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Crystal Palace

building, London, United Kingdom

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Crystal Palace, giant glass-and-iron exhibition hall in [Hyde Park](#), [London](#), that housed the [Great Exhibition of 1851](#). The structure was taken down and rebuilt (1852–54) at Sydenham Hill (now in the borough of [Bromley](#)), at which site it survived until 1936.

Crystal Palace The Crystal Palace at Sydenham Hill, London. It was designed by Sir Joseph Paxton for the Great Exhib...(more)

In 1849 [Prince Albert](#), husband of [Queen Victoria](#) and president of the Royal Society of Arts, [conceived](#) the idea of inviting international exhibitors to participate in an exposition. Plans were developed and the necessary funds speedily raised, with Victoria herself heading the list of subscribers. The exhibition opened in the Crystal Palace on May 1, 1851.

The Crystal Palace, designed by [Sir Joseph Paxton](#), was a remarkable construction of prefabricated parts. It consisted of an intricate network of slender iron rods sustaining walls of clear glass. The main body of the [building](#) was 1,848 feet (563 metres) long and

408 feet (124 metres) wide; the height of the central [transept](#) was 108 feet (33 metres). The construction occupied some 18 acres (7 hectares) on the ground, while its total floor area was about 990,000 square feet (92,000 square metres, or about 23 acres [9 hectares]). On the ground floor and galleries there were more than 8 miles (13 km) of display tables.

Some 14,000 exhibitors participated, nearly half of whom were non-British. France sent 1,760 exhibits and the [United States](#) 560. Among the American exhibits were [false teeth](#), artificial legs, Colt's repeating pistol, Goodyear india rubber goods, [chewing tobacco](#), and McCormick's reaper. Popular British exhibits included hydraulic presses, powerful steam engines, pumps, and automated cotton mules (spinning machines). More than six million visitors [attended](#) the exhibition, which was open to the public until October 11. The event showed a significant profit, and a closing ceremony was held on October 15. Thereafter the building was taken down, and it was rebuilt at Sydenham Hill in Upper Norwood, overlooking London from the south.



Crystal Palace Illustration of the transept of the Crystal Palace, designed by Sir Joseph Paxton, at the Great Exhibition of 185...(more)

The Crystal Palace established an architectural standard for later international fairs and exhibitions that likewise were housed in glass conservatories, the immediate successors being the Cork Exhibition of 1852, the Dublin and [New York City](#) expositions of 1853, the Munich Exhibition of 1854, and the Paris Exposition of 1855.

For a number of years the Crystal Palace was the site of shows, exhibitions, concerts, football (soccer) matches, and other entertainments. On the night of November 30–December 1, 1936, it was virtually destroyed by fire; the towers that survived were

finally demolished in 1941 because they were deemed a [conspicuous](#) landmark for incoming German bombers.

The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica

This article was most recently revised and updated by [Adam Augustyn](#).

Visual Arts > Architecture

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Victorian architecture

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Manchester Town Hall, England, designed by Alfred Waterhouse.

Victorian architecture, building style of the [Gothic Revival](#) that marks the movement from a [sentimental](#) phase to one of greater exactitude.

Its principles, especially honesty of expression, were first laid down in *The True Principles of Pointed or Christian Architecture* (1841) by [Augustus Pugin](#) (1812–52). Much Victorian design consisted of adapting the decorative details and rich colour combinations of Italian, and especially Venetian, Gothic. Though [ornamentation](#) could be elaborate, it was usually not superficially applied but grew rationally out of the form and material used.

This article was most recently revised and updated by [Kathleen Kuiper](#).



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