UNIVERSITY-LED URBAN REGENERATION

INTRODUCTION TO THE CASE STUDIES

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September 2015

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Universities as actors in urban regeneration   **1**

'Cities are produced through processes of uneven development based on rounds of accumulation, commoditisation, and particular geographies of biased investment and preference that produce unequal processes of urbanisation. This historical process of accumulation and dispossession has to be actively produced – urbanism is an unequal achievement, and in that achievement, the past, present, and future of the city are constantly being brought into being, contested, and rethought'
(McFarlane 2011:652)

Since 2014, UCL's Urban Laboratory has been housed in short-life temporary accommodation, the large warehouse building previously owned by British Home Stores behind Euston station in central London – a site and a whole neighbourhood in limbo as decisions on the implementation of HS2, along with the demolition and redevelopment of the station and a large swathe of the surrounding area await clarification. If and when it goes ahead, it will mark the beginning of another decade of radical redevelopment based on 'particular geographies of biased investment' as described by McFarlane above, which have seen the transformation of the King's Cross area to the east into a new business and cultural district, and the lives of countless people in the surrounding neighbourhoods blighted by years of construction noise, pollution, and disruption – only to be followed by significant rises in land and property values that will push many out.
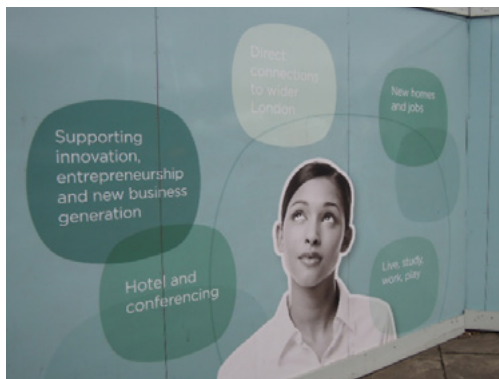
Development hoardings, Imperial West, London: alluring rhetoric and imagery conjur visions of new urban futures. *Photos C.Melhuish 2013*

As Ruth Glass, urban sociologist and founder of UCL's former Centre for Urban Studies (1958–80), predicted in 1964: 'London may quite soon be a city which illustrates the principle of the survival of the fittest – the financially fittest, who can still afford to work and live there. (Not long ago, the then Housing Minister advised those who cannot pay the price to move out)' (Glass 1964:xx). But major redevelopment projects always promise economic benefits for local communities: for example, quoting from the King's Cross regeneration strategy: 'King's Cross Central could also deliver around 30,000 new jobs, of which up to 40% might be taken up by local people with the right employment brokerage and training measures in place. Moreover, the development would also significantly increase Business Rate and Council Tax revenues for the Local Authorities' (Arup/Argent 2004:2). This is urban regeneration, and universities are increasingly playing a part in these processes. They have become one among the multiple urban actors and agencies involved in assembling and re-assembling cities around the world to meet the needs of the post-industrial knowledge economy, projecting new urban futures through a proliferation of promises packaged in rhetoric and alluring visual imagery. Like University of the Arts at King's Cross, universities

and other higher education institutions are increasingly embedded in new speculative urban developments as cultural anchors, or science and technology hubs linked to enterprise zones. But they are also ever more likely to take the lead on new academic and mixed-use developments in their own right, shaped by urban masterplans designed by international firms, which explicitly make links and physical connections with the wider city and communities beyond the academy.

As Allan Cochrane described in the Urban Laboratory's Future Univercities seminar series in 2013, and more recently in the Urban University conference in Northampton,[1] many universities have assumed a proactive role as landowners and developers, generators of employment, and investors in roads and local government in the course of promoting their own spatial development projects (in the UK for example the University of Hertfordshire owns bus companies in Welwyn and Hatfield, while Falmouth University has launched a Shared Services Initiative whereby the University provides administrative and IT services to the local council). Their property strategies involve working with other developers, government and non-government agencies (such as local authorities and, formerly, Regional Development Agencies and Urban Development Corporations), public, private and third sector bodies, participating in wider urban processes. McCann Ward and Roy further underline the international and translocal context of these processes, elaborating on the concept of assemblage (see McFarlane above): 'to describe the practices of actors who assemble policies from close by and elsewhere (Allen and Cochrane, 2007) … engaging with various policy networks and communities, stretched across the globe, in order to learn, teach, and share knowledge about best practice models. Through their assemblage work … they produce cities and policies as emergent translocal policy assemblages "deducted" from wider flows (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987; Prince, 2010). In the contemporary globalized context, almost every policy can be seen as an assemblage of expertise and resources from elsewhere' (McCann Ward Roy 2013:583).

Development hoardings, City University, London: building a vision of the institution's future in an urban and global context. *Photos C.Melhuish 2013*

As the following case studies show, universities are very much part of these wider flows. Driven by competition (for reputation, staff and students) in an international marketplace, and released from financial constraints by the lifting of the cap on student fees (as recommended by the Browne Review 2010), they engage in intense scrutiny of what their peers are doing, in order to produce locally embedded variants of global higher education models. These assume physical and spatial form within the parameters of distinct, but increasingly similar, city planning and urban regeneration contexts defined by an 'assemblage of expertise and resources from elsewhere'. And in many cases, cities and towns are becoming increasingly expectant of, and reliant upon universities to represent and promote their own urban interests at regional, national and international levels. Wiewel and Perry note that, 'The urban location and centrality of universities to the nature and well-

being of cities means that cities and countries can be expected to turn to their universities as part of strategies to respond to the new challenges and opportunities that global economic competition poses for urban regions' (Wiewel and Perry 2008:304). Indeed, Cochrane points to 'the surprising alignment of regional/local priorities and university priorities, despite different drivers',[2] and to the circulation of a shared language and imagery in the promotion of these common interests. Alan Harding has also emphasised the role of universities as anchor institutions in the transition from an industrial to a knowledge economy, increasingly operating in collaboration with local authorities within a framework of 'growth coalitions and urban regimes' such as Local Enterprise Partnerships. As he says, they are in this sense beginning to catch up with American institutions which have been players in development strategies for a long time, positioned as businesses, deliverers of services, and attractors for new investment[3] – as well as drivers of urban renewal (*see Case Study 4*). In many cases (eg Liverpool and Newcastle universities, *see Case Study 3*) this has meant re-visiting and reinventing their founding charters as civic universities established to meet local demands for specific skills and knowledge applicable to particular fields of industry. Goddard and Vallance, of Newcastle University, have explored the implications of this shift in many publications, pinpointing the question: 'Is the university *in* the city or *part of* the city? ... we make the case for the civic university working with others in the leadership of the city in order to ensure that its universities are both globally competitive and locally engaged' (Goddard and Vallance 2011:1). Indeed, they stress that 'all publicly-funded universities in the UK have a civic duty to engage with wider society on the local, national and global scales, and to do so in a manner which links the social to the economic spheres' (Goddard 2009:4).

Robin Hambleton has further elaborated on the idea of universities as the 'sleeping giants of place-based leadership'[4] in a globalising world. He suggests that they are now beginning to stir from their slumbers to become proactive in the development of innovation zones which lie at the interface of, and bring into alignment, different realms of leadership-community- and business-based, political, public, managerial and professional. In this set of case studies we present a number of different scenarios for this kind of 'place-based leadership': **Durham University**, which took on a key role in the economic and social regeneration of Teesside back in the early 1990s, with an emphasis on tackling issues around health, poverty, and lack of access to higher education through the development of its Queens Campus site in Stockton; **Newcastle University**, which is currently developing new university facilities on the city's emerging Science Central site in partnership with the city council, in order to stimulate the transition to the knowledge economy, promote sustainability research, and address social inequalities in the local area; and **University of Cambridge**, which is developing a new urban quarter in the northwest of the city to accommodate its postdoctoral research staff but also to provide community infrastructure for the wider residential area, contribute to the city's much-needed housing supply, and set new standards of sustainable design. In case study 4, we compare these scenarios with initiatives launched by three US universities over a similar period – **Pennsylvania, New York University and Columbia** – to highlight the transatlantic and international context in which universities are developing their spatial expansion strategies, and the corresponding emphasis on participation in wider urban regeneration processes. And finally in case study 5, we look at an example of local urban regeneration in London – **Somerleyton Road** – proceeding without the input of a university 'anchor institution', with a view to highlighting the similarities and contrasts between development approaches, specifically in terms of the principle of local community participation and benefits, and co-operative working with the local council.

Regeneration, universities and communities   2

For the issue of community engagement and local needs occupies a central position in all these university scenarios, and returns us to the conundrum at the heart of urban regeneration: increased land values, gentrification and social displacement. Ruth Glass is credited as the original creator of the term 'gentrification', and the UCL Urban Laboratory has focused attention on the need to address this issue 40 years on, especially in the context of UCL's own plans for a new university site at Stratford in the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park (www.ucl.ac.uk/ucl-east): 'If economic growth, and the supposed "trickle-down" effects of increased land values have come to dominate regeneration rhetoric and practice, how can they be rebalanced towards the needs and values of existing communities?' (Campkin, Roberts and Ross 2013). As cities compete for status in a world hierarchy of cosmopolitan urban centres, radically re-making vast tracts of the urban landscape to attract global investment, it is vital to consider what voice under-represented and marginalised local communities have in preserving their identity and right to sustain ordinary dwellings and livelihoods (Campkin, Melhuish, Ross 2014). But the discourse and practice of urban regeneration naturally relies for its legitimacy on a prior concept of urban decline and *de*generation, which Campkin has explored in the case of London in some detail (Campkin 2013). Within this discourse, the identification of local communities and environments as disadvantaged and degraded is often framed within a suggestive rhetoric of disorder, social decline, criminality and the desirability of economic 'convergence' in order to justify investment, property acquisition, and reconstruction of entire neighbourhoods on inner city sites. It is often linked to imminent international events hosted by cities, such as the Olympics in London or the FIFA World Cup, and now Olympics, in Brazil, when the image and reputation of a city and nation as a whole is considered to be at stake (*see Case Study 5* for a note on London's Great Outdoors improvement programme in the run-up to 2012). Indeed, the case of Newham in east London has often been cited as a case in which regeneration, anchored by the Olympic Park and a number of high-profile educational and cultural institutions (including UCL East) has moved 'away from a [local] renewal and "convergence" agenda … towards a rebranding and globalising initiative positioning the site in a symbolic relationship to national economic and imaging priorities' (Melhuish 2015:5).

The backdrop against which this idea of urban regeneration as a necessary remedy for economic stagnation and social decline has flourished is addressed by Massey Quintas and Wield in their 1992 critique of science park development, which can be seen as a clear precursor of the new types of university expansion and innovation cluster projects which are emerging today, but with a shift to more integrated urban locations (*see case study 3*). They discuss the relocation of industry away from the north of England in the context of Peter Hall's 1985 dismissal of the former urban manufacturing centres of the north, which they quote: 'the old industrial city has an ageing workforce resistant to change … a depressing physical environment unattractive to mobile workers … [the old cities] often suffer from poor transportation linkages … lack of innovative entrepreneurship. They lack the right milieu. They have, in other words, little going for them' (Massey Quintas Wield 1992:241). This attitude had led to the abandonment of whole populations and the development of the new science and technology-based industry in more attractive, new locations such as Cambridge, the home of one of the country's first science parks (*see Case Study 2*). Much like the new urban university developments of the 2000s, considerable investment was made in their design and development, driven by competition for and retention of the new mobile, international knowledge workers over and above a commitment to improving local conditions and prospects. Massey et al quote a *Financial Times* story of 1984 to this effect: "In the kind of service we provide, good staff are fiendishly hard to come by and you've got to play every card you've got in the vicious

business of attracting them, including the environment" (Massey Quintas Wield 1992:89). The importance of a high-quality environment as key to maintaining institutional viability is a recurring theme in the following university case studies, but as in the case of the earlier science park developments does not guarantee economic and social convergence. Indeed, Massey et al suggest that science park development did nothing to solve the problems of unemployment for those outside the elite science and technology workers and even exacerbated social inequalities (in places like Cambridge). This then is a fundamental question which arises with the new wave of university-led urban regeneration, with little long-term evidence available to date to support any hard-and-fast conclusions on the economic benefits or otherwise for local, 'non-elite' populations, from knowledge-based development.

In his US-based survey Moretti argues that universities do not specifically contribute to the generation of local skilled workforces, because students usually move away from the city where they studied. However, he does conclude that a university presence in metropolitan areas is associated with a better-educated labour force overall and higher local wages across the board (in that area), especially linked to academic research and translation in the fields of medicine, medical technology, electronics, optics and nuclear technology, but even in low-skilled jobs. On the other hand, universities can only contribute to these effects if supported by local governments and attractive cities with strong financial systems in place (Moretti 2013).

Addie Keil and Olds suggest that despite university engagement with a place-making agenda in the north American context, and the development of innovation and creative economies in cities, many institutions remain detached from their regions. In fact many major research universities only have a marginal impact on their immediate local economies: 'physical … infrastructures … are central to universities' strategies of knowledge transfer … yet their impact on surrounding communities and social spaces are often a secondary concern to the production of innovation and economic growth' (Addie Keil Olds 2015:34), in a global context. They note that there is an additional lack of evidence of the benefits and mechanisms of community engagement in different higher education institutions (HEIs), and point to the frequent 'tensions between universities and their surrounding communities, including … use of urban space (e.g. insensitive development projects … cultural conflicts between academic and non-academic groups) and potentially exploitative relationships between students and communities as research subjects' (Addie et al 2015:34). So although universities are increasingly used (by governments) to support austerity projects and neo-liberal agendas through the assumption of political and economic functions, 'narrow policies aimed at optimizing the economic function of universities' do not necessarily lead to benefits for less skilled workers and excluded communities in local neighbourhoods.

In their evaluation of the UK Labour government's New Deal for Communities programme (1997–2010), Lawless and Pearson set out the indicators for the impact of investment and community participation in urban regeneration which provide a useful measure against which to guage the potential benefits of university-led regeneration beyond reductionist economic criteria: reduction in crime, enhanced sense of local community, quality and provision of housing and the physical environment, rising health standards, access to education, and reduction in worklessness (Lawless and Pearson 2013). NDC specifically aimed to make communities more resilient and boost social capital (understood as knowing and looking out for local people, increased trust in local institutions, and enhanced sense of personal empowerment in influencing local decisions). But Lawless and Pearson note that 'there is little consistent evidence … on the impacts and benefits associated with community participation' (Lawless and Pearson 2013:510) in urban regeneration through such programmes, partly due to problems including ethnic

and cultural diversity, intra-community strife, transience, loss of community interest, and 'over-optimistic assumptions on the part of local residents as to what could ever be achieved' (Lawless and Pearson 2013:509).

These observations underline the challenges facing universities entering the urban regeneration game which genuinely do have aspirations to deliver on a place-based economic and social agenda which goes beyond narrow neoliberalist-driven policies, and is underpinned by mechanisms for genuine community engagement. As Bromley, Benneworth and many others have highlighted, many universities on both sides of the Atlantic have embraced the so-called 'third mission', placing both community participation and social innovation at the heart of their institutional identities. The Great Cities Institute of the University of Illinois in Chicago (a city which had been the subject of extensive sociological research by the Chicago School at the University of Chicago since its rapid industrialisation in the 1930s) has played a significant role in expounding the benefits of partnership between academy – the 'engaged university' – and community, supported by federal government initiatives and others such as the Building Communities programme launched by the Rockefeller Foundation (2001). The University of Pennsylvania's Institute for Urban Research was also appointed by the US Department of Housing and Urban Development in 2009 to co-ordinate a Task Force to investigate how anchor institutions such as universities could be more effectively leveraged to improve communities and help solve urban problems (*see Case Study 4*). In the UK, the work done by US universities in terms of their 'civic mission' and 'service learning' programmes (Bromley 2006) has been acknowledged, and, as Robinson and Adams described in 2008, many universities have taken steps to engage with and support local communities through business and employment-related regeneration activities, as well as volunteering and widening access initiatives.

Over two-thirds of the respondents in Robinson and Adams' research (35 universities, of which 40% were pre-1992 institutions, and 60% post-1992) 'stated that their institutions had dedicated urban regeneration teams' (Robinson and Adams 2008:282); however at that point the number of universities engaged in urban regeneration initiatives as property developers through spatial development projects was very small – only three – while two 'simply did not see regeneration and community engagement as relevant activities for a HEI' (Robinson and Adams 2008:286). Since then however, universities have come under increasing pressure to play the role expected by government in local urban regeneration initiatives, especially since the Coalition government's reform and decentralisation of the planning system to place decision-making powers more squarely in the hands of local agencies and community bodies (Localism Act 2011, *see Case Study 5*). UK urban policy has placed a strong emphasis on multi-sector partnership and community participation in area-based planning and neighbourhood regeneration for several decades (Lees and Melhuish 2012; Hall and Hickman 2002), in successive government bids to address the problems of post-industrial city centres (*see Policy milestones*) and as referred to above in relation to New Deal for Communities (*see Case Study 3*). In 2013 the Witty Review of Universities and Growth stressed the need for universities to work harder with the new LEPs on Strategic Economic Plans, especially by providing research and advice to SMEs; but universities engaging in spatial development face additional pressures, in common with other property developers, to demonstrate how they will contribute to those wider regeneration benefits – including infrastructure, skills and training provision, housing growth and improvement, community development and neighbourhood renewal (identified by Cambridge Economic Associates et al 2010 for the Department of Communities and Local Government), e.g. under Section 106 agreements – in conjunction with academic programmes tailored towards social relevance, community impact, and widening access.

In 2014, HEFCE announced a five-point framework for a university-wide renewal of of principles around place-making and social engagement, which had been present in the

wave of university expansion during the 1960s and 70s, launched by the Robbins Report (1963), but become lost in the subsequent competitive race for international research profile and ratings. Speaking at the National Engage (NCCPE) conference in Bristol,[5] HEFCE CEO Professor Madeleine Atkins declared that the arrival of the 39 Local Enterprise Partnerships and European Structural Funds for regional development now represent 'the only secure source of funding for universities over the coming years', due to cuts in public funding for higher education and increased competition for students. Universities should therefore embrace a multi-disciplinary approach related to the societal Grand Challenges to drive thinking and dynamics around engagement. Atkins identified five specific areas in which this should occur: engagement with local schools; local skills agendas; social innovation and social enterprise; cultural engagement; and local economic growth. It will be supported by HEFCE through new local collaborative networks, partnership funding for social investment and a Catalyst Fund to develop a new model of exemplary anchor institution.

Also in 2014, a report for the Russell Group of universities found that £9bn was projected to be spent by universities on capital development projects to 2017, covering facilities for research and teaching, science, technology and engineering campuses, student accommodation, business schools, and IT facilities (Biggar Economics 2014). This investment is indicative of the increasing emphasis on STEM subjects in the curriculum, geared towards economic growth, and the interest in developing physical urban innovation clusters in which academic and business interests are co-located. The UK government, reflecting the largely instrumentalist approach critiqued by Addie et al in the north American context, endorsed the economic benefits universities are believed to bring to cities and regions with its establishment of a £15m government budget for new University Enterprise Zones (Bristol, Nottingham, Liverpool, and Bradford) in 2013 – including support from UK Trade and Investment and simplified planning constraints (though no business rate discounts), similar to the old UDCs. This support is based on published statistics showing that at a national level university output in the UK (for 2011–12) accounts for 2.8% of GDP and 1% of employment. That includes £26.7 bn in direct expenditure, just slightly less than the amount earned, plus additional output and employment in other sectors through secondary multiplier effects – estimated at £37.63 bn (Universities UK 2013).

Universities are promoted then as agents of urban regeneration because they are seen to generate economic activity and produce skilled localised workforces to power the knowledge economy (NESTA 2009, RSA 2014), while offering stability and 'sticky capital' (to use the term coined by Maurrasse 2001) as anchors for development with a long-term commitment to place (*see Case Study 2*) and community participation. Furthermore they have access to alternative and diverse sources of funding, from both higher education and urban renewal funds, that can be directed into physical projects with benefits for stakeholders including business and local communities (Goddard and Vallance 2013). Hence university spatial development plans often garner support from national and local government as vehicles for long-term urban regeneration initiatives – even though the primary driver for such projects is nearly always the need for additional space, including high quality facilities and environment to attract and retain the best staff and students (Austrian and Norton 2005). Indeed in many cases, especially in the US, HEIs may have long track records of conflict and distrust with local communities who see them as predators on their territory (*see Case Study 4*), and so the active embrace of the third or civic mission is vital to re-balancing those relationships within the larger discourse of urban regeneration.

As Benneworth has highlighted however, the third mission is not an easy one for universities to manage, especially in a place-based urban context: 'Universitiesare not just actors which relate to governments and customers, but institutions en-meshed in complex relationship systems with societal partners with their own goals, intentions, cultures and norms. This is visible in the systematic barriers restricting community engagement. These

barriers emerge from shifting accountability and authority relations in public administration more generally' (Benneworth 2013:5). He identifies a number of issues which many universities have found difficult to resolve, in particular their fundamental spatial independence from their physical contexts arising from their position within global circuits or flows, of capital (see McCann Ward Roy above), and their relationship with the city as a strategic rather than physical space, to be managed in order to promote their global performance rather than local regeneration. In addition, institutional deadlock makes it hard for individual academic actors to engage with local contexts and various types of urban stakeholders from a research and impact perspective, while those same university actors often lack local and contextual knowledge about their physical location because they deal in a universal vision of knowledge production which is validated as such by the academic system. Finally, local stakeholders on their part distrust universities for 'laboratorising' the city and its inhabitants, without bringing any, or at least limited, benefits – or because of historical predatory takeover bids and failures to engage with communities, often coloured by ethnic and racial issues.[6] All these issues present difficult challenges for universities wishing to engage on a long-term, mutually beneficial basis with local communities, especially socially-excluded groups.

Benneworth usefully identifies the key mechanisms of social exclusion – short-term flexible work contracts and restricted workforce progression, combined with financial penalisation resulting from insecure income; remotely located housing with poor services (including healthcare and education) and transport provision; fragmentation of family units across areas (due to housing allocations and lack of affordable options), reducing opportunities for interaction and informal support; and retreat of police from problem areas, with concomitant exclusion of 'problem' communities from decision-making (Benneworth 2013:19). There is certainly a body of opinion that for universities to try to fix this range of structural issues as urban regeneration actors is well beyond their remit as publicly-funded higher education institutions; yet a growing expectation that they will find the ways and means to do so, working in collaboration with 'citizen scientists' on the ground, under the even larger rubric of the global societal challenges – notably urban sustainability and prosperity.

However the argument that universities should steer clear of 'laboratorising' the city is also a cogent one. Karvonen stresses that urban knowledge is specific to local contexts, and therefore incapable of being translated to the status of 'generally valid knowledge', applicable to universal problems. Urban environments are complex, messy, and exhibit endless variations, hence the idea of generating a best practice formula for university-led urban regeneration is an elusive one – notwithstanding the global production of cities as 'policy assemblages' from elsewhere, as noted by McCann Ward and Roy (2013). Many universities evoke the 'urban' or 'living' laboratory model to describe a particular attitude to engaged, outward-looking, innovative urban teaching, research and practice, and a modus operandi for the modern university in the contemporary city. But as Karvonen and Evans point out, 'The explicit purpose of a laboratory is to create a space apart from the norm … In bounding space, urban laboratories represent a specific type of niche that is often created by university-led partnerships to emphasize the importance of knowledge production' (Karvonen and Evans 2014:415). The danger of this is that ultimately the process of drawing boundaries may 'reinforce the divide between the knowledge community and the surrounding neighbourhoods rather than integrate these in new ways' (Karvonen and Evans 2014:426). In the case of Manchester's Oxford Road Corridor, a 'low-carbon laboratory' for sustainable change, representing a partnership between the University of Manchester and the City Council, Karvonen and Evans conclude that: 'it serves as a rhetorical device for the aspirational goals of influential urban actors in Manchester, but does not in and of itself provide a means for realizing real change on the ground' (Karvonen and Evans 2014:421).

Visions and typologies of university-led urban regeneration

3

While the laboratory model has entered the rhetoric of university-led urban development (see for example the case of Newcastle, *case study 3*), the material typology of new university development – including so-called urban laboratories and innovation hubs, designed to create interfaces and alignment with other spheres and practices of place-based leadership (see Hambleton above), as well as learning centres and sports facilities intended to be open to community use – remains under-documented. However, as van Heur notes, there has been a 'flurry of [HE] building activity in cities around the world' (van Heur 2010) as institutes of higher education step up to the task of meeting their own space needs alongside wider urban regeneration objectives. In general, this building activity has been located on urban sites, with an emphasis on connectivity, permeability, and accessibility within the wider urban context; as such, it represents a shift away from the out-of-town campus model of university planning. As Bender describes, this was always more typical of the Anglo-American than the European university tradition (Bender 2008), but subsequently came to define the later science park concept as a frame for the separation of scientists and experts from everyday citizens.

Wiewel and Perry (2005:9) note that 'University capital requirements increasingly dictate that real estate development projects be mixed-use in nature – blurring the edge of the old campus and the purposes of new buildings, creating projects that are part academic and part commercial, and making the traditional notion of the campus more a thing of the past'. Certainly, universities have turned towards the terminology of the urban precinct, quarter, or extension, as in the case of North West Cambridge (*case study 2*), to promote their own spatial projects alongside innovation clusters and mixed-used developments (*case study 3*) – but not only for financial reasons. Universities are also keen to re-integrate scientists, researchers and academics with local communities, and also to participate in the wider discourse and practice of urban regeneration. Within these developments then, the shape and form of university buildings is increasingly being determined by the demands of the commercial and public interface. However it also reflects changes in models of pedagogy within the academy, and especially an increased emphasis on multi-disciplinary, cross-disciplinary and collaborative teaching, learning and research. The growing importance too of informal social learning spaces for self-directed learning, in the context of reduced student-staff contact time as student numbers grow, is shaping new approaches to the briefing and design of university buildings. As universities get bigger and more anonymous, the need for greater connectivity in student life and provision for social contact is articulated by students, while the pressure on available appropriate teaching space, and lack of dedicated individual workspace, is often a frustration for staff (Boys, Melhuish and Wilson 2014).[7] These factors are leading to the design of larger, more generic and more flexible academic buildings or 'hubs', often shared by different disciplines, and supported by state of the art ICT infrastructure. They are intended to promote collaborative work, and may include a multimedia venue, social learning cafés and forum or atrium areas designed for displays and events promoting staff and student interaction, as well as public or semi-public areas intended for university-community interface, and start-up units for commercial translation of research. They are likely to be co-located with conference centres and hotels, business centres, sports facilities and retail provision, as well as student and staff housing, and public open space. As with the new University of Northampton campus in the UK, they may be situated in a government-supported Enterprise Zone, taking advantage of waterfront sites well-served by existing or future public transport interchanges.

In this context of accelerated university/urban development, and recognising the importance of built form itself in materialising certain objectives and outcomes, Bas van Heur (2010) has identified a need for 'comparative synthetic research that can: evaluate finished

and ongoing building projects; analyse actual interactions between researchers, firm members and/or citi zens in and as a result of these buildings; and provide concrete suggestions for improvement of future HER buildings' (van Heur 2010:1713). He notes that much of the scholarship on university development comprises mainly historical accounts of university architecture, alongside the body of work on university estates development strategy and campus planning in the US and internationally by Wiewel and Perry (2005, 2008), Temple (2014) and others, and research on the economic dimensions of university development (such as Goddard and Vallance 2013). However there is a relative lack of attention to the spatial and material manifestations of university expansion and development and their effects on cities.

As contributors to this sphere of knowledge in particular, Benneworth and Hospers (2007) have coined the term 'planning animateur' to describe universities (such as Newcastle) which have taken an active role in the production of 'university-influenced urban landscapes' (Benneworth Charles Madanipour 2010) through their spatial developments. The purpose of the UCL Urban Laboratory's case study-based research has been then to consider universities in this light, and to provide some insights into both the institutional visions which drive such initiatives and the emerging material typologies of the new university developments and their effects or projected impacts on cities, in variable urban and peri-urban contexts. Each case study is divided into four sections, looking firstly at the historical institutional context for the development, the way it has been shaped by national higher education and regeneration policies, and the choice of a site; secondly at the institutional and external visions and narratives which have defined and communicated the idea of the project and mobilised a wide base of support for its realisation; thirdly at the processes and structures put in place to bring the development to fruition, including governance, finance, and partnerships with other urban actors, as well as the tools used to materialise the vision, in particular community engagement and architects' plans and drawings; and finally at the process of translation of visions and aspirations into the reality of local place, through the complex business of local planning systems, construction, and towards a set of hoped-for social, economic and environmental benefits for the wider urban area.

The research, conducted over an 18-month period from July 2013 to December 2014, was based on a mixture of desk-based and archival work, site visits, and interviews with key personnel within the academic institutions concerned, planning authorities and regeneration agencies, architectural and masterplanning practices, and community groups. It is far from complete, but aimed to generate a multi-faceted picture of the process of university development in each case from inside and outside the institution, and across the comparative context of the five case studies. It owes a great deal to the access and time generously provided by interviewees, and the public availability of much institutional documentation on the web – while it also brought into focus the commercial confidentiality of much institutional business. Hence while financing, governance and leadership are core to the processes of university development, it is not surprising that they are also rather understudied: as Wiewel and Perry comment of the international case studies contained in their 2008 volume, discussion about individual leaders or leadership, for example, is 'strikingly absent' (Perry and Wiewel 2008:307) – even though as they note in their earlier US-focused publication, 'strong leadership seems to be a critical success factor' (Perry and Wiewel 2005:303).

But equally important, we suggest, are motivation, clarity of vision, and communication, even where, as the case studies show, definitive programming and concrete detail on space utilisation and standards seem to be lacking, open-ended, and long-term. Austrian and Norton (2005:196) suggest that: 'Recognizing what motivates universities' real estate development activities is important in studying the development process. Motivation obviously affects the types of projects that universities undertake, but it can also affect the structure of the decision-making process, availability of various financing mechanisms, and the nature of university-community relations. The prime motivation for physical expansion by many

universities is steady growth in student enrollment'. The case studies suggest however that, while motivation is key to success, it is not only driven by the desire for institutional growth. Even though increasing student numbers, driven by international competition and, in the UK, the lifting of the cap on enrolment, are a catalyst for development in most cases, there are clearly other factors at play in the development of the vision, the mobilisation of commitment across a network of academic and other actors, and the belief in the project's social value which are fundamental to the institutional motivation which will eventually propel it into reality.

In fact the distinctive feature of university development which seems to set it apart from other forms of corporate or commercial property development is an underpinning narrative of identity and purpose which goes well beyond the maths around student numbers and income from teaching and research, and varies from institution to institution – shaped by its own founding charter and heritage, and increasingly embedded in the wider discourse of local urban place-making in which universities are both positioning themselves and being positioned by external forces. It is the development and communication of this narrative, in both verbal and visual form, which performs a vital function not simply in representing or projecting a future identity for the university, but also in building social relationships and alliances among the different actors implicated in it and keeping dissent at bay within the free-thinking academic community.

University visions of development comprise two dimensions: the institutional, embracing the structure and organisation of the university as an educational institution; and the physical – the university as a particular kind of place where research and teaching are carried out. But there is often a significant dysjunction between the two. Academics and administrators may not consciously visualise universities as physical places, but rather as a complex organisation of teaching and research programmes that need to be accommodated. Estates teams often only see universities as spatial and operational entities which pose particular issues around maintenance and running costs. Communication between the two is often fraught with tensions, and further complicates the process of communication between the university as a unified entity with the heterogeneous communities outside it which have an interest in its plans. Thus when spatial development projects come onto the horizon, masterplanners, architects, and engagement consultants are brought in to develop a three-way mediation process. Then, that vision needs to be communicated to wider audiences beyond the university, to build support for the project, both through statutory consultation exercises, and other types of research and outreach initiatives shaped by that ambition.

The visioning and communication process thus involves particular types of imagery and language in which we can see an evolution of universities' idea of themselves and what they want to project in terms of their heritage and identity, within a global urban placemaking discourse that translates into locally-embedded forms and variants. Most universities are working hard to distance themselves from the imagery of dreaming spires, ivory towers, academical villages, and other utopian scholastic communities with which they identified in the past. Instead, as the case studies show, they are using the language of the knowledge or innovation cluster, urban laboratory, communiversity, non-campus campus, and other terms, to evoke new images and institutional identities that are gradually emerging as new types of built form. These are being packaged as new components of the urban landscape, within precincts, quarters and extensions, to underpin a re-visioning of the university as urban placemaker and agent of regeneration which is subtly different from the civic identity which historically made the 'urban' university urban.

The unfolding materialisation of these re-visioning operations is a complicated, contingent and elusive process to follow however, especially within the framework of an 18-month research period. As McFarlane notes of urban policy more generally, it

is 'assembled not just through structures of political economy, but through particular atmospheres of reception in the boardroom or coffee room, the materiality of policy documents themselves (eg the agentic force of the texts and their visuals and modes of presentation), serendipitous moments and juxtapositions, and forms of friendship or conflict, all of which operate with different and contingent forms of power and impact' (McFarlane 2011:652). Furthermore, university-led urban development projects are long-term enterprises that take many years to come to fruition, witnessing many changes in personnel in the duration. This set of case studies can only touch on the longitude and depth of the processes which they put in motion, the staff input and accumulated knowledge and expertise, but provide a reference point from which to draw some specific insights and details across a set of variables.

Notes

1   Univercities 1: Space: universities, cities and globali-
sation, UCL Urban Laboratory, 9th May 2013; The Urban
University: universities as place-makers and agents of civ-
ic success in medium-sized towns and cities, University
Town Northampton project, Northampton July 2nd –
3rd 2015
2   Allan Cochrane, speaking at the Urban University
conference, July 2nd 2015
3   Alan Harding, speaking at Univercities 1 seminar,
UCL, May 2013
4   Robin Hambleton, speaking at the Urban University
conference, July 2nd 2015
5   National Co-ordinating Centre for Public Engage-
ment, annual conference, Dec 3rd and 4th 2014, Bristol
6   Paul Benneworth speaking at Universities, Cities and
Transformation International Workshop, Anthony Burgess
Foundation, Manchester, organised by Salford Universi-
ty's SURF Centre, September 1st and 2nd 2014
7   Based on research at the University of Northumbria,
Newcastle, in 2013–14; and previously at the Universities
of Brighton and Sussex, 2008–09

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Acknowledgements