

LIBRARIES: THE MOST TRULY DEMOCRATIC SPACE?

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INTRODUCTION

“Welcoming ... porous... a warehouse of ideas.” (Shelley McNamara, Grafton Architects, RIBA Gold Medal lecture 2020) “The best place to lay your laptop?” (Rowan Moore, The Guardian, 25 January 2020)

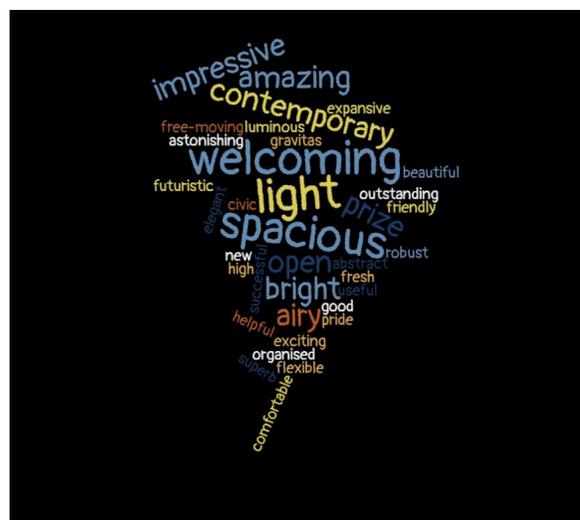
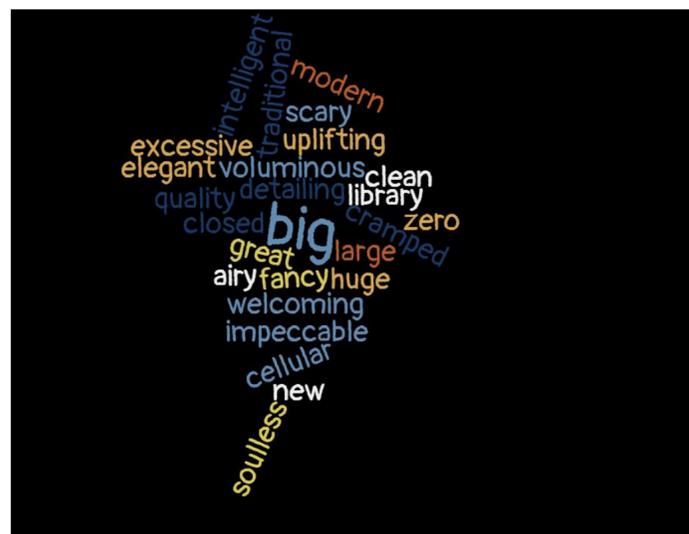
Words and phrases used to describe Kingston University’s new Town House building which challenges preconceptions of what the future of libraries might look like. Designed to incorporate library and archives storage, study and research space alongside dance studios, performance and event spaces, the Town House offers a different model for an academic library.

ASPIRATION

- To create a porous building
- To create a civic building
- To remove the barrier between university & town

DELIVERY

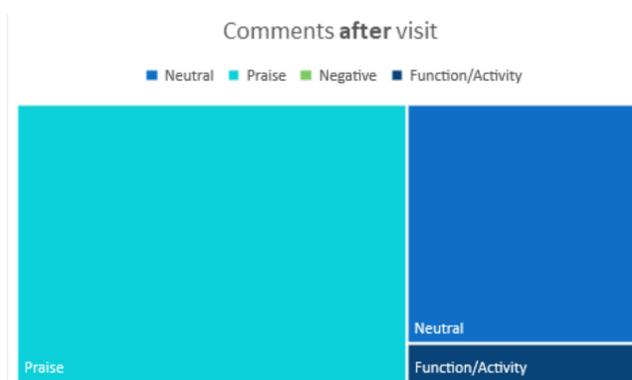
- Definition and configuration of spaces
- Management of spaces, events and teaching



BEFORE AND AFTER

Perceptions of new visitors to the space (students, staff, public), captured via handout or whiteboard in the answers to the following:

What one word describes what you expected Town House to be before you visited for the first time?



THE TRULY UNEXPECTED



How do you manage an open and welcoming building during a pandemic when no one can be less than 2 metres apart?!



Summer 2016

Transforming Your University TOWN HOUSE PROJECT 1985

Café

The wall that divided town and gown.

Two cafes open from Day one for all visitors

Stock in place as planned. Located across three floors and available to browse by all visitors.

Unexpected elements. Artwork installed on an ongoing basis.

VISITORS! WE WANT YOUR FEEDBACK

Nice coffee! Thankyou! Very quiet ✓
Great staff! → thank you for your kind service
Beautiful

Awesome building!

Quite popular then!

Whiteboards have been essential for quick feedback throughout the project. KISS.

Getting ready to provide help - our 'hub'

Lockdown day 1. 'Traffic' past and through the campus significantly changed.

Dance may not be confined to the Studios.