

WORKING WITH LANCASTER UNIVERSITY

JOHN McASLAN + PARTNERS

AN UNBROKEN STREAM OF REDEVELOPMENT PROJECTS AT LANCASTER UNIVERSITY'S CAMPUS BY JOHN MCASLAN + PARTNERS HAVE FORMED A REMARKABLE DESIGN ODYSSEY. THE PRACTICE HAS DESIGNED AND DELIVERED CAMPUS MASTERPLANS AND INDIVIDUAL BUILDINGS FOR SEVERAL UNIVERSITIES IN LONDON, MANCHESTER, SOUTHAMPTON AND KINGSTON. BUT AS JMP DIRECTOR, TONY SKIPPER PUTS IT:

“THE WHOLE RELATIONSHIP WITH LANCASTER, STRETCHING BACK TO 2005, HAS BECOME VERY COMPELLING AND HIGHLY EFFECTIVE, ARCHITECTURALLY AND EDUCATIONALLY. LANCASTER UNIVERSITY IS AN ALREADY ARCHITECTURALLY SIGNIFICANT MODERNIST CAMPUS, SO IT IS DEEPLY SATISFYING TO BE ABLE TO PROVE THAT THESE BIG SET-PIECES CAN BE REDEVELOPED SUCCESSFULLY WITHOUT IGNORING WHAT ALREADY EXISTS. WE TAKE GREAT PRIDE IN THE TRUST THE UNIVERSITY CONTINUES TO PLACE IN US – WE DO SEEM TO GRASP EACH OTHER'S KEY ISSUES QUICKLY.”

THE UNIVERSITY HAS A TOP-TEN NATIONAL RATING AND ITS ABILITY TO MAINTAIN ITS POSITION WITH STEADILY IMPROVED FACILITIES IS A KEY ISSUE ON A CAMPUS WHOSE STRONG FORMAL LAYOUT, DESIGNED BY SHEPHEARD EPSTEIN IN THE 1960'S, WAS BASED ON CLOISTERS, A BISECTING SPINE ROUTE, CONNECTED BUILDINGS THREE OR FOUR STOREYS HIGH, AND PARKING AREAS OUTSIDE THE FORMAL NUCLEUS.

SINCE DELIVERING THE CAMPUS DEVELOPMENT MASTERPLAN IN 2006, AND COMMENCING THE DESIGN OF THE BREEAM EXCELLENT RATED POSTGRADUATE STATISTICS CENTRE THE SAME YEAR, WE HAVE DELIVERED SEVERAL VERY DIFFERENT SCHEMES. ALL HAVE BEEN ROOTED IN OUR INCREASINGLY DETAILED PHYSICAL AND OPERATIONAL UNDERSTANDING OF THE 200-ACRE CAMPUS, AND EVOLVING EDUCATIONAL NEEDS WITHIN THE HILLTOP COLLEGIATE TABLEAU.



LANCASTER UNIVERSITY MASTERPLAN (2006)

JMP's various roles at Lancaster cannot be seen as surgical-strike interventions: like any campus, it remains an organism in physical and educational flux. JMP's original masterplan ring-fenced the talismanic, but logical need to open up the original spine route through the campus more effectively, and the practice is now detailing a scheme to mediate the currently chaotic parking black-spots, and create a new entrance sequence to the campus which will greatly improve porosity through key points on its northern edge.



Above - original 1960s Masterplan

“CAMPUSES DESIGNED IN THE 1960'S HAVE, FOR THE MOST PART, HAD A VERY POOR PRESS – NOT LEAST BECAUSE BOTH THE MEDIA AND THE GOVERNMENT HAVE LUMPED THEM INTO THE GENERAL CATEGORY OF SUPPOSEDLY INTRACTABLE TYPES OF MODERNIST OR BRUTALIST ARCHITECTURE. IN THE CASE OF 1960S UNIVERSITY DESIGN, WHAT IS OFTEN MISSED IS THE WAY IN WHICH BUILDINGS WERE ORIGINALLY ARRANGED, OR MASTERPLANNED.

THE ORIGINAL MASTERPLAN AT LANCASTER, HOWEVER WAS A SUBTLE AND WELL-SCALED CAMPUS. IN MANY REGARDS OUR WORK WAS TO REVEAL AND CLARIFY THE FRAMEWORK AND RE-ANIMATE THE CAMPUS.”

AIDAN POTTER, DIRECTOR AT JOHN MCASLAN + PARTNERS

CHARLES CARTER BUILDING (2011)



With the Charles Carter Building, 4000sqm has been created for the university's Management School and, like the Postgraduate Statistics Centre, this high quality yet low-cost building conveys a clear-cut formal presence that celebrates its pragmatic structure, programming and materiality; if not quite a postmodern

palazzo, the building's expressed superstructure and simple façade rhythm conveys its form boldly. Deep reveals on the southern colonnaded elevation offer an important new link between the edge of the campus and its central spine, in addition to providing solar shading, contributing to the building's BREEAM excellent rating.



“MCASLAN'S DESIGN OF THE CHARLES CARTER BUILDING HAS AGAIN DEMONSTRATED THEIR ABILITY TO PRODUCE AN EDUCATIONAL BUILDING, AT NOTABLY LOW COST, THAT HAS BROUGHT SOMETHING NEW AND DISTINCT TO THE CAMPUS IN TERMS OF FLEXIBLE, LIGHT-FILLED LEARNING CONDITIONS THAT HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO ITS BREEAM EXCELLENT RATING. EQUALLY IMPORTANT IS THE WAY ONE SIDE OF THE BUILDING HAS BEEN CONFIGURED TO INCREASE CROSS-FLOWS OF STUDENTS ACROSS THE CAMPUS AT WHAT WAS PREVIOUSLY A NEARLY BLOCKED POINT.”

MARK SWINDLEHURST, DIRECTOR OF FACILITIES AT LANCASTER UNIVERSITY



Inside, an atrium brings natural light into the heart of the plan, around which the building's teaching, office and departmental spaces are arranged. Future flexibility was a key requirement of the brief. Demountable partitions, raised floors and flexible service arrangements, together with a strong rational planning grid - all components more usually found in commercial office buildings - have been used to maximum effect to create a space that can meet the university's ever evolving requirements.



POSTGRADUATE STATISTICS CENTRE (2008)



JMP's most recent Lancaster projects, led by Tony Skipper and Paul Hughes, have responded to quite different architectural, space-use, or public realm challenges. The Postgraduate Statistics Research Centre, within the Fylde College segment of the campus, brings a far higher material and formal quality to the eastern edge of the campus. The BREEAM Excellent, RIBA Award-

winning project has created an international centre of excellence for postgraduate teaching and learning. The building is connected to the existing accommodation by an atrium, creating a visible front door to the department and improving accessibility.

The north-facing elevation is fully glazed, giving views out to the landscaped space and views in revealing the activity

of the spine route. The south elevation is louvred to mitigate summertime solar gain and incorporates innovative solar chimneys to promote passive ventilation of the teaching spaces.



LEARNING ZONE (2009)

In the Learning Zone, the remodelled ground floor of the Bowland College building brings something new to the university: hybrid learning space for individual or group study and conversation. The Zone projects slightly outwards from the existing two-storey façade, accentuating its streamlined modernist linearity and having the effect of subtly connecting the study environment with the external public realm.



GRIZEDALE (2009)

In JMP's Grizedale College Building intervention, a mix of newbuild and refurb came into play so that internal and external space-use could be radically improved. Again, JMP brought something new to the campus: upgraded social spaces, and the university's first "city centre" style students' bar. Views of the cloister around the Grizedale Building were also maximised, and natural light reaches much deeper into the building.

HUMAN RESOURCES CENTRE (2011)

Currently on site is JMP's latest project, the Human Resources Centre. Our design will carve out a public space in this existing point-block building to relieve the internal gloom of the original deep plan, and create a new series of group training rooms.





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