

# Architecture of the english renaissance history essay



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In the 14th century, a very powerful movement called the Renaissance began in Florence, Italy. Between the early 16th and 17th century, this movement reached England where it gave birth to a large cultural and artistic era known as the English Renaissance. No field was left untouched by the revolution caused by this influential era. The English Renaissance, often referred to as “ the Elizabethan era”, created an immense stimulation in the arts, literature, music, and architecture throughout all of England. Next to the arts and literature, architecture proved to be one of the most distinguishing aspects of the English Renaissance. Many new styles of architecture, as well as architects emerged during this period, becoming known throughout time. Of these brilliant styles and architects none were better known than Elizabethan Architecture, English Baroque Architecture, and famous architects Andrea Palladio and Inigo Jones.

Elizabethan style architecture was one of the earliest and most popular forms of Renaissance architecture in England, coming after Tudor Architecture. It was a major transitional style of the English Renaissance that emerged during Queen Elizabeth’s reign, giving it its name. This style of architecture was seen as a blend between Medieval and Renaissance styles because it was created during a time of transition between the two. The Elizabethan style was known for being used in the design of upper class houses, manors, and castles. In general, it focused on a more symmetrical style of construction for the buildings, geometric designs adorning the floors of buildings, and various towers on each side of them. For the upper class houses and manors, stone and expensive bricks were used to ensure durability and give the buildings an elegant appearance. The style would

typically result in the construction of tall outsized square houses. They would have asymmetrical towers built attached to each side, hinting at the evolution from medieval fortified architecture. The towers at each end would be referred to as wings and have a many mullioned windows. They would usually be connected by an extravagantly detailed façade, sometimes done with a different style depending on the owner's choice. Both the towers and the facade would be built with exactly the same detail in order to create an overall sense of symmetry for the whole structure. Then a common internal feature of the Elizabethan style was having a long gallery built to function as the chief reception room in the building. An example of a house that has these features would be the Longleat House near Wiltshire, England. Many dwellings such as this one were commissioned to be built by the court of nobility during that time. The Elizabethan style architecture also adopted some features that were very popular during its time, such as the long great halls of medieval manors and the classical Greco-Roman columns used for the framing of house entrances. However, the original Elizabethan features always outshined the ones adopted from those other styles. Some of these exquisite features were broad staircases, a long gallery connecting the wings of the house on the upper floors, withdrawing rooms, bedrooms of greater size and detail, high chimneys, overhanging first floors, pillared porches, dormer windows, and thatched roofs. Besides being used in upper class homes and manors, few Elizabethan features were found in some of England's castles. People during that time only added this style's features to castles in order to make them more luxurious and comfortable. Other than for these reasons, Elizabethan architecture was not used for much else.

Eventually, the peoples' want for a greater unified style of architecture lead them to abandon Elizabethan style in search of a new one.

Much time after the Elizabethan style a new form of architecture known as the English Baroque style emerged. It made use of vivid curved shapes, strong lines, and rich colors to give emotion not only to works of art, but to architecture as well. In architecture, the English Baroque style used lavish, heavy decoration and curvaceous, complex forms to appeal to people's senses. It appealed to people in a way that no other style could match, however the appeal was so dramatic, that its lavish use of curves and exaggeration was sometimes seen as ridiculous. An example of these ridiculous proportions would be the doors of the Blenheim Palace. Many lavishing mansions and public buildings were constructed using this style of architecture to make them seem more extravagant in the eyes of the people and owner's, putting them in awe. The proportions of specific parts of a building compared to those of other were mostly ignored. This was because more attention was placed on the parts of the buildings in proportion to people. Though Baroque was very popular throughout most of Europe, it only experienced a brief blossoming period in England. No one is sure how or why, but the style only lasted a life span of a few decades from 1690-1730. However, in that short amount of time, the Baroque style of architecture gave birth to some of England's most important architectural treasures. Two of these treasures were Castle Howard and Blenheim Palace, both the work of one of the world's best-known English Baroque architects, Sir John Vanbrugh. In his works he focused more on putting the viewer in awe than embellishing proportions and decor. Unfortunately by the third decade of the

1700's, the lavish elements of the Baroque style gave way to the cautious, more proportionally focused Georgian classical period.

Throughout the entire English Renaissance, the two most well-renown architects of this time were Andrea Palladio and Inigo Jones. Andrea Palladio was an Italian Renaissance architect during the beginning of the 1500's. He was greatly moved by the works of Vitruvius, a Roman architect. Palladio tried to recreate the specific form of ancient Roman buildings in his own buildings. He would often base his works on the temple fronts of the Romans, mostly focusing on their symmetry, perspective, and formal style. The temple influence eventually became known as a trademark of his work. However, besides basing his works on that of the Romans, he also designed them with reference to their setting. In addition, many of his buildings were made of less expensive materials such as brick and stucco. This allowed a chance for financially-troubled clients to have work done for them. Basically Palladio's style of architecture was based on grace, understated decorative elements, and use of classical orders. In many ways Andrea was ahead of his time, for it was not until the 18th century that adherence of his classical ideals became truly widespread in England. It was during this time that Palladio's work became the basis for Palladian architecture. This type of architecture was based on the fundamental ideas behind Palladio's works. Palladian architecture, brought to life by Palladio's work, became quite popular in England during the 17th century and part of the 18th century. Some of Palladio's well-known works are the Villa Foscari and Tauride Palace. It was thanks to famous architect Inigo Jones that Palladian architecture was first introduced to England from Italy. Sometimes called the " English

Palladio", Jones traveled to Italy to further his studies in painting and stage design, where he then later decided to study architecture, chiefly following Palladian style architecture. After further studies in Venice, his reputation grew to such an extent that various kings, queens, and rich patrons commissioned him to design great manors and palaces for them, such as the palaces of Rosenborg and Frederiksborg he designed for Christian IV. In the following year he then accompanied Anne of Denmark to the court of James I of England, where he was appointed architect to the queen and Prince Henry and employed to supply the designs and decorations of the court masques. Sometime after his studies and work in Italy, Inigo Jones went back to England where he became the most influential follower of Palladio. Later referred to as Palladianism of Jones, his style was largely focused on facades and using them for the construction of buildings and royal palaces all throughout England. The Queen's House at Greenwich and the Banqueting House at Whitehall are just some examples of places Jones used his Palladian based style to create. Inigo Jones lived a talented and extravagant life, using Andrea Palladio's style as a basis for his own work.

The English Renaissance was a period of great innovation and development. Through the hard work and creative thinking power of numerous people, the old boundaries of the English culture have been pushed to new heights. However, the progress made in each of the separate fields of culture during English Renaissance has not only benefitted England throughout the past few hundred years, but all of the world's societies. The advancements made by people in architecture during that time period have been the basis of future progress. What we have now is the end result of thousands of years of

progress, some years like the period of the Renaissance being some of the most crucial. It is certain that without the expansions made in architecture during the English Renaissance, many of the buildings and innovations we have now would not be in existence.