

History of Architecture

History of Architecture – Structured Study Notes

1. Overview

- **Definition:** Architecture is the art and science of designing and constructing buildings and other physical structures.
 - **Why study its history?**
 - Reveals cultural, technological, and social shifts.
 - Shows how form follows function, climate, material availability, and ideology.
 - Provides a toolbox of typologies, proportions, and detailing that inform contemporary practice.
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2. Chronological Framework

Period	Approx. Dates	Key Characteristics	Representative Examples
Prehistoric	?–?c. 3000? BC	Shelter, megalithic monuments, use of stone & earth	Göbekli Tepe (Turkey), Newgrange (Ireland)
Ancient Near East	?c. 3000–500? BC	Monumental temples, ziggurats, mud?brick, early urban grids	Uruk (Iraq), Ziggurat of Ur
Classical (Greek & Roman)	?c. 800? BC–476?AD	Orders (Doric, Ionic, Corinthian), symmetry, proportion, engineering of arches & domes	Parthenon, Pantheon, Roman aqueducts
Byzantine	?c. 330–1453	Centralized domes, rich mosaics, emphasis on interior light	Hagia Sophia (Istanbul)
Islamic	?c. 7th–16th? c.	Courtyard houses, hypostyle halls, muqarnas, arabesque ornament	Alhambra (Granada), Great Mosque of Córdoba
Romanesque	?c. 1000–1150	Massive walls, rounded arches, barrel vaults, sculptural portals	Saint?Sernin (Toulouse)
Gothic	?c. 1150–1500	Pointed arches, ribbed vaults, flying buttresses, stained glass	Notre?Dame (Paris), Cologne Cathedral

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Renaissance	?c. 1400–1600	Revival of classical orders, perspective, symmetry, domes	Florence Cathedral, Palladio's Villa Rotonda
Baroque & Rococo	?c. 1600–1750	Dynamic movement, dramatic light, elaborate ornament	St. Peter's Square, Versailles
Neoclassicism	?c. 1750–1850	Return to pure classical language, rational geometry	Panthéon (Paris), White House (USA)
Industrial Revolution	?c. 1850–1914	Iron & steel, glass, prefabrication, new typologies (train stations, skyscrapers)	Crystal Palace, Eiffel Tower
Modernism	?c. 1910–1970	Functionalism, "form follows function," rejection of ornament, new materials (reinforced concrete, glass)	Villa Savoye, Bauhaus, Le Corbusier's Unite d'Habitation
Postmodernism	?c. 1970–1990	Historical reference, irony, eclecticism, "contextualism"	Piazza d'Italia (New Orleans), Portland Building
Contemporary / 21st Century	?1990–present	Sustainable design, parametric modeling, digital fabrication, adaptive reuse	The High Line (NYC), Bosco Verticale (Milan), 3D-printed housing

3. Major Architectural Elements & Their Evolution

| Element | Ancient / Classical | Medieval | Renaissance & Later | Modern &