

ACCESSIBILITY WITHIN A DWELLING

(eg Garage Conversions)

(Guidance to Standards 3.11, 3.12 and 4.2)

Part of Building Standards role is to ensure that alterations to a building do not result in the building failing to comply with mandatory Standards to a greater degree and also to address both the immediate accessibility and future adaptations of dwellings.

Standard 4.2 (d) states:-

“In dwellings, safe and convenient means of access is provided throughout the dwelling; and”

This Standard refers to “throughout the dwelling” and it is acknowledged that by removing the capability to easily provide a stair lift or platform lift, it reduces the ability of occupiers to gain access to the upper floors. Importantly, Standard 4.2 (d) refers to “safe and convenient” but does not incorporate the term “unassisted” as contained within the text of Standard 4.2 (e).

Standard 4.2(e) states:-

“In dwellings, unassisted means of access is provided to, and throughout, at least one level”.

The provision of the extra accommodation on for example the ground floor level provides additional flexibility to allow an enhanced apartment (Clause 3.11.2), a kitchen (Clause 3.11.3) and sanitary accommodation (Clauses 3.12.1, 3.12.3 and 3.12.4) all on the same floor level, thereby creating a principal living level as described in Clause 4.2.6, thus providing compliance with Standard 4.2 (e).

The following guidance has been created to assist the designer to meet the functional Standards. Where the present house layout is as described in 1, or the proposed layout matches or can be designed to match 2 – 5, the additional alternatives listed in 6 – 10 will not be considered.

Criteria Meeting the Terms of the Guidance

1. The **present** stair arrangement would not permit the installation of a stair lift e.g. no parking space to top (200 x 400mm) and bottom (700 x 400 mm) of flight or a door at mid landings obstructing rail etc.
2. Stair lift parking spaces are available at both the bottom and top of stair.

3. Stair lift parking space maintained by relocating proposed door outwith “parking zone”.
4. Access to new accommodation via an alternative route e.g. via kitchen, another hallway, utility room etc.
5. Extension of the hallway to create a recessed doorway incorporating space to park stair lift clear of any door swing fitting or obstruction.

Where the proposed layout of the dwelling cannot be designed to match the criteria listed in 2 to 5 above, the additional alternatives listed in 6 – 10 below will be considered.

Additional Guidance

The additional guidance below is designed to allow applicants to extend or enhance the living accommodation of a dwelling house by means other than by meeting the guidelines to the Mandatory Functional Standards.

6. A parking space (700 mm x 400 mm) is available to the top or bottom of the stair. (Stairlift seat automatically returns to parked position when not in use).
7. Vertical platform lift located outwith activity spaces to both lower and upper floors. If located within any activity space the room cannot be deemed as, nor used as, an apartment.
8. Where the existing dwelling already has an accessible W.C. meeting the guidance contained in the 2007 Hand Book, or is close to meeting the previous guidance for an accessible toilet (800 mm wide x 750 mm deep activity space clear of any door swing) and having a space available for an accessible shower (Clause 3.12.3).
9. Where the existing dwelling has an accessible W.C. meeting present or close to meeting previous guidelines, but does not have a space for a shower, then provision must be made for the future installation of a shower or bath. The submission drawings for the conversion of the garage etc should indicate the location of an accessible shower or bath (Clause 3.12.3) with an apartment. The location of this sanitary ware should be indicated by a dotted or broken line and include a note stating that all light switches or power points affected by this future installation will be relocated.
10. Where the existing dwelling does not currently have an accessible W.C. or one which is close to meeting the previous guidelines, provision must be made for the future installation of an accessible W.C., wash hand basin and shower or bath. Drawings should indicate the location of the future W.C., wash hand basin and shower or bath (including wash hand basin) within an a room.

The above information is intended as guidance for an applicant submitting a Building Warrant application within Clackmannanshire. Clackmannanshire Council will base its assessment on the circumstances detailed within each application and a decision made on one property need not, therefore, set a precedent for similar works elsewhere.

For further assistance please visit www.sbsa.gov.uk or www.clacksweb.org.uk.
Alternatively contact your local Building Standards Office.

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