

Urban landscape- *A comparison between old and modern architecture*

The urban landscape now is the end product of historical events and strong growth. Before the “Great Fire” in 1666, London's architecture was not characterised by an architectural style, but after the “Great Fire” Sir Christopher Wren rebuilt London and it stayed a city rich in structures with historic associations.

Before the “Great Fire” most of the people lived in medieval houses, where every floor got an addition, but this construction wasn't good, because the streets became smaller and with the second floor the houses nearly crashed together. The houses were built mostly out of wood and because of that 80% of the houses went on fire in 1666 as well as the famous buildings like St. Paul's Cathedral, the Newgate and Guildhall prison.

After Sir Christopher Wren's rebuilding of London the houses become more modern and were different to the construction before the “Great Fire”; they were now built of stone and brick. There are different types of houses, like Mock Tudor, Victorian terraced houses or the modern tower blocks.

Most Londoners live in smaller houses or flats and sometimes you can see, which the older houses are, because they can have a dark front from the old days of pollution and the “Great Fire”.

The Mock Tudor houses were built between 1900 and 1940, and included wooden beams on the front of the houses. This made them look more traditional. When two houses are linked together, they are called semi-detached or if they are in long rows, they are called terraces.



A typical Mock Tudor house.

The Victorian terraced houses were built in the 17th . century, but there modern features like our bathrooms and indoor toilets are missing. Mostly the first and the last houses are called end-terraced houses and are often bigger than the houses in the middle. The terraced houses have mostly the same front in a row, but sometimes they are differently painted, like this example in Camden Town:



In the 1960's the government wanted to abolish these slum houses and for that reason thousands of Londoners were invited to leave the City of London and live outside in new towns. Many people moved in to new tower blocks of flats.

The council flats in the tower blocks are a symbol of modern living. They were built after the Second World War. These tower blocks rise high over the surrounding streets. Every tower block has got lifts in there and also parking spaces and door phones. With the years these tower blocks have become the new slums, because there are graffiti and vandalism in the corridor, the lifts are mostly out of order and the people never see their neighbours. The people wished to return to their old lives, where everyone knows everyone and for this reason many tower blocks were demolished in the 1990's. The tower blocks were replaced by modern conventional houses.



Young married couples buy a house at once, but they both have to work, because a small house in London can cost an income of seven years.

The architecture of Docklands:

A comparison to the City of London is Docklands, because there the buildings are big, high and modern. It is a big contrast to the City of London, but the Docklands now, as the people know them, weren't always like this. The change has been for 20 years, but it counts as one of the most dynamic developments in the world. Not only Docklands make a large profit London itself. The people say that Docklands are like a new and modern New York.



The modern Docklands.

Saint Paul's Cathedral and his architect Sir Christopher Wren:

Sir Christopher Wren as a person:

Sir Christopher Wren was born on 30. October 1632 in East-Knoyle in Wiltshire. He studied maths in Oxford and in 1659 he became a teacher at the University of Oxford. He was interested in architecture. After the “Great Fire” he became the architect of the city. Christopher Wren produced together with Robert Hooke new plans for the rebuilding of London. He built over 60 churches and public buildings, like the new part of Hampton Court Palace, the Palace of Winchester, Kensington Palace and the library of Trinity College in Cambridge. His major work is Saint Paul's Cathedral. He is one of the most excellent architects in English architecture, who always worked with the same team of tradesman. He built his work in different styles, like classicism or Italian baroque. Christopher Wren didn't want a monument, he wanted his work to speak for him. His memorial slab in the crypt of St. Paul's Cathedral reminds the people of him as an architect. It has bears the inscription: “Lector, si monumentum requiris, circumspice”, which means, if you are searching for his memorial, look about you. He died on 8. March 1723 in Hampton Court.



A picture of Sir Christopher Wren

Saint Paul's Cathedral:

Saint Paul's Cathedral is in the City of London, 300 metres north of the Thames. It is one of the biggest cathedrals in the world. The building now is a new building, because of the “Great Fire” in 1666.

After the “Great Fire” Sir Christopher Wren rebuilt it on a basis of tax resources. It took over 30 years, from 1675 until 1710. He planned different designs, but his last design in 1676 is accepted.



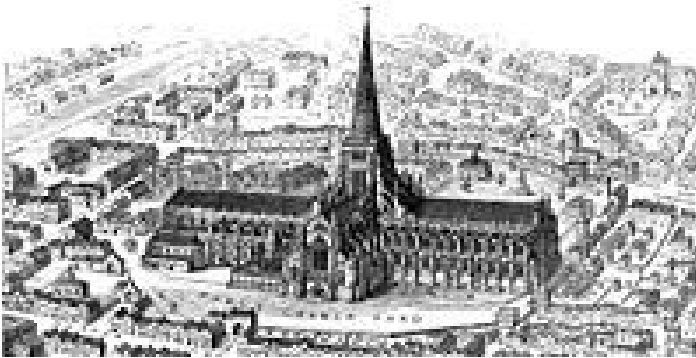
His first design.



His last design, which is accepted. The cathedral now.



He planned a long building with a high tower, but with the many changes, only the ground-plan is like what he planned. His idea for the dome he had in his first designs, was pushed through and now Saint Paul's Cathedral has a dome. With a height of 110 metres is the dome the second highest in the world after the “Peterskirche” in Rome. In the crypt there are buried numerous famous Britons or remembered with a monument. In 1708 Saint Paul's Cathedral was finished with its two clock towers.



The old Saint Paul's Cathedral, a design.



The new Saint Paul's Cathedral.

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Finally it can be said that the architecture in London is a big part of a change in the world. For a lot of people the architecture is a pioneer for lots of countries, but other people say that it is only a imitation of the big cities like New York. However the Londoners can be proud of , what they have and don't have to be jealous.

Vocabulary:

growth- Wachstum, Zunahme

beam- Balken

semi-detached- Doppelhaushälfte

council flats- Sozialwohnung

tradesman- Handwerker

memorial slab- Grabplatte

assumed- angenommen

to inhumed- beisetzen

to perpetuate- verewigen

pioneer- Vorreiter

Sources: en.wikipedia.org(Sir Christopher Wren, Saint Paul's Cathedral, "Great Fire")

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[google pictures](http://google.com/pictures)

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