Masonry

M1 Do not paint masonry, stucco, limestone walls, and masonry retaining walls that have never been painted. Painting unpainted surfaces creates an on-going maintenance issue. Paint is difficult to remove, accumulated layers will obscure decorative detail, and paint coatings (even "breathable" paints) will affect the wall's vapor transmission performance.

M2 New masonry features shall not be constructed that are either falsely historical (characteristic of periods prior to the building's actual construction), or are incompatible with the building or historic district in terms of size, scale, material, or color.

M3 New openings shall not be cut into exterior walls that constitute the building's street-address or street-facing façade. (For example, do not create an opening in an exterior wall for the installation of an air conditioning unit on a street-address or street-facing façade including structures on a corner lot or sited diagonally.) For these purposes, an alley is not a street-facing façade.

M4 Architectural features that are proposed for reconstruction or replacement must be photographically documented by the property owner as part of the application submitted to Landmarks for approval of any exterior modification. Historic elements cannot be removed until after approval has been obtained.

M5 The existing bonding pattern, coursing, color, size, and strength of masonry should be matched when repairing a section of brick wall. Bricks should be toothed-in to historic brickwork to strengthen the joint between new and old, except where new construction (e.g., a room addition) meets old construction.

M6 Substantial portions of exterior walls should not be removed or rebuilt if such an action would adversely impact a structure's historic integrity.

M7 Exterior replacement bricks should be suited for exterior use. Do not replace sections of historic brick with brick that is substantially stronger. New brick is stronger than old brick.

M8 Re-point only those joints that are no longer sound. Do not remove all joints, sound and unsound, in an effort to achieve a uniform appearance when re-pointing. Large-scale removal of mortar joints often results in damage to historic masonry. Old mortar is softer than new mortar.

M9 Unsound mortar joints should be carefully removed with hand tools that are narrower than the mortar joint. Power tools should not be used because they have the potential to scar adjacent masonry.

M10 Unsound mortar should be removed to a depth of two-and one-half the times the width of the joint or to sound mortar, whichever is greater.

M11 Historic mortar joints should be matched in color, texture, joint size, and tooling when repairing or re-pointing.

M12 The mortar mix used for re-pointing should be compatible with the historic masonry. The re-pointing mortar should be equivalent to or softer than the original mortar. (When re-pointing mortar is harder than the surrounding masonry, as is the case with many modern mixtures, moisture cannot escape through the joints. Trapped moisture will freeze within the walls and fracture surrounding masonry.)

M13 The mortar should be analyzed to determine the chemical composition of the mortar mix for the specific application at the historic structure. If possible, send a sample of the original mortar to a lab for analysis. If this is not feasible, a high lime and low Portland cement content mortar mix (1 part cement, 1 part lime, 6 parts sand) is often acceptable.

M14 Joints that have been re-pointed using a very hard mortar – or in an un-workmanlike manner – should not be removed until natural weathering has begun to weaken and crack them. Removal prior to that time would likely damage the adjoining brick, block, or stone.

M15 Synthetic caulking should not be used to re-point historic masonry.

M16 Masonry surfaces should not be cleaned with harsh chemicals, abrasive brushes or high pressure power tools. It is better to under clean than over clean. A "like new" appearance is rarely desirable.

M17 The physical and chemical properties of the masonry should be known before proposing or testing any chemical cleaning treatments. If improperly applied, chemical treatments may cause permanent damage that significantly outweighs any benefits of cleaning. Contractors and homeowners may wish to consult the Landmarks staff for the best practices and techniques for cleaning masonry surfaces.

M18 Cleaning treatments should be tested in an inconspicuous area of the building to evaluate potential adverse effects to the masonry. Observation over a complete seasonal cycle is preferred so any long-term effects may be ascertained. For any proven acceptable chemical cleaning treatments, be sure to follow all manufacturer's instructions.

M19 Sandblasting or high-pressure water treatments should not be used to clean historic masonry. Both sandblasting and high-pressure water (greater than 300 psi) remove the tough, outer-protective surface of the brick and loosen mortar joints, accelerating deterioration.

M20 The masonry on buildings with deteriorated mortar joints should not be cleaned. Such masonry should be properly re-pointed prior to cleaning to ensure water does not penetrate the wall during the cleaning process.

M21 Water- or chemical-based cleaning systems should not be used when there is a chance of freezing temperatures. Masonry cleaning should not commence until the temperature will remain above 50 degrees for 72 hours after cleaning.

M22 Graffiti should be removed as soon as possible, beginning with the gentlest means possible and taking care not to inadvertently etch an outline of the graffiti onto the wall.

M23 When removing paint from previously-painted masonry, use gentle treatments that have been tested in an inconspicuous location. Do not sandblast, pressure wash or use acid-based cleaners (consult with Landmarks for recommended products). Solvent-based chemical strippers are preferred over sandblasting or pressure washing the masonry surface.

M24 When painting is applicable, a "breathable" masonry coating that is compatible with – and can create a strong bond with – existing paint should be used.

M25 Repaired or patched stucco areas should match the strength, composition, color, and texture of the original to the greatest degree possible.

M26 When patching stucco, cut back the successive layers to provide a key for the new layers to prevent new cracking.

M27 Stucco repairs should result in the same or unchanged dimension between the surface of the stucco and adjacent finishes.

M28 Stucco, any synthetic stucco treatment, or a permastone-type cladding should not be installed over historic masonry or wood siding.

M29 Do not resurface historic masonry with exterior insulation.

M30 Masonry and terra cotta chimney caps proposed for reconstruction or replacement should be replaced only after approval is obtained with caps of similar material and design whenever possible. Otherwise, a metal cap historically appropriate to the roof's design and materials is acceptable. Salvaged or historical reproductions are locally available.