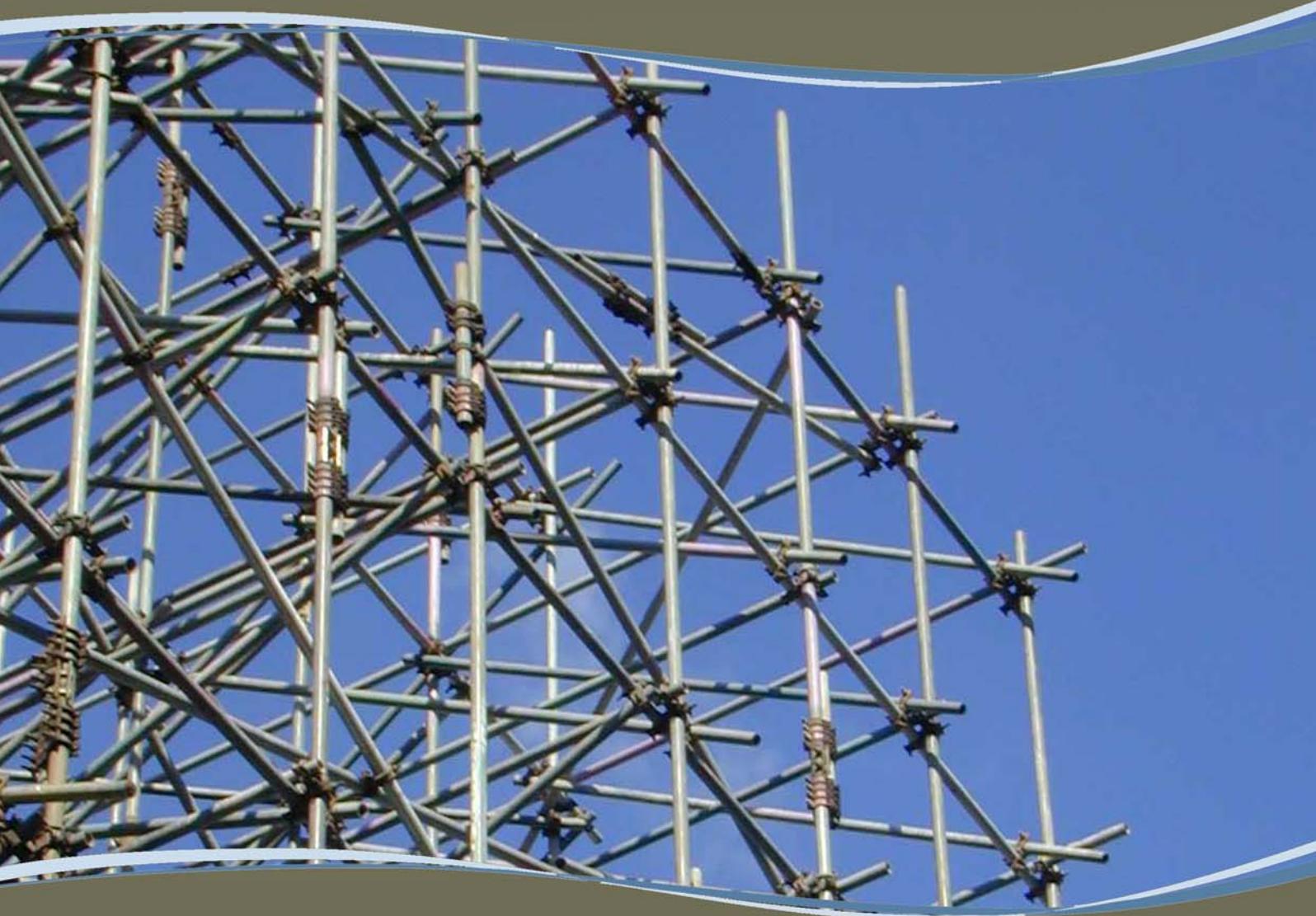


Development Management

Repair and maintenance of traditional buildings



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‘Informed conservation’ means understanding the historical development, and significance, of your building and identifying the most appropriate approach to its management.

Introduction

This is a guide for the owners of historic buildings on how best to maintain and, where necessary, repair your property. As there is a wide range of historic buildings in Newcastle, the guidance remains broad; for detailed advice you should always contact Development Management.

The most important element of caring for historic buildings is maintenance. Regular maintenance can avoid the need for repair or restoration work altogether. In the long run this is likely to save you money and time and will help to sustain the building into the future.



Above: failure to undertake regular maintenance can have seriously detrimental effects on historic buildings.

Listed buildings

Listed buildings are designated by the Government and English Heritage and are protected under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. Listed Building Consent is required for any work that would materially affect a listed building’s ‘special interest’, either inside or outside.

It is a criminal offence to carry out work to a listed building, other than minor like-for-like repairs without consent, so if you are planning significant repairs or alterations then you must obtain Listed Building Consent from the council.



Above: grade II* listed Civic Centre.

Conservation areas

Conservation areas are designated by the council under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. Most conservation areas in Newcastle benefit from guidance in the form of character statements and management plans.

The council has a duty to ensure the preservation and enhancement of the special character and appearance of conservation areas. If your property is in a conservation area then it may also be covered by an Article 4 Direction which introduces additional protection and means that you will need planning permission to carry out certain works.



Contrasting characters - above: Lower Ouseburn Valley Conservation Area and below: Central Conservation Area.



Scheduled monuments

Scheduled monuments are protected under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979.

Scheduled Monument Consent is required for any work that would affect a scheduled monument. It is a criminal offence to undertake works affecting a scheduled monument without written consent from the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS).

Scheduled Monument Consent (SMC) applications are administered, processed and determined by English Heritage, not the council. Application forms can be downloaded from their website www.english-heritage.org.uk and should be sent to the English Heritage North East regional office.



Above: the Norman Castle Keep, originally built in 1080 and rebuilt between 1168 and 1178. Grade I listed and a scheduled monument.

Locally listed buildings

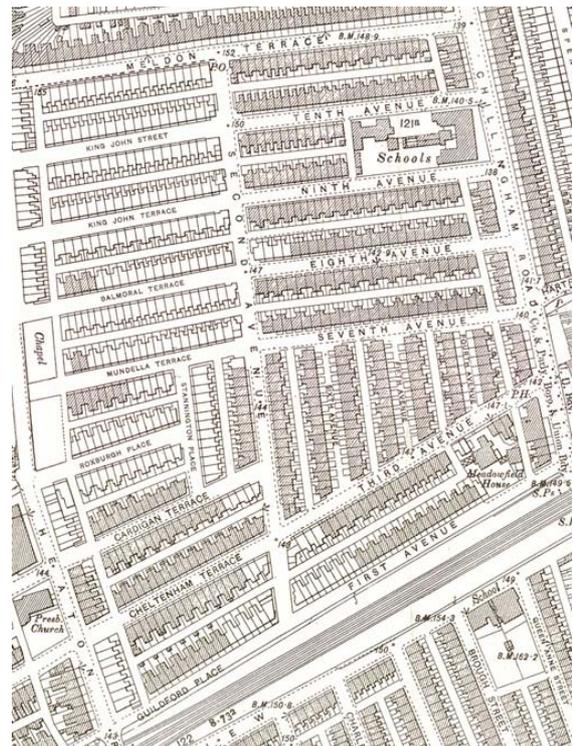
The local list is a list of structures and spaces in Newcastle with special local architectural or historic interest, which were nominated by members of the public. A Supplementary Planning Document provides planning guidance for those sites on the list which encourages the retention and conservation of Newcastle's local heritage assets.



Above: public conveniences in the Bigg Market, now locally listed.

Other historic buildings

It may be that your historic building has no statutory protection at all; this does not mean that it is not of interest or worthy of appropriate care, and the following advice will still be of use.



Above: comparing this excerpt of a 1912 OS map of Heaton with a modern aerial photo shows that much of the area has retained its original layout and is of demonstrable historic interest. There are few listed buildings, and the area is not currently a conservation area, but the buildings and streets are nonetheless of interest and worthy of appropriate treatment by owners and residents.

Maintenance

Guidelines for the inspection and essential maintenance of historic buildings are set out below. They are intended to help you to carry out an initial inspection; further advice is available from Development Management. The council is not in a position to undertake surveys on behalf of owners but is able to offer advice on suitable specifications for repairs, whether it is necessary to obtain consent for works, and whether there is financial assistance available. Please note, however, that even where a grant scheme is in operation it is not usual to contribute to works that are considered to be routine maintenance.

The aim of this guidance is to provide owners of all historic buildings with a guide to their inspection and repair. By carrying out regular inspections it is possible to establish the nature, extent and cause of any problems at an early stage. This gives you the opportunity to remedy defects promptly and economically. Damp problems, in particular, can often be remedied quickly and without recourse to expensive and invasive damp proofing methods. Damp is often the result of water getting into a building, for example through a leaking or blocked gutter. If the water source is removed and the building left to dry out naturally, the problem will normally be resolved.

The inspection of a large historic building is well within the capability of the average property owner. It is generally wise to then consult a professional as to the most efficient and appropriate method of repair.



The impact of a leaking gutter can be extreme. Above, it has taken the stucco off the stone work and below, water ingress has caused serious damage to the timber staircase and historic plaster work.



Maintenance year planner

Immediately

- **Attend to** overflowing cold water cisterns.

In rainy periods

- **Inspect** gutters, hoppers, downpipes and gullies for leaks and blockages.

Frequently

- **Test** smoke alarms.

Every spring

- **Inspect roofs for:** broken and displaced slates or tiles; ridge and verge slates and tiles that need re-bedding and/or re-pointing; perforated lead flashings and gutter linings; perished felt underlayer.
- **Check for:** deterioration of render finishes, brick and stone faces, and for unsound pointing to walls, parapets and chimneys. At the same time check that air brick vents are unobstructed and that everywhere around the base of the building, ground levels are not less than 150mm below the damp proof course (if there is one).
- **Trim back** ivy around openings and at eaves. Where it is necessary to remove large areas of ivy its main stems should be cut at low level and the ivy left to die back in-situ before gently removing it at a later date. This will minimise damage to mortar in joints.

- **Arrange for** any external painting as required. Check condition of glazing and putty and operation of doors, casements and sashes (page nine).

- **Remove** old nests from unused chimneys and install wire mesh grilles to prevent further nesting. Sweep chimneys that are in use.

- **Arrange for** routine servicing of boilers and inspection of gas appliances and flues.

Every late spring and summer

- **Check** all timber floors for excessive deflection.
- Take any opportunity to **examine** underfloor voids for dampness, rot and the adequacy of ventilation.
- **Check** condition of staircases and balconies and whether they meet current safety regulations, particularly in respect of height of balustrades in buildings used by the public.
- **Examine** internal screens, panelling, partitions, doors, frames and ironmongery.
- **Examine** wall and ceiling finishes.
- **Check** washers to ballcock valves and taps in cold and hot water and heating systems.

Every autumn

- **Clean** out gutters, hoppers, downpipes and gullies as often as necessary during and after leaf fall.
- **Clean** out manholes and rod drains. Inspect for broken manhole covers and gulley grates.

Every winter

- **Determine** which trees and shrubs constitute a potential problem in respect of roof invasion, collapse onto building, etc.
- **Clear** snow regularly from vulnerable areas.
- **Inspect** roof spaces for water and vermin penetration, adequacy of ventilation and condition of entire roof structure including that of any insulation in voids.
- **Check** water-based heating systems and bleed radiators. Check for even heat distribution throughout building.

Annually

- **Arrange** servicing of fire extinguishers.
- **Check** boundary walls, fences and gates.
- **Check** paved areas, paths and steps.
- **Check** operation of panic bolts and latches to emergency exit doors.

Every five years

- **Arrange** for testing of electrical systems.

The following page illustrates a typical historic terraced building.

While this building may not look exactly like your own, it provides a useful guide to some of the features that are typical to historic buildings and that are referred to in the text on these pages.

Repair

The main purpose of repair is to slow down the inevitable process of decay without damaging the character of your building, altering any of the features which endow it with historic or architectural importance, or unnecessarily destroying historic fabric. The extent of any repair should only be that required to ensure the long term survival of a building or its features: total or substantial replacement is rarely necessary.

If the repair of historic buildings is not sensitively undertaken then those qualities which make them attractive and significant will be lost. As a general rule, you are most likely to be successful in preserving the character of a building if you ensure that repairs are carried out in the same manner and with similar materials to those used in the original construction. It should be also be remembered that it is not only the front elevation of a historic building which is important. The same care and attention should be exercised when repairing or replacing elements of the less visible elevations and the interior.

The recording, by means of photographs and measured drawing of the relevant parts of the building, both as found and as modified by any repairs or alterations carried out, is strongly recommended as an aid, initially to the designing of the repairs and subsequently as a knowledge base for future owners of the building.

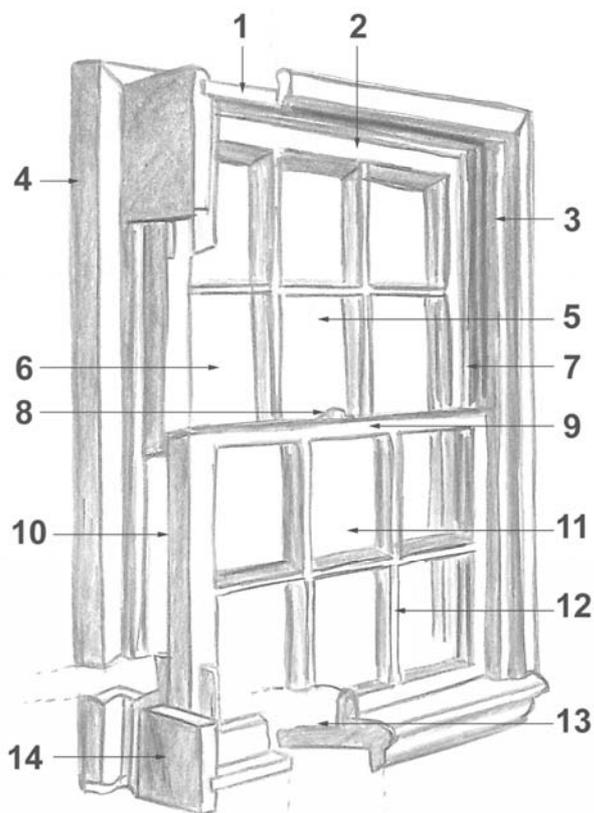
Where historic buildings are of particular importance or complexity, it may be necessary to employ experts from different specialisms to design appropriate repairs. This may include a specialist conservation practitioner.



Above: Stonemason Michael Moody repairing Earl Grey's head on the Monument.

Windows are a common cause for concern in historic buildings, and it is frequently the case that a window which appears, at first glance, to be rotten is in fact only in poor condition in localised areas. Relatively small-scale in situ repairs can often save a historic window and sustain it long into the future. Page nine of this document illustrates a section through a typical timber sliding sash window, identifying parts and explaining some terms.

Section through a typical timber sash window



- | | |
|--------------------|-----------------|
| 1. Head jamb | 8. Lock |
| 2. Rail | 9. Meeting rail |
| 3. Interior casing | 10. Stiles |
| 4. Brickmould | 11. Inner sash |
| 5. Outer sash | 12. Glazing bar |
| 6. Glazed pane | 13. Outer cill |
| 7. Parting strip | 14. Side jamb |

Glazing bars are delicate timber bars that separate individual glass panes in a window. The panes fit into the bars and are secured with putty. Glazing bars often feature attractive decorative profiles that cannot be replicated in any material other than timber.

Traditional buildings usually feature windows (and doors) with a “**vertical emphasis**”. This means that they are taller than they are wide. Changing the proportions of a historic window opening can radically alter the overall appearance of a building, and should therefore be avoided.

Sash cords, weights and box housing: sash windows slide up and down, controlled by the sash cord, which is attached to the side of the frame at one end and to a heavy weight (traditionally lead or cast iron)

at the other. The weight is hidden from view in the box housing, to either side of the window frame. Friction and gravity thus control the movement of the window.

Painting: windows from the 1700s onwards are usually softwood, and require regular redecoration in order to protect them from the elements. When repainting, old paint should be carefully removed as this will provide an opportunity to inspect the condition of the wood. Care should be taken not to paint over the putty that holds the glazing in place as this is likely to reduce natural movement and risk cracking. Likewise, painting over moving parts, such as sash cords, will impede the smooth operation of the window and could result in it becoming stuck.

General repair principles

- **Avoid unnecessary replacement of historic fabric** as it will have a negative effect on a building's appearance and historic interest. For example, window frames and sashes are often replaced at considerable expense when they could be more appropriately and cheaply repaired and upgraded for thermal efficiency.
- When designing repairs, the prime consideration should be the **preservation of the appearance and historic integrity** of a building by matching the existing materials and methods of construction. Any combination of new and old materials should be honestly shown and no attempt should be made to artificially age materials.
- As a general rule, **only well tried and tested materials and methods of repair should be used on old buildings**. For example, the inappropriate repair of mortar joints with cement can be extremely damaging – in most cases the use of a lime mortar will be required.
- In any comprehensive repair scheme, involving for example a whole street of houses, additions through age should not be removed in the pursuit of a spurious “perfection” or completeness of style. Much, of course, depends on the quality and contribution of the later alterations and no hard and fast rules can be applied. You should always seek advice from specialists and the council.
- The **restoration of missing features** should only be undertaken where their presence is crucial to the appreciation of the original design and where sufficient evidence exists for accurate replacement.
- Where funds are limited, carry out a **phased programme of repairs** in a logical sequence commencing with roofs and rainwater goods to ensure that the building is wind and water tight before proceeding to walls, windows and so on.
- Although not strictly a repair, the **cleaning of facades** often accompanies repair and restoration work. Inappropriately executed it can have a devastating effect on a building's appearance and can seriously undermine the condition and performance of brick and stone walls. Cleaning should not be undertaken without a full appreciation of the consequences and without drawing up a very precise specification for its implementation. If your building is listed then you must obtain Listed Building Consent for any cleaning works.

Contacts for further information

For information on **grade I and grade II* listed buildings** in Newcastle, contact:

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For information on **grade II listed buildings** and conservation areas in Newcastle, contact the Conservation Team:

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You may also be interested in the other guides in this series:

- Living in a conservation area: a guide for residents

- Listed buildings: a guide for owners and occupiers

- Conservation Area Profiles

These are available from Development Management and the council website www.newcastle.gov.uk/hes

Other organisations

Tyne and Wear Historic Environment Record

www.twsitelines.info

Heritage Gateway

www.heritagegateway.org.uk

Newcastle Heritage Partnership

www.heritagepartnership.org.uk

English Heritage

www.english-heritage.org.uk and www.helm.org.uk

Society for Protection of Ancient Buildings

www.spab.org.uk

Institute for Historic Building Conservation

www.ihbc.org.uk

Historic Towns Forum

www.historictownsforum.org

Historic Scotland

www.historic-scotland.gov.uk

Royal Institute for British Architects

www.architecture.com

Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors

www.rics.org.uk

