



## Approved Document B 2006 - Single stairways - Residential uses Part 4

In this part of the single stair residential series we will be looking at Houses in multiple occupation and hotels.

### Single stairs F Houses in multiple occupation

Approved Document B 2000 referred us to DOE circular 12/92 as an alternative approach for houses in multiple occupation (HMO's). this code required an alternative means of escape where the building exceeded five storeys (ground, first, second, third and fourth could be single stair, with an alternative escape from the fifth floor (sixth storey)).

This always sat uncomfortably with the common standards in other codes where it was normal for an alternative means of escape to be required above 11m (this would normally mean an alternative escape from the fourth floor level), even in premises without sleeping risk. 12/92 has been withdrawn, and this anomaly has been removed from the Building Regulations.

The new Approved Document B 2006 effectively splits HMO's into two categories.

**1.** Buildings where not more than six occupants are dwelling. These are dealt with like single family dwellings and the guidance in Approved Document B 2006 Vol 1 is applicable and in particular there is a new diagram (Diagram 1 page 18) which shows four categories of unlobbied single stairway situations. These diagrams are very good and therefore I do not need to supplement them here. (ADB 2006 Vol. 1 page 5). An alternative means of escape is needed for a floor above 7.5m or the protected stair combined with sprinklers in rooms to reduce the fire growth and therefore smoke toxicity leaking into the protected stair around the fire doors. (Note the protected stair cannot be omitted as sprinklers alone do not sufficiently reduce the smoke toxicity).

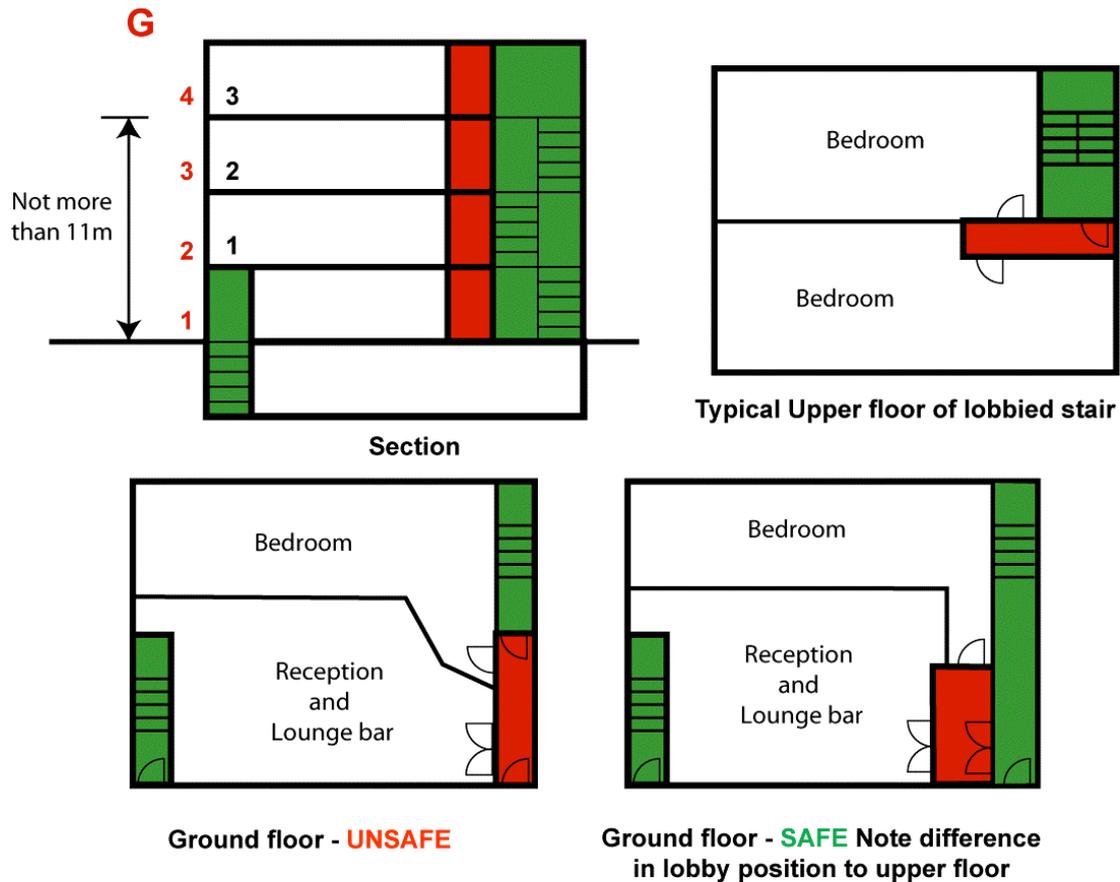
The fire warning system standard is as for dwelling houses (ADB 2006 Vol. 1 1.3 – 1.7, 1.10 -1.24)

**2.** Where seven occupants (i.e. more than six) are proposed the building is dealt with as flats. Therefore Single stairs A, B, C, D and E, in Parts 1 – 3 of this series would be suitable. (ADB 2006 Vol. 2 page 6).

The fire warning system standard is as for flats (ADB 2006 Vol. 2 1.4 – 1.5, 1.9 -1.23)

### Single stairs G Hotels

Height is limited to 11m and the stair (and any lift connecting with the stair enclosure) cannot continue down to the basement. The basement needs to be served by an independent stair (para 4.42). Lobbies are required on all floors except the top.



**Top floor not more than 11m. No restriction on No. of storeys – in theory a 4<sup>th</sup> floor (5<sup>th</sup> storey) is possible. No Basement connection to single stair**

*ADB 2006 Vol. 2 4.5 a. and b. Lobbies reqd by 4.34. Basement connection NOT permitted by 4.42. '...the basement should be served by a separate stair.'*

### Lobby arrangement at Ground level

The layout of the lobby at ground floor level is different from the upper floors. The important point is that the whole of the escape route to the street from the stairway is protected by the lobby as shown in the illustrations above. This is probably one of the most common errors made by applicants.

### Generally

**In category G the usual requirements apply in respect of the following:-**

1. Hotels (other residential premises) should be provided with an automatic fire warning system (ADB 2006 Vol. 2; 1.35).
2. Travel distances are complied with (9m in hotel corridors, restricted distance in rooms (9m in bedrooms, 18m in other rooms) (ADB 2006 Vol. 2; 3.5, 3.6 and Table 2).
3. Escape route widths are complied with (ADB 2006 Vol. 2; 3.18, 4.15 – 4.19 and 4.22 - 4.23).
4. Access to ancillary accommodation is addressed. The new Approved Document B 2006 has still not addressed ancillary accommodation such as kitchens (other than in small premises which are not hotels). As previously reported when asked a

number of years ago, the DCLG (then ODPM) had advised that the principles of the BS 5588 be applied, i.e. that kitchens store rooms and plant room be enclosed in fire resisting construction and where accessed from stairways be lobbied [2]. Why such accommodation has not been addressed in this revision is unclear, we may have to ask them again – presently I would suggest we carry on with the previous advice and deal with ancillary accommodation as described in the fire column article on [ancillary accommodation](#) [as published in LABC Outlook issue 1].

### **References**

[2] Communication between Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea and ODPM.