



## Information and sources for the history of your house or street

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## **Title deeds**

The archives service holds a collection of title deeds. They are mainly deeds and leases for corporation owned property but there are some in privately deposited collections (e.g. solicitor's collections). The deeds are indexed by property and personal name.

## **Estate plans and land auction particulars**

Many of Southampton's housing developments were built on land that had previously been part of large country estates. When the estates were sold off for development, in some cases estate plans were drawn up showing the proposed sale plots and street layouts. Both the special collections library and the archives have some estate plans and other sales catalogues.

## **War damage records**

The archives has a card file recording damage to residential properties in Southampton. Some associated records for repair work are also available from the Borough Architect's Records. There is also a large war damage map showing positions of bombs dropped on Southampton.

## **Maps**

Large-scale maps are an excellent way to see the changes to streets and areas over a period of time. They are also useful for approximately dating individual houses and other buildings. There is a very detailed map (60" to the mile) from 1845/46 for the original borough of Southampton (much smaller than the present city boundaries) and further 25" maps from 1867, 1897, 1910, 1935, (with few also from 1942). After WW2 there are more recent maps at 1:2500 and 1:1250 scales. These maps are available in both the archives and the special collections library. The archives also has copies of tithe maps and schedules (1830s - 1840s) for the area.

## **Street directories**

Street directories, such as the famous ones produced by Kelly's, list house by house who lived in Southampton's streets from c1850 to 1975 (the date of the last Kelly's Directory). It is possible, therefore, to find out who was living at a particular house during that period. In some cases you can also discover what they did for a living. Directories only listed heads of households; they did not list everybody living at an address. Both the library and the archives have good collections of directories.

Also available on the [Portcities site](#)

## **Electoral registers**

Electoral registers also listed people by address. They were produced yearly from 1832 and listed only the people who were eligible to vote. In the 19th century the franchise was extremely limited and in 1832 there were only 1403 voters registered. Before 1918 the right to vote was based on property ownership and generally excluded women. The archives holds registers from 1832-1918 and 1930 to date (1918-1930 are missing). The special collections library holds 1932 to date. The archives also hold Burgess Lists 1835-1918 (with gaps). These were drawn up for local elections and give the use (house, shop etc) of properties listed.

## **Census returns**

Censuses have been taken every ten years since 1841, but only the 1841-1901 returns are available to the public. Unlike street directories and electoral registers, census returns list everybody, including children, at an address. They also show the age of each occupant, relationship to the head of the household, occupation and place of birth. The special collection library holds all available census returns for the Southampton area.

## **Books**

Two books have been written on the history of Southampton's streets by local author, AGK Leonard - *Stories of Southampton Streets* and *More Stories of Southampton Streets*. These books trace the beginning and development of the streets, and in many cases the origin of street names. The library also holds general histories of Southampton and its suburbs, many of which will mention individual streets. The library maintains a subject index of local books that pays particular attention to references to streets and houses. A *Topographical Index of Southampton* by L.A Burgess is good for former names or 'lost streets' with further references. References to individual houses are more difficult to find, unless you happen to live in a listed building or your house has some historical significance, in which case you may find mention of it in conservation area reports etc.

## **Newspapers and periodicals**

The library has, since 1939, maintained a newspaper clippings file on subjects of local interest. Articles on the history of streets are filed at HS/h Streets; articles on the planning and development of streets are filed at HS/lk Streets. AGK Leonard wrote two columns in the *Echo* on the history of streets - *Men of the Streets* and *The Name Lingers On* which are also placed in the clippings file (HS/h)

We also index periodicals and magazines - look in the Periodical Index under street name.

## **Photographs**

Photographs will show how streets and houses looked at a particular time. The library has a collection of aerial photographs of various dates (those of 1926-27 are especially good), and a general collection showing individual buildings and street scenes. The aerial photographs are not indexed, but the others are listed in the Illustrations Index. The archives also has a good collection of housing photographs, including many streets taken before the slum clearances of the 1930s and the redevelopment of the 1960s and a collection of war damage photographs. All photographs in the archives are indexed by place.

## **Building control registers and plans**

These records are held in the archives.

The registers, nearly all indexed by street, are a useful starting point for research on individual buildings. Detailed plans of properties exist in many cases, however, post 1920 plans can only be accessed by the owners of a property, or by those with the owner's permission. The registers date back to late 19th century.

## **Rate Books**

Rate books list owners/occupiers of houses and the amount of rates they were liable to pay. The archives hold rate books for the old town area from 1732. Rate books are also held for some of the outlying districts later absorbed into the city (Shirley, South Stoneham, North Stoneham and Itchen)

## **Borough architects and city engineers plans**

Plans and drawings for houses constructed by the Borough Architects and City Engineers departments for the period 1920s - 1970s are held by the archives.

## **Other official publications**

The Report on Dilapidated Housing 1890-1914 (published as Southampton Record Series Volume 29) includes detailed maps and descriptions of streets, courts and alleys, many of which were swept away in the slum clearances of the 1890s and 1930s.

Housing Schemes Carried Out in the Borough of Southampton, 1919 - 1931 contains descriptions and photographs of individual houses and plans of the estates build in that period. They include the 'Flower Estate' in Swaythling, Bassett Green Housing Scheme and the Freshfield Estate.

These reports are available in both the library and the archives.

Snippets of information about streets can sometimes be found in the council minutes, particularly information about street widening or other alterations. A complete collection of council minutes is held by the archives; the library holds 1894 to date. Each yearly volume is indexed.