

Common Plumbing Problems in Historic Old Homes

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Though older historic homes are definitely charming, they can be fraught with problems requiring the services of a plumber. In this article, we will discuss some of the more common plumbing problems found in old historic homes.

Damage Arising from Mold or Mildew

Old, leaky pipes can, over time, create a serious water damage problem. This can particularly be felt in the basements or bathrooms of homes that are located in areas where the climate is wetter. ***When the environment is conducive to the growth of mold and mildew, it can create health problems*** for those dwelling in the residence. While some of those can be serious, of tremendous concern also is the fact that, ***left untreated, this can cause severe structural damage to the home.***

Problems With Copper Piping

Many old homes are equipped with copper piping. An immediate problem with this is that if the home has ever been left for a period of time or if the owners ever went on vacation, their home may have been a target for thieves. ***Copper pipes are notorious for being stolen from older homes because of their resale value***, and you must make sure that the piping system is complete. Also, some ***copper piping that is more than 20 years old has been fitted with lead-based solders, and if this is the case, you will need to have your water tested.***

Other Types of Pipes

Your historic home may have been equipped with ***clay pipes*** or with ***galvanized steel***. The problem with all of these

is that *they have a certain amount of time during which they are viable, and after that, they need to be replaced.* **Many insurance companies will not write policies for homes that continue to use pipes that are past their point of usage.** **Concrete pipes** can last for a very long time, but they are *prone to shifting under the home's foundation.* **Cast iron** can disappear completely, and it can rust before doing so. **Lead pipes** are a hazard and must be completely removed, and **Polybutylene** also poses a health risk and must be removed.

Water Pressure Issues

Erosion from your pipes, particularly zinc, can cause your pipes to become less effective over time. When the pipe corrodes, bits of that corrosion can *clog up the line*, causing your water pressure to drop. *This can cause the tank on your toilet to take longer to refill*, and it can make showering a hassle. Mineral deposits from the hot water heater can also *cause hot water to take longer to be pumped through the pipes.*

Problems With the Drains

Your sewage main can sometimes be made out of terra cotta or cast iron, and it can experience a break or leaks. Dirt can get into it, *clogging it and causing backups.* The earth can also *shift, and this can cause it to break.* This can cause the ground to become soft, and depending on how porous the area is, the water can spread over a larger area. Over time, **this can cause a shift in your foundation, structural damage, and problems with the foundation.**

Sewer Lines and Septic Tanks

When a tree's root structure has had a long time to grow, it can virtually strangle your home's sewage lines. This can cause large sections of your main to need to be repaired. Also, *you will need to know how long it has been since your home's septic tank has been pumped.* Over time, gases can build up, and these can travel back up the lines. **The very best course of action when purchasing an older home is to have it inspected by plumbing professionals who have experience in evaluating the plumbing in old historic homes and in repairing plumbing problems.**

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