

**Kamra tal-Periti Seminar on Accessibility for All
Radisson SAS Baypoint, St Julian's,
15 May 2008**

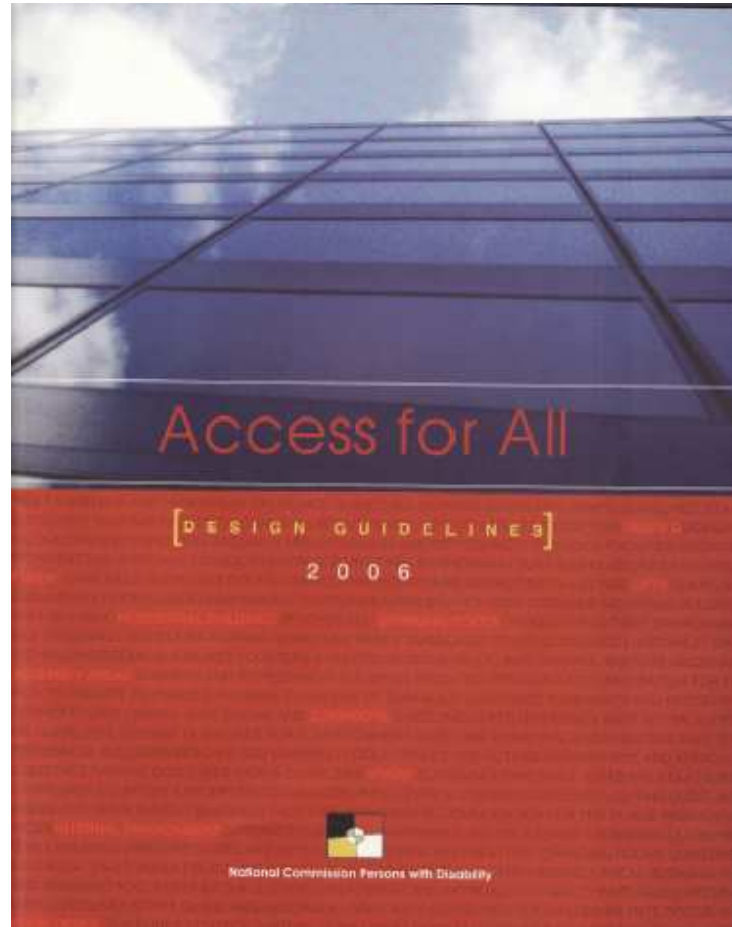
Perit Dr Joseph Spiteri

Good Practice in Accessible Design

Understanding Good Practice

- Understanding the difference between new build and adapting existing structures.
- Universal Design (UD) principles apply to new build.
- In addition to UD, Reasonableness applies to adaptation of existing structure.

Design Guidelines set technical standards for Universal Design



From strategic view to detailed design

- Whether we are dealing with new build or adaptation .. it is the attitude... the mind set... that dictates the success of our design.
- Architects have the power to mould an accessible environment by:
 1. Influencing development and investment decisions.
 2. Creativity in design.

Competing constraints

- Discussion on the relative 'weight' of accessibility issues relative to other constraints placed upon building development.
- Conservation
- Architectural value
- Aesthetics
- Health and safety

Good examples

- We can all see good examples of accessibility .. Or can we?

St John's Co-Cathedral



Conservation vs Accessibility?



Law Courts .. Reasonable adjustment?.. Good Example...



But is it...

Perhaps not so good.



Two reasonable adjustments?



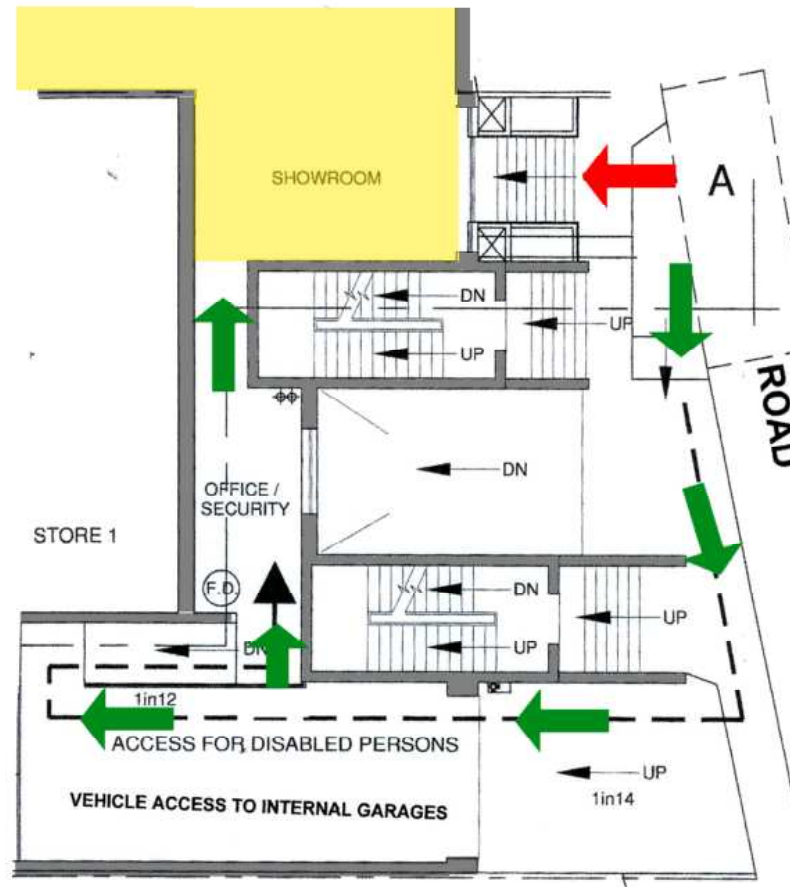
Two adjacent adjustments.



Indoors accessibility !



Reasonable?



Principles of Universal Design*

1. Equitable use
2. Flexibility in use
3. Simple and intuitive use
4. Perceptible information
5. Tolerance for error
6. Low physical effort
7. Size and shape for approach and use

* Council of Europe

Decision Framework & Intervention Strategies for Reasonable Access

- Joint research carried out by University of Leeds and University of Malta – EU FP6 Funded Research Project*.
- **Decision Framework**
- **Degrees of Reasonableness**
- Policy Approaches to Reasonable Access
- Intervention Strategies

*SSPS-CT-2004-006623 Contract Number 006623: ReasonableAccess

Decision Framework (1)

Does the proposed access solution discriminate i.e. provide unequal treatment by:

Compromising or impeding users?

Not offer ease of use such as appropriate distances?

Send the wrong message i.e. are they undignified?

If the answer to any one of the above is **YES then redesign.**

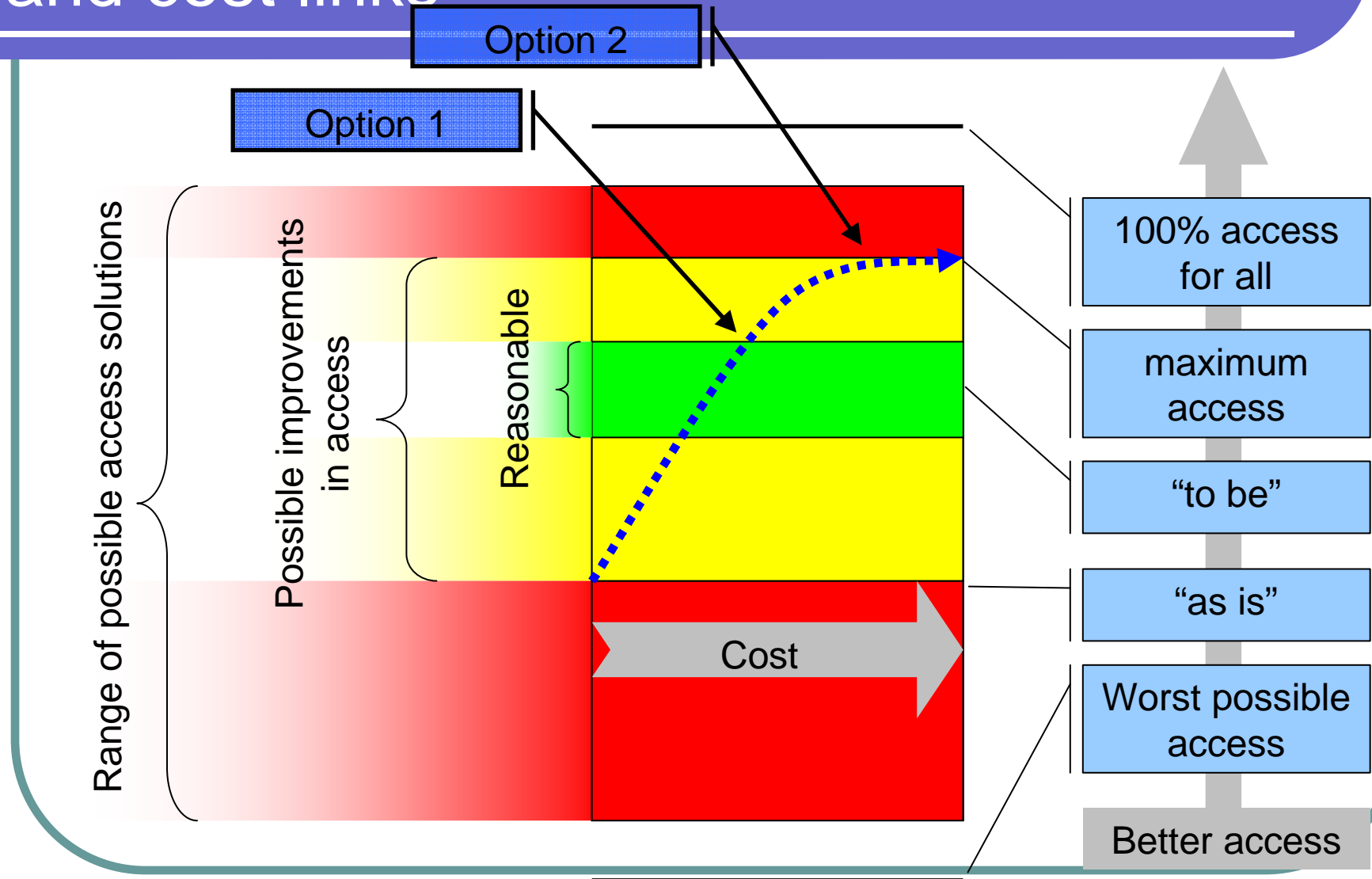
If this is not possible consider the decision criteria below.

Decision framework (2)

Criteria for Building

- Use/Purpose/Function
- Existing or New Build
- Location
- Technical Considerations
- Size
- Type of Developer/Organisation
- Frequency of Use
- Safety Considerations
- Legislation
- Financial Considerations

Degrees of reasonableness - benefits and cost links



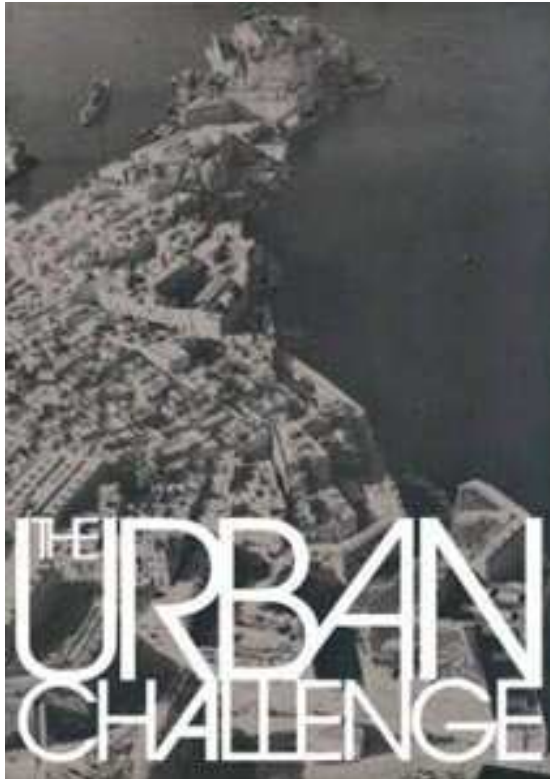
Definition of Terms

- *100% Access for All* – A situation that can never be achieved as requirements for different impairments will always conflict.
- *Optimum Access* – The best possible level of access available in a given situation, regardless of building disruption or cost.
- *Reasonable Access* – A position balancing optimum access against building disruption and cost without compromising use. The use of Aristotle's mean and the middle way

Conclusion

- **Consult early and widely to reach an agreement on what is reasonable**
 - Stakeholders help improve designs
 - But no scheme can go ahead at any cost
- **Once a 'reasonable' design has been agreed... freeze the design**
 - A design change later on will waste time and money and may stop the project
- **Prescriptive legislation/standards should be used wisely in the circumstances**
 - not possible to anticipate every future situation
 - can force money to be spent in areas where it doesn't deliver optimal value for money

The next challenge ... ?



Two of the main scopes addressed by this document are the presentation of the vision of the Kamra for a more sustainable development of the built and rural environment, and the emphasis of the need for quality in design as an essential tool for the nation's economic and social development.



Thank you