

Care - Maintenance

Regular maintenance by professional consultants and specialist contractors can preserve the authenticity of the historic buildings, slow down the decay of building elements. Meanwhile, it also helps keeping the buildings in a habitable condition and maintaining the historic and market values of the properties.

For traditional buildings constructed with Chinese tiled roof, masonry wall and timber structure, the material and design are breathable which need good ventilation. Unskilful repairs which break this norm will only accelerate the deterioration of the historic structures and fabrics. The use of right skill and right material are important. Maintenance of traditional buildings needs to be supervised by experts who understand the characteristics of the materials and design of the buildings.

Owners shall appoint building consultant with conservation knowledge to inspect the historic buildings and prepare a conservation plan for the continuous upkeep of the buildings.

Comprehensive maintenance will be required for all historic buildings particularly which is dilapidated or which is vacant and left unattended for a long time. It includes regular inspection and general maintenance. And, maintenance can be classified into planned maintenance and reactive maintenance.

Planned maintenance based on regular inspection and repair cycle of building elements allows actions taken before failure occurs. For example, clearing rainwater pipes and vegetation at high level; re-painting timber windows or metal elements in every 5 years; employing services for monitoring and controlling termite infestation. Prevention is better than cure.

Reactive maintenance aims to rectify defects. For example, repairing leaking gutters and repairing tiled roof damaged by tree branches after typhoon. Reactive maintenance shall be carried out without delay to prevent further damage to other building elements.

If owners wish to alter or modify the historic buildings, it is necessary to follow the requirements of relevant law and take care of the historic fabric. You may have to appoint an Authorized Person with conservation knowledge to lead the project and employ specialist contractors to carry out the works. If you are the owner of a declared monument, you need to have a permit for carrying out repair works under the Antiquities and Monuments Ordinance. For details, you can contact the Antiquities and Monuments Office.

Short Guide on Maintenance of Your Historic Building will be available at
<https://www.hkis-heritage.com/>

Resources

Financial Assistance for Maintenance Scheme on Built Heritage ("the Maintenance Scheme")

The Maintenance Scheme is to help preserve historic buildings from deterioration due to lack of maintenance by providing financial assistance in the form of grants to the owners of privately-owned graded historic buildings and tenants, who are non-profit-making organisations ("NPOs"), of government-owned declared monuments and graded historic buildings for them to carry out minor maintenance works by themselves.

Amount of Grant

The amount of grant for each successful application will be determined based on the justifications provided by the applicant. The ceiling of grant for each successful application is HK\$2 million inclusive of both the consultancy fee and costs of the maintenance works.

Eligibility

Owners of privately-owned graded historic building, and tenants, who are NPOs, of government-owned declared monuments or graded historic buildings can apply for grants under the Maintenance Scheme. A list of the current declared monuments and graded historic buildings can be obtained from the following links:

<https://tinyurl.com/y3nhowe9>

<https://tinyurl.com/y46k8t8f>

<https://tinyurl.com/y4rtaboh>

Detail of the Maintenance Scheme can be obtained from the following link:

<https://tinyurl.com/y3xh7up8>

Specialist Contractors

Specialist contractors under the Repair and Restoration of Historic Buildings Category can be obtained from the following link:

<https://tinyurl.com/y56n7umt>

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歷史建築 維修小冊子

Tips for Maintenance of Historic Buildings

發展局保育歷史建築基金資助
Funded by Built Heritage Conservation Fund, Development Bureau

THE HONG KONG INSTITUTE OF
SURVEYORS
香港測量師學會

Historic Buildings

Hong Kong with its Chinese cultural background and Western influence in the colonial period has cultivated its unique heritage. You can still find over a thousand graded historic buildings or declared monuments in the concrete forest. There are traditional vernacular Chinese architecture like ancestral halls, study halls, village houses and temples. There are also Western colonial styled buildings like civil buildings, residential villas, schools and churches. Within the early developed urban areas, there are also groups of tenement houses (tong lau) built in the early twentieth century to house the influx of Chinese immigrants from mainland China in that era.



These historic buildings are our valuable cultural assets; they shape our identity, tell us the story of the past and are collective memories of many of us.

The success of conserving these valuable assets rely on the support of the community including owners, occupants, developers, the government and the general public.

Appreciation

There are many characteristics of historic buildings that enable them to survive until today. Aesthetically, their designs are well received at all times by the majority. They are typical energy efficient buildings. The traditional design aims to provide a comfortable environment by integrating with nature instead of mechanical means. The design details and the skilful construction are tested over the years to be effective against extreme weather. For example:



- verandah to keep off the sun and render the internal area cool in hot summer
- open courtyard in traditional Chinese architecture for providing ventilation to the house
- ventilator and openings at the high level to allow rising hot air to dissipate from the building to achieve natural ventilation
- thick wall to achieve good thermal insulation and acoustic insulation
- construction with good quality and durable material could last for centuries.

The intangible value of historic buildings are also high:

- the high quality decorative artworks contain the unique traditional skills of the craftsmen
- full of characters with symbolic and spiritual meaning to reflect our culture
- the use demonstrates the spirit of the place
- each building contains its unique story and memory, which are of unmeasurable value



Historic buildings contain so many valuable cultural and architectural characteristics. They worth our appreciation and deserve our actoins to preserve them for our descendants.

Care – Routine Caring

Historic buildings are often considered to be difficult to manage and are expensive to maintain. In fact, by understanding the characteristics of traditional buildings, and with the right care and attention, they can last for a long time.

Routine caring is the best solution to prevent building from deterioration. Three areas that need particular attention:

- Keep out of moisture
- Prevent insect attack
- Stop plant growth on building fabric

Keep out of moisture. Allow water shedding off the building smoothly. Maintain good ventilation to let trapped water evaporate before causing damages.

Roof and roof gutters: to allow water shedding /draining away from the roof smoothly

- Remove debris and plant growth
- Check for wear, cracks and punctures
- Check damp patches and soft timber at the roof structure

Drainage

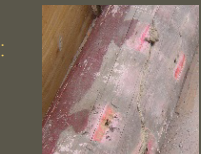
- Remove any debris that blocks the drains
- Check pipe leakage by observing if there are any damp patches on wall behind the drainage pipe
- Check for sign of blockage, for example water overflow

Insect, in particular termite, can eat up all your timber elements and books. Early eradication can minimise the damages.

- Check signs of insect infestation i.e. mud tube, small holes, sign of dampness, soft timber and deformation
- Tap timber to check for damped sound (soft and rotted timber), hollow sound (internal fibre is eaten up)

Small plants on the building can grow into big trees. Their roots will induce dampness to the roof and walls, causing cracking and structural problem; for the worse, they can entangle your whole building.

- Remove any small plant at reachable position immediately



Owners can walk around your building and draw up an inspection checklist on aspects that you are able to judge their conditions. For areas that are difficult to access, owners are recommended to contact competent tradesmen and professionals to helpout the inspection and repair works.