Lancaster Civic Vision

Celebrating our Heritage – Enhancing our Environment – Shaping our Future

TWO UNIVERSITIES

Lancaster Civic Vision Guide 38

It is unusual to find two universities in a local authority district with a population of only around 140,000 and in a town with about 60,000 people. Lancaster is home to two universities, Lancaster University and what is now the Lancaster campus of the University of Cumbria. Both are well worth a visit for their varied and interesting architecture.

Lancaster University



Lancaster University's campus at Bailrigg, just south of Lancaster, between the M6 (right) and West Coast Main Line railway and the A6 (left), looking north, south Lancaster at the top.

A new university in Lancaster was announced in 1961. In 1964 it received its Royal Charter and began operations in existing buildings in Lancaster itself. By 1970 most departments had moved to the new campus at Bailrigg, just south of the town. Today there are around

13,000 students in this medium-sized, highly-ranked university. The large campus covers 360 acres (146 ha).

The Bailrigg site in its modern form was established in 1899–1902 when H. L. Storey, one of Lancaster's textile magnates, bought the estate and built Bailrigg House. It is in a neo-Elizabethan style and looking west it sits in gardens designed by Edward Milner and Thomas Mawson, the renowned Lancaster landscape architect. See Guide 46 for more details on Mawson's life and work. The shelter belts and planting scheme aided the hunting aspects of the estate.

The modern buildings are based around a compact design created by the architects, Bridgewater, Shepheard and Epstein in the early 1960s. There is a central square ('Alexandra Square') around which are clustered shops, Library and administrative buildings.

North and south from the Square runs a covered, pedestrian walkway ('The Spine') alongside which are the colleges and teaching buildings. The earlier buildings were three-storeys, in brick, around quadrangles, in the Oxbridge college model. The Library followed this model too until its recent refurbishment and expansion.

Later buildings as the University expanded – including the very extensive recent replacement of 1960s student accommodation – have been taller and set apart from the original plan. The emphasis in the newer and expanded buildings has been on the flexibility of the future use of the internal spaces (as in the Library building) and the energy efficiency of the buildings in their construction and running (as in the LICA building).

There has been a major expansion of student accommodation to the south-west of the original site.



Chaplaincy Centre



InfoLab21

Perhaps the most architecturally notable of the buildings on the campus are the Chaplaincy Centre (1969), Ruskin Library (1998), InfoLab21 (2004) and the LICA building (2010).



Ruskin Library

A campus map (for satnav use LA1 4YW) can be downloaded from:
campus-map.pdf (lancaster.ac.uk)

University of Cumbria, Lancaster Campus

In Bowerham, just south of Lancaster city centre, lies the site now known as the Lancaster Campus of the University of Cumbria. Locally it is still known as "Saint Martin's".

From 1880 to 1959 the site was a barracks for the local King's Own Royal Regiment. Guide 77 describes the barracks period. The Keep and Officers' Mess survive as buildings, with new uses, as do some of the barracks themselves. When Lancaster College of Education was set up in 1964 – soon to be rechristened as St. Martin's College – a major building programme took place to create the new facilities needed for teacher training.

The expansion of the College into other areas, such as the humanities and arts, nursing and health-related professions and business subjects, necessitated further new buildings around the site and new halls of residence. Originally overseen academically by the University of Manchester, it then came under the wing of Lancaster University, until the merger of local colleges in 2007 that created the University of Cumbria, which is based in Carlisle. The site has recently been extensively redeveloped with new housing and care facilities.

There are several buildings of interest for the visitor. The Harold Bridges Library (now extended) offers a striking facade and wonderful views west for its users. The Chapel, at

the entrance to the College and its former parade ground, is the place of worship in this originally Church of England foundation. Inside the Chapel, the crucifixion scene by John Bratby is thought provoking. The stone-built Keep reminds us of the military beginnings of the site. There are several works of art in the grounds around the buildings.

A campus map (for satnav use LA1 3JD) can be downloaded from:
LANCASTER MAP



The Keep



St Martin's Chapel

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