

# 3C Gardens and Boundary Walls

## Outbuildings



### The Conservation Value of Outbuildings

Before indoor plumbing became widespread, most households would have had access to a toilet or privy which was either freestanding or built as a lean-to against a boundary wall. Earlier workers' cottages and houses would have shared blocks of privies, while higher status (and later in the 19th century, workers' housing) would have had one privy per house. In a similar vein, until the mid-20th century all houses were heated by coal fires or open fires. Each house would need somewhere to store deliveries of coal



and timber prior to use, therefore most houses and cottages were built with coalhouses or coal boxes which could be loaded with coal from the street and emptied from inside the yard.



Sometimes the coalhouse and privy stood side by side or were under the same roof. With the advent of indoor plumbing and the increasingly common use of gas-fired, oil-fired and electric heating, virtually all privies and most coalhouses are no longer used. Although relatively small and no longer used, coalhouses and privies are interesting relics of pre-modern times, as they are evidence of past ways of life. It is therefore important that for present and future generations that these historic features are retained wherever possible.

### The Maintenance and Repair of Outbuildings - Best Practice

The best motivation for maintaining or repairing an outbuilding is to put it to use. While a privy or coalhouse may no longer be needed for their original purposes, they could be used as storage for gardening equipment and furniture, bicycles, ladders and so on. It is important



for outbuildings to retain their original character, so features like coal chutes or traditional roofing and doors should be retained. Much of the guidance for the repair and maintenance of outbuildings is covered in the other sections of this guide.