

Building in Context: Appraising a proposal

It is true that there is a subjective element in judgements about design quality and people often disagree about what they like. Such differences of opinion and matters of personal taste should not be allowed to obscure the fact that it is possible to arrive at opinions about design quality that are based on objective criteria. There are many ways of doing this, but any such process is likely to include asking the following questions. They encompass both the quality of the building itself and its quality as a contribution to the urban design of the neighbourhood in which it is situated:

The site

How does the proposed building relate to the site?

Is there a positive and imaginative response to any problems and constraints?

Have the physical aspects of the site been considered, such as any changes in level within or beyond it?

Are access arrangements convenient and existing routes respected?

Can the amount of accommodation required be fitted on the site in an elegant way?

Wider setting

How does the proposal relate to its wider setting?

Are the street pattern and grain of the surroundings respected?

Are there changes in height between the existing and new development and if so how are they managed?

Will the result enhance or damage the quality of the townscape?

Density

How is the density of the proposal related to that of existing and neighbouring uses?

If there are differences, are they acceptable?

Impact on close views

Has the impact of the building in close views been assessed?

Is it either weak or overpowering?

Does it respect the scale and rhythm of its neighbours?

Materials

What materials are used?

How do they relate to those of the surrounding buildings?

Is the quality as high?

Are there interesting comparisons or contrasts in the use of materials?

How will the colours work together?

Architecture suitable to its use

Is the architecture of the building suitable for the uses it contains?

Is it trying to be too grand or pretending to be more modest than it really is?

Composition

How does the architecture present itself to the viewer?

Is there a strong composition in the pattern of solid to opening in the façade?

Does the detailing of the materials show signs of careful thought or originality in the way the building is put together?

Public realm

What contribution, if any, does the proposal make to the public realm?

If new open space is created, is it clear that it will provide a positive benefit and have a genuine use?

Vistas and views

In the wider setting, has the impact of the building in views and vistas been considered?

Does it make a positive or negative impact?

Does it form an harmonious group or composition with existing buildings or features in the landscape?

Does it distract the eye from the focus of the view and if so does it provide something better to look at?

From Building in Context, pg 37

By Design Checklist 2: Information requirements for a full planning application

Adequate plans and drawings must be submitted as part of a planning application, so that the design can be properly assessed. They will be required for the benefit of planners, councillors (on planning and other committees), residents and amenity groups, among others. The checklist sets out what is likely to be required for full (as opposed to outline) applications. Models and computer-based representations are particularly useful in the case of large scale or complex development proposals.

Location Plan

Scale 1:1250 preferably, and no smaller than 1:2500. Metric scales only.

North point, date and number.

Outline the application property, and indicate any adjoining property owned or controlled by the applicant.

Show the application property in relation to all adjoining properties and the immediate surrounding area, including roads.

Show vehicular access to a highway if the site does not adjoin a highway.

Details of existing site layout

Scale, typically 1:200.

North point, date and number on plans.

Show the whole property, including all buildings, gardens, open spaces and car parking.

Tree survey, where appropriate.

Details of proposed site layout

Scale, typically 1:200.

North point, date and number on plans.

Show the siting of any new building or extension, vehicular/pedestrian access, changes in levels, landscape proposals, including trees to be removed, new planting, new or altered boundary walls and fences, and new hard-surfaced open spaces.

Show proposals in the context of adjacent buildings.

Floor plans

Scale 1:50 or 1:100.

In the case of an extension, show the floor layout of the existing building to indicate the relationship between the two, clearly indicating what is new work.

Show floor plans in the context of adjacent buildings, where appropriate.

In the case of minor applications it may be appropriate to combine the layout and floor plan (unless any demolition is involved).

Include a roof plan where necessary to show a complex roof or alterations to one.

Elevations

Scale 1:50 or 1:100 (consistent with floor plans).

Show every elevation of a new building or extension.

For an extension or alteration, clearly distinguish existing and proposed elevations.

Include details of materials and external appearance.

Show elevations in the context of adjacent buildings, where appropriate.

Cross sections

Scale 1:50 or 1:100 (consistent with floor plans).

Provide these if appropriate.

Design statement

Design statements submitted with planning applications should:

Explain the design principles and design concept.

Explain how the design relates to its wider context (through a full context appraisal where appropriate).

The written design statement should be illustrated, as appropriate, by:

Plans and elevations.

Photographs of the site and its surroundings.

Other illustrations, such as perspectives.

Other supporting material

For example, retail, environmental or transport assessments.

By Design Urban design in the planning system: towards better practice (DETR CABE 2000).

Guide to the range of information required for consultations with English Heritage on proposals affecting nationally important heritage assets

The type and amount of information needed may vary according to the kind of development proposed. The following checklist is intended as the basis for assessing the particular requirements in each case.

- A plan showing the site, its location, extent and context.
- Photographs, dated, numbered and cross-referenced to a plan, showing the site and its context in general and the area of proposed change in detail.
- A statement of significance that demonstrates an understanding of the historical, archaeological and architectural interests of the site.

Measured drawings as existing and as proposed to show, where appropriate:

- all floor plans
- any external and internal elevations affected by the works
- sections through floor, roof and wall structures, where these are affected by the works
- perspectives or photomontages, models or computer visualisations, to show the impact of new works on the heritage asset and its setting
- landscape works, to include contours and planting schemes
- other material necessary to provide a full understanding of the impact of the works on the significance of the heritage asset and its setting

Drawings should be at a sufficient scale to show the impact of the proposals on the asset and its setting, usually 1:50. Plans, elevations and sections as existing should be hatched to show areas proposed for demolition.

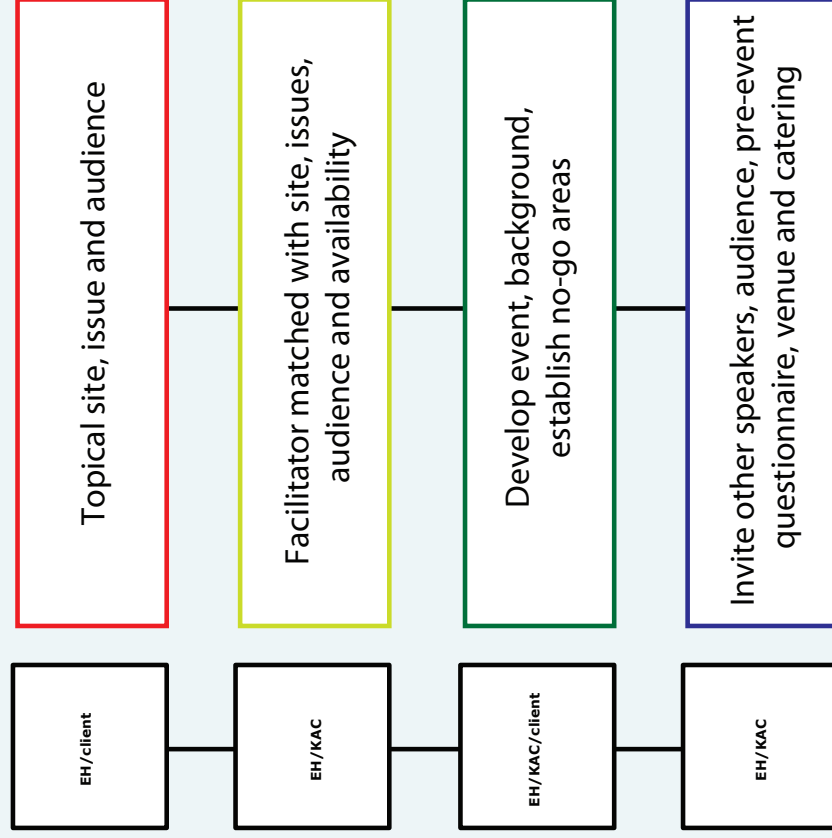
A written explanation of the proposed works to include:

- an assessment of the impact of the works on the significance of the asset
- a statement of justification explaining why the works are desirable or necessary (this should include development appraisal where appropriate)
- an archaeological assessment or field evaluation and a mitigation strategy where important archaeological remains may exist
- a structural report by an engineer familiar with heritage assets, that identifies defects and proposes remedies, when works include significant elements of demolition or rebuilding

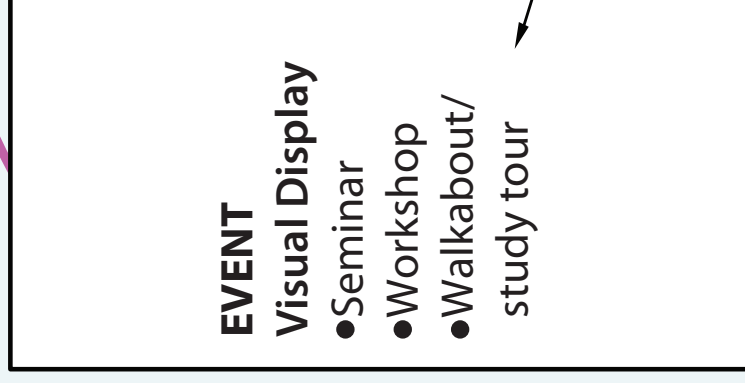
When proposed works include the total or substantial demolition of a listed building, or any significant part of it, the statement of justification should be framed around the following criteria, as set out in detail at 3.19, PPG15:

- the condition of the building, the cost of repairing and maintaining it in relation to its importance and to the value derived from continued use
- the adequacy of efforts made to retain the building in use, including evidence that the building has been offered on the open market at a realistic price
- the merits of alternative proposals for the site.

1. Event build-up



2. Event



typical materials provided in facilitator pack to tailor to suit the event

3. Post-event

