

**Imperial College Union
Board of Trustees / 23 June 2021**

Space Review

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Space Review Steering Group

Purpose: To update the Board on the status of the Building & Space Review

1. Background Information

Over the past few years, it has been clear that many of Imperial College Union managed spaces are no longer fit-for-purpose, and some had been allowed to fall into a state of disrepair. The following are also issues that need to be fixed:

- Space allocation is currently based on SOD subjectivity, resulting in unclear processes for CSPs.
- The current approach to maintenance and development is reactive, resulting in higher costs, poor use of resources, and poor CSP satisfaction
- Inefficient use of our spaces results in CSPs paying for external activity and storage space, with increased travel time from campus, and as a result

In addition, the Union's approach to space has lacked any strategic approach resulting in expedient practice and an inability to articulate the Union's space requirement to the College.

Given our back to basics strategy, and the Union entering a new period where it seeks to become more effective and engaging in its core purpose, our spaces are a critical part of the improvement plan. Our spaces are our most important physical resource that require proactive maintenance after bringing back up to a base standard and re-assessing space allocations & functions to inform future requirement. Our approach to space planning requires a clear understanding of our current space status, its current state of repair and utilisation, in order to inform future priorities.

The room booking process causes confusion at the moment, with some CSPs booking spaces directly from College departments, others direct with Move, and some with the Student Opportunities & Development team at the Union. Alongside the room booking policy, the Equipment policy is convoluted and unclear. Policies that have lapsed include a space policy, an access policy, and an inventory policy. These should all be consolidated to simplify the process.

Beyond bookable rooms in Beit, the Union manage a number of spaces throughout the college estate. These include, 5 garages, 5 CU offices, a prayer room, music/dance studio and a gym. There has been a lack of clarity over recent years about who is responsible for maintaining these spaces, and as a result the students using them have been unsupported and had a poor experience.

The Building & Space Review consists of 4 OTs, one lay trustee, one student trustee, and two staff members. This group will look to solve the above problems and deliver:

- i. A *space assessment report* for all Union-controlled spaces (South Kensington and elsewhere) that clearly identifies current usage, future planned usage, and any refurbishment needs.
- ii. A *space management policy* that governs how CSPs use Union-controlled space, including storage.

- iii. A *future space requirements report* for future College developments, in particular White City, that considers both Union and CSP requirements. - needs commercial review to feed into this

2. Work Completed

Since the review group was formed, the following work has been completed:

- i. Storage spaces have been made safe, tidied, and cleaned. This includes:
- Underwater Club Storage (West Basement, Beit)
 - Caving Club Storage (West Basement, Beit)
 - Laundry & Cleaning facilities (West Basement, Beit)
 - ICRPC Armoury (West Basement, Beit)
 - West Basement Cages (West Basement, Beit)
 - Canoe Store (East Basement, Beit)
 - Dramatic Society storeroom and workshop under the stage (Beit)
 - Musical Theatre storage (behind Union Gym, Beit)
 - Society Storeroom (behind Union Dining Hall, Beit)
 - Society Storerooms (behind Union Gym, Beit)
 - Club Storage room (Basement, Reynolds)
 - Music & dance storage cupboards (Dance/Music room, Reynolds)

None of these storage spaces pose a health and safety hazard any longer, and a full inventory of the equipment stored in each space is available through eActivities inventories. Equipment belonging to deceased CSPs has been distributed, disposed of, or sold as per the CSP equipment policy. Additionally, waste disposal was organised for all CSPs to dispose of the build up of broken, and unusable equipment. New processes have been implemented to ensure that storage spaces do not fall into the previous state of disrepair.

- ii. A space audit has been fully completed for all spaces within Beit Quad. This audit has included:
- Access type
 - Space function/type
 - Urgent H&S issues
 - List of CSPs using that space
 - NET Area
 - Any other relevant details

Access to Union spaces in non-Union buildings has been difficult because of COVID restrictions. Whilst access to these spaces isn't possible, all obtainable information about them has been recorded, pending confirmation.

- iii. A space survey has been distributed among all students, with a deadline for completion of the 24th June 2021. The questionnaire seeks to obtain how much students value space, how satisfied they are with our various spaces, and any suggestions they have for future space use.
- iv. A draft space and storage allocation policy has been drafted. It aims to establish fair principles and should provide greater transparency regarding the allocation itself. This needs student consultation before it is taken to CSPB after the conclusion of the space survey.

Beyond these completed works. The UCH Redevelopment project finally started on Monday 14th June. This concludes 2+ years of dialogue between students, OTs, staff, College estates, architects, rake seating provider, structural engineers, and the Harlington Trust.

3. Next Steps

Over the next three months the Building & Space review steering group will conclude on any outstanding areas within the project.

3.1. Space Audit

This starts with continuation of the space audit across Union spaces in other buildings. Any health and safety concerns in these areas will then need immediate resolution. The audit will also be compared to the Union's space agreement with college, and any discrepancies resolved.

Beyond that a report will be produced, drawing together findings from the space audit and the space survey that clearly identifies current usage, future planned usage, and any refurbishment needs.

There may be funds available to do this refurbishment from the Harlington Trust that would enable us to bring our current spaces back to basic. Once approved by the Harlington Trust, we would task College estates with a list of priorities to accomplish within a set budget - estimated to be roughly £500k.

The timeline for accessing these funds look like:

- 8th July 2021 – Harlington Grant Fund Committee Meeting to discuss proposal
- September 2021 – Walk through of spaces with College Estates
- October 2021 – start of prioritised works
- July 2022 – conclusion of works

3.2. Space Management Policy

Once the draft space policy has been consulted on, they will be taken to CSPB, Council, and relevant Board subcommittees. This will include principles used to inform space, equipment, access and inventory policy and define inventory, room booking, storage allocation and disciplinary processes for CSPs.

The maintenance and periodic review processes will also be defined in this document to ensure that the Union takes a proactive approach to ensuring our spaces are fit for purpose.

3.3. Future Space Requirements

An assessment of future space requirement will consider the information gathered from the space audit, survey and policy reviews.

Alongside this review, a Commercial review is being undertaken. Throughout these two reviews, locations might be identified that require a space use change, require significant investment to improve, or the creation of new Union space. The latter being particularly evident with regard to Imperial College's expansion at White City.

The commercial review will finish in Jan/Feb 2022 at which point we will be in a position to combine the two reviews to fully define the Union's future space requirements.

This report should stipulate where funding might be accessed from and will include a combination of:

- Capital Expenditure Funding Bids to College (agreed access to annual funding rounds).
- President's Community Fund proposals - £5 million over the next 5 years that will be award to small/medium projects (£15,000 - £150,000) that enhance the student experience and benefit the wider college community.
- Potential use of the Union's strategic investment fund as per our new financial model