

Hi Marnie

Re: INSTALLATION OF FABRICATED METAL ACCESS RAMP

Rogerstone Public Library is included in the statutory list as *“a well-designed small Edwardian library building in free classical style.”*

The building is principally viewed from Tregwilym Road to the south, where its richly decorated front is elevated above the low front wall at road level and framed by its substantial side boundaries: a prominent position which contributes positively towards its setting (and therefore its significance). This setting has, however, been partially compromised by later-constructed access arrangements (ramp, railings and handrailing), which have eroded the extent of green slope to the fore (see image below) and serve to distract from the asset itself. The existing access steps from road level also result from these alterations, featuring a modern anti-slip finish with associated nosing. The principal access gate is, however, richly decorative and of considerable antiquity. Its preservation should be secured as part of these proposals.



Undated early view of Rogerstone Library, from the south-east

Approach from the south-east (along the same road) allows for part-appreciation of the full-height side elevation over the asset's substantial boundary wall, wherein the building's tall chimney stacks and cupola are most visually prominent. Views of the side elevation within approach from the north-west are more limited, due to the more diminutive nature of the side annexe (and the corresponding side boundary wall to the north), although the fine semi-circular doorway and oeil-de-boeuf window to the porch remain prominent.

This application proposes new access steps and a free-standing column-and-beam access ramp, to enable side access to (and from) the re-landscaped rear garden. The structure is to

be set 50mm away from the building, meaning it is not attached to the asset. Minor modification of a lateral boundary wall will also be required to enlarge the garden gateway aperture, to ensure universal access. As proposed, the toothed red-brick reveals to the existing masonry wall will be carefully reinstated to match the existing. Loss of the corresponding garden gate is of no concern, being evidently modern and of no historical interest.

Proposed materiality for the new will be key: both the form and finish of the proposed ramp and handrails, and the appearance of proposed new steps to the fore. Provided these are acceptable, I have no issues with the principle of this development from a heritage perspective: considering the modern nature of the existing access, the location of the proposed, and its relatively low level of visibility, only minor harm to setting (and therefore significance) of the asset will result, which can be balanced positively against the substantial public benefits brought by universal accessibility and continued viable use of this asset as a public library.

Such details (including retention of the existing front gate) should be secured by condition.

Many thanks,

Guy Arnall