



appraisal

principles

analysis

concept

Planning Advice Note

design

statements



design statements should explain the design principles on which the development is based and illustrate the design solution





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Further copies of this PAN and a list of SPPs, NPPGs and PANs can be obtained by telephoning 0131 244 7543. A copy of this PAN is also available on the Scottish Executive website: www.scotland.gov.uk/planning



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eastgate
SHOPPING CENTRE

eastgate
SHOPPING CENTRE

DEBENHAM'S

Introduction

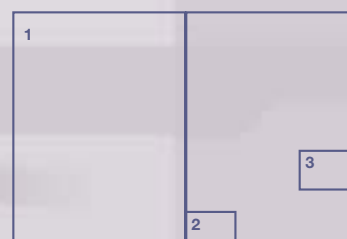
Designing Places, published in November 2001, sets out the Scottish Executive's expectations of the planning system to deliver high standards of design in development and redevelopment projects.

This Planning Advice Note (PAN) focuses on design statements. It is one of a series of advice notes which address design in more detail and should be read in conjunction with them. It explains what a design statement is, why it is a useful tool, when it is required and how it should be prepared and presented. The Annex describes the design process.



Although some applicants already submit design statements to accompany planning applications as a matter of course, most do not. Submitted design statements often lack structure and contain irrelevant information. A more consistent approach is needed.

This PAN does not introduce a prescriptive approach. It seeks to ensure that local authorities and applicants are clear about the role of design statements and applicants, in particular, become more confident in preparing them. The aim is to see design statements used more effectively in the planning process and to create places of lasting quality.



1: Eastgate shopping centre, Inverness
2: Eastgate's interior design
3: Broomielaw Square residential development, Glasgow

What is a design statement?

A design statement can be prepared for large and small scale developments. As for every development, the applicant (developer, urban designers, architect, landscape architect or agent), in discussion with the client, should consider and set out the design principles which determine the design and layout of the development proposal. This should be done as early as possible. A design statement enables the applicant to explain why the selected design solution is the most suitable in the circumstances – in terms of the building(s) and the quality of spaces created. A building may be good architecturally but if it is inappropriate for its context it may not contribute to a quality place.

A design statement can be presented in various formats. It can be on one or two pages, in a small booklet, an A4 or A3 document, a fold-out sheet, a display board or a CD ROM. The approach used will be influenced by the scale, nature and potential sensitivity of the site and of the proposed development.

A design statement should explain and illustrate the design principles and design concept of the proposed layout; landscape; scale and mix; details and materials; and maintenance. It should show, as briefly as necessary, how these will help to achieve the qualities in **Designing Places.**

PAN 67 Housing Quality

Designing Places

Successful places are:

- ▶ Distinctive
- ▶ Safe and pleasant
- ▶ Easy to get to and move around
- ▶ Welcoming
- ▶ Adaptable
- ▶ Resource efficient

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Why is a design statement a useful tool?

Designing Places and **PAN 67 Housing Quality** encourage greater use of the urban design toolkit. A design statement is a useful tool which has benefits for applicants and local authorities. They increase design awareness, provide a sound basis for constructive discussions and negotiations, and should lead to good quality development. They can also help individuals and communities understand why a particular approach has been adopted.



Applicants

A design statement allows applicants, and their clients, to explain the design of their scheme in a structured way. It is an opportunity to demonstrate what has been done to appraise the context, and how the design takes account of it sensitively. The importance of this cannot be over estimated.

Local authorities

Local authorities should encourage applicants to consider how increased value, and sustainability, can result from good design. The submission of a design statement allows officials to see the extent of analysis, as well as the quality of thought, time and effort which has been dedicated to developing the scheme. Providing the information is presented clearly, a statement should help local authorities to understand the thinking behind the design. It should therefore be an aid to more efficient decision making and lead to an improvement in the quality of development.

Design is a material consideration in determining planning applications. Councils may refuse an application, and defend their decision at appeal, solely on design grounds.



design statements should be an aid to more

efficient

decision making

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When is a design statement required?

A design statement could potentially be submitted with any planning application. While it is good practice, and in the applicants favour to submit a statement, it is not a requirement in all cases.

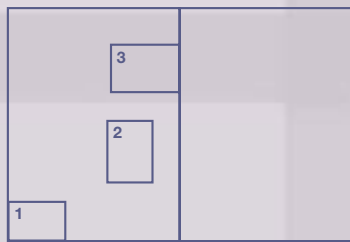
There are, however, certain types of sites or developments where a design statement will be highly desirable. They will most often be needed for major developments or listed building applications. Design issues should, where appropriate, be considered as part of the scoping process for significant planning applications, which require an environmental assessment. Design statements may also be appropriate for some minor applications or small scale developments on sensitive sites, such as some house extensions in conservation areas.



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Where a formal design statement is not necessary, applicants should still have a clear and logical design philosophy which could be explained, if required.

SPP1: The Planning System reinforces the importance of good design and reaffirms that design is a material planning consideration. Councils should set out in local plans the circumstances where they will expect design statements to be prepared. They should also prepare development briefs for specific sites, and urban design guides on specific topics or for specific areas. If applicants are uncertain, then the views of the local authority should be sought.



1: Small scale development in a conservation area, Edinburgh
 2: Examples of design policies in a local plan, a design guide and site planning briefs
 3: Neighbourhood centre sketch drawing, Edinburgh

Who should prepare a design statement?

Preparation

Pre-application discussion

If a development does require a statement, and is particularly complex or sensitive, the applicant should arrange a pre-application discussion with the appropriate planning official(s). There may also be a need to involve a mix of disciplines including planners, urban designers, architects, landscape architects, quantity surveyors, environmental consultants, energy specialists and transport engineers. Such a discussion gives the applicant a useful opportunity to discuss the scheme, and agree the level of scope and detail that will be appropriate. This potentially saves time and cost on design solutions which could be inadequate, and subsequently rejected.



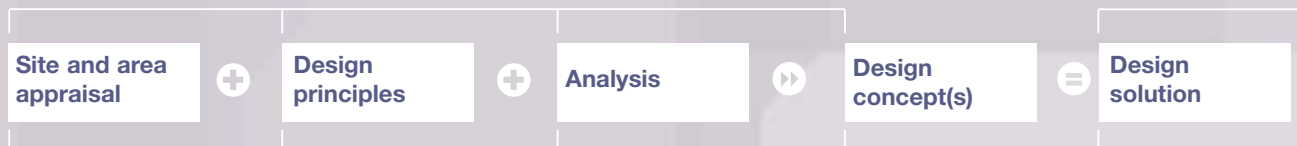
The design process

The design process can be set out in 5 stages. Each stage informs the production of the design statement. More details on each stage are set out in the Annex.

- ▶ **Stage 1** Site and area appraisal
- ▶ **Stage 2** Identifying the design principles
- ▶ **Stage 3** Analysis
- ▶ **Stage 4** Design concept(s)
- ▶ **Stage 5** Design solution

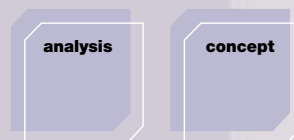
Depending on the nature and scale of the development, there may be a need for public involvement during the design process. This can occur at any stage, however, early consultation with the public or amenity groups should help to identify any key issues or concerns. When the design concept(s) have been worked up, it is advisable to feed these back to the contributors in order to check that nothing has been missed or interpreted incorrectly. This exercise will also help to gauge any initial reactions to the preliminary design which may help to influence the final design.

Stages in the design process



Whilst each stage is presented separately, in practice the design process is often more iterative, rather than linear. This is because the site appraisal and analysis can be reviewed by testing alternative design concepts. For example, a design concept may have implications which were not initially foreseen.

Once all the stages have been completed, the design statement can be assembled, bringing together all the thinking on the design issues.



How should a design statement be presented?

Presentation

The applicant should choose the most effective form of presentation, as the contents of a design statement will vary according to the nature of the development and the site's characteristics. For most applications, the design statement need not be elaborate. It can be a short document (one or two pages), which sets out the principles on which the development is based and explains the design solution. Irrespective of the scale of development, the design statement must be supported by good graphics. Suggestions for (1) text and (2) illustrations are set out on the following pages, together with (3) extracts from a case study which shows an example of a design statement.

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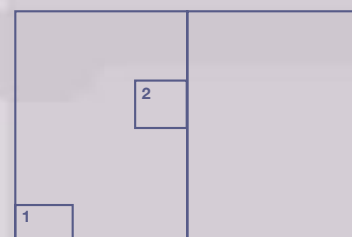


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applicants should choose the most

effective

form of presentation



1: Residential development in Canongate, Edinburgh
2: Sketch drawing of entrance to Cramond Kirk Hall, Edinburgh

1. Text

The main issues which need to be covered include background information, a brief description of the site's details and its area appraisal, the relevant design principles, any reference to public involvement or programming and an explanation of why the design solution was chosen.

Background information

Name of the scheme
Applicant
Architect/developer/urban designers/agents/advisors, etc.
Description of client brief (if there is one)
Date

Site details

Location and site plan – scale and north point
Description
History
Ownership

Site and area appraisals

Any specific points relating to:
▶ Context
▶ Identity
▶ Connection

Design principles

National guidance
Local authority development plan design policies
Supplementary planning guidance
Site specific development briefs
Design guides

Public involvement

Outcome of consultation and public involvement

Programme

How will the project be phased?

Design solution

Explanation of the proposed development with respect to:

- ▶ Layout, i.e. context
 - streets and spaces
 - accessibility
 - safety and security
 - sustainability
 - energy efficiency
- ▶ Landscape
- ▶ Scale and mix
- ▶ Details and materials
- ▶ Maintenance

2. Illustrations

Illustrations must be easy to interpret and relate clearly to the text. They can consist of a mixture of photographs, sketches, figure/ground diagrams, photomontages, concept diagrams, computer-based images and artists' impressions. The applicant may also submit models or photographs of models to illustrate certain aspects of the design. The aim is to explain the design approach, not to duplicate submitted copies of the drawings accompanying the application. The scale and format of the images will often depend on the required level of detail.

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Aerial location of the site



Site plan and orientation



Site history



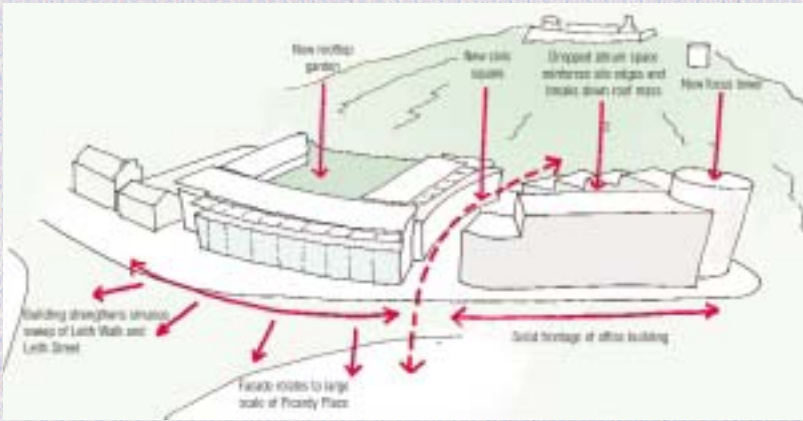
Existing buildings



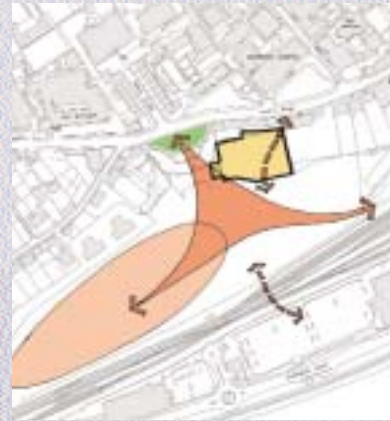
Figure ground diagram showing the spatial pattern of the area



Views



Massing



Connections



Proposed elevation showing listed facade



Landscape framework



Sketch plan



Section drawing showing internal layout



Axonometric showing perspective



Use of models



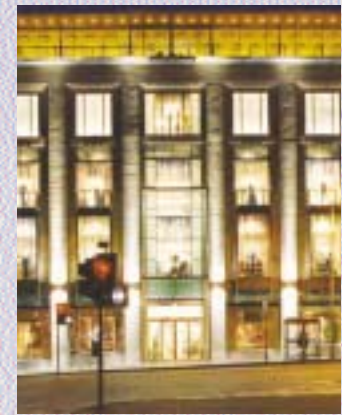
Artist's impression



Computer-generated image

3. Design statement case study

An example of extracts taken from a design statement for 30-34 St. Andrew Square, Edinburgh, is set out below. To view the document in full visit the website www.cda-group.co.uk/udr.pdf.

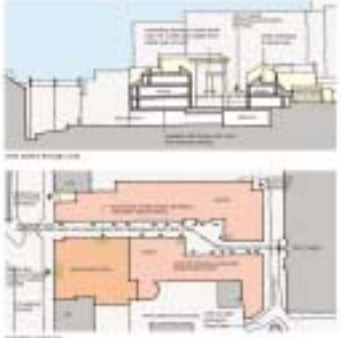




Strategy

1. The design approach is based on the existing building fabric and the surrounding context. The aim is to create a new building that respects the existing architecture and the surrounding environment.
2. The design approach is based on the existing building fabric and the surrounding context. The aim is to create a new building that respects the existing architecture and the surrounding environment.
3. The design approach is based on the existing building fabric and the surrounding context. The aim is to create a new building that respects the existing architecture and the surrounding environment.
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DESIGN APPROACH




Strategy

Site

Site Planning

DESIGN DEVELOPMENT



Site Planning

DESIGN DEVELOPMENT



Strategy

DESIGN DEVELOPMENT



Strategy

DESIGN DEVELOPMENT



Strategy

DESIGN DEVELOPMENT



Where should a design statement be submitted?

The design statement should be submitted to the local authority, as additional information in support of a planning application. If the planning authority advised that a design statement was desirable, and the applicant fails to produce one or the design statement is considered below standard, the application may be refused if the authority considers the design of a proposed development unacceptable.

The existence of a design statement does not guarantee planning permission. It supports a planning application – it does not replace it.

Some of the questions an authority may ask when looking at a design statement are:

- ▶ Was there a pre-application discussion?
- ▶ If there was a brief (either a planning brief and/or a client brief) for the project, how well has it been interpreted?
- ▶ Has there been a thorough appraisal of the site and area, with the most important issues identified?
- ▶ Have all the key design principles been identified?
- ▶ Are the illustrations easy to interpret?
- ▶ Does the design statement explain how the development will meet the six qualities of what makes a successful place? Is it:

Distinctive – Does the development enhance the sense of identity?

Safe and pleasant – Is the space safe for the community, attractive, useable and at the right scale?

Easy to get to and move around – Have direct routes been created? Does it provide access for disabled people?

Welcoming – Have any new landmarks or gateways been created which will help people to find their way around?

Adaptable – Does the development or improvements support a mix of compatible uses? Will there be opportunities to make buildings and areas adaptable to a variety of future uses?

Resource efficient – Has the opportunity been used to create a new and exciting building in how it has been constructed? Does it minimise the use of energy through the way it faces the sun? How sheltered is it from the wind?

- ▶ Is the design solution achievable?

Once submitted, if the local authority requests any amendments to the scheme, the Committee report must refer to the changes which have been made. It must also provide some indication of how the proposal has been improved due to these amendments. This will allow Committee members to monitor changes in the design process.



1: Redevelopment at Greenside Place, looking from Calton Hill, Edinburgh

Conclusion

All applicants, including developers, architects, designers and agents, should consider design as an integral part of the development process. This advice aims to encourage more attention to be given to the design of developments.



Although it will involve some additional work to present ideas and thinking, in many cases it can be achieved simply. It should not be an onerous task. By providing additional information, which explains and illustrates the design principles and design concept, applicants are likely to benefit from a greater degree of certainty in the planning process, and quicker decision making. The result should be improved quality of new development, lasting improvements to the built environment and successful places.

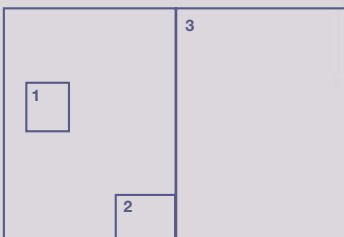
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concept

although it will involve some additional work to present

and thinking, in many cases it can be achieved simply



- 1: Glazed roof to Cramond Kirk Hall, Edinburgh
- 2: Cancer Care Centre at the Western General Hospital, Edinburgh
- 3: Contemporary Arts Centre, Dundee





Dundee Contemporary Arts

See the world differently

Dundee Contemporary Arts



From the creator of Toy Story



Toy Story

Annex – The design process

As part of the **Designing Places** design framework, the following sets out what is required at each stage of the design process. Whilst going through each stage, clients should always be effectively engaged in the process. Also, for major or sensitive schemes, developers must be conscious of public involvement and carry out consultation exercises with the public and local amenity groups.

Stage 1 Site and area appraisal

The first step is to carry out a site and area appraisal (see checklist opposite). This involves a desk survey combined with observations made on site – during the day and in the evening. For example, the use of certain spaces, access to pedestrian routes and the impact of lighting will vary depending on the time of day. The main aim is to examine the site in its wider and immediate context, to assess its current identity, and to check connections.

The site and area appraisal checklist has a dual purpose. It can be used by applicants as useful indicator of the type of information that will need to be investigated during a site appraisal, and it can also be used by officials to assess the extent of analysis. The list is a prompt – it is neither inclusive nor exclusive. The relevance of all the items on the list will vary according to the nature and circumstances of each site.

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Stage 2 Identifying design principles

The second step is to identify the established design principles. Design principles are not just a list of preferences but a framework of ideas from which the design will be developed. Design principles will vary in number and complexity from one proposal to another, but whatever the final design, it should relate and respond positively to the principles.

These can include government policy such as the guidance set out in **SPP1: The Planning System** and **Designing Places**. Consistent with these will be the local authority's own design principles, set out in the development plan or supplementary planning guidance. In addition, site specific principles, such as a development brief, may have been drawn up.

Stage 3 Analysis

When sufficient information has been collected, the findings can be analysed. This will involve looking at the opportunities and constraints of the site. Examples include important views, features worthy of retention or protection, and any other features which may affect proposals.

Stage 4 Developing the design concept

The fourth stage is to combine the site investigation, design principles and analysis to produce a 3-dimensional design concept. The concept should show how the designer has understood, embraced and interpreted the site in its context – all in the light of relevant policies. If more than one design option has been drawn up, the applicant may wish to present and discuss these options with the planning authority.

Stage 5 The design solution

The last stage involves deciding on the best solution and drawing it up. If the applicant has followed all the stages, the subsequent process of producing a design statement should be relatively straightforward.

good quality development


Planning series:

- › Scottish Planning Policies (SPPs) provide statements of Scottish Executive policy on nationally important land use and other planning matters, supported where appropriate by a locational framework.
- › Circulars, which also provide statements of Scottish Executive policy, contain guidance on policy implementation through legislative or procedural change.
- › Planning Advice Notes (PANs) provide advice on good practice and other relevant information.

Statements of Scottish Executive policy contained in SPPs and Circulars may be material considerations to be taken into account in development plan preparation and development control.

Existing National Planning Policy Guidelines (NPPGs) have continued relevance to decision making, until such time as they are replaced by a SPP. The term SPP should be interpreted as including NPPGs.

Statements of Scottish Executive location-specific planning policy, for example the West Edinburgh Planning Framework, have the same status in decision making as SPPs.

**Site and area
appraisal
checklist** 



Context

▶ Local area

- Location of the site
- General description of the surroundings, e.g. urban, residential and industrial
- Is the site in or near a conservation area?

▶ Site description

- Planning history
- Ownership of the site
- Adjacent land uses, and relevant planning proposals
- Heritage conservation – listed buildings
- Focal points
- Landmarks
- Vistas
- Views to/from/over site
- Topography – contours on the site
- Microclimate – wind, sun orientation, exposure, shelter

▶ Services

- Public utilities, e.g. underground services, drainage systems, overhead power lines
- Public services available locally, e.g. schools, public transport

Identity

▶ Surrounding buildings

- Building lines – groupings, rhythms and plot/feu sizes
- Entrances – styles and sizes
- Windows – styles and sizes
- Active frontages
- Scale – height and massing
- Appearance – details and materials

▶ Use of the space

- Use of spaces between buildings – public/private
- Day, night, seasonal variation of use
- Prohibited activities, security arrangements

▶ Hard landscaping

- Location of street furniture
- Condition and maintenance
- How people use it
- Public art/sculpture trail

▶ Soft landscaping

- Landscape character
- Quality of landscaping
- Need for ground modelling
- Nature conservation area
- Wildlife habitats
- Tree Preservation Orders
- Play space/recreational space

Connection

▶ Vehicular movement

- Surrounding road and street layout
- Access, parking and circulation
- Bus & tram stops and routes, taxi stops, cycle routes
- Areas of vehicular/pedestrian conflict
- Use of traffic measures, e.g. speed humps, surfaces, crossing points, bollards
- Servicing arrangements

▶ Pedestrian access

- Where are people coming from, going to?
- Desire lines
- Disabled access
- Are people restricted from access due to any current aspects of design?