

Research the History of your House

There are many fascinating things that you can find out about your house but it helps if you ask yourself the question at the start of your research: 'What do I most want to find out?' Available information varies from place to place, but you may be able to find out the age of the house, details of former residents, and information about the land the house was built on. You may also be able to find architectural information, through photographs and plans. This simple guide will give you hints about what information may be available and where to find it.

At home

- Look for visual clues, such as names on gateposts and date stones.
- Does the architectural style give you a clue as to the age of the house?

Follow the links to see some useful articles about the history of architectural styles:

https://fet.uwe.ac.uk/conweb/house_ages/flypast/print.htm

<https://www.homesandantiques.com/interiors/homes/discover-500-years-of-british-homes/>

- Do you have the original deeds? Deeds can give historical information about land extent, past owners and occupiers, transfers of ownership, and the age of the house.



On the internet

- **Ancestry and Find My Past websites:** You can search the 1939 register and the census records from 1841 to 1911 to find out about former residents.

<https://www.findmypast.co.uk/>

<https://www.ancestry.co.uk/account/signin>

Search tip: when searching the census, leave the names blank, choose your location e.g. 'Altrincham' and then try entering either your house or street name in the 'keyword' box.

- **British Newspaper Archive:** If you live in a house or on a street with a distinctive name, you may be able to find newspaper articles that mention your home.

<https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/>

Search tip: try using quotation marks to search for an exact phrase, e.g. "Moorside Road" Urmston'.

- **National Library of Scotland, Maps:** The National Library of Scotland have digitised thousands of maps showing Scotland, England and Wales.

<https://maps.nls.uk/>

Search tip: you can see changes over time by going to 'find by place', searching by a place name, e.g. 'Stretford', and then scrolling through the maps that appear on the right-hand side.

- **Trafford Local Studies Catalogue:** Thousands of archive photographs have been digitised and are available to view online.
Search tip: the image reference numbers start with TL or TP. Go to advanced search, type the name of your road into the 'Anywhere' box and then type either 'TL*' or 'TP*' in the reference number box.



In Trafford Local Studies

- **Reference books:** We have books about the history of different areas in Trafford. These will give you contextual information to help you to understand how the area you live in has changed over time.

Some examples include:

Chas Nickson, *Bygone Altrincham*, (Mackie and Co. Ltd, 1935)

Don Bayliss (ed.), *Altrincham: A History*, (Willow Publishing, 1992)

R.N. Dore, *A History of Hale, Cheshire*, (John Sherratt and Son Ltd, 1972)

N.W. Swain, *A History of Sale*, (Sigma Press, 1987)

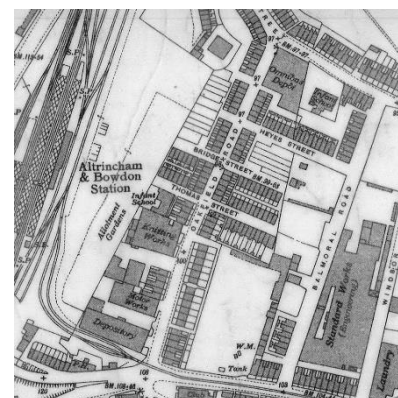
Samuel Massey, *A History of Stretford*, (1976)

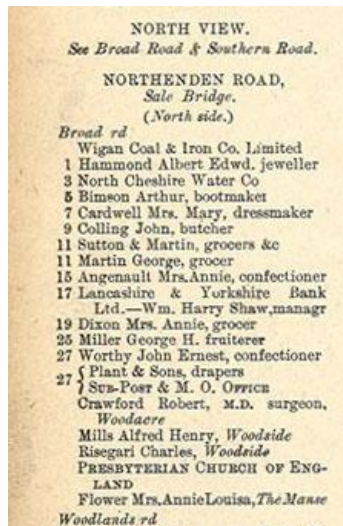
David Herbert Langton, *A History of the Parish of Flixton*, (1898)

Michael Billington, *The Story of Urmston, Flixton and Davyhulme*, (The History Press, 2018)

Robert Nicholls, *Trafford Park*, (Phillimore and Co. Ltd, 1996)

- **Maps:** The Local Studies reference section includes hundreds of maps. Tithe maps from the 1840s can tell you how land was used. From around the 1870s onwards, we have Ordnance Survey maps of most areas that are now in the Trafford borough.





- **Street directories:** Slater's and Kelly's Directories are kept on the shelf in the Local Studies reference section. We also hold a number of earlier, more delicate directories behind the desk, so please just ask if you would like to view these.

Search tip: the directories will only list the 'head of the household' (usually a man) but you can find out about other residents by using the census.

Search tip: house names and numbers can change. If you aren't sure which is your house, using the directories in conjunction with a map can be helpful. You may be able to count forwards or backwards from points that you know to work out which house is yours.

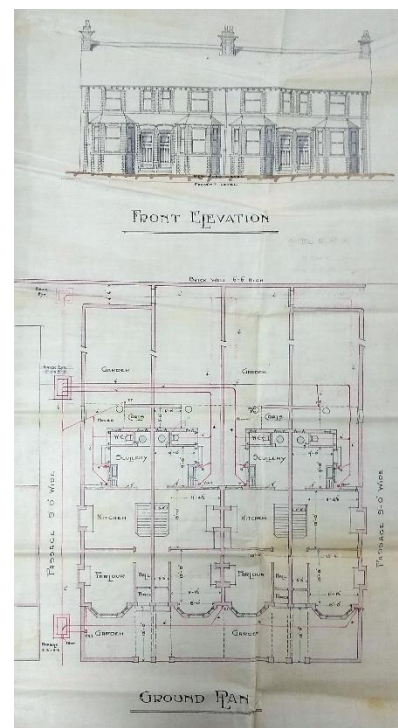
- **Archives:** Trafford's Archive holds a wealth of information about houses in the borough. Individual streets and houses are not always listed in the catalogue description, but we can offer recommendations based on your research focus. Please note: archive items need to be ordered at least one working day in advance.

Some archive items that are particularly useful for finding out about the history of your house include:

Rate books: Rates were local taxes which went towards the relief of the local poor, the upkeep of highways and a number of public works. The information fields include 'name of occupier', 'name of owner', 'description of property rated', 'estimated extent' as well as details of the rate charged and collected. Please note: these records are subject to GDPR.

Electoral registers: we hold electoral registers from 1890 to 2008, although what we hold varies from place to place. These can be a useful tool if you are trying to find out the names of residents during years not covered by the census or the 1939 register.

Plans: we hold hundreds of plans. Many of these are for public works but we also hold individual building plans. These can give you details about the architect, builder or the person who commissioned the building, as well as showing you the original layout of the property.



Search tip: You never know where mention of a street or a house might turn up, so it's always worth searching the catalogue.

In other archives

Trafford does not hold all the records relating to the Trafford area. Before 1974, half the borough was part of the county of Cheshire and the other half was part of Lancashire, meaning that many records are held by the county record offices. Other documents are held by the National Archives. Members of the public may also have donated relevant materials to other archives.

Material held by other archives includes:

- The National Archives

Valuation Office Survey, 1910-1915: This survey was carried out to levy a duty on land in the United Kingdom. The survey field books offer wonderful descriptions and diagrams of land parcels and properties. Information can include: the name of the owner, the name of the occupier and how long they have been there, use of buildings, extent of land.

- Lancashire Archive and Record Office

De Trafford of Trafford Collection: includes leases in the Stretford, Urmston and Davyhulme areas.

- Cheshire Archives and Local Studies

Some early electoral registers for the south of the borough are held here.

- Manchester Archives and Local History

Manchester holds a number of photographs of the Trafford area, as well as additional street directories.

- John Rylands Library

Grey (Stamford) of Dunham Massey Papers: included in these are a large quantity of estate papers relating to properties in Altrincham, Ashton-upon-Mersey, Bowdon, Carrington, Dunham Massey, Hale, Partington, Sale and Timperley, amongst others.

TOP TIP: ask us for help! We are more than happy to offer advice to help you with your research. You can visit in person or contact us on 0161 912 3013 or trafflocals@trafford.gov.uk

