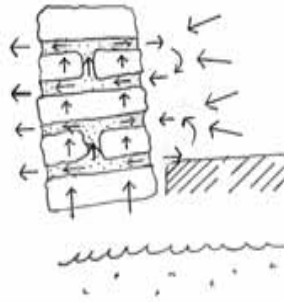


What is rising damp?

Rising damp is the result of ground water being sucked up through the walls of the building, through a process called capillary action. Whilst small amounts of moisture within walls of historic buildings would usually not be a major issue, as the building should be able to cope with this through "breathing", when this results in large large amounts of water, this can be detrimental to the the building, and its



occupants, as this can result in damage to the fabric of the building. However, damp problems in historic buildings are often misdiagnosed as being rising damp, and owners are often sold useless and expensive treatments which are not needed, through a lack of understanding of the issues of damp. Please read our other leaflets on damp, which will help to understand damp in historic buildings.

Does my building suffer from rising damp?

Many buildings do have rising damp to some extent, but with historic buildings, this is generally not an issue, as the materials, such as lime, allow this additional water moisture to evaporate out of the building. However, when non-traditional materials, such as cement render, are used, then this will prevent such evaporation taking place, and will compound the problem of damp.

With historic buildings, much rising damp is not due to an increase in the water table, or natural causes, but more likely due to excess water lying in the ground, caused by cracked pipes, or defective ground or surface drainage.



How can I address this ?

As can be seen, rising damp is only one potential cause of damp at the base of walls, and is very rarely the primary source of excess water, if it is present. To address any damp problems, an accurate and correct diagnosis of the problem and its causes needs to be undertaken – it is strongly recommended that this is undertaken by an independent damp expert (one who is not interested in automatically selling a damp proof product without understanding the real causes of the problem).

Much of the time, good management of the building and its surroundings, will either remove the damp problem completely, or address it to such a point that the building can cope with the water moisture.



Regular inspections of pipes, drainage, cellarge will all help in understanding what the cause of any damp is, and should give some clear indication of what work needs

to be undertaken to address this. If drainage or raised surface levels are identified as problematic, then the use of additional measures such as French drains, correctly constructed, or ventilated and drained "dry areas" will help with the removal of water moisture away from a building, and control the sources of damp.

Does my building need a damp proof course, injection or membrane inserted?

It is unlikely that your historic building will require a damp proof course, membrane of injection. Furthermore, it is also probable that, as these will have to be inserted after the building has been constructed,

that they will not work to their expected control, as it cannot be guaranteed that they will permeate through the entire wall. Any such insertion will also prevent water moisture from within the building evaporating as it should, and thus will be likely to compound the issue of damp within the building and its fabric.

It is strongly advised that prior to undertaking any such work, that an independent expert be consulted to assess whether this is an appropriate measure to take. Whilst this may appear to be an additional expense, it is likely that this will save money in the short, medium and long term, in undertaking appropriate and correct remedial work, rather than spending up to several thousands of pounds on remedial work which will have little or no benefit to the building.

Ventilation

As with condensation, proper levels of ventilation are essential to ensure that excessive water moisture within the air is removed efficiently. This may range from removing cement-based renders through to inserting additional ventilation/ air bricks into the walls to enable the building to breathe effectively.



If cellars are the dominant area of excessive damp in the property, then this can easily be addressed through sympathetic methods. Tanking is not recommended, as whilst this will prevent water moisture from entering the room, it retains the water in the walls, where it cannot escape, thereby creating severe damage in the long term. The most sympathetic and appropriate method of addressing damp in cellars is the use of a generic cavity drain membrane system. This attaches a waterproof