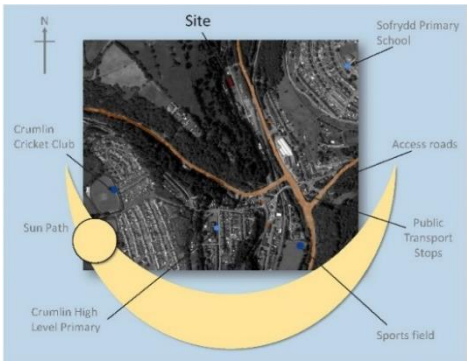
Case study - CAS6001 Built Heritage (CSAD)

Cardiff School of Art and Design
Architectural Design and Technology BSc (Hons) Degree
Education for Sustainability (ESD); Commercial awareness; Professionally oriented learning; Authentic learning and assessment; Task and inquiry based learning; Group work.

Who?

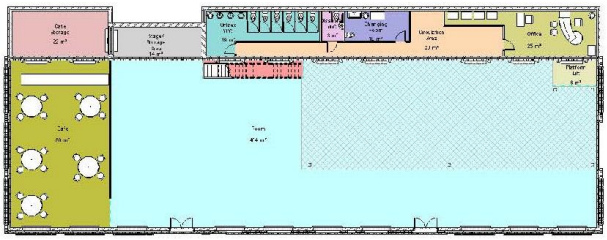
The Built Heritage module was a 40 credit module which formed part of the final year (level 6) of the Cardiff School of Art and Design Architectural Design and Technology BSc between 2010 and 2016. A key aspect of the module topic was its focus on real world examples of built heritage assets as the basis for engaging students in professional procedures and methodologies. Specifically this case study will examine how Cardiff Met academics made use of the heritage site and listed buildings at 'The Navigation' Colliery in Crumlin, Gwent as the basis for authentic learning and assessment tasks underpinned by a range of contemporary student centred pedagogies. 'The Navigation' is an historic Welsh colliery site which saw coal production between 1911 and 1967. Now disused, the site still has a number of unique colliery buildings that although having fallen into disrepair remain structurally viable for alternative uses. The site is currently maintained and managed by "The Friends of The Navigation", a team of local volunteers who aim to restore the site and buildings and bring them back into use to the benefit of the local community through the associated registered company and charity GLOFA Navigation Cyf.

Why?



A vocational subject such as architecture requires graduates to be able to understand and apply their learnt knowledge and skills to necessary benchmarks delineated by professional bodies in order for them to be able to practice professionally. Thus learning through practice is fundamental, be that practice simulated, based on real world contexts or through work placements. The QAA benchmarks for architectural technology state "As a subject that bridges theoretical, practical and professional activities, its pedagogy embraces the practical application of theory and the embedding of employability skills. Approaches such as case studies, practical development projects using real sites, project simulations and collaborative interdisciplinary projects are encouraged because of their particular relevance to the subject area." Thus authentic learning and assessment within real world contexts are core to undergraduate education, providing a means by which students can garner the requisite breadth of professional skills, knowledge and experience. It should be noted that such authentic learning as well as requiring original analytical and creative application also provides fertile opportunity for students to engage with agendas and benchmark skillsets inherent to the discipline that will undoubtedly impact upon learner's future professional practice. Examples include: commercial awareness – responsibilities of architects to clients, building users, constructors, co-professionals and wider society; sustainability – awareness of the relationship between people and buildings, between

Images adapted from projects by J. Frost, A. Williams, S. Anno and T. Jordan, M. Hamilton
Case study authored by learning developer Stuart Abbott, based on the work of module leader Anthony Whyman.



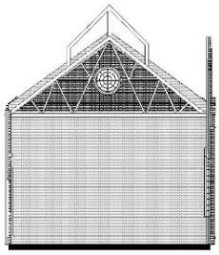
buildings and their environment and the precepts of sustainable design; collaboration – the ability to work effectively with others to achieve common goals. As such, module leader Anthony Whyman was specific in organising and aligning learning content, outcomes and tasks with relevant QAA benchmark statements and associated expectations of a graduate of architectural technology, which in turn are also mapped onto the HE graduate learning outcomes document of the Construction Industry Council (CIC). By adopting benchmark statements as module learning outcomes it became explicit to learners that the knowledge, understanding and practical skills they are expected to demonstrate via module assessments are wholly authentic in their nature in that they are also the standards of practice expected of a chartered practitioner offering professional architectural services.

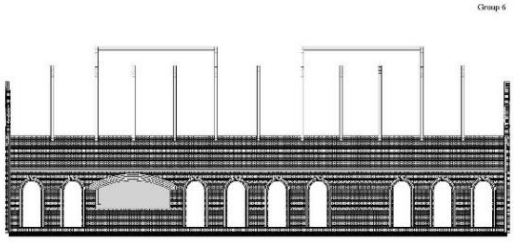
How?

The module sought to provide learners with opportunities to build on prior learning and in doing so further develop their experience of applying professional practices as they relate to existing building stock of architectural and/or historic significance. Working collaboratively in groups of 3-4, students were tasked with responding to a project brief formulated by GLOFA and module academics that required an analytical as opposed to descriptive approach to the task set. Through the research, authoring and presentation of formal architectural proposal reports for the re-use of obsolete buildings at the site, students gained valuable authentic professional experience. Learners were actively challenged to account for authentic feasibility considerations relating to the structural and technical specifics of the building itself, legislation relevant to the site and buildings as well as the socio-economic aspirations for the site of the local community.

Outcomes

The Built Heritage module was highly effective in enabling students to document their experience of a range of key procedural skills as well as engaging them with a number of challenges or issues that graduates can be expected to have awareness of upon entering professional practice. Key among such challenges is the juxtaposition between legal regulation and creative expression which, whilst common to all architectural design proposals, is particularly pertinent in the field of built heritage. Likewise students were required to consider technical issues surrounding precedent, procurement and legislation and how they might attenuate client ideals for the site. Similarly students had opportunity to fulfil the role of professional practitioners as part of genuine client / practitioner relationships. Such interpersonal experience saw students questioning, teasing out and ultimately interpreting the needs and motivations of the client. Finally it was noted by module tutors that the inherent engagement with sustainability concerns was recognised as being a core element of consideration by students, although the focus was often environmental with the challenge being to shift learner conceptions of 'sustainability' to include economic and social considerations.





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