

SPACE STANDARDS SPD



FEBRUARY 2012

Worthing
BOROUGH COUNCIL



Space Standards SPD

1 Introduction	2
2 Background	3
3 Policy Context	5
4 How to apply the guidance	6
5 Internal Space Standards	7
6 External Space Standards	10

Appendices

Appendix 1 - Useful publications	14
Appendix 2 - Building for life criteria	15
Appendix 3 - Contact Details	16

1 Introduction

1.1 The purpose of this document is to ensure that the floor area and associated storage space in new residential developments and conversions in Worthing is sufficient to secure a satisfactory standard of accommodation for their residents. This Supplementary Planning Document provides an opportunity to address some concerns over the inadequacy of space in some developments that have arisen over recent years.

Who is this guidance for?

1.2 The guidance is for any individual, group of people or company considering building or converting a home or homes in the borough of Worthing. It informs developers of the space standards that are expected for all new residential development in the borough whether publicly or privately funded. The guidance once adopted will be a reference document for use by the Council when considering applications for new residential development (and conversions). It contains the information necessary to assess whether or not a proposal is likely to provide satisfactory living accommodation.

Issues covered by the SPD

1.3 The SPD gives the background to residential space standards and its effect on health, the history of standards in the UK and a comparison with standards in the rest of Europe. The policy context is set out and requirements for consultation are explained in the document.

1.4 The SPD sets minimum areas for both the overall size of the property and the size of the areas for cooking, eating and living. Bedrooms have to achieve a minimum floor area and width. One common theme in new homes is a lack of storage and this is an essential basic requirement for any home. The SPD sets out a minimum area to be set aside for general storage. The need for private outdoor space in the form of a balcony for flats and a garden for other dwellings is specified in the SPD with minimum dimensions for gardens only and guidance for balconies.

1.5 Issues of overlooking and privacy, design, waste storage and parking are referred to but are not dealt with in detail in the SPD. However, these are important and a number of guidance documents have been listed in Appendix 1 to help with these issues and contact details have been provided for Development Management, Planning Policy and Waste Strategy (Appendix 3). New development should be designed with reference to Building for Life and it is encouraged that the requirements of Lifetime Homes are complied with.

Consultation

1.6 Initial internal consultation was undertaken with key Council departments and a wider public and stakeholder consultation was then held for 6 weeks between 19 August and 30 September 2011. A report was taken to the Joint Planning Committee on 13 September informing Members of the progress on the SPD. Comments received were then summarised within a report which together with officers' responses was then considered at Worthing Planning Committee on 23 November. The revised SPD was then considered by Joint Planning Committee on 17 January 2012 before the Cabinet Member for Regeneration was asked to sign off the approved SPD.

2 Background

2.1 A report for CABA (the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment) published in July 2009 entitled 'Resident Satisfaction with Space in the Home' looked at the issue of space standards nationally. The conclusion of the report is that housing does not consistently provide adequate space for residents to go about their everyday lives in comfort. The research shows that many residents lack sufficient space:

- for the furniture they need
- for storing their personal possessions
- for household necessities
- for materials for recycling
- to prepare food conveniently
- for children to play
- to have somewhere private to retreat to
- to work from home or for children to do their homework
- to entertain friends and family in the home.

2.2 It is unlikely that the private market will always meet the internal space requirements without space standards being adopted. The CABA report concluded that those who can't afford to move to larger homes have to live with the negative effects of space constraints and that local authorities should:

- introduce or apply existing minimum space standards
- recognise that adequate space in the home has an effect on health, and community cohesion and that insufficient space provision in the local housing stock will ultimately impact upon local services.

2.3 In Europe only England and Wales have no minimum space standards for housing. Research carried out for the Greater London Authority indicates that the levels of space in the home in England are near the bottom of the range compared with other countries in Europe (Housing Space Standards, HATC for the Greater London Authority, 2006). The same report draws attention to research which shows an association between the quality of living accommodation and psychological health.

2.4 A policy paper by the Royal Institute of British Architects 'Better Homes and Neighbourhoods' (2007) gives a striking comparison of floor space in England and Wales with other countries: *The average floor space of a new dwelling in England and Wales is 76m². Compare this with an average 92m² in Japan or 115m² in Holland – both countries with just as much pressure on land.*

2.5 In 1961, a government report called 'Homes for Today & Tomorrow' specified minimum space standards for new homes. These came to be known as the Parker Morris standards (Parker Morris was the chairman of the Central Housing Advisory Committee which produced the report). The report was addressed to both the private and public sector and by the end of the 1960s the space standards were mandatory for all council housing (but not for private housing). The standards were an attempt to raise the quality of public housing, but their adoption did not always lead to well-designed or popular housing.

2.6 The Parker Morris standards defined the *minimum* space requirements for a new dwelling, but not surprisingly, many developers treated them as the maximum size of a dwelling. In 1980 the standard was scrapped as mandatory by the government.

2.7 More recently, the government's housing and regeneration agency, English Partnerships (now part of the Homes and Communities Agency), have adopted the Parker Morris standards plus an additional 10% of space as mandatory for all its developments. The standards used by a number of councils (including Adur) are based on English Partnerships' standards as published in 2007. The Homes and Community Agency now advises (May 2011) that proposed national standards have been scrapped and that councils are encouraged to set their own.

2.8 In September 2011 the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) published a research document 'The Case for Space'. The paper assesses the internal floor area of homes on a sample of sites by England's eight largest volume housebuilders. Findings are compared to the Greater London Authority's space standards to benchmark good practice. The paper also analyses past research into what adequate space in the home means, and how it impacts upon our lives.

2.9 Based on a sample in the research paper, the average new home in England is only 92% of the recommended minimum size. The average three bedroom home from the sample was 88m² which is 8m² short of the recommended minimum floor area for a two storey, three bedroom home for five residents (96 sqm).

2.10 In parallel with the need for better provision of space in the home and the emergence of minimum space standards, the Lifetime Homes organisation has introduced a list of 16 key requirements which, if complied with, should enable homes to provide satisfactory accommodation throughout a lifetime including times of illness, bringing up a family or disability and old age. The Lifetime Homes (Lifetime Homes 21st Century Living www.lifetimehomes.org.uk) requirements enable a greater number of people to stay within their local neighbourhood and community throughout changes in lifestyles and needs, which in turn helps to build more stable communities. Homes built to the Lifetime Homes standard permit adaptation to the changing needs of its occupants and are able to be altered more easily and with less expense and disruption than more conventional homes.

2.11 This background clearly indicates the need for local authorities to progress and adopt local standards as part of a wider housing framework. The Space Standards SPD for Worthing is based on Adur District Council's space standards.

3 Policy Context

National Policy

3.1 As previously referred to, the Parker Morris standards for public sector housing were introduced in 1961 and were in place until the 1980s when they were scrapped. Since then there has been limited national planning guidance on space standards.

3.2 Some Planning Policy Statements (PPSs) do provide support for the development of residential space and layout standards although none are explicit about what such guidance should contain.

- *PPS1 Delivering Sustainable Development* (January 2005): addresses matters of design
- *PPS3 Housing* (June 2011): para 16 'Provides, or enables good access to, community and green and open amenity and recreational space (including play space) as well as private outdoor space such as residential gardens, patios and balconies.'
- *PPS3 Housing*: para 17 refers to informal play space and in para 49 states that 'Successful intensification need not mean high rise development or low quality accommodation with inappropriate space'.

Local Policy

3.3 Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) form part of the Local Development Framework for the borough alongside the Core Strategy and any other subsequent Development Plan Documents. An SPD can be used to add detail to the policies in a DPD. In this case the relevant DPD is the Core Strategy. The most relevant Core Strategy policies, which are supplemented by this SPD, are Policy 16 Built Environment and Design and Policy 8 Mix of Homes. Paragraph 7.13 refers to the adaptability enabled by Lifetime Homes and to the internal size and layout of homes which are both essential factors to consider if new homes are to be built to a standard which enables people to have a reasonable standard of living accommodation.

3.4 There is no requirement for an SPD to undergo an Examination in Public but it is subject to public consultation in accordance with the Council's Statement of Community Involvement. This means that interested individuals, community groups and organisations as well as developers are invited to become involved in the content of this document and make representations, which may result in amendments being made to the document before its adoption for development and management purposes.

4 How to apply the guidance

4.1 All new build dwellings should comply (or surpass) with the essential minimum standards set out in section 5 and 6 of this SPD. Compliance should be clearly demonstrated by the drawings that are submitted as part of a planning application. All new build developments will also be expected to surpass the standards which are a minimum. However, the standards in certain circumstances will be applied flexibly if sufficient justification is provided on a case by case basis.

4.2 Extensions and conversions of existing buildings should follow the guidance where practicable for example by applying the standards to new rooms added to a dwelling in the form of an extension. The guidance is also applicable to conversions or subdivision of existing buildings to new habitable units. If buildings to be converted or subdivided to form living accommodation are unable to accommodate the minimum standards, they are in all probability unsuitable for residential use. However, in some circumstances a balance may be struck that would allow for an element of flexibility as long as, overall, the proposal resulted in the delivery of acceptable living accommodation. It would need to be demonstrated why the conversion would not be able to meet the required standards. Any significant variation from the standard for any element will be refused.

4.3 Detailed external design and appearance are not covered by this SPD. Guidance on good design is provided by a number of bodies including CABE <http://www.designcouncil.org.uk/our-work/CABE/> and reference should be made to the guidance documents listed in the Publications List in Appendix 1. Information on sustainable construction is available in the Council's Core Strategy Policy 17.

4.4 The Lifetime Homes space requirements are included as part of the minimum space standards in this document. New housing provided with public funding complies with Lifetime Homes standards and it therefore makes sense for all new housing, including that built for the private market, to comply. The same standards for all new housing stock also makes a future change in tenure possible. The proportion of Lifetime Homes should increase over time as more new homes are built to this standard. <http://www.lifetimehomes.org.uk/>

4.5 Building for Life is a national standard for well designed homes and neighbourhoods administered by Design for Homes (<http://www.designforhomes.org> and <http://www.designcouncil.org.uk/our-work/CABE/Localism-and-planning/Building-for-Life/>). 'Building for Life' focuses on the environment and community, character, streets, parking and pedestrianisation and design and construction. It contains 20 criteria (see Appendix 2) of which one is "*Do internal spaces and lay-out allow for adaptation, conversion or extension?*". The main consideration is adaptability of changing demands and lifestyles as a result of social, technological and economic conditions by providing flexible internal lay-outs. Examples include space for a downstairs toilet, lift/stairlift, conservatory/extension, as well as wider doorways and level entrances and a structure that enables internal partition walls to be moved. New developments should be designed with reference to 'Building for Life' in order to produce a high quality environment and sense of place.

5 Internal Space Standards

The minimum total internal floor area requirements for dwellings listed below follow those of English Partnerships' Quality Standards (and Gentoo Group Ltd). They are the same space standards as used by Adur District Council. The standards are approximately 10% more generous than Parker Morris standards (dating back from the 1960s). There is one exception and that is that an additional standard has been included for studio flats as this type of accommodation provides choice and enables first time purchasers more opportunities to access the housing ladder.

Space Standards by dwelling type (m²)

Dwelling type / Number of bedrooms	Total minimum floor area	Storage space	Living, cooking & eating area	Sleeping area
Studio flat	32	1.5	22	7
One bedroom flat	51	2.5	22	12
Two bedroom flat	66	3.5	24	19
Two bedroom flat wheelchair flat	71	3.5	26	21
Two bedroom house	77	3.75	27	24
Three bedroom dwelling	93	4.5	30	31
Four bedroom dwelling	106	5.5	33	36

Notes:

The total minimum floorspace is the gross internal floor area (GIA), being the space measured between the inside faces of the enclosing walls of the dwelling unit (measured over space taken by private stairs, partitions, internal storage space, internal chimney breasts and heating appliances, conservatories and internal porches which form an integral part of the habitable space, and internal storage over 1.5m in height). It excludes garages, external storage areas, balconies, porches and lobbies open to the air, non-habitable basements and attics, and any accommodation (eg. sloping ceilings within the roofspace) where the ceiling height is less than 1.5m high (NB. Definition from HQI April 2008). Living rooms should not be narrower than 3.3m (from English Partnerships).

Storage space: storage standards includes storage for buggies and child scooters.

Storage space

5.1 There is a need to ensure that dwellings contain sufficient space both internally and externally for the storage of household items and for 'dirty' storage (which is storage for such items as buggies, scooters and boots where there is no practical access to outdoor storage). Surveys carried out elsewhere have revealed that insufficient storage space is the main area of dissatisfaction. Provision should be made for storage cupboards within dwellings with at least 1.5 m² for a single person dwelling and the standards listed above follow those adopted by Adur and Mid Sussex District Council which are higher than those of the other bodies.

Living Cooking Eating

5.2 The living/cooking/eating areas and bedroom sizes listed above follow those of Gentoo Group and the recommendation of housing policy adviser HATC Ltd as developed for the Greater London Authority (GLA) in 2006. They state that they have been calculated on a qualitative approach (the experience of the project team in developing properties) and a qualitative approach (a calculation of the minimum floor area needed to accommodate the furniture schedules set out in the Building Research Establishment (BRE) Housing Design Handbook and the National Housing Federation's Guide to standards and quality).

Minimum Floor Areas for bedrooms (in metres)

Bedroom	Area (in m ²)	Minimum width
Single	7	2.6
Double	12	2.6

6 External Space Standards

External private space

6.1 It is important for both children and adults to have access to some private or at least, semi-private outdoor space. In the case of non-flatted developments, this can most easily be provided in the form of a private enclosed garden. The provision of a garden also makes it easier to provide outside covered storage for items such as bicycles, garden tools, garden furniture and outdoor toys. In the case of flats, balconies may take the place of a garden but easily accessible communal areas will also be required for relaxing and play as well as areas for hanging washing.

6.2 A private outdoor space is one which is not overlooked from the street or other public place. Private balconies on the front elevation of flats may be acceptable if the building is set back from the street onto which they face. However, it is accepted that in some locations (particularly the town centre) it may be appropriate to have balconies and outdoor space near the street if suitably designed. If the building is sited on or close to the back edge of the pavement, a balcony on the front elevation, where the activities of the occupants can be observed by passers by, is not likely to provide an acceptable private outdoor space. This may be less of an issue for balconies at higher levels depending upon its distance back from a road. It may therefore be necessary to provide alternative forms of private outdoor space for some first floor flats, which could be in the form of side or rear facing balconies or access to a terrace. Aside from the issue of privacy, fumes and noise from vehicles, would spoil any enjoyment of a balcony in close proximity to a heavily trafficked road.

6.3 Communal gardens should provide an attractive area for residents to relax without being overtly in the public gaze but nevertheless should be overlooked by residents in the interests of security. Plans should indicate how the space to be provided allows for the provision of overlooking by residents.

6.4 It is unlikely that single aspect homes will be considered acceptable especially if the single aspect is north facing as no rooms would benefit from sunlight at any time. Design layouts should seek to reduce the number of single aspect dwellings in a development as much as possible and preferably exclude them altogether.

Minimum standards for rear gardens for houses

Type	Rear garden area (m ²)
2-bedroom terraced	50
3-bedroom terraced	65
Small Semi or detached (3 bedroom max)	85
Large semi or detached	100

Private outdoor space for flats including balconies

6.5 For flat developments a minimum of 20 m² per flat should be provided which is normally in the form of communal areas. However, with larger and taller blocks especially, there is an increasing desire for some form of private outdoor space to be provided for each flat in the form of a balcony (or roof terrace). This has been recognised by English Partnerships who state that balconies need to be of sufficient size to accommodate a small table and sufficient chairs for each occupant. On this basis HATC (2006) have calculated a standard of 3 m² for a 1 or 2 person flat plus 1 m² for each additional person. A minimum depth of 1.5 m and area of 5-9 m² is recommended by English Partnerships. Communal space should normally be provided to make up the balance of the 20m² but this may be influenced by the design and location of the development. These standards may also need to be applied more flexibly in sensitive locations, such as Conservation Areas, where design considerations may take a precedent.

Car and cycle parking

6.6 The recommended levels of car parking and cycle provision are set out in Guidance for Car Parking in New Residential Developments (September 2010) published by West Sussex County Council. New development needs to accord with these.

http://www.westsussex.gov.uk/leisure/getting_around_west_sussex/parking/parking_standards.aspx

Waste storage

6.7 External areas also need to include space for recyclable and non-recyclable waste storage. The necessary space needs to be provided either within each curtilage for dwellings or communally for flats and high density housing, being in a convenient position for both the householders (including wheel-chair users) and waste collection people. In designing the layout for new housing, use should be made of dedicated bin stores or sufficient garden space for refuse/recycling storage (with bins capable of being wheeled to the front edge of the property).

Provision is 140 litres of refuse per unit and 140 litres of recycling waste per unit. For standard houses 2 bins of 240 litres are provided to allow expansion in case of larger families. For communal facilities bin sizes will often need scaling up to deal with multiple occupancy and remove the need for a plethora of bins. This is normally done in consultation with the developer; the sizes of bins available are 140 litres, 240 litres, 660 litres and 1100 litres. The last kind will not be used if not immediately adjacent to an access point due to manual handling considerations and ease of movement. The 1100 litre bins are also discouraged for retirement housing or housing for disabled residents as they are difficult to use by these population groups.

The contact details for the Waste Strategy Team can be found in Appendix 3.

Waste Storage requirements

	Area	Access
Standard Properties (ie houses that are single dwellings)	2 x 240 litre bins	To be accessed from the front
Other types of property	Developers to contact the Waste Strategy team. 140 litre bin which may be part of a communal facility in a bulk bin	Important. Consult the Waste Strategy team.

6.8 Schedule 1, Part H of the Building Regulations (2000) defines locations for the storage and collection of waste. Key points in the approved document to Part H are:

- residents should not be required to carry waste more than 30m (excluding any vertical distance) to the storage point;
- waste collection vehicles should be able to get to within 25m of the storage point
- the collection point should be reasonably accessible for vehicles typically used by the waste collection authority

Sustainable design & construction, conservation of energy and other environmental matters

6.9 In addition to space-related issues the Council also emphasises the importance of sustainable design and construction, the conservation of energy and resources and high quality design. Developers are therefore encouraged to comply with criteria set out in Building for Life, Lifetime Homes and the Code for Sustainable Homes. The criteria can be found using the following links:

<http://www.designcouncil.org.uk/our-work/CABE/Localism-and-planning/Building-for-Life/>

<http://www.lifetimehomes.org.uk/>

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/planningandbuilding/sustainability/codesustainablehomes/>



Appendices

Appendix 1 - Useful publications

Useful publications and information

The list below shows relevant design related and other documents which impact upon residential space and layout and which developers are expected to both refer to and be guided by:

- Secured by Design – focuses on crime prevention at the design, layout and construction stages of homes and commercial premises.
- Safer Places 2004: the Planning System and Crime Prevention – is a government publication which includes a great deal of design advice related to all kinds of development.
- Better Places to live by design 2001: A Companion Guide to PPG3, which considers residential space and layout issues in some detail.
- The Code for Sustainable Homes for new build developments
<http://www.communities.gov.uk/planningandbuilding/sustainability/codesustainablehomes/>
- Ecohomes Standard for existing dwellings ie. conversions/large extensions
- Building for Life. Building for Life promotes design excellence and shows good practice examples. Design for Homes. <http://www.designforhomes.org> and <http://www.designcouncil.org.uk/our-work/CABE/Localism-and-planning/Building-for-Life/>
- Room to swing a cat? The amount and use of space in new dwellings in London and the South East, March 2010
- Lifetime Homes Standard. Habinteg.
- London Housing Design Guide, interim edition, August 2010 [Interim_London_Housing_Design_Guide](#)
- Places, homes, people, English Partnerships, November 2007
- By Design – urban design in the planning system: towards better practice, www.communities.gov.uk/publications/planningandbuilding/bydesignurban
- West Sussex Design Commission ‘Design Principles’, www.westsussexdesign.org.uk
- For historic areas, the Building in Context Toolkit, www.building-in-context.org.uk
- For access-related matters, the Manual for Streets, www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/sustainable/manforstreets
- Guidance for Car Parking in New Residential Developments, West Sussex County Council, September 2010.
- Space in new homes: what residents think (summary), CABE, August 2009
- Better Homes and Neighbourhoods, Royal Institute of British Architects, 2007
- Department of Communities and Local Government. Information about the planning system, planning policy and guidance, building regulation, Code for Sustainable Homes. [Department_of_Communities_and_Local_Government](#)
- Planning Portal, provides a free and independent planning advice service. [Planning Portal](#)
- Internal Space Standards for New Homes, Good Practice Guidance Note, Adur District Council, January 2010

Appendix 2 - Building for life criteria

The criteria fall into four categories, and are as follows:

Environment and community

1. Does the development provide (or is it close to) community facilities, such as a school, parks, play areas, shops, pubs or cafes?
2. Is there an accommodation mix that reflects the needs and aspirations of the local community?
3. Is there a tenure mix that reflects the needs of the local community?
4. Does the development have easy access to public transport?
5. Does the development have any features that reduce its environmental impact?

Character

6. Is the design specific to the scheme?
7. Does the scheme exploit existing buildings, landscape or topography?
8. Does the scheme feel like a place with distinctive character?
9. Do the buildings and layout make it easy to find your way around?
10. Are streets defined by a well-structured building layout?

Streets, parking and pedestrianisation

11. Does the building layout take priority over the streets and car parking, so that the highways do not dominate?
12. Is the car parking well integrated and situated so it supports the street scene?
13. Are the streets pedestrian, cycle and vehicle friendly?
14. Does the scheme integrate with existing streets, paths and surrounding development?
15. Are public spaces and pedestrian routes overlooked and do they feel safe?

Design and construction

16. Is public space well designed and does it have suitable management arrangements in place?
17. Do the buildings exhibit architectural quality?
18. Do internal spaces and layout allow for adaptation, conversion or extension?
19. Has the scheme made use of advances in construction or technology that enhance its performance, quality and attractiveness?
20. Do buildings or spaces outperform statutory minima, such as building regulations?

Appendix 3 - Contact Details

Planning Policy:

Tel: 01273 263009

Email: Planningpolicy@worthing.gov.uk

Development Management for planning applications, design matters, planning records:

Tel: 01903 221065

Email: planning@worthing.gov.uk

Waste Strategy for waste storage requirements:

Tel: 01903 851729

Email: help.aws@adur-worthing.gov.uk