



## Future Proofing Universities

The presentation addresses three of the conference themes:

- Next generation learning spaces and pedagogy
- Facilities Management Infrastructure
- Environment and Sustainability

The rapidly changing nature of learning and teaching and the unpredictability of funding are just two of the current factors which mean that University Campuses and their buildings must be capable of adapting to change.

The presentation will have four parts, an introduction, a comparison with workplace evolution, a draft A-Z of principles for future proofing and some conclusions.

### Introduction

The definition of 'future proofing' comes from the IT industry, it is different from 'adaptability' which is strategic and 'flexible' which is tactical.

In order to put the term in context there will be a short history of University campus master planning and typical building types such as learning and teaching, laboratories, libraries and social hubs. This perspective will provide a background to some of the current issues facing universities and assist delegates to reflect on how well their own institution will adapt in the future.

For example, a key issue being debated currently is how universities relate to the city. The mono culture of university districts within the city is being questioned. It seems perfectly possible in the future that the relationship between university and city will be more blurred. The implications of this are that the campus may contain more non- university buildings or buildings and facilities may be shared. How will this be accommodated?

### Workplace Evolution

Workplace design over the last hundred years provides a very interesting comparison with educational buildings as the common distinction between the shell and core of the building and its fit out means that a degree of flexibility has always been considered.

The most recent evolution of the workplace into buildings which provide a menu of different ways of working enabled by mobile technology has obvious parallels in many university building types.

### Towards an A-Z of Future Proofing

There are a number of principles for future proofing which should be considered during the briefing stage of projects. Examples will be provided of -

Master Planning- the importance of master planning and why it should include a sensitivity analysis of growth and change.

Scale- what is an appropriate scale for a University?

Accessibility- to the city and within the campus.

Geometry- some geometries are easier to extend or change than others.

Multi-use- can university buildings change their function over time to become other building types?

Circulation- potential for separating different types of circulation and making circulation more visible.

Floor plates- grids and ideal dimensions.

Generic and non-generic spaces- the importance of sifting spaces.

Structure- spans, down stands, holing, loading and vibration.

Services- should be adaptable, maintainable and accessible.

Section- adaptable to changes in use and climate.

Shell and fit out- all parts of a building have different life spans.

Soft space- helps highly serviced complex functions to change.

Modularization- consider standardization and reduce fixed equipment.

Loose fit- consider the use of large envelopes containing smaller changing functions.

Research- study buildings in use over time.

## Conclusions

The conclusions of the presentation are-

\_ Continuous change is the norm, not the exception

\_ The biggest opportunities are won and lost in briefing

\_ Space should be managed as a resource not a territory

\_ Post Occupancy evaluation and analyzing data on buildings in use is vitally important for improvement.