BIRKBECK  
University of London  

MINUTES OF THE ESTATES COMMITTEE  

27 October 2010  

Present:  
Professor David Latchman (chair), Mr John Biggs, Professor Philip Dewe, Professor Hilary Fraser, Ms Karen Scott, Professor Nick Keep, Professor Philip Powell, Mr Sean Rillo Raczka, Professor Miriam Zukas  

Apologies for absence:  
Professor Patricia Tuitt  

In attendance:  
Mr Keith Harrison – College Secretary & Clerk to the Governors, Mr David McGhie – Director of Estates and Planning, Mr Malcolm Pearson – Estates Project Manager, Mr Malcolm Mooney – Estates Manager, Ms Elizabeth Whitehead - Facilities Manager, Mr Tom McCartney - Safety Officer, Mr Mike Devereux – Management Accountant, Mr Terry Andrews - Income Accountant, Mr Mark Pimm - Disability Co-ordinator, Ms Julia Lerch – Corporate Support Intern, Mrs Katharine Bock – Head of Governance and Corporate Support.  

In attendance for item 5:  
Jeremy Tanner (Conference Manager), James Smith (Strategic Review Project and Process Manager)  

1 TERMS OF REFERENCE AND SCHEME OF MEMBERSHIP  
Received  
1.1 The terms of reference and scheme of membership for 2010-11. (E 2010 01)  

2 MINUTES  
Confirmed  
2.1 The Minutes of the Estates Committee meeting held on 12 May 2010.  

3 REPORT TO THE FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE  
Noted  
3.1 F&GPC's receipt of the Report of the Estates Committee. (E 2010 02)  

4 ESTATES STRATEGY UPDATE  
Considered  
4.1 An update on implementation of the Estates strategy. (E 2010 03)
4.2 In order to complete refurbishment as quickly as possible, separate tracks were being pursued for planning applications and building work for minor work in houses 27-28 and more extensive work in houses 25-26. The initial phase of refurbishment at houses 27-28 had been concluded and the teaching rooms were in use. An administration office had been added near the entrance of house. Contractors would be finished in early November and following installation of the gas supply the offices should be available at the end of November.

4.3 Following discussions with Camden Council’s conservation officer on the possibilities for refurbishment at houses 25-26, which included a lift, a single reception area and internal access between houses 26 and 27, an informal note of the planned work had been sent to Camden’s planning department for feedback before the formal application was lodged. The current budget covered energy efficient heating installation, internal access between the houses and redecoration, but not the lift or shared reception area. The lift would be fitted later if resource became available.

4.4 To keep the budget for Russell Square under review.

4.5 As a lift would improve accessibility to the building, donor funding possibilities to resource this should be pursued.

4.6 The department of History, Classics and Archaeology were accommodated in Russell Square. The School of Philosophy would move to Russell Square in summer 2011.

4.7 Birkbeck and the Wiener Library had signed the lease for the Wiener’s accommodation at 29 Russell Square and the Wiener had started to refurbish the house. Discussions were taking place on the Wiener’s use of Birkbeck’s security and estate management services (on a charged basis) as well as a collaborative approach to the heating and gas supply at house 29.

4.8 Refurbishment and relocation at Gordon Square was very close to completion. Energy efficient heating had been installed and the fire alarms and electrical wiring replaced. Following relocation of the Department of Media and Cultural Studies to the third floor, taking place at the end of November, the School of Arts would be in place in 39-47 Gordon Square and 32 Tavistock Square. 32 Tavistock Square had become the home of the theatre studies group and was housing music and stage equipment.

4.9 £50K had been pledged by a donor to refurbish the Keynes Library room at 43 Gordon Square. The donor had visited the space and discussed the plans for refurbishment and the work was scheduled to commence in early November.
4.10 The Committee commended the Estates team and members of the School for their contribution to the efficient consolidation of the School’s accommodation, which was already delivering benefits for staff and students.

**Senate House North Block (SHNB)**

4.11 Computer Science and Psychological Sciences had moved out of SHNB by the deadline of 31 July and their equipment had followed by the deadline of 31 August. The space had been cleared and made good and returned to the University, which had paid the agreed £600K compensation for vacating the space.

**Malet Street**

4.12 Computer Science and Psychological Sciences were accommodated in Malet Street, as was the BEI Dean’s office. Geography, Environment and Development Studies had also been relocated as planned.

4.13 The former Library entrance had been remodelled during the summer providing 20+ new study places and IT workstations, addressing the shortage of spaces that had been the subject of recent student feedback.

4.14 In the basement, the first phase of the construction of the shared data centre, including the external “shell” of walls and cabinets and the cooling system, was complete. The next phase would be for IT services and schools to move their servers and equipment in.

4.15 The testing facilities for the department of Psychology, replacing those in North Block, were in use with some operational issues with the locks being addressed.

4.16 Refurbishment of Crystallography laboratories was nearly complete. Building of Biological Sciences laboratory facilities on the upper floors were complete and the space would be fitted out following conclusion of an academic appointment process.

4.17 The main lifts had been replaced over the summer vacation. The work was completed in budget and the new lifts were larger, faster and of better quality than the previous lifts. The Committee endorsed the additional work planned to install a communication system between the lift entrances and the reception desk for use by disabled people during emergency evacuations of the building.

**Egmont House**

4.18 Registry Services had relocated to Egmont House, completing the transfer of most Professional Services sections to that building. The student centre and associated student services remained on the ground floor of Malet Street. The former Registry Services offices on the ground floor had been converted to accessible teaching space and were in use.

**Leases**

4.19 Birkbeck’s acquisition of 27-29 Russell Square and additional space in Gordon Square entitled it to ask the University for low cost 99 year leases on the other properties in both runs of houses. In addition, the University had agreed to issue 999 year low cost leases for the “headquarters” buildings of the Bloomsbury based Colleges. The
University would be working on the “headquarters” building leases first and would then move to the Russell Square and Gordon Square house leases.

Next phase of the Estates strategy

HEFCE Capital Investment Framework (CIF) 2011-14

4.20 The College’s CIF application had been submitted to HEFCE by the deadline of Friday 8 October. The submission had required a carbon management plan and registration for the Government carbon reduction commitment scheme. HEFCE would advise institutions whether they had satisfied the requirements of the framework in January 2011. HEFCE had stated that the provision of capital funding from April 2011 would depend on the spending review. There was speculation that the fund may be 50-60% of the 2008-11 allocation. For Birkbeck this would mean that the fund would decrease from £12-13 M. to £6-7 M.

Emerald Street

4.21 The College was investigating selling its share in 23-29 Emerald Street, where the London Knowledge Lab and some archive facilities were based, to the Institute of Education who were its partners in the property. Activities currently taking place there would eventually be relocated to the main building. It was noted that this would require additional space resource in the main building.

4.22 Estates officers were discussing with their counterparts at IoE leasing back space short term until accommodation in the main building could be provided. Although Birkbeck staff would ultimately relocate, this would not affect Birkbeck’s continuing commitment to the London Knowledge Lab partnership with IoE.

4.23 Negotiations on the price and sale would be reported via Estates Committee to Finance and General Purposes Committee and Governors. The property had been acquired as part of a HEFCE capital investment scheme in which institutions working in partnership were exempt from costs. As the property was acquired some years ago, the College would not need to pay money back to HEFCE.

4.24 The proceeds of the sale would be allocated to projects as determined by Governors advised by the Committee. There were competing calls on Estates resources by Stratford and the ongoing refurbishment of Russell Square as well as the need to expand and enhance teaching space and maintain the existing buildings. Stratford had already been identified as a priority in the existing capital programme. Estates Committee would give further consideration to prioritising other work once the CIF allocation was confirmed.

Next phase of relocations

4.25 In consultation with Executive Deans and Schools, Estates officers would now begin to plan the next phase of relocations, which would need to take into account

- Move of Earth sciences from its current accommodation in UCL
- Consolidation of Psychology’s space in the main building
- Improved space to accommodate growing numbers of postgraduate research students
• Need for more and better teaching and IT workstation facilities to accommodate larger numbers of students paying higher fees and thus with higher expectations, especially after the Browne review was implemented.

4.26 The possibility of leasing the second floor of 18–20 Gower St from the University was also being explored. This could be used as decant space and possibly to accommodate expansion and development.

4.27 Following preliminary discussions an outline costed plan for the next phase of work would be developed.

Signage
4.28 New signage was needed in Malet Street, Gordon Square and Russell Square. The current Malet Street signs were temporary and permanent signs had been commissioned. Lower floors and public areas had been prioritized.

ACTION
4.29 (All) Report and missing or misleading signs to the Estates Department.

5 TEACHING SPACE
Received
5.1 An update on the teaching space project (E 2010 04)

Noted
5.2 The new Teaching Space Planning Tool (TSPT) enabled teaching planning and teaching space information to be captured in a central database. Teaching space for 2010-11 had been planned and allocated using the tool which had enabled better planning of teaching space; better understanding of the issues around matching class size to rooms; and better systems for reallocation of space for larger than planned classes. It had also enabled personalised online timetables for most students, improving service to students and the management of “front of house” at the demanding start of term.

5.3 The project had also produced management information on space use which would enable the second phase of the project, to examine teaching patterns. Data gathered in the Teaching Space Planning Tool would be used to model and evaluate detailed proposals to be discussed at the Teaching Space Project and through consultation with staff.

5.4 There was growing demand for IT teaching space resulting from larger classes. A larger IT teaching space within the College was necessary.

5.5 The Committee also noted that a bigger general teaching space was becoming increasingly necessary given the expanded sizes of some classes, with more expansion anticipated in 2011-12. Although College resources were constrained there was the possibility of raising capital funds from donors.

ACTION
5.6 (Director of Estates) Identify possibilities for expansion in IT teaching space.
5.7 (Estates Project Manager) Prepare a report on options and preliminary costings for a large lecture theatre, to be used to assess fundraising potential.

Noted

5.8 Estates Committee also discussed the need to balance different requirements in allocating space. These issues were becoming more defined as the College continued to grow. There was a tension between the extent of standardisation of process necessary for automated services such as online timetables, that were expected by students; and the more ad hoc and responsive approach, such as allowing individuals to sample before confirming module choice, that was a feature of some provision.

5.9 Another area examined by the Committee was the need to match space with class size set against the wish to keeping students close to “their” School.

ACTION (Conference and Teaching Facilities Manager and Strategic Review Project and Process Manager)

5.10 Prepare a summary report on the current dimensions of our teaching space and the demands on it.

6 BIRKBECK STRATFORD

Considered

6.1 A report on the Stratford Island University Campus project (E 2010 05)

Noted

6.2 Good process was being made on the project, which was was still on schedule for building to commence in 2011 and be completed in time for the 2013-14 academic year.

6.3 Newham Council had produced a draft long land lease for the building site and the partners were drafting their proposed amendments. The Heads of Terms had been agreed.

6.4 The project and governance structure was in place and UEL had appointed a development project manager whose time was divided between UEL and Birkbeck. The Co-operation Agreement between Birkbeck and UEL was finalised and awaiting signature and an Operations Agreement would also be drafted.

6.5 Design development was progressing satisfactorily. Planning proposals had been submitted to Newham Council and London Thames Gateway Development Corporation. Subject to planning approval, the project board expected to go out to tender in December.

6.6 There were 310 FTEs currently studying at Birkbeck Stratford, 210 FTEs of whom were on undergraduate and postgraduate degree programmes. The School of Business, Economics and Informatics and the School of Law would be expanding their Stratford academic programmes in 2011-12. The target for the first year of operation in the new building was 800 FTEs.
6.7 The Committee was reassured of the financial viability of the University of East London and arrangements for exist and protection of the parties in the contract between the College and UEL.

7 ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT
Considered
7.1 A report on energy and environmental management. (E 2010 06)

Noted
7.2 The College’s annual energy consumption and carbon dioxide emission, especially from electricity, had risen over recent years. To help identify how energy consumption could be contained, a survey of all buildings had been carried out in summer 2010 in order to identify opportunities to reduce energy and water consumption. A carbon management plan had been produced listing measures to reduce carbon dioxide emissions. Malet Street was the main consumer of electricity.

7.3 A substantial part of the savings would result from a single measure, the re-commissioning of the building management system. Works were already underway to improve the control of the heating and air conditioning systems. Other measures would include installation of low energy lamps, improved lighting controls and the use of variable speed drives for large water pumps. Low cost, short payback measures would be implemented first and those requiring major investment would be tackled when finance became available.

8 FINANCIAL REPORTS
Considered
8.1 Reports on budget allocations and expenditure for:
• The operational Estates and Facilities budget (E 2010 07)
• The capital programmes budget (E 2010 08)
• The Stratford Island project (E 2010 09)

Noted
8.2 Projects were proceeding and were within the overall budget.

8.3 The Committee had started to monitor the operational budget in response to the introduction of devolved budgets and the need to make accurate estimated and control costs.

9 PROJECT PROGRESS REPORTS
Noted
9.1 The Committee received and was satisfied with reports on progress on previously agreed Estates projects and on expenditure and budgetary management of these projects. (E 2010 10)

ACTION
9 (Estate Manager) ensure commissioning of the system in the lift lobbies for disabled people to communicate with Reception in emergency situations.
10  LONG-TERM MAINTENANCE PROGRAMME
   Noted
10.1 Progress on implementing the Long Term Maintenance programme 2010-11 (E 2010 11)
   ACTION
10.2 (Estates Manager) review the report to include more information on the criteria for prioritising work.

11  KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS
   Considered
11.1 Updated Key Performance Indicators for 2010-11 to be forwarded to F&GPC. (E 2010 12)

12  DATES OF MEETINGS
   Noted
12.1 Dates for the Spring and Summer term meetings:
   • Wednesday 26 January 2011 at 10.30am.
   • Wednesday 11 May 2011 at 10.30am.