

HEAD

TO

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In this Head2Head, Bill Kenyon and Neil Sarsfield, technical support engineers at Ultraframe, discuss the specification and installation of a cavity tray.

One of the questions frequently asked is "Is a cavity tray necessary?" Unfortunately the answer is not straight forward.

What is a cavity tray?

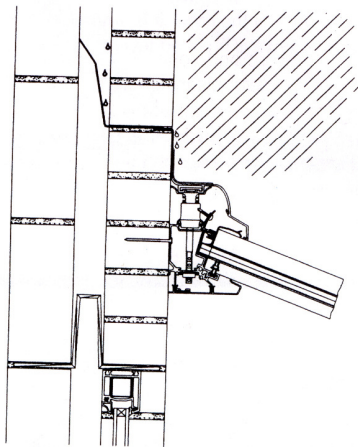
It is a high level barrier to moisture that is formed from a series of interlinked trays that are built into the outer leaf of masonry.

Why are cavity trays necessary?

Masonry material is generally porous and, during wet weather, it absorbs moisture. The cavity tray prevents the moisture appearing inside the conservatory as the status of the back wall changes from being external to inside the conservatory.

When should it be fitted?

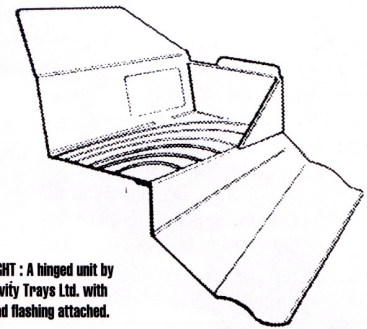
This, as they say, is the \$64,000 question! On



BELOW : A typical installation sequence.



normal cavity tray is utilised at the ridge to enable the lead flashing to be correctly dressed over the PVC-U flashing trim that is supplied with the roof. When planning a cavity tray installation, it is important to calculate the correct number and style of trays. As each of the main trays are handed (i.e. left to right) they cannot be interchanged. Further, a stop end should be used along with a weep hole at the corner end of each tray run.



RIGHT : A hinged unit by Cavity Trays Ltd. with lead flashing attached.

new houses, those covered by the NHBC 10 year warranty, cavity trays are a mandatory. Following the guidance of the NHBC is good guide to help decide if they should be 'retro-fitted'. On the training courses at Ultraframe, particularly those aimed at surveyors, we recommend that the issue of a cavity tray is broached early with a retail customer - it saves any conflicts later. The maxim should be 'if in doubt, fit it.' Factors such as the depth and style of mortar joint, the conditions of any window cills above, which way the conservatory faces are all important.

How should it be fitted?

Some installation companies hesitate at the mention of a cavity tray - probably because of the 'fear factor'. Undoubtedly, when fitting a cavity tray the installation company needs to be organised. The back wall needs to be set out for the base crew using a chalk line to facilitate accurate cutting of out of the brickwork. The chalk line is normally 75mm above the top of the glazing bar capping. Cavity trays are usually supplied in varying lengths dependent upon pitch. For example, at 25° the tray is 270mm long. It is recommended that perhaps enough cutting out is done for 2 trays so that there is minimal disturbance to the surrounding masonry (an electric cutting wheel or similar is ideal for this purpose). Each tray is then positioned and mortared home. A longer than

How much does it cost?

At 25° pitch there are eleven 270mm long cavity trays per metre of vertical rise per side. A 3m wide conservatory is around 1m high at the ridge -so, 22 trays at £6 each plus a special ridge tray at £10.00 gives approximately £150 material cost. Including the labour, around £300 of cost is involved.

A professional installation is one that is right first time. Offering guidance to your retail customer and then installing a cavity tray effectively is a further guidance demonstration of professionalism. The guidance offered here should help you achieve that objective.