



Supplementary Planning Guidance

spg



Design
Statements

© 2004 Brent Council

Extracts from design statements cited within this text are for illustrative purposes only, and do not imply endorsement of the particular schemes they relate to.

For further information about this SP, please contact:

Delle Odeleye,
Brent Planning Service,
Policy & Research Team
Brent House, 349 High Road
Wembley, Middx. HA9 6BZ

Tel: 020-8937 5315

Fax:020-8937 5207

Email: delle.odeleye@brent.gov.uk

or see the Brent Council Website at:

www.brent.gov.uk/planning

Contents

page



1. Background	1
- The Planning System	1
- Purpose of this guidance	1
- Other permissions you may require	1
- What to include in your application	1
2. Introduction	2
- What is a Design Statement?	3
- How will a Design Statement Help?	4
3. When do you need a Design Statement?	4
4. Stages in Preparing a Design Statement	4
- Brief Statements (Householder)	4
- Full Statements	5
5. Content of Design Statements	6
- Brief Statements	6
- Full Statements	6
- Checklist of Issues	6
6. What should a Design Statement Look like?	7
7. What to do Next?	8
- Help with your Design Statement	8
- Useful References	8
Appendices	
A. Planning Policy & Guidance	9
B. Contacts	9

1.0 Background

1.1 The Planning System

1.1.1 The Planning System plays an important part in shaping the character of the Borough and your local area. New buildings and landscape can have a serious impact on the environment and your quality of life. Brent Council's Planning Service is responsible for assessing planning applications to ensure that developments are well designed and do not have a negative effect on your neighbours or the local area.

1.1.2 If you are in any doubt whether you require planning permission please check with the Planning Service.

1.2 Purpose of the Guidance

1.2.1 The guidance in this document gives a more detailed explanation of, and supplements the policies outlined in the London Borough of Brent Unitary Development Plan (UDP) adopted 2004. The Plan is a legal document containing all the planning policies and standards that are used to help the Council make decisions on all planning applications. An extract from the section of the UDP which relates to Design Statements, can be found in Appendix A of this document.

1.2.2 This guidance also provides the basis for assessing any planning applications which require a design statement. The Planning Service is happy to provide guidance and pre-application advice on any application.

Consequently, if your proposal follows the guidance in this document, it will make it easier for the Planning Service to give favourable consideration to your application.

1.3 Other Permissions you may require

1.3.1 Getting planning permission does not mean that it is either legal or safe for you to carry out the approved demolition or building works. Planning permission does not relieve you of your responsibility to obtain all other necessary consents. You may also require Listed Building or Conservation Area Consent and/or Building Regulations approval. If you are in any doubt, call the Planning Service or Building Control. A list of useful telephone numbers has been included in Appendix C of this guidance.

1.4 What to include in your Application

1.4.1 You will need to provide clear, accurate drawings (4 copies) of your proposal with any application. You will need drawings of how your site looks before building works start and drawings of how it will look when the building work is completed, including floor plans, elevations and sections at a scale of 1:50. You will also need to provide (See SPG1: Making a Planning Application for full details):

- 4 copies of the relevant application forms
- 4 copies of the certificate of ownership
- 4 copies of an Ordnance survey Plan (minimum 1:1250 Scale)
- The correct fee, and also, if relevant:
- A design statement (if proposal is not exempt - See page 4 of this SPG)
- A completed Sustainability Checklist (only for proposals of 10 or more residential units or 1,000+ sqm floorspace, or in AQMAs - See SPG19)

1.4.2 This is the minimum amount of information required to allow the Planning Service to make a decision about your application. To help you provide this information you may need to contact a suitably qualified person such as an architect (See Section 7 of this document & SPG1).



Above: ACAD, Central Middlesex Hospital, Park Royal. Below: Carlton Vale Housing, Kilburn



2.0 Introduction

2.1.1 There is now general agreement that good design is essential to enhance the quality of life in urban areas. Design affects not only the appearance and functioning of individual buildings, but also the use of public spaces and the character of areas they collectively form. The design quality of new developments is therefore a matter of public interest and of proper planning concern.



2.1.2 The Government is committed to an 'Urban Renaissance' of towns and cities in the UK and has identified good design as a key means of achieving this. The London Borough of Brent also recognises that good urban design is essential for attracting high quality investment to secure environmental and social regeneration. Policies to raise the standard of design in the Borough, form one of the core themes within Brent's Revised Unitary Development Plan (UDP) 2001.



2.1.3 Government, advice in Planning Policy Guidance Note1 [PPG1] para. 16, is that a Design Statement should be submitted with planning applications. The Council has produced this Supplementary Planning Guidance note (SPG4) to further explain these requirements.



2.2 What is a Design Statement?

- 2.2.1 A Design Statement is a document explaining the method(s) used to achieve an appropriate design solution for a particular site. It should be able to show how good design principles have been taken into account in generating a development proposal. The statement should also show how the proposal will contribute to the area.

2.3 How will a Design Statement Help?

- 2.3.1 A Design Statement will help the Council, neighbours, public and you to:
- consider your proposals against urban design principles in Government and other advice (See selection below) and design policies in the UDP;
 - fully understand the design principles of your proposals;
 - realise how your development will fit into, and/or enhance the area;
 - discuss the design of your proposals in a more productive way;
 - decide whether your proposal is likely to be acceptable.



- 2.3.2 A design statement helps ensure that the main issues influencing your design are explained in a clearer, structured and visual way. This makes it easier for people who need to be consulted to understand what you are trying to achieve, and any site or other limitations affecting your chosen design. It helps planning officers assess your proposals more quickly and reduces the need for costly and time consuming redesign.



Above: The Green, Watford/Harrow Road

Below Left: The Swaminarayan Temple, Neasden; Below Right: Jubilee House, Kilburn



3.0 When do you need a Design Statement?

3.1.1 Adopted Unitary Development Plan (UDP) Policy BE1, indicates the types of development for which a Design Statement would be required. A Statement should be submitted for all new development proposals:-

- On larger sites (0.3 hectares or more);
- On sites likely to have a significant impact on the public realm (these would include advertisements);
- In Conservation Areas;
- Within the setting of listed buildings; and for
- Major new regeneration projects; or for
- Smaller uncontroversial schemes. These would include proposals for infill sites, and significant (e.g. two storey/ side) domestic extensions or alterations.



3.1.2 Applications exempted are:

- Minor alterations to elevations e.g. satellite dish installation;
- Small domestic proposals e.g. dormer, porch, single storey extension;
- Change of use/conversions e.g. from office to retail, or refurbishments;
- Some infrastructural proposals e.g. forming a vehicular access.

Please remember, unless the proposal is exempt, your application will be invalid if you do not submit a design statement.

If you need further clarification on whether or not your proposal requires a design statement, please contact the Planning Service (See Appendix).

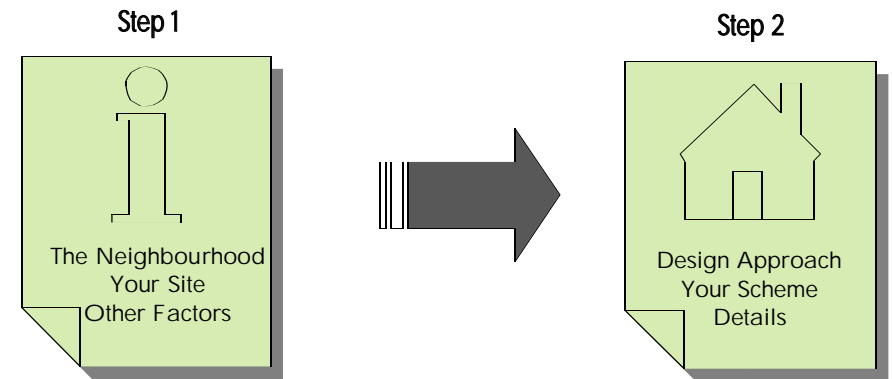
4.0 Stages in preparing a Design Statement

4.1.1 The steps for preparing a Design Statement correspond to those involved in going through the proper design process. It is work that you would normally carry out in the process of deciding on a design for your proposal before submitting an application. The only difference is that you

are expected to formally record these steps and explain the results, so that it is clear to others. A Design Statement is not simply a justification for a pre-determined design solution.

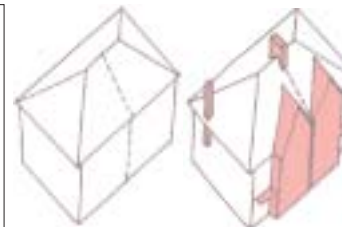
4.2 Brief Statement (for householder/small schemes)

4.2.1 You will need to follow 2 main steps in producing your brief statement:



STEP 1 - first look at the features that make your neighbourhood distinctive, and the particular aspects of your site. This will involve understanding how the density and form of housing (e.g. blocks of flats, terraces, semi/detached houses, bungalows) roof forms and local building style(s) make up the character of the neighbourhood. You need to look closely at the design of your existing house (including size, layout and materials) any trees or hedge boundaries and the amount of space between you and your neighbours. You will also need to find out about other factors that will influence your scheme (e.g. design policies within the UDP and any Supplementary Planning Guidance [SPG] standards).

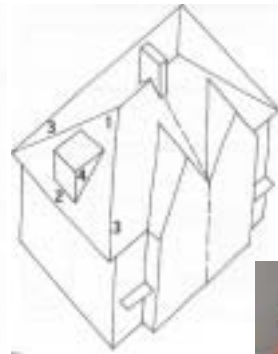
Neighbourhood house form analysis
Source: Loft & rear extension statement, Michael Rushe Architect



The semi-detached house remains the dominant element that defines the character of the estate. Although there is a variety of road settings, and many of the original details of the houses have been lost through renovation, the simple basic form of the pair of houses with hipped roofs, and variety added through different treatments of bay windows, remains legible throughout the estate.

The proposed side dormer has been designed therefore on the basis of the following principles, (features noted on the sketch to the right):

1. Respect for ridge line, and dormer placed as centrally on ridge line as staircase position will allow,
2. Dormer set back from eaves of hip,
3. Hip line legible front and back,
4. Glazed side lights to allow hip to be read through dormer.



Dormer design principles

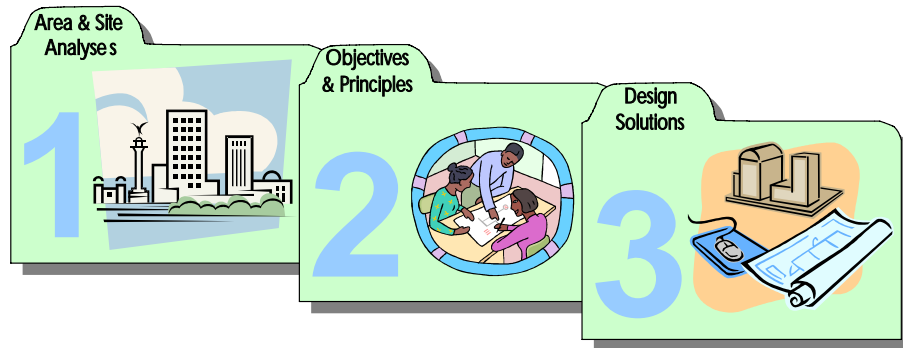
Source: Loft & rear extension statement, Michael Rushe Architect.



STEP 2 -then decide how to design your scheme so that it will meet your requirements and satisfy the design principles and standards in the UDP and relevant SPG. If properly designed with professional guidance, your scheme should fit comfortably into the site, make a beneficial contribution to the character of your neighbourhood and help improve the environment. (See SPG5: Altering & extending your home). Use plans, elevation drawings (and photographs, where helpful) to demonstrate the results of your design.

4.3 Full Statement (for Other Applications)

4.3.1 There are 3 stages in preparing a full Design Statement:



Stage 1- Area and Site Analysis

This should be a factual evaluation of the site and its surrounding area.

The existing townscape character (land-forms, architecture, heights, uses, views) and urban structure (spatial and street patterns) provide the context for examining your scheme's potential. The location, levels and shape of the site, its orientation, existing views or buildings, its main access points, pedestrian routes, any notable trees and wildlife habitats. Other physical features such as underground services, drainage systems, may also suggest physical limitations and opportunities for its development.



Source: Willesden City Academy Design Statement, Foster Associates.

Stage 2 -Identifying Objectives & Principles

The objectives for the development need to be identified and assessed against these site constraints, and any planning requirements. If a planning brief has been produced for the site, the design objectives in the brief must be addressed. Objectives in Government Guidance (See Appendix) and policies in the UDP (Policies BE1-BE7 and BE9, BE11 & BE12) will help you to identify appropriate design principles for the site. These principles should not simply be a list of preferences. They should relate to the findings of the site evaluation and provide a consistent framework of considerations and aspirations for the design. Their number and complexity will depend on the nature and scale of the proposal.



Option 4. Source: Willesden City Academy Design Statement, by Fosters.Associates.

The design principles will suggest a variety of possible design approaches and options to be investigated, at least one of which

Stage 3 - Generating Design Solutions

The design principles will suggest a variety of possible design approaches and options to be investigated, at least one of which



External space for flats steps away from gardens to minimise overlooking
 Source: Pound Lane Redevelopment, Design Statement, HTA Architects.

could reconcile most conflicts that may exist between the development objectives, and the site/planning constraints. The statement should explain how any special planning designations or requirements have been taken into account in the chosen design option. An objective assessment of any impacts of the design on the area, or adjoining properties, should also be given, as well as an explanation of how adverse impacts have been avoided or minimised.

5.0 Contents of a Design Statement

5.1 Brief Statement

5.1.1 A brief Design Statement should include:

- A short written explanation (illustrated with photographs where appropriate) of the character of the neighbourhood, the conditions of the site and its surroundings, and identifying the factors which have led to your design solution.
- Plans and elevations (including the streetscene, where appropriate) to show your existing house, the spacing with neighbouring buildings and your proposals. Give details of existing and new materials to be used.

5.2 Full Statement

5.2.1 A full Design Statement should contain:

- A comprehensive written statement addressing each of the 3 stages outlined above. The scope will depend on the prominence or sensitivity of the site and/or the nature and scale of the proposed development.
- Where appropriate in major schemes, tables and/or spreadsheets can be included to summarise schedules of accommodation, unit sizes,

breakdown of different uses or other relevant quantities or categories.



Section & gardens Source: Pound Lane Redevelopment, Design Statement, HTA Architects

5.2.2 Outline Applications -It is accepted that information supplied at outline stage will be of a more general nature, but it should still be sufficient to establish that the form of the development is acceptable in principle.

5.3 Checklist of Issues

5.3.1 Before submitting your Design Statement, you may wish to check that the following issues have been addressed (not a comprehensive list) where relevant to your proposal:

A. Have you done an Area & Site Analysis - does it include?

- A description of the townscape character of the area and any features which make it distinctive (landscape character, land use, building/roof form, 'grain' /plot sizes, materials used and height of buildings;
- Analysis of the urban structure - spacing between buildings, continuity/building lines, road/pedestrian network, nodal/focal points;
- A brief history of the site, what it has been used for, and noting any possibility of contamination;
- Important views, both of the site and from within it;
- The size, shape, orientation and topography of the site, including cross sections where there are any significant changes in level;
- Access to the site including road and footpath layout adjacent to it;
- The location, condition and importance of any existing buildings, heritage features and structures on the site;

- Existing landscape features: trees, hedges, ponds, streams, boundary treatments and presence of protected species and wildlife habitats ;
- Northpoint and prevailing wind direction;
- Any habitable room windows facing the site;
- A summary of the site appraisal findings.

B. Have you identified Objectives and Principles?

- Opportunities and constraints identified from the site analysis, including build-ings and heritage features to retain/enhance,
- Trees/landscape features to retain and opportunities to improve/supplement these and to strengthen any existing green paths/soft edges that are charac-teristic of the area
- Opportunities to improve access points and/or create new ones;
- Mass/scale of scheme in relation to adjoining buildings;
- Enhancing any nodal/focal points or providing new ones;
- Townscape and Landscape design opportunities e.g. enclosing a space, exploit-ing important views or opening up new views;
- Softening the visual impact of engineering requirements e.g. roads, servicing, car parking;
- Public and private space.
- Access for the less mobile;
- Community safety measures (enabling passive surveillance, etc)
- Sustainability – intensive design, design for flexibility and mixed uses, energy efficiency, use of eco-friendly materials, water management measures, con-struction/demolition waste recycling, renewable energy features, noise control measures, access to public transport, footpaths and cycleways as well as ;
- Developer requirements & objectives, e.g. accommodation require-ments, minimum floorspace/number of units.
- The national, strategic and local policy background including any Development Plan policy requirements
- Other relevant planning/design guidance

C. Does your design solution reflect the analysis and principles?

- Do sketches and annotated plans clearly identify the design principles?
- Is it clear how your design solution responds to the analysis and fits the design principles identified earlier?
- Have you noted the impact of your design on neighbours e.g. loss of light, over-looking, noise etc.
- Have you noted your design's impact on travel patterns?
- Have you highlighted any contribution to the character of the area and/or its regeneration?

6.0 What Should a Design Statement Look Like?

6.1 Format

6.1.1 Although there is no single prescriptive format for a Design Statement, the following guidelines may help ensure it is easier to compile and read:

- All Statements should have a cover sheet clearly entitled, 'Design Statement' and labelled with the name and/or address of the proposed development.
- Drawings of the proposal and photographs can be annotated to high-light key features and explain how they relate specifically to the design principles or approach identified.

See SPG 1: 'Making a Planning Application', for a list of the types of maps, plans and drawings required and the scales to which they should be drawn.

6.1.2 Brief Statements should be presented as an A4 sized, bound document oriented either in portrait or landscape format (whichever is convenient). Full Statements should preferably be presented as an A3 sized document, oriented in landscape format.

7.0 What to do next?

- 7.1.1 It is important to check, before design work is started, that the principle of the proposed use of the site is compatible with policies and proposals within Brent's Revised Deposit UD 2001, and guidance in other SPG. This is because planning policy objections to the principle of a particular use or development, cannot be overcome simply on the basis of good design, whether or not a Design Statement is submitted.
- 7.1.2 If your proposal requires the submission of a Design Statement, request the contact details of the Development Control team or the Case Officer (if known) who will handle your application. A member of that team, or the Case Officer, can assist you in identifying the main issues you should be addressing in your Design Statement.

7.2 Help with your Design Statement

- 7.2.1 You may also find it helpful to discuss your proposed design solution with a planning officer before submitting your application. Pre-application discussions are best undertaken after you have carried out the site analysis, so that possible design principles can be discussed in the light of the sites' constraints and opportunities, before work starts on a detailed design solution.
- 7.2.2 The Council cannot produce your Design Statement for you. It is best to seek professional assistance from an architect, an urban designer and/or a planning consultant with design experience.
- 7.2.3 Other organisations that may offer information, advice and/or may be able to help you in producing your Design Statement, or point you towards consultants who can help, include:

- URBAN DESIGN GROUP (UDG) 70 Cowcross Street, London EC1M 6DG, Tel/Fax: 0207 250 0892, email: admin@udg.org.uk
- ROYAL INSTITUTE OF BRITISH ARCHITECTS (RIBA) 66 Portland Place London W1B 1AD Tel: 020 7580 5533, email: info@inst.riba.org
- ROYAL TOWN PLANNING INSTITUTE (RTPI) 41 Botolph Lane, London EC3R 8DL. Tel: 020 7929 9494, Fax 020 7929 9490, email: online@rtpi.org.uk
- COMMISSION FOR ARCHITECTURE & BUILT ENVIRONMENT (CABE), The Tower Building, 11 York Road, London SE1 7NX, Tel: 020 7960 2400, Fax: 020 7960 2444, email: enquiries@cabe.org.uk

7.3 Useful Design & Planning References

- 7.3.1 '*PPG1: General Policy & Principles*', 1997, DETR
- 7.3.2 '*Better Places for Sport - A client guide to achieving design quality*', Sport England & CABE, May 2003
- 7.3.2 '*Going to town, A Compendium Guide to PPG6*', ODPM2002
- 7.3.3 '*Building in Context*', CABE with English Heritage), January 2002
- 7.3.4 '*The Value of Urban Design*', DETR, CABE & UCL Bartlett School of Planning, 2001
- 7.3.5 '*Urban Design Compendium*', English Partnerships & The Housing Corporation, 2001
- 7.3.6 '*By Design - Better Places to Live: a companion guide to PPG3*', (DETR and CABE, 2001
- 7.3.7 '*By Design - Urban Design in the Planning System: towards better practice*', (DETR & CABE, 2000)
- 7.3.8 '*PPG3: "Housing"*' DETR, 2000
- 7.3.9 '*Streets for All*', English Heritage, 2000
- 7.3.10 '*Towards an Urban Renaissance*', Urban Task Force, 1999
- 7.3.11 '*Places, Streets and Movement*', DETR, 1998
- 6.3.12 '*Planning for Sustainable Development*', DETR, 1998

Appendices

A Planning Policy & Guidance

A.1 What the Adopted Unitary Development Plan says:

Policy BE1: An 'Urban Design Statement' should be submitted for all new development proposals. On all sites of (0.3 hectares or more), and sites likely to have a significant effect on the public realm, in conservation areas, and sites affecting the setting of listed buildings or major regeneration projects, this statement and should include matters relevant to the scheme, such as:

- (a) important features (trees, hedgerows, buildings, etc) within and/or forming the edges of the site;
- (b) the location and nature of existing and potential links to and through the site, to facilities outside it (Policy BE3);
- (c) important views within and out of the site, and landmarks visible outside the site;
- (d) the relationship of the site to the surrounding area (levels, etc);
- (e) how the design relates to and enhances its urban context (Policies BE2, BE4, BE5 and BE7) as well as the concept and principles behind the architectural & landscape design (Policies BE6 and BE9); and
- (f) how the development contributes to urban sustainability & regeneration (Policies BE11 and BE12).

On smaller and/or uncontroversial proposals, a brief statement of the design approach should be provided.

A2 Other Supplementary Planning Guidance Notes available from the Planning Service:

- SPG1 - Making a Planning Application
- SPG2 - Commenting on a Planning Application
- SPG3 - Forming An Access onto a Road
- SPG5 - Extending Your Home
- SPG6 - Satellite Dishes
- SPG7 - Shopfronts and Shopsigns
- SPG8 - Advertisements (Other than Shops)
- SPG9 - Special Needs Housing
- SPG10 - Community Safety
- SPG11 - Non-Residential Development adjoining Residential Gardens

- SPG12 - Access For Disabled
- SPG13 - Layout Standards for Access Roads
- SPG14 - Childcare Facilities
- SPG15 - Medical Practice Accommodation
- SPG16 - Special Standards For Hassop Rd
- SPG17 - Residential Design Standards
- SPG18 - Employment Development
- SPG19 - Sustainable Design, Construction & Pollution Control
- SPG20 - Buildings in Gardens within Conservation Areas
- SPG21 - Affordable Housing

B Contacts

B.1 The Planning Service

- | | |
|---|-------------------------|
| <u>Policy & Research Team</u> | Tel: 020-8937 5315 |
| <u>Design & Regeneration Team</u> | Tel: 020-8937 5259/5018 |
| <u>Landscape Design Team</u> | Tel: 020-8937 5112 |
| <u>Western Area Team</u> | Tel: 020-8937 5240 |
| (Wembley, Park Royal, St Raphaels, Sudbury, Sudbury Court, Preston, Alperton & Stonebridge) | |
| <u>Northern Area Team</u> | Tel: 020-8937 5220 |
| (Queensbury, Kingsbury, Kenton, Roe Green, Fryent, Barnhill, St. Andrews, Church End, Gladstone, Cricklewood & Mapesbury) | |
| <u>Southern Area Team</u> | Tel: 020-8937 5265 |
| (Willesden Green, Kilburn, Carlton, Brondesbury, Roundwood, Harlesden, Chamberlayne, Kensal Rise & Queens Park) | |