

Why is a design statement needed?

A design statement is important to protecting local character.

It is needed to help planning officers, members of the public and councillors:

- Understand fully the factors that have influenced your design
- Consider how your design benefits the existing local environment
- Consider how your design relates to Development Plan policies and any relevant Supplementary Planning Guidance
- Consider how your design relates to Government Planning Advice

For applicants and agents, a design statement helps minimize the potential for costly and time-consuming re-design once the application is submitted.

The capacity of a site for development can only be properly tested through the design process. The production of a design statement is a fundamental part of this process.

A Design and Access Statement is required for:

Householder applications within designated areas only (conservation areas, AONB, National Park) will require a very brief design statement and may only involve one or two design principles (see below).

All Listed Building applications need to be accompanied by a Design Statement.

For all other applications a fuller design statement will be required and applicants and agents should follow the process set out below.

A Design and Access Statement is not required for:

- An extension/alteration of an existing building or development that forms part of a property but is separate to it, such as a free standing garden room or swimming pool building, or a tennis court (so-called “householder” applications) unless the building is within a Conservation Area, AONB or National Park.
- Change of use, unless it involves building works;
- Engineering and/or mining operations (although these would ordinarily be submitted to the County Council);
- Applications relating to advertisements, tree preservation orders or the storage of hazardous substances.

A listed building/conservation area/AONB householder design statement should include:

- **A brief written statement clearly identifying the factors which have led to the proposed design solution**
- **Plans and elevations of the proposal including details of adjoining buildings, spacing between buildings and a streetscene elevation where appropriate**
- **Photographs, where appropriate to illustrate the site and its surroundings**

All Other Applications

There are three stages to producing a design statement. These are:

- 1. Site and Area Appraisal**
- 2. Identify and design principles**
- 3. Select and justify the design solution**

There will always be several design options for site development and the design statement should clearly justify the design solution, setting out the thought processes that led to the design approach you have selected.

Please note that all three stages should be addressed in the design statement and it is not a means of justifying a design as an afterthought.

What should a design statement look like?

There is no prescriptive format, but it should comprise a short written statement and illustrative material (sketches, photographs, plans) identifying the key features of the site appraisal and the design principles (opportunities and constraints).

Plans should also illustrate how the design solution has addressed the principles identified and how it relates to local distinctiveness and the existing environment.

The plans can be annotated to explain the key design principles and features.

Whilst a design statement for a proposal of one house may be shorter and involve less design principles than one for 20 houses, all design statements must address each of the 3 stages – site appraisal, design principles and design solution.

For further information visit for the IGNITE website www.ignite-ne.com

There is a specific section on composing a design statement which may be useful at <http://www.designstatement.co.uk>