

Ministerial Interim Planning Policy
Statement 01/2008



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru
Welsh Assembly Government

Planning for good design



January 2008

This Ministerial Interim Planning Policy Statement provides a revised section 2.9 (Promoting sustainability through good design) of Planning Policy Wales (Welsh Assembly Government, 2002). The existing section 2.9 is hereby cancelled.

The amendments will be incorporated in the next revision of Planning Policy Wales.

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Section 2.9: Promoting sustainability through good design

2.9.1 Design is taken to mean the relationship between all elements of the natural and built environment. To create sustainable development, design must go beyond aesthetics and include the social, environmental and economic aspects of the development, including its construction, operation and management, and its relationship to its surroundings.

2.9.2 Good design can protect and enhance environmental quality, consider the impact of climate change on generations to come, help to attract business and investment, promote social inclusion and improve the quality of life. Meeting the objectives of good design should be the aim of all those involved in the development process and applied to all development proposals, at all scales, from the construction or alteration of individual buildings to larger development proposals. These principles should be reflected in the content of any design and access statements required to accompany certain applications for planning permission and listed building consent^{1,2}, which are material considerations.

2.9.3 Good design is also inclusive design. The principles of inclusive design are that it places people at the heart of the design process, acknowledges diversity and difference, offers choice where a single design solution cannot accommodate all users, provides for flexibility in use, and, provides buildings and environments that are convenient and enjoyable to use for everyone.

2.9.4 The design process should promote the efficient use of resources, including land. It should seek to maximise energy efficiency and the efficient use of other resources, minimise the use of non-renewable resources and minimise the generation of waste and pollution. Ways to achieve this include, for example, site selection and treatment.

2.9.5 The design process should also ensure that development contributes to tackling the causes of climate change (by reducing greenhouse gas emissions) and to effective adaptation to climate change impacts. An integrated and flexible approach to design, including such things as location, density, layout and built form, will be an appropriate way of contributing to climate responsive development.

2.9.6 Mixed use development (of both built and open space) emphasising flexibility and adaptability, can provide particular design opportunities, adding interest and vitality to living and working environments. At the same time, good design is important for the success of relatively compact mixed use developments, for example in helping to keep noise levels low.

2.9.7 Good design is essential to ensure that areas, particularly those where higher density development takes place, offer high environmental quality, including open and green spaces. Landscape considerations are an integral part of the design process and can make a positive contribution to environmental protection and improvement, for example to biodiversity, air quality and the protection of water resource housing strategies.

2.9.8 The visual appearance of proposed development, its scale and its relationship to its surroundings and context are material planning considerations. Local planning authorities should reject poor building and contextual designs. However, they should not attempt to impose a particular architectural taste or style arbitrarily and should avoid inhibiting opportunities for innovative design solutions.

References

¹ **Access statements:** Article 4D of the Town and Country Planning (General Development Procedure) Order 1995 (S.I.1995/419); Regulation 3B of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Regulations 1990 (S.I.1990/1519).
Design Statements: Legislation will be coming into force following consultation, in 2008.

² Technical Advice Note 12: Design (TAN12)

2.9.9 In areas recognised for their landscape, townscape or historic value, such as National Parks, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and conservation areas; and more widely in areas with an established and distinctive design character, it can be appropriate to seek to promote or reinforce traditional and local distinctiveness. In those areas the impact of development on the existing character, the scale and siting of new development, and the use of appropriate building materials (including where possible sustainably produced materials from local sources), will be particularly important. The impact of development on listed buildings should be given particular attention.

2.9.10 Local planning authorities and developers should consider the issue of accessibility for all, including the needs of people with sensory impairments, people with learning difficulties and people with mobility impairments, such as wheelchair users, elderly people and people with young children at an early stage in the design process.

2.9.11 Local authorities are under a legal obligation to consider the need to prevent and reduce crime and disorder in all decisions that they take. Crime prevention and fear of crime are social considerations to which regard must be given by local planning authorities in the preparation of development plans, should be reflected in any supplementary planning guidance, and may be material considerations in the determination of planning applications. The aim should be to produce safe environments through good design.

2.9.12 Design is an inclusive process, which can raise public aspirations, reinforce civic pride and a sense of place or 'bro', and help to secure continued public acceptance of new development. Local planning authorities should encourage early consultation/pre-application discussions with potential developers and other interested parties on design matters and design and access statements.

2.9.13 In preparing design and access statements, applicants should take an integrated and inclusive approach to sustainable design, proportionate to the scale and type of development proposal. They should be 'living'³ documents which deal with all relevant aspects of design throughout the process and the life of the development, clearly stating the comprehensive design principles adopted and include illustrative material in plan elevation and section where relevant.

2.9.14 Development plans should provide clear policies, supported where appropriate by supplementary planning guidance, setting out the design expectations of local planning authorities for various places and development proposals. Local planning authorities should encourage a good quality design of buildings and spaces in their policies and guidance and use these to eliminate poor quality development.

2.9.15 Planning and development briefs should be used to outline sustainable design requirements where appropriate. Supplementary planning guidance and briefs can usefully be prepared in partnership with stakeholders and should be subject to appropriate consultation. The preparation of audits and appraisals can also assist local planning authorities in the exercise of their planning and development control functions. Design frameworks can also help to revitalise urban areas, and towns and guide development in villages.

³See definition in TAN 12: Design