

TYPICAL ERA **PROBLEMS**

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Tudor and Jacobean and Vernacular buildings



How do we recognise the Tudor ERA?

Very typically, they are built by using local materials such as thatch, timber, stone (that's pretty much what vernacular means local). A traditional Tudor building is also known as a black and white building to reflect it having black timber and white render between. Ironically, the timbers were originally lime washed generally in the same colour as the building or rendered over. It was only from the Victorian ERA where we started painting the timbers black.



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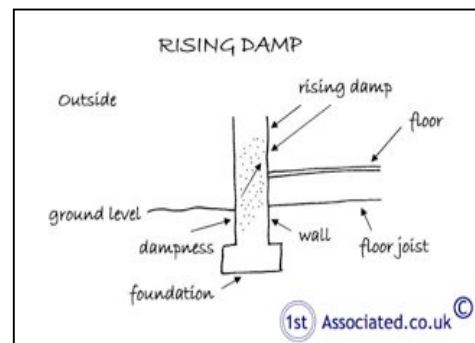


What are the typical problems with Tudor, Jacobean and Vernacular buildings?

These are timber framed buildings. Can you name the years when they were typically built and if possible five typical problems?

- i) They are built with a timber frame, which can rot over the years and is normally caused by water pouring onto the structure such as leaking gutters or a higher ground level and dampness onto the sole plate which is the plate at the very bottom of the wall.
- ii) Dry rot can occur – interestingly you need a damp environment for dry rot which is one of the worst things that can happen to a property. It has a very fine root that hunts out timber and eats it from the inside out so it is difficult to see, unless you know what you are looking for, such as the flowering body. It is quite beautiful in a way unless it is in your property because this can be very expensive to resolve.
- iii) Woodworm – most people have heard of death watch beetle and most old properties have some woodworm and the question is – is it active woodworm or not and is it causing structural damage or likely to cause structural damage?

- iv) Rising damp – often people are concerned with rising damp in older properties. Often they have had a modern techniques used unsuccessfully or in fact which have caused further problems.



Rising Damp

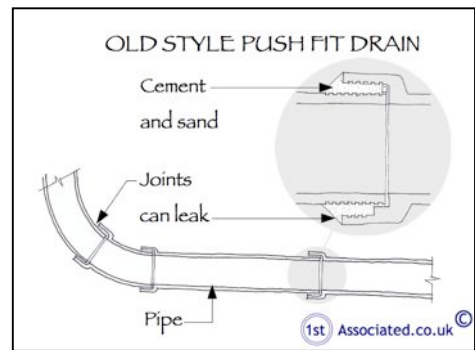
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v) Drains – drains can leak on older properties as they have push fit type drains.



Push Fit Drain

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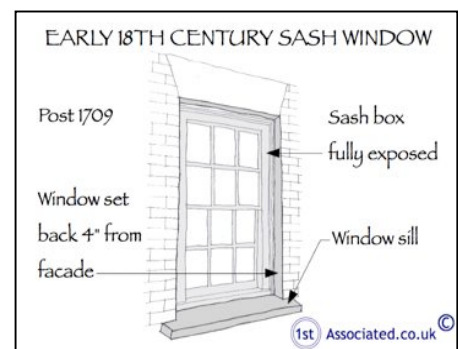


Georgian and Regency Buildings



How do we recognise Georgian and Regency properties?

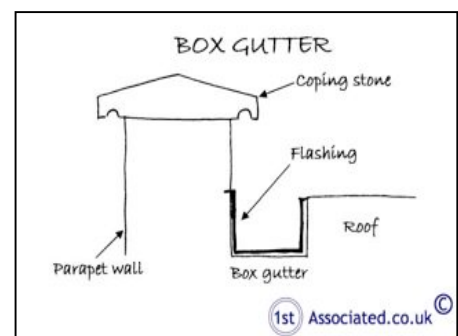
Georgian properties tend to hide the roofs behind parapet walls and tend to hide the gutters and downpipes from the front elevation and they have large windows. The reason they have large windows is because they didn't have electric lighting. Regency buildings tend to be slightly more decorative using cast iron for balconies etc.



Georgian Sash Window

What are the typical problems of Georgian and Regency buildings?

- i) Weathered and often built out of the softer red brick which deteriorates particularly in its exposed position on the chimney and also often original lead flashings have been replaced with cement flashings which leak.
- ii) Box gutter detail – these are drains behind parapet walls and are gutters in the shape of a box that tend to block up.



Box Gutter

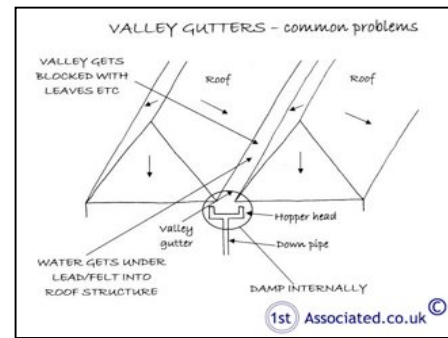
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iii) Valley gutters – particularly hidden valley gutters have all sorts of problems where they back up with leaves etc, and cause rot to the roof rafter which can be a major problem.



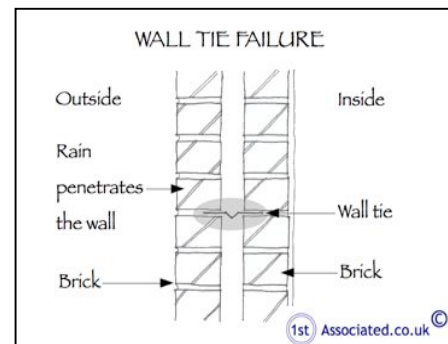
Valley Gutters - Common Problems

iv) They suffer from wet rot and in worse case scenarios, dry rot, which you really don't want to buy a property with dry rot.

v) Woodworm can be prevalent which eats into the timber.

vi) Rising damp is a problem that we commonly see with properties from this era, however it is far more common to see where modern techniques have been wrongly used to solve this problem which have made things worse.

vii) Joists and roofs not tied into the walls causing bowing to the structure.



Wall Tie Failure

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Victorian and Edwardian Buildings



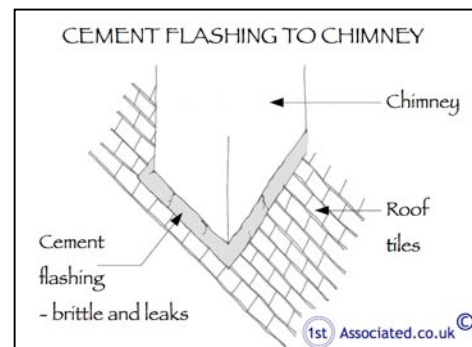
How do we recognise Victorian and Edwardian properties?

A much more pointy style of architecture, generally known for having square bays whereas Edwardian tends to have splayed bays. Other features are the uniformity of the buildings; there are often rows and rows of similar looking buildings. You do need to remember that although these buildings look nice, the latest mod-con when they were being built was drains.

What are the typical problems of a Victorian and Edwardian property?

The main typical problems you have in a Victorian and Edwardian property are:-

- i) Chimneys are weathered and need re-pointing and the flashing has been carried out in cement and is leaking.



Cement Flashing to Chimney

- ii) The original slate is still on the property but the nails that hold them on have rusted away.

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iii) The cast iron guttering has rusted away/partly been repaired and needs replacing.

iv) The original timber frame sash windows have been removed and plastic windows have been put in their place which don't have any integral strength and it has caused structural movement. This particularly occurs in bay windows.



Victorian Sash Window

v) Dampness in the walls for several different reasons – 1) the external ground level has been made higher 2) a chemical damp proof course has been inserted wrongly – it is nearly always wrong in a Victorian property.

vi) Drains are leaking causing structural movement.

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War years/Post War property - so we are talking about from the 1930's to the 1960's-1970's?



How do we recognise a War Years/Post War property?

They tend to use render and concrete tiles. Cavity walls were just starting to be used and originally they would have had metal windows, although much of these have now been replaced with plastic.



1960s/1970s cross wall construction



Art-Deco Property

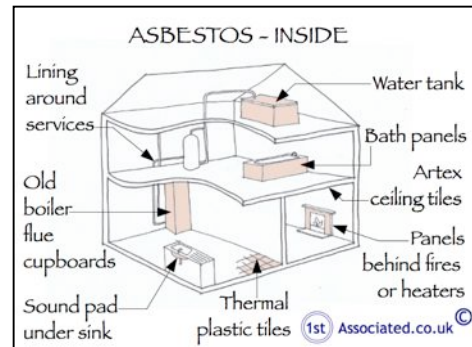
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What are the typical problems of War years/Post War properties?

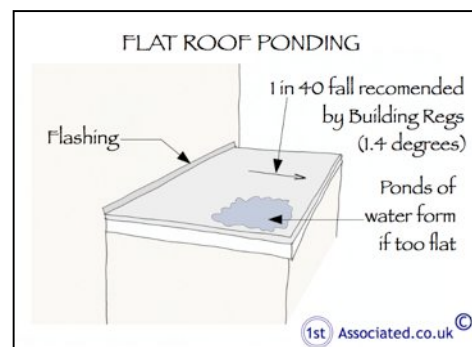
- i) The property is a non-traditional building and there can be problems with this such as structural problems, particularly with metal properties where there will be rusting and corrosion.
- ii) Asbestos was commonly used in years gone by and can be deteriorating.



Asbestos Inside

- iii) The electrics are old and out of date and can become a fire hazard/general danger.
- iv) In this ERA of construction was the first time we used and they really thought about how economical we could build with some very, what we would term as light weight structure, literally the floor deflects as you walk along it, so any alterations and amendments to the property can cause structural problems.
- v) Often black mould is found in these properties due to many reasons, everything from lack of ventilation to them being poorly designed to them being poorly insulated and/or poorly built.

- vi) Flat roof – if only flat roofs had a fall on them a third of the problems would be gone, a third of the problems unfortunately is due to poor workmanship and a third is due to poor materials.



Flat Roof Ponding

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Non-traditional Buildings

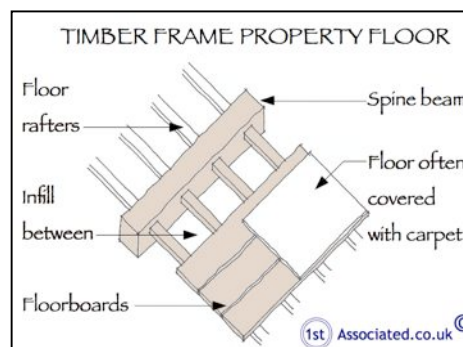
Non-traditional buildings were the result of needing lots of houses after the war. They were more a manufactured type house and they tended to be divided into three distinct categories:-

- (1) Metal framed houses such as BISF.
- (2) Concrete buildings such as Airey houses and Wimpey No-Fines cement.
- (3) Timber framed houses which we have had before in the Tudor ERA but there is also timber from the 1960s/1970s and another revival of timber frames in the 2000s.

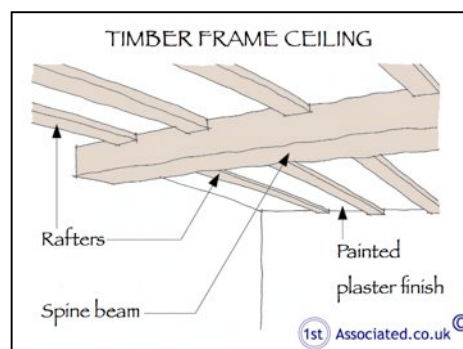
What is a timber framed property and why can it be a problem?

There are three different types of traditional timber framed properties:-

- i) Traditional timber frame – it is typical of Tudor/Jacobean properties and you have typical problems associated with these such as wet rot and dry rot to the timber frame and woodworm due to alterations and amendments over the years that are inappropriate.



Timber frame



Timber frame ceiling

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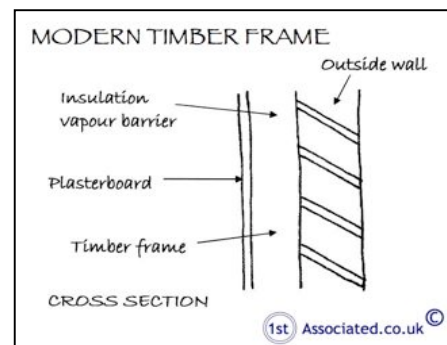
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ii) The 1970's decade of timber framed structures is generally considered to have been poorly built. The BBC World In Action programme exposed this making many timber frame companies bankrupt which unfortunately made the problem worse. The problems seem to have come about by a lack of understanding and experience in timber frame building.

iii) The third type of timber framed structure is a modern timber frame structure which is currently in use where we would now have a much better understanding of timber frame building. However would a surveyor buy one, we carried out a survey and generally we don't think surveyors would buy them or indeed recommend them if there was an option the timber framed buildings are built very economically and often they look exactly like a traditional house you would have external cladding, brickwork or stonework or whatever is appropriate for the area. The ways you can tell if the buildings are modern timber frame is by looking out for weep holes in the structure.



Modern Timber Frame

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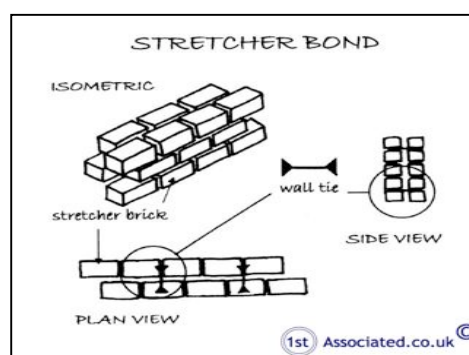


Modern and New properties - what ERA are we talking about?



How do we identify Modern and New properties?

They tend to have concrete tile roofs, many don't have chimneys, they have stretcher bond brick construction and they tend to be more densely built than houses of previous ERAs, as well as having higher insulation levels through the walls, roofs and often floor insulation.



Stretcher Bond Brickwork

What are the five typical problems or more in Modern and New properties?

The ERA we are talking about is the 1970s onwards – why do we divide them into modern and new? Because there is a definite change in construction techniques and about the year 2000 where we were forced by the building regulations to consider the insulation values and the green credibility of properties, which meant that although they look externally similar, the construction has changed.

Problems with modern properties:-

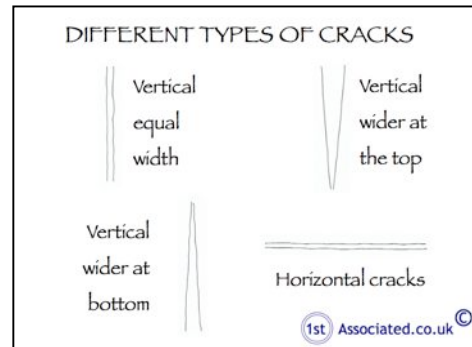
- i) Condensation – both surface condensation and interstitial condensation, due partly to the increased insulation values, partly often to ventilation and partly to lifestyle.

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ii) Cracking – cracks in modern properties are a problem as buildings are built to minimum standards. Have you ever seen the size of a modern house roof truss compared with the size of an older house roof truss? There is no room for error so movement and cracks are a problem in the modern properties.



Different types of Cracks

iii) Dated electrics – even in a modern property the electrics are dated after 20 years.

iv) Flat roof – if only flat roofs had a fall on them a third of the problems would be gone, a third of the problems unfortunately is due to poor workmanship and a third is due to poor materials.

v) Awkward roofs – where extensions have been added there can be awkward roof detail and unfortunately a modern property can't cope.

vi) Plastic guttering in the wrong place doesn't catch the rain.

vii) Things aren't what they seem to be and often in modern properties for example, with rendered properties that look like a traditional rendered property but when you dig beneath the surface there is only a few millimetres of render and then you have insulation. These are known as structural insulation panels, a relatively modern thing in the construction world and we are seeing properties where the render is coming away and is very difficult to resolve.

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