



ModernGlide Specification Guidance

Movable Wall Specification Guide

Designing flexible spaces with **acoustic performance, precision engineering, and long-term usability** in mind — a complete guide for architects, designers, and specifiers.

What Are Movable Walls?

Movable wall systems are known by many names across specifications and tenders. Regardless of terminology, the function remains constant: to create flexible, reconfigurable spaces without compromising acoustic performance or usability.

Movable Walls

Also spelled "Moveable Walls" — the most common specification term

Operable Walls

Frequently used in commercial and institutional briefs

Sliding Folding Partitions

Describes the mechanical operation and panel configuration

Bi-Folding Doors

Used for smaller-scale or residential-adjacent applications

- 📌 **Core function:** To create flexible, reconfigurable spaces without compromising acoustic performance or usability — regardless of what they are called in the specification.

Why Specification Matters


A movable wall is not simply a partition. It is a critical component of the building's acoustic strategy, spatial planning framework, and daily user experience. Getting the specification right at design stage determines the long-term success of the installation.

What's at Stake

- Acoustic strategy integrity
- Spatial planning flexibility
- Daily user interaction quality

Consequences of Poor Specification

- Poor sound insulation in real use
- Difficult or heavy operation
- Misalignment and visible gaps
- Conflict with structure and services

 **Key principle:** The success of the system is defined at design stage — not after installation.

Start With the End Use

Before selecting a system, the design team must clearly define the operational and acoustic intent of the spaces. User needs and activity patterns should drive product selection — not the reverse.



User Profile

Who will operate the wall?
Staff, public, or facilities team?
Frequency of use and user capability directly influence system type and hardware selection.




Acoustic Intent

Define the required performance level: general separation, speech privacy, or high acoustic / confidential environments. This determines the product specification.



Simultaneous Use

Will both spaces operate independently at the same time? This is the single most important question for acoustic performance requirements.

 **Guiding principle:** Specify based on function and end use — not product performance figures alone.

Understanding Acoustic Ratings

Two distinct acoustic metrics govern movable wall specification. Understanding the difference between laboratory-tested performance and real-world on-site performance is essential for accurate specification.

Rw — Weighted Sound Reduction Index

Laboratory-tested product performance. Measured in controlled conditions. Represents the maximum theoretical performance of the wall system in isolation.

DnT,w — Weighted Standardised Level Difference

Actual on-site acoustic performance. Accounts for real installation conditions. This is the figure that matters in use — and the one that should align with acoustic targets.

Why the Gap Exists

A high Rw rating does not guarantee equivalent real-world performance. On-site performance is influenced by a combination of factors that extend well beyond the panel itself:

- Perimeter sealing quality
- Structural coordination
- Ceiling void and flanking paths
- Installation workmanship

Education Specification — BB93

In education environments, acoustic design must align with **BB93 Acoustic Standards**. Performance is measured as DnT,w (on-site), reflecting real conditions. Requirements typically range from **35 dB to 55 dB** depending on room use and adjacency.

Teaching Space to Hall

Minimum **40 dB DnT,w** required. This level may not support full simultaneous independent use — define the operational intent clearly in the brief.




Sequential Use

Spaces used one at a time with limited overlap. Lower acoustic thresholds may be acceptable where timetabling controls activity patterns.



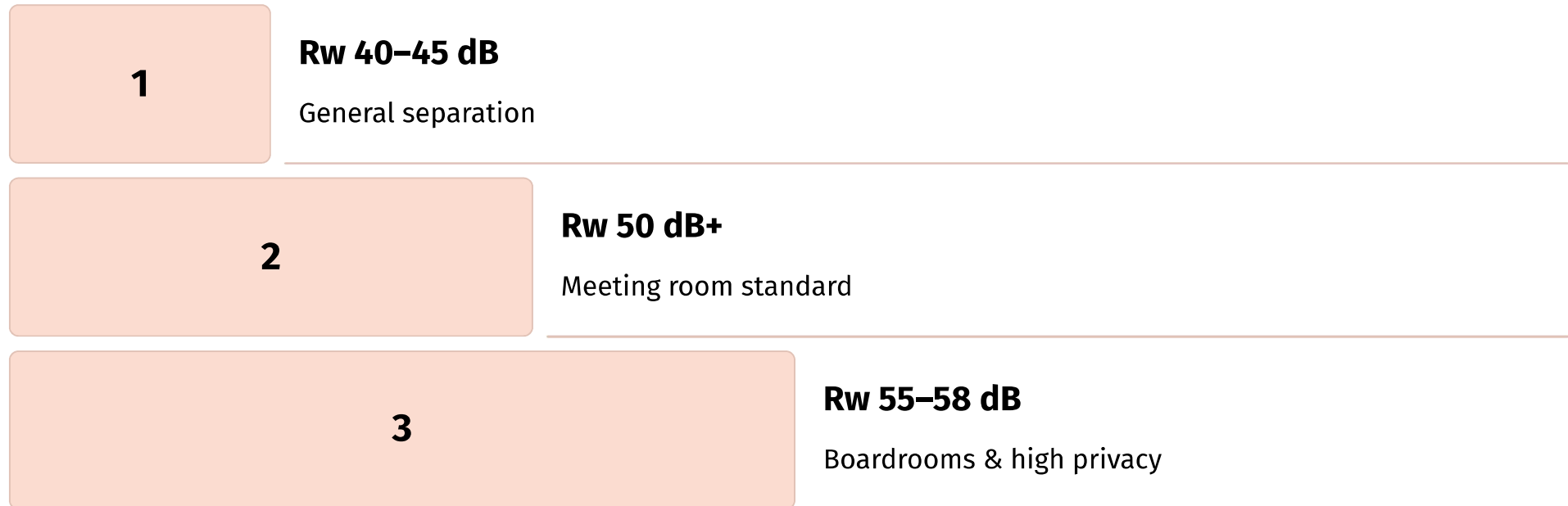
Fully Independent Operation

Concurrent, simultaneous use by separate groups requires higher acoustic performance and precise detailing throughout the partition head, floor, and perimeter.

-  **Architect consideration:** Define whether spaces are intended for sequential use, limited overlap, or fully independent operation — and specify accordingly.

Commercial Office Specification

In commercial offices, acoustic targets are design-led and informed by workplace strategy, privacy requirements, and adjacency to open-plan environments. There is no single regulatory standard — performance levels should be defined by the design team based on intended use.



Typical applications include meeting rooms, boardrooms, training rooms, and divisible office spaces. **Higher performance directly correlates with better speech privacy and day-to-day usability.**

System Selection & Building Integration

Selecting the right system requires coordination across architectural, structural, and building services disciplines. Movable walls must be designed into the building fabric from the outset — retrofitting or late-stage coordination inevitably compromises performance and programme.

System Configuration

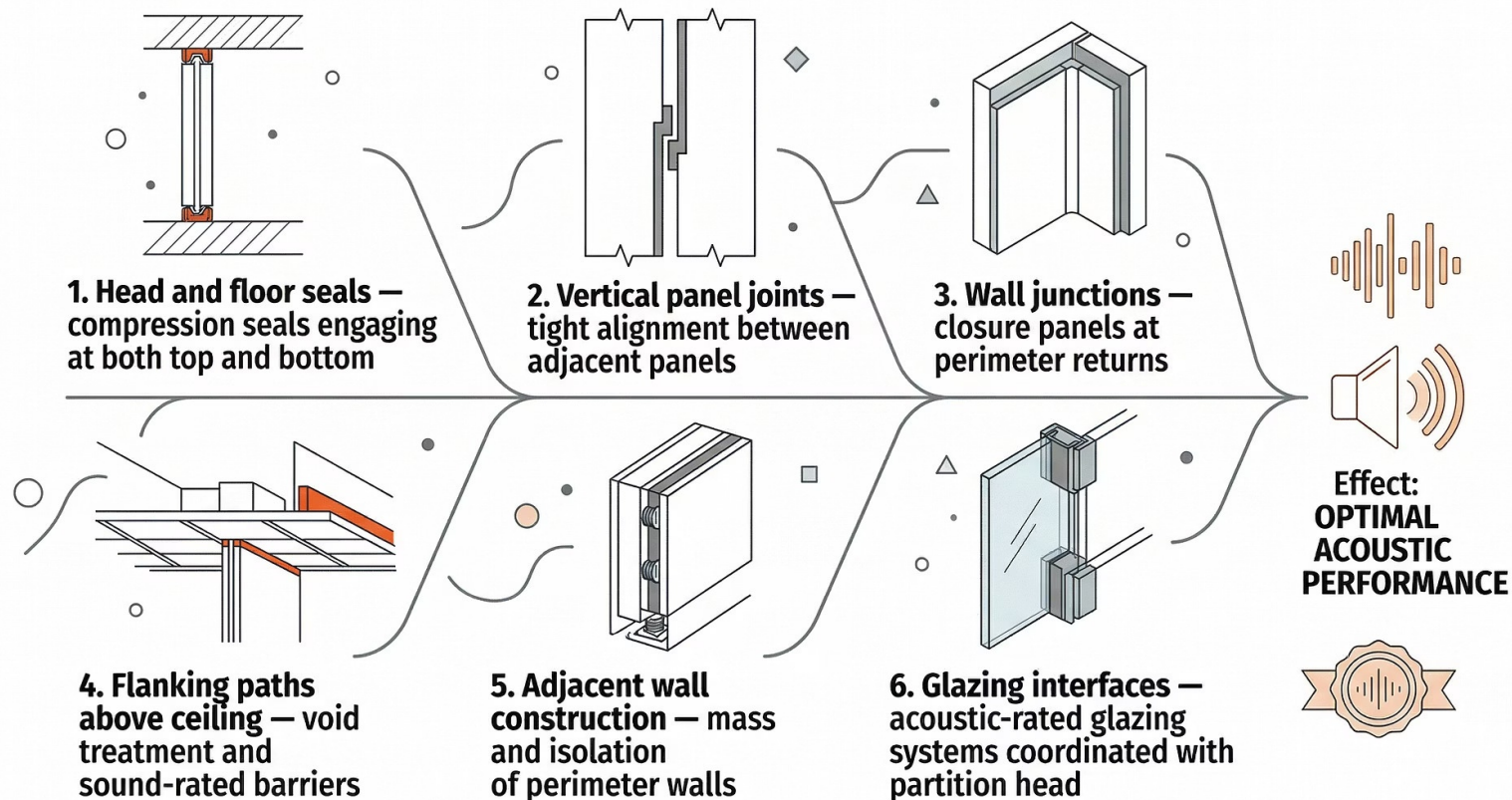
- **Panel type:** Solid, glazed, or mixed panel configuration
- **Operation:** Manual or semi-automatic hardware
- **Stacking:** End stack, centre stack, or pocket configuration


Integration Checklist

- Structural support for top-hung systems
- Ceiling coordination and void treatment
- Lighting, sprinklers, and HVAC routing
- Floor flatness and finish transitions

Acoustic Detailing & Real-World Performance

True acoustic performance is not delivered by the panel specification alone — it is achieved through coordinated detailing at every junction and interface. The majority of acoustic failures in movable wall installations occur not at the panels themselves, but at the boundaries where the system meets the surrounding construction.



 **Design principle:** A coordinated detailing approach — across structure, services, and finishes — ensures consistent acoustic performance, smooth operation, and long-term reliability.



Lifecycle & the ModernGlide Approach

A complete specification goes beyond product selection. Long-term performance depends on ease of operation, durability under high-frequency use, and a structured approach to commissioning and maintenance. ModernGlide supports architects and specifiers throughout the full project lifecycle.



Up to Rw 59 dB

Systems achieving the highest levels of acoustic performance for confidential and boardroom environments



Early-Stage Guidance

Expert specification support from RIBA Stage 1 onwards, ensuring systems are designed in — not retrofitted



Commissioning & Maintenance

Structured handover, adjustment at completion, and annual maintenance programmes to protect long-term performance



Tailored Solutions

Education, commercial, healthcare, and hospitality environments each receive solutions matched to their specific acoustic and operational requirements