

The Prefab



The devastation caused by bombing during the Second World War (1939-45) resulted in a serious housing shortage. 200,000 houses were destroyed by air raids and a further 3 million were damaged during the war. In all, 3 750 000 houses were rendered uninhabitable.

Part of the Temporary Housing and Emergency Factory Made Homes programmes, saw 156 623 prefabricated buildings being erected all over the UK between 1946-8.

Prefabs were built in factories, in packs and then shipped to the area they were to be built in.

Where did this building come from?

The prefab at Avoncroft was manufactured in April 1946 and was originally sited at 85 Moat Lane, Yardley, Birmingham. It is the Arcon MK. V prefab, produced by Taylor Woodrow.

Birmingham City Council gave the prefab to the museum and it was dismantled in 1981. The cost of its reconstruction was borne by the Taylor Woodrow Group with additional grants and help from the Science Museum and other firms and institutions.



What was this building used for and who lived in it?

The main aim of the prefabricated buildings was to provide accommodation to ex-servicemen returning from the war, people made homeless by the destruction of war, or those living in overcrowded and insanitary conditions.

The prefabs were mainly located in bombed areas, rural areas and on parks. The initial plan was to replace them after 10-15 years. In reality, many were in use for a lot longer than this and some can be still found across the UK.

The prefab design was very clever and made excellent use of the space. There were three entrances, one into the kitchen, one into a hallway and 'french door' style access into the garden. There was an inside bathroom and toilet and two bedrooms. Cupboards were built into the walls as part of the structure.