

Railway station accessibility to Towner Art gallery- route 1

On 2 October 2023 a walk was undertaken using route 1. Route 1 was assessed in respect of people living with dementia/cognitive impairments, mobility impairment (mobility scooter/wheelchair users) people with mobility impairments who are walking with aids (or who have impaired mobility) and people with visual impairments.

In terms of public transport there are rarely any wheelchair accessible taxis available on the station rank and the only bus service near the station to the Winter Garden (near the Towner) is the no 3 which goes from stop R1 opposite the station. However, this bus service is infrequent and the bus company uses a type of single decker bus which is particularly difficult for wheelchair users to access the space on board.

The walk should take around 25 minutes and is under 1 mile.

Our findings are as follows:

- The signage on exiting the station concourse is poor for people with visual or cognitive impairments. The exit is in the far left corner of the station as you stand with your back to the platforms and barriers. It is located to the left of Foundry coffee shop, but be aware that you will move from light on the concourse to a darker space before reaching the exit. Be cautious when exiting the station if you are a powered wheelchair or scooter user as this is a narrow exit and usually very busy.



- The crossing you need to take outside station is to the right as you exit and you then go around the corner to the right and then you will cross the road in front of you. The pavement and road are both grey so there is no colour contrast which is confusing for people with cognitive and visual impairments.
- Be aware that the timing on the lights is not long to cross, so be cautious. The pedestrian light indicator at the far side is not visible easily and so caution needs to be taken as this is a very busy road. There is **NO** tactile indication of the refuge in the middle of the road. The control box is not very visible due to the grey colour of the roadway and pavement. The grey colour and the small refuge in the middle is particularly difficult for people with visual impairments and those using mobility scooters or wheelchairs.



- There are rotating cones on the 2 pedestrian crossing boxes for people with sensory impairment which were working at the time of the inspection.
- Once you cross the road to proceed along Gildredge Road (south) be aware of the lamp post situated in the middle of the pavement and also the bus queues that continually extend across the pavement. Also the bus stops are positioned away from the kerb so they are not where you would expect them to be. The pavement is sloping and has an adverse camber at this point.



- Ahead of you is West Street Junction with Gildredge Road- the tactile markings element of the kerb is quite worn and so may not be obvious to people with visual impairments at first.



The crossing point just before the Eagle Pub at the end of Gildredge Road- the dropped kerb is ridged and manual wheelchair users need to be cautious. This is a trip hazard and wheels can get stuck.



- The signage for the Eagle Pub is not identifiable as it is located high up on the building.



The crossing point across South Street past the Eagle pub has **NO** cone for visual impairment but it does have an audible warning. The tactile paving on the crossing is worn away and the timing is short on the pedestrian lights to get across the street.

Once you cross the corner is tight to get around with tables outside the Urban Ground coffee shop.



Be aware of the drain/gully outside Urban Ground on the left as this is a trip hazard. Also it is challenging for mobility scooters and powered/manual wheelchair users to navigate as it has an adverse camber.



The crossing point around the corner from Urban Ground towards College Road has an adverse camber so manual wheelchair users need to be cautious. It is a pedestrian crossing without lights and parked cars block some vision to the right. Use caution when crossing the road due to the poor visibility.

Cross to the left hand pavement and go along College Road.



If you need dropped kerbs all the way please cross the road at the junction ahead to the right hand side of the road as there is no dropped kerb on the left hand side of College Road if you continue on the left hand pavement. If you do **NOT** need dropped kerbs you can continue along the left hand pavement to the end of the road to reach the Towner Art gallery.



Go to the right hand side of the road at this junction if you need dropped kerbs but be aware that there are tree roots ahead on the right



hand side of the road



These tree roots are passable for scooters and the pavement can accommodate 1 wheelchair user or scooter user at a time. This pavement is not suitable for people who are walking due to the unevenness of the pavement and the tree roots, so the left hand side of the road will be more accessible if you are **not** using a wheelchair or scooter.



Once you leave the right hand side pavement to cross to the Towner at the end of the road use caution, as the visibility with parked vehicles to the left is tricky. There is a dropped kerb on both sides.



Be careful of the silver bollards outside the Towner as these merge with the background. You have arrived at the Towner!



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Liz Trethewey, Eastbourne Access Group 5 October 2023