



UNIVERSITY OF
BIRMINGHAM

THE GREEN HEART



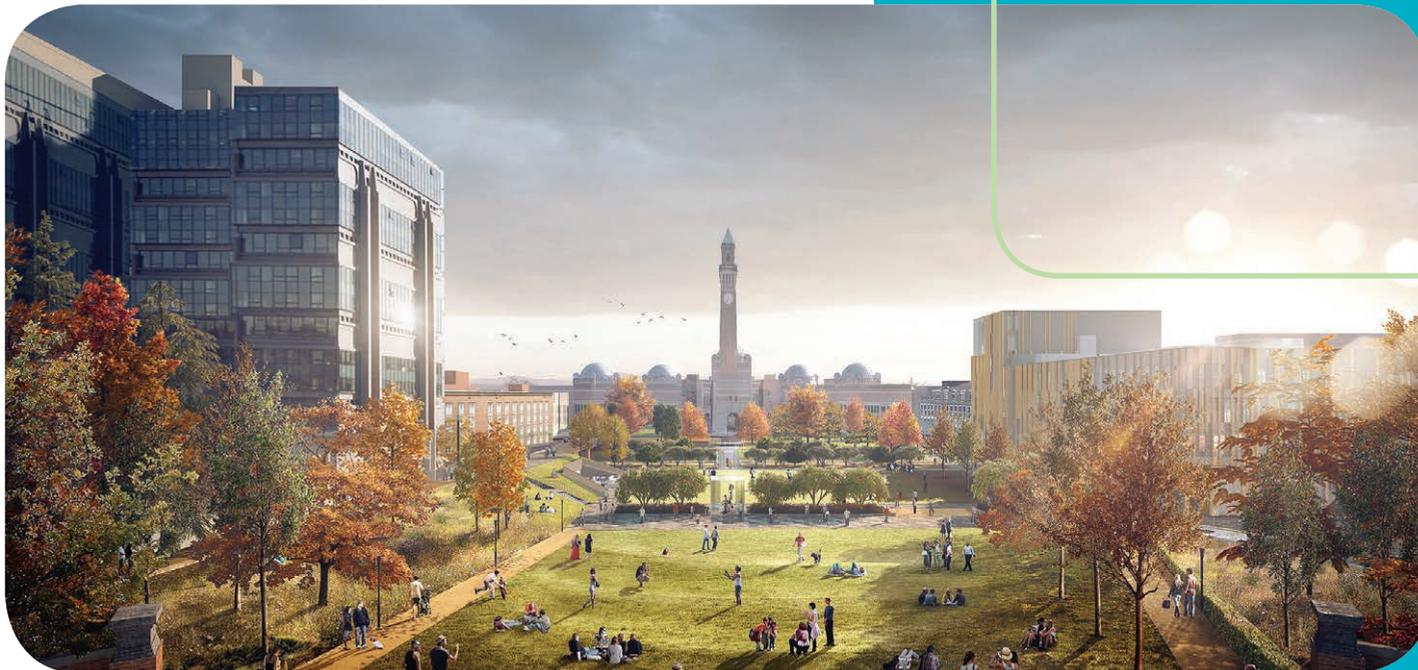
BUILDING A NEW SPACE CENTRED AROUND YOU

‘THE GREEN HEART WILL PROVIDE STIMULATING, SECURE AND ACCESSIBLE LANDSCAPED SURROUNDINGS – TO BE USED AND ENJOYED ALL YEAR ROUND. PLANTING SECTION WILL ENCOURAGE WILDLIFE AND PROVIDE A PALETTE TO LIFT ALL OF THE SENSES. THE DESIGN WILL CREATE A SENSE OF PLACE AND SUPPORT SUSTAINABILITY...’

Trevor Payne, Director of Estates

CONTENTS

Introduction and engagement	4–5
Spaces and place	6–7
Events and activities	8–9
Information and technology	10–11
Identity and sense of place	12–13
Conclusion	14



INTRODUCTION AND ENGAGEMENT

The University of Birmingham is in the midst of an exciting and transformational campus redevelopment. Key to this development is the creation of a new focal point – the ‘**Green Heart**’ – at the centre of the Edgbaston Campus.

The Green Heart Research and Consultation Project was undertaken by Nomad RDC Ltd, who have worked closely with the University to understand the needs of our students, staff, and the wider community to make sure that the design of the new space is centred around you.

Thank you to everyone who gave their views and ideas throughout our research. This summary highlights your thoughts, ideas, hopes and desires for the Green Heart. From interviews to online polls, we have collated your feedback and used your suggestions to further shape the Green Heart vision.



HOW ARE WE TAKING YOUR IDEAS FORWARD?

YOU HAVE GIVEN US **HUNDREDS OF IDEAS** FOR HOW THE GREEN HEART COULD BE CONSTRUCTED AND DEVELOPED. THROUGHOUT THIS BOOKLET, WE WANT TO SHARE WITH YOU HOW THE PROJECT TEAM AND OUR TEAMS OF ARCHITECTS ARE **ADAPTING AND INCORPORATING** YOUR THOUGHTS AND OPINIONS INTO **THE GREEN HEART DESIGN**. WITHOUT DOUBT, IDEAS ARE NOT YET EXHAUSTED AND WE’LL CONTINUE TO TAKE FEEDBACK AS THE JOURNEY UNFOLDS.

You can keep up-to-date with project progress on our blog at uobgreenheart.com, and on our website at birmingham.ac.uk/greenheart

But, it is not too late to get involved, share your ideas by tweeting us [@uobgreenheart](https://twitter.com/uobgreenheart) or, contact us by email at greenheart@contacts.bham.ac.uk

SPACES AND PLACE

The outdoor areas of the current campus are enjoyed immensely by students, staff and the wider public.

UNIVERSITY SQUARE

Interviews and behavioural mapping shows us that the University Square is the most popular location on campus. It should act as the busy and vibrant **'social hub'**, and **'focal point'** of the Green Heart. Yet, it should also provide an atmosphere where students can go to **relax** and feel at ease.

CHANCELLOR'S COURT

Chancellor's Court is used by a more eclectic mix of people all of whom enjoy the impressive and historic buildings. This space is viewed as a more **sophisticated** space with a relaxing and **peaceful** atmosphere, and it should maintain a classical and grand character while also being open to the public.

MOST POPULAR FEATURES

- WATER FEATURES
- TREES
- VARIETY OF PLANTS
- OUTDOOR DINING AREA
- MARKET STALLS
- HANGING CHAIRS
- WOODEN FURNITURE
- OUTDOOR EXERCISE
- SCULPTURES AND CONTEMPORARY ART

SHAPING OUR VISION



WILD FLOWERS AND NATIVE PLANTS THAT ENCOURAGE LOCAL SPECIES TO THE CAMPUS HAVE BEEN CAREFULLY SELECTED, AND WE ARE INCORPORATING NESTING SITES TO ATTRACT WILDLIFE INCLUDING BATS, SWIFTS AND HEDGEHOGS. WE WILL ALSO ESTABLISH LUSH **GRASS AREAS** FOR PICNICKING AND SOCIALISING IN THE WARM WEATHER. A NUMBER OF **WATER FEATURES** HAVE BEEN INCLUDED IN THE DESIGN TO MANAGE DRAINAGE, BUT TO ALSO ENHANCE THE SERENITY OF THE SPACE, IMPROVE AIR QUALITY AND PROVIDE A **RELAXING AUDIO BACKDROP**.



EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES

You said you'd like different parts of the Green Heart to host distinctive activities and events. From our research it was apparent that people mainly want to use the outdoor space to meet friends and colleagues to socialize; thus, fostering a strong sense of community on campus.

SOCIALIZING

To turn the Green Heart into a social hub you suggested:

- Outdoor spaces to eat
- Meetings areas
- Street food stalls
- Work and study outdoor spaces
- Heated shelters and gazebos

WELLBEING

You want your new space to allow people to engage in:

- Exercise and sporting activities
- Fun and informal team events
- Tug of war, volleyball or basketball
- Yoga or Tai Chi

ENTERTAINMENT

There was great interest in making the Green Heart a space for entertainment which could include:

- Music and outdoor concerts
- Outdoor cinema
- Drama performances
- A small amphitheatre
- Exhibitions and walking tours



SHAPING OUR VISION



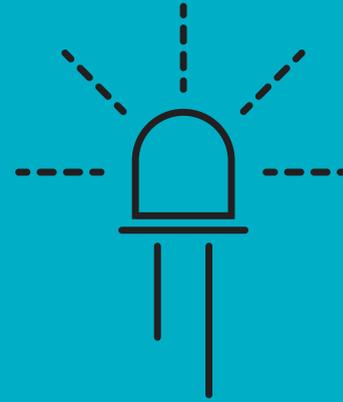
A **VIBRANT SPACE** THAT INVITES STAFF, STUDENTS AND THE LOCAL COMMUNITY TO PLAY, AS WELL AS WORK AND REST, WILL BE CREATED BY THE GREEN HEART. THE DESIGN WILL INCORPORATE GENEROUS AMOUNTS OF SEATING, PLUS SPACE FOR FARMERS **MARKETS, PERFORMANCES AND GATHERINGS**. THE MAIN LAWN BETWEEN MUIRHEAD TOWER AND THE NEW LIBRARY WILL ACCOMMODATE GRAD BALLS, MARQUEES AND MAJOR EVENTS. PLUS, WE WILL BE OPENING A BRAND NEW SHELTERED **CAFÉ AND BAR** AT THE HEART OF CAMPUS. WE WILL ALSO BUILD A GRASS AUDITORIUM SO YOU CAN ENJOY UNIQUE **OUTDOOR PERFORMANCES** FROM THEATRE AND MUSIC, TO FESTIVALS AND SPONTANEOUS SPECTACLES!

INFORMATION AND TECHNOLOGY

Overall, students and staff would like to keep technology in the Green Heart to a minimum. Instead it should be a natural green space and a **sanctuary** free from technology.

However, you considered **wi-fi** throughout as essential, as well as charging facilities. You also want the Green Heart to be environmentally responsible, with suggestions including solar energy to power charging points. Heaters and improved **lighting** were also highlighted to encourage people to stay on campus in the evenings and during winter.

Greater access to information is sought-after. You would like the Green Heart to showcase the history, heritage and status of the University, including its academic achievements, plus its cultural and architectural history. Ideas such as **statues, plaques, information points and exhibitions**, as well as plants and trees that symbolise the University's research and history were popular. You also think there should be more information about University news, upcoming events and projects on campus, including improved navigation.



SHAPING OUR VISION

WE'VE APPOINTED LIGHTING EXPERTS TO DEVELOP A ZONED LIGHTING STRATEGY WHICH WILL INCORPORATE TIMBER COLUMNS AND **ENERGY-SAVING TECHNIQUES** TO COMPLEMENT THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT. CAREFULLY MANAGED SYSTEMS WILL ENABLE US TO KEEP CAMPUS SAFE AND BRIGHT, WHILE DELIVERING AN AMBIENT ENVIRONMENT AND **MINIMISING LIGHT POLLUTION** OR WASTE. WE HAVE ALSO INCORPORATED SEVERAL SUSTAINABLE AND ENERGY SAVING TECHNOLOGIES INCLUDING **ENERGY GENERATING PAVING** WHICH PRODUCES POWER WHEN PEOPLE WALK ACROSS IT, AND RAIN GARDENS, WHICH WILL ACCOMMODATE ALL RAINWATER ON-SITE, THUS DOING AWAY WITH CONVENTIONAL DRAINS.

IDENTITY AND SENSE OF PLACE

Identity and sense of place are key features of a University. Identity differentiates one institution from another, making it stand out from the crowd, while an associated sense of place helps to foster a feeling of community and belonging among students, staff and the wider public.

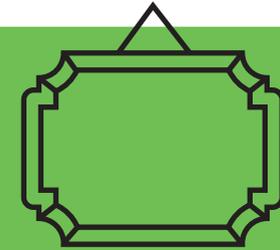
THE UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM IS VIEWED FOREMOST AS A **PRESTIGIOUS AND SCHOLARLY INSTITUTION, WHICH IS CLASSIC, HISTORIC AND ICONIC.**

There is a strong sense of pride in the University's historic identity and many are keen to maintain its traditional aesthetic. Others are also keen to showcase the history and heritage of the University through **statues, plaques, information points** and **exhibits**.

But, you also want the campus identity to be leafy, green and scenic. Your most desired features on campus were **mature trees** and **hedges, flowers and shrubs**, and **water features** such as **fountains** or **ponds**. Overall, the Green Heart should have a calm and peaceful atmosphere with wooded, natural elements filling an open, aromatic, meadow-like space.



SHAPING OUR VISION



BIRMINGHAM HAS A WEALTH OF **CULTURAL ASSETS** AND A STRONG HERITAGE COLLECTION: WE'RE WORKING CLOSELY WITH EXPERTS TO BRING **IMPORTANT CULTURAL ELEMENTS** INTO THE SPACE AND PROVIDE A NEW HOME FOR SOME OF OUR TREASURED UNIVERSITY PIECES. EXISTING FEATURES, SUCH AS THE UNIVERSITY PLAQUES FROM THE FORMER LIBRARY, WILL BE MOVED INTO THE GREEN HEART.

MAINTAINING A **RICH GREEN TAPESTRY** IS FUNDAMENTAL TO OUR DESIGN. WE WILL BE **PLANTING 160 NEW TREES** IN THE GREEN HEART TO ENHANCE AIR QUALITY, AS WELL AS PROVIDE SHADE AND **VISUAL VARIETY**.



CONCLUSION

Every insight and suggestion which you have given through this research will enable the University of Birmingham and the Green Heart project team to create a space that is unique to our staff, students and local community. Without doubt, ideas are not yet exhausted and many alternatives will be explored.

We understand that you are excited about outdoor learning spaces, a greater variety of entertainment and activities on campus, more information on the University and its history, as well as quiet contemplative spaces for relaxation and secluded study. Your ideas will be brought together to create a green and unified campus with a clear identity.

You can keep up-to-date with project progress on our blog at uobgreenheart.com, and on our website at birmingham.ac.uk/greenheart

But, it is not too late to get involved, share your views and ideas by tweeting us [@uobgreenheart](https://twitter.com/uobgreenheart)

DO YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS ABOUT THE PROJECT? HEAD TO [INTRANET.BHAM.AC.UK/GREEN-HEART](http://intranet.bham.ac.uk/green-heart) FOR A FULL LIST OF FAQs, A SCHEDULE OF BUILDING ACTIVITY AND MUCH MORE! OR, CONTACT US BY EMAIL AT [GREENHEART@CONTACTS.BHAM.AC.UK](mailto:greenheart@contacts.bham.ac.uk)

BUILDING A NEW SPACE CENTRED AROUND YOU



'...THE OVERALL CONCEPT WILL BE VIBRANT AND PROVIDE AND SUPPORT A **CONSTANTLY CHANGING RANGE** OF USES THROUGHOUT THE YEAR TO REFLECT CAMPUS ACTIVITY... **OUR AMBITIOUS REDEVELOPMENT AND LANDSCAPING PLANS** ARE DESIGNED TO ENHANCE THE STUDY, WORK AND VISITOR EXPERIENCE FOR **OUR CAMPUS COMMUNITY.**'

Trevor Payne, Director of Estates



DISCOVER MORE...

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