

Atomic Bomb Dome

One of the largest structures left standing after the atomic bombing, the Hiroshima Atomic Bomb Dome is located 160 meters from ground zero. The building, designed by Czech architect Jan Letzel (1880–1925) and completed in 1915 as the Hiroshima Prefectural Industrial Promotion Hall, was a local landmark feted for its European-style architecture. The reflection of the building could be seen in the Motoyasu River, much as it can today.

The atomic blast detonated almost directly above, destroying the majority of the building and killing all of its occupants instantly. The steel skeleton of its dome, however, somehow survived, along with parts of the thick concrete walls below. These twisted, charred remains stand to this day, almost unrecognizable as the stately building that once charmed crowds strolling along the riverside.

After World War II, the structure came to be known as the A-bomb Dome, and initially the public was free to walk around inside, directly beneath the mangled dome. Then, in 1966, the city made the decision to preserve the site as a memorial bearing mute witness to the horror of atomic warfare. The necessary work has been undertaken on the structure to ensure it remains safely standing, and in 1996 it was granted World Heritage status.