

Case Study: Ironmonger Row Baths

Heritage / Recreation

The much-loved Ironmonger Row Baths was built in 1931 to the design of father and son architects Arthur and Kenneth Cross. It provides Turkish bath and laundry facilities as well as swimming pools, gym and exercise studios. It was listed Grade II by English Heritage in November 2006 and is located within St. Luke's Conservation Area in Islington.

Islington Council's aim for Ironmonger Row Baths was to provide facilities to a diverse community who will visit regularly. Prior to development only the ground floor was accessible, meaning that popular facilities such as the Turkish baths could not be used by all visitors.

The building is now fully accessible. The only non-accessible public facility is the plunge pool. To ensure that all visitors have the opportunity to enjoy the extremes of temperature an overhead bucket, discharging icy water from above, is an alternative that can be used by all.

Ironmonger Row which is now entered via a new bold, stone clad street-level entranceway, provides easy access for all while respecting the heritage fabric and the architectural ambitions of the client. Special features include high quality signage that incorporates descriptive pictograms; well-designed platform lifts and easy access steps to both pools; a movable floor in the smaller pool; electronic chips providing wristband access to wheelchair friendly lockers, WCs and changing rooms. Clever use of materials provides the necessary colour contrasts as well as way-finding assistance.

The project was designed in close collaboration with Disability Action in Islington, an advisory group who attended site visits as well as scrutinising similar facilities.



Ironmonger Row Baths, London



Project Details:

Location	London
Completion	2013
Architects	Tim Ronalds Architects
Clients	Islington Council
Awards	RIBA National Award for Architecture