

WHEN IS A DESIGN STATEMENT REQUIRED?

New regulations* mean that a design statement must be submitted with planning applications for local developments within the following areas:

- Conservation Area
- National Scenic Area
- Site of a Scheduled Monument
- Curtilage of a category 'A' listed building
- Historic garden/ designed landscape
- World Heritage Site

WHEN IS A DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT REQUIRED?

A design and access statement must be submitted for all **national** or **major** developments (see definition on back page). Applications for marine fish farms which fall into the major category require a design statement only.

The design and access statement should be submitted as a single document combining the design and access elements.

Any application meeting the above criteria which is submitted on or after 3rd August 2009 without a design statement or design and access statement will not be registered until one is provided.

Design statements / design and access statements are **not** required for the following types of application:

- alterations or extensions to an existing house;
- development within the curtilage of an existing house which is incidental to the enjoyment of the house (e.g. sheds, garages etc);
- planning permission in principle (outline);
- a material change of use of land or buildings;
- mining/engineering operations; or
- the amendment of previously granted permissions.

* The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (Scotland) Regulations 2008

WHAT IS A DESIGN STATEMENT?

A design statement is a short, illustrated report that shows how design considerations have been integral to the proposed development.

It gives you the opportunity to explain the design of the proposal in a structured way, and set out the thought process that has led to the final design. It demonstrates that the site and its surroundings have been fully appraised and that the final design solution is the most suitable for the site. A building may be good architecturally, but if it is inappropriate for its context it may not result in a quality place. In turn, a design statement gives us a better understanding of the proposal and should ultimately lead to an improvement in the quality of development.

WHAT IS A DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT?

A design and access statement is a document which includes both the design information as outlined above and a written statement describing access issues. The purpose of this is to allow the applicant to explain how the needs of all users have been incorporated into the design process and specifically to set out in detail the proposals for access for those with disabilities.

WHAT SHOULD THE STATEMENT LOOK LIKE?

For most applications the completed design statement / design and access statement will be a short document (one or two pages).

However this will vary depending on the scale and nature of the proposed development and the sensitivity of the site. Whatever its size, good quality illustrations are important - for example, plans, elevation drawings, site profiles, photographs of the site and its surroundings, possibly even 3D models.

WHAT SHOULD A DESIGN STATEMENT INCLUDE?

The statement should demonstrate a good understanding of local character and circumstances and is likely to include the following information:

- 1. Background information** – e.g. applicant and agent details; site location plan; description of

development proposal; ownership and development history of the site.

2. Site appraisal – an examination of the site and surrounding area. Depending on the site and proposed development, this is likely to refer to a number of the following factors:

- **site description** - e.g. adjacent land uses, boundary treatments, focal points, views, topography, land use, microclimate;
- **surrounding buildings** - e.g. existing settlement pattern, building lines, building sizes and styles; appearance scale and massing;
- **landscape** – e.g. landscape character and features, wildlife habitats, trees, hard landscaping including play and recreational space, street furniture;
- **connections** - e.g. street layouts, vehicular movement, access, parking and circulation, public transport routes, pedestrian movement, desire lines, disabled access and access restrictions.

3. Identification of the design principles

Design principles are the general rules and guidance that inform and support the overall design of the proposal. These should take account of government policy; any design principles within the development plan and supplementary guidance; and any development briefs for the area. The statement should explain how these have been taken into account in the design.

4. Analysis and the development of the design concept

Once the information has been gathered it can be analysed, and the constraints and opportunities of the site considered – e.g. important views and landmarks and any features, habitats, trees or buildings to be retained. From this information the design solution can be developed.

5. The design solution

This section should explain how the proposed design is the most suitable in the context of the site appraisal and design principles and should refer to the following:

- **Layout** – i.e. the way in which buildings, roads and open spaces (both private and public) are placed and orientated in relation to each other and to surrounding buildings and spaces. Design statements should explain and justify the proposed layout in terms of the relationship between the proposed building(s) and the buildings and spaces around the site, and demonstrate how these relationships will help to create safe, vibrant, sustainable and successful places.
- **Landscape/landscaping** – i.e. the way in which the buildings and landscape interact and the treatment of spaces to enhance or protect the site and its surroundings through hard and soft landscaping measures. Design statements should explain the steps taken to ensure that the development will be integrated into the landscape rather than dominating or detracting from it. It will also show how significant landscape features, trees or habitats have been safeguarded through the design. The design statement should explain and justify any landscaping proposals and their relationship to the surrounding area, as well as explaining how they will be maintained in the future.
- **Scale and mix** – i.e. the size and type of building(s) in relation to their surroundings. The design statement should explain and justify the scale of the proposed building(s), including why particular heights have been decided on and how these relate to the surroundings and skyline.
- **Appearance** – i.e. the aspect of a place or building that determines the visual impression it makes, including the external built form of the development, its architecture, materials, window fenestration, roof pitch, decoration, lighting, colour and texture. The statement should explain and justify the appearance of the proposed development including how it will relate to the appearance and character of surrounding buildings or features.

WHAT SHOULD A DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT INCLUDE?

The design and access statement should include ALL elements of the design statement, as outlined above. More detailed guidance is available for The Council's Development Plan Policy Guidance – Designing for Sustainability in the Highlands 2006. The statement must also include a written statement on access. It should be presented as a single document.

Allowing access for all users is a central part of the design process and should not be considered in isolation. The written statement should cover the following:

- **Access to the development - the statement should explain what the arrangements for access to the development are and how they relate to the wider context.** Access arrangements for emergency and service vehicles, transport links and links to footpaths and cycle ways should all be identified. Any public rights of way that exist on the site should also be identified along with a description of how these will be maintained, or indeed, improved.
- **Access for all users – the statement should show that access arrangements provide all users with equal and convenient access both to and through the development. It should also demonstrate that consideration of such access requirements formed part of the design process outlined in the rest of the statement.** Any specific issues relating to access for people with disabilities should be identified and any provisions that have been made should be specified. The statement should consider all aspects of access for people with disabilities including means of entry and the impact of street furniture, surfaces, signage, visual contrast and lighting as well as future maintenance and safety of such features.
- **Policy Context – The statement should show how policies relating to access in the Development Plan have been taken into account as well as other local policy and guidance - e.g. The Local Transport Strategy, and Core Path Plan.**

The statement will not normally cover internal aspects of buildings which will be assessed by Building Standards.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

Where either formal or informal pre-application public consultation or discussions have been carried out, the statement should include details of any design or access issues raised during the consultation process and explain how these have informed the final proposal.

USEFUL PUBLICATIONS

Where appropriate design statements and design and access statements should refer to relevant guidance. The Highland Council, Development Plan Policy Guidance – Designing for Sustainability in the Highlands, available to download from the Council's website. The following Scottish Government publications may also be useful:

- PAN 68 – Design Statements, 2003
- PAN 67 – Housing Quality, 2003
- PAN 78 – Inclusive Design, 2006
- Designing Places, 2001

MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS

Use the definitions below to work out whether or not your development proposal will need a design and access statement

Type of Development	Threshold/criterion
SCHEDULE 1 DEVELOPMENT	
Development of a description mentioned in Schedule 1 to the Environmental Impact Assessment (Scotland) Regulations 1999(3) (other than exempt development within the meaning of those Regulations).	All Development
HOUSING	
Construction of buildings, structures or erections for use as residential accommodation	(a) The development comprises 50 or more dwellings; or (b) The area of the site is or exceeds 2 hectares
BUSINESS & GENERAL INDUSTRY, STORAGE & DISTRIBUTION	
Construction of a building, structure or other erection for use for any of the following purposes: (a) as an office (b) for research and development of products or processes (c) for any industrial process (d) for use for storage or as a distribution centre	(a) The gross floor space of the building, structure or other erection is or exceeds 10,000 square metres (b) The area of the site is or exceeds 2 hectares
ELECTRICITY GENERATION	
Construction of an electricity generating station	The capacity of the generating station is or exceeds 20 megawatts
WASTE MANAGEMENT FACILITIES	
Construction of facilities for use for the purpose of waste management or disposal	The capacity of the facility is or exceeds 25,000 tonnes per annum. In relation to facilities for use for the purpose of sludge treatment, a capacity to treat more than 50 tonnes (wet weight) per day of residual sludge
TRANSPORT AND INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS	
Construction of new or replacement roads, railways, tramways, waterways, aqueducts or pipelines	The length of the road, railway, tramway, waterway, aqueduct or pipeline exceeds 8 kilometres
FISH FARMING	
The placing or assembly of equipment for the purpose of fish farming within the meaning of section 26(6) of the Act	The surface area of water covered is or exceeds 2 hectares
MINERALS	
Extraction of minerals	The area of the site is or exceeds 2 hectares
OTHER DEVELOPMENTS	
Any development not falling wholly within any single class of development described in paragraphs 1 to 8 above	(a) The gross floor space of any building, structure or erection constructed as a result of such development is or exceeds 5,000 square metres (b) The area of the site is or exceeds 2 hectares

Further information

For more information please contact your local planning and building standards office:

INVERNESS AND NAIRN

(01463) 720606
planning.inverness@highland.gov.uk

BADENOCH AND STRATHSPEY

(01540) 661700
planning.badenochandstrathspey@highland.gov.uk

SUTHERLAND AND EASTER ROSS

(01408) 635352
planning.sutherland@highland.gov.uk

CAITHNESS

(01955) 607751
planning.caithness@highland.gov.uk

ROSS

(01349) 868600
planning.rossandcromarty@highland.gov.uk

SKYE

(01478) 612412
skye.planning@highland.gov.uk

LOCHABER

(01397) 707015
planning.lochaber@highland.gov.uk

HEADQUARTERS

(01463) 702250
planning@highland.gov.uk

To request this information in an alternative format, e.g. large print, Braille, computer disc, audio tape, or suitable language please contact the Highland Council's Planning & Development Service on 01463 702250 or email planning@highland.gov.uk