

Syze Developments

Jargon Buster



Confused by builder jargon?

Here's our A-Z of the most common terms that customers ask us about, helping you follow plans, quotes and site updates with confidence. Each term is explained in plain English - no hard hats required.

PART ONE - MATERIALS

Abutment - Where a roof meets a wall.

Aggregate - Crushed stone, gravel or sand mixed with cement to make concrete.

Airbrick - Ventilated brick allowing air under floors or into roof spaces.

Architrave - Decorative trim around a door or window.

Asbestos - Older insulation or fireproofing material; safe if untouched, hazardous if cut or drilled.

Ball Valve / Ballcock - Float valve controlling water flow into a cistern or tank.

Balustrade - Rail with posts beneath, beside stairs or balconies.

Batten - Thin timber strip supporting roof tiles or slates.

Bonnet Tile - Curved tile covering roof hips.

Casement Window - Window with hinged, pivoted or fixed sections.

Cladding - Non-structural outer wall or roof covering.

Conduit - Tube protecting electrical cables.

Consumer Unit - Main fuse board controlling a home's electrical circuits.

Coping Stone - Cap on top of a wall to prevent water ingress, often concrete or stone.

Cornice / Coving - Moulded trim at the junction between a wall and the ceiling.

Cowl - Chimney cap preventing rain and allowing airflow.

Dado Rail - Mid-height wall trim or top of panelling.

Engineering Brick - Dense, hard brick used for strength or damp resistance.

Expansion Tank - Small loft tank allowing heating system overflow.

Fascia Board - a long, straight board that runs along the lower edge of a roof where it meets the exterior wall.

Flashing - Waterproof joint between a roof and wall.

Flue - Channel for air intake and fume outlet from fires or boilers.

Macerator - Aa device that grinds up waste and then pumps it through pipes to a drainage system.

Mastic - Flexible sealant used around joints or glazing.

Mortice Lock - Lock set into the edge of a door.

Newel - Main post supporting a stair handrail.

Padstone - Concrete or hard brick block used to spread weight from structural elements like steel beams.

Plasterboard - Sheet of plaster between paper layers used for walls or ceilings.

Plywood - Multi-layer board made from thin sheets glued with alternating grain.

Rodding Eye - Access point for clearing drain blockages.

Soffit - Underside of a roof overhang, beam or stair.

Soil Stack - Vertical waste pipe vented above roof.

Stopcock - Valve to shut off a water or gas supply.

Trap - U-shaped bend in waste pipes holding water to block smells.



Find out more

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PART TWO - TERMINOLOGY

Benching / Haunching - Shaped concrete at the base of a drain chamber.

Bond - Brick or block laying pattern (e.g. English, Flemish).

Box Gutter - Square gutter behind a parapet wall.

Cold Roof - Roof where insulation sits below the structure.

Condensation - Water released by condensed moist air.

Course - Single horizontal layer of bricks, blocks or slates.

Damp-Proof Course / DPC - Waterproof layer in a wall stopping rising damp.

Damp-Proof Membrane - Waterproof sheet beneath floors or slabs.

Distemper - Old chalk-based paint finish.

Dormer Cheek - Side wall of a dormer window.

Drip - Groove stopping rainwater running down a wall.

Dry Rot - Wood fungus found in damp, unventilated areas.

Eaves - Lower overhang edge of a roof.

Foundations - Concrete base supporting a building.

French Drain - Gravel trench draining water from walls.

Frog - Hollow in a brick's top face to save weight.

Gable - Triangular end wall of a pitched roof.

Heat Exchanger - a device which transfers heat between incoming (fresh) air and outgoing (humid) air.

Hip - Sloping junction where roof faces meet.

Hopper - Funnel head directing rainwater into downpipes.

HVAC - heating, ventilation, air conditioning: systems that control building's temperature, humidity & air quality.

Inspection Chamber - "Manhole" giving access to underground drains.

Joist - Horizontal beam supporting a floor or ceiling.

Kerb - Raised edge on a flat roof beside a wall.

Lath - Narrow slats traditionally used as a base for plaster.

Lintel - Beam over an opening supporting wall above.

Load-Bearing - Structure carrying the weight above it.

Mullion - Vertical divider between window panes.

Oversite - Rough concrete layer below timber floors.

Parapet - Low wall at the edge of a roof or balcony.

Pier - Vertical column strengthening or supporting a wall.

Pointing - Finished mortar joints between bricks.

Purlin - Horizontal roof beam supporting rafters.

Rafter - Sloping timber forming the roof frame.

Reveal - Side face of a window or door opening.

Ridge - Apex or highest point of a roof.

Riser - Vertical part of a stair step.

Rising Damp - Moisture drawn up walls from the ground.

Roof Deck - Base boarding under a flat roof covering.

RSJ - Rolled Steel Joist, a stiff structural beam.

Screed - Smooth top layer over a concrete floor.

Scrim - Mesh tape covering plasterboard joints.

Soakaway - Underground pit letting rainwater soak into the ground.

String - Side of a staircase supporting treads and risers.

Stud Partition - Lightweight internal wall.

Transom - Horizontal divider in a window or above a door.

Tread - Flat step surface on stairs.

Trussed Rafters - Prefabricated triangular roof frames.

Underpinning - Used to strengthen weak foundations

Verge - Edge of a sloped roof over a gable.

Ventilation - Airflow preventing condensation and decay.

Wall Plate - Horizontal timber supporting joists.

Warm Roof - Roof with insulation above the structure.



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