

Call for expressions of interest -

Empowering Design Practices: historic places of worship as catalysts for connecting communities

Empowering Design Practices is a new five-year research project exploring historic places of worship and their potential as community resources. The project is funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council and includes the following partners: The Open University, English Heritage, the Historic Religious Buildings Alliance, Heritage Lottery Fund and The Glass-House Community Led Design.

The aim

The project aims to work with those who look after historic places of worship and explore the support mechanisms and practices that would help them to more effectively engage with their communities and create more open, vibrant and sustainable places.

What we are looking for

New projects: *We are looking to identify and work with people who run historic places of worship (including historic churches, mosques, synagogues and temples) and where they are planning to embark on a project that includes restoration and/or some physical change in their building. We are specifically looking for projects that want to create more open and sustainable places by effectively engaging with the needs of their community (worshippers and local communities).*

Past projects: *We are also looking to work with people that have already completed such projects in order to learn from their experience but also help them capture and share their projects with others.*

Through these collaborations the project team will aim to develop and evaluate new ways of working, supporting and building capacity for communities that embark on such projects.

What do we offer?

The project team, which includes architects and experts on historic places of worship, design, and community engagement, will work together with these people to support them in their

project journey. We are planning to have various levels of interaction and support with places of worship and their communities:

Ongoing support: We are targeting to build 4 long partnerships with places of worship/communities that require support at all stages of development from visioning through occupancy, for the 5 years of this project

Targeted support: We also aim to offer more targeted, short term, support to projects through themed or bespoke workshops focussed on specific needs - such as for instance support on setting up a project, getting the design brief right, getting the most out of a listed building or community engagement in the design process.

If you want to get involved or for more information about Empowering Design Practices contact Theodore Zamenopoulos at t.zamenopoulos@open.ac.uk, Katerina Alexiou at k.alexiou@open.ac.uk and Becky Payne at beckypa@hotmail.co.uk