

History in the making

Looking to purchase an old property but anxious about the cost of renovation? Get the experts at historicbuilding.co.uk on your side with their essential database of professionals, craftsmen and services

Whether you're a developer or a private owner, working with historical buildings or sites has always had the reputation of being expensive and stressful. But help is at hand with the recently launched Historic Building Advisory Service (HBAS) at historicbuilding.co.uk.

This exciting money-saving resource is the country's first online professional consultancy service dedicated to builders, developers, architects, estate agents and property owners: all those involved with old property and historic sites – for historic, read anything built before 1945, from an Iron Age hill fort to an Art Deco flat.

At the heart of the service is a database of

companies and services that supply the skilled and experienced help you will need to renovate your property, including archaeologists, architects, brick and tile makers, marble suppliers, window restorers and VAT consultants.

What differentiates this database from similar services is that all the entrants have to supply information (based on criteria employed by conservation bodies) about their company, the type and size of work they undertake and, most importantly, references from a professional or commercial source. The idea, says founder, RICS chartered building surveyor Robert Hill, is to take the guesswork out of choosing a contractor or supplier.

Hill's motto says it all: 'Work with the site, rather than fight it.' With this refreshing approach, HBAS provides comprehensive, independent advice about all aspects of the built heritage or environment, from historic building methods, materials and specifications, to recognising and diagnosing faults, historic furniture, interiors, fittings and fixtures, urban and rural regeneration, tourism, finance, insurance and much more.

An annual subscription to historicbuilding.co.uk (£55, which is rebated against many of the services it offers) includes complimentary email question and answer sessions, as well as access to its database, a vital resource bank.

This site's practical and knowledgeable advice will help to sweep away many of the myths about working with historic buildings and sites, so now there's nothing stopping you making your own slice of history...

For more information about HBAS, visit historicbuilding.co.uk



Clockwise from top left: 18th-century re-faced 14th-century house; 18th-century dovecote; 15th-century gatehouse; 19th-century door.

