



Discover the Age **AND** History of Your **Home**



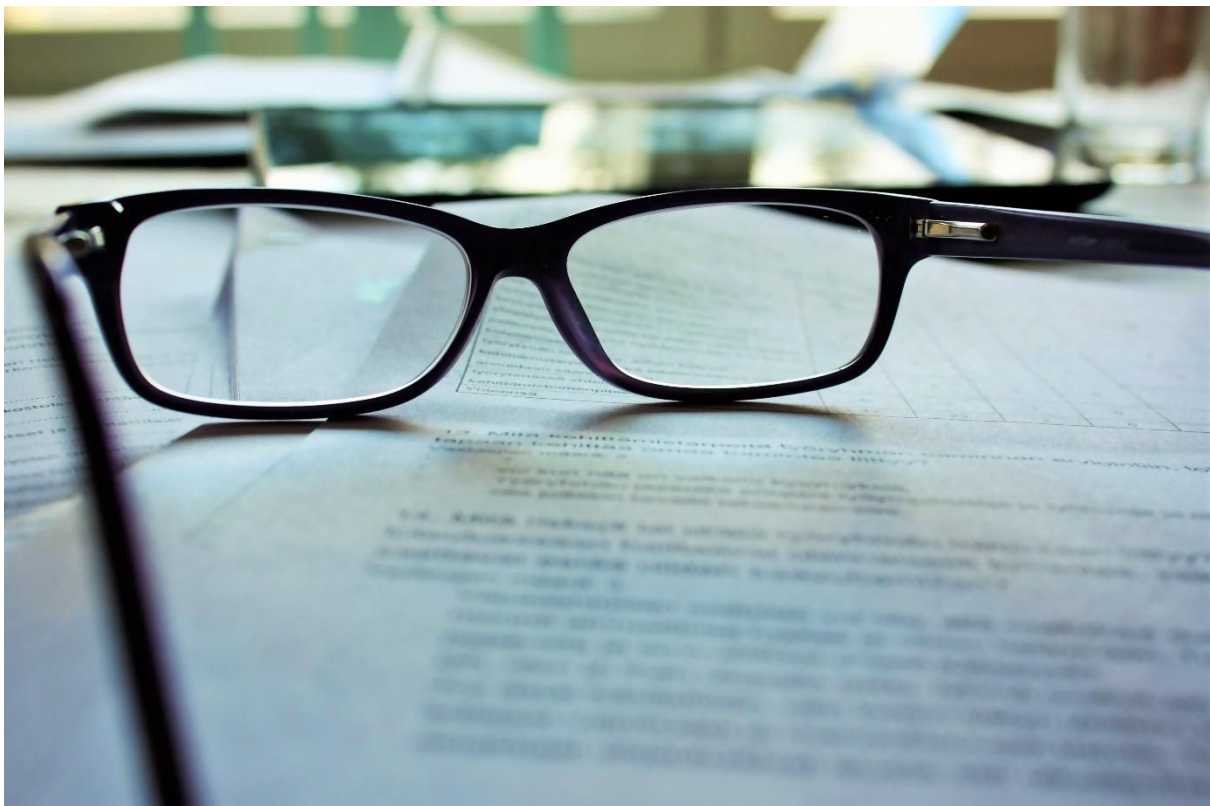
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Why finding out the age of your Home matters

Being able to pinpoint the date your home was built is important to most property owners. Many people have a vague idea of their home's age, or can estimate the date of its development. But it's often hard to be sure whether information from neighbours or previous owners is accurate, or based on an uninformed guess. Discovering your home's age and history can be truly fascinating, but there are also many occasions when this can be very useful or even crucial information to have.

If you're thinking of selling your home, then of course you'll be expected to let your estate agents and potential buyers know when you think it was built. This is information which will be part of the property details provided to anyone showing an interest, and might be something solicitors enquire into further when preparing contracts.

It used to be the case that property deeds would usually give an accurate indication of the age of all but the oldest properties, but the digitalisation of property registration means many banks and solicitors no longer keep original deeds. If you do have the deeds to your house, you should hang on to them for the details they contain about the property, even though the documents themselves no longer have the same legal status they once did. As it is becoming increasingly common for properties not to have deeds associated with them, there's all the more reason to do a little research yourself.



If you are buying or already own your own home, there are still several good reasons you should be able to date your property with some accuracy. Mortgage lenders will ask when your home was built, in order to assess its value and make their own calculations. Insurance providers will also need to know the build year, in order to assess risk and maintain their records. **As one broker told us: 'providing an accurate build date can be crucial because if you need to make a claim, but your insurers discover a substantial**

difference in the information provided and their own investigations, you could find yourself severely out of pocket.' Knowingly providing false information to banks and other financial services providers can even be considered fraud. Being able to confidently say when your home was built will put your mind at rest and ensure your home is well protected.

Finally, of course, knowing something about your property's history can be very interesting. Even if you have a relatively modern home, buyers are sure to be interested in any extra information you can provide about such a major purchase. It's worth doing some research before putting your property on the market, as it can take a little time and effort. If you own an older, more historic home, having some stories and insights into your home's past might even add value to your property.

Getting started

Most people have a rough idea of the era or perhaps decade their home was built in, but don't know the exact year. Knowing its age bracket is really important as a starting point, as different types of property need different approaches to pinning down a more accurate date. If you really haven't got a clue about your home's age, there are some easy ways to figure out roughly how old it is. You might even be able to use these ready-to-hand sources of information to find out the exact year.

First, dig out any paperwork you might have from when you first moved into the property. Estate agent brochures, solicitors' reports and correspondence can all be very insightful, as this is the time when most information gets shared. However, whilst these sources are the most likely to give you quick insights, you should take your findings with a pinch of salt. Many sellers just provide an estimate of their property's age, rather than doing research into a home they no longer plan to live in. Estate agents will often have a good idea of the age of properties in their area, but they probably didn't have specific details about your home. So whilst your purchase papers are a great place to start, be aware they aren't completely reliable. You'll need to do some research of your own to back up anything you learn – and you might even find they were completely wrong!

It's also worth checking through any surveys you may have had carried out on your home. It's common to have a survey carried out when buying a property, and usually compulsory if you've taken out a mortgage. You may also have had a survey carried out if you've ever had major work done to the property. Surveyors will often mention a property's age in their report and, whilst they are unlikely to provide an exact date, they tend to have architectural and local knowledge which allows them to make an accurate estimate of its build date. Mortgage and insurance documentation will often include this information too, so it's likely you'll have some clues to get you started somewhere within your own filing cabinet.

Hopefully you now have some general information which can help you narrow down on a more accurate date, as different types of property benefit from different approaches. There are several different national archives and registers which contain property information, and countless sources of local property history too. It would be easy to waste time and get frustrated if you don't know where to look. This guide will help you target the archives most appropriate for you and your home, how to use them, and what you might find.



The main factors in deciding a research strategy are whether or not the property is modern, and whether it is part of a development or estate. This is because older properties are somewhat harder to date precisely, but are also more likely to be mentioned in the wide range of historical records which can be accessed by the public. Newer properties are more likely to benefit from examination of recent information such as planning documentation and Land Registry evidence. Every type of home also contains giveaway clues in the way it has been built. Once you've figured out roughly when your home was constructed, the following chapters will help you decide the best place to start your own research. If you're not sure where to begin, start with the next chapter on accessing property information from Land Registry.

Accessing Land Registry Records

The Land Registry is a government-run service which maintains records of all property sales, as well as other transactions and property-related matters. Because all essential information is now kept at Land Registry, it is no longer necessary to hang on to the original deeds to evidence ownership. This means the Registry is probably the most important resource out there for learning more about the history of your home, and most of the information held is available to the public. However, Land Registry documents and processes can appear quite daunting, and it would be easy to get lost without some guidance. This section will help you get hold of the right information about your home, and make sense of it.

You may already have copies of the Title Register for your home, especially if you have only recently purchased it. Many conveyancing solicitors will send you a copy after your purchase completes. If you made the purchase some time ago, or don't have a copy to hand, you can download the title documents fairly easily by setting up an account with the [Land Registry E-portal](#), and searching for your home by postcode. There is also a useful map function which will allow you to zoom in on your home. Once you have found the entry for your address, you can choose whether to download just the registry entry, or the plan too. Many people like to have a copy of the Title plan, but it is not strictly necessary for dating your home unless you aren't certain about the extent of your property. Each document costs £3 to download online, or £7 if you apply by post.

It can be difficult to make sense of the Title document itself, as it uses technical language and may contain all sorts of information. Some register entries will fit onto one side of A4, whilst other older or more complicated properties may run for two or more pages. However, they all follow the same logic, and having an idea of how they work can help you mine them for information.

Section A always contains information to help identify the property, including the address and a description of anything confusing about its boundaries. It may also refer to any rights the property has the benefit of which involve other properties. If this is the case, you may also want to download the Registry entry for other Title numbers referred to here, as they might help you find out more about the history of your own home.

Section B is called the Proprietorship Register, and contains information about who currently owns the property, and anything which might affect their ownership rights. If you have a mortgage secured over your home, it will therefore be listed here. You may also find other deeds, conveyances, transfers and other documents referred to in this section. Sometimes the important parts of these documents will be copied out within Section B, but often the entry simply advises the reader to refer to a filed copy. It can be well worth getting hold of any documents referred to, as these property rights can be historical. The deeds which set them out will contain dates and information about your home's history. Newer build properties may refer here to the original transfer from the developer, and hint at its original build date. Older homes will often be affected by covenants and easements which give some insight into your home's history, and can help guide further research into local records and other resources. These can also be found referred to in section C, which contains charges and other property interests which affect your home.

If you have a historical home and find further documents referred to on your register entry, it is particularly worthwhile requesting copies of these. They may interest potential buyers in future, as are likely to have once formed part of the original deeds. However, they are also likely to give real insight into how old your home is. Older legal documents can be quite detailed and less standardised than those of today. You will find old conveyances refer to dates, local people, businesses, and other activities which can help you pinpoint when your home was built, what kind of activities were taking place there, how it related to the local area, and other clues which can lead to deeper research.

Newer build properties can often be dated fairly accurately from their Land Registry entries. This is because such homes are usually sold with covenants and other clauses which apply to all the buildings in the developments. These are usually included in a standard transfer which may have been used by the original property developer. If that is the case, then the date of that original transfer should be very close to the home's actual build date. New build

homes often are, or were, leasehold properties. In that case, it will be worth downloading a copy of the lease itself, which is likely to contain plenty of information from when the development was set up.

There are some notes of caution to be aware of when researching through the Land Registry. Firstly, although register entries are simple to download, other documents must be applied for by post, which can be more costly and time consuming. Secondly, this Register only holds records for England and Wales. Homes in Northern Ireland and Scotland have separate Registers which work a bit differently and are not always as easy to access, but can still be used for research by members of the public. Finally, you should remain aware that Land Registry documents contain legal information and, whilst this can certainly be useful for your own research, you should not attempt to rely on it for legal transactions without taking further advice.

The Land Registration Act of 1862

The Land Registration Act of 1862 was the country's first attempt to create a register of property ownership. Although registration didn't really take off properly until later into the twentieth century, there were many property transactions recorded in the volumes which make up this original register. Entries were often made and updated by hand in large books, but luckily, each record has now been uploaded into a digital archive and can be accessed at no cost through the Land Registry's website:

<http://digitalarchives.landregistry.gov.uk/1862/search>

This archive is obviously going to be of most interest for researching properties built during or before the mid nineteenth century. Even if that does apply to your home, don't panic if you can't find any information within these records. Registration was not compulsory at the time, and in fact was considered by many to be a costly and time consuming process with little benefit. As a result, only two thousand or so properties were ever entered on the Register introduced by the 1862 Act. But as this source of information is free and easy to access, it's well worth checking out if you think your home is more than one hundred and fifty years old.

Using this archive is fairly easy, especially if you know the name of owner of the property at that time. You may be able to find this information from your deeds, even if they don't quite stretch back to 1862, as they may be named on covenants or other documents. The archive can also be searched by title number, but as it is unlikely that the Land Registry will have preserved the original number for today's Register entries, you will also need to look through any older deeds or documents to find this out. If you don't have either of these clues, the records can also be searched by local or county parish, which should help you zone in and discover whether your home was ever listed.

If you do find records for your home on the 1862 Register, you can download a scan of the original Register entry for free. You will probably need to zoom in on the document to make sense of it, and may find some dense handwriting and archaic legal terms. However, much of the terminology is still in use today, so a little online research, or a friend with a little legal knowledge, should be able to help you make sense of any information you might come across. Print off a copy to put together with your deeds and any other property information you may have, as there is something rather special about having one's home listed on the original Land Register.

Local Archives

Parish Records were historically the main way in which births, marriages and deaths, as well as some other information, were recorded by the state. Parishes were small church districts which allowed for local administration of government functions, and registers began to be kept in 1538. They therefore go back much further than national censuses and land registration. Whilst the purpose of parish records was more about life events of people than property, they can still be a valuable source of information if you are struggling to date a historical property. It is very rare for deeds to go back more than two hundred years, but even the earliest deeds will provide the names and details of those who lived in the property at that time. You can use the names of these owners to trace birth, marriage and death records, which may well contain the information you *are* looking for. You may find clues about the sort of work and lives which your home supported in the past, and the names of parents who might have previously owned your property, enabling research further back in time. Parish records can therefore be used to find the earliest possible mentions of your property. Clues about owner occupations and family activities might help you understand what your property was being used for many years ago, and also if it went by a different name. In the past, spellings were not standardised, and a property may have been known by different colloquial names, as well as that on the deeds. All of this information can therefore be very helpful in building up a picture of the history of your home. Whilst it isn't likely that parish records will confirm the year in which your property was actually built, getting a more detailed idea of its past will give you more starting points if you want to continue your research into local history more generally.

There are two main ways in which Parish Records can be accessed, and both can be a little time consuming. This is because Parish Records were, of course, originally kept on paper, and stored in a safe box within the parish church. Organising all this information and making it easily available is a massive task which government, voluntary organisations, and companies providing family history services are involved in. Many records have also been lost or destroyed, particularly during the English Civil War. Figuring out exactly how to pinpoint information for your own home can therefore be confusing at first. But if you are careful in your research methods, it should be possible to find plenty of information without having to get your wallet out.

The first option is to find a genealogy service which offers online access to parish records. Some companies even offer CD-ROMs containing copies of particular records, although these are now becoming less popular. Signing up for a family history service can be a great way to access parish records and carry out research into your property from the comfort of your own home. The Genealogist is perhaps the most popular site for accessing Parish Records, as well as a variety of other archives <https://www.thegenealogist.co.uk/>

The second option is to contact your own local authority directly, as it is county councils which now have the responsibility of archiving and organising the original documents. Larger cities may also have their own archive offices. Members of the public should be able to access this information by visiting their County Records Office, but you may well need to book this ahead of time and have a clear idea of what you want to look for, so that the archivists can help you get the most out of your visit. County Record offices are often found within local government buildings or major libraries, but you should be able to find out where your nearest archive is by contacting your local council. Many local authorities are also now working to get their own archives digitised and available online, to help members of the

public wanting to research family and local history. It's well worth looking into whether this is something your local archive is working on, as it could save you a time-consuming trip digging through dusty records.



Tithe Records are another type of record which local authorities now generally hold. These are historical documents which record the tithes, or fees, property owners had to pay to the church right up until the early nineteenth century. If your home is of considerable age, the chances are it was once part of an estate which had to pay tithes, and you might find considerable information about the property itself within these records. Tithes were sometimes paid in cash, and sometimes in goods, so that you might learn what sort of agriculture or other business was going on in your area, and how long it had been recognised as a property. You might discover how its boundaries have changed over time, when your own home was built, and whether neighbouring properties were built before or after your own. All of this can be very useful when trying to accurately date a historical home.

Finally, don't forget about the other sources of historical information available to you locally. A trip to your nearest museum might turn up something interesting – perhaps your home will be featured in a photograph or painting. And if you find an image of your area *without* your home in it, that will also help you zone in on when your property was built. Many museums have more resources than they can possibly display at once, so it might be worth striking up a conversation with a museum worker to see if they can help you find out more.

Libraries also take care to curate information about their area, and will often have a section or reading room dedicated to local history. This will often contain books and records from

local authors, with photographs and accounts which cover hundreds or even thousands of years. Ask a librarian to help you find information which could guide your research.

Many towns, cities and even villages also have a local history society or club. You might like to join it to find out more about your area, or attend talks and other events such groups often hold. Some groups even set up websites to share the information they discover. These local groups can be particularly rich sources of detailed, social history, and you are likely to meet people whose families have lived in the area for a long time. Maybe someone will remember when your house was built, or the name of a family who lived in it fifty years ago? All of this can be very useful and fascinating information to have.

Architectural Styles

The way a house looks from the outside is often the first and most obvious clue as to its age. But while architectural styles are certainly key indicators as to a property's age, they can also be deceiving. From mock Tudor homes to faux Georgian frontages, British architecture has often been influenced by earlier periods. It's therefore well worth paying close attention to the details both inside and outside a house, to check whether it really belongs to the era it appears to. This section sets out some key identifying features of the most predominant architectural styles, to guide you in dating your own home, or making judgement calls about any other building you might visit.



The Tudor period ran from the 15th to 17th century, and there are still plenty of genuine properties from this important historical era to be found in British towns and villages today. Perhaps the most famous feature of homes from this time is half-timbering, where the timber frame was left exposed on the outside of a building and filled with brickwork or render. This creates the characteristic black and white effect seen on picture postcard cottages. Another feature commonly found in cities with narrow, historical streets is an upper storey which

protrudes out further than the wall below it, in a technique known as jettying. This allowed homes to create as much space as possible in cramped cities, and is far less common in reproduction Tudor homes than half-timbering. Another giveaway for a genuine Tudor home is a brick chimney, as well as uneven walls and floors. Staircases may be narrower or steeper than those seen today. Although these are often now replaced with safer modern staircases, listed homes and lesser used areas such as attic rooms are likely to preserve such features. The late 17th century is known for the Baroque style of building which influenced the architecture of the grand country homes springing up around the country at that time. Whilst this style is less commonly seen in residential homes, an older house in the vicinity of a country home may have once been associated with its estate, and therefore date to the same period.

The 18th century was defined by the Georgian period, during which architecture evolved dramatically as building techniques developed, and people started moving from the countryside to growing towns. Townhouses began to be built in rows and crescents, although these tend to be much more spacious than later terraced homes. Georgian architecture was inspired by classical art, so homes from this era are highly regarded for their symmetry and airiness. A central front door is often surrounded by large, airy windows arranged so that the frontage is perfectly symmetrical. The windows of a Georgian style home are often the key to checking its true provenance: those on the top floors tended to be smaller, as that is where household staff would most likely have lived. Bricked up windows are also evidence of a home's age: as tax at this time was assessed according to the number of windows a home had, many owners bricked up as many as they could in order to reduce their bills.

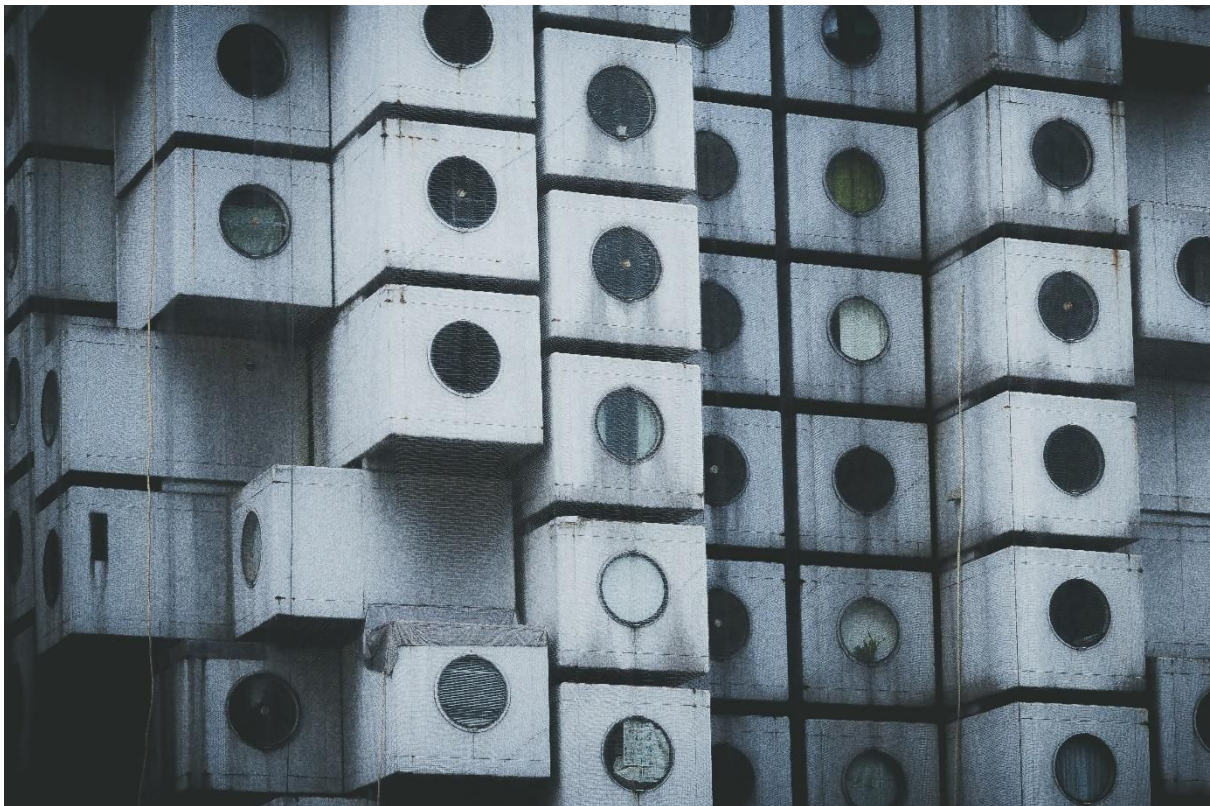
Victorian homes are perhaps the most common historical building style in the UK today. Industrialisation progressed rapidly during this era, causing rapid growth in the population and the economy. Increasing global trade also inspired new influences within style and architecture. Victorian fashion was all about showing off and aspirational living, and that is certainly reflected in the often ornate and detailed building styles of the time. Stained glass windows, porches and ornate gables are all features which crept into everyday homes during this era. But with towns becoming more concentrated, homes also became narrower. Victorian properties therefore tend to have a tighter footprint than their predecessors, with narrow hallways and steeply pitched roofs.

The early 20th century saw a shift from the heavy and detailed styles of the previous century, towards the cleaner, spacious spaces favoured during the Edwardian era. Houses built during this period often feature neat red brickwork which still looks fresh today. They tend to have much larger hallways than Victorian homes, as well as larger frontages. The economy modernised and living standards raised, so that it became less common to have servants needing quarters. Houses are often therefore smaller overall, but less cramped and much airier. Kitchens are more likely to be integrated into the home, rather than tucked away out of sight of the rest of the house. It was also around this time that the Arts & Crafts movement picked up momentum, and many Edwardian homes reflect its values of using high quality materials and skilled craftsmen to create the features of the house.

Between the wars, architectural styles evolved to reflect art deco and art nouveau trends, styles which are still fashionable today. Sometimes these influences can be detected in subtle detailing inside the home, which will be covered in the next section. But architects also revelled in the new modernist style, and designed striking homes with smoothly rounded

walls, circular windows, and flat roofs. These homes are particularly fashionable today, admired for their architectural style and high quality build standards.

After the Second World War, there was a boom in house building. At first these tended to be rather utilitarian in design, and sometimes made quickly from cheap materials. High-rise tower blocks also increased from the middle of the century. But these practical designs soon gave way to a resurgence of interest in the historical eras which had gone before, with Edwardian and Georgian styles particularly influential upon new build developments. For this reason, many new homes are carefully designed to feature open and airy spaces, even though they generally have a smaller footprint than the houses our grandparents lived in. Stained glass in the front door and bay windows are still popular features introduced during the Victorian era, but are usually easily recognised as modern due to the materials required to meet contemporary building standards.



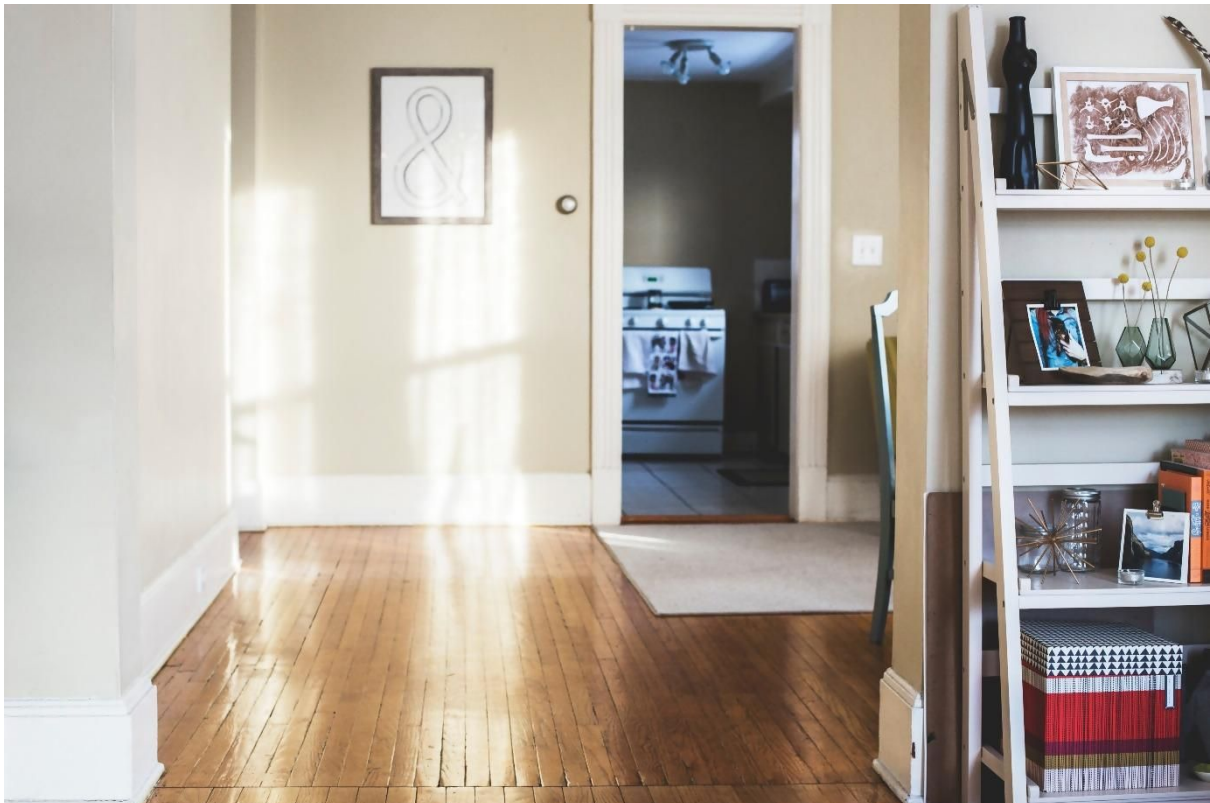
Some modern homes are very distinct, and their architectural style might help date them as part of a particular movement such as brutalism or postmodernism. Many cities feature developments in the brutalist style, characterised by heavy use of concrete, strong angles, and a minimalist approach to ornamentation. Postmodernism includes a range of influences and styles, but many architects of this movement are featured heavily in books on the topic. If you have an interesting modern home, which you suspect might have been designed by an architect of note, check out some library books on the topic and discuss the area's history with your neighbours. This should help you narrow down on when your property was built - maybe you'll even find out it's a work of modernist art! However, for many newer build homes, the best way to discover the build date is through planning and building documents, as well as investigation at Land Registry.

The Clues hidden within your own home

In this section we'll be taking a look at internal features of the home which can give away a property's true age. From central heating systems to décor, there are many hidden clues which can confirm whether a home really is as old as it appears from the outside. Sometimes you have to peel back the layers to find an old scrap of wallpaper, and you might need a little extra research to date your findings. But there are several key indicators of interior design and architecture which you can easily look for yourself. Who knows, maybe you'll even uncover a period feature which you'll want to show off to prospective buyers.

Flooring

Floors are always beneath our feet, and that can lead us to take them for granted. But floors can be an important clue in figuring out how old a home really is. If you're lucky enough to live in a historical house with wooden floors which you suspect might be original, you might want to have a sample taken and tested to identify the type of wood used and age of the tree it was taken from. Sometimes wood for flooring was reused from other projects, so you might be standing on a real antique with fascinating history.



Most people, however, will need to look carefully beneath the laminate or carpets which are so popular today. It might be best to do this in a discreet area, such as behind the sofa or in the corner of your kitchen. If you are planning to update any flooring in your home, it's the ideal time to take a look.

Should you find some old lino lurking beneath your floorboards, don't assume it's a 70's throwback. Lino first became popular in the 1930's, and you might be able to date any

samples you find using reproduction websites or online resources. This can be really useful if you aren't quite sure whether your house was built before or after the Second World War.

Original parquet floors are highly desirable today, and suggest a home which dates from the late nineteenth or early twentieth century. These are well worth resanding and polishing, as quality wooden floors are popular with buyers, and show your property has some authentic vintage.

Floor tiles were popular in the Victorian era. Plain tiles in earthy tones were often used in kitchens and other areas which got high traffic, whilst ornately patterned tiles were used all around the publicly visible parts of the home. Very uneven floors, and floorboards which show the use of hand tools, can suggest a property is even older.

Walls and Ceilings

The height of ceilings changed with fashions and the economy, with the highest ceilings being popular during Georgian times. Dado rails were very popular during the Edwardian era, when style dictated that the wall be papered up to the rail, and painted above. You might be able to find evidence of this decorating technique by peeling back the layers of current wallcoverings in an out of sight spot.

Wallpaper, of course, is a very rich source of historical information. Particularly popular from the Victorian era right up until the mid-twentieth century, scraps of original wall coverings are often easier to find in out of the way places such as bathrooms, porches, under-stair cupboards and attic bedrooms, as these rooms don't tend to get redecorated as often or as thoroughly as living rooms and kitchens. The Victorians were fond of highly ornate and decorative patterns which would seem over the top today. High end wallpapers often featured flocking or damask finishes. The Edwardians, however, preferred more organic designs, and the influence of flowers and plants can be seen in the wallpapers designed by Williams Morris, and others involved in the Arts & Crafts and Art Deco movements. As the twentieth century progressed, abstract designs and bright colours became increasingly popular.

There are interior design experts who can consult on historical wallpapers, but for most purposes, the best way to research any wallpaper fragments you might find is by looking at reproductions. Many companies now produce wallpapers which are exact replicas of, or influenced by, the most popular designs of every era. By looking through the designs available from a reproduction company online, you should be able to date your own. Another feature to look out for when considering the walls of your home is plaster mouldings and architraving. These can be found around the top of walls, edge of doorways, light fittings and other features, and dated in the same way as wallpaper. Although some of the more ornate styles may not seem to suit contemporary tastes, you should think carefully before replacing them with modern alternatives. Some people really appreciate these genuine historic touches to a home, and they can be worth drawing attention to.

Fireplaces



Many British homes still have original fireplaces, although they are sometimes bricked up or covered over with stud walling. If you still have feature fireplaces in your home, or come across one during a renovation, these can be a great way to figure out roughly when your home was built. Victorian fireplaces are often surrounded with highly patterned tiles, inspired by European or Oriental motifs. Simple tiles in natural colours were more popular in the twentieth century up until the Second World War. Cast iron fire places are common across many eras, but hooded styles were particularly popular during the Art Nouveau period. If you do have any vintage fireplaces in your home, it is well worth restoring them with authentic or reproduction tiles from the era in which your house was built. That way, potential buyers will also get a sense of its history when they visit.

Tips for Modern Homes

So far we've look at a lot of tips and resources aimed at helping the owners of historical homes narrow down on when their property was built. But if you own a much more modern home, there are some very straightforward ways in which you should be able to figure out your build date, using local information and the evidence within your own home.

If your home was built within the last thirty years, you should be able to find out exactly when it was built from the completion certificate required by building regulations. These can sometimes be obtained by applying to your local authority, although there is no legal requirement to make them accessible to the public. The requirement to obtain a building control certificate upon completion of a house was only introduced in the 1980's, so this also won't be much help for older homes. However, certificates are also required for other major works, such as extensions and window replacements. You may find these sorts of

information amongst your original purchase papers, and sometimes invoices and reports from the time the work was done can hint at when the home was originally built.



Planning Permission offices are another vital source of information for newer build properties. All new builds have had to seek planning permission from 1948, so any post-war home is likely to have its build date and details recorded somewhere. Local authorities usually maintain online records of all planning applications, although older applications may not yet be digitised. By contacting your local planning office, you should be able to get guidance on how to obtain all the information held for your home. If your property is part of an estate or larger development, it is likely that the original permission granted for your home forms part of the whole application made by the developer, rather than one individual consent.



Another type of document which modern homes are likely to carry is an NHBC or Buildmark certificate. The National House Building Council was set up in the 1930's, and the vast majority of new builds will obtain a 10 year new build warranty through them. This is designed to reassure new build buyers of the quality of their home, and properties which still have Buildmark cover will usually be sold with the certificate. If you don't have one in your possession, but think your home might still be covered by an NHBC warranty, you can contact the Council to obtain a copy of the certificate which will show its build date.

But perhaps the easiest information to access about larger scale developments, is what can be learnt from your neighbours and the local community by simply asking around. If you don't have friendly neighbours, or they haven't lived in the area long, try asking local shopkeepers and other people likely to have long memories. Someone is bound to recall when a housing estate or large scale development was finished. Maybe you'll learn something new about the history of your area, and what was on the land before your home was built.

The features and design of a newer home can also be just as insightful as those of a historical property. Whilst modern houses tend to be of similar architectural style, they are more likely to have original fittings which might help you figure out the year in which they were installed. Some sellers will provide guarantees for fixtures which might be as old as the house. Sometimes an invoice for an appliance, such as a boiler, will also mention the model of the boiler it was installed to replace. If you aren't sure whether or not such fixtures are original, try looking around for clues that replacement work has taken place, such as rewiring, modern piping, or patched up plasterwork. If there are no such indications that a

replacement has taken place, it is more likely that a fitting has been in place since the house was built.



Central heating systems in particular are very useful indicators of age in a mid to late twentieth century home. If the rooms in your house have vents at the base of walls or the edge of floors, it is likely a warm air system was originally installed. This form of central heating system was most popular during the 1960's and 70's, so if you find these vents in a

modern home, it is likely that it dates from those decades. Storage heaters were also first introduced in the 1960's, but continue to be installed in some lower cost housing. If you do come across any retro central heating appliances, a little online research may offer some clues as to when particular models were being sold.

Original wallpapers and flooring materials can also be used to date modern properties, particularly those from the mid to late twentieth century. The distinctive designs of the 60's and 70's in particular are coming back into vogue, so if you find any traces of retro internal décor, it could be worth looking on wallpaper reproduction sites to see if you can date your own samples.

It's worth bearing in mind though, that these days, we tend to update our homes very frequently. The wood and other materials used in buildings are safer than in the past, but often also less distinctive because of this standardisation. So although you might find some clues within your own home as to its age, for modern properties, it is generally far more useful to use evidence from Land Registry, planning consents, building documentation and local knowledge to narrow in on the build date of your home.

Conclusion

Hopefully, this guide has provided you with resources and information which have helped you access the secrets held within your home. By following the research tips provided for different types of home, it should be possible to figure out the year in which your house was built, or at least make a very accurate estimate of its age bracket. If the result is different to what you'd expected, be sure to inform your insurers and mortgage lenders. It's also well worth hanging onto the wide range of historical information you've learned about your home along the way. Whether your house is old or new, it's probably the most important thing you own, and also a part of the local history of your area. Should you ever decide to put your home on the market, estate agents and potential buyers will be really glad of all the context and background you will now be able to provide. And even if you aren't planning on selling up, your family will no doubt be interested by the history of a place which is so personal and fundamental to their lives.

About the author;

Jonathan Rolande has worked in the property business since 1987 and is regularly featured in the national press for comment and opinion on the housing market.

A successful estate agent for many years, Jonathan became frustrated by the 30% + fall through rate that plagues the industry and decided to do something about it. He set up a new company, House Buy Fast in 2008 purchasing properties that need a speedy, secure sale in just weeks or even days.

Buying just one or two a month in the early days, by 2019 House Buy Fast has become one of the major professional buying firms in the UK, purchasing hundreds of homes across England and Wales to chain-break, assist with probate, job relocations, 'problem properties', short leasehold flats etc etc.