Floor *build-up* heights: getting wood, stone and carpet to meet at one level

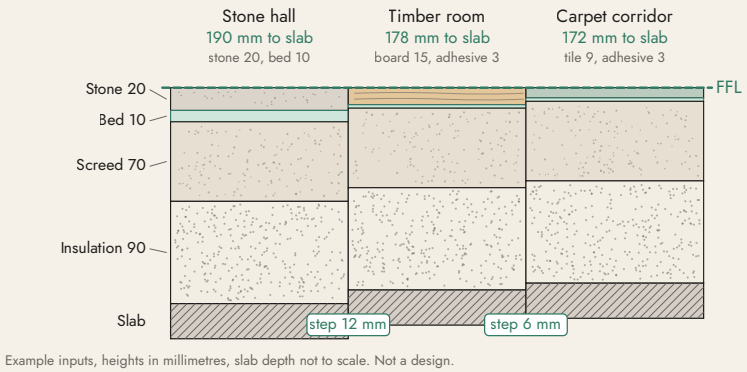
Two floors meet flush when their finished surfaces are drawn at one level, but each finish needs a different stack of layers under it. Work down from the finished floor level, add the layers, and decide where each difference goes. Thicknesses are as published documents state them; limits are Approved Document M's (England).

Compliance guidance. Heights are as the documents named state them, read on 5 and 6 November 2026: guidance from trade bodies, suppliers and makers, not British Standards, whose texts were not read. Threshold figures are from Approved Document M volume 2 and acoustic figures from Approved Document E, England only. The structural engineer sets slab levels, the heating engineer the insulation and screed, and building control decides what applies. Guidance, not engineering, design or legal advice.

AT A GLANCE

Layer	What the documents give, in mm	Source	Who confirms
Stone	20 for sizes up to 600 x 600; larger formats may need more	B	Stone workshop
Bed under stone	Over an uncoupling membrane: not generally above 10. Sand and cement bed: 40 to 70	A	Stone fixer
Engineered timber	14 to 20 in all (notation 14/3: total / wear layer)	H	Flooring workshop
Parquet blocks	10, 15 or 20 (NWFA gives 8 to 19)	G	Flooring workshop
Plywood	6 over timber subfloors; 9 for parquet where none is present	E, H	Flooring contractor
Overlay heating	6 distribution layer between panels or pipes and the timber	F	Heating engineer
Carpet	9 for a tile; underlay 5 or 8; carpet itself not stated	A	Carpet supplier
Heated screed	65 to 75 cement:sand; not less than 65 domestic; Type B at least 35	A	Screed contractor
Insulation	Typically 90 to 100 for Type C; otherwise 'suitable'	A	Heating engineer
Acoustic floor	65 screed on 25 or more mineral wool (new-build flats, hotel rooms)	D	Acoustic consultant
Entrance threshold	Level, or 15 in all; upstands over 5 chamfered or rounded	C	Accessibility consultant

Millimetres, as each document states them. Source letters are listed under Standards and sources. These are guides, not standards: confirm every figure with the partner workshops and contractors before it goes on a drawing.



Example inputs, heights in millimetres, slab depth not to scale. Not a design.

One finished floor level over three stacks; the slab steps up 12 mm, then 6 mm. Example inputs. Original drawing by Make Bespoke Studio.

SPECIFICATION WORDING

FINISHED FLOOR LEVELS

Finished floor levels (FFL) are as shown on drawing [ref]. All floor heights are measured from FFL. Where two floor finishes meet, their finished surfaces are flush at FFL [ ] unless the drawing shows a step. Each finish has a build-up drawing [ref] stating every layer and its thickness; the total from FFL to the top of the structural slab (SSL [level]) is [ ] mm for [finish A] and [ ] mm for [finish B]. [Contractor] checks the totals against the slab levels before the base is laid and reports in writing any difference over [3] mm before work starts.

BUILD-UP SCHEDULE

[Finish]: [stone, [20] mm, schedule ref] bedded on [adhesive and uncoupling membrane, total [ ] mm, by the stone fixer], on [floating screed, [ ] mm, not less than [65] mm, by the screed contractor], on [insulation, [ ] mm to the heating engineer's design], on [structural slab]. Thicknesses are as installed, with a tolerance of [ ] mm, and each is confirmed in writing by the party that supplies it.

MAKE-UP BETWEEN FINISHES

Where finishes differ in total height, the difference is taken up by [screed thickness / insulation thickness / a step in the slab of [ ] mm / a make-up layer of [ ] mm] as shown on drawing [ref], and by no other means. No layer under a finish is added to, thinned or omitted on site without the designer's written approval.

THRESHOLDS AND ACOUSTIC FLOORS

Where Approved Document M volume 2 applies and the door is an accessible entrance, the threshold is level or, if a raised threshold is unavoidable, not more than 15 mm in total height, with any upstand over 5 mm chamfered or rounded (paragraph 2.7(e)) [confirm current edition]. Elsewhere finished surfaces meet flush; any change of level is shown on the drawing and approved before the floor is laid. Where the floor is a separating floor under Approved Document E, its construction is [floating floor (b) of paragraph 3.65 / a tested system, report [ref]] as the acoustic consultant specifies, and its full thickness is included in the build-up on drawing [ref].

TERMS USED

Finished floor level (FFL)

The height of the finished walking surface, shown on drawings so that different finishes meet at one level. Floor heights are measured down from it.

Structural slab level (SSL)

The height of the top of the structural floor. The distance from FFL down to SSL is the sum of every layer in the build-up.

STANDARDS AND SOURCES

- A. The Tile Association, Tiling to Heated Floors (2013, file updated 2014): read in full; screed, insulation, bedding, drying, Table 4.
- B. A UK stone supplier's technical manual, internal flooring: read; stone and screed figures.
- C. Approved Document M volume 2 (2015 ed. incl. 2020 and 2024 amendments, England): read; 2.6, 2.7, Table 1.
- D. Approved Document E (reprint Oct 2015, England): read; 3.64 to 3.66.
- E, F, G, H. A UK distributor's, a timber maker's and a parquet supplier's guides; NWFA B300 (2015); a retailer's article; our live pages: read; named in the notes file.
- Stone Federation GB, Inspection and snagging (Aug 2022): read; substrate tolerances.
- BS 8204-1:2003+A1:2009, BS 8201:2011, BS 5385-3:2024, BS EN 1264-4:2021: BSI listings read, all current; texts not read. Confirm the current editions.

Full guide: https://makebespoke.com/trade/technical/floor-build-up-heights-and-finished-floor-levels. Make Bespoke Studio coordinates manufacture through its partner workshops. Figures are guidance only and your specification governs; some may be superseded, so contact the studio to verify.