

WESTERN ARCHITECTURE: THE HISTORY & DESIGN OF BUILDINGS

Beginnings

The study of primitive architecture shows us where our basic building ideas came from, and why they emerged, and helps us to recognize their shadows in our contemporary architecture. Watch these early forms morph through the requirements of available materials and structural techniques into what we have come to call our classical architectural heritage.

ELEMENTARY: structural and space-planning concepts.

MESOPOTAMIA, etc.: prehistory; vanished cultures, their cities and monuments.

EGYPTIAN ARCHITECTURE: Pyramids, temples, and houses; monumental design; hierarchical space order.

Classical Architecture & The Rise of Christian Forms

GREEK ARCHITECTURE: Temples, public buildings, houses, city plans; development of systematic constructions and finesse in details.

ROMAN ARCHITECTURE: temples, public buildings, civic works.

BYZANTINE ARCHITECTURE: centrally planned, domed forms.

Western Christian Forms; Gothic & Renaissance Architecture

From the abbot, Suger, the father of gothic architecture to the painter-architect-sculptor-goldsmith-genius Michelangelo, architecture was transformed (between crusades of clashing religious thought, and bouts of devastating plague which reduced the population by half) from soaring medieval skyscrapers of incredible structural exhibitionism to the ultimate in refinement and grace in Renaissance chapels, as the focus of culture changed from mysticism to humanism, and as designers looked back to the greatness of Rome and Greece for inspiration.

The Early Middle Ages: CHRISTIAN BASILICA: (linear planning) & ABBEYS; the evolution of Western Christian church forms.

The Late Middle Ages: GOTHIC ARCHITECTURE; 11th century skyscrapers.

RENAISSANCE ARCHITECTURE; return to classical forms

Modern Times

After Rome generated a gaudy reaction to Renaissance elegance, this phase of the continuously evolving magic of building design moves toward REVOLUTION! The French, the Americans, and Industry collaborate to set the architectural world on a rampage of invention and audacity: materials of unbelievable strength make possible structures spectacularly tall and slender, in pristine elegance.

A Prelude to Revolutionary Change

MANNERIST & BAROQUE ARCHITECTURE.
Idiosyncratic and dynamic style.

PALLADIO, INIGO JONES, & CHRISTOPHER WREN.
Italian villas, English Renaissance, renewal of London's churches.

Modern and Post-modern Times

That less is more style, the result of new structural materials, was perfected through the development of skyscrapers, and, when it was complete, the radicals moved in to disturb the peace. Designers now erect the most brazen, cheeky, outrageous challenges to the established order, and we love and hate them at the same time.

Modern Times (Continued)

ARCHITECTURE OF REVOLUTION.
American, French, Industrial.

BIRTH OF THE SKYSCRAPER.
1890-1950; Chicago and New York.

TWENTIETH CENTURY ARCHITECTS: 1900-1950.
Gropius, Mies, Saarinen, Wright, etc.

Post-modern Times; New Forms

MODERN SKYSCRAPERS:
New heights, forms, structural systems.

TWENTIETH CENTURY ARCHITECTS: 1950-1990.
Newcomers and radicals; unique architectural forms.