

# Planning Information for HISTORIC BUILDINGS – Maintenance & Repair



Tuck pointing being carried out to 'The Green'  
Hampton Court

This leaflet is designed primarily to inform owners of historic buildings, and those concerned with their upkeep, how current practice and legislation can affect them, and to give very general advice as to how historic buildings should be maintained.

Other leaflets in this series deal with **Conservation Areas**, **Historic Buildings**, **Buildings of Townscape Merit** and the legal aspects of **Listed Buildings**.

## The philosophy of repair – repair versus restoration

The best method of responsibility preserving and conserving historic buildings from the effects of decay or changing requirements is to carry out regular maintenance, rather than allowing buildings to deteriorate to such an extent that it is necessary either to demolish or 'restore'. The latter can imply the loss of much characteristic detail and original fabric and their replacement by modern facsimiles.

'Restoration' should only be considered as a last resort to prevent complete rebuilding or even demolition and it is therefore preferable to avoid such problems and keep the fabric sound through regular repair, i.e. to conserve the existing fabric as far as possible. Apart from anything else the principle of good housekeeping is sound economics.

By keeping a building 'old' its historic interest is maintained. It is advisable to retain as many existing features of interest as possible whether on view or not. To lose features or to replace them with replicas, as a result of negligence or for any other reason, will inevitably devalue the quality of the building.

Where repair works have to be undertaken traditional materials and methods are favoured in order to lessen the impact of the works and retain the integrity of the building. Historic building repair is best carried out with similar materials to the original construction.

Modern techniques and materials can be used but only with care and an over-riding purpose of retaining the character of the building. Replica and facsimile details should be avoided in favour of conserving the existing fabric. It is seldom advisable to carry out wholesale replacement if surgical repair is possible.

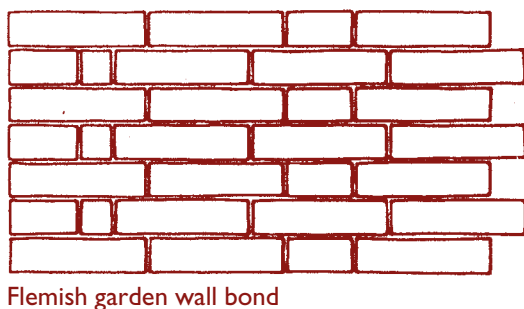
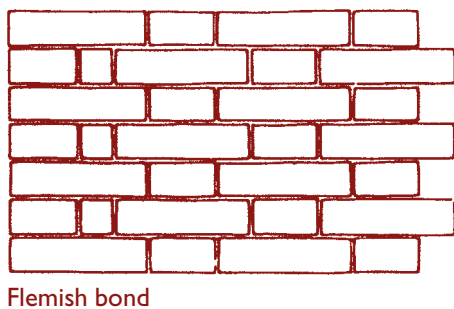
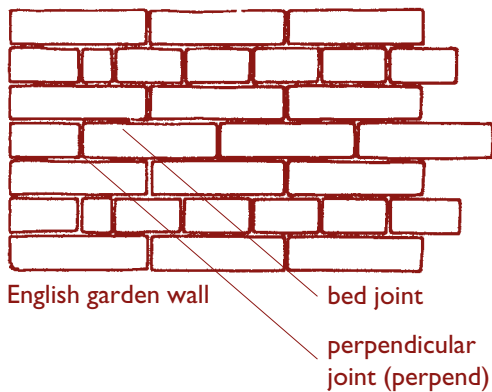
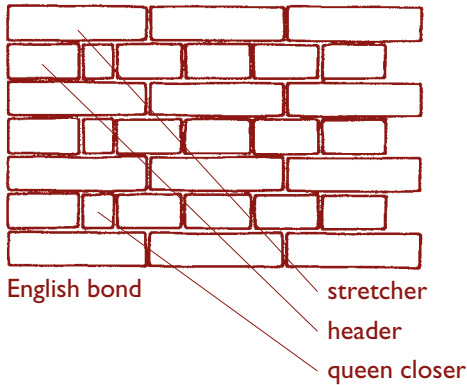
Annual inspections for rot and damp; cleaning of gutters, downpipes, hoppers and airbricks and every five years the inspection of the fabric, exterior woodwork, painting, masonry and pointing are all good practices to avoid problems occurring.

At all times it is imperative to prevent water penetrating the building. This will not only damage interior decorations and fittings but if prolonged and unchecked can create conditions for wet and dry rot to take hold and threaten the entire building.

## Brickwork & Masonry

Over the last five centuries it is the inherent character of brickwork and its weathering that have given the Borough's historic buildings their particular quality. Particular care needs to be taken when defects in brickwork, such as settlement, require repairs to be undertaken. The size, colour and texture are all important. If existing bricks cannot be re-used a close match should be found using carefully selected second hand bricks. Various bricks suitable for use on historic buildings are being produced and 'specials' can be found.

### Examples of Decorative Brickwork

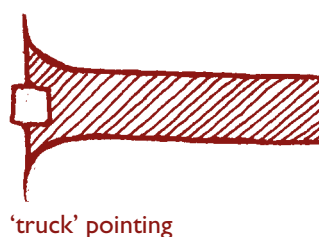
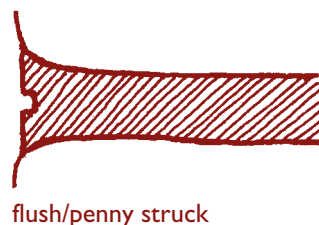
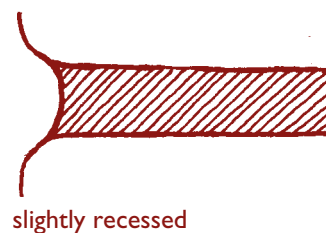


It is essential that repair work should employ a lime mortar at, say, 1:2:9 Cement/Lime/Sand to allow a degree of flexibility in the overall bonding. Modern cement mortars are too 'hard', they can cause problems through trapping moisture in the brick and hasten their decay. Practices such as sand or grit blasting are not acceptable. Cleaning with water, dilute acids and brushing are preferable. It is often possible, using appropriate techniques, to remove paint from brickwork without damage.

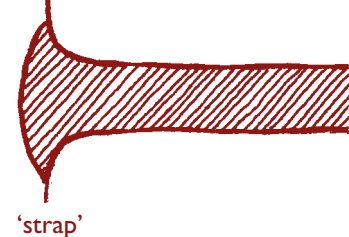
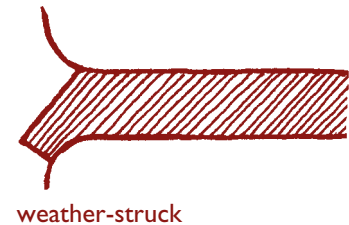
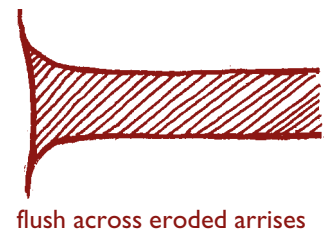
Existing mortar joints should not be removed without the prior agreement of the Council. No power tools should be used. Existing jointing sizes, types of pointing and bond should be replaced if disturbed. Arches, quoins etc. are frequently in gauged soft red brick with lime putty joints. On no account should this work be repointed with a conventional joint. Generally brickwork or stone on old buildings should not be painted or rendered.

Repointing must respect the gauge of the original bed joint in almost every case of repointing on historic buildings, the brick edges (arrises) are chipped; it therefore becomes necessary to recess the new pointing in order to maintain the original appearance of the face brick. Major repairs to stonework should be carried out with similar stone. Bonding and jointing should be compatible. Minor repairs to stone and plaster work can be in a similar 'plastic' filler. Piecing in small sections of stone is preferable to replacement.

### Appropriate examples of pointing



### Unsuitable examples of pointing



## Roof to Foundation – problems and remedies

This section gives a general description of maintenance and repair works necessary to safeguard the building and its character.

**1. Covering** – Original plain clay or pantiles may have been replaced with slates after c.1830's; often only requires relaying on new battens with new fixings. Matching materials should always be used.

**2. Roof Structure** – Though unseen should be regularly checked for signs of weather penetration. Where roofs are also felted provision must still be made for ventilation.

**3. Flashing** – Usually lead or zinc substitutes can be used but must be carefully laid. Care should be taken in the selection of the correct code lead. Sheet sizes and falls may require adjustment to meet revised standards.

**4. Stack** – May need repointing, bracing or in some cases reconstruction. Acids from combustion gases and exposed position can accelerate erosion of brick and mortar.

**5. Pots** – Renew flaunching. Cap redundant pots but retain ventilation.

**6. Parapet** – Leaky gutters can threaten walls, interiors and roof structures. Frost action on permanently damp masonry or render can result where falls are inadequate and ponding occurs.

**7. Rain Water Goods** – Regular clearance of hoppers and downpipes is essential to maintain effective roof drainage.

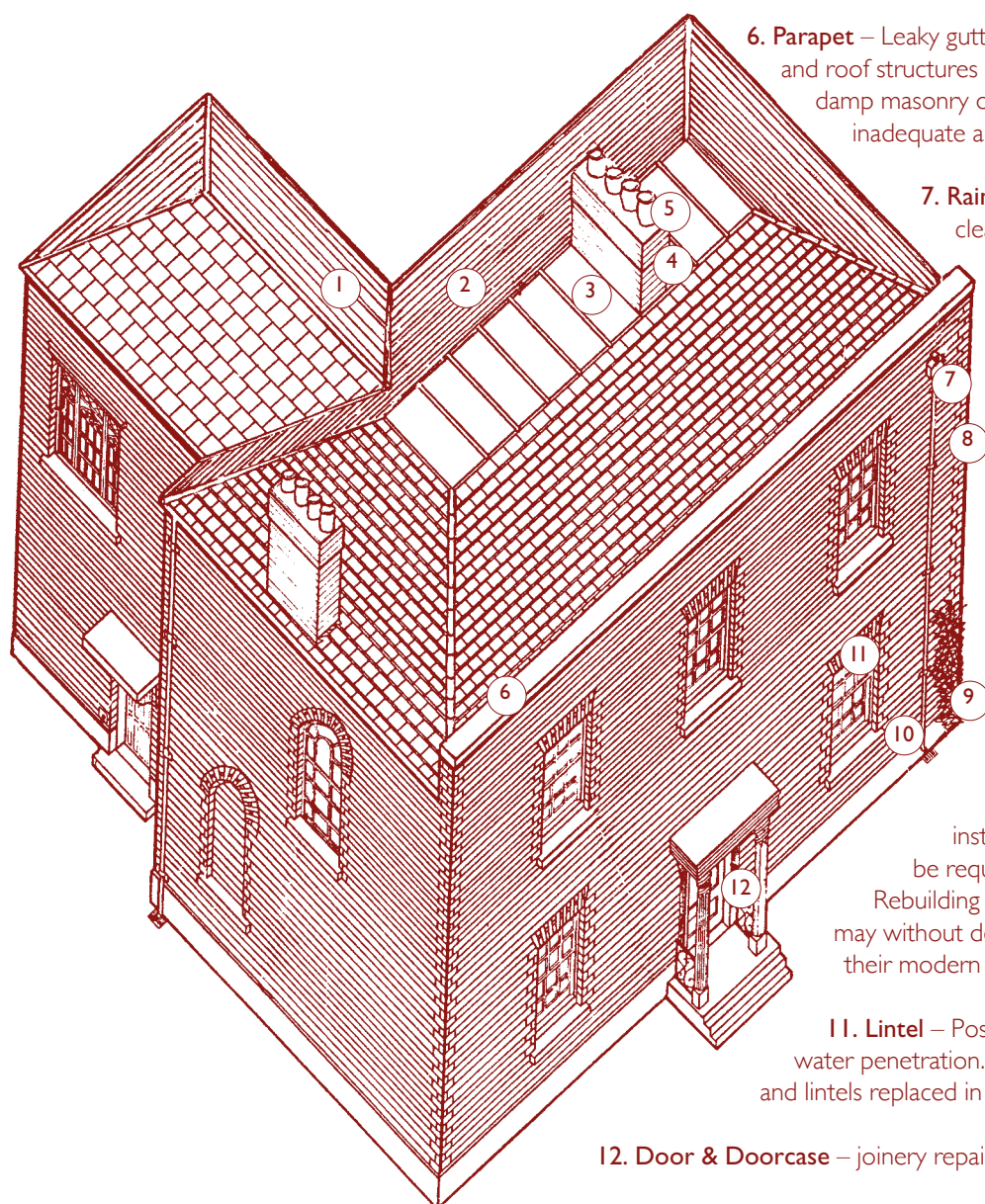
**8. Brickwork** – In rare instances may need localised repointing. Quoins, string courses, apron panels and gauged work should be respected and in any repair should match existing.

**9. Ivy** – Should be removed as it attacks masonry by penetrating the fabric. Virginia Creeper adheres by suction and is less destructive. Cut back and allow to die before removal.

**10. Bulging** – A possible sign of instability. Repointing or bracing may be required after a thorough survey. Rebuilding is the last option. Old buildings may without detriment appear less plumb than their modern equivalents.

**11. Lintel** – Possible 'failure' due to beetle or water penetration. Brick arches should be repaired and lintels replaced in matching materials.

**12. Door & Doorcase** – joinery repairs as for windows.





**13. Settlement** – Failure of footings or wall plate. New Footings or more substantial under-pinning may be required. The brick work can be 'stitched' together. Such works should be professionally supervised.

**14. Shutters & Frames** – re-cramping, piecing in of new wood, re-painting and rehanging is frequently all that is necessary. Replacement is the last option to be pursued and will involve purpose made joinery. Off the shelf replacement windows in timber will never adequately match for size and pattern.

**15. Porch** – Special attention should be paid to lead flashings and the easy disposal of rainwater.

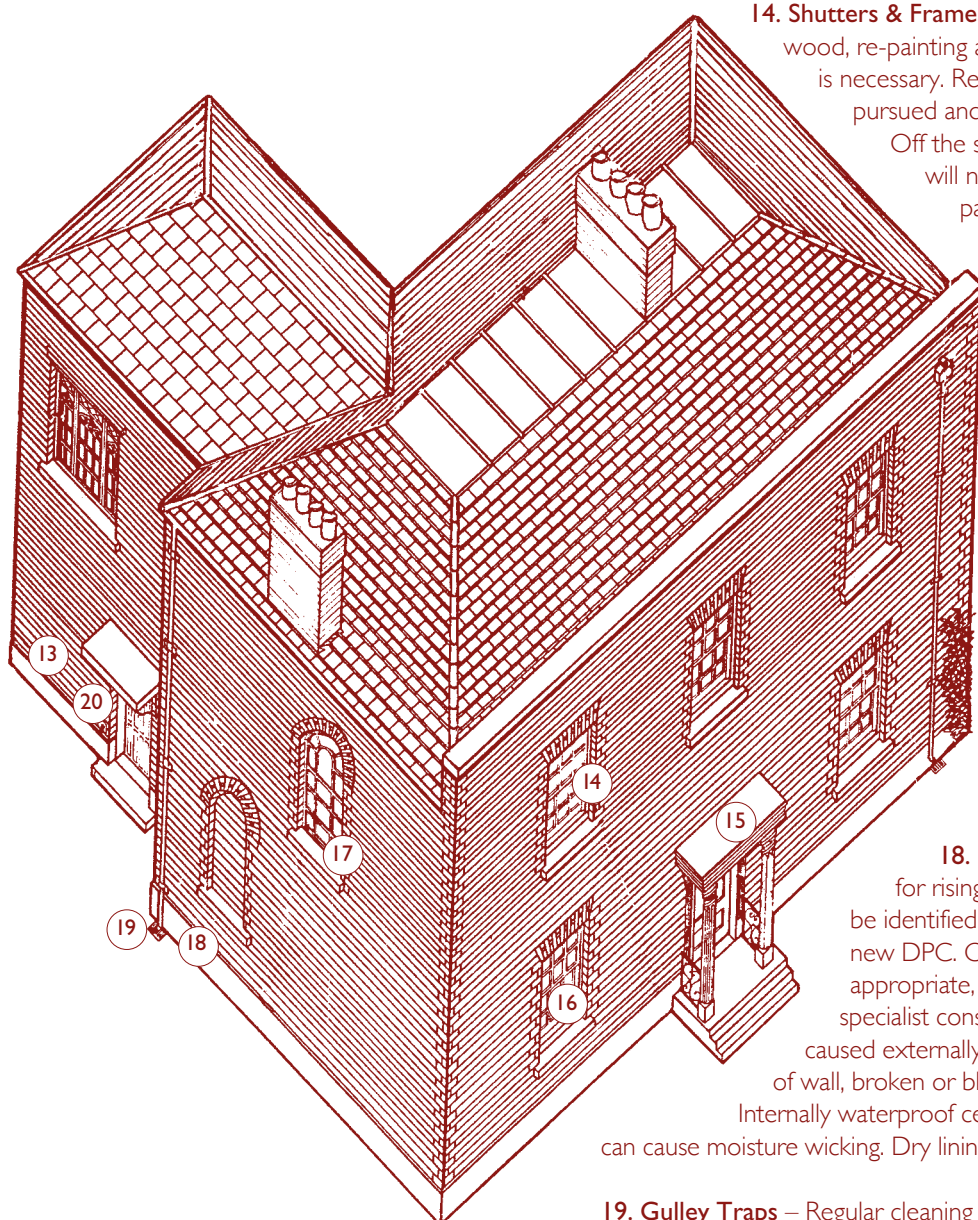
**16. Glazing Bars** – need to be retained. Patterns of glazing bars vary from building to building and at different dates. Establish correct pattern for building and match.

**17. Glass** – Early 'crown' glass should be retained. Particular care must be taken to avoid damage during repainting where heat stripping of paint is used.

**18. Dampproof Course (DPC)** – Check for rising damp. Source of moisture should be identified and remedied. if necessary insert a new DPC. Chemical injection may sometimes be appropriate, but should be used only following specialist conservation advice. Rising damp can be caused externally through plant growth against base of wall, broken or blocked drainage or soil levels. Internally waterproof cement rendering of basement rooms can cause moisture wicking. Dry lining is to be preferred.

**19. Gully Traps** – Regular cleaning and maintenance of flaunchings.

**20. Airbricks** – Must be kept free from obstruction. At all times sub floor areas should be ventilated to allow the fabric to 'breathe' and combat damp and rot.

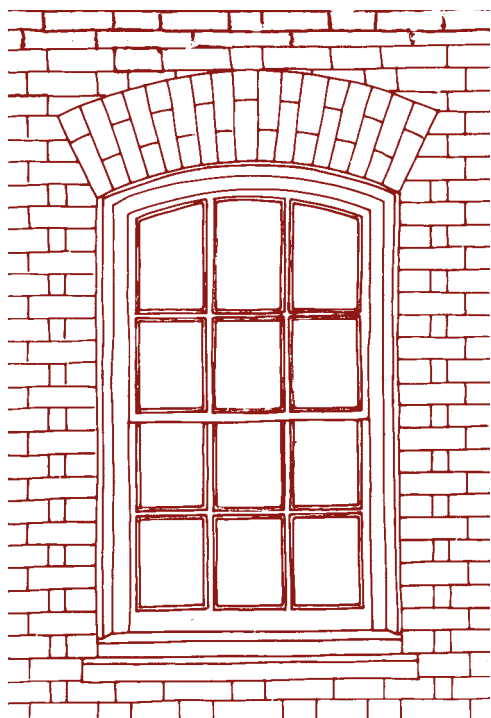


## Windows

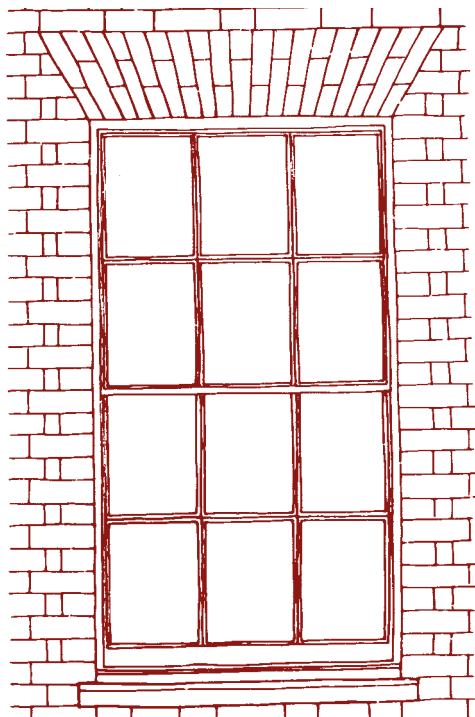
Wherever possible windows in historic buildings should be retained and repaired. Consent for their replacement except where in dire condition will seldom be granted. When new windows are needed they should be precise copies of existing windows. Any house may contain different patterns. Take advice on the correct choice. Timber should always be used except in the case of early iron casements. Removal of original glass is always to be avoided. Features such as mullions, transoms, glazing bars, shutters (internal and external), horns and 'crown' glass must be retained in the course of repair. Special decorative windows, such as Lunettes, Gothick, Venetian or Diocletian should always be retained.

Double glazing is usually not an acceptable alteration to existing windows. Secondary glazing avoiding shutters is to be preferred where additional glazing is essential. Most current standard window joinery is unsuitable and new windows may have to be custom built. It is therefore more economical to maintain existing windows.

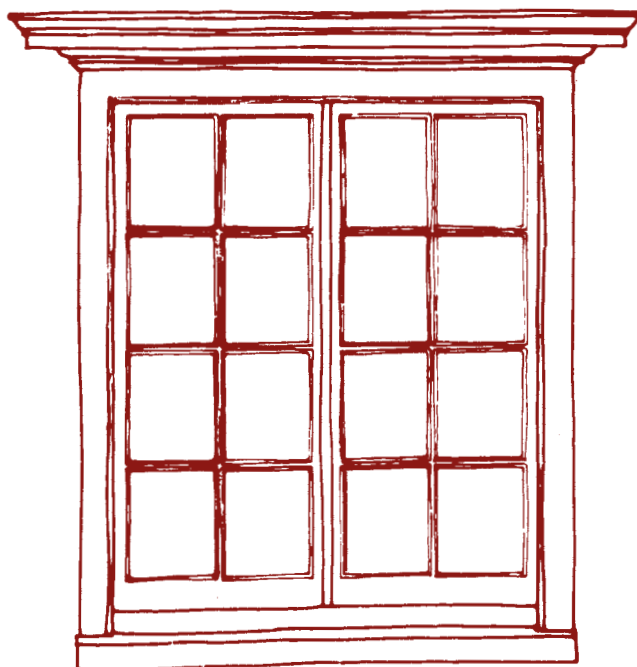
## Interiors



Sash window – flat gauged arch recessed frame



Sash window – Cambered arch flush frame

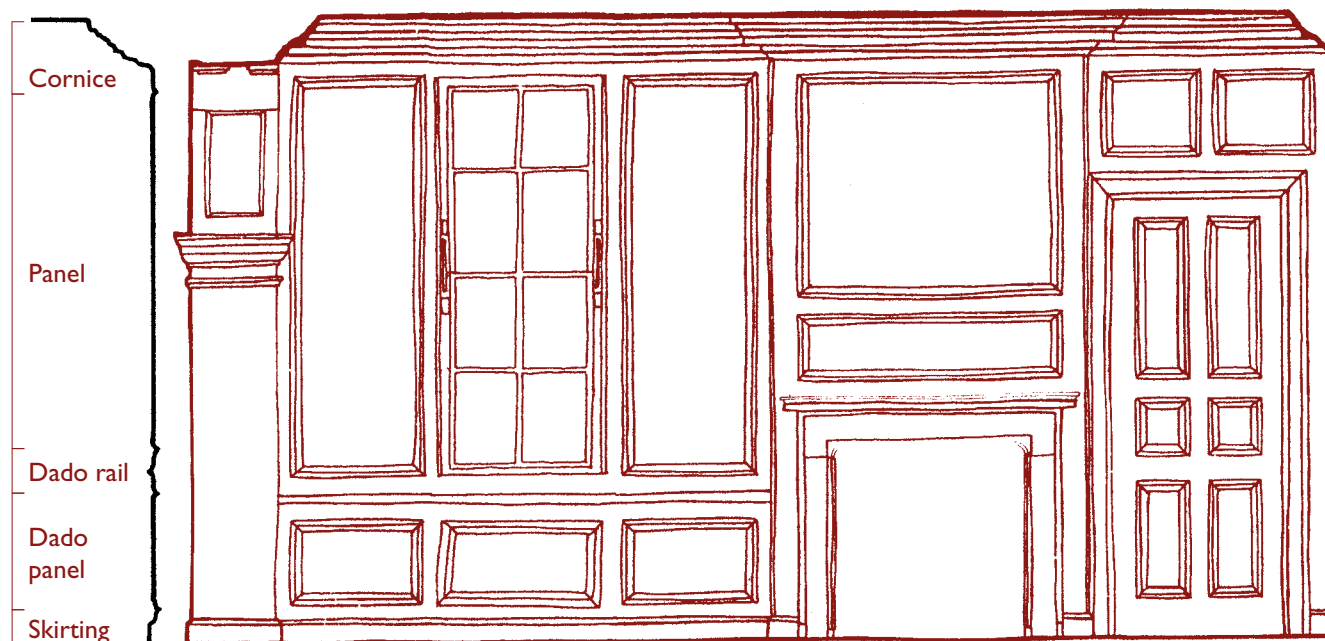


Dormer window

The interiors of 'listed' buildings are equally protected. The need to obtain consent for works affecting the interior character or appearance is no less than that required for exterior alterations. Attention should always be paid to staircases, panelled rooms, plaster ceilings, cornices, fireplaces, doors, shutters, pediments and brackets. Original sized room compartments and hierarchy should be maintained. Painted interiors should not be stripped and natural or stained finishes should not be painted over without consent. Installation of new electric light fittings, cabling, built-in furniture, radiators, plumbing or drainage should not remove or destroy original fabric. Services should be designed and fitted in sympathy with the interior and its supporting structure.

## Decorative Features

The gradual addition to a building of external and internal decorative features often adds to the character and when repairs are considered these features should be safeguarded. Wooden trellis porches, iron balconies, pilasters, insurance plaques, door hoods, glazed or ceramic tile, timber studding and panelling, old wall-paper etc. are all of interest. Their removal in most instances will require consent.



## Gardens & Settings

The setting of any historic building can be easily ruined by the use of inappropriate materials or the loss of original features such as railings, fences, gates, trees, hedges, related outbuildings, conservatories, green-houses etc. Where such original or characteristic features occur they should be repaired and retained and where new works are proposed they should be sympathetically designed as part of the overall setting. Any object or structure within the grounds of a listed building which has been in position prior to 1948 is as equally protected as any attached feature.

## Statutory Procedures

Most historic buildings have been 'listed' as being of special architectural or historic interest by the Department of Culture, Media & Sport and the legislation concerning them is covered in this Council's Planning Information Leaflet No.3 Historic Buildings. P.P.G. 15 (Planning Policy Guidance: Planning and the Historic Environment. September 1994 H.M.S.O.) is especially helpful on these procedures and for basic advice on repairs. If repairs are necessary or if any work would materially alter the character or appearance of the building, 'Listed Building Consent' may be required. Building Regulation approval may be required in addition to 'Listed Building Consent'. To avoid the conflict of different statutory requirements waivers on Building Regulations can be granted in certain cases where the character of the building is threatened. Compromise arrangements are almost always possible.



## FURTHER INFORMATION

If you have any queries concerning any of the points or details raised in this leaflet or any other matter please contact – Urban Design and Conservation Section on 020 8891 7335/7941 who are willing to give advice and assistance. This leaflet is for guidance only and any repairs

to a historic building should be undertaken with the advice of a professional who is suitably experienced in working with such buildings. The following can help in this respect:-

### **Royal Institution of Chartered surveyors**

Contacts Centre, Surveyor Court, Westwood Way,  
Coventry CV4 8JE, T 0870 3331600, E [contactrics@rics.org](mailto:contactrics@rics.org),  
<http://www.rics.org>

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

Clients Advisory Service, 66 Portland Place,  
London W1B 1AD, T 020 7580 5533, E [info@inst.riba.org](mailto:info@inst.riba.org),  
<http://www.architecture.com>

At all times when dealing with an historic building it is imperative to employ experienced craftsmen and builders used to dealing with old fabric, and professional consultants well versed in the problems and development of historic buildings.

For current information please ring 020 8891 1411.

If you need this leaflet in Braille,  
large print, audio tape, or another language,  
please contact us on 020 8891 1411  
or minicom 020 88316001

Civic Centre 44 York Street  
Twickenham TW1 3BZ  
website: [www.richmond.gov.uk](http://www.richmond.gov.uk)

اگر در فهمیدن این نشریه مشکلی دارید لطفاً به میز پذیرش  
در آدرس قید شده در زیر مراجعه نمایید تا ترتیب ترجمه  
تلفنی برایتان فراهم آورده شود:

#### Farsi

إذا كانت لديك صعوبة في فهم هذا المنشور، فنرجو زيارة الإستقبال في  
العنوان المعطى أدناه حيث بإمكاننا أن نرتب لخدمة ترجمة شفوية  
هاتفية.

#### Arabic

ਜੇਕਰ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਇਸ ਪਰਚੇ ਨੂੰ ਸਮਝਣ ਵਿਚ ਮੁਸ਼ਕਲ ਪੇਸ਼ ਆਉਂਦੀ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਹੇਠਾਂ  
ਦਿੱਤੇ ਗਏ ਪਤੇ ਉੱਪਰ ਰਿਸੈਪਸ਼ਨ 'ਤੇ ਆਓ ਜਿੱਥੇ ਅਸੀਂ ਟੈਲੀਫੋਨ ਤੇ ਗੱਲਬਾਤ  
ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਇੰਟਰਪ੍ਰਿਟਰ ਦਾ ਪ੍ਰਬੰਧ ਕਰ ਸਕਦੇ ਹਾਂ।

#### Punjabi

Reformatted with minor updates July 2005  
(First published March 1982)

