

Research paper on distinctive characteristics of ancient greek architecture

[Design](#), [Architecture](#)



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Ancient Greek Architecture is dated from around 600 BC to the 1st Century AD. The temples, theatres, gateways, tombs, stadiums and other buildings built around this time in the areas under the Greek empire and later, the Hellenic lands constitute the bulk of ancient Greek architecture. This report is a look at some of the best work of that time, the technical and architectural commentary on these structures and the present day relevance of these architectural marvels.

Among all, the correctness and strictness of the Greek architectural structures are their most distinctive characteristics. Unlike architectural styles of the past and some of the styles that followed, the Greek buildings, especially the temples, had a sense of formalization in as far as their design was concerned. Even in terms of structural definitions, measurements and prototypes, the Greek architecture had its styles divided into three clear categories. These were called the Doric order, the Ionic order and the Corinthian order .

The Doric order, the oldest among the three, had the following features in the structures: Conclave curves, also known as flutes were sculpted at the bottom of the shafts while the frieze of the entablature was bedecked with

vertical channels and spaces. These were called tryglyphs and metopes. The columns were without bases and at the same time were placed next to each other at a close distance. The famous Parthenon is said to be the best example and the zenith of the Doric order.

On the other hand, the Ionic order, most importantly had small bases at the bottom of the columns of their structures. The difference is also in the form of stone double curves found under the architrave. The friezes are not separated by spaces but are continuous in the structures built as per the Ionic order. The third order is called the Corinthian order. Famous, more in the Hellenistic times, the capitals of the Corinthian structures are known to have a pair of small volutes enabling similarity of structural view from all sides. The capitals are also known to portray an echinus which is decorated with leaves and palmettos.

Buildings of the Ancient Greek Architecture

The trademark buildings of the Greek architecture are the Ancient Greek Temples, the open air theatre or auditorium, and three other structures known as Stoa, Agora and Acropolis.

The temple, rectangular in shape is the best known and the most represented structure of ancient Greek architecture. Some of the famous Greek temples include the temple of the Olympian Zeus, the temple of Poseidon, the Cyrene Zeus temple, the Apollo Epicurus temple, the Erechthium, The Segesta temple, a famous Doric construction, the Paestum and the Parthenon.

The Greek theatre was another key cornerstone of the Ancient Greek

Architecture. The areas of the theatron which was the slope where the play was finally watched from, the orchestra which was a circle with diameter of around 80 feet and the skene together constituted the entire theatre. Initially these theatres were built on a massive level and range so that a lot people could be accommodated. The number of audience could be as high as fifteen thousand people in total. Even acoustic arrangements were taken care of. Among other structures, famous are the Agora which refers to a market place where as the Stoa is the word for the Greek colony .

Modern Relevance

The Greek Buildings went on to have a great influence on the architecture that followed. Even modern day buildings have been heavily influenced by the design and mechanics of the Greek era. More importantly what remains relevant till date is the method in the design of the buildings. The strict formalization, though it draws ire from the more creative architects who prefer to be looser in their structure and in the possibilities of design, remains one of the most taught fundamentals of architecture. The point being made is that the accuracy with which some of the boundary conditions of design were prescribed by the Greek architects is simply rare today. It is therefore better to take in the already designed precision of the golden era of architecture and to use it in the best way possible today.

Another argument being made by the followers of the rigidity of the Greek architecture is that while the rules were strict and precision was a standard, while one had to always stick to the scales and formats prescribed, there still have emerged a large number of distinct marvels from the Greek order. This

is a hint at the fact that within the boundaries, there is a huge scope for creativity and improvisation. In fact the more creative of two architects or designers is he who is able to bring in more dimensions to work within the prescribed limits. A limitless world is more anarchic than is brilliant while a new world within the same limits is the stuff of dreams that architects dream of.

As impossible as it seems, the Greek formalization allowed for more creativity than today's modern architecture and that statement agreed to by most. Perhaps formalization was the biggest gifts the Greek builders gave our generation. In formalization lies the root of all creativity.

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