

Transformational campus development to get underway

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The University of Birmingham's plans for a £175 million **campus development** (<http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/community/building/index.aspx>) project including brand new library and sports centre have been approved by Birmingham City Council. This marks the final step in the planning stages for a five-year investment in facilities that will transform the University's famous Edgbaston campus and extend the services available to the local community.

Following extensive public consultation, the estate development plans will deliver the city's first 50 metre swimming pool, create an outstanding academic library opening up the green heart of campus. The plans will also see the construction of new contemporary student accommodation and a multi-storey car park.



The new library project demonstrates the University's commitment to research of the highest quality, attracting both excellent students and staff. In line with founder Joseph Chamberlain's vision for the estate to provide 21st century educational and research facilities, the new building will focus on providing inspiring, multifunctional, flexible study and research space and enabling immediate access to printed and digital materials. The library will also include a 'Cultural Gateway'; an exhibition space and café featuring a programme of exhibitions and displays providing new opportunities to engage visitors in the research of the University, transforming the traditional idea of what a library, and more specifically a university library, can offer.

By working closely with colleagues in the city, the University has ensured that the new library will complement other facilities provided within the region and in particular, the new Library of Birmingham, enhancing Birmingham's reputation as a vibrant, culturally aware, information-rich city.

Diane Job, Director of Library Services, said: 'By investing in the very best facilities for staff and students our new library will herald a new era in targeted, customer-friendly library provision in all its guises, whether this be access to print and digital texts, detailed and tailored individual help service, group discussion areas, or private study rooms. It will reflect the ways in which people teach and learn in the digital age and will be flexible and responsive to changing user needs.'

The sports centre will include Birmingham's first 50 metre swimming pool as well a large gym, sports hall and activity and dance studios to meet the needs of students, staff, local community and community clubs. Housing one of the largest gyms in Europe, the centre will cater for wide ranging fitness needs from rehabilitation through to competitive players.

The centre will also include a purpose designed Performance and Wellbeing Centre. The adjoining Performance Gym will provide specialist equipment and expertise to talented sportsmen and women in the University, city and region, and help to produce Britain's future Olympians.

Zena Wooldridge, Director of Sport, said: 'This new facility will be a game-changer for the University and City. Not only will it provide much-needed opportunities to enhance the health & wellbeing of local residents, students and university staff, but help Birmingham attract talented athletes to study and train at the University, but also to retain and develop the city's and University's most talented athletes and players. At the end of the 2012 Olympics, there wasn't one gold postbox (gold medal) in Birmingham; and we hope the University's new facility will put that right, and also inspire others to take part.'

These new campus buildings will join the award winning **Bramall Music Building** (<http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/bramall/index.aspx>), the new home of the University's world-class music department which opened in autumn 2012 to offer state-of-the-art facilities to staff students and the local community. Appointing top architects, including Birmingham based, award-winning Associated Architects, will ensure the highest quality in design and will use the latest environmentally friendly building materials.

The estates development plan is supported by the University's £160 million **Circles of Influence** (<http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/alumni/giving/circlesofinfluence/oldindex.aspx>) fundraising campaign. Director of Development, Alumni and Business Engagement, Nick Blinco, explains: 'The generosity of our alumni and supporters through Circles of Influence is continuing to transform lives with every gift making a real difference. We remain incredibly grateful to the many individuals and foundations whose investment, combined with the University's, is helping to realise our vision of providing state-of-the-art facilities to enhance the student experience.'

For more information about the transformational development plans please visit the University of Birmingham's dedicated **webpage** (<http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/community/building/index.aspx>).

Notes to editors

Image: New Bramall Music building

Circles of Influence supports research that saves the lives of children and adults in the West Midlands and around the world. It funds scholarships that open the University to talented young people who might otherwise feel university is not for them. It ensures internships are available to hundreds of students. It provides fellowships to outstanding researchers who will become the next generation of academic leaders. It provides outstanding facilities that attract the best students and staff to the region, and that open our campus to the communities in which we live.

For more information about how you can support the library development, please contact **Reheila Shahein** (<mailto:r.shahein@bham.ac.uk>), Circles of Influence Campaign Manager.

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