

# INCREASING SKILLS FOR ADAPTING AND MAINTAINING TRADITIONAL BUILDINGS



HISTORIC  
ENVIRONMENT  
SCOTLAND

ÀRAINNEACHD  
EACHDRAIDHEIL  
ALBA

## Case Study: Historic Environment Scotland

Although many of Scotland's traditional buildings are very resilient and have stood the test of time, changes in climate such as increased severe weather events are causing problems. These problems are being made worse by poor maintenance. Historic Environment Scotland is pioneering work to up-skill the public and professionals to be better able to adapt and maintain buildings to withstand the impacts of climate change.

### Scotland's changing climate

We are already seeing evidence of Scotland's climate changing. Over the last few decades our climate has warmed, sea-levels have risen, rainfall patterns have changed and we have been impacted by extreme weather events. These changes are projected to continue in the decades ahead. The UK Climate Projections 2009 data suggests that, for Scotland:

- the average climate will become warmer throughout the year;
- rainfall is likely to become more seasonal with a typical summer becoming drier, and a typical autumn and winter becoming wetter; and
- sea levels will rise.

We can also expect to see:

- an increase in summer heat waves, extreme temperatures and drought;
- increased frequency and intensity of extreme precipitation events; and
- reduced occurrence of frost and snowfall.

Source: [ukclimateprojections.metoffice.gov.uk](http://ukclimateprojections.metoffice.gov.uk)

**Adaptation  
Scotland**  
supporting climate change resilience

### Scotland's traditional buildings

Scotland's traditional and vernacular buildings were designed, and constructed, with an in-built resilience to the climate in which they were situated. Small details such as drip moulds below window sills, overhanging eaves, diminishing courses of slates and even certain detailing in masonry work, all played an aesthetic and practical role in allowing these buildings to effectively shed water, protecting properties from damaging moisture ingress, damp and stone decay. However, the inherent resilience of these buildings is now being challenged by the continuing impacts of climate change.

Decades of poor interventions and a lack of maintenance has left many of these historic structures vulnerable to increasing amounts of rainfall and extremes of wind.

Today, one in five (480,000) of Scotland's dwellings are more than 97 years old (built pre-1919), and at least 68% of these pre-1919 dwellings are in need of repair. To effectively repair and maintain these buildings, it is vital that there is a prolific workforce equipped in the traditional skills used to construct these buildings (Source: Scotland's Historic Environment Audit, 2016).



An apprentice HES stonemason at work (©Historic Environment Scotland).

## Future proofing the historic environment

Historic Environment Scotland (HES) actively undertakes and enables a range of activities and research to improve the quality and availability of skills and knowledge across the sector and beyond.

**1. The Engine Shed** is Scotland's first dedicated building conservation centre, as well as a free visitor attraction. Located in Stirling, the centre will help to increase the understanding of traditional building materials and skills among the public and professionals alike, and will raise standards in conservation for traditional buildings. It will offer formal, and informal, learning programmes and regular public events and activities to engage property owners and the general

public in the conservation and protection of the historic environment.

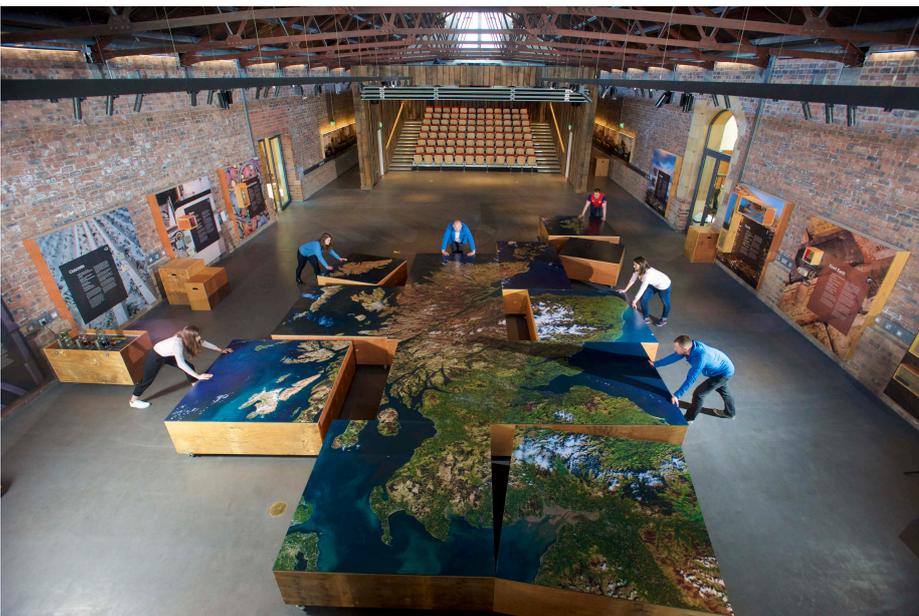
- 2. Largest employer of traditional craftspeople in the UK** – From permanent staff to a craft fellowship and apprenticeship scheme, HES supports the development of traditional craft skills by equipping people with the practical experience and knowledge that will strengthen the sector.
- 3. Publications** – HES publishes a range of free guidance for homeowners and professionals alike. This includes an extensive series of INFORM and Short Guides, that provide introductions to topics related to traditional skills and materials, building defects and the conservation and repair of traditional buildings.

## The benefits of maintaining your building

A building that is properly maintained will be able to retain its commercial, historic and aesthetic value, will be more resilient to the impacts of climate change, as well as more energy efficient. This is important as the look and feel of our towns and cities, as well as more rural landscapes, is often defined by the characteristics of traditional buildings. The distinctive Edinburgh tenements or more modest blackhouses of the Western Isles are testament to this. Better knowledge of the materials and skills used in the construction of these buildings means that more appropriate repairs can be carried out as necessary. This can save homeowners and businesses money in the future, as inadequate repairs can often lead to more expensive remediation work being required further down the line.

### Learn more

To discover more about looking after traditional buildings visit the Engine Shed or download free guidance from: [www.engineshed.org](http://www.engineshed.org).



An interior view of the Engine Shed in Stirling, Scotland's first dedicated building conservation centre. (©Historic Environment Scotland).

### Further information

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## Adaptation support

Adapting to climate change takes time and Adaptation Scotland are here to provide support and advice with all your adaptation queries and projects. Get in touch to discuss how we can help you with your climate change adaptation work.

[www.adaptationscotland.org.uk](http://www.adaptationscotland.org.uk)

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