“...to encourage the spirit of collaboration... West Cambridge is all about activity and interaction, about creating common outdoor spaces to encourage people to meet and talk rather than scurry away to their own corners.”

Liz Pride, Director of Education, MJP
The University of Cambridge commissioned MJP in 1995 to Masterplan a 66ha site in West Cambridge to accommodate academic departments and independent research organisations, University residences, sports and social facilities.

The Masterplan was devised to be substantially driven by landscape, ecology, wildlife habitat and sustainability as focal points to proposals for buildings on the site.

Social Sustainability
The Masterplan’s proposals provide for the creation of a new part of the city with a lively social and visual character. The emphasis of the plan was to move away from a typical spread-out science park layout. The plan instead creates a coherent framework of routes and places to encourage activity and interaction between the site uses.

The Masterplan was designed to support this vision by:
— Creating a public realm biased towards cyclists and pedestrians
— Proposing two main social centres named the East and West Forums linked together by a 380m long path, canal and lakes
— Integrating mixed use development help to create a lively social environment such as shops, cafes, restaurants and sports facilities.

MJP went on to design 200 apartments and a nursery within the masterplan. The masterplan will be implemented over 25 years and MJP have an ongoing role to advise on implementation and design.

— Proposals for energy generation on the site by integrating photovoltaic cells into the roof, in order to use the solar energy to generate hydrogen to power buses serving the site
— The visual character of the Masterplan is based on precedents set by historic Cambridge. The Masterplan Design Guidelines reflect the form and scale of existing courts, colleges and their gardens to support a sense of community
— We worked closely with an Ecologist to ensure the plan maintained and enhanced wildlife habitat. This included ensuring existing wildlife corridors were maintained and improved, and where possible creating new ones
— Shared car parking is used across the site to emphasise the idea of a community and to discourage the ring fencing of parking and setting up of physical barriers
— An art strategy was developed for the entire site to ensure that art is integrated into the buildings and landscape and artists work collaboratively with architects, engineers and scientists.