

Preventative Maintenance

Preventative maintenance is the key to ensuring your building continues to retain its significance and can save you money by avoiding the need for expensive repairs in the future.

This leaflet aims to give owners and occupiers some tips and information regarding preventative maintenance to help ensure the building retains its special character and historic significance.



Check for slipped slates

1. Create a maintenance plan

A maintenance plan is a useful way of documenting the condition of your building and provides a checklist of things to look out for. It is important that maintenance isn't reactive and that it is planned to ensure that the fabric keeps performing as it was originally intended. Firstly walk around the building in order to make an external inspection of the building

and to note the elements which make up the building. It may be useful to use binoculars to see the roof and chimney breast and areas of the façade which are high up, such as the bargeboards. A maintenance checklist should be developed in order to monitor and record the condition of the building and could consist of the following items:

Task	What to look for	How often
Visual Inspection	Compile a checklist of the elements of the building and visually assess all items on a checklist	Every 6-12 months
Rainwater Goods	Make sure that gutters, down pipes and hopper boxes are free of debris, weeds and leaves so that water can run off the building smoothly	Every 6-12 months
Roof coverings	look for slipped tiles/slates, any holes and cracked roof coverings which may need replacing; inspect valleys of roofs to ensure no debris/ weeds preventing the flow of rainwater; check flashings and punctures to lead.	Every 6-12 months
Façade	check that air vents in brickwork are clear, any cracks appearing in the brickwork/render, ensure there are no weeds growing from façade; look for any signs of pests nesting in the façade; check shopfront for flaking paint, check for areas of mould and damp	Every 6-12 months
Windows and doors	Check for flaking paint or rotting timbers, repair and repaint if necessary; oil hinges and clean glass	Every 6-12 months
Areas around building	Make sure that the ground around the building is clear and that gardens or landscaping are not against the brickwork; check that ground drains are flowing and are not blocked up by debris	Every 6-12 months
Pointing	Check pointing is in place and no substantial cracks	Every 3 years
Timber joinery (windows, doors and bargeboards)	Check for flaking paint and any deterioration of timbers, particularly at joints, glazing bars, high level timbers such as bargeboards, repaint and repair as and when necessary.	Every 3 years
Chimneys	Visually assess chimneys to ensure that pointing is still in place, no visible cracks and the security of chimney pots.	Every 5 years
External painting	Paint all external joinery, such as bargeboards, windows and doors with a 'breathable paint' which allows water vapour through	Every 5 years

2. Keep a list of maintenance people

Not all jobs can be done by owners and occupiers, with some specialist advice and maintenance needed, particularly when working at height or investigations into structural failures.

Keep a list of tradespeople for the different elements of the building. It may be easier and cheaper to pool together with other owners in the street, particularly if maintenance works require working at height and requires the hiring of a 'cherry picker' for the day. Some useful questions to ask:

Check hopper boxes and downpipes for plant growth



Check windows and surrounds



Check roof valleys for weed growth and the facade for flaking paint

- Has the tradesperson worked on a listed building or a building within a conservation area and understands the conservation techniques of older buildings?
- Is the tradesperson affiliated with a professional conservation institution such as the Institute of Historic Building Conservation (IHBC)?
- Can the tradesperson show examples of similar buildings they have worked upon?
- Can the tradesperson offer a cheaper rate if more people in the street become involved in having their building maintained?

3. Health and Safety

A health and safety risk assessment is essential before considering inspections or maintenance of a building. If in doubt always hire a qualified professional. Some buildings may have difficulty with access, slippery surfaces, surrounding debris and broken glass. Always wear a hard hat, eye protection and gloves, and particularly a facemask if clearing debris or bird droppings.

A visibility vest may also be appropriate if in public areas. Also ask yourself whether the repair or maintenance work may disturb or expose hazardous materials. If you suspect that your property contains potentially harmful materials you should not undertake any work which may disturb or release the material, but seek advice from a suitably trained or qualified professional.

4. Further help and advice

It should be noted that some works may require consent from the Council, such as works over a pavement, within a public place or, planning, listed building or building regulation consent:

- **Building Control:**
Email: buildingcontrol@walsall.gov.uk
Telephone: 01922 652600
- **Development Management & Building Conservation:**
Email: planningservices@walsall.gov.uk
Telephone: 01922 652677

The following websites will also assist with preventative maintenance of historic buildings:

- **Historic England**
<https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/technical-advice/buildings/maintenance-and-repair-of-older-buildings/>
- **Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB)** <https://www.spab.org.uk/noticeboard/faith-in-maintenance/>
- **Historic Scotland Maintenance Toolkit**
<http://conservation.historic-scotland.gov.uk/home.htm>