

FOUNDATION ASSESSMENT & FLOORING EVALUATION REPORT

Client Name: [REDACTED]

Property Address: [REDACTED]

Inspection Date: 1-31-25

Inspector: Jesse Bryant - Professional Inspector / TREC 8511



1. Purpose of Inspection

The purpose of this inspection was to evaluate concerns regarding the condition of the first-floor tile flooring, including hollow sounds when tapped, cracked grout, and a section of tile that had lifted and buckled (“tented”). The client also expressed concerns that these issues may be indicative of a foundation problem.

2. Inspection Process & Methodology

The inspection included:

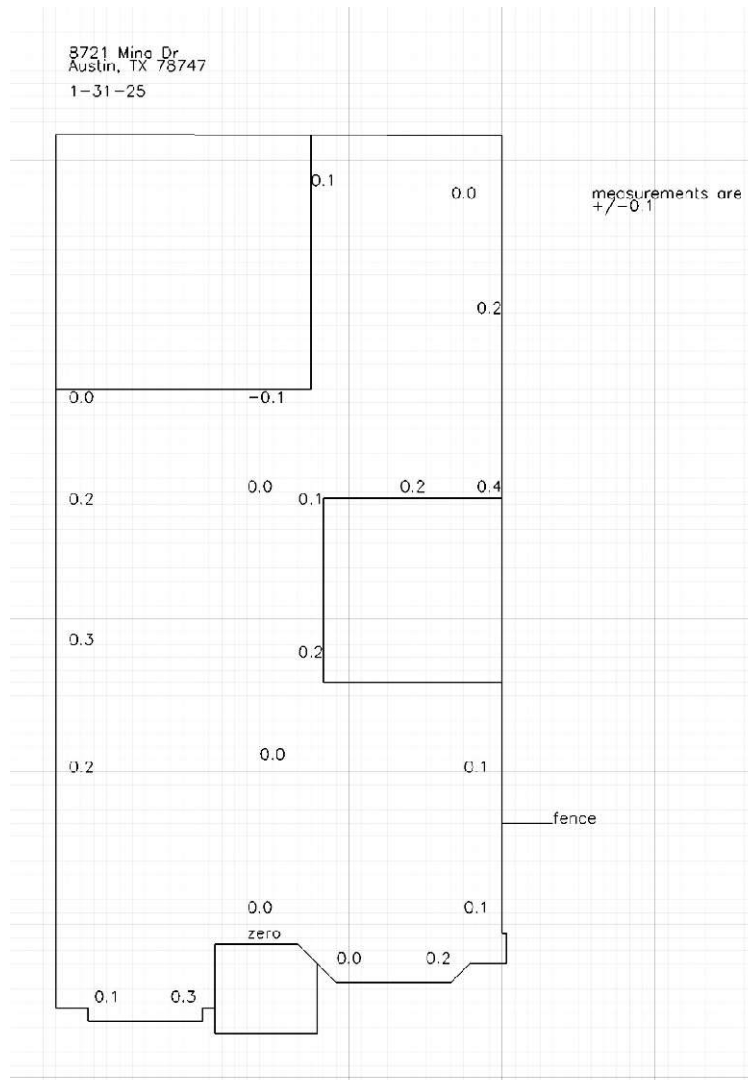
- A walkthrough with the client to discuss concerns.
- A visual assessment of the tile flooring for signs of movement, separation, or failure.
- A foundation elevation survey, using a Smart Level High-Precision Construction Altimeter, to assess the relative levelness of the slab.
- Observation of other structural indicators such as drywall cracks, door operation, and exterior conditions to determine if any evidence of abnormal structural movement was present.

The foundation elevation survey was performed across the primary footprint of the home, with a zero reference point established directly adjacent to the front door. Elevation readings were taken at multiple locations along the outer perimeter of the foundation (excluding the garage and side porch).

3. Findings & Observations

A. Foundation Elevation Survey Results

- The elevation survey showed minimal variations across the slab, with the highest point being approximately **3/8 (0.4) inch higher than the zero reference point.**
- The **centerline of the slab, running front to back, was relatively level**, with outer elevations slightly higher than the center.
- The elevation pattern suggests **minor soil-related movement**, likely due to **recent rainfall and a lack of gutters**, leading to slight expansion of the soil near the perimeter beams.
- No signs of significant foundation settlement, heaving, or structural distress were observed during the survey.



B. Flooring Observations

- A majority of the tile flooring on the first floor exhibited a **noticeable hollow sound when tapped**.
- Several areas showed **cracked grout lines**.
- A section of tile near the stairway had **buckled and “tented”**, indicative of the slight pressure on the perimeter of the slab, but more likely attributable to **poor tile adhesion**.

4. Conclusion & Opinion

Based on the findings, **the foundation is performing adequately and does not show evidence of abnormal structural movement**. The minor elevation differences are within normal tolerances for slab-on-grade foundations in this region and do not appear to be the primary cause of the tile failure.

The observed tile issues—including hollow sounds, cracked grout, and tenting—are **more indicative of a flooring material and/or installation issue**. While minor foundation movement may have contributed, **it alone would not typically cause widespread tile failure unless there were pre-existing weaknesses in the flooring system**.

Factors that may have contributed to the flooring failure include:

1. **Inferior tile product or manufacturing defects** – The installed tile is **Emser Tile Albero Foresta 8x24**, a product that has reportedly had issues in some Central Texas homes. It has been said that there have even been some instances where builders and / or flooring manufacturers have replaced entire floors due to failures related to material quality or improper installation.
 2. **Installation-related issues** – Potential contributing factors include improper slab preparation, inadequate expansion gaps, or improper bonding techniques.
 3. **Moisture-related effects** – Perimeter soil expansion due to recent rains and the absence of gutters may have caused slight slab movement, which could have exacerbated an already weak flooring system.
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5. Recommended Next Steps

To further assess the cause of the tile failure and provide documentation for discussions with the builder or manufacturer, the following steps are recommended:

1. **Consult a flooring inspection specialist** – A professional flooring inspector can perform an in-depth evaluation of the tile material, installation method, and potential defects.
2. **Review builder warranty documentation** – If the home is still under warranty, the client should review the flooring warranty terms and notify the builder of the issue.
3. **Gather additional evidence** – If possible, obtain reports or testimonies from other homeowners in the area who may have experienced similar issues with Emser Tile products.
4. **Consider a structural engineer consultation (if desired)** – While no foundation issues were identified, clients may choose to obtain an engineer's assessment for added documentation.

6. Summary Statement

The foundation of the home is performing within normal parameters, with no evidence of significant movement or structural issues. The observed flooring failures are more likely due to **material quality, installation deficiencies, or a combination of both**, rather than foundation problems. Consulting a **flooring inspection specialist** and discussing the issue with the builder are the most appropriate next steps.

Jesse Bryant

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