

INSPECTION CHECKLIST

A Worksheet Approach to Preventative Maintenance for Property Owners

INSPECTING YOUR HISTORIC BUILDING

This checklist is intended as a general guide for inspecting older buildings. Since all buildings are different, the checklist can be adapted to fit specific cases. It is not intended to take the place of an evaluation by a professional building inspector, contractor, engineer or architect. If building faults are identified through the use of these guidelines, such persons should be consulted for professional expertise and assistance in addressing and correcting the fault.

ROOF

Because the roof is typically the first line of defense against water infiltration, maintenance is critical.

Materials:

- Look for signs of severe wear, warping, cracking, lumps, curling, splitting, rusting, and pieces that are loose, missing or broken.
- Asphalt Shingles: Are shingles missing, curling on the edges, or losing mineral coating (granules)?
- Wood Shakes or Shingles: Are shingles missing, curling, or cupping on the edges?
- Slate: Are there any missing, broken, or fallen slates?
- Metal: Is there rust?
-  Slate: should last 75-150 years
-  Asphalt shingles: should last 15-30 years depending on shingle quality and installation
-  Wood shingles/shake: should last 10-25 years depending on shingle quality and installation
-  Asphalt roll roofing: should last 10-15 years
-  Standing Seam metal: should last 50-75 years (need to paint every 5-10 years)

Structure:

- Is the ridge of the roof level, or does it sag?
- Check rafters for deterioration and moisture penetration.
- Is paint peeling or blistering at the cornice (eaves), especially on the underside?
(Check the edge of the roof overhang for evidence of ice dams and water damage.)
-  A dry, properly maintained roof structure should last indefinitely.

Chimney:

- Is the chimney sagging, leaning or bowing?
- Is the chimney cap rusting or missing?
- Are bricks or stones cracked, loose or missing? Are the mortar joints tight?
- Is the metal flashing at the chimney loose, missing or rusted?
-  Masonry pointing should last 50 years or more.

Gutters & Downspouts:

- Are there loose, rotted or missing gutters or downspouts?
- Is there rusting or paint loss?
- Do the gutters slope uniformly to the downspouts?
- Are the gutters clean and free-flowing? Are the elbows of the downspouts blocked with packed material?
- Do downspouts have splash blocks? Is rainwater properly diverted away from the base of the building?
-  Clean out gutters in the spring and fall.

EXTERIOR WALLS

Structure:

- Is the wall out of plumb or unlevel? Is the wall leaning, bowing or bulging?
- Are cracks evident? Are the door and window openings square?

Materials:

- Are the walls water stained? Is there any mold or mildew on the wall surface?
- Is wood trim sound, firmly attached and painted?
- Are there open joints around door and window frames or woodwork?
- Is the paint peeling, blistering or cracking (alligatoring)?

Masonry:

- Are any masonry units missing, loose or deteriorating?
- Are any bricks missing, spalling or crumbling?
- Is the mortar soft, loose, flaking, or crumbling?
- Are there any major cracks in the masonry?
(Vertical or diagonal cracks through masonry units and joints in particular can signal problems.)

-  Masonry units can last for centuries with proper maintenance. Address moisture problems promptly.
-  Pointing should last 50 years or more.
-  Wood clapboards can last 150 years, with proper maintenance.
-  Painted surfaces may require repainting every 5-10 years.
-  Paint previously painted masonry surfaces about every 10 years.

FOUNDATION

- Does water drain away from the foundation? Does water collect excessively in any areas?
- Is vegetation growing on the foundation, causing water infiltration?
- Is the foundation wall bulging or bowing?
- Are there vertical or diagonal cracks in the concrete or masonry?
- Is masonry missing, loose, flaking, crumbling, or cracking? Is the mortar loose or crumbling?
-  Properly maintained masonry should last indefinitely.
-  Proper repointing should last 50 years or more.

EXTERIOR FEATURES

Porches, stairs, railings, cornices, brackets and other exterior features.

- Are these features in good repair? Are elements missing or loose?
- Is any wood cracked, split, or rotted?
- Is the paint cracked, faded or peeling?
-  Repaint features every 5-10 years, depending on surface and conditions.
-  Wood porch floorboards can last 50 years or more, if protected.

WINDOWS and DOORS

Operation:

- Do windows and doors open and close smoothly? Do they stick due to excessive paint buildup?
- Does the window sash (the movable part of the window) operate smoothly?
- Is the window sash loose in its frame?
- Are window sash cords broken or missing?

Glass:

- Is the glass broken? (Broken glass should be repaired immediately to guard against water infiltration.)
- Is the putty around the panes of glass firm and painted? Do the glass panes fit securely?
-  Window glass, properly maintained, should last indefinitely.

Materials:

- Are all wood window and door components, exterior and interior, sound and painted?
- Do the exterior sills, frames or sash show signs of decay, rot or insect damage? (Sills are particularly vulnerable.)
- Is the door's threshold rotted?
- Are there open joints around the frames and trim?
-  Wood windows, properly maintained, can last 100 years or more.
-  Doors, properly treated, should last indefinitely.
-  Perform periodic repairs, and limited parts replacement, as required. (Sills and thresholds may require repair or replacement before other frame members.)
-  Repaint every 5-8 years as necessary, depending on weathering.

Weatherization:

- Are storm doors and storm windows available for use during winter months?
- Do storm windows fit tightly?
- Are the screens damaged?
- Is there evidence of excessive moisture penetration around the sash or at the sills on the interior?
- Does condensation build up on interior or exterior storm sash during winter months? (Some condensation is normal, but high amounts of condensation can deteriorate wood quickly.)
-  Putty should last 10-15 years.
-  Caulking should last 15-20 years.
-  Clean and mend screens and storm windows annually.