

What Do Educators and Students
Want From the RIBA Archives at the V&A?

Qualitative Research

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Contents

	Page No.
INTRODUCTION	
Objectives, Methodology, Stimulus Material	
3	
OVERVIEW	6
What Motivates our Different Respondents?	7
First Reactions to the V&A/RIBA Archive	14
Positives	15
Barriers	16
Fit with Existing Study Habits	20
V&A as Exhibit	21
Mobilising the Archive	22
What Services do People want?	28
Support for Educators	31
The Intellectual Cut	35
Some Direction for Future Development	38

Project Goal

To bring the RIBA/V&A archive collections more imaginatively within the range of students, educators and general visitors.

Research Objectives

- To explore how people would spontaneously make use of the archives.
- To understand any barriers to use.
- To explore how the teaching/learning process can be helped by the V&A environment.
 - Teaching/Study Rooms**
 - Workshops/Study Days**
 - The V&A Building itself**
 - Guest Lecturers/V&A Staff**
 - Resource Boxes, Handling**
 - Master Classes**
- To identify which support material will make the archives easier and more inviting to use.
 - Preparation • On site • Follow-up**
- To gauge how relevant and motivating some of the Museum's intellectual themes are seen to be.
 - e.g. Creation of buildings as a process**
 - 2D → 3D. Fat drawings and computers**

Inhabiting space • dyslexia, dyspraxia
Making connections between architecture, locations, artefacts.

The Sample

Three standard focus groups with educators and students

Group ① HE/FE Teachers

Mix of academic and Practical Architecture Subjects

All known to V&A 5 respondents, 1 1/2

hours

Group ② HE/FE Students, male and female

Students of the above teachers 8 respondents, 2 hours

Subjects drawn from

Art History,

Architecture, Cultural and Critical Studies

Fine Art, 3D Design, Graphics, Craft

Group ③ KS2, KS3 Teachers, men and women

All had taken a school group to a Central London
Museum and two

to the V&A. All had visited the V&A themselves.

All considered architecture, building design, built
environment to

be relevant to their subject.

Dates and location of groups • December 2003/January, 2004
V&A, In home, West Hampstead

Moderator • Susie Fisher. Observed by Helen
Thomas (V&A).

Stimulus Material

- Laminated visuals, showing exemplars of the archive

Models
Drawings
Photographs

Manuscripts
Prints

- Visualisations of the new V&A study areas and re-displayed Architecture Gallery.
- Trigger boards
- Academic theme boards

Scale
Structures
Construct
Mapping

Making connections between architecture
and other styles
Translating from 2D **3D**

Understanding the creation of buildings as a process

- Bubble Cartoon

If I were coming back here to use the Architecture Collection, I would.....

Overview I

- The V&A is perceived as a high status museum, but not as yet widely associated with Architecture. The concept of the Archive needs to be clearly and persuasively expressed and well publicised. Think in terms of
'The Architectural Ideas Bank at the V&A'.
- Their hopes for the Archive lay in wandering through a variety of material, getting close to their heroes through sketch books and roughs and making inspirational leaps, sometimes accidental.
- Doubts centred around the immediate relevance to the curriculum and slow inconvenient systems, unhelpful cataloguing and intimidating atmosphere.
- Different groups had different key needs.

Professors • Advance information and access to content so they could organise topics and exhibitions into the syllabus.

Students • An informal social atmosphere in which they could browse through topics which they needed to research.

Teachers • Focused, highly structured teaching workshops, involving passionate experts.

- Resource boxes and interaction with V&A staff become central features of the Archive offering. Study days, debates and lectures were less popular, because they focused less closely on individual needs.

Overview II

- Educators named the following helpful supports.

Advance planning information on the Website.
Personal contact; a named host on the day, a personal visit to the school.

Follow-up master classes, on site or in College.

Website follow-up with worksheets.

Positive publicity with the right atmosphere.

- The idea of using V&A itself to illustrate the process of creating buildings was universally popular.
- It is important for the Museum's intellectual 'cut' to be seen as recognisable, relevant to the syllabus/curriculum and practical.
Abstract ideas e.g. spatial thinking were off putting.
Clear, popular ideas were

→ Design/creation process Shelter
Structures Power buildings
2D 3D Computer drawing
Connecting with other
styles

Each Of The Three Groups Had A Distinct Character

"Imagination, extend what's possible in the world.

Expand outside the box."

KS2, KS3

TEACHERS

Plant ideas

Keep it lively

EDUCATOR

HE/FE

PROFESSORS

Systems,

timetables

Set in their ways

"We're so stretched.

This is far too much to

do for a few people.

It's more formal."

INSPIRATIONAL

TIED

HE/FE STUDENTS
Torn between exploring
and degree requirements.
Young, IT savvy, informal

"They need a halfway
house, different types
of room.

A room to do what I
like.

Different zones "

STUDENT

The further into higher education you go, the more formal and goal directed, study seems to become.

IMPLICATION • THE V&A STRUCTURE COULD USEFULLY EXPLOIT THIS DISTINCTION BETWEEN GOAL DIRECTED AND EXPLORING.
PROVIDING ENVIRONMENTS FOR EACH AND BRIDGES BETWEEN THE TWO.

What Were Our Professors Interested In Themselves?

Geodesic and Polydomes.
Linking Art and Design with Architecture.
The roots of symbolism.

Architectural History, 18th and 20th Century.
Linking cultural history, art, architecture, with social
history.
(19th and 20th Century)

What do they want to impart to their students?

A sense of process, from plans to building.

"For students to look at drawings, the relationship between
projects and finished building. The way it has developed." HE
Educator

How ideas originated

"I'd like to take them back to the origination of ideas.
It's an important learning curve." HE Educator

Interpreting between different media.

Relationships between the different strands.

"I'd like to see the architectural vista." HE Educator

IMPLICATION • THE PROFESSORS HAVE SPECIALISED RESEARCH INTERESTS, BUT ARE AWARE THAT
THEIR STUDENTS NEED TO MASTER THE BASIC PLATFORM ON WHICH THEIR NEW
DISCIPLINE IS BUILT.

What Subjects Motivated Their Students?

Individual homes.

17th Century architectural history, the way people think about buildings.

What architects are trying to reference.

How buildings function.

18th Century buildings, mass society engaging with high architecture.

Creative design.

Communications within buildings.

Organic shapes.

Power theory of buildings.

The effects of weird shapes in buildings.

Can designs be built?

COMMENT • THERE IS A STRONG THEME HERE ABOUT HOW BUILDINGS RELATE TO PEOPLE, HOW THEY EXPRESS IDENTITY AND HOW THEY ARE USED.
THERE IS AN EQUIVALENT FASCINATION WITH SHAPES, CREATIVITY AND THE FIELD OF THE POSSIBLE.

IMPLICATION • THESE WILL BE THE KINDS OF THEMES AND LANGUAGE WHICH ARE LIKELY TO ATTRACT YOUNG PEOPLES' INTEREST AS THEY ASSESS WHETHER THE ARCHIVE IS RELEVANT TO THEM.

KS2, KS3 Teachers Were Punching In All Directions

Inspired by the curriculum, they are tackling

Tudor structures and the process of designing buildings.

Building Tudor houses, making joins

Housing through the decades, shelter

1930s • Fashion, housing, buildings

Visiting buildings and neighbourhoods

Tate Modern, London Eye

Somerset House

Highgate to Archway

Recognising styles, Victorian, Bauhaus

Relating interior space to exterior

Partnerships with local architects/developers

New stadium

Paddington Basin

Building 3D models

Web design

"We went to the HLK headquarters in Putney. And we looked at the designs and downloaded images from their website.

We wrote on top of the drawings and put in details. Then we made it in polystyrene."

KS3 Teacher

IMPLICATION • THERE IS A STRONG MIX OF BASIC IDEAS, OBSERVATION AND HANDS ON CONSTRUCTION. THEY ARE ALREADY OUT THERE IN THE WORLD. WILL THE V&A NEED TO COMPLEMENT RATHER THAN REPLICATE THIS?

Teachers Were Trying To Develop

Intellectual Maturity In Their Students

- Learning how to read 2D and 3D objects.
- Seeing the design process as a whole.
- Understanding the point and purpose of
 - Sources
 - Multiple ideas
 - Development through roughs and trials
 - Measurement

"How processes work. Gaudi's sketches gave a breakdown of what he was up to and what he was thinking. With copies of his scribbles, they could see the development." Teacher

"Rough unstructured sketches they find difficult to deal with." Teacher

"It's difficult for them to put a plan together, difficult to find lots of different ideas. They are not sure about rough sketches and then changing it." Teacher

"The little ones make rough drawings and random measurements. We'll cut up that bit of wood and see if it fits." Teacher

"The concept of development is difficult. I've got this idea and that's it. And if it doesn't work, it's tears and that's it." Teacher

IMPLICATION • TEACHERS WOULD BE GRATEFUL IF THE V&A COULD HELP ROOT THIS WAY OF THINKING.

What Is The Relationship With The V&A Itself?

Across the board, the V&A is perceived as high status It confers an advantage on the user.

Professors

The V&A is like a very old friend. Esteemed, sometimes irritating. Curators and Professors are cast in the same mould - scholarship, research. Accomplished users of libraries, collections. See no need to change the system, now they've mastered it.

"Make it easy and possible for students to come and do their own research. To explore at PhD level." Professor

Students

Excited, but intimidated by the V&A. New territory. Don't think of the Museum as a place for Architecture. It requires effort to get there; travel, cost, procedures and formalities. The name looks good on a term project.

"The prestige of the Museum is daunting, you've got to be intelligent to go there." Student

Teachers

Personal admirers of the V&A from a visitor's point of view. Take courage and justification from their role as teachers in demanding attention from a grand institution.

"It's criminal not to go and see the V&A." Teacher

"It's a great resource for teachers. They've done my work for me." Teacher

IMPLICATION • THE V&A IS HIGHLY REGARDED AND MUST PROTECT ITS ACADEMIC REPUTATION. BUT IT ALSO NEEDS TO DEMONSTRATE FLEXIBILITY AND A CAPACITY FOR INFORMALITY IF IT WANTS PEOPLE TO SPEND TIME WITHIN ITS WALLS.

How Does The Archive Fit With The Main Goal?

Professors

Main goal • To equip their students with the fundamentals of their future

trade and achieve their qualifications.

The archives (?) A way to illustrate, ground, broaden and inspire, providing

the content reflects the needs of the syllabus.

Students

Main goal • To feel the human thrill of buildings and design, to touch new

ideas (and get their exams).

The archives (?) Brings them closer to their architectural heroes and sparks new ideas.

Teachers

Main goal • To open their students' eyes and give them a first brush with the basics

of structure, buildings and design.

The archives (?) To introduce and illustrate themes, together with interpretation

from passionate professionals.

IMPLICATION

- THE ARCHIVES ARE POTENTIALLY VERY RICH AND VERY WELCOME.
BUT THEY WILL NEED TO BE ACCESSED THROUGH THEMING WHICH IS RELEVANT.

On Seeing What's In The Archives • Positives

- Getting close to the people who created the plans.
"Originals are more interesting anyway. The pinpricks on the page, pencil marks, the mistakes. They are more exciting and intimate, not just a book." Student
- 3D Models
Being able to touch, wander through a variety of material.
"They should bring any relevant materials together, the wood alongside the drawings, watercolour sketches. Could you have them all together?" Professor
"The work is not that interesting, without a wide range." Student
- Strong Art History component, excellent if that is your subject.
"This is quite a big part of Art History. Drawings of Renaissance buildings and slides." Student
- Sketch books, rough plans, finished plans, references to the finished building i.e. the complete process. Especially if these are familiar buildings or new buildings going up.
"I'd like to see the drawings and concepts of the new buildings going up in London now." Professor
- Making inspirational comparisons.
"The manuscripts are less critical. You want to put drawing 'x'

next to drawing 'y' and make the comparison."

Professor

IMPLICATION • THERE IS A STRONG HISTORICAL COMPONENT. THE MODERN DAY AND SOCIAL HISTORY ASPECTS NEED TO BE BROUGHT OUT. THE MATERIAL IS MORE REMOTE FOR SCHOOLS THAN FOR HE/FE.

On Seeing What's In The Archives • Doubts And Anxieties

Schools and Colleges have the same basic concerns.

- Are there topics in here which are directly relevant to my curriculum?

"We should see the process working, why people are doing these things. Use the curriculum as a guide." Teacher

"To look through a book like that, a manuscript, they need a specific reason." Student

- Can I be sure, if I make the trip in, that the actual material will cover my needs?

"Computers could be a halfway house, you can have a quick look and look closely when you go in." Student

"At A Level, I'd choose an architectural project and these would be the first research visit." Student

- What is the starting point? Will it all be too difficult to access? Will there be definite themes, topics to start from?

"There's so much to look at. Where do you start?"

Why is it there?" Student
 "Get the children to focus on something particular." Teacher
 "The idiosyncrasies of the V&A. It's classified by Artists.
 There's no typographical index, or by types of building. We
 need a cross reference, so you can look up 'x' and it says
 see 'a', 'b', 'c'." Professor
 "How do you group the stuff? We want specific projects and
 you think maybe I can add that into my plans." Student

IMPLICATION • EVERYONE NEEDS TO GET THEIR MIND ROUND THE MATERIAL IN TERMS OF THE
 ISSUES AND TOPICS WHICH IT COVERS. HOW TO GET STARTED.

Students And Professors • Barriers To Use

- How is the material organised? They fear it may not be flexibly and efficiently catalogued. Is it on line?
 "There's a case for using new technology. You could search by exhibition and have the bibliography on email." Student
- Is the atmosphere in the building right?
 "In terms of our FE students, it's the presentation, the feeling, the design of the place. The visual liveliness." Professor
 "I wouldn't use it if there were kids making a noise.
 Not little kids." Student
- Is it a formal, time consuming process? Both getting into the collections and getting hold of the material once you're in.
 "Could you just come and ask or do you have to have a letter of authorisation? Can you do it there and then?" Student

- "How long does it take to fetch it?" Student

• Is there enough space for everybody or will it be cramped?

"There's no room for enough students." Professor

"How many people would it take? I wouldn't work there if it was overcrowded and jostling." Student
- Will they charge for it, like RIBA?

"The money, now it's free, that will be an enormous change." Professor

IMPLICATION • EVEN IF YOU'VE IDENTIFIED USEFUL MATERIAL, THE V&A SYSTEM MAY TURN OUT TO BE TOO CUMBERSOME AND INCONVENIENT. THEY ARE LOOKING FOR A LIGHTER TOUCH.

Teachers • Barriers To Use

- Teachers assume that the system will be set up efficiently for them.

Their concern is more about keeping the students motivated and focused.
- Does the Museum understand the needs and limitations of young people at KS2/KS3?

 - The need for a WOW factor

"We want to see something 3D. You need the WOW factor in a room." Teacher
 - The need for a practical, hands-on activity with a specific purpose.

"Be generous with resources so that the children use ICT, models, virtual reality, building constructions." Teacher

- That children could damage valuable original documents and may not value the difference between reproduction and original.

"You'd have glasses and moustaches appearing in the original manuscript." Teacher

- That lunch is as important as architecture.

"You must have a lunch which is child friendly." Teacher

IMPLICATION • SCHOOL CHILDREN AND THEIR TEACHERS NEED MUCH MORE STRUCTURE AND PERSONAL SUPPORT, WHEN THEY VISIT. THEY WANT TO PUT THEMSELVES IN THE HANDS OF THE MUSEUM.

How Does The V&A Fit Into Existing Study Habits?

Educators

FOR PROFESSORS

They would expect to send students to a relevant exhibition. They may even build it into a course and use it as a jumping off point for course work.

If they knew the Archives contained relevant material they would mention/recommend them as a resource for a particular topic. Independent study.

"In terms of exhibitions, it's useful to have advance information. You don't know if you want to use it or not. You need stuff with content so you can make a judgement." Professor

FOR TEACHERS

If the teachers are well resourced and confident about taking groups to London destinations, then they might choose the V&A as a destination to further a particular class/curriculum topic. Once in the Museum, they would put themselves in the hands of the Education Staff. They favour organised activities led by Museum staff, drawing relevantly on galleries, archives, exhibitions. It's all one to them.

"It works better if somebody else is doing it." Teacher

"When Somerset House did a workshop, they gave the children something focused to do. Schedules of work and knowing why. They knew what was wanted." Teacher

IMPLICATION • BOTH SETS OF EDUCATORS NEED TO KNOW WHETHER THE CONTENT IS RELEVANT, THEREAFTER PROFESSOR AND STUDENT TAKE CONTROL FOR THEMSELVES, WHEREAS TEACHERS LOOK TO THE MUSEUM FOR STRUCTURE AND LEADERSHIP

How Does The V&A Fit Into Existing Study Habits?

Students

Students are more open, but also more confused.
Three modes suggest themselves.

CREATIVE, BROWSING, DISCUSSING IDEAS

- Needs an informal environment, instant and varied range of material, buzz of conversation, capacity for note taking.
- Other students of similar age and interests (plus coffee?).
- An approachable member of staff.

"Come and talk about it to other people. We have the facilities."
Student

"There is a foundation at Camberwell, where there's a glass bit at the back which is completely silent. Outside there are people on computers, a sofa, stacks of books." Student

QUIET STUDY

- Library environment, thinking, concentrating.
- Focused towards a particular subject, set of material, study outcome.

"If I'd made the effort to come down here to work for my project, I'd sit down and work." Student

ON YOUR OWN TURF

- Access the material on the internet.
- Use it as and when you feel like it.
- No travel, no restrictions, no formalities.

"Could you get what you want from the computer and not bother coming?" Student

"I wouldn't want to work here in the Museum." Student

IMPLICATION • THE MUSEUM WILL PROBABLY NEED TO PROMOTE DIFFERENT KINDS OF ENVIRONMENTS TO TEMPT IN YOUNG PEOPLE.

Using The V&A Itself As An Exhibit

- Most people expect to see objects in the galleries or a special exhibition when they come to the V&A. Seeing the

objects is both spectacular and an experience unique to the Museum.

"I'd be looking to see exhibitions drawn from the collection.

Small simple exhibitions."

Professor

"They'd be astonished to see the great bed of Ware." **Teacher**

- However, all our sample responded instantly and positively to the idea of using the V&A building as a 'live' demonstration of issues in the study of architecture. This was immediate and compelling.

"They could show the V&A building itself behind the scenes.

Relate it to the drawings and go out into the building." **Professor**

- The building could be used to demonstrate some of the basics.

Architectural features - different styles, shapes, scale

Architectural process - ideas, plans, construction, fitness for purpose

"Using the building itself, the actual building. What type of furniture is equivalent to what type of building?" **Teacher**

- This did not extend to taking people out to the surrounding area and considering the building within its local environment. The thread is too thin. The visitor would fly away.

"Going out to the locality is hard work. Could you do it with interactive or video?" **Student**

IMPLICATION • THE MUSEUM AS A BUILDING WITH A STORY IN ITS OWN RIGHT IS A HUGE AND UNEXPLORED EXHIBIT, WHICH COULD BE POWERFULLY EXPLOITED.

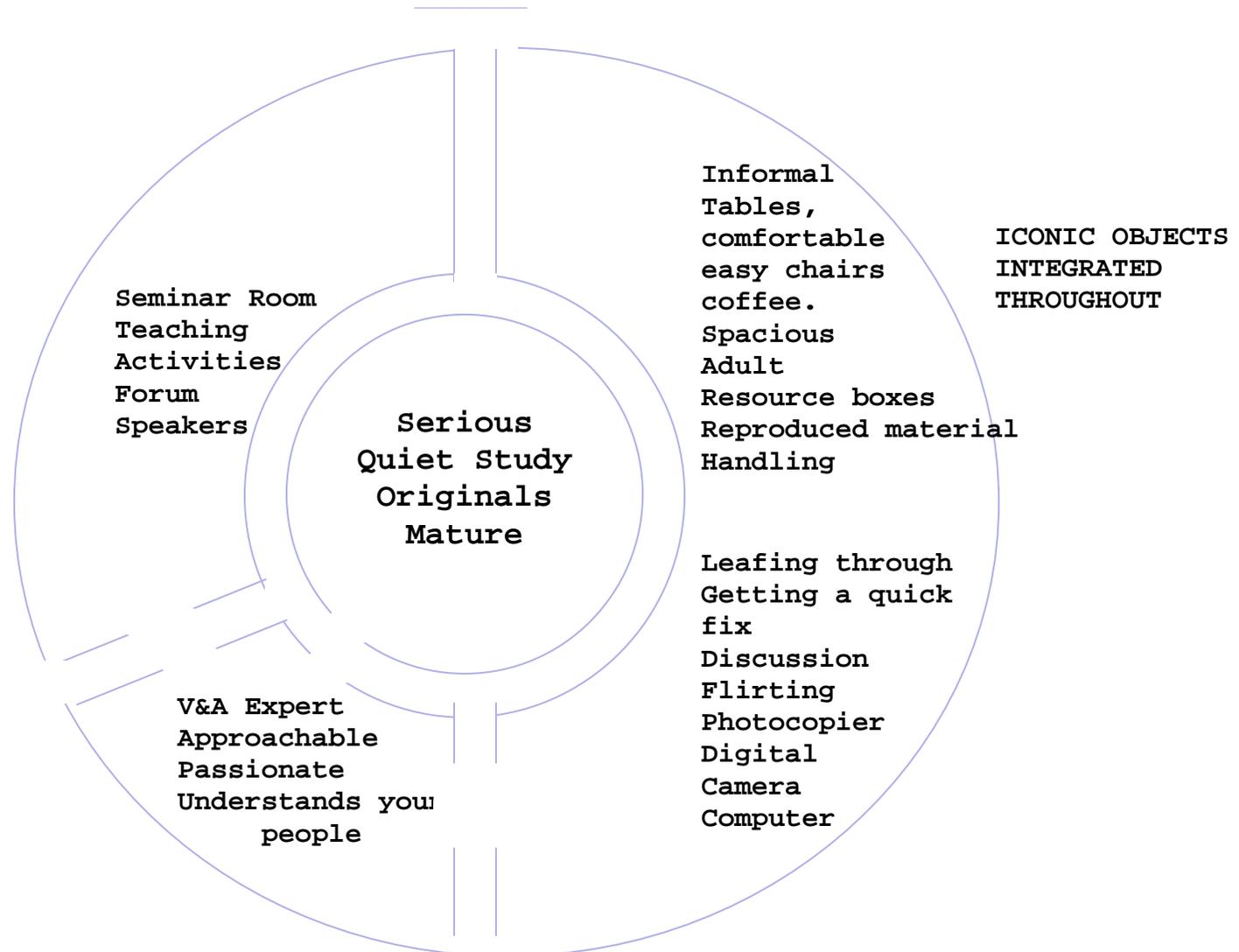
Mobilising The Archive • Initial Comments

- It is quite difficult for people to take on board the idea of an architecture archive for general use at the V&A.
 - "I wouldn't think of the V&A for architecture." Student
 - "A museum, you look at things, not study." Student
- Professors are used to RIBA, Portman Square
 - "Magical, you'd book a place and get total support from the staff." Professorand anxious about change.
 - "V&A and RIBA, can you look at the different collections at the same time? Could you have them all together." Professor
- Once they do get their minds round it, however, there is much enthusiasm.
 - "It would be fantastic if it enabled students. The staff are used to talking to architects but never at BA level." Professor
 - "Here's a group of drawings where you can see about architecture. No one else does it. It would be interesting and useful." Student
 - "Any university would recommend this so much." Student
- The Museum needs to make a strong lively case for its new approach.
 - "Big up the V&A." Teacher
 - "It should be well advertised, not grey, dull and boring." Professor

IMPLICATION

- THE V&A ARCHITECTURE ARCHIVE WILL HAVE TO PUT EFFORT INTO POSITIONING AND PUBLICISING THE NEW CONCEPT, SO THAT IT WILL CATCH THE IMAGINATION AND BEGIN TO BE USED.

How Does The Audience See The New Concept Ideally?



THE ARCHITECTURE IDEAS BANK AT THE V&A

Verbatim Quotes • Evidence From Students

- "It appeals as a quick look for ideas, like a magazine, something quick." Student
"You might need a criticism on a building or a particular style or architect." Student
- "Getting the book and manuscript you want. The research you want." Student
"The resource box should be an overview. Browsing. You need different zones. This might go in the coffee zone and then you could go and look at the original." Student
- "It would be nice to talk to people here. How do you see the architecture, working closely with it?" Student
"They shouldn't pounce on you. They should be there and be accessible. Not 'I'm an academic and your ideas I've never heard before'." Student
- "Get photocopies of the page." Student
"People chatting." Student
- "Portals to other ideas." Student
"There should be an expert at a desk so you can ask. They know more information than you do. It's important to

discuss things with them." Student

"Search by any key word. Not taking hours and hours." Student

"By accident, I found something which completely changed my approach." Student

Verbatim Quotes • Evidence From The FE/HE Educators

"Can they sit 30 students in one go?" Professor

"I'd like inspirational sources. Locate them on computers and on the Internet." Professor

"They could draw on the other V&A departments." Professor

"RIBA have a commercial side, will they charge?" Professor

"If you click on Lutyens, it will give you key books, social implications, objects in the V&A." Professor

"Photography, do they allow that?" Professor

"They could have a debating forum with live debates." Professor

"They could give an analysis of current events." Professor

"They have the objects and the curators and you can photocopy and take away books from the library." Professor

"There would be things brought together from different aspects of the V&A. And the staff being there to talk." Professor

"They could create that atmosphere, if architecture can be made interesting...." Professor
"They could meet other students. An impetus from somewhere else and another viewpoint." Professor

Verbatim Quotes • Evidence From Teachers KS2/3

"People with expert knowledge bring things alive." Teacher

"There should be people in the space and images providing questions and narratives." Teacher

"It's no good, things you can't touch." Teacher

"Groups of five can look through a sketch book with whoever's there in a controlled environment." Teacher

"They will accept a photocopy of the originals." Teacher

"You could mobilise their digital cameras." Teacher

"You must have a lunch which is child friendly." Teacher

"Where do these objects belong in terms of architecture?" Teacher

"Building constructions from the computer." Teacher

What Are The Essential Themes Of The Ideas Bank?

- Relaxed comfortable social space for browsing through ideas. Easy access.
- Passionate, approachable V&A expert on hand to ask and talk to.
- Contained room for organised activity which can draw on the originals from the collections.
- Mature study space with authorised access to originals.
- Confident array of architectural themes to start from
 - Fundamentals
 - Innovative

- Mix of media and materials plus objects on display and handling.
- Quick system and delivery.

IMPLICATION • THIS IS A MODERN APPEALING ATMOSPHERE, CALCULATED TO RELEASE THE EXCITEMENT TRAPPED IN THE SUBJECT MATTER.

What Services Do People Want The Archives To Offer?

Very popular

personal

- Resource boxes and handling
- Using the V&A building itself
- Interfaces with Museum staff
- Brings the expertise of the V&A to bear on my needs and it's under my control.

Maybe

Guest lecturers
Critical debates
Study days

- Might be inconvenient, expensive and only peripherally relevant to my syllabus.

For schools only

Workshops

Great! Focused, practical, hands-on, run by experts

(But for students, they are too much like school).

FE Professors might use them, if they can specify the subject

IMPLICATION • IT'S HORSES FOR COURSES.

What's The Problem With Lectures, Debates And Study Days?

- They're likely to be too advanced and not tailored enough to schools.

"You'd need to be very structured. Relate it to something definite, like a football stadium." Teacher

- Students and their professors tend to assume they won't give value.

Too much effort involved in terms of cost, time and travel, when the subject is unlikely to be exactly what is needed for course work.

"With guest lecturers, price is a key issue. They are competing against a lot of places." Professor

"Big names are a draw, but I won't come if I have to pay." Professor

"You wouldn't go if it was more than £5.00 only if it was a specific need." Student

"It's not needed to get my degree done. It's unnecessary work and I've got time constraints and commitments." Student

"Debate is a load of professionals, sitting round arguing. It's fun to watch, but I can't personally go there and get anything done." Student

IMPLICATION • STUDENTS MAY RESPOND BETTER TO A MORE FLEXIBLE SYSTEM. THEY GO IN AT THEIR CONVENIENCE TO RESEARCH A PARTICULAR TOPIC AND MAY BE DRAWN INTO BROWSING AND DISCUSSION.

The Role Of Resource Boxes

- Resource boxes are being pushed into a more central role. They offer a mixed media route, in conjunction with computers for familiarising and thinking round a subject.

"Resource boxes work well, they're excellent." Professor

- Students and their educators would like them to be easily available as a way to start research on the basic subjects.

Topics suggested by Educators

Structures	Contemporary architecture
Shelter	Architecture and photography
The V&A	The architecture prizes
Palladio	Lost buildings
Power buildings	Computer drawings
Le Corbusier	Art Deco
Fashion design	Design process
30s architecture	

- Educators want to instil a sense of process. They are keen on rough sketches, drawings, computer programmes and links to models, materials, furniture, objects.

IMPLICATION • RESOURCE BOXES WILL REPAY GREATER THOUGHT AND PLANNING. THE RIGHT MIX OF MEDIA AND HOW TO MAKE SURE THE TOPICS CO-ORDINATE WITH WHAT THE COLLEGES AND SCHOOLS ARE TEACHING.

What Support Is Needed?

Contemporary learning theory suggests

Readiness to learn is enhanced by perceived relevance of the subject.

Long term learning is confirmed by subsequent experience.

For Museum visits

Pre visit support helps by heightening the interest.

Post visit support helps by bringing the experience to bear.

If the V&A is able to support schools and colleges, by making personal visits, this has enormous impact.

"If the V&A person came to the school, they would build up the trip. The children would get excited. It whets the appetite." Teacher

"The children would feel special. They could come with a facsimile or something valuable." Teacher

"It would be great for me if I could invite someone from here to come to St. Martins at the end of the project." Professor

IMPLICATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• PRE AND POST SUPPORT WILL GREATLY ENHANCE THE SUCCESS OF THE RIBA/V&A COLLECTIONS. THE MORE PERSONAL, THE BETTER.
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Support For Teachers

Pre-visit

- A personal visit from the V&A to drum up interest and give context.
- Let teachers know what's in the collection and how it relates to the curriculum.
This information can go on the website.
- Loan boxes can be used as a taster.
- Give a personal contact for the trip.

"Allot one person to oversee the trip and educate." Teacher

- Be clear about arrangements for coach, lunch, dropping off bags, when they get to the Museum.

Post Visit

- Worksheets to be copied from the website.

"Reaffirming the activities you've done." Teacher

- A place on the website where students from each school can put in their own report of the visit (like the Ordnance Survey site).

IMPLICATION • TEACHERS SEEM MORE CONCERNED WITH UP FRONT SUPPORT AS WELL AS HIGHLY STRUCTURED ACTIVITIES DURING THE VISIT.

Support For Professors • Pre Visit

- HE Professors are tied into long lead times and specified syllabuses.
"Ours is a unitised system. It's a three year degree.
All planned." Professor
- They need information a long time in advance so they can make a judgement and plan in a role for the Museum.
Content - is it relevant?
Dates - can they be timetabled in?
"I need to know months in advance, this is going to happen, not in the next two weeks. I've got the whole year planned." Professor
"At FE level, we will build the exhibition into our course."
Professor
- Others have more flexibility.
"We have a short lead time, 2-3 weeks ahead. Something will come up, we'd say 'Wouldn't it be good.....'" Professor
So a monthly update of events would help.
"It would be good to look at a monthly update from the V&A over coffee."
Professor
- Everyone would benefit from a positive publicity campaign.
"Send out posters to decorate the place. Informative posters about the facilities."
Professor

IMPLICATION • COLLEGES NEED REPEATED ADVANCE INFORMATION ABOUT EVENTS AND EXHIBITIONS AND EARLY CO-ORDINATION BETWEEN V&A TOPICS AND COLLEGE SYLLABUSES.

Follow Up For Professors • Post Visit

- The desired experience is for students to talk through their ideas and research, both with other students and a V&A expert.

"If you could have a teaching session in the study room and be given a named member of staff, who wouldn't be embarrassed and doesn't start from scratch. They'll know how to deal with students of all sorts and their particular needs."

Professor

- Also helpful are practical facilities.

"Copying and photographing."

Professor

IMPLICATION • THE IDEAL IS FOR THE V&A EXPERIENCE TO INTEGRATE RELEVANTLY INTO THE EXAM COURSE.

Responses To The Museum's Intellectual Cut

How the subject is 'cut' is critical to its success with the user.

Ideally, the user must recognise topics and perceive them as relevant, even better, necessary.

There should be a sprinkling of tantalising innovative ideas too.

Popular topics

Creation of buildings as a process

The V&A building as a its own exhibit

Structures

Moving from 2D to 3D

Making connections between architecture and other

styles

Too abstract, not popular

Spatial thinking

Mapping

Scale

Missing from the cut

How buildings relate to people and express identity.

IMPLICATION • AT SCHOOL AND COLLEGE LEVEL, STUDENTS NEED TO EXPLORE THE FUNDAMENTALS ONLY AT PHD LEVEL, DO PEOPLE START TO GRAPPLE WITH ABSTRACT CONCEPTS. WHERE ARE THE PEOPLE IN THIS CUT?

Some Quotes To Illustrate

"Making connections yes! It's important to teach people, architects designed the most important furniture." Student

"The V&A itself has quite a wide appeal. It would make the architecture quite relevant. It's quite a cool building." Student

"It looks physically different when I put it together in 3D." Student

"Think from object to theory and infer the theoretical construction. Why is this not like that?" Professor

"Mapping is too abstract. A lot of theoretical approaches are too much for my students." Professor

"Metaphor and symbols in a religious context. How space takes on a meaning and affects how people move and think. Cruciform." Professor

"Dwelling and inhabiting is more anthropological. It's more than 18th Century drawings." Professor

"Spatial thinking, I'm not sure you could do a whole workshop on that. It's a bit ethereal." Teacher

A Last Word On Spatial Thinking

- 2D → 3D is intelligible and interesting and can be visualised. Brings to mind
 - Computer design
 - Going from drawings to models
 - Creating a 3D object.

Fat drawing sounds fun and challenging.

"You can't get a feel for space if it's not in 3D." Student
"You get the concept of space, rotational models. An image looking down." Teacher

- But the psychological aspects of space are too abstract and difficult
 - Spatial thinking Mapping
 - Inhabiting space Dyslexia and dyspraxia

"I have some difficulty in seeing how it develops." Professor

- That said, anyone with personal experience of dyslexia and dyspraxia and how they affect people's relationship with space, engage strongly with the subject.

"My brother is dyslexic. He gets lost in buildings. Try and make it so people with dyslexia can have the same response." Student

IMPLICATION • THE SKILL WILL LIE IN ENGAGING PEOPLE WITH THESE MORE DIFFICULT SUBJECTS AT THE MARGIN OF THEIR CORE STUDY.

Some Directions For Future Development

- Name the new Collections Centre and publicise its concept and content widely and persuasively. Think in terms of The Architecture Ideas Bank at the V&A
- Ensure that key fundamentals are offered in topic form, probably supported by resource boxes and helpful computer cross referencing.
- Consider zoning the public areas
 - Mature study area; original documents
 - Social browsing area; resource boxes, reproductions, technology, coffee
 - Teaching room; structured activities
 - Consultation area; with V&A experts

- Strive for as much personal contact with V&A experts as you can offer.
 - Pre and post visits
 - Informal conversations in and around the collections
- Look to design rapid access routes to material, plus the capacity to gather a mix of material to address the user's specific research needs.
- Develop a well resourced package for learning aspects of architecture theory from the building itself.

Process

Styl

Relation to the neighbourhood

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