



# Strathaven

Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme

## Strathaven Maintenance Guide



Conservation and maintenance  
in Strathaven



Good practice maintenance



What to look out for  
*Walls, roofs and problem areas*

Windows and shopfronts



Common property repairs  
*Working with other owners*

Get help  
*Where to get professional and  
technical advice*

# Strathaven CARS

Strathaven was designated as a conservation area in 1976 and recently, Strathaven Community Groups and South Lanarkshire Council, in partnership with Historic Environment Scotland, have established a Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme (CARS) to help and support owners in the repair and conservation of the area.

Limited funding is available over the next five years to provide grant aid for shopfront improvements and the repair of priority buildings within the CARS area. More information on the Strathaven CARS scheme can be found on South Lanarkshire Council's website [www.southlanarkshire.gov.uk](http://www.southlanarkshire.gov.uk) or by contacting the CARS Officer, Stuart Hodge on 0303 123 1015. The Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme (CARS) for Strathaven town centre is a joint endeavour between all owners, residents, businesses and public services. Your role as an owner is to maintain your building and the Council aim to help you with many aspects of this.

## Where to get help maintaining and repairing your building

### Paying for repairs - Grants

CARS Grants – up to 80% for repair, maintenance and enhancement works in the CARS area. This includes shopfronts. Contact Strathaven CARS Officer, Stuart Hodge, South Lanarkshire Council.

Where you have been given a grant to repair your building you will always be required to produce a maintenance plan. The Council may ask for proof that you are carrying out the plan or you may be required to repay your grant with interest.

### Personal Advice

Citizens Advice Scotland, Almada Tower  
67 Almada Street, Hamilton ML3 OHQ.  
Telephone 01698 283477 [advice@hamiltoncab.casonline.org.uk](mailto:advice@hamiltoncab.casonline.org.uk)



## Repair procedures

### Enforcing common repairs

- South Lanarkshire Council, Housing Services can serve orders and notices to require you to repair and maintain your house to a reasonable standard. You will be charged for work carried out and an admin fee will be added.

### Professional surveys and construction advice

- Strathaven CARS Project Officer Stuart Hodge, Planning and Economic Development Services, Montrose House, 154 Montrose Crescent, Hamilton ML3 6LB

### Emergency Repairs

- The Council's Building Standards officers can enforce emergency repairs but note that they will charge owners the full cost plus admin costs. It can be cheaper to organise repairs yourself.

### Planning consent for alterations and repairs

- Planning Service.
- Note: You generally need planning consent for large repair schemes, replacing windows and sometimes for painting schemes. You normally also need permission for repairs to listed buildings and those in conservation areas, however some like-for-like repairs can be carried out without the need for consent. You should contact the Planning Service to check if permission is required. If you are replacing windows in the conservation area, you will normally be asked to use timber. This is mainly because it

is a traditional material which is appropriate to the character of the conservation area and timber windows can be a better long-term investment than uPVC when properly maintained.

### Dangerous Buildings

- Building Standards  
If you suspect that your building is dangerous, or that there is a risk of slates or stones falling, you should contact building standards.

## Your rights and responsibilities

### For common repairs

See page 18

### Help setting up owners association

South Lanarkshire Council, Housing Services

### Finding absentee owners

South Lanarkshire Council, Housing Services

### Private landlords and tenants

Environmental Health Officers

### Anti social behavior / noise

Environmental Health Officers

### Public health issues

Environmental Health Officers

# Good practice maintenance

## Four reasons to repair your property

- Property in better repair sells faster and are worth more – every potential buyer sees the Home Report for residential property.
- Minor repairs not dealt with quickly can cause further and even more expensive problems in concealed parts of the property.
- The cost of repairs increases faster than inflation.
- If stones, slates or chimneys fall and hurt people, you will be legally responsible and could be sued.

## Four ways to pay for repairs

1. Start saving. Repairs are inevitable so save for them. If you save with a credit union, you can ask for small loans to cover repairs. Consider setting up a joint account if you live in a flat and share repair costs with other owners.

2. Get a loan or extend your mortgage –sometimes it is just not possible to save quickly enough to pay for a repair. Get good financial advice so that you get the best loan for you. Extending your mortgage or taking out a new mortgage can be the best value solution.

3. Approach the Council to see if you would be eligible for a grant using the CARS Scheme – funding will be limited and people who apply early will have a better chance of obtaining funding.

4. If you can't get a grant or a loan, phase works over a period of time.

## Neighbours helping each other

Working with your wider set of neighbours can help lift the value of all your properties and save you cash. Working together may be essential and unavoidable. But, by working with your neighbours in adjacent properties, you could:

- Co-ordinate a painting or stone maintenance scheme to make an impact and lift house values across the whole street.
- Get a contractor to give you a discounted price for cleaning all the gutters, downpipes and other water conductors in the street.

It can be demonstrated that, by all owners getting together to use one builder who can bring in a large crane, a gutter cleaning programme can be cut from as much as £1000 to £200 per property.

# A professional health check



A good survey will help you identify your priorities for repair and help you plan work to save your building from costly repairs and even demolition. This document will help you with planning and budgeting – but you get what you pay for!

Get quotes for the survey from at least three architects or surveyors. Ask all of those quoting for the same thing so you can make a good comparison of prices.

## You will most probably want:

- A description of the current condition of the key parts of the building.
- Digital photographic proof of disrepair.
- Identification of works which are essential or urgent rather than just desirable.

- An estimated cost for carrying out all the recommendations in one package of works.
- Suggested alternatives for phasing work over say the next five years, with costs, prioritising Health & Safety; reducing further expensive damage; keeping the building wind and weather tight with acceptable level of maintenance.
- A maintenance plan to ensure the building does not deteriorate further in the future.

## Once you decide to go ahead with work, your next step will be to find an architect or surveyor who can help you by:

- Planning work so you get the best deal for your cash.
- Preparing specifications and tenders to find contractors experienced in the type of work you want done and get quotes for the same quality of work.
- Managing the building works and co-ordinating builders and other specialists.

## Maintenance Schedule

### Every year

- gutter cleaning
- inspect and carry out minor reactive repairs to roof slates
- check flashings on the roof
- check harling and render
- check chimney heads and pots
- check TV aerials and fixings

### Every 2 years

- repaint doors, windows, gutters and downpipes
- overhaul door entry systems

### Every 5–10 years

- stair painting
- mastic around windows
- repair felt roof coverings

# What to look out for



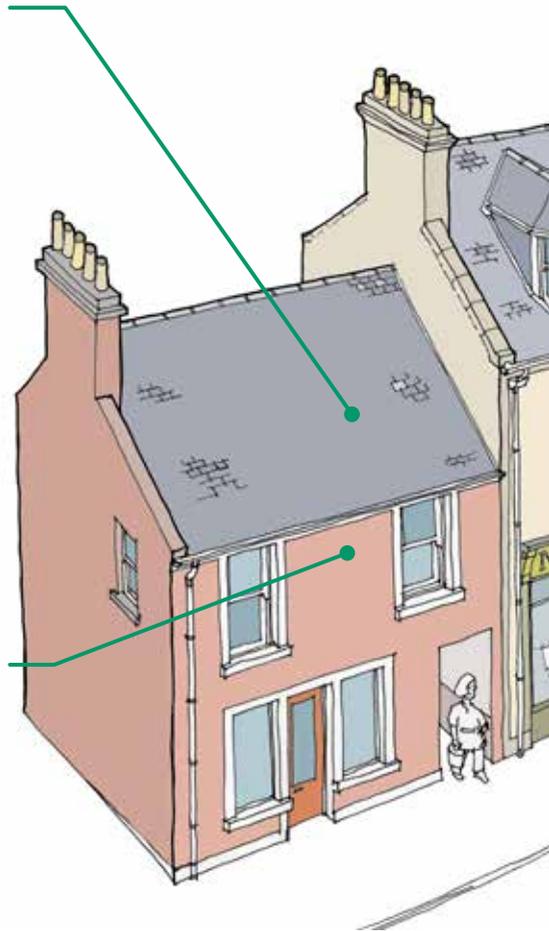
## Go outside and look up for:

- Slipped or missing slates and ridge covers.
- Dislodged, leaking or overflowing gutters.
- Loose brackets for gutters.
- Staining suggesting broken/blocked gutters or downpipes.



## In your property, look indoors for damp patches on ceilings

- In the middle of the ceiling?  
– could be a loose or broken slate or a plumbing leak.
- At the corner with an outside wall?  
– a problem with gutters.
- At the corner by a gable wall?  
– a problem with flashings.





### Check your chimneyheads

- They are highly exposed to weather and plant growth can damage the stonework.
- Loose or damaged stonework can eventually lead to collapse of the chimney.



### Check the outside walls for:

- Areas of decayed stone on external walls.
- Gaps in the pointing or excessive use of cement pointing.
- Cracks, especially those going across lintels, above windows or snaking down the building.
- Lintels or courses of stone off level.
- cracked or loose render.
- Failure of previous cement repairs.



### Look in the close for

- Loose or missing balusters – children could fall through.
- Uneven steps- a hazard to users.

# At the back: gables, pends and stairs

## Check the chimney pots and copings

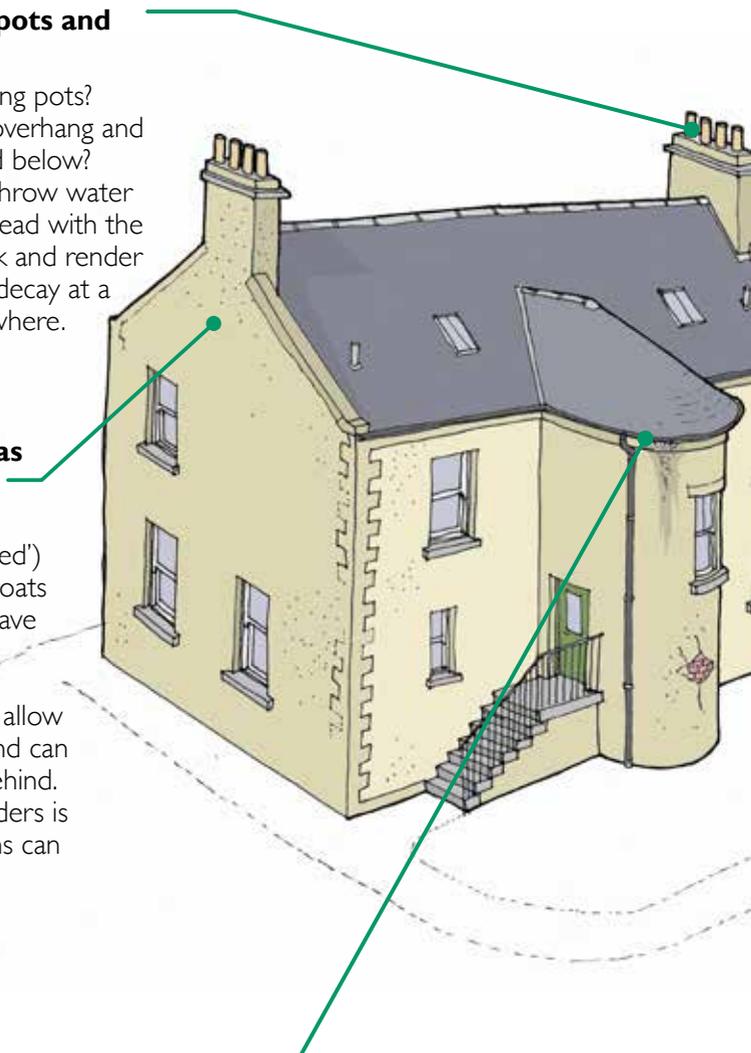
- Any cracked or missing pots?
- Does existing cope overhang and protect chimneyhead below?
- Poor copings fail to throw water away from chimneyhead with the result that stonework and render on the chimney can decay at a faster rate than elsewhere.

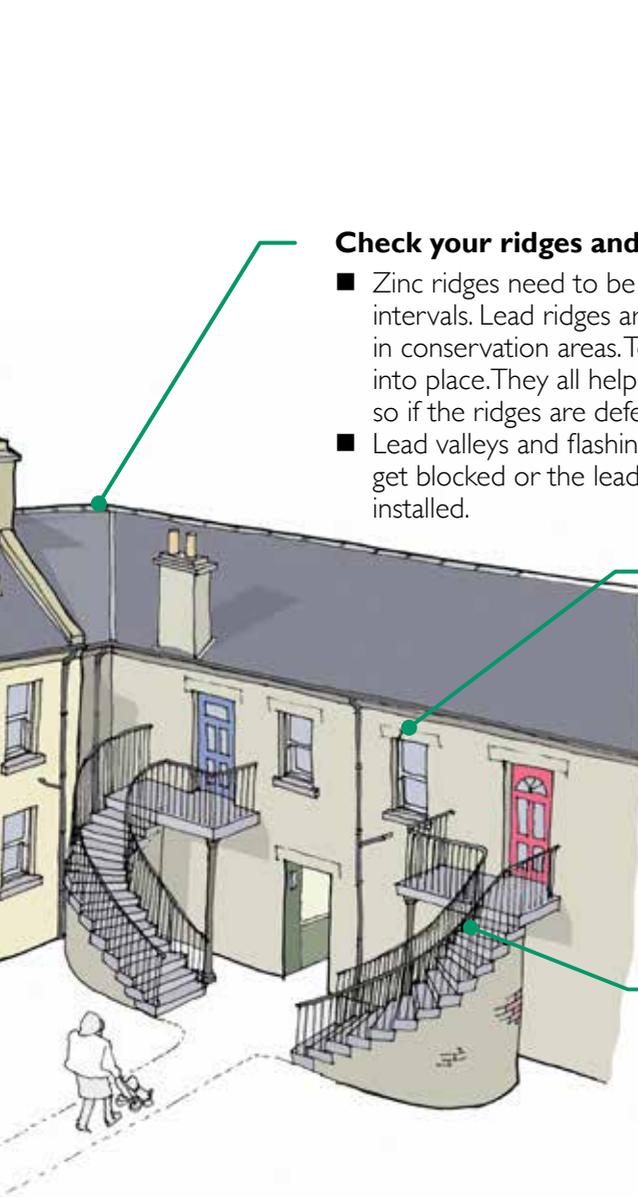
## Check rendered areas

- Most older stone buildings would have been rendered ('harled') with a lime render. Coats of limewash would have protected it.
- More recent cement based renders fail to allow for any movement and can damage the stone behind. Cracking in such renders is common and sections can lose their adhesion.

## Check the gutters

- Note any staining under gutters, may be due to blockage or leaking joint.
- Check gutter supports and that the gutter drains towards outlet.





## Check your ridges and flashings

- Zinc ridges need to be clipped with straps at frequent intervals. Lead ridges are recommended for slated roofs in conservation areas. Terracotta ridges are mortared into place. They all help to secure the top row of slates, so if the ridges are defective, the slating will loosen.
- Lead valleys and flashings at chimneys and skewes can get blocked or the lead can crack if it is not properly installed.

## Check the lintels and cills

- Are any lintels cracked or showing signs of stress?
- Check that stone or concrete cills are solid and not cracked.

## Check the external stairs and platts

- Stone treads may be worn or badly repaired.
- Cracks in stone or platts may be structural and need checking by an engineer.
- Metal or cast iron balusters may be loose or missing.
- Are there areas of steel supports or cast iron columns that show rust or corrosion?

# Stone and rendered walls

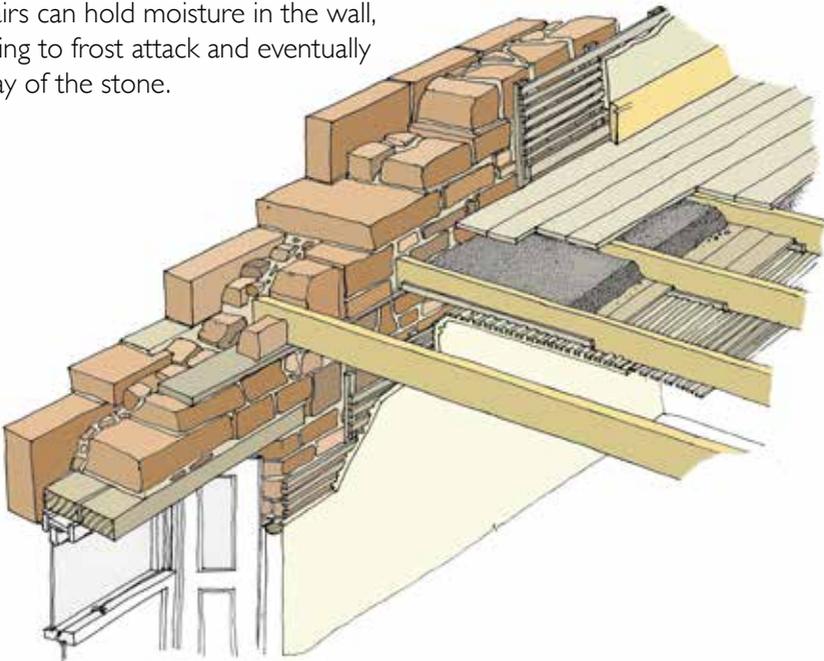
External walls in the Strathaven CARS area are usually built in stone. The stone may be rough whereas lintels, margins and cills are formed in smooth cut stone. The rough external walls would have been rendered in lime and limewashed.

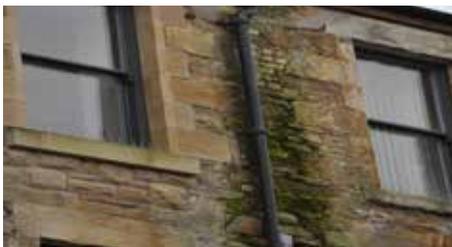
Such stone walls often support floor joists, set into the walls. Also, timber 'safe lintels' were often used at window and door openings. If the external wall gets saturated and does not dry out, moisture in the wall can cause rot decay to embedded timbers.

Cement renders and cement based repairs can hold moisture in the wall, leading to frost attack and eventually decay of the stone.

## Check the outside walls for:

- Areas of decayed stone on external walls.
- Gaps in the mortar pointing between stones.
- Cracks, especially those going across lintels, above windows or snaking down the building.
- Cracks in render.
- Lintels or courses of stone off level.
- Bulging or leaning walls.
- Leaking gutters or downpipes which cause staining to the wall.





The growth of algae on stone is a sure sign that the gutter or downpipe is defective. Water concentrated on an area of stone can cause rapid decay.



Linostone was a resinous material applied to stonework to improve appearance in the 1970s and 80s. It does not allow the stone to 'breathe' or let moisture in the stone naturally dry out. This leads to further damage of the stone.



Cement based renders and roughcast can also damage the backing stone or brick. Such renders prevent the wall drying out, frost attack behind the render will fracture the render resulting in 'boss' areas and eventually cause the render to loosen.



Cement pointing (here poorly done), will entrap moisture and lead to decay of the adjacent stonework. Lime pointing should be used and ideally formed to match the original lime pointing.



Evidence of moisture at a cracked stone lintel which has previously been repaired with a flat steel bar. Cracked lintels where moisture is evident may suggest that the timber safe lintels embedded in the wall are affected by rot.

# Roofs, chimneys, flashings

## Go outside and look up for:

- Slipped or missing slates.
- Dislodged, leaking or overflowing gutters.
- Loose brackets for gutters.
- Staining suggesting broken/ blocked downpipes.

In your property, look indoors for damp patches on ceilings.

In the middle of the ceiling?

– could be a loose or broken slate or a plumbing leak.

At the corner with an outside wall

– a problem with gutters.

At the corner by a gable wall

– a problem with flashings.

Check your chimneyheads

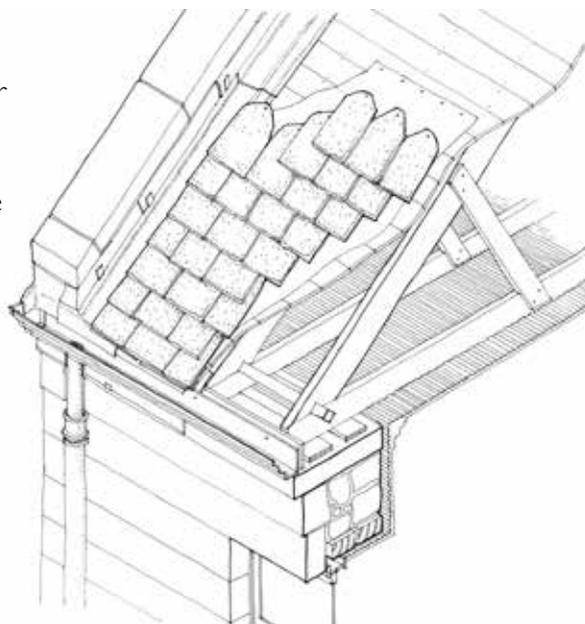
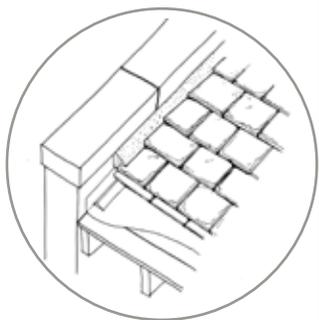
They are highly exposed to weather and often damaged by flue gases.

Cap unused flues to prevent dampness (but make sure you leave ventilation lower down).



Watch out for plant growth as this can collect at parapets, skews and gutters.

The plants hold the moisture and can lead to frost attack and their roots can expand and damage the stonework.



A junction between slating and stone skew can be formed with a mortar fillet or a lead flashing. But some movement should be allowed for in both cases



Slates are often 're-dressed' when reslating existing roofs. This causes the slates to reduce in size, which can lead to poor coverage. Ridging is essential in securing and protecting the top row of slates.



Check the loft space if it can be accessed. Water penetration behind chimneyheads and from overflowing gutters can rot the main roof timbers.



Chimneys are the most exposed parts of the building. Check that the coping is well pointed and throws water away from the face of the chimney. Render and structural defects are common on chimneyheads and falling debris can present a serious health and safety hazard.



Some modern copings don't provide sufficient protection to the chimneyhead. Decayed stone and open joints can be difficult to spot from ground level.



Any evidence of patch repairs to lead flashings suggests that the lead has cracked, possibly because allowance has not been made for the lead to expand and contract. Best to renew the flashings.

# Windows

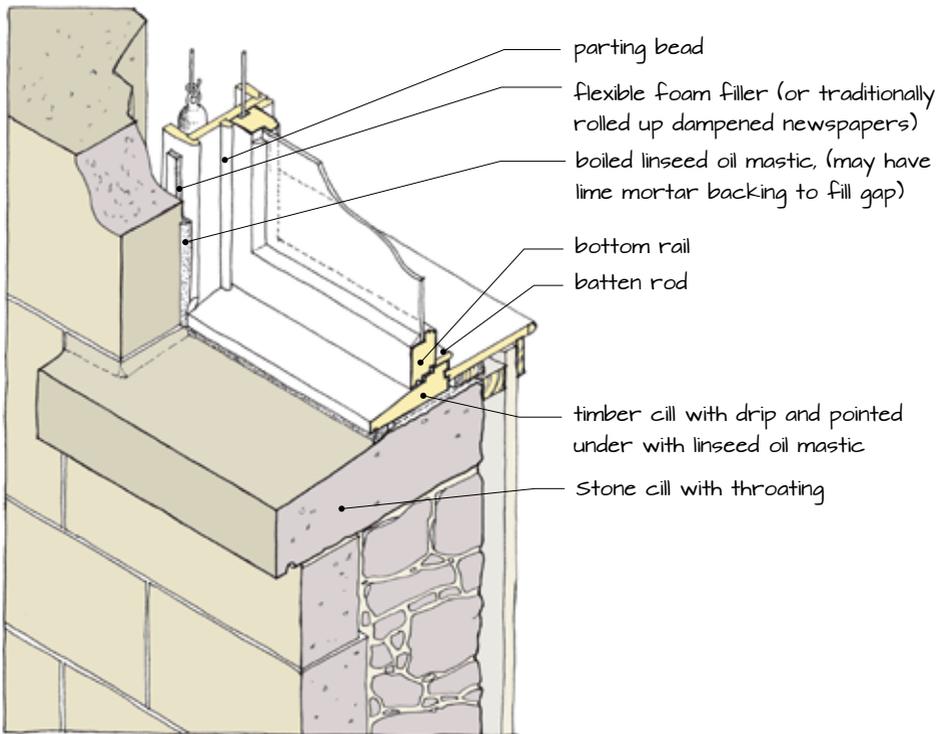
In Strathaven, the design of traditional doors and windows provides a statement to the age and character of each building. The proportions and frame size of a traditional sash and case window, together with the configuration of the glazing bars, helps to make the area more distinctive and in character with the age of the building. Doors also provide this important 'introduction' to a building.

Most of the properties in Strathaven would have had either simple dual sash windows or, if built in the Georgian period, small panes divided by slender astragals (glazing bars).

In listed buildings and conservation areas, approval is required to change or replace windows. As uPVC and aluminium windows are not in keeping with the character of such buildings, they are not generally appropriate.

It is also worth noting that uPVC windows tend to have thick frames which also cut down the amount of light from a window and they tend to be difficult (and sometimes impossible) to maintain.

The most common problems with timber sash and case windows is when they



don't get painted and the cills and bottom rails take in moisture leading to decay. However such defects can also be repaired by experienced joiners at low cost.

Regular painting (at five yearly intervals) of doors and windows can help to enliven a property and the act of regular painting focusses attention on any other repairs that may need attention.

In some cases, it is worth considering improving the draught stripping of existing sash and case windows, although this is best done by specialists.

If your windows are uPVC, aluminium, or simply rotten or badly configured, then replacement timber sash and case windows and new panelled doors can be made. Modern timber sash and case windows can be made with full double glazing and draught stripping built in. These can be appropriate on the rear of buildings, however on frontages, where appearance is important, secondary glazing may be a better solution.

'Slimlite glazing' has also been used successfully in conservation areas (double glazing with a very thin cavity) although the thermal efficiency of the units is less effective than full double glazing.

If doors have to be replaced, this should match the style and design of the age and character of the building. They should be made of good quality timber (such as Douglas Fir) and not from uPVC.



# Shopfronts

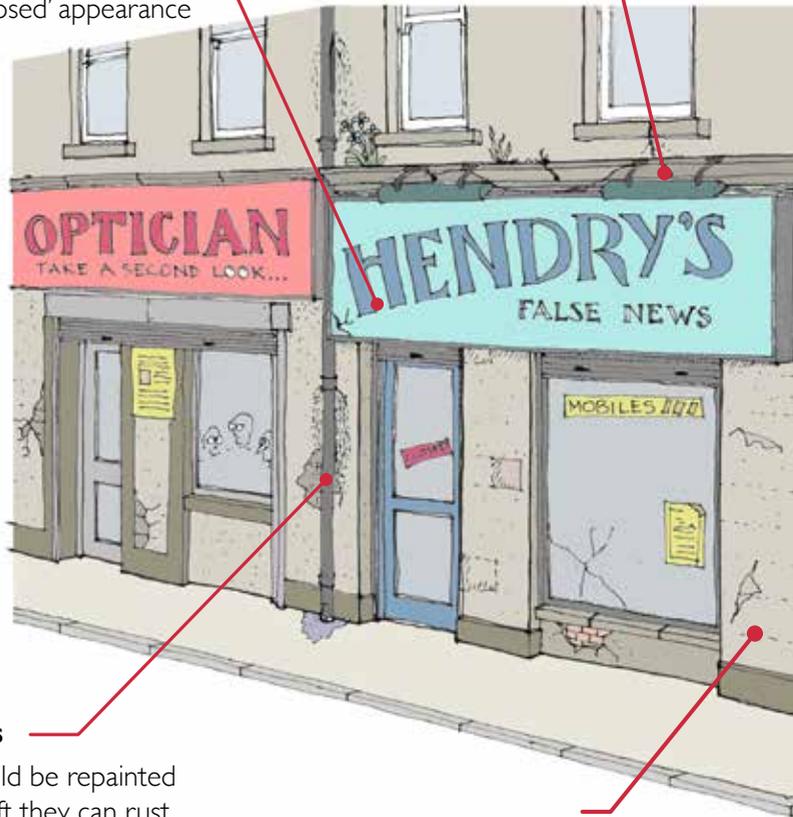
## Oversized signage

Signage that drops well below the original window opening, obstructs light into the shop and lessens status of shopfront.

- Some large signs project to contain an external roller shutter.
- Surface mounted external roller shutters, give a 'closed' appearance and are not appropriate.

## Check cills and string courses

Open joints can allow plant growth and the roots can damage the stone. Cracked cills can focus water into the stonework.



## Check downpipes

Cast Iron pipes should be repainted every five years. If left they can rust and crack and water overflows and damages the stone or render.

- Also check fixings are secure.
- Avoid using uPVC.

## Painted stone and render

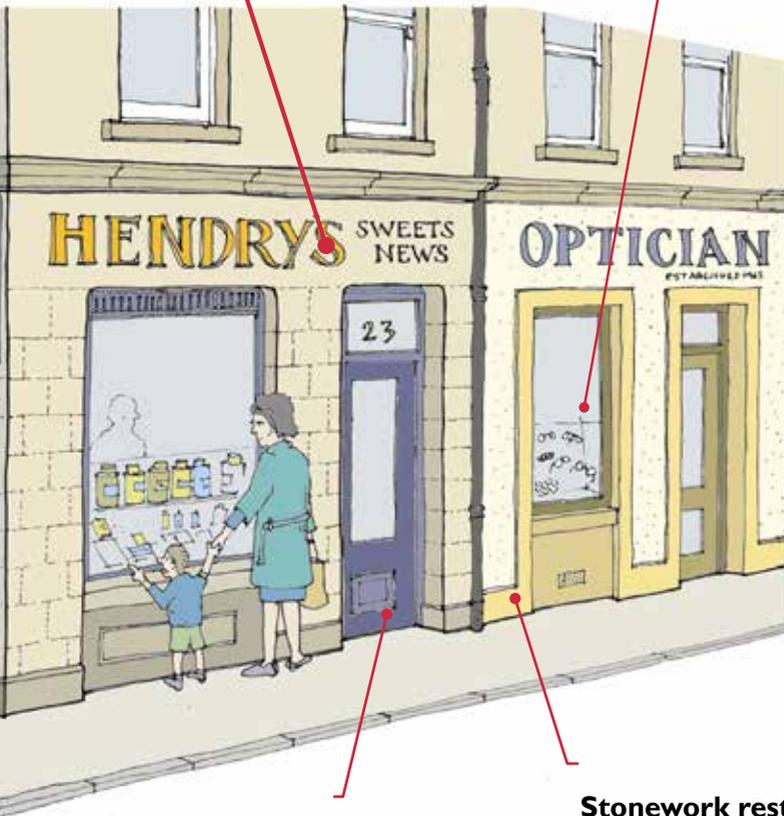
Old cement repairs can damage the stone and rendered areas can crack due to water and frost damage.

### **New signage**

Old oversized signage removed. If stone evident under fascia, restore and apply individual letters and signage. Alternatively, new timber signboard installed to original depth of sign. Handpainted signs are preferred.

### **Open Grille shutters**

Shutters reformed as 'open grille' shutters and positioned inside. These still allow window shopping at night and help to enliven the street. Shop doorways may have fold back metal gates.



### **Doors and shop windows**

Repaired or reformed in timber. Shop windows with toughened glass.

### **Stonework restored**

Paint and old 'Linostone' removed from stone and stone repointed in lime mortar. Stall risers and plinths restored.

# Common Property Repairs

If you own a flat or any part of a building divided horizontally into two or more separate parts, you will have a responsibility in common with other owners to keep your building maintained.

Generally speaking, the roof, gutters, external walls, shared services and stairs are common property and decisions about repairs are made by majority vote. However, the rules can be different for every building so you will need to check your Title Deeds.

## You and your neighbours are responsible for:

- Maintaining any part of the property that provides support and shelter;
- Paying your share of any common maintenance where proper procedures have been followed.
- Paying your share of repair costs, even if you sell your house, from the time decision was made.
- Carrying building insurance to full reinstatement value including common parts.

## You have the right to:

- Arrange essential repairs and recover the costs from other owners.
- Refuse to pay for non-essential repairs you have not been informed of.
- Appeal decisions you did not agree to at the Sheriff Court within 28 days.
- Get access to a neighbour's house to carry out essential repairs.
- Ask other owners for proof of insurance.

## Owners decide, normally by majority vote on:

- what needs to be done;
- organising surveys;
- the appointment of contractors to carry out work;
- the appointment of property managers;
- organising common insurance;
- running a maintenance account.

## Get agreement!

1. Always use proper procedures to make decisions:

Make decisions at well attended owners meetings or contact all owners individually. If you can't get owners in person, you can notify the owner or their agent/solicitor by post or email.

2. Track down absentee owners.

Use the Registers of Scotland or, if the flat is rented, the Register of Landlords held by your local council. If you still can't trace the owner, you can post repair notices through their letterbox addressed to 'The Owner.'

3. Keep other owners informed throughout.

When a majority of owners make a decision about maintenance, tell other owners immediately and give them 28 days notice to appeal to the Sheriff Court about the decision.

4. Taking action with uncooperative owners.



If the repairs are essential to providing support and shelter, such as a roof repair or other repairs to common property – do the work and charge the other owners. (Use the Duty to Maintain, s8 of Tenements Scotland Act 2004.). If they refuse to pay, take them to the Sherriff Court (using the new Simple Procedure if your claim is under £5000).

There are ways to attach a debt to a property so that you can get your money back when a flat is sold. Seek legal advice to find out how to do this.

### Where does it say I have to?

Your Title Deeds (and your Deeds of Condition) contain the key rules about how your tenement should be run, what are common repairs and how much each owner should pay for common repairs.

If you don't have a copy of your title deeds, you can get them from Registers of Scotland. A copy will cost around £15.

If there are gaps in your title deeds, or what your title deeds say is unworkable, use the relevant parts of the Tenement Management Scheme introduced by The Tenements Scotland Act 2004



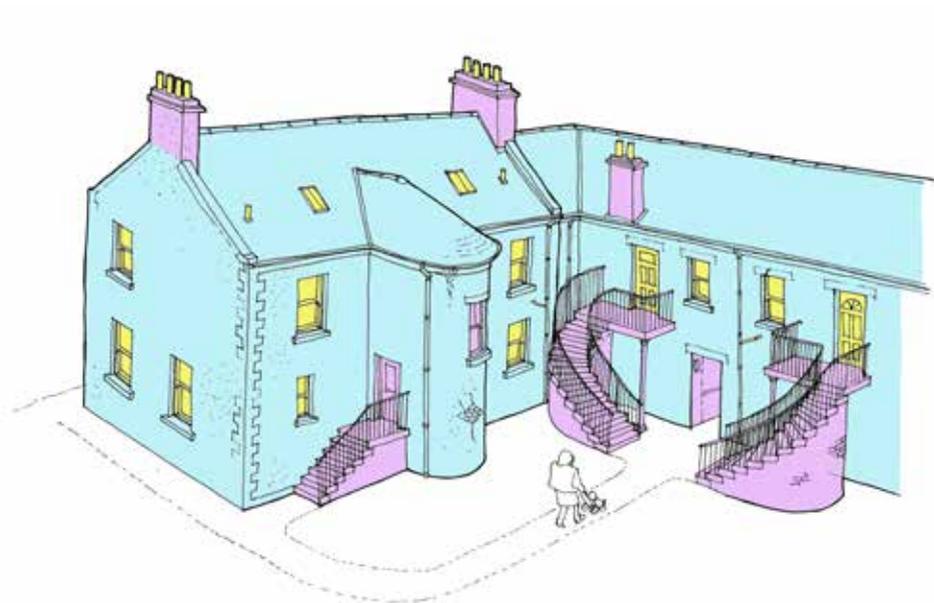
### Six maintenance tasks every owner MUST pay a share of:

- Cleaning;
- Painting;
- Gardening;
- Routine work;
- Repairs;
- and 'Incidental improvements' (such as installing a new street door; controlled entry or insulation).

Unless your title deeds say otherwise, maintenance requires only a majority of owners to agree. The minority of owners who disagree are bound by the majority vote.



# Is it a common part?



## Common responsibility

- External walls from the half way point within the individual flat or close
- Foundations and damp proof course
- Roof structure, slating, flashings, gutters and downpipes
- Services - as far as the branch into an individual flat

## Individual responsibility

- Anything serving only one flat
- Windows (but individuals have a duty to maintain their windows on behalf of other owners)
- Doors to individual flats
- Chimney pots and cowls related to individual flues
- Front shop facades
- Plumbing connections from fittings to main waste pipes



## Mutual responsibility

- anything used by two or more owners and should be paid equally by all who use the part - unless the Title Deeds say otherwise
- Chimneys- paid by all those that have a use of the chimney
- Gable wall shared with an adjacent property (although hard to enforce)
- Close windows
- Close, close stair; pend and all owners who have use of access
- The floor between two flats is usually shared between the two flats

# Keep it up – prevention is better than cure

## Roof and gutters

- Get gutters cleaned annually.
- Get the roof, chimneys and flashings looked over annually and loose slates refixed.

## Downpipes and drains

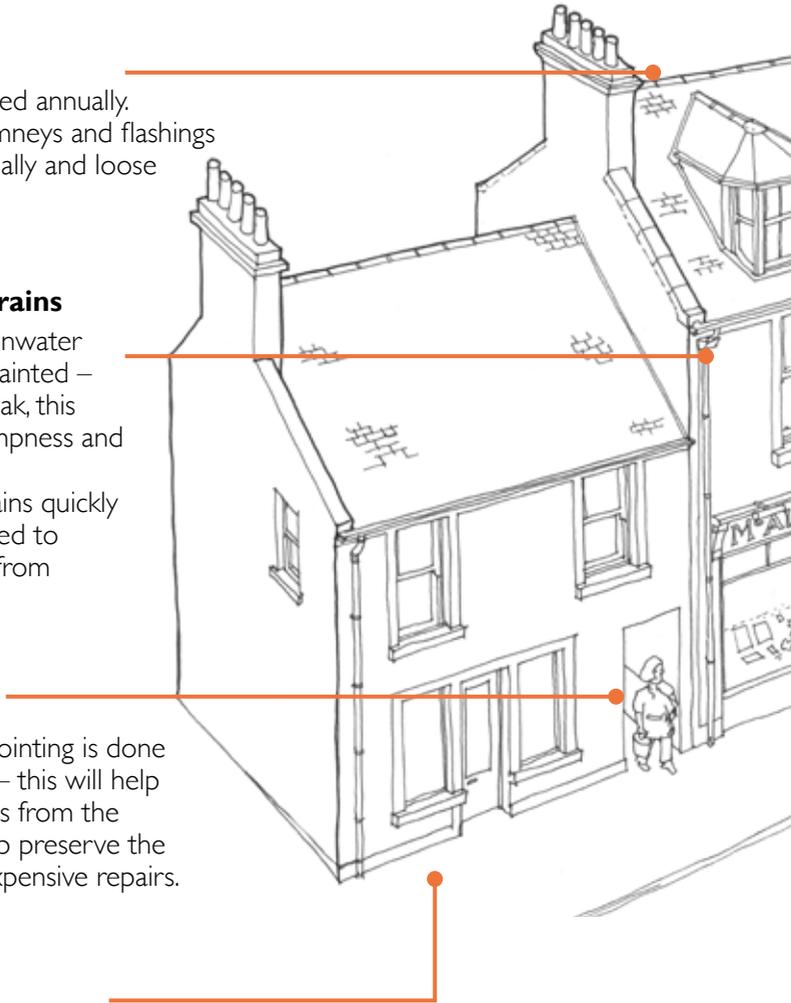
- Keep cast iron rainwater goods properly painted – if they rust and leak, this could lead to dampness and rot.
- Treat blocked drains quickly – they are designed to take water away from your building.

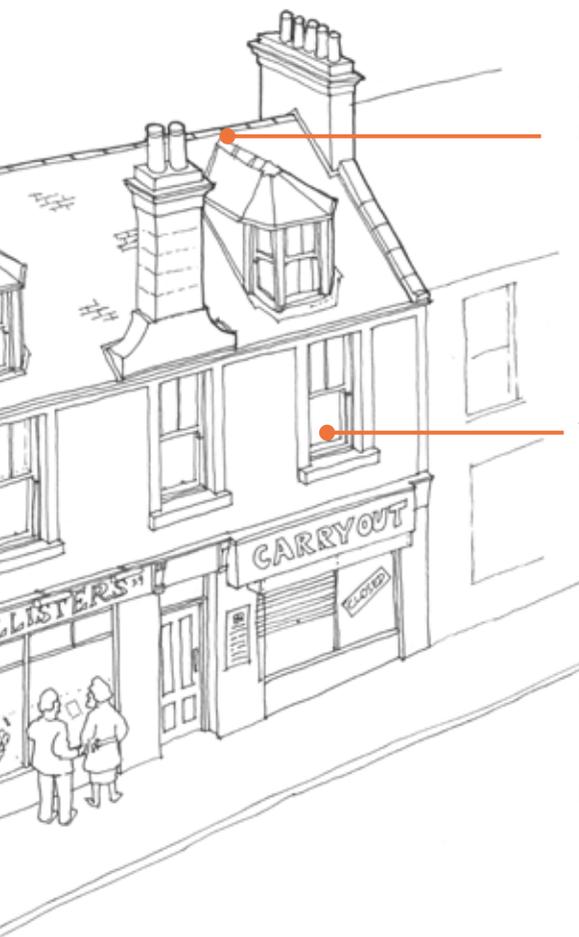
## Walls

- Make sure all repointing is done with lime mortar– this will help remove dampness from the structure and help preserve the stone, delaying expensive repairs.

## At ground level

- Make sure damp courses are not “bridged” by build ups of soil or rubbish at ground level.
- Make sure airbricks are not blocked. Lack of ventilation can lead to rot in timbers of the sub floor.





## Preventing rot

- If you get a roof leak or leak from a pipe, overflow etc. fix the leak and ventilate the area well to dry timbers quickly (much dry rot can be prevented or even cured by drying alone). Lift floorboards etc. and use dehumidifiers if necessary.

## Windows

- Paint your windows regularly – this will help preserve timber windows. Pay special attention to window sills – often the first part of the window to suffer from rot and the place where water ingress can lead to rot below.
- Replace mastic sealant around windows – it keeps out draughts and stops water penetration.
- Getting older timber windows repaired and draught proofed is often much cheaper than getting them replaced.

# Protect your inheritance: free advice

Historic Environment Scotland provide a whole series of well illustrated, easy to read leaflets about the different parts of your building.

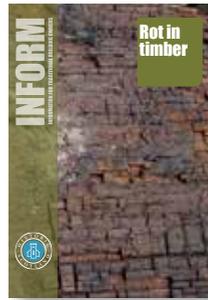
They all include good advice about “First Aid” repairs. You can download these from the Historic Environment Scotland website at

[www.historicenvironment.scot](http://www.historicenvironment.scot)



## Maintaining your home

How to inspect your property and draw up a maintenance plan.



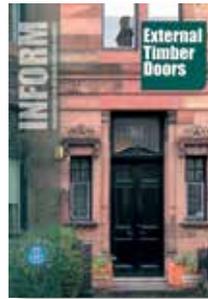
## Rot in timber

Guides building owners through the different types of rot and how to identify them, action which can be taken to eradicate the problem and how and why rot spreads.



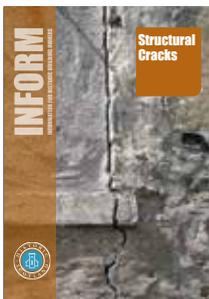
## Sash & Case Windows

A short guide on how to maintain, repair and upgrade your windows plus information on contractors.



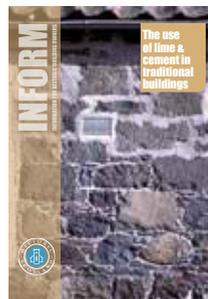
## External Timber Doors

Gives a brief history of Scottish doors, explains door construction, the recognition of faults and offers direction on suitable methods of repair.



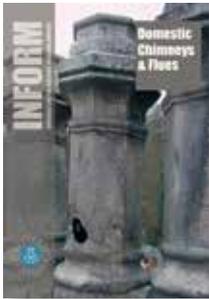
## Structural Cracks

How to recognise and diagnose various types of settlement cracks that can be found in traditionally constructed buildings.



## The use of lime & cement in traditional buildings

Guide to the external use of lime and cement mortars in traditionally constructed buildings.



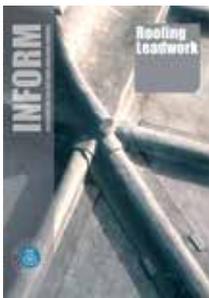
### Domestic Chimneys & Flues

Outline the basic elements of a flue and chimney system and identify common faults, their diagnosis and the principles of how to deal with them.



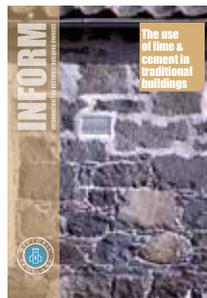
### Damp: Causes and Solutions

Describes common causes of damp, and illustrates the best approach to help remedy problems.



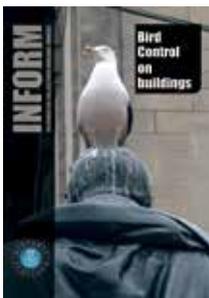
### Roofing Leadwork

Describes why lead is a good material for buildings and how to maintain your lead roofs and flashings.



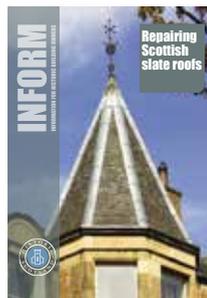
### The use of lime & cement in traditional buildings

Describes the use of lime and cement mortars for the exteriors of traditionally constructed buildings.



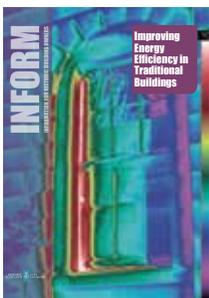
### Bird Control on buildings

Examine measures which can be taken to minimise the threat birds pose to our built heritage and the ways in which they can be controlled.



### Repairing Scottish slate roofs

A guide to repairing slate roofs.



### Improving Energy Efficiency in Traditional Buildings

Basic ways to improve the thermal performance of a traditional building.



### Traditional Shopfronts

A short guide for shop owners

## **Strathaven Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme**

This leaflet is designed to help YOU as a property owner with the repair and maintenance of your property.

More information on the Strathaven CARS scheme can be found South Lanarkshire Council's website [www.southlanarkshire.gov.uk](http://www.southlanarkshire.gov.uk) or by contacting the CARS officer, Stuart Hodge.

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