

Design and Access Statements to Accompany Applications for Listed Building Consent

Introduction

Under changes introduced from 10 August 2006 before certain applications can be registered it is necessary submit a Design and Access Statement.

The Government¹ sees Design and Access Statements as setting out how issues such as disabled access have been addressed in the proposal, ensuring there is a greater understanding of what is being planned and what the final development might look like.

The Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE)² sees the document as explaining the design thinking behind a planning application.

Different considerations apply to different types of applications and the statement will need to vary to take account situations. There will therefore not be a “one size fits all” approach. This guidance relates to Design and Access Statements to accompany applications for listed building consent. Separate documents deal with design and access statements which need to be submitted with applications for planning permission.

It has been drawn up by Planning Officers across the whole of the historic county of Hampshire, including Southampton and Portsmouth, the Isle of Wight and also includes the New Forest National Park so as to provide consistency of approach for applicants and their agents.

A list of references is given at the end of the document, together with internet links where possible.

When is a Design and Access Statement needed?

A Design and Access Statement has to be submitted with any application for listed building consent. However, it only needs to address the Design elements where the proposal is for internal works only.

If you are submitting a complementary application for planning permission then there can be a single Design and Access Statement for both applications, however, it is necessary to ensure that the statement includes the additional elements required of applications for listed building consent.

What is Required in a Design and Access Statement – the Design Component

The design and access statement should cover both the design principles and concepts that have been applied to the proposed development and how issues relating to access to the development have been dealt with. Statements should evolve throughout the design and development process.

¹ Department for Communities and Local Government – News Release 2006/0024

² CABE (2006) Design and Access Statements – How to write, read and use them, London page 6.

The design component of a statement should cover

- layout,
- scale; and
- appearance.

In addition it should include a brief explanation of how design policies and approaches have taken account of paragraph [3.5 of PPG15 Planning and the Historic Environment](#) and in particular:

- i. the historic and architectural importance of the building;
- ii. the particular physical features of the building that justify its designation as a listed building; and
- iii. the building's setting.

The statement will need to explain and justify the approach to ensuring that the listed building preserves or enhances its special historic and architectural importance. Where there is potentially an aspect of design that will impact on this, the statement should explain why this is necessary, and what measures within the approach to design have been taken to minimise its impact.

What is Required in a Design and Access Statement – the Access Component

The statement should make clear how the approach to access has balanced the duties imposed by the Disability Discrimination Act where the proposal is subject to those and the particular historical and architectural significance of the building. The statement should detail any specific issues that 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. In alterations to existing buildings where the fabric of the structure restricts the ability to meet minimum levels of accessibility details should be provided of the solutions that will be put in place to minimise the impact on disabled people and ensure that any services provided within the building are made available in other ways.

Some common themes

It should be remembered that a design and access statement is not a technical document. It is an opportunity for an applicant to inform the wider public of the scheme.

CABE's publication *Design and Access Statements – How to write, read and use them* asks the question "Is the design good enough to approve?" not, "Is it bad enough to refuse?", and then explains how to identify good design. In drawing up any document it is often useful to have in mind the questions that it sets out to answer. Reproduced below is the crib sheet which officers will use in assessing the proposal. This has been amended to take account of the particular aspects that relate to listed buildings.

THE PROCESS

- Does the statement show the applicant has assessed the site's full context, including physical, social and economic characteristics and relevant planning policies?
- Has the applicant demonstrated how they have taken account of the results of any community involvement?
- Does the statement show that the scheme has emerged from a rigorous assessment-involvement-evaluation-design process rather than trying to justify retrospectively a pre-determined solution?
- What particular assessment has there been of:
 - o the historic and architectural importance of the building;
 - o the particular physical features of the building that justify its designation as a listed building; and
 - o the building's setting.

LAYOUT

- Do all spaces have a purpose?
- Will public spaces be practical, safe, overlooked and inclusive?
- Will private spaces be adaptable, secure and inviting?

SCALE

- Will the buildings sit comfortably with their surroundings?
- Will they, and parts like doors and windows, be of a comfortable scale for people?

APPEARANCE

- How will the development visually relate to its surroundings?
- Will it look attractive?

ACCESS

- Will the place be safe and easy for everyone to move around?
- Will it make the most of the surrounding movement network?
- Has the applicant clearly described their policy approach and consultation process, whether carried out or planned?

REFERENCES:

CABE (2006) Design and Access Statements – How to write, read and use them, London www.cabe.org.uk/AssetLibrary/8073.pdf
 Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) – News Release 2006/0024
www.communities.gov.uk/index.asp?id=1002882&PressNoticeID=2170

DCLG (2006) Circular 01/2006: Guidance on Changes to the Development Control System, London www.communities.gov.uk/index.asp?id=1500620
Home Office/Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) (2003) Safer Places- the Planning System and Crime Prevention
www.communities.gov.uk/pub/724/SaferplacestheplanningsystemandcrimepreventionPDF3168Kb_id1144724.pdf
ODPM (2005) Planning Policy Statement 1: Delivering Sustainable Development, London