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ProjectBook's first birthday celebrated by period and listed building owners

ProjectBook, the UK's premier resource for period and listed buildings, is celebrating a successful first year of assisting owners of old buildings

From its low key launch on January 1st 2009, ProjectBook has rapidly become the first stop for anyone contemplating work on a period or listed property.

Horrified by some of the 'repairs' he had seen carried out on heritage properties, James Mott, heritage building expert, saw the need for a comprehensive national database of vetted professionals who were trained in the special needs of properties built prior to 1919.

Until around 1919 lime mortars and renders had generally been employed in construction, but from this point cement mortars and renders began to be widely used. Unlike lime, cement is impermeable and stops a building from 'breathing'. As a consequence, using cement mortars and renders to repair older homes can be hugely damaging and often leads to problems with damp and rot.

Many builders are no longer trained to understand these different building techniques, which is why, according to the Wedgewood Markham Survey undertaken in 1995, an estimated 70% of heritage building and maintenance work is undertaken by unskilled practitioners, often with irreversible damage to the property they are 'repairing'.

Owners of pre-1919 homes themselves are often not aware of the damage that can be done by using modern methods of construction on a period property.

ProjectBook has been created to help owners understand how their buildings work and to help them find appropriate craftsmen and products.

Using his extensive contacts, Mott has created an online database of qualified professionals vetted by their peers, many of them leading experts in their fields. Some of these tradesman have been traditionally trained in skills lost to modern construction. As marketing may not be a core skill, many of these craftsmen would be difficult or impossible to find without ProjectBook.

ProjectBook Facts:

- In total, over 700 businesses specialising in period and listed property work can be found on ProjectBook
- ProjectBook's Heritage Register contains over 540 registered businesses, the largest directory of its type in the UK
- ProjectBook's Products Directory lists 150 suppliers

In addition, ProjectBook offers on-line articles from leading experts in their fields including historic paint analysis, wrought iron, damp issues and the use of laser scanning.

New for 2010

Content and resources will be continuously added, offering site users even more choice.

- Expanded entries, now including a projects list and social media links
- Networking groups will be piloted in Surrey. If successful, these will be set up around the country. These groups will bring together all players involved with old buildings – property owners/managers, councils, sector organisations along with the UK's best craftsmen, contractors and consultants from ProjectBook
- Website redesign to make navigation even easier
- Events - shows, courses, seminars, open days, exhibitions, CPD Lectures
- A blog forum offering topics for debate, ProjectBook news, member posts and guest blogs

For more information, please contact James Mott, founder and managing director of ProjectBook on Tel: 08445 611646 or Email: info@projectbook.co.uk

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