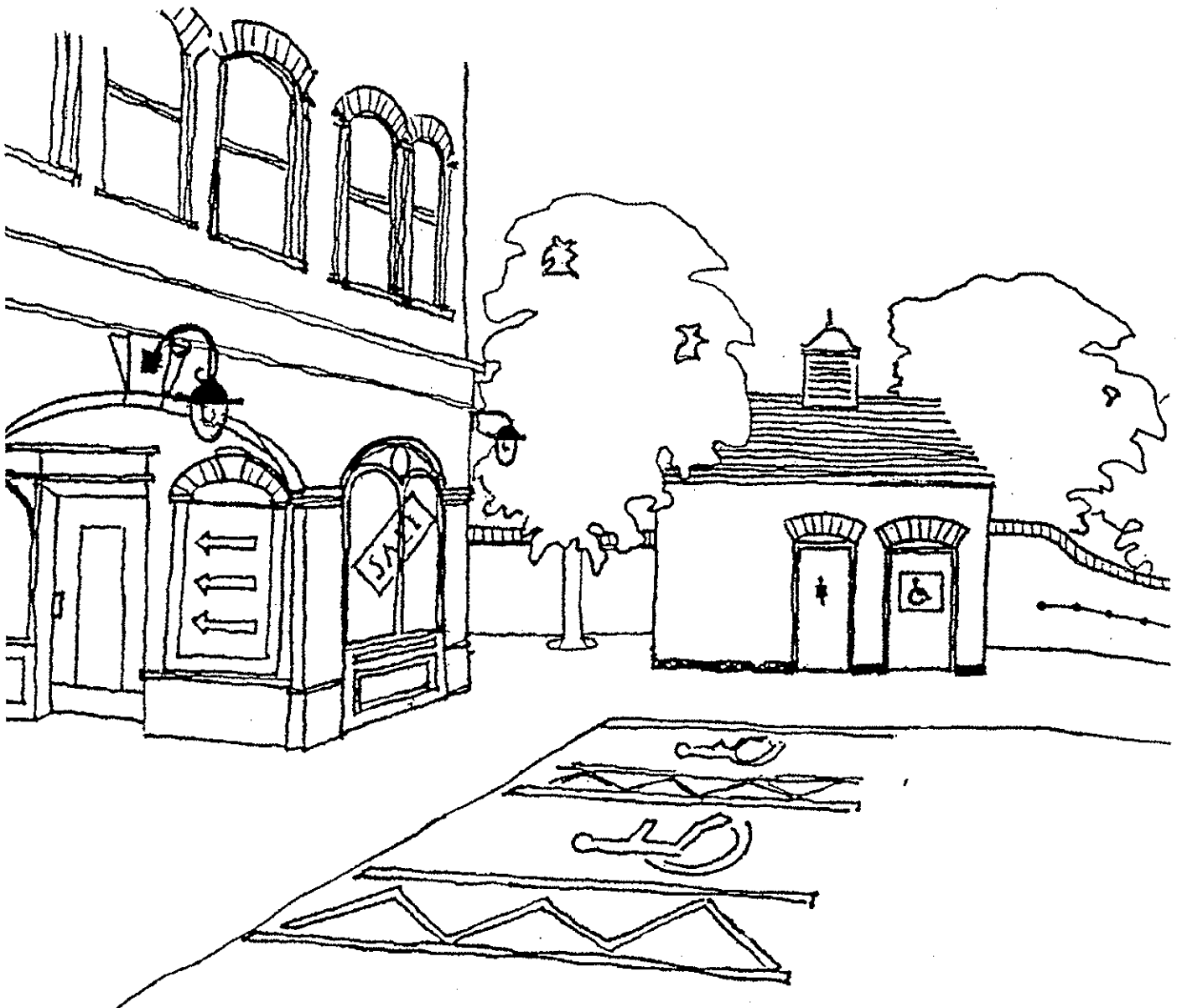


TENDRING DISTRICT COUNCIL ACCESS GUIDANCE



Supplementary Planning Guidance to help create environments
that are accessible to all

TENDRING DISTRICT COUNCIL ACCESS GUIDANCE

Guidance Note No. 1: General Principles for Access to Non-Domestic Buildings

This leaflet is one of a series of planning guidance notes covering access issues which have been produced to supplement the policies contained in the Adopted Tendring District Local Plan (April 1998), and encourage designers and developers to create environments and buildings which are accessible for everyone. The other two guidance notes in the series are *Guidance Note No. 2: ATMs (Cash Dispensers)* and *Guidance Note No. 3: Access to Shops for Disabled People*. Copies of all three guidance notes, and the District Local Plan are available from Tendring District Council's Planning and Building Services (see back page for address).

Guidance Note No. 1 has been designed to make designers and developers of non-domestic developments aware of the need to consider access for people with disabilities, and summarises the Planning service's commitment to make the District easily accessible for all. In planning terms this means not only ensuring that new buildings and the spaces around them are properly designed to meet everyone's needs, but also taking every opportunity to improve existing environments that are not convenient for everybody to use.

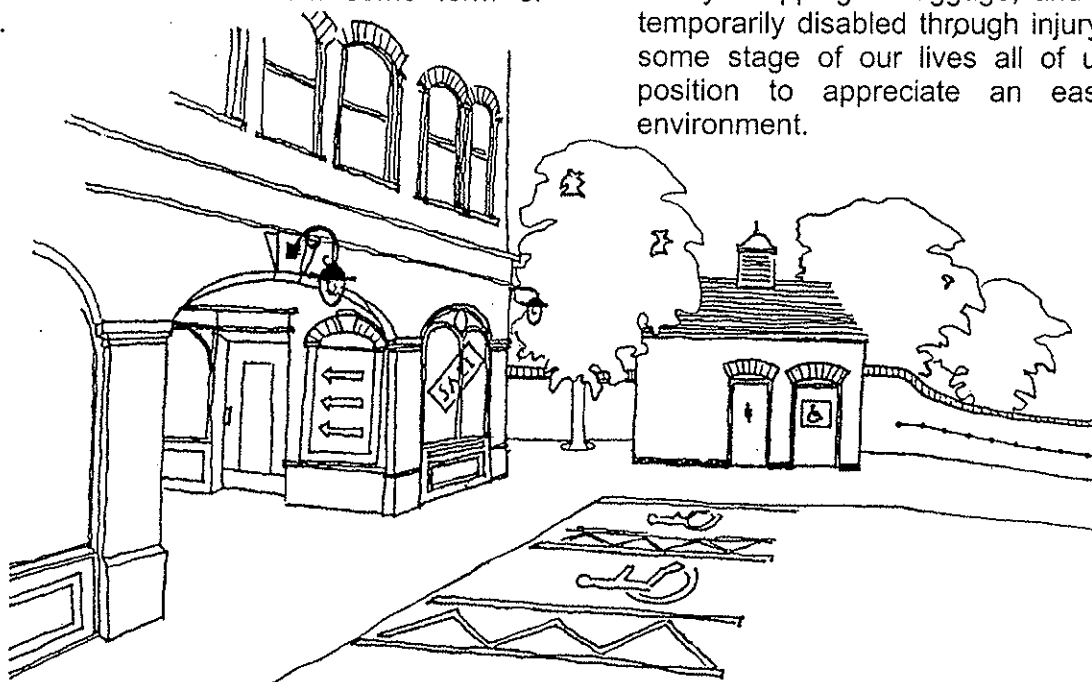
Detailed design advice for the provision of accessible buildings and internal spaces is available in **Part M (Access and Facilities for Disabled People) of the Building Regulations**. In addition, the Council has adopted the Centre for Accessible Environment's design guide "*Designing for Accessibility – an essential guide for public buildings*" as Supplementary Planning Guidance which contains detailed guidance for the design of accessible internal and external environments. Useful contacts and sources of information are listed on the back page of this leaflet.

Why is Access Important?

Access to jobs, services, housing and entertainment, taken for granted by many, can be very difficult, if not impossible, for people with disabilities or limited mobility. Within Tendring District the 1991 Census showed that there were 21,139 persons (or 17% of the total population) suffering from "limiting long-term illness", a figure which rises to over 20% in certain parts of the District. This is significantly above the national level of 14% who suffer from some form of disability.

Within this context it is therefore of great importance that the Council does all it can to improve accessibility.

Good access benefits the whole community. This includes wheelchair users or people who have a mobility problem, people who have understanding difficulties, people who are partially sighted or blind, people with hearing impairments, elderly people, carers with young children, people with heavy shopping or luggage, and those who are temporarily disabled through injury or illness. At some stage of our lives all of us will be in a position to appreciate an easily accessible environment.



Planning an Accessible Environment

What is Expected?

The Council will seek to improve accessibility in the design of public spaces, new buildings and as existing buildings are altered, upgraded or refurbished. This is particularly important for those people with disabilities looking for employment, wishing to shop, or visit leisure and recreation facilities.

National planning policy guidance has established that access can be a material consideration in determining planning applications. The Council's adopted Local Plan includes access policies which apply to new and existing buildings. The key policies for non-domestic buildings are Policies TD13 and TS8A:

POLICY TD13

APPLICATIONS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF (AND WHERE PRACTICABLE AND REASONABLE, CHANGES OF USE OR ALTERATIONS TO) BUILDINGS OPEN TO THE PUBLIC AND BUILDINGS USED FOR EMPLOYMENT AND EDUCATION PURPOSES SHOULD PROVIDE SUITABLE ACCESS AND FACILITIES FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES, AS CUSTOMERS, VISITORS AND EMPLOYEES.

POLICY TS8A

TO MAXIMISE ACCESSIBILITY FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES TO AND WITHIN SHOPS AND OTHER LOCAL SERVICES THE DISTRICT COUNCIL WILL:

- i] ENCOURAGE THE RETENTION OF A WIDESPREAD DISTRIBUTION OF EXISTING SHOPS AND LOCAL SERVICES ALREADY ACCESSIBLE TO PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES BY RESISTING CHANGES FROM RETAIL USE;**
- ii] EXPECT APPLICANTS TO COMPLY WITH THE COUNCIL'S DESIGN GUIDE ON ACCESS TO SUCH FACILITIES WHEN IMPROVEMENTS TO SHOPS ARE UNDERTAKEN;**
- iii] SEEK TO NEGOTIATE THE PROVISION OF PUBLIC TOILET FACILITIES SUITABLE FOR USE BY PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES IN LARGE STORES AND SHOPPING CENTRES;**
- iv] EXPECT APPLICANTS TO COMPLY WITH THE COUNCIL'S DESIGN GUIDE ON ATMs (CASH DISPENSERS) WHEN IMPROVEMENTS ARE UNDERTAKEN TO BANKS AND BUILDING SOCIETIES OR APPLICATIONS MADE TO INSTALL AN ATM ELSEWHERE.**

In the case of new buildings and certain extensions and major refurbishment works **Part M (Access and Facilities for Disabled People) of the Building Regulations** applies. This requires all new non-domestic buildings to be fully accessible, and provide facilities such as accessible toilets and lifts.

Accessible New Buildings

Careful consideration should be given to the needs of people with disabilities at an early stage in the design process. When creation of an accessible environment is accepted as a basic principle of good design, it is much easier to design accessible new buildings, and it will cost less to incorporate convenient access at the beginning.

Together, the Council's planning policies and Part M of the Building Regulations require new non-domestic buildings to be accessible throughout.

Accessible Spaces Around New Buildings

The planning of spaces around new buildings to which the public will have access is important in ensuring accessibility for all and should be taken into account in the design of new development.

People with mobility problems, sight impairments or understanding difficulties should ideally be offered full freedom of movement in external spaces.

Appropriate provision might include:

- safe, convenient access to building entrances from adjoining streets, drop-off points, passenger transport facilities and parking areas,
- suitable car parking spaces, access to passenger transport facilities and drop-off points for disabled people,
- clear signposting of disabled facilities and routes to accessible entrances.

The Council will seek to ensure the accessibility of external environments through the planning process by negotiating with applicants and the use of planning conditions.



This new retail development has been designed taking accessibility into account with lifts and ramps from disabled persons' car parking areas, the provision of toilet facilities for disabled people in each retail unit and easy access to crèche facilities.

Existing Buildings

If a building is altered provisions for the disabled user must not be made any worse. For example, steps cannot be constructed to replace ramps.

Whenever alterations are proposed the opportunity to improve access for all should be taken. Whilst this may be more difficult than providing a fully accessible new building, there will usually be scope for achieving some type of improvement to an existing building.

The Council will expect all applicants for planning permission to demonstrate that accessibility issues have been taken into account in proposals for the alteration of existing buildings including changes of use. Where appropriate planning conditions may be attached to planning permissions detailing the required provision.

Historic Buildings and Areas

Tendring District contains a number of historic buildings and areas which are important to preserve and enhance. There is often perceived to be conflict between conservation and improving access for people with disabilities, especially in listed buildings. However, alterations

can often be made to bring buildings closer to modern needs without a loss of historic character.

Most external alterations will require planning permission and all alterations (internal and external) to listed buildings will require listed building consent.

Of key importance in any scheme will be the quality of design, materials and standard of workmanship. Traditional materials, as well as being more appropriate in historic areas, are often just as durable and offer a range of textures which can assist people with disabilities.

General Design Principles

Entrances:

- should be easily identifiable, using details, colour, materials and position to distinguish the entrance from the façade;
- able to be easily and safely negotiated by all users including those with mobility and sensory impairments;
- thresholds should be flush;
- door handles and locks should be easy to identify, reach and operate;
- door closers should be used which do not require excessive pressure;
- glazing should be well positioned to ensure good visibility when entering or leaving the premises;
- entrance lobbies should be designed to allow a wheelchair user to be able to move clear of one door before using the next one, with space provided for any person assisting the wheelchair user and for anyone passing in the opposite direction.'

Internal Spaces:

- lighting should be carefully designed to allow clear identification of features in the internal environment;
- circulation areas should be free of obstacles and without unexpected changes in level, particularly at doorways;
- wall projections should be avoided, with fittings and appliances recessed wherever possible;
- corners should be splayed or rounded and must allow enough room to turn a wheelchair.

Stairs:

- should be safe, easily identified and be short flights with handrails provided;
- where no alternative is provided consider the installation of stairlifts, hoists and lifts for those who are unable to use the stairs.

Lifts:

- should be able to accommodate wheelchairs and carers;
- controls should be within easy reach and include raised numerals to allow tactile selection of floor level;
- audible indications are desirable.

Toilets:

- accessible conveniences should be provided within places of work, public buildings and preferably restaurants.

Counters and Checkouts:

- should be carefully designed to allow use by people in wheelchairs, but retain security where necessary.

Signs and Information:

- signs should be clear and legible, easy to distinguish from the background and be consistent;
- raised letters within hands reach may be used to assist the visually impaired, but should be confined to single letters, numerals and symbols, and placed in standard positions throughout a building;
- symbols should be pictorial and use standard symbols indicating specific facilities, for example, induction loop, information etc.

Other facilities that should be considered include visual and audible warning devices, enhanced lighting and hearing systems.

Contacts and Further Information

Please remember that if there is an access problem, an officer may be able to advise on possible solution.

For advice about planning applications, alterations to listed buildings, building regulations and access issues

telephone: 01255 425501

or

write to:

**Planning and Building Services
Tendring District Council
Council Offices
Weeley
Clacton on Sea
Essex CO16 9AJ**

Useful Documents

Adopted Tendring District Local Plan (1998)

**The Building Regulations 1991
"Access and Facilities for Disabled People"
Approved Document Part M (1999 Edition)**

**"Designing for Accessibility – an essential guide for public buildings" (1999)
Centre for Accessible Environments**

**Easy Access to Historic Properties (reprinted 1999)
English Heritage Product Code No. XH10828**

Status of this Guidance

This guidance note was formally adopted as Supplementary Planning Guidance by the District Council on 12 October 1999.

It was subject to consultation between 5 July and 16 August 1999 and sent to 82 organisations including the Tendring Access Group, the Government Office GO-East, Town and Parish Councils, local business organisations and local agents.

The response to the consultation was generally supportive and comments received have been used to produce the final version of the guidance.

TENDRING DISTRICT COUNCIL ACCESS GUIDANCE

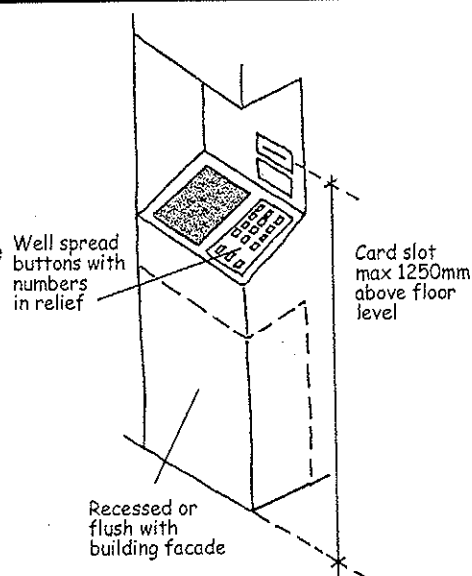
Guidance Note No. 2: ATMs (Cash Dispensers)

This leaflet is the second in a series of guidance notes covering access issues which have been produced to supplement the planning policies contained in the Adopted Tendring District Local Plan (April 1998), and encourage designers and developers to create environments and buildings which are accessible for everyone. The other two guidance notes in the series are *Guidance Note 1: General Principles* and *Guidance Note 3: Access to Shops for Disabled People*. Copies of all these documents are available from Planning and Building Services (see address at the bottom of the page).

Accessible ATMs (cash dispensers) are very important to disabled people as many banks are inaccessible and ATMs offer a considerable range of services. ATMs should be designed to be accessible to disabled users for approach, reach and eye level. When installation of ATMs in listed buildings is proposed, special care should be taken to ensure that the character and appearance of the building is preserved. Early contact with Planning and Building Services to discuss proposals in detail is advised.

Design Principles:

- ✓ Facilities should be well signed
- ✓ There should be a clear, level space of at least 1500mm x 1500mm in front of the cash machine to provide turning space for wheelchair users
- ✓ All controls and functions should be within reach both horizontally and vertically, and be legible, whether standing or seated
- ✓ The card slot and cash dispenser should not exceed 1250mm above floor level (lower if recessed or if immediate access is prevented by a projection on the building façade)
- ✓ Control buttons should be well spaced and raised and be easily identifiable by colour contrast, together with use of raised letters, numbers or Braille



- ✓ A sound system on cash machines can indicate each phase of operation to assist use by blind or partially sighted people
- ✓ The screen should be positioned so that it does not become unreadable in bright sunlight
- ✓ Obstacles to side approach by wheelchair users, such as building projections or fixed street furniture, should be avoided

- ✓ All vulnerable edges should be well rounded
- ✓ If possible, space below the cash dispenser should be left clear to allow room for wheelchair footplates, but machines should not project into a pathway and become an obstacle
- ✓ Where machines are installed within building entrances, sufficient manoeuvring space, level access and easy to open doors should be provided.

Further Information

For advice about planning applications, alterations to listed buildings, building regulations and access issues telephone: 01255 425501 or write to:

**Head of Planning and Building Services
Tendring District Council
Council Offices
Weeley
Clacton on Sea Essex
CO16 9AJ**

TENDRING DISTRICT COUNCIL ACCESS GUIDANCE

Guidance Note No. 3: Access to Shops for Disabled People

This leaflet is the third in a series of guidance notes covering access issues which have been produced to supplement the planning policies contained in the Adopted Tendring District Local Plan (April 1998), and encourage designers and developers to create environments and buildings which are accessible for everyone. The other two guidance notes in the series are *Guidance Note 1: General Principles* and *Guidance Note 2: ATMs (Cash Dispensers)*. Copies of all these documents are available from Planning and Building Services (see address at the bottom of the page).

All proposed shop entrances should incorporate design features that make access easier for people with disabilities. With listed buildings and buildings in conservation areas, the proportion and detailing of entrances and doors are often important elements of a building's special interest. A careful balance needs to be made between ensuring that shops are accessible and that the character of the building is retained. This will sometimes require innovative solutions to the overall design of the shopfront entrance. Early contact with Planning and Building Services to discuss proposals in detail is advised.

Design Principles:

- ✓ Ideally the shop entrance should have a level surface, without any steps, if not, a ramp should be provided

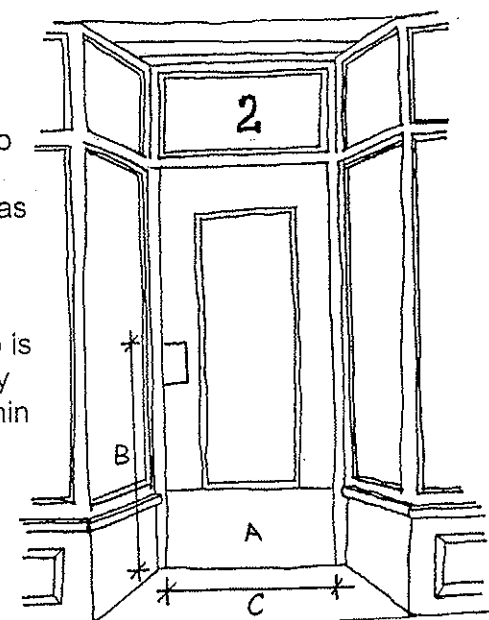
- ✓ Incorporating a ramp into a recessed entrance is often the ideal solution, as this can usually be accommodated into the design of the shopfront. Where an external ramp is not viable, the ramp may have to be provided within the shop

- ✓ Ramps should have a gradient which is not steeper than 1:12 if not more than 5m long or 1:15 up to 10m

- ✓ Thresholds should be flush

- ✓ Doorways should have a minimum clear opening width of 800 mm

- ✓ Doors should be easy to open



- A- Protection against damage by wheelchairs
- B- Height to the top of the door handle approx 1000mm
- C- Clear opening 800mm minimum

- ✓ Plain plate glass doors should be avoided as they may confuse someone who is partially sighted

- ✓ Fixings such as door handles and letter boxes should be easily accessible and identifiable

Further Information

For advice about planning applications, alterations to listed buildings, building regulations and access issues telephone: 01255 425501

or write to:

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CO16 9AJ