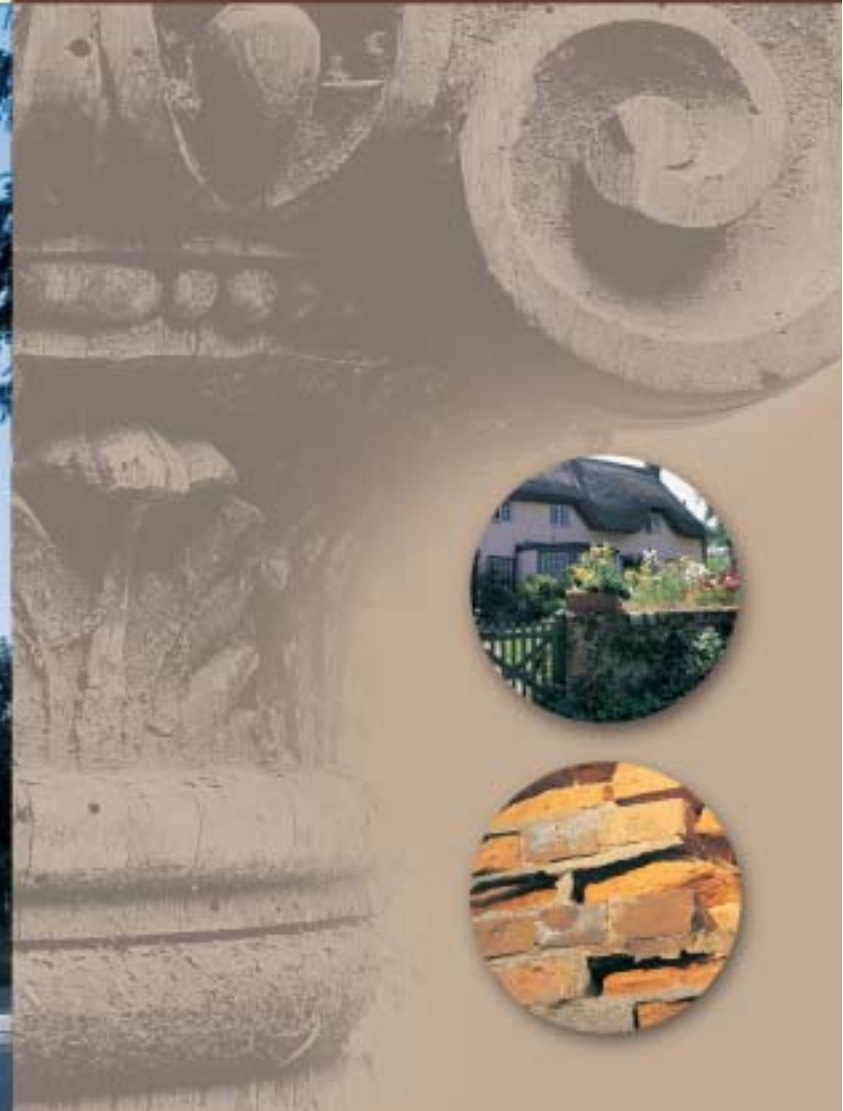




# Historic Buildings - *A Guide to Owners*





This leaflet is a guide for current and prospective owners of historic buildings and in particular listed buildings.

A listed building is one included on the List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest. The legislation affecting listed buildings and Conservation Areas is discussed in our accompanying leaflet - Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas.

Probably the most important advice before purchasing a listed building is to make sure that it is suitable for your requirements. Many listed buildings are located in desirable locations but it may not be possible to extend or alter them to suit particular needs or lifestyles. Although listed buildings can be altered by obtaining Listed Building Consent from the Local Planning Authority (District Council), it is important that basic requirements of size, number of rooms etc are realistic.

Only alterations and extensions which respect the character (external and internal) will be permitted.

**Purchasing a Listed Building Survey**

Before purchasing a historic building a survey should be carried out by a surveyor or architect with proven expertise in historic buildings.

The survey may reveal a number of building defects, but it is important to obtain professional advice on those of major concern which will require immediate and perhaps costly attention, and other minor problems which are less important.

It is common for the injection of damp proof courses to be advised where this is unnecessary, and in the case of cob buildings, of real harm to the structure.

The cost of a detailed independent survey will be a small proportion of the total cost of purchase and is well worth it in the long run.



*The use of hard cement render on a cob building leading to major structural failure.*



“Will proposed alterations, both outside and inside be acceptable? Always consult your local planning authority”



### Works to Listed Buildings

Your local planning authority Conservation Officer will be able to offer general advice on what may be acceptable in terms of alteration, and what will require Listed Building or Conservation Area Consent, but this will be limited, particularly if you are planning to purchase, but have not yet bought the building.

The Planning Policy Guidance No. 15 (PPG15) “Planning and the Historic Environment” contains useful general advice on alterations.

windows, roof timbers or unnecessary repointing will alter the character of the building and will require consent. **Always check with the local planning authority if in any doubt.**

Many listed buildings have evolved over several hundred years and the merits of all phases of the building should be carefully considered before contemplating widescale changes.

It is seldom a good idea to attempt to “restore” a building to a particular period.

Most minor repairs carried out using “like for like” materials and not involving significant removal of historic building fabric will not need consent.

Other, more extensive, “repairs” such as the replacement of

Inappropriate changes commonly encountered which would, in any case require Listed Building Consent, include exposing ceiling timbers, removal of paint from panelling and doors, widescale stripping of historic plaster from wall surfaces and opening up fireplaces.

### Maintenance and Repair

Dampness in buildings probably represents the single most important cause of problems.

The main point to emphasise is that you must treat the cause rather than the symptom.

Damp may be caused by a number of factors and it is likely that several will apply to a historic buildings.

- Rain penetration
- Rising damp
- Condensation
- Plumbing defects

*Using non-traditional materials on a historic building may alter its character significantly. Always check to see if permission is required.*



“The importance of regular maintenance cannot be over stressed.”



Rain penetration is often the cause of damp at junctions in a building such as where a lead flashing around a chimney has failed or where a roof meets a parapet gutter. It is rarely directly through a masonry wall unless this is very thin and exposed (for example an infill panel in a timber framed building).

Internal inspection of the roof space can show damp staining and help identify the source of rain penetration.

Another common cause of damp ingress is blocked, broken or faulty gutters and downpipes. These should be regularly inspected and cleared of leaf debris etc.

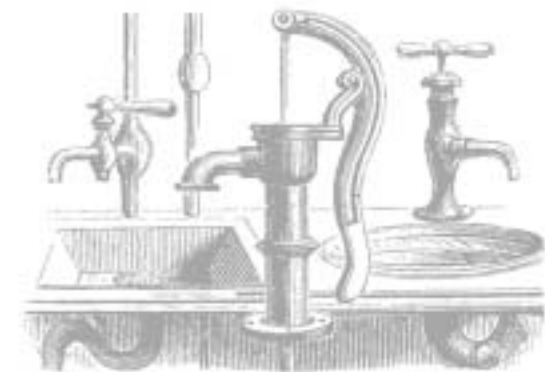
It is a very good idea to look at the building during a heavy downpour. This will soon reveal blocked or broken gutters, hopper heads, valley gutters, downpipes, gullies or drains.

**Recent predictions of climate change indicate that we are likely to experience increasingly wet winters and higher average wind speeds so the need for such attention will become even more significant.**

**The importance of regular maintenance cannot be over stressed.** Blocked rainwater goods and parapet gutters are often out of sight but if left unattended can cause outbreaks of dry and wet rot with large and unexpected costs for repair.

Inconspicuous leaf guards can be fitted to gutters in locations particularly close to trees.

Problems of rising damp at the base of masonry walls is often caused by outside ground levels being too high, poor drainage and dense vegetation, preventing the wall drying out.



*Neglected downpipes and hopper heads will create damp problems if left unrepaired.*



*Vegetation growth  
in guttering*

All these will prevent dampness in the wall being able to evaporate out. It is vital to remember that historic buildings need to "breathe". Hard cement based mortars, plasters and renders must not be used as they will trap moisture within a wall, can cause frost damage to masonry and lead to damp problems within the building.

Traditional paints and limewashes should be used which also allow moisture to escape from within the building and fabric.

Ventilation is very important throughout the building. Where there are chimneys and fireplaces not in use they should not be sealed but allowed to provide through ventilation. Air bricks should be kept unblocked and where appropriate additional ventilation provided.

It is possible to achieve good insulation standards and levels of comfort within a building whilst keeping fresh air routes open.

A common cause of damp within a building can be traced to internal plumbing defects. A leaking pipe or radiator may cause damp problems to appear some distance from the original fault. It is important to check this before assuming a problem is being caused by external water penetration.

*“Traditional paints and limewashes should be used to allow moisture to escape.”*

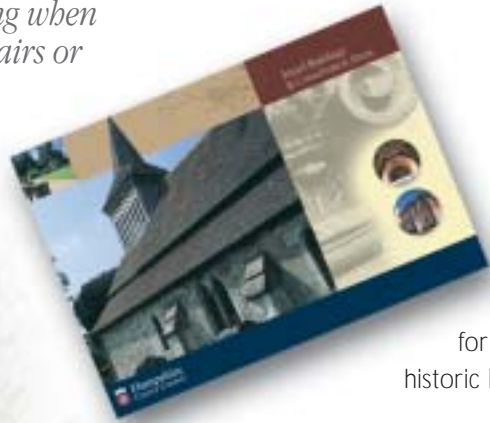


Lead lined valleys to roofs and parapet gutters are vulnerable to decay. Apart from regular clearing of debris it is a good idea to fit "sacrificial" lead strips under the bottom row of slates or tiles, simply clipped into place. This will extend the life of the leadwork considerably.

*The use of a hard cement mortar for pointing will cause accelerated erosion of historic brickwork.*



“Take time to properly assess the building when undertaking repairs or alterations.”



Some key points to emphasise for a prospective or current owner of a historic buildings:

- Obtain good experienced professional advice.
- Discuss proposals and problems with your local authority.
- Take time to properly assess the building when undertaking repairs or alterations.
- Regular maintenance and the use of appropriate traditional repair techniques and materials will pay dividends.

More general advice is contained within the Hampshire County Council advice note "Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas".

*Problems caused by using a hard cement render and impermeable paint.*



*Vegetation growth in brickwork may cause significant damage if left unchecked.*



## Useful Contacts

### **Department for Culture Media and Sport (DCMS)**

2-4 Cockspur Street  
London SW1Y 5DH  
Tel 020 7211 6200

### **English Heritage**

23 Savile Row  
London W1X 1AB  
Tel 020 7973 3000

### **English Heritage (South East Region)**

2nd & 3rd Floor  
Eastgate Court  
195-205 High Street  
Guildford GU1 3EH  
Tel 01483 252000

### **National Monuments Record**

National Monuments Record Centre  
Kemble Drive Swindon  
Wiltshire SN2 2GZ  
Tel 01793 414600

### **The Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB)**

37 Spital Square Spitalfields  
London E1 6DY  
Tel 020 7377 1644

### **The Georgian Group**

6 Fitzroy Square  
London W1T 5DX  
Tel 020 7387 1720

### **The Victorian Society**

1 Priory Gardens Bedford Park  
London W4 1TT  
Tel 020 8994 1019

### **The Twentieth Century Society**

70 Cowcross Street  
London EC1M 6EJ  
Tel 020 7250 3857

### **The Royal Institute of British Architects**

Conservation Group  
66 Portland Place  
London W1N 4AD  
Tel 020 7580 5533

### **The Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors**

Building Conservation Group  
12 Great George Street  
Parliament Square  
London SW1P 3AD  
Tel 020 7222 7000

### **Hampshire County Council**

Environment Department  
(Archaeology and Historic Buildings)  
[www.hants.gov.uk/archaeology](http://www.hants.gov.uk/archaeology)  
Tel 01962 846832/846831  
e-mail [historic.environment@hants.gov.uk](mailto:historic.environment@hants.gov.uk)

### **Hampshire County Records Office**

Sussex Street  
Winchester SO23 8TH  
Tel 01962 846154

### **Government Guidance from HMSO Publications Centre**

PO BOX 29  
Norwich NR3 1GN  
Tel 0870 600 5522  
for Planning Policy Guidance Note 15  
(Planning and the Historic  
Environment)  
The Planning (Listed Buildings and  
Conservation Areas) Act 1990



## Contacts and Organisations

**Archaeology & Historic Buildings**  
Environment Department  
Hampshire County Council  
The Castle Winchester  
SO23 8UD Fax 01962 846776  
Tel **01962 846831** or **846832**  
[www.hants.gov.uk/archaeology](http://www.hants.gov.uk/archaeology)  
e-mail [historic.environment@hants.gov.uk](mailto:historic.environment@hants.gov.uk)

### Hampshire District Councils

- 1** Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council  
Tel **01256 844844**
- 2** East Hampshire District Council  
Tel **01730 266551**
- 3** Eastleigh Borough Council  
Tel **023 8068 8000**
- 4** Fareham Borough Council  
Tel **01329 236100**
- 5** Gosport Borough Council  
Tel **023 9258 4242**
- 6** Hart District Council  
Tel **01252 622122**

- 7** Havant Borough Council  
Tel **023 9247 4174**
- 8** New Forest District Council  
Tel **023 8028 5000**
- 9** Rushmoor Borough Council  
Tel **01252 398398**
- 10** Test Valley Borough Council  
Tel **01794 527700**
- 11** Winchester City Council  
Tel **01962 840222**



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