Woodvale Park, located in the socially and economically deprived area of the Upper Shankill, embodies both the fragility and the potential of under-utilised and negatively perceived public space in Belfast.

WOODVALE HUB

How is it possible for citizens to initiate projects that would otherwise be neglected by the institutional and developer-driven mechanisms that shape the public spaces of cities like Belfast? And how is it possible to act as agents of this alternative action? Building Initiative developed tactics, methods, and active approaches to build consensus, confidence and capacity about the future of public space within this fragmented social context.

Local residents, represented by Friends of Woodvale Park approached Building Initiative to facilitate the process of citizen-led regeneration of Woodvale Park. They wanted to create a "Hybrid-Use Building" or HUB that, in their words, "is equally welcoming to users that are traditionally at odds (e.g., young adults and pensioners, racial minorities and long-term white residents, etc.), all of whom feel a sense of 'ownership' of the place". The proposed site was the disused pitch in a corner of the park beside a high-traffic shopping centre and just below a traditionally volatile interface between two communities.
WOODVALE HUB STUDENT PROJECT

The Woodvale Hub is run as a student project at the University of Ulster School of Architecture. This generates many diverse ideas, and broadens the discussion and possibilities beyond pre-conceived solutions. This builds the profile of the project in the surrounding community and Belfast institutions, and benefits the students by providing the opportunity to engage meaningfully with a real social context.

INITIATION
Building Initiative is approached by local residents and interest groups represented by Friends of Woodvale Park.

BRIEF FORMATION
Building Initiative assisted by Friends of Woodvale Park to prepare a document compiling knowledge, experiences, aspirations, and background of local residents about the need for the Woodvale Hub.

PRESENTATION TO BCC PARKS DEPT
Brief document is formally presented to Belfast City Council Parks Committee, who give approval in principle to the Woodsale Hub.

FUNDING APPLICATIONS
- May 07
  To Belfast City Council Heritage Funding Program (Unsuccessful)
- June 07
  To Arts Council Northern Ireland Re-Mapping Communities Program (Unsuccessful)
- Sept 07
  To University of Ulster Cultural Development Programme
- Oct 07
  To Arts Council Northern Ireland Project Funding
- Jan 08
  To Department of Social Development Modernisation Fund for Capital Funding (Unsuccessful)

FEBRUARY - MAY 07

- 26th February 07
  SITE INTERVENTION
  The students analyze and suggest new uses for the site, which they communicate to existing physical interventions and performances in the park. This explores ambitions of park users and media. Local papers cover this event.

- 3rd May 07
  EXHIBITION OF STUDENT WORK
  Students present their design schemes in a marquee in the park. This event is publicized and is attended by park users and parents by and other bodies such as Ground Work NI. Arts Council of Northern Ireland, BCC Parks Department, local community groups, and media.

- May 07
  TV DOCUMENTARY
  This is produced by local media covering the exhibition of student projects in the park. It explains the projects background, and promotes projects exercises and the history of the park.

PARK RENOVATION
- "LANDFORM"
- "EMBRACING STRUCTURE"
- "RADIATING BUILDING"
- "PATHWAYS"
- "PAVILION"
- "PLAZA BUILDING"
- "COURTYARD"
Build Initiative (B.I.)
Friends of Woodvale Park (FWP)
Arts Council of Northern Ireland
University of Ulster Cultural Development

February 08
6th March 08
11th March 08
16th March 08
21st March 08
26th March 08
April 08
June 08

ARTS COUNCIL FUNDING

Building Initiative (B.I.)
Friends of Woodvale Park (FWP)
Arts Council of Northern Ireland
University of Ulster Cultural Development

Consortium to Yellow Press
Community Groups
Students
Local Historian
Urban Geographer
Alignment Holder
Workshop Participants
Building Initiative (Editor)

WORKSHOP 1: THE GAME

A strategy board game is developed to play out various possibilities and priorities using game pieces indicating different conditions and functions ranging from land uses to land uses. These pieces are also given construction and maintenance costs allowing participants to prioritise proposals against different budget scenarios.

WORKSHOP 2: STRATEGIES AND STAGING

The game is used to illustrate how the previous workshops are transformed into spatial diagrams. A visualisation emerges or a new public space is suggested through the use of visual tools. This could be a new bus shelter, a new park, or a new café.

WORKSHOP 3: YOUTH WORKSHOP

Workshop is held in local schools. It involves students in a week-long workshop where they are asked to design a new public space for the park. The day of the workshop is dedicated to the public to review the work of the students and to discuss the best ideas.

YELLOW PRESS PUBLISHED

The final Bristol issue of the Bristol Press and the final copy of the project is published. The project is then presented to the public and to the local authorities. The project is then presented to the public and to the local authorities.

FEEDBACK

Feedback is taken from the public and from the public and from the public and from the public.

CONSULTATIONS

Consultations are carried out with Planning Authorities and Roads Department regarding proposed pedestrian access and cycling routes into the park.

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