

Upstairs Case 12

Ancient Greece and the Elgin Marbles

1. Henning Pencil Drawings

The two pencil drawings by John Henning show the power and beauty of the horses in the original sculpture. They were donated to Elgin Museum in 2014 by the 11th Lord Elgin.

2. Model of Athena

The statue of Athena was constructed by Pheidias around 447 BC. It stood about 10 metres high and was constructed on a wooden core, faced with ivory and gold. In the centre of her helmet was a likeness of the Sphinx and on either side were Griffins in relief. She held a statue of Nike (victory) in her right hand while her left supported a shield sheltering a snake, with a lance resting on her left shoulder. Athena stood on a pedestal 8 x 4 metres.

A shallow pool of oil stood on the floor in front, adding further drama to the statue due to its reflective surface.

The main purpose of the Parthenon was to shelter this giant statue of Athena.

3. Acropolis

This is a reconstruction drawing of the Acropolis showing the Parthenon at the top.

4. Image of part of Parthenon Frieze

This is what the frieze would have looked like when first constructed, including the colour.

5. The Parthenon

Cut away image of the great temple with statue of Athena *in situ*.

6. The Temporary Elgin Room, 1819

This painting by Archibald Archer shows the makeshift museum housing the Elgin Marbles, at the corner of Piccadilly and Park Lane

7. Reconstruction of the Parthenon in Tennessee

This concrete building which stands in Centennial Park, Nashville, is a full-scale replica of the original in Athens. It was built in 1897

and is complete, including colour. The plaster replicas of the Parthenon marbles are direct casts of the original sculptures. In the 1990s the recreation of the statue of Athena was added.

8. Photo of the Acropolis today

9. Photo of Caryatides on the Erechtheion

Instead of columns, these draped female figures (“caryatides”) are used as decorative pillars to support the entablatures of Greek or Greek-style buildings. Those on the Erechtheion are the most famous examples. Construction of the Erechtheion was completed in 406 BC.

10. Greek Oil Cruet

This alabaster oil cruet is typical of that used in ancient Greece.
ELGNM: 1837.3

11. Parthenaic Frieze

This copper cast, set in a wooden frame, simulates a portion of the outer frieze of the Parthenon. The galloping horses and warriors represent the solemn procession to the Temple of Minerva (The Parthenon in Athens).
ELGNM: 1979.43

In 1841 Lord Elgin brought home
from the Parthenon of Athens a
splendid collection of basso-relievos
and fragments of statuary which
were called the Elgin marbles. They
were at once seen to be among the
first remains of ancient art, and
might be it was said ^{or} executed from
designs by Phidias. The British
Parliament bought them for £35,000
they are now to be seen in the British
Museum (^{from} Murray's description).

ELGIN MUSEUM

— Casts of the Elgin Marbles.

— Presented by

— Lewisia Countess of Seafield

— Grant Lodge Elgin.

— Novr. 1886