

Discover London...

trail 4

map & introduction

THE LONDON ARTS AND CRAFTS TRAIL... In the footsteps of William Morris

Not to scale

THE LONDON ARTS AND CRAFTS TRAIL... In the footsteps of William Morris



Discover London Trails have been produced by the Campaign for Museums, a registered charity, in support of London's Smaller Museums and Galleries with funding from the Mayor of London and ALM London.

Themed trail - full day/half days

The Arts and Crafts Movement was one of the most far-reaching, influential and popular design movements of modern times. Emerging in the late 19th century, it was quickly taken up and adopted in America and Europe until it reached its final manifestation as the Mingei (Folk Crafts) Movement in early 20th century Japan.

William Morris was the central figure in the Arts and Crafts Movement and one of the most important and influential designers in British History. In 1861, he founded his first company producing a wide range of decorative objects for the home including furniture, fabrics, wallpaper and stained glass.

The Movement championed a unity of arts and was broadly defined by its common aims of social and industrial reform, the revival of handicrafts and a return to the simple life. A rebellion of substance as well as style, its power came from the conviction that art and craft could change people's lives. It brought new attitudes to work, design and the home and remains an inspiration for artists and craftspeople working today.

From the pioneering designs of William Morris and the writings of John Ruskin, to a new generation of architects, artists, designers and their patrons, the style has endured and multiplied and can be found today in museums, galleries, historic houses and homes across the UK. This trail highlights some important examples across London where it all started, covering design, architecture and historical connections.

- 1 Victoria and Albert Museum
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- 3 Geffrye Museum
- 4 Red House
- 5 Kelmscott House
- 6 Merton Abbey Mills
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addresses & summary

THE LONDON ARTS AND CRAFTS TRAIL . . .

TRAIL SUMMARY

This trail follows the theme of William Morris and the Arts and Craft Movement as demonstrated at a number of locations across London. Since it would be ambitious to visit all these in one day, the trail is designed to allow you to 'pick and mix' according to your own interests.

A good starting point would be the **Victoria and Albert Museum** in South Kensington. In many ways, this is the heart of the Arts and Crafts Movement in the UK with whole interiors by William Morris and his contemporaries.

The **William Morris Gallery** in Walthamstow is devoted to William Morris where the versatility and true inspiration of William Morris can be fully appreciated as well as his influence on his contemporaries and followers.

The **Geffrye Museum**, a former almshouse, stands in the heart of Shoreditch in East London (nearest station Liverpool Street), once an area of furniture makers and craftsmen. This is London's museum of domestic interiors where the arts and crafts style features mainly in the Edwardian Room but is also included in the garden and temporary exhibitions.

In Bexleyheath, south east London is the **Red House** now in the ownership of the National Trust (*admission by guided tour only that must be pre-booked*). Commissioned by William Morris in 1859 and designed by Philip Webb, this house is of enormous international significance in the history of domestic architecture and garden design. **Kelmscott House** in Hammersmith is another private house lived in by William Morris. Now the home of the William Morris Society, the basement and coach house are open to the public on Thursday and Saturday afternoons.

In south London are Merton Abbey and Carshalton. William Morris opened a factory at Merton Abbey on the River Wandle. The **Merton Abbey Mills** craft village is now housed in the former Liberty silk-printing works, by the restored waterwheel. Finally, **Little Holland House** in Carshalton is a unique house created by Frank Dickinson, with inspiration from Ruskin and Morris, in the arts and crafts style.

Plan your own journey by visiting Transport for London's website www.tfl.gov.uk.



Victoria and Albert Museum

Cromwell Road, SW7

www.vam.ac.uk

Open: 1000-1745 daily, 1000-2200 Wed and last Fri of month

Tel: 020 7942 2000

One of the world's leading museums of art and design

William Morris Gallery

Lloyd Park, Forest Road, London E17

www.lbwf.gov.uk

Open: 1000-1300, 1400-1700 Tue-Sat, first Sun of month

Tel: 020 8527 3782

A museum devoted to William Morris

Geffrye Museum

136 Kingsland Road, London, E2

www.geffrye-museum.org.uk

Open: 1000-1700 Tue-Sat, 1200-1700 Sun and BH

Tel: 020 7739 9893

A display of domestic interiors from 1600 to the present day

Red House (National Trust)

Red House Lane, Bexleyheath, DA6 8JF

www.nationaltrust.org.uk

Admission by guided tour only, bookable in advance
Admission charge

Tel: 01494 755588

A house of international significance in the history of domestic architecture

Kelmscott House

26 Upper Mall, W6

www.morrissociety.org

Basement and coach house open:

1400-1700 Thu and Sat

Tel: 020 8741 3735

Home to the William Morris Society

Merton Abbey Mills

Watermill Way

Merton Abbey, SW19

www.merton.gov.uk/outandabout/abbeymills

Craft market open: 1000-1700 Sat and Sun

The location of William Morris's factory on the River Wandle

Little Holland House

40 Beeches Avenue, Carshalton, SM5 3LW

www.sutton.gov.uk

Open: 1330-1730 first Sun of month

plus BH Sun and Mons

Tel: 020 8770 4781

A house created by Frank Dickinson in the arts and crafts style

CHILDREN'S/FAMILY ACTIVITIES

Victoria and Albert Museum – free family events from special exhibition-related created workshops to permanent interactive exhibits as well as a selection of trails with activity sheets.

Geffrye Museum – workshops, quizzes, fun activities, family days with live music, craft activities and story telling. Holiday activities.

Merton Abbey Mills – outdoor riverside space with craft village.

Images

Textile 'Strawberry Thief'

Frank Holland House, Sutton

William Morris Gallery, Walthamstow

Woodcutter stained glass

by Madox Brown and Webb

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the trail in detail

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The **Victoria and Albert Museum** (V&A) in South Kensington (Circle, District and Piccadilly Lines) is one of the world's leading museums of art and design. More than seven miles of galleries are filled with outstanding collections of objects dating from 3000 BC to the present day with the British Galleries offering the most comprehensive collection of British art design from 1500-1900. There are whole interiors by William Morris and his contemporaries including the Morris Room or Green Dining Room, also known as the Gamble Room. The V&A offers a range of food venues to suit all tastes from the Gamble Room to the main Café.

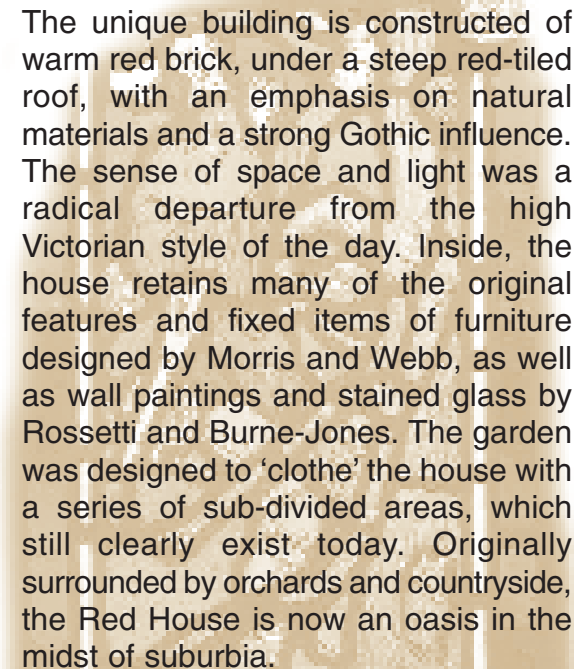
The **William Morris Gallery**, located in Walthamstow, is about 15-20 minutes walk from Walthamstow Central Underground station. Situated in an attractive Georgian House, in the front of Lloyd Park, this was the family home of the prosperous Morris family from 1848 to 1856. Here, you will discover the history of William Morris and see examples of both his designs and those of his followers, including fabrics,

rugs, carpets, wallpapers, furniture, stained glass and painted tiles.

The **Geffrye Museum** is set in elegant 18th century almshouses with a contemporary wing surrounded by attractive gardens - walk or take a bus along Kingsland Road from Liverpool Street station. Depicting the quintessential style of English middle-class living rooms, the collections of furniture, textiles, paintings and decorative arts are displayed in a series of period rooms from 1600 to the present day. You will be led on a walk through time, from the 17th century with oak furniture and panelling, past the refined splendour of the Georgian period and the high style of the Victorians, to 20th century modernity as seen in a 1930s flat, a mid-century room in 'contemporary style' and a late- 20th century living space in a converted warehouse. This museum has a restaurant.

In 1859, William Morris commissioned the **Red House** in Bexleyheath, south east London, where he lived for five years. Reached by train from Charing

Cross, Waterloo East or London Bridge, this house is a landmark in the history of domestic architecture and the garden provided inspiration for Morris's early designs of wallpaper and fabric.



The unique building is constructed of warm red brick, under a steep red-tiled roof, with an emphasis on natural materials and a strong Gothic influence. The sense of space and light was a radical departure from the high Victorian style of the day. Inside, the house retains many of the original features and fixed items of furniture designed by Morris and Webb, as well as wall paintings and stained glass by Rossetti and Burne-Jones. The garden was designed to 'clothe' the house with a series of sub-divided areas, which still clearly exist today. Originally surrounded by orchards and countryside, the Red House is now an oasis in the midst of suburbia.

Between 1878 and 1896, Morris lived in **Kelmescott House** in Hammersmith. The nearest Underground station is

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Ravenscourt Park (District Line). This is partly a private house; the basement and coach house serve as a museum and headquarters for the William Morris Society; open on Thursday and Saturday afternoons or by prior arrangement. On view is the craft workshop including William Morris's Albion Press Coach House and library, with changing exhibitions of Morris embroideries and Pre-Raphaelite drawings. The house is close to the premises of the Kelmscott Press, founded by Morris in 1890.

In 1881, William Morris opened a factory at **Merton Abbey** a village on the River Wandle in Surrey (now London Borough of Merton) where textile printing had gone on since the middle of the 18th century. The works consisted of a dwelling house, coach house, and workshops and sheds on each side of the River Wandle. A mill house, mill pond, meadow, orchard and vegetable garden were also included within the grounds of this picturesque seven-acre site. Much of the company's design work and manufacturing was done

here, producing high quality goods: printed and woven fabrics, stained glass, furnishings, tapestry and carpets. The company continued trading until 1940.

Abbey Mills was also the base for Arthur Liberty, another eminent Victorian and founder of the famous Liberty's shops. The Liberty works produced thousands of yards of hand printed silks that made Liberty a household name. Liberty's historic Victorian waterwheel, fully restored and working, is now the home of **Merton Abbey Mills Craft Village** where there is also a riverside free-house pub, the William Morris. Colliers Wood Underground station (Northern Line) is less than 10 minutes walk from Merton Abbey Mills.

There is a 15km Wandle trail, running along the length of the river, which passes through Carshalton in the London Borough of Sutton, the home of **Little Holland House**. The house is close to Carshalton Beeches station (trains from Victoria). This former home of artist, designer and craftsman Frank

Dickinson (1874-1961) built between 1902 and 1904 is a unique testament to the power and influence of the Arts and Crafts Movement. The exterior and Grade II interior was created entirely by Dickinson, inspired by the ideals of Morris and Ruskin. It contains Dickinson's paintings, hand-made furniture, furnishings and metalwork.