

Holden, Charles Henry 1875 - 1960



Charles Henry Holden was born in Great Lever, Bolton, Lancashire, England, on 12 May 1875. Following the early death of his mother and bankruptcy of his father, he left school at an early age and worked as a clerk and laboratory assistant before his brother-in-law, Frederick Green, a land surveyor, arranged in 1892 for him to be apprenticed to the Manchester architect Edward William Leeson (1862-1915). While working for Leeson, Holden attended classes at the School of Art and the Technical College in Manchester where he excelled as a student.

Holden left Leeson's office in 1896 and worked for a brief period with the Bolton architect Jonathan Simpson (1851-1937) before going to London to work with the architect and designer [Charles Robert Ashbee](#) (1863-1942) in 1897. He remained with Ashbee until 1899 when he joined the London architect [Harry Percy Adams](#) (1865-1930) as chief assistant, and later, in 1907, as a partner. [Lionel Godfrey Pearson](#) (1879-1953) also joined the partnership in 1913, thus forming the firm [Adams Holden & Pearson](#).

Holden qualified as an architect in 1905 and was elected an Associate of the Royal Institute of British Architects (ARIBA) in 1906, and a Fellow of the Royal Institute of Architects (FRIBA) in 1921.

Much of Holden's work in from the 1920s to the 1940s was for the London Passenger Transport Board for whom he designed or redesigned more than fifty London Underground Stations.

In his work on the London Underground Stations, Holden's influence extended to the design of all parts of the buildings including the decoration of the interiors, the interior and exterior lighting, clocks, ticket machines, platform seats, kiosks, and litter bins. Holden, together with [Charles Holloway James](#), (1893-1953) also designed the British Empire Marketing Board stand for the 'British Industries Fair' held in London in 1931.

Following World War Two, Holden concentrated more on town planning. In addition to his work as a town planner, Holden also designed furniture. A table and chair in unpolished English walnut designed by him are illustrated in 'The Studio Yearbook of Decorative Art' 1924 (p.106).

Holden was a founder member in 1915 of the Design and Industry Association (DIA) and was elected a member of the Art Workers' Guild in 1917. He was vice-president of the Royal Institute of British Architects from 1935 to 1937 and was awarded the RIBA Gold Medal in 1936. In 1943 Holden was elected a Royal Designer for Industry (RDI) by the Royal Society of Arts. He died at 87 Harmer Green Lane, near Welwyn, Hertfordshire on 1 May 1960.

Worked in

UK

Works

Holden's work as an architect included Belgrave Hospital for Children in Kensington, London (1900-03), the library of the Law Society Building in London (1902-04), British Seaman's Hospital in Istanbul (1903), Norwich House in High Holburn, London (1903-04), King Edward VII Sanatorium in Midhurst, Sussex (1903-06), Tunbridge Wells General Hospital in Tunbridge Wells, Kent (1904), Central Reference Library in Bristol (1905-06), Bristol Royal Infirmary (1906-12), British Medical Association building - later Rhodesia House, now Zimbabwe House in Strand, London (1907-08), Women's Hospital, Soho Square, London (1908), Tomb of Oscar Wilde, with Jacob Epstein, in Père Lachaise Cemetery, Paris (c.1911-12), Sutton Vallance School, Kent (1911-23), King's College for Women in Kensington, London (1914-23), 67 war cemeteries in France and Belgium (1918-26), War Memorial Gateway at Clifton College, Bristol (1922), more than fifty London Underground Stations, both new and redesigned, including Oval, Westminster, Bond Street, St. Paul's, Mansion House, Clapham South, Balham, Piccadilly Circus, Leicester Square, Tooting Bec, Collier's Wood, South Wimbledon, Morden, Ealing Common, Houslow West, Sudbury Town, Sudbury Hill, Alperton, Manor House, Turnpike Lane, Bounds Green, Wood Green, Arnos Grove, Southgate, Oakwood, Cockfosters, Chiswick Park, Acton Town, Northfields, Boston

Manor, Osterley Park, Rayners Lane, Hammersmith and East Finchley (1922-39), London Passenger Transport Board Headquarters in Broadway, London (1929), Senate House and other buildings, University of London, Bloomsbury, London (1931-37, 1948-55), and the National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth (1933).

See also:

[Historic England](#)

[British Listed Buildings](#)

[Wikipedia](#) - List of work by Charles Holden

Bibliography

Adler, Gerald. Charles Holden: Underground Architect. MA thesis, University of Sheffield, 1978

Allibone, Finch and Karol, Eitan. 'Charles Holden'. RIBA Journal vol. 95, no. 4, April 1988 pp. 50-51

The Architecture of British Transport in the Twentieth Century. Edited by Julian Holder and Steven Parissien. New Have ; London : Yale University Press for the Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art and the Yale Center for British Art, 2004

Beeson, Anthony. Bristol Central Library and Charles Holden. Bristol: Redcliffe Press, 2006

Cork, Richard. 'Jacob Epstein and Charles Holden: a Whitmanesque collaboration in the Strand'. AA Files no. 8, January 1985 pp. 64-98 [Discusses the collaboration between Charles Holden and the sculptor Jacob Epstein]

Directory of British Architects 1834-1914. Compiled by Antonia Brodie, et al. Volume 1: A-K. London; New York: British Architectural Library, Royal Institute of British Architects/Continuum, 2001

Glancey, Jonathan. 'Architect to the commuter: Charles Holden'. Blueprint no. 47, May 1988 pp. 66, 68

Gray, A. Stuart. Edwardian Architecture: a Biographical Dictionary. London: Gerald Duckworth & Co., Ltd., 1985

Hanson, Brian. 'Singing the body electric with Charles Holden.' *Architectural Review* vol. 158, no. 946, December 1975 pp. 349-356

Harwood, Elain. *Art Deco Britain: Buildings of the Interwar Years*. London: Batsford, 2019

'Holden at the V&A'. *RIBA Journal* vol. 117/118, December 2010/January 2011 p. 12 [A review of an exhibition of the on Charles Holden's underground stations at the Victoria & Albert Museum in 2011]

Holden, Charles. 'The new buildings for London University'. *RIBA Journal* 9 May 1938 p. 634 [Architect Charles Holden discusses his plans for the Senate House building, University of London]

Hutton, C. 'Dr. Charles Holden, 1875-1960'. *Artifex* vol. 3, 1969 pp. 34-55

Karol, Eitan and Finch, Allibone. *Charles Holden 1875-1960*. London: RIBA, 1988

Karol, Eitan. *Charles Holden, Architect*. Donington, Lincs.: Shaun Tyas, 2007

Karol, Eitan. *The life and architecture of Charles Holden (1875-1960)*. Ph.D. thesis, University of Reading, 2001

Lawrence, David. *Bright Underground Spaces: The Railway Stations of Charles Holden*. Harrow Weald, Middlesex: Capital Transport, 2008

Mayer, Martin. 'Underground architect: marking the centenary of Charles Holden's birth, a look at his enigmatic architecture'. *Building Design* no. 245, 11 April 1975 pp. 12-13.

Middleton, Grahame. 'Charles Holden and his London Underground stations'. *Architectural Association Quarterly* vol. 8, no. 2, 1976 pp. 29-39

'Obituary'. *Architectural Association Journal* vol. 76, July-August 1960 p. 67

'Obituary'. *Architect and Building News* vol. 217, 11 May 1960 p. 592

'Obituary'. *Architectural Review* vol. 127, June 1960 p. 371

'Obituary'. *Town Planning Institute Journal* vol. 46, June 1960 p. 184

Pevsner, Nikolaus. 'Obituary' *Architectural Review* vol. 128, December 1960 pp. 446-448

Pevsner, Nikolaus. 'Charles Holden's early works' in *Edwardian Architecture and its Origins*. Edited by Alastair Service. London: The Architectural Press Limited, 1975 pp. 372-384 [Written by Nikolaus Pevsner shortly after Holden's death].

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

Ruddock, Ted. 'Charles Holden and the issue of high buildings in London, 1927-47.' *Construction History* vol. 12, 1996, pp. 83-99.

Service, Alastair. *The Architects of London and their buildings from 1066 to the present*. London: The Architectural Press, 1979

Simpson, Richard. 'Classicism and modernity. The University of London's Senate House'. *Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies* vol. 43, 1999 pp. 41-99

Stamp, Gavin. 'A cathedral of modernity: 55, Broadway, London SW1'. *Country Life* vol. 205, no. 40, 5 October 2011 pp. 88-91 [Discusses the London Underground headquarters and St James's tube station, completed in 1929]

Stamp, Gavin. 'King of the underground'. *Architects' Journal* vol. 187, no. 10, 9 March 1988 pp. 80-81.

Thirties: British Art and Design before the War. London: Arts Council of Great Britain, 1979 [Catalogue of an exhibition at the Hayward Gallery, London, 25 October-13 January 1979]

Whittick, Arnold. 'Charles Holden' in *Contemporary Architects*. Edited by Ann Lee Morgan and Collin Naylor. Chicago, Illinois St. James Press, 2nd edition, 1987 pp.366-367

Who's Who in Architecture 1914. London: Technical Journals Ltd., 1914

Who's Who in Architecture 1923. Edited by Fredeick Chatterton. London: Architectural Press Ltd., 1923

Links

- Charles Hutton, 'Holden, Charles Henry (1875–1960)', rev. Alan Crawford, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography Online*[Subscription service]http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charles_Holden
<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/33927>
- Wikipedia https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charles_Holden
- Wikipedia - List of works by Charles Holden
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_works_by_Charles_Holden

- Alan Powers. Charles Henry Holden. Grove Art Online. Oxford Art Online [Subscription service]
<http://www.oxfordartonline.com/subscriber/article/grove/art/T038611?q=holden>
- Jonathan Glancey. 'An architecture fee from fads and aesthetic conceits' The Guardian 16 October 2007
<https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2007/oct/16/architecture4>
- Historic England - numerous entries relating to Charles Holden
<https://historicengland.org.uk/sitesearch?searchType=site&search=%22Charles%20Holden>
- Architects of Greater Manchester 1800-1940
<https://manchestervictorianarchitects.org.uk/architects/charles-henry-holden>
- London Transport Museum
<https://www.ltmuseum.co.uk/collections/stories/people/charles-holden-london-transport-architect>
- Modernism in Metro-land <https://www.modernism-in-metroland.co.uk/charles-holden.html>
- Find a Grave <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/107731625/charles-henry-holden>
- National Art Library Catalogue <https://nal-vam.on.worldcat.org/search?sortKey=LIBRARY&databaseList=&queryString=charles%20holden>
- UK Modern House http://www.ukmoho.co.uk/html/architect/Charles_Holden.html
- British Listed Buildings - numerous listed buildings by Charles Holden
<https://britishlistedbuildings.co.uk/site-search/?q=%22Charles%20Holden%22>
- Clare Price. Cathedral of modernity. Twentieth Century Society - headquarters of the Underground Electric Railway at 55 Broadway, London, designed by Charles Holden and built in 1925-29 <https://c20society.org.uk/casework/cathedral-of-modernity>
- Building of the Month. Senate House, Bloomsbury, London designed by Charles Holden in the 1930s <https://c20society.org.uk/building-of-the-month/senate-house-bloomsbury-wc1>
- RIBApix - 147 entries on Charles Holden
<https://www.ribapix.com/search?adv=false&cid=0&mid=0&vid=0&q=Charles%20Holden&>