

# Thomas Cecil Howitt

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**Thomas Cecil Howitt, OBE** (6 June 1889 - 3 September 1968) was a British provincial architect of the 20th Century. He was Housing Architect for Nottingham City Council, designing municipal housing estates which are often considered to be among the finest in terms of planning in the country.

## Background

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Born 1889 at Hucknall, his father was James Cullen Howitt from Lancashire – later manager of Co-op store Watnall Road, Nottingham. He went to Nottingham High School, then in 1904 (aged 15) joined the office of Albert Nelson Bromley at Prudential Buildings, Queen Street, Nottingham. In 1908, he opened and ran Bromley's London Office (Bromley & Watkin). He returned to Nottingham in 1909 and stayed until 1914 when he travelled around Europe. Joined Army in 1914, became a Major in 1916 then temp. Lt-Colonel in 1917. He was de-mobbed in 1919 with the award of a Distinguished Service Order (DSO).

## Architectural career

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Howitt joined Nottingham City Architects department in 1919, part of the City Engineers Dept under T. Wallis Gordon, City Engineer.

In 1928 he was appointed City Architect in Nottingham in succession to Arthur Dale, but he relinquished this position in 1930 in favour of Edward Phillips. He went on to live in two houses on the council estates he designed; 2 Staunton Drive, Sherwood and Thatch, Baildon Close, Wollaton Park.

As work on the new Council House at Nottingham came towards completion, Howitt wished to set up his own practice, and after being asked to stay in post until a suitable successor could be appointed, he established an office in Exchange Buildings in December 1930

He maintained his practice in Exchange Row, Exchange Buildings until 1938 when he moved to 2 Mapperley Road.

## Later years

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Howitt was actively involved in RIBA matters during the 1950s; effectively leaving the practice in the hands of partners Philip Gerrard and Frederick Woolley. Indeed, the name of the practice was changed to Cecil Howitt & Partners in 1948. He retired from architectural practice in April 1962.

Cecil Howitt died aged 79 in September 1968 in the house he designed for himself, The Cottage, Lombard Street, Orston, Nottinghamshire.

## Major architectural works

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- Approximately 6000 municipally-owned houses for rent, Nottingham 1919–30
- Council House, Exchange Buildings and Processional Way, Nottingham 1924–29 (Grade II listed)
- Raleigh Cycle Company Head Office, Lenton Boulevard, Nottingham (opened 1931) - awarded RIBA Bronze Medal 1933 (Grade II listed)
- Martin's Bank, Market Street, Nottingham 1930
- Birmingham Municipal Bank Head Office, Broad Street, Birmingham 1931–34
- Thatch, Baildon Close, Wollaton Park, Nottingham, house for himself 1931
- Attenborough House, 31 Oundle Drive, Wollaton, Nottingham for W.F. Attenborough 1933
- Mary Hardstaff Almshouses, Arnold Lane, Nottingham 1934

- Odeon Cinema, Warley, Worcestershire (exterior only - 1934)
- Odeon Cinema, Weston-Super-Mare (opened May 1935) (Grade II listed)
- YMCA, Mansfield Road, Nottingham, 1937 (Grade II listed)
- The Falcon Hotel, 4 Saltergate, Lincolnshire. Rebuilt the hotel for the Home Brewery Co. in 1937/8.
- The Vale Public House, Mansfield Road, Daybrook, Nottingham 1935-37 (Grade II listed)
- Baskerville House, Centenary Square, Birmingham 1935–39
- Home Brewery Head Office, Mansfield Road, Daybrook, Nottingham 1936 (Grade II listed)
- Odeon Cinema, Clacton-on-Sea, Essex (opened May 1936)
- Odeon Cinema, Bridgwater, Somerset (opened July 1936)
- Woolwich Equitable Building Society, 4-9, South Parade, Nottingham 1936-37
- Civic Centre, Newport, Monmouthshire 1936–67
- YMCA, Shakespeare Street, Nottingham 1937
- St. Mary's Church, Wollaton Park, Nottingham 1937–39 (Grade II listed)
- St. Barnabas' Church, Lenton Abbey, Nottingham 1937–39
- Odeon Cinema, Bristol (opened July 1938)
- The Oxclose Public House, Oxclose Lane, Nottingham 1939
- Staythorpe 'A' Power Station, near Newark, Notts (from 1946) - awarded RIBA Bronze Medal 1953, now demolished
- Staythorpe Cottages
- Nightingale Hall, University of Nottingham 1946–56
- Portland Building, University of Nottingham 1951–56
- Nottingham & District Technical College (now Newton Building, Nottingham Trent University), Burton Street, Nottingham 1956–58 (Grade II listed)
- Wheelhouse Pub, Russell Drive, Wollaton (opened 1965) (Howitt & Partners).