

DESIGN STATEMENT

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 In accordance with Section 10.4 of the Limerick County Development Plan 2010-2016, the Planning Authority will require all planning applications for **5 or more dwellings or a single rural house or commercial / industrial developments over 1,000 sq. metres** to include a 'Design Statement'.
- 1.2 A 'Design Statement' is a short document which enables the applicant to explain why a particular design solution is considered the most suitable for a particular site.
- 1.3 A Design Statement should be prepared at an early stage of the design process. The design statement should address urban design, landscape and building design issues and clearly explain the development process, design options considered and the adopted development strategy. The Design Statement should take the form of a concise illustration or series of illustrations, photographs of the site and surroundings and a written statement, however, it is not intended to duplicate planning application documents. This material may form the basis of meaningful pre-application discussions with the Planning Authority. Statements should evolve throughout the design process. Reference and cognisance to the 12 criteria outlined in the DEHLG '*Urban Design Manual*' 2009 and the guidance contained in '*Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas*' 2009 documents shall also be made for relevant developments. The level of detail will depend on the scale and sensitivity of the development.
- 1.4 A Design Statement should outline:
 - The policy background, identifying all relevant policies, design guides, standards and regulations and in the case of developments in areas with local area plans shall show compliance with the relevant urban design and architectural principles and guidance;
 - The urban / rural design and architectural context including a site and area appraisal (illustrated with diagrams / photographs), summaries of relevant studies and reports of any relevant consultations;
 - The development strategy for the site including design principles which have been formulated in response to the policy background, the site and its settings and the purpose of the development.
 - In the case of urban developments an explanation of the urban structure, including approach to movement and accessibility, landscape, development blocks, land uses, density, urban grain, visual context and built form;
 - A programme of meetings with the local authority and other bodies; if appropriate.

Design Statement for Residential developments of five houses or more and commercial development.

2.1 USE

The design statement should explain how the proposed use will fit in with the area and how it supports local aims, for example, how an application for a shop relates to an existing shopping area or how schools, shops, sports facilities and other supporting amenities will be provided to support new housing provision

What to include:

- A justification of the use in terms of land use policies, but also how it has been informed by existing uses in the area.
- An explanation of how the uses will work well together, making the place more useful for the community and, where possible, allowing people to do more than one thing in the same area. Having a good mix of uses is a vital part of creating sustainable places.

2.2 AMOUNT

The statement should explain why the amount of development proposed is appropriate. For a commercial development this might include the amount of footfall for shops or leisure uses.

What to include:

- Show how the amount of development planned takes into account how much development is suitable for the site. This should take account of the various restrictions identified in the site analysis and the aims of good urban design.
- It is important to show how the scheme affects the way the area works.
- For major developments, explaining how the amount of development planned will change the neighbourhood (for example, adding services and open space, supporting local businesses or placing more demand on local services) can help to show how appropriate the scheme would be.

2.3 LAYOUT

The statement should explain why the proposed layout has been chosen, and how it will work and fit with the surroundings. For example, for larger plans, the layout may be balancing a variety of design features such as solar gain, crime prevention and accessibility.

What to include:

- Details of how the buildings and spaces in and around the site would work together. So, it might be worthwhile explaining why buildings face the way they do, why entrances are where they are and how these aspects relate to changes in levels, existing buildings, natural features and infrastructure.
- It should explain how the layout contributes to making the place safer;
- It may be useful for the statement to explain the potentially conflicting pressures on layout design and which ones have been given priority (for example building orientation, traffic circulation, crime prevention and accessibility);
- For complex sites it may be useful to show how the design has developed and how different layouts and options have been considered but rejected.

2.4 SCALE

The statement should demonstrate why the size of buildings and spaces proposed are right for the site.

What to include:

- Drawings, photographs and sketches that show the relationship between existing buildings on or around the site and those proposed.
- Show that the scale of the development takes account of the restrictions of the site and the need for good design. It should not try to justify fitting a predetermined amount of accommodation onto a site.
- Explain how the design considers the balance of features such as doors, windows and detailing for example window sill heights and door widths.

2.5 LANDSCAPING

The statement should outline how all outdoor spaces will be treated, including street furniture, water features and road materials as well as planting and paving.

What to include:

- Show that the planned landscape design is based on a strategy for long-term maintenance and management.
- Explain the purpose of landscape design on the site, and how this will be achieved and maintained, for example, to create a natural habitat, support an existing green corridor or provide a sensory garden or play space.
- Show how the needs of disabled or older people will be met, for example by using level surfaces, non slip materials and providing resting places.

2.6 APPEARANCE

The statement should explain what the applicant wants the place to look like and why, and should explain how a good appearance will be achieved and maintained. This should reflect all of the decisions that went into the design such as layout, scale, architectural style and landscaping, all of which affect what a place will look like.

What to include:

- Set out the design rationale that underpins the proposal and how this has informed the detailed aspects of the scheme.
- Explain how the appearance fits with other aims for the development. So, if the development is meant to create a new landmark, its appearance, scale and use should reflect this. If the development is designed to blend seamlessly with its surroundings, its design should take this into account.
- Pictures of what the scheme would look like based on details included in the application, or where details of material are not finalised the statement might suggest a range of materials for the site to give a sense of the final appearance.
- The statement might include details of how the appearance of the scheme will change throughout the day, in different seasons with changes in light and vegetation and the effect of time on the appearance of the scheme.

2.7 ACCESS

- The statement should consider two potential aspects of access – vehicular and transport links and universal access and the statement should show that all access issues have been considered together. In this regard the statement should explain the movement pattern around and through the site.

Design Statement for single rural dwelling

All planning applications should be accompanied by a detailed Design Statement outlining the rationale of the proposed design. The design statement for a single rural dwelling should address the following:

3.1 Site Selection:

- Site location characteristics, including the wider landscape character and the more immediate landscape and other designations such as Natural Heritage Areas, Special Areas of Conservation and Special Protection Areas.
- Use of sites existing natural qualities / features
- Existing development pattern
- Roads and Infrastructure
- Site orientation.

3.2 Layout:

- Site context
- Design principles considered
- Scale, building line and set-back
- Building form and proportion
- Topography
- Building orientation
- Vehicle parking & access
- Boundaries / landscaping.

3.3 House Design:

- Building form
- Universal Access (access for mobility impaired)
- Building elements
 - Materials and colours
 - Roofs and chimneys
 - Dormers and roof lights
 - Doors, porches and windows
 - Conservatories, garages and other extensions.
- Details of how the proposal will optimize natural light in building design, location and orientation
- Where a sun room/ conservatory is incorporated, is it designed so that it respects the proportions and materials of the house and is appropriately orientated and energy efficient?
- Indicate any re-use / renovation of existing buildings
- Details of other sustainable design approaches/renewable energy technologies