



# UCL Student Centre

Nicholas Hare  
Architects







# UCL Student Centre

This flagship project reinforces UCL's commitment to creating one of the most exciting universities in the world at which to study and work. The building provides a flexible environment that enhances the lives of UCL students and supports their needs and learning in the heart of the Bloomsbury campus.

The brief for the Student Centre required a truly student-focused building which would be responsive to change, be inspirational and enabling, and capable of re-inventing itself as trends in education develop. It required a building accessible to all, reflecting the diversity of its users, with architecture that is easy to read and use, and one that creates a memorable experience. A building of the highest quality was required, both in terms of finish and longevity, but also in response to its civic conservation area context. Key components of the brief included 1,000 study spaces for students, a Student Enquiries Centre, a café and space for exhibitions.

*"It will stand as one of UCL's greatest buildings and the spirit of teamwork behind its design and construction will inspire the students who use it for generations to come."*

Professor Anthony Smith, Project Sponsor and Vice Provost (Education and Student Affairs)







*"It is only when you step inside that you truly see the hand of its architect and the Student Centre starts to scintillate with excitement."*





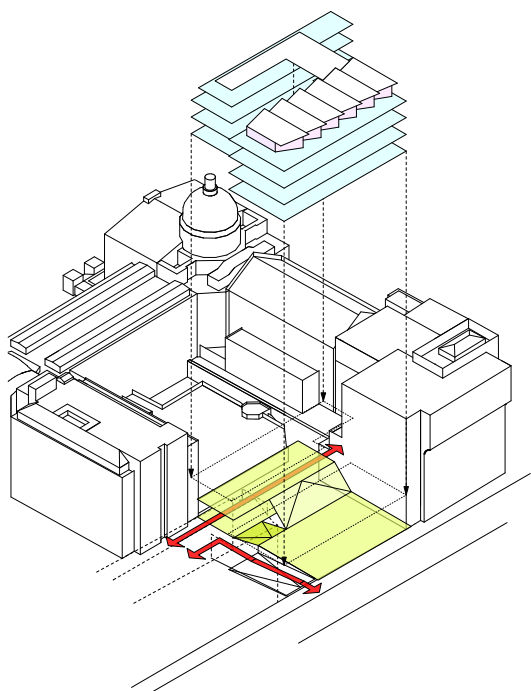
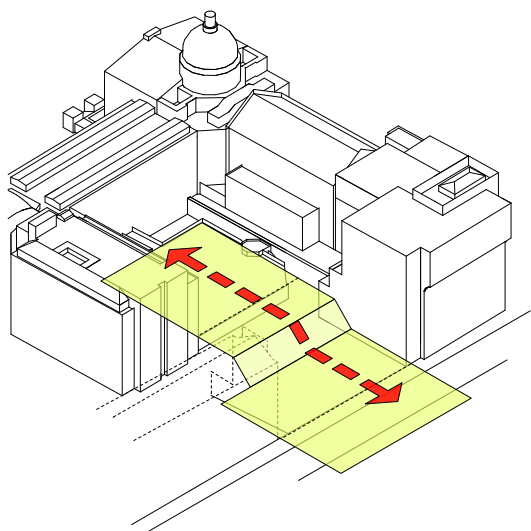
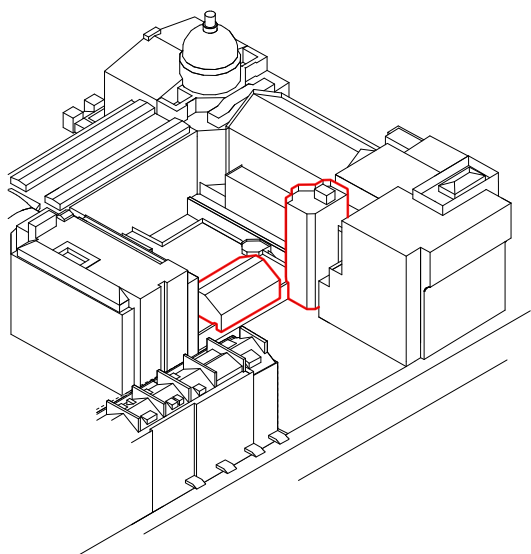


## Maximising the project opportunities

The Student Centre is built on what was the last piece of undeveloped land on Gordon Street, adjacent to the Bloomsbury Theatre. The sensitive site sits within the Bloomsbury Conservation Area and adjacent to Grade I and Grade II listed buildings.

Key to successfully obtaining planning consent was our structured and collaborative approach working with the planners and stakeholders. Consultation was carried out with a range of external stakeholders and neighbours, and gained strong support from Design Council CABE and Historic England.

As well as maximising the amount of learning space for students, the project offered the opportunity to make the most of the site's strategic location by creating a new and vibrant approach to UCL, one which captures the outreaching ethos of the University. In response, the building creates a new high quality civic realm through into the Bloomsbury Campus, resolving campus circulation routes and re-inventing the existing Japanese Garden as a tranquil urban courtyard for London.



*"A stunningly designed building that fits beautifully into the complex street architecture of Gordon Street, and one that has been built to the very highest standards."*

Professor Anthony Smith, Project Sponsor and Vice Provost (Education and Student Affairs)

# Extending the public realm

As a prominent new eastern gateway to the Bloomsbury Campus, the fully inclusive, 24/7 building provides a welcoming reception for students, the public and visitors, allowing ease of movement within it and outward to the wider university. The generous ground and upper-ground floor levels are open to the public, and connect to the Japanese Garden and beyond.

*"This flagship development has required a genuinely collaborative team approach. The site is one of our main gateways in to campus, and is surrounded by listed buildings, sensitive laboratories, and the Bloomsbury Theatre, part of which the project has had to rebuild."*

David Young, UCL Estates Senior Project Manager



- 01 Open Study Space
- 02 Quiet Study Space
- 03 Quiet Contemplation Room
- 04 Student Enquiries Centre
- 05 Group Room
- 06 Group Space
- 07 Cafe
- 08 Plant Room





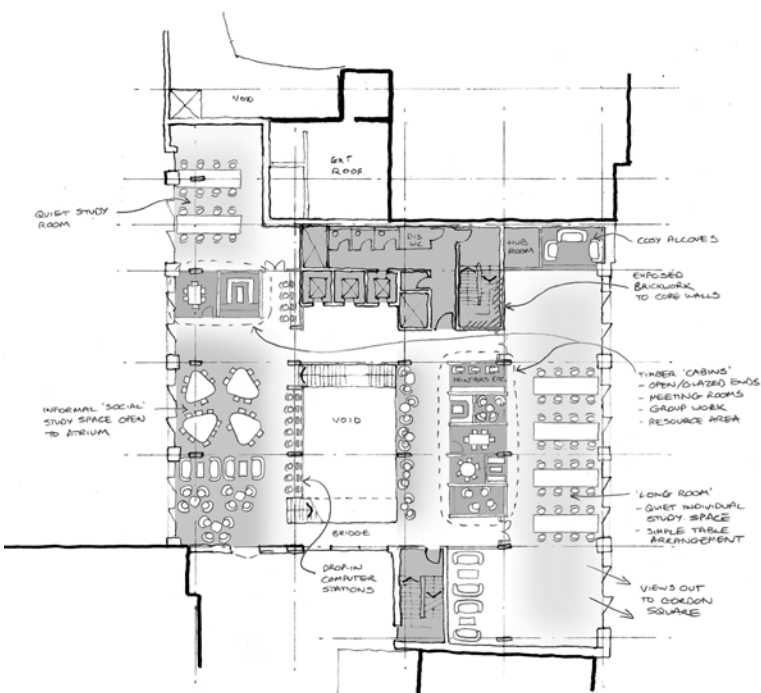






# A student workplace

With four storeys above ground plus two basement storeys, student workspace occupies the largest portion of the new building's area. A rich variety of learning and work environments have been provided. The spaces vary in character and size, creating different types of individual study and group collaboration settings, as well as more social learning areas. Spaces and furniture solutions have been designed to be flexible and adaptable to suit changing needs. All are IT resourced, with effective power provision.



*"A truly student focused building providing an exceptional environment for informal learning together with student support services."*

Andrew Grainger, Director of UCL Estates















## Long-life, loose-fit

A key aspect of the design has been to create a fully flexible building that will be adaptable to the changing needs of the University over time. Thus, the basic layout creates large flexible floor plates with generous floor to floor heights, which as well as maximising daylight penetration, also mean that future changes in use can be accommodated.

Regularity in the order of the façade openings allows for flexibility of internal use, and for future adaptations to the functions within the building - for instance a change to academic teaching space or offices. The provision of a raised floor means that space is fully flexible and distribution of services can be altered to suit future layout changes.



*“The Student Centre imparts a strong sense of architectural ambition – and there’s something inspiring about coming to work in the presence of ambition.”*

Robert Vilkelis - UCL student







## Quality & sustainability

High aspirations for sustainability include a BREEAM 'Outstanding' rating. High-quality, durable materials have been chosen throughout and transparency and daylight characterise the new building. Internally, creamy coloured concrete is left exposed, its mass contributing to the thermal stability of the building. Embedded pipes set within the concrete slabs connect to boreholes beneath the basement to provide free cooling as part of the low-energy, mixed-mode strategy. Façade materials were chosen to complement the heritage context.

*"The project is destined to be a flagship for sustainability at the University and the team are targeting the highest possible levels of environmental performance."*

Green UCL









## Project Team

|   |                                 |
|---|---------------------------------|
| Client  | University College London (UCL) |
| Architect   | Nicholas Hare Architects        |
| Contractor  | Mace                            |
| Services engineer,<br>acoustics & lighting design | BDP                             |
| Structural engineer                               | Curtins                         |
| Fire engineer                                     | Arup                            |
| Project management                                | Arcadis                         |
| Cost planning                                     | AECOM                           |
| Energy and sustainability                         | Useful Simple Trust             |
| Landscape architect                               | Colour UDL                      |
| Health & safety                                   | Faithful & Gould                |
| Planning consultant                               | Deloitte Real Estate            |

*“NHA have shown great passion, a team that have worked in complete collaboration to meet our goals”*

Kevin Argent, UCL Estates Development Director





## Nicholas Hare Architects

3 Barnsbury Square  
London N1 1JL  
020 7619 1670  
[info@nicholashare.co.uk](mailto:info@nicholashare.co.uk)