AN
INTRODUCTION TO
ARCHITECTURE

Skills development Activities:

COMMUNITY MINI CHALLENGE

KS4 - National/Foundation

Created by Students at The Welsh School of Architecture

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

PLACE MAKING

The built environment is an opportunity to make connections between learners and their communities. When familiar with our surroundings and with a destination to reach, rarely are we fully aware of what is around us. By stopping and examining these spaces we might be surprised by our surroundings. Allowing young people to take ownership of spaces within their community and exploring a sense of local identity can help foster a sense of pride.

Learners should identify forgotten and disused spaces and study their current usage before exploring the potential of creating a temporary intervention. An emphasis should be placed upon local identity, meeting the needs of the community and illustrating the power of art and culture on communities. Designers are encouraged to engage and work with local residents and groups.

AIMS

_____

- Identify issues within the built environment and understand how to overcome these issues with design solutions, developing the **Critical Thinking and Problem Solving Skills**.

- Demonstrate analysing and representational techniques through using **Creativity and Innovation** skills and exploring the possibility of **Digital Literacy.**

- Demonstrate independant thinking developing **Personal Effectiveness**

- Demonstrate an iterative process of design development to reach a final design; displaying **Planning and Organisation** skills.

- To better understand the relationship between the built environment and our communities.

- Develop an overall understanding of the value of good design.

SKILLS

In planning for the Community Challenge learners will learn the importance of **Planning and Organisation**. This will be demonstrated through completing a plan with a timescale and learners will have to source and manage their own resources. The plan will need to be monitored and evaluated throughout the project with learners demonstrating that they can adapt to change.

Group tasks will demand learners to show that their **Personal Effectiveness** can allow them to work well within a team and be able to allocate responsibilities. They must also be able to respect and respond to the values and opinions of others while presenting their own views effectively, demonstrating **initiative and independence**. In order to work well within a team the learner will need to understand and manage their own behaviour, time management and performance. In case of any conflict within a group the learner must be able to respond appropriately.

PROMPTS

_____

- What is the local community? (consider varying scales and boundaries)

- What is the built environment?

- How does the built environment impact the local community?

- How do cultural, historical, social and environmental concerns of the local community affect the built environment?

- How can a space be deemed pleasant or undesirable? What are the parameters of this assessment?

- What are the needs of the local community?

- How can problems identified in the built environment be resolved to benefit the local community?

- How will the scale of the intervention effect the built environment?

- What ways can we represent our ideas to persuade our ideas to others?, What ways to architects use to represent their design intentions for different audiences - client, general public, planning department, council etc.?

- Who can you engage in the design process?

- Where are you going to source your materials, and can you support the local economy?

- What is the time frame of your intervention, if long term, and how can you ensure it is maintained?

- What is the environmental impact of your intervention?

- How can you assist in creating safe and secure spaces within the community?

FRAMEWORK

Group project planning and making an intervention within the local community to enhance the built environment. The groups must consist of 3 - 6 members. The project consists of tasks for the learners to carry out as preparation for carrying out the Challenge.

Initially the local community should be analysed by exploring the built environment with all information gathered presented using appropriate representation techniques. Using this information, learners should then design and plan an intervention within their groups. The intervention should have an emphasis on place making. Learners should demonstrate an iterative process of development before reaching a final design. The materials for the creation of the intervention should be sourced locally and learners should aim to incorporate recycled materials.

For assessment purposes at KS4 a minimum of 10 hours must be spent directly carrying out the projet with or in the local community. Overall learners should spend around 25 hours on the challenge. A 'Personal Digital Record' with supportive evidence of a 'Skills Audit', a 'Plan'. a 'Confirmation Statement' and a 'Personal Reflection' must be completed for presenting to the WJEC.

Task 1 - Defining architectural terms

Task 2 - Analysing the local environment and understanding the issues

Task 3 - Choosing a site and creating a site model

Task 4 - Creating a manifesto

Task 5 - Overcoming the issues with design solutions

Task 6 - Feedback and development

A sheet is available with key stages of the design process for the learner.
An Introduction to Architecture Resource Pack: Learner Resource 1

This is an example of a task in the style of a challenge brief. The approved challenge brief for community challenge: Neighbourhood Enhancement is available from the WJEC secure website

THE BRIEF

We all need to be aware of the challenges and opportunities we may meet on a personal level in our local community: school, the local area, the nearest village, town or city. During this Challenge you will focus on real-life concerns and needs through activities which aim to make a difference in the community. You will need to consider whether you need to develop and extend your skills, knowledge and understanding to be able to successfully meet the needs of the Challenge.

Are you fed up of litter, fly tipping, dog fouling, tired looking areas and interested in improving your environment? Then why not get involved in a Community Challenge initiative to support improvement of your local community, helping to develop design solutions to enhance the built environment and will benefit the local community.

Design and develop an intervention within a forgotten space in your local community. The intervention at whatever the desired scale should have an emphasis on local identity and place making.

The local community would like your help to improve a forgotten space within the community. You and/or your team must identify and develop ideas to help improve the area, ensuring it is appealing, safe and useful for users. You should aim to source your materials locally and try to incorporate recycled elements within your design. You must actively participate over a minimum of 10 hours to support the development of this area that will benefit the local community.

Remember you will need to consider the following factors:

- What skills do I have to help me complete this task?
- What skills will I need to develop in order to complete this task?
- Time available
- Health and safety issues
- Support and guidance required
- Impact on the local community

This Challenge will enable you to develop as effective and responsible members of your local community. In competing the Community Challenge you will be able to recognise the contributions you can make towards improving the community in which you live and the benefits this will have for yourself, for others and the environment. You will demonstrate how you can create and manage an action plan when developing opportunities for the community and with the use of feedback can reflect and review your personal performance in planning and carrying out the activity.

A copy of the brief is available for the learner.
An Introduction to Architecture Resource Pack: Learner Resource 2

TASK 1

DEFINING ARCHITECTURAL TERMS

_____

This is an introductory task to start discussion with learners about the brief they have been given. Within the given brief and this pack, various terms have been cited which may not be familiar to the learner:

This first task is therefore to discuss and come up with definitions for the following terms. Learners should undertake this within their groups of 3 - 6 members **without** referring to a dictionary or with use of the internet.

- community

- built environment

- intervention

- enhancement

- spaces

- scale

Another option is firstly to give learners the brief and to let them to identify words which they do not fully understand and discuss.

Particular attention should be paid to defining the term community. How can a community be defined? Can a community be defined? Does a community have varying scales? What do learners feel their own position within their local community is?

It is recommended that this is repeated at the end of the Challenge to see if learners' have had a shift in thought.
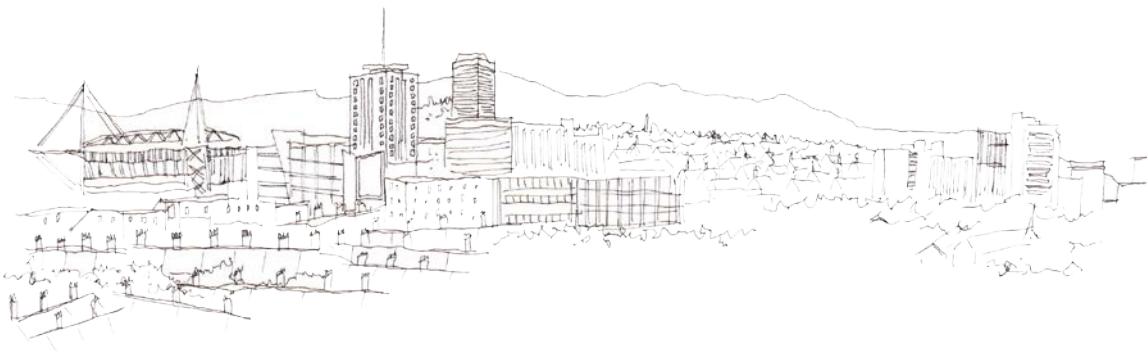
TASK 2

ANALYSING THE LOCAL ENVIRONMENT AND
UNDERSTANDING THE ISSUES

This task will help learners form opinions on their local environment and their aspirations for its design. Learners should be able to express their ideas and concerns about the places and spaces they inhabit.

Leaners should explore and analyse the local environment within their groups. It is likely that the learners are familiar with their local environment but the emphasis should be placed on examining it afresh. Attention should be paid to varying scales from the built environment as a whole to looking at smaller details. Within each group each learner should focus on one of the following themes:

- local identity

- historical points of interest

- users and current usage

- sense of community

- green spaces/environmental issues

- forgotten spaces/areas of neglect

This analysis should be carried out with a camera and a sketchbook. Learners should be encouraged to record as much as possible and experiment with different techniques within their sketchbook. This could include watercolours, collage, rubbings and pencil drawings among others.

Whist the learners are analysing their local environment they should also be looking for a site to create their intervention and potential recycled materials that they could incorporate.

This task can also be carried out within the grounds of a school.

A presentation is available with examples of abandoned and under used spaces.
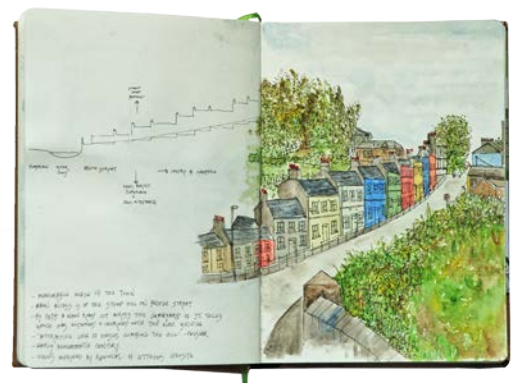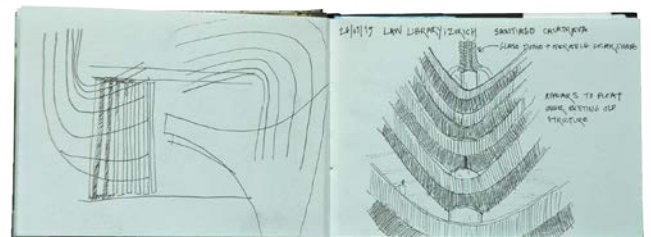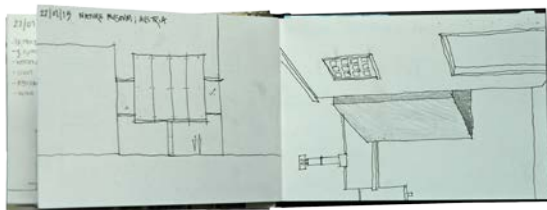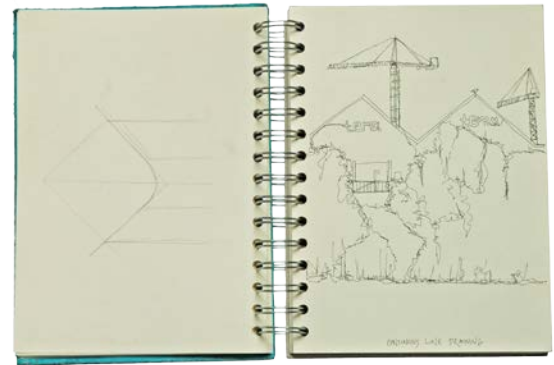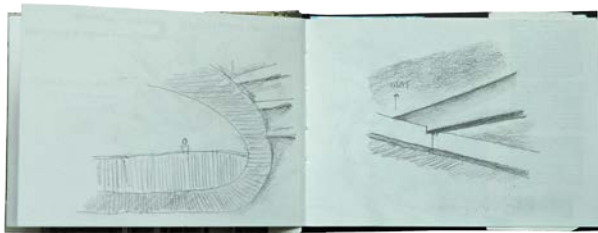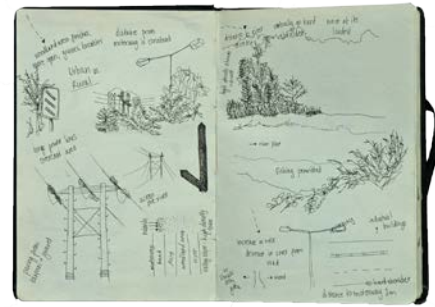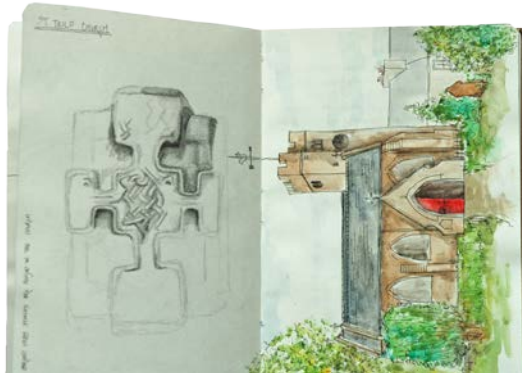An Introduction to Architecture Resource Pack: Learner Resource 3

A presentation is available with examples of sketchbooks.
An Introduction to Architecture Resource Pack: Learner Resource 4

Additional recommended Resources

Rothman, Julia, and Vanessa Davis, Drawn In: A Peek into the Inspiring Sketchbooks of 45 Fine Artists, Illustrators, Graphic Designers, and Cartoonists (United States: Quarry Books, 2011).

Hobbs, James, Sketch Your World: Drawing Techniques for Great Results on the Go (United Kingdom: Apple Press, 2014).

Campanario, Gabriel, The Art of Urban Sketching: Drawing On Location Around The World (United States: Quarry Books, 2012).

A further activity that can be carried out is the above. Children of varying ages from 9 to 16 year olds were given an image of an disused space and had to re-imagine the space by drawing on a piece of tracing paper over the top. Some children were able to identify existing issues with the site (in the case above broken glass and rubbish on the road and a lack of colour) as well as the users of the space. A disadvantage of this task was that the sites had already been chosen for the children. Therefore, this task could be carried out after each group have chosen their site and have started the process of designing.

TASK 3

CHOOSING A SITE AND CREATING A SITE MODEL

_____

Choosing a site should be an accumulation of the information collected within Task 2. With an emphasis on under used and disused spaces learners should be looking for somewhere they feel they can inhabit with an intervention to bring life to a forgotten space. Considerations must be taken to who owns the space and health and safety concerns. If within the school grounds then this is obviously less of an issues, otherwise appropriate permission is needed, most likely from the council.

Once each group has chosen their site, the next step is then to create a model at an appropriate scale. The model could be made from any material such as cardboard, clay or plaster. Using cardboard is an easy option and learners can recycle materials for this. How learners model trees and other items can be experimented with.

Learners will probably not be familiar with using scales such as 1:100, 1:200, 1:500 or 1:1000. These are commonly used scales for site models. Without access to scale rulers using 1:100 would easy using a standard ruler (with 1cm equivalent to 1m). It should be noted that incorporating scale into the task will increase its difficulty significantly and therefore this element is optional as exploring scale could take up several lessons. Scale rulers can also be downloaded online from website such as this:

http://www.clockworkprint.com.au/client_tools/printable_scale_rulers.html

The site model will allow learners to further understand the constraints and opportunities the site offers. With the site model and the previous information collected in their sketchbooks and photographs they are now ready to start designing.

_____

A presentation is available with examples of site models.
An Introduction to Architecture Resource Pack: Learner Resource 5
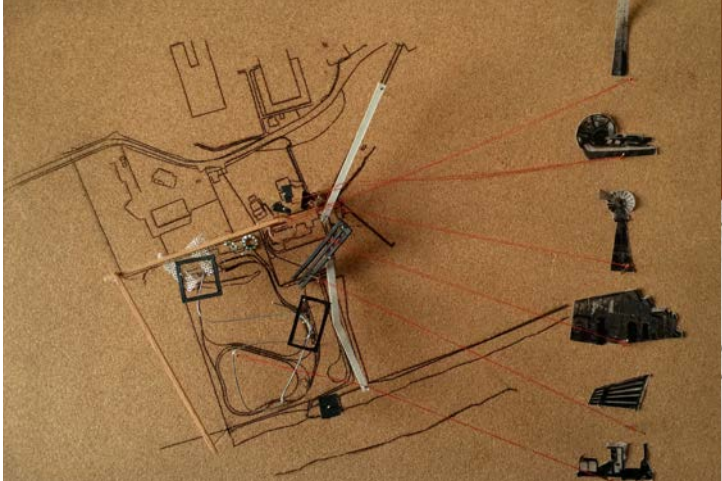
TASK 4

CREATING A MANIFESTO

_____

To assist the learners in designing their intervention, it would be beneficial for each group to create a manifesto. This will be the main idea for the design and is something which will drive the project. It is likely that the manifesto will aim to overcome the issues identified within the site analysis stage. The principal question to ask the designers is what do they want the intervention to achieve?

The manifesto should be a maximum of 100 words.

Some examples are listed below, however, the manifesto should be unique to the chosen site:

- Our idea is to create a seating area within the school grounds as there is currently no where to sit outside. Having a seating area would increase social interaction and allow learners to enjoy being outside in their break times. The seating area will be made entirely from reclaimed materials.

- The community has a strong industrial history and this is something we want to explore. Many young people are not aware of this and we wish to bring this to their attention. We will make a sculpture to illustrate this.

- We found that the community has a lack of green spaces. Our project will be making a small green area that increases biodiversity and also contains edible plants for the community.

TASK 5

OVERCOMING THE ISSUES WITH DESIGN
SOLUTIONS

The aim is for learners to work together within their team to produce an idea for their intervention. Leaners should be encouraged to quickly sketch out ideas or make models which can then be placed on the site model made previously.

Designers should consider the following points:

- The intervention must be able to be built within the allocated hours in the community (minimum 10 hours)

- All materials need to be sourced from within the local community and contain an element of upcycling to address current issues of wastage

- The intervention designed must be not pose any health and safety issues, learners should identify any possible issues and work to reduce them

- It is likely that the intervention will be placed outdoors and if so must be weather proof

- Decide how the intervention will be fixed to its site if necessary

- Consideration must be placed on the life span of the intervention and how it will be used or recycled when no longer in use

A presentation is available with examples of interventions of various scales.
An Introduction to Architecture Resource Pack: Learner Resource 6

TASK 6

FEEDBACK AND DEVELOPMENT

Receiving feedback is an integral element of designing. It allows the designer to reevaluate their project and develop it further. Each group should have the opportunity when they have an initial design to present their ideas. This should be to the other groups and a couple of teachers. The aim is to ensure that any issues are identified so designers can resolve them.

Each group should present their project for 5 - 10 minutes. This could include selected sketches, photos, the site model and importantly the design. Learners should learn the importance of selecting work and ensuring it is presentable. The presentation could take the form of a powerpoint presentation or be pinned up on a wall.

Learners should be able to respond to questions concerning their project. They will then have the opportunity to watch and give constructive feedback to other groups in order to learn, inspire and support each other. It is hoped that this will generate a positive atmosphere in which a critical but friendly discussion on design can occur.

Once the feedback stage has been completed, learners should then develop their design to produce a final design. Learners should also have a plan of action of how the intervention will be created.
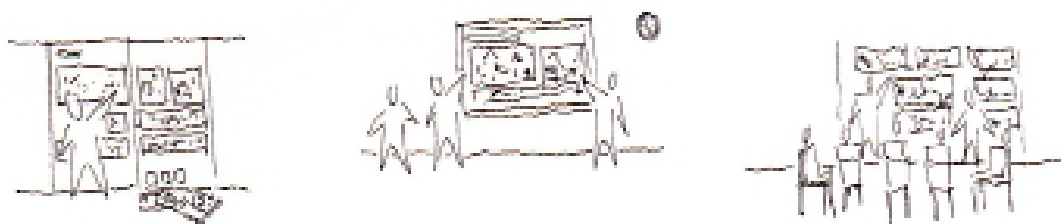
RESURCES

A collection of educational resources and inspirational projects of varying scales and settings.

www.artshell.org
Art Shell engages in research and helps to facilitate art in temporary or alternative spaces.

www.architecturecentre.co.uk/education-teaching-resources
The Architecture Centre in Bristol works with other educational and built environment organisations to develop resources and deliver projects that increase understanding of the built environment.

www.engagingplaces.org.uk/home
Educational website supporting teaching and learning through buildings and places.

www.groundwork.org.uk
Campaigns such as 'My Treasured Space' and 'Why it matters' have an emphasis on green spaces and the positive impact they an have on people's lives.

www.what-if.info
An architecture practice based in Hackney, London with a focus on inner city areas with the aim of creating more sustainable urban environments.

www.adaptableneighbourhoods.com
Architecture practice Ash Sakula have the idea that our cities can adapt to change as an alternative to comprehensive redevelopment and give various examples.

www.assemblestudio.co.uk
Assemble seek to actively involve the public as both participant and collaborator.

www.studioweave.com/projects/public-realm
Examples of interventions within the public realm.

www.wemadethat.co.uk/projects/view/croydon-meanwhile-use-toolkit
Project turning empty spaces and places into opportunities for communities and businesses, with on emphasis temporary use.

All resources accessed July 2015