

# **Unit 1: Week 1**

## **Methods of Investiagtion**

# Physical space

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UNIT 1: WEEK 1  
METHODS OF INVESTIGATING

I chose the Everyman cinema as my physical space to investigate.

I chose to focus on the front facade of the cinema.

The cinema is located in the town of Oxted which is approximately three miles from where I live.

# Modes of investigating

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UNIT 1: WEEK 1  
METHODS OF INVESTIGATING

**I experimented investigating by:**

Photographing  
Sketching  
Sound  
Note taking  
Rubbings  
Video

**I have chosen to present:**

Photographing  
Sketching  
Sound  
Rubbings

# Experiment 01

## Photographing

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UNIT 1: WEEK 1  
METHODS OF INVESTIGATING

I questioned whether I should go at the same time each day or the same day every hour on the hour, but this wasn't really feasible so I didn't.

I decided to photograph the facade of the cinema every time I went into Oxted. My daughter is at school in Oxted and my son takes the train from Oxted to his school, so I pass through regularly. I felt this would give me initial snapshots of the cinema and its life.

# Experiment 01

## Photographing

### UNIT 1: WEEK 1

#### METHODS OF INVESTIGATING



#### INSIGHTS:

On 26.09.23 (IMG 001) there was a man up a stepladder changing the films on the sign above the door. This brought my focus to the sign above the door and that it must be changed every week although I had never noticed this before.

When I photographed the front facade at night the red light dominated the building. Traditionally associated with the underworld, I thought this an interesting colour to use. It ties in with the EVERYMAN branded sign, and clearly draws your attention if you were walking down the road, so I wondered if this was commercially driven. This drew my focus up the building, I was drawn more to what was above the street level view and entrance, to the architecture and the building as a whole. What was up there? Did someone live there?

On 27.09.23 (IMG 004) there was a delivery taking place, again drawing my focus to the systems that are required in creating a functioning space that is open to the public.

On 27.09.23 (IMG 006) there was a child and a lady (his mother?). The lady looks like she is going in the door, the child is not. This drew my focus to who goes to the cinema and why. They clearly were not going to a film.

There are very few people in the photographs which takes my focus to the location and the environment it is in. It projects a quiet town, with low footfall. The architecture of the building looks Tudor-ish suggesting a long history and an old town. Possibly implying elderly residents. Sometimes there were tables and chairs outside. Sometimes the awning was out. These are a visual signals to the opening hours?

# Experiment 01

## Photographing

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UNIT 1: WEEK 1  
METHODS OF INVESTIGATING

### What I learnt

I learnt that photographing leads to insights to the **systems** that allow the building to function as a public place.

I learnt that **visual cues** (table and chairs, awning, doors open) visually told people the cinema was open.

I learnt that there is a **pattern** to the buildings' life. It has a routine. The sign above the door gets changed which is a pattern. The deliveries are maybe every week, or twice a week, which would be in a pattern. The tables and chairs are physically put out in a pattern, the putting out also be would be a pattern. Its opening hours are a pattern.

### How I could improve

I could choose one pattern to investigate in greater depth.

I could use a stronger systematic approach of photographing to compare images over time to get a greater understanding of systems.

### Links to texts

#### **The Hotel, Room 47**

##### **Sophie Calle**

In Calle's study she took real images and created fictional stories from them. I feel I could use this as inspiration to take more interesting photographs to try to investigate real peoples' stories and emotions connected to this building, that weren't fictional.

#### **Species and Spaces and Other Pieces**

##### **Georges Perec**

Perec's account of The Street is beautiful. I would like to try to describe the front facade of the space as he does, maybe from photographs? Why?

# Experiment 02

## Sketching

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UNIT 1: WEEK 1  
METHODS OF INVESTIGATING

I decided to focus my sketching on the typography that was evident on the front facade of the cinema



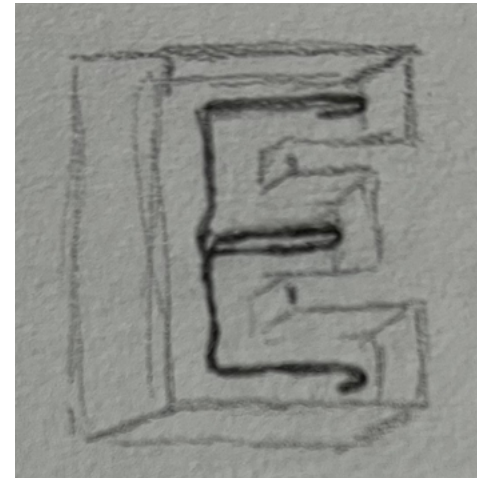
# Experiment 02

## Sketching

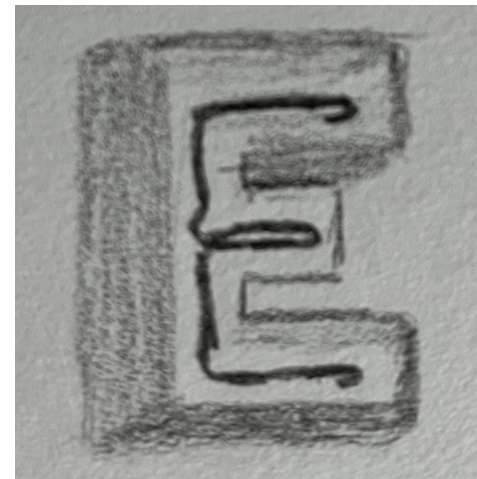
UNIT 1: WEEK 1  
METHODS OF INVESTIGATING



001



002



003

### INSIGHTS:

In sketching the EVERYMAN sign that protrudes from the building I found my focus drawn to the letters and how each letter was formed within a square and how all the letters (and spaces) formed a larger square. Obviously intentional from the original designer, which prompted me to think about why it should be a square and the significance of that. My focus was also drawn to the font and the intentions behind the font and what that told me about the space. There are echos of art deco (numerous lines) and Everyman cinemas are based around an Art Deco interior, but it wasn't wholly art deco, more modern?

On sketching the same sign from the other side at a different time and a different angle I found my focus drawn to the fact that each letter actually protrudes from the back of the board that forms the sign. I hadn't noticed this the first time I sketched the sign. In drawing the neon line that sits within the frame of each letter, in this case it was the E I was looking at, I found my focus move to the construction of the E as I found kinks and doubled over parts that allowed the E to be one continuous line, bringing my focus to form and function (presumably so the electricity would flow through the entire letter and it would light up to be strong and clear?) of the letters and the sign.

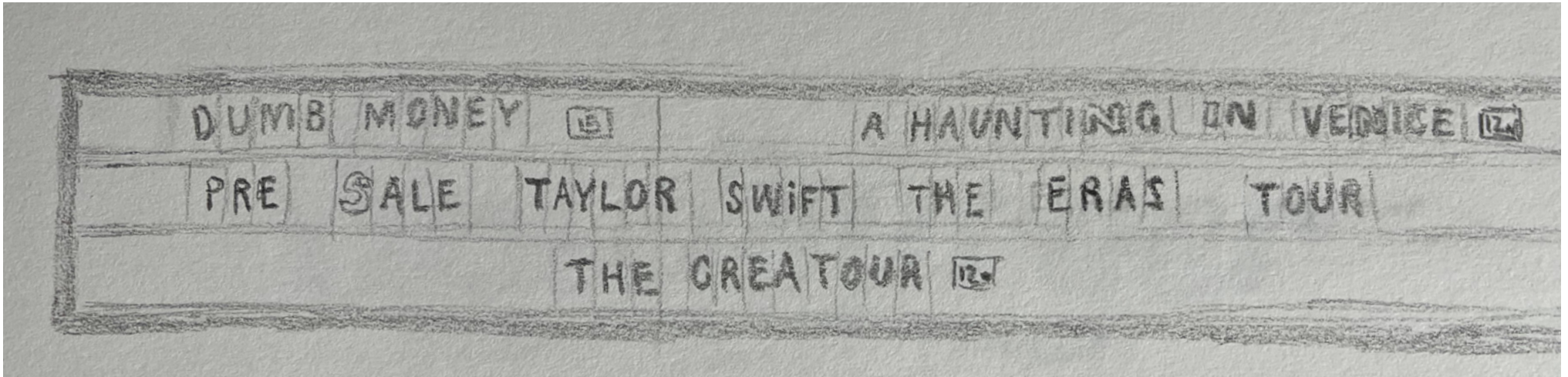
The design of the sign and the choice of font must have had to take into consideration the fact that it had to be lit up at night, but just as impactful and strong in the day. This highlights the thought and process to the form.



# Experiment 02

## Sketching

UNIT 1: WEEK 1  
METHODS OF INVESTIGATING



004

### INSIGHTS:

In sketching the sign above the doors I found my focus drawn to the typography and formed a thought that the simple sans serif font was chosen to be functional and clear.

Through sketching it became clear quickly that each letter is an individual rectangle. This drew my attention to the functionality of the letters in three ways:

- The colour of the background of each rectangle is the same as the broader background, so the physical overall form blends into the background. This allows the letters to dominate. The simple, condensed, sans serif font reinforces this dominance, which in turn allows customers to easily read what films are showing.

- The individual letters allows the staff to constantly create new words, required to change the film titles on the facade easily, by hand, (and a ladder as I learnt earlier through photographing), each week.

- An anomaly was that there were four red, slightly wider, slightly bolder, letters amongst all the black letters. This made me ask why? Maybe these were a previous set and when they were low on letters they used these to fill in. A very human quality, an imperfection, that showed personality, which I liked.

Through sketching these letters and the EVERYMAN letters my focus turned to the two fonts and how they worked, or didn't work, together and what their relationship was meant to be. I didn't get too far with

this, as my focus shifted to their purpose and position, and their combined whole as a sign. The EVERYMAN sign hung from a large wooden post that was perpendicular to the cinema, whereas the film titles typography was flat against the facade, almost hidden, above the door. The contrast between the fonts and the positions and the orientation could not have been further apart.

My focus shifted to the hierarchy in play. The EVERYMAN sign was the biggest and most flamboyant. Its orientation meant that where ever you stood on the road you would be able to clearly see the sign. Additionally if you drove past the sign at the maximum 30mph you would also be able to see and read the sign. The form of this sign must be to attract

the customer in the first instance, or signpost where the cinema was if you were looking for it.

The film titles, positioned above the door, appeared secondary. The RED, FANCY FONTED sign that PROTRUDES has attracted/signposted the customer to the door. Now the customer could easily see what was on. Taking the customer on a seamless journey through the doors.

# Experiment 02

## Sketching

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UNIT 1: WEEK 1  
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### INSIGHTS:

I hadn't noticed this bit of typography until much later on. It caught me by surprise. Situated on the right front side of the canopy that protrudes from the front of the facade that runs across two thirds of the building.

Here my focus was drawn to the fact that this was yet another font, and this time in another language, another colour, lowercase and in italics. I only realised to notice that the previous two sketches were all caps when sketching this one, that wasn't. What was interesting through sketching this sign is how it made me think about the other two. My implicit assumptions of the placement of this sign lowered the importance of it in my mind and was almost an after thought. It is only now that I note that the Spielburger is in beige on green and that I did not note the colours of the other signs.

I googled the translation and it appears to just mean burgers. How disappointing. The cinema does sell burgers, but this is clearly of German origin, the prompts my focus to ask why German burgers? How does that connect to the brand and the history of the brand...?

# Experiment 02

## Sketching

UNIT 1: WEEK 1  
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### What I learnt

Through sketching the typography of the space, I feel I get insights to the **character** of the interior and I get **information**. As a wider perspective I see signs and signage and how this is aesthetic and implentary of character, but also of **function** (in attracting the customer, or signposting the customer), to the information for them to make a decision or find reassurance they are in the right place; which in turn turns into a transaction (to watch a film) which creates the commerce required for the facade to exist.

### How I could improve

I could look deeper into the typography styles.

I could look deeper at the facade as on close inspection I found more typography in smaller, more modern, later additions that I missed in this session.

### Links to texts

#### Species of Spaces and Other Places

##### Georges Perec

Perec published La Disparition in 1969 which was a novel written in the form of a lipogram. A lipogram is a usually short text where one or more letters has been banned. I thought it would be interesting to reomove one letter, then another, then another and see how many I could remove and it still be legible.

#### Species of Spaces and Other Places

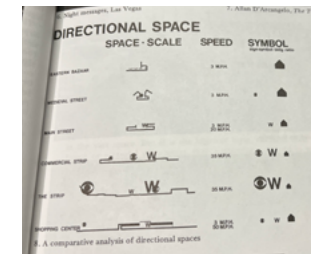
##### Georges Perec

Perec discusses how you should keep going, "until you are in a strange town, or better still, until you can no longer understand what is happening or what is not happening" I would love to explore sketching to an extent that you may find your self in this place, and what occurs from that (although I question the validity of this as a research tool?). I find parallels with this and Calle's Room 47 where the reality and fiction blur and become one. My rational mind still finds a question in the validity of research (even though I don't want it to).

#### Learning Form Las Vegas

##### Robert Venturi, Denise Scott Brown, Steven Izenour

There is a wonderful diagram showing signage size against building size and I feel there is a path for exploration here (below).



# Experiment 03

## Sound

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I chose to position myself within the facade to investigate sound. I sat at the far right hand table, of three that are set up in front of the facade on the pavement, to the right of the doors (main entrance). I decided to record the sound on my phone for five minutes, whilst at the same time listening and noting down what I heard. The intention was to listen to the recording at a later date to see if I heard it differently.

# Experiment 03

## Sound

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UNIT 1: WEEK 1  
METHODS OF INVESTIGATING

Perec's scribing of *The Street* was so relaxed, calm, methodical almost therapeutic. I was looking forward to feeling this... My implicit assumptions were that it is so quiet there that there wouldn't be much to record.

In contrast there was so many sounds I couldn't note them fast enough, then some were constant and some were intermittent and I didn't know if I should write all of them in chronological order or just once, or as they repeated. I was aware that my personal context affected the context. I was in a slightly manic state of mind, which made this experience overwhelming. I was also aware that my eyes were listening not my ears. I was also aware that I had assumptions of what I wanted to record! This went on for about 10 minutes, longer than my prescribed 5 minutes.

I closed my eyes, relaxed and just listened and stopped overthinking it, for five minutes.

# Experiment 03

## Sound

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UNIT 1: WEEK 1  
METHODS OF INVESTIGATING

### An extract from the recording

A whistle – bird? Three short whistles  
Typing on my laptop  
Voices  
Bird / Whistle  
Soft voices  
Scuffing of shoes  
Chair on ground, someone sitting  
Train in distance  
Car / Cheep  
Unusual alien sound – sort of toot sort of not  
Revving  
Music from within a car  
Hard shoes on pavement  
Jingle of keys in hand  
Tinkle of something against a post

#### INSIGHTS:

Initially listening to sounds turned my implicit assumptions that it was a really quiet place, even when a film was on, upside down. There were so many sounds it was hard to write them all down, and some of them were hard to decipher.

This brought my focus to how intrinsically linked the building is to its wider environment and the community. Where as visually I set the boundary of the front facade, I hadn't thought about boundary to sound. There were sounds from the road that runs past the cinema, from the park at the bottom of the road, from the train station at the top of the road, from inside the cinema, from the sky. Sound was coming from every direction apart from below.

My focus was also drawn to the minitae. I didn't know I could hear shoes scuffing on the pavement, I know I hear high heels clicking, but never scuffing. This must occur everyday, but I never notice it?

The sounds also give reference to modern life and to people's lives. "Keys jingling" - are these car keys? house keys? keys to something else...?

This short extract also gives clues to a variety of materials: wood, metal, engines, rubber, humans, technology, concrete, material clothing.

Two other points to note that are not in this extract but the full one: I noted laughter a few times which gives insight to peoples feelings towards the buidling. I also noted how the cars sound different going up the road to down the road.



# Experiment 03

## Sound

UNIT 1: WEEK 1  
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### What I learnt

I learnt that this was initially overwhelming. There were so many sounds.

I learnt to relax and not try to label the sounds, but rather take down the sound, not what it was.

I learnt that my state of mind (my context) can affect the recording of the sounds (the context?).

Sound gave insight to **people** (behaviour and lifestyle) and to the number of **materials** that exist in a small space.

### How I could improve

Could I set a boundary to sound? Could I identify sounds that were only internal or on the pavement outside the width of the building?

Should the recording of sound remain impartial and neutral, or should you allow your thoughts and inspirations and links that occur, be part of it?

Objective listening v emotional listening? What are you listening for? Just sounds. Or sounds and what they mean / infer / inspire?

### Links to texts

**The Medium is the Message**  
**Marshall McLuhan**

McLuhan noted how sound is everywhere and essentially has no boundaries. “We are enveloped by sound. It forms a seamless web around us.” It is “infront”, “behind”, “above”, “below”, “right”, “left” “the ear world is a world of simultaneous relationships”

**Bits**  
**Paul Elliman**

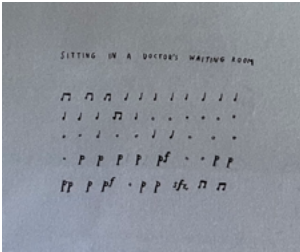
I loved this study of letter forms and feel there is inspiration here to investigate how I could visually describe the sounds I heard.

**Six Types of Waiting in Berlin**  
**Christine Sun Kim**

The examples in the handout of this study shows interesting representation of sound, in recognised language of sound with additional language, which I feel is inspiring for another way I could look at representing the sound I noted.



BITS, PAUL ELLIMAN



SIX TYPES OF WAITING IN BERLIN, CHRISTINE SUN KIM



# Experiment 04

## Rubbings

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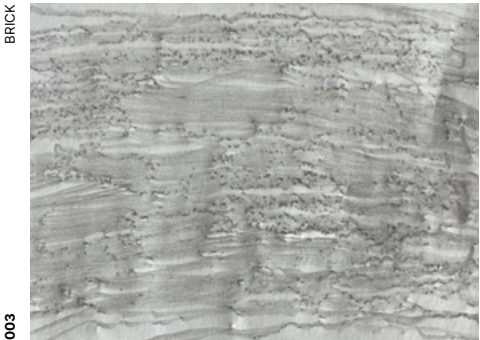
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I was intrigued by the variety of textures on the facade of the cinema. I love texture, so I decided I would do some rubbings of the textures. I tried taking rubbings with chalk and pencil. Pencil gave more detail and a cleaner pattern.

# Experiment 04

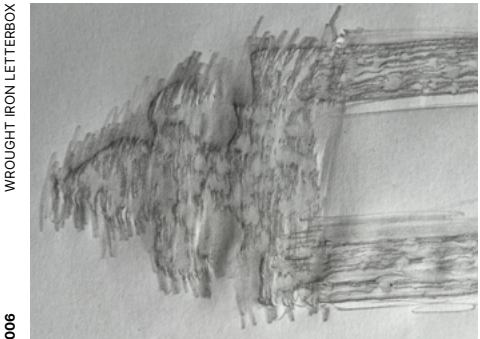
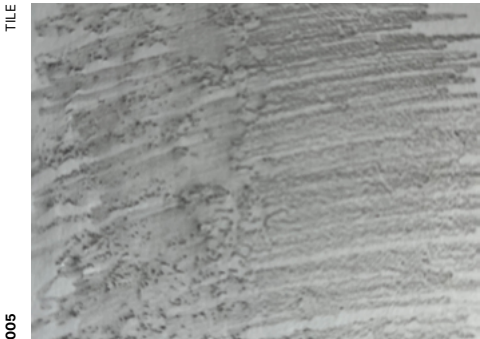
## Rubbings

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METHODS OF INVESTIGATING

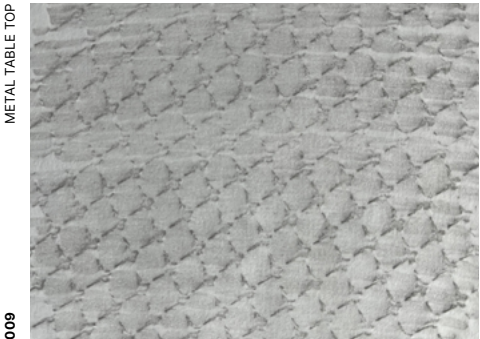
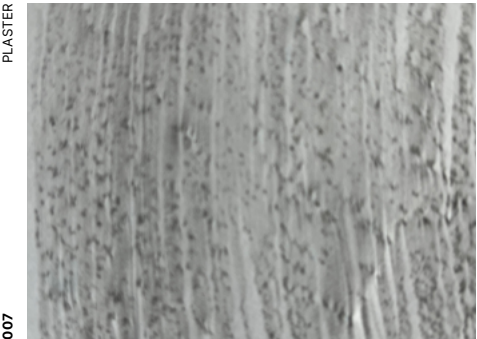


Taking rubbings of textures drew my focus to the materials used in creating the physical front facade of the building. There was wood, metal (of different varieties), plaster, brick, ceramic, glass.

My focus was also drawn to history and the age of the building. There were materials used that suggest older periods of construction (IMG 001 and IMG 006), but there were also materials that suggested modern additions (IMG 002 and IMG 008). I felt there was an entire timeline of creation to be found through further documentation of the materials.



I particularly loved the wood rubbing (IMG 001), the wood was so old it had warped hugely to make deep rivets, that felt full of stories that couldn't be told.



# Experiment 04

## Rubbings

UNIT 1: WEEK 1  
METHODS OF INVESTIGATING

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### What I learnt

Rubbing the paper felt like magic as patterns appeared. This was very therapeutic. Perec muses on the blank page that becomes full with words, "Before, there was nothing, or almost nothing; afterwards there isn't much, a few signs..."

This method helps investigate **history** and **time**.

### How I could improve

I could set a stronger boundary of a smaller area of the facade to investigate more deeply, in a more systematic way. If I took rubbings of every single material in the smaller area, then catalogue the materials used, try to ascertain their age and build a timeline of creation that would tell me when parts of the building were created and possibly the humans that created each part.

### Links to texts

#### **Learning From Las Vegas**

**Robert Venturi, Denise Scott Brown, Steven Izenour**

In Learning from Las Vegas it's noted that "The mixing of styles meant the mixing of media" I feel this quote is relevant to the front facade as there are a mix of architectural styles and textures (media).

They go on to say "The overlapping of disciplines may have diluted the architecture, but it enriched its meaning" I feel this is true of the facade as the mixed media used to create the facade exhibit the time and materials of construction that lead to understanding not only what was added when, but why.

# Reflective Methods of investigating

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## What I learnt

Being present and objective was hard.

Not taking in pre-conceived ideas of what I wanted or thought I wanted to note was hard.

Didn't "see flatly" as Perec advised. Didn't "exhaust" the subject as Perec advised. Didn't get to the "grotesque" or "pointless". Didn't get to where "imagination takes over" where reality blurred with fantasy which I was looking forward to.

I didn't create a tight enough boundary, my area of investigation was too big.

In trying these methods I found out how hard they are to achieve. My mind was racing with too many thoughts of how I should be doing it. Objectively? With emotion? Without emotion? With internal commentary? Without internal commentary? In the facade? Out of the facade?

Perec wrote neutrally, but also with assumptions. He commented on the type of housing he saw and what that meant; "The buildings, note they are on the comfortable, well-heeled side." Is that research? Objective? Social observations? Perec is praised for his writing style, which is lovely, it is almost poetic compared to say Learning from Las Vegas, which is a bit more factual / scientific.

## How I could improve

Set clearer and smaller boundaries.

Repeat the exercise of recording if the first instance raises too many questions, until I can record effectively?

Decide how to record (impartial, with thoughts, stream of consciousness)

Decide what I am investigating. History, present, systems, patterns, something else?

## Further reading



### How to Read Trees Tristan Gooley

I haven't read this yet, but my friend told me how it tells you how to look at trees to learn how they grow, the influences of their environment, how

they survive and what they do through the bark, leaves, structure, branches, ground.



### Wilding Isabella Trees

I read some of this a long time ago and I remember it particularly talking about trees and how their roots (the part you can't see) is a whole infrastructure to

insects, fungi, soil production etc. and how land left to be wild feeds, and is part of a much wider ecological system, that is ruined by intensive farming and gardening.