

Cigarette smoke infiltration – Cambridge



Background

The property is semi-detached Victorian house - extended and upgraded some 15-20 years ago. The occupants of the house had for sometime been experiencing the smell of cigarette smoke in their house, seemingly emanating from the adjoining property where two heavy smokers live.

APP were asked to inspect the property and provide advice on how the smell of cigarette smoke from the adjoining property might be reduced. The owner of the property advised that the most affected areas were the first floor bathroom & landing and ground floor hallway. It was decided therefore to concentrate remedial works in these areas

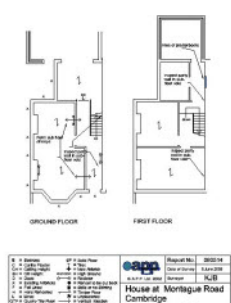
An inspection of the rear roof void revealed missing bricks at ridge level in the party wall.

The airing cupboard in the bathroom has pipework passing into the roof through holes in the ceiling.

Secondhand smoke
Exposure to other people's tobacco smoke can be a cause of ill-health. Secondhand smoke has been shown to cause:

- lung cancer and heart disease in adult non-smokers;
- increased sensitivity and reduced lung function in people with asthma;
- irritation of the eye, nose and throat;
- reduced lung function in adults with no chronic chest problems.

Secondhand smoke exposure also harms babies and children, with an increased risk of respiratory infections, increased severity of asthma symptoms, more frequent occurrence of chronic coughs, phlegm and wheezing, and increased risk of cot death and glue ear.



It was agreed to inspect the party wall at sub floor level in the hall, understairs cupboard and landing.

This inspection revealed more holes and missing pointing in the party wall below floor level and a plasterboard section over an area where a chimney breast had been removed. Removal of the plasterboard revealed unplastered brickwork, just left after demolition with no making good.

The underfloor ventilation was considered to be inadequate and the floor joists could suffer from decay. Improvements to the underfloor ventilation could also help with smoke penetration control.

The Work Required

The party wall in the rear roof void had the missing bricks replaced and the wall was repointed. Additionally the client requested the thermal insulation was upgraded and an additional layer of fibreglass insulation was laid as part of the work.

Seal around the pipe entries in the airing cupboard with expanding foam filler.

The holes and pointing in the party walls in the floor voids were made good and then sealed over with a liquid vapour membrane.

The old chimney area had expanded metal lath fitted over and was then rendered over with sulphate resistant Portland cement/sand mortar, followed by new timber battens, plasterboard and skim finish.

Replacement of the existing sub-floor ventilation bricks with improved metal or plastic grille type and install additional metal grille or plastic air bricks in the positions shown on the plan.

Conclusion

The works were carried out in a phased manner to allow the home owner to clear certain areas at a time to reduce the disruption to the family. An immediate improvement was noted by the occupants after the first phase and the smell of smoke has now been eliminated. The house is now feels cleaner and a healthy environment for the family.

A happy smoke free house.

