



ENGLISH HERITAGE  
EDUCATION

KS4+

## ART DECO SKETCH TOUR

### Eltham Palace

This resource has been designed to help teachers plan a visit to Eltham Palace which provides essential insight into 1930s Art Deco design. Students can follow the Sketch Tour to explore the palace's Art Deco interior design and furniture.



#### INCLUDED:

- Teachers' Guide
- Student Art Deco Sketch Tour booklet

#### GET IN TOUCH WITH OUR EDUCATION BOOKINGS TEAM:

- ☎ 0370 333 0606
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Step into England's story

## TEACHERS' GUIDE

# ART DECO SKETCH TOUR

KS4+

### Recommended for

KS4 & 5 (Art and Design)

### Learning objectives

**WHAT:** identify characteristics of Art Deco design, develop specialist vocabulary and understand the historical, social and cultural context of the Art Deco period.

**HOW:** engage critically with the Art Deco-inspired design features of Eltham Palace and record their responses by completing the sketch tour.

**OUTCOME:** recognise the contextual influences that inspired artists and designers of the Art Deco period and can use this knowledge and insight to inform their own work.

### Time to complete

1 hour 30 minutes



The dining room at Eltham Palace.

## PRE-VISIT

### PRIOR LEARNING

Students should gain an understanding of the basic principles of Art Deco design and its foundation as a movement evolved from Art Nouveau. Elements of design that they will encounter at Eltham Palace include:

- contrasting colours
- textures and tones
- geometric forms
- animal motifs
- lacquerwork
- influences from ancient civilisations
- Parisian chic
- Streamline Moderne.

It would be beneficial for students to carry out research on some of the major cultural and technological shifts that influenced the wider Moderne movement, i.e. cheaper raw materials, more sophisticated manufacturing processes and faster transport capabilities.

### PRE-VISIT ACTIVITY

Students should research and record their findings about four key elements of Art Deco design in the front of their Art Deco Sketch Tour booklet. This will help them to recognise Art Deco forms within Eltham Palace.

### PREPARATION AND RESOURCES

Print the Sketch Tour booklet and complete the 'Before you visit' section.

The booklet will print as four double-sided pages which can be folded into a booklet and stapled.

1. Select pages 3 – 20 of the PDF
2. Select size A4
3. Select 'Print on both sides of the paper'

**Please be aware** that only plain lead pencils can be used at the palace. Students must use clipboards to lean on when sketching to prevent damage to historic surfaces, so please bring these with you.



ENGLISH HERITAGE  
EDUCATION

KS4 & KS5

# ART DECO SKETCH TOUR

DISCOVER  
ELTHAM PALACE



NAME: .....

Allow two pages in your school sketch books to create mind maps for the four key terms below. Research each term and annotate the mind maps with information, key words and collage imagery to show your learning about the historical, cultural and social context of Art Deco design.

- Modernism
- Art Nouveau
- Art Deco
- Streamline Moderne

Start your exploration of Eltham Palace online at **Google Arts & Culture**: [artsandculture.google.com/exhibit/7QJizGV3pfRdJA](https://artsandculture.google.com/exhibit/7QJizGV3pfRdJA)



Virginia Courtauld's bedroom at Eltham Palace.

Stephen Courtauld, the son of a wealthy cloth manufacturer, and his wife, Virginia (Ginie), came to live at Eltham Palace in 1936. They commissioned the architectural firm run by John Seely and Paul Paget to design a modern house alongside the medieval and Tudor palace. What they created became recognised as an Art Deco masterpiece.

John Seely and Paul Paget met at Trinity College, Cambridge. The couple became inseparable: in Paget's words, 'it was just the marriage of two minds... we became virtually one person'.

Their relationship was a loving one, at a time when homosexuality between men was illegal. They went into business together in 1926. Paget was no architect, but used his charm and personality to attract clients. Seely was the designer. As in their relationship, the two were inseparable in business – each referred to the other simply as 'the partner'. They lived and worked together at 41 Cloth Fair in the City of London, where the firm remained until 1986.



Celebrating the Queen's coronation on 2nd June, 1953. © Templewood Estate

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Seely (left) draws up a set of plans while Paget (right) watches. © Templewood Estate



Seely and Paget installed two separate baths in the bathroom of their home, where they would soak together. © Templewood Estate

This Sketch Tour will guide you around the Art Deco-inspired art, furniture and interior design at Eltham Palace. There are six points on the tour. Each one will introduce you to an aspect of Art Deco design.

### You'll discover:

- key elements of Art Deco-inspired design
- contextual information that influenced artists and designers of the era
- inspiration for your own work.

It should take you between 1 hour–1 hour 30 minutes to complete this Art Deco Sketch Tour.

After your visit, look back over your booklet at the **Independent Research Hints** to help develop your studies further.



An aerial view of Eltham Palace.

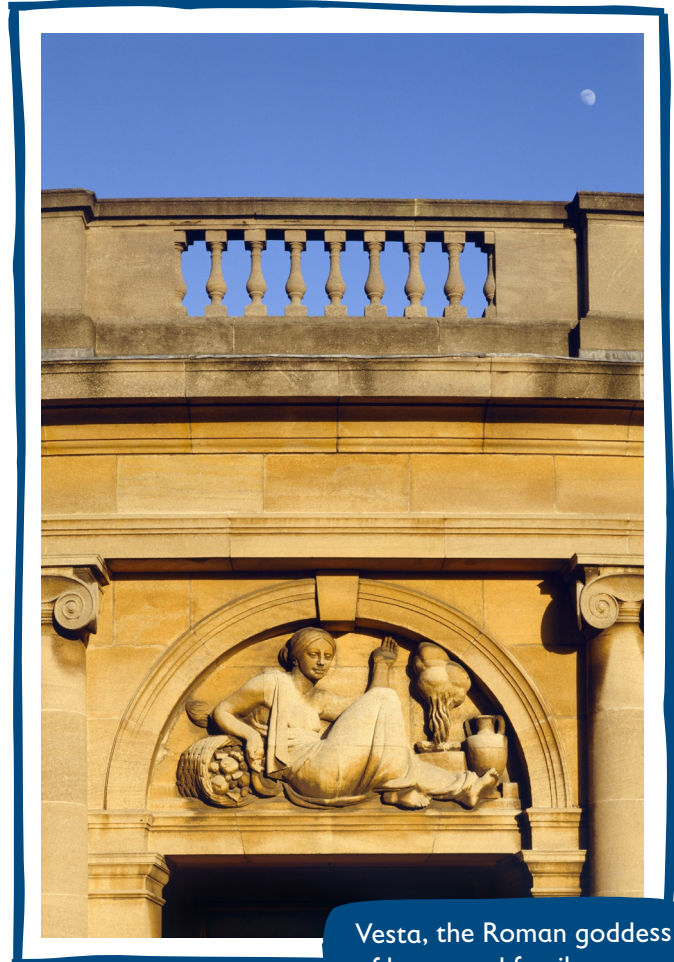


Art Deco design is a mixture of style influences. This can mean that styles are copied from different periods in history and from different countries as well as from the natural or industrial worlds.

**COLONNADE** – a row of evenly spaced columns supporting a roof or arches.

The entrance **colonnade** is **neo-classical**, designed to remind the visitor of ancient Greece or Rome. It is also inspired by Trinity College Cambridge, where the designers, Seely and Paget met.

The sculpture of the Roman goddess Vesta is by an artist called Harry Carleton Attwood (1907–85). Neo-classical sculpture reliefs are a popular Art Deco motif.



Vesta, the Roman goddess of home and family.

**NEO-CLASSICAL** – in the style of, or inspired by, 'classical' art and the classical civilisations i.e. Ancient Greece and Rome.

#### Independent Research Hint:

- Hampton Court
- The library at Trinity College Cambridge



The Erechtheum, an ancient temple on the Acropolis of Athens in Greece. © Creative Commons.



Sketch the neo-classical features of the entrance colonnade. Annotate your sketch to explain what impression these features might have on a visitor in the 1930s and/or today.



The entrance hall is where the Courtaulds' guests were welcomed to the house. The interior was designed by a Swedish designer, Rolf Engströmer (1892–1970) to immediately impress guests.

**FUTURISTIC** – having or involving very modern technology or design.

The light from the concrete and glass domed roof, and its circular form, was designed to give a **futuristic** feel. These materials are common in Art Deco architecture, as they had become cheaper to make by the 1930s. Their use influenced the design, as they could be shaped more easily than traditional building materials such as brick or wood.

The circular rug is a replica of the rug that the Courtauld's commissioned from Marion Dorn (1899–1964), a leading **modernist** textile designer in the 1930s. She carried out commissions for the London hotels Claridge's and the Savoy, and for the 'Queen Mary' cruise-liner.

#### Independent Research Hint:

- Marion Dorn designs at the V&A
- Claridges Hotel lobby, 1935



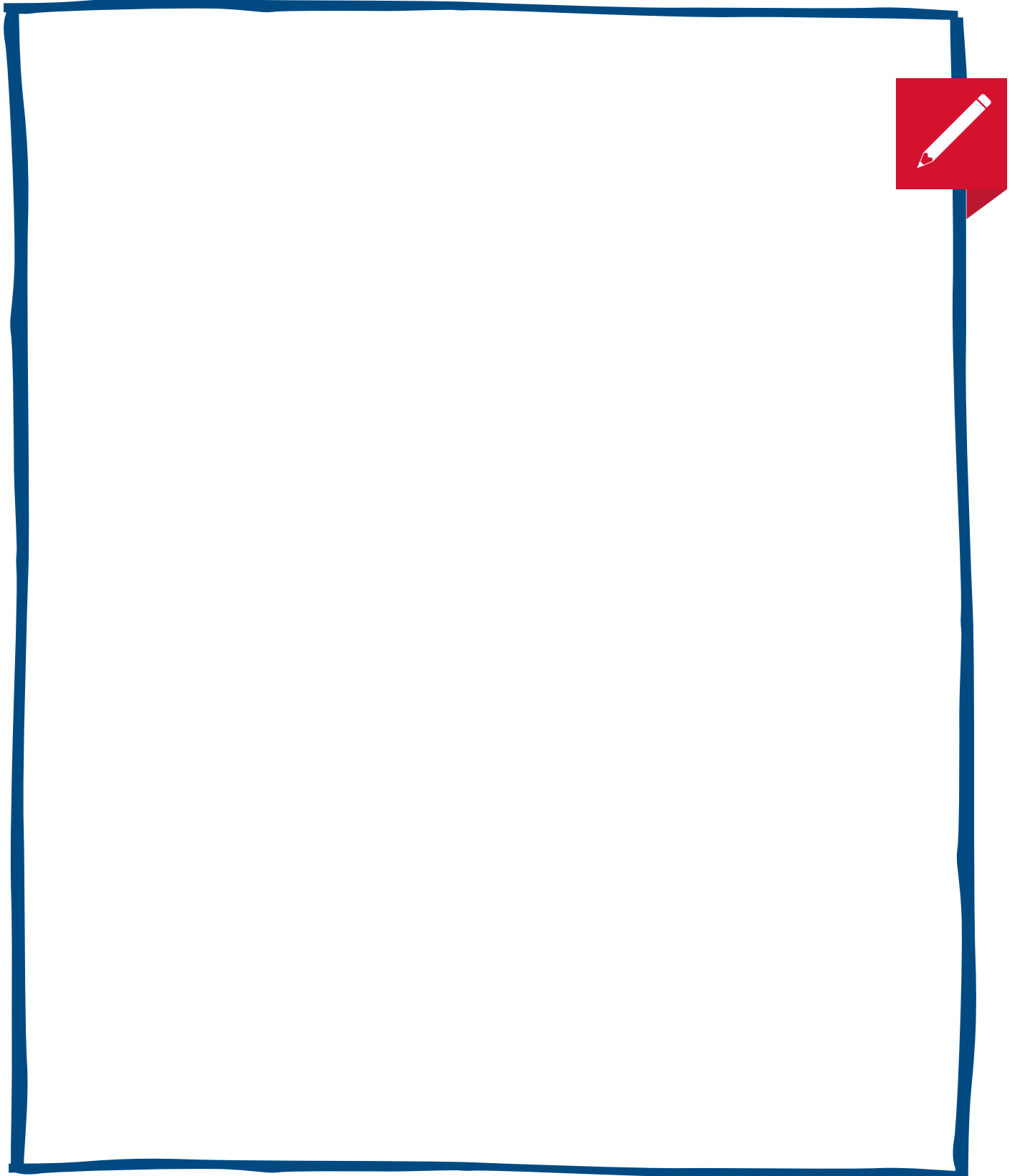
The entrance hall at Eltham Palace.

**MODERNISM** – the Western art movement that rejected the styles of the past. It emphasised innovation and experimentation in forms, materials and techniques to create artworks that reflected modern society.



Marion Dorn's designs were revolutionary for her boldly modern textile designs.

Sketch the domed ceiling and the circular rug and annotate how these elements complement each other.



This room is designed by Italian interior designer Peter Malacrida. It is a good example of the **Moderne** style of design with geometric or stylised shapes and contrasting textures and tones. The aluminium ceiling contrasts sharply with the flexwood walls.

**MODERNE** – the Art Deco style characterised by bright colours and geometric shapes

Lacquering was a popular decorative technique used by Art Deco designers. Use of animal motifs and other inspiration from the natural world were key design aspects of **Art Nouveau** (1910–20s), which influenced the Art Deco movement.

**LACQUER** – layers of varnish applied to a surface to create a decorative 'finish'.

#### Independent Research Hint:

- The 'Exposition des Arts Decoratifs' of 1925 in Paris
- Park Lane Hotel, Piccadilly

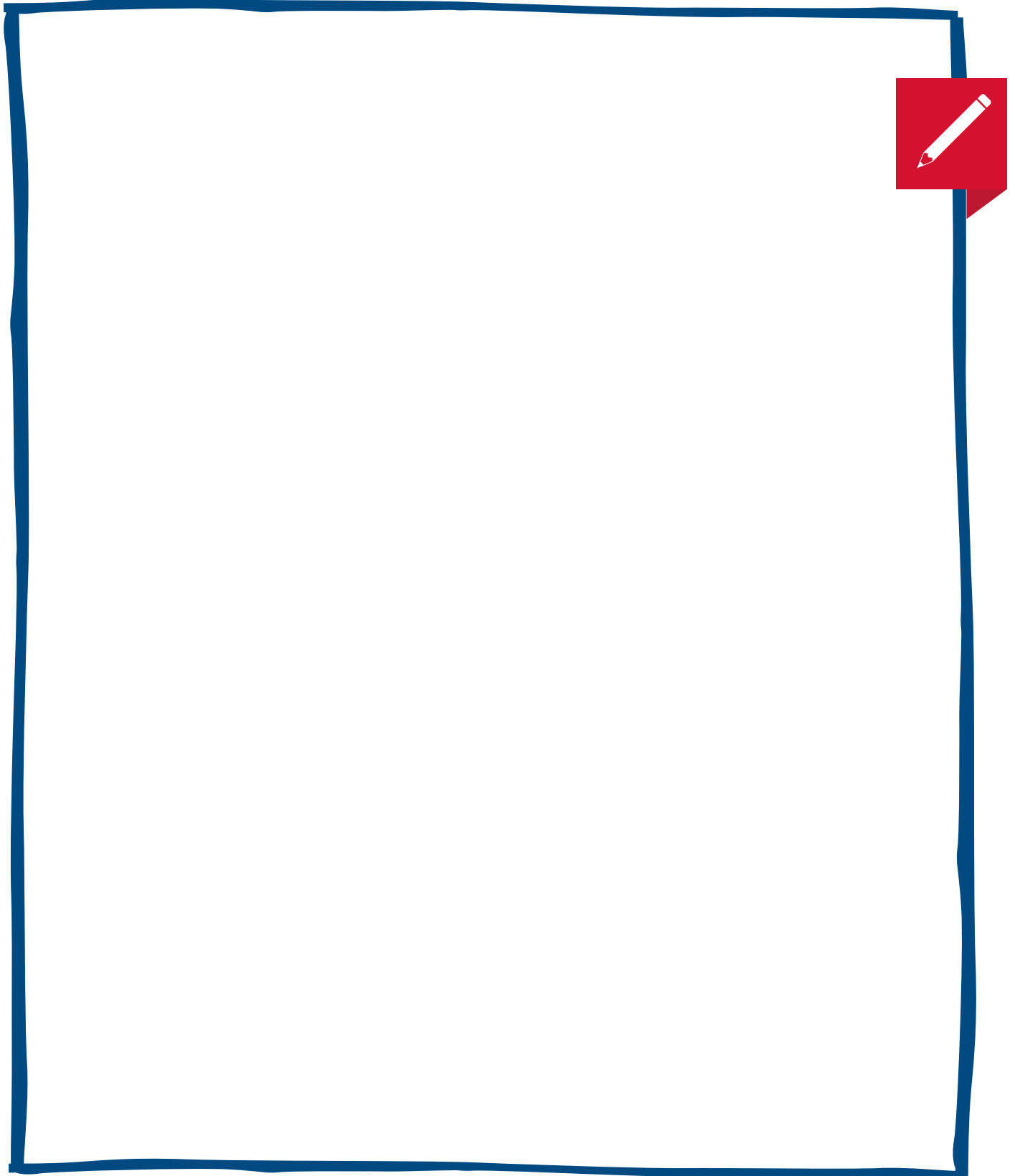


A copy of an Ancient Greek jar showing contrasting tones and repeating patterns – styles that are echoed in this room.



The ivory-coloured applied lacquer animals contrast sharply with the black doors.

Sketch the examples of contrasting tones and colours that you notice in this room. Note how this style may have impacted on people sitting down to dine in this room.

A large, hand-drawn style blue rectangular frame occupies the central part of the page, intended for sketching. In the top right corner of this frame, there is a red square icon containing a white pencil, indicating where to start sketching.

The boudoir interior was also designed by Peter Malacrida. The room displays the 1930s fashion for painting ceilings a lighter colour than the walls.



The mirrored ceiling creates the illusion of a larger room.

The walls are sycamore **veneer**. The form of the ceiling is ribbed and coved, with mirrors at either end. Electric light shines up onto the ceiling.

**VENEER** – very thin layers of expensive wood glued on to a panel of less expensive wood. New technology in the twentieth century meant veneers could be mass produced, making them cheaper.

The McMichael wireless radio set shows how Art Deco design principles were translated into everyday household objects. The introduction of plastic allowed manufacturers to create more dynamic shapes, quicker, and more cheaply, than ever before. The **sunburst** motif was a very popular feature in Art Deco design.

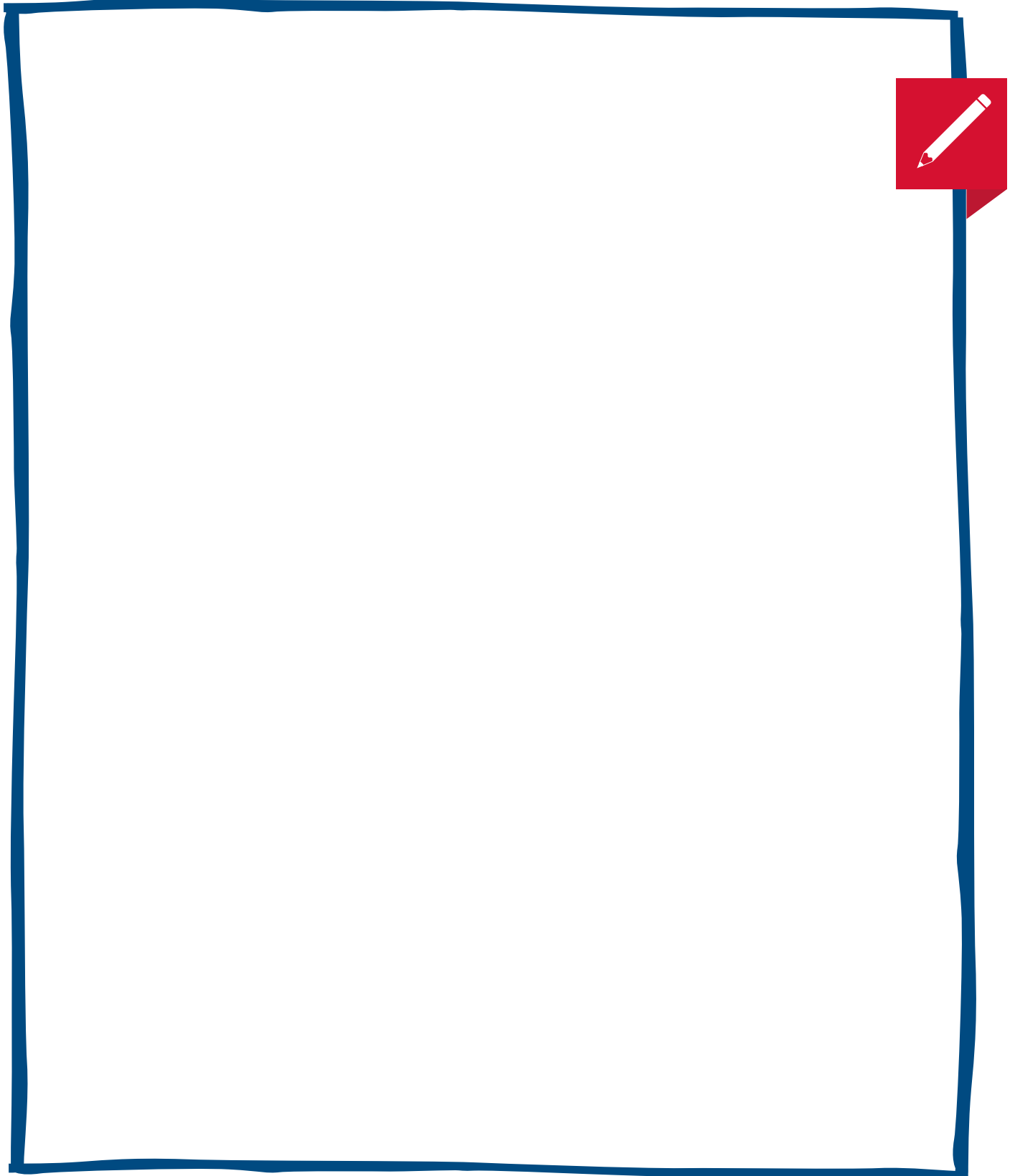


The McMichael wireless set – a luxury item in the 1930s – showing a sunburst motif.

#### Independent Research Hint:

- The Atlantic map in the dining room of the 'Queen Mary' cruise liner
- Bakelite radios – 1930s

Sketch where you see interesting uses of line, form and shape in this room. Explain through your annotations what effect these elements create.

A large, hand-drawn blue rectangular frame occupies the central portion of the page, intended for a student to sketch and annotate. In the top right corner of this frame, there is a red square icon containing a white pencil, indicating where to start sketching.

The 'Queen Mary' sailed on her first voyage in 1936, the same year that the Courtaulds moved into Eltham Palace. At that time, steam cruise liners were considered a very luxurious and fast way to travel.

**STREAMLINE MODERNE** – a form of Art Deco architecture and design that used curving forms, long horizontal lines and nautical elements. The revolution in transport in the 1920s and 30s, with faster trains, ships and cars, influenced designers and artists who wanted to replicate the sense of speed in their furniture, architecture or objects.



RMS 'Queen Mary' - 1936.  
© Creative Commons.



The porthole in the corridor near the entrance hall.

The Pear Room is named after the material which the fitted furniture is made from – pear wood. This room was designed by Seely and the wood furniture demonstrates the **streamline moderne** aesthetic of the Art Deco movement. It is inspired by the smooth, horizontal curved lines of a cabin on a cruise liner.

#### Independent Research Hint:

- The 'Queen Mary' cruise liner
- The Pan Pacific Auditorium, Los Angeles, 1935
- Scarborough cinema – 1936



Sketch the use of sweeping lines and curves that you notice in this room. Record what impressions you think the design of the Pear Room would have on guests staying for the weekend?



A large, empty rectangular area outlined in blue, intended for sketching and writing.

Virginia's bathroom was designed by Italian interior designer Peter Malacrida.

The room uses **geometric forms** and contrasting colours, tones and textures – key principles of Art Deco. The contrast of classical statues with modern vibrant tones and textures was very fashionable in luxurious Paris hotels in the 1930s.



Virginia's bathroom echoes the style of luxury 1930s hotels.



The taps and mirror in Stephen's bathroom use geometric forms.

**GEOMETRIC FORMS** are a key feature of Art Deco. This was a new idea, and a deliberate move away from the organic shapes and forms used in the earlier Art Nouveau design movement of the 1900–20s.

**Independent Research Hint:**

- The Landsdowne Club entrance
- Strand Palace Hotel foyer, 1928

Sketch the geometric forms that you notice in Virginia, Stephen's and the other bathrooms. Explore how they contrast with other shapes and tones in the bathrooms. Annotate your sketch to record your observations.

A large, hand-drawn blue rectangular frame intended for sketching. The lines are slightly irregular, giving it a sketchy appearance.

You can use the information in this Sketch Tour about the Art Deco elements at Eltham Palace to develop your own research project on Modernism.

Remember the key characteristics that you have observed at Eltham at each sketch point:

- Neoclassicism
- Futuristic Forms
- Contrasting Tones
- Modern Manufacturing
- Streamline Moderne
- Geometric Forms

Use the [Independent Research Hints](#) to further your understanding and discover more Art Deco artists, designers and imagery to inspire you.

**CONGRATULATIONS** on completing the Art Deco Sketch Tour.  
We hope you enjoyed your visit.

You can use this trail in your portfolio as a record of your visit.