
The future of Engaging Places

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A Farrell Review Position Paper

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Overview

Introduction

Open-City's 'Engaging Places' is an invaluable national resource for young people to learn about the built environment through subject-based learning. The online portal supports teachers in the delivery of national curriculum subjects, and has hundreds of resources and lesson plans. The aim is to relaunch these to tie into the new national curriculum and to help young people with career pathways.

The vision will be to create a resource for teachers which will be acknowledged as the gold standard for built environment education for schools, supporting practitioners in this field through the dissemination of excellent learning materials. Timing is critical in this period of curriculum change, and the Engaging Places portal is poised to help teachers adapt.

Engaging Places was established in 2009 to fill a gap in the marketplace; where there was low support for teachers to bring built environment learning into the classroom, and conversely take learning out into the wider built environment. DCMS had a clear strategy, and that involved the partnership between English Heritage and CABE up until the new formation of Cabi at the Design Council. Open-City have been guardians of the resource since then, and are best placed to provide the strategy to maintain and improve the online resource.

We know from research when Engaging Places was established that there is a proven interest from teachers in the value of the resource. We aim to continue to support teaching and learning through the built environment across the curriculum and beyond and to disseminate high quality resources, so that the subject of architecture, urban design and the broader built environment can be widely accessible to children and young people through classroom teaching.

Aims and Objectives

- + The dissemination of high quality resources, clearly signposted for the teaching profession.
- + A website which builds on Engaging Places' reputation as a national resource for built environment education.
- + To stimulate debate and allow for curriculum innovation by teachers using the content.
- + A website which evolves to meet the needs of a changing profession and reflects the very best in learning through the built environment.

What is Engaging Places?

The Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) put in place a strategy and funding to create the website in 2009. A Project Director was appointed within CABI, who managed the joint partnership with English Heritage.

A portal was created to help teachers use the built environment as a tool for learning across many subjects and all key stages.

When CAFE merged with the Design Council in 2011, Engaging Places was bequeathed to Open-City. Following positive changes in the education landscape, the Engaging Places portal has the capacity to support and nurture the delivery of the new, national pedagogical ambitions. Much of the content created back in 2009 is still valuable, but could be added to and tweaked to be more relevant.

The website is a static portal that needs to become more dynamic and reflect technology innovation. It currently hosts lesson plans and other resources to help teachers (who often report not having the confidence to take on a new subject matter in their teaching). The re-launch of the site would include:

- + An open source platform (teachers able to upload lesson plans and comment on others).
- + Alignment with the new curriculum and assessment methods.
- + A simpler website to navigate and find what you are looking for.
- + New lesson plans and featured content/sites.
- + Technologically innovative resources such as 3D virtual models and videos to engage children in the classroom.
- + Opportunities for architects and other professionals to volunteer time to help teach in local schools.
- + Strong links to the Times Education Supplement online with shared content.


What is the need for reinvestment in *Engaging Places*?

- + Children enjoy and benefit from using the environment around them to learn.
- + The built environment (a school, a street, museum, home, or town) can help teach many core and foundation subjects.
- + The existing website is currently 5 years old, and proves popular with those who use it and report back to Open-City.
- + More evidence has emerged showing improved results in children's understanding and learning from using real life places and buildings.
- + All citizens should be able to engage in the debate about the future of their cities, towns and villages. As a by-product of this learning tool, children will increase their literacy and understanding of how places are shaped.
- + Helping young people with career pathways.

Why invest?

- + This is a relatively low cost and low maintenance resource, with **high-value and significant cultural and societal gains**.
- + It is popular with an existing user base, which we can grow rather than start from scratch.
- + It is supported by influential individuals and organisations across architecture, urban regeneration and development.
- + Specialist materials in other subjects already exist in abundance, but the built environment is more complex.
- + In order to commission resources which are written with a firm **understanding both of teaching and architecture**.
- + To give more opportunities for architects and other professionals to **volunteer** time to help teach in local schools.

- + Corporate sponsorship will meet two thirds of the funding – a joint grant from the [Department of Education](#) and the [Department for Culture, Media and Sport](#) would show properly joined up national thinking.
- + As a digital resource, the Technology Strategy Board in BIS may have a relevant funding stream.
- + (see further Funding and Costs below)



Engaging Places

A resource to support teaching and learning through buildings and places

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Home8 September 2014


The leading guide to using buildings and places for learning and teaching. Lesson plans, teaching resources about architecture and design, great places to visit or learn about, details of other useful organisations and upcoming events.

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Engaging Places and the new National Curriculum

25 word abstract


Teaching resources



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In your area



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Great summer activities and events for all the family.


Network



Unlocking the past through streets and buildings


Want to try work like this with your class? Try these ideas.

About us



Built environment education

Find out the benefits of built environment education and how buildings and places relates to the national curriculum.



Engaging Places

Today on Engaging Places

632 resources
533 venues
374 articles

NEW! Key Stage 4 Maths resources...

Lesson plans & activities
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Search

Browse by topic

- Architecture in focus
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- School case studies
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Browse by subject

- Art and design
- Citizenship
- Design and technology
- English
- Geography
- History
- Computing
- Maths
- Science

Recently added


New content is continually added to the site. Check out the list below for latest events. Or visit the complete list of items.

YOUNG PEOPLE'S COURSE: Create! Careers in....Architecture and Construction with AL_A for 16-19 year olds
29 – 31 October 2014
Victoria and Albert Museum, London

Stores Tour: General Tour
13 September 2014
Wolverhampton Art Gallery

Sea Dragons
6 November 2014
Bristol Museum and Art Gallery

Search our map

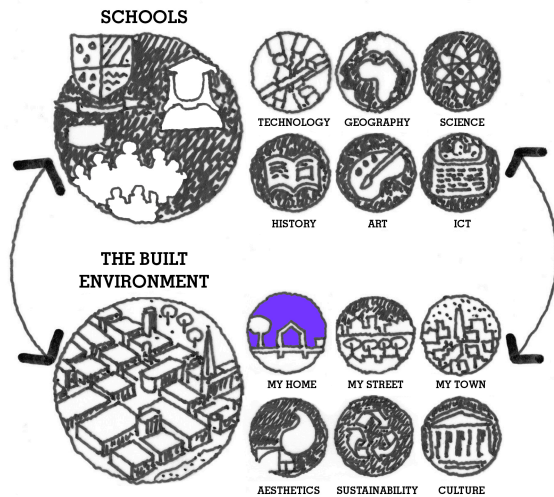


Map Satellite

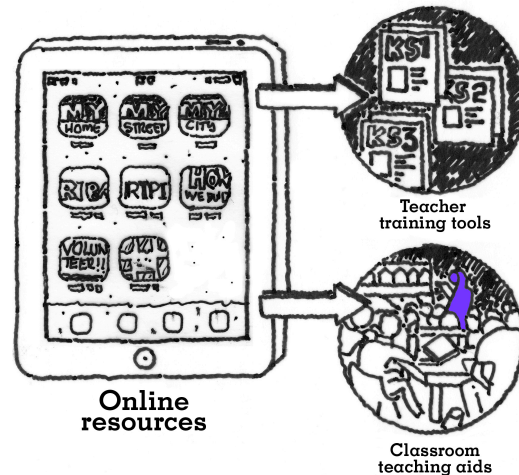
[Screen grab – September 2014]

What The Farrell Review said...

Teach the built environment across all subjects in schools



Develop online resources for teachers in schools



Conclusions

“The way in which we shape our physical environment must be taught as early as possible in schools if we are to get across how critical the role of the built environment is to our health and wellbeing – socially, economically, environmentally and culturally. It includes everything from aesthetics and sustainability to “your home, your street, your neighbourhood, your town” where the smallest part, your home and your street, collectively make an enormous contribution to the future of our planet. **Architecture, the built environment and an understanding of “place” should be taught through many different subjects including art and design, geography, history and STEM subjects (science, technology, engineering and maths) rather than as a subject in its own right. The aim is for young people to develop the widest creativity and problem-solving skills, which are essential for the creative industries, and to develop an understanding of what the built environment professions do.**”

“The best way to include architecture and the built environment in the education system at primary and secondary school level is through teacher training and introducing new content across the curriculum. **Online resources should be developed for teachers and also for built environment professionals and students to reach out to schools**, as the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) did for the Olympics and the Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI) does with its Future Planners initiative. Professionals and students could contribute significantly if there were more volunteering to pass on their passion and beliefs to the younger generation at the earliest age and with the greatest intensity. This kind of engagement is incentivised and rewarded through formal accreditation by the RIBA, but there is little take-up and a culture change is needed to encourage more people to get involved. Opportunities for volunteering could be clearly signposted on built environment agencies’ websites.”

Recommendation #01

PLACE institutions and agencies should develop online resources for teachers and professionals to teach architecture and the built environment across a whole range of subjects. These should reflect the 2014 curricula, potentially through the *Engaging Places* portal, and include a series of e-seminars on school lesson plans and excellent schemes of work. They can be introduced by the Department for Education at different points in a teacher's career including in-service training (INSET) days as well as training offered by external agencies.

Our audience

We have identified five main audience groups for Engaging Places:

- + Qualified Teachers
- + Teachers in Initial Teacher Education
- + Architects and professionals volunteering
- + Education Professionals outside the classroom
- + School Leadership teams

Qualified Teachers

Teachers remain one of the primary audiences for Engaging Places. Engaging Places has successfully targeted both primary and secondary teachers and we aim to continue to do this.

The content of the Engaging Places website is well structured so that resources can be accessed by Key Stage and learning phase. For instance, the resource bank of lesson plans is clearly identified so that the primary teacher or the secondary educator can access subject and stage specific material. We aim to improve this feature of the website in future, so that more sections of the site are signposted this way. We believe that this will enhance both the reach and effectiveness of content where appropriate.

We are also interested in learning pathways from 14 – 19, and are keen to target post-16 educators through channels such as a knowledge bank for this learning phase.

Teachers in Initial Teacher Education

Our aim is that Engaging Places will support teachers going through Initial Teacher education, including those on school-based training routes. We can do this by ensuring that the content of the website remains relevant and by encouraging new teachers to use learning through the built environment in their curriculum planning and delivery.

In addition, we envisage offering physical and virtual training sessions for teachers going through teacher education. These will draw on architecture and buildings as a resource and explore the potential to create digital learning materials, such as videos to support teachers' progression and classroom learning.

Architects and professionals volunteering

We aim to ensure that the website draws on the very best architecture related learning materials, and supports those from the built environment professions who want to work with teachers to motivate young people to learn about the world around them.

As an example, we would like to show architects how they can use their buildings to promote learning and ways that they can engage with a wider audience. This can be done through curriculum aligned resources, such as the ones Open-City have created with Architecture in Schools, or through the creation of digital learning resources that can be posted on the Engaging Places website.

Architects and wider built environment professionals can be encouraged to contribute to the content of Engaging Places more effectively, so that they can help promote the way the subject area is embedded in teaching and learning.

Education Professionals outside the classroom

Engaging Places can be used by education officers and others working in the field of education in the wider cultural sector. The portal successfully identifies opportunities and we aim to strengthen this further, so that as broad a group as possible promotes learning in this field.

Open-City's education programmes lead the way in learning through architecture and the built environment. There are other architecture centres across England who also offer exemplar programmes.

School Leadership teams

These are the people who shape and manage the school curriculum, as well as broader pastoral and whole school areas.

How will we reach the Target Audience?

We want to reach a wider audience and higher numbers within the groups we target. These would include

- + Architecture Centres in England
- + Historic Houses and other Heritage Sites
- + Subject Associations, such as the Design and Technology Association
- + Design Council
- + Cultural learning sites, such as the V & A museum in London, the Design Museum and other regional museums and galleries
- + The audience of digital learning portals, such as Culture 24 and the National Grid for Learning Network
- + Initial Teacher Education universities and colleges in England, including the Institute for Education
- + The Department for Education and other relevant government departments

What do we want people to do? (outcomes)

- + Qualified Teachers –
 - o Use buildings and streets as teaching and learning tools for children across all curriculum subjects.
 - o Download free lesson plans and use online resources.
 - o Feedback and improve on lesson plans as well as add new ones.
- + Architects and Professionals – find ways to volunteer in your local schools.
- + **A new generation** – have more knowledge about how the built environment all around us is shaped and be more empowered to be a part of shaping it.

What do we need to say to them?

- + Everybody has access to a home, a school, a street... it is the perfect learning tool.
- + Using buildings and places to teach can *improve* learning, improve results and is enjoyable.
- + The built environment can help teach many core and foundation subjects. (English, Maths, Science, Art and Design, Citizenship, Computing, Design and Technology, Geography, History, Physical Education, Music)
- + You don't have to be an architect to use our resources, they are simple and aimed at teachers who are new to the subject.
- + Lesson plans and so many more resources are free and simple to access.

What's the idea and how do we see it coming to life?

In a nutshell... what's the idea?

- + Relaunch *Engaging Places* in 12 months as one of the best educational resources of its kind available to teachers. It will become the de-facto resource for teachers wanting to use the built environment in their teaching methods.
- + Targeted print and journal media campaign to let teachers know about the site.
- + Form part of a larger project with the Department for Education and the Farrell Review of Architecture and the Built Environment.
- + Support the transition to the new national curriculum using one of the broadest and readily available subject matters so that everyone can take part.

How do we see this idea coming to life?

- + Run focus groups with active teachers to learn how the resource can benefit them most.
- + Charlie Peel in collaboration with Open-City and key pedagogical personnel to scope and set the brief for the website.
- + Commission new content to be created.
- + Re-work and bring up-to-date all the existing content.
- + Build the open source site using existing and free templates.

Resource and Development of the Website

We aim to create a detailed list, showing which organisations are putting information and content on to the website, so that we can also understand peer to peer thinking.

Encouraging organizations to endorse Engaging Places and to take part in partnering opportunities will be an effective way to develop both the reach and the effectiveness of Engaging Places.

To resource the website we need a Web Editor who can evaluate the resources and re-post them online. Much of the content currently available also needs editing and related work in order to ensure that they are succinct and more useful to the audience.

Developing a [Post 16 Knowledge Bank](#) can help to broaden the use of Engaging Places.

To date EP has been targeted at teachers and learners from Key stage 1 – 4, but there has always been a wealth of material and learning opportunities that can be used for the older age group

Open-City has done much work to promote careers in the built environment and work in partnership with schools and the university sector, through their Accelerate into University programme.

Engaging Places can support 16 – 19 education providers, including:

- School sixth forms
- Sixth form colleges
- Further education (FE) colleges
- Work based learning providers in the built environment sectors

We can do this by providing a platform for learning and debate that targets this group exclusively but ensures there is continuity. To do this we can share best practice, including the resources and thinking behind university access programmes like Accelerate into University and by widening the understanding of career pathways into areas such as Landscape Architecture or less well known jobs in the construction sector.

Open ended resources could be included to demonstrate how we use the built environment to teach the AS/A2 and the vocational curriculum, or how the local area can be used to design a curriculum a physical or social context. Funding would be needed to provide more resources for this age group.

Engaging Places can provide a platform for learning and debate targeting this group exclusively.

Distinguishing between a teacher and a student audience is harder with this age group, but is essential if Engaging Places is to retain educational authority in the field.

Typical User Journeys:

Case 1:

A newly qualified teacher is developing a teaching curriculum in mathematics and geography for Key stage two. She chooses to work with a group of teachers in their primary school to develop a project on Designing out Crime. They use the Engaging Places website to learn about the topic, collate materials and gather ideas for additional research using the local area.

The first part of the scheme of work is delivered using Open-City's My Green School resource on Designing Out Crime. The teachers are then inspired to take the pupils on a visit to explore the public realm in their local area and use the Venue area of Engaging Places to make contact with local professionals who can support this.

Case 2:

A landscape architect has been working with the local planning department on a project to expand an area of green space in the centre of a town. They are keen to work with several of the local secondary schools, but are unsure how to go about this. They are directed to Engaging Places by a teacher from one of the schools who has recently become interested in built environment education. It is clear to the landscape architect that some areas of the portal are targeted at professionals as well as teachers. They explore the Venue section, read a number of the articles and see a number of ways that the work they are doing can be used to inspire learning and debate in the value of good design and how young people can shape this. They devise a project, put the funding in place and then contact several local schools to invite them to participate.

Case 3:

An ARCHITECT... looking for information about volunteering in his/her local school, or information to support him/her to work with children, visits the portal. There they find there is a local school looking to take children on a tour of local building, and so they offer services to help. The architect uses template resources available on the portal and gives a walk around the building on the day focusing on how natural light can be used in buildings, then the children go back to school to do an exercise on how to redesign their school without lightbulbs. The architect comes back to evaluate and talk about all the design proposals. Some are entered into a national schools competition, promoted through the Engaging Places portal.

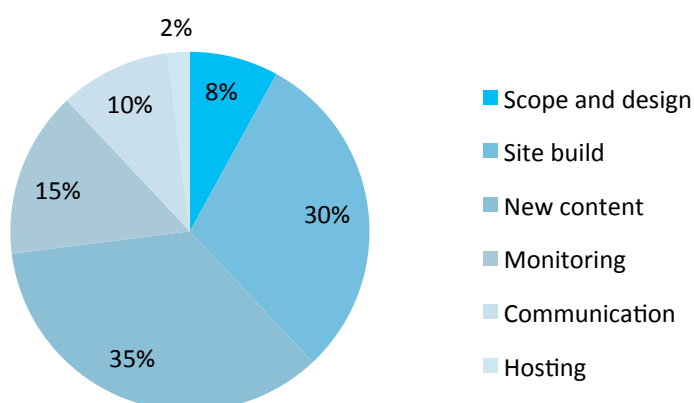
Appendix

Funding and costs:

How will the money be spent?

If £100,000 is raised (VAT exempt):

- + £8,000 will be spent on scoping and designing the site, including focus groups.
- + £30,000 will be spent on building the new website.
- + £35,000 will be spent on generating new content, lesson plans, videos.
- + £15,000 for Open-City to provide 2 days per month resource to monitor and manage for 3 years.
- + £10,000 will be spent on getting the new site known about and used.
- + £2,000 for costs, domain and webhosting for the next 5 years.
- + Remaining budget or underspent to be added to the new content allocation.



Who could our sponsors be and what could we offer them?

- + £60,000 – Corporate, named sponsors (1 to 5 companies depending on uptake).
- + £40,000 – Match funding from DCMS / DfE / TSB.

Potential corporate sponsors:

- + Construction industry
- + Architectural practice
- + Developer
- + Engineering firms
- + Publishers
- + Teaching supplies companies

Phases and deliverables:

Programme

April 2015 – approval of brief + Farrell Review and DCMS endorsement
June 2015 – supporter signatories for a manifesto, short fund-raiser film.
July 2015 – attract media (targeted) and support with social media.
July 2015 – run focus groups and define brief for website build.
August-October 2015 – commission new content
November 2015 – Testing and populating website
November 2015 – piloting new site with qualified teachers
December 2015 – final tweaks
December 2015 – launch of new site