



# THE Specialists' Guide FOR PERIOD HOMES

The sensitive renovation of a period home requires an arsenal of specialists, skilled in traditional techniques which have been long forgotten by the average builder. Whether you are looking to draught seal sash windows or repair a cast iron gate, our specialist guide will help you find the experts who can help you restore your home to its former glory

**WORDS:** JOANNA MARSDEN

## Brickwork

**BRICK IS THE PREDOMINANT** building material for period houses in urban areas of Ireland. A wonderful variety of brick types, from rough yellow 'butter bricks' to decorative terracotta bricks, were produced in thriving Irish factories, and can be seen around our towns and cities today.

Bricks are a very durable and relatively low maintenance material, but a number of common problems do arise.

Over time, the mortar between bricks can become loose and crumbly, and re-pointing is necessary to prevent damage to bricks and water ingress. It is important to use a contractor who is familiar with traditional building techniques because modern pointing styles, where the edge of the mortar tends to stand proud of the brick, are not appropriate for older houses. Not only does it give a 'string-vest' appearance to brickwork, but the hard mortar causes damage by forcing any moisture into the softer brickwork. Instead, more subtle flush or recessed pointing is generally recommended, together with the use of a breathable lime mortar.

Re-pointing the front facade of a terrace house costs from €3,000-7,500 – this is a substantial investment, but assuming it is done well, with good preparatory work, it should last 60 years.

Badly spalled bricks may need replacing, in which case efforts should be made to source a similar brick. Salvage yards sell a wide selection of old bricks at €1-€2 per brick.

Specialist contractors can clean brickwork where it has been discoloured by atmospheric pollution or a build-up of vegetation. There are several chemical and mechanical cleaning techniques, and the right advice is essential as the wrong type of cleaning can cause permanent damage to delicate brickwork.

Another common problem is brickwork that has been painted at some point in the past. Unfortunately the removal of paint is not a straightforward procedure and can cause damage to the underlying bricks if the wrong method is used. The removal of render is even more challenging. In both cases, you will need advice from a specialist contractor who will inspect your brickwork and where appropriate undertake a patch test before starting work.

**Company name:** Bacon Restorations Ltd  
**Contact details:** 2 Belgree Drive, Tyrrelstown, Dublin 15. Tel: 01 885 6026  
 Email: [baconrestorations@eircom.net](mailto:baconrestorations@eircom.net)  
 Web: [www.baconrestorations.ie](http://www.baconrestorations.ie)  
**Key contact person:** Derek Bacon  
**Specialist services provided:** All types of re-pointing of brickwork, including use of lime mortars, and brick colouring.

**Company name:** Nolans Group  
 Conservation and Restoration  
**Contact details:** Unit 408L, Grants Park, Greenogue Business Park, Rathcoole, Co Dublin. Tel: 01 401 8500  
 Email: [info@nolansmpc.ie](mailto:info@nolansmpc.ie)  
 Web: [www.nolansmpc.ie](http://www.nolansmpc.ie)  
**Key contact person:** Shane Nolan  
**Specialist services provided:** Traditional re-pointing of brickwork, including the use of lime mortars.

**Company name:** Nolan MPC  
**Contact details:** Unit 408L Grants Park, Greenogue Business Park, Rathcoole, Dublin 11. Tel: 01 401 8500  
 Email: [info@nolanmpc.ie](mailto:info@nolanmpc.ie)  
 Web: [www.nolanmpc.ie](http://www.nolanmpc.ie)  
**Key contact person:** Shane Nolan  
**Specialist services provided:** Stone brick restoration

## Decorative Plasterwork

### DECORATIVE PLASTERWORK,

which is usually at its most ornate in entrance halls and reception rooms, was one of the ways in which Georgians and Victorians showed off their wealth and social position. Status conscious middle class people would not lease a house if they considered the plasterwork inadequate, and property developers soon learnt to tailor plaster mouldings to their prospective market. By the mid-19th century, technological advances such as the introduction of gelatine moulds meant that all but the poorest households had cornices (which run at the junction between wall and ceiling) and a ceiling rose.

Today, decorative plasterwork is one of the features that attracts us to period properties, emphasising the proportions of rooms and making them feel less box-like.

If you are restoring a house with original decorative plasterwork, you may encounter a number of problems. Delicate leaf and flower

motifs may be missing from ceiling roses and cornices may have been damaged by ceiling cracking or by electricians running cables. If your home was rented in the past, you may also need to reinstate plasterwork where ceilings have been lowered or rooms subdivided.

If a section of cornice is badly damaged or missing, a mould can be taken by a specialist plasterwork company and a reproduction made. Most companies charge a fee for making the mould, in the region of €200-€350, and a per metre fee of €40-60 for any lengths of cornice they make with the mould. Missing details like leaves, flowers or rosettes can be copied and reproduced for as little as €50.

Similar repairs can also be made to exterior decorative mouldings, like window architraves or dentil mouldings below parapets. Many of these details, common on Victorian seaside properties, have suffered from frost damage in recent cold winters.



**Company name:** Irish Fine Art Plasterwork

**Contact details:** 144 North Strand Road, Dublin 3. Tel: 01 836 6065  
Email: info@plasterwork.ie  
Web: www.plasterwork.ie

**Key contact person:** Frank Newman

**Specialist services provided:** Repair and replacement of interior and exterior plasterwork.

**Company name:**

The Old Mould Company  
**Contact details:** Unit D2, Network Enterprise Park, Kilcoole, Co Wicklow. Tel: 01 281 2161.

Email: info@oldmould.com

Web: www.oldmould.com

**Specialist services provided:**

Repair and replacement of interior and exterior plasterwork.

**Company name:** Dublin Mouldings

**Contact details:** 99 Parnell Street, Dublin 1. Tel: 01 878 6174

Web: www.dublinmouldings.com

**Specialist services provided:** Decorative plasterwork and restoration of plasterwork.

**Company name:** Smith and Henderson Stuccodores Ltd

**Contact details:** Ballinakill Lodge, Kinnegad, County Westmeath.

Tel: 046 943 7649

**Key contact person:**

Andrew Smith/Sean Henderson

**Specialist services provided:**

Specialist paint removal and repair of decorative plasterwork, including in situ work.

**Company name:** Graham Keely Plastering

**Contact details:** 1 Main Road, Tullyallen, Co Louth. Tel: 041 984 8319

Email: graham@gkpc.eu

Web: www.gkpc.eu

**Key contact person:** Graham Keely

**Specialist services provided:** Repair of decorative plasterwork.

**Company name:** Nolan MPC

**Contact details:** Unit 408L Grants Park, Greenogue Business Park, Rathcoole, Dublin 11.

Tel: 01 401 8500

Email: info@nolanmpc.ie

Web: www.nolanmpc.ie

**Key contact person:** Shane Nolan

**Specialist services provided:** Stone brick restoration



## Fireplaces

**FIREPLACES MAY NO LONGER** be the only sources of heat, but they continue to be the heart of any period room. Nothing is as homely as the glow of a crackling fire and the smell of wood and turf burning! Original fireplaces should always be preserved, and if they have already been removed, an appropriate replacement is usually a good investment.

In grander rooms, fireplaces tended to be made of marble or marble-effect slate with cast iron or tiled inserts. In less important rooms, the whole fireplace is normally made of cast iron. Mass produced cast iron fireplaces were ordered from catalogues and depicted fashionable motifs, like art nouveau style tulips in the 1890s or shamrocks in the 1920s.

Heavy usage and changing fashions often leave their mark on original fireplaces. Marble is permeable and easily stained by smoke and rust, whereas cast iron is often painted with thick white gloss. Tiles in the hearth or insert may be cracked or missing, and in the 1940s, there was a fashion for replacing cast iron inserts with pastel coloured tiles.

While you can undertake straightforward tasks like cleaning or

polishing with cast iron paste, more complex restoration work usually requires a specialist. The restoration of a typical cast iron fireplace, including the stripping of paint, is likely to cost €200-€300, whereas the professional cleaning of a badly stained marble fireplace is likely to be twice that. Bear in mind that most fireplaces have to be taken off-site for full restoration, a task which can cause damage to surrounding plasterwork.

If your home's original fireplace is missing, you will probably want to look for an appropriate replacement, be it a salvaged fireplace or a reproduction. Before you start hunting, be sure to measure the size of the original fire opening, and if possible take a peek at fireplaces in neighbouring properties for inspiration. A restored Victorian marble fireplace will cost from €1,500 to €7,000 – and more for rare examples. Cast iron fireplaces range from €450- €3,000, with tiled fireplaces commanding a premium. Un-restored cast iron fireplaces can be found in salvage yards, but while they may look the part, a considerable amount of work may be required before they are safe to use.

**Company name:** Antique Fireplace Restoration

**Contact details:** Francis St, Dublin 8.

Tel: 01 454 4101

Email: dorfireplaces@yahoo.ie

Web: [www.irishchimneypieces.com](http://www.irishchimneypieces.com)

**Key contact person:** David O'Reilly

**Specialist services provided:** Original fireplaces, reproductions and restoration.

**Company name:** Belle Cheminée

**Contact details:** 106 Capel St, Dublin 1.

Tel: 01 872 4122

Email: [cheminee@indigo.ie](mailto:cheminee@indigo.ie)

Web: [www.bellecheminee.com](http://www.bellecheminee.com)

**Specialist services provided:** Original and reproduction fireplaces.

**Company name:** Academy Fireplaces.

**Contact details:** 10 Parnell St, Dublin 1.

Tel: 01 872 6928

Email: [johnjpduffy@hotmail.com](mailto:johnjpduffy@hotmail.com) Web:

[www.academyfireplaces.com](http://www.academyfireplaces.com)

**Specialist services provided:** Original and reproduction fireplaces.

**Company name:** Nolan MPC

**Contact details:** Unit 408L Grants Park, Greenogue Business Park, Rathcoole, Dublin 11.

Tel: 01 401 8500

Email: [info@nolanmpc.ie](mailto:info@nolanmpc.ie)

Web: [www.nolanmpc.ie](http://www.nolanmpc.ie)

**Key contact person:** Shane Nolan

**Specialist services provided:** Stone brick restoration

## Ironmongery (Door and Window Furniture)

**PERIOD DETAILS** like door handles and locks are easy to overlook when you have a large-scale renovation on your hands, but nonetheless they are an important part of your home's character. Door pulls, door knobs, door bells, letter boxes, knockers, escutcheons, rim locks, bolts, sash locks and pulls – there is more to door and window furniture than you might think. And if you have the originals, it's wonderful to think that when you close your front door each morning, you are pulling the same handle that former occupants pulled over a hundred years ago.

Elements of ironmongery tend to get replaced or added to over the years, and most homes are left with an assortment of styles. While brass is the most popular material, iron, chrome, nickel and porcelain are also common. You may choose to live with this eclectic mix – it reflects your home's history after all – or you may prefer to choose one style and standardise fittings. Research the styles

**Company name:** The Victorian Kitchen Company (also salvage and joinery)  
**Contact details:** South Gloucester Street, Dublin 2. Tel: 01 672 7000  
 Email: info@victoriankitchencompany.ie Web: www.victoriankitchencompany.ie  
**Specialist services provided:** Internal and external door and window furniture.

**Company name:** Nolan MPC  
**Contact details:** Unit 408L Grants Park, Greenogue Business Park, Rathcoole, Dublin 11. Tel: 01 401 8500  
 Email: info@nolanmpc.ie Web: www.nolanmpc.ie  
**Key contact person:** Shane Nolan  
**Specialist services provided:** Stone brick restoration

appropriate to the period of your house and remember that specialist ironmongers may be able to repair existing elements or advise on appropriate reproductions. It may



also be possible to match originals with salvaged ironmongery. And, finally, remember that a sensitive renovation should not be about

making an old house look new – an aged patina or the odd dent can add beauty and authenticity and is not a reason to discard an item.

## Lime Plastering

**IN PERIOD HOMES**, both the original interior plasterwork and external render would have been made from a lime-based mortar or plaster, which has very different qualities from modern cement or gypsum plaster. One of the many benefits of lime is that it is flexible and porous, expanding and contracting with your building and allowing moisture to dry out easily.

Unfortunately too many period homeowners are quick to remove old plaster and re-plaster with modern materials. Modern plaster or render is much harder and less permeable, compromising the breathability of the building and sometimes leading to problems with damp.

Conservationists encourage all period home owners to use a lime-based plaster, and if you are the owner of a protected structure, you may be obligated to do so. Fortunately, the art of lime plastering is currently enjoying something of a renaissance, and there are a number of specialist plasterers who can assist you with the task. Bear in mind that lime plastering is likely to be slower and consequently more expensive than conventional plastering, and also that work is best carried out in temperatures over 10 degrees.

**Company name:** Stoneware Studios  
**Contact details:** Stoneware Studios, Pillmore, Youghal, Co Cork. Tel: 024 901 17.  
 Email mail@stonewarestudios.com Web: www.stonewarestudios.com  
**Key contact person:** Hugh Dorrian  
**Specialist services provided:** Manufacture, supply and advice on the use of lime mortars and plasters.

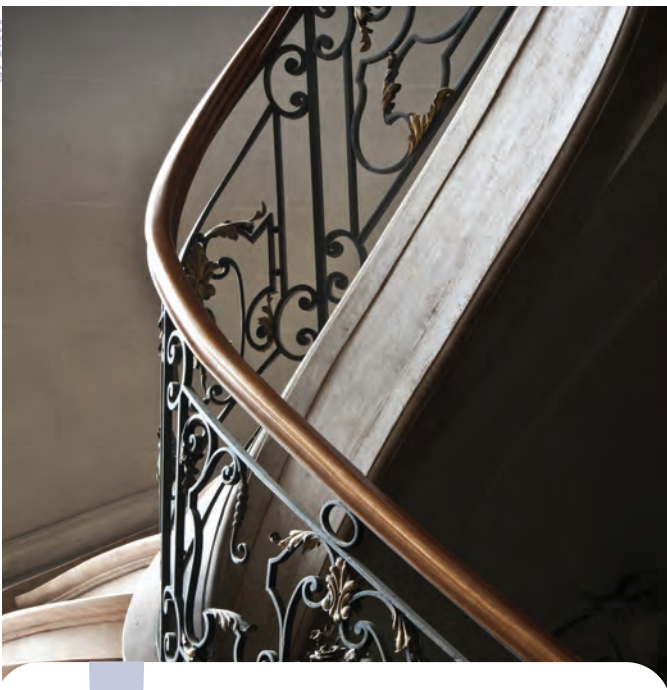
**Company name:** Traditional Lime Company  
**Contact details:** Rath, Shillelagh Road, Tullow, Co Carlow. Tel: 059 9151750 Web: www.traditionallime.com  
**Key contact person:** Edward Byrne  
**Specialist services provided:** Supply of lime putties, ready mixed mortars, natural hydraulic limes, hair and fibres, wattle, etc.

**Company name:** Nolan MPC  
**Contact details:** Unit 408L Grants Park, Greenogue Business Park, Rathcoole, Dublin 11. Tel: 01 401 8500  
 Email: info@nolanmpc.ie Web: www.nolanmpc.ie  
**Key contact person:** Shane Nolan  
**Specialist services provided:** Stone brick restoration

**Company name:** P&K Haigney Lime Specialists  
**Contact details:** Maple Leaf, Colpe Road, Drogheda, Co Meath. Tel: 041 983 6183  
 Email info@haigneyrestoration.ie Web: www.haigneyrestoration.ie  
**Key contact person:** Kevin Haigney  
**Specialist services provided:** Lime plastering.

**Company name:** Graham Keely Plastering  
**Contact details:** 1 Main Road, Tullyallen Co Louth. Tel: 041 984 8319  
 Email: graham@gkpc.eu Web: www.gkpc.eu  
**Key contact person:** Graham Keely  
**Specialist services provided:** Lime plastering and mud rendering.

**Company name:** Old Builders Company  
**Contact details:** Parke Cottage, The Mall, Eyrecourt, Ballinasloe, Co Galway. Tel: 086 823 6451  
 Email: info@oldbuilders.com Web: www.oldbuilders.com  
**Key contact person:** Henry Thompson  
**Specialist services provided:** Lime plastering and hemp and lime construction.



## Railings, Gates and Other Ironwork

**AN IMPRESSIVE ARRAY** of historic ironwork survives in Irish period properties unlike in the UK, for example, where much domestic ironwork was given up for the war effort. Decorative railings and gates, window guards and even the humble boot scraper, add character to our homes and streets, and should be prized and preserved.

Period ironwork can be made from wrought or cast iron, and it is useful to identify the type of metal you are restoring. Wrought iron is a pliable material, forged through hammering and rolling, and tends to have a hand-beaten or smooth rolled finish. As it had to be worked by hand, only the wealthy could afford elaborate wrought ironwork. Cast iron on the other hand is made by pouring melted iron into moulds, a process which lent itself to mass production of decorative ironwork in Victorian and Edwardian times. Sometimes wrought iron and cast iron will be used together; for example, plain railings may be made from wrought iron but capped with cast iron finials.

Iron railings and gates, while hardwearing, are prone to several problems. Poorly maintained paintwork can cause rust, and when ironwork rusts it can expand to over ten times its original size, creating unsightly bulges. Another common problem is movement to the granite plinths into which the railings are set, caused by settlement or tree roots. Gates also have a tendency to stick as a result of factors like rising ground levels or wear to the heel cup into which the gate sits.

If individual elements such as finials are missing, you may be able to source a match at a foundry which specialises in restoration. Such foundries stock a range of traditional patterns, and replacements can cost as little as €30. If you can't find a match, a mould will need to be taken from an existing finial in order to make a reproduction.

While you can clean and paint ironwork yourself, specialist advice should be sought for repair works. The repair of historic ironwork requires craftsmanship and expertise in handling different types of iron, or further damage may be caused. For example, a replacement finial should never be welded, but rather slotted into place or secured with hot poured lead.

Restoration costs vary hugely, but the repair of a typical iron gate, including re-hanging the gate and fitting new latches and receivers if required, should cost €500-€1,000.

**Company name:** Bushy Park Ironworks  
**Contact details:** Units 22-24, Greenhills Business Park, Tallaght, Dublin 24. Tel: 01 462 2788  
 Email: info@bushyparkironworks.com  
 Web: www.bushyparkironworks.com  
**Key contact person:** Edward Bisgood  
**Specialist services provided:** Restoration of railings, gates and other ironwork. Good catalogue of decorative details in stock.

**Company name:** Mojo Designer Blacksmiths  
**Contact details:** Castlevue Mills, Clonakilty, Co Cork. Tel: 087 917 0301  
 Email: joe@mojometaldesign.com  
 Web: www.mojometaldesign.com  
**Key contact person:** Joe O'Leary  
**Specialist services provided:** Restoration of railings, gates and other ironwork.

**Company name:** Ronan Creative Ironcraft  
**Contact details:** New Forge, Carlue, Bandon, Co Cork. Tel: 023 412 86  
 Email: ronanironcraft@eircom.net  
 Web: ronancreativeironcraft.com  
**Key contact person:** Patrick Ronan  
**Specialist services provided:** Restoration of railings, gates and other ironwork.

**Company name:** H & M Ironworks Ltd  
**Contact details:** Unit 2, Greenhills Industrial Estate, Greenhills Road, Walkinstown, Dublin 12. Tel: 01 450 7070.  
 Email: info@handmironworks.com  
**Key contact person:** Brian Hudson  
**Specialist services provided:** Restoration of railings, gates and other ironwork.

**Company name:** Pristine Traditional and Contemporary Ironwork  
**Contact details:** Upper Crutt, Clogh, Castlecomer, Co Kilkenny. Tel: 086 190 8233 Email: paul.devlin1@live.ie  
**Key contact person:** Paul Devlin  
**Specialist services provided:** Restoration of railings, gates and other ironwork.

**Company name:** Nolan MPC  
**Contact details:** Unit 408L Grants Park, Greenogue Business Park, Rathcoole, Dublin 11. Tel: 01 401 8500 Email: info@nolanmpc.ie  
 Web: www.nolanmpc.ie  
**Key contact person:** Shane Nolan  
**Specialist services provided:** Stone brick restoration

**Company name:** CMT Blacksmith & Ironworks Ltd  
**Contact details:** Tourtane House, Glencairn, Nr. Lismore, Co Waterford  
 Tel: 058 532 90 Email: charliemtrigg@gmail.com  
 Web: www.charliemtrigg.com  
**Key contact person:** Charlie Trigg  
**Specialist services provided:** Restoration of railings, gates and other ironwork.

## Rainwater Goods

**RAINWATER GOODS** such as gutters, downpipes and hoppers are critical functional items, carrying rainwater away from your home. If they start leaking or become blocked with silt and debris, rainwater will seep into the walls of your building and cause serious damage. As a period homeowner, keeping gutters and downpipes in good working order is one of your most important ongoing tasks. Annual inspections should be carried out, and gutters should be cleaned at least twice a year, particularly in late autumn after leaves have fallen. Drains at the base of downpipes also require regular cleaning to prevent water splashing or seeping into the building from ground level.

Some period properties still have their original cast iron rainwater goods. With attractive decorative details like brackets or hoppers, original cast iron is aesthetically far superior to modern

plastic replacements and should be preserved. Regular maintenance involves periodically cleaning and repainting to prevent corrosion developing.

Where sections of downpipe are missing or have become detached, they should be repaired as soon as possible. Replacement cast iron downpipes can be ordered from foundries and some builders' merchants and cost as little as €25 for a 6ft length. Decorative sections will need to be ordered from specialist foundries which can often match an original using their pattern catalogue.

If original cast iron gutters have already been replaced with plastic, you may wish to consider full reinstatement by a specialist foundry – cast iron rainwater goods for a typical mid-terrace home are likely to cost in the region of €800. And if your budget doesn't stretch to the real thing, cast iron style plastic rainwater goods may be a compromise solution.

## Roofs

### ANY RESTORATION

should begin with the roof, because without a reliable, functional roof, other good work could rapidly be undone. Common problems include structural movement, sagging timbers, leaking valleys, missing ridge tiles and delaminated or slipped slates. Period roofs may also have added maintenance complications like parapets and concealed guttering.

Slipped slates are usually fixed in place using a lead or copper clip called a tingle, which is visible from the ground. As a rule of thumb, if more than 20 percent of your tiles have tingles, your roof will soon need replacing.

A few basic guidelines should be adhered to when restoring an historic roof. Firstly, never alter the pitch – this requires planning permission and can dramatically affect the character. Secondly, when buying new roof coverings, match the originals as closely as possible – and this isn't as simple as just replacing natural slate with natural slate. There are many different colours, thicknesses and sizes of natural slate, sourced from various quarries in Ireland

**Company name:** The Blue Bangor Company  
**Contact details:** Unit 6, Jamestown Industrial Centre, Jamestown Road, Inchicore, Dublin 8.  
 Tel: 01 454 6688 Email: info@bluebangor.com  
 Web: www.bluebangor.ie  
**Specialist services provided:** Supply of new and reclaimed slates and tiles, including Blue Bangor and Killaloe slates.

**Company name:** Valentia Slate Ltd.  
**Contact details:** Knightstown, Valentia, Co Kerry.  
 Tel: 066 947 6922 Email: valentiaslatesltd@eircom.net  
 Web: www.valentiaslate.com  
**Specialist services provided:** Supply of slate.

and abroad. Welsh Blue Bangor slates are a common variety in Irish properties, and are still quarried today. Traditional imperial sizes, produced for conservation work, tend to be more expensive than metric sizes – a 24" by 12" Blue Bangor, for example, will cost approx €8 per slate. Salvaged slates of the same size are approx €4 per slate.

You may be able to save money by re-using existing tiles or slates, as long as they have their nail holes intact and no serious cracks or pitted areas. A good roofer will strip the roof with great care before sorting the slates by size and condition. It may be possible to salvage up to 75 percent of the old slates and re-roof the front of the house with the salvaged slates to maintain the appearance of the property to the street.

**Company name:** Stoneware Studios Ltd  
**Contact details:** Pillmore, Youghal, Co Cork. Tel: 024 901 17 Email: mail@stonewarestudios.com  
 Web: www.stonewarestudios.com  
**Key contact person:** Hugh Dorrian  
**Specialist services provided:** Supply of traditional cast iron rainwater goods sourced from local foundries in Cork and from the Hargreaves Foundry in the UK.

**Company name:** Nolan MPC  
**Contact details:** Unit 408L Grants Park, Greenogue Business Park, Rathcoole, Dublin 11.  
 Tel: 01 401 8500  
 Email: info@nolanmpc.ie  
 Web: www.nolanmpc.ie  
**Key contact person:** Shane Nolan  
**Specialist services provided:** Stone brick restoration

**Company name:** J. & J. W. Longbottom Ltd  
**Contact details:** Bridge Foundry, Holmfirth, Huddersfield, England, HD9 7AW.  
 Tel: 0044 1484 682 141.  
 Web: www.longbottomfoundry.co.uk  
**Specialist services provided:** Producing cast iron rainwater and soil goods from extensive pattern range.

**Company name:** O'Hara Gutters Ltd  
**Contact details:** Tubbercurry, Co Sligo.  
 Tel: 071 918 5385  
 Email: info@oharagutters.ie  
 Web: www.oharagutters.ie  
**Key contact person:** Paddy O'Hara  
**Specialist services provided:** Supply of traditional cast iron and cast iron-style PVC rainwater goods.



## Sash Windows

**SASH WINDOWS** are an intrinsic part of the character of most period properties, and fortunately, after decades of inappropriate replacement, homeowners are beginning to appreciate this. Restoring original sash windows, or re-instating sympathetic reproductions, can only enrich the comfort, appearance and value of your home.

There are many joineries specialising in the restoration and draught proofing of sash windows. In order to provide a detailed quotation a surveyor from the joinery will call to your home to inspect your windows. Work normally includes the repair of loose joints or rotten sections, replacement of weights and cords, the insertion of draught proofing strips and, where required, the addition of new window locks or pulls. Paint stripping, replacement of putty and re-painting may be carried out by the joinery or by a separate contractor.

A full overhaul of a sash window, including re-painting, takes up to three days and costs in the region of €800. Work is normally carried out in situ, although windows may be taken to the joinery for complex repairs or full paint-stripping.

Fitting double-glazing to existing sash windows is not generally recommended as the extra weight can put pressure on the joints in the sashes. If double-glazing is a firm requirement, a compromise can sometimes be achieved by replacing the two sashes with replica double-glazed units, but maintaining the original frame.

If original windows are genuinely beyond repair, or have already been replaced, a good joinery will be able to supply a convincing reproduction. The design of the new window, including details like glazing bars and horns, should faithfully replicate your original window, or those in neighbouring properties. Prices for new sash windows range from €800 to over €2,000, depending on the mechanism, the timber and the level of detailing.

**Company name:** Ventrolla Ireland  
**Contact details:** Unit 10/11 Western Industrial Estate, Naas Road, Dublin 12  
Tel: 1800 948 359

Email: alex.beaumont@ventrolla.ie  
Web: www.ventrolla.ie

**Key contact person:** Alex Beaumont  
**Specialist services provided:** Restoration of joinery including sash windows. New sash windows to original detail.

**Company name:** Nolan MPC  
**Contact details:** Unit 408L Grants Park, Greenogue Business Park, Rathcoole, Dublin 11. Tel: 01 401 8500

Email: info@nolanmpc.ie  
Web: www.nolanmpc.ie

**Key contact person:** Shane Nolan  
**Specialist services provided:** Stone brick restoration

**Company name:** NK Conservation Joinery

**Contact details:** Connolly, Co Clare.  
Tel: 087 207 2625

Email: neilkelly@gmail.com  
Web: www.nkconservationjoinery.com

**Key contact person:** Neil Kelly  
**Specialist services provided:** Restoration of joinery including sash windows. New sash windows to original detail.

**Company name:** Keane Windows  
**Contact details:** Unit 6, Trinity Court, Fonthill Ind. Park. Dublin 22.  
Tel: 01 620 3232

Email: pat@keanewindows.com  
Web: www.keanewindows.com

**Specialist services provided:** Suppliers of a complete range of products for draught-proofing and repairing sash windows.

**Company name:** Maclyn Ltd  
**Contact details:** 28 Oakcourt Grove, Palmerstown, Dublin 20. Tel: 01 460 5945 Email: maclynLtd@eircom.net

**Key contact person:** Patrick Lynch  
**Specialist services provided:** Restoration of joinery including sash windows and shutters.

**Company name:** Sash Window Solutions  
**Contact details:** Garr, Rhode, Co Offaly.  
Tel: 045 880 997 Email: sashwindowsolutions@gmail.com

Web: www.sashwindowsolutions.ie

**Key contact person:** Andrew Wolahan/John Dunne



**Specialist services provided:** Restoration of joinery including sash windows.

**Company name:** Mellott Windows Ltd.  
**Contact details:** Castlebar Road, Ballinrobe, Co Mayo. Tel: 094 954 1053  
Email: mellottwindows@hotmail.com  
Web: www.sash-windows.ie

**Key contact person:** Thomas Mellott  
**Specialist services provided:** Restoration of joinery including sash windows.

**Company name:** Callaghan Sash Windows

**Contact details:** Ongenstown, Boyerstown, Navan, Co Meath.  
Tel: 046 902 3323

Email: info@sashwindowsirl.com  
Web: www.sashwindowsirl.com

**Key contact person:** Barry Callaghan  
**Specialist services provided:** Restoration of joinery including sash windows.

**Company name:** Heritage Sash and Joinery

**Contact details:** Carrickbanagher, Drumfin, Boyle, Co Sligo.  
Tel: 071 670 56 Email:

heritagesashandjoinery@eircom.net  
**Key contact person:** Nicholas Taylor  
**Specialist services provided:** Restoration of joinery including sash windows. New sash windows to original detail.

**Company name:** Classic Windows  
**Contact details:** 12 Kilfergus, Glin, Co Limerick. Tel: 087 903 2271

Email: annahagan@btinternet.com  
**Key contact person:** Stephen Hagan  
**Specialist services provided:** Restoration of joinery including sash windows. New



## Stained Glass

**STAINED GLASS** or coloured glass panes became very fashionable in Victorian and Edwardian homes and were often used to illuminate hall landings, fanlights or panels to the sides of front doors. Sometimes sash windows would be made with coloured panes around the edges, called 'margin lights', or 'sunburst' motifs in the corners.

In the late Victorian era leaded glasswork, called 'leadlights', became popular, and was often combined with painted roundels depicting nature scenes such as songbirds or deer.

Both glass and lead-work are

vulnerable to damage, but there are a number of specialists who can restore windows, replacing missing panes with appropriate pieces of old glass as required. Most keep a stock of traditional glasses, including textured coloured glass, which are sourced from specialist manufacturers abroad, or salvaged from other repair work. Minor repairs can be carried out in situ but glass painting or more extensive repairs will need to be carried out in the repairer's studio.

In addition to restoration work, stained glass specialists are often asked

to make decorative leaded panels to replace the upper panels of a previously solid wood hall door. A good restorer will be able to advise you on a style of glasswork appropriate to the house, and this work is likely to cost €250-500. You may also decide to double-glaze an existing stained glass panel, leaving the original panel on the inside while adding modern glass to the outside. While this is an aesthetic compromise, it is better than removing original stained glass altogether when security or insulation is a priority.



**Company name:** Irish Stained Glass & Leaded Window Co Ltd

**Contact details:** The Studio, Tree Tops, Greenlands, Sandyford, Dublin 16.  
Tel: 01 295 6167

Email [info@irishstainedglass.com](mailto:info@irishstainedglass.com)

Web: [www.irishstainedglass.com](http://www.irishstainedglass.com)

**Key contact person:** Alan Tomlin

**Specialist services provided:** Glass painting, stained glass restoration, leaded windows.

**Company name:** Glasshaus Studio

**Contact details:** Unit 34, Navan Enterprise Centre, Trim Road, Navan, Co Meath.

Tel: 046 905 9398 Email: [info@glasshaus.ie](mailto:info@glasshaus.ie)

Web: [www.glasshaus.ie](http://www.glasshaus.ie)

**Key contact person:** Liam Mc Corkell

**Specialist services provided:** Glass painting, stained glass restoration.

**Company name:** Emerald Stained Glass

**Contact details:** Kilcruatin Industrial Estate, Spollanstown, Tullamore, Co Offaly.

Tel: 057 935 1068 Email:

[info@emeraldstainedglass.com](mailto:info@emeraldstainedglass.com)

Web: [www.emeraldstainedglass.com](http://www.emeraldstainedglass.com)

**Key contact person:** Seamus Malone

**Specialist services provided:**

Stained glass restoration, including extruding their own lead.

**Company name:** Divito Studios Ltd (Stained Glass)

**Contact details:** Unit P3, A.B.E.C, Kilbride Industrial Estate, Arklow, Co. Wicklow.

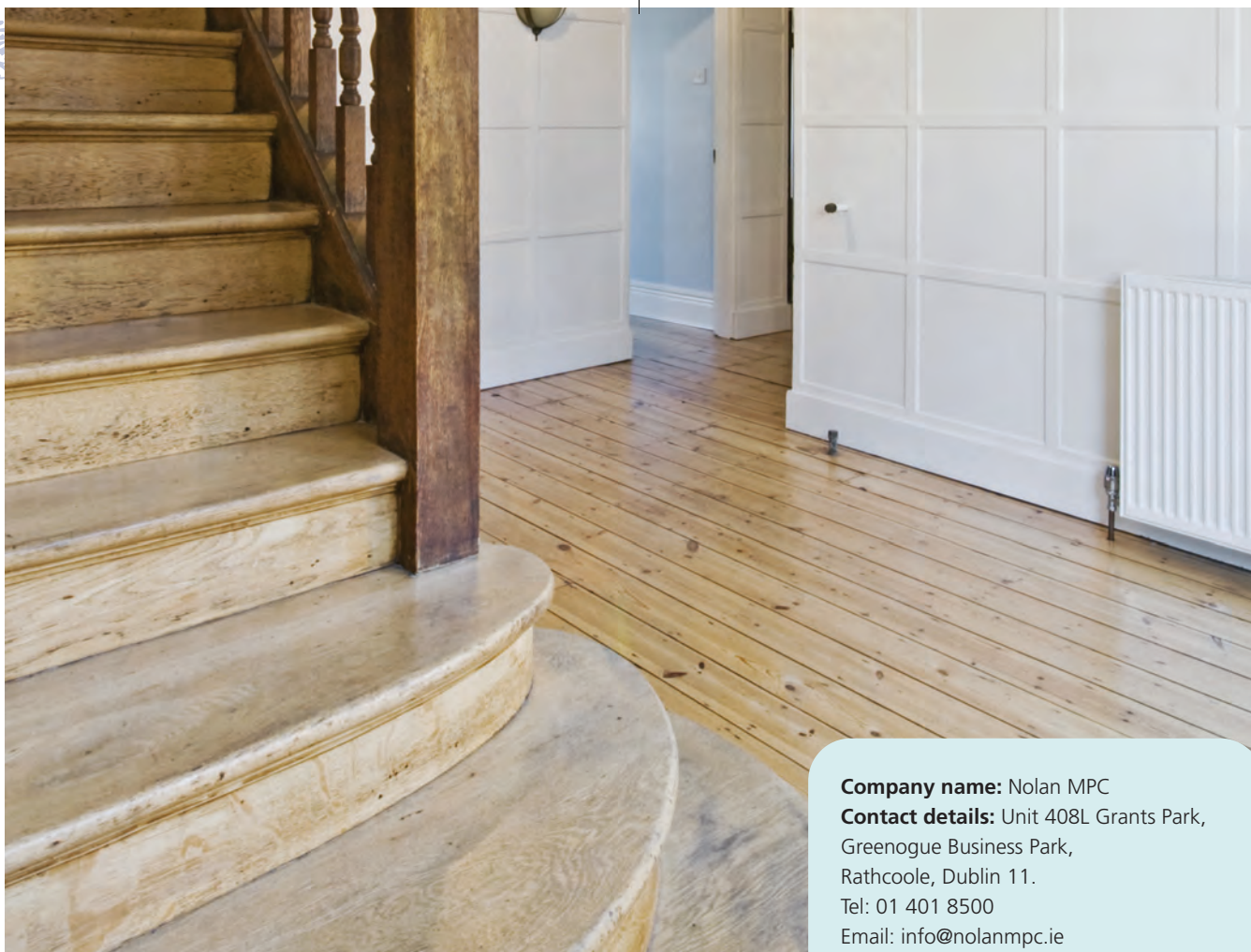
Tel: 0402 269 20

Email: [stainedglass@divitostudios.com](mailto:stainedglass@divitostudios.com)

Web: [www.divitostudios.com](http://www.divitostudios.com)

**Key contact person:** Bianca Divito

**Specialist services provided:** Stained glass restoration.



## Stairs

**THE CRAFTSMANSHIP** evident in the internal joinery of a period house is rarely matched in modern homes. When these houses were built, skilled labour was cheap, and there was ready access to high quality, slow-grown, well seasoned wood. While hundreds of years of use may have resulted in small imperfections, like a slight warp in a door or a few woodworm holes in the floor, the original joinery remains an integral part of your home's detailing and can never be matched by modern, off-the-shelf replacements.

Most internal joinery was intended to be painted (the stripped pine look only came into fashion in the 1980s) but layers of heavy gloss paint can build up and obscure the original mouldings. In some cases it is desirable to strip paint with a solvent paint remover, to reveal the detailing before repainting.

When joinery features have significant damage, such as wide cracks in doors panels or rot at the base of door architraves, a specialist joiner can make discreet repairs or manufacture new sections to match the original. It is harder when

elements are missing altogether, but an experienced conservation joiner should be able to help you visualise what might have been there, taking inspiration from other rooms or from neighbouring properties.

If you want to add new joinery elements like double doors between reception rooms, bespoke items can be made to sit discreetly beside the original joinery, matching details such as mouldings. A set of double doors normally costs in excess of €800.

Conservation joiners can also tackle staircase repairs, including securing creaking stairs or wobbly balustrades, and replacing missing spindles. To bring out their full beauty, stair handrails should be French polished – this is a time-consuming task and you should put aside approx €500 if you want it done professionally.

One of the final stages of any renovation is usually the repair, sanding and re-finishing of floorboards. A number of companies specialise in this task, and it will cost €20-€25 per square metre to sand, stain (if required) and apply four coats of lacquer.

**Company name:** Nolan MPC  
**Contact details:** Unit 408L Grants Park, Greenogue Business Park, Rathcoole, Dublin 11.  
 Tel: 01 401 8500  
 Email: info@nolanmpc.ie  
 Web: www.nolanmpc.ie  
**Key contact person:** Shane Nolan  
**Specialist services provided:** Stone brick restoration

**Company name:** NK Conservation Joinery  
**Contact details:** Connolly, Co Clare.  
 Tel: 087 207 2625  
 Email: neiltkelly@gmail.com  
 Web: www.nkconservationjoinery.com  
**Key contact person:** Neil Kelly  
**Specialist services provided:** Restoration of joinery and new period-style joinery, including staircases.

**Company name:** EV Kidd Ltd  
**Contact details:** Unit 31/32, Finglas Business Park, Tolka Valley Road, Finglas, Dublin 11. Tel: 01 811 0722.  
 Email: info@evkidd.ie Web: www.evkidd.ie  
**Specialist services provided:** Floor sanding, finishing & French polishing

**Company name:** Conservation Letterfrack  
**Contact details:** Connemara West Centre, Letterfrack, Co Galway.  
 Tel: 095 410 36.  
 Email: info@conservationletterfrack.ie  
 Web: www.conservationletterfrack.ie  
**Key contact person:** Sven Habermann  
**Specialist services provided:** Conservation and restoration of architectural joinery work.

## Stonework

**IRELAND'S RICH** geological landscape has provided a wealth of different types of stone, which have been used over the centuries to build many beautiful homes and walls.

Stone used in period buildings tends to be local to the area. Dublin's south coast is lined with Victorian houses built with rubble walls made of Dalkey granite. Granite also predominates in County Wicklow and in parts of Counties Donegal, Galway and Mayo. In County Clare, cottages and farmhouses were built in limestone, whereas in County Cork, both sandstone and limestone are common.

There are a number of stonemasons specialising in the repair of historic stonework in domestic buildings and garden walls. Common problems include rotten timber lintels above windows and damage caused by freeze-thaw action. Old stones can spall or crack as a result of pointing with modern cement mortar, and a specialist stonemason will insist on the use of a breathable lime-based mortar for repair work. Repair and re-pointing of a stone

wall with lime costs €60-€100 per square metre. Lime mortar, combined with a heavy aggregate, is also used to provide the traditional 'harled' or 'wet dash' finish to vernacular stone farm buildings and cottages.

Renovators are often tempted to expose rubble stonework that was originally rendered. While it may look attractive, unfortunately most rubble stonework was designed to be rendered and may cause damp when left uncovered.

If you are trying to identify the stone used in your home, or source similar stone for repair work, specialist stone suppliers can offer advice. They usually stock new and reclaimed stone, and can also help you source rarer stones like Cork Red Limestone (which is actually a marble) and 'Greywacke' (a type of sandstone).

If you have a stone building or wall, and want to learn more about the stone used and how to repair it, Irish conservation expert Pat McAfee has written two books on the subject: 'Stone buildings' and 'Irish Stone Walls'.



**Company name:** Stoneware Studios

**Contact details:** Stoneware Studios, Pillmore, Youghal, Co. Cork.

Tel: 024 901 17.

Email [mail@stonewarestudios.com](mailto:mail@stonewarestudios.com)

Web: [www.stonewarestudios.com](http://www.stonewarestudios.com)

**Key contact person:** Hugh Dorrian

**Specialist services provided:** Supply of new and salvaged stone, and advice on stonework restoration.

**Company name:** Nolans Group Conservation and Restoration

**Contact details:** Unit 408L, Grants Park, Greenogue Business Park, Rathcoole, Co Dublin. Tel: 01 401 8500

Email: [info@nolanmpc.ie](mailto:info@nolanmpc.ie)

**Key contact person:** Shane Nolan

**Specialist services provided:** All types of stonework, including the use of lime mortars.

**Company name:** Nolan MPC

**Contact details:** Unit 408L Grants Park, Greenogue Business Park, Rathcoole, Dublin 11.

Tel: 01 401 8500

Email: [info@nolanmpc.ie](mailto:info@nolanmpc.ie)

Web: [www.nolanmpc.ie](http://www.nolanmpc.ie)

**Key contact person:** Shane Nolan

**Specialist services provided:** Stone brick restoration

**Company name:** Lynch Stonemasons

**Contact details:** Intack, Donard, Co Wicklow. Tel: 045 404 674

Email: [info@stonemasonsireland.com](mailto:info@stonemasonsireland.com)

Web: [www.stonemasonsireland.com](http://www.stonemasonsireland.com)

**Specialist services provided:** All types of stonework, including the use of lime mortars.

## Salvage

**SALVAGE YARDS** are an invaluable resource for any period home renovator. If you need to match brickwork or roof slates, or to replace a section of damaged floorboards, they might just have what you are looking for. As well as the building basics, they usually stock cast iron radiators, fireplaces, vintage sanitary wear, quarry tiles and old joinery. They may also have more unusual items like boot scrapers, panels of stained glass or old shop fittings.

Before you go, put on some old clothes and bring a pair of rubber gloves, because if you are willing to root around, you will often find some real gems. Most salvage yards sell items in the condition in which they were found, so remember to factor in the cost of restoration. Off-standard plumbing fittings may also need to be sourced for old radiators and sanitary wear.






## Thatching

**THATCHING** is one of Ireland's oldest building techniques, yet it has very modern eco credentials. It relies on the use of locally grown materials such as reed, straw, oat, wheat and hazel, and provides excellent acoustic and thermal insulation. It helps keep local vernacular building traditions alive, and the materials used are sustainable and recyclable.

In recognition of the many benefits of thatch, the Department of the Environment provides a 'Grant for the Renewal or Repair of Thatched Roofs'. Allowable every seven years, the grant provides two thirds of the approved cost, up to a maximum of €3,810, towards renovating thatched roofs of owner-occupied houses. A higher level of assistance is available for medical card holders or those living on specified offshore islands.

You may also be able to access this grant to help you re-instate thatch if your building

was previously thatched but has since been re-roofed with materials like slate or corrugated metal. However, the grant will not cover the full cost of a new thatch roof, which tends to be in the region of €16,000-€18,000 for 120sq metres of roof, or a typical 2-3 bed traditional cottage.

There are some drawbacks to thatch, including maintenance requirements and the perceived fire risk which can affect home insurance premiums. Common problems include damage caused by birds, storms or workmen walking over the surface. The lifespan of thatch varies hugely, depending on the roof shape and pitch (a steeper pitch will be exposed to less rain), the location of the house, the expertise of the thatcher and the material used. Water reed is particularly durable, lasting well over 30 years, but while traditionally used in coastal areas or near estuaries, it is not always appropriate in other areas. 

**Company name:** Philip Doran, Traditional Thatcher

**Contact details:** Cappalinnan, Rathdowney, Co Laois.

Tel: 0505 488 18

Email: phil@philipdoranthatcher.ie

Web: www.philipdoranthatcher.ie

**Key contact person:** Philip Doran

**Specialist services provided:** New thatching and repair work.

**Company name:** The Thatch Company

**Contact details:** Lackendarra, Ballinamult, Co Waterford.

Tel: 058 473 35

Email: info@thatchco.com

Web: www.thatchco.com

**Specialist services provided:**

New thatching and repair work.

**Company name:** Brereton Family Thatchers

**Contact details:** Martinstown, Suncroft, The Curragh, Co Kildare

Tel: 087 294 4522

Web: www.breretonstrawthatchers.ie

**Key contact person:**

John Brereton

**Specialist services provided:**

Thatching

**Company name:** Wicklow Thatching Service

**Contact details:** Knockrobin, Wicklow, Co Wicklow.

Tel: 087 257 5400

Email: kyranogrady@eircom.net

Web: www.reed-thatching.com

**Key contact person:**

Kyran O'Grady

**Specialist services provided:**

Thatching, including harvesting own Irish reed.

**Company name:** Irish Reed Supply Company

**Contact details:** Knocknaskeha, Meelick, Co Clare

Tel: 061 454 096

Email: irishthatching@gmail.com

Web: www.irishthatching.com

**Key contact person:**

Tomas Collins

**Specialist services provided:**

Thatching