

Planning Technical Advice Note: 1A

Space Standards for Residential Development

Guidance for applying the Nationally
Described Space Standard

May 2016



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Space Standards for Residential Development

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Introduction

- 1.1 This Technical Advice Note sets out the City Council's interpretation of the Nationally Described Space Standards published in March 2015, and which came into full effect in October 2015. It should be read in conjunction with Technical Advice Note 1B: Accessible Homes.
- 1.2 In particular it makes reference to the nearest national space standard to the internal space standards adopted in the Sites and Housing Plan in 2013. This will help decision makers to apply the appropriate standard when considering applications for residential (Use Class C3) development.

2. Local policy context

- 2.1 In 2013, Oxford City Council adopted the Sites and Housing Plan as part of its statutory Local Plan. The SHP includes Policy HP12 - Indoor Space. This sets out minimum standards for the internal space required in new flats and houses in Oxford.
- 2.2 Policy HP12 and its supporting text is reproduced in full in Appendix 2. In summary, the minimum internal standards included in the policy are:
 - any single dwelling to provide at least 39 square metres of indoor floorspace, measures internally,
 - any single family dwelling to provide at least 75 square metres of indoor floorspace, measures internally.
- 2.3 A family dwelling is defined in the SHP as "a self-contained house (or bungalow) of 2 or more bedrooms, or a self-contained flat either with 3 or more bedrooms or otherwise deemed likely to encourage occupation by a family including children."

3. The National Technical Standard

- 3.1 In March 2015, the Government introduced a 'Nationally Described Space Standard' (or National Standard for short). This sets out more detailed minimum standards than the earlier Sites and Housing Plan policy for Oxford. The full standards are available on the Government's website¹ and reproduced in Appendix 1, and should be read as a whole. However a summary table is provided below.

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/technical-housing-standards-nationally-described-space-standard>

**Table 1 – Extract from Nationally Described Space Standard
(minimum gross internal floor areas)**

Number of bedrooms(b)	Number of bed spaces (persons)	1 storey dwellings	2 storey dwellings	3 storey dwellings	Built-in storage
1b	1p	39 (37) ²			1.0
	2p	50	58		1.5
2b	3p	61	70		2.0
	4p	70	79		
3b	4p	74	84	90	2.5
	5p	86	93	99	
	6p	95	102	108	
4b	5p	90	97	103	3.0
	6p	99	106	112	
	7p	108	115	121	
	8p	117	124	130	
5b	6p	103	110	116	3.5
	7p	112	119	125	
	8p	121	128	134	
6b	7p	116	123	129	4.0
	8p	125	132	138	

² Where a one person flat has a shower room rather than a bathroom, the floor area may be reduced from 39m² to 37m²

3.2 In a Ministerial Statement², the Government set out how they wished local planning authorities to implement the new National Standard. In cases where a Local Plan already included internal space standards, the following would apply:

“From 1 October 2015: Existing Local Plan, neighbourhood plan, and supplementary planning document policies relating to water efficiency, access and internal space should be interpreted by reference to the nearest equivalent new national technical standard. Decision takers should only require compliance with the new national technical standards where there is a relevant current Local Plan policy.”

3.3 The Ministerial Statement also stated:

“Where policies relating to technical standards have yet to be revised, local planning authorities are advised to set out clearly how the existing policies will be applied in decision taking in light of this statement.”

² Planning update March 2015, written statement to Parliament by the Rt. Hon. Sir Eric Pickles MP, 25th March 2015 <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/planning-update-march-2015>

4. Applying the National Space Standard in Oxford

4.1 In light of the above, **the City Council will apply the National Space Standard to new residential (Use Class C3) development**, in preference to the more basic standard set out in Policy HP12 of the Sites and Housing Plan.

4.2 In addition to setting minimum overall internal space standards, the National Standard also sets out minimum space requirements for single and double/twin bedrooms, minimum headrooms for all rooms, and technical requirements for internal storage space. This relates directly to paragraph A3.22 in the SHP supporting Policy HP12, which states:

“Within each new home, rooms and corridors should be comfortable, able to accommodate furniture and household equipment that would be expected in that part of the home, and allow for convenient circulation and access. Ceilings should allow sufficient headroom for people to live and move around; any spaces with insufficient headroom will not generally be counted as habitable space.”

4.3 Therefore all of criteria a. to i. in paragraph 10 of the Nationally Prescribed Standard should be applied for residential (Use Class C3) proposals in Oxford.

5. Outdoor space

5.1 The Nationally Described Space Standard and accompanying Planning Practice Guidance make no reference to Local Plan policies that deal with outdoor amenity space. It is therefore concluded that Local Plan policies should determine outdoor space requirements in light of local evidence. As an adopted Local Plan policy, Policy HP13 - Outdoor Space in the Sites and Housing Plan will continue to apply in full when determining planning applications. Policy HP13 and supporting text is reproduced in Appendix 2.

6. Conversion and sub-division of existing buildings

6.1 The Ministerial Statement states that the National Space Standard, where adopted by the Local Authority, should apply to new housing. New housing will include where an existing building (either an existing house or a building in non-residential use) is converted into flats or smaller dwelling units. The National Space Standards, as related above to the Sites and Housing Plan, will apply to such developments where planning permission is required.

6.2 However some residential development can be created under permitted development rights. An example is where a non-residential building is proposed for conversion into flats: provided that no physical external work is required which requires planning permission, this can usually be achieved

through a 'prior approval' process. In such instances, the local planning authority has no power to seek particular standards or conditions. Therefore the space standards are not applicable to these types of developments.

7. Contact

Please use the following contact to ask any questions you may have on the content of this note.

Planning

Phone: 01865 249 811 (select option for Planning)

Email: planningpolicy@oxford.gov.uk

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Or alternative visit www.oxford.gov.uk/planningpolicy

Appendix 1 Nationally described space standard



Department for
Communities and
Local Government

Technical housing standards – nationally described space standard



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Technical housing standards – nationally described space standard

Introduction

1. This standard deals with internal space within new dwellings and is suitable for application across all tenures. It sets out requirements for the Gross Internal (floor) Area of new dwellings at a defined level of occupancy as well as floor areas and dimensions for key parts of the home, notably bedrooms, storage and floor to ceiling height.
2. The requirements of this standard for bedrooms, storage and internal areas are relevant only in determining compliance with this standard in new dwellings and have no other statutory meaning or use.

Using the space standard

3. The standard Gross Internal Areas set out in Table 1 are organised by storey height to take account of the extra circulation space needed for stairs to upper floors, and deal separately with one storey dwellings (typically flats) and two and three storey dwellings (typically houses).
4. Individual dwelling types are expressed with reference to the number of bedrooms (denoted as 'b') and the number of bedspaces (or people) that can be accommodated within these bedrooms (denoted as 'p'). A three bedroom (3b) home with one double bedroom (providing two bed spaces) and two single bedrooms (each providing one bed space) is therefore described as 3b4p.
5. This allows for different combinations of single and double/twin bedrooms to be reflected in the minimum Gross Internal Area. The breakdown of the minimum Gross Internal Area therefore allows not only for the different combinations of bedroom size, but also for varying amounts of additional living, dining, kitchen and storage space; all of which are related to the potential occupancy.
6. Relating internal space to the number of bedspaces is a means of classification for assessment purposes only when designing new homes and seeking planning approval (if a local authority has adopted the space standard in its Local Plan). It does not imply actual occupancy, or define the minimum for any room in a dwelling to be used for a specific purpose other than in complying with this standard.
7. Minimum floor areas and room widths for bedrooms and minimum floor areas for storage are also an integral part of the space standard. They cannot be used in isolation from other parts of the design standard or removed from it.

8. The Gross Internal Area of a dwelling is defined as the total floor space measured between the internal faces of perimeter walls¹ that enclose the dwelling. This includes partitions, structural elements, cupboards, ducts, flights of stairs and voids above stairs. The Gross Internal Area should be measured and denoted in square metres (m²).
9. The Gross Internal Areas in this standard will not be adequate for wheelchair housing (Category 3 homes in Part M of the Building Regulations) where additional internal area is required to accommodate increased circulation and functionality to meet the needs of wheelchair households.

Technical requirements

10. The standard requires that:
 - a. the dwelling provides at least the gross internal floor area and built-in storage area set out in Table 1 below
 - b. a dwelling with two or more bedspaces has at least one double (or twin) bedroom
 - c. in order to provide one bedspace, a single bedroom has a floor area of at least 7.5m² and is at least 2.15m wide
 - d. in order to provide two bedspaces, a double (or twin bedroom) has a floor area of at least 11.5m²
 - e. one double (or twin bedroom) is at least 2.75m wide and every other double (or twin) bedroom is at least 2.55m wide
 - f. any area with a headroom of less than 1.5m is not counted within the Gross Internal Area unless used solely for storage (if the area under the stairs is to be used for storage, assume a general floor area of 1m² within the Gross Internal Area)
 - g. any other area that is used solely for storage and has a headroom of 900-1500mm (such as under eaves) is counted at 50% of its floor area, and any area lower than 900mm is not counted at all
 - h. a built-in wardrobe counts towards the Gross Internal Area and bedroom floor area requirements, but should not reduce the effective width of the room below the minimum widths set out above. The built-in area in excess of 0.72m² in a double bedroom and 0.36m² in a single bedroom counts towards the built-in storage requirement
 - i. the minimum floor to ceiling height is 2.3m for at least 75% of the Gross Internal Area

¹ The internal face of a perimeter wall is the finished surface of the wall. For a detached house, the perimeter walls are the external walls that enclose the dwelling, and for other houses or apartments they are the external walls and party walls.

Table 1 - Minimum gross internal floor areas and storage (m²)

Number of bedrooms(b)	Number of bed spaces (persons)	1 storey dwellings	2 storey dwellings	3 storey dwellings	Built-in storage
1b	1p	39 (37) ²			1.0
	2p	50	58		1.5
2b	3p	61	70		2.0
	4p	70	79		
3b	4p	74	84	90	2.5
	5p	86	93	99	
	6p	95	102	108	
4b	5p	90	97	103	3.0
	6p	99	106	112	
	7p	108	115	121	
	8p	117	124	130	
5b	6p	103	110	116	3.5
	7p	112	119	125	
	8p	121	128	134	
6b	7p	116	123	129	4.0
	8p	125	132	138	

² Where a one person flat has a shower room rather than a bathroom, the floor area may be reduced from 39m² to 37m².

Appendix 2 Sites & Housing Plan Policy HP12 – Indoor Space

Living conditions

A3.21 The Core Strategy Vision recognises that good housing will improve our social, environmental and economic well-being. The standard of people's homes, both within and outside the building, is crucial in meeting people's everyday needs and expectations.

Space for living

A3.22 Within each new home, rooms and corridors should be comfortable, able to accommodate furniture and household equipment that would be expected in that part of the home, and allow for convenient circulation and access. Ceilings should allow sufficient headroom for people to live and move around; any spaces with insufficient headroom will not generally be counted as habitable space.

A3.23 New homes should also provide some open space which allows the people living there to enjoy fresh air and light in privacy. Where appropriate, balconies or private terraces should be provided for flats, which must have a minimum dimension of 1.5 metres' depth by 3 metres' length. Alternatively, a private garden can be shared between a small number of flats, but must not be accessible to the general public. Private outdoor areas should allow space for a table and chairs, and/or clothes drying space, plus reasonable circulation.

A3.24 Family homes (as defined in the Glossary) will require additional space. Inside such homes, adequate space should be provided for at least four occupants. Houses with 2 or more bedrooms must also provide direct access to a private garden with adequate space for children to play in, and for family activities. The City Council will expect an area of private garden for each family house which is at least equivalent to the original building footprint.

A3.25 Space must be provided for storage of refuse and recycling bins. This must be large enough to accommodate wheeled bins, of a number and size required for the size and type of homes proposed. Hard surface access must be provided from the bin stores to the street. The City Council will publish a technical advice note, subject to update, to provide detailed requirements.

Policy HP12

Indoor Space

Planning permission will only be granted for new dwellings that provide good-quality living accommodation for the intended use if:

- a. each dwelling has its own lockable entrance, its own kitchen and at least one bathroom;*
- b. the space provided within each room allows for reasonable furnishing, circulation and use of household facilities in each part of the home, including for desk-based home working;*
- c. each dwelling provides adequate storage space, taking account of the occupation intended.*

Planning permission will not be granted for new dwellings if:

- d. any single dwelling provides less than 39m² of floorspace (measured internally), or*
- e. any single family dwelling provides less than 75m² floorspace (measured internally), or*
- f. inadequate ceiling height, lack of natural lighting or natural ventilation, or a restricted outlook prevents proper use and enjoyment of the dwelling.*

Policy HP13

Outdoor Space

Planning permission will only be granted for new dwellings that have direct and convenient access to an area of private open space, to meet the following specifications:

- a. houses of 2 or more bedrooms must provide a private garden, of adequate size and proportions for the size of house proposed, for exclusive use by occupants of that house;*
- b. flats and maisonettes of 3 or more bedrooms must provide either a private balcony or terrace of useable level space, or, in the case of ground floor flats, direct access to a private or shared garden, with some defensible space;*
- c. 1 or 2 bedroom flats and maisonettes should provide either a private balcony or terrace of useable level space, or direct access to a private or shared garden.*

The following factors will be material in assessing whether adequate space has been provided:

- d. the location and context of the development, in relation to the layout of existing residential plots, and proximity to public open space;*
- e. the orientation of the outdoor area in relation to the sun;*
- f. the degree to which enclosure and overlooking impact on the proposed new dwellings and any neighbouring dwellings, and*
- g. the overall shape, access to and usability of the whole space to be provided.*

Planning permission will not be granted for residential dwellings unless adequate provision is made for the safe, discrete and conveniently accessible storage of refuse and recycling, in addition to outdoor amenity space.