



Which ethical rules need to be followed? Is technical assistance available?

Ensuring the longevity of heritage

In 2007 the Federal Commission for Historic Monuments published the "Principles for the conservation of built heritage in Switzerland" – the basis for guiding its own work, and that of heritage professionals.

To ensure the longevity of built cultural heritage – the main objective that in principle underlies all interventions – the key ethical rules must be remembered:

- Appropriate use begets long-term use. All use must be adapted to the conservation of the material.
- Regular maintenance is the most effective and relevant conservation measure.
- As soon as the existence of an object of heritage is menaced, provisional measures of conservation are necessary.
- Before taking measures for a heritage object, a precise and detailed knowledge of said object must be acquired.
- An interdisciplinary approach to questions of heritage conservation must be employed.
- Before all intervention both the objective and the programme must be fixed.
- Conservation of the material has priority over all other measures.
- For all interventions, a document describing the object's peculiarities and the measures taken is drawn up.

Is technical support available?

As there is no standard method when it comes to heritage conservation, so the collaborators of the Heritage Conservation Section are available for discussion with architects and proprietors to provide personalised advice. Before establishing what advice is needed, the collaborators in charge of the dossier will often suggest either a meeting or a visit to the building. A good observation of the building allows us to evaluate the object's potential and to avoid incurring unnecessary costs.

Let us not forget that when it comes to the viability of building, cancelling an architectural project will often have a more negative impact (and excess cost) than the consequences of the age of the building.

Appropriate use of materials is synonymous with the longevity of the building.



Broad answers to specific questions

The Federal Commission for Historic Monuments has published documents summarising their answers to fundamental questions relating to heritage conservation.

- Recommendations "Energy and Historical Monuments"
- Seismic security of historic monuments
- Protection of the monument's surroundings
- Art in historic buildings
- Historic rooms in museums
- Windows in historic buildings
- Mobile phone antennae
- Subterranean work in historic grounds

They also offer a digital version of the "Principles for the conservation of built cultural heritage in Switzerland".

On a regional level, dossiers have also been established on the following subjects:

- Ancient masonry and plaster
- Windows – heritage in danger
- Yellow stone of Neuchâtel

See also:

- Stonemason's Charter of Craftsmanship