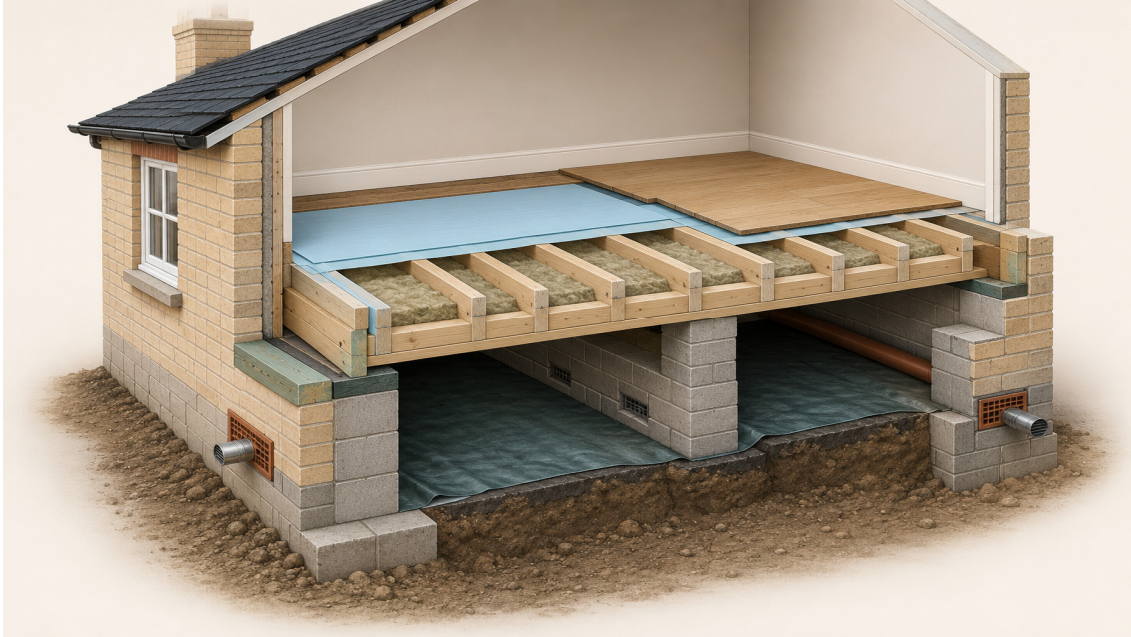


HOUSEPLANSDIRECT TECHNICAL GUIDES

TIMBER GROUND FLOORS EXPLAINED

A complete guide to suspended timber ground-floor construction



A dry, ventilated void and continuous insulation protect the strength, comfort and durability of a suspended timber floor.

NINE-PART PUBLICATION EDITION

Principles · Systems · Structure · Anatomy · Installation · Services · Compliance · Defects ·
Inspection

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About this guide

This guide explains suspended timber ground floors for domestic construction in England. It covers solid and engineered joists, bearings, sleeper walls, stability, subfloor voids, ventilation, moisture, durability, insulation, airtightness, services, finishes, installation and inspection. Joist size, grade, span, bearings, moisture strategy and fire performance must follow the project design and current manufacturer guidance.

SCOPE Joist size, grade, span, bearings, treatment, ventilation, insulation and moisture strategy are project-specific. Survey existing construction and follow structural and product design; figures are explanatory and must not be scaled.

Part 1 – What Is a Suspended Timber Ground Floor?

A joisted floor spanning above a ventilated or otherwise designed subfloor void

A suspended timber ground floor uses joists, decking and supporting walls or beams to carry room loads above the ground. The timber must remain dry, adequately ventilated and separated from moisture-prone masonry. Insulation and airtightness are added without blocking subfloor airflow or trapping moisture. It differs from an upper timber floor because ground conditions and external ventilation govern durability.

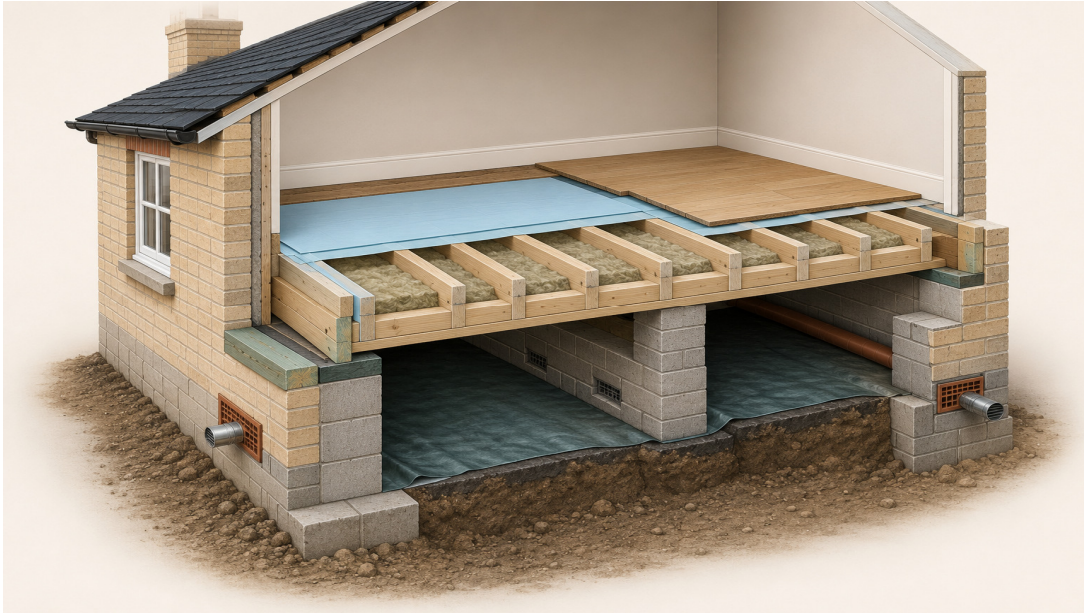


Figure 1 – Typical insulated suspended timber floor with joists, void and ventilation exposed.

1.1 Principal components

Component	Primary role
Joists / I-joists	Span between supports and carry floor loads.
Decking	Distributes loads and braces the joists.
Bearings / sleeper walls	Transfer reactions to foundations.
Subfloor ventilation	Controls moisture beneath the timber.
Insulation / air layer	Reduce heat loss and draughts.

1.2 Benefits and limitations

- Factory-made units can create a rapid, durable ground floor with little formwork.
- A suspended system can bridge variable fill and keep the structural floor clear of the ground.
- The units are heavy and require planned delivery, lifting, access and temporary safety measures.
- Incorrect bearings, damaged beams, blocked void ventilation or improvised openings can cause serious defects.

KEY PRINCIPLE Keep structural timber dry and ventilated while making the insulation and warm-side air layer continuous across every joist bay and perimeter junction.