

Building Control Solutions

Homeowner Guide 16

# Removing a Chimney



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## 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 works must comply with the Building Regulations 2010. A Building Regulation application is required. Forms to make a submission can be downloaded from the website at:

[www.bcsolutions.org.uk](http://www.bcsolutions.org.uk).

Alternatively, please call Building Control Solutions and we will forward any forms to you.

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 Party Wall etc Act cannot be enforced by the Local Authority. Advice should be sought from a suitably qualified surveyor or legal expert. Our Homeowner Guide 13 is available to provide further advice, either by contacting us or by visiting our website.

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 should be contacted to give advice on the correct design for your building.

## 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.

A structural engineer should be contacted to give advice on the correct design for your building. It is not enough to corbel the brickwork below the remaining chimney stack. The remaining stack must be properly supported.

One method of support, is by the use of brackets, commonly referred to as gallows brackets. The details opposite show this method. Where this is not possible steel beams can be used instead of brackets provided that they are supported on suitable loadbearing walls.

## Fire Resistance

All supporting steelwork should be provided with adequate protection from fire.

## Ventilation

The remaining sections of flues within the chimney should be adequately ventilated.

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 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.

## **Please Note**

Further guidance on removing chimneys and the application forms are available from Building Control Solutions. Further guidance regarding the Party Wall etc Act 1996 is available from our website or by contacting the following organisations:

The following professional bodies hold lists of their members who may be willing to act as a surveyor under the Party Wall etc Act 1996:

**The Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors**  
[www.rics.org.uk](http://www.rics.org.uk)

**Private Practice Register**  
Chartered Association of Building Engineers  
[www.cbuilt.com](http://www.cbuilt.com)

## **Providing Guidance**

Please consult our Building Control team prior to making an application. Our service is there to help if you are in any doubts over requirements or require further information.

This is one of a number of Homeowner Guides to help you through the Building Control process. Copies are available either through our website or by contacting our Building Control team.

## **How do I make an application?**

Our Homeowner Guide 1 is available either from our website or can be obtained from our Building Control Team.

## **How much will it cost to make an application?**

A separate guidance leaflet on Building Control Charges is available and can be obtained from our website.

## Need Help?

Our Building Control Surveyors are happy to give guidance and answer questions, how ever trivial you think they are. They would rather tell 20 people the same thing, than risk one person being injured as a result of unauthorised building works.

## Visit our Website

For a wealth of information including application forms, guidance on charges and latest news, why not visit our website at: [www.bcsolutions.org.uk](http://www.bcsolutions.org.uk)

## Other Approvals

In addition to a Building Regulation approval you may also require Planning Permission in certain circumstances. Please contact the relevant authority's Development Control team for further advice.





Tel: 0300 790 0580  
[www.bcsolutions.org.uk](http://www.bcsolutions.org.uk)

