

# A history of station design



**From Russia with love:** Gants Hill Tube station was influenced by the Moscow Metro

## LEARN ABOUT THE ICONIC UNDERGROUND ARCHITECTURE OF CHARLES HOLDEN

SOME of London Underground's most famous art deco station designs have come from the drawing board of acclaimed architect Charles Holden, who first joined the Underground Group as a consultant in the early 1920s.

Teaming up with London Transport commissioner Frank Pick, Holden designed or influenced many of the Tube's most recognisable stations.

Pick believed the Tube stations should have to pass a 'fitness for purpose' test, in that they should be well-designed, friendly and easy to use – a practical and aesthetic vision that Holden shared.

Holden redesigned existing stations, including Piccadilly Circus in 1926, but arguably his greatest works were the modernist stations on the Piccadilly line extensions in north and west London.

Here are some of his most notable designs.

### SUDBURY TOWN STATION

This Grade-II listed building was Holden's first design and ushered in a new modernist era for the London Underground. His work took influence from the continental architecture of Holland, Germany and Sweden.

The station on the Piccadilly line incorporates a tall brick booking hall with large windows and lower wings to each side.

It became known as the 'Sudbury Box' and formed the basis for many of Holden's other station designs.

### ARNOS GROVE STATION

Another of Holden's stations from the Piccadilly line extension project, work on Arnos Grove station started in 1931.

It was the first of his designs to feature a distinctive circular ticket hall, although the station itself maintains the classic box style.

Holden again places an emphasis on glass, with large windows that allow light in and illuminate the station from the outside at night.

### OAKWOOD STATION

Another of the Piccadilly line extension stations, Oakwood takes its influence from Holden's work at



**Outside the box:** Sudbury Town station features Holden's square design

Sudbury Town station, with a tall rectangular ticket hall and reliance on glass and natural light.

The station was originally named Enfield West, before it finally took the name Oakwood in 1946. It is now a Grade-II listed building.

### SOUTHGATE STATION

Holden again placed an emphasis on practicality and simplicity for his designs of Southgate station, which was another of the Piccadilly line extension stations.

It is one of the most striking buildings on the network, with a full circular form, while the roof is supported from a central column within the ticket hall.

Windows feature heavily once more, with a band of glass running the circumference of the middle layer. This ensures the ticket hall

and entrance are light and airy, while at night, the station is illuminated, giving the impression of a spaceship coming in to land.

### GANTS HILL STATION

This station on the Central line is Holden's only project that is entirely below ground, posing an interesting architectural challenge. Construction of the station began in the 1930s, but was suspended during World War II, when it was used as an air-raid shelter and the tunnels between Gants Hill and Redbridge were used as a munitions factory. The Underground station was finally completed and opened in 1947.

The style of the station and platforms was influenced by the Moscow Metro and the parallels to the Russian designs can be seen to this day.

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