



**Heads of Research Group Meeting
2nd meeting of the Space Strategy Group
Wednesday 3rd November**

Minutes

Present: Danny Alexander (DA), Ann Blandford (AB), JJ Giwa (JG), Lewis Griffin (LG), David Jones (DJ), Brad Karp (BK), Jill Saunders (JFS), John Shawe-Taylor (JST), Anthony Steed (AJS).

Apologies: Simon Arridge, Peter Bentley, Mark Handley, Tony Hunter, David Rosenblum

1. Notes of meeting held 27 July 2010
(<http://www.cs.ucl.ac.uk/dept/cttee/research/>)

2. Matters arising from the Minutes

2.1 Update on work over the summer

JG reported on work completed successfully over the summer - extra desks installed on open plan offices, the new hot-desk area (currently used by some 5-6 visitors), and research office refurbishments.

2.2 Machine Room

Exploratory discussions are underway to see if equipment from the CS 4th floor Machine Room can be at least partly relocated elsewhere. This would help reduce pressure on space, air conditioning and power supply.

BK highlighted that some services should remain in MPEB (eg HEN). The funding for such a project remains TBA. It was suggested that the front wall, between Machine Room and Lift Foyer, should be changed to glass to let in more light (ie same as trading floor lab on level 1).

2.3 Use and booking of external lab space

Deferred to next meeting.

2.4 Removal of Internal walls on levels 5, 7, and 8

JG has met Estates (EFD) colleagues to assess the feasibility of opening up internal walls to enlarge the open plan research areas. It is do-able, but expensive, and EFD have no funds for such projects. Ideally the work should also include (i) replacing inward-facing walls in academic offices with glass, to let in natural light, and (ii) reconfiguring desks and floor boxes again to increase capacity. Rough figures = >£200K to remove internal walls on 3 floors; including £60K per floor for glass, plus VAT. The furniture, re-carpeting and floor box costs would be extra. We discussed the possibility of changes on the 8th floor, as DTJ was aware of particular pressures there.

Overall, it seemed that the space gain achieved from this sort of work would be relatively small. Given that funding was so uncertain, it was agreed not to proceed with obtaining quotes for the work.

2.5 Common Room [AB]

Deferred to next meeting. It was noted that the contract on our coffee machine still has 2 years to run. After this, JST wishes to move to a different system.

3. Forthcoming departmental moves and developments

3.1 Meeting room space for CREST

We had expected 4.13 and 4.13(a) to be vacated by CMIC by now, but hold-ups elsewhere in the Faculty moves process means that these offices are not yet available to us. Alternative space will be found for CREST as they need room in MPEB where they can meet students.

3.2 Srimi (Mandayam A. Srinivasan, currently at MIT)'s move to UCL

Srini is expected to take up a research fellowship at UCL in December. His work is in haptics, with links to Mel Slater's area. Office and RA/student space is needed, as well as experimental lab space.

3.3 A proposal for a new Chair in HCI is awaiting UCL approval. Office space has been identified on the 8th floor, but extra open plan spaces will also be needed.

3.4 DTC proposals

(i) with E&EE, and (ii) with Imperial, are going through the approval process, both with space implications.

4. Lift lobby developments

A project to install air con/ventilation and furniture in the lift lobby areas is now held up due to lack of funding. The air con/ventilation work alone would cost some £80k plus VAT. It has been suggested that if the Machine Room project goes ahead, air conditioning units from that area might be re-used in the foyer areas.

5. Ideas for the ground floor MPEB

AJS and DT have looked at the cavernous space at ground floor level MPEB to see if that can be made more useful. Apart from rubbish bins, there is a lift for moving heavy engines to the Mech Eng basement test facility. If the lift is still in use, then it would be difficult to redevelop the area.

There is also some space behind the CAVE that could be redesigned (currently plant, pipework and a small Medical Imaging cluster).

6. AOB

JG circulated copies of a new policy on allocation of desks to research students, this policy has been agreed (in principle) at the Management Committee. Comments should be sent to JJ.

7. Date of next meeting

TBA early 2011.