

For Those Considering Owning and Maintaining an Adobe building

Although some of the oldest surviving buildings in the world are made of earth, owning or maintaining an adobe structure requires a different type of care than a wood frame building. In fact, well intentioned measures taken by uninformed owners or contractors can in even hasten or cause damage to the structure.

The following “Dos and Don’ts” will help avoid some major mistakes, and when in doubt, it is never a bad idea to obtain advice from an adobe professional.

In a historic adobe structure (pre-WWII, before the invention and use of asphalt stabilized adobe), **do not** undertake any work without consulting a historic preservation professional.

Do maintain roofs, flashing, rain gutters and downspouts. Address the causes of water damage as soon as they occur.

Do not allow sprinklers or irrigation equipment to spray the building, or saturate the soil at the base of the walls. If you want to have plantings around your adobe wall, choose some very waterwise plants such as cacti or succulents planted in well-draining soil.

Do not install, pavement, paver bricks or tiles, or sidewalks at the base of adobe walls, above the elevation of the concrete foundation stem wall. Although it may seem that such additions will prevent water damage, generally they only capture moisture within adobe walls, exacerbating deterioration.

Do not install stucco/portland cement-based plaster on an adobe building without the consultation of an expert familiar with adobe construction. While cement-based plasters are durable and low-maintenance, an improperly detailed or installed stucco finish can destroy an adobe building.

Do not add soil or allow grading to direct water towards the building.

Do not paint adobe walls with vapor impermeable paints such as gloss paints, elastomeric coatings, et cetera.

This information comes from an associate's website: adobe is not software, which is an additional excellent resource for anyone interested in adobe construction.