



Looking after your Heritage Character home

In Letchworth Garden City

**Letchworth
Garden City**
Heritage Foundation

Revised October 2020

The World's First Garden City

Letchworth Garden City has a rich architectural history that is embodied in the early housing.

The Arts & Crafts Movement was a re-awakening of traditional crafts and skills with good quality materials and attention to detail which make these houses so special. Whilst they have stood the test of time, there is a need to ensure that these buildings are well cared for and some simple survey work and maintenance can ensure that these buildings survive with original features intact.

General maintenance ensures that your property retains its quality and value. Water ingress and ventilation are the biggest challenges when considering our older housing. Simply checking roofs, chimneys, rainwater guttering and drainage regularly can avoid more significant problems later on. If caught early enough a broken downpipe could be replaced without further damage and the possibility of more costly and extensive repairs at a later date. Older traditional buildings were designed to breathe and ventilation is very important to help maintain the building fabric.

If your house is a listed building you will need to check with North Hertfordshire District Council regarding the need for Listed Building Consent.

Letchworth Garden City has a Scheme of Management which means that most homes require our approval before any external changes are made.

Some properties have similar requirements in their leases. The process is called Landlord's Consent and throughout this document, reference will be made to whether Landlord's Consent is required or not. If you are unsure, please contact us for further advice.



Here to Help

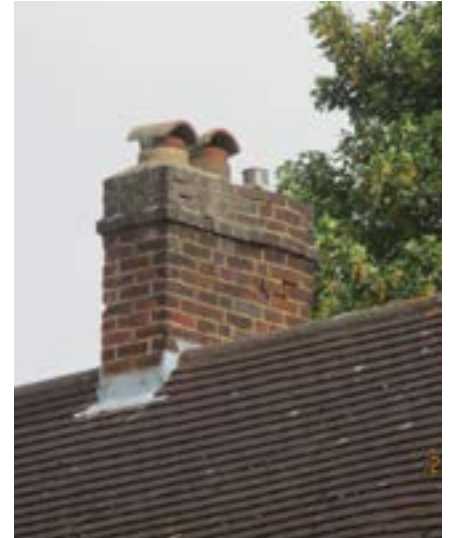
If you are thinking of planning any external changes at your property, please contact the Heritage Advice service as soon as possible (01462 530335 or home@letchworth.com).

We can meet with you to talk about your needs, ideas, options and what is achievable.

We can advise you on the best way to progress your proposals and guide you through the application process.

Please note that you may require Landlord's Consent for some or all of the works.

Chimneys



Chimneys are a key architectural feature and are designed in brick or render, or a mixture of both.

What to look for:

- Lost chimney pots
- Loose brickwork
- Cracking
- Blown or cracked render
- Check lead flashings at junction between roof and base of stack for wear and tear

Advice & Requirements:

- Chimneys are considered to be very important architectural details that should be retained and repaired
- Landlord's Consent is required for repairs and alterations to the chimney stacks. In most cases it is unlikely that Landlord's Consent would be granted for their removal, unless an acceptable alternative is submitted
- Any architectural detailing for example bands, corbels or saw tooth brickwork should be matched and retained

Loose brickwork



Blown render and blocked gutter

Roofs

Plain clay tiles either handmade or machine made are the dominant roofing material within Letchworth although clay pantiles and thatch can also be found.

Plain Clay Tile Roofs & Pantiles

Handmade and machine tiled.

What to look for:

- Replace slipped or broken tiles
- Loose or missing ridge tiles to ensure fixed - any decorative ridge tiles or finials should be retained and repaired
- Substantial tile slippage

Advice & Requirements:

- Re-roofing requires Landlord's Consent from the Heritage Foundation
- Tiles should be re-used where possible and new tiles should be a good match with the original. Where the whole roof is being re-tiled, common practice is to use the existing tiles to those elevations on public view

Flat Roofs & Parapets

Flat roofs can be in lead or felt.

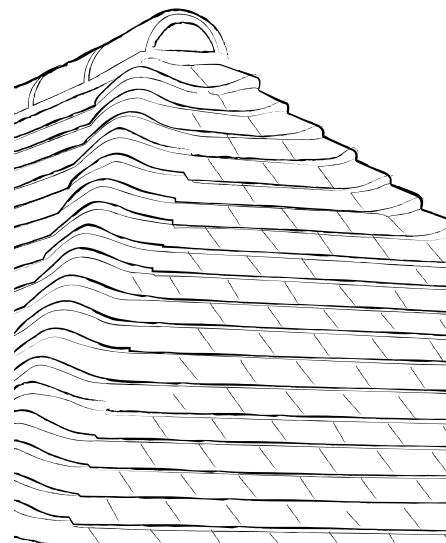
What to look for:

- Vegetation and moss as these are a source of moisture
- Pooling or any build-up of water
- Splits, creep, blistering or bubbling of roof and seek a specialist to repair

Parapets & Flashings

What to look for:

- Hidden gutters should be kept clear of debris
- Parapet upstands need to be checked for repointing and also any spalling or blown render



Tiled roof



Flat roof - in need of attention



Flashings

Roofs



Roof Structure

What to look for:

- Uneven tiles
- Slipped tiles
- Bulging or dips to ridge line

Advice & Requirements:

- Some movement and changes to the roof structure are tolerable but if in doubt seek specialist professional advice

Dormers

Dormers are a traditional architectural feature of the Garden City with either gabled or flat roofs.

What to look for:

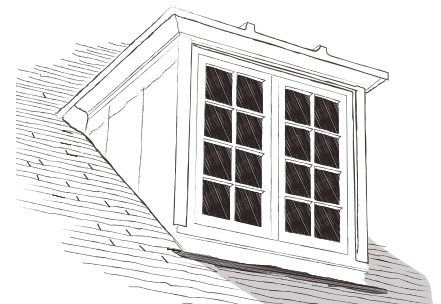
- Roofs (as above)
- Lead flashings at junctions with the roof plane
- Cheeks (dormer sides) for wear and tear

Advice & Requirements:

- Dormers are very important architectural features and any work to them will require Landlord's Consent



Slipped roof tiles



Dormers

Rainwater Goods

The correct disposal of water from buildings is one of the most important features in maintaining a property. Regular checks and clearance of this system can prevent larger and more expensive work later on.

What to look for:

- Build-up of vegetation or debris – silting, bird's nests, leaf blockage
- Run of water goods is un-cracked, the joints remain sealed and the run is clear
- Bracket fixings are secure
- Staining or vegetation behind the rainwater goods is a way of identifying failures in the system
- Drains are clear and not backed up or broken

Advice & Requirements:

- The Heritage Foundation encourages the retention of cast iron rainwater goods wherever possible and encourages their replacement with matching materials
- New rainwater goods will require Landlord's Consent

Fascia & Bargeboards

What to look for:

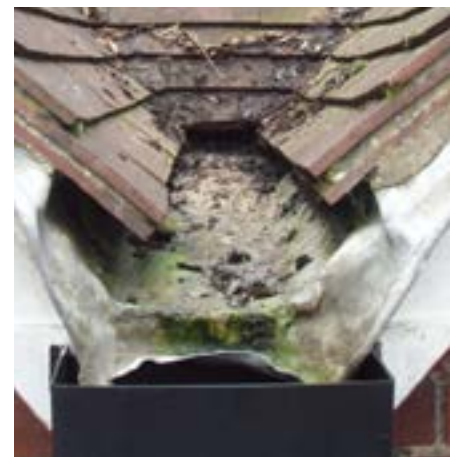
- Timber fascias need to be monitored for water damage and flaking paint work

Advice & Requirements:

- Decorative bargeboards should be maintained and repaired as these add to the character of the Garden City



Blocked hopper head



Prevent by checking valley gutters and keep them clean



Saw toothed barge boards add interest to the building

External Walls

Good quality brickwork, render and tile hanging are dominant characteristics of the historic building stock of Letchworth.

Brick

What to look for:

- Cracks/ bulges
- Slumping brickwork
- Does it require re-pointing? See 'Mortar'
- Spalled brickwork
- Vegetation and creepers

Advice & Requirements:

Cleaning of brickwork - unless the brickwork is excessively dirty, this should be left alone.

- Any repair work needs to be sensitively carried out with brickwork and mortar detailing to match. Brickwork bonds and brickwork patterns e.g. patterned brickwork should be copied and retained

Painted brickwork - look for blistering and flaking paintwork.

- Painting of brickwork will need Landlord's Consent and would not be encouraged where there is no historic evidence of such finishes

Mortar

Part of the function of mortar was to provide a layer between bricks ensuring the release of moisture without degrading the bricks.

Many of the original houses were built in a lime mortar and it is advisable to check this before carrying out any repairs.

What to look for:

- Re-pointing
- Set back, chipped fallen out
- Use of inappropriate mortars such as cement

Advice & Requirements:

- Localised areas of re-pointing may not require Landlord's Consent but larger areas or the re-pointing of complete elevations will need Landlord's Consent to ensure that the pointing is carried out carefully
- Always ensure a flush finish, struck or recessed joints are not recommended and can impact on the appearance of the house
- Where lime mortars exist any repointing should be carried out in a suitable lime mortar



Damaged brickwork and mortar

External Walls

Render

Inspired by the Arts & Crafts Movement returning to traditional materials, render finishes are mainly roughcast. It is advisable to check the constituents of the render as some may still be of lime.

What to look for:

- Hairline cracks
- Blown render

Advice & Requirements:

- Re-rendering will require Landlord's Consent, however patch repair may not. Please do contact our team for advice

Pebbledash

Pebbledash can also be seen around the Garden City. Originally this would have been unpainted, however some houses have since been painted.

Advice & Requirements:

- The debate about retaining unpainted pebbledash is fuelled by the difficulties in matching it when areas are repaired such as when windows are replaced
- The Heritage Foundation would like to see any original unpainted pebbledash to remain



Damaged render



Blown pebbledash

External Walls

Tile Hanging

Tile hanging was another architectural effect utilized in the Arts & Crafts period.

What to look for:

- Missing tiles
- Slipped tiles

Advice & Requirements:

- Where repairs are required, ensure that tiles match in colour, size and type

Timber

The use of timber frame architectural pieces is another important feature of the Arts & Crafts period mimicking earlier timber frame details and can provide structural and decorative contribution.

What to look for:

- Junctions of frame where pooling or water penetration could affect the strength of the frame
- Timber frame elements many of which are painted need to be checked for blistering paintwork

Advice & Requirements:

- The removal of applied timber framing would require Landlord's Consent and is unlikely to be approved



Tile hanging



Timber frame

External Features

Windows

Original timber windows are very important to the appearance of older houses.

What to look for:

- Cracked and broken glass, missing putty, broken sash cords
- Rot especially at timber joints
- Stained glass - Check that the lead comes are not damaged

Advice & Requirements:

- Original windows are important features and if regularly painted and maintained should last. The Heritage Foundation encourages the retention of original windows. Many windows can also be refurbished to improve their energy efficiency
- Where windows are to be replaced with uPVC, we will require them to match the original in terms of proportions, external glazing bars and equal sight lines to ensure that they match the original as closely as possible

What to look for:

- Metal windows - check for rust and loss of fixings

Advice & Requirements:

- Where possible these should be repaired but if they require replacement, Landlord's Consent will be required

Doors

What to look for:

- As with timber windows check for rot, especially at timber joints and the base of the door

Advice & Requirements:

- Original doors are also extremely important details to the houses of Letchworth
- The Letchworth boarded door is an important local design and where still in situ should be retained and repaired. If beyond repair, we will require a like for like replacement



Good quality repair of a timber window



Window needs attention



Original style door

External Features

Architectural Timber Work

The Arts & Crafts movement embraces the use of crafted timber such as:

- Porches
- Settles
- Verandahs
- Balconies
- Sleeping sconces and balconies
- Loggias

What to look for:

- Blistering and faded paintwork
- Joints especially to lower elements such as sills as water may pool

Advice & Requirements:

- The retention of architectural timber work is crucial to maintaining the appearance of Letchworth Garden City. Their removal or alteration will require Landlord's Consent. Any replacements will need to match the original

Ground Treatment

What to look for:

- Soil accumulated against the building
- Hardstandings should not butt up to the building as this can bridge the damp proof course

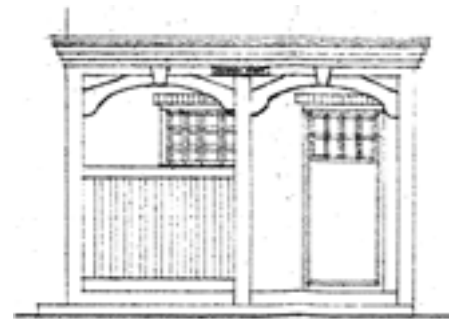
Trees

Advice & Requirements:

- Landlord's Consent is required if you wish to remove any trees at your property



Architectural timber work



Original porch design



Vegetation needs to be cut back from the building

Other Considerations

All building works must adhere to building regulation legislation: Officers at North Hertfordshire District Council can assist in this respect.

Letchworth Garden City Heritage Foundation's approval of any works does not constitute a grant of planning permission and you are responsible for contacting North Hertfordshire District Council.

Adaptive works to a dwelling may be eligible for grant funding either from Letchworth Garden City Heritage Foundation or North Hertfordshire District Council: please do not hesitate to contact us to find out more.

Further information

Further information on looking after your Garden City home can be found at:

Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings:

37 Spital Square, London, E1 6DY

020 7377 1644 | www.spab.org.uk

Historic England - East of England Local Office:

Brooklands, 24 Brooklands Avenue, Cambridge CB2 8BU

01223 582749 | www.historicengland.org.uk

The Victorian Society:

1 Priory Gardens, London W4 1TT

020 8994 1019 | admin@victoriansociety.org.uk | www.victoriansociety.org.uk

Amenity group for Victorian and Edwardian buildings.

The Twentieth Century Society

70 Cowcross Street, London EC1M 6EJ

020 7250 3857 | caseworker@c20society.org.uk | www.c20society.org.uk

Amenity group supporting 20th Century architecture from 1914 onwards.

Here to Help

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Contemplating changes?



We're here to help, call us now
on: 01462 530335