



DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENTS

Introduction

Changes to the Development Control system are being introduced by the Government from 10 August 2006. These changes introduce a requirement for Design and Access Statements to accompany planning applications.

If a Design and Access Statement is not submitted this may result in delays in your application being registered or the application being returned to you as invalid.

What is a Design and Access Statement?

It should be a short report accompanying an application. The length and complexity will depend on the nature of the application. The Statement should illustrate the process that has led to the development proposal, and explain and justify the proposal in a structured way.

It is not a substitute for the drawings and information already required for an application.

These Statements allow an applicant to explain and justify their proposals. They also enable those assessing proposals to understand the design and access rationale underpinning them. They are a communication tool but they cannot ensure good design and access by themselves.

Which applications require a Statement?

Within Dacorum ALL applications require a Statement *except* the following:

- Applications for householder development – unless any part of the curtilage of the application site is within a Conservation Area, an SSSI or an AONB;
- Changes of Use applications – providing no operational development is involved;
- Engineering or Mining applications (Note: In these applications Hertfordshire County Council may be the Local Planning Authority);
- Applications for Advertisement Consent;
- Applications for works to trees subject to Tree Preservation Orders or within a Conservation Area;
- Hazardous Substances applications

What should a Design and Access Statement Contain?

A Design and Access Statement should be a single document reflecting an integrated approach. The Statement should include information on the following:

The process

How the physical characteristics of the scheme have been informed by a rigorous process which should include the following steps:

- Assessment. Reference should be made to the site context, local character, layout and means of enclosure, making connections and quality of the public realm.
- Involvement - An explanation of how community members and professionals, have been included and how consultation has affected the proposal;
- Evaluation - How information, opportunities and constraints have been evaluated;
- Design - What the result is after following the above three steps.

Please refer to Dacorum's Urban Design Assessment for further information.

Design

Explain the design principles and concepts that have been applied to:

Use

What the buildings and spaces will be used for.

Amount

How much would be built on the site.

Layout

How the buildings and public and private spaces will be arranged on the site and the relationship between them and the buildings and spaces around the site.

Scale

How big the buildings and spaces would be (their length, height and width).

Landscaping

How open spaces would be treated to enhance and protect the character of a place.

Appearance

What the building and spaces will look like, for example, building materials and architectural details.

Access

The access component relates to access to the development and does not include the internal aspects of buildings.

The statement needs to include two potential aspects of access.

Vehicular and transport links

Why the access points and routes have been chosen, and how the site responds to road layout and public transport provision.

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.

Inclusive Access

How everyone can get to and move through the place on equal terms regardless of age, disability, ethnicity or social grouping.

Please note a separate leaflet regarding the requirements of the Highway Authority is available on request.

Listed Building Consent Applications

Where an application for Listed Building Consent is submitted in parallel with a planning application one Statement can cover both applications. It should cover the matters as set out above, and those additional points listed below.

Where only a Listed Building Consent is being sought the requirements for the Statement are solely as set out below:

- Design principles and concepts applied to the scale, layout and appearance characteristics of a proposal (information on use, amount and landscaping is not required);
- How the design takes account of:
 - The importance of the building, its intrinsic architectural and historic interest and rarity, in both national and local terms;
 - The particular physical features of the building which justify its inclusion in the list.
 - The building's setting and its contribution to the local scene.
 - The extent to which the proposed works would bring substantial benefits for the community, in particular by contributing to the economic regeneration of the area to the enhancement of its environment (including other listed buildings)
- Explain and justify the approach to ensuring that the building's special historic and architectural importance is preserved or enhanced;
- Make clear how the approach to access has balanced the duties imposed by the Disability Discrimination Act (where appropriate) and the special historic and architectural importance of the building.

What will we do with your Statement?

The legislation does not allow the Council to deal with an application where a Statement is required and one has not been submitted. In addition, if your Statement does not cover all of the aspects required, the Council will not register your application.

Please ensure that, where a Statement is required, one has been submitted and is complete. Otherwise your application will be returned to you.

Once a complete Statement has been received, and your application has been registered, your Statement will be available for public inspection. It will also be sent to Statutory Consultees.

The content and detail of the Statement will be assessed as part of the consideration of the development proposals. We may suggest that amendments or additions are made to the Statement and/or your development proposals. If it is considered that an element set out in your Statement should be secured through the development, if permission is given, conditions may be applied which specifically require certain elements within the Statement to be implemented.

Sustainability Checklist

Please note that the Design and Access Statement is separate to the requirement for you to produce and submit a Sustainability Checklist.

Further Information

This Guidance Note is intended to be a helpful and useful source of information with regard to the requirement for Design and Access Statements. It is not intended as an authoritative interpretation of the regulations and neither is it intended to be binding on any party in terms of the full extent of and requirements in relation to Design and Access Statements.

The following documents provide further useful information and should be read by those intending to submit Design and Access Statements.

The Town and Country Planning (General Development Procedure) (Amendment) (England) Order 2006 (SI2006/1062).

The Planning (Applications for Planning Permission, Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2006 (SI2006/1063)

PPG15 Planning Policy Guidance Note 15 – Planning and the Historic Environment

DCLG Circular 01/2006 – Guidance on Changes to the Development Control System

CABE – Design and Access Statements – How to Write, Read and Use Them

Dacorum Borough Local Plan 1991 – 2011 Supplementary Planning Guidance – Area Based Policies

Urban Design Assessment for Dacorum

Chilterns Buildings Design Guide and associated Technical Notes

Chipperfield Village Design Guide