

ACTIVITY 2: A Neighbourhood Walk – Key Activity

Take the class for a neighbourhood walk around a block or two, asking students to take time to observe various types of windows, doors and entrances, rooflines, number of stories, placement of rooms (as much as you can tell from the outside), etc.

Buildings, like clothing, have style and fashion. And like clothing, many new houses are based on stock plans with a few variations, so a kind of common look gets perpetuated.

Materials:

Clip boards, pencils, and paper for sketching

Ideas to consider:

Is there a common style in this neighbourhood?

How do new houses differ from older houses?

Are there a common number of stories for houses or buildings?

Are most or all of the houses for single families or are they multiple-dwelling units?

Are any buildings multi-use (home plus business)?

Halfway through the walk, stop at a particular house you have chosen in advance, have the students make sketches of the house or details of the structure. If possible, you have met the owners and know a bit of the history of the house. Talk to the class about how this house has changed over time. Ask them to tell you what they notice about the house. Have students discuss and compare what they have noticed on the walk.

Back in the classroom revisit the question about what determines the style in which a house is built? (Fashion, budget, land-formation, weather, building materials, personal taste, etc.)

One good resource is *British Columbia Houses: A guide to the styles of domestic architecture in British Columbia* by Graeme Chalmers and Frances Moorcroft.