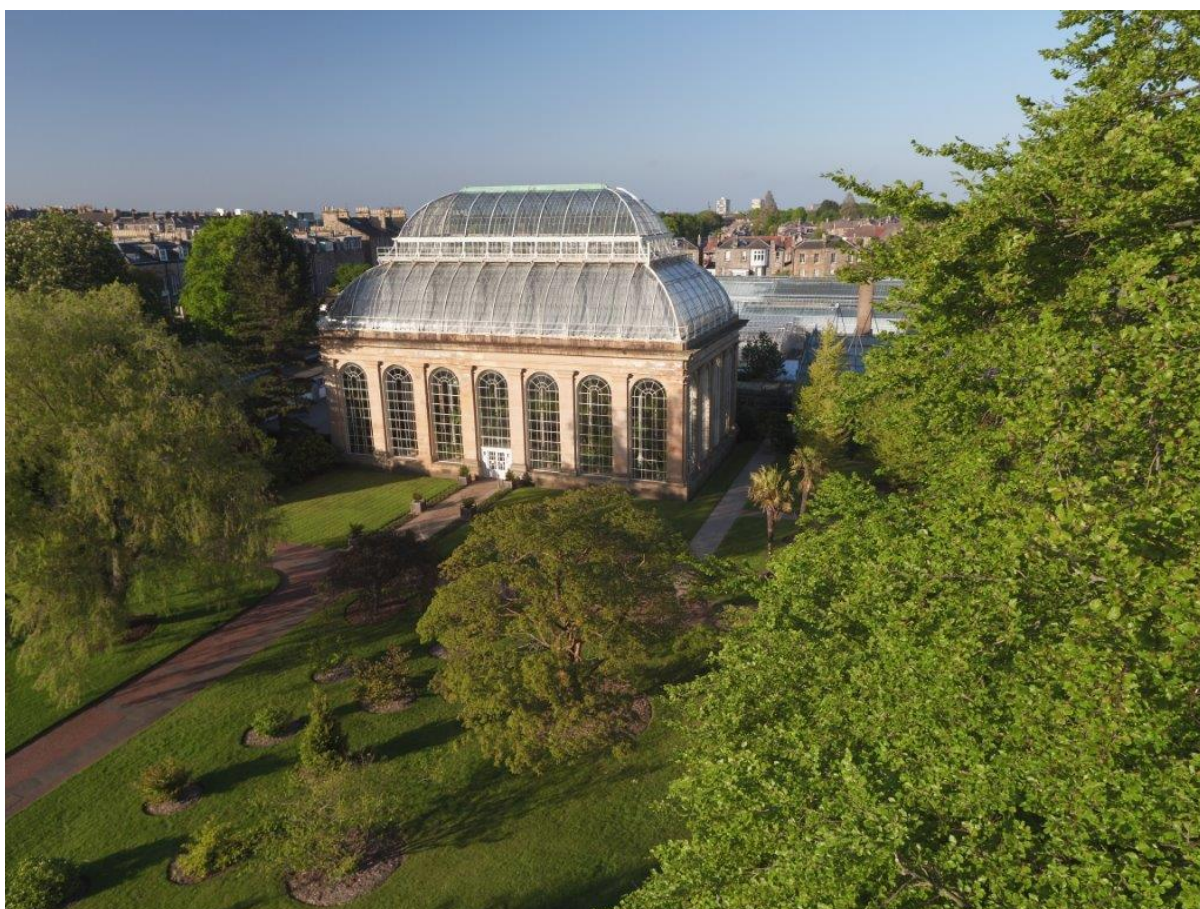




Royal
Botanic Garden
Edinburgh

Access Statement



The Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh
Arboretum Place/Inverleith Row
Edinburgh EH3 5LR

+44 (0) 131 248 2909

www.rbge.org.uk



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1.0 Our Accessibility Promise to You



Above: Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh Glasshouse and lawn

The Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh welcomes all visitors and aims to provide best possible access to everyone in order that they enjoy their visit to our Garden whether it is for a walk, a guided tour, an event or exhibition, meal, meeting or conference.

We provide:

- Accessible toilets in our visitor centre, restaurants and in the Garden.
- Mobility scooters and wheelchairs for visitors to use.
- Seating at regular intervals throughout the Garden.
- Water for assistance dogs in our restaurants.
- Pen, paper and magnifying glass at our Visitor Welcome desk.

If you require any further information about specific access or need advice about planning your visit please contact us on: +44 (0) 131 248 2909 or email visitorwelcome@rbge.ac.uk.

If we have not covered your access needs in this document, please contact us and we will discuss your needs and offer assistance where we can.

This Access Statement aims to accurately describe the facilities and services that we offer all our visitors and guests and does not contain personal opinions as to our suitability for those with access requirements.

2.0 A Map of the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh



Above: Garden map showing the East Gate Inverleith Row entrance (top right) and the West Gate Arboretum Place entrance and John Hope Gateway visitor centre (bottom middle).

The Weather

Please note that in severe weather conditions the Garden closes for safety reasons. You are welcome to call us to check in advance that the Garden is open on +44 (0) 131 248 2909. Visitors are recommended to take extra care outside when exposed to weather conditions such as wind and rain. Please note that the John Hope Gateway visitor centre remains open even when the Garden closes due to extreme weather.

3.0 How To Reach Us

The Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh, EH3 5LR, is just one mile north of Princes Street and can be accessed by our West Gate at Arboretum Place or the East Gate on Inverleith Row. You can plan your journey by using www.transportdirect.info.

3.1 Walking Directions from Waverley Station

When you arrive at Waverley Station make your way to Princes Street.

- Turn left and walk to Hanover Street which is the first street on your right.
- Walk up Hanover Street, crossing George Street and Queen Street, and walk down Dundas Street. Follow this road all the way to Canon Mills.
- At the traffic lights turn left onto Inverleith Row. As you continue onwards up Inverleith Row, you will find the East Gate entrance to the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh on the left hand side.

The distance is one mile approximately.

3.2 Pedestrian Crossings

There is a pedestrian crossing outside the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh's East Gate entrance on Inverleith Row. Currently, there is no pedestrian crossing outside our West Gate entrance on Arboretum Place.

3.4 By Rail

The nearest railway station is Waverley Station which is 1.5 miles away from the Garden. It is possible to use the number 8 bus from North Bridge to the Garden, or the 23 and 27 from The Mound or Hanover Street

3.5 Bicycle



Above: Bicycle stands can be found at the East Gate, and also the West Gate.

3.6 By Bus

The Lothian Buses number 8, 23 and 27 stop on Inverleith Row near the East Gate of the Garden. There is no seating at the bus stops on arrival, but there is seating in the bus shelters on the other side of the road when you depart.



Above: The Royal Botanic Gardens Bus Stop

Buses also stop outside the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh's main reception and Balfour Building, the site of the Library, Herbarium, Lecture Theatre, Conference Room and Classrooms. For timetables visit www.lothianbuses.com.

The West Gate is serviced by the World Heritage Tour Bus and the Majestic Tour Bus as well as the number 9 (on Saturdays and Sundays from 31 May to 21 September).

3.7 Taxis

Taxis can stop right outside the West Gate next to the entrance gates, from where there is easy access into the John Hope Gateway Visitor Centre. There is also a free phone to a local taxi company at the Information desk when you are ready to leave. Taxis can also stop on the roadside outside the East Gate entrance and there is a free phone to call taxis at the East Gate Lodge on departure. Please ask a Visitor Welcome member of staff.

3.8 Car Parking

Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh has a maximum of six blue badge disabled parking bays located to the left of the West Gate entrance gates on Arboretum Place, offering free parking. Parking is also free on Saturdays and Sundays on Arboretum Place, Inverleith Terrace and Inverleith Row opposite the East Gate. Parking meters are operational down these streets on weekdays. Blue badge holders can park in metered bays for free if displaying their badge.



Above: Disabled spaces at the Garden's West Gate at Arboretum Place

4.0 Garden Entrances

There are two Garden entrances.

- The West Gate at Arboretum Place
- The East Gate at Inverleith Row.

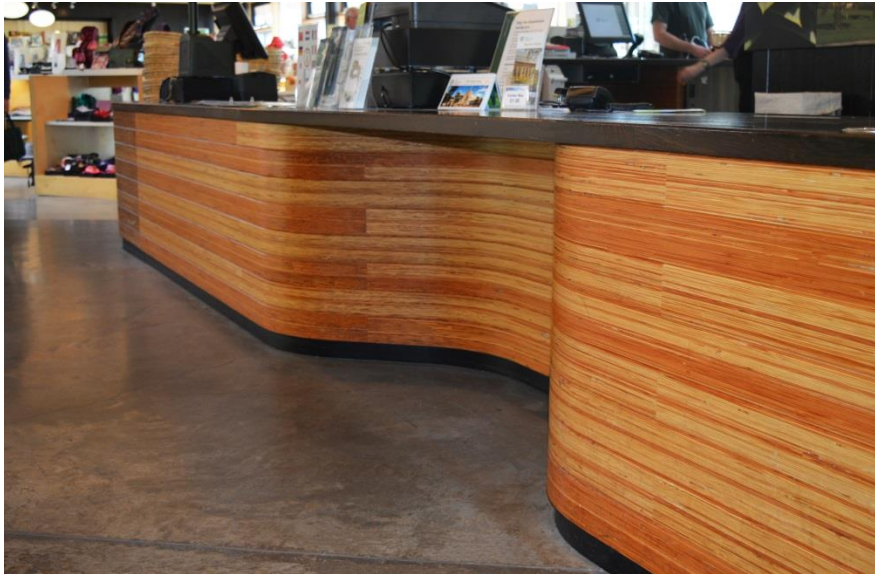
4.1 The West Gate, Arboretum Place – John Hope Gateway Visitor Centre

The West Gate is the main entrance to the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh, where the John Hope Gateway visitor centre (below) is located. The step-free entrance is wheelchair accessible. Note, there is a foot mat at the gate which protects the Garden's plants from external plant diseases.

Please note that manual wheelchair users may need assistance on the 70m path leading to and from the Garden from the John Hope Gateway (which has an incline of 1.12). The path can be avoided by taking the accessible lift to restaurant level and to the terrace beyond.



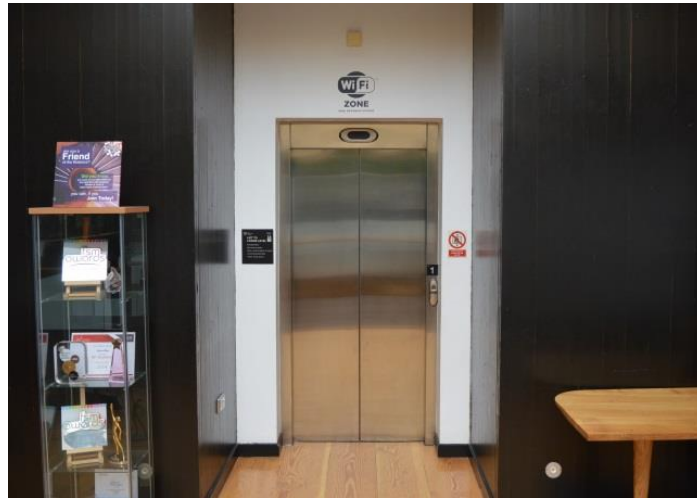
Above: The entrance to the John Hope Gateway building, which opened in 2009.



Above: The information desk at the entrance has a lowered section to the till point and a hearing loop.



Above: The John Hope Gateway has four motorised scooters and three wheelchairs for visitors to use. If possible, please book in advance by calling 0131 248 2909.



Above: A lift, large enough to accommodate a person using a standard wheelchair and at least one companion, is available to take visitors to The Gateway restaurant on the first floor and to the outdoor terrace beyond. It measures 90cms wide x 135cm depth x 190cm height.

There are three accessible toilets in the John Hope Gateway (see page 20).

4.2 The David Douglas Room

The David Douglas Room on the first floor of the John Hope Gateway is often used for external meetings, anniversaries and events. It offers panoramic views over the Garden and is ideal for parties of up to 40 people. It can be reached from the ground floor by the accessible lift (see above). There is an accessible toilet on the same floor.

4.3 The Patrick Geddes Room

The Patrick Geddes Room on the first floor of the John Hope Gateway is often used for external events and courses. It is accessible from the ground floor by lift (see above) and there is an accessible toilet opposite.

4.4 The Real Life Science Studio

Located on the ground floor of the John Hope Gateway the studio is accessed through wide sliding glass doors and in close proximity to accessible toilets at the Visitor Centre's entrance.

4.5 The East Gate, Inverleith Row – East Gate Lodge

The East Gate on Inverleith Row is well serviced by Lothian Buses (see page 6).

- The entrance is accessible by wheelchair.
- Note, there is a foot mat at the gate to protect the Garden's plants.
- The East Gate Lodge where you will find a 'Welcome, Tickets and Information' window (below) with a portable hearing loop.
- There is a coffee shop with outside seating (see page 18).
- There is one accessible toilet.

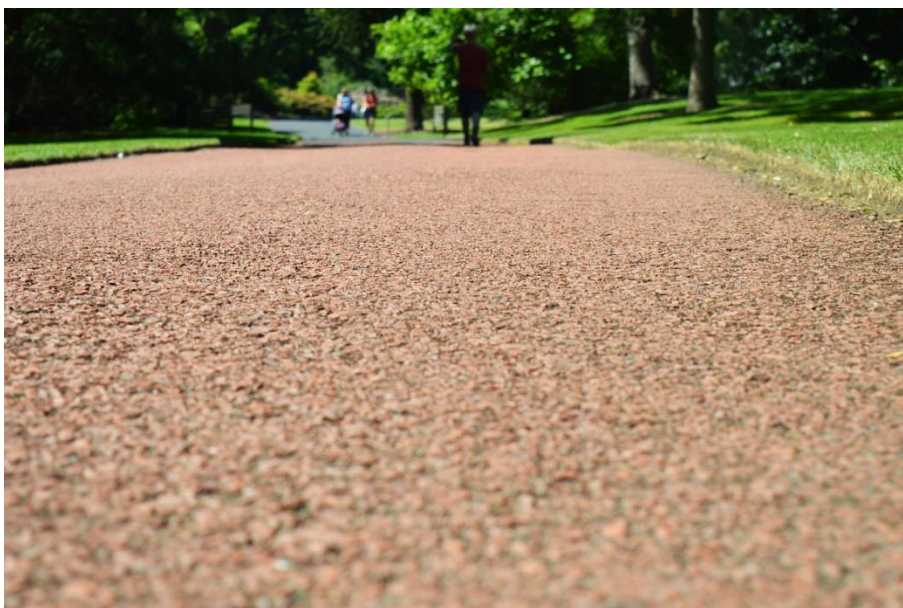


5.0 The Garden

The Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh is one of the leading botanic gardens in the world. It is largely accessible to wheelchair users, with marked routes, and its public buildings have level or ramped ground floor access. There are tarmac paths in most places. Any paths which are not wheelchair accessible are sign-posted. Beware that some of the Garden's paths can be a little steep, due to the gradient and/or camber.



Above: Signage indicating wheelchair accessible paths



Above: Typical paths are tarmac

Throughout the Garden, signage is at ground or low level so that information can be readily seen by a child's eye or when in a seated position. The Garden provides 140 benches across the Garden with arms and without.



Above: Garden benches with arms



Above: Garden benches without arms

Our team of volunteer Garden Guides conduct tours around the Garden at 11.00hrs and 14.00hrs every day, from 1 April to 30 October. Tours last 90 minutes and we always try to tailor the tour to meet the specific needs of the group. If you would like to enjoy a guided tour, please call in advance to discuss your needs on 0131 248 2909.

5.1 Glasshouse Visit

The Garden's Glasshouses, a highlight of any visit, are home to over 3,000 exotic plants from all over the world.

- The Glasshouses are accessible to wheelchair users and assistance dogs are welcome. Most doors are push-button automatic doors (see below). Please note that due to health and safety risks, the 'Plants & People' Glasshouse is currently not accessible to mobility scooter and motorised wheelchair users but this is something we are working to remedy at the very earliest.
- On occasions, the Glasshouse can be closed and you are advised to check our website or call 0131 248 2909 before your visit.
- Visitors pay a small fee to visit the Glasshouses which is gifted back to the Garden to help with conservation projects. Carers go free.
- Please note, there are ponds and water features in the Glasshouses which require care and assistance to navigate.
- Manual wheelchair users should be aware of a gradient of up to 1:6 across a small bridge in the Rainforest Riches Glasshouse and the 1.15 gradients (with resting places) on route to and from the Montane Tropics Glasshouse.



Above: Push button automatic doors in the Glasshouses

5.2 Inverleith House

The Garden's contemporary art gallery is accessible to wheelchair users, with ramp access at the double-door entrance (see image to follow). The narrowest doorway within Inverleith House is 79cm.

Between the entrance and the ground floor of the gallery, there is a platform lift (see image below). The lift door is 80cm wide and the lift itself is 120cm deep by 86cm wide. The safe working load is 750 lbs or 340kg. Please ask for assistance on arrival.



Above: Inverleith House entrance and the lift for wheelchair users.

There is also an accessible toilet in the basement of the building which can be reached via a lift in the centre of the building. The lift door is 80cm wide and the lift itself is 140cm deep by 110cm wide.

Assistance may be required to open a door on route to the accessible toilet, or to use the alternative ramped route to and from the basement and WC area accessed from the back of Inverleith House.

5.3 The Botanic Cottage



The Botanic Cottage is a community and education centre, primarily for use by pre-booked groups, but open to the public on selected days. The core of the building is 250 years old but during its re-build at the Garden in 2015, efforts were made to ensure that this historic building is suitable for 21st century needs, particularly with regards to accessibility.

On the ground floor, there are two accessible toilets – one inside the cottage and one outside. The ground floor has level access and the floor coverings are sandstone flagstones. In the Garden Room and Kitchen, tables can be used by wheelchair users, and in the Potting Shed, one of the potting benches has been designed specifically for wheelchair users. Each room has sufficient space for a wheelchair user, person with a carer or assistance dog to move around unimpeded; pillars in the ground floor rooms have been sanded and the corners smoothed to reduce risk of accidents.

There is one room upstairs, the Professor's Room, which is accessed by a stone spiral staircase with a metal handrail. There is a platform lift, accessed from a ramp at the rear of the building, which can be operated with staff assistance, ensuring that the upstairs room is accessible for all standard wheelchairs.

5.4 The Caledonian Hall

The Caledonian Hall, built in 1842, overlooks the famous Rock Garden and is often used for weddings and public engagements for up to 100 people. It is all ground level, has a step free entrance and an accessible toilet inside.



6.0 Catering

There are three catering outlets in the Garden: The Gateway restaurant in the John Hope Gateway visitor centre at the West Gate; the Terrace Café in the centre of the Garden and the East Gate Lodge coffee shop. They cater for most dietary requirements as indicated on the menu.

6.1 The Gateway Restaurant

The Gateway Restaurant is on the first floor of the John Hope Gateway and can be accessed by the lift, located to the rear of the main wooden spiral staircase in the atrium (see page 10). It takes you directly to the restaurant entrance point.



Above: Welcome at The Gateway Restaurant.

- The tables, which are accessible for wheelchair users, offer a view over-looking the bio-diversity Garden.
- There are accessible toilets on the same floor as the restaurant.
- The restaurant can also be accessed by scooters and wheelchairs from the Garden via the John Hope Gateway decking where there is a push button automatic door and step free access.
- Tables and furniture can be moved as required.
- There are large print menus available and our staff are happy to read out the menu



Above: Push button automatic door at the John Hope Gateway

6.2 The Terrace Café

The Terrace Café by Inverleith Lawn is accessible by wheelchair and also provides an accessible toilet. Outside on the terrace, there are two tables that have been designated as having a priority for wheelchair users. The staff in the Terrace Café, which is a self-service outlet, would be happy to assist you or serve you at your table. Please ask for assistance.



Above: Priority tables for wheelchair users at the Terrace cafe

6.3 East Gate Lodge

You will find a selection of coffees, teas and snacks at the East Gate Lodge and an area where you can sit outside, which is accessible for wheelchairs. There is also an accessible toilet inside the Lodge. If you need assistance, the staff will happily help you or serve you at a table outside, so please just ask.



Above: Outdoor seating at the East Gate Lodge

7.0 Shop

There is a shop in the John Hope Gateway, easily accessed directly from the entrance foyer, which offers a wide range of quality gifts, souvenirs, books and plants.



Above: Wide aisles in the John Hope Gateway shop.

Features of the shop:

- Step free access and spacious placement of shop fixtures to allow ease of movement for wheelchairs and motorised scooters.
- The indoor plant area is accessed through automatic doors and there is ramp access to the outdoor plant area.
- The shop is evenly and well lit.
- There is a hearing loop at the till point, a magnifying glass, pen and paper.
- Shop staff are always on hand to offer assistance.

8.0 Accessible Toilets

These are the locations of accessible toilets at the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh:

- Three in the John Hope Gateway visitor centre at the West Gate (two at the entrance and one on the first floor)
- One in the East Gate Lodge at the East Gate
- One located centrally in the Garden outside the Fern House
- One in the Garden's Terrace café
- One in Inverleith House, accessed via lift or ramp to basement (ask member of staff for assistance (see 9.2).
- One in the Caledonian Hall
- Two in the Balfour Building
- One in the Fletcher Building



Above: An accessible toilet at the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh

8.1 Changing Places WCs nearby

There are two Changing Places WCs in the area at the following locations. For more information, please visit www.changing-places.org:

1.04 miles from the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh:

Edinburgh College, Granton Campus, Sports Block
350 West Granton Road
Edinburgh EH5 1QE
Open Monday – Friday: 8.30am to 5pm
Tel: 0131 669 4400

The toilet is located on the ground floor in the Sports block corridor. It provides a height adjustable, adult sized, free standing changing bench and mobile hoist (loop system). The toilet is centrally placed with room either side for carers. The toilet can be used by anyone in the area that needs to use it.

1.19 miles from the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh:

Royston Wardieburn Community Centre
11 Pilton Drive North
Edinburgh EH5 1NF
Open Monday- Friday: 9.00am – 9.00pm
Saturday: 10am – 2pm
Sunday 1pm – 5pm

This toilet is located on the ground floor of the community centre. It provides a height adjustable, adult sized, free standing changing bench and mobile hoist (loop system). The toilet is centrally placed with room either side for carers. The toilet can be used by anyone in the area that needs to use it.

9.0 Hearing Loops

A permanent Induction Loop is fitted at the John Hope Gateway Visitor Centre Information Desk. There are four portable loops located at the John Hope Gateway shop counter, the East Gate Visitor Welcome counter, Inverleith House reception desk and the Glasshouse Visit Information Desk in the Temperate Palmhouse.



Above: The induction loop in the shop at the John Hope Gateway

10.0 Assistance Dogs

The Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh welcomes all registered assistance dogs to the Garden. Dog bowls of water are available on request at our restaurants and coffee shops. Dogs can be let off their leads in Inverleith Park which is directly opposite the Garden's West Gate Entrance on Arboretum Place.



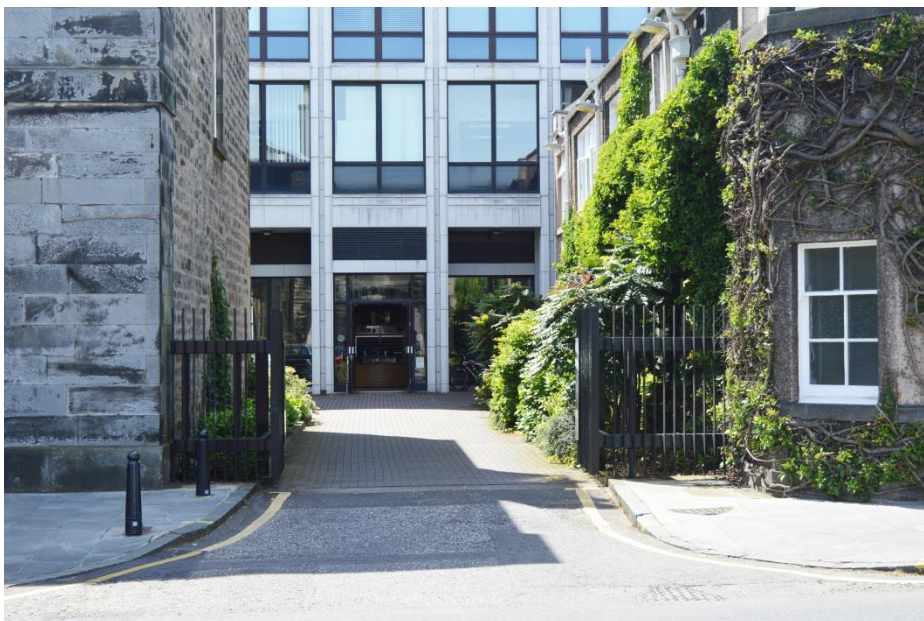
Above: Guide dog Huxley with toddler Francesca at the Garden

11.0 The Balfour Building

The Balfour Building is used to access the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh's library, herbarium, lecture theatre, conference room and classrooms. It is located at 20A Inverleith Row and a stop for local buses 8, 23 and 27 is outside. There is metered parking opposite on Inverleith Row which is free to blue badge holders.



Above: The Balfour Building on Inverleith Row



Above: The Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh entrance on Inverleith Row where the herbarium and library can be accessed.

A lift to the left of the reception area of the Balfour Building provides access to the library and an accessible toilet is also located nearby. An accessible lift is available to take visitors to the herbarium as well as stairs as an alternative route. The lift measures 160cm width by 140cm depth by 214 cm height.

11.1 The Lecture Theatre

The Lecture Theatre on the ground floor of the Balfour Building features a hearing loop system for visitors and has space for wheelchairs on the front row (see below). Assistance dogs are welcome. An accessible toilet is located a short distance away down the corridor and to the left. A spacious Conference Room is situated next door to the Lecture Theatre.



Above: The Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh Lecture Theatre.

Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh staff will assist those who require help in the event of fire and accessible toilets are physically searched in the event of an emergency evacuation.

12.0 The Fletcher Building

The Fletcher Building is used for school visits, educational events and functions. It is accessible through wide automatic sliding doors providing entry to the classroom. There is an accessible toilet available in the Fletcher Building. The education or events teams will assist those who require help in the event of an emergency and accessible toilets are physically searched in the event of an evacuation.

13.0 Evacuation

Should a fire alarm sound and an evacuation take place, the Visitor Welcome team or other Garden staff will assist those with specific needs to evacuate. Within the John Hope Gateway, there are two dedicated refuge points for visitors and staff in the North and South stairwells. Our Visitor Welcome team will assist those who require help to those areas, and wait with them until the fire services arrive. Accessible toilets in all buildings are physically searched in the event of an emergency evacuation.

14.0 Future Plans

The Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh is part of the VisitScotland Accessible Tourism Steering Group and aims to continue to enhance its offering to those with specific needs. Our future plans:

- The Garden will be the national host of Euan's Guide Disabled Access Day on Saturday 12 March 2016.
- We will continue to provide disability awareness training for our staff.
- We plan to provide more general information about the Garden in large print.

If you would like to provide any feedback on this Access Statement, we would welcome your comments. We would be interested to hear if there is any information we may have missed, or things you think might help us to improve accessibility in terms of services and facilities.

Please contact us at marketing@rbge.org.uk