

## Sir John Soane



Sir John Soane (1753–1837) was one of England's greatest architects. He was also Professor of Architecture at the Royal Academy for 31 years and a passionate collector. A number of the architectural masterpieces he designed in London can still be visited today.

Soane was born near Reading in 1753, the youngest son of a bricklayer. When he was 18 he enrolled as an architectural student at the Royal Academy, winning their Gold Medal for Architecture in 1776 and then a scholarship to take a 'Grand Tour' round Italy (1778–80) and to see and study the great buildings of Antiquity.

On his return to England Soane established a successful architectural practice and married an heiress, Elizabeth Smith, in 1784. In the course of a long and successful career he was Architect to the Bank of England, Surveyor to the Royal Hospital at Chelsea and Grand Superintendent of Works at Nos. 10 and 11 Downing Street and Law Courts at Westminster. He was knighted by William IV in 1831 and by the time of his death was widely regarded as the father of the architectural profession.



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## Sir John Soane's Museum

In 1792 Soane bought and rebuilt No. 12 Lincoln's Inn Fields as his family home. Twenty years later he moved into No. 13, where he designed a sequence of rooms which demonstrated how an architect could combine light, space and decoration to create the 'poetry of architecture'. Here he displayed his collection of paintings, sculpture, architectural models, and diverse artefacts including the Egyptian sarcophagus of Seti I, excavated in the Valley of the Kings in Egypt in 1817.

He lived alone after his wife's death in 1815, devoting himself to the constant improvement and expansion of the Museum as a picturesque setting for his collections. In 1833 he had a private Act of Parliament passed bequeathing his house and Museum to the nation on his death, on condition that they be preserved in an unaltered state. Sir John Soane's Museum is a museum piece amongst museums – considered by many to be the most important example of a house museum in the world.



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The Museum building has recently been restored and a new exhibition gallery for temporary exhibitions opened in 1995. Since that time more than 20 exhibitions have been held in 'The Soane Gallery', many displaying works from Soane's collection of 30,000 architectural drawings. In 1996 the Museum purchased No. 14 Lincoln's Inn Fields, next door, also designed by Soane; this will be restored in 2004.



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Sir John Soane's Museum · 13 Lincoln's Inn Fields · London WC2A 3BP  
Tel: 020 7405 2107 Fax: 020 7831 9957 www.soane.org  
email: jbrock@soane.org.uk

Open Tuesday to Saturday 10am–5pm  
Late evening opening (6pm–9pm) on the first Tuesday of each month.  
Closed Sunday, Monday, Bank holidays and 24 December  
Admission free. Limited disabled access, tel. 020 7440 4263  
All groups must book in advance, tel. 020 7440 4263  
Guided tour every Saturday at 2.30pm: a limited number of tickets are sold from 2pm on a first-come first-served basis, £3 and free for students.  
Please contact the Education department for lectures, tours etc. for adult groups, tel. 020 7440 4246 or for children's education tel. 020 7440 4247  
The Research Library and drawings collection can be visited by appointment: tel. 020 7440 4251  
The Museum can be hired for a private dinner or reception: tel. 020 7440 4263

Nearest Underground station: Holborn (Central and Piccadilly lines)  
Buses: 8, 98 (to Red Lion Square); 68, 521 (to Holborn Underground station)



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## The Bank of England

Soane's appointment in October 1788 as 'Architect and Surveyor' to the Bank of England was the most important of his distinguished career. The Bank was his main pre-occupation for the ensuing 45 years until his retirement in 1833 when he described it as '... a situation which has long been the pride and boast of my life'.

His first major work, the daringly unconventional Bank Stock Office, was completed in 1793 and was the seminal design for much of his later work. Reconstructed in 1988 on its original site, it now forms a key feature of the Bank's Museum. The Museum tells the story of the Bank of England from its foundation in 1694 to its role today as the central bank of the United Kingdom.



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Bank of England Museum · Bartholomew Lane · London EC2R 8AH  
Tel: 020 7601 5491/020 7601 5545  
Fax: 020 7601 5808  
www.bankofengland.co.uk

Open Monday to Friday 10am to 5pm  
Closed weekends, Public and Bank holidays  
Admission free  
The Museum welcomes disabled visitors and tries to overcome the limitations of a historic building. Prior notice is appreciated.  
For further information contact:  
June Greenhalf tel. 020 7601 5491  
email: june.greenhalf@bankofengland.co.uk

Nearest Underground station: Bank (Northern, Central, Docklands Light Railway, Waterloo & City lines)



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## Pitzhanger Manor-House

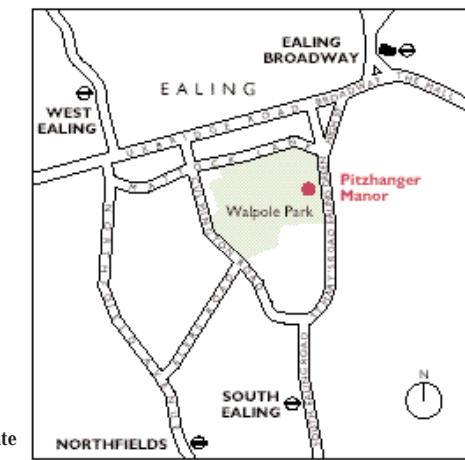
Purchased in 1800 Pitzhanger was to be Soane's 'Dream' home. This Country Villa would be a weekend retreat, a place to entertain friends and clients, a home for his growing collections and, subsequently, a 'suitable' residence for his sons. Retaining an extension by George Dance, Soane designed a façade (which he later described as a 'sort of portrait'), behind which he created a sequence of functional rooms incorporating radical colour schemes and his idiosyncratic use of space and light. Today, these interiors are being restored to their appearance in 1804. Later extensions to the Manor accommodate a collection of Martinware Pottery and West London's largest contemporary gallery space. Outside, Soane's entrance arch, lodge and ornamental bridge can still be seen in the adjoining Walpole Park.



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Fitzhanger Manor-House  
Walpole Park · Mattock Lane · Ealing  
London W5 5EQ  
Tel. 020 8567 1227 Fax: 020 8567 0595  
www.ealing.gov.uk/jmgallery&house  
email: jmgallery&house@ealing.gov.uk

Open Tuesday–Friday: 1pm–5pm  
Sat: 11am–5pm  
Sunday (May–Sept only): 1pm–5pm  
Closed Mondays and Bank Holidays  
Free Entry Wheelchair access (limited parking by arrangement)  
Group visits by arrangement  
Fitzhanger Manor-House is licensed for wedding ceremonies and available for private concerts and tours.  
Nearest Underground station: Ealing Broadway (Central and District lines). Main line trains from London Paddington (10 mins)  
Buses 207, 65 & 83



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## Dulwich Picture Gallery

Dulwich Picture Gallery was designed by Soane between 1811 and 1813 and was recently described by *The Sunday Telegraph* as the most beautiful art gallery in the world. The collection includes works by Rembrandt, Poussin, Rubens, Gainsborough, Claude, Canaletto and Watteau and was originally put together by Noel Desenfans and Sir Francis Bourgeois for the King of Poland. The king was forced to abdicate in 1795 and the pictures were never delivered to Poland. Soane was therefore asked by Desenfans and Bourgeois to create the Gallery after their deaths. It was a most curious commission for Soane incorporating not just the picture gallery itself but also a mausoleum for the founders and almshouses for old women. Dulwich was the first public picture gallery in Britain.



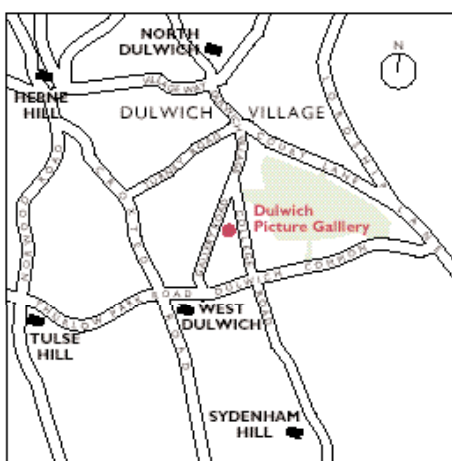
The building is of brick and has no classical order. It is now much admired and its top lighting and suite of subsequent museums, including Richard Meier's Getty Museum in Los Angeles. Today the Gallery attracts art lovers who come to see the building for its own sake, the collection and the regular international loan exhibitions.



Dulwich Picture Gallery - Gallery Road  
Dulwich Village - se21 7ad  
Tel: 020 8693 3254 Fax: 020 8299 8700  
www.dulwichpicturegallery.org.uk  
email: info@dulwichpicturegallery.org.uk

Open Tuesday to Friday 10am-5pm  
Saturday, Sunday and Bank Holiday Mondays 11am-5pm  
Closed Mondays (except Bank Holidays),  
Good Friday, 24-26 December and 1 January  
Admission charges. Concessions for senior citizens. Free for students, the disabled, unemployed and children. Easy disabled access, induction loop, disabled toilet.  
Free Guided tours (admission charges apply):  
Saturday and Sunday 3pm  
Groups: The Gallery offers guided tours and study days for groups of more than 15 people.  
tel. 020 8299 8711

The Sackler Centre for Arts Education: the education department offers practical art education for all. For information tel. 020 8299 8731.  
To hire the Gallery or the Library Room for private events, dinners and receptions tel. 020 8299 8711  
Transport: Train from London Victoria to West Dulwich.  
The Gallery is just off the South Circular Road (A205)

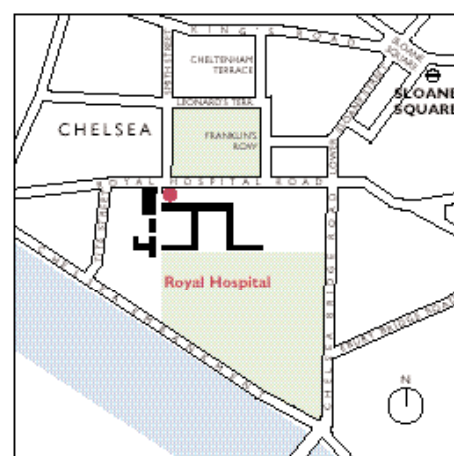


## Some other Soane buildings in London The Royal Hospital, Chelsea

Soane became Clerk of Works to the Royal Hospital in 1807 and held the post for 30 years, until his death. He designed a number of new buildings adjacent to Wren's hospital beginning with the Infirmary, built in 1810 but destroyed in World War II. The stables (1814-17: not open to the public but visible from Royal Hospital Road) epitomize the vocabulary of Soane's work at Chelsea with their yellow stock bricks, abstraction of architectural ornament and 'primitive' handling of form: they have been called the 'most quintessentially Soanic' of all Soane's exteriors. The Secretary's Office of 1818 was built, on the instructions of the Hospital Board, in red brick, to match Wren's building and now houses the Museum of the Royal Hospital, which is open to the public.

The Royal Hospital - Royal Hospital Road - Chelsea - London sw3 4sr  
Tel: 020 7881 5203  
Fax: 020 7881 5463

Open Monday-Saturday 10.00am-12.00pm,  
2.00pm-4.00pm  
Sunday (1 April-30 September)  
2.00pm-4.00pm  
Closed all Public and Bank Holidays  
Nearest Underground station:  
Soane Square (Circle and District lines)  
Buses: 11, 137, 211 & 239



## St Peter's Church

Liverpool Grove, Walthowrth

St Peter's is the best preserved of Soane's churches, designed in 1822 (the church was consecrated in February 1825). The west front, with its Ionic portico flanked by single bays, can be seen from the Walthowrth Road. The slim tower consists of two contrasting stages supporting a small dome and topped - controversially at the time - by a weather vane. A Greek key frieze runs around the front and sides of the building. Inside, the church is intricately designed yet retains the austerity for which Soane is known. The Crypt is a splendid example of early nineteenth-century brickwork engineering. The exterior of the building can be viewed from the grounds which are open during daylight hours. Visitors can view the interior by attending church services.



For information tel. 020 7703 3139 between 10am and 12noon. Monday to Friday. www.dswark.org  
Nearest Underground station: Elephant and Castle (Northern and Bakerloo lines) or mainline train (Thameslink). Buses: buses on the Walthowrth Road, in the direction of Camberwell, pass the end of Liverpool Grove, Walthowrth. St Peter's is clearly visible on your left from the bus.

## St John's Church

Bethnal Green

(corner of Cambridge Heath Road and Roman Road)  
St John's was the last of Soane's churches, built in 1826. The exterior differs from its two predecessors (St Peter's and Holy Trinity) in not having an Ionic portico at the west end, this being replaced by six Portland plaster strips which divide the façade into three bays separated by narrow recesses in the brickwork. The pilasters are given 'token' capitals in a very Soanean manner in the form of small rectangles of grooved masonry.

St John's is accessible for church services.  
Nearest Underground station: Bethnal Green (Central line)

## St Mary Abbots Church

Kensington

Monument to Miss Elizabeth Johnstone (in the churchyard)

## St Nicholas' Church

Chiswick

De Louthembourg Tomb (in the churchyard)



## Holy Trinity Church

Marylebone

(on the Euston Road opposite Great Portland Street Underground station)

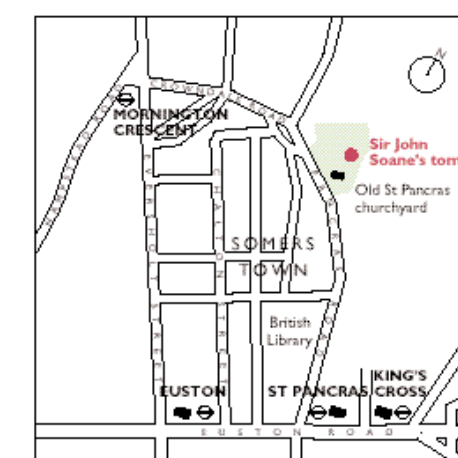
One of the three Commissioners' Churches Soane designed in the 1820s. The same rectangular plan, with galleries, was used for each church. Holy Trinity was completed in 1825, with a distinctive tower inspired by Robert Adam's design for twin towers at Mistle Church, Essex. Holy Trinity is now used as accommodation for the Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge with the chancel and part of the nave accessible for church services.

Nearest Underground station: Great Portland Street (Metropolitan and Circle lines)

## The Soane Family Tomb

St. Pancras Gardens, Pancras Road

The tomb Soane designed for his wife on her death in 1815 and in which he is also buried. It is one of only two Grade I listed tombs in London (the other being that of Karl Marx in Highgate Cemetery) and almost certainly inspired the form of the red telephone box.



Illustrations

- All watercolours were painted by Soane's perspective artist, Joseph Gandy, unless otherwise stated, and are at Sir John Soane's Museum.  
Front cover: detail of Public and Private Buildings Erected by Sir John Soane between 1780 and 1801, watercolour, 1818  
1 Portrait of John Soane by William Owen, oil on canvas, 1805  
2 The Trade Corner at the Bank of England, watercolour, 1805  
3 Sir John Soane's Museum facade, photo by Martin Charles  
4 Sir John Soane's Museum, the Breakfast Room, photo by Martin Charles  
5 Sir John Soane's Museum, the Dome Area, photo by Martin Charles  
6 Sir John Soane's Museum, the Monk's Parour, watercolour, 1825  
7 Bank of England, The Bank Stock Office, watercolour, 1798  
8 Aerial cutaway view of the Bank of England, watercolour, 1830  
9 Fitzhanger Manor House, Sir Soane's eye view, watercolour by Sir John Soane, 1825  
10 Fitzhanger Manor House, Sir Soane's eye view, watercolour by C. J. Richardson, 1825  
11 Dulwich Picture Gallery, the eastside, photo by Martin Charles  
12 Dulwich Picture Gallery, the westside, photo by Martin Charles  
13 St Peter's Church, Walthowrth, facade, photo by Brent Williams  
14 A group of designs for the tomb in an imaginary landscape, watercolour, 1815  
15 The Soane family tomb, design showing the tomb in an imaginary landscape, watercolour, 1815

Leaflet produced jointly by Sir John Soane's Museum, Bank of England Museum, Fitzhanger Manor House and Dulwich Picture Gallery

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