

# The Architecture Centre, Bristol Annual Review April 09–March 10



The Architecture Centre



## Championing better buildings and places

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.

We are a founding member of the Architecture Centre Network which represents the growing number of architecture centres in the UK, and works with architecture and built environment centres internationally.

The Architecture Centre achieves its goals through a public programme of exhibitions and events, lectures, conferences, visits to inspiring buildings, and critical debate. Our Learning programme provides engaging built environment education and resources for children, young people and teachers.

We promote the value of good design, empower communities to be engaged in local decision making, and we work with built environment professionals, local authority officers and councillors to achieve design excellence.

### Aspiration + Inspiration

The Architecture Centre looks to the very best that contemporary architecture has to offer as its inspiration. We want to share our passion for the possibilities of great building: we champion better buildings and places for everyone.

### Sustainability + Integrity

A cornerstone of The Architecture Centre's mission is to support sustainable approaches to architecture and design. It sits at the core of our work and informs all we do from programmes to procurement, combined with an uncompromising commitment to design quality.

### Empowerment + Involvement

We wish to see architecture and design de-mystified, so that everyone feels they have the knowledge and confidence to demand better buildings. We work with communities and schools, promoting active citizenship, to make architecture accessible to all.

### Information + Interpretation

We act as a conduit between the public and built environment professionals, giving an all-too-rare insight into how buildings are planned, designed and developed. Attracting a broad audience, we communicate complex or technical issues in straightforward and engaging ways.

### Influence + Advocacy

The Architecture Centre acts as a champion for design excellence with those who make and influence policy, provides support to design champions, and promotes the use of local and regional design review.



### The value of good design

The Architecture Centre has worked hard this last year to maintain a rich and diverse programme, reflecting our mission and core values despite the challenging economic climate. We strongly believe that great architecture and a well designed public realm remain important and significant to our social, economic and cultural well-being.

Now in our fourteenth year, we remain positive in our outlook and approach, and determined to retain the skills, expertise and experience built up over those years. We have recently recruited several new trustees to strengthen our dedicated Board, adding new skills for the future.

This year our exhibitions and events have been well attended, both at the Centre and beyond, and through all of our programmes we are reaching a growing and diverse audience. While we are always looking to improve our effectiveness, we feel that we are successfully raising awareness of the value of good design and the expectation of its achievement.

As always we rely on working with others to increase our capacity and reach, and this year is no exception. In addition to our major funders Arts Council England, CABE and Creating Excellence we have worked with a number of other partners and funders to achieve our aims. The Centre is, as ever, grateful for the enthusiasm and support of the architecture and design community in Bristol, Bath and beyond and we continue to work with and gain support from the Architecture Centre Network and its members throughout the country.

We have had a busy and varied year and we hope you enjoy this brief review which highlights some of our activities. Further details can be found on our newly developed website [www.architecturecentre.co.uk](http://www.architecturecentre.co.uk)

David Mellor, Chair of Board of Trustees  
Gillian Fearnough, Director

## The Architecture Centre

Based on Bristol's Harbourside, The Architecture Centre complements the city's outstanding arts, cultural and heritage attractions that include Arnolfini, Watershed and Spike Island, as well as the forthcoming City of Bristol Museum at M Shed.

The Architecture Centre's Harbourside building contains our gallery spaces and shop which are open six days a week to the public, offering free exhibitions, information and resources.

In addition we have a small, well equipped meeting room which is used for our own events and is also available for hire. The space is ideal for meetings, workshops and CPD sessions.

The Centre's shop is highly regarded, stocking a wide range of well designed gifts, cards and jewellery, as well as books on architecture, landscape, urban design, sustainable building and renovation techniques.

We aim to source our products from ethically responsible companies that follow sustainable practice. From the stock in our shop to catering suppliers, we are moving towards local producers who work in a sustainable way, while retaining an emphasis on good design.

All profits from the shop support The Architecture Centre's work.

'Brilliant exhibition and great building. Thanks Architecture Centre - keep going!' *Visitor comment*



Neville Gabie, *A weight of stone carried from China for you*

## Aspiration + Inspiration

### Engaging Places

The Architecture Centre worked with students from Oakhill Pupil Referral Unit on an *Engaging Places* project to help raise aspirations about future careers. The students gained new skills, knowledge and confidence as they worked on a design project to redevelop a derelict piece of land on the Bristol Harbourside. They took part in workshops and visits, and met professionals from the built environment industry before creating their own impressive models.



### O.space

Weymouth in Dorset will host the sailing events of the 2012 Olympics. Using the regeneration potential this brings to Weymouth as a context, The Architecture Centre ran an exciting design challenge event with students from Budmouth Technology College. Working with architecture and planning professionals, the students were inspired to redevelop the Esplanade area. They surveyed the current site, explored 'what makes a good public space' and developed exciting sea-front design schemes that reflected the needs of residents and tourists.



### The Promised Land

Artist Neville Gabie presented work from his three year residency during the construction of Bristol's Cabot Circus shopping centre. Alongside work produced during the residency, the exhibition premiered *The Promised Land* which quietly brought into question a reliance on the culture of shopping as the catalyst for urban regeneration. Associated events included urban walks and a debate at the Pierian Centre with Neville Gabie, contemporary archaeologist James Dixon, and Louis Rice, urban designer and lecturer at UWE. The debate offered an opportunity to reflect on the impact of Cabot Circus on Bristol and its surrounding communities.

## Sustainability + Integrity

### Spring Green

In 2010 our Spring Green sustainability programme focused on water, encouraging debate around this crucial aspect of green infrastructure. Through an informative season of exhibitions, events and lectures we explored this diverse subject, including flood risk management and sustainable urban drainage systems. Our audience also enjoyed a guided boat trip around Bristol's Floating Harbour learning about its bridges. This rich programme highlighted the importance of water in our urban environment, and the key role it plays in shaping our understanding of our city and of climate change.



### Sustainable schools

Our education programme continues to promote the importance of environmental sustainability in the design of new school buildings. The Centre hosted a series of engaging talks by respected architects working on sustainable new school buildings, in the region and beyond. The talks featured St Luke's Primary School by Architype, Rednock Secondary School by Cube Design and Dartington Primary School by White Design. Case studies and film resources of these school projects are available on our website. The Centre will continue its sustainable schools work during 2010/11, developing resources, events, visits and working with school communities.



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## Empowerment + Involvement

### Spaceshaper 9-14

Spaceshaper 9-14 is a workshop based toolkit developed for involving young people in improving their local spaces. It follows the success of the original Spaceshaper as a practical toolkit to measure the quality of a public space, before investing time and money in improvements. Young people are engaged in hands-on activities and facilitated discussion, gathering useful data, which directly contributes towards improving a space as part of a wider consultation process.

Both Spaceshaper programmes are now used nationally and internationally as a good practice method in community consultation on the development of public spaces. The Architecture Centre has worked with project partners CABE Space, beam and Kent Architecture Centre to train over 150 facilitators, and is supporting young people to help deliver the workshops as co-facilitators. See more at: [www.cabe.org.uk/spaceshaper-9-14](http://www.cabe.org.uk/spaceshaper-9-14)

**'Working with the Architecture Centre has given the school a unique opportunity to work with an expert and be part of the development of an exciting and empowering tool for young people to take charge of their spaces and make real changes for themselves.'**  
*Elise Hurcombe, Real Ideas Organisation*

### Guided urban walks

Accompanying the Streetwise campaign, a series of walks around Bristol in the summer of 2009 considered different aspects of the city's streets, including street trees, walkability, urban design and history. The walks were conducted by architects, artists, landscape architects and other specialists, and related to topics such as the impact of Cabot Circus, the history of Castle Park, and walking discussions on the uses of green space. The success of these events has prompted The Architecture Centre to plan further tours and walks.

### Debating Bristol

This year several of our exhibitions explored ideas for the redevelopment of three areas of Bristol – Redcliffe, Easton and the Castle Park area. Post graduate architecture students from Bath University, Sheffield University and UWE respectively, worked on these projects, consulted local communities and documented their research. The work was then re-presented for a public audience at The Architecture Centre where we continued the discussion about the future of these hotly contested areas of the city.

## Information + Interpretation

An important part of our programme involves inviting world-class built environment experts to Bristol to speak about innovative spaces and places. Each year we collaborate with the Bristol and Bath Society of Architects to present the Stirling Prize lecture. In 2009 Mike Keys, of Feilden Clegg Bradley Studios, spoke about the winning project Accordia, a housing development in Cambridge.



Accordia

Our second joint annual lecture with ArchaosUWE was given by architect Eric Parry who showed work to date on the exciting extension to the Holburne Museum in Bath. Other speakers this year included Ken Yeang of Llewelyn Davies Yeang, Wulf Daseking, Director of City Planning at Freiburg in Germany, and Charles Kneivitt, Director of RIBA Trust.



Holburne Museum

The Architecture Centre is dedicated to providing information to a wide and varied audience and we extend our impact by producing resources to support our activities. In November 2009 we launched a brand new website: [www.architecturecentre.co.uk](http://www.architecturecentre.co.uk) which not only gives details of our programme of exhibitions and events, but also provides a variety of fact sheets, case studies and links to related external resources. Wherever possible we film our talks and events, making them available as webcasts on our blip.tv channel: [www.architecturecentre.blip.tv](http://www.architecturecentre.blip.tv)

## Influence + Advocacy

### Building Health: Planning and designing for health and happiness

In January 2010 this major conference, hosted by the newly launched Institute for Sustainability, Health and Environment at UWE, brought together built environment and public health professionals, academics and policy-makers to share knowledge, evidence and inspirational stories of success. Seven masterclasses led by experienced speakers and chairs demonstrated the role that planning, design and good maintenance can play in tackling public health challenges such as obesity, health inequalities and concerns around mental health and well-being.

### Design Leadership

This professional development programme supports local authorities, councillors, officers and management teams – especially those faced with major growth or development programmes. It identifies the barriers and challenges to success and provides training and development in design action.

Through workshops, case studies and inspiring speakers we demonstrate the social, health and economic benefits of good design. This year our work with local authorities has covered residential design quality, placemaking, sustainable masterplanning, and investing in design quality, with speakers including Roger Evans, Tom Russell, Sue McGlynn and Paul Murrain.

Design Leadership is part of our Design Action programme, and is supported by Creating Excellence.

### Construction and Built Environment Diploma (CBED) support

The Centre champions learning about architecture and design, planning, and sustainability, through the delivery of CBED for 14-19 years olds. We help to embed architecture within this new national qualification for schools and colleges through our work on local curriculum steering groups, resource development and training for teachers, brokering partnerships with built environment industry professionals, and delivering workshops and visits for students.

**'The Architecture Centre continues to inspire students and teachers within the Kingswood Partnership and adds considerable value to our employer engagement programme.'**

*Ronnie Ward, Business Links Manager, The Kingswood Partnership*

## General information

### Staff

Gillian Fearnough, Director  
Amy Harrison, Education Manager  
Christine Davis, Regional Programme Manager  
Lottie Storey, Programme & Marketing Manager  
Jodie Marks, Programme Co-ordinator  
Alice Murdoch, Regional Programme Co-ordinator  
Van Hill-Smith, Retail Buyer  
Vickie Whitehead, Centre Administrator  
Jean Dyte, Catering Assistant  
Weekend staff: Holly Maries, Shaun Oaten, Kevin Woodward

### Board members

David Mellor (Chair)  
Ken Brown (Vice-chair)  
Keith Hallett (Secretary)  
Chris Askew  
Alastair Brook  
Philip Burbidge  
Colin Fudge  
Rob Gregory

### Patrons

Sherban Cantacuzino  
Robert Emmerson  
Anthony Hunt  
Michael Manser  
Jane Priestman OBE  
Lord Rogers  
Sir Colin Stansfield Smith

Visit [www.architecturecentre.co.uk](http://www.architecturecentre.co.uk) for further information about The Architecture Centre. The Centre produces a monthly email newsletter – subscribe online via the website.



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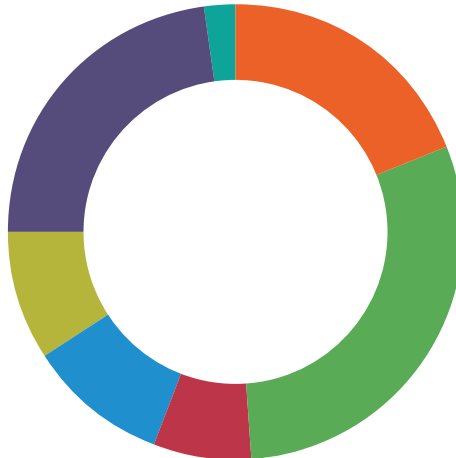
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## Financial information

### 2009-2010

The Architecture Centre is a registered charity and a company limited by shares. Our work is primarily grant aided – The Architecture Centre receives core funding from Arts Council England and major project funding from CABE and Creating Excellence. Income is also generated by consultancy, training, shop and ticket sales, meeting room hire, membership and sponsorship.



### Income: £251,717

- CABE: 19%
- Arts Council England: 30%
- Creating Excellence: 7%
- Project grants: 10%
- Project income: 9%
- Earned income: 23%
- Membership, sponsorship, donations: 2%

This year we have worked with: ArchaosUWE, Arnolfini, Arup, Bristol and Bath Society of Architects, Bristol City Council, Bristol Festival of Ideas, Budmouth Technology College, CABE Space, City of Bristol College, Department of Health South West, Engaging Places, Groundwork South West, InSite Arts, Institution of Civil Engineers, Kingswood Partnership, Oakhill Short Stay School, Pierian Centre, Real Ideas Organisation, RIBA Building Futures, RIBA South West, University of Bath, University of Bristol, University of the West of England.

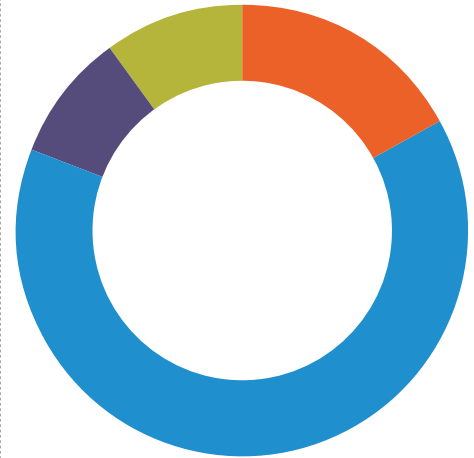
We have worked extensively this year with architecture centres:

Architecture Centre Devon and Cornwall, beam, and Kent Architecture Centre.

This annual report is kindly sponsored by:



We rely on Friends and Corporate Members to give their continuing support and goodwill. Membership and sponsorship income supports the Centre's role as an advocate of excellent design, and its work to develop public awareness and understanding of the built environment. For more information visit our website.



### Expenditure: £230,690

- Overheads: 17%
- Staff: 64%
- Marketing and web site: 9%
- Project costs: 10%

The Architecture Centre is supported by Arts Council England, the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE), and Creating Excellence.



The Architecture Centre is a founding member of the Architecture Centre Network which coordinates and supports 23 centres across the country.

ARCHITECTURE  
CENTRE  
NETWORK