

Architecture

London consist of multiple architectural styles. The range goes from medieval castles to modern skyscrapers. In the Great Fire of London in 1666, many historical buildings burnt down.

Few have been rebuilt but most of them were completely destroyed. Today, the skyline of London does not contain lots of high-rises or towers and has therefore a low-rise nature.



Figure 1 Westminster Abbey

Gothic architecture (1100-1600)

Lots of great Cathedrals in Europe were built during this time period. A pointed arch, rib vault and buttress are typical characteristics. Back in the Middle Age it used to be something like a skyscraper to the people because gothic cathedrals are taller than they are wide. The Westminster Abbey is London's most famous building with gothic architecture.



Figure 2 St. Paul's Cathedral

Baroque (1600-1750)

The most famous building of the British baroque era is probably St. Paul's Cathedral. It was built in 1675. The Anglican cathedral and especially the Dome was heavily damaged during the Second World War. It is now a Grade 1 listed building (List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest).



Figure 3 Georgian Housing close to Hyde Park

Georgian Housing (1740-1830)

Lots of residential homes in London were built in this time period. Brick or Stonework are characteristic features as well as rectangular sash windows. The roof is hidden by a parapet, which leads to the illusion of a flat roof. This picture was taken close to Hyde Park. These houses now belong to the upper class but used to be middle class apartments.

Postmodern Buildings (1900-toady)

New technologies of construction made it possible to build skyscrapers. Concrete, steel and glass are usually integral parts of this architectural style. 20 Fenchurch Street, known as “The Walkie-Talkie” was completed in 2014. The shape is intended to give more floor space to upper stories of the building. There is a garden on the three top floors as well as a viewing platform. It is one of the highest buildings in London, even though it had to be scaled down because there were concerns about the visual impact on the city.

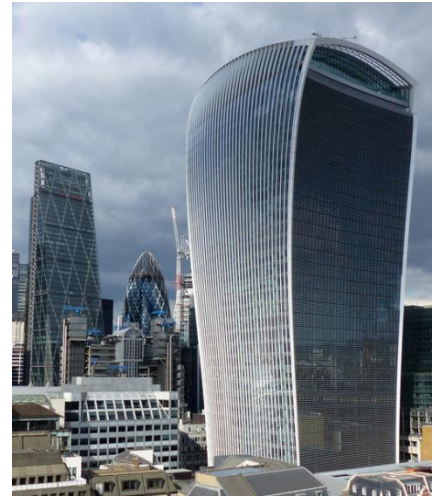


Figure 4 The Walkie-Talkie



Figure 5 Tower Bridge

Bridges

Bridges are essential components of British architecture. There are more than 30 bridges across the Thames in London. All of them were built in different time periods and for different purposes. They look different in shape, color, size and style. Two examples would be the famous Tower Bridge and the Golden Jubilee Bridges.

Impression

The destruction from World War 2 and the Great Fire have led to a unique variety of architectural styles. Before we visited London I imagined it to be more like Paris or Rome with all these old buildings, but it's more of a mix and match kind of design of the city. This makes London very special because the architecture matches the multicultural society.



Figure 6 Golden Jubilee Bridge