

# Removing a chimney breast



## Everything you need to know:

Removing a no-longer-used chimney breast is an often considered alteration, but sometimes isn't straight forward as you would hope. This guide aims to help you identify (before you have incurred too much expense!) whether removing your chimney breast should be a breeze (relatively speaking) or something best not started! Don't forget your Local Authority Building Control Team is here to help if you get stuck, want clarification, or need specific advice.

### What should you consider?

Circumstances can limit the options available, but generally there are three approaches that may be appropriate:

- a) Remove just what you need internally, providing a gallows bracket support to what remains above, or
- b) As option a), but using a beam instead of a gallows bracket, or
- c) Starting at the top, remove the chimney, loft-space flues and chimney breasts as required.

Which approach should you take?

**Gallows brackets** (option a) can be a straight forward solution for some chimney breasts on party walls. They tend to be fitted in loft-spaces where they cannot be seen. They should always be fitted as low down as possible and into undisturbed brickwork. You will typically need two brackets for a single flue, three for a double, with a steel plate and angle spanning between. In a room they would need to be boxed in for fire resistance and appearance. A different solution will likely be needed if any of the following apply:

- 1) The property was not originally built with a party wall at least 225mm (one full brick) thick, or
- 2) The chimney in the loft is entirely vertical, or
- 3) At support the chimney is wider than 900mm, or
- 4) At support the chimney projects between 235mm and 310mm, or over 340mm, or
- 5) There will be more height of chimney remaining above the roof covering than below, or
- 6) The chimney supports other loads (e.g. beams), or
- 7) Next door has already removed the corresponding chimney breast on their side.

**Steel beams** (option b) are generally acceptable in most circumstances, even when gallows brackets cannot be used, provided there are suitable walls to support the ends of the beam. If scenario 1 applies and the party wall at room level is also less than 225mm wide then the chimney breast should be left in place. In all cases beam selection will likely require an engineer (unless spans are very short).

**Complete removal** (option c) of a redundant chimney (assuming your house isn't listed or in a conservation area) could mean that Building Regulation approval is no longer needed but check with us first! For scenario 7 cases, and all non non-shared chimneys where chimney breasts are being removed from the top-most storey this will likely be the preferred option.

#### Top Tips:

- (i) Never start structural work to party walls and party wall chimneys without a **Party Wall Agreement**.
- (ii) Don't forget hearths serving upper floor fireplaces will also need to be removed or supported.
- (iii) If you can **with safety**, measure the loft party wall thickness through a hole, or measure the side of the chimney at the highest point, and again in the room below. If 330mm then likely only a 100mm party wall.

### What do you need to do next?

Make your Building regulations application here :

[www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/planning/building-control/make-a-building-regulations-application](http://www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/planning/building-control/make-a-building-regulations-application)

Let us know at least 48 hours before you intend to start work, and book your inspection the day before.

*On successful completion you will receive a certificate of compliance to keep safe should you ever sell your property.*

Still have a query? Did you know that we do offer 1 hours free pre application consultation for those who need it. Contact us today at [buildingcontrol@eastsuffolk.gov.uk](mailto:buildingcontrol@eastsuffolk.gov.uk) / 01502 523072