Maintaining Your Historic Building

A Short Guide
For Homeowners

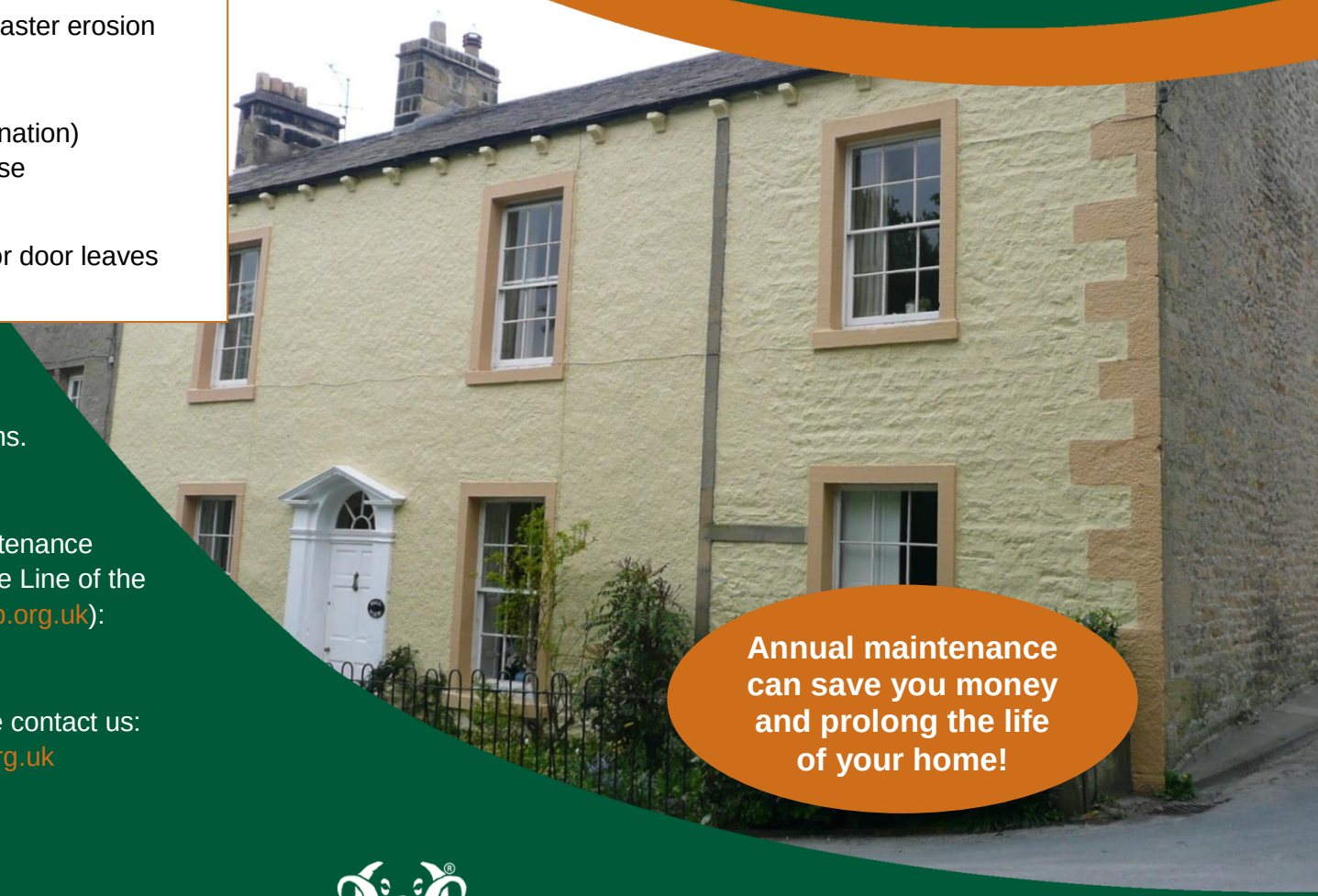
Basic checklist for building maintenance:

Roofs	☐ Vegetation growth (incl. inside gutters)
	☐ Defective rainwater goods
	☐ Slipping slates / tiles
	☐ Sagging / 'wobbly' roof
	☐ Visible hole(s) / loss of roof surface
	☐ Wet / dry rot to historic timbers
	☐ Structural instability / collapse of timbers
Walls (incl. chimneys)	☐ Vegetation growth on / near structure
	☐ Areas of mortar / render / plaster erosion
	☐ Cracking / bulging masonry
	☐ Water ingress / damp
	☐ Stone decay (erosion / lamination)
	☐ Structural instability / collapse
Windows & doors	☐ Loss of paint
	☐ Rotting / damaged frames or door leaves
	☐ Broken / missing glazing

This is not a fully comprehensive list of all possible defects but meant to raise awareness of common problems. Some issues may be more complex or interrelate.

If you have technical questions regarding repair and maintenance issues of your house you can contact the Technical Advice Line of the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (www.spab.org.uk): 020 7456 0916 Monday - Friday (9.30am - 12.30pm)

If you require further information from the Authority please contact us: Phone 0300 456 0030 or email herinfo@yorkshiredales.org.uk



Annual maintenance can save you money and prolong the life of your home!

YORKSHIRE DALES
National Park Authority

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NATIONAL PARKS
Britain's breathing spaces

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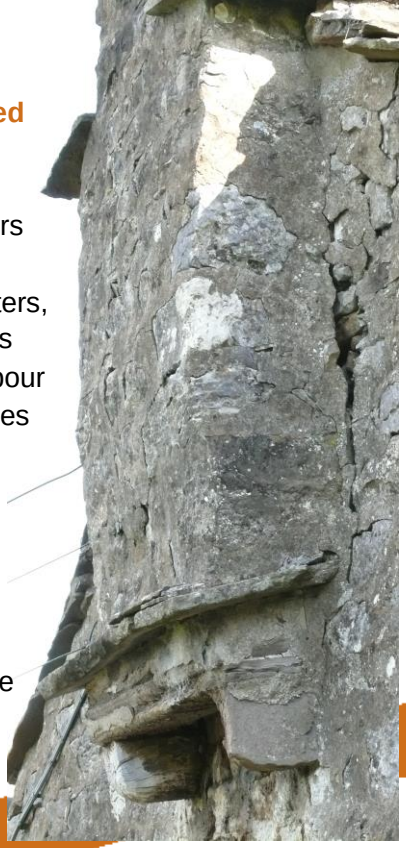
Common **causes of damp** on historic buildings:

- × The use of impermeable materials and construction methods (see right >)
- × Removal of existing lime wash or lime render/plaster
- × Lack of ventilation
- × Higher external (than internal) ground levels
- × Ineffective external ground drainage
- × Faulty rainwater goods
- × Vegetation growth on/near the building
- × Holes or defects in the roof or walling

Modern construction methods to be **avoided** on historic buildings:

- × Mortars and renders including cement
- × Impermeable plasters, paints and sealants
- × Damp-proof or vapour barriers, membranes or injections
- × Internal lining or tanking systems
- × Impermeable insulation
- × Epoxy resins
- × Tarmac or concrete surfaces in/around the building



Construction methods **compatible** with your historic building:

- ✓ Lime mortar
- ✓ Lime wash or render
- ✓ Lime plaster, also when added hemp or straw for insulation
- ✓ Limecrete
- ✓ Good ventilation
- ✓ Effective rainwater drainage off the building and external ground surfaces

Historic buildings tend to deteriorate at a slow rate, which can give a false sense of security until an unexpected repair becomes essential. Although routine maintenance requires investment, the costs involved will be quite modest compared to those resulting from a series of unplanned emergency repairs. It is therefore worthwhile identifying those parts of a building which have the potential to deteriorate and decay, as it is best to prevent failures before they occur.

IMPORTANT!

Before undertaking any inspection or maintenance work, all risks involved should be assessed, e.g. difficulty of access, slippery surfaces, loose or broken features, etc. Particular care should be taken when working with ladders.

Old buildings behave differently from those constructed using modern methods and materials: In order to be able to dry out, traditional solid wall construction requires moisture movement (breathability) throughout, whilst modern cavity walling relies on creating barriers to water ingress/egress. It is a misconception that old buildings can be sealed in retrospect; this is not possible as cracks will inevitably occur through which moisture will enter and, being trapped, potentially cause significant damage. Unfortunately, a lot of harm has been caused by using modern materials on historic buildings, often as a result of false 'specialist' advice, and owners are now faced with the consequences.

The 'golden rule' should always be to use construction methods and materials that are compatible with your building. You are likely to get the best advice from independent historic-buildings consultants, not people who will try to sell you further services/product following their survey.