

The Cost of Looking Away

What Historic England’s research reveals about delayed maintenance - and why early inspection changes everything

In 2019, Historic England commissioned a detailed analysis of 30 listed churches, tracking every defect and repair cost across multiple inspection cycles to answer one question: what does delay actually cost? The findings were unambiguous.



Delaying Repair Cost and extra £1.2million across 30 churches

The extra **£1.2m** is entirely avoidable
Total repair cost if fixed immediately £6,950,000
Total cost after repair £8,150,000

Cost Escalation

Between the first and last inspection reports, total defect costs increased by £1,800,000 - purely from unresolved issues getting worse



One Gutter. Five Years. A 16x Cost Increase

A lead parapet gutter with minor splits was flagged for repair at £1,250
After one 5-year inspection cycle with no action: £20,000 - A 16x cost increase in five years



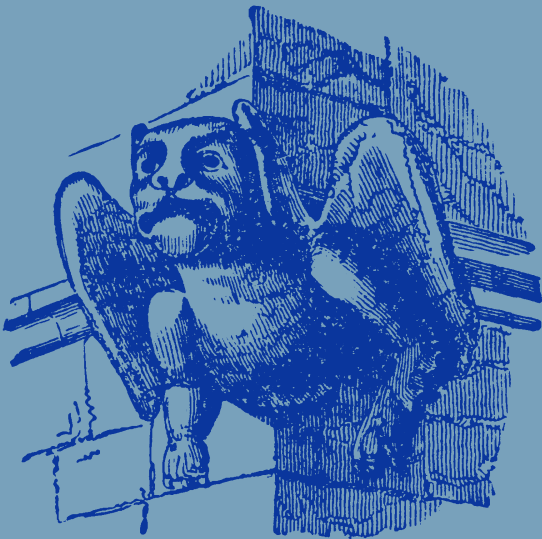
The Tipping Point Finding

Once a building reaches a critical level of disrepair, costs escalate so rapidly that no regular maintenance programme can bring it back - only a major capital scheme



Roofs & Gutters

Roofs and rainwater goods were found to be the primary cause of defects in masonry AND interiors.
Keeping these two elements maintained prevents the majority of all other defects



The Maintenance Payoff

One church with a regular maintenance contract (a few hundred pounds per quinquennium) had no issues attributed to water penetration - the fewest defects of any church in the study

The 18% Figure

Nearly 18% of total repair costs - over £1.25m arose directly from lack of maintenance. This is avoidable cost.

Cost of a Well-Maintained Church

Medieval church: budget up to £35,000 per quinquennium
Victorian church: budget up to £20,000 per quinquennium

The Domino Effect



The report repeatedly identifies inaccessibility as a core reason maintenance is missed — high-level gutters, parapet valleys, tower parapets. Three Weave provides scheduled aerial inspections for heritage buildings, delivering roof-level visibility without the cost of scaffolding. Early inspection doesn't just find problems. It changes what they cost.

Learn more at threeweave.co.uk/heritage

See the Unseen, Protect Whats Valued