

Stakeholder communication improvements in the expansion of a university research facility

Project type: Construction

Location: London

RICS/APM stakeholder principles: Communicate; Consult early, and often; Plan it!; Just part of managing risk

Stakeholder terms: stakeholder expectations, communication

Abstract

A case study on an East London research facility developing a new graduate centre

Background

The university operated from a constrained urban site, with both historic and modern departmental buildings. In order to accommodate the footprint of the new graduate centre, the university had little choice but to demolish two existing structures in the heart of their campus and build higher and wider in their place

The issues

Serious risks threatened the viability of this approach – the possibility of ground and nuclear laboratory contamination, a London Underground tube line directly beneath the proposed footprint, complex and unmapped services in the immediate area, and a historic graveyard nearby. The risks also came from within the institution itself, via business critical operations such as scheduled examinations, public events and externally funded research laboratories requiring stable and consistent conditions.

The challenges

The challenges are summarised under ‘The issues’.

The solution

In order to mitigate these risks stakeholder engagement was fundamental throughout the project, with risk workshops used to identify potential hazards and the vulnerability of the project to them. This was then followed up by subsidiary consultations with key stakeholders with knowledge in the areas of risk to be able to establish means to minimise the risk levels during the project. Crucially this strategy was continuous and not merely a snapshot of risks at the time.

The benefits

This approach of thorough and continual stakeholder engagement allowed the institution to be responsive to project changes, systematic and structured. It also allowed stakeholders to become part of the decision making process, and ultimately created value – the gain through intelligent preparation outweighing the pain of the implementation process

The learning points

On potentially hazardous and difficult to manage operations, extensive stakeholder engagement of both general and risk specialised stakeholders allows risk mitigation and an improved decision making process. These benefits, for the final project outcome, and the reduction of delays or risk related incidents is worth the initial effort to conduct the engagement process.

This case study was written by the APM Stakeholder Engagement Focus Group.

- *For more information on the group or stakeholder engagement, [click here](#).*