

Historic Staircases & their evolution

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Historic Staircases before 1680



In the early 17th century spiral staircases were in popular in smaller houses but straight flights were increasingly used, particularly from the mid 17th century onwards, with turned balusters and finials to newel posts.

Historic Staircases 1680 to 1700



Flat capped finials and bulbous balusters were popular in the 1680's and drop finials still occurred at the newel base.

By the 1690's more advance forms were used, such as the toadback handrail, with the raised middle and curved ramp of the handrail at the the start of a flight of stairs.



The 1690's staircase, on the left, has twisted balusters and ornate open string brackets. The late 17th century staircase on the right is much more basic with splat balusters which are flat silhouettes of more expensive turned balusters.

Historic Staircases before 1700 to 1750



This 1720's staircase, on the left, has barley twisted balusters, fluted column newel posts, ramped toadback handrail and ornate open string brackets.



This staircase has the set of 3 balusters patterns per step, which was used on high status work in the 1720's.



The 1750's saw the start of the gothick, such as this staircase at Strawberry Hill.

Historic Staircases 1750 to 1830



Two early 19th century staircases, the one on the left being a basic cottage staircase, but the one on the right, despite its high status, shows the simple detailing and square balusters popular at this period.



Mahogany handrails became popular at this period, the one of the left having an elegant sweep. The open string brackets are still used, but are no longer elaborately carved.

Historic Staircases 1830 to 1900



Mid 19th century staircases often retain the previous regency simplicity. Others are more ornate, with cast iron balusters become available for the higher status houses.



The late 19th century sees the use of heavier and ornamental woodwork.

Historic Staircases After 1900



In the 1900's, there is a return to the simpler forms of the Georgian period.