

# Design and Access Statements



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## **WHEN ARE DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENTS REQUIRED?**

A design and access statement must be submitted to support all planning applications with the exception of:

1. Applications for change of use of land or buildings (unless it involves operational development);
2. Householder applications for alterations to an existing dwelling or development within the curtilage of a dwelling house for any purpose incidental to the enjoyment of the dwelling (Statements are still necessary for properties in Conservation Areas or a Listed Building);
3. Engineering or mining operations;
4. Advertisement applications or applications relating to tree preservation orders.

Applications that require design and access statements cannot be registered until a design and access statement is submitted.

## **WHAT SHOULD BE INCLUDED IN A DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT?**

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 developing process.

Applicants are advised that the level of detail will be dependent on the scale and complexity of the proposal.

### **Design Component**

Design statements should consider the physical, social, economic and policy context of development with regard to the following criteria:

#### ***Amount***

The amount of development 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***

The layout is the way in which buildings, routes and open spaces (both private and public) are provided, placed and orientated in relation to each other, and buildings and spaces surrounding the development.

**Scale**

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

**Appearance**

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.

**Landscaping**

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.

**Access Component**

It is important to note that the requirement for the access component of the statement relates only to “access to the development” and therefore does not extend to internal aspects of individual buildings.

Statements should explain how access arrangements will ensure that all users will have equal and convenient access to buildings and spaces and the public transport network. The statement should address the need for flexibility of the development and how it may adapt to changing needs.

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. The statement should also provide information on any consultation undertaken in relation to issues of access and how the outcome of this consultation has informed the development proposals. This should include, for example, a brief explanation of the applicant’s policy and approach to access, with particular reference to the inclusion of disabled people, and a description of how the sources of advice on design and accessibility and technical issues will be, or have been followed.

Access for the emergency services should also be explained where relevant. Such information may include circulation routes round the site and egress from buildings in the event of emergency evacuation.

For outline applications, where access is reserved, the application should still indicate the location of points of access to the site. Statements accompanying such applications should, however, clearly explain the principles which will be used to inform the access arrangements for the final development at all scales, from neighbourhood movement patterns (where appropriate) to the treatment of individual access points to buildings.

**Statements accompanying applications for Listed Building Consent**

The design and access statement should explain the design principles and concepts that have been applied to the scale, layout and appearance characteristics of a proposal (information on use, amount and landscaping is not required for listed building consent design and access statements that do not also accompany a planning permission). Otherwise, scale, layout and appearance are broadly the same as outlined in previous paragraphs.

In addition to following the broad approach in drawing up the design and access statement in relation to applications for planning permission, a design and access statement relating to listed building consent should include a brief explanation of how the design has taken account of paragraph 3.5 of PPG15 (Planning and the Historic Environment), and in particular:

- the historic and special architectural importance of the building;
- the particular physical features of the building that justify its designation as a listed building;
- 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.

Similarly, the access component is broadly the same as for design and access statements accompanying applications for planning permission, but again with reference to the special considerations set out above.

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 (as judged by the aspects set out in paragraph 3.5 of PPG15). 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.

### **Can you get more detailed advice on design and access statements?**

**Yes.**

The circular 01/2006 dated 12 June 2006 published by the Dept for Communities and Local Government titled 'Guidance to Changes to the Development Control System' explains in detail when statements are needed and how they should be used.

The Disability Rights Commission website [www.drc-org.uk](http://www.drc-org.uk) explains how access statements work and how they should be used. CABE have also produced a written guide entitled 'Design and Access statements: How to write, read and use them'. [www.cabe.org.uk](http://www.cabe.org.uk)

There is more information in 'Planning and Access for Disabled People: a good practice guide (ODPM, 2003)' and 'Safer Places: the planning system and crime prevention (ODPM/Home Office, 2003)'. The Urban Design Group has produced detailed guidance called 'Design and Access statements for development frameworks'. Details can be downloaded from [www.udg.org.uk](http://www.udg.org.uk)

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