



THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL
BUILDING STANDARDS

Professional Policy Note

Dwellings With Limited Entrance Storey Accomodation

(December 2010)

BST- 019

Purpose

The Highland Council Building Standards Professional Policy Notes are produced to inform and create uniformity and consistency of interpretation throughout the Highland Council area, thus promoting good practice and customer care for the benefit of our Stakeholders. Please note that this guidance note is based upon information available at the time of issue, and may be subject to change.

General

Mandatory Standard 4.2 requires that in *dwelling*s, safe and convenient means of access is provided throughout the *dwelling*, and unassisted means of access is provided to, and throughout, at least one level.

This requirement was clarified by the Head of the SBSA in a ministerial debate in 2007

"Improved building standards came into force on 1 May 2007 and require that all new dwellings, where it is reasonably practicable to do so, must be designed to a 'liveability' standard that was based upon and developed from Communities Scotland's Housing for Varying Needs and the Joseph Rowntree Lifetime Homes Standards.

The main changes were:

- *improved accessibility throughout all levels in a dwelling, including wider doors and corridors;*
- *increased area for an apartment, kitchen and bathroom on the same level;*
- *flexibility built into the design to allow ease of adaptability in the future;*
- *reduced ramp lengths and enhanced guidance on accessibility to all dwellings."*

Clauses 4.2.6 and 3.11.3 consider the facilities required in dwellings.

Clause 4.2.10 considers the instances where there may be limited or no entrance storey accommodation. The clause defines this;

"Where a dwelling, such as a townhouse or upper villa flat, contains no, or only limited, accommodation on the entrance storey".

There has been some confusion in when the facilities required on a principal living level in a dwelling do not have to be provided on the entrance storey. While the guidance in clause 4.2.10 does refer to apartments on the entrance storey, the primary statement is where **there is limited or no entrance storey accommodation.**

The fundamental aim of the standard in respect of the design of houses is to ensure flexibility is built into the design to allow ease of adaptability in the future.

However, it is not the intention of the technical standards or the Highland Council to unnecessarily limit or impeded good design.

Policy

1. For the purposes of standard 4.2 and clause 4.2.10 *no, or only limited, accommodation on the entrance storey* is defined as
 - a. An upper villa flat
 - b. A townhouse
 - c. Any other design where the required accommodation physically cannot be provided within the entrance storey footprint by good inclusive design.*
 - d. A design where the living accommodation is provided on an upper storey in order to obtain better views or daylight.

* this would include narrow or severely sloping sites, but while not precluding garage accommodation on the entrance storey neither should garaging or storage accommodation prevent reasonable space being available for the entrance storey provision

2. To ensure transparency of decision making and consistency where the above definition of *no, or limited entrance storey accommodation* is not met then an alternative solution proposal should be made in line with BSP-12 Risk Assessment Protocol for Alternative Solutions