Participatory heritage, spatial politics and the development of two city universities

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Universities: space, place, community
University of Manchester Sept 13th 2017
‘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)
Adam Brown on ‘reverse indexicality’:

*the more realistic a building is, the more likely it is to come into being?*

the discourses and narratives which mediate and mobilise universities’ spatial development projects are not just about a simple representation or projection of the future, but rather about building social relationships among the different actors implicated in it
existing Humanisten building and library on Näckrosen site, now under redevelopment

‘now heritage will come back in the new building, you’ll see it’s four floors, with pillars’ (Anders Houltz)
‘A place for the unexpected..., accepting and welcoming... easy to access and a place that people do not want to leave... integrated into the city structure’

University of Gothenburg vision statement 2013
Whose heritage?

Neolithic remains
Medieval agriculture
C17 Industry
C19 Industrial waste
C20 Landfill
C21 Olympics
Culture & education
• creating new spaces for urban encounters
• access to resources and life learning
• collaborative ventures with communities
UCL Wilkins Building London (1827) William Wilkins in Partnership with J.P. Gandy-Deering. ‘half-brother to the National Gallery’ (Reginald Turner)

‘this is the classical façade of University College London in the middle of Bloomsbury, a very well-established cosmopolitan area of London at the centre of the British Imperial process with all the historical legacy that goes with that; so that sense of the place and the space for activities - the location defining some of these issues of identity and the heritage that’s associated with those things’
Dean Sully, workshop 2
‘to innovate tradition and traditionalise innovation’

University of Gothenburg motto
‘The University’s broad range of activities are characterised by a strong sense of civic responsibility, proximity to city life and openness to the surrounding society. The University is firmly rooted both locally and regionally, at the same time as research, education and cooperation are characterised by extensive global engagement... People from different places and with different backgrounds will meet and work together, yielding outcomes that will exceed the mere sums of the parts...’
UCL East is envisaged as a radical new model of how a university campus can be embedded in the local community and with businesses, as well as providing world-leading research, education, entrepreneurship and innovation.
Space & Location, Heritage & Identity
LONDON'S GLOBAL UNIVERSITY

Locals and globals

A ‘community of scholars’?
A corporate business enterprise?
A concentration of knowledge/power?
A node in the network of the global knowledge economy?
A site for the accumulation or re-distribution of intellectual and cultural capital?

The dissenting Academy: ‘Speaking truth to power’ (Phil Cohen)
Dialogue Campus Näckrosen
University of Gothenburg, Sweden, 2013

‘the university's own heritage has always been in crisis’
(Johan Oberg, University of Gothenburg)
UCL East

Vision for public engagement

- Staff and students as agents for change
- Relationships with local communities
- Olympic Park partners & the Olympic legacy
- Deliver successful transition to operation... (and beyond)...
Bridgers or Bonders

Locals

- the community as ‘laboratory’?
- low skill ‘service class’?
- Intensification of gentrification?
- student population stimulates hidden economy around drug use?
- Dissenting Academy links up with and supports community activism?
Industrial terra nullius?

Cultural land grab of a land without culture
The arrival of UCL, a large predator
Transforming landscapes utopian & dystopian
Separation between the park and the historic fabric to the south