

## BUILDING ESSENTIALS

*Helping you care for your valuable historic buildings and high streets.*

SOUTH  
NORWOOD  
REGENERATION PROGRAMME

# Maintenance Calendar

## A suggested plan for annual tasks

*Building Essentials is funded by Historic England as part of the South Norwood High Street Heritage Action Zone Programme.*

Training and Guidance by:



HM Government



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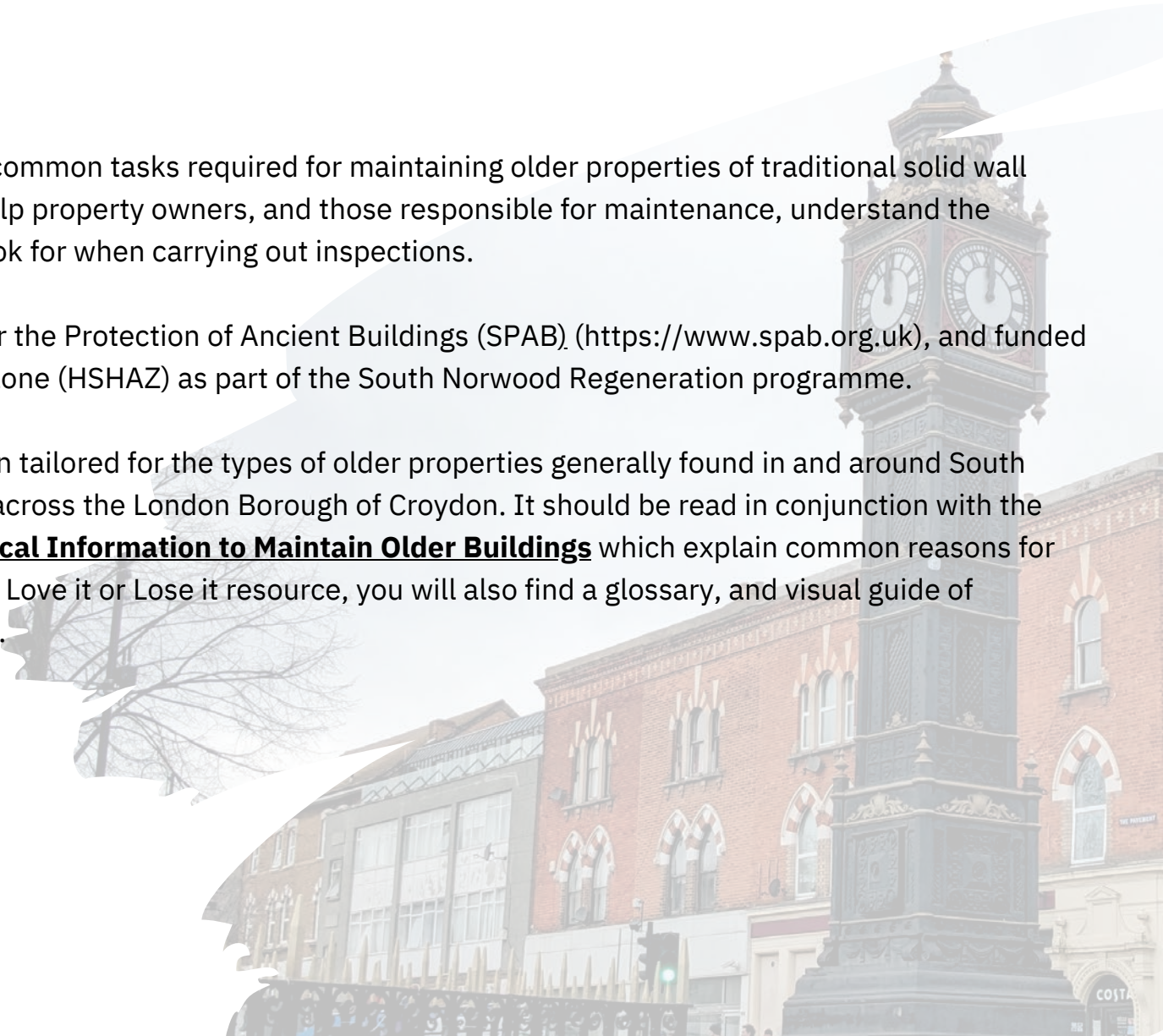


## Introduction

This *maintenance calendar* is a suggested plan of common tasks required for maintaining older properties of traditional solid wall construction. This calendar has been created to help property owners, and those responsible for maintenance, understand the importance of regular maintenance and what to look for when carrying out inspections.

This calendar has been produced by the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB) (<https://www.spab.org.uk>), and funded by Historic England's High Street Heritage Action Zone (HSHAZ) as part of the South Norwood Regeneration programme.

The information and tasks in this calendar has been tailored for the types of older properties generally found in and around South Norwood but can be relevant for property owners across the London Borough of Croydon. It should be read in conjunction with the complementary guidance **Love it or Lose it: Practical Information to Maintain Older Buildings** which explain common reasons for decay and what to look for in your buildings. In the Love it or Lose it resource, you will also find a glossary, and visual guide of maintenance terms and common building features.



## January

- Have your electricity system checked by a qualified person every 5 years.
- Smoke alarms should be regularly tested and cleaned. Remember to replace the batteries too.
- Check the condition and safety of any ladders, inspection equipment, and means of roof access; as well as personal protective equipment or other kit used as part of regular maintenance.

Maintenance Kit  
Box



## February

- If appropriate check that roofs and windows are bird proof before nesting starts. Do not disturb bats.
- If you have valley or parapet gutters make sure they are clear and water is running freely to prevent water from entering the wall tops and roofspace. Extra caution is needed in icy conditions.
- Gullies beneath downpipes and around drains should be cleared out regularly.

Tree sapling and  
damage to  
render  
indicating  
blocked parapet  
gutter



## March

- Check that gutters and downpipes have not been damaged during frosts. Look for cracks or leaks in rainwater goods, note and if it is safe to do so ideally repair damaged sections.
- Inspect lead flashings and mortar fillets at chimneys and roof wall abutments for signs of decay. Problems include holes or splits in the lead-work and cracked or missing mortar fillets.
- If your roof space has safe access and is boarded, check whether there is evidence of leaks or damage to roof covering during heavy rain, especially below gutters.



**TOP TIP:** Use a hand mirror to look behind downpipes as splits and cracks in old cast iron and aluminium often occur here and are not easily noticed.

## April

- Check your roof for storm and wind damage. As well as slipped slates or tiles, debris on the ground can indicate a problem.
- Make sure gutters and downpipes are cleared of leaves and other debris. Regular attention may be needed if there are trees nearby in blossom or coming into leaf.
- Look out for cast iron gutters and downpipes that may also require re-painting.
- Gullies beneath downpipes and around drains should be cleared out regularly.

Slipped slate photo after storm damage



## May

- Drains should be cleaned and rodded out if they overflow during wet weather. Remove silt and debris to ensure water discharges freely.
- Make sure that windows open easily and that vents are working so that the building can be ventilated on dry days during the summer months. Lubricate door and window fittings and check security locks.
- Shut down the heating system and have the boiler serviced. Bleed radiators and ensure that the frost thermostat is operational.
- Clear away plant growth from drains, drainage channels and around gullies and the base of the walls generally.

## June

- Check the masonry or render for signs of damage. Seek expert advice on deeply eroded or missing mortar joints, cracks or signs of movement.
- If your building has a painted finish check it isn't peeling or flaking. Repair and re-decoration may be required.
- Check timberwork for signs of rot including floor and roof voids and under stairs. Don't forget to check in and behind your cupboards.
- Check vermin can't access roof and floor voids.

Peeling paint above doorway



**TOP TIP:** Fit bird/leaf guards to the tops of soil and downpipes and gullies to the base of downpipes to prevent blockages.



**TOP TIP:** Have gutters adjusted or re-fixed if they are discharging water onto the wall – look for staining to the walls.

## July

- Look at timber windows, doors, fascia boards and bargeboards. Check for cracked and rotten wood. Repair and re-decoration may be required.
- Clear away any plant growth from around the base of the walls and in particular around gullies and drains.
- If the building has a lightning protection system have it serviced every five years.
- Take a break in August!

Flaking and rusting downpipe



## September

- If your roof space has safe access and is boarded, check for evidence of leaks or damage to the roof covering during or after heavy rain. You might spot light coming through gaps left by missing or slipped slates.
- Clear away any plant growth from around the base of the walls and in particular around gullies and drains.

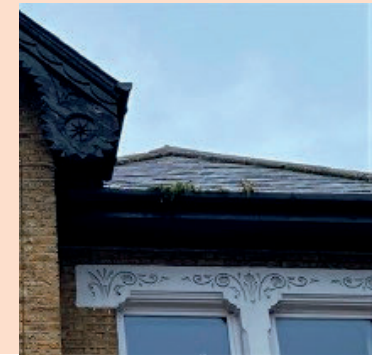
Buddleia allowed to grow above a shopfront



## October

- Check that the heating system is working properly.
- Clear leaves and debris from gutters and downpipes regularly. If you have them, check valley or parapet gutters, particularly if the building is surrounded by trees, or perched on by pigeons.

Gutter blocked with vegetation



**TOP TIP:** Regular painting of cast iron is essential to prevent rust and keeps your property looking good.



**TOP TIP:** The best time to look at gutters and rainwater goods is during or just after the rain as this will help you to spot any leaking sections.

## November

- Inspect the roof for damage after storms or heavy rain. Look out for broken or missing slates that may allow water to get in.
- On larger buildings check that any snowboards or access walkways on the roof are in a good state of repair.
- Check for loose downpipes. Tighten or replace broken or missing bolts and clips.
- Remove any dead plant growth from drainage channels, around gullies and the base of the walls, generally.

Slipped slates allowing rain to get in.



## December

- If you have them clear valley or parapet gutters if to prevent water rising above the leadwork and causing damp internally. Take extra care if it is wet or icy under foot.
- Gullies beneath downpipes and around drains should be cleared out regularly. Drains should be rodded out if they overflow during wet weather. Remove silt and debris to ensure water discharges freely.
- Make sure that any fire safety equipment has been serviced.

Gully not draining away properly after heavy rain.



## SAFETY

Ensure you maintain your building safely:

- Ladders, lofts and roofs present particular hazards. It is best not to work alone, and think of the safety of helpers and others beneath.
- Safety equipment is needed for some jobs, including protective gloves, for the clearance of drains or removal of pigeon droppings from gutters. Hard hats should also be worn at high level.
- Do not touch gas or electrical supplies unless you are qualified.
- If you are in any doubt about safe access, particularly on roofs and attics, use a reputable, professional builder for inspection of work.
- Don't undertake maintenance work at high level unless you are accompanied and have suitable equipment. If in doubt always seek help from a professional.



**TOP TIP: Binoculars, mirrors and selfie sticks can be useful tools to help you inspect roofs and other high level items.**

## Need more help?

Further information, help and advice on all the areas covered is available through the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings at [www.spab.org.uk](http://www.spab.org.uk).

Alternatively you can phone their technical advice line on 020 7456 0916, 9.30am-12.30pm Monday to Friday.

## Thanks and image credits

With thanks to SPAB for use of their idea for this calendar.

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