Introduction
Design and Access Statements must be submitted with most types of application for planning permission and listed building consent for new built development. Local Planning Authorities are not allowed to accept an application unless it is accompanied by a design and access statement, where required. (DCLG Circular 01/2006 - Section 3).

When is a Design and Access Statement required?
Statements must accompany planning applications for both outline and full applications, except:

- A material change of use of land or buildings, unless it also involves operational development.
- Engineering or mining operations.
- Development of an existing dwelling house, or development within the curtilage of a dwelling house, unless part of the dwelling or curtilage is within a Conservation Area, Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty or a Site of Special Scientific Interest.
- For advertisements; works to trees covered by a Tree Preservation Order or storage of hazardous substances.

What is the purpose of Design and Access Statements?
Statements will explain and justify proposals set out in the application. They will also set out the principle and concepts that will be used when the proposal is developed in the future. In particular, for outline planning applications they should demonstrate how relevant parts of the statement will be followed when drawing up the details. These may be details submitted as part of an application for approval of reserved matters or other details reserved by condition such as materials or landscaping.

In some cases it will be necessary to amend the information as designs are worked up. In such situations the Council may feel that additional information will be required at the reserved matters stage. The Council may make this a requirement by attaching a condition to an outline planning permission.

Pre-application discussions
Pre-application discussions with prospective developers/applicants and/or their agents are welcomed. The Council employs a “Duty Planning Officer” specifically to assist with pre-application discussions. However meetings will only be held where prospective developers are able to prepare sketch schemes as a basis for internal consultation prior to discussion. Although not a formal requirement, it is good practice to use design and access statements as an aid to pre-application discussions. Planning Officers are willing to advise you on what you need to include in your design statement. However, applicants need to be aware that any Officer advice will not be binding on the Council when an application is made. It is only at formal stage that a full consultation exercise is carried out and all views taken into account. A charge is made for pre-application discussions, for more information see: http://www.tandridge.gov.uk/Planning/PlanningApplications/preapplicationdiscussions.htm

How should the information be presented?
For most straightforward planning applications, the statement may only be a page long, whereas for more complicated planning applications, a more detailed format and, perhaps, longer document is likely to be necessary to illustrate the various issues to which the scheme has responded. However, whilst its length and complexity may vary, what is important is that the document is concise, and effectively covers all of the design and access issues for the proposed development. Statements can be submitted electronically.

Design and access statements may include, as appropriate, plans and elevations; photographs of the site and its surroundings; and any other relevant illustrations. For large and complex schemes, a model of the proposed development in the context of its surroundings may also accompany the statement, but should not be a substitute for it. These illustrative materials must not be used as a substitute for adequate drawings submitted with the planning application.

What is required? - The Design Component
The Surrey Design Guide and Village Design Statements (where available) should be used to guide proposals and the Council will assess schemes against this guidance. Statements should evolve throughout the design process and should explain the design principles and concepts that have been applied to particular aspects of the proposal – these are the amount, layout, scale, landscaping and appearance of the development.
In addition the Council will expect information on renewable energy and energy conservation to be included with applications for commercial and residential development (see also page 3).

**Amount** of development is how much development is proposed. For residential development, this means the number of proposed units and for all other development, this means the proposed floor space for each proposed use.

Amount cannot be reserved within an outline application, although it is common to express a maximum amount of floorspace for each use in the planning application and for this to be made the subject of a planning condition. The design and access statement for both outline and detailed applications must explain and justify the amount of development proposed for each use, how this will be distributed across the site, how the proposal relates to the site’s surroundings, and what consideration is being given to ensure that accessibility for users to and between parts of the development is maximised. Where the application specifies a range of floorspace for a particular use, the reasons for this should be explained clearly in the design and access statement.

**Layout** is the way in which buildings, routes and open spaces (both private and public) are provided, placed and orientated in relation to each other and buildings and spaces surrounding the development.

If layout is reserved at the outline stage, the outline planning application must provide information on the approximate location of buildings, routes and open spaces proposed. The design and access statement accompanying an outline application should explain and justify the principles behind the choice of development zones and blocks or building plots proposed and explain how these principles, including the need for appropriate access will inform the detailed layout. The use of illustrative diagrams is encouraged to assist in explaining this.

For detailed applications, and outline applications where layout is not reserved, the design and access statement should explain and justify the proposed layout in terms of the relationship between buildings and public and private spaces within and around the site, and how these relationships will help to create safe, vibrant and successful places. An indication should also be given of factors important to accessibility of the site for users, such as travel distances and gradients, and the orientation of blocks and units in relation to any site topography to afford optimum accessibility.

A key objective for new developments is that they should create safe and accessible environments where crime and disorder or fear of crime does not undermine quality of life. Design and access statements for outline and detailed applications should therefore demonstrate how crime prevention measures have been considered in the design of the proposal and how the design reflects the attributes of safe, sustainable places set out in Safer Places - the Planning System and Crime Prevention (ODPM/Home Office, 2003).

**Scale** is the height, width and length of a building or buildings in relation to its/their surroundings. If scale has been reserved at the outline stage, the application must still indicate the upper and lower limits of the height, width and length of each building proposed, to establish a 3-dimensional building envelope within which the detailed design of buildings will be constructed. In such cases the design component of the statement should explain and justify the principles behind these limits and explain how these will inform the final scale of the buildings.

For detailed applications, and outline applications that do not reserve scale, the design and access statement should explain and justify the scale of buildings proposed, including why particular heights have been settled upon, and how these relate to the site’s surroundings and the relevant skyline. The statement should also explain and justify the size of building parts, particularly entrances and façades with regard to how they will relate to the human scale.

**Landscaping** is the treatment of private and public spaces to enhance or protect the amenities of the site and the area in which it is situated through hard and soft landscaping measures. Statements should also explain how landscaping will be maintained.

If landscaping is reserved at the outline stage, the outline application does not need to provide any specific landscaping information. However, the design and access statement should still explain and justify the principles that will inform any future landscaping scheme for the site.

For detailed applications, and outline applications that do not reserve landscaping, the design and access statement should explain and justify the proposed landscaping scheme, explaining the purpose of landscaping private and public spaces and its relationship to the surrounding area. Where possible, a schedule of planting and proposed hard landscaping materials to be used is recommended.

**Appearance** is 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, decoration, lighting, colour and texture.

If appearance is reserved at the outline stage, the outline application does not need to provide any specific information on the issue. In such cases the design and access statement should explain and justify the principles behind the intended appearance and explain how these will inform the final design of the development.
For detailed applications, and outline applications that do not reserve appearance, the design and access statement should explain and justify the appearance of the place or buildings proposed including how this will relate to the appearance and character of the development's surroundings. It should explain how the decisions taken about appearance have considered accessibility. The choice of particular materials and textures will have a significant impact upon a development's accessibility. Well thought-out use of materials that contrast in tone and colour to define important features such as entrances, circulation routes or seating for example will greatly enhance access for everyone. Similarly early consideration of the location and levels of lighting will be critical to the standard of accessibility ultimately achieved.

Renewable Energy and Energy Conservation proposals should be included in all schemes for residential development (except for works to an existing dwelling) and commercial development over 500m2 in accordance with Core Strategy policy CSP3. Development will be required to reach a minimum percentage saving in CO2 emissions through the incorporation of on-site renewable energy.

Understanding the Context of the Proposal
A design and access statement must demonstrate the steps taken to appraise the context of the proposed development and how this has been used to draw up the application. To gain a good understanding of context and to use it appropriately applicants should follow a design process which includes:

- Assessment of the site’s immediate and wider context in terms of physical, social and economic characteristics and relevant planning policies. This may include both a desk survey and on-site observations and access audit. The extent of the area to be surveyed will depend on the nature, scale and sensitivity of the development.
- Involvement of both community members and professionals undertaken or planned. This might include, for example, consultation with local community and access groups and planning, building control and conservation officers. The statement should indicate how the findings of any consultation have been taken into account for the proposed development and how this has affected the proposal.
- Evaluation of the information collected on the site’s immediate and wider context, identifying opportunities and constraints and formulating design and access principles for the development. Evaluation may involve balancing any potentially conflicting issues that have been identified.
- Design of the scheme using the assessment, involvement, and evaluation information collected. Understanding a development’s context is vital to producing good design and inclusive access and applicants should avoid working retrospectively, trying to justify a pre-determined design through subsequent site assessment and evaluation.

In the light of this understanding of the context, a design and access statement should explain how this context has been considered in relation to the use or mix of uses proposed for land and buildings.

Use cannot be reserved within an outline application. Design and access statements for both outline and detailed applications should explain the use or uses of the proposed development, their distribution across the site, the appropriateness of the accessibility to and between them and their inter-relationship to surrounding uses.

In addition, the statement should explain how this context has been considered in relation to the physical characteristics of the proposal, that is, the amount, layout, scale, landscaping and appearance of the development.

What is required? - The Access Component
It is important to note that the requirement for the access component of the statement relates only to “access to the development” and therefore does not extend to internal aspects of individual buildings.

Statements should explain how access arrangements will ensure that all users will have equal and convenient access to buildings and spaces and the public transport network. The statement should address the need for flexibility of the development and how it may adapt to changing needs.

The design and access statement should also explain the policy adopted in relation to access and how relevant policies in development plan documents have been taken into account. The statement should provide information on any consultation undertaken in relation to issues of access and how the outcome of this consultation has informed the development proposals. This should include, for example, a brief explanation of the applicant’s policy and approach to access, with particular reference to the inclusion of disabled people, and a description of how the sources of advice on design and accessibility and technical issues will be, or have been followed.

Access for the emergency services should also be explained where relevant. Such information may include circulation routes round the site and egress from buildings in the event of emergency evacuation.

For outline applications, where access is reserved, the application must still indicate the location of points of access to the site. Statements accompanying such applications should, however, clearly explain the principles which will be used to inform the access arrangements for the final development at all scales from neighbourhood movement patterns where appropriate to the treatment of individual access points to buildings.
**Statements for Listed Building Consent**

Design and access statements will also be required for listed building consent. They will be similar to design and access statements for planning applications, although there will be some differences because of the differing nature of the application. Where there is a planning application submitted in parallel with an application for listed building consent, a single, combined statement should address the requirements of both. The combined statement should address the elements required in relation to a planning application in the normal way and the additional requirements in relation to listed building consent (see below).

**What should be included in a Listed Building Consent Statement?**

The design and access statement should explain the design principles and concepts that have been applied to the scale, layout and appearance characteristics of a proposal (information on use, amount and landscaping is not required for listed building consent design and access statements that do not also accompany a planning permission). Otherwise, scale, layout and appearance are broadly the same as outlined in previous paragraphs.

In addition to following the broad approach in drawing up the design and access statement in relation to applications for planning permission, a design and access statement relating to listed building consent should include a brief explanation of how the design has taken account of the following:

- the historic and special architectural importance of the building;
- the particular physical features of the building that justify its designation as a listed building; and
- the building’s setting.

The statement will need to explain and justify the approach to ensuring that the proposal preserves or enhances the building’s special historic and architectural importance. Where there is potentially an aspect of design that will impact on this, the statement should explain why this is necessary, and what measures within the approach to design have been taken to minimise its impact.

Similarly, the access component is broadly the same as for design and access statements accompanying applications for planning permission, but again with reference to the special considerations set out above.

The statement should make clear how the approach to access has balanced the duties imposed by the Disability Discrimination Act where the proposal is subject to those and the particular historical and architectural significance of the building. The statement should detail any specific issues that arise particularly with regard to the fact that the building is listed, the range of options considered. In alterations to existing buildings where the fabric of the structure restricts the ability to meet minimum levels of accessibility, details should be provided of the solutions that will be put in place to minimise the impact on disabled people and ensure that any services provided within the building are made available in other ways.

**Useful References**

- Surrey Design 2002
- Tandridge District Core Strategy 2008 and Tandridge District Local Plan 2001*
- Lingfield Village Design Statement and Woldingham Village Design Statement*
- Bletchingley Conservation Area Appraisal and Kenley Aerodrome Conservation Area Proposal Statement*
- Surrey Hills Design Guide (for applications in the Surrey Hills AONB)*
- Waste and recycling materials storage standards*
- By Design - DETR/CABE, 2000
- Better Places to Live - DETR/CABE, 2001
- Planning & Access for Disabled People - ODPM, 2003

(*all available on www.tandridge.gov.uk)

For more information see C Abe: www.cabe.org.uk and Department of Communities and Local Government: http://www.communities.gov.uk/planningandbuilding/planning/

Contact 01883 732855 or email: planningapplications@tandridge.gov.uk