
Preface

This book by Jürgen Klemisch and his team exemplifies their many years of experience in the building profession. Through their expert understanding of the needs of historic buildings they have written an invaluable aid to best practice maintenance which is presented in a straightforward logical format. Although the examples provided are intended for polite architecture, the principles can be applied to all.

All too often, neglect is caused by a lack of understanding of the maintenance needs of a building – a fact long championed in the UK by the Society for the Preservation of Ancient Buildings and other key heritage organizations, and now accepted in any work centred on life-cycle costings. This excellent publication builds upon the work of Monumentenwacht in the Netherlands, widely accepted as a best practice approach.

The informed approach contained in this book was developed after the reunification of Germany in 1989. This was partly as a response to the demands of an extensive works programme for many historically and culturally important castles which had been largely neglected in East Germany. The methodology emphasises the need for the long-term preservation of a building once it has been refurbished. This is achieved by setting out responsibilities and providing guidelines in a clear and user-friendly format.

By following the process outlined, a definitive logbook can be produced which covers all maintenance needs, including timing for repairs and accurate budgeting. The standard documentation is easy to understand and use, whether by contractors, service providers, caretakers or users/tenants.

The book itself is divided into two core parts plus examples from an actual project:

1. User Maintenance Instructions for use by the tenant
2. Condition Surveys for use by the owner or manager

Part 1 sets out responsibilities: what the tasks are, how they should be performed, where they are and who should undertake them. It provides simple work cards for each self-contained subject area. The need for location plans and task descriptions is set out, providing an overview in a tabulated format that is detailed yet easy to use, and which can also be updated. Specialist tasks are also identified, such as the maintenance of ventilation systems, fire alarms, water treatment and others.

Part 2 shows how routine inspections can be undertaken with minimal disturbance by the owner/manager, using a logical walk-through sequence with target times for identifying and analyzing any defects. Checklists are provided throughout to ensure that all considerations are met,

along with useful example spreadsheets which demonstrate how straightforward and effective the approach can be. These provide a highly effective overall framework – this attention to detail acts as a record of the issues and a simple specification.

Guardians of historic buildings, whether short-term tenants, statutory agencies or charitable organizations, should be conscious of their responsibilities and will be reassured by the expertise they now have access to in this book. Its straightforward approach will be of value to all building consultants (however experienced) and adoption of this model will be of significant benefit to the heritage sector.

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