



Universities and their cities – some observations for framing a debate

Introductory comments

The higher education sector is undergoing rapid and radical change worldwide. The European Union is committed to university reform and the UK government is pursuing major expansion of the sector with new campus buildings in the pipeline across the country. A seminar on the expected changes in HE was held at the RIBA on 10.01.2007, following which Building Futures decided to investigate further. The project currently underway asks how universities and their cities will look, feel and function twenty years from today.

The very definitions of higher education, universities, and academia are up for debate. To complicate matters, HE is now part of a global and extremely competitive market and the sector is increasingly segmented and diverse.

We are barely aware of the broader transformations underway as HE's social, economic and cultural role is moulded to fit a post-industrial rather than an industrial economy and only just beginning to get a sense of the possible implications for the built environment. We do know that many institutions are technically innovative as well as creative in the way they accommodate the activities that go on inside them. Most universities still have architectural as well as institutional boundaries but the relationship between higher education (HE) and the rest of society is undergoing a shift and growth in student numbers is driving changes in residential patterns.

The current transformation is usually discussed in connection with globalisation and technological change. It is often imagined as a historical continuum from pure research to today's commercial science 'parks' and university spin-offs. But since the seventeenth century if not longer, universities and commercial efforts have been intertwined. Scholarship has also always been embedded within a wider social fabric, regardless of popular conceptions of academic isolation in 'Ivory Towers'.

University buildings can even endow whole cities with character and so decisions about campuses are also decisions about the broader environment. To make better decisions about higher education buildings architects, planners and other regeneration professionals as well as residents and politicians need to be a better understanding of what the drivers are behind the great enthusiasm for mass higher education. They also require a realistic assessment of the potential benefits. This is challenging because to date the question about what a university is, and how to reproduce it, has fostered live debate and considerable disagreements over facts as well as aspirations.

For those who work in them universities – a term used loosely in this essay – are communities of people and they are, at their most cherished at least, made up of buildings with emotional and practical, functional and even perhaps spiritual meaning. The academic ‘community’ also values, however ambivalently, the intellectual autonomy traditionally associated with scholarship. Universities have also tended to be inherently international and academic work has long been done by transient, but also healthier than average, populations.

Characteristically universities operate a functional distinction between postgraduate and research activity on the one hand and undergraduate teaching on the other, but a third strand, one of civic engagement, is being progressively introduced as standard. This may have significant implications for the built environment.

University buildings are already used for a range of activities by the wider community. Institutions can also serve larger numbers by offering virtual learning, using both old and new technology to reach students far away. Some are developing life-long learning. Others have actually enlarged an existing campus with the aim of making their locality more attractive to older residents. Also, new forms of higher education are being developed as education and business are brought together in corporate universities where an individual’s skills and talent are recognised and nurtured as specifically commercial assets, and where learning is directly oriented towards workplace performance.

We hope to provoke discussion about the built environment impacts of such transformations. The changes being pushed through at the moment with such enthusiasm and speed will have deep, long-term and large-scale consequences. We want to make a space for considering what good university environments could be, how staff and students relate to their non-academic neighbours and how change in higher education can best be managed. The themes that we will look at include: the emergence of extremely large campuses and sprawling student populations; university governance and collaboration with host towns; international university brands; innovations in funding; new social and cultural roles for higher education; new technology; heightened social mobility; life-long learning.

Some numbers*

There is an abundance of data on HE, but there are complications in interpreting the figures because academic institutions developed very much as national (even nationalist) projects. Many global figures refer to tertiary education, incorporating both academic degree-level, relatively long-term (at least three years) study and more vocational courses. In the UK the development of higher education curricula and new subjects or new qualifications (e.g. in nursing, performing and decorative arts) further alters the meaning of the numeric indicators. The 2004 Higher Education Act even removed the requirement for the definition of a university to include awarding research degrees.

To help make sense of this proliferation of qualifications, an industry of quality assurance and benchmarking has emerged including such processes as the Research Assessment Exercise (RAE) and teaching quality measurement by the Quality Assurance Agency. The European Union's Bologna Process of harmonising higher education aims to create a system for comparing degrees and skills by 2010 and global indicators to facilitate comparisons are being developed by UNESCO and others.

In August 2007 in the UK there were 168 Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) including 106 universities on countless campuses. 47 of them teach over 20,000 students and the trend is towards ever larger units. In 2005/06 there were 2,336,115 students in HE. The figure is not that much higher than a few years ago, but it is up by almost 50% from ten years earlier with an increase of 108% in part time undergraduate places. The participation rate (17 to 30-year olds in HE) is now 47%, near the government's target of 50% by 2010. In the early 1960s only about 6% of young people went to university and so the current situation is frequently referred to as a shift from elite to mass HE.

There has also been growth in the numbers working in academia, with an increase of 11% in academic staff between 1995 and 2000. In 2005/6, there were 164,877 academic staff in the UK's HEIs. Expansion will require growing this workforce year on year, through training up students but also through recruiting from overseas. Whilst there is often talk of a 'brain drain' out of the UK, in fact 'brain circulation' or even 'gain' may be more accurate terms. Importantly, by comparison with other OECD countries, the UK has for a long time not had a high proportion of young people entering HE and the proportion of the population holding an academic degree is also relatively low, only 27% compared to North America's 40%.

There are huge increases in 'tertiary education' worldwide but graduation ratios (percentage of young people of graduation age attaining a tertiary degree) vary hugely, with Finland leading at 56% (2006) while parts of sub-Saharan Africa don't even reach 1%. Although the figures also take in large numbers of students working towards diplomas that would not, by European standards, be considered of university level, growth is striking. The OECD mean average has gone from about 16% between 1964 and 1972 to almost 30% between 1994 and 2003. The expansion of HE in China is an issue of

* The data come from various publicly available sources, including Universities UK (UUK), the Higher Education Policy Institute (HEPI) and the Global Education Digest.

considerable international interest, partly because of the numbers involved. China accounted for 64% of the total student increase in East Asia from 1991 to 2004 despite reduced rates of population growth (GED 2006: 22)

The increases are attributable partly to worldwide efforts to promote educational achievement, but also to economic globalisation and increased geographical mobility. The numbers of so-called 'internationally mobile students', studying in countries where they are not permanent residents, jumped by 41% between 1999 and 2004. Other projections estimate growth from 1.8 million in 2000 to over 7 million in 2020. Besides enrolment in host countries' own institutions this includes students at 'offshore' campuses. For example Australia's Monash University has a programme of building overseas campuses (including one in London) with plans to enrol almost 80,000 students, half of them international.

At European level, the Lisbon Strategy (2000) for economic reform requires enhancing the knowledge sector, i.e. HE. This has given further impetus to the so-called Bologna process (based on the Bologna Declaration of 1999) to create a European Higher Education Area by 2010, effectively a common market in education. Inspired by the belief that this will counter-balance the USA's overwhelming lead in HE, it works towards standardised teaching enabling credit transfer, and it provides Europe-wide guidelines for modernising universities. It has also meant substantial capital investments.

In the wealthy world there is growing nervousness about the rise of China and India, whose growing economies now challenge older economic powers. These countries are playing novel and, as some see it, threatening roles in the global higher education race, leading to routine exhortations elsewhere to keep up and wake up. What exactly the expansion of higher education in formerly poorer economies means, is not yet fully understood. UNESCO is concerned further that its implications for poorer women are potentially worrying, as the embrace of the knowledge economy introduces new forms of gender discrimination.

In China university reform has been underway since 1985, with countless mergers and radical changes in administration. There are now 25 million students, a five-fold increase in the nine years to 2007, but still only about 15% of the age group. Postgraduate research has expanded most remarkably. In 1996 China produced a mere 5000 PhDs, today's figures are six times that, a trend that means it will soon overtake the USA. New campuses are under construction both by the Chinese and in collaboration or partnership with overseas institutions. The UK's Nottingham University is one of a growing number of overseas universities investing in the Chinese mainland. Continued major expansion in China is part of a national plan, "Project 211", which invests in the HE infrastructure, some of which is huge in scale. For instance Henan, with already 30 000 students, is currently building a totally new campus on a 123ha site.

In many countries, including the UK, universities are huge land owners and hold substantial assets, though there are also worries that these may turn out to be financial liabilities. Currently HEIs are major clients for the architectural and other built environment professions. According to AUDE (Association of University Directors of Estates) in 2004 universities had 24.9 million m² gross

space, an estimated property revenue cost £1,552 million p.a. and an insurance replacement value £38.9 billion.

Economic considerations

HE's economic significance is undoubtedly growing. In the UK income was £12.8 billion in 1999/2000, rising to £16.87 billion in 2003/4 directly accounting for the 1.2% of full time equivalent jobs - and going up. Governments, and arguably electorates, now measure university activities within a framework of cost-benefit analysis and direct accountability to funders. Universities are seen as producing a yield, information and skills, whose benefits can be directly transferred from one setting to another as an asset, delivering productivity, growth and welfare. In terms of economic geography, the shift from industrial production to information and knowledge as economic assets means that university towns and cities, as magnets for mass (knowledge) producers, are today's equivalent of the industrial centres of the past.

The current boom is expected continue for some time. In the UK critics anticipated a fall in student numbers subsequent to the introduction of fees (in 1998) but this has not in fact had much impact. So-called top-up fees were introduced in autumn 2006, allowing universities to charge differential fees in a bid to create a market for buying a higher education. But demographic trends also impinge on future student populations. It is estimated that by 2020 the drop in full-time students will be over 20,000, without taking into account possible changes in international intake.

Around the globe higher education policies, like universities' promotional literature and websites, look much the same. That radical reform is needed to ensure "economic strength and social harmony" (Charles Clarke, Education Secretary)[†] is a routine exhortation, at least in the advanced industrialised countries. The overarching imperative, to change and to do so under global pressures, is often supported with heroic stories of institutions that have succeeded in entrepreneurial activities and in attracting top students and world-class staff. On the other hand, the wisdom of pursuing urgent, speedy and sometimes formulaic reform, has often been challenged.[‡]

The income generated by universities is made up of many components. HE produces a highly skilled labour force for the economy, it generates innovations that translate into intellectual property rights and enterprise, and locally it creates jobs and supports consumer spending. There are financial costs as well in having large numbers of students, notably for housing and services – including disposing of the waste universities create. Many cities have already tackled these issues head on, by integrating university expansion into their planning policies. Boston (College) is one, Helsinki another. In the UK Cambridge is possibly a pioneer in this, but others have followed suit, e.g. Loughborough, although in many cases major transformations have come about without the benefit of much joined-up

[†] Foreword to Education White Paper 2003

[‡] E.g. Marilyn Strathern ed. (2000) *Audit Cultures: Anthropological studies in accountability, ethics and the academy*, London and New York: Routledge; Rosemary Deem (2007) 'Producing and Re/producing the European University in the 21st Century: research perspectives on the shifting purposes of higher education', paper for World University Network Seminar, London, November 2007, available at <http://www.wun.ac.uk/theglobaluniversity/workshop.html> (April 2008)

thinking. It remains to be seen how Statements of Community Involvement (Planning Act, 2004) will influence this.

As was the case with industrialisation, socio-economic change today is highly uneven across the world, but the linkages between different types of players are and will remain relevant to understanding future developments. 'World class' status is the stated aim of many a policy maker or university head, but obviously "not all universities are the same and [...] not all have the same world conquering ambitions"[§]. Administratively, financially as well as pedagogically, there are huge and growing differences within HE, with regional divergences and new typologies emerging. Global economic trends, like growth in disposable income and increased geographical mobility, obscure many important, spatially specific details.

The Association of University Directors of Estates recognise the variation among HEIs, and stresses that global excellence is a goal for only a few institutions, and this should be considered when planning future construction. Municipalities and regions also need to further investigate the links between universities and economic success since it is not always clear who the specific beneficiaries might be.

The Bologna process has progressed as a Europe-wide response to global economic competition. In many countries investing in universities is debated in nationalist terms, e.g. Finland, a country openly proud of its recent successes as well as of its NIS, or National Innovation System. China's university expansion echoes earlier geopolitical power struggles. Meanwhile individual cities and municipalities and whole social groups, however, can miss out as the rewards of the information revolution are distributed. One of the UK's most economically vibrant university cities is Cambridge, but parts of it suffer severe deprivation. This is a visible feature of many of the USA's most famous university towns also.

Its uneven economic impacts notwithstanding, since the Second World War HE has been a growth industry. But it has often been beset by financial problems. After the 1960s expansion of British HE, it soon became clear that university expenditure was something that can grow explosively, with "the government insisting on ever larger numbers of graduates at lower cost"^{**}. But by the late 1990s many universities were, or almost were, in deficit in a way they had not previously experienced. In the wake of the geopolitical upheavals of 1989-90 and the subsequent recession, there was increased demand for academic skills but the costs of the industry had also risen. Some have interpreted the squeeze on universities as part of a more general pressure on all publicly funded organisations to improve cost-effectiveness. It has been discussed as a shift from higher education as a public good to a private good whose benefits to the individual are substantial enough to warrant being treated as an investment in future earning potential, i.e. a private matter.

It has become routine to debate universities in language that elevates 'innovation' and 'creativity' to unquestioned values. More specifically,

[§] From Deem op cit. 2007, p. 30

^{**} Tony Birks and Michael Holford (1972) *Building the New Universities*, Newton Abbot: David and Charles Publishers, p. 22

universities and their social functions have been discussed for about two decades through the metaphor of the triple-helix, made up of government, industry and university. Together they are being asked to respond together to the economy's need for more productivity and efficiency. This is mainly a business agenda but many academics love it too. The consequent shift in emphasis and in academic culture is reflected in the change of name of the UK's relevant ministry, 'Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills'.

As with many of the issues, it is important not to lose sight of the very long term, and to remember that universities have long cost immense amounts of money. In the UK universities' funding dates back to the founding of the Universities Grants Council in 1919. But elsewhere too, including the USA, over the last 100 years (and longer) university assets were typically developed through public grants. Many of the USA's universities were training grounds for minerals and agricultural experts, crucial to commerce, and so considered entitled to public subsidy.

In Europe higher education used to be state funded, but now students are increasingly paying fees and where they are not, the discussion is alive about whether they should. The USA's HE has a broad mix of funding types, but private funding including high fees is more socially acceptable than in Europe. The UK is interesting in this respect, in that within it are four national systems of funding with different student experiences. Scotland has so far resisted charging fees directly from students whilst England's universities are being reorganised into a market place with low and high-end products.

The cost of education should be a primary concern of any society. But it is research that has excited political and academic passions more, notably in OECD countries. R&D (Research and Development) spending has been going up steadily since at least the early 1990s, with the UK around average for the G7 countries but with industry consistently lobbying government to invest more and government seeking to encourage industry to do its bit. The science budget more than doubled from 1997 to 2007 rising to £3.4 billion. The majority of this budget is allocated to the Research Councils to support research and the research infrastructure.

(Curiously, although science and engineering units – laboratories, technical support facilities, science and technology parks and the like – account for much of the new building and are talked of as a source of technological innovation and, enrolments in engineering and technology subjects (excluding computing) in the UK continue to be low.)

Whatever the national specifics, a key factor shaping tomorrow's universities will be how the internationalisation of HE proceeds. Contradictory forces are at play here, from massive rates of increase in international students, to government-imposed barriers to entry in the name of security policies.

In 2004 the UK had 11% of world's international students and they are explicitly seen as a source of income. There has been a considerable increase in the number of students from non-EU countries compared to the UK or the EU (but the enlargement of the EU has a distorting effect on the figures). In 2005/6 China was clearly the most significant provider of students to the UK. India, USA and Republic of Ireland follow.

As the world's second largest importer of students after the USA, the UK enjoys, for now, a large tranche of the global market. The dominance of the English language has helped it maintain a level of excellence and wide dissemination in scholarly output as well. Campuses now recruit very actively from abroad, organising open days, auditions etc. overseas.

Though there seems to be agreement that getting foreign students in is a top priority, there are warning voices suggesting that the honeymoon period may be over. This is not just a financial problem. From a sociological perspective overseas students can be seen as a way to renew and refresh the academic system. The UK also suffers from reduced social mobility which will affect the ability of school-leavers to enter HE. Meanwhile, in the USA, there is evidence of stagnation in the HE sector, which extends to a slow-down in recruiting top talent from overseas. This may be related to the explosive growth and development of the university system in China as its students will no longer be seeking places abroad but will be catered to on domestic campuses.

The management of universities has excited the passions for decades. There are signs of disgruntlement about HEIs being run by professional managers, as well as about the gulf – in remuneration and in attitude – between Vice Chancellors and other academic staff. Yet HEIs are now financial operators within an ever more complex maze of economic forces with fragmented and dispersed accountabilities whose management arguably requires specialist skills.

Overall universities are treated as wealth creators. However, although clearly embracing a business agenda, the Bruegel think tank (for European and international economics) notes that universities' research performance correlates with autonomy and this in turn may be linked to who has building ownership. At a broad level, they note that governance in EU universities should be better and (even) more geared towards commercial output than at present.

New financial instruments are being developed to sustain and expand HE. Mergers have been common, though not always uncontested, and some proposed mergers, e.g. of London's UCL and Imperial College, have been halted amid controversy. Elsewhere 'super universities' have emerged, like Manchester which now has over 35,000 students, others, London for example, may yet fragment. New forms of collaboration, including international partnerships, and university franchises are also up and running. The arrival of more private sector players in HE is a fact, and one that will have pedagogical implications. It is probable that as the private HE sector grows it will concentrate on commercially profitable areas, including business and management, and areas of science and technology.

The standard model of success in HE remains the USA, far and away the leader in most academic research fields. Its academic system is uneven, but overall investment in HE is much higher than in the EU, as are the rankings of US institutions in the Shanghai index of research performance. Notwithstanding news of anticipated stagnation in its universities, it still leads in all areas of campus developments and may yield insights into tomorrow's HE.

Building trends

Academics have always been at pains to show that their contribution is, above all, totally new and totally radical. To sift through the rhetoric, some understanding of the historical development of HE buildings is thus helpful. It is also worth noting that the long prevailing idea of what a university is and looks like is also historically shaped. The oldest universities go back about 700 – 800 years, but it was developments in late 19th century Europe and North America that have informed contemporary notions of what universities ought to be.

University buildings have long been seen as a metaphor for what goes on inside them. In the USA university architecture was explicitly utopian and progressive and designed to help develop universities as communities. This was easily done on large, hitherto almost undeveloped lands, producing the campus model, notably on land-grant colleges. In the early 19th century Thomas Jefferson implemented strictly rationalist designs at Charlottesville, Virginia. Later Stanford University realised a grand plan of courtyards plus arboretum, and across the continent campuses tend to replicate a model of leafy calm combined with classical motifs and a ground plan that pays homage to classical antiquity.

The UK's/England's equivalent to America's 19th century campuses were the 'Redbrick' or 'civic' universities built particularly in northern, industrial strongholds but usually within the urban area. The separate campus was introduced to the UK through the so-called 'Shakespearean Seven' with their origins in the 1963 Robbins report into the future of higher education. They were (written about as) innovative and bold architectural experiments carried out with largely public funds, and they left a substantial mark on the environment – and on academia as an institution, expanding higher education and aiming to erode its elitism.

Arguably the academy has always had an interest in and the capacity for forward-looking building. Furthermore, as Brian Edwards argues in *University Architecture* (2001), as developers universities have often taken a particularly long-term view of their assets. As well as experimenting with cutting-edge technical solutions, typically, at least in the better instances, they have also worked with masterplans that provide a sense of order and vitality. There is ample evidence of the future orientation of universities as architects' clients. Even existing urban centres can accommodate self-consciously forward-looking design (e.g. Columbia University's master plan by Piano) as well as new campuses like the private, not-for-profit Bond University's campus in Australia opened in 1989.

In the late 20th century research success actually translated directly into changes in urban form. The most famous cases are probably Stanford's Silicon Valley, Boston's Route 28 and, in England, Cambridge. In all of them (and elsewhere), urban life and built form have taken shape as part of specific university-industry success stories. None have, however, progressed without some social and, in California's case at least environmental, disruption.

On the other hand, universities are also said to have a key role in commissioning and developing ecologically sustainable architecture.

Technological know-how and scientific interest in cutting-edge technology often go hand-in-hand with an explicitly green political imperative, spearheaded by research and willingly supported by the youthful inhabitants and users of university facilities. There are synergies between greening work spaces and increasing worker productivity. Both are 'lean' when they are at their best. Cost creates further pressures to think about the functionality of university buildings and to enhance adaptability and flexibility.

Today, as it was in the past, university building is inspired by developments in pedagogy and views of human development. Today's routine exhortations to create 'fun' and 'interactive' spaces for the creative juices to flow more freely may be seen as a continuation of this tradition but they also have roots in the office building sector. ICT and the blurring of the boundaries of work and play have had a huge impact on spatial arrangements. Meanwhile the environmental cost of travel is a continuing problem. Despite technology that theoretically reduces the need to travel, empirically it seems that demands for mobility and interruptions to work still outweigh opportunities for sustained, place-based concentration.

There is undoubtedly much overlap in the needs of campuses and offices, but universities must still cater to certain specialised functions. The standard format lecture hall still features but may be too inefficient to survive long. In those universities particularly where business studies and technological disciplines are to the fore, even the open-plan office is under consideration, despite protests from academic staff! As regards libraries, despite digitalisation, they still need to accommodate a huge rate of increase in holdings, a focus of much architectural as well as logistical concern. The problem is acute because digital recording and storage, though relatively efficient in terms of space, are unproven and the technology needed to make them useful is in danger of itself becoming obsolete.

Iconic or signature buildings are a recognised staple of university campuses. CABE's *Design with Distinction* (2005) identifies staff and student retention as a key driver of good design but when it is expressed as a preference for high quality building, it sometimes runs counter to managerial goals of efficiency and cost reduction. However, 'intangibles', like work-place satisfaction and the ways social, physical and psychological experiences combine to create a campus experience, are now recognised as significant.

The academic calendar and social conventions mean that university buildings have tended to be under-used. This has been changing fast as HEIs manage their estates as commercial ventures, enhancing their attractiveness to investors as well as students and staff. From the 1970s universities began to organise conferences to make money from their accommodation all year round. Universities in the UK collaborate with private funders and local authorities much more than ever before to build state-of-the art sports facilities or cultural amenities.

Universities are also being asked to contribute to regeneration, to help reclaim parts of cities, even by leveraging funds from regional players such as the EU or Regional Development Agencies. At the same time, their expansion means that towns have to cope with 'studentification', where transient low-paying populations of students are concentrated in particular neighbourhoods, and/or

accommodate more purpose-built student residences, whose contribution to a townscape is debatable. On the other hand, the rise of part-time studying allows universities to fill their classrooms without the need for so much student housing.

As campus building intensifies, its impacts on the lives of both the academic community and the 'host' community will be substantial. Today government policy sees universities as contributing to the world around them more than vice versa. Any indirect and/or long-term costs are less well known (or talked about). The enforced mobility of knowledge workers surely creates pressures towards transience that erode commitments to place and will, one would think, create totally new kinds of social challenges in the future.

Issues to pursue

Universities are currently informed by contradictory forces and their futures remain the focus of passionate debate. There are signs of homogenisation and industrialisation of academic work globally although the 'academy' is also fragmenting as a community of practice. A preference for entrepreneurial universities with links to industry has had invigorating effects in some departments but led to the closure of others. Some people even feel that long established academic virtues that have stood their ground for a very long time have become frighteningly fragile. One of the effects of this that is already visible in the built environment has been to drive a wedge between those departments whose outputs have a ready market and those whose work has traditionally been valued by other criteria than commercial success.

Future trends in the internationalisation of HE are contingent on geopolitical events that are impossible to predict. Many poorer countries currently provide hard-working and often well trained graduates for research groups in wealthy countries. This is good for some and disastrous for others. Some countries of the South have thus not been keen to enter into HE partnerships. For now, there are no regulatory mechanisms in place, leaving the fate of current and future generations of students to the anarchy of international commerce.

The overall dominant logic behind the new competitive academy seems to be to build campuses to lure in the world's most gifted students. University managers are doing whatever they can to attract the talent of tomorrow to their courses and research groups. In this game the UK is in an enviable position. However, its universities are not guaranteed to succeed for ever on old reputations or even of London as a global creative city. Space, quality faculty, contact time with students and often technical support are all in short supply on many UK campuses, including some of the most famous. The use of the English language will not compensate for this if overseas students decide that UK degrees are poor value for money.

Meanwhile the House of Commons Education and Skills Committee has noted that the current momentum of change is so powerful that it is time to ask some basic questions:

"In moving further towards a high-skill economy, an increasingly international HE sector, an era of mass-participation in HE, and a possible future market in fees after 2009, this inquiry will investigate questions of first principles in HE: what is the role of universities, what should the principles of funding be, and what should the structure of the HE sector look like or be shaped by?" (House of Commons, July 2007).

Our project will contribute to this debate by exploring the impact of tomorrow's university building on their surroundings, not forgetting that historically 'town' and 'gown' have always been both entangled and distinct.

Eeva Berglund, April 2008