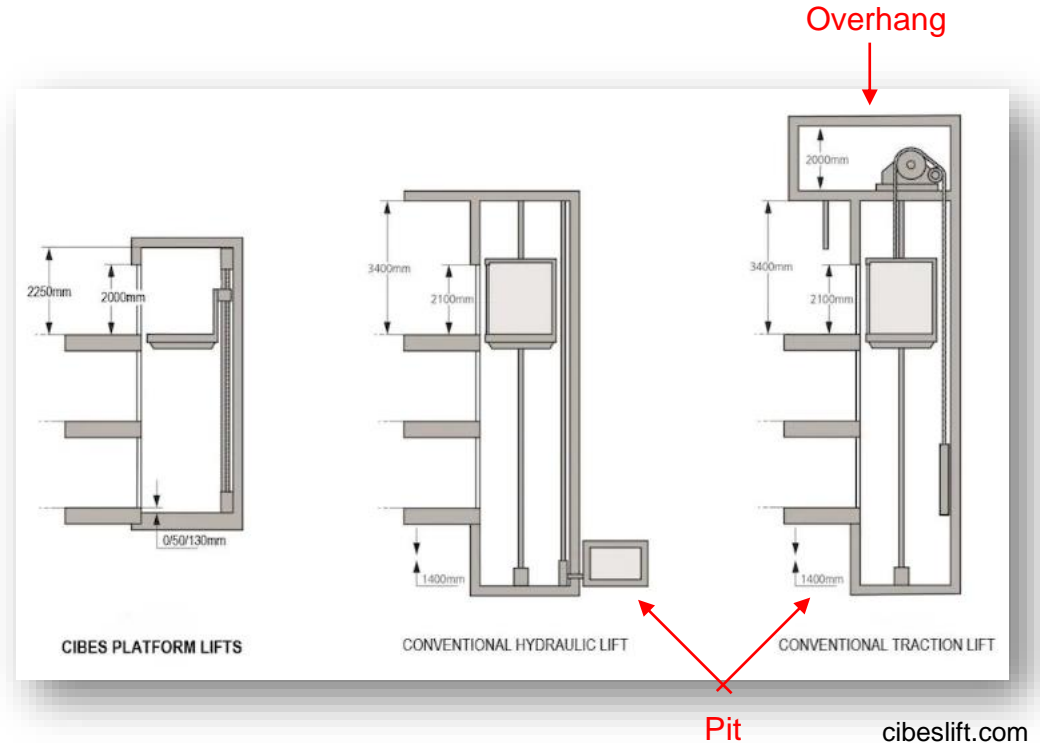


Lifts in Churches

- Platform lifts
- Conventional hydraulic or traction lifts
- Stairlifts





Platform lifts

Ibstock St Denys, Leics



Mountsorrel St Peter, Leics



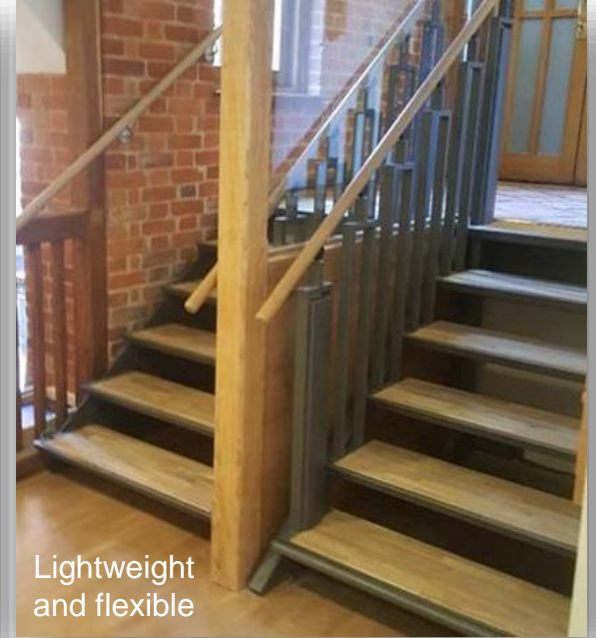
- These can be a good solution if there is no space available for a fully compliant ramp
- The machinery is built in, so no need for a harmful pit or overhang
- Enclosed platform lifts are more visually prominent than open ones, so good design is key

Platform lifts

Desford St Martin, Leics



FlexStep at Leeds Castle, Kent (liftup.dk)



- Open platform lifts will minimise visual impact
- Lightweight designs in heritage-friendly materials are now available
- Potential to combine stairs with platform lift

Conventional lifts

Conventional hydraulic and traction lifts present challenges in churches:

- They can be very harmful to the significance of the building and to below-ground archaeology, as they will require a pit and possibly an overhang for machinery in addition to a lift shaft
- They are expensive to install
- They are expensive to run and to maintain in line with legal requirements
- They require someone present to respond to an emergency if anyone gets stuck
- They have a limited lifespan so there will be a cost for replacement
- They're not very green!

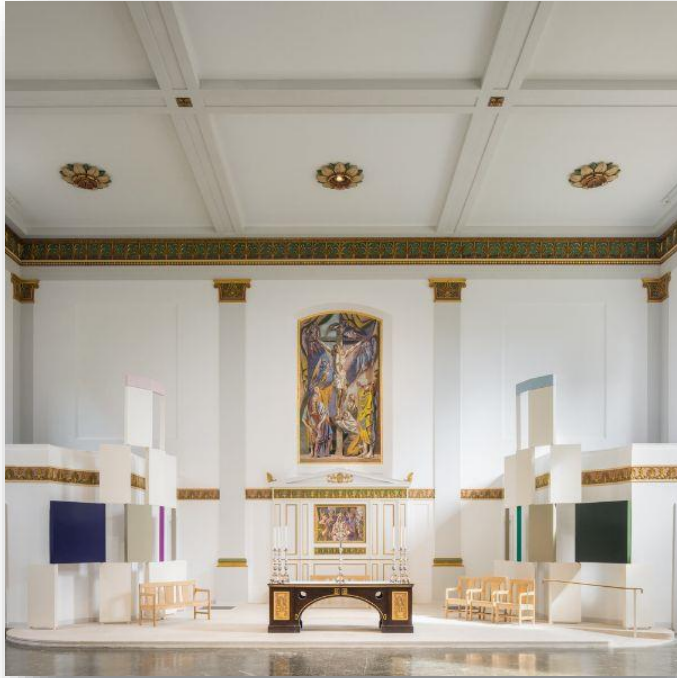
... therefore, unlikely to be a realistic option for most churches.



Conventional lifts

stjohnswaterloo.org

ianvisits.co.uk



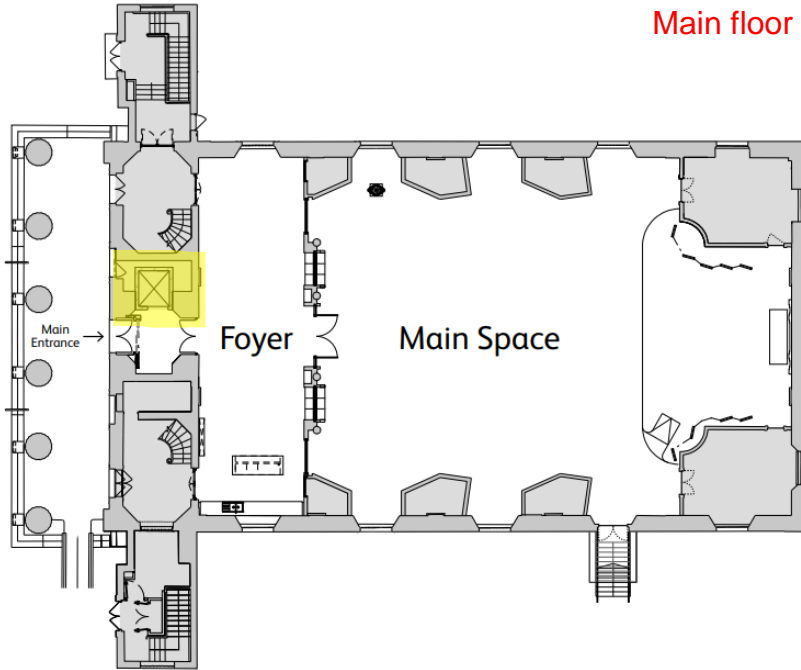
Case study: when can conventional lifts be an appropriate solution?

- St John's Waterloo in London is a major Grade II* church with an undercroft, which underwent a £5.5 million restoration project. The undercroft spaces are hired out for events and were the only appropriate location to install WC facilities.

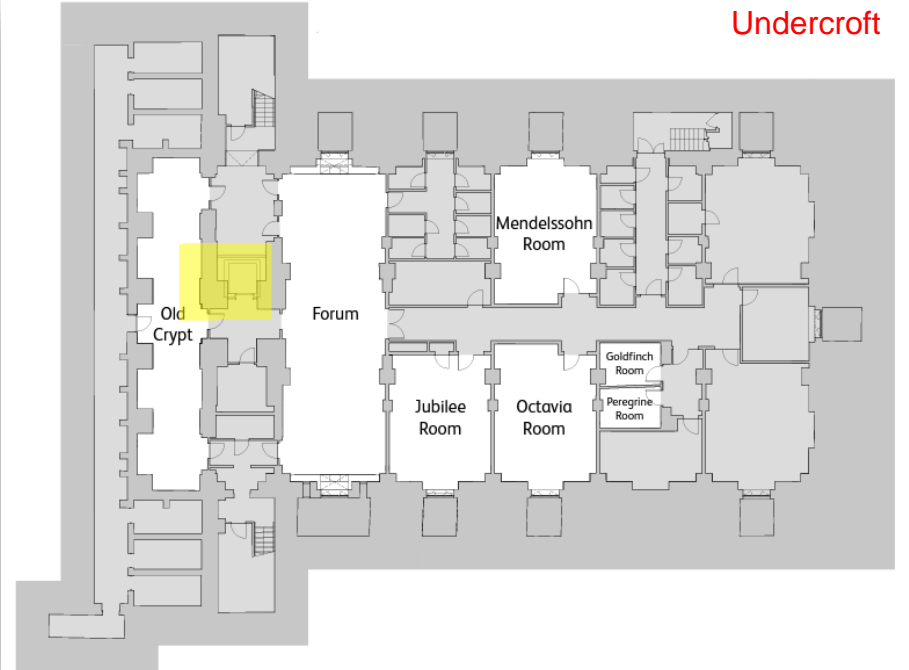
Conventional lifts

stjohnswaterloo.org

Main floor



Undercroft



- As part of the major project, a lift was installed in a discreet location next to the stairs. This enabled the undercroft events spaces and WCs to be made fully accessible, while avoiding harm to the most significant architectural spaces.



Stairlifts

Curved stairlift (lifewaymobility.com)



Bespoke stairlift at Grade II* Stroud Congregational Church (Stannah/Dolphin Lifts)



- These can be a cheaper, less harmful alternative to conventional lifts
- Curved and lightweight designs can be made to suit historic staircases
- No attachment to bannisters required; consider floor attachments carefully

To summarise:

- Platform lifts can be a good solution if there is no space available for a fully compliant ramp
- Open platform lifts have less visual impact than enclosed ones; good design is key in both cases
- Conventional hydraulic and traction lifts present challenges as they can be very harmful to significance and expensive to install, run and maintain
- Conventional lifts may be appropriate for major churches with large numbers of users, if a less-sensitive location can be found
- Stairlifts can be a cheaper, less harmful alternative to conventional lifts
- They can be made in curved and lightweight designs to suit historic staircases

