

Professional Support

Working with older buildings calls for a particular set of skills and expertise. For any significant work to your property you will likely need to employ a specialist advisor such as an architect or surveyor, or a specialist contractor.



Professionals use conservation accreditation to demonstrate their competence.

Regardless of the type of support you need, here are some top tips to help you ask the right questions.

- **Have they any experience of working with your type of building and with the type of work you want them to do?**
- **Can they provide references?**
- **Are they local?**
- **Are they willing to visit the property before providing a quote?**
- **Are they accredited?**
- **Have they been recommended?**
- **Are there any requirements from the Planning Authority?**
- **Are they insured?**
- **How soon are they available to do the job?**

It is always recommended that you get three quotes for any professional service.



Advisors

Professionals can help plan and oversee work to your property. This can include advising on specialist surveys, drawing up plans and specifications, costing the work, supporting applications for consent, producing a schedule of works and helping appoint contractors.

Find an advisor with knowledge and experience of historic buildings where possible. Conservation 'accredited' professionals will give you, and planning officers, confidence that the work will be carried out appropriately.

You can include the contact details of your advisor as your 'Agent' on planning applications. Make sure you sign-off what goes into the form as you are responsible.



Directories of conservation professional advisors:

<u>HESPR</u>	Promotional service for businesses that work to standards expected by the Institute of Historic Building Conservation. Includes architects and surveyors but also firms who prepare heritage statements.
<u>Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors</u>	Downloadable register of Building Conservation Accredited Surveyors.
<u>Register of Architects Accredited in Building Conservation</u>	Independent accreditation body for architects experienced in building conservation, searchable by area.
<u>Royal Institute of British Architects</u>	Conservation Register includes architectural specialists in all aspects of historic building conservation, repair and maintenance. Searchable by area.
<u>Conservation Accreditation Register for Engineers</u>	Downloadable register of conservation accredited engineers.

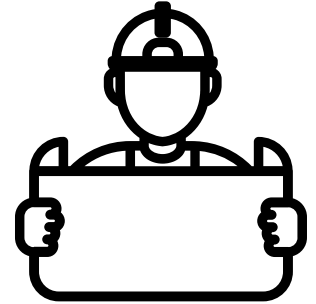


Contractors

Getting the right contractor is vital. Where possible find a contractor with knowledge and experience of historic buildings.

Depending on the size and complexity of the job, it may not be necessary to get a conservation accredited contractor.

Local knowledge, good communication and reliability are key. Ask around neighbours, local groups and online forums for recommendations too. And don't forget to share your recommendations with others.



Directories of conservation professional contractors:

<u>Maintenance Booker</u>	Accredited contractors experienced in historic building maintenance and services.
<u>Lead Contractors Association</u>	Association for contractors working with lead sheet.
<u>National Federation of Roofing Contractors</u>	Also manage the National Heritage Roofing Contractors Register.
<u>National Society of Master Thatchers</u>	Largest recognized body of thatchers in the UK

Working with professionals

Here are some top tips to help you get the best out of your advisors and contractors:



- **Agree the appointment in writing, confirming the price, scope or schedule of works, timescales and any other agreed conditions of the work including a payment schedule. Home Owner contracts may be useful templates for small-scale maintenance and minor work, but emails or letters can also be used as a form of contract.**
- **Check the small print if the contractor supplies a form of contract, and if necessary seek legal advice.**
- **Agree at the outset how you will communicate and who the main point of contact will be.**
- **Getting quotes and making appointments takes time- make sure you build in enough time to do this when planning the work.**



Other Sources of Support

It's important to remember you aren't alone. About 20% of England's housing stock was built before 1919 (over 4 million houses!).



Many people live or work in historic buildings and face the same challenges keeping on top of maintenance and repair. Below are some further sources of support and inspiration.

Business Properties

Are you signed up to the local business E-newsletter from Leominster Town Council? There are over 100 local contacts on the circulation list. Get details of available grants and upcoming events.

Sign-up by emailing: business@leominstertowncouncil.gov.uk.

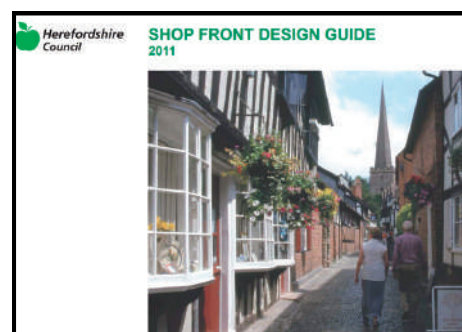
Herefordshire Business Improvement District (BID) are a good source of local business knowledge and support.



The Marches Growth Hub offer advice and support including grants and loans.



Wanting to reinstate a historic shopfront? Herefordshire Council have further guidance on design principles, considerations such as lettering, materials and security. The Guide was produced in 2011 so be sure to check the latest information about planning and permissions.



Other Sources of Support

Local Groups

Get involved with some of the fantastic Leominster community groups:

Leominster Civic Society has a newsletter, periodic events and special interest research projects.

LARC Development Trust is a charitable trust set up to support the preservation of historic buildings in Leominster, focused on Grange Court.

There are some useful local social media groups online too.

Some neighbourhoods have local residents groups. Leominster Town Council can help you find your local group. Email: admin@leominstertowncouncil.gov.uk.

The Leominster Conservation Area Management Plan also has lots of useful local information. Contact the Town Council for a copy.

