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UDALL, Julia <<http://orcid.org/0000-0003-0742-1142>> and WAKEFORD HOLDER, Anna

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Placemaking for the Civic University: interface sites as spaces of tension and translation

Dr. Julia Udall and Dr. Anna Wakeford Holder, Sheffield Hallam University, UK

In this chapter we examine the role of place within the developing civic agenda for universities, through examining 'interface sites'. We conceptualise interface sites as physical places at the boundary of the university, where institutional resources, structures and employees come together with civic stakeholders and communities, to engage in shared concerns through programmes of research, teaching and knowledge exchange. The instances we explore, – an urban room, a law clinic, and a natureculture lab, build on historic precedents, but extend and refine them in relation to their institutional and civic context and aims. Their successful operation requires consideration of how to make a space for the achievement of collective agency amongst diverse groups and interests, often in the face of complex societal problems. They become a location which allows relationships to become durable, and meaningfully directed towards tangible common purpose. These sites are interesting to consider in relation to placemaking because they must function for diverse publics and hybrid programmes, and are continually recalibrated and reconfigured both through, and in support of emerging relationships and activity. We argue that their scale and necessary responsiveness allows for feedback that not only results in better spaces in relation to their particular civic agenda, but also can support broader institutional learning in ways that can transform the university.

Even without an intention to impact beyond its walls, universities contribute to shaping the urban realm; their physical, social and economic impacts will be manifest spatially. When considering the contribution of the university to the city, and the responsibility of universities as urban actors, we might initially picture distinct spaces of the university and those outside it, be that through a clear separation of out-of-town campuses, or cloistered dreaming spires inside yet apart from the city. In such a conception, placemaking is confined to the aesthetics and qualities of the architecture, the dominating urban impact of estate expansion, or how the edges of a campus or digital infrastructures contribute to the public realm. Yet, whilst these factors are of importance, rather than conceive of placemaking as civiness, we want to explore placemaking *for* civiness: we wish to speculate upon how places are produced in ways that enable civic university activity to flourish. The reason for this is to establish a civic agenda not as something a university *does* to a place, but rather something that must emerge in collaboration, and which offers the potential to change the university as much as it changes the world 'outside'. We

therefore offer three instances that seek to permeate hard institutional borders and examine them both as places that support outward facing civic activity, but through producing porous, heterogenous and critical spaces, they are also seeking to make the university otherwise.

The university as urban actor

The university has shaped urban development in ways which enact and perpetuate a divide between 'town and gown', and in this first section of this chapter we reflect on the distinct spatial typologies of this legacy, and efforts to move beyond it, by drawing out a history, primarily in the UK and also elsewhere in Europe. The university is a powerful actor, and important architectural patron. It can be understood as an instrument of, and produced by the dominant logics of society at any particular point in time. As William Whyte suggests in his social and architectural history 'Redbrick'; 'there is not, and never has been, a single idea of the university' (Whyte, 2015 p. 16). Their architectural style, spatial organisation and urban composition are intimately tied to the tastes and agendas of those who instigated and funded them, as well as the influence of local elites and communities, and the contingencies of their changing use. Architectural historian Tom Wilkinson points out that the university is not an architectural or urban typology, but "[...] rather it is a community of students and teachers requiring a variety of functions, usually in a number of separate buildings. These originated piecemeal, occupying existing structures and spreading out through urban settings with which they co-existed in a state of semi-permanent conflict." (Wilkinson, 2009). Initially modelled on religious buildings, the aristocratic students, considered to be 'unruly youths', were literally cloistered; in the colleges of Oxford, the quadrangle formation protected but also contained them. Historically universities' role was to train the feudal elites as political leaders, to oversee the masses, and later, and to administer the colonies, and this inevitably led to class and racialised conflict and struggle. The St Scholastica Day Riots in Oxford in 1355, started as a tavern brawl and erupted into days of fighting that led to the deaths of over thirty townspeople and sixty scholars. This battle between the scholars and the townspeople is noteworthy, because judges sent to preside over the incident by the King decided in favour of the university over the town and significantly expanded its power and responsibilities and its ability to impose taxes through Royal Charter (Cobban, 1992).

The Humboldtian conception of the university, as a secular and autonomous institution that would support scientific education took hold and grew to shape institutions in Europe and the US, and in the case of the latter, through the development of the campus university, in mediaeval and classical architectural styles. From the early 19th century the university was already considered to be 'an institution rooted in its locality' (Kelsall, 1814, p.18). In the late 19th century UK there was an expansion of universities to the provinces, driven by a political aim to expand access to higher education. Taking an explicitly stated

civic role, the red brick buildings were located close to public transport, and took their name from the cities in which they were located. During the post-war period out of town campuses developed in the UK, and became known as the plateglass universities. Architectural historian Michael Hebbert notes the rejection of municipal pleas from Coventry and Norwich, and York, to the University Grants Commission for these new universities to be located near or in urban centres, potentially to reinvigorate the historic fabric. He goes on to say that; '[The view was taken] that spacious settings of parkland were more conducive to creative thinking than urban street-blocks' (Hebbert, 2018), and also driven by a concern around how to accommodate the significant increase in student numbers (Wilkinson, 2009), and a belief students and staff would be more likely to own a car. The result, Hebbert suggests, was the ossification into disciplinary silos, and a lack of density "It had been hoped that physical segregation would encourage collegiality, interdisciplinarity and a more holistic pursuit of knowledge [...] it had rather the opposite effect. The powerful dynamic of academic specialisation found expression in building complexes dedicated to separate disciplines. Deans exerted a baronial sway over campus territory [...]" (Hebbert, 2018). In France, in 1968 the Paris University in Nanterre saw student rebellion against what was seen as an authoritarian institution, within the context of wider civil unrest and strike action. Post May 68, the French government's response was to disperse universities into the suburbs. It was into this atmosphere, during the same year that architect Lucian Kroll explored student participation in the design of university accommodation at La Meme.

Whilst suburban campus universities suffered issues of isolation and fragmentation, inner city campuses, under pressure to expand, and utilising funding to support urban renewal in the context of central government-led programmes, encountered their own particular challenges. Many contributed to the demolition or gentrification of low-income areas and then turned their backs on those who remained on their outskirts. As the marketization of the university continued, through the removal of block grants and the introduction of student fees in the UK, the university campus, which had always been seen as an attractor for students, became increasingly dominated by large landmark building. Such projects were often developed for the wealthier disciplines, such as business schools, and designed by prestigious architectural firms, with tendering frameworks where only the largest could afford to compete. Through their estate programmes, universities often actively contribute to gentrification, displacement and exclusion, altering the city in ways that can be understood to be to the detriment of civil society. Multinational developers produce student housing at massive scale that gives little back to the urban realm, and displaces existing activities, business and people. The impetus for Universities to be run as a business and engage in constant growth leads to the buying up of land, and the ability to engage as a

powerful player in negotiations with Local Authorities, Planners and Urban Designers Chatterton, (2010); Elenz (2019) discusses the role of planners to try to mediate the negative impacts associated with the neoliberal turn in universities for their neighbourhoods. Yet, in the context of austerity, continual budget cuts and savaged planning and urban design departments there is pressure on councils to allow anything to go, both in terms of what is seen as inward investment, and the inability to resource challenges to wealthy developers. Universities are often located in city centres where land prices are high, particularly in the case of the major cities. In 'Ground Control', Anna Minton shows how the rapid and scaled privatisation of land in the UK, and the consequential demand for risk reduction from the financiers, has led to increased surveillance and exclusion of groups and activities (Minton, 2009). The concept of studentification, seeks to acknowledge the homogenising cultural impact of university developments to the urban realm (Moos et al 2019).

Since the 2000s there have been moves in for universities to have a better relationship with their neighbourhoods; large institutional masterplans seek permeability with adjacent residential areas. A recent RIBA report into standards for professional practice, authored by Australian Architect Tom Kvan in 2016 argues for increased connectivity for universities. In his recent exploration of the relationship between the campus and the city, Hebbert cites Janne Corneil and Phillip Parsons of Sasaki Associates, when they suggest that 'in a healthy knowledge society the university becomes the city and the city becomes the university' (2007 p114-127). Whilst we recognise and value the ethical intention of this statement, we argue that such an urban aspiration is not paying sufficient attention to the power dynamics at play and forms of enclosure produced by a university as a private or public institution, that work to exclude, or only include in a subordinate position. We therefore wish to explore approaches that actively engage in such challenges, through their programmes and spaces, as an ongoing process of learning.

Three instances of placemaking for civic action

In the following section we explore three examples that are interfaces between the university and civic society. These experimental approaches could be understood as prototypes for how the university can engage in placemaking in ways that are collaborative, emerge from their context, and are produced with care, and an orientation towards social and ecological justice. They are spatially and socially located in ways that make the university more porous, because they pay attention to the situation in which they are working and allow spaces of learning for the public, civic and institutional stakeholders. Each has been initiated either through teaching programmes and/or a research centre and brings together critical questions for society, with innovative pedagogical approaches or research

methods, and particular constituencies of civic society. The first, the Refugee Rights Hub is based at the Helena Kennedy Centre for International Justice at Sheffield Hallam University and is located within a university campus. It brings members of the public into the university, together with undergraduate and postgraduate students in order to offer free legal advice and support for refugees who want to be reunited with their families. The second is Live Works, an 'urban room' that forms part of the Sheffield School of Architecture Live Project programme, that is located on a pedestrianised city centre high street in a northern post-industrial city. The urban room provides a consultation space for architecture students to work with community clients, and it is nestled amongst other social enterprise and community focused businesses, as well as independent shops and government offices. The third is CSM Rural¹, an emerging remote campus at Dalby Forest, developed in partnership with Forestry England and others, which, through creative and scientific programmes on site, uses learning from the land as a key way to develop climate and biodiversity literacy.

There is a historical and intertwined legacy for universities' involvement in such spaces for non-profit groups and citizens to access technical and professional knowledge and services in relation to urban and legal problems. Law Clinics that offered pro-bono advocacy grew up in the US during the 1960s as a result of the civil rights movement, and in response to criticisms emerging from University Law Schools that learning by case did not embed students in the complex realities of how the law operated in society (Hardy et al, 2020). Legal Clinics thus became an important model that informed university activity here in the UK. This advocacy model also went on to inform the community design centre movement in the US. In the 1960s Community Design Centres in the US provided a space for architecture and planning students and staff to address some of the growing challenges of urban centres, supporting tenants with housing problems, opposing urban renewal plans and enabling citizen participation in neighbourhood proposals. The University of California initiated a Community Design Centre in San Francisco in 1967 as "both a learning resource and a service to the community" which among other projects provided supporting evidence to legal action against the city in opposition of commercial redevelopment plans which would displace local residents (Towers 1995, p.103). In the UK the University of Strathclyde established "Assist" in the early 1970s. This research and development unit addressed housing problems by providing free technical services to enable voluntary improvement of tenement housing by residents, a project which began as a pilot from a student thesis project and grew to result in a partnership between the university and local and national institutions for the improvement of around 12000 tenement flats (ibid, p. 105).

¹ This is a working title for the new campus.

In approaching this chapter through examining these three instances, we chose examples where universities are engaging with some of the biggest issues that we face as a civil society- around population displacement, rising inequality, exclusion and climate crisis. In this context, civiness, and civic rights is understood in terms of a process of actively engaging in questions of who the city is for, and who is included in the idea of 'citizen'. They operate with an inclusive understanding of citizenship that brings within its purview all those who make up a city, seeing citizenship not limited to those meeting legal requirements of state, and the need to pay particular attention to the needs of marginalised groups, and the added barriers they may face in accessing the resources of the university in its civic role. If civiness is an orientation to engagement with a wider world, both human and more-than-human, and to measurable impact in countering social inequality and environmental degradation then, to be civic, universities need to continually reflect upon who matters, and is present, and their sense of agency within that context. For example, In *No Love Found*, Samatar et al, explore the experience of black female students on campus as surveilled by the white gaze, leading to detachment and withdrawal (Samatar et al, 2021), and this offers sharp lessons in terms of how deep this work must go. In the context of intertwined ecological crises around climate, species loss and pollution of land, air and seas, the imperative is clear- place cannot be considered just as a human concern. Places are not merely a resource, or pleasant backdrop for our day-to-day human activities; place, and civiness should be understood in relation to more-than-human others; our social relations must be considered in their fullest sense, as necessary to our continued survival. In what follows we consider how engaging in these bigger societal questions also requires and offers nourishment to produce space differently at the local level.

The Refugee Rights Hub: placemaking for care and justice

The Refugee Rights Hub² is based at the Helena Kennedy Centre for International Justice at Sheffield Hallam University and was fully established in 2018. The RFR Clinic's aims and approach are set within the HKC's wider missions around social justice, which are achieved through live casework, research and scholarship, global engagement, policy impact and professional training and advocacy. Undergraduate and postgraduate students, (including from the MA in Applied Human Rights and graduates from the LLB Law) work as interns within the Hub. This clinical work supports students' training and development, working alongside qualified OISC registered immigration and asylum specialists, helping refugees

² Our understanding of this project has developed through conversations with Liz Dew, Refugee Rights Hub Project Officer; Professor Sital Dillon OBE, Head of Department of Law & Criminology and Director of the Helena Kennedy Centre for International Justice; Clare Tudor, Director of the HKC Refugee Rights Hub, and through a visit to site, and I would like to extend my thanks to them for their generosity and insights.

navigate the often-complex processes and procedures for making family reunification applications. This enables students to broaden and deepen their understanding of refugee rights and develop and hone skills through active casework, and work beyond traditional law subjects. Given the political controversies around asylum and migration, and recent rise in hate crimes, the making of such a space must entail a careful management of visibility and presence within the city (Migrant Help, 2022).

The focus of the Hub is support for reuniting refugee families –acknowledging that you cannot settle fully in a place when your family is prevented from being there with you, together with an awareness of the inaccessibility of legal support for many; ‘The Hub was established in recognition of the fact that there were major gaps in legal advice and assistance following the withdrawal of Legal Aid that made access to essential immigration services impossible for large numbers of potential applicants.’ (Helena Kennedy Centre for International Justice 2022; Wilding 2022). Family reunion cases are often shorter in duration- than full asylum claims which can take many years to conclude– and therefore they are more likely to be processed during the student’s degree, enabling them to ‘see the case through’. Whilst the key role of case workers is to represent their clients and submit their family reunion application to the Home Office in a manner that will be most likely to be accepted, there is also an acknowledgement that their work goes well beyond this, and also involves relationship building and advocacy work. The Refugee Rights Hub strives for justice through the legal system, but also crucially is a space of care. People who come through the doors may have been traumatised, and are often fighting complex and draining legal battles, over extended time periods in precarious circumstances. This requires a sensitivity to how places are created in ways that people who are or may become clients can recognise themselves in and feel welcome. They may have been incarcerated or interned in small cell like spaces, or taken dangerous journeys in confined circumstances, and therefore there is an awareness not to replicate this within the Hub. Addressing such concerns requires consideration of the physical space and its aesthetics and organisation, its cultural and social qualities, and the structures that shape its production. Following how those instigating this clinic have approached these issues of inclusion and civic role with sensitivity, and getting it right for this context, offers insights for university placemaking at a much broader level.

The university estate is designed to inspire confidence in students, and aesthetically what can be quite formal and polished may be in tension with the need for a warm and relaxed space to discuss emotive and complex issues. The size of the staff base may fluctuate due to changes in funding and the nature of the projects in which they are engaged. The ability to adapt the spatial organisation, décor and furniture can be slow within an

institution that has to manage health and safety and ensure durability and ease of maintenance at scale across a large estate. For staff at the RFR Clinic, spending any funding for the clinic on refurbishment or redesigning the space must be balanced with investing money on working directly with the clients. Therefore, early involvement at a more granular level in estate redevelopment by those using and managing key public-facing spaces that support civic activity seems appropriate and will enable central institutional resources to be directed in a way that will make meaningful impact. This needs to be supported by creative and experienced design advice, perhaps in addition to formal consultation processes with the appointed architects or design team. In this instance, the pending relocation of the Refugee Rights Hub from a neighbourhood-based campus to the city centre will improve public transport links and accessibility and offers an important opportunity to work with clients and interns to rethink the design of their clinical spaces.

Those managing the Hub must balance its function as a professional ‘clinical’ space of confidential documents and formal procedures, with the need to offer a space of care and welcome, and as a site of learning for the students. Some case workers and interpreters share a refugee background, and whilst their journeys and experiences are varied, they are likely to have encountered similar barriers or formal procedures to those using the service. This offers a connection to people already living in the city for a longer period. Students carry out work as part of their curriculum and need supervision and support in engaging in this work. Crucially, clients can connect with academic staff from different backgrounds and nationalities; this is possible due to wider structural work around recruitment and retention within the department and HKC. Many clients have (multiple) degrees but depending on the country in which they gained their qualification could be struggling to have it recognised in the UK, so bringing them into the university campus can be an opportunity to support them to either convert their existing qualification or to gain new ones. Liz Dew, a manager at the hub, also works on the New Beginnings Mentoring Scheme in partnership with Voluntary Action Sheffield (VAS), in which she matches mentees to trained mentors from SHU who can support refugees and asylum seekers into HE. As a University of Sanctuary, within the first City of Sanctuary, Sheffield Hallam also offers three Sanctuary Scholarships, annually to support talented students who have sought asylum in the UK. The scholarships are jointly funded by the University and through generous donations from former students. This can become a site that connects the university internationally, which can be of incredible value in terms of learning, research, and culture beyond the Hub itself.

The challenge of getting across the threshold is addressed through regular joining city-wide drop-ins, social events, and outreach activities, both on the threshold of the campus and elsewhere in the city with community and anti-racist organisations. The hosting of events in Hallam Square, adjacent to a main entrance during refugee week, enabled the

clinic to have a public presence in the city. A refugee choir, speakers and musicians performed in the amphitheatre adjacent to a main public thoroughfare, and food was provided for all who wished to join. This allowed for those who were homeless or precariously housed to join and share food. Their work offers some important prompts in terms of who is included as a citizen within the practices of the civic university, making space for people to interact as equals, even if the State does not treat them as such.

LiveWorks: placemaking for community co-design

The next typology we wish to explore is that of the 'urban room'; sites within the city that host and support citizen engagement with, and participation in, the urban development of the city. It has a particular focus on forms of development that may operate outside of the market, or within the third or community sector, shaping the spatial infrastructures of the everyday. The ideas of the urban room intersect with 'live project' pedagogy in architecture, which recognises the value for university students in learning through engagement with real world briefs or design problems, and co-production of knowledge through interaction with project clients and stakeholders. While live projects may involve commercial partners, there is an emphasis on working with non-profit organisations, or on projects with a social agenda. They also offer professional design services to those who may not usually be able to access them.

'Urban rooms' as a specific typology and function were one of the recommendations of the 2014 Farrell Review of Architecture and the Built Environment, a national independent review commissioned by the Department for Media Culture and Sport, looking across education and public engagement with place, planning and design quality, cultural heritage, the economic benefits of good design and built environment policy and leadership. Drawing on international examples, the Review advocated for spaces of display and meeting within towns and cities where citizens can engage with the past, present and future of that place, with the aid of physical or virtual models, produced in collaboration with colleges or universities (Farrells 2014). Tewdwr-Jones et al find echoes in this recommendation of the planner Patrick Geddes' 1892 Outlook Tower in Edinburgh, an 'urban observatory' functioning as both museum and laboratory which included a "designated 'Civic Business-room' as a discussion hub for 'practical civic work'" (Tewdwr-Jones et al, op cit). Exhibitions as a mode of engaging communities with proposed urban planning changes have a longer history, from the birth of modern planning and the early decades of the twentieth century (Tewdwr-Jones et al 2020). In these early presentations of urban futures, there was a decided split in the roles of planners and public, with people and places to be surveyed and planned for, then informed of these plans using visual tools to help to share the imaginaries

of professional planners or government officials and to solicit "support, with political intent, for often far-reaching interventions intended to enhance the efficiency and liveability of urban regions" (ibid). The making of an exhibition within an urban context can be understood as the production of a specific form of temporary place that convenes particular publics.

'Live Works', established by the University of Sheffield School of Architecture in 2018, is a permanent University-funded urban room, and provides a spatial infrastructure to support the forms of engagement, collaborative working, exchange of ideas and information and co-production of architectural and urban design projects, which have been developed over nearly two decades through the School of Architecture's live project programme. The first location for the initiative was in a co-working space in Union Street in the centre of Sheffield, which also hosted start-up and non-profit businesses, and placed students amongst cultural actors. Between 2014 and 2016 students and staff from the university used the space for teaching and engagement, through workshops, a design studio in residence, urban walks, exhibitions and networking events (SSoA Urban Education Live 2018). In 2018 Live Works was moved to occupy a former shop unit on a key pedestrianised shopping street and in this location can be seen to extend the university into the high street, hosting university activities such as teaching and research workshops and local community activities.

The spatial and material form of LiveWorks³ in its current incarnation at 108 The Moor combines the makeshift or transitional and the intentional. Traces of its former use as a retail unit are present in the glazed shop front windows to the street and suspended plastic ceiling tiles. Bespoke timber display furniture and tabletops printed with maps of the city speak a different language – that of the museum, gallery or design office. The white shell of the shop unit is flexible in allowing the configuration of the space for different uses; stools grouped around tables for design workshops, moveable seating for presentations to larger groups, with the walls papered with project examples and visuals, or a more formal and curated display for an exhibition. Organisations who have been involved as live project clients reflected on the value of the university hosting the different community projects in the same space at Live Works and the opportunity of understanding being built across the range of projects (Urban Education Live Sheffield Team, 2020). Creating a space and time for people and organisations to come together allows strategic connections to be formed and a

³ Live Works operates within a national network of urban rooms which involves universities, local councils, civic societies, community groups and arts organisations. It is also a part of the campaigning organisation Place Alliance promoting design of buildings, streets and urban spaces to enhance quality of life.

sense of understanding being built between the different projects. The common aims of envisaging changes to the spaces of the city, through the communication of different communities' concerns, alternative futures can be imagined.

CSM Rural: Placemaking in climate crisis

The third experimental typology we wish to explore is that of a landscape lab; a campus or site that operates to bring research and teaching into critical relation with the crisis of the Anthropocene through interdisciplinary field work and creative pedagogy. A number of UK universities are currently developing these large-scale, often rural or peri-urban sites for climate and biodiversity focused research and teaching programmes.⁴ Whilst their teaching and research programmes and disciplinary emphasis vary, what links them is that they are an interface between the natural world (at scale), and public and third sector stakeholders who are focused on climate, biodiversity and rewilding goals, and civil society. The university takes a role as custodian or facilitator, sometimes through ownership of the site, or through a long lease agreement, or working in partnership with other landowners with civic responsibilities. The landscape lab can be understood as a complex and evolving site of experimentation that has a role in hosting and supporting developing interconnected areas of knowledge.

These initiatives have arisen in recognition of complex civic challenges such as the climate crisis, which require interdisciplinary approaches to research, the development of field-based skills, and the mobilisation of civic society. UKRI states that "We recognise that many of the most pressing research challenges are interdisciplinary in nature, both within the social sciences and between the social sciences and other areas of research." ("Impact, innovation and interdisciplinarity expectations – ESRC", 2022). Interdisciplinarity in these contexts is driven by issues emerging from the relationships between place, civic actors and critical knowledge production, brought together with existential crisis at planetary scale. In developing such programmes, there is a recognition that in responding to and working with climate emergency and climate collapse we are in new territories of knowledge uncertainty. Such challenges require responsiveness and commitment over extended periods of time, often working to a different rhythm than the academic year, and one which is informed by natural processes, stakeholder capacities and restraints, and the longer duration required for meaningful public engagement. Their physical extent is often driven by issues such as land

⁴ Key examples include; The Architectural Association's Hooke Park a woodland campus in Devon that is 'an educational facility for design, workshop, construction and landscape-focused activities' ("AA Hooke Park", 2014); and Sheffield Hallam University's Langsett Living Landscape Laboratory which seeks to develop a 'Lakeland landscape partnership to support Knowledge Exchange, Research and Community engagement' (Sheffield Hallam University Centre for Sustainability and Climate, 2022) and Lancaster Landscape Lab.

ownership, and ecological territories, as well as the needs and requirements of the university's programmes.

Central St Martins is commencing a 5-year pilot project 'CSM Rural' (working title), a programme of placemaking that engages well beyond the institution's immediate geographic context in central London⁵. The initiators describe their ambition to create "a dedicated biosphere reserve to construct and explore radical ecological systemic change in creative education" (Barnett, Collet and Lang, 2022). Whilst at an early stage of development, it is an interesting example of this typology in relation to the civic university and placemaking. One of the key early partners is Forestry England who are England's largest land manager (Forestry England, 2020). They have recently expanded their remit from primarily timber growth and sales, to also include commitments around public health and wellbeing, education and ecological remediation. This nascent partnership has led to the selection of the approximately 100-acre site in Dalby Forest, Yorkshire, and their role as a key player in what will become a broader consortium.

One of the driving aims for Central St Martins is to develop eco-literacy skills around living systems, through experiential and transformative pedagogies.⁶ Andreas Lang wants to develop a context in which students, who will become futures design leaders, can build empathy with the natural environment. 'It is only by having transformational experiences within a living system that this empathy can be nurtured. There is also a move back to the city / or dialogue with urbanised areas where hopefully that new understanding or empathy to and with nature can inform placemaking practices'⁷. The CSM Rural pilot programme will initially take the form of workshops, one-day field trips, short forest stays, and medium to long-term residencies. Year one will bring students from the MA Art and Science and the M.Arch Architecture together on site through experimental briefs that support the first stages of collaborative placemaking, as well as research-led activities. The proposal organises itself around three intersecting spheres: Climate and Ecology, Commons and Publics, and Identities and Equity. The programming explicitly opens space to collaboratively navigate different approaches to activities such as rewilding and biodiversity, inclusion, and more equitable economic models, in ways that open up space for many approaches to be collectively explored and evolved.

This proposal signals an important commitment to long-term engagement with site and stakeholders, predicated on experiential and situated design practices. What

⁵ Led by Dr. Heather Barnett, Prof Carole Collet and Andreas Lang.

⁶ This project can be understood as allied with, and informed by important non-institutional natureculture programmes such as Floating University ("FLOATING BERLIN", 2022); Climate Care by Soft Agency ("Climate Care", 2019), and R-Urban ("R-Urban English", 2014), which have been at the cutting-edge of practice based research on commons, and art and design-led ecological remediation work, and share overlapping protagonists and methodological approaches.

⁷ In conversation with Andreas Lang during the writing of this chapter, 2022.

placemaking is in this context, and how it develops is driven by pedagogical, ecological and social justice aims, but is allowed to emerge through an iterative process that centres mutual learning between students, academics, civic partners and the site itself.

Spaces of Learning: tension, transition, translation

We have introduced these instances, because in their careful attention to issues of social justice, climate care and collective agency, we consider that they each *make places* in ways that could benefit the wider university, both within and beyond its civic agenda, and also the city. To understand and feedback on-going learning from these sites into the university placemaking strategy requires careful labour, sometimes in ways that will challenge existing structures and ways of doing. Each site must navigate tensions and complexities as they act from within a large and powerful institution, often with grassroots organisations, or vulnerable communities. Each site hosts actors with a combination of civic goals, and pedagogical and employability ones. Shaping a spatial infrastructure for these heterogeneous needs therefore requires a constant attention to how the space might need to be adapted as these requirements evolve. This must happen in relation to changing programmatic needs, a fluctuating community of students, researchers, members of the public and wider civic stakeholders, and a responsive civic agenda informed by the contingencies and politics of the situation. The granular detail, and fluidity such spaces require can be at odds with university estates programmes planned at scale and far into the future, often driven by top-down and quantifiable understandings of spatial requirements. We argue that to understand how structures and programmes of placemaking from the university could adapt to changing civic contexts, the examples highlighted point to approaches that will embed better attunement to issues of justice, equity and inclusion throughout a university campus. These instances demonstrate how a permeable boundary, rather than fixed border can be a useful site of transition, neither wholly determined by the institution, nor a fully public space. In these sites those entering in from the university and the city can each gain an awareness of differences, tensions and opportunities. The interface can be a site of translation, where meaningful relations and coproduced knowledge practices can emerge.

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