

Neoclassical Buildings of Sheffield

A teacher's guide for class-based lessons and field visits



Corinthian column outside Cutlers' Hall

Sheffield has many Victorian and early 20th century buildings inspired by the Classical architecture of Ancient Greece and Rome.

This guide is to those in the city centre which are easy to access for a class visit in history, art or architectural studies. They can be visited individually or on a walking tour.

This guide provides the following resources:

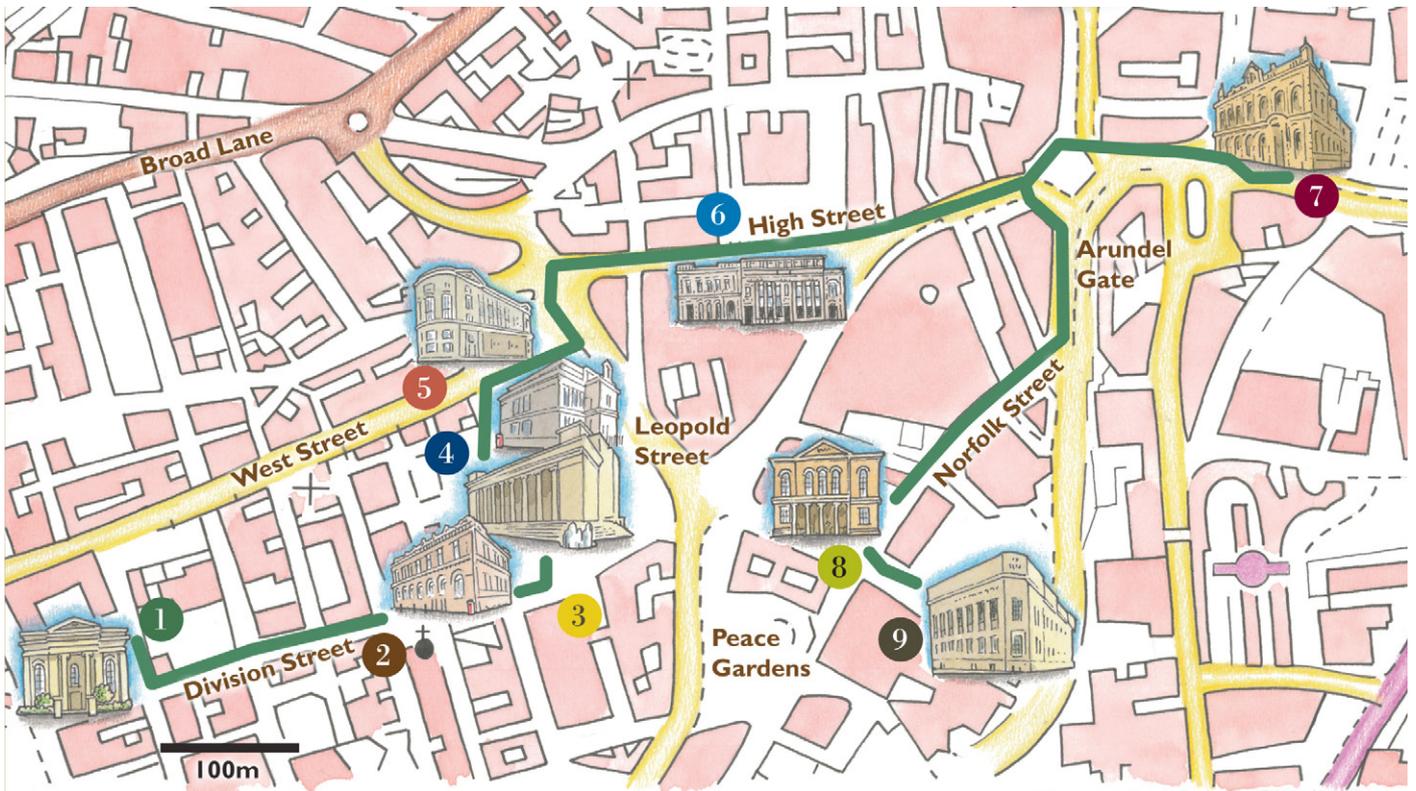
- 1) **Directions to the buildings.**
- 2) **A suggested itinerary with directions.**
- 3) **Photographs of the buildings.**
- 4) **Architectural details about the buildings.**
- 5) **Common Neoclassical architectural elements.**
- 6) **History of the buildings.**
- 7) **Glossary of architectural terms.**

Introduction to Neoclassical Architecture

The Classical buildings of Ancient Greece and Rome inspire Neoclassical architecture. Renaissance architects in 16th century Italy loved the simple, geometric style of columns and flat roofs as an alternative to Baroque domes, towers and decoration. The style spread during the 18th century as nations increasingly turned to the ancient world for authority. That's why the US White House looks like a Roman temple.

It's also why you find columns on some of Sheffield's iconic buildings. The Cutlers' Hall, Weston Park Museum, City Hall and Central Library all have a touch of Classical architecture. There are classically styled banks, schools, chapels, cemeteries and utility companies.

These were the places where residents of Sheffield were educated, spiritually uplifted and laid to eternal rest, as well as the offices where they deposited their money, paid their bills and had telephone calls connected. Non-conformists chose Classical simplicity to reflect their difference from the ornately gothic-dominated Church of England, while other institutions wanted to communicate their enduring importance and reliability.



Location of Neoclassical buildings in this guide with suggested itinerary and walking route.

Glossary

- 1) Anthemion - A palmette or anthemion (from the Greek for a flower) is an artistic motif resembling the fan-shaped leaves of a palm.
- 2) Entablature - The superstructure of moldings and bands which lie horizontally above columns, resting on their capitals.
- 3) Neoclassical - Style of architecture originating in Renaissance Italy. It revived the simple, geometric style of columns and flat roofs of Classical Greece and Rome.
- 4) Palazzo - Emulating the palaces of wealthy Renaissance Italians.
- 5) Palladian - Style of 18th century Italian architect Andrea Palladio.
- 6) Pediment - Triangular upper part of the front of a building (photo below left).
- 7) Pilaster - Flat 'fake' column decorating a wall (photo below right).
- 8) Portico - Roof supported by columns, often a building's porch.
- 9) Renaissance - The culture and style of art, architecture and literature developed during the 14th–16th centuries, which was influenced by Classical models.



Know Your Classical Columns

A lot of Classical architecture is about rows and rows of columns - such as those that adorn the Parthenon in Athens.

There are three types and all are found in Sheffield. Ancient Greeks thought they were modelled on the human body.

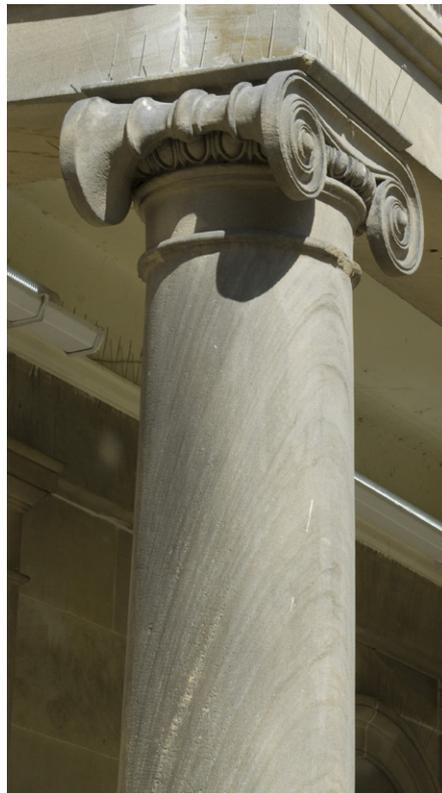
Doric columns

Wide columns with squat, plain capitals. Seen as being male.



Ionic columns

Slender columns with curling capitals. Represent the female body.



Corinthian columns

Slimmer columns than Ionic with elaborate plant decorated capitals. These are supposedly young maidens.



1. Mount Zion Congregational chapel - Westfield Terrace



Mount Zion is on Westfield Terrace, a side street connection West Street and Division Street. Westfield Terrace is towards town from the West Street tram stop.

This may look like the front of a Greek temple, yet it was the entrance to a non-conformist chapel built amongst a large garden in 1834.

Two Ionic columns support a portico with a typically Greek triangular pediment above. The tall arched windows to either side are Palladian in style.

Sheffield Royal Hospital bought Mount Zion for its outpatients' entrance, opened in 1927 by future Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain.

Look out for:

1. Ionic columns supporting portico
2. Palladian-type windows
3. Name Mount Zion below triangular pediment

2. Sheffield Water Works Company - Division Street



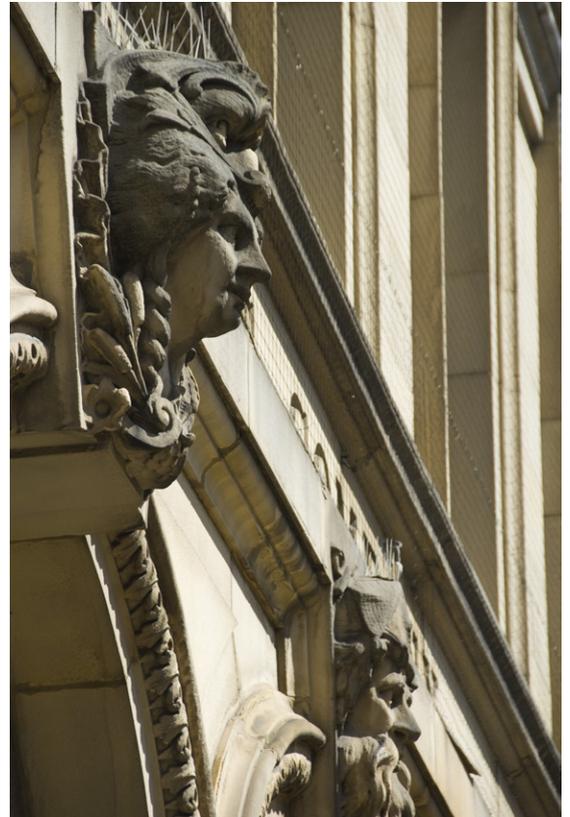
Walk along Westfield Terrace to Division Street, turn left and continue towards the city centre to the end of Division Street.

Sheffield Water Works built many of the city's reservoirs including the notorious Dale Dyke, which burst its dam catastrophically in 1864 and drowned hundreds of people.

The Sheffield Flood didn't do the company much harm. They had architects Flockton and Abbott design these offices in 1867 in the Palazzo style. Polished granite Doric columns support arched windows. The heads represent Greek and Roman water deities, including a woman wearing a the head of a fish.

Look out for:

1. Arched windows with attached columns, heads of water gods (photo right)
2. Balustraded parapet, topped by draped urns (photo above)
3. Palazzo style, rare in Sheffield
4. Polished red granite Doric columns with plain capitals
5. Ornate ashlar façade, but side walls plain brick



3. Sheffield City Hall - Barker's Pool



The City Hall is the large building in Barker's Pool, just after the Water Works.

The City Hall opened in 1932 as a concert hall and the city's war memorial. Some of the biggest names in popular music have played here, from the Beatles and Jimi Hendrix to Little Mix in 2013. Orchestras and comedians also perform here.

It was designed by E. Vincent Harris, one of the last architects to create Neoclassical civic buildings in Britain. It is built from Darley Dale stone quarried near Matlock.

The row of Corinthian columns above the flight of steps is typical of a Roman temple. The columns support a frieze where Sheffield City Hall is engraved.

Look out for:

1. Built in 1930s Classical Revival style
2. Originally planned to have a more ornately decorated façade, including decorated entablature
3. Darley Dale Stone (near Matlock)
4. Medieval-style interior



4. Central Schools - Orchard Lane, Holly Street and West St



Find the Central Schools building immediately behind the City Hall.

The Victorian buildings around Leopold Square are a time-travelling clash of Ancient Greek and Tudor styles. All built for education, they include the Sheffield Medical Institution, one the University of Sheffield's forerunners.

You can see the Greek influence in the old Central Schools building opposite the City Hall. Built in 1876 by Flockton and Abbott, Classical urns stand above a pediment on Orchard Lane to your right.

Continue down Holly Street on to West Street and look up to your right. Flat Ionic pilasters frame the first floor windows of the 1894 Bow Street School.

Leopold Street was created in the 1870s to create a more attractive and convenient link between Church St and Barkers Pool.

Look out for:

1. Central Schools extension at the top of lane is topped with pediment and urns
2. Bow Street at corner of Holly St and West St has flat Ionic pilasters (photo above)
3. School Board Offices on Leopold St, with entrance flanked by Ionic columns and broken pediment; festooned frieze
4. Pilasters on Leopold St.

5. Steel City House - West Street



Look at the imposing grey building across West Street, opposite Leopold Square.

Steel City House was built in 1927 as the city's telephone exchange. It also housed a post office, bank and shops.

The building is clad in Portland stone. This on West Street has Doric pilasters separating the first floor windows. Its impressive entrance is on the corner of West Street to your right. It is a semi-circular portico supported by massive Doric columns, each fluted with vertical ridges.

Look out for:

1. Clad in Portland stone, giving its grey colour
2. Fluted Doric columns supporting semi-circular portico to main entrance (photo below)
2. Upper floor bays divided by Doric pilasters



6. Cutlers' Hall and Banks - Church Street.

A) Cutlers' Hall

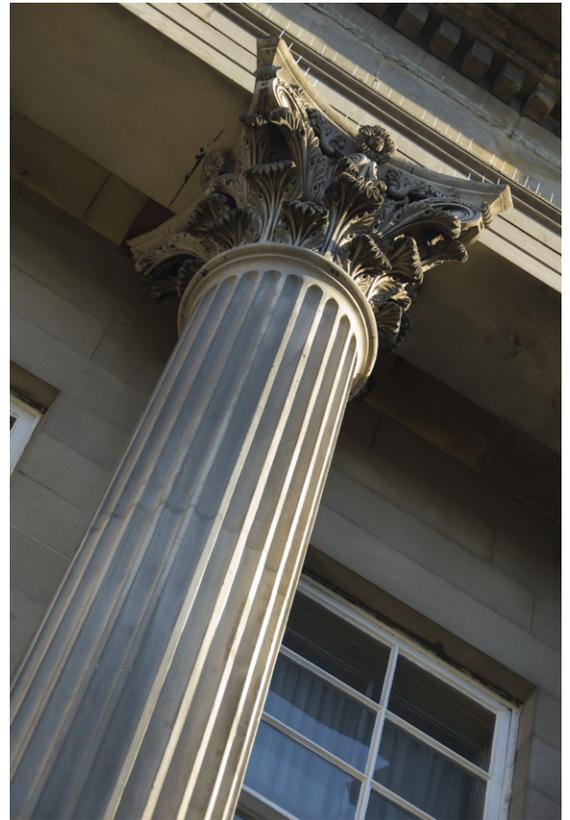


Walk down West Street to the cathedral. You can point out for more Neoclassical columns and pilasters along Leopold Street looking towards the Town Hall as you cross Leopold Street.

This is Sheffield's grandest Neoclassical street view. These three buildings have all three styles of Classical columns – Doric, Ionic and Corinthian.

The Cutlers' Hall is in the centre. Built from Derbyshire gritstone in 1832, and then extended during the Victorian period, it has towering Corinthian columns. The ornate capitals are decorated with the leaf of the Mediterranean acanthus plant.

The Company of Cutlers in Hallamshire has been the trade guild of Sheffield metalworkers since 1624. The hall is home to the Master Cutler, award ceremonies and formal functions such as the 360-year-old annual Cutlers' Feast. The elephant head in the Cutlers' Coat of Arms refers to the use of ivory for cutlery handles.



Look out for:

1. Corinthian columns outside (photo right). The plants on the capitals are the Mediterranean acanthus plant
2. True Corinthian entablature
3. Attic storey added in 1928

6. Cutlers' Hall and Banks - Church Street.

B) HSBC Bank



To the right of the Cutlers' Hall is the Sheffield and Hallamshire Savings Bank, until recently a branch of HSBC. It opened here in 1836. There was a wire workshop between the bank and the Cutlers' until 1878.

The bank has Ionic fluted columns topped with curling capitals. The architect aligned the roof balustrade with the Cutlers' Hall to create a continuous facade.

Look out for:

1. Eight Ionic columns on plinth
2. True Ionic entablature, creating sight-line from Cutler's Hall
3. Anthemion panels over doors at either end and meander patterns over lower windows
4. Originally 5 bays with 4 columns; mirroring addition added to left in 1878, along with Renaissance gateway

6. Cutlers' Hall and Banks - Church Street.

C) Royal Bank of Scotland



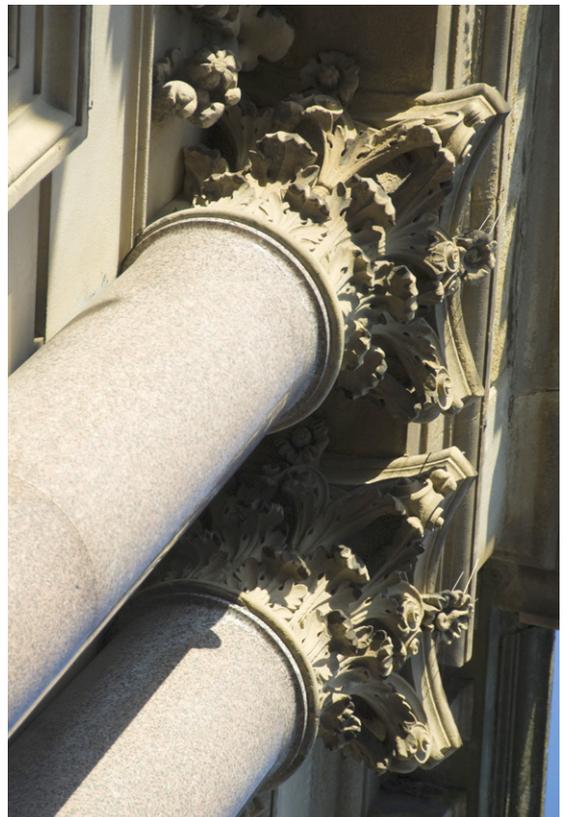
To the left is the Royal Bank of Scotland, built in 1867 with two storeys of polished red granite columns.

The architect who designed the Sheffield Water Works building used a similar Palazzo style here.

The 'male' plain capitals of the ground floor Doric columns support 'young maidens' of ornate Corinthian capitals.

Look out for:

1. Palazzo-type style, as is the Water Works
2. Columns of Aberdeen red granite
3. Stacked orders, Doric on bottom, Corinthian on top (photo right)



7. Sheffield United Gas Light Company - Commercial Street



Continue down Church Street and High Street, cross Fitzalan Square and walk downhill to the imposing Neoclassical block on your left just after the tram stop.

Built in the Palazzo style, this was an Italian palace for a gas company. Its original name - Panache House - can still be seen above the door.

The riot of decoration comprises granite Corinthian columns, gritstone pilasters, arched and triangular pediments and ornate plant motifs. Two massive figures of Atlas hold the arched portico aloft, as the Greek Titan takes a break from shouldering the earth.

M.E. Hadfield built this office in 1874 as a statement of the company's success. It is Sheffield's only building comparable to the Manchester commercial 'palaces'. The building was known to generations who paid their gas bills here as 'The Gas Office'.

Look out for:

1. Palazzo style
2. Hollington stone façade with 'riot of decoration'
3. Off-centre entrance with open segmental pediment supported by Atlas figures (photo right)
4. Very ornate Corinthian capitals; frieze with bay-leaf decoration



5. Interior dome 25 feet/8 metres in diameter

8. Upper Chapel - Norfolk Street



Retrace your steps to Castle Square, turn left along Arundel Gate, turn right along Norfolk Street and continue to Upper Chapel on your right.

This was Sheffield's first non-conformist chapel. The original 18th century brick chapel fronted on to Fargate, but it was enlarged and turned around in 1847 to face what were fields. That's when the simple Neoclassical façade was added. Four plain Ionic columns support the porch while the graceful arched windows are framed with Corinthian pilasters.

Look out for:

1. Brick side walls
2. Ionic porch with pediment
3. Corinthian pilasters on upper windows



9. Central Library and Graves Art Gallery - Surrey Street



Continue to Surrey Street and turn left towards the Central Library. Look for the figure of Knowledge high up on the library's corner. He holds an ankh and an asp – the choice between good and evil.

1930s Neoclassical meets Art Deco at the home of Sheffield Libraries and the Graves Art Gallery. Designed by W.G. Davies, it was opened by the Duchess of York.

Six tall Ionic pilasters dominate the broad front, and 9 medallions are carved around the entrance. They represent different aspects of knowledge.

Graves Art Gallery is named after J.G. Graves, who founded one of Britain's first mail order businesses. He donated thousands of pounds, along with paintings from his collection, to Sheffield's art galleries. He also funded Sheffield University's Student Union and gave land to the city, including Graves Park.

Look out for:

1. Faced with Portland stone, with giant Ionic pilasters and a high parapet wall around 3rd floor galleries
2. Carved medallions around main entrance, representing Literature, Music, Drama, Architecture, Sculpture, Painting, Mathematics, Chemistry and Astronomy (photo right)
3. Also figure of Knowledge, holding an ankh and



asp representing choice between good and evil (photo top)

More Neoclassical Gems in Sheffield



Weston Park Museum. Built in 1885 as the Mappin Art Gallery, it has a pure Ionic facade (photo above).

King Edward's School, Clarkehouse Road. Giant Corinthian columns look out from this early Victorian temple to learning.

The Mount, Glossop Road. Eight terrace houses look like a country mansion with massive Ionic columns. Built in 1832 by William Flockton.

Botanical Gardens. Opened in 1836, the Clarkehouse Road entrance is a portico supported on paired Ionic columns and a rounded arch.

General Cemetery. One of the first public cemeteries in Britain, it was laid out for non-conformists in 1836. Doric columns, porticos and friezes blend Greek and Egyptian styles in the entrances and non-conformist chapel.

Find out more about Sheffield's historic buildings in *Pevsner Architectural Guides: Sheffield*, edited by Ruth Harman and John Minnis, 2004.

This guide has been produced by Sheffield-based heritage interpreters *inHeritage.co.uk* in partnership with Drs Maureen Carroll and Jane Rempel, Department of Archaeology, University of Sheffield, as part of the University's Festival of the Mind, 20th – 30th September 2012. www.sheffield.ac.uk/FOTM. Text by Bill Bevan based on the lecture by Maureen Carroll and Jane Rempel. Photos by Bill Bevan.

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