

1. Graffiti

Historic or modern art or writing added onto a structure – how have people near you left their mark on a place?

2. Animal as decoration &

3. Plant / flower as decoration

Maybe carved or painted – try a pub sign or a flag! These have historically been some of the most popular ways to add decoration to built places.

4. Name and location of a manufacturer

Some manufacturers add their branding onto what they make. Try a brick or a manhole cover – you'd be surprised how much you can find out about the history of the different elements which make up places.

5. Evidence of repair work or patching

Can you find signs that something has been maintained over time?

6. Building with structural timbers

Historically, a lot of buildings used wooden frames to hold their walls in place. Can you spot one?

7. Ghost sign

Old adverts and shop signs – these are a great way to find out about historic businesses and the products people used to buy. Some have survived by chance and faded over time, while others are preserved and re-painted for preservation.

8. War memorial

Lots of communities remember the local impact of conflict by memorialising their dead. Where is your local memorial?

9. Unusual shape or size of window

Windows are often called the “eyes of a building” and can give it loads of character. Can you find a window which is much larger or smaller than usual, or a different shape to those around it? Can you spot an interesting one?

10. Water fountain / drinking fountains

Who needs single use plastic bottles? Look out for historic and modern places where anyone could come to quench their thirst.

11. Accessibility alterations

Old places weren't always built in a way which is easy for people with disabilities to access. Can you spot a change, like a wheelchair ramp or braille sign, which makes a place more accessible?

12. Structure connected to water

Rivers and seas were historically ways to transport people and goods more easily than badly maintained roads! Can you find a bridge, pier or dock which connects people to the water?

13. Bench with a memorial plaque on it

Benches in public spaces have become a popular way for people to leave a positive legacy in their favourite places

14. Built-in boot scraper

Before streets were paved and when animals were used to pull carts and carriages, streets in towns changed into a muddy mess in bad weather and especially in winter. These scrapers let people scrape the mud off the bottom of their shoes before entering the house. They went out of use when flag-stoned pavement was introduced.

15. Cobbled surface

“Cobbles” are stones which have usually been rounded by water, so they don’t have sharp edges. Before tarmac, these stones were set into the surface of roads to provide a hard-wearing surface. Later on, bricks and flattened stones were also used to give a less bumpy surface!

16. Hopper at the top of a downpipe with a date on it

“Hoppers” are the wider part at the top of a drainpipe, letting lots of water flow in during heavy rain. These were a popular place for adding extra decoration – can you spot one which has the date it was made on?

17. Building with a construction date on it

There’s nothing buildings archaeologists love better than a building which tells you when parts were built! How old are the buildings near you?

18. Horse mounting steps

People used to travel on horseback. You might not think there’s much evidence of that around now, but if you can find a wall which has a little set of steps by the road, chances are they were built to let people climb onto their horses!

19. Benchmark

Builders need to make sure that they’re building in a straight line! They used “benchmarks” as a point of reference, so everything else they built would stay in line. These usually look like an arrow with a horizontal line. Sometimes they could be a cast iron or bronze plate set into stone or concrete, but also chiselled into stones.

20. Damaged building

Places change over time, through deterioration, fire or bomb damage, or flooding. Can you see signs of the way buildings near you have been damaged?

21. Unusual house/building name

The names of buildings can give really interesting clues to their history. Find a named building, and see if you can guess where the name comes from!

22. Water trough

When horses were used as a form of transport, a lot of towns and cities had water troughs where the horses could drink after their journeys. Since there aren’t so many horses in cities these days, some troughs now have plants in, so you’ll have to look carefully to spot the long thin shape!

You can also find them on farms for other animals to use.

23. Scaffolding

Places are always changing – either through damage, repair or new additions. Find the metal framework of scaffolding near you, and discover what’s going on!

24. Stained glass

Adding extra materials into glass as it's made can result in beautiful colours. It’s often been used to decorate churches, but you can also spot it in historic houses, public buildings, and as a decoration in modern houses!

We'd love to see your local heritage - take photos as you go! Tag @archaeologyuk on social media and use the hashtag #LocalExplorerChallenge, or email your finds to Festival@archaeologyuk.org to feature in our blog.

If you're under 16, please ask an adult to share your local exploring with us on their social media or email accounts.