

# REGENCY DESIGN PRECEPTS



**A guide to design in the context of  
Cheltenham's Regency buildings**

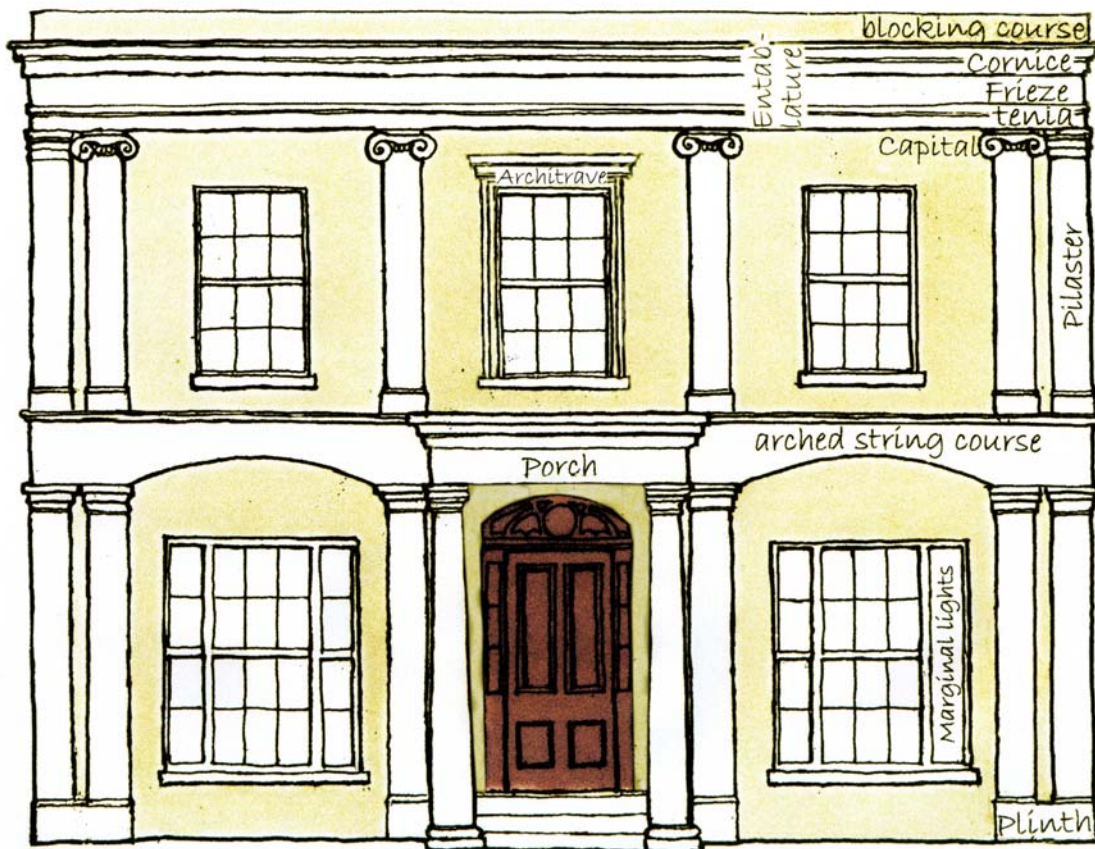


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# A GUIDE TO DESIGN IN THE CONTEXT OF CHELTENHAM'S REGENCY BUILDINGS



**Fig.1a** Illustrating architectural terms (cf *Precept 23*) and the avoidance of duality owing to an odd number of windows, the middle one with an architrave, central above the front door and porch. Also showing the appropriate use of different paint tones (*Precept 47*)

## **SCOPE AND PURPOSE OF THE GUIDE**

Most Georgian buildings embrace such consistent design characteristics that some can be identified as norms. By continuing to observe these norms when altering a Regency building, or when designing anew in this Georgian idiom, one is more likely to produce works which are appropriate and are pleasing to the eye, or which at least do not debase our architectural inheritance nor detract from a Regency context. Approval under planning legislation, where required, would therefore be more likely to be forthcoming.

This guide uses these norms to set out 50 numbered ***precepts*** (in bold italics) which can be used on building projects in a Regency context, not only in a Regency style, but on traditional building forms in a nineteenth-century setting and for repairs and alterations to existing buildings. If a design or alteration in these circumstances does not seem

quite 'right' or 'comfortable' a check to see if it conforms to the precepts may point to an appropriate solution. It should in any case prove a good starting point in an area of design where there is debate or uncertainty. Of course not all the precepts are always followed in Cheltenham's original Regency buildings, nor do they need to be. For example many attractive buildings have even numbers of window (*contrary to Precept 1 on duality, below*) because they only have room for two windows.

The advice given here relates only to the exterior of the building, the area over which there are normal planning controls. Alterations and other works to the interior, although important, are not subject to control under planning legislation unless the building is listed. Nor does this advice cover details of technical or structural considerations such as use of lime mortars or double glazing.

The Regency Period covers the last nineteen years, from 1811–1830, of the Georgian Period which had started in 1714. Stylistically, however, and for the purpose of this Cheltenham guide, 'Regency' is taken to include the subsequent reign of William IV and the first twenty years or so of Queen Victoria's reign, which started in 1830. So 'Regency Style' is relevant to Cheltenham from about 1800–1850.

## **GENERAL PRINCIPLES.**

There are some principles which apply to most buildings.

### **DUALITY**

#### **1 Group features together horizontally in odd numbers.**

The eye naturally seeks a satisfactory resting place or focus. 'Duality' occurs where an elevation consists of two approximately even and equal halves – two mirror images – the eye does not know on which to settle. The effect is a restless and unsatisfactory duality. A focus is required to join the two at the centre. A central porch might be a simple solution or, on a grander building, a central pediment.

A building's pervasive features are usually its windows. Where they are aligned vertically, and in an odd number of vertical rows, then the central row will provide the required focus for the eye. In Cheltenham's more imposing buildings this central row could be emphasised by a window with a bolder 'architrave' (Fig. 1); sometimes the front door was placed in line with central windows. Even if there is no extra emphasis provided by a central feature, still the odd number will reduce any awkward duality.

This norm of odd numbers applies to all vertical features on a building with the exception of columns and pilasters. In these cases it is the spaces between the columns (usually occupied by windows) which need to be in odd numbers between an even number of columns.

### **ADDITIONS & EXTENSIONS**

#### **2 Extensions to existing buildings should not normally project above or in front of the original building.**

Where it is neither desirable nor practicable for an addition to be designed simply as a continuation of the main building in the same form and with equivalent details, it is usually appropriate for the extension to be designed as architecturally subservient, often with a lower roof line and the main facade set further back.

#### **3 New buildings inserted into a street should similarly pay respect both to their neighbours and to the predominant pattern of development, not extending beyond the height nor the building-line of either their neighbours or of the street norm.**

This is especially important where the street is of a

consistent period or style. The principle applies normally, and indeed particularly in the case of a prominent site, such as at a corner.

## **PRINCIPLES FOR REGENCY BUILDINGS.**

### **LOCAL CHARACTERISTICS**

#### **4 Consider the particular nature of Cheltenham's Regency architecture before undertaking an alteration or addition to an existing building or designing a reproduction Regency building.**

Although the Regency style of building is recognisable throughout the country there are variations from one place to another. There are differences even between Cheltenham and Gloucester in this period. There may be a trend for architects, used to Nash's heavier and grander London buildings, to propose designs here lacking the light, Greek-revival touch of Regency Cheltenham: a genteel country resort, where villas were known as 'cottages'.

### **WINDOWS**

#### **5 The windows of Regency Cheltenham are vertically sliding timber sashes divided into smaller panes.**

This is a defining characteristic which needs to be retained in any replacement or reproduction, as set out below.

#### **6 Windows should not only be vertical in proportion, but each pane of glass needs to be vertical too. (Fig. 1)**

Top floors can prove the exception, where square windows may be found, especially on four-storey houses and on attic floors, above the main cornice; even there, however, each pane will still probably be a vertical rectangle, using just three panes per sash.



**Fig.2** Square window with three panes per sash, Montpellier Retreat

In a rear basement the kitchen window was sometimes widened to a horizontal proportion to increase light penetration under a low ceiling.



**Fig.3** Unusually wide, horizontal window in a basement kitchen, Montpellier Retreat

**7 Windows will normally have the same width within a single facade, but on each floor the windows, while consistent in height on the, individual floor, should be of a different height from the windows of the floors above and below.** (Fig. 5)

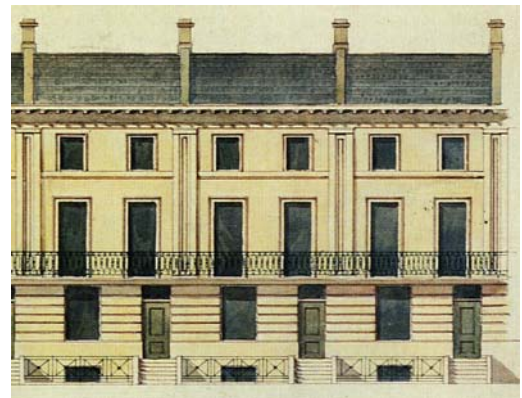
This variation reflected the relative importance of the rooms on each floor; it also enlivened the overall design. In a two-storey house the taller windows were on the ground floor. In a three-storey house the tallest windows were on the first floor (or 'piano nobile'), the second tallest on the ground floor and the shortest on the second floor. On the ground floor of some houses (normally of two storeys) there can be an exception to window widths since on that floor marginal lights were sometimes added on each side, beyond the main sash frame (Figs. 1 & 4).



**Fig.4** Marginal sashes, Suffolk Parade

**8 Windows should normally be aligned vertically and evenly spaced laterally.**

There is, however, often an exception on the ground floor of those terrace houses which are two windows wide. This is because the internal symmetry of a window in a room was generally considered even more important than the external symmetry of the facade. A central door in a hall of normal width, close to the side of a house, could not normally line up with a window central to a wider room above. Furthermore the space left by the entrance hall for the adjoining, ground floor front room differed from the rooms above, being neither the full width nor half the width of the facade. The window central to this ground floor room consequently did not align with the windows above.



**Fig.5** Off-centre ground floor windows, London terrace by J.B. Papworth, c 1825.

In pairs of semi-detached houses this problem was often avoided by locating front doors in a porch at the side of the building. The windows to all floors could then line through, but duality was not resolved.



**Fig.6** Doors to the sides of semi-detached houses allow windows to line through, but at the risk of duality, Montpellier Villas

**9 Windows at the side of a building should not be close to the corner.**

They should preferably be at least a window's width from the corner (Fig.6, above), although a space of two thirds of a window's width can suffice. Windows

too close to the edge of the building make the whole edifice appear weak.

**10 The limited sash window dimensions available from some modern catalogues, can prove inappropriately small for a typical Regency building.**

There is no rule on the overall size of windows, but if included in a new building of Regency aspirations undersized windows look weak and incongruous, particularly if adjacent to genuine buildings of the period. There may also be too few options to achieve the necessary variation in window height, without a tall enough window for the principal floor.

**11 Sashes should normally be three panes wide.**

The odd number principle was widely applied regarding the number of panes across the width of a window, with three being the norm. When the dimensions of a window were such that the best proportion of pane would result in four panes across a sash, the odd number objective was sometimes achieved by forming the window from three full-sized, central panes connected to the sash on each side by a 'marginal' half-width pane, thus making a total of five panes across (Fig.7).

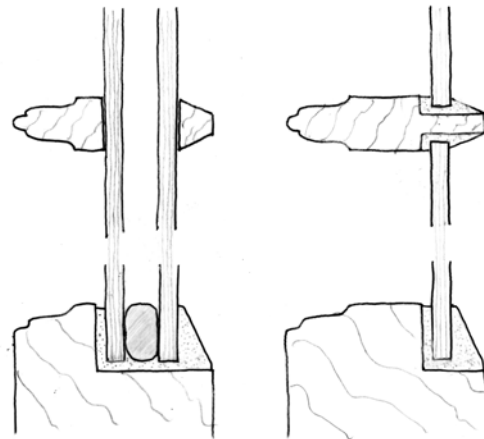


**Fig.7** Window with marginal panes, some original crown glass and possibly original paint tones, Imperial Lane.

Windows four panes wide were none the less sometimes used, especially at the rear of buildings,

and at basement or third floor levels, occupied mainly by servants and children (Fig.18).

**12 Glazing bars in a replacement Regency window or in a new building in a Regency style should not exceed 18mm width. Alternatively it may sometimes be acceptable to form each sash of a single double glazed unit with appropriate, cut-down glazing bars bonded to both sides of the glass.**



**Fig. 8** Half-scale sections through a timber sash, with traditional, individual panes (right) and using one, double glazed unit (left) with truncated glazing bars glued to each side of it.

Regency glazing bars were very slim, often only 13mm wide, supporting very thin glass. Such glazing bars, using traditional pine wood, are usually too weak to use today with double glazed units, or even with some modern, single glazing, which is much thicker than the 'crown glass' used in the nineteenth century. The use of hard woods can overcome this problem, while glazing bars up to 18mm thick are usually acceptable.

**13 Surviving panes of the original, thin 'crown glass' should be retained.**

This glass, only one or two millimetres thick, can be identified by its slight curvature and surface irregularities; it was cut in relatively small pieces from individually blown discs. Panes of this glass are still to be found in some old Cheltenham windows. They are not only of historic interest, but slight variations in angle gives a sparkle to exterior reflections (Fig.7) and their retention avoids the need to adjust sash weights to compensate for heavier glass.

**14 Replacement window sashes to Regency buildings should be square at each corner (Fig. 9) whereas sashes to the later Victorian windows should incorporate scroll-curved 'horns' at each exposed corner (Fig.10).**



**Fig.9** Regency sash detail, Suffolk Parade

While the joints at the corners of the lighter Regency sashes and glazing proved adequate, it appears that there may have been concerns that the heavier glass and sashes in use later in the century, often without the extra stiffening of glazing bars, needed horns to strengthen the joints.



**Fig.10** Victorian sash detail, Suffolk Parade

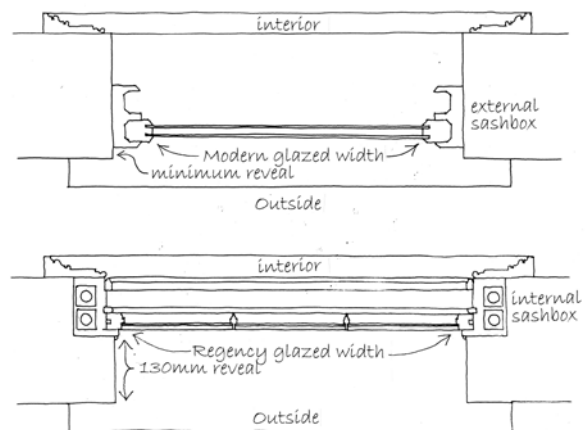
**15 In an original nineteenth-century building, or the reproduction of one, the windows should normally be made of timber.**

It has proved extremely difficult for UPVC windows to provide a sufficiently close approximation to original windows in cross sections, mouldings or in texture.

**16 Where double glazing is needed for an existing window the best solution is usually secondary glazing.**

Some secondary systems can be applied with minimal intrusion (using single sheets of toughened glass) providing equal thermal and superior acoustic insulation compared to standard, sealed units. Where possible the external face of framing to secondary glazing should be coloured a dark grey so that the frame and any cross rail is not noticeable from the street.

**17 Windows in new Regency-style buildings should have reveals of 130mm, or 100mm at a minimum, with sash boxes not expressed externally.**



**Fig.11 Top:** modern sash box fixed externally. **Bottom:** traditional sash box inserted into the wall from within the room, leaving deep external reveals.

The sash boxes to Regency windows were inserted from inside the building and hardly expressed at all on the exterior. This was to reduce the risk of igniting in a street fire. The sash boxes were also set back from the face of the building by at least 130mm for the same reason. Modern buildings aspiring to the Regency style often have their windows set on or close to the outside face of the wall, with exposed sashes. Not only do the resultant reduced reveals appear inadequate and diminish the building's articulation, but the glazed area is further reduced. This may make initial construction easier but it is liable to make the completed building appear weak and inferior in comparison with nearby, genuine Regency buildings.

**18 Most window changes in flats, offices and other commercial uses require planning permission. In a listed building it is an offence to carry out such changes without specific consent.**

Replacing original timber sash windows with inappropriate modern UPVC windows is liable to spoil the look of a house and cumulatively spoil the whole street, being in most cases smaller and less articulated, as explained in the previous paragraph.

**19 It is usually appropriate to continue the current tradition of painting window frames white, though preferably not a brilliant white.** Window frames and glazing bars were originally painted grey (as in Figs.7 and 15) green or brown. The idea was that they should be as unobtrusive as possible (Fig.5), which is also why the glazing bars were so slim, there being no glazing in their precedents of ancient Greece. Today the practice of painting window joinery white is so nearly universal that it is better to stay with this than to

create a mismatch within an otherwise uniform terrace. A 'broken' or 'off' white should however be selected in place of the usual brilliant white. Eighteenth-century Georgian windows should not be mistaken as a precedent for Regency Georgian windows. The former were usually heavier in all elements, but especially glazing bars, and often had the sash boxes exposed, flush with the exterior of the front wall (prior to fire regulations).

**20 A 'bellcast' should not be introduced into the render over a nineteenth-century window.**

A bellcast (Fig. 12) is a slight drawing out of the render over an opening, a bit like a vestigial awning, which is a 'drip' to throw water away from the window. It is, however, a detail alien to a Regency building and should be superfluous if the sash is traditionally recessed (see Precept 17, above).



**Fig. 12** A bellcast moulding, Suffolk Parade

**21 Stone or concrete sills on a building of Regency period or style should normally be at least 80mm thick and not have a chamfered front edge.**

Most Regency sills were slightly weathered on top, to throw off water, but were otherwise simply rectangular in section and robust in proportion.

**22 'Blind' windows (blocked up and never intended to be glazed) should be recessed to the same depth as real windows, with matching sills. The whole recess should be rendered, without scratched masonry joints, and painted to match the rest of the wall.**

Cheltenham's blind windows were originally left completely plain without any three-dimensional representation of a sash nor a painted *trompe l'oeil* imitation window. They were used in Cheltenham's old buildings, probably not so much to avoid the window tax, as to retain the symmetrical or regular window pattern of a facade. There was a need for blind windows where an internal wall obstructed the preferred window location or to enliven a blank side wall where there was no need for more light (a particular nineteenth-century concern for furnishings with fugitive dyes).

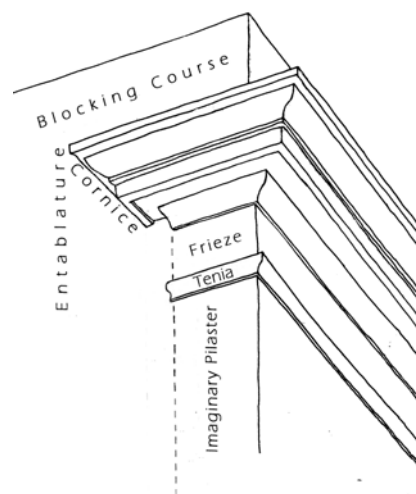
Exceptions to building regulations can be negotiated on new building works, where the thinner walls of properly recessed blind windows can conflict with insulation 'U values'.

Further information about historic windows is available in the leaflet *Conservation and Renewal of Timber Windows* at: [http://www.cheltenham.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/1818/looking\\_after\\_your\\_old\\_buildings](http://www.cheltenham.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/1818/looking_after_your_old_buildings)

**CORNICES AND ENTABLATURES**

**23 A new building in Regency style with a parapet will require a front 'cornice', over a stretch of plain wall called the 'frieze', with a narrow 'tenia moulding' below it, all together forming the 'entablature'. Similar nearby buildings should be studied to establish appropriate mouldings and dimensions.**

'Tenia' is properly the term for the moulding marking the bottom of a Doric frieze. In this document it is used, for simplicity and clarity, to denote a moulding in that relation to any frieze.



**Fig. 13** Correct termination of the entablature, including the cornice, at a corner.

On many buildings the roof's eaves and gutter, capping the front wall, provide a clear and positive termination to the front elevation. On Regency buildings, however, the front wall usually has a



parapet on top to hide the roof, in which case there will be a cornice to crown it at that level. The cornice helps to throw rainwater off the main wall. Its main justification is, however, aesthetic: it is a confident and attractive way to complete an elevation, as the alternative to eaves. The appearance of a building which has lost its cornices can be considerably enhanced by reinstating it (Fig.14).



**Fig.14** The effect on appearance due to the loss of original entablature, windows and door, St Paul's Street North

On individual villas, though not terraces, Cheltenham's Regency builders sometimes made a feature of prominent eaves, in place of parapets and cornices. The eaves partly masked the roof and often incorporated concealed gutters. Some eaves were supported by paired brackets.



**Fig.15** Projecting, bracketed eaves, The Park

**24 A new building with a parapet in a nineteenth century context, though not a Regency reproduction, will still benefit from some moulding or feature at the top of the wall to terminate it visually.**

A simple string course may be adequate, or a *brise-soleil* (a sun-shade of projecting slats) is a fashionable option. Prominent eaves may offer a different but equally effective solution. A large area of blank wall above the top windows is ugly and throws an elevation out of balance (Fig.14).

**25 To terminate the entablature at the end of a front wall there is a need to carry the cornice, together with the narrow 'tenia' moulding below it, just round the side, properly mitred at the corner, for a distance of approximately 350mm, or equal to the height of the total entablature (Fig.13) The effect created is the capital of an invisible or imaginary pilaster down the edge of the return wall.**

The cornice is not normally carried right round the less important, side and rear elevations unless the building is grander than usual. It looks crude and ugly, however, if the cornice is just 'chopped off' at the corner or stopped in some other way before it reaches the end of the main elevation.

## STONEMWORK

**26 Unskilled attempts to imitate the original ashlar stone of Regency buildings, by using smaller blocks of 'artificial stone', are usually unsuccessful and should be avoided.**

The main elevations of Cheltenham's most prestigious buildings were clad in ashlar stonework as a facing to structural brickwork. This required large pieces of masonry, each often as much as 400mm high, laid in courses with hairline-fine joints and with the whole facade rubbed as smooth as one piece of stone on completion. This was and remains a highly skilled and expensive process, which is why stucco (see Precept 27, below) was widely used in Cheltenham as a cheaper imitation of stone.

The stone was a local oolitic limestone, often won from mines as well as from open quarries, from Leckhampton, Cleeve, Whittington and even Bath. Local quarries are no longer producing stone suitable for ashlar work, but an appropriate stone is still available from Corsham, near Bath.

## RENDER AND STUCCO

**27 Expert advice should be sought to ensure that render, while strong enough, will contain sufficient lime to relate satisfactorily to the old render and will allow the flexibility and permeability which old buildings require.**

'Render' is a general term for an extra-durable form of plaster especially appropriate for external use. 'Stucco' was a term used for a particularly fine form of render used in imitation of ashlar masonry. These days 'render' is the more general term for all external plaster work. Render mixes, however, vary widely and it is important that a suitable render mix is chosen, especially when repairing stucco on old buildings.

In nineteenth-century Cheltenham, render or 'stucco' was widely used, partly to protect poorly fired local bricks, but principally in elegant imitation of stone. For this reason many buildings, rendered on their main elevations, had their brickwork left

exposed to the visually less important rear elevations

**28 A new building or an extension in accurate period style should have its render finished using a wooden float and with the coursing lines, in simulation of ashlar stone joints, scratched into the surface when half dry. The same careful alignment is required for rustication.** (Fig.16)

Care needs to be taken to ensure that these artificial coursing lines would make sense if it were real masonry, with regular, staggered, vertical 'joints', and with courses lining through with other lines or with window heads, etc. 'Rustication' is the emphasis of these fine joints by expressing them as deeply defined grooves, often in a V-shape. The rustication may follow horizontal joints only or the vertical joints as well. Rustication is used both in stone and render, but is normally limited to the ground floor.



**Fig.16** Rusticated render, Royal Crescent

Further information about lime mortar is available in the leaflet *Pointing with Lime Mortars* at: [http://www.cheltenham.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/810/pointing\\_with\\_lime\\_mortars](http://www.cheltenham.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/810/pointing_with_lime_mortars)

## **RAILINGS AND GARDEN WALLS**

**29 Reinstatement of missing railings, together with new railings in a historic context, need to be installed in the traditional manner with both kerbs and railings following the slope of the pavement in front of the building, unless actually attached to the building itself. They**

**should not be stepped, as is now common practice.**



**Fig.17** Railings inappropriately stepped, Montpellier Avenue

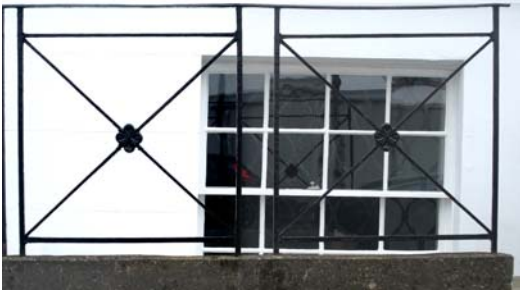
Each rod of the railing should remain vertical, while the top rail and the stone kerb into which they are set, should slope as the ground slopes or, of course, remain horizontal where the ground is level. Proper reinstatement is important to Cheltenham, where most of the Regency houses were once set back behind their railings, a part of the ironwork for which the town is famous. Most of these railings were removed during the Second World War, but happily are now gradually being reinstated.

**30 Garden walls in Cheltenham's historic settings need to accede to the same historic precedent and follow the lie of the land.**

The bricks themselves, together with the coping on top, were, until recently laid consistently at the same angle as the ground. The norm in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, however, is for all walls, as well as railings, to be built strictly horizontally. Where the land slopes the walls are now constructed in a series of horizontal but anachronistic steps (Fig. 17). The traditional, sloping approach has, however, stood the test of time; it has proved as strong and effective as the incongruous 'new' steps but has the advantage of looking right.

**31 Where the railings are very close to a building and attached to it, notably for safety around basement light wells, the railings should be erected horizontally, in parallel with the building and its features.**

This has been the universal practice even if the garden is at a slope. Since these light-well rails were intended to stop people falling down, rather than keeping intruders out, they were of a relatively open, St Andrew's cross design (Fig. 18), with a rounded top to the rail, unlike the close-rodged, spiked rails on street frontages.



**Fig.18** St Andrew's cross railings to a basement, Imperial Square

**32 The base diameter of a railing finial should match or relate appropriately to the diameter of the rod below it and be accurately aligned.**

Historically railing finials, such as the traditional spear heads, were forged integrally from the top section of each vertical rod in the railing. These days they are often sourced separately and then welded together. Unfortunately they are liable to a mismatch both in diameter and accuracy of alignment.



**Fig.19** Mismatched railing finial, Suffolk Square

**33 Modern railings should be constructed using similar cross sections to those originally on site or in the area.**

Modern railings, although strong enough in practice, are often slimmer than the original railings, and can appear weaker and inferior. Surviving old railings or stubs in the kerbs of previous railings should indicate appropriate dimensions.

**34 Specify and check that all curves in decorative, wrought ironwork are carried properly through to the curled inner tip.**

A coil is commonly used as an end feature in ornamental ironwork. Traditionally the blacksmith would have worked the hot iron on an anvil so that

the curve carried through to the very tip of the metal. These days, using mild steel, one end of the metal is often simply placed in a vice and the rest of the rod then bent relatively easily round on itself from there. The end of the metal which had been held in the vice then remains incongruously flat just where the curve should be most acute, debasing the decorative effect.



**Fig.20** Regency wrought ironwork (top) and 20<sup>th</sup> Century bent mild steel (below), Suffolk Parade

**35 It is desirable to maintain consistency in the street scene when choosing a paint colour for ironwork. Black remains suitable, but painting the finials a different colour, whether gold or otherwise, is inappropriate and to be avoided.**

Many of Cheltenham's railings would probably have been painted dark green originally rather than the black which became fashionable after the death of Prince Albert in 1861 and still predominates today. The previous choice of green would have been in deference to the ideal of railings made of bronze. There was an inclination in the Regency period to upgrade the appearance of materials. Pine was grained as oak, plaster was veined in imitation of marble, stucco was lined in imitation of stonework and ironwork pretended to be bronze. As with white window joinery, however, consistency is probably more valuable in the street scene than historical accuracy, and black does look smart.

**36 Where vehicular gates are required, the most suitable forms of support in a Regency setting are openwork iron piers.**



**Fig.21** Appropriate modern iron gate and openwork pier, Promenade

Solid masonry piers, although occasionally introduced in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, are not normally appropriate. Masonry piers were sometimes used in nineteenth-century Cheltenham for the demarcation of individual streets and housing developments or, mainly in the late Victorian period, for large villas.

For more information about railings, see the leaflet *The Conservation and Renewal of Historic Ironwork* at [http://www.cheltenham.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/1344/the\\_conservation\\_and\\_renewal\\_of\\_historic\\_ironwork](http://www.cheltenham.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/1344/the_conservation_and_renewal_of_historic_ironwork)

**37 Garden walls look most appropriate in a historic Cheltenham setting if the top is protected by 'once weathered' coping stones, sloping one way only** (Fig.22, below)



**Fig.22** Once weathered coping, Queens Lane

Twice weathered copings (sloping both ways with a ridge in the middle) or a 'header course' of edge bedded bricks (Fig.23, below) are in common use today but are not the form of coping usually found on nineteenth-century Cheltenham garden walls.



**Fig.23** Use of header course in place of coping stones, Marle Hill Parade

**38 Where there is a need to repair or extend an old brick wall it is desirable to use bricks of the right size. One solution is to use old salvaged bricks: these must be laid to present a clean exterior, with painted or dirty faces turned inwards.**

Nineteenth-century bricks were normally slightly larger than their equivalents today. Re-using them enables courses to be lined through and to be bonded properly. Where recycled bricks are used it

can also be easier to achieve a match in texture and colour.

## CHIMNEYS

**39 Party wall fire barriers should be expressed externally, over the roof, on terraced developments where parapets and chimneys are omitted.**

The purpose is to articulate what can otherwise appear as excessive, unbroken expanses of slates or tiles. This accords with the 19th Century norm for roofs to modest, two-storey houses (Fig.29), though they were further punctuated by chimneys. These days fire walls remain a practical requirement and a visual asset, even if chimneys are no longer needed.



**Fig.24** Modern terrace with roof articulated by party fire walls, Royal Oak Mews



**Fig.25** The effect on a terrace of an unbroken expanse of roof, Park Street

**40 The retention of prominent old chimneys is desirable in a nineteenth-century townscape.**

The use of parapets in Regency and Victorian times served to divorce the main elevation from the roof, which was not usually considered an aesthetic component in the design (Figs. 6, 26 and 28). Indeed the visual impact of Regency roofs was deliberately reduced by the use of twin-ridged roofs with a central gutter, rather than a taller, single ridged roof. Chimneys, together with terracotta pots, are none the less valued today as an enriching characteristic of the historic street scene, often providing an interesting and attractive silhouette.



**Fig.26** Chimneys add an extra dimension to the street scene, Rodney Road

## FRONT DOORS

**41** *Where a development is a reproduction, a replacement or an addition to an old building, an appropriate front door is necessary. This requires reeded panels flush at the bottom, but 'raised and fielded' above.*

Front doors to nineteenth-century houses were particularly prominent and elegant features. It is important to retain or reflect their traditional arrangements of four, or more usually, six panels. The thick bottom two panels (sometimes one wide panel) were flush with the front of the door, for strength against kicks etc, and articulated at their edges by reeded mouldings. The upper panels were usually raised and fielded (*Fig.27*) producing an attractive play of light and shade. Most ready-made doors using raised and fielded panels today incorporate that design throughout, top to bottom. Without flush panels at the bottom they are not, therefore, suitable as front doors in Cheltenham's Regency buildings.



**Fig.27**  
Correct  
Regency  
front door  
with the two  
bottom  
panels  
reeded but  
flush, the  
upper panels  
raised and  
fielded with a  
simple  
fanlight  
above,  
Montpellier  
Terrace

**42** *The main panels in a front door should not be replaced in glass.*

Sometimes the short (or square) fifth and sixth panels at the top of Regency doors have, over the years, been replaced with glass to let extra light into the hall. This does not affect the door too badly but glazing the large, middle panels debases the whole feature.

**43** *Front doors are best painted a dark colour, traditionally maroon, dark red, navy blue, holly green, black or dark grey.*

For the surrounds a broken white or stone colour is appropriate, as for the rest of the elevation (see below, under 'Painting').

**44** *Front doors incorporating a small, pastiche fanlight within the top of the door itself are inappropriate.*

The large and elegant originals of such fanlights formed a separate feature above the front doors of fine Regency and other Georgian houses (*Figs. 16 and 27*) but were never parodied within the actual door (*Fig. 14*).

## PAINTING

**45** *Painting a listed building which was not previously painted, or to a significantly different colour scheme, may be appropriate and acceptable but is likely to require listed building consent. Always check if in doubt.*

Historically, where the render to the new building dried out to a light colour, similar to the colour of newly-quarried Cotswold stone, it was sometimes left unpainted. In most cases, however, it was painted a pale cream colour ('broken white') to represent new stone. 'Brilliant white', which is the predominant tone of white used today, was not available either internally or externally in the nineteenth century and would have appeared brash against the more muted colours then in general use.

**46** *It is important that a terrace forming an architectural entity conforms to the same colour scheme throughout its length.*

The architectural coherence of the terrace is otherwise fragmented (*Fig.28*). In London and elsewhere exterior render was occasionally painted in different shades, for special effect. No original examples of this are, however, known in Cheltenham. Various colour combinations were used in interiors, but no need for this was apparently felt outside. The architect could choose to have his actual cornices, pilasters or other mouldings built as bold or as protuberant as he saw fit, to catch the light or to throw a shadow. Normally there was considered to be no need to emphasise this further by the use of different colours.



**Fig.28** Painting each house differently in a small, informal street can appear attractively cheerful, but it detracts from a formal terrace such as this, especially where the pilasters are split between two colours, Bath Road

**47** Where there is today a desire to pick out certain features of an elevation in a different shade or colour, this needs to be done in a manner that respects and makes sense of the original design. All features which project beyond the main wall plane should be painted the same, lighter colour and, where appropriate, they should join up and support each other (Figs.1a and 1b).

Light shades bring a feature forward, while darker shades make it recede. If mouldings are to be picked out they must therefore be in a lighter shade than the base colour of the wall, otherwise the painting will be negating the effect of the mouldings, and rendering the building less interesting, rather than enhancing it. Furthermore one needs to consider carefully the architectural structure of the whole facade. The elevational features and decorations of this were based on the classical orders which were, in turn, based on the structural elements of ancient Greek and Roman buildings. Highlights need to pick out these decorative features in a way that would have made structural sense originally and would tie all together correctly. An example is explained below and shown in Fig.1 but it is always a good idea to take advice.

Any pilaster needs to be painted the lighter tone, from the mouldings at its base right up to the capital at its top. The pilaster's capital then needs something to support (and to be painted lighter also); this will often be the string course. Supposing there are further pilasters or blind arches rising from the string course, then they will also need to be painted that lighter tone and so will the 'entablature' they support. The entablature (Figs.1 and 13) consists of the narrow 'tenia' moulding on top of the

pilaster's little capital moulding, the frieze above that (which is the length of plain wall immediately below the cornice) and the cornice itself. The 'blocking course', the low stretch of plain parapet wall immediately above the cornice, is just part of the main wall and remains painted the same, darker shade, as the rest of the plain wall, as does any projecting coping on top of the parapet.



**Fig.1b** A properly integrated two-tone colour scheme

The exception to the principle of painting projections lighter may be the plinth at the bottom of the wall, which is particularly liable to dirt and splashes. In this example, or elsewhere, any element in an interconnected sequence of projecting mouldings and features, if left out, breaks the architectural rationale and the decorative approach is contradicted. Similarly, but worse, is to paint on their own just the capitals, for example, or the cornice without the frieze, thus fragmenting and nullifying both the building's original design and the new painting scheme.



**Fig.29** A nineteenth-century roofscape with external party firewalls, Swindon Street

**48** Where a cornice has a protective sheet of lead dressed over it, then the whole cornice, including the lead, should be painted in the same masonry paint.

The lead is often left unpainted in the mistaken belief that, if painted, the paint would either not adhere properly or would be in some way

damaging. The resultant dark grey line of unpainted lead is, however, incongruous and visually fragments this important feature from the rest of the elevation.

## BALCONIES

**49** *Balconies need to be located so that they relate sensibly to their windows in terms of width and proximity to sills.*



**Fig.30** *A well used, wrought iron Regency balcony, Cambray Place*

Cheltenham is distinguished by its fine wrought and cast iron balconies. While it remains appropriate to include balconies in a design primarily for their decorative rather than their practical properties, they do need to make some visual sense. This also applies to 'window guards': forms of balcony erected for safety, or to take window boxes, but too narrow to step out onto.

## GARAGES AND OUTHOUSES

**50** *Garages can be assimilated more easily into a nineteenth-century setting if incorporated in a two-storey brick building with a pitched roof.*



**Fig.31** *A nineteenth-century coach house, Edward Street*

This is because outbuildings to the rear of houses in the Regency period were normally in this form as small workshops, as stabling or as coach houses with lodging or haylofts above. Single-storey buildings were relatively rare except as privies. However while small, two-storey outbuildings were once numerous, most of them have by now either been pulled down as too insubstantial, or have been converted to mews cottages.

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## **Council Information**

Controls apply to all works to a listed building, both external and internal, that would affect a buildings special interest.

Consent is not normally required for repairs, but where repairs involve alterations which would affect the character of the listed building, consent is required.

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