

14 September 2011

Open-City awarded Design Council CABE grants to develop plans for communities in Islington and Barking

Open-City, London's leading architecture and advocacy not-for-profit organisation, has been awarded grants by the Design Council/ Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE) to help two local communities shape the future of their built environment.

Following successful bids to the Design Council CABE's Neighbourhood Projects and Design Review Small Grants Programmes, Open City will be providing design expertise and support to two different London estates.

Andover Estate, Islington – Open-City has been awarded £7,000 to develop options for 'underused spaces' within this large estate – converting underused, problem areas into places that make a positive contribution to the quality of life and reputation of the estate.

By supporting the Finsbury Park Community Hub and other residents in negotiations with Islington Council and Homes for Islington, Open City will be helping all local stakeholders to move towards a consensus on how the estate should best utilise such areas.

Richard Schunemann, Chair of the Andover Tenants and Residents Association, said:

"This is a brilliant opportunity for the community on the Andover Estate to really get involved in the design process and take the lead in the development of affordable homes on our estate."

Additionally, in conjunction with the **London Borough of Barking and Dagenham**, Open-City has been awarded £6,000 to develop its comprehensive residents' design review process, which will enable it to consider additional projects, and develop a greater community input to major schemes in the Borough.

The award will enable The Barking and Dagenham Residents Design Forum (RUDF), which has been developed and trained by Open-City in conjunction with the Council's planning team, to engage with the local community and consider alternative development options, under the scrutiny of an inclusive and transparent design review.

The Design Council CABE grants represent a positive endorsement of Open-City's Enabling programme, launched in June 2011, to build on the organisation's experience and expertise of engagement with council members and communities over the last decade, as well as its ability to provide independent and impartial advice.

Victoria Thornton, Founding Director of Open-City, said:

"These grants called for the 'on the ground' experience of working with communities that has been the very basis of Open-City's long-standing work with the London boroughs to increase awareness of the impact and importance of design.

This approach to community engagement has already been very successful in Barking and Dagenham, and provides a viable model for all councils to ensure local people play an integral role in the changes taking place around them.”

For more information on Open City’s Enabling programme, please visit: www.open-city.org.uk/advocacy.

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Notes to Editors

About Open City

Open-City is an independent, not-for-profit organisation that aims to be at the centre of creating better places. It champions excellence in design quality and advocates for an inclusive and informed approach to the development of London.

With a basis of experience, expertise and research built up over a decade and a half, Open-City encourages dialogue, debate and learning about how architecture and public space affects our daily lives, enabling people with the understanding and ability to make informed decisions that really influence change in the built environment.

Open-City is the only organisation that actively involves such a variety of stakeholders across London, connecting up those that plan, design and build the city to those that live and work in the city, both through their own action research and in their advocacy, education and engagement programmes.

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