



West Midlands
Historic Buildings Trust

BUILDINGS AT RISK



Condition Survey Guidance





About the 'Buildings At Risk' project

- West Midlands Historic Buildings Trust developed the 'Buildings at Risk' project with the aim to complete a condition survey for all c.15,000 Grade II listed buildings in West Midlands region.
- This is so that we, and other parties, can better focus our efforts and investment to help give new futures to important historic buildings and identify the structures which are most vulnerable.
- Our aim is to encourage people to get out-and-about, actively engaging with their local heritage by completing condition surveys of Grade II listed buildings and suggesting buildings for local nomination.



What is 'Listing'?

When a building is listed, it is entered onto the National Heritage List for England due to its special architectural or historic significance. This gives the building a level of protection in law.

However, a building becoming listed does not 'freeze' it in time but means that Listed Building Consent must be obtained before any changes are made that detract from the historical significance of the building.

Listed buildings are categorised by Historic England into three groups:

- Grade I buildings are of exceptional interest and represent only 2.5% of all listed buildings.
- Grade II* buildings are particularly important buildings of more than special interest and represent 5.8% of listed buildings.
- Grade II buildings are of special interest and make up the remaining 91.7% of the list.

Beyond the 'statutory designation' of national listing, Local Authorities often keep a register of Locally Listed buildings. These are generally more modest but add to the intrinsic character and heritage of a region.

What is a 'Condition Survey'?

A 'Condition Survey' is used to assess the status of a historic building to understand whether a structure is in a good, fair, poor, or very bad condition.

To do this, individual building elements are assessed using four verbal descriptors. The overall condition is then assessed using the same verbal descriptors. After analysing the condition of the individual building elements and the overall building, the occupancy status is assessed to understand the vulnerability of a building. The 'At-Risk' category is then automatically generated based on the answers provided.

A 'Condition Survey' comprises of the following steps:

Assess the condition of **individual building elements** e.g. roof or wall structure.

STEP ONE

Use your answers for the individual building elements to assess the **overall condition** of the building.

STEP TWO

Assess the **occupancy status** of the building to understand whether it is at threat of not being maintained.

STEP THREE

Based on the previous 3 stages, the **'At-Risk' score** is automatically generated.

STEP FOUR

The Four Verbal Descriptors used in a 'Condition Survey'

To assess the overall condition of a building, alongside the condition of each building element, there are 4 verbal categories you must choose from. These have been set by Historic England and range from Good – Very Bad.

At times it may be difficult to choose a rating. If you find yourself debating between two ratings when assessing the condition of the building, we suggest you err on the side of caution and select the harsher rating. For instance, if you are struggling to decide whether a building element is Poor or Very Bad, please select Very Bad.

The four verbal descriptors used to rate a building:

Good

Fair

Poor

Very Bad

Best Condition

Worst Condition

Good The element is of a high standard with no need for work.

Fair The element is of an okay condition but could benefit from work.

Poor The element needs work in the near future and risks deteriorating.

Very Bad The element needs immediate work and is severely deteriorating.

The Individual Building Elements

Each Condition Survey first considers the condition of the following building elements:

- Roof
- Gutters and downpipes
- Wall structure
- Doors
- Windows
- Architectural details
- Boundary walls / fences / gates / railings
- Interior (if visible)

At times, certain individual elements may not be visible or apply to a building you are assessing, in that case, you should select Not Applicable or Not Visible.

Due to health and safety and trespassing laws, Condition Surveys must only be completed based on what you can see whilst standing on a publicly accessible road/footpath/right of way. We understand this may mean that outbuildings may not be visible and that in more cases than not no assessment of the interior will be able to take place. When this is the case, please select Not Visible.

Ratings for Individual Building Elements

Good

Fair

Poor

Very Bad

Not Applicable






Not Visible

Best
Condition

Worst
Condition

A full guide is available that details how to assess all the different elements of the building.
This then creates the following symbols in the app.

WMHBT/BuildingsAtRisk: Symbol Types

-  A blue symbol represents a Grade II Listed Building which has not been surveyed.
-  A green symbol represents a Grade II Listed Building which has been surveyed and is deemed to be 'Low Risk'.
-  An orange symbol represents a Grade II Listed Building which has been surveyed and is deemed 'Vulnerable'.
-  A red symbol represents a Grade II Listed Building which has been surveyed and is deemed a 'Building at Risk'.
-  A small black symbol represents a Grade I, Grade II*, or Grade II Place of Worship. These buildings are not surveyable.

