The Victorians built many buildings; every town has buildings from the Victorian period

Buildings are built by people, for people and are designed with specific purposes in mind. The Victorians had strong views that are reflected in their buildings.

You can find more background in the [Information Sheet](https://historicengland.org.uk/services-skills/education/explorer/teachers-notes-victorian-minds) ‘What can Victorian buildings tell us about how the Victorians thought?’ relating to;

* The growth of towns
* Victorian beliefs and attitudes
* Which documentary sources can help you to find out more about Victorian buildings

**Card Sort Activity**

This card sort can be used to introduce the idea of why buildings were built – what motivated the person or people who built them.

**How to use the card sort**

* Cut out the images of buildings and the pieces of text giving possible motives for building
* Ask students in pairs to match the motives to the images
* Make it clear that there can be several motives associated with each building – and that some motives will apply to more than one building.
* Ask each pair to talk about one building explaining why they decided on the motives they chose
* Discussion
  + Did all the students choose the same motives, if not why not?
  + Is it always possible to work out the motives from the actual building?
  + If not what documentary evidence can be used to find more detailed information?

**See also**

The [Image by theme – Victorian Buildings](https://historicengland.org.uk/services-skills/education/images-by-theme/victorian-buildings) has more information about all of the buildings used in the card sort.

This activity is related to the Teaching Activity: [What can Victorian buildings tell us about how the Victorians thought?](https://historicengland.org.uk/services-skills/education/teaching-activities/what-can-victorian-buildings-tell-us-about-how-the-victorians-thought)

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| **To make life better for people** | **To control people** |
| **To make a product** | **To make people safer** |
| **To impress people** | **To encourage self-improvement** |
| **To intimidate people** | **To look beautiful** |
| **To look democratic** | **To look solid and respectable** |
| **To encourage commerce** | **To store products** |
| **To promote cleanliness and good health** | **To create a dependable workforce** |
| **To show off your wealth** | **To educate people** |
| **To leave a legacy of your life** | **To improve moral standards** |
| **To improve the environment** | **To inspire people** |

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| L184740%5b1%5d_library_sort  Museum and Public Library, Fleetwood, Lancashire | bb78_8703%5b1%5d_manchester_sort  Town Hall, Albert Square, Manchester |
| bb96_1338%5b1%5d_bank_sort  Midland Bank, Oswestry, Shropshire | op03711%5b2%5d_V&A_sort  The Natural History Museum, Greater London |
| **L477810%5b1%5d_baths_sort**  St Pancras Public Baths, Camden, Greater London | L465075%5b1%5d_workhouse_sortWorkhouse (now St James Hospital), Leeds, Yorkshire |
| L288507%5b1%5d_fire_sort  Old Fire Station, Shere, Surrey | L457001%5b1%5d_firesheff_sortWest Bar Old Fire Station, Sheffield, Yorkshire |
| L388963_townhall_sort  Oldham Town Hall, Greater Manchester | L041441_school_sort  Old School and School House, Shinfield, Hampshire |
| L213633%5b1%5d_warehouse_sort  Warehouse D, Albert Dock, Canning Place, Liverpool | aa024927%5b1%5d_brewery_sort  Anglo-Bavarian Brewery, Shepton Mallet, Somerset |