

Iron Men Leave Legacy To Trip You Up

There are still so many MS angle iron lintels out there in the UK's domestic property portfolio causing damage as they expand because of water ingress writes The Installer's technical author Don Waterworth of Hanley Amos Stewart. And they are ready to cause problems for the unsuspecting (or unsavvy) Fenestration Surveyor that fails to point prospective defects out to the householder.



As most Fenestration Surveyors are aware, problems can readily arise where a traditional cavity wall property has been built with MS angle iron lintels, The Installer's technical author Don Waterworth of Hanley Amos Stewart writes.

The properties most affected were built between 1960-1980 usually have when they didn't have the benefit of the Catnic and IG Lintel – or at least they were not as readily readily available as they are today. Iron lintels saw the demise and then the virtual elimination of soldier course bricks and mullions.

Builders needing a simple way

to support the brickwork above an aperture clearly thought the iron lintel was the best thing since sliced bread – and so you can find them everywhere..

Bad idea really

Surely a Professional Surveyor or Architect should understand that rainwater penetrating the outside skin could easily attack this MS lintel and due to the section of the steel, usually 10 or 12mm thick, the steel would start to expand. The consequence of this bad design (often only manifested on South or West facing elevations, which take the brunt of the UK wind and rain), was extensive expan-

sion in some cases of the lower leg of the lintel. I have been to properties where an angle iron lintel has lifted the brickwork above with cracks so wide that I could fit my fingers in.

Photograph

The photo shows typical expansion of an MS angle iron lintel with the crack running up from the top left-hand corner of the aperture. However, as this aperture sits within a metre or so of the corner, this weak section of masonry has allowed the crack to continue around the corner, opening up to 6-8mm wide.

Fenestration Surveyors beware

Therefore again, as Fenestration Surveyors, be wise to any existing defects and be professional by explaining the sequence of events that can lead to this problem...and suggest a practical solution.

N.B. Do not forget to write down on your Survey Sheet that you have advised the householder and take a photograph. **Don**



Picture: A typical expansion of an MS angle iron lintel with the crack