

Scotland's
Urban Past
YOUR TOWN YOUR STREET YOUR STORY



UNDERSTANDING BUILDINGS AND URBAN SPACES

Sketching

This guide has been created by Scotland's Urban Past (SUP), a five-year community-engagement project from Historic Environment Scotland.

We support communities to record, research and celebrate the history on their doorsteps.

Through our free training and resources, people of all ages can discover and share the fascinating stories of Scotland's towns and cities.

www.scotlandsurbanpast.org.uk

Sketching

Sketch

noun a rapid or rough drawing or painting, often a study for a more finished work

verb to make a rapid or rough drawing

Getting to know your site or building will be an essential part of your project and sketching can help you achieve this.

Sketch whenever and whatever you can, not only your chosen building or site; sketching makes you observe and consider familiar objects, buildings and streetscapes in a new way. As is the case with many other activities practice brings improved skills and confidence.

Sketching is for everyone, whether you have never sketched before, are an accomplished artist or somewhere in between.

Keep a sketchbook in your bag all the time then you can be ready to sketch whenever you find something interesting.

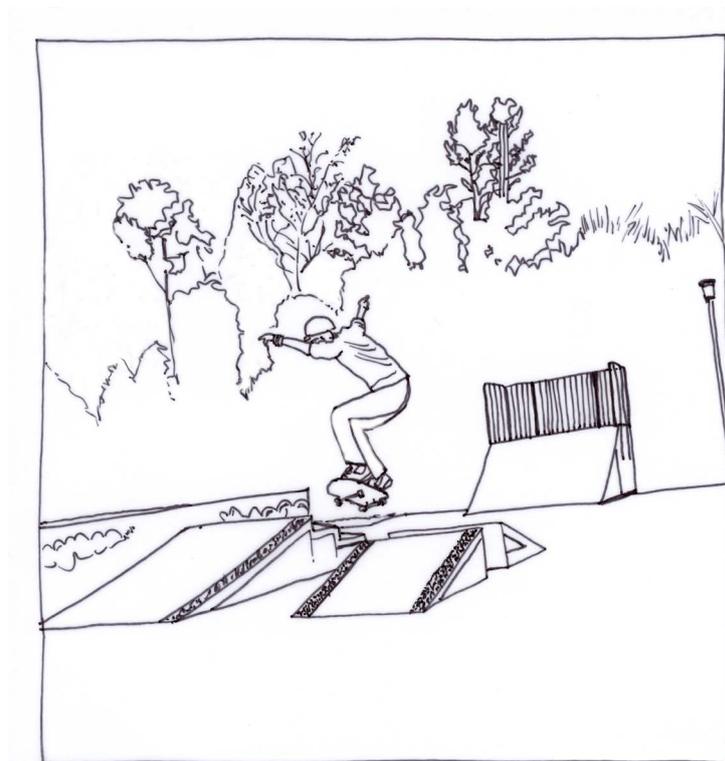
You can find out more about how to make a **field survey sketch** – a simple plan representing a vertical, bird’s-eye view of your site – within our Introduction to Recording Buildings resource.

Planning your site visit

Visiting your site or building will give you the opportunity of looking carefully at it and buildings around it, and of making sketches and taking notes. Understanding what you are looking at will inform what you choose to record in your sketches and later in photographs and/or measured survey drawings.

Things to consider before you visit your site:

- you have a goal for each sketching trip
- you have equipped yourself with sketching materials. These might be paper and pencil, coloured pencil, charcoal, chalk or oil pastels, wax crayons, feltpens, marker pens, ink or watercolours, or a digital tablet and stylus. A waterproof clipboard might be a useful, additional investment
- the best time of day and of the year of to visit
- you have selected safe, comfortable and accessible points from which to observe and sketch your site
- if required, you have gained written permission from appropriate authorities and/or owners to access a site or enter a building
- you have carried out a Risk Assessment of your sketching location(s)



Where do I start?

When you reach your sketching location start by simply looking. Don't rush; give yourself plenty of time to enjoy the experience of looking and to think about what you want to capture in your sketch(es). Then, you can make a mental composition before you begin to sketch.

Depending on your skills, experience, familiarity with the building or site, your mood and the amount of time that you have, why not consider sketching:

- the basic shapes and outlines of the building or site
- the entire building, only a detail or both
- exterior architectural or decorative details
- the streetscape showing the building or site in context
- interior spaces
- interior architectural or decorative details
- the building or site in use

When you begin sketching, start by making light lines. Firm in the lines when you are happy with the lines and shapes that you have created.

Technique

When you are creating a sketch of a streetscape, a building, an interior or an object it can be very helpful to make use of **linear perspective** to make the subject of your sketch **appear three dimensional** and so **more realistic**.

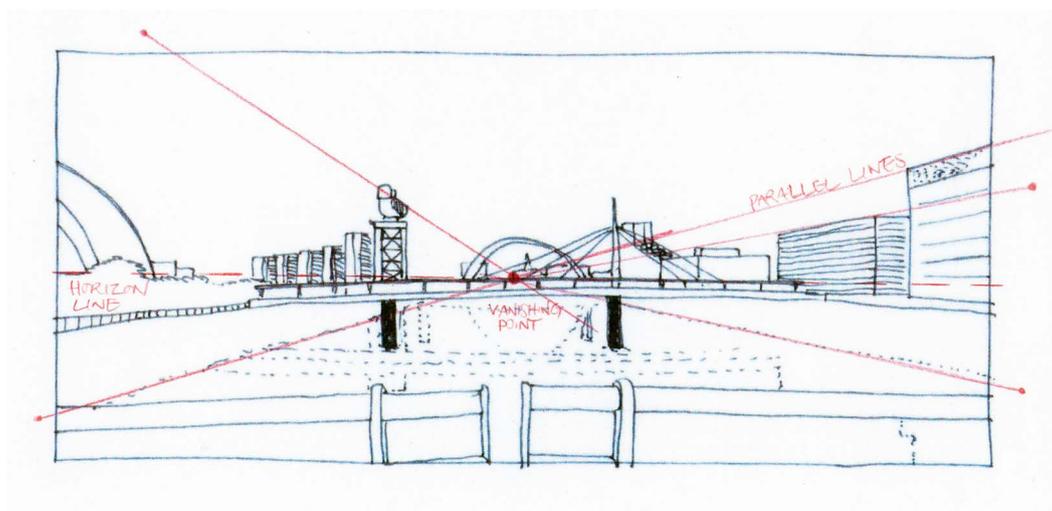
Linear perspective is a method of drawing that uses **converging lines** to create the **illusion of depth and distance**; buildings or objects closer to the viewer appear larger, while those further away appear smaller.

All perspective drawings have three basic components: **parallel lines**; a **horizon line**; and one or more **vanishing points**. The horizon line is drawn at the same height above the ground at the viewing point as the eye line of the person making the drawing; often this is given as the standard height of 1.5m above the ground. Lines which are parallel in the real streetscape, building, interior or object converge in the drawing at one or more vanishing points.

One-point perspective

A one-point perspective drawing has a **single vanishing point** on the horizon line. **All parallel horizontal lines converge at that single point**.

One-point perspective could be used when sketching the view along a street, a railway line, canal or river, tunnel, an indoor space, or even the interior of a train carriage or an aircraft.



Sketch of the view looking east along the River Clyde, Glasgow

Two-point perspective

A two-point perspective drawing has **two vanishing points**. They sit on and are **connected by the horizon line**. Here parallel horizontal lines in **two separate directions** converge at these two separate points. The two vanishing points are often beyond the edges of the drawing as here.

Two-point perspective can be used when viewing a streetscape, building or object when facing a corner.

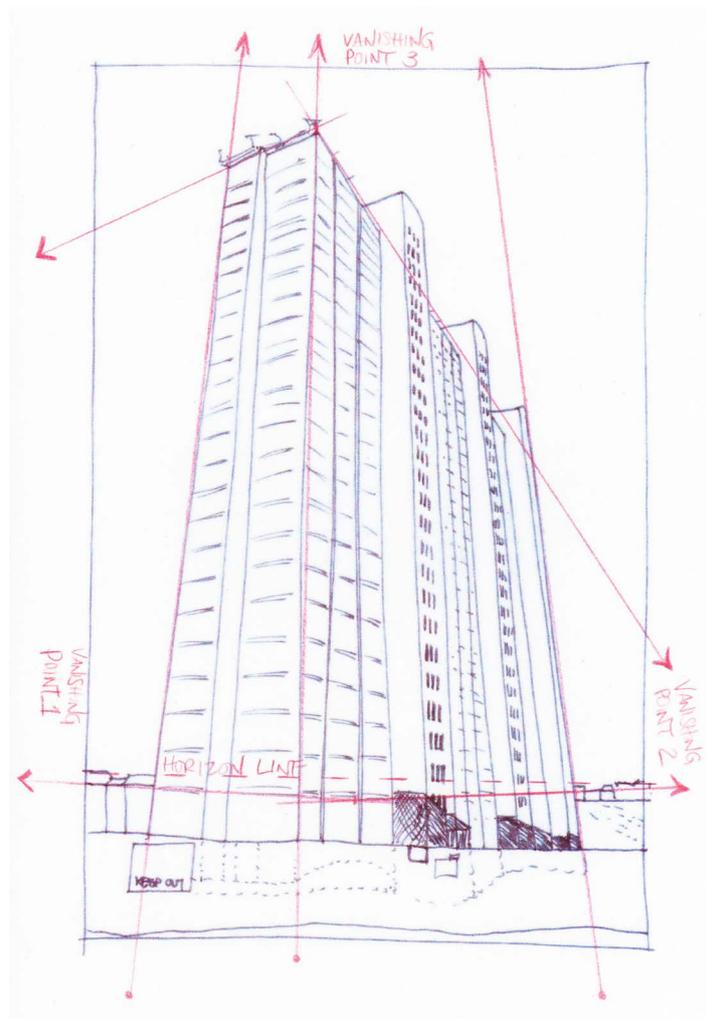


Sketch of Nardini's Cafe, Largs

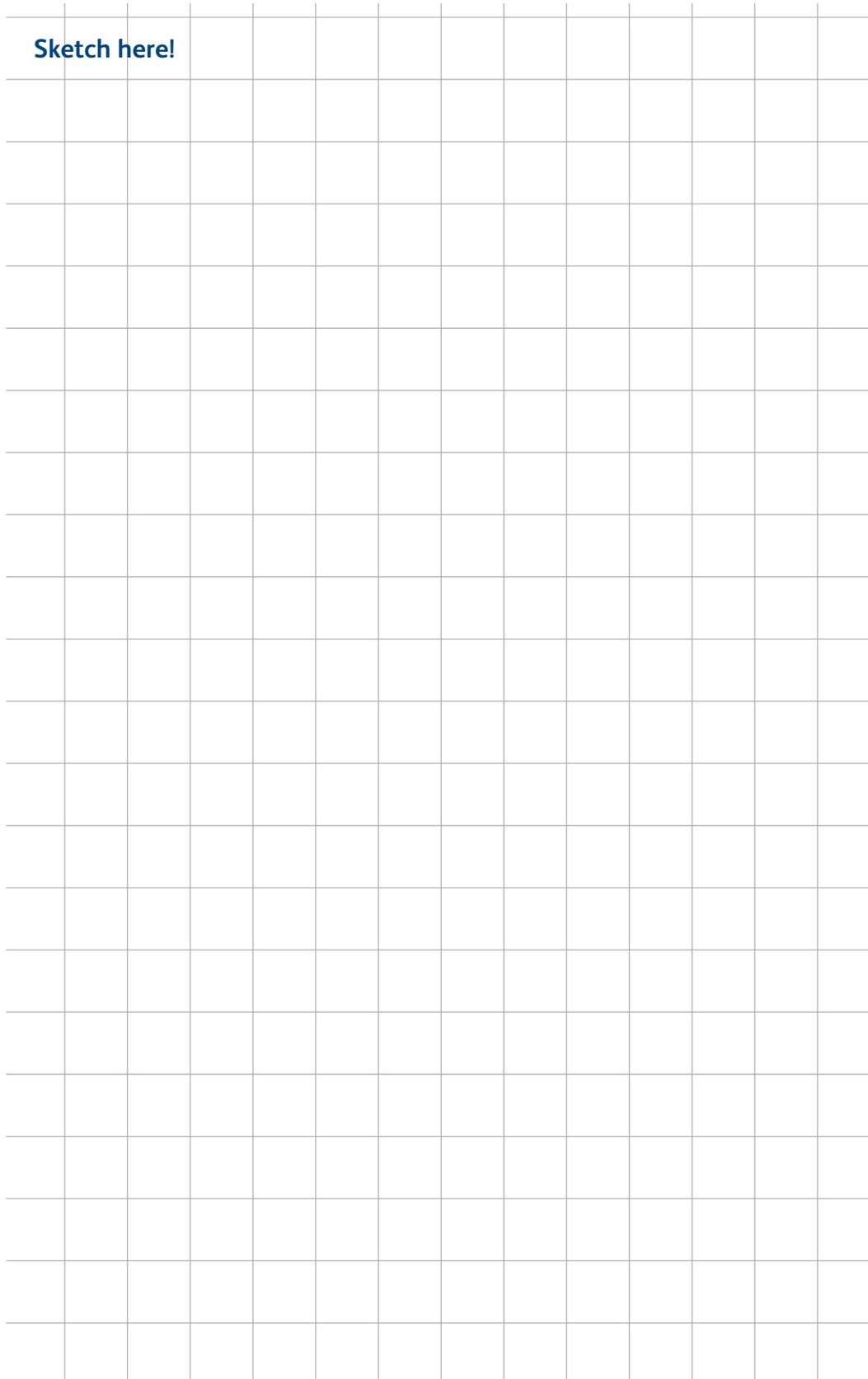
Three-point perspective

A three-point perspective drawing also has **two vanishing points** on the horizon line. It has a **third vanishing point** where **vertical parallel lines converge**. This could be above or below the viewer's eye level.

Three-point perspective can be used when sketching tall structures from a very low or very high view point, such as a worm's eye view of a tower block as here, or a bird's eye view from the top of a tower block looking down over neighbouring buildings.



Sketch of the Red Road Flats, Glasgow (demolished)



Sketch here!

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