



Access Statement

The Mermaid Conference & Events Centre's access policy is to take all reasonable steps to ensure that the widest range of visitors; regardless of disability or impairment have full access to the services that we supply.

A DDA audit in Feb 2003 was carried out by the "AIMS Group", items highlighted within the report have already been addressed or are part of our ongoing plans, which includes this statement.

ACCESS INTO THE BUILDING

The Mermaid Conference and Events Centre is located in Puddle Dock Blackfriars EC4. Blackfriars Main line station and underground (Circle and District) are within 1 minute walk.

A lay-by at the front of the building functions as the setting down point. A disabled parking space is available in St Andrew's Hill (1 minute walk away), and there are 6 spaces on the ground floor of Castle Baynard Car Park in Queen Victoria Street (2 minutes walk away).

Access from the pavement level down to the main Foyer Doors is via a ramp which leads directly into the Reception Area. This ramp was constructed, and is maintained by the Corporation of London. In addition to this there are covered walkways from the top level of Blackfriars station and the car park itself.

FOYER/RECEPTION AREA

The main foyer doors are fully automatic with proximity sensors inside and out side the building. Additional linear sensors have been placed on the doors to reopen if a presence is detected between the doors during the closing cycle.

During all events a steward is located in the Foyer to assist guests and delegates upon arrival. The Reception desk has a low shelf to aid those in wheelchairs sign in, and an induction loop.

ACCESS TO MAIN AUDITORIUM

The main auditorium is accessible via a ramp which leads down the side of the auditorium and into the front of the seating area. Handrails have been installed on both sides of the ramps leading to the auditorium. Due to the constraints of the existing building it is not possible to minimise the rake of this ramp.

This ramp is technically in the backstage area of the building, and therefore any user must be accompanied by a steward.

Wheelchair allocation in the main auditorium is restricted to the auditorium left side. The current license allows us 6 wheelchairs in the auditorium at any given time.

Whilst the Mermaid does not directly allocate tickets, we advise all visitors to let us know:

- Whether they wish to remain in a wheelchair or use an auditorium seat.
- If they are attending with a companion, where they wish them to sit - either alongside or behind.
- Whether they wish to have their guide dog in the auditorium during the performance or taken care of by a member of staff.
- Whether they require appropriate seating for a sign-interpreted performance.
- The configuration of the wheelchair. For example, is it wider than standard? is the horizontal length greater than the standard?

BACKSTAGE & STAGE ACCESS FOR PARTICIPATING ARTISTS IN WHEELCHAIRS

There is direct level access to the stage via a side entrance. Whilst there are no permanent dressing rooms at stage level special arrangements can be made to provide this accommodation.

PEOPLE WHO HAVE HEARING IMPAIRMENTS

An infra-red hearing enhancement system for people with a hearing impairment has been installed into the main auditorium; this facility can be used with or without a hearing aid. To use the system you can obtain a receiver and headphones or personal loop from the Duty Manager free of charge for the duration of the show. For assistance and further details please ask for the Duty Manager.

PEOPLE WHO HAVE SIGHT IMPAIRMENTS

All changes of level throughout the building have contrasting step nosing's including the steps in the auditorium. This assists people with sight impairments to negotiate the stairways. Lighting throughout the building has a mixture of artificial and natural daylight.

STEPS/LIFTS

It is inevitable that there will be areas of the building that contain steps. We have listed below exactly how many steps will be encountered in each area of the building, which will help when planning a visit. All steps have contrasting edge trims to help denote the change in level. All handrails are painted in a contrasting colour to their surroundings. Lifts are available which allow access to most areas and have been modernised to DDA requirements.

MAIN ENTRANCE AND AUDITORIUM

Level street access directly into Foyer

Number of steps from Foyer to Main Auditorium Doors = 19

Number of steps from Foyer to Bridge Bar = 28

An enclosed platform lift is available giving direct access from the Foyer to the Bridge Bar.

FUNCTION ROOM ENTRANCE

Level street access directly into function room entrance

Number of steps from Entrance to River Room and Gallery Level = 34

Number of steps from River Room to Blackfriars and Studio Level = 21

A Lift is available from this entrance to all floors.

DISABLED WC FACILITIES

Dedicated WC facilities are available on the Ground floor (Auditorium end) and the 1st and 2nd floor (Function Room end). Patrons using the Bridge Bar have access to the River Room facilities via ramped and level access. A modified WC is available in both the Male and Female toilets in the Bridge Bar to assist the ambulant disabled, which has wider than average cubicles and handrails.

CLOAKROOM FACILITIES

The cloakroom facilities throughout the building have integrated accessible counters to assist those in wheelchairs to use this service.

SIGNAGE

Signage around the building has been placed to take into account the type, design and location for maximum effect. The inclusion of Braille has also assisted in the movement throughout the building.

MISCELLANEOUS INFORMATION

USE OF STROBE LIGHTS

Signs are always displayed on the night of a show when strobe lighting is in use. Information can be obtained by calling in advance on **020 7236 1919**.

FIRST AID

First Aid cover is provided at all shows by the Fire Marshall, Duty Manager and staff who hold First Aid certificates.

EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURES

You will be asked whether you would like or specifically need assistance in the case of an evacuation. It is the Mermaids policy that wheelchair users are escorted off the premises by an allocated member of staff using (preferably) the main entrance doors. If for any reason this is not possible, designated wheelchair refuge points are located in the stairwell by stage door and outside the fire exit on level 1 beside the Bridge Bar and outside the lift on the 2nd floor.