

Design and Access Statements - Lewisham Planning Service
Guidance for applicants on the requirements of the
Department for Communities and Local Government Circular 01/2006

To improve the quality of the built environment a Design and Access Statement has to accompany all listed building and planning applications (except householder applications outside a conservation area, changes of use and engineering operations).

The Statement's purpose is to demonstrate how the design of the proposal has taken into account the nature of its surroundings and how it will create a sustainable place that people will want to use.

The amount of detail shown in the Statement should be proportionate to the complexity and scale of the scheme. However, in all cases, a clear and concise Statement is more effective than a lengthy one. It will help to:

- Effectively communicate the principles of the design proposal.
- Demonstrate how the proposal relates to the policies in the development plan.
- Structure discussions and negotiations.

How to prepare a Design and Access Statement

The Statement is the product of working through the design process below, addressing the topics listed where applicable. It should always begin with a thorough site analysis.

1. Site analysis

Local context and character is made up of building styles, their age and architectural character, especially if listed or in a conservation area, heights, scale, massing, rhythm of the street scene, means of access, tree planting, pedestrian routes, public transport services, watercourses, topography and views. The analysis needs to demonstrate an understanding of the wider context before focussing on the site and the appropriate level of design detail.

- Does the statement cover these points where applicable?
- Does the statement effectively explain the particular character of the local area or listed building?
- Does it clearly identify the opportunities and constraints of the site?

2. Design process components

The Statement should explain the design principles and concepts that are to be applied to the particular components of the proposal:

- Use - What will the buildings and spaces be used for?
- Amount - How much floorspace or how many homes will be built on the site?
- Layout - How will the building be arranged on the site and what is its relationship with its neighbours?
- Scale - What is the height, width and length of the building?
- Landscaping - How will open space be treated?
- Appearance - What does the building look like?

- Context - How does the building relate to its neighbours?
- Consultation - How has the community, for example a local amenity group, been involved?

3. Access

To be inclusive development should be accessible to all regardless of age, disability, ethnicity or social grouping.

- Why have the access points and routes been chosen?
- How does the site relate to pedestrian and cycle routes, road layout, local services and public transport provision?
- How can everyone get onto the site and into the building?
- How is access for emergency services to be provided?

Although not a requirement of the Circular, it may be appropriate to include information about circulation within the building in order to promote inclusive development in line with development plan policies.

4. Design Solution

The design solution is the conclusion to the site analysis and the design process. The Statement should show how the solution has been arrived at. It should answer the following points:

- Does the statement explain and justify the proposed development?
- Does the layout promote good access into and through the site?
- Do the design and materials of the proposed building and landscaping complement the local character and respond positively to the local context?
- If in a conservation area, how does it preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the area?
- If a listed building, how does it preserve the building's special architectural or historic interest?

Advice

Applicants are positively encouraged to seek pre-application advice and discuss their proposals with planning officers at an early stage. A meeting will only be held after the applicant has completed the site analysis, begun the design process and formulated initial design solutions.

Supplementary Planning Documents. A range of these are available on different topics which may be relevant to preparing a Statement. For example the Shopfront Design Guide.

Contact the Planning Information Office on 020 8314 7400.

Further Information on Design and Access Statements

- CABE www.cabe.org.uk 'Design and Access Statements, how to write, read and use them'
- Department for Communities and Local Government www.communities.gov.uk DCLG Circular 01/2006 'Guidance on changes to the development control system'
- Disability Rights Commission www.drc-gb.org 'Access Statements'
- English Partnerships www.englishpartnerships.co.uk 'Guidance Note on Inclusive Design'