03 National Design Guidance

**What is
out there?**

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When designing in Walsall everyone is expected to be very familiar with four essential design documents and any successors to them, and positively use and apply such guidance to inform the design process at the earliest stage. References to further national guidance are provided in Appendix A.

Design and Access statements should explain how developments comply with local design policies, such as the ones in this SPD and the BCCS and UDP. Design and Access statements are an important part of explaining how the design merits of a scheme reflect the urban design principles in By Design. The Design and Access scheme should also answer the 'Building for Life' questions for all new development.

The five essential design documents for Walsall

1 – By Design – Urban Design in the Planning System (CABE and DETR)

What is it? Objectives of Urban Design

Character – a place with its own identity

Continuity and enclosure – a place where public and private spaces are clearly distinguished

Quality of the public realm – a place with attractive and successful outdoor areas

Ease of Movement – a place that is easy to get to and move through

Legibility – a place that has a clear image and is easy to understand

Adaptability – a place that can change easily

Diversity – a place with variety and choice

Aspects of development form

Layout: urban structure
Layout: urban grain
Density and mix
Landscape
Scale: height
Scale: massing
Appearance: details
Appearance: materials

2 – Design and Access statements: How to read, write and use them (CABE)

The statement must explain the design process

How the physical characteristics of the scheme have been informed by a rigorous process which should include the following steps:

- Assessment
- Involvement
- Evaluation
- Design

The statement should also explain:

Use – What buildings and spaces will be used for

Amount – How much would be built on the site

Layout – How the buildings and public and private spaces will be arranged on the site, and the relationship between them and the buildings and spaces around the site

Scale – How big buildings and spaces would be (their height, width and length)

Landscaping – How open spaces will be treated to enhance and protect the character of a place

Appearance – What the building and spaces will look like, for example, building materials and architectural details

The statement should also explain the access:

The statement needs to include two potential aspects of access; vehicular and transport links, and inclusive access. These are not separate from one another and the statement should demonstrate that all access issues have been considered together

Vehicular and transport links – Why access points and routes have been chosen and how the site responds to road layout and public transport provision

Inclusive access – How everyone can get to and move through the place on equal terms regardless of age, disability, ethnicity or socia grouping

3 – Building for Life 12 (Building for Life Partnership)

Integrating into the neighbourhood

1 –   Connections

Does the scheme integrate into its surroundings by reinforcing existing connections and creating new ones; whilst also respecting existing buildings and land uses along the boundaries of the development site?

2 –   Facilities and Services

Does the development provide (or is it close to) community facilities, such as shops, schools, workplaces, parks, play areas, pubs or cafes?

3 –   Public transport

Does the scheme have good access to public transport to help reduce car dependency?

4 –   Meeting local housing requirements

Does the development have a mix of housing types and tenures that suit local requirements?

Creating a place

5 –   Character

Does the scheme create a place with a locally inspired or otherwise distinctive character?

6 –   Working with the site and its context

Does the scheme take advantage of existing topography, landscape features (including water courses), wildlife habitats, existing buildings, site orientation and microclimates?

7 –   Creating well defined streets and spaces

Are buildings designed and positioned with landscaping to define and enhance streets and spaces and are buildings designed to turn street corners well?

8 –   Easy to find your way around

Is the scheme designed to make it easy to find your way around?

Street & Home

9 –   Streets for all

Are streets designed in a way that encourage low vehicle speeds and allow them to function as social spaces?

10 –   Car parking

Is resident and visitor parking sufficient and well integrated so that it does not dominate the street?

11 –   Public and private spaces

Will public and private spaces be clearly defined and designed to be attractive, well managed and safe?

12 –   External storage and amenity space

Is there adequate external storage space for bins and recycling as well as vehicles and cycles?

4 – Building in Context: New development in historic areas (English Heritage)

The need to respond to historically sensitive context

A successful project will:

1 –   relate well to the geography and history of the place and the lie of the land

2 –   sit happily in the pattern of existing development and routes through and around it

3 –   respect important views

4 –   respect the scale of neighbouring buildings

5 –   use materials and building methods which are as high in quality as those used in existing buildings

6 –   create new views and juxtapositions which add to the variety and texture of the setting.

5 – Designing Walsall SPD