

INTRODUCTION

Following the success of the architecture centre's 'Model Architecture' schools' project for Architecture Week 2002, it was decided that this experience should be reinvested in a different, but similar project for Architecture Week 2003. The original intention was to run a series of linked projects right across the south east region, but pressures of time meant that a single pilot version was carried out in Medway, with a view to testing the ideas before rolling out a more wide-ranging programme.

The culmination of the 'FUTURE-HOUSE' project saw the installation of a colourful large-scale model 'township' in a shopping centre in Chatham created by about 60 primary school pupils with help from a local artist.



PROJECT AIMS

The main aim of the project was to stimulate pupils' interest in buildings and architecture, encouraging them to consider 'the way they live' in terms of their housing, and to think about what houses might be like in the future.

The project provided an opportunity for pupils to carry out 3D artwork, guided by a professional artist. The project was designed to be 'fun' for the pupils, whilst the underlying aim was the more serious one of encouraging young people to take an active interest in their surroundings.



PROJECT REVIEW

Due to the very tight timescale, 5 Primary Schools in Medway, each of whom had applied to take part in the previous year's project, and were therefore known to be interested in this type of activity, were invited to apply to take part in the project which would involve a year 5/6 class working with a local artist and architect to produce a set of model houses. The pupils would then, on a day in Architecture Week, take their model houses to a public venue, the covered Pentagon Shopping Centre in Chatham, where they would work with the artist and architect to create a model 'village', which would then be on display to the public for the remainder of Architecture Week.

Amanda Randall, a Medway-based artist with education experience/interest, who had participated in the previous year's project was invited to take part in the project. Three of the five schools invited responded to the invitation to participate, but one had to drop out due to staff illness. The two schools who carried out the project were English Martyrs' RCP School in Rochester, and Horsted Junior School from Chatham.

An introductory session for the pupils, led by the architecture centre, was held at each of the schools, and this aimed to get the pupils thinking about both what houses of the future might look like and the range of technologies that will need to be taken into account in their

design. An updated version of the powerpoint presentation devised for the previous year's project was shown to the pupils, and it provoked plenty of response and discussion.



The creation of the model houses took place in school during a period of about two weeks prior to Architecture Week, with input from the artist over two sessions. A further session with the architecture centre's Architect in Education was held in each school to plan the layout of the model 'village' or 'estate', so that when the pupils arrived at the Pentagon Centre, they would be able to create their layout in a short period of time.



A poster, briefly describing the project, was designed to be displayed at the Pentagon Centre with the model 'village' during Architecture Week.

The culmination of the project, the assembling of the model 'village', was made even more exciting as a result of the BBC filming and interviewing pupils about the project. Unfortunately the item didn't make it onto the news programme, but it is hoped that the architecture centre and the schools will be able to obtain copies of the film for their own use.



EVALUATION

Feedback from key participants, artist, teachers and pupils, suggests the project went very well. Teachers commented that pupils had responded particularly enthusiastically to tasks set, at a time of year when they are not easy to motivate. Pupils were absorbed in the model-making activity, enjoying the fact that their models were put on display in a public place. It would have been interesting to get feedback from people who saw the models on display. Talking to pupils it was apparent that they had absorbed the underlying messages, delivered in the initial presentations and reinforced by the artist, about sustainable design.

It is considered that the project could readily be replicated in other locations, and a Project Pack will be devised for distribution. The key requirements would be artist(s) and architect(s) to work with groups of pupils, and a suitable public venue where the model 'village' could be created and then left on display.

