

OPEN UP! Architecture visit to the CUE building at the Horniman Museum

On Friday 9th October, twenty three Year 8 pupils visited the CUE building at the Horniman Museum. They were accompanied by teachers from the Technology department and Miss Riddell, representing the JAGS Environmental Group. In the spirit of sustainability, our very well behaved party, travelled by Number 185 bus. There we met up with practising architect, Nadine Adamski of Forge Architects and Louise Palmer from the Horniman Museum Education Department. The purpose of the trip was to visit the CUE Building (Centre for Understanding the Environment) and take part in a workshop to help us learn about the building's design and construction, about the work of architects in general and issues concerning sustainability in building design.



The Centre for Understanding the Environment (CUE) was opened in 1996 and it incorporates advanced ecological design features and is built from materials, which aspire to be renewable, reusable, energy efficient, locally produced, durable and healthy. It now houses the Horniman Library, a valuable collection of books concerning ethnology, musical instruments and Natural History. The CUE building was designed to be a temporary structure but at fifteen years old, it is still going strong. It is made almost entirely of wood and has a grass roof for insulation. Inside cold air is funnelled through wooden hollow pillars and rises through port holes -warm, circulating into the building making a very pleasant ambient working temperature. We had a tour and discussion about the building's relationship to the more recently built extension, comparing scale and the design of the entrances; entrances are very important. Girls sketched the plans and elevations of the CUE building, using a JAGS girl as a scale factor...five Sophie's = one side of the building! There were some key questions to discuss about the features and advantages of such a building and Nadine chaired the girl's presentations. A quick thank you, re-group and head count and back on the bus in time to arrive back at school for the end of the day; a very smooth running, informative and sustainable visit. The girls had an interesting afternoon out and a rare chance to hear a professional talk about one of South East London's favourite buildings.