

Chimneys

Chimneys are an important part of the roof outline that add interest and character to Govan Conservation Area. They should be checked regularly for loose or missing pointing and to make sure that the copes and chimney cans are not loose. Pointing or mortar should be renewed by a skilled tradesman using lime - not cement -mortar.

Leadwork

Many roofs use lead 'flashings' to deflect water from vulnerable points - for example around the chimneys, dormer windows, where the slates meet the wall heads, or at the ridge of the roof. Lead has a very long lifespan when it is laid properly with correct detailing and sizing. However, because it is constantly expanding and contracting, if the sheets are too large, too thin, or fixed at both ends then they can crack through movement.

Damp patches on your internal walls or ceiling may be caused by damaged lead flashings on your roof. When lead-work has failed, it is important to have it repaired or replaced correctly by a suitably experienced tradesman who works to the standards of the Lead Sheet Association. Govan Cross THI can help you with this.

Rainwater goods

It is important to clear out gutters annually to stop them getting blocked with leaves & other debris, which causes water to overflow, often resulting in damage to the stonework and internal damp patches. They should also be painted regularly to prevent rust and decay.

Any repair or replacement should match the original material, usually cast-iron. Modern materials, like plastic or uPVC, are not suitable replacements in a conservation area.

Windows & Doors

When properly looked after, traditional timber sash & case windows can last for over 100 years. The most important way to maintain timber windows is through regular repainting every 5 – 7 years. You should also check for any rotten timber or other problems and get a skilled joiner to carry out any necessary repairs. It is very rare for a timber sash & case window to be beyond repair, but if your windows do need replaced this should be done in timber to match the original. Avoid replacing your windows in UPVC. As well as having a negative impact on the character of a traditional building, plastic windows have a relatively short lifespan and can cause problems in old buildings that were designed to 'breath'.



Slate roof

It is important to check your roof regularly for missing or slipped slates. You can use binoculars to do this from the ground, or it may be possible to view the roof from a hatch in your loft, if it is safe to use. You can also check for leaks in the loft, especially after heavy rain. Where slates are missing or broken they should be replaced with new or salvaged slates to stop water coming in your roof.

Avoid using modern concrete roof tiles, which have a negative impact on the character of old buildings.

Stonework

While modern buildings are usually of sealed construction, older stone buildings were designed to 'breath'. This means that water enters the stonework when it rains, and then dries out – this is normal. It is important not to prevent this process by covering the stonework with cement render, impervious paint, or by stopping natural ventilation. All of these things can lead to accelerated decay, damp and other problems.

When stone has decayed you will probably need to take the advice of a stonemason, conservation architect or another specialist to make sure that it is repaired or replaced correctly. It is very important that repairs are not carried out using cement, as this can cause more damage in the long-run. You can see evidence of this all over Govan, especially at Brechin's Bar.

Pointing

'Pointing' means the mortar joints between stonework. If you find any loose or missing pointing when inspecting your building this should be renewed by a skilled tradesman using lime mortar. It is important to use lime mortar and not cement. This allows any moisture in the wall to evaporate out through the mortar joints rather than the stonework. Using hard cement pointing can cause stone decay, making expensive repairs necessary in the future.

Shopfronts

Traditional shopfronts in Govan have suffered in recent times from inappropriate alterations that negatively affect the character & attractiveness of the area. The ideal solution would be to restore traditional shopfronts to their original proportions, scale and detail. If this is not possible incremental improvements can be made by doing things like: retaining original features; removing excessive signage; or replacing external roller shutters with alternative security measures. See the *Improving Govan's Shopfronts* booklet for more information.

Repair & maintenance - how to look after Govan's old buildings



Introduction

There are a lot of old buildings in Govan that were built using a 'traditional' method of construction - with sandstone walls, slate and lead roofs, timber sash & case windows and cast-iron rainwater goods. As well as being attractive and adding character to the area, these 'traditional buildings' will last for a long time if properly looked after.

Because old buildings behave differently from modern buildings, it is very important to repair and maintain them using traditional materials and workmanship in order to: ensure that the building continues to function properly, save money in the long-term, and preserve the special character of the building and Govan Conservation Area.

'A stitch in time saves nine'

On-going **maintenance** is the best way to keep a building in good condition and save money on future repair bills. Carrying out routine tasks, like clearing gutters or painting windows, can stop minor issues becoming major problems.

When **repairs** are needed it is really important that they are carried out on a like-by-like basis by an experienced tradesperson using appropriate traditional materials, such as natural slate, sandstone, lime mortar and timber joinery work. Modern, substitute or artificial materials, like uPVC, plastic or cement mortar are rarely ever suitable. This is because they have a negative impact on the character of the area and because they can damage an old building and cause it to decay faster.

Carrying out an annual check of your property

Carrying out an annual check of your property is a good way to spot problems and get them fixed before they get worse and lead to unaffordable repair bills. A good method for carrying out an inspection is to start at the roof and work your way down, one side of the building at a time.

Common defects to look out for include:

- Missing slates on your roof, or signs of holes or splits on flat roofs
- Vegetation growing in gutters, chimneys or other areas.
- Leaks in your loft, especially after heavy rain.
- Overflowing gutters and wet stains on external walls.
- Damp patches on internal walls or ceilings.
- Loose or missing mortar joints between stones/bricks.
- Cracks in render or harling.
- Weathered or damaged stonework.
- Flaking paintwork on windows or doors.
- Rotten woodwork, for example on window cills.

The diagram overleaf illustrates where common problems are found in traditional buildings, and explains suitable maintenance and repair techniques to fix them.



Missing slates at Water Row & rusted railings at Elder Park



Stone decay accelerated by cement at Brechin's Bar



Above: Flaking paintwork on windows at Water Row



Above: Vegetation growing on the roof of Brechin's Bar



Missing & loose mortar joints to a Govan chimney stack

Advice

If you would like FREE advice about repairing or maintaining your traditional building in central Govan, please get in touch with the Govan Cross THI team. We can also help you find out more about possible sources of funding to help pay for your building repairs or improvements. Contact us on:

0141 440 2334 or www.getintogovan.com

Further Information

Historic Scotland publish a number of useful guides on repairing and maintaining traditional buildings. Both hard copies and downloads are available free of charge at: www.historic-scotland.gov.uk

You should always check if planning or other permissions are required before carrying out repairs or alterations to historic buildings. Contact Glasgow City Council on: 0141 287 8634 or 5

Remember! Repairing and looking after Govan's heritage is not just about saving old buildings - it's about people too. People enjoy living in historic, locally distinctive and well-kept places. Creating better physical places, making central Govan more attractive and enhancing the things that make the area special and unique can help lead to:

- **More jobs.** An improved, more attractive Govan will attract new people to the area to live, work, visit or invest. This leads to job creation.
- **Less crime.** Improving the appearance of an area can make it feel safer, and as more people feel comfortable walking around Govan (especially at night), there will be less opportunity for anti-social behaviour and vandalism.
- **A better quality of life.** Improved surroundings can improve the quality of life of residents of Govan through increasing optimism, pride, self-esteem and wellbeing.

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