THE BEAM DOCTOR
RESIDENTIAL STRUCTURAL ENGINEERING

Paul Kangunga, CEng MIStructE
Huddersfield, West Yorkshire, HD8 0GS
07999 384132 · thebeamdoctor.co.uk

Taking Out a Wall: A Homeowner's Checklist

What to sort out before anyone starts, from Paul Kangunga CEng MIStructE, The Beam Doctor

This checklist helps you get a wall removal organised and ready for Building Control. It does not tell you whether your wall is load-bearing. That needs an engineer to assess your house, from photographs and drawings or on site.

1. Before you ask anyone for a price

- ☐ **Write down which wall, and why.** A sketch of the room with the wall marked is enough.
- ☐ **Find what you already have.** Floor plans, the sale particulars, any survey from when you bought the house, and any old Building Control certificates.
- ☐ **Note the age of the house,** roughly. It changes how walls and floors were built.
- ☐ **Check what runs through the wall:** sockets, switches, pipes, radiators or a gas pipe. These need moving by a qualified electrician, plumber or Gas Safe registered engineer.
- ☐ **Do not remove any part of the wall to "see what is there".** Taking out even a small section can let the floor or roof above move. Opening up, if it is needed, is done to an agreed plan with temporary support in place.

2. What a structural engineer will need from you

Good information makes the quote faster and the design more accurate.

- ☐ Photographs of **both faces of the wall**, from floor to ceiling.
- ☐ Photographs of the **ceiling on both sides** and, if you can get into it safely, the **loft** above the wall.
- ☐ The **room above** the wall, if there is one: what it is, and which way the floorboards run.
- ☐ Whether there is a **wall directly above** this one upstairs, and whether there is a **cellar** below it.
- ☐ **Measurements:** the length of the wall and the width of the opening you want.
- ☐ Anything unusual: a **chimney breast** nearby, cracks, sloping floors, or doors that stick.

3. Building Control, consents and your neighbours

- ☐ **Building Control.** Removing a load-bearing wall is building work under the Building Regulations. Speak to your local authority Building Control or a registered building control approver before work starts. They will usually want the structural calculations and details.
- ☐ **Fire escape.** Taking out a wall around your hallway or stairs can affect how you escape in a fire, even if the wall carries no load. Raise it with Building Control early.
- ☐ **Listed building or flat?** A listed building will usually need listed building consent to remove a wall, even inside. Speak to your council's conservation officer first. In a leasehold flat, check your lease: you will usually need the landlord's written consent before any structural work.

- ☐ **Your neighbours.** The Party Wall etc. Act 1996 can apply when a new beam bears into a wall you share with a neighbour, when a chimney breast is removed from one, or when new foundations are dug within 3 metres of a neighbouring building and deeper than its foundations. You, as the building owner (the person having the work done), must serve notice on the adjoining owners before that work starts. If this may apply, get advice before you set a start date.
- ☐ **Asbestos.** If your house was built before 2000, ask your builder how they will check for asbestos, including textured ceiling coatings, before any work starts.

4. What your builder should give you

- ☐ A **written quote** that names the beam and padstones from the engineer's design, not a size chosen on site.
- ☐ A **method** for the work: how the floor and wall above will be supported while the wall is taken out, and in what order.
- ☐ How the beam will be **boxed in or fire-protected**, as Building Control requires.
- ☐ Proof of **insurance**.
- ☐ Agreement that **temporary support goes in before any wall is removed**.

The engineer's calculations cover the new beam. Temporary support is usually the builder's responsibility unless you agree otherwise in writing.

Ask more questions if a builder:

- says the wall "definitely isn't load-bearing" without having checked above it;
- wants to take the wall out before putting in temporary support;
- will not put the quote or the method in writing.

5. After the work

- ☐ Let Building Control **inspect** at the stages they ask for.
- ☐ Get the **completion certificate** (or **final certificate**, if you used a registered building control approver) and keep it with the calculations and your house papers. Your buyer's solicitor is likely to ask for them when you sell.

How I can help

I am Paul Kangunga, a Chartered Structural Engineer (CEng MIStructE) based in Huddersfield. The Beam Doctor is my trading name.

- **Steel beam calculations from £295.** Desk-based, from your drawings and photos, with a pack for Building Control. Some jobs need a site visit or more work; if so, I tell you why and confirm the fixed fee before starting.
- I acknowledge every enquiry within 24 hours and confirm the scope and fixed fee within 2 working days of receiving what I need to price it.

help@thebeamdoctor.co.uk · 07999 384132 · thebeamdoctor.co.uk

This checklist is general guidance for homeowners in England, correct at September 2026. It is not advice on your property, and reading it does not create a professional relationship or a duty of care. I give advice on a specific property only under a written appointment. Any wall removal should be checked by a competent person before work starts.

Professional Indemnity Insurance held with Accredited Insurance (Europe) Ltd – UK Branch, limit £1,000,000 each and every claim, inclusive of costs and expenses · Prices are final — not VAT registered