

Warning on Timber Homes as Blaze Guts Terrace



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A chief fire officer warned of the vulnerability of timber framed houses after an overnight blaze destroyed four partially built homes.

Gardaí are investigating the cause of the blaze in a terrace of timber framed houses in the border town of Lifford, Co. Donegal. All that remained of the terrace on Lifford's main street yesterday was the scaffolding and the smouldering remains of the timber frames.

Fire tenders from Strabane, Stranolar, Letterkenny and Milford were called to the scene at 2.15 am yesterday by which time the houses were completely ablaze.

The constructions, which had been roofed in recent days, had not yet been fireproofed, according to Donegal Chief Fire Officer Frank Kerrane.

'I don't want to be scare-mongering but

obviously there is a lesson to be learned here. Timber frame houses are vulnerable and I will be looking very closely at the situation', he said.

Block work around the houses had only been partially completed when the fire broke out. Mr. Kerrane added that there is an obvious risk during construction because fire-stopping measures which would be in the completed structure and would protect the timber, were only introduced at a later stage.

'I have not seen many terraced houses in a timber frame construction but clearly there is an added fire risk when the houses are in a terrace'.

'Obviously when the buildings are completed, the cavities are sealed and the



compartments are isolated so fire should not be able to spread', he said.

Mr. Kerrane visited the scene yesterday to photograph and examine the ash that remained. A Garda forensic officer also carried out an examination of the scene.

