

ACTIVE DESIGN CASE STUDY

ACTIVE CAMPUS: LOUGHBOROUGH UNIVERSITY'S NEW STUDENT VILLAGE



ACTIVE DESIGN PRINCIPLES IN ACTION:

1. ACTIVITY FOR ALL



2. WALKABLE COMMUNITIES



3. CONNECTED WALKING & CYCLING ROUTES



5. NETWORK OF MULTIFUNCTIONAL OPEN SPACE



6. HIGH QUALITY STREETS & SPACES



9. MANAGEMENT, MAINTENANCE, MONITORING & EVALUATION



10. ACTIVITY PROMOTION & LOCAL CHAMPIONS



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ACTIVE CAMPUS: CREATING AN ACTIVE CAMPUS ENVIRONMENT

LOUGHBOROUGH UNIVERSITY HAS INVESTED ALMOST £50MILLION IN DEVELOPING A NEW STUDENT VILLAGE, DESIGNED BY DAVID MORLEY ARCHITECTS AND LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS, COLOUR.

LOUGHBOROUGH UNIVERSITY

Loughborough University is renowned for its excellence in research, teaching and enterprise and the contribution it makes to sport and activity. The university's reputation in sport is built on a long and successful sporting heritage. Today Loughborough is ranked first in the world for sports related subjects and plays host to many of the highest performing student athletes and teams in the country.

The original ethos remains through the commitment that every student will have the opportunity play sport regardless of their ability or current activity level. The University has a diverse student community is made up of almost 18,000 students from over 130 countries. Loughborough University is a research-active institution contributing at the very highest levels to new knowledge and understanding, helping business and industry to compete more effectively, shaping public policy and, ultimately, aiming to improve the quality of people's lives.

Irrespective of sporting ability, the University were very keen to develop its new student village that would encourage all of its students to be more active through the design of their surroundings.





ACTIVE CAMPUS – LOUGHBOROUGH UNIVERSITY'S NEW STUDENT VILLAGE

Located in the heart of the Loughborough campus, the new student village provides over 600 student bedrooms within halls of residences, together with the innovative Elite Athlete Centre. The centre, coupled with the sporting facilities on campus is designed to support quality accommodation in 44 bedrooms. 20 of these are equipped with innovative technology that creates climatic conditions up to 5,000 metres to support athletes undertaking altitude training.

The University recognised that outside of its world class sports and fitness facilities a broad and inclusive offer was needed to encourage people to introduce more physical activity into their daily lives. This led to the realisation that creating places to be active between formal sport facilities not only creates more opportunities to be active for those already engaged in sport, but for those students who are less active, it encourages them to become more active.

The result is that the Student Village has become the first Active Campus anywhere in the UK. Throughout the site facilities are provided that offer outstanding recreation and fitness opportunities that are specifically designed to support learning, health and wellbeing in an exceptional environment. The design of the new village looked to apply a number of the Active Design principles through:

- Ongoing enhancement of the student experience and promoting activity for all
- Maximising the potential for activity within the external environment
- Providing a network of open spaces with walkable and connected routes, co-located with high quality spaces
- Enhancing physical and mental wellbeing
- Creating a well maintained, natural landscape and environment
- Maximising the potential of the scheme's success through effective stakeholder engagement

THE ACTIVE LANDSCAPE COMPRISES A SUITE OF COURTYARDS OFFERING DIFFERENT ACTIVITIES SET WITHIN AN ENRICHED ENVIRONMENT FOR EXERCISE, RELAXATION AND SOCIAL INTERACTION. THE ELEMENTS IN THIS ACTIVE LANDSCAPE WERE CHOSEN THROUGH CAREFUL COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND ARE DESIGNED TO INFLUENCE BEHAVIOUR AND PROMPT CHANGES IN PERSONAL ACTIVITY HABITS.





ACTIVE CAMPUS: LOUGHBOROUGH UNIVERSITY'S NEW STUDENT VILLAGE





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Image © Loughborough University



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ACTIVITY FOR ALL – UNDERSTANDING YOUR STAKEHOLDERS NEEDS

One of the key strengths of the project was to understand the needs of all the students, not just those who are already active, but also those less active.

The University embarked upon extensive stakeholder engagement consultation as part of the process of developing the design. The overarching aim was to optimize the opportunity for end users to become involved and contribute to creating an environment that would encourage and assist them to be active. The consultation process also introduced the concept of encouraging wellbeing and fitness engagement, to promote activity and to support local champions to inspire participation in sport and physical activity across the campus.

The design team led a series of workshop sessions involving representatives from across the university

community including both Loughborough Sport and the Student's Union. The aim of the workshops was to introduce the project to a wide cross-section of stakeholders, exploring their views and ideas to create a design to encourage activity for all students. As the workshops progressed, they were also used to report back findings from earlier workshops and demonstrate how ideas were being translated into firm proposals.

The consultation and engagement objectives were thought out in advance and sought to:

- create an environment that encourages inactive people to be more active
- better understand how people engage with activity in their own lifestyles
- better understand how student wellbeing needs can be met
- develop long term positive activity habits
- test whether proposals will work in practice
- empower the community by involving end users in the design and decision – making process

“MAYBE USE WORDS OF INSPIRATION”

“A HORIZONTAL LINE ON A WALL OR TARGET AREAS TO HIT WORKS FOR ALL SPORTS”

“PEOPLE YOU LIVE WITH INFLUENCE YOUR BEHAVIOUR”

“ADD STRETCHING POINTS AT THE START OF RUNNING TRACKS”

“LINES MAKE YOU WANT TO RUN”



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ACTIVE LANDSCAPE FEATURES – APPROPRIATE INFRASTRUCTURE

- 1 PEDESTRIAN LINKS** to the new Student Village from other areas of the university campus encourage walking and cycling to promote walkable communities and provide connected walking and cycling routes.
- 2 A CALM GREEN SETTING** designed to promote biodiversity, frame views, define spaces and highlight seasonal changes. This includes an apple orchard, social raised lawns, street trees, sensory planting and a green roof.
- 3 A TRACK** makes positive use of a service road with red tarmac with white lanes to create the feel of a running track; lanes merge, cross over and split to favour fun over competitive action. A loop with 2 lanes cutting through the active courtyard, were designed to evoke, persuade and encourage wider fitness participation.
- 4 ZIG-ZAG PATH** on arrival that provides a direct route of steps for fast travel, an accessible route shallower than 1 in 20 so that handrails aren't required. It includes decked meeting and sitting places with WiFi.
- 5 GIANT STEPS** provide a striking landmark feature and create an informal meeting place with infrastructure suitable for both formal and informal fitness activities. This place was developed in collaboration with an international athletics coach so as to maximise its potential for activity.





6 A BOULDERING WALL with coloured holds for routes of varying challenge makes use of a blank retaining wall and includes a soft surface.

7 IRREGULAR SHAPED ARTIFICIAL SURFACES are located at the heart of the active courtyard, they are visible from the overlooking social space to encourage participation in inclusive, informal and diverse activities such as pop-up badminton, volleyball, and frisbee.

8 EXERCISE STATIONS AND STRETCHING LOCATIONS that are suitable for informal uses or programmed activities. This includes space allocation for boot camps or circuits and makes a secondary use of the steps on level changes.

9 GROUND SET TRAMPOLINES are placed in a zone linking the active courtyard with the track. This concept was derived directly from student feedback which preferred 'big kids play equipment' to a serious gym.

10 A REBOUND WALL bounds the irregular pitches, with markings for target practice on one side and designed so that an outdoor screen can be mounted for future events.

11 PEDAL POWERED USB CHARGING POINTS are located along the sheltered and sunny south facing side of the rebound wall. These are intended to encourage meeting, socialising and add activity.

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OUTDOOR BOOTCAMP

Outdoor Bootcamp which is a circuits-based fitness class has been delivered in the Active Environment since July 2019 and regularly attracts both students and staff, with numbers of participants increasing each week. The fitness session incorporates the use of the multi-sport games areas, the rebound wall, and the integrated fitness equipment including the giant steps and track. Participants have said the following about their experiences of the Active Environment:

"It's an amazing place to work-out."

"It's a very welcoming environment and a fun space to workout"

"I love the use of colours, like the red run-track and the green grassed areas"

LOCAL CHAMPIONS

To help new students to adopt activity as part of their everyday lives, students are introduced to the active landscape during Fresher's Week as the first step in modifying activity habits. In addition to this, the university's My Lifestyle Programme helps them to use the facilities to deliver some of the weekly timetabled fitness & sport activities.



Image © Loughborough University



Image © Loughborough University



MONITORING & EVALUATION

The first phase of the new Student Village opened in time for the start of the 2018 academic year and included some of the active landscape features. The Elite Athletes' Centre has proven a popular location for people seeking healthy food and a healthy lifestyle. Within only a few months of opening it was already being used by a broad community in addition to elite athletes.

The track on the service road is in regular and varied use for physical activity, even prior to the complete loop. Walkers struggle not to break into a jog, skateboarders use the down hill, cyclists use it frequently and players of the nearby hockey pitch use it for warm up. Furthermore, anecdotally, users report a positive psychological impact and have said that it inspires them to run or become active.

Reports from the Giant Steps are that they work perfectly in all directions. As well as boot camps they are also being used as an informal meeting place and hang out space – sparking interest as a local landmark.

The most recent data identifies that 78% of 12,300 students had participated in at least 30 minutes of sport on one or more of the previous 28 days.

FUTURE MONITORING

The University intends to monitor and evaluate the positive impacts of the active landscape. Measurement is important in assessing the effectiveness of the Active Campus and formulating an evidence base to support future interventions. This will also provide examples of good practice and lessons learned that can be shared with others. The evaluation criteria will identify and measure whether the facilities are being used by those who are already active or the newly active. This will enable identification of behaviour change.

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WHAT CAN OTHER DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS LEARN FROM THE ACTIVE CAMPUS APPROACH?

- 1. Clear and thought out consultation and engagement objectives.**
- 2. Stakeholder Engagement** – listen to a wide range to stakeholders.
- 3. Engage with all users** – not just those that are active.
- 4. Monitoring** – keep engaged, monitor what users are doing.
- 5. Build elements into everyday landscape** – stairs as giant steps.
- 6. Be innovative** – USB charging points linked to cycling, make activity fun and quirky and help to engage with people. Running track on the paths, service and access roads.
- 7. Use of quality materials** – making a place people want to be in.
- 8. Creating a variety of spaces that will appeal to a wider range of users** – create different zones, or ‘court yards’ of open spaces.
- 9. Changes of materials and colour creates zones.**
- 10. Flexible space** – not being prescriptive about use creates opportunities for a wide range of activities and users.

ALTERNATIVE LANGUAGES & FORMATS:

This document can be provided in alternative languages, or alternative formats such as large print, braille, tape and on disk upon request. Call the Sport England switchboard on 08458 508 508 for more details.

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