

# Maintenance Checklist

The starting point is to draw up a checklist from which you can inspect a building in a logical sequence. The following is not an exhaustive list of maintenance inspection and routine tasks, but provides the basics involving the most critical elements.



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BEDFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL

## Rainwater Goods and Drains

Item	Check points	Action points
Gutters and downpipes	Do the gutters slope correctly? Is the water carried away effectively? Are there any stains on the wall suggesting blocked or damaged sections? Are the fixings secure? Do the gutters and downpipes need to be repainted? Check the condition of fascia boards	Clear away leaves and debris regularly. Consider fitting bird/leaf guards.
Gulleys	Does the gully catch all the water from the downpipe? Are gulleys free from leaves and other debris? Does the water flow away effectively after rainfall?	Clean gulleys regularly and remove any silt and debris. Clear any blockages using drain rods. Empty any silt traps every three months.
Ground gutters	Is the pointing between the bricks or flags in good condition or does it need to be repaired?	
Surface water drains	Is water satisfactorily carried away from the structure? Is water pooling on any surface?	Consider installing a water butt to collect rainwater.
Foul and combined	Are accessible drains, manholes, inspection chambers and outlets clear and in good condition?	
Soakaways	Does the water drain away quickly after rainfall?	Check for silting or contamination every few months or so. Remove any silt deposits when the soakaway chamber is empty.



Blocked gutter



Blocked drain

Vegetation blocking drain



## Roofs

Item	Check points	Action points
Clay tiles, natural slate and stone	<p>Is there any sign of frost, snow or wind damage?</p> <p>Is there debris from broken slates and tiles on the ground?</p> <p>Are there any loose, slipped or missing slates or tiles?</p> <p>Are there any large areas of moss on the roof covering?</p> <p>Are there any internal signs of dampness on ceilings that may indicate roof leaks?</p>	Record the location of slipped slates and tiles before having them replaced.
Ridges and hips	<p>Are there any missing ridge or hip tiles?</p> <p>Are there any areas where the pointing is missing?</p>	
Sheet metal roofing	Are there any splits or cracks in areas of flat or sloping sheet roofing?	Use mastic or repair tapes as an emergency measure until a proper repair can be carried out. Consider having heating tapes fitted in inaccessible gutters.
Asphalt, flat roofs	Are there any splits, cracks, blisters or bumps that are allowing water to penetrate the roof covering?	Use mastic or repair tapes as an emergency measure until a proper repair can be carried out. Inspect twice a year.
Thatch	<p>Does the thatch appear to be in good condition or are some areas starting to look thin or worn?</p> <p>Is there any evidence of water ingress?</p>	<p>Think about fire prevention measures.</p> <p>Ensure that any electrical wiring in roof spaces is checked regularly by a qualified electrician.</p>
Roof valleys and parapet gutters	Are plants, birds' nests or other materials blocking the passage or water in valley and parapet gutters?	<p>Clear debris from roof valleys and parapet gutters at least twice a year.</p> <p>Clear away snow from parapet and valley gutters in the winter.</p>
Flashings	<p>Are any flashings in good condition, without holes or splits?</p> <p>Are flashings securely fixed?</p> <p>Is the mortar pointing in good condition?</p>	
Access	Are duckboards, access platforms and handrails safe and in good condition?	Remove leaves and other debris that has become trapped underneath duckboards.
Chimneys	<p>Is the chimney stack leaning or out of position?</p> <p>Is there vegetation growing out of the chimney?</p> <p>Are there any cracks, loose or bulging stones or brick and badly eroded or open joints?</p>	Take prompt action to arrange a close inspection by a professional advisor if any of these problems are noted.



Broken roof tile



Chimney requiring attention



Poor thatch



Flat roof cracking

## Walls

Item	Check points	Action points
Structural issues	<p>Have you noticed any unusual or progressive cracks, bumps or bulges?</p> <p>Have you observed any spalling of the edges and corners of blocks of masonry?</p>	<p>Note down the position of any existing cracks, bulges or other such defects.</p> <p>Take advice from a professional advisor (surveyor/architect) about whether monitoring is required.</p> <p>Report any significant changes in any cracks to your professional advisor.</p>
Masonry	<p>Are there any signs of damage, particularly to key features such as string courses, cornices and hood moulds?</p> <p>Are there any areas of masonry that have become deeply eroded?</p> <p>Is the pointing in good condition or are there areas where it is deeply recessed, crumbly, loose or missing?</p>	
Render	<p>Are there any areas where the lime render has worn away exposing the stone underneath?</p> <p>Are there any cracks in the cement render that could be allowing water to penetrate into the wall core?</p>	
Timber	<p>Are there any signs of timber decay or possible insect infestation?</p>	<p>Ensure that the integrity of paint finishes is maintained by repainting external timberwork every few years.</p>
Plants	<p>Are there any plants or shrubs growing close to the wall and blocking air bricks or ventilation?</p> <p>Are there any plants growing on the walls that may cause damage?</p>	<p>Clear away plant growth from around the building.</p> <p>Consider removing ivy and other climbing plants.</p>
Ground levels	<p>Are there any signs that high ground levels are contributing to excessive damp in the building?</p>	
Air bricks and ventilators	<p>Are air bricks or ventilation grilles in good condition and free of obstruction?</p>	<p>Clear air bricks or ventilators if necessary.</p> <p>Consider fitting fine mesh behind the ventilator to exclude rodents and insects.</p>

## Doors and Windows

Item	Check points	Action points
Doors	Is it possible to open and close doors easily, without using any force? Are any metal coverings and flashings intact?	Lubricate door ironmongery. Check the security of any locks.
Timber / metal windows	Do windows 'stick' or are they difficult to open? Is the timber/metal in good condition and free from decay? Are any paint finishes in good condition?	Ensure that the integrity of paint finishes is maintained by repainting timber /metal windows every few years. Make sure that windows can be opened easily so that the building can be ventilated. Lubricate window ironmongery. Check the security of any locks.
Leaded windows	Is the lead matrix in good condition? Are any opening lights easy to operate?	Make sure that windows can be opened easily so that the building can be ventilated. Clear away any dirt from condensation drainage channels.
Glass	Are there any broken, cracked or missing panes of glass?	
Ironmongery	Are metal supports in good condition and free from corrosion? Are all paint finishes in good condition?	
External joinery	Are there any areas of cracked or rotten wood? Are all paint finishes in good condition?	Ensure that the integrity of paint finishes is maintained by repointing external joinery every few years.

Poor paint work and ironmongery



Rotten window frame



Cracked/damaged glass

## Inside the Building

Item	Check points	Action points
Roof spaces	Is there evidence of leaks or damage to the roof covering during heavy rain? Does the roof insulation restrict ventilation?	
Ceilings	Can you see any patches of staining on the underside of the roof or ceiling?	Consider carrying out an inspection of the roof covering if you observe any new stains.
Internal walls	Are there any patches of staining on the walls or other signs of excessive dampness?	Identify and address the cause of any dampness indicated by patches of staining or peeling paint. Open windows and doors on dry days during the summer months to allow water vapor to escape.
Floors	Are timber floors in good condition and free from decay? Do any floor coverings show signs of excess wear and tear or do they present a hazard?	
Internal joinery	Are there any signs of timber decay or insect attack? Have you checked less accessible areas such as floor and roof voids, under stairs and in cupboards?	



Water damage



Dry rot



Timber decay

## Services

Item	Check points	Action points
Plumbing		Fix dripping taps and leaks immediately to prevent moisture seeping into nearby timber or masonry and causing decay.
Electrical systems		Commission an electrical inspection by a qualified person at least once every five years. Ensure that a competent person carries out the annual 'routine' check.
Heating systems	Is the heating system operating correctly? Have you checked that all exposed water tanks and heating pipes are protected against severe frost?	Shut down the heating system once a year and have the boiler serviced. Bleed radiators if you have them. Ensure that the frost thermostat is operational.
Fire safety		Test and clean smoke alarms regularly.

## Health & Safety

Ensure you maintain your building safely. Ladders, lofts and roofs present particular hazards. It is best not to work alone, but think of the safety of helpers and others beneath if working above ground level. Safety equipment is needed for some jobs, including gloves for the clearance of drains or removal of pigeon droppings from gutters.

Do not touch gas or electrical supplies unless you are qualified.

If in any doubt about safe access, particularly on roofs and in attics, use a reputable, professional builder for inspection or work. Binoculars can be a useful tool to help you inspect roofs and other high level items.

*For further advice contact the Health and Safety Executive – [www.hse.gov.uk](http://www.hse.gov.uk)*



**Useful web addresses:**

<http://www.maintainyourbuilding.org.uk/index.php>

<http://www.spab.org.uk/>

<http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/>

<http://www.climatechangeandyourhome.org.uk>

<http://www.buildingconservation.com>

<http://www.aabc-register.co.uk>

[http://www.rics.org/site/scripts/download\\_info.aspx?fileID=2466](http://www.rics.org/site/scripts/download_info.aspx?fileID=2466)

[http://www.bedford.gov.uk/business/regeneration/townscape\\_heritage\\_initiative.aspx](http://www.bedford.gov.uk/business/regeneration/townscape_heritage_initiative.aspx)

[http://www.bedford.gov.uk/business/regeneration/townscape\\_heritage\\_initiative/property\\_maintenance.aspx](http://www.bedford.gov.uk/business/regeneration/townscape_heritage_initiative/property_maintenance.aspx)

For free building conservation advice, telephone the  
**SPAB Technical Advice Line** on 0207 456 0916

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