

Handout A

Conducting a visual survey of a building (also known as “reading” a building)

Observation

How many windows are located at the front of the building? Draw one example.

Is the main entrance to the building marked in a special way? How? Draw it.

How many stories tall is the building?

What kind of materials is the building made from? (wood, brick, concrete, steel?)

What is located on either side of this building?

Are any other structures attached to this building or does it stand by itself?

Does the building sit close to the street or is it set back?

Is the street busy and noisy or is it a quiet street?

Does the building have special ornamentation - none, some, a lot? Draw one example.

Does the home have any unique details? If so, draw one example.

Draw a sketch of the entire front side of the building.

What are some clues (such as a sign or cornerstone) to tell you what year it was built? When was it built?

Interpretation

What do you think was (or is) the function of this building?

Does this building look very similar or very different from those around it? How?

Do you think many families live in this building or just one family?

Is there a stoop or a porch? How do you think the people who lived here might have used it?

Are there any clues (besides the plaque) to let you know that a famous person lived or worked here?

Analysis

Why do you think the famous person you are studying chose to live here?

What would happen if the house could talk? What would it say?

What special memories about the famous person do you think this house contains?

If you could ask the house one question, what would you like to know?

What other information would you like to know about this person or their home?

Where could you go to locate information about this person or their home?

Who could you talk with to find out more information?

How could you let other people in the neighborhood know about this building and the person who lived or worked here?