



Mitigating the Impacts of Climate Change on Traditional Buildings

Changing weather patterns are having an impact on traditional buildings, and it is likely that this will increasingly be the case in the future. This might mean that some owners of traditional buildings may have to adapt their building to minimise the impacts of the weather on the building fabric.

Some of the key areas in which changing weather patterns might impact traditional buildings are:

- Overheating
- Flooding
- Heavy rainfall/wind driven rain (damp problems and leaks)
- Storms related damage (e.g. damage to chimneys, loose/missing roof coverings)
- Higher risk of fungal growth, insect attacks

Buildings that are not well maintained will be more vulnerable to the effects of the changing climate and will deteriorate more quickly than those that are well maintained. This makes it even more important that traditional buildings are well maintained to ensure that they don't get damaged, or become unhealthy places to live, visit and work. For more information on this, please visit the [Maintenance](#) and [Damp](#) pages.

Whilst there may be a need to adapt your building in the future, traditional buildings have many features which have been designed to withstand the weather. For example, oversailing eaves and bargeboards were traditionally incorporated in areas where there is heavy rainfall to reduce water run-off down external walls. Similarly, drip detailing above windows or on coping stones were also designed to enable effective water shedding. Maintaining these features will help the buildings' resilience.

If you own a listed building or a building in a conservation area and find that your building needs adapting to perform better in the changing climate, then a good starting point is to look at traditional responses to environmental factors (as described above), to see whether they may be an effective solution for your building. Some solutions may require listed building consent/planning permission. If you are unsure, then you should seek [pre-application advice](#) from the Council.

Further guidance

The Department for Communities (Northern Ireland) has produced a very good guide on assessing the impact of climate change on historic buildings. Whilst it is aimed more at owners of larger historic buildings, it is still a very useful guide for helping all traditional building owners assess the future impact of climate change on their traditional building. This can be found [here](#).

[Climate Change Adaptation for Traditional Buildings](#), written by Historic Environment Scotland provides a very good overview on how to adapt traditional building features (e.g. chimney, roofs, external walls) to cope with changing weather patterns.