

Design and Access Statement

From 10th August 2006, Applications for outline and full planning permission, and Listed Building Consent, must be accompanied by a design and access statement. This applies in all cases, except applications for a material change of use only (where no building work is proposed), engineering or mining operations, or most development within the curtilage of an existing dwelling (see below).

Content and Format

A design and access statement should be a single report accompanying and supporting an application. It should illustrate the process that has led to the development proposal, explaining and justifying the design solution. The length and detail will vary depending on the complexity of the proposal. It is an opportunity to show commitment to good design and ensuring accessibility.

The following guidance, based on the requirements of the legislation, is offered as to what Torridge District Council expects as the basic content of design and access statements. The statement should cover the principles that have been applied in respect of amount, layout, scale, landscaping and appearance.

Access Component

As a basic requirement, we will expect to see:

- The key issues arising in the scheme, together with special consideration given to Listed Buildings, development in Conservation Areas, or other designated areas, and how they have been addressed;
- Current access provisions and proposed areas for improvement, including how the proposed users will gain access to the development from the existing transport network;
- Areas not proposed for improvement and/or reasons why an alternative approach has been adopted;
- How features that ensure access to the development will be maintained;
- Sources of advice and guidance used and how it has influenced the chosen solution.

Design Component

In part, the design solution proposed will arise from the requirements of the access provision and will be covered in the above. However, further information will be required to outline the design principles adopted. It is important the design responds to important aspects of the setting and context, even when a contemporary design approach is adopted. As a basic requirement we will expect to see:

- Regard given to the setting, which will usually include an appraisal and illustrations of the wider context. This should include an assessment of the site's immediate and wider context – physical, social and economic characteristics and relevant planning policies. The extent of the survey will depend on the nature, scale and sensitivity of the development.
- How the proposed use fits into the local area;
- Special consideration given to listed buildings, conservation areas, or other designated areas.
- Demonstrate how crime prevention measures have been considered.

Suggested layout

The following suggestion of report sections is derived from advice contained in the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE) noted below.

- **Assessment and appraisal** of the context.
- **Involvement** of community members, neighbouring land owners and professionals, including pre-application discussions with Planning, Conservation and Building Control officers or Access Consultants (see the National Register of Access Consultants – www.nrac.org.uk).
- **The key issues** and how they are being addressed, identifying opportunities and constraints in formulating design and access principles. Any balancing of conflicting issues should be described, explaining where the most weight has been attached and why. This could be arranged around the five topics amount, layout, scale, landscaping and appearance.
- **Final design** of the scheme, based on the information gathered. Retrospective working, trying to justify a pre-determined design through subsequent site assessment and evaluation is likely to result in unsatisfactory and poorly designed solutions.

Applications for Outline and Full Planning Permission

Full details must be given as to how the proposal has been considered and that there is an understanding of what is appropriate and feasible for the site in its context. It should clearly explain and justify the design and access principles that will be used to develop future details of the scheme. For outline applications this requirement applies even when access, layout and appearance are reserved for subsequent consideration.

Applications for Approval of Reserved Matters

It will not usually be necessary to submit a further access and design statement as consideration will have been given to this when the outline planning permission was granted. However, if there is a significant deviation from the agreed details, a further statement will be required to explain why the deviation has occurred.

Householder Applications/Development within the curtilage of a dwelling

For most development within the curtilage of an existing dwelling, design and access statements will not be required. However, where the site is within a Conservation Area, Site of Special Scientific Interest, or Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, a design and access statement will still be required. Where statements are required, it is not expected that they will be overly detailed, but should address the key design issues in respect of the site and surroundings, such as its relationship with the existing and neighbouring dwellings, consideration of overlooking or overbearing impacts, and any discussions that may have taken place with neighbours.

Applications for Listed Building Consent

Applications for Listed Building Consent also require a Design and Access Statement. There is no need to consider use, amount and landscaping which are not relevant to the determination. In addition to scale, layout and appearance, which will be relevant, a brief explanation of how the design has taken account of paragraph 3.5 of PPG15 (Planning and the Historic Environment) should be submitted, 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 should explain how the approach to access has balanced the duties imposed by the Disability Discrimination Act and those in terms of preserving the particular features of historical and architectural interest that the building possesses.

Where an application for Listed Building Consent is submitted simultaneously with an application for planning permission, a single statement can be used (although sufficient copies should be submitted for consideration with each application). This statement must demonstrate all of the requirements for the planning application and the application for Listed Building Consent.

If the basic requirements outlined above are not met in any application received on or after 10th August 2006, the application will be considered to be invalid on receipt.

Further advice and guidance

CABE (2006) *Design and access statements: How to write, read and use them*. CABE.
DCLG (2006) *Circular 01/2006: Guidance on changes to the development control system*. TSO.
DOE (1994) *Planning Policy Guidance Note 15: Planning and the Historic Environment*. DOE.
ODPM (2003) *Planning and access for disabled people: a good practice guide*. ODPM.
ODPM (2003) *Safer places: the planning system and crime prevention*. ODPM/Home Office.
ODPM (2006) *Statutory Instrument 1062: The Town and Country Planning (General Development Procedure) (Amendment) (England) Order 2006*. TSO.