

Ducts/flues through core drilled holes

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Question

Is it acceptable to install fan ducts and boiler flues through core drilled holes in external masonry walls without a cavity tray above?

Considerations

- NHBC Standards clauses 6.1.17 and 6.8.12 refer to the provision of cavity trays to air bricks ducts and moisture drip collars to balanced flues to avoid water gathering on the ducts/flues and crossing the cavity to the inner leaf.
- Circular ducts/flues to extract fans and boilers when installed with a slight fall to outside helps to direct moisture back on to the outer leaf of the wall.
- The installation of the duct/flue through core drilled holes is usually after completion of the wall when the risk of mortar droppings gathering on the duct/flue and bridging the cavity has passed.
- Careful setting out is required to correctly position cavity trays at the time of constructing the walls to suit the later provision of a core drilled hole for ducts/flues etc.

Answer

Where a duct to an extract fan is built-in as the wall is constructed it should be provided with a cavity tray to protect the duct from mortar droppings, which could bridge the cavity and cause dampness.

Where a duct to an extract fan or boiler flue is installed through a core-drilled hole after completion of the wall it is not essential to provide a cavity tray although the provision of a tray during the construction of the wall is considered good practice.