

CASE STUDY - 'One Team Wessex'

Design Standardisation on Access for All (AfA)

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The Challenge

'Step free' access is vitally important to gain easy access to rail stations for every person. But its implementation can have both short and long term impacts on passengers and train operators. As professional advisers we balance the short term construction impacts against ongoing maintenance to develop whole life designs for our customers who own and maintain these assets.



On the Wessex route, we have listened to stakeholder needs and collaborated closely to meet those needs. By standardising our approach we are now delivering consistent solutions, in terms of end user experience and in terms of predictability of cost and time for Network Rail.

Combined with clear scoping and modern methods of construction, the standardisation of design elements has been critical to maximising return from investment for Network Rail on their Access for All (AfA) upgrades in Wessex.



How has this been achieved?

Asset procurement on the Wessex route is through a collaborative partnership with Network Rail, Osborne and our designer Arcadis. Co-location at Waterloo binds the team and opens the doors for early conversations. At design development stage this is critical to delivering not only Network Rail's requirements but also those of the Train Operating Companies (TOC's) and in turn the travelling public.

Lessons learnt are voiced and incorporated into the design along with the specific needs of TOC's, passenger groups and the wider Network Rail business. This early consultation and the close collaborative relationships created by the people who form the 'One Team Wessex' on this route, has led to standard design elements.



These standard approaches are captured in a new 'How To' guide for all AfA upgrades across the route. Adoption of the guide by Network Rail allows those savings to be shared across the wider rail network to continually improve the end user experience.

Realising the Benefits

What did we do? To capture 'what good looks like' and incorporate ideas into the design we facilitated sessions with the Route Asset Management teams and the TOC's. Site 'walkover' sessions with real life examples reinforced both the good points and the areas of frustration for asset operators and maintainers.

Our design team then worked with suppliers to develop solutions and details which resolved ongoing issues. On-going engagement with the stakeholders throughout the design and delivery process ensured solutions were verified and incorporated into the final proposals.

TOP: AfA Footbridge

MIDDLE: AfA Lifts with clear areas

MIDDLE: Canopies and Drainage

BOTTOM: Access bridge

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Solutions ranged from simple to more complex and included:

- Inward opening windows to allow cleaning and replacement from the walkway without stopping trains running.
- Sloping the roof to allow rain water to drain to the outermost edge of the structure which reduced the number of downpipes cluttering the platform edge and allowed safe access for maintenance.
- Sealing the footbridge spans to prevent driving rain which improved passenger experience and eliminated the need for internal span drainage.
- Providing dedicated power points on the span to aid cleaning.
- M&E containment to provide a less cluttered structure.
- Widening the support structure to increase accessibility and a feeling of openness and improved maneuverability for lifts users.
- Providing additional storage under the stairs.

Whilst the solutions might have been simple, in a live operational rail environment any impact on passengers and train operations has significant time and cost implications for all parties and ultimately can impact on reputation.

Proof of the success of a standard approach is demonstrated at Ascot, Virginia Water and Godalming Stations, with the £4m upgrade at Godalming opening four weeks earlier than planned.

To find out how we can transfer learning to your scheme, please contact Matt Smith at matthew.smith@osborne.co.uk

