

17 February 2011

Open-City appoints new Heads of Advocacy and Enabling

Open-City, the leading architecture and advocacy organisation, has appointed Richard Crutchley and Dominic O'Neill to take forward the development of its advocacy and enabling initiatives.

As joint Heads of Advocacy and Enabling, Richard and Dominic will share responsibility for the strategic direction and delivery of Open-City's advocacy programme, which promotes a better built environment and design quality through a range of training partnerships with communities and councillors.

The joint appointment will bring significant benefits to the newly created role within Open-City's advocacy department, whose independent design advice and exemplar training programmes are increasingly in demand as a result of the Government's decentralisation and localism reforms.

An experienced policy planner, Richard Crutchley has a proven track record in community engagement and partnership working at strategic levels. Previously an Enabling Advisor in CABE's Design and Planning Directorate, he has delivered design and planning support to regions and communities across England and is an accredited 'Building for Life Assessor'. Formerly a senior planner at Swindon Borough Council and planning manager of the town's Urban Regeneration Company – The New Swindon Company - he has vast experience of working with both public and private sector partners.

A chartered architect and project manager, Dominic O'Neill will bring contrasting and complementary skills and experience to the advocacy team. He has worked as a project architect for Fitzroy Robinson as well as for Unite Group, the UK's largest developer of student accommodation, where he championed better quality developments as design and planning manager for the London region. Most recently, as a Design and Planning Advisor at CABE, he provided expert support for capital projects and planning policy to local planning authorities, the Homes and Communities Agency and ecotown developments.

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

"We are delighted to have Richard and Dominic on board and look forward to utilising their combined skills and experience to drive and develop our important advocacy work. Given the fundamental changes to the planning system, it is essential that communities,

councillors and other local decision makers have access to specific, expert and independent advice on design that a not for profit organisation like Open-City can provide.”

Richard Crutchley and Dominic O’Neill, joint Heads of Advocacy and Enabling, said:

“This is a great opportunity for us to continue Open-City’s core advocacy function while expanding the capacity to support and develop greater awareness of a quality built environment among non-professionals at a local level, and seeking to influence those who deliver it.”

-Ends –

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. This appointment completes the organisation’s transition from its well-known origins as Open House into Open-City, with broader programmes of work supporting a better quality built environment. 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, and to give people the tools and language to enable people to discover and understand how they can make informed decisions and really influence change in the built environment.

They are 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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