Third edition

The Access Manual

Designing, auditing and managing inclusive built environments

Ann Sawyer and Keith Bright

with website

WILEY Blackwell

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From the endorsements and reviews of previous editions:

I welcome this guidance which should enable people to understand access requirements and to undertake access audits. … The law is important but how much better if those organisations simply did it right in the first place so the law did not need to be used. This book should help do just that.

Bert Massie, Chairman of Disability Right Commission

Please make the most of what you find in this volume, but please don't use it merely to achieve compliance. Use it to spark creativity, humanity and urbanity in the buildings and public spaces we all use every day, so nobody need feel ‘this place isn't for me’ and everyone feels welcome.

Richard Simmonds, Chief Executive, CABE

This is a well-written and practical manual, recommended reading for building engineers concerned with the creation, planning and management of buildings.

Building Engineer

Incredibly informative … will enable you to keep the edge over non-enlightened competitors.

Architectural Technology

This is an excellent book.

Access Journal

Both authors are well known for their work on access … between them they have produced a useful book that is helpful in the context of our current built environment and what steps can be taken to improve access.

Barrierfree

The Access Manual

Designing, auditing and managing inclusive built environments

Third edition

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and

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WILEY Blackwell

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By 2025, 2.5 million people will have joined the ranks of the active elderly – they are entitled to choice and opportunity.

John H. Penton MBE

Chartered Architect and Registered Access Consultant

About the Authors

Ann Sawyer BA Dip. Arch. is an architect and access consultant. She works with architects, developers, building owners and facilities managers providing access consultancy services on new and existing buildings and environments. She advises on access and inclusive design, provides access appraisals and audits, advises on improvements to meet new legislative requirements and provides training in accessible design, auditing and the management of accessible environments. She has been involved in many prestigious new build and refurbishment projects for public and private sector clients and has advised on access to a wide variety of historic buildings. Ann is a member of the London Legacy Development Corporation Quality Review Panel, the South East Regional Design Panel and is an Urban Design London design surgeon.

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Chairman of the NRAC Management Board until March 2012. From 2008 to 2014 Keith was a member of the Civic Trust Awards National Panel involved in the allocation of UK and international awards. From 2012 to 2014 he also served as Chairman of the national judging panel of the Selwyn Goldsmith Universal Design Award which is supported by the Civic Trust Awards.

His international roles have included working as an advisor to the Building Construction Authority in Singapore on issues related to Universal Design, and working with the Global Alliance on Accessible Technologies and Environments (GAATES) in the development of an international body for the certification and accreditation of access auditors and consultants.

Foreword

Innovative approaches to design by architects and their clients continue to provide us with buildings and spaces of exceptional quality. What makes a successful building or public space is difficult to encapsulate, but what is often universally demonstrated is a commitment by designers to strive for excellence in terms of aesthetics, environmental performance and inclusive design. The completed project should engage with and have a positive impact on its users. Buildings should of course make a visual statement, but at the Civic Trust Awards, we firmly believe in the concept that architecture and design should be people centred. Inclusive design has been at the forefront of our thinking since the 1990s, and we utilise the services of hundreds of access professionals, working alongside experienced architects, as part of our judging process to ensure this philosophy is maintained.

It is true to say that we still see examples where designers clearly don't fully comprehend the importance of early consultation with respect to accessibility. Inclusive design should not be a bolt-on afterthought, it should be integral to the design process from inception. That way, many issues that would often arise later on can be designed out.

In this book, you will see a number of case studies from the Civic Trust Awards where the client and their architect have appointed an inclusive design consultant or have consulted with a local access group who provide help, advice and guidance throughout the design process. These are the true success stories, where planning, design concept, aesthetics, performance and accessibility are fully integrated.

Not all approaches to design will adopt these same philosophies, but we must continue to strive to help make it become the norm. Inclusive design is not about just meeting minimum standards; it should be about creating an environment that is welcoming and accessible to all users without the need for expensive interventions. Successful design is seamless inclusive design.

Malcolm Hankey BSC LLB IEng MICE Hon FRIBA

Managing Director

Civic Trust Awards

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I would like to thank all my friends and colleagues who are working to improve the accessibility of buildings and spaces and to promote inclusive design. Since the first edition of this book was published, there has been increased recognition of the importance of providing access for all; it is critical that this is maintained and that inclusive design becomes integral to the design and management of our environment.

Thanks to Vin Goodwin, who supplied some of the photographs, to Keith Bright, whose knowledge and enthusiasm have been invaluable throughout the writing and updating process, and to Joe and Liddy for giving support and inspiration.

Ann Sawyer

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Keith Bright

About the Website

On the book's companion website at http://www.wiley.com/go/TheAccessManual, you will find invaluable resources:

- Photo Gallery – with examples of best practice, what to avoid and reasons why
- Access Audit Checklists – for you to download and use
- Case Study Material – demonstrating good practice
- Sources of Guidance on Legislation, Standards and Good Practice
- Information Sources

Introduction

Buildings are designed for people to use – to give shelter, to house, for work and for play. An environment that is designed to be inclusive allows those activities to take place without restricting access to people with certain abilities only. Inclusive design does not disable the users, it enables independent and equal use.

For many owners, designers and managers of buildings and environments, meeting the needs of all users, and especially disabled people, can seem difficult. However, it is possible to address the needs of the great majority of users with design and management solutions that neither conflict with each other, nor are expensive or difficult to carry out. An inclusive approach requires designers and building managers to consider abilities rather than disabilities and integrate a range of needs into one solution that can be used by everyone. The improvement in accessibility that can result from this approach will benefit all users of the built environment, not just disabled people.

Inclusive design also takes into account the long-term implications of sustainability by providing flexible and responsive developments limiting the need for future adaptation, as well as helping to promote social inclusion. True inclusion goes beyond simply being able to gain access to a building or space. It also allows people to experience designs and management practices that enhance and stimulate mental and physical well-being, reflects the diversity of modern society, encourages mutual relationships and harmony between social groups, and encourages equality in the distribution of economic resources.

Designing inclusively will help those who have duties placed upon them by anti-discrimination legislation such as the Equality Act 2010. Well-designed buildings that meet a broad range of people's needs are more likely to allow occupiers to meet their duties and can also offer employment and commercial benefits.

Objectives of the Manual

This manual covers the design, improvement, maintenance and management of accessible environments. The intention is to encourage designers, owners and managers of buildings to look at how they can provide and operate buildings, services and employment facilities in a way that allows independent and convenient use by everyone.

The manual is intended to enable people with responsibility for the design and management of the built environment to

- be aware the issues involved in accessibility;
- take account of those issues when commissioning and designing new or refurbished developments;
- understand and commission access audits;
- create and manage an access improvement programme;
- maintain accessibility in buildings and working practices; and
- respond effectively to the legal requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and other relevant legislation.

The first chapter looks at inclusive design and what this means in relation to the design of the built environment and gives information on access appraisals, the access statement and access stratgegy. Chapters 2 and 3 cover legislation, standards and guidance relating to access.

Chapter 4 explains the audit process and how it fits into an access improvement programme, the implementation of improvements and the importance of ongoing access management to ensure accessibility is sustained in use.

The design criteria in Chapter 5 cover access to and use of buildings considering the needs of a wide range of users. The design guidance can be used when designing new buildings or taken as a standard to assess and improve existing ones.

Appendix A contains a number of sheets of ‘general acceptability criteria’, which can be used to highlight where access problems exist. Appendix B gives sources of reference and further information. Throughout the manual there are boxes giving hints and tips. The information given in the boxes covers issues that are not always found in standards, legislation or other guidance, and includes advice and thoughts that come from the authors’ experience.

Inclusive design is about people and their needs, and, in the context of this manual, how these relate to the design, use and management of the built environment. The manual not only includes comprehensive information on standards, legislation and good practice, but also recognises that to achieve a truly accessible environment, designers and operators of buildings must move beyond compliance with standards and adopt a new way of thinking. Taking a creative approach, considering the needs of everyone, integrating those needs into good, thoughtful designs and practices will help achieve an accessible, inclusive, built environment that enables people to participate fully in all aspects of society.

1
Inclusive Design

[An inclusive approach](#)

[Principles of inclusive design](#)

[Benefits](#)

[How environments are used](#)

[Access appraisals](#)

[Access statements](#)

[Case study – Canada Water Library](#)

An Inclusive Approach

An inclusively designed and managed building or space will allow everyone to maximise their own individual abilities and enjoy full, equal, confident, independent and safe participation in everyday activities. Inclusive design goes beyond simple accessibility. A design that offers a choice of stepped or ramped approach to a building addresses accessibility for all; however, one that incorporates a level approach for everyone to use is a truly inclusive design.

Design guidance is often based on the needs of a notional ‘average’ person; however, everyone varies from the average in some way. People differ in height, strength and dexterity; can have different visual, hearing or cognitive abilities; or may have respiratory impairments or reduced stamina. Mental health or emotional issues can also affect people's ability to interact with the built environment.

Physical and mental health conditions can be temporary, ongoing or progressive and may vary considerably throughout different stages of life. Older people may have limited mobility; some may use wheelchairs, sticks or crutches. Mobility may be affected by having to carry a child or heavy shopping bags or push a buggy.

Despite this apparently wide diversity of need, many of the issues that affect how people interact with the built environment are similar. For example, good, clear, effective and sensibly used signage incorporating symbols helps everyone, including those whose first language is not that of the information on the sign. Firm, level, non-reflective surfaces will not only benefit people using mobility aids such as a wheelchair or crutches, but also people pushing buggies or carrying luggage. Well-designed lighting, colour and visual contrast may benefit people with sensory or cognitive impairments and will also affect how people feel and are able to respond to spaces and places.

An inclusive approach to design and management does not deny that there are specific areas where particular assistance can be provided. Hearing enhancement systems, such as induction loops, or the provision of information in Braille, are useful to certain building users. Specific provisions that meet particular needs are also part of inclusive design.

Adopting a positive approach and giving careful consideration to the abilities of users, rather than their disabilities or limitations, can identify design outcomes that are able to address the needs of a wide range of building users across the spectrum of ability, age, gender, and religious and cultural diversity. Active and effective management in use will ensure that these identified design expectations will actually be delivered in practice.

Figure 1.1 The London 2012 Olympic Parklands and Public Realm project, which received a Civic Trust award for Recognition of Excellence in the Built Environment, is a good example of inclusive design in practice.

Principles of Inclusive Design

To help achieve this aim, it is useful to understand and adopt the established principles of inclusive design. The Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE) published guidance on inclusive design, including a set of principles.

> CABE was established in 1999 as the UK government's advisors on architecture, urban design and public space in England. It was dissolved in 2011 and subsequently merged with the Design Council.
>
> See Appendix B for details of how to access archived publications from CABE, including those relating to the principles of inclusive design.

In the view of CABE, good design is inclusive design, and design that does not deliver an inclusive environment is not