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# Vernacular architecture

In the medieval period people lived in smoky hall-houses. Around 1550, new building styles developed, with chimneys, based on locally available materials.

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## Snowdonian Houses

Built from stone, these were the earliest houses in Wales to have a first floor accessed by stairs.

Fireplaces were built at either end of the house to provide smoke-free warmth for all four rooms.

They had slate or stone tiled roofs and tall chimneys. Chimneys like these were a clear sign of wealth.



## Glamorgan Houses

These were also built from stone and had thatched roofs as wheat was plentiful in this fertile region.

They often started life as a small building with a chimney at one end. After an extension was added, the chimney would remain in the middle of the roof.

The bright red colour was thought to ward off evil spirits.



## Border Houses

Large trees were plentiful along the border, and all houses in this area were built from timber.

The spaces in-between the oak frame were filled by wattle and daub panels. Roofs were thatched with straw.

Internal, curved oak trees called *crucks* took the weight of the roof at first. After such timbers became scarce, strong *box-framed* walls took the weight.



## Long houses

In south and mid-Wales, medieval style hall-houses were extended to include room for cattle. Those built from timber were often later rebuilt in stone.

Both human and animal used the same doorway to enter. The owners lived at the opposite end from the cattle and away from the animal muck.

Typically, the chimney was to the side of the shared doorway, and consequently near the centre of the roof.



## Cottages

Cottages were small, one-room houses. They became common around 1750 as the population grew and poverty became widespread.

Like the earlier halls, they didn't have a first floor, instead they had a simple raised sleeping platform at one end.

Many were of stone, but in west Wales, where good building stone was rare, their walls were often built from earth.