

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

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Links

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- Architects of Greater Manchester 1800-1940

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- National Art Library Catalogue <https://nall.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&>