

A guide to a comfortable, efficient home

Heritage buildings

Low-carbon retrofitting of heritage and traditionally built properties in conservation areas is both necessary and achievable. With the right approach, we can enhance energy efficiency without compromising heritage value. The PAS retrofit framework provides a structured methodology, and successful examples are increasingly showing how it can be done effectively.

Conservation and sustainability go hand in hand

Heritage conservation is sometimes used as a reason to avoid energy efficiency improvements, with proposals occasionally refused by Local Planning Authorities when they aren't well planned. However, with the right approach, retrofitting can support both conservation and sustainability.

A well-thought-out retrofit can:

- **Lower carbon emissions** and energy bills – making heritage homes more comfortable and affordable.
- **Protect the building fabric** – preventing damp and structural issues in under-insulated properties.
- **Maintain value** – efficient, comfortable homes are more likely to be well-kept and valued long-term.



Recent examples of heritage retrofits include Grade I listed Trinity Student Halls in Cambridge and a Grade II Victorian home in Clapham, London. Both projects applied internal insulation with careful attention to moisture management and monitoring.

Finding solutions for heritage properties

A whole-building approach ensures compatibility with each property's unique character.

Key solutions include:

- **Window upgrades** – Traditional single glazing is inefficient, but with permission, double or triple glazing can reduce heat loss by up to 40%. New technologies, like evacuated glazing*, allow for historic window styles with reduced heat loss. Secondary glazing (of which there are many different types) is available for original windows and glass which need to be preserved.
- **Insulating plasters** – Insulating plasters improve wall insulation while preserving original structure, protecting both thermal performance and historic features.

Each retrofit measure must be carefully selected to complement the building's historical features, ensuring that upgrades support both sustainability and heritage conservation.

Key takeaway

With thoughtful planning, retrofits can reduce carbon footprints, improve comfort, and protect heritage – securing these buildings for future generations.

*Evacuated glazing: Advanced glass with a vacuum layer between panes, offering superior insulation in a slim profile.



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