



# Fitzrovia Chapel

A five-minute walk from Oxford Street, nestled between some new-build flats, is Fitzrovia Chapel. From the outside you'd hardly take a second glance, except to consider this might be a church of some sort. Inside, however, it's a literal gem – a small and very sparkly bit of London history.

The Grade II-listed building was the former chapel of the Middlesex Hospital. It was designed as a memorial to Major Ross MP, a former chair of the board of governors at Middlesex Hospital. The chapel was designed by John Loughborough Pearson and completed by his son Frank. Pearson senior started it in 1891 and the first service took place on September 19th 1915. Back then it had a timber roof but by 1929, Pearson junior had added a vaulted ceiling covered in mosaics. So it's Pearson junior we have to thank for the bling. Pearson senior died in 1897 and between then and 1901, Pearson junior worked on the magnificent ceiling. Inspired by San Marco church in Venice, Pearson employed Italian craftsmen and imported the finest materials including seventeen different kinds of marble! Overlaid in glittering mosaics, the chapel proved a costly and time-consuming project.

Middlesex Hospital moved to this location on Mortimer Street in 1757 and lasted until 2005. It was demolished three years later but until 2013 the chapel was in limbo. Originally, the site was going to be developed by the Candy Brothers but they pulled out because of the financial crash in 2008, and thankfully Sir Robert McAlpine took over. Work began on restoration in 2013 and after £3m of work the chapel was ready to open for Open House London 2015, a full century after its first service. The restoration work was carried out by Caroe & Partners, so it's them we can thank for this astonishing little London marvel.

The Fitzrovia Chapel is open every Wednesday between 11.00 and 16.00 to visit for free.



**Katie Wignall**, an award-winning history blogger and Blue Badge Guide, founded Look Up London. She runs history walking tours that focus on the quirkiest sights of the city and encourages fellow Londoners to look up to discover more. Find out more at: [www.lookup.london](http://www.lookup.london)