

# **Hackney Houses**

**A guide to improvement, conservation, sustainability and maintenance**

Updated and revised by Lisa Rigg and Ann Robey

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## Introduction

*Hackney Houses* was first published in 1982 with a grant from Hackney Council. It is nearly 30 years since the original book was published and some things have changed for the better whilst other things have worsened. In the original publication there was a focus on the current decay of Victorian and Georgian housing stock in the borough. Today, many of these buildings have been restored and refurbished, and thankfully are no longer at risk from demolition. They have become well-loved, desirable family homes. The downside of this is that much of this housing has become unaffordable and the preserve of high-earning City professionals with two incomes. Although wholesale redevelopment and the tower block are not altering Hackney in the way that it did, Hackney is still threatened with over development in the form of over-dense housing of poor design quality – similar to that which was built in the 1960s and 70s. By 2031 the population in Hackney is predicted to reach 262,600 – a figure that exceeds the inter-war years, when Hackney was a popular suburb. But, unlike then, many more people are living alone, which in turn effects the kind and amount of housing to be built. In 1981, Hackney's population was at a century low at just 179,536 (just 7,151 more people than in 1861 when much of Hackney was still a rural back water and under developed). During this time not many people wanted to live in Hackney. This lack of pressure meant that existing historic housing stock, whilst decaying before our eyes, was not being demolished to make way for insensitive and large-scale developments. Also, the type of housing being built during the 1980s was low-rise and low-density, semi-

detached houses and maisonettes with gardens – building forms that have always been more popular with the general public than high-rise developments.

Thanks to a small grant from Team Hackney the Society has been able to revise and update this booklet for the tastes and concerns of today's residents. However, the purpose of the book remains the same. We are passionate about the quality of the built environment and we are keen to remind people that the character of Hackney is made up of many individual houses, and the neighbourhoods that they form. Each house or street has its own character and if modernised without thought, or with no attention to detail, this uniqueness can easily be destroyed. Maintaining your home is important to both individual and local economic health. It is proven that the historic environment adds to the quality of the urban environment and contributes to making the borough a pleasant and popular place to live and work.

This is not a do-it-yourself manual, nor is it a history book, though it does say something about the historical background of Hackney's houses. It suggests that there are ways of altering a house, which contributes to the streetscape rather than harm it. Not everyone may agree with the opinions expressed here, but it is hoped that this book will help you to decide, for what happens to the ordinary houses of Hackney is just as important in shaping the borough as what happens to its well known and iconic historic buildings.

## **GROWTH AND CHANGE**

In 1800 Hackney consisted of fields, country estates and villages. As London expanded the fields and estates were gradually built on until those villages of Dalston, Shacklewell, Homerton, Stoke Newington, Upper and Lower Clapton, and Hackney joined together to form a new suburb of the city. In 1801 approximately 50,000 people lived in the area we now call Hackney, by 1851 it had risen to approx. 170,000, and to 370,000 in 1901. In 2001 the population had fallen to XXX,XXX, but this is set to rise in the next 30 years as new housing is built.

It was to house this growing population that the houses we see today were built. Londoners sold their fields and estates for development. Houses were built for sale or for rent to the professional classes, businessmen, and their clerks; as well as their own servants, the shopkeepers, and others who served them less directly. By 1900 Hackney was becoming less fashionable, the better off moved further out to the suburbs, and new and often poorer people moved into the rented accommodation that was vacated. The rack renting landlord became a characteristic figure, and spent as little as possible on their property. By the Second World War much of the housing was poorly maintained and lacking in modern amenities, far below the standards of the housing estates being built further out of London in places like Dagenham.

Hitler's bombs brought this slow decay to a climax for many streets and necessitated large scale rebuilding. There was also widespread hope after the war to build a new life in a new environment. To the politicians, architects and planners of the time, many of the streets that were left appeared old and insanitary. Many felt that there was an opportunity to build a new city, and politicians spoke of sweeping demolition and redevelopment. Their vision was sincere though it was an ideal which has failed to provide the new communities that were hoped for. The old Borough of Shoreditch began a rolling programme of redevelopment, the necessity of rebuilding war damage was compounded by a vision of a new world: indeed it is said that more houses were destroyed by bulldozer than by the bombs. In the Boroughs of Hackney and Stoke Newington it was only later, when the Boroughs were amalgamated, that such policies became general, and a rolling programme of redevelopment laid down for the whole borough up to 1975. Encouraged by governments that gave high subsidies for tower blocks and little for improvement, numerous streets of sound houses that had formed communities were demolished. Moreover apart from the demolition, the grand plans themselves did much harm in blighting the houses left standing.

In the early sixties the wastefulness of such redevelopment was increasingly apparent and pressure grew for a change; by 1969 central government responded, ahead of many local authorities, and money was made available for improvement areas. In 1970, Hackney declared two general improvement areas, the first borough in London to do so, and there were signs that the policy was moving from redevelopment to rehabilitation. This initiative was, however, short-lived; control of the borough changed at the next election and whilst arguments over policy were fought out within the council so blight and redevelopment continued, and improvement of existing houses remained an opportunity largely ignored by Hackney Council.

Initiatives for change came from local people, for many in the borough were

questioning the Council's policies both because of the indiscriminate way in which good houses were demolished together with the bad, and because the problems of living on the new estates were becoming sadly apparent.

Public concern forced the Council to attempt to justify its plans at Public Enquiries such as Sanford Terrace, where permission to demolish a Georgian terrace was refused; the Ferncliff Road Enquiry where permission to demolish a terrace of listed buildings was refused, and Mapledene, where redevelopment plans were refused. Sanford Terrace was, later renovated by the Council. Through these, and other, particular cases, increasing government pressure, and increasing general interest to retain familiar streets and their houses, so Council policy changed.

Today the original houses of Hackney are still having to change, as existing owners and tenants, and new owners moving into the Borough, modernise their homes, and alter the familiar houses and streets.

Since the 1950s and up until the present day many of the owner-occupiers of Hackney have been gripped by the various changing fashions and fads of so-called 'modernisation'. The 1950s and 60s saw people smashing out the fronts of their houses to put in picture windows in a vain attempt to make the compact and characterful Victorian house into a modern streamlined machine. Since then there have been mock Georgian doors, windows and lamps, glass doors, aluminium and uPVC windows, in fact anything and everything that is part of the desire to make the Victorian house into what it is not and pretend that it is something else.

The rehabilitation of older houses is not an easy or inexpensive task. Many people, confronted with this problem, took the line of minimum resistance and had little thought for the repercussions of badly conceived and badly built alterations. The problems that they confronted, and are still confronting today, are by no means small and the persuasive literature of the building trade, the do-it-yourself and makeover TV programmes which made everything seem easy and the high cost of using an architect have all contributed towards this insensitive approach to rehabilitation.

Changing views about the value of 19th century houses are leading towards the rejection of alterations that destroy their character. Taste now recognises that the original building and its construction has a beauty of its own. Rehabilitation works is a part of any respectable council's programmes and many individuals are putting time and money into sensible and sensitive improvement of their houses. Unfortunately, whether council owned or privately owned, the amount of money available in grant is not sufficient to do justice to the years of neglect and blight.

Economic and political conditions make it increasingly unlikely that large areas of Hackney will be redeveloped in the immediate future. Although major battles have been won, they could still be lost if neglect and decay destroy the houses that were once threatened by demolition. Conservation is still an issue that needs fighting for.

## **DECAY**

When the first edition of this book was published in the early 1980s the aftermath of Functionalist planning of the 1960s and 1970s was still very much with us. The consequences of the wholesale demolition of Victorian housing, as well as the neglect of the social landlords to maintain its social housing stock had led to considerable decay.

The reason why some areas of cities decay, while others do not, are related to much wider issues than simply the actions of individuals and how they treat their own houses. The city planning aspects such as transport provision, new road building, location of industry and employment, the way local authorities allocate money, the priorities they have and the interrelationship of these factors with building societies and banks who lend money all play a part in how and why parts of cities decay. Decay occurs through lack of investment but why there is a lack of investment is a complicated economic, political and social issue. One aspect is, however, clear. Those areas which have forceful, vociferous and influential groups working in them are less likely to suffer decay.

The physical decay of individual houses, of streets and of whole areas has a direct effect on the spirit of the communities that live in cities. Decay leads people to lose respect for their surroundings, encourages vandalism, and is not only depressing for those who live in decaying streets but for those who pass through them.

Sensible house maintenance will last a long time, save money and look good. Neglecting essential repairs can lead to the need to do expensive work at a later date. If a roof has been left until it reaches a state of considerable decay then the slates and timbers may need to be extensively renewed. This fact is only common sense as is most of the battle against decay in buildings.

One house that brightly and self confidently shows itself well maintained in a street of neglected houses is something that is immediately noticed. At the same time a house that is neglected can detract from the visual quality of the whole street. A number of decaying houses in an area can seriously take away from the overall character and quality of the area.

Of course the problem of neglect is not always in the hands of homeowners; areas of Local Authority and Greater London Council owned property have in the past been left empty and allowed to decay. This kind of unforgivable neglect still goes on today, and, in the end, it may be this kind of negligence that destroys Hackney. All of us have the responsibility to be aware of what is happening to our heritage and to protect it strongly.

The photographs on this page show some of the decay that can be found in many areas of Hackney. The following pages show some areas that, despite recent history and despite the decay in other parts of the Borough, have managed to keep the character that they were intended to have.

Each of the areas chosen represents some aspect of Hackney; for example houses next to parks, local shopping areas, etc. The areas are distributed throughout the Borough as can be seen from the map at the end of the book.

## **RENEWAL**

In the 1990s a new wave of young people started to move into the borough. Empty warehouses in Shoreditch started to be occupied and slowly gentrified. Young British Artists started to open art venues in Hoxton and Shoreditch, which in turn attracted visitors and transformed these once desolate areas into trendy districts with bars, restaurants and clubs. Artists, designers, architects also started to occupy former warehouse buildings – converting them into live/work units. Broadway Market, Dalston, London Fields, Shoreditch, Stoke Newington and Hackney Wick are places that have become part of the popular imagination. Places that even people who don't live in London have heard of. This transformation from dangerous and unknown inner London borough to being featured in TV programmes marks how far Hackney has come.

# **UNIFORMITY WITHOUT MONOTONY**

## **GEORGIAN TERRACES**

The population of Hackney grew rapidly during the reigns of the Georges and the collection of small villages, which made up Hackney were beginning to expand. As well as substantial detached houses for wealthy merchants the less wealthy were also moving into Hackney in considerable numbers. The middle classes found comfortable homes in the new terraced houses. Hackney has a few remaining examples of these buildings with some lovely examples found in Albion Road, Cassland Road, Lansdowne Drive, Mare Street, Paragon Road, Stoke Newington Church Street and Upper Clapton Road. These houses include features like sash windows with slim glazing bars, gauged flat brick arches to the window and door openings, a raised ground floor above a basement with a front area enclosed by wrought iron railings, steps up to a panelled wooden door with a fanlight above. Houses from this period can be found in:

### **Sutton Place, Homerton, E9**

Located within the Clapton Square Conservation Area, Sutton Place is one of the most attractive terraces of Georgian houses in Hackney. It dates from 1790 to 1808 and is Grade II listed, together with the villas on the north side of the street, which date from 1820. The street replaced Church Path, an old pedestrian way connecting the villages of Homerton and Hackney and was a small-scale residential speculative development. The entire front of the terrace is 'soot washed', hence the very dark coated brick with mortar originally picked out in narrow white lines to give the appearance of much finer brickwork. The terrace appears uniform, but nos. 1, 2 and 3 are the earliest houses, and some of the houses have different fanlights and detailing.

### **Clapton Terrace, Clapton Common, N16**

Around 1750 the White Swan Inn was built opposite Clapton Common and by 1740 parts of Clapton Terrace (nos. 49-67) was begun, the rest of the terrace was built by c.1800. These Grade II listed range of Georgian period houses form the main feature of the west side of Clapton Common. The terrace is set back behind a rectangular green space, which forms an extension to the common. The part three-, and part four-storey houses are a remarkable survival and the terrace contains some of the earliest terraced houses to survive in Hackney. Different groups within the terrace date from c.1760 to the mid-18th century. Some of the houses have Doric porches, others pedimented open door cases, while others have ironwork balconies.

### **Lansdowne Drive, E8**

Along Lansdowne Drive are a number of long terraces of early nineteenth century houses, set well back from the road, some with mature trees creating notable boundaries. These terraces overlook the green open space of London Fields and comprise three-storey stock brick houses, some Grade II listed buildings many that have been carefully restored. Fanlights, balconies and railings contribute to a high environmental quality. The terraces in Lansdowne Drive have been well restored and add positively to the environment. Attractive ironwork (both original and reproduction) enhances the street boundaries. Nos. 126-148 Lansdowne Drive is a very handsome early nineteenth century terrace where there is good survival and reinstatement of front boundary railings.

## **VICTORIAN SPLENDOUR**

Many of the buildings of Hackney were constructed during the long reign of Queen Victoria. Between 1837 and 1901 the population of Hackney increased from 120,000 to nearly 370,000 as people left the countryside to work in the new industries of East London. During this period Hackney's rural feel disappeared under bricks and mortar. But, the Victorians wanted something different to the uniformity of the Georgian terrace and they began to modify this basic form. The flat plane of the façade was to be replaced by the introduction of a bay window – firstly at ground floor level only, but later continued to the first floor. Another advance was the introduction of the pillared porch for individual houses, a pitched roof with overhanging eaves, and larger window panes in sash windows due to the availability of larger panes of glass.

### **Northchurch Road, De Beauvoir, N1**

Originally known as Church Road, the north side of Northchurch Road was built between 1841-46, while the south side was constructed slightly later between 1844 and 1847. Northchurch Road is important both for its central location in the layout of De Beauvoir Town and for the quality of houses it contains. With the exception of two terraces of four houses each, this road is exclusively designed as detached villas or semi-detached houses. These villas can be classified into two general types; the villa with fully stuccoed elevations and villas with exposed brickwork and partly stuccoed elevations. Some have Ionic pilasters to the top floors and grand balustraded approaches to side entrances. Almost all of the villas of Northchurch Road are listed buildings and those that are not statutory listed are locally listed. Some of the villas in Northchurch Road have two-storey flank extensions, which have resulted in some of the villas losing their original symmetrical appearance, for example the flank extension to no. 31 and no. 33, has resulted in the loss of the two semi-detached villas and made them a terrace. Many of the houses have beautiful front gardens and generally any off-street parking has been arranged in a sympathetic manner without detracting from the houses.

### **Mapledene Road, London Fields, E8**

This area of houses from the 1850s shows considerable variety with semi-detached houses, continuous terraces of two-storey houses and three-storey terraces as well. Nevertheless, certain elements bind it together as an area, despite some demolition and recent rebuilding nearby. Many original windows and doors remain and the fine brickwork of the houses has stood the test of time. The detailed work tends to be more austere and classical than the later Victorian flamboyance.

### **Montague Road, Shacklewell, E8**

Montague Road contains some of the most distinguished and unusual terraced houses in St Mark's Conservation Area. The majority of the houses in the street were built in 1866 and several builders were involved in their construction. Cornelius Margett built nos. 5-11 (odd) in 1866. This group has door cases decorated with Mermen, a very unusual decorative device. Two of the terraces, nos. 1-7 (odd) and nos. 2-8 (even) are Locally Listed. Most of the houses in Montague Road are three-storeys in height with deep basements and raised first floors accessed via steep staircases to the paired front doors. The harmony of the road is broken by a

pair of four-storey Italianate houses at nos. 58 and 60. All the houses have canted bays to the first floor, with some also having bays to the basement windows.

### **Evering Road, E5**

Evering Road is one of the most attractive streets in the Northwold and Evering Road Conservation Area and has many examples of well-kept houses with attractive gardens. The road was formed in 1875 and the houses with their square bays to the ground floor and heavy stucco embellished door surrounds with paired-columns remain as handsome today as when built. There is variety in the styles of houses here that range from semi-detached houses at the junction with Brooke Road, to the double-fronted villas at the eastern end. Many of the houses were built to resemble semi-detached villas, but were in fact terraces with the main body of the houses projecting forward, concealing service areas joining the houses together.

### **Gore Road, Victoria Park, E9**

The Crown acquired Victoria Park and the surrounding land in the 1840s. After James Pennethorne laid out the park, he intended to build spacious villas around the new public space. The grand villas were never built and more modest terraces were constructed for middle-class families in the 1870s. Gore Road has particularly good uniform sweeping terraces (which follow the boundary of Victoria Park) in crescents, built in yellow brick with stucco dressings and detailing. Small canted bays enhance the ground floor front rooms. The classical columns and original windows are painted in light colours in contrast with the fine brickwork. A variety of terraced house types can be found here but generally they are 3 to 4 storeys in height. The houses have neat and colourful front gardens and many privet hedges separate the pavements from these gardens. In the mid-1960s the Crown Estate commissioned John Spence and Partners to build infill housing in Gore Road (now numbered nos. 89-96 consecutive). This was to replace bomb-damaged and run-down properties. The houses are a most striking and successful take on the terraced house, which look as interesting and well maintained today as when new 40 years ago.

## **HOUSING THE 20TH-CENTURY NATION**

### **1-67 Clissold Court, Greenway Close N4**

Clissold Court, designed by Howes and Jackman, is a set of three blocks of Art Deco style flats. The three-storey blocks, containing 70 flats, are set back behind a semi-circular green space, which forms a visual link to Clissold Park. Built in 1935-6 this estate remains popular with residents and retains many of its original Modernist features. The middle block is different from two flanking blocks, which are white rendered with black, glazed pan-tiles. The middle block combines a red pan tiled mansard roof, brick walls, white rendered projecting balconies and horizontal banding between the first and second floors. Two, central double-bays and two single-bays located at each end of the block have 'Suntrap' Crittall windows with doors leading onto the balconies. The mansard roofs are punctuated with metal dormer windows. Each main entrance to each block has a brick detail around the door. This building positively contributes to the Clissold Park Conservation Area.

### **53-67 Cleveleys Road, E5**

Stylistically belonging to the interwar period this row of eight houses, built in 1947-8, are an unusual example of post-war housing in Hackney. Based on the 'universal' semi-detached house this row of terraced houses were designed in the 'moderne' style characteristic of the speculative housing of the 1930s. Pure Modernist houses – flat-roofed and white-walled with curved corner Crittall windows – were few and far between and generally not popular with middle class clientele. Instead, speculative builders developed a watered-down version of Modernism by introducing hipped roofs and two-storey bay windows. 'Suntrap' or 'Sunspan' houses as they became known were popular with middle class families. Many fine examples can be found in the richer, outer suburbs of north west London. The houses in Cleveleys Road demonstrate this softer interpretation of Modernism. Divided into two small terraces of four these brick and white rendered houses with hipped roofs have full-height, white rendered projecting bays, divided by a reinforced concrete band at the first-floor level. This banding extends to become a slab that forms a porch over the front entrance. Large, curved metal windows with terracotta-tiled sills provide an Art Deco feel to this post-war infill housing. Unfortunately, in the last couple of years owners have started to replace the metal Crittall windows with uPVC. This is a shame as there are not many examples of this once popular house type in Hackney.

### **Somerford Estate, Shacklewell Road, E8**

Designed by Frederick Gibberd (master planner of Harlow New Town in Essex) this estate, built between 1946-49, was the first mixed development in England. Combining direct access flats, gallery access flats, flatted houses, bungalows and terraced houses this estate was designed to accommodate people throughout their life by providing different kinds housing suitable to their age and size of family. In reaction to the perceived monotony of Victorian terraced housing a variety of forms and a range of materials, colours and textures were used to provide visual interest. Gibberd designed many other schemes in Hackney but this was his most notable. The estate embodies Gibberd's desire to combine town planning, landscaping and architecture and is significant as it predates his most famous work at Harlow

## **21ST-CENTURY SOLUTIONS?**

With the population of Hackney set to rise by approximately 34,000 in the next 20 years more houses will need to be built to accommodate them. This is not going to be popular with existing residents as Hackney is already the third densest borough in London. Hackney has an average of 106.4 people per hectare, well above the London average of 45.6. Private property developers and social landlords will build much of this new housing stock. A small proportion of this will demonstrate good design with other examples putting profits before design. In the last decade there have been some award-winning examples of high-density housing. Here are two examples:

### **Adelaide Wharf, E2**

Built on the site of the former Haggerston Basin, Adelaide Wharf, designed by Allford Hall Monaghan Morris is a sustainable housing development with a hidden social agenda. Contained within its glossy, vitreous enamel-lined entrances, and rough-sawn Siberian larch and smooth zinc façade, are 147 flats and 690 square metres of office space that seek to create a genuine mixed community. This innovative development mixes social economics with well-designed and stylish apartments. In a borough

### **Bateman's Row, EC2A**

Tucked down a narrow street in Shoreditch this ingenious mixed-used development combines quirky features with fine attention to detail. Shutter-cast concrete and yellow Danish bricks with 'bagged' rather than 'pointed' joints, add rustic charm to what is in essence an old-fashioned kind of Modernism – mainly associated with the 1920s and 30s. Bateman's Row, designed by Theis and Khan is a modest, yet stunning, façade conceals an intricate, geometric puzzle within. Standing at six-storeys, on a confined site, this development holds an impressively dense mix of residential and commercial space – a good-sized family home (with a separate floor dedicated to accommodating four children and a planted roof terrace), three flats, architect's offices, art gallery and a garage. The internally exposed concrete structure acts as a thermal store, combined with a highly insulated envelope and natural ventilation. Solar panels supplement hot water provision. The scheme maximises space and light, and introduces wide expanses of flush-fixed glazing that face south towards the sun as well as the exciting cityscape of London. Bateman's Row sits comfortably within its industrial setting and makes direct reference to the nearby buildings. It is an exceptional development that combines density with excellent design and finish.

## THE HISTORIC HOUSE

Very few people own detached houses set apart from other buildings, and, the architecture associated with this kind of house is often very different from the architecture that is associated with Hackney. In Hackney, older houses are built in terraces that part of a pattern of streets covering an area. They are not, however, monotonous terraces for in one terrace of houses there may be considerable variation in the details, which give each house its own individuality.

Hopefully, some of the areas that have been looked at in the first section of this book have shown how houses in groups derive much of their character and appeal from their being part of a unified pattern.

There is a growing public awareness about conservation but many people feel that conservation is about special public buildings such as Hackney Empire or a local synagogue or church. Or, they feel that it is about squares in Bloomsbury or grand terraces in Knightsbridge. In fact, conservation is just as much about the Victorian house of Hackney as it is about any other aspect of our heritage.

Most people think in terms of improving their houses – updating the central heating system, replacing windows, etc – but they don't always think of the conservation aspects of keeping their property in good order. Alterations and general maintenance can be done badly and therefore detract from the overall character of the house and of the street, or, they can be done well, not only contributing to the overall harmony and balance of the street but also contributing to the beauty and value of the individual house and area. Often it is believed that replacing windows and doors increases the value of your house. In the case of an old building the exact opposite is frequently true. Original features are much sought after, and inappropriate replacement may spoil the character not only of an individual building but of an entire street. This kind of work also devalues the price of your property so whatever money was saved in the short term by buying uPVC windows rather than spending a bit extra refurbishing the originals, will be lost when you sell your home.

Good maintenance makes sound economic sense but it involves taking the time and trouble to be sensitive to the use of traditional materials and the effects of colour and texture. It also involves knowing something about older houses and it is hoped that this book will help people to learn more about their houses and feel confident that when they are doing repairs and alterations that they understand the consequences and effect of what they are doing. There is a section at the end of the book which will help with further information.

It cannot, however, be denied that conservation is also a matter of taste. There will always be aesthetic arguments about, for example, painting exterior paintwork. It is impossible simply to argue that the uncovered brickwork is better because that is what the Victorian builder intended the house to look like. Nevertheless, there are also sound practical and economic reasons for not painting brickwork and for retaining, repairing and replacing the original fabric of older houses.

It should be obvious that this book aims to show that if people really understand that their house is part of a unified pattern, part of its surroundings, then they will aim to make the most of their houses as they are and not try to make them what they are not. A Victorian house was not designed to have large areas of glass; introducing

picture windows destroys the balance of the composition of the façade. Painting the brickwork in a colour which must inevitably end abruptly at the neighbouring house is to pretend that the house is detached from its surroundings when it is not. Removing façade details like plaques and cornices denudes the front of the house and removes its individuality within the group. Replacing slate roofing with orange concrete tiles makes a colour and texture break in the continuity of street roofs.

Conservation must be the concern of the individual and not regarded as being in the hands of public authorities who do up isolated buildings to give historic areas a facelift. What people do to their windows and doors in Hackney is just as important as what the Greater London Council does to old market buildings in Covent Garden.

## **PARTS OF THE HOUSE – TRADITIONAL MATERIALS**

Taking a good look at the individual house and the traditional materials used in building can really help towards understanding the merits of the original construction.

### **The roof and chimneys**

Slate is the traditional material used for the roof covering. Although the material is basically smooth and grey there are subtle variations of colour and texture. Even the roof can have extra little details that add to the character of the house. Perhaps there are special ridge tiles that run along the street or iron-work 'finials' on roofing over upper storey bay windows, resembling weather vanes. Quite often each house has a different detail.

Chimneys make a punctuation point between houses. Clay pots can be of different design and height.

### **External walls**

Walls are traditionally of brick. The colour is not 'flat' but little variations produce a rich, textured effect. Generally the bricks used in Hackney are London yellow stocks or sometimes Essex Reds. There are different 'bonds' (the way that the bricks are laid down on top of each other) and sometimes a combination of bonds are used in one house front. There may be brickwork arches over the window and door openings of a special pattern of different coloured bricks making a continuous band along the street. Different styles of pointing and colours of mortar between the bricks produce different overall texture to the external wall.

Although brickwork is naturally porous it does not actually absorb much water because, as it ages, brickwork builds up a protective skin so rainwater runs off. Any rainwater that is absorbed by the brick will evaporate quickly under normal conditions and brickwork need not give any problems with damp if the mortar is in good condition.

Sometimes a 'cornice' of plasterwork at the junction between wall and roof, rather like the plasterwork at ceiling level that may be in the front room, runs along the street binding it together. There may be other plasterwork details like date plaques or a plaque with the name of the house or a set of houses. Plasterwork around windows and doors is very common and emphasises the openings.

## **Windows**

Windows are traditionally made of wood with parts that slide vertically on ropes that are an integral part of the window construction (called sash windows). The actual size of the panes of glass in the window and the different divisions was thought about in the original design of the house and is important to the proportion and balance of the façade.

The construction of traditional windows is such that parts can be replaced and sections of rotting timber can be mended. Unlike metal, wood is an easy material to work with.

Plasterwork surrounding window openings may have attractive designs or lintels and cills (the stone supports above and below the window) may have special mouldings. Plasterwork surrounds picked out with paintwork smoothly contrasting with the surrounding textured brickwork is characteristic of Victorian houses.

Bay windows are very common, either one at ground floor or continuing up to the first floor. There are a variety of details used like plasterwork columns with fruits and flowers moulded in the head of the column, or tiny upstands to ground floor bay windows resembling small balconies with decorations of leaves and flowers.

## **Doors**

Doors are also traditionally of wood and sometimes have stained glass panels. Surrounds to doors with arches and columns emphasise the entrance and are usually built as one unit with the house next door. Heads to doorway columns are often very varied in one street, with moulded heads surrounded by leaves or bunches of grapes.

## **Paths and front wall**

The path to the front door may be of attractive small tiles making patterns in different colours. Steps up to the front door may also have tiles or be plain reddish brown.

The original front wall has often disappeared from older houses but occasionally there is some original ironwork or small brick walls with brick columns at the gateway. Small iron gates are characteristic.

## HOW TO LOOK AFTER ... THE ROOF

How the roof looks may not seem all that important when considering the overall appearance of the front of the house. However, as most 2- and 3- storey terrace houses have continuous roofing along the street, which is clearly visible from the ground there is no reason why appearance should be neglected if re-roofing is necessary.

The most obvious reason why the roof should be kept in good repair is that faulty roofs let in damp which causes decay and ruins decoration. If not treated, damp can lead to serious structural damage. Loose slates can be seen by looking up at the roof from the road or the back garden (a pair of binoculars helps), but it is a good idea to go into the loft during wet weather to check for leaks.

Roof repairs are essential and come before most other maintenance being considered. A builder should be called in if a problem is suspected and estimates are free. It is always a good idea to try and get a number of estimates if possible. Whereas one builder may feel it is necessary to completely reroof, another may feel able to patch up the existing roof material. It is possible that grants for carrying out repairs are available and people should get in touch with the local authority to find out what they may be eligible for. (See the last section of this book for further details).

If complete re-roofing is necessary and the price of new slate is considered too expensive then imitation slate of asbestos cement could be considered. From a distance it can look as good as the genuine article. Concrete tiles are much heavier than the slate which the roof timbers were originally designed to carry and the increased weight may be treble the weight of the old slate roof covering. It should be remembered that this may lead to sagging and the roof timbers may need to be strengthened. In extreme cases the additional weight can be sufficient to push the walls out if the roof is not strong enough. If it is thought that concrete tiles can be used then they can be obtained in grey to match the surrounding slate roofs and keep the continuity of the roofline.

For small renewal jobs, second-hand slates can be obtained. New slates can be bought singly or in quantity and all slates vary in size, shape and thickness. So, people who are attempting small repairs themselves will need to be sure that the new slate matches the old or complicated cutting will be necessary.

Chimneys are often neglected as they are so inaccessible. Sulphuric acid from smoke and damp can eat away mortar. Loose bricks, damaged flaunching (the sloped mortar fillet around the chimney pot), defective flashing (the weatherproof seal used where the roof abuts a chimney stack) and broken pots can all be repaired or replaced. Repairs should be done with materials to match.

A chimney that is not being used can be capped off with a ventilation 'spigot' which allows air to circulate. There is no need to remove a chimney that is not in use particularly when there is such uncertainty about future fuel sources – a chimney may be important in the future and provide a vital heat source.

Alterations to extend the roof space will affect the appearance of the house from the street. If dormer windows are being put in then it is more sensible to make them

face the garden side of the house which will be quieter and not affect the appearances of the front. 'Off-the-peg' glazed roof lights will be cheaper than dormer windows and can be used for rooms facing the front.

## **HOW TO LOOK AFTER ... WALLS**

The solid brickwork walls of older houses were usually constructed by skilled brick layers using good quality bricks. There is no reason why, with some sensible maintenance, brickwork walls should not continue to exclude the weather and look good at the same time.

The most important maintenance to be carried out is repointing. This means that mortar joints between the bricks are raked out and replaced with new mortar. The joints may be flush with the brick forming a flat surface, or they may be slightly sloped or 'weather struck' to give maximum protection from damp. It may be that only one section of the wall needs repointing in which case the old joints must match the new and the mortar be colour-matched with the old. Once repointing has been done it is unlikely that the brickwork will need any attention for many years.

Damaged bricks can be replaced with a new brick that has been cut in half along its length and inserted where the crumbling parts of the old brick have been chipped out. Whole bricks can be removed one by one if necessary (the wall won't fall down) but it is important that in all cases the new bricks match the old. Generally second-hand London yellow stocks will blend in with most buildings.

If there are additional problems with damp, like for example rising damp, then the cause must be traced. If the external wall is simply coated with paint or render before the damp problem has been properly tackled then serious problems may result.

Damp proof courses do exist in older houses but new chemical DPCs can be installed to prevent rising damp from the ground. This is relatively inexpensive if the problem is tackled early in its development, but if the internal plaster gets wet then the problem will be a lot more serious. This kind of work must be done by experts.

Junctions between the wall and window timbers can sometimes be a cause of damp penetration if the wood has shrunk away from the wall. Water staining on the brickwork around the window area is evidence that this is happening or it may be that the cill is faulty (see later).

Damaged gutters and drainpipes can direct water at the wall and cause damp penetration. It is an easy matter to check whether this is happening and renew defective guttering etc.

Painting or rendering is absolutely useless if all the above work has not be done first. If rendering or painting is not done properly it is likely that a lot of trouble may be caused un-necessarily. Brickwork can rot under gloss paint. Paint that is applied without following the makers instructions exactly can flake quickly and in any case will need renewal after about four years. Rendering can crack badly and look very unsightly and if small pockets of air are caught between the render and the brickwork they can hold water and damp will get into the house. Quite simply,

additional coatings to brickwork are unnecessary and expensive.

From the appearance point of view, covering up brickwork is going to break up the street rhythms and make the individual house look out of step in the terrace. Render and paint work often only cover up the individuality and charm of the house and they have no real practical advantage.

## **HOW TO LOOK AFTER ... TIMBER SASH WINDOWS**

Timber sash windows that have not been looked after may start jamming, the frames may warp causing the glass to crack or become loose, and joints can rot or break. The Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB) has a range of free leaflets and publications to buy that will show you how to tackle all of these problems (Please refer to the chapter 'Who can help?' at the back of this book for further information).

Timber windows have a very long life if well maintained. The proportions, detailing and glazing pattern of original windows are fundamental to the integrity of a building's façade. It is not necessary to think of replacement first. The original window in question would have been designed to last and may have already survived for 150 years, or more. Older windows were usually made from high-quality wood from natural forests, in contrast to the less durable heat-treated farmed timber that is mainly used today.

Replacement should only be considered if absolutely necessary. Many homeowners make the mistake of thinking that this solution is the easiest and cheapest solution. People also make the mistake of thinking that double-glazed units are the only way to make their homes warmer and more energy-efficient. A lot can be achieved with simple upgrading of the windows and installation of curtains, shutters and secondary glazing (Please refer to the chapter 'A note on energy conservation' for further information).

### **How to assess the condition of your timber windows**

Make a plan of the house and give each window a number so it can be easily identified. If removing more than one window ensure that each is labelled with the corresponding number and that the plan is kept in a safe place.

Inspect each window and make a list of the specific repairs required. Check for rotten wood (particularly at the sill and the lower parts of the window frame), broken panes, damaged putty, loose mortise and tenon joints, worn out sash cords, broken hinges, missing ironmongery. Also open the weight pockets to check for obstructions and damp, and check that the sashes slide freely and are perfectly counterbalanced by the weights.

### **Tips**

To check for rotten wood, use a penknife to see if it penetrates the wood – good condition timber will resist penetration.

To gain a clearer idea of the condition of the window it may be necessary to strip paint away.

## Parts of a timber sash window

[Annotated drawing detailing: sill, sill plates, posts, studs, rail, weight pockets, sash cords, hinges, sash box frame, iron weights, parting bead, staff bead, pulley, inner sash, rails, stiles, glazing bars]

## Repairs

For anything other than minor repairs, it is usually best to remove them from their frames. This is relatively simple and is done from the inside.

### *Loose or rotten mortise tenon joints*

Windows with loose joints can be repaired by simply re-gluing. Bear in mind that the frame may not be square so, rather than clamping it together on a work bench place it in an actual frame and use small wedges of wood to keep the joints tight until the glue is dry. Rotten joints are little more difficult to repair. The simplest form of repair is the strengthening of the corner with a metal angle bracket. Otherwise ...

### *Rotten sills*

Rotten sills can be repaired by cutting the rotten wood back and then planting a new piece in its place – using glue and non-ferrous screws to fit it. Ensure that there is a drip groove along the underside of the sill.

### *Rotten rails, stiles, glazing bars and frames*

New rails, stiles, glazing bars and frames can be spliced in the existing wood by a good joiner using a scarf joint. In all such repairs the minimum amount of existing timber should be removed to allow an effective repair to be formed.

### *Windows that have been painted shut*

Run a blade carefully around the edges.

### *Glazing*

Always try to retain old glass. If it has to be replaced, it must be of the same thickness and weight as the original for the sash to be correctly balanced by its weights.

### *Sash cords*

If a sash cord is broken always repair the cords on both sides. Sash cords come in a range of thicknesses so make sure that the new cord is strong enough for the weight of the window.

### *Painting*

Window frames that are regularly maintained and painted for protection will last a very long time. Paint fulfils a vital role in protecting timber. Flaking and chipped paint looks unpleasant and allows the wood to absorb moisture and swell up. Lightly coloured window frames always look good next to traditional brickwork, contrasting well with the darker texture finish of bricks. If the window surrounds are painted in a pale colour this helps more light get into the rooms. When sashes are removed from their frames, they are easy to redecorate. You will need to rub them down carefully and prepare the surface first. If you are taking the windows back to bare wood, linseed oil paint is likely to provide the longest longevity. Use a

sash brush with a pointed end to get into the corners.

## **Tips**

Do use quality timber that is well seasoned and matured. Oak, XXXX, and XXXX are a good choice. Timber can be bought from XXXXX.

Choose a good quality paint system, which includes a primer, undercoat and topcoat. For example:

## **Reducing noise and heat loss**

Please refer to the chapter 'A note on energy conservation'.

## **Replacement windows**

Several million windows are replaced every year in the UK with uPVC or aluminium windows. English Heritage and Greenpeace are apposed to this as solution to increasing thermal performance or reducing window maintenance.

If new windows really are necessary then a replacement window of the original type will fit the opening that is already there. This is the simplest and most economical solution.

New window types may involve altering the size of the opening, which involves extra cost and can have structural implications. Many people carry out extensive building work in order to put in new window types such aluminium or uPVC, which may have no real advantages over the window type that existed before. Properly fitting wooden window frames that work smoothly, are designed to let in sufficient light according to the size of the rooms and look good as part of the original design of the house.

The size and numbers of existing window panes are intended to be a part of the balance and order of the house front; alterations to this existing balance are not always damaging, but care must be taken.

A number of companies specialise in repairing, draughtproofing and making new sash windows. You could try: Core Sash Windows, Fuller Builders Ltd, Ventrolla, Original Box Sash Window Company.

## **HOW TO LOOK AFTER ... METAL WINDOWS**

Early metal windows were wrought iron and glazed with leaded lights. From the mid-eighteenth century, cast iron was then used. Steel windows started to appear in the second half of the nineteenth century – with Crittall becoming the main manufacturer. Crittall revolutionised the worldwide use of the metal casement much associated with classic Modernist buildings of the 1920s and 30s. Steel windows were strong, slim, cheap and fire resistant; and they fitted with architect's ideas of plenty of fresh air. Casements could be opened much wider than traditional sash windows. In Hackney, many inter- and post-war houses and flats had this style of windows, but unfortunately, many have been replaced with uPVC.

Common problems with metal windows include rust, distortion, excessive paint build-up and failed hinges and fittings. But even windows that seem to be well beyond repair may be overhauled.

## **Repairs**

### *Rust*

Unprotected metal windows will quickly accumulate rust on the surface, so a priming coat should always be applied as soon as possible. Where rust is present purely on the surface, it can simply be cleaned off with the use of a wire brush. Long-term protection can be provided for steel windows by hot-dip galvanising, but this may result in severe damage to old windows so always take advice. Damaged or corroded parts of steel or wrought iron windows can be cut out and a replacement section welded in. There are many specialist steel window companies that can undertake this work – either on site or in the workshop.

### *Painting*

Preparation is important. Care should be taken when rubbing down to minimise the risk from hazardous dust. Small areas of paint may be removed with chemical strippers. Alkyd resin paints like micaceous iron oxide promise greater durability, but are limited in colour range so may require overcoating. Common primers are red lead and zinc oxide.

## **Reducing noise and heat loss**

First, service, ease and adjust the opening casements. If air leakage between the frame and casements is still a problem, this can be remedied by applying a silicone foam rubber sealant in the gap. The casement edges are temporarily lacquered or taped beforehand so that the sealant adheres only to the non-treated frame sides. Take care to select a non-corrosive sealant. To reduce condensation, allow for additional ventilation near sources of moisture. Heavy curtains, insulated blinds, re-used shutters and secondary glazing may be used additionally, or as alternative methods.

Please refer to the chapter 'A note on energy conservation'.

## **HOW TO LOOK AFTER ... WOODEN DOORS**

Solid timber doors to older houses are constructed of well-seasoned wood of fine quality, which is largely unavailable today. They only need to be painted to keep them in good order. Older doors are generally much wider and taller than modern doors so replacing the old door with a flush timber one or clouded glass type may not be as easy as it seems. It will probably have to be specially made to fit.

The original door was made as a part of the design of the house. Doors along the street will match in type and size but may be painted in many different colours. Maybe it doesn't seem all that important to worry about what kind of door a house had – perhaps the photographs on this page are the best way to show the different impressions that different doors give. However, it is worth remembering that most people who call round to see each other spend a minute standing looking at the front door before it's opened!

### **How to assess the condition of your timber doors**

Inspect each door and make a list of the specific repairs required. Check for rotten wood (particularly on the bottom edge of external doors as this area is prone to rot due to damp), broken or worn hinges, missing ironmongery and general water penetration due to peeling paint.

### **Parts of a panelled door**

[Annotated drawing detailing: bottom rail, panel, moulding, architrave, top rail, meeting stile, hanging stile, lock rail, centre mullion or muntin, and panel]

### **Tips**

New timber can usually be scarfed in to replace rotten parts of the door.

Thorough decoration can minimise shrinkage and swelling. Always take a door off its hinges so that all the edges can be properly primed and finished. This must include all bare timber.

External doors may shrink and swell several millimetres with the seasons, so think twice before trimming the edges during damp weather.

If you are changing your floor covering, the bottom of a door may need trimming. Always think twice before making irreversible changes.

## **HOW TO LOOK AFTER ... HISTORIC DETAILS**

Traditional details to Victorian house fronts are very varied and often a mark of the individuality of each house. Some details, like a continuous band of plasterwork above the upper storey windows, bind the terrace together. Other details may be barge boards, finials, entrance porches and canopies. [photographic examples]

When details are removed, which is very common when people attempt to 'modernise' their houses the façade can appear very bleak. Date plaques, plasterwork etc. will leave unsightly marks on the brickwork if they are removed. There is no reason why such details should be removed and it makes sense to get another skilled builder to look at the work if the first builder is unwilling to do the work.

Attention to these details is very much a question of taking extra time and trouble to think in terms of small repairs and not to immediately opt for the apparently easy, but sometimes costly, solution of removing detail work. The house can benefit equally from protecting internal details like mouldings, fireplaces, original doors, etc.

It is a good idea to take a look at houses around Hackney, which have been sensitively treated and make comparisons with those that have not. It soon becomes clear that the better-looking houses are those that try to retain the details which are integral part of the original design.

The photographs on this page show some of the many varied and interesting details, which can be found in Hackney.

## **HOW TO LOOK AFTER ... FRONT GARDENS AND BOUNDARY TREATMENTS**

Front gardens and boundary walls contribute almost as much to the character of an area as the buildings themselves. Many houses in Hackney have wonderful front gardens, but in some areas they are being changed into hard standings for car parking, or are just being paved over for less maintenance. Car-parking in front gardens rarely increases the overall car-parking capacity of an area, as the provision of a cross over from the street usually results in the loss of at least one on-street parking space. [photos of lovely front gardens]

The loss of front gardens and the use of inappropriate boundary walls can detract from the overall appearance of the historic street. Large areas of tarmac, concrete or paving stones can increase the risk of rising damp as well as rainwater run-off, which puts pressure on Hackney's old Victorian drains and increases localised flooding. Planting and gravel act as a natural sponge – soaking up fifty percent of rain.

Consideration should also be paid to boundary walls. Low brick walls, topped with copingstones and iron railings are characteristic of Hackney's streetscape. Excessively high or solid boundaries can contribute to streets feeling unfriendly and intimidating due to the lack of passive surveillance.

### **Tips**

To minimise flooding, at least 50% of surfacing materials should be soft planting, shrubs or lawn while the rest should be a porous paving material, like gravel.

Existing railings, gates and gateposts should be retained and refurbished, particularly where original features are in-situ. Where walls, gates and gateposts are to be replaced, care should be taken to respect the original character, height and materials. Try to use bricks that match the original fabric of the terrace.

Try and hide unsightly bin-stores and other front garden features.

If your street has had many of its trees removed contact the Council's Tree Officer to replant a tree outside your house. Trees soften the urban environment and help to decrease the effects of air pollution. They also provide shading to your house in summer reducing the need for air conditioning.

## **A NOTE ON ENERGY CONSERVATION**

Energy saving measures are now becoming an important part of home maintenance. Many of the ways of reducing fuel bills require alterations which affect the appearance of the house. Expensive measures like double glazing, wall insulation fixed to internal walls and rendering to outside walls are the sorts of elaborate solutions that the building industry wants to sell people. The kind of work that needs to be done is often very simple and need not be expensive. The extra comfort will be immediately felt within a couple of years any initial spending will be offset by the money saved in fuel bills.

### **Where the heat goes (energy losses)**

30% of the heat in an average house is lost in ventilation. Not only an open window or door is to blame but also cracks around window frames and in the frame itself.

30% leaks through the roof of the house

30% disappears through the walls. This percentage is even higher if parts of the wall are damp.

10% of the heat is lost through the floor.

### **How to reduce heat losses**

Become energy conscious. The fuel bill will depend very much on the personal habits of people living in the house. How often doors and windows are left open and for how long will have much more effect on fuel consumption than whether there is single or double-glazing in the house.

Reduce ventilation losses by thorough draught stripping to windows and doors. Window frames should be repaired and cracks filled in around the frames (see section on windows)

People who have central heating are often using one or two rooms but the whole house is being heated to a high temperature. Automatic thermostats on each radiator will lower the average air temperature and save energy costs by up to 10% per degree centigrade lowered.

Insulation measures can often be very simple. Heavy curtains or shutters used at night can cut out some of the cold and a curtain over the front door can do the same. Loft insulation can be done with the aid of a grant (see the last section of the book) and it will cost less if home owners do it themselves.

These are a few of the measures that should be considered. There are various books available that give more details on this subject some of which can be found in the book list at the back of this book.

## PERMISSIONS

Before beginning any repair work on your home it is essential that you check with Hackney Council's Planning Department about whether any planning consent is needed for what you are proposing. In the case of listed buildings you will need **Listed Building Consent** in addition to normal **planning permission** for any alteration or extension that will affect the character, and/or architectural or historic interest of your home. Just because a building is listed does not mean that it cannot be changed; however, it does mean that you will need to be able to justify the reasons for those changes, and show that the special characteristics of the building are not being compromised. The design of any new additions to a Listed Building must be carefully considered. The setting of a Listed Building is also important to preserving its special characteristics. It is a criminal offence to carry out works to a listed building without prior Listed Building Consent – even if you did not know that the building was listed.

Alternatively, if your house is in a Conservation Area and you wish to substantially change it you will probably need **Conservation Area Consent**. Conservation Area Consent applications must accompany a planning application for redevelopment of a particular site and Hackney Council will consider the applications together. The conservation area consent process is therefore similar to and runs alongside the planning application process.

For householders who are thinking of altering their home Hackney Council offers free written advice.

## WHO CAN HELP?

### PLANNING

London Borough of Hackney, *Residential Extensions and Alterations*, Supplementary Planning Document (London Borough of Hackney, 2009). Download PDF from: <http://www.hackney.gov.uk/residential-extensions-spd.htm>

### HOME MAINTENANCE

#### Organisations

**SPAB (The Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings)** provides useful guidance and advice on appropriate repairs to traditional buildings [www.spab.org.uk](http://www.spab.org.uk) (accessed October 2010)

**The Georgian Group** is dedicated to preserving Georgian buildings and gardens from between 1700 and 1837 [www.georgiangroup.org.uk](http://www.georgiangroup.org.uk)

**The Twentieth Century Society** campaigns to protect post-1914 buildings [www.c20society.org.uk](http://www.c20society.org.uk)

**The Victorian Society** is a champion for Victorian and Edwardian buildings [www.victoriansociety.org.uk](http://www.victoriansociety.org.uk)

**The Federation of Master Builders** can provide a list of builders who are registered and approved by them [www.fmb.org.uk](http://www.fmb.org.uk) (accessed August 2010)

#### Publications

##### Books

Hunt, Roger, and Suhr, Marianne, *Old House Handbook: a practical guide to care and repair*, in association with the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (Frances Lincoln, 2008).

Parrisien, Steve, *The Georgian Group Book of the Georgian House* (Aurum Press, 1995).

Wedd, Kit, *The Victorian Society Book of the Victorian House* (Aurum Press, 2002)

##### Pamphlets

*Technical Pamphlets (No. 1-37)* are a series of online technical advice including timber windows, rising damp, repointing, brickwork, old doors and much more [www.spab.org.uk/advice/technical-qas/](http://www.spab.org.uk/advice/technical-qas/) (accessed October 2010).

Wrighton, David, *A Stitch in Time: maintaining your property makes good sense and saves money* (Institute of Historic Building Conservation, 2002). Download from [www.ihbc.org.uk/stitch in time.htm](http://www.ihbc.org.uk/stitch_in_time.htm)

*Georgian Group Guides No 1-14* are a series of short illustrated booklets for owners of Georgian houses comprising information on windows, brickwork, doors, paint colour, render, stucco and plaster, wallpaper, mouldings, ironwork, fireplaces, roofs, floors, stonework, lighting, curtains and blinds and papier mache.

*Care for Victorian Houses* are a series of eight-page illustrated booklets for owners of Victorian and Edwardian houses. Each booklet contains information about the history, design, materials and construction of one element of the house. Reading lists, addresses, places to visit and other useful information are also included to enable readers to carry out further research. £3 each.

## **IMPROVING THE ENERGY EFFICIENCY OF YOUR HOME**

### **Websites**

'Climate Change and Your Home' is an excellent website by English Heritage. Full of downloadable information on how to make improvements to your home [www.climatechangeandyourhome.org.uk/live](http://www.climatechangeandyourhome.org.uk/live) (accessed September 2010).

The Energy Saving Trust provides information and advice on energy efficiency in the home [www.energysavingtrust.org.uk](http://www.energysavingtrust.org.uk) (accessed October 2010).

The Department of Energy and Climate Change created in October 2008 brings together the Climate Change Group previously housed within the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) and the Energy Group from the Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform (BERR) [www.decc.gov.uk](http://www.decc.gov.uk) (accessed October 2010).

Centre for Alternative Technology offer solutions to some of the most serious challenges facing our planet and the human race, such as climate change, pollution and the waste of precious resources. They demonstrate practical ways of addressing these problems. Leading by example, we aim to show that living more sustainably is not only easy to attain but can provide a better quality of life [www.cat.org.uk](http://www.cat.org.uk)

### **Publications**

#### **Pamphlets**

*Look out: your choice of window frames could seriously affect the health of our planet* (Greenpeace, 1998)

Gunn, C, *Small-scale solar electric (photovoltaics) energy and traditional buildings* (English Heritage, 2008) Download from XXX

Gunn, C, *Small-scale solar thermal energy and traditional buildings* (English Heritage, 2008) Download from XXX

Baird, L, *How to harvest water: the art of saving water* (Anova Books, 2011)  
Energy Saving Trust Publications

London Borough of Hackney, *Sustainability of Built Environment*, Supplementary

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