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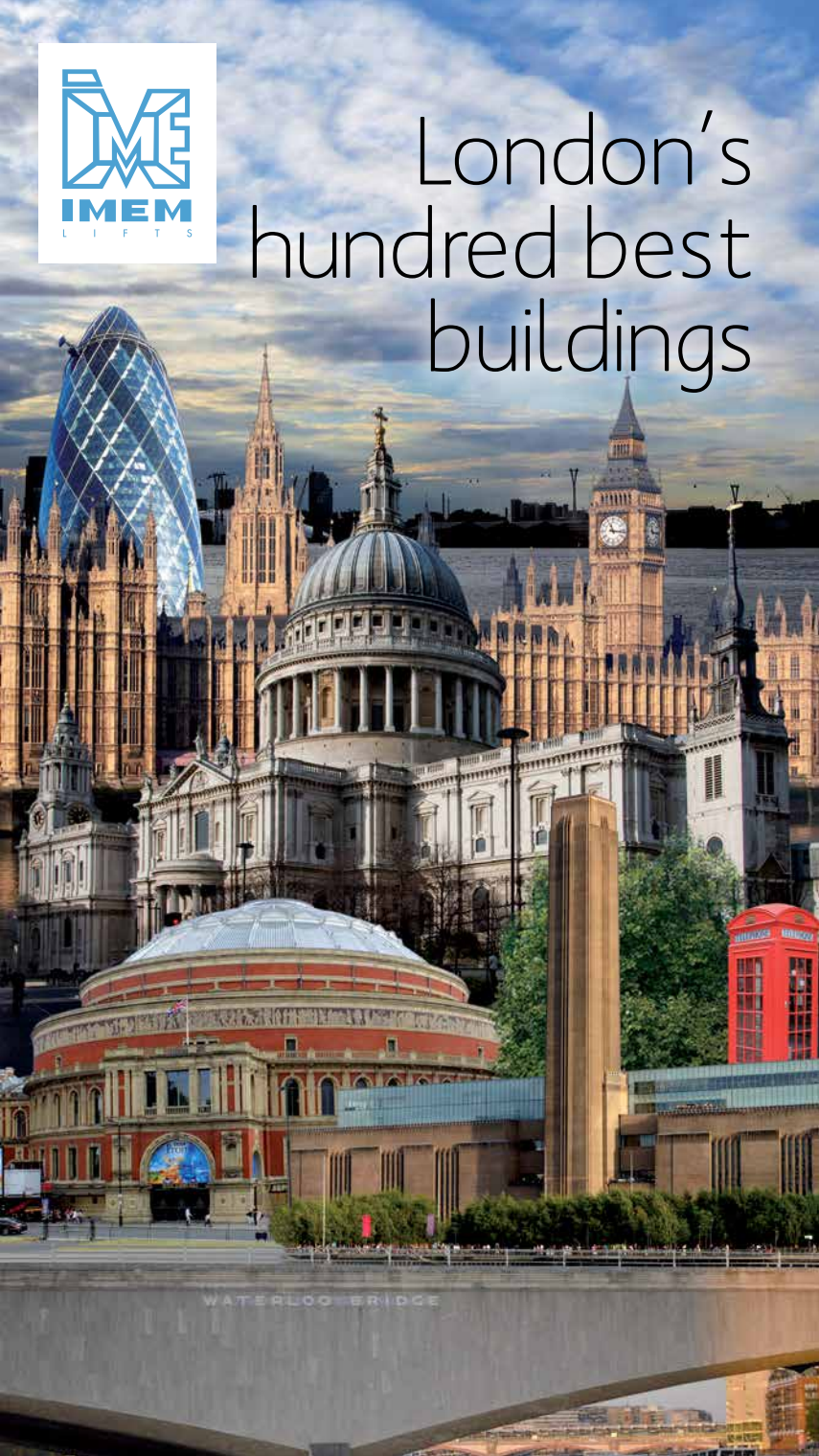
London's hundred best buildings



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Antón Capitel.
(Cangas de Onís, Asturias, Spain, 1947) is an architect and a Professor of Architecture at the Polytechnic University of Madrid. An essayist, historian and critic, Mr Capitel has published numerous articles and books on Modern Architecture, Spanish and International, and both specialised and general works, and a range of books on Architectural Theory and Monument Restoration Theory. In 2010 and 2011 he was an Associate Senior Researcher at University College London's Bartlett School, a stay which would give rise to the book: Londres, ciudad disfrazada. La arquitectura en la formación del carácter de la capital británica. (London: A Disguised City. Architecture in the Development of the British Capital's Character) (Abada Editores, Madrid, 2013).

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London's hundred best buildings

FROM THE 17TH TO THE 20TH CENTURY

Antón Capitel

IMEM Lifts is delighted to present to you this guide to some of the wonderful architecture on display in the supremely cosmopolitan city of London, one of the world's premier business centres and tourist destinations. Our motivation is simple and straightforward: it is the fruit of our company's longstanding love affair with the built environment - which is both pleasing and productive for us.

IMEM Lifts began working in the UK more than twenty years ago and as a result there are now thousands of IMEM lifts systems in operation throughout the country, many of them installed in buildings of particular architectural significance. We are proud that our customers recognise IMEM Lifts as a company which can be relied on to provide effective and appropriate vertical transport solutions for buildings of outstanding historical and artistic significance. And - as this guide so clearly demonstrates - London is blessed with an abundance of such works of art.

The guide's author is Antón Capitel, the highly respected architect and Professor at the Madrid School of Architecture, and it includes buildings from a comprehensive range of historical periods and styles, with a particular focus on avant-garde and groundbreaking works in each.

Our many thanks to those who, directly or indirectly, have contributed to the publication of this guide. Our contribution at IMEM Lifts has been to sponsor it and thereby do our bit in helping to promote the architectural heritage of this great city. We hope that Antón Capitel's work will encourage more and more people to look up and really appreciate the wonderful buildings featured here.

Antonio Pérez
General Director
IMEM LIFTS

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I would like to express my warmest thanks to all those who in one way or another contributed to the publication of this book.

Firstly, I would like to recognise IMEM Lifts and its Marketing Director, Antonio Pérez Luzuriaga, for their support and placing their trust in me to carry out this project. Without their encouragement it would not have been possible.

To Antón Capitel, the author of this simple and accessible compendium, for sharing with us his particular and unique take on London's best architecture, and responding to our request with such eagerness.

To Tim Buxbaum, the English architect and author of the guide *Suffolk's hundred best buildings*, also published by IMEM Lifts, which garnered significant public and private recognition, including by the RIBA (Royal Institute of British Architects).

And the photographers, layout artists, and the translator, Justin Peterson. Everyone did their part.

Finally, I'd like to thank you, the readers, an integral and essential part of the project, for dedicating your valuable time to reading this work, which we hope you worthwhile.

Thank you, to everyone.

Ignacio González-Riancho
Editor
Grupo Publicitario Cruzial

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Introduction

This book aims to summarize the history of the city of London's architecture through the documentation and critical analysis of an anthology composed of more than 100 buildings deemed particularly significant, in an effort to provide an account of the historical journey that gave rise to such a remarkable city. It spans the period from the work of Inigo Jones, in the second half of the 17th century, up until the late 20th century; that is, from when the English Renaissance went international by following the Italian trend, at the service of the Crown, down to this day. Omitted are the first stages, in the interest of simplifying the already extensive anthology, and also based on the conclusion that the oldest significant works have already been thoroughly documented and discussed in many other publications.

In this way three fundamental periods in the history of the British capital's architecture are covered. Three ways of approaching architecture that furnished the city with a succession of characters, struggling for symbolic supremacy, but that ultimately proved compatible and complementary, harmoniously sharing and comprising the city's attractive urban landscape.

The first period is the CLASSICAL, initiated by Inigo Jones as a pioneer of an Italian style, but in a way made his own, taken up and continued by Christopher Wren and his disciple Nicholas Hawksmoor, who set out and succeeded in developing a unique form of British Classicism, thereby writing a unique Baroque adventure of the highest quality. Other architects, like Gibbs and Archer, rounded out this initial period of London's Baroque classicism. The second, identified with Neoclassicism, but very specifically with what came to be called "Neo-Palladianism", was manifested in a set of outstanding works, such as those by the architect Lord Burlington and, above all, the abundant and fine works of "small urbanism" in the form of squares, terraces and crescents. Later still, in the 19th century, two very capable architects, John Nash

and John Soane, contributed in an exceptional way, though a very different and complementary one, to bringing to a close the Classical stage of the city's conformation.

The second period was the ROMANTIC, during which the paradox arose that, after a Classical London had been built in a successful effort to produce something uniquely British, the collective sensibility quickly shifted and embraced Romanticism, spawning an effort to produce architecture in the United Kingdom that was either Gothic, or primitive British Renaissance, predating the Italian manner introduced by Jones. Thus arose the Victorian period, neo-Gothic and neo-Tudor, and the Edwardian, also historicist, but more eclectic. The era culminated with a third and final period presided over by Sir Edwin Lutyens, one spilling well over into the 20th century, which was once again Classical, but should also be considered Romantic, without this being viewed as a contradiction. The city, disguised as Classical in the first stage, dressed up as Gothic and eclectic in the second, and its personalities, although grappling to prevail, as already mentioned, coexisted and continue to coincide in a city that, figuratively speaking, became dual.

The third period is the MODERN, in which two parts must be distinguished, distinctly separated by World War II. In the 1900s, the modern century, properly speaking, the first phase encompassed the two great wars and was defined, above all, by the work of architects who participated in the academic and eclectic tradition in which they had been educated, but in a transformed and modernized way. These are the architects who we can call moderates, and they constituted the majority, the most important figures amongst them being John Burnett, Charles Holden and Giles Gilbert Scott. They devised the city's first modern costume or character, which came to characterise and distinguish the city, which was superimposed on what had been Classical and Romantic London. These moderates coexisted with the late academic architects, both Classical and Romantic, Lutyens pre-eminent amongst them, but also with members of the avant-garde; i.e. very interesting modern radicals, of whom there were few. Of particular note amongst them were foreigners, like Erno Goldfinger and Berthold Lutbenkin, along with the brilliant engineer Owen Williams.

The second phase is that which begins upon the end of World War II and the city's reconstruction. The post-war generations were quite eclectic, if considered together, as they spanned from Donald McMorran, who sought to carry over some of the Classical ideals to modernity, to Denys Lasdun, who represented the most radical architecture of those years, along with Leslie Martin, Robert Mathew, Philip Powell and Hidalgo Moya, Basil Spence... This trend would endure up until the first stage of the work of James Stirling and James Gowan, and the advent of the radical avant-garde, which did not actually design buildings constructed in the city, but did alter the cultural landscape, to a great degree eliminating it. At the beginning of the 70s, and down to almost the present day, what survived was the "High Tech" architectural style, its foremost figure being Norman Foster, and the so-called "Post-modern" movement, almost devoid of works of interest in the capital. This second phase of modernity was, therefore, very eclectic and varied, serving to complicate and densify the great British capital's architectural character.

With the expression of this last stage, this guide comes to an end.

Chapter One

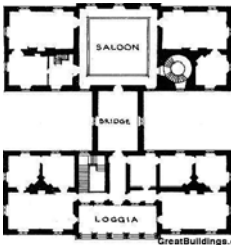
Classical Period

During the 17th and 18th centuries, and through the beginning of the 19th, London's architecture took on its Classical character, which began with the introduction of the Palladian style by Jones, and came to an end with the works of Nash and Soane. In any case, this effort aimed to produce a city that was Classical and yet British, at the same time, which gave rise to diverse, attractive and sometimes contradictory interpretations, which its various buildings evidence in a detailed and particular way.

Queen´s House, 1616-1638

Architect: Inigo Jones.
Greenwich Park SE10.

The Queen's House was the first major commission received by Inigo Jones, designed and built after his second trip to Italy with the Earl of Arundel, and as an architect of the Crown. In this work Jones, a passionate admirer of Palladio, sought to capture the Italian Renaissance while rendering it British, in a pivotal and crucial work that would transform the character of the city, setting the tone and marking the path London's architecture would take from then until the first third of the 19th century. This "Britanisation" of Palladian architecture was clearly manifested in the configuration of its layouts, with two separate houses joined by a bridge - which actually represented an arrangement totally unrelated to the Italian architect's centralised schemes. However, the building's architectural vocabulary is typically Palladian, marking a total rupture with the English Renaissance of the Elizabethan era. The Queen's House was later used by Wren as a compositional focal point for the great Naval Hospital - an approach actually taken upon the Crown's insistence, the complex being built in a calculatedly harmonious relationship with the House.



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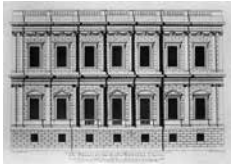
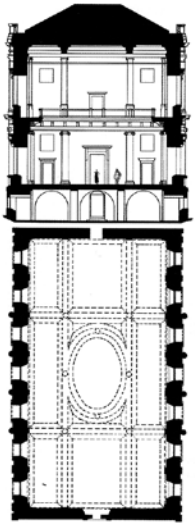
Banqueting House, 1619

Architect: Inigo Jones.
Whitehall, Westminster SW1.





The intention had been for this unique building to be but the beginning of Whitehall Palace, a major ambition of the Crown that was never fully realised but for which Jones drew up plans. The Banqueting House insisted on the Britanisation of Italian architecture through the creation of a unitary interior space for which only some precedents could be found in imperial Roman architecture, turning to Classical Antiquity in an effort to elude associations with the Catholic Renaissance. This is an utterly simple and absolutely unitary space and interior that ultimately proved a purely compositional exercise. The House is an important and outstanding prototype of what an interior and exterior ought to be, in accordance with the new architecture, and was to serve as a template for the construction of the Crown's buildings, thereby furnishing London with a Classical character. The answer came in the form of Ionic and Corinthian orders, which became the only elements of a formal vocabulary as fitting as it was abstract. The ceilings were painted by Rubens, commissioned by Charles I, in honour of his father, James I, who had ordered the building's construction. After the Civil War waged against the forces of Parliament, Charles I was executed right in front of this building.

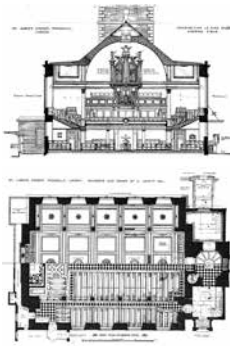
St Paul's Covent Garden, 1631-1638

Architect: Inigo Jones.
Covent Garden Piazza WC2.

London's first Anglican church (i.e. the first church built after the English Reformation), endures as a vestige of the Covent Garden Piazza, the city's first square, designed by Jones and today almost completely overhauled. The Church pays adequate and intense tribute to the Square by presenting it with a main façade featuring an imposing portico. Paradoxically, however, this entry is false, providing no means of access, to be found on the other side. The portico and volume represent another of Italian Classicism's intense and important contributions to this British work of art. In addition to drawing upon Palladio, on the one hand, in this case Jones sought to convey the front of an Etruscan temple, thereby once again suggesting Roman antiquity while evading a relationship with the architecture of papal Rome. This is what explains the curious and interesting wooden pediment, with an overhang of the same material instead of a classic stone frieze, though to understand the portico's complete composition and, above all, its side arches, it is necessary to once again recall its Palladian influence, one curiously understood by Jones as equivalent to the architecture of imperial Rome and, as such, devoid of Catholic contamination.

St James Piccadilly, 1676-84

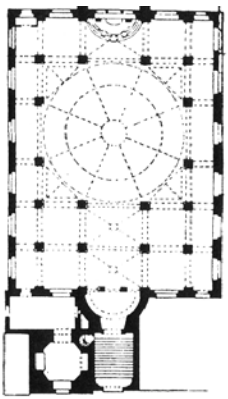
Architect: Christopher Wren.
Piccadilly and Jeremy St SW1.



A successor to Jones in continuing Britain's particular conversion of and take on Classical architecture, Wren took very important steps forward in this pursuit, one of the most prominent being the codification of London's Anglican parish churches, taking advantage of the large number of commissions he received from the Crown after the Great Fire of 1666. In the case of St James he employed the model of the Anglican basilica, with a tower at the apse in a symmetrical position, three naves, the two lateral ones featuring wooden galleries, low and arched windows, and stained glass at the rear of the chancel. This model was widely replicated by many others into the 19th century, though not so much by Wren himself. The most original aspect of this church is the fact that the central nave is graced by a vault, but the sides, instead of featuring small parallel vaults, possess a series of transverse ones, yielding a particularly attractive space. This idea may have actually belonged to his great pupil, Nicholas Hawksmoor, who, in any case, applied it at his brilliant Christ Church in Spitalfields.

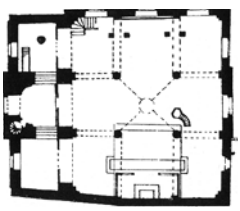
St Stephen's, Walbrook, 1672-77 (Spire from 1717)

Architect: Christopher Wren.
Walbroock EC4.



Of the many and varied churches designed by Wren to replace the parishes that were lost to the Great Fire of 1666, St Stephen's, Walbrook may be the most original, and undoubtedly boasts the most complex interior. Beginning with a tower in a symmetrical position, with five naves of very different sizes, after only two sections of these the space is occupied by a massive square opening featuring twelve columns, forming a chamfer, with eight scallops above, light entering through their arches and, finally, a large dome. This main space leaves room only for the small side naves, transversally, in the other direction leading to a final section housing the chancel. The twelve main columns are Corinthian, as are all of the Church's, and represent an interesting allusion to the rebuilding of the temple in Jerusalem, according to the prophet Ezekiel, as depicted by the Spanish Jesuits Villalpando and Prado, who had published their influential book in Rome, in Latin, in the previous century. These columns symbolise the 12 tribes of Israel, thereby referring to Hebrew antiquity. St Stephen's constitutes Wren's most complex ecclesiastical space, and probably his most extraordinary and attractive.

Photo at the top-left: https://temporaryviewsoflondon.wordpress.com/2012/02/07/temporary-view-2
Author's drawing at the top-right.



St Martin, Ludgate, 1677-87

Architect: Christopher Wren.
Ludgate Hill EC4.

In addition to the Anglican basilicas, whether simple or complex, Wren produced designs featuring other interesting typologies for London's new parishes, such as his centralised, square churches. Worthy of mention are those of St Anne and St Agnes, with four interior columns, and St Mary Abchurch, featuring an absolutely diaphanous space. Probably the most interesting is St Martin Ludgate, with an entrance tower that is symmetrical with respect to the volume, but which entails a lateral access in relation to the altar. As in the case of St Anne and St Agnes, the four interior Corinthian columns seem to denote the rebuilding of the temple in Jerusalem, according to the prophet Ezekiel, as portrayed by the Spanish Jesuits Villalpando and Prado, who had published their influential book in Rome, and in Latin, although in this case the reference is very different from that found at St Stephen's, Walbrook, which features twelve. As in that case, this was a way of avoiding any relationship to Roman Catholic architecture and establishing a link with ancient times; not Roman, but rather Hebrew. The configuration of the square, with four columns, gives rise to an interesting cruciform ceiling, with four vaults intersecting in the centre.

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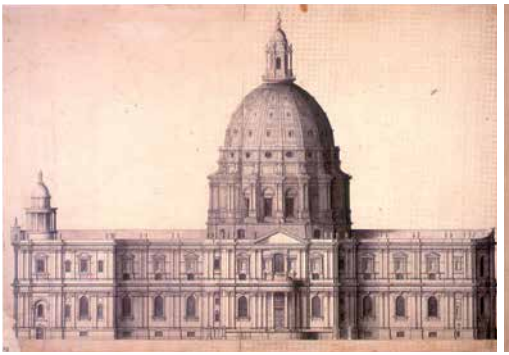
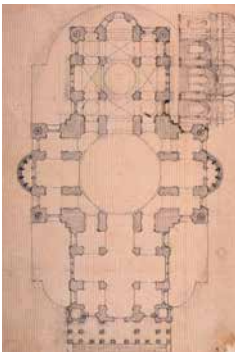
Author's drawing at the top-right.

St Paul´s Cathedral, 1675-1711

Architect: Christopher Wren.
St Paul's Churchyard, London EC4.

The design and construction of the new St Paul's Cathedral, the former having been destroyed by the Great Fire of 1666, was the most protracted and laborious work undertaken by Christopher Wren as an architect serving the Crown. In accordance with his general aim of designing distinctly Anglican churches, differing from Catholic ones, an objective also informing his designs for his parish churches, Wren developed successive alternatives in an effort to serve the Crown and the Nation, precisely the task with which he been charged. He had first designed an original layout in the form of a Greek cross, dubbed the "Great Model" (1673), with curvilinear exterior angles and a Classical exterior form that was almost conventional (fusing inspirations from Bramante, Michelangelo, Jones, Sangallo and Mansart). This plan was approved by the Crown, but must not have pleased the clergy, who preferred longitudinal basilicas over central churches.



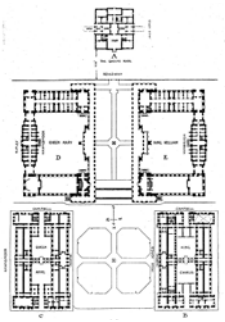


In a second stage he drew up what was termed the "Warrant Design" (1675), with an elongated basilica presided over in the middle by a crossing and large dome, this more moderate approach being compensated by the overall effect of its elevations, both inside and out. In line with his intention of "Anglicanizing" ecclesiastical architecture, the look is neither Classical, nor Italian, nor French, dominated by a very original dome which could be described as Baroque, its spire exaggeratedly high, rendering it somewhat Gothic.

But this aspect must not have been entirely satisfactory. Although the work began based on this plan, its elevations were altered after the work was already underway. In the end the Cathedral took on a Renaissance aspect, rather than a Baroque one, thereby alluding to a time in history not truly the city's own, and entering into direct competition with St Peters in Rome. The great dome was inspired by the small temple of San Pietro in Montorio, by Bramante; its curved side porticoes, by the work of Pietro da Cortina; and its central towers, by that of Borromini, these constituting its most Baroque elements. It should be underscored, however, that it formed part of a "neo-Renaissance" effort that sought to infuse London with the illusion of a history that never was.

Royal Naval Hospital, 1696-1702

Architect: Christopher Wren (with N Hawksmoor and others).
Greenwich, Romney Road SE10.



With plans for a palace initiated by John Webb (1664), and ultimately completed by Nicholas Hawksmoor after the death of his master and teacher (1702), the Royal Greenwich Naval Hospital is probably Christopher Wren's most remarkable work. Initially Wren had produced some general sketches calling for the demolition or concealment of the Queen's House, but the Crown did not approve. Thus, the architect was forced to accept that Inigo Jones's small building was destined to shape the project's general design, despite its distance, as it was required to lie on the same symmetrical axis.

The complex is dominated by a sprawling open and dual patio, with the presence of two pairs of buildings around courtyards. The first two, standing along the banks of the river, incorporate Webb's existing work and feature a broader patio. The second pair introduced a narrower patio and are characterised by the domed buildings framing the view of the Queen's House in the distance. As this small palace does not actually belong to the

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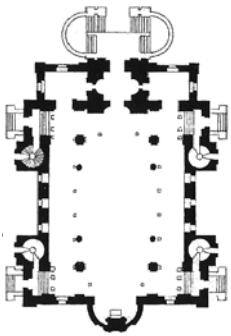
complex, it is composed of symmetrical elements on both sides of the axis, lacking a centre, in a composition that is entirely unique.

The main pavilions, those corresponding to the domed towers, contain the Great Hall, on the west side, and the Chapel, on the other (by Stuart and William, from 1789), their courtyard opening to the central exterior space through detached colonnades. The buildings' lateral façades and some of the inner courtyards were completed by different designers (Ripley, Vanbrugh, Hawksmoor) in accordance with architectural approaches different from Wren's, the work of Hawksmoor being of particular note, specifically the west side of King William's Pavilion.

St George-in-the-East, 1714-29

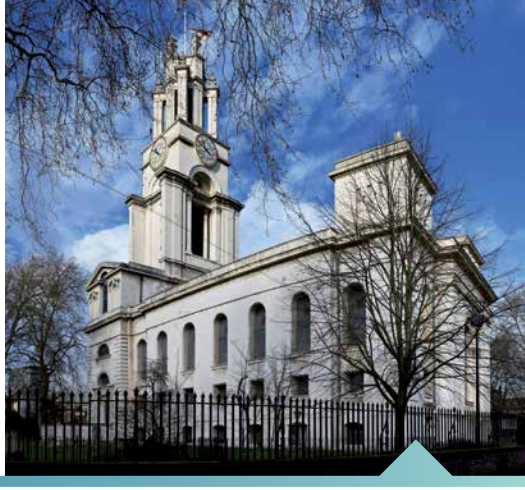
Architect: Nicholas Hawksmoor.
Cannon Street Road E1.



Nicholas Hawksmoor, the most brilliant Baroque architect and one of British classicism's best, if not the best, received several commissions for new London parishes, extended in 1711 by a Parliamentary commission formed by, among others, the architects Wren, Vanbrugh and Archer. His first was that of St Alphege (1712-1714), in Greenwich. The second was this, St George-in-the-East, and St Anne's Limehouse, contemporaneous and architecturally related to each other. St George (whose interior was destroyed during the Second World War and not rebuilt) is a longitudinal basilica that retained a bit of a central plan. The interior features four large pillars near the sides, and, more centrally, another two Doric columns forming a square, yielding the illusion of a central space. The number four, as in the case of Wren, once again refers to the architectural plans depicting the temple of Jerusalem by the Spanish Jesuits Villalpando and the Prado.

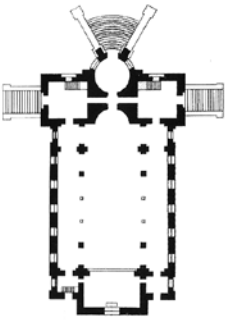
The exterior, conserved and rebuilt, is simply superb. The brilliant and original tower constitutes, in a Classical language, an appealing innovation with a Gothic twist. Though it must be considered Baroque, the overall volume evokes an impossible Renaissance, in an alternative way, but with an intention similar to that of Wren at St Paul's.

Author's drawing at the top-right.



St Anne's Limehouse, 1714-30

Architect: Nicholas Hawksmoor.
Commercial Road E14.



Featuring a Classical tower, like St George-in-the East, but with a Gothic flavour, the external volume is not as bright as that of the preceding church, but also evokes the lost Renaissance, at least through some Alberti-like references to the composition to be found on the lateral façades, and in the elegant bodies flanking the tower, anticipating, in this case, the radical architecture of the late 18th century. The interior, fortunately preserved in its entirety in this case, is a three-nave basilica in the style of Wren and, like St George, features four large pillars at the very sides, and another four smaller but more central ones forming an almost square area, thereby producing, once again, the illusion of a central space. This illusion was reinforced on the ceiling with a large elliptical moulding between the four columns. As the ellipse is of limited eccentricity, it is perceived as a circle, converting the position of the four central columns into a kind of visual square. In this way St Anne represents a particularly attractive example of integration, somewhere between a linear basilica and a central church. The sophisticated tower, in a symmetrical position, houses a round narthex, which gives way to the naves and the vestries, this access being very refined and original.

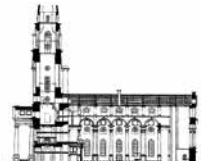
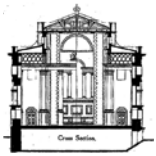


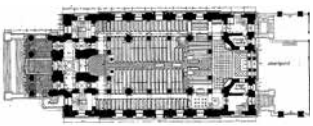
Christ Church Spitalfields, 1714-29

Architect: Nicholas Hawksmoor.
Commercial Street E1.

Also contemporaneous with St George-in-the-East and St Anne's Limehouse, Christ Church in Spitalfields is Hawksmoor's most celebrated church and undoubtedly his most complex and intense. The tower is symmetrical, consonant with Wren's model, and is truly sophisticated, elaborately Classical, and somewhat Palladian, but with a spire that also gives it a strong Gothic touch, without ceasing to be intricately Baroque, as can be appreciated in its articulated volume. The lateral façades are very different, again evoking the architecture of Alberti, while the rear wall once again speaks to us of a lost Renaissance, but one evoked with considerable force.

The main nave features a flat ceiling, while the smaller ones borrow from Wren's technique at St James Piccadilly of employing a series of vaulted, transverse naves, which leads us to believe that the solution there may also have been Hawksmoor's. Corinthian columns frame with a free-standing entablature both the entrance and the high altar. In the inner space thus formed four major pillars constitute a square subarea, in this way again generating the effect of a central area that we also find at St George-in-the East and St Anne's Limehouse. The number four and the Corinthian order again transmit the influence of the Spaniards' ideal conception of the temple in Jerusalem.



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St George's Bloomsbury, 1716-31

Architect: Nicholas Hawksmoor.
Bloomsbury Way WC1.

Also highly complex, the church of St George's Bloomsbury features a volume that does not conform to the designs devised by Wren, as was the case with Hawksmoor's previous churches. The main façade is like a Classical temple that could be described as adopting the Palladian manner, with an entrance through its portico. A major tower, however, situated laterally with respect to the volume and the urban surroundings, but symmetrically in relation to one of the axes of the floor plan, and with another entry through it, produces a sharp conflict between this direction and that indicated by the main portico. Thus, the church's design is affected by two axes generating an intense interplay: that of the entry via the tower, enhanced by the prominence of the vestry at the end, and the entry via the main portico, enhanced by said portico and the greater depth of the dimension in this direction. In the centre, a very high quadrangular space seems to seek a neutrality between the two directions.

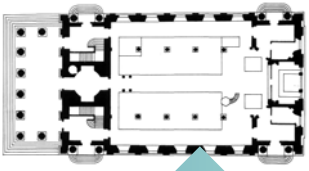
A unique feature of the tower is a tribute to the Mausoleum of Halicarnassus at its pinnacle. And the rest of the volume, especially in the back, once again evokes, as on other occasions, the lost Renaissance. Also employed are some elements that, like at St Anne's Limehouse, seem to presage the radical Classical architecture of the late 18th century.

St Mary Woolnoth, 1716-27

Architect: Nicholas Hawksmoor.
Lombard Street and King William Street EC4.

An extremely original church, St Mary Woolnoth, standing right in the heart of London, is a completely square temple, in this following the work of Wren, in which his assistant Nicholas probably participated, producing a radically central church. Hawksmoor's predilection for ambiguity, however, led to the placement of the door and the altar, and the role played by the side ambulatories, as naves, also endows the temple with a relatively longitudinal design; i.e., that of a short basilica. The space is defined by a square walled configuration that encloses another open one, defined by three Corinthian columns at each vertex. The numbers four and twelve and the Corinthian order strongly relate this church to the ideal ideation of the Temple of Jerusalem by the Spanish Jesuits Villalpando del Prado, as we saw at the churches by Wren and Hawksmoor himself.

As for the exterior, the façade utterly refuses to observe any concordance with the interior and floor plan, taking the form of a boldly Baroque statement creating a sophisticated confusion between a tower understood as single, or as dual. The anticipation of the radical architecture of the late 18th century reappears at the bottom of this façade, where a difficult juxtaposition of lateral Doric columns and the façade, with an entrance at its centre, is rendered coherent through the peculiarly bold grooves characterising the stone.



St Martin-in-the-Fields, 1721-26

Architect: James Gibbs.
Trafalgar Square WC2.

One of the two churches designed by Gibbs (the other, equally interesting, is St Mary-le-Strand, at Strand and Aldwych, 1714-1717), an architect trained in Rome with Carlo Fontana, but who clearly reveals his devotion to basilica design as proposed by Wren. A Palladian portico features, at its top and on its axis, a Baroque tower with somewhat of a Gothic undertone, giving way to an interior with three naves, the sides being separated by large Corinthian columns with high and low galleries between them. The large lateral apertures are placed low, and a large stained-glass window doubles as both an altar and chancel. Not even the side naves are covered by a longitudinal arch, but rather connected to a large central dome, through lunettes, followed by a series of small domes.

With all these features Gibbs again reasserted Wren's basilica model, as stated, thereby eschewing the original and exaggerated elements found in Hawksmoor's contemporary temples, and reclaiming an approach that would endure until the advent of Romantic ideals in the second third of the 19th century.

Its splendid placement in Trafalgar Square particularly enhances this well-known church's presence in the city.

St John's Smith Square and St Paul's Deptford, 1714-28 and 1712-30

Architect: Thomas Archer.
Smith Square SW1 and Deptford High Street SE8.

Of the two attractive churches designed by Archer, a contemporary of Vanbrugh, Hawksmoor and Gibbs, perhaps the most original is that of St John, in Westminster. Free-standing in a square and completely surrounded by urban space, the presence of its two towers and the power of its attractive volume's two faces eloquently express an integration between Anglican architecture and inspiration drawn from the Italian Baroque. Both in this volume and the church's interior space, the work represents an alternative to the "official" model inherited from Wren and consolidated, above all, by Gibbs.

St Paul's Church in Deptford, on the other hand, volumetrically follows this model, with its symmetrical tower and, at the front, three naves, etc. But its layout and, consequently, its interior, is very rich and of high quality. Also worthy of note is the intense and auspicious eclecticism characterising its exteriors, which combine a typically Baroque tower, featuring some Gothic-like remnants, with a vocabulary that, as occurred with some works by Hawksmoor, seems to augur the radical architecture of the late 18th century. James Stirling identified Archer as this era's most outstanding architect.

Chiswick House, 1725-29

Architect: Henry Boyle (Lord Burlington).
Hogarth Lane and Burlington Lane W4.

With the Chiswick House, and other works outside London, a paradigm shift came about, moving away from the Baroque in what might be described as a "call to order" in response to the excesses of the period of Wren's disciples, particularly Hawksmoor, whose works Boyle criticised. Boyle (along with others, such as Campbell and Kent) was one of the founders and practitioners of neo-Palladianism, which sought to return to the origins and the works of Inigo Jones, rejecting the "Britanisation" of Classical architecture embodied by the works of Wren and his successors. Paradoxically, however, this "call to order" and for a more orthodox Classicism would ultimately prove no less British, due again to the proclamation of Palladio as the ideal model to be followed.

Chiswick House is an interpretation of Palladio's Villa Rotonda, though smaller and more reasonable, lacking the radicalness present in a work like Colen Campbell's Mereworth Castle in Kent. The house is not the same on all four sides. Rather, it features a front and back and is different on each side. The floor plan does more strictly conform to the Palladian ideal, though featuring and articulating some more functional and concrete spaces. In a suburban location and in the middle of a park, it is a very well-known and celebrated work, considered emblematic of its trend and its time, and, of course, of very high quality.

Photo by folkestonejack.
https://folkestonejack.files.wordpress.com/2014/02/chiswickhouse_01.jpg

Bedford Square, 1775

Architect: Attributed to Thomas Leverton.
WC1.

With precedents like Covent Garden and St James in the 17th century, and after the works of John Wood in the city of Bath (Royal Crescent, the Circus and numerous terraces) London's construction during the 18th and 19th centuries offset the city's lack of geometric and unitary planning by means of numerous small-scale urban planning projects, with crescents, terraces and squares that came to characterise the capital city, furnishing it with one of its greatest spatial assets. They are of the highest quality, and London's squares entailed the addition of a series of very concrete and attractive urban spaces.

One of the most praised is this one, Bedford Square, attributed to Leverton. Built by large landowners for the rental of properties to the upper classes and the bourgeoisie, they constitute public spaces, but often had at their centres small, private park/squares. These houses are vertical, comprised of a basement with a forecourt, entrance floor, main floor, and two more. At back they have a yard and, in some cases mews: small buildings for staff and stabling.

At Bedford Square, an outstanding example, one can see how these rows of vertical houses are aesthetically unified, forming large "palaces" projecting a unitary appearance. And yet, they are vertically split, greatly enhancing the urban space's atmosphere. The interested reader will be able to find a complete list of these important London spaces in more exhaustive guides.

Fitzroy Square, 1793-98 and 1827-35

Architect: Robert Adam.
W1.

Discussing squares and, specifically, Fitzroy Square, provides us with an apt occasion to introduce the London works of the Adam brothers, Robert and James, important Scottish architects boasting an extensive list of buildings. Learned collectors, their most important work was the large construction dubbed "Adelphi" (1776-1780), which played an important role in defining the city's face towards the River Thames, but which we cannot see today, for it was demolished in 1937. The City of London prudently pushed back from the river, as this was nothing more than a port, leaving the banks for residual spaces and buildings. This trend was gradually corrected over time, and the *"Adelphi"* was one of the complexes furthering this development, endowing the river's banks with a more metropolitan character.

Returning to Fitzroy Square, this a particularly attractive example of these typical London spaces that greatly enrich the city, and is one of those in which vertical houses, actually separated, don figurative disguises of unity on the outside, taking on the appearance of important and non-existent palaces. This configuration yields central and end elements that are emphatic and of the highest quality, skilfully achieving the desired effect.

The Crescent, 1760-70

Architect: George Dance the Younger.
America Square and Vine Street EC3.

George Dance the Younger, the son of an architect, created works very expressive of the radical Classicism of the late 18th century, and was responsible for major urban restoration projects in London, like Newgate Prison (demolished in 1904), and All Hallows-on-the-Wall Church (1765-67).

He also designed one of London's few crescents, this one at America Square, a vestige of a much more ambitious project that also included a square and a circus. As a more revolutionary and radical architect than the Adams brothers and many others, in this case Dance forewent the traditional images and compositions his peers used to adorn vertical houses, instead employing a simple and continuous design faithful to the juxtaposition of independent homes, assisted only by the repetition of large, vertical windows. Featuring a very sober façade, it is expressive of his radical approach to the Classical tradition, heralding a new era.

Regent´s Park, Portland Place and Regent St, 1811-14

Architect: John Nash.
W1.

The creation of Regent's Park, the refurbishment of Portland Place and the layout of Regent Street to Piccadilly Circus, first, and to Waterloo Place, secondly, was London's only major urban revitalisation project in the 19th century, carried out by John Nash, commissioned by the Prince Regent. With it the city was endowed with a new centre, located between the financial district and north of Westminster's oldest section, with which it ultimately joins. The streets' original buildings were largely replaced over time, but the attractive layout remained, which starts with a crescent, turns between it and the intersection at Oxford Street, and bends again, almost violently, to find Piccadilly Circus, then continuing on to cross Pall Mall and end at Waterloo Place.

This revamp project entailed the creation of a new urban structure for this sector, as well as a set of more central and representative streets in the city. Buildings designed by Nash, Soane and Adams, some of them no longer standing, as stated, enriched this important new location. The place modified most recently was "The Quadrant": the great curved section preceding Piccadilly Circus and that was designed in the late Classical style by Reginald Blomfield in the 20s.

Park Crescent, 1812

Architect: John Nash.
Regent´s Park W1.

The beginning of Nash's great restoration project, immediately after the new Regent's Park, is composed of this crescent, first designed as a circus; that is, a completely circular urban space, but later cut in half, forming a semi-circle, or crescent. This was probably a better decision from the urban point of view, given the importance the new west-to-east cross street was going to acquire, in this way offering the arced shape as the most appropriate beginning for Portland Place, and also as the most fitting way to complete the park, which contains a promenade in the same direction, leading to the rectangular Park Square.

Park Crescent is simply a continuous set of vertical houses, following the example set by John Wood in Bath, and other works, as this approach had come to be viewed as adaptable to any urban setting. Thus, this Crescent, with a columned portico attached on the first floor, is no longer disguised as a palace, as had happened at the oldest squares, but rather features an absolutely continuous design, perhaps following the most radical precedent set by George Dance the Younger at America Square. The result is extraordinary, very auspiciously commencing Nash's great urban reform project, and characterises London, almost for the last time, as a great Classical city.

All Souls Church, 1822-24

Architect: John Nash.
Langham Place W1.

In order to ably resolve the S-shaped turn yielded by the new layout of Portland Place before reaching Oxford Circus, Nash placed the Church of All Souls there, in such a way that its presence helped to provide coherence to the variation originated by the street, in such a way that it would appear entirely logical. For this he designed a church that, although conventional in its volume, per se, is preceded by a prominent round portico, almost in the manner of the Roman Temple of Vesta, crowned with a circular tower and a drum, also columned, along with a very slender conical crown in a very Gothic tone.

In this way he enhanced his urban refurbishment project in an extraordinary way, achieving a very attractive and successful integration of architecture into the city, and expressing in a very fitting manner the value of this new and final Classical vestment adorning London, which begins with Park Crescent. The All Souls Church stands as a convincing background image, providing perspective along its north side towards the celebrated shopping artery of Regent Street, today and ever since one of London's most important.

Photo at the top by Steve Cadman. CC BY-SA 2.0.
https://www.flickr.com/photos/stevecadman/246302718

Sussex Place and Carlton House Terrace, 1927-32

Architect: John Nash.
Outer Circle NW1 and Regent´s Park SW1.

The Prince Regent's architect, John Nash, designed numerous sets of vertical residential structures for the upper classes as a complement to his major revamping of the park, Portland Place, and Regent Street. Several of them were built free standing, when located in the vicinity of the park, as was the case with Sussex Place, which revisited the professional traditions of squares, taking on the guise of a palace and doing so with particular flair, through the elements of a domed tower and large colonnades.

A completely different case was that of the Carlton House Terrace, located in this urban enclave, formerly a residence of the prince regent, as King George IV, prior to living in nearby Buckingham Palace. In this case the Terrace adopts a completely urban character, defining the important street on which it is situated, and also a palace-like appearance, though quite different from that mentioned above.

In the area surrounding Regent's Park one can find other buildings by Nash of a similar nature, such as Cornwall Terrace, Ulster Terrace (Outer Circle and Marylebone Road), Cumberland Terrace and Kent Terrace (Park Road).

Photo at the top-left: Susset Palace.
Photos at the top-right and bottom-left: Carlton House Terrace.

Bank of England

Architects: George Sampson, Sir Robert Taylor and John Soane, 1732-64, 1765-87 and 1788-33.
Threadneedle Street EC2.

On an irregular block, the Bank of England building was initiated by George Sampson in 1732 through a configuration of pavilions and courtyards commencing the project from the centre of the block's south side, advancing northwards. The next stage of the project, by Taylor, extended an expansion westward that also took the traditional form of closed pavilions around courtyards and, towards the east, a completely different type of development based on large halls, suggesting longitudinal and central basilicas, juxtaposed to each other and receiving light from above.

Soane's work, on a block that continued to be irregular, but that was completed with the shape and size it has today, continued and completed the three types of operations that he found initiated by his predecessors. On one side he continued Sampson's work, completing the central part, featuring an axial arrangement that might be called academic, and that, doubling its axis, placed another main entrance on the north side. On the other side he continued the work by Taylor; to the west, following the system of pavilions around courtyards and, in the east, rebuilding the rooms or "basilicas", featuring light from above, which he remodelled due to the poor conditions of the material and their state of conservation, completing them with others and furnishing them with a more brilliant and

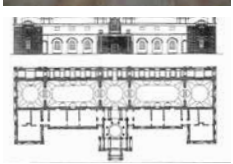
refined architecture. He ultimately completed the façade, of a continuous and encompassing nature, the only aspect that endures today.

The interior - the entire bank, actually - was completely destroyed in the 20th century by Herbert Baker as part of a pretentious expansion. This was a senseless destruction which left London without one of its finest buildings. The preservation of the façade did not suffice for the necessary dissimulation, but at least it allows us to remember the original and outstanding work by John Soane, and to bemoan its disappearance. The interested reader can find photos from the era and drawings in specialised books.

Dulwich Picture Gallery, 1811-1813

Architect: John Soane.
Dulwich. College Road and Gallery Road SE21.

The Dulwich Picture Gallery is a work highly representative of Soane's architecture, but precisely because it is not as unique as other much better-known works of his. One of its most interesting features is its floor plan, which completely abandons almost any vestiges of traditional methods, constituting a very modernised scheme of a freestanding building featuring a dual construction and some unique elements that subtly enhance its centre and sides, the only feature that we can consider inherited and conventional. This arrangement suggests one of the academic typologies that would be thoroughly developed over the course of the 19th century and throughout the western world.



Also to be considered are the quality and interest of its external vocabulary, an auspicious and refined simplification of the Classical language, a formal contribution of Soane's that was not, in reality, followed by his colleagues, whether British or from other countries, but that lucidly advanced formal interests that would be very important in the 20th century.



Sir John Soane's Museum

Architect: John Soane.
Lincoln´s Inn Fields WC2.

This is the most famous and admired work by John Soane, and one of London's most renonwed and visited works of architecture. He built it as a home and architectural studio, as well as to install in it a major private museum containing his pieces and collections. As a young man John Soane had gone to Rome to live and to receive in the Eternal City the complementary education that so many artists and architects sought. In the Italian capital he developed an intense interest in collecting items of archaeological interest.

The building was completed by refurbishing two adjacent vertical houses. With them Soane created a unique domestic and spatial work, refined and highly sophisticated, that can be conveniently visited today. With it Soane amply demonstrated his extraordinary talent and his somewhat unclassifiable status as an architect, for he was not exactly Classical or Romantic, but rather both at once, and anticipated modernity, to an extent, as we have already observed at Dulwich Picture Gallery.

His home evidences his great talent and originality in the area of interior design, while the museum, located principally in the back, illustrates his skill in the handling of interior spaces, their subtleties and complexities. Some of his formal and spatial features inspired later architects, his influence extending into the late 20th century.

On the façade facing Lincoln's Inn Fields the strict Classical language disappears, in reality, giving way to an extraordinary and refined vocabulary of a personal nature, portending important innovations, such as those of the Vienna Secession, or the architecture of Mackintosh, for example, all in the 20th century.

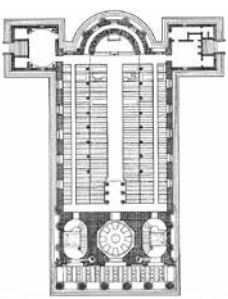
St Pancras and All Saints, 1819-22 and 1822-24

Architects: W and HW Inwood.
Euston Road and Upper Woburn Place NW1 and Camden Street NW1.

These two churches by the Inwoods followed the pattern set by Wren and, very specifically, that set down by Gibbs, particularly at St Martin-in-the-Fields. They are like many other London churches, we might say, but with these temples boasting a special quality and refinement, and constituting the first and almost only cases of neo-Greek historicism in the capital's parishes. The intensity of this historicism was carried to an extreme in the case of St Pancras, to which was added a rear portion featuring an interpretation of the Acropolis's Erechtheion, caryatids and all.

Author's drawing: St Pancras.

The towers of both churches are not conventional and do not follow Baroque models or works, but rather are very personal and attractive, with both featuring cylindrical compositions. Their porticoes, both neo-Greek, nevertheless exhibit two very different attitudes: the purely "orthodox" one at St Pancras is in line with a standard Classical temple, while the circular one at All Saints is closer to the Baroque. Both employ the Ionic order as the most adequate expression of the historicism they pursue.



St Pancras.

Photo at the top-left by Steve Cadman. CC BY-SA 2.0.
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Chapter Two

Romantic, Victorian and Edwardian Periods

Romantic London succeeded Classical London, introducing a strong and sudden change of taste. Classicism came to be considered something foreign and a new effort was made to seek a Britanisation of architecture and the city through the neo-Gothic, on the one hand, and revivals of the early English Renaissance, on the other. It was, therefore, a more eclectic period, coinciding with the long reign of Queen Victoria, and one further complicated by a Baroque historicism, and others, during the Edwardian period. The character of the city thus became dual, at least. Actually, it might be said that it multiplied and became manifold.

Houses of Parliament, 1836

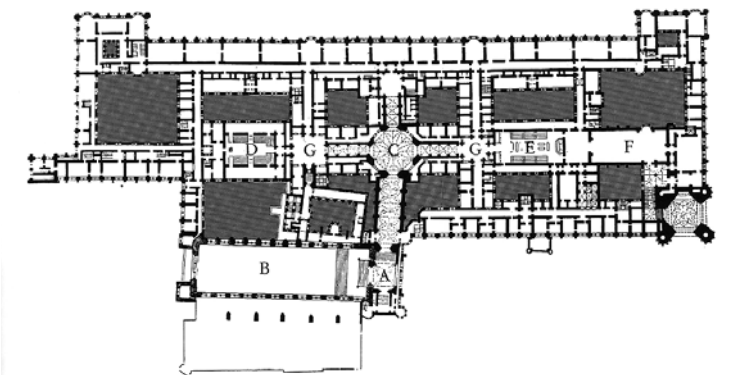
Architects: Charles Barry & Augustus W N Pugin.
Palace of Westminster SW1.

The most important work expressing the momentous and radical change that rejected the Classical tradition in a pursuit of the medieval and the "neo-British". This unique building was the product of an architectural design competition convoked in 1836, with the proviso that the design conform to a Gothic or Elizabethan style. The commission was won by the architects Charles Barry and Augustus W N Pugin. Barry was an eclectic, typical of the era, as evidenced by his neo-Renaissance Florentine work at the Reform Club (London, 1837, No. 29), but Pugin was a neo-medievalist, highly qualified and thoroughly convinced, and with a somewhat fanatical disposition.

The building, of the highest quality, as can be seen today, dramatically enhanced its location in the city. It could even be said, without much exaggeration, that it alone turned London into a Gothic city, precisely as was intended. The general plan took advantage of some elements from previous buildings, almost completely destroyed by a fire, which explains the somewhat irregular nature of its layout. It was designed by combining the traditional method of construction around courtyards with the modern, academic system of axial arrangements and unique internal spaces organising the construction as a whole.

The building's image is highly emblematic of the city and a great achievement, of special note being its celebrated tower and entire exterior appearance, which enriched the River Thames in the most extraordinary way, making it a central location, a status that would later be bolstered

by other public buildings on the other side of the river. Its designers largely specialised in different aspects of the work, with Barry working above all on the general arrangement and façades, and Pugin on the elaborate and equally attractive interiors.



"The House of Lords in Session: F. Sargent, 1880. Lord Beaconsfield is addressing the House. The Prince of Wales is conspicuous on the right of the cross-benches".

Reform Club, 1837

Architect: Charles Barry.
Pall Mall SW1.

A building, as indicated above, designed by Barry in the Italian Renaissance, almost Florentine manner. Its design is faithful to the inspiration he selected, arranged around a nearly square courtyard, surrounded by large bays on all four sides. A major modernisation of this old system was introduced, however, by outfitting the courtyard with a glass roof, which turned what was should have been an open space, according to Renaissance schemes, into a large interior hall. The courtyard remained the building's centrepiece, as was typical of formally Classical architecture, but now converted into an interior space.

As previously indicated, this building demonstrates architect Charles Barry's absolutely eclectic nature, capable of designing with the utmost quality the great neo-Gothic building of the Houses of Parliament, in addition to the neo-Renaissance Reform Club. This is explained by the academic training architects of the era received, which was widely eclectic, as was the period itself, in the broadest sense, defined by its wide-ranging thinking and practices.

Another very similar building, and designed for the same purpose, is found in the Traveller's Club (Pall Mall W1, 1829-1832), slightly predating the building in question.

All Saints Church, 1850-59

Architect: William Butterfield.
Margaret Street W1.

This is one of the city's most interesting neo-Gothic churches, and certainly the most important in central London. It was designed by William Butterfield, subsequently architect behind the enormous and outstanding Keble College, Oxford (1868). All Saints Church combines an intention of presenting itself almost as if it were a purely Gothic medieval church with other hallmarks typical of 19th-century architecture. Of note amongst these is its urban integration, with the church pushed back and accessed by an open courtyard flanked by auxiliary constructions arranged in perfect alignment with the street.

The church, however, is boldly purist, both in its floor plan and its decoration, even featuring some irregularities that, having been very deliberately designed, are presented as if they were spontaneous manifestations of the medieval era. Some defects in its symmetry and regularity, especially in connection with the entrance, aspire to distract from the plan's decidedly academic foundations.

St Mary Magdalene and St Augustine Church, 1868-78 and 1897-98

Architects: G E Street and J L Pearson.
Woodchester Square W2 and Kilburn Park Road NW6.

These two churches, very different and by different architects, share the quality of clearly embodying London's ecclesiastical Gothicism, that typical of later 19th century in the former, and the close of the century in the latter, when the Gothic style had finally been confined to ecclesiastical use. In this respect they are both outstanding and highly expressive.

It might be argued that the first, St Mary Magdalene, is a more imaginative creation, in which the architect seems to adopt not so much a position of an archaeological nature, but rather providing a contemporary and personal twist on the very idea of the Gothic. Both inside and out its attractive combination of brick and stone is particularly striking, generally in horizontal bands of different compositions and classes.

The second church, St Augustine, is a bit more historicist, conceived as a work closer to archaeology; that is, an attempt to construct a Gothic church that may have actually existed in the medieval era.

Red House, 1859

Architect: Philip Webb.
Red House Lane, Bexleyheath.

One of the most famous architectural works of the Victorian era is this Red House, designed by a young Philip Webb, but whose legendary status is owing more to the great personality of its owner: the artist and intellectual William Morris, one of the most important British and Romantic legends.

The house, though featuring neo-medieval and neo-vernacular features, is not truly historicist, and boasted the virtue of belonging to a set of architectural works that broke with what were viewed as excessively abstract Classical conventions. Thus was born what came to be called "functional" architecture, which came about and developed in the 19th century, amidst eclecticism, the modern being only a consequence and a perfection of it.

Thus, the house was created with great fidelity to a domestic programme, eloquently present in its plans, in which the different rooms are completely differentiated and specialised in accordance with their uses, arranged into two areas: the main one and that for the services, and on two floors, corresponding to the day and night. These features, thus, heralded the solutions and conventions that still characterise our houses today. The volume, very painteresque precisely because it is functionalist, is in an L-shape, in the garden forming a sort of open courtyard graced by a notable well.

Swan House

Architect: Norman Shaw; 17 Chelsea Embankment SW3, 1876.
Glebe Studios Architects: Shaw and others; Glebe Place, 1850.
Studio House Architect: A H Mackmurdo; 25 Cadogan Gardens SW1, 1893-94.

This section combines three varying examples from different times, but falling in the second half of the 19th century and corresponding to architectures of a "Victorian" nature. Thus, they are representative of many other stylistically similar buildings built in the city at this time, above all in the district of Chelsea, the Victorian quarter *par excellence,* where these works are located.

After such an extensive period of Classicism, European and Italian, British architecture sought its personality in a kind of historicism considered more its own, turning to the styles of the Elizabethan era and developing with them formal vocabularies of extreme imaginativeness and spectacular urban effects, which, to a large degree, came to provide the city with a distinctly Romantic aspect. The systematic use of brick, with the artisanal details which it allows, and large windows traced by white woodwork, are very general hallmarks of these styles.

The works indicated are representative of many more which, as already stated, the traveller will easily find on London's streets. In any case, those cited here are masterpieces embodying these trends, which came to characterise a massive London built with the wealth amassed by the British Empire.

St Pancras Station, 1866-68 and 1868-76

Architect: George Gilbert Scott (with W H Barlow and R M Ordish). Euston Road NW1.

This complex, the hotel and the station, is one of the most extreme examples of Victorian historicism. The hotel is particularly unique, designed by Gilbert Scott, the most important architect of this extravagant trend, with this building constituting one of its clearest examples. The station, more restrained, was designed by W H Barlow and R M Ordish. The complex features a complex and deft arrangement.

Gilbert Scott had also designed the building for the Foreign Office and the Albert Memorial. In the hotel he fully employed his proficiency at Gothic historicism, with its picturesque character, with results of high quality and of an extremely theatrical nature. A penchant for the incorporation of colour was satisfied on the outside by combining red brick, grey granite and the colour beige. Victorian historicism continues to have its sympathisers, of course, but cases like that of this building (and Gilbert Scott, in general) seem to us today as largely overstated and verging on what has come to be known as "pastiche".

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Photo at the top-right by Robert Cutts. CC BY-2.0. https://www.flickr.com/photos/panr/5977344571

Victoria and Albert Museum, 1856-1909

Architects: Captain Francis Fowke, Godfrey Sykes and others.
Cromwell Road SW7.

A building more important for the institution that it houses than for its eclectic architecture, this is one of those buildings designed by military engineers, which was the case with many of Queen Victoria and Prince Albert's foundations. Henry Cole, the director of this institution, promoted by Prince Albert, distrusted architects and preferred to assign plans for buildings to engineers and artists.

Very complex, and constructed over an extensive period of time, the building has also been radically refurbished. Other architects contributed to it, including Aston Webb (who designed the emphatic and complex façade, circa 1891), and even William Morris himself. Its complex and rich interiors can be viewed by those visiting the museum, more important for what they contain than the building housing them. However, it does exemplify very well both the virtues and excesses of Victorian architecture.

Henry Cole Building, 1863-73

Architect: Lt. General Scott.
Exhibition Road SW7.

Built for the School of Naval Architecture, and having housed a series of very different institutions, the building ended up forming part of the Victoria and Albert Museum. It was also designed by a military engineer, and presents the paradox that its highlight is its extraordinary and compositional façade facing the street, as if it had been impossible to elude the maniacal interests of architects, to whom the lieutenant general seems to pay dramatic homage here.

Ignoring the Gothic and primitive British historicisms typical of the era and their regal patrons, a bold, meticulous and attractive Classical façade was designed, though endowed with typically Victorian materials in its combination of red brick and stone. The design is unconventional: though extraordinarily care was taken with the quality and distinction of the sides, there is nothing that distinguishes the centre, which was designed as a seamless feature. The base level, with a large portico, and the crown, with a loggia, complete the sides, furnished with a pediment, yielding one of the most attractive façades of this era.

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Royal Albert Hall, 1867-71

Architects: Captain Francis Fowke and General H Y D Scott.
Kensington Gore SW7.

Also designed by military engineers and, very specifically, one of the main architects of the Victoria and Albert Museum, the Royal Albert Hall is one of the projects promoted by Prince Albert that typifies the era, with all of them to be found in this same area immediately south of Hyde Park and Kensington Garden. Its uniqueness lies primarily in its purpose, that of a major concert hall, but also of note are its round shape and its urban site, free-standing and across from the great park.

Its architecture is Classical and, as in the case of the Henry Cole Building, there is an effort to offset the deliberate omission of Victorian stylistic conventions through the use of the materials typical of the era: red brick and stone details. The building's urban volume is not as emphatic as it might have been, as an entrance portico was placed at each semiaxis of the floor plan. Nevertheless, though perhaps not intentional, its shape inevitably evokes the Pantheon, even inside.

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Natural History Museum, 1973-81

Architect: Alfred Waterhouse.
Cromwell Road SW7.

The designer of other awkwardly historicist buildings, the architect Alfred Waterhouse shared with George Gilbert Scott a predilection for the era's exaggerated historicism, perhaps offering an adequate and logical explanation for its repudiation by architects like Henry Cole, the first director the Victoria and Albert Museum, as previously indicated.

Be that as it may, here Waterhouse set about creating a work defined by the most extraordinary and emphatic Romanesque historicism, though with a very systematic layout, evidencing his academic background. The plan features an initial, extensive space offering a long section facing the street, observing the Classical convention of five elements: one central, two intermediate, and two lateral. The centre provides access and gives way to a main pavilion containing the most extraordinarily Romanesque interior to be found in the world. The design is rounded out by a system of pavilions parallel to this, forming an almost compact layout.

Mary Ward House, 1895-98

Architects: D Smith and C Brewer.
Tavistock Place WC1.

The architecture of the late 19th century, subsequent to the Victorian era, abandoned medieval historicism and primitive English Classicism, but not academic eclecticism. And, in some cases, like this one, it took freer and more attractive paths akin to Europe's Art Nouveau and, specifically, the work of the Scot Mackintosh, although some authors also relate this successful example to Charles Harrison Townsend and Norman Shaw.

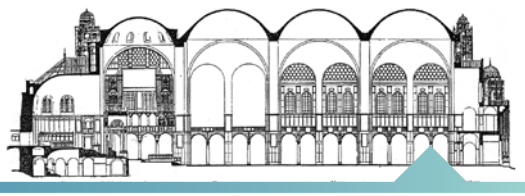
It is, in any case, a very refined and virtually unique work in the British capital. Some conventions of its language, such as its red brick walls, its woodwork and its white elements, proceed from the Victorian stage, but others are freer and more advanced, like the main composition on the street and the entrance's stone element. The building commenced, in any case, a new era, largely heralding the architecture of the 20th century, and doing so in a uniquely successful way. That is, definitely leaving behind the conventions of the Victorian era.

Whitechapel Art Gallery, 1897-99

Architect: Charles H Townsend.
Whitechapel Road E1.

The architecture at the close of the century, like that above, also featured a shedding of Victorian historicism, though it was also eclectic. This is certainly the most important work in London by the accomplished architect born in Birkenhead, constituting a more advanced and skilful example than the also very well-known Bishopsgate Institute (1892-1894) of an extreme and also very personal historicism. Some authors associate this example of the gallery with the great American architect H H Richardson, above all due to the building's asymmetrical façade, featuring emphatic medieval allusions, now devoid of conventional historicism, and also lacking the combinations of materials typically used during the Victorian period. This striking stone façade, of course, is the building's most important feature, with a starkly simple interior characterised only by the entrance of light from above.

Townsend was one of the British architects belonging to the British school of the major European Arts and Crafts movement, important for its impact on many countries and also for its influence on the evolution towards the modern architecture that would characterise the 20th century.



Westminster Catholic Cathedral, 1895-1903

Architect: John Francis Bentley.
Victoria Street SW1.

Probably the most attractive and the ultimate achievement of this final, eclectic stage of the 19th century is this: Westminster Catholic Cathedral, upon which construction came to an end in the 20th century. Neo-Byzantine and, to some extent, Neo-Romanesque, it exposed the city to formal elements to which it was unaccustomed but that were paradoxically Catholic. It was designed in these styles in a calculated effort to avoid a Gothic approach, so as not to compete with the relatively close Westminster Abbey.

This large church reflects the British tradition only in its very elongated floor plan, a solution almost always employed in order to produce a spacious temple without resorting to large transverse dimensions and the technical problems they entailed. The architect, a Catholic, exhibited a historicism alluding to Italy and southern Europe, but one which avoids purely Roman references, turning to an Italian interpretation of the Romanesque and Byzantine. In this way he drew upon the Middle Ages and furnished London with an architectural reference point detached from allusions to the old conflicts dating from the era of the Reformation.

Efforts to complete the ambitious temple's Byzantine interior decoration were never successful, but its rich urban volume did leave an important mark on the city, expanding its stylistic diversity.

Bedford Park, beginning in 1875

Architects: Norman Shaw, Maurice B Adams, E W Godwin, E J May and others. W4.

A "garden suburb" illustrative of a conception of urban spaces that would be very important to the British capital's development, remaining relevant well into the 20th century. Featuring a painteresque layout, it incorporated some non-domestic buildings, including a church exhibiting a refined and unique Gothic historicism, an inn, a bank, and a variety of single-family homes designed by very different architects. For a time it was partly inhabited by a colony of artists and bohemians.

The development includes notable works by CFA Voysey, an important architect of the era and the Arts and Crafts movement, of which there are few works in the capital. The two homes he built here were dubbed the "Studio Houses" (1889-94, 14 South Parade W4 and 1891, 17 St Dunstan's Road W6), of very different natures: one with three storeys and a compact volume, and the other with just one floor and a painteresque layout and volume.

To better appreciate the works of this architect one can also visit the small factory now called Voysey House (formerly Sandersons Wallpaper, 1902-1903, Barley Mow Passage W4), which is very original.

Hampstead Garden Suburb, 1906-1915

Architects: B Parker and R Uwin / E Lutyens, Baillie Scott and others. NW11.

This is London's most interesting and beautiful garden city, or garden suburb, built upon the initiative of the social reformer Henrietta Barnett and designed by the urban architects B Parker and Raymond Unwin, the latter a theorist and follower of Ebenezer Howard, the initiator of the concept of the garden city, who would continue working on this project until 1915. Broad and complex, consisting of single-family homes arranged in rows and clusters with shared gardens, it is of the highest quality, and attractive. Here we can find domestic designs by Edwin Lutyens (i.e. the houses of Erskine Hill, NW11, 1908-1910) or the very interesting work by M H Baillie Scott called Waterlow Court (Heath Close, off Hampstead Way NW11, 1908-1909). To theirs may be added works by Curtis Green, Guy Dawber and Geoffrey Lucas.

Edwin L Lutyens also designed the buildings that surround the large central green square, an impressive space surrounded by a grammar school marking its axis (Central Square, 1909-1920), and flanked by two churches: one Anglican, and another Unitarian, dedicated to all religions, in consonance with the founder's progressive ideology of social reformism, and in which urban architects also had a hand.

It can be said, in summary, that it is one of the most interesting, beautiful and attractive sites on the outskirts of London.

St Jude and Unitary Church, 1909-14

Architect: Edwin L Lutyens.
Central Square, Hampstead Garden Suburb NW11.

As explained above, Lutyens designed, commissioned by Unwin, the school and the two churches surrounding the green space at the Hampstead Garden Suburb's Central Square. The two churches' broader sides flank this square/park's great rectangular space, presided over by the school, which defines its central axis, marked by a large, wooded walkway. The two churches masterfully achieve this spatial definition, presented almost as twin structures; that is, very similar, but not identical. Sharing a common architectural language and some similar details, the churches differ, above all, in the great Gothic steeple arising from St Jude's crossing, in contrast to the dome of the Unitarian Church, somewhat smaller than the Anglican.

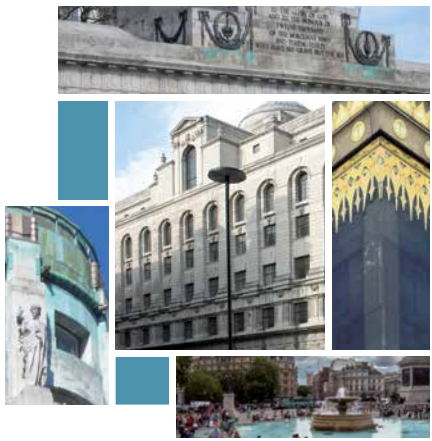
St Jude is more attractive and a greater achievement than the Unitarian temple outside and, above all, inside. The church's large external volume, with its Gothic spire towering over the crossing, produces one of the finest and most accomplished images in London's religious architecture, and represents a major contribution to the Central Square and the aesthetics of the neighbourhood in general. The volume is

characterised, above all, by the combination of its defining and steeply-sloping roof, and its Gothic tower, very adeptly combining Classicism and Gothicism. Its combination of materials, stone and two types of brick, is both fortunate and important for its external composition.

Inside, the Church of St Jude features a basilica design, with three naves and a crossing, a vaulted central nave, and lateral ones defined by an original wooden structure charged with resolving the large gaps, in the form of giant garrets, through which light enters the church. The fronts of the façades, identical at the two churches, are very well done and vividly illustrate Lutyens' skill as an architect, in this case extremely eclectic and occupying an intermediate position between his most Romantic works from the 19th century, and his fullest and late Classicism, in the 20th. This is probably Lutyens' greatest work in London.

Chapter Three

Late Classicism



The last stage of Romanticism became once again Classical, sometimes emulating American cities (New York and Chicago), which served as modern models for the English metropolis. The most truly British architecture of this era was that by Lutyens, who had produced prior work that was purely Romantic (as has already been seen), and that by his friends and disciples, all of them interested in maintaining a Classical London, which would run parallel to the modern city and endure up until World War II.

Selfridges Department Store, 1907-28

Architects: R F Atkinson, J Burnet and D Burnham.
Oxford Street W1.

This building's significance is twofold, as it represents London's first large department store (still operating) and one of the first instances in which the British capital would emulate the architecture found in America's cities, choosing them as a modern model after the Romantic ideals had been exhausted. Or, perhaps we might say that it constitutes the last Romantic model: that of late Classicism, diametrically opposed to medieval revivals and primitive English Classicism.

The American model was, very specifically, found in Chicago, though adapting the massive architectural dimensions of that city to the more moderate ones of London - though in this case neither the enormity or the monumentality are sacrificed at all. Chicago's influence is incontrovertible, as that city's great architect, Daniel Burnham, actually collaborated with London's RF Atkinson. The superb architect John Burnet, also from the capital city, served as supervisor on the project.

Worthy of note is the building's stark, well-executed and monumental façade, graced with massive Ionic columns, in addition to its interior, featuring a virtually "open plan", a trademark of Chicago's commercial buildings that anticipated the development of modern architecture.

Heal´s Building, 1916

Architects: Smith and Brewer.
196 Tottenham Court Road W1.

Among the many buildings that introduced their own twists on the well-known commercial architecture coming out of Chicago, adapting it to the lower heights and scale of the British capital, of particular note is this one, by the architects behind the Mary Ward House (No. 49 Tavistock Place), and who were linked to the Arts and Crafts movement. The architecture here is refined, as the façade's design clearly shows.

As in Chicago, these commercial buildings were defined by a design featuring a façade and main level enjoying great freedom, as their uses required, but in whose combination the architectural problem came to be resolved and exhausted. In this case the façade presents very refined features, akin to those of the European movements arising from Art Nouveau. While retaining the Classical principles of composition, the strict language of forms and details is new, and the sections between the large columns might be called "curtain walls".

Vigo House (Westmorland House), 1920-25

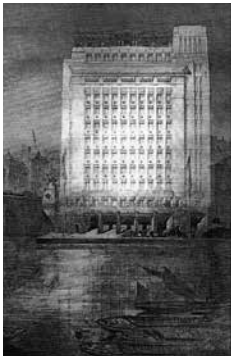
Architects: John Burnet and Thomas Tait.
117-27 Regent Street W1.

A product of the remodelling of the important shopping artery of Regent Street, designed at the time as part of John Nash's great restoration project (see No. 20), in this building by the talented team of Burnet and Tait the American model was abandoned and instead a Parisian manner was embraced, with this urban model's most academic approach.

Characterised by a façade that occupies the entire block and is presented as completely symmetrical, the building splendidly fulfils the urban role that the location requires, while its late academicism was both greatly simplified and contaminated by more modern languages. These elements exhibit, above all, the style that would be called "Art Deco" after the Great Decorative Arts Exhibition in Paris in 1925 - although this work immediately predates the consecration of this style at that event. Burnet's team, initiated in this stage of late Classicism, would go on to create more moderate works in line with the trends defining modern architecture.

Adelaide House, 1924-25

Architects: John Burnet and Thomas Tait.
King William Street EC3.

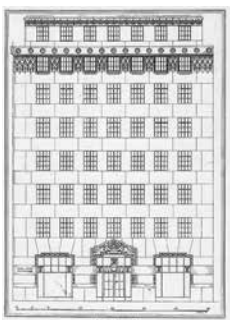


Another building by the important team of Burnet and Tait, constructed at almost the same time as the preceding work on Regent Street, and in which the architectural model found in American cities reappeared, this time without making a specific reference to any of them.

Boasting a very important urban presence, next to London Bridge and the riverbank, the building's great but compact volume is carried out in a Classical way, but this time adding imaginative elements evoking Egypt, exhibiting both its creators' eclecticism and their abilities. As an office building it features an interior that is systematic, functional and with an open layout. This is why the architectural accent was placed completely on the definition of its remarkable external volume, through the employment of the aforementioned compact composition, with the great formal success of the urban image it projects, as can be observed there today.

Palladium House, 1928

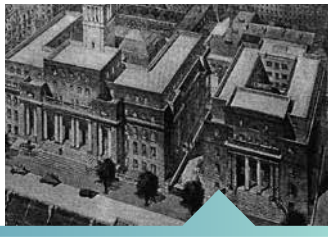
Architects: Raymond Hood and Gordon Jeeves.
Great Marlborough Street and Argyll Street W1.



An extremely curious and attractive building, whose American character, despite its small size, can be clearly understood in light of the personality of its designer, Raymond Hood, the man behind major skyscrapers in the United States and the head of the team that designed Rockefeller Center in New York. Collaborating with him was Gordon Jeeves, the London architect who seems to have been notably influenced by the American approach, as evidenced by some of his other works.

The very compact and simple building, with stark façades featuring almost nothing but windows, stood out, however, for its use of black stone and its elaborate and decorative cornice, with whimsical golden adornments directly related to the *Art-Deco* style.

Notwithstanding this, the building was thoroughly adapted to its location and the height and volume parameters of the British capital, contributing with a small but exquisite work to the city of London's American guise.



Marylebone Town Hall and Library, 1914 to 1921 and 1939

Architect: Edwin Cooper.
Marylebone Road NW1.

With these works by Cooper, the designer of other official buildings in the city, we enter the late Classical stage of London architecture, marking the early decades of the 20th century, which aspired to produce its own academic model that would inform the capital's on-going development. This was an attempt which found its most important base and model in the stellar quality of the works of Edwin Lutyens, late Classicism's only truly great architect.

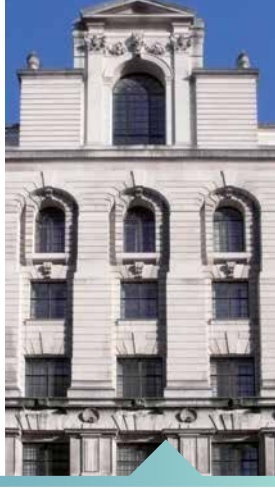
Along with their institutional status, and the contiguity of the two elements (Town Hall and Library), the importance of the street was drawn upon to spotlight the volumes and character of the buildings, which feature an opportunely moderate scale in their language, distancing them from the conventionality and immoderation of other works by the architect. The Town Hall's tower seems to allude to the churches by Wren, in this way employing a reinforcement of the local tradition, whose inspiration in the conventions of the 17th and 18th centuries was completely logical. In London Cooper designed other important works for the banking and public sectors.

Britannic House, 1924-27

Architect: Edwin L Lutyens.
Moorgate and Finsbury Circus EC2.

Undoubtedly Lutyens' most important and outstanding administrative building in London, his Britannic House enhances its urban location in the most extraordinary way, both on the straight and conventional stretch of Moorgate Street and with the circular courtyard behind the construction, where Lutyens' design proves especially attractive.

As an administrative building its architecture's most important feature is its exterior, featuring seven stories and a penthouse level. Its composition, employing stone and its designer's capacity for detail, features a double base and an upper body, more emphatic in its curved section. This was achieved through the use of its giant Corinthian orders, which are duplicated, framing conventional windows, on one side, and large arched windows on the other. Its entrance features a kind of portal at the level of the double base. The result, thus, is purely compositional, formal and scenographic, but really can only be described as extraordinary.



Midland Bank Head Office, 1924-39

Architect: E L Lutyens.
Poultry and Princes Street EC3.

After his magnificent Britannic House, this is probably Lutyens' most important and successful creation in the field of corporate buildings and offices in London. It is an outstanding work reflecting the major effort to revamp London's financial centre during the first third of the century, evidencing the effort to enrich this vital part of the city without altering its time-worn, obsolete street layout, inherited from the Middle Ages. As always in Lutyens, the study of Classical architectural vocabulary, and the compositions and volumes that can be achieved through it, is combined with an unconventional mentality, yielding an urban product of the utmost quality.

Worth noting also is that this is one of the few office administrative buildings that Lutyens designed on his own at this earlier time; except for Pall Mall (No. 53) his London works after this consisted of projects carried out in collaboration with major firms of architects, on which he handled only the buildings' external aesthetics, necessarily traditional, in some specific locations.

Building in Pall Mall, 1929

Architect: E L Lutyens (with W H Romaine-Walker and Jenkins).
67-68 Pall Mall SW1.

A mixed-use building, for a bank on its base floors and housing on the others, it is located in an attractive square at the head of Pall Mall, near St James. As already mentioned in reference to the Midland Bank (No. 52), this was this one of the few occasions on which Lutyens designed the entire building.

The ideal corner lot on this important street was taken advantage of to create this building, standing out for its unique and unitary façade facing the square, where Lutyens shines, as always, in his skilful use of Classical composition and its strict language, as well as the singular character with which he is able to infuse the building. Perhaps the formal moderation that defines this work, much more conventional than what was common in his work, was due to his respect for the important and attractive neighbourhood in which it is located. However, careful observation reveals how refined and its approach and language really are.

Grosvenor House Hotel and C&A Department Store, 1926-28 and 1931-33

Architect: E L Lutyens with Wimperis and partners and Messrs Joseph. Park Lane and 200 Oxford Street W1.

The first is probably the most important and representative building of a series of collaborative projects Lutyens undertook with large architectural firms, in which he was called in to take charge of the façades for a design whose layout and sections were already organised, with a view to it being approved by the municipal authorities, who requested traditional architecture for new buildings to be constructed in premier and protected districts in the city centre. The work once again exhibits Lutyens' great skill and his capacity to respect what was destined to become an outmoded style.

An emblematic illustration of that explained with regards to the previous building, in this second example Lutyens was also limited to designing the façade for a volume previously determined by his colleagues and subordinates, who fulfilled the need for a traditional, dignified building on Oxford Street - a precedent that should have been more widely imitated in the area, but unfortunately was not, as it has been marred by several recent eyesores. Here we can observe how Lutyens, concerned about the integration of such a large volume, used traditional dark brick and Georgian windows.

Mercantile Marine Memorial, 1922

Architect: E L Lutyens.
Trinity Square EC3.

One of London's examples of Lutyens' broad and prominent dedication to patriotic and war memorials, representative of how in the first decades of the century Classicism was increasingly reserved for tangential and specialised works.

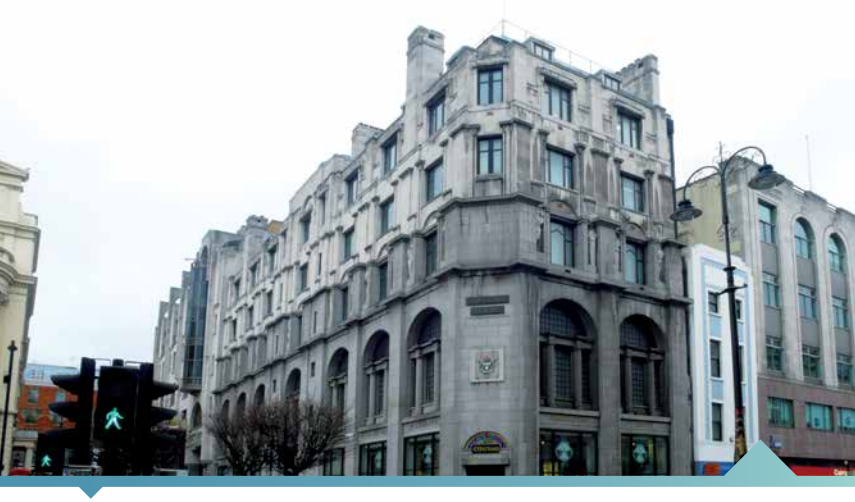
In London one also finds Lutyens' "Cenotaph" in the governmental district of Whitehall. This is a very small urban monument located in the centre of said street, in honour of those who perished in World War I. We can find another one in Leicester, in the university area, which takes the form of a triumphal arch, and many more in Europe, especially in France, and at cemeteries paying tribute to the fallen in that War. They are usually of the highest quality, though it may be said that this one in London, and the Merchant Navy monument (Tower Hill), are particularly outstanding. But, at the same time, they illustrate how Classicism came to be confined to stately works of a commemorative and monumental nature.

Pools and Fountains, 1939

Architect: E L Lutyens.
Trafalgar Square WC2.

Lutyens' only project for the enhancement of an urban space and its elements in London, as his intelligent and attractive plans to make over Hyde Park Corner were never implemented. It is true that with this observation we might be accused of overlooking the centre of the Hampstead Garden Suburb, as previously discussed, but there the buildings eclipse the elements of urban design *per se*.

The set of fountains and pools, presenting a very refined layout, judiciously enhances the very difficult Trafalgar Square and demonstrates, yet again, the architect's brilliance, Britain's champion of late Classicism. Worthy of mention is that the square was recently refurbished, especially its upper part (that facing the National Gallery) by the contemporary architect Norman Foster.



British Medical Association, 1907-08

Architect: Charles Holden.
429 Strand WC2.

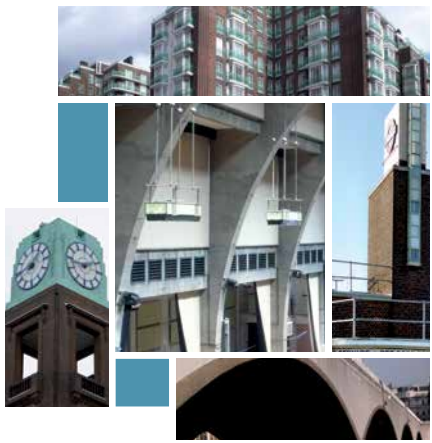
The building of the British Medical Association (then Rhodesia House and today Zimbabwe House) was probably Charles Holden's finest Classical building during his early stage as a partner of H Percy Adams, although not to be overlooked is his Law Society Library (Chancery Lane and Carey Street, 1902), featuring similar characteristics, but not as original.

Holden's body of work, though characterised much more by his later buildings, exhibiting a moderate and, in part, even academic modernity, also stands out for these youthful creations, almost the only truly outstanding examples of late London Classicism, save for the work of Lutyens. Holden was also, like Lutyens, responsible for designing a number of World War I memorials, built mainly in France.

With regards to the building in question, of special note is Holden's admiration for Nicholas Hawksmoor and the influence he had on him, not only here but in some of his other works, even at a time when Hawksmoor's work was not held in high regard.

Chapter Four

Pre-War Modern



The work of architects like Holden, Burnet and Giles Gilbert Scott dominated the first modern stage, of a moderate nature, developed during the interwar period. The works of these three figures furnished this first modern phase of the British capital with great interest and appeal, with buildings like the metropolitan railway stations (by Holden), and the city's famed telephone booths (by Scott) as the city's major modern trademarks, symbolising this period. This moderate modern version existed alongside some more extreme avant-garde works, which were rare, but of high quality and attractive.

Balham Station, 1925

Architect: Charles Holden.
Northern Line.

The first and a very representative example of the initial series of stations that Holden designed for the London Underground. Here, and with his other subway projects, he was able to leave a major mark on modern London, endowing the city with one of its first modern "disguises" or elements. Many of the stations south of the Northern Line (Collier's Wood, Tooting Bec, Tooting Broadway, and others, all from 1925 and 1926) belong to this first series, of a heterodox Classicism and Art-Deco, characterised by a volume covered in white stone, a large canopy, and an interior space presided over by heterodox white Classical columns.

The stations thus became small public buildings furnishing London's suburbs with character. Some of the stations consist of several different halls that, while not identical, are stylistically akin and interrelated. There were several series, as is clear in the following sections, characterising the various stages in different ways, but without losing their nature.

Acton Town Station, 1932

Architect: Charles Holden.
Piccadilly Line.

A very representative example of the second series of subway stations designed by Holden (1931 and 32), as he continued to dress up the British capital with modern elements through small public buildings providing access to and representing the underground railway network. The formal constants were those of a main volume of exposed brick and a major reinforced concrete cantilevered cornice, on a base featuring canopies or porches providing access to the station.

The Arnos Grove Station, also on the Piccadilly Line, constitutes an example of this type of construction, but is set apart by the attractive cylindrical volume that characterises it. It may also be noted that in this case, as in all the others, great care was taken with the interiors, which are as austere and refined as the external volumes, and that Holden's designs encompassed everything, including the platforms and their canopies and complementary elements. Also forming part of this series were the stations of Bounds Green, Northfields, East Cote and Rayners Lane.

Boston Manor Station, 1933

Architect: Charles Holden.
Piccadilly Line.

A station representative of a final series (1931-38) of operations of a much more unique character, though always characterised by formal elements and materials, and the emblem identifying them as subway stations and, as such, public buildings. The Boston Manor Station is characterised, in particular, by the presence of a tower, replacing the high interior ceilings employed in all the other cases, and with which a modern language, between tradition and modernity, gave way to a somewhat fuller embrace of European modernity.

The other unique stations include Southgate (1931-1932), accompanied by an ancillary building with which it establishes an interesting dialogue; Wood Green (1931-1932), Uxbridge (1935-1938) and East Finchley (1935-1938), all of them constituting genuinely unique public buildings. That of Cockfosters is reduced to a small and elegant single-level pavilion, a virtually unique characteristic amongst this class of constructions.

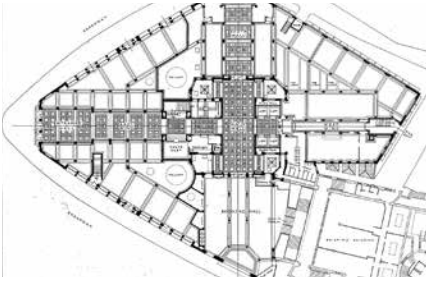
Broadway House, 1927-29

Architect: Charles Holden.
55 Broadway SW1.

The central building of the metropolitan railway company that commissioned the aforementioned stations. Assigned to the architectural studio of Percy Adams and Holden, the latter was truly the designer in this case.

Featuring a cruciform layout, a solution to deal with what promised to be a difficult project, to be carried out on a large diamond-shaped lot, the building's base houses a large shopping and access lobby leading to one of the subway stations. Holden designed here a towering building, aspiring to "disguise" or depict London like an American metropolis, specifically New York. We can consider this important ambition to transform the image of the great British capital as an intention pervading this great architect's last work.

Along with its staggered volumes, its concrete architecture, somewhere between academic and modern, constitutes an emulation of New York and with it, Art-Deco language, expressed in both its details and decorative sculpture.



Senate House, University College London, 1932 and following

Architect: Charles Holden.
Malet Street and Montague Place WC1.

Directly related to the architect's intentions in the building he designed for the urban railway company (No. 61), this important commission to establish, in a modern way, the University College London in the district of Bloomsbury repeats and reinforces Holden's determination to infuse London with the character of an American city, specifically to endow it with a New York "disguise" capable of transforming it into a modern metropolis.

As with his metropolitan railway building, this work's concrete architecture is also defined by its eclectic approach, both Academic and Modern, and the use of Art-Deco language, in this case in a more refined manner. The comparison with New York here is even more inevitable, due to the horizontal stacking of spaces serving many different purposes, such as the offices of the university's vice-chancellor, and a large library. The building is also notable for its prominent urban presence and its refined interiors, such as its main lobbies and vestibules, and those of the aforementioned library. The building's construction was interrupted by World War II before it was completed.

Daily Telegraph Building, 1928

Architects: Elcock, Sutcliffe and Tait.
135 Fleet Street EC4.

A unique building highly representative of the architectural problems typical of the era - as it retains the urban and compositional features characteristic of eclectic and Classical architecture, even with the use of a prominent colonnade - but which it resolves with a relatively modernised language.

The intense tribute to conventional ways rendered through the building's pronounced Classical colonnade seems to be counterbalanced by the extreme intensity with which it employs Art Deco language, gracing the entire façade, though doing so with high quality and in a particularly forceful way. Its complex stone details are very elaborate and refined, and it might be said that they are responsible for the building's uniqueness and its quality.

Worthy of special note here is the presence of the architect Thomas S Tait, who worked with John Burnet on a very important series of works.

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Mount Royal Hotel, 1932-33

Architects: Burnet, Tait and Lorne.
Oxford Street and Bryanston Street W1.

The integration of an urban volume with traditional characteristics and a modern language ties the building to the one preceding, although its specific architecture separates it completely. Said integration is particularly fortunate in this case, also accentuated by the prominent urban position it occupies on Oxford Street, very close to Marble Arch, and its massive size, as it occupies an entire city block.

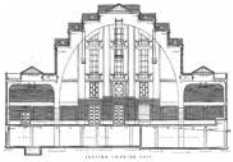
TYPICAL TWO-ROOM FLAT LAY-OUT

Evident in this case is the great quality of the team of architects, headed up by Burnet, and including Tait, who had contributed to the Daily Telegraph Building (No. 63). This project marked the commencement of their modern designs, after an eclectic stage, although it seems that in this case the plans were drawn up mainly by Lorne, the group's third member.

Worthy of note is the influence of the position adopted by the great German Expressionist architect Erich Mendelsohn with regards to urban buildings, which had an important impact on the entire Western world, and, specifically on London. This consisted primarily of enriching the practice of Rationalism with elements borrowed from Expressionist language.

Royal Horticultural Society, 1923-28

Architects: Easton and Robertson.
Vincent Square SW1.



A building featuring a very moderate and genteel urban volume facing Vincent Square, typical of the era, with an interior that houses, as a great surprise, a large hall, forming a centrepiece of the construction.

The main space constitutes one of the most spectacular and attractive interiors of this era. Its design is lineal and continuous, with an almost ecclesiastical flavour and character, made up of a succession of reinforced concrete parabolic arches, exploiting the formal freedom that this material, still considered novel, afforded designers. The space is illuminated from above in an able and professional manner with a split-level roof.

Except for the great uniqueness of this high-profile space, the remainder of the building represents a work of modern architecture made compatible with traditional resources. It could even be said that this space, though unique, is incorporated into and forms part of a spatial idea that, as noted, is proximate to tradition. In any case, what matters most is its great quality and attractiveness.

Residential neighbourhood in Pimlico, 1928-30

Architect: E L Lutyens.
Page Street and Vincent Street SW1.

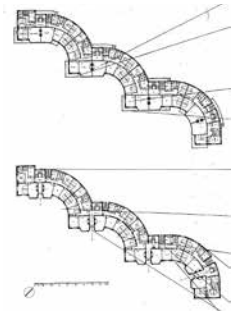
A series of public housing units, of considerable size, designed for London County Council by Lutyens. Perhaps the social nature of these buildings was what spurred the great Classical architect, albeit reluctantly, to make his own contributions to modern architecture. The complex consists of a series of housing blocks in a U-shape, with corridors and an open courtyard providing access.

But the most unique aspect of this attractive and outstanding set of constructions are their figurative exterior features. In a very emphatic and effective way, the façades' simple composition, employing Georgian windows (i.e., vertical, but short, as are generally found on vertical houses forming squares), is enriched by a very important decision on the building's brown brick walls: a checker pattern, with the windowpanes and diagonally-staggered rectangular blocks in white. This idea, as arbitrary as it was brilliant, distinguishes the work and lends it a very modern look, to which Lutyens provided contrasts through the employment of other details.

Cholmeley Lodge, 1934

Architect: G Morgan.
Cholmeley Lane and Highgate Hill N6.

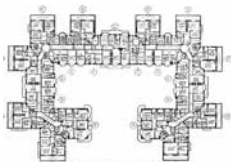
This unique and outstanding group of houses appears here as one of a whole series of representative examples that could be cited of London's many residential buildings of the era, characterised by the use of brick and white woodwork, these being hallmarks of the period's architecture and constituting an alternative, with a tone both modern and traditional at the same time, in opposition to the most extreme rationalist approaches advanced by the Central European avant-garde.



As for their layouts, in this case there is juxtaposition of linear blocks, but with their plans forming a half C-shape, with limited curvature, and of an independent nature. Three of these possible elements came together in the configuration of a single residential building. Their concave, repeated forms make up the south façade, which is highly expressive, with its terraces and balconies, and convexities facing north. The attractive interplay of the volumes configured in this way is rounded out by the auspicious and rich design of its domestic elements, boasting quality as evident as it is effective.

Dorset House, 1935

Architect: Bennett and Emberton.
Gloucester Place and Marylebone Road NW1.



Another of the housing complexes of the type abovementioned (No. 67), so abundant in London's residential architecture from this period. In this case the building is of a highly urban nature, located on an important corner of the city centre, both compact and open in the formation of its complex and attractive volume. The building consists of a base and high-rise blocks featuring a continuous appearance, somewhat mitigated by the inclusion of lineal and wrap-around balconies, in addition to a stair-like formation at the top, with multiple penthouse apartments boasting balconies.

The quality of the concrete composition employed to project this notable and significant work's urban image is very high, both in general and in its particulars. Noteworthy is the refinement achieved in the balconies gracing its façades, as well as the design of its remaining domestic elements, which greatly enhance the work.

Dolphin Square, 1937

Architect: G Jeeves.
Grosvenor Road SW1.

A massive yet attractive residential complex stretching for an entire block and covering more than 100 x 200 m., arranged around a large inner square featuring a statue of dolphins, reflected in its name. The apartments, numbering more than 1,200, feature small layouts, distributed facing the courtyard or the street by means of internal corridors, their designs taking advantage of the non-linear floor plans made possible by volumes protruding into the side streets and the courtyard. The complex includes its own large garage and sports facilities. It is the only residential work in the city that, while suggesting a desire to remain faithful to the London tradition, with its interior square, features a design and, above all, a scale consonant with the idea of making London over in the American image.

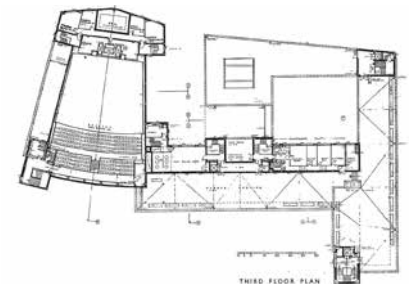
Supporting this interpretation, it should be noted that its architect, Gordon Jeeves, worked in collaboration with the American Raymond Hood (head of the team behind the Rockefeller Center) on the Palladium House (No. 49), also exhibiting a decidedly American tone, despite its size. Perhaps the work's most notable feature is its large courtyard, a genuine private paradise, which can be visited. With large-scale (10-storey) buildings stretching over it, it appears as a domesticated achievement. Stylistically speaking, the building also belongs to the extensive series of London architectural works from this period featuring brick and white woodwork, as previously mentioned in multiple sections.

Greenwich Town Hall, 1939

Architects: E C Culpin and Bowers.
Greenwich High Road and Royal Hill SE.

One of the town hall buildings built for jurisdictions making up the greater London area, in this case representative of a less British class of architecture than those preceding, and directly akin to other European architectures, such as the Dutch, more specifically here to the works of the great Willem Marinus Dudok. This work exhibits a relatively moderate approach and, as such, is not truly representative of the most avant-garde constructions.

The building is dominated by a large tower at one corner, proclaiming its status as a municipal institution for the area in which it is located. The town hall's layout ably articulates the very different volumes of which it is composed, thereby effectively serving both the complex of which it forms part, its urban emplacement, and the character considered necessary for it to project an image as an official and representative building. Of special note in its interior is the refined design of its details and the presence of an interesting and spacious Municipal Auditorium.



Ibex House, 1937

Architects: Fuller, Hall and Foulsham.
42 Minories EC.

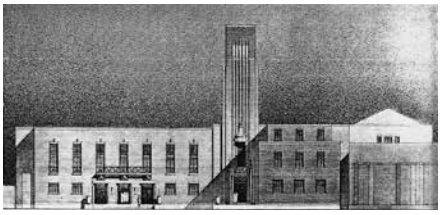
This is another modern work, but this time an office building, and embodying an architectural trend quite different from those preceding. In this case a relatively eclectic approach was taken, in the sense that it incorporates both elements of moderate and rationalist Expressionism, as promoted by the German Mendelsohn, with additional features, like its continuous windows, traceable to the architecture and principles of Le Corbusier. As previously indicated, the German Expressionist Erich Mendelsohn had produced architecture combining Expressionist and Rationalist features, with this auspicious fusion soon being broadly mimicked in the western world. In the present case we can even identify certain totally intentional vestiges of Academicism, such as its symmetry, employed by both Mendelsohn and Le Corbusier. In any case, the combination is very propitious, yielding an attractive and refined urban volume.

Hornsey Town Hall, 1934-35

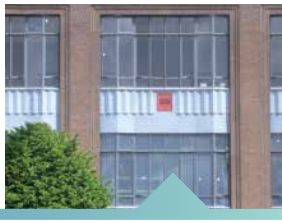
Architect: R H Uren.
The Broadway, Crouch End N8.

Another of the administrative buildings constructed for areas today having been incorporated into Greater London, built during its time as the Hornsey Town Hall. Like its equivalent in Greenwich, it owes something to Dutch architecture, and even to the works of Dudok. But in this case there are elements that are more personal and reflect a commitment to compositional criteria that are still academic, although served by languages that we must consider fully modern, as they are devoid of historical vestiges.

Thus, the general façade of the building constitutes a composition capable of adequately completing the small square where it is located, to this end drawing upon Expressionist elements, served by still-Classical elements. The tower is located at the corner of the complex's concave, L-shaped arrangement, housing the entrance at its base and intended to serve the construction's role as an official building. But its positioning prevents literal academic references, as it is situated at the end of the front façade, thereby introducing an asymmetrical composition. This is an outstanding work, both for the features described and the refinement of its details.





Gillette Factory, 1936

Architect: Sir Banister Fletcher.
Syon Lane W5.

A building related to some aforementioned in its link to Dutch architecture, although somewhat more academic in the exaggerated monumentality of its tower, hardly to be expected of a factory building, and the large apertures in its horizontal volume. That is, it represents a factory building approached in a way very similar to the town hall buildings previously discussed, thereby producing a certain distortion of its character. Here we have a factory taking the form of a town hall, with this decision lacking any other explanation than to furnish its peripheral location with a degree of formality.

Its quality and refinement, nevertheless, are remarkable. Also worthy of mention in this case is its renowned and esteemed designer, a British professor who became famous in many parts of the world for having written the prestigious *A History of Architecture on the Comparative Method*, a work as novel as it was systematic. This book, translated into many languages and published in several countries, was a textbook in many Architecture schools in the western world through the 1950s.

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Homes at Highpoint 1 and 2, 1936 and 1938

Architects: Lutbenkin and the Tecton Group.
North Hill N7.

With these two different and adjacent buildings we begin our examination of London's modern architecture, which marked a radical shift , specifically through its introduction of the ideas implicit in the theory and work of Le Corbusier. With them begins the trend towards a thorough Rationalism, or Cubism, characterised by pure and abstract geometry and the continuous use of the colour white. Both these two buildings, in addition to these architects' (not British but based in London) entire bodies of work have been consistently considered by critics and historians to be the most important manifestations of Modern British architecture, due to their radical and contemporary approaches, completely opposed to the works of the late academics, represented by Lutyens, whose hegemony was intentionally challenged in an attempt to overthrow it through these works.

As evidence of an approach both unconventional and radical, noteworthy is the presence of the caryatids of the Erechtheion, sustaining an awning that must be viewed as an ironic touch, but also as a manifestation of, along with a radical Rationalism, a sort of new Classicism. The internal distribution of the dwellings and their spaces must be described as functionalist, unconventional and ground-breaking, as are their exterior aesthetics.

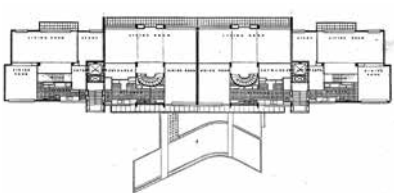
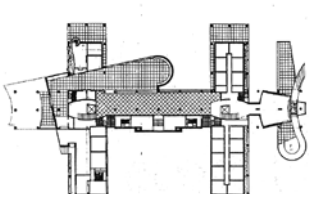
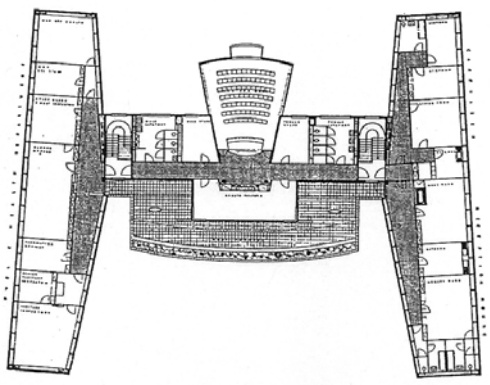



Photo at the top-right by SilvaBarral. CC0 1.0.
https://es.wikipedia.org/wiki/Highpoint_apartments#/media/File:Highpoint_I_1.jpg

Finsbury Health Centre, 1938

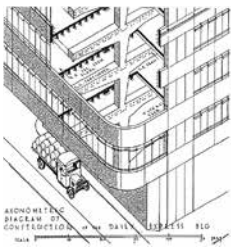
Architects: Lutbenkin and the Tecton Group.
Pine Street EC1.

Another work from the same period and team that designed the aforementioned homes. This time the building in question is a medical centre, a facility with a specific function that lent itself, like the homes above, to the employment of modern architecture. The trend here, however, is somewhat more moderate, both in its specific stylistic features and a volume that is still quite academic, as it is conceived as symmetrical and placed at the service of the conception of the outdoor urban space. It should be understood that some academic (or Beaux Arts) criteria were not considered contrary, but rather akin to modern Rationalist architecture.



Daily Express, 1932

Architects: O Williams with E Clarke and R Atkinson.
Fleet Street EC4.



In collaboration with Berthold Lutbenkin and the Tecton Group, the engineer Owen Williams, a specialist in reinforced concrete structures, but also a designer, has been considered one of the UK's finest modern architects, particularly in London, with this building (designed alongside the architects Ellis Clarke and Ronald Atkinson) considered one of his greatest works, if not his ultimate masterpiece. Small in size and featuring remarkable formal refinement, it was built to serve as a newspaper headquarters. Its modern radicalness exists in harmony with the buildings proximate to it, nearly all of them traditional, in a very important section of central London, very close to St Paul's Cathedral.

It is true that figuratively it is extremely radical, but volumetrically it is moderate and restrained. The building is constructed entirely with a glass curtain wall, black but transparent, concealing its concrete structure and following the normal urban alignments at its site, wrapping around the corner with an elegant curvature, and complying with height regulations by pulling the volume back and rendering it more expressive. This is a real gem that must be understood and enjoyed as such.

Wembley Arena (Formerly the Empire Swimming Pool), 1934

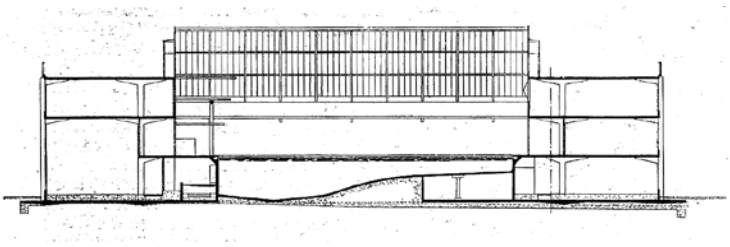
Architect: O Williams.
Empire Way, Wembley HA9.

A former indoor pool, unfortunately completely refitted inside for conversion into a multi-purpose space for activities such as concerts. It would be a great masterpiece by the much-admired engineer Owen Williams, perhaps the best in London, if it were not for the drastic change that gutted its attractive and spectacular space, as can be appreciated in some photos from the era. Nevertheless, both the large external volume, which survives with few changes, and some internal access spaces that still retain their original configuration, testify to the expressiveness of its reinforced concrete structure, plastically very bright, and that truly seems the work of an architect, even though it is that of an engineer who gradually came to realise the impossibility of achieving objectivity and pure logic in his buildings. The structure greatly enhances the external volume, furnishing it with a character befitting a public building.

Pioneer Health Centre, 1934-36

Architect: O Williams.
St Mary´s Road SE15.

Another work by Owen Williams, also greatly transformed, as it was converted from a gymnasium into a series of apartments, today only conserving its external appearance. The concrete structure we can see today was one of its most important architectural elements, as it was identical in both directions of the layout, following square modules. In this way horizontal "isotropy" was achieved with respect to the structure, which was one of the greatest obsessions of the great German architect Ludwig Mies van der Rohe - although he did so using steel structures, and somewhat belatedly, such that we cannot suggest that there was any direct influence. Of note is the absence of pillars at its corners, a very important detail common to many of van der Rohe's works, and the unique handling of its extreme plastic elements, evidencing the mastery achieved by Williams in its architectural design.



Telephone Box, 1924

Architect: Giles G Scott.

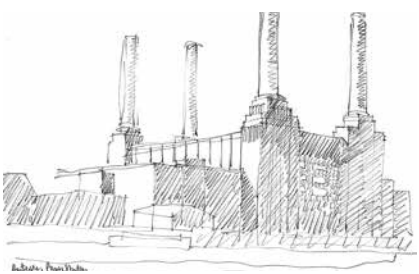
Located throughout the city of London, Britain's famous telephone booths were designed by the architect Giles Gilbert Scott, who won the tender for them in 1924. Their roofs feature a groined arch design, inspired by the tomb that John Soane designed for himself in London, as Soane frequently employed this geometric pattern. As a very young man Giles Gilbert Scott had won the design competition for Liverpool Cathedral, upon which he worked for many years. Both his design of this celebrated booth, and other works, made him one of the architects who shaped the capital's modern character. As proof of this it suffices to recall that he was the consulting architect, and, to a large measure the designer, of the Battersea Power Station (from 1929 to 1935, with its four chimneys) and the Bankside Power Station, converted into the Tate Modern Museum.

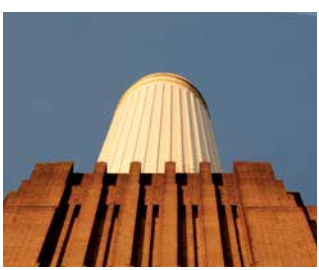
Battersea Power Station, 1929-31-55

Architect: Giles G Scott.
Queenstown Road and Battersea Park Road SW8.

Giles Gilbert Scott was the consulting architect for the engineer S L Pearce, theoretically charged with designing this power plant, but it was the former who was actually responsible for the plant's iconic image, which left its mark on 1930s London, its monumental presence dominated by four towering, column-like chimneys. It was Scott's talent that proved capable of converting a power plant into a kind of secular cathedral whose design became a symbol of the capital city. His talent was also placed on display in his designs for Britain's phone booths, Waterloo Bridge, and also that for another facility of this type: Bankside Power Station (now Tate Modern), constructed after World War II). S L Pearce was accompanied by fellow engineer H N Allot, and Scott also collaborated with the architect J Theo Halliday.

Unfortunately, plans have been announced to convert the abandoned plant into housing, which does not bode well for the future of this genuine gem of London's architectural heritage.





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Author's drawing at the bottom-left.

Waterloo Bridge, 1939-45

Architect: Giles G Scott.
WC2 and SE1.

Built over the course of the Second World War, and formally spanning the periods before and after the great conflict, the refined Waterloo Bridge displays the talent of Giles Gilbert Scott, who would prove vital to the conformation of London, the architect's contributions including his designs for its telephone booths, and two former power plants: the Battersea Power Station (with its signature four chimneys) and the Bankside Power Station, today the Tate Modern Museum. The bridge is particularly important due to its specific location, one of the few where the capital was able to render both sides of the River Thames truly central and metropolitan. This was an important achievement to which the bridge contributed, later bolstered by the presence of the Royal Festival Hall (by Leslie Martin and others) and the National Theatre (by Denys Lasdun).

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Chapter Five

The Modern, Post-War Period

After World War II, with the city struggling through a difficult period of recovery and reconstruction, Classical architecture completely disappeared from the city, and avant-garde architecture receded, as London underwent a brilliant stage of modern and professional consolidation, but in a relatively moderate way and largely embracing both the Western world's hegemonic "International Style" and a certain revision of it that traced its inspiration to the work of some admired Nordic architects.

An acute crisis occurred in the 1970s, parallel to those in other Western countries, which narrowed the British architectural spectrum, as architecture came to be divided into two archetypal extremes: High Tech and Post-modern, archetypes that would dominate the architectural scene in London, determining its patterns until the end of the century.

Bevin Court Building, 1946-54

Architects: Berthold Lubetkin and the Tecton Group.
Holford Place and Pentoville Road N1.

A triangular apartment block with a central staircase, designed by the Tecton Group after World War II in a style that was noticeably and propitiously consistent with its previous work, also carried out with Lubetkin. These buildings have been considered as hallmarks of the radical British vanguard designs developed during the interwar period. Also worthy of mention is the work known as the Priory Green Estate (1938 - 1952, at Collier Street N1), by the same architects, a sizeable residential complex consisting of several blocks. These examples, along with those from the interwar period, represent the limited acceptance of strictly modern architecture taking a "Functionalist" approach, later to be designated the "International Style", followed by very few other architects, such as Erno Goldfinger and Owen Williams.

Bankside Power Station, 1956-59

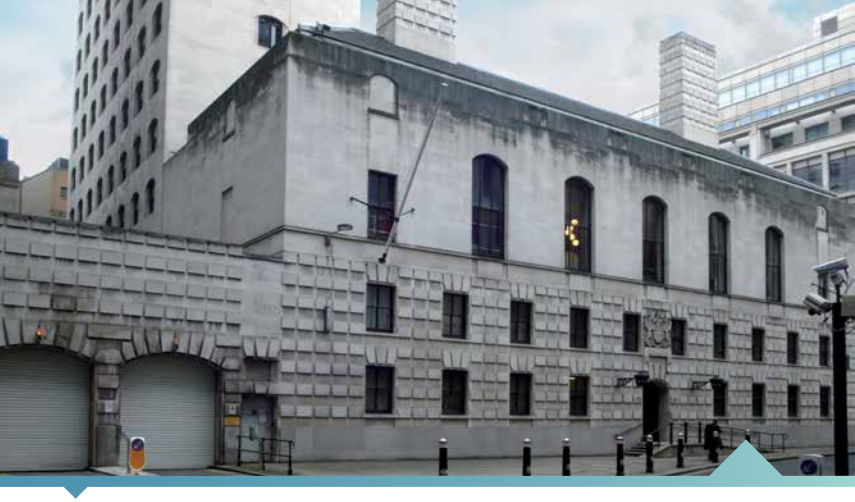
Architect: Giles G Scott.
Bankside SE1.

The second work by the great architect Giles Gilbert Scott, who was crucial to shaping the British capital's modern character. Located just across the river from St Paul's Cathedral, Edward Jones and Christopher Woodward (authors of the outstanding guide *The Architecture of London*) indicate that, as a counterpoint to the Battersea Power Station, which constituted a sort of secular cathedral, Scott designed this new station as a kind of City Hall. Its great quality was recognised when it was preserved and converted into the Tate Modern Museum, after a major and successful refurbishment project carried out by the Swiss architects Jacques Herzog and Pierre de Meuron. Of note is the plant's retro design, more typical of the 30s than its own era, and the great importance in this case of its central urban location. Here Scott was a collaborator with the engineers Mott, Hay & Andersen. When the Tate Modern was transformed it was connected to the other side of the river, to the financial district, by a footbridge designed by Norman Foster.

Lloyds Bank and British Aerospace, 1956-58

Architects: D McMorran and D Armstrong Smith.
100 Pall Mall SW1.

In this first work by Donald McMorran (in this case in collaboration with Armstrong Smith) the architect proved capable of designing a building for the centre of the city in a modern way, but also capable of conserving the values of Classicism, an approach which was rather unique to him but did not prevent him from furnishing London with some very fine works, like this one and the two that follow. Influenced to some extent by the memory of Lutyens and his ambitions, and conscious of the site's great value, McMorran continued in the line of some previous projects in this more ambitious work, whose composition of volumes, the academic arrangement of its apertures, and stone coatings yield a refined work in accord with the significance of its site. Although culturally isolated during this period, if considered in a strict sense, it was quite illustrative of Britain's involvement in an attempt to revise modernity, also undertaken in other cultures, such as the Nordic and Italian.



Police Station, 1962-66

Architects: D McMorran and G Whitby.
Wood Street EC2.

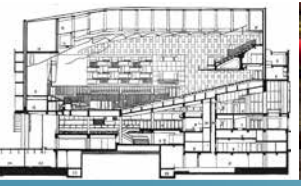
Donald McMorran's second attempt (now with his partner George Whitby) to produce modern architecture capable of preserving Classical values but without employing strictly Classical language. Presided over by a large tower in the manner of a giant *Campanile*, and a horizontal building featuring an institutional look, the Classical idea of volume resurfaces, as if it were a palace, with an academic composition of its apertures and a stone exterior. However, if one examines the façade carefully one will notice refinements in its composition and details revealing the work's high quality. For example, on the horizontal building, its composition is divided into two strata of equal size, one serving as a base, heavily textured by its apparent ashlar façade, but an unconventional one, and the upper level. This is achieved through large openings featuring a non-conventional relationship to the lower ones.

Expansion of the Central Criminal Court, 1972

Architects: D McMorran and G Whitby.
Old Bailey EC4.

At a later date McMorran and Whitby brought their experience to bear on the expansion of the Central Criminal Court (E W Mountford, 1900-07), where they were able to produce a very successful aesthetic result, now consonant with the importance of the site, the presence of the original building, and the institutional character of the whole facility. Its very high façade is composed of a single plane, continuing with a composition in an academic style, enhanced by a series of apertures and a stone surface. Again, the composition is by no means conventional, and enriches the work in an extraordinary way.

Note the great stylistic affinity between this work and the previous two, and their concern with achieving a language which, while unique, is placed at the service of creating a public space.



Royal Festival Hall, 1951-62

Architects: L C C Architects Department (Leslie Martin, Robert Matthew, Edwin Williams and Peter Moro).
South Bank SE1.

This important building was the only one intended to be permanent, constructed for the interesting Festival of Britain (1951), an exhibition of avant-garde modern architecture intended to promote industry, modern design and architecture, and to rescue the capital city from its post-War malaise. As this fair was located across the river from Westminster, it shared its situation with County Hall, almost opposite Parliament, as part of an effort to colonise the south bank of the Thames and prevent the river from serving as a boundary between the suburbs and the centre by integrating the south bank into it. When the Festival of Britain came to an end the Royal Festival Hall was retained as a building capable of generating this urban improvement, later complemented by other works like the National Theatre, adjacent to another important construction in this regard: the Waterloo Bridge.

The Royal Festival Hall, built to replace the Queen's Hall, destroyed in World War II, houses a magnificent auditorium boasting a large capacity, elevated over a spacious and complex system of vestibules and service spaces, where the refined and complex "spatialism" in which they were conceived and created reflects the building's social function, open on all sides for the public's use and enjoyment. In the "International Style", the building's most important façade faces the river, while its interior series of vestibules and service spaces, formally and plastically more ambitious, largely conform to what has been termed "organic revision", with a strong influence by the architecture and masters of the Nordic countries.

Balfron Tower, 1965-67

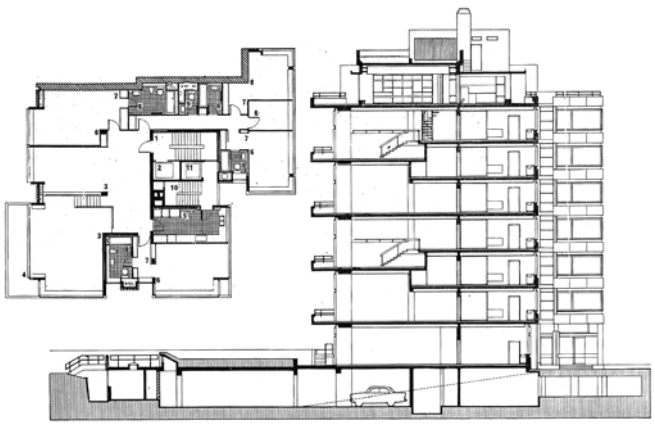
Architect: E Goldfinger.
St Leonard's Road E14.

Together with the Trellick Tower (Golborne Road W10, 1973), both works illustrate Goldfinger's avant-garde approach, in these cases rather late, and his specific subscription to the architecture of Le Corbusier, whom he ardently strives to emulate, and almost seems determined to surpass. A Hungarian architect who settled in London before the Second World War, he embodies very well the avant-garde school, in principle a minority approach, endorsed by few other than Lutbenkin, the Tecton Group, and the engineer Owen Williams. It should be noted, however, that this limited group achieved high quality and considerable renown. Also worth examination is the small apartment building, from 1940 (1-3 Willow Road, NW3) and office building in the city centre, from 1953-58 (45-46 Albemarle Street W1).

St James's Place (Residential Building), 1958-60

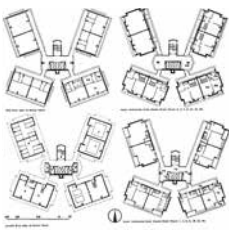
Architect: D Lasdun.
26 St James's Place SW1.

Denys Lasdun was the architect most representative of the avant-garde school during the post-war decades, though one can also detect in some of his work nuances typical of what was called "organic revision", very important at this time and common to many European countries. This building, in a district as posh as it is central, exudes confidence, constituting a fully modern, though moderate and elegant work of architecture in an important area featuring Classical and Historicist buildings, conscious of having to stand in harmony with them, at least to some extent. These attractive and luxurious dwellings are characterised by their duplex arrangement and the presence of some two-level interior spaces.

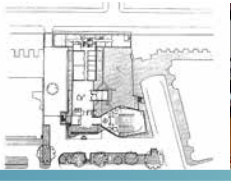


Housing on Usk St and Keeling House, 1952 and 1960

Architect: D Lasdun.
Usk Street and Claredale Street E2.



Denys Lasdun's residential building on Usk Street was an initial attempt to design collective, vertical housing that defies its surroundings and seeks to impose its radical and modern presence upon them. The model for these first ones, a low-rise plan, was tested in subsequent years for the creation of a tower on Claredale Street. Both works feature a similar layout, exhibiting independence from their locations, with four individual housing modules occupying oblique positions and united by a vertical core, facilitating movement. This yields a volume that is as abstract as it is plastic, proclaiming its unique status and, as stated, imposes itself as an autonomous entity upon its surroundings. The dwellings are duplex units.



Royal College of Physicians, 1960-1964

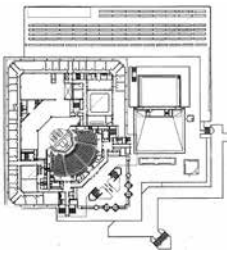
Architect: D Lasdun.
Outer Circle and St Andrew's Place. Regent's Park NW1.

Probably Denys Lasdun's most celebrated and successful work amongst the many he created in London. Characterised by its division into many different sections, occupying the lot from side to side, that which stands as the façade and main entrance, facing Regent's Park, features touches that could be interpreted as derivative of Le Corbusier, although in a way possibly influenced by certain elements reflecting an admiration for Classical architecture. These features, however, are very abstract, part of what was called the last British "neo-Palladianism". Despite these widely varying associations, the interior of this main part cultivates, in addition, the complexity and attractiveness of the interior space, characterising it intensely and in a very refined way, and relating it to what was called the "organic revision" trend.

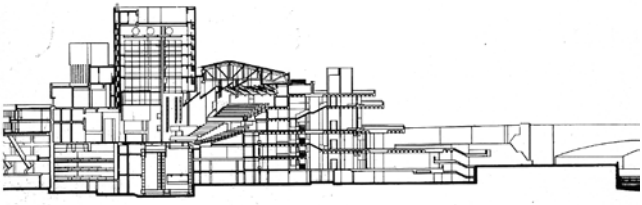
This revision, so important in those years, and related to both the Nordic masters and the much-admired Frank Lloyd Wright, is also manifest in the exteriors facing the back street. There we can observe that, while remaining rationalistic and, thereby, faithful to the "International Style", Lasdun was significantly influenced by the approach to this style by the great Finnish architect Alvar Aalto. There are many such references in this building, reflecting the eclecticism characteristic of Lasdun on this important occasion.

National Theatre, 1967-77

Architect: D Lasdun.
South Bank SE1.



Initiated as a dual building between the County Hall and Royal Festival Hall, to constitute an attractive joint project that would have enormously benefitted the capital, also endowing it with an opera house, in the end the building was unified and located more towards the city centre with respect to the latter of the aforecited buildings. However, it very successfully fulfilled the objective of furnishing this very urban sector with a truly central character on both sides of the river. The modern freedom of its volumes and the use of reinforced concrete as its sole material has not garnered the building good press, a rejection fuelled by a dislike of modern architecture manifested by some prominent public figures. It is, however a highly refined modern contribution whose presence greatly enhances the south side of the city, towards the Thames.



The Economist Building, 1964

Architects: A and P Smithson.
25 St James´s Street SW1.

Probably the most important work in London designed by the couple of Alison and Peter Smithson, characterised by introducing into the important area, and on the street of St James, a new complex intended for the headquarters of the magazine *The Economist*. The complex establishes a difficult and successful balance between a modern and free-standing building, with the volumetric continuity entailed by its emplacement in a traditional building centre of a closed nature. This challenge was met through the placement of four different structures on a slightly elevated base, amongst which a large tower stands out and claims the starring role, but is aptly receded, while a wider and lower building's façade mirrors the street's conventional lines, and a smaller tower and separating wall round out the complex.

In this way a very successful urban "theatre" was created. The floor plans trace symmetrical and square shapes, a geometry reinforced by the chamfered corners, thereby following a pattern associated with the architecture of the American Louis I Kahn and the criteria of the Team X international group to which they belonged. Its external appearance, characterised by the presence of its very sturdy structure, can be understood as an approach related to Auguste Perret, Mies van der Rohe and the architects of the Milanese generation of Ernesto N Rogers, who were separated by some controversial positions, though more theoretical than real.

Robin Hood Gardens, 1968-72

Architect: A and P Smithson.
Cotton Street and Robin Hood Lane E14.

An affordable housing complex consisting of two large blocks flanking a central garden, with special care being taken to generate an artificial topography. Despite this garden, the dual condition of the blocks and their non-linear configuration, their reference point, both in their shape and their types of housing (duplexes, and served by continuous corridors) evidence in this case the Smithsons' affinity with the urban works of Le Corbusier, such as his Living Units. They were separated from the Swiss master by controversial opinions, but these were also more theoretical than real, as this work evidences.

Dedicated to affordable housing, and occupying quite an important location in the city, whose value was bolstered by the construction of Canary Wharf, its restoration is a very daunting task, due to its construction with reinforced concrete and the small size of the dwellings. As a result, it is slated for demolition.

Whittington Estate, 1965-80 (Stages 1 and 2)

Architects: London Borough of Camden Architects Department; Peter Tabori and William Forest.
Dartmouth Park Hill and Chester Road N19.

One of London's complexes, or "new towns", which entailed the creation of a new collective housing concept, representing an intermediate position halfway between an urban and isolated suburban space. The terraced design in this case, and in others, was extremely successful, both in Britain and throughout the western world, so valued that it can even be said that during the years it was in vogue it was touted as a kind of new modern paradise. This work is characterised by the existence of several successive terraced units, arranged in a sloping pattern as if they occupied a hillside. They form a complex which has been well preserved and refurbished, thereby retaining considerable appeal.

Brunswick Centre, 1965-73

Architects: P Hodgkinson and B Allen.
Brunswick Square and Guilford Street WC1.

Another of the complexes of terraced housing typical of the late 60s and early 70s that were so successful at the time, as already explained in the case of the Whittington Estate. This Brunswick Centre stands out by featuring two staggered systems directly across from each other, with a large urban promenade in between them. As in this case the complex is located in the centre of London, its lower level houses a shopping centre, along with traffic arteries and parking facilities. One can observe other examples on Alexandra Road (1969-79), featuring an identical design, and the first one (97) by the London Borough of Camden Architects Department.

Photo on the right by Steve Cadman. CC BY-SA 2.0.
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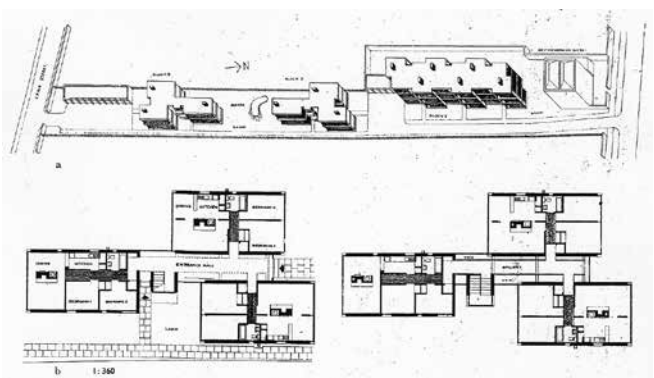
Flats, Langham House, 1958

Architects: Stirling and Gowan.
Ham Street, Richmond.

One of the first London works by the team of Stirling and Gowan, who would become very famous, even at the international level, after their work on the Department of Engineering at Leicester and other subsequent works outside the capital, like their university facilities at Oxford, Cambridge and St Andrews in Scotland.

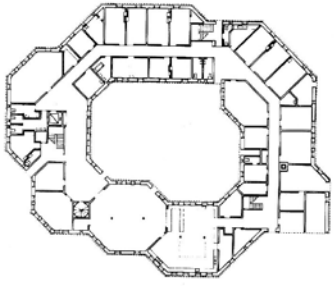
Both the use of the dwellings and the aesthetic and constructive approach classify it here under what came to be known as "New Brutalism", a key trend on the British scene in post-War era, and also abroad, featuring a certain influence by Le Corbusier, when he functioned as a revisionist of his own work. But the quality of the complex completely transcends this historical vision and trend, being conserved with great quality and appeal.

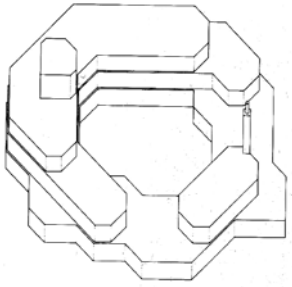


Old People's Home, 1960

Architects: Stirling and Gowan.
Rectory Field. Crescent off Marlborough Lane SE7.

A building departing from these architects best-known line (and, very specifically, from James Stirling's subsequent approach), more related to a revision of conventional modernity, such as the Nordic and also and above all, the Italian. The careful use of brick, arranged in a vertical manner, yielding a building featuring an irregular octagonal shape around a courtyard, evokes historical references, probably somewhat ambiguous and vague, but also quite intense and valuable. The building, of a very small scale, is of remarkable quality and highly unique.





Snowdon's Aviary, London Zoo, 1963

Architects: Cedric Price and Frank Newby, with Lord Snowdon.
London Zoo Prince Albert Road NW1.

One of the most admired products of the technological vanguard of those years, if not the most, and truly representative of an attitude that abounded on blueprints for projects that were seldom carried out, perhaps because they were too conceptual and abstract. Although it was the result of an idea by Lord Snowdon, it really represents the work of architect Cedric Price, its actual designer, and the most prominent and respected figure of this vanguard, the architect behind highly conceptual works like this one. Amongst his few constructions one can view images of his work called the "InterAction Centre" (Dalby Street and Prince of Wales Road NW5).

Park Road Apartments, 1970

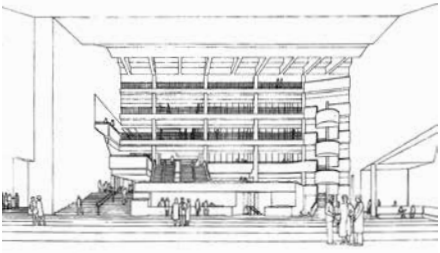
Architects: Farrell and Grimshaw.
125 Park Road NW1.

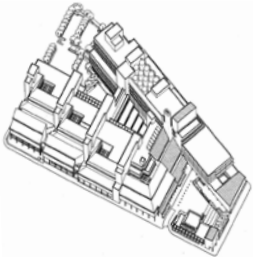
The advent of a new and different generation harbouring a fresh, distinct and coherent attitude was marked by this attractive, rounded tower block close to Regent's Park. Its prismatic and square design reflected a trend thait proceeded, to some extent, from the preceding stage and overlapped with the next, especially in its technological façade and the continuity of its openings. Despite this brilliant start, much admired even at the international level, which portended a brilliant career, these architects went on to stand out as some of the most exaggerated perpetrators of a very theatrical and unconvincing Post-modernism.

British Library, 1962-97

Architect: Colin St John Wilson.
96 Euston Road NW1.

This unique product of great institutional importance took a very long time to complete, and its approach was seldom replicated, but it proved quite significant to the extent that it managed to conserve its designer's particular features during the 1960s (and his work with Leslie Martin) and, thus, an intense relationship with the architecture of the great modern masters; more specifically, with the work of Finland's Alvar Aato and his eclectic and revisionist interpretation of modernity. The protracted duration of its design and construction meant that it ultimately overlapped with the rise of the Post-modern trend that would be very intense in London, but with moderation and greater quality than in most other works constructed in the capital under these premises.





Queen Elizabeth II Conference Centre, 1975-76

Architects: Powell and Moya.
Broad Sanctuary, Westminster SW1.

Architects active in London for many years, and the designers of a very interesting residential area, Churchill Garden Estate (Grosvenor Road, Lupus Street and Claverton Street, from 1946 to 1962) and the no less attractive Museum of London (London Wall, 1975), they were able to resist the siren songs enticing them to practice "High Tech" or "Post-modern" architecture, as they remained faithful to a modern tradition that had stood them in good stead, and that shines again in this outstanding facility. Its location at a site featuring buildings of historical importance makes the continuous modern style of which it boasts particularly bold and significant.

Hillingdon Civic Centre, 1977

Architects: Robert Matthew Johnson-Marshall and Partners.
High Street, Uxbridge.

A unique and attractive work of Post-modern architecture produced for a major institutional building whose architecture measures up to the character of the institution it serves through an eclectic approach to historical and popular architecture, and even to unique modern trends, like German and European interwar Expressionism. Although this large building is quite exaggerated in many respects, it really stands out from amongst the great number of mediocre works created in this style during the period, which, logically, has made it very popular. Its designers included Robert Matthew, the chief architect of the London Council when the Royal Festival Hall was being built, and co-designer of the same.

National Gallery, Sainsbury Wing, 1985-91

Architect: Robert Venturi, with Denise Scott Brown.
Trafalgar Square W1.

The final result of the different competitions for the expansion of the National Gallery, the intelligence of the highly-renowned American architect and theorist Robert Venturi ably resolved the specific challenge of the gallery's expansion while placating those with conservative sensibilities desiring Classical continuity. The most important thing, however, is that he also pleased those harbouring more modern mentalities through the fundamentally eclectic, very attentive and successful approach he took to responding to the various challenges posed by the building's surroundings. The building is a Post-modern work boasting much greater quality than is common in London constructions exhibiting this trend, and even included a set of museum interiors as interesting and "palatial" as they were fitting. Venturi's work, the product of a competition, resolved and silenced the controversies surrounding the expansion of the important museum, in which even Prince Charles had been involved.

Photo at the top by Rory Hyde. CC BY-SA 2.0.
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Warwick Court, 2003

Architect: Richard MacCormac.
Paternoster Square EC4.

A work constituting a quite recent response to the formal requirements posed by the presence of St Paul's Cathedral and its surroundings, following with concerns specific to very different periods of the 20th century. For this contemporary office building the decision was taken to employ modern architecture, but applying a number of formal instruments and concrete architectural elements capable of appropriately relating it to the important historical architecture found at its location. In this way it proves to be a very interesting work reflecting the theory of "pre-existing environments", typical of the Italian generation of Richard Rogers and Franco Albini (50s and 60s), even though this had been emphatically rejected in certain British architectural circles at that time.

The Lloyd's Building

Architect: Richard Rogers.
107 Leadenhall Street EC3.

A reconstruction of the bank building that involved a virtually total elimination of the academic work by Edwin Cooper, from 1928, from which only a small remnant survived, as the work was overhauled, applying a radical application of the "High Tech" style. The new building has been quite well received by the city's professional critics, but it must be pointed out and lamented that it constitutes a work of architecture exhibiting a disregard for every aspect of its surroundings. It also represents an exception to the city's history of conservation, as its construction involved the demolition of a building representative of 20th-century Classicism (1928) that had been held in high regard in London. The consideration of the building as a signature work by its architect does not much favour his prestige. Though the building is undoubtedly striking, it is lacking in refinement.

Riverside Studio and Albion, 1986-90 and 2003

Architect: Norman Foster.
Chelsea Reach SW11.

A mixed-use building for offices and homes designed by Norman Foster in line with the "High Tech" trend, but in this case with a deliberate stylistic and conceptual fidelity to the Rationalist tradition typical of modern architecture. Its refined composition and careful language were capable of generating an especially attractive image to stand as the new façade over the River Thames. Contiguously, in 2003 the same architect designed another building (Albion), which features an aesthetically similar language, but is much more complex, with curved volumes, and probably not as judicious or appropriate in its urban presence. Thus, in the two works one can clearly perceive this famous architect's evolution.

City Hall, 2000

Architect: Norman Foster.
River Thames, London Bridge (in front of the Tower of London) SE1.

A building illustrating the evolution of Norman Foster's architecture, from the practice of the High Tech style, associated with the Rationalist tradition (such as at the Riverside Studio, 107) towards an idea of formal freedom and the cultivation of arbitrariness characterising a new approach that can only be called Formalist. It characterises a site that was already very much defined by the presence of the centuries-old Tower of London and the more modern London Bridge, and has entailed one of the most important alterations of the river's south bank, rendering it more central and metropolitan. In this conversion it accompanies the preceding one of the Royal Festival Hall and Waterloo Bridge, and the most recent, originating from the transformation of the Bankside Power Station, designed by Giles Gilbert Scott, at the Tate Modern Museum, according to the restoration carried out by the Swiss architectural firm Herzog and de Meuron.

Photo at the top-left by Andreas Jalsøe. CC BY 2.0.
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Photo at the top-right by UserColin. CC BY 2.0.
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St Mary Axe Tower, 1997-2003

Architect: Norman Foster.
30 St Mary Axe EC3.

This tower could be considered Norman Foster's most significant work in contemporary London, especially in light of its importance to the city's skyline, increasingly characterised by the presence of tall buildings, at least in the city's financial centre. This particular tower eloquently expresses the crisis faced by the prismatic, or parallelepiped tower, and its image and form, typical of the modern tradition, held in low regard despite its efficiency and logic, and the predilection for buildings aesthetically more akin to the refined and attractive works in New York City built during the interwar period. This, then, would be the fortunate adventure that this work seeks to evoke, prolong, and transfer to London, whose intention began many years ago before with the American post-modern style. Its pointed shape and its relationship with its metallic and helicoidal outer structure characterise and enhance this well-known tower.

Afterword

Are these the city of London's main buildings? To a large extent, yes, but not in absolute terms. They are those used by the guide's author to summarise the history of construction in the city from the 17th to the 20th centuries, providing an account of the different styles and the ideas that gave rise to them. There are many, many more, buildings in the city of great merit and importance. The interested reader may refer to other works (some of which are included in the Bibliography) to complete his knowledge of what is summarised here. Knowledge of the city of London is as attractive as it is almost infinite. What this guide presents should only be considered an introduction to the city's architecture.

The Author

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Occupational Health & Safety Management

ISO 14001
Environmental Management