Each building is unique
Look upon any quality building – regardless of age and style – as something exceptional. The building is a link in a historical chain, and is a resource – not an obstruction. What are the qualities of the building? Which aspects of the building will be of interest in 150 years? We have a tendency to dislike what our parents created, whilst the creations of our grandparents are of increasing interest.

Get to know the building
Carry out pre-examinations. The more knowledge you have about the building, the more conscious you will be when working with it. How does the building appear in its surroundings? Do the old drawings correspond? What changes have the building gone through? Examine the use of materials and building techniques. Damage may occur where the old meets the new. Collect your documentation, for the use of others – later on.

Have discussions – seek advice
No one knows everything. Do not surmise. Seek advice from experts. Ask again, rather than making mistakes. Buildings worthy of preservation are non-renewable resources where everything must be done right. Contact experts on cultural heritage as early as possible and prior to planning.

Adapt user needs
The building should only adapt to the users’ requirements within the building’s physical limit of tolerance. If a conflict occurs between the needs of the users and the building’s possibilities, it is a question of whether or not the building suits the purpose.

Minimize changes
All buildings have a limit of tolerance, before their character is lost. Be humble. Let the building’s characteristics and quality be guiding. Previous rebuildings and changes may be important to maintain as they tell the history of the building, through changing styles and use. The building’s historical layers (e.g. layers of paint or wallpaper) should, as a rule, not be removed. Old technical installations and permanent fittings may also be of cultural value. Detail counts! Do not ‘improve’ the existing based on personal preferences.

Choose reversible solutions
It is better to add something new rather than removing original building elements. Respect the building’s structure. Technical installations should also be reversible. All new elements must be designed with respect for the building’s original character. The simple and obvious is often the best.

Keep old building elements
If doors, permanent fittings etc. must be removed, examples of same should be stored, preferably on the property, as documentation. If unfeasible, make sure to take photographs, measure and draw objects that cannot be preserved. Do not throw away old building elements – think recycling and environment.

Use the correct materials
Select building materials that can stand the test of time. Materials with a well-known tradition of maintenance, is a safe and often sustainable choice. If new materials are being used, they should interact with the original. Register the product and its manufacturer in a maintenance manual belonging to the building.

Create quality
Spend time on preparations, development of ideas and planning. The expenditure for co-ordination, development and change of plans are less during the planning phase than during construction. Everyone involved in the project should agree upon goals related to sound architecture and cultural heritage. Seek advice and help. Be respectful of other trades and skills. Set standards for consultants and other practitioners. Knowledge leads to dedication, which again contributes towards an excellent result. Think ahead: both economically and aesthetically. You shall be proud of the result!

* To take care = to be attentive, careful, considerate, meticulous, responsible, thoughtful.
Maintenance is preservation

Maintenance is better than repair, and repair is better than replacements. Regular maintenance is the best and most economical way to preserve a building. Proper maintenance of new buildings secures future cultural heritage. Original or old building elements and details should be kept to the utmost extent. Sound maintenance preserves economic, cultural and historical values.

Be observant – prevent damage

Damage preventing measures are important. Make the user of the building conscious of its qualities. Protect the building against moisture, fire and wear and tear. Systematic and regular monitoring of the building can reveal potential damage or damage at an early stage. When inspecting a building, use all your senses. Think ahead. Which parts of the building are vulnerable? What may prevent damage? Avoid introducing new materials when repairing and maintaining, as this can do more harm than good.

Documentation

Record findings, assessments, maintenance and materials utilized. Write down the name of products. Your knowledge of the building will be useful for your successors. What happened? What was done? Why? With which materials? Such documentation may prevent future problems – and repetition of mistakes. Well intended but incorrect use of materials, may cause new damage and decay. Establish a maintenance manual for the building.

Original is better

Accept visible material and surface patina if it works technically. Odd angles may be kept. If alterations or replacements have to be made, it is better to add something new than to remove original building elements. Replacements should only be used if damage cannot be repaired, and then as an exact copy, both as to materials and craftsmanship. The original is better than the copy. A ‘near-copy’ may be completely wrong.

Have discussions – seek advice

No one knows everything. Do not surmise. Seek advice from experts. Ask again, rather than making mistakes. Buildings worthy of preservation are non-renewable resources where everything must be done right.

Make few interventions

Try to preserve all parts of the building. Interventions should be kept at a minimum. Hidden parts of the building (e.g. constructions) are as important to maintain as the visible parts (e.g. surfaces). Do not remove the building’s historical layers (e.g. layers of paint or old wallpaper) without contacting experts on cultural heritage.

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