

North Norfolk District Council Planning Advice

Design and Access Statements and Heritage Statements

What is a Design and Access Statement?

Design and Access Statements are intended to demonstrate how these issues are dealt with in planning applications with the aim of improving the quality of proposals submitted for planning permission. They should also allow local communities, access groups and others interested in applications to be able to interpret the intentions of the applicant and hence become more directly involved in the planning process.

A Design and Access Statement is a short report accompanying and supporting a planning application to illustrate the process that has led to the proposal and to explain and justify it in a structured way. One Statement should cover both design and access, allowing the applicant to demonstrate an integrated approach to these requirements. The Statement allows designers to show how applications meet the various obligations placed on them by legislation and policy and help those assessing applications to understand the design concepts behind the submission.

Which applications have to be accompanied by a Design and Access Statement?

All planning applications and applications for Listed Building Consent have to include a Design and Access Statement, with the exception of the following:-

- a material change in the use of land or buildings
- engineering or mining operations
- extensions to the time limits for implementing existing planning permissions
- development of land without compliance with conditions previously attached
- development affecting existing dwellings (including flats) where no part of the building or its curtilage is within a Conservation Area
- extensions to existing non-domestic buildings where the new floorspace does not exceed 100m² and no part of the building is within a Conservation Area
- erection, construction, improvement or alteration of a gate, fence, wall etc which does not exceed 2m in height (or its former height) and which is not in a Conservation Area or within the curtilage of (or surrounds) of a listed building
- erection on operational land of a building which has a volume not exceeding 100 cubic metres and does not exceed 15 metres in height (or its former height – whichever is greater) and is not within a Conservation Area
- alterations to a building which do not increase its size and is not within a Conservation Area
- erection, alteration or replacement of plant or machinery which does not exceed 15 metres in height (or its former height - whichever is the greater) and is not within a Conservation Area
- applications relating to Advertisement Control
- tree works applications

Some applications will also require a Heritage Statement (see page 3).

Does the procedure apply to proposals for outline planning permission?

Yes. Statements are required for outline applications and should set out the principles and concepts that will be used when the proposal is developed at a later stage in detail. They will form part of the assessment of later applications for the approval of reserved matters or matters covered by conditions.

If an application is submitted without a Design and Access Statement will the Council accept it?

No, unless it is for one of the exceptions referred to above. In all other cases it is a legal requirement for Statements to be submitted with applications and the Council will return the application and will not be able to register it until a Statement has been submitted.

What has to be included in a Design and Access Statement?

A Design and Access Statement should cover the design principles and concepts that have been applied to the proposal and how issues relating to access to the development have been dealt with.

The level of detail required in a Design and Access Statement will depend on the scale and complexity of the application and the length of the Statement will vary accordingly, but it should always be concise and easy to interpret. Other than for minor householder developments, applicants are strongly advised to use the sources of information and advice set out at the end of this Practice Advice Note.

DESIGN

The Design component must cover in particular the following issues

- the amount of development proposed, in terms of numbers of residential units and/or floorspace
- the layout, in terms of buildings, routes and open space
- the scale, including height, width and length of building or buildings in relation to neighbouring buildings and the surroundings
- landscaping, including both planting schemes and structural components such as walls, fences, paths and other features and details of the proposed maintenance measures for these, and
- appearance, including materials, decoration, lighting, colour and texture.

The Council encourages innovative approaches to design that take account of the particular context and setting of the site and contribute to the maintenance of local distinctiveness.

ACCESS

The Access component must explain how the Council's policies for access have been taken into account and what consultation has been undertaken regarding access to the development. It should also cover how any specific issues which might affect external access to the development have been addressed, including the requirements of disabled people, how users of the development will be able to gain access from the existing transport network and why the main points of access to the site and the layout of access routes have been chosen.

CRIME AND SECURITY

The Council will expect Design and Access Statements to show how crime prevention measures have been considered in the design of the proposal. A separate leaflet is produced by the Norfolk Police Architectural Liaison Service covering this issue.

Heritage Statements

Required for all applications for Listed Building Consent and for planning applications affecting historic assets, including listed buildings and ancient monuments and significant proposals in conservation areas and historic parks and gardens.

The Council will expect the statement to include:

- a brief outline of the history of the building or asset and details of how it has evolved
- an architectural description of the building
- a justification as to why the proposed changes are desirable or necessary
- a statement of what the impact upon the listed building/heritage asset will be. This should include details of changes to historic fabric eg walls, fireplaces, panelling and shop fronts; changes to the layout of the buildings and the impact of the proposed works on the appearance of the building

It may be incorporated in the Design and Access Statement, provided all of the above points are covered.

How will the Council use the Statement in assessing the application?

The Statement will be included on the register of planning applications maintained for public inspection, displayed on the Council's web site and copied to consultees who are invited to comment on the proposals.

The Council is anxious to improve the quality of the design of proposals in North Norfolk and will carefully consider whether the design of a proposal is good enough to approve. Proposals which fall short of the Council's design requirements as set out in its Local Development Framework will not be approved.

FURTHER INFORMATION

- Further advice on writing, reading and using Statements is set out in the CABI publication 'Design and Access Statements' (2006), CABI being the Government's advisor on architecture, urban design and public space.
- Particular advice on the access aspects of Statements is available in 'Planning and Access for Disabled People: A Good Practice Guide' available from the DCLG website at www.communities.gov.uk/publications/planningandbuilding/planningaccess
- The crime and disorder aspects of design are covered in 'Safer Places - the Planning System and Crime Prevention' available from the DCLG website at www.communities.gov.uk/publications/planningandbuilding/saferplaces

For further information please contact North Norfolk District Council by e-mailing planning-consultation@north-norfolk.gov.uk or by telephoning 01263 516150.