



What is Architectural Democracy?

We either sleepwalk our way to automated democracy and isolation or we develop tools for us to plan cities and communities for the kind of people we want to become.

Architectural Democracy started as an academic research in Finland 10 years ago. The term was coined by Pedro Aibéo, proposing a framework of the relationships between architecture and democracy for all stakeholders to better understand the complexity of cities and thus to participate more actively in the planning decisions that affect their lives.

Based on growing interest, active affiliations globally, and a track record of collaborations, Architectural Democracy is now considered a nascent movement, an informal academic discipline, encompassing service architecture and has its own developments. Aibéo & team provide leadership, but by no means is there a centralised doctrine.

The purpose of Architectural Democracy

The purpose of Architectural Democracy is to improve resident well being and economic outcomes from both new build and regeneration projects. An adjacent purpose is to reduce social and economic risk for planners and developers. To achieve this we identify for residents the problem of passivity and isolation, and identify directions for constructive engagement that informs planners, developers and other decision-makers.

Non-ideological approach

Architectural Democracy is not ideological. Informed participation is more effective if ideological constraints are avoided and a better balance of decision-making is pursued. This will reflect needs as well as aspirations, and will result in higher wellbeing, economic efficiency, sustainability, etc.

The challenge

Just as people and institutions in a controlled society don't know how a democracy works and responds to citizen input, both residents and city planners have imperfect models of participation. We simply do not know how to interact. Architectural Democracy has experience in research, gamification and other forms of engagement.

The core: bigger ideas and collaborations

Aibéo and two other partners, Mark Linder and Stefan Gustafsson, constitute a design collective to create ideas for larger collaborations, provide storytelling, stakeholder engagement and advocacy expertise. Architectural Democracy has secured academic, foundation sponsorships, and prestigious invitations. Although we are asked to provide services, the ArcDem team has not settled on a business model. Our current focus is building ArcDem's convening power to create new and more significant collaborations.