

An Art Deco Society Self-Guided Walking Tour

Liverpool



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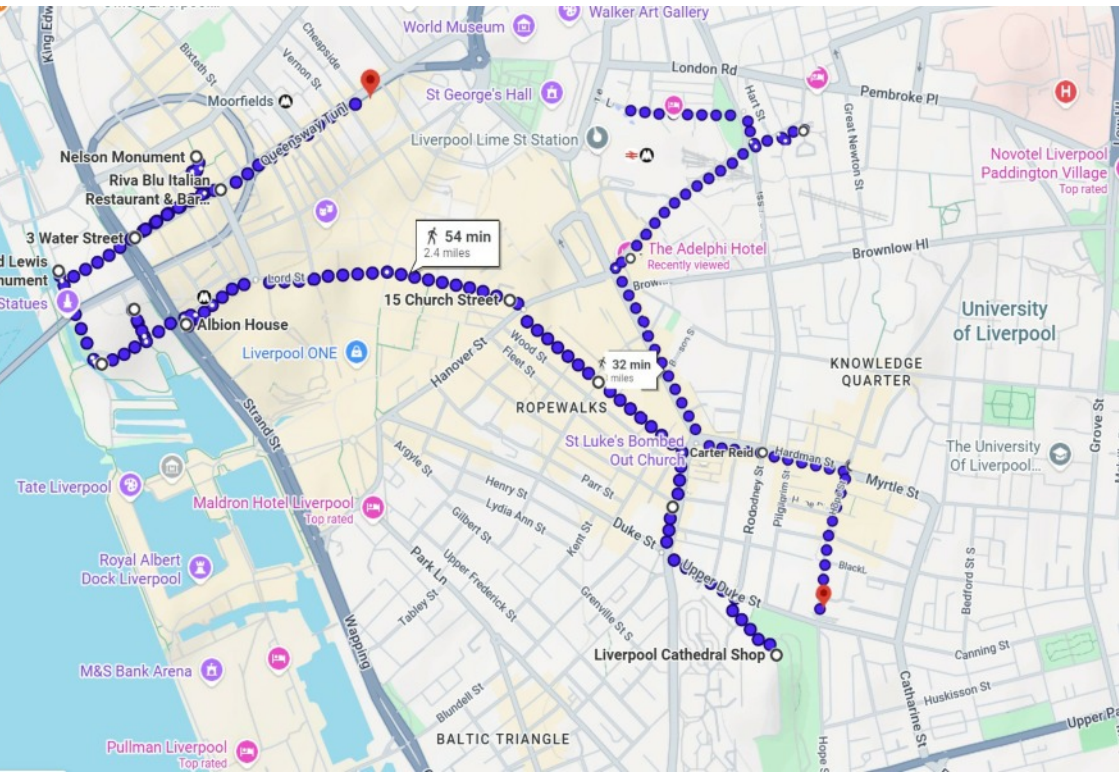
Liverpool

Welcome to the Liverpool, the third in a series of self-guided walking tours from the Art Deco Society UK. Liverpool is a city rich in architectural history, including some incredible examples of Art Deco design. This self-guided tour will take you through some of the city's most striking interwar buildings, each with its own unique story. The walk is approximately 4 miles of easy city walking and will take approximately 1.5 hours. Sites visited are:

1. The Bullring (St Andrews Gardens)
2. Adelphi Hotel
3. Liverpool Philharmonic Hall
4. Liverpool Cathedral
5. Bold Street
6. Queensway Tunnel Ventilation Towers
7. Waterfront Buildings
8. Exchange Flags
9. The Municipal Hotel

[Links to Googlemap of the tour](#)

Part 1
Part 2



We start our walk at Liverpool Lime Street station. Walk east down Lorn Nelson Street, walk to the junction with Seymour Street and cross over, taking the first left Copperas Hill.

I. The Bullring/St. Andrews Gardens

Your first stop is St Andrew's Gardens, commonly known as "The Bullring." Built in the 1930s, this distinctive curved housing complex is a prime example of Art Deco social housing. Built under the direction of Sir Lancelot Keay, Director of Housing and City Architect, it was designed by John Hughes. Designed with a modernist approach, the buildings feature sweeping lines, symmetrical patterns, and open communal spaces that reflect the optimism of interwar urban planning. It's now student flats.

More info here

<https://manchesterhistory.net/architecture/1930/standrewsgardens.html>



Walking Directions (approximately 7 minute walk): From St Andrew's Gardens, walk down Copperas Hill at the end you will see the side of the Adelphi hotel on your left. Turn onto Renshaw St to see the front of the hotel.

2. The Adelphi Hotel

The grand Adelphi Hotel was rebuilt in 1914 but incorporates much of the luxury which we associate with Art Deco. The building was designed by Frank Atkinson, and construction was left in the hands of one of the most renowned firms in Liverpool. During the interwar years, the hotel attracted the rich and famous – who were tempted by luxurious facilities like Turkish baths, shooting galleries, and each of its bedrooms having it's own telephone! The Sefton Suite is often compared to the First-Class smoking lounge of the Titanic, designed in a transitional Edwardian–Deco style. Look for geometric motifs, polished wood, and luxurious detailing inside.



Walking Directions (approximately 10 minute walk): Leaving the Adelphi, walk along Renshaw St until you come to the large junction with Leece St. Opposite you will see the remains of the bombed out church of St Lukes which suffered catastrophic damage during the May Blitz of 1941, leaving only its external masonry standing. The site has now been repurposed as a cultural and events venue. Walk up Leece St until it becomes Hardman St. You will see the iconic Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Hall at the crossroads with Hope St.

3. Liverpool Philharmonic Hall

Designed by Herbert Rowse and completed in 1939, this building features elegant curves, decorative reliefs, and a bold, geometric façade. The interiors are equally stunning, with streamlined wood panelling, chrome accents, and a beautiful auditorium designed for perfect acoustics. At the time, The Manchester Guardian commented, "The magnificent compliment Liverpool has paid to the cause of music in England almost takes one's breath away ... a hall of great size, noble proportions, and up-to-date appointments ... ready to take its place among the most eminent homes of musical culture in this or any other country."

Edmund C. Thompson was responsible for the gilded reliefs of Apollo on the landings, and the female figures representing musical moods in the auditorium.

You can book tours of the Hall if you would like to explore further.



Walking Directions: Continue south down Hope Street toward the large cathedral at the end.

4. Liverpool Cathedral

Although predominantly Gothic, Liverpool Cathedral features several Art Deco touches. The Lady Chapel's wrought-iron screens and some interior details reflect 1930s craftsmanship. Its architect, Giles Gilbert Scott was only 22 when he designed it in 1901. Construction started in 1904, but wasn't completed until 1978! Scott would later design the iconic K6 red telephone box and, of course, Battersea Power Station.

You can meander through St James Gardens, which are sunk below road level. These have been both a quarry and a cemetery, and they now offer a haven of peace in the busy city.



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Walking Directions: Return to Upper Duke St, walk along until you reach Berry St. Walk up Berry St until you reach Bold St on your left (St Lukes, which you saw earlier, is opposite Bold St)

5. Bold Street – Art Deco shop fronts

Stroll down Bold Street to appreciate Liverpool's Art Deco-era shopfronts. While some buildings have been modified, you'll still spot streamlined facades, curved glass windows, and terrazzo entrances—features common in 1920s–30s commercial design. Walk to the bottom of Bold Street until you reach Hanover Street.

A particular highlight is 65-67 Bold Street which dates back to 1828, the building was originally the site of a chapel. The Art Deco facade was added in 1935 when car dealer William Watson moved into the premises. The establishment is now an independent dining venue called LEAF. According to their website, the building was a tea house in the 1920s and operated as a cinema towards the end of the 20th century.



Walking Directions: Walk the full length of Bold St, and then cross over Hanover St to walk along the pedestrianised Church St. Continue along Lord St until you reach the Queen Victoria monument. With the monument on your left continue onto James St which will bring you to The Strand. You can't miss the enormous St Georges Dock building almost directly opposite!



PHOTO CREDIT By Rodhulandemu - Own work; CC BY-SA 4.0.

6. Queensway Tunnel Ventilation Towers

Location: Georges Dock & Birkenhead. Perhaps Liverpool's most striking Art Deco structures, the ventilation towers for the Queensway Tunnel (opened in 1934) are unmistakable. Designed by Herbert Rowse, these structures blend Egyptian Revival with classic Deco, featuring bold vertical lines and stylised reliefs. The George's Dock Tower, near the waterfront, is particularly impressive. Built as part of the Mersey Road Tunnel, this is one of 6 ventilation towers, and was Grade II listed in 1980. You can book tours of the Mersey Tunnel System (which take approximately 2 hours).

The west façade on Georges Dock Way has the main entrance, flanked by two fluted niches with free-standing sculptures representing 'Day' and 'Night'. Above the door is the figure of 'Speed, the Modern Mercury', approximately 23 feet tall. At the corners of the north and south facades are four bas-relief panels: 'Civil Engineering' and 'Construction' (facing the Mann Island), and 'Architecture' and 'Decoration' (facing the Cunard Building across Brunswick Street).

The east façade on The Strand holds a memorial to the 17 men who died during the nine years of the tunnel's construction.

Walking Directions: Walk towards the waterfront. Here you will find some of Liverpool's most contemporary architecture on your left. Turn right onto Mann Island, passing in front of the Port of Liverpool building and the Cunard Building.

7. Waterfront Buildings

The Cunard Building may not be Art Deco, but RMS Queen Mary was designed in this very building so it is worth a mention!! It was designed by William Edward Willink and Philip Coldwell Thicknesse and was constructed between 1914 and 1917. The building's style is a mix of Italian Renaissance and Greek Revival. It was home to the Cunard Line until the 1960s.

The Royal Liver Building is primarily an Edwardian landmark (completed in 1911), but later modifications incorporated Art Deco styling, particularly in its clock faces and interior renovations. The streamlined grandeur of this building complements the city's later Deco additions.

Walking Directions: Walk along Water St, passing over the Strand. As you reach the Town Hall turn left into Exchange St. This will bring you into a square.



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8. Exchange Flags

Here, you'll find examples of restrained, functional Art Deco design, particularly in the former Martins Bank Building and other office facades. The Nelson Monument in the square provides a contrast between earlier Neoclassical influences and the clean lines of the surrounding 20th-century buildings. Construction of the main building was completed in 1939 but the construction of Walker House was interrupted by the war. The inclusion of the reinforced bunker to house the command centre for the Battle of the Atlantic meant that Walker House wasn't finished until 1941



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Walking Directions: Return to Water St via Exchange St East. Turn left onto Water St and continue along (it becomes Dale St) until you reach the Municipal Hotel on your right. You might be interested to know that you are walking on top of the Queensway Tunnel!

9. Municipal Hotel

End your tour at The Municipal Hotel, formerly the Municipal Buildings. Originally constructed in the 1860s, its recent refurbishment as a luxury hotel incorporates stunning Art Deco-inspired interiors. The use of brass, geometric motifs, and period furniture create a 1930s glamour that fits right into Liverpool's Deco heritage.



We hope you have enjoyed this little tour around Liverpool.

This guide issued by the Art Deco Society and is not affiliated with any of the buildings listed. Any questions or queries regarding the guide should be directed to ADSUK and not to the owners of the buildings.

Not all buildings are open to the public, and therefore you should respect private property, be courteous to any staff encountered, and to never enter private property without prior permission.

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