De Montfort University: a case study of a space scenario[1]

The James Went Building had a total area of 9,937 square metres. Its eight floors housed lecture theatres, computer laboratories, seminar and classrooms, a mainframe computer, staff rooms and a cafeteria. Asbestos was discovered in the building late in the summer term of 1987 and it was declared a health hazard. All staff and students in the schools of computing, science and mathematics were immediately removed from the accommodation and subsequently relocated to three upper floors of the Thames Tower Building approximately three quarters of a mile away. The rented accommodation provided larger floor areas and released significant additional circulation space for teaching facilities. The modelled spaces in Thames Tower were utilised at a space utilisation level of 40%. Each teaching facility was on average used for 63% of the week and was occupied at a similar level when in use.

The innovative timetabling unit of the university used its own automatic scheduling system to model the accommodation required in the Thames Tower Building and a responsive estates department developed the necessary teaching facilities. The timetabling unit scheduled rooms, staff and students in the new accommodation during the summer vacation. Courses were transferred to a new building without any disruption of course programmes and student enrolments. The three schools did not commence any new degree course programmes or change course delivery methods during the period they were in the Thames Tower Building. It would have been possible to model the consequences of any such innovations.

Once the renovation of the James Went Building was completed students returned to their original location. Several years after the return to the James Went Building it was demolished and replaced by the new Hugh Aston Building housing the De Montfort University Leicester Business School and the Leicester De Montfort Law School.

James Went Building being demolished 2007

Hugh Aston Building was partially in use in 2009 and officially opened in 2010. The building extends over the site of the James Went Building.

The flexible timetabling system developed at De Montfort University and bearing Crown copyright was subsequently used by a variety of institutions including the University of Aberdeen, Glasgow Caledonian University, the University of Bournemouth, the University of Manchester and South Bank University, London.[2]

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[1] Stellae gratefully acknowledge the De Montfort Estate Department in the preparation of this paper.

[2] HEFC (JISC 2006) Designing Spaces for Effective Learning: A guide to 21st century learning space design. Half the institutions referred to in the publication engaged Stellae to support the strategic planning of their estates based on workable timetables. The colleges were Edinburgh's Telford College, North Hertfordshire College and Stephenson College, Coalville. The higher education institutions supported by Stellae in the publication are Glasgow Caledonian University and the University of Strathclyde.

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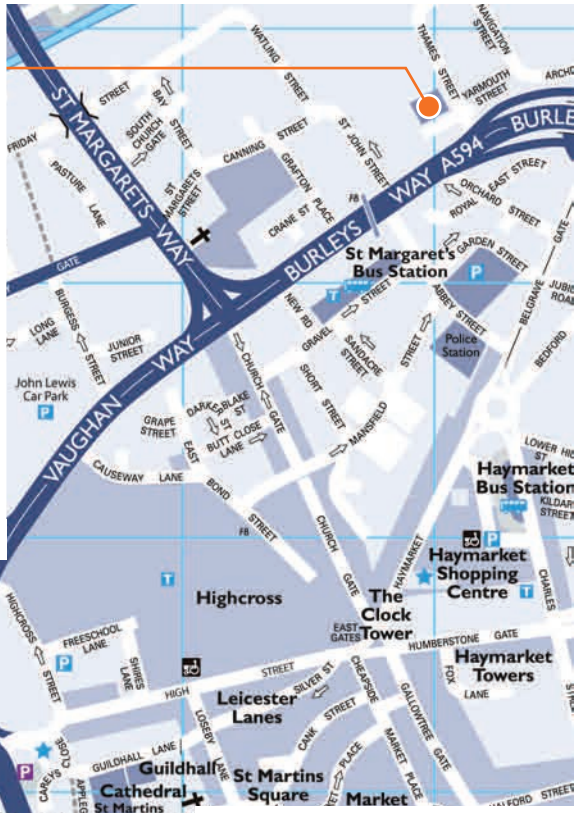
The innovative and capable timetabling unit of De Montfort University and the responsive estates department which led to the development of new accommodation illustrate the capabilities required to address mission critical issues. The provision of viable estate scenarios helps to support the delivery of high quality courses.

EQUINOX BUILDING FORMERLY THAMES TOWER



JAMES WENT BUILDING