

Glasgow's Iconic Buildings:

ENGLISH-
SPEAKING
UNION



THE TRADES HALL

85 Glassford Street



SUMMARY:

Glasgow's Trades House was composed of representatives of the city's fourteen incorporated trades. It met originally at the Alms House in Cathedral Square but in 1791 work began on the erection of a new Trades Hall in newly-formed Glassford Street. It was designed by Robert Adam and had shops on the ground floor and a main hall on the floor above.

At the time the Hall was designed Robert Adam was Scotland's best known architect and this building is the only major building designed by Adam still surviving in Glasgow. It is also the oldest building (apart from the medieval cathedral) still used for its original purpose as a public hall and meeting place.

At one time the Trades House Crafts controlled all trade work in the city, giving them immense power in the development of industrial Glasgow. In the 1800s the power to control who worked and what they were paid was removed in the Burgh Reform Act and The Trades House of Glasgow and the Incorporated Trades are now charities which support good causes in the city. The Trades Hall is still the home of The Trades House, and can be used for events.

THINK ABOUT:

- What are the 14 incorporated trades? Why do you think they were so important as the city was developing?
- Find out about why architects used elements from ancient Roman buildings.
- Find out about other buildings built by Robert Adam in Glasgow and the rest of Scotland. (Be careful! There is a modern architect called Robert Adam too)
- The Trades Hall has elaborate carvings, decoration and stained glass windows - what impression do you think it was designed to give people about the trades and about Glasgow?
- Find out about the difference between the Trades House and the Merchants House.

FIND OUT MORE:

Trades House website, <http://www.tradeshouse.org.uk/>

Trades Hall website, History of the Hall, <http://www.tradeshallglasgow.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/History-of-the-Hall.pdf>

Dictionary of Scottish Architects, Robert Adam, http://www.scottisharchitects.org.uk/architect_full.php?id=402763

Trades House coat of arms, <http://www.theglasgowstory.com/image/?inum=TGSA05258&t=2>

The Glasgow Story website, The Rising Burgh: Crafts, <http://www.theglasgowstory.com/story/?id=TGSBE02>

The Merchants House of Glasgow website, <http://merchantshouse.org.uk/>