

# AFTERCARE MANUAL

CARING FOR YOUR ENGLISH HERITAGE  
BUILDINGS OAK FRAME

ENGLISH  
HERITAGE<sup>®</sup>  
BUILDINGS







# WELCOME

Now that you are the proud owner of an English Heritage Buildings oak frame, there are a few things that you will need to consider to ensure that the natural beauty of your timber building is maintained. It is vitally important that these guidelines are followed at all times. Please take the time to read the following points on how to care for your English Heritage Buildings oak frame over time.



## AFTERCARE MANUAL

# WHAT TO EXPECT FROM YOUR GREEN OAK FRAME

As your frame seasons, it will gradually lose its moisture. This will result in visual changes to your frame. This process is particularly apparent in the first few years. Common characteristics you will see during this process include:

## Shrinking

Oak shrinks in width not length, so all joints will remain effective. Oak shrinks around the mortice/tenon and dowel construction, making the joints even tighter and stronger.

## Cracks and Splits

Also known as shakes and fissures, these have very little effect on the structural integrity of your oak frame. You will find that splits will open up along the grain as the fibres dry and separate. The grading system in place at English Heritage Buildings (approved by the leading timber authority) limits the slope of the grain in any given piece of timber, meaning that despite cracks in the frame, they are not a cause for concern. The strength of the frame is not compromised. It is also important to note that if your oak frame has dried out too quickly, it will result in dramatic cracks and splits. This, again, will not have any structural effect, but may not look as aesthetically pleasing. Although it is widely thought that these cracks and splits add to the character and charm of an oak frame structure.

## Outbuildings

The timber frame is naturally very durable and will weather to a silver grey colour.

## Garden Rooms & Habitable Buildings

Treatment of internal oak timbers can help to limit excessive movement and cracking. Internal oak timbers can be treated with a variety of products or can be left untreated. External oak timbers can be left to weather to a silver grey colour.

## Brickwork & Stones

Exposure to the elements may cause oak to bleed onto the brickwork and stones which can leave rust like stains. These stains will fade in time and, if desired, can be cleaned with a suitable brickwork cleaner.

*English Heritage Buildings would always recommend that you take advice from a professional decorator on which product/look will suit your desired finish & requirements.*





# TANNIN MARKS

What are tannins? Tannins are the acidic chemicals found in the oak's liquid sap.

When the oak is first cut and newly-erected, the natural drying out process draws out the tannins causing visible brown stains over time. During this process, it is best to avoid metal contact on the oak frame. You will also find that damp conditions will accelerate the speed at which tannins will appear.

Although we will do our best to minimise tannin marks during the manufacturing process, you may notice black tannin marks on your frame and braces when it is delivered.

## How to treat tannins?

If you have excessive marks on your frame, they can be removed using a product called Oxalic Acid from Rubio Monocoat. You can purchase this online by visiting the EHBP website, found under Aftercare.



If your building has been installed by our approved contractor, they will have already treated the affected area with a coat of acid prior to finishing. Another option is to sand the marks down, or for more severe cases, you may choose to have the oak sand blasted, which is a service supplied by specialist companies. It is worth bearing in mind that some marks may reappear as the frame dries out, so you may have to repeat the process. Alternatively, if you wait until the frame dries completely you will find the tannin marks will disappear.

### Tips to Minimise Tannin Stains

- If you are storing the frame prior to assembly, ensure that the frame is lightly covered and raised off the floor in a well ventilated area
- Do not allow bare metal to come into contact with the frame, as this reacts with the oak
- Keep the frame dry before assembly



# WEATHERBOARD

The general maintenance of your weatherboard will depend on local conditions and the type of weatherboard that has been supplied for your frame. You should always refer to the manufacturer's application recommendations and should follow their guidelines accordingly. Maintenance of weatherboard in normal exposed conditions should only be necessary every 5-8 years and more frequently in highly exposed locations.

## Softwood Weatherboard

Your softwood weatherboard comes treated with XILIX GOLD 760 wood preservative. This is a water-based treatment that is an effective insecticide product, effective against the wood-borer larvae of various beetle species.

Stain as soon as possible with the colour of your choice to stop water penetration and to give an even colouring. If left unstained, the timber will weather unevenly and go a patchy grey colour in appearance. Untreated boarding will also absorb moisture leaving the inside face of the weatherboard damp during long periods of inclement weather.

## Fire Retardant Softwood Weatherboard

Your Fire Retardant Softwood Weatherboard comes treated with SENTRIN FRX fire retardant chemical, necessary to meet the testing requirements of BS EN 13501-01:2007 fire classification of construction products and building elements.

No further treatment is needed. If you wish to decorate, please check that the product you use is compatible for use with SENTRIN FRX Exterior. The use of a non-compatible product may affect the fire retardant properties of the weatherboarding.

## Oak Weatherboard

Due to its natural properties, oak weatherboard is prone to shrinking and splitting, and therefore no treatment can prevent this. You may also notice a small amount of mildew forming on the faces of the board.

Oak weatherboard provides the perfect conditions for mildew spores to develop due to the moisture content and can be more apparent during the warmer months. This is a normal feature of oak weatherboard and will disappear over time as the oak weathers to an attractive silver grey.

*English Heritage Buildings would always recommend you seek advice from a professional decorator on which product/look will suit your desired finish.*





# JOINERY

Timber joinery can last a lifetime and beyond if you invest the time and effort to ensure it's finish is completed to a high standard.

By not following these guidelines below, you will run the risk of reducing the lifetime and effectiveness of the products you have purchased, along with invalidating any guarantees placed on your purchases.

## Maintenance

The joinery leaves the factory having been base coated. The base coat will protect the joinery whilst it is being handled prior to installation.

**The base coat is not a sufficient finish. You must apply a top coat as soon as possible.**

Your joinery units will need to have your chosen top coat applied as soon as installation has been completed. Ensure all the edges and faces of your units are treated, in particular paying close attention to the tops and bottoms.

**Please note:** Once you have chosen which product to further decorate your joinery, it is essential that you follow the application guidelines. Any additional coats of treatment are the customer's responsibility and that failure to follow the guidance given on this maintenance sheet may invalidate your 12-month customer warranty.

**Important:** Once received, all doors should be stored flat prior to installation in a cool dry environment. Under no circumstances should your units be stored in damp/wet areas or close to any artificial heat sources.

Moisture ingress is the most common contributing factor to problems with any natural wood product. It is therefore important to treat all surfaces. Along with ensuring that all edges are treated, you should also pay particular attention to 'cut outs' that will host items such as letter boxes, hinges and hardware. If not properly treated, they will quickly absorb moisture, causing the joinery to swell and twist.

## Top Tips to Prolong the Life of Your Joinery

- Inspect windows at least annually
- Repair any small patches of coating damage promptly
- Redecorate when the lower parts of the joinery show general signs of wear
- Wash with a solution of warm water and liquid detergent
- Keep moving parts i.e hinges, locks, handles etc, free of grit, dirt or mortar. Clean regularly and apply acid free oil
- Do not paint over rubber gaskets or ironmongery

*English Heritage Buildings would always recommend that you take advice from a professional decorator on which product will suit your desired finish.*









# STORAGE

While you are getting your groundworks ready for assembly, it may be the case that your frame and joinery will need to be stored on site. Here is some essential guidance on best practice for keeping timber products in storage.

- Provide a clean, safe and dry area for storage
- Goods should be stacked on a flat even surface to protect against twisting
- Store loose items of ironmongery separately in a secure area for fitting after assembly
- Remove product wrapping if products are to be stored for more than one month to ensure adequate ventilation
- Do not store products in an area where wet trades have recently been working or near areas that are still drying out
- Do not store in areas of strong sunlight or darkness for long periods of time to avoid paint discolouration

# DURING THE BUILDING PROCESS

As your project gets off the ground, it's important to protect and maintain all goods. These tips will ensure your products stay in excellent condition.

- Keep the coating intact at all times
- Protect surfaces from plaster, render or concrete damage
- Clean off any splatters while wet with clean water – do not use any acid based cleaners
- Use any brick or stonework wash with extreme caution – these products are usually acidic so any splatters onto paint, timber or hardware are likely to cause damage
- Pay particular attention to the protection of window sills and door thresholds from damage by plaster, render or cleaning products
- Do not carry out wet trades until the joinery has been decorated. Wet trades such as plastering and floor screeding will significantly raise moisture levels in your building, which in turn can cause movement in your joinery. Please ensure adequate ventilation in this situation. We also recommend that you use a dehumidifier whilst wet works are drying.

***NB: Failure to provide an adequately moisture-free environment may invalidate your warranty and should any adjustments be needed to your units, work will not be able to be carried out until the moisture levels have significantly dropped and the swelling of the units has decreased.***



# GLASS

Just like the timber frame and joinery, the glass you have specified for your building should also be treated with care and attention before and after it has been installed.

Here are some easy steps to follow to achieve an excellent finish right from the start:

- Protect glass from all alkali materials and fluoride bearing compounds
- Never use scrapers, razor blades, steel wool or other metal tools on glass (the window supplier is not responsible for scratches that have occurred during construction and cleaning)
- Never use water that has been used to wash the face of the building as it will damage the glass surface. It may contain contamination taken from the mortar, cement, organic coatings etc.
- Remove glass labels promptly after installation – prolonged exposure to the sun can make the adhesive very difficult to remove
- Protect glass from splatter during welding, cutting and concreting, otherwise this will cause permanent damage
- Avoid contact with organic solvents, oils and plasticisers
- Protect glass during surface treatment of masonry acid washing, sand blasting, grouting and waterproofing
- Avoid prolonged exposure to sprinkling or spraying with hard water. The minerals in the water can become chemically bonded to the glass, causing permanent damage.



# CHECKING YOUR GOODS

When taking delivery of your order, whether that be the frame or joinery, it is vital that you check the condition of your goods for damage that may have occurred during manufacture or in transit.

At English Heritage Buildings we are unable to respond to complaints from deliveries that have been characterised as 'unchecked'. Visible damage must be detailed and noted clearly by you at the time of delivery/collection. Failure to do this will invalidate your claim. We accept no liability if costs are incurred by a carpenter before having received and checked the goods.

Any claims for damaged goods or where goods supplied do not match those ordered must be reported within 3 working days from receipt of order. Every effort is made to supply you with the correct components in perfect condition. However, on rare occasions, errors are made or a piece of joinery may not be up to standard. It is imperative that you check the following:

## On your frame:

- General condition
- Any mechanical damage from forklifts
- Chips to staddle stones
- Footprints
- Fixings box

## On joinery:

- Warping or bowing beyond 4mm tolerances
- Scratches on glass
- Wrong joinery model supplied
- Wrong size supplied
- Two odd doors supplied when they should be a matching pair

The above details examples of potential faults/errors but this list is not exhaustive. Please remember that by fitting or finishing your joinery or by making alterations in any way, you will be deemed to have accepted the goods as supplied. Unfortunately, we cannot replace a faulty or incorrectly supplied piece of joinery if any alterations have been carried out.

## Making alterations to joinery

Due to the nature of an oak framed building, you may find sometimes that doors will need to be altered to suit the natural shape of the oak. Please remember that you must re-seal any edges, cavities or cut-outs straight away. The top and bottom edges of doors are often overlooked but these must be done, even if it means taking the doors down for a short while. Please bear in mind that oak is a natural material which will move when subjected to changes in temperature and humidity. We cannot accept liability for its natural movement or distortion.

# TIME TO ENJOY

Thank you for taking the time to read this handbook.

Should you need clarification on any of the points raised, please do not hesitate to contact us to discuss. In your signing pack, you will note that there is an aftercare acknowledgement that you will need to sign and return confirming that you have read and understood our guidance and advice.





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