

INTRODUCTION TO REGISTERED DESIGNS

Updated 27 February 2008



Intellectual Property covers four main areas:

Patents - How something works

Designs – What it looks like

Trade Marks – What you call it

Copyright – Artistic or literary expression

Sometimes a single item can be covered by all four elements, for example, a new lock mechanism could be covered by a **Patent** for the mechanism, by a **Design** for the appearance given to the outside, by a **Trade Mark** for a logo and by **Copyright** for the installation instructions.

Registered Designs are for the eye appeal of an object. They are applied for at The UK Intellectual Property Office. Britain also has a 'Design Right' providing automatic protection for 15 years from the date of creation, even when a registered design is not applied for. Before July 1989 design protection ran for 5 years from the date of application, then was renewable for a second 5 year term and then a final 5 year term, giving a total of 15 years. From August 1989, registered designs have a maximum of 25 years protection subject to renewal fees. From 1842 to 1883 there were two series of designs, Ornamental and Non Ornamental, they can be found in 'The National Archives.

Non-Ornamental Designs

There is a part manuscript part print volume, which contains in date order information on non ornamental designs. These were minor inventions and had registered numbers which were usually found on the artefacts. This is located with the British Library research team.

Ornamental Designs

British ornamental designs registered up until 1883 have a diamond mark on them. From 1884 non-textile designs were issued in a single numbered series, starting from 1 and carrying on to the present day. Objects will typically have 'RD' or 'Reg Des' on them followed by a number. Designs from 1884 onwards are listed in the *Commissioners of Patents journal* and then later in *The Official Journal (patents)*. They began to list ornamental designs from number 320,741 and non-ornamental designs from number 6,030. The applicant's name and address but not the title is given.

Ornamental Class system

Classes were for the material used rather than for the type of product.

Class number	Type of material
1	Metal
2	Jewellery
3	Wood, bone, ivory and other solid substances
4	Glass, earthenware, porcelain
5	Paper
6	Leather
7	Paper-hangings

Class number	Type of material
8	Carpets
9	Lace
10	Millinery
11	Ornamental needlework
12	Other goods
13	Printed or woven designs on textiles
14	Printed or woven designs on handkerchiefs

The table below shows the first design listed in the *Official Journal (Patents)* for each year from 1884 to 1932. That is, the first design listed in Class I of the first issue for that year. The list ends in 1932, after this designs are listed each week alphabetically by the applicant and it becomes virtually impossible to trace a design number.

Year	First number
1884	1
1885	18,993
1886	39,547
1887	61,207
1888	87,266
1889	111,664
1890	140,481
1891	160,613
1892	183,259
1893	203,348
1894	223,861
1895	244,726
1896	266,237
1897	288,848
1898	309,956
1899	328,527
1900	349,120

Year	First number
1901	367,628
1902	380,979
1903	401,944
1904	422,489
1905	428,004
1906	469,160
1907	486,464
1908	516,375
1909	533,561
1910	546,084
1911	561,570
1912	585,707
1913	608,541
1914	627,887
1915	642,613
1916	651,079
1917	655,001

Year	First number
1918	662,576
1919	665,728
1920	664,869
1921	676,491
1922	685,412
1923	691,571
1924	695,944
1925	705,943
1926	716,386
1927	723,430
1928	725,899
1929	740,459
1930	741,336
1931	757,945
1932	767,110

Historical designs are kept in the National Archives up until the end of 1990. The UK Intellectual Property Office hold copies of more recent decisions – from 2,012,309 onwards and can provide copies if the number is known.

Searching for designs by number

Representations of British designs were not published until October 1997 in *Designs in View*. This shows non-textile designs. The British Library does not hold any copies of British Designs except for those appearing in *Designs in View*. Currently protected British designs (in force as of 1st June 1997) can be searched using Design Finder.

Searching for British Designs by subject

British designs are not arranged by subject. Early design classes, up until 1933, are arranged by the type of material only. British designs can be searched by subject using the Locarno Class system and the official designs database on the UK Intellectual Property Office website.

The Locarno agreement establishes an International classification for Industrial designs. It was signed in 1968 and amended in 1979.

For more information see <http://www.wipo.int/classifications/nivilo/locarno/index.htm#>

Searching British Designs by applicant

From May 1878 British designs began to be listed in the *Commissioners of Patents Journal*. Currently protected British Designs can be searched using the applicants name on the UK Intellectual Property Office official designs database.

References

The British Library Business & IP Centre

The Business & IP Centre has all the business and Intellectual property information you need as an innovator and entrepreneur.

We can be contacted by phone– 020 7412 7454/7919 or by email bipc@bl.uk.

You can take a look at our Web page <http://www.bl.uk/bipc/>

The UK Intellectual Property Office

The UK IPO is the official government body responsible for granting Intellectual Property rights in the United Kingdom.

They can be contacted by phone– 08459 500505 or by email-enquiries@ipo.gov.uk.

You can take a look at their web page <http://www.ipo.gov.uk/home.htm>

The National Archives

The National Archives is a government department and an executive agency of the Secretary of State for Justice. It brings together the Public Record Office, Historical Manuscripts Commission, the Office of Public Sector Information and Her Majesty's Stationery Office

Their address is The National Archives, Kew, Richmond, Surrey, TW9 4DU. Their telephone number is 020 8876 3444.

You can take a look at their web page <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/?source=home>.