



Rochford District Council

**SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING
DOCUMENT 7**

**DESIGN,
LANDSCAPING AND
ACCESS
STATEMENTS**

January 2007



ROCHFORD DISTRICT LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK



ALTERNATIVE FORMATS

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<p>Shona Kana uchida ruzivo, kana tsananguro iyi yakanyorwa nemavara makuru, kana kuthi yakanyorwa nerurimi rwemapofu, kana nerumwe rurimi, kana umwe mufauro sununguka kuti taurira parunare ronoti 01702 546 366</p>	<p>If you would like this information in large print, Braille or another language please contact 01702 546 366</p>	

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STATUTORY BASIS

This document has been prepared in accordance with the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004) and the various relevant subsequent *statutory* instruments.

It was adopted by Rochford District Council on 11th January 2007 & came into effect on 5th February 2007.

The following are also particularly relevant to the preparation of this document:

- Under S.71 of the Planning (*Listed Buildings & Conservation areas*) Act 1990, the *Local Planning Authority* has a duty from time to time to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of any parts of their area which are *conservation areas*.
- Under S.39 of the *Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act 2004*, the *Local Planning Authority* has a duty, when exercising its functions, to contribute towards achieving *sustainable development*.
- Under S.40 of the Natural Environment & Rural Communities Act 2006, the *Local Planning Authority* has a duty, when exercising its functions, to conserve *biodiversity*.

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A glossary of the technical terms used in this document is available on the Council's website or can be obtained in hard copy from the Council's offices in Rochford and Rayleigh. Terms listed in the glossary are shown in *Italic* type.



SECTION 1 – INTRODUCTION

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 *Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 1 (Delivering Sustainable Development)* states that planning policies must promote high quality inclusive design in both the layout of new *developments* and within individual buildings. The function and impact of the building must be considered over the lifetime of the *development* not just for the short term. Design which fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area must not be accepted. Good design, as stated in PPS1, is an important aspect of *development* and not necessarily easy to achieve. Applicants must be able to demonstrate how they have taken account of the need for good design in their *development* proposals. For these reasons, certain types of planning application are required to be accompanied by a design, landscaping and access statements.
- 1.2 Policy CS6 (Page 13) of the Rochford District Replacement *Local Plan* sets out the principles of good design which *development* proposals must demonstrate. Good quality design will:
- Take into account the existing form and character of the site and surroundings;
 - Relate to the locality in terms of scale, layout, proportion, materials and detailing;
 - Include landscaping arrangements which reduce the visual impact and positively enhance the proposal and its surroundings; and
 - Minimise the risk of crime.
- 1.3 It is the intention of the requirements for design, landscaping and access statements to ensure good quality design is achieved in Rochford district. This *Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)* follows on from previous supplementary planning guidance (LPSPG5) to provide detailed guidance on the circumstances in which design, landscaping and access statements will be required and how they should be produced. It is important to note that there are different criteria for when access statements are required which are set out in Section 5. The circumstances when a *design statement* and landscaping scheme (Policy CS9, Page 17) will be required are set out below. Design, landscaping and access statement may be submitted as one document.

CS9 - EMPHASISING THE VALUE OF LANDSCAPING

It is the Council's aim to ensure that when *development* takes place landscaping is an integral part of the design process. Where a *design statement* is required under Policies HP4 or EB6 or in the circumstances given in LPSPD7, a landscaping scheme will normally also be expected.



SECTION 2 – WHEN STATEMENTS ARE REQUIRED

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2. WHEN DESIGN STATEMENTS AND LANDSCAPE SCHEMES ARE REQUIRED

- 2.1 From 10 August 2006, all planning applications not included in the categories listed below must be accompanied by a Design and Access Statement, incorporating landscaping information on the proposal.
- 2.2 The purpose of the statement is to explain and justify the design and access principles and concepts on which a *development* proposal is based, and how these will be reflected in individual aspects of the scheme.
- 2.3 Design and Access Statements, incorporating Landscaping information, are required for all planning applications not included in the categories below. Categories of *development* not included in this requirement are:
- engineering and mining operations;
 - *development* of an existing house or *development* within the *curtilage* for any purpose incidental to the enjoyment of the dwelling-house (except for dwelling-houses in a *conservation area*);
 - a *material change of use* of land or buildings.
- 2.4 Design and landscaping statements will also be required for any sites considered complex or sensitive by the *Local Planning Authority* or in the case of any major *development* sites as defined in Policies HP4 and EB5 of the Replacement *Local Plan*. The *Local Planning Authority* defines sensitive sites as those lying within or having an impact upon to following (as defined by law or no the *Local Plan proposals maps*):
- Metropolitan *Green Belt*
 - *Coastal Protection Belt*
 - *Special Landscape Areas*
 - Areas of Historic Landscape Value
 - Sites of *Nature Conservation* importance (including, but not limited to, SSSIs, SACs and SPAs)
 - Residential areas, and
 - *Public open space* and green spaces
- 2.5 Where an applicant is unsure if a site is considered sensitive they should contact the *Local Planning Authority* to discuss the matter.

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SECTION 2 – WHEN STATEMENTS ARE REQUIRED

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- 2.6 It is important to note that the work required will be largely dependent on the type of *development* proposed. Small householder applications will usually require nothing more than an extended covering letter, setting out their intention to comply with the design and landscaping requirements. New commercial *development*, however, will require significant work. Further guidance is available in the CABA guide 'Design and access statements: how to write, read and use them' (www.cabe.org.uk).



SECTION 3 – DESIGN STATEMENTS

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3. DESIGN STATEMENTS

- 3.1 The Council believes that good quality design is important and the early consideration of design issues is encouraged. The issue of design is one of the core policies within the *Local Plan* and is one of the threads that run through every section of it. Good design has the ability to improve the quality of *development* and to improve quality of life.
- 3.2 A *Design statement* will help the Council, Councillors, neighbours and the public to:
- understand the proposals and the principles of the design;
 - consider the proposals against design policies in the *Local Plan*; and
 - consider the proposal against design objectives in PPG1 from which the *Design Statement* requirement comes.
- 3.3 If the proposal for *development* is of District-wide or greater significance, the Council will consult the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE).

Producing a Design Statement

- 3.4 There are three essential steps to producing a Statement. These are:
- site analysis
 - identifying design principles – to include the urban, landscape and architectural design aspects of the *development*
 - creating design solutions
- 3.5 These steps are dealt with in the sections below. It is important to note that the depth of work required will be largely dependent on the type of *development* proposed.
- 3.6 Small householder applications will usually require nothing more than an extended covering letter, setting out the three areas. However, new commercial *development* will require significant work.

STEP 1 – SITE ANALYSIS AND EVALUATION

- 3.7 This is a factual account, which must be based upon drawings and sketches explaining the site within its context and surroundings, e.g. urban, residential, *conservation area*, sloping, industrial, vegetation, etc.
- 3.8 It is important that this analysis is primarily based on fact and reason rather than opinion and must include:



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- building styles and sizes, street patterns the nature of spaces between buildings and their uses, the character of the area, proximity to *Listed Buildings*, etc.;
- an explanation of the constraints and opportunities the site has in terms of its design, e.g. features worthy of retention or protection, an assessment of historic environment constraints and opportunities, any features which are detrimental and need to be addressed; and
- an explanation of the constraints and opportunities the site has in terms of its context, e.g. local building, changes of levels, physical features such as underground services, drainage systems, overhead powerlines, service trenches, trees, ecology and wildlife *habitats*, etc.

3.9 When assessing the context of the site the analysis must take into account the physical, social and economic characteristics of the site and its surroundings. It must cover the following information as outlined by CABE (2006):

Physical context - what the area looks like and the character that is derived from existing buildings, landscape features and movement routes. The statement should avoid going into too much detail – it is an opportunity to explain the scheme – not record local history.

Social context - how people in the locality will be affected by the development, including any aspirations they may have for the site.

Economic context –the contribution the development will have on the local economy. The value of the land and its effect on development options may also be discussed here.

3.10 Guidance from the ODPM (2005) and CABE (2006) concerning the delivery of *sustainable communities* explains that it is important that the design and access statement explains what groups of people have been, or will be, consulted on the scheme.

3.11 This section must include plans, sketches and photographs to support and explain the approach adopted.

STEP 2 - IDENTIFYING THE DESIGN PRINCIPLES

3.12 It is important to understand that each site and proposal is unique and there is no right or wrong set of design principles.



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- 3.13 Design principles are the main criteria that the design needs to fulfil. These are so important that they cannot be easily changed. The principles will not just be a list of preferences, but instead a clear statement of what must be included in the design. They will remain consistent irrespective of any approach taken. The principles may include critical constraints to the applicant such as minimum floor space, the importance of signs to a commercial proposal, financial constraints, etc. This section will also include principles that are a requirement of the Council as set down in *Local Plans* and *Development Briefs* or other Guidance Notes.
- 3.14 The design principles must clearly relate to the site analysis and evaluation findings. If the site evaluation identifies negative features, these must be addressed and overcome in this section. The design principles will vary in number and complexity from proposal to proposal. For extensions or alterations to dwellings there will be only a few principles, e.g. the extension should be designed to be sympathetically related to the existing property and not offend the neighbour.
- 3.15 In more complex proposals, design principles may include the retention of important public views, whether the mass and scale of buildings should be similar to those in the street or conversely a new building ought to be larger because of the relationship of the site to neighbouring buildings. Other important considerations can include the need to keep important trees or that buildings may need to face a particular way or be in specific positions to meet the needs of industrial activities, etc.

STEP 3 – CREATING THE DESIGN SOLUTION

- 3.16 The third stage is to produce the design solution. The design solution must incorporate the design principles, which in turn can be justified against the site analysis and evaluation.

Conclusion

- 3.17 There are no set rules or ways of presenting *design statements*. Much depends upon the scale and nature of the *development* proposed. It should first comprise a detailed site analysis based upon drawings and sketches setting out the constraints, opportunities and design principles. *Written Statements* alone may not be enough and photographs of the site and its surroundings can be helpful. The statement must relate to the wider context of the site and not just to the site itself.



SECTION 3 – DESIGN STATEMENTS

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3.18 A good *design statement* should have addressed each of the following points.

response to context	how the physical, social, economic and policy context of the <i>development</i> has informed its design in relation to each of the 6 other design elements below.
quantum	or amount of <i>development</i> proposed for each use expressed the number of residential units or floor space for other forms of <i>development</i> . Quantum supersedes <i>density</i> in the earlier Ministerial list of elements.
use	or mix of uses proposed.
layout	the buildings, routes and open spaces within the <i>development</i> and their relationship to buildings and spaces outside the <i>development</i> .
scale	height, width and length of each proposed building.
appearance	aspects of a building or place which determine the visual impression it makes, including the external built form of the <i>development</i> .
landscaping	this section must cover the enhancement or protection of the amenities of the site and the area in which it is situated, including screening and planting. Policy CS9 (Page 17) of the Rochford District Replacement <i>Local Plan</i> details the emphasis the Council places on the value of landscaping. Although only one part of an integrated overall statement, landscaping schemes can be considered a key part of such design statements. As such the requirements for landscaping schemes and statements are detailed further in the following section.

3.19 In all cases applicants are invited to contact the *Local Planning Authority* for pre-application advice as such discussions are often a resource-effective and valuable opportunity to resolve issues at an early stage.



SECTION 4 – LANDSCAPING SCHEMES

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4. LANDSCAPING SCHEMES

- 4.1 Policy CS9, Emphasising the Value of Landscaping, sets out when the *Local Planning Authority* will require the submission of a landscape scheme as a condition of planning consent. Where a *design statement* is required, this is also required to include a landscaping scheme.
- 4.2 The core strategy of the Replacement *Local Plan*, regarding promoting good design and *design statements* (Policy CS6, Page 13), states the requirement for *development* proposals to demonstrate good quality design including the use of landscaping arrangements which reduce the visual impact of and positively enhance the proposal and its surroundings. The requirements of landscaping statements are detailed in Policy EB6 of the Replacement *Local Plan* (Page 75). A landscaping scheme must set out how the proposals intend to comply with or exceed the criteria contained within these policies.
- 4.3 Landscaping Schemes must pay particular attention to:
- Lighting, including that for security purposes
 - Hard and soft landscaping measures; and
 - Buffer zones
- 4.4 Landscaping schemes must make use of on-site earth mounding or planting to protect or enhance amenities where possible; this should include the use of indigenous vegetation as a noise mitigation barrier where necessary.
- 4.5 Landscaping schemes, especially in the case of employment *development* (Policy EB7), should make use of on-site earth mounding or planting to protect and enhance amenities. It is important to consider the ecological value and appearance of the surroundings in general, including those of neighbouring properties and *Nature Conservation* sites in particular.
- 4.6 Guidance on Landscaping schemes is available from a number of sources, including Rochford District Council. The CABE guide 'Design and access statements: how to write, read and use them' includes advice on landscaping (www.cabe.org.uk). The National House Building Council (www.nhbcbuilder.co.uk) sets out guidelines on the design of new buildings in relation to existing and proposed vegetation. For more information see "NHBC Standards Chapter 4.2", BS 8004:1986 "Code of Practice for Foundations" or contact the Building Control Section. The British Standard "Guide for trees in relation to construction" (BS 5837:1991) also sets out details regarding vegetation and *development*.



SECTION 4 – LANDSCAPING SCHEMES

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Biodiversity

- 4.7 *Biodiversity* is an important consideration in any landscaping scheme. In many cases, proposed *development* and landscaping schemes have the potential to impact on *biodiversity*.
- 4.8 It must be noted that established *habitats* are more likely to flourish with management than 'imposed' *habitats* and be more cost effective as a result. Replacement/new *habitat* takes many years to stabilise and gain the value of an established *habitat*.
- 4.9 The onus is on applicants to provide assurances to the *Local Planning Authority* that the *development* will not have a negative impact on *biodiversity*. This will be provided in the form of an ecological impact assessment. Planning applications which have the potential to impact on *biodiversity* but are not accompanied by an ecological impact assessment will not be granted consent.
- 4.10 In the majority of circumstances existing *habitats* will be retained. Landscaping should have regard to, and make the most of, what is established on site.

Planting design

- 4.11 Planting should be designed in such a way as to reflect the typical or traditional, indigenous landscape character of the adjoining area. Planting should be structured to reflect and complement the landform and any variation in soil types.
- 4.12 A clear structure should be created using woodland blocks, hedges, more open scrubland, grassland areas and other landscape and *habitat* types. Indigenous species of plant material should be used in mixtures and proportions which will simulate natural models.
- 4.13 A degree of ecological diversity is also to be encouraged both to create a good range of *habitat* and provide a range of seed sources for subsequent natural *regeneration*. This diversity should be reflected in a variety of planting related to *habitat* types.
- 4.14 The selection of species mixtures can be critical and the following guidelines should be noted.
- Limit the dominants for each area to one or two species.
 - Nurse species are short-term plants sown along side the main seeds in order to aid their establishment. Avoid selecting tree species as a nurse. Use additional shrub species such as *Acer campestre* or *Crataegus monogyna*.
 - If a tree nurse species is required to create 'high forest' use *Betula* or *Alnus* to a maximum of 20 per cent. *Pinus* or *Larix* should be avoided.



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- Avoid mixing Salix or Populus directly with other tree species. Their vigour will create problems of competition.
- The major part of any mixture should comprise a limited number of species, but smaller amounts of numerous other species may be added to provide a seed source from which they can find their own population balance.
- Demonstrate a clear view of how any mixture is likely to develop over time and how it might be managed in the future to achieve a desired result. Where feasible consideration should be given to the establishment of advance structural planting, and provision made for planting within the period of the main contract.

Species choice

4.15 In general, tree and shrub cover together with crops, are the basic materials of a landscape that lacks rocks and dramatic topography. Trees make contrasts with open land, form spaces, and give variety of texture, colour, and express seasonal change. Without them, the inland Essex landscape becomes more bleak and less interesting. Traditional trees express historical continuity.

4.16 The following indigenous species are common in Essex and should form the main content of planting schemes.

Common Name	Species	Distribution	Notes
Field Maple	Acer campestre	wide	small tree, woodland component
Hornbeam	Carpinus betulus	localised	clay soils
Dogwood	Cornus sanguinea	wide	hedge
Hazel	Corylus avellana	wide	woodland, hedges
Hawthorn	Crataegus monogyna	wide	wetter sites
Ash	Fraxinus excelsior	wide	invasive
Ivy	Hedera helix	wide	more acid soils
Holly	Ilex aquifolium	wide	sometimes difficult to establish
Aspen	Populus tremula	localised	but can become invasive
Wild Cherry	Prunus avium	localised	lighter soils
Blackthorn	Prunus spinosa	wide	woodland
Sessile Oak	Quercus petraea	localised	clay soils
Pendunculate Oak	Quercus robur	wide	small tree, woodland component
Field rose	Rosa arvensis	wide	clay soils
Dog Rose	Rosa canina	wide	hedge

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5. ACCESS STATEMENTS

- 5.1 Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) guidance 'Planning and Access for Disabled People - A Good Practice Guide' recommends the provision of an Access Statement, principally to identify the philosophy and approach to inclusive design adopted, the key issues of the particular scheme, and the sources of advice and guidance used. An access statement is also important to assist building control in making judgements on whether proposals make reasonable access provision in accordance with The Building Regulations 2000 (Part M).
- 5.2 At its very simplest, an access statement is required with all applications for *development* within Rochford District. At its very simplest, such a statement might simply record that the intention of the client, designer or design team ('the applicant') was to comply where appropriate with the guidance in the Approved Document, and to indicate in what respects it was considered appropriate. Where an applicant wishes to depart from the guidance in Approved Document M, either to achieve a better solution using new technologies (e.g. infrared activated controls), to provide a more convenient solution, or to address the constraints of an existing building, the Statement must set out the reasons for departing from the guidance and the rationale for the design approach adopted.
- 5.3 Access statements must demonstrate both a commitment to inclusive design as well as compliance with the Building Regulations (2000) as required by Building Control. Statements must be provided at the time plans are deposited, a building notice is given or details of a project are given to an approved inspector, and updated to reflect decisions reached on site.
- 5.4 The requirements of Part M of the Building Regulations (2000) apply if:
- a non-domestic building or a dwelling is newly erected;
 - an existing non-domestic building is extended, or undergoes a *material* alteration; or
 - an existing building or part of an existing building undergoes a *material change of use* to a hotel or boarding house, institution, public building or shop.
- 5.5 For these types of *development* the access statement should not only show a general inclusive approach to design, but also that the *development* complies with the Part M regulations.

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- 5.6 Also note that whilst the requirements do not generally apply to domestic dwellings, under regulation 4(2) any building which is extended, or undergoes a *material* alteration, must not be any more unsatisfactory in relation to the requirements of Schedule 1, than it was before alteration. In such cases the access statement must set out how the proposed *development* will avoid comprising accessibility.
- 5.7 The exact form of statement depends upon the size, nature and complexity of the proposed building or space. Each statement, as long as it is relevant, includes the following information:
- A short explanation of the Project Sponsor's policy and approach to access, with particular reference to the inclusion of disabled people.
 - A description of sources of advice on accessibility.
 - Details of any *consultations* undertaken or planned, which groups of people were consulted, and the degree to which the plans have been influenced by it.
 - Details of any professional advice including any recommendations for access audits or appraisals.
 - An explanation of any accessibility problems particular to this environment and details of the solutions adopted to ensure adequate provision of services, employment and educational opportunities.
 - Details of management and maintenance policies to maintain features of the proposed *development* which enhance accessibility (for example lighting, colour and luminance contrast, door closing forces etc.), specialist equipment (such as induction loops, audible and visual fire alarm systems etc.), and staff training.
 - A plan of the environment illustrated features such as routes in, out and around the outside of the building, vertical and horizontal circulation routes, positions of accessible parking bays (further advice can be found in the Vehicle Parking Standards SPD5), the location of public transport, and any other features relevant to the proposal.
 - Where good practice cannot be met, the Access Statement should set out why, what implications this will have for users, and what alternative methods are being used to lessen the impact.

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- 5.8 It is important to highlight that the scale of the *development* proposals will determine the complexity of access statement required. Small-scale domestic applications, for example, may only require a consideration of accessibility as part of an extended covering letter. Commercial or large-scale applications need to consider accessibility in greater detail. For further details on what may be included, the Disability Rights Commission's *Access Statements: Achieving an inclusive environment by ensuring continuity throughout the planning, design and management of buildings and spaces* provides more detailed good practice guidance (<http://www.drc-gb.org>). The Association of Building Engineers' *Access Statements: Key to an Inclusive Environment* document also provides good practice guidance and examples of how access statements should be produced for various types of *development* (<http://www.abe.org.uk>).



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