



An Roinn Tithíochta,  
Rialtais Áitiúil agus Oidhreachta  
Department of Housing,  
Local Government and Heritage



**NBHS**

An tSeirbhís Oidhreachta  
Tógtha Náisiúnta  
National Built  
Heritage Service

# VACANT TRADITIONAL FARMHOUSE CONSERVATION ADVICE REPORT TEMPLATE

**Property Address:**

**Clients Name:**

**Date of Inspection:**

**Author:**

**Note for Building Owner:**

This report has been produced by an accredited Conservation Professional for you to use. If you decide not to act on the advice in the report, you do this at your own risk. The report aims to:

- help you make a reasoned and informed decision when planning for repairs, maintenance and/or upgrading of the property;
- provide detailed advice on condition;
- describe the identifiable risk of potential or hidden defects;
- avoid maladaptation;
- where practicable and agreed, provide an estimate of costs for identified repairs; and
- make recommendations as to any further actions or advice which need to be obtained.

**Note to Author:**

The following should be inspected and addressed in the report:

- inspect the inside and outside of the main house, ancillary buildings and boundary features.
- inspect the parts of the electricity, gas/oil, water, heating, drainage and other services that can be seen, but these are not tested other than through their normal operation in everyday use.

A traffic light system should be assigned to the suggested actions/recommendations which ranks them in order of urgency.

	Defects that are serious and/or need to be repaired/replaced or investigated urgently
	Defects that need repair but are not considered to be either serious or urgent.
	No repair is currently needed.
	Not inspected. If there are concerns about elements that the inspection cannot cover, the report should advise on any further investigations that are needed.

Where practicable and agreed, the report will include approximate costs for identified repairs and make recommendations on how these repairs should be carried out in line with best conservation practice. Some maintenance and repairs that are suggested may be expensive. Purely cosmetic and minor maintenance defects that have no effect on performance might not be reported. The report provided is not a warranty.

**Template:** The following template must be used by the appointed conservation professional. The advisory text shown in green italics is not to be deleted.

**Photographs:** Labelled photographs should be included as an appendix to the report. They should be clearly labelled and, where required, referenced in the text below.

**Plans & Drawings:** Site survey/drawn measured survey of the building, which should include the location of the existing services where present. This should be included as an appendix to the report.



**Sketch Plan outlining Reuse Proposal (to include mapping location of proposed services required):** The grant does not cover costs associated with the detailed design and specification of new-build additions. However, the grant provides financial support of **€500** towards a sketch plan outlining a reuse proposal for the building. Any reuse proposal should respect the character and integrity of the original building, in particular taking into account the building layout, survival of historic features and the importance of the hearth in traditional and vernacular houses. Where future extensions are being considered they should be sympathetic to the scale, form and traditional character of the existing historic building.

**1. INTRODUCTION TO THE REPORT:**

**1.1 Author's Name**

**1.2 Conservation Accreditation/member number of report author**

*(RIAI, EI/CARE, SCSI if applicable):*

**1.3 Company Name**

**1.4 Date of Inspection**

**1.5 Full Address of the Property (incl. Eircode)**

**1.6 Weather conditions when the inspection took place**

**1.7 The status of the property when the inspection took place**

*Note the current use in terms of vacancy and/or underuse. The purpose of this section is to establish the overall use of the property, including ancillary structures and site, particularly where they are vacant or only partially used.*

**1.8 Owner/Custodian**

**1.9 Consent to the survey obtained from the Owner/Custodian**

**1.10 Restrictions during the Survey (if any)**

**1.11 RPS reference/ACA name (where applicable)**

*The scheme is not limited to Protected Structures or historic structures located within an Architectural Conservation Area. It includes traditionally constructed buildings which do not have statutory protection. 'Traditionally constructed' is normally, but not exclusively, taken to mean buildings with solid walls constructed of stone, brick and/or mud with lime and/or earth mortars. Please note that any works to a protected structure and/or a structure located within an Architectural Conservation Area should be discussed with your Local Authority prior to works commencing as statutory consent may be required (Planning Permission/Section 57 Declaration/Section 5 Declaration).*

**1.12 NIAH reference & Rating (where applicable)**

*Check the Buildings of Ireland website to establish if the building has been surveyed by the NIAH: <https://www.buildingsofireland.ie/buildings-search/>*

**1.13 Archaeological Monuments reference (where applicable)**

*Works at, in relation to, or in proximity to, monuments and places protected under the terms of the National Monuments Acts 1930 to 2014 shall have full regard to the general principles for the protection and management of the archaeological heritage, as set out in the policy document Framework and Principles for the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage (Government of Ireland, 1999 framework-and- principles-for-protection-of-archaeological-heritage.pdf [www.archaeology.ie](http://www.archaeology.ie) and full regard to all relevant policy and guidelines publications by the National Monuments Service. Please contact [nationalmonuments@housing.gov.ie](mailto:nationalmonuments@housing.gov.ie) for further details.*

**1.14 Special Area of Conservation (SAC where applicable)**

*These are prime wildlife conservation areas in the country, considered to be important on a European as well as Irish level. Most Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) are in the countryside although a few sites reach into urban areas. <https://www.npws.ie/protected-sites/sac>*

**1.15 Site location**

*The site complex/location should be clearly outlined in red. Confirm the location and context of the subject site by applying to OSI and purchasing current mapping, i.e. planning pack for the report e.g. <https://store.osi.ie/planning-pack.html>*

*Provide a brief written description of the evolution of the site through a review of the readily available on-line historical mapping on-line from the Historic Environment Viewer (HEV) and GeoHive Map Viewer. Check existence on 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition OS Maps. Confirm key characteristics of the site and any relationships to immediately adjacent heritage sites.*

*<https://maps.archaeology.ie/HistoricEnvironment/help.html> &*

*<https://webapps.geohive.ie/mapviewer/index.html>. We draw attention to the fact that conservation professionals will not be able to copy and paste OSI mapping from the HEV for reports, as it will infringe OSI or DigiGlobe copyright. It is advised that the author abide by the OSI copyright requirements/licensing agreement. (The purpose of this section is to identify key characteristics of the overall site – irregular building line, plan form, ancillary structures, yard arrangements, etc.)*

**1.16 Is the building(s) shown on 1<sup>st</sup> edition OS Map?**

**1.17 Is the building(s) shown on 2<sup>nd</sup> edition OS Map?**

**1.18 Brief Appraisal of Significance**

*Brief appraisal of significance in the context of the Architectural Heritage Protection Guidelines (2011) and the NIAH Handbook 2024. Establish whether the special significance resides in the exterior character, as part of a wider landscape/streetscape, and/or whether it includes historic fabric and*

*spaces internally. Please emphasise whether the building retains significant historic interior details/features, such as layout, joinery, historic glass, fireplaces, plasterwork, etc.*

*In relation to vernacular houses, please emphasise whether the building retains significant historic interiors such as a bed outshot, chimney canopy, old kitchen hearth, historic roof structure (bog oak/unhewn roof timbers) or fitted furnishings (dressers, built-in presses, etc.).*

## 2 DESCRIPTION/ASSESSMENT

### 2.1 Brief Description of Property & Grounds

*This section should provide a brief description of the exterior of the property, while taking into account any site features of note, such as a farmyard, outbuildings/ancillary structures, boundary walls, gate piers, gates and surrounding streetscape and/or landscape (field boundaries). Use a selection of annotated photographic images, as necessary, to describe the structure's context and external character (with owner's consent).*

### 2.2 Year of Construction (can be approximate – check 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> edition OS Maps)

### 2.3 Extensions (if any) and approximate phases of construction

### 2.4 Construction Materials, where known, including Ancillary Buildings & Boundary Features

### 2.5 Building Energy Rating

*(if there is a Building Energy Rating Certificate - BER – Please record current rating here)*

### 2.6 Services – (tick appropriate box below)

Provide details of alternative

Gas	Mains		Other	
Electricity	Mains		Other	
Water Supply	Mains		Other	
Foul drainage	Mains		Other	
Surface Drainage	Mains		Other	
Communication Services	Phone line		Broadband	

### Heating: (tick appropriate box below)

Gas		Electric		Solid Fuel		Oil		AGA / Range		Other	
-----	--	----------	--	------------	--	-----	--	-------------	--	-------	--

Insert additional narrative where required

## 2.7 Limitations to Inspection:

## 2.8 Exterior of Main Building

*Describe composition and condition of each component, followed by suggested recommendation*

### Chimneystacks

*Consider the following:*

*Position of chimneys; materials (exposed brick, or stone, rendered etc.); condition of finishes; structural movement; no. of chimneypots; approx. height of stack; are they original/rebuilt (evidence for); flashings; flaunching; bird guards; spark guards; caps to pots, etc.*

*Note: As part general remedial works to the roof, chimneys should be repointed and/or re-plastered with traditional lime mortar, where renders/mortar have failed, and all rooted vegetation should be removed. Cracked pots should be replaced and bird guards, where in poor condition, should be replaced. Generally all flashings should be replaced as part of re-roofing works.*

### Roof Coverings

*Consider the following:*

*Form: gabled, hipped, half-hipped, etc.*

*Materials: slate (native or imported), stone, thatch, corrugated iron, corrugated asbestos, tile, etc.*

*Slate/Stone: consider geology and where material sourced, presence of diminishing courses and random sizes. Presence of dormers, roof lights, etc.; treatment of ridges, hips, eaves, barge etc.*

*Thatch: Note the material (wheat, oat, rye, reed, flax, rushes, sea grasses, etc.); technique (scaloped, thrust, roped, etc.) fixings (such as scollops, rope etc.); presence of scraw / sod under thatch / tin over thatch or combination of.*

*Presence of dormers / roof lights; treatment of ridges, hips, eaves, barge, etc.*

### Rainwater pipes and Gutters

*Consider the following: materials (cast-iron, mild steel, aluminium, uPVC etc.); profile of gutter; complete or incomplete system;*

*Note: Unless it is raining at the time of the inspection, it is generally not possible to state whether the gutters and pipework are watertight. All*



<p><i>no. of downpipes, provision of gullies etc.</i></p>	<p><i>gutters should be cleared at least once a year and preferably twice a year to ensure they can run clear without obstructions.</i></p>
<p><b>Main walls</b>  <i>Consider the following:  Materials: stone, brick, earth;  Renders and pointing: lime-based, earthen-based, earth, presence of cementitious mortar, etc.  Brick walls: style of bond such as English, Flemish, English Garden Wall, Stretcher, etc.  Pointing: flush, ruled, wiggled, bastard-tuck, tuck-pointed, penny-struck, double-struck, weather-struck, etc.  Paint finishes: modern paint, limewash, etc.  Renders &amp; external finishes: intact/removed, later finishes to house and/or extensions.  Settlement cracking: evidence, location and severity of cracking.  Also consider construction phase joint; lintels exposed and/or concealed; presence of weather slating, etc.</i></p>	
<p><b>Foundations/base of wall/Damp-proof course</b>  <i>Consider the following:  internal finished floor levels relative to external ground levels at entrance(s) and around building, presence of retaining walls / banked earth / trenches / cobbled gullies. Evidence of ponding and/or surface ponding of water around building.  Evidence of splashback against walls, presence of concrete path around base of house, including condition thereof.</i></p>	<p><i>Note: Foundations are generally not exposed as part of the inspection and, therefore, it is not possible to comment on their adequacy. However, evidence of settlement, subsidence and structural movement will be noted. With older buildings it is generally not possible to establish whether a damp-proof course (DPC) has been built into the wall and generally it is assumed that no DPC has been provided. As part of substantial refurbishment of the property some building owners may be advised to install an injected damp-proof course. However, due to the make-up of most traditional walls, the success of such injected DPCs is highly questionable. It should also be noted that the extent of decay which has occurred as a result of a lack of a damp-proof course is generally minor in nature, being cosmetic rather than structural. It would be acceptable to carry out localised repairs to low-level plaster using traditional earth/lime based plasters which are compatible with the underlying structure.</i></p>
<p><b>Suspended Floor / Sub-Floor ventilation</b></p>	
<p><b>Windows</b></p>	

<i>Consider the following: materials, design, historic glazing, age, significance</i>	
<b>Doors</b> <i>Consider the following: materials, design, age, significance</i>	
<b>Porches/Extensions</b> <i>Consider the following: materials, design, age, significance</i>	
<b>Other Joinery &amp; Finishes, if applicable</b>	
<b>Other</b>	
<b>Limitations to Inspection</b>	

## **2.9 Interior of Main Building**

*Describe composition and condition of each component, followed by suggested recommendation*

### **Roof Structure/Loft/Attic**

*For stone / slate roofs consider the following: roof construction (use of common rafters, purlins, ridge board, coupled rafters, collar ties, trusses, etc., centres between rafters/trusses & dimensions, where possible); method of fixing slates – nails or pegs; presence of sawn/roughly hewn timbers/bog pine/oak, etc.; parging/rendering under slates; roofing felt (type); existing ventilation.*

*For thatched roofs, consider the following: roof construction (trusses, collars, rafters, etc.); presence of sawn/roughly hewn timbers/reused timber/bog pine/oak, etc.; presence of timber pegs, sugán rope, soot blackening of roof timbers and/or scraw.*

*Also note condition of chimneys; storage and water tanks; presence of vermin; condition and evidence of water ingress; existing insulation.*

<p><i>Please note that good photos of the roof structure are very important.</i></p>	
<p><b>Wildlife/Protected Species</b>  <i>Note any evidence of colonisation in roof/building of protected species, such as pine martens, red squirrels, swallows, swifts, bats, etc. These species are protected. Furthermore, please note that all nesting birds are protected. If present, please consult with National Parks and Wildlife Service as derogation licences may be required. Further information can be found here: <a href="https://www.npws.ie/licencesandconsents">https://www.npws.ie/licencesandconsents</a> or from <a href="mailto:wildlifelicence@npws.gov.ie">wildlifelicence@npws.gov.ie</a></i></p>	
<p><b>Ceilings</b>  <i>Consider the following: materials such as lath and plaster, plaster on reeds, flour sack sheeting, timber sheeting, hardboard sheeting, tongue and groove boarding, plywood, modern plasterboard etc.  Note presence of decorative ceilings such as cornices, ceiling roses etc.</i></p>	<p><i>Note: Lining paper to ceilings will often prevent a thorough inspection of the ceilings and may obscure cracking.  Note: With old lath and plaster ceilings, moisture penetration or leakage through the roof can cause the timber laths to the ceiling to swell as they absorb moisture. As the laths swell, the plaster nibs which form part of and support the ceiling are pinched or squeezed. This often causes the plaster nibs to snap and when the laths eventually dry out the ceiling can sag as the nibs have now come loose. This commonly results in cracking and in more extreme cases, sagging and even partial collapse of sections of the ceiling. Where the timber laths do not dry out, they can develop wood rot as fungi and/or furniture beetle colonise, consume and weaken the timber and can be attacked by insects such as furniture beetle (woodworm). This can also result in cracking, sagging and partial collapse of a ceiling. Note: Where timber becomes wet and is colonised by fungi such as wet rot or dry rot, these fungi consume the constituent parts of the timber such as cellulose and lignin. This weakens the timber and tends to cause the timber to be crushed or squeezed under the load it is supporting be it a floor joist, roof rafter or lintel in a wall. Evidence of this is usually seen as cracking in the surrounding wall and ceiling plaster.</i></p>
<p><b>Walls &amp; Partitions</b>  <i>Consider the following:  Are walls loadbearing or non-loadbearing; is the wall solid, brick-nogged, stud, lath-and-plaster, timber sheeting, etc; is there built in furniture such as wall presses, dressers, bed</i></p>	<p><i>Note: internal walls and partitions will be either load-bearing or non-load bearing. In older buildings, non-load bearing walls often take up some of the load of an adjoining roof, ceiling and floor structures. Alterations to walls, such as forming or enlarging a doorway should only be carried out following detailed inspection and localised opening up of these structures</i></p>

<p><i>outshots, etc; cracking and location of; presence of wallpapers, timber wainscoting, wall cladding, etc.; presence of newspapers (noting dates); evidence of replastering using modern mortars and plasters such as cementitious mortars and gypsum plasters.</i></p>	<p><i>and features. Minor to moderate cracking will often occur over doorways in old buildings as the lintel and frame of the doorway settles over time and as a result of continued use of the door. Such cracking is often of little structural concern but may impact on decoration. Wall paper and lining paper to walls will often prevent a thorough inspection of the walls and may obscure cracking, damp staining and other such defects.</i></p>
<p><b>Fireplaces, chimney breasts and flues</b>  <i>Consider the following: materials; canopied hoods and supporting timber structure, hearths, ovens, iron cranes and grates, ventilators, later repairs / modern interventions, presence of chimneypieces and its materials – cast-iron, stone, timber; evidence of water penetration; cracking to chimneybreasts etc.</i></p>	<p><i>Note: Generally, it is recommended that all flues, which it is intended to use are inspected and cleaned before use. Re-lining of some flues may be required and is always required where new gas or solid-fuel stoves are being installed. Flues should be swept on a regular basis. Ventilation to each end of a flue is important as a means of dissipating dampness. Therefore, fireplaces should be kept open and where these have been closed over a vent should be fitted. The use of solid fuel stoves in thatched buildings is <u>NOT RECOMMENDED</u> as they create a fire hazard.</i></p>
<p><b>Timber Floors</b>  <i>Consider the following: Joist direction, condition of boards, evidence of deflection, dampness and decay; have boards been previously lifted or altered, coverings (particularly use of impermeable linoleum, carpets, underlays etc.). Presence of newspapers and dates. Consider upper floors: findings of heel tests; presence of beams and struts; dimensions where possible of upper floor joists and centres.</i></p>	<p><i>Note: Where possible, loose edges/corners of floor coverings should be lifted to allow the inspector to establish the nature of the underlying floor. Note: Extreme care should be taken where holes have to be notched or drilled through floor joists to accommodate new heating pipes or electrical cables. Where excessive notching or drilling is undertaken, the joists will be weakened and this can result in a floor becoming springy or bouncy and can damage underlying ceilings.</i></p>
<p><b>Solid Floor</b>  <i>Consider the following: Location of floor/portion of building; age if known; type; insulation if known; later floor coverings (linoleum/carpets etc.); presence of newspapers and dates.</i></p>	<p><i>Where a later solid floor has been laid it is not possible to identify whether insulation has been incorporated into the slab without excavating part of the floor.</i></p>
<p><b>Flagstones/Paving/Tiling on earth</b></p>	
<p><b>Windows</b>  <i>Note linings and shutters where present.</i></p>	

<p><b>Interior Doors</b>  <i>Note design and construction materials, historic latches, fittings, hinges, locks etc.</i></p>	
<p><b>Woodwork / Joinery</b>  <i>Consider the following: staircases, wainscoting, architraves, shutters, skirting boards, dado rails, picture rails etc.</i></p>	
<p><b>Furniture and built in fittings</b>  <i>Consider the following: dressers, settles, beds, wall presses, mug racks, shelves, coat hooks/racks, etc.</i></p>	
<p><b>Bathroom fittings</b></p>	
<p><b>Kitchen fittings</b></p>	
<p><b>Evidence of Dampness</b>  <i>Consider presence of and note locations of staining, discolouration, algae, deterioration of paint/plaster etc.</i></p>	
<p><b>Surface Condensation</b>  <i>Consider presence of and note locations of mildew, black mould, staining, streaking, peeling paper, lifting wallpaper; presence of large pieces of furniture against external walls which restrict air circulation etc.</i></p>	<p><i>Note: Condensation occurs where water vapour in air comes in contact with a cold surface such as a window, wall or ceiling and condenses back to a liquid. A number of contributing factors will determine the rate or extent of condensation. These include levels of heating, ventilation and modern living patterns such as cooking, bathing and washing and drying of clothes. The damp conditions allow black mould to grow. All moulds give off spores which can be damaging to health and therefore steps should be taken to counteract condensation. Problems with condensation are generally alleviated by adequate heating and ventilation. Internal temperatures should be maintained above 13 degrees Celsius and/or surface temperatures above 15°C and that all bathrooms and kitchens be fitted with extractor fans to remove water vapour and steam.</i></p>
<p><b>Wood Rot and Timber Decay</b>  <i>Identify locations and evidence of fruiting bodies, cuboidal cracking to timberwork, hyphal-strands, mycelium, red spore dust (for instance on top of wardrobes and shelves), condition of affected timber elements etc.</i></p>	<p><i>The primary causes of dampness in older houses tends to be a combination of factors: surface condensation, moisture passing through a wall from the exterior, roof leaks, plumbing leaks, and condensation. Inappropriate alterations such as the use of hard impermeable external renders, internal plasters and solid floors can cause or exacerbate damp problems. Inspection and testing for dampness is done using sight, smell and touch as well as through the use of a moisture meter. At all times it is important to take a holistic approach to the diagnosis of dampness. It should be noted that the use of a moisture meter alone is not always an adequate diagnosis for dampness as they reply on surface readings. In</i></p>

	<p>many cases, problems with condensation or moisture penetrating through a wall, can be mistaken for 'rising damp'. Such a misdiagnosis can result in unnecessary and potentially destructive remedial works being undertaken which still fail to address the root problem.</p>
<p><b>Insect Infestation</b>  <i>Consider evidence of and note locations of exit flight holes (historic or active); are exit holes clean or dirty (i.e. recent or old); presence of wood bore dust indicating active infestation and condition of affected timber elements etc.</i></p>	<p><i>Spraying of timber is often recommended as a means of eradicating woodworm. Unfortunately, indiscriminate spraying rarely has any significant impact on woodworm as the spray is not absorbed into the timber and has no effect on the woodworm living beneath the timber surface. While the spray may have some effect on beetles which might land on the timber to lay eggs or beetles emerging from the timber, in many cases the spray is soon brushed or washed away as part of housekeeping operations and thus has no effect on the beetles. Injecting insecticide into woodworm holes is also unlikely to have an effect as these holes will now be empty following the emergence of the beetle. It is advised to eliminate all causes of dampness and promote drying to reduce moisture content to below about 15%, for example, by controlling condensation. Major damage could necessitate conservative timber repairs but avoid automatic wholesale replacement. Secondary measures may be required, particularly where infestation is extensive, timber lacks durability or it is hard to cut moisture levels sufficiently. Action could entail targeted chemical treatment - Where advice is sought, this should be from an independent professional or consultant, not a remedial treatment contractor.</i></p>
<p><b>Evidence of Potential Damp</b>  <i>Note evidence of damp; assess condition of external wall surfaces; condition of internal wall surfaces; condition of external roof drainage and surface drainage – consider spillage/leakage from rainwater goods; external ground levels, presence of/condition of drains – consider potential leakage from drains; is moisture at depth in the wall or only on the surface; presence of salt efflorescence etc.</i></p>	<p><i>Damp can potentially occur where moisture in the soil beneath a building rises up through its walls as a result of 'capillary rise' or flow. In order to counter this form of moisture movement, modern walls incorporate damp proof courses which halt 'rising damp'. However, most buildings built before the First World War were constructed without damp proof courses with the result that capillary rise can sometimes occur.</i></p> <p><i>'Rising damp' is typically characterised by stains or a tide mark at the base of a wall. It can cause the breakdown of plasters and paint finishes, salt efflorescence in masonry and plasters, and the decay of timbers in contact with damp walls and soil. However, surface condensation is often mistaken for 'rising damp' and the resolution is very different, therefore it is important to ascertain which is present before deciding on the remediation required. Surface condensation typically accounts for up to 90% of instances of damp found at the base of walls in traditional buildings. This is the result of heat loss through the floor and wall, combining to produce excessive low temperatures at the floor/wall junction. As the wall is coldest here, it attracts condensation.</i></p>

*Moisture levels in a wall can be affected by the porosity of building materials and the rate of evaporation from the wall. The presence of impervious finishes, such as cement-based external render, will hinder evaporation of moisture in a wall to the exterior – instead it is likely to evaporate to the interior of the building where it causes staining and damage to plaster finishes. Moisture content within a wall can also be subject to seasonal variations and changes in the water table. Where impermeable concrete floors are installed there is further tendency for any moisture beneath a building to migrate towards the walls where, in concentrated quantities, it rises up through the wall. Remedies should always be appraised with regard to their effectiveness and the potential to cause damage. Addressing damp conditions will often require a suite of interventions rather than a single cure-all operation. Caution is recommended with regard to any proposals to install an injected damp proof course around the base of the walls. Injected damp proof courses consist of a liquid silicon which is injected into a series of holes around the base of the walls and ‘theoretically’ forms a continuous layer or barrier which prevents moisture rising through the wall, however in traditional buildings, this continuous barrier is rarely achieved and as a result it is also usual practice to remove all plaster to a height of approx. 1m and replace this with a water-proof plaster as part of these ‘damp-proofing’ works. Such damp-proofing works are often used as a panacea, disguising, and hiding the actual damp problem rather than actually tackling it.*

*Generally, the most effective way to address issues with damp in old buildings is to first ensure that drains and pipes running under a building are not leaking and aggravating damp problems and that rainwater from downpipes is also being drained away and isn’t just flowing in under the building. Further interventions may include the lowering of external ground-levels so they are at least 150mm below internal floor levels as well as the provision of French drains around the base of the exterior walls – these will draw ground moisture away from the walls of a building and allows moisture beneath the building to drain or evaporate into the trench before it starts to rise up through the walls. In many cases the simplest treatment is to hack off and replaster any localised damaged plaster and accept that this might have to be done again at a future date.*

*It is therefore recommended that the low impact and non-invasive actions outlined above are followed through before considering invasive and expensive damp-proofing measures.*

*Note: it is not possible to comment on any such defects which are covered, hidden within walls or floors, or which are not readily accessible.*

**Evidence of Water Penetration**

*Consider presence of and note locations of; consider defective chimneys; defective flashings; leaking / spillage from gutters,*

<i>roofs, downpipes, defective barges and verges; external cracks in wall finishes; defective wall finishes; defective window and door joinery; inadequate drips to sills; abutting walls and outbuildings</i>	
Other	
Limitations to Inspection	

## 2.10 Services

*\* Services are generally hidden within the construction of the property. This means that only the visible parts can be inspected. The visual inspection cannot assess the services to make sure they work efficiently and safely, or meet modern standards.*

*In relation to electrical installations it is recommended that a registered electrician check the property and its electrical fittings at least every ten years, or on change of occupancy. Furthermore, all gas and oil appliances and equipment should regularly be inspected, tested, maintained and serviced by a registered 'competent person' and in line with the manufacturer's instructions. This is important to make sure that the equipment is working correctly, to limit the risk of fire and carbon monoxide poisoning and to prevent carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases from leaking into the air.*

Electricity	
Gas/Oil	
Water	
Heating	
Water Heating	
Extraction <i>What kind of extraction is there in kitchens and bath/shower rooms?</i>	
Foul Drainage	
Surface Drainage	
Common services	
Other Services/Features	
Radon <i>Check radon maps: <a href="https://www.epa.ie/environment-and-you/radon/radon-map/">https://www.epa.ie/environment-and-you/radon/radon-map/</a></i>	
Limitations to Inspections	

## 2.11 Grounds

External surfaces around building <i>Consider ground levels; sloping land; ponding of water; drainage; presence of drains, gullies, debris, ACO drains, etc.</i>	
Boiler House	



Ancillary Structures/Outbuildings	
Boundary/Site Features <i>Consider walls, fences, hedges, hedgerows, trees, gates, gate piers, stiles, paving, cobbling, riding blocks, churn blocks, dung pits, etc.</i>	
Paving/cobbled surfaces	

<b>2.12 Ancillary Buildings Exterior (use for each building where applicable)</b>	
<i>Describe composition and condition of each component followed by suggested recommendation</i>	
Chimneystacks	
Roof Coverings	
Rainwater pipes and Gutters	
Main walls	
Windows	
Doors	
Other Joinery & finishes	
Other	
Limitations to Inspection	

<b>2.13 Ancillary Buildings Interior (use for each building where applicable)</b>	
<i>Describe composition and condition of each component followed by suggested recommendation</i>	
Roof Structure/Loft/Attic	
Ceilings	
Walls & Partitions	
Fireplaces, chimney breasts and flues	
Built in fittings (such as stalls)	
Floors	
Windows	
Doors	
Woodwork / Joinery (staircase, architraves, shutters, skirtings etc.)	
Other	
Limitations to Inspection	

### 3. OVERALL ASSESSMENT & SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

This purpose of this section is to provides an overview of the property, highlighting areas of concern, and to summarise the works required in order of prioritisation. It also provides a summary of suggested repairs (and cost guidance where agreed) and recommendations for further investigations. This is the most useful section for the owner and the information provided should reflect this in terms of content and detail.

3.1 Defects that are serious and/or need to addressed urgently	
Exterior	
Interior	
Services	
Grounds	
Drainage	

3.2 Defects that need repairing or replacing but are not considered to be either serious or urgent	
Exterior	
Interior	
Services	

Grounds	
Drainage	

<b>3.3 No repair is currently needed. The property should be maintained in line with the documents outlined in Section 4.</b>	
Exterior	
Interior	
Services	
Grounds	
Drainage	

**3.4 Suggested Energy Efficiency Improvement Measures**  
*This section describes energy related matters for the property as a whole. It takes account of a broad range of energy related features and issues already identified in the previous sections of this report, and discusses how they may be affected by the condition of the property. This is not a formal energy assessment of the building but part of the report that will help the owner to get a broader view of this topic. This section will also suggest*

appropriate and sensitive energy upgrades taking into account the construction of the building, levels of surviving historic detail and need for vapour permeable materials. [Improving Energy Efficiency in Traditional Buildings](#) (IEETB) (2023) goes through this in detail particularly Chapters 3 (Section 3.4 and 3.5) and Chapter 4. Note: Not all conservation professionals will have energy modelling skills so engagement of additional expertise may form part of the report recommendations.

**Pitched Roofs**  
 Consider the following:  
 Where standard flat ceiling is in situ, attic insulation can be easy to introduce. However, where ceilings follow the roof rafters this can be more difficult. If roof repairs are required, consider installing insulation between rafters while roof covering is removed as part of works. It is important to consider ventilation as part of insulation works. Consider dormers and chimneys etc. IEETB Section 3.4.2  
 Please note that this would not apply to thatched roofs, as well-maintained thatch already has good thermal performance. Adding additional insulation can reduce the longevity of thatched roof coverings.

**Flat Roofs**  
 Consider the following: Flat roofs are generally of modern construction. Works should comply with Building Regulations and follow the guidelines and minimum efficiency standards set in TGD L. IEETB Fig 28

**Suspended timber floors**  
 Consider lifting floorboards and insulating between floor joists. Consider a radon sump/barrier where appropriate. IEETB Section 3.4.3.1

**Solid Floors**  
 Consider the following:  
 Where a flagstone floor is intact, it can be very difficult to remove and reinstate. Often it is advised to retain in-situ in order to retain the historic floor.  
 Where an existing modern floor slab is in place, it may be possible

to install a layer of screed/insulation it. Where installing a new insulated floor slab there is also potential to introduce under-floor heating. Consider a radon sump/barrier where appropriate. IEETB Section 3.4.3.2

#### **Windows**

Consider the following:

Where windows are modern replacements consider new appropriately designed double glazed windows.

Where windows are historic, ensure they are draught-proofed; use shutters where present and use thermally lined curtains.

Consider providing new shutters where there are no shutters.

Consider use of secondary glazing. IEETB Section 3.4.4

#### **Doors**

Consider the following:

Where doors have been replaced, consider renewal with thermally efficient doors.

Where historic doors are intact, consider upgrading internal side with insulation.

Use thermally lined curtains

across doors. IEETB Section 3.4.4

#### **External Solid Walls**

Consider the following:

Where external render has been removed and/or existing modern renders have to be removed; there is an opportunity to apply insulated external render or insulation. It is important to ensure that any proposed material is compatible with underlying structure.

IEETB Section 3.4.5.2

Please note that particular care needs to be taken when insulating walls built with earth-based mortars and renders. Earth walls have good thermal performance

*and present limited opportunity for thermal upgrade. Please note that many harder NHL's such as NHL 3.5 and NHL 5 are generally considered too hard for many underlying historic mortars, in particular, earth based mortars.*

**Internal Walls**

*Consider the following: Where existing internal plasters are in poor condition, have been removed or consist of incompatible cement/gypsum-based materials, it may be appropriate to apply internal wall insulation using appropriate micro permeable materials. Again particular care where existing walls have earth-based plasters and mortars. Any new mortars should match the underlying soft mortars where present. IEETB Section 3.4.5.1 Please note that many harder NHL's such as NHL 3.5 and NHL 5 are generally considered too hard for many underlying historic mortars, in particular, earth based mortars.*

**Airtightness**

*Airtightness is an essential component in order to protect the building fabric from the effects of interstitial condensation caused by warm moist air leaving the building through air leakage pathways. Traditional buildings typically use wet-applied lime plaster to ensure airtightness. Where the plaster finish is intact, relatively high levels of airtightness have been found through air permeability testing. Conserving, repairing and reinstating lime plaster finishes will ensure the continuity of the airtightness layer. Air leakage should be eliminated as far as practically possible. This does not*

<p><i>include any purpose-provided controlled mechanical ventilation. IEETB Section 3.4.6</i></p>	
<p><b>Lighting &amp; Lighting Controls</b>  <i>Consider the use of energy efficiency lighting. The use of recessed down lighters should generally be avoided in historic ceilings. IEETB Section 3.5.1</i></p>	
<p><b>Controlled Ventilation</b>  <i>Carefully consider that there is sufficient ventilation to allow for removal of water vapour, particularly mechanical ventilation in bathrooms and kitchens. IEETB Section 3.5.2</i></p>	
<p><b>Bioclimatic Design Principles</b>  <i>Consider bioclimatic design: this means ensuring that the fabric of buildings is designed to local conditions (climate, orientation and site). This would include ensuring using a lime shelter coat to protect against driving rain, using passive solar gain through windows etc. IEETB Section 3.5.3</i></p>	
<p><b>Smart Heating Controls</b>  <i>Smart heating controls that respond to temperature sensors ensure more comfortable environments and reduce the runtime of some heating systems compared to manual controls. IEETB Section 3.5.4</i></p>	
<p><b>Pipe Insulation</b>  <i>Ensure pipework is insulated (in accordance with TGD L) as this will ensure in lower heat loss, greater efficiency and protect against freezing. IEETB Section 3.5.5</i></p>	
<p><b>Maintenance Schedules</b>  <i>Consider the use of a clear maintenance plan as part of any renovation project. This will reduce the need for expensive repairs and can provide cost savings. IEETB Section 3.5.6</i></p>	
<p><b>Fittings and Appliances</b></p>	

<p><i>Higher energy consumption can be the result of inefficient appliances and fittings. Consider the use of low-flow taps &amp; showerheads, boiling water taps and A-rated or better appliances when replacing appliances and fittings. IEETB Section 3.5.7</i></p>	
<p><b>Water Conservation</b>  <i>Consider the potential for reusing grey water from sinks, showers/baths, washing machines etc. Useful guidance on the use of collected greywater and harvested rainwater is included in TGD H.IEETB Section 3.5.8</i></p>	
<p><b>Heating</b>  <i>Consider upgrading an existing boiler to more efficient model where already in situ to include insulation of all pipework IEETB Section 4.2</i></p>	
<p><b>Heat pumps</b>  <i>Consider the following: where a new insulated floor slab has to be installed, a heat pump could be considered to provide low background heat, possibly with a secondary heat source to boost internal heating. Consider liaising with heating engineer. IEETB Section 4.2.2.1</i></p>	
<p><b>Renewables</b>  <i>Consider potential renewables such as carefully sited domestic wind turbines. The use of adjoining building with a suitable south facing roof or an area in grounds where solar or PV panels can be placed at ground level to facilitate periodic cleaning of panels. IEETB Section 4.3</i></p>	
<p><b>Potential Plant Room</b>  <i>Consider a suitable location for a potential plant room to accommodate modern plant which can take up significant space, e.g. in outbuilding IEETB Section 4.5</i></p>	
<p><b>General</b></p>	



### 3.5 General Recommendations

#### Drainage

*Consider the following: Existing ground water conditions & lack of maintenance in existing ground drainage. Consider use of attenuation ponds for heavier rain falls.*

#### Water courses

*Note location of neighbouring water courses which may inform location of septic tanks, waste water treatment plants and inform safety (new fencing etc.)*

#### Existing trees / hedges / climbing plants on buildings

*Consider the following: Overhanging trees and climbing plants on buildings can prevent traditional buildings from drying out and require gutters to be cleared out more frequently. Any proposed cutting back should avoid the nesting season (March 1<sup>st</sup> to August 31<sup>st</sup>).*

#### Health & Safety/Fire Recommendations

*Consider the following installation of water reservoir/attenuation pond, water pump, smoke detectors with heat detectors in kitchens, provision of fire blankets and extinguishers, and carbon monoxide alarm. Where a modern thatched roof has to be fully rethatched, consider installation of fire retardant materials under the thatch.*

### 3.6 Restoration

*Suggest measures, where appropriate, to restore lost character/enhance amenity where there is sufficient evidence for their original form, or otherwise with an appropriate new design.*

### 3.7 Other Upgrades

*Optional, and if appropriate, suggest sensitive re-use and/or modifications to enhance amenity and show character to advantage*

**3.8 Issues for Your Legal Advisors/Further Investigations Required**

*The author does not act as the legal adviser and will not comment on any legal documents. However, if during the inspection they identify issues that your legal advisers may need to investigate further, these will be listed and explained in this section (for example, boundary issues, access issues, location of septic tank, unauthorised works etc.). You should show your legal advisers this section of the report.*

Regulations	
Planning issues	
Guarantees	
Boundary issues	
Rights of Way	
Other Matters	

**3.9 Risks**

*This section summarises defects and issues that present a risk to the building or grounds, or a safety risk to people. This should also list suggested recommendations and/or actions.*

Risks to the Building	
Risks to the Grounds	
Risks to People	
Other Risks or Hazards	

**3.10 Summary of Repairs Required & approximate Cost Guidance**

*(insert more lines as required)*

Repairs Required	Approximate Costs

## 4 USEFUL REFERENCES

### Department of Housing, Local Government & Heritage

*Bringing Back Homes – Manual for the Reuse of Existing Buildings* (updated 24 April 2024)

<https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/68a5b-bringing-back-homes-manual-for-the-reuse-of-existing-buildings/>

### National Built Heritage Service Resources & Publications:

<https://www.buildingsofireland.ie/resources/>

*Architectural Heritage Protection Guidelines for Planning Authorities* (2011)

<https://www.buildingsofireland.ie/app/uploads/2019/10/Architectural-Heritage-Protection-Guidelines-for-Planning-Authorities-2011.pdf>

*Improving Energy Efficiency in Traditional Buildings, Guidance for Specifiers & Installers* (2023)

<https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/18cb9-improving-energy-efficiency-in-traditional-buildings-guidance-for-specifiers-and-installers-2023>

*Sources of Information for Built Vernacular Heritage* (2024)

<https://www.buildingsofireland.ie/app/uploads/2024/03/Sources-of-Information-for-Built-Vernacular-Heritage-Edition-February-2024.pdf>

National Inventory of Architectural Heritage Handbook May 2024 Edition

<https://www.buildingsofireland.ie/app/uploads/2024/05/NIAH-Handbook-Edition-May-2024.pdf>

### Advice Series

- Maintenance <https://www.buildingsofireland.ie/app/uploads/2019/10/Maintenance-A-Guide-to-the-Care-of-Older-Buildings-2007.pdf>
- Windows: <https://www.buildingsofireland.ie/app/uploads/2019/10/Windows-A-Guide-to-the-Repair-of-Historic-Windows-2007.pdf>
- Bricks <https://www.buildingsofireland.ie/app/uploads/2019/10/Bricks-A-Guide-to-the-Repair-of-Historic-Brickwork-2009.pdf>
- Ironwork <https://www.buildingsofireland.ie/app/uploads/2019/10/Iron-The-Repair-of-Wrought-and-Cast-Ironwork-2009.pdf>
- Roofs <https://www.buildingsofireland.ie/app/uploads/2019/10/Roofs-A-Guide-to-the-Repair-of-Historic-Roofs-2010.pdf>
- Energy Efficiency <https://www.buildingsofireland.ie/app/uploads/2019/10/Energy-Efficiency-in-Traditional-Buildings-2010.pdf>
- Thatch <https://www.buildingsofireland.ie/app/uploads/2019/10/Thatch-A-Guide-to-the-Repair-of-Thatched-Roofs-2015.pdf>
- Paving <https://www.buildingsofireland.ie/app/uploads/2019/10/Paving-The-Conservation-of-Historic-Ground-Surfaces-2015.pdf>

## Other Useful Publications/Sources of Information

### General

*Irish Period Houses: A Conservation Guidance Manual* (2015), Frank Keohane, Dublin Civic Trust. \*Very good guidance and overview of repairs and upgrades to any traditionally constructed buildings.

Information on working with Protected Structures and RIAI Conservation Accreditation system

<https://www.riai.ie/work-with-an-architect/working-with-an-older-building>

### Traditional Building Skills

*Irish Georgian Society Traditional Building Skills Register*: <https://www.igs.ie/conservation/register>

The Irish Georgian Society maintains a register of crafts people and professionals who work with historic buildings.

*Register of Heritage Contractors*: The Register of Heritage Contractors is an accredited listing of competent main contractors and specialist contractors in the field of built heritage conservation. Each member of the Register meets a set of predefined criteria, experience and expertise that enable them to carry out restoration projects. <https://www.heritageregistration.ie/>

### Vernacular Furniture

- Kinmonth, Claudia (1993) *Irish Country Furniture, 1700-1950*. Yale University Press, London
- Kinmonth, Claudia (2020) *Irish Country Furniture 1700-2000*. Cork: Collins Press.

**Some Useful British Publications** (Please note that the Irish building control system is different and some advice provided here needs to be agreed in advance with local Building Control Officer to ensure it is acceptable to Irish standards).

### General

*The Old House Handbook: The Essential Guide to Care and Repair* (2008), Hunt and Suhr, SPAB.

### French Drains

- <https://www.spab.org.uk/advice/french-drains> Any archaeological implications related to digging will need to be addressed in line with National Monuments Service requirements which are different to UK considerations.

### Damp/Condensation/Ventilation

- *Inform Guide: Damp. Causes and Solutions* (2007), Historic Scotland [Inform Guide: Damp: Causes and Solutions | Hist Env Scotland \(historicenvironment.scot\)](#)
- *Inform Guide: Condensation* (2020) Historic Environment Scotland [Inform Guide: Condensation | Historic Environment Scotland | HES](#)
- *Inform Guide: Mould Growth* (2019) Historic Scotland [Inform Guide: Mould Growth | Historic Environment Scotland | HES](#)
- *Inform Guide: Ventilation in Traditional Houses* (2008) Historic Scotland. [Inform Guide: Ventilation in Traditional Houses | Hist Env Scotland \(historicenvironment.scot\)](#)
- *The Warm Dry Home: A practical guide to understanding the causes and solutions of damp in buildings* (2022), Pete Ward, Heritage House Building and Restoration.

### Energy Efficiency

- *The Old House EcoHandbook: A Practical Guide to Retrofitting for Energy Efficiency and Sustainability* (2019) Hunt, Suhr and McCloud, White Lion Publishing.
- Historic Environment Scotland refurbishment case studies. Range of case studies describe the repair and upgrade of traditionally constructed buildings and components. Building typologies include traditional farmhouses buildings. <https://www.historicenvironment.scot/about-us/what-we-do/conservation/refurbishment-case-studies/>
- *Insulating pitched roofs at ceiling level: energy efficiency and historic buildings* (2016), Historic England <https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/technical-advice/retrofit-and-energy-efficiency-in-historic-buildings/insulating-roofs-in-historic-buildings/>
- *Insulating pitched roofs at rafter level: energy efficiency and historic buildings* (2016), Historic England <https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/technical-advice/retrofit-and-energy-efficiency-in-historic-buildings/insulating-roofs-in-historic-buildings/>

### Structure

- *Inform Guide: Structural Joinery* (2010) Roger Curtis. Historic Scotland. [Inform Guide: Structural Joinery | Historic Environment Scotland](#)
- *Inform Guide: Structural Cracks* (2008) Ingval Maxwell. Historic Scotland [Inform Guide: Structural Cracks | Historic Environment Scotland](#)
- *Inform Guide: Foundations & Wall Footings* (2008) Ingval Maxwell. Historic Scotland. [Inform Guide: Foundations and Wall Footings | Hist Env Scotland \(historicenvironment.scot\)](#)

### Woodworm/Furniture Beetle

- <https://www.spab.org.uk/advice/wood-boring-insects>