

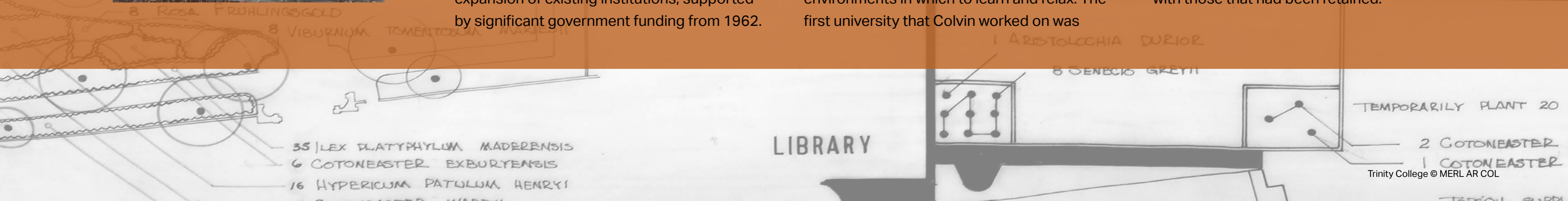
Universities



The end of the Second World War saw an expansion of universities in the UK, building upon the creation of 'redbrick' universities at the beginning of the twentieth century. Deriving from the 1944 Butler Education Act and the 1946 Barlow Report, the extension of university education became Government policy. Higher education grew significantly in the 1960s, and new institutions were created parallel to the expansion of existing institutions, supported by significant government funding from 1962.

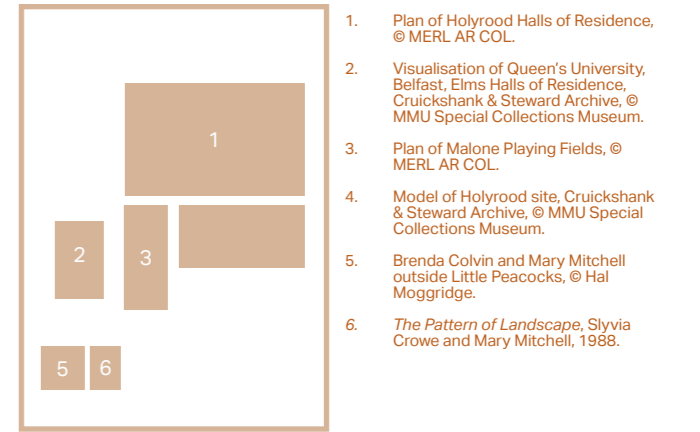
Colvin worked directly on four campuses, including Trinity College, Oxford, Queen's University, Belfast, Aberystwyth University - all of which were pre-war universities - and the University of East Anglia in Norwich which was one of the new generation of post-war 'plate-glass' universities. In each incidence and at varying scales, Colvin created gardens and landscapes that provided delightful environments in which to learn and relax. The first university that Colvin worked on was

Trinity College, Oxford, with a focus on the area around the chapel and the president's house and taking in buildings and gardens that were up to 400-years-old and which had evolved from a monastic grove to a formal garden in the 18th century. The first stage of Colvin's proposals focussed upon the removal of old and failing trees and their replacement with complementary species which would integrate with those that had been retained.



Landscapes for Learning

QUEENS UNIVERSITY, BELFAST

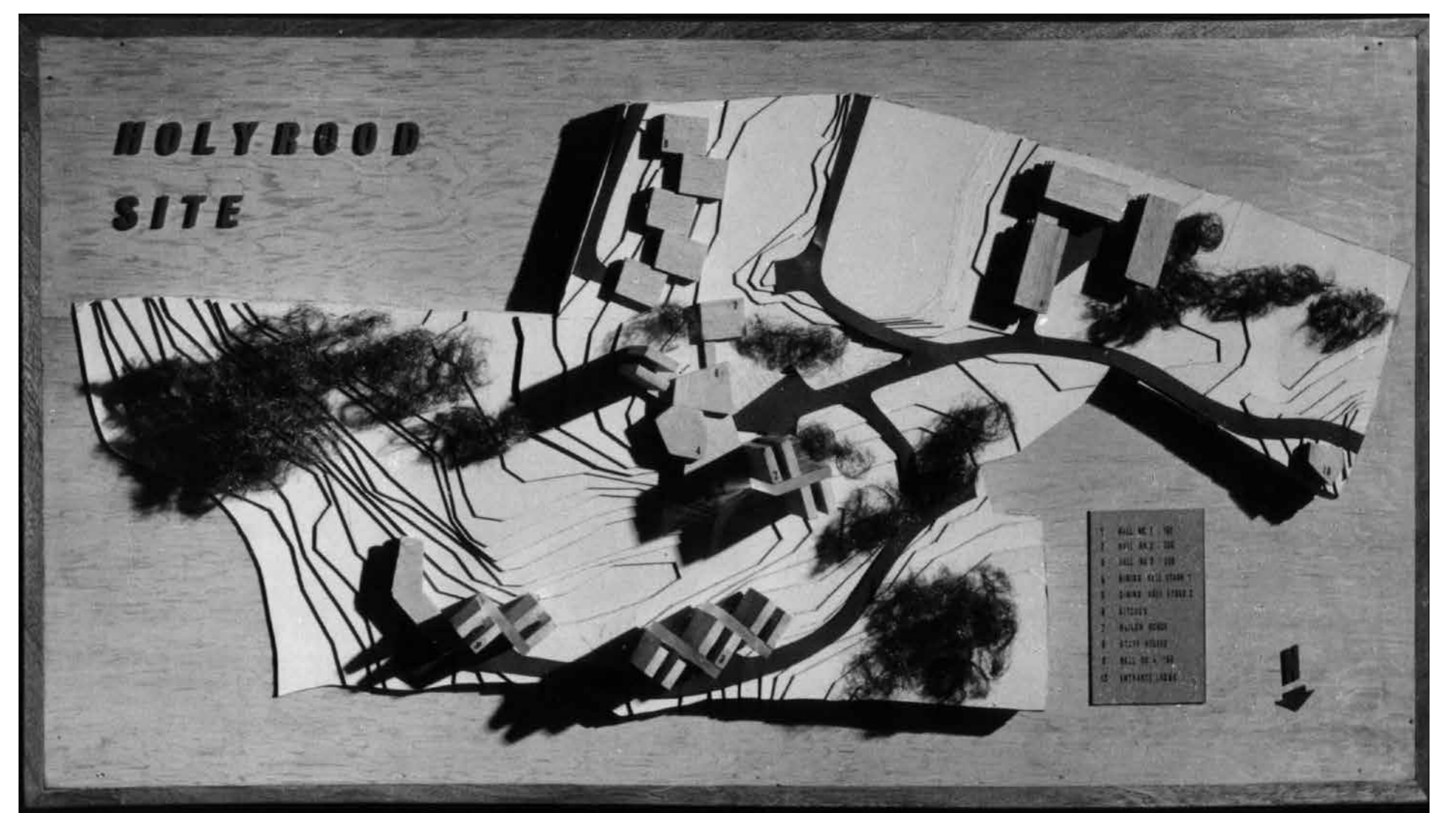
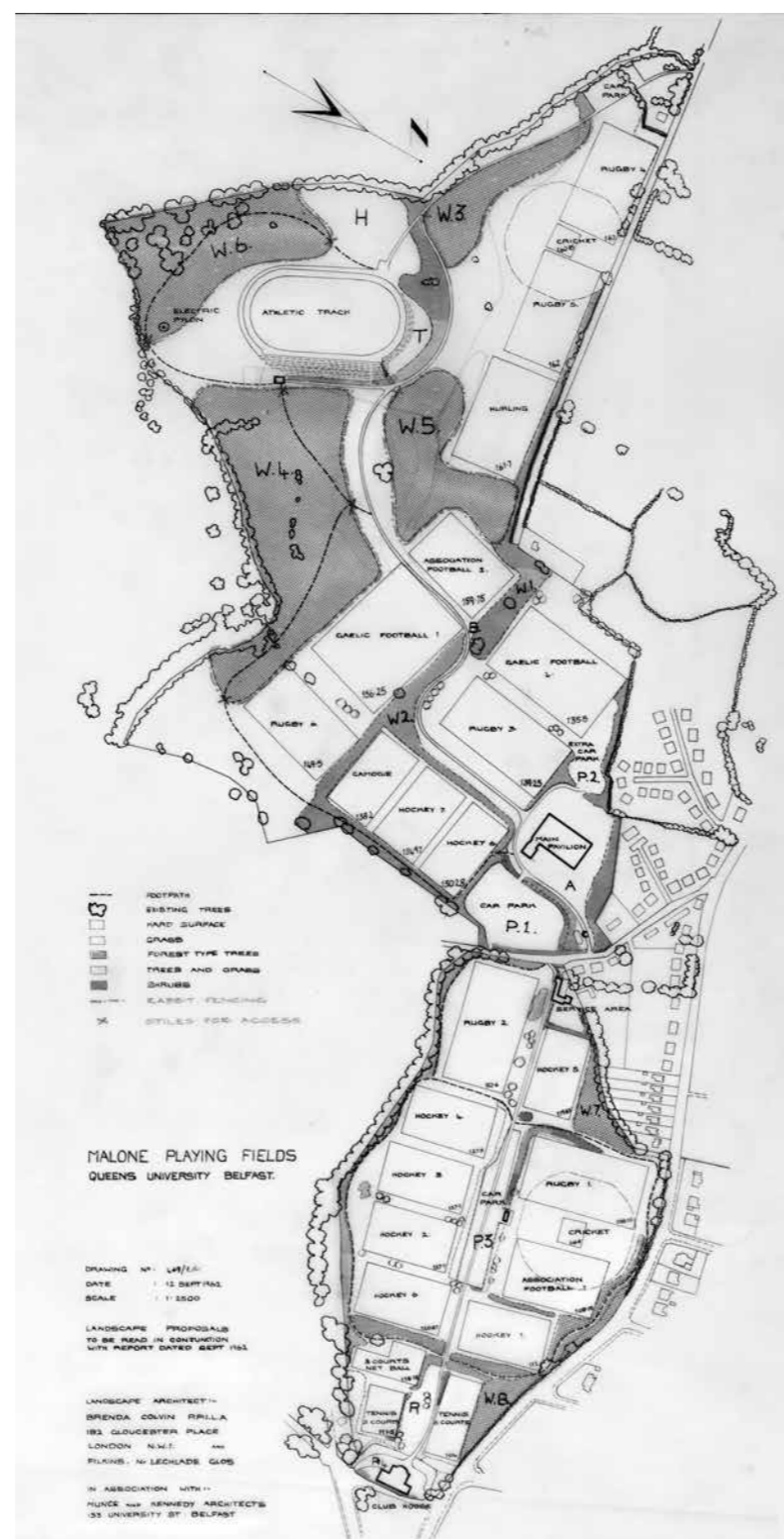
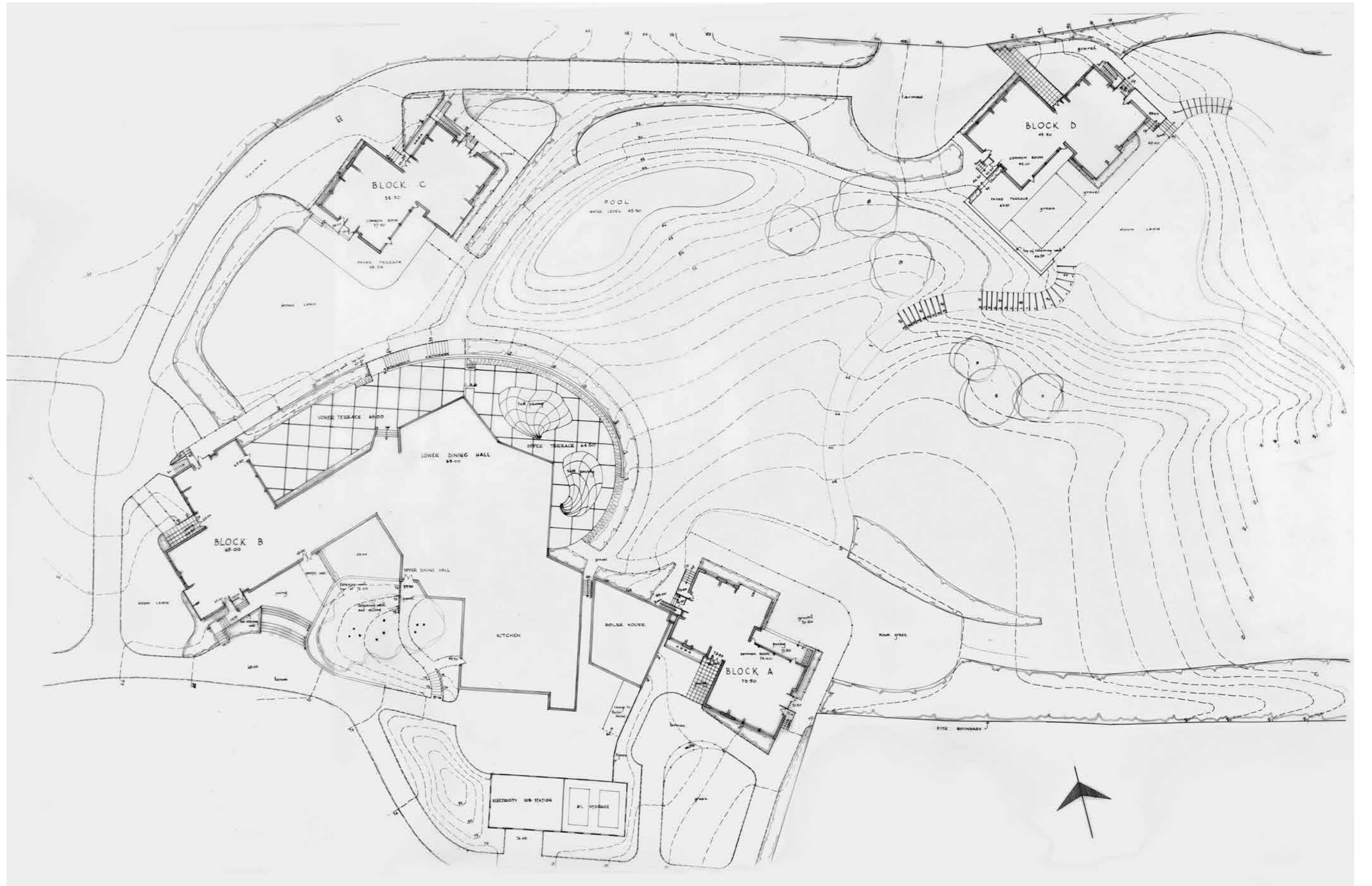


1. Plan of Holyrood Halls of Residence, © MERL, AR COL.
2. Visualisation of Queen's University Belfast, Elms Halls of Residence, Cruickshank & Seward Archive, © MMU Special Collections Museum.
3. Plan of Malone Playing Fields, © MERL, AR COL.
4. Model of Holyrood site, Cruickshank & Seward Archive, © MMU Special Collections Museum.
5. Brenda Colvin and Mary Mitchell outside Little Peascogs, © Har Mogginjigs.
6. The Pattern of Landscape Sylvia Crowe and Mary Mitchell, 1966.

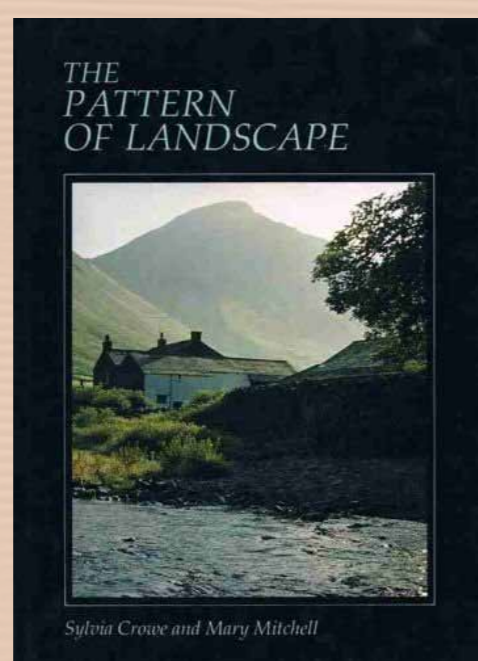
Queen's University, Belfast, engaged Colvin as landscape architect after appointing the architects Cruickshank and Seward to design new halls of residence on their campus. It was one of the collaborations which Colvin felt epitomised the benefits of landscape architects and architects working together from the outset with the resulting plans allowing the new tower blocks to blend into their surroundings rather than dominate them.

As with many of her schemes, Colvin's proposals deployed a sophisticated manipulation of landform along with the strategic retention of existing trees to ensure that the buildings sat happily in the landscape. Alongside the landscape proposals for the Holyrood Queen's Elms halls of residence, Colvin also produced schemes for sport, recreation and woodland creation as part of her Malone Playing Fields project in collaboration with the project's architects, Munce and Kennedy.

Colvin's exacting 1962 planting plan for the site included specification for the dead and diseased trees that needed removing, a sophisticated palette of tree and shrub species for different areas of the site, and ease of movement throughout the playing fields. This sensitivity may well have been informed by the proximity to the Lagan River and anticipating the creation of the Lagan Valley Regional Park in 1967. In 1965 Colvin was presented with a Class I Civic Trust Awards for the Queen's University Playing Field.



MARY MITCHELL



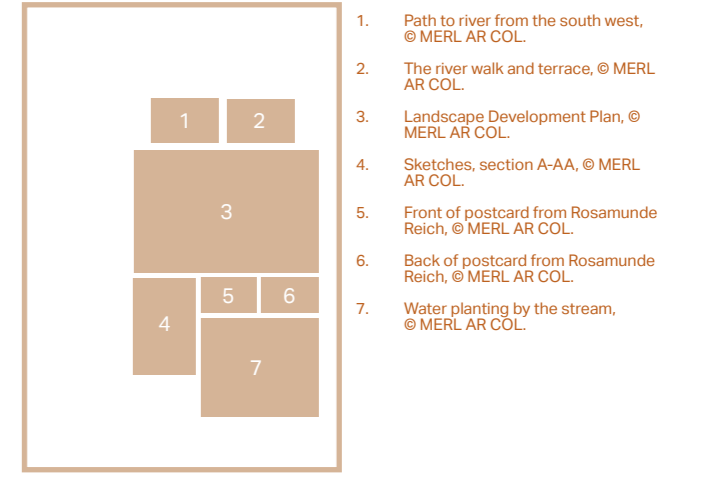
As a landscape architect setting up Birmingham City Council's landscape architecture team, Mary Mitchell (1923-1988) led the creation of a landscape plan for the University of Birmingham's newly acquired Edgbaston Vale site between 1959-60. Mitchell's plan entailed significant landform manipulation, the retention of existing trees, and the sympathetic treatment of 19th century villa gardens and the modern halls of residence that influenced later campus designs, including the University of East Anglia. Mitchell had been born in

Wiltshire, and during the Second World War had joined the Women's Land Army from where she had gone on to a varied and intensive horticultural training that took her from RHS Wisley to the Royal Botanic Gardens in Edinburgh. Following the end of the war, Mitchell took up a diploma in landscape design at the School of Planning in London, from which she went on to work in Richard Sudell's office until the opportunity to work as a garden designer in South Africa presented itself and she moved to the southern hemisphere. Upon

returning to Britain in 1950, Mitchell found further work as a garden designer whilst pursuing her accreditation as a landscape architect. She is best known for her innovative work on playgrounds, collaboration with Lady Allen of Hurtwood on various playgrounds-related projects, and being ardent supporter of IFLA. Mitchell also designed a number of housing, reclamation, hospital and crematory schemes and she co-authored Sylvia Crowe's last book, *The Pattern of Landscape*.

An Ecological Campus

UNIVERSITY OF EAST ANGLIA



1. Path to river from the south west. © MERL AR COL.
2. The river walk and terrace. © MERL AR COL.
3. Landscape Development Plan. © MERL AR COL.
4. Sketches, section A-A. © MERL AR COL.
5. Front of postcard from Rosamunde Reich. © MERL AR COL.
6. Back of postcard from Rosamunde Reich. © MERL AR COL.
7. Water planting by the stream. © MERL AR COL.

The University of East Anglia (UEA), founded in 1961 and opened in 1963, was one of the new generation of universities created by Royal Charter to meet the rising demand for further education. The architect of the Royal National Theatre, Sir Denys Lasdun, was engaged to design the campus which was situated to the West of Norwich on land that took in a former golf course in the Yare valley. Both Lasdun and the university's vice-chancellor Frank Thistlethwaite recognised that the landscape was an integral part of the campus and would provide a stimulating environment for staff and students. The first buildings were completed in 1963 with the distinctive ziggurat structures constructed in 1967.

Brenda Colvin was engaged as landscape architect in 1966 and approached the site with typical attention to detail, surveying the ecology, trees and landscape features of the 272-acre campus. Her first draft plan from January 1970 shows the 'landscape principles' that defined the approach: a minimal palette that worked with the open valley with its marsh vegetation, grass and water; the importance of the skyline in the low but gently undulating landscape; and structural woodland that enhanced the campus and maintained significant site lines within the site.

A priority in Colvin's landscape report from December 1967 took in the broader context of the site, identifying the qualities and characteristics of the trees and woodlands both within and beyond the campus. Colvin recognised that the greatest benefit to the new campus would be the enhancement and regeneration of adjacent woodlands, and so pressed the university to work with the city council to this end. The economic productivity of the trees on site was also considered, including the fate of a willow spinney which had previously been proposed as a place for growing wood for cricket bats and which Colvin recognised as having commercial potential if integrated into the landscape plan.

There is some ambiguity as to the scope of Colvin's proposals and their uptake by UEA. One defining landscape feature was the Broad, a body of water formed by the extraction of peat alongside the Yare River and creates visual continuity with other manmade broads in Norfolk. Colvin's plans developed above and beyond Lasdun's initial site proposals, taking in land owned by Norwich City Council and recognising the public access that traversed the site. It is unclear whether The Broad was solely Colvin's idea, but its presence in her 1967 report suggest that at the very least she articulated and advocated a pre-existing idea. Colvin's involvement was gradually reduced, whilst Fielden and Mawson (who had taken on the role of consultant architect to the University in 1969) employed Rosamunde Reich as landscape architect, with Colvin and Moggridge resigning from the project in 1972.

A UEA postcard titled 'University of East Anglia, Norwich – view from the Broad' and sent from Reich to Colvin in 1979 paints a happier picture of the relationship between Colvin and UEA. Reich's message conveyed the news that the Broad had won a Sand and Gravel Association Award and a Times / RICS Commendation, that the biologists and environmental scientists were very happy with it, and that the UEA Fishing Club had the best waters in the area, signing off with the news that 'Six years of excavation happily ended!'

