Approaches for shaping the future of your historic church through engaging people in design

Dr Theodore Zamenopoulos
The Open University

Louise Dredge
The Glass-House Community Led Design

Representing the research project:

EMPOWERING DESIGN PRACTICES

historic places of worship as catalysts for connecting communities
One word about St Clements

a feeling, impression, thought
All these words express something about **design**
What is Design? How things fit together to achieve something (enable activities, trigger emotions, make connections with our values or history)
What is Design?
Design often also includes considerations of how we run and sustain a place.
Approaches for shaping the future of your historic church through engaging people in design

Representing the research project:

historic places of worship as catalysts for connecting communities

Funded by Arts and Humanities Research Council
Budget: £1.5 million
Start date: 21st October 2014
End date: 20th October 2019
Protection of Heritage

Community engagement in design

Faith communities

historic places of worship as catalysts for connecting communities
The buildings: the future and sustainability of historic places of worship in England

The people: the importance of supporting the people who look after historic places of worship

The potential: of places of worship to connect with local communities and address wider social needs
One word about your place of worship as it is now

a feeling, impression, thought
One word about the future of your place

inspired by St Clements
What does engagement in design mean?

**WHAT** do you have now?

**WHAT** could the future be?
What does engagement in design mean?

**WHAT** do you have now?

Your place of worship as it is now

**WHAT** could the future be?

Your place of worship in the future

**Physical environment**
Spaces, Forms, Views, Light, Furniture

**Human environment**
Activities, Users, Organisations

**Effects**
Effects on what you do, feel or how you interact with others
What does engagement in design mean?

**WHAT** do we have now?

**WHY** will we change it?
Reasons/effects of action

**WHAT** could the future be?

**WHAT** will we do?
Steps

**HOW** will we do it?
People       Resources
Think of levels of engagement in design:
who, when and how people contribute to these questions

YOU

A CORE GROUP

COMMUNITY
Think about the purpose of your engagement activity

Generating ideas

Collecting ideas and knowledge

Evaluating ideas

Sharing information and knowledge

Unlocking skills and capacity

Fundraising

YOU  A CORE GROUP  COMMUNITY
Engaging a core design group

Who to invite:
A group of core stakeholders and users of the church: aim for a representative group and people who have time and passion to engage
**Activity:** Have a quick chat with the person sitting next to you

**Imagine** that you are entering your place of worship
Think of **something that you see** that is of value to you

**Share it** with the person next to you and **explain why this is of value to you**
Make sure you each share something with the other person.

**Reflect together** whether there is an **common emerging theme that is important for both of you**
Purpose of engagement: To build a core group of people that have a shared understanding of the challenges but also potential of their place
Memory mapping

**Map** - Share your experience of using and worshiping in this place

**Reflect** – Identify emerging themes or elements that can be the focus of your project
Visioning

Create – a picture of the future drawing from the memory map and other inspirational materials, photos, words or sentences
**Map-Reflect-Create:** how it connects to core design questions

**WHAT do we have?**
Share your memories and experiences using the church – draw them on a map

**WHY**
Reflect on the importance and effect of the discussed memories and identify emerging themes

**WHAT could the future be?**
Create picture of the future using photos and insights from the memory map
Asset mapping

Purpose of engagement: To identify assets that are required for a project and guide your design thinking
Asset mapping: The process

Identify & organise assets on the map: from most accessible (center) to less accessible (periphery)

Draw conclusions and monitor progress
Negotiating conflicts and identifying share purposes

Purpose of engagement: To negotiate conflict and create purpose or vision statements
Purpose statement: process

What you want to do and for what reason

e.g. We want to increase the visibility to the altar window in order to highlight the history and spirituality of the building
Purpose statement: process

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>PRIORITY</th>
<th>INDIVIDUAL</th>
<th>SHARED</th>
<th>CONFLICTING</th>
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<td>CONCERNS</td>
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<td>PRINCIPLES</td>
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**Stage 1:**
participants reflect and write their *priorities, concerns* and *values* in post its

**Stage 2:**
participants share and classify the statements as individual, shared or conflicting/contested.

**Stage 3:**
participants write purpose statements that can be derived by combining a priority, a concern and a *principle*
Engaging your wider community in design

Who is the community:
People who worship in the building
People who have an interest in your building (e.g. Friends group)
People who might be potential users (e.g. local schools)
People who see the value of a place of worship
Types of engagement

**Questionnaires or surveys** (door to door or online media)
*Purpose:* evaluate ideas / gather evidence about needs and wants

**Social media**
*Purpose:* communicate ideas / evaluate ideas / gather evidence about needs and wants / mobilise people

**One-to-one conversations**
*Purpose:* communicate ideas / evaluate ideas / gather evidence about needs and wants / mobilise people

**Events**
*Purpose:* communicate ideas / evaluate ideas / crowdsource ideas / gather evidence about needs and wants / mobilise people / fundraising
**Interactive public events**

**Purpose of engagement:** To bring the congregation together in order to:

- To collect views about the identity of the place (what is special about this church)
- To crowd source ideas and resources for the future of the church
- To enthuse members of the congregation about the potential of the place
Interactive public events: how it happened

**Ideas**
What could make this place better?

**Send a postcard**
What is special about this place?

**Use a metaphor**
This place looks/feels like...

**Share memories**
Tell a story, share a picture/object
Prototype and experiment

Purpose of engagement: to test an idea about the building (and gather evidence)
Prototype and experiment: an example of an open day event

Will people cross the threshold to socialise and play in our church?

Open the door

Signpost that the church is open

Arts and crafts materials

Dreaming booth

Tea and cakes!

Materials for children
Prototype and experiment: Collect evidence

Capture conversations about:
The interest of people to use the space
The sentiment of people for using a faith and heritage building
The reasons that people cross the threshold

Count
The volume of people that crossed the threshold
The time they stayed in

Observe and record:
Who is crossing the threshold (e.g. families, retired, age of people)
The power of engaging people in design

A better place: as the place becomes more relevant to the users

A sustainable place: as people invest in the project and place

Empowering people: as a community unlocks its potential and builds skills
historic places of worship as catalysts for connecting communities

Web: empoweringdesign.net

Twitter: twitter.com/empoweringdp

Email: empoweringdesign@gmail.com