

Design and Access Statements

1. The Content of Design and Access Statements

1.1 The Government has set out the purpose and content requirements of design and access statements in DCLG circular 01/2006. Good practice guidance is contained in Design and Access Statement – How to write, read and use them by the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment. The guidance below is derived from these documents and from Sheffield's experience of statements submitted. It is intended to assist applicants and establish what is required for a valid planning application and to encourage best practice. Examples of best practice can be downloaded from the covering web page.

1.2 Planning applications, for those types of development that require a design and access statement, cannot be considered without a statement and this includes essential content. The Government regulations make clear that the statement shall:

(a) Explain the design principles and concepts that have been applied to the following aspects of the development –

1. Amount
2. Layout
3. Scale
4. Landscaping
5. Appearance

(b) Demonstrate the steps taken to appraise the context of the development and how the design of the development takes that context into account

(c) Explain how access to and within the site for vehicles, cycles and pedestrians has been considered including the steps taken to ensure that the development is inclusive.

Where pre-application consultation has been undertaken it should be referred to, including how it has been taken into account.

It is good practice to include a draft of the statement in the information provided for pre-application discussion.

1.3 Statements that do not cover the above topics (where appropriate to the type of development proposed) may render an application invalid.

Unfortunately, many of the Statements submitted provide a quite inadequate assessment of the site and its context, or explanation of how and why design decisions have been made. The Planning Service will take a robust approach in future, as agents should now be familiar with the principle of design and access statements.



1.4 A design and access statement should illustrate the process that has led to the development proposal; it explains and justifies the proposal in a structured way. They are not a substitute for drawings and other information required as part of the planning application itself.

1.5 The Planning Service does not want a lengthy description of local, regional and national planning policy, though policy may usefully be referred to if it is particularly relevant. When appropriate the information should be presented in the form of diagrams, drawings, plans and photographs, because they are easily understood and help to explain the written information. The absence of illustrative material to explain the context of the development proposed is a key weakness of many Statements. Examples of good practice context material show the sort of material required.

1.6 Models and computer representations are very useful for larger schemes and the Planning Service has its own electronic 3d model of a large part of the City. You may be asked to provide a computer representation of your scheme so we can put it into the model, from this we can produce images of the scheme in its setting. These images could form part of the Statement.

1.7 Statements are made available for viewing by the general public including disabled people. They should therefore meet minimum clear print standards which are; a clear typeface such as Arial, a minimum type size of 12pt, text aligned on the left, and good contrast between text and a plain white or pale coloured background. Any electronic copies should be in Microsoft Word format.

2 The Design Component

2.1 The first step in the preparation of the statement should be the appraisal of the site, including the local context and particular local issues. It is important that how the site appraisal has influenced the resultant design is apparent to the reader, as without this the statement will not meet the statutory requirements described above. It is recommended that at least the site appraisal part of the statement is available for use in pre-application discussions with officers, if the full document is not complete.

2.2 In respect of residential development the Council has adopted the Building for Life model of residential design excellence, produced by CABI and the Home Builders Federation. The Council expects statements to use this as a framework for developments of 10 or more dwellings. More details can be found using the following link. [Sheffield City Council - Building for Life](#)

2.3 A Design and Access Statement should explain the design principles and concepts that have been applied to particular aspects of the proposal – these are the amount, layout, scale, landscaping and appearance of the development.



Amount is how much development is proposed, what the uses are and how this complements the wider area. For residential development, this means the number of units for residential use and for all other development, the proposed floor space for each proposed use. The Statement should explain and justify the amount of development proposed for each use, how this will be distributed across the site and how the proposal relates to the site's surroundings. In the case of residential developments an explanation of the proposed mix of dwelling type and tenure should be included.

Layout is the way in which buildings, routes and open spaces are provided, placed and orientated in relation to each other and buildings and spaces surrounding the development. The use of concept and illustrative diagrams will assist in explaining this. Design and Access Statements for outline and detailed applications should demonstrate how crime prevention measures have been considered in the design.

Scale is the height, width and length of a building or buildings in relation to its surroundings. The statement should explain and justify the scale of buildings proposed, including why particular heights have been settled upon, and how these relate to the site's surroundings and the relevant skyline.

Landscaping is the treatment of private and public spaces to enhance or protect the amenities of the site and the area in which it is situated through hard and soft landscaping measures. Statements should also explain how landscaping will be maintained.

Appearance is the aspect of a place or building that determines the visual impression it makes, including the external built form of the development, its architecture, materials, decoration, lighting, colour and texture.

2.5 Sustainability Statements all developments have to be sustainable to obtain planning permission. The adopted Core Strategy requires that in Sheffield applications for developments of 5 or more dwellings and other types of development involving 500 square metres of new floor space; have to be accompanied by a Sustainability Statement. That can either be a separate statement or incorporated into the Design and Access Statement. It is important to explain where and how sustainability considerations have influenced the design. Inclusive design is a key component of sustainable development but should be covered in the part of the statement dealing with access.

3.0 The Access Component

3.1 This concerns accessibility to and within the site for cycles, other vehicles and pedestrians. Access for emergency vehicles and access to public transport should also be explained, where relevant.

3.2 This part of the statement must include a description of how the needs of disabled people will be met within the scheme by achieving an



inclusive built environment. This includes the entrance into a building but does not extend to the interior of the building except for Mobility Housing or where the internal character of a Listed Building might be affected. Authoritative guidance indicates that good accessibility for disabled people is best dealt with at the planning application stage as it can have a considerable impact on the design of the development (the statement should form the basis for later submissions for Building Regulations purposes, in respect of disabled access and facilities). For further guidance on inclusive design refer to Appendix A.

4.0 Outline Planning Applications

4.1 Outline planning applications are required to contain sufficient information to describe the fundamentals of the scheme including the amount of development and indicative access points. Thus the Design and Access Statement should explain why the parameters in respect of the above information have been chosen. It should also set out the principles to be followed as the design becomes more detailed, where appropriate.

5.0 Listed Building Consent ,Development in a Conservation Area and Development Affecting the Setting of a Listed Building

5.1 Statements will also be required for listed building consent applications and for most types of development within a conservation area. The content of the statement must describe the significance value of the building or site, its setting and how this has influenced the proposals.

5.2 It should be noted that the National Planning Policy Framework requires the submission of a heritage statement for development involving or affecting a heritage asset. The heritage statement can form part of the design and access statement if one is needed. However a heritage statement will be required where the proposal adjoins a listed building or is within the curtilage of one even if a design and access statement isn't needed. Further advice on the content of statements for listed building consent and other heritage assets designated can be found on our website. <http://www.sheffield.gov.uk/planning-and-city-development/applications/apply/lpar/heritage>

Appendix A Inclusive Design

1 The size of the access component can be tailored to suit the scope and extent of the proposed development, but it should fully describe the inclusive design standards to be adopted. Key standards are included in the references to this guidance. Statements accompanying an outline application should describe the inclusive design principles that will be applied to access and facilities when the detailed design is undertaken. It is also helpful to provide details of the project access champion for larger projects, their role in the development of the design to date and their proposed future role.



2 The Council is required by the Disability Equality Duty to promote equality of opportunity for disabled people by the achievement of inclusive design through the Planning system. Design and Access Statements for proposals accessible to the public and for residential developments of 4 or more dwellings will therefore be assessed by the Council's Access Officer with regard to inclusive design standards.

3 Inclusive design aims to remove the barriers that create undue effort and separation. It enables everyone to participate equally, confidently and independently in everyday activities and is particularly important to achieving equality for disabled and older people. Inclusive design places people at the heart of the design process, acknowledges diversity and difference, offers choice where a single solution cannot accommodate all users, provides for flexibility in use, and provides buildings and environments that are enjoyable for everyone to use.

4 Design should always be judged by whether or not it achieves an inclusive environment. Design which does not do this is not good enough. Good design should reflect the diversity of people who use it and not impose barriers of any kind.

5 Ensuring good accessibility for everyone, including disabled people, in the approach to and between buildings - and within buildings where applicable - is best dealt with at the planning application stage and in the pre-application discussions that lead to the formulation of the application design and access statement. Suitably designed spaces allow disabled people to use all of their senses, aiding their understanding and comprehension of spaces and allowing them to participate fully within a safe, healthy and inviting environment for everyone to enjoy.

6 Access requirements can have a dramatic effect on the design, location and siting of building(s) and should be considered at the very early stages in the process in reaching agreement on the levels and locations of key functions.

7 CABE's guidance on design and access statements notes that unless the layout inside the building is considered, it will be very difficult to decide where entrances and fire exits should go. It should also be noted that Unitary Development Plan policy BE 7 'Design of Buildings used by the Public' encourages the provision of facilities for disabled people and others within buildings, including safe and easy access between floors and toilet facilities. Although the minimum requirement in DCLG circular 01/2006 does not extend to the interior of buildings, CABE's guidance document states that this component of design and access statements should cover access to buildings through entrance areas or front doors and access to facilities such as toilets or conference rooms and shops or sports centres. As well as access to the building, it should show that disabled people will not be segregated but will be able to move up and down in a building and use the same entrances,

corridors and rooms as everyone else without detours. This further information will also enable the Access Officer to provide helpful advice on internal issues.

8 Sufficient information on the highway, public realm and external works should be submitted to demonstrate inclusive design. This should include 1:50 or larger scale details.

9 Design and access statements accompanying full planning applications for residential developments providing four or more dwellings should include plans of each dwelling type intended to comply with the supplementary planning guidance accompanying Unitary Development Plan policy H7 'Mobility Housing' at a scale of 1:50. Information shown on the plans should include room dimensions, fittings, indicative furniture arrangements, door widths, door swings and wheelchair turning areas. The drawings, dwelling plans and written element of the statement read together should demonstrate compliance with the Mobility Housing SPG.

10 UDP policy BE 7 'Design of Buildings used by the Public' states that "access to existing buildings and their surroundings should be improved as opportunities arise, to enable all users to move around with equal ease". The Council will therefore expect reasonable access improvements to be undertaken whenever the use of land or buildings changes. This is particularly applicable where the change of use will increase public use of the land or building, for example from residential or employment premises to class A1/A2/A3/A4/A5. Design and access statements will therefore be required with all applications for change of use where the proposed use will be accessible to the public.

11 Where areas of shared surface are proposed within developments, the access component of the design and access statement must demonstrate awareness of the issues facing disabled people in such areas as described in the DfT's 'Manual for Streets', particularly the need for physically demarcated protected spaces, and demonstrate how the issues have been resolved as an integral part of the design process, with reference to national and local design guidance and with respect to the specific development site.

12 Listed building statements should make clear how the approach to access has balanced the duties imposed by the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) where the proposal is subject to those and/or the criteria in the Mobility Housing SPG with the particular historical and architectural significance of the building (as judged by the aspects set out in paragraph 3.5 of PPG15).

13 The statement should detail any specific issues which arise particularly with regard to the fact that the building is listed, the range of options considered and where inclusive design has not been provided, an explanation as to why should be given. Where the fabric of the structure restricts the ability to meet inclusive design standards, details should be provided of the standard of access which will be achieved and the solutions that will be put in

place to minimise the impact on disabled people and ensure that any services, education and associated services and employment opportunities provided within the building are made accessible in other ways.

14 Consultation responses on planning applications for developments including buildings or spaces accessible to the public will include advice on the relevant provisions of the Disability Discrimination Act. Applicants should be aware that there is a considerable risk of engendering significant further expenditure in the future to comply with the DDA if developments are not designed and constructed to be inclusively accessible from the start.

References

'The principles of inclusive design (They include you)' - Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment -
<http://www.cabe.org.uk/default.aspx?contentitemid=1499&site=search=inclusive+design&type=2>

'Commitment to Inclusive Design' - DPTAC -
<http://www.dptac.gov.uk/inclusive/commitment/index.htm>

'Inclusive projects' - DPTAC -
<http://www.dptac.gov.uk/inclusive/guide/index.htm>

'Access Statements - Achieving an inclusive environment by ensuring continuity throughout the planning, design and management of buildings and spaces' - Disability Rights Commission -
<http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/Documents/Disability/Services/Access%20Statements.doc>

Mobility Housing SPG - <http://www.sheffield.gov.uk/planning-and-city-development/planning-documents/spg>

'Achieving Part M and Lifetime Homes standard' - Joseph Rowntree Foundation -
<http://www.jrf.org.uk/housingandcare/lifetimehomes/partMandLTH.asp>

'Manual for Streets' - Department for Transport -
<http://www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/sustainable/manforstreets/>

'Inclusive Mobility' - Department for Transport -
http://www.dft.gov.uk/stellent/groups/dft_mobility/documents/page/dft_mobility_503282.hcsp

'Guidance on the use of Tactile Paving Surfaces' - Department for Transport -
<http://www.dft.gov.uk/transportforyou/access/tipws/guidanceontheuseoftactilepav6167>



'Home Zones - Challenging the future of our streets' - Department for Transport - <http://www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/sustainable/homezones/cfos/>

'Homes Zone Design Guidelines' - The Institution of Highway Incorporated Engineers - <http://www.homezones.org.uk/>

Joint Committee on Mobility of Blind and Partially Sighted People's policy statements on various aspects of inclusive highway and public realm design - <http://www.jcmbps.org.uk/index.php?id=2384>

BS 8300 'Design of buildings and their approaches to meet the needs of disabled people - Code of practice'

'Access for Disabled People' - Sport England - <http://www.sportengland.org/disabled.pdf>

'Countryside for All' - Fieldfare Trust - <http://www.fieldfare.org.uk/>

The Council's Disability Design Standards have been compiled in liaison with the Council's Access Liaison Group and supplement the design standards listed above - <http://www.sheffield.gov.uk/planning-and-city-development/urban-design--conservation/disability-access/design-guidance>