This fieldwork experience can be used to tackle key questions, concepts, case studies, skills and techniques in the changing place units of A level geography specifications.

**Aims**
The fieldwork aims to give students experience and understanding of:
- how a space is perceived and develops an identity
- how and why the identity of a place can change
- whether the identity of a place can be designed and/or branded
- the economic, social and cultural forces that can drive continuity and how change might produce a ‘ripple’ effect

**Key Concepts**
The fieldwork and follow up aims to develop understanding of:
- ‘character’ of place
- authenticity of (urban) places
- industrial change
- gentrification
- regeneration
- the role of ‘heritage’ in city redevelopment

**Key Questions (for students)**
- What was this place like, what is this place now?
- Who works there? Who lives there?
- How is this place changing and how is it envisaged for the future?
- Are there ‘winners’ and ‘losers’ in the way this place is changing?
- Are the changes ‘authentic’ or imposed?
The Fieldwork

The fieldwork follows a pedagogic sequence of experiences

1. Introduction
Students are briefly introduced to the theme and how their role is to gain a sense of place and its character by ‘being there’, using all manner of clues to assess and evaluate how a place is ‘lived’ in, is being represented and is changing.
Their goal is to decide whether the place and its changes are ‘authentic’ or being designed/developed in such a way that any attachment to its ‘residual’ character and identity are superficial or extinguished.

2. Impressions of Sheffield
   Location = Parkwood Springs.
   Overview of the Sheffield and the Upper Don Valley
   Locate position on OS 1:50k map
   Visual Sweep - students write down 6 words in reponse to what they see
   - students identify (and justify) their favourite prospect
   - students complete a ‘cityscape’ record of Sheffield – recording descriptive words /phrases in matched locations on the ‘skyline’ diagram.

   Key features students usually note:
   - industry in the valley bottom asks what type of industry? ask them to comment on the nature of industrial buildings – using descriptive words).
   - surprise at the green-ness of the city (many open spaces/green spaces)
   - topography – the city is built on hills with intervening valleys.
   - residential areas – older housing, suburbs, mixed (recent) housing.
   - densely packed and higher rise buildings demarcating the city centre (and university) area
   - high rise residential areas (Hyde Park, Park Hill, Netherthorpe and Upperthorpe)

3. Ugliest City?
   Aim = to identify former conditions of the city – and how this might have contributed to the ‘external’ reputation of Sheffield.

   3.1 Read the description Sheffield from George Orwell’s diary and have students:
   (i) imagine the described conditions and
   (ii) identify an area of Sheffield (from their cityscape sweep) that might be a remnant of this type of housing
   (iii) suggest positive and negative aspects of Orwell’s Sheffield.

   3.2 Look at (and read) the newspaper ‘sketch’ of life in Parkwood Springs just before demolition of the terraced housing (in 1974). Show the painting of the area (1950s)
   Highlight the ‘village’ life of these areas, which gave rise to a close-knit community.

   3.3 Review the highrise developments across the cityscape. These can be seen on the opposite side of the valley (west) and the large blocks of Hyde Park and Park Hill to the south east.
   Note the open Woodside area immediately down valley from the viewpoint (behind the derelict works). The Woodside Estate was created by total clearance of a large area of terraced and back-
to-back housing. The entirely new landscape and plan form was separated from an adjoining industrial area by open space.

Remnants of a large 1960s housing development can be seen at the top of the hillside – but most of this was demolished in the 1980s. (see image in resources)

Discuss with students the reason(s) for high rise and high density estate residential development in the 1960s.

Look across the valley (west). The lower area of the hillside, above the valley floor, was a highrise block development – the Kelvin Estate. This was similar in design and scale to the Park Hill complex. It was demolished in the mid-1980s and re-built as low-rise housing.

Refer back to the Orwell description and students’ pre-conceptions/impressions of Sheffield as a place. Ask students to review their cityscape descriptive words.

Have students suggest what Sheffield City authorities have attempted to do to change the ‘character’ of Sheffield as a place.

4. Are cities becoming less authentic?

Aims = (i) to assess the ‘character’ of places, (ii) to understand the concept of place ‘authenticity’, how it is created, why it is considered a desirable characteristic in gentrification, (iii) how changes to a place might ‘falsify’ its authenticity.

Location = Woodside, Neepsend and Kelham Island (see map)

4.1 Read the article ‘Are cities becoming less authentic?’
Ensue students understand who ‘millenials’ are.

4.2 Ask students to suggest how they can assess the ‘character’ of a place.
Discuss how places are developed when ‘meaning’ is attached to locations by the people who inhabit it or visit it.

Meaning is derived from whether the location fulfils their purpose for it being there, and their emotional response (‘feeling’) to and/or perception of the activities, people, community and physical environment within that location.
Both these factors are grounded in the values held by individuals. Consequently, places can be perceived and interpreted differently by different people.
Each feature or sensed quality of a place response can be expressed as a trait or characteristic of that place.
The ‘character’ of a place is a summary description of the ‘characteristics’.

4.2 Issue the Place ‘character’ immersion assessment sheets.
Review the traits listed and clarify the meaning of any terms students may not understand (ask students to identify any words they are not familiar with).
4.3 Walk a route through the area from Rutland Road through Neepsend, across the River Don to Green Lane and Kelham Island.

Select a route that takes in different working premises, including some where students can look into buildings to see they type of work in progress.

Stop at 5 (or more) locations. At each location:

- Students spend (at least) 2 minutes ‘immersion’ - exploration of its features and gaining a ‘sense’ of place (what do they see, hear, small, feel?). Emphasise the importance of absorbing the ‘atmosphere’ of each location;

- Students complete the Place ‘character’ immersion assessment sheet.

- Ask students to decide which places they think are:
  (i) ‘authentic’, i.e. have developed from decisions and made by people within the place (e.g. a sense of natural evolution)
  (ii) those they think are ‘extrinsic’ i.e. have been determined by external influences or forces.

Students should suggest evidence (physical or emoted) that justifies their decision.

4.4 Students take 3 photos which they consider summarise the following attributes:

(i) the ‘character’ of the place (i.e. conveys a ‘sense’ of place),
(ii) its level of ‘authenticity’,
(iii) the way it is represented.

Some of these qualities may (will) overlap in photos – but student should think (and justify) why their photos highlight the particular attributes.
5. **Suggested Follow-up activities**

5.1 Students could prepare a (poster) display about continuity and change of the urban environment in the Neepsend-Kelham area using an annotated map and their photos under the headings of:
   (i) Characteristics
   (ii) Authenticity
   (iii) Identity

Students add text (which could be word limited) to interpret their photos and what their images indicate about the changes in the pattern and economy and social change.

5.2 A level practice exam question (and mark scheme)

How has economic change influenced and is continuing to influence the pattern and of land use development in the Neepsend area of Sheffield?

**Question**

Evaluate the usefulness of Figure 5a and Figure 5b in showing the nature and extent of either economic change or demographic and cultural change in this area. (6 marks)

Figure 5a is a view of Sheffield and the River Don looking towards Kelham from a bridge across the river, painted in 1908.

Figure 5b is a photo taken from the same spot in 2018.
Mark scheme

Level 2 (4–6 marks)
Clear evaluation of the qualitative evidence provided which makes appropriate use of data to support. Clear connections between different aspects of the data.

Level 1 (1–3 marks)
Basic evaluation of the qualitative evidence provided which makes limited use of data to support. Basic or limited connections between different aspects of the data.

Notes for answers
The question requires an evaluation of the usefulness of the two sources. The emphasis is on the use of geographical skills to analyse and evaluate how visual media represents information (captured in a moment of time) about the economic, demographic and cultural characteristics of an area.

AO3
• Evaluation of the usefulness of the two visual sources in depicting details of the area, including evidence of settlement function, housing development, industrial land use, communications and open space.
• Evaluation of the usefulness of the sources indicating either economic change or demographic and cultural change over time.
• Consideration of the limitations of the 2 sources in showing change.

The photo image might be considered a more truthful representation (although this may depend on the choice of view and scale of image) whereas the artistic representation is more subjective (often a combination of the real and the imagined). Both sources have a limited perspective, so may not show much detail about change in the area. Both are a snapshot in time.

• Evaluation of economic and social change.
This is demonstrated effectively in several ways.
Figure 5a portrays dense industrial development with the glow of fiery furnaces and forging hearths throwing out orange smoke from the chimney stacks and whisps of white steam (from steam engines used to drive machinery). The buildings overhang the river to extend the working or storage space. The forges on the left of the photo are built on piles over the river allowing water to pass during a mild flood but would easily be swept away in a severe flood. This suggests an inventive but non-regulated social structure. The impression is of tightly packed land use by the river, a smoky atmosphere and intense, hot, working conditions even though there is no detail of the work going on inside the buildings shown.

In Figure 5b the buildings have changed from (heavy) industrial use and have been replaced by new buildings which serve as offices (on the left) and residential flats (on the right). The photos suggests a significant shift in the economic activity of this area over the century separating the images, towards a more service-based economy with a decline in the traditional industry and/or upscaling of these types of (small) works necessitating re-location to larger sites elsewhere. The river channel is lined with flood walls, suggesting a regulatory social structure to society, designed to protect people and property.
The visual images therefore suggest significant economic change and social change over the period.

_Evaluation of demographic and cultural change._
The shape of the new building on the right of the photo is a similar shape and design to the older building it has replaced, suggesting an attempt to retain the character and historic identity and give an impression of ‘authenticity’ for potential residents. This is a sign of gentrification and suggest a likely demographic shift to occupation by people who value historical/cultural environments.

There are balconies overlooking the river built into the design of this building. Today, views of water are often considered as a premium feature and generally increase the price of rent/purchase, suggesting the buildings are likely to be occupied by relatively affluent (professional) people.

In contrast to Figure 5a, the place today looks like a relatively clean environment in which to live or work. There are trees and vegetation lining the river banks suggesting the place has low levels of pollution.

In summary, some cultural change can be deduced from the two images, although the level at which the degree of change can be evaluated is limited.

Overall evaluation of the painting in Figure 5a, which gives an impression of both the economic and social geography of the area. The photo in Figure 5b is probably more reliable and the detail is more precise. However, together they are even more useful, showing what has changed and what is obviously still important from the past.

5.3
A case study of the Kelham area of Sheffield, including suggested activities is available from the GA website
http://www.geography.org.uk/Kelham-Island

This is part of a bigger case study of Sheffield and its changing urban environments that can be accessed at:
http://www.geography.org.uk/Sheffield-case-study
Sheffield, I suppose, could justly claim to be called the ugliest town in the Old World..."

George Orwell “The Road to Wigan Pier” 1937

"It has a population of half a million and it contains fewer decent buildings than the average East Anglian village of five hundred. And the stench! If at rare moments you stop smelling sulphur it is because you have begun smelling gas. the shallow river that runs through the town is - usually bright yellow some chemical or other."

In 1936 (80 years ago) the writer George Orwell visited Sheffield on a tour north of England to ‘research’ his book documenting his experience of working class life in the north of England. Whilst in Sheffield Orwell lodged at the house of Gilbert and Kate Searle in Wallace Road, Neepsend. There are extracts from notes in his diaries.

This house: two up two down, living room about 14 ft by 12 ft, parlour rather smaller. Sink and copper in living room, no gas fire, outside w.c. Rent with rates about 8s. 6d. 2 cellars as well. Husband is out of work, wife works as a char at 6d. an hour. One kid aged 5.

Had a very long and exhausting day (I am now continuing this March 4th) being shown every quarter of Sheffield on foot and by tram. I have now traversed almost the whole city. It seems to me, by daylight, one of the most appalling places I have ever seen. In whichever direction you look you see the same landscape of monstrous chimneys pouring forth smoke which is sometimes black and sometimes of a rosy tint said to be due to sulphur. You can smell the sulphur in the air all the while. All buildings are blackened within a year or two of being put up. Halting at one place I counted the factory chimneys I could see and there were 33. But it was very misty as well as smoky - there would have been many more visible on a clear day. I doubt whether there are any architecturally decent buildings in the town. The town is very hilly (said to be built on seven hills, like Rome) and everywhere streets of mean little houses blackened by smoke run up at sharp angles, paved with cobbles which are purposely set unevenly to give horses etc, a grip. At night the hilliness creates fine effects because you look across from one hillside to the other and see the lamps twinkling like stars. Huge jets of flame shoot periodically out of the roofs of the foundries (many working night shifts at present) show a splendid rosy colour through the smoke and steam. When you get a glimpse inside you see enormous fiery serpents of red-hot and white-hot (really lemon coloured) iron being rolled out into rails. In the central slummy part of the town are the small workshops of the 'little bosses', i.e. smaller employers who are making chiefly cutlery. I don’t think I ever in my life saw so many broken windows. Some of these workshops have hardly a pane of glass in their windows and you would not believe they were inhabitable if you did not see the employees, mostly girls, at work inside.

The town is being torn down and rebuilt at an immense speed. Everywhere among the slums are gaps with squalid mounds of bricks where condemned houses have been demolished and on all the outskirts of the town new estates of Corporation houses are going up. These are much inferior, at any rate in appearance, to those at Liverpool. They are in terribly bleak situations, too. One estate just behind where I am living now, at the very summit of a hill, on horrible sticky clay soil and swept by icy winds. Notice that the people going into these new houses from the slums will always be paying higher rents; and also will have to spend much more on fuel to keep themselves warm. Also, in many cases, will be further from their work and therefore spend more on conveyance.
Will Mather's Sketchbook

visits 1974.

Parkwood Springs

DESPITE its forbidding appearance, cut off from the main-stream of Sheffield by railway lines, bye-roads and gas-works, Parkwood Springs is probably one of the few real "villages" left in the city. It is a place where, despite a tough reputation, everyone knows everyone and where relatives live in the next street.

In fact it is almost an advantage to be cut off or forgotten, because there is no through traffic, so the suntanned children can play reckless games in safety on the streets or on the disused gravel workings on the hill behind — which makes a natural adventure playground.

But the executioner's axe hangs over the community. Soon it will all be gone in another step of progress. But what will replace it is uncertain. Maybe the families will be more comfortable in modern flats but gone perhaps will be the laughter and the close community atmosphere and the little boys dashing down the steep streets on their homemade kettledrums.

Surrounded by gas holders, railway lines and bye-roads, Parkwood Springs still stands defiantly, despite it all (above). Looking down from the hill behind Parkwood Springs (below) people can be seen standing about and talking on Douglas Terrace. The pub on the left is now closed, but in front of it is the five-month-old bus stop, which thanks to The Springs action group provides a shopping run into the city centre. Someone calls the bus stop the "best part of Parkwood Springs."

Children play on steep Wallace Road, Parkwood Springs (above) and walking down the centre of the road here are Tugger Smith, aged six (left), and Mandy Betts, aged seven.

From the left: Martin Linfield, aged 11, Kipper Clayton, aged 7, Martin Shaw, 9 and Keith Ledger, 4, pause for a moment on Mount Road.
Are Cities Becoming Less Authentic?
Extracted from a post by Klaus Philipsen Posted June 12, 2015

In the never ending quest to find out what millennials want (bike sharing, walkability, brewpubs, strong coffee, placemaking) another attribute is frequently mentioned: authenticity, both as a desired quality millennials seek, or as a threatened quality that their influx destroys.

*City slogans come and go*

These notions lead immediately to the question: what makes places or cities authentic? Is it their most famous landmark (the Eiffel Tower, the Pantheon, the Golden Gate Bridge and the Tower of London), an iconic skyline (New York, Dubai), a memorable slogan (the “City That Never Sleeps”), gritty art (Berlin's Kreuzberg before unification) or tough scars that come from the heavy blows of history (Detroit)?

This last example brings to mind a related word that people may seek alongside authenticity: Character. If hardship builds character and authenticity, Detroit and all the other industrial legacy cities must be full of it.

Are the smokestack cities of the past, the ones that suffered the near fatal blows of de-industrialization, urban flight, depopulation, poverty, racial segregation and violence, the only possible winners in authenticity and character?

Are the smooth places in the “sunbelt,” that coasted without too much history or effort into their current state of bliss by accident of their location, necessarily the losers?

Or are global forces of homogenization at work, that level the spikes of authenticity worldwide, smoothing the roughness of local history with the glossy lacquer of consumption where whole cities become nothing more than branded products?
The more alike our cities and neighborhoods become, the harder we try to stand out. While we are at it, why not throw some additional words into the mix that seem to swirl around in discussions about authenticity, for example gentrification and culture. Is gentrification an antipode to authenticity, character and culture? Or to race and class? Are affluence and gentrification the enemies of culture, character, grit and authenticity? Is everything new, every change a threat to authenticity?

![Millenials enjoying food truck in front of the MICA Art Institute in Baltimore (photo: Philipsen)](image)

Greek authentikós original, primary, at first hand, equivalent to authent(ēs) one who does things himself (Dictionary). 

This definition of the term authentic as a duality meaning "original/genuine" on the one hand and "self-doing" on the other, illustrates two important characteristics we would care about in the urban context.

1. is it real or an imitation or "Ersatz," .....and....
2. is there any "self doing," which I interpret rather freely as people having some self-determination rather than being subjected to external and abstract forces.

It stands to reason that authenticity has a lot to do with class, race, economic, technological and social forces.

We mentioned already the hardships and the life that came with industrialization and its associated alienation, segregation, exploitation and environmental degradation.

And now in the de-industrialized city, depopulated and marred by abandonment, we see the bifurcation into places of glitz and others of abject poverty. The authenticity/ gentrification/ character discussion seems to arise and thrive from this contrast and how it remains or changes over time.

Certainly for those on the short end of industrial production or postindustrial gentrification, authenticity in the sense of "self determination" seems to be elusive whereas the authenticity of the hard life as "genuine" is beyond doubt.
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