

Building Detectives: Notes to Teachers

Why are buildings important and what can they tell us?

- They can tell us about the people who lived, worked and worshipped in them.
- They tell us about social history - what was important in past communities and their aspirations.
- They tell us about social hierarchy - they hold up a mirror to the society that built and used them.
- They tell us about the interaction between people and the environment/landscape. Every building is related to the landscape that it came from. The geology that the stone was quarried from, the aggregate in the mortar that binds the walls together.

Why is it important to record buildings?

- Buildings are undergoing change constantly, they are either being used and adapting to changing needs over time or they are falling into disuse and disrepair.
- By recording buildings we are providing an opportunity for children to physically capture a snapshot of Falkirk Town Centre at this time in the 21st century.

How do we investigate buildings?

- By looking at historic documents, maps or old photographs.
- By looking at the architectural styles that have been employed in its construction or decoration.
- By studying the standing fabric or 'archaeology' of the building.

What do we look for?

- What function the building has - how might that have changed over time?
- Comparative examples
- What form does it take? Can you see what its original form took - has it been modified, how has it been altered?
- What materials have been used in its construction - where might they have come from - how did they get there?
- What features are there that might tell us about its history?

Below you will see that we have compiled a simple recording sheet for your pupils to fill out when examining their local buildings.

When we are looking at and studying buildings, why do we need to use a recording sheet?

- It helps to jog your memory
- It makes sure that everyone collects the information in the same way.
- It helps with cross-referencing to other information you collect (such as photographs, finds or drawings)
- It helps when transferring the information to a computer database.
- It's also good to take a camera along as photographs are very good especially if you want to return at a later date so that you can compare and contrast.

BE SAFE WHEN EXPLORING - DON'T TAKE ANY RISKS!

Let us know how you get on and please feel free to send any of your work and photographs to Falkirk THI Project, Suite 1/2, The Hub, 45 Vicar Street, Falkirk, FK1 1LL.

BUILDING DETECTIVES
BUILDING RECORDING SHEET

Project name:

School:

Class:

Teacher:

Building Address: (or location description)

Date of recording:

Recorded by:

What type of building is it?

House Industrial Commercial/Shop Flat Other

Number of storeys How many storeys?

Detached Semi-detached Terraced

Is the building in use? Yes/No

If “yes” for what is it used? E.g a house/shop/garage

If “no” explain why you think that the building is not used anymore

Is the building rendered? This means that the bricks and stones on the walls can't be seen because they are covered by something. Yes / No

If “yes,” is the building:

Painted Cement rendered Other

What is the dominant building material? This means, what is the main material used in building the house?

Stone Brick Corrugated Iron Timber/Wood Concrete

Other please specify:

If “brick” is it:

Red Brick Yellow Brick Blue Brick White Brick Multi-coloured (polychromatic)

What are the roofing materials?

Slate Stone tile Thatch Corrugated iron Clay tile Concrete tile

Other please specify:

Draw one of the windows:

Is it?

Wooden UPVC (plastic) Metal

Use this area to draw and label the front wall (elevation) of the building.

When you have gathered information about a lot of buildings in your area, here are some questions that you can ask or research.

- When was it built?
- Why was it built?
- By looking at the building, what is its function, if it's a house, how many people do you think live there now?
- Is it the same as the other buildings in the street?
- How are the buildings numbered in the street?
- Was it always used for the purpose that it's used today?
- How many different people do you think it took to build the building?
- If I wanted to build today, how would I go about it?
- Have people always built in the same way? e.g would I have needed a garage in 1762?
- Why do we have windows and front doors and have we always had them?
- Where is the oldest building in your area and of course the newest too!
- If you have studied your school building, why do you think it was designed that way?
- Maybe you would like to design a house or new school for yourself?
- Can you find your building on a map?