

Pre-visit classroom session

This is a facilitated session (1 hour) led by a volunteer or a teacher to prepare for the class's visit to Stirchley Baths and set the context for future on-site and follow up activities.

Resource pack:

- PowerPoint of pictures, audio and film on CD
- Set of laminated newspaper articles
- Set of laminated PowerPoint slides (back up)
- Laminated original architect's drawing (x5)
- Narrative

Equipment/set up required:

- Paper and pencils
- White screen or projection to show PowerPoint presentation – including speakers for audio.
- The children will be working in groups around their tables as well as watching the presentation.

Narrative to slides:

Slide 1	Does anyone recognise this building / been into the building? Stirchley Baths is over 100 years old. It has seen a lot of changes, witnessed a lot of events and has lots of stories to tell, and so have the people who have used the building.
Slide 2	Talk about where Stirchley Baths is in relation to their school. Use map if possible.
Slide 3	Today's learning objectives are: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To discover how important Stirchley Baths has been to local communities in the past. 2. To consider how important it is to look after and save our historic buildings. 3. To think about what being an 'active citizen' means.
Slide 4	Aerial view of the Baths. In 1903 a piece of land was given by the Cadbury Brothers to the City Council to build a 'public swimming baths, slipper or spray baths and washhouse'. The Cadburys were philanthropists and wanted to raise the standard of living for their workers and ordinary people in Birmingham.
Slide 5	When the Baths officially opened in 1911 Stirchley was a small village and many homes did not have a bathroom, but a tin bath in front of the fire. People would come straight from working in the local factories to use the slipper baths and get clean before going home. A slipper bath gets its name from the shape – we believe they originally would have looked like this.

Slide 6 3 minutes	Activity: Look at the architectural plans of the building (handouts for a closer look). Can you see where the slipper baths are? How are they divided up?
Slide 7	When the Baths were built there were laws which segregated swimmers and washhouse users by class and by gender. You were either considered to be First Class (wealthy) or Second Class (poorer, working class) and boys and girls did not mix, not even in the swimming pool. There were separate halls. This was the law until 1927.
Slide 8	Stirchley Baths was a really popular swimming pool; always busy and a well-used facility for the local community.
Slide 9	But it was more than just a swimming pool. Did you know that it was turned into a popular dancehall in the winter months in the 1940s and 1950s, when the pool was covered over with boards – and you danced over the water! Here’s a picture of the regular Friday night band Den Jones and his Orchestra.
Slides 10 & 11 Film 5-6 mins	<i>Let’s listen to some memories of the Baths that local people have shared with us over the last couple of years.</i>
Slide 12	You’ve just heard memories from the 1950s to the 1970s. Now I want us to fast forward to the year 1988, when the building was 78 years old; something happened which had a dramatic and long-lasting impact on Stirchley.
Slide 13 Film 1-2 mins	<p>One day part of the ceiling in the ladies’ changing room collapsed and there were serious concerns over the stability of the balcony. The Baths were closed forever. They had become unsafe and the council needed £1 million to repair them and keep them open; money they did not have.</p> <p>How do you think the people who used the swimming baths felt when their local swimming pool was closed down and the council said they were not going to fix it?</p> <p><i>Let’s listen to what Brenda, a local resident, remembers about the day the Baths closed and what they did as a result. Link to audio; click black box. 1 ½ mins</i></p>
Slide 14	The closure of the Baths was big news and hit the headlines regularly in 1988. You’ve heard some personal evidence from Brenda. We are now going to do a table activity for 15 minutes. I would like you to become history detectives and look for evidence from the newspaper clippings I am going to give you to answer the following questions:
Slide 15 10-15 mins plus feedback	<p>Activity: Use the newspaper clippings to find evidence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ What are the articles trying to tell us? ○ What are the different arguments that are being made? ○ What words are used to express the feelings of the local community? ○ What methods are being used by the local community to campaign? ○ What is an active citizen?

Slide 16	Now we are going to fast forward 20 years to 2008. During this time the Baths had been left completely empty and unused.
Slide 17	No one repaired the roof, no one repaired the broken glass in the windows. The rain got in, the pigeons made it their home and 25 years later this is what it looked like.
Slide 18	In 2008 local people decided it was time for action again and they held an open day. 500 hundred people queued around the block to go inside this building. And again in 2011 - one hundred years after the swimming baths and washhouse was first built – people and memories came flooding back. Between 2008 and 2013 there was a fundraising campaign to save the building.
Slide 19	In 2012 an opportunity arose when the City Council sold the land on which the old community centre was built to Tesco. Some of the money was put aside to part fund the restoration of the Baths and the City Council led a fundraising campaign to get £1.2m of Heritage Lottery Fund money. To get this money local people again got involved to show their support for the project and how much they needed a new community building. People were asked to draw round their hands and write messages of support. These were pegged up around the Baths at an event.
Slide 20 Film 3 mins	The Baths have been saved and refurbished and in January 2016 officially they re-opened as a community centre. The refurbishment project cost just under £4million. I want to show you why it cost so much money.... Here is a short film taken inside the Baths in 2013 after being left empty for 25 years.
Slide 21 Discussion 3-4 mins	Let's look back at our learning objectives and see what we have found out today... Who can tell me... <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How important has Stirchley Baths been to local communities in the past? 2. How important is it to look after and save our historic buildings? 3. What does being an 'active citizen' mean?
Slide 22	We very much look forward to welcoming you to Stirchley Baths, where some of the activities will be to do more history detective work. You'll discover more about its history and also how important the building is for local people today.