

# How to ensure your dream home is really what you want

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Key editor

**C**AN you pick a Victorian house from an Edwardian; a 1930s bungalow from a 1940s brick veneer?

We take a look at housing up to the modern era to help you identify period homes and how to avoid becoming a house-fashion victim.

## COLONIAL (1788 to 1840)

If you have your heart set on living in one of Australia's first houses, be patient.

Experts say few Colonial-era homes are left in Victoria and they seldom change hands.

Author Laurie Burchell, who wrote *Recognising House Styles 1880s to 1990s*, identifies "only a handful" of surviving Colonial-era buildings including The Bluestone Cottage at 82 Bell St, Coburg, which was built in 1864, and La Trobe's Cottage, which now is in Kings Domain.

Colonial homes are simple structures made with then-readily available materials including clay, timber and stone.

These humble cottages usually have thatched or shingled roofs.

Surviving miner's cottages in Ballarat and fisherman's flats in Queenscliff are other examples of Colonial homes and are "very highly prized", according to Real Estate Institute of Victoria president John Grabyn.

## VICTORIAN (1840 to 1890)

Buyers looking for period homes in Melbourne will be hard-pressed to find any pre-dating 1840. Surveying of the town began only in 1837.

Early Victorian homes — modest shacks with minimal ornamentation — have pitched roofs and up to two rooms at the front opening to a hall.

They were built before 1860 and can be found in the first parts of Melbourne to develop — Collingwood, Richmond and Fitzroy.

Mr Burchell says most of Victoria's Victorian-era real estate was built during "the big boom" of the 1880s and '90s.

"1888 was peak of the boom," the architecture expert says.

Victorian homes were built as freestanding houses or rows of up to 14 terrace homes, with common walls.

Polychrome brick — two-colour brickwork — was popular in the mid-to-late 1800s.

Back-to-back chimneys are a "good giveaway" of authenticity, as are iron lacework and cornices.

A Victorian-style home will have a main front window with narrow windows on either side.

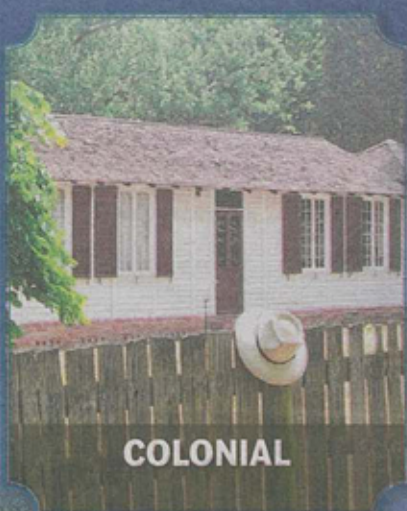
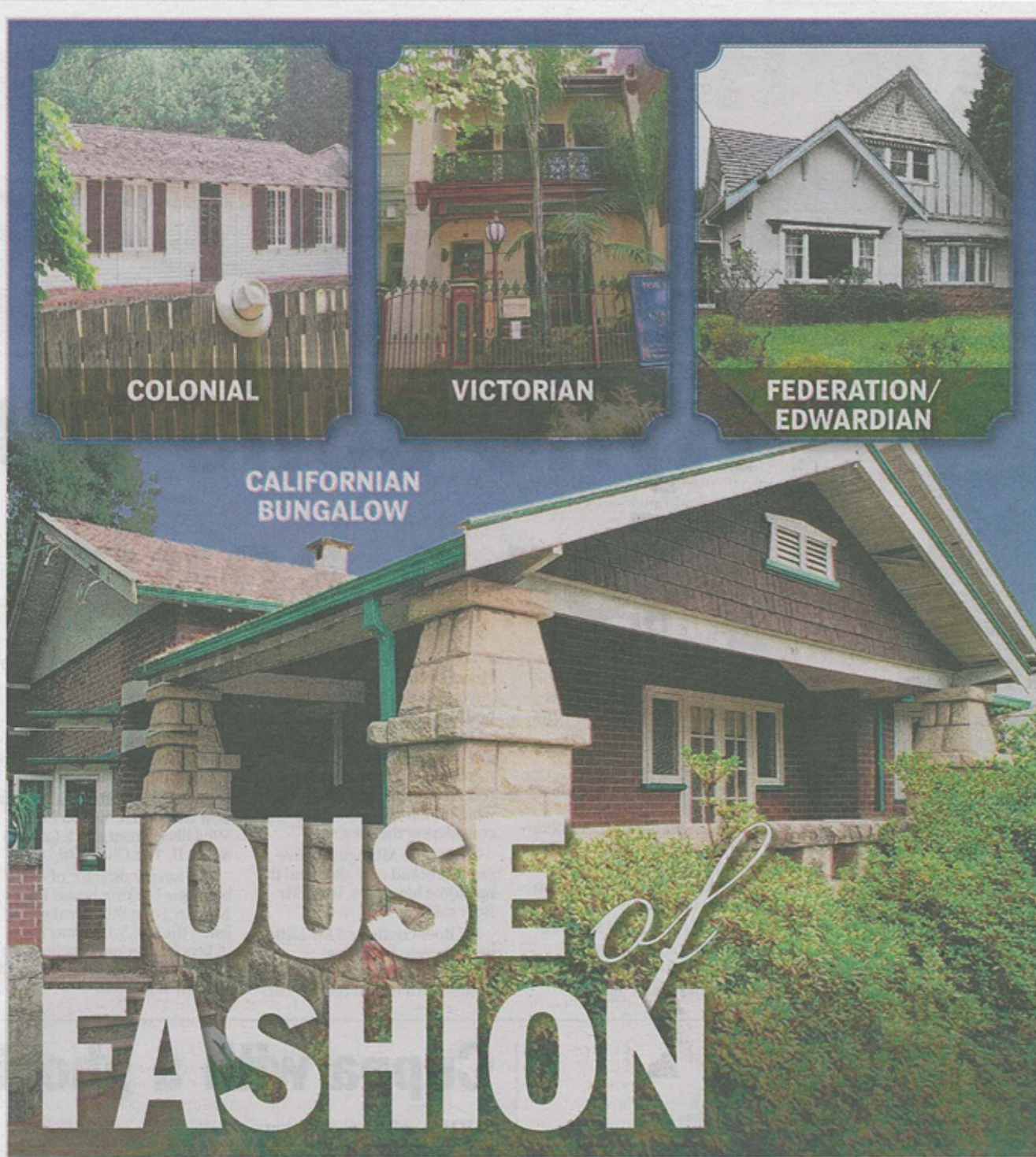
Internal gutters over the top of the hallway are a further trait of these period homes.

"None of the housing styles since have ever had an internal gutter, they used to overflow occasionally," Mr Burchell says.

## FEDERATION/EDWARDIAN (1901 to 1914)

Windows came in wider measures and narrow sidelight windows disappeared as the next century arrived.

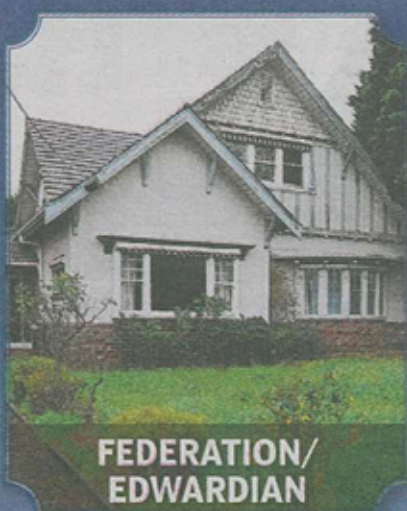
Federation homes — also



COLONIAL



VICTORIAN



FEDERATION/  
EDWARDIAN

CALIFORNIAN  
BUNGALOW

# HOUSE of FASHION

referred to as Victorian survival — have steep roofs and tall chimneys close to external walls, small chimney pots and terracotta ridging.

"These homes have equal-size front windows in triples with little awnings," Mr Burchell states.

"Roofs were steeper, internal ceiling heights were higher,

"Quite a few of the modern homes quote 'Californian bungalow' when they are in fact replicas," Mr Burchell reveals.

"A good clue is the rafters. They should be exposed under the eaves and these eaves are fairly wide.

"Victorian and Federation homes have narrower eaves."

Suburbs with good stocks of

Art Deco — possibly the most overused phrase in real estate marketing today — burst on to the housing design scene.

English/Tudor homes with four centre arches and steep roofs arrived. And brick also made its mark on the market from the 1930s onwards.

Mr Burchell says before the 1940s brick homes' walls were

roof and steel and timber formwork has been erected — relegated bricks to a mere supporting role in house construction.

"Most people wanted brick but could only afford veneer or weatherboard so you started seeing a lot more mix of homes emerging in suburbs we would today view as middle-ring," Mr Burchell says.

"We also saw hangover from Art Deco, with waterfall chimneys, curved windows and sometimes triple frontages in more expensive homes."

## HOT SUBURBS FOR PERIOD HOMES

### COLONIAL

■ Found in Coburg and Melbourne

### VICTORIAN

■ Found in suburbs including Carlton, Parkville, Brunswick, Collingwood, Richmond and Fitzroy

### FEDERATION/EDWARDIAN

■ Found in suburbs including Clifton Hill and St Kilda

### CALIFORNIAN

■ Found in suburbs including Brighton, Williamstown, Hampton, Sandringham, Thornbury and Seddon



which gave them commanding presence in the street."

## CALIFORNIAN BUNGALOW (1920s)

Few housing styles are easier to identify than the Californian bungalow. Their huge, gabled roofs overhang facing the street and they often have big bay windows and deep verandas.

The gable may have shingles — overlapping wooden tiles — as decorative features.

Chimneys are square, often with terracotta pots on top.

bungalows include Brighton, Caulfield, Coburg, Preston, Thornbury and Seddon.

## PRE-WAR and WAR HOMES (1930s to 1945)

The Great Depression stopped most house building early in the 1930s. Therefore most surviving 1930s architecture was built between 1934 and the start of World War II in 1939.

The Spanish Mission style of house emerged with its arched veranda doorways and "little arcades" rather than porches.

commonly constructed with two layers of brick with an internal cavity.

"If looking for a 1930s house, look for 1938 — it was the peak of building," Mr Burchell says.

From March 1942, there was a ban on building due to World War II.

## POST-WAR BOOM (1945 to 1965)

Single-brick wall homes started post-WWII. Veneer — in which brickwork does not hold up a house, but is added once the

Do not be swayed by fashion.

Buy based on location and budget, Melissa Opie says.

Anyone who buys a period home must remain true to the original design, Fletchers boss Tim Fletcher says.

To err can be costly.

"Period styles do not get obsolete and out of date. Land value and house value rises with time, but the opposite is true with modern homes; the land value rises, but the house value does not," Mr Fletcher says.

"It is incredibly important that when people renovate they are sympathetic to the era."

Owners of modern homes wanting to replicate features of their favourite heritage homes should also take heed.

"Pseudo-Victorian or pseudo-Georgian homes are just fashions of the day and may not be trendy in 10 years," Mr Grabyn says.

## TIPS FOR BUYERS