

# U.K. Firefighter Voices Wall Cavity Concerns

A senior Tayside firefighter says the design of many new-build homes may exacerbate the damage if a fire takes hold.

Balmossie station manager Scott Thomson said wall cavities in timber-framed homes leave them open to fires spreading unnoticed.

He was at a newly-built Panmurefield Village home where a fire crew had to remove large sections of the wall to ensure a fire had been completely contained.

The crew attended Bannoch Rise just after 2.30pm on Saturday to extinguish a blaze thought to have been caused by a boiler fault. Damage from the fire itself was minimal but they had to cut into the east wall to make sure it had not kindled in the cavity.

The fire had spread from the garage into the lounge and the crew feared it may spread into upstairs rooms.

Mr Thomson said, "The fire started in the gas boiler situated in the garage. From there the fire ignited inside the wall cavity and began to spread into the lounge from inside the wall.

"The fire crew was called out and we've had to systematically remove large sections of the wall to ensure the fire is not still burning away unnoticed. "There's a danger it will spread upstairs if we are not completely sure all of the embers have been put out".

"That's the problem with these new timber-framed houses; the cavities in the wall allow for better insulation but also present a problem when a fire takes hold.

"It's not something we face regularly in Dundee but it is something that we'll see more and more in future. Timber-framed houses are cheap to build and quicker to put up so most of the new homes being built in the area will have these cavities, including all of the homes on this estate."

The Bannoch Rise houses are new-build Wimpey homes and it is thought the young couple had only occupied it for weeks.

A Wimpey site manager declined to comment from the scene and no one was available from the company headquarters at the time of going to press.