

The logo features a central gear with a shield-like shape inside it, surrounded by a laurel wreath. Below the wreath is another gear. The text is overlaid on the central gear and wreath.

British Motor Industry Heritage Trust

ACCESS POLICY

Heritage Motor Centre
Banbury Road, Gaydon, Warwick CV35 0BJ

tb&svl/2008

Contents

1	Objectives of the Access Plan	2
2	Mission Statement of British Motor Industry Heritage Trust	2
3	Access Statement for the Trust	2
4	The Trust's access aims	3
5	Consultation and development	4
5.1	Improvements to the layout of the building	4
5.2	Improvements to the museum displays	4
6	The current facilities at the Heritage Motor Centre	5
6.1	Lower ground (museum) floor	5
6.2	Upper ground (conference) floor	6
6.3	Top floor	6
7	Future improvements	7

1. Objectives of the Access Plan

This document provides evidence of the commitment by the British Motor Industry Heritage Trust ('the Trust') to providing access for all of its visitors. It outlines current facilities and provision at the Heritage Motor Centre. The plan identifies barriers to access based on research by staff and consultation with disabled access groups, together with an action plan for the Trust giving details of suggested improvements to access, including priorities and additional measures that could be adopted.

2. Mission Statement of the British Motor Industry Heritage Trust

“To collect, conserve research and display for the benefit of the nation, motor vehicles, archives and ancillary material relating to the motor industry in Britain”.

3. Access Statement for the Trust

“The British Motor Industry Heritage Trust is fully committed to ensuring that all of its activities are fully accessible to everyone and to removing all physical, sensory, intellectual and cultural barriers to learning and enjoyment of its collections and museum”.

4. The Trust's access aims

The Trust is committed to making access a core value of all of its activities. To this end it will:

- ensure that the Heritage Motor Centre is physically accessible to people with disabilities and that visitor facilities are provided to allow access to all parts of the Centre;
- ensure that it complies with the provisions of the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) and that discrimination against people with disabilities in employment (1996), information, policy, practice and procedures (1999), service provision and access to buildings and premises (2004) is avoided;
- provide its staff with training and information to enable them to carry out their tasks and responsibilities;
- consult with people with disabilities, both individually and as a group, on a regular basis to ensure its policies, facilities and activities are as inclusive as possible;
- encourage people with disabilities to participate in the activities of the Trust, as visitors, researchers, staff and volunteers;
- aim to make its facilities accessible to all sections of the community including those from other cultures and traditions;
- provide accessible formats for published and promotional marketing information provided by the Trust to the public through printed, audio and web formats;
- in planning any new exhibitions, displays and visitor facilities, build accessibility into everything the Trust does to ensure the removal of any barriers to access;
- monitor accessibility issues on a regular basis as a result of feedback from staff, visitors and access groups.

5. Consultation and development

In December 2002 and in consultation with the South Warwickshire Access Group (SWAG), the Trust carried out an access audit. SWAG made a number of recommendations, some of which were addressed quickly. Where larger improvements were required, these were incorporated in the Trust's next Five Year Plan (2004).

5.1 Improvements to the layout of the building

Included in the Five-Year Plan were a number of actions that would improve the viability of the business, give visitors a better experience and improve access in the museum. The main priority was the separation of the conference and museum operations in order to reduce the operational difficulties experienced through using one entrance to the building. These changes involved the creation of a new museum visitor entrance at the front of the building, at the lower ground (museum) level and on the same level as the main car park. Completed in 2006, this allowed visitors direct access into the museum without having to use escalators or lifts, as was previously the case. At the same time the museum shop was moved down into the main exhibition area. Both these actions made access for people with disabilities much easier. A future development is the incorporation of a café for museum visitors and also the Archive Reading Room on this same level.

5.2 Improvements to the museum displays

In 2005 the Trust put in an application to the Heritage Lottery Fund for a major refurbishment of its exhibition provision – The Road Ahead project. In preparation for this bid, the Trust commissioned PBL to formulate an Audience Development Plan (ADP) in November 2005. The ADP included data from the 2002 SWAG access audit, together with further consultation with that group. In parallel with the need for improved interpretation, much better access for all visitors was a key tenet of the project.

The bid was successful and many of the access recommendations were encompassed in the designs for the new exhibitions. In addition, improvements were made to areas of the displays that were not the subject of the bid. Throughout the process of finalising the designs and building the new exhibition, SWAG was used as a consultant group, including giving feedback since the exhibitions were opened to the public in 2007. A summary of the facilities and layout of the museum, together with other areas of the Centre, are provided in section 6.

6. The current facilities at the Heritage Motor Centre

The collections of the British Motor Industry Heritage Trust are housed in the Heritage Motor Centre, a purpose-built museum and conference centre opened in 1993. Set in 65 acres of grounds and located in a rural location approximately 8 miles from Warwick and 11 miles from Banbury, the building is arranged over three floors, with separate access for museum and conference visitors.

The Heritage Motor Centre's current layout and facilities are in general accessible to people with disabilities, although the Trust is aware that more can and will be done to improve the experience for visitors. Current, general arrangements include:

- ◆ dedicated disabled parking spaces close to the museum and conference entrances;
- ◆ level access to all parts of the building;
- ◆ lift access to all three floors;
- ◆ disabled toilet facilities on both museum and conference levels;
- ◆ additional wheelchairs available for visitors;
- ◆ hearing induction loop systems located at various points in the building;
- ◆ audio guide provided for visitors with visual impairment;
- ◆ individual, 'touch tours' for visitors with visual impairment;
- ◆ website to a minimum of W3C/WAI A standard throughout;
- ◆ disability awareness training courses run for Trust staff;
- ◆ availability of a museum overview in a number of languages.

6.1 Lower ground (museum) floor

Located on this floor is the 4,000m² exhibition hall, within which virtually all of the museum displays are housed, including the car collection. A classroom for education groups is also situated next to the main displays. The Trust's Archive, a large collection of business records, publications, film and over one million photographs, is also housed on the lower ground floor, although public access to material from that collection is gained through a Reading Room situated on the upper ground floor. Adjacent to the exhibition hall are six conference syndicate rooms, used largely by corporate clients during the week but also by car clubs and other groups at weekends. Other facilities on this level include the Trust's maintenance and restoration workshop and miscellaneous storage rooms.

Access to the lower ground floor is via a flat floor entrance at the same level, directly from the main car park, with automatic opening doors. Additional facilities, including disabled toilets and the shop are provided at this level. A hearing induction loop system is located at the entrance pay desk.

A number of the displays are located on a mezzanine level, situated entirely within the main exhibition hall. Access to this mezzanine level is via a dedicated passenger lift, in addition to a stairway. Emergency access to the upper ground level, via a ramp, is also provided from the mezzanine.

All exhibitions that were introduced during 2007 have hearing induction loop systems installed where audio-visual material is presented. Where a written guide is provided with particular exhibitions, a large print version is available. Consideration has been given to lighting levels, use of colour and text font and size throughout the exhibition panels. Interactive exhibits have been designed to be fully accessible to visitors using wheelchairs. Adequate space is provided so visitors using wheelchairs can navigate the museum floor easily. An audio guide to the exhibitions is available for people with visual impairments.

6.2 Upper ground (conference) floor

Access to the Centre for conference visitors is via an entrance on the upper ground floor, situated on the North side of the building. This level houses the café and kitchen, one 120m² and two 150m² lecture rooms and a larger, 624m² conference/exhibition suite. Beyond the reception area is a substantial conference exhibition gallery, leading to the Trust staff offices and the Archive Reading Room. The Trust's Board Room is also on the upper ground floor and has views over the main museum exhibition hall.

There is flat floor access to the upper ground floor, with disabled car parking bays located close to the entrance, which is fitted with automatic opening doors. Lift access to the other two levels is provided from this floor. The conference reception is fitted with a hearing induction loop system and portable systems are available where required throughout the conference rooms. Disabled toilet facilities are provided in the conference reception area.

6.3 Top floor

The top floor of the building houses the Kestrel Suite, an 'Art-Deco' styled rooftop restaurant and conference suite, which has panoramic views of the local countryside. The suite is accessed by both a staircase from the conference reception area and a lift from the conference exhibition gallery.

7. Future improvements

The Trust recognises that more work is needed to improve access arrangements for its visitors. Priorities for future developments include:

- ◆ relocation of café and Archive Reading Room to the lower ground floor, so all the museum visitor facilities are on one level;
- ◆ extension of hearing induction loop system to the education classroom;
- ◆ addition of Braille labels to museum displays;
- ◆ addition of subtitles to audio-visual presentations;
- ◆ improvement of website to W3C/WAI AA and AAA standard;
- ◆ production of an access guide to the Centre.

The Trust has also embarked on a major project to provide a new centre housing its archive, reserve vehicle collection and workshops, adjacent to the museum. The overarching aim is to provide much improved access to all aspects of the Trust's collection, with an expanded range of opportunities to research and experience the material that is currently behind the scenes. It will allow access to these collections in a manner that addresses a much wider audience, together with new programmes for learning and enjoyment. The building will be designed to incorporate the best possible facilities to meet the Trust's access aims in full.