



DESIGN, HERITAGE & ACCESS STATEMENT (INCLUDING ACCESS AUDIT)

The Royal Bank of Scotland, 10 Gordon Street, Glasgow, G1 3PL

Overview

Applications for planning and listed building consent for external and internal alterations to form accessible entrance at:

Location: 10 Gordon Street, Glasgow, G1 3PL

Heritage Context: Glasgow Central Conservation Area Appraisal 2012

Listed: Category A

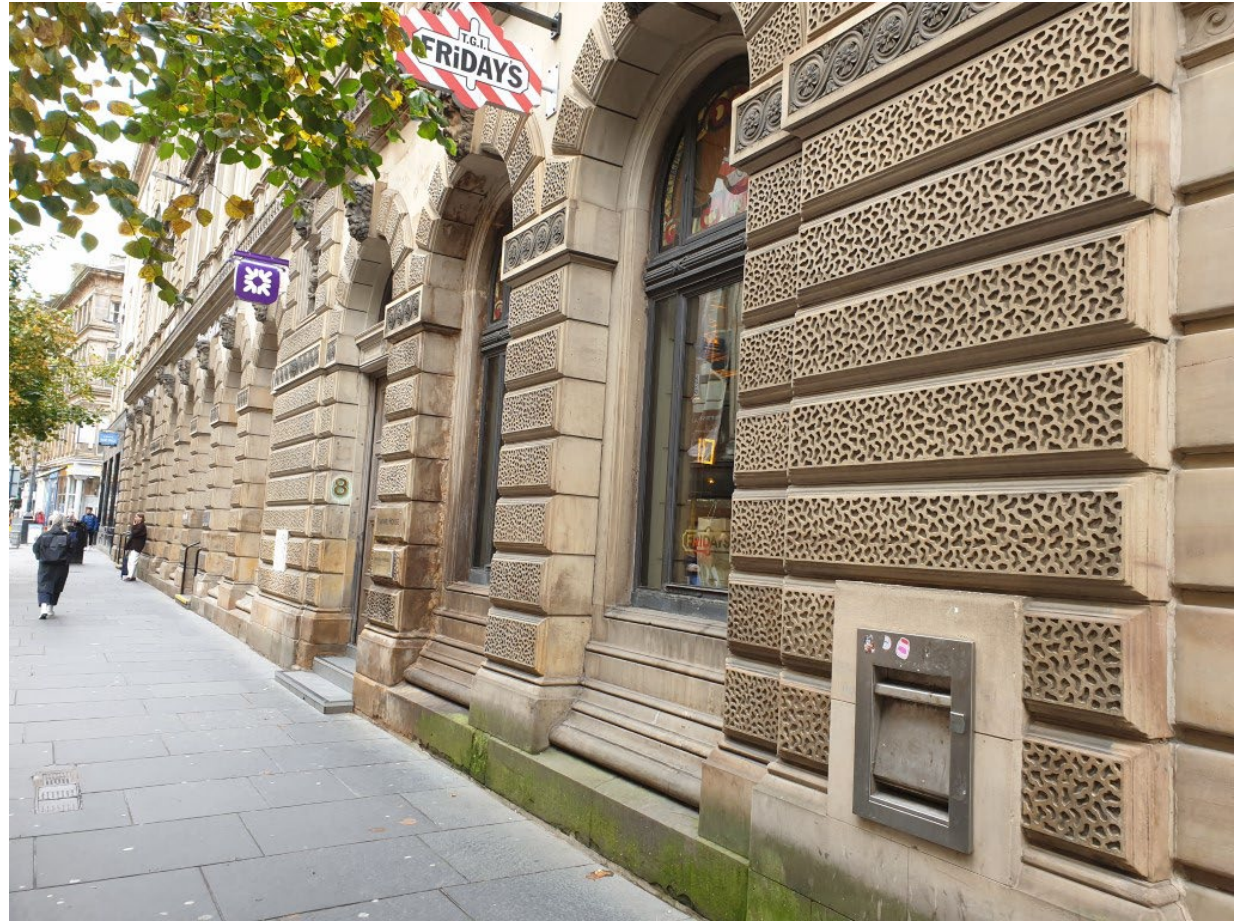


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1.0 Introduction

This Design Statement has been prepared by Lewis & Hickey Ltd to support an application for Listed Building Consent by NatWest Group and to support concurrent applications for planning and listed building consent, for works to form an accessible entrance at 10 Gordon Street, Glasgow.

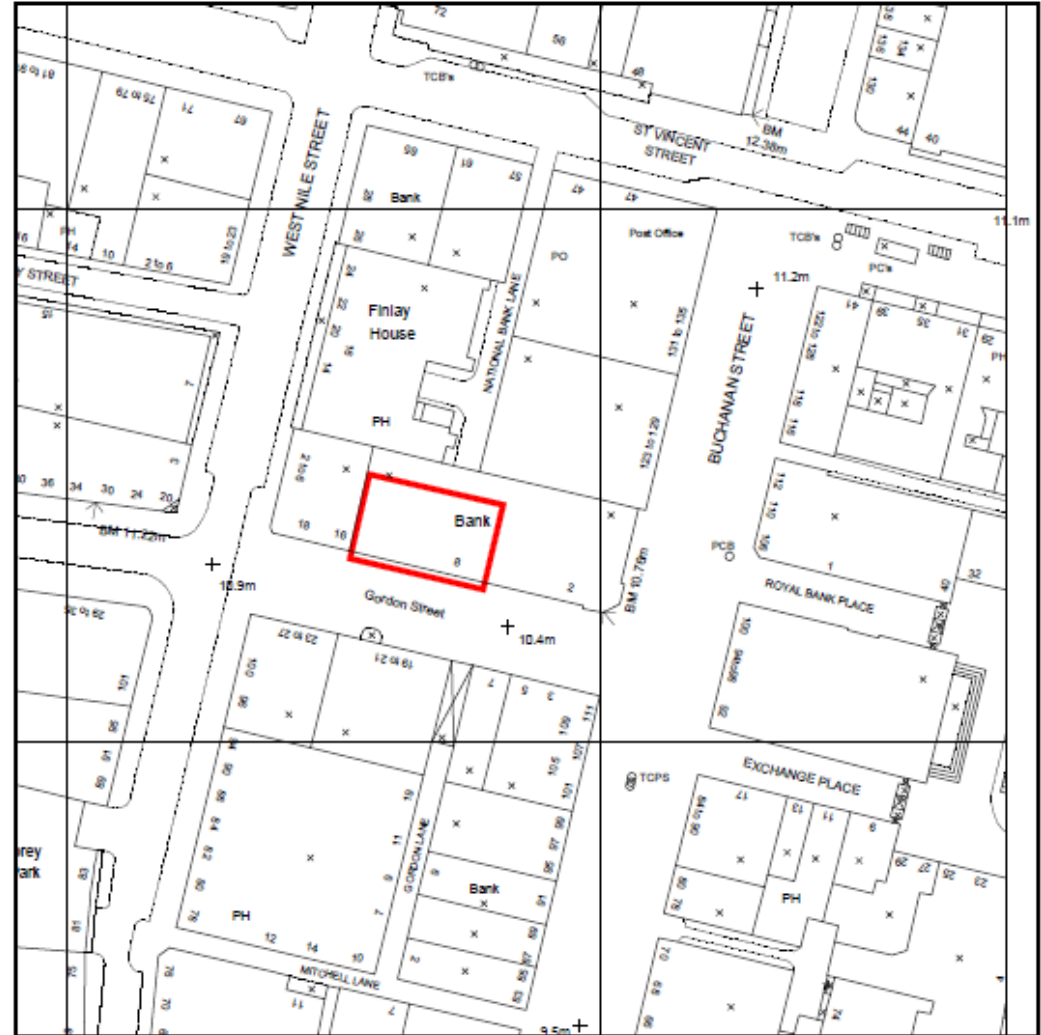


2.0 The Site

The application site is located on Gordon Street within Glasgow City Conservation Area, which is a semi-pedestrianised street with a high concentration of listed buildings.

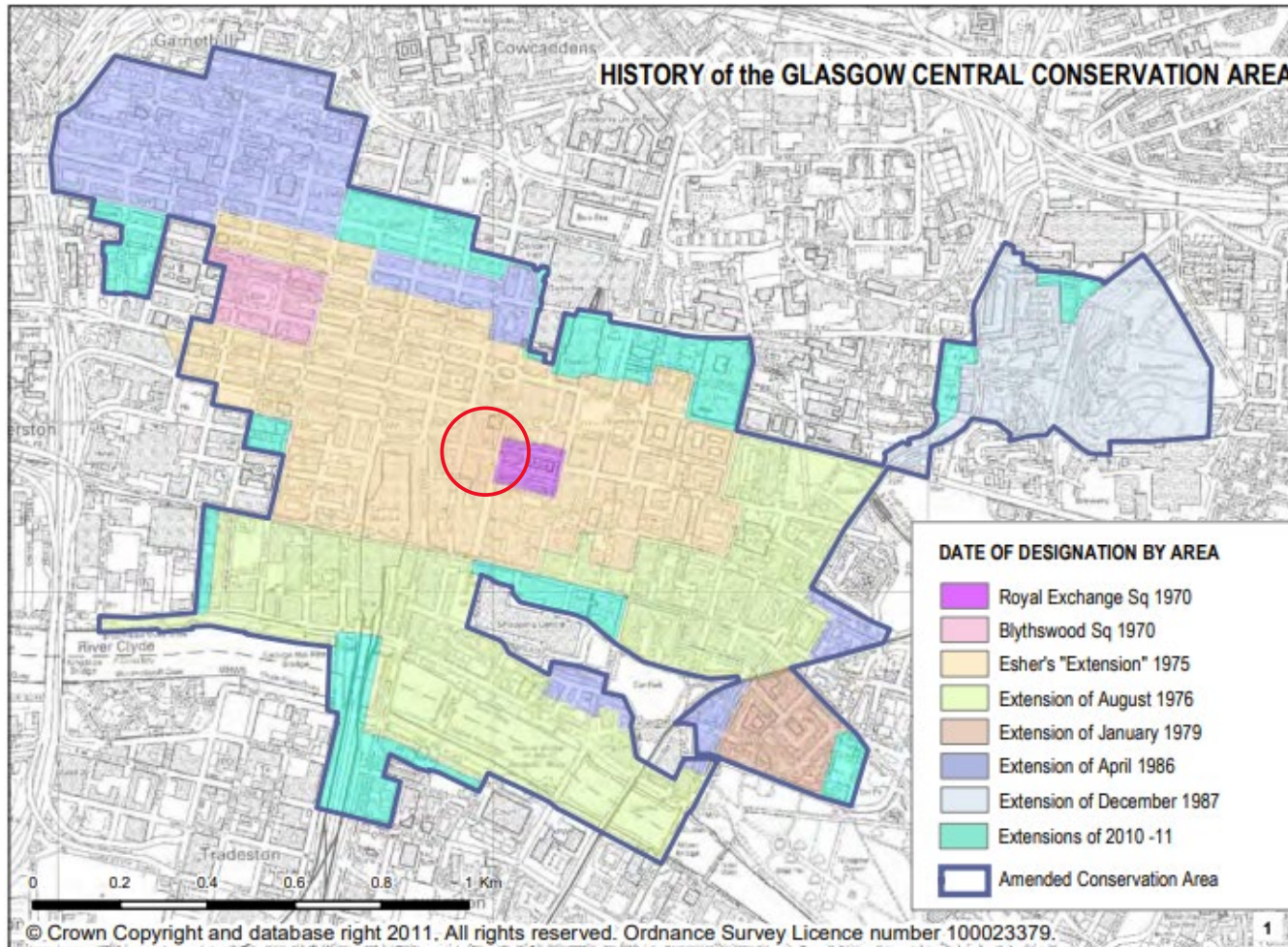
The site is located between West Nile Street and Buchanan Street and has a Category A listing. The street comprises a mix of cafes, shops, restaurants and express supermarkets.

10 Gordon Street consists of a basement, ground floor and mezzanine level of the existing RBS Glasgow City branch.



3.0 Conservation Area

Location within conservation area



Referencing

Conservation Areas in Glasgow (2015). Conservation Areas in Glasgow. [online] glasgow.gov.uk. Available at: <https://glasgow.gov.uk/article/17163/Conservation-Areas-in-Glasgow>.

In-text citation: (Conservation Areas in Glasgow, 2015)

(Conservation Areas in Glasgow, 2015)

3.1 Central Area

Earliest History:

Archaeological evidence indicates human activity on the banks of the Clyde for 8000 years. However, settlement patterns cannot be confirmed prior to the 6th century. At this stage it appears that a pair of closely related settlements began the formation of what has become the City of Glasgow. St Kentigern established a monastery overlooking the Molendinar Burn in the late 6th or early 7th century and a fishing hamlet was settled near a ford over the Clyde (where Victoria Bridge stands today) in the same period. The route between these settlements is marked by the Saltmarket and High Street. The east-west route along the Clyde Valley probably crossed this; it was certainly in place by the time Burgh status was granted by William the Lion between 1175-78...."

Architectural Character:

The architecture of the City Centre exhibits a distinctive confidence from the late 18th century into the 21st century that makes it unique in Scotland. Although a variety of architectural styles exist, there are certain Glasgow characteristics: depth of modelling; wealth of ornamentation and sculpture; animated roofline; and consistent building lines and predominantly flat (not stepped or curved) linear elevations along the backs of the pavements. Glasgow architects and engineers were, and remain, frequent pioneers of new building technology and materials. Glasgow has some areas of unified architectural character, but the main architectural character of the City Centre is the eclectic mix of styles employed in the 19th and 20th centuries. Five local character areas are examined in greater detail later in this appraisal." (*Conservation Areas in Glasgow, 2015*)

The conservation area has been understood and one of the most recurring points made in the document is that the Architectural Style and historical significance of the buildings are really important to the area, and as such it is worth noting that these proposals have been carefully and sensitively designed so the proposed works do not damage the character and appearance of the RBS Bank within the 'CENTRAL AREA' Conservation Area.

4.0 The Building

4.1 Description

Listing: Category A

Exterior:

David Rhind (Edinburgh) 1854-7 for Commercial Bank. Renaissance. Sculpture by Handyside Ritchie 3 and 4 storeys with double-height banking hall at ground floor offices above. 11 bays, arranged 3-5-3 divided by quoins. Central bays raised. Polished ashlar with vermiculated rusticated ground floor and quoins. Roll moulded plinth. Arched ground floor with keystone masks, incised frieze, sculpted cherubic panels of industry; stepped aprons. Dentil band, guilloche frieze. 1st floor: aedicule windows with balconies, Corinthian antae and columns to each section with richly sculpted tympana of cherubim with heraldry over centre bay of each.

The 2nd floor windows plain with lugged, dropped architraves. 2nd floor entablature with guilloche frieze sculpted panels over quoin strips, dentil band, modillion cornice. Balustrade die parapet to outer bays. Central bays 3rd floor eaves gallery with key blocked arched windows set in Corinthian semi-engaged colonnade, independent, deeply bracketed cornice.

Interior:

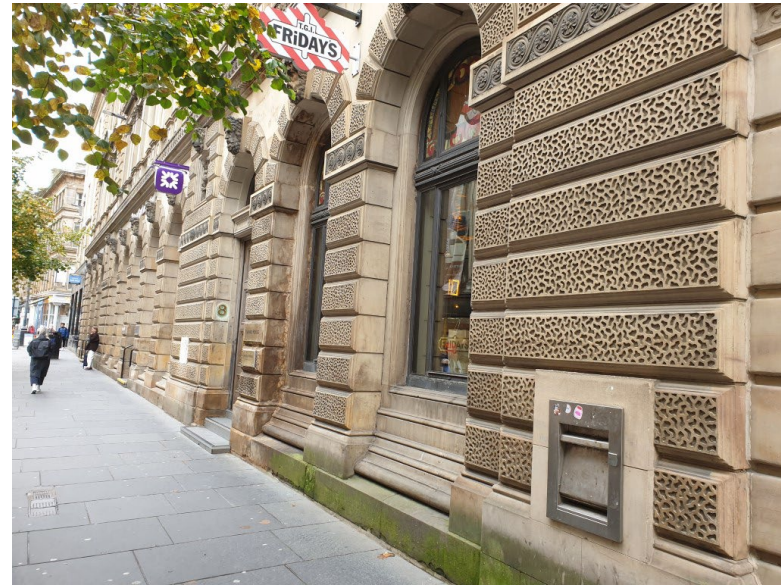
by James McCallum 1937 with sculpture by J H Clark. Marble-lined banking hall with shallow covered ceiling. Sculpted tablets of industry in frieze." (portal.historicenvironment.scot, n.d.)

Harvard Reference:

portal.historicenvironment.scot. (n.d.). 6 GORDON STREET, PART OF FORMER COMMERCIAL BANK (LB33030). [online] Available at: <https://portal.historicenvironment.scot/designation/LB33030> [Accessed 25 Oct. 2023].

4.2 Statement of Special Interest

This No 78 palazzo style design was influential in commercial buildings of the 1860s and 1870s. Now Royal Bank of Scotland.



5.0 Existing Entrances



Entrance for Automation facilities

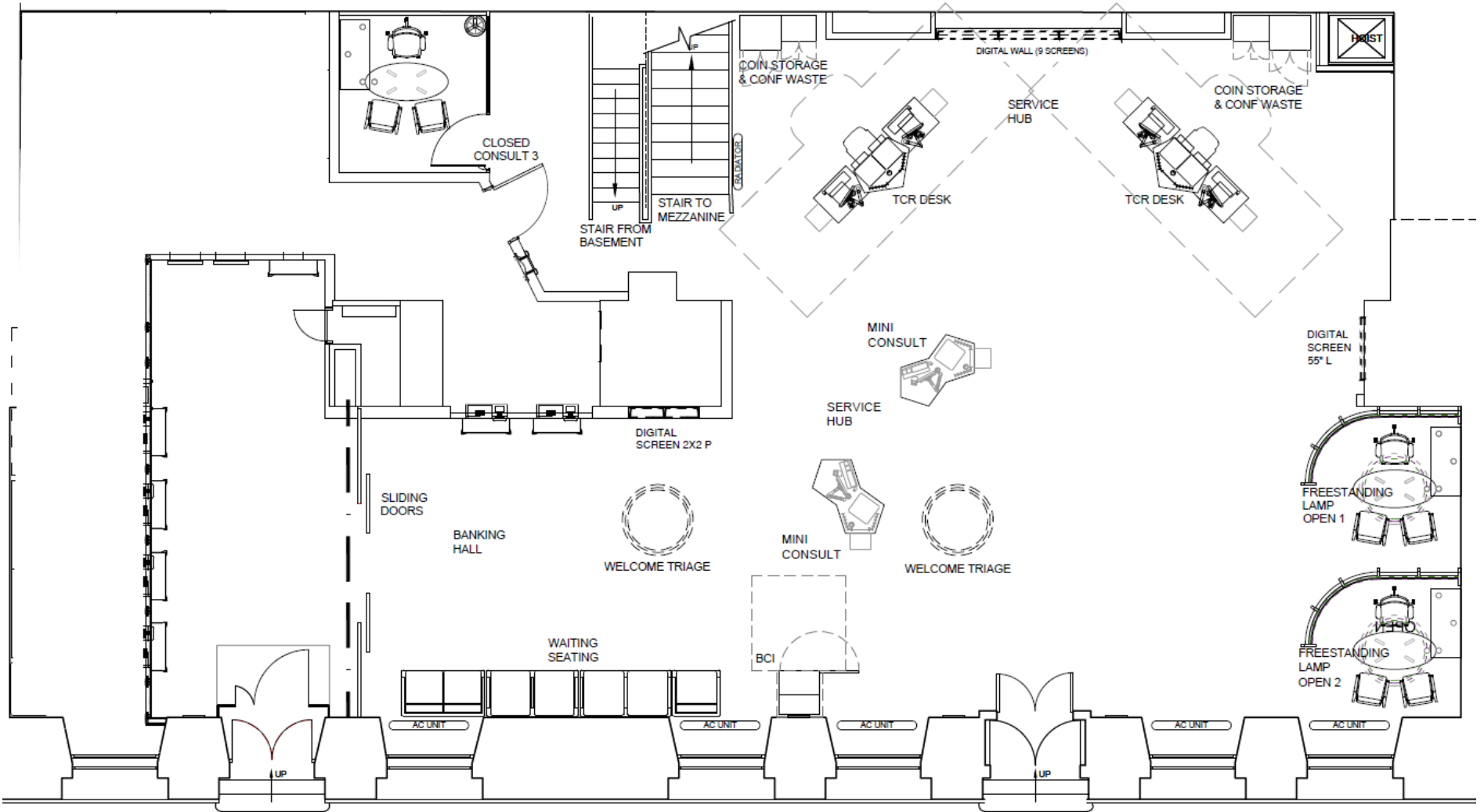
The ground floor banking hall is currently accessed via two main entrance doors from Gordon Street: there is one entrance to access automation facilities and another entrance to access consultation services.

Neither of these entrances are currently accessible to wheelchair users from street level. However, once in the branch the customer has level access to all ground floor facilities.



Entrance for Consultation facilities

5.1 Existing Plan



**Entrance for
Automation facilities**

**Entrance for
Consultation facilities**

5.2 Existing Photographs - entrance lobby



6.0 Access Audit

Introduction.

Current government policy is committed to promoting equality of access to and enjoyment of the historic environment, in order to encourage the provision of physical access for everyone in ways that also safeguard the character of historic buildings and places.

While this policy involves the users and potential users of historic buildings, any improvements must be sensitive to the historic character of the building through high quality design, management and maintenance.

People of all levels of physical, mental and sensory ability should have the opportunity to access, experience and enjoy the historic environment on an equal basis and improved accessibility can have numerous benefits for the historic environment, in particular its contribution to the use and viability of historic buildings.

With careful thought and planning, improved physical access to most elements of the historic environment can usually be achieved through reasonable adjustments without harming the character and appearance of the historic building and this is our aim with this development.

Finding the Right solution

The aims of this development are as follows:

- To understand the needs of the user
- Identify existing barriers to accessibility
- Provide unassisted and dignified physical access for all.
- To assess the various improvement options available.

- Using the most appropriate materials in terms of aesthetics and maintenance.
- Ensure that all services and facilities of the business are available to all customers.
- Achieve the best practical balance between access requirements and the reasonable conservation needs of the building.

What Are The Barriers here?

The Gordon Street is a key Royal Bank of Scotland branch in Glasgow city centre. The branch is very busy and caters for a large and wide range of customers on a daily basis.

Unfortunately, the branch itself, while very accessible throughout the ground floor in terms of access to all banking services, is not accessible from the street itself.

Our assessment of the building's accessibility is as follows:

- There are two main entrance doors, both of which are wide enough to access the ground floor facilities of the bank.
- Both entrance doors are only accessed via, what appears to be, 3 no. non-original steps up into the building.
- This gives a level difference of 350mm between the street and the ground floor level which is fairly low.
- An external ramp has previously been considered, but this was deemed inappropriate due to the amount of space this would take up on the busy pedestrianized thoroughfare of Gordon Street. It would have a significant deleterious effect on the character of the existing façade and also be obtrusive. The same would apply to the installation of an external platform lift.

- The bank only occupies part of the overall building and shares the premises with other tenants. Creating an alternative accessible customer entrance, such as at the rear or side of the building, is not considered a viable option given that the unit can only directly accessed by the public from Gordon Street.

Pedestrian Access

The building is currently accessed from Gordon Street which is now pedestrianised. The existing street surface is a mixture of a concrete slab pavement adjacent to the building, with large colour mix monobloc to the road itself. All materials are modern and non-original.

Our Solution

Having explored various options in order to make the branch more accessible, we have concluded that the best approach is to create a new ramped access internally. There are several factors that support these findings:

- The existing pedestrian street is level across the entire pathway as well as surrounding streets, as such it makes this portion of Glasgow very accessible to pedestrians, as well as access to several car parks and transport links. We aim to improve upon this by making the bank for accessible also.
- The existing pedestrianised street has been formed of non-original materials, but are sympathetic to the central conservation area and its surroundings
- There are two main entrances to the branch, both served by steps up into the branch. By altering one of the entrances, this would provide accessibility for all users.
- The existing 3 no. steps up to the building are non-original and are not considered to contribute to the character of the building.
- The existing entrance doors are wide enough to be retained and both entrances have original storm doors which are currently held open while the branch is in operation.
- Creating a level entrance by removing the existing steps to one of the entrance door, the existing doors can be retained and rehung at a lower level. This means that the proportions and design of the storm doors will remain the same as the other entrance doors.
- By lowering the door, an infill will be required above the door to compensate for the loss of the steps. The materials used for this should match existing in terms of type, colour, texture and patina. A timber frame with glazed fanlight is proposed in this instance.
- While the internal features of the building have largely been retained and have formed a basis for the interior's evolution over the years, there has already been newer, non-original and permanent features installed. Using high quality and complimentary materials, the later addition of the mezzanine level and open stainless steel balustrades and handrail have improved the building's functionality and versatility.
- The existing ground floor facilities comprise of the full services offered to all customers. It is intended that this will be updated and enhanced to the current offering in line with other branches nationwide. This will improve the circulation and accessibility for all users without any major physical alterations.
- The other alterations consist of a new Automation facility, improved confidential meeting spaces for customers and a new low-level internal ramp at the branch entrance for wheelchair access. Consideration has been given to appropriate materials, which compliment the original interior.

The Impact On The Character of The Building

We are of the opinion that the solution we have arrived at is the solution which has the minimum impact on the existing building. The original layout and plan form of the building has been respected and has not resulted in the loss of historic fabric, including fixtures and fittings, which contribute to the building's special interest.

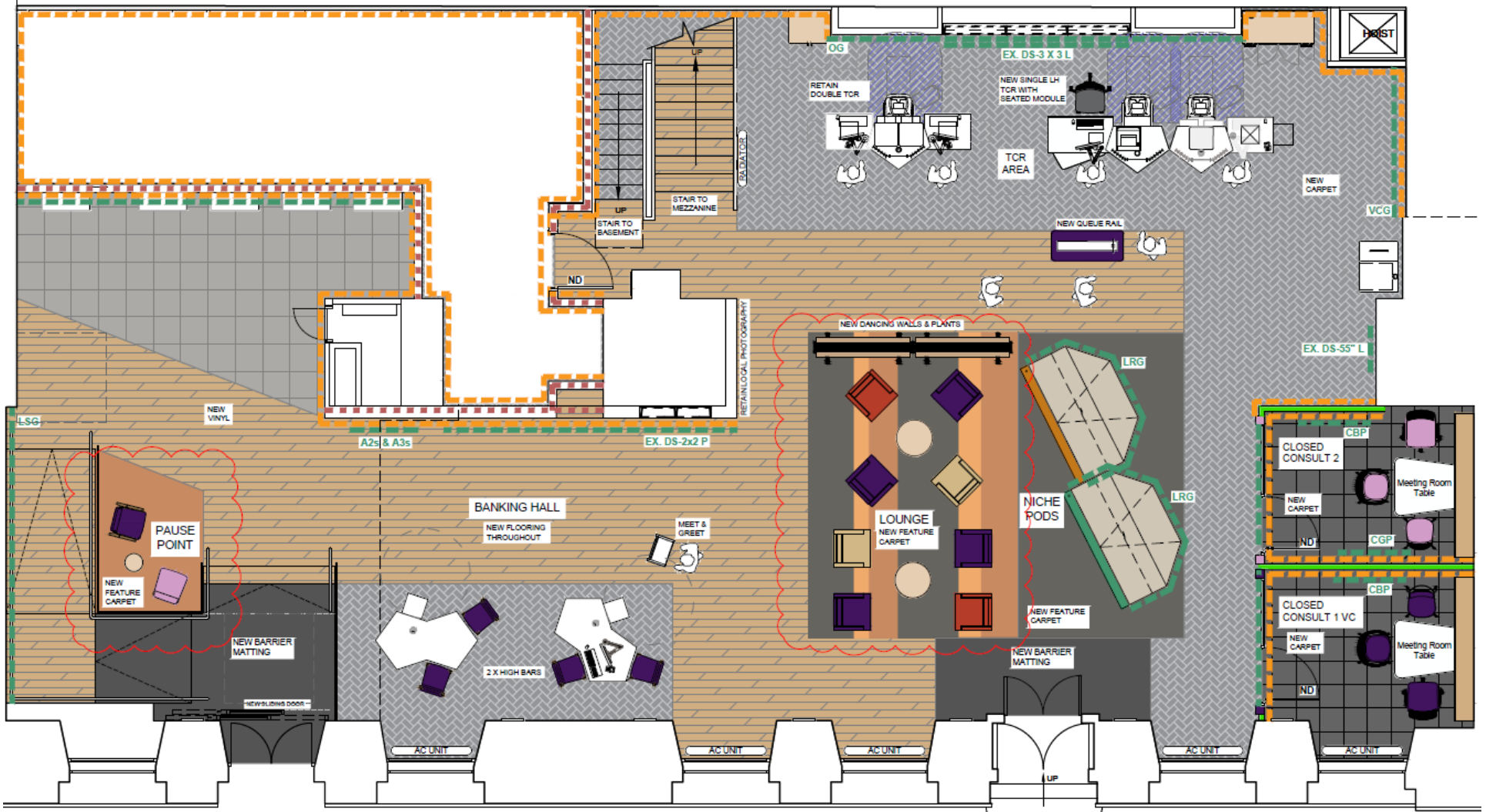
- The impact to the character of the façade is minimal; alterations are minor and confined entirely to only one of the main entrance doors.
- Only non-original steps are to be removed to provide the level access.
- The existing storm doors and frame are retained and rehung in the new lowered location
- A sympathetic infill will be installed to compensate for the loss of the steps and door relocation.
- The new ramp is located at the left hand entrance door only and the facilities have been rearranged and upgraded to allow the customer journey to flow for all potential users of the building.
- The design of the ramp is simple with the use of a slim and neutral glazed balustrade which is of high quality, has minimal visual impact on the existing interior, whilst complimenting the existing and more modern balustrade to the mezzanine.
- There are less maintenance requirements with a ramp than there is with a more mechanical solution.
- The new barrier matting to the lobby and the base of the ramp, provides an anti-slip surface as well as colour contrast for visual impairment.

Summary

The proposal not only provides access for all to this Category A listed building, but also prolongs its life and potential use going forward. This important and inclusive addition will allow this building to be barrier free and continue to be functional whilst preserving its own historical significance within the Central Conservation Area of Glasgow City Centre.

It will also keep the city thriving for years to come.

7.0 Proposed Plan



**Entrance for
all customers & services**

**Entrance for
Consultation facilities**

7.0 Proposals

There is currently no barrier free access into the building. Various options have been considered with two primary objectives:

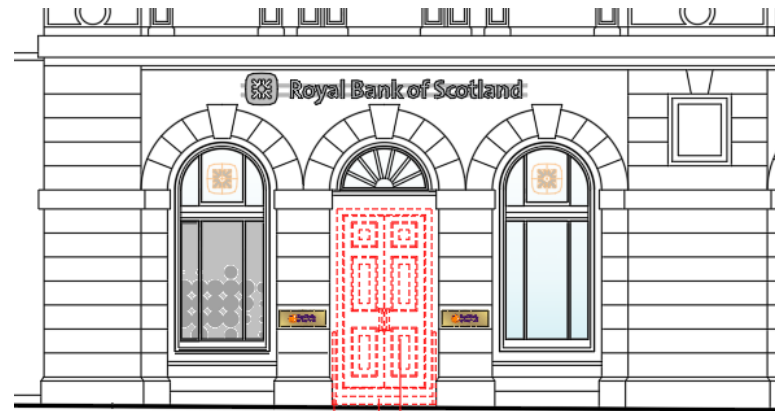
1. Provide barrier free access to the main banking hall with access to a full range of facilities for all customers
2. Avoid any options that involve major alterations to the exterior façade of the building.
2. Avoid encroaching on to the streetscape.

7.1 The Solution

The works detailed within this application propose the installation of an internal ramp which allows customers to access the main banking hall from street level. Given that the main banking hall is on the same level, this will give full access to all facilities, to every possible customer.

There will be minimal works to the existing facade and no works to the pavement, with the exception of the finish at the area where the steps will be removed. The only works required will be the removal of the existing door and frame which will be set aside and re-installed at a lower level to suit the new level access at the street.

A small glazed infill with frame to match existing in material, colour, texture and patina, will be installed in order to allow the existing storm doors and frame to be re-instated without affecting the height of the door and the proportion of the door panels



CAREFULLY REMOVE ORIGINAL DOORS - SET ASIDE FOR RE-INSTALLATION. INFILL ALL HOLES LEFT BY REMOVAL OF DOOR & FRAME TO MATCH EXISTING COLOUR AND GEOLOGY.

CAREFULLY REMOVE STEPS TAKING CARE TO MINIMISE IMPACT TO SURROUNDING SANDSTONE OPENING

CAREFULLY REMOVE EXISTING HANDRAIL. MAKE GOOD AFFECTED SANDSTONE WITH NEW TO MATCH EXISTING COLOUR AND GEOLOGY.

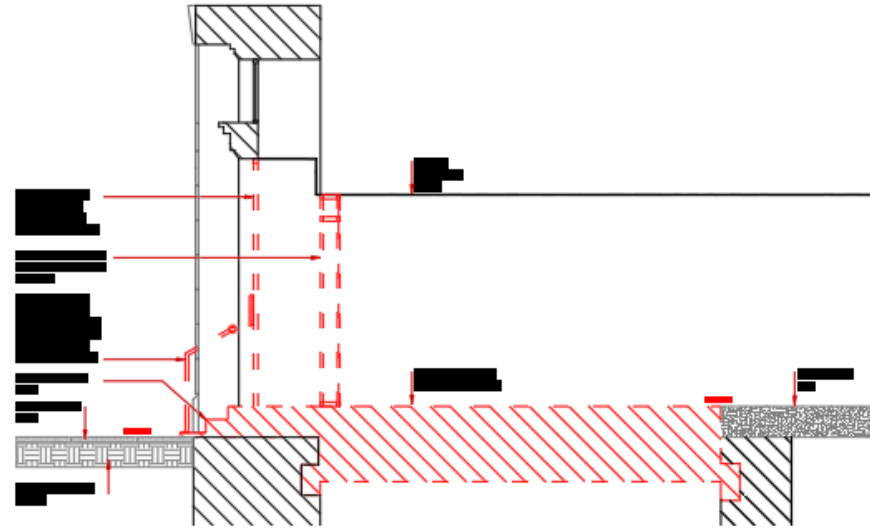


CAREFULLY RE-INSTALL ORIGINAL DOOR AND NEW FRAME TO SUIT

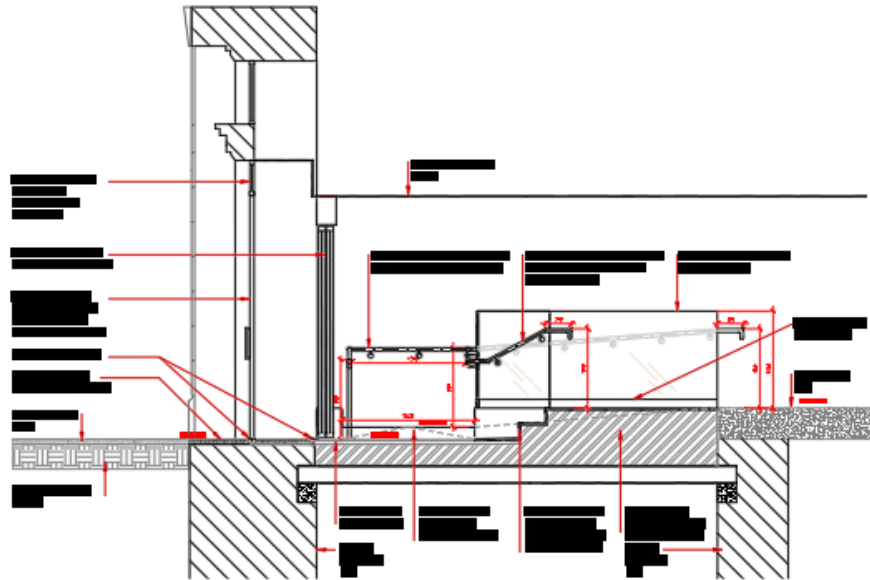
ALLOW FOR NEW PAVING SLABS TO MATCH EXISTING

ALLOW FOR WINDOW PANEL ABOVE DOOR. WINDOW FRAME TO MATCH EXISTING PROFILE AND TIMBER SPECIES.

8.0 Details



SECTION - EXISTING ENTRANCE AREA,
SCALE 1:50 @ A3




SECTION - PROPOSED ENTRANCE AREA,
SCALE 1:50 @ A3

Let's talk

Let's talk

Let's talk



Welcome to  Royal Bank of Scotland Glasgow City



A little glass for all



LEWIS AND HICKEY

NatWest Group