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Stucco should be inspected

California inspectors' group reminds home buyers to have stucco examined

Friday, June 01, 2001

Inman News Features

The [California Real Estate Inspection Association](#) is cautioning home buyers to have any home they are planning to buy professionally inspected with one eye on potential stucco problems.

Stucco adheres best when applied directly over cement-based materials. A correctly installed stucco color coat should be expected to last 20-50 years or longer, contractors say.

However, stucco problems can arise if money-saving shortcuts are used when the stucco is applied to the home. If stucco is installed over paint, adhesion can be compromised, resulting in chipping and peeling. Adequate surface preparation should include removal of old paint by sand-blasting or applying a special primer.

Not every stucco crack is an indication of a serious problem. Only cracks that are large and excessive are likely to mean trouble. Some pre-1950s homes have fewer cracks than newer homes because at that time builders used larger studs that came from more mature trees and were kiln-dried.

The California Contractors License Board published a set of workmanship guidelines that addressed cracks in stucco in 1982. The guidelines say hairline cracks are acceptable if they aren't excessively numerous, and cracks larger than 3/32 of an inch are unacceptable and should be repaired.

A qualified home inspector can investigate stucco and report on its condition.

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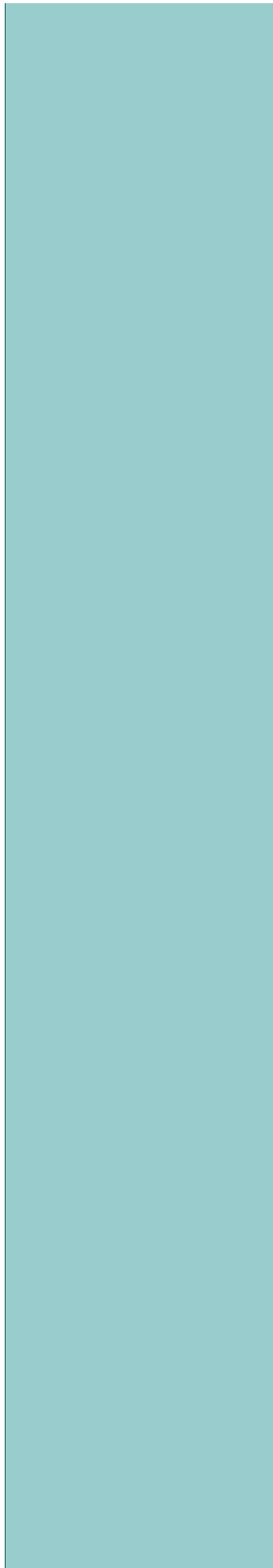
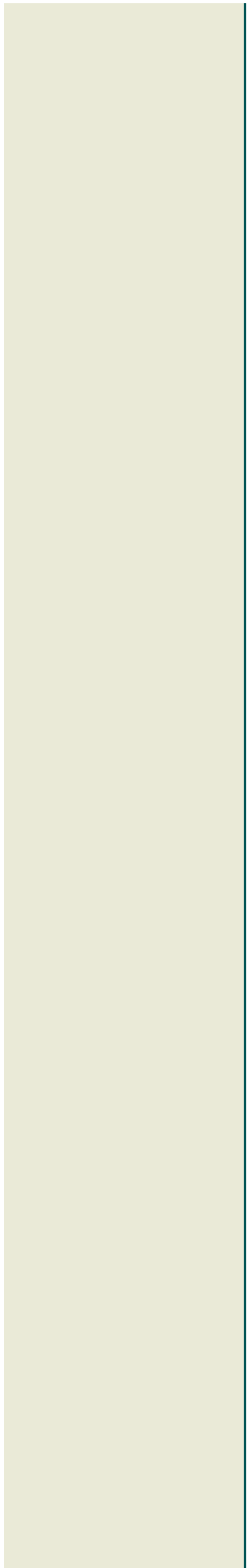
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