



DUNDEE CITY COUNCIL

Leisure & Communities Department

CAIRD HALL

Access Statement

Our commitment to
*“Achieving an inclusive environment by
ensuring continuity throughout the planning,
design and management of buildings and
spaces.”*

As envisioned by
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Disability Rights Commission

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1. Executive Summary

- 1.1** This Access Statement is a way of demonstrating that design, refurbishment and product selection decisions have already been addressed, or will in the future fulfil the obligations of reasonableness introduced by the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA).
- 1.2** This Access Statement demonstrates the Caird Halls commitment to providing accessibility when undertaking all works.
- 1.3** This Access Statement provides information on the historical reasons for the access projects which have been undertaken up until now and is a live document for use in the long term management of the Caird Hall.

2. Background.

2.1 The government is committed to achieving:

“Thinking, inclusive and sustainable communities in all regions”.

(Mission Statement of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, 2003).

2.2 A fundamental element in achieving this will be the removal of unnecessary physical barriers imposed on people by the poor design or management of buildings and spaces.

2.3 The Caird Hall was built as a Concert Hall and officially opened on 26 October 1923. It is a Grade ‘B’ listed building, forming a significant feature in Dundee’s city centre.

2.4 It is managed by the Leisure and Communities Department of Dundee City Council.

2.5 The construction included stairs to access all levels within the building.

2.6 The Caird Hall consists of the main 2000 seater auditorium, the ancillary Marryat Hall seats 350 as well as ample backstage accommodation.

2.7 No access for wheelchairs or the necessary facilities were included in the original design.

3. 1980's

- 3.1** It was identified that access was necessary for wheelchairs.
- 3.2** An external ramp was constructed to access the West Door from the City Square. The gradient of this ramp is 1:13, although British Standard quotes the rise should be 1:15 for a ramp of this length. The ramp width conforms to BS8300.
- 3.3** Inside the building a metal, cage type lift was installed to reach the auditorium level.
- 3.4** At the auditorium level a toilet for use by disabled was constructed.
- 3.5** Tayside Fire Brigade were consulted in identifying the most suitable areas for wheelchairs to be located in the auditorium. A maximum of 12 was agreed.
- 3.6** The above works opened the Caird Hall to a new audience.
- 3.7** Following consultation with the Brittle Bone Society who regularly held events in the Marryat Hall, the cage lift was identified as being unsuitable because it locked into position at the stalls level and there were also a number of unsettling jarring movements.
- 3.8** Once funding was identified, work commenced on an internal ramp and both the cage lift and an office were removed to accommodate the construction. The ramp was designed for the area available and in keeping with the decoration of the venue. However, the gradient of this ramp varies from 1:10/1:11 (BS8300 recommends 1:15). Also, neither the width which is only 1 metre (BS8300 recommends 1200 mm minimum) nor the distance between the handrails 890 mm (BS8300 recommends 1000 mm) nor the handrails themselves conforms to this British Standard.

4. 1990's

- 4.1** The toilet for use by disabled was upgraded in the early 1990's.

- 4.2** In January/February 1995 a major refurbishment took place in the Caird Hall. This included the painting of the auditorium, renewal of the electric cables, motorising the chandeliers and the installation of fixed trussing for flying equipment and one of the largest flat fixed stages in Scotland. Upgrade of the sound system including the installation of an induction loop.

- 4.3** The stage is accessible by wheelchair users from either backstage or side of stage and means that disabled delegates attending conferences/disabled Graduants/performers can use this area with ease.

- 4.4** In 1996 a lift was installed from the Underground Garage to the City Chambers/Committee Rooms and Caird Hall. This allowed disabled users the opportunity to park in the Garage and access the Caird Hall at the stalls level. The Underground Garage and lift is managed by Support Services and there were occasions when the Caird Hall was open for an event but the Garage was closed and therefore lift access was not available. This situation caused confusion in relation to access and a review of arrangements was therefore implemented. In the meantime, although Caird Hall staff discussed in detail access for audiences with organisers of events.

5. 2001

- 5.1** In 2001 the Council's Access Officer undertook an Access/Audit Appraisal of the Caird Hall.
- 5.2** This report outlined the legal obligations for the Council in respect of Access for Disabled patrons.
- 5.3** It provided a working document for discussions with Dundee Access Group for improvements for the Caird Hall.

6. 2002 - Refurbishment

6.1 In July/September 2002 a second refurbishment took place in the Caird Hall. These works included a number of the recommendations from the Access/Audit Appraisal of 2001.

6.2 These works included installation of:

- (i) New Seating.
- (ii) New cafe/bars.
- (iii) Adult Change Room.
- (iv) Platform for wheelchair users in stalls.
- (v) Lift to Balcony level.
- (vi) 4 x wheelchair spaces in Balcony
- (vii) Toilet for disabled on Balcony level.
- (viii) Signage.
- (ix) Automatic Access Doors.

6.3 Cafe/Bars

The design of both cafe/bars took cognisance of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and incorporated serving areas for wheelchair patrons as part of the overall design.

6.4 Adult Change

The adult change room was installed for the ease of patrons requiring such a facility as previously they had to leave the event they were attending. The local PAMIS (Profound and Multiple Impairment Service) group welcomed the addition of the facility at the Caird Hall.

6.5 Platform for Disabled

Jury Box R was reconstructed to allow access for 9 wheelchairs in the front row with dedicated seat numbers and higher seats were installed in the back row for carers/friends. This Jury Box can also accommodate those patrons with walking difficulties, and blind patrons with guide dogs. After this platform for disabled was put in place it grew in popularity and for a number of shows the wheelchair tickets are now sold out. This area allows ease of access in relation to emergency evacuation procedures.

6.6 Lift Access

The lift from the Underground Garage was extended to the Balcony level to permit access to this level for the first time in the Caird Hall's history for wheelchair patrons. It was also of great benefit to those with walking difficulties.

6.7 Balcony Wheelchair Spaces

In view of the fact access was now available to the balcony, 4 wheelchair spaces were identified. Wheelchair patrons were then provided with the choice of stalls or balcony seating in the same way as everyone else.

6.8 Balcony WC

Along with access and seating came the requirement for a toilet for disabled on the Balcony level. This was situated beside the other toilets and was built as a unisex facility in common with all the facilities provided for use by disabled people.

6.9 Emergency Evacuation

The means of escape for wheelchair patrons on both levels in the Caird Hall includes stairs and therefore two refuge spaces within the corridors were identified on both levels at the east and west entrances. If it was necessary for a full evacuation then Caird Hall staff would ensure patrons were directed to the West doorway for exit via the ramps with evacuation from balcony level by trained staff.

6.10 Signage

The directional/information signage installed in the Caird Hall was designed in accordance with the recommendation of the Sign Design Guide.

6.11 Access

At the West Door entrance at the site of the external ramp, push button automatic opening access was installed to make it more easily accessible.

6.12 Stalls WC - Disabled

This was redesigned as part of the refurbishment and now included a baby change facility.

6.13 Public Telephone

This was relocated to the hallway beside the west stalls WC – Disabled and fixed at the required height for use by wheelchair patrons.

6.14 Project

Throughout this refurbishment there was consultation with the Council's Access Officer to ensure all legislation in relation to Disability Discrimination Act and good practice was being addressed, as far as possible within the limitations of the Caird Hall.

6.15 Tickets

Following consultation with Promoters of Concerts at the Caird Hall agreement was reached that the carer assisting a wheelchair patron be provided with a complimentary ticket. This was to further encourage attendance by wheelchair patrons.

6.16 Wheelchairs

Two self-propelled wheelchairs were purchased and are stored in the Hall for use by patrons with walking difficulties.

7. 2003 - Improvements

- 7.1** The number of events in the Marryat Hall using the sound system had been increasing and identified a gap provision for the hard of hearing.

- 7.2** An Induction Loop was installed in the Marryat Hall for use with the sound system to overcome this issue.

- 7.3** Increased usage of the Underground Garage by Concert audiences led to an agreement with Support Services to open the Garage for Concerts where tickets are purchased via Dundee City Box Office, as originally it was always closed on Sundays. Wheelchair patrons in particular were delighted with this new facility which provided safe and secure parking and lift access to both levels of the Caird Hall. However this facility was only made available to patrons who had purchased via Dundee City Box Office and it was highlighted by the Dundee Access Group that tickets for events such as Education concerts, National Youth Choir of Scotland concerts etc could only be purchased at the door and therefore these patrons were not able to access the underground garage. The Leisure and Communities Department do not manage the Garage therefore could not guarantee that it would be open or available for access to these events. Dundee City Council sought to address this management issue with a review of current arrangements.

8. 2004 - Improvements

- 8.1** The Caird Hall stage is fully accessible for wheelchair patrons but there was a lack of facilities backstage for speakers/performers.
- 8.2** In 2004 Dressing Room 3 was altered and a WC suitable for disabled patrons was installed.
- 8.3** Access to Dressing Room 3 was hazardous so unnecessary doors were removed and new flooring installed in the corridors, to ease the access.
- 8.4** It had been highlighted that patrons were stumbling at the steps to the auditorium level between Jury Box R and S. The need for a handrail was identified and one brass type installed in-line with the decoration of the Caird Hall. Effectiveness of the new handrail was monitored and it proved successful.

9. 2004 - Survey

9.1 In 2004 a year-long customer survey took place to allow our patrons to comment on the facilities provided. It also proved useful in identifying future planning requirements.

9.2 Some of the comments made included:-

- (i) Garage car park was excellent, and a friendly gentleman took us up in the lift – very safe.
- (ii) I have to use my wheelchair, which is not a problem. The Caird Hall, Dundee caters for all this – excellent!
- (iii) Seating for the disabled is very good.
- (iv) I am grateful for underground parking and lift to Hall as I am disabled.
- (v) Very high standards. Staff helpful, disabled access very good.
- (vi) As a wheelchair user the facilities are excellent and the staff are very helpful and polite.
- (vii) As a wheelchair user, I find the Caird Hall facilities very good. Access is better now than was previously. Well done. I appreciate the fact that my carer can accompany me free of charge.
- (viii) Didn't know you could prebook tickets at the underground car park.
- (ix) Would like to see full explanation of prices for carers and also more notices about lifts for disabled.
- (x) I am disabled and find I am exhausted after manoeuvring my electric buggy to enter the Caird Hall. The ramp is very twisting and narrow.

9.3 The response from patrons requesting them to rate the access produced the following results:-

73% good, 22% satisfactory, 2% poor, 3% no response.

Further improvements are necessary to raise the access satisfaction levels of patrons.

10. 2005 - Improvements

- 10.1** In order to further improve access for disabled to the backstage area a new double door access was created as part of the capital works.
- 10.2** The installation of this doorway completed the access issues backstage and the corridors were painted as the final part of the capital works. Colour/tonal contrast were implemented, where reasonable in the listed building, to accommodate the needs of visually impaired people.
- 10.3** As the one handrail at the steps between Jury Box R and S had been effective in reducing incidents a second was installed to match the original.
- 10.4** The need for a rail for the bed in the Adult Change Room had been highlighted and this was sourced and fitted.
- 10.5** Following the complaint from Dundee Access Group in relation to the use of the lift for Concerts, where tickets are not sold via Dundee City Box Office, see under 4.4 and 7.3, the Caird Hall Manager met to discuss situation with Support Services (who are responsible for the management of the Underground Garage) and event organisers such as Education Department, NYCOS etc. A solution still had to be identified.

11. 2006 - Improvements

- 11.1** Following agreement with Historic Scotland two handrails were installed on the main external steps.
- 11.2** Handrails between Jury Boxes U and V were installed to mirror those between Jury Boxes R and S which have proved successful
- 11.3** Dundee Access Group advised that the external ramp is dangerously slippery when damp/wet, Caird Hall Manager met with Officers from Economic Development and a programme of power hose cleaning was agreed to remove this hazard.
- 11.4** Caird Hall Manager will continue discussions with Support Services to identify a solution to the problem of lift access from the Underground Garage when the Caird Hall is open but the garage is not. (See 4.4, 7.3 and 10.5).

12. 2007 - Improvement

- 12.1** Holders for walking sticks were installed in all toilets for use by disabled patrons.
- 12.2** Caird Hall Manager will continue discussions with Support Services to identify a solution to the problem of lift access from the underground garage when the Caird Hall is open but the garage is not.
(See 4.4, 7.3, 10.5 and 11.4).
- 12.3** The issue surrounding the difficult access via the internal ramp at the Marrayat entrance by wheelchair patrons had been problematic on a number of occasions due to the new types of wheelchairs and the winding/narrow ramp. Caird Hall Manager to seek funding to address this issue.

13. 2008

- 13.1** No funding available for works.

14. 2009 - Improvement

- 14.1** Feedback from our customers in the survey of 2004 highlighted the difficulties manoeuvring wheelchairs on the internal ramp at the Marryat doorway due to it being so narrow and twisting in parts. Problems have increased recently with the new types of wheelchairs now available.
- 14.2** To resolve these issues certain parts of the lengths of handrail were altered to widen the space available. Circular handrails were installed to improve the grip for the users of the ramp.
- 14.3** Caird Hall Manager has discussed the issue of the Garage not being open for certain Caird Hall events, with the individual organisers who do not sell their tickets via Dundee City Box Office. (See 4.4, 7.3, 10.5, 11.4 and 12.3).
- 14.4** Agreement has been reached that an allocation of their event tickets will be sold in advance via Dundee City Box Office thus allowing Support Services to open the Garage for the event and have tickets available for purchase along with the Concert tickets. This will be monitored to ensure the facility is promoted by the organisers of the concerts.

15. Outstanding Issues

15.1 Staff Accommodation

The existing staff accommodation currently meets the needs of all employees who have been appointed to work in the Caird Hall. Should a disabled person be employed at the Caird Hall, individual needs will be identified and reasonable adjustments undertaken, as in Part II of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995.

15.2 Staff Training

Staff training in disability awareness, the testing and use of the induction loops, toilet alarms, and lifts will be undertaken as part of the current ongoing staff development.

15.3 Evening Box Office

The present service offered from the Caird Hall Office at 10 City Square is not Disability Discrimination Act compliant. It would be beneficial to all concerned for this service to be available from within Caird Hall and this will be investigated as part of the project detailed in 13.4.

15.4 Garage Lift

The lift from the underground garage has an internal car size of 1070 mm x 1400 mm, with a clear door opening width of 800 mm. This is slightly smaller than BS8300 minimum recommended size of 1100 x 1400 mm. This results in problems with the carer being unable to go with the wheelchair person in the lift as the Caird Hall staff member has to accompany users at all times. It is also difficult for electric wheelchairs to access due to the sizes. These issues will be reviewed under the current programme of access improvements.

15.5 External Steps

External steps to Caird Hall are difficult for many patrons, particularly those with a visual impairment. The main issue appears to be that the individual steps cannot be differentiated between and thus stumbles/falls are many. The provision of improved white artificial lighting has assisted and made the frontage steps more visible. Highlighted nosings which can be laid into stonework are to be investigated within the constraints of alterations permitted to this Grade 'B' listed building. The two handrails installed on the steps in 2006 (see 11.2) have improved this access.

15.6 External Ramp

The external ramp although adequate at present will require to be upgraded in the next four years.

15.7 Hoist to Adult Changing Facilities

The existing adult changing facilities installed does not currently have fixed hoist arrangements. Recent changes to manual handling regulations mean that professional carers require the use of a hoist for the safe movement and handling of some disabled individuals for toileting and changing. There is currently a corporate review of adult changing facilities in Dundee and it may be that if appropriate fixed track hoisting will be installed at this venue, PAMIS (Profound and Multiple Impairment Service) will be consulted in this process.

16. References – Good Practice Guidance

- BS8300:2001 Design of buildings and their approaches to meet the needs of disabled people.
- Overcoming the Barriers; Providing Physical Access to Historic Buildings: Welsh Historic Monuments.
- The Sign Design Guide – a guide to inclusive signage (JMU Access Partnership and The Sign Design Society).
- DRC Codes of Practice.

17. Thanks

Caird Hall management is grateful for the support, advice and guidance of:-

- Jan Bethell and Members of Dundee Access Group.
- PAMIS (Profound and Multiple Impairment Service).
- Dorothy Wilson, Dundee City Council Access Officer.