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Mayor's Draft London Housing Design Guide

The Mayor has published a Draft Housing Design Guide as part of his London Housing Strategy. This document is intended to promote excellence in design quality and sustainability.

"New homes in London are some of the smallest in Western Europe and to continue to build cramped 'hobbit homes' is indefensible" (Boris Johnson, Housing Design Guide: Draft for Consultation)

Although primarily aimed at improving homes provided through public funding, the standards within the guide will be expected to influence good practice across all sectors of the housebuilding industry.

The standards will become applicable to all housing development funded by the HCA from April 2011 onwards. The consultation also opens the debate on applying standards consistently for all new housing in London as the Mayor is considering adopting the standards as Supplementary Planning Guidance to the Revised London Plan.

Key Standards

Minimum gross internal floor areas

These are calculated by number of bedrooms/persons rather than habitable rooms and include different requirements for flats; two storey houses; and three storey houses.

Space requirements for living/kitchen/dining areas

These include aggregate floor area standards for living/kitchen/dining areas as well as requirements that dwellings with three bedrooms or more have two living spaces e.g. living room and kitchen-dining room.

Minimum bedroom floor areas

Applies a minimum single bedroom space standard of 8.4sq.m and double bedroom minimum space standard of 12.8sq.m. In units over more than one storey space is required on the entrance level that could be used as convenient bed-space.

Private outdoor space and balconies

Applies minimum floor area provision standards for private outdoor space (5sq.m per 1-2 person dwellings + 1sq.m per additional occupant size); and a minimum 1.5m depth standard for balconies.

Presumption against single aspect units

The guidance sets a general presumption against single aspect units. Where dual aspect units are impossible the design must demonstrate good levels of natural ventilation and daylight.

Minimum floor to ceiling heights in habitable rooms

Sets a minimum floor to ceiling height in all habitable rooms of 2.6m with increased ceiling heights for single aspect rooms with a depth exceeding 7m.

Code For Sustainable Homes

Requires all homes to achieve a minimum level 4 of the Code for Sustainable Homes

Renewable Energy

Requires development proposals to adopt the Mayor's energy hierarchy of using less energy; supplying energy efficiently; and using renewable energy (including meeting the London Plans presumption of 20% renewable energy).

The consultation runs until the 30th September 2009 with an anticipated publication of a final guide in April 2010.

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