

## INTRODUCTION

Most older houses were constructed with fireplaces in every room to provide heat. These days central heating has replaced the need for fireplaces and the chimney breast is seen as wasted floor space in the room.

Although a fireplace does provide a focal point in the room, the removal of the fireplace and the chimney can increase the size of the room significantly.

**But the chimney is part of the structure of the house and its removal should be carefully considered before any work is carried out.**

The work must comply with the Building Regulations 2000. **A submission is required.**

Forms to make a submission are available from the Customer Contact Centre at the Civic Centre or by post. Guidance on this process is contained in Guidance Note No.2 also available by post and from the Civic Centre.

Where the chimney is part of the party wall between two properties, the **Party Wall etc Act 1996** places certain burdens on the person intending to carry out the work.

The details that follow are not the only way of adequately supporting a partially removed chimney, but are intended to give one option regarding carrying out the work so that it complies with the Building Regulations. A structural engineer would be able to give advice on suitable alternative methods.

## CAN THE CHIMNEY BE REMOVED?

If you want to remove a chimney breast in a ground or first floor room you must first support the chimney adequately.

It is not enough to corbel the brickwork below the remaining chimney stack. The stack must be properly supported and the bracket detail illustrated below is one way.

Steel beams can be used instead of brackets provided that they are supported on suitable load-bearing walls.

Where a chimney stack on an external wall is partly removed, say on the end house of a terrace, the chimney stack should be reduced to be no more than 1 metre above the highest point of the where the stack emerges from the roof.

Where a stack forms a buttress, the wall must be checked for stability by a structural engineer. This will apply where the chimney is in a long wall without another brick wall at 90 degrees to it, other than any returning external walls. In the case of a two storey building the wall must not exceed 9 metres without a buttress, and in the case of a single storey building 12 metres.

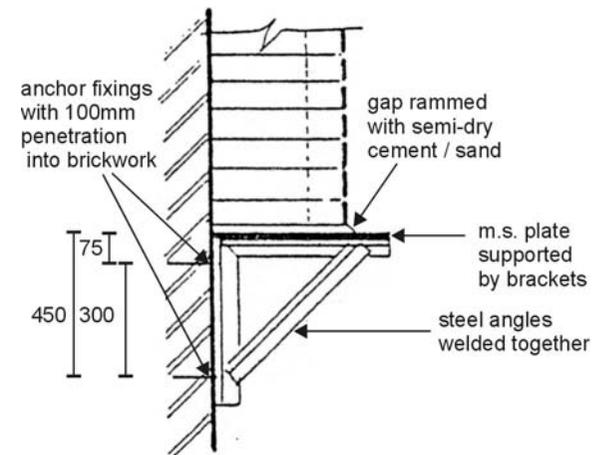
## CONSTRUCTING AND FIXING A SUPPORTING BRACKET

The bracket should be made of 50mm x 50mm angles in 5mm or 6mm steel. The angle of the support should be 45° with all the joints welded together with 5mm fillet weld.

The brackets should be at 600mm centres and no more than 300mm from the vertical edge of the chimney stack.

Over the top of the bracket there should be a 6mm thick steel plate.

All the steel should be given 1 coat of protective paint.



The brackets should be fixed to brickwork in good condition. Any brickwork or mortar that is not in a good condition, should be rebuilt.

The holes in the angles should be 12mm in diameter and the anchor fixing should be a 10mm diameter Rawlbolt or similar and should go into the brickwork at least 100mm.

There should be a 25mm gap between the steel plate and the underside of the brickwork. This gap should be rammed full with semi-dry sand/cement (1:3 mix) and the chimney made good and re-pointed as necessary.

**Note:**

Further guidance on removing chimneys and the application forms are available from the Building Control Group at the address given below.

Building Control Officers are normally available for informal advice at the Civic Centre between 8.30am and 10.30am and 3.30pm and 5.00pm.

Further guidance regarding the Party Wall etc Act 1996 is available from:

The Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors  
12 Great George Street  
London SW1P 3AD  
Tel: 0171 222 7000

The following professional bodies hold lists of their members who may be willing to act as a surveyor under the Party Wall etc Act 1990:

1. **Private Practice Register**  
Association of Building Engineers  
Jubilee House  
Billing Brook Road  
Weston Favell  
Northampton NN3 8NW  
Tel: 01604 404121
2. **The Faculty of Party Wall Surveyors**  
19 Church Street  
Godalming  
Surrey GU7 1EL  
Tel: 01424 883300

Director of Enterprise, Tourism & Environment  
Southend on Sea Borough Council  
PO Box 5557  
Civic Centre  
Victoria Avenue  
Southend-on-Sea  
Essex SS2 6ZF

Tel: 01702 215345  
Fax: 01702 215386  
Email: [doete@southend.gov.uk](mailto:doete@southend.gov.uk)

Please contact the Building Control Group on 01702 215345 if you require a larger text version of this leaflet.

