

Evaluation of Design 2 / Hollingdean Community Centre.

Has the design worked?

The initial brief was 'To make our Community Centre beautiful'.

The Design has improved the appearance of the outdoor environment and made it feel a lot more welcoming.

It has achieved this by adding areas where food and flowers can be grown and by supporting groups who use the Community Centre to put their waste food & cardboard into the composting bins that were introduced while doing the design.

A core group of residents have been identified as able and willing to keep water, weed and maintain the growing spaces.

It has gone beyond the initial brief by also providing fresh vegetables to the local community and improving systems for dealing with waste by turning what was a problem into the wonderful solution of compost to be used at the Centre and by the local community.

I am still waiting for water butts to be added to the building and am assured that this hasn't been forgotten about.

As a fairly regular visitor to the Centre and a local resident - I enjoy keeping an eye on the beds and planters and liaising with the Centre Manager & core group when things need to be done. I hope over time that some of the other core group will feel confident to take more of a lead on this.

Reflecting on using the Design Framework & Tools.

I was attracted to using CEAP as a framework as the language felt slightly more fluid and open compared to SADIM, plus I wanted to see if it brought different ideas. I got quite confused about what tools were appropriate in what part of the process but I found the document below really helpful.

[design frameworks and methods.pdf \(permaculture.org.uk\)](https://permaculture.org.uk/design-frameworks-and-methods.pdf)

I made lots of notes throughout the process and needed to make a lot of decisions on the spot. There wasn't a year to observe. This was a huge learning curve as it involved working with so many groups. It was a challenge to write this up at the end of the project.

Mapping was useful when talking through initial ideas with people and measuring up for the planters, sectors were really important in understanding what was appropriate for the site, PNI was good in identifying pros and cons of design elements, seasonal plant lists were a good way to share ideas with the Centre manager and identify gaps of colour/structure.

Permaculture principles.

In my head I always have 'small, slow solutions' & 'produce no waste'. I am very guilty of jumping into detail so the principle 'Design from Patterns to Details' is a very useful one for me.

My journey as a designer.

This was a wonderful learning opportunity and has also improved an area where I live which is identified as being very deprived. It has proved to be a wonderful way to connect with local residents who have been previously hard to make contact with - I meet them on a regular basis when I eat at The Real Junkfood Project on Thursdays.

The planters have been a productive way to bring food growing into a hard landscaped space, but I have learnt better ways to design them for future projects.

My skills in identifying attractive and low maintenance plants for hanging baskets have also improved.

I am currently catching up on writing up another 2 designs and the thing I have learnt from this is to SLOW DOWN. In the early stages of my diploma I was so enthusiastic and excited to be designing, I was saying 'Yes' to lots of things. Once I have written up the next 2 designs I am going to focus just on 1 project which is my allotment. This is a piece of land I have observed and interacted with for 11 years and I am hoping it will be a real opportunity to explore soil health, regenerative practice and also provide a good amount of food for myself and my co-workers. I also have a lot more control about the space so am excited to see what new ways of using the space will be thrown up by the design process.

Polly Charlton 9.8.23