



FEATURES

Beyond government funding Massive development on York's horizon as Lapp Report sends university into 21st century



The York University Development Corporation was established over the summer to start the ball rolling on York's plan to develop the Keele St. campus by selectively leasing its land. Last month, Excalibur's David Byrnes interviewed Philip Lapp, the prime mover behind the project.

In the six months since Philip Lapp first presented his report *Physical Planning Requirements at York University* to York's Board of Governors (BOG), work has gone on swiftly, although largely invisibly, towards making York a bigger, different and largely self-financing university through the selective leasing of its land.

After gaining strong support from the administration and some consultation with the university community, the Lapp Report's recommendations are being systematically implemented, and now, with the establishment of the York University Development Corporation (YUDC) over the summer, York is already poised to set up joint arrangements with private sector and government users on the Keele Street Campus.

In light of the sluggish rate of development York has endured since 1972, when a government funding freeze left the Keele campus only half completed (for example planned engineering and medical facilities never materialized), the decision to market land here may seem very sudden. But the idea has been developing for several years.

After hoping for the duration of the '70s that more government funding would become available, the BOG started looking elsewhere for money in the early 1980s—namely to York's large asset of Keele campus land. In 1981 a cooperative housing project that would have been built south of the graduate residences was approved at all levels, until it was finally turned down by the BOG, who decided that it would not be a profitable enough venture. Then in 1982, a comprehensive land study was commissioned to investigate the marketability of several areas of the Keele Campus. In 1983 a new committee of the BOG, the Strategic Planning Committee was formed, and in 1984 through the efforts of this committee Lapp was hired to conduct his study. The university has now committed itself to a program of land development.

As well as the YUDC, which acts as an arm of the administration and is designed to respond quickly to joint development proposals from outside the university, an Advisory Council was also set up in the summer. The Advisory Council is designed as a mechanism that will give the Board of Directors of the YUDC a means of rapid consultation with all the major constituencies that have interests in any campus development. It is also an expression of a fundamental principle behind the YUDC—that any development be based on th-

rough consultation with the "stakeholders" in the community, such as students, staff, and faculty, and not be at odds with the social and academic goals of the University.

High hopes have been placed in the Advisory Council's role in York's self-determination. It is the most widely representative body York has had since its inception, covering almost all stakeholders within the university as well as outside interests.

Composition of the Advisory Council to the YUDC

- 3 Senate reps
- 1 Council of Masters rep
- 2 YUFA reps
- 3 Faculty reps, elected at large
- 2 CUEW reps
- 2 YUSA reps
- 1 Professional and Managerial Group (P&M) rep
- 3 Student reps
- 3 Alumni reps
- 3 reps from the Presidential & Vice-Pres. level of the administration
- 3 Deans
- 3 BOG reps
- 3 reps from Community Groups; one from the North York Department of Economic Development, one elected rep from North York City Council, and one rep from Neighbourhood Organizations.

Lapp, himself a BOG member, believes that the development of the Keele campus will provide many benefits to York, including increased capital assets, greater revenue through rents, and the opportunity to "infill" the present campus, which is now largely barren and especially inhospitable in the winter. Also, by attracting development and people to the campus, it is hoped that a community of a "critical mass" can be achieved, which would attract mass transit facilities, which would enhance the value of the land and in turn make it more profitable to develop the perimeter lands.

In the interview below, conducted on September 19, Lapp discusses the early work of the YUDC and some of the issues the project raises. The first answer below is Lapp's response to an article in the September issue of the Graduate Student's Association newsletter, *York Forum*, which expressed a concern that what Lapp refers to as "synergistic" (mutually beneficial) relationships between the university and private sector users might compromise the integrity of the university.

A. The basic point that we have to come back to is a fundamental point. If the campus is to continue building to meet the original dreams of the inspirers of this university in the first place, there has to be an influx of money, because buildings don't get built for nothing. The money can come from one of the several sources, but usually three. The obvious source is where the money came to build this place in the first place—the government. There's no indication from certainly the past Tory government or even the current government that they're prepared to finish building this campus. If you reckon that the price per square foot of building space is probably at least twice what it was at the time that the university was built, and we're talking about 500,000 unassignable square feet, which is probably closer to 750,000 gross square feet building space that's required to complete the space needs of this campus in its current size—we're talking about well over a billion dollars worth of further

development on this campus. And since there is just no likelihood that that's going to happen, I mean if it happens at York, I can cite probably at least 10 or 12 other campuses which would be wanting similar treatment, maybe not quite as much as York because some of them are further along. But the amount of money that the government would have to find to finish this campus is quite frankly not available. There's just no way that money's going to be made available. And I don't care whether it's the Tories, or the Liberals or the NDP or whoever the hell is running this province, there's just no way that money's going to be found. We can get bits of money, as we did to get the Lumber's building, we got two thirds of that money from government, and there will always be some ratio within reasonable limits which we might get from the government. But I haven't even explored or plumbed the depths of that one yet with the current government. So that's one source of money.

Now this institution this year is celebrating its 25th anniversary. In an institution that young, as universities go, that's almost like you're still being born, and indeed this university is still being born, there's no way we're going to find an alumnus with that kind of money to put in as an endowment to the university, to get the buildings built that way. So, I ask you then, where else are we going to look for funds? I don't know any other place. The third source is to use your assets. The assets of this university consists basically of land—that's a viable asset. And I've used the word brains—land and brains—I don't want to make that sound too facile, perhaps to say it that way but, we have a lot of traction as an institution, not just because of the brains and people, that's a sine qua non of course, but it's also the organization of those people and brains into units that make them attractive to the outside world, and I can generalize without talking about the private or the public sector.

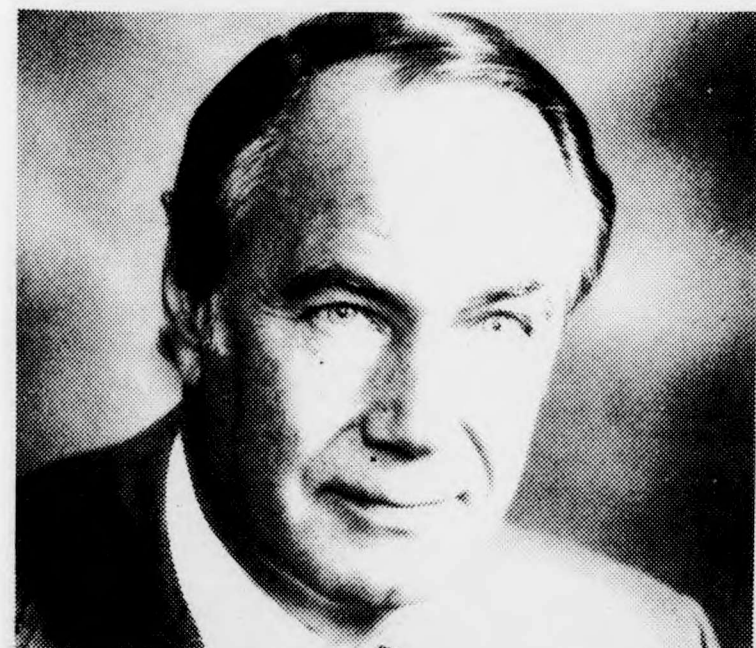
The article I can fault in one area—they think that there is a sole preoccupation with the private sector—this is not true. I'm pursuing as many government and public sector agencies as I am private sector agencies. And indeed agencies that are neither public or private, such as institutional operations which are some kind of a hybrid between public and private. So, we're not just seeing ourselves dancing to the tune of the private sector of industry; we're looking for tenants that would come into the campus that could relate to what's going on in the campus. And to me there's no other way that we'll finish this campus. Now the alternative is to say, well we'll just hope that the government someday comes along with some money, maybe something will happen, this will come about. I can tell you we're going to wait a long time. You know, like well past your grandchildren or my grandchildren before we see anything like that happen. So it seemed to me that that was the *only* way out. It's what other universities have done. There are some universities, of course, that are older than us, they have alumnus who can put money into the university and help to build it that way. In fact we did very well with our York fund, just with our appeal to the local community, including alumnus and people in York. We raised what, 16-million dollars? And that's going some distance, and will go some distance. Some of it's pledges, of course, all the money isn't in our hand. And indeed I would hope that we would continue to be looking for outside sources of money, which would supplement the monies that we would get from the arrangements that we are trying to develop here. So, I guess my answer then is that, and my challenge is to go back and say "find us a way." What's the York University motto? "The way mst be tried." Tentanda via, that's the answer.

There is an alternative, and I'll throw it out to you because this

is another way of putting it back to the person who wrote the article. The alternative is to say, 'This is all the space we're going to get, so let's make it livable, so let's cut down the flow of students. Let's cut it down 100 a year, 200 a year, till we get it down to the point where then we can spread around and enjoy the kind of environment we want, with what we've got.' That's the option. And if we're in a growing city, and a growing province, where the pressures for enrolment—we're taking 5,500 new students every fall right now. Do you know how many we get apply to this place? Over 20,000. So we're turning down already three in four. So the option, and we can throw that right back to them, is to say, 'Well, if you want to have the place the way you'd like it then cut back on the students. Lower the accessibility of the system.' And I don't think any of us really believe this is what we should do.

Q. How do you see that the university is going to change in character because of this development?

A. I don't see it changing in character very much at all. I would think that the university will decide its own agenda and follow it. That's what I want. Let's be frank, though. I think it's true that the presence of outside tenants on the campus will change the campus, there's no question about that—that will change. But the destiny of this campus will be under the control of the university, not the outside tenants. And that's the whole premise for setting up YUDC. So these options that I suggested I think are quite unacceptable really. And I got the sense from the community that they agree. Although I'm not sure that everybody agrees, I guess it wouldn't be a university if everybody did. But I think that it is a fair statement that there was a general consensus.



Philip Lapp, author of the eponymously-named Lapp Report

Q. But isn't it realistic to expect that there are going to be conflicts between academic and university user interests?

A. You see, that's one of the basic principles of the Development Corporation, the one that I hold *extremely* important, is that we don't set in any way the academic agenda of this university. I mean that would be unconscionable to do that. And if there was any indication that that was going to happen I couldn't agree more if anybody accused us of it. It just isn't going to happen. At least not as far as I'm concerned. And that's one of the reasons why we have an Advisory Council—to prevent that sort of thing every happening. But, I just say to you that once outside tenants are on the campus, being realistic about it, they're going to influence, they're going to be part of this campus. Now if you call that a price to pay it might be a very good price to pay, because it starts to bring, a trend that's happening all over the world—that is to bring universities and the outside world together.

"You know who one of the biggest benefactors of this world be? The graduate students. Because the graduate students are going to be able to work with these companies and with these tenants, get part-time employment and ultimately full-time employment. And in fact, one of the things that I would like to see happen, if this ever comes about, is that there be an ability to have people in the industries work in graduate studies programs with the university and do their thesis in the company. And you can do that with the residence situation on campus that you couldn't do if the company was off-campus.

Q. Exactly what kind of development is going to be compatible and is going to enhance the university?

A. Just to give an example without being specific as to name, an industry, the XYZ company, has a research and development facility that has parallel interests to our Faculty of Science, say CRESS. They might be manufacturing or developing meteorological instruments. We have a very strong atmospheric chemistry and meteorological capability in the faculty of science. It would be advantageous for such and such a company to locate nearby, to make use of the skills and facilities perhaps that the university has. The university might like to have these people there because it gives them an opportunity to work with them to develop new ideas and new concepts. So you have a research group of company that's in that business adjacent cheek to jowl with people in the faculty. And in this way you enrich the faculty's operation in atmospheric chemistry and instrumentation, and the company benefits so that—that is what I mean by the synergistic effect—that both sides benefit from the nexus.

Q. What kind of relationships can you see getting set up with Arts?

A. There are some departments in Arts that are quite unlikely to benefit from the corporation. And the people who would like to have the cloistered environment preserved and indeed that would and should be preserved on the campus, I mean I'm not suggesting we'll find outside tenants everywhere. And that has to come into our development plan, to allow for that. But there are a lot of applied aspects of Arts that would relate directly, Computer Science being one of them, a second one being psychology.

Q. What are the concerns of the YUDC right now?

A. Right now there are a number of initiatives happening which are probably worth noting. A very important one of course is the Advisory Council itself which is extremely important because this is the means of communication to and from York community. Secondly, there's the question of developing potential situations that lead to building on campus. There are a number of initiatives that have started, none of which I'm prepared to talk about openly for obvious reasons. So there are a number of situations that are starting to look interesting—mixed use buildings, infill—this is the sort of basic thrust of our plan. I guess the strengthening of the corporation will happen as these particular situations start to take form. There are two or three other factors that come into it, you've read the report, you

know that I've asked for a mission statement of the university—well, the word mission statement is probably not the right word, as we get into it. There's no such thing as a single mission for a university like York. It's more what you'd call a strategic plan, or generally speaking a long-range plan. The long-range plan probably has something like a five-year time horizon to it. And it will be the means whereby we can get some feeling for where individual faculties see their destiny, where they're going to be strengthening or weakening, where their weaknesses might be, their strengths.

Q. Then are you allowing five years for this process?

A. Well, what I'm saying is that when the planning structures are in place there will be something like a five-year plan that will be rolled over once a year, the sixth year will come in as the first year is happening and so on. Now the long-range plan of course is the guiding light for the development corporation, because obviously we have to be doing things that are congruent with such a plan.

So there's a planning structure that has to be locked into the YUDC; there's the Advisory Council; there's the addition of staff—by that I mean getting a development officer into the company, who basically will be a person skilled in the general field of land development, and essentially a person who can develop numbers and work up optional financial arrangements with potential tenants on campus and with other developers. So I need a person with those skills, that's what I'm looking for (this guy will be part of York, in the YUDC). We have sort of a two time frame circumstance facing us. There's a short time frame to take advantage of certain opportunities that are arising right now, which will not allow us enough time to do a proper concept plan for the campus.

Q. Wasn't the idea behind the competition to give York some kind of international recognition?

A. Well, that was one of the things that Harry (Arthurs) felt was useful to do, and I agree with him, there's no argument that that would do something. But in terms of how practical it is for a situation at York—see if we were building a Ross Building we'd hold a competition to design a new building, like a new city hall or a new whatever, then that's one way of going. And there are some pluses and minuses to that. But that's an interesting way to go. We're not talking about a new specific building, we're talking about a whole campus layout and approach to planning.

Q. Was that the argument against the competition?

A. No, the argument of the people against it were saying, 'it's kind of an interesting argument, is that there's sort of a very important chemistry that has to exist between the university development corporation, I guess that's me and the guy that will be coming in with me, and the developer. And he says this chemistry is so important to the success of the project that you wouldn't want to leave it up to a paper proposal coming from a number of developers. I still believe that you can hold a competition but you work it on a basis of chemistry rather than on a basis of something written. So I think it's possible to still do that. And I think what he's really saying is choose the guy using... 'follow the heart and not the head,' and maybe there's something in that. But as I say, I haven't really come down finally with which way we should go. Until we get some of these other ducts in order, such as the council, the planning structure, not necessarily the plan, the man on board that I want. I've been a bit reluctant to carry things very far, except where I see an opportunity arise, you know I'm pursuing that with as much vigor as I can.

Q. Is the first project going to start soon?

A. I can't answer that. I wish I could say yes, I hope I could say yes, but I don't think I should even say that. I'd have to be more cautious because you know it's the old story, 'it isn't over till it's over.' 'We haven't got a deal till we've got a deal.' And so I don't want to suggest or get any expectations going that something's happening. Because I don't think it's justified at this stage.