

# DRAWING ARCHITECTURE

The beginner's guide to drawing and painting buildings



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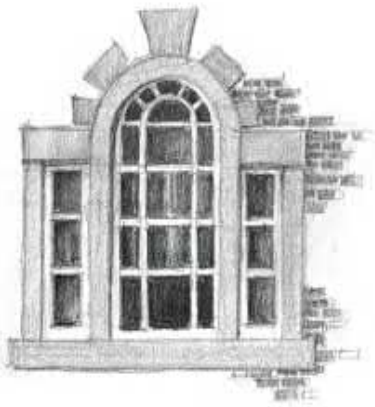
**DRAWING**  
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buildings

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# Introduction

The wonderful thing about drawing buildings is that, wherever you travel around the globe, you will never be short of subjects to inspire you. From the most elaborate of Renaissance cathedrals, through to the humble garden shed, you will always be able to practise your skills and learn a few techniques in the process.

As this book is primarily concerned with the methods and techniques employed in drawing

buildings, I have not dwelt in any depth on architectural history or heritage, although this aspect cannot simply be dismissed. The buildings of any district bear witness to its past, and many modern buildings may help us to look towards the future, too. Furthermore, as you begin to develop the confidence to sketch on site, I am sure that you will also begin to absorb much of the history that has created the buildings that you are drawing.



## How to use this book

As you work through this book, you will find that I have devoted each double-page spread to a specific theme: I look at materials and their qualities at the

beginning, and then move on to explore how to put these materials to best use when drawing specific types of building. You will also find that you will be led gently through levels of learning, with a reasonably easy exercise always preceding a slightly more challenging one. I have never had any difficulty in combining the two elements of my working life – artist and teacher – and always tend to think about progression of knowledge and development of skills.

As the book is divided into discrete sections, you can dip in to any particular type of

building that you wish to draw, and use the information and illustration provided.

The projects may be identified more as extended teaching exercises, taking you through

the way I approach composing and completing a drawing. They show not just the way that I work, but also the way I think about putting together a drawing.

## Size and scale

The majority of the illustrations throughout this book are reproduced very near to their original scale. I generally use an A3 (16½ by 11½in) sketchpad to draw in, which is not very much larger than the open double pages of this book. I believe that these full-size illustrations will give you a good indication of the way in which I draw, and the way in which you can learn by copying the exercises and using the suggested media on a similar scale.

## Photographs

I have used photographs on a couple of pages to illustrate just how useful they can be as a visual reminder. Many artists work from photos – but few do so exclusively. The slavish copying of flat images is not to be recommended. Much of the pleasure of drawing and sketching buildings comes from finding a building that grabs your interest, and applying your drawing skills while you are on site. The excitement of making the first mark on a blank sheet of paper, the intense concentration as you trace the lines of rooftops with your eye, and the feeling of total oblivion (albeit temporary) to the world around you as you sketch and draw on the streets of your chosen venue cannot ever be replaced by the simple click of a shutter.

You can learn to draw: maybe not in a day, but it can be done. Drawing is a very

absorbing activity, and practice will help you to improve your technique. My advice is to practise regularly – drawing for ten minutes a day, every day, will allow you to develop your eye and train yourself to translate the three-dimensional built environment around you into fascinating two-dimensional sketches.



# Finally

I hope that this book opens your eyes to see inspiration in the built environment from areas other than the traditional roof, doors, windows and four-wall structures – there is so much more to find!

# MATERIALS

I use a limited number of mark-making tools, and have no preference for particular brands. My main tools for sketching trips are graphite pencils. I always carry a 2B, 4B, 6B and 8B pencil with me. These will deal with most of the tones that you are likely to see in the built environment. I also use water-soluble graphite pencils, because these can provide some of the qualities of line and wash, while still drawing like pencils.

I use two different types of pen: a fibre-tip writing pen (the cheaper the better), and a

draughtsman's ink pen. The ink from fibre-tip pens is not usually waterproof and will bleed if washed over, as opposed to the draughtsman's ink pens. Both types have their uses, and come in a variety of sizes and colours. I also tend to carry a small bottle of Indian ink with me, as well as water for diluting the ink. I also take small (size 1) and medium (size 8) soft watercolour brushes with me for tinting drawings.

Sketchpads and artists' paper can be a major source of confusion – there are so many

different types to choose from! My personal preference is for an A3 (16½ by 11½in) hard-backed cartridge paper sketchpad. Good cartridge paper will allow you to work with all media. It is usually sufficiently robust to stand up to several light washes of diluted ink or watercolour paint.

I also carry a compact camera with me on sketching trips. Although a camera has its

limitations, it can be a valuable tool for recording the more complex facets of buildings or for capturing vistas that are simply too large to sketch at one sitting, allowing you to refer back to your photos in the safe confines of your home.







When making a studio painting, I occasionally want to draw on a larger scale,  
but I still

stick with strong cartridge paper. This is not textured like watercolour paper, but maintains a certain 'tooth' to grip and hold graphite. I will sometimes use graphite powder on large sheets of paper. Graphite powder is commercially available, although you may need to visit a specialist art store to find it. The joy of using graphite powder lies in the physicality of its application.

As you draw buildings more regularly, you will begin to develop a preference for

particular media and will build up your own drawing kit accordingly. In the meantime, however, a pencil and a sheet of paper are all that you need to get started.

## **PENCILS**

Pencils are the medium most commonly associated with the art of drawing. Although you can make marks with any type of pencil, there is a group of pencils that is produced specifically for artists. These are the B pencils, which contain soft compressed graphite. These pencils range from the straightforward, relatively hard, B grade, through to the extremely soft, deep black 9B.

The softer the pencil that you use, the easier you will find it to create strong, deep shadows

without damaging the surface of your paper through exerting too much pressure.

When drawing with pencils, there are two basic techniques that you can employ. Firstly,

by drawing with only the tip of the pencil lead in contact with the paper, you will get a sharp, thin line. This technique is good for producing sketches and outline images. It can also be refined more to develop types of shading, such as cross-hatching (see below). Next, you can lower the angle of the pencil so that the side of the pencil lead is in contact with your paper. This technique allows you to create soft-edged shading, and is ideal for quickly filling in areas of space or creating specific shadows.

### *Pencil grades*

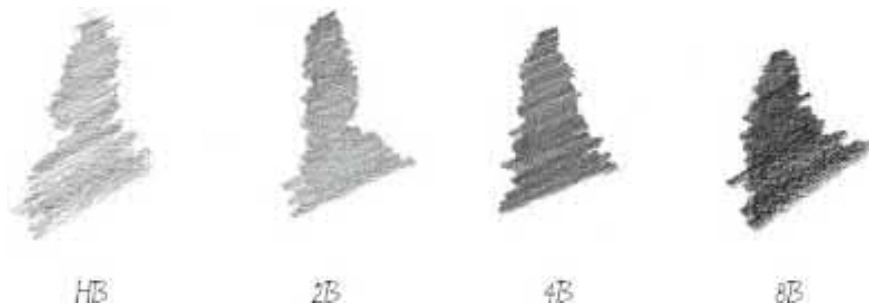
*You will probably find it best to start drawing with a 2B pencil to create the basic outline*

*of your building. You can then establish the middle tones with a 4B pencil, before moving*

*on to complete the image by the addition of the deep, dark areas with a 6B pencil. As your*

*confidence in pencil shading grows, you may want to graduate to an 8B pencil for*

*shading.*



### *Techniques*

*These pencil techniques are best practised on cartridge paper; it is not textured but has a*

*slight 'tooth' for the graphite to cling to.*



*Line shading  
using the tip  
of the pencil.*



*Soft shading using  
the edge of the  
pencil lead.*



*Cross-hatching.*

*Cross-hatching on soft shading  
is a good technique for  
creating hard-edged shadows.*

