

Draft Design and Access Statement: An Applicants Guide

1 Introduction

A design and access statement is a report accompanying your planning application. The purpose of the statement is to explain how design and access issues should be considered as part of your proposal. The statement will be used to assess the application against the Council's adopted development plan policies and to assist those who are consulted on your application to understand your plans. The statement is a government requirement introduced to encourage higher quality and standard of design.

From 10th August 2006, a design and access statement now forms part of the required information when submitting a planning application. If a statement is not submitted or does not provide the correct information as shown in this guide, the application will not be registered and the progress of the application will be delayed.

Providing a statement does not guarantee that an application will be approved, the Council's planning decision process still applies.

2. When a Statement is Required

A design and access statement should accompany most planning applications that involve development. A statement is needed for outline, detailed proposals and applications for listed building consent. A statement is not required for:

- Changes in the use of land or buildings (unless this involves operational development).
- Householder development (unless the dwelling is within a conservation area).
- Applications relating to advertisements, tree preservation orders or storage of hazardous substances.

If you are unsure whether a statement is required, please contact the Council for advice.

3. What form should the Statement take?

The level of detail required in a design and access statement will depend on the scale and complexity of the application, and the length of the statement will vary accordingly. Where possible, the statement should be kept short and to the point. The statement should not be copied from somewhere else and should be written specifically for the application.

The statement can include drawings and plans illustrating the various issues but cannot be used as a substitute for adequate drawings submitted with the planning application.

Copies of the statement should be submitted with the application. The statement can also be submitted electronically, unless the local planning authority specifically requires a hard copy.

4. Topics that should be covered in the Statement

4.1 Design

A design and access statement should explain the principles and concepts that have been applied to particular aspects of your proposal. It should cover the following issues:

Amount: This is how much development is proposed. For residential development, this means the number of proposed units for residential use and for all other development this means the proposed floor space for each proposed use.

Layout: This should explain how buildings, routes and open spaces (both private and public) are provided, placed and orientated in relation to each other, other buildings and spaces surrounding the development.

Scale: Indicates the height, width and length of a building or buildings in relation to its surroundings.

Landscaping: This 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: Finally this 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.

4.2 Use

Design and access statements for both outline and detailed applications should explain the **use** or **uses** proposed, their distribution across the site, the appropriateness of the accessibility to and between them, and their inter-relationship to uses surrounding the site.

4.3 Access

Design and access statements should explain how arrangements will ensure that all users have equal and convenient access to buildings and spaces and the public transport network. This can include links with the development in terms of paths, roads

and so on, visibility of entrances, and access to facilities. Access for emergency and other services should also be covered where relevant.

Access within buildings is dealt with under building regulations and does not have to be specifically covered in the statement. However, for certain proposals (e.g. where there is public access or houses in multiple occupation) planning officers will consider internal access arrangements in their assessment of whether the scheme is fit for purpose. Where relevant, details should be included in the statement.

The design and access statement should also explain the policy adopted in relation to access and how relevant policies in local development documents have been taken into account.

4.4 Statements covering Listed Building Consent and Outline Applications

Listed building statements should include an additional explanation of how design has taken historic features or setting of the building into consideration.

The statement will be given added weight in outline applications and will need to provide details of what is envisaged on the site. The developer should keep within the parameters set out in the statement, and the outline permissions may include conditions to make sure the vision and aims identified in the statement are followed through as the design progresses.

5. Producing a successful Statement.

The design statement should be the first thing you work on when considering any development proposal. Statements which are produced at the end of the design process or are poorly presented will invariably fail to justify a proposal and may well undermine the success of your planning application.

A good design statement should cover the process which has led to the scheme as presented in the application. It should demonstrate that you have considered the various design and access issues in relation to the use, the surrounding area and local context.

An early pre-application discussion with the Council's planning officers and the County Council's highways department is recommended. The statement should include details of any changes made to the design and layout of the proposal as a result of local consultation or pre-application discussions.

6. How the Council will assess the Statement

The Design and access statement will be considered as part of the planning application and will be assessed against the Council's policies in the adopted local development plan, particularly policies HD13, HD14, HD16 and HD17. Transport and access will be considered against policies T3 and HD23. See appendix 1. Applicants are also advised to consult the Council's Supplementary Planning Guidance and any development briefs relevant to the site. Officers will give particular consideration as to how the proposed scheme reflects and relates to local characteristics and can enhance or improve the existing character of the area. If you require any guidance please contact a planning officer at the council.

Planning permission is granted on the basis of the submitted plans however the Council may include conditions if it considers parts of the statement must be adhered to.

Where to get more information

Details of the Council's local development plan, guidance and other policies can be found on the Council's website - www.broxbourne.gov.uk

Further advice on design and access statements can be obtained from the sources below:

DCLG Planning Circular, circular 1/2006 *Guidance on changes to the development control system* explains in detail when statements are needed and can be found at www.communities.gov.uk

The Disability Rights Commission website (www.drc-org.uk) explains how access statements work and how they should be used in relation to ensuring Disability Discrimination Act requirements are met.

The Urban Design Group (www.udg.org.uk) has also produced detailed guidance called *Design and access statements for development frameworks*.

The Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment or CABE has also produced a short guide, (*Design and access statements; How to write, read and use them*) which gives practical advice on the statement and is downloadable from their website, www.cabe.org.uk.

Appendix 1

Design and Access policies taken from the Borough of Broxbourne Local Plan Second Review (Adopted Dec 2005)

HD13 DESIGN PRINCIPLES.

THE COUNCIL EXPECTS ALL NEW DEVELOPMENT TO INCORPORATE A HIGH QUALITY OF DESIGN BASED ON THE FOLLOWING PRINCIPLES:-

- i) RECOGNITION OF THE NEED TO PAY CAREFUL ATTENTION TO THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN BUILDINGS AND OPEN SPACES IN ORDER TO ENSURE CONTINUITY IN THE STREET SCENE AND TO PROVIDE DEFINITION FOR PUBLIC AND PRIVATE AREAS;
- ii) PROMOTING LEGIBILITY BY ENSURING THAT PLACES CONNECT WITH ONE ANOTHER AND ARE EASY TO MOVE THROUGH;
- iii) PROVIDING PUBLIC SPACES AND ROUTES THAT ARE ATTRACTIVE AND SAFE TO USE BY ALL MEMBERS OF SOCIETY INCLUDING THE DISABLED AND ELDERLY;
- iv) TAKING INTO ACCOUNT THE IMPACT OF A DEVELOPMENT ON EXISTING AND PROPOSED MOVEMENT PATTERNS AND MAKING PROVISION FOR PEDESTRIANS, CYCLISTS AND PASSENGER TRANSPORT AS WELL AS PRIVATE MOTORISED VEHICLES;
- v) CREATING PLACES THAT ARE ADAPTABLE TO CHANGE; AND
- vi) PROMOTING DIVERSITY AND CHOICE THROUGH THE INCORPORATION OF A BALANCED DEVELOPMENT MIX TO CREATE VIABLE PLACES RESPONSIVE TO LOCAL NEEDS.

HD14 DESIGN STATEMENT ON LOCAL CHARACTER

THE COUNCIL EXPECTS APPLICANTS FOR PLANNING PERMISSION TO DEMONSTRATE HOW THEIR DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL REFLECTS AND RELATES TO LOCAL CHARACTERISTICS AND THE CONTEXT OF THE SURROUNDING AREA. DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS SHOULD AS A MINIMUM MAINTAIN, AND, WHERE POSSIBLE, ENHANCE OR IMPROVE THE EXISTING CHARACTER OF THE AREA.

HD16 PREVENTION OF TOWN CRAMMING

- (a) RESPECT THE SCALE, MASSING, DENSITY, HEIGHT AND CHARACTER OF NEARBY BUILDINGS AND ACHIEVE A HIGH STANDARD OF DESIGN;
- (b) RETAIN AND ENHANCE EXISTING NATURAL FEATURES INCLUDING LANDSCAPING AND ALLOW FOR THE INCORPORATION OF NEW PLANTING;
- (c) ENSURE THAT THE BUILT FORM AND ACTIVITY WITHIN THE AREA IS NOT UNACCEPTABLY INTENSIFIED;
- (d) RELATE THE LAYOUT AND ACCESS TO THE NEW DEVELOPMENT TO NEIGHBOURING BUILDINGS AND THE LOCAL AREA MORE GENERALLY; AND
- (e) ENSURE THAT THE DEVELOPMENT WOULD NOT MATERIALLY HARM THE AMENITIES OF EXISTING RESIDENTS.

HD17 RETENTION/ENHANCEMENT OF LANDSCAPE FEATURES

- (I) THE COUNCIL WILL EXPECT ALL DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS TO RESPECT EXISTING NATURAL OR BUILT FEATURES WHICH CONTRIBUTE POSITIVELY TO THE CHARACTER OR APPEARANCE OF THE AREA AND WILL SEEK TO INCORPORATE PROPOSALS FOR NEW OR ENHANCED LANDSCAPING, INCLUDING APPROPRIATE MEASURES FOR THE MAINTENANCE OF ALL NEW LANDSCAPING, IN ALL DEVELOPMENT SCHEMES.
- (II) PLANNING PERMISSION MAY BE REFUSED FOR PROPOSALS WHICH WOULD RESULT IN THE LOSS OF IMPORTANT LANDSCAPE FEATURES, WATER COURSES OR NATURAL HABITATS.

T3 TRANSPORT AND NEW DEVELOPMENT

- (I) ALL DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS INCLUDING RE-DEVELOPMENT AND CHANGES OF USE WILL BE CONSIDERED AGAINST THE AMOUNT, TYPE AND TIMING OF TRANSPORT MOVEMENTS LIKELY TO BE GENERATED AND THE EFFECT ON THE LOCAL HIGHWAY, PUBLIC TRANSPORT SYSTEMS, FOOTPATHS, BRIDLEWAYS, CYCLE ROUTES AND THE ENVIRONMENT.
- (II) DEVELOPMENT WILL NOT BE PERMITTED WHERE:
 - (a) THERE WOULD BE A SIGNIFICANT DETRIMENTAL IMPACT ON ROAD CONGESTION AND MOVEMENT ESPECIALLY AT PEAK TRAVEL TIMES;
 - (b) THE SAFETY OF ROAD USERS, INCLUDING CYCLISTS, POWERED TWO-WHEELERS AND PEDESTRIANS, IS COMPROMISED;
 - (c) TRAFFIC AND/OR PARKING GENERATED BY THE DEVELOPMENT WOULD SEVERELY ADVERSELY AFFECT THE SURROUNDING ENVIRONMENT.
 - (d) INSUFFICIENT PROVISION IS MADE FOR ACCESS BY SERVICE AND EMERGENCY VEHICLES.
- (III) APPLICANTS FOR DEVELOPMENTS WITH MAJOR TRAFFIC IMPLICATIONS WILL BE REQUIRED TO SUBMIT A LOCAL TRANSPORT ASSESSMENT.

HD23 ACCESS FOR THE DISABLED

THE COUNCIL WILL EXPECT ALL DEVELOPMENTS WHICH WILL BE ACCESSIBLE TO THE GENERAL PUBLIC TO SHOW THAT MEASURES TO MEET THE REASONABLE REQUIREMENTS OF THE DISABLED HAVE BEEN CONSIDERED THROUGHOUT THE PLANNING PROCESS.