

Profile for Heritage Counts 2015

Ciaran Horohoe – Listed Building Owner

1. What are the details of your building?

“My building is The Hermitage, 776 Kenton Lane, HA3 6AF. It is a Grade II* property, thought to have been erected in the 1500s. However, upon closer inspection, my heritage architect seemed to think the building was much older, with parts used on the house from a much earlier mansion building. Evidence from things like the many unused mortises in places that do not match my building, such as in front of windows led them to this conclusion. The house lay empty for many years before I purchased it and it was on the ‘Heritage at Risk’ register, at serious risk of collapse.”

2. How long have you lived in/owned the building?

“I have owned the building for approximately four years. I spent three years renovating it and have lived here for one year now.”

3. Why did you decide to live in/buy a listed building as opposed to any other older building or new building?

“I purchased it initially as it appeared cheap (I soon learned that it wasn’t)! Plus I like a challenge, which it certainly was.”

4. What do you like/value most about living in a listed building?

“It's character and the fact that it is different to most houses.”

5. Could you provide an example of an experience have you had with undertaking repairs or maintenance work on your building (detailing the work, the process, and who advised you)?

“I basically dismantled the house with just the wooden frame remaining supported by a mass of scaffolding as it was so rotten. We then repaired and replaced the defective wood (approximately 50%) and set about piling underneath the wooden frame and all the scaffolding, following on with all new drainage and a new concrete slab. I then placed a timber-framed house over the old frame and extended the property by 50%. I ended up with a complete new house with the oak frame inside in the old section and a complete modern feel to the new section of the house.”

6. What would you say are the main barriers or challenges to owning a listed building (in relation to carrying out repairs and maintenance)?

“None as in my case, I have a totally new house with the added bonus of an old oak frame in part of my house.”

“The only down side to owning a listed property, in my experience, was the expense and time spent on the actual planning applications (and subsequent meetings with the local authority and others, like Historic England). The reports required did take up a lot of the budget (in my case, in excess of £100,000), which many people may not be able to afford.

If you require an alternative accessible version of this document (for instance in audio, Braille or large print) please contact our Customer Services Department:
Telephone: 0370 333 0607
Fax: 01793 414926
Textphone: 0800 015 0516
E-mail: customers@HistoricEngland.org.uk