



Design History

Module Descriptor

Module Code: LSA7DEH
Version: V2.00
Status: Final
Date: 04/09/2025

Summary Module Details

Module details

Module Title: Design History

Module Leader: Alan Powers

Module Mode: Full time face to face

Semester/Term: 1

Level: 7

Credits: 20

Learning Hours: 200

Contact & Study Hours

Directed Study Time: 32 hrs (16%)

Self-directed Study Time: 168 hrs (84%)

Assessment Type

Portfolio: 100%

Module Summary

The first term of the Second Year provides an intense period of design experimentation, developed through three concurrent modules: Design Speculation, Design Tectonic and the Design History. While Critical Practice: Placement examined the relationship between process and product in a contemporary practice environment, this module applies a similar critical lens to architectural history. Asking 'How have architects approached the task of design?' it considers the confluence of forces that have shaped form and the resulting design paradigms at different moments in time.

This module culminates with a personal study of a building or a series of buildings appropriate to the student's critical interests and that can offer either case studies or counterpoints for design questions and conditions. This study is intended to be in support of the design thesis work and students should reference observations made in Design History in their Design Speculation, Thesis and Synthesis work.

Taken on which Programmes

MArch Designing Architecture (C)

Core (C) or Elective (E)

Design History

Pre-requisites

All modules on the programme must be completed and passed in the sequence outlined within the programme structure section of the programme specification except where progression has been approved by the Board of Examiners due to mitigating circumstances.

Module Aims

- Like the other lecture-based modules at the London School of Architecture, the Design History, as expressed through the built artefact, aims to develop in students the advanced skills to critically analyse how design happens, in this case through the prism of history, in order to provide students with the objective tools to be self-critical of their own design output.
- This module aims to deepen a student's knowledge by presenting fresh perspectives on architectural history, providing the space to compare and contrast the similarities and differences in how architecture has been designed and made in different periods.
- Through the selection of a building or series of buildings that are critically relevant to their own design work, the module seeks to enhance a student's ability to investigate and evaluate appropriate design strategies and techniques, to formulate perspectives on what lessons could be learned from the past, and to develop professional judgement in how this relates to contemporary practice.

Module Learning Outcomes

On completion of this module students are expected, within the study of a selected architectural exemplar(s), to be able to:

- LO1. Appraise the design of an historic building(s) as a cultural, social and intellectual artefact shaped by the histories, theories and technologies of architecture and the related arts
- LO2. Analyse the influence of history and theory on the spatial, social and technological qualities of architecture
- LO3. Identify ways in which the theories, practices and technologies of the arts influence the quality of architectural design

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- LO4. Illustrate how the application of creative practices such as painting, sculpture, music, performing arts, conceptual art, photography, film and so on, can be relevant to and impact upon architecture
- LO5. Critically analyse architecture in relation to precedents of function, typology, organisation and technology

Indicative Module Syllabus

Sessions will combine lecture and workshop elements, in some cases involving visits to relevant exemplars and away-days with classes held in an appropriate building and manual exercises to explore history through re-enactment. Design History tutors will support the Module Leader in delivery of sessions as well as group tutorials.

Sessions will investigate theories of design in relation to historical periods, styles, cultural, societal and psychological conditions, linked to the potential of materials and technologies and the social aspirations and contingencies that have shaped them.

Students are asked to develop the insights provided during the session by researching a specific building or series of buildings (chosen by student in consultation with tutor) that will support a deeper investigation of their individual design thesis work in relation to the architectural culture, theory and technological capability of the period under scrutiny. The research methodology should be clearly articulated.

Overview of Summative Assessment

Module learning outcomes	Assessment	Word count or equivalent	Weighting
LO1, LO2, LO3, LO4, LO5	Assessment 1 Portfolio - Portfolio of written and visual materials + a 1,350 word reflective statement	N/A	100%

Module Pass Mark (as a weighted average of all assessments): 50%

Key Module Learning Resources

Core Sources and Texts

Indicative bibliographies for each module can be found in Module Booklets.

Module tools

Students will learn through the following range of teaching and events:

- Lectures, workshops and/or field-trips led by Module leader, tutors, and/or experts in specific fields of design theory;
- Seminar of work in progress with the Module leader, tutors, and peers.