

TECHNICAL GUIDANCE

ACCESS TO ROOF VOIDS

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(First Issue)

QUESTION

Is access required to small roof voids such as in room-in-the-roof designs or where a secondary roof(s) joins a main roof?

CONSIDERATIONS

- NHBC Standards clause 7.2.12 refers to the need for access to the main space and roof voids which contain equipment such as cisterns, tanks and heating and ventilation plant. It also states that access is not required to roofs which contains only water pipes.
- NHBC Standards clause 7.2.12 refers to the access being at least 520mm x 520mm and large enough to permit the removal of permanent equipment in the future and not located over stairs or other hazardous locations.

ANSWER

The purpose of providing access to roof voids is to allow for periodic inspection and maintenance of equipment where required. In the majority of homes it is clear where the main roof void is or where access is required for maintenance, however, in some cases it may not be so obvious, for example:

- in attic truss construction the main roof void may be no more than a small area below the ridge.
- where a roof has more than one void as in a 'T' or 'L' shape in plan.

Where a roof contains only a small void below the ridge access is not required where the raised collar is less than 2 m in length and the void does not contain any equipment which requires maintenance (this includes a connection point for a TV aerial), see Figure 1.

Similarly access is not usually required to small voids in the eaves that do not contain equipment which requires maintenance.

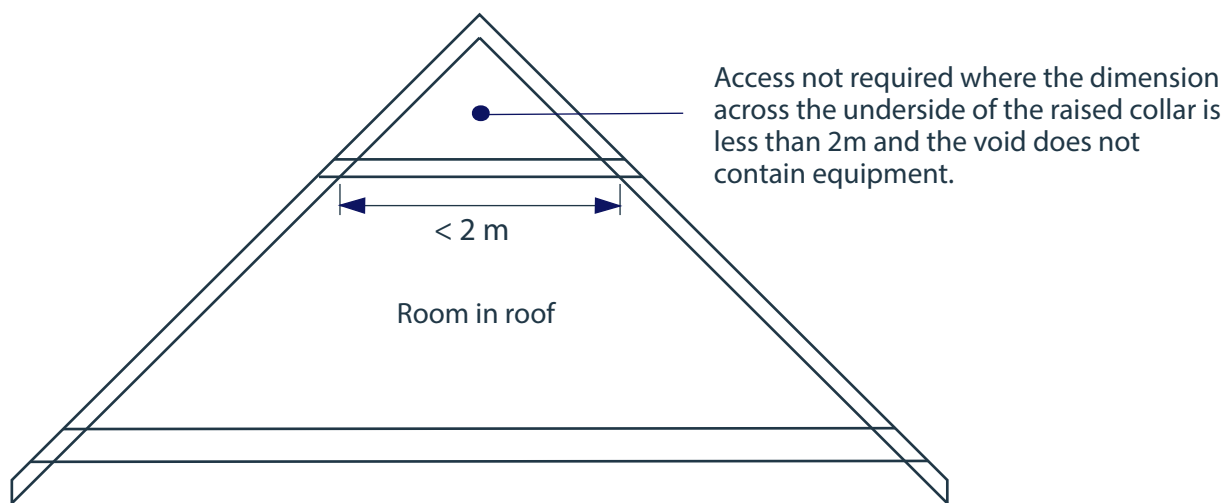


Figure 1

Where a roof plan is made up of more than one roof void, as in a 'T' or 'L' or similar, the main roof space, for which access should be provided, can be taken as the largest roof void see Figure 2. Unless the secondary roof void(s) contains equipment which requires maintenance, access is not usually required.

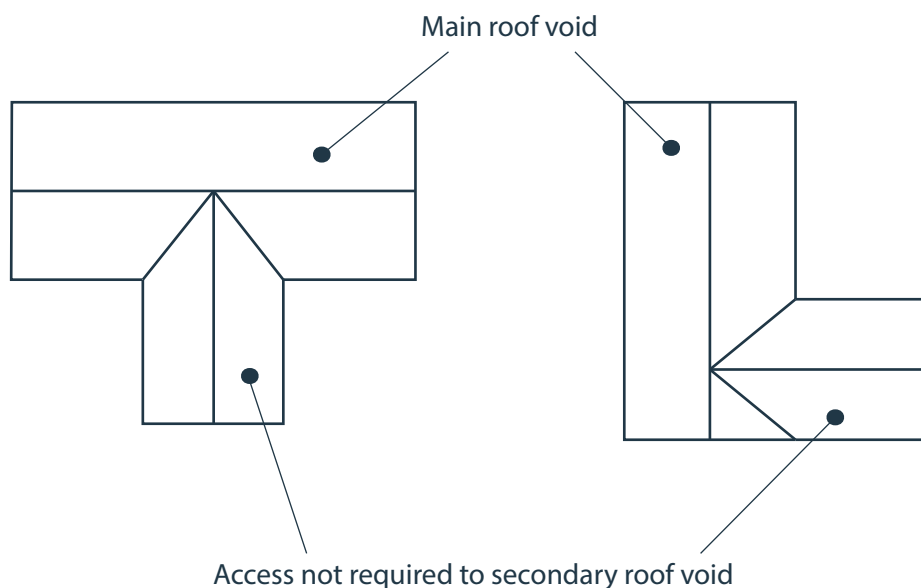


Figure 2