

Case Study **April 2005**

Aquatics Centre Architectural Competition



“ This project has been really interesting and I have gained so much from it. This made me realize that there is something phenomenal happening just outside our doors and that it is nice to be a part of its progress. Getting involved in an experience such as this is also a way of saying to the community that building the future isn't just for professionals. ”

Architecture Crew member (15)

the project →

A group of nine 14-15 year olds from Eastlea School LB Newham took part in 'The Aquatics Centre Architectural Competition' project between November '04 – January '05. The young people are all members of the Architecture Crew, the first stage in the development of a Newham-wide Youth Architecture Forum.

This project provided a rare opportunity to engage a group of young people in the high profile architectural competition to design an Olympic Aquatics Centre by following the brief and timetable of the formal competition itself. The Aquatics Centre is planned for a site near Stratford Station LB Newham, and will form part of the proposed Olympic Park. Six architectural teams competed to design London's first Olympic venue.

The group were presented with a brief, visited the site and, through a series of design exercises illustrating some rudimentary principles of space and architecture, were facilitated in developing their own exciting design for the Olympic Aquatics Centre, which was developed into a professional model and rendered drawings. The group presented their final design to the team at London 2012, the company bidding to bring the Olympic Games and

Paralympic Games to London, on 19th January 2005 at Canary Wharf.

The project set a new standard for architectural engagement demonstrating that 14-15 year olds could really influence the design of a building.

partners

This project was commissioned by the London Development Agency and supported by KSS Design Group, executive architects for the Competition. Additional support was provided by Unit 22 model makers and Eastlea Community School.

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“ Projects like this are crucial to students and their teachers. Students were actively engaged in matters relating to their environment – and have had a rare opportunity to follow real life projects such as the Olympic bid. As an art educator, whose specialism is definitely not architecture – I found this project to be very enlightening. I leave the project with a better knowledge of architecture which will and has already informed my own practice. ” Art teacher



project aims

- To engage young people in the London 2012 Olympic Bid and address the main issues in the design brief for the Aquatics Centre.
- To enable the students to develop an understanding of architectural design processes.

lessons learnt

- The students describe themselves as the 'Architecture Crew' and over the course of the project had developed a strong group identity. Being in the Crew made the students feel special and important.
- The students felt that they had become more observant and more curious about the buildings around them and in particular some of the regeneration work since starting the project.
- The students had developed some strong views about regeneration and these suggest a growing sense of their own importance as members of a community which is going through major changes.
- Being listened to by and talking with 'important' people makes a big impression on young people who feel that their opinions are often ignored. Building in informal opportunities as well as formal presentations will enhance a project.



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