

Victorian Houses 1837-1901

Knowing more about the Victorian era helps you pick some of the best property on the market.

The Victorian period is a well established period in the public mindset as the epitome of sturdy design, robust gothic details and a symbol of the Empire. "Victorian" as a label is readily given to sturdy designs and engineering innovations. In this period, spanning 64 years, we see the emergence of buildings that would form the basis of our modern building techniques. The Gothic and Venetian inspired decorations and features makes Victorian houses some of the most sought after property on the market.



What to look out for

Common Features. Solid square appearance. Repeat features in streets. Prominent front doors (with stained glass inserts), slate roofs, recessed sash windows (2 over 2), tiled front steps, front elevation gables, cant bay windows, ecclesiastical decoration influence, brick patterns, Gothic emblems.

Traditional colours: Ruby reds and deep forest greens (Brunswick green) - Prussian blue and purple came in midway through the century. Railings were more popularly green than black and in cities it became popular to paint windows brown.

Ornamentation. Lots of it! Look out for mass produced repeating motifs in lintels, tiles, roof decoration and timberwork. Inside look for decorative fire places with tile surrounds. Rare features include patterned glass and slightly wavy glass in windows.



Sash Windows. Classic sash windows starting with 2 panes over 2 then 1 pane over 1. Look out for the "horns" on the meeting rails. Top tip. If you see six panes over six with "horns" on the meeting rails this is a big clue that it could be a Victorian copy of a regency window.



Bay Windows. The glass tax was repealed and glass manufacture made glass cheaper. Builders added bay windows to "show off" which appealed to the middle classes as one could look up and down the street. Double bays meant you had arrived!



Brass Fixtures and coloured glass. Very popular with the Victorians. Brass is versatile and looks luxurious. Look for letterboxes in art nouveau style, door handles and fire surrounds. Stained glass was also a popular luxury referencing church architecture.



How to find a great Victorian House

Ask your Estate Agent where the Victorian areas in the town are. Many districts were developed within towns usually around industrial areas and railways. Have a look around at the local designs. In the rural areas many Villas exist or Victorian farm houses. Cast iron verandas are a must!

Make sure you get an Independent Chartered Building Surveyor to give you lots of information on how to look after your home and what priorities you need before you buy.

Look for genuine Victorian features and sympathetic décor such as fireplaces and tiling, deep moulded skirtings and cornices. Textured glass is rare these days and remember, the Victorians did not “do” bare timber.

The Victorian house tended to be quite dark so homes that have opened up rooms and added roof lights can give a modern airy look.

Original sash windows add character to the house. They can be converted to be draught proofed or secondary glazing can be added.

Many Victorian houses had bathrooms or outhouses. These are often converted to bedrooms or knocked through to form bigger kitchens. If well done they can add value to a house.

Nice solid brickwork and neat pointing. The top quality houses have the same brick pattern at the back and sides as the front.

Cast iron grills at the base of the walls mean the floors are made of timber. The floors at the back are often solid.

Remember, Victorian homes are period properties that need care and attention and are not as energy efficient or technically dry as modern homes. They are, however, versatile, robust, full of character and an amazing piece of British history.