

HHEAD **o**f **D**DIVISION

(**HOD**)

TEMPLE

STRUCTURE SAFETY

under

DIRECTOR SAFETY

Temple Structure Maintenance (Building)

These wonderful principles for **OLD BUILDING MAINTENANCE** by **Roger Hunt** can be applied straight to the **MAINTENANCE OF TEMPLE BUILDINGS** which are 50 years and above old

Temple Structure Safety



Temple Structure Safety



Temple Structure Safety



Green Building Design

Thanks to

Roger Hunt
co-author



Maintenance



Roger Hunt, co-author (with Marianne Suhr) of the Old House Eco Handbook, stresses the importance of instigating a stringent maintenance regime in preventing potentially serious damage in old buildings.

Neglect the maintenance of an old building at your peril. Simple problems such as a slipped roof tile or slate, a cracked gutter or a blocked drain quickly escalate if left, leading to damp, decay and potential collapse. The longer the problem goes unchecked, the greater the damage and the further the building's history, character and value will be eroded and the less sustainable it becomes as more raw materials, resources, money and time will be needed to put things right.

Maintenance isn't simply about reacting to problems; it should be based on the sound philosophy that prevention is always better than cure. Whether you're dealing with a castle, church or cottage, maintenance must be planned as part of a regular cycle of repair backed by an inspection regime. When problems are discovered they should be fixed promptly and properly. Monitor areas that may be a cause for concern in the future and note jobs that need to be undertaken on a rolling basis, such as painting exterior woodwork and sweeping chimneys, so they can be scheduled appropriately.

Start the inspection process inside. Look for problems such as dampness, rot, beetle infestation, fungal growth, vermin damage and structural movement. If you smell dampness investigate thoroughly. Check behind cupboards, under stairs and, where access is available, in the roof space. A torch and small hand mirror can be useful. Ensure pipework, including waste pipes, is in good order, that there are no dripping taps and that stopcocks can easily be turned off.

Outside, note telltale signs of trouble on the ground. These may include broken tiles or slates, fillets of mortar, broken bolts from gutters, fragments of putty from windows or pieces of wood from joinery. Then, using binoculars, study all the key parts of the building including the roof, chimneys, gutters and downpipes and pay particular attention to junctions between different building elements such as the roof and parapet walls. Any damage to brick or stonework should be noted along with joinery defects. Areas where rot is suspected may be tested with a knife - sound timber resists penetration.

Where necessary, seek permission to carry out inspections from neighbouring properties or use ladders to gain access to otherwise inaccessible areas. Increasingly, on larger buildings, drones are being used to undertake aerial inspections.

Inspections carried out during heavy rain are particularly informative as they can reveal water leaking or spilling from gutters or from downpipes and gullies that may be cracked or overflowing due to blockages. Clearing leaves and other debris should be a regular job, preferably carried out in spring and autumn. It's also worth lifting the inspection covers of drains, flushing the pipes through and, where you suspect problems, using a set of rods to ensure all is clear. Specialist drain companies will use CCTV to undertake inspections to check for cracks or other problems.

Further essential maintenance tasks include ensuring air bricks are clear so there is good ventilation below suspended floors, removing soil banked up against walls and keeping vegetation around the building in check. Don't forget that maintenance is important both before and after extreme weather events such as high winds, snow, ice or prolonged rainfall. Neglect the maintenance of an old building at your peril. Simple problems such as a slipped roof tile or slate, a cracked gutter or a blocked drain quickly escalate if left, leading to damp, decay and potential collapse. The longer the problem goes unchecked, the greater the damage and the further the building's history, character and value will be eroded and the less sustainable it becomes as more raw materials, resources, money and time will be needed to put things right.

Slipped slates and blocked gutters are typical maintenance issues



Putty and paint may be needed in the repair of window frames



Blocked gutters should be cleared as soon as possible



Plant growth must be controlled on buildings



Roger Hunt

Roger Hunt is an award winning writer and blogger specialising in sustainability, old houses, house building and traditional and modern building materials. He is the co-author of Old House Handbook and the companion volume Old House Eco Handbook.