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As the Big Society agenda gathers pace, the potential of 3D technology for community consultation, education, training and conservation projects is also being explored

re-created its original appearance with crowds of virtual Romans walking its streets. The model illustrates the possibilities of 3D technologies – the CityEngine software itself has numerous applications and functions, including the editing of dynamic city layouts and modelling of 3D streets and buildings.
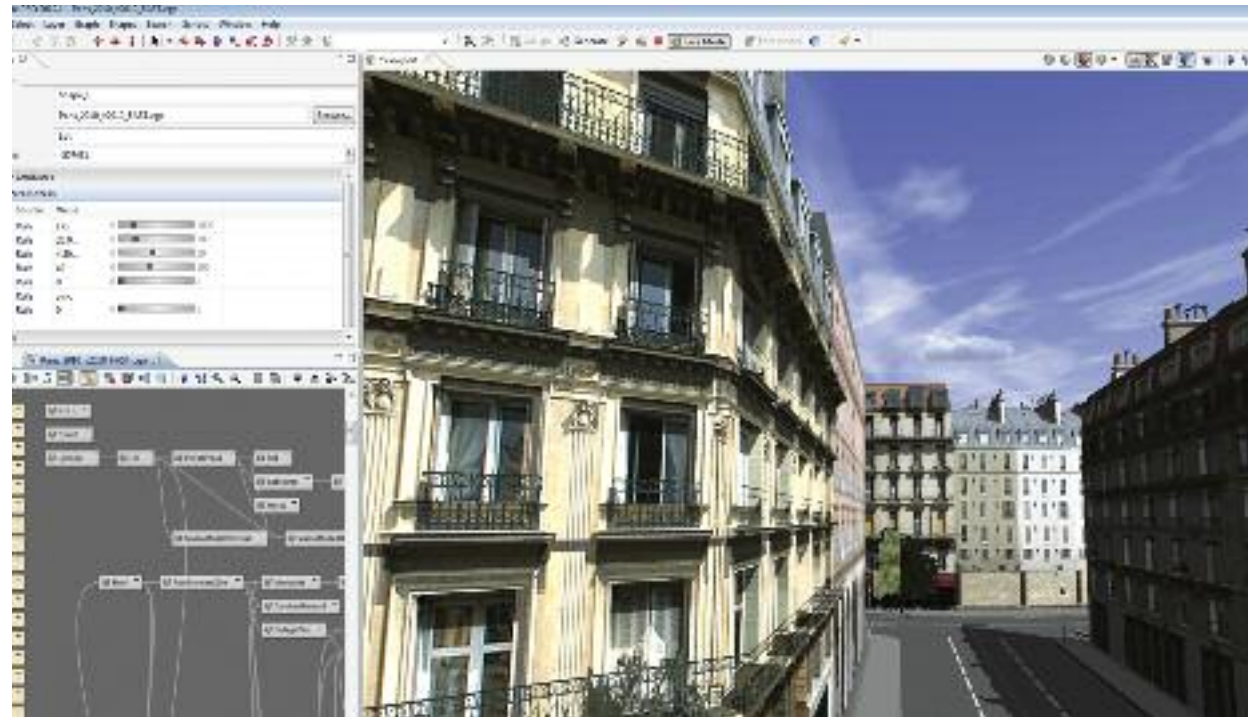
3D HANDS-ON SCENARIOS

As the Big Society agenda gathers pace, the potential of 3D technology for community consultation, education, training and conservation projects is also being explored. Site-specific 3D flythoughs are already being used by local authorities for public consultations, while interactive 3D maps using moveable objects have been developed to give a more 'hands-on' experience of placemaking scenarios.

I-create, an architectural visualisation and 3D architectural rendering company based in the UK, has developed 3D interactive masterplans which use touchscreens as a communication tool for use in consultations and presentations. The company also offer interactive 3D walkthroughs and virtual worlds that combine advanced computer gaming expertise with 3D architectural visualisation to present realistic models of new developments. This immersive 3D experience presents great possibilities for use in the planning and design process and could become a useful tool to assess the impact of new designs and developments on urban areas.

Change happens fast and 3D technologies are likely to become ever more visible in the placemaker's toolkit. The potential for testing, visualising and communicating plans and designs could lead to more efficient urban developments but, as with all technologies, it should assist and not overly influence decisions.

Imagina 2011, the European 3D simulation and visualization event, will take place in Monaco from 1-3 February2011 www.imagina.mc

The CityEngine software, developed by the Swiss firm Procedural, has numerous applications and functions, including the editing of dynamic city layouts and the fast and responsive modelling of 3D streets and buildings