

Facilities for External Inspection and Maintenance of Buildings

Introduction

Buildings do require inspection and maintenance or repair from time to time throughout their life. Many of the maintenance activities for the external building services and building elements need to be carried out at height outside the external walls of a building. Examples of these activities include maintenance and repair of external drainage pipes, window cleansing, re-painting of walls, overhauling of finishes and repairing of the fabric of the external structure.

Facilities to be provided

2. It is recognized that the availability of permanent access facilities would help to improve safety at work during external building maintenance. Authorised Persons (APs) and Registered Structural Engineers are strongly advised to consider, at the design stage of a project, incorporating such facilities for safe access to the external walls of buildings.

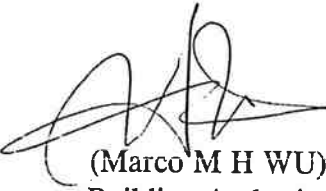
3. One of the common types of access facilities takes the form of a permanent suspended access system comprising a working platform suspended on ropes from a securely mounted overhead structure. Reference should be made to PNAP 185 on the construction and maintenance of suspended working platforms.

4. Where a permanent suspended access system is not proposed, consideration should be given for the installation of mechanical booms or anchorages on the roof at suitable locations to facilitate the installation of a suspended access system at a later date. In addition, alternative permanent features (such as hooks, bolts, holes, platforms) at suitable locations for anchorage of temporary structures or scaffoldings should be provided to facilitate future external maintenance and repair works and at the same time, to provide better safety for the workers engaged in these works. All associated structural members, fixings and anchorages of facilities should either be corrosion resistant or protected with anti-corrosion system.

Access for Maintenance and Repair

5. As drainage and other service pipes are often placed in lightwells and re-entrants, APs are therefore advised to pay special attention on access for repair and maintenance when designing lightwells and re-entrants.

6. Access to the common facilities for maintenance and repair should preferably be through common areas of a building or areas which are designated in the Deed of Mutual Covenant for the purposes of inspection and maintenance. The lowest level of re-entrants and lightwells housing soil and waste pipes or stacks should be designated as common areas with access, including access through cat-ladder where appropriate, to facilitate maintenance and clearance of any refuse.



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