

## Precincts: Campuses

The term campus was first applied to layouts of universities. The idea of a unified campus in a rural setting away from the realities, and temptations, of everyday life in cities is a peculiarly American ideal but was derived from and has been much copied elsewhere. Since the 1980s, the label ‘campus’ has been extended to cover a variety of types of development other than universities: medical facilities, office complexes and even industrial sites. Although some critics may distinguish between campus design and urban design, the issues addressed are largely the same. Many campuses are small cities. The university campuses that were total urban designs were substantial in number particularly in the years immediately after World War II. Today many are in developing countries. Often, however, the term ‘total’ can only be applied to the first stage of their development.

Many of the first set of post World War II universities were strongly influenced by Modernist design principles (e.g. The Punjab University in Chandigarh, designed by Pierre Jeanerret and B. P. Mathur and the Universidad Central de Venezuela described below). A number of more recent ones (e.g. the Catholic University at Louvain la Neuve in Belgium) have followed New Urbanist ideas, even though they were conceived before the term ‘New Urbanism’ was coined (Figure 7.25). They attempt to integrate town and gown into one settlement. They are generally all-of-a-piece designs. Perhaps the majority of campuses have little urban design thought behind their site designs. Their buildings, often individually well designed are simply located within greenery in a modified English landscape design setting.

The two examples of university campuses included in this chapter are both Modernist in nature but follow different design ideas. The Universidad Central de Venezuela follows Le Corbusian principles; the State University of New York (SUNY) in Albany is more in line with its own architect’s prior work. The former now has world heritage listing. Universities continue to be built around the world especially in developing countries. More attention seems to be given to the architecture of their individual buildings than to their overall site design. This lack of concern for campus design is unfortunate. The university years are influential ones for those people who have the privilege of tertiary education. The environment in which that education takes place can have a lasting impact, for good or ill, on their attitudes towards design quality.

### Major references

- Dober, Richard P. (1992). *Campus Planning*. New York: John Wiley.  
 Turner, Paul V. (1984). *Campus: An American Planning Tradition*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.