

Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames

Supplementary Planning Advice Note



DESIGN & ACCESS

STATEMENTS

Adopted April 2008

Design and Access Statements are required by:

The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (Section 42)

DCLG Circular 01/2006: Guidance on Changes to the Development Control System (Section 3)

The London Plan: Spatial Development Strategy for Greater London (Policy 4B.1 and Policy 4B.5)

1. Introduction:

The Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames is committed to achieving high quality, inclusive, and sustainable design in all new development.

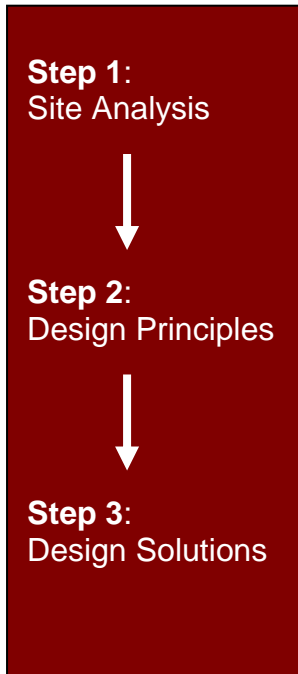
Legislation requires that a Design and Access Statement is submitted with certain types of planning application. A Design and Access Statement is a document that explains the design thinking behind a planning application. This allows decision makers, and those consulted on a planning application, to better assess the development proposal. The purpose of this note is to explain when a Design and Access Statement is required, and what information needs to be included.

When is a Design and Access Statement needed?

DCLG Circular 01/2006 sets out in detail what a Design and Access Statement is and when one is needed. Design and Access Statements must be submitted **with all planning applications except:**

- **Householder development (where the property is not in a conservation area)**
- **A material change of use of land or buildings**
- **Engineering or mining operations**
- **Advertisement Control**
- **Tree preservation orders**
- **Storage of hazardous substances**

Applications submitted without the required statement will be treated as invalid.



2. Design:

A Design and Access Statement should include a site analysis, set out the design principles and the design solutions considered. It should show the following:

- The principles and factors that have influenced your design
- How your design respects its surroundings and will help to improve the local environment
- How the principles of inclusive design, including the specific needs of disabled people, have been integrated into the proposed development
- How your design incorporates sustainability measures that improve the environmental performance of the development

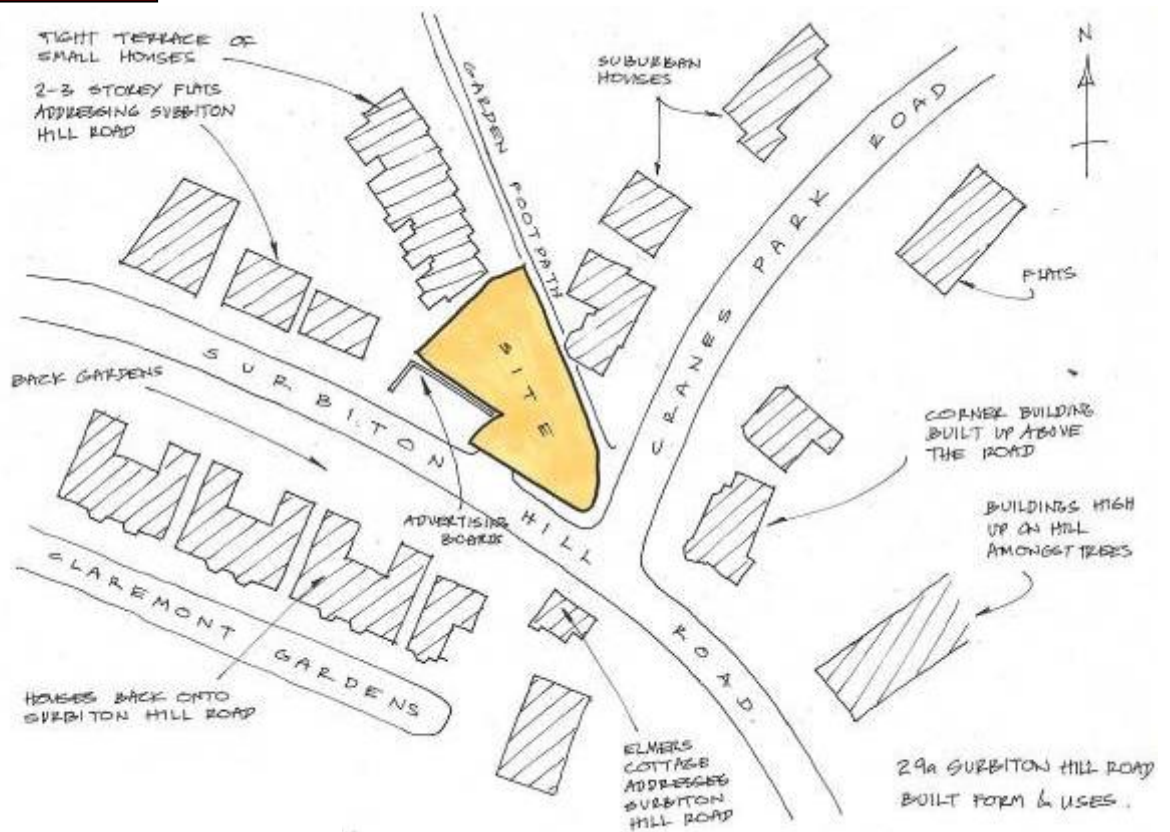
The level of detail in the statement should reflect the size and complexity of the project it supports. Thus for straightforward applications the statement may be short. Focusing on the key principles and concepts behind your design, and setting out what the project actually includes will make a statement easier to read than including lists of aspirations that the project might not achieve.

Fulfilment of relevant policies on design, access and sustainability should be clearly and precisely stated and based on physical commitments. Ambiguous statements, e.g. 'easy to manage', will not be acknowledged as a commitment to fulfilling a policy.

The context of a development refers to its location and surroundings and how they influence the design of a new development

Step 1: Site Analysis – The Importance of Context

A full analysis of a site's immediate and wider context should always be carried out prior to any initial design considerations. The context analysis should be able to inform several designs. Presenting a range of design options at the beginning of the statement may help justify the chosen design. The analysis should demonstrate how the context has informed the chosen design.



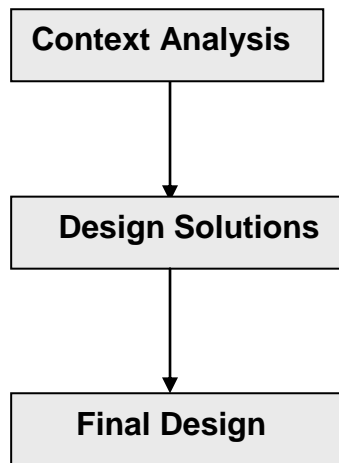
A context plan indicating key features surrounding a site

Always begin a Design and Access Statement at the initial stages of the scheme and use it to shape your design.

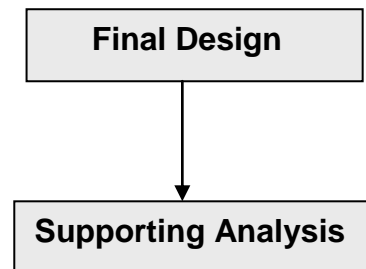
It may help you to discuss your preferred design with the Council's planning officers before you submit your formal application.

A context analysis should never be carried out retrospectively to fit a particular design solution. If the council believes that a context analysis has not been carried out properly the application may be invalidated.

Correct Process



Incorrect Process



Applicants should follow a design process when appraising the context which includes:

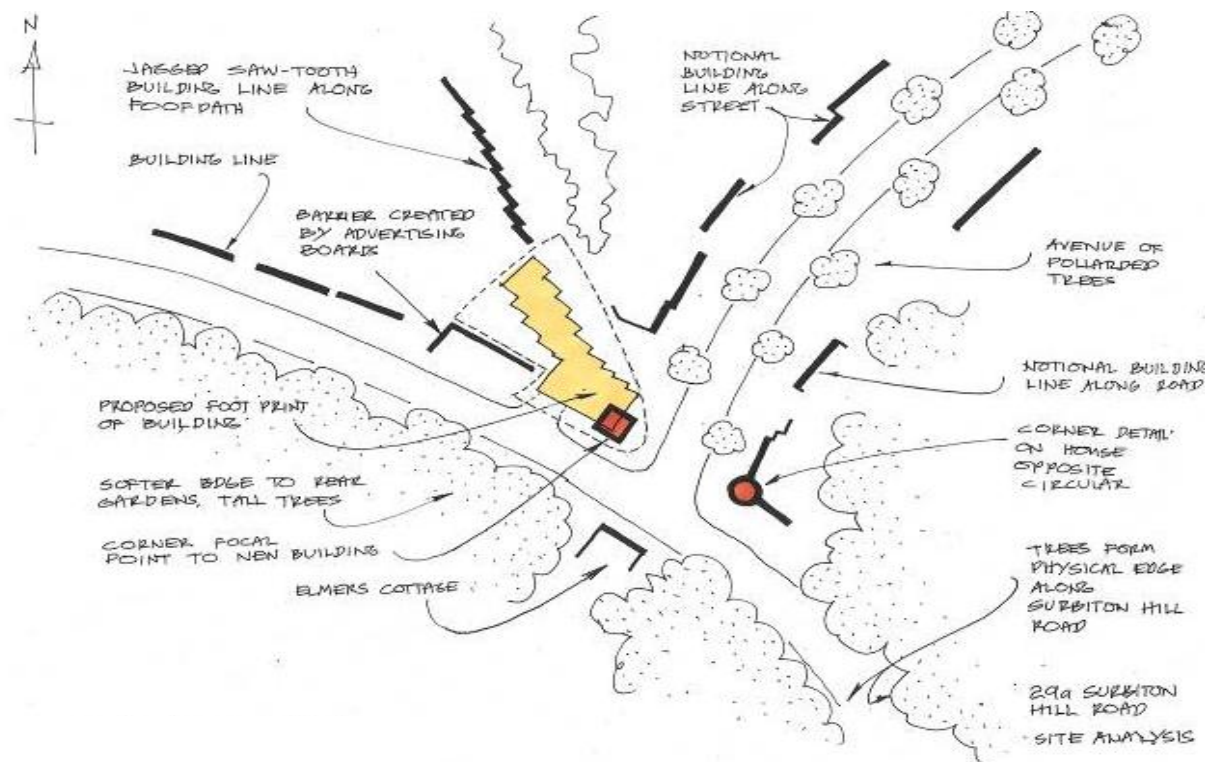
1. **Assessment** of physical, social and economic characteristics
2. **Involvement** of community members and professionals
3. **Evaluation** of the information collected, identifying the opportunities and constraints of the site
4. **Design** of the scheme using the assessment

More information on these steps can be found in Circular 01/2006 and in CABE, *Design and Access Statements*.

It is **vital** that **design** and **access** are considered in the design as **integral issues**. The design and access components should never be thought of as two separate statements.

Step 2: Identify the Design Principles

The site analysis should directly identify a set of design principles that will inform your design. A Design and Access Statement should state the principles, how they have been informed by the site analysis and how they may shape the design.



A plan indicating design strategy in the context

A Design and Access Statement should give full details of the way in which the **principles of inclusive design** have been incorporated into the proposed development. Inclusive design should infuse the whole Design and Access Statement

The Statement should show how the development:

1. can be used safely, easily and with dignity by all regardless of disability, age, gender, ethnicity or financial circumstances

Step 3: Create Design Solutions

This section of the statement should explain how your proposed design responds to the site analysis and design principles. With regards to the chosen design option, Design and Access Statements should include and justify the information stated below:

Design:

- **Design process:** the design principles and concepts that have informed your design
- **Amount of development:** the amount of development that will be built on site. Including the quantity of accommodation and other uses, the floor space, the number of parking spaces etc.

Layout:

- How the buildings and spaces are to be arranged on site, their relationship with the site's context and the wider context, and how the building layout supports the proposed use/s

Scale:

- How big the buildings and spaces will be in terms of their height, width, and depth and their relationship to buildings and spaces in the wider setting

2. is convenient and welcoming, with no disabling barriers, so everyone can access it independently without undue effort, separation or special treatment

3. is flexible and responsive taking account of what different people say they need and want, so people can use them in different ways are realistic

4. offers more than one solution to help balance everyone's needs, recognising that one solution may not work for all

Appearance:

- Details of materials, architectural detailing, finishes, colours and textures, including the effect of shadow, the buildings appearance at night, possible reflections etc.

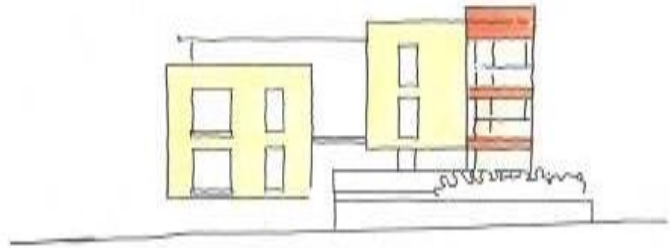
Landscape:

- The treatment of the landscape including tree planting and surface materials

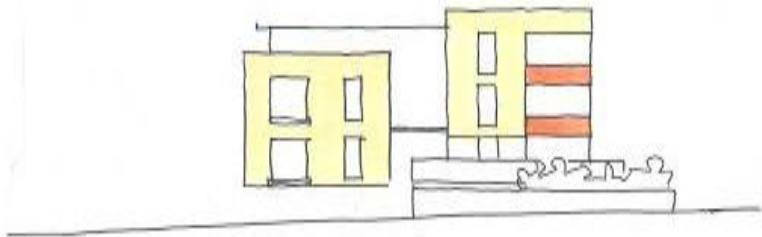
Access:

- Access arrangements into the development and how they relate to the wider context, including access for emergency vehicles and service vehicles.
- how people (all users) get to and move through the development - This should ensure equal and convenient access to buildings and spaces and the public transport network for everyone

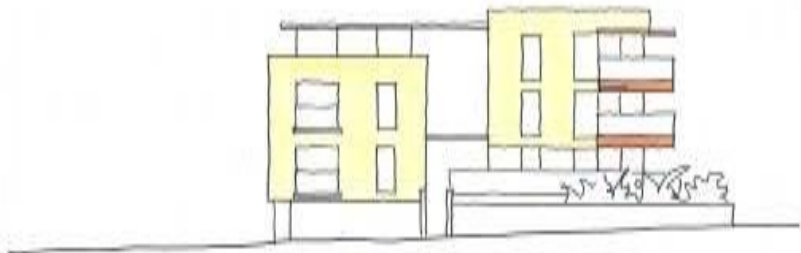
Several design options should be available that fulfil the identified design principles



Option 1



Option 2



Option 3

Developers and Applicants are encouraged to seek the services of an access consultant for larger developments (reference can be made to the National Register of Access Consultants)

3. Access:

Developers and applicants should explain how the needs of ALL users have been incorporated and this should be accompanied by plans showing circulation routes, facilities and dimensions etc. The access component of a design and access statement should never be considered in isolation from the design principles. Specifically, the access content of the statement should include:

- the philosophy and approach to inclusive design
- the strategy to achieve inclusive access
- information on how local planning policies relating to access have been taken into account
- the key access issues of the particular scheme
- the sources of advice and guidance used
- how the principles of inclusive design have been embedded into the scheme
- how inclusion will be maintained and
- any specific provision for disabled people
- recommendations of an access consultant

The access element should also:

- aim for the highest standards not the minimum;
- justify any deviation from accepted good practice
- explain the relationship between design and management
- highlight issues of ongoing management and maintenance
- make it clear what can be tied down in planning conditions and/or Section 106 agreements
- explain and justify the decisions taken so far and explain the principles that will be followed when the details are designed after permission is granted

Key policy:

RBK Access for All
Supplementary
Planning
Document (applies
to non-residential
schemes)

RBK
Supplementary
Planning Advice
Note on Lifetime
Homes and
Wheelchair
Housing

- set out how inclusive access will be addressed in any masterplan and reserved matters applications

Your access assessment of the project should include how users:

- gain access from the public transport network
- access and use any parking provision
- access and use the public realm including areas of private and public open space
- negotiate any changes in level
- orientate themselves and find their way around the development

For more information on the access component of design and access statements please refer to Circular 01/2006.

Policy 3A.5 of The London Plan (February 2008) requires all new housing to be built to 'Lifetime Homes' standards and 10% to be wheelchair accessible. The Design and Access Statement should demonstrate fulfilment of this policy, including the Lifetime Homes standards. Internal arrangements of the buildings will therefore need to be illustrated. The number of wheelchair homes should be clearly stated. Please refer to the Council's *Lifetime Homes and Wheelchair Housing* Supplementary Planning Advice Note.

Design Standards:

The Design and Access Statement should make reference to other standards that may have been used and how the standards have been followed. Standards that could be referred to include:

- CABE Building for Life standards
- The Housing Corporation – Housing Quality Indicators Version 4 (April 2007) and Design and Quality Standards (April 2007)
- Secured by Design
- The Parker Morris Space Standards

The Mayor of London's Energy Strategy encourages local authorities to apply a hierarchy when considering development proposals. The hierarchy states that essential energy needs should be met through applying in sequence the following factors: -

Use *less* energy

Use *renewable* energy

Use energy *efficiently*

3. Sustainable design:

The Council requires sustainability issues to be addressed in Design and Access Statements. In the past the Council has required separate Sustainability Statements with certain types of planning application, to demonstrate the environmental performance of the development (e.g. energy and water efficiency, renewable energy, sustainable urban drainage systems). However, the integrated nature of sustainability and design, and the promotion of sustainable design as a key planning principle of PPS1 suggests that sustainability issues should form part of a Design and Access Statement rather than forming a statement on their own.

Consequently the Council now requires sustainability issues to be addressed in Design and Access Statements illustrating how sustainable design, construction and energy efficiency have been integrated into the design.

This is consistent with the supplement to PPS1 *Planning and Climate Change*, which promotes the use of design and access statements to explain how a development would minimise carbon emissions through elements of its design. It suggests that specific or standalone assessment for new development should not be required separately if the information can be made available through a design and access statement. The information on sustainability should state how relevant development plan policies have been fulfilled.

Key Policy

London-wide: -

The London Plan
(February 2008)

The Mayor's
Sustainable
Construction
Supplementary
Planning Guidance

The Mayor of
London's Energy
Strategy

Borough-wide: -

The Unitary
Development Plan

RBK Sustainable
Construction
Supplementary
Planning Guidance

Emerging Local
Development
Framework Policy

The Mayor of London has produced a helpful Sustainability Checklist (at www.londonchecklist.co.uk) which can be used on any project not just those referable to the Mayor. The following issues should be addressed:

- **Re-use**
Re-use of land and buildings
- **Natural Systems**
Maximising the use of natural systems
- **Energy**
Conserving energy, materials and water resources
- **Materials**
Conserving energy, materials and water resources
- **Water**
Conserving energy, materials and water resources
- **Pollution & Flooding**
Reducing the impacts of noise, pollution and microclimate effects
- **Comfort & Security**
Ensuring developments are comfortable and secure
- **Natural Environments**
Conserving and enhance the natural environment and biodiversity
- **Waste**
Promoting sustainable waste behaviour
- **Sustainable Construction**
Promoting sustainable construction practice

Using Renewable Energy

The London Plan (February 2008) requires that developments need to achieve a 20% reduction in carbon dioxide emissions from on-site renewable energy generation (Policy 4A.7 Renewable energy). All development proposals that require a Design and Access Statement should therefore demonstrate as part of that statement how the 20% requirement will be met. Creative Environmental Networks (CEN) have produced a Renewable Energy (RE) spreadsheet for applicants which will help officers to assess the RE component of an application. It is available to download from our website; http://www.kingston.gov.uk/browse/environment/planning/plannin_gpolicy/supplementary_planning_guidance.htm.

Commitment to Sustainability Principles

The Sustainability information within a Design and Access Statement should show a clear commitment to achieving stated targets. The statement should not describe the different technologies that could be used to reach targets but should explain the chosen technologies that will be used to reach targets and how they have been incorporated into the design. The Code for Sustainable Homes and BREEAM Rating provide good sources for both setting targets and identifying ways in which targets can be met through building design and layout.

A commitment to sustainability and renewable energy targets should also include details on how the development will be monitored to confirm that the targets have been fulfilled.

4. Listed Buildings

Where proposals affect a listed building, the statement should explain how the design has taken into account the setting of the building, its special architectural and historic importance and the particular features of the building that justify its listing. The statement should explain how the design has balanced the inclusive access approach and the particular historic and architectural significance of the building. Where the constraints of the building restrict the ability to meet minimum levels of accessibility, the statement should clarify how the services provided in the building may be met in other ways.

5. Outline Applications

Design and Access Statements accompanying outline applications, as well as justifying the decisions taken so far, must also explain and justify the design, access and sustainability principles that will be used to develop the future details of the project after permission is granted.

The scope and level of detail should reflect the matters which are reserved and unreserved. If a matter is unreserved, then the level of detail in the Design and Access Statement should be the same as in a Design and Access Statement accompanying a full application. As a minimum, a Design and Access Statement accompanying an outline application should explain the proposed uses and amount of development related to an indicative layout illustrating scale parameters and access points, as below:

- Layout - the approximate location of buildings, routes and open space, together with how the chosen design framework should inform a detailed layout.
- Scale - the upper and lower limits of proposed building height, width and depth.
- Appearance and Landscaping - there is no need to include specific information but the guiding principles for the development should be explained.
- Access - the principles for access at all scales, from neighbourhood movement patterns to access to individual buildings and the access standards to be provided within buildings. Outline applications should indicate the location of points of access and clearly explain principles which will be used to inform the access arrangements for the final development. This should include examples showing that internal access requirements can be fulfilled as part of a potential scheme, even if the design of the scheme may change. For residential schemes, indicative figures for the number of Wheelchair Homes should be included. All new homes must be built to Lifetime Homes Standards.

The statement should include reference to detailed examples that demonstrate that the design, access and sustainability principles can be achieved and that they result in a high quality environment. These examples will be purely illustrative and will not be tied to the conditions of the reserved matters, although the demonstrated principles may be.

What should be included in a Design and Access Statement?

A comprehensive written statement which addresses the issues set out in this guidance

Plans, elevations and photographs showing the relationship of the proposal with its surroundings (this may include perspective drawings, annotated sketches and street scene drawings)

If the site is particularly complex then it may be helpful to produce three dimensional drawings or an architectural model

6. Presenting the Information:

The length of the Design and Access Statement is dependent on the size, complexity and the significance of the site being developed.

The statement should be as concise as possible, as well as being clear and easy to read. It is important to remember that not only design officers and development control officers will read the Design and Access Statement, but that it will also be available to the general public, therefore jargon should be avoided.

Often the most concise and informative way to present principles relating to design is visually, especially when explaining a proposed development's relationship with its context. Visual aids could take the form of plans, illustrations or photos. However it is important to note that illustrations presented as part of a Design and Access Statement should never be a substitute for plans submitted as part of a planning application.

For any development, a model, no matter how simplistic, may help to show the proposed development in context. However a model should accompany a Design and Access Statement and should never replace it.

**Additional
Information**

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

**CABE – Design
and Access
Statements:**
*How to write,
read and use
them*

7. Pre-application Discussion

The Council encourages pre-application discussion, particularly with regards to large, strategic sites. Pre-application discussions can help to create a better understanding between applicants and officers of the objectives and constraints associated with developing a site. Design and Access Statements are good tools to use in pre-application discussions and can aid communication throughout the design process.