



## Walkabout. **Materials & delivery.**

### Materials

Students will need:

- one camera per group if possible: a disposable camera for each group might be donated by local shops or businesses or a digital camera or their own cameras may be used
- pens and pencils
- *Walkabout Analysis Checklist*
- a *Site Information Pack* including a plan of the site ideally in a plastic sleeve
- suitable clothing for weather conditions.

### The Site Information Pack

The *Site Information Pack* provided is based on the Westgate Centre site in Oxford, an example which can be used for teaching, or which can act as a model when using a local development site. It gives students background information about both the site and development proposals for it, allowing them to analyse and extract useful information and to see the planning and development processes at work. Most information required will be on file at the Local Authority Planning Department. There is also a video guide which looks at the Westgate site, and requires the students to consider its qualities at 15 specific points on a circular tour. This video guide can be used for teaching purposes if the Westgate example is used, or by the teacher as an example of how to visit a local site.

The pack should include:

- a development brief should be prepared which incorporates: the history of the site; information on its current status of development; plans of any proposed developments and the site owners' vision and requirements; the local authority's comments on the planning application (if submitted), plus the result of application (does it have planning permission? If not, what are the objections and how has the applicant responded?)
- maps of the present development and the proposed development site
- photographs of the site
- any relevant items from the press, papers, TV, etc.

The Westgate Centre Site Information Pack contains:

- Oxford City Council Redevelopment Brief
- photographs of the site
- video guide to the Westgate Centre site. This is a pdf file marked with clickable 'hotspots'. Clicking on a 'hotspot' will launch a video showing this section of the site. The video guide is packaged as a zip file and can be downloaded with either high or low video clips depending on the speed of your internet connection. (Please see the help section on this website for more information on downloading and viewing video files.)
- map 1: a blank sheet of the area for students' use
- map 2: starting points and directions for a walkabout with five student groups
- map 3: the development site shaded.



## Time frame

The briefing session should take around 30 minutes.

The site visit should be allocated around 90 minutes, not including travel time. Timing is based on a site the size and complexity of the Westgate Centre site (see Map 3), and can be adjusted for another site.

## Lesson notes

The walkabout lesson reinforces understanding of urban design qualities by giving students the opportunity to look at and evaluate a local development site. During the walkabout the students become familiar with the place for which they will be asked to create a design, and therefore should be able to identify its strong and weak points in the light of required design qualities.

Divide the class into groups of four or five students depending on the size of the class, preferably the same groups that worked together during the 3D modelling exercise (the same groups could also form the working teams for the presentation and design development stages).

Before leaving for the site, hand out information packs and review the needs and wishes of the landowners and surrounding community. To make the project more real, you can also invite a 'stakeholder', say a local planning officer or the site developer, to brief the students. It may also be helpful to review the city's local plan and identify how this plan may affect or influence any development on the site. A *Site Information Pack* is provided for the Westgate case study.

Students should also be given maps of the site showing the site boundaries and the surrounding area, which can be used to show the route of the walkabout and the starting point for each group. The *Westgate Site Information Pack* contains examples of these materials.

Before starting the walkabout students should also be given the *Walkabout Analysis Checklist* of questions to use in their exploration. Questions are designed to help students to remember the design qualities when looking at the site and analysing its components, and are divided into five sections relating to each desirable quality. The list should fit any site and will help students to recognize where design principles have been applied, or, alternatively, spot the consequences of their omission. Individual group members could be assigned to observe and record one of the qualities en route. Select points of interest along the route to stop and make observations.

Some of the questions ask students to examine and compare the existing site with proposed development plans, and can be omitted if proposed development plans are non-existent or are not to be considered.

Each group should take photographs of elements illustrating concepts they observe. Providing disposable cameras is a good idea or students can use their own. If available, digital cameras are preferable.

Ideally, a trained facilitator would accompany each group during the walkabout. It is important to supervise each group as far as possible to ensure that they observe the site's major features, and to keep them moving, as points of interest can lead to lengthy discussions. After the walkabout, ask students to refine their notes for the next session in which the groups will begin to develop their analysis and recommendations for presentation.



## Organising the classroom

Students will need to spend 30 minutes in the classroom. The second part of the session will be on site, where students work in small groups of four or five, each of which should start the walkabout at a designated point, e.g. Westgate Map 2.