


For and on behalf of  
**Oshwal Association of the UK**

## **DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT**

**Provision of a Disabled Access Lift (including provision of a new glazed facade to  
facilitate the installation of the lift)  
Oshwal Centre, Coopers Lane Road, Northaw**

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## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 This design and access statement has been prepared by DLP Planning Ltd on behalf of the Oshwal Association of the UK (OAUK).
- 1.2 Government regulations require a Design & Access Statement (“DAS”) to accompany most planning and listed building consent applications. The requirements are set out in the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2010.
- 1.3 As a general guide, a design and access statement is a short report, which must explain the design process rather than be used as a substitute for drawings. The level of detail required will depend on the scale and complexity of the application.
- 1.4 The statement is submitted in support of a full planning application for the provision of a Disabled Access Lift (including provision of a new glazed facade to facilitate the installation of the lift) at the Oshwal Centre, Coopers Lane Road, Northaw. As such, the complexity and length of the document is therefore proportionate to the nature and extent of the application, having regard to the above legislation and all relevant associated guidance.

### ***Background***

- 1.5 The Oshwal Association of the UK was founded in 1968 by the first Halari Visa Oshwals to settle in Britain as they saw the need to create an organisation which would mirror the sister Oshwal organisations in India and Kenya and which would establish its own identity in step with the intellectual, cultural and religious ethos of the people it represents. OAUK was established as a charitable foundation in 1972 and today represents over 15,000 members.
- 1.6 Its Vision is:

*“To form a more perfect Community, for the advancement of the Jain religion, the relief of poverty, the advancement of education and the protection of health for Oshwal Members”*

1.7 It seeks to achieve this by acting:

*“as one large extended family, sharing a common ancestry, history and culture. Its strength and prosperity comes from the diversity of its hugely talented family members working together.”*

1.8 Its ethos is defined by its cultural heritage and is one of self support amongst its members, tolerance and inclusion which extends to all races and religions, hospitality, and care and welfare for all living creatures.

1.9 The Association is wholly dependent on its members. It is today a thriving organisation, enjoying the influx of new younger Oshwals volunteering for the many activities undertaken by the Association. In the last two years nearly 1 in 10 of all members have volunteered their time and energies for the advancement of the Association through becoming involved with a range of events and activities which bring benefit to the Community at large.

1.10 The activities of the Association in general include education, young person’s activities, healthcare, support for the education and health of women, sports, social and community activities, as well as religious and cultural activities.

1.11 The Association currently has two centres - Oshwal Centre, Potters Bar, Hertfordshire and Oshwal Mahajanwadi in South London.

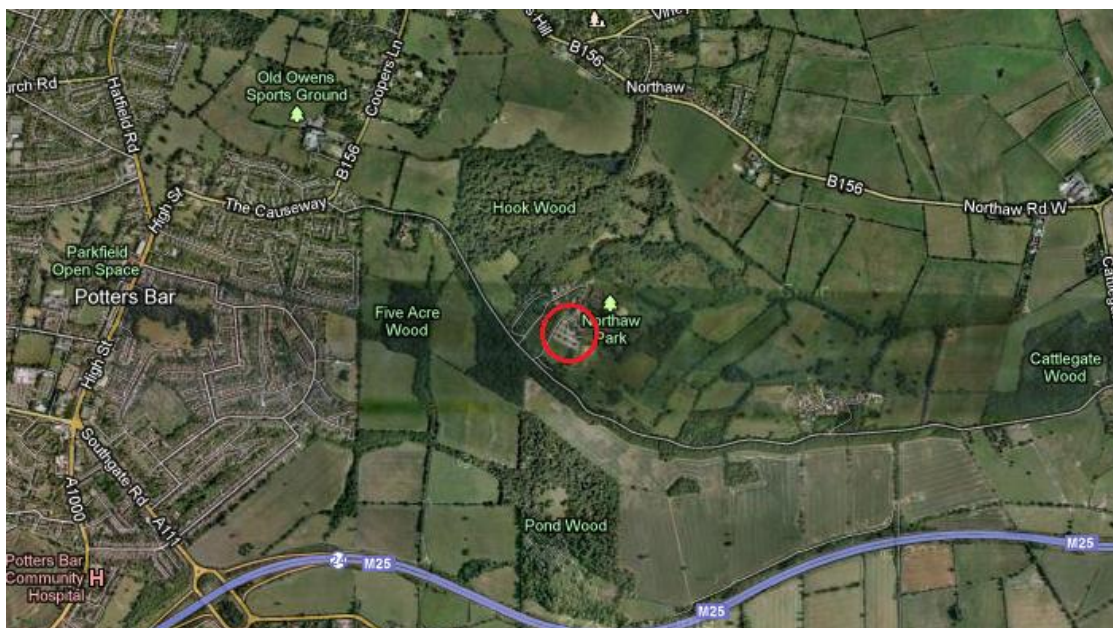
1.12 The Oshwal Centre is headquarters of OAUk and its administrative nerve centre. Oshwal Mahajanwadi has served the needs of Oshwals residing in South London since 1982 and also houses a Ghar Derasar, where religious activities are organised on a regular basis. Halls at both centres can be hired by Oshwal members as well as non-members for celebrations of births, marriages, the performances of rites relating to

death, religious and cultural functions. OAUK has recently acquired a property in Kingsbury, North London (Project 'EKTA' or 'Unity') to use for community purposes – to date the Association has had to rely on renting halls and meeting places for its local activities. This will not replace the use of the Oshwal Centre but will allow greater access for many to weeknight activities.

- 1.13 The main objective of the Association is the Advancement of Jainism by the provision of a place of worship. It was with this objective in mind that the elders of the Community purchased the property known as Hook House in Coopers Lane Road, Potters Bar (Northaw). This site, now simply known as the Oshwal Centre, comprises almost 80 acres at the heart of which is a Tuscan Style villa dating from 1839 and Grade II listed (listed in 1952).

### ***Site and Surroundings***

- 1.14 The application site forms part of the larger Oshwal Centre complex and lies a short distance to the east of Potters Bar and to the south of the village of Northaw in Hertfordshire. The M25 motorway lies to the south. This is best appreciated by way of the aerial photograph extract below.



1.15 The Oshwal Centre site is located off the northeast side of Coopers Lane Road, in an area of otherwise open countryside. For planning policy purposes, the site is located within the Green Belt.

1.16 On site there exist a range of buildings and community provision, the main buildings are described in detail below.

### ***The Mansion (Hook House)***

1.17 Since the estate was acquired in 1980, the mansion has been transformed into the headquarters of the Association and its administrative nerve centre. The mansion now houses offices for the Association, meeting and seminar rooms, a small restaurant for staff and visitors. There is also a small flat occupied by the resident priest.

### ***The Community Halls***

1.18 A building comprising two large Assembly Halls fronted by a large car park to the south comprising 296 car parking spaces in a landscaped setting were officially opened in 1989. The Halls extend to around 1560m<sup>2</sup> in total and were granted permission from 1986 on the site of old stables and barns present on the site when it was acquired. It took the Association 9 years to complete the scheme based on the availability of funds and competing calls on the money available.

1.19 The Assembly Halls are fundamental to the Association's activities and its ability to deliver its social and cultural objectives. They are therefore in constant use and are well used.

1.20 The Halls are accessible to visiting members of the public, but at the present time, access to the main hall space and lower floors (the entrance being effectively on an upper floor) due to the slope of the land, is restricted from the ground floor lobby and car parking area for those in wheelchairs or with other mobility impairment. This is clear from the plan of the west elevation provided on drawing number 6842/05/P0.

- 1.21 The Oshwal Association has been seeking to actively improve this access provision and have for some time been considering various options to improve the usage and accessibility of the halls to all users.
- 1.22 The optimum access solution is presented as part of the accompanying planning application.



## **2.0 DESIGN AND ACCESS**

2.1 The accompanying full planning application seeks the provision of a Disabled Access Lift (including provision of a new glazed facade to facilitate the installation of the lift) at the Community Hall of the Oshwal Centre, Coopers Lane Road, Northaw.

### ***Use***

2.2 The current use of the site, as has been outlined above, is that of a community centre and hall.

2.3 The current proposals will facilitate the greater ease of access and use of the site for wheelchair, limited, or impaired mobility users, and as an ancillary element of the primary use, will have no impact whatsoever on the primary use of the site.

2.4 As such, in terms of the land use, this remains unaltered and therefore the use is deemed wholly acceptable on this basis as already have been deemed appropriate in the Green Belt.

### ***Amount***

2.5 The application proposes the installation of 1 no. lift measuring 1.8 metres deep by 1.7 metres wide in the foyer of the existing ground floor. This will provide access to the mezzanine floor below this, and the main hall, sub-ground level and facilities beyond this.

2.6 To prevent restriction in the use of the main ground floor foyer through the creation of the lift and associated shaft and to facilitate this installation, the existing glazed screen will be removed and a new replacement screen installed 1.6 metres forward of the existing screens location at present. This will sit under the existing canopy of the over-hanging roof (please see the photograph below). This will result in the need to provide a new glazed screen and 4 no. new pairs of access doors.



### ***Layout***

- 2.7 As noted, multi options have been explored regarding where to site the proposed lift. The current siting has been selected as being financially viable, having the least visual impact on the exterior fabric, character and appearance of the building given its Green Belt location, and on not otherwise restricting access or narrowing down the foyer provision at ground floor level. This still achieves the primary objective of creating a more accessible building for all users.
- 2.8 This proposed siting also provides access to all levels of the building including the mezzanine and lower ground floor for the main hall. Its installation will not compromise the use of access to the stairs, circulation or access in the foyer, or result in the loss of notable facilities at lower ground floor level.
- 2.9 Some minor internal works will be required to the doorways and spaces at the mezzanine and lower ground level, but being wholly internal to the fabric of the building and having no wider material impact, do not require planning permission.

### ***Scale***

- 2.10 The lift will measure 1.8 metres deep by 1.7 metres wide. The new glazed screen will move forward out under the existing canopy by some 1.6 metres but in all other respects the scale of the glazed screens and doors will reflect those which will need to be replaced to facilitate the installation of the lift, as they will continue to be sited under the existing canopy roof.
- 2.11 The lift will have a travel of 5.1 metres and car dimensions of 1.1 metres wide by 1.4 metres deep. The door width is to be 0.9 metres.

### ***Landscaping***

- 2.12 No landscaping will be lost, altered or is proposed as part of this application given the limited scale and nature of the application.

### ***Appearance***

- 2.13 The lift will be a Model 700 DIONE as outlined on the specification sheets which accompany this application.
- 2.14 This will have a full height COP control panel with handrails and ceiling as per the enclosed product literature. There will be a blue pearl floor in granite. Push buttons will be marked with the Braille alphabet and voice information. The headroom has been planned so as to have no external impact on the roof of the building.

### ***Access***

- 2.15 The proposal will notably improve access provision within the building to the mezzanine and lower ground levels for those with mobility impairment and/or wheel chair users.

- 2.16 The lift has been designed to be accessible from the disabled parking spaces to the front of the Hall, and highly visible from the main entrance so users are in no doubt of the location or presence of this facility. The lift will be clearly marked and visible behind the relocated glazed screen. From the car parking area, users can already access the site utilising the existing ramp provision – a photograph is provided on the following page.
- 2.17 The relocated glazed screen is necessary to facilitate the provision of the lift without unduly limiting or compromising existing pedestrian access provision into and out of the building – something that is not desirable in case of a need to exit the building rapidly i.e. in the case of an emergency.



- 2.18 The lift is of a suitable scale, location and design to be wholly fit for purpose and to genuinely improve the accessibility and access to the community building in question. The location does not otherwise compromise any other access to the building and so retains its legibility.

### **3.0 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS**

- 3.1 The accompanying full planning application seeks the provision of a Disabled Access Lift (including provision of a new glazed facade to facilitate the installation of the lift) at the Community Hall of the Oshwal Centre, Coopers Lane Road, Northaw.
- 3.2 The lift is of a suitable scale, location and design to be wholly fit for purpose and to genuinely improve the accessibility and access to the community building in question for wheel chair and limited/restricted mobility users, including the elderly. The location does not otherwise compromise any other access to the building and so retains its legibility.
- 3.3 The limited external alterations to the building to facilitate the construction of the lift will have negligible impact on the character and appearance of the building, and will all be contained within the existing envelope of the building. As such, there will be no impact in the openness of the Green Belt or the impact of the building within or upon it.
- 3.4 In light of the above, it is respectfully considered that planning permission should be granted for the proposed development.