

# Iron and Glass

## Architecture

What engineers built in the nineteenth century while architects argued about style.

From about 1780 to 1900, cast iron, wrought iron, steel and plate glass produced spans, speeds and building types that no masonry tradition could deliver.

**CRYSTAL PALACE**  
**1851**

**EIFFEL TOWER**  
**300 m, 1889**

- Iron Bridge, Coalbrookdale, 1779, in cast iron.
- Labrouste exposed iron in a reading room, Paris, 1850.
- Crystal Palace, Paxton, 1851, prefabricated and demountable.
- It was assembled in roughly nine months.
- St Pancras train shed, Barlow, 1868, spanning 73 m.
- Eiffel Tower, 1889, at 300 m, and built as a temporary.

### LOOK FOR IT

Most of these were designed by engineers, and the architectural profession of the time largely declined to claim them.

Against masonry's limits, and against a profession defined by style. The buildings arrived before a theory for them did.