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Maintenance, Repair and Restoration

Render



The Conservation Value of Render

Traditionally a material used in timber framed medieval buildings, in the District's conservation areas render is only traditionally found on buildings from the late 19th and first half of the 20th century and is a key feature of Old English and Arts and Crafts architecture. Both of these styles hark back to the pre-industrial era; the Old English style replicating the timber framed medieval houses, and Arts and Crafts using the material to help it break away from the revival styles of the Victorian era such as Gothic and Classical.

In both the Old English and Arts and Crafts styles it is usually only the upper storey which has render over the stonework, sometimes set within a mock timber frame. Render was traditionally limewashed (giving it its white colour) and in some cases pebbles or small stones were mixed into the render to give a rough finish (variously called pebbledash, roughcast, wet-dash, dry-dash or harling). The use of white render on the upper storey of Arts and Crafts, Old English style houses and on other styles of house dating from the early 20th century is a key feature of these buildings and is a sign of the style and age of these buildings, contributing positively to the townscape and the overall character of conservation areas.



The Maintenance, Repair and Replacement of Render - Best Practice

DO...

- 4 Replace loose or cracked render. Defective render can be found by tapping it. If there is a hollow sound, it may be loose. These areas can be patched.



- 4 Use traditional, soft lime-based render. This material is permeable and will absorb rainwater and dry out naturally. Soft renders also allow for movement in the wall (such as expansion due to warm summer weather) without being damaged. Apply render in three coats in order to obtain the required cover.

- 4 Give render a smooth or rough finish as appropriate. This will depend on the architectural style of the building. Other buildings in the conservation area or historic photos may indicate how smooth or how rough the render should be.

- 4 Coat render with limewash or an oil paint. These allow the render to 'breathe' (i.e. it allows the render to absorb moisture and allows any moisture in the render to evaporate). Use the same coating when re-painting, as not all coatings are compatible with each other.

DO NOT...

- 6 Ignore cracked or loose render. Defective render might be letting water into the stone of the wall, causing deterioration and damp. Loose render can be forced off the wall by frost forming behind it.

- 6 Use modern, hard cement-based render. As this material is impermeable and harder than the stone behind it, any water entering the wall will be trapped behind the render, causing the deterioration of the stone and damp. Cement mortar is inflexible and will crack in cold or warm weather, letting moisture into the wall.

- 6 Render buildings which traditionally have bare stonework. Rendering such buildings would rob them of their original character and appearance.

- 6 Coat render with modern impermeable or 'long life' paints. These will damage the render and potentially the wall behind it by not allowing the render to 'breathe'.

- 6 Remove render all together where it is an original feature of the building. This will have a negative impact on the character and appearance of the building.

