

## **Birmingham Back to Backs Access Statement**

Birmingham Back to Backs  
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### **Introduction**

1. Birmingham Back to Backs are located on a busy street (Hurst Street) in Birmingham city centre, next to the Hippodrome Theatre. The Back to Backs are a series of small Grade II\* Listed houses built back to back with a single dividing wall between them, and they enclose a walled courtyard which is accessed via a level alleyway from Inge Street. They are three-storey buildings with a small, furnished room on each floor and steep, winding staircases between each floor, though we operate ground-floor only tours. Space is very limited and it can be quite dark inside. With the exception of George Saunders's tailor shop, objects are suitable for handling (which is paused during Covid 19 pandemic).
2. Mobile phone reception is good across the site. Visitors are always accompanied by a guide who will welcome them and provide a narrative as they tour the property.
3. There is a level-access toilet with handrails situated within the yard.
4. There is a portable induction loop available in reception.
5. Light levels can be low around the property. Genuine fires, candles and paraffin lamps are lit to evoke an appropriate atmosphere.
6. Whilst we regret that dogs are not permitted on site due to limited open space, assistance dogs are welcome.
7. Due to confined spaces and narrow staircases, large bags will be stored behind reception.
8. We regret that photography is not permitted inside the houses due to light-sensitive objects and out of courtesy to other visitors.
9. For Health and Safety reasons and due to limited space, visiting is by guided tour only – please book using the online booking facility on the National Trust website.
10. Ground floor only tours are currently available and these are enhanced with visuals of the upper floors.

### **Arrival & Parking Facilities**

1. Birmingham Back to Backs are located on the corner of Hurst Street and Inge Street, next to the Birmingham Hippodrome Theatre. There are a limited number of directional brown signs in the general locality.
2. There is accessible drop-off available outside the property, on Inge Street, by our gated alleyway. You can notify your arrival at the visitor reception on Hurst Street. There is a step from visitor reception into the courtyard, the alleyway access on Inge Street provides level access into the yard.
3. The roads and pathways approaching the Back to Backs are tarmac surfaces. There are no accessible parking spaces at Hurst Street any longer, pavements outside are also on a tarmac road surface.

4. As accessible parking is not available, it is possible to drop visitors off outside the property and find parking. The nearest car park is at the Arcadian, but parking is also available nearby on Bromsgrove Street or Pershore Street.
5. New Street Station is 460 metres away from the Back to Backs.

## WCs

1. There is a level access toilet with left hand transfer in the yard, opposite the alleyway entrance from Inge Street.
2. The accessible toilet measures 2.25m x 1.6m.
3. There are no adult changing facilities due to space restrictions, but baby changing facilities are available here.
4. All the WCs have automatic hand driers, tile floors, and brick wall surfaces.
5. All the WCs have artificial lighting with no natural light once the door is closed.

## Visitor Reception

1. The visitors' reception has a wooden floor throughout. The area also functions as the on-site shop (currently closed due to covid 19) and therefore includes various wall displays. National Trust products for sale are displayed on shelving and free-standing units. Sound echoes are effectively reduced in this area.
2. There is step access to visitor reception from the public pathway in Hurst Street. There are two manually – operated doors that lead into the reception from Hurst Street. Both of these doors are 750mm wide and open inwards. One door has a level threshold the other door a small step of 100mm. The manually-operated entrance door from the yard into reception is 770mm wide, opening inwards to 90 degrees, and has 2 steps down into reception from the yard. Staff are available to assist with opening the doors if required.
3. The reception desk is 900mm high. Staff can move freely from behind the desk to talk to customers as the need arises. Lower cupboard surfaces are also available for writing on should customers have difficulty in reaching the reception desk.
4. There are large windows allowing natural light into the reception area, which is also lit with LED lamp bulbs.
5. There are two wooden chairs available to sit on. We regret that, due to space constraints, we do not have chairs with arms permanently available on reception, though these can be made available.
6. There is a portable induction loop available at the reception desk.

## House

1. The Backs to Backs is a small site made up of several small buildings surrounding an inner yard. The entrances to the show houses are on the same side of the yard as the level entrance via the alleyway, and only a short distance across from reception.
2. The pavements on the exterior of the property are tarmac surfaces. The yard is paved, and is uneven in places.
3. Entrances into the show houses are level. The doors are manually-operated, but are usually opened by tour guides.
4. The doorway to House 1 is 760mm wide and opens inwards. The doorway to House 2 is 720mm wide and opens inwards. The doorway to House 3 is 750mm wide and opens inwards. House 4 is more easily accessed from the street. The doorway to House 4 is 760mm wide and opens inwards.



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5. The rooms are small and well-furnished, and so are not conducive to echoes. However, there are sound points in some of the rooms. Some of these provide background music and sounds. Please let us know if we can arrange a quiet tour for you.
6. House 1 is lit by candlelight. House 2 is lit by paraffin lamps. Houses 3 and 4 are lit by LED lighting. There is limited natural light, as windows are only on one side of the houses.
7. The houses are on three storeys but we are currently only offering ground floor only tours.
8. The rooms are very small and filled with furniture. There is not adequate space to turn a wheelchair because of this.
9. There are many seats around the houses which can be used. On the ground floor of properties 1, 2 and 3 some seats have armrests.
10. All visits to the Back to Backs are guided. On the day of your visit your guide will be able to assist with any access requirements you may have.
11. There are no WCs in the houses, but there is a level access WC opposite the houses in the courtyard.
12. The houses are not suitable inside for access for powered wheelchairs or powered mobility vehicles.
13. Should visitors not wish to complete the tour with their group, arrangements can be made to provide a place to sit either in reception if wearing a face mask or within the courtyard.

## Catering

1. There is currently no catering facility at the Back to Backs.

## Garden

1. There is no garden at the Back to Backs, only a courtyard.

## Contact details for more information

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