

Masonry

Staff Letter - No Certificate Necessary:

Due to the permanent nature of masonry repairs and maintenance, staff or Commission consultation is required before ANY job is determined to be in the category of "No Certificate Necessary."

1. Masonry repairs and maintenance, defined as the following work involving less than 5% of the masonry on any one wall surface:
 - a) Tuck pointing, using materials to match the original.
 - b) Stucco replacement, using materials to match the original.
 - c) Cleaning, excluding any abrasive cleaning process such as sandblasting or water blasting.
 - d) Replacement of deteriorated masonry, using materials to match the original.

Staff Level Certificate of Appropriateness:

1. The following masonry restoration, if it involves more than 15% of a façade visible from a public way:
 - a) Tuck pointing, using materials to match the original.
 - b) Stucco replacement, using materials to match the original.
 - c) Cleaning, excluding abrasive cleaning methods such as sandblasting or water blasting.
 - d) Replacement of deteriorated masonry, using materials to match the original.
2. Reconstruction of severely deteriorated--unsafe and/or unstable--features, with no changes in design or materials.

Commission Level Certificate of Appropriateness:

1. Masonry alterations, including:
 - a) Removal of any masonry features.
 - b) Reconstruction involving changes in material or design.
 - c) Construction of new features on existing buildings.
 - d) Any new masonry work requiring a foundation.
2. Application of any waterproofing or sealing agent, paint, or stucco to a surface not previously treated in a similar manner.
3. Any action deemed inappropriate by Staff.

Recommended:

1. Damage to masonry is usually caused by movement or water infiltration. Causes should be identified and remedied before undertaking repairs.
2. If mortar is missing or loose, the joints should be cleaned out and repointed using a mortar mix, which closely matches the composition, joint profile, and color of the original. A high-lime content mortar should be used on soft historic bricks. No more than 20% of the total volume of the mortar should be white Portland cement. A suggested formula to obtain this result is: 3 parts clean sand, 1 part lime, 1 part white Portland cement.
3. Careful removal of mortar from the joints so as not to damage the brick edges.
4. Whenever partial or total foundation replacement is required, the new foundation walls should be faced in materials, which match the original in appearance. Reuse of the original material on the face of the foundation is preferable.

Masonry (cont.)

5. Whenever replacement brick or stone is needed, use salvaged or new material, which closely matches the original in size, color, and texture. It is important that mortar should be dyed to match the hue and color of existing mortar.
6. Whenever masonry has been painted, it is usually advisable to repaint after removing all loose paint. Old paint, which is firmly fixed to the masonry, will usually serve as an adequate surface for repainting. Methods that attempt to remove all evidence of old paint can damage the masonry. Remember, softer brick and mortar is more prone to damage.
7. Any cleaning should be done with the gentlest method possible and should be stopped at the first evidence of damage. Test patches should be used to assess the effect of any proposed cleaning method.

Not Recommended:

1. Replacing bricks, unless excessively spalled or cracked. Consider reversing a brick to expose its good surface before replacing it with a new brick.
2. Using what is commonly called “antique” brick. These consist of a mixture of bricks, in a wide range of different colors and types. Bricks on historic buildings were usually uniform in color.
3. Covering-over or replacing masonry simply to eliminate evidence of past cracks, repairs, and alterations.
4. The cleaning of dirt, grime, and weathering from masonry surfaces is usually not necessary unless it is causing damage or is unsightly. In any case, the goal should not be to make the masonry look new. Old masonry neither can nor should regain its original appearance.
5. Power grinders. The mechanical equipment is cumbersome and even the most skilled worker will tire or skip and cause irreversible damage.
6. Sandblasting, high pressure water blasting (over 600 psi), grinding, and harsh chemicals.
7. Waterproof and water repellant coating. They are generally not needed and can potentially cause serious damage to the masonry. Also avoid covering masonry with tar or cement coatings.
8. Parging a masonry surface.
9. Applying mortar that does not reasonably match existing mortar, in a way that does not match the existing profile of the mortar joint, or applying mortar in a manner that is not neat or in a workmanship like manner, or in a way such that it significantly defaces the look of the brick, block, or stone.