

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.

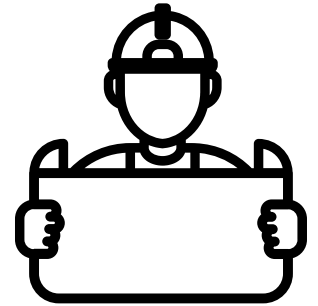


Contractors

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.

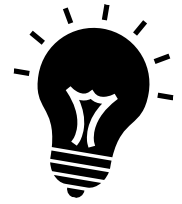


Directories of conservation professional contractors:

<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:

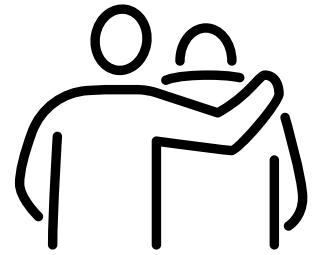


- **Agree the appointment in writing, confirming the price, scope or schedule of works, timescales and any other agreed conditions of the work including a payment schedule. Home Owner contracts may be useful templates for small-scale maintenance and minor work, but emails or letters can also be used 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.

Domestic Properties

Take a look at the [Old House Project](#). You can follow the progress of the SPAB as they repair a listed property which has stood empty for 50 years. Lots of inspiring videos, and lots of information ranging from topics on finance and budgeting to scaffolding.

SPAB periodically run (paid for) [courses](#) in [Understanding Your Building](#). It can be a great way to meet like-minded owners of historic properties.

The screenshot shows the 'Project Resources' section of the SPAB website. It features three articles with accompanying images:

- Finding a project house:** Accompanied by an image of a large, historic stone building. The text discusses the SPAB's Old House Project at St Andrews and the challenges of finding a suitable property.
- Getting started:** Accompanied by an image of architectural plans and documents. The text covers the initial stages of a project, including surveys, assessments, and securing the building.
- Finance and budgeting:** Accompanied by an image of a person working on a building. The text explores how to manage the costs of a large-scale project, including budgeting and contingency planning.

The screenshot shows the 'Courses' page on the SPAB website. At the top, there is a navigation menu with links for 'CAMPAIGNING', 'GET INVOLVED', 'LEARNING', 'WHAT'S ON', 'ADVICE', 'NEWS', and 'MILLS'. The main content area features a large image of a hand using a chisel on a stone surface. Below the image, the text reads: 'Training and sharing knowledge and skills have always been an important part of the Society's work. We offer a range of courses and other educational events, constantly reviewing and developing our programme to respond to current research or training priorities. Working with leading experts we deliver hands-on workshops, masterclasses, seminars, lectures, short courses and other activities to hundreds of people from across the UK and overseas each year.' A 'Sign up for our monthly courses bulletin' button is visible in the bottom right corner.

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.

