ACCESS STATEMENTS

People are very different in their needs, and in the way they use the built environment. Recent changes to Building Regulations Part M go a long way towards promoting the idea of an "inclusive environment" recognising and broadly accommodating these differences in personal needs in a way that is universal. The theory being that an inclusive design provides a single solution for everyone.

A change in guidance and legislation for both Planning and Building Regulations has introduced the concept of access statements. This provides the opportunity for developers, designers and owners/managers to demonstrate their firm commitment to providing inclusive environments in the work that they intend to undertake, and importantly in the management of the buildings and/or spaces in use.

An access statement provides essential supplementary evidence in support of applications for the necessary statutory consents.

Starting at a strategic level the statement will record and explain decisions on accessibility of the project.

To be useful the access statement must be more than just a statement confirming that Part M of the Building Regulations and/or British Standards will be complied with. It should explain how the needs of disabled people and everyone else are incorporated into the general design and arrangements of the scheme, and how the principle of "inclusive design" have been incorporated into the scheme.

The access statement should commence at the project brief stage as an expression of intent, and expand, as the project develops to encompass planning, design, management and maintenance requirements.

The access statement will be used to demonstrate to the various statutory control mechanisms that the client and designer has fully considered access requirements and how they intend to meet them and that they recognise their legal duties.

Most importantly, where the design promotes circumstances whereby facets of the technical guidance cannot be complied with - for whatever reason, an access statement must outline the reasons and/or justification for such deviations. This evidence can then be considered by the building control authority, in their deliberations to determine the reasonableness of the approach proposed. Depending upon the nature of the premises and the extent of deviation the authority may wish to seek the views of the local access group.

Whilst the Disability Rights Commission (DRC) has published a document offering supplementary guidance on the contents and structure of an access statement this is still quite subjective.

In an attempt to offer some further direction an Access Statement Template has been prepared and incorporated purely for guidance.

Access/Egress Statement

Site address:		**Date:**

Contact details

	Applicants name		**Agents name**
Name:		Name:	
Address:		Address:	
Post code:		Post code:	
Telephone:		Telephone:	
		Fax No:	
		E-mail:	

Description of development

To include description of proposed works. Size of proposed works, building use, number of occupiers, perceived modes of transport etc.

Design standard followed:

Approved Document M (2004):		CAE Designing for Accessibility (2004):	
BS8300 (2001):		CAE Good Loo Design Guide (2004):	
Building Bulletin 91(Schools):		Other (please elaborate below):	
Sport England (Sports Facilities)			

Philosophy and approach

Overview of the developer's philosophy regarding access for disabled people and inclusive design.

This section must include specific examples of how individual design proposals within the project reflect this philosophy.

Reference to current/pending legislation may also be relevant.

Key access issues of the design

This should include direct guidance references to key design attributes in relation to:

- *Approach*
- *Parking*
- *Entrances*
- *Horizontal circulation*
- *Vertical circulation*
- *Access to services*
- *Emergency Egress etc.*

Sources of advice and consultation

Include references to relevant British Standards
Consultation with planners, conservation officers, access officers etc.
Evidence of consultation with existing/planned building users (where appropriate)
The extent of input from local access groups or local organisations reflecting the views of disabled people.

Nature and impact of environmental and/or other constraints

Where environmental factors act to constrain compliance with the relevant design guidance an explanation of the individual constraints should be included. These may include constraints imposed by an existing structure during an extension, or geographical constraints on new or existing developments.

The responsibility will be on the developer to explain why the relevant design guidance can't be achieved in any particular situation and to provide material evidence to this effect.

One alternate solution that has been considered should also be described for each instance in which the design is felt to deviate from the relevant design guidance.

Proposed solutions for overcoming identified constraints

Where deviation from the relevant design guidance is proposed as a solution an explanation of how the relevant barrier can be 'reasonably' overcome should be explained.

What steps have been taken to ensure this information is made available to building occupiers.

Explain the steps taken by the designers to ensure the above access philosophy and information particular to the building is fully integrated into the long-term management of the building.

Additional material information

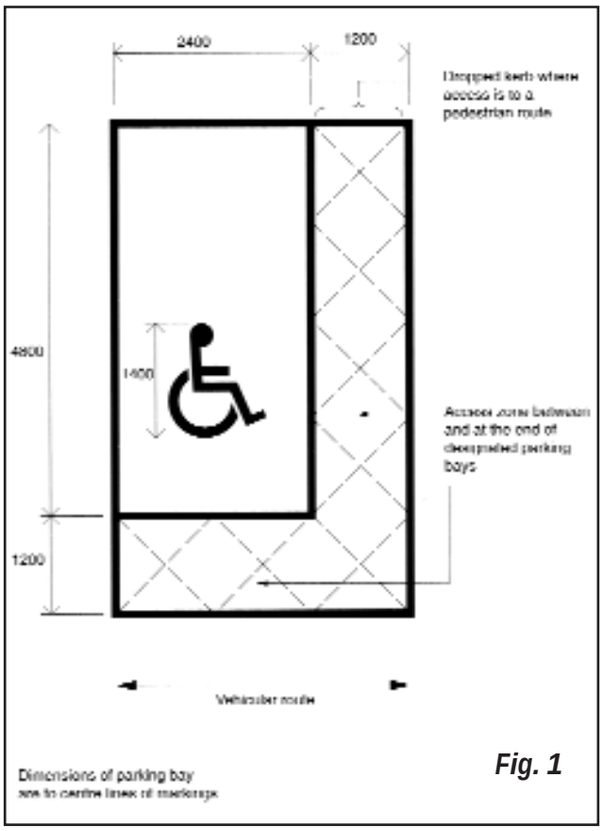
Any additional information in support of the proposed development.

Car Parking Spaces

- For disabled people, car access is vital. In car parks, provision should be made for disabled drivers and cars carrying disabled passengers. Parking should be provided as near to the principal entrance as possible and under cover is desirable. If payment is required, provide level and unobstructed access to pay and display units.

- The surface of a designated parking bay should be firm and level, slip resistant and have a 1200mm transfer zone alongside and at the rear of the vehicle.

- If people need to obtain tickets for pay and display parking, the ticket dispensing machines need to be accessible to wheelchair users and people of short stature. They should be adjacent to the designated parking and have controls between 750mm and 1200mm from ground level.



Dimensions of parking bay
Fig. 1

- Guidance on designated parking, ticket dispensing machines, vehicular control barriers and multi-storey car parks can be found in BS 8300.

- The recommended numbers of reserved spaces vary in accordance with the type and capacity of car parks as follows:

Car parks associated with employment premises and provided for employees and visitors.

- 5% of the total parking capacity should be designated for disabled motorists.

Car parks associated with shopping areas, leisure or recreational facilities

- One space for each disabled employee plus 6% of the total capacity for visiting disabled motorists.

- Car parking spaces for the disabled should be signposted using the international symbol of the disabled (fig. 46, page 56), which can also be painted on the ground with the legend "Disabled Drivers Only."

External Travel

- Routes of travel across grass or paved areas should be highlighted. This can be achieved by contrasting colour, texture or by directional paving.
- Covers and gratings should be flush with pavings, the maximum gap being 18mm.
- Define footpath edges with either kerb, low rail or a surface change.

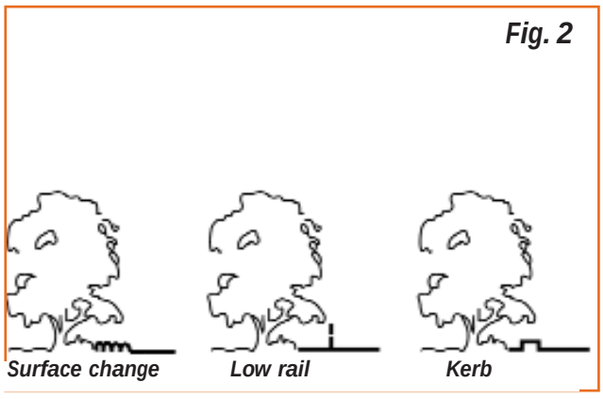


Fig. 2

- Pedestrian crossing points require special attention.
- Red tactiles should be used at controlled crossings and buff coloured tactiles at uncontrolled crossings.
- At changes in level and to slopes steeper than 1:15 a handrail and kerb should be provided. A lower rail and kerb should be provided as a guide for partially sighted people using canes.

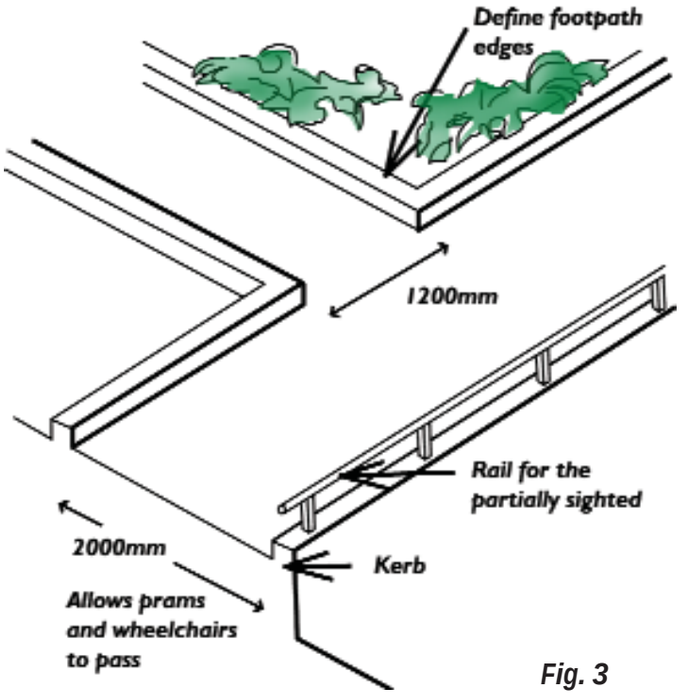
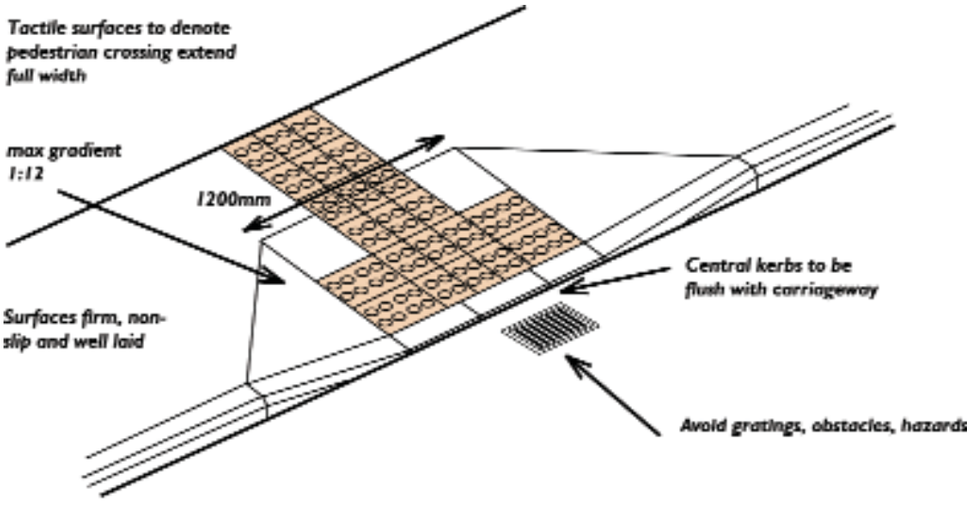


Fig. 3



This layout is a general detail only. Further advice on exact layouts should be sought from the local Highway Authority.

Fig. 4

External Hazards

LANDSCAPE FURNITURE

- The provision of landscape furniture requires careful thought. It needs to be made distinguishable from the background, i.e. by colour contrast and should be detectable at low level for people with impaired vision.

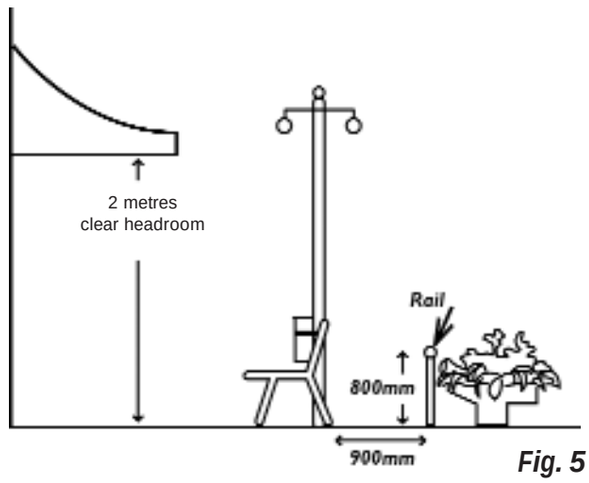


Fig. 5

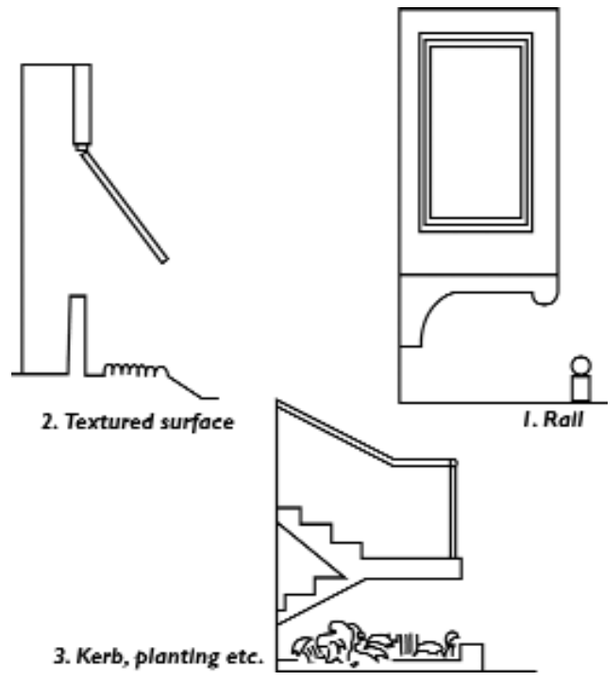


Fig. 6

- Avoid overhangs, especially at ground level.
- Guard against building projections by the use of (1) rails, (2) textured surfaces, (3) kerbs and planting, etc.

DOORS

- Doors which open outwards should not cause an obstruction on a path which runs along the face of a building, i.e. recess the doors or provide suitable guarding.

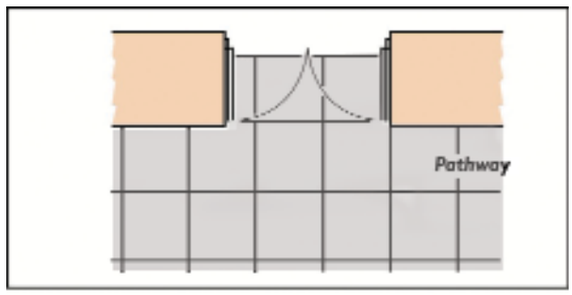


Fig. 7

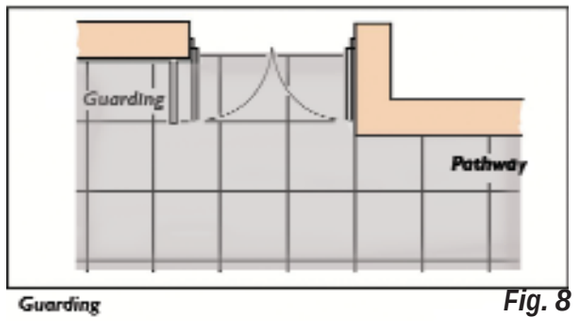


Fig. 8

ACCESS TO BUILDINGS

Approach to the Building

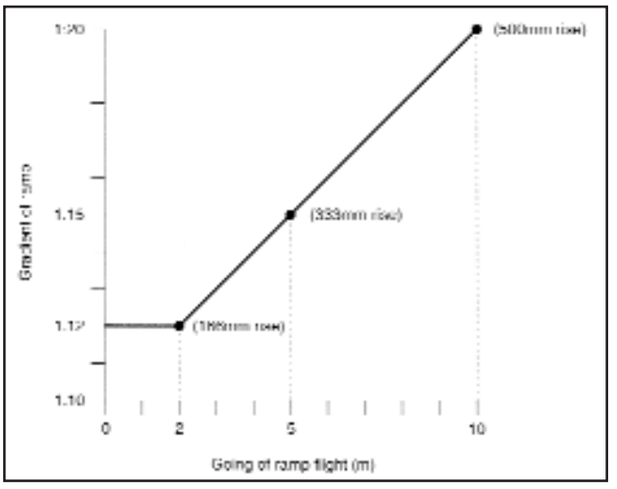
- There should be a convenient access into the building for disabled people, whether they are visitors to the building or work in it and whether they arrive on foot or in a wheelchair.
- If space outside the principal entrance is restrictive, an alternative accessible entrance in common use should be provided.
- Car parking spaces should be provided adjacent to the principal entrance or the accessible entrance in common use.
- Clearly signposted steps should be provided when the rise of the ramp exceeds 300mm. The surface of the ramp should be slip resistant and of a colour that contrasts visually with that of the landings.

Table 1 **Limits for ramp gradients**

Going of a flight	Maximum gradient	Maximum rise
10 m	1:20	500mm
5 m	1:15	333mm
2 m	1:12	166mm

Notes:
For goings between 2m and 10m, it is acceptable to interpolate between the maximum gradients, i.e. 1:14 for a 4m going or 1:19 for a 9m going (see Fig. 9).

Fig. 9 **Relationship of ramp gradient to the going of a flight**



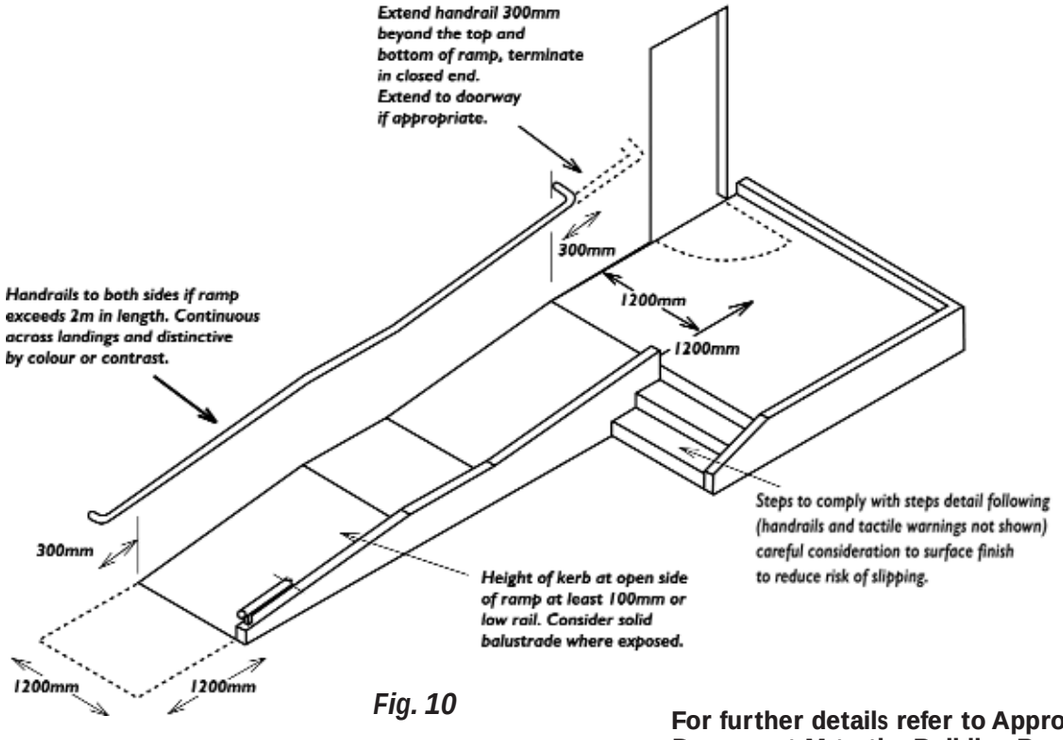


Fig. 10

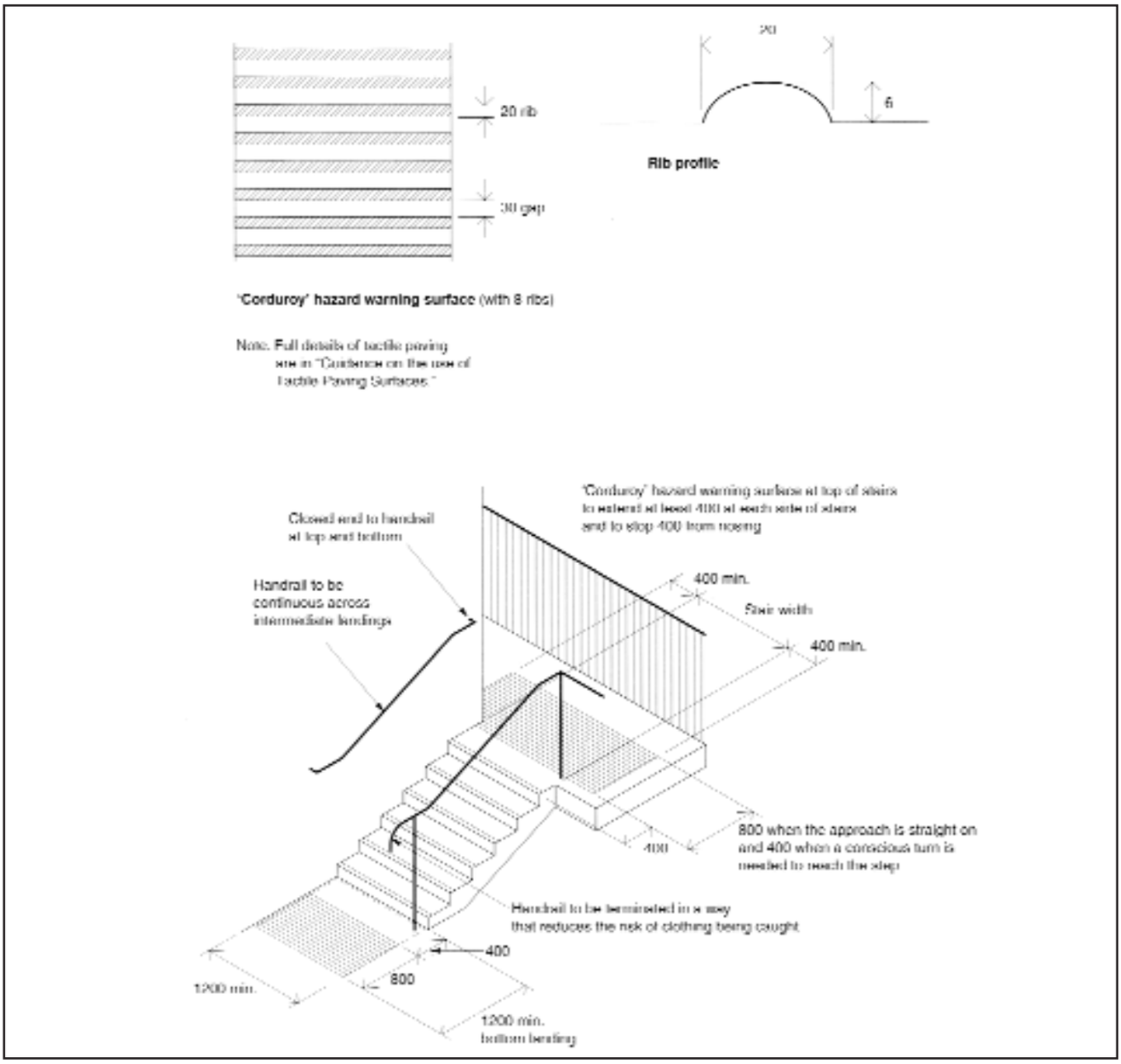
For further details refer to Approved Document M to the Building Regulations

Stepped Access

- A corduroy hazard warning surface should be provided at top and bottom landings of a series of flights to give advance warning of a change in level.
- Rise of each step should be between 150mm and 170mm.
- Going of each step should be between 280mm and 425mm.
- Rise and going of each step should be consistent throughout the flight.
- Width of the flight should not be not less than 1.2m.

For schools the preferred dimensions are 150mm rise and 280mm going

Fig. 11 **Stepped access – key dimensions and use of hazard warning surface**



ACCESS TO BUILDINGS

Stepped Access

Fig. 12 **External steps and stairs – key dimensions**

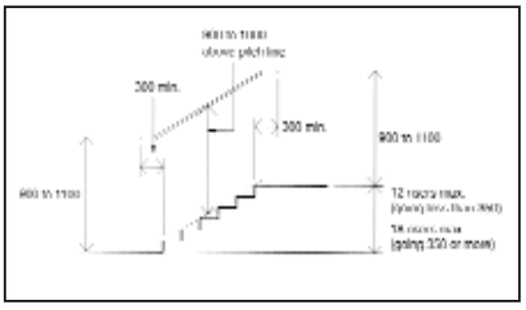
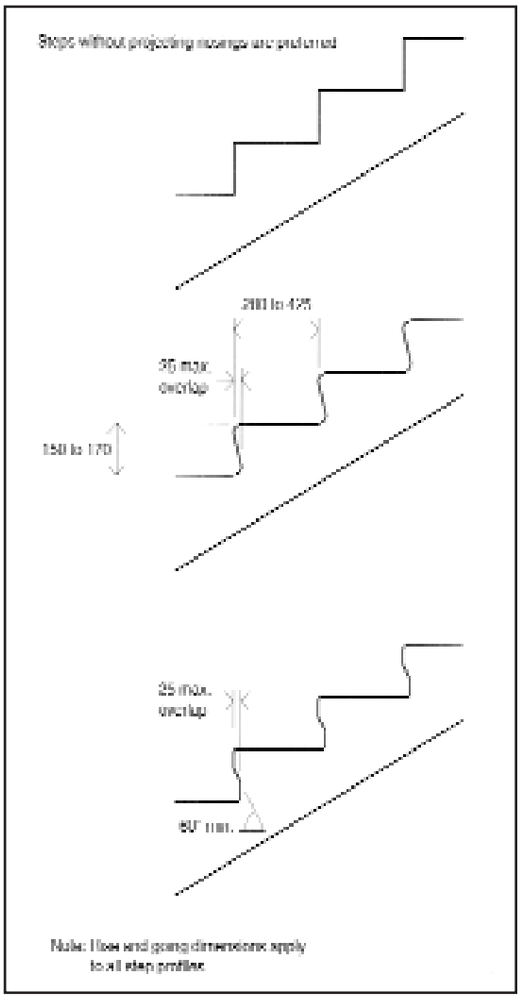


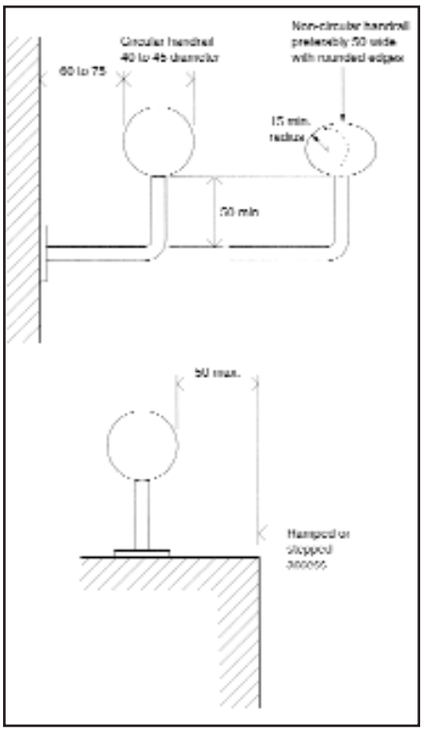
Fig. 13 **Examples of acceptable step profiles and key dimensions for external stairs**



HANDRAILS

- Should be between 900mm and 1000m above the surface of the ramp.
- Should be continuous along the flights and landings of steps and ramps.
- Should extend at least 300mm beyond the top and bottom of ramps and a flight or flights of steps whilst not projecting onto an access route.
- Should contrast visually from the background without being reflective.
- The surface should be slip resistant and not cold to the touch.
- The profile should be circular with a diameter of between 40mm and 45mm or oval, preferably with a diameter of 50mm.
- Should protrude no more than 100mm into the surface width of ramp or stairs where this would impinge on the stair width requirement of Approved Document B (Fire Safety).
- Should have a clearance of between 60mm and 75mm between the handrail and any adjacent wall surface.

Fig. 14 **Handrail design**



Accessible Entrances

ACCESSIBLE ENTRANCES

- Should be clearly signposted and should include the international symbol of access, from the edge of the site, and the principal entrance if this is not the accessible entrance. (Guidance on sign posting can be found in BS 8300).
- Any structural supports at the entrance should not be a hazard to the visually impaired.
- Should have a level landing at least 1500mm by 1500mm clear of any door swings immediately in front of the entrance and be of a material that does not impede wheelchair users.
- Door entry systems should be accessible to deaf and hard of hearing and people who cannot speak. (LED display) fitted between 750mm and 1000mm from floor level.
- The surface of any entrance matting should be level with the floor and should not impede wheelchair movement. Avoid coir matting, and changes in floor surfaces which are potential trip hazards.

Table 2 **Minimum effective clear widths of doors**

Direction and width of approach	New buildings (mm)	Existing buildings (mm)
Straight-on (without a turn or oblique approach)	800	750
At right angles to an access route at least 1500mm wide	800	750
At right angles to an access route at least 1200mm wide	825	775
External doors to buildings used by the general public	1000	775

Note:
The effective clear width is the width of the opening measured at right angles to the wall in which the door is situated from the outside of the door stop on the door closing side to any obstruction on the hinge side, whether this be projecting door opening furniture, a weather board, the door, or the door stop (see Fig. 15). For specific guidance on the effective clear widths of doors in sports accommodation, refer to 'Access for Disabled People', Design Guidance Note, Sport England
ISBN 1-86078-1497

DOORS TO ACCESSIBLE ENTRANCES

- Entrance doors can be manually operated, or power operated under manual or automatic control.
- Vision panels should comply with the minimum zone of visibility of between 500mm and 1500mm from floor level, if necessary interrupted between 800mm and 1150mm from floor level to accommodate a horizontal grab-rail.

MANUALLY OPERATED NON POWERED ENTRANCE DOORS

- A non-powered door fitted with a self-closing device capable of closing the door against wind forces and the resistance of draught seals is unlikely to be openable by a wheelchair user or someone with limited strength.
- The opening force at the leading edge should be no greater than 20N.

It should be noted that double buggies are wider than wheelchairs and this should be borne in mind when designing certain types of buildings.

Accessible Entrances

POWERED ENTRANCE DOORS

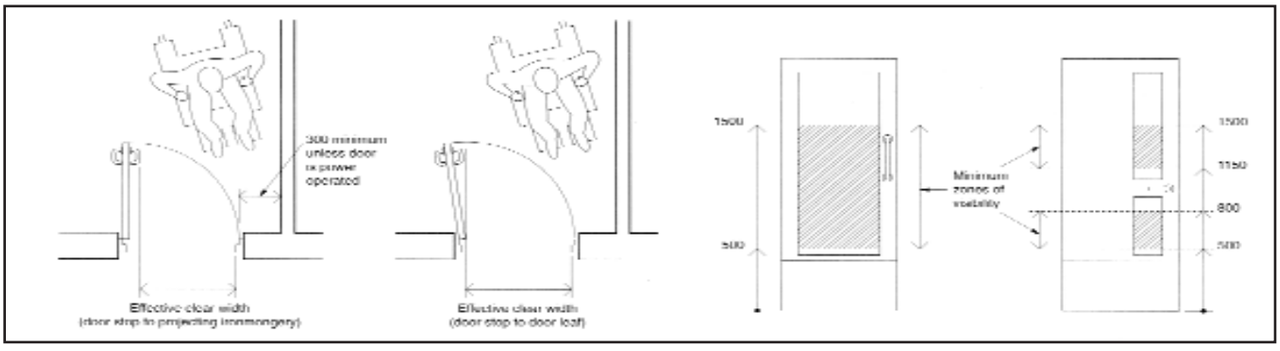
- Manual control for powered entrance doors should be clearly distinguishable from the background, and located between 750mm and 1000mm from the ground level (to include swipe cards etc).

- Where the doors swing towards people approaching them visual and audible warnings should be provided. They should incorporate a safety stop if someone is passing through and revert to manual control or stay open in a power failure.

GLASS ENTRANCE DOORS AND GLAZED SCREENS

- Should be clearly defined with manifestation on the glass at two levels 850mm to 1000mm and 1400mm to 1600mm. Manifestation is a sign or a logo at least 150mm high.

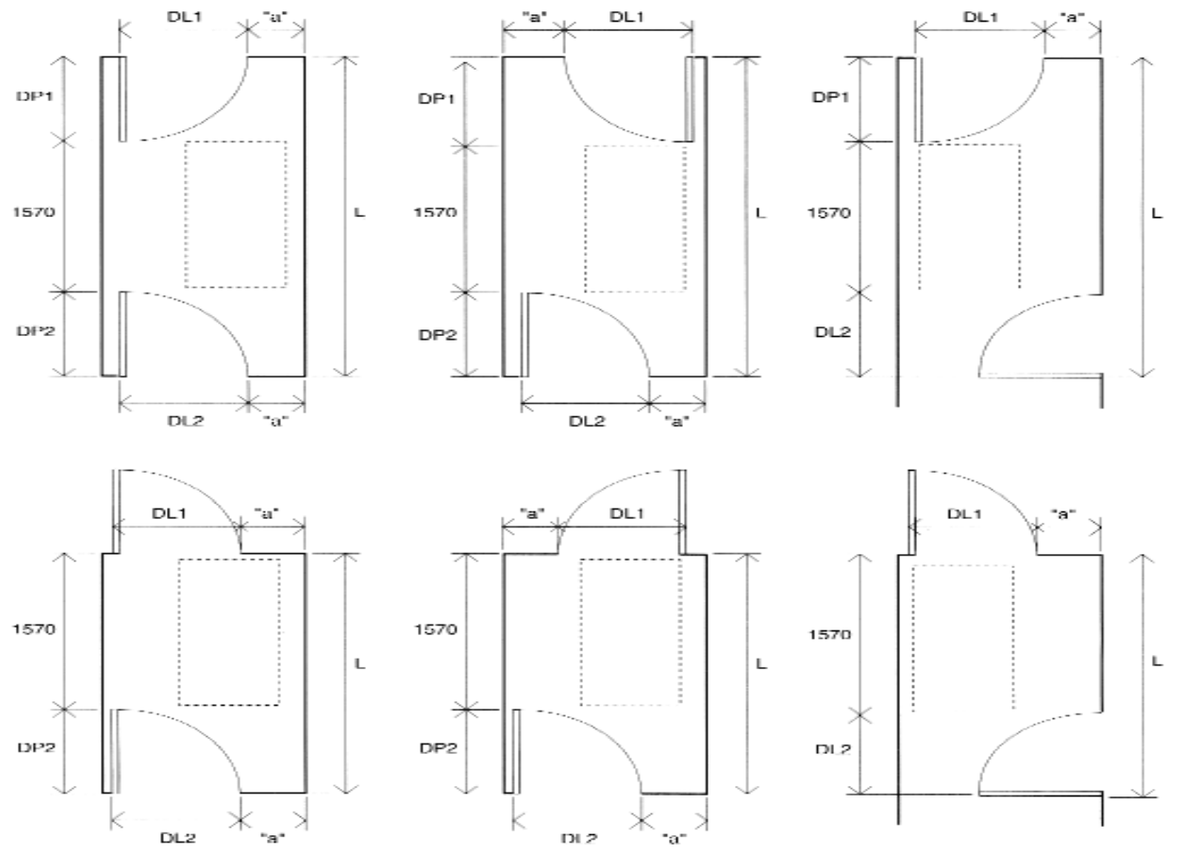
Fig. 15 **Effective clear width and visibility requirements of doors**



Entrance Lobbies

- Where entrance lobbies are incorporated in buildings, adequate space must be provided between doors. There should also be space for someone assisting the wheelchair user and for someone passing in the opposite direction.
- Thresholds should be flush, 15mm maximum, at both doorsets.
- Matwells should be flush (including the surrounds), close fitting and firm.
- The door opening widths should apply to the inner doors as well as the outer doors.
- Lighting to reduce the contrast between the outside and the building's interior should be considered.
- The floor surface should be level, slip resistant and not impede the movement of wheelchairs or crutch users. Avoid coir matting and ensure any changes in floor materials do not create potential trip hazards.

Fig. 16 **Key dimensions for lobbies with single leaf doors**



DL1 and DL2 = door leaf dimensions of the doors to the lobby
DP1 and DP2 = door projection into the lobby (normally door leaf size)
L = minimum length of lobby, or length up to door leaf for side entry lobby
"a" = at least 300mm wheelchair access space (can be increased to reduce L)
1570 = length of occupied wheelchair with a companion pushing (or a large scooter)

NB: For every 100mm increase above 300mm in the dimension "a" (which gives a greater overlap of the wheelchair footprint over the door swing), there can be a corresponding reduction of 100mm in the dimension L, up to a maximum of 600mm reduction.

Entrance Hall and Reception Area

- Any reception point should be easily identifiable from the entrance doors or lobby and have a direct approach and be free from obstructions.
- Should be designed to accommodate both seating and standing visitors. At least one section of the counter should be at least 1500mm wide, no higher than 760mm with a knee recess not less than 700mm from floor level.
- Reception points should be provided with a hearing enhancement system.

Guidance on aids to communication can be found in BS 8300

Internal Doors

Design considerations similar to those for entrance doors apply to internal door
Refer to table 2 and fig. 15.

- The force needed to open the door manually should not exceed 20N.
- Doors should be distinguishable from the adjacent facades, as should be ironmongery (i.e. pull handles) from the actual door itself.
- Lever handles are preferable to knob sets.

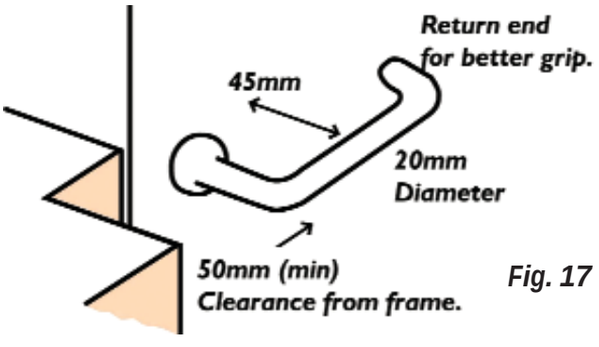


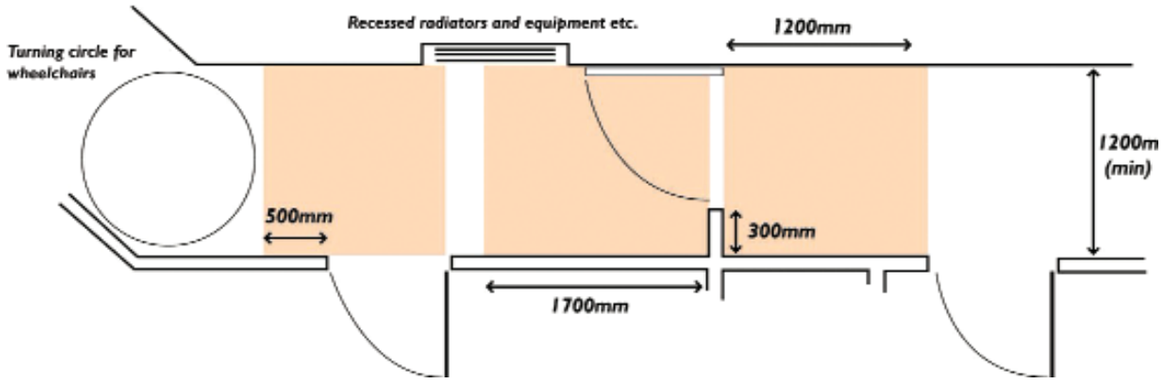
Fig. 17

- Doors should have a zone of visibility between 500mm and 1500mm from the floor, if necessary interrupted between 800mm and 1150mm from the floor, to accommodate an intermediate horizontal rail.
- Incorporate low-level protection from wheelchairs. Thresholds should be level with adjacent floor finishes.
- Fire doors particularly those in corridors should be held open with an electro-magnetic device, but self-close when:
  - Activated by a smoke alarm or fire alarm
  - Power supply fails
  - Activated by a hand operated switch.
- Fire doors to individual rooms should be fitted with swing-free devices that close when activated by smoke detectors, fire alarms and power failure.

For guidance on fire doors and self-closers see Approved document M and BS 8300

Corridors and Passageways

- In locations required to be accessible to wheelchair users, corridors and passageways need to be wide enough to allow for wheelchair manoeuvre and for other people to pass.
- Elements such as columns radiators and fire hoses should not protrude into the corridor, or where this is unavoidable a means of directing people around them, such as a visually contrasting guardrail should be provided.
- Unobstructed width should be at least 1200mm excluding any projections into the corridor.
- Where the unobstructed width of the corridor is less than 1800mm, passing places should be at least 1800mm long and 1800mm wide at reasonable intervals to allow wheelchairs to pass at corridor junctions and similar.
- A floor is classed as level if the gradient is no steeper than 1:60.
- Corridors of gradient between 1:20 and 1:60 should have rise no more than 500mm without a level rest area at least 1500mm long.
- If the corridor is 1:20 or steeper, refer to ramp details.
- Any door opening towards a corridor which is a major access route, should be recessed so that when fully open it does not project into the corridor.
- On a major access or escape route the wider leaf of a series of double doors with leaves of unequal widths is on the same side along the length of the corridor.
- Floor finishes should be slip resistant.
- Glass screens should have suitable manifestation.



Shaded areas show required unobstructed space requirements for approaching doors. All dimensions are clear widths.

Fig. 18

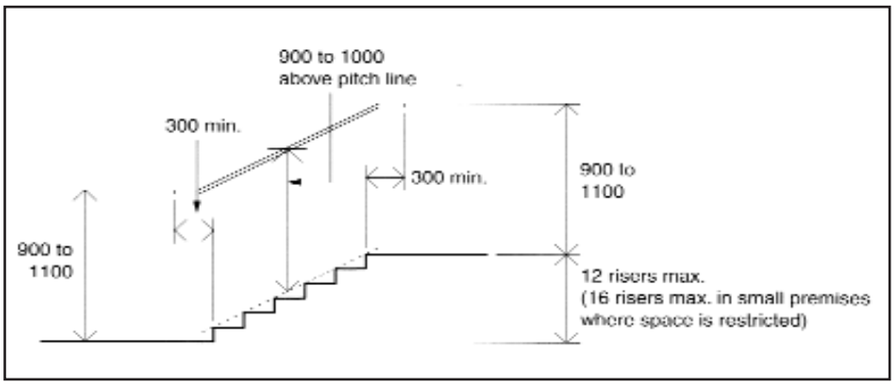
ACCESS WITHIN BUILDINGS

Internal Stairs

Guidance as for stepped access except:

- It is not reasonable to require a hazard warning surface at the head of internal stairs (since there is no recognised warning surface for use internally, which can be guaranteed not to constitute a trip hazard when used alongside flooring surfaces with different frictional resistance characteristics) .
- A flight between landings normally contains no more than 12 risers, but in very exceptional circumstances 16 risers in small premises may be provided where the plan area is restricted.
- The rise of each step should be between 150mm and 170mm.
- The going of each step should be at least 250mm.
- The provision for handrails is the same as for stepped access.

Fig. 19 **Internal stairs – key dimensions**



Means of Escape

- BS 5588 Part 8 allows for assisted means of escape in case of fire for people who cannot readily travel down through the building by the provision of suitable refuges, e.g. on staircases or in protected lobbies/corridors.

Refuge space 700mm x 1200mm (min); 900mm x 1400mm preferred including manoeuvring space

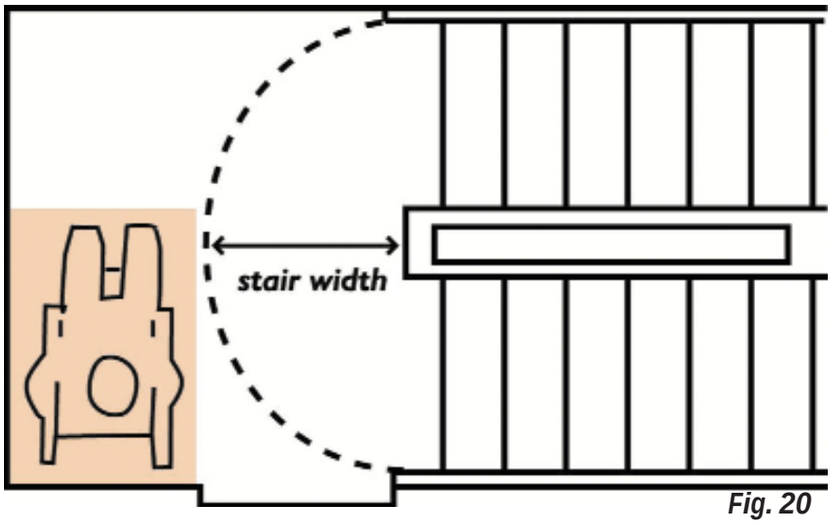


Fig. 20

Vertical Circulation within the Building

A passenger lift is the most suitable means of vertical access and should be provided wherever possible.

However given the space constraints in some buildings it may not always be possible to provide a full passenger lift.

- Signs indicating the location of a lifting device accessible by mobility-impaired people should be clearly visible from the building entrance. Additionally a sign indicating the floor reached should be provided on each landing that can easily be seen from the lifting device and is visually contrasting.
- Whatever lifting device is chosen, internal stairs should always be provided, designed to suit the ambulant disabled and the visually impaired.

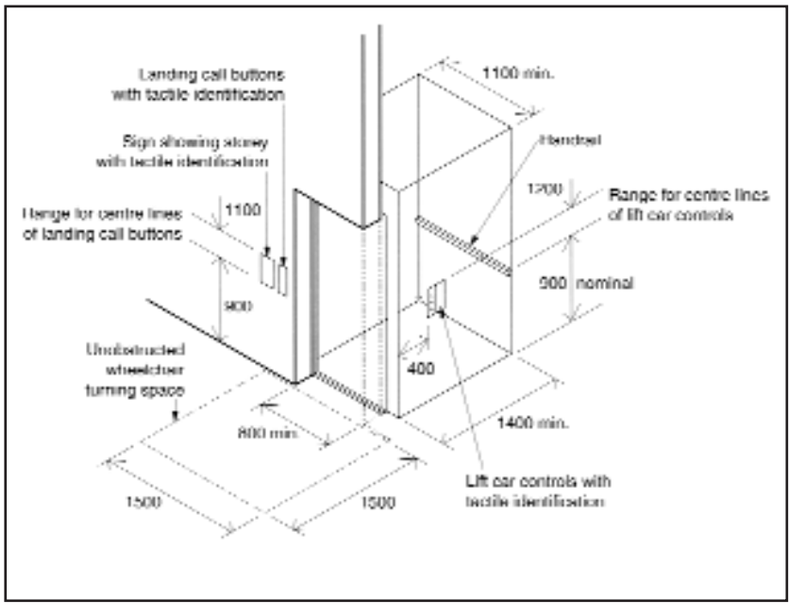
Provision of Lifting Devices

- New developments should have a full passenger lift serving all storeys.
- For new developments where due to site constraints a full passenger lift cannot be provided, a lifting platform may be acceptable.
- Existing buildings may in exceptional circumstances have a wheelchair platform stairlift.

Passenger Lifts

- Minimum dimensions of the car should be 1100mm wide and 1400mm deep.
- For a lift that does not have room for a wheelchair user to turnaround a mirror should be provided to allow the user to see the space behind the wheelchair.
- Power operated sliding doors should provide a minimum clear opening of 800mm and be fitted with timing and re-opening activators to allow time for people and assistance dogs to enter or exit.
- Controls should be located between 900mm and 1200mm from the car floor and at be least 400mm from any return wall.

Fig. 21 **Key dimensions associated with passenger lifts**



- Landing call buttons should be located between 900mm and 1100mm from the floor and at least 500mm from any return wall.
- Lift landing and car doors should contrast visually from adjoining walls.
- Audible and visual indication of lift arrival and location should be provided in the lift car and lift lobby. If the lift is to be used in an emergency it should conform with the relevant recommendations of BS 5588 part 8 (Code of Practice for Means of Escape for Disabled People).

Vertical Circulation within the Building

Lifting Platforms

- Vertical travel distance should be no more than 2m where there is no liftway enclosure and no floor penetration.
- Controls should be located between 800mm and 1100mm from the floor of the lifting platform and be at least 400mm from any return wall.
- Continuous pressure controls should be provided, with landing call buttons the same as for a passenger lift.

Minimum dimensions should be

- 800mm wide and 1250mm wide where the platform is not enclosed and provision is being made for an unaccompanied wheelchair user.
- 900mm wide and 1400mm deep if the platform is enclosed and provision is made for unaccompanied wheelchair users.
- 1100mm wide and 1400mm deep where two doors are located at 90 degrees relative to each other and where the platform is enclosed, or where provision is made for unaccompanied wheelchair users.
- Doors should have clear opening of 900mm for an 100mm x 1400mm platform and 800mm clear opening in other cases. Audio and visual announcements should be provided for platform arrival and location indication.

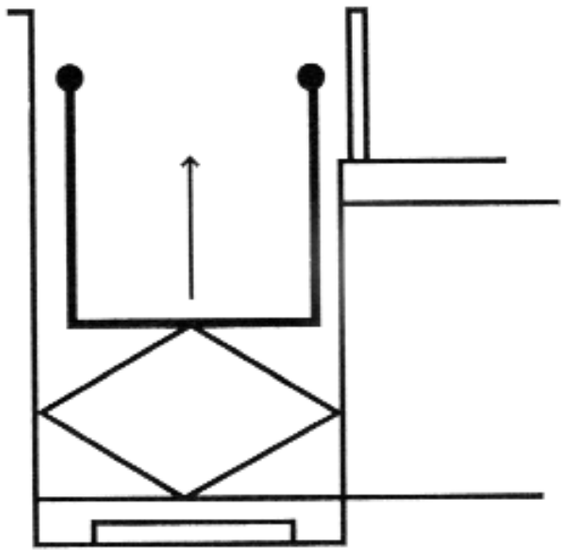


Fig. 22 *Platform lift*

Wheelchair Platform Lifts

- In a building with a single stairway required width for means of escape should be maintained when the platform is in the parked position (see Approved Document B).
- Continuous pressure controls should be provided. The minimum dimensions are 800mm wide and 1250mm deep.
- Access with an effective clear width of at least 800mm should be provided.

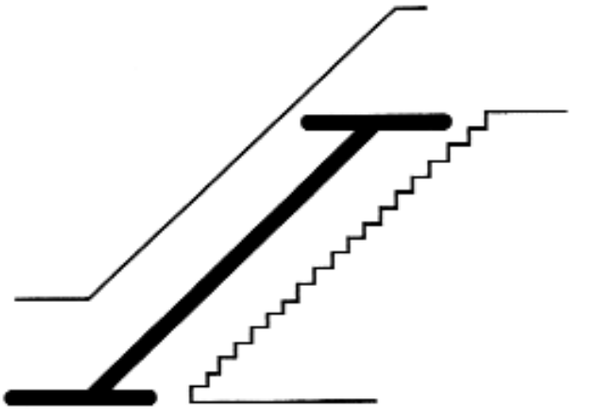


Fig. 23

Wheelchair stairlift