



## External Snagging Guide

A practical homeowner guide to common external issues in new-build homes - what to look for, why it matters, and how to record it clearly.

### How to use this guide

Walk around the outside of your property slowly. Look at each element in daylight where possible, take clear photos, and note what you can actually see. SnagClear helps you turn those observations into a structured, professional-style report you can share more clearly with your developer. Also see Image 1, at the end of this document for a labelled diagram.

### What this guide covers

- Brickwork, mortar joints and pointing
- Ground levels, damp protection, and drainage
- Roofing, gutters, and rainwater goods
- External doors, windows, and sealant
- Paths, paving, driveways, fencing, and boundary items

This guide is for homeowner use. It does not replace a surveyor or specialist inspection, but it will help you check the most common external snagging points in a clear and organised way.

## 1. Brickwork and External Walls

Brickwork is one of the most visible parts of the home and one of the most common sources of cosmetic and workmanship snags. Look closely at the finish rather than just the overall colour from a distance.

### Inconsistent mortar beds and perp joints

Mortar beds are the horizontal lines of mortar between bricks. Perp joints are the vertical joints. In a neat finish they should look reasonably consistent rather than wildly uneven from one area to the next.

- Very thick joints beside very thin joints
- Joints that wander or look uneven across the wall
- Mortar that appears smeared across the face of bricks
- Poorly filled joints or visible gaps in joints
- Areas where the mortar finish is rough, cracked, or incomplete

**Why it matters:** inconsistent joints can make the wall look poor and, where joints are not filled properly, may allow greater water penetration and faster deterioration over time.

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### Damaged, marked, or mismatched bricks

- Chipped brick arises or cracked brick faces
- Bricks with obvious colour mismatch in highly visible areas
- Stained brickwork, including mortar stains or white deposits
- Bricks that appear heavily scratched, drilled or repaired poorly

**Helpful note:** white powdery deposits on brickwork are often called **efflorescence**. They are commonly salts brought to the surface by moisture. They are often cosmetic, but worth recording if widespread or persistent.

### Poor pointing finish

- Mortar that has not been tooled or finished evenly
- Messy edges around openings or at changes in material
- Mortar that looks recessed too deeply or crumbling in places

## 2. Ground Levels, Damp Protection and Drainage

Ground levels around the property are important because they affect how surface water behaves and whether damp protection measures can work properly. Ground levels should generally sit two brick courses below DPC (see diagram 3)

### Ground level height

As a practical rule of thumb, external ground level should generally sit around two brick courses below the damp proof course and below the threshold level at doors, unless the detail has been designed differently with suitable drainage protection.

- Soil, bark, paving, or gravel built up too high against the wall
- Ground level appearing close to or above damp-proof course level
- Raised beds or landscaping piled against external walls
- External levels close to air bricks or blocking them partially

**Why it matters:** if external ground levels are too high, the damp proof course can be bridged over time this may increase the risk of moisture entering the wall and causing damp internally.

#### SnagClear tip

When recording brickwork snags, say what you can actually see and where it is. For example: 'Mortar joints to rear elevation appear notably inconsistent beneath kitchen window, with several poorly filled vertical joints visible.'

### Drainage and standing water

- Water ponding on paving or near the building after rain
- Poor falls on paths, patios, or driveways

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- Rainwater discharging too close to walls or foundations
  - Gullies or drainage covers sitting awkwardly or not draining well

**Why it matters:** poor drainage can leave water sitting against the building envelope and may contribute to staining, slippery surfaces, soft landscaping problems, or longer-term moisture issues.

#### **Air bricks and vents**

- Air bricks blocked by soil, gravel, or paving
- Air vents damaged, painted over or partially obscured

**Why it matters:** air bricks help ventilate voids beneath certain floor constructions. If they are blocked, airflow is reduced and moisture build-up can become more likely.

### **3. Roof, Gutters, and Rainwater Goods**

You may not be able to inspect every roof detail safely from ground level, but many issues can still be spotted by standing back and checking the general finish with care.

#### **Roof coverings**

- Missing, slipped or visibly damaged tiles/slates
- Uneven lines that look noticeably irregular from ground level
- Untidy cuts around abutments, roof edges, or penetrations

**Why it matters:** visibly poor roof finishing may indicate workmanship issues and can sometimes allow water ingress if key details are incomplete.

#### **Flashing and abutments**

- Loose-looking flashing around walls, chimneys, or roof junctions
- Messy sealing or visibly incomplete junction details

You may not always be able to confirm whether flashing is defective from ground level alone, but visibly untidy or incomplete details are still worth recording.

#### **Gutters and downpipes** *(see image 2)*

- Gutters that appear to dip, bow, or fall the wrong way
- Leaking joints, staining beneath gutters or downpipes
- Loose brackets or poorly aligned downpipes
- Downpipes terminating awkwardly or discharging poorly

**Why it matters:** poorly installed rainwater goods can allow water to run down walls, stain brickwork, and saturate the ground close to the building.

#### **Record clearly**

A useful note might read: 'Gutter to front elevation appears to hold water near centre span and staining is visible beneath joint above bay window.'

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## 4. Openings, Joinery and External Finishes

### External doors and frames

- Door frames with poor sealant or visible gaps
- Threshold details that look uneven or poorly finished
- Scratches, dents, or chips to external door surfaces
- Handles or locks that feel stiff, loose, or misaligned

**Why it matters:** poor finishing around openings can affect weather resistance, appearance, and ease of operation.

### Windows and external seals

- Scratched frames or glazing
- Messy or incomplete perimeter sealant
- Visible gaps around frame edges or trims
- Poor alignment where one frame line appears obviously out

Where possible, note whether the issue appears to affect the frame, glazing, handle, or sealant rather than just saying 'window damaged'.

### Render, cladding, or other external finishes

- Uneven render texture or colour variation
- Cracks, chips, or impact damage
- Poor junctions where finishes meet trims or frames
- Loose-looking cladding edges or inconsistent boards



## 5. Paths, Paving, Boundaries and External Areas

### Paths, patios, and driveways

- Loose or rocking slabs/blocks
- Uneven levels creating trip points
- Cracked paving or damaged block edges
- Poor finish to edges, cuts, or joints
- Low spots where water appears likely to pond

**Why it matters:** these are both quality and usability issues. Some may worsen with traffic or weathering if not corrected.

### Boundary items

- Leaning fence panels or loose posts
- Poorly secured gates or latches
- Untidy or incomplete boundary finishes
- Meter boxes, covers, and external fittings
- Loose meter box doors or poorly aligned covers

- External taps not secure or leaking
- Vents, grilles or covers damaged or poorly fitted

**Use SnagClear with this guide**

As you work through the outside of the property, use SnagClear to photograph each issue, note the exact location, and keep everything organised room-by-room or area-by-area. You can then generate a structured, professional-style report to communicate your observations more clearly.

**Glossary of helpful terms**

Term	Meaning
Air brick	A vent in an external wall that allows airflow, often to an underfloor void.
Rainwater goods	A collective term for gutters, downpipes and related fittings that carry rainwater away from the roof and building.
Threshold	The lower part of a doorway where the external door meets the ground or sill detail.
Damp Proof Course (DPC)	A horizontal barrier within the wall designed to help stop moisture rising from the ground into the building fabric.
Efflorescence	A white powdery deposit that can appear on brickwork or mortar as salts are drawn to the surface by moisture.
Mortar bed	The horizontal mortar joint between courses of bricks.
Perp joint	The vertical mortar joint between adjacent bricks.
Pointing	The visible finish of the mortar joints on the face of the wall.

This guide is intended to support homeowners in recording observations clearly. It does not replace advice from a qualified surveyor or other building professional where specialist input is needed.

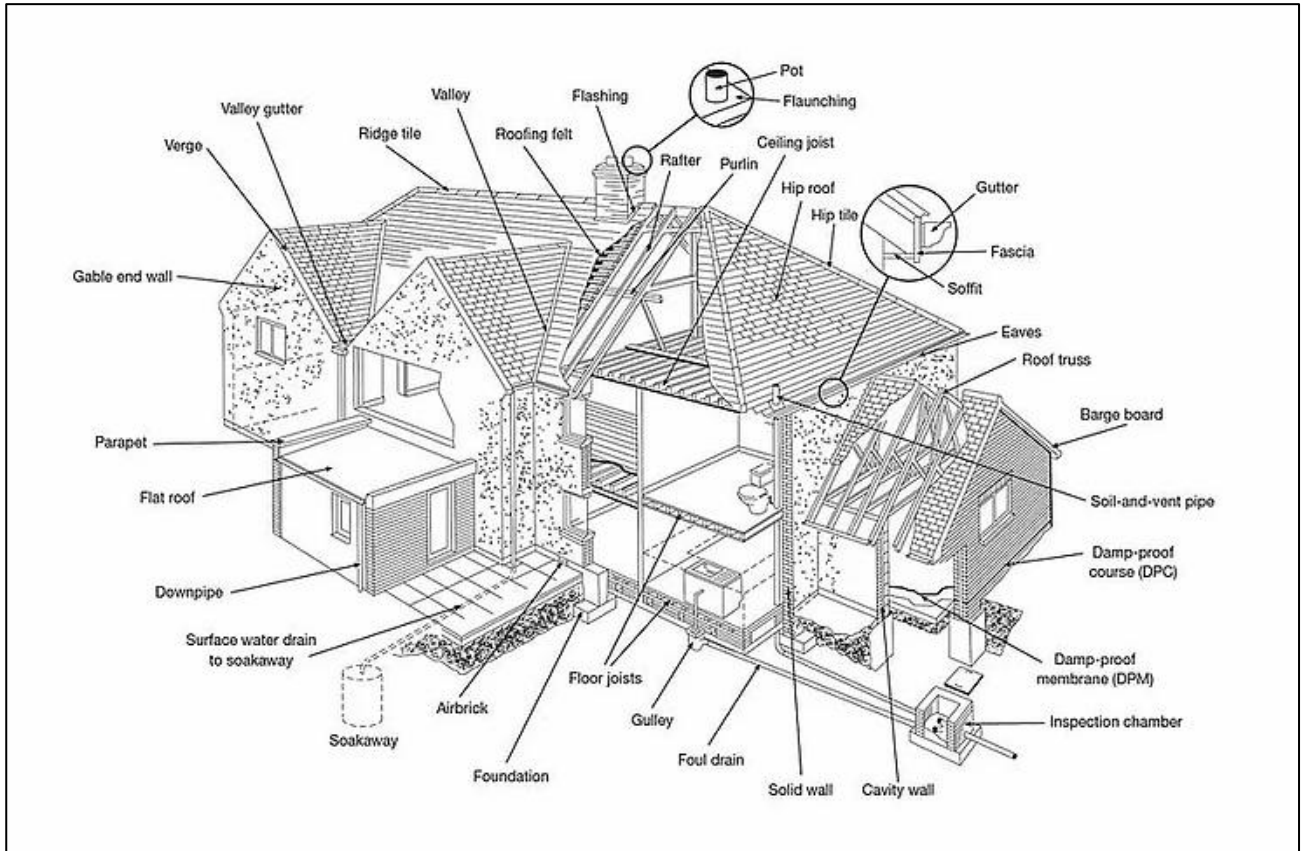


Image 1: Labelled diagram of external elements.



Image 2: Guttering components.

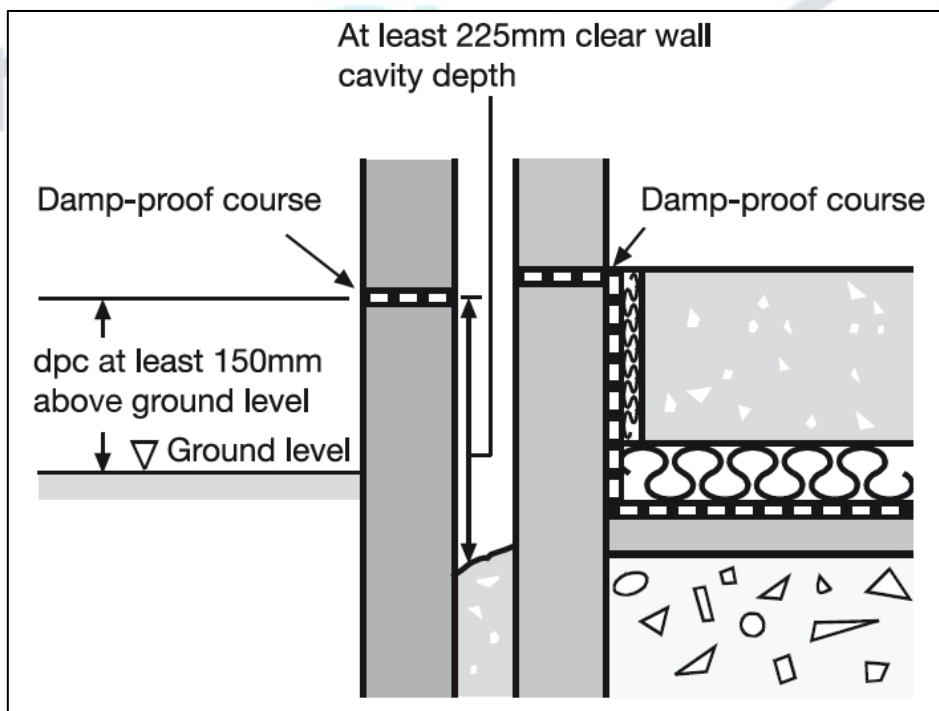


Image 3: Typical DPC detail.