

Travelling | Visiting and “revisiting” the Orient | Revisiting the Orient in Europe – Orientalist architecture

Europe’s encounter with “the Orient” manifested itself most visibly and monumentally in architecture ...

Europe’s encounter with “the Orient” – whether directly through the many travellers to the region who brought back stories, depictions, photos and “exotic” souvenirs, or indirectly, through journeys of the imagination triggered by them all – manifested itself in many different aspects of European culture, but most visibly and monumentally in architecture. Since the later 18th century and until the early 20th century, palaces and stately homes, pavilions, learned institutions, public baths, commercial buildings and numerous interiors were transformed into markers of Europe’s Orientalist obsession. Up to the later 19th century, projects of this sort seem to have been the result of somewhat isolated, personal initiatives – reflecting the aesthetic and intellectual tastes or preoccupations of their respective patrons – largely yielding from the political and social elite. Later, a number of magnates, public bodies and commercial companies commissioned structures that were variously influenced by the aesthetics of the East. Orientalist buildings in Europe represent a truly eclectic range of stylistic influences from ancient Egypt and the Islamic world, but also from India and even China. “Moorish”, “Mughal” and pan-Islamic styles came to the fore particularly in the later 19th century, with European countries concentrating mainly on styles immediately evocative of their intellectual or direct interaction with specific countries and cultures in the East.



Working Number: PD 001

Name: The Royal Pavilion

Holding Museum: -

Date: 1787-1860

Materials: -

Curator Justification: Britain’s long-standing involvement with the Arab and Ottoman world and India led to a far-reaching fascination with all things “Eastern”. One of the more spectacular architectural manifestations of this trend is seen in the Royal Pavilion at Brighton, which George IV, Prince of Wales, commissioned John Nash to refurbish in the Orientalist style in 1822.



Working Number: FR 002

Name: Le salon turc de la maison de Pierre Loti

Holding Museum: -

Date: 1877–1902

Materials: -

Curator Justification: In France, too, 19th-century architecture included occasional expressions of Orientalist taste. The French novelist Pierre Loti, who travelled extensively in North Africa and other regions of the East, transformed his house in Rochefort into an Orientalist fantasy as a backdrop to his extensive Islamic art collection.



Working Number: DE 009

Name: The King's House on the Schachen

Holding Museum: -

Date: 1869–1872

Materials: -

Curator The Turkish Room inside the House of King Ludwig II of Bavaria (1869–72) on Schachen mountain in Germany exudes Oriental fairytale charm. Its design was based on an engraving by the British architect, artist and illustrator Thomas Allom, showing a room built by Sultan Salim III (r. 1789–1807) in the Palace of Eyüb and published in an architectural work on Constantinople.

Justification:



Working Number: DE 005

Name: The Moorish Banqueting hall (Wilhelma Park)

Holding Museum: -

Date: 1851

Materials: -

Curator In German lands, monumental Orientalist architecture was often built in the context of elaborate garden projects. The Moorish Banqueting Hall, completed in 1851, forms part of an ambitious Orientalist palace garden, commissioned by King Wilhelm I of Württemberg from the court architect Karl Ludwig von Zanth in 1837.

Justification:



Working Number: DE 003

Name: The Moorish Villa (Wilhelma Park)

Holding Museum: -

Date: 1846 (?)

Materials: -

Curator In 1837, King Wilhelm I of Württemberg instructed the court architect Karl Ludwig von Zanth to design buildings in the Moorish style for his “Wilhelmina” gardens. The aim of 19th-century Orientalist garden design in Germany was to evoke visions of elegance, luxury, colourful brilliance, seduction and eroticism.

Justification:



Working Number: DE 006

Name: The Belvedere (Wilhelma Park)

Holding Museum: -

Date: 1851

Materials: -

Curator In 1837, King Wilhelm I of Württemberg commissioned the court architecture Karl Ludwig von Zanth to design buildings in the Moorish style for his palace gardens. The priority was not to re-create an authentic Oriental-Islamic building, but simply to evoke an exotic, otherworldly atmosphere.

Justification:



Working Number: DE 007

Name: The Damascene Hall

Holding Museum: -

Date: 1864

Materials: -

Curator Justification: The Damascene Hall in Wilhelmina Park was completed in 1864 by Professor Wilhelm Baeumer, Karl Ludwig von Zanth's successor. Despite its palatial exterior, it was actually used to house pheasants and chickens!



Working Number: DE 004

Name: The Covered Walkway in the Moorish Garden (Wilhelma Park)

Holding Museum: -

Date: -

Materials: 1844

Curator Justification: -

In 1837, King Wilhelm I of Württemberg commissioned court architect Karl Ludwig von Zanth to design buildings in the Moorish style for his "Wilhelma" gardens. The aim was to create a sensual fairytale world that, not least, might help him and his guests escape the real one.



Working Number: DE 010

Name: Moorish Kiosk in Linderhof Palace Park

Holding Museum: -

Date: 1867

Materials: -

Curator Justification: King Ludwig II's Linderhof Palace Park in Bavaria was laid out between 1870 and 1880 according to the plans of the architect Karl von Effner. It was further enhanced by architectural features such as the Moorish Kiosk and the Moroccan House – conjuring up the fabled world of "the Orient".



Working Number: DE 008

Name: Garden Mosque

Holding Museum: -

Date: The mosque complex comprises a cloister-like colonnade in the east (1779–84) and a main building (1782–86) flanked by two minarets (1786–95) in the west

Materials:

Curator Justification: -

In Germany, Islamic-style designs borrowed from mosque architecture were used in a wide range of contexts, but none of them religious or in line with Islamic principles. This late 18th-century garden "mosque",

in the Turkish style and part of the Schwetzingen Palace complex in Germany, is the earliest of its kind in the country.



Working Number: DE 001

Name: Steam engine building

Holding Museum: -

Date: 1841–1843

Materials: -

Curator Justification: This mosque-style building in Potsdam near Berlin was erected in the 1840s to hide a steam-pump engine that was used to pump water up to the main fountains at Sanssouci. The exterior of the building borrows “Oriental” design elements and clearly imitates Moorish architecture.



Working Number: PT 003

Name: Pena Palace

Holding Museum: -

Date: 1838–1868

Materials: -

Curator Justification: Given their long shared history with the Arab world, Portugal, Spain and Italy in particular revived elements of Arab and Islamic architecture in some constructions of the 19th century. The Pena Palace in Sintra – the Royal family’s summer residence – is an eclectic and exotic building that also incorporates neo-Islamic styles.



Working Number: PT 006

Name: Palace of Monserrate

Holding Museum: -

Date: 1790; 1841; 1863

Materials: -

Curator Justification: The Palace of Monserrate in Sintra was completed in 1863. It blends a range of European design features with those of India and the Arab world, the latter a clear reference to the legacy of Arab art and culture in Portuguese history.



Working Number: PT 024

Name: Monumental Ensemble of Bussaco

Holding Museum: -

Date: 19th–20th centuries

Materials: -

Curator Justification: Between 1888 and 1933, the architectural assemblage at Bussaco (Baçaco) took shape. Its eclectic buildings – such as the Palace Hotel – include a wide range of Arab and Islamic details

referencing Portugal's historic encounter with the Arab world.



Working Number: PT 064

Name: Plan of Bullring of Campo Pequeno, Lisbon

Holding Museum: City Museum

Date: Before 18 August 1892 (1887?)

Materials: -

Curator Justification: The Campo Pequeno Bullring, completed in 1892, shows many architectural features borrowed from the Arab-Islamic, "Moorish" past of the Iberian peninsula. The lands of what is now Portugal were first conquered by Muslim forces in the 8th century and gradually reclaimed from them over some 500 years.



Working Number: PT 005

Name: The Palace of Porto Trade Association Headquarters, the Arabian Room

Holding Museum: -

Date: 1842

Materials: -

Curator Justification: Portuguese interiors, too, could reveal a distinct "Oriental" feel in the 19th century. Most spectacular is the Arabian room at the heart of the Oporto Bourse Palace, with its neo-Moorish features inspired by the Alhambra in Granada, built between 1862 and 1880.



Working Number: PD 002

Name: Toledo Railway Station

Holding Museum: -

Date: 1919/1920

Materials: -

Curator Justification: Spain, with its long and complex history of Arab-Islamic rule between the 8th and the 15th centuries, also followed the pan-European trend of "Orientalising" architectural design features, especially as it considered itself the cradle of the "Moorish" style. The Toledo Railway Station opened in 1919/20.



Working Number: IT1 010

Name: The Hotel Excelsior at the Lido in Venice at the end of construction work

Holding Museum: Archivio Progetti – Università Iuav di Venezia

Date: 1907–08

Materials: -

Curator Justification: The grand Hotel Excelsior in Venice, built by Giovanni Sardi and opened in 1908, fuses elements of Moorish architecture such as minarets and domes with aspects borrowed from medieval art and

Art Nouveau. Its fanciful appearance emphasizes the character of the building as a glamorous destination for holidays and amusement.
