

ADOPT A BUILDING

Christopher Imhof
Montessori School of Denver

OVERVIEW

This activity uses primary and secondary sources to help students learn about local history and the methods of historic preservation.

STANDARDS

- History Standard 2: Students know how to use the processes and resources of historical inquiry.
- Geography Standard 2: Students know the physical and human characteristics of places, and use this knowledge to define and study regions and their patterns of change.
- Reading and Writing Standard 5: Students read to locate, select, and make use of relevant information from a variety of media, reference, and technological sources.

OBJECTIVES

After completing this activity, students will:

- Expand their knowledge of local history by "adopting a building" in their community.
- Learn about architectural aspects of historic buildings.
- Research the history of a building.

INQUIRY QUESTIONS

- What year was the building constructed?
- Who built it?
- Who was the architect? What is the style of architecture?

- What materials were used to build it?
- What was the building used for?

- Who used or lived in the building?

- How has the building changed over time?

PROCEDURE

1. Obtain a (digital) camera; use appropriate materials from the Doing History/Keeping the Past CD-ROM or website (Mining and Colorado Cities Topics; Virtual Field Trips).
2. Identify a building in your town or neighborhood suitable for class "adoption," involving students in this decision to the extent possible.
3. Take photos of the building, with close-ups of its significant architectural features. These might include stairs, railings, cornerstone, foundation, brick pattern, window design, door styles, etc.
4. Involve students in finding out everything they can about the history of the building. As resources, use libraries, the local historical society, interviews with long-time residents or owners of the building. Develop a set of inquiry questions for this building (see Inquiry Questions above as starters). Compare this building with buildings on the Virtual Field Trips for the Mining and Colorado Cities topics.
5. Have students investigate why and how this building has been preserved and whether it should be preserved for the future.
6. Have students assemble their research by making a poster or scrapbook.