

HULL CITY COUNCIL - PLANNING SERVICES

Guide to Design and Access Statements

From 25th June, 2013 the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) (Amendment) Order requires some planning applications to be accompanied by a **Design and Access Statement**. The aim of this guide is to explain why and when a Design and Access Statement is required, what it is and what it should include.

1. Why is a Design and Access Statement required?

It is because the City Council needs to fully understand the likely impact of proposed development and make a well-informed and balanced decision. A Design and Access Statement can help planning officers, other professionals and members of the public to fully evaluate a planning application and help to make the application process work more efficiently. It should also result in well designed, integrated, inclusive buildings and places making a positive contribution to their surroundings.

2. When is a Design & Access Statement required?

A Design and Access Statement (DAS) is required with planning applications for -

- (a) development which is major development;
- (b) where any part of the development is in a Conservation Area, development consisting of—
 - (i) the provision of one or more dwellinghouses; or
 - (ii) the provision of a building or buildings where the floor space created by the development is 100 square metres or more.

A Design and Access Statement (incorporating a **Heritage Statement**) is required for applications affecting site or setting of Conservation Area / Listed Building / Scheduled Ancient Monument /site of archaeological interest as defined in Local Plan or otherwise identified /building on local list/ Historic Park or Garden (commonly called Heritage Assets).

3. What is a Design and Access Statement?

This is a document that explains the design thinking behind a planning application. It enables the applicant to explain why the selected design solution is the most suitable in the circumstances. It should show that the person applying for permission (the applicant) has thought carefully about how everyone, including disabled people, older people and very young children, will be able to use the buildings and places they want to create.

A Design and Access Statement (DAS) should include a description of the site, its context and a justification for the planning application. Photos, maps and drawings will be needed to illustrate the points made. The DAS will be available alongside the application for anyone to see so should avoid jargon or overly technical language. It need not be very long but the amount of detail contained should reflect how complex the application is. So a statement for a major development is likely to be much longer than one for a single building. All statements should be as clear, succinct and illustrative as possible.

4. What should be included?

The statement should consist of the two primary components, Design and Access, but both should clearly relate to each other and a one page summary should be included.

Design Component

The Design and Access Statement should demonstrate that the designer has fully analysed the site and followed a clear **Design Process** including a **Contextual Appraisal, Site Assessment, Evaluation, Design Synthesis** as well as **Consultation** with others. In detail these should cover;

- a) **Contextual appraisal** of the site's built and natural features and the key characteristics and history of the surrounding area. In a conservation area you should also appraise its character or appearance.
- b) **Assessment** of the site's context in terms of other physical, social and economic characteristics along with relevant planning policies, guidance and site history. Details of earlier consents, reserved matters approvals, development phases, frameworks, briefs, or masterplans should also be outlined.
- c) **Evaluation** of identified **opportunities and constraints** leading to the formulation of inclusive

and sustainable design principles in relation to the following criteria:

- **Use** - the uses proposed within the development and how they compliment and coordinate with other uses in the locality.
- **Amount** – of development is proposed (number of residential units or amount of floor space).
- **Layout**¹ - the way in which buildings, routes, and open spaces are placed and orientated.
- **Access**¹ – for disabled people and all modes of transport (see access component)
- **Scale**¹ - the height, width and length of a building (or buildings) in relation to its surroundings.
- **Landscaping**¹ - the treatment of public and private spaces to enhance the site and surroundings.
- **Appearance**¹ - the aspects of a place or building that make a visual impression, including its built form, architecture, materials, colour, etc.
- d) **Synthesis** of these considerations into alternative concept designs and an explanation of the chosen design.
- e) **Consultation** with members of both the local community and professionals (planning, urban design, access and conservation officers). Details of these consultations and changes made should be described.

It is important to be precise about the proposals as information provided may be incorporated into Planning Conditions. Increasingly important for **Sustainable Design** is to explain how these criteria can also contribute to meet climate change objectives by “designing for environmental performance”.

Access Component

The access component of a Design and Access Statement should be based on the **Principles of Inclusive Design** and explain the **Access Strategy** adopted, particularly:

- Why the main points of access to the site, car parking and access routes have been chosen, and how prospective users will move through the development.
- How prospective users will be able to access the existing transport network including how connections and crossings will be provided to existing vehicular routes, footpaths, cycle paths, public transport facilities. (including emergency services)
- How access arrangements will ensure that **all users will have equal and convenient access** to the

proposed development with particular consideration given to topography and floor levels.

- How relevant national and local policies and guidance have been taken into account, with particular reference to the inclusion of disabled people.
- What consultations have been undertaken with regard to access issues and how the outcome of these consultations has informed the process.
- How the proposals address the need for flexibility and how the proposed development may adapt to changing needs, i.e. Lifetime Homes.

Note 1: Layout, Scale, Appearance, Landscaping and Access are all reserved matters in Outline Applications.

Outline Applications

The components of a Design and Access Statement will be the same regardless of whether the application is for full or outline planning permission, but their scope will differ. Applications should always include a site appraisal, **indicative access points**, access strategy and at least the Design Components of:

- Use**, uses or any distinct zones within the site.
- Amount of development – for each use
- Indicative layout
- Scale** - the height, width and length of a building (or buildings) in relation to its surroundings.

Listed Building Consent Applications

A Design and Access Statement incorporating a **Heritage Statement** is required for applications affecting site or setting of Conservation Area / Listed Building / Scheduled Ancient Monument /site of archaeological interest as defined in Local Plan or otherwise identified /building on local list/ Historic Park or Garden (commonly called Heritage Assets).

A Heritage Statement in particular should assess the potential impact:

- on the special historical and architectural interest of the building.
- on any object or structure fixed to the Listed Building or included within the curtilage.
- on the setting of the listed building.

A Heritage Statement should also explain how a proposed scheme preserves or enhances the heritage Asset.

Conservation Areas

There are 26 conservation areas in the City, many of which have appraisals that must be taken into account. A Design and Access Statement for an application in a conservation area should also explain how the proposals preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the area. For more information see [Conservation Areas](#).

Sustainable Design Principles include contributions from building materials, construction methods, conservation of energy and water, minimisation of waste and pollution, reuse of buildings and ecology.

Illustrative Materials

All Design and Access Statements should include:

- Site plan with adjoining buildings, roads, footpaths & landscaping etc
- Photographs of the site and its surroundings.
- Plans or illustrations that demonstrate a contextual analysis has been undertaken. For larger applications these should extend at least 400m from the site boundary and include consideration of the landscape/townscape setting, proximity to greenspace, routes, street pattern, proximity to community facilities, shops and public transport, views, built form and architectural details.
- Diagrams and illustrations that demonstrate how the proposal has evolved following analysis.
- Existing and proposed building plans highlighting alterations and extensions.
- Colour coded plans or use of contrasting tone for larger or more complex applications

NB: The illustrative materials must not be used as a substitute for adequate drawings submitted with the planning application.

References

The DAS must include details of author, date prepared, a version reference and date of any amendment.

Local Policies

In Hull the adopted policies are in the Hull and East Riding Joint Structure Plan, Hull Local Plan and Supplementary Planning Guidance. See [Planning Policy](#).

Further Advice

For further advice on what to include in a Design and Access Statement please contact the Development Management Section on 612345, www.hullcc.gov.uk

Consultation with **Hull Access Improvement Group (HAIG)** is encouraged for larger applications and this can be arranged through the City Council's Access Officer on (01482) 612737. For Principles of Inclusive Design see Centre for Accessible Environment's publications.

Other References

Design and Access Statements - How to write, read and use them, CABE, - (the assessment crib sheet at page 32 can be used as a checklist for the applicant at the end of the exercise) [CABE DAS guidance](#)

Planning and access for disabled people: a good practice guide(ODPM, 2003) [Good Practice Guide](#)

Building for Life Standards and criteria. High quality holistic design approach to quality neighbourhoods [Building for Life](#)

Lifetime Homes standards [Lifetime homes](#)

Centre for Accessible Environments Inclusive Design Principles and extensive publications list for guidance. [Centre For Accessible Environments Publications](#)

Prepared by Hull City Council Planning Services and Access Officer and updated March 2014.