What is BS 3632:2023 Residential Park Homes Standard?

UK Residential Park Homes, Mobile Homes, and Twin-Unit Homes. This standard is crucial for manufacturers, site operators, planning authorities, and residents as it specifies the minimum requirements for design, construction, and performance, ensuring a higher standard of permanent residential accommodation compared to holiday caravans.

Synonym(s): Specification for Residential Park Homes, British Standard for Permanent Park Homes, UK Standard for Mobile Homes (Residential).

Definition: BS 3632:2023 is the current British Standard that specifies the essential requirements for the design, construction, and performance of residential park homes in the United Kingdom. It is designed to ensure that these homes, which are intended for permanent residential use, provide comparable levels of thermal comfort, energy efficiency, acoustic performance, and **indoor air quality (including ventilation)** to traditional housing built to UK Building Regulations.

Explanation and Application (UK Context):

The standard goes significantly beyond the requirements for holiday caravans (which are typically covered by European standard EN 1647) and is the benchmark for homes marketed and sold as permanent residences on licensed park home estates. The 2023 revision supersedes BS 3632:2015 and introduces updated requirements to align with current best practices and regulatory shifts, particularly in energy performance.

Key Areas of Focus (Ventilation and Building Fabric):

1. **Thermal Performance and Energy Efficiency:** Park homes conforming to BS 3632:2023 must meet stringent U-value and air-permeability targets for the walls, floor, roof, windows, and doors. These requirements are generally comparable to, or aim to approach, the standards set out in **Approved Document L (Conservation of Fuel and Power)** for new dwellings in England and Wales, ensuring good insulation and reduced heat loss. This directly impacts the heating demand and running costs for the resident.

2. **Ventilation and Indoor Air Quality (IAQ):** This is a critical aspect where the standard directly overlaps with best practice ventilation principles, essential for maintaining a healthy internal environment.

    - BS 3632 compliant homes must incorporate adequate means of **both background and purge ventilation** to comply with the principles in **Approved Document F (Ventilation)**. This typically mandates systems such as continuously operating **Mechanical Extract Ventilation (MEV)** or **Mechanical Ventilation with Heat Recovery (MVHR)**, particularly in newer designs, to ensure a constant supply of fresh air and removal of pollutants and moisture.

    - The standard requires specific air change rates to manage condensation, mould, and the

build-up of Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs), critical in the context of the typically airtight construction demanded by the high thermal performance requirements.

- **Practical Example:** A park home built to BS 3632:2023 will typically feature an MVHR system that continuously extracts stale, moist air from “wet rooms” (kitchens, bathrooms) while recovering heat and supplying filtered, pre-warmed fresh air to “habitable rooms” (living rooms, bedrooms). This ensures excellent IAQ with minimal heat loss.

Relevance to UK Sectors:

- **Residential Retrofit/Home Renovation:** Although park homes are manufactured off-site, the standard sets an important precedent for the quality of off-site construction and the performance benchmarks expected of any UK home, particularly those undergoing **deep retrofit** where thermal and airtightness improvements necessitate a corresponding upgrade to mechanical ventilation.

- **New House Building:** The rigorous performance metrics of BS 3632 are increasingly being mirrored in modern, highly efficient modular and volumetric housing being adopted by the wider UK house building sector.