

# La maison du nez



The “Nose House” was one of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century’s marvels of architectural engineering. Construction on the house commenced in 1907 at 30 Fleet Street in London’s fashionable publishing district, however it was kept under wraps until March 1908, when King Edward VII himself unveiled it. The house shared many revolutionary design ideas with Buckminster Fuller’s first geodesic dome in Bennington, Vermont, however it predated the Buckydome by nearly 40 years. Instead of rooms, the building was divided into seven “sinuses” that were separated by sound-dampening mucus membranes. A common coal furnace heated all three floors, and every time the furnace backfired – which was, unfortunately, often – the house seemed to “sneeze.” Once during the harsh winter of 1910, the furnace backfired so violently that the chimney collapsed, resulting in what observers wryly dubbed a nosebleed. Unique to *la maison du nez*, as it was commonly known, was a clever system of gutters that directed rain from the bulbous roof down to the street through “les narines,” or nostrils. To detractors – and there were more than a few – it clearly suggested a runny nose. During the Nazi Blitz of February 1941, the house suffered serious structural damage. After the War, famed architect Le Corbusier performed radical rhinoplasty on the old edifice, but the cartilage foundation was beyond repair. In 1954, the Nose House was razed to make room for a Wimpy Bar, which still stands to this day.