

# Greek and Roman Architecture in Singapore Civic District

## Cheat Sheet

A guide to finding out more about  
Greek and Roman influences in the architecture of  
Singapore's historic buildings



## Greek and Roman Architecture

### Overview

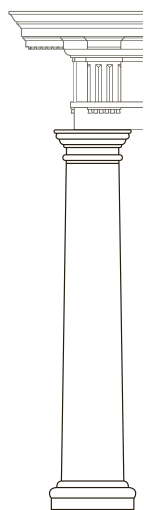
The art and architecture from the ancient civilisations of Greece and Rome have enduring and widespread influence around the world. At its peak in 5th century BC, various great sculptures, structures and artwork were produced in classical Greek style. When the Romans came into power thereafter, they absorbed much of the Greeks' culture and arts.

The combination of the Greco-Roman cultural fusion was often referred to as the 'classical' civilisation.



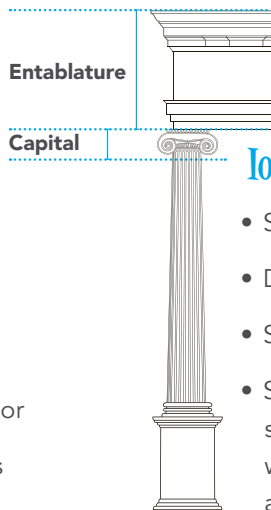
### Features and Terms

**Columns are a common feature in Greek and Roman architecture.**  
**They come in 3 different orders:**



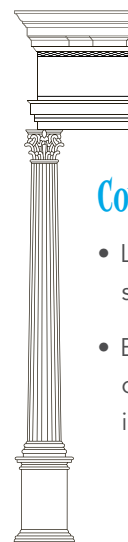
#### Doric

- Thick
- Wide, shallow flutings
- No base, rising directly from floor
- Tops of columns are plain



#### Ionic

- Slimmer than Doric
- Deeper fluting
- Stands on a base
- Supports a capital with spiral scrolls, and an entablature with small projecting blocks and decorations



#### Corinthian

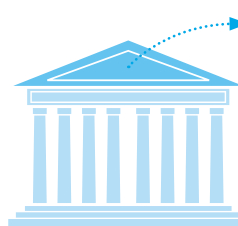
- Longer and slimmer than Ionic
- Elaborate carvings on capital, with inverted scrolls

### Classical Architecture

Architectural style from the 5th century BC in Greece to 3rd century AD in Rome, dominated by the columns and pediments.

### Neo-classical

Refers to the movement where there was revival of classical architecture, particularly in the 18th and 19th centuries.



### Pediment

A common element of classical architecture. Refers to the triangular portion below the top of the roof, usually supported by columns that lead to the entrance of buildings.

# Civic District in Singapore

- The civic district refers to the area near Singapore River, which was the historic birthplace of Singapore.
- Many government offices were located at the area during the British Rule.

## What are some of the buildings?

Some of the significant landmarks in Civic District include the old City Hall, Supreme Court, Parliament House, Victoria Concert Hall and Theatre, and the old General Post Office (today's Fullerton Hotel). Various historically-significant churches can also be found in this area.

As of the time of publication, the old Supreme Court and City Hall are in the midst of being converted into the National Art Gallery (to be opened in 2015)

## Fullerton Hotel

A neoclassical style building with Doric columns, the building served various functions before being converted to the luxury hotel that it is today. It used to house the General Post Office (GPO), and served as the Japanese administrative department during the war years.



## City Hall

Designed by Municipal Architects A.Gordon and F.D Meadows, the neoclassical building has fluted Corinthian columns lined along its façade. Originally known as the Municipal Building, the building used to be the offices of various governmental administrative bodies.



## Old Supreme Court

Containing courtrooms, a Court of Appeal, a library, a registry and offices, the Supreme Court was designed to match the façade of City Hall that was situated just beside it. Corinthian and Ionic columns support the structure, while a pediment sculpture showing an allegory of justice sits atop the columns.



## Cathedral of Good Shepherd

As the oldest Roman Catholic church in Singapore, the Cathedral of Good Shepherd is also significant in its architectural style. Said to be reminiscent of a Classical or Renaissance style, the church structure includes a pediment supported by Doric columns.



## National Museum of Singapore

Originally Raffles Institution, and then Raffles Library and Museum, the National Museum of Singapore is referred to as a neoclassical building. It is designed by Major McCallum.



# Steps to conducting Research

Given a task of researching Greek and Roman architectural features in Singapore's civic district, what should you do?

Here are some quick steps to conduct your task!

Identifying **Greek and Roman architectural** features in **buildings** of **Singapore's civic district**

Step 1.

Break down your task and identify the keywords.

Ask questions?

Greek and Roman Architecture

What are the features of Greek and Roman architecture?

Singapore's civic district

Where is this located?  
What are the buildings found there?

Step 2.

Find out more about each keyword.

Make use of the materials available in the library.

Visit the library or explore the following online databases  
(Go to [eresources.nlb.gov.sg](http://eresources.nlb.gov.sg) to access them)

Ancient History and Medieval



Encyclopædia Britannica



Credo Reference: History



Browse photos of buildings in the civic district on Picture SG ([pictures.nl.sg](http://pictures.nl.sg))



Step 3.

Put together your findings and link them together to complete your task.

Greek and Roman Architecture

Related terms: Ionic, Doric, Corinthian, Classical, Neo-classical

Singapore Civic District

Buildings in the Civic District  
(Fullerton Building, Old Supreme Court and City Hall etc)

Present your findings!

## References:

### Books

Nardo, D. (2012) *Ancient Greek art and architecture*, Detroit: Gale Cengage Learning (Call Number 709.38)

Curriculum Planning and Development Division (1997) *The civic district: Teachers' notes*, Singapore: Ministry of Education (Call Number q711.551095957 CIV)

Lee, E (1990), *Historic Buildings of Singapore*, Singapore: Preservations of Monuments Board, (Call Number 720.95957 Lee)

### Websites

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National Art Gallery, Singapore (2013) 'About the Building', Retrieved from <http://nationalartgallery.sg/buildings/>

E-databases (access from [eresources.nlb.gov.sg](http://eresources.nlb.gov.sg))  
*Encyclopædia Britannica*  
*Ancient and Medieval History Online*.