

Goldfinger, Ernő 1902 - 1987



Ernő Goldfinger was born in Budapest, Austria-Hungary [now Hungary], on 11 September 1902. With his family he left Hungary following the communist putsch in 1919. After a year spent at a school in Switzerland, he settled in Paris where he studied architecture and urban planning at the École des Beaux-Arts under Léon Jaussely (1875-1932) and Auguste Perret (1874-1954) from 1922 to c.1924. He also attended the École d'Urbanisme at the Sorbonne in 1927-28. Whilst in Paris he moved in the avant-garde circles of the Left Bank where he associated with artists and architects such as Robert Delaunay, Max Ernst, Man Ray, Le Corbusier, Amédée Ozenfant and Pierre Chareau. From 1924 to 1934 he was in private practice in Paris. In 1927 he visited London where he built a shop for Helena Rubenstein. He returned to the city in 1934 and subsequently made it his permanent home, becoming a naturalised British citizen in 1945.

Following his move to London he re-established his architectural practice. In c.1936 he formed a partnership with Gerald Wanklyn Flower (1912-1994) as Goldfinger & Flower. The practice designed a toy shop for Paul and Marjorie Abbatt Limited at 94 Wimpole Street, London (1936); and 1-3 Willow Road, a terrace of three houses at 1-3 Willow Road, Hampstead, London (1937-39).

Goldfinger and Flower also designed furniture and interiors. Three photographs of nursery furniture designed by Goldfinger and Flower for Paul & Marjorie Abbatt Ltd. are illustrated in 'Decorative Art' 1938 (p.128). Some of the toys they designed for Abbatt were exhibited at the Exposition Internationale des Arts et Techniques dans la Vie Moderne in Paris in 1937.

In 1938 Goldfinger designed a stand for ICI at the British Industries Fair at Olympia, London, and the Children's Section for MARS Group Exhibition at Burlington Gallery in London.

During World War Two he designed educational exhibitions for the British armed forces and an air raid shelter at Bedales School in Petersfield Hampshire in 1940.

Among his post-war projects were offices for the Daily Worker newspaper; the headquarters of the British Communist Party; kiosks for the Festival of Britain in 1951, two primary schools for London County Council; Alexander Fleming House [now Metro Central Heights] in London, completed in 1966; a factory, offices and showroom for the furniture company Hille in Watford, Hertfordshire, completed in 1960; Balfron Tower in Poplar, Tower Hamlets, London, 1965-67; and Trellick Tower a 31-floor tower block in Kensal Town, London, completed in 1972.

Goldfinger was a member of the [MARS Architectural Research Group](#). He was elected a Fellow of the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) in 1966; a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts (RSA) in 1968; an Associate of the Royal Academy (ARA) in 1971; and a Royal Academician (RA) in 1975. He died at 2 Willow Road, Hampstead, London on 15 November 1987.

Worked in
UK
Works

See:

UK Modern House [*link below*]

Historic England [*link below*]

Goldfinger, Ernő and Winter, John. 'Ernő Goldfinger'. Contemporary Architects. [**Bibliography** below]

Bibliography

Elwall, Robert. Erno Goldfinger. London: Academy, 1996 [RIBA Drawings Monograph No.3]

Ernő Goldfinger : Works 1. Compiled by James Dunnett and Gavin Stamp. London : Architectural Association 1983 [Published to accompany an exhibition at the Architectural Association from 2 June to 25 June 1983]

Exhibition of the Work of Ernő Goldfinger RA celebrating his 80th Year. London: Royal Academy of Arts, 1983.

Goldfinger, Ernő. British furniture to-day. London : A. Tiranti 1951

Goldfinger, Ernő and Winter, John. 'Ernő Goldfinger'. Contemporary Architects. Edited by Ann Lee Morgan and Colin Naylor. Chicago, Illinois St. James Press, 2nd edition, 1987 pp. 330-332 [Contains a comprehensive list of Goldfinger's architectural projects]

Harwood, Elain. Mid-Century Britain: Modern Architecture 1938-1963. London: Batsford, 2021

Harwood, Elain and Powers, Alan. Ernő Goldfinger. London: Historic England, 2020

McDermott, Catherine. 'Ernő Goldfinger'. Contemporary Designers. Edited by Sara Prendergast. Detroit, Michigan: St. James Press, 3rd edition, 1997 pp. 312-313

Powers, Alan. Modern. The Modern Movement in Britain. London: Merrell, 2005

Read, Herbert. 'Ernő Goldfinger'. Architectural Design vol. 33, January 1963 pp. 6-54 [A detailed chronology of the life and work of Ernő Goldfinger]

Richards, J. M. 'Criticism: office building in Albermarle Street, London, W.1.'. Architects' Journal vol. 126, 18 July 1957 pp. 105-107 [Office building designed by Ernő Goldfinger]

Slessor, Catherine. 'Reframing Balfour'. C20. The Magazine of the Twentieth Century Society, issue 2, 2021 pp. 22-31

Stamp, Gavin and Goldfinger, Ernő. 'Conversation with Ernő Goldfinger'. Thirties Society Journal no.2, 1982 pp.19-24

Warburton, Nigel. Ernő Goldfinger : the life of an architect. London : Routledge 2004

Links

- UK Modern House http://www.ukmoho.co.uk/html/architect/Erno_Goldfinger.html
- Historic England - details of 17 architectural projects by Erno Goldfinger <https://historicengland.org.uk/sitesearch?searchType=site&search=Goldfinger&searchRes>
- Wikipedia https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ern%C5%91_Goldfinger
- James Dunnett, revised. Ernő Goldfinger. Oxford Dictionary of National Biography [Subscription service] <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/39984>

- James Dunnett. Ernö Goldfinger. Oxford Grove Art Online [Subscription service]
<https://doi.org/10.1093/gao/9781884446054.article.T033060>
- Royal Academy of Arts https://www.royalacademy.org.uk/art-artists/name/erno-goldfinger-ra?birth_date=&commit=Search&form=names&gender=&index=1&member_type=&name=
- National Art Library Catalogue [https://nall-vam.on.worldcat.org/search?databaseList=&queryString=Erno%20Goldfinger](https://nall.vam.on.worldcat.org/search?databaseList=&queryString=Erno%20Goldfinger)
- Dezeen <https://www.dezeen.com/2014/09/24/brutalist-buildings-balfron-tower-london-erno-goldfinger/>
- National Trust <https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/features/who-was-ern-goldfinger>
- Designing Buildings Wiki
https://www.designingbuildings.co.uk/wiki/Ern%C3%B6_Goldfinger
- Becky Sunshine. 'The flat Ernö Goldfinger built: 'We fell in love'' The Guardian 30 December 2017
<https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2017/dec/30/architecture-erno-goldfinger-high-rise-apartment-south-london>
- The Modern House <https://www.themodernhouse.com/directory-of-architects-and-designers/erno-goldfinger/>
- Arch Daily <https://www.archdaily.com/office/erno-goldfinger>
- Open University <http://www.open.edu/openlearn/history-the-arts/history/heritage/erno-goldfinger>
- National Portrait Gallery, London
<https://www.npg.org.uk/collections/search/person/mp05964/erno-goldfinger>
- Wikimedia Commons
https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Category:Ern%C5%91_Goldfinger
- YouTube. Erno Goldfinger: Trellick Tower designer and inspiration for James Bond 'baddie' – BBC London News <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WRgfy1-ctY4>
- YouTube. Short Film Balfron Tower London Video - 1960's Brutalist - Erno Goldfinger Block - Architecture
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z996NMmKPgU>
- YouTube. 2 Willow Road <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kVSVwDdSKuA>
- YouTube. Goldfinger's ideas on modern living: 60 second lecture (7/11)
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xQ9ePBgn_e4
- AJ Building Library - Alexander Fleming House
<https://www.ajbuildingslibrary.co.uk/projects/display/id/364>
- AJ Building Library - Odeon Cinema, Elephant and Castle
<https://www.ajbuildingslibrary.co.uk/projects/display/id/4024>