Old house listing check

For buyers looking at an older house in Scotland. Fill it in as you read the listing, and take it to the viewing.

Address	Postcode	Asking price
Agent	Date viewed	Age claimed in listing

1. The Home Report

Every house for sale in Scotland needs a Home Report, and the seller or agent must give you a copy within nine days of you asking. It has three parts. When the house first goes on the market the report can be no more than 12 weeks old, so check the date on the front.

- ☐ **Single survey and valuation.** A chartered surveyor's visual inspection. Each part gets a repair category: 3 means urgent repairs needed now, 2 means future attention, 1 means no immediate action. Note every 2 and 3.
- ☐ **Energy report.** The Energy Performance Certificate, with estimated heating and hot water costs.
- ☐ **Property questionnaire.** Filled in by the seller: council tax band, alterations, past damage, guarantees and notices.

Report date: Valuation: Repairs rated 3:

2. What it sold for before

ScotLIS (scotlis.ros.gov.uk), run by Registers of Scotland, shows the last purchase price and date free of charge. The title sheet and plan cost £3 plus VAT (£3.60) and name the current owner and the legal boundaries. If the house is still on the older Sasine Register, Registers of Scotland will search it for £30 plus VAT.

Last sold for: on: Land Register / Sasine:

3. Listed, or in a conservation area?

- ☐ Search listed buildings on trove.scot or the HES portal (portal.historicenvironment.scot), by both record and map. The record names the category: A for outstanding examples of a period, style or building type, B for major examples, C for representative ones. All three are protected, and listing covers the inside as well as the outside.
- ☐ Conservation areas are set by the council. HES's map may not be up to date, so check the council's own planning pages too.
- ☐ Either can change what you're allowed to do to windows, roofs and walls. Ask your solicitor what it means for this house.

Listed: yes / no Category: Conservation area: yes / no Name:

4. Clues to its age

None of these dates a house on its own. Taken together they tell you whether the listing's "circa" is believable.

- ☐ **Skewputts.** The carved or shaped stones at the foot of each gable. Plain, scrolled, or a face?
- ☐ **Crowsteps.** Stepped gables are an old Scottish form, but Victorian Baronial houses copied them too.
- ☐ **Wall thickness.** Measure at a window reveal. HES gives traditional Scottish stone walls as 0.6 metres or more.
- ☐ **Roof.** Scots slate is small, thick and laid in diminishing courses. Traditional Scottish roofs are steep, around 40 degrees.
- ☐ **Windows.** Sash and case windows, astragals (glazing bars), and the shape of the openings.
- ☐ **Pointing.** Soft, pale lime, or hard grey cement? Cement on old stone is worth a note.

What I saw:

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5. Damp and lime: things to note for your surveyor

Old stone walls were built to take in moisture and let it dry out again. Many problems start when that drying is blocked. You are noting what you see, not diagnosing it.

- ☐ Cement render or cement pointing on stone walls
- ☐ Plastic or other impermeable paint on stonework
- ☐ Tide marks, salts (white crust) or flaking plaster low on walls
- ☐ Ground or paving built up against the walls
- ☐ Blocked or overflowing gutters and downpipes
- ☐ Recent injected damp-proof course: HES says these are often unnecessary, so ask why it was done
- ☐ Musty smell, or a dehumidifier running on viewing day
- ☐ Cracks: where, how wide, and do they reach outside?
- ☐ Chimneys: leaning, missing pots, damp breasts inside

Notes:

6. Questions to ask the agent

- ☐ How long has it been on the market, and has the price changed?
- ☐ When was the Home Report done, and has a buyer pulled out since?
- ☐ What work has the seller had done, and are there warrants, completion certificates or guarantees?
- ☐ Has the roof, the wiring or the heating been renewed? When?
- ☐ Is any part shared, such as a roof, gable wall, drive or septic tank?
- ☐ Is there a closing date, or a note of interest yet?

Answers:

7. Old maps

The National Library of Scotland puts Ordnance Survey maps online free (maps.nls.uk). Its side-by-side viewer sets an old map next to a modern one, so you can see whether the house is on the first edition six-inch map (surveyed in Scotland from the 1840s to the 1880s) or only on later ones, and what stood there before.

First map it appears on: Named as:

8. Who lived there

ScotlandsPeople (scotlandspeople.gov.uk) indexes are free to search. Valuation rolls list the owner, tenant and occupier of most properties, with rolls online every ten years or so from 1855 to 1940; each image costs 2 credits (50p). Census returns from 1841 to 1921 cost 6 credits (£1.50) an image. Credits are 25p each, bought in bundles.

Names found:

Before you offer

Take your notes to your surveyor and solicitor. This sheet is a record of what you saw and asked. It is not a survey and it is not legal advice.

Want the full story of the house? A House life story starts at £99.
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