

Co-op Coalition Survey: Repointing Brickwork

Thanks to the 10 members who responded to the survey. You provided an incredible amount of helpful, detailed information! This could serve as the basis for a Repointing Brickwork 101 course! Your responses were very helpful. Thanks, again, for helping one another!

Best,
Mike O'Dell, Director
DC Cooperative Housing Coalition

In a message dated Tuesday, January 02, 2018 11:50 AM, CooperativesDC@aol.com writes:

Answers to the set of questions, below, can be of significant help to many Coalition members. Please help the requesting co-op and, by so doing, helping many others at the same time now or in the near future! Please send your responses by close of business Friday, January 12.

Again: Thanks for helping out one another!

Mike O'Dell, Director
DC Cooperative Housing Coalition
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This email is being sent to co-op presidents, their representatives to the Coalition, and managers. You are being blind-copied to protect your privacy.

SURVEY OF COOPERATIVES' EXPERIENCE WITH REPOINTING

Our building was constructed in 1917, and building engineers have estimated the "useful life" of mortar in the exterior walls at 100 years. We had limited repointing and recaulking done in 2015 on two facades -- based on damaged plaster reported by residents and an inspection by building engineers as part of our twenty-year capital reserve replacement analysis. We are now weighing completely repointing other facades.

We would appreciate the insights gained by other cooperatives in considering or carrying out repointing of their buildings.

1. When was your building constructed?
2. Have you had any repointing done, and if so, when?
3. Have you done targeted repointing in troublesome areas or repointed entire facades?
4. What companies or contractors have you hired for assessment or repointing? Please rate them from 1 to 10 where 1 is terrible and 10 is excellent.
5. What problems, if any, were encountered during the repointing?
6. Has there been any evidence that repointing you had done was not entirely successful and needed to be redone?
7. Are there any factors you wish your cooperative had considered or been made aware of when you decided to repoint?

<25 Units	1. When was your building constructed? 1926-27 2. Have you had any repointing done, and if so, when? Yes, 2007, 2012, 2013
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	<p>3. Have you done targeted repointing in troublesome areas or repointed entire facades? targeted</p> <p>4. What companies or contractors have you hired for assessment or repointing? Please rate them from 1 to 10 where 1 is terrible and 10 is excellent. Shal Builders 10, Ev-Air-Tight 8, American Exteriors 8</p> <p>5. What problems, if any, were encountered during the repointing? None -- do need to pay attention to mortar color</p> <p>6. Has there been any evidence that repointing you had done was not entirely successful and needed to be redone? No, but in areas exposed to driving rain mortar may still let moisture through which can be solved by application of sprayed waterproofing</p> <p>7. Are there any factors you wish your cooperative had considered or been made aware of when you decided to repoint? No</p>
<p><25 Units</p>	<p>1. When was your building constructed? 1928</p> <p>2. Have you had any repointing done, and if so, when? Yes, 2012 on North face of upper level (5th floor) of two tiers; also spot-repointing over front entrance in 2015</p> <p>3. Have you done targeted repointing in troublesome areas or repointed entire facades? targeted repointing</p> <p>4. What companies or contractors have you hired for assessment or repointing? Please rate them from 1 to 10 where 1 is terrible and 10 is excellent. Chamberlin-Washington, Inc.</p> <p>5. What problems, if any, were encountered during the repointing? mismatched mortar color</p> <p>6. Has there been any evidence that repointing you had done was not entirely successful and needed to be redone? no, except for the problem of bad color matching which was not redone</p> <p>7. Are there any factors you wish your cooperative had considered or been made aware of when you decided to repoint? bad color matching for the repair mortar; experience level of the workman</p>
<p>25 – 49 Units</p>	<p>1. When was your building constructed? 1916</p> <p>2. Have you had any repointing done, and if so, when? Spot repointing in appx 2006, will be repointing in 2018. I suspect that there has been other repointing over the years, but I don't know when or how it was completed.</p> <p>3. Have you done targeted repointing in troublesome areas or repointed entire facades? Previous work in appx 2006 was spot only.</p> <p>4. What companies or contractors have you hired for assessment or repointing? Please rate them from 1 to 10 where 1 is terrible and 10 is excellent. I don't have information about the work completed in appx 2006. For the current project, we used Property Diagnostics to create bid sheets and scope the project. https://sites.google.com/site/propertydiagnostics/ We have had a positive experience. That company received and analyzed bids on our behalf. We accepted a bid from KGS, and the work has not yet begun.</p> <p>5. What problems, if any, were encountered during the repointing? It was very difficult to get comparable bids when the building attempted to solicit bids without a project manager/someone to define the scope of work. We did that in 2016, and in 2017 had success by first having Property Diagnostics assess the building and coordinate the bids.</p> <p>6. Has there been any evidence that repointing you had done was not entirely successful and needed to be redone? Not that I am aware of.</p> <p>7. Are there any factors you wish your cooperative had considered or been made aware of when you decided to repoint? I have received conflicting advice on whether it's necessary, but it is possible to get an analysis of the existing mortar so the repointing can match the composition of the</p>

	<p>substance used originally. This company offers that http://usheritage.com/services/mortar-analysis-and-matching-services/</p>
<p>25 – 49 Units</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. When was your building constructed? 1917 2. Have you had any repointing done, and if so, when? Yes, in 2015. 3. Have you done targeted repointing in troublesome areas or repointed entire facades? In response to residents' reports of leaking around windows, the board commissioned an updated building inspection and twenty-year capital reserve replacement analysis early in 2015. Based on the updated engineering report, a contract was let in September with another firm to recaulk around windows and tuckpoint cracked and void mortar joints. In October after positioning swing stage scaffolding to examine the exterior from outside, the contractor found additional areas where the mortar showed signs of deterioration and needed to be repointed. A revised bid was submitted and approved. 4. What companies or contractors have you hired for assessment or repointing? The building inspection and twenty-year capital reserve replacement analysis was performed by AmeriStruct-HARE Engineering (no longer in business.) They estimated that the useful life span of mortar is 100 years. Exterior examination, repointing, resealing and recaulking was done by Ev-Air-Tight, Shoemaker, Inc. The president of the coop board at that time rated the contractor's work as excellent (10) and spoke highly of the contractor's continuing availability for consultation throughout the project. 5. What problems, if any, were encountered during the repointing? As noted above, the repairs required were more extensive than originally anticipated. 6. Has there been any evidence that repointing you had done was not entirely successful and needed to be redone? No. The Board concluded that blistering on subsequently repainted interior plaster stemmed from not having allowed enough time for the plaster to dry out. Since that time evidence of leakage and damaged interior plaster elsewhere has been brought to the attention of the board, and the board is considering repointing on other portions of the exterior. 7. Are there any factors you wish your cooperative had considered or been made aware of when you decided to repoint? Given other ongoing repair projects, the board decided in 2015 to keep costs to a minimum by recaulking and repointing only those areas on two sides of the building where there was evident deterioration. As we contemplate our next steps, we are focusing on exterior walls that were not repaired in 2015 but where residents have reported interior damage. However, it is our intention to completely repoint those walls rather than repairing only the old mortar which appears to be deteriorating.
<p>25 – 49 Units</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. When was your building constructed? 1915 2. Have you had any repointing done, and if so, when? Some fairly major rear-building work in 1984. 3. Have you done targeted repointing in troublesome areas or repointed entire facades? The work in 1984 was mostly targeted, but with the entire top floor (of the rear facades) being repointed. 4. What companies or contractors have you hired for assessment or repointing? Please rate them from 1 to 10 where 1 is terrible and 10 is excellent. We have interviewed several companies within the recent past, looking for a good candidate when we decide to have additional needed work done. One was a 9, one a 6 or so. One (Titan Restoration) was barely a 1 ... appeared ready to do more harm than good (this is a subjective assessment, of course; and only based on their on-site interview and proposal). 5. What problems, if any, were encountered during the repointing? In our rear, the repointed areas are bit noticeable, but not too bad. Repointing can be difficult, because, ideally, the work should not call attention to itself. Some contractors appear to want to "prove" that they have done their job, by making the work stand out. 6. Has there been any evidence that repointing you had done was not entirely successful and needed to be redone? Happily, the 1984 work was well-done. But the company then tried to sell the co-op on an almost-full repaint, that was not really necessary. 7. Are there any factors you wish your cooperative had considered or been made aware of when you decided to repoint? At our earlier repointing, we could have planned-out

	<p>each facade in a more-complete way. For future brick work, we want to be careful, because we can see that bad repointing is pretty common throughout the city. In fact, several older buildings appear to have been reworked a couple of times. Plus, some companies try to upsell an owner on extra work that may or may not be needed. Our co-op needs some fairly minor (but important) street-facade work (according to a good resource) and more work in the rear; thus we are concerned about appearance and durability. So we here in our good brick co-op are interested this survey's results.</p>
25 – 49 Units	<p>[Our co-op has done] nothing major on a large scale but we have had some work done in specific places that had issues. We usually use a company called Ev-Air-Tight, they are very big in this area and have a very good reputation. They are very expensive (like everyone in this industry) and have a reputation for getting the work done quickly with no call backs.</p>
25 – 49 Units	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 1928 2. Yes, over the course of 2012-2014 3. We repointed entire facades during that time period. 4. Commercial Waterproofing Incorporated and Engineering and Technical Consultants, Inc 5. No problems encountered during the project. 6. Yes. Since last year we have had about 3-4 units report water damage / bubbling / signs of moisture to their units. We have since hired an attorney to guide us on next steps regarding this matter. 7. Whether there would be ongoing maintenance or touchups or resealing required within the first 5-10 years, as that is the problem we are facing now.
Manager of multiple 50-175+ unit 100+ year old buildings	<p>Responding as a manager who manages multiple 50-175+ unit 100+ year old buildings.</p> <p>Titan Restoration handles most of my repointing. They are not the cheapest but they are one of the best. Part of the problem is that a shoddy job won't show itself for years, well beyond most companies' warranties and short of having someone oversee each worker for the entire project, there's no way to guarantee what kind of job an association is getting. Multiple engineers have complemented their work and for those reasons, I hire them.</p> <p>For funding reasons, many associations I manage can't afford to repoint entire facades or elevations at once. Therefore, we are forced to spot-point as an interim measure until the funding for the project becomes available.</p> <p>One key point is that the tuckpointing is just one aspect of a waterproofing plan. In addition to the mortar, boards should look at lintel condition (the metal supports above windows which hold the bricks in place), sill condition (one-piece sills angled down to encourage water drainage are best – multi-piece sills have joints where mortar can fail and allow water intrusion), window/vent sealant, and flashing/capping are all areas where water can penetrate a façade.</p> <p>These factors should be part of a comprehensive study done prior to soliciting bids and developing a scope of work so that the board understands which elements it needs to consider and what their current condition is. Doing one of these projects the right way is not cheap, but by not cutting corners, a board can maximize the chances that the repairs serve the intended purpose.</p>
50+ Units	<p>When was your building constructed? 1929</p> <p>Have you had any repointing done, and if so, when? Yes, in 2016/17</p> <p>Have you done targeted repointing in troublesome areas or repointed entire facades? targeted repointing</p> <p>What companies or contractors have you hired for assessment or repointing? Please rate them from 1 to 10 where 1 is terrible and 10 is excellent. Blackburn Architects 1 and EV Air Tight 8</p>

	<p>What problems, if any, were encountered during the repointing? Access, missed work - oversight by the architects.</p> <p>Has there been any evidence that repointing you had done was not entirely successful and needed to be redone? Yes is a small areas, nothing substantial</p> <p>7. Are there any factors you wish your cooperative had considered or been made aware of when you decided to repoint? Brick sill conditions, we had to go back and repoint many they missed; It is important to consider whether an architectural or structural engineering firm should be engaged to provide proper contract oversight and ongoing quality control as the project proceeds. Coops typically have no expertise on staff to provide these services. The ideal choice is probably a structural engineering firm and not an architectural firm.</p>
50+ Units	<p>Our Co-op includes 7 historical townhouses built around 1790-1800 in addition to mid-century townhouses. We had repointing done several years ago on the townhouses. Unfortunately, the people who were involved in the contracting and overseeing the work are no longer here, but the one takeaway the community heard was that old concrete/cement is very different in composition to modern concrete/cement. Because “new” material was used, it was incompatible with the “old” material and pointing on the historic buildings failed. Lesson learned: Make sure the people doing the work understand the difference.</p>