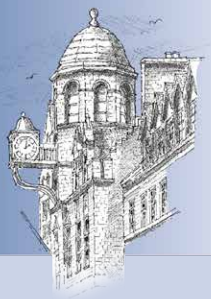
Penicuik Townscape Heritage (TH) and
Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme (CARS)

Penicuik
Heritage
Regeneration



ADVICE FOR HOMEOWNERS

Looking after your building makes good sense and saves money

Maintain and repair regularly, don't let minor problems turn into major ones.

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Penicuik Community Development Trust

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Introduction

Costly building repair can be the result of lack of timely maintenance and previous repair carried out using inappropriate methods and materials. A few pounds spent regularly looking after your building can pay dividends in the long run. This leaflet has been produced to assist and encourage owners of historic buildings to take care of them. A more comprehensive Historic Building Maintenance and Repair Guide is also available.

1 Rotten roof timbers due to blocked gutters
2 Cement render causing damp and stone decay
3 Vegetation causing damp
4 Damage to stone due to blocked and leaking gutters

Caring for Older Buildings in Town Centres

The centres of Dalkeith, Gorebridge & Penicuik are conservation areas with a number of listed historic buildings. The Dalkeith Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI) and Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme (CARS) and the Gorebridge Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme (CARS) have highlighted a number of common problems. As surveys were carried out on many of the buildings they revealed their poor condition and this is due primarily to two main factors:

- Lack of timely maintenance
- Previous repair being carried out using inappropriate materials and methods.

It is likely that there are similar issues in Penicuik town centre.

Dalkeith Town Centre

Gorebridge Town Centre

Penicuik Town Centre

Common Problems and Solutions

Maintenance

Replacing a few slipped slates and repairing/ cleaning out gutters and downpipes regularly can avoid costly repair later on. If damp is allowed into the building it can have extremely costly implications:

- Dry and wet rot can spread
- Damage can occur to stonework and roof/floor timbers
- Chimneys can become unstable if not inspected regularly
- Damage can occur to internal decorations and fittings.

1 Vegetation blocking down pipes
2 Vegetation and loose slates in gutters
3 Cement render over soft sandstone
4 Cement render damaging chimney

The kind of common problems that can occur if regular maintenance is not carried out can include:

- **Blocked and broken rainwater goods** i.e. downpipes and rhones resulting in soaking stonework/vegetation growth which will dislodge mortar and stones making the wall unstable and allowing water to get in.
- **Loose/damaged slates** will let water into the roof, soaking roof timbers and the tops of walls. This can result in structural damage as well as damage internally.
- **Blocked roof gutters and valley gutters**. This can allow water to build up and penetrate into roof timbers and wall heads.
- **Flaking and damaged render** can result in water ingress in behind and penetrating brick and stonework. This can be a serious problem with chimneys and gable walls.
- **Blocked drains and vegetation growing around the bottom of walls** can lead to damp penetration and dry/wet rot.

Many of these problems can be quickly addressed through regular maintenance checks. There is a handy maintenance checklist in the Historic Building Maintenance and Repair Guide.

1 Blocked valley gutters
2 Dry rot due to leaking down pipe
3 Blocked drains and rubbish at ground level

Repair

Repair needs to be carried out using the correct materials and techniques for traditional buildings. Examples of poor repair, which can aggravate the problem and the correct approach are:

✗ **Using hard cement renders and mortars on soft sandstone and brickwork**. Many of the old buildings in the area were built with a local soft sandstone that can damage easily if inappropriate repair methods are used. Hard cement render and mortar can trap moisture behind the wall which will lead to stone/brick decay and damp penetration.

✓ **The correct material in this situation would be lime harling/render and lime mortar using a mix appropriate to the situation.** This will react better with the soft stone and allow the wall to "breathe" enabling moisture to evaporate out of the wall.

Before, hard cement mortar

After, lime harling pointing

Before, eroded stone work

After, lime harling applied

✗ **Using mineral felt or other bituminous materials** to reline valley gutters and repair roof junctions with chimneys and gable walls. These materials will not last long and will shrink and deteriorate allowing damp to penetrate.

✓ **The correct material in these instances is lead** although a more expensive material initially, it will last longer and is more robust.

✗ **Using plastic rainwater downpipes and rhones**. These will shrink and move with changes in temperature and are more likely to dislodge under the weight of water/ice/snow. They are also inappropriate on an historic building.

✓ **The correct material is cast iron.** This is more traditional and more robust and will last longer.

Before, hard cement render on chimney

After, cement render removed and lime harling applied with lead detailing

Before, Parapet gutter with poor felt repairs

After, Gutter repaired with lead

✗ **Using inappropriate replacement stone or hard cement render** to fill over damaged stone. This will react badly with the existing stonework and will allow water penetration.

✓ **The correct approach is to assess whether replacement stone is necessary**. It maybe that a lime mortar/repair mix can be used or if a replacement is necessary it is important to replace with a stone having similar properties to the existing stone.

Before, eroded stone work

After, stone repair and replacement

There are other examples of the correct materials and methods to use i.e.:

- ✓ **Replacing slates with traditional slates to match** i.e. rather than using concrete or fibre cement look a likes!
- ✓ **Repair if possible timber sash and case windows**. If not then replace with same rather than plastic "look a likes!"
- ✓ **Repair if possible timber panelled doors and traditional shop fronts** or replace with same materials rather than plastic "look a likes!"

All the above can have a disastrous effect on an historic building both in terms of damage to the fabric and also visual damage, adversely affecting the character of the building if inappropriate materials are used.

Before, dormer window

After, dormer window repair

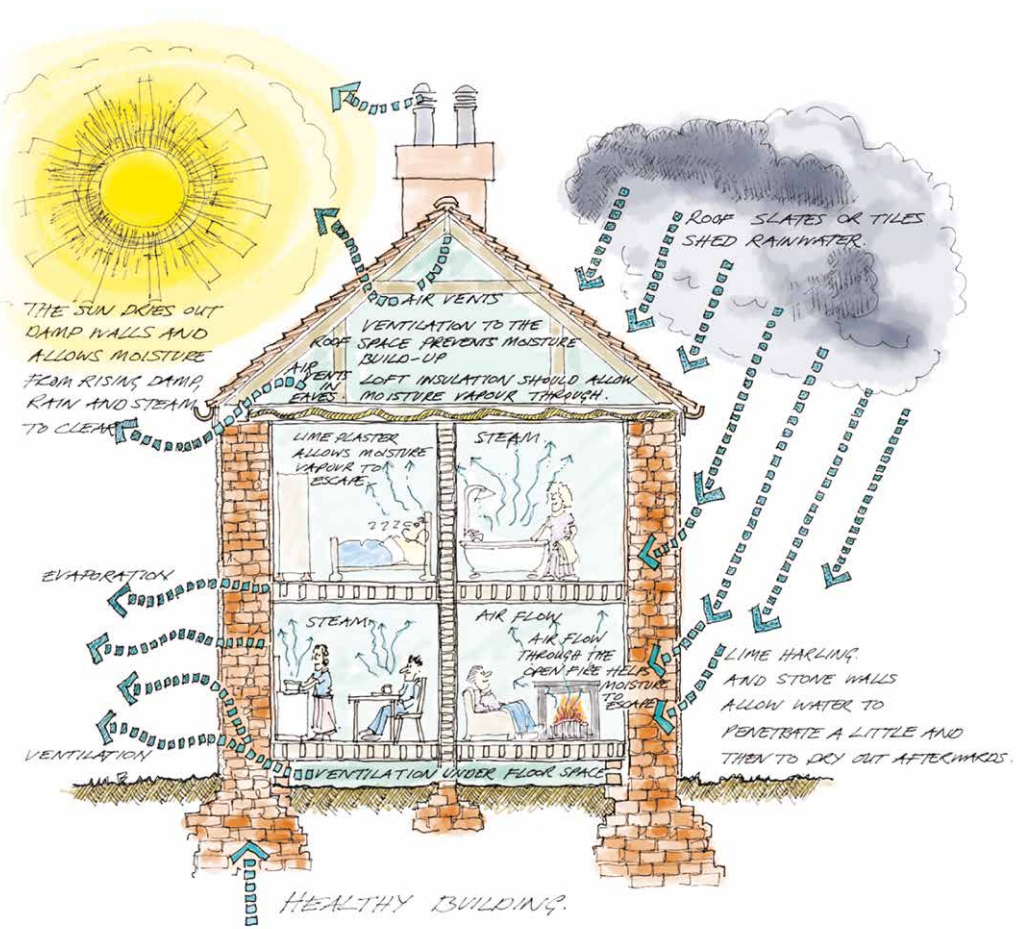
Before, shopfront

After, shopfront restoration

Don’t let it get to this!

Understand your building and maintain/repair appropriately.

Understanding Traditional Buildings



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So remember a “Stitch in time...”

Spend some time looking at your building on a regular basis rather than being faced with a costly bill later.

If in a tenement building talk to your neighbours and set up a residents group to look after the building – its’ in everyone’s interest.

Helpful references:

Penicuik Heritage Regeneration Scheme	*Historic Building Maintenance and Repair Guide*
Historic Environment Scotland	*Maintaining your home. A Short Guide for Homeowners*
IHBC & SPAB	*A Stitch in Time, Maintaining your Property, Makes Good Sense and Saves Money*
Historic Environment Scotland	*The Repair of Historic Buildings in Scotland*
Historic Environment Scotland	*Inform leaflets* – available on their website
Assist Architects	*The Tenement Handbook. A Practical Guide to Living in a Tenement.*
Consumer Focus Scotland	*Common Repair, Common Sense. A Short Guide to the Management of Tenements in Scotland.*

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