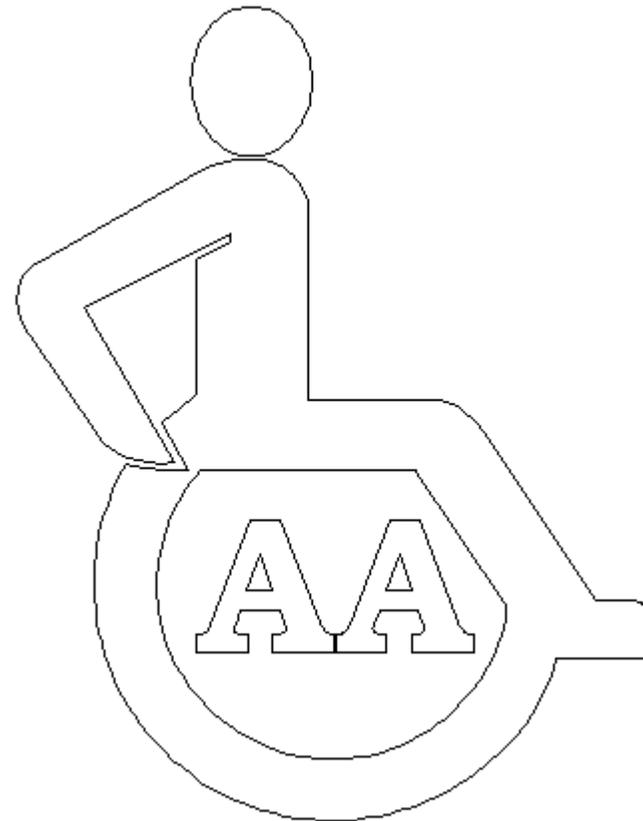


# **Access Audit of A Oakes Ltd**

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# Walk & talk access audit report

## Introduction

This access audit report has been produced for A Oakes Ltd by Access Alliance for their Vicarage Road retail premises. The audit includes approach, access to parking, access to the building and main facilities, including the external route to the rear wheelchair accessible entrance.

The audit is an assessment of the accessibility of the building for disabled people and takes into account the needs of those with mobility impairments, including wheelchair users, and those with sensory impairments and learning difficulties.

However, it should be noted that the issues considered in the report will affect the convenience of to the building for all its occupants not just those with identifiable disabilities.

The report records and assesses the current situation with regards to specific physical elements, noting problems and giving recommendations to improve access. Generally only those items that fall below an acceptable standard are noted.

The criteria for assessment are:

Need to maximise access and use of building

Provisions of Approved Document Part M of the Building Regulations May 2004.

Current guidance on the provisions of the Disability Discrimination act 1995.

Current published good practice in design and detailing which meets the needs of disabled people (BS 8300)

Need to observe reasonable functional and financial practicalities of implementing action to improve access.

Dimensional criteria used in the report are based on guidance given in *Approved Document Part M of the Building Regulations May 2004*,

### **1.1 Factors contributing to accessibility**

There are many factors contributing to accessibility the most obvious being the building shell. However, it is also critical to consider fixtures and fittings, also furniture and equipment.

It is also very important to consider how a building is used. Awareness and attitudes of staff need to be developed if the safe and convenient use of the building is to be preserved. How a building is managed in its day-to-day running will have a huge impact on how easy the building is to use by disabled people. For these reasons it is critical to consider staff training as well as physical improvements to the building and the role of management is critical.

### **1.2 `In` should equal `out`**

Means of escape for disabled people, including the fire alarm system and management procedures for evacuation, were not reviewed as part of this audit. However, the following points should be noted.

A truly accessible building is one which people not only enter and use safely and conveniently, but on which they can leave safely in the event of an emergency. Safe access is totally dependant on safe egress, and safe egress is of necessity planned egress. In general two separate strategies are required for customers and staff.

Staff in the building are `known quantities`. Their individual needs can be assessed and agreed with them, and personal escape plans devised for all members of staff requiring assistance.

The needs of customers are not necessarily known, and often their total knowledge of a building is the route by which they entered. As opposed to personal plans. An overall strategy is needed to allow customers to escape from the building, or at least to a place of relative safety or refuge, whether assistance is needed or not. Specific measures to meet the needs of disabled people may include alterations to an alarm system by introducing, for example strobe lighting alarms, vibrating pagers and designing appropriate refuge areas.

### **1.3 Legislation**

There is various legislation concerning accessibility.

### **1.4. DDA**

The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 gives disabled people rights in the areas of recruitment, employment and in the provision of goods and services. Service providers and employers must ensure that they are not discriminating against disabled people either in the way they provide services or in their buildings or facilities.

The Act does not override other legislation relating to buildings such as planning permission, building regulations, listed building consent and fire regulations. It is advisable to follow current best practice design guidance as provided by this Report to be able to justify decisions taken.

The access audit is a useful first step towards meeting the requirements of the Act. The findings of the audit can be used to prepare an access plan which will comprise a programme of implementation of improvements over a period of time. There will be some access improvements that can be included in maintenance programs and other items that can be planned for the future' budgets, allowing a considered planned response.

## **1.5 Disclaimer**

Compliance with the advice contained in this report does not ensure compliance with the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995. Neither the writers of this report nor the Access Alliance or its members accept responsibility for loss occasioned by reason of non-compliance with the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995.

## **1.6 Audit details**

**Auditors** Allan Jones & James White

B) **Date of Audit** 25 March 2004

## Access Audit findings and recommendations

	<b>Findings</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
2.1	Access by busses cars wheelchairs and scooters is level with dropped kerbs and controlled crossings in all directions	None.
2.2	Front entrance to premises 3 inch step double doors left open into lobby then through second set of double doors and mat in floor recess.	Step to be left at front entrance due to safety issues in the area. Mat to be raised to floor level as it is a trip hazard. Glass door panels to be marked to aid visually impaired.
2.3	Shop is clearly signed from all directions.	None.
2.4	No signage to rear accessible entrance and parking.	Clear signage is required in the front windows giving directions to the rear accessible entrance and parking.
2.5	Route to rear car park level.	None.
2.6	Car park uneven gravel surface.	Order already in place to tarmac car park with one accessible marked parking space.
2.7	Level entrance through double doors into lobby and on into shop through second set of double doors.	Kicking plates fitted to doors for wheel chairs users and glass door panels to be marked for the visually impaired.
2.8	Entry into shop impaired by clothing Racks.	Circular rack nearest door to be removed and others moved slightly to the right to give clear line of vision between wheelchair user and assistants for communication purposes.

## Access Audit findings and recommendations

	<b>Findings</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
<b>2.9</b>	Two sets of two steps in shop to the higher level one at the front and one at the back.	The steps at the front of the shop are made into ramp and steps as they are wide enough for both and the riser on the steps to be made even whilst the ramp is being constructed. The rear steps will remain at this time. Ramp specifications enclosed.
<b>2.10</b>	Three small changing rooms.	Reasonable adjustments already in place by allowing customers to take goods home to try on. Accessible changing room specifications enclosed for future reference.
<b>2.11</b>	Signage that exists is in upper case.	More signage needs to be used emergency exit signs and where to assemble in case of fire.
<b>2.12</b>	Fire Alarms being installed.	A flashing light needs to be installed for the hearing impaired to know the alarm has been triggered, and vibrators should be considered.
<b>2.13</b>	No hearing system for those using hearing aids.	A hearing system needs to be installed. Literature to be supplied.
<b>2.14</b>	Staff have not had disability awareness training.	Staff need to have disability awareness training.