

GOVERNMENT

THE TREASURY

LONDON

DAVID BONNETT ASSOCIATES
Inclusive design consultancy & research



The buildings in which people work not only have a powerful impact on efficiency but also on the culture and perception of the organisation occupying them. With this in mind the Government determined, when it decided to adapt its high profile office Treasury building, that the completed project should convey a message of openness and inclusiveness. The decision to sacrifice private space for welcoming communal space was key to the new design, resulting in spaces that not only improved personal interaction but also simplified the incorporation of inclusive design.

The proposals for the Grade II* listed building included detailed consideration of access for staff and visitors with disabilities. This was an anticipated requirement of the recently introduced Disability Discrimination Act (1995) as well as reflecting the aspirations of the Treasury as a government department and as an employer.

Security requirements, the importance of the heritage fabric and the sheer scale of the building and distances to be travelled had resulted in an inaccessible building. David Bonnett Associates used its standard audit methodology, reviewing the 'journey' to and through the building, to explore all opportunities for setting best practice standards in the new development.

The Treasury is typical of other buildings in Whitehall, with a raised ground floor, originally precluding direct access. Now resolved, access to the ground floor is possible and onward circulation is easily achieved with wide access corridors and large doors. It is noteworthy that ease of access to all parts of the building, for the passage of deliveries, equipment and mail, had been afforded by hoist, ramp, automatic door opening devices and vision panels. These features were not however designed for the benefit of wheelchair users.

The completed scheme has resolved the apparent conflict between accessibility and security while physical alterations touching on the listed status have been sensitively incorporated. The considerable size of the building will inevitably stretch the limits of many mobility-impaired people. By providing a suitable distribution of lifts, WCs and other key features the new scheme minimises unnecessary travel.

Project Details:

Sector: Government

Location: London

Completion: 2002

Architects: Foster+Partners

Clients: Exchange partnership plc



Awards

- British Council for Offices – London Refurbished Workplace Award
- Building Cleanability Award – National Winner, Heritage