
St Margaret's Townscape Heritage Initiative

2014-2019

Keeping It 'Green'

The St Margaret's (East) THI is a grant scheme part-funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund.

One of the requirements for all projects funded by the scheme is that environmental impacts should be reduced.

To ensure that all projects funded by the St Margaret's THI have as little negative impact on the environment as possible, we have put together the following list of suggestions which you should discuss with your professional advisor and the firms you invite to tender for the works, from the outset.

Reducing the environmental impact of a project does not have to be costly, difficult or intrusive; but it is always easier if these issues are considered early in the process of planning your project, rather than changing or adding things at a later date.

1. Use of breathable insulation materials, draught proofing and weather stripping

Insulation and draught proofing play an important part in reducing heat loss, keeping our homes and workplaces warm and comfortable. They also help to reduce energy bills. However, many modern materials used for this purpose are impermeable and do not allow moisture to pass through. Whilst this is not such a problem in modern structures, these materials can cause problems in historic buildings.

Historic buildings, unlike many modern ones, were built with natural materials which need to "breathe" – ie air needs to pass through them in both directions. If impermeable materials are introduced with inadequate ventilation, condensation can build up, often in unseen areas such as roof spaces, which can cause damp, decay and ultimately rot – things which are costly to remedy.

So please make sure any insulation used is made from breathable materials. Consider products made from sheep wool, old newspapers, wood fibre, hemp or recycled cotton clothing. There are now plenty on the market and lots of information available to help you choose the most suitable and cost effective for your project.

2. Windows and Doors

In common with accepted good practice for all historic buildings work, when repairing historic windows and doors, as much original material should be retained as possible. Small areas of rot or damage can often be replaced and new timber spliced in, without the need to replace the whole window or door, and this will always be the preferred option.

Where we agree that windows need to be replaced or new ones inserted, these can be double glazed in some instances, but must always be in the original material, usually timber, and the glazing pattern and construction must be approved. PVC-u will never be acceptable.

In some cases, where the construction of the original window has sufficient internal depth, it may be

possible to insert secondary glazing without altering the appearance of the windows. This can be considered on an individual basis.

Where historic single glazed windows are to remain, well-fitting, good quality repair will often eliminate draughts. For further insulation, consider the use of heavy curtains down to the floor, or long enough to tuck behind radiators, as a means of reducing heat loss.

3. Chimneys

Chimneys, when not in use, can be a source of cold air getting into a room and warm air escaping. They can also contribute to noise pollution entering a room from outside.

A chimney balloon can be a cheap and simple solution. Made of tough plastic and reusable, they come in different sizes and are usually curved at one end to allow a small amount of ventilation. They can be inflated to fill the space and reduce the airflow in both directions.

4. Water consumption

When installing new kitchen and bathroom fittings, measures to reduce water consumption can easily be built in.

Use aerated taps which give a forceful flow with reduced volume of water.

Place flow-reducing valves on pipes where high water pressure is not required, such as bathroom wash basins.

New toilets should all have the option of a low volume flush.

5. Lighting

All light fittings should be fitted with energy efficient light bulbs.

In communal areas, movement sensors should be fitted so that lights come on as needed, and switch off again automatically when there is no one there.

6. Use of materials

In general, the following principles should be followed with regard to all materials used:

- Timber replacement should be kept to the minimum necessary. New timber should be from sustainable sources, as approved by the government's Central Point of Expertise in Timber (CPET), and certified as FSC or PEFC.
- All new materials should be sourced as locally as possible and be traditionally-produced.
- Paints should be natural oil or water-based. Petro-chemical and solvent based products should never be used.