

# Case Name: University of York, former Langwith College

**Case Number: 1456388**

## Background

Historic England has been asked to assess this building for listing as part of a wide-ranging designation application that includes most of the buildings on the University of York's Campus West, some sculptural work, and also the designed landscape.

## Asset(s) under Assessment

Facts about the asset(s) can be found in the Annex(es) to this report.

Annex	List Entry Number	Name	Heritage Category	HE Recommendation
1	1457043	Former Langwith College, University of York	Listing	Add to List

## Visits

Date	Visit Type
17 April 2018	Partial inspection
08 June 2018	Partial inspection

## Context

The University of York are preparing a masterplan to inform estate and funding strategies up to 2027. Their aims regarding the estate are to update the campus over a 21 year period, maintain and enhance the landscape, improve the condition of the buildings, and enhance the student experience. In order to inform the masterplan, they are seeking clarity regarding the designation status of the campus buildings and landscape. A programme of replacement has been prepared for those buildings that are not considered fit for purpose or viable to renovate. The draft Development Brief for the university has identified that new development should be focused on the replacement of existing buildings or construction on car parks so as to limit density and help retain the landscape setting. Redevelopment may include a new main entrance leading from University Road to the Market Place, which could involve the demolition of the library access bridge and ramp, and relocation of the 'Untitled' sculpture.

## Assessment

### CONSULTATION

The owner (the university), local planning authority (City of York Council) and City of York Historic Environment Record (HER) were consulted, as well as the Twentieth Century Society as an interested party. The Twentieth Century Society replied to say that the university cases were discussed at their casework committee meeting, and members were pleased that the campus was being assessed in a holistic way. They stated that the campus was designed as a complete planned landscape and that an assessment of the landscape was therefore a welcome step, given that interest is derived not only from the buildings but from the way they link and relate to each other and their surroundings. They noted that the buildings were the result of a coherent vision, and that they therefore all possessed significance of some degree not only in technological terms as high quality exemplars of CLASP-built architecture, but in terms of their location within the landscape, their sculptural groupings and as an embodiment of an educational philosophy that underlay their configuration. Members welcomed the assessment of Central Hall, Derwent College and the former Langwith College. They had no comment on the detail of the individual factual reports.

The consultants Montagu Evans responded on behalf of the University of York with a cover letter and extensive (193 page) report. In regard to the History sections of the reports, they stated that they consider the consultation reports to be broadly factually correct and did not note any inaccuracies but provided an additional outline of the history of the university and its context. They stated that the University of York opposes designation of all the cultural assets and in particular the CLASP buildings. However, they added that on a without prejudice basis, if, in the round, Historic England recommended that any of the following buildings were of special interest, the university would not resist designation, using, in part, the powers of exclusion under s1(5) of the Planning Act 1990:

- The exterior of Derwent College
- Central Hall
- The Dining Hall and Art Colonnade of Langwith College
- Dryad Sculpture
- Untitled Sculpture (excluding the walkway)
- A revised outline of the campus as a registered park and garden.

Montagu Evans provided extensive comment on the CLASP buildings. They stated that the university acknowledges that some of the CLASP buildings do contribute in some way to the character of the campus and that the masterplan proposes areas of regeneration to adapt certain buildings to the changing needs of the campus. They suggest that the buildings have not performed as intended and have problems relating to thermal performance, requiring services to be added, and inflexibility. They state that the university considers the CLASP buildings as beyond their useful life and in need of refurbishment or redevelopment in the near future. They note that a study undertaken for the university has indicated that refurbishment of the CLASP buildings could cost 87 per cent of the new build cost to refurbish; a potential range of £1.8m to £9.2 per block. They also add that a survey indicated that the buildings have a low standing in the eyes of the students. The university has therefore prepared a programme of replacement of CLASP buildings that are not considered fit for purpose or viable to renovate.

In regard to the historic and architectural interest of the CLASP buildings, Montagu Evans (ME) made several comments, summarised as follows [with our numbering for ease of reference]:

1. The historical interest stems from the university's role as one of the new post-war universities. Other new universities had similar aspirations but what gave York a particular character was the role of the landscape as part of the campus. RMJM's, and particularly Andrew Derbyshire's association as architects give an aspect of historic interest, although Derbyshire is not of such note that any buildings of his are automatically worthy of designation.
2. The campus has some interest for the inclusion of a large collection of CLASP buildings. These have some qualities, notably their form of construction, incorporation of artwork of some aesthetic merit, and for the modified units such as oriel windows that add a degree of visual interest. However, these positive points are offset by the extremely plain composition of the concrete cladding.
3. The poor condition of the buildings is self-evident and contemporary reports from the 1960s indicate issues were evident from the outset, suggesting the buildings were not fit for purpose. A user perspective by D Waddington in *Perspective East Yorkshire* (1967) noted that the floors are not vibration free and cannot accommodate heavy equipment whilst there were heating and ventilation problems where research laboratories and tutorial rooms were intermingled. Furthermore, a 1980s student survey found that there was a dislike of the colour of the concrete in winter.
4. There are critical literary references to the CLASP buildings (cited in Section 5.0 – 5.30 within the Montagu Evans report): Tony Birks (1987) noted the lack of flexibility for varying rooflines whilst Andrew Saint (1987) referred to the drabness of the cladding.
5. Whilst the interiors largely remain intact, this is largely due to the inflexibility of the CLASP system. The internal columns are clad in asbestos insulation board, while the structural grid does not easily allow for the transfer of loads without bearing considerable expense and effort, making reconfiguration challenging.
6. The use of materials and layouts are standardised, average quality and devoid of special interest.

In specific reference to the former Langwith College, Montagu Evans state that the university accepts it has some intrinsic value as one of the first two colleges, and that there is evidence of consideration of space along the walkway. ME suggest that whilst the nucleus of the college, with the dining hall and decorative panels along the colonnade, has some interest, it can be debated whether this amounts to special interest, whilst the remainder of the college is of insufficient quality to warrant designation. ME also state that the position of the accommodation blocks is less successful, including the engagement to the north-east, and less clearly-grouped than those at Derwent. Together with the above issues around the quality of construction, and performance, ME consider Langwith, as a whole, fails to meet the listing criteria.

HISTORIC ENGLAND RESPONSE: our assessment is confined to the architectural and historic interest of the former Langwith College, and the six points above can be addressed in turn:

1. The historic interest of York as a new university and the significance of the architects is outlined in the Discussion section below.
2. The importance of the CLASP system is also outlined below. The surviving CLASP buildings include Derwent, the former Langwith, Vanbrugh, Goodricke, and Wentworth colleges as well as the Chemistry, Biology and Physics laboratories, and Historic England have applied a high degree of selectivity in recommending two of these buildings for listing. We acknowledge that the aesthetics of the two colleges are neutral and egalitarian but this serves to ensure, as intended, that the lake and designed landscape form the dominant feature of the university. This was recognised at the time of construction and thereafter. For instance, Architectural Design stated in December 1966 (605) that: 'The architecture is unpretentious. It is at its best at its most neutral, as a backcloth to people and activity and to the superb landscape of water, fields, trees and weeping willows'. Great attention was given to the massing, height and layout of the CLASP-built colleges, which is particularly successful, whilst the prefabricated system is an important exemplar for a rapidly-built, economical and standardised form of architecture that had never been used on this scale before.
3. Contrary to this point, the Historic England site visit indicated that Derwent College and the former Langwith College are in relatively good condition. They demonstrate a high degree of survival externally and retain many original features internally. The user perspective of D Waddington actually refers to the chemistry laboratories, a separate building altogether where standards were lowered to save money. There are many positive accounts of the CLASP-built colleges in contemporary reports. For instance, the same 1967 journal article contains an account by a student of one of the colleges, Jennifer Barraclough: 'There was one early morning this summer when I realised that the colleges and their surroundings could be beautiful and stimulating as well as admirably functional but somewhat neutral; it was bright and warm, and suddenly the college concrete, the grass, trees, and ducks asleep on the lake blended into a unity of construction'. The findings of a student questionnaire in the same article found that 85 per cent were satisfied with the daylighting, between 61 and 69 per cent found the temperature just right whether in summer or winter, day or night, and 59 per cent found the sound insulation between study bedrooms satisfactory. The latter point regarding sound insulation listed the main causes of dissatisfaction as due to noisy 'party behaviour' and loud radios, which largely relates to inappropriate uses of the building. Meanwhile a revisit by the Architects' Journal in 1972 observed that the CLASP buildings had weathered well and given 'little trouble in the way of maintenance' They added that 'the precast wall panels with exposed Trent River aggregate have retained an even and attractive appearance' (23 Feb 1972, 420). Finally, the fact that the two colleges have continued in use as integral parts of the university for over 50 years clearly indicate that they were fit for purpose.
4. The critical literary references cited in Section 5.0 – 5.30 in the Montagu Evans report have, for the most part, been taken out of context. Derwent College and Langwith College were applauded in the architectural press at the time of their construction and since. The Architects' Journal described the way in which the architects had used the CLASP system for the two colleges to be 'joyously successful' (15 Dec 1965, 1444). Both Tony Birks and Andrew Saint were largely complementary in their critiques of the university architecture. Saint stated that: 'nowhere else did concentrated thought about what a university ought to be like in a modern democracy come so close to finding physical expression' (1987, 214). Birks observed that the colleges were 'grouped with great invention' (1972, 67). His subsequent point regarding variations in the roof line can be disputed; the college roofs vary throughout between one and four storeys high so that the massing and height of the blocks add interest and correspond to each other, Heslington Hall, and the landscape extremely well. Finally, Nikolaus Pevsner described York, with its colleges, as the best of the new universities, a reference retained in the most recently published Buildings of England volume (2005, 464).
5. The two CLASP-built colleges have offered a greater degree of flexibility than is credited in this point or the Montagu Evans report. The former Langwith College has seen the foyer converted into a café and bar and refurbished in about the 2010s, conversion of the dining hall to a lecture and examination hall with retractable seating, the former library to a computer room, part of the main kitchen to an audio-visual centre, and the former squash courts to a performance space. Communal kitchens have been updated with modern fittings, modern decking and pergolas added to the North Courtyard, whilst the entire ground floor of the south residential block and three lower floors of the east residential block have been wholly converted to academic offices. Perhaps most notably, the study bedrooms of the north-west block have had modern ensuite bathrooms inserted; the architect Sir Andrew Derbyshire proclaiming that this refurbishment 'proved that CLASP was up to the job' (transcript of a talk given at the university, 24 Nov 2005). Whilst we acknowledge that the steel structural grid can make reconfiguration more challenging, it is clear that the buildings can, and have, accommodated a relatively high degree of change. We also note that where there is asbestos insulation board, this can make alterations more complex and more expensive to manage but it is clear that changes have been successfully managed in the past. Finally, we note that the asbestos information in Appendix 2 of the Montagu Evans report appears to refer to the use of a building as the campus nursery rather than the colleges (see the final paragraph).

6. Contrary to this assertion, the layout of the two colleges is intricate and extremely well-thought-out, as can be observed by looking at their ground plans. Furthermore, there is a measure of contrast in finishes, material and colour, such as the use of bright vitreous enamel panels under the windows and the blue-brick of the former squash courts building which contrasts with the main cladding of the colleges.

In regard to the final points concerning the former Langwith College, some of these points are covered by the response above and its relative significance is considered in the Discussion section below.

No other responses were received to the consultation.

## DISCUSSION

In order to be listed, the former Langwith College must demonstrate special architectural or historic interest in a national context (Principles of Selection for Listing Buildings, DCMS March 2010). To be of special architectural interest a building must be of importance in its architectural design, decoration or craftsmanship; and to be of special historic interest a building must illustrate important aspects of the nation's social, economic, cultural, or military history. After 1840, because of the greatly increased number of buildings erected and the much larger numbers that have survived, progressively greater selection is necessary for listing; and particularly careful selection is required when assessing buildings constructed after 1945.

The Historic England Selection Guide for Education Buildings (Dec 2017) provides a historical overview and specific considerations for the assessment of university buildings for listing. It states that those dating from after 1945 include some of the most exciting buildings of their day and that some have international importance. Architectural interest will be determined sometimes by questions of successful functionality, as well as consideration of design quality. The piecemeal approach that typified campus design up until the 1960s was then often replaced by greater coherence which can justify a holistic approach to designation of the heritage assets on site, perhaps including registration of the landscape.

The University of York was one of seven new universities founded in England between 1958 and 1961 (Sussex, York, East Anglia, Essex, Kent, Warwick and Lancaster). These universities provided the opportunity to experiment with new curricula and teaching methods, and to break new ground in architectural design and planning; each effectively being built on the scale of a new town. In terms of ambition and architectural quality, the seven universities mark the high point of publicly-funded architecture in post-war Britain.

York has been described as a university 'more deeply pondered and clearly conceived than any of its potential rivals' (Saint 1987, 217). The exceptionally-detailed development plan behind it was heralded as the beginning of contemporary university planning in Britain. At its simplest, the aim was to provide for the social and psychological well-being of the students by generating a sense of community. This was embodied at both Derwent and the Langwith Colleges by innovatively combining teaching and social facilities as well as residential accommodation in a single college. The plan enabled each college to instantly function as a university, whilst making it easy to expand year on year by adding further colleges on the same principles.

The former Langwith College was built as part of the first phase of new buildings for the university in 1963-1965 to the design of the architects Robert Matthew and Johnson-Marshall and Partners (RMJM), with Stiratt Johnson-Marshall and Andrew Derbyshire as the partners in charge. Sir Stiratt Johnson-Marshall was one of the most important and respected architects to emerge in the immediate aftermath of the Second World War. He pioneered the CLASP (Consortium of Local Authorities Special Programme) prefabricated system for schools and designed the Commonwealth Institute (Grade II\*-listed). Sir Andrew Derbyshire is known for designing the neo-vernacular Hillingdon Civic Centre, London, (Grade II-listed) but his - and Johnson-Marshall's - best work is considered to be the University of York. Here they developed an extremely close and successful collaboration with the university. RMJM was the only architectural practice to design four universities in Britain: York, Bath, Stirling, and the University of Ulster at Coleraine.

Both Langwith and Derwent colleges were the first university buildings to be erected using the CLASP system, which had never been used on this scale before. It seemed to fulfil the ideal of an economical, flexible system of building that was as efficient as building a car or airplane; the modernists' ideal since Le Corbusier first wrote of it in *Vers Une Architecture* in 1923. More widely, CLASP was deemed as the means of producing a good quality, standardised welfare state architecture, which could be rapidly constructed and rolled out to serve all those that needed it. At York, it ensured the university was built both to cost and time; a major problem at other new universities. Aesthetically, the CLASP system is neutral and egalitarian but serves to ensure that the lake and designed landscape at York form the central focus of the university. The relationship of massing and height of the colleges to each other, Heslington Hall, and the landscape, as well as their layout, are exceptionally well-thought-out. The seven sculptural relief panels by the artist Fred Millett

add flourish to the main pedestrian walkway. The overall result was deemed an immediate success in the architectural press, and has continued to be well-regarded; York was described by Nikolaus Pevsner as both visually and structurally the best of the new universities, several of which are listed (including buildings at Sussex, UEA and Warwick).

On the whole, the former Langwith College still demonstrates a relatively high degree of survival externally. Regrettably, some of the windows have been replaced but these match the original glazing pattern. Whilst it has undergone some renovations internally, the extent of the original fixtures and fittings were rather limited (eg the only built-in items in the study bedrooms were heater and washer units and wardrobes) and the college still retains many original staircases, parquet and linoleum floors, flush timber doors and glazed softwood doors, partitions and ceilings.

The former Langwith College holds group value with the Grade II\*-listed Heslington Hall, as well as the covered walkway to the west of the college, Derwent College, Central Hall, two sculptures by Austin Wright ('Dryad' and 'Untitled'), and the designed landscape, which are all separately recommended for designation at Grade II.

In view of the above, the former Langwith College, is considered to hold special architectural and historic interest in a national context and therefore merit listing.

The covered walkways extending east of the college to the footbridge over University Road and to the south-east to Derwent College form an important part of the original design scheme and are included in the listing. The building housing the former squash courts, now a performance studio, is built of blue brick to offer contrast to the CLASP buildings; it survives well and is included in the listing. However, the nearby music room has been heavily altered with replacement windows, doors and roofs, as well as the construction of an adjacent telephone exchange block in 1992, and is not of special interest and therefore excluded from the listing.

In recommending the extent of designation, we have considered whether powers of exclusion under s1 (5A) of the 1990 act are appropriate, and consider that they are with regard to the music room, the telephone exchange block, as well as the steel roof rails, air conditioning units, the automatic doors, the steel handrails, pergola, and the modern timber decking to the north courtyard of the former Langwith College. Internally, the powers of exclusion are appropriate with regard to the fixtures and fittings within the study bedrooms and flats, communal kitchens, laundry rooms, showers and bathrooms, computer rooms, seminar room and offices, as well as those within the kitchen and audio-visual centre. The café and bar within the former foyer and the hall were refurbished in the 2010s and the powers of exclusion are also appropriate to these later fixtures and fittings, in addition to the disabled lifts.

## CONCLUSION

After examining all the available records and other relevant information, and having carefully considered the architectural and historic interest of this case, the criteria for listing are fulfilled. It is therefore recommended to list the former Langwith College at Grade II.

## REASONS FOR DESIGNATION DECISION

The former Langwith College, built at the University of York in 1963-1965 to the design of the architects Robert Matthew and Johnson-Marshall and Partners (RMJM), is recommended for listing at Grade II for the following principal reasons:

### Historic interest:

- \* as one of a wave of new universities that improved access to higher education and marked the highpoint of publicly-funded architecture in post-war Britain;
- \* as a physical manifestation of the University of York Development Plan, which was heralded as the beginning of contemporary university planning in Britain.

### Architectural interest:

- \* the University of York is arguably the greatest work of the influential architects Sir Stiratt Johnson-Marshall and Sir Andrew Derbyshire of RMJM, the only practice to design four universities in Britain;
- \* for the innovative combination of teaching and social facilities as well as residential accommodation in a single college, enabling it to instantly function as a university and allow for expansion by adding further colleges on the same principles;

- \* Langwith and Derwent colleges were the first university buildings to be erected using the CLASP prefabricated system, a model for a rapidly-built, economical and standardised form of welfare state architecture, which had never been used on this scale before;
- \* the relationship of massing and height of Langwith college to its neighbour in Derwent, to Heslington Hall, and the landscape, as well as its layout, is exceptionally well-thought-out;
- \* for the seven sculptural relief panels by the artist Fred Millett, which add flourish to the main pedestrian walkway.

Group value:

- \* with the Grade II\*-listed Heslington Hall, as well as the covered walkway to the west of the college, Derwent College, Central Hall, two sculptures by Austin Wright ('Dryad' and 'Untitled'), and the designed landscape, which are all separately recommended for designation at Grade II.

### **Countersigning comments:**

Agreed. Langwith College, with its sister college in Derwent, was the first university college to be constructed using the CLASP system, allowing an integrated teaching and living facility to be economically and effectively designed while creating a building of some quality. Langwith is similar in conception to Derwent but also has its own characteristics. The survival of the original and distinctive pyramidal rooflights to the former dining room, and the exterior coloured vitreous enamel panels for example. The plan is well-conceived, as is the massing of the blocks relative to each other, to the neighbouring college and to the designed landscape, with the building decorated and enhanced by striking murals by Fred Millet: the covered walkway alongside the former dining room being particularly noteworthy. Langwith fully merits listing at Grade II, not only for its intrinsic interest but as an important physical manifestation of the University's 1960s masterplan with its new approach to socially cohesive higher education colleges.

V Fiorato, 13 July 2018

**Annex 1****List Entry****List Entry Summary**

This building is listed under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as amended for its special architectural or historic interest.

**Name:** Former Langwith College, University of York

**List Entry Number:** 1457043

**Location**

University Of York, Heslington, York, YO10 5DD

The building may lie within the boundary of more than one authority.

County	District	District Type	Parish
	York	Unitary Authority	Heslington

**National Park:** Not applicable to this List entry.

**Grade:** II

**Date first listed:**

**Date of most recent amendment:**

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**Legacy System Information**

This section only relates to older records, created before the introduction of the National Heritage List for England in 2011.

**Legacy System:** Not applicable to this List entry.

**Legacy Number:** Not applicable to this List entry.

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**Asset Groupings**

This List entry does not comprise part of an Asset Grouping. Asset Groupings are not part of the official record but are added later for information.

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**List Entry Description****Summary of Building**

University college. Built in 1963-1965 to the design of the architects Robert Matthew, Johnson-Marshall and Partners (RMJM), with Stiratt Johnson-Marshall and Andrew Derbyshire as the partners in charge, in association with the CLASP Development Team. The cast relief artist was Fred Millett. The structural engineers were Scott and Wilson, Kirkpatrick and Partners, and the contractor was F Shepherd and Son.

**Reasons for Designation**

The former Langwith College, built at the University of York in 1963-1965 to the design of the architects Robert Matthew and Johnson-Marshall and Partners (RMJM), is listed at Grade II for the following principal reasons:

Historic interest:

- \* as one of a wave of new universities that improved access to higher education and marked the highpoint of publicly-funded architecture in post-war Britain;
- \* as a physical manifestation of the University of York Development Plan, which was heralded as the beginning of contemporary university planning in Britain.

Architectural interest:

- \* the University of York is arguably the greatest work of the influential architects Sir Stiratt Johnson-Marshall and Sir Andrew Derbyshire of RMJM, the only practice to design four universities in Britain;
- \* for the innovative combination of teaching and social facilities as well as residential accommodation in a single college, enabling it to instantly function as a university and allow for expansion by adding further colleges on the same principles;
- \* Langwith and Derwent colleges were the first university buildings to be erected using the CLASP prefabricated system, a model for a rapidly-built, economical and standardised form of welfare state architecture, which had never been used on this scale before;
- \* the relationship of massing and height of Langwith college to its neighbour in Derwent, to Heslington Hall, and the landscape, as well as its layout, is exceptionally well-thought-out;
- \* for the seven sculptural relief panels by the artist Fred Millett, which add flourish to the main pedestrian walkway.

Group value:

- \* with the Grade II\*-listed Heslington Hall, as well as the covered walkway to the west of the college, Derwent College, Central Hall, two sculptures by Austin Wright ('Dryad' and 'Untitled'), and the designed landscape, which are all separately listed at Grade II.

## History

After several previous attempts at establishing a university in York had failed, in 1953 York Civic Trust and the Rowntree Trust launched the Institute of Archives and the Institute of Advanced Architectural Studies (IAAS), which became key components of the York Academic Trust founded in 1958 in King's Manor in the city centre. The administrator appointed to run both courses was John West-Taylor, who saw them as a stepping stone to the founding of a new university.

In April 1959 the University Grants Committee (UGC) set up a Sub-Committee on New Universities and invited applications from cities or groups of authorities wanting to promote new universities. York's application was approved in April 1960, along with that of Norwich, with further approvals in the following year. The seven new universities in England (Sussex, York, East Anglia, Essex, Kent, Warwick and Lancaster) differed from older institutions in that they were full universities setting their own degrees and supported by the UGC from the outset. All appointed well-respected architects to prepare detailed masterplans and to design the most important buildings, giving each a sense of unity and a distinctive identity.

In York the C16 Heslington Hall about 1.5 miles south-east of the city centre, which had been secured in 1958 by local benefactor John Bowes Morrell, was chosen as the site for the university. Robert Matthew, Johnson-Marshall and Partners (RMJM) were appointed in 1961-1962 as masterplanners with Stirrat Johnson-Marshall and Andrew Derbyshire as partners in charge, working alongside the Vice-Chancellor Lord (Eric) James of Rusholme, West-Taylor and incoming professors to produce a detailed development plan. The hall was adapted as the administrative centre of the university in the first phase of building work in 1963-1965. More grounds were then acquired to the west and it was agreed on the need for a lake as a balancing reservoir to lower the dangerously high water table on the site. A younger RMJM partner, Maurice Lee, specialised in landscape design, which he produced here in conjunction with Herbert Francis (Frank) Clark, previously landscape architect to the Festival of Britain and a co-founder of the Garden History Society.

All the new universities experimented with new course structures, particularly in the growth area of social sciences, and this shaped the movement seen at Sussex, UEA and Essex towards pushing the teaching buildings together as megastructures. By contrast, York's course structure was relatively traditional and collegiate, but enabled daytime teaching facilities and residential accommodation to be combined together so

that they could share catering, common rooms and bars, encouraging a 24/7 atmosphere and maximising their usage and the available UGC grant. Buildings were to be of no more than four storeys so that the landscape remained dominant and the overall sense of place palpable.

The masterplan included groups of loose-knit college ranges, with the science laboratories behind them and landmark buildings, such as the library and Central Hall, set within a careful pattern of circulation. The university was built in phases that progressed westwards from Heslington Hall, with development becoming more piecemeal as funding became more restricted.

A shortage of building labour, expensive materials, and waterlogged ground required a lightweight construction solution in order to avoid expensive piling. In 1946-1947 Johnson-Marshall had devised a prefabricated system using steel frames and concrete panels used by Hertfordshire County Council for building schools, a critically acclaimed programme from which six surviving examples are listed. Its ideals informed the CLASP (Consortium of Local Authorities Special Programme) system developed by Nottinghamshire County Council in 1954-1956. CLASP was designed as a lightweight and flexible structure that could 'ride' the mining of coal seams below them; the first CLASP building, Intake Farm School, Mansfield (Grade II) of 1955-1957 was called the 'rock and roll school'. When York was designed CLASP was at the peak of its success and it was used for fire stations, health centres, libraries and offices. It is used in the design of many of the university's buildings at York.

RMJM was the only architectural practice to design four universities: York, Bath, Stirling, and the University of Ulster at Coleraine, and it specialised in public sector work throughout the 1960s. It began to work outside Britain in the late 1960s and today is a massive international practice with offices in the Middle East, Asia, Africa and the Americas, as well as Europe.

The former Langwith College was built in December 1963 to July 1965 as part of the first phase of new buildings of the University of York Development Plan, which also included Derwent College and the chemistry department. The exceptionally-detailed development plan was heralded as the beginning of contemporary university planning in Britain (Dober 1966, 48). At its simplest, the aim was to provide for the social and psychological well-being of the students by generating a sense of community. This was embodied at Langwith by combining teaching and social facilities as well as residential accommodation in a single college for 400 people, including 300 undergraduates, of whom about 200 were provided with study bedrooms. The plan enabled the college to instantly function as a university, whilst making it easy to expand year on year by adding further colleges on the same principles. Integral to it was the use of the CLASP system. In the early 1960s it seemed to fulfil the ideal of an economical, flexible system of building that was as efficient as building a car or airplane; the modernists' ideal since Le Corbusier first wrote of it in *Vers Une Architecture* in 1923. More widely, it was deemed as the means of producing a good quality, standardised welfare state architecture without frills or pretences, which could be rapidly constructed and rolled out to serve all those that needed it. CLASP went through several versions, with Marks 1 and 2 being the prototypes. A lighter frame was introduced in 1961 but was then quickly modified with better windows as Mark 3B, adopted at Langwith and Derwent Colleges. The university architects worked in association with the CLASP Development Team co-ordinated by the architect David Parkes during the design and building work. The system ensured the buildings were built both to cost and time; a major problem at other new universities. A distinctive oriel window and pyramidal roof lights were developed specifically for the university, and a grey Trent River Gravel exposed aggregate finish was chosen. Additional flourishes were given by the use of sculptural reliefs designed by the artist Fred Millett. The overall result was deemed a success in the architectural press, though limited insulation from sound caused some subsequent issues in the light structures.

The former Langwith College continues in use in 2018, although it has been combined with Derwent College into a single college under that name. Several of the former study bedrooms are now in use as offices, the foyer has been converted into a café and bar, the kitchen partly into an audio-visual centre, along with some other changes in use (see below).

## Details

University college. Built in 1963-1965 to the design of the architects Robert Matthew, Johnson-Marshall and Partners (RMJM), with Stiratt Johnson-Marshall and Andrew Derbyshire as the partners in charge, in association with the CLASP Development Team. The cast relief artist was Fred Millett. The structural engineers were Scott and Wilson, Kirkpatrick and Partners, and the contractor was F Shepherd and Son.

**MATERIALS:** the construction is a variant of the CLASP Mark 3B system developed by Nottinghamshire County Council for schools and other local authority buildings. It comprises a cold-rolled steel frame clad in

pre-cast concrete panels with a Trent River Gravel exposed aggregate finish, softwood-framed windows with aluminium opening lights including projecting oriels, and flat felt-covered roofs.

**PLAN:** the college is situated to the north-west of the contemporary Derwent College and overlooks an artificial lake to the south. It is orientated east to west. A pedestrian walkway forms the main spine, running the full length of the building. There are three open courtyards attached to the south and one attached to the west end of the north side of the walkway; the former are open to the south so as not to inhibit views out towards the lake. The communal and teaching accommodation is concentrated in a one and two-storey central nucleus whilst three and four-storey residential wings are positioned at the extremities of the college. A former foyer (now café bar) and hall form the centre of the service and teaching core with a single-storey kitchen block adjoined to the north, a lecture room and seminar room at the east, and further lecture rooms and a former library attached in two blocks to the south of the walkway. The four residential wings are located at the north-west, west, south and east ends of the college; these are long, narrow wings containing study bedrooms and associated amenities.

**EXTERIOR:** an asymmetrical composition comprising a one and two-storey central nucleus and four residential wings of three and four-storeys. The treatment of the elevations is similar throughout. The exterior walls are formed of precast concrete panels with a Trent River Gravel exposed aggregate finish attached to steel box stanchions and beams supporting wooden floors internally. A slight variation in texture and projection of the concrete panels differentiates the horizontal floor bands from the vertically set room height panels. There are dry joints between the panels, which have angled drainage channels at their edges, and are set upon a moulded precast concrete plinth. The fenestration to the residential blocks includes a mixture of narrow, half-width windows, and wider, full-width windows, occupying the place of a full precast panel, with a central sliding aluminium light between top and bottom transoms. These are also combined into larger, one-and-a-half width windows with an off centre mullion, or double-width windows; most divided by transoms to conform to the tripartite glazing pattern. Colour is provided by white, blue and green vitreous enamel panels occupying the positions of the lower subsidiary lights in several of these windows. Further variety is provided by projecting full-width oriel windows. There are flush timber doors and softwood glazed doors providing entry into the blocks at ground level. The main entrances along the walkway have had steel-framed glazed automatic doors fitted in around 1990 and renewed in about 2014, which are not of special interest.

The elevations towards the lake and south courtyards are partly raised over ground-floor pilotis whilst the other elevations are flush to the ground floor. The former library and part of the walkway are treated with wider expanses of glazing, whilst a narrow band of lights forms a clerestory to the kitchen and to the west elevation of the southernmost teaching block. At the north of the kitchen is an entrance raised on pilotis to provide service access for deliveries. On the ground floor, generally in close proximity to the main walkway running through the college, are seven sculptural relief panels in cast concrete by Fred Millett. These comprise abstract shapes forming a variety of textures and patterns, which are enlivened by artificial light at night. They have the dual purpose of hiding the steel wind braces that support the structural frame. The blocks have flat felt-covered roofs with an extruded aluminium eaves capping. Maintenance and emergency access is provided by square timber-boarded roof porches. The original eight sharply-pointed pyramidal rooflights, comprising a combination of faceted solid panels and glazing, survive over the former dining hall. Elsewhere there are shallow-pitched roof lights. Protective steel rails have been added around the perimeter of some of the roofs, which are not of special interest.

The covered walkways linking the blocks are constructed of pilotis with precast concrete panels forming a fascia to the flat felt-covered roofs; these are built on the CLASP system. However, where they extend beyond the college to meet the neighbouring buildings the walkways are non-CLASP, comprising steel columns supporting I-beams and timber joists carrying a timber-boarded roof with timber fascias and a felt roof covering. These were designed by the main architects in conjunction with the architect Dick Howard. They incorporate a central overhead services duct constructed of timber, which carries electrical wiring, television and telephone cables between the buildings. The covered walkways extending east of the college to the footbridge over University Road and to the south-east to Derwent College are included in the listing. The main pedestrian route is paved in concrete slabs, which continue through the blocks underneath the recently-added tiled carpets. There is hard landscaping in the form of cobbled areas and dark blue brick paving, as well as tiered terraces constructed of concrete slabs to the open courtyard at the centre of the south side of the college, which are included in the listing. A timber pergola and decking, and steel handrails, were installed in the north courtyard in around the 2010s and are not of special interest.

A building housing the former squash courts, now a performance studio, is situated to the east of the college. It is square in plan and constructed of a reinforced concrete frame, externally-articulated, within which are blue brick walls. A narrow clerestory formed of ribbon windows and a white eaves cornice is set beneath a pyramid roof covered in aluminium.

INTERIOR: the college has retained much of its original internal layout and floor plan with some changes in use. The west entrance leads along the main pedestrian walkway, briefly through the west residential block and then passing externally between a north and a south courtyard before reaching the former foyer and hall. The north courtyard contains modern timber decking and pergolas. The foyer has been converted into a café and bar, which was refurbished in about the 2010s; these later fixtures and fittings are not of special interest. Above the bar is a suite of offices, the former senior common room (now a meeting room) and former junior common room (now in general use). The hall was formerly a dining hall but is now in use as a lecture and examination hall. There is an original parquet floor and a ceiling with distinctive pyramidal roof lights (currently covered) surviving within it. South of the former foyer is a teaching block, containing lecture rooms and offices on three storeys, and beyond it is the south residential block. North of the former foyer is the kitchen, part of which has been converted to use as an audio-visual centre. The pedestrian walkway has a gallery over it at the centre of the college. From the former foyer it continues externally, past another courtyard opposite the hall, and then internally between the former library block at the south and a lecture room and seminar room at the north. The former library is on two storeys, now containing computer rooms. On the floor above the lecture room and seminar room at the north are academic offices. The walkway continues from this point, passing a third courtyard at the south and then briefly through the east residential block, before proceeding externally as a covered way towards Derwent College. The four residential blocks of the college, at the north-west, west, south and east (now referred to as Blocks 'J', 'K', 'M' and 'P'), largely contain study bedrooms grouped off staircases on each floor, including one and two person bedrooms and flats. The original heater and washer units and wardrobes, the only built-in items, have largely been removed and the fixtures and fittings within these rooms are not of special interest. The groupings share communal kitchens, largely containing modern fittings, as well as laundry rooms, showers and bathrooms. However, the ground floor of the south block ('K') and the three lower floors of the east block ('J') have been wholly converted to use as academic offices. The bedrooms of the north-west block ('P') have had modern en-suite bathrooms inserted, which are not of special interest. The former squash courts building, now a performance studio, has a viewing gallery on the east side but otherwise forms a single open space; a partition between the two courts having been removed.

Among the surviving original fixtures and fittings to the college are: linoleum floors, flush timber doors and glazed softwood doors, plasterboard or plastic-faced plywood partitions, softwood glazed screens and plasterboard or timber suspended ceilings. The internal staircases have precast concrete stair treads and landing units fixed to steel stringers and landing beams, raking steel balustrades and timber handrails. Some retain the original rubber treads to the stairs and landings.

Pursuant to s1 (5A) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 ('the Act') it is declared that the following are not of special architectural or historic interest: the music room, the telephone exchange block, as well as the steel roof rails, air conditioning units, the automatic doors, the steel handrails, pergola and modern timber decking to the north courtyard of the former Langwith College. Internally, the fixtures and fittings within the study bedrooms and flats, communal kitchens, laundry rooms, showers and bathrooms, computer rooms, seminar room and offices, as well as those within the kitchen and audio-visual centre are not of special interest. The café and bar within the former foyer and the hall were refurbished in the 2010s and these later fixtures and fittings, in addition to the disabled lifts, are also not of special interest.

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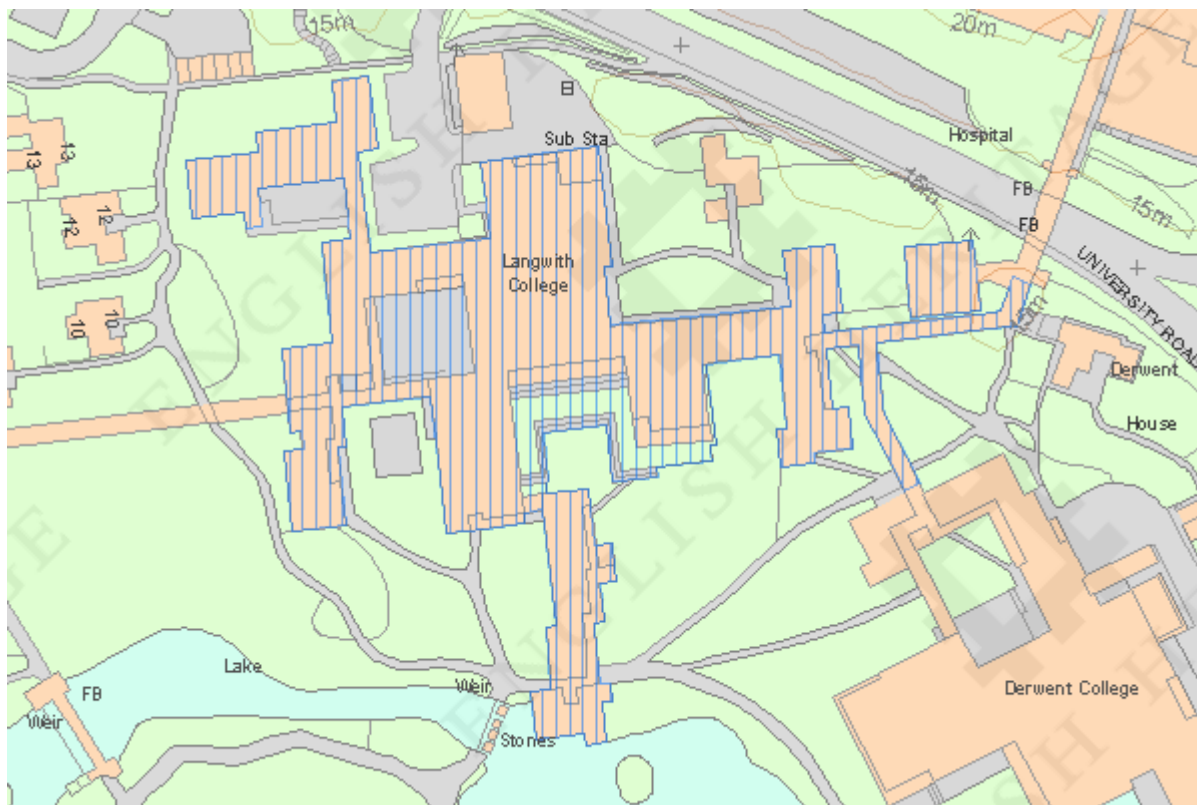
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**Map****National Grid Reference:** SE6248050491

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