

Accessibility

Circulation

WCs Within Dwellings

Accessibility

On 25th October 1999, Part M of the Building Regulations was amended to improve accessibility for visitors to all new dwellings. It is not intended to create lifetime homes. Reasonable access is required into the dwelling within the boundaries of the plot. Generally, a level or ramped approach is required to the principal entrance, with a gradient not exceeding 1:20 and not less than 900mm wide.

If site topography prevents this, and the plot gradient exceeds 1:20, a ramp may be required. This requires a firm and even surface, a minimum width of 900mm, 1.2m top, bottom and intermediate landings, and a gradient no steeper than 1:12, broken into 5m lengths.

If the plot gradient exceeds 1:15, a stepped approach will be acceptable, providing the steps are designed to meet the needs of an ambulant disabled person (see below).

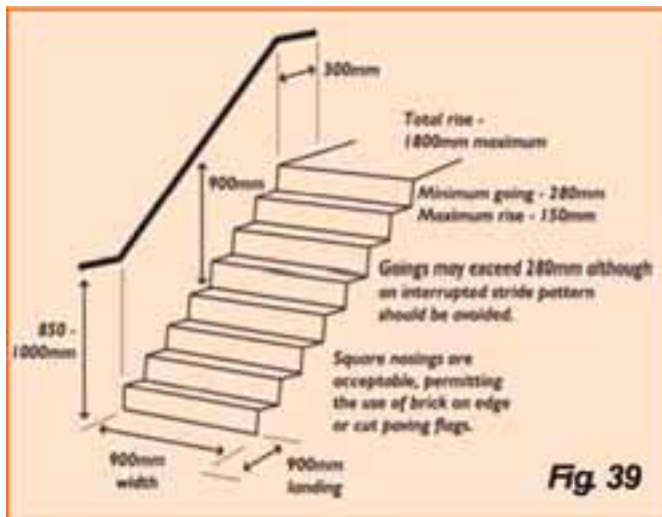


Fig. 39

- The approach cannot be made of loose laid materials such as gravel or shingle.
- The presence of a driveway might provide a better opportunity for creating a level or ramped approach, either from the pavement or footpath or from a car parking space.

- The width of the approach, excluding the space for parked vehicles (approximately 2.1 metres) should not be less than 900mm.
- Access to the dwelling or block of flats must be via an accessible threshold. This should be designed to take into account the requirements of other parts of the Building Regulations including resistance to weather and ground moisture.

Timber sill and external concrete slab paving

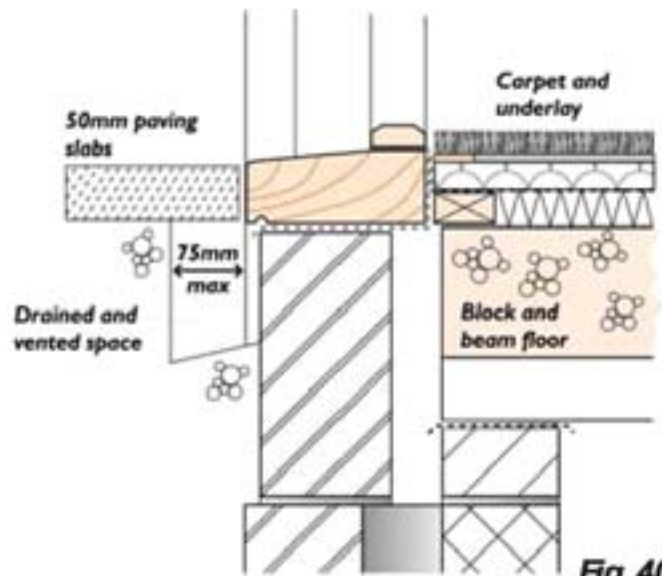


Fig. 40

Concrete sill and internal transition unit

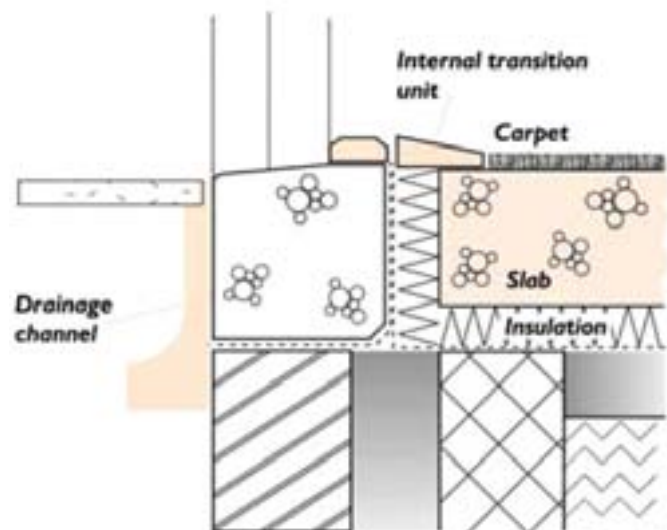


Fig. 41

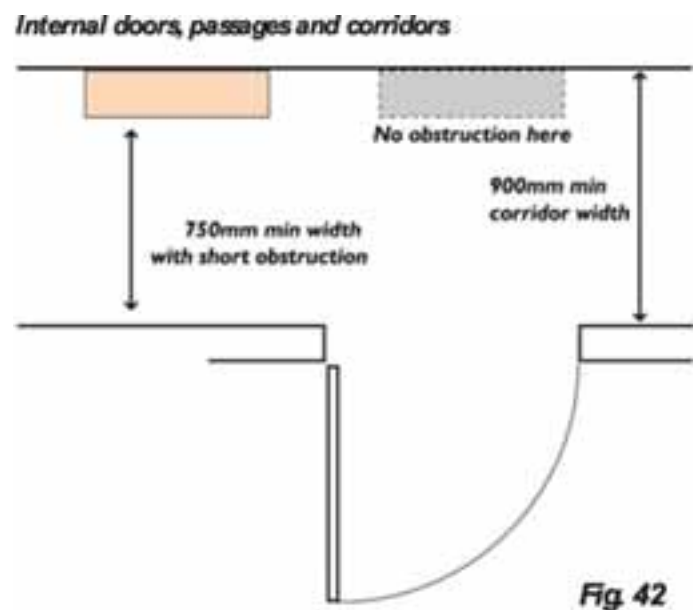
The DETR published a design guide for accessible thresholds in new housing, which is available from The Stationery Office (ISBN 011 702333 7). This document provides design solutions for suitable thresholds in many situations which minimise the risk of moisture ingress. Guidance is provided on suitable sill and threshold profiles, provision of drainage channels, treatment of internal floor finishes and external hard landscaping.

Table 4 - Minimum widths of corridors and passageways for a range of doorway widths

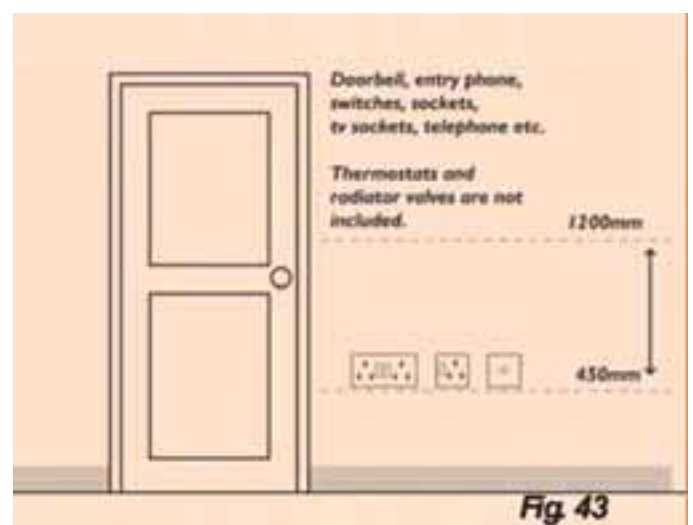
Door clear opening width (mm)	Corridor / passageway width (mm)
750 or wider	900 (when approach is head-on)
750	1200 (when approach not head-on)
775	1050 (when approach not head-on)
800	900 (when approach not head-on)

- Circulation within the entrance storey of the building must be possible for wheelchair users, providing access via doorways, corridors and passageways to the kitchen, habitable rooms and a room containing a w.c.
- An obstruction free zone of 900mm wide must be maintained outside the w.c. and opposite door openings in general. This zone should extend 200mm both sides of the projected edges of the clear opening.
- On steeply sloping sites a change in level within the entrance storey may be unavoidable. A 900mm wide staircase complying with Park K with handrails on each side if there are three or more risers would suffice.
- Switches and sockets on all levels within the dwelling should be located within an accessible zone. This is to assist people whose reach is limited to use the dwelling more easily.

- If a building contains flats, provision must be made for disabled people to visit occupants on any storey. This may be via the installation of a suitably dimensioned and designed lift or via common stairways designed for use by ambulant disabled and visually impaired people. See Section Vertical Circulation within the Building.



Location of switches, sockets, etc for accessibility



WCs within dwellings

A W C should be provided in the entrance storey of the dwelling. This should be located such that it can be reached from the habitable rooms in that storey without using stairs. (If the entrance storey contains no habitable rooms the W C may be provided in the principal storey).

The door to the W C should

- open outwards
- have a clear opening width as described previously
- be positioned to enable wheelchair users to access the w.c.

N.B. The compartment does not have to fully accommodate a wheelchair, and handrails are not required.

Clear space for frontal access to WC

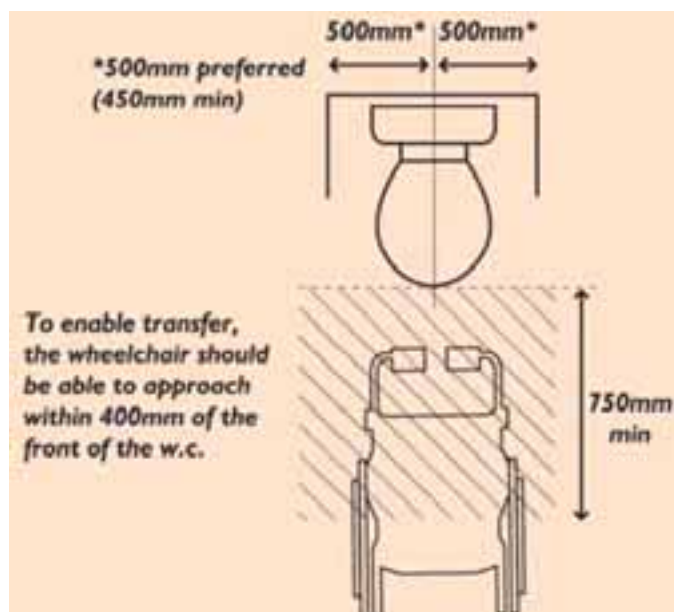


Fig. 44

The minimum width of the compartment is 900mm, but prescriptive layouts have not been imposed. Consideration should be given to the location of the wash basin, particularly in very small rooms.

Clear space for frontal access to WC

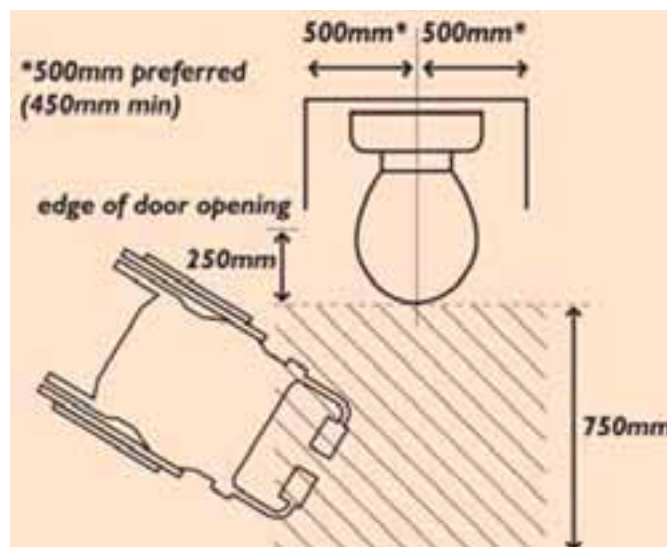


Fig. 45

It is intended that these improved standards will not only help disabled people to visit other homes more easily, but will also enable more people to remain in their homes for longer as they become less mobile with age.