

Bridging design and accessibility with Stannah's stairlift at luxury Islay hotel

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Ardbeg House, a boutique luxury hotel on the picturesque island of Islay, Scotland, has opened its doors as a truly immersive whisky and hospitality experience, with a newly installed [Stannah](#) Stairiser CR2 inclined platform lift providing guests with full accessibility to upper floors.

Featuring twelve individually themed bedrooms, the hotel combines luxury, creativity and storytelling inspired by the island's famous Ardbeg distillery and heritage. The hotel interiors include striking copper wall art, a custom-designed boat chandelier and interactive features including buttons labelled *Press for Smoke*, which release a smoky whisky scent. Guests can also enjoy tours of the local distillery and a quality food and drink menu with an Ardbeggian twist.

The work

Designed in collaboration with Russell Sage Studio, Ardbeg House honours the heritage of Ardbeg while creating immersive spaces that reflect the island's culture and the distillery's iconic history. Over 20 local and Scottish architects contributed to weaving Ardbeg's story into the hotel's design, which also involved seamlessly integrating the Stannah Stairiser CR2 with customised solutions. Stannah Lifts collaborated closely with Russell Sage Studio and main contractor Thomas Johnstone to supply a custom lift solution that met both the functional and aesthetic requirements.

The Challenge

The hotel required a custom solution to provide disabled access to its upper floors, which presented three main challenges. The first challenge was accessing the island, as transporting equipment involved careful planning and coordination with ferry services to ensure timely delivery and installation without disrupting

the renovation schedule.

The second challenge was addressing the space constraints. The hotel had no space to accommodate a passenger lift, so an inclined platform lift was the best option. However, the staircase area was small, requiring a compact design. Following a detailed assessment of the space, a Stannah CR2 inclined platform lift was chosen as the ideal solution. The lift's slimline design further minimised wall projection, and the platform folds neatly when not in use, preserving staircase space. The platform dimensions of 800mm by 1000mm comfortably accommodate a wheelchair and user, while raised ramps and safety barrier arms ensure secure and safe operation.

The goal was to provide safe and reliable access for wheelchair users without disrupting the visual appeal of the hotel interiors. To achieve this, a bespoke colour was selected for the platform lift, ensuring it blended seamlessly with the surrounding walls and décor.

The results

The Stairiser CR2 now provides safe and reliable access to the two upper floors of Ardbeg House, allowing all guests to enjoy the hotel's immersive and unique experience. Equipped with remote call stations, wheelchair users can summon the lift independently from the top or bottom of the stairs, ensuring convenient operation.

Designed for use on a curved rail, the Stairiser CR2 follows the natural flow of the staircase while keeping outward projection to a minimum. This innovative feature makes the Stairiser CR2 equally well suited for installations featuring a single turn, multiple landings or spiral configurations.

To ensure the stairlift complemented the hotel's rich Ardbeggian interiors, the rail and carriage were finished in a custom green paint specifically chosen to match the hotel's décor. This carefully considered design decision allowed the lift to feel like a natural part of the space, making the lift an integral element of the storytelling and design.

With the installation of the Stairiser CR2 completed in just two days, Ardbeg House continues to offer a world-class whisky and hospitality experience that is now fully accessible to every guest.

Dimitri De Juliis, Technical Sales Consultant at Stannah Lifts Scotland, said: "Working on Ardbeg House was an exciting challenge because it required a solution that improved access while seamlessly blending with the interiors. By customising the stairlift with a bespoke green finish, we were able to provide full accessibility without compromising the hotel's luxurious design. Careful logistical planning was also essential, as all equipment had to be transported to the island via ferry. It's incredibly rewarding to see how naturally the lift integrates into such a unique and immersive space."