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Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church
North-western Europe Diocese
London D.G. Holy Trinity Church

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Date: 21 Feb 2016

ቁጥር/Ref: DGHT/551/17

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Re: Challenging the Equality Statement of British Land under the Relevant Protected Characteristics - Race and Religion

Population and Residency

The Equalities Statement produced by British Land is replete with proxy assumptions, clearly based on the limited official statistics available.

The assumptions are by no means accurate (and this is not the fault of British Land) but the overall result is that it generates an inaccurate impression of the size of the Ethiopian community in London, confusingly correlates Amharic speakers with those following the Ethiopian Orthodox liturgy, conflates Ethiopian ethnicity with Ethiopian orthodoxy, and grossly underestimates the numbers of those using the services of the church.

The implication of this highly misleading and inaccurate report, is that the church serves a population of insignificant numbers, and that a smaller replacement facility (i.e smaller than the site of DGC) in Camden or otherwise, would suffice to meet their needs.

To show how the report is fundamentally flawed in its factual assertions and calculations, we have set out below how the Ethiopian population figures provided by British Land are misleading, and we present more accurate figures.

At 4.47 of the Equalities Statement it states: “The Census also records country of birth, with around 10,500 London residents having been born in Ethiopia – around 0.1%. This data is not available more locally, and in any case it is likely that many of London’s Ethiopian community were born in Britain.”

It is unsurprising that only a minority of ethnic Ethiopians would be recorded as being born in Britain. This is because the two main waves of migration to the UK were in 1974 and



1991. Hence, the overwhelming majority of ethnic Ethiopians in Britain today, are British born.

Furthermore, there are sizeable numbers of those from the families who settled in Britain, who were born outside of Ethiopia. Approximately 15-20% were born in refugee camps and in transit countries, whilst awaiting resettlement in Britain.

At 4.51 of the Equalities Statement it states: “The Census data records those whose main language is Amharic, so **does not include** (emphasis added) those for whom it is a second language, nor people of Ethiopian descent for who English is their main language”.

The Equalities Statement rightfully qualifies its use of the Amharic speakers statistic as being only useful to shed some light on the broad distribution of London’s Ethiopian community.

We would agree that London’s Ethiopian community is broadly spread, and we would assert that its widespread nature makes it even more important that there is a centrally based mother church (which is one of the functions of the DGC). However, we also point out that since the overwhelming majority of the Ethiopian community do not speak Amharic as a first language, the distribution figures are not really very accurate and certainly not reflective of density.

Using the numbers of Amharic first language speakers to estimate the distribution and concentration of Ethiopians in London is highly misleading for several reasons.

- i) Amharic is a first language for only about 29% of Ethiopians even within Ethiopia. <http://www.ethiopiantreasures.co.uk/pages/language.htm>
- ii) Ethiopia has 83 different languages with up to 200 different dialects spoken. The largest ethnic and linguistic groups are the Oromos, Amharas and Tigrayans.
- iii) Oromo (and its dialects) is the most widely spoken first language in Ethiopia. There are also substantial numbers of Oromo first language speakers residing in London.
- iv) Tigrinyans, Oromos and other nationalities of Ethiopian origin even including Amharas, often speak Amharic only as a second or third language if at all. According to British Land at 4.54 “London has approximately 6,200 Amharic speakers and 7,200 Tigrinya speakers”. These figures are certainly too low, since the census question is only asking about first language.
- v) For the overwhelming majority of British born ethnic Ethiopians, Amharic is at best a second language, and for many, even from Amharic backgrounds, it is merely an ancestral or culturally related language.

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Thus, calculating the numbers and distribution of ethnic Ethiopians by tracing first language Amharic speakers is of little use. However, it scales up the value of our argument that the church is not composed of a majority of Amharic first language speakers. Many of those Tigringa first language speakers (7,200) and the many London based Omoro speakers, especially those born in Ethiopia, are likely to be Amharic speakers at best as a second language, yet also to be attending the Orthodox church.

It is important to take note of the fact that the sacred texts and liturgy of Ethiopian Orthodoxy are written in Ge'ez, which is not understood by the majority of lay worshippers. In general lay worshippers rely on translation to English or Ethiopian languages for comprehension. Hence the ability to speak Amharic is irrelevant in terms of taking part in the worship and participation in church activities. Please refer to the supporting document "liturgy in three languages" that shows an extract from the power point slide that is used in the church during service to enable both Amharic and English speaker to understand the Mass service.

More accurate statistics for the size of the Ethiopian community

There are alternative and more reliable sources to finding the real population of the Ethiopian community in the UK, including the following.

Ethiopian Refugees in the UK: Migration, adaptation and settlement experiences and their relevance to health

A study by Papadopoulos I, Lees S, Lay M and Gebrehiwot A carried out in **2003/4**

"Although the United Kingdom (UK) Home Office reports on quarterly asylum applications by country of origin this does not provide information on the number of refugees and asylum seekers in the UK at any one time. Therefore an estimate of the number of Ethiopian refugees currently in the UK can only be made. The Ethiopian Community Centre in the UK (ECCUK) estimates that there are 25,000 - 30,000 Ethiopian refugees in the UK, most of who live in London."

International Migration Organisation (IMO) NOVEMBER 2006

In 2006 the IMO undertook a mapping exercise to try to estimate the approximate size of the Ethiopian population of the UK. Their best estimate was 30,000 with most being in London. However, in the last decade since that exercise it must be realized that the population has significantly increased.

"ETHIOPIA MAPPING EXERCISE LONDON,

2. OVERVIEW OF THE ETHIOPIAN COMMUNITY IN THE UK It is difficult to put a figure on the exact number of Ethiopian nationals in the UK but community organisations' estimates and Home Office statistics suggest that over 30,000 Ethiopians live here. Roughly 80% of them are thought to be living in London." (P. 5)

Current Population Figures

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Ethiopian community groups in the UK estimate that the current ethnic Ethiopian population in the UK stands between 80,000 to 100,000. See attached leaflets put out by the Federation of Ethiopian Organizations in 2015 and 2016 estimating the size of the community to be 100,000 strong.

This figure does seem to be a much greater number than the historical estimates of a mere 10-13 years ago. However, it is our view that the 2003/4 and 2006 estimates of around 30,000 were in any event significant underestimates, since they calculated only highly affiliated ethnic Ethiopians.

Furthermore, even if the community was at a 30,000 base in the early to mid-2000s, it is necessary to add to that figure all the ethnic Ethiopian immigration over the last decade, plus all the natural growth within the UK over the past decade.

It is unknown what the exact fecundity rate of ethnic Ethiopians is in London. However, based upon the fact that Ethiopia has the fourteenth highest fecundity of any nation in the world, at 5.23 children per woman of child bearing age, (<http://www.indexmundi.com/g/r.aspx?c=et&v=31>), it is reasonable to assume that coming from the norm of a very large family background, ethnic Ethiopians in the UK would have an average family size much larger than that of the average British family. Hence, we are assuming that ethnic Ethiopians in the UK have an approximately similar family size to the average size of African origin families in the UK which is 2.5 children. <http://iussp2009.princeton.edu/papers/93139>.

Consequently, looking at an approximately 2.5% natural growth figure (compounded) over a period of ten years, would bring a base population of 30,000 up to 38,403 by the close of 2016. In addition, one would need to add to that figure the number of more recent immigrant ethnic Ethiopians who have arrived since 2006 together with their subsequently born children.

Factoring in all the above discussed figures, we reckon that for every first language speaker of Amharic residing in London, there are at least 13 ethnic Ethiopians non-first language speakers Londoners.

Hence, extrapolating from the 2011 statistics of 343 Amharic speakers in Camden, it can be estimated that there are likely to be as many as 4,000 ethnic Ethiopians resident in Camden.

Besides performing just a basic multiplication function of the 2011 Amharic speaker's census figure, there are several unique draw factors bringing ethnic-Ethiopians, and indeed others of the Ethiopian Orthodox faith to Camden and adjoining boroughs.

One factor is due to the DGC now being regarded as the Ethiopian Orthodox mother church of the UK, due to also being the residence and office of the archbishop of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church. Hence, over the last few years many ethnic Ethiopian families have opted to reside in Camden or in adjoining boroughs.

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Another draw factor has been the fact that Camden is a well located central London borough, and many ethnic Ethiopians are well educated and professionally qualified people working in central London firms.

The Debre Genet Holy Trinity Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church (DGC) does not exclusively cater to Ethiopians

Whilst the above statistics estimate the general Ethiopian population in London and the UK, it is crucially important to realize that just because the church is Ethiopian orthodox in denomination, it does not mean that its congregation is entirely Ethiopian.

To conflate Ethiopian Orthodoxy with being exclusively ethnically Ethiopian, would be the same mistake as conflating Anglicanism with just being for English worshippers.

A regular Saturday or Sunday congregation at DGC averages about 500 people and is composed of several groups of ethnicities and national origins; besides Ethiopians there are Eritreans, West Indians and others.

The DGC is not comprised of a monolithic group of people. It is a rainbow church catering on a cross-communal basis for those following the Ethiopian orthodox liturgy.

There are almost as many ethnic Eritreans as ethnic Ethiopians attending the church. The numbers of Eritrean congregants have been steadily rising as Eritrean immigration to the UK has increased dramatically over the last few years. The church is massively important for Eritreans who are in general more recent arrivals in the UK than ethnic Ethiopians. This is because the church in addition to offering its worship service to them also has a welfare division which assists them in helping them to integrate into Britain. Furthermore, the church's youth division helps keep the youth on the straight and narrow.

Many people do not realize that more than 300,000 West Indians follow the Ethiopian Orthodox liturgy and indeed Bob Marley was a member of the faith. In the London area there are approximately 15,000 West Indian Ethiopian Orthodox and hundreds of them attend or have attended the church over the four years that it has been in Camden, with several dozen being local people and regular congregants.

[https://orthodoxwiki.org/Yesehaq_\(Mandefro\)_of_the_Western_Hemisphere](https://orthodoxwiki.org/Yesehaq_(Mandefro)_of_the_Western_Hemisphere)

These groups have been excluded from the impact assessment, yet the DGC plays a very important role in their religious and communal life, as it does for ethnic Ethiopians.

The Residential Location of Congregants and Functions of the Church

The DGC was established with the express mission of serving the faithful residing in the north-west and north London area, particularly those living in Camden and Islington. Whilst it is true that the congregation does include many from other north and north-west London boroughs, the overwhelming majority of worshippers on any given Saturday or Sunday (Ethiopian Orthodoxy celebrates two days of Sabbath, Saturday in remembrance of the

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creation, and Sunday in memory of the resurrection) will be from Camden, Islington and adjoining boroughs.

Because, there are two days of Sabbath worship, there are approximately 1000 weekly individual congregants, since few come to both services.

Besides the main Saturday and Sunday services, smaller services are held each morning and evening on a daily basis. On feast days such as Christmas and Easter, due to the overwhelming large numbers of up to 1500 people, there are overflow services in nearby premises such as the nearby Anglican church and school halls. Luckily, because the orthodox dates for Christmas and Easter are different to the Catholic and Protestant denominations, we can make use of their sanctuaries.

However, the loss of the church building would be much more than the loss of a house of worship and centre of religious study. The church fulfills many important other community functions.

DGC provides educational services teaching Ge'ez, Amharic and English to adults, youth and children. It has social clubs for pensioners, women, youth and children. It has a youth leadership training course. It provides family counselling as well as counselling to troubled or needy individuals. It has a welfare arm gathering funds for distribution to indigent and especially vulnerable families and individuals, as well as co-ordinating visitation to the sick, housebound and elderly.

Moreover, the DGC also has an ecumenical role, teaching other Christian denominations and other faiths as well as people of no faith about Ethiopian Orthodoxy, and promoting tolerance in the Ethiopian Orthodox community for those of other religions and none. Many school children and church groups visit the DGC on an ongoing basis.

As part of its mission of promoting the message of Christ to the world, and in emulation of Christ's mission to the world, particularly in His ministry to the most vulnerable in society, the DGC has an active welfare program catering for the needs of some of the most needy people of Camden and elsewhere, irrespective of their faith. This mission feeds the homeless, provides emergency shelter to the homeless and distributes clothing and basic sanitary equipment to homeless people.

DGC Occupancy of the Church

DGC began occupying the church in February 2013 without the benefit of a formal lease, but on a rent-paying basis. In November 2013 the Catholic Diocese produced a four year backdated lease which they told the DGC would give them security in the premises.

At no stage prior to moving in or at the lease signing stage, did DGC ever have legal representation.

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Even before moving in, the DGC had made it very clear to the Catholic Diocese that they were seeking a long term home and had even asked if they could buy the building. However, they were told that it was not for sale, but that if it did ever become available it would be offered to them first. However, only a lease was ever offered to them.

To represent that the DGC only expected or wanted the building on a short term basis is a completely false representation. For whatever unknown and unfathomable motive, the Catholic Diocese withheld informing the DGC that the building was in fact for sale and sold it in a manner designed to prevent the DGC becoming aware of its being on sale.

There was no for sale sign placed outside nor attached to the building, and no prospective purchasers were ever brought around to view. The whole transaction was done in a secretive manner that indicates that the diocese wanted to deliberately keep what was happening from the DGC.

The premises were purchased by British Land in 2014, during the occupancy of DGC. Since DGC had never even been told that the building was up for sale, and had in fact been specifically told that it was not, the sale of the building came as an immense shock.

The DGC would have undoubtedly bid for the church had it been offered to them. Furthermore, they would definitely have been willing to pay more for the building than the 1.5m paid by British Land.

Service of Notice to Quit

Equality Statement 5.12 states: *"The Applicant served the EOTC with a notice to determine the lease in February 2016, in line with the terms of the lease. Since that time, the Applicant has twice agreed to extend the lease in order to provide the EOTC with more time to find alternative premises. The first lease extension was to October 2016, and then the second to September 2017. This has been at the request of the EOTC. The Applicant understands that the EOTC has set up a 'Building Committee' whose purpose it is to find new premises for the Church."*

Equality Statement 5.13 states: *"The latest extension to the lease provided by the Applicant gives the EOTC approximately seven months longer than the original lease allowed and 19 months from when the Applicant first notified the EOTC of its plans for the Site and exercised the break clause."*

DGC is very grateful that British Land has twice extended the lease but there is unfortunately nowhere to move. Camden Council should protect the church as a community and looking into exempting British Land from having to building the social house requirement.

The DGC wants to acknowledge its gratitude for the kindness of British Land in twice extending the lease, especially for British Land's great kindness in providing the extensions.

Nonetheless, the loss of the building without suitable replacement premises would inevitably make DGC homeless and cause the active flourishing congregation to dissolve.

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In order to prevent huge distress and disruption to large numbers of Ethiopian Orthodox Christians in Camden and in adjoining boroughs, as well as elsewhere, the DGC is making it clear that it is essential that Camden should play a key role in finding alternative site for British Land to build affordable housing.

Alternatively, DGC is requesting that British Land be allowed to fulfil their obligation to build affordable homes, by just utilising the space at 1 Triton Square, and to grant exemption to British Land regarding the homes it would have built on the site of the church building.

Alternatively, to allow British Land to build affordable homes outside of Camden.

D1 Premises are becoming a rare and threatened species in N/NW London

The lack of available D1 premises is a very significant issue.

DGC has been pro-actively searching for new D1 usage premises since even before moving to the current premises. However, there is currently a tremendous dearth of such available premises in N/NW London.

Furthermore, there are many dozens of church groups chasing the few properties that crop up. This is because so many burgeoning new Eastern European and African churches are homeless, and usually only have guest status in Anglican and Catholic church premises, with all the inconveniences of being merely paying guests.

Many London premises that were previously afforded D1 usage have had their usage changed in recent years, due to the connivance of local authority planning departments with developers, to change their usage to allow for housing development, so that more council tax can be raised.

The few D1 premises that have cropped up tend to be too small to accommodate the basic congregation size of DGC or are in unsuitable locations. The rare available suitably large and well located premises have always been chased by DGC and other church groups who are always outbid by housing developers who seem to have no trouble whatsoever obtaining change of usage and getting planning consent.

Camden Council are operating in bad faith in order to divest the building of D1 usage

When Sir Keir Starmer MP approached Camden Council regarding the plight of DGC, they responded merely by regurgitating British Land's speculative conclusion regarding what would happen in the event of forced termination of the lease. However, this conclusion is itself based on false premises and is misleading.

Camden Council has not themselves bothered making any assessment of DGC's plight. Camden Council do not seem to care at all that DGC will become homeless or that they will be taking a sorely needed D1 building away from the community.

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Camden Council seem to be only concerned about getting more housing, without having sufficient concern that the community has the communal facilities that it needs.

We quote from Camden Council's response to Sir Keir Starmer MP

British Land make various assumptions, none of which are grounded in reality.

In the Equality Statement at 5.21 it states: *"The EOTC vacating St Anne's Church would affect the congregation and staff of the church. Mitigation is likely to take the form of a relocation of the EOTC, and re-establishment of equivalent services elsewhere."*

In the Equality Statement at 5.22 it states: *"The nature of these effects will depend on the new location. Given the long notice period allowed and the wide area that is potentially suitable, it is reasonable to expect an alternative location can be secured. The Applicant has offered assistance and advice to facilitate this, as set out above."*

In the Equality Statement at 5.23 it states: *"Relocation will inevitably be more or less convenient for different individual worshippers. However, London's Ethiopian community in general (and the congregation of the church specifically), is not concentrated in this local area, and additionally a number of other places for Ethiopian Orthodox worship are available in London. This means that on balance, it is not considered likely that relocation of the church would significantly compromise the ability of the congregation to continue to celebrate their faith."*

There are a lot of flawed assumptions made by British Land:

1. That the DGC will be able to secure alternative suitable premises. This as discussed above and elsewhere by us, is in any event doubtful, at least currently. There are no suitable large enough premises with D1 usage at an affordable price (either for rent or sale) available anywhere in the N/NW London area.

2. British Land's assumptions that the congregation could be absorbed by the three existing other London congregations of the same denomination, are impossible for two extremely significant reasons:

i) The three existing other Ethiopian Orthodox congregations in the London area are bursting at the seams and have no absorption capacity.

ii) The three other churches referred to, ie Debre Tsion St Mary of London, Battersea, Debre Birsate St. Gabriel's, Belsize Park and St Mary of Zion, Clapton Pond, Hackney. are all in shared facilities and are themselves currently facing eviction. St Gabriel's in particular is living on heavily borrowed time. They might well be homeless even before DGC, and many if not all their congregation are already looking to be absorbed at least temporarily into DGC.

Camden Council's approach to divesting D1 status of church buildings actively being used and needed by non-indigenous based Christian sects, is in breach of the Public Sector General Equality Duty

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Camden Council is reminded that they need to take steps to meet the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people.

The needs of non-indigenous British Christian groups are just not being met in terms of being able to access D1 buildings for use as churches. That is why literally hundreds of non-indigenous congregations from Africa, Eastern Europe and Asia have to share premises with other church congregations, sometimes several congregations having to share the same church facilities.

Whilst the indigenous white population mostly have their traditional and often very underused church buildings, ie Church of England, Catholic, Methodist etc. The Christian denominations of immigrant communities struggle to find appropriate church facilities. This is because land in London has become prohibitively expensive and also because councils are readily divesting existing vacant church premises of D1 status to be turned into housing. When a building ceases to have D1 status, it is removed probably permanently from community use.

There is a clear cut case and desperate need for D1 buildings to be retained for D1 usage, and ignoring such need might well be a breach of the public sector equality duty!

DEBRE GENET HOLY TRINITY CHURCH OUR SEARCH FOR AN ALTERNATIVE PROPERTY

The Equalities Statement and the St Anne's Church Note are misleading and inaccurate documents clearly prepared to generate the distinct impression that the Debre Genet Holy Trinity Church has not made appropriate effort in terms of securing an alternative property, or else has rejected potential other properties without due reason.

We strongly refute such assertions. Accordingly, we herein provide a detailed account of our intense and relentless search strategy, together with supporting documentation to evidence what we have been doing.

Our search effort has been organised on two fronts:

1. Estate Agents:

We are registered with several agents specialising in D1 Property and follow up on all potential leads notified to us. We have developed a good and close relationship with Alex Martin Commercial over the past 5-6 years. On a regular basis the Building Committee receives email notifications from this agent, and details of each property put forward are assessed. Inquiries are then made to the agent regarding any remotely suitable properties. If things seem promising, a sub-committee goes to view the premises.

Supporting Document "Property received from agent"

2. Direct approach to other Christian Denominations in London



a. We have reached out to the Catholic and Anglican churches to assist us in finding a possible church to share. We have held numerous meetings with the Diocese of Westminster Catholic church and have openly expressed the grave danger that we are facing. We have several times attempted to explore whether we can have a church share either on a short or long term basis. We are very grateful of their effort to assist. However, unfortunately they have been unable to facilitate us in finding us a church to share.

Supporting Document “Letter from the Catholic Church”

b. We made an approach to the Archdeacon of the Church of England in the London Diocese who promised to find us a place within a month. However, to our great disappointment, he wasn’t able to do this.

Supporting Document “Meeting with Arch-Deacon”

c. The Diocese of North West Europe Ethiopian Orthodox Church has written letters to the Coptic Orthodox Church and the Greek Orthodox Church asking for assistance to accommodate our church.

Supporting Document “Coptic Orthodox Church”

Supporting Document “Greek Orthodox Church”

3. Search Methodologies

As the problem facing the church directly impacts each congregant, we decided to tap into the concern of the many congregants who asked if they could do something to help. We mobilised such volunteers to take part in the search effort through participation in a specially formulated Building Search Team

A large number of congregants put themselves forward, and their efforts are described below,

The Building Search Team is comprised of two groups of volunteers. The first group gathers data from different sources about possible opportunities. This includes church buildings, halls and warehouses. The data gets sorted by postcode and passed on to the second group, who visit the buildings, make preliminary assessments, and whenever possible, speak with the owners or persons responsible and report back to the data group. This is done mainly via an "App" created specifically for this purpose using appsheet.com.

Depending on the feedback; the Parish Office follows up on communications.

We have facilitated the following three search tools:

a. **Online:** We created a page (www.dght.uk/abc) to enable congregants to submit any possible property that they believe might be suitable. Supporting Document “Online form” [please cite the web page]



- b. **Paper based:** We prepared a form that each congregant can fill in and submit back. The forms are available to any person visiting the church. Each completed form is analysed weekly by the Building Committee who decides whether any potential properties are available that need following up. If so, the Parish council will contact the relevant people. Supporting Document “Search Form”
- c. **Mobile App:** We created a mobile App which we demonstrated to British Land at one of our meetings. Many of our congregants with a smart phone have installed the App and submit their weekly search task via a mobile. A report is produced by the Building Committee based on the search team feedback and follow up progress is made on those places with indicated likelihood of being a suitable prospect. Supporting Document “List of church Place viewed using Mobile App”

The Major Challenges

Location: As with any property search, location is a major deciding factor. The Parish Council has decided not to consider property that is too far away from a significant percentage of the congregation. The reasons for this are several:

- a. We have a moral and Christian obligation to continue providing worship and communal facilities to the loyal families that are current members of our congregation. Our mission from the outset has been to service the needs of the faithful in Camden, Islington and adjoining boroughs. If they can no longer reasonably travel to be with the congregation, they would be cast adrift and suffer both religiously and socially.
- b. Many of our congregants are car-less. Hence any property needs to be readily accessible via public transport.
- c. The church plans to buy a property by securing a mortgage. Therefore, we cannot risk losing too many congregants due to inaccessibility and distance. If they give up membership, the loss of their financial contribution would directly impact our capacity to fund a mortgage.

Size: We have an average weekly congregation of approximately 500. Therefore, it is important that the potential property should be able to accommodate us. There have been many properties that we have not been able to consider for this reason.

Price: Based on the deposit the church has available, NatWest Bank has advised that we can take a mortgage out on property within the price range of £1.75-2m. Because of this price restriction it has been impossible for us to find suitable properties in term of location and size. Any suitable ones have been well over the £2m asking price.

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Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church

North-western Europe Diocese

London D.G. Holy Trinity Church

Nature of our service: The nature of our ancient Ethiopian Orthodox Cannon law and tradition has a direct impact when assessing a property to rent or share. We require early start, access during week days; we need an altar and place of baptism

British Land suggestions: British land has given a list of properties that they have suggested in the report and have simply indicated that we have rejected them but not mentioned our valid reasons.

Please find below detailed accounts of the churches included in the report:

Former Wisdom School, 336 Philip Lane, and Former East Street Evangelical Church

We are not aware of the above mentioned two properties and have never received any information from British Land.

St Mary Magdalene Church, across the road from St Anne's Church. St Mary was the first option that we immediately considered, as we had used the church for annual feast days to accommodate larger congregational crowds attending from the wider region. We had the first round of meeting with Fr. Martin who informed us that Fr. Colin is now in charge of the church and hence redirected our inquiries. We met in person with Fr. Colin and exchanged numerous emails to explore the possibility of using the church on Saturday and Sunday mornings. As much as he would like to provide assistance, since we are brothers in Christ, the Anglican Parish council strongly objected to sharing their church. We didn't reject them; we were turned down by them!

Supporting Document Attached: "St Mary Magdalene Church Emails"

Regent's High School in Somers Town. We attended a viewing and fully assessed the feasibility of using the school. The Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahdo Church requires mass service to start early in the morning since there are mandatory prayers and weekly baptisms that need to take place prior to service. Baptisms are carried out not just for the local congregants but for many of the faithful throughout the whole of the UK, since only a bishop or ordained priest has the authority to baptise into the faith, and not all of the other Ethiopian Orthodox congregations have baptism facilities or sufficient time to carry out baptisms.

Furthermore, because congregants are not permitted to eat breakfast prior to the service, it is important that we are able to start service early in the morning as we currently do at 6am. However, the school has told us that we can only have access after 10am, which is the normal finish time of our service.

Also as it is a school, we can't have access to it on weekdays and this is a significant problem because our church has many services that take place during weekdays. On these grounds, the school is not suitable for us.

Supporting Document Attached: "Regent's High School Emails"

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Charity Registration No.: 1124941

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Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church
North-western Europe Diocese
London D.G. Holy Trinity Church

Oasis Church, Essex Road, Chadwell Heath, Romford and Pershore Close, Ilford. These properties were significantly too small for us and too far away from most of our congregants. Furthermore, this property was for sale. Accordingly, the parish council has to scrutinize long-term commitment very carefully.

Former Tetherdown Church Hall, Muswell Hill, the initial assessment of the size has indicated it to be too small. However, we are awaiting a viewing date after 20 February 2017.

Supporting Document Attached: "Muswell Hill Emails"

Yours in Christ
Revd Kefyalew Aschalew
Priest-in-Charge