

Introduction

Design and Access Statements were introduced as a statutory requirement for submission with planning applications and applications for listed building consent on the 10th August 2006.

A Design and Access Statement is a short report that must explain how an applicant has considered a proposal and must demonstrate an understanding of what is appropriate and feasible for a site. It should clearly explain and justify the design and access principles and concepts of a proposal and the process that has led to the development proposal.

The content of a Design and Access Statement will depend on the type of application and site. It may need to include photographs, drawings, plans and elevations. It may even mean preparing a model (3D

or actual). None of the material in a Design and Access Statement will be a substitute for all of the appropriate plans required for the planning application.

If a Design and Access Statement is required for a planning application, the absence of such a statement when an application is submitted will result in it being invalid.



When is a Design and Access Statement needed?

A Design and Access Statement is required for all applications for Listed

Building Consent and planning applications, **except** for planning applications relating to:

1. Householder proposals (unless in a conservation area);
2. Changes of use (unless operational development is also involved);
3. Engineering or mining operations.

A Design and Access Statement is **not** required for the following types of application:

1. Advertisements;
2. Tree preservation orders;
3. Conservation area consent;
4. Storage of hazardous substances;

5. Part 24 applications to determine whether approval is required for the siting and design of telecommunications development.

What does it mean for applicants?

The requirements for the Design and Access Statements will mean that applicants will have to properly consider all relevant policies as well as the site's constraints and opportunities at the time of making the application. This will enable the Local Planning Authority and other consultees to properly understand and give consideration to the development proposals.

The Local Planning Authority may also require further information to either amplify the Design and Access Statement or to cover areas of design and access not covered by the statement if

this is considered necessary to determine an application.

What should be included in a Design and Access Statement?

A Design and Access Statement should include an explanation of the following **physical** characteristics of the proposal:

Amount of development

Residential developments should include the number of dwellings, and other development should include the floorspace. The Design and Access Statement should explain and justify how much development is proposed, how it will be distributed across the site, how it relates to the surroundings and how accessibility to and within the site has been maximised.

Layout

This will include the way that buildings, routes and spaces are provided, placed and

orientated in relation to each other and to the surrounding buildings and spaces. The Design and Access Statement should explain and justify the proposed layout, it should indicate factors important for the accessibility of the site for users and have ways to ensure the creation of safe, vibrant and successful places, where crime or fear of crime does not undermine quality of life and sense of community.

Scale

This will include the dimensions of buildings in relation to their surroundings. The Design and Access Statement should explain and justify the scale of buildings proposed, including an explanation as to why particular heights have been chosen and how these relate to the surroundings and the skyline. It should also explain and justify the size of parts of the proposed buildings such as entrances and facades.



Landscaping

The Design and Access Statement should explain and justify the proposed landscaping scheme, explaining the purpose of private and public landscaping, its relationship to the surrounding area and how the landscaping will be maintained. A schedule of planting should be provided and details of hard landscaping materials (for example surfacing materials, wall materials and seating or other street furniture) should be stated.

Appearance

This will include the aspects determining the visual impression of a place or building, including the external built form, its architecture, materials, decoration, lighting, colour and texture. The Design and Access Statement should explain and justify the proposed appearance including how this relates to the surroundings. It should explain how accessibility has been considered in making decisions about the appearance (for example texture, colour of materials and lighting). The Design and Access Statement must also demonstrate that there has been an **appraisal of the context** of the proposed development. This should include an explanation of how the development relates to the physical characteristics outlined in paragraph 97 Section 3 (DCLG Circular 01/2006 *Guidance on*

changes to the Development Control System), following a **design process** that includes:

- Assessment of the site's immediate and wider context in terms of physical, social and economic characteristics and relevant planning policies.
- Involvement of the local community and access groups and professionals (for example planning, building control, conservation, design and access officers)
- Evaluation of the information collected, identifying opportunities and constraints and formulating design and access including the need to balance conflicting issues.
- Design of the scheme using the information above rather than justifying a pre-determined scheme.

The Design and Access Statement should also explain how the context appraisal outlined in paragraph 97, section 3 (DCLG Circular 01/2006 *Guidance on changes to the Development Control System*) has been considered in relation to the proposed use(s). It should explain the use(s), their distribution across the site, the appropriateness of the accessibility to and between them and their inter-relationship to surrounding uses.

The Design and Access Statement should explain how access arrangements will ensure equal and convenient access for everyone. This should include access to buildings and spaces and to the public transport network and how these could be adapted to changing needs, having regard to relevant policies.

It should explain the principles for access around the neighbourhood and to

individual access points to buildings. The Design and Access Statement should describe the consultation undertaken and how this informed the proposals. It should also explain access for emergency services and for emergency evacuation (if appropriate).

Different arrangements for Listed Building Consent



When both a planning application and an application for Listed Building Consent are submitted together, one combined Design and Access Statement should be provided, covering the elements set out above and

the additional requirements set out below:

- In the same way as for planning applications, the Design and Access Statement for an application for Listed Building Consent should explain the design principles and concepts that have been applied to the scale, layout and appearance characteristics of a proposal, together with the access arrangements, but does not need to provide information on use, amount and landscaping.
- The Design and Access Statement for an application for Listed Building Consent should additionally include a brief explanation of how proposals take account of paragraph of PPG15 and in particular:
 1. The historic and special architectural importance of the building

2. The particular physical features of the building that justify its listing
 3. The building's setting.
- The Design and Access Statement will need to explain and justify the approach to ensure that the listed building is preserved or enhanced, and where there is an aspect of the proposals that will impact on this.
 - The Design and Access Statement should explain why this is necessary and the measures that have been taken to minimise impact.
 - With regard to access arrangements, the Design and Access Statement should clarify the balance between the Disability Discrimination Act requirements (if applicable) and the historic and architectural aspects of the building. It should detail any issues; the range of options considered and, where

inclusive design is not to be provided, gives an explanation as to why.

- Where minimum levels of accessibility are not to be achieved, the Design and Access Statement should provide solutions to minimise the impact on disabled people, including the need to ensure that services are made available in other ways.

How do Design and Access Statements affect pre-application enquiries?

Where pre-application enquiries are made, a Design and Access Statement will aid discussions. However, whether or not a Design and Access Statement is produced at this stage, it will be necessary for the local planning authority to remind the applicant of the need for an appropriate Design and Access Statement to

accompany the subsequent application.

Legislation related to Design and Access Statements

The relevant legislation that should be referred to and that has informed this guidance note includes:

Dept of Communities and Local Government Circular 01/2006

Town and Country Planning (General Development Procedure) Order 1995

Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Regulations 1990

Town and Country Planning (General Development Procedure) (Amendment) (England) Order 2006

Further guidance

Further guidance on Design and Access Statements can be found from:

CABE (2006) **Design and Access Statements: How to write, read and use them** - this document sets out further guidance with particular emphasis on the importance of creating attractive places through the planning process.

DCLG (2006) **Guidance on changes to the development control system** - this document sets out in detail the formal requirements for Design and Access Statements

