

HULL CITY COUNCIL - PLANNING SERVICES

Guide to Design and Access Statements

From 10th August 2006 Circular 01/06 requires most planning applications to be accompanied by a **Design and Access Statement**. The aim of this guide is to explain why and when a Design and Access Statement is required, what it is and what it should include.

1. Why is a Design and Access Statement required?

It is because the City Council needs to fully understand the likely impact of proposed development and make a well-informed and balanced decision. A Design and Access Statement can help planning officers, other professionals and members of the public to fully evaluate a planning application and help to make the application process work more efficiently. It should also result in well designed, integrated, inclusive buildings and places making a positive contribution to their surroundings.

2. When is a Design & Access Statement required?

With all planning applications, except:

- applications for development which affect a house or its garden - **unless either the house or its garden is within a Conservation Area**;
- applications involving a change of use of land or buildings - **unless the application also involves building work**;
- applications for advertisements;
- applications for engineering or mining operations;
- applications for storage of hazardous substances.

3. What is a Design and Access Statement?

This is a document that explains the design thinking behind a planning application. It enables the applicant to explain why the selected design solution is the most suitable in the circumstances. It should show that the person applying for permission (the applicant) has thought carefully about how everyone, including disabled people, older people and very young children, will be able to use the buildings and places they want to create.

A Design and Access Statement (DAS) should include a description of the site, its context and a justification for

the planning application. Photos, maps and drawings will be needed to illustrate the points made. The DAS will be available alongside the application for anyone to see so should avoid jargon or overly technical language. It need not be very long but the amount of detail contained should reflect how complex the application is. So a statement for a major development is likely to be much longer than one for a single building. All statements should be as clear, succinct and illustrative as possible.

4. What should be included?

The statement should consist of the two primary components, Design and Access, but both should clearly relate to each other and a one page summary should be included for use in officers reports.

Design Component

The Design and Access Statement should demonstrate that the designer has fully analysed the site and followed a clear **Design Process** including a **Contextual Appraisal, Site Assessment, Evaluation, Design Synthesis** as well as **Consultation** with others. In detail these should cover;

- Contextual appraisal** of the site's built and natural features and the key characteristics and history of the surrounding area. In a conservation area you should also appraise its character or appearance.
- Assessment** of the site's context in terms of other physical, social and economic characteristics along with relevant planning policies, guidance and site history. Details of earlier consents, reserved matters approvals, development phases, frameworks, briefs, or masterplans should also be outlined.
- Evaluation** of identified **opportunities and constraints** leading to the formulation of inclusive and sustainable design principles in relation to the following criteria:
 - **Use** - the uses proposed within the development and how they compliment and coordinate with other uses in the locality.
 - **Amount** – of development is proposed (number of residential units or amount of floor space).
 - **Layout**¹ - the way in which buildings, routes, and open spaces are placed and orientated.
 - **Access**¹ – for disabled people and all modes of transport (see access component)
 - **Scale**¹ - the height, width and length of a building (or buildings) in relation to its surroundings.

- **Landscaping**¹ - the treatment of public and private spaces to enhance the site and surroundings.
 - **Appearance**¹ - the aspects of a place or building that make a visual impression, including its built form, architecture, materials, colour, etc.
- Synthesis** of these considerations into alternative concept designs and an explanation of the chosen design.
 - Consultation** with members of both the local community and professionals (planning, urban design, access and conservation officers). Details of these consultations and changes made should be described.

It is important to be precise about the proposals as information provided may be incorporated into Planning Conditions. Increasingly important for **Sustainable Design** is to explain how these criteria can also contribute to meet climate change objectives by “designing for environmental performance”.

Access Component

The access component of a Design and Access Statement should be based on the **Principles of Inclusive Design** and explain the **Access Strategy** adopted, particularly:

- Why the main points of access to the site, car parking and access routes have been chosen, and how prospective users will move through the development.
- How prospective users will be able to access the existing transport network including how connections and crossings will be provided to existing vehicular routes, footpaths, cycle paths, public transport facilities. (including emergency services)
- How access arrangements will ensure that **all users will have equal and convenient access** to the proposed development with particular consideration given to topography and floor levels.
- How relevant national and local policies and guidance have been taken into account, with particular reference to the inclusion of disabled people.
- What consultations have been undertaken with regard to access issues and how the outcome of these consultations has informed the process.
- How the proposals address the need for flexibility and how the proposed development may adapt to changing needs, i.e. Lifetime Homes.

Note 1: Layout, Scale, Appearance, Landscaping and Access are all reserved matters in Outline Applications.

Outline Applications

The components of a Design and Access Statement will be the same regardless of whether the application is for full or outline planning permission, but their scope will differ. Applications should always include a site appraisal, **indicative access points**, access strategy and at least the Design Components of;

- **Use**, uses or any distinct zones within the site.
- **Amount of development** – for each use
- **Indicative layout**
- **Scale** - the height, width and length of a building (or buildings) in relation to its surroundings.

Listed Building Consent Applications

A Design and Access Statement for a Listed Building Consent Application should be similar to one for planning permission, although no information on **Use**, **Amount**, or **Landscaping**, is required.

Where Listed Building Consent and Planning Permission are both required a single combined Design and Access Statement may be submitted.

A Listed Building Consent Design and Access Statement should include an explanation of how the development satisfies PPG 15 (Planning and the Historic Environment) criteria, in particular the potential impact:

- on the special historical and architectural interest of the building.
- on any object or structure fixed to the Listed Building or included within the curtilage.
- on the setting of the listed building.

A Listed Building Consent DAS should also explain how a proposed scheme preserves or enhances the listed building.

Conservation Areas

There are 26 conservation areas in the City, many of which have appraisals that must be taken into account. A Design and Access Statement for an application in a conservation area should also explain how the proposals preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the area. For more information see www.hullcc.gov.uk/conservation/index/php

Sustainable Design Principles include contributions from building materials, construction methods, conservation of energy and water, minimisation of waste and pollution, reuse of buildings and ecology.

Illustrative Materials

All Design and Access Statements should include:

- Site plan with adjoining buildings, roads, footpaths & landscaping etc
- Photographs of the site and its surroundings.
- Plans or illustrations that demonstrate a contextual analysis has been undertaken. For larger applications these should extend at least 400m from the site boundary and include consideration of the landscape/townscape setting, proximity to greenspace, routes, street pattern, proximity to community facilities, shops and public transport, views, built form and architectural details.
- Diagrams and illustrations that demonstrate how the proposal has evolved following analysis.
- Existing and proposed building plans highlighting alterations and extensions.
- Colour coded plans or use of contrasting tone for larger or more complex applications

NB: The illustrative materials must not be used as a substitute for adequate drawings submitted with the planning application.

There are good examples of page layouts and graphic presentation in the Scottish Executive Advice note 68: Design Statements available on, www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2003/08/18013/253970

References

The DAS must include details of author, date prepared, a version reference and date of any amendment.

Local Policies

In Hull the adopted policies are in the Hull and East Riding Joint Structure Plan, Hull Local Plan and Supplementary Planning Guidance. Emerging policies are in the Yorkshire and Humber Plan and City Centre Action Plan as well as Supplementary Planning Documents in the City Centre. Built Form, Public Realm and 5 Strategic Development Areas. All to view on www.hullcc.gov.uk/planningpolicy

Further Advice

For further advice on what to include in a Design and Access Statement please contact the **Development Control Section on 612345**, www.hullcc.gov.uk

Consultation with **Hull Access Improvement Group (HAIG)** is encouraged for larger applications and this can be arranged through the City Council's Access Officer on (01482) 612737.

For **Principles of Inclusive Design** see Centre for Accessible Environment's publications.

Other References

Circular 01/06 - Guidance on Changes to the Development Control system, Department for Communities and Local Government, <http://www.communities.gov.uk>

Design and Access Statements - How to write, read and use them, CABE, - (the assessment crib sheet at page 32 can be used as a checklist for the applicant at the end of the exercise) <http://www.cabe.org.uk/default.aspx?contentitemid=1436>

Planning and access for disabled people: a good practice guide(ODPM, 2003) www.communities.gov.uk/index.asp?id=1144644

Building for Life Standards and criteria. High quality holistic design approach to quality neighbourhoods <http://www.buildingforlife.org.uk>

Lifetime Homes standards Joseph Rowntree Foundation www.jrf.org.uk/housingandcare/lifetimehomes/

Centre for Accessible Environments Inclusive Design Principles and extensive publications list for guidance. www.cae.org.uk

PPS, Planning and Climate Change, for Key Planning Objectives (para6), carbon target compliance (para34) and Design for Environmental Performance (para35) www.communities.gov.uk/index.asp?id=1505140

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