

KS3 Activity Sheet

Looking at Buildings



Introduction

The London Canal Museum is housed in a building put up over 150 years ago, for a very different purpose from the one it is used for now. In the drive for regeneration around the Battlebridge Basin, some buildings have, like the Canal Museum, been adapted and reused. Others have been demolished, and new ones, made out of quite different material, put in their place. This activity looks at the buildings as machines for living and working, and in terms of design. It also examines the differences in materials used to build them.

Learning Objectives

- To understand the original purpose for which the Canal Museum was built, and how this has changed.
- To look at the ice wells and first floor stables in the building, and consider why they were placed where they were.
- To examine the windows, doors and other functioning parts of the building and consider why they were built as they were.
- To compare the materials from which the London Canal Museum was built with the materials of the modern buildings and consider why the changes took place.

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Before you go into the London Canal Museum, stand on the opposite side of New Wharf Road and look at the outside of the building. It was put up over 150 years ago, to serve as a warehouse for Carlo Gatti to store the blocks of ice he had imported from Norway before distributing them by horse & cart around London.

What is the Museum made of?

There are patterns on the building. Draw an example here

What clue is there on the outside that this was not simply a residential building?

Is there anything outside that makes it different from a modern building?

Why is there a small door on the right of the building?

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Choose a part of the building that interests you, and draw it below.

You might prefer to make a simple sketch of the whole building. You could also record some of the architectural details using a camera.

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Go into the building. Walk past the exhibits, and go straight towards the back of the ground floor. What can you see there, and what was it used for?

Think of four good words to describe it, and write them here:

A large, white, cloud-shaped thought bubble with a black outline. Inside the bubble, there are four numbered lines for writing:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

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What is it made of?

What shape is it

Would a modern building be built with one of these? If not, why not?

Think of three good reasons why it was built on the ground floor of the building.

1.....

2.....

3.....

NOW turn around, and look behind you. Can you see a ramp leading upstairs? This was used by horses, which were led up to their stables on the first floor. People are not allowed to use it, but you can go up the museum stairs to the first floor.

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Keeping horses UPSTAIRS in a building is a method used in crowded Victorian London to save space. Can you think of two DISADVANTAGES of keeping animals upstairs?

1.....

2.....

Was this a good design? Could the same functions have been provided in another way? Could you have done better than the building's original architect?

When you get back to school, you might like to try to work out a new design, and make a model in clay or card. Remember your design will need the following features: • A place where ice can be stored without a freezer • Easy access to the ice well by horses and carts. • A comfortable area for stabling horses • An easy way to supply the horses with food. • An easy way to remove soiled straw & manure. You might find it interesting to look at www.nps.gov/history/nr/travel/shaker/han This is a description of a very well-designed circular barn in America, which was built in the 1820s - the Hancock Barn. It had three floors, and an outside ramp. Carts carrying hay, drove up the ramp to the top floor. They dropped their hay into a central storage area. It fell down to the middle floor where over 50 cattle were tied up, facing inwards so they could eat the hay. Their manure fell through a slatted floor to the bottom level, where it could be easily removed. Could you use any of these ideas in your design?

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Now go through the doors at the back of the museum, and look at the Battlebridge Basin. Some of the buildings around the Basin are old, and some are new. Can you tell the difference? Look at their shape, height, and the materials they are made of. Write down as many differences as you can here:

The older buildings are:	The newer buildings are:

On the next page there is a plan of Battlebridge Basin in 1871. The Canal Museum is on the eastern, or right-hand side. Look carefully at the plan, and then at the buildings you can see around the basin today. How many of the buildings on the plan are still there? You can start by marking the Ice House on the plan with a tick. Have any others survived? Mark the buildings that have changed with a cross on the plan.

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You have had a chance to look at a range of buildings of different ages and built using different materials. With your group, discuss the following question and note down some answers below:

When a city is regenerated, is it better to repair old buildings or demolish them and rebuild?