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Buying, refurbishing or extending a Traditional Irish property **CHECK LIST**

The following checklist will help in the purchase, refurbishment or extension of a traditional Irish property; whether it's a protected structure or a simple 3 room cottage:

Always check whether the property you are thinking about purchasing is a Protected Structure (similar to Listed Building in the UK) as this affects seriously upon what you can and can't do with the property,

There are no fixed rules, but generally a house loses it's habitable status after approximately ten years of no one living in it. You cannot be therefore guaranteed of obtaining planning permission for works to the house as technically it has lost it's habitable status.

If you are contemplating purchasing an older property; life is easier with regards to planning if:

- It has been lived in within the last 10 years (see above)
- It has a septic tank (in any condition)
- It has a connection to a water supply (either mains or group water scheme) - a well could be dug but the water would then generally have to be tested as part of the planning application.
- It has safe egress onto the road - the Council may still require sight visibility diagrams in accordance with County road speed requirements should you require and apply for planning permission.

Check the type of finish to the external walls. A render containing Portland cement externally is liable to cracking and give a pathway for water to enter but not exit; leading to serious damp problems internally. The removal of this cement render on a traditional property (which would have been lime rendered) is problematic and costly prior to re-rendering in lime

If the walls have been dry-lined internally; remove a section to check for signs of mould (or other infestations) as a non-breathable finish internally can temporarily mask serious damp, decay and health problems behind. (see below on breathable internal insulation)

If you are contemplating internal insulation, ensure you use a breathable dry lining system such as Calsitherm or the OPTIMA dry lining system from Isover

If the walls are damp near the floor level internally; check the perimeter of the external walls for soil build-up. This damp problem is easily rectified by the construction of a French drain

Appoint a Chartered Structural Engineer to undertake a full structural survey and report of the property prior to purchase

Check thoroughly for the tell-tale small holes of wood worm in any timbers as these will need to be treated and checked for structural integrity

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