



ARCHITECTURE
CENTRE
NETWORK

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INTRODUCTION

“Good design should not be considered as a luxury. Architecture centres play a pivotal role in supporting individuals and communities in shaping their local areas to form tightly knit, lasting and vibrant places. My role with the Architecture Centre Network is to support their work and place them in the heart of the new emerging urban agenda.”

Peter Bishop

Chair of Architecture Centre Network

Architecture Centre Network brings together over 20 independent organisations from England and Northern Ireland who offer a range of innovative activities across the architecture and built environment sector.

The Network acts as a catalyst, facilitating joined up and cross sector working, knowledge sharing and collaboration. The collective impact is significant and has grown year on year.

This guide outlines the role of the Network and the activities of its members. If you are a potential partner, stakeholder, or participant in the placemaking agenda and want to find out more or work with us, then please get in touch.

Bridget Sawyers, Chief Executive
Architecture Centre Network



ABOUT US

“The Architecture Centre Network is a vital force in bringing architecture to the public.”

Angela Brady
RIBA President

“Close and caring association with shared local environments is at the core of a civil society. The Architecture and Built Environment Centres across the Country in their work with schools, communities and the wider public play a very significant role in building interest, understanding and capacity in relating to and helping to shape local environments – strengthening and deepening this association. The Architecture Centre Network fulfils an invaluable role in reinforcing the work of the individual centres through the sharing of experience and the development of collaborative and collective activity.”

Colin Haylock
RTPI Senior Vice President

Architecture Centre Network is the national development and advocacy organisation for architecture and built environment centres.

Our remit is to improve public engagement with, and the quality of, architecture and the public realm.

We work through the Network members, as well as with a broad range of stakeholders, to promote this engagement. Architecture has a critical role to play in increasing our economic prosperity, enhancing our quality of life and showcases creativity.

We facilitate joined up and cross sector working, knowledge sharing and collaboration, nationally and internationally.

We are a national network of local organisations that are independent with local expertise and knowledge. We are the localism infrastructure; providing a vehicle for local authorities, communities and others to respond to the localism agenda.

“There is so much we can learn from one another, from the architecture networks being established across the globe, and the members that power this work. In starting our own efforts, few have been as supportive and knowledgeable as those involved with the Architecture Centre Network. It’s a vital resource, and one we look forward to coordinating with even more in the years to come. Architecture is an essential building block in every vibrant community. People need to know this.”

Michael Wood
Association of Architecture Organizations / Architecture + Design Education Network, USA

We:

Nurture innovation and good practice by facilitating knowledge sharing.

We achieve this by:

- promoting the Network’s activity and resources on the website;
 - through holding education events;
 - and sharing information, experience and best practice – avoiding the need to reinvent the wheel.
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Broker, develop and deliver projects with a wide range of partners and stakeholders including government.

Examples include:

- delivery of the London 2012 Open Weekend event in 2010 on behalf of the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE), Natural England and Heritage Alliance;
 - knowledge exchanges with the Netherlands and Japan;
 - collaborative working with STEMNET;
 - Engaging Places with CABE and English Heritage.
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Advocate for the unique role that the Network’s members can play in improving public engagement with, and the quality of, architecture and the public realm.

We achieve this with:

- our programme of public talks;
- participation on advisory and steering groups for a number of projects and initiatives;
- speaking at events and conferences nationally and internationally, responding to government consultation on behalf of the Network;
- and through meetings with national stakeholders and decision makers.

“It was a great opportunity to discuss how to progress built environment education with members of several architecture centres during their delegation to Japan organised by Architecture Centre Network. Through the conversations I realised that their passion to develop built environment education initiatives have been constantly supported by the ACN’s activities.

By studying these activities, I just finalised a paper mentioning how it is important to establish a support organisation, such as ACN, for active local groups to network, to get updated policy information and financial support from plural central government agencies, and to develop their knowledge through wide and international resources. ACN works as a platform for local not for profit organisations to maintain and to grow their projects. And what works about architecture centres is that they enable local people to learn about the built environment and to think about the built environment as their own issue.”

Dr Aya Sakai

Department of Architecture and City Planning, Hokkaido University, Japan

Create resources and events to enable the Network to promote and maintain excellence.

Recent examples include:

- the creation of bespoke resources and fact sheets for the website and membership;
 - organisation of national and international events, such as conferences and our FUTUREScape symposia, to showcase the Network’s members work;
 - and participation in events such as London Festival of Architecture, 100% Design and The Big Bang.
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Promote cross sector working and engage with a wide range of individuals and organisations.

We achieve this by:

- facilitating core members and partner organisations in submitting collaborative funding applications;
 - creation of advocacy documents to encourage collaboration with members;
 - our Affiliated Membership and Corporate Partnership schemes (launched in September 2011).
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ABOUT THE NETWORK CORE MEMBERS

Architecture and built environment centres help people make better places.

They achieve this through:

- Participation and consultation
- Advocacy and design support
- Learning and skills development

The Network's core members collaborate and share best practice, knowledge and resources to maximise their reach and effectiveness, including with international networks and partners.

With a collective expert staff of 115+, supported by 450+ volunteers and 200+ built environment professionals, the centres have significant impact. Their built environment education work is recognised as world leading; their design support services are esteemed for their expertise; and their exhibitions, debates and events have received national and international acclaim.

Our members work with, and for, a wide range of national and regional agencies and practitioners including: local authorities, planners, regeneration companies, communities, architects and built environment professionals, schools, designers, developers, registered social landlords, artists, and the general public.

SERVICES

Each member of the network operates independently, with distinctive areas of focus, expertise, and responses to local need. Collectively, services include:

- Advocacy and advice
- Artists' projects
- Awards
- Community engagement programmes
- Contributions to local policy and strategy
- Critical friend and client advisor
- Design competitions
- Design enabling services
- Design review services
- Exhibitions
- Education programmes (both formal and informal)
- Housing - related events, programmes and services
- International projects
- Lectures and debates
- Lifelong learning
- Neighbourhood design support
- Projects promoting local distinctiveness and sustainability
- Public events, exhibitions and demonstration projects
- Public realm / public art advisory services
- Publications and resources
- Research and benchmarking
- Seminars and workshops
- Study tours and delegations
- Training for officers, members, registered social landlords (RSLs) and built environment professionals



PARTICIPATION AND CONSULTATION

“Architecture is pretty important to us all. This being the case, shouldn't we, the people who use and are affected by the architecture and spaces around us have the chance to be a bit more involved with it? When was the last time you were consulted on proposals for some new bit of planning or development in your area? Shouldn't there be some way of engaging and having a say? Well luckily for us, Bristol has the Architecture Centre, who try to do just that for us ... Phew, thank goodness someone is fighting our corner.”

Gustave Savy,
Suit Yourself Magazine

Facilitating engagement with architecture and the built environment for everyone, from a creative and independent perspective.

The Network members ensure that all sectors of the community have a voice, particularly young and older people, within the placemaking agenda. Most of the centres are involved with – and leading in – sustained youth and community engagement in architecture, urban design and public space.

A key role of our members is to make architecture accessible to the broadest range of people through creative and critical engagement.

Each of our members delivers talks, debates and workshops, and host exhibitions, often about their local areas and local distinctiveness. They also work to mediate between developers and the community, facilitating consultation events, assisting in the development of local visioning exercises and creating collaborative interventions.

The Network and its members play a key role in professional development and advocacy of art in the public realm, in relation to the quality urban design and placemaking agendas.

ADVOCACY AND DESIGN SUPPORT

“Getting the design right for Fairmile hospital was so important, but was proving difficult to achieve. We had looked at so many options and quite rightly no one wanted to compromise any aspect of the development. The design review process was incredibly useful and allowed us to find a common solution that will achieve everyone's goals.”

Judith Smallman
Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) Project Manager, following design review by Kent Architecture Centre's South East Design Panel

Making the case for, and providing specialist advice to assist with, the delivery of architecture and design of the highest quality.

Our members deliver a wide range of events to advocate on the value of good design, from screening of films, curating exhibitions, delivering debates and lectures to producing a wide range of publications, including maps, guides, podcasts and online image banks and resources.

The Network's core members deliver expert advice on design and placemaking through design support, facilitated visits and tours, and design competitions. They run design review and enabling services to advise and help and support clients to embed design quality throughout the planning and development process.

With local authorities being required in the Localism Bill to have local design review arrangements in place to provide assessment and support to ensure high standards of design; and proposals which can demonstrate good engagement with the community in developing the design of a new development being looked on more favourably, the availability of independent and informed advice at an early stage of the design process has never been more important. This is what centres can provide.

Five of the Design Council/CABE affiliated panels are run by our members. Others centres partner or support the affiliated panels or their own or other sub-regional or local panels. The Network's core members are committed to sharing their learning for others to benefit, and do this through research projects, case studies, publications, presentations and training events.

LEARNING AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

“Working with Architecture Centre Network is always a pleasure - your expertise, network and drive is admirable.”

Annette ter Haar,
Education Coordinator,
Netherlands Architecture
Institute

Developing greater understanding of architecture, design and the built environment for children and young people, communities and professionals. The Network's core members' built environment education work is world leading, operating in and out of formal education.

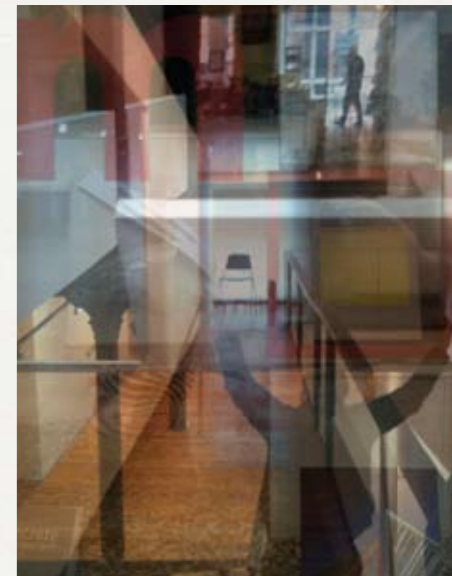
The Network's core members arrange public tours and student visits to buildings, hold debates, produce resources for teachers, and deliver training to a range of organisations including community groups, local authority officers and members, universities, RSLs and built environment professionals.

Visual literacy and an understanding of design quality are vital in ensuring authentic public engagement with developing healthy sustainable futures for our towns, cities and communities. See the Learning section of our website for free resources produced by the centres.

Youth work includes activity in and out of school, using the school buildings, grounds and local environment; after-school, weekend and summer events and courses; career development; and delivers across the National Curriculum.

A busy year round programme of training is punctuated by summer schools for young people and professionals; study visits; accredited professional development and themed programmes of learning and debate around such issues as sustainability, placemaking, design and heritage; training Spaceshaper and Spaceshaper 9-14 practitioners; Building for Life assessors and Manual for Streets users.

International partners in education and learning at present come from the USA, Japan, Germany, Italy, Spain, Ireland, Serbia and the Netherlands.



Top: CUBE © osa
Bottom: Shape East Community Consultation

Top: Shape East Councillor Training Day
Bottom: Kent Architecture Centre:
Spaceshaper 9-14 Facilitator Training

IMPACT

In 2010/11 the centres:

Design reviewed
294 schemes

Trained **2,767** built
environment
professionals

Delivered **164** training
days

Facilitated **3** artist's
residencies

Managed **61** new
artist's commissions

Involved **142** artists

Provided **142** policy and
advice sessions

Delivered **398** education
events to over **10,469**
students

Delivered **274** informal
education and
participatory sessions

Facilitated school
visits to **101** buildings

Organised **72**
exhibitions with an
audience of over
190,228

Undertook **27** research
projects

Managed **28**
competitions

Organised **76** exhibitions
with an audience of
191,728

Produced **44**
publications and **49**
online publications /
resources

Screened **35** films to
an audience of **5,530 +**
thousands in Bradford

Broadcast **1** event, the
Stirling Prize, seen by
over **500,000** people

Organised **158** tours

Led **65** teacher
training / INSET days

Organised **148**
lectures, plus **18**
conferences to a total
audience of **9,252**

Delivered **70** community
events for **8,428** people

Attracted over **250,000**
visitors to **750** of
London's exemplary
buildings during the
Open House weekend





Beam: Interconnections, Halifax,
Image © Gillian Dyson

CONTACT

Architecture Centre Network
www.architecturecentre.net

Core Members:

Arc

www.arc-online.co.uk

Arc promotes and fosters quality in architecture and public space in the Humber region.

The Architecture Centre, Bristol

www.architecturecentre.co.uk

The Architecture Centre's principal aims are to demonstrate the value of good design and, by increasing people's awareness and enjoyment of their built environment, to stimulate the demand for design excellence.

The Architecture Centre Devon and Cornwall

www.acdandc.org.uk

Architecture Centre Devon and Cornwall aims to raise public awareness of design issues, and support local authorities, communities and practitioners in the creation of high quality design.

The Architecture Foundation

www.architecturefoundation.org.uk

The Architecture Foundation is a non-profit agency for contemporary architecture, urbanism and culture. They cultivate new talent and new ideas. Through their diverse programmes they facilitate international and interdisciplinary exchange, stimulate critical engagement amongst professionals, policy makers and a broad public, and shape the quality of the built environment. They are independent, agile, inclusive and influential. Central to their activities is the belief that architecture enriches lives.

Beam

www.beam.uk.net

Beam is a company dedicated to the imaginative understanding and improvement of the public realm — our urban and rural streets, buildings, neighbourhoods and public spaces.

The Building Exploratory

www.buildingexploratory.org.uk

The Building Exploratory, based in Hackney, East London helps people discover the secrets of their local area and gain a better understanding of the buildings and spaces that surround them. The Building Exploratory runs an extensive education programme, leads innovative learning projects and facilitates the engagement of local residents with changes taking place in the public realm.

CUBE

www.cube.org.uk

CUBE, The Centre for the Urban Built Environment, is dedicated to broadcasting the ideas and issues that lie behind the buildings, spaces and environments that make up the built environment in the North West.

Concourse

www.concourse.org.uk

Concourse is the Leeds Centre for art, architecture, construction, landscape, planning and urban design.

Fundamental Architectural Inclusion

www.fundamental.uk.net

Fundamental seeks new ways for people to genuinely participate in the planning and development process of regeneration in their neighbourhoods.

Kent Architecture Centre

www.architecturecentre.org

Kent Architecture Centre works with design professionals, decision-makers and the wider community to promote the value of good architecture and urban design.

[Core members continued](#)

MADE

www.made.org.uk

MADE supports and promotes excellence in place-making in the West Midlands, bringing architecture, public space and urban design together to make better places for people.

Northern Architecture

www.northernarchitecture.com

Northern Architecture champions high quality design and focuses on raising aspirations for good design among professionals and the public.

Open-City

www.open-city.org.uk

Open-City encourages Londoners to experience, explore and understand architecture, design and the built environment. Over the last 20 years, the organisation has grown from showcasing the capital's architecture annually to research, training, advice and campaigns that impact on the whole city.

Opun

www.opun.co.uk

Opun works with decision makers, design, planning and regeneration professional and communities to encourage investment in good design in the East Midlands.

PLACE

www.place.uk.net

The mission of PLACE is to positively influence the creating and sustaining of excellent places and buildings, making Northern Ireland an environment of exceptional quality for all.

Places Matter!

www.placesmatter.co.uk

Places Matter! is devoted to generating a strong sense of place in living, working and learning environments throughout the North West. Places Matter! is delivering with partner organisations including RIBA North West, North West Development Agency (NWDA), DC CABE and English Heritage.

The Solent Centre for Architecture + Design

www.solentcentre.org.uk

Solent Centre for Architecture + Design (SCA+D) works in the Solent area (Hampshire and the Isle of Wight) and also the bordering areas of Dorset, West Sussex, Surrey and the Thames Valley. It aims to promote high quality design in the built environment, with an emphasis on achieving environmental and social sustainability.

Shape East

www.shape-east.org.uk

Shape East works with communities, schools and professionals to increase understanding of the importance of good planning, urban design, architecture and construction, and to encourage people to participate in the planning process.

TransForm Places

www.transformplaces.com

TransForm Places promotes good design and aims to inspire, encourage and help all those involved in development and growth in Milton Keynes and the South Midlands.

Urban Vision North Staffordshire

www.uvns.org

Urban Vision North Staffordshire aims to inspire the people of North Staffordshire to demand high quality architecture and urban design, and make it a priority in all major regeneration schemes in the region.



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