

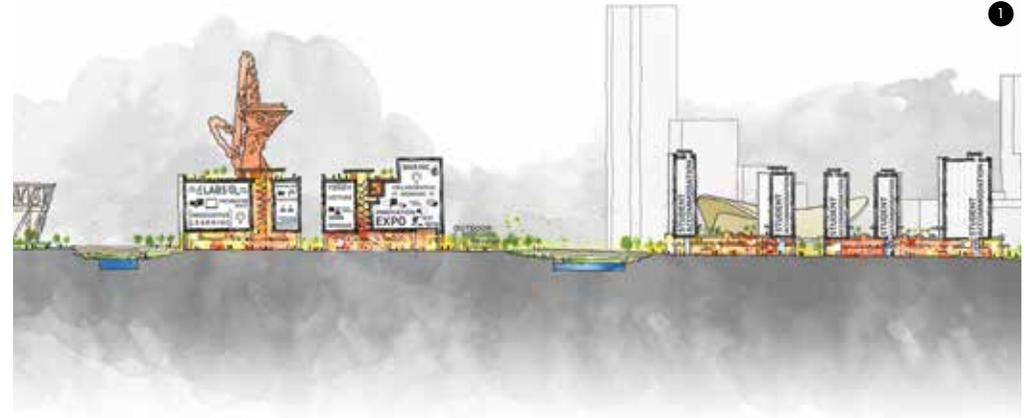
UCL East: New vision aims to break ‘town and gown’ divide

University College London (UCL) is building on its pioneering history with a new campus on Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park. It will be the single biggest expansion since the University was founded almost 200 years ago, providing 180,000 square metres of new floor space (the masterplan increased this significantly from the original brief requirement of 125,000 sqm). This is 40 per cent more space than UCL currently has across its historic Bloomsbury site.

Of much greater importance is the vision behind the move, which is for a more open academic environment that fosters collaboration and significantly benefits the local community.

LDA Design’s masterplan for UCL East shifts the needle forward on higher education design. Developed in partnership with the London Legacy Development Corporation (LLDC), the proposal is for a sociable and highly permeable campus that will inspire students and help secure better education and employment outcomes for local people. It was informed by intensive public consultation and tested against higher education benchmarks to maximise development potential.

In seeking to overcome traditional barriers between universities and the public, the masterplan takes a landscape-led design approach. It distils a clear and simple idea about connecting people and place through landscape: the sunny river banks which provide an ideal setting for a university are also the key to its integration, provided the local community has easy and inviting access.



Client
London Legacy Development Corporation
University College London

Location
Stratford, East London

Partners
Nicholas Hare Architects, BuroHappold Engineering,
Arcadis, Momentum Transport Planning, Soundings,
Studio Weave

Services
Masterplanning, Landscape Architecture, Biodiversity

Area
5.6 ha

Schedule
2017 - ongoing

- ¹ ‘The Fluid Zone’
- ² Illustrative view of the plaza
- ³ Illustrative masterplan

Public routes and spaces are located on the waterfront. The plaza at the heart of the campus is a multifunctional space for curation and programming, a confluence zone for academics, students and community users to encourage encounters.

The built form is robust with lower floors accessible and activated. UCL East is about creating 'stickiness', a place of cultural exchange where people enjoy spending time and can share ideas. These principles can and should be applied to any development, not just a new university campus.

UCL East is part of the city's emerging Cultural and Education District in the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park, another LDA Design project. It will connect surrounding communities to the Park, and the plan is inspired by the informal riparian character of the Park and its rich biodiversity.

The masterplan secured outline planning permission with unanimous approval from the Planning Decisions Committee. Detailed plans were approved in March 2019.



¹ UCL East terrace