

INTRODUCTION

This leaflet gives guidance on the approvals are needed before removing a chimney breast on an external or party wall of a house or flat.

There are at least 5 main requirements to consider before carrying out the work:-

- a) Building Regulations compliance,
- b) Planning Permission,
- c) Party Wall Award under the Party Wall etc. Act 1996,
- d) Landlords Licence if a leasehold property. (Please take your own legal advice on this),
- e) The safety of any gas appliance that uses a party walls flue in neighbours or own property. (Please take advice from a person approved under Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations

a) Building Regulations

There are 6 main aspects that need to be considered:-

- 1) Structural Strength
- 2) Fire Safety
- 3) Sound Insulation
- 4) Maintenance of neighbours chimney
- 5) Damp Penetration, and
- 6) Ventilation to rooms.

1) Structural Strength

Typical 1 or 2 storey houses with an external or Party wall one brick thick (225mm) would have their front and back walls less than 9.0m apart. These front and back walls give adequate resistance to wind or other lateral loads acting on flank or Party walls.

It is, then, usually structurally possible to remove chimney-breasts from the flank or party walls of such buildings without affecting the strength of the wall. For larger buildings a structural engineer may need to check the adequacy of the wall and a buttress wall or pier may need to be provided instead of the chimney-breast.

The opening, where the hearth and breast have been removed will normally need to have the existing floor joist hearth trimmers removed and new full-length floor joists inserted to take the load from flooring and ceilings.

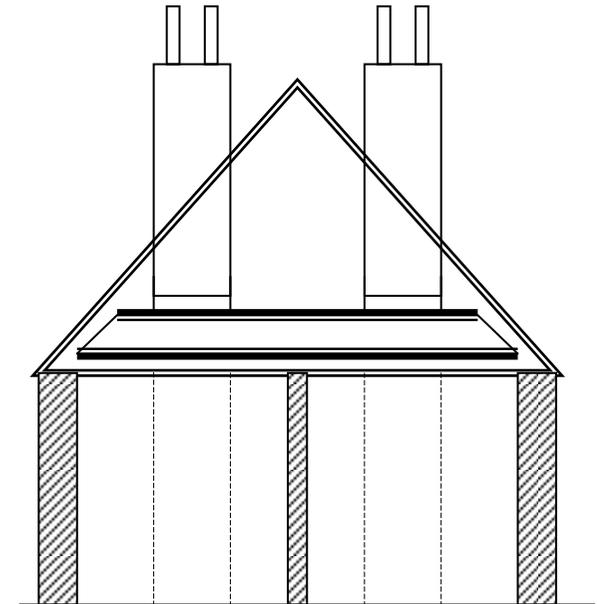
Where it is intended to retain part of the chimney above the roof it will need to be supported. Typically this would be because of an aesthetic or planning permission reason.

There are 3 typical ways of achieving this:-

- Insertion of a structural steel beam,
- Insertion of steel beam and post, or
- Use of gallows brackets.

Structural Steel Beam

This usually involves the submission of structural calculations by your structural engineer to justify the proposed size of beam.



SECTION SHOWING BEAM

Insertion of steel beam and post

If centre wall is not brickwork a structural steel post may be installed.

Gallows Brackets

Where the chimney-breast does not protrude from the wall by more than about a third of the thickness of the wall, the brickwork may in some circumstances be corbelled out or have gallows brackets installed. Where lime mortar has been used or the neighbour's flues are in line with yours the use of gallows brackets would not be acceptable.

If advantage is to be taken of a neighbour's chimney to allow use of gallows brackets, you are advised to have a written agreement with your neighbour to ensure that remedial works at your expense do not become necessary if they remove their chimney at a subsequent date.

A gallows bracket in some situations may be acceptable. Please discuss this arrangement with your local Building Control Surveyor.

2) Fire Safety & 3) Sound Insulation

When a chimney-breast is removed, sometimes a recess is found in the wall for the flues. This recess needs to be filled with brickwork to make up the wall locally to the same thickness and density as elsewhere for sound insulation.

Typically small recess areas are built up with bricks on edge, which are tied back to the wall

with ties at 450mm centres. All joints need to be packed with mortar for their full depth.

Typically at least a one-hour fire resistance is required to wall between neighbouring properties.

4) Maintenance of Neighbours Chimney

If separation between flues is damaged carbon dioxide/ monoxide poisoning could result from the neighbour's fires.

5) Damp Prevention

To ensure rain and condensation coming down the flue is dried out by natural convection, a ventilated cap is sometimes added to the top of chimney pots and airbricks installed low level.

6) Room ventilation

Building Regulation Part F2 advises rooms to have permanent ventilation of at least 8,000 sq.mm. Chimneys can provide this.

b) Planning Permission

Listed Buildings and some Conservation areas may require an application to be made. In such circumstances you should seek the agreement of your local Planning Officer (Development Control Section of the local authority).

Consents Required Prior to Chimney-Breast Removal

Information Sheet

June 2002.