

Lorraine farm built of earth brick in four bays, with roof overhang supported on brackets. Vallée de la Meuse.



(with oblique bracing); the plain overlapping Alsatian tiles replace the half-round tiles of Lorraine. Vosges sandstone, much used in masonry, is found in the Vosges and Pays de Bitche areas.

In the Vôge, in the Vosges département, the compact groups of housing typical of Lorraine begin giving way to more scattered dwellings such as are found in mountainous areas. No longer standing close together along roads, houses are in groups of three or four, while their character, still indisputably of Lorraine, is supplemented by the *charri*, a space in front of the barn which constitutes a transition between interior and exterior, simply removing the passage from the basic organization of the Lorraine farmhouse. The isolation of farms in the Montagne area means that dwellings are scattered. There is more use of wood here, for gables, and the farms have a ground-level entrance to the barn facing the pastures.

In the Vosges area again, towards Neufchâteau, there are several examples of stone tiled roofs at the northern and eastern limits of the great area of limestone, a building material used lavishly in Burgundy, Franche-Comté and Champagne until the appearance of the machine-made tile in the 19th century.

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See also
2.III.6.a Alsatian

References

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2.III.5.1 Norman (France, NW)

Norman vernacular architecture is notable for the richness and variety of its materials: dressed stone, stone rubble, brick, tile, timber-frame, cob (or *bauge*), straw thatch and slate.

Timber-frame Normandy farm ensemble of the Pays d'Auge.



Settlement patterns are also diverse: isolated farms housing one or two families, small, medium and large hamlets, and *bourgs* varying widely in size. Whilst most regions display some variety, certain areas are noted for their highly distinctive settlement pattern. The Bocage Normand, in the west, is notable for its hamlets and isolated farms, as is the Pays d'Auge; the Plaine de Caen is characterized by large courtyard farms, with nucleated villages in the valleys and along the line of the limestone outcrops. Other regions, the Pays de Bray, the Pays d'Ouche and the Vexin Normand each have their own characteristic variations.

Building material, detail and finish show strong regional characteristics, largely determined by the geology. Western Normandy, in particular, is characterized by alternating ridges of hard rock with intervening clay vales; stone buildings are usual on the former, timber-frame and clay structures in the latter. Whilst stone was common in medieval times, dressed stone was increasingly used from the 17th century onwards. Earth construction (*bauge*) is found in the Pays d'Ouche and on the plain of the River Eure; mass earth-walling is characteristic of the low-lying areas of the Carentan marais. Other techniques occur, like the use of unbaked clay bricks around Coutances and Saint-Lois. Since the 19th century the use of brick has increased; its origins go back much further. Decorative brickwork, with moulded bricks for cornices and other details, is notable particularly in northeast Normandy. Timber framing is widely admired and has many regional variations: close-studding in the Pays de Caux is combined with interrupted sill-beams; in the Seine valley and the Vernier Marais studs are more widely spaced and bracing is evident. Timber-framing is more complex in the Pays d'Auge and a number of subtypes prevail.

Roof-pitch is commonly of 42° to 45°. Thatch was once by far the most common form of roof covering, reed thatch being ubiquitous in certain low-lying and marshy areas. As early as the Gallo-Roman period tile was a significant material, later to disappear only to reappear in the later Middle Ages. Whilst slate too is known from the central Middle Ages, its present dominance has its origins in the 18th century.

Roof types include aisled hall structures, kingpost and upper kingpost trusses. It is the kingpost truss – the classic roof truss of 'metropolitan' France – which is the dominant type. Some of the greatest buildings of the later Middle Ages had collar-rafter trusses. From the Renaissance onwards the upper cruck was used, providing greater access to lofts and roof spaces. Base-cruck trusses are reported near Rouen.

At least from the time of the Norman conquest of England, the province had shared common cultural characteristics with its northern neighbour. It is thus not surprising that the open hall – with central hearth – and freestanding chamber block were common on both sides of the English Channel. Well-attested examples are known, representative of the upper levels of society. It is probable that the centrally placed open hearth was universal in peasant houses of the Middle Ages but only one surviving example is so far known, recently identified near Rouen. By the 16th century – the period from which most of the earliest surviving houses date – hearths with chimney-stacks