

BUILDING TERMS EXPLAINED

Aggregate	Broken stone, gravel or sand used with cement to form concrete. Aggregates may be coarse or fine and are often used in the construction of "soakaways".
Airbrick	A perforated brick built into a wall for the purpose of providing air for ventilation purposes. Used for instance, to ventilate the underside of a wooden floor or a roof space.
Architrave	A moulding around a doorway or window opening. It usually covers the joints between the frame and the wall finish, thus hiding any shrinkage gaps that may occur.
Asbestos	Material used in the past for insulation. Can sometimes be a health hazard – specialist advice should be sought if asbestos (especially blue asbestos) is found.
Asbestos Cement	Cement mixed with 15% asbestos fibre as reinforcement. Fragile – will not usually bear heavy weights. Hazardous fibres may be released if cut or drilled.
Asphalt	Black, tar-like substance designed to be impervious to moisture. Used on flat roofs and floors.
Barge Board	See "Verge Board".
Balanced Flue	Common metal device normally serving gas appliances that allows air to be drawn to the appliance whilst also allowing fumes to escape.
Baluster	A post or vertical pillar supporting a handrail or parapet rail.
Balustrade	A collective name for a row of balusters or other infilling below a handrail on a stair or parapet.
Beetle Infestation	(Wood boring insects e.g. woodworm). Larvae of various species of beetle can tunnel into timber causing damage. Specialist treatment normally required. Can also affect furniture.
Benching	Shaped concrete slope beside drainage channel with an inspection chamber. Also known as "haunching".
Bitumen	Black, sticky substance, similar to asphalt. Used in sealants, mineral felts and damp proof courses.
Carbonation	A natural process affecting the outer layer of concrete. Metal reinforcement within that layer is liable to early corrosion, with consequent fracturing of the concrete in some cases.
Casement Window	A window composed of hinged, pivoted or fixed sashes.

Cavity Wall	Filling of wall cavities by one of various forms of insulation material: Beads: Polystyrene beads pumped into the cavities. Will easily fall out if the wall is broken open for any reason. Foam: Urea formaldehyde foam, mixed on site, and then pumped into the cavities where it sets. Can lead to problems of dampness and make replacement of wall-ties more difficult. Fibreglass: Inert material fibre pumped into the cavity
Cavity Wall Tie	A twisted piece of metal or similar material bedded into the inner and outer leaves of cavity walls intended to strengthen the wall. Failure by corrosion can result in the wall becoming unstable – specialist replacement ties are then required.
Cesspool	A simple method of drain comprising a holding tank that needs frequent emptying. Not to be confused with “septic tank”.
Chipboard	Often referred to as “particle board”. Chips of wood compressed and glued into sheet form. Cheap method of decking to flat roofs, floors and (with Formica or melamine surface) furniture, especially kitchen units.
Cleaning Eye	Sometimes known as an “access eye” or “rodding eye”. An opening in a drain or ventilation pipe, covered by a plate, the removal of which allows the drain to be rodded to clear blockages.
Cob	Walling of damp earth or clay usually mixed with small stones and straw and compressed without reinforcement into blocks. Sometimes it is rammed into formwork. This cheap method of walling has in the past been practised mainly in East Anglia and the West of England.
Collar Beam	A horizontal tie beam of a roof, which is joined to opposing rafters at a level above that of the wall plates.
Collar	Horizontal timber member designed to restrain opposing roof slopes. Absence, removal or weakening can lead to roof spread.
Combination Boiler	Modern form of gas boiler that activates on demand usually within a pressurised system. With this form of boiler there is no need for water storage tanks, hot water cylinders etc.
Coping/Coping Stone	Usually stone or concrete, laid on top of a wall as a decorative finish and designed to stop rainwater soaking into the wall.
Corbel	Projection of stone, brick, timber or metal jutting out from a wall to support a weight above it.
Cornice	A large moulding at the junction between an inside wall and a ceiling. Can also include a moulding at the top of an outside wall designed to project and throw raindrops clear of the wall.
Coving	Curved junction between wall and ceiling.
Dado Rail	A wooden moulding fixed to the wall or capping panelling and forming the topmost part of a dado. Originally designed to avoid damage to the wall

	where people or furniture brushed against it.
Damp Proof Course (or DPC)	Layer of impervious material (mineral felt, pvc etc) incorporated into a wall and designed to prevent dampness rising up the wall or lateral dampness around windows, doors etc. Various proprietary methods are available for damp-proofing existing walls including “electro-osmosis” and chemical injection.
Deathwatch Beetle	<i>(Xestobium Rufovillosum)</i> . Extremely serious insect pest that attacks structural timbers. Usually effects old hardwoods with fungal decay already present.
Double Glazing	A method of thermal insulation usually either: Sealed unit: Two panes of glass fixed and hermetically sealed together; or Secondary: In effect a second “window” positioned inside the original window.
Double Hung Sash Window	A window in which the opening lights slide vertically within a cased frame, counter balanced by weights supported on sash cords which pass over pulleys in the frame.
Dry Rot	<i>(Serpula Lacrymans)</i> . A very serious form of fungus that attacks structural and joinery timbers, often with devastating results. Can flourish in moist, unventilated areas.
Eaves	The overhanging edge of a roof.
Efflorescence	Powdery white salts crystallized on the surface of a wall as a result of moisture evaporation.
Engineering Brick	Particularly strong and dense type of brick often used as a damp proof course in older buildings.
Fibreboard	Cheap, lightweight board material of little strength, used in ceilings or as insulation to attics.
Flashing	Building technique designed to prevent leakage at a roof joint. Normally metal (lead, zinc, copper) but can be cement, felt or proprietary material.
Flaunching	A cement mortar weathering on the top of a chimneystack surrounding the base of the chimney pots to throw off the rain and thus prevent it from saturating the stack.
Flue	A smoke duct in a chimney, or a proprietary pipe serving a heat-producing appliance such as a central heating boiler.
Flue Lining	Metal (usually stainless steel) tube within a flue – essential for high output gas appliances such as boilers. May also be manufactured from clay and built into the flue. Other proprietary flue liners are also available.
Foundations	Normally concrete, laid underground as a structural base to a wall; in older buildings these may be brick or stone.
Frog	An indentation, usually V shaped in the bedding face of the brick so reduces its weight. “Frog down” or “Frog up” are the generally

	accepted ways of describing how the brick are laid.
Gable	Upper section of a wall, usually triangular in shape, at either end of a ridged roof.
Ground Heave	Swelling of clay sub-soil due to the presence of moisture: can cause an upward movement of foundations in extreme cases.
Gulley	An opening into which rain and waste water are collected before entering the drain.
Gutter	A channel along the eaves of a roof or the edge of a path for the removal of rainwater.
Hardcore	Broken bricks or stone which, consolidated, are used as a foundation in extreme cases.
Haunching	See “Benching”. Also term used to describe the support of a drain underground.
Hip	The external junction between two intersecting roof slopes.
Hip Tile	A saddle shaped or angular tile fitting over the intersection of those roofing tiles that meet a hip.
In Situ	“In position” – applied to work done in the position where it is finally required, e.g. concrete may be precast in sections that are later taken to the position where they are required or it may be cast “in situ”.
Inspection Chamber	Commonly called the “man-hole”: access point to a drain comprising a chamber (of brick, concrete or plastic) with the drainage channel at its base and a removable cover at ground level.
Jamb	Vertical side face of a doorway or window.
Joist	A timber or steel beam directly supporting a floor and sometimes alternatively or additionally supporting a ceiling. Steel beams are usually referred to as RSJs (rolled steel joists).
Key	The roughness of a surface that provides a bond for any application of paint, plaster, rendering, tiles etc or spaces between laths or wire meshes that provide a grip for plaster.
Landslip	Downhill movement of unstable earth, clay, rock etc often following prolonged heavy rain or coastal erosion, but sometimes due to sub-soil having poor cohesion.
Lath	Thin strip of wood used in the fixing of roof tiles or slates, or as backing to plaster.
Mortar	Mixture of sand, cement, water and sometimes lime used to join stones or bricks.
Mullion	Vertical bar dividing individual lights in a window.
Newel	Stout post supporting a staircase handrail at top and bottom. Also, the central pillar of a winding spiral staircase.

Oversite	Rough concrete below timber ground floors.
Parapet	Low wall along the edge of a roof, balcony etc.
Parapet Gutter	A timber gutter of rectangular cross-section usually provided with a flexible metal or other impervious lining. Used behind a parapet or sometimes at a valley.
Pier	A vertical column of brickwork or other material, used to strengthen the wall or to support a weight.
Plasterboard	Stiff “sandwich” of plaster between coarse paper. Now in widespread use for ceilings and walls.
Pointing	Outer edge of mortar joint between bricks, stones etc.
Powder Post Beetle	(Bostrychidae or Lycctidae family of beetles). A relatively uncommon pest that can, if untreated, cause widespread damage to structural timbers.
Purlin	Horizontal beam in a roof upon which rafters rest.
Quoin	The external angle of a building; or specifically, bricks or stone blocks forming that angle.
Rafter	A sloping roof beam, usually timber, forming the carcass of a roof.
Random Rubble	Basic early method of stone wall construction with no attempt at bonding or coursing.
Rendering	Vertical covering of a wall either plaster (internally) or cement (externally), sometimes with pebbledash, stucco or Tyrolean textured finish.
Reveals	The side faces of a window or door opening.
Ridge	The highest part or apex of a roof, usually horizontal.
Ridge Tile	A specially shaped tile for covering and making weather tight the ridge of a roof. These tiles may have a rounded or angular cross-section.
Riser	The vertical part of a step or stair.
Rising Damp	Moisture soaking up a wall from below ground, by capillary action which can cause rot in timbers, plaster decay, decoration failure etc.
Roof Spread	Outward bowing of a wall caused by the thrust of a badly restrained roof framework (see “Collar”).
RSJ	Frequently used abbreviation for a rolled steel joist.
Screed	Final, smooth finish of a solid floor; usually cement, concrete or asphalt.
Septic Tank	Drain installation whereby sewage decomposes through the action of bacteria, that can be slowed down or stopped altogether by the use of chemicals such as bleach, biological washing powders etc.
Settlement	All properties settle to some extent, and this can show as cracking

	and/or distortion in walls. Very often minor settlement is not of great significance to the building as a whole.
Sewer	A large, underground pipe or drain used for conveying waste water and sewage. The Local Authority is usually responsible for the sewers that collect the effluent from various drains, the drains being the responsibility of the landowners.
Shakes	Naturally occurring cracks in timber; in building timbers, shakes can appear quite dramatic, but strength is not always impaired.
Shingles	Small rectangular slabs of wood used on roofs instead of tiles, slates etc.
Soakaway	A pit, filled with broken stones etc below ground to take drainage from rainwater pipes or land drains and allow it to disperse.
Soaker	Piece of flexible metal fitted to interlock with slates or tiles and make a watertight joint between a wall and a roof or at a hip or valley. Stepped flashings are used over the soakers at a joint against a wall.
Soffit	The underside of an arch, beam, staircase, eaves or other feature of a building.
Soil Pipe/Soil Stack	A vertical pipe that conveys sewage to the drains. Its upper end is usually vented above the eaves.
Solid Fuel	Heating fuel, normally wood, coal or one of a variety of proprietary fuels.
Spandrel	Space above and to the sides of an arch; also the space below a staircase.
Stopcock	A valve on a gas or water supply pipe that is used to cut off the supply.
Stud Partition	Lightweight, sometimes non load-bearing wall construction comprising a framework of timber faced with plaster, plasterboard or other finish.
Subsidence	Ground movement, generally downward, possibly a result of mining activities or failure of the sub-soil.
Sub-Soil	Soil lying immediately below the topsoil.
Sulphate Attack	Chemical reaction, activated by water, between tricalcium aluminate and soluble sulphates that can cause deterioration in brick walls and concrete floors
Tie Bar	Metal bar passing through a wall, or walls in an attempt to brace a structure suffering from structural instability.
Torching	Mortar applied on the underside of roof tiles or slates to help prevent moisture penetration. Not necessary when a roof is under drawn with felt.
Transom	Horizontal bar of wood or stone across a window or top of door.

Tread	The horizontal part of a step or stair.
Trussed Rafters	Method of roof construction utilising prefabricated triangular framework of timbers. Now widely used in domestic construction.
Underpinning	Method of strengthening weak foundations whereby a new, stronger foundation is placed beneath the original.
Valley Gutter	Horizontal or sloping gutter, usually lead or tile-lined, at the internal intersection between two roof slopes.
Ventilation	Necessary in all buildings to disperse moisture resulting from bathing, cooking, breathing etc and to assist in prevention of condensation. Floors: Necessary to avoid rot, especially dry rot; achieved by airbricks near to the ground level. Roofs: Necessary to disperse condensation within roof spaces; achieved either by airbricks in gables or ducts at the eaves.
Verge	The edge of the roof, especially over a gable or around a dormer window or skylight.
Verge Board	Timber, sometimes decorative, placed at the verge of a roof; also known as "barge board".
Wall Plate	Timber placed at the eaves of a roof, designed to take the weight of the roof timbers and coverings.
Wall Tie	See "Cavity Wall Tie".
Waste Pipe	A pipe from a wash hand basin, sink or bath to carry away the waste water into the drains.
Weather Boarding	Horizontal overlapping boards nailed on the outside of a building to provide the finished wall surface.
Wet Rot	(<i>Coniophora Puteana</i>). Decay of timber due to damp conditions. Not to be confused with the more serious dry rot.
Woodworm	Colloquial term for beetle infestation: usually intended to mean Common Furniture Beetle (<i>Anobium Punctatum</i>): by far the most frequently encountered insect attack in structural and joinery timbers.

FIRE SAFETY ADVICE

General

Loss of life and property damage due to fire is a serious problem in residential property. Around 500 people die each year from these fires. 70% of these are trapped by fire and smoke before they have time to escape. Each year over 11,000 people are injured by fires.

Statistics show that elderly or disabled people are more likely to suffer injury due to their restricted mobility in the event of fire. Young children are similarly vulnerable.

Matches and cigarette lighters should be kept out of reach of children, who should be made aware of the danger of fire and the effects of smoke inhalation. Where appropriate you should discuss a fire escape plan with them.

The use of candles and supplementary lighting causes many fires. You should avoid naked flames in bedrooms and never smoke in bed. Nightwear and bedding should be of fire retardant material.

Many accidental fires occur in kitchens or utility rooms. These rooms are often compartmented. Fires in hallways or on landings are potentially more serious as these are normally escape routes to safety. You should avoid the use of portable heaters in the hallway and ensure that stairs and halls are kept free of stored articles.

Inflammable liquids should be stored in a cool, safe place (out of sunlight) in clearly labelled containers.

You should not have bonfires close to buildings; refuse receptacles, sheds, boundary fences, trees, shrubs etc.

Appliances

Many fires are caused by damaged or defective appliances or where appliances have been left unattended.

Where gas and electric heaters and appliances are included in the sale their age, safety and serviceability should be verified by an appropriately qualified contractor prior to use.

Appliances should be correctly and regularly maintained and used. Ideally they should never be left in operation at night or whilst you are sleeping.

Fires can be caused by faults both in electrical appliances and in the wiring supply to them. The electrical system and wiring should ideally be tested by a suitably qualified contractor prior to use to ensure that no dangerous or non-confirming adaptations are in existence and to ensure that the systems and fittings are properly earthed. Any adaptations should be undertaken by a qualified Electrician and fuses in plugs should be of the correct rating.

Electric blankets should not be connected to multi adaptors to reduce the risk of accident. Such fittings should be checked regularly and replaced if impact damaged or worn.

It is estimated that two thirds of domestic cooking fires occur on electric cookers. You should always double check that cookers are switched off when not in use. If you have a gas cooker ensure that controls are fully turned off before leaving the appliance.

Chip pans should never be left unattended. Each year these fires cause 5,000 injuries.

Fire Control
Products

Ideally a proper fire blanket, suitable for putting out a chip pan, waste bin, cooker top and clothing fires should be kept in the kitchen.

Kitchen fire extinguishers are easy to use and may be suitable for putting out small oil, grease or material fires at an early stage. Only carbon dioxide type fire extinguishers should be used on live electrical equipment or liquid fires.

Open Fires
and Heaters

A suitable fireguard should always be available not only for open fires but for other fires and heaters in the home where there are young children. The appropriate fuel should always be used.

Clothing, newspapers, or other inflammable materials should never be placed near to or lay on top of fireguards and heaters. Do not place a clotheshorse near a fire or cooker.

Chimneys should be swept prior to use and regularly thereafter. Flues should ideally be lined to prevent the escape of the flue gases heat and smoke. Flues to boilers or water heaters should be kept free of obstruction both to prevent blockage and combustion.

Rooms in which permanent fires and heating appliances are fitted or placed should ideally be permanently ventilated to prevent the entry or build up of deadly carbon monoxide or fumes within the enclosed space. (See also Maintenance Advice Notes).

Portable heaters should be kept away from furniture or other combustible materials such as clothes or curtains. Do not stand portable heaters where they could be knocked over.

Furniture
and Fittings

Be aware if old furniture or curtains are left as part of the sale. Upholstered furniture purchased after 1990 is required by law to be resistant to ignition from burning cigarettes and matches. Older furniture of this nature is known to be highly combustible and give off large amounts of smoke and toxic fumes.

The Building

Walls, ceilings and doors in modern houses constructed in accordance with current Building Regulations are designed to reduce or limit the spread of fire and to provide time to escape in the event of fire in the home.

Any alterations or extension to an existing building should be in accordance with Part B1 of current Building Regulations, which particularly relates to fire safety issues. There is however no requirement to upgrade existing buildings except in certain circumstances, for example in application to "houses in multiple occupations".

Ideally each habitable room, i.e. bedrooms or living accommodation should open directly on to a hallway or stair leading to an exit from a building, or have a window or door through which an escape can be made.

With taller buildings more complex provisions are needed because escape through upper floor windows becomes increasingly hazardous. For example if there are floors more than 7.5 meters above ground level it is necessary to protect the internal staircase against fire.

Loft Conversions

Building Regulation approval is required for the conversion of the loft area in an existing two or more storey structure. Approval is not only required for structural alterations. There are significant requirements for fire safety and means of escape.

Ideally the floor/ceiling partition should be upgraded to provide at least 30 minutes of standard fire resistance.

Special requirements apply to integral garages and it is normal that ceilings, walls and doors are upgraded to provide additional fire resistance. Any wall or floor between a garage and a house should ideally have at least 30 minutes of fire resistance. Any opening in a wall from the garage should be at least 100mm above the garage floor level with a 30 minute fire door. Should you require further advice you should contact the local Building Inspector.

Basements

A basement with habitable rooms such as a bedroom should have an alternative means of escape. Smoke and fumes rise and there is a danger that people escaping from a fire in a basement would move into a lethal layer of smoke or heat if they have to use an inner stair.

Flats and Marionettes

Special provisions apply to buildings in multiple occupation and there may be a requirement for the landlord, owner, head lessee, or occupier to install fire/smoke detection equipment or fire alarms. The building may be required to comply with fire regulations with regard to fire resistance and protected stairways, openings in walls and provision of alternative means of escape.

Where an existing house or building has been converted into flats in the past, and has timber floors, it is unlikely to provide the standard fire protection for newly built or recently converted flats constructed or altered under existing regulations.

Fire Escape

You should always be aware of your route or means of escape from any room in the event of fire in a building. In some cases it may be necessary to provide an escape ladder.

A room whose only escape route is through another room is at risk if a fire starts in that other room. Open plan layouts can therefore be potential high-risk areas as there is no fire compartmentation.

If your home is designed so that the stairs come directly down into the living room or kitchen without the separation of a door, a fire occurring downstairs could prevent the easy escape of people upstairs.

Windows &
External Doors

Ideally windows necessary for escape purposes should have unobstructed openings. If a non-opening window is the only means of escape, e.g. in an older style terraced house with a central staircase where the means of escape is through a window, in such cases ensure that the glazing is not of toughened or laminated glass to enable it to be broken easily.

Suitable fire doors and self-closing hinges should be fitted where necessary.

Security should not compromise safety. There should still be a safe and speedy means of escape in the event of fire.

Smoke Alarms. A newly built house, or newly converted home where Building Regulations approval is required, must be fitted with mains powered smoke alarms.

There is no statutory requirement for the installation of smoke detectors in existing dwellings unless the building constitutes part of a larger property which requires a Fire Certificate under the Fire Precautions Act 1971. However to minimize risk of fatality, you should also ensure that smoke detectors are fitted in older property as required by modern regulations.

Smoke alarms require careful siting, usually at the highest point of a circulation area, to alert occupants to the presence of smoke in escape routes. Battery operated smoke alarms are relatively inexpensive to purchase and easy to install and maintain.

More than one alarm can be fitted to cover different parts or floors or the circulation or escape route and in high-risk areas such as the kitchen.

At least one smoke alarm should be fitted on each level of the house. Ideally sited on the ceiling of the hall and landings. Ideally one should be installed to each room except in the kitchen, bathroom and garage or in areas likely to experience extreme heat or cold.

Over a third of smoke alarms are inoperable due to the fact that batteries have either been removed or expired. You should ensure, therefore, that batteries are working and never temporarily remove them. Consideration should be given to installing a long lasting 10 year smoke alarm with sealed and tamper proof battery cells.

Smoke alarms should be to British Standard 5446 Part 1 and carry the standard kite mark. Batteries should be changed regularly and the alarms tested periodically.

Interconnect able smoke alarms can be used to ensure that everybody in the house can hear the alarm. In larger properties consideration should be given to the installation of an integrated fire alarm system.

Fire Escape Plan

You have the best chance of surviving a fire if you are prepared for it.

If you are woken by your smoke alarm or by a sound which you think is a fire then STOP, THINK ACT.

Wake up all members of your family and make your way out together through the nearest exit. Do not investigate the fire and only open doors if you need to escape through them.

Once everybody is outside call the Fire Service. Stay out of the house until the Fire Officer tells you that it is safe to return.

If for any reason you cannot use the normal way out the following course of action should be used:

Smoke can be deadly so, if you have to, crawl under it.

Gather the family into a room where it is safe to drop from a window, either onto a flat roof or into the garden.

Have the children passed down, never leave them until last. Do not jump but lower yourself to arms length then drop.

If you find yourself trapped by smoke and cannot escape do the following:

Block up any gaps around the doors into the room using spare clothing, towels, or blankets. This prevents smoke from entering.

If you have a telephone in the room call the fire service or alternatively go to the window and shout for help. Wait for assistance.

Further Information

Loft insulation should be of a non-combustible material. Expanded polystyrene insulation material will react with and cause the breakdown of PVC coating of electrical wiring. Wires become exposed and fires may result. All such material should be removed.

Additional Information

Building Regulations 1991 Part B1 (2000 Edition).

“Fire Safety in the Home” and related correspondence issued by the Home Office.

“BRE Digest 388 (November 1933) issued by the Building Research Establishment, Garston, Watford WD2 7UR.

Security

Security is becoming an increasingly important issue with properties and provisions for security measures may have a bearing on your contents insurance policy.

HOME SECURITY

The following information is provided on home security to help you make your property more secure. There is always a possibility that you could be locked out of your house. Perhaps the first things that cross our mind, is what is the easiest way in. This is often the train of thought followed by most burglars. If you have any concerns about crime prevention, we suggest you contact your local Crime Prevention Officer who can often be contacted by a local police station.

Here is some further information to assist you and hopefully make your life easier in your new home.

1. Use recognised trades people

We suggest that you use local trades people, preferably those allied to professional bodies or associations; recommendations are also useful.

2. Keys

Ensure that you know where all the keys are for the property. We suggest that upon occupation of a new property you have the locks changed on the same day that you move in. The reason that we suggest this is that in most houses have looked around the property. We feel that viewing empty houses and taking a copy of keys is always a good opportunity for future burglars.

3. Insurance

You need to ensure that your home insurance begins on the day that you move in.

4. Belongings

You should ensure that all your valuable belongings are kept in a safe place on the day of the move.

5. Removal Van

You should ensure that the removal van is kept secure and that it carries adequate insurance in the unfortunate event that it is stolen.

6. Windows

A third of all break-ins occur through a rear window. Easily visible key operator locks could deter some thieves. Most DIY shops sell many varieties of patented locks. You need to be aware of the following:

- All downstairs windows that can be seen from the street should have a window lock fitted, particularly those that are accessible from single storey or a flat roof.
- Skylights are often vulnerable. Remember a thief can get through any gap, it only needs to be about 14 ins square.
- Louvre windows are also vulnerable. It is definitely a good idea to have these strengthened or provide additional security measures.
- Doors. Make sure that external and internal doors are fitted with good quality locks and bolts top and bottom. Ideally the door should be solid core and at least 44mm thick.
- Glass panels are often vulnerable so it is a good idea to replace them with laminated or toughened glass. Alternatively, consider using a different type of door altogether.
- Fit 5-lever mortice locks. Make sure that all doors are dead-locked where dead-locks are fitted.
- Fit tower bolts or integral bolts to the doors at top and bottom.

- Obtain specialist advice for security locks for patio doors.
- If you are buying new PVC windows or doors, you should make sure they come with built-in locks and also carry a recognised certificate, such as a BBA Certificate.

Further advice on Home Security is available from your Crime Prevention Officer. You need to be aware that the cost of a burglar alarm is relatively inexpensive and may also give you a slight reduction on your insurance policy. You should always check with your Insurance Company if there are any particular home requirements that will reduce your policy as discussed above, burglar alarms.

We hope the above information is sufficient to make your life in your new home much easier.

APPENDIX B

PROPERTY MAINTENANCE CHECKLIST

Your home represents a very considerable financial investment and it makes good sense to keep it in good order. Regular checks of various parts of the building and prompt maintenance can pay dividends in preventing potentially more serious and costly repairs. The following checklist is not intended to be definitive or fully comprehensive but is intended to be a simple easy to follow maintenance guide.

CHECK POINTS:

ROOF

- Roof slopes and coverings, for example tiles, slates – particularly after severe weather conditions check for slipped, cracked or badly damaged tiles/slates.
- Cement pointing at the roof edges. Make sure that this is kept in good condition.
- Remove lichen and other moss growth from tiles/slates if this becomes heavy.
- Flat roofs, normally covered in felt or metal are prone to defects. Felt in particular has a limited life. Whenever possible try to avoid walking or standing ladders on flat roofs as the coverings can be very easily damaged.
- Check flashings and valley gutters or hidden gutters for blockages and leaks. Valley gutters are particularly prone to defects and should be cleaned out at regular intervals.
- Make sure that the chippings to your flat roof remain evenly laid and clear away any heavy moss or lichen growth as this can retain moisture.
- Keep chimney pots and cowls in good order and ensure that the brickwork cement joints are in good condition.
- Gutters often become blocked with leaves, weeds or debris and should be cleaned out on a regular basis. Replace or repair any missing or defective sections immediately in order to protect the property.

LOFT

- Check for bird ingress or wasps' nests. In very rare cases where you find bats, remember that they are a protected species so you will need specialist advice.
- Check condition of water storage tanks and pipe work and ensure they are properly covered and lagged.

WALL

- ❑ Dampness can penetrate through defective mortar joints or hairline cracks in the rendering. Although very fine surface cracks may appear insignificant, it is always sensible to fill them to be on the safe side.
- ❑ Ensure that the cement mortar around the waste pipes is in good condition.
- ❑ Use a pliable waterproof mastic sealant to close any gaps around the window or door frames.
- ❑ Never bridge a damp course by building up external paving levels or garden borders. A sensible guide is to keep external levels at two brick courses below damp course level, or inside floor level.
- ❑ Never render walls down to external ground level, as this is likely to bridge any damp proof course. Always finish the rendering in a properly formed bell cast.
- ❑ Water may get behind poor rendering that could lead to dampness. Any cracked or loose areas of rendering should be repaired or replaced.
- ❑ Remove ivy or other climbing plants in particular from walls and gutters. Such plants can damage stonework/brickwork and retain moisture in the wall.
- ❑ Do not allow any sub ground floor airbricks to become blocked. Failure to do so will prevent adequate airflow and could lead to decay.
- ❑ Check water down pipes for splits or leaky joints.

EXTERNAL WOODWORK

- ❑ Paint/re-stain window frames and other joinery at regular intervals.
- ❑ Periodically check window and door frames and repair any timbers affected by wet rot. Regular painting will help avoid the timber becoming rot affected.
- ❑ Replace broken or damaged sash cords or window latches.
- ❑ Renew cracked or broken panes of glass and replace missing or loose putties before re-decoration.

ELECTRICS, HEATING AND PLUMBING

- ❑ We strongly advise you that you have the electrical installation checked by the Electricity Board at least every three years as the system can deteriorate with age and Regulations are being constantly updated.
- ❑ Ensure that you obtain qualified advice before making any alteration to the electrical wiring system.

- ❑ Ensure that you know how to get to external and internal stopcocks in the event of an emergency.
- ❑ Check your plumbing pipework and waste pipes for joint leaks and from time to time clean out bath, sink and wash basin traps. Re-seal joints around shower bases and other appliances.
- ❑ Clean through overflow pipes from water tanks or cisterns.
- ❑ Arrange for central heating boilers, water heaters and heating appliances to be regularly serviced to maximise efficiency.
- ❑ Clear blocked soakaways or gulleys. Blockages in a drainage system may be cleared by rodding or pressure hosing.

IN THE GARDEN

- ❑ Shrubs and trees can be damaging to the fabric of the property and so their growth needs to be restricted. Keep soil, trees and shrubs away from outside walls wherever possible.
- ❑ Cut back any wall climbing plants as they can damage walls and can encourage damp penetration.

EXTENSIONS/ALTERATIONS

- ❑ Before you start any structural alterations of extensions check with your local Council as to whether Building Regulations or Planning Approval is necessary. (Building warrants in Scotland).
- ❑ If you live in a Listed Building remember that Listing Building Consent may be necessary even in the case of minor alterations to the appearance of the building.

ENERGY CONSERVATION

- ❑ The thermal efficiency of your property can often be improved at relatively modest cost. These measures can often result in an improved internal environment, reduced carbon dioxide emissions and lower fuel bills. Such measures include:-
 - Draught exclusion to windows and external doors.
 - Proper insulation of hot water cylinders and lagging of water pipes.
 - Check that your loft insulation is thick enough but make sure that gaps are left at the eaves to allow sufficient ventilation to the roof space, and remove from below water storage tanks.
 - Ensure that your heating controls are effective, e.g. consider the use of automatic time clock controls, thermostatic radiator valves, thermostatic cylinder controls etc.
 - Double or secondary glazing of windows.
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BRE Scale of Cracking

<u>CATEGORY OF DAMAGE</u>	<u>DEGREE OF DAMAGE</u>	<u>DESCRIPTION OF TYPICAL DAMAGE AND EASE OF REPAIR</u>	<u>CRACK WIDTH IN MILLIMETRES</u>
0	Negligible	Hairline cracks less than 0.1mm in width. These are classed as negligible	Up to 0.1mm
1	Very Slight	Fine cracks normally visible internally only and which can be easily treated during normal decoration. Perhaps indicative of slight fracturing in building. Rarely visible in external brickwork.	Up to 1mm
2	Slight	Cracks which are easily filled and re-decoration normally necessary with recurrent cracking being able to be masked by suitable linings. Cracks not necessarily visible externally, some external re-pointing may be required to ensure weather tightness. Doors and windows may stick slightly.	Up to 5mm
3	Moderate	The cracks require some opening up and can be patched by a builder. Possible re-pointing of external brickwork, doors and windows may stick, service pipes may fracture and weather tightness of the building is often impaired.	5-15mm
4	Severe	Windows and door frames distorted, floors sloping noticeably, walls possibly leaning or bulging, some loss of bearing in beams, service pipes disrupted. Extensive repair work normally involved in breaking out, replacing sections of walls especially above doors and windows.	15-25mm (dependant on number of cracks)
5	Very Severe	This requires a major repair job involving partial or complete re-building, beams lose bearing, walls lean badly and require shoring. Windows broken with distortion, danger of instability.	Usually greater than 25mm