



Design & Access Statements Guidance Note



GUIDANCE ON DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENTS

A Design and Access Statement (DAS) is required to accompany most Planning and Listed Building consent applications (with defined exceptions).

● ● ● ● WHAT IS A DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT?

A Design and Access Statement outlines how the objectives of good design have been considered at the outset of the development process. It is an opportunity for an applicant to explain and justify their proposal. It will assist the local authority and local community by providing a clear indication of the specific design aspects, features and considerations of a development.

The DAS should be clear and concise and include illustrations, plans (to scale) and photos, where appropriate. The length and content of the DAS should reflect the scale and complexity of the proposal and address all matters raised by it.

A Design and Access Statement should:

- Outline the established vision and principles of the scheme. What is the idea behind the design? How has community engagement shaped the scheme?
- Include a justification of a proposal in policy terms. (National and local).
- Explain how the objectives of good, secure and inclusive design have been applied to a development.
- Discuss what is being provided by the proposal and how it is sustainable.
- Express how design issues and conflicting demands have been identified prior to detailed design work being undertaken and illustrate how these have influenced the design.

● ● ● ● WHEN IS A DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT REQUIRED?

A DAS is required by legislation to accompany all planning applications (outline and full) with the exception of:

- engineering or mining operations
- householder development (new dwellings will require a DAS)
- material changes in use (an Access only statement will still be required in most cases)
- applications which are not for planning permission or listed building consent (applications relating to advertisement control, tree preservation orders or storage of hazardous substances).

●●●● WILL A DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT BE REQUIRED FOR RESERVED MATTERS APPLICATIONS?

As a reserved matters application is not an application for planning permission, a DAS is not a statutory requirement within the policy framework. However a progress statement updating the original DAS submitted at outline stage is recommended. The provision of an updated DAS can be conditioned within an outline planning permission.

A DAS is not required if an outline application was granted permission before June 1st 2009.

●●●● REGISTRATION OF A PLANNING APPLICATION

The local planning authority will review each DAS on receipt of a planning application.

If the Design and Access Statement is not considered to be adequate, the planning application will not be registered, and you will be asked to submit a revised DAS.

INCLUSIVE DESIGN

It is important that a development can be easily used by everyone, including those with mobility and sensory impairments.

Easy access should be available to all, including those in wheelchairs, the mobility/sensory impaired, people with learning difficulties and people with pushchairs.

It is recognised that there is no standard solution, as each individual building, and the requirements of user groups will be different.

The **Equality Act 2010** provides a new legislative framework to protect the rights of individuals and advance equality of opportunity for all. The Act simplifies and brings into one act existing discrimination law including the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA). The Act covers existing and new protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief, sex, sexual orientation and marriage and civil partnerships. [Equality Act 2010](#).

The Act consolidates and extends existing duties from the DDA to make reasonable adjustments for disabled persons. Section 20 of the Act sets out a three fold duty, including where a physical feature puts a disabled person at a substantial disadvantage in comparison with persons who are not disabled, the person to whom the duty applies must take reasonable steps to avoid the disadvantage.

The Planning Aid Wales Access Statement Guidance booklet gives advice on preparing the Access element of Design and Access Statements. It gives guidance on how the principles of inclusive design can be used to make sure new development will be accessible and that it can be used by everyone. The booklet also provides links to more detailed information on this subject. [Planning Aid Wales Access Statement Guide](#).

Cadw's publication, **Overcoming the Barriers : Providing Physical Access to Historic Buildings** (2002) gives good practical advice and examples for improving access to Listed or historic buildings. [Cadw Wales Overcoming The Barriers](#)

WHAT SHOULD BE CONTAINED WITHIN A DAS?

An outline of the broad content of a DAS for planning permission and listed building consent is set out in The Welsh Assembly Government's [Technical Advice Note 12 - Design \(TAN 12\)](#)

The key components of the DAS are as follows:

1. Site Analysis

The location and context of the site should be clearly identified.

The following criteria should also be considered:

- access points
- boundaries
- site features
- topography
- constraints and opportunities

2. Context Analysis

This should include a character appraisal. Where are local facilities? (public transport, schools, shops?). Are there any social, physical or economic issues? Has there been any community/neighbour engagement.

3. Policy Context

Summary of national, regional and local design policy, including relevant supplementary planning guidance.

4. Design Analysis

Explain how the design of a development has considered the objectives of good design, identified in TAN 12: Design

- Character & Context
- Access & Movement
- Community Safety
- Environmental Sustainability

Character & Context - Outline how the development proposal has taken account of local characteristics (including natural and built heritage assets) to provide a development which is legible, promotes quality, choice, variety and innovative design and creates a successful relationship between public and private space.

Details should be provided which clarify how and why the design has evolved over time and explain how particular elements and characteristics in the design are justified.

The DAS will need to explain how the design of the development has considered matters of: layout, scale, amount of development, appearance and landscape design.

Access & Movement - Detail how the development can be safely and efficiently accessed by all members of society.

Indicate how the proposal addresses the principles of inclusive design whilst responding to the existing topography of a site or constraints caused by an existing building.

Include, where relevant, details of the following:

- How the principles of inclusive design have been incorporated within the design proposal.
- How access to and from a site and circulation routes within it have been considered for pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles (including emergency and refuge vehicles).
- How the public realm within and around a development will be designed to support the needs of all potential users.
- How a development can be safely and conveniently accessed, using sustainable means of transport.
- If any off-site improvements will be put in place to improve access and movement to, from and within the development.

It is not considered satisfactory for a DAS to simply state that issues such as 'inclusive design' will be/has been considered in the design without any justification or explanation .

Community Safety - How has community safety been considered within the design?

The DAS should set out how the proposal has considered the guidance and requirements of the Secure by Design initiative (see website) www.securedbydesign.com

Safer Places - The Planning System and Crime Prevention (ODPM, 2004) identifies 7 attributes of sustainable communities which are relevant to crime prevention and should be considered within Design and Access Statements.

- Access & Movement
- Structure
- Surveillance – achievING security through natural surveillance.
- Ownership
- Physical Protection
- Activity
- Management & Maintenance

Environmental Sustainability -The DAS should incorporate details of the environmental sustainability of the development in line with the requirements of [Planning Policy Wales \(PPW\) \(Edition 4, February 2011\)](#) and [TAN 22: Planning for Sustainable Buildings, June 2010](#).

It should give a clear indication of how a proposed development has considered the following as a minimum:

- Meeting or exceeding the Welsh Assembly Government's sustainable building standards (Code for Sustainable Homes / BREEAM)
- Adaptability for future change
- Enhancing biodiversity
- Achieving efficient use and protection of natural resources

Detailed information regarding the requirements of the Code for Sustainable Homes and BREEAM can be found in the Council's [Sustainable Design Guidance Note](#).

It is important that in achieving sustainable building standards, these do not compromise wider design principles and other planning issues. The DAS needs to demonstrate how a balance of design issues has been achieved through combining good design and energy objectives.

Appendix 1 of this document provides a checklist of issues that should be considered as part of a DAS.

LISTED BUILDINGS

A DAS is required by legislation to accompany **all applications** for Listed Building Consent. Whilst a complete statement is required for exterior works, the access element of the statement is not required for interior works.

If both planning and listed building consent applications are made for the same scheme, one DAS is sufficient.

In addition to the requirements set out above, you will also need to take particular account of the historic and architectural significance of the building, its special features, and its setting and contribution to the local area, along with a full justification of the proposed works and a demonstration of how they will affect the listed building and its setting, in accordance with WO Circular 61/96.

OUTLINE APPLICATIONS

An outline application by its nature will have less material available in terms of the design elements to the proposal. The guidance, set out in TAN 12, requires that the DAS should:

“...clearly explain and justify the objectives which will be used to inform the detailed proposal, demonstrating an understanding for what is appropriate and feasible for the site in its context, even if all reserved matters are to be considered later.” (TAN12, Paragraph A3.2)

The need to evidence how sustainability standards are to be met will also require a more fully developed proposal to be prepared for outline, to ensure pre-assessment reports can be prepared.

The key components of a DAS accompanying an **outline application** should at a minimum include:

Site Analysis - The location and context of the site should be clearly identified.

Context Analysis - An assessment of the site's social, physical and economic context.

Design Vision - An indicative proposal in the form of a concept plan with reference to any initial community involvement which may have been undertaken.

Policy Context - Summary of relevant national, regional and local design policy.

Design Analysis - Even where all matters are reserved, the DAS will still need to provide a set of design parameters based upon the site analysis which will guide any future reserved matters application and provide detail on the following components:

- **Layout** - The approximate location of buildings, routes and open spaces included in the proposed development should be shown.
- **Amount of development** - This will be dependent on scale and type of application.
- **Scale** - The upper and lower limit for the height, width and length of the buildings proposed.
- **Appearance** - Where this is a reserved matter, the DAS should set out principles to guide the detailed design of buildings where appropriate.
- **Landscaping** - Where this is a reserved matter, the DAS should set out principles to guide the external works where appropriate.
- **Access & Movement** - The DAS should set out the area where the access points to the site and dwelling could be situated.

COMMUNITY SAFETY

The DAS should establish parameters as to how future reserved matters applications would:

- Ensure attractive, safe public spaces
- Achieve security through natural surveillance
- Create a sense of community spirit
- Reduce vehicular speeds in urban areas/settings

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

Where a development falls within the relevant threshold for WAG sustainability standards to apply, the DAS should set out the elements as required for a full application. Including:

- A statement on the approach taken to meet or exceed the minimum sustainable building standard expected
- Sustainable design solutions to deliver these standards
- Details on the relevant plans of those environmentally sustainable design solutions proposed.
- A LZC feasibility study where relevant.

Where a development falls below the relevant threshold for these standards to apply, consideration of environmental sustainability measures should still be included within the DAS.

FURTHER INFORMATION:

PRE-APPLICATION ADVICE

Pre-application advice on any proposal can be requested from the Council. The availability of a DAS at this stage can prove invaluable in aiding the discussion and establishing any initial issues with regard to the scheme.

PROCEDURAL ADVICE

TAN 12: Design and TAN 22: Planning for Sustainable Buildings set out procedural advice including when an application should be registered and guidance on attaching conditions to a planning/Listed building consent.

PLANNING CONDITIONS

Planning conditions can be attached to a decision to implement or accept details contained in a DAS.

For outline applications, any design and access considerations crucial to the development will be secured through conditions on the outline permission.

For reserved matters applications, there is no obligation on the applicant to submit an updated access statement in addition to the one submitted at the outline stage. To provide consistency the Council may request a condition at the outline stage stating the need for an updated access statement when reserve matters application is considered.

CARDIFF COUNCIL DESIGN GUIDANCE

The Council has issued design guidance for a range of development types: Householder Design; Residential Design; Infill Sites and Tall Buildings. The DAS should demonstrate how the objectives of relevant design policy have been met. The full range of SPG's is available to download via the publications list within the Planning Policy section of this website.

- [Cardiff Council, Supplementary Planning Guidance \(SPG\)](#)

FURTHER DAS GUIDANCE

Further information on the content of Design and Access statements can be found in:

[TAN 12 - Appendix 1](#)

[TAN 22](#)

[Design and Access Statements in Wales - Why, What and How](#) (Design Commission for Wales)

Advice on sustainable design solutions is set out in [TAN 22 - Annex B](#)

Appendix 1 – Design and Access Statement Checklist

Access	Evidence
Have the principles of inclusive design been considered throughout the development proposal for all buildings, streets and spaces?	
Can emergency, servicing vehicles and refuge trucks access the development efficiently, safely and conveniently?	
Is the public realm associated with, or in the vicinity of, the development appropriate and inclusive for all members of society?	
How will all users of a development have equal and convenient access to buildings, spaces, local facilities and infrastructure?	
How will the development be integrated into its surroundings to ensure that roads and footpaths are linked and legible?	
Movement to, from and within the development	Evidence
Can people easily gain access into and exit buildings? Are lifts and ramps provided for wheelchair users and pushchairs?	
Does the internal layout of a development consider the needs and requirements of all those who might use it including those with disabilities?	
Does the development seek to reduce conflict between pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles?	
Does the development seek to promote sustainable methods of transport?	
Has the accessibility of and links to public transport been considered?	
Does the development provide appropriate levels of car parking and bicycle storage provision?	
Character	Evidence
Is the amount of development proposed appropriate in the context of the site and its surrounding area?	
Is the development proposal adequately supported by local facilities and infrastructure?	
How has the characteristics of the local area influenced the design of the proposed development?	
Does the layout of a development provide buildings, streets and public spaces which are well related?	

Is the development proposal appropriately scaled for its location and surroundings?	
Are all proposed landscaping features appropriate for their setting and realistically maintainable?	
Are proposed buildings of an appropriate architectural design for their location and of a general high quality?	
Community Safety	Evidence
Has consideration been paid to minimising conflict between pedestrians, vehicles & cyclists and reducing vehicular speeds?	
Are all streets and public spaces well defined allowing for the efficient access and movement of people within them?	
Have adequate levels of surveillance been provided over all streets and public spaces?	
Does the development promote a sense of ownership?	
Have physical protection measures such as defensible spaces between buildings and public spaces been provided?	
Does the development promote activity within public areas thereby creating an increased sense of security within them?	
Has the ongoing management and maintenance of the development been considered in order to ensure community safety over time?	
Environmental Sustainability	Evidence
Does the development promote sustainable travel choices?	
Has the development proposal considered the protection of natural resources?	
Will the development meet the Code for Sustainable Homes / BREEAM standards required by the Welsh Assembly Government?	
Has the development been designed to accommodate future change?	
How has enhancing biodiversity been considered?	
Have any innovative technologies been designed into the scheme to improve its environmental credentials? How will they benefit the development? How have they impacted upon the design?	