



Strategic Sewers: What you need to know

At Wessex Searches we are the only producer of the Law Society approved Official CON29DW that include strategic sewers within our search reports as standard.

We introduced this in October 2017. One of the reasons why we chose to do so is because by definition a strategic sewer is “a sewer of critical importance to the water company”, thus, we believe that any asset of such importance should always be reported, and you should be made aware of its presence.

You may be wondering “how big are strategic sewers?” Wessex Water advises that “typically, they are large (12inches/300mm or greater) in diameter, but they can be of smaller diameter and still be strategic.” It is important to note, that sewers aren’t always classified as strategic just because of their size, and can also be due to their material, depth and/or location.

Strategic sewers play an essential role in the continuous operation of the sewerage network. They can carry high volumes of foul waste, surface water or both (this is known as a combined sewer). As a result of this, any damage or interference caused to one of these pipes could have a drastic

consequence to a number of properties. It is therefore extremely important to contact the relevant water company when considering carrying out any works nearby to a strategic sewer.

The general advice given is that you are prohibited from building within six metres of a strategic sewer, and permission to build directly over the top of such a sewer could only be granted as a result of extensive consultation and on-site assessments which have proved it viable. In some

circumstances, permission can be given on brownfield developments.

Taking this into account, you may wish to raise further enquiries following receipt of a CON29DW search result which has revealed the location of a strategic sewer in close proximity to your client’s potential new property.

We believe it is important for all those involved with the property transaction to closely study the sewer plans provided within a CON29DW search.



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