ERIC MARTIN

IMPROVING ACCESS TO HERITAGE BUILDINGS

A practical guide to meeting the needs of people with disabilities

AUSTRALIAN HERITAGE COMMISSION

NATIONAL TRUST

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A practical guide to meeting the needs of people with disabilities

by Eric Martin

Australian Council of National Trusts

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CANBERRA

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FOREWORD

One of the pressing challenges for managers of heritage sites is to provide equitable and dignified access for all people to the places in their care.

However, a dilemma can arise when the need to introduce access, such as a ramp, compromises the very heritage values that make the place significant.

Improving Access to Heritage Buildings tackles very difficult issues such as this and should be of great practical help to all those responsible for providing access and interpretation to culturally significant places. It discusses the legal framework that underpins equity issues, sets out strategies to identify and resolve access requirements and provides hands-on solutions from around Australia.

The publication is particularly timely as, with the Paralympic Games coming to Sydney in October 2000, there will be an increased focus on heritage buildings and their ability to provide for the needs of all visitors.

The practical knowledge and design solutions presented in this publication will assist in ensuring that our heritage places can be experienced by all.

The Australian Heritage Commission is committed to research on heritage issues and to making that research freely available. To help achieve this objective, this publication will be placed on the internet linked to the Commission's home page at *www.ahc.gov.au.*

Peter King

Chairman

Australian Heritage Commission

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PREFACE

This book follows on from an earlier National Estate Grants Program funded project, which produced the booklet *Access to Heritage Buildings for People with Disabilities*. In 1998 twenty-nine case studies of National Trust of Australia properties throughout Australia were undertaken. These studies were sponsored by the Australian Council of National Trusts and funded by The National Estate Grants Program administered by the Australian Heritage Commission.

My thanks go to those members of the National Trust who assisted me in the preparation of the case studies. The twenty-nine case studies are presented in a separate report to the Australian Council of National Trusts and the Australian Heritage Commission. My particular thanks go to Dr Susan Marsden of the Australian Council of National Trusts and Philip Giovanelli, of the Australian Heritage Commission, who guided the total study and provided valuable feedback. Roslyn Russell edited the manuscript and Gosia Sikorski was the designer. I also thank Michael Small of the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission and Helen McAuley of the National Industry Association for Disability Services for their comments on the draft manuscript.

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Please note that following the suggestions within this book will not necessarily remove liability or give protection against an action under the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992*.

Key abbreviations used within the book are:

ACNT	Australian Council of National Trusts
ACROD	National Industry Association for Disability Services
AHC	Australian Heritage Commission
BCA	Building Code of Australia
DDA	Disability Discrimination Act 1992
HREOC	Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission
NT	National Trust

Eric J Martin

1999

1.0 THE NEED FOR ACCESS

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Heritage places should be accessible to everyone, including people with mobility or sensory impairments, the elderly, parents with small children and anyone who is temporarily disabled as a result of illness or injury. Owners and managers of heritage properties should commit themselves to creating a situation in which this can be achieved.

The word "access" is widely interpreted to include access to and within any building or site, access to all facilities and services and to any information. The objective is to provide a barrier free environment for all visitors.

Providing access to buildings for people with disabilities is required under the *Disability Discrimination Act*. Nevertheless, there is also a need to conserve our heritage places and not to alter them in ways that adversely affect their significance.

Heritage places play an important part in communicating Australia's history to present and future generations. Our heritage buildings constitute a considerable percentage of our existing built environment. They include places of administration such as town halls, post offices and court buildings, places of worship, places of social gathering such as community halls, and hotels and places of cultural interest.

Access solutions will be unique to each historic building. Consequently, standardised design makes little sense. However, adopting a process which combines an understanding of the principles of access and heritage with practical examples will assist managers, users and designers to achieve effective solutions.

There will be, however, some cases where access will not be feasible if the heritage asset is to be preserved. These are few: innovative thinking and application of the principles set down in Chapter 2 will usually provide an acceptable solution.

1.2 BACKGROUND

The definition of disability as outlined in the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (DDA)* is:

a total or partial loss of the person's bodily or mental functions; or
b total or partial loss of a part of the body; or
c the presence in the body of organisms causing disease or illness; or
d the presence in the body of organisms capable of causing disease or illness; or
e the malfunction, malformation or disfigurement of a part of the person's body; or
f a disorder or malfunction that results in the person learning differently from a person without the disorder or malfunction; or
g a disorder, illness or disease that affects a person's thought processes, perception of reality, emotions or judgement or that results in disturbed behaviour; and includes a disability that:

(i) presently exists; or
(ii) previously existed but no longer exists; or
(iii) may exist in the future; or
(iv) is imputed to a person.

In 1998 the Australian Bureau of Statistics indicated that 19% of Australia's population had some kind of disability. A further 31% had an impairment or long term condition that did not restrict their everyday activities. The rate of disability increased with age; from 4% for children aged 0-4 years to 84% for people aged 85 and over. Over a million people (1.1 million) had a profound or severe core activity restriction affecting communication, mobility or self care. 455,100 used some kind of mobility aid, and 626,000 used a communication aid (of which 369,000 used hearing aids).

1.3 LEGAL SITUATION

The Disability Discrimination ACT (DDA) 1992 is a piece of Commonwealth legislation requiring that people with disabilities be given equal opportunity to participate in, and contribute to, the full range of social, political and cultural activities. The goal of the DDA is not fulfilled by limited or parallel access. Instead, it promotes and protects *equality* of access - physical, informational and attitudinal.[1]

The *DDA* Section 23 makes it unlawful to discriminate against a person on the basis of a disability that he or she has, had, may have in the future or is assumed to have. It also makes it unlawful to discriminate against a person on the basis that his or her associate (partner, carer, friend or family member) has a disability".[2]

It is also unlawful to discriminate against people because they have or may have a disability, or to treat a person with disabilities in a different way to other people when providing goods and services, or facilities.[3]

The *DDA* is a complaints based law. It requires people who consider themselves discriminated against to lodge a complaint. This is then heard by the Human Rights and Equal Opportunities Commission (HREOC).

Human Rights and Equal Opportunities legislation also includes protection against discrimination on the basis of colour, culture or creed. Failure to cater for people from other cultures in providing access to heritage properties could be regarded as discriminatory.

All States and Territories have legislation similar to the *DDA*.

Heritage legislation at Commonwealth, state or territory level seeks to conserve and protect the cultural heritage significance of a place. Significance is expressed in a statement describing the value of the place to us and to our society. The general criteria used to assess significance are:

- ability to demonstrate an aspect of our past. This is concerned with the importance of a place as evidence and with the physical survival of that evidence in the fabric. This can be of value to social and scientific investigation.

- associational links for which there is no surviving physical evidence. These can include places that have affected our development or have been critical or important in our history.
- formal or aesthetic qualities. These include scale, form, materials, textures, colour, space and relationship of components.[4]

These three criteria embody aesthetic, historic, scientific and social value for past, present or future generations.[5]

Conservation means all the processes of looking after a place. It includes maintenance preservation, restoration, reconstruction and adaptation.[6]

The legal view is that the *DDA* will override Commonwealth, state or territory heritage legislation.[7] The only exception to this would be if implementing proposed changes to provide access can be shown to constitute unjustifiable hardship. This does not include difficulty or cost if a reasonable access solution is achieved. However, alteration or removal of a major aspect of significance in order to provide access could constitute an argument of unjustifiable hardship.

As both the *DDA* and heritage legislation are non-prescriptive, application of the relevant provisions of the Acts is flexible. There is ample scope for consultation between the relevant authorities over potential conflicts in matters relating to providing access to places on heritage registers, and for reaching acceptable solutions.

2.0 DEVELOPING AN ACCESS STRATEGY

2.1 INTRODUCTION

There must be a shift in conservation philosophy, which takes into account the social and legal duty to provide access and facilities for people with disabilities, if real improvement in access to heritage buildings is to occur.

Building conservation by its very nature poses unique problems. Standard design guidelines are not always applicable, yet a policy of providing dignified and easy access is desirable.

Access relates to the total pathway - from the initial approach, then to all parts of the building, to services and to information. Good access will also ensure heritage places are accessible to all people. Barriers to people with a disability do not only limit access for people with reduced mobility or other impairments. They also limit access for carers, family and friends of those individuals plus young children, parents with strollers, elderly people or people with temporary disabilities.

Improved access can open up wider markets for owners and managers, which could be promoted to increase visitation. However, increased visitation must be managed to ensure it does not accelerate deterioration of the original fabric.

Although a general approach has been developed, each situation presents unique opportunities and limitations. The objective is to enable all users to access the building and services in the same way, and independently. However, some heritage buildings may only permit a certain degree of independence.

Heritage buildings have different functions, which may result in the development of a range of different access solutions. A house museum may be used chiefly for interpretation, while a town hall must be accessible to staff and visitors. Therefore the solution depends on the purpose of the building and its anticipated users, bearing in mind that no one should be discriminated against.

2.2 GENERAL APPROACH

Here is a five-step approach to identifying and implementing accessibility modifications that will also protect the integrity and significance of heritage properties.

1 Review the significance of the place and identify the elements of greatest significance.
2 Undertake an Access Audit to determine existing and required levels of accessibility.
3 Evaluate access options within a conservation context. This process includes consultation with authorities and approval of the proposed action.
4 Prepare the access policy or action plan.
5 Implement the necessary action.

These steps are expanded in the rest of this chapter. A process flow diagram appears on the next page.

PROCESS FLOW DIAGRAM
TO IMPROVE ACCESS TO BUILDINGS

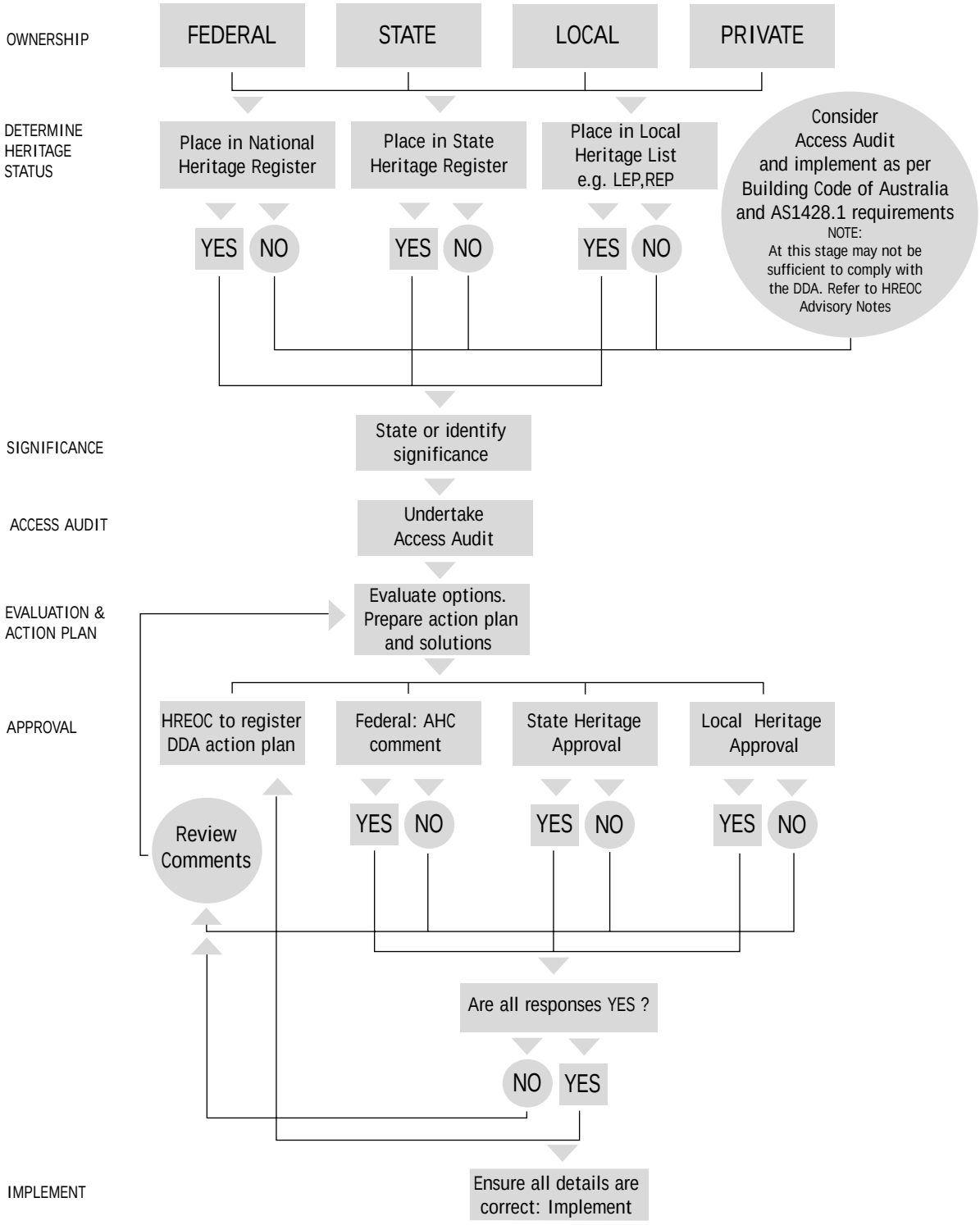


Figure 1

2.3 REVIEW SIGNIFICANCE

If a Conservation Plan exists, the significance of the place and its associated elements should have been adequately defined.

If a Conservation Plan does not exist or the significance is not adequately defined, it is important to identify overall significance and significant elements in the best way possible.

Options for this include:

- Prepare a Conservation Plan.[8]
- Obtain details of significance from relevant authorities (local council, state/territory Heritage Council, Australian Heritage Commission).
- Obtain details relating to significance from community organisations such as the National Trust or a local, regional or state historical society.
- Seek advice from a conservation professional.

Documentary evidence should be supplemented by a review of the physical evidence on site. This is necessary to confirm the levels of significance of all elements, and what must be protected from change.

The significance of a place can lie in its construction materials, its style, principal elevations, major architectural or landscape features or principal public spaces.

Every effort should be made to minimize damage to original materials, fabric and elements that contribute to the significance of the place. Alterations should, as far as possible, be reversible, especially if these involve change to the original fabric.[9]

Secondary spaces and less significant elements should also be identified, as these may possibly be altered without adversely affecting the primary significance of the place.

Items of low significance are more amenable to alteration without affecting the significance of a place.

It is critical that significance is clearly defined and understood. A specialist conservation professional may be required to assist this process or to review existing information.

2.4 ACCESS AUDIT

A building survey or assessment should be undertaken to evaluate the place's accessibility thoroughly, identifying all barriers and issues to be resolved.

Surveys or audits must identify barriers to access for people with a range of disabilities. All aspects must be assessed when considering the total access pathway - from parking, site entry, access to and into the building and circulation within it, and access to and use of all facilities.

Factors such as surface textures, widths, gradient, steps, weight of doors, restrictions on access, signage, clarity of interpretative material and audiovisual presentations must be considered.

A series of checklists to assist in the building survey are available from ACROD or selected publications.[10] Use of the Australian Standard (AS 1428-1), and the support of a professional experienced in access issues or a person with disabilities can also help to determine the level of accessibility required. It should be noted, however, that compliance with AS1428.1 will not necessarily mean compliance with the *DDA*.

Fair, equitable, independent and dignified access to the building by disabled people must be a fundamental objective.

The detailed requirements of the Building Code of Australia, Australian Standards[11] and any *DDA* requirements administered by the HREOC[12] should be considered when finalizing access details.

Full access to all heritage sites may not be possible, despite advances in access provision. Lighthouses and ships pose particular problems.

2.5 EVALUATE ACCESS OPTIONS

Solutions can be developed once significance has been defined and the access required is determined. These solutions must respond to the purpose for access, whether it be interpretation, work or other reasons.

The fundamental requirement of access means that the total path of travel by all visitors, and the accessibility of all services and facilities for a range of people with all possible disabilities, must be considered. This requirement extends from the time visitors decide to visit a heritage building, to transportation methods, parking, access to the principal public entry, circulation within the main floor, access to other levels, circulation externally around the site, adequacy of toilet provisions and other facilities, and how information is provided. The following chapters expand on each of these issues, and provide design solutions.

These solutions should provide the greatest level of access without adverse effects on the place's significance. Solutions should also minimise modifications, as this reduces their impact and, often, their cost.

Using a professional with experience in access provision and/or conservation is recommended to achieve the best result. This professional should consult with people with disabilities and authorities while developing access solutions. The peak organisations for conservation advice are the Australian Heritage Commission, and State and Territory heritage councils. The National Industry Association for disability services (ACROD), HREOC or a local Human Rights Office or Equal Opportunities Office can also advise on the need to provide access without discrimination.

Modifications should generally fulfil the following objectives:

1 Make the main or principal public entrance and primary public spaces accessible, including a path to the entrance.
2 Provide accessible toilets.

3 Provide access to goods, services and programs, including access to all interpretation and means of communicating with patrons.
4 Create access to other amenities and secondary spaces.

All work should be carried out within the conservation guidelines set down in the Australia ICOMOS Charter for the Conservation of Places of Cultural Significance (the Burra Charter).[13]

Solutions to access problems should avoid diminishing the place's significance, particularly in highly significant areas. Alterations should be sympathetic and, where possible, reversible. New work should be evident on close inspection.

The interpretation of what is sympathetic or non-invasive must be considered in the design of each detail. Items such as general form, material, finish and compatibility with the general architectural details and philosophy of the original design are guiding principles. The final result should be visually compatible with the existing fabric.

For some heritage buildings, value exists in their ability to show the evidence of change. Further change to facilitate access can reflect a change in attitude towards accommodating the needs of people with disabilities. This could be seen as another stage in a building's history, and as evidence of today's social attitudes for future generations.

Where a new item is articulated, or stands relatively independently of the original structure (for example, a ramp), that item can then feature a design that is contemporary with the time of its own construction, not that of the host structure.

Alterations should be reversible wherever possible with minimum change to original fabric. This will enable an easy return to the original form in the future if desired.

Any proposed alterations where required should be referred to the appropriate heritage authority for approval.

Final details must also comply with the detailed provisions of the Building Code of Australia (BCA) and Australian Standards. Access can be impeded if any detail in the total access pathway does not meet these requirements.

There is usually more than one way to solve a problem. Options should be fully explored and the impact of each assessed before a final solution is selected. Some solutions may utilise modern technology and methods to provide the best result. A range of issues to consider, and possible solutions, are provided in the following chapters.

2.6 ACCESS POLICY AND ACTION PLANS

Where owners or managers of heritage places make these places publicly accessible, they should first establish an access policy.

One example of an access policy is that adopted by the National Trust of Australia (WA). Its *Disability Services Plan* states that the National Trust "is committed to

consulting with people with disabilities, their families and carers and, where required, disability organisations to ensure that barriers to access are removed or minimized as appropriate". The National Trust sets out a number of outcomes for this policy, and a strategy to achieve them.[14]

The National Trust in WA access policy requires:

- undertaking access audits of the building to identify areas needing improvement
- setting down a program to implement changes, and
- implementing the changes.

The strategic plan established for Old Parliament House in Canberra demonstrates a similar policy.

Such a policy is suggested in the *DDA* in the form of a *DDA* Action Plan. However, such action plans are not mandatory but are a voluntary provision, which everyone is encouraged to adopt.[15] An outcome from complaints lodged under the *DDA* can include access agreements between the two parties involved in the complaint. Sometimes these agreements include the need to establish and implement an action plan. Furthermore, legislation in some states requires that certain government departments and agencies prepare and implement Disability Service Plans.[16] It is important therefore to establish an implementation plan to ensure that actions required by an access policy are realized.

Any access solution should be part of the long term conservation and use of the place, and be consistent with its conservation management plan.

The solution should form part of a site specific action plan. The action plan is sometimes called an access plan or implementation plan. The access plan provides the opportunity to bring together the details in sections 2.3, 2.4 and 2.5 and then to establish priorities and time-scales.

It should also define management arrangements for implementation and provide for periodic review, as access requirements may change over time, or as new technology becomes available.

Requirements for regular staff and volunteer training should be clearly defined.

2.7 IMPLEMENTATION

Implementation may be phased in over time if funds are limited. Interim solutions can be considered until more permanent solutions can be implemented.

Successful implementation also requires regular training of staff and volunteers in understanding people with disabilities, and how best to assist them to appreciate a place.

Getting the details right first time is essential to implementation.

Guidelines for solving these problems provided in the following chapters do not include all the specific details defined within regulations such as the Building Code

of Australia, or Standards such as AS1428. However, they do provide some design principles, show why they are important, and offer a range of practical solutions.

2.8 SUMMARY OF PRINCIPLES

Each case must be individually and carefully assessed. Nevertheless some general principles do apply, and these are summarised below:

GENERAL APPROACH

1 Review the significance of the place and identify the elements of greatest significance.
2 Undertake an access audit to determine the place's existing and required level of accessibility.
3 Evaluate accessibility options within a conservation context.
4 Establish a policy on access and heritage and prepare an action plan.
5 Implement the action plan.

TO CONSERVE HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

1 Make alterations sympathetic to the original building.
2 Ensure designs are reversible.
3 Ensure new material is evident on close inspection.
4 Preserve items of higher significance if a compromise is required.

TO PROVIDE ACCESS

1 Make the main or principal public entrance accessible where possible.
2 Ensure an accessible path of travel to all areas and facilities.
3 Where toilets and facilities are provided, ensure that at least one is accessible to disabled users.
4 Methods of interpretation and communication should aim to be suitable for all users, and for a range of disabilities.
5 Comply with Australian Standards particularly AS1428.1 for details.
6 Use modern technology and methods where appropriate if it makes access easier.
7 Train staff and volunteers to understand the needs of people with disabilities and the best means of ensuring their appreciation of the place. Training should be a regular occurrence, with special procedures to include new staff and volunteers.

It is important to note that following this procedure will not necessarily protect someone from an action under the *Disability Discrimination Act*.

3.0 TRANSPORT AND PARKING

The public transport system is beyond the scope of this book, but it is a factor that managers must consider if they want to maximize opportunity for visitors. At Woodbridge (Figure 2) in Perth most visitors arrive on the Swan River ferry, usually as day-trippers. The ferry is set low to pass under bridges, making access from it difficult. Discussions with providers of public transport such as this are necessary if access issues are to be resolved.

The principles for providing parking to people with disabilities are:

PROVIDE PARKING AS CLOSE AS POSSIBLE TO THE PRINCIPAL PUBLIC ENTRY.

People with disabilities often have difficulty in travelling large distances. The heritage impact of the parking location should also be considered.

THE ROUTE TO PARKING NEEDS TO BE CLEARLY SIGNPOSTED AND INDEPENDENTLY AVAILABLE.

Managers sometimes claim that if disabled visitors had telephoned beforehand they could have let them through the gate. It is unreasonable to expect that people with disabilities should have to telephone beforehand. The *DDA* is clearly aimed at equality: most visitors do not telephone beforehand, so people with disabilities should not have to do so either.

Clear signposting is essential if parking spaces are to be found. Often spaces close to buildings are reserved for staff, but there is always the possibility of indicating "Staff or disability permit holders only" or something similar.

Signage should reflect the nature of the site, and should not automatically be the standard urban type. Signs on fences or buildings using similar materials may be more appropriate. The key issues are clarity, good contrast, and a size and location in which signs can be easily seen.

Figure 2

Most visitors to Woodbridge in Perth WA arrive by ferry. Access to and from the ferry must be considered.

Figure 3

Lanyon Homestead, ACT. The designated parking space is in an adjacent paddock. Car parking signage is simply fixed to the fence.

PARKING SPACES SHOULD BE CLEARLY IDENTIFIED FOR AUTHORIZED PERMIT HOLDERS.

Once again, signage must be clear, but it can be designed to fit within the character of the place. Lanyon ACT has a sign on the farm fence (Figure 3).

One parking space is likely to be sufficient for most sites, except places with high visitor numbers such as Old Parliament House in Canberra (Figure 4), which has four. Old Parliament House has over 100,000 visitors per year, an average of nearly 300 per day. More parking spaces should also be considered for places with a high level of interest for elderly people, who may be permit holders.

Identification of authorised permit holder parking spaces usually includes a vertical sign, and a horizontal one on the roadway surface. They are often in different colours, such as blue or yellow, and usually include the international symbol of access.

The space should be reasonably flat, large enough and have a firm surface.

These characteristics help to make alighting from the vehicle safe and easy without inconvenience to others.

The gradients should not exceed 1 in 40 and be 3.2m wide minimum with 3.8m preferred. Surfaces must be firm, not only for ease of wheelchair access, but so

Figure 4

Old Parliament House, Canberra, ACT. Two designated car parking spaces for disabled persons are located each side of the main entry.

that any mobility impaired person is not endangered by slipping gravel or surfaces.

A sealed surface (concrete or bitumen) is best, but a well compacted or cement stabilized gravel can be suitable and, in many rural settings, more appropriate.

PROVIDE KERB RAMPS AS NECESSARY.

Access is needed from a parking space to the pathway system. This can usually be achieved by a properly constructed kerb ramp, or level access to the path.

Undercover parking is desirable but rarely provided.

Similar principles to car parking provision apply to drop-off points for public transport such as taxis and buses, and to set-down points for private vehicles.

4.0 ACCESS TO PRINCIPAL ENTRY

It is important to define the principal public entry. This is not always the "front door", but is the entry that most people will use, or are encouraged to use, to enter the building. It is usually the point of "people control" (information or reception desk, location of guards or guides, or the point from which interpretation starts).

There are opportunities in larger sites to ensure that the easiest entry for disabled access is the one of general access. Patrons can be directed around a site to any entry in a logical and informative way. Such a situation exists at Mugga Mugga in the ACT (Figure 5), Old Government House, Sydney, NSW (Figure 6), and Lanyon in the ACT (Figure 7).

It is discriminatory to expect people with disabilities to enter through a rear or back entry, while others can use the main entry. Nevertheless, an accessible main entry, and a second one, which may be more convenient for some people while maintaining the building's significance, may be considered an acceptable outcome.

Figure 5

Mugga Mugga, ACT.
A small farmhouse in a large space. All visitors can be directed to enter the building by the back door, which is easiest to access.

Figure 6

Old Government House, Parramatta, NSW.
The entry to the site is from the rear. Access to the house can be from the rear, which is easier even if tours start from the front entry hall.

Figure 7

Lanyon, ACT.
A homestead in a large site. Access to the house can be controlled through one of several entrances. The most appropriate access option can be selected.

Therefore, where there are options, an assessment should be made as to which one provides the easiest access with least impact on significance. This was achieved with the Port Adelaide Court House (Figure 8).

Locate the entry to minimize loss of original elements, such as porch railings, steps and windows, and preserve the overall setting and character of the place. Designs can incorporate a range of materials, but should be sympathetic and simple, and able to be distinguished from original elements. They can form part of the architecture by extending balconies, walls and so on, as in the Hotel Kurrajong in the ACT. (Refer Figure 9)

As mentioned earlier, the parking area or public drop-off point should be conveniently located to this principal public entry.

The principles of providing access to the principal public entry are:

DISTANCE TO BE MINIMIZED.

Many elderly people or those with physical impairments cannot travel large distances, or do so at a very slow pace. To reduce time and inconvenience, access to buildings needs to be as short as possible. There are a number of heritage places

Figure 8

Port Adelaide
Court House, SA.
Access ramp provided beside steps to the principal entry (although this is not the front entry).

Figure 9

Hotel Kurrajong, Canberra, ACT. New designated parking close to the main entry and two ramps, to maintain symmetry, constructed to provide access. Balustrade details reflect the original details but are easily identified as new work.

where parking is kept some distance away to preserve the integrity of a setting, for example Lanyon in the ACT, where parking is in farm paddocks adjacent to the main house, and some 150m from the entrance (Figure 3). At Mulberry Hill, Baxter, Victoria, a parking space is to be defined closer to an accessible entry (Figure 10). If parking is a long way from the place, other factors must be considered, such as resting points along the way.

ROUTE TO BE CLEARLY DEFINED.

A clearly defined route maximizes people control, and can also enhance interpretation opportunities.

A clearly defined path will make access easier for visually impaired people, as it is more easily noticed by people with failing sight, or by those who use tactile indicators (such as changes in material) to guide them.

Covered or protected paths are desirable, but if they never existed their use can often compromise the place's significance. They should not be provided if significance is likely to be affected.

A variety of signage options is available. This may be as simple as a clearly visible "entry" sign or a collection of arrows that could be integrated into the character of a place or form part of a path itself. Signage can be freestanding, and therefore clearly understood as new items which can be removed easily for an "authentic" presentation when the need arises.

The former Hale School in East Perth provides an example of this treatment (Figure 11).

Figure 10

Mulberry Hill, Baxter, VIC. The existing parking space is some distance from the building, but a designated space is to be located near the principal entrance.

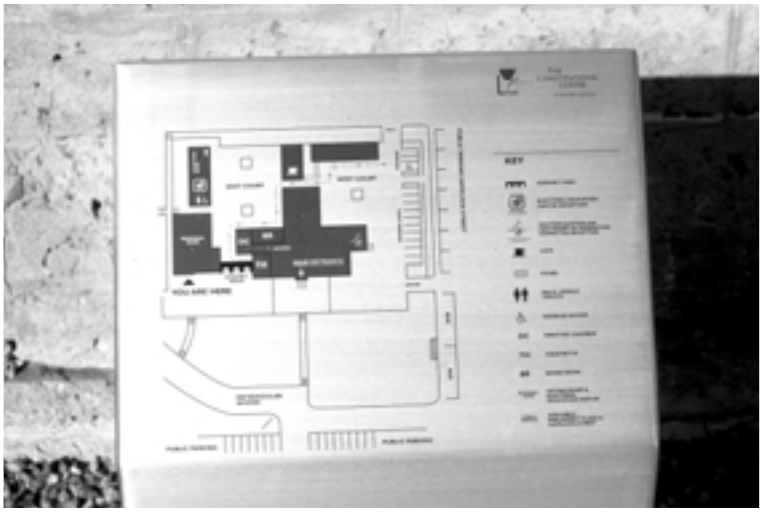


Figure 11

Former Hale School, East Perth, WA. Sign is freestanding and at a level that children and people with disabilities can read. Information is clearly and graphically displayed.

Figure 12

Former Hale School, East Perth, WA. Gravel is firmly bedded into bitumen giving the appearance of a traditional gravel finish but providing an accessible surface.

PATH TO BE AT A CONVENIENT GRADIENT, WIDTH AND PROVIDE A FIRM SURFACE.

Paths should be 1000mm wide, with a gradient of no more than 1 in 20, and landings or flat areas for resting located at regular intervals, no more than 14m apart. A width of 1000mm is the minimum sufficient for a wheelchair, or a carer walking beside someone with physical disabilities.

Paths should have a firm surface. Concrete is best, but well-compacted gravel, cement stabilized or consolidated gravel or dirt are also suitable. Loose gravel is a problem for wheelchairs, which have difficulty in traversing it. It can also be unbalancing for others with physical impairments. Gravel can be embedded in a sub-base such as bitumen. This gives the impression of gravel, but is quite firm, a solution used at the Former Hale School in East Perth (Figure 12).

The gravel path at the Norman Lindsay Gallery at Faulconbridge, NSW could be replaced with dirt, its earlier finish, thereby achieving accessibility and enhancing significance (Figure 13).

It is important that paths do not deteriorate too easily or quickly and become loose and difficult, causing concerns for wheelchair and other ambulant disabled people.

Figure 13

Norman Lindsay Gallery, Faulconbridge, NSW. The gravel path was added in relatively recent times, whereas the original surface was dirt. By reinstating the dirt and stabilising it, the path is more accessible and achieves a better conservation outcome.

A path on grade is best as it will assist access for everyone. Ramps may be required at all level differences to overcome the problem of steps.

There are some situations where the material which visitors must cross is significant, but unsafe for all users, for example, washed river cobblestones in the yards of a stable building at Burra, SA (Figure 14), or the cobblestones at the Maritime Museum in Melbourne (Figure 15).

In these circumstances a new walkway can be constructed above this area, so the original fabric is preserved but people can cross it. One solution is a timber boardwalk, clearly identified as an introduced element, that is easily removed if the need arises, and disturbs no original fabric.

Heavily shaded paths may become slippery as a result of excessive moss growth, and be a potential hazard.

OBSTACLES EN ROUTE ARE MINIMIZED.

The more common obstacles include:

Overhanging elements or overhead clearances less than 2000mm cause problems for the visually impaired.

This includes spaces under stairs, low door heads, trees and low verandahs (Figure 16).

The solution is to identify the areas of concern. A rope barrier is insufficient, as blind people with walking canes will not identify the barrier or indicator unless it is at or close to ground level.

Figure 14

Police Stables, Burra, SA. The rough cobblestones are difficult for anyone to walk over. One solution to this situation is a new timber boardwalk above the cobblestones to guide patrons to each item of significance on display.

Figure 15

Maritime Museum, Melbourne, VIC. The cobblestones are part of a former street and are significant in understanding the functioning of the area. A timber ramp and boardwalk has been constructed over the cobblestones to provide access to the building.

Figure 16

Norman Lindsay Gallery, Faulconbridge, NSW. The low branches of the tree overhang the path, providing an obstacle for the visually impaired. Note also the rope barrier around the sculpture in Figure 13, which is not detectable by blind patrons using a cane.

Figure 17

Former Government Offices in Victoria Square, Adelaide, SA provide access via a new ramp and steps constructed on the footpath that enter the building through a modified former window.

Figure 18

The north entry to the Sydney Town Hall uses the former light well adjacent to the building to provide ramp access to the lower level.

Tactile indicators can be effective, and can consist of raised profiles as per AS1428.4, or include a textural change, which alerts people.

Level differences and uneven surfaces, even if only 10mm, can frequently create a trip hazard.

As even small differences can create a trip hazard, surfaces should be made level by relaying paving as required.

Gates are difficult to open.

Gate catches are often located on one side only, and access from the other side is difficult. The gate could be left open, or altered to be opened easily from both sides.

ENTRY LEVEL MUST BE INDEPENDENTLY ACCESSIBLE.

There is frequently a level difference between the path and the main floor level. This is often owing to the prominence given to civic buildings by elevating their entry levels, or by the traditional construction techniques of timber floors, which require space above ground levels. The solutions to these level differences are extensive, and include a range of lifts or ramps. However, the principle of independent and dignified access which does not affect the significance, or which affects significance to a minimum degree, is preferred. Any alteration that increases other problems, such as rising damp, is not encouraged.

Ramps may be permanent or temporary. Permanent ramps are preferred by people with disabilities, as they are usually more stable than portable ones. With negotiations, ramps can occupy part of public space. For example, an Adelaide footpath has been given over to a ramp as part of a new entry to a building. The two former entries were not adapted, as the building is symmetrical. One central ramp was added, even though it required the change of a window to a door because it was cheaper than two ramps (Figure 17).

Shifting steps out from the face of the building and incorporating a ramp behind them is possible. Or two ramps could be added to maintain symmetry, as in the Hotel Kurrajong in the ACT (Figure 9).

Figure 19

Duntroon House, Canberra, ACT. Original flagstone paving is raised to provide access to the building.

Sydney Town Hall has a ramp slotted within a light well. This has minimum impact on the building or its significance (Figure 18).

Regrading the external areas to remove steps is also an effective means of overcoming this problem, for example, Duntroon House in the ACT (Figure 19). This can include regrading footpaths, which may require local government approval (for example, Highercombe Hotel, Tea Tree Gully, SA (Figure 20).

Temporary ramps can be either semi-permanent, in that they are in place most of the time, or put in place daily when the building is opened. The latter method requires greater management. Temporary ramps have the benefit of being easily removed. The building can be returned to its earlier form more quickly and easily.

Temporary ramps must still comply with the Australian Standards. They must be wide enough, and have handrails and guards at the sides. They must also be stable and non-slip.

Standard fold-up temporary ramps are available on the market. Nevertheless, they must be able to be managed by staff on duty, and not be too heavy for them to install.

Figure 20

Highercombe Hotel, Adelaide has the brick footpath raised to provide access into the principal entry. The former front door is no longer used as the principal entry.

There is a range of **lifting devices** which includes:

- Standard lift
- Platform or porch lift
- Retractable platform lift

The standard lift requires a shaft. Provided this is included within a building, this could be a suitable access solution. A standard lift was accommodated in the NSW Parliament House by extending a window down to ground level to provide a door to an internal lift. This then delivered people to the main entry level (Figure 21).

Figure 21

Parliament House, Sydney, NSW. A former window has been extended to ground level to provide access to a lift, thereby overcoming the problem of the adjacent 13 steps.

Platform lifts often require assistance to operate under safety and code standards. This defeats the purpose of independent access and often creates difficulties, as staff are not always available to leave an information/control desk to assist. For example, the Adelaide Courts Building has a lift, but a ramp will be added to ensure greater independence (Figure 22). Authorities are currently reviewing the Australian standards: the likely outcome is that independent use of platform lifts meeting certain specifications will be permitted.

Retractable platform lifts can be provided and, although none are known in Australia, some have been installed overseas (Figure 23). They are often more expensive than platform lifts but can be the best solution. Side rails must be incorporated with platforms for safe operation.

External lifts sometimes create difficulties with occupational health and safety authorities, and their requirements may influence issues of independent access. Making lifts weatherproof if they are open to the elements can also be difficult. Vandalism, or the prevention of it, also can be difficult in some places.

For some places, for example, Myilly Point Houses, Darwin, NT, the only solutions are an external lift, or relocation of all critical areas to the ground floor (Figure 24).

Figure 22

Platform Lift at the Courts Building, Angas Street, Adelaide, SA. Unfortunately this requires attendants to operate it, which means it is not independently accessible.

Stairs can remain as part of the access solution: it is important to realize that many people prefer to climb stairs than walk up ramps. However stairs require handrails, preferably on both sides, to accommodate people with a left or right side disability.

Stairs and ramps should be solid, or with gaps less than 5mm, and non-slip, so that they create no problems for physically or

Figure 23

The Royal Society, Carleton Terrace, Westminister, London, UK. A fully retractable plaform lift.
(reproduced with permission of Donhead Publishing Ltd).

visually impaired people, particularly those with walking frames or canes.

Stairs with nosings also create difficulties with ambulant disabled or visually impaired people, as they can catch their feet on the overhang. The nosings of stairs should be clearly defined so that they can be seen easily by visually impaired people.

Stair handrails should indicate the end of the steps for visually impaired people. This can be simply done by adding a plastic band, as at the Old Melbourne Gaol (Figure 25), or a raised dome, as suggested in AS1428.1.

ENTRY DOORS MUST BE EASILY OPERABLE, WIDE ENOUGH, AND WITHOUT STEPS.

Entry doors if closed normally must have:

- handles at an accessible height (less than 1100mm). This also helps children
- door knockers or bells at an accessible height
- handles that are easily turned. Lever handles are better, but if the handles are significant the original ones should be retained, even if they are supplemented by others
- a clear width at least 800mm to permit easy access by wheelchairs
- no obstacles such as mats.

If doors are not wide enough, it may be possible to increase the effective opening by joining two leaves together, or by fitting offset hinges.

A door should not be too heavy or difficult to open. If heavy, assistance may be required by mechanical or electrical means, such as automatic or power assisted doors. Closers are available that can be made automatic for wheelchair users and

Figure 24

Myilly Point Housing, Darwin, NT.
The open ground level structure and the height make ramps difficult, and a lift the most desirable way to provide access.

Figure 25

Old Melbourne Gaol, VIC. A tell tale plastic band indicates the end of the handrail and start of steps for visually impaired.

manual for other users. Operation can be by beams, touch pads or pressure sensitive mats. Access can be made easier by double swinging doors and unlatching doors.

Entry doors should have no threshold steps, as even a 10mm step can be a barrier to wheelchairs or a trip hazard. These should be removed or overcome by adding threshold ramps or adjusting levels to remove the step.

Worn thresholds are also a concern, especially for wheelchairs, and therefore may require replacement or building up.

Management options can be adopted. While the building is open the door is kept open, thereby overcoming most access-through-door issues, provided it is wide enough.

It is critical to ensure there is sufficient space beside and in front of the door, particularly on the handle side, to enable a wheelchair to manoeuvre through it.

ENSURE DOOR MAT IS NOT AN OBSTACLE.

If mats are proposed, use a ribbed rubber or similar type that has greater wear characteristics in preference to coir mats. Otherwise manage the process, ensuring that coir mats are regularly replaced.

4.1 THE IMPOSSIBLE BUILDING

There are some heritage buildings to which full access for all people with disabilities is not possible without substantial impact on their significance. One example is an open structured lighthouse such as Cape Jaffa Lighthouse of Kingston, SA (Figure 26). Numerous narrow stairs, narrow balconies, and narrow doors with large thresholds are

Figure 26

Cape Jaffa Lighthouse, Kingston, SA. Independent access to this building for the physically impaired is virtually impossible. Alternative means to display and interpret the building may be the only method by which many people will be able to appreciate it.

Figure 27

The *Polly Woodside* ship, Melbourne,Victoria. It is difficult to provide independent access onto the deck and to lower decks without innovative solutions. Alternative interpretation may be the only means of understanding for those people who cannot access the ship.

all design features relating to its location on a reef, and are part of its significance. In this situation other interpretation options (refer Section 10) must be implemented. Future technology may provide possibilities for those with physical disabilities to access such buildings.

Special arrangements may possibly be made for such buildings. These could include a bosun's chair or something similar to provide access to the lighthouse, or to significant ships such as the *Polly Woodside* in Melbourne (Figure 27). Advertising such arrangements and managing them would then be necessary. This would not provide an independent means of access, but it is an option that could be offered. Alternatively, improved interpretation could be considered instead of actual visitation. (Figure 36)

4.2 MANAGEMENT

Management of all buildings includes ensuring that access paths are not temporarily obstructed. (Figure 28).

Figure 28

Management of access routes is essential so that temporary barriers do not restrict access. In this illustration a car parked on the footpath prevents access to the ramp.

5.0 CIRCULATION THROUGHOUT MAIN LEVEL

The building's purpose, and why access to it is desirable, should be clearly understood by management before developing the access strategy. This influences which areas need to be accessible for visitors to appreciate the place, the collection, the detail, or for staff to work there. A circulation path that enables an easily accessible route should be selected. Here are some principles to follow in selecting an accessible route. The access design for the former Government Offices in Adelaide is one example (Figure 29).

DOORS ARE WIDE ENOUGH AND EASY TO OPERATE.

The issues and solutions with doors are similar to the points made in section 4. Internal spaces provide a greater opportunity to have doors left open, or even removed.

Sometimes there is more than one door into a room, with one accessible and the other not. This may mean guiding people through a place by entering through the accessible door, rather than trying to overcome the problem of the narrower door.

If doors are not wide enough it is often difficult to widen them. There is also a risk to significance. If doors are not original, widening them can be considered.

Some spaces can be adequately appreciated without physically entering them, particularly if they have narrow doors (and widening them affects the significance) or if they hold sensitive original objects.

NO OBSTACLES ARE PROVIDED.

These include places where overhead clearances are less than 2000mm. This causes problems for visually impaired people.

Where removing obstacles is difficult the solution may lie in identifying the risk to the visitor.

Figure 29

Former Government Offices in Adelaide, SA. Internal access to the courtyard is provided by a new door from the main entry point to the building and a new ramp.

In the Royal Bulls Head Inn, Toowoomba, QLD, an original light fitting was below 2000mm. A table was placed under it, preventing people from walking into it. This solution could also be applied to the unenclosed underside of stairs and low door heads.

Areas of concern may be identified by signage, or by tactile indicators. Indicators can be those outlined in AS1428.4, or changes in surface texture.

Good illumination without glare is necessary to ensure that problem areas can be seen easily.

Sharp-edged protruding features or encroachments, including counters, objects, low signs, opened windows, stable doors or loose mats can also create obstacles. Most can be avoided by management sensitive to possible obstacles, and removing them or alerting people to their presence.

Changes of direction where handrails exist can be identified for visually impaired people by simple means such as a plastic band around the rail, for example, at Old Melbourne Gaol (Figure 25).

ROUTES ARE WELL DEFINED AND MADE AS COMFORTABLE AS POSSIBLE.

Display places or those with administrative functions often have more than one space to access. Signage to spaces or facilities, or a logical flow for a particular way around a heritage place, should be easily identifiable.

Signage can usually be provided with minimal impact, or be freestanding so as not to affect original structures.

In many places the distance around the place can be extensive. Places to rest are desirable for many ambulant disabled and elderly people. These are often provided, such as in Runnymede, Hobart, Tasmania (Figure 30).

Issues and solutions in some larger and industrial sites are discussed under External Circulation in Section 7.

In some places a special device, such as an electric wheelchair, may be used to help physically impaired people move around a large building more easily, or management might supply a narrow wheelchair which could go through the doors of

Figure 30

Runnymede, Hobart, TAS. Seats are provided inside the house and around the garden to provide resting places for people who need them.

Figure 31

Saumarez, Armidale, NSW. One bathroom has slippery tiles so the whole room is roped off and patrons see the room from the doorway.

a particular building. These are less desirable generally, as wheelchairs are often made to a personalized design.

FINISHES ARE SUITABLE AND DO NOT CREATE DIFFICULTIES.

Finishes often vary; it is important not to create trip hazards by allowing uneven surfaces or small steps. It is also important not to make them too slippery. This causes problems with some walking aids and leather soled shoes.

Unfortunately flagstones can be quite rough or excessively worn in areas, making access for wheelchairs difficult. Flagstones can be re-laid if they pose a major concern; thresholds may need building up or replacing if they are excessively worn.

The step between timber and carpet, especially an excessively thick carpet, can be a concern and may require an alerting signal, directing people around the problem, or replacement with a thinner carpet.

Heavily polished floor (marble or timber), particularly in areas that may get wet, may require less polish and better management. In Saumarez, Armidale, NSW (Figure 31), one bathroom has slippery floor tiles. The area is roped off so no one enters the room, allowing visitors to view the room from the open doorway.

Figure 32

Bellevue Homestead, Coominya, QLD.
A step between two stages of the homestead expansion exists inside the house as well as on the verandah.

Figure 33

Bellevue Homestead, Coominya, QLD.
A ramp has been provided between two sections of the house which are at different levels.

Figure 34

Claremont, Ipswich, QLD. Two small rooms have high steps up to them, as the floors are higher because the ground level rises in that corner of the building. Restricted access may be the only way to deal with small difficult areas.

ALL LEVEL DIFFERENCES ARE ACCESSIBLE OR OVERCOME.

It is not uncommon to have small level differences, such as one step between sections of a building. This may have been created by later extensions (for example, at Bellevue, QLD, Figure 32 and Figure 33) or site condition (for example, Claremont, Ipswich, QLD, Figure 34). The best solution is ramps, either permanent or temporary. Some issues surrounding ramps are discussed and illustrated in section 4.

In heritage places where groups are guided at certain times, there is the option of installing a temporary ramp when required for people with particular disabilities in the group. Otherwise the step can remain.

Management solutions can fail, either because they are too difficult or people forget (for example, portable ramps can be too heavy, such as at Norman Lindsay Gallery, Faulconbridge, NSW).

Clearly identifying changes in level, having non-slip finishes, and no overhangs that create potential hazards, as discussed in section 4, also apply here.

A handrail to a step or ramp is desirable to assist people up the ramp/step when there are differences in levels.

An internal raised platform and ramps may be a means to enable greater appreciation of high objects on display, for example, the Hospital Car at Jamestown Railway Station (Figure 35) could be erected on a platform so patrons could see into it.

The Maritime Museum in Port Adelaide, in designing the display, had the opportunity to make a ship accessible (refer Figure 36)

Figure 35

Hospital Car at Jamestown Railway Station, SA has narrow doors, a wide gap between carriage and platform and a high step, making access difficult.

Sometimes spaces where different levels are a problem can be quite insignificant. Closing them off to all patrons may be reasonable, given the difficulty and impact of providing access for everyone. Such rooms may be used as store rooms.

PROTECTING SENSITIVE FABRIC.

This can be achieved by barriers preventing people from accessing a space, and plastic covers over original floor covering, provided they are non slip. However, such barriers must not create other problems, such as reducing access width, creating trip hazards or hampering identification for visually impaired people.

Original fabric may need protection from damage from walking aids. Original door frames of soft cedar could be damaged by wheelchairs, walking sticks or frames may penetrate thin lino. Management to control access into sensitive areas, or physical protection, may be necessary if these situations exist.

Figure 36

Maritime Museum, Port Adelaide, SA. The ship has been made accessible by the construction of a new wharf. However, this is a static display which offers greater opportunities to ensure access is provided.

6.0 INTERNAL ACCESS TO OTHER FLOORS

Stairs were the main means of providing access to other floors in buildings until the twentieth century.

While lifts are the easiest means of overcoming the problem of access to other floors, and are essential for people with physical disabilities such as those in wheelchairs, stairs remain a suitable means of access for most people.

Stairs still need to be assessed. There should be handrails on both sides to cater for people who may have a left or right side disability. Handrails must be firmly fixed and stable. Stairs should not have projecting nosings, as they can present a trip hazard.

Open stairs can also be a concern for visually impaired people. Nosings should be clearly defined, and the whole stair non-slip.

It is often difficult to alter existing stairs. They are usually finely detailed, so changing them can affect significance. Alternative lifting devices should be considered.

Options for **lifting devices** include:

1 standard lift (section 4)
2 platform or porch lift (section 4)
3 stair lift
4 wheelchair stair lift
5 stand up stair lift
6 stair climbing device

The standard lift is widely used and offers many advantages. It is safe, easy to use and can be used for a range of purposes. However, it is usually expensive and requires a considerable amount of space, including over runs above and below the floors it serves. It should be located in a convenient place, but in a space that is less significant than other parts of the building.

Figure 37

Woodbridge, Perth, WA. This stair was from a bank and was never part of the original house. This could be removed and a lift provided in its place to provide access to the upper level.

A building often has smaller rooms, such as stores or areas previously altered, where installing a lift will cause little impact on significance.

At Woodbridge in Perth a lift could be inserted in the place where a former stair had been removed, and an old bank stair (which is out of context) installed (Figure 37).

There are small lifts, available today from most lift companies, designed to cater for a wheelchair and carer only. These take up less space and are cheaper, so can be a cost-effective solution.

The platform hoist can be an open visible structure or fully retractable (at extra cost).

It is often restricted in use or needs attendants, causing management difficulties and providing a less independent solution.

Some platform lifts have a limited number of stops (usually two). There are sometimes work cover or occupational health and safety issues that must be considered in conjunction with them. This may restrict independent use.

Stair lifts require a rail inserted on the stair and sufficient space at the top and bottom to get on/off. The equipment is in place permanently and may be intrusive. They are also not liked by many users, as they appear less safe than other lifts. Some steep or narrow stairs with winders may be unsuitable

Figure 38

The "Scalamobil" is a stair climbing device available from Anelcomobil in Adelaide (reproduced with permission of Anelcomobil, Crafers, SA.)

Figure 39

Claremont, Ipswich, QLD. A cellar, which is not open to the public, can be displayed by the use of mirrors enabling visibility into it from the ground floor.

Figure 40

Royal Bulls Head Inn, Toowoomba, QLD. The upper level has four small attic rooms with restricted headroom and dormer windows. Access is via narrow steep stairs.

Figure 41

Stair, Royal Bulls Head Inn, Toowoomba, QLD.

to accommodate these types of lifts. They are not common, which means potential users are not familiar with them and are less comfortable with their use.

A stair climber is a piece of equipment that a wheelchair sits on, and it climbs a stair mechanically (Figure 38).

It requires a trained operator. The wheelchair is elevated above the stair in a safe but somewhat precarious-looking position. Some steep or narrow stairs with winders may be unsuitable for this machine. Its one advantage is that it requires no alterations to original fabric and is cheaper than other lifting devices. But it is also slow and prevents others using the stair while it is in operation. It is not independent and, some people would say, not dignified. However, in some heritage places with low visitor numbers and where patrons are guided, this can be a short-term solution.

The third means of accessing other floors is by using a **ramp**. However, this needs to be extensive and can become intrusive, thereby affecting significance.

For steeper sites which have on grade access to more than one level it may be feasible, when guiding people around a site, to direct them onto one level, out around the building and into the other level using external ramps. This becomes part of the access path for everyone and can be made to work effectively. (Refer also to comments in section 4.)

Some buildings retain **old lifts**, which have become part of their significance. There is scope for continuing use of these after some negotiation with authorities. Acceptable alterations may include lining open cages with clear perspex, polycarbonate or glass to ensure objects or limbs are not caught. The controls may be supplemented by concealed or remote control without losing the detail or location of the original system.

Figure 42

Cape Jaffa Lighthouse, Kingston, SA.
Narrow curved stairs are the only means of access to the upper levels.

Some parts of buildings may not be accessed easily but can still be appreciated, for example, cellars. Seeing into them, sometimes by using mirrors, can provide sufficient access as an alternative to people descending steep narrow stairs, for example, at Claremont, Ipswich, QLD (Figure 39).

Figure 43

Portable Iron Houses, South Melbourne, VIC. The small attic rooms are accessed by a steep narrow stair.

6.1 THE IMPOSSIBLE SITUATION

There will be situations such as attic rooms, in the following places

- Royal Bulls Head Inn, QLD (Figures 40 & 41)
- Cape Jaffa Lighthouse, SA (Figure 42)
- Portable Iron Houses, South Melbourne, VIC (Figure 43 & 44)

where access is not feasible, as providing it will substantially affect the significance of the place.

In such situations, access for some people with disabilities may not be possible, and the use of interpretative solutions may be the only practical approach (refer section 10).

Nevertheless, this is a last resort, as nothing can replace first hand experience.

Figure 44

Stair, Portable Iron Houses, South Melbourne, VIC.

7.0 EXTERNAL CIRCULATION TO OTHER ITEMS WITHIN A SITE

7.1 GENERAL

This usually applies to places such as farmsites, that have a number of buildings scattered around the site, for example, Saumarez, Armidale, NSW (Figure 45), or industrial sites such as Burra, SA (Figure 46), Venus Battery, Charters Towers, QLD (Figure 47), or old villages like Greenough, WA (Figure 48).

It also applies to sites with extensive gardens, many of which are significant, for example, Clarendon, TAS (Figure 49) and Lanyon, ACT (Figure 50).

Factors such as:

- path to be at a convenient grade, width and a firm surface
- obstacles en route are minimized
- route to be clearly defined
- entry into any extra or remote buildings

are discussed in section 4 and apply equally here.

Figure 45

Saumarez Outbuildings, Armidale, NSW. Include a large collection of farm buildings over a large area.

Figure 46

Burra Mine, SA. Industrial sites involve steep terrain and tall open structures, making access difficult.

Figure 47

Venus Gold Battery, Charters Towers, QLD. A large industrial site that uses the slope of the land to asist the production process, but makes access difficult.

Choosing a route around these external features needs careful consideration to minimize obstacles and maximize opportunities for interpretation and appreciation. There may be no need to access every part of a site if all its elements can be appreciated. This applies particularly to landscapes where the layout can be seen from a key location point, and crossing grassed areas to all parts is difficult and unnecessary.

Adequate gradients can also be difficult to achieve on steep sites without altering old land form patterns (for example, ploughing or vineyard rows), so alternative means of accommodating them should be considered, including:

- enabling vehicle access to remote parts of sites (for example, Greenough, WA (Figure 51), Saumarez, NSW (Figure 52))
- providing on site alternate means of getting around, such as an electric wheelchair or golf buggy-type car. These are capable of going over steeper, rougher, softer terrain than wheelchairs, and will assist some people.

A route around a site can vary depending on the capability of people, so a range of options can be presented to users. While this is not a perfect solution, it will

Figure 48

Greenough Village near Geraldton, WA is a small village with a full range of building types dispersed over some distance.

be appreciated by people who can then select the best one for themselves, while maximizing appreciation of the site. Routes can be specially designed for wheelchairs, people who cannot walk, or for visually impaired people. A tour guide can select the best route for a group depending on its members and their abilities. This flexibility is a practical way of overcoming access problems without the need for extensive alteration to create one stated route accessible to everyone at all times.

Signage and interpretation opportunities need to be carefully resolved to allow independent access around a site. These can easily be provided without being intrusive.

Gates should open from both sides or be left open.

7.2 LANDSCAPES

Successfully incorporating access into historic landscapes requires a planning process similar to that for other historic places. Careful research and inventory should be undertaken to determine the materials and features that convey the landscape's significance. Those features that are character defining (topographical

Figure 49

Clarendon, Nile, TAS. The extensive gardens include lawns, and a variety of paving types and picket gates, all of which make access difficult. Parts of the garden layout are best understood from the upper levels of the house.

Figure 50

Lanyon, ACT has extensive gardens, including a vegetable and cutting garden which steps down the hill. Access to all areas is not possible but there is sufficient for understanding the garden. Access to critical areas is possible.

Figure 51

Greenough Village near Geraldton, WA. Vehicle access within the village is possible with special permission, thereby reducing the travelling distance to each building.

variation, vegetation, circulation, structures, furnishing, objects) should be identified as part of this evaluation. Historic finishes, details and materials that contribute to a landscape's significance should also be documented and evaluated before determining an approach to landscape accessibility.

For example, aspects of the pedestrian circulation system that must be understood include walk width, pavement pattern, texture, relief and joint details. The context of the walk should be understood, including its edges and surrounding area. Modifications to surface textures or widths of pathways can often be made with minimal impact on significant landscape features.

Areas of secondary importance such as altered paths should also be identified - especially those where modifications for access will not destroy the landscape's significance. A sympathetic circulation experience can then be developed, after identifying those features that do or do not contribute to significance,

Access solutions can be considered after assessing a landscape's integrity. Full access throughout a historic landscape may not always be possible. It is easier generally to provide access to larger, more open sites where there are fewer barriers and more opportunities. However, when a historic landscape is uniformly steep,

Figure 52

Saumarez Homestead, Armidale, NSW. Vehicle access to the old cottage is possible, reducing travel distance.

it may only be possible to make discrete portions of it accessible. Visitors may only be able to experience the landscape from selected vantage points along a prescribed pedestrian or vehicular access route. The interpretative value of the user experience should be considered when defining such a route. In other words, does the route provide physical visual access to those areas that are critical to understanding the meaning of the landscape?

This is achieved for Clarendon, TAS (Figure 49) and Lanyon, ACT (Figure 50).

Other factors to consider in the final design for access include overhanging barriers, seating and shade.

Some of the principles that should be followed are:

1 Define the meaning of the landscape, and what is necessary to understand and appreciate its significance.
2 An existing landscape that has changed over time may allow a greater degree of change to make the place accessible. This could include changes to orientation, circulation, interpretation and maintenance to assist accessibility.
3 Upgrade difficult surfaces sympathetically by special treatment, such as reinforced turf or stabilised dirt.
4 Take advantage of opportunities to provide scenic overlooks to enable broad visual access and interpretation of the landscape.

8.0 TOILETS

If toilets are provided, a unisex accessible toilet should be included. It must comply with current codes and be constructed strictly to the Australian Standards. Too often toilets are installed and do not comply. They become inaccessible, ineffective and expensive to change when a problem might have been avoided by correct design.

It is essential that toilets be designed and constructed to the standards. Unfortunately, standards have been modified after additional research over the years. Toilets need to be reviewed to ensure they meet current codes and standards.

A unisex toilet is preferred, as it is then easily accessible to a person and carer if the need arises. In most places one unisex toilet is all that is required. This can be cheaper than two separate (male and female) facilities.

Toilets can be incorporated in less significant rooms (usually bathrooms that have obviously been modified), store rooms or external rooms, for example, in a separate newer interpretative centre such as at Mugga Mugga, ACT (Figure 53).

Figure 53

Mugga Mugga, Canberra, ACT. Toilets are located in the new education centre located away from the historic cottage, thereby minimising impact on the cottage. Vehicle access to the cottage is possible where necessary.

9.0 OTHER FACILITIES

These include everything that may be provided and used within a heritage building. Such facilities could be:

- reception counter
- telephone
- shops
- café or tea rooms
- drinking fountains
- switches and controls.

These all should be accessible to everyone, including people with disabilities. People in wheelchairs or children prefer facilities at a lower height (max 1100 mm).

Figure 54

Former Hale School, West Perth, WA. Drinking fountains at different heights to suit different users.

The key factors in their design are:

PROVIDE THEM AT CONVENIENT HEIGHT.

This may mean counters or facilities at two heights: 750mm for wheelchairs and children, 900mm for other people, for example, Hale School Drinking Fountain (Figure 54).

SHOPS AND CAFÉS MUST MAINTAIN ADEQUATE SPACE FOR GENERAL CIRCULATION AND ACCESS TO ALL ITEMS AND SPACES.

TELEPHONES TO INCLUDE TELETYPEWRITERS (TTY) OPTIONS FOR THE HEARING IMPAIRED

OBJECTS ON FLOOR OF SHOPS SHOULD BE MINIMIZED AS THEY PRESENT TRIP HAZARDS AND ARE NOT APPROPRIATE OR SAFE DISPLAY.

Most of these facilities are new or added to heritage buildings, so it ought to be possible to design them to be accessible. They are usually loose items or freestanding, so their impact on heritage values is minimized.

Figure 55

Old Umbrella Shop, Launceston, TAS retains all original fittings and counters. A lower counter is not a feasible option.

If some facilities are part of the significance, for example, Old Umbrella Shop, Launceston, TAS (Figure 55), there are greater restrictions on altering the original fabric. In such circumstances management must be on hand at all times, to be aware of and attend to all users as the need arises.

10.0 INFORMATION PRESENTATION AND INTERPRETATION

Access to buildings and services also includes access to information.

Interpretation is critical to most heritage buildings. People visit them to gain an understanding of the past. Visitors also benefit from an understanding of the significance of heritage buildings that are used continually, and appreciate the opportunity to learn about their ongoing conservation.

The extent to which a building is accessible can be promoted through all advertising material and to tourist information centres.

Avoid visual clutter in interpretation. This will help everyone to understand it.

Interpretation may be the only way to understand a building that has been altered, or partially or wholly demolished.

Selection of the best means of interpretation must be on a case by case basis. Some places have guides who explain the building; others have self guided walks where information is presented in a variety of ways.

There are a number of key principles to apply:

STAFF TRAINING

It is critical that staff and volunteers not only know the building, its history and significance, but also how best to present information and assist users.

Lack of training can create an unconscious attitudinal barrier based on ignorance and misunderstanding. The provision of education in this area is essential.

Users include people of all ages, disabilities and countries. Explanation should be such that users can understand it.

People with disabilities from Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander and non-English speaking backgrounds often encounter additional barriers in attempting to access services. Access is made difficult not only because of potential user disability, but also because services are not offered in a manner that is culturally and/or linguistically appropriate.

The following issues must be considered when presenting heritage places:

- Collection of data on users and potential users with disabilities from Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander and non-English speaking backgrounds, particularly information which enables the service offered to users of the heritage place to address the specific needs of these communities.
- Ways of distributing information about services offered - simple translation of information into other languages may not be sufficient. Minority communities have different yet well established networks, which could be accessed to promote and distribute information about the heritage place more effectively.
- Familiarity with working with interpreters and translators.
- Employee attitudes, including ignorance of different cultures and possible racism.

- Development of employee policies and provision of employee training to ensure effective delivery of services to the whole community, particularly people from Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander and non-English speaking backgrounds.
- Involvement of people from Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander and non-English speaking backgrounds in developing strategies to make services accessible to people from these communities.
- Evaluation of strategies to ensure their effectiveness in making services accessible.

When talking to hearing impaired people it is important to face them, as many lip-read.

Explanation to children will differ from that given to adults, so the depth of knowledge of the person giving the explanation needs to be extensive.

Be aware of the spaces and how speech can be heard in them. Some rooms with all hard surfaces can reverberate, making it difficult for hearing-impaired people to hear. It may be necessary to explain the detail in one space and then allow visitors to go into the other space, for example, Stuart Town Gaol, Alice Springs, NT (Figure 56).

Encouraging feedback from users by direct comment, a suggestion box or questionnaire can also be adopted. These ideas should be collated, reviewed and acted upon as required.

DISPLAYED INFORMATION

Written text should be clearly displayed and of sufficient size to be read from a normal viewing distance. Text should be in good contrast to the background and without serifs, as this is easier for visually impaired people to read.

If there is a market opportunity available to explain the display or building in other languages, and thereby attract more visitors, this should be considered and the information displayed in appropriate languages. Managers should check expected patronage from other countries and cater accordingly.

Figure 56

Stuart Town Gaol, Alice Springs, NT has hard surfaces, making speech often inaudible in some rooms due to echo and reverberation.

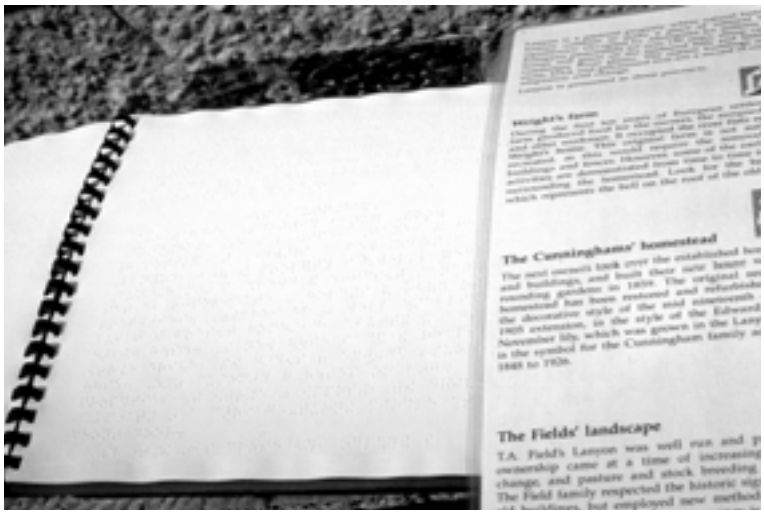


Figure 57

Lanyon, ACT has leaflets in Braille and large print to assist visually impaired visitors.

Lighting levels must also be adequate for reading information at all times. This is sometimes difficult in heritage places which are often dark (small windows and candles or oil lamps). These lighting levels are maintained to enhance presentation. Usually additional lighting can be incorporated unobtrusively and effectively.

Photographs similarly must be clear and well displayed. They are an effective means of explaining the early phases of a building and people associated with the place, and can show less accessible spaces.

Sometimes the detail is small and some assistance may be required to see it properly. Magnifying glasses or binoculars can be used in this situation.

HANDOUT MATERIAL

This can range from simple brochures (which may be handed out at entry) to more detailed booklets.

To ensure maximum benefit, basic information on the building should be available in large print for visually impaired people or in Braille for the blind, for example, at Lanyon, ACT (Figure 57). Some of these special provisions can be produced in limited numbers with a request that they be returned after the visit.

Figure 58

Old Melbourne Gaol, VIC. Basic interpretative information is available in 9 languages for non-English speaking patrons.

Figure 59

Venus Gold Battery, Charters Towers, QLD. Basic interpretative information has been translated into German as there are many German speaking visitors to the area.

Production of information in alternative languages is also useful, as it expands the potential market by attracting non-English visitors, for example, at Old Melbourne Gaol (9 languages) (Figure 58), Venus Gold Battery, Charters Towers, QLD (German) (Figure 59) and Runnymede, Hobart, TAS (Japanese). Handout material also includes small leaflets that may promote the place. These are usually available from tourist outlets but are an important part of advertising and encouraging people to visit. This material should be designed to capture the widest possible audience, and accurately describe access provisions.

VIDEO/AUDIO VISUAL

Videos are now used more extensively as a medium to present detailed information about places. They can draw upon historical details and help to explain places in an easily assimilated way.

Video should be presented in rooms where the sound can be easily heard without reflection, or excessive background information which can distract or make hearing difficult. Assisted listening devices should be included, such as audio frequency induction loops and infrared light transmission systems. An induction loop is a cable around a room with an amplifier attached, which reinforces sound for people with hearing aids. Infra red light systems require a transmitter and special headphones. These can be included as temporary facilities without affecting or altering the original building. The less common devices are induction field radio (FM) or VHF frequency modulated radio system. (For more details on these systems contact ACROD, who can provide contacts to organisations for the hearing impaired.)

Cameras can be set up in inaccessible places and display the spaces, so that everyone can appreciate the building to a greater extent. This can be extended to individual control of the camera, so that the image moves around a room or closer to an object, just as it would do if viewers were in the space themselves.

This can be extended to 3D imaging of rooms and spaces from the point of entering the space and moving around it.

If special rooms are provided for video/film viewing, they should have space for wheelchair users with a carer.

Figure 60

Old Melbourne Gaol, VIC has an extensive guide and facilities for vision impaired visitors.

AUDIO

Audiotapes can be used effectively to explain places. They are extensively used in art galleries to explain exhibitions, but are not often used in heritage buildings.

They are a useful means of providing additional information on the various spaces or objects while they are in front of the viewer, and as the viewer moves around a place.

They can be an extremely useful means of assisting visually impaired people to appreciate buildings and can include detailed information on how to move around the building. This is being done to good effect in the Old Melbourne Gaol, where the audiotape was established with the assistance of some blind people (Figure 60).

SIGNAGE

There are different types of signage, such as informative and interpretative (discussed above), and directional signage, which is outlined below.

Standards setting out the requirements for signage include AS1428.1, and CSIRO Technology File No 11 August 1996.

Figure 61

Old Parliament House, ACT. Signage on the wall is easily visible, has good contrast and uses the international symbol.

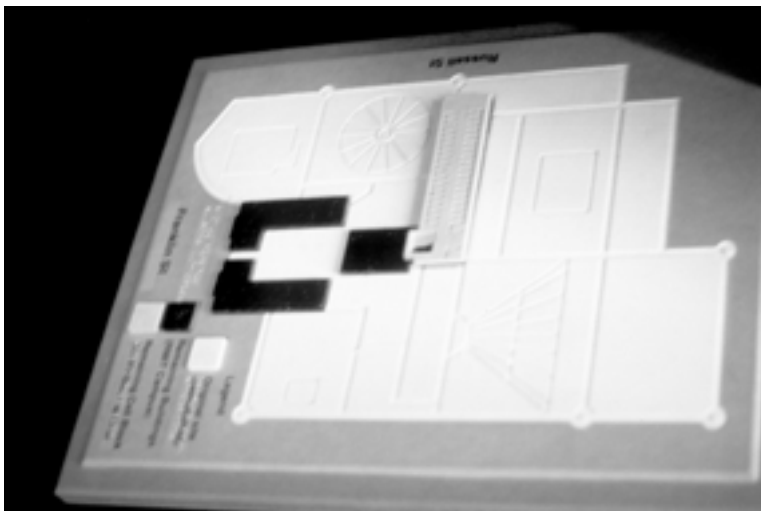


Figure 62

Old Melbourne Gaol model is colour coded and includes tactile presentation.

Signage must be obvious so that people can see it and find where they wish to go. Free standing signs should be above head height (to be seen above a crowd) or clearly visible if lower. Signs must be clear with good contrast of letters to background. Light coloured lettering on darker backgrounds is easier to read. Avoid glare on signs. This can occur from reflective surfaces and poor illumination of the signs. Consistent positioning of signage helps people to find it.

Graphic and international symbols are preferred as they are easily read and understood.[17]

Figure 61 shows signage at the entry to Old Parliament House in the ACT.

Signs that reflect the architecture of heritage buildings can also be suitable and help reinforce their significance.

Signage beside doors is safer than on the doors themselves. Visually impaired people sometimes need to get close to read and doors can inadvertently be opened, possibly causing injury. Tactile signs assist interpretation by visually impaired people.

Text without serifs is preferred, as it is more easily read by visually impaired people.

MODELS

Models are a useful interpretative medium that can explain the growth and expansion of a building from its original form. This may not be possible to appreciate owing to demolition.

Some models are able to be touched. This helps visually impaired people to appreciate them.

A simple block model at Old Government House, Parramatta, NSW, explains the building's growth, and is available to be touched.

Old Melbourne Gaol has a tactile model with Braille information and good colour contrast in the detail, which helps interpretation (Figure 62).

External models must be capable of surviving the elements. If they are made of metal they must be shaded so they don't get too hot and burn people who may touch them in hot weather.

Models can also be helpful in explaining construction techniques and earlier forms, for example, Penitentiary Courts, Hobart, TAS (Figure 63).

Models can replicate inaccessible areas and offer a greater understanding of a place. There can be cut away models, or models where elements can be removed, for example, roofs; or even transparent models so visitors can see through spaces. Models can include full fit out with furniture, and even figures of people, which will assist interpretation.

Replica models of objects or furniture can be made available for people to touch or use, so they can appreciate an object without placing the original fabric under any threat. This can be very beneficial to blind people. There may be some less significant original objects which can also be made available to visitors to touch and enhance their appreciation (Figure 64).

Figure 63

Penitentiary Chapel and Criminal Courts, Hobart, TAS. Model explains the building's original form and detail.

Figure 64

Old Melbourne Gaol, VIC. Some original or reproduced objects are available for visitors to touch and pick up to enable greater appreciation.

11.0 THE FUTURE

Codes and standards are constantly being researched and reviewed, so the most recent information should be obtained from all authorities when considering access issues. It is likely that early in 2000 new access standards will be endorsed, more precisely defining requirements for access under the *DDA*. These will not alter the principles and guidelines in this document, but may change the details within the codes and standards.

Future development of access will allow people with disabilities to become more fully integrated into all aspects of our society.

This will extend from the ongoing social requirement of equal opportunities to the right of everyone to expect equal access in an independent and dignified way.

As a means of implementing this social requirement, legislation will become stricter, or better define what is necessary to meet this social obligation.

Legal precedents can further clarify the situation.

Technology will also offer opportunities in the future. Technical advances and medical research will find ways to overcome past difficulties for physically, visually and hearing impaired people. This can occur through medical developments which overcome the impairment and thereby the physical barriers.

While possible solutions are endless, our greatest challenge will be to find easier ways for people to move around and overcome level differences. Imagine a vehicle that replaces the wheelchair and can climb stairs, or a virtual reality experience exposing all our senses to elements of our heritage. Our options can only increase as we move forward.

APPENDIX 1 - Abbreviations and Key Contact Organisations

ACROD ACROD Ltd
(National Industry Association for Disability Services)
ACROD House
33 Thesiger Court
DEAKIN ACT 2600
(GPO Box 60, CURTIN ACT 2605)
Ph. (02) 6282 4333 Fax (02) 6281 3488

AHC Australian Heritage Commission
John Gorton Building
King Edward Terrace
PARKES ACT 2600
(GPO Box 787 CANBERRA ACT 2601)
Ph. (02) 6274 2111 Fax (02) 6274 2095

AHCA Australian Heritage Commission Act 1975

DDA Disability Discrimination Act 1992
Administered through the

HREOC Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission
Disability Discrimination Commission (HREOC)
Level 8 Piccadilly Tower
133 Castlereagh Street
SYDNEY NSW 2000
(GPO Box 5218, SYDNEY NSW 2001)
Ph (02) 9284 9600 Fax (02) 9283 9611

NT National Trust
Branches in each state and territory
National coordination through:

ACNT Australian Council of National Trusts (ACNT)
PO Box 1002
CIVIC SQUARE ACT 2608
Ph. (02) 6247 6766 Fax (02) 6249 1395

RAIA Royal Australian Institute of Architects
National Headquarters
2a Mugga Way
RED HILL ACT 2603
Ph. (02) 6273 1548 Fax (02) 6273 1953

For definitions and interpretations of conservation terms refer to the *Burra Charter: Australia ICOMOS Charter for the Conservation of Places of Cultural Significance.*

Definition of disabilities is outlined below:

Physical Disabilities: These are users of wheelchairs, walking aids or those who are restricted from travelling long distances. It also includes people with arm or hand disabilities.

Vision Impairments: These include people who are blind or have varying degrees of impaired vision.

Impaired Hearing: These include people who are deaf or have impaired hearing.

Psychiatric Disability: This affects a person's emotions, thought processes and behaviour, for example, schizophrenia and manic depression.

Intellectual Disability: This affects a person's judgement, ability to learn and communicate.

APPENDIX 2 Runnymede Case Study

1. ***RUNNYMEDE***

2. 61 BAY ROAD NEWTOWN HOBART TASMANIA 7008

3. OPENING HOURS

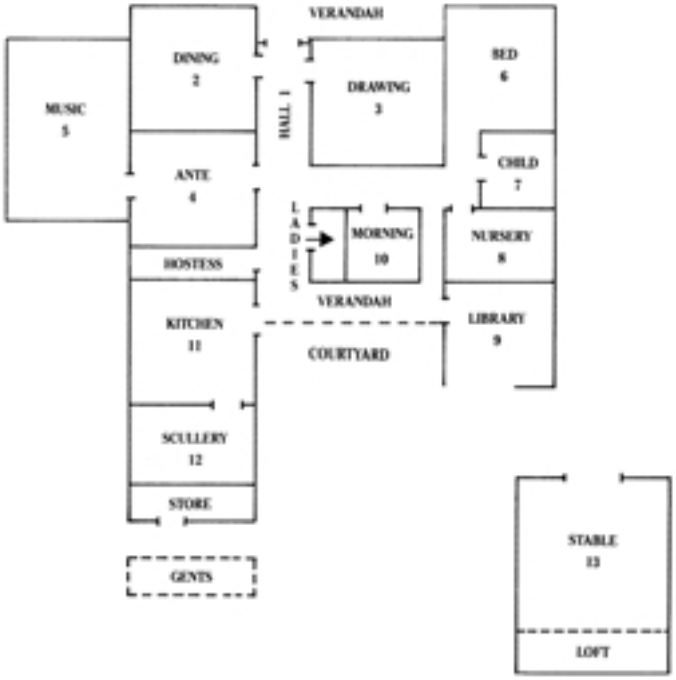
Monday - Friday: 10 - 4:30
Saturday and Sunday: 12 - 4:30
Other times by appointment
Closed in July

4. OUTLINE HISTORY

The land was granted to Captain John Bell in 1827. Six acres was sold to Robert Pitcairn, a barrister in 1836. He built Runnymede in 1840. In 1850 it was sold to Bishop Nixon who renamed the house Bishopstowe. Nixon enlarged it by adding the music room but owing to ill health he returned to England, selling the house in 1864 to Captain Charles Bayley who renamed it Runnymede after his favourite ship. The house was inherited by his daughter Harriet, who married HV Bayly. The house remained with the Baylys until it was purchased by the Tasmanian Government and given to the National Trust in 1965.

The garden has been expanded, contracted and changed over the life of the house. It is now presented in a style appropriate to the age and style of the house.

Ref: National Trust Booklet on Runnymede



Floorplan of Runnymede as it is today)

Reproduced from National Trust (Tas) Booklet

5. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

A fine Regency-style stone house built in the early 1840s, the house includes a music room added by Bishop Nixon in 1860, a delicate trellis verandah of huon pine, delightful wooden entrance gates and original coach house and stables.

Ref: National Trust Register File

6. PARKING

a Access provisions:

Parking is available in the street or in a gravel /dirt parking space adjacent to the house.

Vehicle access is available next to the house, but is restricted to guides and pre-booked arrangements.

b Key issues to resolve:

Designated space close to the building.

c Recommendation:

Permit authorized permit holders to enter the main grounds and park adjacent to the house as other options are not accessible (refer Cl 7)

7. ACCESS TO PRINCIPAL ENTRY

a Access provisions:

If parking is in the street, it is some 150m walk to the house, with a rough gravel drive initially and quite a steep drive generally.

The parking area is dirt /gravel which becomes soft in wet weather. The gate from the car park is 630mm wide, with a very rough flagstone path to a well-compacted gravel drive leading to the front door.

The front entry is the current principal entry, and is accessed by five steps (140mm rises) and a 100mm step at the front door. A coir mat is at the front door and the bell at 1250mm.

The rear door is accessed from compacted gravel, dirt and brick paving plus a 50mm threshold step and coir mat. Request for entry is indicated by a bell.

b Key issues to resolve:

An accessible entry to the house.

c Recommendation:

Provide an accessible path from the designated car park to the courtyard door and permit all visitors to enter from the front or courtyard doors. Some differentiation of bell sounds between the two doors is desirable for guides. Bells to be accessible from the lower height (max. 1100mm).

8. CIRCULATION TO MAIN LEVEL

a Access provisions:

The main floor is at one level and consists of timber boards with loose rugs. The exceptions are the kitchen with flagstones but it is quite level. A small

step (10mm) exists to the scullery, the nursery and library (5mm). The museum has a small threshold ramp.

Spaces are quite open and easy to circulate within, and doors are all open and provide 780 mm clearance. The only restricted area is the small museum room, which has spaces down to 640mm wide. Seats are available for people to sit down.

b Key issues to resolve:

Nil

c Recommendation:

Maintain the existing provisions but ensure that the layout of Museum retains adequate clearance between exhibits.

9. INTERNAL ACCESS TO OTHER FLOORS

a Access provisions:

The only other level is the cellar, which has 10 steps to rise 2100mm with no handrail and low head clearance. The cellar is primarily one space at the base of the steps.

b Key issues to resolve:

Improved access to cellar.

c Recommendation:

Provision of a lift to the basement is considered excessive given the small space. The use of mirrors and models would equally explain the cellar. A handrail should be added for easy access and a warning about the low head height added.

10. CIRCULATION EXTERNALLY TO OTHER ITEMS WITHIN SITE

a Access provisions:

Egress from the house is via a coir mat and a 170mm step down from the shop.

Paving is generally well compacted gravel and grass, but includes rough flag-stone to parts of garden, some of which is quite steep.

The coach house has an on grade access to the concreted main section but a 100mm timber threshold to rough river stones in the stable section.

The main drive has a cut edge and 75mm step to the lawn, the toilet has a small 10mm threshold step.

b Key issues to resolve:

Provide an accessible path to key areas of the garden.

c Recommendation:

The rear door needs the paving raised to provide a ramp exit. A well compacted gravel route should be provided to key parts of the grounds. This includes the toilet, cellar, courtyard door, coach house and top of the sloping garden.

The stables can be appreciated from the coach house doorway, and the lower sections of the garden seen from the top.

11. TOILETS

a Access provisions:

One unisex toilet is provided in the outbuilding accessed from the outside. It is not accessible.

b Key issues to resolve:

Provide an accessible toilet.

c Recommendation:

Change the toilet to an accessible unisex toilet.

12. OTHER FACILITIES SUCH AS RECEPTION AREAS, TELEPHONE, CAFÉ, SHOP

a Access provisions:

The only facility is a shop, which is well laid out and accessible.

Functions are fully catered with table service or buffets.

b Key issues to resolve:

Nil

c Recommendation:

Nil

13. INFORMATION PRESENTED SUCH AS LEAFLETS, BOOKLETS, LABELS, AUDIO, AUDIO VISUAL

a Access provisions:

There is usually a brief background provided by the guide then visitors are left to take a self guided tour. Groups are usually guided. Information on the house is a small outline plan and each room has an A4 printed information sheet. The garden walk is a double sided A3 printed information sheet. A basic statement on the house is available in Japanese.

Lighting levels (natural and some artificial) throughout the house are quite good and sufficient to easily read the information available.

b Key issues to resolve:

Improved interpretation.

c Recommendation:

A larger print format of the basic information and the garden walk to be available for vision impaired people. If necessary, this can be laminated, with the intention of having it returned to guides after use.

Information in other languages to be prepared if demand indicates that it is worthwhile.

Maintain adequate lighting levels to read information and provide larger print on room sheets.

14. IMPLEMENTATION

a Parking (Cl 6)

b Access to Principal Entry (Cl 7)

c Access to Cellar (Cl 9)

d Circulation externally (Cl 10)

e Information upgrade (Cl 13)

f Toilets (Cl 11)

15. BUDGET COSTS

For items referred to in Clause 14:

a Parking management and sign $500

b Access to Entry $2000

c Access to Cellar $7000

d External circulation $5000

e Information $3000

f Toilet $12000

APPENDIX 3 Access Checklist

Adapted from *Right of Access* with approval of Villamanta Publishing Service.

Note: Checklist predates changes to BCA from 1/1/99 and AS1428.1 1998

PART 2 - Access to Buildings with Special Requirements

2.8 HERITAGE BUILDINGS
Measurements and standards used have been taken from the 'Australian Standard, Design for access and mobility', AS 1428.1-1993, AS1428.2-1992 and AS 1428.4-1992.

date:
location:
completed by:

No.	Access Checklist Questions	Yes	No	Comments
2.8.1	Is the main entrance of the building accessible? If NO, can it be altered to allow wheelchair without affecting the architectural/historic significance of the building? (Consult your State Heritage Office or the National Trust) If the entrance cannot be altered to allow wheelchair access, can an alternative accessible entrance be modified or built, that becomes the primary entrance for all visitors? (Having two entrances, one for people with mobility disabilities and one for others, is confusing for visitors, unwelcoming for people with disabilities and inconvenient for staff/volunteers.)			
2.8.2	If for heritage reasons, it is impossible to provide an accessible entrance are staff available at all times to assist people with mobility limitations to gain entry via removable ramps or other access aids? Is an accessible buzzer or bell provided to summon assistance?			
2.8.3	If turnstiles, gates or security systems are in use, are they accessible for a person using a wheelchair, a person with limited strength or a person with short stature? Are turnstiles or gates operated by beams or touch sensors? If a touch sensor is used is it within reach of a person using a wheelchair?			

No.	Access Checklist Questions	Yes	No	Comments
2.8.4	Is an accessible circulation route at least 1200mm wide with adequate manoeuvring space at changes of direction provided for wheelchair access through all parts of the building open to visitors? If access for all people is not possible to some areas (eg. upstairs rooms, cellars etc.) are audio visual presentations, displays or architectural models provided as an alternative experience?			
2.8.5	Have all modifications to the building intended to assist people with disabilities been designed and located in consultation with the State Heritage Office and the National Trust?			
2.8.6	Are all areas clearly signed? Is there clear written and pictorial signage indicating accessible areas? Entrance Route to entrance - from carpark - from set-down/pick up points Auditoriums Carparking Drinking fountains Lockers/ coat room Public telephones Toilets			
2.8.7	Is there a plan of the building displayed showing the recommended route throughout the building? - near the entrance - on a leaflet or brochure printed on non-reflective paper with clear colour contrast? Is a continuous system of directions provided throughout the building indicating the recommended route in a consistent style of signage? Are the directional signs easy to see from a seated position?			

No.	Access Checklist Questions	Yes	No	Comments
2.8.8	Is information interpreting the historic/architectural significance of the building communicated in a variety of ways to aid people with sensory, visual or hearing disabilities? -signs with large, clear lettering on a contrasting background with illustrations -visual interpretation ie. video, models etc. -guided tours -audio interpretation -guide books/leaflets/brochures -dramatisation ie. reinactments -tactile models -other			
2.8.9	Is there an accessible toilet within the building? If NO, is there an alternative accessible toilet nearby?			
2.8.10	If controls are provided to operate doors, audio interpretations, visual interpretations, light switches or other devices are these all accessible to a person using a wheelchair?			
2.8.11	Has Checklist Part 2.0 been completed?			

COMMENTS:

REFERENCES

1 Human Rights & Equal Opportunity Commission, *Disability Discrimination Act Action Plans; A Guide for Non Government Organisations*, p iii

2 Human Rights & Equal Opportunity Commission, *Disability Discrimination Act Action Plans; A Guide for State and Territory Government Departments and Agencies*, p 8.

3 Human Rights & Equal Opportunity Commission, *Disability Discrimination Act Action Plans; A Guide for Non Government Organisations*, p 3.

4 Kerr, James Semple, *The Conservation Plan*, National Trust of Australia (NSW), Edition 4, December 1996, p 8.

5 Australia ICOMOS (International Council on Monuments and Sites) *Charter for the Conservation of Places of Cultural Significance (The Burra Charter)*, Article 1.2.

6 Australia ICOMOS *Charter for the Conservation of Places of Cultural Significance (The Burra Charter)*, Article 1.4.

7 Martin, E J, *Access to Heritage Buildings for People with Disabilities*, ACROD Ltd, Canberra, 1997, Clause 2.4.

8 Kerr, James Semple, *The Conservation Plan*, National Trust of Australia (NSW), Edition 4, December 1996.

9 These actions to be consistent with Australia ICOMOS *Charter for the Conservation of Places of Cultural Significance (the Burra Charter)*.

10 A range of checklists is available from disability organisations. One simplified example is in Appendix 3. A detailed one is available from *Right of Access* by Villamanta Publishing Service or the Western Australian Disability Services Commission *Access Resource Kit*.

11 Standards Australia, SL 34 - Standards for People with Disabilities, *Standards Australia*, July 1998.

12 At present only *Advisory Notes on Access to Premises* 12 March 1998 are available until standards are promulgated.

13 Marquis Kyle, Peter and M Walker, *The Illustrated Burra Charter*, Australia ICOMOS 1992.

14 National Trust of Australia (WA), *Disability Service Plan as submitted to the Disability Services Commission*, Draft, December 1995.

15 Human Rights and Equal Opportunities Commission, *Developing Effective Action Plans*, September 1998. Available on hhht://www/hreoc.gov.au/disability_rights/action_plans/Effective_Plan/effective_plan.html

16 Human Rights & Equal Opportunity Commission, *Disability Discrimination Act Action Plans; A Guide for State and Territory Government Departments and Agencies,* p 7.

17 Disability Access Symbols, produced by the Graphic Artists Guild Foundation, available on http://www.gag.org/das/

In addition to the above references, the following are recommended reading:

Martin, E J, *Access to Heritage Buildings for People with Disabilities*, ACROD Ltd, Canberra 1997.

Foster, L, *Access to the Historic Environment*, Donhead Publishing, 1997.

NOTES