

Development Management Service

(Updated 25th June 2013)

Design and Access Statements

Design and Access Statements are documents that explain the design principles and concepts behind your planning application, and how issues relating to access to the development have been dealt with. They provide you with an opportunity to explain the thinking behind your application, and should therefore be seen not as an obstacle to be overcome but as a chance to formally present your case.

1. Is a Statement needed with my application?

Design and Access Statements must accompany all planning applications for:-

- Major Development (Residential – 10 or more dwellings. Other uses – floorspace 1000 sq metres or more or site area is one hectare or more);
- Within a Designated Area (a Conservation Area or a World Heritage Site) – one or more dwelling houses or a floor space of 100 sq metres or more;

But not for:-

- Engineering and mining operations;
- Applications for change of use only;
- Waste development;
- Applications to extend the implementation period for existing permission (suffix EXT);
- Applications to develop land without compliance with planning conditions.

There are additional requirements for Listed Building Consent applications – see below. Reserved Matter applications will not normally require a Statement unless exceptionally the terms of the outline permission require one to be submitted. The reason they are not normally required is because after August 2006 one would have been submitted at the Outline stage. Applications for Conservation Area or Advertisement Consent, or Tree applications, do not require a Statement.

2. The Design and Access Statement should:

- (a) Explain the design principles and concepts that have been applied to the development;
- (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 the policy adopted as to access, and how policies relating to access in relevant local development documents have been taken into account;
- (d) State what, if any, consultation has been undertaken on issues relating to access to the development and what account has been taken of the outcome of any such consultation;

and

- (e) Explain how any specific issues which might affect access to the development have been addressed.

The regulations are demanding and must be taken seriously. If your Statement fails to meet the regulations we cannot validate your application, and the statement will have to be altered; this wastes everyone's time. Furthermore, if we were to accept a Statement which is later shown to be deficient, any permission granted may be open to legal challenge. In order to avoid these problems, we ask that you base your Statement on the attached Annex for all Major proposals and other applications within Designated Areas. If a heading is not applicable to your scheme you should say "not applicable" and say why; this demonstrates that the matter has at least been considered.

3. How long must the Statement be?

The answer will depend very largely on the scale of the development proposed. A major housing scheme for 200 houses may need a statement many pages long explaining the full design thinking, consultations undertaken, public involvement, options considered, and the justification for the design proposed. A Statement involving extensive alterations to a Listed Building may need a detailed analysis of the building's history and architectural evolution.

All Statements should include a written description and justification of the application proposals; often photographs, maps and drawings will be needed to explain the points made. Statements should, however, be as brief as reasonably possible, and keep to the point. They should be written individually for the application in question – do not copy or adapt one from somewhere else. Start writing the Statement when you start the design process – do not try to write it afterwards to rationalise decisions taken earlier.

4. What happens to the Statement?

Although not a formal part of your application, the Statement must accompany the application and will be used by the third parties, consultees and the Council to understand and assess your proposal and to reach a decision on the application. It will be scanned onto the Council's web site and made available for public viewing.

The Statement is your opportunity to show your thinking behind the scheme and to demonstrate why you have designed it like it is, and how it is appropriate to the area.

Please be aware that intentions and promises made in the Statement will normally be tied into any permission granted, by the imposition of conditions or Legal Agreements.

5. Further requirements for Listed Building Consent

A Statement is also always needed for LBC applications; this is additional to the Statement needed for your application for planning permission, although if the two applications are submitted in parallel a single combined Statement can cover all the issues.

The Regulations require the Statement to:

- explain the design principles and concepts that have been applied to the scale, layout and appearance of the scheme;

- explain how you have taken account of:
 - o the special architectural or historic importance of the building;
 - o the particular features for which it was listed;
 - o the building's setting.

Unless the works relate only to the interior of the building, the Statement must also:

- explain the policy adopted as to access, and how you have taken into account Development Plan policies about access;
- explain how the access proposals take account of the building's listed status, including the features for which it was listed, and its setting;
- state what consultations (if any) have been carried out on access matters; explain how specific access problems to the building have been dealt with. In relation to the Disability Discrimination Act you should show how a balance has been reached between the duties of that Act and the duty to protect the architectural significance of the building.

The DAS for Listed Building Consent must undertake an assessment of the significance of the building, as explained in PPS5 Planning for the Historic Environment: Practical Guide.

6. Changes from 6th May 2008

- (i) Since 6th May 2008 (the date the Council introduced a Local Validation Checklist for applications), the Council will expect a Stage 1 Safety Audit and Designer's Response to be submitted for all major applications (10 residential units or more, or 1000sq. m. commercial) which propose new or altered accesses to the highway network, or material increases in movements through an existing access. The Audit should be included with the Design and Access Statement, i.e. with the initial application documentation, rather than be submitted later.
- (ii) Following the publication of the National Planning Policy Framework, Chichester District Council has produced an updated Interim Statement on Planning and Climate Change to assist applicants in demonstrating how their proposed development mitigates and adapts to climate change. Applicants will be required to demonstrate how their proposals comply with the Interim Statement within the Design and Access Statement.

7. Changes from January 2013

The requirements for additional information relating to layout and scale where on Outline application states that there are 'reserved matters' has been received.

Town and County Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) (Amendment No.3) Order 2012 SI 2012 No. 3109

8. Changes from June 2013

A Design and Access Statement is only required for Major Development or for one or more residential units or 100 sq metres floorspace or more in a Designated Area.

ANNEX

Suggested DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENTS for Major and other applications in Designated Areas

- **Assessment of physical context** – the physical appearance of the site and its surroundings – the proximity and size and style of adjacent buildings – the presence of trees, roads, paths, boundary treatments, ditches, streams, the shore, etc – photographs of the site may help – key viewpoints – neighbouring houses – access visibility – heights of nearby buildings – in urban areas a street elevation – in rural areas wider landscape matters – individual architectural features characteristic of the area – site dimensions – and hectareage, and any key levels changes – archaeology or contamination on the site nearby.
- **Social/economic context and planning context**– the economic needs and benefits from the proposed development – the effect of land values on development options – the aspirations of the applicant and of local residents – the planning policies which you took into account – national (the Government’s Planning Policy Statements), or local (the 1999 Chichester District Local Plan, or the emerging LDF) – show which ones you have taken into account, and why.
- **Involvement of local interests**– list which local groups and bodies you have held discussions with, if any. Many urban areas have residents groups or amenity societies – the Council encourage discussions with such groups – consultations direct with statutory bodies such as the Environment Agency or West Sussex County Council Highway Authority and Parish Councils – informal discussions with the Council’s planning officers (our “Preliminary Enquiry” procedure).
- **Evaluation** – the assessment of the site’s context should result in a list of the constraints and opportunities for the site – which development options did you consider – your reasons for selecting the application proposal
- **Design Principles** – the **Use** proposed – what the development would be used for – explanation of what uses are proposed – how this fits into the physical and other context – why the use is appropriate to the area – different uses have different access requirements – buildings open to the public (eg shops) must be accessible to everyone – how the climate change objectives have been addressed.
- **Amount of development** – an explanation of how much floorspace or many dwelling units are proposed – the housing mix – density proposed in dph – expected occupancy levels
- **Layout** – why has the proposed layout and siting been chosen? – relationships buildings and spaces, and to site boundaries, and neighbours impacts on neighbours from overlooking, privacy, outlook, noise – (See our Note no 3 – “Design Guidelines for Alterations to Dwellings and Extensions” which gives guidance on overlooking distances and angles) – access routes through the site – amenity space – play areas – car and cycle parking .

- **Scale** – the sizes of buildings proposed – heights in relation to site’s context – how does scale and mass of building relate to its design? – impacts on neighbours from bulk and dominance – perspective drawings and sketches are useful to show the 3-D effect of scale across the site – articulation of buildings to reduce bulk
- **Landscaping** – soft and hard treatment of spaces – retention of existing features and trees – long-term maintenance arrangements – street furniture – fences and walls
- **Appearance** – architectural style for the buildings – relationship of this style to site context – proportions and details for the buildings – elevational treatment – articulation – fenestration – roof pitches – solid-to-void ratio – external materials – colour palette – impact on the character and appearance of the area – coloured presentation drawings
- **Access**, both in terms of vehicular and transport links, and inclusive access for all. Explain the access policy chosen, particularly for disabled people. List the Consultations carried out – eg with disabled groups – with West Sussex County Council Highways. Explain how access will be achieved – links with adjacent roads and paths – choice of particular access points – specific problems anticipated – likely traffic generation by the development – vehicle and pedestrian movements within the site – movements within the buildings – road safety – emergency and utility arrangements. For major applications, a Stage 1 Safety Audit and the Designer’s Response is required.