

# DESIGN & ACCESS REPORT

## St Ann's Library Hall Project - Cissbury Road London N15

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### 1.0 Introduction

In November 2006 John Miller + Partners with Sidell Gibson were commissioned by L B Haringey Libraries, Archives and Museum Services to prepare designs for the redevelopment of St Ann's Library Hall. The project is situated close to the centre of the NDC area and aims to improve and enlarge the already well used community facilities provided and to assist in the local target for improvement in educational performance and help NDC residents to take up employment and training. An extension to the library offers the opportunity to work with young people and the elderly to become involved in learning and to improve skills level.



### 2.0 Context / Site

#### Streetscape and Visibility

Cissbury Road Branch Library is located in a predominantly two-storey terrace residential road, with retail units on the corner of St Ann's Road.



The existing library hall is not visible from the street, being sheltered by the main library frontage. The hall is a single storey free standing building set at the rear of the Library with planted and hard landscaped space on three sides and a narrow alley between it and the library on the forth side.

The rear garden walls and fence of the adjoining two-storey terrace housing and a single storey workshop unit form the boundary surrounding the site.



#### Existing Envelope

The hall consists of a timber structural frame with lightweight panel in fill. The pitched roof is of bituminous felt finish supported on timber roof trusses. The fenestration comprises timber casement windows, clerestory windows and rooflights.

The main Library consists of a single storey symmetrical façade with pitched roof fronting Cissbury Road. The library is also planned symmetrically comprising a double-height central reading space, with two wings of supporting accommodation behind a constant parapet line. The materials on the main elevation are warm red brick walls on a stone base and tiled roof, with stock bricks to the flank and rear walls and asphalt flat roofs. Windows are generally are a mixture of metal and timber.



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### Access/Routes

The hall already is a well used local amenity, being served by good public transport links and a network of pedestrian routes. Public access to the hall is via gated passages on both flanks of the main library fronting onto Cissbury Road, with the wider approach to the rear being on the S.W. side nearest to the St Ann's Road junction. A dropped kerb from the road allows limited vehicular access into the rear of the site for delivery and service vans.

A rear exit from the library also leads to hall and the adjacent side passages.



### Levels

The main library frontage is raised approximately 300mm above pavement level, and steps and ramp provide access for all into the library. The side passages slope gently into the rear site, which leads directly to a level entrance to the existing hall. The level of the hall is approximately 575mm below the main library floor level.

## 3.0 Existing Building Conditions

### Existing building fabric

The Library Hall is generally in a poor state of repair. The main roof has damage from water ingress and internal condensation, which necessitates a major roof overhaul. The building has almost no thermal insulation in either the roof structure, external wall envelope and floor slab causing extreme fluctuations to the internal temperature. Windows and roof lights are difficult to operate, are single glazed and have no solar controls. The general construction is poorly fitting and causes a leaky non-airtight interior, and is without the benefit of mass provides little or non sound and acoustic insulation.

See Fulcrum Consulting report on the existing Mechanical and Electrical services conditions.

### Asbestos

The current type 2 asbestos report identifies widespread use of asbestos within the hall. The most significant items are the internal wall particleboard finish to all partition walls, together with asbestos lagging to pipe work etc.

In summary from the view of Health and Safety, thermal performance, energy consumption and acoustic insulation, the existing hall requires radical and wholesale upgrading to meet current building legislation. The conclusion reached is therefore that the more cost beneficial option to meet the brief is to demolish the existing hall and redevelop the site.

## 4.0 Brief Requirements

The existing library hall is already well used and is well placed for extended use, for the benefit of the whole community.

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Current activities range from toddler groups, messy play and a toy library, onto more structured learning such as Kumon Maths and CONEL English classes and Venture Group of the Blind. Youth activities include music and dance workshops and family groups include family learning drama, church services and ministry.

The elderly participate in older and bolder line dancing and community groups hold lunches, functions and catered events. The hall also acts as a drop in centre.

The expanded facility should provide flexible space for multiple use, to involve all ages, with inclusive access. Expanded facilities include NDC Youth Forum music studio and IT, multi-purpose activity space, space for the elderly, sympathetic to their needs, improved catering and ancillary accommodation.

The brief also requires the hall to directly attach itself to the library. In normal opening hours it is intended to enter the hall from the main building. Out of hours entrance/egress is provided externally via the side access approach.

Servicing is intended from the side passage, with associated refuse provision.

The outside space adjoining the hall is to be accessible from the spaces within providing secure seated and community planted areas for recreation and hard areas for toddler play.



### 5.0 Access Statement

The design appraisal covers the site entrances, facilities, horizontal and vertical circulation within the proposed new building. Stores, plant rooms and kitchen production and the existing building are not covered in this document.

#### **The Criteria for Assessment for Access are:**

The need to maximise access to and use of the building and facilities for customers, user groups, staff and other visitors

Provisions in Approved Document Part M of the Building Regulations

Current guidance on the provisions of the Disability Discrimination Acts 1995 & 2005

Need to observe reasonable functional practicalities of implementing action to improve access.

#### **Factors contributing to accessibility**

Many factors contribute to accessibility the most obvious being the building shell. However, it is critical to consider fixtures and fittings, also furniture and equipment.

It is also very important to consider how the building is used.

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Awareness and attitudes of staff are critical if the safe and convenient use of the building is to be preserved. How a building is managed in the daily running will have a huge impact on how easy the building is to be used by disabled people.

### Approach & Entry

Approach is directly from Cissbury Road footpath, leading to the existing Library front entrance doors, via a short pedestrian ramp and steps, already provided to make the Library accessible. Alternatively, a gated external side entrance leads directly to the side entrance doors to the new building foyer/lobby. The double action swing doors provide level access.

Normal access to the new building is expected to be through the existing Library via a new opening doorway 1000mm wide providing level access to the upper connecting entrance lobby to the new building.

Signage and way finding systems will contribute to the legibility of the building. Although these are not yet specified they should follow good practice and relevant British Standards.

### Horizontal and vertical circulation

Although the new accommodation is on one level, it connects internally to the upper library level by a platform lift, wheelchair accessible linking the two ground levels. A short flight of shallow steps also provide access for ambulant disabled use. Safe access and egress is also provided by the side entrance, with level entrance through double swing doors leading to the side passage and public footpath.

### Facilities

Level access is provided to all internal facilities. Architectural elements such as doors, floors and walls will be carefully defined to establish visual contrast. Floors will be specified with non-slip, low sheen surfaces.

Acoustic detailing of the main space includes perforated timber panels, which together with the inherent fragmented shape of the soffit will reduce sound reverberation, although further acoustic detailing is essential.

All doorways provide a minimum of 800mm effective clear width door and to be specified with adjustment requiring less than 30N force to open.

### WCs

WC facilities are provided in the entrance lobby threshold space, comprising male and female facilities with one cubicle in each for ambulant disabled people, with an activity space that meets current provision. A pull down baby changing facility is designed for the female lavatory as well as in the separate unisex disabled cubicle measuring 2.2m by 1.5m wide.





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### Management Issues

At this stage it is difficult to confirm management procedures, other than to note that the Library will need to establish policies, practices and procedures to ensure that the building remains accessible once occupied.

## 6.0 Proposals

### Massing/Appearance

The proposed new library hall echoes the massing of the existing front library by planning the main hall as a central space, on axis with the front building, and projecting above two equal side wings of accommodation. However, the height of the central volume is lower than the apex of the existing library hall, to be demolished.

The line of the flank walls of the front library, set building lines which define the edges of the proposed building. Similarly, the parapet heights of the new side wings are at the same height as the existing front library.

The roof profile of the projecting main space is a series of folded pitched roof sections, which refer to the immediate context of the saw tooth roof forms of the rear extensions of the surrounding dwelling.

Window fenestration is generated from the internal functions, with little or no windows provided to acoustically sensitive areas, such as the kitchen and studio, which are proposed to include attenuated grilles for ventilation. Larger windows and sliding doors are proposed to give access to the south facing garden areas.

### Materials

The main envelope is proposed as facing bricks to match the warm red and yellow stock brick of the existing library, alternating in horizontal bands every fourth course.

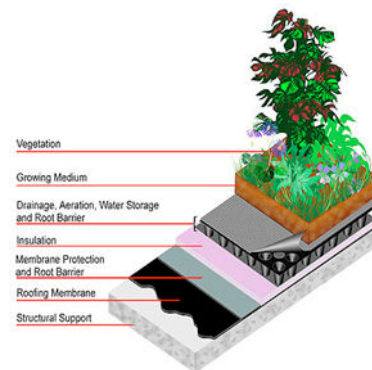
Windows and screens are proposed as high performance aluminium assemblies with gunmetal grey anodised finish.

The finish of the folded roof profile over the main hall is proposed as a single ply membrane, self-coloured, mid grey in keeping with the slate roofs of the surrounding dwellings. The fascias are of matching powder coated metal pressings.

The flat roofs to the side wings are proposed as “extensive green roofs” finished in self-maintaining sedums, to provide a living, colourful and sustainable finish to benefit the surrounding outlook.

Internal materials comprise a self finished perforated maple veneered plywood soffit to the main space, proposed to provide acoustic absorption and visual warmth to the space.

Internal walls are generally load bearing masonry, with dense



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render and smooth skim finish, to provide exposed thermal mass as an energy store.

Floor finishes are either hard wood flooring in the main space, and vinyl sheet or carpet in all other areas as appropriate to function.

### Landscaping

The existing community garden, is intended to be regenerated, with the major structure planting being stored on site during construction and recycled and integrated into a larger community garden. Apart from the inclusion of small scale ornamental tree planting, the existing quality of the garden should be maintained and enhanced by shrub planting, seated areas and paved areas and a secure, safe outdoor toddlers play area.

A screen wall and 1.8m gate that lead onto the side entrance service are provides access into the rear garden area.



### 7.0 Traffic Impact/Serviceing

As the building already currently offers a wide range of facilities for local community use, it is believed that day to day traffic impact will not significantly increase in scale. Any potential enlarged impact of traffic may also be mitigated by an active management policy and careful timetable of activities.

### 8.0 Structural Concept

Subject to the finding of site investigations and trial pit analysis, the proposed structure is as follows.

Foundations are traditional strip concrete footing supporting load bearing masonry, with insulated ground bearing floor slab.

Walls are load bearing, full-fill insulated cavity construction, with internal solid masonry load bearing internal partitions.

The main roof is formed of single spanning prefabricated mono pitch timber roof trusses, bolted together at an inclined angle of 45 degrees, supported on stub steel columns. Roof finish is a single membrane sheet on continuous plywood decking and full fill insulation.

The side roofs consist of metsec steel beams spanning onto perimeter masonry, supporting continuous plywood decking and a propriety extensive green roof system by Bauder Ltd.



### 9.0 Sustainability and Energy Performance

The building aims to embody passive energy saving principles. These are to include high internal building mass combined with night time ventilation, solar protection to windows and clearstorey

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lights to reduce external heat gains, super thermal insulation to the building perimeter, combined with airtight construction. The green roof also provides a cooling mass in the summer, and control of rainwater run off, in storms.

Solar thermal panels fixed at the optimum angle of 32 degrees to the south, are proposed to be installed on the existing flat roof of the existing building, to provide hot water for domestic and catering use. For full information on mechanical and electrical engineering services see Fulcrum Consulting's design report.