



Aims & objectives.

Introduction

We live in a constantly changing environment. The results of these changes have often been positive but in many cases there are persistent problems ranging from vandalism and crime to loss of diversity, traffic congestion, noise and pollution. Over the past decade the government has placed increasing emphasis on improving these conditions by encouraging better design and through stimulating participation by citizens of all ages.

In creating this educational package our aim is to develop students' appreciation of the urban environment and good design, to broaden their understanding of citizenship and to cultivate their ability to participate actively.

The materials provide teachers with a unique tool to engage students in developing a broader understanding of the built environment, what makes a good place and how it can be created. It has been designed for AS and A level students, and will be most effective as part of the Geography syllabus, although it has relevance in other parts of the curriculum.

There are five units which incorporate a range of activities, learning techniques and practical exercises, culminating in a project to design a piece of town. A variety of learning materials is provided from which the teacher can select what is appropriate for the student group. An overview of all the units and materials can be found in 'structure'.

Aims

The programme aims to:

- inspire and light the spark of students' interest in the cities and places where they will live, work and play, and which they can influence in the future
- give students the ability to understand their local area and make proposals for changing their surroundings
- introduce students to good practice in design from other localities
- show students ways in which good design can be implemented
- cultivate students' ability to participate actively in the planning process.

The materials are based on ideas and techniques used by built environment design professionals in real planning situations. Five key urban design principles¹ set the framework for this exploration into built form.

The resource allows teachers without expert knowledge of urban design to conduct lessons, assign coursework and assess outcomes.



Objectives

To reach these aims this resource was created to:

- inform students of the design process and the various actors involved in a development (Unit 1: Who makes the town: powergram)
- introduce students to design principles as they apply to the formation of the built environment (Unit 2: What makes a good place?)
- allow students to observe and assess the quality of their built environment by taking them out of school and into the places where they live (Unit 3: Walkabout)
- promote students' analytical skills and understanding of design principles and then formulate a development solution (Unit 4: How to make a better place)
- create design solutions, using 2D and 3D modelling exercises, which enable students to present and communicate their development solutions (Unit 5: Making a better place).

1. The five urban design principles are based on the Responsive Environments approach developed at the Joint Centre for Urban Design, Oxford Brookes University, (see Bentley, Ian et al (1985) Responsive Environments, Architectural Press).