The Project Office was formed as an architectural consultancy within the University of Portsmouth School of Architecture and aims to provide knowledge transfer, consultancy and research opportunities for full and part-time staff and students. It differs from a ‘normal’ private architectural consultancy in the broadness of its remit and the research and knowledge transfer context that a University provides. This newsletter will update you on the type of projects we are working on and who we are working with.

To supplement the services on offer, the Project Office can turn to staff members and students within the School of Architecture, external architectural practices and other disciplines and support facilities from outside the University.

The city of Portsmouth also presents us with opportunities to work on significant regeneration projects. In this way, the Project Office can continue to champion the University of Portsmouth’s goal to support society through learning and research.

News

Space for city vision

Completed in May 2008 for City Vision Networks, City Vision Centre Southampton is the first permanent exhibition space for architecture outside London and is located in Southampton City Art Gallery.

The exhibition includes a virtual model of Southampton and the largest machined physical model in the UK. The latter was produced on a specialist Computer Numerical Control (CNC) milling machine by the University of Portsmouth’s School of Architecture. The models are being used as a design and planning tool, allowing the public to see building development proposals and help shape the future of the city.

The Project Office is building relationships with other UK cities with the ambition to create additional City Vision Centres across the country.

Early success for the Project Office

The Project Office at the University of Portsmouth has achieved considerable success since its inception in November 2008. It has adopted several projects being worked on in the University’s School of Architecture and is working with the University’s Estates Department on a number of significant building design projects. The practice, which chartered architect Martin Andrews coordinates, is also in the process of undertaking architectural work with external clients.

The Project Office has capitalised on its unique geographical and cultural position. It has already started to bring together groups of people – academic staff, students, design and construction professionals, and community groups - in the pursuit of architectural and academic excellence.

RIBA Chartered Practice status

The Project Office is currently implementing a quality management system throughout the practice. When this exercise has been completed at the end of 2009, the Project Office will apply for Chartered Practice status with the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA). By becoming a Chartered Practice, the Project Office will benefit from the support of the Institute and will be published each year in the RIBA Directory of Practices.
In October 2008, eight postgraduate students from the Diploma in Architecture course at the University of Portsmouth formed a group to combine their design dissertation research and thesis projects. Their focus is upon the Isle of Wight Eco Island initiative, which aims to turn the Isle of Wight into the ultimate eco island, with strong communities and the lowest carbon footprint in England by 2020.

The students have made a significant contribution toward the initiative by producing an island master plan entitled ‘One Island’, in the form of a video presentation aiming to explain the extent of change required to achieve the Eco Island objectives. The students are also preparing a vision statement for the Medina Valley area with the Newport Planning Department.

The Project Office is in discussion with Newport Council with a view to providing a detailed master plan for the Medina Valley based upon the visionary ideas of the students.

**New projects**

New wing to bring transparency and unity

The Project Office was appointed to prepare the outline client brief for the development of a new west wing for the existing Eldon Building, the home of the Faculty of Creative and Cultural Industries (CCI) at the University of Portsmouth.

There are two significant aims for this project. The first is for the Eldon Building to form the heart of a cluster of creative and entrepreneurial spaces in Portsmouth, with the enlarged building forming a dynamic ‘hub’. The new west wing of the Eldon Building will have two broad uses: as exhibition space and as social and reflective areas for viewers to engage with the exhibited work, thereby enhancing educational value.

The second aim relates to the unique geographical positioning of CCI within Portsmouth. The Eldon Building has the potential to become a significant landmark in a complex and dense urban fabric. It is firmly rooted in its local community, as well as being adjacent to a four-lane carriageway acting as an artery for traffic and pedestrians directly into the city. The mission is for it to be used to guide, inform and entertain local residents, visitors and students.

This project has the potential to strengthen existing relationships and foster new associations within the University, but also between the University and the local community. The developed Eldon building will become a gallery, showing on the outside what is happening within the Faculty of CCI, allowing for a greater sense of transparency, encouraging interaction and breaking down established barriers.

The Project Office submitted the outline client brief to the Faculty in January 2009. The document is currently under review and a decision regarding the project programme and consultant appointment will be made shortly. Watch this space!

On the path to health and well-being

Fifty postgraduate students from the Portsmouth School of Architecture have been producing innovative ideas for the £1.5 million redevelopment of St Francis Church in Leigh Park, Havant. Their brief from Portsmouth Diocese was to develop the site to create open, welcoming and attractive facilities that contribute to health and well-being in the community.

After exploring the buildings and churchyard, the students took part in a ‘charrette’, an intensive design workshop in teams working against the clock. The students then presented their proposals to the vicar of Leigh Park and Warren Park, and a panel of parishioners and community development experts.

Their ideas included a community café, multi-function studios and a ramp to open up access to existing basement rooms. The project will be taken forward through the next design stages by the Project Office. The involvement of the Project Office is being jointly funded by South East Coastal Communities (SECC) and the University of Portsmouth.

**To find out how the Project Office can help you, please contact Martin Andrews using the contact details below.**

**Project Office**

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