

Georgian Houses 1710 -1790

Knowing more about the Georgian era helps you pick some of the best property on the market. Local Chartered Building Surveyor, Geoff Hunt explains what to look for.

The Georgian era spans some 120 years if you include regency and is the quintessential classical style of the European architecture brought to life in sweeping facades and towering, elegant buildings. This is the era of design when the old style of clumsy vernacular houses gave way to deliberate proportions and grand palisades. “Georgian” symbolises style, elegance and status. Whole cities were transformed into unified streets and crescents. It is little wonder that Georgian houses are some of the highest prized properties on the housing market today.



Styles often quoted for the period include: Georgian, Regency, early, mid and late Georgian.

What to look out for

Common Features. Palladian style – Symmetry between the relationship of windows and doors. Vertical sliding sashes with early 9 panes over 9 to late period 6 panes over 6. Ornamental railings, balconetts and porches. Parapets at the roof with shallow pitched slate roofing. Full and half basements with front entrance steps over, rendered finish (stucco) or sand stone with fine pointing (ashlar). A continuous style within a single street. In rural areas look out for Georgian facades to the front of older buildings.

Traditional colours: Windows were traditionally brown or black, deep and vibrant greens and blues, Indian red, Rose pink and Bistre. Wallpapers such as Damask and flock were popular.

Ornamentation: Symmetry between windows and doors which are all beautifully proportioned. Tall windows sometimes surrounded with key stone lintels. Iron work to the façades was also popular. Fairly plain but sometimes with columns or colonnades and stone features at the corners



Sash Windows. Early windows were 9 panes over 9 and set back from the face of the building. Look for the plain meeting rails and original slender glazing bars. Shutters were often used to block light to protect wall papers.



Doorway and fan lights. Six panel doors with pediment surrounds. Early Georgian have square fan lights in wooden frames and later semicircular fan lights with cast iron frames were seen at the end of the period.





How to find a great Georgian House

Ask your Estate agent where the Georgian areas are. Many streets were developed in squares, avenues and crescents in the Palladian style. Have a look around at the local designs and see if you can work out if they are early or late Georgian. In the rural areas many of the more substantial houses on the main street are Georgian inspired homes, usually with a local twist.

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. Many Georgian houses are listed so you need to take care you're buying a well maintained property.

Look for genuine Georgian features and sympathetic décor such as; ornate cast iron banisters, central fire places, deep plaster coving, window shutters with iron stays. Remember the Georgians did not use brass on front doors and the letterbox was a Victorian invention.

The Georgian style was to live on the first floor or Piano Noble so it can be fun to revive the style and take advantage of city or country views. The tall elegant windows throw sunlight into a room so south facing facades are best.

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

Many Georgian houses had no services so things like bathrooms, electricity and running water are all additions. Make sure all of these things are in order. Often the rear rooms are converted to bathrooms and sculleries made into modern kitchens. A well documented refurbishment can add great value to the house.

Remember Georgian homes are period properties that need care and attention and are not as energy efficient as modern homes. They are, however, effortlessly elegant, stylish, full of character and you will love owning it.

Geoffrey Hunt is a Fellow of the RICS and author of Residential Building Defects