Architectural briefing and argumentation:
an instrumental case study on the new university
campus at UCL East (RIBA Stages 1-3)

Emma Louise Gribble

Bartlett School of Architecture

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of University
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Declaration

I, Emma Louise Gribble, confirm that the work presented in this thesis is my own. Where information has been derived from other sources, I confirm that this has been indicated in the thesis.
Thesis abstract

Best practice guidance on architectural briefing makes two commonly accepted recommendations: the design team should have a single point of contact with the client ‘to prevent any misunderstanding or cross communication’, and there should be ‘early and on-going engagement with end users’ to ensure that new buildings meet the needs of the people who will use them. However, there is scant research into how these two apparently contradictory pieces of advice are reconciled in practice. This thesis, is a study of the briefing process for a new university campus on the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park in east London. It asks how internal stakeholders engage with the briefing process in the early stages of architectural projects (RIBA Stages 1-3) and focusses on intra-client argumentation. The research methodology is Situational Analysis and the research methods are interviews with key stakeholders, non-participant observation of project meetings and document analysis.

Internal stakeholders were found to differ on a number of issues including the decision to build, the strategic brief, project governance and the virtual building (the developing building design), and there were many ways in which things could have been otherwise. Stakeholders deployed a variety of strategies and tactics to justify or contest design decisions and enrolled a heterogenous range of actors such as contaminated soil, specialist teaching practices and university strategy documents to support their positions.

This thesis argues that architectural briefing is an inherently social process and draws on insights from diverse scholars to develop a conceptual framework which links three interrelated aspects of architectural projects: the strategic brief, project governance, and the virtual building to nine areas of potential disagreement – areas where argumentation may inform design outcomes. Finally, it proposes a set of sensitising questions based on this framework to support practitioner and client reflection-in-action (Schön 1991).
Impact Statement

This naturalistic case-study provides a rich account of the briefing and design review process for Phase 1 of a new university campus on the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park, east London. It is unusual in the level of research access granted and in being a concurrent rather than retrospective study. In recent years there has been increasing pressure from the UK government and the public to improve the briefing process and widen stakeholder participation in architectural and town planning projects. This indicates the contemporary significance of the research question: ‘how do clients and end users engage with the briefing and design review process?’.

The aim in presenting an empirically grounded exploration of intra-client argumentation on a live project is to raise awareness of the situated, value-laden (Paton and Dorst, 2011, p. 574) character of architectural briefing and contribute to academic debates concerning specifically architectural theory which lies ‘not in the invocation of external abstractions, but in a proper understanding of the processes and products of architecture’ (Hillier, 1993, p. 9).

Situational Analysis (SA) was developed by Clarke working in the field of science, technology and medicine studies. This thesis argues that core SA assumptions about the situation of inquiry and the ecological and relational character of the SA ‘theory methods package’ enable research into how architecture is made (and how it is used) to take the wider social situation into account. It suggests that this methodology could be of significant value to future qualitative researchers in this field.

The conceptual framework developed in this thesis draws on the work of diverse scholars to challenge common sense assumptions about the purely practical, objective character of architectural briefing. Sensitising questions based on this framework, are proposed to support the reflection-in-action (Schön, 1991 [1983]) of clients and practitioners. These questions are designed to focus attention on the social construction of the architectural brief.
and encourage consideration of the ways in which things might be different. In highlighting the social content of both the architectural briefing process and the architectural product, they are designed to support ethical practice and design equity.

With a few notable exceptions, the architectural curriculum does not place much emphasis on briefing. This has the unfortunate effect of divorcing architectural education from an understanding of how architectural design is situated in real-world practice. It also enables the desire for artistic autonomy (Till, 2009, Stevens, 1998) to develop unchecked. In this context, briefing is associated with checklists and room data sheets, dull lists of requirements and philistine clients, all perceived as lead weights on design creativity. Contra to this position, the argument developed in this thesis is that architectural briefing is a creative process central to the practice of an art which encompasses human life, that a building is not complete until it is occupied - and that the interplay of buildings and their inhabitants is where things really start to get interesting.
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Chapter 3: Research design and methodology

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Candidate

Emma Gribble

Date: 7.08.2023
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I am also grateful to the partners at Pollard Thomas Edwards for granting my request to work a 4 day week – a rare luxury in the world of architectural practice. It would have been impossible to undertake this research without the flexibility to attend project meetings and research interviews during working hours.

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Chapter 1 Thesis introduction

1.1 Introduction

Architectural briefing is about change. When a new building is commissioned everything is opened up for debate, nothing is fixed, the future is uncertain and social goods may be lost or gained. Territory, interpersonal relations, identity, status and established ways of doing things are all subject to review. Will I still have my own office? Where will it be? How will I engage with my colleagues, students, the public? These are sensitive issues so ‘building is emotional for the client’ (Boyd and Chinyio, 2006, p. 71).

Architecture has often been discussed in relation to the large-scale politics of nation building or legitimising government but here I am interested in the micro politics of architecture, in its effect on how we relate to each other on a day-to-day basis. In studying the making of architecture I am also looking at the microethics of practice, the messy everyday contingent interactions between clients, building users and the design team, the ‘delicate ongoing process of negotiation and compromise’ (Komesaroff, 1995, p. 66) that forms the ground on which design decisions are made.

When other architects ask me about my research, I sometimes get the impression that they think I have chosen a rather dull subject. I associate this response with Prasad’s observation (Blyth and Worthington, 2010, p. xiii) that until recently briefing has ‘been dominated by a highly mechanistic view of the design process’ and his implication that architects may be allergic to briefs because they threaten to ‘turn design into something close to painting by numbers’. There is evidence that architects find it frustrating to work with briefs that are too long and over-detailed, unclear, inconsistent or incomplete but the suggestion that they might prefer to work completely unconstrained by client requirements is largely unfounded (Bogers et al., 2008, p.111). Frankl’s evocative description of a church that has lost its original furnishings as a ‘blown egg […] plundered lifeless’ and his argument that buildings are living works of art in which ‘people are part of architecture’ sums up for me
why the topic of architectural briefing is far from dull. Following Frankl, I see the building programme or brief which defines the social purpose of a building as ‘the bridge between art and life’ (Frankl, 1968 [1914], p. 160).

1.2 Rationale for research

The motivation for this research arose from my experience as a practicing architect when I had been surprised and occasionally dismayed to witness the impact of rhetoric, client governance structures and influential relationships on the briefing and design process. I was also curious about how clients made the decisions which set the course for the projects I worked on and only too aware of the ethical dilemmas inherent in design decisions which would impact differently on disparate stakeholders.

In his paper on understanding construction clients ‘from the inside’ Green observes that ‘client organisations are social systems’ and that they ‘therefore possess the inherent complexity of any situation characterised by people’ (Green, 1996, p. 156 italics in the original). Writing about hospitals Chandra and Loosemore note that building projects can become ‘a challenging arena where all the inherent tensions in the health sector are acted out, perhaps more passionately than in any other context because of the criticality and rarity of space opportunities offered’ (Chandra and Loosemore, 2011a, p. 223). While hospitals may be an extreme case, socio-political complexity is a feature of all but the simplest projects (Geraldi et al., 2011). This social aspect of design is perhaps most clearly apparent during the early stages of briefing and design and I have always found it intriguing.

Briefing offers a unique opportunity to understand how people perceive, interpret and operationalise their buildings. Participants in briefing meetings are motivated to describe their experience of space and place and justify their position on design options in order to persuade their colleagues and the design team of the merits of their vision of the future. As Latour argues, the network of associations that constitutes our experience of the social becomes
more visible when it is subject to change – this is when material artefacts (as well a building users) can be made to talk (Latour, 2007, p. 79).

Buildings are expensive to build, they are (usually) designed to last and, for better or worse, they can have a significant impact on people’s quality of life. The practice of architectural briefing is central to the design of the built environment which structures how we engage with each other and the world around us - ‘if anything is described by an architectural plan, it is the nature of human relationships, since the elements whose trace it records – walls, doors, windows and stairs are employed first to divide and then selectively to re-unite inhabited space’ (Evans, 1997, p. 56). Briefing, the process through which those walls, doors and windows are located, is still widely regarded as problematic and therefore merits further research.

1.3 Background to research

There is a long history of government reports on the UK construction industry recommending (among other things) that the practice of briefing should be improved (Banwell 1964, Latham 1994, Egan 1998, Government Construction Strategy 2011). There has also been extensive research associating poor briefing with a range of problems in the construction industry including cost overruns, delays, late variations, disputes, rework and low levels of client satisfaction (Fellows, 2014, Barrett and Stanley, 1999, p. viii, Blyth and Worthington, 2010, p. 3).

Othman reviewed a range of customer satisfaction barometers and indices and identified two common antecedents to satisfaction: ‘perceived performance (value) and customer expectations’ (Othman, 2015, p. 36). He also distinguished between client satisfaction with the process, the product and the cost or programme of project delivery. Othman argues that consulting building users early in the project would enable a better ‘understanding of their culture and traditions’ (ibid. p. 40) and therefore increase the likelihood of customer satisfaction. Chinyio and Boyd make a similar point when they observe that clients are more likely to be satisfied
with a completed building if it meets their latent cultural needs (Boyd and Chinyio, 2006, p. 11).

One of the justifications for research into the briefing process is that in the early stages of a project ‘the ability to influence changes in design is relatively high and the cost of making those changes is relatively low’ (British Standards Institution, 2015, p. 8). Early strategic decisions can be difficult to undo and late variation instructions become increasingly expensive and demotivating for the design and construction team as the project approaches completion. Consequently, there is a recognised tension between the ability to respond to the client’s growing understanding of their needs and the design teams’ desire for certainty. Determining the ‘last responsible’ moment (Blyth and Worthington, 2010, p. 9) to freeze different aspects of the design requires judgement on the right balance between the flexibility desired by clients and the risk acceptable to the delivery team (and the cost and programme implications of any late changes).

There is a broad consensus on three points: an effective briefing process is critical to the success of architectural projects, briefing is still problematic despite many years of research, and the solution lies in improving communication with clients and building users. However, disagreement still exists regarding the relationship between briefing and design. The RIBA plan of work 2020 states that the Project Brief should be developed in Stage 1 and recommends that design work does not start until Stage 2. Similarly, Kamara et al argue that briefing should be kept separate from design to maintain the focus of attention on the client’s requirements (rather than the designer’s) (Kamara et al., 2001). On the other hand, designers such as the architect Richard MacCormac express the view that ‘the real problem is often concealed by the way it is written about as a brief … issues which are the stuff of the thing often only come out when you try and solve, when you try and produce a scheme, and therefore the design process defines objectives in a way which the brief could never do’ (cited Lawson, 1994, p. 62). There is also a related debate regarding which construction professionals are best placed to work with the client organisation to develop the project brief, with
project managers, quantity surveyors and facilities managers all making moves on what was traditionally regarded as part of the architect’s scope of services.

1.4 Problem statement

There is a widespread view in the construction industry that the design team should have a single point of contact with the client to ‘prevent any misunderstanding or cross communication’ (Ostime, 2020, p. 12) but scant attention is given to how the different needs or perspectives within a client organisation are reconciled in advance of any instruction to the design team. The RIBA Job Book recommends what should be done at each stage of a construction project and advises that the most important task in Stage 1 is ‘assisting the client to develop the initial project brief’ (ibid. p. 71). However, although it provides a checklist of the categories of information that should be included in the brief, it does not indicate the political (with a small p) challenges that developing the brief might present or offer much guidance on how to overcome them. Possible difficulties are only hinted at in the statement that ‘however the decision-making process is structured it is important to make sure that one person is designated as the point of contact between the client organisation and the architect’ (ibid. p. 47).

The British Standard Briefing for Design and Construction – Part 1: code of practice for facilities management (buildings infrastructure) BS 8536-1:2015 defines briefing as ‘the process of identifying and analysing the needs, aims and constraints (the resources and the context) of the client and the relevant parties, and of formulating any resulting problems that the designer is required to solve’ (2015, p. 4). This definition is clear and succinct but like the RIBA Job Book, the Code of Practice recommends the appointment of a single person to represent the owner’s interests and liaise with the design and construction team (ibid., p.15), and only indicates the potential challenges they may face obliquely in advice such as:

End users or their representative/s should be allowed to express their views in an environment that is conducive to obtaining an
honest and accurate understanding of their needs (ibid., p.19 my italics)

The efficiency of this process [communication] depends to a large extent on the clarity with which questions are put by the owner or to the owner, how the subsequent answers are interpreted and how the decisions that arise from them are implemented (ibid., p. 22 my italics)

Multiple stakeholders are likely to have different perspectives on operational requirements and performance outcomes, necessitating close scrutiny of needs and their subsequent prioritization (ibid., p. 26 my italics)

Questions regarding what kind of environment is conducive to obtaining an honest and accurate understanding of end users’ needs, how answers should be interpreted or how different perspectives should be prioritized are not explicitly addressed.

The Government Soft Landings (GSL) policy implemented in 2016 was part of the Government Construction Strategy (2011) designed to improve the performance and reduce the cost of public buildings. Like the RIBA Job Book and the Code of Practice, GSL recognises the need for early and on-going engagement with end users and recommends the appointment of an individual from the client’s organisation, (designated the GSL champion), to engage with the delivery teams during design, construction, handover and operation. One of the responsibilities of the GSL champion is to develop a ‘stakeholder engagement and communication plan’ (GSL UK_BIM_Framework, 2019, p. 20) but again it offers little advice on how to do this or on how to get from engagement with multiple stakeholders to a single architectural brief. While nobody would argue against the GSL aim that buildings should be designed to meet the needs of the people who will use and operate them, GSL policy guidance does not appear to acknowledge that client organisations may include individuals and groups with different or even conflicting needs, or advise on how to reconcile or prioritise these different needs. The challenge of the task faced by the single point of contact, the owner’s representative or the GSL champion (whatever their job title), is indicated by Barrett and Stanley’s observation that the advice to
appoint a single client representative is ‘paid lip service but only partially implemented’ in that they are ‘not given total authority and often overruled/not supported at a later date’ (Barrett and Stanley, 1999, pp. 6, 8).

There is a conceptual gap between best practice advice calling for early and on-going engagement with a wide range of end-users, and the recommendation that a single person should be appointed from the client organisation to ‘represent the operational needs of the end user within the project team’ (Cabinet Office, 2013, p. 4). If this were simply a conceptual gap it might not be a practical concern, but good intentions to commission and design buildings which satisfy the client and meet the needs of end-users are at risk of falling into this gap. It is commonly assumed that construction is a practical enterprise in which there will be verifiably right and wrong answers to any problem but while this is true of some aspects of design there are many questions where technical rationality (Schön, 1991 [1983], p. 21) is of limited use. It is these kinds of socially situated, value laden (Paton and Dorst, 2011, p. 574) questions that can make architectural briefing politically challenging.

1.5 Purpose of research

The aim of this research is to explore how, in real-world practice, clients commissioning new buildings bridge the gap between engagement with multiple end-users and the appointment of a representative to act as a single point of contact for the design team. In other words, what kind of briefing environment the client creates, how questions are put and answers interpreted and how different perspectives on operational requirements and performance outcomes are prioritised. Much research on architectural briefing focusses on client/architect communication. Here the focus is on internal communication within the client organisation in the context of an ongoing architectural project, and on the role of argumentation in reaching an accommodation between the various needs and priorities of internal stakeholders.
The purpose is two-fold, first to use the moment of disjuncture and change offered by a new building project as an opportunity to gain insight into how building users perceive, interpret and operationalise the affordances and constraints of their buildings and second, to develop some provisional sensitising concepts or questions to support the reflection-in-action (Schön, 1991 [1983]) of practitioners and clients navigating the political challenges presented by complex architectural projects. The term ‘sensitising concept’ was originally used by Blumer who argued that unlike ‘definitive concepts [which] provide prescriptions of what to see, sensitising concepts merely suggest directions along which to look’ (Blumer, 1992 [1968], p. 148). A sensitising concept is designed to ‘spark your thinking’ about a topic, it is does not ‘command inquiry, much less commandeer it’ (Charmaz, 2014, p. 30). Barrett and Stanley report that few construction professionals consult best practice guidance on briefing regarding it as either ‘too prescriptive or vague’ (Barrett and Stanley, 1999, p. 10). It is hoped that sensitising concepts may prove more congenial (and therefore of practical use) to creative construction professionals.

1.6 Research questions

The principal research question is, how do clients and end-users engage in the briefing and design review process during the early stages of architectural projects (RIBA Stages 1-3)?

The subsidiary questions are:

1. How do clients and end-users describe the spatial qualities of existing buildings?
2. How do clients and end-users account for or predict the use of space?
3. How do clients and end-users attribute value or meaning to building design?
4. What topics are contested/not contested during the briefing and design review process?
5. What strategies and tactics of argumentation are deployed by clients and end-users?

These research questions were developed concurrently with the literature review, the pilot studies and the emergent research design (See Appendix B for further details).

1.7 Research design and methodology

My original intention was to research the briefing process on a number of small architectural projects. However, following two pilot studies during which I became interested in the significance of argumentation and in how it is socially situated, I was offered the opportunity to study the internal decision-making process for UCL East, a new university campus on the Olympic Park in east London. Universities are institutions where people investigate the world and how it might be changed for the better and argumentation is a valued part of the academic skill set. Luker uses the metaphor ‘data outcropping’ to recommend that qualitative researchers look for data on the phenomenon they are investigating in the places where it is most likely to be found (Luker, 2010, p. 103). A university project seemed a promising place to look for data on argumentation in architectural briefing.

This research is an exploratory, instrumental case study. The data collection methods include interviews, non-participant observation of project meetings and events, and analysis of project documents. Data collection took place largely between 2015 and 2018 (RIBA Stages 1-3). Analysis was done, in part, concurrently with data collection using Situational Analysis (Clarke et al., 2018) and with the assistance of MAXQDA software. Situational Analysis (SA) is a development from constructivist grounded theory and shares many of its underlying assumptions, but in SA the unit of analysis is the situation rather than a singular basic social process. SA’s broader focus and explicit recognition of multiple viewpoints makes it a better fit for a study of architectural briefing.
Some research requires the use of special instruments to generate data about the object of inquiry, but in interpretive research (like this case study) the instrument is the researcher. Interviews, meetings and other forms of data are all perceived directly by the researcher. However, perception is not a passive process of receiving raw information - it is inevitably pre-structured by the intentions and life experience of the person doing the perceiving - what you ‘see’ is influenced by your motivation for looking and by your expectations (based on past experience) about what you are likely to find. This influence has long been recognised as a challenge to the validity of interpretive research. Consequently reflexivity (paying close attention to your personal or professional biases with the intention of mitigating their impact on the research process), is widely recommended. Reflexivity makes two demands on the researcher, first she must be honest with herself and critically evaluate her own intentions and underlying assumptions, and second, she must be transparent about her starting point so that her readers can take this into account, calibrate the ‘research instrument’, and thereby make their own assessments of the validity of her research.

Much of this thesis is written in a traditional academic style in which the narrator is largely absent. However, I have chosen to include some first-person narrative to foreground my position in relation to architectural briefing in general, and this case study in particular. Although use of the pronoun ‘I’ is now more common in academic writing (Sword 2012:39), it is particularly congruent with the research design of this study because it keeps the provisional, social nature of knowledge (central to pragmatism) and the position of the researcher (central to situational analysis) continually in the reader’s mind. My use of the personal voice is also intended to evoke the idea (central to this thesis) that architectural briefing is a subjective, polyvocal, ‘social accomplishment’ (Luck, 2009, p. 24).

1.8 Scope of research

The principal case study for this research is a complex project about which many different theses could have been written. I have chosen to focus on
intra-client argumentation during the early stages of the briefing and design review process, and questions requiring human judgement, those questions where the relational, rhetorical aspects of briefing come into play. Therefore, this thesis does not address the architect’s design process or give an account of the many design problems for which there was an independently verifiable ‘optimum’ solution, although as I report in this thesis, there were times when the line between the two was in itself subject to debate.

The UCL East project involved extensive consultation with a wide range of external stakeholders including local residents, organisations and politicians. Although interesting as a research topic in its own right, the public consultation process for UCL East lies outside the scope of this thesis. Likewise, this thesis does not address university-led urban regeneration (Benneworth and Hospers, 2007, Melhuish, 2015) or the pros and cons of Mayoral Development Corporations such as the LLDC unless these topics are referred to directly in client meetings.

A third aspect of the case study which is clearly outside the scope of this thesis is the commercial management of the project - the financing and procurement of Phase 1 of the new campus. While methods of procurement and forms of contract constitute the formal relationships within which the project team works, neither contract terms nor management of the project budget are addressed in this study.

1.9 Thesis outline

This thesis is written in a traditional 8 chapter format, it comprises an introduction, a literature review, a methodology chapter, three empirical chapters, a discussion chapter and a conclusion.

Chapter 2 This review chapter is based on a rigorous literature search focussed on architectural briefing. However, it also includes references to studies of briefing in other fields of design such as graphic design, product design and IT where these cast light on the practice of briefing. An overview of the research methods used to investigate architectural briefing is included
here rather than in the methodology chapter because the research methods chosen by different scholars indicate how they conceptualise the practice of briefing. The aim of this chapter is to problematise the practice of briefing and locate this study in relation to the existing research literature. It is structured around a consideration of the dimensions, components and conditions of architectural briefing and concludes with a review of three areas of on-going disagreement in the literature: briefing and design, briefing and time, and briefing and argumentation.

**Chapter 3** The methodology chapter describes two pilot studies and gives a brief overview of Pragmatism and Situational Analysis to explain the reasoning behind my choice of philosophical stance and research design. It then gives a first person account of the empirical research process and reflects on my ambiguous insider/outsider position, my approach to research ethics, including the challenges of carrying out research in an institution where I am enrolled as a student, and my deliberations over how to delimit the research. This chapter concludes with a justification of the choices I made in collecting and analysing the data and in writing up my research.

The following three empirical chapters explore the role of argumentation in architectural briefing. Each chapter explores argumentation around a different aspect of architectural briefing, justifying the decision to build and developing the strategic brief, establishing and contesting the project governance, and the internal debate over design decisions, the *virtual building* (Medway, 1996). There is an element of chronology in the ordering of these empirical chapters from the general to the particular. However, this ordering should not be taken to suggest that the different aspects of briefing described are necessarily independent or chronologically distinct.

**Chapter 4** sets the scene for the UCL East case study and describes the events leading up to the decision to build. It then explores how the project is framed by different stakeholders - ‘the struggle for the idea of the university’ (Neary and Saunders, 2011, p. 333). In doing this it addresses different aspects of the strategic brief, how the problematic situation was framed
(Schön, 1991 [1983]), different perspectives on the purpose of the project, and the scope for change. The chapter concludes with the debate over whether a 300 seat lecture theatre should be included in Phase 1 of the new campus. This account indicates that the principle of ‘sharing space’ is problematised by some building users and exemplifies the potential for teleological reasoning to be used in justifying design decisions.

**Chapter 5** describes the project governance and deliberations over the legitimacy and scope of the consultation process. It includes an account of how the decision to build was contested, how the initial designs were critiqued, and how the emergent project governance evolved in response to challenge and new knowledge. In discussing project governance, it gives an overview of formal governance structures and highlights the importance of relationships in situating project argumentation. It argues that briefing is characterised by formal and informal lines of communication and explores the significance of trust, timing and motivation in the briefing process. This chapter concludes with an account of the executive group deliberations prior to presenting the revised UCL East business case to Council for approval in November 2017.

**Chapter 6** gives an account of the fit out briefing process and the internal debate regarding the virtual building, the developing design of the Marshgate building. It situates the user group briefing workshops in relation to the shell and core design and the competition for space as a scarce resource. This chapter covers 3 themes, the impact of material and social conditions on the evolution of the Fluid Zone, the tensions between space efficiency and efficacy in the development of the workplace strategy and different perspectives on the potential for UCL East to generate wider institutional change.

**Chapter 7** considers the accounts of the UCL East briefing process given in chapters 3, 4, and 5 through the lens of argumentation. It explores different concepts from the literature such as the topics, aims and conditions of argument and notes the highly heterogenous quality of architectural
argumentation. It draws on the literature to distinguish between argumentation about truth and argumentation about choice, and claims that rhetorical argumentation is both necessary and central to architectural briefing. The section referencing the literature on argumentation is followed by a reflection on the research questions, and the tentative proposal of a set of sensitising questions and a provisional conceptual framework to support the reflection-in-action of clients and consultants. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the relevance of this case study to other projects, its transferability, and the significance of argumentation to the microethics of practice.

Chapter 8 concludes this thesis with a summary of the central argument and key observations followed by a statement on the limitations of this research study and the claim that it makes 4 contributions to knowledge: a rich description of client and end user argumentation throughout the early stages of a significant architectural project, a trial of the use of SA in architectural research, a reflection on architectural briefing through the lens of argumentation theory, and 9 sensitising questions to support the reflection-in-action of clients and consultants working on complex architectural projects. It concludes with three recommendations for future research and some final thoughts on the implications of this study.
Chapter 2 Problematising briefing: an exploratory review

A paper that does not have references is like a child without an escort walking in the night in a big city it does not know: isolated, lost, anything may happen to it. (Latour, 1987, p. 33)

In a real-life conversation it's considered rude if you barge into an ongoing conversation without any mind to what's been happening, fail to say hello, talk over people, take their ideas and claim them as your own, or act as if you are the only person who has anything worth saying. (Thomson and Kamler, 2016, p. 31)

2.1 Introduction

A distinctive feature of the literature on architectural briefing is the wide range of contributions from different disciplines and professions. Researchers writing on this topic include design studies scholars, architectural historians, architects, project managers, quantity surveyors, facility managers and software developers. The academic conversation appears to be fractured with separate groups pursuing very different lines of inquiry. It could also be argued that much useful knowledge about briefing is tacit, procedural knowledge in the heads of practitioners. However the task in this chapter is to scope the explicit, declarative knowledge in the academic literature. This review aims to cover ‘central/pivotal’ literature rather than produce an ‘exhaustive’ review (Cooper, 1988, p. 109). My purpose in reviewing the literature is to locate and delimit this study in relation to existing knowledge, develop my theoretical sensitivity (Glaser, 1978) and make a case for focussing on client-side dialogue and argumentation as an under researched aspect of architectural briefing. Academic guidance on literature reviews suggests that researchers should aim to ‘build an argument not a library’ (Rudestam and Newton, 2007, p. 66) and that is my intention here.

There is some confusion about the right time to review the literature in a Grounded Theory (and by extension Situational Analysis) study. In Discovering Grounded Theory, Glaser and Straus advise researchers to begin by ignoring the literature in their field to avoid ‘contamination’ and the associated risk of forcing ‘round data into square categories’ (2008 [1967], p. 37). However, this advice has been criticised as naïve by later scholars who
argue that an initial literature review is a necessary part of the research process (Dey, 1999, p. 250, Thornberg, 2012, p. 244, Charmaz, 2014, p. 306). Rather than aiming for the unrealistic goal of maintaining theoretical innocence they recommend that researchers practice ‘theoretical agnosticism’ – that they keep an open mind (Henwood and Pidgeon, 2003, p. 138). Nonetheless, Glaser has a valid point when he observes that it may not be possible to know what literature will be relevant to a research study until the empirical work is well advanced (Glaser, 1988, p. 68). Researchers have resolved this problem by proposing a phased or on-going literature review (Martin, 2006). This is the approach taken here. This chapter reports on an initial focussed review of the literature on architectural briefing. In later chapters, principally Chapter 7 (the discussion), new literature is introduced to address topics arising from analysis of the empirical data such as the principal sensitising concept - argumentation. The benefit of allowing the empirical work to lead an on-going literature review is that this approach encourages researchers to pursue solutions to research problems across disciplinary borders (Martin 2006). This is helpful when addressing an inherently transdisciplinary problem like architectural briefing. A more detailed account of this exploratory, abductive approach to the literature in given in appendix B.

The overview of the literature given in this chapter addresses the following questions:

1. How do researchers conceptualise briefing?
2. What methodologies have been used to research architectural briefing?
3. What are the key dimensions, components and conditions of architectural briefing?

The following sections consider each question in turn and then address three areas of ongoing disagreement in the literature: briefing and design, briefing and time, and briefing and argumentation. Although these literature review questions explore different aspects of architectural briefing, this should not be
taken to suggest that the dimensions, components and conditions of briefing necessarily have an independent *out-thereness* (Law, 2004). The aim in structuring the literature review in this way is to highlight different perspectives and the potential for argumentation to influence design outcomes - another researcher might approach a literature review on architectural briefing differently (see Appendix A for the literature search methodology).

### 2.2 What is architectural briefing?

When I attempt to explain my research topic to people unfamiliar with the construction industry, I say that I am studying how clients and building users tell the design team what they need or want from their new building. However, I am aware that this description of architectural briefing is an oversimplification, and that the briefing process is rarely just a question of communicating a stable, pre-existing set of spatial and material requirements (Green, 1996, p. 155). First, the client’s requirements will depend on how they define the purpose of their organisation and in ‘human affairs the unequivocal pursuit of objectives which can be taken as given is rare’ (Checkland and Scholes, 1990, p. A6). Second, ‘the concept of the client as a single entity’ has been replaced by an understanding that architectural projects may be influenced by many stakeholders with different and sometimes conflicting values and priorities (Newcombe, 2003, p. 841). And third, clients often find it difficult to define their requirements from scratch (in the abstract) and may need to see a number of alternative sketch designs before they can effectively describe what they need (Green, 1996, p. 160, Lawson, 1997, p. 121, Bogers et al., 2008, p. 112). Consequently, rather than just being a simple act of communication, briefing is likely to include a complex admixture of information seeking, deliberation, negotiation, decision-making, and design requiring both social skills and imagination.

Despite decades of research the practice of briefing is still a contested topic. Should the brief be *solution neutral* (Kamara et al., 1999) or will design problems inevitably be pre-structured ‘by constraints and by the designer’s
own cognitive map’ (Hillier et al., 1972, p. 29-3-1). Are client requirements pre-existing, stable and objective, or are they socially constructed in ‘a process of creative exploration’? (Alexander, 2010, p. 258). Architectural briefing sounds like such a self-evident task and yet on closer examination it seems quite difficult to define. Several scholars (Pegoraro and Paula, 2017, p. 2, Parsanezhad et al., 2016, p. 280) complain that there is a lack of consistency in the way that terms are used in Architecture, Engineering, Construction and Operation (AECO) projects and argue that the first step in theory development should be to develop a common vocabulary. Contra to this position, I suggest that the diverse meanings assigned to the terms used in these fields reflect not only different ways of framing architectural briefing but also qualitatively different kinds of briefing. The first step for researchers is therefore not to force consensus but to clarify difference.

Drawing from the literature Green describes three types of briefing: first a single decision maker with authority to set the design requirements, second, ‘extensive collaboration between clients and designers over a period of time’, and third, standard briefs developed in response to lessons learned but explicitly characterised as open to ‘continuous improvement through “responsible innovation”’ (Green, 1996, p. 160). He suggests that consultants sometimes approach briefing in a default way which may not be appropriate for a particular client or project and argues that the design team needs to understand the client organisation ‘from the inside’ in order to adjust their briefing methodology to fit the situation.

Green selected three types of briefing to illustrate his argument about the importance of understanding the client organisation. Although the conceptual clarity of these models makes them a useful tool for thinking about architectural briefing, they do not reflect the full range of potential variation in real world practice. Nonetheless, they do indicate that the question for researchers studying architectural briefing should not be simply ‘what works?’ but what works for whom, and in what circumstances, and how? (Generic questions from Hart, 2018). The RIBA Job Book makes it clear that ‘the briefing process must be appropriate to the nature of the project’ (Ostime,
2020, p. 37) and any search for a ‘one-size-fits-all’ approach to briefing is unlikely to succeed (Lavikka et al., 2019, p. 1947).

2.2.1 How is architectural briefing conceptualised?
As might be predicted from the range of disciplines and professions engaged in researching this topic, the architectural briefing process has been framed in a variety of different ways. Sometimes the epistemology of researchers is clear from their vocabulary. For instance, terms such as success factor, variable, and optimise indicate a positivist perspective while framing, sense-making or situated suggest a more interpretivist world view. This can be helpful because it allows the reader to orientate herself in relation to the research. However, because the term briefing lacks specificity it is used by researchers with different world views to describe quite different activities (for example the three types of briefing described by Green). This means that it can be difficult to determine exactly what kind of activity is being referred to and even more difficult to grasp the diverse assumptions about the nature and practice of briefing lying behind each use of the term.

Although researchers frame briefing in different ways (see Table 2-1) rather than assuming that these perspectives are mutually exclusive it might be helpful to ask whether, like in the parable of the blind men and the elephant, each view reflects a different aspect of a complex whole. Alternatively, these theoretical positions can be used as vantage points (Alvesson and Sandberg, 2013, p. 49) from which to question the assumptions or taken for granted knowledge that underlies different positions and to ask what conditions of practice would have to be in place for each framing to be convincing. A few of the texts listed in Table 2-1 represent the views of individual researchers but others are examples of more common perspectives that could have been represented by many different texts. Whether these different ways of thinking about briefing precede the research design or represent research conclusions, they indicate different assumptions about the location of the solution to the briefing ‘problem’.
Table 2-1 Different ways of framing architectural briefing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Briefing as:</th>
<th>Title, Author, Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>Exploring construction project design as multimodal social semiotic practice, (Collinge, 2019)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decision-making</td>
<td>Tracking decision-making during architectural design (Cooper et al., 2005)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning</td>
<td>Investigating the role of client learning for successful architect-client relationships on private single dwelling projects, (Siva and London, 2011)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research</td>
<td>Inquiry by Design, (Zeisel, 2006 [1981]) Morphology and Design: reconciling intellect, intuition and ethics in the practice of architecture (Hanson, 2001)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sensemaking</td>
<td>Managing value in realising construction projects through co-creational sense-making, (Fellows et al., 2013) Sense-making in value management practice, (Thiry, 2001)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socialisation</td>
<td>Communicating about organizational culture in the briefing process: case study of a hospital project, (Chandra and Loosemore, 2011a)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information processing</td>
<td>Information model for construction briefing, (Kamara and Anumba, 2003)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge creation</td>
<td>The briefing process: an organisational knowledge creation perspective, (Kao, 2004)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Framing the problematic situation</td>
<td>The reflective practitioner, (Schön, 1991 [1983])</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negotiating</td>
<td>Client engagement and building design: the view from actor-network theory, (Kurokawa et al., 2017 )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creative exploration</td>
<td>Creativity in the design process: coevolution of the problem-solution, (Dorst and Cross, 2001) Managing the brief for better design (Alexander, 2010)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.2.2 Content of architectural briefs
The RIBA Job Book checklist for the final project brief includes the following information: ‘the aim of the design including prioritised project outcomes’, the
structure of the client organisation, client function and activities, spatial and quality requirements, sustainability targets, servicing and access strategy, site, programme, budget, risk management strategy and procurement process (Ostimé, 2020, p. 134). This list includes several disparate categories of information that can be broadly summarised as follows:

- The aims for the new building
- How the new building will be used
- Project context including site, legislation and stakeholders
- The resources available for the project (time and money)
- Project governance and contracts (O'Reilly, 1987)

This study focusses on the first three items, those parts of the brief that address the purpose of the product (the building), its context and how it will be used and not on the last two, that define resources and project processes. Project governance is addressed in Chapter 5, but this is to situate the briefing process rather than to describe one of its outcomes. In terms of specifying the new building, what is of particular interest here are those aspects of the brief that do not have a verifiable right or wrong answer (where value judgements are required) rather than the more technical requirements such as structural integrity or thermal efficiency that can be empirically validated.

2.2.3 Uses of architectural briefs

The brief has been described as a tool for communication, for quality assurance and for building specification (Prins et al., 2006). Ryd argues that the brief carries the client’s information through the project from inception to completion (2004, p. 231), while the RIBA Job Book (Ostimé, 2020, p. 40) refers to three functions of the brief - enabling conversation about desired outcomes and objectives, tracking progress, and evaluating outcomes. This study is focussed on the use of the briefing process to enable dialogue and decision making in RIBA Stages 1-3 rather than on how the brief is used to inform the building specification, track progress or evaluate outcomes during later RIBA work stages. It addresses the briefing process and how it is
informed by client-side argumentation, and not how briefing documents are used as a tool for quality control, design management, programme planning or evaluation.

2.3 How is architectural briefing researched?

Researchers investigating architectural briefing have used a range of different research methods (see Table 2-2) and research design falls broadly into three categories: theoretical work, empirical work focussing on briefing as it is currently practiced, and empirical work evaluating some kind of intervention either a formalised briefing process or a new tool (see Table 2-3). Many of the intervention evaluations are based on scenarios or quasi-experiments rather than real world projects and (with the exception of surveys) most studies are based on fairly small numbers of case studies. There is also a notable disconnect between academic theory and practice so research into architectural briefing can best be assessed on its potential theoretical contribution rather than on its statistical significance or proven efficacy in practice.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research methods</th>
<th>Variations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Questionnaire surveys</td>
<td>Qualitative or quantitative with statistical analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviews</td>
<td>Client, end-user, stakeholder, consultant or contractor: structured, semi-structured, unstructured</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus groups/workshops</td>
<td>Clients, end-users, stakeholders, consultants or contractors: structured, semi-structured, unstructured</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observation</td>
<td>Participant or non-participant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Document analysis</td>
<td>Textual or visual analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analysis of design artefacts and material practices</td>
<td>Material ethnography</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2-3 Research designs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research designs</th>
<th>Variations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Development of new IT tools</td>
<td>Visualisation, simulation, knowledge management, change management/tracking, creative collaboration platforms, decision support systems, automated briefing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Testing of new IT tools</td>
<td>Quasi-experiments and real-world tests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development of formalised briefing process</td>
<td>Value Management, Strategic Needs Analysis, Choosing by Advantages, Functional Performance Specification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Testing of formalised briefing process</td>
<td>Research scenarios and real-world tests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Action research</td>
<td>Client, or construction professional e.g. architect, project manager working on live project/s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case study</td>
<td>Archival or concurrent ethnographic study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theory building</td>
<td>Systematic or traditional literature review, AECO or alternative perspective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research on buildings in use</td>
<td>Post-occupancy evaluation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The mind-map in Figure 2-1 indicates the range of directions in which researchers have looked to find a solution to the ‘problem’ of briefing. As discussed earlier, researchers understand the practice of briefing differently and different epistemologies generate different kinds of research question. From the top clockwise, the research categories in the purple boxes loosely map onto the following construction professions: IT, quantity surveying, project management, facilities management, design and architecture. However, research in this field is, almost by definition, interdisciplinary and the cloud shapes in this diagram are intended to suggest that different strands of research meet and interact.
Current concerns regarding sustainability, whole-life costing, lean construction, and concurrent engineering are apparent in the conversation about architectural briefing. There are also attempts to apply techniques borrowed from other industries such as manufacturing and ICT. For example, Quality Function Deployment (product design) and Benefits Realisation (software development). On the whole the research field is practice focussed and relatively light on theory (Koskela, 2008, Seymour et al., 1997) although some scholars make interesting use of theory borrowed from sociology such as Actor Network Theory (Latour), Habitus (Bourdieu) and ethnomethodology (Garfinkel).

2.4 Dimensions of architectural briefing

The term dimensions is used to mean ‘separate and interesting sources of variation’ (Jacoby, 1991). This section draws on the literature to discuss change, engagement and knowledge as interesting sources of variation in the practice of briefing.
2.4.1 Change

Architectural briefing is by definition about change. This section addresses three ways in which that change varies: the degree of novelty, what changes, and drivers for change.

**Degree of novelty** Most architectural projects lie somewhere on a continuum between two extremes with a form of in-practice critical research in which client aims and objectives are interrogated and taken-for-granted aspects of building design seen as natural and inevitable are opened up to question at one end of the scale, and the application of prescriptive, tried and tested design instructions used by large repeat clients such as McDonald’s or Tesco at the other. The degree of novelty may be considered at the scale of the client organisation or at the scale of the wider society – is the proposed building type just new to the client organisation or is it completely unprecedented? Hyams identifies the following degrees of novelty and suggests that they will impact on the level of detailed briefing required (2001, p. 33):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Knowledge of project type</th>
<th>Requirement for client briefing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Well understood</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Understood but requires major rethink</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Traditional, poorly documented</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>New type, few precedents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Completely unprecedented</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**What changes?** The degree of change may also be considered in terms of what changes. Blyth and Worthington argue that organisations aim to control change at the point where people, process and place interact (Blyth and Worthington, 2010, p. 29). The question for the design team at the start of a
project is what are the parameters of the project, what is its scope? How much does the client intend to change within the timescale of the project, just the place (building) or also the people (organisation), and work (process), for instance only the design of the classroom or also the staff, timetable or teaching methods?

![Diagram of People and Organisations, Process and Workflow, Place of Work]

Figure 2-2 ‘People, Process, Place’

‘Organisations aim to control change at the point where people, process and place interact’ (Blyth and Worthington, 2010, p. 29)

**Drivers for change** The final question to be addressed in this section is what is driving the change? Boyd and Chinyio refer to a range of drivers including a desire to ‘improve a service or cope with a change in the environment …’ (2006, p. 7) while the clients interviewed by Gibb and Isack referred to the following corporate and government policy and financial drivers:
Table 2-5 Reasons for commissioning project

(Adapted from Gibb and Isack, 2001, p 49)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason for commissioning project</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Upgrade facilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reducing operating costs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Add capacity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health and safety</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expand by geographic region</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legislation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expand into new markets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Other reasons included making a profit, balancing a property portfolio, relocating facilities, and facilitating new technology

Whether the project drivers are internal or external, positive or negative, it is clear that an understanding of why the client has commissioned the project will inform the briefing process. A simple driver like the need to 'upgrade facilities' could include a range of social motivations which bear further exploration and project drivers may be tacit, complex, or covert. This can be the case when clients propose to use building projects to engineer organisational change, the benefits of which may be unevenly distributed or contested. The management of projects must take into account 'the social and political forces acting within the client organization, especially the influence of the client’s pre-project history on the decision to build' (Cherns and Bryant, 1984, p. 182).

2.4.2 Engagement

This section addresses three sources of variation in client and building user engagement in the briefing and design process: levels of engagement, who
participates, and whether users participate as individuals or in roles prestructured by their position within the client organisation.

**Levels of engagement** Arnstein’s ladder of participation was deliberately designed to be provocative and 50 years later it still has a certain bite (see Figure 2-3). Although her classic paper focussed on larger scale citizen participation in urban development, the questions she asks: which way is the information flowing? And does participation affect what happens? are also central to the architectural briefing process.

Figure 2-3 ‘Eight rungs on a ladder of Citizen Participation’

(Arnstein, 1969, p. 217)

While presumably manipulation, therapy and informing all involve communication, Arnstein’s distinction between the different rungs on the ladder suggest that the purpose and rhetoric of the communication will be very different.

Looking at the question of briefing from the point of view of the designer offers a less politically charged interpretation of levels of engagement. Paton
and Dorst asked graphic designers to describe their role in the briefing process and identified 4 different modes of briefing which they linked to the timing of their appointment in relation to formulation of the design problem. Although this research was done on briefing for graphic design it seems equally applicable to architecture.

Table 2-6  Briefing modes
(categories from Paton and Dorst, 2011, pp. 578-9)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Designer's role</th>
<th>Description of briefing mode</th>
<th>Timing of designer’s appointment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Technician</td>
<td>Client knows what they want. Designer is given clear well defined instructions. Questioning of the brief is limited to requests for clarification.</td>
<td>At end of problem formulation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilitator</td>
<td>Client knows broadly what they want but needs help with the detail. Designer is expected to advise on how to make ‘the solution workable’.</td>
<td>Towards the end of problem formulation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expert/Artist</td>
<td>Client has ‘partially formed’ idea of what they want and designer is expected to use their expertise or artistic talent to help the client develop the brief/design.</td>
<td>Midway through problem formulation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaborator</td>
<td>Client and designer work together to ‘frame the project in terms of both problem and solution spaces’</td>
<td>Near the beginning of problem formulation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Paton and Dorst’s modes of briefing refer to relative levels of client and designer engagement with problem setting but, perhaps because their study is on graphic design and not architecture, they do not make a distinction between the paying client and other stakeholders.

Zeisel’s classic diagram illustrates the potential communication gaps between building users, and the designers and paying client. This suggests that, like Arnstein, he was concerned that the people who will be most
affected by a project may lack the power to influence the briefing and design process.

Figure 2-4 ‘The user-needs gap’
(Zeisel, 2006 [1981], p. 50)

Who participates? Although Zeisel’s diagram makes a useful distinction between paying clients and user clients, it does not reflect the complexity of most client organisations. As many scholars have pointed out, the client is not a single, unitary entity (Cherns and Bryant, 1984, Green, 1996, Boyd and Chinyio, 2006, Thyssen et al., 2010, Olsson et al., 2010, Thomson, 2011). Olsson et al (ibid., pp. 28-29) ask the question ‘Who is the user?’ and propose the following categories:

- Owners
- Facilities management and service personnel (operating the building)
- Management of the organisation based in the building
- Service providers (e.g. teachers, doctors and nurses)
- Service receivers (e.g. students, patients)
- Indirect service receivers (e.g. parents of students, relations of patients)
The broader category of *stakeholder* also includes ‘regulatory agencies and public interest parties’ (Kao, 2004, p. 43) and anyone who will be affected by the project, either positively or negatively. If you take into account that stakeholders can include a range of internal and external actors with ‘different levels and types of investment and interest’ (Newcombe, 2003, p. 841) then it is clear that the level and impact of engagement in architectural briefing can vary widely depending on who is consulted, how invested they are in the project, and whether any stakeholders turn up uninvited (and unexpected) like the wicked fairy godmother at Sleeping Beauty’s christening.

**Participation as mediated by client organisation** Research into user involvement in briefing, has tended to focus either on the individual user experience or on ‘users as parts of organisations seen from an FM point of view’ (Jensen et al., 2011). This distinction between the individual/environment relationship and the organisation/environment relationship may be fuzzy but it provides an interesting perspective on the briefing process because it suggests that designers need to understand how the organisation (and the different institutional structures, spatial practices and attitudes within that organisation) will act as a mediating factor between the individual user and their experience of the built environment. In this context usability is seen as ‘a cultural phenomenon which can only be improved through a better understanding of user experience, considered as *situated action* in a specific context’ (Alexander, 2008).

### 2.4.3 Knowledge

This section addresses three aspects of knowledge in architectural briefing that are ‘interesting sources of variation’: who knows what, different types of knowledge and how knowledge is established as ‘fact’.

**Who knows what?** Many scholars argue that the appropriate method of briefing will depend on the client's level of knowledge and experience (Cherns and Bryant, 1984, Green, 1996, Barrett and Stanley, 1999). However, there are two types of expertise relevant to the briefing process:
knowledge of the construction industry and knowledge of the client organisation. It might be assumed that clients will be knowledgeable about their own organisation but this is often not the case (Boyd and Chinyio, 2006, p. 39, Marmot cited in Blyth and Worthington, 2010, p. 260). Clients may also not understand their roles and responsibilities in a construction project, or the constraints and drivers of the briefing and design process (Barrett and Stanley, 1999, p. 31). Although the emphasis in the literature is on levels of client knowledge and experience, it seems clear that the level of the knowledge and experience in the design team will also determine what needs to be communicated during the briefing and design process. The architect Eva Jiricna suggests that ‘the client is not capable of knowing what the options are and we are not capable of understanding what the end product is for’ (cited in Lawson, 1994, p. 50). Knowledge, not only of the client’s spatial practices, but also their organisational values, governance structures and institutional or business drivers can assist consultants to manage the process effectively and arrive at a ‘good enough’ solution.

Figure 2-5 Degrees of knowledge in different domains

(Format/concept of diagram adapted from Russell-Rose and Tate, 2013, p. 5)
It may be no surprise that a design team in which both client and consultants are 'double experts' is likely to be more effective than a team of novices. However, what is less often acknowledged is that expert/novice clients and consultants may both be unaware of what they don’t know. This is critical because the extent to which mutual learning takes place will depend to a large extent on the people involved, their openness to alternative perspectives and their communication skills.

Barrett and Stanley adapted the Johari window to model this process of mutual learning. The Johari window was created by psychologists to help people develop self-knowledge and understanding of how they are seen by others. It was first used in relation to construction briefing by Bedjer (1991) but its adaption by Barrett and Stanley (1999, p. 49) to show what is known and not known by construction clients and designers is its most persuasive use in this field. Barrett and Stanley’s diagram (See Figure 2-6) convincingly illustrates the concept of briefing as a dynamic process of mutual learning and discovery.

![Johari window diagram](Barrett and Stanley, 1999, p. 49 words in arrows adapted)

*Figure 2-6* Johari window

(Barrett and Stanley, 1999, p. 49 words in arrows adapted)
This fits with an understanding of briefing as ‘more a matter of discovering what was previously unknown or poorly understood than of collecting information and ideas previously formulated’ (Franck and von Sommaruga Howard, 2010, p. 26).

Types of knowledge Although an ‘understanding of the methods of investigation and preparation of the brief for a design project’ and the ability to prepare ‘briefs that take account of social factors’ (ARB, 2010, GC6 & GC7) are considered essential skills for members of the architectural profession, briefing is rarely taught in architectural schools and most architects only begin to learn about briefing during the two years of practical experience required to complete their education. Learning in practice generally takes the form of legitimate peripheral participation (Lave and Wenger, 1991) rather than explicit training. Part I and II students will go along to briefing workshops with the lead architect ostensibly to take notes, carry the model and help with setting up the meeting but also to watch and learn. This kind of socially situated learning is largely tacit.

Norman distinguishes between three types of knowledge: knowledge of (declarative knowledge) knowledge how (procedural knowledge) and external knowledge (knowledge embodied in the material world) (Norman, 1988, p. 57). The tacit procedural character of both the clients’ spatial practices and the architects’ approach to briefing tends to be a barrier to mutual comprehension. This is exacerbated by the curse of knowledge, ‘a difficulty in imagining what it’s like for someone else not to know something that you know’ (Pinker, 2014, p. 11), and the tendency for the knowledge and ideas which we take for granted to become invisible to us (Douglas, 1987, p. 98, Hillier, 1993, p. 11).

Norman’s classification of different types of knowledge is useful in understanding some of the challenges of the briefing process but Chandra and Loosemore suggest a more detailed way of thinking about the types of knowledge involved in architectural briefing. Based on Sackmann’s work they propose the categories of cultural knowledge set out in Table 2-7.
### Table 2-7 ‘Coding categories and indicators’

*(Chandra and Loosemore, 2011a, p. 225)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Label</th>
<th>Definitions, indicators and examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dictionary</td>
<td>Descriptions, labels or definitions – the ‘what’ of situations, their content such as what is considered a problem by briefing participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Directory</td>
<td>Practices, chains of events, explanations – the ‘how’ of things and events, their processes, such as how a specific problem is solved or what people in their group do – it is descriptive rather than evaluative/prescriptive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recipe</td>
<td>Prescriptions for repair, improvement of strategies – the ‘should’ and recommendations of certain actions, how a particular problem should be solved, what the briefing participants should do to solve the problem, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Axiomatic</td>
<td>Reasons, explanations of the final causes of particular events – the ‘why’ things and events happen, why a particular problem emerged, or why the briefing participants acts in a particular manner</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chandra and Loosemore (2011) found that formalised briefing documents and discussions tend to focus on explicit Dictionary knowledge at the expense of tacit Axiomatic knowledge. They observed that axiomatic knowledge appeared to be more difficult to access and often only came to light when building users, in their case clinicians, used it in arguments in favour of their preferred design solutions. This observation forms the basis of their conclusion that constructive conflict plays a key role in successful briefing.

**Establishing knowledge as ‘fact’** Classic briefing guidance refers to the requirement to ‘collect and analyse facts’ (Pena and Parshall, 2001 [1969], p. 12) prior to the start of design. Duerk argues that facts are ‘objective, specific, and verifiable by some measurement or observation’, defines them as ‘things or events which have occurred in reality; true things’ (Duerk, 1993,
pp. 25 & 238) and seems to suggest that they will be self-evident and uncontested.

This is surprising when she, like Peña and Parshall (ibid., p. 108), includes under the category of *fact* ‘those physical, social, emotional and intellectual qualities that typify the users and affect their behaviour patterns’. Other scholars have noted how peoples’ perceptions and interpretations will affect their behaviour (Checkland and Scholes, 1990, p. A39, Green, 1996, p. 156) but they are less categorical about the nature of ‘facts’. As Checkland observes, social knowledge is contingent, situated and potentially subject to as many different interpretations as there are ‘people who make the interpretations’ (Ibid., p. A39).

If, as Checkland suggests, social knowledge is subject to interpretation and therefore the ‘facts’ discussed during the briefing process are not necessarily self-evident or uncontested then this raises an interesting question about how they are established as facts. Potter’s work on ‘fact-making practices’ is helpful in addressing this question (Potter, 1996, p. 30). He studies how ‘descriptions [are] produced so that they will be treated as factual … that is how are they made to appear solid, neutral, independent of the speaker and to be merely mirroring some aspect of the world?’ Reflecting on Potter’s work suggests that when building users offer information during the briefing process then their descriptions and accounts, will be designed to establish the information they provide as relevant, credible and useful - as having practical value to the briefing and design process. In doing this clients and building users may also (consciously or unconsciously) be making a case for a preferred design solution.

Working as an architect I have been fascinated to observe how the design team’s perception of ‘facts’, their relevance, credibility and how they are used can be influenced by the persuasive skill of the speaker and the pre-existing attitudes and past experiences of their audience. What at first appears as a tentative design proposition or a quirky personal narrative may (or may not) begin to take on the aura of an accepted fact, recognised and acknowledged
by the design team as a ‘given’, part of the ground on which the project will be constructed.

Readers might object to my suggestion that ‘facts’ are socially constructed and argue that some facts such as the combustibility of polyisocyanurate [PIR] insulation are tragically indisputable. In response, I would point out that while the physical properties of this product have not changed significantly since it was first introduced to the construction industry, the perceived relevance of these properties, the way they are discussed and acted on has changed radically since the Grenfell Tower fire.

### 2.5 Components of architectural briefing

The term components is used here to mean a constituent element or part of a larger whole – in this case the briefing process. This section reviews the literature on three related types of component: project stages, activities and relational work. Breaking down a project into stages imposes a clear linear structure onto a complex messy process and has the practical advantages of enabling incremental approval (through the use of stage gates), delimiting the scope of consultant appointments, and defining payment schedules. Project activities (such as eliciting information on client requirements, or translating this information into building specifications) may be associated with a particular project stage or continue throughout the project. And the activities performed, and the manner in which they are performed, will inevitably have an impact on stakeholder relations.

#### 2.5.1 Stages

The process map native to the construction industry is the RIBA plan of work (see Figure 2.7). The 2020 Plan of work assumes that briefing only takes place during the first three stages of a project: strategic client requirements are defined during RIBA Stage 0, the project brief is developed, (with or without the use of feasibility studies) during RIBA Stage 1, and the brief remains ‘live’ and subject to revision during Concept Design, RIBA Stage 2. The curious description of a Stage 2 output as ‘Project Brief Derogations’
(previously Final Brief) seems designed to simultaneously allow and
discourage changes to the brief during Stage 2. As noted in the introduction,
this study focuses on the early stages of architectural projects nominally
covered by RIBA stages 1-3.

![RIBA Plan of Work 2020](image)

Figure 2-7  RIBA Plan of works 2020

Previous process models have made a clearer distinction between the
client’s Statement of Need, Business Case, Decision to Build, Strategic Brief
(‘broad scope and purpose of a project’) and Project Brief (‘full statement of
client’s operational and functional requirements for the completed project’)
(CIB, 1997, p. 4) but the desirability of freezing the brief early is a consistent
theme.

Software engineers working on the development of IT briefing tools have
introduced a requirements processing model to the field which includes the
following stages: *Elicitation, Analysis* and *Prioritization, Specification*, and
*Validation* (Pegoraro and Paula, 2017, p. 1). Validation refers to the

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1 This study does not claim to address RIBA Plan of Work Stage 0, as this was
largely complete before the empirical work began, and because it focuses on
argumentation around the *virtual building*. However, the actions and decisions
taken during Stage 0 are referenced in Chapter 4 to situate the project. And
challenges to these decisions and actions are referenced in Chapter 5 so Stage 0
is seen to reverberate throughout later stages.
agreement by the client that a description of what the software will do and how it will perform (the Specification) accurately describes what they need or want. An additional final stage, Verification, may be included. This comprises confirmation that the software developed matches the Specification. While this model was developed for software design, the use of these more explicit and granular labels to describe the architectural briefing process can be helpful. However, neither model fully acknowledges the iterative nature of briefing and the potential for the briefing and design process itself to generate new knowledge and understanding of client requirements. If the brief is not treated as a live document then it can ‘feel like a cage’ to the client and Barrett and Stanley argue that briefing must be seen as ‘a process not an event’ (1993, p. 3). This suggests that verifying a close match between the initial specification and the final product is not necessarily the best criteria for judging the success of the briefing process because it does not acknowledge the potential benefits to the client of allowing the brief to evolve.

2.5.2 Activities
According to the RIBA Plan of Work 2020 each stage of a project is characterised by different core activities and this view is reflected in the academic literature. However, although there are some commonalities in the activities prescribed, there are also significant differences in how this topic is addressed in the literature. These differences include the kind of activities prescribed, advice on how they should be performed, and on whether briefing should be viewed as comprising a linear series of discrete activities in which each activity is completed before the next one is started, or as a more emergent messy process in which activities may be concurrent, overlapping or recursive.

Some of the variation in the activities prescribed in the literature arises from the different views held on when the briefing process starts: when ‘there is a sense of unease, a feeling that things could be better than they are, or some perceived problem requiring attention’ (Checkland and Scholes, 1990, p. 288), when the client defines their organisational needs and objectives, the
‘statement of need’ (CIB, 1997, p. 4), or following the decision to build. However, most of the variation can be ascribed to differences in epistemology - to whether researchers assume that stable information on client requirements exists *out-there* in the real world, ready to be *captured*, or whether this information is, at least in part, generated through an iterative design process, (Fernie et al., 2003, p. 359) in which ‘the goals do not precede the action but rather emerge from it’ (Barrett et al., 1999, p. 641).

The activities of identifying stakeholders, eliciting information, recording and organising information and translating this elicited information into client requirements are referred to by many writers (e.g. Fernie et al., 2003, Bogers et al., 2008, Kamara, 2017), and the Government Soft Landings Champion is required to prepare a plan setting out how stakeholders will be consulted. However, there are different views on how these activities should be performed to obtain the most accurate, relevant and usable information. For instance, methods for eliciting both tacit and explicit knowledge about client requirements and spatial practices include observing (or taking part in) everyday activities in similar buildings, feedback on initial designs, interviews with end-users, workshops, walking tours of the client’s current facilities, formal evaluations of existing facilities, visits to precedent buildings, and reference to standard briefs and design guides. Diverse epistemological perspectives are also indicated by different attitudes towards the use of formal tools such as the Design Quality Indicator (DQI). And recognition of the potential impact of both the design of the consultation events and the prevailing state of stakeholder relations on the quality of information offered/gathered.

### 2.5.3 Relational work

The concept of relational work is used in a variety of ways in different contexts (Baym, 2015, Jindra et al., 2019) but here it is used to indicate the work involved in building and maintaining relationships between individuals and groups engaged in the briefing and design review process. This section draws on the literature to argue that relational work is a key component of the architectural briefing.
Barrett and Stanley’s large EPSRC and DETR funded grounded theory study proposed five key improvement areas in construction briefing; two major solution areas and three supporting issues (see Figure 2.8). Their two major solution areas can both be understood as requiring on-going relational work.

![Figure 2-8 Two major solution areas and three support issues](Barrett and Stanley, 1999, p. 18)

Cuff also highlights the importance of relationship work. In her ethnographic study of architectural practice she observes that building rapport supports good communication and argues that ‘rapport is not simply “established” at the outset, it must be maintained and strengthened throughout the period that participants work together’ (Cuff, 1992, p. 180).

Rapport has been described as ‘an interactive concept - more a verb than a noun’ that ‘is composed of three elements: mutual attentiveness, coordination, and positivity’ such that:

Both parties are focussed on the same objectives and attuned to a common mindset or mental frame; that the interaction is well-coordinated, flowing comfortably without awkwardness and involving mutual linguistic and non-verbal behaviours; and finally that both parties generally have positive feelings or attitudes toward one another (Brimbal et al., 2020, p. 151)
Brimbal et al note that in their field (investigative and intelligence interviewing) trust, unlike rapport, has only recently been the subject of research. However, they argue that ‘the key question should not be rapport or trust, but rather how can the synergy of rapport and trust be most effectively implemented in the effort to elicit reliable information from subjects’ (ibid., p. 163). While clearly architectural briefing is very different from investigative interviewing, the association observed by Brimbal et al between trust and rapport and the quality of information elicited is interesting in the context of this study.

Due to the adversarial nature of the construction industry, trust has long been recognised as important in the later stages of construction projects. However, Hudson et al argue that ‘a climate of trust’ is also necessary for effective communication in the early stages of architectural projects. They suggest that trust has the following 6 dimensions (Wood cited Hudson et al., 2006, p. 245):

1. Honesty/openness in communications – integrity in sharing information; no covert agendas
2. Promise keeping – never misleading by making false promises
3. Fairness/reasonableness – fair sharing of benefits; avoiding a blame culture
4. Mutuality/reciprocity – willingness to work beyond contractual obligation for mutual benefit
5. Values/ethics – the need for participants to demonstrate high ethical standards
6. Reputation – key to being trusted and in willingness to trust; has to be earned

Brimbal et al’s definition of trust includes both ‘the intention to accept vulnerability’ and ‘the maintenance of positive expectations with respect to the outcome’ (2020, p. 158). Trust in the construction industry has been categorised in a number of different ways (Gad and Shane, 2014) but there are three common themes: trust in competence/ability, trust in
motivation/integrity and trust in person/relationship. The literature also distinguishes between cognitive trust based on rational consideration of all available evidence and affective trust based on feelings about a person or organisation (ibid.).

Franck and von Sommaruga Howard argue that ‘the quality of the relationship between client and architect has a strong influence on the quality of the finished project’ (Franck and von Sommaruga Howard, 2010, p. 70). They suggest that a ‘good enough’ relationship is necessary to enable people to ‘talk through’ the many disagreements and misunderstandings that are likely to arise in any complex project. This study focusses on the relationships within the client organisation rather than between architects and clients, but I suggest that Franck et al’s comment applies to all professional relationships within the project situation.

2.6 Conditions of architectural briefing

In order to understand a particular phenomenon it is necessary to consider the conditions under which it occurs. This section gives a brief overview of three aspects of the project situation which are discussed in the literature on architectural briefing process: the structure of the construction industry, procurement, and client culture. The first two are beyond the scope of this study but the third will be discussed further in the following empirical chapters.

2.6.1 Construction industry

As an architect I am familiar with the structure of the UK construction industry so it seems quite unremarkable to me. However, the literature highlights a number of characteristic peculiarities. Cherns and Bryant conceptualise a construction project ‘as an engagement of parts of several separate and diverse organizations – client, consultants, contractors etc. – for the limited and finite purpose of bringing a building into being from inception to completion’. They argue that these temporary multi-organisations (TMOs) bring an additional level of complexity to the project dynamics (Cherns and
Bryant, 1984, p. 181). Each member of the team not only has to manage relationships within the project team but also with members of their own organisation who are not directly involved in the project. This is particularly true of the client which should not be regarded as ‘a unitary concept (like a person), but as a complex system of interest groups, some congruent and some competing’ (ibid.). As Cherns and Bryant point out, the temporary nature of the project team has implications for professional relationships, the management of risk and the potential for organisational learning.

Although in recent years several attempts have been made to change the way that building projects are delivered, the UK construction industry is still widely perceived to be fragmented and adversarial (Latham, 1994, Modernising construction, NAO, 2001, Construction Contracts and Law Report, RIBA, 2022). With the exception of some specialised areas, construction is also characterised by projects which are bespoke one-offs or too expensive to prototype, and which have such long programmes that opportunities to learn from user feedback are limited and circumstances may change before the project is complete. These distinctive characteristics limit the applicability of quality assurance processes developed in other industries.

2.6.2 Procurement methods
The RIBA Construction Contracts and Law Report 2022 includes the observation that ‘too many clients and contractors don’t properly understand how to develop a procurement and contract strategy aligned to their real aims and objectives’ and argues that ‘getting procurement right is the first step towards making a project both ethical and successful’ (ibid., p. 7). As noted in the previous section, the construction industry is still perceived to be adversarial and although an ‘ethos of “mutual trust and collaboration”’ is widely supported, a significant percentage of respondents to an RIBA survey reported that their collaboration was limited because ‘the parties involved have different aims and objectives’ (21%) or because there are ‘established divisions between different professionals’ (14%) (ibid., p.13).
Many researchers recommend that briefing should be seen as an on-going dynamic process and argue that ‘the exchange of tacit cultural knowledge’ takes time (Barrett et al., 2004, p. 584, Chandra and Loosemore, 2011b). However, lines of communication and the resources available to engage in consultation with the client organisation will be constrained by how the project is procured. The way that the construction contract allocates risk will also have an impact on the different parties’ openness to innovation and attitudes to variation instructions. Therefore, although procurement methods are outside the scope of this study, it is clear that in practice they have to be taken into account alongside the approach to briefing.

2.6.3 Culture of client organisation

Formal project structures and the governance of the client organisation also constitute the conditions under which briefing occurs. Degrees of change, participation and knowledge may all be informed by the client’s organisational culture and pre-existing governance structures as well as by project specific protocols. Aspects of client culture such as argumentation practices, whether power is centralised or devolved, attitudes to openness and transparency and mechanisms of accountability will impact on the briefing process. The impact of organisational culture on architectural briefing is discussed further in the following empirical chapters.

2.7 Divergent perspectives

There has been a general shift towards more qualitative research methods in construction research, but there still does not seem to be consensus on where the boundary to briefing should be drawn – on what should be considered integral to the briefing process and what should not. This section addresses three contested aspects of architectural briefing: briefing and design, briefing and time, and briefing and argumentation.

2.7.1 Briefing and design

Some scholars believe that defining the scope of a project and framing the problem to be solved are key aspects of design (Lawson, 1994, p. 4, Luck,
2007, p. 14), and therefore question whether briefing can be artificially separated from design (Bendixen and Koch, 2007). They argue that there is an ‘intimate connection between briefing and design, to the point that they become indistinguishable’ (Prasad foreword: Blyth and Worthington, 2010).

However, in their classic work *Problem Seeking*, Peña and Parshall claim that ‘programming precedes design, just as analysis precedes synthesis. The separation of the two is imperative and prevents trial-and-error design alternatives’ (Pena and Parshall, 2001 [1969], p. 20). This view is shared by Kamara et al who call for ‘solution-neutral' briefing and argue that ‘a solution-based approach tends to shift the focus from the requirements of the client to that of the designer(s)’ (Kamara et al., 2002, p. 30). Since *Problem Seeking* was first published in the 1960s, scholars have moved away from the idea that design is a process of analysis followed by synthesis, towards an understanding of design as an iterative process of conjecture and test (Hillier et al., 1972) ‘imaging, presenting, testing’ (Zeisel, 2006 [1981]), or ‘co-evolution of the problem and solution’ (Dorst and Cross, 2001). This idea of ‘the designer’s attention oscillating between the emerging requirement ideas and the developing provision ideas’ (Archer, 1979, p. 17) until the solution ‘satisfices’ (Simon, 1997 [1945], p. 119, Fellows, 2014) has been in circulation for a long time. However, architects are still being warned in RIBA publications against starting to design too early when ‘the problem to be solved is not defined clearly enough’ (Fletcher and Satchwell, 2015, p. 125).

This seems surprising given the potential benefits of ‘designerly thinking’ (Archer, 1979, p. 17) in addressing ‘wicked problems’ (Lawson, 1994, p. 4, Rittel and Webber, 1973, pp. 160-161). However, in practice this is not a binary question and the extent to which a project brief is defined prior to the start of design will, whether by accident or design, be a matter of degree. What is interesting in the context of this thesis, is how the degree of separation between briefing and design is agreed and managed, and how the client and building users engage in the iterative cycle of 'conjecture and test', 'image, present, test', or coevolution of the problem and solution.
As you might expect given my profession, I lean towards a definition of briefing that encompasses rather than excludes design. My position is that the challenge of translating social aims into spatial requirements is not value-free and the limited capacity of linear text to represent configurational and material qualities, combined with initial uncertainty about site capacity and the impact of site constraints, means that ‘by the time the brief is fully developed the design will also be largely formed’ (O'Reilly, 1987, p. 11). That the brief and the building design will keep step with each other as they co-evolve over the course of the project (Dorst and Cross, 2001). As the brief is progressively translated from words to diagrams and sketches, to 3D models and finally into a building, it becomes progressively less and less open to interpretation as the structural differences between the representations and what is being represented are reduced. The result, in my experience, is that client sign-off on design and construction drawings is interpreted by both parties as superseding the written brief (although of course it remains the architects’ responsibility to point out any significant
discrepancies). In this thesis references to the briefing process should be taken to mean ‘the briefing and design process’ – the position taken here, following Luck, Bendixen and Kock, is that briefing cannot be artificially separated from design.

2.7.2 Briefing and time
This section addresses two aspects of time in relation to architectural briefing: first, time during the briefing process and second, time during building use (both in the short term and in the longer term).

**Time during the briefing process** is closely related to the relationship between briefing and design, and different views on whether project requirements can be defined and fixed at the beginning of a project or whether they evolve and develop as the client and design team engage with the design process and learn more about possible problems and solutions. A central assumption in much of the literature is that changes to the brief should be avoided (Lavikka et al., 2019), and that the success of a building project can be judged by whether it meets the client requirements set at project inception. This position is supported by graphs illustrating the relative cost of changes as the project progresses and reference to programme delays, cost increases and litigation resulting from late changes. However, as indicated earlier, Barrett and Stanley argue that ‘briefing must be seen as a process not an event’. They observe that a brief constructed ‘quickly and efficiently at the start of a project’ can ‘feel like a cage’ to the client (Barrett and Stanley, 1999, p. 3).

Despite advice from academics and efforts by the profession to eliminate late changes to the brief (RIBA plan of work 2020), in practice project change orders are still being made and ‘very few projects are implemented without any change to the original scope of work’ (Othman Ayman et al., 2004, p. 251). Drawing on the work of Barrett and Stanley, Othman makes two key points to support his concept of Dynamic Brief Development. First, ‘client's ideas develop as the possibilities of a design unfold’ (ibid.) so fixing the brief early will limit ‘creative dialogue with the design team’ and second, ‘many
client organisations are in a state of dynamic change’ so their requirements are not fixed and may change during the course of the project. He argues that the project brief ‘has to be considered as a live document continually developing and adapting in an innovative manner to the influential internal and external drivers for the benefit of the project’ (Ibid., p. 257).

A number of scholars have attempted to develop a taxonomy of drivers for change in construction projects (Othman Ayman et al., 2004, Sun and Meng, 2009, Lavikka et al., 2019). This literature, suggests that drivers for change include changes in the external environment, changes in the client organisation, changes in contractual relationships, the discovery of unexpected project conditions, correction of errors or omissions and budget or programme over-runs, better understanding/communication of client or building user needs, and new awareness of project possibilities including alternative spatial practices and design options. Haug’s study of emergence patterns for project requirements (2015) was done with product designers but it also seems to apply to architectural briefing and he provides a finer grained examination of the drivers for change related to communication and design (see Table 2-8).

Table 2-8  Client design requirements: drivers for change

(Table summarising Haug, 2015, pp. 58-62)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reasons why the client's requirements are unknown</th>
<th>Aspect of the product that the client has not yet considered</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Aspect of the product that the client has not recognised the importance of communicating (assumed to be unimportant or self-evident)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Aspect of the product that the client falsely assumes to have been communicated (failure of communication by client or understanding by designer)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

65
The ancient Greek concept of kairos, the right, critical or opportune moment, is relevant to Haug’s research because in suggesting that there may be a right time for action, (in this case communicating certain kinds of information), it begins to explain why communication which is mistimed might be ‘taken the wrong way’ or fail to be taken in at all, either by the client or the designer.

In summary, nobody disputes that late changes can be expensive, cause delays and result in litigation if handled badly, but judging by the fact that they keep happening despite many decades of research and professional advice, two conclusions may be drawn. First, that changes can be difficult if not impossible to avoid and second, that ‘changes are often necessary and useful for the end-result of the project’ (Lavikka et al., 2019, p. 1959), that flexibility in response to changing conditions and growing understanding can
increase project value for clients. A project that overruns on programme and budget and fails to meet performance goals may still be considered successful by the client 'if it satisfies emergent requirements not understood during the initial briefing' (Thomson, 2011, p. 69).

**Time in use** Although design teams tend to focus on immediate goals, Duffy recommends thinking about architecture in a ‘time-laden way’. He argues that this helps designers to ‘avoid such classic mistakes such as solving a five minute problem with a fifty year solution, or vice versa’ (Duffy cited Brand, 1994, p. 17) and observes that ‘for us [DEGW] the unit of analysis isn’t the building, it’s the use of the building through time. Time is the essence of the real design problem’. There are two ways to think about time in relation to the ‘design problem’. The first concerns the interdependence of time and space in the present, and the second to changes in how the building is used over the longer term.

**Short term** The first idea is obvious when you stop to think about it but it can be overlooked. Space and time are interdependent, space requirements depend on how use will be organised over time, or to look at things the other way around, use over time will depend on space provision. For instance, the answer to the question ‘how big does the refectory need to be?’ depends (among other things) on opening times and teaching timetables. Similarly, the adequacy of escalators may depend on whether teaching and research programmes require everyone to arrive or leave at the same time.

**Longer term** Although architects have been interested in the concept of flexibility, adaptability and 'loose fit' buildings for many years, Duffy is one of the few architects to have given the question of change over time serious thought and his classic conception of buildings as composed of layers with different rates of change: a 50 year Shell, 15 year services, 5 year Scenery and Sets (which change every day) has been widely influential (Duffy, 1990, p. 17). Brand has since argued that Duffy’s four layers should be expanded to six: Site, Structure, Skin, Services, Space plan, and Stuff and speculated about including 'souls' (Brand, 1994, pp. 13 & 17). The focus here is on how
clients and building users talk about the social agency of architecture so rather than Brand’s speculative category of ‘souls’ which highlights the individuality of building users, it might be more helpful to assume that the non-material layers to be taken into account in architectural briefing are ‘systems’ and ‘staff’. The term ‘staff’ rather than ‘souls’ focusses attention on building users’ organisational position, identity and role, on the sociology rather than psychology of buildings.

2.7.3 Briefing and argumentation
The literature on architectural briefing covers a range of positions on conflict, with some scholars viewing it as potentially beneficial and others regarding it as something to be avoided or resolved as quickly as possible. Chandra and Loosemore note that constructive conflict has long been recognised as an important aspect of architectural briefing and suggest that its role ‘in encouraging axiomatic knowledge exchange is central to its success’ (Chandra and Loosemore, 2011a, p. 229). In their case study on a new hospital project they observed that axiomatic knowledge (the ‘why’ of spatial practices) is rarely exchanged and was mainly used ‘as a tool by clinicians to persuade others of their needs’ (ibid.). They noted that ‘the sharing of axiomatic knowledge seemed to require a trigger (such as a conflict) which would encourage people to invest time in more deeply discussing an issue’ (ibid.).

Other researchers assume that the briefing process needs to start with an agreed definition of value (Thyssen et al., 2010, Thomson et al., 2003) and argue that the aim should be to ‘develop a common understanding of the design problem, identify explicitly the design objectives, and synthesize a group consensus about the comparative merits of alternative courses of action’ (Green, 1994, p. 51). Checkland and Scholes take a more pragmatic view and observe that in projects with diverse stakeholders it may not be possible to reach a genuine consensus. They suggest that it is more realistic to aim for a plan of action ‘in which the conflicts endemic in human affairs are still there, but are subsumed in an accommodation which different parties are prepared to “go along with”’(Checkland and Scholes, 1990, p. 29).
Technical rationality (the rigorous use of scientific methods and techniques) is of little help in making these kinds of value judgements (Simon, 1997 [1945], Schön, 1991 [1983], Checkland and Scholes, 1990). Drawing on Flyvbjerg, Cairns argues that phronesis (Aristotle’s concept of practical wisdom) is likely to be more helpful and calls for a ‘value-rationality’ that ‘questions the purpose and motivations of decision-makers, the desirability or otherwise of the likely outcomes of the project, who the likely winners and losers are from it, and what, if anything, should be done to change its direction’ (Cairns, 2008, p. 283). These kinds of question cannot be addressed without making problematic issues explicit and accepting ‘that different stakeholder groups will hold to different rationalities, underpinned by different beliefs and value systems derived of their own contextual ethical frameworks’ (ibid., p. 287).

Geraldi et al describe the complexity of projects and identify ‘5 dimensions of complexity - structural, uncertainty, dynamics, pace and socio-political complexity’ (Geraldi et al., 2011, p. 966). It is now widely recognised that clients, building users and other stakeholders may have diverse world-views and perspectives on the problematic situation but although this ‘socio-political’ complexity is acknowledged in the literature, few scholars focus on the microethics of practice (Komesaroff, 1995), argumentation and the way these different perspectives are addressed as clients and building users engage with the briefing and design process.

The extensive literature on argumentation is referred to in more detail in the discussion chapter, but it is drawn on it briefly here to orientate the reader to the account of the UCL East briefing process given in the following chapters. If you accept that most projects will have multiple stakeholders with different perspectives on the problematic situation, then it is clear that there will be scope for argumentation about the best course of action. This has long been recognised, ‘when we discuss the people, their behaviour, and their purpose in relation to the built environment we are bound to engage in conflicts which is the very stuff of design decisions’ (Sanoff, 1977, p. 1). This thesis explores client and building user argumentation and rhetoric in the briefing and design
review process but it challenges the negative connotations of these terms and does not equate argumentation with either conflict or disagreement. Billig sees argument not as a quarrel or fight but as ‘the root of thought’. Likewise, he describes rhetoric as dialogue ‘that pushes speakers into new realms of talk and thought’ rather than as a competition of wits or empty technique (Billig, 1996, pp. 27-28). From this perspective argumentation is an externalised form of thinking which drives creativity and innovation. In adopting Billig’s position on the potential benefits of argumentation, it is also necessary to make clear that the use of the term argumentation is not intended to suggest ‘those properties of human activity by which humans most resemble machines or Weberian bureaucrats: rule-based deliberation based on formal logic’ (Flyvbjerg, 2001, p. 22). On the contrary, emotion is seen as playing a key role in focussing attention and guiding judgement (Simon, 1983, p. 28). Toulmin’s classic study moved thinking about argumentation away from formal logic towards a study of how arguments are used in practice and how ‘in everyday life we actually assess the soundness, strength and conclusiveness of arguments’ (Toulmin, 2003 [1958], p. 2). This study of briefing as a situated practice, draws on Toulmin’s work on the uses of argumentation and his insight that argument is context dependent (van Eemeren et al., 2014). The final reference point is Potter’s work on representing reality (Potter, 1996) which suggests that descriptions are not neutral representations of the world as it exists ‘out there’ but are social constructions used as building blocks for arguments that may be explicit or tacit, contested or uncontested.

2.8 Summary

This chapter has drawn on the literature to argue that architectural briefing varies in a number of dimensions, encompasses different components and takes place under different conditions. This supports the view that there is no one-size-fits all approach – that the nature of the architectural briefing process must be tailored to fit the project situation which includes the project, the client, and the design team. It also identified three areas of ongoing disagreement in the literature about how briefing should be done: the
relationship between briefing and design, the relationship between briefing and time, and the relationship between briefing and argumentation.

Argumentation has been discussed in relation to design (e.g. Rittel and Webber, 1973, Fleming, 1998, Stumpf and McDonnell, 2002) but this literature review suggests that informal client and building user argumentation and rhetoric are under-researched aspects of architectural briefing. It locates the research question ‘how do clients and end-users engage in the briefing and design process during the early stages of architectural projects (RIBA Stages 1-3)?’ within an exploratory design process conceptualised as conjecture and test (Hillier et al., 1972), image present, test (Zeisel, 2006 [1981]) or coevolution of problem and solution (Dorst and Cross, 2001). And also draws on the literature to frame the practice of architectural briefing as a situated value laden task (Paton and Dorst, 2011) and a social accomplishment (Luck, 2009, p. 24). By identifying the number of potential stakeholders with different views, priorities and interests, and by suggesting the many ways in which things could be done differently, this review points to the potential significance of argumentation in making decisions about what action to take.
Chapter 3 Research design and methodology

3.1 Introduction

My motivation for undertaking this study was a growing curiosity about the experience of clients and end-users associated with building projects, I wanted to understand how they engaged with the briefing and design process. Working on the early stages of architectural projects, I had glimpsed moments when clients and the design team came together in a creative exploration which encompassed both the client organisation and the developing building design. I experienced these moments as powerful and felt that they had something to teach us about how, as members of institutions (of all kinds: family, organisation, government), we use space to manage our experience of the world, and how we relate to each other. However, my gut feeling that architectural briefing was not a dull and dusty checklist exercise but, on the contrary, offered a unique and fascinating opportunity to look into the black box of architectural design and question its social agency was just a starting point – it was still necessary to work out how it could be researched.

Guidance on research methods identifies two contrasting approaches to social science research. In the first, it is necessary to finalise your research design before starting an investigation to ensure rigour and maintain consistency. In the second, it is considered acceptable, and even necessary, to allow your research design to evolve in response to unexpected or surprising findings. The first approach is often associated with quantitative research while the second is more common in qualitative research. It seemed clear to me that architectural briefing, or at least the social aspect of it I wanted to investigate, was not researchable with reductive, quantitative methods. I was interested in questions of meaning and interpretation at the intersection of two complex social processes; organisational change and architectural design, so I was naturally drawn to a more ethnographic approach which could address architectural briefing as a social, situated and value laden practice.
Blyth and Worthington observe that in the 1950s ‘The strong sociological and socialist rhetoric of the predominantly public-sector culture led the [architectural] profession to search for method in design and a rationale for brief-making’ (2010, p. xv). Although attitudes to briefing and design have changed significantly since the 1950s and there is a growing interest in qualitative methods in construction research, some academic and good practice advice stills seems influenced by this positivist legacy and fails to take full advantage of the ‘interpretive turn’ in the social sciences. The construction industry, like the world of STEM laboratories investigated by Latour and other STS scholars, can seem so hard-nosed, rational and objective that it is easy to miss the extent to which the ‘facts’ of the situation are socially constructed and could be different.

Reflecting on how to begin my research, I took the pragmatic view that the best way to learn how to do something is to start doing it and, bolstered by books on qualitative research methods which justified an emergent research design, I began work on two pilot projects – a deep retrofit of an architecture school and a new-build care home.

This chapter, gives a brief account of these pilot studies and how they informed the research design for an exploratory case study – the briefing process for a new university campus. It then outlines the ‘theory/methods package’ (Clarke and Star, 2008, p. 117) selected for this study: epistemology (pragmatism), theoretical perspective (interpretive), methodology (Situational Analysis) and research methods (interviews, non-participant observations and document analysis) (Crotty, 1998, p. 4). The following section reflects on three research issues: my position as a researcher, my approach to research ethics and the scale of inquiry. The final four sections cover the data generation and data analysis for the principal case study and a short summary. O’Reilly (1987, p. 11) argues that ‘by the time the brief is fully developed the design will also be largely formed’ and I suspected that, likewise, by the time my research design was fully developed my research would also be largely complete.
3.2 Pilot studies

The pilot studies, a new build elderly care campus and the deep retrofit of an architecture school were both convenience samples but as medium scale projects for institutions seeking organisational change they promised to be a rich source of data. I was granted research access through personal contacts and began to observe briefing workshops and interview participants from each client organisation.

Good practice guidance indicates that the purpose of briefing is to reach a common understanding about the purpose of the proposed new building, how it will be used, and the material, technological and spatial qualities necessary to support the patterns of behaviour needed or desired by the client – the anticipated spatial practices of the occupants. However, in the initial observations of briefing workshops, I saw that building users did not always agree about the answers to these kinds of question. For instance, in an early meeting for the first pilot study project, a care campus, I observed a difference of opinion about how the design should accommodate the needs of elderly residents with severe dementia “people who are not like you”\textsuperscript{2}. There was a clear value conflict between staff with a deeply held conviction that all residents had a right to a “meaningful life”\textsuperscript{2} and should not be socially segregated (however mentally impaired), and managers responsible for the financial viability of the home who were concerned that the visible presence of people with severe dementia could frighten away potential residents who would “not want to be reminded of what the future might hold for them in 5 or 10 years time”.\textsuperscript{2}

The second pilot study project, an architecture school, was described by staff as a place of “ambush, sabotage and secrecy”\textsuperscript{3} and “intensely political”\textsuperscript{4}.

\textsuperscript{2} Care home briefing workshop, 24.04.2014. In this thesis quotations from case study interviews, observations and project documents, are referenced in footnotes and printed in blue to distinguish them from academic quotations which are referenced in-text and listed in the bibliography. Quotations from the grey literature are also referenced in the footnotes but are printed in black.
\textsuperscript{3} Director of Bartlett School of Architecture, Welcome SSS10, 2015
\textsuperscript{4} Senior academic Bartlett Faculty of the Built Environment, Interview 14.05.2015
During interviews I heard opposing views on the architect’s proposals to make the design studios semi-open plan and visible from a simplified circulation route. It was reported that some studio tutors feared that “their creativity would be lost with their secret rooms”\(^5\), while a key stakeholder welcomed the informal oversight that would be enabled by the new layouts as a defence against “Stockholm Syndrome”\(^4\) among the students.

These preliminary observations drew my attention to two things. First, design problems do not have a single optimal solution (Lawson, 1994, p. 5) – what suits one group of users or clients may not suit another. And second architecture is not culturally neutral, ‘space is never simply the inert background of our material existence. It is a key aspect of how our social and cultural worlds are constituted’ (Hillier, 1993, p. 11). The building users I observed during these pilot studies debated the affordances and constraints of the proposed architectural layouts in terms of their potential to reinforce or undermine fundamental institutional values relating to creativity and pedagogy, inclusion and philosophy of care.

Reflection on these pilot studies suggested that communication in the briefing workshops was not neutral, and that the ‘facts’ presented were (like the data in qualitative research), ‘far from being raw’ (Dreyfus cited Strübing, 2007, p. 582). What I mean by this is that when the building users provided information to the design team they appeared to be, either tacitly or explicitly, making a case for a preferred design solution. For example, when IT staff were asked how they wanted to provide teaching, training and support in the refurbished architecture school, the information they presented constituted several different kinds of argument in support of re-provision of computer clusters.

These arguments ranged from reference to the students, (what Clarke et al. 2018 describe as ‘implicated actors’) “one day I went into the studio room and I asked a couple of students and I said do you want a computer in here

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\(^{5}\) Senior UCL Estates project manager, Interview 27.10.2014
and they said no we want a computer area like we have in the cluster room”, reference to current usage “if you go upstairs now [to the computer cluster] on the second floor it is chock-a-block” and an imagined future scenario of computer use in the design studios “will it restrict you? because you will have materials around you and then accidentally dropping it on the keyboard…”

The alternatives to computer cluster rooms being considered were mobile laptop trolleys or students using their own laptops. In discussing this reaction from IT staff, one participant suggested that the loss of a dedicated computer teaching room could be interpreted as a threat to the professional identity and status of the IT staff – that this potential loss of territory could be taken as evidence that their contribution to the education of the architecture students was being undervalued by the institution.

Doing these pilot studies clarified several things for me. First, I was interested in real-world practice so my research approach should be ethnographic and abductive. Second, I should focus on clients and building users rather than architects because they were more knowledgeable and engaged in the questions about spatial practices and organisational culture that I wanted to explore. And third, I should pay attention to what was being done in the meetings and briefing workshops – the social function of descriptions, accounts and predictions given by clients and building users and the relational work aimed at developing their trust and confidence.

In both pilot studies building users recognised that significant social goods or institutional values were at stake and were prompted to defend their vision of the future. This suggested that a study of the situated argumentation deployed in briefing workshops might reveal something interesting about both how client and building users perceive, interpret and instrumentalise architectural space and about the nature of the briefing process itself. My intention here is to investigate what people think architecture does and how this informs their engagement in briefing workshops. This is a study of briefing, not campus design, so what architecture actually does is beyond the

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8 User group workshop with architects on 22 Gordon Street, 26.02.2014
scope of this study. However, as suggested by the Thomas’ Theorem, ‘if men define situations as real, they are real in their consequences’: what clients and building users think architecture does is likely to have a real and significant impact on briefing and design outcomes.

3.3 Research design

Yin recommends case studies as an appropriate method to investigate ‘a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident’ (Yin, 2003, p. 13). My research question is ‘how do clients and end-users engage in the briefing and design process during the early stages of architectural projects (RIBA Stages 1-3)?’. The boundaries between the phenomenon of client and end user engagement and its context are difficult to discern so, following Yin, a case study seems an appropriate research method. The aim here is to use the study of a particular case, the UCL East Campus project, to investigate the wider phenomenon of client and end user engagement, so this research is a form of ‘instrumental case study’ (Stake, 1995, p. 3). This section gives a brief account of each element of the theory/methods package used in this study to situate the accounts given in the following chapters and demonstrate that the research design is internally consistent.

3.3.1 Epistemology: Pragmatism

There are several aspects of pragmatism that make it an appropriate research paradigm for this study of architectural briefing. First, ‘It helps you stop asking the unhelpful questions’ (Rorty cited Bryant, 2017, p. 335) by focussing on human experience rather than the nature of reality (Morgan, 2014, p. 1047). Second it emphasises the ‘interaction of beliefs and actions […] knowledge is not about an abstract relationship between the knower and the known; instead there is an active process of inquiry that creates a continual back-and-forth movement between beliefs and actions’ (ibid., p. 1049). Third, ‘actions cannot be separated from the situations and contexts in which they occur’ (Morgan cited Kaushik and Walsh, 2019, p. 3). Fourth, pragmatism recognises that both actions and beliefs are informed by social
experience – that ‘actions depend on world views that are socially shared sets of beliefs’ and ‘all knowledge is social knowledge’ (ibid.). Consequently there is no such thing as a view from nowhere (Bryant, 2017, p. 338). And finally, although in pragmatism knowledge is understood to be provisional and socially constructed it avoids the pitfalls of an ‘uneasy relativism’ in which ‘every claim to knowledge is upheld as equally valid’ by offering a means to judge beliefs and actions – through their consequences, their usefulness (ibid., p. 340) - ‘the world does not tolerate all understandings of it equally’ (Silverman, 2017, p. 389).

3.3.2 Theoretical perspective: Interpretive

This research is interpretive. Interpretive research is often defined in contrast to positivist research, as in the following extract:

> It is not concerned with providing parsimonious explanations for purposes of prediction or with uncovering “causal mechanisms” that generalize across sites or populations. Nor does it test hypotheses deduced from general theory, because the knowledge it seeks is not law-like generalizations. (Schwartz-Shea and Yanow, 2020, p. 7)

Writing in support of an interpretive perspective in construction management research, Seymour et al question the use of instrumental rationality when studying human systems. They recommend that research should be ‘primarily concerned with meaning rather than causality’ and produce ‘an account that recognizes the respective viewpoints of practitioners in the process’ (Seymour et al., 1997, p. 118). Seymour and Rooke also draw on Blumer to argue that research based on ‘variable analysis [...] is inadequate for the understanding of social processes’ (1995, p. 6) and make two key points both arising from the observation that social processes are situated in specific social conditions: first ‘a process of interpretation intervenes between the independent and dependent variables’ and second ‘the need for clear-cut, unitary definitions of variables leads to an oversimplification of complex phenomena’ (ibid.).
The argument that in human systems, interpretation and intention always lie between stimulus and response, action and reaction is convincing and relevant to the topic of architectural briefing. As is the suggestion that a positivist approach to research into situated social processes calls for a difficult choice between oversimplification and a combinatorial explosion of variables. I took the view that an interpretive approach aimed at verstehen (empathetic understanding) rather than prediction was better suited to a study of architectural briefing, a social process characterised by complexity and a multiplicity of perspectives.

3.3.3 Methodology: Situational Analysis

My original choice of methodology was constructivist grounded theory (GT) (Charmaz, 2014). However, following the pilot studies and reflection on the significance of the material world, of pre-existing discourses and the interconnections between different types of element across different scales from micro to macro, I concluded that the focus of GT would be too narrow to fully take into account the situated character of architectural briefing. Situational Analysis (Clarke et al 2018) is a relatively new approach to qualitative research (regarded as an extension to Straussian and constructivist GT) in which the unit of analysis is ‘the situation’ rather than a ‘basic social process’.

Situational analysis (SA) is explicitly designed to include the analysis of discursive materials (both textual and visual) and other non-human actors in the situation. It enables researchers to ‘grapple with power in both its more solid and fluid forms’ (Clarke et al 2018, p. xxv) and encourages researchers to pay attention to what is missing from a situation as well as to what is present. Clarke et al draw on work by Foucault, Science and Technology Studies scholars, and Deleuze and Guattari to explore relationality and the complex ecologies of social situations. They recognise that life is messy and do not aim to reduce it to simple commonalities (Clarke et al 2018, pp. 13 & 38).
SA shares many of the research practices of Constructivist GT including concurrent data generation and analysis, theoretical sampling, sensitising concepts and memo-writing. It also shares assumptions about ‘the researcher’s subjectivity and participation in co-constructing the data with participants’ and the importance of researcher reflexivity (Clarke and Charmaz, 2019, p. 7). However, the principal research tool in SA is data mapping rather than data coding.

SA offers 3 different types of map to use as tools in analysing the situation of inquiry. Situational maps layout the major human, nonhuman, discursive, historical, symbolic, cultural, political and other elements of the situation. Social worlds/arenas maps lay out collective actors and their arenas of commitment – organizational and institutional dimensions. Positional maps lay out major positions taken, and not taken, in the situation vis-à-vis particular contested or controversial issues (Clarke and Charmaz, 2019, p. 32). I did not use positional maps\(^7\) in this study although in focusing on argumentation I did consider the positions adopted by different internal stakeholders.

I chose SA as my research methodology because it offers graphic tools to analyse relations within complex situations (which can be difficult to represent in linear, sequential text), because it resonates with my experience of architectural briefing as a value-laden task in which the material world, human relationships and pre-existing discourses all play a part, and because

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\(^7\) Clarke et al 2018 propose that positional maps are used to ‘lay out the major positions taken and not taken’ in relation to issues of concern or controversy in the situation of inquiry (positions are emphatically not linked to specific individuals or groups). Positional maps are expressed in the form of a coordinate grid with an x axis and a y axis. I considered a number of possible axes for positional maps including Bernstein’s classification and framing in education, and open plan or enclosed space, professional/expert led and academic/user led design, adaptable/generic/shared space and configured/specialist/‘owned’ space but although this process raised some interesting questions in relation to potential links between project governance, pedagogy, spatial practices, and building design, I did not find the positional map format particularly helpful in addressing them.
(like Constructivist GT) it recognises ‘meaning as constructed, situated, negotiated” (Charmaz, 2011, p. 297).

3.3.4 Methods: Interviews, observations, document analysis
My research methods are interviews, non-participant observation and analysis of project documents. These are the standard tools for qualitative research but there are contrasting views on whether they should be used together. Yin (2003, p. 97) argues that ‘… a major strength of case study data collection is the opportunity to use many different sources of evidence’ while Silver is dubious about ‘mixed methods’ and suggests that the concept of ‘triangulation’ is highly problematic in qualitative research (Silverman, 2017, p. 294). From Silverman’s constructionist point of view, it does not make sense to try and compare data from different sources. He argues that social reality is ‘constructed in different ways in different contexts’, so ‘you cannot appeal to a single “phenomenon” which all your data apparently represents’ (ibid., p. 209).

It is understandable that Silverman would resist claims that triangulation produces ‘a definitive version of reality’ but it seems overly restrictive to look at only one way of ‘constructing reality’. It may be more messy and time consuming to use different methods of data generation but tensions and correspondences between different versions of a phenomenon are characteristic of most real world situations so it makes sense to consider these variations as a topic rather than a problem to be avoided. This approach is consistent with SA methodology. In SA it is assumed that the situation of inquiry will include a range of different actors including material artefacts and technologies, individuals and documents – so different methods are required to generate data on the different kinds of actors, and using ‘a wide range of data sources’ is encouraged (Clarke et al., 2022, p. 20). In SA as in GT ‘the beauty of the method lies in its “everything-is-data characteristic”’ (Stern, 2007, p. 115).

Prior notes that ‘documents are ordinarily positioned to fulfil a dual role; for they appear as both receptacles of content, and as active agents in networks
of action’ (2008, p. 822). He criticises Glaser and Strauss for being ‘blind to the suggestion that documents might ever do things as well as contain things’ (ibid.). My approach to project documents and transcripts of interviews and meetings is to adopt Prior’s position: I do not treat them either just as containers of ‘evidence’ about the situation, or just as ‘active agents in episodes of interaction and schemes of organisation’ (ibid., p. 824) but pay attention to both possibilities. I take the view that discourse is always about ‘saying, doing and being’ something (Gee, 2014, p. 2), that social interactions are designed to communicate information, for a particular purpose and from a specific identity position. I am also interested in the relationship between the way stakeholders speak and the social situation or ‘speech event’ (Hymes, 1972, p. 60) in which they are speaking, (for instance a presentation, briefing workshop or governance meeting), in how ways of speaking and speech events co-constitute each other (Gee, 2014 p. 33).

3.4 Reflection on research issues

This section reflects on three issues I deliberated on when developing the research design: my position as a researcher, my approach to research ethics and the scale of inquiry.

3.4.1 Ambiguous insider/outsider position

The relative value of insider (emic) versus outsider (etic) research has been much discussed – are insiders, like fish, unable to see the water they swim in? are outsiders never going to be able to fully understand a world they were not born into or experiences they have not lived? Each position is seen to have both costs and benefits. However, several writers (Dwyer and Buckle 2009, Kerstetter 2012, Kerr et al 2019) have now problematised the insider/outsider binary. In his guidance on researching your own institution, Trowler points out that “insiderness” is not a fixed value: you may be researching aspects of the institution previously unknown to you, collecting data from strangers, and what counts as ‘inside’ also depends on your own identity positioning’ (Trowler, 2011).
I am a post-graduate research student at UCL and both my supervisors were closely involved in the early stages of the UCL East campus project. I am also an architect, so I am familiar with RIBA work stages and typical design team protocols. However, I am clearly not participating in the consultation or strategic decision-making process for UCL East and when I started this research I had no understanding of what happens ‘under the bonnet’ of a university, of how a university is run at a strategic or operational level. My insider/outsider position is therefore ambiguous.

Clearly there are potential advantages and disadvantages to this position, on the one hand I was granted research access to a fascinating project and I benefited from the guidance of supervisors with direct experience of my case study project. As an architect, I also start with an understanding of the ‘normal’ trajectory of building projects. On the other hand, could my gratitude for research access and respect for my supervisors influence my research process? Could my socialisation as an architect lead me to take for granted aspects of the situation which should be problematised? In response to these questions, I have endeavoured to mitigate any potential disadvantages by reflecting on my own biases and preconceptions and by seeking to defamiliarize the briefing process.

### 3.4.2 Ethics

As this study involved human participants I was required to apply for and was granted UCL Research Ethics Committee approval. The British Educational Research Association guidance (BERA, 2018, p. 21) observes that the ‘confidential and anonymous treatment of participants’ data is considered the norm for the conduct of research’. However, it acknowledges that ‘anonymity may not be possible in some contexts and cases’ and I made it clear in the information sheet and consent form that although I proposed to anonymise individuals:

You [Participants] should be aware that as the study will include an analysis of project drawings and refer to specific roles it may be possible for people familiar with the project to identify the contribution of individuals.
As my research progressed, it became clear that any attempt to anonymise the UCL East project would be unsuccessful due to my use of visual material, the level of contextual detail required to adequately situate the briefing process, and both my own and my supervisors’ affiliation with the university. As I had been transparent with participants that it would not be possible to guarantee full anonymity I decided, after some deliberation, that identifying UCL in my thesis was both necessary and defensible.

My approach to obtaining consent depended on the situation. I gave all interviewees a copy of my information sheet, and offered to answer any questions before they signed the consent form. I also circulated a brief description of my research to attendees of key meetings. However, it was not always possible to predict in advance who would attend a meeting or event, so I made a case-by-case judgement as to whether it was acceptable to request verbal consent on the day. In general, I did not seek written consent from people peripherally involved in the research process. My justification for this approach was that ‘undue emphasis upon technical agreements may move the entire research process away from a voluntary, cooperative ethos, perhaps to the detriment of the research’ (Oliver, 2010, p. 31). I also took the view that as my research methods are naturalistic ‘the research presents no more than minimal risk of harm to participants and involves no procedures for which written consent is normally required outside the research context’ (UCL REC Guidelines 2017). When I attended public meetings to gather background material for my research, I usually requested permission from the host of the event but not from other attendees.

My approach was informed by Carpenter’s advice that ethical research should be ‘less about the research ethics review as a one-off event and more thinking about research ethics as a life lived’ (Albary, 2021). Carpenter referenced MacFarlane’s reaction to the ‘capture’ of research ethics by the bio-medical sciences and his recommendation that an alternative model based on Aristotle’s virtue ethics would be ‘better suited to the values and aspirations of qualitative researchers’ (MacFarlane, 2010, p. 18). MacFarlane suggests that there are ‘personal values and virtues that are
central to being a “good” researcher’ (ibid., p. 22) and observes that these include courage, respectfulness, resoluteness (or perseverance), sincerity (or honesty) and humility (and reflexivity) (ibid., pp. 24-25). He argues that ‘getting better at handling ethical issues’ and responding to the unexpected ‘comes with practice, experience and learning from the good (and bad) example of others’ (ibid., p. 25). This resonates with my experience of striving to be a ‘good’ researcher.

3.4.3 Scale of research

Scholars writing about case study research (Stake, 1995, Yin, 2003, Flyvbjerg, 2006) suggest that there are many ways of defining a case and that selecting, and delimiting a case is not a straightforward task. In a paper calling for ‘theoretical propositions which link physical and spatial forms to social outcomes at the design level’, Hillier provides a practical definition of what he means by ‘design level’ – that is the level of resolution at which ‘built environment professionals typically intervene in the built environment’ (Hillier, 2008, p. 218). I recognise that this is a normative definition but nonetheless I find it a useful starting point. However, for the purposes of this study, it is necessary to exclude urban planners from the built environment professionals in question. Having framed briefing and design as a social, collaborative (Bucciarelli, 1988, p. 160, McDonnell and Lloyd, 2009, p. 1) and value-laden, situated practice (Paton and Dorst, 2011, p. 574) the design level is the natural scale for this research. Although my pilot studies and professional experience suggest that the briefing and design process is influenced by both macro social conditions, and micro level interactions between individuals, it is at the meso level of the commissioning organisation or institution, the design level, that most of the social action relevant to this study in takes place.

However, as Clarke et al point out the situation is ‘elastic – capable of stretching broadly and inclusively or narrowing down to focus more closely’ (Clarke et al., 2018, p. 117). They offer two pieces of advice on constructing the situation of inquiry: first they recommend starting with ‘the big picture – the broader situation of interest’ and second, when deciding whether or not
something should be included they recommend asking ‘whether it seems to
matter – make a serious difference - in the situation’ (ibid.). They see
clarifying the boundaries of the situation as an outcome of research, as an
emergent rather than predetermined frame. This is significant because
‘boundaries are necessary for the creation of meaning and, for that very
reason, they are never innocent’ (Suchman, 2007, p. 285).

3.5 Data generation

3.5.1 Case study selection
My original intention was to do a number of medium sized case studies but
following completion of the pilot studies, I was offered the opportunity to
observe the early stages of planning for a new UCL campus in Stratford, east
London. The new campus represents the largest expansion of the university
since it was founded in 1826 and forms part of the East Bank development
on the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park. The London Legacy Development
Corporation (LLDC) plan for the cultural and educational district on the East
Bank has been described as ‘the most ambitious scheme of its kind since the
great exhibition gave rise to all the Kensington museums in 1851’ and is
intended to contribute to the wider cultural and economic regeneration of east
London. In reviewing the literature on briefing, I had noted that much of the
empirical research was either retrospective or based on project simulations
so the chance to research Phase 1 of the new campus project as it happened
seemed too good an opportunity to miss. Regardless of its intrinsic interest, I
judged this project to be suitable for an instrumental case study on the
briefing process because it met the following criteria:

- Timing: RIBA stages 1 to 3
- Complexity: Stakeholders with different roles and responsibilities
- Organisational change: Client seeking some degree of change

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8 Simons, Deputy Mayor Creative and Culture Industries in UCL Our new campus
on Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park video on Youtube posted 23.07.2019
• Consultation process: Client committed to an extensive end user consultation process

The stated aims of the UCL East Campus to provide ‘a model for the university campus of the future, open, dynamic and breaking the conventional barriers between research, education, innovation, public engagement and collaboration’\(^9\) and the fact that it would accommodate diverse programmes ‘from architectural design to robotics, media to art and technology, heritage to engineering and advanced propulsion’\(^10\) both indicated that it was likely to be a rich source of data on client and building user engagement in the briefing and design process. Cultural change which calls into question existing organisational practices, and consultation which includes people with a diverse range of experience and thinking styles, are both likely to create the conditions in which people are prompted to put tacit beliefs and spatial practices into words in an effort to bring their knowledge and experience to the table.

3.5.2 Research access

I was given informal permission to attend the initial master planning meetings for UCL East as a non-participant observer in late 2014 and when the Provost took on the role of project sponsor in 2016, my supervisor approached him on my behalf to request formal approval for research access. In support of this request, he noted that I was unobtrusive as a ‘fly on the wall’ observer and that once people knew who I was and what I was doing they seemed unaffected by my presence. The Provost replied that he was happy to grant this request but suggested that we should meet before I started my research. We arranged to meet in his office. This turned out to be located not far from the Jeremy Bentham auto-icon and behind a large wood panelled door flanked by two stone Koptos lions. Thankfully, the Provost proved a gracious host. He invited me to sit down on one of the easy chairs in his large elegant office and chatted easily with me about the

\(^9\) UCL East Business Case, 2014
\(^10\) UCL Comms [https://www.ucl.ac.uk/ucl-east/study-and-research](https://www.ucl.ac.uk/ucl-east/study-and-research) accessed 3.02.2023
new campus project. I left feeling relieved that although I had probably just been informally vetted, I could proceed with my research without fear of objections from the UCL management team. Being able to say that the Provost had granted me research access proved helpful when I went on to request interviews with other participants. I sensed that confirming this point eased people’s concerns that they might be seen to be talking out of turn if they agreed to be interviewed. I recognise that my approach of starting at the top of the project organogram and working my way down to the operational level may have affected what people felt able to say. However, I suggest that without this key insider support it would not have been possible to gain research access to this fascinating and significant project.

Although I intended to use ethnographic research methods, as a part time doctoral researcher (working in architectural practice 4 days a week) it was not possible to immerse myself in the field or shadow key members of the UCL East Team (Czarniawska-Jörges, 2007). Even if this had been possible, I would not have been able to observe all the critical project conversations because they took place in different locations, between different people and were often unplanned or concurrent. I decided to focus on observing meetings and key workshops or events. I made this decision in part for practical reasons because these kinds of project activity are time-tabled in advance so I could arrange to attend, but also because they are designed specifically to bring different groups of people together, to receive or communicate key project information, to report on what has happened between meetings and to plan next steps.

As well as being constrained by my own circumstances, access was sometimes limited by concerns about commercial or political sensitivity. For instance, it was not possible for me to observe the tender interviews where the design teams were selected for Marshgate and Pool Street. I was also told that ‘there was a certain amount of twitchiness’¹¹ about my presence in some forums not because of what I might hear but rather due to concerns

¹¹ Senior UCL Estates project manager, interview 4.07.2016
that people might be inhibited in what they could say. For these reasons, I had to accept that my data would inevitably be partial but I attempted to mitigate these limitations by using project documents and interviews with key stakeholders to fill in some of the gaps in my understanding and by attending a wide a range of events including governance meetings, user group briefing workshops, critical friends meetings, design team presentations, and planning committee meetings.

Despite the ‘twitchiness’ noted above, my presence was rarely questioned and I was made welcome at numerous diverse events. Although my research was constrained by other commitments, a common experience which is now being acknowledged (and defended) under the umbrella term of Patchwork Ethnography, there were some advantages to working as a part-time doctoral researcher. First, it meant that I could spread out my research activities over a longer period of time and continue to study the project from early concept meetings to planning approval. This enabled me to get a sense of the briefing and design review process over time rather than just taking a snapshot view. Second, studying part-time enabled me to keep in touch with a practice perspective and use my ongoing experience at work as a resource for comparison and reflection.

3.5.3 Programme of research
The observations of the UCL East project were carried out in three distinct phases (with some overlap). First, I attended a number of early concept meetings as a non-participant observer in late 2014 and 2015. Second, once research access had been agreed with the Provost, I observed a series of UCL East Executive Group meetings between March 2016 and December 2017. UCL Council approved the revised business case for Phase 1 of UCL East in November 2017 and my final observation of an Executive Group meeting was the debrief and discussion session in December following this approval. The period covered by these meetings included key project milestones including preparation of the employer's brief and the Academic Vision, appointment of the design teams for the new campus, submission of the outline planning permission application and a Special Meeting of the
Academic Board as well as Finance Committee approval of the updated business plan. Third, I refocussed my attention on meetings with user groups engaged in developing the fit out brief and reviewing the emergent building proposals. These meetings culminated in an intense series of Mid-Stage 3 meetings in May 2018 when the fit out design team met the user groups to present the current designs for detail review prior to completion of Stage 3. In line with my initial research design, I stopped observing the UCL East project when the reserved matters application was submitted in September 2018. However, a further series of meetings with user groups was arranged in November 2018 to review the fit out designs following completion of the Stage 3 Report and I draw on reports of these meetings where relevant to the analysis. The interviews and document collection were concurrent with the observations (see Figure 3-1)
Figure 3-1  Record of empirical research
3.5.4 Non-participant observations

When I was developing the research design for this study, I considered video recording events in order to capture how participants engaged with drawings and other design artefacts. However, although this approach was approved by the ethics committee, I decided not to video project meetings because of concerns that it would be too obtrusive, raise participant anxiety about confidentiality and present significant analytical challenges. My intention then was to make field-notes of any salient aspects of events that would not be apparent from the audio-recordings. Although in some ways there is very little to observe in a meeting, what you do see can be quite telling. However, it is difficult to observe several things at once and in practice I often found myself caught up in the verbal exchanges so my field notes could be rather thin. I usually noted the type of drawings presented (such as plans, sections or perspectives) and how participants engaged with them (such as pointing to identify an element under discussion or to trace intended routes through the building or occasionally annotating or sketching over the printed drawings), but I tended to pay less attention to the micro-interactions of gaze, expression and body language unless they were particularly striking such as on one occasion during one Critical Friends meeting, when I looked across the table to see three academics all sitting with their hands over their mouths.

Another interesting aspect of the executive group meetings that was not apparent in the audio recordings was the change of location, with early Executive Group meetings being held in the UCL Estates meeting room while later meetings took place in the Provost’s office. This shift of location may have been agreed in part for practical reasons – to fit the meetings into the Provost’s busy day – but it signalled a clear change in power dynamic. Likewise, early UCL East briefing meetings were held in whatever space was available across the Bloomsbury campus while later meetings were usually in the dedicated UCL East meeting room in the North Cloisters of the Wilkins Building. Again, the location of meetings communicated something significant, in this case a growing institutional commitment to the UCL East project manifested in the allocation of space to the meeting room and to UCL.
East programme team office. The concept of ‘home game’\textsuperscript{12} has resonance beyond the field of competitive sport.

3.5.5 Interviews

At the same time as observing many different types of meeting (between 2016 and 2018) I arranged/was granted 25 interviews. Some of these were sequential interviews with key individuals at different stages of the project – I interviewed 17 people overall. These included an architect, members of UCL Estates, UCL East Academic Planning team and the Critical Friends group, and faculty leads. The advantage of doing the interviews concurrently with the observations was that I was able to ask about what had happened during the meetings. Likewise, once I had interviewed several of the participants, I was more attuned to what was happening in the meetings during later observations. Although I interviewed an architect to get an alternative perspective, the research focus was on members of the client organisation and their interpretation of what was happening during the design and briefing process for UCL East. All interviews were arranged at a time and place of the participant’s choosing, this was usually in their own office or a local meeting room. Each interview was approximately 1 hour long.

I started by interviewing key gatekeepers and asked for suggestions as to who I should interview next (snowball sampling). I also approached people I had observed working on the project if I thought their input might cast light on my research questions, a form of theoretical sampling. Two characteristics of case study interviews are worth noting here: first, interviewees are likely to know each other and second, you are likely to meet them again in other contexts, so ‘it should be recognised that some interviews are as much like participant observation as they are like other interviews’ (Platt, 1981, p. 75). In this study I also found myself interviewing ‘up’, not only people with more power and status but also, somewhat disconcertingly, people with more

\textsuperscript{12} Senior UCL Estates Project Manager, interview 02.10.2017
experience of research than me. This may explain in part why my interviews were not more directive.

However, in principle, my approach was based on Charmaz’s description of intensive interviews as a technique that:

- Combines flexibility and control
- Opens interactional space for ideas and issues to arise
- Allows possibility for immediate follow-up on these ideas and issues
- Results from the interviewer and interview participant’s co-construction of the interview conversation (Charmaz, 2014, p. 58)

### 3.5.6 Institutional and project documents

The third kind of data I collected was documents – studying documents is the most unobtrusive form of social research. As I engaged with the project, I came across many different kinds of document, including meeting papers, presentation hand-outs, press releases, planning drawings, governance records and reports. It soon became clear that key documents such as UCL 2034, the Business Case and Masterplan shaped other documents and activities, that they were what Smith would call master documents (Smith, 2006). This highlights how institutional and project documents are very much part of the situation under investigation. As Prior (2003) points out it would be strange to pay no attention to documents when they play such an active role in structuring complex literate societies. At first my document collection was fairly haphazard but as the investigation proceeded, I began to search out documents to fill in the gaps in my understanding and answer operational questions. However, I was not just interested in documents as ‘repositories of facts’, I was also interested in how they were produced and used, in how they were ‘mobilised and enrolled by various parties to practical ends’ (Prior, 2003, p. 86)

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13 UCL 2034 is a strategy document produced by the university in 2014 setting out its institutional values and global aspirations for the future
3.6 Data analysis

In Situational Analysis, in common with many other qualitative methodologies, data generation and data analysis are 'simultaneous not sequential stages' (Richards, 2015, p. 6). I discussed data generation in Section 3.5 and in this section I give a short account of the data analysis (further detail is given in Appendix B). In the introduction to this section, I outline my approach to what Richardson calls ‘handling’ qualitative data – the process of ‘creating and working with data records’ (ibid, p. 4).

I audio-recorded observations whenever I was able to request verbal consent from attendees at the start of an event. Where this was not possible, I took more extensive field notes. I also recorded and transcribed all interviews. The slow careful listening required to transcribe an audio-recording supports line by line reflection on its meaning and constitutes the first step in data analysis. I used a verbatim transcription protocol based on the simple notation system used for the DTRS7 dataset (McDonnell and Lloyd, 2009, p. 7) and uploaded all recordings with timestamps and transcriptions to MAXQDA 2012 and later upgrades to 2020 (VERBI Software). This enables easy location and relistening to any segment of speech. I took the view that because I was focussing on the ‘design level’ rather than micro-interactions it would not be helpful to use a complex notation system such as the Jeffersonian transcription system used in Conversation Analysis to transcribe qualities of the spoken voice such as tone, pitch, pace, volume or emphasis.

The way I handled the audio-tapes of my observations (80 events) varied from listening through to make scratch transcriptions, that is ‘gisting’ (summarising chunks of data) combined with selecting key episodes for transcription, to full verbatim transcriptions. This depended on the relevance of each event to my research questions.

Initially, to familiarise myself with the UCL East project, I used both coding (Charmaz 2014, Saldaña 2016) and mapping (Clarke et al:2018) to explore and mull over my data. My reasoning was that coding supported a close
focus on what was happening in the interview accounts and observations, while mapping encouraged reflection on how the briefing process was situated. I used MAXQDA for coding and a more manual system using Illustrator (Adobe Inc., 2019, Adobe illustrator) for mapping. A key recommendation made by Charmaz and Clarke is to write memos during or immediately following an episode of coding or mapping to capture any questions or tentative interpretations which arise during engagement with the data. During the most intensive period of my empirical study, I worked mostly with memos reflecting directly on what I saw and heard rather than with memos about codes or maps. However, as I became more familiar with these tools my approach to memo-writing shifted to include reflection on the process of analysis as well as the ‘raw’ data.

Situational Analysis offers three types of map as heuristic tools to support analysis of the situation of inquiry – in SA the unit of analysis is the situation. I used two of these types of map in this study, first situational maps and then social worlds/arenas maps.

3.6.1 Situational maps

Situational maps are used for ‘developing research and data-gathering strategies and for preliminary analysis’ (Clarke et al., 2022, p. 10). Making and re-making messy situational maps encourages thinking about everything in the ‘situation of inquiry’ – they are radically heterogenous and may include diverse elements such as people, organisations, the material environment, technologies, discourses, social structures and spatial or temporal practices. As such they are ideally suited for a study of briefing which is itself naturally heterogenous and relational.

One of the first things that really struck me when I started observing meetings and interviewing participants was the degree of interconnection between the built environment, spatial practices and institutional systems. This suggested that none of these elements of the situation could be fully understood in isolation. For instance, I was surprised to learn that the minimum size required for examination halls could be reduced by using two exam papers
and distributing the papers so that students answering questions on type A papers were sat next to students answering questions on type B papers and vice versa. That space might be designed as fluid, open ended break-out areas to ensure that it would not be recognised as ‘rooms’ by the university wide room-booking system. ‘Rooms’ are made available for use by other departments across the university while expanded areas of circulation can be retained for exclusive use by faculty staff and students. And that controlled access to a room for the secure storage of passports was required within the student services department in order to comply with new government legislation on immigration.

These connections between different types of element and across different scales from the macro to the micro, such as the impact of national immigration policy on the layout of the student services offices, resonate with Clarke’s understanding of the ‘situation’ (Clarke et al. 2018) and her explicit use of Latour’s actor-networks and Foucault’s concept of apparatus (dispositive):

A thoroughly heterogeneous ensemble consisting of discourses, institutions, architectural forms, regulatory decisions, laws, administrative measures, scientific statements, philosophical, moral and philanthropic propositions — in short, the said as much as the unsaid. Such are the elements of the apparatus. The apparatus itself is the system of relations that can be established between these elements (Foucault cited Clarke et al., 2018, p. 82)

The interesting thing about this way of looking at the world, as Foucault pointed out, is that it reveals the possibility that things could be different — that if one element of the network shifts then the things we take for granted, that seem natural, reasonable and inevitable may reveal themselves as socially constructed and contingent.

The value of situational maps lies more in the process than the product and messy situational maps are designed to ‘work against “premature closure”’. Researchers are advised to be inclusive and open-minded when constructing a map, it can always be revised, and to ‘keep on analysing until [they] have a
goodly range of possible analytic stories’ (Clarke et al., 2022, p. 11). The situational map is, like the boundary to the situation, seen as contingent and emergent. As I worked on the UCL East project I encountered diverse new elements to add to my situational maps such as the discourse on space efficiency in universities, the requirement to give safety briefings to students before they enter a laboratory, and the soil contamination on site. Each addition encouraged reflection on the boundaries to the situation of inquiry and the relations between different elements on the map (see Appendix C for an Ordered Situational Map).

3.6.2 Social worlds/arenas maps
Social worlds/arenas maps ‘layout collective actors and the arenas of commitment in which they are engaged’ (Clarke and Charmaz, 2019, p. 29). They focus on the meso-level, the level of the organisation or institution. People within a social world share a set of common assumptions about the world – they inhabit what Strauss calls ‘universes of discourse’ (Strauss, 1978, p. 120) although he cautions against regarding social worlds as consisting of nothing but words and concepts to the exclusion of material artefacts, technologies and organisational or institutional practices. While social worlds are composed of groups of people, an arena is a field of activity usually ‘composed of multiple worlds organized ecologically around issues of mutual concern and commitment to action’ (Clarke and Star, 2008, p. 113).

There are some parallels between making social worlds/arenas maps and the practice of stakeholder mapping in project management – they both assume that the situation and projects/arenas will be characterised by the actions of diverse groups of people with different interests, priorities, and power bases, and view the organisation as a ‘shifting multi-goal coalition’ (Newcombe, 2003, p. 842). This assumption, that maps are dynamic and that ‘the power bases of the main actors and indeed the actors themselves “shift” over time’ (ibid.), is central to both approaches. As Clarke observes ‘one cannot assume directionalities of influence, boundaries of social worlds are open and porous, negotiations are fluid and ongoing’ (Clarke and Charmaz, 2019, p. 29).
In practice, I found it difficult to make the jump from in vivo UCL East project organograms to social worlds/arenas maps. Strauss contrasts social worlds with ‘seemingly hard realities like formal organisations with clear boundaries and known memberships’ (Strauss, 1978, p. 121) but in my situation of inquiry although the composition and role of different groups shifted they remained largely constituted by institutional definitions and terms of reference. Any more transient, informal groups were difficult to observe in project meetings. However, struggling to translate a series of organograms and construct social worlds/arenas maps highlighted the affordances and constraints of each type of graphic representation and supported questioning about inclusions and exclusions, institutional relations and change over time. The dynamic character of social worlds/areas maps focusses attention on the history of controversies and the trajectory of arguments, the location of the architectural project in time as well as space. Drawing these maps highlights how the building blocks supporting a particular course of institutional action are put in place or contested/dislodged over time (See Appendix D for a Social Worlds/Arenas Map).

3.6.3 Writing process

Writing research memos is central to SA and this practice highlights the role of writing in analytic thinking, the idea that ‘writing is thinking’ (Richardson and Pierre, 2005, Booth et al., 2016:14). I used the process of memo writing and writing and re-writing my thesis to familiarise myself with the data, to reflect on my preliminary interpretations and develop my analysis. In this section, I outline how I decided what was ‘worth telling’, describe my approach to quotations and acknowledge my own fact-making practices (Potter, 1996).

If I attempted to describe everything that happened on the UCL East project, even if I limited my report to analytical stories based on what I personally observed, this thesis would be far too long and dense. It is therefore necessary to select a limited number of vignettes from a range of possible alternatives. However, like the practice of drawing boundaries, selection is never innocent so I will give a brief account of how I decided what to include
and what to exclude. In a constructivist GT or SA study these decisions are usually made following theoretical saturation, ‘the point at which gathering more data about a theoretical construct reveals no new properties nor yields any further theoretical insights about the emerging grounded theory’ (Bryant and Charmaz, 2007, p. 611). I am hesitant to claim theoretical saturation in this research because the nature of a dynamic case study like the UCL East project precludes revisiting activities associated with earlier stages of the project and significant speech events may also be one-off occasions. This means that there is often a limit to the amount of new data that can be gathered around any tentative theoretical constructs sparked by data generation and analysis. In this context, I am using the data I have to think with, reflecting on possible interpretations and framing my research as exploratory rather than definitive. Putting my provisional interpretations down in writing has been a way to assess their credibility, to engage in an iterative process of testing the emergent argument. As part of my writing process I have used direct quotations from interviews and observations. I chose to do this because using the exact words of participants evokes the affective quality of an episode of communication in a way that a summary or paraphrase rarely does.

The principal research question is ‘how do clients and end-users engage in the briefing and design review process during the early stages of architectural projects (RIBA Stages 1-3)?’, and I selected the analytic stories presented in the empirical chapters that follow on the basis of their salience to this question and the subsidiary research questions. In selecting these vignettes I also considered the strength of the ‘logical links between the gathered data and [my] argument and analysis’ (Charmaz, 2014, p. 337). My selection of what to include in this account of the UCL East briefing process was also influenced by judgements about which vignettes best exemplify potential sensitising questions for use in practice. Bruner draws on Labov to observe that ‘narrative structures have two components: what happened and why it is worth telling’ (Bruner, 1991, p. 12). Polanyi develops this position by recognising that all narration is situated and asking the more detailed question: ‘what is worth telling, to whom and under what circumstances?’
Decisions about what is ‘worth telling’ in this thesis are based on an assumed audience of clients and built environment professionals involved in complex projects.

In referencing documents and transcripts of interviews and observations, either in the form of direct quotations or in the analysis, I have endeavoured to represent any views expressed in such a way that they can be recognised and acknowledged by their proponents. I have given footnotes locating quotations within specific speech events in an effort to ensure that their meaning is understood as originally intended. Although I report on a range of different perspectives on the UCL East project, I bracket questions regarding the ‘truth’ of what is happening or what ‘ought’ to happen (in the built environment and in briefing meetings), in order to focus on how positions are justified, actions accounted for and knowledge produced (Potter, 1996, p. 86). The aim in asking the research questions, is not to determine whether participants’ descriptions are accurate, their predictions correct, their values justified or their arguments necessary. I intend to remain agnostic on these points and express each position as accurately as possible.

As this research focusses on the accounts, descriptions and arguments used in briefing and design review workshops, and how ‘descriptions are established as factual’ (Potter, 1996, p. 16) it would be disingenuous not to acknowledge my own ‘fact-making practices’. These include references to my professional education and experience, claims of direct access to informed participants and the time-honoured ethnographic trick of writing myself into the scene - of ‘being there’ (Geertz, 1988). The reasoning behind the decision to, on occasion, foreground my position as researcher in relation to the UCL East case study and architectural briefing more generally, is given in section 1.7 of the introduction.

3.7 Summary

This chapter has given an account of how I developed the research design from an early interest in value conflict and argumentation arising from the
pilot study observations to the selection of the principal case study and research methodology. In describing the research process, I have endeavoured to justify my design choices, to present a coherent ‘theory/methods package’ and argue that there is a good fit, a ‘clear logical connection’ between my research questions and methodology (Yin, 2003). I claimed that SA is congruent with a study of architectural briefing because it shares its radical heterogeneity and ecological, relational qualities and concluded that SA is an appropriate choice of methodology to push the study of briefing ‘around the interpretive turn’ (Clarke et al., 2018).

I also described the experience of generating data and gave an account of some of the associated research dilemmas. Architecture is generally a future oriented profession, so it has been an interesting experience to take the time to look back and listen through recordings of the UCL East campus meetings - it has felt almost like time travel. Audio-recordings enable you to revisit past events and key moments of dialogue, and this has allowed me to reflect on the social dynamics of meetings in a way that is not usually possible in the heat of the moment. My research is based on a combination of this in-depth reflection on the empirical data combined with theoretical sampling of the literature (Thornton et al., 2005).

Like GT, SA is an inductive/abductive research process, so I did not start out with a well-defined conceptual framework. I have a naturalistic, practice-based approach to research and hold the pragmatist view that all knowledge is social and provisional. However, it would be naive to claim that I began this research project as a blank slate. My perspective has inevitably been informed by my architectural education, experience in practice and work on a masters dissertation ‘brief as virtual building’, a space syntax analysis of generic institutional briefs.
Chapter 4 Framing the problematic situation

4.1 Introduction

In November 2014, senior UCL academics were invited to visit the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park (QEOP) to discuss UCL’s vision for a new campus in East London and view the proposed site. A number of key events had preceded this invitation. In 2012 the London Legacy Development Corporation (LLDC) was established as a mayoral development company to ‘develop a dynamic new heart for east London’\(^{14}\) on the site of the Olympic Games. In 2013, a meeting was held between the Chancellor of the Exchequer, the Mayor of London, the Provost of UCL and the Chairman of the Trustees of the V&A ‘to discuss a new vision for delivering legacy and growth at the Olympic Park’\(^{15}\). Following this meeting, UCL was offered a site on the park together with a government grant to subsidise the development and in October 2014 UCL Council approved a business plan for a new campus (subject to agreement of terms with the LLDC).

![Planning boundary for UCL East campus](image)

*Figure 4-1 Planning boundary for UCL East campus*

Source: Design & Access Statement outline application 2017, p. 10

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\(^{14}\) LLDC website [https://www.queenelizabetholympicpark.co.uk/our-story](https://www.queenelizabetholympicpark.co.uk/our-story)

\(^{15}\) Design and Access Statement Reserved Matters application 2018, p.17
Following the invitation to visit the QEOP noted above, a group of academics and project officers met at the base of the ArcelorMittal Orbit and took the lift to the viewing platform at the top. The proposed site was identified as the area of land bounded by Sidings Street (and the Great Eastern Main Line) to the southeast, City Mill River to the southwest, Thornton Street and the Olympic Park to the North, and Montfichet Road to the northeast. The site is also bisected by the Water Works River. Mingling with the academics as they looked down on the site, I noted some sotto voce dismay at the extensive industrial and post-olympic infrastructure surrounding the site and separating it from the rest of Stratford and East London.

Returning to ground level, the Campus Concept Group\(^\text{16}\) reconvened to review site specific constraints and opportunities. Following a discussion concerning the impact of the transport infrastructure on connectivity with local neighbourhoods, a senior UCL academic expressed the view that ‘taking the university concept and plonking it down in Stratford is surely looking at things totally the wrong way round, what we should be doing is taking education into the community not expecting the community to come to education’\(^\text{17}\). He spoke passionately about how when he was a child, lecturers from Swansea University came out into the villages in the Swansea Valley in the evenings to give lectures on all kinds of subjects from history and industrial archaeology to languages, and noted that their lectures were widely attended not just by young people but also by adult members of the community. He argued that ‘if we want to do anything at all on this site it should be a warehouse where we park the vans, where we drive the equipment out to schools rather than this old-fashioned idea of a university that is a fixed site in concrete and

\(^{16}\) The Campus Concept Group (CCG) was ‘responsible for ensuring that the appointed masterplanners correctly interpret the Project Brief and reflect it appropriately in the development of the masterplan proposals’. Members of the group included senior UCL academics from participating faculties and 2 current UCL students but meetings were also attended by representatives from UCL Estates, LLDC and the consultant team appointed to prepare the new campus masterplan. The CCG was convened by the Project Director for UCL East who joined the UCL Estates leadership team from Drivers Jonas Deloitte to ‘work with the university and wider stakeholders to further define and ultimately realise the vision for Stratford’ - Estates Gazette 30.11.2012

\(^{17}\) Campus Concept Group meeting, observation 13.11.2014
This challenge highlights that ‘things could be different’, that as Foucault pointed out, taken for granted practices may not be the only way of doing things.

Neary and Saunders define a series of ‘historical ideal-types’ of university from medieval, liberal humanist, industrial, to post-modern and entrepreneurial and argue that universities have evolved over time in response to changing social conditions (Neary and Saunders, 2011, p. 348). In their paper about academics involved in the design and delivery of higher education buildings, they describe a ‘struggle for the idea of the University’ (ibid.). This phrase resonated with what I observed on the UCL East project – a struggle for the idea of UCL and how it should respond to the challenges of the 21st century.

There was a salient coda to the exchange described above (which problematised the ‘old fashioned idea of the university’):

- Academic 1: Nobody is doing extramural universities these days – name me a university that is doing it
- Academic 2: that’s because they have got the REF
- Academic 1: it is time we told the REF what to do
- Academic 3: [They would score it very well on Impact]¹⁸

These references to the REF (Research Excellence Framework) and Impact (the effect research has beyond academia), made only partly in jest, indicate a general awareness within the meeting of the structural constraints on the ‘struggle for the idea of the university’. These government systems for auditing the quality of research in UK higher education institutions are closely linked to the award of research grants and the university ranking systems which affect potential fee income. So to adapt Marx - academics make their own universities not ‘as they please […] under self-selected circumstances,

¹⁸ Campus Concept Group meeting, observation 13.11.2014
but under circumstances existing already, given and transmitted from the past’ (Marx, 1852).

This is the first of three chapters reporting on an empirical study of the briefing process for the UCL East campus on the Olympic Park in Stratford. The aim of these chapters is to give a rich description of how members of UCL, executives, academics and professional services staff, engaged with the early stages of the new campus project. This thesis frames briefing and design review as a social, collaborative (Bucciarelli, 1988, p. 160, McDonnell and Lloyd, 2009, p. 1) and value-laden, situated practice (Paton and Dorst, 2011, p. 574) so the focus in these chapters is on the dialogue and intra-client argumentation that took place in the project meetings and briefing workshops I attended as an observer.

Schön suggests that the key challenge for professionals in complex situations is not problem solving but ‘problem setting’. He argues that ‘in real world practice problems do not present themselves as givens, that professionals have to ‘set the problem’ (Schön, 1991 [1983], p. 40). Achieving clarity of purpose is central to ‘setting the problem’ (ibid, p. 18) and as the exchange between academics described above suggests, not only the purpose of a project but also the spatial practices or conditions required to achieve that purpose can be problematised and made the subject of debate. As discussed in the literature review, these kinds of complex question cannot be resolved with ‘technical rationality’ (ibid., p. 40). Schön argues that professional reflexivity is required to address complex ill-defined problems while Cairns, drawing on Flyvbjerg (who in turn drew on Aristotle), makes a case for ‘Phroënésis, or “practical wisdom” a form of ethical decision-making about ‘design/occupation/use’ (Cairns, 2008). Schön focuses on the judgement of professionals while Cairns is more inclusive and critical in arguing that design decisions should be informed by open and transparent discussion between multiple stakeholders about ‘the purpose, desirability, and inevitability of the likely outcomes of the project, of who stands to gain and lose from it and, in particular, the question, “what if anything we should do about it?”’ (ibid., p. 284). The purpose in asking the research question
'how do clients and end-users engage in the briefing and design review process during the early stages of architectural projects (RIBA Stages 1-3)?’ is to explore what form this kind of situated intra-client argumentation might take in practice.

This chapter sets the scene for the UCL East project by describing the key building blocks for the argument supporting the decision to build a new campus and by outlining how the construction of this argument was situated in relation to contemporary discourses concerning university funding and aspirations for the future of UCL as a ‘world-class’ institution. It then gives an account of debates around the choice of site, the development of the masterplan and the strategic brief, and diverse perspectives on the Marshgate building proposals. Finally, it describes the teleological reasoning centred on the contested question of whether a 300 seat lecture hall should be included in Phase 1 of the new campus. The following two empirical chapters focus on the emergent project governance and stakeholder relationships, and the internal stakeholder argumentation about the virtual building in the fit out briefing workshops. There is an element of chronology in ordering these empirical chapters from the general to the particular. However, this ordering should not be taken as an indication that the different aspects of briefing described in these three chapters are necessarily independent or chronologically distinct. To locate the matters discussed in these chapters, the overall timeline for the UCL East campus project, and the timing of key actions are illustrated in Figure 4-2. Items in the orange boxes to the left of the time-line refer to academic planning and institutional governance while items in the blue green boxes to the right of the time-line refer to the infrastructure project planning and delivery.

19 UCL East Business Case, 2017
4.2 Constructing the argument for a new campus

4.2.1 Pressure on the UCL Estate

The first UCL building was built in Bloomsbury following its foundation as a secular non-residential university in 1826. The idea of a radical metropolitan university was resisted by the Tory press and an article in John Bull
communicated disapproval of the whole scheme by describing the site as a ‘large space of mud and nastiness’ (Spencer, 2021, p. 58). Following construction of the Wilkins Building, the UCL estate developed in a ‘gradual piecemeal manner’ and incorporated both purpose-built and converted buildings (ibid., p. 50). However, as London grew and UCL was no longer located on its periphery, land and property became increasingly expensive and difficult to acquire. The UCL estate is ‘highly concentrated in one of the most expensive real estate markets in the world’\(^{20}\). This meant that opportunities to expand in Bloomsbury were limited and in the 2010s this constraint on growth was further ‘exacerbated by the High Speed II development around Euston station’\(^{21}\). Development of the UCL estate was also constrained by planning restrictions associated with the Bloomsbury Conservation Area and the relatively high proportion (37%) of listed buildings on the Bloomsbury campus. Senior management at UCL became concerned that pressure on space in Bloomsbury could have a negative impact on the student experience, on research effectiveness and on UCL’s national and international reputation so they commissioned two extensive pieces of work: a Space Utilisation Study and a Masterplan for the Bloomsbury Campus.

### 4.2.2 Space utilisation survey

The space utilisation survey carried out by Alexi Marmot Associates (AMA) in 2010 covered 53 non-residential buildings on the Bloomsbury Campus and comprised a desk-top analysis based on floor plans, the FAMIS database (type of space/function, ‘ownership’ and floor area) and data from the room booking system CMIS, combined with observations of space use during Term 2. The study also compared UCL space use with HEFCE norms. In addition to these quantitative research methods, AMA interviewed user representatives, evaluated the quality of each teaching space and contacted 95 key stakeholders ‘to understand the way space can, should and does function’\(^{22}\). The report’s high-level recommendations included the sensitive issues of ‘rigorous management’\(^{22}\) of space use, consideration of

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\(^{20}\) UCL White Paper 2011 - 2021  
\(^{21}\) UCL East Business Case 2017  
\(^{22}\) Space Utilisation Survey, AMA, 2010
rebalancing the allocation of space between faculties and departments’, and a general review of UCL office workspace policy. Less controversial recommendations were the provision of space to support different kinds of staff and student interaction, ‘interaction between people in different disciplines, departments and laboratories’ and new ways of ‘communicating, sharing knowledge and learning’. The AMA report was intended to provide ‘baseline information’ for the Bloomsbury masterplan.

4.2.3 Bloomsbury Masterplan

In 2011 Lifschutz Davidson Sandilands (LDS) was commissioned to prepare a masterplan for the Bloomsbury campus. This was produced following ‘a thorough review and analysis of the estate, wide consultation with UCL staff and student communities and considerable iteration of options’. It was approved by UCL Council in 2011 and intended to ‘provide the strategic framework for the development and improvement of the UCL Bloomsbury Estate over the next ten to fifteen years’. The master plan had four objectives: to improve the academic facilities and enable a more efficient and flexible use of space, to improve the ‘university’s physical identity’ and make it more visible and accessible to the public, and to improve the experience of working and studying in the university by upgrading the public realm and rationalising routes through all the ‘ad hoc additions, extensions and alterations’. The fourth objective was to develop a realistic strategy to meet the first three objectives. The masterplan proposed a number of key interventions on the Bloomsbury campus but the recommendation, which is of interest here, is the suggestion that UCL should overcome the constraints on expansion at Bloomsbury by creating a new campus elsewhere to ‘provide world-class facilities supported by student residences, enterprise incubators and other amenities’.

4.2.4 UCL White Paper 2011 - 2021

At around the same time as AMA and LDS were working on the Space Utilisation Study and the Bloomsbury Masterplan, staff were also being

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23 Bloomsbury Masterplan, Lifschutz Davidson Sandilands, 2011
consulted on the UCL Council White Paper 2011-2021. The consultation process included a series of open town meetings, two meetings of Academic Board as well as presentations by the Provost to ‘heads of department and other staff and student representatives’\textsuperscript{24}. At this time the government was proposing to cut the teaching grant to universities (in 2012) and replace it with student loans to cover undergraduate tuition fees. The White Paper asserted that ‘the new funding arrangements pose grave challenges to UCL’\textsuperscript{24}, and argued that the university response should include investment in ‘the student experience’\textsuperscript{24}. It proposed that one aspect of improving the student experience should be improvements to the UCL estate as set out in Strategic Aim 9: ‘UCL is committed to improving the quality and sustainability of its estate and its use, upgrading its built environment and making optimal use of space’\textsuperscript{24}. Under the heading of ‘New Campus’ it was argued that UCL does not ‘have the capacity to locate major new activity in Bloomsbury, even with the rationalisation envisaged in the masterplan’\textsuperscript{24}, that a central London location was not required for some of the activities currently taking place in Bloomsbury, and that few activities had the potential to expand in their existing space. It concluded with the statement that:

\begin{quote}
The time has come to explore a parallel track, and we are currently examining opportunities for some activity that is not focussed on undergraduate education to be relocated to another area within London where large-scale facilities can be provided at a lower cost and with better environmental and financial sustainability.\textsuperscript{24}
\end{quote}

However, the White Paper acknowledged that none of the proposals would work ‘unless there is sufficient buy-in on the part of all actors’, and that ‘top-down prescription seldom works in any community, let alone an open and critical institution such as UCL’\textsuperscript{24}. It is beyond the scope of this thesis to comment on the extent to which the consultation referred to in pre-project texts actually influenced executive decision-making at the time, but the

\textsuperscript{24} UCL Council White Paper 2011-2021
emphasis placed on working with the academic community at each stage is notable.

4.2.5 UCL East Business Case

The Space Utilisation Study and the Masterplan identified constraints on space resulting from both contextual factors and institutional practices such as single occupancy offices, timetabling, room booking and established departmental territories. The UCL East Business Case, written to support the proposal to build a new campus at Stratford, stated that ‘the reputational harm that the current central London restrictions are causing could be significant and will only get worse over time’\(^{25}\). Key arguments against the ‘Do Nothing’\(^{25}\) option were that limitations on space at Bloomsbury restricted opportunities for ‘growth and progression’\(^{25}\). That current constraints on both the expansion of existing programmes and the creation of new programmes ‘reduced UCL’s ability to attract and retain intellectual leaders’\(^{25}\), that new talent would not choose to work at UCL if it was known ‘that growth was capped’\(^{25}\). It was also noted that the constant pressure on space had a significant impact on ‘student satisfaction’\(^{25}\) (and the National Student Survey) which had gained new significance following the government’s recent announcement of the planned changes to higher education funding. The underlying message was that without a new campus ‘there is a danger that UCL may get left behind in the global challenge market place’\(^{25}\).

The argument that a university with no space for flex is likely to suffer a competitive disadvantage due to its limited ability to respond to the continual change in research focus, specialisms and funding typical of research intensive universities (Becher and Trowler, 2001, p. 97) is persuasive. However, at a UCL Council meeting in 2012, it was also suggested that the academic community should be encouraged ‘to view the project as an opportunity to think at a fundamental level about what a university is or does, rather than seeing it primarily as an opportunity for academic expansion’\(^{26}\).

Bearing this comment in mind, there is an interesting sentence in section 33

\(^{25}\) UCL Business case, 2017
\(^{26}\) UCL Council Minutes 1 October 2012, Item 8.6
(Qualitative Appraisal, p. 44) of the Business Case. Read in isolation it would be unclear whether it describes a pro or a con: ‘it [the Do Nothing option] would avoid significant change to both the culture and behaviour of the University and would avoid disturbances to the academic status quo’\textsuperscript{25}. However, its location without preamble at the end of a long list of disadvantages suggests that this too was intended to be read as a disadvantage.

4.3 UCL Vision for the new campus

4.3.1 Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park site
Following publication of the UCL White paper, the Estates department was instructed to act on the recommendation that ‘the time had come’ to consider a new UCL campus. In March 2012, six potential solutions to the pressure on space at the Bloomsbury campus were presented to the UCL Finance Committee for review:

1. Do minimum – limit growth
2. Continue piecemeal opportunistic site acquisitions in Bloomsbury
3. Additional London location – Metropolitan University Quarter
4. Rebalance the academic offering in Bloomsbury
5. Merge with or acquire another HEI (Higher Education Institution)
6. Additional London location – suburban M25 University Quarter

The first three options were noted as ‘warrants further analysis’\textsuperscript{27}. However, all the presentation slides were titled ‘UCL Stratford’\textsuperscript{27} so the preferred option was evident and Drivers Jonas Deloitte had already been appointed to determine the feasibility of building a new campus on the Carpenters Estate in Stratford. The Finance Committee was advised that Metropolitan University Quarter opportunities were ‘few and far between’\textsuperscript{27} and a preliminary analysis of six possible sites was presented to illustrate the

\textsuperscript{27} UCL Finance Committee meeting presentation, March 2012
criteria that had been used to select the Carpenters Estate as the preferred site for a new UCL campus (see Table 4.1 below).

Table 4-1  Metropolitan University Quarter opportunity shortlist

Source: UCL Finance Committee presentation, March 2012

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Site location</th>
<th>Availability</th>
<th>Planning</th>
<th>Capacity</th>
<th>Accessibility</th>
<th>Land price</th>
<th>Enabling cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Carpenters Estate, Stratford, E15</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Greenwich Peninsula, SE10</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>O</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Olympic Legacy Development Sites</td>
<td>O</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Old Oak Common, NW10</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>International Quarter, Stratford City, E15</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>The Royal Docks, E16</td>
<td>O</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

However, following announcement of UCL’s plans for the Carpenters Estate, staff at the Faculty of the Built Environment expressed unease about the ethics of demolishing people’s homes to make way for a university. A senior academic referred to Ruth Glass’s work on gentrification and advised that ‘it is vital for UCL’s proposals to embody an exemplary approach to regeneration, with the primary aim of benefitting Newham’s existing communities’\(^{28}\).

The UCL campus proposals also met with strong objections when they were presented to a meeting of Carpenters estate residents. One elderly resident was very clear: ‘I would like to say to UCL if you honestly think that I am going to give my home up to you or anybody else at my time of life, forget it, I will fight you, you will have to drag me out, it is mine, it belongs to me’\(^{29}\). A statement from the Residents’ Steering Group was equally combative: ‘We

\(^{28}\) UCL Comms 25 April 2012

\(^{29}\) BBC Inside Out, 19 December 2012
are essentially a working-class community. What you are proposing is social cleansing in the name of your corporate objectives. That’s injustice and we do not intend to let it happen’ (Watt, 2013, p. 110). Faced with eloquent arguments from both internal and external objectors and perhaps mindful of potential public relations fallout, UCL Council acknowledged ‘a moral obligation to satisfy itself that the relocation arrangements offered to residents were satisfactory’ and in May 2013 it was announced that UCL had ‘broken off talks with Newham Council over the Carpenters Estate’. However, the Provost reported that ‘the process has reaffirmed the commitment of both parties to establishing a UCL presence in Stratford’. In April 2015, following the meeting with the Chancellor of the Exchequer described in the introduction to this chapter, ‘UCL and the LLDC entered into an Agreement for Lease (AfL) for the letting and development of UCL East on the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park, the largest project in UCL’s ambitious building and refurbishment programme (Transforming UCL).

4.3.2 UCL 2034: a 20-year strategy
On 8 July 2014 UCL Council approved the final draft of UCL 2034: a 20-year strategy setting out the university’s institutional values and global aspirations for the future. This was produced following a ‘wide-ranging engagement exercise with staff, students and key supporters’ and planned as a ‘dynamic document communicated principally through the website, rather than an unchanging, published text’. UCL 2034 is referenced in many of the UCL East documents and acts as a ‘master text’ (Smith, 2006) for the project. This relationship is made explicit in the business case which states that UCL East is ‘a cornerstone of delivering the ambition outlined in our strategy, UCL 2034’. The project team argue that the new campus ‘will make a substantial contribution to at least 24 of the 75 objectives of the UCL 2034 Strategy and contribute to ‘all of the remaining 51 objectives’.

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30 UCL Council Minutes, 1 October 2012, Item 8.4
31 Times Higher Education (THE), 7 May 2013
32 UCL East Employer’s brief, 2016
33 UCL Council Minutes, 8 July 2014, Item 125
34 UCL News, 17 July 2014
35 UCL East Business Case, 2017
Three of the six UCL 2034 principal themes: integrating research and education, accessibility and public engagement and the role of the university in the economic, political and cultural life of London are central to the UCL East project. Other themes such as ‘cross-disciplinary activity and the creation of new disciplines’\(^35\) and ‘working in partnership with governments, business and industry […]’\(^36\) are also evident in the academic vision approved by Council in 2014:

Firstly, it [UCL east] will be a place for new activities for UCL; secondly it will be highly open and collaborative with external organisations; thirdly, it will serve as a model for the university campus of the future, open, dynamic, and breaking the conventional barriers between research, education, innovation, public engagement and collaboration.\(^37\)

The themes of integrating teaching and research, interdisciplinarity, public engagement and innovation underscored by an ethos of collaboration are reflected in the wider discourse about the future of higher education\(^38\) and the ‘idea of the university’. However, what is interesting in the context of this thesis is the step-by-step construction of the case in favour of UCL East, how the argument is built document by document, and the narrative connections drawn between the foundation of UCL, its contemporary values and aspirations, its plans for a future on the Olympic Park, and the strategic brief for the new campus.

### 4.3.3 UCL East masterplan brief

The Campus Concept Group meeting in Stratford described in the introduction to this chapter concluded with a discussion about the brief for the masterplan. The first point noted was ‘that there are two organisations involved, there is LLDC and there is UCL and neither of them have a single mind behind them…’\(^39\). There was also a feeling that there were lots of different agendas and ‘we probably don’t understand each other as well as

\(^{36}\) UCL 2034: A new 20-year strategy for UCL
\(^{37}\) UCL East Business Case, 2014
\(^{38}\) Universities without walls: A vision for 2030 EUA 2021
\(^{39}\) Campus Concept Group meeting observation, 13.11.2014
we will do at the end of the process […] so we can do it and we will do it but it is going to be a journey\textsuperscript{39}.

The discussion then moved on to what the master planners would need to know about UCL’s vision for the new campus. Suggestions included the relationship between UCL East and the Bloomsbury campus (‘not a slave to Bloomsbury?’\textsuperscript{39}, i.e. new activities, not just used for storage, or administration), and UCL’s aspiration to encourage interdisciplinary working (‘things happening at the margins’\textsuperscript{39}), and to support new ways of learning (‘the act of doing and making things as opposed to just absorbing information’\textsuperscript{39}). Concerns were raised that the ‘organisational structure of UCL, the way the money flows and all that stuff’\textsuperscript{39} would make interdisciplinary collaboration difficult but it was suggested that the building should be designed to support this way of working and then the ‘accountancy will deal with it’\textsuperscript{39}. The implication being that the building design could precede (and possibly drive) a change in institutional structures.

Reflecting on current spatial practices in Bloomsbury, academics noted a need for a building in which it would be easy to adjust departmental boundaries in response to changing demand following shifts in research priorities or funding. Becher and Trowler observe that regular change in fashionable or ‘hot areas’ of research and the associated expansion and retraction of specialisms is typical in most academic disciplines (Becher and Trowler, 2001, p. 97). The comments of a senior academic in a later interview indicated an awareness of this kind of flux at UCL. He had observed the pattern of a star researcher developing a team of loyal followers with a large research base, and questioned how the talent should be managed when their star has faded. He suggested that this could present a ‘Sunset Boulevard’\textsuperscript{40} HR challenge. The spatial element of this challenge is clear in the observation made at the Campus Concept Group meeting that when faculties or research institutes are coterminous with buildings, space

\textsuperscript{40} Senior academic, interview 23.10.2017 - reference to the film Sunset Boulevard in which an aging silent-film star refuses to accept that her career is over
allocation becomes highly inflexible because organisational entities are reluctant to concede space within buildings that they regard as their territory.

The spatial implications of the UCL East academic vision were also discussed, specifically what kind of building would encourage interdisciplinary collaboration and enable flexibility and adaptability in response to changing demands for space. It was suggested, as a thought experiment, that the figure ground relationship in the design could be inverted so that rather than separate buildings set in the landscape, the proposal could be for courtyards set in a ‘matty{39} low rise building, a kind of academic ‘souk{39}. In support of this proposition, it was argued that because the building was located in the Olympic Park, it was not necessary to provide a significant quantum of public open space, and that a continuous interconnected building form would enable academic territories to flex. It would also provide more opportunities to create interstitial spaces for cross-disciplinary collaboration. However, the Campus Concept Group agreed that the masterplan brief should state the objectives UCL wanted to achieve rather than prescribing a design solution. So, for example, rather than specifying a ‘ground-hugging{39} building it should give ‘communication between groups{39} as an objective. Nonetheless, it was noted that communication between groups on the same level is much easier, and therefore more likely to happen, than communication between groups on different vertical levels.

4.3.4 Masterplan design development

Following the appointment of the master planners by LLDC in 2015, a series of workshops were held between members of UCL, LLDC and the design team. These workshops built on the strategic space planning work already started by Nicholas Hare Architects and were planned to address the following issues:

- Contextual analysis and precedent assessment
- Scale and massing and capacity assessment.
- The importance of the public realm
- What kind of place is suitable for UCL East?
The master planners faced two very particular challenges. First, the UCL East site is located in an area undergoing extensive redevelopment which will ‘create a completely new place for the park’\textsuperscript{41} so the context is in radical flux. Second, the master plan is required ‘to enable phased development to allow for a meaningful place to be created in each phase and to grow UCL East in stages, to meet the university’s future needs’\textsuperscript{41} so the Phase 1 buildings would have to be designed to work both as stand-alone buildings and as part of a larger, as yet unspecified, development. The combination of these two conditions of change over time generated an unusual degree of uncertainty.

A Space Syntax Ltd analysis of the local area confirmed the academics’ initial impression of the site as isolated by infrastructure and reported ‘an overall lack of an established smaller scale movement network in the areas around the site, offering limited choices for pedestrians’\textsuperscript{42}. An LLDC officer recalled that during the run-up to the Olympic Games the speed of delivery required by the hard deadline for the games had resulted in decisions being made in haste without fully understanding their implications for legacy developments, ‘chucking a lot of infrastructure to the periphery’\textsuperscript{43}. Consequently, the local area was described by Space Syntax Ltd as unlike most established urban areas in being ‘largely attractor based, with local concentration of flows and a lack of continuity between key functions’\textsuperscript{42}. The segregated character of the site with its limited, poor-quality connections (long underpasses) to the surrounding neighbourhoods was widely recognised as likely to have a negative impact on UCL’s ability to engage with the local community. However, the masterplan team argued that this disadvantage was offset by some unique opportunities: a highly connected transport network (developed to bring spectators to the 2012 Games), world class sporting facilities, the Olympic park and riverside setting, and the opportunity to collaborate with the East Bank Partners (UAL/London College of Fashion, Sadlers Wells, the V&A and the BBC).

\textsuperscript{41} Design and Access Statement, Outline planning application 2017, pp.20 & 8
\textsuperscript{42} Design and Access Statement, Outline planning application 2017, p.25
\textsuperscript{43} Masterplan briefing and design review meeting observation, 10.26.2015
Following the site analysis, the masterplan team carried out a comparative density study which looked at a range of developments from Broadgate (high density) to West Cambridge (low density). The precedents analysed included a range of uses - university projects where possible but also a high proportion of office-led mixed used developments. The proposal to use the Kings Cross development as a precedent was justified on the grounds that with a Floor Area Ratio of 4.8 ‘it was possible to deliver efficient built form alongside generous public realm’\(^{44}\). The argument supporting this decision illustrates the Goldilocks technique: Broadgate is too dense, West Cambridge is not dense enough – Kings Cross is just right. A similar implicit argument was used to justify the floor plate depth: 13.5m is too narrow, 36m is too deep, ‘floor plates of approximately 25m-30m provide the best balance between flexibility, adaptability and the quality of the internal environment’\(^{44}\).

The proposal by the master planners to draw on the Kings Cross regeneration as a precedent led to the adoption of the following design parameters:

- Building footprints to cover 50% of the site
- Floor Area Ratio 4.00-5.0 (FAR = gross floor area ÷ site area)
- 8-10 floors – common datum with other East Bank buildings
- Deep plan buildings – 4 similar sized plots (27-63m deep)

Selecting a datum in common with the East Bank proposals is a defensible design move (see Figure 4.3). It follows the reasonable assumption that the LLDC planners were unlikely to approve an application for buildings that were significantly higher than the proposals being developed for neighbouring sites and an awareness that applying for anything lower could be interpreted as a failure to maximise the value of the site. It was certainly argued at the time that the height agreed for the Phase 1 buildings could set the acceptable

\(^{44}\) Design and Access Statement, Outline planning application 2017, pp.51, 52
scale of development for future phases of the new campus thereby compounding the financial impact of proposing a lower density scheme.

![Diagram of South Park Datum](image)

*Figure 4-3 South Park Datum*

Source: Design & Access Statement outline planning application 2017, p. 41

The proposal to divide the site into 4 large building plots may also have been influenced by the existing planning permission for the Legacy Communities Scheme (LCS) for a residential led mixed-use scheme. Certainly, the Design and Access Statement submitted with the outline planning application argues that the design principles for this scheme remained relevant and were taken into account in the UCL East Masterplan\(^\text{45}\). These included references to safeguarding views, provision of public open space, a sense of containment to the park, and strong frontages along the waterways as well as an appropriate response to the scale and massing of the International Quarter and the iconic buildings on the park. However, it should be noted that although the LCS scheme is also divided into four plots, as a residential scheme it had a completely different typology, with courtyard blocks rather than deep plan buildings.

\(^{45}\) Design and Access Statement, Outline planning application 2017, p39
Discussion at the briefing workshop on the kind of place suitable for UCL East generated four urban typologies for further exploration:

- Distributed – an “even” city with a tightly drawn pattern of city blocks of roughly equal size
- Centralised – a hierarchical city pattern with a prominent building and space
- Fluid – a city pattern where buildings and external space merge and thresholds are indistinct
- Internalised – a single entity of continuous built form with space carved out within it^46

^46 Design and Access Statement, Outline planning application 2017, p73
The master planners reviewed key characteristics of each typology, identified precedents and produced sketch layouts. However, it is arguable that ‘Fluid’ is not in the same category as ‘Distributed’, ‘Centralised’ and ‘Internalised’, in that the concept of blurring of internal/external boundaries, a sectional privacy gradient and ‘opportunities for outward facing activity’ could be applied to any of the other three typologies. It is also surprising that of the 12 sketch layouts – no less than 7 are composed of four large building plots with the result that any differences between the typologies are minimised (Figure 4-5).

Several criteria were used to assess the potential of each typology to meet UCL’s requirements – these included a 35:65% split between specialist and standard space, floor plate depth, diversity of public realm (and ‘stickiness’-

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47 Design and Access Statement, Outline planning application 2017, p75, & 78
operationalised as diverse public spaces adjacent to through routes), access, circulation and movement, and townscape, massing and scale. The Design and Access Statement reports that ‘the conclusion of the workshop was that the Fluid Concept had the most potential to achieve the greatest number of the Masterplan Principles’\(^{47}\). However, it is notable that of the assessment criteria listed above, only the desirability of through movement was not contested at some point during the briefing process. The split between specialist and standard space is arguably only critical if the floor to floor height for standard space is less than for specialist space (this variation was questioned due to its impact on flexibility), the deep floor plates were questioned because they limit access to daylight and natural ventilation (and beyond a certain depth may result in race-track circulation which has a negative impact on space efficiency), the value of adding to the public realm was questioned due to the site location within a public park, and views on massing and scale were dependent on the narrative presented in the masterplan that in order to ‘assert its presence’\(^{48}\) within the Cultural and Education District, and define the Southern edge of the park, UCL East needs to be ‘a particular height and scale’\(^{48}\). The call for a ‘distinctive and confident’\(^{49}\) identity and references by the masterplanners to a ‘flickr moment’\(^{50}\) and an ‘identifiable postcard shot’\(^{50}\) are based on the assumption that iconic buildings are required to justify government investment and define the UCL East brand – Bloomsbury has the portico, what will UCL East have?

Some academics at the Bartlett School of Architecture expressed frustration that the LLDC had commissioned a landscape architecture practice to prepare the masterplan for the new campus and viewed the proposals as ‘flawed’\(^{51}\). This might sound like special pleading but the analysis of typologies in the Masterplan Design and Access Statement (DAS) does lack the depth of engagement demonstrated in the exploration of public realm options. The suggestion in the DAS that ‘the need to avoid bland box

\(^{47}\) Design and Access Statement, Outline planning application 2017, pp. 105, 41, 80 & 82
\(^{48}\) Strategic brief, 2016, p8
\(^{50}\) Masterplan briefing workshop observation, 6.10.2015
\(^{51}\) Critical Friend correspondence, 19.01.2017
buildings could be addressed through a public realm led approach' also indicates that the professional attention of the masterplanning team was focussed on the landscape rather than the building design.

The most distinctive and innovative aspect of the masterplan is the Fluid Zone concept, 'a physically permeable and visually transparent space' on the ground and first floor designed to encourage people into the buildings, showcase university activities and support public engagement. This approach mitigates the impact of the large building plots on permeability at ground level and was intended to embody the vision of an open and accessible university. However, this concept was contested by one stakeholder who argued that the Fluid Zone might have unintended consequences – the principal social spaces in the proposed new campus, the refectory, the library and the student services in Marshgate, and the podium garden and common room spaces for the student residences in Pool Street are on the second and third floors respectively, raised above the university plaza and riverside setting and away from the public and pedestrian routes through the campus. It was suggested that if it was applied across the campus, the Fluid Zone concept could also increase the social distance between the future occupants of buildings in phases 2a, 2b and 2c. The design and management challenges related to the Fluid Zone concept are discussed further in Chapter 6.

The other interesting innovation in the masterplan is the colocation of the student residences with academic accommodation on the Pool Street West site. This was a requirement of the UCL brief and intended to ‘encourage a sense of community, academic friendship and cross-disciplinary engagement’ in a similar way to the college system at Oxford and Cambridge. The masterplan locates the student residences on the sites constrained by the PLUG tunnels and closest to what is expected to be the principal public access point onto the campus. The Phase 1 buildings

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52 Design and Access Statement, Outline planning application 2017, p. 72
53 The Powerlines Undergrounding (PLUG) tunnels and associated headhouses were created to enable removal of electricity pylons prior to the 2012 Olympics
Marshgate and Pool Street West face each other across the Water Works River.

Figure 4-6 Conceptual section - Fluid Zone (in red)

Source: Design & Access Statement, Outline planning application 2017, p. 83

4.4 Perspectives on the Marshgate design

This section gives an account of the development of the initial design proposals for Marshgate, the larger of the two phase 1 buildings. The problem domain was conceptualised in different ways by different stakeholders. Four distinct perspectives on space, in operation during the briefing process for UCL East, are described here: quantified space, engineered space, sculpted space and lived space. This account gives an indication of the scope for argumentation both within and across these different perspectives. According to Paton and Dorst ‘the ability to frame a problematic situation in new and interesting ways is widely seen as one of the key characteristics of design thinking’ (Paton and Dorst, 2011, p. 573). They reference Schön and his idea of ‘framing the problematic situation’ but here I propose to address a slightly different topic also explored by Schön - the idea of ‘framing the practice role’ in which different professions have ‘a distinctive approach to problem setting and solving’ (Schön, 1991 [1983], p. 41). This section has two interrelated aims, first to summarise the early
design development of the Marshgate building, and second to indicate how different world views or perspectives on the problem domain and the different tools and knowledge practices associated with them pre-structure the problem in different ways. As indicated above, these observations relate largely to the Marshgate building and not Pool Street West or the masterplan as a whole.

4.4.1 Quantified space

The principal requirement in the Agreement for Lease (AfL) with the LLDC was that UCL should provide a minimum of 50,000m$^2$ of university space in Phase 1 of the new campus of which a maximum of 25% should be residential accommodation. The other significant commitment associated with the AfL was the requirement to coordinate the UCL East Phase 1 building programme with the ‘incredibly ambitious … incredibly ambitious’ LLDC programme for the Cultural and Education District (later called East Bank). The consequence of this was that the building design and the planning of academic programmes and operations had to be done concurrently.

When I first met the UCL East project manager to discuss my research proposal (and my intention to use the new campus project as an instrumental case study to investigate architectural briefing), he made it clear to me that UCL Estates were ‘trying to keep the shell and core design as generic as possible, as if you were just doing an office building […] the priority is that this is a viable long term building not, “we are going to tailor it for the short term, for this generation of occupants”’. The rationale behind this approach was that the academic programme had not yet been finalised, that the majority of academic programmes in the new building would be new and therefore untested so their success rate would be unpredictable, and that UCL should take the long view as it would be leasing the land from the LLDC for 299 years with an option to extend the virtual freehold to 999 years. From the point of view of the UCL Estates team, uncertainty about what would

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54 Marshgate project architect, interview 30.8.2016
55 Senior UCL Estates project manager, interview 2016.07.04
happen in the building and the projected rate of churn could, and should, be sidestepped by instructing that ‘the new environment should allow flexible use in the short term, and adaptable use of space in the long term’\(^{56}\). This focus on the flexible and adaptable quantum of space to be delivered by UCL suggests an underlying assumption that space is a fungible commodity. This perspective on space was further exemplified by the following statement:

> I want to keep the design team focussed on the shell and core. If they start coming back and saying “oh we need to know the users’ needs” it means they are tailoring the building for the first generation of users. So that is fine for, what shall we call it, the medium term but once those users have moved out and changed etcetera, etcetera, we will have a building which has been tailored for their use and won’t be good for the next generation so we have to try and keep the team focussed on adaptability.\(^{57}\)

It was recognised by the UCL Estates team that this approach would result in some disappointment when it became apparent that the building could not accommodate all the requirements of the first generation of users but this was regarded as a price worth paying for a building that would ‘support the needs of UCL in the long term’\(^{56}\).

The UCL East Business Case refers to the development of a space strategy focussed on long term flexibility and adaptability, and ‘efficiency of use’\(^{58}\). It argues that ‘efficiency will be achieved by developing different operating models (including for research and teaching) where space is shared by, and curated for, all occupiers’\(^{58}\). At about the same time as the UCL East proposals were being developed, the discourse around ‘value for money’ initiated by the first UUK efficiency report in 2011 was gaining traction. Value for money, defined as ‘the achievement of economy (reducing the costs of inputs), efficiency (getting more output for the same or less input) and

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\(^{56}\) UCL East Strategic Brief, 2016  
\(^{57}\) Senior UCL Estates project manager interview, 22.08.2016 [despite this focus on adaptability it was acknowledged that it would be naïve to completely ignore the potential impact of academic activities on the generic shell and core design]  
\(^{58}\) UCL East Business case 2017, p74
effectiveness (getting better at what universities set out to do)\textsuperscript{59} was becoming something that had to be quantified by university estates departments. The Universities UK 2015 Report ‘Efficiency, effectiveness and value for money’ stated that universities will: ‘develop a balanced scorecard of metrics that will be used to demonstrate estates performance in efficiency and effectiveness, and report on these annually to improve accountability\textsuperscript{60}. This ‘set of robust metrics’\textsuperscript{60} was to be agreed by a stakeholder group including AUDE, HEFCE and UUK\textsuperscript{61}.

Although the UCL Space Utilisation Report used qualitative as well as quantitative methods, its use of metrics such as net internal area/student FTE, income/m\textsuperscript{2} and space utilisation (hours of use expressed as a percentage of the teaching day - typically 40 hours per week - multiplied by the percentage of occupied seats or workplaces) is clearly part of this narrative. Also notable in the UCL Space Utilisation report was the use of these metrics to compare space types (e.g. laboratories, teaching space, offices) across UCL faculties, to compare space use across institutions (e.g. the UK HEI Sector, and Russell Group Universities with excellent medical schools) and to compare UCL space provision with HEFCE space norms (adjusted in accordance with the Space Management Group model 2006).

HEFCE space norms ‘were based on observations and assumptions about how students in different disciplines were taught, such as how many hours and what type of teaching activity was needed, staff:student ratios and areas per workplace, for example the area per student in a lecture theatre or laboratory’\textsuperscript{62}. They were intended to ‘provide a point of departure for the process of assessment, not a rigid formula for the calculation of capacity’\textsuperscript{62} and have not been updated since 1990. The SMG 2006 report estimated that current space norms were approximately 20% below the 1990 UGC

\textsuperscript{59} Efficiency, effectiveness and value for money: insights from the UK and other Countries European University Association (EUA) Report 2018:5
\textsuperscript{60} Universities UK Report, Efficiency, effectiveness and value for money, 2015
\textsuperscript{61} Association of University Directors of Estates (AUDE), Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE), Universities UK (UUK)
\textsuperscript{62} UK Higher Education Space Management Project: Review of Space Norms, space management group, 2006, pp.3, 7 (quote from UGC 1974) & 4
HEFCE space norms. However, it stressed that due to the wide variation between institutions in terms of contact hours, opening hours, timetabling, teaching practices, and staff:student ratios, ‘it would not be appropriate to recommend a single set of norms across the sector’\(^{62}\). Instead, it provided a model in spreadsheet form to enable estates to make broad brush estimates of space requirements in a specific institution or department.

At a Critical Friends meeting in 2017, these kinds of metric were used to interrogate the Phase 1 building proposals and question assumptions in the business plan regarding student numbers.

**Academic 1:** My real question here is base-line figures we don’t seem to be using anything from estates that we know about so we can have an appreciation of what that figure is as a ball park figure, you know just to get a feel for - because at 500 you are talking about 6 square meters per student and I would like to know what other universities are that aggressive in their space utilisation

**Academic 2:** Chemical engineering at UCL

**Academic 1:** OK are the students happy? Can we manage the space?\(^{63}\)

Space charging systems designed to make the link between operational costs and the quantum of space ‘owned’ by a faculty or department transparent are recommended by funding councils to incentivise higher space utilisation (Neary et al., 2010, p. 8). However, the claim in the 2015 Universities UK Report that ‘drivers for efficiency and value for money are about more than just austerity’ is defensive in tone and the comment in the EUA 2018 Report that ‘the interpretation of efficiency and approaches to the assessment of its outcomes can differ greatly across the various actors and stakeholders’ indicates a general awareness that space management in universities is a contentious topic.

\(^{63}\) Critical Friends meeting, observation 26.04.2017
4.4.2 Engineered space

The term engineered is used here to mean ‘designed and built using scientific principles’ but ‘scientific’ is interpreted loosely to incorporate both the laws of physics such as gravity or thermodynamics, and systematically developed laws of construction such as building regulations relating to safety, accessibility and health. Although clearly, as a human invention, laws relating to construction are not constant in either time or place and continue to evolve in response to new knowledge and changing social priorities, nonetheless they tend to be used in similar ways to physical laws to pre-structure the design problem. In this model, design is seen as a process of ‘funnelling down’ or ‘filtering possibilities’ in contrast to the concept of design as ‘conjecture and test’ (Hillier et al., 1972) or ‘co-evolution of the problem-solution’ (Dorst and Cross, 2001).

In order to provide some structure to the task of providing 50,000m2 of space without yet knowing who the first generation of users was going to be, the strategic brief outlined a typology of academic workspace with provisional percentages informed by base-line data on the existing UCL estate. Variations from the base-line data such as increased workshop and catering space and reduced office and lecture space could be interpreted as indicative of an intended cultural shift.

Table 4-2 Categories of space

UCL East Strategic Brief, May 2016

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Space use</th>
<th>Specification</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Standard</td>
<td>Laboratory (light)</td>
<td>‘not dissimilar to standard commercial office floor provisions in terms of structural loads, building services, typical storey height and structural grid(s)’</td>
<td>60-65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Workshop (light)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teaching &amp; Seminar</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Studio/low spec workspace</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Office</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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64 Senior UCL Estates project manager, interview 19.09.2016
The servicing and structural requirements for these space categories were used to propose a number of design moves: specialist space including heavy facilities such as Imaging (which required very thick concrete walls) or facilities accessible to the public should be on the ground floor, with standard space on the intermediate floors and non-standard spaces which needed to be ‘highly flexible (large span) or highly serviced (high air extract)’ on the top one or two storeys of the building. However, although grouping the different categories of space into ‘three strata’, was highly rational in terms of construction and reducing the floor to floor height of the ‘standard floors’, resulted in cost savings, stratifying the building like a layer cake raised concerns among some academics who wanted to see more ‘academic vitality’ and argued that if the cake ‘was fully mixed it would be much tastier’.

What we are seeing at the moment is basically a scheme in which they are separating say the academic floor from the student floors, from the teaching floors and clearly this doesn’t enable us to realise the vision which is about research led teaching, breaking down the barriers, breaking down the bound - you know the

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Library</th>
<th>Non-standard</th>
<th>Specialist</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lecture theatre</td>
<td>'Enhanced structure and/or specific technical provisions above the standard'</td>
<td>Museum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workshop</td>
<td>35-40</td>
<td>Auditoria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laboratory (plus write up space)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Cat 2+ wetlabs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Museum</td>
<td></td>
<td>Specialist workshops</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Large event/exhibition</td>
<td></td>
<td>Large spans (&gt;9m) high spaces (&gt;4m) and high structural loading or specialist building services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catering</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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65 UCL East, Strategic brief 2016
66 UCL East Executive Group meeting observation, 22.11.2016
67 Academic Director, Interview 29.11.2016
barriers between teaching and research and enterprise which for us, sorry, which for us are not just words. It’s actually predating a new way of working which we don’t have in Bloomsbury because in Bloomsbury everything is stratified in the buildings we live in, the faculties live in their own individual worlds, so in silos, and we don’t want to replicate this at UCL East.67

Following consideration of the project parameters including adaptability, strict vibration requirements, and cost and programme constraints, the design team explored a variety of different structural strategies. The solution selected was a reinforced concrete frame on a 9 metre grid. This was justified on the following grounds:

Achieved via flat slab design, a 9m x 9m grid accommodates long spans with relatively shallow structural zones, even for significant uniformly distributed loads such as those allowed for in the design of the specialised labs at levels 7 and 8. This grid is structurally efficient and can resist proposed loads with reasonable thicknesses and economical quantities of reinforcement. Due to less columns, the spaces created are more adaptable, flexible and future-proof. A 9m x 9m grid accommodates a façade grid of 3 metres and an office planning grid of 1.5m.68

The floor plans are arranged around a central atrium and vary between 18m and 27m deep. The initial fit out plans illustrate block allocations of space for the different categories of space use, possibly informed by the deep footprints and core locations. Again, there was a concern amongst some academics that the building design would create spatial segregation between different activities. Noting the horizontal segmentation, the Academic Director commented that the plans were ‘very blocky, this is the cultural block, this is the professional services block, this is somebody else’s block’69. Although she recognised that the need for ‘space efficiency’69 was likely to be presented as a counter argument against the integration of different uses.

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68 Design and Access Statement, Reserved Matters planning application, 2018 p147
69 Academic Director, interview 29.11.2016
In the early stages of the briefing and design process, academics had requested floor plans in which no one would be more than 9m from a window to ensure access to views, daylight and natural ventilation, so when they saw the Stage 2 conceptual design scheme they questioned the proposed depth of the floorplans\textsuperscript{70}. The design team countered this challenge by arguing that narrower floorplates could not ‘effectively accommodate significant elements of the initial user requirements including laboratories; large teaching spaces and workshops; project spaces for up to 150 students’\textsuperscript{71}, claiming that a deep floorplan building with a low ratio of façade to floor area was more sustainable, cost effective and flexible, and that narrower floor plates would have an ‘adverse impact on collaborative, cross-disciplinary working due to loss of proximity/visibility between users and a dispersed arrangement of activities’\textsuperscript{71}. They also argued that the viability of the masterplan was predicated on relatively deep plan buildings so any significant change would ‘require a new Masterplan to be developed, with a consequent delay to the programme and associated costs’\textsuperscript{71}.

4.4.3 Sculpted space

There are two aspects to a sculptural approach to space – an appreciation of form and an appreciation of materiality. A sensitivity to both these aspects of architectural design was evident in the descriptions of the Marshgate building provided in documents from the tender submission to the planning application. The winning architectural bid for the Marshgate site stated:

Working within the massing parameters set out in the masterplan, our initial studies have investigated how this massing can be translated into a \textit{sculptural form} of sufficient strength to work in dialogue with the characterful buildings being developed for the Stratford Waterfront and the powerful forms of the Stadium, the Aquatics Centre and the AcelorMittal Orbit. \textsuperscript{72} \textit{[Italics in the original]}

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\textsuperscript{70} Correspondence between BSA and UCL Estates, 9.01.2017  
\textsuperscript{71} Argument summarised in Architect’s Briefing note on Building Massing and Scale, 30.08.2017  
\textsuperscript{72} Tender document 2016, Architectural Approach Section 2.7 p. 4
A key source of inspiration, what Darke might describe as a ‘primary generator’ or ‘designer imposed constraint’ (Darke, 1979, p. 38) referenced in both the tender documents and in the planning application submitted two years later, was Praise to Architecture IV, a sculpture carved out of alabaster by Chillida (See Figure 4-7).

![Figure 4-7 Praise to Architecture IV by Chillida](image)

A section on building appearance in the Design and Access Statement (DAS) reported that: ‘inspired by the studies of solid and void in the sculptural forms of the Spanish sculptor Eduardo Chillida, large scale primary openings are carved into the building volume’. The architects’ sensitivity to the sculptural qualities of space was also noted by an architectural critic: they ‘have claimed to see architecture with the eye of sculptors. They are never more at ease than when making things or putting things together in ways that need only a few words’ (Scalbert, 2009, p. 8). Another critic in the same monograph observed that the practice sees models as ‘essential design tools’ and has a long term interest in how ‘space and light are explored in

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73 Design and Access Statement, Reserved Matters planning application 2018 p. 132
I take a pencil and make marks on paper. I take pieces of card and hold them together, reconfigure, cut, pin, add, fold, subtract, assemble, carve, disassemble, reassemble. In each case the hand thinks. Sometimes there’s a mistake. One sketch elides with another to create something unexpected. A broken model suggests a new spatial arrangement. Accidents are part of the process. That is why we make models. Making by hand evolves before the brain has had time to set boundaries, enforce preconceptions. The craft of making things, whether drawings or models, is the essence of design. (Henderson, 2016)

Carving is a recurrent motif in the DAS and the Marshgate building is described as a ‘sculpted volume’ with ‘vertical communities or neighbourhoods’ comprising two or three floors given sculptural expression by the creation of shared breakout spaces opening off the central atrium. Each breakout space offers different views out over the city and the ‘shifting, overlapping nature of the spatial volumes’ is designed to give an individual character to each neighbourhood. This choice of words recalls Till and Stevens’ observations about architects search for artistic autonomy (Till, 2009, Stevens, 1998).

Careful consideration was also given to the choice of materials and methods of construction. For instance, the finishes proposed for the Fluid Zone elevations (both internal and external) were in-situ concrete cast in layers to reflect the layering of sediment in the fluvial Lea Valley, in reference to the industrial past of the Olympic Park site, and to blur the boundaries between inside and outside. The specification of weathering steel and board marked or exposed aggregate concrete was proposed to create a robust, ‘unprecious’ architecture with a characterful haptic quality.

In response to the Stage 2 brief for Marshgate, one Critical Friend suggested that ‘it might be prudent to say our strategy is to emulate MIT’s famous

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74 Design and Access Statement, Reserved Matters planning application, 2018 pp. 85, 54 & 56
“Building 20” innovative incubator facility. Brand used Building 20 as a prime example of a ‘Low Road’ building – that is a building which is ‘low-visibility, low rent, no-style, high turnover’ (Brand, 1994, p. 24). Building 20 was built in 1943 and only intended to be used until the end of the war but it’s unprecious construction, ‘one never needs to worry about injuring the architectural or artistic value of the environment’, (ibid., p. 28) turned out to have significant benefits for the university:

Its unusual flexibility made the building ideal for laboratory and experimental space. Made to support heavy loads and of wood construction, it allowed a use of space which accommodated the enlargement of the working environment either horizontally or vertically (Building 20 exhibition press release cited Brand, 1994, p. 24)

It is clear why Building 20 might be suggested as a precedent for UCL East, adaptable and interdisciplinary, it was never occupied by ‘any one school, department or centre ’(ibid., p. 27) and incubated a remarkable range of innovative work over the second half of the 20th century. However, Building 20 was ‘implacably ugly’ (ibid, p. 27) and LLDC discourse about the Cultural and Education District and its vision for the regeneration of East London had no place for ‘implacably ugly’ Low Road buildings. UCL East was intended as ‘another glittering jewel in the world class constellation of intellectual and cultural riches taking shape in the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park’

The reference to Building 20 also suggests an alternative interpretation of what ‘unprecious’ materials might mean. It is true that board marked in-situ concrete and corten steel are robust and weather well but they are also inflexible and difficult to adapt or repair unlike more ‘low rent’ materials such

75 Critical Friends correspondence 2.10.2017
as timber, plasterboard and paint. This point was remarked upon by building users in the fit out briefing meetings.

4.4.4 Lived space

The term lived space\textsuperscript{77} is used here in a loosely phenomenological sense to mean space as it is experienced by its inhabitants going about their everyday lives. Stakeholders who articulated this perspective focussed on the distinct relational and qualitative properties of space.

The dialogue around lived space on the UCL East project addressed two themes, the spatial configuration of the building and its physical qualities, for example light levels or acoustic performance. At a special meeting with the architects called to address feedback from the Bartlett on the initial design proposals (RIBA Stage 2), a senior academic made the case for more spatial diversity:

> The trick here is to create as much diversity of space as possible so that you have light spaces and dark spaces and quiet spaces and loud spaces, in the right proportions so that people can appropriate it for the use they need at the time they need it and that will be something that changes over time, different people and different groups will appropriate different space over time. One of the risks of - let's call it a modern architectural approach - is that you homogenise space\textsuperscript{78}

This feedback raised a concern that standardised workspaces (especially when combined with large open plan areas) could result in a factory floor feel and called for more spatial diversity, 'particularity and quirkiness'\textsuperscript{78}, to provide the distinct ecological niches needed to support the development of a diverse academic culture. Similar comments were made at an academic workshop where one participant referenced previous conversations in which the building was conceptualised 'as a kind of ecology or ecosystem of different

\textsuperscript{77} The 'lived space' perspective described in this section addresses the institutional affordances and constraints of the material building design so it has more in common with Lefebvre's spatial practices or 'perceived space' than it does with his concept of representational or 'lived space'

\textsuperscript{78} Client feedback meeting at architects' office, 14.12.2016
academic cultures\textsuperscript{79} and another suggested that the anticipated range of visitors to UCL East should translate into a diversity of space in the building because ‘not everybody is going to feel at home in the same way or feel welcome in the same way so we really need the building to reflect that - it’s quite a complex task for the building …’\textsuperscript{79}. UCL’s Inclusion and Diversity Policy was not referenced explicitly here, but it is relevant to this debate because it recognises that ‘reasonable adjustments’ for neurodiverse students and staff may include a spatial component.\textsuperscript{80}

The strategic brief stated that the design team would be expected to explore alternative models for the organisation of space including the possibility ‘that the building can be organised on the basis of use/activity zones as opposed to departmental areas of occupation e.g. zones for office/administration; teaching; workshops; exhibition etc. that are actively managed to be used and shared by different departments’\textsuperscript{81}. This statement references the ‘Learning Landscape’ model developed from the DEGW approach to office design in which spaces are provided for different types of activity for workers to use as and when they need them: ‘The Learning Landscape is the total context for students’ learning experiences and the diverse landscape of learning settings available today – from specialised to multipurpose, from formal to informal and from physical to virtual’ (Dugdale, 2009, p. 52). As indicated in section 4.4.1 this approach was viewed as a way to improve space efficiency. However, one senior academic observed that students, particularly post graduate students, come to UCL to gain a very specific learning experience with staff who work in a particular specialism and that this might be at odds with trying to avoid ‘turfs and boundaries’\textsuperscript{82}.

At a workshop in 2017, academics involved in the preliminary programming for UCL East were invited to discuss the concept of ‘home’ – ‘what is/are your

\textsuperscript{79} Marshgate Programme Planning workshop, 10.03.2017
\textsuperscript{80} Talk on Neurodiversity at UCL by Louise Grimmett, Disability and Specific Learning Differences Manager 29.11.2021
\textsuperscript{81} Strategic brief, 2016 p28
\textsuperscript{82} Senior academic, interview 27.11.2017
home/s and who are your neighbours?” As indicated by the structure of the question there are two interrelated issues being considered here, one concerns claims to territory – do individuals, programmes or institutes have a permanent ‘academic home’ or are they itinerant, occupying workspaces in the academic commons or centrally bookable spaces as and when required? The second issue concerns opportunities for co-presence – the role of space in academic identity, affiliation and opportunities for staff and students to learn in communities of practice (Lave and Wenger, 1991). One participant proposed that Marshgate ‘needs to be a mix of cross-working and dedicated activities. Like a Venn diagram with overlap areas - vertical and horizontal overlaps’. Another suggested that ‘this whole thing comes down to grain and the scale, open plan can work up to a point and is good up to a point and then beyond that it becomes isolating and becomes impersonal’. These concerns about ‘a sense of belonging’, co-location requirements and the spatial practices of academic work are discussed in more detail in Chapter 6.

4.5 Teleological reasoning: a 300 seat lecture theatre?

In the introduction to this chapter it was argued that achieving clarity of purpose is central to ‘setting the problem’ (Schön, 1991 [1983]). This section describes how different definitions of purpose were used to justify and contest the decision not to provide a 300 seat lecture theatre in the Marshgate building. Sandel argues that teleological reasoning can help us decide on questions of social justice - ‘Teleological comes from the Greek work telos which means purpose, end or goal’ (Sandel, 2009, p. 188). He gives the following example: when a university admissions officer is faced with the question of who should be offered a place at university, teleological reasoning, i.e. reasoning based on the purpose of the university should help them decide (ibid., p. 191). For instance (drawing on Neary and Saunders’ 5

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83 Marshgate Programme Planning Workshop, 10.03.2017
84 The term programme is semantically ambiguous. It is used in three senses in this thesis: 1. a series of coordinated projects, 2. an academic course and 3. a schedule of planned activities e.g. a construction programme. It can also be used as a synonym for brief (US) but it is not used in that sense here (except in describing the Boolean search terms in Appendix A.).
“historical ideal-types”), is the purpose of the university to educate the clergy, cultivate the minds of young gentlemen, drive industrial development, challenge the ‘hegemony of neoliberal capitalism’ or contribute to the national economy? According to Sandel, selection criteria should be informed by the answers given to these kinds of question. It seems clear that when faced with the challenge of designing a new university campus, a consideration of purpose, while not mapping directly onto the ‘statement of need’ (Blyth and Worthington, 2010, p. 15), is key to the design decision making process.

In developing the brief in parallel with the academic programme, the academic planning team asked themselves the question ‘how do we want to teach, do we want to teach in lecture theatres any more or do we want to teach in a new way?’ and came to the conclusion that having a 300 seat lecture theatre in the Marshgate building was not a priority. They reasoned that a large lecture theatre would not be used often enough during Phase 1 of the new campus to justify the loss of space for other kinds of academic activity. Space within the building was limited and this decision was characterised as a choice between traditional lectures and collaborative learning and project work. However, I was told that the question of a large lecture theatre had been brought up ‘again and again and again and we keep trying to put it to bed and it rises up because they are not satisfied with our response’. This difference of opinion was seen to arise from the fact that ‘different individuals have different sorts of understandings about what UCL East wants to achieve’.

I observed some of the arguments around the size of the lecture theatre at a project presentation in 2018. The architect was talking through the Marshgate proposals and when he got to the 120 seat lecture theatre on the first floor, a senior academic queried its size, referred to the demand for 200-300 seat lecture halls on the Bloomsbury campus and reported that staff at the Crick Institute were dissatisfied with the size of their new lecture theatre ‘which everyone thought was very clever but now turns out to be too small’.

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85 Senior Academic Planning Coordinator, interview 23.07.2018
86 Project presentation at UCL East Governance Working Group meeting,
He argued that the size of the Marshgate lecture theatre should take into account demand from the general public and professional groups, as well as projected UCL growth. He implied that provision of a large space for use in events and conferences was necessary to support the UCL East vision of public engagement and collaboration with industry. The Academic Director responded to this comment by reporting that the size of the lecture theatre was based on the need for lecture space arising from the academic programmes planned for Phase 1 and that UCL was in talks with East Bank partners, including the London College of Fashion about opportunities to share space, ‘they are interested in our making spaces and we are interested in their lecture theatre’.

This information received a mixed response, one senior academic who had previously answered his own rhetorical question ‘when John O’Keefe gets his Nobel Prize where does he give his lecture? Not at UCL East’ countered with ‘John O’Keefe at the London College of Fashion not UCL - we can’t host him on campus’. This retort raised a fundamental challenge to the radical concept of sharing space that was also evident in discussions about space allocations within Marshgate – the concern that institutional or academic identity and status could be undermined by the lack of an identifiable and permanent home (in a world of the Matthew Effect this is a serious concern).

A related argument in favour of a 300 seat lecture theatre was based on the assumption that the Phase 1 buildings, as the first UCL project on the Olympic park [sic], would need to attract teaching and research staff to work at UCL East. One senior academic argued that holding major social and

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87 The Matthew Effect of accumulated advantage describes how disproportionate attention and recognition is given to the work of established researchers. It is named after the bible passage in the Gospel of Matthew 25:29: ‘For to everyone who has, more will be given and he will have abundance; but from him who does not have, even what he has will be taken away’
public events at UCL East would be key to creating the right ‘vibe’ and proposed that every big name lecture to be held at UCL over the next few years should on the new campus rather than at Bloomsbury – and clearly a large lecture theatre would be necessary to make this possible. This stalemate was broken by the architect proposing a temporary pop-up auditorium as a meanwhile use on the Phase 2 site as a ‘way to have you cake and eat it’. This suggestion was accepted as a potential interim solution.

4.6 Summary

This chapter, introduced the UCL East project, gave an account of how the decision to build was justified, and described 4 different perspectives on the Marshgate design. The aim in doing this was to demonstrate that there may be different ways of framing a project, for deciding what aspects of the wider world could/should make a difference to the project, and therefore need to be taken into account in the briefing and design review process. For instance, does the project situation include mandatory spatial efficiency audits, UCL’s Inclusion and Diversity Policy, and Praise to Architecture IV by Chillida?

The list of different perspectives on space described in this chapter is not exhaustive. Other perspectives that could have been included relate to the management and maintenance of space (maintenance robots scaling the façade or ‘stupid’ light switches) and integration of UCL East into the wider urban context (iconic campus or ‘piece of city’, Sodexo or local food culture). Although these different perspectives are commonly attributed to professional stakeholders according to the conventional division of labour endemic in the construction industry, they are not unique to consultants. It is suggested that the different ways of pre-structuring the design problem described in this chapter address areas of concern for all stakeholders. And that the interesting question here is not which perspective is ‘right’ but how different perspectives are justified, and how skill in rhetorical argumentation influences

88 Project presentation at UCL East Governance Working Group meeting, 11.06.2018
the weight given to different perspectives and thereby impacts on design decisions and ultimately on project outcomes.

The discussion of perspectives also situates the question of purpose or ‘setting the problem’ to be solved. Purpose is only understandable in the context of a specific world-view (Checkland and Scholes, 1990, p. A7). In describing the debate over the whether to provide a large lecture theatre, this chapter indicated how perspectives on the purpose of the university informed the discussion. Macintyre argues that it is only possible to answer the question ‘what am I to do?’, if you can answer the prior question ‘of what story or stories do I find myself a part?’ (MacIntyre, 2014, p. 250). For instance, is the story of UCL East primarily about a move towards new ways of learning – defined by problems rather than disciplines, hands on practical projects and group study, and away from the ‘chalk and talk’ of traditional teaching methods? Or is it about shifting the centre of gravity of London eastwards and creating a stage for the great events of university life in Newham one of the poorest and most diverse local authorities in the country?

Finally, in referencing comments concerning the management of space, the organisational structure of UCL, ‘the way the money flows’ and the recommendation that the UCL East project should be seen as an opportunity to think again about the nature of the university and what it does, this chapter highlights the on-going internal deliberations about project scope. This subject is further explored in Chapter 6 which describes the fit out briefing process.

In giving an account of the three aspects of strategic briefing described above: framing or situating the project, defining the project purpose, and agreeing the scope of the project (which aspects of the problematic situation can be changed and which can’t) this chapter takes the first steps in developing the conceptual framework set out in Chapter 7.
Chapter 5 Deliberating on programme governance

5.1 Introduction

This thesis has characterised the briefing and design review process for UCL East as a ‘struggle for the idea of the university’ (Neary and Saunders, 2011). UCL East represented an opportunity to do things differently on an unprecedented scale. It was seen as an opportunity to ‘reinvent not just our university, but the concept of what a university is’ and the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park site was described variously as a ‘a blank slate’, ‘a blank canvas’ and a ‘blank sheet of paper’. However, although the narrative around UCL East drew parallels with the founding of UCL in Bloomsbury and its disruption to the ‘social status quo’, the situation was very different. The new campus is an extension of the existing university not an entirely new and independent entity, so the project governance and consultation process were inevitably embedded in the culture and governance of UCL. As noted in the introduction to this thesis, building projects are political and building can be ‘emotional for the client’ (Boyd and Chinyio, 2006, p. 71). Writing about hospitals, Chandra and Loosemore observe that building projects can become ‘a challenging arena where all the inherent tensions in the health sector are acted out, perhaps more passionately than in any other context because of the criticality and rarity of space opportunities offered’ (2011a, p. 223). UCL East represented a rare opportunity for UCL and space is a scarce resource on the Bloomsbury campus. The university has a ‘highly devolved culture’ and its ‘decentralised institutional structure facilitates a high degree of departmental autonomy’ (Addie and Paskins, 2016, p. 257).

As a multi-disciplinary, research-intensive university UCL employs eminent academics with widely different research practices and teaching methods. It

89 Vice-Provost’s View: UCL East - Imagining the future campus, UCL Coms 4.06.2015
90 Senior Academic Planning Coordinator, 23.07.2018
91 Senior UCL Estates project manager, interview 22.08.2016
92 Senior UCL Estates project manager, interview 15.10.2018 and UCL East Operations Lead, interview 15.04.2019
93 Marshgate Programme Planning workshop, 10.03.2017

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is therefore perhaps unsurprising that the struggle for the ‘idea of the university’ was particularly intense.

The previous chapter, gave an account of argumentation around different world views or perspectives on the problematic situation. This chapter, looks at how that argumentation was situated within the pre-existing institutional structures of UCL and how these structures informed the emergent project governance of UCL East. Erikson uses the image of swimming across currents to suggest the influence of larger scale social processes on local action in the here and now (Erikson, 2004, p. 113). This image is helpful in understanding the influence of cultural attitudes and informal relationships on day-to-day decision making, but this chapter also looks at something more like the ‘rules of engagement’. The analogy of rules is apt because institutional practices both enable and constrain local action and their impact is not predetermined but dependant on how the game is played. It is also useful in the context of this study to bear in mind Erikson’s concept of a mutually constitutive relationship in which the influence flowing between macro and micro social processes is bi-directional.

The first point to reiterate in this chapter is that entering into a partnership with the LLDC for the design and delivery of UCL East committed UCL to a site with challenging constraints, to meeting the LLDC aims for the Olympic Park, to accepting (at least initially) the way they proposed to assign responsibility for design and procurement of the Phase 1 buildings, and to working within their ‘incredibly ambitious...incredibly ambitious’\(^{94}\) programme for the East Bank. This created a situation in which the Phase 1 buildings had to be designed concurrently with the academic planning and the development of an operations strategy for the new campus. This time constraint created significant challenges for UCL and, as the kind of opportunity represented by UCL East occurs once in a generation, few people within the university had any experience of managing such a large

\(^{94}\) Marshgate project architect, interview 30.09.2016
capital project. Consequently, the project governance processes had to evolve in response to practical and political pressures as work proceeded.

You can’t design buildings without having a very clear idea of what you are trying to achieve and what you are trying to achieve concerns things like the academic programme so that the questions start coming out of the process, at which point people say “oh we need to get organised about this, we need to get our decision making sorted out in the right way” so that penny drops during the process […] it takes a while for the university to catch on to what is required in terms of governance, organisation and resourcing.95

As noted above, the LLDC had a significant influence on the design and delivery process for the UCL East masterplan and the Phase 1 buildings. There was a significant overlap between the UCL East Investment Objective 6 (informed by UCL 2034 Principal Theme 5): ‘to reinforce UCL’s position within London, to engage with local communities, and actively contribute to the positive economic development of the capital as a leading centre of learning, research, innovation and enterprise’96 and the LLDC’s strategic aims97 to:

- Redefine Stratford’s place in London’s economy as a new metropolitan centre for the capital
- Create access to opportunities for sporting, cultural and civic participation by international, national and local visitors
- Boost economic growth nationally
- Enhance education and skills attainment levels
- Raise local aspirations and improve external perceptions of East London
- Create sustainable local jobs and help people from East London access jobs elsewhere

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95 Senior UCL Estates project manager, interview 29.11.2016
96 UCL East Business Case 2017, p36
97 LLDC Strategic Objectives, 2015
However, although these aims for the new campus were not inherently incompatible, UCL and the LLDC clearly had different priorities and concerns, and the UCL East project was complicated by the LLDC’s plan to retain control of the Cultural and Education District (CED) development process. The draft Agreement for Lease (AfL) 2015 set out ‘the respective obligations of LLDC and UCL in respect of the design, planning applications, procurement and construction of the Masterplan and Phase One buildings’. This agreement split Phase 1 of the new campus project into three separate elements, masterplan, shell and core and fit out. The LLDC was to be responsible for the masterplan design, the design and delivery of the Marshgate shell and core, and managing all the planning applications. UCL was to be responsible for the design and delivery of Pool Street West and the fit out for Marshgate. However, in May 2016 concerns were raised regarding the ‘LLDC’s ability to protect UCL’s interests’ and working with the LLDC was described as ‘challenging’ at times and ‘very very wearing’. By December 2016, UCL was holding meetings with the LLDC to renegotiate the Heads of Terms for the AfL. The aim in renegotiating the AfL was that there should be ‘one design team, one management team and one contractor to deliver the Marshgate Phase 1 project’ and that UCL should be responsible for the design and delivery of both the shell and core and fit out for Marshgate. The drivers for this decision included the need to ‘retain control and flexibility over space requirements’ and ‘remove the risk of shell & core not meeting UCL requirements for fit out’.

As previously noted, the UCL White Paper 2011 acknowledged that, ‘Top-down prescription seldom works in any community, let alone an open and critical institution such as UCL’ and a key message from the UCL East team was that:

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98 UCL East Business Case, 2017 p65, 96 & 61  
99 UCL East Infrastructure Programme Board Meeting, 6.05.2016 minutes, item 11b  
100 Senior UCL Estates project manager, Interview, 27.02.2017  
101 UCL East – Estates and Infrastructure Summary Report – Update, 27.01.2017
The UCL East programme is committed to making decisions through a bottom up process. It regularly consults with members of UCL’s leadership team, the academic community, faculty teams and the staff and student population [...] on the business case, academic vision and wider design plans.

Although the academic vision for UCL East was developed following a peer review of submissions received in response to a university-wide call (in 2015) for UCL staff to ‘bid for research, teaching and public engagement space for Phase 1 of the campus’, the strategic decision to commission advice on the UCL Estate at Bloomsbury and subsequently initiate plans for a new campus in East London was led from the centre by the Provost and his leadership team. Council, UCL’s governing body is ‘responsible for the final stage of decision-making’ but it delegates ‘operational management of all aspects of UCL’s work’ to the Provost. However, the authority of the Provost is counterbalanced by the power of the Academic Board to advise the Council directly on all academic matters. This means that the Provost’s strategic leadership is constrained by the need to convince the academic community that he is acting within his authority and in the best interests of the university as a whole.

The previous chapter described how the case for the decision to build was constructed but it should not be assumed that this decision was uncontested. Some members of the School of Life and Medical Sciences (SLMS) who needed to be close to the UCL hospital to maintain the link between their research and clinical practice, made it clear that they would be unwilling to move out of Bloomsbury. They were, in any case, unlikely to be able to meet the high financial contribution target set for prospective new activities at UCL East. At the same time some academics who had no direct stake in the proposals became increasingly concerned that UCL East represented an unacceptable risk to the financial stability and academic reputation of UCL. As the project gained momentum and appeared increasingly likely to go

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102 UCL Comms on the new campus consultation, reported 25.04.2018
103 Information on UCL Governance, ucl.ac.uk/governance-compliance, downloaded April 2022
ahead, these academics began to raise their concerns more widely and campaign against the new campus proposals. The UCL East governance advisor observed ‘I have seen resistance to change in a lot of organisations, what I have never seen, I suppose I should be impressed, I have never seen an organisation been able to deploy its structures so well against change’\(^{104}\).

As well as those who argued that the campus project should be abandoned before it could put the future of UCL at risk, there was a group of Critical Friends (many of whom were based in the Bartlett Faculty of the Built Environment) who although supportive of the project in principle were concerned about the alignment of the initial design proposals with the project aims: to support cross-disciplinary working, integration of education and research, public engagement, and innovation. Their feedback covered a range of issues including site constraints, building configuration, maintenance and design quality.

Closer to home still there was a cultural divide between the people working with the consultants on plans for the new campus, the UCL Estates infrastructure team, and the academic planning team - ‘we are trying to work out how to interact with the academics because their culture is different’\(^{105}\). Neary and Saunders observed a similar issue in their study of the design and delivery of new teaching and learning spaces in universities, ‘there is a strong feeling among academics and estate staff that both work in different paradigms and speak different languages’. They also noted that problems of ‘miscommunication and misunderstanding’ were reported by both academics and professional services staff (Neary and Saunders, 2011, pp. 239-240).

Interviewees working on the UCL East project indicated that cultural differences had a negative impact on levels of trust and confidence in the briefing process.

While contending with these ongoing internal debates, the continued existence of the UCL East Campus programme, (the infrastructure project,

\(^{104}\) UCL East programme manager [governance advisor], interview 26.01.2018
\(^{105}\) Senior UCL East Estates project manager, interview 04.7.2016
the academic planning and the operations strategy) depended on a sequence of approvals from the UCL Finance Committee and Council to allow it to develop from the initial concept, first presented in the Bloomsbury Masterplan and the UCL White Paper, through iterations of the business plan to planning approval (and beyond). Consequently, the UCL East Executive Group can also be seen as an interest group within the university making the case for one vision of the future over another.

Newcombe observes that ‘the traditional view of the client as a single entity does not reflect the reality of stakeholder configurations for most projects’ (2003, p. 841). He also notes that changing social attitudes towards participatory decision-making are associated with a broader interpretation of ‘project stakeholder’ and argues that the way potential conflicts between multiple stakeholders are managed ‘gives a very strong political flavour to the project process’ (ibid., p. 842). This study focusses on *internal* stakeholders but even within this smaller arena, expectations of the project varied widely and the ‘political flavour’ of the project process was clearly evident.

There is an axiom regarding architectural projects, that building a building is more like winning an election than painting a painting. This chapter describes the ‘election campaign’ for UCL East. It begins by describing how the formal programme governance structure evolved in response to practical and political challenges and the intention that the project should be ‘academic-led’. It then gives an account of how the decision to build was contested, and how the initial designs were critiqued. Finally, it outlines how the multiple informal relationships within the project situation were managed, discusses the influence of trust, motivation and timing on the consultation process, and gives an account of the rhetorical work done by the UCL East Executive Group leading up to presentation of the updated business case to the UCL Council for approval.
5.2 Programme governance

UCL announced plans for a new campus on the Olympic Park in December 2014 and the first iteration of the governance structure for the new project (circulated in 2015) had two independent Boards reporting to the Provost, the Infrastructure Programme Board and the Academic Programme Board (see Figure 5-1). There were also two groups set up to support the decision-making process of the Infrastructure Programme Board and enable the programme team to draw on expertise from the Bartlett Faculty of the Built Environment. The role of the UCL East Academic Challenge panel was purportedly to ‘inform and influence the design and delivery of UCL East’\(^{106}\) while the role of the UCL East Campus Concept Group was to be ‘responsible for ensuring that the master planners correctly interpret the Project Brief’\(^{106}\). However, as the LLDC was responsible for the masterplan and (at this stage) the design and delivery of the shell and core for Marshgate there seems to have been a disjunction between the roles assigned to these groups and the means available to fulfil them.

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\(^{106}\) Campus Concept Group paper 2015
At this time the UCL East Executive Group was chaired by the Vice Provost for operations in his role as professional services lead (supported by the Director of UCL Estates). However, in September 2016 the Provost took over as Programme Sponsor and chair of the UCL East Executive Group meetings. At the Provost’s first meeting the recently appointed Academic Director requested more clarity in terms of her role and that of the Deputy Academic Director. She observed that now that the four functions sitting under the Executive Group had been defined (Infrastructure, Academic planning, Operations, Finance and Commercial) it was time ‘to consider the interactions between these functions’\(^{107}\). She proposed that the UCL East governance structure should be reconsidered in recognition of the fact that the new campus was ‘an academically led project’\(^{107}\). She stressed the need for more clarity on reporting lines and delegated authority for decision-making, and stated that ‘the structure that we have in place actually doesn’t reflect the academic nature of this project, and we feel it should’\(^{107}\). This assertion was supported in principle by the Executive Group subject to the details being agreed with the new programme manager (recently appointed to advise on project governance and due to start work in October 2016)\(^{108}\).

The Provost made it clear that in future the Academic Director and her deputy would be reporting directly to him and acting in his place thus explicitly confirming their position as client to the UCL Estates infrastructure project team\(^{108}\).

The Academic Directors’ concern about delegated authority for decision making was later validated by the new programme manager. She agreed that although the Academic Director and her Deputy had been appointed to demonstrate to the academic community that the UCL East project was academic-led and thereby encourage ‘buy-in’\(^{109}\), this had not been appropriately reflected in the governance structure at the time. She reported that the Academic Director and her Deputy were being told ‘oh but you are

\(^{107}\) UCL East Executive meeting observation transcript, 29.09.2016
\(^{108}\) UCL East Executive Group Minutes, 29.09.2016
\(^{109}\) UCL East programme manager [governance advisor], interview 30.01.2017
leading the programme, and so it was like saying to them go and drive that car but we are not going to fit you with a steering wheel”\textsuperscript{109}.

The programme manager appointed to advise on governance structures and processes made a clear distinction between programme and project. She referenced an approach to managing transformational change developed by the Office of Government Commerce (OGC) in which a programme is defined as:

A temporary flexible organisation structure created to coordinate, direct and oversee the implementation of a set of related projects and activities in order to deliver outcomes and benefits related to the organisation’s strategic objectives.\textsuperscript{110}

The UCL East programme was intended to function as a layer of management between the UCL Council and the individual project managers working on the different, but necessarily coordinated, UCL East projects [academic, estates, operations, and finance and commercial – see Figure 5.2]. The purpose of a programme is to develop the strategic vision, ‘where you want to go in the future’\textsuperscript{109}, and ensure that the projects are coordinated and kept on track to support that vision. In the language of the OGC the programme is about the ‘outcome’ and the projects are about the ‘output’. The programme manager saw her role as advising UCL on how to ‘get some programme management wrapper’\textsuperscript{109} around the UCL East projects. She observed that in the initial absence of clear procedures for decision making, information flow and management of the executive, the UCL East Estates team had been (with ‘good intentions’\textsuperscript{111}) stepping up to fill the gap with the result that the boundaries between programme governance and project management were becoming blurred.

The significant difference between the new programme governance diagram in Figure 5-2 and the previous diagram (Figure 5-1) is that rather than two

\textsuperscript{109} Guidelines for Managing Programmes, Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, 2010, p.3

\textsuperscript{111} UCL East programme manager [governance advisor], interview 30.01.2017
parallel work streams, the Infrastructure Planning Board and the Academic Planning team, reporting directly to the Provost, the infrastructure team now reported to the Academic Directors, effectively formalising their role as client acting on behalf of the Provost. The new programme governance structure also identified the project sponsors and project lead for each project and noted that the Academic Directors would be advised by the Estates Strategy Manager and have regular planning meetings with the Vice Provost as ‘Critical Friend and peer’\textsuperscript{112}.

\textbf{Figure 5-2 Organisational structure 2017}

Organisational structure based on diagram in Executive Group paper, January 2017 (The public engagement coordinator and Comms manager are not shown on this diagram but were also noted as accountable to the Academic Directors)

A wider view of the different types of groups engaging with the briefing and design review process for the new campus shows how it was proposed that

\textsuperscript{112} UCL East Programme: Structure and Governance Arrangements, January 2017 – presented at UCL East Executive Group meeting 27.01.2017
the UCL East programme governance should fit within UCL’s existing governance structures (see Figure 5-3).

![Governance Groups](image)

**Figure 5-3 Governance Groups**

(based on diagram in Executive Group paper January 2017)

This governance diagram makes a clear distinction between working groups, decision making groups and assurance groups. Programme assurance is defined as:

Independent assessment and confirmation that the programme as a whole or any of its aspects are on track, applying relevant practices and procedures, and that the projects, activities and business rationale remain aligned to the programme’s objectives.\(^{113}\)

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\(^{113}\) Guidelines for managing programmes, Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, 2010, Glossary p.23
The new UCL East programme governance structure was designed to provide a number of checks and balances both within the project governance process and from independent groups to minimise the risk of ‘group thinking’ and people ‘marking their own homework’. However, although the Academic Board had the opportunity to vote on the UCL East proposals, the mechanism through which the Critical Friends Group was to fulfil this assurance role was unclear.

As the overall project management structure was emergent, ‘so complex that the organogram doesn’t even fit on one slide’, and the governance diagrams referenced do not include informal lines of communication or mechanisms of influence, the account given above should not be taken as comprehensive. Nonetheless, it indicates how the episodes of argumentation described in the following sections were situated.

5.3 Contesting the decision to build

In April 2016, UCL reported that it had taken out a £280 million loan from the European Investment Bank to support a substantial investment programme. This investment programme, Transforming UCL, was described as ‘the largest capital programme in the university’s history’. It had a total budget of £1.25 billion and covered renovations and improvement works across the UCL estate as well as a number of major projects, the largest of which was the new campus at Stratford. Other UK universities were also investing heavily in their estates at this time, but UCL’s loan was reported to be the largest and academics raised concerns that the planned expansion was not financially sustainable and would put UCL’s reputation at risk. They also complained that ‘The traditional democratic ethos of UCL is being replaced by a top-down style of management’. In an attempt by objectors to control the narrative, a large number of documents were leaked to the

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114 UCL East programme manager [governance advisor] interview 30.01.2017
115 Senior academic at Symposium on Urban Rooms, 05.09.2018
117 ucl.ac.uk/transforming-ucl (downloaded 14.04.2022)
national press. One of these documents was a memo sent to UCL professors which called on them to act ‘to protect scholarship and teaching’ and claimed that ‘we can have a major impact on the decisions made by our so-called managers – but only if we act together in large numbers throughout 2017’\textsuperscript{118}.

Objectors to the expansion of UCL (like the UCL East programme team), used a range of different communication methods both formal and informal to campaign for their preferred course of action. One informal channel was an anonymous blog which called on readers to ‘Save UCL (again!) from the dangerous plans of senior management’\textsuperscript{119}. This stated that its main focus was to ‘oppose commercialisation, privatisation, and any target-driven, management-speak infested, surplus-focussed, expansion fetishizing, control-centralising’\textsuperscript{119} plans by UCL management. The new campus project, ‘a mysterious white elephant at Stratford’\textsuperscript{119}, was a prime target. While this blog represented a position of extreme mistrust, like the articles in the national press, it highlighted more general concerns about the financial risks of expansion and fears that ‘UCL is being run as a business not a university’\textsuperscript{120} and ‘that the pure spirit of rigorous, radical academic endeavour is being compromised by “suits”’\textsuperscript{121}.

Although the different faculties and departments at UCL have a high degree of autonomy, their continued existence depends on the financial sustainability of the university as a whole and because government research grants are linked to TEF and REF assessments, the loss of reputation resulting from the poor performance of any one department has the potential to impact negatively on the prospects of success for academics across the university. Consequently the UCL East programme manager observed that ‘there is a

\textsuperscript{118} Saveuclagain.wordpress.com, Joining the dots, 01.12.2016 & About: Saving UCL (Again) no date given (downloaded 29.01.2018)
\textsuperscript{119} Guardian 15.12.2016
\textsuperscript{120} UCL Professional Services Leadership Forum meeting 29 June 2017, Review of Internal Comms
fear of UCL East, a fear of change, a fear of what UCL East will do to the UCL brand. 

The perception of UCL East as an existential threat motivated certain factions within the University to use all legitimate means to contest the decision to build. The principal mechanism at UCL for challenging decisions taken by the Provost and his Senior Management Team is the Academic Board so in October 2017 a special meeting of the Academic Board was called to discuss UCL East. The meeting was held in the Kennedy Lecture Theatre in the Institute of Child Health (286 seats) and by the time the Chair began to speak most of the seats were occupied.

It was clear that the speakers on both sides of the debate were well prepared and skilled in argumentation - their efforts to gain control of the narrative about the new campus were impressive. Objectors concentrated on raising doubts and fears about the project, and mistrust of its proponents: is LLDC competent to manage the project? Is the £100m government funding secured? What is the predicted overspend? Are there contingency plans to raise further loans or sell off UCL property? Are any Private Finance Initiatives planned? Will there be redundancies? What is the teaching vision for UCL East and how will this be achieved? The senior academic speaking against the new campus noted discrepancies between the financial information on the project website and figures presented at the meeting, questioned the business case for the project observing that any financial forecast 'depends on what numbers you put in', referred to an earlier UCL Estates capital project that had to be abandoned because the numbers had

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122 UCL East programme manager [governance advisor], interview 26.01.2018
123 Membership of the academic board includes all UCL Professors and elected academics from across the university plus appointed members (specified institutional roles)
124 Questions recorded in paper for the Special Meeting of the Academic, October 2017
125 The Provost responded that the figures on the website were as approved by Council in 2014 and that the website could not be updated until the current figures had been approved ie the discrepancy was not an error but indicative of a time-lag resulting from following appropriate governance procedures.
126 Special Academic Board meeting, observation field notes 30.10.2017
‘not been correct’\textsuperscript{126} (implying that UCL East could be a similar failure writ large), and asked how the proposed new campus would affect existing departments - would it perhaps result in ‘falling standards?’\textsuperscript{126}

In contrast, the UCL East programme team aimed to demonstrate good faith, provide comfort and assurance about the business plan and generate enthusiasm and excitement about the new campus project. The Provost observed that UCL East was a ‘once in a lifetime opportunity’\textsuperscript{126}, drew parallels between planning the new campus in Stratford and the foundation of UCL in 1826, and argued that it was ‘key to the 2034 strategy’\textsuperscript{127}. He also referenced two core objectives of UCL East: ‘to provide the space for UCL to grow’\textsuperscript{127} and to ‘rebalance UCL’s profile of strength across all disciplines in line with the Academic Development Plan’\textsuperscript{127}. The Academic Director introduced herself as a professor of engineering who had been at UCL for 24 years and spoke with passion and conviction about the new campus project. She resisted the characterisation of UCL East as something ‘other’ and argued that ‘this is in the DNA of UCL, UCL is us’\textsuperscript{127}. She spoke of breaking down barriers, learning by doing, and creating a new type of building to provide teaching and research space to enable UCL faculties to collaborate on innovative transdisciplinary research projects.

The debate implied two very different positions on the new campus project. Was UCL East being driven by an autocratic senior management team with covert plans to increase UCL’s financial surplus through a massive expansion of teaching at the expense of its reputation as a research-intensive university? Or was it a ‘once in a lifetime opportunity’\textsuperscript{127} to provide innovative new facilities to support interdisciplinary collaboration and knowledge transfer, promote a ‘connected curriculum’\textsuperscript{128} (integrate education and research) and widen participation in higher education - led by academics committed to a comprehensive consultation process? Was UCL East a case of ‘misconduct and reckless adventurism’\textsuperscript{129} or a carefully considered

\textsuperscript{127} Special Academic Board meeting, observation field notes 30.10.2017
\textsuperscript{128} UCL Education Strategy 2016-21, June 2017 p7
\textsuperscript{129} Financial times 6 & 14.02.2018
proposal ‘building on our institution’s tradition of radical innovation’\textsuperscript{130} and necessary to maintain UCL’s global position at a time when ‘all our competitors are actively preparing for the future’?\textsuperscript{130}

Although the Provost made it clear that one of the aims of UCL East was to ‘rebalance the university’\textsuperscript{131} reference to this was notably absent from the arguments presented against the new campus despite the fact that it was presumably widely understood that a significant expansion could shift the disciplinary balance of power within the university. There was also silence in the meeting on the question of what other projects UCL’s resources might be spent on if plans for a new UCL East campus at Stratford were abandoned.

At the end of the meeting ‘a show of hands was called’\textsuperscript{132} and the Academic Board endorsed the financial management, the academic principles and the geographic location of UCL East. The chair asked whether the vote should be counted but ‘members did not feel this was necessary as the outcome was clear’\textsuperscript{132}. Having failed to halt the project through internal governance processes, objectors finally wrote a letter to the UCL Visitor\textsuperscript{133} alleging that ‘decisions over the college’s expansion plan – notably a proposal, known as UCL East, to build a new campus on London’s Olympic Park – were taken in breach of its rules’\textsuperscript{134}. However, following an investigation, the visitor reported that no ‘sustained or intentional infringement’\textsuperscript{135} of UCL’s constitution had been found.

5.4 Critiquing the initial designs

At the Academic Board meeting described above, the Academic Director reported that the UCL East programme team was working with Critical

\textsuperscript{130} Special Academic Board Paper, October 2017 p.11 & 6 \\
\textsuperscript{131} Special Academic Board Paper, October 2017 p. 2 \\
\textsuperscript{132} Special Academic Board meeting minutes 30.10.2017, item 1.18 & 1.19 \\
\textsuperscript{133} The University Visitor is a role based on medieval ecclesiastical law. The function of the Visitor is now largely ceremonial but the role was originally conceived to provide governance oversight and the Visitor can be called upon to resolve internal university disputes (Price and Whalley 1996). \\
\textsuperscript{134} Financial Times, 06.02.2018 \\
\textsuperscript{135} Guardian, 4.06.2019
Friends from the Bartlett to get their expert feedback on the architectural proposals for Phase 1 of the new campus. The Critical Friends were a small group of senior academics with skills and knowledge in design, complex construction projects, briefing and facilities management. In addition to consulting this core group, the UCL East programme team organised wider Critical Friend’s workshops to provide an opportunity for feedback on the initial designs – invitees included academics from all the faculties participating in the planned Phase 1 programmes (the membership and heads of terms of the Critical Friends group were agreed following negotiations with senior academics from the Bartlett\textsuperscript{136}). The programme team also held meetings with all the participating faculties to present the UCL East proposals to the wider academic community and invite questions.

Unlike some members of SLMS who feared the impact of UCL East on the university as a whole, academics within the Bartlett Faculty of the Built Environment were generally supportive of plans for a new campus at Stratford. The Bartlett had submitted 12 proposals for taught courses covering three themes gathered under the umbrella of Global Future Cities Co-lab. These courses were grouped into three themes: global future cities, value innovation and the built environment, and design-computer-manufacture. Consequently, the aim of the Critical Friends from the Bartlett was not to contest the decision to build but to ensure that the new buildings met their own course needs and the current and future needs of UCL as a whole. Academics at the Bartlett did not question the concept of a new campus in Stratford or the academic vision in principle but expressed concern about the masterplan and the Phase 1 design proposals, ‘the idea is amazing but I can’t see any of it in the design [...] I buy everything except the design’\textsuperscript{137}. This concern was articulated most clearly in a question about, ‘how the design would respond to the vision, how it will inform the pedagogy and act as a catalyst for different forms of teaching?’\textsuperscript{137}.

\textsuperscript{136} Executive Group meeting, observation 31.03.2017
\textsuperscript{137} Bartlett Faculty Board meeting on UCL East, observation fieldnotes 15.01.2018
The academics involved in planning the new taught courses for UCL East were enthusiastic about the potential benefits of the new campus and keen to engage with the briefing process to ensure that these anticipated benefits could be realised. They welcomed the proposal that the Phase 1 buildings would support new ways of working by, for example by ‘bringing the process of doing and making’\textsuperscript{138} into the arts and humanities, and social sciences, disciplines more traditionally associated with ‘a seminar culture or a lecture culture’\textsuperscript{138} and were excited by the opportunity to do ‘big things’\textsuperscript{139}, the kind of large-scale engineering projects that were not possible on the more constrained sites in central London. Academics who valued the interdisciplinary work already happening within some of the faculties at Bloomsbury were also enthusiastic about the possibility offered by the new campus of expanding cross disciplinary working practices to include different faculties from across the university.

The debate within UCL around the vision for the new campus: the need to give students a choice of enjoyable places to learn, to provide flexible space for projects, group work and interaction and to encourage academics and students to break out of disciplinary silos, engage with each other and with the wider community resonated with the Learning Landscape approach advocated by Dugdale who observes that:

\begin{quote}
Learning has become richer and more complex: technology is generating myriad new ways of learning and the tools to support them; students are seeking more collaborative and immersive experiences; and the demands of interdisciplinary research are stimulating new academic relationships and interactions; and learning is just as likely to happen in virtual space as in physical space. (Dugdale, 2009, p. 51)
\end{quote}

Dugdale argued that these changes required a new approach to campus planning; that universities should ‘maximise encounters among people, places, and ideas, just as a vibrant urban environment does’ (ibid., p. 52). However, several Critical Friends expressed concern that, contra to

\textsuperscript{138} Faculty lead UCL East, interview 4.12.2017
\textsuperscript{139} Campus Concept Group Meeting, 13.11.2014
Dugdale’s recommendation to ‘develop insights from user engagement’, there was a disjunction between the work being done on the academic programmes and the Phase 1 building proposals being developed by the design teams. The most extreme comment referred to ‘a massive divorce between the vision and the architecture and planning process’.

The official remit of the Critical Friends Group (CFG) was to review the designs at high level and provide ‘constructive advice, guidance and challenge’. However, at the first meeting the Chair informed the attendees that it had been made clear to her that the Group did not constitute a ‘formal design review panel’. On hearing this one Senior Academic asked whether there was a formal design review panel. The UCL Estates project manager responded that there was a CABE design review at the end of each RIBA Stage and that the LLDC Quality Review Panel (QRP) would also review the designs as part of the planning application process. He explained that the purpose of this mid-stage meeting was more about feeding information into the design process than reviewing a completed design.

Independent design reviews ‘conducted by people who are unconnected with the scheme’s promoters and decision makers’ (CABE, 2013, p. 7), are intended to supplement, not replace, internal design reviews and the Academic Director later asserted that she and the deputy Academic Director, had participated in the conceptual design review (RIBA Stage 2) and were following the project ‘every step of the way’ as representatives of the UCL East academics. Contra to the UCL Estates project manager, she implied that the Critical Friends Group had been set up to support the academic directors in fulfilling this role rather than just to feed information into the design process.

140 Senior Academic, interview, 4.12.2017
141 UCL East Pool Street West Critical Friend Group, Heads of terms, UCL East Executive group papers 25.05.2017. These meetings are referenced here because they addressed the Masterplan and Phase 1 design principles and project governance as well as the Pool Street West proposals
142 Critical Friends meeting, 26.04.2017
143 Critical Friends meeting, 26.04.2017
It is notable that there was a striking difference of tone between the positive feedback on the design proposals received from the LLDC Quality Review Panel (QRP) and the concerns raised by some of the internal stakeholders who were actively engaged in developing the academic vision for UCL East. An interesting feature of this disparity of opinion was that it existed within the discipline of architecture. Academics from the Bartlett were perhaps the most vehement critics of the proposals that their professional colleagues on the QRP so warmly commended - ‘the architecture proposed for UCL East – Marshgate Plot 1 is exceptional. The panel has no hesitation in concluding that it will meet the requirement of Policy BN.10 for “outstanding architecture”’. The QRP noted that ‘the building provides delightful, generous spaces’ and looked forward ‘to seeing the passion and conviction evident in the design followed through to construction’. In stark contrast, internal feedback claimed that ‘there is no discernible design vision for this building’ and that Marshgate is a ‘deeply flawed scheme, based on a flawed brief’. This suggests that the proposals were being judged on different criteria. I refer to this critical divergence again in Chapter 7.

The CFG meetings held in the spring of 2017 were organised to discuss the initial Pool Street proposals. However, at the first meeting members of the group made a point of commenting on the masterplan and the poor connectivity of the site with its limited and pedestrian unfriendly connections to the rest of Stratford. This expansion of the remit of the meeting was resisted by the project manager.

Project manager: We have to remember that the focus of this group is about Pool Street

Senior Academic: Ah no no, hold on, the focus of this group is about UCL East

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144 Report of Formal Review Meeting on UCL East, LLDC Quality Review Panel, 17.05.2018
145 UCL East: Feedback from user group review sessions, professional view of attendee reporting on Stage 3 user group sessions, November 2018
146 Correspondence from Bartlett School of Architecture director to UCL East project team, 17.11.2016
Critical Friends also sought assurance that their recommendations would be taken into account, ‘how will this sort of question be taken forward?’ \textsuperscript{147} ‘I have a horrible feeling that there isn’t a mechanism for this [guidance] to be properly taken on board at top level’ \textsuperscript{147} This concern arose in part from the feeling that many of the points made at the CFG meetings had been raised by the Academic Challenge Panel the previous year and that ‘none of it seems to have been followed through at all’ \textsuperscript{147}.

This implication that the Critical Friends were not being heard was resisted by the UCL East programme team. At the first meeting a senior academic (also a practicing architect) had observed that the site was ‘very hostile and isolated’ \textsuperscript{147} and strongly advised that UCL should put pressure on the LLDC to improve the physical connectivity to adjacent neighbourhoods. At the second meeting the Critical Friends were informed that the recommendation to take a strong line on improvements to the quality and accessibility of routes into the UCL East site had been taken to ‘the highest possible level’ \textsuperscript{148} and Council had given the Director of Estates a mandate to push hard when negotiating with the LLDC on this issue. UCL’s representation at various LLDC meetings had also been revisited in an effort to ensure that concerns about the urban design and connectivity of the wider area were adequately addressed.

Feedback and questions from the Critical Friends meetings held in Spring 2017 addressed two main themes. First, as outlined above, project governance: the design review process, and access to information (for example the brief and Stage 2 Report), and second, project aims and design proposals: congruency between the designs and the academic vision, the spatial practices associated with university culture, and the ‘hostile and

\textsuperscript{147} Critical Friends meeting, observation, 26.04.2017

\textsuperscript{148} Critical Friends meeting, observation 08.05.2017
isolated\textsuperscript{147} character of the site. Several key points were made including the limited number of blue badge parking spaces proposed and the importance of ensuring that the Global Disability Innovation Hub (GDIH) was exemplary in terms of accessibility. This was considered particularly important due to the high bar that had been set by the inclusive design of the Olympic Park and the embarrassment and reputational damage that would result if a disability conference had to be held at Bloomsbury because people with disabilities could not access the GDIH on the UCL East site. Similar concerns regarding congruency with the academic vision were raised in relation to the energy strategy and sustainability of the design proposals.

One Critical Friend queried whether the brief (prepared as an output of RIBA Stage 2) defined the quantum of space required to deliver the academic courses as set out in the Business Case and the assumptions on which it was based - such as the percentage of single occupancy offices provided. The Academic Director assured the meeting that the space requirements for the new courses had been modelled with the help of the previous architects (working as part of the masterplan team) but acknowledged that there were issues with the workspace strategy and reported that a Pool Street user group had been set up to review how to make this work.

Picking up on the contested question of single occupancy offices another Critical Friend noted that there was a correlation between very successful architecture schools and busy places where academics want to ‘hang around’\textsuperscript{149} and argued that the key challenge for the UCL East programme team was how to encourage academics to come to the new campus and spend time there, ‘getting people to stay in the building should be your number one concern right now’\textsuperscript{149}. He observed that when the Bartlett had temporarily relocated to open plan offices in Hampstead Road, ‘everyone disappeared, no one came in’\textsuperscript{149}.

\textsuperscript{149} Critical Friends meeting, observation 08.05.2017
In response, the Pool Street architect commented that Bloomsbury was a ‘pretty woeful example of space utilisation’\textsuperscript{149} with people hanging onto offices they barely used and offered an alternative perspective on space efficiency and academic culture by arguing that ‘if you want to create something that has the critical mass we are talking about you have to commit to a different way of working’\textsuperscript{149}. However, he agreed to explore day-to-day scenarios of use, ‘when we get a more detailed brief’\textsuperscript{149}.

The issues raised at these meetings foreshadow some of the later discussion in the fit out briefing workshops recounted in the next chapter and indicate a sense of unease about the level of uncertainty generated by working concurrently on the academic planning, business case and building design, and the lack of an LLDC masterplan for the wider area. In the absence of immediate answers to the questions raised about how the Phase 1 buildings would operate, the outcome of the CFG meetings was a tracker document listing items for future review and action.

\section{5.5 Managing relationships}

The previous sections outlined the emergence of the formal project governance structures for UCL East but building projects are also characterised by informal lines of communication\textsuperscript{150} and the maintenance of day-to-day relationships. At the start of the Critical Friends meeting described above, the chair noted that the meeting was a forum in which ‘we can be critical of what we see’\textsuperscript{151} but that ‘you have got to stay friends at the end of the meeting’\textsuperscript{151}. This was a reminder that unlike consultants who can move on to the next project, people within the client organisation have worked together in the past and will usually continue to work together. Vickers suggests that fulfilling a professional role involves the ‘maintenance of relationships in time’ and argues that institutional decision making is about the ‘setting of governing relations or norms’ rather than the setting of goals.

\textsuperscript{150} ‘We have our formal committee meetings and all of that but actually what gets most traction and allows us to speed up most is coffee, chats over coffee or things like that’ Senior Academic Planning Coordinator, interview 23.07.2017

\textsuperscript{151} Critical Friends meeting, observation 26.04.2017
Inspired by Vickers, Checkland recommends asking ‘what relationships in the network will be affected by doing this project? What is the current state of those relationships? How will they be affected? What second-level (enabling) activities are therefore required?’ (Checkland and Scholes, 1990, p. 94). Checkland and Vickers use the term ‘relations’ broadly to encompass both material and social relations and this makes their advice particularly pertinent to architectural briefing and design. Vickers’ conclusion that ‘the individual decider can no more be studied in isolation than the individual decision. The mental activity and the social process are indissoluble’ is also useful to bear in mind in the context of this study (Vickers, 1965, p. 15).

The task of guiding the new campus programme through to the reserved matters planning approval involved the management of a complex network of relationships both internal and external to UCL. For instance, the UCL East Business Plan was premised on Treasury approval of the LLDC’s Business Plan for the Cultural and Education District (CED) as a whole. Consequently, it was necessary for UCL to work with the LLDC (and the other CED partners) to help them convince senior civil servants and central government that the CED was a worthwhile investment and that UCL’s vision for a new campus at Stratford was aligned with the LLDC’s strategic aims for the regeneration of east London.

The UCL East programme team was acutely aware of the wide range of internal and external stakeholders interested in the new campus project and particularly sensitive to stakeholders with the power to influence project outcomes. The team assessed potential methods for communicating with each stakeholder, from UCL and LLDC management bodies to future students and staff, local residents and workers, and carefully considered how best to keep these diverse stakeholders informed and generate positive thoughts and feelings about the UCL East project. The effort expended on each relationship was relative to the level of interest and influence of the stakeholders concerned. High interest, high influence stakeholders such as UCL Council, and Finance Committee were kept informed through special
reports, presentations and one to one meetings with the Provost or the Finance Sponsor, while communication with stakeholders working directly on the project generally took place through regular meetings, workshops and distribution of minutes. UCL communications, press releases and presentations were used to make information about the project available to the university as a whole and target relevant groups in the Stakeholder Engagement Plan.

The project message was also tailored to address the anticipated concerns of each stakeholder regarding issues such as: adherence to the academic vision, value for money and transparent and effective governance (UCL Council, Finance Committee), openness to challenge and advice (Steering Group, Academic Board, Critical Friends, Design Team, Auditors), strong business case, alignment with LLDC strategic objectives and willingness to work in partnership (LLDC), high quality design and ability to meet Section 106 targets\(^{152}\) (LLDC Planning Decisions Team and Quality Review Panel) positive local impact: economic, social and cultural (local politicians, residents, workers, visitors), and UCL East as an attractive place to work and study, key to fulfilling UCL’s strategic objectives and ‘not to the detriment of Bloomsbury activity, present or future’ (UCL staff and students)\(^{153}\).

Baym coined the term ‘relational labour’ to describe the work involved in building relationships through ‘regular, ongoing communication’ (Baym, 2015, p. 16). A notable amount of relational labour was expended on the UCL East project. In fact the programme manager [governance advisor] observed that ‘80% of what we do is building relationships and 20% is about having processes’\(^{154}\). One indicator of the importance placed on building relationships and managing the flow of information to a wide range of stakeholders was the presence of representatives from CAM

\(^{152}\) Section 106 agreements (S106) are negotiated between developers and Local Authorities and set out the developer’s obligations in relation to a planning approval – for example contributions towards the cost of local infrastructure improvements.

\(^{153}\) UCL East Stakeholder Profiles and Map, Executive Group papers 31.10.2018

\(^{154}\) Programme Manager [Governance advisor], interview 26.01.2018
(Communications and Marketing), PACE (Public and Community Engagement) and DARO (Development and Alumni Relations) at the UCL East Executive Group meetings. CAMS in particular was responsible for ‘communicating the journey towards the UCL East vision to internal and external audiences, sharing information with the Communications Task Group; and, ensuring all communications work towards building UCL’s reputation and strengthening our position’\textsuperscript{155}. The UCL East Communications Task Group was intended to be the only source of content ‘making it easier to control UCL East image/reputation’\textsuperscript{155} and manage potential crises.

This thesis explores the role of argumentation in architectural briefing and the approach recorded in the UCL East Stakeholder map illustrates a classic feature of rhetorical argumentation – the focus on matching argument to audience, on selecting the right argument to convince a particular audience. The generic aim of convincing stakeholders to actively support (or at least not obstruct) the UCL East project is given specific form depending on who is being addressed. In order to do this, it is necessary to construct an idea of each stakeholder and how they might respond to the proposals for the new campus. This task requires an understanding of the project situation, existing stakeholder relationships and the interpretive repertoires in play. The following sub-sections give an account of three aspects of stakeholder relations – trust, motivation, and timing.

5.5.1 Trust

Building projects do not start with a tabula rasa. They are conceived, designed and constructed within a given situation. The proposals for a new campus in Stratford were developed at a time when there were a number of anxieties and discontents simmering within the university. These included concerns associated with TOPS (Transforming our Professional Services) reform, a pensions shortfall, the discretionary accounts policy, a contribution target of 5.5%, ‘I was never prepared to ruin people’s working lives by

\textsuperscript{155} UCL East Programme: Structure and Governance Arrangements Workstream overviews
becoming a five-and-a-half-percenter\textsuperscript{156} and a feeling that the ‘the traditional democratic ethos of UCL is being replaced by a top-down style of management’ \textsuperscript{156}. The challenge for the UCL East programme team was therefore to build trust and confidence in the new campus project at a time when some of their colleagues were disinclined to give any proposals supported by the UCL senior management team the benefit of the doubt and liable to associate them with ‘certain wider anxieties’\textsuperscript{157}.

Hudson et al explore the role of trust in knowledge transfer, specifically ‘the knowledge that facilities managers have of the ways in which buildings and infrastructure can support organizational function’ (2006, p. 243). They argue that trust is necessary for ‘effective communication and timely decision making’ and refer to ‘honesty/openness in communications’ as one of the key dimensions of trust (ibid., pp. 244-245). The relationship between trust and open communication is bidirectional with open communication understood as a means of building trust and trust understood as a facilitator of open communication. Consequently, the manner in which information is given and received, and the timing and sequence of information transfer can be interpreted as an indicator of trust and trustworthiness (or lack thereof).

Chandra and Loosemore argue that constructive conflict is a critical driver in the attempt to reach a common understanding of the project (2011a, p. 223). However, as noted by a UCL East project manager, trust is a necessary pre-condition for constructive conflict, ‘you have got to build that relationship of trust before you then challenge people’ \textsuperscript{158}.

The significance of trust on the UCL East project was first raised by a project manager recalling his surprise at the number of technical meetings that the new Academic Director was attending. He reported that he had asked why she felt the need to come to so many meetings and she had made it clear to him that (at that time) she did not trust the UCL Estates infrastructure team to

\textsuperscript{156} Professor MacAllister, Director of the Faculty of Medicine on ‘UCL’s policy of increasing its budget surplus to 5.5% of income’, Financial Times 15.12.2016
\textsuperscript{157} Senior academic interview 21.01.2019
\textsuperscript{158} Senior UCL East project manager, interview 27.02.2017
represent the academics’ interests. Lack of trust between the academics and the estate team was also evident in the request at the Critical Friends meeting in 2017 that the updated brief and Stage 2 Report be released for internal review and comment, and in what was experienced by the UCL Estates project managers as micro-management by the academics.

If, as suggested above, a request for information can be interpreted as an unwillingness to take things on trust, a perceived reluctance to release information can be interpreted as a sign of untrustworthiness and raise doubts about hidden agendas or professional competence. The anonymous writer/s of Save UCL Again complained that the paper prepared by the Provost and the UCL East Executive Group in response to questions about the new campus was only issued on the morning of the special UCL East Academic Board meeting. They interpreted this as a deliberate attempt to ‘prevent proper scrutiny and preparation by members of the Academic Board’\(^ {159}\).

The timing of information release is therefore another contested topic - should work-in-progress information be released with the associated risk that it could be misinterpreted and set hares running, or should it be withheld until a specified threshold of certainty is reached with the associated risk of damaging trust and stakeholder relations by leaving an unexplained gap in the flow of communications? Both positions were expressed in early UCL East Executive meetings:

> My personal instinct is to keep it to our chests at the moment because it is being seen in isolation, because it refers to some principles which may be misinterpreted …\(^ {160}\)

> My view is that more communication, even if it is not definitive, I think would be helpful otherwise people will assume the worst rather than the best\(^ {161}\)

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\(^ {159}\) Saveuclagain.wordpress.com, update on Academic Board special meeting 30.10.2017

\(^ {160}\) UCL East executive meeting, observation 24.03.2016

\(^ {161}\) UCL East executive meeting, observation 28.04.2016
Franck et al observe that the systemic anxieties associated with uncertainty in complex building projects have to be managed to maintain a space for creativity (Franck and von Sommaruga Howard, 2010, p. 82). The paradox is that anxiety can be produced by both too much and too little information so decisions about what information to communicate and when, are based on pragmatic situated judgements that and have to be weighed against local norms for governance, accountability and assurance. Although the examples referred to above are comments by members of the Executive Group, it should be noted that decisions about the timing and extent of information transfer are routinely deliberated on by stakeholders communicating ‘up’ as well as ‘down’ and there is a delicate balance to be maintained between the due diligence required for adequate assurance and creating ‘a drag on the programme’ by opening up every decision to stakeholder review and comment.

Cuff uses the related term rapport rather than trust and focusses on the relationship between the client and architect, but her point, that establishing positive relations is not a one off event but an ongoing process ‘throughout the period that participants work together’ (Cuff, 1992, p. 25), can also be applied to the relationships between stakeholders. Trust can be lost or gained and ongoing relational labour is required to maintain a functional level of trust.

5.5.2 Motivation

The introduction to this section, suggested that in order to tailor arguments supporting the UCL East project to specific audiences, the programme team would have had to construct an idea of the stakeholders concerned. Narrative theory suggests that this would entail consideration of their rights and duties (‘obligation world’), their fears and desires (‘wish world’) and their knowledge, ignorance and beliefs (‘knowledge world’) (Ryan, 1991, p. 111). Arguments in support of the UCL East project recorded in the stakeholder map are designed to address the assumed stakeholders’ worlds such as the

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162 Senior UCL East project manager, Interview 22.08.2016
Council’s obligation to ensure ‘transparent and effective government’, local politicians’ desire for positive change ‘economic, social and cultural’, and the Critical Friends’ doubts that the UCL East programme team is open to ‘challenge and advice’, that their feedback is being heard.

Ryan’s concept of stakeholders’ ‘worlds’ was referenced above to indicate how arguments justifying the plans for UCL East were tailored to specific audiences. The concepts of ‘obligation world’, ‘wish world’ and ‘knowledge world’ are also helpful in discerning stakeholders’ diverse motivations for engaging in the briefing and design review process. Internal stakeholders were motivated by a sense of their rights and responsibilities based on their professional position or affective relationship with the university, by their desire for a new kind of inclusive, cross-disciplinary university or their fear that the financial stability and academic standards of UCL would be undermined. Differences in knowledge worlds also drive engagement if stakeholders believe that the people in a position to act do not have the knowledge they need to make the right judgements in determining project outcomes. Conversely, in the absence of perceived rights and duties, felt fears or desires or an assumed knowledge differential, stakeholders are less motivated to engage in the briefing process. There is of course also a fourth condition to be taken into account, whether stakeholders trust, or at least hope, that their engagement will make a positive difference to project outcomes.

Engagement takes time and emotional energy. An elderly resident on the Carpenters Estate speaking about her participation in UCL’s consultation process reflected ‘I get too upset when I am told because this is my life really isn’t it?’\textsuperscript{163} Clearly for her the stakes were particularly high but all engagement has some costs. UCL academics were conscious of expending ‘precious time and energy’\textsuperscript{164} on the UCL East project and some found the experience dispiriting when it appeared that their ‘challenge and advice’\textsuperscript{165}

\textsuperscript{163} BBC Inside out – Carpenters Estate 19.12.2012
\textsuperscript{164} Senior academic, correspondence 4.10.2017
\textsuperscript{165} UCL East Stakeholder Profiles and Map, Executive Group papers 31.10.2018
was having a limited impact on the briefing process. In these circumstances internal stakeholders may feel increasingly reluctant to stake their social capital on the project outcome.

Stakeholder mapping is necessarily an inexact art because most stakeholders will have a complex admixture of responses to a proposed building project. However, its reliance on a theory of mind has interesting implications for the role of argumentation in architectural briefing. Writing about narrative and plot, Ryan introduces the ‘concepts of goal and plan which together define the intent (l-world) of characters’ (Ryan, 1991, p. 123) and makes the crucial point that we can be wrong about other peoples’ (obligation, wish, knowledge and intent) worlds, either because we are deliberately deceived like the crow in Aesop’s fable of the Fox and the Crow (ibid., p. 157) or because we make false assumptions about the motivations of others. An interesting concept from discourse analysis is the idea that in a dialogue between two people each conversational turn constitutes an interpretation of what was said in the previous turn. Argumentation designed to address the assumed motivations of different stakeholders brings these assumptions about motivation to the table, however indirectly, and can thereby alert stakeholders to their existence and provide an opportunity for incremental clarification (correction or confirmation) as each conversational turn is interpreted and each interpretation constitutes the following turn.

5.5.3 Timing
There is a disjunction between the regular measured time (chronos) of project programmes and the lived experience of time working on a project, which is not uniform but dense or attenuated and pervaded by judgements about the opportune moment to act (kairos). Lantz and Just argue that ‘the rhetorical framing of time is central to decision-making’ and conceptualise kairos as both ‘the time that is right for speaking and the time made right by speech’ (2021, pp. 1 & 3). This duality is conceptually useful but in reality the distinction between recognising that the time to act has arrived and speaking up to convince others to seize the moment, and the deliberate use of persuasive speech to construct the ‘right moment’ to act is not binary with
individual instances of persuasive discourse falling across a continuum in which the boundaries are blurred, ‘kairos is neither purely determined by organisational context nor can it be freely constructed by communicators’ (ibid., p. 13). Lantz and Just’s work focusses on how the present moment is discursively established as ‘the right time for deciding’ but the opposite strategy was also apparent on the UCL East project with calls for action being deflected by the argument that now is not the right time for deciding, that it was either too early or too late to address the issues raised: ‘Whenever I/we make some suggestions the comment that always comes back is that that was bottomed out in Stage (current stage minus 1) and they can’t go backwards’\textsuperscript{166}

Paying attention to the question of time highlights some interesting features of the UCL East project. UCL was already looking for a new campus site when the LLDC proposed the Olympic Park site and made the ‘limited time offer’ of a £100m government grant to sweeten the AfL deal. However, this offer came with a programme attached which, at least initially, ceded control of project timing to the LLDC. This gave extra force to the chronos of the project programme and the usual restrictions on ‘going backwards’ such as outline and reserved matters planning approval and the associated time and cost penalties of making material amendments to approved designs. However, when the LLDC notified the UCL East programme team that there would be a delay in submitting the outline planning application, this was framed by internal stakeholders as an opportunity for UCL to pause and review the RIBA Stage 2 plans for the Marshgate shell and core, to say ‘let’s just hang on a minute here guys because we need to be clear about what we are doing here’\textsuperscript{167} and ‘test and validate certain concepts’ to check the alignment of the proposed scheme with UCL’s strategic aims for the new campus. Questions had been raised about the deep plan layouts and whether the stratification of space, with different types of activity located on different levels, would constrain opportunities to integrate research and education (the ‘connected curriculum’). There was also concern about the

\textsuperscript{166} Critical Friend correspondence 4.10.2017
\textsuperscript{167} Senior UCL Estates project manager, Interview 29.11.2016
functionality of the Fluid Zone which was being compromised by plant and back of house space. The argument that a projected 3 month delay in submitting the masterplan outline planning application was an opportune moment to review the brief, the budget, the programme and the relationship with the LLDC was generally accepted. Nonetheless this pause for review was described to me as the ‘first odd event in the project process’167.

The pause described above was called to review strategic issues around the shell and core design but the timing of internal consultation on the fit out of Marshgate also shifted against the programme to accommodate the challenges of working on the building design concurrently with academic planning, developing the operations strategy and updating the business case, ‘of trying to agree the plan while things were moving so the plan never settled’169. A more detailed account of the Marshgate fit out briefing process is given in the following chapter, but it is notable that the programme for the RIBA Stage 3 Fit out design was extended to the end of October ‘to allow time to resolve the space challenges identified and the implications for the business case’169, address the multiple issues raised at the mid-stage user group meetings held in May 2018 and to fill in gaps in the information provided to the fit out team. This extension could be characterised as the second odd event in the project process.

The months between the midstage meetings and the end of RIBA Stage 3 (Marshgate fit out) were described as ‘a time of great turbulence’168. Confidence in the lines of communication between the consultants on the design team, the UCL Estates infrastructure team, the academic planning team and the academics working on programmes for UCL East, (and in the project tracking documents) was eroded as conversations were repeated ‘again and again and again’168 and there also was some confusion about which changes had been instructed and which had not. In August 2018, the UCL East infrastructure project board recommended replacing the external

168 Senior Academic Planning coordinator, interview 10.12.2018
169 Executive Group Minutes 24.07.2018, item 2.1
The new project managers had a more proactive and explicit management style and this was reported to have had a positive effect on academics’ confidence in the project process. Nonetheless, in October 2018 a member of the UCL Estates team expressed frustration that the design direction was still being challenged and suggested that the time for dialogue had passed - that it was no longer productive:

> It is all very interesting to debate you can debate these things as long as you want, that’s all very interesting but that’s not very helpful in the context of a programme that needs to deliver something by a certain date, if we want any hope of doing what we say we are trying to do you know at some point we have to stop talking about it and get on with it and that is quite a hard message to convey.

This comment indicates a cultural difference in attitudes to time with the Estates team professionally committed to delivering the project to programme and the academics more focussed on the contingent usability of the design proposals (Fenker, 2008) and less conscious of the penalties of delay. It also indicates that persuading internal stakeholders that the ‘right time’ to act should be determined by the project programme can be challenging in the face of arguments that the programme should be adjusted in response to new information or concerns about design direction, that establishing the ‘right time’ (kairos) to act is a significant rhetorical task.

Establishing the ‘right time’ to act to best influence the project was also a challenge for stakeholders outside the immediate project team. For instance critical friends deliberating about raising their concerns regarding the design proposals with the Provost and Academic Director were acutely aware that ‘nobody will be keen for doubt to be cast on the design’ in the run up to the Finance Committee meeting where the future of the project would be decided, and yet at the same time very conscious that once the scheme had

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170 Executive Group Minutes 24.08.2018, item 6.1
171 Senior UCL Estates project manager, interview 15.10.2018
172 Senior academic, correspondence 4.10.2017
been approved it would be more difficult to make a case for any significant changes.

This section has touched on some of the informal influences on project governance; levels of trust between different categories of internal stakeholder, motivation for engagement in the briefing process and the discourse around timing, the interplay of chronos and kairos. The UCL East Executive Group debate around the presentation of the revised business case to Council that follows also indicates an awareness of the rhetorical task of constructing the present as the ‘opportune moment’ to act and the need to build confidence in the case for change.

5.6 Presenting the business case to Council

In order to proceed with proposals for UCL East, the Executive Group needed approval from the UCL governing Council. The Provost’s view circulated in September 2017, argued that the UCL East project would deliver ‘a campus that will give us the scale and space to take on the global competition and become world-leading in areas as diverse as robotics, advanced propulsion, cultural heritage, the urban environment, imaging science and innovative finance’¹⁷³. This was the mood of optimism and enthusiasm that the programme team aimed to generate, ‘it will be like 1826 all over again’¹⁷⁴. In the Autumn of 2017, three meetings were organised to determine the future of the new campus project: a Finance Committee meeting to review the new budget (23.10.17), the special Academic Board meeting questioning the overall strategy (30.10.2017 – described in section 5.3) and the Council meeting to request final approval for Phase 1 (23.11.2017). The updated Business Case had been subjected to a ‘robust challenge’¹⁷⁵ when it was submitted to the Finance Committee in June. The outcome was that the programme team were asked to look at options for reducing the overall capital costs to UCL including the possibility of involving the private sector in the residential element of the scheme and of raising

¹⁷³ Provost’s view 29.09.2017
¹⁷⁴ Executive Group meeting observation, 24.10.2017 (UCL was founded in 1826)
¹⁷⁵ Executive Group Minutes, 26.07.2017, item 2.1
more capital from external funders. The follow-up meeting with the Finance Committee in October to discuss the revised budget was seen as the last chance for the new campus project.

The programme team worked on an options paper over the summer. This paper identified 10 different ways to reduce the impact of the new campus on the UCL capital plan. These options were generated from 4 variables: the programme, the design (size and specification) and the delivery method for each building, and the level of UCL borrowing. In deliberating on the pros and cons of each option, the Executive Group had to take into account a wide range of situational factors affecting both UCL and the LLDC. UCL factors included, but were not limited to, the perception that ‘there is a background fear in the academic community that UCL East is consuming everything and nothing else will happen’\(^{176}\), that any increase in borrowing ‘is likely to meet with significant resistance’\(^{176}\), that involving the private sector would be interpreted as ‘privatising the university’\(^{178}\) and concerns that a shortfall in future student numbers at UCL East would result in other parts of the university having to generate a higher level of contribution. LLDC factors included the possibility that a reduction in the scale of Marshgate could put the Government grant at risk, that any change in the programme for delivery of Marshgate could fuel fears that UCL only wanted to build residential accommodation in the Park and was not committed to the LDDC’s vision for a new Cultural and Education District in Stratford, and that proposing a Design Build Finance and Operate (DBFO) model for delivering Pool Street would generate uncertainty about the quality of the design and place-making, that the planners only had to look out of the window at Stratford One\(^{177}\) (a building delivered by a private sector student accommodation provider) to ‘be fairly horrified’\(^{178}\).

\(^{176}\) Executive Group observation, 23.08.2017
\(^{177}\) This was on the shortlist for the Carbuncle Cup, Britain’s ugliest building prize in 2014
\(^{178}\) Executive Group observation 22.09.2017
The aim in developing a range of options was to avoid the high stakes scenario of an all or nothing decision and allow Council members to select an option to reflect their appetite for risk bearing in mind resistance within the academic community to raising borrowing levels. Following a discussion of each option in terms of its impact on the academic vision and capital cost, the Provost asked the Executive Group to select ‘two, three, four options, that we can all live with’\textsuperscript{179}. He argued that this selection must be based on the appetite for risk of the Council members and not of the programme team, that the options proposed should be the best that could be delivered taking into account the ‘realities of the situation which are quite tricky’\textsuperscript{179}. In the deliberations concerning how to construct the argument presented in the options paper, the council members were ‘discursively present’ (Clarke et al., 2018, p. 76) as their perceived priorities, concerns and appetite for risk were all taken into account. These deliberations included consideration of alternative rhetorical strategies such as emphasising the risks of the ‘do nothing’ approach ‘dispassionately’\textsuperscript{180}, and the value of this unique opportunity for UCL to acquire a long term land bank at a very economical price.

The executive group were also faced with the challenge of agreeing what line to take on aspects of the Business Case that were difficult to predict with any degree of certainty, such as the potential for future funding from philanthropy, industry and government, and the student demand for new academic programmes - too cautious and they risked refusal, too optimistic and the figures looked unrealistic. Informal discussions were arranged with the Chair of the Finance Committee and the Chair of Council to sound them out on the different options in advance of the key meetings. Following these discussions the number of options was further narrowed down to two, with the remaining options presented as background to demonstrate a rigorous response to the Finance Committee feedback given in June.

\textsuperscript{179} Executive Group meeting, observation 23.08.2017
\textsuperscript{180} Executive Group meeting, observation 22.09.2017
In the Executive Group meetings leading up to the key UCL governance meetings, the Provost was very clear about the ‘big picture’ to convey to Council – the proposal for the new campus does not stand in isolation, it is the result of all the work done on UCL 2034 and the ‘size and shape’ of the university. UCL East is ‘the mechanism by which we secure the future of UCL in the top echelon of universities for decades or centuries to come’ and that ‘if we don’t do this 2034 is dead’. This strategy was successful and Option F (replacing the floor omitted from the Marshgate building in Stage 2 to provide space for the Global Business School for Health and using a DBFO model to deliver Pool Street) was given the go ahead by Council at the meeting on 23 November 2017.

5.7 Summary

This chapter gave an account of how the project governance of UCL East evolved over time and how it was situated within the pre-existing governance structures of UCL. Setting the rules of the game was widely recognised by internal stakeholders as a way to pre-structure the project situation and influence future decisions. This meant that the early stages of the briefing and design process for UCL East were characterised not just by argumentation arising from different perspectives on the problematic situation, and related decisions concerning the purpose and scope of the project, but also by argumentation concerning how these decisions should be made, how they could be legitimately justified or contested and who could participate in the decision making process. These tacit and explicit arguments concerning legitimacy were informed by institutional and wider national discourses around participation, transparency and accountability. No project is truly a blank slate and the norms and expectations embedded in

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181 Executive Group meeting, observation, 23.08.2017
182 Following further specialist advice the decision to use a DBFO model to deliver Pool Street was reversed in 2018
183 Argumentation concerning ‘rules of the game’ may centre on how the client and the project should be characterised or categorised. As Julius (JULIUS, A. 2022. Willed Ignorance: Reflections on academic free speech, occasioned by the David Miller case. Current Legal Problems, 75, 1-44.) points out in relation to free speech, different rules or principles may be applicable in different situations
these discourses (and in accepted working practices) can both empower and disable stakeholder engagement. The intention in giving a rich description of how the UCL East project was situated within the existing university, was also to suggest how the distribution of formal authority, project resources, professional relationships and rhetorical skill can influence both the ability to set the rules of the game and to use them effectively.

Finally, this chapter aimed to illustrate some of the different rhetorical strategies and tactics that internal stakeholders used to justify or contest the project governance and consultation process, and to highlight the relational work expended by the project team to inform how project argumentation was situated in terms of internal levels of trust and confidence. Despite the extensive efforts made to persuade diverse internal stakeholders to support the new campus project, these accounts suggest that accommodation may be a more realistic goal than consensus.
Chapter 6 Making a case for preferred design decisions

6.1 Introduction to fit out briefing process

The previous two chapters, gave an account of how the problematic situation was framed by different project stakeholders and how the project governance and consultation process was situated within the existing culture and governance of UCL. This chapter, zooms in on deliberations about the virtual building (the developing building design), the design issues discussed during the fit out briefing for Marshgate Phase 1, and how prospective building users made a case for what they needed in the new building to enable delivery of their academic programmes or professional support services. Briefing workshops were organised to consult UCL staff about the spatial and technical requirements of individual academic programmes and functions such as catering and student services, and to agree a design strategy for different categories of generic space such as teaching space, workspace and public engagement space.

In line with Clarke’s advice (2018, p. 49), the aim in this study is to pay attention to different voices within the project situation. The Phase 1 UCL East campus buildings will be inhabited by many different people. The user personas proposed by the UCL East Governance Working Group\textsuperscript{184} and developed to assist in the development of a ‘fit for purpose UCL East operating model’\textsuperscript{185} included the following categories: post graduate taught student, researcher, member of professional services staff (technical and non-technical), visiting student, academic, visitor and teaching fellow. A user persona was defined as ‘a fictional character who represents the essential traits of a user group’\textsuperscript{185} and the UCL East personas were based on 11 interviews by the programme manager [governance advisor] with UCL academics, student advisors and professional services staff. The

\textsuperscript{184} UCL East Governance Working Group with Deans and Faculty Managers, Minutes 2.11.2017, item 4.11
\textsuperscript{185} UCL East User Personas: Ensuring user perspectives are built into the operation of UCL East, discussion paper UCL East Governance Working Group, 11.12.2017
descriptions of these personas included suggestions as to what each one might be excited or worried about. For example, the postgraduate taught student might be excited about living on the Olympic Park but worried about access to student support services, while a researcher might be excited about having the space to set up the rig he needed to tackle his new project but worried about the processes for ordering equipment and supplies. Reflection on these personas was intended to focus attention on the diverse needs of future inhabitants of the building. However, although they were a useful as a tool to think with, the range of academic programmes proposed and the different types of space and support functions to be provided at UCL East was far more complex than could be captured by just 7 personas.

A taught post graduate student could be working with the Advanced Propulsion Lab (APL) developing electric vehicles, alternative fuels and power storage, with Culture Lab learning how to conserve, exhibit and interpret cultural artefacts, or with the Global Future Cities Co-Lab researching the conditions of urban living in partnership with local and international communities. And the range of academic activities proposed for Marshgate also included Executive Education, the Manufacturing Futures Lab, the Future Media Studio, the Institute of Making, an Experiential Learning and Research Hub, and a precision fabrication workshop.\footnote{This was the proposed academic mix at the time of the Stage 3 fit out briefing workshops}

The single persona created for members of professional services staff was even more under-representative given the wide range of technical and non-technical professional services staff needed to support the academic activities on the new campus. The professional services staff (both central and faculty based) considered in developing the operations strategy for UCL East included Professional Services (Finance, HR etc), research and enterprise management and support, staff experience support services, student administration/student experience support services, facilities management (reception, security, catering etc.), IT, AV and Tech, communications, marketing and engagement, Global Engagement Offices.
and Vice-Provosts Offices. And each of these headline categories included diverse roles with different responsibilities, priorities and working practices.

In the early stages of working with the LLDC a member of the UCL East programme team expressed frustration that the people they were dealing with did not seem to ‘understand what a university is’. The Director of UCL Estates responded that:

Local authorities very often don’t understand universities, it is only very recently that Camden have started to better understand what we do and the value we bring so it is not surprising that LLDC as a relative newbie, a small body with no experience of universities in the past, struggles to get it.

It is easy to underestimate the complexity of a university. A member of the academic planning team described how her understanding had been transformed when she graduated and took a job within her university as an administrator;

It was like lifting the hood as it were, it was really like the curtain fell away, it was like oh my god just the sheer effort from like to time-table my classes, to my exams, to mark my work, to then get to my degree, you just sort of sail through it as a student fairly oblivious until it goes wrong or something is an issue.

The challenge for the UCL East programme team was not just to understand and deliver ‘the machinery behind the doors, behind the scenes’ of the university but to work out how it needed to be adjusted to support the radical cross-disciplinary vision for the new campus. If, as a member of the Executive Group stated, ‘part of the whole reason for doing this shift to the East is actually to disrupt the way that we have been doing the university

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187 Paper on UCL East Operations Project, 2017. The initial study of the functions and services that would need to be provided at UCL East was based on the Cubane framework – UCL East Executive minutes 24.10.2017 Item 2.6

188 UCL East Executive Group meeting, observation 28.04.2016

189 Senior Academic Planning Coordinator, interview 23.07.2018
thus far\textsuperscript{190} and ‘force us to do new things and to think new thoughts’\textsuperscript{190} then what would this mean for the design of UCL East?

As outlined in the previous chapter, the UCL East programme encompassed 4 separate projects; academic planning, infrastructure, operations, and financial planning but the overall academic vision and development of individual academic courses, the design of the buildings, their size, quality and configuration, the operational strategies for managing space, people and materials, and the accounting systems for projecting and balancing financial costs and benefits were inextricable aspects of the same proposal for action. The UCL East programme was distinctive in the degree to which all four projects were developed concurrently and in the level of uncertainty that this entailed. This included varying degrees of uncertainty about student (home and overseas) demand for the proposed new academic programmes (both undergraduate and postgraduate), the space requirements resulting from new ways of working (for different disciplines), future governance processes and the anticipated level of funding from fees, central government and philanthropy. The way the project was structured created a classic ‘wicked problem’ (Rittel and Webber, 1973, p. 160) in which ‘everything impacted on everything else’\textsuperscript{191}. If part of the UCL East Academic Vision was to do things differently then how much of the building design, operations strategy and financial model would have to be invented from scratch? This was the key question underlying the fit out briefing workshops. The bold claim that UCL East ‘will serve as a model for the university campus of the future, open, dynamic, and breaking the conventional barriers between research, education, innovation, public engagement and collaboration’\textsuperscript{192} implied few available precedents.

In order to situate the following accounts of stakeholder dialogue around the emerging fit out design, specifically the evolution of the Fluid Zone, the workspace strategy and institutional change within the Marshgate building,

\textsuperscript{190} UCL East Executive Group Meeting, observation, 28.04.2016  
\textsuperscript{191} UCL East Operations Lead, interview 15.04.2019  
\textsuperscript{192} 2014 Business Case for UCL East
this chapter first indicates how the fit out user group workshops were located within the overall UCL East time-line, outlines their scope and the prevailing conditions in which they took place, describes the format of the mid-stage 3 workshops, and gives an impressionistic account of attending these workshops as a non-participant observer.

6.1.1 Timing

The Marshgate user group briefing workshops began at the end of April 2017\(^{193}\) following extension of the shell and core architect’s scope of services to include the fit out design. This extension was possible following the successful re-negotiation of the Agreement for Lease terms with the LLDC. However, the timing of this instruction meant that although the fit out design was carried out by the same architectural practice as the shell and core design, it was managed by a separate team within their office, and the UCL East campus masterplan and the shell and core concept designs (RIBA Stage 2) for the Marshgate building had already been completed. The ‘incredibly prescriptive’\(^{194}\) masterplan which set out the design principles and parameters for the Phase 1 buildings had been approved in June 2016\(^{195}\) and although there would be some later communication between the architects and the master planners, the design was largely frozen by the time the two architectural design teams were instructed in August 2016. The outline planning application was submitted in May 2017 shortly after the start of fit out briefing for the Marshgate building (see Figure 6-1). The original Stage 2 proposals for the Phase 1 buildings were approved at the Executive Group meeting held in November 2016\(^{196}\) and an addendum produced following an internal review was instructed in March 2017\(^{197}\). At this time the financial assumptions in the original business case were being sense-checked and updated prior to resubmission to the Finance Committee and Council in summer 2017 and (subject to Council approval), issue to the LLDC for

\(^{193}\) UCL East Executive Group minutes, 21.04.2017, Item 1.2.1
\(^{194}\) Project architect, interview 30.09.2016
\(^{195}\) Executive Group Minutes, 07.06.2016, Item 4.4 and Infrastructure Programme Board Meeting Minutes 28.06.2016, Item 3a
\(^{196}\) Executive Group meeting, observation 22.11.2016
\(^{197}\) Executive Group minutes 31.03.2017, item 2.2.1
inclusion in the Full Business Case for the Cultural and Education District (CED)\textsuperscript{198}. Submission of the CED Business Case and approval by the HM Treasury was a necessary step towards confirmation of the government grant funding of £100 million pounds required to subsidise the cost of developing the UCL East Campus.

The UCL East programme team proposed that, in line with guidance in the Government’s Green Book, the ‘refreshed’\textsuperscript{199} business case should propose options 'commensurate with the stage of development'\textsuperscript{199}, that is, rather than revisiting existential questions about the new campus, it should focus on ‘what activities should be included on the QEOP site’\textsuperscript{199}. Although a shortlist of academic activities had been agreed in 2016 following a university-wide call for bids, the financial risk associated with all the new academic activities was being reassessed as part of the business case review\textsuperscript{199}. In addition to the on-going financial review, initial analysis of the space requirements for the proposed academic activities had indicated a short fall of space in the Phase 1 buildings\textsuperscript{200}. Consequently, the list of Phase 1 academic activities was still viewed as provisional and a variety of options were being discussed prior to presentation of the updated business case to UCL Council\textsuperscript{199}. These included a temporary pavilion, scaling or reducing academic activities, as well as (the non-preferred options), ‘lift and shift’\textsuperscript{201}, and selecting academic activities to either maximise income at UCL East or to maximise the quantum of space released in Bloomsbury. The Operations Lead had not yet been appointed.

\textsuperscript{198} Executive Group observation, 27.01.2017
\textsuperscript{199} Executive Group 31.03.2017, Paper 4-01: Options for Summer 2017 UCL East Business Case Refresh
\textsuperscript{200} Space Strategy, Executive Group paper 22.09.2017
\textsuperscript{201} The term ‘lift and shift’ was used to describe the option of moving an entire existing academic entity (eg department or institute) from Bloomsbury to the new campus in Stratford
Figure 6-1 Time line: UCL East masterplan, Marshgate shell and core, and fit out design
6.1.2 Scope

The fit out briefing sessions covered the academic activities listed in the introduction to this section as well as support functions such as catering, library and student services, a specialist computer lab, and the senior common room. It also addressed a number of cross cutting themes including facilities management, public space, wayfinding, UCL Culture, AV/ISD, sustainability, security and, health and safety.

In the early stages of the Marshgate project there was a view within the UCL East estates team that the shell and core design should be ‘as generic as possible’\(^{202}\) to allow for future flexibility and adaptability\(^{203}\). From this point of view, the fact that the masterplan and the shell and core concept design were frozen prior to appointment of the fit out design team was not seen to be a problem. However, it did mean that there was limited scope for the end-users (engaging in the fit out briefing process) to change the Marshgate shell and core design. The design work of the fit out team was reviewed twice a week by the project architect and partner in charge of the shell and core design\(^{204}\) and when internal stakeholders raised issues affecting the overall building design in the fit out briefing meetings, the response from the fit out design team suggested a clear hierarchy within the architectural practice with the shell and core team leading the project not only in terms of programme but also in terms of design strategy. Consequently, the fit out team appeared to be faced with similar challenges to architects working on retrofit projects and the Marshgate fit out design could perhaps be characterised as a ‘new build retrofit’ with the added complication that as the user groups engaged in

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\(^{202}\) Senior UCL Estates project manager, interview 04.07.2016

\(^{203}\) This argument in support of flexibility, that ‘the correct solution does not exist, because the problem requiring solution is in a permanent state of flux’, ‘that the future of education is unknown therefore remove any obstructions the building may impose’ has been challenged on the grounds that ‘designing for the unknown means designing for nothing’ Hertzberger and Medd cited WOOD, A. 2017. *A School’s Lived Architecture: the politics and ethics of flexible learning spaces*. PhD, Manchester Metropolitan University and FORTY, A. 2000. *Words and buildings : a vocabulary of modern architecture*, London, Thames & Hudson.

\(^{204}\) Response from the project architect (fit out) to a question from the Academic Planning team about how the two separate teams coordinated their work, briefing meeting observation 29.05.2018
a series of fit out briefing workshops, the design of the shell and core was still shifting, ‘moving and readjusting’205 as the back of house areas were reviewed.

Nonetheless, despite the relatively advanced stage of the shell and core design when the fit out team was instructed, some significant changes to the shell and core were instructed following consultation with key internal stakeholders during Stage 2 of the fit out design. These included the addition of a refectory and lecture theatre and changes to the library and atrium design206. It was also later agreed to reintroduce the floor that had been omitted in the Stage 2 Addendum.

With the shell and core design strategy more or less fixed, the task left to the fit out design team was to support decision making by the academic planning team regarding the allocation of space to the different academic programmes and service functions, and to work with the end users to establish their needs in terms of the size and local configuration of space, environmental conditions, servicing and loading requirements, and internal finishes. The range of different academic activities proposed for the Marshgate building meant that both the requirements for environmental conditions and the teaching and research practices varied widely. The brief for the fit out design for each space was discussed and developed through an iterative process of design proposition and evaluation, what Hillier describes as ‘conjecture and test’ (1972).

This study focusses on RIBA stages 1-3, however it is worth noting that the design architect was not novated to the main contractor and in late summer 2018 a new project manager (from the recently retendered UCL professional services framework), was appointed to deliver the scheme. The UCL Estates infrastructure team advised the Executive Group against novation of the

205 Academic Core group meeting, observation 22.11.2017
206 Reserved Matters Design and Access Statement 2018:70
architect in order to allow a new design team to ‘bring new impetus and ideas to the value engineering challenge faced by the project’\textsuperscript{207}. At this point it was hoped that UCL could retain the design architects in a technical assurance role.

6.1.3 Conditions
Although it was reported that initial support for a new campus at Stratford had been based on the general assumption that some other department would be going there, ‘everybody wanted someone else to go so that they could get more space here [Bloomsbury]’\textsuperscript{208} by 2016 the programme team were facing a very different problem, ‘demand out there is outstripping supply’\textsuperscript{209}. This was described as a good problem, ‘a nice problem to have’\textsuperscript{210} but it meant that a decision had to made as to whether to omit some academic activities entirely or ask the academics proposing each activity to accept a reduction in space. The Academic Planning team argued for the scaling option and this was accepted by the Provost and the UCL East Executive Group as the preferred solution.

> From the point of view of academic vitality, our view is that all members of the current planning mix are valuable and interconnected. It is academically undesirable for any of them to be lost in their entirety, however all can and should, be scaled to fit the wider planning constraints (space, finance etc.)\textsuperscript{211}

In September 2017, a financial rescaling of the space strategy prepared by the masterplan architects indicated a further space deficit of around 2500m\textsuperscript{2} and the Academic Planning team reported ‘working closely with the academics to resolve this deficit, through further re-scaling, shared spaces

\textsuperscript{207} Executive Group meeting paper 28.09.28, Infrastructure update – decisions to Ratify. This decision may have been influenced by the recently appointed contractor who recommended the new architect as their preferred consultant.
\textsuperscript{208} Observation by senior academic at Campus Concept Group meeting 08.02.2015
\textsuperscript{209} Senior UCL Estates project manager, interview 19.09.2016
\textsuperscript{210} Senior UCL Estates project manager, interview 22.08.2016
\textsuperscript{211} UCL East Outline Integrated Academic Plan 06.07.2018 ‘This plan recognised that 'significant reduction may take some of them [academic activities] below critical mass and we will need to remove them from the mix’
and removing activities. The complex iterative process of keeping space allocation, the financial and practical viability of academic activities, the UCL East academic vision and the overall business case aligned continued to present space deficit challenges as the building design and academic programmes were developed in parallel throughout 2018. This meant that the fit out briefing workshops took place in an atmosphere of scarcity with an underlying concern that the space allocated to an activity might be reduced, shared with others or lost entirely. One senior academic expressed a concern that competition for space arising from this perception of scarcity was undermining the espoused ethos of academic collaboration.

The original completion date for the Stage 3 fit out was March 2018 and although this was eventually pushed back to November 2018 (to ‘resolve the outstanding space challenges’ identified as the academic programmes were adjusted and additional information became available), the tight deadlines in the Stage 3 fit out programme generated a sense of urgency. End users were encouraged to see the midstage 3 briefing meetings and the two weeks immediately following them as the culmination of the fit out consultation process and as a strictly time limited opportunity to communicate their needs and aspirations for the new building. There was a feeling of ‘speak now or forever hold your peace’.

The majority of academics and professional services staff working on the UCL East project had responded to the original call for expressions of interest in research, teaching and public engagement space on the new campus. Over 60 expressions of interest were submitted and at each stage of the selection process the academic planning team asked the applicants to explain how their proposals would support the vision of UCL East as a model for an open, collaborative ‘university campus of the future’. If a proposal was not a good fit with the UCL East vision then it was not selected for

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212 Executive Group meeting minutes 22.09.2017, item 3.2
213 Academic Planning - Space Challenges, Executive Group paper 27.06.2018
214 Executive Group meeting minutes 24.07.2018, item 4.3.1
215 UCL East Business Case 2014
development. Consequently, staff engaging in the briefing process for Marshgate had effectively been pre-selected for their readiness to collaborate and their interest in cross-disciplinary research and new ways of teaching and learning. This was fortunate because working on the UCL East campus programme, including participation in the UCL East Steering Group and project Task Groups, involved working with colleagues who approached the task of briefing the design team in very different ways. To an extent, engagement with the briefing process could be seen to prefigure (and prime for) the experience of working across disciplines envisaged on the new campus. The common perception within the UCL East programme team that departments and faculties on the Bloomsbury campus worked in disciplinary ‘silos’, was confirmed as engagement in cross-disciplinary discussions about the vision for the Phase 1 buildings revealed different ways of working and assumptions about how things work, ‘I think it has become clear that really every every faculty is a different world and the fact that there is little understanding of how their neighbours work then clearly shifts the way they look at the model [of UCL East]’.

6.1.4 Format
In order to help manage the process of internal engagement, academic leads (‘champions’) were selected from the Bartlett, SLASH (Arts and Humanities, Social and Historical Sciences and Laws), Life Sciences, and Engineering to feed into the design process and ‘facilitate reporting and supervision by the programme team’. The champions co-ordinated regular meetings with their faculties to ensure that they were engaged with the UCL East briefing process and ‘able to provide sufficient input and challenge’.

We have the champions for each of the particular space types, the champions talk to the programme leaders so the ones that lead the particular programmes and the programme leaders would then

216 Senior Academic Planning Coordinator, interview 03.04.2017
217 Academic Director speaking at Executive Group meeting 20.12.2017
218 Executive Group meeting minutes 24.01.2018, item 2.3
219 Statement about the consultation processes that have taken place during academic planning published on UCL East website reported Executive Group Minutes 24.04.2018 item 1.3.1 ucl.ac.uk/ucl-east/campus/consultation
The process of setting up briefing workshops and one-to-one briefing meetings with academics and professional services staff was managed by the UCL East Academic Planning team with the assistance of the Estates Strategy Manager (ESM). The ESM acted as a go-between to facilitate communication between the academics and the estates project delivery team.

No detailed information on the first generation of users’ requirements was included in the strategic brief issued as part of the invitation to tender for the shell and core design (July 2016) and the architects were discouraged from speaking directly to building users during Concept Design (RIBA Stage 2). The UCL Estates’ position at the time was that engaging with the first generation of users would only create a ‘drag on the programme’ and distract the architects from the task of designing a building that would be flexible and adaptable over the long term. Early assumptions about the overall quantum of space required for academic programmes (assuming some overlap for shared facilities) were based on a strategic space planning exercise done in collaboration with the architects working on the UCL East masterplan team. Although this space strategy was informed by initial conversations with academics, and Critical Friends had commented on the early design proposals for Marshgate, the fit out briefing workshops represented the first opportunity for the majority of end users to meet the design team for Marshgate and discuss their requirements in detail.

Attendees at the briefing meetings included consultants on the fit out design team including architects, engineers, and project managers and UCL staff including a representative from UCL Estates, a member of the Academic Planning team, the relevant ‘champion’ (responsible for ‘gathering user input and feeding this back to the programme team’) and one or more of the

220 Senior Academic Planning Coordinator, interview 23.07.2018
221 Senior UCL Estates project manager, interview 22.08.2016
222 Senior UCL Estates project manager, interview 26.10.2017
223 Executive Group Minutes 21.02.2018 item 2.1
future academic or professional services users. The meetings were largely led by the architects and addressed primarily to the end users with other members of the UCL project team stepping in when they felt this was necessary, for instance to provide context, establish constraints or clarify a question. The architects tabled A1 plans of the areas provisionally allocated to each programme or function extracted from the overall floor plans. This ensured that the drawings were large enough to be read by everyone sitting around the table. However, it also had the effect of focussing attention on the space allocated to each activity in isolation from the rest of the building. The way the consultation process was structured with separate meetings set up for each academic programme or support function also had the effect of maintaining this narrow focus of attention. This was raised as a matter of concern by one attendee. She commented that because ‘architects are meeting with people individually the coherence of our group effort is getting diluted’ and expressed concern that ‘there hasn’t been an opportunity to keep things joined up’.

I said can we - we need to have a group meeting and they said that the architects don’t want to meet with groups so I don’t know if you have noticed the size of the groups being quite small at all of these meetings? so - so I was told that the architects don’t want to meet with groups because it is not manageable.

Although this study included observations of a wide range of meetings held between appointment of the fit out team for Marshgate in April 2017 and submission of the Reserved Matters planning application in September 2018, a significant proportion of the meetings observed were part of a series held midway through RIBA Stage 3 (fit out). These midstage 3 meetings addressed specific areas of the building provisionally allocated to defined academic programmes or support services. The senior architect opened these meetings with an explanation of their purpose:

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224 Senior academic, interview 4.12.2017
Today’s session is a way for the design team to playback what we have heard from UCL during our briefing sessions for Stage 2 and the first part of Stage 3 as we prepare for the Stage 3 costings, we would just like to make sure that we are aligned and if we are not we will take on board your comments.

The architects used the meetings to test their assumptions about how the academics and professional staff envisioned that their space would be used and raised queries arising from a review of the room data sheets and equipment schedules they had been sent. The design propositions were presented as tentative ‘forgive my ignorant assumptions’ and feedback was actively encouraged:

What we are planning is a week or two of comments for you guys to have a look at the detail work that we have done and then feedback to us “you haven’t provided us with enough bench space” or “perhaps if you arranged it differently we might, we might have a better kind of er” …as I say, always interject with any questions you have, I welcome that…

In general, the meetings began with an overview of the latest layouts which picked up any spatial issues, this was followed by a review of environmental conditions, loadings and services requirements and concluded with a brief discussion of fixed furniture and internal finishes. Contributions by users did not always fit smoothly into this structure. User engagement included queries about the management of space, arguments in support of specific requirements (both met and unmet in the current design proposals), and requests for clarification.

6.1.5 Observations
The aim in observing the fit out briefing meetings was to identify some regularities in the way that people approached the task of briefing the design team. However, even within the well-structured format of the meetings and

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225 Facilities management briefing meeting, observation 30.05.2018
226 APL briefing meeting, observation 29.05.2018
227 Experiential Learning and Research Hub briefing meeting, observation 31.05.2018
despite the limited scope of the fit out brief, internal stakeholders seemed to engage with the design team and the developing design proposals in very different ways. One reason for this difference, commented on by several participants, was the involvement of academics from different disciplines, ‘it is very different how an arts and humanities type person would think compared to, you know, a chemist or a physicist’\textsuperscript{228}. There was a clear perception that people brought their own distinctive disciplinary thinking styles to the briefing process, that academics from the arts and humanities, from architecture and from engineering had different perspectives on the task and different ways of tackling it. At times this led to frustration and upset with diverse internal stakeholders finding it difficult to reconcile the way that others were engaging with the briefing process with their own conceptions of effective working practices. Due to the range of activities proposed for Marshgate, it also became apparent that requests for an emergency eyewash or resilient electricity supply were easier to defend than requests for more intangible, but nonetheless key, requirements such as co-location or a sense of identity and belonging.

Internal stakeholders also used a range of persuasive techniques when communicating their perspective on a particular design problem or solution. These included technical, authority and value-based arguments, and inspirational narratives. Some people endeavoured to enlist and marshal allies while others deployed charm to prompt the desired action, or were passionately confrontational in expressing their point of view\textsuperscript{229}. Stakeholders reflected on how their argument strategies were being dismissed by others as ‘nitpicking’\textsuperscript{230} or ‘throwing a tantrum’\textsuperscript{230} and responded to the argument strategies of others by describing a colleague as ‘kind of a bulldog’\textsuperscript{231} or suggesting that someone had been ‘ranting’\textsuperscript{230} at them. The challenging character of some of these exchanges was attributed variously to cultural, disciplinary and personal differences in communication.

\textsuperscript{228} Senior UCL project manager, interview
\textsuperscript{229} Stakeholder positioning and existing or desired alliances were signalled by the strategic use of words like ‘we’ or ‘they’
\textsuperscript{230} Personal communication UCL academics 2017 & 2018
\textsuperscript{231} Academic core group meeting, observation 22.11.2017
style. There is a tendency in some professional guidance to imply that decision-making should be the result of pure rationality (Barrett and Stanley, 1999, p. 11) but people working on the UCL East project reported that 'space is very emotive' and talking about 'bricks and mortar and programmes and facilities' did not rule out the possibility of being surprised by an emotional reaction. The intention in making these observations is not to argue that the briefing process would be improved if stakeholders curbed their feedback (or cared less) but to suggest that emotion is not something that can be artificially excluded from deliberations about space.

Another source of difference was the degree of agency people felt within the briefing process and how they interpreted their role in the consultation meetings. For example, a representative from the post room responded to new layouts showing a reduction in the space provided for receiving goods and post by saying, 'we will make that work'. When pressed for a more detailed response he said:

> Look give me a choice I would have had this space here and said we will book in here and out here and make it all nice, well in the real world I am in the post room, what you get is a little corner somewhere so that is the corner that we can … make work

This non-combative, can-do approach of, 'we will go wherever you want us, we will make it work anyway' contrasted sharply with the approach of another participant described by a member of the academic planning team, 'she is shooting for the highest end when she is talking about equipment or set-ups because that is her job, to fight for the absolute best for her space and for all the students who will use it'. These (institutionally situated) positions represented two ends of a continuum between accommodation and assertion which complicated the project team’s task of allocating space in an equitable and workable way. There was also a noticeable difference in the

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232 Senior UCL Estates project manager, interview 26.10.2017
233 Programme Manager [Governance advisor], interview 30.01.2017
234 FM briefing meeting, observation, 30.05.2018
235 Academic Planning Coordinator, interview 27.06.2018
decision-making culture in different faculties with some representatives seeing their role as facilitating a highly consultative process and others feeling able to make a decision on the spot without first conferring with their colleagues.

During observations and interviews, it became increasingly clear that significant work was being done between the formal project meetings. Governance meetings were reported to be ‘reasonably well choreographed’ and interviewees spoke of the ‘great political tact’ involved in crafting an interview panel, the politics of ‘keeping everybody on board’, and “the moving and shaking and pushing and pulling that’s going on at the most senior level of the institution”. It was clear that the formal meetings observed in this study represented only the most accessible aspects of a complex social process.

6.2 Evolution of the Fluid Zone

![Figure 6-2 Fluid Zone plans (RM application September 2018)](image)

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236 Senior UCL Estates project manager, Interview 04.07.2016
237 Senior UCL Estates project manager, Interview 22.08.2022
238 Academic Director, Interview 29.11.2016
239 Senior UCL Estates project manager, interview 02.10.2017
The Fluid Zone concept was central to the masterplan design. It was defined as a ‘physically permeable and visually transparent space’\textsuperscript{240} that would blur the boundaries between inside and outside and, by deemphasising the institutional threshold, encourage the public to engage with the university. This was a key aim set out in the original UCL East business case. The Fluid Zone was also justified on the grounds that it complied with Local Plan Policy BN.10 which called for design proposals to ‘generate an active street frontage’\textsuperscript{241}, provide ‘accessible public space within their curtilage’\textsuperscript{241} and ‘incorporate sufficient communal space’\textsuperscript{241}. The masterplan Design Code stated that the Fluid Zone should comprise the ground, first and possibly second floor of the Phase 1 buildings and restricted land use in these areas to academic or commercial research, and retail or food and drink (up to 30%). Working within the constraints of the masterplan, the architects for Marshgate conceptualised the Fluid Zone as comprising “separate ‘buildings’ organised around an internal ‘square’”\textsuperscript{242}. The materials proposed for the internal elevations and the ground treatment in the atrium and internal ‘streets’\textsuperscript{242} of the Fluid Zone reflected the external finishes to ‘reinforce’\textsuperscript{242} the impression that Marshgate was a series of separate buildings. The architects also moved towards a more nuanced interpretation of transparency and explored ‘the space between the interior and exterior; the potential for deep thresholds, overhangs or colonnades which enrich the opportunities for encounter on the boundary between the building and the plaza’\textsuperscript{242}. In their design narrative they argued that the layout of the fluid zone was informed by the ‘dense urban grain found in existing creative London districts’\textsuperscript{242} and implied that it would generate a comparable atmosphere of interaction and innovation. They pictured the Fluid Zone as supporting ‘an evolving, rich and varied mix of uses’\textsuperscript{242} and cited the Central St Martins building\textsuperscript{243} at Kings Cross as a relevant precedent. The internal public spaces at Central St Martins are reportedly used for a wide range of activities including workshops, exhibitions and events. The LLDC Design Review Panel later

\textsuperscript{240} UCL East Design Codes May 2017:8
\textsuperscript{241} Outline planning application Design and Access Statement, 2017 p106, 107
\textsuperscript{242} Reserved Matters planning application Design and Access Statement, 2018
\textsuperscript{243} The Central St Martins building at Kings Cross was designed by the architects for Marshgate
commented that ‘the concept of the ‘fluid zone’ developed for the masterplan of UCL East has been skilfully interpreted for Marshgate Plot 1’\textsuperscript{244}.

However, the design evolution of the Fluid Zone was not without issue and the execution of the concept was contested several times. The ongoing discussion around the evolution of the Fluid Zone design indicates the wide range of factors referenced in deliberations concerning the design of the Marshgate building.

\subsection*{6.2.1 Competition for space}
Soil remediation undertaken to prepare the site for the Olympics had been limited to covering the park with 1.5m of clean soil, and ground below this level was reported to be heavily contaminated as a result of previous industrial uses. Consequently, early discussions suggested that the area of basement should be limited on the grounds that the high cost of disposing of contaminated soil would make any basements ‘disproportionately expensive’\textsuperscript{245}. At this stage a representative of the LLDC commented that the government funding was not put into the project for it all to be in basements\textsuperscript{245} and one consultant questioned whether basement space was really needed or whether the view that a basement was required was based on ‘habit’ and the ‘culture of basements’ on the Bloomsbury campus where, due to site specific constraints, ‘one of the only ways is down’\textsuperscript{245}. The debate about basement provision touched on flood risk in the context of global warming and the location of railway lines. It was also suggested that it might come down to a question of choice, that ‘your public realm would be degraded if you invest so much in the ground’\textsuperscript{245}. The outcome of these early deliberations was a proposal that there should be no basements in the Phase 1 buildings.

As the building design and academic vision were worked up in parallel, a number of issues became apparent. The Marshgate Phase 1 proposals included two significant engineering activities, an Imaging Centre and an
Advanced Propulsion Laboratory (APL), which because of their height, weight and access requirements had to occupy blocks of space on the ground floor. It also became clear that the services strategy and London Plan requirements for bicycle and waste storage meant that a large proportion of the ground floor would be taken up by plant and back of house facilities. These developments raised concerns about the functionality of the Fluid Zone, ‘we are trying to satisfy both the real aspirations of the fluid concept […] and accommodate a lot of requirements on the ground floor which are not conducive to that and we will just get a compromise’, ‘an unhappy mix’. Questions began to be asked about whether Marshgate was the right place for these specialist engineering activities. Different views were expressed about what exactly was meant by *engagement* and whether the Fluid Zone concept entailed public access to all areas, shop windows on interesting research activities (such as the Formula One cars in APL’s vehicle bay) or visits by appointment. Meanwhile, senior academics at the Bartlett continued to argue that a basement was needed to free up the ground floor for more public facing activities.

Marshgate was due to be one of the first UCL buildings constructed on the Olympic Park and its location on the north east corner of the site identified as a ‘key arrival point’, meant that it would be one of the first buildings visitors encountered when approaching UCL East from the Waterfront development or from Stratford High Street. Internal stakeholders recognised the importance of first impressions and argued that the success or failure of the Fluid Zone could have a powerful influence on how UCL would be perceived by the public. Consequently, in March 2017 an RIBA Stage 2 Addendum which included a part basement was instructed and in December 2017, after much deliberation, the Executive Group agreed to remove Imaging from the Marshgate building. At this point arguments asserting the value of the Imaging Centre (‘a unique combination of different image-making technologies in a single suite, giving the ability to image large objects in

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246 Executive Group meeting observation, 06.07.2016
247 Outline planning application Design and Access Statement, 2017:43

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many different ways\(^{248}\)) as a resource for many of the diverse academic courses planned for the Marshgate Phase 1 building were outweighed by cost and space pressures, and health and safety concerns. The UCL Radiation Protection Advisor did not have sufficient information to calculate the exact thickness of the walls required but according to reports he estimated that they would have to be between 1 and 2 meters thick and suggested that it might still be necessary to create ‘a perimeter where people aren’t allowed to stand next to it, which in the middle of a public zone didn’t seem like a great idea’\(^{249}\). Situational factors supporting the development of alternative imaging technology at the Harwell campus were also referenced in the argument in favour of omitting the Imaging Centre.

From the early stages of the Marshgate project there was a ‘massive over demand’\(^{250}\) for space on the ground floor. Initially the Institute of Making (IoM) was spread across the ground floor but an early decision was made to put this on two floors so that the ground floor could be ‘multi-flavour’\(^ {251}\). Although some of the demand for ground floor space related to ceiling heights, servicing and loading requirements, the appeal of the ground floor was also due to its perceived potential for public engagement. As noted by a member of UCL Culture, ‘a huge amount of research has shown that [in] any museum or cultural institution stairs are a problem, people see a stairwell and 50% or 60% of people turn away’\(^{252}\).

When proposals for the new campus were first being developed, one of the options under consideration was provision of a substantial visitor attraction, ‘UCL’s first purpose-built museum’\(^ {253}\). However, in 2016 there was already uncertainty about the ‘scale and nature of the museum’\(^ {253}\) and by the time the fit out briefing meetings were taking place in 2018, the size of the museum component in Marshgate Phase 1 had been substantially scaled back. It was

\(^{248}\) Outline Integrated Academic Plan July 2017 – ‘large’ was intended to include objects the size of military tanks (Executive Group 20.02.2017)
\(^{249}\) Education Task Group, observation 07.01.2018
\(^{250}\) Executive Group meeting, observation, 06.07.2016
\(^{251}\) Academic Director, Interview 08.08.2017
\(^ {252}\) UCL Culture briefing meeting, observation 26.04.2018
\(^ {253}\) UCL East Outline Integrated Academic Plan July 2016
clear from the UCL Culture briefing meetings that the earlier ambition had not been forgotten, ‘originally the aspiration was a 600m² museum but that was a long time ago …’\(^{254}\), ‘The original idea, the original idea was to create a space with enough quality so that we could bring in international standard exhibitions’\(^{254}\). In sharp contrast to this ambition, the exhibition space provided in the new layouts was characterised by a representative from UCL Culture as ‘the corridor for the toilets’\(^{254}\). He argued that the museum had been taken out of the Marshgate proposals ‘because apparently it didn’t have the return on investment’\(^{254}\) and contested this decision on the grounds that a museum should not be assessed in the same way as an academic activity, that ‘if you were counting that way [you] would never put anything that isn’t teaching into an institution’\(^{254}\). UCL Culture staff also argued that ‘every global university worth its salt has world class galleries’\(^{254}\) and that ‘we could have brought sixty thousand school children a year into the building’\(^{254}\) so omitting the museum meant losing an opportunity to ‘really change the way our university integrates with the outside world’\(^{254}\). It was clear by this stage that the scheme could not accommodate both the café/riverside pub and a large exhibition space so a choice had to be made. UCL Culture questioned the value of the café to the university’s public engagement strategy and made an implicit bid for the café space, ‘I don’t want to be that guy saying we are sacrificing aspirations for Sodexo’s income’\(^{254}\). Although it was given serious consideration, this bid for more space was ultimately unsuccessful and in December 2018 the formal exhibition area was omitted entirely from Phase 1. The provision of a museum remained an option for later phases and UCL Culture continued to work with the programme team to animate the Marshgate building.

In January 2019 following confirmation of the safety risks, specifically of fire or explosion, and additional costs associated with accommodating APL in the Fluid Zone, it was agreed that the APL activities originally planned for the ground floor (fuel cells and battery testing) should be relocated to a standalone pavilion on Plot 4. Arguments around health and safety

\(^{254}\) UCL Culture fit out briefing meeting observation, 26.04.2018 (Sodexo is the University’s current catering contractor)
outweighed other considerations and the option of a standalone facility on Plot 4 was proposed to retain APL’s ability to access major funding streams associated with the Government’s Industrial Strategy (supporting the development of alternative fuels and energy storage capacity) and avoid the loss of a research activity viewed as attractive to potential philanthropic donors and to the public. Omitting ground floor elements of APL from Marshgate Phase 1 enabled a redesign of the Fluid Zone. The Culture Lab was moved down to the ground floor thereby enhancing its public engagement potential and freeing up much needed space on the first floor for other activities such as studio space or computer clusters.

6.2.2 The heterogenous campus

The second common theme which was apparent in deliberations concerning the Fluid Zone was the heterogeneity of the university campus and how this could radically increase the number of potential design options and therefore the complexity and uncertainty of the design process. Gans used the term ‘effective environment’ to describe the environment as it is experienced by people using it as opposed to the ‘potential (physical) environment’, which is by definition empty and uninhabited. He argued that the effective environment is constructed out of the potential environment by the people who use it and in doing so create the rules and behavioural norms which determine its social meaning and function (Gans, 1991, p. 27). Gans was writing about urban planning in which it is assumed that management of the public realm will be relatively light touch. His concept takes on a different significance in the context of architectural briefing for institutional buildings where design is considered alongside alternative scenarios for the future management of space and where the construction of the potential environment can therefore be much more intentional. In recent years there has been a growing interest in the impact of space and place on organisational behaviour. However, as Sailer et al point out, ‘it is not just the spatial layout of a workplace that matters for organisational behaviour, but equally the way in which the layout is strategically utilised by a particular organisation and how the layout interplays with organisational culture and structure’ (2021, p. 386). They advocate a ‘socio-spatial perspective’ and
emphasise the importance of ‘organisation-environment fit’. Work on educational buildings also suggests that there is a ‘complex relationship between users and setting’ and that the success of design proposals can depend on ensuring that the ‘physical setting, is aligned with educational intentions and organisational elements’ (Woolner, 2018, p. 154-155). This indicates both the range of knowledge required in programme teams and the complexity of the design process particularly for a project like UCL East where the building, the academic programme and the operational strategy were being developed concurrently.

Deliberations concerning the Fluid Zone were characterised by diverse stakeholders deploying different kinds of knowledge to support or contest design propositions and future scenarios of use. Even aspects of the design that at first appeared to be scientifically verifiable such as the temperature of the atrium in the Fluid Zone revealed themselves to be less definitive than might originally have been assumed. The engineers’ initial calculations were done to predict air temperature in the atrium, but when it became apparent that there were tensions between BREEAM sustainability targets, running costs, the accessibility of the main entrance doors (sliding, side hung, revolving?) and ensuring that ‘the atrium is a comfortable environment in which to sit without your coat’ more nuanced calculations were carried out which also took into account air movement and radiant heat (i.e. resultant temperature). However, it soon became clear that comfort levels would also depend on formal and informal patterns of use, for instance how often people came in and out of the external doors, whether access was controlled for evening events, occupancy levels, ‘expectations about dress’ and the duration of sedentary activities. For instance, higher resultant temperatures would be required to ensure comfort during award ceremonies or performances where people are seated for long periods of time and expected to wear evening dresses or other elegant clothing which is not designed for warmth. The range of values brought into a debate about comfort that you might have assumed could easily be resolved by reference to physics and

255 Atrium fit out briefing meeting, observation 03.05.2018
human physiology was striking and included environmental sustainability, financial viability, disability access rights, the social norms and cultural practices of the university, and a narrative around UCL’s ethos of inclusivity and public engagement.

The question of space management was a recurrent theme in the fit out briefing meetings but the importance of planning for occupation was perhaps most clearly articulated in discussions concerning the Fluid Zone. A representative of UCL Culture asserted that ‘we cannot take a “if we build it they will come” approach’ and stressed the need to ‘think about how we animate and curate these spaces to draw people in’. Ideas for what might happen in the Fluid Zone included a range of public engagement activities including ‘community meetings, fairs, science festivals, speeches, hands on experiments, artwork’, ‘a performance art installation, a trapeze’ and curating the space to ‘reflect the research and academic content of the institution’. Deliberations about the provision of fixing points and the location of power and data in the atrium were informed by these aspirations but it was clearly acknowledged that providing a building which could support these kinds of activities would not be enough to make them happen – that concerted effort from a Fluid Zone curator (and institutional support) would also be required.

When one of the design consultants raised the question of operational access to high level lighting and fixing points in the atrium, ‘presumably you are going to have access to a MEWP [mobile elevating work platform], ‘the modern alternative to a ladder’, a MEWP was presented as the standard industry solution for working safely at height. However, in a later meeting the design team were advised that ‘UCL Estates has a complicated relationships with MEWPs’ and when asked directly about this a representative from the UCL Estates FM team said:

256 UCL Culture briefing meeting, observation 26.04.2018
257 UCL Culture briefing meeting, observation 26.04.2018
258 Future Media briefing for ground floor studio space, observation 29.05.2018
259 UCL Culture briefing, observation 30.05.2018
Our preference is always not to have one, so if we can not have one we would rather not have one, we don’t want to test and inspect these, we don’t want to use these. However, if we are looking for maintenance strategies then that is something we have to discuss but it has to be an inherent and critical need as opposed to a “nice to have”.  

Clearly the UCL FM team was reluctant to change its policy regarding the use of this ‘expensive equipment’ which had the additional disadvantage from its perspective of requiring all users to be specially trained. Consequently, any features of the design that would entail the use of MEWPs for the safe operation and maintenance of the building would have to be clearly justified. This may sound like a mundane detail, but a viable operations and maintenance strategy (with appropriate resources, skills, and contract/policy) is critical to ongoing usability, satisfaction and perceptions of the institutional brand. This was clearly recognised by one user who asserted her preference for simple and intuitive light switches rather than a sophisticated ‘smart’ lighting system which would be difficult for staff to control, ‘I don’t want it smarter, that is exactly what I am saying, I want it really stupid’.

Existing FM policy was just one aspect of the heterogenous campus that had to be taken into account in the design process. Other examples included disciplinary specific teaching practices (such as briefing students before they enter the laboratory or specialist ways of working with objects), legal agreements, (such as library license requirements, insurance conditions and immigration law), institutional policy (such health and safety, and equality, diversity and inclusion policies) and material artefacts (such as research equipment with a specific size, weight and mode of operation).

Another feature of deliberation about the brief associated with the heterogeneity of the campus was consideration of alternative ways to assign the necessary ‘work’ of the university. In the Fluid Zone this related to the

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260 FM briefing meeting, observation 30.05.2018
261 IoM briefing meeting, observation 29.05.2018
provision of a staffed reception desk and the possibility of other roaming staff to offer directions or advice to visitors. Given the huge scale of the building, internal stakeholders felt it was important that visitors were welcomed by human beings rather than just physical signage or electronic screens, ‘they found in the V&A that if they didn’t put a reception in the new entrance people would wander in stand there and then turn round and go out because they don’t feel like they are supposed to be there and there are screens galore, there are screens everywhere’\textsuperscript{262}. Other instances where the allocation of work was discussed in UCL East briefing meetings included the management of football crowds (60,000 fans on match days), this was assigned to the police rather than permanent physical barriers in the landscape, and suicide prevention which was assigned largely to student support services rather than attempting to close off \textit{all possible} opportunities to jump from height. Meanwhile, it was proposed that work such as access control, locating desk vacancies and signposting booked rooms should be assigned to technology embedded in the building.

### 6.3 Workspace strategy

Working out a strategy for the allocation of space to teaching, research and office space in Phase 1 was expected to be ‘a challenging task’\textsuperscript{263}. In recent years the traditional university model of single occupancy cellular offices has been questioned by estates professionals, architects and senior managers proposing new ways of working. However, provision of academic workspace is ‘a sensitive and contentious subject’ (Pinder et al., 2009, p. 2). The workspace strategy for Pool Street and Marshgate was intended to set a precedent for ‘an efficient workspace model for the whole development’\textsuperscript{263} and the academic planning team worked with UCL Estates to review ‘alternative ways of working to support maximisation of the space’\textsuperscript{264}. This section locates the UCL East case study in relation to the literature on university workspace and gives an account of deliberations concerning

\textsuperscript{262} Wayfinding briefing workshop, observation 24.04.2018
\textsuperscript{263} Executive Group Minutes 21.04.2017, item 2
\textsuperscript{264} Executive Group Minutes 02.03.2017, Rolling Action List
academic and student workspace. It does not cover professional services workspace because very little discussion on this point was observed – the default position being that ‘professional services staff would be working on an agile basis’\textsuperscript{265}. However, the absence of discussion concerning agile working for professional services staff in the UCL East briefing meetings observed is itself noteworthy\textsuperscript{266}. In her study of academic and professional staff perceptions of their positioning within UCL, Brown notes that ‘the move to more communal working or hot-desking in recent years, to encourage more flexible work patterns and to maximise the chronic shortage of space, has almost exclusively been applied to professional services staff’ (Brown, 2021, p. 90). She observes that the shift to agile working has not been without personal cost and illustrates this with a quotation from one of her participants, ‘it’s awful not to have a space of your own, it really is, and it’s causing a lot of stress… it’s incredibly stressful’ (ibid, p. 89). Brown concludes that patterns of space allocation are a clear indication of the value placed upon individual employees by the institution.

6.3.1 Academic workspace – efficiency and efficacy
The research literature identifies a number of different workspace models ranging from single occupancy offices to ‘non-territorial’ open plan offices. In non-territorial open plan offices staff are expected to clear their desk at the end of each work session and these offices may be designed to support a purely agile work culture or an activity-based working model (Pinder et al., 2009, Gorgievski et al., 2010, Muhonen and Berthelsen, 2021)

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[scale=0.5]{figure6-3.png}
\caption{Types of academic workspaces in the UK HE sector}
\end{figure}

\textsuperscript{265} Academic Core Group meeting, observation 22.11.2017
\textsuperscript{266} Agile working for PS staff may have been discussed in other meetings
(Pinder et al., 2009, pp. 2 & 5) *the combi-office model comprises ‘small cellular offices and adjacent shared informal meeting spaces’*

Pinder et al argue that ‘changing academic practices and priorities, new information technologies, financial pressures and environmental considerations’ (ibid., p. 1) are all driving a shift away from cellular offices towards a variety of new ways of working that have been developed in other sectors. They note that academic office space is characterised by low occupant density and poor space utilisation; ‘academics and researchers typically occupy their workspaces for only 30-40% of the working day’ (ibid., p. 7). This figure is consistent with the UCL Space Utilisation Survey (2010) which found that the overall utilisation of office space on the Bloomsbury campus was 36%.267

Wilhoit observes that the benefits claimed for new ways of working include: ‘flexibility, cost savings and increased informal interaction’ (2016, p. 805) with increased opportunities for informal interaction being assumed to support greater knowledge sharing, creativity, and collaboration. However, while some research suggests that unplanned interactions between staff from different work groups can generate innovation (Hillier and Penn, 1991), findings are inconsistent (Sailer and Penn, 2009)268 and a number of empirical studies (Pinder et al., 2009, Gorgievski et al., 2010, Lansdale et al., 2011) suggest that in universities open plan offices can have the opposite effect to that intended, with academics self-censoring informal interaction to avoid disturbing others or choosing to work from home. The disadvantages attributed to open plan working include: visual and auditory distraction, loss of visual and auditory privacy, loss of environmental control (Wilhoit et al., 2016), inability to use workspaces to sustain and express professional

267 ‘Utilisation (UT) is calculated as frequency (FR) of room used expressed as a percent of the timetabled week multiplied by the percentage of occupied seats (OC) when the rooms are in use: UT = FR x OC’

268 Sailer and Thomas 2021 suggest that these inconsistent findings may result from a lack of specificity concerning workspace configuration, ‘configuration in use’ (managerial decisions about how work space is occupied such as seating plans or location of photocopiers) and organisational culture and structure
identity (Baldry and Barnes, 2012), lack of access to materials and resources, loss of the ‘cognitive value of the workspace’ (Lansdale et al., 2011, p. 411), and a reduced ‘sense of social community’ (Berthelsen et al., 2018, p. 240). Even the most pro-change researchers report that new ways of working are having mixed results and acknowledge that ‘the relationship between the work environment and the perceived values of the organisation can become an area of acute tension’ with ‘proposed or actual changes to the physical environment being interpreted by staff as reflecting deeper, and perhaps sinister, organisational issues’ (Pinder et al., 2009, p. 23). Contra to views of space as a neutral container, ‘faculty do not see space as a backdrop for work, but an essential tool for productivity’ (Wilhoit et al., 2016, p. 812).

The challenge of space efficiency described in the literature was also referenced in UCL East meetings with Estates staff reporting low levels of space utilisation:

Yesterday I had a walk around Central House and 40 desks, 4 people sitting on them and they are apparently all allocated to PhDs and postdocs, 36 of the desks had no sign of life and they still had their coats on the chairs and they have been like that for over two years […] it is like that through the whole university269

Chapter 4, referred to new requirements to ‘demonstrate estates performance in efficiency and effectiveness, and report on these annually to improve accountability’270. In order to be able to report on efficiency across the university, UCL Estates has instituted a policy of putting heat sensors under the desks in all new projects to provide data on space utilisation. At the time of the fit out briefing meetings it was also proposing to carry out an occupancy survey of 22 Gordon Street and investigating a slightly longer range Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) system which could detect ID (swipe access) cards to identify who was in the building at any one time. Space utilisation was clearly seen as a priority with one estates project

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269 Academic Core Group meeting, observation 22.11.2017  
270 Universities UK Report, Efficiency, effectiveness and value for money, 2015
manager reporting that, ‘we are saying look you can’t carry on working as you have done, economic necessity, sorry forget preferences, economic necessity dictates that you have got to share space’. However, there were clearly different perspectives on this issue. The UCL East consultation process involved a number of workgroups, including a lab user group, a workshop group, a teaching space user group, an operations user group, and a workspace user group. Some of the user groups went well but a member of the UCL Estates team reported that in others, ‘you actually just want to bang your head against a brick wall’. The workspace user group was experienced as ‘quite contentious’. There was an acknowledged tension between the push towards space efficiency, ‘not having cubicle offices’, with ‘UCL as a whole […] switching to agile working’, and the need to provide an environment where people wanted to come and work, to encourage academics to spend time on campus and to aid recruitment and retention. Some academics were suspicious of the UCL Estates department agenda for the project, ‘you look at this with your estates goggles on and all you see is hot desks, hot desk spaces’ and there were also concerns that in a building the size of Marshgate, unconstrained agile working could have the unintended effect of breaking down research groups with teaching and research staff and students unable to consistently co-locate and share ideas.

Many of the debates described in this case study are situated in the specifics of UCL as an institution and the location of UCL East in Stratford but the question of academic workspace is a clear exception. Although key members of the infrastructure project team were keen to avoid taking the ‘entrenched’ position of ‘you can’t have a cellular office’ and ready to explore a range of alternative options, they were in effect stepping into a pre-existing argument and the battle lines were already drawn. Interestingly, although Estates staff were aware of the number of research papers

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271 Senior UCL Estates project manager, interview 4.17.2016
272 Senior UCL Estates project manager, interview 26.10.2017
273 Senior Academic Planning coordinator, interview 3.04.2017
274 Culture Lab briefing meeting, observation 4.12.2017
275 Bartlett Faculty UCL East meeting, observation 11.01.2018
276 Senior UCL Estates Project Manager, interview 2.10.2017
asserting the value of individual offices because they allow academics ‘to switch between activities that require quiet concentration and reflection, such as preparing lecture notes and writing papers, and noise generating activities, such as telephone conference calls, meetings and collaborative work’ (Pinder et al., 2009, p. 13), they were inclined to discount them on the grounds that they were not sufficiently disinterested to be objective:

There is lots of research on the benefits of cellular offices, there is no research in any sector on the benefit of open plan working for academics because most academics have done the research based on trying to protect their cellular offices\(^\text{277}\)

The workspace strategy finally adopted following visits to other institutions (such as the King’s College Strand Campus), workspace user group debate, an iterative design process, and consultation with the Deans and Academic Leads was ‘based on the concept of neighbourhoods and on 2 academics sharing an office\(^\text{278}\). The workspace provision (both cellular and open plan with some larger shared cellular offices for part time academic staff) was considered sufficient for the number of staff in the Business Case but it was acknowledged that Marshgate might need to be reconfigured over time as academic courses changed.

6.3.2 Student workspace – an ‘academic home’?
An early aspiration from the UCL Library Services was that the Marshgate building should provide a minimum of 1 workspace for every eight students (a Russell Group average benchmark). In a fit out briefing meeting, the architect noted that it would be difficult to provide this number within the space allocated to the library. This led to an interrogation of the benchmark figure and what exactly would ‘count’ as a student workspace? The library services staff disputed the suggestion that seats in the refectory could be used for studying. They pointed out that the highest demand for study space, between 2.00 and 6.00pm, would coincide with the busiest times for the refectory, and proposed reallocating some of the space in the refectory to the

\(^{277}\) Senior UCL Estates Project Manager, interview 2.10.2017
\(^{278}\) Executive Group minutes, 27.06.2018, item 2.7.2
library. A counter argument, based on observation of student behaviour in
the new refectory at Bloomsbury, was that the distinction between eating and
studying was a false one, that ‘if you go down there at really busy times
people aren’t just eating they are studying at the same time’\textsuperscript{279}. Reference
was also made to the new student centre at Bloomsbury, where a variety of
different kinds of seats had been counted towards the target figure of 1000
study spaces. It was noted that ‘people are very mobile, very agile with their
studying […] people are changing in the way that they are studying’\textsuperscript{279} and
that in term 3, when pressure to study independently would be most intense,
the generic teaching rooms would be more available for use as study space
by the students. Finally, the relevance or accuracy of the Russell Group
average benchmark was questioned on the basis of working patterns in
Bloomsbury where ‘if you go into every local coffee shop here its full of
students, you can’t get a seat and they have all got their laptops out’\textsuperscript{280}. These deliberations, like that concerning the temperature of the atrium,
indicate that what may at first seem to be a stable and uncontroversial
reference point is much more situated and subject to interpretation than
might have originally been assumed.

The effective environment (Gans, 1991) is also seen to be subject to
emergent social rules concerning student occupation of the academic
commons. The architect queried the brief regarding the ratio of quiet to
social study space required and received the following answer:

\begin{quote}
I think the proportion of quiet versus more social project based
space is actually cyclic because if you actually see our students
here [Bloomsbury] those spaces that are more project based
working, in term two and three become quiet spaces and the
whole point of it is that we want students, […] to occupy space and
manage that space and be grown up about the space and use it
how they want so that was the principle for the student centre so
that the group learning spaces could then become quiet study
spaces and its - its about how students decide to manage that
space. \textsuperscript{281}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{279} Academic Core group meeting, observation 22.11.2017
\textsuperscript{280} Education task group, observation 07.01.2018
\textsuperscript{281} Academic Core group meeting, observation 22.11.2017
Deliberations concerning student study space covered the minimum desk area required to avoid feeling 'squished'\textsuperscript{282}, the type of computer provision, and the different types of seating for 'touch down'\textsuperscript{282} checking emails or social media, for writing an essay and for collaborative group work. Laptop loans were proposed to give students the flexibility to work in a variety of different kinds of space, both in the library and in the circulation space around the atrium. It was suggested that quiet individual work could be done in the library and areas separated from the atrium by full height glass screens while noisy group work could be done in the more open areas.

The unprogrammed space around the atrium was designated the 'social commons'\textsuperscript{282} by the architects. The use of this term is apt given the expectation that students would manage the social commons themselves. A commons is defined as a 'shared resource that is vulnerable to social dilemmas' (Hess and Ostrom, 2007, p. 13). In Marshgate these dilemmas include how to mitigate the risk of enclosure (staking a permanent claim to a workspace), unfair control of access, and 'pollution' (by noise or other distractions). According to Hess and Ostrom, common resources can be effectively managed and sustained ‘if they have suitable conditions such as appropriate rules, good conflict-resolution mechanisms, and well defined-group boundaries’ (ibid., p. 11). Reference during the ft out briefing meetings to complaints about noise in the atrium of the Crick suggest that the development of appropriate ‘workplace protocols or etiquettes’ (Parkin et al., 2011, p. 46) may be critical to effective studying in the Marshgate academic commons.

The provision of student managed space for independent study supports the ‘long-term shift in emphasis from teaching to learning’ and ‘growing faculty interest in constructivist learning approaches (team-based, group-process, resource-based, inquiry driven, etc.’ (Beagle, 2010, pp. 15 & 9). However, at an early academic workshop set up to imagine the future of Marshgate, academics made it clear that taught students need both an 'academic home'

\textsuperscript{282} Library services briefing meeting, observation 12.12.2017
and a ‘learning hub’\textsuperscript{283}. In later meetings the call for a ‘home space’\textsuperscript{284} for students was reiterated and generic teaching space and study space in the social commons was characterised as ‘airport lounge space’\textsuperscript{285}, the antithesis of home. There was concern that without a place of their own students would ‘not feel a sense of belonging’\textsuperscript{283} and identity or learn from engagement with ‘communities of practice’ (Lave and Wenger, 1991). It was also pointed out that there appeared to be a disconnect between UCL’s strategy of the Connected Curriculum ‘designed to enhance education by fostering closer connections between its two main endeavours: research and education’ (Carnell, 2017, p. 1) and the proposed layout of the new building. These concerns are discussed further in the following section.

The concept of an academic ‘home’ was later developed by a key stakeholder to suggest that there are multiple levels of affiliation and identity, with individual academics feeling a sense of belonging to their group, department, faculty, university and academia as a whole. This raises the question of how these multiple ‘homes’ relate to each other (are configured) in space.

6.4 Institutional change

This section gives an account of debate concerning the future relationship between UCL East and UCL, and on how the occupation of Marshgate might differ from the current patterns of space use on the Bloomsbury campus. Early work on the academic planning for UCL East emphasised that the new campus should not be in competition with Bloomsbury so all proposals for academic programmes should be for new activities. However, internal stakeholders expressed both hopes and fears that the new campus was not just a practical solution to the chronic space shortage in central London, but also intended to model new ways of working that might be fed back into the wider university and result in change to UCL as a whole. As outlined in the introduction to this chapter, the design of the fit out briefing meetings

\textsuperscript{283} Marshgate Programme Planning Workshop, observation 10.03.2017
\textsuperscript{284} UCL East Bartlett Faculty presentation and Q&A, observation 15.01.2018
\textsuperscript{285} Bartlett UCL East meeting, observation 11.01.2018
encouraged a close focus on the space for individual academic courses and support activities. However, some questions were asked about how the building would function as a whole. The following sub-sections address two concerns raised, first the potential conflict between two valued aims, cross-disciplinary work and an ‘academic home’ for communities of practice (Lave and Wenger, 1991) and second the related issue of sharing facilities and the perceived tension between space efficiency and academic culture.

6.4.1 ‘Breaking down barriers’: social and material
Checkland and Scholes observe that real-world projects are initiated when ‘there is a sense of unease, a feeling that things could be better than they are, or some perceived problem requiring attention’ (Checkland and Scholes, 1990, p. 288). As outlined in Chapter 4, the most obvious problems requiring attention at UCL were a shortage of space for flex on the Bloomsbury campus and the need to rebalance the disciplines within the university to achieve financial sustainability. However, there was also a sense of unease about institutional barriers to integrating research and education and to strengthening cross-disciplinary research, public participation and collaboration with industry, a feeling that UCL could be better prepared for future challenges. As noted in the UCL Council White paper and UCL 2034, these challenges were expected to include the new UK student funding regime, ‘instrumentalist attitudes towards higher education’ and increasing global competition for staff and students. The stated aim of UCL East was to break the ‘conventional barriers between research, education, innovation, public engagement and collaboration’. This aim was foreshadowed in the White Paper 2011-2021 which asserted that UCL was ‘not an academic fortress, but an open institution committed to working collaboratively with others’, argued that ‘interdisciplinarity and team working across disciplinary boundaries will be central to the solution of the many challenges facing humanity in the 21st century’, and claimed that the two-way dialogue of ‘effective public engagement is a prerequisite of research impact’. The institutional narrative around UCL’s plans for the future was linked to its

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286 UCL Council White Paper 2011-2021 p14, 16, 26, 42
287 UCL East business case 2014
tradition of ‘disruptive thinking’ and providing an education to people who had previously been excluded. Nonetheless, contemporary reports identifying strategic challenges in the Higher Education sector raised similar issues indicating that UCL was not unique in recognising the limitations of research within traditional disciplinary silos and the need to maintain public trust and engagement.

The UCL East Business case states that the new campus is intended to support ‘cross-disciplinary activity and the creation of new disciplines’. Rosenfield’s taxonomy of cross-disciplinary research includes: multidisciplinary, interdisciplinary, and transdisciplinary (1992, p. 1351). Each of Rosenfield’s categories involves researchers from different disciplines addressing a common problem: working in parallel or sequentially (multidisciplinary), working together but in disciplinary-specific ways (interdisciplinary) and working together using a shared conceptual framework developed jointly drawing on insights from ‘disciplinary-specific theories, concepts, and approaches’ (transdisciplinary). Rosenfield observes that ‘moving beyond multidisciplinary research requires supportive institutions’ because the conventional organisation of academic life does not encourage transdisciplinary research. While academics involved in the UCL East programme recognised that the existing university estate, comprising separate buildings occupied (and fiercely defended) by different departments, constituted one barrier to transdisciplinary research they acknowledged that providing a new kind of building would not be enough to change the research culture – that other institutional barriers would have to be addressed. Meetings with the Deans and Faculty Managers held to discuss plans for the future governance and operation of the new campus covered a range of issues including: how the costs of cross-disciplinary activities would be apportioned given that faculties and departments have to balance their budgets, how the career development of staff would be

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288 Site hoarding on QEOP photographed 13.09.2022
289 Extract from 1826 prospectus cited in UCL Council White Paper 2011-2021
290 The case for new academic workspaces, Pinder et al 2009, and Universities without walls: A vision for 2030, European University Association, 2021
291 UCL East Business Case, 2017
supported given that cross-disciplinary work can leave academics (particularly junior academics) feeling outside the fold, how the allocation and re-allocation of space would be managed given that research funding and the demand for academic courses is unpredictable, who would be responsible for health and safety given that teaching and research space in the building would be shared, and who would drive the academic vision and champion cross-disciplinarity. It was reported by staff working on Here East (a forerunner and potential test bed for UCL East), that ‘UCL structures just don’t make that [cross-disciplinary activity] easy at all’.

This situation is not unique to UCL, university faculties and departments are not to designed to support cross-disciplinary activities - tenure, prizes and academic honors ‘are accumulated by those who have focused on basic questions in their own fields’ (Rosenfield, 1992, p. 1355). However, members of the Governance Working Group expressed an appetite for change and a sense that if they could only develop the mechanisms to overcome key barriers to cross-disciplinarity at UCL East then they would also be ‘creating the operating model for UCL of the future’. This view, acknowledged as controversial within the university, was contra to an early suggestion from one disgruntled academic that cross disciplinarity should be sent out East to allow the disciplines at Bloomsbury to ‘get on without being disrupted’. The suggestion made in a Governance Working Group meeting that UCL East could prefigure the future of UCL indicates the scale of ambition for the new campus and resonates with other comments from internal stakeholders, that UCL East ‘was going to be significant enough to change Bloomsbury’ and that ‘the main reason for doing this [UCL East] is to challenge the university as an institution to change […] the idea is that this is actually about challenging the university to do things in a different way’.

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292 Governance Working Group, observation 29.09.2017
293 It was also noted that the academic reward system does not support public and community engagement, Senior Academic interview 27.11.2017
294 Senior UCL Estates project manager, interview, 19.09.2016
295 Senior academic, interview 27.11.2017
Although, the primary focus here is on the infrastructure project, these deliberations about the operation and governance of UCL East are referenced to make two points. First, although architectural projects may play an integral part in organisational change, the social impact of a building design can only be anticipated if the project situation is viewed from a ‘socio-spatial perspective’ in which ‘the physical space of an organisation is considered alongside its organisational structure’ (Sailer and Thomas, 2021, p. 382). The significance of this perspective for architectural briefing is that the organisation has to be considered (and if necessary redesigned) alongside the building if the intended social outcomes are to be realised.

Second, although user consultation during the early stages of architectural projects may be genuinely intended to inform the physical design, it can also be seen as the first stage of a change management process. Pinder et al argue that ‘the success of projects is directly linked to the organisation’s ability to keep all stakeholders enthusiastically engaged and its willingness to recognise and meet the costs of doing so’ (Pinder et al., 2009, p. 1). It is likely that any ‘organisation’s ability to keep all stakeholders enthusiastically engaged’ will depend on the nature of the project being proposed and on the stakeholders’ ability to influence the design outcome. However, it is suggested that the answer to ‘how much did the building design change in response to stakeholder engagement?’ is not the only legitimate indicator of successful engagement. If the consultation process prompts stakeholders to change organisational structures, spatial practices or cultural attitudes (to redesign or adjust institutional ways of doing things), then even if the design of the potential environment is not influenced in any significant way, the effective environment (Gans, 1991) may be more successful due to a better ‘organisation-environment fit’ (Sailer and Thomas, 2021).

At an early stage of the UCL East project, a senior academic noted that the masterplan team were using the language of communication rather than engagement (with stakeholders) and argued that it was important for building users to be able to ‘invent for themselves what the solution is rather than being told that some group somewhere has decided what is going to happen
to them\textsuperscript{296}. He observed that if you tell people within UCL what is going to happen to them then ‘you will get pushed back’\textsuperscript{296}. However, his following comment, that you might end up with the ‘same solution at the end of the day’\textsuperscript{296}, indicates an awareness that the perceived value of engagement lay not just in how it could inform the building design but also in how it would prompt UCL stakeholders to question their institution, its habitual ways of working, and its relationships with local communities and external partners. In a later meeting, a member of the academic planning team explicitly acknowledged that the space allocation strategy constituted a process of change management that would require careful management (alongside UCL Estates) to avoid losing ‘the goodwill of academic colleagues’\textsuperscript{297}.

The suggestion that engagement has a social function is not intended to, invoke Arnstein’s ladder of participation and imply that consultation is merely a form of political manipulation. On the contrary, although genuine engagement can be challenging as indicated by the comment, ‘it’s painful, it’s quite painful but it’s getting there’\textsuperscript{298}, the briefing process for UCL East was seen to provide real opportunities to develop new academic relationships and teaching practices. For instance, during negotiations on how they were going to share the large studio space on the fourth floor, the engineers questioned why the architects’ needed so much space. The architects responded that they needed the space to hold crits. The engineers were not familiar with the concept of a crit and the outcome of the explanation that followed was that ‘engineering will now use crit-like teaching in their new programmes’\textsuperscript{299}. In another example of cross-disciplinary insight arising from engagement with the briefing process, academics working on the Urban Room and the London Memory archive were struggling with the tight constraints on space for public engagement and storage when ‘they were like oh we are both communicating to the public on very similar themes’\textsuperscript{299} perhaps if we work together we can have a bigger more usable space. The outcome of the

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{296} Campus Concept Group meeting, observation, 08.02.2015
  \item \textsuperscript{297} Executive Group meeting minutes, 21.04.2017 item 2.1.3
  \item \textsuperscript{298} Senior Academic Planning coordinator, interview 10.12.2018
  \item \textsuperscript{299} Senior Academic Planning coordinator, interview 10.12.2018
\end{itemize}
conversation that followed was a shared space designed around academic and engagement activities rather than disciplinary boundaries.

6.4.2 Spatial relations: interpretation and prediction

The initial split of the Marshgate building into two separate projects, shell and core and fit out, and the way the fit out briefing process was designed had the effect of focussing internal stakeholder attention on the allocation of space as distinct from the overall building design. A key topic of debate was the extent to which academics could be co-located with their students to enable ‘research led teaching’\(^\text{300}\). However, an expressed desire for local diversity of space, with centrally timetabled space, cellular academic office space and some social study space clustered together on each floor, was resisted by the UCL Estates team, ‘I am saying to them the building isn’t designed like that, and you won’t get the efficiencies if you design like that’\(^\text{301}\) (Marshgate is structured like a layer cake with different functions located on different floors - this design was justified by reference to practical and financial constraints – see Chapter 4). The question as to whether the vision for the building would allow different floors to be identified with particular academic programmes or whether ‘one morning you could be on the 6\(^{th}\) floor, the next week you could be on the 5\(^{th}\) floor’\(^\text{302}\) was contentious, ‘When I mentioned this in front of some our dear colleagues from estates I nearly got strung up for suggesting that we might even consider such a thing’\(^\text{302}\). However, a senior academic working on the teaching space strategy questioned the claim that increasing the amount of dedicated teaching space would necessarily result in a significant reduction in space efficiency in a building the scale of Marshgate. There was also an acknowledged tension between ‘trying to avoid saying “here is your space” for anything’\(^\text{302}\) and the understanding that there would inevitably be ‘dominant users’\(^\text{302}\) in the specialist teaching and research spaces. This generated a sense of disquiet in some quarters about the potential for an inequity of experience if engineering and architecture students would have the advantage of a strong

\(^{300}\) Education task group meeting in RIBA Stage 2 Fit out, observation 07.01.2018

\(^{301}\) Senior UCL Estates project manager, interview 27.02.2017

\(^{302}\) Education task group meeting in RIBA Stage 2 Fit out, observation 07.01.2018
association with their home laboratory or studio space while humanities students would be expected to be more peripatetic. As an interim proposal, it was suggested that some ownership of generic teaching space should be allowed in the early days of the new campus, ‘when all the courses have not ramped up to their full capacity’\textsuperscript{302} even if this might not be possible in the long term. This suggestion prompted the response from a member of the UCL Estates team that testing an alternative model for space allocation (which included more dedicated teaching space) risked encouraging territoriality and setting up expectations for ownership that would be difficult to shift later if/when this became necessary. It was also noted that ‘the way the workspace is set out would make that [providing dedicated space] quite hard because it is very hard to partition in a way that people can put names on doors and departments’\textsuperscript{303}.

The debate over the proposed space allocation strategy for Marshgate supports Pinder et al’s observation that academics and estates departments tend to have different priorities and constraints (Pinder et al., 2009). However, while deliberation over the space allocation strategy illustrates different perspectives on the design problem across groups, it also provides an example of a perceived tension between two desired academic objectives, cross-disciplinary working and a ‘home’ space. Cross-disciplinary projects (at least transdisciplinary ones) are likely to require proximity and regular face-to-face encounters between people who are different from each other, while the idea of an ‘academic home’ is based on proximity and regular face-to-face encounters between people who are similar to each other. The challenge faced by the UCL East project team was how to develop a space allocation strategy that would support transdisciplinary collaboration and generate the kind of unplanned interactions between diverse people that are associated with innovation and information flow in some organisations, while at the same time providing academic homes to support peer learning, a sense of identity and the development of communities of practice. Opinions varied on how these two aims should be balanced, one option suggested by

\textsuperscript{303} Education task group meeting in RIBA Stage 2 Fit out, observation 07.01.2018
the literature is that transdisciplinary interactions take place when people are on the move (Penn et al., 1997), using shared facilities such as tea-rooms and printers or in programmed meetings (Sailer and Thomas, 2021), while peer learning and ‘legitimate peripheral participation’ (Lave and Wenger, 1991) take place where people are relatively immobile, working together in a designated space.

Deliberation about how people would move about within the Marshgate building covered different aspects of the design, including the vertical circulation, configuration of the floor plans and access control. Pedestrian movement in academic buildings is, to a large extent, driven by the programme of teaching activities and the architects for Marshgate were aware of the need ‘to manage the peak-flow student circulation at changeover times in the timetable’\(^{304}\). The vertical circulation strategy for Marshgate was developed iteratively in a series of design moves and now includes two double height, ‘highly visible’\(^{305}\) escalators in the central atrium. These go from the ground floor to the ‘principal academic arrival point’\(^{305}\) on the second floor, and from the second floor to the fourth floor. In addition to these escalators (and the vertical circulation in 4 cores), a sequence of accommodation stairs wind around the atrium providing access to the interim and upper floors. Escalators are designed to move large numbers of people in a short period of time but, like lifts, they prevent encounters with people travelling in the opposite direction. The accommodation stairs in the academic commons were intended to draw people into the atrium and so enliven the space by making movement up through the building more visible and by generating more unplanned encounters.

A consistent feature of the Marshgate building design, from the competition bid through to the planning application scheme, was the articulation of a central atrium to create a series of break out spaces ‘opening off the atrium or created within the floor plate’\(^{306}\) letting light into the building and framing

\(^{304}\) Marshgate Phase I: Briefing Note on Building Massing and Scale, 30.08.2017
\(^{305}\) Reserved matters Design and Access Statement, September 2018
\(^{306}\) Design and Access statement, reserved matters planning application, 2018
different views out across the city. The architects argued that each break out space was linked to a ‘vertical community’ of two or three storeys and argued that this approach introduced an intermediate scale to the central atrium, ‘a scale at which human interaction can be maintained’. However, design feedback from the Bartlett raised concerns about the U-shaped floorplates created by cutting through from the atrium to the external façade to form these multi-storey breakout spaces. Critics of the U-shaped plans noted dead-ends in the horizontal circulation and observed that this configuration maximised travel distances within the building. They argued that the physical segregation resulting from this layout would constrain interaction and collaboration and made a case for linking the two ends of the U-shaped plans. Following deliberation over this issue, bridges were incorporated into the plans for level 5 and 6.

Future patterns of movement through the building were also discussed in relation to the access control strategy. In a meeting held to discuss building security it was agreed that all entry points from the public Fluid Zone should be access controlled. However, there was a longstanding intention to make the building collaborative, ‘so we can’t design it […] to stop people talking to each other’ and the vision for Marshgate was to allow members of the university free movement within the building as far as reasonably practical. Staff familiar with Bloomsbury recalled with frustration having to use a swipe card several times just to get themselves a cup of tea and noted that in order to visit someone in another department you had to be ‘able to have your access sorted, and we don’t want to have that sort of barrier’.

Consequently, it was proposed that only areas with potentially dangerous equipment (such labs and workshops), privacy requirements (such as academic offices), or institutional restrictions (such as the academic staff common room) would have swipe card controlled access active during the day. However, concerns remained about possible disruption to quiet work and it was proposed that the technology should be installed to allow management to control access to specific areas if through routes or patterns.
of use became problematic in the future. The academic planning team hoped it would not be necessary to activate access control if visual cues could be effectively deployed to make it clear to people that they should ‘go that way rather than that way’. Minimising access control and making provision for future management flexibility was aligned with the overall aim of making the boundaries to the university more porous, with students and academics going out to work with local communities and partner institutions or to study wildlife in the park, and visitors from the public, industry and partner institutions coming in to use the facilities at Marshgate.

Although, the user group briefing meetings focussed largely on specific designated areas, some participants raised issues concerning the relationship between their space and other parts of the building. For instance, in one meeting a senior academic noted the social disadvantage of making his laboratory too self-sufficient:

**Academic:** if you give them a tea making point here, what happens is that they will eat their lunch in there, all sitting down on the floor, they will drink tea and coffee in there because then they will go back in desperate to get back to work and they will become like mole people that just live in this space and so so actually often we, for their own kind of you know work life balance and general health, say 'look go to the refectory buy a cup of coffee and sit down for 10 minutes and then come back…'

**Architect:** right so no tea point

**Academic:** no tea point

At another meeting, a senior member of the student support and wellbeing team, commenting on early plans for the main arrival point on the second floor, made it clear that student support services and the Students’ Union office could not be located together because the perceived independence of

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309 Conservation laboratory briefing workshop, observation 26.04.2018
the Students’ Union would be compromised if they were seen to be occupying the same space as university staff:

The Students’ Union is completely separate and needs to stay separate because if they are seeing students to advocate for academic appeals or grievances that would be a complete conflict of interest for us to be co-located … and they do see themselves as a separate entity.\footnote{Student services briefing meeting, observation 19.12.2017}

In questioning the degree of permeability between staff and student space in Marshgate, one senior academic drew an analogy between his relationship with his children and with his students commenting, ‘I love them very dearly but there are times when I just want – you know I just have to go somewhere else, there has to be a place for you to go’.\footnote{Critical Friends meeting, observation 08.05.2017} He argued that while it was desirable to maximise the permeability of main building thresholds and promote interaction between students, more discussion was required concerning constraints on student-staff contact and the ability of teaching and research staff to withdraw to collaborate with their peers or concentrate on their own work.

The relative location of different activities was also discussed at a more local scale. For instance, the Director of the Institute of Making asserted the need for an internal connection between the ground and first floor so that the Institute could have a single entrance door and a clearly defined identity within the building. She also requested that the staff spaces should be arranged in an interconnecting sequence of increasing privacy and anticipated that although people would have their own desks, they might choose to work in any of the three types of staff space according to the needs of their current task: the technicians office opening off the main workshop (for members’ consultations), the main office (for research or planning events) or the Director’s office (for meetings or private concentrated work). In discussing the proposed plans she drew clear parallels between

\footnote{310 Student services briefing meeting, observation 19.12.2017} \footnote{311 Critical Friends meeting, observation 08.05.2017}
the configuration of space and a sense of belonging and group cohesion between staff with different areas of responsibility:

I suppose it’s about adjacencies and connectedness because one thing we found was that having an office upstairs and the workshop downstairs – it is easy for you to think ‘oh what are they doing up there?’ you create a separation…

The examples given above indicate that co-location and integration can be interpreted as either positive or negative depending on the situation. The perceived value of visibility, like permeability, also varies: the visibility of the reception desk in the Fluid Zone, the materials library and the circulation in the central atrium were seen to be positive, while visibility of the student counselling rooms or study spaces was seen to have potential negative consequences. It goes without saying that the WCs and showers in Marshgate were also expected to be visually screened but even these expectations are historically or culturally specific.

6.5 Summary

This chapter, gave an account of the fit out briefing process for Marshgate and described episodes of argumentation centred on the developing building design (the virtual building). It suggested that because separate design teams were responsible for the masterplan, shell and core, and fit out designs, Marshgate could perhaps be characterised as a ‘new-build retrofit’. It described how the fit out briefing meetings took place under conditions of value conflict and uncertainty arising from competition for space, time pressure and disciplinary differences. It situated the Marshgate fit out consultation within the wider campus project, suggested that the design of speech events (briefing workshops, presentations, project meetings) informed decision-making, and indicated the social and institutional pressures on the individuals and groups involved. In identifying the diversity of people expected to occupy Marshgate, it also indicated that stakeholders at UCL East were likely to have very different needs and priorities, and

312 Institute of Making fit out briefing meeting, observation 23.10.2017
experience the new building in different ways (and use different evaluation criteria).

The aim of this chapter was to draw attention to the challenges of designing a building concurrently with developing the academic programme and operational strategy. Diverse aspects of the project situation such pedagogy, institutional policies, legal conditions and scientific equipment, all had an impact on the emergent design proposals indicating the fundamentally heterogenous character of a university campus. While the focus here was on the virtual building, it became clear that no aspect of the project situation could be considered in isolation, even apparently stable reference points such as the temperature in the atrium or the Russell Group benchmark for student study spaces revealed themselves to be socially situated and subject to interpretation.

Working in the field of discourse analysis, Shuy argues that it is not possible to understand the meaning of words and phrases without taking into account ‘the larger units of the participants’ speech events, schemas, agendas, speech actions and conversational strategies’ in which they are ‘nested’ (Shuy, 2015, p. 824). Likewise, it is suggested that it is not possible to understand the meaning of design decisions concerning the virtual building without some understanding of the spatial practices, cultural attitudes and institutional structures (planned or anticipated) within which it will be enmeshed. The material and social aspects of the situation are fundamentally ‘entangled’ (Hodder, 2012). Predictions about future behaviour based on assumed affordances and constraints are dependent on an understanding of the client culture and organisation. Any assessment of who stands to lose and who stands to gain from the project in terms of social goods such as autonomy or control, status, identity, a sense of belonging, safety and security or access to resources is also dependant on a thorough understanding of the client body.

This account of the consultation process, included the observation that internal stakeholders’ power to propose, contest or defend design decisions
is situated within the pre-existing structures of the institution and therefore not equally distributed. It also noted the different rationalities in operation (Hofstede, 1980, Schein, 1990), the different perceptions of personal agency, and the impact of the speech event design (format of meeting/workshop/presentation) on the topics, emotional temperature and understanding of the question ‘what is happening here?’.

The episodes of argumentation concerning the virtual building described in this chapter encompassed aspects of the strategic brief (as defined in Chapter 4) and were informed by the emergent project governance (as described in Chapter 5). It is also notable that deliberations in the fit out briefing meetings blurred the boundaries between decisions about space allocation (‘Configuration-in-use’) and building design, and decisions about space management and building design. This suggests that these aspects of the project are inherently interconnected and cannot be easily disentangled. Deliberation concerning non-material issues associated with the virtual building included social rules and norms of behaviour for students using the academic commons, managing and curating the Fluid Zone, programming access control systems, how to manage room booking and the use of shared spaces, and the social impact of end user engagement in the briefing process (the first step in a change management process?). The rich diversity of argumentation strategies and tactics deployed by internal stakeholders engaging in the briefing and design review process are discussed further in the following chapter.
Chapter 7 Architectural briefing and argumentation

7.1 Introduction

In recent years there has been an increasing interest in the social aspect of design. This has led to a shift away from research into design as it happens within the heads of individual designers and towards studies which investigate design work in teams (McDonnell and Lloyd, 2009, p. 101). In a similar move, rather than studying briefing as the sole responsibility of the client’s representative (possibly in collaboration with the lead designer), this case study explores the broader social aspect of client-side engagement in the architectural briefing process - how decisions about the future building are informed by the dialogue between groups and individuals within the client organisation. Although design consultants were involved in many of the project meetings observed, the research focus here is on the words and actions of clients and end users.

This study noted many aspects of briefing that have been identified in the literature: that clients are not ‘unitary entities’ (Green, 1996, p. 2), that people may have different perspectives or points of view on the problematic situation so objectives can rarely be ‘taken as given’ (Checkland and Scholes, 1990, p. A6, Schön, 1991 [1983]), that different categories of people may use and therefore experience a building in different ways (Hillier et al., 1984) and that briefing is ‘value laden’ (Paton and Dorst, 2011). Lawson argues that ‘design is a process in which there will be no one recognizably correct or even optimal answer’ (Lawson, 1994, p. 2). This suggests that things could always be different, that architecture is contingent (Till, 2009) and Lawson’s position certainly resonates with the wide range of options discussed during the briefing and design process for the UCL East campus.

In the early days of this case study my standard answer to questions about the research focus was that I was studying ‘how internal stakeholders agree on the architectural brief’. On two occasions, (with the project architect and a UCL Estates project manager), this answer was met with laughter. I
interpreted this response as rueful recognition that this was indeed a problematic topic. However, while internal disagreement about project aims and objectives is clearly a matter of everyday concern for clients and practitioners, and there are many suggestions in the literature about how briefing ought to be managed, there appears to be scant research into how client organisations actually manage internal argumentation on real-world projects. As outlined in the literature review, architectural briefing has been characterised in a variety of different ways: as communication, decision-making, learning, research, sensemaking, socialisation, information processing, knowledge creation, framing the problematic situation, negotiation, and creative exploration. This chapter, reflects on the UCL East case study and characterises architectural briefing as a process in which argumentation is central. This may appear to be self-evident. If stakeholders did not believe that what they said might change design outcomes, they would probably not turn up to briefing workshops. If consultants did not believe that the strength of their arguments could influence decision-makers, they would not put so much thought into preparing their design presentations. It may appear as if there is no point in discussing argumentation as a significant aspect of architectural briefing, that this is already a commonplace, and yet this chapter argues that something interesting remains to be said. The work of Yaneva and her students in mapping controversies (Yaneva, 2012) supports this view. However, while they tend to focus on the architectural object, here the focus is on the building users and everyday practice.

Architecture, as Till has pointed out, is ‘dependent on others at every stage of its journey from initial sketch to inhabitation’, it is ‘irredeemably contingent’ (Till, 2009, p. 45). Contra to the suggestion that acknowledging contingency implies a relativist position in which ‘anything goes’, Till argues that situated intentional judgements are ‘necessary in the contingent world’ (ibid., p. 53). UCL could not control the ‘physical, environmental, social, political and economic conditions’ (ibid., p. 19) in which the new campus at Stratford was conceived and planned, but a series of situated judgements had to be made about the best available course of action. The focus of this thesis, and this
chapter in particular, is internal stakeholder argumentation, deliberating on options for action and justifying or contesting situated judgements.

This chapter, reflects on the constitutive power of argumentation and the tendency for this to be unacknowledged, or at least down-played, to avoid undermining the perception of the preferred decision or design option as the natural, inevitable choice, ‘out there’, in the real-world and just waiting to be recognised by all right minded people. As Simon argues, the ‘scarce resource’ is not information but attention (Simon, 1997 [1945], p. 241). The proposition explored here is that argumentation is used to focus attention on some aspects of the situation (rather than others) and thereby plays a part in the making of architecture, ‘from initial sketch to inhabitation’. This account is not intended to suggest either that argumentation is the only lens through which architectural briefing can be viewed, or that verbal and textual argumentation is more significant than how a project is situated in the material world. The aim is simply to explore an aspect of architectural projects that is so prevalent and everyday that it is often taken for granted.

This chapter reflects on the briefing process for the UCL East campus project as described in the previous three chapters. In section 7.2, it draws on the literature to look at briefing through the lens of argumentation. The term argumentation, as used here, does not refer to the formal logic of analytical reasoning which Toulmin so satisfactorily demonstrated was a special case of limited use in practical situations (Toulmin, 2003 [1958], p. 5) nor is it meant in the sense of a quarrel (although argumentation can on occasion be eristic). However, it is acknowledged that in architectural briefing, as in other fields of action, consensus is ‘the occasional special case within the general case of seeking accommodations in which the conflicts endemic in human affairs are still there, but are subsumed in an accommodation which different parties are prepared to “go along with”’ (Checkland and Scholes, 1990, p. 29). And in a complex and contentious project like UCL East the term argumentation may be taken to include disagreement. Section 7.3, returns to the research questions and reflects on what has been learned about how clients and building users engage in the briefing process through undertaking
this instrumental case study. Section 7.4, discusses the parallels and differences between Situational Analysis and architectural briefing and tentatively propose some sensitising questions for use in practice. These are selected with the aim of raising awareness of the kinds of argumentation that may take place during the briefing process for complex building projects. This chapter concludes by delimiting the transferability of the UCL East case study and discussing the implications of the central role of argumentation in architectural briefing for the ‘microethics of practice’ (Komesaroff, 1995, pp. 67-68).

7.2 Argumentation

The pilot studies and principal case study were characterised by recurrent episodes of argumentation, so this section reviews key literature around argumentation and rhetoric to assess the fit and ‘grab’ (Glaser, 1978) between concepts in these fields and the dialogue observed taking place between internal stakeholders engaged in the briefing process for the UCL East campus.

7.2.1 Composite dialogue

Walton and Krabbe identify 6 basic types of dialogue ‘in which argumentation can occur’ (they do not claim this list is exhaustive):

Table 7-1 Types of Dialogue

(Walton and Krabbe, 1995, p. 183)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of dialogue</th>
<th>Initial situation</th>
<th>Participant’s goal</th>
<th>Goal of dialogue</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Persuasion</td>
<td>Conflict of opinions</td>
<td>Persuade other party</td>
<td>Resolve or clarify issue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inquiry</td>
<td>Need to have proof</td>
<td>Find and verify evidence</td>
<td>Prove (disprove) hypothesis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negotiation</td>
<td>Conflict of interests</td>
<td>Get what you most want</td>
<td>Reasonable settlement that both can live with</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Information seeking

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Information seeking</th>
<th>Need information</th>
<th>Acquire or give information</th>
<th>Exchange information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

### Deliberation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Deliberation</th>
<th>Dilemma or practical choice</th>
<th>Coordinate goals and actions</th>
<th>Decide best available course of action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

### Eristic

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Eristic</th>
<th>Personal conflict</th>
<th>Verbally hit out at opponent</th>
<th>Reveal deeper basis of conflict</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Architectural briefing is traditionally seen as a process of *information seeking* and possibly *inquiry* with more recent literature suggesting that it also includes negotiation through talk-in-interaction (McDonnell, 2009) or the ‘interessement, enrolment and mobilization’ of various actors (Kurokawa et al., 2017, p. 914). This study suggests that architectural briefing may include all 6 types of dialogue but that although these typological distinctions are conceptually useful, in practice the dialogue that takes place during client and building user engagement in the briefing process is more likely to be an amalgamation of two or more of Walton’s basic types than a ‘pure’ version of any one of them. This means that assuming an episode of dialogue is typologically unmixed can be misleading about what is actually happening in briefing meetings. The focus in this chapter is therefore on argumentation as it occurred in any kind of dialogue during the briefing process for UCL East.

#### 7.2.2 Between ‘logico-experimental truths and sophistry’

An initial review of the literature on argumentation suggests that, although there is no definitive list, there is some consensus about the kind of claims that might be made or contested:

- **Claims of fact or existence:**
  - e.g. There is/is not a chronic shortage of space on the Bloomsbury campus, the current size and shape of UCL is/is not financially sustainable
• *Claims of definition, classification:*
e.g. UCL is a university that develops specialist knowledge within well established academic disciplines/UCL is a university that does innovative collaborative research across the boundaries between conventional academic disciplines

• *Claims of cause and consequence:*
e.g. The new campus at UCL East will undermine the academic reputation and financial security of UCL/
The new campus at UCL East will underpin the successful implementation of UCL 2034 and secure the future of UCL in a competitive global marketplace

• *Claims of evaluation or appraisal:*
e.g. The Marshgate building is ‘a scheme of exceptional quality’\textsuperscript{313}/
The Marshgate building ‘is a deeply flawed scheme, based on a flawed brief’\textsuperscript{314}

• *Claims of action or policy:*
e.g. UCL should/should not build a new campus on the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park

• *Claims of interpretation:*
e.g. ‘what was once industrial, contaminated land is being turned into a stunning new urban park in Europe’s largest *regeneration* project’\textsuperscript{315}/
‘*regeneration*, state-led gentrification and displacement are intertwined’ (Watt, 2013, p. 99) – *my italics*

(Source of categories Booth et al., 2016, p. 123, Fairclough, 2003, p. 109, Hart, 2018, p. 131, Eemeren et al., 2001, p. 5). There are some variations on

\textsuperscript{313} LLDC Quality Review Panel Report of Formal Review Meeting: UCL East – Marshgate Plot 1 17.05.2018
\textsuperscript{314} Senior Academic, Bartlett School of Architecture, correspondence 17.11.2016
\textsuperscript{315} Creating the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park: Post-games transformation. Olympic Park Legacy Company Ltd, 2012
these categories with Toulmin proposing three time based judgements: facts about the past, facts about present and predictions. Toulmin also distinguishes between moral and aesthetic judgements (van Eemeren et al., 2014) while Kock distinguishes between claims about facts, social facts (such as norms) and values (2017, p. 165).

These kinds of claim can be difficult if not impossible to prove definitively and their validity is situated and perspective dependant – they are claims about which reasonable people may disagree. They are not on the ‘high hard ground where practitioners can make use of research-based theory and technique’ (Schön, 1991 [1983], p. 43). As Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca point out nobody argues about something that is analytically necessary or self-evidently true, ‘the domain of argumentation is of the credible, the plausible, the probable to the degree that the latter eludes the certainty of calculation’ (Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca, 1971, p. 1). However, we should not assume that if something cannot be proved it is just an opinion and that all opinions have equal weight: ‘some opinions are mere opinions whereas others are based on evidence, reasoning and good judgement’ (Govier, 2010, p. 3). Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca reject the restriction of reasoning to formal analytic logic or empirical questions with definitive right or wrong answers and claim that:

‘it is too easy to disqualify all reasoning that does not conform to the requirements of what Pareto called “logico-experimental” proofs as being “sophistical”. If all argumentation of this kind must be considered a misleading form of reasoning, then the lack of “logico-experimental” proofs would leave the field wide open, in all essential spheres of life, to suggestion and violence’ (1971, p. 512)

Clearly this chapter is not implying that there was a risk of violence on the UCL East project but strong views were expressed about what action should, or should not, be taken and stakeholders were skilful and determined in their use of argumentation to defend and contest these views. Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca’s claim is referenced here to suggest that this argumentation took place largely in the space between the ‘logico-
experimental' proofs of Pareto and sophistry - on Schön’s ‘swampy ground’ (1991 [1983], p. 43).

### 7.2.3 Social conventions of purposive dialogue

Grice observed that verbal exchanges are ‘to some degree at least, cooperative efforts; and each participant recognizes in them, to some extent, a common purpose or set of purposes, or at least a mutually accepted direction’ and that in any exchange ‘at each stage, some possible conversational moves would be excluded as conversationally unsuitable’ (Grice, 1975, p. 45). He identified a number of maxims which people are conventionally expected to follow when engaging in purposive dialogue:

*Table 7-2 Cooperative Principle: maxims of effective communication*

(Grice, 1975, pp. 45-46)

| Quantity | Make your contribution as informative as is required (for the purposes of the current exchange)  
|          | Do not make your contribution more informative than is required |
| Quality  | Do not say what you believe to be false  
|          | Do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence |
| Relation | Be relevant |
| Manner   | Avoid obscurity of expression  
|          | Avoid ambiguity  
|          | Be brief (avoid unnecessary prolixity)  
|          | Be orderly |

Govier cites Grice and argues that if we did not in general try to follow these maxims ‘then communication, whether in conversation or writing, would not be possible’ (2010, p. 51). Eermeren proposes a similar but more succinct set of rules for effective communication:
• Be clear
• Be sincere
• Be efficient
• Keep to the point (2001, p. 52)

Both Grice and Eemeren observe that because most people follow these rules most of the time, any violation can be interpreted as a deliberate attempt to imply something without saying it explicitly. However, this chapter, follows Govier’s advice and assumes that, in the absence of strong evidence to the contrary, all internal stakeholders engaged in the UCL briefing process were following these communication rules, that they were ‘trying to give good reasons for claims they genuinely believe[d]’ (Govier, 2010, p. 52). This is consistent with the overall impression received on this project that the internal stakeholders who engaged with the briefing process for the new campus were highly motivated to ensure the future success of UCL whatever their differences concerning how this should be achieved.

7.2.4 Rhetoric, argumentation and interpretations of ‘logos’

The intention in using the term argumentation rather than rhetoric, (a practice so widely associated in the UK with advertising, public relations and political self-interest that it is difficult to defend against the ancient charge that it seeks merely to persuade and has no concern with ‘truth’) is to focus attention on the constructive and necessary aspects of argumentation. Human beings are social animals and argumentation is central to our ability to collaborate - one of our key evolutionary advantages. However, although rhetoric has more negative connotations than argumentation, these practices are not mutually exclusive. If rhetoric is defined as finding the available means of persuasion in a given case (Aristotle cited Kock, 2021, p. 501) and argumentation involves ‘making a claim, providing reasons to support that claim and implying that the premises make it reasonable to accept the conclusion’ (Govier, 2010, p. 3) then there seems to be, at the very least, a significant overlap (Blair, 2011, p. 321). In practice the effects of Aristotle’s famous trichotomy; ethos, pathos and logos ‘the character of the speaker’, the ‘disposition of the audience’ and ‘the speech itself’ (Aristotle, 1991 [4 BC],
p. 74) can be difficult to disentangle and should perhaps be viewed as different aspects of a single argument. The common tendency to view them as separate and interpret logos as *reason or logic* (rather than the *words* of the speech as it ‘demonstrates or seems to demonstrate’ something (ibid.) and pathos as emotion (rather than the prevailing mood of the audience) has the unfortunate effect of enabling logos and pathos to be set up in opposition to each other with everything that is suspected of being unreliable and slippery about rhetoric attributed to pathos (and to a lesser extent ethos). The common association of *logos* with Pareto’s *logico-experimental* method exacerbates the problematic nature of this interpretation. As Perelman et al have observed – this would leave everything that can’t be scientifically ‘proved’ as inaccessible to reasonable argument. Schön uses an alternative term, ‘technical rationality’, but the problem remains the same, this kind of reasoning can help you decide *how* to do something but is of little use in deciding *what* to do (Schön, 1991 [1983], p. 41).

Schön’s solution to this problem, which is essentially the problem of briefing, is reflective practice. The challenge associated with this solution is that what ‘determines for a given group of people both what will be noticed as significant and how what is noticed will be judged’ is their history (Checkland and Scholes, 1990, p. A15). This means that any individual consultant’s capacity to reflect on the problematic situation will inevitably be limited by their personal and professional experience. The commonplace recommendation that end-users should be consulted in the early stages of architectural projects is intended to overcome this constraint and ensure that new buildings meet the needs of their inhabitants by widening input into the briefing process. The difficulty here is that end users do not necessarily have common interests, priorities or perspectives on the problematic situation. For example, on the UCL East project the interests of students, UCL staff and the public were not fully aligned, staff in different faculties had different priorities in relation to the design of teaching and research space and the UCL Estates staff had a different perspective on the project from the academics. This diversity of perspectives is one of the reasons why architectural projects tend to be characterised by argumentation.
7.2.5 Argumentation and the design process

The proposition underlying the discussion in this chapter is that argumentation, largely in the space between logico-experimental proof and sophistry, is the mechanism used to test designs in an iterative process of conjecture and test (Hillier et al., 1972) ‘imaging, presenting, testing’ (Zeisel, 2006 [1981]), or ‘co-evolution of the problem and solution’ (Dorst and Cross, 2001). And that argumentation both pushes the design forward until a solution that ‘satisfices’ (Simon, 1997 [1945]) is produced and, to an extent, constructs the solution. This is a version of Rittel and Weber’s approach to complex, ill-defined, ‘wicked’ problems, an ‘argumentative process in the course of which an image of the problem and of the solution emerges gradually among the participants’ (Rittel and Webber, 1973). The ‘wicked’ problems of architectural design cannot be ‘clearly stated’ and do not have ‘optimal’ solutions (Lawson, 1994, p. 4) so the design problem is largely understood through a creative process of proposing and evaluating possible design solutions rather than pre-design analysis. If, as is widely recommended, end-users participate in evaluating design solutions then it follows that ‘setting the problem’ is not just a matter of professional reflexivity and judgement but also of social argumentation. In architectural design, as Zeisel’s inclusion of ‘imaging’ in his model suggests, the project documents including sketches, drawings, and models are ‘boundary objects’ (Star and Griesemer, 1989, Kjølle and Blakstad, 2014) sitting between the client (and building users) and the design team. The aim in drawing the diagram below (see Figure 7-1) based on previous models of the design process is to be more explicit about the active role of the client and building users, and representations of the virtual building, as well as the social mechanism for testing design iterations (argumentation). This approach has some parallels with research extending Schön’s concept of individual reflective practice to apply to designers working in teams (Stumpf and McDonnell, 2002). The diagram below is simplified for the sake of clarity and the fact that it represents both the design team and the client as single entities is clearly a significant limitation in the context of this thesis. A more representative diagram would show a complex interaction of multiple internal and external
arguments around purpose and action in which perceptions of a solution which could satisfice shift in response to the arguments presented over time.

Figure 7-1  Argumentation in the briefing and design process

Argumentation in the space between logico-experimental proof and sophistry might, for example, involve different views on the problematic situation, the project purpose or aims, on how best to achieve those aims or about the decision making process itself. In these kinds of dialogue facts and values are inevitably ‘entangled’ (Putnam, 2002, p. 30). Putnam argues that ‘evaluation and description are interwoven and interdependent’ (ibid., p. 3) and Potter makes a similar point when he observes that ‘descriptions are not just about something but they are also doing something; that is they are not merely representing some facet of the world, they are also involved in the world in some practical way’ (Potter, 1996, p. 47). For instance, the description given earlier in this chapter of the Olympic park site as ‘once industrial, contaminated land’ was not neutral, it was designed to do something, to support the government narrative of the site as a ‘largely
abandoned ‘wasteland’ and make a legal case for the compulsory purchase of existing businesses and homes (Gardner, 2022, p. 163). This value-laden quality of description is one of the reasons that Walton’s different types of dialogue are rarely ‘pure’, that information seeking, inquiry and deliberation are often admixed with elements of negotiation, persuasion and eristic argumentation. However, the hybrid nature of dialogue and the ‘entanglement’ of facts and values should not be seen as undermining the value of argumentation in architectural briefing. In fact, quite the opposite is suggested, that it is at the intersection between claims about values and claims about facts that reasonable people are mostly likely to disagree and therefore where argumentation will be most necessary.

Govier argues that ‘even in areas of our life in which feeling plays a central role in our experience, reason retains its relevance’ (2010, p. 9) and in recent years the ‘narrative of emotion as the primitive part of human nature, to be controlled by the more advanced and uniquely human rational parts’ (Barrett, 2018, p. 223) has been increasingly questioned by psychologists and neuroscientists. Research now indicates that brain functions are much more integrated than the concept of a layered brain in which a discrete prefrontal neocortex over-rides impulses from older more primitive layers would allow. Damasio suggests that ‘the action of biological drives, body states, and emotions may be an indispensable foundation for rationality’ (2006 [1994], p. 200) and argues that while it has long been recognised that emotion can disrupt reasoning, ‘at their best, feelings point us in the proper direction, take us to the appropriate place in a decision-making space, where we may put the instruments of logic to good use’ (ibid., p. xxiii). Barrett goes further in suggesting that ‘affect is not just necessary for wisdom; it is also irrevocably woven into every decision’ (2018, p. 80). Building design impacts on social values and human relationships, so an architectural briefing process which did not take these issues into account, a process managed by someone like the character Captain Spock (of Star Trek fame) for example, would probably appear quite unreasonable.
7.2.6 Characteristics of practical argumentation

The purpose of architectural briefing is to decide what to do and as Kock points out arguing about ‘what to do’, is different from arguing about ‘what is true’ (Kock, 2017, p. 1). ‘Choice is not either true or false’ (Aristotle cited Kock, ibid.). Kock identifies some distinctive characteristics of practical reasoning (proposals for action) which resonate with what was observed on the UCL East project:

- There may be legitimate arguments both for and against an action
- These arguments may be multi-dimensional
- The dimensions may be incommensurate
- The dimensions may be incompatible
- The dimensions may be on a continuum (not binary)
- The dimensions may be subjective (Kock, 2017, pp. 110-11 & 137)

For instance, in 2017 objectors raised legitimate concerns about the new campus project related to ‘the uncertainties of the funding environment for UK universities with regard to tuition fees and the outcome of Brexit negotiations’ while proponents, no less legitimately, argued that UCL East was required to ‘rebalance’ the university, to ‘provide the space for UCL to grow’ and thereby ensure its long-term financial viability. Both these concerns relate to the university’s financial status but the issues deliberated on also included UCL’s academic vision, governance and identity, existing spatial practices, the ‘regeneration’ of Stratford, UCL’s relationship with the LLDC, and the architectural quality of the design proposals. The argumentation deployed on the UCL East campus project was truly multi-dimensional. And these kinds of issue are not commensurate: space efficiency, social inclusion and innovative research cannot be measured against the same scale. There were also inherent value tensions in argumentation around opening up the buildings to the public and ensuring the safety and security of staff and students, around the desire for an academic ‘home’ and pressure to improve space efficiency, and around

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designing for maximum adaptability and working within cost constraints. Attitudes to the design proposals for Marshgate were on a continuum with some feedback either highly positive or highly negative and internal stakeholders holding a range of positions in between. Many end users demonstrated their readiness to work within the Marshgate shell and core proposals while negotiating the details of the fit out with varying degrees of assertiveness and enthusiasm. Finally, as indicated in the empirical chapters, different stakeholders had different perspectives on the project. Kock claims that these characteristics are typical of arguments about action, but I suggest that architectural briefing is distinctive in the degree to which these characteristics apply.

Toulmin was interested in practical reasoning in the field and he observed that what is accepted as a sound argument largely depends on the kind of thing that you are arguing about. He proposed that there is a universal or field-invariant model for arguments consisting of ‘claim, data, warrant’ which can be extended if necessary to include ‘modal qualifier, rebuttal and backing’ (van Eemeren et al., 2014, p. 204) but he recognised that what counts as relevant data and a reasonable warrant (and backing) is field dependent. Architectural briefing involves a number of substantially different fields (including aesthetics, ethics, and politics) so a wide range of data and kinds of warrants may be relevant. This suggests why the argumentation deployed in architectural briefing can be so rich and messy.

7.2.7 Accuracy, relevance and weight
Having claimed that in deliberative rhetoric ‘there can be no deductive inference from premise to acceptance’, Kock observes that people make decisions about what action to take by assessing the accuracy, relevance, and weight of the pros and cons ‘in the light of their respective value systems’ (Kock, 2017, pp. 112, 282 & 142). It follows that in order to make a case for their preferred design solution stakeholders must convince others of the accuracy, relevance and weight of the substantive issues they present for consideration. People are more likely to provide ‘a source or basis’ for any piece of information if it is in dispute (Pomerantz, 1984, p. 607) and in the
briefing meetings observed stakeholders referred to a range of different sources for the views they presented. The most common source was personal experience either of the existing university buildings or of other buildings cited as precedents. These precedents were perceived to have more relevance the closer they were to the topic under discussion and to the experience of the stakeholders engaged in the debate. Some examples of arguments concerning accuracy, relevance and weight are given in section 7.3.5.

7.2.8 Situated argumentation
Unsurprisingly, the ‘source or basis’ for a claim will make it more or less persuasive according to how it fits with the experiences and values of the people being addressed. Arguments only gain traction when they make sense in terms of how people conceptualise the world: their figured worlds (Gee), world-views (Checkland) object worlds (Bucciarelli) or thought-worlds (Fleck)\(^{317}\). Gee defines figured worlds as ‘simplified, often unconscious and taken-for-granted theories or stories about how the world works that we use to get on efficiently with our daily lives’ and argues that although we construct our figured worlds from life experiences, ‘these experiences are guided, shaped, and normed by the social and cultural groups to which we belong’ (Gee, 2014, p. 95). Individuals and social groups may conceptualise how the world works in different ways and so differ on questions of accuracy, relevance and weight when making decisions. For instance, on UCL East, project stakeholder positions varied concerning the accuracy of the social ‘fact’ that current levels of space utilisation at Bloomsbury were ‘woeful’\(^{318}\), the relevance of a Russell Group benchmark for student study spaces, and the weight of arguments centred on the original capital cost estimates.

Tannen’s work on framing is also helpful in making sense of how argumentation is situated and the concept of framing is of particular relevance to the practice of briefing (Paton and Dorst, 2011). When writing

\(^{317}\) These concepts do not map directly onto each other but they all indicate that argumentation will be socially situated

\(^{318}\) Critical Friends meeting, observation 8.05.2017
about framing, Tannen uses the phrase *structures of expectation* to encompass the variety of terms used to describe the way people or groups conceptualise the world (including those listed above). Like *figured worlds*, Tannen’s *structures of expectation* are based on past experience but she is very clear that they are dynamic not static, that ‘expectations about objects, people, settings, ways to interact and anything else in the world are continually checked against experience and revised’ (Tannen, 1993, p. 61).

Tannen notes some ambiguity in the literature on framing and distinguishes between references to structures of expectation at two different scales. She uses the term knowledge schemas to refer to global structures of expectation and contrasts it with interactive frames which she defines as ‘what people think they are doing when they talk to each other’ (ibid., p. 6) or ‘what game is being played’ (ibid., p. 60) in a specific face-to-face interaction. For instance, to reference Arnstein’s provocative ladder of participation, is the game being played one of collaboration, consultation or manipulation? Tannen observes that knowledge schemas and interactive frames are interdependent and provides an example of the dawning awareness of a disjunction between the knowledge schemas of a doctor and patient ‘triggering shifts in interactive frame’ (ibid., p. 7).

The concepts of knowledge schemas and interactive frames both resonate with what was observed during the UCL East project meetings. However, the diagram below (Figure 7-2), drawn to suggest the dynamic interaction between different scales of structures of expectation, also includes an intermediary concept, ‘hinterland’ (Law, 2004). Law’s concept of hinterland includes ‘statements about reality, instrumental, technical and human configurations and practices’ (ibid., p. 31). It occupies similar conceptual ground to Bucciarelli’s concept of *object worlds*: ‘worlds of technical specializations, with their own dialects, systems of symbols, metaphors and models, instruments and craft sensitivities’ (1988, p. 162). It is suggested that both *hinterlands* and *object worlds* can be understood as textual, material and social structures of expectation which interact with and supplement Tannen’s cognitive knowledge schemas and interactive frames to constitute the situation in which argumentation takes place.
Another concept from the literature that is of relevance to how argumentation is situated in architectural briefing, is the ‘speech event’ (Hymes, 1972). Speech events are defined as ‘recurring occasions that have “tacitly understood rules of preference, unspoken conventions as to what counts as valid and what information may or may not be introduced”’ (Gumperz cited Shuy, 2015, p. 824). The tacit rules of behaviour governing speech events can perhaps be seen as part of the stakeholders’ hinterland or object world, sitting between the global scale of Tannen’s knowledge schemas and the local scale of frames of interaction. Hymes argues that there is a sociocultural aspect to language competence with children learning not only how to speak grammatically but also acquiring ‘competence as to when to speak, when not, and as to what to talk about with whom, when, where, in what manner. In short, a child becomes able to accomplish a repertoire of speech acts\(^{319}\), to take part in speech events, and to evaluate their accomplishment.

\(^{319}\) Hymes’s uses the term ‘speech acts’ in the sense of ‘ways of speaking’ appropriate to the ‘speech event’. He is not using this term in JL Austin’s sense of ‘speech act’, where a phrase such as ‘I promise’ constitutes the act of promising (How to do things with words, Austin 1962)
by others’ (Hymes, 1972, p. 60). If, as we all intuitively know, speech is judged as appropriate or inappropriate depending on the social situation and people self-censor what they say, the interesting question here is, what speech acts are considered appropriate to the speech event of a briefing workshop? How is that appropriateness established or contested? And how do tacit social expectations about briefing workshops inform what is and is not said, what information is made available for consideration during design development?

In the architectural briefing process, as in other areas of life, arguments are constructed to take into account the actual or assumed structures of expectation of the participants (both speakers and audience) and these structures are seen to influence how the statement of a premise or a proposal for action is received – we understand that the way an argument lands will be situation and audience dependant. However, argumentation also has the potential to shift structures of expectation and is often designed with this aim explicitly in mind. Awareness of this two-way dynamic was apparent in UCL East meetings with internal stakeholders adjusting their communication strategies to accommodate the anticipated structures of expectation of a specific audience but also attempting to use argumentation to shift knowledge schemas. Careful consideration was also given to how speech events could be designed to manage the information/feedback offered and influence the decision-making process.

7.3 Reflection on research questions

The principal research question for this instrumental case study is ‘how do clients and end-users engage in the briefing and design review process during the early stages of architectural projects (RIBA Stages 1-3)?’ This study was also designed to address 5 subsidiary research questions:

1. How do clients and end-users describe the spatial qualities of existing buildings?
2. How do clients and end-users account for or predict the use of space?
3. How do clients and end-users attribute value or meaning to building design?

4. What topics are contested/not contested during the briefing and design review process?

5. What strategies and tactics of argumentation are deployed by clients and end-users?

This section reflects on some provisional answers to these questions and finds that rather than helping to clarify a simple concept of the briefing process, this study has highlighted some of the reasons behind its rich, messy, complexity. The subsidiary research questions address engagement in the briefing process at increasing levels of abstraction and each question can be seen to raise a different theme: hybridity, relations, value conflict, the characteristics of architectural argumentation and legitimacy. The following sub-sections discuss these themes in relation to the UCL East campus project and the existing literature.

7.3.1 Describing existing buildings: evaluating precedents

Internal stakeholders referred to a variety of precedents when discussing the brief for the Marshgate building. They deployed descriptions of existing buildings to do a number of different things: to explain what they wanted in the new building, to explain what they didn’t want in the new building or simply to draw attention to an existing problem that needed to be addressed. There was also recognition that some academic programmes were wanting to ‘do new things’ so they were entering more ‘uncharted territory’ than others. The briefing task for the academics managing these programmes was seen to be more challenging due to a knowledge gap about learning space design, ‘built pedagogy’, (Marmot, 2016, Bligh and Pearshouse, 2011) and the lack of relevant precedents. The term precedent is used here in the architectural sense of a reference (Goldschmidt, 1998).

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320 Culture lab briefing meeting, observation 4.12.2017
The key point concerning precedents is best exemplified by a comment from the programme manager [governance advisor] on UCL East. When doing interviews to develop user personas (see section 6.1) as part of the operations project, she observed that users found it difficult to disaggregate their accounts of UCL operations from descriptions of the UCL Estate. Despite asking for ‘less about the building’\cite{321} she found herself listening to descriptions of the physical environment in which the operational processes she was interested in took place. This suggests a distinctive characteristic of the precedents referred to by building users, that they tend to be hybrid entities (Latour, 1993) in which their physical and social features (whether desired or undesired) are aggregated. This recalls Hillier’s observation that it is difficult to ‘separate social institutions from the buildings they occupy’ and his question as to whether the building type associated with a particular institution such as a church or school can be understood as part of what defines it (Hillier, 2007 [1996], pp. 306 & 289). And Penn’s recommendation that ‘users and environment are considered as a single “ecological” system’ in which ‘the boundary between user and system dissolves’ (Penn, 2005, p. 2).

A related feature of the use of precedents in architectural argumentation, is how different stakeholders may interpret the same building in different ways. For example, the architects referred to the exciting range of activities that took place in the central atrium of Central St Martins, from end of year fashion shows to workshops and public exhibitions, while a key UCL visitor to the Central St Martins building commented that ‘when we went it was empty’\cite{322}. Likewise, while the architects referred to the building as a big flexible space, easy to reconfigure to accommodate new creative activities, another UCL visitor described the studios as laid out like 19\textsuperscript{th} century factories, with homogenous rows of looms or jewellers’ benches. As Kock’s work on deliberation suggests, the accuracy of descriptions, the relevance of precedents and the weight of the point they are being used to make can all be contested. Nonetheless, referencing building precedents is one of the

\footnotesize{\begin{itemize}
\item \footnotesize{\cite{321} Programme Manager [Governance advisor] interview 26.01.2018}
\item \footnotesize{\cite{322} Academic Director, interview 08.08.2017}
\end{itemize}}
most persuasive tactics deployed in deliberations over architectural design decisions particularly if the precedents are already familiar or a special visit can be arranged. As an attempt to prefigure in some way an experience of the future building, citing precedents is also a way of materialising an argument, premise or proposal for action – of making it tangible and providing a concrete shared reference point.

As noted above, stakeholders can contest the relevance of building precedents and they may be right to do so. If there are too many dissimilarities between the precedent building: its site, the circumstances of its construction and the purpose, culture and organisation of its occupants then they may be misleading at best. The seemingly objective HEFCE space standards were based on ‘observations and assumptions about how students in different disciplines were taught, such as how many hours and what type of teaching activity was needed, staff: student ratios and areas per workplace, for example the area per student in a lecture theatre or laboratory’\(^{323}\) and the Space Management Group now recommends that universities estimate their space needs based on ‘their own particular profile of academic activity and methods of delivery’\(^{323}\). This recognition of the contingency of space standards, even by the UK HE Funding Councils whose forerunners originally developed them, indicates that space requirements cannot be considered in isolation from the diverse non-material aspects of the situation such as time-tabling (e.g. larger blocks of teaching time), the structure of the academic year, management of room-booking, teaching and research practices, key academic appointments, sector norms (benchmarks) and student expectations (National Student Survey). The relevance of precedents will be dependent on these and many other diverse aspects of the situation which may not be immediately apparent and may or may not be within the scope of the project to change.

\(^{323}\) Review of space norms: UK Higher Education Space Management Project 2006/40, space management group
7.3.2 Accounting for and predicting spatial practices

Cuff observes that ‘conversations between architects and clients revolve around the consequences of certain hypothetical actions – as if conducting an imaginary experiment by constructing a word-sketch building’ (Cuff, 1992, p. 97). She uses the concept of a ‘word-sketch building’ to describe how words are used to bring a sketch to life by predicting how the drawn space will be used over time. McDonnell goes further and suggests that architects provide their own skeletal scenarios of use to ‘present conversational openings for building users to proffer their own scenarios’ (McDonnell and Lloyd, 2009, p. 260) and argues that building users have ‘a hugely richer scenario repertoire’ (ibid.).

The topic of this section is how building users deploy their expert knowledge of university life to account for existing spatial practices and predict emergent spatial practices in the new building. The idea explored here is that building users base their accounts and predictions of behaviour on what they perceive to be the affordances and constraints of the existing estate and the future building: for them, for their discipline and for the university. Building users are uniquely positioned to provide these accounts and predictions because of their embodied understanding of the culture and practices of their institution.

The term affordance was first used by Gibson, the ecological psychologist, who proposed that ‘the affordances of the environment are what it offers the animal, what it provides or furnishes, either for good or ill’ (2014 [1979], p. 119). In defining the affordance of an environment as the possibility for action offered to a specific animal, as something that must be ‘measured relative to the animal’ (ibid., p. 120), Gibson argued that an affordance exists neither in the physical environment nor in the capacity of the animal but in the relation between the two. Since 1979 Gibson’s simple but powerful concept has been adopted by researchers in a diverse range of fields from product design, human-computer interaction (HCI), to engineering and architecture (e.g. Norman, 1988, McGrenere and Ho, 2000, Brown and Blessing, 2005, Maier et al., 2009). Although this has led to some confusion about the meaning of affordance, this section does not aim to compare and contrast all
the different ways in which the term has been applied. However, it is necessary to outline a key theoretical development of Gibson’s concept which is relevant to the argument here.

Gibson’s view was that an affordance exists whether it is perceived or not. He accepted that children can learn to perceive the affordances of things (and how to use them) but appeared to suggest that affordances are independent of acquired skills, so for example, a pen affords writing whether or not you have learned how to write. Several scholars have questioned this position and proposed revisions to Gibson’s concept to allow learned abilities and sociocultural practices to be taken into account when assessing the existence of affordances. Fayard and Weeks observe that ‘research has shown that affordances, especially of man-made objects, are linked to a complex web of cultural knowledge and conventional rules regarding use’ (Fayard and Weeks, 2007, p. 611). Similarly, Rietveld and Kiverstein cite Wittgenstein: ‘what is common to human beings is not just the biology we share but also our being embedded in sociocultural practices: our sharing steady ways of living with others’ (Rietveld and Kiverstein, 2014, p. 329), and argue that affordances should be understood as possibilities for action offered by the environment to a ‘form of life’ rather than to a species of animal (as proposed by Gibson). If affordances are considered to be ‘dependent on the abilities and practices found within a form of life’ (ibid., p. 339) rather than just on the innate biological abilities of human beings in general, then the concept suddenly becomes much more interesting in relation to architectural briefing.

However, ‘form of life’ is too broad for the purposes of this thesis, so the argument is pushed one step further here to suggest that the affordances of an environment should be considered at a social scale, that is in relation to an organisation or institution rather than to Rietveld and Kiverstein’s ‘form of life’ or to Gibson’s species of animal. This focusses attention on the specific abilities and practices found within the client institution. As Ellis and Cuff point out ‘the connections between places and individual behaviour and perception are well established, both in the academy and in the minds of
designers. The weaker link is between places and groups, societies, or culture’ (Ellis and Cuff, 1989, p. 101). While the relationship between space and organisational behaviour has received more attention in recent years, most notably from the space syntax community, this does not seem to be reflected in the literature on architectural briefing. It is suggested that this knowledge gap could be further addressed by studying spatial affordances and constraints in relation to specific organisations or institutions.

It is important to note that, as Gibson’s reference to ‘good or ill’ makes clear, affordances can be either positive or negative (and the same is true for the related concept - constraints). So for example, a knowledge of UCL culture and practices was inherent in the prediction that physically separating the student union office from the UCL student support services was necessary to constrain the perception of collusion between the professional services staff employed by the university and the politically independent student union representatives. And in the prediction that putting Institute of Making management offices on a separate floor from the main workshop and technicians’ office would afford the development of an ‘us and them’ attitude rather than the desired sense of belonging to a cohesive group.

Affordance is a useful concept when applied to the practice of architectural briefing for two reasons, first because it is relational and ecological (Gibson, 2014 [1979]) and second because it recognises agency (Fayard and Weeks, 2007) - the action possibilities offered by the environment do not have to be accepted, it does not assume architectural determinism. The concept of affordance is compatible with an understanding of usability as a situated, ‘contingent quality’ (Alexander et al., 2013) rather than something that is inherent in the physical environment - ‘usability cannot be assessed without questioning for whom, for which purpose and in which action the usefulness is required’ (Fenker, 2008). It also supports Sailer and Thomas’s call for a socio-spatial approach (affordances are inherently socio-spatial) in which architectural layouts are considered alongside organisational structure and ‘the demands being placed on the organisation by the nature of the work being undertaken’ (2021, p. 394). Gibson distinguishes the ecological
concept of niche from habitat, suggests that a niche ‘refers more to how an animal lives than where it lives’ and argues that ‘a niche is a set of affordances’ (Gibson, 2014 [1979], p. 120). Transposing the concept of niche to an organisational or institutional context, indicates a conceptual overlap between a good organisation-environment fit (Sailer and Thomas, 2021) and an environmental niche or set of affordances, an environment which offers possibilities for action that are congruent with the aims and values of the organisation.

However, affordances can be gained or lost either by changes in features of the environment or in the abilities of an animal (Chemero, 2003, pp. 192-193) and as we are now talking about the sociocultural practices of an institution rather than the innate abilities of an animal, then change becomes much more likely (at least within a shorter timescale). The diagram in Figure 7-3 suggests how change over time may result in a feeling of unease as the organisation-environment fit becomes uncomfortable and change to the material environment and organisational structures lags behind more volatile aspects of the situation. For example, changes in attitude towards university education including the ‘long-term shift in emphasis from teaching to learning’ and the ‘growing faculty interest in constructivist learning approaches (team-based, group-process, resource-based, inquiry driven, etc.)’ as referred to in Section 6.3.2, exacerbated a growing feeling of constraint on the Bloomsbury campus. These cultural changes together with a concern that the existing university estate was reinforcing disciplinary silos and inhibiting development of the ‘connected curriculum’ contributed to the demand for a new kind of building at UCL East.

Clearly this diagram is highly simplified and limited by its static quality – a more complex animated diagram would better reflect the continual process of accommodation and adjustment in the socio-spatial life of a large institution. Turner’s use of the term homeostasis to describe the vital mechanism by which a viable internal state is actively maintained might perhaps be a better term here than ‘social equilibrium’ (Turner, 2018). This would begin to suggest the potential for adaptation of the environment or niche construction
to drive social and cultural evolution (Penn and Turner, 2018). The interesting point to note here in relation to briefing and argumentation, is that there is more than one way to achieve homeostasis.

Figure 7-3 The problematic situation: change over time

At the beginning of this section, it was argued that building users base their accounts and predictions of spatial practices on perceived affordances (and constraints) because ‘what we perceive when we look at objects are their affordances, not their qualities’ (Gibson, 2014 [1979], p. 126). However, this is not an infallible process because the affordances of an existing building ‘may be subtle and actors may be unconscious of them until the setting is relocated or redesigned in a way that certain behaviours are no longer afforded’ (Fayard and Weeks, 2007, p. 611). Likewise, as ‘the affordances of an environment arise from its social meaning, and conventional rules regarding use in addition to its physical properties’ (ibid.) it may be difficult to predict behaviour when there is uncertainty about sociocultural aspects of the future situation.

7.3.3 Attributing value or meaning to building design

The question of values can be considered in relation to both the process and the product of a project. This section, reflects on values as attributed to, or used to justify, architectural design decisions affecting the built product. The microethics of process is discussed in section 7.4.3.
The internal debate during the early stages of the UCL East project was heavily value-laden and included references to values related to pedagogy, research, duty of care, inclusivity, accessibility, neighbourliness, financial viability, public engagement, sustainability, efficiency, collegiality, design, equity and governance. Values were also referred to explicitly in the strategic brief which stated that Marshgate should be a ‘confident and distinctive’ building that ‘sends the right messages about UCL’s values as an institution’. The concept of values is central to Schein’s definition of organisational culture. He suggests that there are ‘three fundamental levels at which culture manifests itself: (a) observable artifacts, (b) values, and (c) basic underlying assumptions’ (Schein, 1990, p. 111). Schein uses the term values to mean espoused values, explicit beliefs about how things ‘ought to be’ (Heracleous, 2001, p. 428). He defines artifacts broadly as any observable phenomena, such as ‘the physical layout, the dress code, the manner in which people address each other, the smell and feel of the place …’ (1990, p. 111) and argues that underlying both artifacts and espoused values are taken-for-granted, and ‘usually unconscious assumptions [about how the world works] that determine perceptions, thought processes, feelings and behaviour’ (ibid., p. 112). Schein also references the premise that ‘systems tend toward some kind of equilibrium’ to suggest that members of organisations usually seek to reduce internal dissonance by bringing different aspects of their organisational culture into alignment. The concern expressed by Critical Friends that the Global Disability Innovation Hub (GDIH) should meet exemplary accessibility standards illustrates this natural tendency to seek alignment between artifacts and espoused values.

However, Hofstede observes that thinking ‘that value change has to precede behaviour change is a naïve (idealistic) assumption that neglects the

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324 The concept of value has been much contested. However, the intention here is to discuss values (not value) as referred to by stakeholders in project documents, interviews and briefing meetings. The relationship between value and values is addressed in the literature e.g. Thomson et al 2003 or Thyssen et al 2010 but is not central to the argument here.

325 Strategic brief, 2016 p7 and 9

326 Schein acknowledges that this view is not unproblematic because ‘systems contain subsystems, organisations contain groups and units within them, and it is not clear over what range the tendency toward equilibrium will exist in any given complex total system’ (Op. Cit.)
contribution of the situation to actual behaviour’ (Hofstede, 1980, p. 26). And warns against a simplistic understanding of cause and effect in relation to the complex interplay of artefacts, values and assumptions in the evolution and maintenance of organisational culture.

Some of the values listed in the introduction to this section are now widely accepted, or even written into building regulations, but if values are defined as beliefs about ‘what ought to be’, then the UCL East project was typified by multiple, incommensurate and incompatible values. This is consistent with Schön’s view that the conditions of practice include ‘uncertainty, instability, uniqueness and value conflict’ (Schön, 1991 [1983], p. 49). Value conflict may be addressed through argumentation occurring in Walton’s different kinds of dialogue. Ryan’s work on narrative offers a taxonomy of different types of conflict (Ryan, 1991, pp. 121-122) which could support reflection-in-action during the briefing and design review process. Section 5.5.2, referred to Ryan’s concepts of private worlds: ‘obligation world’, (formed by the social rules of external authority and the character’s own moral principles) ‘wish world’ (what is subjectively good or bad for a character - what they fear or desire) and ‘knowledge world’ (what the character knows or believes). Ryan builds on these worlds to define four different kinds of conflict encountered in narratives of real or imaginary events:

- Conflicts in ‘which some private world departs from the actual world: a desire to fulfil, an obligation to satisfy, an enigma to solve’ (Ryan, 1991, p. 130)
- Conflicts between the private worlds of different characters
- Conflicts between the private worlds of one character for instance between their responsibilities (obligation world) and desires (wish world)
- Conflicts within a private world of a character due to ‘contradictory desires, simultaneous allegiance to incompatible sets of rules’ or fuzzy and unstable definition (Ryan, 1991, p. 122)
Reviewing this taxonomy in relation to the UCL East project suggests some examples of Ryan’s different categories of conflict;

1. The conflict between the desire to engage with the local community in east London (UCL wish world) and the infrastructure: canal, railway line, and flyover separating the site of the new campus from the surrounding neighbourhood (actual world)
2. The desire for space efficiency (wish world of UCL Estates) versus the desire for space in which they can work effectively (wish world of academics)
3. The desire to give everyone the space they need (wish world of academic planning team) versus the responsibility to use their best endeavours to deliver the project within budget and to programme (obligation world of academic planning team)
4. The desire for space to do transdisciplinary research (wish world of academics) versus the desire for an academic home (wish world of academics)

Ryan’s comment that ‘conflicts involving the obligation world and wish world may either exist objectively, or be created by an epistemic conflict’ (ibid., p. 122) - that perceived conflicts may result not just from conditions in the ‘actual world’ but also from differences in what people know or believe - perhaps explains the characterisation of architectural briefing as learning (Siva and London, 2011). However, this begs the question as to who is learning what from whom.

Section 6.2.1 gave an account of deliberations over the Fluid Zone in which different kinds of values were considered in terms of their relevance to the design process and the weight that should be assigned to them. Internal stakeholders referenced the academic value that Imaging (as a facility that would be used by diverse disciplines) would bring to the academic vision of UCL East as a place for transdisciplinary research, the financial value of APL to the viability of the business case and to the UK’s Industrial Strategy, and
the public engagement value of an ‘open, and inviting’ Fluid Zone with a café or international quality exhibition space. It also reported that as new information became available, the conflict between the desire to create a space for collaboration and public engagement in the Fluid Zone and the responsibility to address health and safety concerns arising in relation to Imaging and APL led to these activities being partially or completely omitted from the Fluid Zone. The protection of human life has a recognised legal and moral value, so it is not surprising that health and safety concerns were prioritised over other considerations. The decision to prioritise the café over a high quality exhibition space was less predictable and informed by argumentation about how best to promote public engagement with the new campus.

Another arena in which there were different perspectives on ‘what ought to be’ was the contentious question of academic offices. The perceived value conflict between space efficiency and effectiveness was central to deliberations over the workspace strategy. The proposed model was ‘based on the concept of “neighbourhoods” and on two academics sharing an office’ and the number of workspaces required was estimated from staff numbers in the Business Case. However, the ratio of cellular offices to dedicated and agile open plan workspace (and the ratio of staff to desks assumed in areas of agile workspace) was the outcome of iterative conversations in which the capacity of the shell and core design, anticipated working practices, pressure from the Deans and academic leads, and a drive from UCL Estates to introduce more agile working all played a part in creating a finely calibrated hierarchy of space provision. The provisional allocation of workspace or configuration-in-use, ‘programming and strategic decisions on how to distribute functions and central resources’ (Sailer and Penn, 2009, p. 5) was also contingent on the outcome of multiple conversations in which the capacity of the plan on each level, servicing and access requirements, the business case for the academic activities, pedagogy (teaching methods, communities of practice and the Connected

327 Strategic brief, 2016 p9
328 Executive Group minutes, 27.06.2018, item 2.7.2
Curriculum) and space efficiency standards were all weighed against each other. However, although space allocation was considered in detail, there was some internal unease at the end of RIBA Stage 3 fit out concerning whether the close attention given to designing spaces for individual academic activities might have been at the expense of a more holistic understanding of movement and spatial relations within the Marshgate building.

A key consideration throughout the design of Marshgate was the kind of space needed to support new ways of learning: a shift away from lectures and seminars towards more learning by doing, group work and independent study. Academics responded to this general shift and its perceived impact on their spatial requirements in a variety of discipline specific ways when they commented on the early design proposals. For instance, one academic requesting open space for teaching explained that ‘what we would like to do is to get the students to do some proper engineering’\textsuperscript{329} using pumps, pipes and valves to solve practical problems so ‘it is going to be messy and we need loads of elbow room’\textsuperscript{329}. Another, objecting to early layouts showing fixed rows of seating, explained that she needed flexible space which could be reconfigured for group work and would allow her to walk around the room and converse with all her students. She argued that her (mid-career, professional) students on entering a room laid out like a ‘old-style’\textsuperscript{330} classroom would immediately think ‘OK I am passive, I am listening’\textsuperscript{330}. She emphasised that the new teaching spaces should be designed to encourage interaction and peer learning. A third, describing his vision of a high quality media studio with post-production suites which would attract local professionals ‘to come and work here and be around and work with our students’\textsuperscript{331}, explained the need for a second row of seats behind the editing desk so that students could learn from watching their peers and visiting professionals at work. Boys and Smith argue ‘that we need to be much more careful in separating out design intentions from both their translation into

\textsuperscript{329} Experiential learning and research hub fit out briefing meeting, observation, 31.05.2018
\textsuperscript{330} Executive Education fit out briefing meeting, observation 31.05.2018
\textsuperscript{331} Future Media Studio fit out briefing meeting, observation 26.03.2018
actual form, and from the lived experiences of different occupants’ (Boys and Smith, 2011, p. 35) and warn against conflating architectural metaphors (such as permeability or transparency) with actual social impact. They question the assumption that some types of space such as atriums, ‘streets’ or ‘hubs’ enable social interaction and collaboration and call for empirical evaluation of these configurations in educational buildings. However, although the architects emphasised the symbolic value of the communal atrium as a space for interaction and social mixing, academics such as those quoted above tended to discuss desired spatial affordances and constraints in relation to their own staff and students. They appeared largely unconcerned with architectural imagery as distinct from ‘contingent usability’ (Alexander et al., 2013).

7.3.4 Matters of agreement and disagreement
The empirical chapters of this thesis are loosely structured around three aspects of the architectural briefing process for UCL East: scoping the task of the shell and core team, managing the governance and consultation process, and briefing for the fit out design. Chapter 4, gave an account of how the project was conceived, how the case was made for the decision to build and some different perspectives on the project situation, the project purpose and the project parameters. Chapter 5, outlined how the project governance evolved, how it was contested and how formal and informal relations were considered key to getting the project approved and built. Chapter 6, gave an account of the fit out briefing process, the design development and anticipated ‘configuration in use’ (Sailer, 2010, p. 160) for Marshgate.

At each stage it was clear that there were numerous ways in which things could have been different. At the most strategic level, alternatives referred to included a ‘do nothing option’, a fleet of vans taking a mobile university out to the people of east London, rebalancing the university by selective reduction rather than expansion (considered unthinkable even for rhetorical purposes), a ‘low-road’ design based on MIT’s famous Building 20, a ‘matty’ low rise souk, or the approach eventually approved by the LLDC Planning committee, a ‘sculptural form of sufficient strength to work in dialogue with the
characterful buildings being developed for the Stratford Waterfront and the powerful forms of the London Stadium, the London Aquatics Centre and the ArcelorMittal Orbit. Likewise, the power dynamic within the UCL East programme team shifted over time as the Academic Director made a bid to revise the governance structure to reflect the ‘academic-led’ nature of the project and establish the ‘client’ status of the academic planning team in relation to the UCL Estates infrastructure team. The institutional decision-making process was also contested by members of the academic board and the constitution and terms of reference of the Critical Friends Group were the outcome of internal negotiations. At a more granular level stakeholders expressed concern about early constraints imposed on communication between building users and the shell and core design team and resisted the focussed (fragmented?) structure of the fit out consultation process. Finally, resolving the ‘wicked problem’ of finding an acceptable balance between academic, social and spatial and economic visions for the new campus (within uncertain and shifting constraints) involved contested decisions about academic courses and research activities being added, reduced in scale, relocated within the building or lost altogether.

Internal stakeholders who engaged with the briefing process for the new UCL East campus revealed a striking range of perspectives on the emergent plan of action and there were many topics on which they held different positions. The question that arises from this case study is whether there is anything distinctive about the kinds of dialogue that people engage in during the architectural briefing process, or to paraphrase Hillier, whether there is such a thing as ‘specifically architectural’ argumentation. While there are clearly many similarities with argumentation in other fields there do seem to be some kinds of argument which are characteristic of architectural projects. These include:

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332 Design and Access Statement Reserved Matters application 2018 p56
1. Defining the boundaries of the problematic situation: agreeing what should be taken as relevant to the design problem/solution (and what should not)
2. Setting the problem: agreeing the desired outcome
3. Establishing the project parameters: agreeing what aspects of the problematic situation (material / social practice / cultural attitude / organisational structure) can be changed to achieve the desired outcome
4. Agreeing the architectural means (required spatial affordances and constraints) by which desired social ends are to be achieved
5. Establishing the project governance: how decisions are to be made: the rules of the game (and whether the rules are being followed)
6. Agreeing the project constraints: site, time, cost, quality
7. Defining the success criteria: how the project is to be evaluated

While the overarching principles of these arguments may be familiar from classic texts on architectural briefing by Schön and others, the difficulty in reaching agreement and the situated, value laden and provisional nature of any agreement is often glossed over in best practice briefing guidance. For instance, on the UCL East project the programme was reopened several times as internal stakeholders challenged claims that contested aspects of the design were fixed and could no longer be changed. On the other hand, there was a surprising degree of consistency between the site layout of the original Legacy Communities Scheme (2012) and the campus masterplan (2017), and between the Invitation to Tender bid scheme for Marshgate (2016) and the design proposals submitted for planning approval (2018). This recalls Darke’s work on the design process and the ‘tenacity’ with which architects hold on to a generating idea (Darke, 1979, Lawson, 1997, p. 44). Some internal stakeholders questioned these similarities and argued that the masterplan parameters and early bid sketches should have been more rigorously interrogated but calls for radical change were successfully resisted largely on the grounds of programme and planning constraints.
On a more granular level, arguments heard on the UCL East project along the lines of: ‘we can’t afford that’, ‘that is not buildable/operable’, ‘that is not how we do things here’, ‘that would not be safe’, ‘we have to do this because X authority/legislation requires it’, ‘this would/would not fulfil our purpose/meet our statement of need’, ‘that would have these unintended consequences’, ‘that would be flexible/inflexible’, ‘that is good/bad architecture’, ‘that would/would not work here’, ‘that is/is not consistent with our values/identity’, ‘that would be equitable/inequitable’, ‘this represents the past/future’ suggest at least a recognisable family of architectural arguments and the wide diversity of evidence and warrants required to support them. These kinds of arguments could be considered as variations of the types of claims discussed in section 7.2.2: claims about fact and existence, claims about classification, claims about cause and effect, claims of evaluation and appraisal, claims about action or policy, and claims about interpretation. However, as often seems to be the case in practical argumentation, conceptual categories may turn out to be deeply entangled in practice.

7.3.5 Strategies and tactics of argumentation

This section considers the strategies and tactics that internal stakeholders used to convince others to adopt their perspective on the problematic situation, on what action should (or should not) be taken in relation to the proposals for a new campus on the Olympic Park. The social value now placed on participation has been associated with a growing academic interest in the legitimacy of consultation. Bernstein’s definition of legitimacy as something that is both accepted and justified, that ‘straddles the traditional divide between empirical measures of legitimacy and normative theory’ is interesting in this context (Bernstein, 2011, p. 20). It suggests that legitimacy is an attribute that cannot be established once and for all but has to be continually enacted. The concept of legitimacy is introduced here because argument strategies have to be accepted as legitimate before they can be persuasive - if a strategy is judged illegitimate then it will be discounted. However, there is a complication, these judgements are situated (Boltanski and Thévenot, 2000) - the legitimacy of an argument strategy may be judged differently according to who is presenting the argument, about what and in
what circumstances. It may therefore be necessary for stakeholders not only to justify their argument strategy as valid in abstract terms but also to justify their use of it, in relation to this topic of contention and in these circumstances. The argumentation strategies deployed on the UCL East project are discussed in relation to two simple taxonomies from the fields of discourse analysis and pragmatic sociology. Although these taxonomies do not map directly onto each other there are some synergies between them. Fairclough draws on Leeuwen to describe four different strategies for legitimising argumentation:

- ‘Authorization:
  Legitimation by reference to the authority of tradition, custom, law, and of persons in whom some kind of institutional authority is invested
- **Rationalization:**
  Legitimation by reference to the utility of institutionalized action, and to the knowledges society has constructed to endow them with cognitive validity
- **Moral Evaluation:**
  Legitimation by reference to value systems
- **Mythopoesis:**
  Legitimation conveyed through narrative’ (Fairclough, 2003, p. 98)

These argument strategies were all apparent on the UCL East project but, as might be predicted, the response to specific authorities, knowledges, value systems and narratives varied according to the audience addressed. For example, internal stakeholders placed different weight on the authority of design feedback from the LLDC Quality Review Panel, on claims that the proposed layouts could constrain the integration of teaching and research (the Connected Curriculum), on the priority that should be given to facilities for public engagement, and on their affective response to discourse deploying references to UCL’s foundational narrative of ‘disruptive thinking.
since 1826 and its record of inclusivity. The pragmatic sociologists, Boltanski and Thévenot studied everyday disputes and observed how people criticise and defend past, present and future actions. This thesis does not equate argumentation with dispute. However, argumentation does encompass disagreement and Boltanski and Thévenot's insights are relevant to the intra-client dialogue on a complex, contentious project like UCL East. Boltanski and Thévenot identified 6 ‘mutually incompatible modes of justification’ and made a clear distinction between disagreements about whether a particular mode of justification was being deployed in an appropriate way, and disagreements about which mode of justification should be applied to the matter in hand (1999, p. 359). Their 6 modes of justification are: Inspired, Domestic, Civic, Opinion, Market and Industrial (see Table 7-3).

Boltanski and Thévenot make no claims that this list is exhaustive but argue that it covers the most frequent forms of legitimate dispute in contemporary western society. What is interesting about this taxonomy is the claim that these modes of justification are not about self-interest but designed to address different types of common good and that, despite being mutually incompatible, they all have legitimacy.

Table 7-3  Modes of justification

(Boltanski and Thévenot, 1999, p. 368)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mode of evaluation (worth)</th>
<th>Inspired</th>
<th>Domestic</th>
<th>Civic</th>
<th>Opinion</th>
<th>Market</th>
<th>Industrial</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grace, non-conformity</td>
<td>Grace</td>
<td>Esteem</td>
<td>Renown</td>
<td>Price</td>
<td>Productivity, efficiency</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>creativeness</td>
<td>non-conformity</td>
<td>Esteem</td>
<td>Renown</td>
<td>Price</td>
<td>Productivity, efficiency</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reputation</td>
<td>Reputation</td>
<td>Esteem</td>
<td>Renown</td>
<td>Price</td>
<td>Productivity, efficiency</td>
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<tr>
<td>Esteem</td>
<td>Esteem</td>
<td>Esteem</td>
<td>Renown</td>
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<td>Reputation</td>
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<td>Productivity, efficiency</td>
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<tr>
<td>Esteem</td>
<td>Esteem</td>
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<td>Renown</td>
<td>Price</td>
<td>Productivity, efficiency</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

333 Senior UCL Estates project manager ‘If you look at the UCL East website it explains what UCL is about you know and we are quite proud to be disruptive and fine but that doesn’t align very well with completing projects on budget and on time, in fact it is completely counter intuitive, completely counter intuitive’ Interview, 29.10.2018

334 ‘UCL was established in 1826 in order to open up education in England for the first time to students of any race, class or religion. By 1878, it had become the first English university to welcome female students on equal terms with men’. UCL 2034, p.18
### Format of relevant information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Format of relevant information</th>
<th>Emotional</th>
<th>Oral, exemplary, anecdotal</th>
<th>Formal, official</th>
<th>Semiotic</th>
<th>Monetary</th>
<th>Measurable criteria, statistics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

### Elementary relation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Elementary relation</th>
<th>Passion</th>
<th>Trust</th>
<th>Solidarity</th>
<th>Recognition</th>
<th>Exchange</th>
<th>Functional link</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

### Human qualification

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Human qualification</th>
<th>Creativity, ingenuity</th>
<th>Authority</th>
<th>Equality</th>
<th>Celebrity</th>
<th>Desire, purchasing power</th>
<th>Professional competency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

While these ideal modes of justification can be criticised (for instance, disagreements around collective interests are often highly emotional rather than formal and procedural) they provide a useful tool which can be used like one of Checkland’s purposeful activity models, not to represent the real situation but to structure thinking about the situation (Checkland and Scholes, 1990, p. A21). For instance, the 4 different perspectives on space described in Chapter 4 can be roughly mapped onto 4 of these modes of justification: quantified space (Market), engineered space (Industrial), sculpted space (Inspired), lived space (Civic). The renown of the architects (Opinion) may have influenced the shortlist selection and the question of trust (Domestic) was certainly raised during interviews, but stakeholders were not observed using these modes of justification in this study and it seems likely that the legitimacy of these modes of justification would have been challenged in the context of UCL. Certainly, the Domestic mode of justification associated by Boltanski and Thévenot with respect for authority and traditional hierarchies would not have played well with academics used to the devolved power structure of UCL. The cultural differences between how academics and professional estates staff approach architectural projects noted in the literature (Neary and Saunders, 2011, Pinder et al., 2009) and observed in this case study, appears to be associated with a difference in their justification styles with academics tending to favour the Inspired/Civic styles and estates professionals tending to favour Market/Industrial styles. Interviewees also noted a difference in the justification styles used by academics from different disciplines.

Arts et al’s study applying Boltanski and Thévenot’s taxonomy to the consultation process for two environmental conservation projects found that
both the legitimacy of local people’s right to participate in the decision-making process and the legitimacy of the argument strategies used by different stakeholders was contested (Arts et al., 2018). One of their key observations was that although local residents managed to establish the legitimacy of their participation, their arguments or ‘justification styles’ were delegitimised, that ‘these new actors were “invited” (or invited themselves) to the negotiation table – yet were told to leave their arguments outside of the negotiation room’ (ibid., p. 1081). The UCL East project was also characterised by argumentation about who could participate in the briefing process, the scope of their participation (what they could legitimately comment on), as well as the legitimacy of their argument styles. Although most internal stakeholders were competent in multiple modes of justification, stakeholders’ defence and criticism of design decisions was associated with attempts to establish the legitimacy of their preferred argument styles and delegitimise the argument styles of others.

Having discussed argumentation strategies, this section now looks briefly at tactics. First, it is important to note that what will be covered here are legitimate tactics of argumentation - informal fallacies, such as ad hominem, false dichotomy or middle ground fallacies (or rhetoric intended to deceive or manipulate) will not be discussed (Aikin and Casey, 2022, Govier, 2007). The starting point is Kock’s claim that judgements about what action to take are informed by legitimate arguments about the accuracy, relevance and weight of the pros and cons (Kock, 2017, p. 112). Stakeholders’ choice of arguments, evidence and warrants will be informed by their preferred argument strategy or ‘mode of justification’, but persuasion may also involve a variety of different rhetorical tactics such as comparison, association (or disassociation), and making present (Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca, 1971, pp. 242,190 & 117). For instance, the accuracy of the claim that the key challenge facing the infrastructure project team was to create a place that academics would want to come and spend time in was supported by drawing a comparison between Marshgate and the temporary open plan offices in
132-140 Hampstead Road where 'everyone disappeared, no one came in'\textsuperscript{335}. The relevance of the Russell Group benchmarks for student workspace was questioned by associating the perceived adequacy of workspace provision with the location (rural/suburban/urban) of the participating universities and the practice of studying in local cafes. While the weight of concern about the adequacy of acoustic separation was communicated with a brief but evocative description which made the anticipated problem very present:

> We had someone today using an angle grinder and we had to give ear defenders to the 7 people within 10 meters of them working on sewing machines [...] they had started to chat and then someone went on the angle grinder taking a 5 meter length of metal and started grinding out a groove down the whole length of it … and they weren't able to chat anymore \textsuperscript{336}

In drawing on precedents, predicting behaviour and implicitly referencing values (community), these examples of rhetorical tactics indicate the centrality of argumentation in each aspect of client and building user engagement addressed in the subsidiary research questions.

### 7.4 Situational Analysis and architectural briefing

This study adapted Clarke’s Situational Analysis (SA) methodology to accommodate a case study research design but, nonetheless, the ecological and relational character of the SA ‘theory methods package’ has been central to the account of architectural briefing given here. Core SA assumptions concerning the situation of inquiry are congruent with the architectural briefing process and enable research using SA methodology to take into account all aspects of the project situation. These core assumptions (Clarke et al., 2018, Clarke et al., 2022) are:

- The situation is emergent and its boundaries are constructed empirically
- The situation is understood to be radically heterogenous

\textsuperscript{335} Critical Friends meeting, observation 09.05.2017
\textsuperscript{336} Institute of Making briefing workshop, observation 17.04.2018
- The situation is ‘flattened’ (Latour, 2007) - micro/meso/macro elements may exist simultaneously
- The situation is dynamic

In addition to these assumptions about the situation of inquiry, (which may also be made about the situation of architectural design), SA is designed to draw attention to two aspects of the situation that may be downplayed, or go unrecognised in a design situation: the presence of diverse stakeholders with multiple perspectives, ‘the situation is political (with a small p)’ (Clarke et al., 2018, p. 117), and the pre-structuring of the project situation by existing discourses. The term discourse is used here to mean ‘a specific ensemble of ideas, concepts and categorisations that are produced and reproduced and transformed to give meaning to physical and social relations’ (Hajer, 1997, p. 45). Consequently, as might be expected from its name, SA is a good fit for a study of the situated, value laden practice of architectural briefing and, although SA is about understanding while briefing is about action, there are distinct parallels between the relational thinking required in both and the kinds of things that make a difference in each case.

Clarke states that the core aim of Situational Analysis is to generate sensitising concepts. While Glaser and Strauss argue that sensitising concepts should be used to build grounded theory, Clarke’s position is that in a changing world, ‘analyses using sensitising concepts both suffice and allow more flexible theorising downstream’ (Clarke et al., 2018, p. 16).

7.4.1 Sensitising concepts
Blumer defined sensitising concepts in contrast to definitive concepts: ‘whereas definitive concepts provide prescriptions of what to see, sensitising concepts merely suggest directions along which to look’ (Blumer, 1954, p. 7). Blumer’s concept has been interpreted in different ways since 1954 but here it is used to mean concepts whose relative vagueness and “lack of empirical content permit researchers to apply them to a wide array of phenomena” (Kelle, 2007, p. 208). As Kelle suggests, the qualities of sensitising concepts that some critics have regarded as drawbacks, their ambiguity and
indefiniteness, are actually what make them most useful as *tools for thinking* and aids to exploration and creative insight. In use, sensitising concepts are inherently tentative, indefinite and open to modification. As such, it is suggested that they are well suited for transfer to the field of architectural design and that, although they operate in a social rather than a material medium, they bear some resemblance to Darke’s ‘primary generators’, as concepts which both guide the process and are tested against the situation (1979, p. 36).

An RIBA literature review into architects’ use of research based knowledge concludes that while ‘UK universities have become engines of academic architectural research […] this has had very little impact on practices’ (Collins, 2014, p. 6). It reports that ‘architects, more than any other profession, appear to accept the primacy of *knowing-in-practice*’ (Heylighen et al cited Collins, 2014, p. 9) and that ‘most architects do not consider consulting academic research as a source of knowledge’ (Jenkins et al cited Collins, 2014, p. 11). In 1999 Barrett and Stanley wrote that ‘much of the best practice advice provided over the last 30 years has been based on a purely rational perspective of the construction process’ (1999, p. 14) and although there has now been more interpretive research into architectural briefing, normative studies using an ‘industrial mode of justification’ (Boltanski and Thévenot, 1999, pp. 372-373) and advocating the use of systematic procedures or decision matrices are still being cited. Limited knowledge transfer between academics and architects has been associated with incompatible modes of learning and communication practices (Kelly et al., 2011). The proposition explored in this section is that (flexible, tentative) sensitising concepts are a potential vehicle for wider knowledge transfer, and a way to bring tacit knowledge-in-practice into the realm of conscious consideration.

The principal sensitising concept guiding this case study research is argumentation. The decision to explore this concept in relation to architectural briefing was prompted by observations of client dialogue during the pilot studies and early UCL East meetings. An adaptation of the classic
grounded theory question ‘what is happening here?’ (what is the subject of argumentation here?) was used to suggest ‘directions in which to look’. This approach highlighted the broad range of argumentation deployed on the UCL East project. In the following section, some more granular sensitising questions are proposed to guide the attention of architects and clients engaged in architectural briefing for complex projects. These relate to the three aspects of architectural briefing addressed in chapters 4, 5 and 6: arguments about purpose (strategic brief), arguments about process (governance and consultation), and arguments about product (the virtual building). In tentatively proposing these provisional sensitising questions, it is assumed that all argumentation is situated so although individual arguments may have constitutive power they are entangled with more persistent social phenomena such as ‘discourses, institutions, relationships and identities’ (Gillespie and Cornish, 2014, p. 436). This position, which draws on dialogism, acknowledges both human agency and the ‘historicity of human action’ (ibid.) Sensitising questions are proposed, (rather than checklists and process diagrams) as an aid to reflection-in-action (Schön, 1991 [1983]:) that is consistent with an understanding of architectural briefing as a situated practice 337.

This section, presents 9 sensitising questions (and associated subsidiary questions) designed to draw attention to the social construction of the design situation, the problem and solution, to how things could be different, and to the role of situated argumentation in making the necessary judgements about what action to take. The discussion of each sensitising question includes a brief reference to relevant theory and gives an example from the UCL East case study to illustrate the kind of issues the question might highlight and to suggest how the architectural brief is pre-structured and distributed. Further

337 The idea of sensitising questions is derived from the use of SA methodology but the structure of this section was influenced by Gillespie and Cornish’s fascinating 2014 article on the meaning of utterances (which convincingly distinguishes between 19 situated meanings of the phrase ‘I must go to work’.)
detail of how the theme of one of these sets of sensitising questions (4) was
developed is given in Appendix B.

1. **How is the project situated?**
   - How is the situation being framed?
   - How implicit/explicit is the situation boundary?
   - How are inclusions or exclusions justified/contested?
   - Are different frames in operation?

The reference point here is Suchman’s view that ‘boundaries are necessary
for the creation of meaning and, for that very reason, they are never innocent’
(2007, p. 285). Schön recognises the significance of boundaries when he
argues that as professionals ‘we select what we will treat as the “things” of
the situation, we set the boundaries of our attention to it, and we impose
upon it a coherence which allows us to say what is wrong and in what
directions the situation needs to be changed’ (Schön, 1991 [1983], p. 40).

Paton and Dorst’s work on the practice of framing and reframing the
problematic situation as a critical aspect of design thinking is also relevant
here (Paton and Dorst, 2011). Stakeholders involved in the UCL East project
worked in two distinct organisations which framed the problematic situation in
similar but nevertheless distinct ways. For instance, the LLDC framed the
situation to include the “things” they understood to make a difference to the
project such as London 2012 legacy pledges *to transform the lives of east
Londoners*, the Olympic stadium (and associated liabilities) and their
relationship with the GLA, while UCL framed the situation to include other
“things” such as the new student funding regime, the National Student
Survey (NSS), and UK government industrial Strategy grants.

2. **What is the purpose of the project?**
   - How is the purpose justified/contested?
   - Is there more than one purpose?
   - Are all the purposes explicit?
   - Are multiple purposes compatible?

As noted above, Schön has argued that framing the problematic situation is
integral to setting the problem. However, the key reference point here is
Law’s idea that if participants in a meeting bring different knowledges and thinking styles to the table and focus on different aspects of the problematic situation in formulating their decisions then although all their decisions may be coordinated and they may imagine that they are making a singular decision, this singularity is an illusion (Law, 2004, p. 58). Law argues that this ‘does not imply that reality is fragmented. Instead, it implies something more complex. It implies that the different realities overlap and interfere with each other. Their relations, partially coordinated are complex and messy’ (ibid.). This resonates with the decision-making observed on the UCL East project, which appeared to be based on multiple, overlapping understandings of the project purpose such as: providing much needed additional space, supporting transdisciplinary research, engaging with east Londoners, setting new standards for space efficiency, blurring the boundaries between industry and academia, financially rebalancing the university, and maintaining a competitive advantage in a global HE market. There was a more or less tacit search for solutions that satisfied more than one purpose, so for example, providing shared facilities could be seen to support both efficiency and research collaboration.

3. What can be changed?
- What is the (material/social) scope of the project?
- Is there general agreement on the project scope?
- How are positions on what can and cannot be changed justified/contested?
- How are changes to the project scope justified/contested?
- How might the project parameters be different?

The reference point here is Latour’s perspective on the heterogenous ‘content of what is “assembled” under the umbrella of a society’ (Latour, 2007, p. 2). In this context, the question ‘what can be changed?’ refers to the network of associations between heterogenous elements in the project situation and how it might be adjusted to generate the desired outcome. On UCL East, the elements that might (or might not) be changed, in addition to the building design proposals, included the kind of elements listed in section
7.3.1 such as timetabling, the structure of the academic year and the room booking system.

4. **What is legitimate participation?**
   - Who can participate, and what is the legitimate scope of their participation?
   - What argument styles are legitimate?
   - What forums and modes of participation are legitimate?
   - How are stakeholders positioned as legitimate/illegitimate?

These questions are informed by Boltanski and Thévenot’s ‘modes of justification’ (1999) and the work of later scholars using this concept to interrogate the ‘construction of legitimacy’ in public consultation practices (Arts et al., 2018). The term *positioning* was developed by Harré and Moghaddam to mean assigning a set of rights, duties and obligations (including the obligation not to do something) either to oneself or to others (2003). In positioning theory, positions can be either claimed, imposed or resisted. Positions ‘focus attention on dynamic aspects of encounters in contrast to the way in which the use of “role” highlights static, formal and ritualistic aspects’ (ibid, p. 158). The UCL East project was characterised by multiple arguments about legitimacy, from the Academic Board challenging the Provost and UCL East Executive Group, the Academic Directors calling for clarification regarding their role as client in relation to the UCL Estates infrastructure team, to negotiations regarding the membership and scope of the Critical Friends group. It also appears that the structure of the consultation process was designed to position the user groups as having the right to comment on the Marshgate fit out design but not the shell and core design.

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338 This suggests that a form of Arnstein’s ladder of citizen participation, could be developed into a matrix to assess the levels of stakeholder participation accepted as legitimate on different aspects of a project such as Duffy/Brand’s categories of site, structure, skin, services, space plan, and stuff [expanded to include systems (e.g. room booking or timetabling), space allocation (what Sailer describes as ‘configuration in use’) and staff]. Alternative categories could be aesthetic, technical and contingent usability so decisions are taken according to perceived levels of category expertise (although levels of expertise might be contested). Different matrices could also be developed to
5. How do stakeholders influence project outcomes?

- What skills and abilities are in play?
- What resources are being deployed?
- What authority is being asserted/contested/acknowledged?
- What relationships are involved?

These questions map roughly on to Bourdieu’s concepts of cultural, economic, symbolic and social capital (1989, p. 17). They also recall Checkland’s ‘commodities of power’, such as ‘formal (role-based) authority, intellectual authority, personal charisma, external reputation, commanding access (or lack of access) to important information, membership or non-membership of various committees or less formal groups, the authority to write the minutes of meetings, etc.’ (Checkland and Scholes, 1990, p. 51).

Although, on the UCL East project, resources (such as time, staff and equipment), relationships (supportive alliances and the associated ability to get the right people in the room) and authority (‘the architects get directions from us’ 339) influenced the decision making process, what was striking in the context of this study was the instrumental power of rhetorical skill. This could be associated with the nature of the project, universities are places where the ability to argue well is highly valued, but the exercise of persuasive rhetoric is not limited to academics, recall the statement made by a resident of the Carpenter’s estate at a public meeting with UCL: ‘if you honestly think that I am going to give my home up to you or anybody else at my time of life, forget it, I will fight you, you will have to drag me out, it is mine, it belongs to me’ 340.

In the Marshgate building space was a scarce resource and competing demands had to be judged in an arena in which symbolic, cultural, economic and social capital were all in play and some difficult choices had to be made in terms of ‘how much space one group gets as compared to another one, which spaces need to be shared and between whom’ 341. These included deciding whether to provide space for transdisciplinary urban research, assess how specific stakeholders are positioned with regard to the right to participate in the design and briefing process for different aspects of a project.

339 Senior UCL Estates project manager, interview 29.11.2016
340 BBC Inside Out, 19 December 2012
341 Academic Director, interview 29.22.2016

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studio space, or computer clusters, and whether to provide an international standard exhibition space or a café to draw the public into the building.

6. **What voices are being heard?**
   - What pre-existing discourses are in play?
   - How are institutional norms influencing what is said and who is heard?
   - What identities, knowledges, and styles of thinking are being recognised and acknowledged?
   - How is the speech event informing what can and cannot be said?

Hillier suggests that the ‘deceptively simple questions posed by designers – “will this work for these people?” and “is this solution better than that in this context?” – often conceal far-reaching questions about the relations between spatial patterning and social outcomes to which the answers have rarely been sought, let alone found’ (Hillier, 2008, p. 217). He argues that in the absence of a solid evidence base, design may be influenced by ‘theory-like propositions that link spatial forms to social outcomes’ and suggests that these propositions are ‘improvised from the general background of ideas and beliefs fashionable at the time’ (ibid.). Gillespie and Cornish make a similar point. They draw on Bahktin to observe that dialogue is ‘contextual, temporal and relational’ and argue that although people choose what to say, their speech can also be ‘conceptualised as an appropriation of a pre-existing discourse, which, in a sense, is talking through the speaker’ (Gillespie and Cornish, 2014, pp. 435 & 442). In architectural briefing as in other areas of life, ‘problem representations are not made out of whole cloth’ (Simon, 1997 [1945], p. 236). For example, stakeholders often referred to concepts such as the student experience, the connected curriculum and public engagement in UCL East meetings, and UCL 2034 was regularly invoked as a master text. Wider discourses such as the need to address a lack of public trust in ‘experts’ and attitudes towards ‘regeneration’ may also have been in play.

7. **What will the building do?**
   - Are the desired affordances and constraints tacit or explicit?
   - How are the affordances and constraints of the virtual building (for the client organisation) asserted/questioned?
   - Are there any unintended and undesired affordances and constraints
• What changes (material/social) might be necessary to ensure positive affordances and constraints or prevent negative affordances and constraints?

Affordance is a powerful concept in the context of architectural briefing but it is considerably more operational when combined with an understanding of spatial configuration (Hillier and Hanson, 1984). Configuration is defined as ‘relations which take into account other relations’ and space syntax researchers have developed methods to describe and analyse complex patterns of space that cannot be discussed using natural language alone (Hillier, 2008, p. 224). These methods enable stakeholders to consider the possibilities for action (either for good or ill) a virtual building might offer to their institution or organisation, in relation to the specific abilities and practices found within their institution. Considering affordances in relation to the institution opens up thinking about the potential for change and ‘the change sought can usefully be thought about in terms of structural change, process change and changes of outlook or attitude’ (Checkland and Scholes, 1990, p. A29).

The question here is whether changes in structures, spatial practices or cultural attitudes are necessary to ensure the desired institutional affordances and constraints of the proposed building design. Gans distinguishes between the effective environment and the potential environment and argues that the effective environment is constructed out of the potential environment by the people who use it and in doing so create the rules and behavioural norms which determine its social meaning and function (Gans, 1991, p. 27). Gans was talking about the public realm but in an institutional building there is much more scope to manage the rules and behavioural norms, the way in which the building will be occupied, so construction of the effective environment can be much more intentional. The sensitising questions in this section are intended to suggest paying attention to how the building and the institution co-constitute each other and encourage flexible thinking in the design of both. A relevant aspect of the UCL East campus project was the selection process for the academic
programmes to be included in Phase 1. If a proposed programme did not support the vision of UCL as a model for an open collaborative ‘university campus of the future’ in which facilities and space would be shared then it was not selected for development. In other words, the occupants, or at least the people who would be appointing the future staff, were effectively being pre-selected to fit the building. Other aspects of the institution design potentially subject to change are discussed in relation to question 3.

8. **What social goods are at stake?**
- Who stands to lose and who stands to gain?
- Are gains and losses recognised/acknowledged?
- What is the emotional response to these gains or losses?
- How could gains and losses be distributed differently?

The term ‘social goods’ is used as defined by Gee:

> Social goods are the stuff of politics. Politics is not just about contending political parties. At a much deeper level it is about how to distribute social goods in a society: who gets what in terms of money, status, power and acceptance on a variety of terms, all social goods. (Gee, 2014, p. 8)

Gee is writing about language and argues that ‘when we use language, social goods and their distribution are always at stake, language is always political in a deep sense’ (ibid.). The same can be said of space - to paraphrase Gee, ‘when we use space, social goods and their distribution are always at stake, space is always political in a deep sense’. Flyvbjerg calls for a reassessment of Aristotle’s concept of phronesis which he defines as ‘deliberations about values with reference to praxis’, situated value judgements about the right thing to do (2001, p. 57). He argues that when Aristotle speaks of phronesis he is ‘mainly talking about ethics in relation to social and political praxis, that is, the relationship you have to society when you act’ (ibid., p. 55). Used in this sense it is clear that phronesis is required to make situated value judgements about the distribution of social goods. The question ‘who stands to lose and who stands to gain’ is from Flyvbjerg (ibid., p. 60). The social goods discussed in UCL East briefing meetings
included the sense of identity and belonging associated with an ‘academic home’, the professional recognition attributed to having a physical location for a research institute, and the impact on privacy, community and autonomy of being assigned a cellular office, a dedicated open plan workspace, or having to face a daily search for somewhere to work in an ‘agile’ office environment. As pointed out, while some groups were ready to share facilities this represented a change of culture from Bloomsbury and it was anticipated that this would be challenging for some people, ‘space is very emotive, people get very territorial’\textsuperscript{342}.

9. **How will the building be judged?**
- What assessment criteria will be used to evaluate the building?
- How are these assessment criteria justified/contested?
- Are different assessment criteria in operation?
- Are there alternative assessment criteria to those in operation?

As Kock points out deliberative rhetoric, arguing about what to do, involves reasoning about ‘choice not truth’ and choice cannot be proved right or wrong. The value-rationality associated with phronesis involves judgement about the ‘right’ evaluation criteria to apply in any particular situation. The selection of assessment criteria, which may relate to multiple incommensurate or incompatible values, and the relative weight assigned to them will naturally impact on how the success of a building is judged. User group comments on the Stage 3 fit out for Marshgate in November 2018 were classified according to an evaluation scheme designed to prioritise a set of incommensurate values: health and safety was assigned the highest priority followed by the ability to deliver the academic business plan/vision. Next came ‘efficiency, quality and usage of the space’ with ‘the overall aesthetics of the space’\textsuperscript{343} being given the lowest priority. A comparison of this evaluation scheme with the implicit evaluation criteria used by the LLDC Design Review panel might explain the striking difference in their assessment of the quality of the design. There were also differences in the evaluation

\textsuperscript{342} Senior UCL Estates project manager, interview 26.10.2017
\textsuperscript{343} UCL East: User group comments summary, November 2018
criteria applied by UCL Estates staff and the academics, with different weight being assigned to efficiency and effectiveness.

This discussion of sensitising questions may appear somewhat eclectic and sprawling but anything much tidier would be less representative of the messy situated practice of architectural briefing. However, it can’t be denied that a certain amount of conceptual tidying is necessary to achieve a practical degree of clarity (see Figure 7-4). In this diagram each of the sensitising questions discussed above is allocated a place in an integrated system. However, the three aspects of briefing: argumentation around purpose, process and product, are not necessarily chronologically distinct, these sensitising questions address issues that are deeply entangled and the whole situation is fundamentally dynamic. The key point here is that argumentation does not precede design – it is integral to the design process.

![Diagram of Architectural briefing: a conceptual framework](image)

*Figure 7-4  Architectural briefing: a conceptual framework*

[See Appendix B for definitions of terms]
7.4.2 Transferability

It is an accepted practice in qualitative research to select case studies where the phenomenon of interest is likely to be most clearly evident. As a project within a university and more specifically a university with a highly devolved power structure, the choice of UCL East as a case study was justified on the grounds that the phenomenon of interest, rhetorical argumentation, was likely to be clearly evident in the briefing and design review process. However Chapter One, described this research as an instrumental case study (Stake, 1995, p. 3), so clearly the original intention was to gain general insights into the practice of architectural briefing through a close study of the specifics of the UCL East briefing process. Consequently, the question that has to be addressed now is whether any of the lessons learned from observing UCL East meetings and workshops might be of use to clients or consultants working on other complex architectural projects, or to put it more bluntly, how generalisable is this case study?

Polit and Beck define generalization as ‘an act of reasoning that involves drawing broad inferences from particular observations’ and draw on Firestone to discuss three models of generalization ‘classic sample-to-population (statistical) generalization, analytic generalization, and case-to-case transfer (transferability)’ (Polit and Beck, 2010, p. 1451). Clearly, in this case the question relates to how representative this study is of a larger phenomenon, not of a larger population (Yin, 2003, p. 10, Luker, 2010, p. 103). Polit and Beck note that generalisability is a controversial concept in qualitative research but observe that as human beings we all have both the capacity and propensity for ‘abstracting general concepts from particular observations’ (analytic generalisation). In recognition of this propensity, the aim in this section is to carefully delimit any claims to generalisability while at the same time suggesting that this case study may offer some transferable insights.

As described in earlier chapters, the UCL East campus project had many distinctive characteristics including an internal professional client, Critical Friends from a built environment faculty, concurrent institutional (academic
and operational) planning and building design, the split between masterplan, shell and core and fit out, and the internal politics of both UCL and the LLDC, as well as a unique site on the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park. These specifics of the project reduce its ‘proximal similarity’ (Campbell cited Polit and Beck, 2010, p. 1453) to other architectural projects and thereby limit its case-to-case transferability and the potential for analytic generalisation. However, the aim in this thesis is to propose sensitising questions as a means of transferring knowledge from this case study to clients and practitioners working on other complex projects and sensitising questions are inherently tentative and provisional. This approach to transferability is intended to take the situated character of architectural briefing (and the specifics of this case study) into account while at the same time aiming to support reflection-in-action on other projects. This study has also provided rich descriptions of the project situation so that readers can assess for themselves whether any understanding derived from the accounts given here might be applicable to their own projects.

7.4.3 Microethics of practice
This section, draws on Komesaroff’s distinction between bioethics and clinical ethics and argues that there is an architectural practice equivalent to clinical ethics and suggests that this has been given insufficient attention in the literature on briefing. For Komesaroff, bioethics addresses abstract universal ethical issues such as doing no harm, patient autonomy and equality of treatment, whereas clinical ethics is more concrete and situated involving questions such as ‘how to engage this particular patient, with his distinctive history and special circumstance, in the peculiar and characteristic context of the clinic’ (Komesaroff, 1995, pp. 62-63). He argues that bioethics is ‘unable to provide an adequate account of day-to-day decision making in medicine’ and that public debates about medical ethics:

Ignore the finely textured and subtle nature of the interaction between doctor and patient and the social context in which it occurs. They ignore the manner in which problems are formulated within this relationship and the ways in which the various possible courses of action are identified. Most importantly they ignore the delicate ongoing process of negotiation and compromise that
Komesarrof argues that medical ethics in the sense of the question "what should I do?" should be focussed on the ‘practical decision-making context’. The ethical question ‘what should I do?’ and the significance of ‘the practical decision-making context’ are also central to architectural briefing. What is discussed here is not the ethical content, for example design decisions concerning sustainability, accessibility or equality of provision, but the everyday microethics of practice, the social aspect of decision making - the quality of the communication and of the relationships between internal stakeholders. Hyams suggests that ‘perhaps the most important skill for the consultant is the ability to listen: not only to hear what is being said but to listen to the feeling behind what is being said, and not being said’ (2001, p. 39). Tippett writes about academic research rather than briefing, but nonetheless her description of listening powered by curiosity which involves ‘a kind of vulnerability – a willingness to be surprised, to let go of assumptions and take in ambiguity’ seems apt here (Tippett cited Fitzpatrick, 2019, p. 76). The literature tends to focus on the consultant/client relationship, but I suggest that these comments apply equally to communication between internal stakeholders and to how they position themselves and each other. And in doing so attribute their respective rights, duties and obligations in relation to the architectural project.

If, as Kock argues (quoting Aristotle), the aim of deliberative argumentation is to make a choice about what action to take rather than to assert the truth or otherwise of a premise, then it cannot be proved either right or wrong (Kock, 2013) - there is no external referee ‘out there’ to validate decisions. While the accuracy of some factual premises may be established empirically, judgements about relevance and weight and whether something is ‘culturally feasible’ are situated and value dependent (Kock, 2017, p. 282, Checkland and Scholes, 1990, p. 289). In these circumstances, despite the common illusion that ‘facts speak for themselves’ (Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca, 1971, p. 17) argumentation is necessary to support organisational decision-
making. This chapter has discussed the social value of argumentation as a tool to support phronesis (practical wisdom). Various claims have been made for the benefits of argumentation including that it drives people to volunteer axiomatic information, ‘the why’ things are done (Chandra and Loosemore, 2011a), increases mutual understanding (Kock, 2017), and encourages reflection on our own reasoning and evidence (Govier, 2010, p. 9). Leaman’s advice that ‘all assumptions must be properly thought through and out in the open’ and the conception of design as a process of conjecture and test (Hillier et al., 1972, Zeisel, 2006 [1981], Dorst and Cross, 2001) also indicate that argumentation can be a potentially constructive force in architectural briefing. However, it would be naïve to suggest that argumentation is always benign. Checkland’s reference to ‘commodities of power’ (op.cit) and Flyvbjerg’s suggestion that Bacon’s well known dictum ‘knowledge is power’ should be inverted, to read ‘power is knowledge’ (Flyvbjerg, 1998, p. 27), suggest that argumentation can be used to ‘engineer consent’ (Bernays, 1947) in ways that might not stand up to public scrutiny.

It is therefore critical to consider the microethics of briefing, the multiple situated everyday judgements about social interaction and human relationships which generate the conditions of architectural argumentation. On the UCL East project these decisions included how to manage the flow of information, how meetings were set up and choreographed, how relationships were maintained, the distribution of resources, how feedback was framed (primarily and secondarily) and how risk was assessed and communicated. Argumentation around design decisions is situated within a complex web of small pragmatic choices like these, whose cumulative effect can have a powerful impact on project outcomes.

7.5 Summary

This chapter, reflected on the briefing process for the UCL East campus project as described in the previous three chapters. It drew on the literature on argumentation to discuss the role of rhetorical argumentation in architectural briefing. Starting from the position that argumentation takes place in the space between ‘logico-experimental truths and sophistry’, the
first section covered the purpose of argumentation: persuasion, inquiry, negotiation, deliberation, information seeking or personal conflict (eristic dialogue), the topics of argumentation: claims about fact or existence, claims about definitions or classification, claims about cause or consequence, claims about evaluation or appraisal, claims about action, or claims about interpretation, and the conditions of argument; how argumentation is situated within social structures of expectation or world-views and interactive frames, for example, is a particular interaction interpreted as an instance of consultation or manipulation? It also discussed the characteristics of practical argumentation, that it may involve legitimate arguments both for and against a proposition, that practical argumentation may be multi-dimensional, that the dimensions may be incommensurate and incompatible, on a continuum (not binary) and subjective. It was suggested that while this may be true of all practical argumentation, architectural briefing is distinctive in the degree to which these characteristics apply.

The following section reviewed the research questions in relation to the empirical accounts given in chapters 4, 5, and 6 and the relevant theoretical literature. The discussion covered the following aspects of briefing: describing existing buildings, accounting for and predicting spatial practices, attributing value or meaning to building design, contested topics, and strategies and tactics of argumentation.

The final section proposed 9 sensitising questions for use in practice and used them to develop a provisional conceptual framework of architectural briefing, considered the transferability of this case study research, and reflected on the implications for the microethics of practice of recognising the central role of rhetorical argumentation in architectural briefing.
Chapter 8 Conclusion

8.1 Introduction

This study was motivated by a professional curiosity about the experience of clients and end users engaging with the briefing and design review process and a concern about how to manage the day-to-day ethical dilemmas of practice in the early stages of architectural projects. Designed as an instrumental case study, it aimed to address both the specifics of the UCL East project and explore more generic aspects of architectural briefing. Following the first observations of project meetings, it became clear that there were two distinct but entangled aspects of the briefing process to investigate: the emergent building design or virtual building (Medway, 1996), and argumentation about the virtual building. The model of design as a process of conjecture and test proposed by Hillier (1971) and later developed by Dorst and Cross (2001) as the coevolution of the problem-solution, offers a framework in which these two aspects of briefing can be integrated. If clients and end users are understood to engage in the briefing process at the key points when argumentation is being used to evaluate or test the design conjecture, or provisional solution against the provisional problem (and vice versa) then this process model can accommodate an understanding of design as a social, collaborative task (Bucciarelli, 1988) driven forward by the interplay between the virtual building and argumentation about the virtual building.

In recent years there has been a growing emphasis on participation in design. This highlights the importance of understanding how a singular legitimate plan of action can be developed from the multiple viewpoints on the problematic situation that might be offered in a genuine consultation process. Buildings are a high cost, enduring resource which can both empower and disable building users, so design decisions may have a significant social impact. End user consultation is assumed to improve design outcomes and to establish project legitimacy (although the universal value of participation has been questioned (Tholen, 2015)).
The next section summarises the position taken in this thesis on the central role of argumentation in the situated value-laden task of architectural briefing. The following sections outline the key limitations to this research, claim 4 contributions to knowledge, and suggest 3 areas for future research. The chapter concludes with some final thoughts on the UCL East case study.

8.2 Summary of thesis

This thesis asked the question ‘how do clients and end users engage with the briefing process?’ It was designed to explore how the following three gaps in best practice advice on briefing are addressed in practice: the practical gap between the recommended single point of contact with the design team and a consultation process involving multiple end-users, the operational gap between the measurable goals advocated in the Government’s soft landings policy and the concept of ‘contingent usability’, and the conceptual gap between the strategic brief and the project brief i.e. between the social aim and the building specification. UCL East can be regarded as an extreme case - three distinct features of the UCL East project: the split between masterplan, shell and core and fit out design, the concurrent institutional planning (academic and operational) and building design, and the devolved power structure within UCL, emphasised features of architectural briefing that may have been less apparent on other projects. These features included the question of who can legitimately comment on what, the hybrid (part social/part material) character of architectural projects, and the highly heterogenous nature of argumentation about architectural briefing and design.

The diagram of the briefing process in Figure 7-4 (repeated below) illustrates the interaction of three different aspects of architectural briefing: the strategic brief, the project governance, and the virtual building (the emergent building design). This diagram is proposed to suggest how each aspect of briefing is socially situated and value-laden, and how there are many ways in which things could be otherwise. Like several of the other diagrams in this thesis, it is a static simplification of a dynamic process. The suggestion here is that
each aspect of the project could be viewed from a different perspective: the frame, scope and purpose as defined in the strategic brief, the legitimacy of participation, the enrolment of pre-existing discourses and the exercise of different forms of capital as practiced in the project governance and consultation process, and the anticipated affordances, distribution of social goods and evaluation criteria of the virtual building. The proposition explored in this thesis is that these aspects of the briefing process interact in a complex and dynamic way and that the mechanism driving this interaction is situated rhetorical argumentation in the space between 'logico-experimental proofs' and sophistry (Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca, 1971, p. 512).

**Figure 7.4 Architectural briefing: a conceptual framework (repeat)**

**Strategic brief** The position developed in the literature review is that architectural briefing is not a straightforward task, that the design problem cannot be taken as given (Schön, 1991 [1983], Checkland and Scholes, 1990). It was argued that briefing is not a simple process of asking people what they want, and that there is unlikely to be a pre-existing, stable,
universally acceptable set of requirements waiting to be captured. As suggested above, the problematic situation could be framed in different ways, and understanding of how the project is situated is emergent - the situation boundary may expand or contract. This matters because the way the project is framed is likely to have a profound impact on the design outcome. Clients and end users may also differ about the purpose of the project, and about how that purpose is to be achieved. A definition of purpose only makes sense in the context of a specific world view (Checkland, 1985, p. 831) and world views will be informed by diverse past experiences and professional training. Finally, there may be different views about the scope of the project, about how to delimit the project, which aspects of the project situation (material/social) are subject change and which are to be taken as fixed. Again, like the situation boundary, the project parameters can shift in response to rhetorical argumentation. Architecture is contingent (Till, 2009).

**Project governance** This case study focusses on client and end user engagement, it frames briefing as a fundamentally social task and defines briefing as a 'process not an event' (Barrett and Stanley, 1999, p. 3). Barrett and Stanley comment that much briefing advice seems to amount to saying ‘if only people were not involved everything would run smoothly’ (ibid., p. 14). Rather than viewing the human, relational aspect of briefing as the noise to be eliminated, this thesis views it as the signal. Argumentation around legitimacy, how participants and argument styles are established as legitimate, is central to architectural briefing and stakeholders are well aware that these kinds of negotiation pre-structure the design solution. The enrolment of pre-existing discourses and the deployment of different kinds of capital, such as economic resources (time/money), institutional authority, rhetorical skills/professional knowledge, and social connections all have the potential to influence the consultation process and thereby the design outcome. Project processes are embedded in institutional governance structures and the way interactive frames are interpreted will be dependent on levels of trust (trust in someone’s motivation, competence and the quality of a professional relationship). Architecture is intrinsically social and political (with a small p) so it would be illogical to assume that the human dimension

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of briefing can be managed out of existence with the use of decision matrices or process diagrams.

**Virtual building**  Deliberations around the virtual building are characterised by discursive constructions of the future users (‘implicited actors’) and predictions about how they will perceive, interpret and operationalise the new building. These predictions are justified by reference to the anticipated affordances and constraints, the opportunities for action offered to the institution by the virtual building (the emergent building design). Buildings are experienced differently by different people according to their role and position within an organisation and stakeholders may have different views on the distribution of social goods and the evaluation criteria for the building. Deliberations about these issues and about any changes to the non-material aspects of the situation are important because of their power to influence the design of the ‘effective environment’ (Gans, 1991, p. 27). It is not possible to understand the material building in isolation from other features of the situation.

**Argumentation**  Practical argumentation is about choice not about truth so it cannot be proved either right or wrong (Kock, 2017, p. 26). This means that there may be legitimate reasons both for and against an action, that these arguments may be multi-dimensional and that the dimensions may be incommensurate, and incompatible. The dimensions of practical argumentation may also be on a continuum (not binary) and subjective (ibid). Technical rationality is of no help in making the kind of situated practical value-judgements (phronesis) required in deliberations about the strategic brief, the project governance or the virtual building. Pareto complained that people’s choices are based on prior ‘impulse or attitude’ so their argumentation can be dismissed as post-rationalisation (Finer, 1966, p. 35). However, it is arguable that the sequence of events, the fact that the rationalisation follows the choice, does not necessarily delegitimise the reasoning or significantly undermine its persuasive power.
To summarise the argument in this thesis: socially situated value-laden decisions concerning the strategic brief, the project governance, and the virtual building are made with the aid of rhetorical argumentation. The architectural briefing process is inherently ecological and relational, and these different aspects of the situation interact in complex ways. The human quality of architectural briefing is not noise – it is signal.

8.3 Limitations

The principal limitations of this project are associated with two aspects of the research design. First the decision to focus on how clients and end users engage with the briefing process deemphasised the visual. Although, some end users were familiar with architectural drawings, and even on occasion picked up a pen, most client and user group argumentation was verbal rather than visual. The focus on client-side argumentation also limited the extent to which spatial configuration could be taken into account – configuration was discussed by some internal stakeholders but this was largely at a local rather than global level. The use of video rather than audio recordings to generate data was considered at the beginning of this study but it was rejected on the grounds that it would be too intrusive and might introduce an unmanageable complexity to the data analysis. However, the relative absence of references to the visual aspect of argumentation clearly represents a limitation in the context of a study of architectural briefing.

Second, in describing this case study as a form of patchwork ethnography, the inevitably partial nature of the data is acknowledged. The observations were largely limited to formal meetings, workshops and public presentations. Consequently, it was not possible to observe the back-stage informal conversations that pre-structured the project meetings. This thesis, argues that intra-client argumentation and the associated social skills deployed in building trust and confidence, in eliciting information, and in negotiating and persuading others, has a cumulative impact on institutional decision making. Therefore, although interviews and project documents were used to fill in
some knowledge gaps, the lack of full access to the day-to-day interactions behind the scenes on the UCL East project can be considered a limitation.

8.4 Contribution

This section, claims four contributions to knowledge. First, this research has provided a rich description of rhetorical argumentation on a complex real-world project. The new UCL East Campus at Stratford is significant both in its relation to the history of UCL, and in relation to the legacy of the 2012 Olympics in east London. As an example of a complex project commissioned to generate institutional change by a client committed to a comprehensive consultation process, this case study provides a unique insight into the situated, value-laden quality of architectural briefing. It is a relatively rare example of a case study based on research access to a wide range of project meetings and events as they happened over a period of time (from RIBA Stages 1 to 3).

Second, although the version of Situational analysis (SA) methodology used in this research was modified to accommodate a case study format, it nevertheless indicates the potential for SA to be used in research into architectural briefing (and possibly the practice of architectural briefing itself). The core assumptions of SA methodology are congruent with an understanding of architecture as a situated value-laden practice and SA is designed to take into account the micro/meso/macro elements simultaneously present within the problematic situation. SA is ecological, and relational and this gives it traction on the distributed, heterogenous, hybrid character of architectural briefing.

Third, it draws on the literature to claim that rhetorical argumentation in the space between 'logico-experimental truths and sophistry' is central to the architectural briefing process. It reflects on the aims, topics and conditions of architectural argumentation and, in referencing, Kock's work on practical argumentation, it provides a tool for reflection-in-action, for seeking clarity about what is actually happening in briefing meetings. The focus in this
thesis on intra-client argumentation builds on earlier work on argumentation and design.

Fourth, it suggests the use of sensitising concepts as a way of transferring research knowledge to practice, and tentatively proposes 9 sensitising questions selected to focus attention on different aspects of the briefing process: the strategic brief, project governance and the virtual building. These sensitising questions are designed to foreground the social in each aspect of the project, draw on theory to suggest how the problematic situation is pre-structured, and contribute to a socio-spatial understanding of architectural design. However, they are the result of exploratory research on a single case study and therefore must be considered provisional. Testing their external validity by applying them to other complex architectural projects is beyond the scope of this thesis.

8.5 Recommendations for future research

Exploratory research into complex human processes tends to raise more questions than it answers and this case study is no exception. The following recommendations for further research arising from this study address three distinct fields of inquiry.

8.5.1 Microethics of architectural practice

Section 7.4.3, referenced the work of Komesarrof on the microethics of clinical practice and argued that his concept could usefully be applied to architectural practice. The unit of analysis of this study was the situation rather than the individual everyday interactions that constitute the microethics of practice. Further research at the scale of talk-in-interaction (Luck, 2007) could provide a more fine grained analysis of the microethics of architectural briefing: of the social construction of speech events, the positioning of stakeholders and the management of relationships. A focus on the situated ethics of the design process could provide a useful counterpoint to existing research on ethical concerns related to the design product (e.g. Lloyd, 2009). One potentially interesting aspect of practice to explore here could be how
trust is won, lost and maintained during the key early stages of architectural projects. As knowledge becomes more specialised and it is increasingly difficult for individuals on both the supply and demand side of an architectural project to understand all aspects of construction and facility management, the question of trust is gaining new significance.

8.5.2 Visual argumentation in architectural briefing
As noted in section 8.3, this case study was on intra-client dialogue so it focussed largely on verbal rather than visual argumentation. However, visual argumentation clearly plays a significant role in the decision-making process during the design development of architectural projects. A study of how visual argumentation is deployed in architectural practice to justify or contest design decisions could be an interesting line of inquiry in the relatively new field of visual argumentation. As suggested in this thesis, the inherently social nature of both the production and use of architecture foregrounds the need for argumentation to inform judgements about what to do. Architectural practice could therefore, more-so than other fields of visual communication, prove a rich source of examples for a study of visual argumentation.

8.5.3 Space and the emergence of institutional culture
During the course of this study, stakeholders were not just concerned about practical matters such as the size of the space they needed for their planned teaching and research programmes or the building services they would need to enable their work and keep everyone safe. They were also, admittedly some more than others, concerned about how the overall building design would inform the emergence of a unique institutional culture at UCL East and by association UCL. This study focussed on RIBA stages 1-3 so it does not address the building in use. It referenced the Thomas theorem (1928) that ‘if men define situations as real, they are real in their consequences’ to argue that beliefs about the social agency of space will inform design decisions. However, this study raises questions about what will actually come next, about how the space within the Marshgate building will appropriated by different groups, what affordances and constraints will be encountered and how the institutional culture will develop at UCL East. Post occupancy
evaluation (POE) is now a recognised stage in the RIBA Plan of work. However, unless a project is part of a rolling programme of work, there is often little incentive to commission a POE, and the few evaluations that are commissioned tend to focus on technical and operational matters. This suggests a place for POEs of institutional buildings (like Marshgate) that focus on how space, institutional structures (such as staff contracts, timetabling or room booking systems) and cultural attitudes interact to inform the emergence and maintenance of organisational culture. Studies of this kind comparing the outcomes anticipated during briefing with actual outcomes could contribute to the socio-spatial understanding of architecture advocated by Sailer and Thomas (2021). Taking a longer view, there is also scope for more theoretical research into how argumentation about building design (both before and after construction) operates as a feedback mechanism in the interplay of society and the built environment that, it could be argued, drives the evolution of human culture.

8.6 Final thoughts

Observing UCL East project meetings and interviewing key stakeholders has been a fascinating experience. I have felt the persuasive power of the rhetorical argumentation used in the meetings I attended. I deliberately bracketed questions regarding the ‘right’ position on any of the issues raised, the different perspectives on architectural space, the project structure (masterplan, shell and core, fit out), the relationships between the various internal stakeholders, the legitimacy of the justification styles deployed and the evaluation of the design. However, despite having my own professional position, while observing the project meetings or interviewing stakeholders, listening to the audio-tapes or writing this account, I have felt myself drawn in turn towards one position and then another by the eloquence of the speakers.

There are some risks in focussing on argumentation in a study of architectural briefing. First, it might be assumed that by foregrounding argumentation this thesis presupposes a purely rational approach, in which
emotions, ‘impulses and attitudes’ (Finer, 1966:35) are not relevant. However, the position taken here is that emotions are integral to argumentation and situated, value-laden judgements. Second, it might be assumed that by focussing on client and end user dialogue this thesis disregards the significance of visual communication and the material world. Again, it is argued that both these elements of the project situation are central to architectural argumentation. Finally, and perhaps most significantly, it might be assumed that this thesis implies that only what is argued about is important, and yet what is not argued about: the things people have no power to change, the things people disagree about covertly, and the things people take for granted, the things that it doesn’t even occur to them might different, may be the most important of all.

This thesis was written before Phase 1 of the new campus was completed and occupied. The argumentation described here has therefore focussed on the virtual building, and it will only be with the passage of time that we will learn how the discursively constructed virtual building compares with the actual building in use. The UCL East campus was intended to challenge ‘the university to do things in a different way’344, ‘to do new things, and to think new thoughts’345. Marshgate is due to open in September 2023. The question now is how the new campus will live up to this ambition, and how the design of the Phase 1 buildings will inform the emerging institutional culture at UCL East and across the university.

344 Senior academic, interview 27.11.2017
345 UCL East Executive Group Meeting, observation, 28.04.2016
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Appendices

Appendix A: Literature search methodology

Resources When I started working on this thesis my knowledge of the literature related to architectural briefing was based on many years browsing in bookshops, collecting course reading lists and conversations with colleagues and academics. This exploratory, serendipitous process led me to my research topic, and constituted the starting point for a more structured and focused literature review. Due to the interdisciplinary nature of the topic, I decided to use two of the most comprehensive interdisciplinary databases - Scopus and the Web of Science Core Collection (WoS) as the principal sources. I also used Google Scholar as a supplementary source. Google Scholar is a crawler-based web search engine which is not curated and has been criticised for its ‘black-box’ ranking algorithm (which makes searches less reproducible) and limited search features, (Gusenbauer and Haddaway, 2020) but it is quick and easy to use and its wide coverage and good recall (perhaps due to searching full text articles), compensate for its poor precision. I also did some exploratory searching in the following specialist databases on the Proquest platform: Avery Index of Architectural Periodicals, IBSS: International Bibliography of the Social Sciences and ASSIA Applied Social Sciences Index and Abstract but these databases produced few additional relevant results. Although researchers are advised to use multiple databases to achieve maximum recall, ‘searching databases is laborious and time-consuming’ (Bramer et al., 2017). The decision to use the 3 resources listed above was designed to achieve good recall while maximising efficiency.

Using a variety of search methods is also recommended to increase recall and reduce selection bias (Bramer et al., 2017, Kugley et al., 2016) so to supplement the database Boolean search queries, I used other search methods including backwards/forwards citation-chaining, the ‘find similar/related articles’ function, previous literature reviews, library catalogues, and expert recommendations.
**Approach** Having selected the resources, I then had to consider the search method. Staff from the Evidence for Policy and Practice Information Coordinating Centre (EPPI-Centre), argue that pre-determined search protocols are not a prerequisite for systematic reviews and suggest that researchers can choose from a ‘spectrum of review methods’ as illustrated in the diagram reproduced below:

![Diagram illustrating the spectrum of review methods and choice of approaches to coding](image)

*Figure A-1 ‘A spectrum of review methods and choice of approaches to coding’ (Gough et al., 2017:137)*

My interpretive research approach assumes that ‘search is an interactive, iterative process in which the answer can change the question’ (Russell-Rose and Tate, 2013:25) so the selected search strategy sits towards the left-hand side of this diagram. Nonetheless, identifying ‘as many relevant studies as possible (within resource limits)’ (Kugley et al., 2016:10) helps reduce researcher bias so I used a combination of the systematic methods advocated by the Campbell Collaboration and the more iterative, exploratory approach of following the ‘information scent’ (Russell-Rose and Tate, 2013:29). I did not use systematic review reporting and assessment tools such as PRISMA or AMSTAR because they are 'embedded in the notion of a priori as a quality standard for research' and are therefore 'not appropriate for assessing more iterative reviews' (Gough et al., 2017:257).
The challenges of literature searching in the social science and arts and humanities subjects  The Campbell Collaboration suggests that searching the Social Science literature is especially challenging because ‘potentially relevant studies are likely to be widely distributed and unreliably categorised” (Kugley et al., 2016:10). I suggest that arts and humanities literature searches face the same challenges. The Campbell Collaboration recommends that subject terms should be ‘viewed with caution’ because ‘authors may not describe their methods or objectives well and indexers are not always experts in the subject areas or methodological aspects of the articles they are indexing’ (ibid). The indexing for my topic in Scopus and WoS is limited, the most specific subject heading terms available are SUBJTERMS (2216) for architecture and SUBJTERMS (2215) for building and construction in Scopus, and SU (research area) or WC (Web of Science Category) for Architecture or Construction & Building Technology in WoS. It is also worth noting that literature in SSH subjects is more fragmented and ‘characterised by more competing paradigms’ (Hicks, 1999) than work in the natural sciences.

Another difficulty facing non-STEM researchers is that their keywords may be ‘semantically ambiguous’ (Wu and Chen, 2014) so database searches lack precision and find too many irrelevant articles. This difficulty is exacerbated by the limited availability of controlled vocabulary terms to disambiguate search strings. This was certainly a problem in my literature search. For instance, the word ‘programme,’ the American term for ‘brief’, has different meanings in the context of computers, theatres, education and construction (among other things). The words ‘brief’ and ‘architecture’ are also semantically ambiguous and widely used in different fields.

A third challenge to the effectiveness of database searches for Social Science and Humanities (SSH) literature is that the main interdisciplinary databases focus primarily on journal articles or conference papers. In SSH subjects in the UK over a third of academic output may be published in the form of books and monographs (Kousha et al., 2011) and yet this research is not adequately represented in the main citation databases.
Developing search strings  In order to focus my literature search I asked the following questions:

1. How do researchers conceptualise briefing?
2. What methodologies have been used to research briefing?
3. What are the key dimensions, components and conditions of architectural briefing.

The aim was to scope the literature on briefing, to identify the central debates and ‘map’ the field. The initial literature search focussed on architectural briefing but included studies on briefing from related fields where they offered useful insights.

The Campbell Collaboration suggests that it is ‘usually unnecessary and even undesirable, to search on every aspect of the review’s research question’ because some concepts will be less searchable. It also recommends researchers ‘aim for high sensitivity [recall] and be prepared to accept low precision’ (Kugley et al., 2016:36).

I used Google Scholar for two exploratory searches: “architectural briefing” (38,200 hits) “construction briefing” (275,000 hits). Reviewing the results indicated that the majority of hits were due to the semantic ambiguity of the search terms – the first few results pages showed a high percentage of relevant papers. However, the number dropped significantly by page 20 (first 200 hits) and by page 50 (first 500 hits) very few, if any, relevant texts were found. I then used the content analysis tool in MAXQDA to review the titles and keywords of the 50 most relevant texts found to date. Excluding stop words (such as ‘and’, ‘for’, or ‘the’) the most common words (used more than 10 times) were: design, project, client, brief, construction, management, build, practice, user, architect, communication, stakeholder, value and requirement/need. These words suggested three basic search facets:
The relatively low numbers of texts on architectural briefing found in these preliminary searches indicated that it should be feasible to scope the whole literature rather than limit my literature search to specific types of briefing or research methodologies. I therefore chose to keep the search terms broad to minimise bias, enable me to draw a wider map of the topic and better locate my own research. In selecting natural language terms for the search queries, I was careful to include a range of vocabulary to avoid disciplinary bias. Different terms tend to be used by different disciplines, for example, the terms ‘brief’ (UK) or ‘programme’ (USA) are commonly used by architects, while the word ‘requirement’ is used to construct terms such as ‘requirements management’, ‘requirements engineering’, or ‘requirements capture’ used in software development, and ‘value management’ is often used as a synonym for briefing by project managers and quantity surveyors. I used the subject headings ‘Architecture’ or ‘Building and construction’ (Scopus) and ‘Architecture’ or ‘Construction and building technology’ (WoS) to limit the search. It might appear to be redundant to use construction or architecture in the natural language of the search string when this was also specified in the subject heading, but I found that using these terms with proximity operators helped to increase precision by disambiguating the terms ‘programme’ and ‘brief’. I constructed the search query by combining a series of simple searches. This enabled me to identify which terms such as “construction
program*” resulted in an excessive number of false hits due to their semantic ambiguity, and omit them. I developed the search string in Scopus and then translated it into Web of Science syntax. The results for the Scopus search were as follows:

Table A-2 Boolean search string for Scopus

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Search string</th>
<th>Date 2020</th>
<th>No. Hits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(TITLE-ABS-KEY (architect* W/15 program*)) OR (TITLE-ABS-KEY (architect* W/15 brief*)) OR (TITLE-ABS-KEY (construction W/15 brief*)) OR (TITLE-ABS-KEY (build* W/15 brief*)) OR (TITLE-ABS-KEY (client* OR user* OR stakeholder*) W/15 brief*) OR (TITLE-ABS-KEY ((client* OR user* OR stakeholder*) W/15 requirement*)) OR (TITLE-ABS-KEY (&quot;value management&quot;)) AND (SUBJTERMS (2216) OR SUBJTERMS (2215))</td>
<td>07.20</td>
<td>3,220</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A review of the results from this search string indicated that limiting the search fields to title, abstract and keywords missed some of the more interesting articles found when all fields were searched. I assumed this was because articles using more innovative approaches to architectural briefing do not use my generic search terms in their titles or abstracts but referenced more classic articles which did. Including the search field REFTITLE in this search string increased the total number of hits to 4230 (following filtering to exclude foreign language texts). Running a similar search on Web of Science resulted in a further 2030 hits.

Screening of results  After running the database searches, and removing duplicates, I screened the results for relevance by reading through the titles. If it was not clear from the title whether the article covered the briefing process, then I also read the abstract. I did this quickly and deliberately erred on the side of inclusion to avoid spending too long on each decision.
At this stage I only screened for relevance to my topic and not for quality of research.

I excluded texts on:

- Pre-existing generic briefs or competition briefs
- Briefing for urban design, M&E, or infrastructure projects
- Post occupancy evaluation
- Contracts or procurement
- Capital cost control
- Automated design option generation
- Architectural education
- Construction industry (and not architectural briefing)

While some of these subjects are closely related to the architectural briefing process they are not the focus of this study.

I included all texts relating to the briefing process regardless of research method, phase of briefing, disciplinary perspective or type of article (eg theoretical, empirical, review or ‘consciousness raising’ Russell-Rose lecture notes 2020). I did not limit this search by date because recency is not a key concern in non-STEM subjects, early texts may be just as relevant and useful as later ones. However, although in general I did not screen out any early texts, when it came to research into Information Technology such as collaborative work platforms, computer visualisation and simulation, I did focus on more recent work. Although the choice of academic databases as the primary resource favoured peer reviewed articles and conference proceedings, I also reviewed academic books and grey literature such as RIBA publications and government policy documents. I included grey literature texts if I judged them to be useful in describing the context and challenges of real-world practice. Review of the articles found in the Scopus (4230) and WoS (2030) searches and the first 500 hits from google scholar searches on ‘architectural briefing’ and ‘construction briefing’ resulted in 608 relevant articles for evaluation. When combined with the 106 additional texts found through other methods (see above) this resulted in a total of 714 texts for review (I used Endnote to check for duplicates). This number was
reduced to 669 following exclusion of texts which on closer inspection were seen to fall into one of the categories listed above.

Assessment of literature The next step was to read the abstracts from each text more carefully to get a sense of the range and scope of research. In order to systemise this process and make the references more searchable in Endnote, I assigned theme code/s to each paper in the notes section. I also summarised the aims, methods and output/conclusion of each study and gave a preliminary rating of 1 to 3 for research quality and/or relevance (with 1 being high quality/relevance). Where this was not possible to do from the abstract, I accessed the full text. This literature review was not designed to test theory, so I did not necessarily exclude studies because the method was sub-optimal - methodologically flawed studies may still include useful concepts or ‘evidential fragments’ (Gough et al., 2017:266). This comprehensive process enabled me to scope the range of research in the field and select 158 references for more detailed review. These were texts that I judged most likely to offer valuable insights into the practice of briefing either because they were seminal/influential (as indicated by citations) or because they addressed critical human aspects of the project situation. Finally, I uploaded the references for which I had PDFs (116) to MAXQDA for open coding and review. Where coding in MAXQDA was not practical/possible I made manual notes. The majority of references without PDFs were books, book sections or long documents such as theses.

The numbers indicated in this account of my literature search only relate to the primary phase of my literature review. However, they indicate the breadth of my search and the process of selection to get from the 1000s of original hits, 100s of relevant finds, the 158 texts identified for closer analysis and the 10s of articles referred to directly in my literature review. Having completed the primary phase of my literature search, I set up search alerts in Scopus and Web of Science to keep an eye on new research and continued to explore the literature as I worked on my empirical and discussion chapters. The following appendix (B) gives a description of the more playful approach
to working with the literature that followed the rigorous search process described above.
Appendix B: Legitimacy and conceptual framework

1. Introduction
This appendix was written to provide further detail on the research process and the conceptual framework proposed in Chapter 7. It is intended to support the overall narrative of the case study and demonstrate how this is grounded in the empirical work. It begins by outlining the starting point for the research (broad practice-based concerns), then gives a brief account of the development of the research questions and research methodology and reports on how one of the concepts drawn from the literature, legitimacy, was suggested by (and tested against) the empirical data and integrated into a conceptual framework. The appendix concludes with a discussion which acknowledges the messy, cross-disciplinary outcome of this exploratory case study, suggests how the sensitising questions and framework could be used in practice, and emphasises the provisional status of the knowledge produced.

2. Research process

2.1 Setting the scene Much of the early literature on architectural briefing suggested that if only the briefing process was sufficiently systematic and rational then design outcomes would be optimal. This view persists in some quarters although it has since been recognised that clients are complex and internal stakeholders may have diverse or even conflicting interests, so briefing is inevitably value laden. Historically, the literature on briefing also ignored the distinction made by Suchman between plans and situated actions (2007). Scholars who advocate the separation of briefing from design do not appear to question whether plans (in this case architectural briefs), made in advance of the action and therefore largely in the abstract, can be faithfully followed through. However, there has been a shift away from this positivist legacy with the use of more qualitative methods in construction research and it is now more common to recognise that architectural briefing cannot be characterized as a purely rational and practical task, that it is a situated practice embedded in organisational culture, endemic value conflicts and
stakeholder politics. Despite this shift in perspective, research still tends to focus on what ought to happen rather than on what does happen. This study takes a more ethnographic approach, and investigates the rhetorical, relational aspects of architectural briefing on a real-world live project.

This study was motivated by two broad concerns arising from architectural practice. First, that construction professionals are overly focussed on the production of the built object, ‘that we can see and touch’ (Lefa and Lefas, 2021, p.1), at the expense of a more situated understanding of how buildings will be used. And second, that construction professionals tend to be unfamiliar with the client’s organisational culture, not only the spatial practices, but also the project drivers, governance structures and underlying assumptions. Two themes emerge from these initial concerns: the social aspect of using architecture, and the social aspect of making architecture. The term social is used here to emphasise that in each case the relevant actions are performed in groups rather than by unconnected individuals.

Although this study is focussed on the making of architecture, the intra-client argumentation that characterises the briefing and design review process is centred on stakeholder predictions (based on past experience) about how the new building will be used – both physically and discursively. It is therefore clear that the social aspects of using and making architecture are deeply entangled and cannot be easily separated. There may also be a correlation between the positive and negative affordances and constraints for different groups of building users (the power dynamic evident in the building in use), and how these respective groups of building users are positioned in terms of their rights to participate in the briefing and design review process. For example, the UCL East programme team tended to focus on working with the academics while the professional services staff (with the exception of the librarians who could be considered more closely aligned with the academics) were positioned, by themselves and others, more as informants than collaborators.

This suggests a possible feedback loop informing the evolution of building types.
Universities are complex organisations with distinctive spatial practices which due to their familiarity are often, in steady state, taken for granted and unquestioned. These practices are informed by the structuring of time, the financial model, the flux in academic status and funding (and the associated loss and appropriation of space), the range of university functions such as social, educational, research and ceremonial activities, and the rich diversity of occupants and rationalities. As noted in the main body of this thesis, the new campus on the Olympic Park was intended to generate institutional change. This meant that the briefing process for UCL East entailed not just understanding existing spatial practices but also exploring how they could be adapted to support the stated intention of creating ‘a model for the university campus of the future’. It was clear that studying the intersection of two complex situated processes, architectural design and organisational change, in a field which is relatively under-theorized (the social dynamics of architectural briefing), would require an exploratory, abductive research methodology.

2.2 Research design Making the shift from a practice to a research perspective and developing the research design for this study was an iterative and deliberate process. This entailed three tasks: 1. narrowing down the research focus from broad areas of concern to interesting and salient research questions, 2. selecting a research methodology that would have traction on these questions and hit ‘that sweet spot between the rigor and theory-building capacities of canonical quantitative social science research, and the emergent, open ended pragmatic capabilities of traditional field research’ (Luker, 2010, p. 2) and 3. acquiring the necessary research skills and beginning to generate empirical data. These tasks are conceptually distinct but they were undertaken concurrently and were necessarily interdependent. As Abbott notes ‘most research projects advance on all of these fronts at once, the data getting better as the question gets more focussed, the methods more firmly decided, and the results more precise’ (Abbott, 2004, p. 83). The research design was also informed by an ongoing review of the literature.
The first key move in narrowing down the research focus and the thinking behind this move is indicated by this extract from an early research memo:

"I realize on reflection that I don’t particularly want to study the design process as carried out by architects (I can see that every day) what interests me is how clients engage with the design process and how they perceive it, learn from it, understand it and contribute to it. It is the other side of the story, the story that I am not necessarily a party to, that I want to understand – the clients’ story."

This decision was later validated by Haugbølle and Boyd’s call for further research into clients and users in construction (2016) and led to the principal research question: ‘how do clients and end-users engage in the briefing and design review process during the early stages of architectural projects (RIBA Stages 1-3)? Yin argues that ‘research questions have both substance (e.g., what is my study about?) and form (e.g., am I asking a “who”, “what”, “where”, “why” or “how” question?)’ (2003, p. 7). The principal research question for this exploratory case study was written to convey this minimal information and no more. It was formulated as a simple open question to avoid disciplinary specific vocabulary and associated assumptions about the situation of inquiry, and to make it clear that this research follows the ‘logic of discovery’ not the ‘logic of verification’ (Luker, 2010, p. 60). However, 5 subsidiary questions were also developed to make the topic of client and end user engagement in architectural briefing more researchable by defining the research focus with greater precision (Alvesson and Sandberg, 2013, p. 12). These questions evolved alongside the empirical research and literature review and were informed by observations concerning what seemed to ‘make a difference in the situation’ (Clarke et al., 2018, p. 117). They were also revised to eliminate compound questions and adjusted to ensure the right level of granularity. For example, questions about specific topics that were the subject of intra-client argumentation such as establishing the ‘system boundary’ or project scope were replaced by a more general question about topics of argumentation. Likewise, an overly abstract question about design decisions and organisational culture was replaced by a more operational and focussed question about how clients and end users account for or predict spatial practices. The final list of subsidiary research questions was
designed to address the key elements of briefing and design review that involve clients and end-users.

2.3 Research methods  UCL East is a rich and complex case study involving multiple internal stakeholders. It was therefore both interesting and challenging to research. Social dynamics can be confusing in everyday situations, but the potential for confusion is multiplied when significant changes are in play and the stakes are high. The approach taken here, originally informed by constructivist grounded theory, was to enter the field with an open mind and without an a priori conceptual framework. This was recognised as a relatively high-risk strategy but nonetheless considered necessary to explore an under-theorised aspect of complex architectural projects. This strategy informed the research methods. For example, beyond the use of opening questions to locate interviewees in relation to the UCL East project and ease them into the interview, and closing remarks to offer an opportunity for final comments or questions, the interviews were relatively unstructured. A provisional interview guide was written in advance of each interview as a form of mental preparation. This was tailored to the interviewee and stage of the project and informed by previous interviews and observations. However, the guide was only referred to when the research conversation stalled, which rarely happened. Although this approach involves the interviewer opening up the research conversation and then speaking as little as possible, it is nonetheless acknowledged that the interviews were co-constructed. This form of ‘unstructured interview with its focus on interviewee-led narratives and structure’ is considered ‘ideal for elusive or under-researched concepts’ (Mulcahy et al., 2021, p. S104). Similarly, the initial aim in the non-participant observations of project meetings and events was to maintain (as far as is feasible for an adult), ‘lantern’ rather than ‘spot-light consciousness. Gopnik uses this term to describe the panoramic unfocussed awareness of babies and small children as they attempt to make sense of the world. However, as she points out, this open-minded way of viewing the world in all its ‘great blooming, buzzing
confusion\textsuperscript{347} can be equally useful for researchers trying to generate new theory (Gopnik, 2011). If you are uncertain what is going to be relevant to your efforts at understanding the situation of inquiry then it is a powerful (if exhausting) strategy to pay attention to everything.

The obvious disadvantages of this approach are the time required for data processing and analysis, and the risk of being overwhelmed by the quantity of data. However, Luker warns against ‘premature closure’ because it will not be clear at the beginning of a research project what is going to be of ‘theoretical interest’ (Luker, 2010, p. 173). The high levels of uncertainty and ambiguity involved in this kind of research can be difficult to tolerate but Clarke observes that ‘becoming comfortable with ambiguity and elasticity is an important part of becoming a good qualitative researcher’ (2018, p. 108). Novice researchers are encouraged to hold their nerve and follow their curiosity. Clarke also cites with approval Harraway and Law who recommend ‘staying with the trouble’ and not tidying up ‘the mess’ (2018, p. 197). The question which naturally follows from this somewhat disconcerting advice is how do researchers begin to understand a complex situation of inquiry? Crewe offers a clue in her observation that ‘ethnography achieves its rigour through its emphasis on making sense of gaps, connections and contradictions’ (2017, p. 164). Similarly, Schön focusses on the experience of ‘surprise, puzzlement or confusion’ (1991 [1983], p. 68) as an opportunity for reflection-in-action and learning. And taking her cue from the early pragmatists, Charmaz embeds the concept of surprise in her definition of abduction: abductive reasoning ‘begins with the researcher examining inductive data and observing a surprising or puzzling finding that cannot be explained with conventional theoretical accounts’ then exploring all possible explanations and testing them against the data ‘until he or she arrives at the most plausible theoretical interpretation of the observed data’ (Charmaz, 2014, p. 341). Bryant, and Clarke also make claims about the value of letting surprise guide attention when doing Grounded Theory (GT) and Situational

\footnote{This is the classic extract from William James’ description of the world as first experienced by babies, Principles of Psychology (1890)}
Analysis research (SA) (Bryant, 2017, p. 211, Clarke et al., 2018, p. 197). The UCL East case study offered many opportunities to experience 'surprise, puzzlement or confusion' about the social dynamics in the making of architecture. These included data generated from interviews and observations which raised questions about the perceived legitimacy of the project governance, diverse perspectives on who could legitimately participate in the briefing and design review process, the legitimate scope of their participation, and the legitimacy of the argumentation styles they employed.

2.4 Theoretical sampling of the literature As noted above, the iterative development of the research design was informed by an ongoing literature review undertaken in parallel with the empirical work. Conventionally, the existing literature is used to identify research gaps and as a source of reliable pre-tested research methodologies. However, Thornberg proposes a more playful strategy. He suggests applying the grounded theory practices more commonly associated with empirical research to working with the literature. For instance, he recommends theoretical sampling of the literature, 'memoing extant knowledge associations, and constant reflectivity'. And suggests that in this way the literature can become “a possible source of inspiration, ideas, ‘ahah’ experiences, creative associations, critical reflections and multiple lenses very much in line with the logic of abduction” (Thornberg, 2012, p. 249). Luker offers advice which widens the scope of this kind of theoretical sampling, when she suggests that if researchers can’t find anything relevant to their emerging data in the literature covering the specific topic of their research then they should try searching for similarities and useful theories at a higher ‘level of generality’ (2010, p. 136). And Abbott suggests another way to widen the scope of the literature search, looking for heuristic analogies, i.e. asking whether the research topic might ‘look like something that someone else has already come to understand’ (2004, p. 115). The trick when working with the literature, as Thornberg makes clear, is to ‘treat all extant theories and concepts that one already knows or might encounter during the pre-study or on-going literature review as provisional, disputable and modifiable conceptual proposals’ (2012, p. 250). The concepts borrowed
from the literature and integrated into the conceptual framework proposed in chapter 7 (such as legitimacy) were encountered following theoretical sampling of the literature and were always viewed as ‘provisional, disputable and modifiable’.

2.5 Everything is data Research projects are often motivated by curiosity arising from personal or professional experience (as is the case here), and Stern observes that the beauty of grounded theory, and by association situational analysis, ‘lies in its everything-is-data characteristic: that is to say, everything I see, hear, smell and feel about the target, as well as what I already know from my studies and my life experience, are data’ (Stern, 2007, p. 115). In this approach, both the researcher’s emotional response to events (either observed directly or narrated in interviews) and their experience in professional practice are a source of data for reflection and constant comparison i.e. aspects of the situation of inquiry which are, in some research traditions, regarded with suspicion and routinely supressed are treated as a valuable source of data. However, while previous professional experience in the field can be an additional source of insight, and ensure that the research endeavour feels meaningful and worthwhile to the researcher, this does not absolve her from the need to ‘uncover and critically engage’ with any ‘personal biases, presuppositions, and assumptions’ in order to mitigate their impact on the research process (Ravitch and Riggan, 2017, p. 202).

2.6 Legitimacy-as-process This section provides an illustrative example of the iterative research process used on this case-study. A researcher starting work on a case study may find many things confusing, even those aspects of the situation which are self-evident and unremarkable to participants. For example, sources of confusion on the UCL East case study included: the distribution of power throughout the UCL governance structure, the process for planning, developing and approving new taught programmes, the financial contribution model, the vagaries of research funding and student demand, the relationship between academics and professional service staff (particularly the UCL Estates team), the significance of Research and
Teaching Excellence Frameworks (REF & TEF), University ranking systems and National Student Survey (NSS) results, and the diverse models of research and education operating across UCL. The initial challenge therefore is to distinguish between those aspects of the situation which are confusing simply because they are unfamiliar, and those which are not only confusing but also surprising and theoretically interesting because they ‘cannot be explained with conventional theoretical accounts’ (op.cit., p. 341).

The research process on this case study was iterative and messy. The focus of attention shifted over time from an initial interest in value conflict sparked by the pilot studies, through curiosity about organisational culture and institutional identity work, to investigating intra-client argumentation. This recursive widening and narrowing of the research focus resulted in a circling back to internal stakeholder dialogue (about what action to take) at a higher level of abstraction. Although the research course was indirect, the themes explored were conceptually linked. The theme of value conflict (or value tension), emerged in the early observations of briefing workshops, reflection on this then prompted interview questions about organisational culture (the presumed source of value tensions) which elicited salient information about the diverse sources of power and influence within universities. This information then guided research attention in subsequent observations towards the social dynamics playing out in governance meetings and briefing workshops. And this in turn foregrounded the strategies and tactics of argumentation being deployed.

This iterative process of tacking backwards and forwards between different kinds of empirical data, action and reflection, also included theoretical sampling of the literature. For example, when a member of the UCL Estates team remarked that he did not consider aesthetic criticism from the end users to be legitimate while their feedback on functionality was valid and must be responded to, and his colleagues did not view the initial split between the shell and core and fit out contracts for Marshgate as problematic, this suggested that internal stakeholders were being discursively positioned by UCL Estates as legitimate participants in the fit out briefing workshops for
Marshgate but not the wider campus design. And this unformed, incipient idea about what was happening in the UCL East project meetings prompted a literature search on 'positioning'. This process of theoretical sampling led to Harré’ and Moghaddam’s work and their relational concept of *positioning* as an active process of assigning a set of rights, duties and obligations (including the obligation not to do something) either to oneself or to others (2003). They suggest that positions are socially constructed ‘through talk between people’ and propose the concept of position to ‘focus attention on dynamic aspects of encounters in contrast to the way in which the use of “role” serves to highlight static, formal and ritualistic aspects’ (ibid., p. 158). This concept resonated both with what was happening in the UCL East meetings and with the literature on legitimacy-as-process or perception rather than legitimacy-as-property (Suddaby et al., 2016, p. 2) which prompted a further literature search on legitimacy. Having the temerity to appropriate a concept such as legitimacy (which has an extensive literature going back at least as far as Weber) may raise anxieties about trespassing into territory better understood by others, but the potential gains can outweigh the risks. Strauss spoke of ‘interactionism as a conceptual banquet from which guests could select and discard at will’ (Bazanger, 1998, p. 353) while Becker advises scholars to ‘use the literature, don’t let it use you’ (2007 [1986], p. 149). These comments encourage a constructive ‘yes, and...’ rather than a critical ‘no, but...’ approach to the literature. However, the best justification for borrowing a concept from the literature is to demonstrate what it brings to your research in terms of new insight or understanding.

The decision to use sensitising concepts from the literature should be taken with care. It is always necessary to ask ‘is this a sensitising concept or a desensitising concept?’ Bryant describes the use of *desensitising concepts* ‘whereby terms and concepts are introduced with something akin to the very skilful slight-of-hand of an adept conjuror, as if reference to such terms had some magical or mystical explanatory power without recourse to any further explanation or analysis’ (2017, p. 143).
happening in the UCL East project meetings and raised numerous questions. Legitimacy was challenged in an overt way by members of the Academic Board questioning the authority of the Project Sponsor and the UCL East programme team (see Section 5.3), and by members of the Bartlett Faculty of the Built Environment critiquing UCL Estates’ management of the briefing process (see Section 5.4), but efforts to establish or contest legitimacy were apparent at all levels of the project. For example, the design of the fit out consultation process tacitly communicated the scope of legitimate participation (see section 6.1.4) both through the format of the briefing workshops and in the response to feedback of various kinds. Also, the vocabularies used by internal stakeholders reflected their different styles of argumentation and ‘implied the criteria that ought to constitute legitimacy’ (Suddaby and Greenwood, 2005, p. 51). References to ‘bottom up’ consultation ‘on the business case, academic vision and wider design plans’349, cost and efficiency, communities of practice and an academic home, operability and scenarios of use, all made claims on different sources of legitimacy. Research memos written during observations and analysis reflected on different aspects of legitimacy including ‘who can legitimately decide what, and how this is being pushed and pulled’, ‘what types of argument are considered legitimate within an organisation and what common discourses are referenced’, ‘whether there might be something in the definition of roles that might limit participants in the kind of argument they can legitimately make’, what strategies are used to establish or contest legitimacy and how perceptions of legitimacy shift over time. Observations suggested that, like purpose, legitimacy only makes sense from a particular world-view or perspective, that legitimacy ‘lies in the eye of the beholder’ (Ashford and Gibbs cited Suddaby et al., 2016, p. 38) but is, nonetheless, subject to the influence of argumentation and ‘the social forces and power dynamics at play’ (Bernstein, 2011, p. 17). Legitimacy is clearly related to the other kinds of persistent social phenomena or ‘accumulated labour’ (op.cit.) in this set of concepts: forms of capital and discourses. Discourses and capital are both employed in the construction of legitimacy, just as loss of legitimacy can

349 ucl.ac.uk/ucl-East/Campus/consultation downloaded 1.02.2022
impact on discourses and forms of capital. However, although these parts of the framework are functionally interrelated they are conceptually distinct.

2.7 Conceptual framework The previous section described an iterative research process in which unformed ideas or hunches generated during the course of the empirical work prompted theoretical sampling of the literature which led to encounters with the concept of legitimacy (and the related concept of positioning). To put this work into context, the table below provides a definition of all the concepts integrated into the conceptual framework. The table includes comments or modifications to the principal definitions derived from the literature, gives their original source, and provides examples from the UCL East campus project to a) provide a concrete illustration of each concept, and b) in doing so demonstrate how it is grounded in the UCL East case study. The framework addresses three aspects of the briefing process: the strategic brief, the project governance and the virtual building. This three part division is based, in part, on two surprising early observations, first an apparent disconnect between the strategic brief and the architectural design process, and second the on-going effort that diverse groups and individuals exerted to influence the membership and powers of the emerging project governance structures. These observations suggested that although these aspects of the briefing process are mutually influential they are nonetheless conceptually distinct. The two-way arrows within each sub-set of concepts and connecting the strategic brief, the project governance and the virtual building are intended to suggest the dynamic, interdependent relationship between each part of the conceptual framework. Each part of the framework is embedded in the situation of design and therefore is both influenced and influencing.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concept</th>
<th>Original definition and comment/modification</th>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Examples from UCL East</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Frame or situation</td>
<td>Schön explains the concept of framing as follows: 'When we set the problem, we select what we will treat as the “things of the situation”, we set the boundaries of our attention to it, and we impose upon it a coherence which allows us to say what is wrong and in what directions the situation needs to be changed.' Comment/modification Clarke et al see the situation as emergent rather than pre-determined and offer two pieces of advice on the process of delimiting or framing the situation of inquiry: first they recommend starting with ‘the big picture – the broader situation of interest’ and second, when deciding whether or not something should be included they recommend asking ‘whether it seems to matter – make a serious difference - in the situation’ (Clarke et al., 2018, p. 117). Although it can be seen as analogous to the situation of inquiry, framing the situation of design or to use Schön’s term, the problematic situation (still recognised as emergent), is more intentional and future oriented, i.e. the critical question for clients and consultants is not ‘does something make a difference?’ but ‘should something make a difference?’</td>
<td>(Schön, 1991 [1983], p. 40)</td>
<td>The LLDC framed the situation to include the “things” they understood to make a difference to the project such as London 2012 legacy pledges ‘to transform the lives of east Londoners’, the Olympic stadium (and associated liabilities) and their relationship with the GLA, while UCL framed the situation to include other “things” such as the new student funding regime, the National Student Survey (NSS), and UK government industrial Strategy grants. [p.280]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scope</td>
<td>‘The limits within which there is the opportunity to act’</td>
<td>Chambers 21st Century Dictionary</td>
<td>Debate on the scope of UCL East considered: academic activities, methods of delivery, timetables, staff: student ratios, contact hours, and room booking systems [p.257]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Comment: the scope for change associated with an architectural project may be limited to building within the site boundary or may include other material changes or changes to non-material aspects of the situation such as spatial practices, institutional structures or social attitudes.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>The ultimate aim, or intention against which other actions are judged.</th>
<th>Adapted dictionary definition</th>
<th>Definitions of purpose included: Providing much needed additional space, Supporting transdisciplinary research, Engaging with east Londoners, Setting new standards for space efficiency, Blurring the boundaries between industry and academia, Financially rebalancing the university, Maintaining a competitive advantage in a global HE market [p.281]</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>[In a similar way to Taiichi Ohno’s problem solving technique of the 5 whys?, determining the ultimate purpose of a project may involve repeatedly asking the same question until the ultimate aim is identified]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Comment/ modification: Checkland and Scholes observe that ‘interpretations of purpose will always be many and various’ (1990, p. A8) and that any definition of a core purpose will only make sense from a particular world-view or perspective. Checkland also notes that ‘any culture will only take purposeful action which seems “obvious” to the people who constitute that culture.’ And argues that ‘nothing is in fact “obvious”; things are only obvious in relation to a particular way of perceiving the world’. He concludes that the interesting question here is how things are made ‘obvious’ - how world-views are ‘formed, clash and change’ (1985, p. 831). The premise of this framework is that argumentation is one means by which things are made ‘obvious’.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legitimacy</td>
<td>‘a generalized perception or assumption that the actions of an entity are desirable, proper, or appropriate within some socially constructed system of norms, values, beliefs, and definitions’</td>
<td>(Suchman, 1995, p. 574)</td>
<td>Debates concerning legitimacy addressed: Provost’s authority as UCL East Project Sponsor Consultation process as a whole Scope of stakeholder feedback Argumentation styles Motivation of stakeholders Transparency and accountability [p.184]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Comment/ modification: In this framework legitimacy is associated with the concept of positioning (Harré and Moghaddam, 2003) in which people position themselves and others in terms of their rights, duties and obligations (including the obligation not to do something). Legitimacy is understood not as an inherent, stable or universally acknowledged property of an organisation or argument but as subject to ‘the social forces and power dynamics at play’ (Bernstein, 2011, p. 17) and therefore something that has to be continually enacted - constructed and maintained.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
### Discourse

‘a specific ensemble of ideas, concepts, and categorizations that are produced, reproduced, and transformed in a particular set of practices and through which meaning is given to physical and social realities’

*Comment/modification:* Some definitions of discourse cover material artefacts including the built environment – this is not the case here as the virtual building is considered separately, i.e. in this framework discourse may address the built environment but the built environment is not understood as a form of discourse.

(Hajer, 1997, p. 46)

### Formal discourses invoked included:
- 2012 legacy
- 2034 future of UCL
- Connected Curriculum
- ‘Efficiency, effectiveness and value for money’ UUK

### Forms of Capital

- **Social capital:** relationships, “connections” (or social obligations).
- **Cultural capital:** long-lasting dispositions of the mind and body, cultural goods, or educational qualifications.
- **Economic capital** anything which is immediately and directly convertible into money.
- **Symbolic capital:** ‘the symbolic effects of (all sorts of) capital’

*Comment/modification:* Social capital is understood here to include some of Checkland’s ‘commodities of power’, such as ‘formal (role-based) authority, […] membership or non-membership of various committees or less formal groups’, as well as wider social connections. Economic capital includes access to costly resources such as dedicated space and staff while cultural capital covers an understanding of the rules of the game, knowledge and skills (including rhetorical skill). Bourdieu’s concept of capital as ‘accumulated labour’ is referenced here to acknowledge that the briefing process is embedded in an established social system in which the different forms of capital are unequally distributed – that not everyone has the same power to influence design outcomes.

(Bourdieu, 1986, p. 243)

*Decisions were informed by perceived or actual access to different kinds of capital including:*
- Specialist knowledge of construction or procurement
- Ability to generate a financial surplus
- Access to government funding
- Attractive to international students
- Reputation for world-class research
- Membership of Academic Board, Finance Committee or UCL Council
- Transforming UCL budget
| **Affordance** | ‘The affordances of the environment are what it offers the animal, what it provides or furnishes, either for good or ill […]. It implies the complementarity of the animal and the environment’ - ‘Affordances have to be measured relative to the animal’ | (Gibson, 2014 [1979], pp. 119 & 120) | **Affordances and constraints discussed included:** Physically separating the student union office from the UCL student support services to constrain the perception of collusion between the professional services staff employed by the university and the independent student union representatives, and not physically separating the management offices from workshops which would afford the development of an ‘us and them’ attitude rather than the desired sense of belonging to a cohesive social group. [p.260] |
| **Comment/modification:** Rietveld and Kiverstein note Gibson’s argument that the ‘possibilities for action provided to an animal by the environment’ depend on the animal’s ‘way of life’ in an ecological niche. They reason that this implies that affordances are dependent on the animal’s situated abilities. And in arguing that ‘affordances are relations between aspects of a material environment and abilities available in a form of life’, they expand Gibson’s concept of way of life to ‘accommodate the rich variety of social practices that humans engage in’ (2014, pp. 335 & 326). Fayard and Weeks also note that ‘affordances, especially of man-made objects are linked to a complex web of cultural knowledge and conventional rules regarding use’ (Fayard and Weeks, 2007, p. 611). In this framework affordance is understood to be applicable to a specific organisation as well as a specific animal or form of life. |

| **Social goods** | ‘Social goods are the stuff of politics. Politics is not just about contending political parties. At a much deeper level it is about how to distribute social goods in a society: who gets what in terms of money, status, power and acceptance on a variety of terms, all social goods.’ | (Gee, 2014, p. 18) | **Social goods discussed included:** Privacy and control An ‘academic home’ A community of practice Accessibility Safety and security Collaboration Recognition/status |
| **Comment/modification:** Gee, a linguist, is writing about social goods associated with the use of language but here his concept is applied to the use of space. For example, Hanson (writing about sheltered housing) implicitly refers to the distribution of social goods when she notes that ‘the design choices emphasise different strategies for inhabitant autonomy or staff
surveillance and control and in so doing, they would appear to encode different modes of institutionalisation’ (Hanson, 2001, p. 6.12). Likewise, Markus refers to two kinds of social relations. First those of power, ‘based on roles, structures and control of resources’ and second those of bonds, relations of ‘love, friendship and solidarity’ which are ‘beyond and in some way the opposite of socially constituted ones’. He argues that buildings and relations are interdependent, that ‘buildings are more than passive containers for relations. Like all practices they are formative, as much through the things that happen in them, their functional programme, as by their spatial relations and their form’ (Markus, 1993, pp. xx, 10, 11, & 25).

| Evaluation criteria | “We can’t evaluate without criteria. [...] Criteria express, manifest, encompass, make explicit, and operationalize what is valued. Criteria mediate the conversion of values into judgments’, and ‘prioritise what is important’. Comment/ modification: Evaluation criteria may not be fixed or universal. Vickers conceptualises appreciation a ‘mental evaluative act’ as part of a dynamic system: ‘previous experience (and appreciative settings) fix what is perceived. What is perceived is judged according to standards (measures of performance) also deriving from previous experience. Acting as a result of the evaluation changes the perceived world and hence in the continuous operation of the cycle both what is perceived, and the standards themselves are changed. This continuous cycle is the “appreciative system”‘ (Checkland summarising the ideas in a letter from Sir Geoffrey Vickers dated 30.1.1974). Different people may evaluate things differently because they have different appreciative systems. | Access to resources Institutional identity/brand |

| | User group evaluation criteria were proposed to prioritise a set of incommensurate values: health and safety was assigned the highest priority followed by the ability to deliver the academic business plan/vision. Next came ‘efficiency, quality and usage of the space’ with ‘the overall aesthetics of the space’ being given the lowest priority. Judging by difference in feedback on the design of Marshgate the LLDC DRP applied a different set of criteria. p.287 | |
3. Discussion

The aim of the conceptual framework introduced in chapter 7 and discussed above is to emphasise that making architecture is a situated practice and foreground the role of argumentation in the different social mechanisms through which the situation may impact on design outcomes. The theoretical concepts integrated in this framework are not new (although some have been modified), and accounts of their effects are likely to be recognised by experienced practitioners. However, applying them explicitly to the briefing and design review process in the early stages of architectural projects is novel and this framework is intended to provide a tool to surface social aspects of the situation of design which are often tacit, unacknowledged or the subject of diverse and even conflicting assumptions. It is suggested that the potential value of this framework to support constructive argumentation during the early stages of architectural projects lies in two features. First it makes clear conceptual distinctions between different aspects of the situation that may impact on the strategic brief, the project governance and the virtual building. And second, it draws attention to the fundamentally interdependent, and dynamic relations between these social concepts and groups of concepts. Each concept in the framework is identified as a point where things could be different, where argumentation has the potential to inform the action taken and thereby impact on design outcomes. These include: how social goods are to be distributed, the affordances and constraints for this particular organisation or group of users, how social values are transformed into evaluation criteria, who deploys what forms of capital, what discourses are in play, how internal stakeholders are positioned as having legitimate rights, responsibilities and obligations (to do, or refrain from doing something), in whose perspective or world view the purpose of the project ‘makes sense’, what aspects of the project situation are agreed to be subject to change, and how the project is framed (what aspects of the overall situation of design are attended to and which are not). Changes in one aspect of the situation may impact on others and vice versa.
As discussed above, the concepts borrowed from the literature and integrated into the three part conceptual framework were suggested by and tested against the empirical data. The fact that the number of concepts (9) in the framework follows the rule of ‘the magical number seven, plus or minus two’ (Millier, 1956) is considered an advantage but this was not pre-planned. In his book on heuristics for the social sciences Abbot advises researchers not to be too worried about whether the heuristic categories or concepts he lists are ‘right’ or ‘true’ and he does not claim that they are exhaustive (2004, p. 94). He suggests that the critical question to ask is whether they seem ‘fruitful’. Checkland and Scholes make a similar point in relation to the use of models in Soft Systems Methodology – models of purposeful action are not intended to ‘be representations of anything in the real situation’ (1990, p. A21). They are only a means to an end ‘which is to have a well-structured and coherent debate about a problematical situation in order to decide how to improve it’ (1990, p. 42). The sensitising questions and conceptual framework (both in the abstract and populated) are, with deference to Abbot and Checkland, offered in this spirit - to be used as heuristic tools if they seem ‘fruitful’, and compared with perceived reality as a means of stimulating questions and debate about the situation of architectural briefing and design. In other words, in line with the pragmatist epistemology of this thesis, they are proposed to be tested (and if necessary modified) on future projects in an iterative process of action and reflection.

Writers are sometimes advised to stop work in the middle of a piece of writing rather than at a natural break point, to leave loose threads that can be picked up in the morning to make it easier to restart and carry on. The unfinished story or argument calls to be completed and offers structural clues as to where to go next in the narrative, or what questions remain to be answered. It could be argued that complex case studies are never finished, the research outcomes are messy, and there are likely to be many loose ends and alternative perspectives on the situation of inquiry. For instance, one intriguing line of research suggested by the UCL East case study and not developed in this thesis is the role of emotion in architectural briefing. Hochschild’s classic work made it clear that emotions were not incidental to
work but could be foregrounded as ‘part of the work itself’ (Hochschild, 2012, Abbott, 2004, p. 141). Key tasks associated with the UCL East case study included building relationships and trust, managing uncertainty and conflict, and maintaining motivation and optimism. These tasks could all be defined as emotional work\textsuperscript{350}. It is argued that the kind of unresolved loose ends that suggest further lines of inquiry and alternative research questions are a positive feature rather than a drawback of this thesis.

Clarke et al differentiate between social science research that seeks universal commonalities and SA research which engages explicitly with ‘ambivalences, contradictions and multiplicities’, the ‘mess of actual situations’ (2018, p. xxvii & 13). However, there is a tension between the kind of dynamic, hybrid networks of association sketched out in messy situational maps (in a kind of free-mapping process analogous to free-writing in which mapping is a form of thinking) and the need to provide an intelligible linear narrative in a thesis. Writing about narrative, Ryan distinguishes between actual events and virtual events. She defines virtual events as plans (what someone intends to happen) that don’t succeed or passive projections of future events (what someone anticipates will happen) that prove inaccurate and argues that tellability depends on the complexity of the plot, the inclusion of things that might have happened but didn’t, rather than a simple linear narrative of actual events (Ryan, 1991, pp. 156-161). Plots can be further complicated by inclusion of the multiple imagined plans and passive projections of others. The aim here has been to give an account of the many different perspectives and ways in which things might have been different (the virtual events – the plans and passive projections of internal stakeholders - both real and imagined) to demonstrate the central role of argumentation in architectural briefing while at the same time providing a recognisable and readable narrative. It is hoped that, although the UCL East campus project is unique in many ways and may be regarded as an extreme

\textsuperscript{350} Some work has already been done in this area e.g. Franck & Sommaruga Howard 2010 on managing the client’s anxiety pp. 80-88 and Cuff 1992 on building and maintaining rapport with the client p. 25.
case, this narrative will have resonance for clients, end users and consultants working on other complex projects.

**Appendix C: Ordered Situational Map**

This SA map is not exhaustive but it gives an indication of the range of people/things involved in the UCL East project – template Clarke et al 2018

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Individual Human Elements/Actors</th>
<th>Non Human Elements/Actants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mayor/s of London</td>
<td>Physical/material</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chair of UCL Council</td>
<td>Transport infrastructure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provost (UCL East Programme Sponsor)</td>
<td>PLUG tunnels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vice Provost (Operations Project Sponsor)</td>
<td>Site topography</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Director (Academic Project Sponsor)</td>
<td>Ground conditions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UCL Estates Director (Estates Project Sponsor)</td>
<td>Underground services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UCL Finance Director (Finance and Commercial Sponsor)</td>
<td>Iconic buildings on Olympic Park</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vice Provost (Research)</td>
<td>Noise from stadium &amp; railway</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deans</td>
<td>Pedestrian routes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UCL East Estates Lead</td>
<td>Building precedents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UCL East Director of Finance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UCL East Operations Lead</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior Academic Planning Coordinator</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Leads</td>
<td>Legal/institutional structures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lead Design Team consultants</td>
<td>OJUE [procurement]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building users</td>
<td>RIBA stage gate process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Researcher</td>
<td>UCL Framework agreements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>UCL Strategies, for example:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Engagement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Equality, Diversity &amp; Inclusion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sustainability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teaching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Widening Participation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Emergent operations strategy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Space efficiency audits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Information technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collective Human Elements/Actors</td>
<td>Implicated/Silent Actors/Actants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GLA</td>
<td>Local residents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LLDC Board</td>
<td>Local businesses</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Smart building technology**
- **AV technology**
- **Research equipment**

**Boundary objects**
- Campus Masterplan
- Parameter Plans
- Drawings and models of the emergent building design

**Key texts**
- UCL Space utilisation study 2010
- Bloomsbury Masterplan 2011
- UCL White Paper 2011
- UCL 2034 Strategy
- UCL Capital cost plan
- Agreement for Lease (AfL)
- UCL East Academic Vision
- UCL East Business Case
- LLDC Strategic Objectives
- Employer’s Brief
- Masterplan and Design Codes
- Design and Access Statements

**Background texts**
- Higher Education and Research Act 2017
- London Plan 2011 & 2015
- Olympic Legacy SPG
- Plans for Cultural and Education District (CED)
| CED Board | Local third sector organisations |
| UCL Council | Prospective students |
| Estates Management Committee | Prospective staff |
| Senior Management Team (SMT) | Russell Group universities |
| Finance Committee | International universities |
| UCL Faculties and departments | Emergent building designs |
| Academic Board | |
| UCL East Executive Group | |
| UCL East Steering Group | |
| UCL East Programme Office | |
| UCL East Infrastructure Projects Board | |
| UCL East Operations Project Board | |
| UCL East Academic Planning Project Board | |
| UCL East Task Groups | |
| DARO [Development & Alumni Relations Office] | |
| CAM [Communications and Marketing] | |
| UCL Culture [formerly PACE] | |
| UCLU & Student Sabbatical Officers | |
| Student Forum (since Nov 2018) | |
| Critical Friends Group | |
| User groups | |
| Design Team | |
| CED Partners | |
| LLDC Design Review Panel | |
| CABE | |
| LLDC Planning Decisions Committee | |
| Statutory consultants | |
| News Media | |
| Construction industry | |

| Discursive Constructions of individual and/or collective Human Actors | Discursive Constructions of Nonhuman Actants |
International and UK students are enthusiastic about new teaching programmes
UCL Estates can’t be trusted to understand and address the needs of academics
UCL’s ‘ability to hit deadlines is poor’ and academics don’t respect the processes put in place to get projects delivered on time and to budget
The LLDC is not democratically accountable
The ‘LLDC is failing to masterplan the area as a whole: it has chosen to minimise risk by parcelling land into separate red-line plots’
The senior management team are making ‘dangerous plans’ for expansion and putting UCLs academic reputation and financial security at risk
The academics involved in UCL East are excited about the new opportunities for public engagement and cross disciplinary collaboration
UCL East will be ‘a campus for the 21st Century- breaking the conventional barriers between research, education, innovation, public engagement and collaboration’
And ‘another glittering jewel in the world class constellation of intellectual and cultural riches taking shape in the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park’
The proposed location for the new campus is ‘a very hostile and isolated site’
UCL East is ‘a white elephant’
it's not this idea of an ivory tower you know, it is a space that is collaborative and open and very inviting’
The masterplan is very prescriptive and quite rigid
The programme is ‘incredibly ambitious… incredibly ambitious’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Political/Economic Elements</strong></th>
<th><strong>Sociocultural/Symbolic Elements</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Removal of cap on student numbers 2015</td>
<td>Regeneration (or gentrification) of east London</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Changes to University funding</td>
<td>2012 Olympic Legacy promises</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost and availability of land in Central London</td>
<td>National Student Survey (NSS)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transforming UCL capital programme</td>
<td>International university rankings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund</td>
<td>REF, TEF &amp; Impact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trends in research funding</td>
<td>New ways of teaching and learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial contribution model</td>
<td>Graduation ceremonies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Departmental budgets</td>
<td>Inaugural lectures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOPS reform</td>
<td>Student Experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philanthropic fund raising opportunities</td>
<td>Connected Curriculum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Global market for higher education</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>International competition for students and staff</strong></td>
<td><strong>Government grant for new campus</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>LLDC Convergence Strategy: ‘Socio-economic convergence in London 2012 host boroughs’</strong></td>
<td><strong>Strong culture of debate</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Temporal elements</strong></th>
<th><strong>Spatial elements</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Industrial history of the site</td>
<td>Transport connections to main campus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ongoing redevelopment of east London</td>
<td>Key views</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phased development of UCL East</td>
<td>Poor connectivity with local area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concurrent academic planning, financial modelling, operations strategy and building design</td>
<td>Fluid zone concept</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consultation process involving: ‘preparing the ground’ and ‘socialising ideas’</td>
<td>Vertical transport systems and core locations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accurate records of past events</td>
<td>Central atrium &amp; study spaces in the social commons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Length of lease 299 - 999 years</td>
<td>Generic teaching space/specialist teaching space</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Designing for 24/7 use</td>
<td>Academic hierarchy of space</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structure of academic time (day/week/term/year/course/career)</td>
<td>Rationale of space allocation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central room booking system</td>
<td>Access control zones</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central/local timetabling</td>
<td>Central room booking system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Temporary road closures for stadium events and match days</td>
<td>Student residences above academic space</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Major issues/Debates (Usually contested)</strong></th>
<th><strong>Related discourses (Historical, Narrative and/or Visual)</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Old university v. New university</td>
<td>‘UCL as international, outward looking, non-conformist, quirky, effortlessly radical, progressive, creative, egalitarian, meritocratic, transformational’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial contribution model</td>
<td>‘… our mission to be London’s Global University – leading the way in radical thinking; influencing and changing the world for the benefit of humanity’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Need to ‘rebalance the university’</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>To grow or not to grow</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traditional teaching methods v. group project work &amp; learning by doing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private academic offices v. more shared open plan and agile workspace</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High tech building management systems v. low tech/simple systems</td>
<td>‘Struggle for the idea of the university’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Space efficiency v. space efficacy</td>
<td>Public and Community Engagement: Cui bono and should the university come to the public or should the public come to the university?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Space as a fungible commodity v. space as diverse &amp; configured</td>
<td>Value of ‘regeneration’ to local community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shared space &amp; facilities v. need for academic ‘home’ and sense of belonging</td>
<td>Social tensions of ‘Town and gown’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specialisation v. cross disciplinarity</td>
<td>Public trust/distrust of ‘experts’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safe and secure v. public and engaged</td>
<td>Wider benefits of HE sector</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Privacy v. community</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How to design flexible, adaptable space</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Design of consultation process and speech events</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How to get people (academics and students) to spend time on campus</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is the ‘system boundary’?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is fixed and what can be changed?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix D: Social Worlds/Arenas Map

Situational maps are ‘fairly crude’ representations (Clarke et al 2018:156) but the drawing process supports reflection on the situation of inquiry.