

H.F. Bishop & Son
Builders
Southmeads, Wadhurst, E. Sussex, TN5 6BB



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Mr and Mrs Blamey
Peter Pan Cottage
Furnace lane
Lamberhurst
TN3 8LD

Report on damp problem with chimney.

Having been called out to see what can be done to prevent ingress of water from the chimney I went up onto the roof to inspect the integrity of the chimney and possible causes of the water penetration.

Description of the Chimney

The chimney is of clay brick construction with clay pots, some of which have been capped. Its obviously very old and from the ground looks in reasonable condition. It has obviously been repointed fairly recently with a lime mortar which looks to have been done well. It has no flashing but relies on a clay tile creasing to seal between the brickwork and roof tiles.

Condition of stack upon close Inspection

Starting at the top of the chimney. The pots and caps are in good condition. The flaunching is of sharp sand and cement and is relatively new. Probably done at the time of the repointing. There were only a couple of hairline cracks which are insignificant and the flaunching was well sealed around the base of the pots.

Further down the brickwork has obviously started spreading as the vertical joints widen the further up you look. As previously mentioned the brickwork has been repointed to a good standard with a lime mortar. I would say of building sand, cement and hydrated lime mix. The face of the brickwork is irregular where bricks have moved in the past and probably during the repointing process.

At the abutment to the roof tiles I remove some of the tile creasing to see if water had been penetrating behind the creasing and into the house. This revealed brickwork that hadn't been repointed. This revealed that the original mortar used in the construction was perished and basically reverted back into fine sand. In removing the tile creasing the brickwork was found to be delicate and the brick moved if levered against. The mortar in several vertical joints was missing completely and it can be assumed that behind the new pointing a considerable number will be the same.

Conclusions

The chimney is in poor structural condition which the repointing is disguising for the time being. I expect the chimney to continue spreading over time causing the flaunching on the top to crack, causing more water ingress.

It is my opinion that the water is penetrating the brickwork through the pointing and that it is travelling down the flue and emerging lower down. The options to either renew the tile creasing, to ensure its integrity, or, to install lead cover flashing would not be appropriate in this instance to resolve the water ingress problem.

My recommendation is that the chimney is due a rebuild from the roofline up. A good number of the bricks can be saved, as I'm sure that once the head has been removed the rest will pick down with very little effort. Any shortfall could be made up with similar salvaged bricks. I would also recommend a stepped lead damp course be installed at this time, to reduce water wicking down the chimney.

I hope this report is of value to you.

Kind regards

Roger Bishop

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