2013 will be a milestone in Birkbeck’s history, as it will see teaching activities expand in east London with the birth of a new campus.

Opening in the autumn, University Square Stratford will enable Birkbeck to increase its provision of part-time evening tuition in a young and booming part of London associated with low participation rates in higher education. This exciting departure is the first time in its 190-year history that Birkbeck will have its own dedicated building outside central London.

Courses at all levels and covering many subjects (including Law, Business and Languages) will be offered to people living and working in east London at the new five-storey building situated in the heart of Stratford’s Cultural Quarter. University Square Stratford is an innovative £33m partnership between Birkbeck and the University of East London (UEL). The state-of-the-art 8,600 square metres of facilities will cater for up to 3,400 students. They include a 300-seat lecture theatre, a learning centre, a performing arts rehearsal and theatre space, a student support centre, seminar rooms and administrative offices, all surrounding a light-filled atrium. The opening of the new campus will be the culmination of a seven-year project, and will enable Birkbeck to increase its student numbers in Stratford (Birkbeck students in Stratford are currently taught at UEL premises).
The excitement and expectation about the new campus have been increasing, especially since the success of London 2012. In September 2012, Birkbeck staff attended the ‘topping out’ ceremony to mark the completion of the main structure of the building.

The following month, staff joined Birkbeck’s Olympic rower Rob Williams to run or cycle the nine miles from Stratford to Bloomsbury as part of the inaugural Birkbeck Square Route to raise money for the Student Hardship Fund.

Professor Philip Dewe, Vice-Master of Birkbeck, says: “Our work in Stratford carries forward George Birkbeck’s mission statement of ‘universal access to the blessings of knowledge’ and represents the strategic significance of Stratford, and our place as part of the east London community. Birkbeck is contributing to the transformation of the area, by providing local residents with the opportunity to improve their education, expand their horizons, and increase their employability.”

University Square Stratford is financed by Birkbeck, UEL, £8m from the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE), £4m from the London Thames Gateway Development Corporation (LTGDC), a significant donation from the Garfield Weston Foundation, and generous support from the Wolfson Foundation, alumni and other individual donors.

By Guy Collender

For more information visit: www.universitysquarestratford.ac.uk

“Stratford really is the place to be” says an alumnus and transport expert

Terry Hill CBE is enthusiastic about Birkbeck’s new campus being located in one of the most well-connected parts of London. An engineer specialising in transport and infrastructure, Hill has been associated with Stratford projects for much of his career at Arup – the 11,000-strong global firm of engineers, planners and designers. In 1991 the Government chose Arup’s route for High Speed 1 – the £5.8bn, 67-mile railway from the Channel Tunnel, via Stratford, to St Pancras – and Hill was heavily involved in turning this plan into reality.

As Chairman of Arup from 2004 to 2009, and now as Chair of Arup’s Board of Trustees, Hill has also seen the results of Arup’s major contracts for London 2012. As well as the infrastructure and landscaping for the Olympic Park, Arup staff designed the Aquatics Centre, the Olympic Village, and the iconic 115-metre ArcelorMittal Orbit sculpture in collaboration with artist Anish Kapoor.

Hill says: “I have seen Stratford over a long, long time, and, therefore, it has been one of the great sources of pleasure and satisfaction to see that transformation. Stratford really is the place to be.”

Hill completed an MSc in Economics at Birkbeck in 1984.