

Cost to Remove Chimney Stack & Fireplace - Row House Renovation Ideas & Remodel

Chimney Ideas for Row Home Renovations

Removing the chimneys and fireplaces from an old row home can be tricky. The row home I feature in these blog posts is the fourth row home I have purchased and renovated. All four row homes are similar where there are 2 chimneys on the same side of the home. The chimneys were also all covered over with plaster. I would have liked to remove chimney 's from all of four houses. However, each home has presented a different scenario for why we could or could not remove chimney stacks.

Row House 1 - Brick Home

In this scenario, our row home was an end unit and the chimneys were located on the side that was connected to our neighbors row home. We were not able to remove the chimneys because our neighbors chimney was integrated with ours. If we tried removing the chimneys, we would actually be taking down our neighbors chimney as well.

With this home, we exposed the brick fireplaces and chimneys. We had to run duct work along side the chimneys, so the sides of the chimneys are framed out and drywalled flush with the brick. We also added hearth stones in the fireplace. In the Kitchen, we had to frame out the whole wall flush with the chimney in order to be able to fit a full sized kitchen.

Row House 2 - Framed Home

This row house was also an end unit however the chimneys were on the side which was not connected to another home. The chimneys were not flush with the exterior of the home and were bumped out. If we removed the chimneys, then we would have had to patch huge holes in the side of the home and reside it. The siding was in good shape and did not need replaced, so I wasn't

willing to add that cost to the budget.

We also exposed the brick fireplaces and chimneys in this home. There was no duct work running along the sides of the chimneys, so we were able to show all sides of the chimney. We did not use hearth stones in this home. It was a smaller home with a lower budget. I also wanted to try something different and run flooring into the hearth of the fireplace to see how it would turn out.

Row House 3 - Brick Home

Row house 3 had a home attached on each side. The chimney situation was similar to row house 1 however my neighbors chimney was not integrated into my chimney. The problem though was if I removed my chimneys, it would have left a hole in my neighbors roof. We knew the owners well and they were not comfortable with us removing the chimney.

We did not expose any brick in this home. This row house really had no character to it and was a big rectangular shape with a flat roof. With the home being so square and boxy, we went with a more contemporary look on the inside and outside. I was not feeling the exposed brick look in this home so we covered up the fireplaces and chimneys with drywall.

Row House 4 - Brick Home

This is the home featured in my blog and it also has a row home attached on both sides. However, my chimneys are not integrated with my neighbors home. My chimneys do not intrude into my neighbors property and they only go through my roof. This means I can actually remove the fireplaces and chimneys!

As you can see, after all the plaster has been removed during demo, my chimneys look pretty rough! It would take a lot of work to get them back into shape.

Layout of Row House 4 When Purchased

These pictures represent the dimensions and layout of Row House 4 when we purchased it. I do not have a layout for the [basement](#) but it closely resembles the 1st floor layout without the chimneys on the right side. Notice the stairs are in the middle of the house which creates a front and back half of the home. The stairs will be moved to create an open concept living space.

The second floor is wider than the first floor. This is due to a tunnel which runs between my house and the neighbors house. The second floor joists are cantilevered over the tunnel making the second floor an extra three feet wider.

If you look at the right side of the pictures, you will see both chimneys intrude into the home, and take up about 5 feet and 4 inches of valuable wall space each.

By the way, if you are looking for a way to create floor plans, check out [Chief Architect Home Designer Architectural](#) software. I purchased it from Amazon for about \$180. It is well worth the money if you are doing any sort of major home remodeling projects.

Why Would I Remove The Chimneys?

Exposed brick is a popular feature in row home renovations. Even more so, having an original brick fireplace in an old row home is highly sought after. The problem with the brick fireplaces and chimneys however, is they take up valuable floor and wall space. This is a big deal when your home is only 10' to 14' wide. Also, when you have to dedicate a whole wall for a fireplace and chimney, then you have less options for arranging furniture in the home.

Take a look at the [Living Room picture](#) in Row House 3 above. If the chimney was not there, we would have a full wall to put furniture against. Instead, the couch had to be angled in the corner which takes up even more floor space.

I would rather expose a whole brick wall in these smaller row homes than to keep the fireplaces and chimneys. That is what we intend to do with the Row House 4 renovation.

Remove Chimney

The chimneys in Row House 4 start on the first floor and go up through the roof of the third floor. The chimneys do not start in the basement. That means the weight of the chimneys is held up in part by the floor joists of the first floor and integrated into the brick wall.

This is typically the case for old row homes. Only in Row House 2 did our chimneys start in the basement. I believe the reason why is the chimney stack protruded from the exterior. Also, Row House 2 is stick built (framed) and not an all brick home. So the brick chimneys could not be integrated with the rest of the home for strength.

With the first and second floors both having 10' ceilings, I'm estimating that our chimney stack was about 30' tall. The chimney stacks also intruded about 16" into the home. That is a lot of brick to remove! Plus, removing chimney stacks can be dangerous. It is especially dangerous to remove chimney stacks from the roof as you don't want any brick falling onto the sidewalk below or onto the neighbors roof.

Cost to Remove Chimney Stacks

I negotiated a price of \$750 with my demo guy to remove both chimney stacks. This did not include the cost of hauling the brick away.

After my demo guys started removing the brick chimneys, they found that most of the brick was double stacked. This means there was not a single layer of brick for the perimeter of the chimney with a nice hole through the middle. Rather, the actual flues of the chimney were only about 12" x 12".

Each chimney has 2 flues, one for the first floor and a separate flue for the second floor. With both flues only being 1 foot square each, that left roughly 3' of the entire chimney which was completely brick since both of the chimneys were a little over 5 feet long.

That was about double the amount of brick which needed to be removed than what was anticipated. But, my demo guy followed through with his original price of \$750.

Next I had to haul away all of the brick. Typically I have a 30 yard dumpster for debris sitting in front of the house. But you can't fill a dumpster completely full with brick as it would be too heavy. I would have had to get 2 dumpsters and fill each of them half full. A 30 yard dumpster typically costs about \$425 so that would have been \$850.

I ended up calling a trash removal guy who throws everything in his truck and takes it away. He charged me \$700 to haul away all of the brick. Most of the cost is in the weight of dumping the brick, not the actual labor.

Total Cost to Remove Chimney Stacks: **\$1,450**

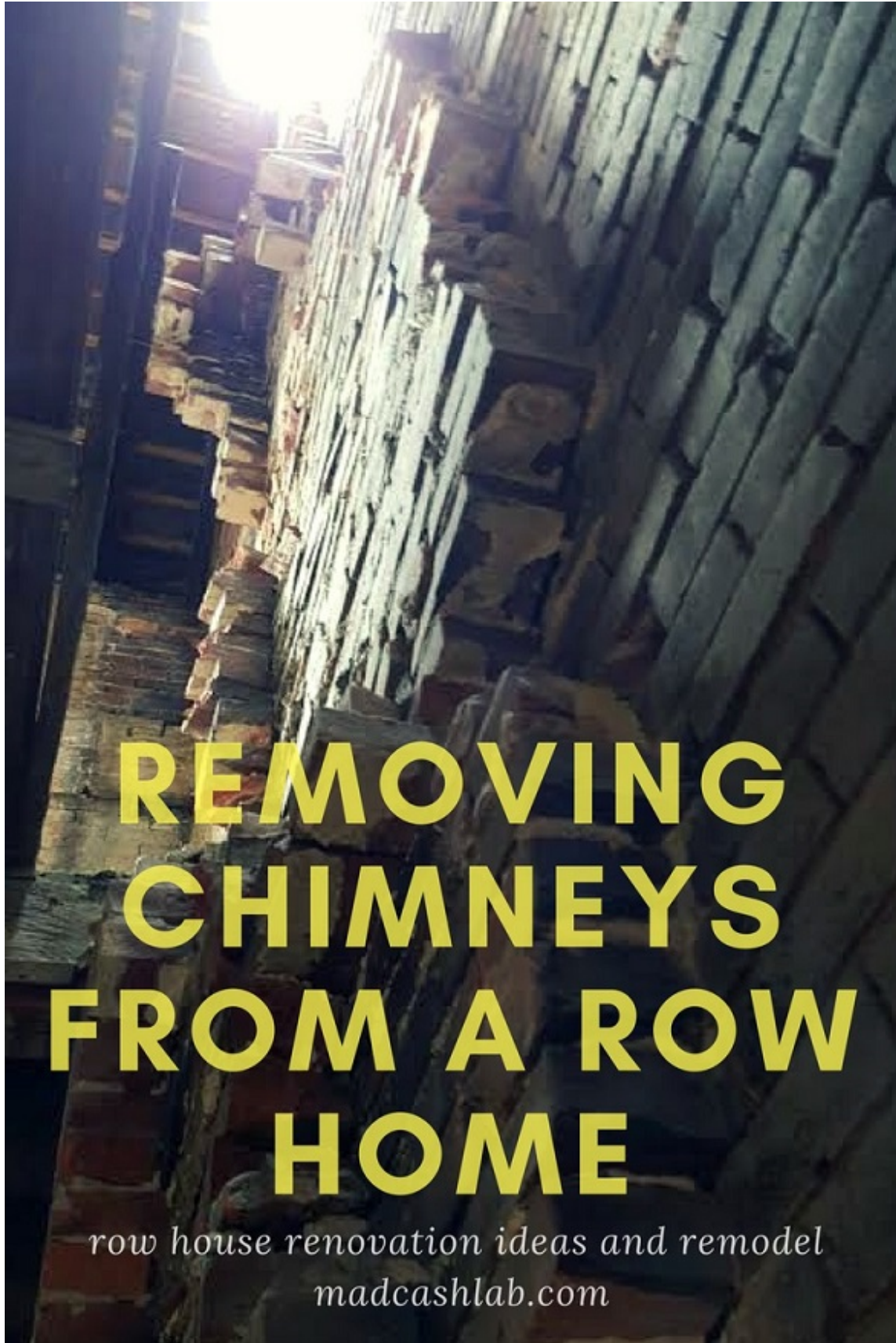
Final Thoughts to Remove Chimney

I'm excited to be able to finally work with a row house space which is free of chimneys and fireplaces. This leaves way more options for design and future furniture placement! Quite honestly, the cost to remove the chimneys would roughly be the same as if I had to repair the chimneys and seal them.

Since I don't have fireplaces and chimneys in this row home, I do plan on exposing the entire brick wall on the left side of the home on both the first and second floors. This should appease the buyers hunger for the exposed brick feature popular in many row home renovations.

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- [Digging Out The Basement to Make it Livable](#)



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Hi readers! Are you looking to remove chimney stacks from your home? What are your thoughts on keeping or removing brick fireplaces? Feel free to ask any questions, I'd be happy to answer them!

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