A SENSE OF PLACE!
AUDIO-DESCRIPTIONS OF ARCHITECTURE FOR
BLIND AND PARTIALLY SIGHTED PEOPLE

EVALUATION OF PILOT PROJECT
THEATRE ROYAL AND JUBILEE LIBRARY,
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Evaluation report summary

**Sense of Place** is an Arts Council funded project that ran from the beginning of May to mid-July 2007. A collaboration between Vocaleyes, a focus group of visually impaired people and the School of Architecture and Design, University of Brighton, its aims were to design and then test a pilot audio-description of architecture with blind and partially sighted people. Two contrasting buildings were chosen, the Theatre Royal and the Jubilee Library in Brighton, and an audio-described live tour developed and then evaluated during Architecture Week 2007.

**Feedback**
The response from the blind and partially sighted volunteers was very positive. They were able to both provide valuable insights on what they wanted from architectural audio-description and constructive detailed criticism of the pilot tours.

Volunteers and participants on the day also responded well to their experiences.

The feedback from students, who acted as volunteer describers and guides, was positive as well. They all felt their involvement had enabled them to get past assumptions and anxieties about 'how to act' with disabled people, to recognise the individuality and knowledge of the visually impaired volunteers they worked with, and to develop an understanding of how to offer and give assistance when required.

However, the project also raised interesting tensions around how to best integrate the existing expertise of Vocaleyes describers and how to enable explorations of different kinds of interpretation of architectural space – something of particular interest to the script-writers (an artist, journalist, architectural writer and architect) involved.

**Lessons learnt**

The process of writing an audio-description of architecture for delivery as a live tour have enabled guidelines to be proposed for the design and delivery of such tours in the future. These are given in Appendix 5, under the headings of journey sequence, architectural orientation, the importance of story-telling, colouring in the picture,
whose interpretation?, expertise and accuracy, touching opportunities, pre-tour
notes, using the voice and enabling a dialogue. Recommendations are also made
about organisational issues, modes of delivery, involving blind and partially sighted
people, training requirements for describers and marketing.

**On future work**

The success of this pilot suggests that it would be valuable to investigate scaling up
the process - testing the guidelines across a wider range of buildings and examining
other modes of delivery as well as the live tour, particularly D-I-Y audio tapes or
podcasts.

It is recommended that Vocaleyes costs two types of services for offering audio-
descriptions of architecture. The first would be to use expert describers to provide
audio-descriptions, and the second, to design training programmes for architects and
others to audio-describe their own buildings. It is hoped that these two approaches
can be tested through scaling-up, both through the London Open House weekend in

In addition the project showed the potential educational benefits of working with
students in architecture and related subjects as volunteer describers. The student
festival component of the LFA offers the possibility of developing this aspect further,
if funding can be found.

Finally, the Sense of Place project suggests two other areas that could be usefully
developed. There still remain issues about the type of ‘building stories’ we tell, which
could be explored further by linking into current debates both within architecture and
across disability arts. And the demand from the blind and partially sighted
participants for better tactile aids in support of architectural appreciation indicates
another possible creative area of study and development.
Figure 1: a student volunteer test describes the auditorium of the Theatre Royal Brighton with Toby Davey, Deputy Director Service Development, at Vocableyes.
Project background

In November 2006 a seminar organised by Vocaleyes and the Centre for Accessible Environments (CAE) brought together a group of people interested in making architecture and the built environment accessible for blind and partially sighted people. The stimulus for this event had come from a number of sources including;

- the need for audio-descriptions which enabled visually impaired people to enjoy architecture from which they are otherwise excluded
- a concern for richer understandings of inclusive design beyond access and way-finding
- the increasing number of events opening up architecture to the public such as Architecture Week and Open House, but which were not including blind and partially sighted people as part of their potential audiences.

It was agreed to “use two iconic buildings and work up descriptions of both in conjunction with a focus group consisting of architecture students, architects and visually impaired people.” This was both to research “different ways of feeling and experiencing space can be expressed, enabling a richer dialogue across a variety of remits” and to develop a schematic and reproducible framework for the architectural audio-description process.

It was felt that such a project would not only open up architecture to blind and partially sighted people, but could also improve clients, architects, and architectural students’ understandings of how visually impaired people interact with buildings; and provide architectural descriptions which would also be of interest to a wider public.

We therefore wanted to explore both different approaches to architectural interpretation and its communication, and to ask blind and partially sighted people about what they wanted to know and experience about architecture. As one participant said “considering how to communicate interpretation to others can result in a much deeper appreciation of that interpretation.”

As a result, Vocaleyes, together with the School of Architecture and Design at the University of Brighton, made a successful bid to the Arts Council SE for a small pilot audio-description project of two buildings in Brighton – the Theatre Royal and the Jubilee Library – offering and evaluating an audio-described tour for visually impaired
people during Architecture Week 2007. Called A Sense of Place! this project’s aims were formulated as follows:

i. To open up architecture to blind and partially sighted people for creative and critical appreciation through an innovative and involving project

ii. To bring together blind and partially sighted people, architects, designers, artists, architectural and interior design students and staff, describers, curators, building owners and users to explore appropriate language for the description of architecture for a new audience

iii. To write and test an appropriate description of the chosen spaces

iv. To enable architectural and interior students and staff to get involved in a collaborative dialogue with blind and partially sighted people about the local built environment

v. To offer a lively event during Architecture Week 2007 available to all but which is particularly aimed at engaging with blind and partially sighted people

vi. To capture underlying issues from the pilot, so as to enable a scaling-up process with recommendations for future description frameworks, appropriate technologies, modes of delivery, user participation methods, and guidance and training requirements

Project development process

The Sense of Place! project ran from the beginning of May to mid-July 2007. It was envisaged in three main stages;

• A ‘design’ process exploring, recording and communicating different perceptions of, and perspectives on, these urban and architectural spaces, working in partnership with visually impaired people

• A ‘testing’ process of a live audio-described tour of architecture by blind and partially sighted people, and by other members of the public

• A ‘review’ process evaluating feedback and proposing improvements in support of planned future development of audio-descriptions of architecture for blind and partially sighted people
Each of these stages can be described in turn.

**Design**

As a first stage, a focus group meeting was organised for mid-May, comprising 4 blind and partially sighted people, 2 expert audio-describers and 3 architectural experts, as well as 2 other representatives from VocalEyes and the project organiser. Because visually impaired people (VIPs) attended as volunteers, with only their expenses paid, this affected who could or was willing to give up time to the project (originally 17 VIPs had shown an interest in getting involved). However, the 4 recruited to this project offered a useful variety, both in terms of their different interests in architecture and because they had different sight conditions.

These volunteers discussed what they wanted from an audio-description of architecture, so as to inform the ‘expert’ writers. These were an architect, artist and journalist, all with some connection with the University of Brighton School of Architecture and Design (Appendix 1: architectural experts’ biographies). Following this briefing the architectural experts and project organiser were given tours at the Theatre Royal Brighton (by Lorraine Gould, Marketing Manager) and the Jubilee Library (by Maureen Berry, Service Development Manager) and then individually wrote notes describing the space (with 2 concentrating on the Theatre and 2 on the Library). A specific sequence of spaces was chosen at this stage, to contain the amount of description and tour duration whilst giving a good ‘flavour’ of each building as a whole. It was decided to make the tour of both buildings about 2 hours in total, with a ten-minute comfort break in the middle.

These notes were then edited together by the project organiser as an initial draft, and reviewed by the expert audio-describers from VocalEyes.

**Testing**

Whilst the initial description writing was taking place, posters and brief talks to student groups were used as a means to attract student volunteers. From an original list of 16 interested, 8 followed through to the next stage, with 2 dropping out at this point. The original intention had been to find additional funding for the architectural students to undertake additional training and support via the University of Brighton’s own Community and University Partnership Programme (CUPP) to which an application for matching funding was made. Unfortunately there was no money left in
this fund at this stage in the academic year. In addition, the timing of the project (and of Architecture Week) which clashes with end of year assessments and design exhibition processes, meant both that many students were not able to get involved; and that those that did needed precise and limited forms of engagement.

The remaining 6 student volunteers came from all undergraduate levels and from both architecture and interior architecture (with one a graduate from the BA (Hons) in photography). They attended a Vocaleyes workshop at Brighton University, introducing them to blind and visually impairment awareness and to the basics of audio-description.

Following this, pairs of students were given a draft script and organised a test tour of the Theatre Royal and the Jubilee Library with one of the blind and partially sighted volunteers. They took it in turns to read the script and take notes, with discussions at the end of section, before moving to the next space. The buildings were also revisited by two of the writers and by the project organiser and the two expert describers on other occasions (fig.2). This feedback became the basis for the final re-write.

The student volunteers received the final version of the script a week before their Architecture Week tours, and were given a dress rehearsal by the expert describers. On the day itself, each student was responsible for an audio-described tour, supported by another person, there to capture the process, take notes and provide any additional help required. It was agreed to organise the tours in 2 ‘waves’ –with both the first and second groups (arriving at 10.00 and 11.00 respectively), going as 3 sets of between 3 and 6, including friends and family of VIPs, one after the other with a five minute gap between.

On the day, there was only a small amount of pre-bookings; resulting in the first tours only having one visually impaired person each. One of these was frail and needed a shorter version, and of the Theatre Royal Brighton only.

The 11.00 groups were larger as people turned up without booking, having heard the project publicised on local radio that morning by Toby Davey of Vocaleyes. In addition, on the day one student volunteer felt to unconfident to work alone, and so was paired with another student. In this batch, one group of four was led by a Vocal Eyes describer, with the other two groups having 2 - 3 visually impaired participants each (Fig. 2). Due to the unexpected numbers, their different ‘speeds’ and
Figure 2: The testing process - Student describers discuss the script with a focus group volunteer in the Jubilee Library; and an architectural writer and Vocaleyes describer together explore the Theatre Royal Brighton.
requirements, and because the Theatre Royal Brighton needed its stage returned for the Saturday matinee at noon, some of these second tours had to be rushed or suffered from a certain amount ‘logjam’ with the groups in front, which required describers to adapt the script as they progressed.

At the end of each tour, participants attended a feedback session in a library conference room. Again, because groups had been obliged to speed up in the Theatre Royal, there were short waits for some groups, and at one stage, participants were divided into two within the conference room to make feedback more manageable.

**A note on building selection and modes of delivery**

The two buildings were deliberately chosen to test key differences, most particularly between a historical and contemporary example; between one that was ‘private’ and could only be visited by arrangement and the other ‘public’ and accessible; and between a building that was made up parts accumulated over a long period and one that was built as a coherent whole.

Partly because of these factors, we felt that the Jubilee Library has the potential to be visited independently, supported by, for example, an audio tape or a downloadable podcast. Although time and limited resources prevented us from testing the D-I-Y option, the two buildings were written initially more like pre-recorded scripts than as tour ‘performances’. It was also thought that a fully-written script with specific stopping points and little improvisation would help the students’ confidence in presentation. In hindsight, this decision to attempt to focus on a fully written script had two problems. It made the language sound quite stilted (so that a large amount of the editing became about making the tone more informal and conversational). And it made it sometimes hard for the students to integrate improvised elements related to the actual tour (for example about what was going on around then), whilst underestimating their abilities to ‘walk and talk’ or engage in dialogue. All these issues will be returned to.

**Review**

Project evaluation was envisaged at 3 levels: first, ongoing review throughout via the capturing of focus group sessions, observation of test walks, and formal and informal
discussion with participants: second, feedback from the guided tour itself; and finally, a project evaluation report.

This review process has three aims

- To evaluate the benefits of this project to its different participants
- To outline lessons learnt about making audio-descriptions of architecture in terms of appropriate content, frameworks, modes of delivery, organisation, training etc.,
- To make recommendations about how to take the project forward in terms of scaling up, funding and development processes

These will now be dealt with in turn.

**Evaluating the benefits**

In the Arts Council proposal, potential benefits for each of the groups of participants were listed. How successful, then, was the *A Sense of Place!* Project in realising these benefits? Feedback from participants was obtained through a variety of techniques:

- Semi-structured on-tour interviewing of focus group volunteers
- Use satisfaction feedback sessions immediately following each tour
- Group feedback sessions with describers and Vocaleyes; and with student volunteers
- Comments on draft evaluation report

**Benefits to blind and partially sighted participants**

It was intended that the visually impaired volunteers would have the opportunity to develop ideas and approaches to architecture; and be able to make a positive impact on audio-description methods and content. It was very important to the project that blind and partially sighted people were involved from the beginning and at every stage. Besides Toby Davey, Deputy Director, Services Development at Vocaleyes, only three blind and partially sighted people were able to give up their time as volunteers, which underlines the importance of properly funding blind and partially sighted people’s involvement.
However, the response from these volunteers was overwhelmingly positive. They both provided valuable insights on what they wanted from architectural audio-description and constructive detailed criticism of the pilot tours (Appendix 2: focus group test walk feedback). Detailed comments on different aspects of the audio-description will be covered later. Generally the focus group felt that the tours improved following their initial test:

“pleased with the changes since last time – enjoyed the descriptions of building details, probably about the right amount”

“auditorium much more vivid than last time”

“I got a sense of both buildings – a feeling and an explanation”

“This worked for me; going through so many different spaces – good to go from one building to the other and to have stories of different buildings.”

The main concerns were about how to describe the Jubilee Library as a whole satisfactorily; and that less time had been given to the library’s various functions and different spaces in later versions of the audio-description. Additional tactile aids would have been much appreciated here.

In addition, a total of 12 blind and partially sighted people took part in the pilot tours themselves (together with companions, family members and friends). The feedback here was also very good; with all rating it as a good experience during the follow-up sessions (Appendix 3: Architecture Week tours participant feedback):

“I followed fairly well. Lots of things came to light”

“Would have liked it to go on longer – people made it very clear.”

“Clear as far as I can say – I thoroughly enjoyed it and I understood a lot of it.”

As with any cross-section of the population, participants had different preferences as to what the tours should cover and brought a variety of prior knowledge and expertise to the project. The pilot also highlighted differences in both expectations and preferences amongst the participants. Some respondents (especially, I suggest,
those joining the tour was for ‘a good day out’ as much to do with the lack of access to cultural activities for VIPs as with a particular interest in architecture were happy with the length and amount of information, did not expect to ‘get’ everything and would have enjoyed the tour being longer. Some would have liked more condensed and precise description.

“it was a long time mentally for both visitor and guide”

“…time description to make more space in the script”

“Writing could have been bolder in the cutting to make more time for touch/conversation”

This was either because they would have preferred time for more informal discussion about the building, or because they had less interest in particular aspects (for instance in the contemporary as opposed to the historical).

Others just did not have the physical stamina to view both buildings, or would have preferred a more condensed version. These shorter tours were provided on the day through improvisation and-on-the-spot editing by the describers.

**Benefits to university staff and students involved**

The feedback from students was also very positive. They all felt their involvement had enabled them to get past assumptions and anxieties about ‘how to act’ with disabled people, to recognise the individuality and knowledge of the visually impaired volunteers they worked with; and to develop an understanding of how to offer and give assistance when required.

All the students also valued the opportunity to improve their public speaking techniques and confidence; and would have liked more training in this area, if time had been available. There was generally a preference for the more informal and improvised developments of the script, although this could have its problems:

“it was great to have conversations – sometimes difficult to get back to the script”

The other issue raised in feedback was whether it would be better to have two describers working together. This was partly because of the mental stamina involved
in speaking and co-ordinating a two hour tour and partly because two voices offered variety and could be used to help ‘size’ space by standing in different locations. All the students felt they could manage on their own (and feedback of their performance from the blind and partially sighted participants was uniformly very positive) but were interested in the potential of working in pairs.

Four student volunteers asked to be involved in the project longer term. And all felt the project would have an impact on how they thought both about disability and about architectural space more generally in their design work.

In terms of educational benefits, the project enabled two processes in relation to improving students understanding of architectural space to go on simultaneously. On the one hand, because they were trying to imagine how the blind and visually impaired people they worked with already interpreted material space (through touch, sound, smell, light, contrast and colour cues etc.,) they began to notice these qualities themselves much more precisely and evocatively. On the other, in having to properly and accurately describe what an exterior or interior is like visually, students had to develop visual and interpretative skills in close looking and in appropriate architectural terminologies and analogies.

The architectural writers involved appreciated the chance to discuss how architecture might be described. However, there was a potential tension here between contemporary debates within art/architecture which emphasise poetic, non-linear interpretations and the need to make sure that basic factual detail (describing a façade accurately for example) and practical information (how to move from one space to another) were incorporated, which, as Andrew Holland, Head of Describing at Vocaleyes noted, tended to ‘squeeze out’ some of the more evocative or personal passages from the earlier drafts.

This was exacerbated by a shortage of time for script development or discussion.

For the School of Architecture and Design more generally, the project provided the benefit of enabling some staff and students to get involved in the local community; and enabled the School activity to be publicised in Architecture Week publicity and in the small exhibition held in the Jubilee Library for the duration of Architecture Week itself (Fig.3)
Benefits to participating buildings

The benefits for both the Theatre Royal Brighton and the Jubilee Library was to bring new audiences to their buildings by opening up the architecture itself; and to gain an audio-described tour script. The Theatre Royal Brighton has already built some of the Sense of Place! material into their existing tours and is exploring continuing audio-described tours for blind and partially sighted people.

The Jubilee Library may also build some of the material into their existing tours, which better cover the buildings different functions and spaces. It is still hoped that is a podcast might be developed for this building which brings together the Vocal Eyes description with details about library services, if funding can be found.

Benefits to Vocaleyes

The main intended benefit for Vocaleyes was to enable a first stage testing and evaluation of an audio-described tour of architecture. Involving staff and students from the School of Architecture and Design reversed their normal procedure whereby expert audio-describers both write and describe initial materials, before being checked by others. In this project, the expert audio-describers took on an editing role, so were involved at a relatively late stage.

This was a deliberate attempt to explore “different ways of feeling and experiencing space can be expressed” as proposed in the original seminar discussions in November 2006, by involving an architecture, artist and journalist so as to get a variety of perspectives and voices from the beginning. However, it meant that the considerable knowledge that Vocaleyes have in this area had sometimes to be ‘applied’ after initial scripting had taken place.

Thus, whilst Vocaleyes has benefited from the piloting of the Sense of Place! project, there is an issue as to whether the most effective method of description development was used. This was exacerbated by some miscommunication during the description development process, where valuable input from the expert describers was accidentally not incorporated before the first run-through with focus group volunteers. This left the expert describers feeling they had a lot to do of “basic meat and potatoes” work at too late a stage in the process; correcting the script for accuracy (numbers of columns of chandeliers on view, for instance) and adding in sample detailed descriptions.
Figure 3: Exhibition panels publicising the Vocaleyes audio-described architectural tours during Architecture Week 2007 in the foyer of the Jubilee Library
Doing audio-descriptions of architecture

The second part of the evaluation process is about learning some lessons in how to design and deliver audio-descriptions of architecture. Due to limitations on resources, we chose at this stage to only offer a guided tour (rather than, for example, downloadable podcasts) and were unable to build related support materials such as pre-tour guides or tactile maps and models (appendix 4: final audio-description script). However, participants were also asked to comment on their preferences about these wider issues. Here, some general guidelines are proposed (summarised in Appendix 5):

1. **Journey sequence**

Unlike performance or artworks, architecture needs to be viewed in a sequence, so requires its own choreography. Most buildings are also extremely complex and cannot be viewed in their entirety.

The two buildings selected for this tour were deliberately chosen because of the very different kinds of spatial arrangements they offered. This was not just a difference of age, style or approach, but also that the Theatre Royal Brighton, was made up of a complex series of individual and varied spaces accumulated through time, whilst the Jubilee Library could be ‘read’ as a totality, with all the pieces integrated into a coherent design, potentially legible from a single location.

This produced two contrasting journey sequences. At the Theatre Royal Brighton, whilst remaining at ground floor level, we hoped to evoke the complexity of the building by moving through a series of spaces in a linear journey from front to back (that is, from front-of-house to back-of-house), and emphasising the sense of surprise appropriate to a theatrical setting, by, for example, juxtaposing the foyer with its immediately adjacent backstage area and by viewing the auditorium from the stage. In the library, we felt a vertical journey through the building, moving in and out of the thick wall separating the main glazed reading areas from the service spaces, could evoke the quality of the building as a whole.

The journey sequence for the Theatre Royal worked well; but feedback on the library suggested that the route failed to give enough information about the building’s function and services. One of the volunteers commented that by editing an earlier
version of the tour which had enabled participants to experience the specialised audio and study rooms linked to, but separate from the main space, these qualities of the building were less clear.

Proposed Guidelines

- Journey sequence should be designed to evoke the quality of the building as a whole
- Pick key stopping locations, linked by ‘walk and talk’ segments

2. Architectural orientation

For blind and partially sighted participants on audio-described tours of architecture, there were three key issues around orientation; in relation to the commentary on a space, from within that space; in moving from place to place (way-finding); and in being able to visualise the relationships between elements of the building coherently. In addition, there were many interesting comments about how best to orientate participants in relationship to time – as both historical layer and events occurring in the immediate vicinity of the tour.

The approach developed to orientation in each location was to generally relate the parts of a building being described to the location of the speaker (“on my left”, “behind where I am standing”). This meant that whatever way different participants were facing, they could piece the building together relative to the describer’s voice. This was mainly agreed to be satisfactory, although some of the participants were less sure.

The experiences of expert describers offering touch tours of stage sets also suggested that the location of voice(s) could help to elucidate the size and shape of spaces, for example by moving around whilst talking (“here, I am moving across from one side of the stage to the other”).

In addition, the original plan for the audio-description was to stop in a limited number of places on the journey and to describe only from these points. This was both to simplify the process (for writers, student describers and participants) and to test describing not just for a guided tour but also a self-directed visit. Description of each space was thus separated from way-finding instructions on how to move from space to space.
However, on testing with volunteers, it became clear that this was an artificial divide - at least for a guided tour - because participants wanted to know about the architectural qualities of the ‘spaces in-between’ the fixed locations, and preferred to have way-finding information informally whilst they were moving from place to place, rather than ‘formally’ in advance.

The description also aimed to enable participants to locate themselves in the context of the wider building by outlining an overall volumetric set of relationships at the beginning of the visit (whilst outside the façade of each building), by consistently referring back to this original 3D diagram, and repeatedly relating spaces within the building backwards and forwards to other spaces, through location, shape, floor level and distance.

Feedback from this project was that the descriptions were improving in terms of clarity of orientation, and would be productively supported by tactile maps and simple hand-held models, separating out and linking the main elements as blocks. Tactile maps and images did not need to be simply accurate reproductions of plans of facades, but might also indicate other information; for example, the sequence of the tour itself or the different periods in which elements of a building or urban setting were constructed.

This last point emphasises another issue raised by some of the participants, the importance of time in architectural orientation. This was both about giving clear explanations of when something has been built relative to other elements (to help in constructing an overall picture of the architecture) and about taking into account what was happening at the time of the tour (noises off, a visual snapshot of what people were going etc.) This latter activity again indicated the relevance of giving the describers’ flexibility in responding to the space and its occupancy during the tour itself.

**Proposed Guidelines**

- Locate elements being described in relation to the speaker and use the voice(s) creatively as a locational and measurement tool
- Integrate way-finding information with the story
- Give an overview of the building at the beginning of a visit by describing its basic volumetric and spatial relationships. Describe changes through time. If possible, use tactile aids to support this activity.
- Explain orientation within the building relative to the sequence of places on the tour
- Reinforce understanding of volumetric and spatial relationships, and of changing relative position, by repetition throughout a tour
- Describe what is happening in the space during the tour itself
- Summarise what has been said at regular intervals

3. The importance of storytelling

Previous research by Vocaleyes for the New Audiences and Talking Images projects, which worked with blind and partially sighted volunteers to explore audio-descriptions of artworks in galleries and museums, underlined the importance of telling a ‘good story’ rather than attempting to neutrally describe a space or object. In this project, the original selection of two contrasting buildings had been merely to test the kinds of language that might be needed for audio-description of different periods of architecture. However, it soon became clear that involving participants in thinking about the differences between the two buildings and considering their own preferences, increased the enjoyment of the focus group volunteers the tour. These questioning components therefore became central to how the overall tour was framed, with some feedback requesting that this to be even more centrally embedded in the material.

In addition, each building developed its own specific story, both to help integrate the descriptions of each area and to underpin the logic and resonance of the chosen journey sequence. At the theatre this was a story about the juxtapositions between the artificial luxury of front-of-house with the bare utility of backstage. In the library it was about how the building aimed for aesthetic variety from a coherent and limited architectural vocabulary, via the simple interplay of light, material and volume.

Finally, it is suggested that good story-telling is a performance and can also entertain and entice. There is, for example, the possibility of withholding or ‘teasing’ with information. In the Theatre tour, for example, the Gulp bar is felt before its function is explained.

Feedback from participants suggested that these ‘core’ stories were engaging and informative. Some particularly responded to ‘human interest’ stories and all to enthusiasm and passion in delivery.
Proposed Guidelines
- Tie descriptions of separate spaces together through a coherent storyline.
- Exploit the performative potential of story-telling

4. Colouring in the picture

As Vocaleyes has found on previous projects, one of the main problems of description is what to leave out. There is a wealth of potential information on, for example, building history, context, architects’ intentions, construction methods, function and use, materials, and compositional, spatial and aesthetic relationships. There is also the issue of the amount of information that someone can take in and process from an audio-described tour. Below, is summarised in turn, issues raised over the selection of content, schematic frameworks for ordering material and dealing with architectural language. In addition, there is a question of whose interpretation is being offered, and its validity.

In addition, it is important to note that the process of writing the descriptions deliberately brought together an artist, architect and journalist, so as to offer different voices and alternative ways of looking at buildings, informed by the focus group briefing. Rather than discussing what should be included, each took their own ‘readings’ of the space, which were then collated and edited. This meant that, partly due to constraints on time and resources, the selection of specific content came from the combination of individual interests rather than any explicit discussion. This had many effects on the development of the script, which will be highlighted under each of the sections below.

- a. Selecting content

At the first focus group, the 4 blind and partially sighted members were asked to outline what they would like to know about buildings. Much of this list was, not surprisingly, similar to a general understanding of what information is valuable in interpreting architecture:

- Why did the architect build in a certain way?
- What is the building’s purpose?
- What is the history and reasons behind it?
- How does it relate to the environment around it?
- How was it built?
- How has it developed and changed?
In addition, the volunteers wanted to be able to picture what a sighted person could see. As one participant said, “I can sense atmosphere and the space but I am frustrated that I can’t ‘get’ architecture.”

Here, it was agreed that it was best to get an overall view first, (of the size and shape of a room and its sequential relationship to others) and then go into more detail. It was felt that different spaces would probably need different solutions. One focus group member suggested he wanted “at least two elements – the physical look and ‘feel’ (not too much description) and what was in the mind of the architect; what they were trying to do.”

Whilst the feedback from the tour was mainly positive in terms of the appropriateness of the amount and type of information, it was felt that dividing information into pre-tour notes and audio-description would free up more time for taking stock and for informal questions and discussions. For example, much of the historical context with which the description of the Theatre Royal Brighton started could be better given in advance. A general rule of thumb was suggested; that material in the tour itself should be directly relevant and informative about what participants were standing in front of; that it should support their understanding and visualisation of that particular space.

**Proposed Guidelines:**
- Describe what the visually impaired person is looking at
- Describe what is directly relevant and informative to the specific place.

**-b. From broad brush to detail**

In the end, the framework for describing each space was usefully informed by Vocaleyes previous experience of describing sets. This involved outlining the overall shape before filling in the detail. For an exterior that was about delineating the overall relationships and then describing the smaller components within it; and for interiors it
meant outlining the size and shape of the space, before going into greater detail of decoration and contents.

Here, there was a potential tension between the 3 architectural writers’ intentions and the participants’ expectations. This was for two reasons. First, there is much architectural and artistic debate about ‘giving people what they want’. It could well be argued, particularly in relationship to architecture, that people do not necessarily know what they want, because they may not have been introduced to the possibilities and range of interpretation and description. Second, within much contemporary architectural and artistic practice, explicitly poetic and non-rational descriptions have come to dominance over the last 20 years. Inspired by psycho-geography and the philosophies of theorists such as Jacques Derrida and Giles Deleuze, writings about architectural space have looked to new ways to express the psychological and emotional qualities of our relationships with buildings and landscapes.

In the initial writing, ideas about evocative story-telling took precedence over the kind of close-looking, factual and functional descriptions of art and architecture, prevalent in more conventional histories of the subject. The early versions of the script, then, were relatively light on straightforward architectural descriptions of facades or room components; and were strong on atmosphere and imaginative ‘occupations’ of the space.

Later versions have included more and more basic description of architectural composition and detailing; which was appreciated in the feedback sessions (but see ‘evoking atmosphere’ section below.)

**Proposed Guideline:**
- Describe overall shape, size and qualities of a space first, then begin to build in details.

**C. Using architectural ‘language’**

There were three issues over what constituted an appropriate language for the tour; architectural jargon, appropriate analogies to support visualisation of architectural space, and the differences between academic or technical and oral and conversational terms.
As one focus group member noted: “terminology needs to assume no knowledge but mustn’t be too long or dull.” Because the tour was explicitly about architectural appreciation it was agreed that architectural terms needed to be used, but that these should always be briefly explained with a short phrase. The test tours with blind and partially sighted volunteers were invaluable in picking up which terms needed this kind of additional glossary ‘phrase’.

As the descriptions progressed, we also became better at using analogies for effectively and poetically describing compositional, spatial and aesthetic relationships. Thus, for example, the band of lower servicing buildings which surround the glass box of the main reading areas of the Jubilee library, were originally described as a U shape. This was confusing, both because it assumed a ‘looking down’ on the building as a whole, without explaining that, and because it implied a semi-circular end. In the final version, this term was replaced by ‘muffler’ which resonantly evoked the quality of enclosure (remembered ‘back’ by one of the tour participants as a ‘cushioning band’) but still failed to capture effectively the overall relationships of these two elements, especially in inadequately describing how the ‘ends’ of the muffler looked as part of the front façade.

Analogies were also vital in enabling visualisation of size and scale of the buildings and spaces, in preference to simple measurements in metres or feet. Participants responded well to dimensions given in relation to the human body, for example, through number of paces, or a panel of glass described as one person standing with their arms out.

Where the description was less successful was in understanding the qualities of oral over written language. Both visually impaired and student describer volunteers found the language to be too academic and stilted. And whilst this improved during the development of the script, particularly in freeing up the describers to take more control over what they said, it remained a problem. One focus group member suggested that it would have been better to have created the audio-description orally from the beginning to help develop an appropriate tone. These issues are returned to later.

**Proposed Guidelines:**
- Use architectural terms, but always explain with a short phrase
- Use analogies for sizes and shapes of things, for example related to human body or number of paces.

**D. Evoking atmosphere**

Blind and partially sighted people have a variety of conditions that affect how and what they see. In addition, people who have lost their sight later in life have memories of what things look like which can support their understanding during an audio-description. Audio-description therefore needs to build on what visually impaired people already experience in buildings; for example in its acoustics, smell, air quality and patterns of light and contrast.

But atmosphere is also created through the kinds of language used. Two of the writers on the Sense of Place project were particularly interested in imaginative techniques for evoking atmosphere and occupation – for example, by populating the auditorium with an invisible audience or by describing themselves as actors on the stage. In addition, one of the blind and partially sighted participants told a captivating story about a childhood experience going to a performance at the Theatre Royal Brighton. As one of the writers noted, the pressures to give plenty of accurate visual descriptions of spaces and practical orientation material, meant that some of this more evocative material was left out:

"the library was still atmospheric (in description) but the theatre had lost a lot of its magic…"

We felt that these more personal voices, perspectives and stories add immensely to the qualities of the audio-description of architecture. In audio-describing theatre performance, TV and cinema, the skill is in bracketing information about the setting and the action around the creative action, not to compete with it. In describing architecture, different interpretations of the space can add texture and richness to our understandings of material space.

Where possible, therefore, we recommend the use of two voices, both for listening variety and to enable the intersection and layering of multiple perspectives or different ‘languages’ about space. This might be by expert describers ‘speaking on behalf’ of various forms of interpretation; by adding in audio clips from other
speakers, or by having one describer as the architect, client, or other expert with a particular and personal relationship to the building.

**Proposed Guidelines:**
- Build on the understandings of space blind and partially sighted people already have
- Incorporate atmospheric description and supporting stories with factual information
- Use two describers to give variety and enable layered interpretations of the space to be explored.

**5. Whose interpretation?**

For blind and partially sighted people, audio-descriptions offer an alternative to having a building or artwork described by a member of their family or a friend, where information may not include relevant facts and can be coloured by one particular personal opinion. At the first focus group meeting, one volunteer emphasised the importance of enthusiasm, but worried about possibly idiosyncratic ‘readings’:

“It would be good to have quotes from the architect….and also another person’s ‘sensible’ rather than ‘nutty’ interpretation.”

Interestingly, in the first stage writing, two of the experts initially disliked the Jubilee Library, as they found it a corporate-feeling space. This affected the follow on editing. It meant, for example, that we deliberately leaving out description of the foyer space (a shop) because it had been initially written about in a very negative way. This was noted as a problem in feedback, since the tour passed through a space that was not introduced to its participants. The second effect on editing was more positive; a careful attempt was made by one of the other writers to describe why the building was in that form, and what might be good about it which led to some very lively and informative discussions about interpretation and description of this building.

However, in this process other aspects of the Jubilee Library, particularly the services it contained were covered less thoroughly – which was problematic in feedback both from some tour participants and from the member of the library staff who had been involved.
Again, the suggestion of offering different voices or using a conversational tone could enable these different opinions to be aired in a constructive and enjoyable way. For example, the issue of whether the library felt ‘corporate’ could be asked as a question, or framed by the phrase ‘in my opinion’.

Proposed guidelines:
- Don't let your own opinion get in the way of good describing
- Enable different interpretations to be heard.

6. Expertise and accuracy

Fact checking for these pilot tours was made easy because of the amount of information supplied by both the Theatre Royal Brighton and the Jubilee Library (from material given to them by the architects). In this case we did not talk to the architects of the library, nor any other experts. We did have a tremendous amount of support from both participating buildings in this, and from the expert describers who picked up matters of incorrect visual information from the very quickly written first stage draft (inaccuracy in numbers of columns or chandeliers for example). In different circumstances, it might be important to work with architects or historians, either in description development or in fact-checking scripts.

Proposed guidelines
- Build in explicit processes for checking factual accuracy
- Consider inviting experts to speak about aspects of the building

7. Touching opportunities

Opportunities to touch surfaces and details were vitally important as a part of the audio-described tours, particularly for people who have always had partial sight, that is, without visual memories of specific elements. Whilst these must not be forced on the participants, buildings have the immediate bonus over, say, artworks or cinema, in that much can is easily touchable.

In addition, it soon became clear, that the blind and partially sighted people involved would have very much appreciated being able to have access to tactile aids. Ideas included tactile maps which related the different historical elements of the Theatre
Royal Brighton, or which showed the tour sequence in context; and 3D hand-sized models which show the basic volumetric, functional and/or compositional relationships of spaces, or modelled elements that could not be touched – for example, the column tops in the Jubilee Library.

**Proposed guidelines:**
- Incorporate as many relevant touching opportunities as possible
- Consider what supporting tactile aids would enhance understanding of the architectural space

### 8. Pre-tour and contextual notes

Both feedback from the focus group volunteers and Vocaleyes previous experience emphasised the value of audio pre-tour notes. These can provide accessibility information, way-finding guidance, and ‘setting the scene’ material for the architectural tour (such as background history and context) where this can be enjoyably absorbed at the VIP’s own pace, especially for information where there is no need to be ‘present’ in the space for understanding. Tactile maps could also be part of such a pre-pack.

At the feedback session, one participant said she would rather not have any information in advance, so as not to reduce the surprise and interest. There was also some discussion about what would be valuable audio material to ‘take away’ as a reminder after the tour event.

**Proposed guidelines:**
- Provide pre-tour notes covering both building accessibility and contextual background for the architectural tour

### 9. Using the voice

From the beginning of this project the architectural experts tended to think more in terms of a written script than a spoken one. Key feedback throughout from the focus group, the expert describers and the blind and partially sighted tour participants was to build on the qualities of the spoken word and its conversational, performative and informal tone. For the trained describers this was also about both engaging and taking control of the tour and the audience – of enacting it rather than merely
speaking to a script. This meant, for example, using the term ‘we’ rather than ‘you’ and asking rhetorical questions and other verbal and communicative devices.

The other aspect of verbal communication was the extent to which describers could be heard – that is, whether they projected their voices well enough, and how well they overcame ‘noises off’, both by explaining what these were and by positioning themselves so as not to be interrupted:

“Sometimes other noises made it hard to hear. I didn’t get where the wind towers were (in the Jubilee Library) because someone was making a lot of noise.”

Some of the student describers lacked confidence or were too in-experienced to project their voices and to take notice of, and respond to, background noise. It is essential that, where volunteer describers are used, some voice training is given. Students would have liked more than the short introduction they received and noted that this would be also invaluable to them in relation to their studies - for example, in presenting during crits.

Proposed guidelines:
- Enjoy using the spoken word
- Engage the audience through language
- Project the voice
- Take into account surrounding noise
- Consider benefits of voice and performance practice and training

10. Enabling a dialogue

One of the main points of feedback was that adherence to a written script, without much time to practice, left the student describers sounding stilted. Whilst the efforts of the student volunteers were rated very positively by all those involved, both the students themselves and the blind and partially sighted participants wanted a more informal, improvised and conversational relationship. This was both about using different voices in the description, taking various perspectives (as mentioned above), and to enable opportunities for dialogue and communication between describer and participants.
The original intention to only talk in specific spaces (with instructions on movement to the next space given in advance of that movement) turned out to be both ‘artificial’ for the focus group testers and difficult to manage organisationally by the student describers. These ‘walk and talk’ sections became much more fluid, enabling the describer to both indicate elements on route and to offer way-finding guidance.

In addition, the original script did not leave much room for dialogue, because we were worried it might close down the tour too much, or put students off their stride. Whilst it is clearly important not to allow individual participants to ‘take over’ to the detriment of others, everyone valued the importance of communication. In our pilot tour, as mentioned above, we began to build in the potential of a debate about which building was better and why. Some feedback suggested participants would have enjoyed this being emphasised even more strongly.

**Proposed guidelines:**

- Enable audio-descriptions to support dialogue with participants

**11. Organisational issues**

For the pilot project, we decided that each building would need about an hour to cover properly, with a break on the 5 minute walk between them. We also aimed for groups with a maximum of three blind and partially sighted people (although the groups were of course larger, with friends and family also attending.) As already mentioned, there were differences in opinion on what was a good length of tour. Some felt that one building was enough, others that the comparison of two was very fruitful, and that it would have been good to also have some information about the buildings in-between. This related to participants specific interests (some people, for example were much more interested in the historical example) and to their particular circumstances. Some of the participants were losing their sight as they got older and were also frail, or had connected conditions to their sight loss that meant they could not stand for long periods of time.

In addition, the most important aspect of audio-description length and timing was the amount of verbal information people could take in and absorb and the amount of time they wanted to reflect on what they had heard. Thus, for example, the break was not just about resting, using the toilet or having a drink – it was also a pause for thought and consideration.
We felt that group sizes were about right; although this also relates to how professional tour guides are, both in orchestrating the group and in projecting their voice so everyone can hear.

**Proposed Guidelines:**
- Consider the duration of the audio-description for different audiences
- Allow time throughout for absorption and reflection on information
- Build in opportunities to sit down throughout
- Keep group sizes small

**12. Modes of delivery**

Because of time and resource constraints, this Arts Council SE funded project only piloted and tested a live tour. For this mode of delivery, it was important to make descriptions lively, informal and interactive. As already noted, one of the main responses from blind and partially sighted volunteers and pilot tour participants was for a more informal, improvised and conversational audio-description.

Other modes of delivery – in particular a pre-recorded tape/podcast were discussed. In addition, it was noted that other projects are exploring other kinds of technology, for example, RFID, to support audio-descriptions of buildings and places. This will be returned to in the next steps section.

In their feedback session, the project team discussed the relationship between different modes of delivery and different types of architecture based on whether buildings are public or private, easily accessible or not, and their overall ‘clarity’ and understandability for guided versus D-I-Y audio-descriptions. Mode of delivery therefore depends on the specific circumstances of a building.

It was agreed that it would be valuable to test the effectiveness of podcasts for audio-descriptions of architecture for blind and partially sighted people, because this could provide an important longer-term service for VIPs, and would also be of benefit to the wider public.
Proposed guideline:
- Consider the most appropriate mode of delivery for each specific building

13. Involving blind and partially sighted people

Involving visually impaired people in the description development process was an invaluable part of effective development. There are cost implications here which need to be taken into account. In addition, evaluation needs to be carefully thought out. For the Sense of Place! Project, the feedback from the focus group volunteers on a detailed space by space basis vitally informed the development of the audio-description, whilst, in this case, the Architecture Week tour feedback sessions concentrated on user satisfaction and were less helpful in evaluating our framework and approach to the audio-description.

Proposed Guidelines:
- Build in proper costs for blind and partially sighted people’s involvement
- Build in effective evaluation processes

14. Training requirements for describers

This project deliberately worked with student volunteers. Because of time constraints they had limited training. Observations from the team were that they responded well to the disability awareness training but found the voice and performance introduction much harder to engage with. Whilst this improved at the dress rehearsal and during the tour itself, the tendency was still to read the script (intersecting with informal and improvised sections, particularly when moving from place to place). This was partly an issue of confidence and of time to practice/learn the script. But it was also, as noted above, because it was difficult to juggle personal commentary with ordered and precise written material. This was probably exacerbated by the fact the students were not involved in description writing (due to constraints on their time), and so not necessarily knowledgeable about, interested in, or involved in what they were describing.

This suggests two alternative approaches; either to provide trained audio-describers to work with architects and/or others to describe architecture, or to provide effective
training programmes for architects, students or others wanting to describe buildings effectively for blind and partially sighted people.

Proposed guidelines

- Consider training requirements for non-expert describers

15. Publicity and marketing

Previous experience for Vocaleyes from the New Audiences Project suggests that there are some difficulties in marketing audio-descriptions to blind and partially sighted people. There is currently no central source (website, talking newspaper, online calendar) where visually impaired people can find information about audio-descriptions. In addition because, to the best of our knowledge, audio-descriptions of architecture for blind and partially sighted people have not been done before, there are no tried and tested methods for tapping easily into unmet demand.

As part of the Sense of Place project, Toby Davey contacted local blind and partially sighted societies in and around Brighton. In some cases the people he spoke to made assumptions about what their members would be interested in. Where possible he went to speak to groups (for example, at St. Dunstans, where it had been suggested that people there would be too elderly “to be interested”). He also sent information to Soundings and other talking newspapers; and gave interviews on local radio.

The majority of participants attended at the last minute (tours were meant to be free but booked via Toby or the Solent Centre Architecture Week SE website) following a radio interview that morning. Two others attended from St. Dunstans. Two attempted to book the tour via the Theatre and the Library:

“I had problems trying to find out about the tour - I tried the library and the theatre but couldn’t find the right people, no-one seemed to know.”

The very tight turnaround on the project from funding to delivery meant that we were not able to publicise the project in some places (including the Vocaleyes newsletter which comes out monthly and did not fit with the Sense of Place project deadlines). It
is therefore important to begin to build longer-term networks with blind and partially sighted groups.

**Proposed Guidelines**
- Do not underestimate the amount of time required to market audio-descriptions to blind and partially sighted people
- Allow lead-in times to publicise and develop audio-description projects

For a summary of these proposed guidelines see Appendix 5. For the associated notes we handed out to student describers on the day of the pilot tours, see Appendix 6.

**Project development; what are the next steps?**

The Sense of Place! project was envisaged as a very first stage pilot of audio-descriptions of architecture for blind and partially sighted people. Possible developments have been focused on key architectural events – RIBA Architecture Week 2007, London Open House 2007 and the London Architectural Biennale (LAB), now London Festival of Architecture 2008.

In addition, one of the successes of the Sense of Place project has been to generate interest for other potential developments of audio-descriptions of architecture. For example, RIBA SE Region wants to explore funding for audio-descriptions of all the buildings in the region gaining RIBA awards, whilst the Solent Centre for Architecture and Design has asked Vocaleyes to get involved in a project offering an audio-description service for buildings in Hampshire.

Following the Sense of Place! project, it is suggested that next steps need to both take what we have learnt forward, and to fill gaps that have not yet been explored. Six key areas are listed below:

- Development and testing of the proposed guidelines for audio-descriptions of architecture through a scaling-up project, covering more buildings
- The testing of different modes of delivery, in particular live tours and D-I-Y audio tapes and/or podcasts
• Exploring how to support audio-description of architecture with appropriate tactile aids and models

• Research into different forms of story-telling so as to inform rich and evocative audio-descriptions of architecture

• Developing the educational potential of architectural student, architects, clients and others involvement in the audio-description process

• Building up audiences for audio-description by publicising services, disseminating lessons and extending development and use for architects, clients and other building stakeholders

These areas will now be considered in more detail. A summary of a proposed action plan for Vocaleyes is given in Appendix 7.

**Developing and testing guidelines for audio-description of architecture**

The draft guidelines offered here, as a result of the first pilot, now need to be tested across a range of buildings and modes of delivery. These are intended only as general principles, with the specific shape and nature of each architectural audio-description evolving through discussion with participants – for example, clients, architects, writers, users and blind and partially sighted people themselves.

There are various possibilities for exploring the implications of scaling-up. It is proposed that, although timescales are again short, Vocaleyes should work with London Open House for September 2007, aiming to either providing expert describers to undertake the descriptions, or offering training and support for architects (or others involved with the building design, development, management or use) to describe their own buildings. Again, blind and partially sighted people would need to be involved in the development process, and evaluation of the appropriateness of the guidelines in different contexts evaluated.

Scaling up would need to explore different kinds of building type with different kinds of access (public, private, open only for special events) and – if time and available buildings allows - both guided tour and D-I-Y description approaches.
Figure 4: a series of images from the Architecture Week pilot tours of the Jubilee Library and Theatre Royal Brighton, held on Saturday 23rd June 2007.
The two-describer model

Just as there was considerable interest in making the tour more dialogic between describer and participants, there were also issues about the description development process that could enable it to feel more conversational, and to incorporate different voices.

As already outlined, the description development process used in this project tended to the academic, written and scripted. One approach already used by Vocaleyes is to use two describers developing material through conversation. This both addresses the issue of using oral language and of how to select appropriate content: “working in pairs each describer would have to argue for the inclusion of certain elements over other elements. This ‘bartering’ was stimulating if time-consuming and meant that details were included on merit.”

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It is recommended that this approach be used for the next round of scaling-up; together with the incorporation of other ‘voices’ as either quotes or as recordings. This might be the architect or client, or it might be a more critical or poetic interpretation.

Building in supporting materials

A definite gap in the Sense of Place! Project was the lack of either pre-tour notes (which Vocaleyes provide, for example, before most audio-described performances), providing both contextual background and accessibility information; and the request for effective visual aids such as tactile diagrams and simple 3D volumetric models.

It is recommended that, where resources are available, future audio-descriptions of architecture build in pre-tour materials; and that funding be actively looked for to support development of suitable tactile aids. This would require the investigation of different modelling techniques and costs as well as exploration with blind and partially sighted people about the kinds of materials that would enhance audio-descriptions of buildings.
Developing alternative modes of delivery

It is also recommended that a future project explores audio-tapes and/or downloadable podcasts, where a suitable building can be found. This would need to consider the similarities and differences between guided tours and ‘stand-alone’ materials. It could be informed by existing audio-description, for example in art galleries and museums, but could also inform these as to best practice for blind and partially sighted people.

It would be particularly valuable to finish and test a podcast for the Jubilee Library, if funding can be found.

Implications for Vocaleyes services

This evaluation has suggested that, for Vocaleyes, there are two different kinds of services they could provide to architects and other architecture-related clients. First, through expert describer provision, Vocaleyes could build on its existing services and offer a costed ‘package’ to architects, clients and others for the audio-description of their building. Second, they could put together a training programme for non-professional describers, covering disability awareness, audio-description development processes and presentation techniques; to enable architects and others to do their own audio describing.

Both these approaches could be for live tours and/or podcasts. Both would require Vocaleyes to disseminate such services through its webpage and leaflets; and to develop a strategy for marketing to possible clients and for building new audiences of blind and partially sighted people.

Implications for future research

In addition, two further research areas could be fruitfully explored, and suitable grants and potential sponsors investigated. These are first, a ‘building stories’ project which would explore more deeply the different forms of interpretation of architectural space and their relevance to the cultural understanding and enjoyment of blind and partially sighted people. As has already been noted, this is a central issue for contemporary architecture. It is also an area which is currently being richly explored within disability arts, and overlaps with story-telling and performance work about the spatial experiences of deafness and disability.
Second, there remains much to be explored about tactile aids and models in support of audio-descriptions of architecture. This would involve reviewing the relative success of existing tactile diagrams of buildings for blind and partially sighted people; the potential of new technologies in providing tactile images and/or models cheaply, easily and locally; and working with VIPs, architects, architectural students and others to develop innovative and creative ways of representing architecture space through tactile forms.

Implications for architectural education

One of the most successful ‘side effects’ of this project has been in its potential benefits for architectural education (and potentially for educating architects and other building-related professionals). As mentioned above, the project brings together the opportunities for student learning in improved awareness of how blind and partially sighted people engage with buildings; skills in ‘close looking’ and careful description of architectural space; wider discursive issues of how buildings should be interpreted (and for whom); and training and experience in public-speaking, presentation and communication.

It is therefore recommended that funding possibilities for extending audio-descriptions of architecture with students and others should be explored. In the first instance, student involvement in the London Festival of Architecture 2008 (where there is a parallel architectural student festival) could offer opportunities for development of this area.

The tactile aids research, outlined above, could also tie creatively and usefully into architectural education – enabling students to explore different forms of representation and communication of their building projects.

Recognising the wider benefits

Finally, as has already been noted, the development of audio-descriptions of architecture can have many wider public benefits. Previous research by Vocaleyes during the Talking Images project suggested that the audio-description process for blind and partially sighted people also provides materials that are beneficial for the sighted, because the close and evocative descriptions it requires helps everyone to engage more directly (in that case) with artworks. A Sense of Place! also had this response from all its participants, and is one that we could build on for taking the
project beyond its first test to a commonplace and valuable addition to our cultural heritage.

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July 2007
Appendix 1:

Architectural writers' biographies

Dea Birkett
Dea is a writer and broadcaster. She writes for the Guardian, contributes to newspapers and magazines and is Royal Literary Fellow at the University of Brighton. She has written many non-fiction books, all with a strong sense of place. These include *Serpent in Paradise* and *Off the Beaten Track: three centuries of women travellers*.

Dea was educated at Edinburgh University, Scotland, Dartmouth College, New Hampshire, and the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, where she gained a doctorate in African History.

http://www.deabirkett.com

Jos Boys
Jos trained in architecture and has worked as a journalist, researcher, consultant, photographer and teacher. Her interests are in the social aspects of architecture, and in the varieties of perception of what architecture is ‘for’. She was co-founder of Matrix feminist architects practice in the 1970s and a development worker for Women’s Design Service before becoming involved in teaching architecture for many years. More recently she has worked for a number of community-based organisations particularly around disability and the built environment; and is now undertaking research in this area funded by a grant from the University of Brighton.

http://www.josboys.co.uk

Julia Dwyer
Julia is an architect and teacher who works part-time in the School of Architecture and Design at the University of Brighton. Together with artist Sue Ridge she has worked on many public art projects including *ghost school*, a portable artwork dealing with the transition to a new school building, based on workshops with Lauriston Primary School children (2206-07) and *now and then*, a series of landscape elements for the new urban place at Central Middlesex Hospital (2004). She is also visiting lecturer at Chelsea College of Art & Design.

Rachel Gadsden
Rachel is a professional artist who has been showing and selling in solo exhibitions since 1990. Her work includes paintings, drawings, portraits and landscapes. She has also been working in video and mixed media during her artistic exploration of the derelict North Wales Asylum in Denbigh North Wales and Cane Hill Asylum in Surrey, where she was interested in the building remains as metaphors for the physical and psychological nature of the human condition. Rachel has recently been collaborating with interior architecture students at the University of Brighton, as part of a deaf and disabled group called Inside Out, on a project entitled *Making Discursive Spaces*.

http://www.rachelgadsden.com
Appendix 2:

Focus group initial discussion

14th May Focus Group meeting notes
Attending: Julia, Rachel, Maureen, Judy, Paul, Andrew, John, Lonnie, Jo, Dea, Jos

CONTENT
Can sense atmosphere/space but frustrated that can’t ‘get’ architecture.
Why did the architect build in a certain way?
What is the building’s purpose?
What is the history and reasons behind it?
How does it relate to the environment around it?
How was it built?
How has it developed and changed?

Value of shared experience with other people
Need for enthusiasm, added colour.

What style is it? What dates was it built?
Then into more about how this is expressed in the details
From previous visits; would like more touch and more description in detail

Not forced touch.

Terminology needs to assume no knowledge but mustn’t be too long or dull.

Best audio-guides are where you get an overall view first and then more detail if you want it.

Get idea of sequence of rooms

Different spaces need different solutions

Possibility of withholding or ‘teasing’ with information…e.g. a muffled space. Why is it muffled?

At least two elements – the physical look and ‘feel’ (not too much description) and what was in the mind of the architect; what they were trying to do.

Not too much information. Not simple description – make the building come alive.

Idea of space and shape good but not too much detail (eg detailed measurements).

Quotes from the architect: but also another’s ‘sensible’ rather than ‘nutty’ interpretation.

What about opinions of people who occupy the space? How well does it work?

Pre-notes; we hope to provide background and access notes from the organisations themselves.
Possibility in the future of fuller pre-tapes. Also of making more dialogue based and interactive tapes for people to use themselves.

TIMETABLE

Wednesday 23rd May
Writers and audio-describers meet in Brighton (10.00 Theatre royal) for day of touring and initial writing.

By 27th May: completed notes to Jos for compiling. Additional research by Jos as required.

Thursday 31st May 10.00 – 1.00
Jubilee library conference room
Student and other volunteers have disability awareness training and introduction to audio-description

Half day during Thursday 6th June and Friday 7th June
Blind/partially sighted and student volunteers organise test walks in threes – organised to suit by email - as follows:

Maureen + Judit + Rosalind
Toby + Ellie + Katie
John + Jon + Jonathan
Paul + Nicki + Alex

One student to read audio-description notes, other to record conversation

Feedback to Jos by end of Friday 7th June.

Week beginning 11th June
Script from Jos to Andrew, Lonnie and Jo for final editing.

Judy, Toby, Jos; final organisational arrangements

Thursday 21st June
Final rehearsal day with students, volunteers and audio-describers to practice reading aloud and recording roles.

Saturday 23rd June AUDIO DESCRIPTION TOURS

10.00 – 12.00 and 11.00 – 1.00 Starting at Theatre Royal and ending at Jubilee Library; followed by half hour feedback session with participants. Preferably 3 groups of 3-4 at 5 min. intervals.
Appendix 3:

Architecture week tours: participant feedback

Sense of Place!
Saturday 23rd June - Architecture Week 2007

Group 1 (Maureen, Dorothy, Phyllis)

M: “pleased with changes from last time – enjoyed description of building details, probably about the right amount.”

Eg - Not sure about stuff about homes on right; scale and context important but maybe shorter.
Eg; stuff about ice cream stall, interesting or not? (issues of history and human story)

“Auditorium much more vivid than last time.’
“Describing position in building was better than before.
“Jon very helpful on orientation” Both he and Maureen valued space for ab-libbing.

Jon ‘‘great to have conversations; sometimes difficult to find place back in script”
Importance of orientation for Maureen – knowing where you are. Tactile maps/models

Could have better location of fishermen’s cottages within building before leaving. Not enough backstage after auditorium for understanding orientation of parts.

Needed a break; came at good point.

Jon enjoyed walking from one building to the other and giving context; more information on other buildings from Brighton history centre in the Museum.

Jubilee Library. Maureen really liked this; atmosphere makes her feel positive. Calming. Comfortable.

M: Problem understanding about tiles; badly ordered in script + repetitions. Can understand glass but couldn’t work out where tiles are in relation to entrance. Maybe talk more about how materials/surfaces relate to each other. M: liked cushioning building (muffler) but needed more on relative dimensions.

Not enough description of transition spaces; entrance and foyer.

Body proportions and other analogies very useful.

Last time, movement in and out of side spaces good, also because gave sense of different spaces/fluunctions – lost sense of functioning library (MB – ‘not a reading room’) different books/resources.

Liked environmental things; could we have been more critical?

Quite a lot more to say about what is going on in the space.
Group 2

“I got a sense of both buildings – a feeling and an explanation.”
“I followed fairly well. Lots of things came to light.”

“Having stuff on tape before could spoil it – might be better after.”

Problem with finding out about tour – tried Library/Theatre couldn’t find right people.

“Would like it to have gone on longer. People made it very clear.”

“Loved going around the back; it was great on the stage. Such a contrast between old and new.” “All for the old, but this (Jubilee Library) is a beautiful building.”

‘fascinating’

‘liked little things like the Gulp Bar’

‘Clear as far as I can say – I thoroughly enjoyed it and I understood a lot of it.’

Sometimes other noises made it hard to hear. I didn’t get where the wind towers where for example because someone was making a lot of noise.”

Group 3 (Toby and Paul)

P: Very concise, felt improvements on how structured. More information and clearer to understand.
Plenty of time to stop.
Like summary at end.

Organisational – different speeds/concentration/mobility issues. This group was rushed, due to need to get off stage. Required flexibility from describer/adapting materials.

Writing could have been bolder in the cutting to allow more time/space for touch/conversation.

Liked break between – P” Important for everyone, time to stake stock and ask questions.”

P: “This worked for me; going through so many different spaces – good to go from one building to the other and to have stories of different buildings.”

Logistics; might be better to have two describers; to give one a break. Nikki – you can start losing it; would prefer to share but managed okay and kept energy levels.

Two voices, more participatory role, use voices to give size of space (one of each side of stage for example).

P: was very impressed with how Nikki said where things were, then elaborated. Good that was more fluid/improvised – walking/talking description.

Spent a long time outside the theatre – was this too long; better in intro notes; then very condensed as refresher.
Tactile maps/models potentially very helpful. Tactile maps in advance. These need to get balance right both in how describe spatial relationships and related to different eye conditions.

Description from layout/relationships to detail. Talk about detail, particularly at touching distance. How spaces and materials feel – hot/cold etc. T: for example, feeling ticket kiosk, reminded one of other buildings.

Need enough opportunities to touch, but not forced upon you.

T: great to see development of script. More communication, ask more questions. Time description to make more space in script.

Feedback from 11am group

How effective was the tour for you?
Did it paint a good picture of the buildings?
• The theatre was excellent, orientation was fine. However the Jubilee Library was difficult.
• York Minster is a good tour example with tactile model/plan to help understand the layout before the visit.
• More orientation was needed.
• Scripts beginning to work well.
• The question was raised whether the script could be delivered by someone not trained. The script cannot contain all the answers. Perhaps a framework with bullet points would work well and be more flexible/responsive to the group.
• Scripts were too flowery and need to be edited.
• Comments other than architecture were needed/liked.

Did it tell you the sorts of things you want to know about architecture?
• Great to hear about the façade and context.
• Would be more interested in historic than modern.
• Having chosen two different buildings it would be good to emphasise the contrast or explain more about it.
• Interested in people’s stories about a place.

How could we make it a more interesting and enjoyable experience?
• A tactile plan supported by audio information would help understand the spaces.
• It would have been helpful to have some sense of place before the visit such as a model to show relationship of spaces, or simple tactile diagram.

Space by space timing:
• Timing was good for the choice of buildings. A one and a half hour limit ws suggested. This could work for larger groups (10-15 including guides?)
• Groups were too close and the tour leader could be overheard from other groups or a group had to wait to move-on if leaders were going at different paces.
• It was a long time mentally for both visitor and guide.

Which of the buildings did you prefer and why?
• Prefer historic.
• (As above - needed more comparison)
• Stories are helpful and interesting.
• Could be more light hearted and for guide and those attending to enjoy the tour.
• Enjoyed the tour.
• It was acknowledged that different people enjoy different things.

Other comments:
• Part of the route has limited physical access,
• The theatre had excitement added by the show preparation.
• Each building ‘spoke’ differently.

Describer comments:
• Describing a building make the tour leader look at it closer.
• The script was needed for a building such as the library.

Cassie’s observer comments
• It seemed to help start-off the tour with a formal welcome.
• It would help to know if the group were welcome to ask questions in the tour.
• Environmental noises were difficult in a busy street, perhaps audio headsets could be used?
• There was no access information given such as steps or availability of seats along the way.
• Reference to ‘buildings breathing’ and qualities of the space were enjoyed.
• Using the describers left and right rather then the left and right of visually impaired people standing facing the tour leader describer, could another locating method be used such as on the groups left or right?
• There was just a minimal amount of tactile experience.
• A traditional way of describing a building is in layers in plan or bands and bays in elevations.
Appendix 4:  
Audio-description of architecture – Jubilee Library and Theatre Royal final script

1. Introduction; Outside the Theatre Royal Brighton.

(In advance - introduce yourself and each other – say a little bit about yourself, maybe talk about why people are interested in this project)

Stand with your participants sitting on the long bench facing the Theatre Royal Brighton.

Welcome to the first test run of an audio-described tour of architecture for blind and partially sighted people. This has been organised by Vocal Eyes, together with the University of Brighton’ School of Architecture and Design; and funded by the Arts Council.

This tour will first take us through the Theatre Royal Brighton and then onto the Jubilee Library with about an hour at each building. After we have visited the theatre we will return to these seats for a ten minute comfort break before going on to the library.

This is the first pilot tour of a new project, so we would much appreciate your comments on the experience at the end. We will finish the tour with a brief feedback session in one of the library conference rooms.

Why did we choose the Theatre Royal Brighton and the Jubilee Library? Well, because these two pieces of architecture may only be five minutes walk apart, along the same road (locate), but they are very different in both feel and approach. The Theatre Royal Brighton has been formed from the piecemeal adaptation of various buildings through time, probably one of the most complicated theatre buildings in England. It combines eleven different buildings from a purpose-built Victorian auditorium to fisherman’s cottages. The richness of decoration is all about putting us in the mood for the fantasy world of the performance. The Jubilee Library, the other building, is in a much more contemporary idiom. That means it has been designed as a whole. The atmosphere of different spaces is created through simple relationships of shape, materials and light, rather than surface details or theatrical effects. It will be interesting to know by the end of the tour which building you prefer and why.
We are standing in New Road. It has been recently paved over to join this part of Brighton to the regeneration area (locate) of which the Library is part.

(comment on any related noises – eg. works on the buildings or the surroundings, seagulls.)

(locate the sea, locate the Botanical gardens, the Royal Pavilion and the Brighton Museum)

The Theatre Royal Brighton is one of Britain’s oldest surviving theatres. It was originally built as part of the late 18th and early 19th century development of the town, done under the patronage of the Prince of Wales, later to become George the Fourth. He started coming here in 1873, aged 21, because his doctors thought the seawater might ease swollen glands in his neck.

He must have found Brighton a welcome relief from the stifling court of his father George the Third. In 1806 he gave Royal Assent for the building of a theatre on New Road and within ten months it was open to the public.

By then Brighton was becoming a place of more popular pleasure. When the railway line was extended in 1841, day-trippers could travel from London to the seaside in under two hours. By the 1850s, there were 500 pubs, 100 brothels and at least 600 prostitutes. Many touted for business here outside the Theatre Royal. Revellers stumbled out of a nearby gin palace and in the doors of the theatre, their miseries forgotten in its magical, dazzling world.

We are looking at the front of the Theatre Royal which is made up of two buildings next door to each other. Over there (locate) is the grand five-storey red brick and stone auditorium building, designed by architect Charles James Phipps in a typically ornate Victorian style and completed in the late 1860s.

Above ground floor level, the main part of the facade is a central wall, pierced by a total of fifteen windows in three rows of five, closely packed one above another. The first and second floor windows are all vertical oblongs, framed by cream stone surrounds against red painted brickwork. At third floor, the set of five windows have arched openings, with the arches – again cream stonework - joined as a series of hoops. Above that, at the fifth floor level, is a full-length glazed conservatory, slightly
set back. This is where Phipps literally raised the roof of the original auditorium in the 1860s to put in extra seating.

To either side of the building are narrow towers, both topped with porthole windows and turrets at roof level. These are separated from the central façade by deep vertical cuts in the building, the depth of a person with their arms outstretched, and only joined at fourth and fifth storey level, supported by an stone arched bridging element.

At the ground floor level, the building has a white painted colonnade, made up of pairs of ornate classical columns at regular intervals. The building behind it now has a blank face, except for emergency exits to the back of the auditorium. This is because the theatre was extended again in the 1890s, to include the building next door (locate).

This is an old Georgian building, the old house of the theatre managers, the Nye Charts. Mr Henry Nye Chart was a company actor who took over running the theatre in 1854. A brilliant manager, he purchased the theatre in 1866 and was responsible for commissioning the Phipps refurbishments and extensions.

When he died his wife Ellen Nye Chart took over, equally if not more successfully, and then when she died in 1892, she left the house to the theatre. Their property, abutting the auditorium building, stands as the last in a row of five four-storey Georgian terraced houses that make up the rest of the street (locate) and now converted for a variety of uses. Each house is a slightly different version of the typical Georgian pale stone façade with its plain unornamented rectangular windows at each level, and a central doorway. Each house is differentiated from its neighbour by a full height classical pilaster – a flat column embedded in the wall. Most have a ground floor colonnade and two large windows on the first floor, known as the piano nobile (pronounce nob-il- a). Both the Nye Chart’s house and the house beside it have elegant semi-circular bow windows on this floor, which would have shown off both their wealth and taste.

The Nye Charts house now provides four storeys of additional foyer, circulation and bar spaces to the original Phipps’s auditorium. This is how people enter the theatre, today, into what still feels a quite domestic space.
As part of its 200 year celebrations, the theatre is currently renovating the two sections of colonnade which run in front of its two buildings. These are made out of pairs of cast iron Corinthian columns, layered with white paint. Lets go closer.

At ground floor, next to the entrance doors in the old house (locate), and between it and the Phipps auditorium building next door, a small bar-room has been carved out. This is called the Colonnade Bar and can only be entered from the street. It has a very ornate moulded, bow front in olive green painted timber.

offer touch tour of columns, bar, entrance door etc
walk from one side of foyer front to other whilst talking to indicate length

Then improvise move inside to the effect that - IN A MOMENT WE WILL ENTER THE THEATRE FOYER, WE WILL BE GOING THROUGH THE RIGHT SET OF A HEAVY PAIR OF DOUBLE SWING DOORS, WHICH I WILL HOLD OPEN – OR WHICH ARE HELD OPEN ..

2. Inside the Theatre Foyer Booking office

Stand on the top of the slope, in the corner between the box office and the entrance.

We have just come through dark wooden polished entrance doors, with decorative glazing panels above based on circles of red, clear and other coloured glass. Before I describe the interior, Lorraine from the Theatre Royal Brighton would just like to welcome you.

Short intro from Lorraine

We are standing in the foyer. It is quite easy to imagine this room as being part of a house. It the size of a large living room. The strange thing about it is that the floor slopes gently down.

There is the box office (locate). This is like a tiny wooden room, resembling a ticket office in an old train station, with its rosewood shelves and glass fronts behind which the box office staff sit. To the other side of this wall (tap) is the colonnade bar and beyond that the Phipps auditorium.
Halfway down the length of the opposite wall (locate), only four or five paces across from the box office, is the original domestic fireplace from the Nye Charts house. This is tiled in deep blood red and with carved wooden surrounds and mantelpiece. To the entrance side of this is a counter for selling ice-cream and cold drinks during the interval, to the far side a wooden bench seat with red plush seating. The wall behind has dark wooden panels to waist height and cream wallpaper with tiny red markings.

At the bottom of the slope is a flight of steps on one side, which goes up to the circle level, and more glass and window swing doors.

The carpet beneath us has a leaf pattern on crimson. It hides an ornate, highly polished Victorian mosaic tiled floor. It's because of the polish, making it very slippery, that it's hidden.

Above us five small crystal chandeliers, set like dots on a playing card, have beads dropping down in hoops. The ceiling is a plain cream, ornamented with ribs dividing it into square and diamond patterns.

*Move down the slope to towards the next set of doors and improvise what else can be seen/touched.*

This interior was intended to suggest opulence and a touch of magic. We are surrounded by dark, heavily varnished and polished rosewood, by crimsons, creams and golds. This expression of luxury, warmth and comfort is enhanced by the way light is deliberately bounced around, creating a gentle dazzle, a constant sparkle. The foyer is full of faceted, bevelled and reflective glass – not just the chandeliers but also mirrors and glass panels in all the doors.

At night time this was all about pleasure in anticipation of the performance itself. During the day, the reflective surfaces help the light from the front doors to reach deeper into a space which has no other openings to the outside.

It’s all a little tawdry now – particularly as slightly shabby and dusty surfaces become revealed in daylight. The cavern of the fireplace is used to store the fridge for the cans of Coke and Lilt. We won’t hear the noise of the industrial fridge when the foyer is full, but now it’s a constant buzz.
But like all theatres, the Theatre Royal Brighton comes alive when the performances are on. Because of the sloping floor, this foyer space feels like a funnel from the street outside into the world of our imaginations. It takes us down, past the wall clock (locate) letting you know how long the performance will last, and to the heavy wooden swing doors at the bottom.

*Take participants through the doors, indicate which open etc., and stop once through the doors….*

We have now moved down to the level of the auditorium stalls entrance. The grand space of the auditorium is (locate) partially hidden behind long crimson velvet drapes, fringed with gold threads.

The foyer slope has matched the slope of the stalls level in the building next door, so that most people enter the auditorium from this side, about halfway down its length.

But instead of going that way, we’re going to take a different route. This space is L-shaped in plan, one leg going to the auditorium, the other straight ahead, to a narrow bar – the stalls bar – against the rear wall. This bar continues the motif of multiple reflections - with a large mirror behind which reflects the daylight from the entrance doors, the view back to the street, and our images back at us.

Behind the bar counter there is a kind of secret door into the backstage areas, where we will be going next. First, though, I want to tell you about the framed wall posters (move)

*a few steps further on, to stand by wall posters, suggest touching ….*

….there are three gilt-framed publicity flyers (locate) from the first half of the 20th century for Peter Pan, Dick Whittington, Jack and the Beanstalk. As was the style at the time, these posters are almost entirely without pictures, instead using different colours and sizes of text for graphic effect, mainly reds and blacks on white paper. The times of last trains home are given here, arranged especially to coincide with the end of the performances. Performance ticket prices are also listed (read out some prices – in 1939, for instance, one shilling for balcony and six shillings for stalls).
We are now going to move around and behind the bar counter (*locate*), with its bar flap already opened to your right, against the wall. As you walk past this, you will be able to feel a strange kind of hatch on the wall, about head height.

Next to this hatch and at right angles to it, tucked tight into the corner, is a door. Because we are going through into an area which is back up to the original street level we started at, this door is set a little way up the wall, with four steep steps to get through it.

*Take the participants around the bar, and up the 4 steps to the higher level of the backstage door. Show the Gulp Bar on the right hand side, a small hatched opening with a shelf at the bottom, in the right hand wall. Show participants how it opens. Hold door open/ tell people what you are doing. Invite to touch as appropriate.*

3. Backstage

We have now moved into the backstage storage area, and are standing in what was the original courtyard behind the Nye Charts’ house. We can see through to stage (*locate*) in the next door building, the back of Phipp’s auditorium where matt black drapes line the stage.

This space was originally an open courtyard - about six metres square - but has now been roofed over, high above us, with solid concrete planks. It bridges the gap between the converted house we have come through and the backs of the buildings from the next street along which have become part of the theatre over time, as dressing rooms and offices. As I have said, the theatre proper – the auditorium and stage are (*locate*)

Here all traces of luxury have gone. Everything is cluttered and utilitarian and the air is damp, dusty, maybe slightly salty. There is no natural light. A large blue tarpaulin is hanging down across the middle, above us, tied to the walls by string from its corners to catch the drips when the roof leaks. The far wall is three storeys of bare, unattractive, modern brickwork and (*locate*) are huge matt black sliding doors to block off backstage whilst a performance is on. The only touch of elegance is the painted two-storey section (*locate*) – called the Alexander Rooms - with its first floor internal windows overlooking this yard, which is where the theatre company meets.
We are definitely ‘back of house’. Not only the décor but also the acoustic is different. External sound is, as far as possible, excluded from here, so despite the size of the space and the hard, unrelieved surfaces all around us, everything is slightly muffled. Lighting back stage is also gloomy at most times, there is no call for daylight. We have left behind that world of shimmering lights in the foyer and entered an area lit only by two, bare and stark fluorescent tubes.

Most of what we see piled around this space are bits of lighting, set, props and costumes. *(improvise examples from what you see)* Everything looks like a jumble sale. But in fact, it’s a carefully ordered and sequenced arrangement laid out ready for the matinee performance. This week, it’s Cole Porter’s “High Society”.

You may remember the small, hatched opening you may have felt, as we came through the door to get backstage - the Gulp Bar. It connects the stalls bar we came through to this backstage area, and meant that actors could be served a drink, stage right, during performances. The story goes that Laurence Olivier would gulp down a drink here whenever he was briefly off stage. At the same time, he’s said to have been conducting a game of bridge, playing a hand each time he went off the other side of the stage. Name a famous actor and they will have performed at the Theatre Royal. Not only Olivier, but Katherine Hepburn, Richard Burton, Vivien Leigh, John Gielgud, Noel Coward, Dirk Bogarde and Vanessa Redgrave have all been in these backstage wings.

So lets go and join them on the stage.

*Take participants through to the stage.*

4. Views from the stage

We are now standing on the stage. It is raked, sloping slightly down towards the audience. There is a proscenium arch opening, with a little strip of forestage in front of that.

The auditorium *(locate)* is a large space, roughly 15 metres square, a metre being about the length of a pace. The volume is formed by a bank of three tiers of seating, one above the other. These have balconies in flattened horseshoe shapes, which
make them feel close to the stage. The ground level, the stalls, slopes back upwards away from us and has rows of plush red seats without a central aisle.

Above us is a round, flat, ceiling panel, which fills the roof space and is decorated with delicate raised motifs, and circular bands of olive green and fine lines of gilt. It has a central chandelier, about two metres deep, made up a circle of hanging glass beads coming together at their base.

This ceiling panel slopes slightly upwards towards the stage. Together with angle of the stalls, it gives a false perspective, artificially appearing to stretch the distance from audience to stage.

All of these elements – the extended stage, the steeply rising balconies, their flattened shape, and the titled ceiling and sloping floor, are all devices to make the theatre experience appear both more dramatic and more intimate. Audience and performance are placed in close proximity, something actors enjoy. For this reason the Theatre Royal Brighton is often called an ‘actors’ theatre’

The auditorium was designed by Charles James Phipps during the refurbishments of 1866. He raised the roof of the earlier design to add an extra tier of seating. You may remember, we could see this from the outside, as a glazed conservatory running across the front of the building at the fifth floor level. In his day, this extra tier of seating, and the changes he made to the rest of the auditorium meant that the theatre accommodated 1900 people. Since then the plain bench seating of the uppermost tier has been replaced by deep red velvet fold up seats, like the rest of the theatre and now it’s capacity is nearer 900. In the old days, the theatre had the reputation of drawing a very discerning crowd, famed for their ‘seat-slamming’. If they didn’t like a play, they stood up and walked out, letting their seat slam loudly up behind them. (add what is happening now – someone hovering, its empty etc.)

This was one of the first works by Charles James Phipps as a theatre architect, a contemporary of the other well-known theatre architect of the day, Frank Matcham. This interior is an early version of a style which they popularised and which can be seen in other Victorian theatres such as the Lyric, the Garrick and the Palladium in London.
These became masterpieces of opulent fantasy, like sitting inside a wedding cake. This theatre, as one of the earliest, is simpler and more classical in its decoration. The chandelier, circular ceiling, and olive green and white frieze band, about a metre deep, that runs around the top of the walls, are all part of the original Phipps decoration.

Each of his curving balconies, has been re-decorated – in the 1920s – quite plainly in gilt and cream with evenly placed wreath motifs and a plain olive green band surround. Regularly placed tiny double light fittings stick out from these balcony fronts and have oddly domestic red shades with gold fringes, like little table lamps, again to increase the sense of intimacy.

On each side of the stage are the boxes – columns of three, one above another, butted right up against the proscenium arch, and then another two beside them. There’s a box to the right of the stage; one seat in that box is hidden from both the actors and all of the audience, just because of the particular place it occupies. The person sitting in that seat, in that box, can’t be seen by anyone. The pop star Robbie Williams sat there, and more recently the Queen. When she occupied the secret seat, the box was renamed from Director’s Box to Queen Elizabeth II in recognition of the Theatre’s ongoing Royal patronage.

Now lets look at the stage itself. Above us, is a jumble of equipment, gantries and ropes and the three fly towers stretching many metres upward from the stage. This theatre still uses brute force - manually hauling scenery flats - rather than raising and lowering them with hydraulic equipment. This makes it one of only 5 ‘hemp houses’ remaining in Britain, named after the original hemp ropes used.

Traditionally it was local fishermen who had the jobs of hauling – and mending - these ropes. The long tradition of bad luck connected with whistling in the theatre dates from these men communicating the shifting of sets high up above the actors through whistles. So someone else’s thoughtless whistle could have unintended – and potentially serious consequences.

Under the stage, underneath our feet, are two further levels, deep basements. The lower one once had a stream running through it.
(add brief comments about set, props and size of stage. Offer touch of set if relevant)

Let's leave the stage now and go towards the stage door.

*Take everyone off the stage and up to the beginning of the stage door ‘cottage’.*

It is now time to leave the Theatre Royal Brighton. We came in through the left hand house as we were facing it, up into its back courtyard and then right across into the other building of the pair, to the stage and auditorium.

We are standing close by the stage door *(locate)* which opens onto the next street along, called Bond Street. The buildings to the back of the theatre are made up of a double row of two-storey cottages running parallel to the street, with a tiny gap making a light well between them. The internal row has become dressing rooms and offices *(locate)* and of the row of four beyond on Bond Street, three are ordinary shops. The fourth, which we are leaving by now, is an old converted two-storey fisherman’s cottage, dating from the 1800s.

Here the ceiling suddenly drops low enough to touch if you reach your hand up, and is made of thin wood planks, chipped now and layered with generations of paint.

*Take participants out the back, invite them to touch the ceiling. Talk about the moveable door managers desk, - maybe get person behind desk to explain about getting large pieces of equipment in.*

*Go out the stage door and then turn around on the pavement,*

*Space here is very tight, crowded…. Make sure everyone is comfortable and can hear.*

5. Outside the stage door.

Here we are, back out in the daylight after being in spaces without any. The façade of this side of the theatre is completely different to the grand fronts on the other side. This cottage is four domestic doors wide, painted in royal blue paint, now chipped and worn by all the scenery and props that have passed through, over the years. A white painted sign with blue writing above says Theatre Royal Stage Door Three of
the doors can be folded back. The fourth, called the Cut, (locate) has another opening panel above it, like a stable door for a giraffe. Through this vertical letterbox all the stage flats for every performance have to be posted.

The three other two storey fishermen’s cottages that form the back of the theatre (locate) look much as they must have done when first built. In fact, this whole street is of a completely different scale and quality to New Road where we started. Not grand Georgian and Edwardian buildings, but cottages and small shops. Here the bulk of the theatre is completely hidden and the scale returns to that of Brighton’s famous old ‘laines’, with tight little two to three storied buildings with windows and doors straight on to the street.

We will now walk back around to the front of the theatre to sit down and have a ten minute comfort break. Then we will go on to the second part of the tour, the Jubilee Library.

Take participants back around the block southwards and return to the bench seating in front of the Theatre Royal. Explain seats, location of toilets, get take away water, teas coffee etc. where required. Mention that refreshments will be provided during the feedback session, once the tour is over.

Then after ten minutes…. 

Okay, if everyone is ready, we will now go straight along New Road, which has been newly pedestrianised as part of the urban regeneration of this area, and to the square in front of the Jubilee library, about five minutes walk away.

Guide participants down New Road, and across crossing.

(add comments about buildings in between – change from old to new and about noise of building work going on for new hotel.)

Stand in front of library and orientate participants to elements of building in relation to where you are standing.

6. Outside the Jubilee library
We are now standing in the new square which is the centrepiece of this whole area of regeneration and development. It has been built on what was a vast empty space used for car-parking, which for many years blighted this part of the city. *(Pace the square in advance so you can tell people its overall dimensions. Relate back to auditorium space. Are these equivalent in size/volumetric feel or different?)*

The new square becomes a formal, contemporary civic space of a type not found much in Brighton. It adds to the urban mix of the city, making a breathing space in the otherwise dense grid of streets leading away from the sea. This is about displaying civic pride and forward thinking for Brighton rather than sticking only to its traditions and heritage.

The masterplan for this area is well on the way to being completed. Besides the Jubilee Library, the final scheme will include 16 social housing units, a conference theatre, 69 private flats, a 96 bed boutique hotel, shops, offices, cafes and restaurants.

*(Locate Jubilee Library, finished but unoccupied wing for café, rows of shops with flats and offices above and hotel construction)*

The masterplan for the whole area was drawn up by Bennetts Associates Architects from London, who collaborated with a Brighton based architectural practice, Lomax Cassidy and Edwards, to design the new library.

200 years on from the Theatre Royal Brighton, this is deliberately a contemporary place. It has been built, not piecemeal, but all at one time, and uses the latest sustainable technologies. The architecture is based on clear volumetric arrangements of shapes, on simplicity of materials and detailing; and most importantly, on the use of natural light to enhance qualities of space and form.

So how can we visualise the Jubilee Library? It is made up of a high rectangular glass box in the centre, flanked by a thick three storey band of offices, specialist library spaces and other service spaces, wrapped around three of the sides like a muffler.

We are facing the fourth side, which is south-facing and fully glazed.
The blank walls of the two ‘muffler’ ends, finish in the same plane as the central glass wall, flanking it on either side and clad in small ceramic tiles. At three-storeys, these wings are still lower than the main glass box. It rises above and is topped by four separate long strips, like thin aeroplane wings, set at right angles to the glass and sticking out over the square. These act as sun shades and move automatically depending on weather conditions.

The front of the glass box is made up of a ground floor row of 12 vertical oblongs – each about the size of two people standing on top of each other with their arms outstretched. Above this, and protruding out, is a wall of similar sized panes of glass, but this time laid on their sides, - 7 panes long by 6 panes high. We can see people through the glass, sitting on comfortable chairs, reading the paper or a book, or just warming themselves in the sun.

This architecture uses minimalist detailing, emphasising the flatness and transparency of the surface, a style often called ‘high tech’ and well known through the work of architects such as Norman Foster.

The whole central glazed section between the tiled ends, for example, appears to float as one piece with no visible means of support. This is called curtain walling – where glass sheets are held with small stainless steel brackets behind along their length and at the corners.

Colours are based on the natural colours of materials and on a limited palette of steel and glass on the outside and steel, glass and honey-coloured wood on the inside. The glass wall is a subtle green tint to reduce glare. The side panels are covered with a grid of ceramic glazed tiles, each about the size of a human hand. These change with the light, blue-black on overcast days and then glowing dark green when the sun comes out. (describe effect of sun/daylight at this moment). These tiles are based on what are called ‘mathematical’ tiles. These are found on Georgian buildings, especially in Brighton and Lewes. Mathematical tiles were thin brick tiles used on many old properties as a cheap way of giving a ‘brick’ appearance to buildings which were, in reality, built from timber frame.

The tiles here, with the glass, create an iridescent reflective skin to the square during daytime. At night, as the building lights up, the interior spaces of the library become visible and the life within the building becomes almost part of the life of the square.
The glazed skin almost disappears and the non-glazed areas black out, providing a silhouette-like frame to the lit spaces within. *(What like now)*

Now, we can just see in, up to the sky above through rooflights inside, and watch patterns of movement as people move about; but all muddled by the reflections from outside.

We will now go into the library. The entrance *(locate)*. Above the entrance is a large window above which contains an artwork of handwriting in etched glass on a translucent panel, based on dictionary definitions of the word library.

So let's go in.

*Take participants in the entrance. Improvise on spaces you are going through, booklovers store, security frames etc.*

*Go into the middle, under the floating floor. Stand under hole in floor above and central wind tower.*

7. Inside the ground floor.

We are now in the middle of that large glass rectangular box I was talking about. This central void, the fiction reading room, is a cavernous space of cathedral like proportions. It has eight evenly placed unpainted concrete columns that rise up from the floor and umbrella out to support another floor – standing like an enormous eight legged table in the space two storeys above us - where people are quietly researching away. This floor is free of the rest of the building only linked to the sides by glass and steel bridges which cross the gap – 2 to each side and 1 to the back *(locate)*. This allows daylight to flood down on all sides from the roof above, through the gaps between to the ground floor where we are standing.

Within this voluminous space under the table, our eye level just looks over the short moveable metal shelving units, packed with books, set at angles throughout the room, and interspersed with a variety of chairs and other furniture. All around us we can see a slice of a working day going on…. Over there…
(Improvise on examples of what you can see people doing, and the spaces they are doing it in)

The clients and architects wanted the building to be a welcoming and flexible space, a new kind of library. Gone are dust, paper and narrow booked-lined corridors. There no ‘quiet’ signs here, or librarians going shush…. In fact, despite many hard concrete surfaces, the sound of our voices, even talking at normal volume, is softened and absorbed - by the soft honey-coloured wooden surfaces of all the surrounding walls, and by the filtering effects of the gaps between the floor above us and these walls. There are three other holes in the floor above us which help this effect - evenly spaced 2 metre square openings that run down the middle. You may be able to feel the up-draught they create. I will talk about this more when we go upstairs.

First, though, we need to know a bit more about why this space came to be like it is. According to the library architects Lomax, Cassidy and Edwards, these reading spaces are a tribute to the work of previous library architects, particularly Henri Labrouste, the designer of the 19th c Biblioteque Nationale in Paris. In that building Labrouste’s elegant iron columns articulate the reading room space, and raise the eyes off the page, to the sky, reminding one perhaps of the wider world beyond the book, and of God. Here, we don’t look up to the sky, but to the underside of the plain concrete floor above. But because this is white, and lit by both uplighters and reflected daylight streaming down the walls, the architects offer us instead a muted and glare-free glow as both daylight and artificial light are diffused and reflected back through the space.

The spatial generosity the architects were after is deliberately a reference to the spatial, monumental qualities of many civic buildings during the 19th and 20th centuries. Such generosity is threatened these days in the cost conscious requirements of contemporary public funded projects, many of them built – as this one was - though the PFI scheme.

For me this is very different in feeling to the Theatre Royal Brighton. There, awe and drama are inspired by rich ornamentation and by colours and materials expressing luxury and magic.
In this building, the minimalist simplicity of the materials and detailing, and the concentration on making space mainly through volume and light aim to express contemporary civic values as simultaneously both awe-inspiring and comfortable.

Are there any questions or comments before we head up to the last stop on our tour, the floor floating above us?

*Short opportunity for questions and comments*

We are now going back across the main fiction reading room to the stairs and lift (*locate*). This will take us up to the non-fiction and study areas on the table floor above us.

*Cross back across and stop at the bottom of the stairs. Check if anyone would prefer the lift and organise with your observer to help if needed.*

For those taking the stairs, you will experience the staircase going ‘in and out’ of the interior wall as it climbs. The stepped sections are hung out into this big main space, running as slanting parallel bands up the wall. But as you walk up, the straight sections from the end of one flight to the beginning of the next take you into the office corridors of the sub-spaces. This means you are moving in and out between the office zone and the reading room.

*Use staircase as an opportunity to touch.*

*Take participants up to top floor by stairs (or lift if required)*

*(Improvise the following comments on stair and when you get to top bridge:)*

- The way the glass and steel of the banisters is detailed is a good example of how the building is put together as a whole.
- Feel how thick the wall has been made between this space and the office areas.
- Differences in scale, light and surfaces when in the glass box or inside the ‘muffler’ zone
- How the staircase is aligned with the gap between upper floor and service wall, but does not touch that top floor
• **How the staircase enables you to see the full length of the reading room, back out to the square and up to the sky.**

  *Anything else you think is important to describe?*

8. Upstairs on the study floor bridge

We are now standing on one of the steel and glass bridges, looking down on the spaces below. We get a different perspective from here as we watch minute figures moving about. *(As before, give examples)*

Beside us, the thick wall we have walked backwards and forwards through up the stairs is clad from top to bottom in soft, light coloured narrow birch-faced planks, laid horizontally. As I mentioned earlier, this gives a feeling of warmth to the space, softens sound and prevents glaring reflections. At each of the three floor levels of this wrap-around band of offices etc., there are a series of regular large square openings, protected with glass banisters, which allow light into the office corridors and into offices and other rooms, like the IT suite a floor below us. Because the wall is so thick, these are deep recesses, shadowed at their top edges. These allow staff and visitors to see what is going on, and feel connected with the whole space. *(improvise extra description; quality of light on wall surface, who is standing there etc)*

On this floor level another eight umbrella like exposed concrete columns – like the ones below but shorter - hold up a flat concrete roof above us, surrounded by the bands of horizontal skylights which have so effectively lit the ground floor below. Again, this concrete ceiling reflects a soft diffuse daylight back to us, managing to feel almost translucent despite its thickness and weight.

This bouncing around of daylight throughout the building is not just for effect. The Jubilee Library aims to be sustainable; and many of the techniques for low energy loss can be seen here up here. One of the largest energy loads in a building of this type is artificial lighting. But despite the size of the spaces, most can be lit most of the time by daylight, through the great southern window wall and skylights above.

This building has also been imbued with a life support mechanism of its own, where the ability to inhale the salty Brighton air is actually all part of its environmental sustainability. On the library roof above us and placed centrally in a line are three, five-metre tall wind-towers, reaching up to the sky. This is an integral part of the
passive cooling system, drawing warm air up and out of the structure. Under these wind tower openings, are three holes punched in the floor we are standing on, protected by glass banisters. Each is about 2 metres square. Together with the wind towers directly above then, these holes help the funnel effect of warm air rising. This is what causes the draft you may have felt when we stood beneath them in the centre of the reading room below.

In winter, artificially warmed air is circulated through the building and the mass of the exposed concrete floor and central concrete roof panel plays a part in absorbing heat by day, and releasing it by night, thus ensuring even temperatures. High-efficiency heat recovery units capture heat from lighting, PCs and people, and recycle it back through the system. (comment on sound of vents opening)

Here, then, we are in a thoroughly contemporary building, designed to be set in a thoroughly contemporary urban setting. As, I have said, what a change from the soft surfaces and rich décor of the Victorian theatre.

In the Theatre Royal Brighton, we made a journey. We went back into the past, and from ordinary to fantasy worlds. We travelled through architecture made up of a piecemeal accumulation of many different kinds of building of different periods. And we went from the theatricality of front-of-house to the utilitarian areas for the people who make it happen.

Here, in contrast we have a new building which, to me at least, opens itself up from any one place within it – wants you to understand how it works as a whole, wherever you are. Designed all at once, in combination with a larger area of regeneration, it aims to tell a different kind of story. It is meant to be about openness, flexibility, accessibility and clarity of spatial relationships. It is almost like a built diagram of how a library should work. Here staff and customers are inter-locked in the same clean lined and neat spaces.

And form and light rather than ornamentation or variety are used to define the atmosphere and experience of the architecture. Some people feel the result is too corporate – more like an off-the-peg office block than a library. Others enjoy its qualities and are happy not to turn Brighton into a heritage city.
We look forward to hearing your opinions about which building you prefer and why; and about your experiences of the tour. Because this is a first trial run of an audio-description of architecture for blind and partially sighted people, we would very much like you to attend a follow up feedback session, taking place now, in conference room one in the library. This will really help us improve the quality of tours and tapes we want to do in the future. In addition, Maureen Berry from the Jubilee Library will tell you about facilities here for blind and partially sighted people. And a drink and a snack will be provided, so I very much hope you can stay about half an hour longer.

Conference room one, on the next level down and that is where we will go now, in the lift.

*Take visitors to conference room one.*
Appendix 5: Proposed guidelines for audio-descriptions of architecture

1. Journey Sequence
Journey sequence should be designed to evoke the quality of the building as a whole
Pick key stopping locations, linked by ‘walk and talk’ segments

2. Architectural orientation
Locate elements being described in relation to the speaker and use the voice(s) creatively as a locational and measurement tool
Integrate way-finding information with the story
Give an overview of the building at the beginning of a visit by describing its basic volumetric and spatial relationships. Describe changes through time. If possible, use tactile aids to support this activity.
Explain orientation within the building relative to the sequence of places on the tour
Reinforce understanding of volumetric and spatial relationships, and of changing orientation, by repetition throughout a tour
Describe what is happening in the space during the tour itself
Summarise what has been said at regular intervals

3. The importance of story telling
Tie descriptions of separate spaces together through a coherent storyline.
Exploit the performative potential of story-telling

4. Colouring in the picture
a. selecting content
Describe what the visually impaired person is looking at
Make supporting information directly relevant and informative to specific place.
b. From broad brush to detail
Describe overall shape, size and qualities of a space first, then begin to build in details.
c. Using architectural ‘language’
Use architectural terms, but always explain with a short phrase
Use analogies for sizes and shapes of things, for example related to human body or number of paces.
d. Evoking atmosphere
Build on the understandings of space blind and partially sighted people already have. Incorporate atmospheric description and supporting stories with factual information. Use two describers to give variety and enable layered interpretations of the space to be explored.

5. Whose interpretation?
Don’t let your own opinion get in the way of good describing
Enable different interpretations to be heard

6. Expertise and accuracy
Build in explicit processes for checking factual accuracy
Consider inviting experts to speak about aspects of the building

7. Touching opportunities
Incorporate as many relevant touching opportunities as possible
Consider what supporting tactile aids would enhance understanding of the architectural space

8. Pre-tour and contextual notes
Provide pre-tour notes covering both building accessibility and contextual background for the architectural tour

9. Using the voice
Enjoy using the spoken word
Engage the audience through language
Project the voice
Take into account surrounding noise
Consider benefits of voice and performance practice and training

10. Enabling a dialogue
Enable audio-descriptions to support dialogue with participants

11. Organisational issues
Consider the duration of the audio-description for different audiences
Allow time throughout for absorption and reflection on information
Build in opportunities to sit down throughout
Keep group sizes small
12. Mode of delivery
Consider the most appropriate mode of delivery for each specific building

13. Involving blind and partially sighted people
Build in proper costs for blind and partially sighted people’s involvement
Build in effective evaluation processes

14. Training requirements for describers
Consider training requirements for non-expert describers

15. Publicity and marketing
Do not underestimate the amount of time required to market audio-descriptions to blind and partially sighted people
Allow lead-in times to publicise and develop audio-description projects
Appendix 6: 
Draft notes to describers used for Architecture week tour

Sense of Place/third draft audio-description/Pilot architecture tour with blind and partially sighted people
Saturday 23rd June /Architecture Week 2007

NOTES FOR STUDENT DESCRIBERS

1. Always orientate the elements you are describing in relationship to your own body and where you are standing (to my right, behind me...). This enables the participants to locate what you are describing in relation to the position of your voice, whichever way they are individually facing. In the script, this is signposted by the word (locate) in brackets.

2. Parts of the script are for you to improvise. This is usually when moving between spaces, or to take into account what is actually happening whilst you are there (noises ‘off’, changed set arrangements etc.). Take time to prepare in advance, by checking out where this happens during the tour and thinking about what you want to say. These are your personal touches, to help the tour sound less scripted.

3. Where there are words or phrases in the text which you find awkward to say, either: highlight in the script to help prevent you stumbling; or choose your own words for saying the same thing. Aim for a tone which is conversational and informal.

4. Practice the script and the tour ‘stops’ itself before the day, so that you can be confident, project well and make the experience enjoyable for others.

5. Prepare for the day itself. Bring clipboard, water or what ever else you think you might need.

6. On the day, wear a bright top, so that you are easier to recognise within the group.

7. Allow time for people to introduce themselves to you and to each other at the beginning of the tour. Address people by name when you are guiding them around.

8. Keep to time! There will be groups behind you, and we have to clear the Theatre Royal by noon.

9. Keep an eye on the whole group, and take control of moving them from one place to the next, by vocalising what is happening. Remember, you may have to interrupt a VIP whilst they are talking because they may not be responding to visual cues - of other people moving, for example.

10. On the day, each group will have an ‘observer’ who will take photographs and notes of the your tour. They are also there to help with any problem, for example, if someone needs to leave the group for any reason.
## Appendix 7: Proposed outline action plan for Vocaleyes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aim</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Timescale</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Development and testing of proposed guidelines for audio-descriptions of architecture through a scaling-up project, covering more buildings</td>
<td>Cost expert service and training programme models Fund-raise for Open House weekend audio-descriptions of architecture from architects, sponsors and trusts. Work with Open House to select 4 buildings for live tours and/or podcasts</td>
<td>Complete next set of audio-descriptions and evaluate scaling-up processes by end of September 2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The testing of different modes of delivery, in particular live tours and D-I-Y audio tapes and/or podcasts</td>
<td>Find funds to complete podcast of Jubilee Library Offer live tour and/or podcast versions to London Festival of Architecture Work with LFA on fundraising and building selection</td>
<td>Have further 10 audio-descriptions of buildings in place for LFA in June 2008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exploring how to support audio-description of architecture with appropriate tactile aids and models</td>
<td>Explore sources of funding</td>
<td>On-going</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research into different forms of story-telling so as to inform rich and evocative audio-descriptions of architecture</td>
<td>Explore sources of funding</td>
<td>On-going</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing the educational potential of architectural student, architects, clients and others involvement in the audio-description process</td>
<td>Work with University of Brighton on student project in 07-08 academic year Work with Student Festival organisers (London Metropolitan University) on involving student volunteers in LFA 08 audio-descriptions</td>
<td>Aim to have project by Feb 08 Build into LFA in June 2008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building up audiences for audio-description by publicising services, disseminating lessons and extending development and use for architects, clients and other building stakeholders</td>
<td>Vocaleyes to develop and resource publicity and dissemination strategy for audio-descriptions of architecture Work with other stakeholders (RIBA, CABE etc) to promote</td>
<td>On-going</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 5: One of the focus group participants enters the Jubilee Library – not excluded from architectural appreciation any more.