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The Babraham Research Campus

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Abstract: The Babraham Research Campus, located 10 kilometers south of the University city of Cambridge, is home to around 60 life science companies, co-located with the Babraham Institute, a world leading research institute in life sciences. It is considered to be one of the UK's leading campuses to support early-stage bioscience enterprise. World-class research and business come together to promote innovation and strengthen links between academia and the commercial world. Funded primarily by the UK taxpayer via the Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council (BBSRC), the campus community provides laboratory and office facilities, with a supportive and well networked community to start-up and scale-up companies. It is close to many world-leading academic research centers such as the MRC Laboratory of Molecular Biology, the Wellcome Trust Sanger Institute, Cancer Research UK as well as the University of Cambridge itself.

The vision of the campus is to be the best place in Europe to start-up and scale-up a life science company.

Keywords: Babraham, Babraham Research Campus, Babraham Institute, Bio-incubator, Accelerator, Cambridge UK, Cluster

1. Where did it start & the journey so far

The Babraham Institute was established in Babraham in 1948 in a 165-hectare parkland environment. The first bioincubator for commercial occupation was established in 1998 and provided bespoke, state-of-the-art, serviced research and development facilities and scientific support services for bioventures at an early stage of the business development cycle. Thus, the Babraham Research Campus was born. Today, the campus supports the full spectrum of science from R&D to commercial realisation and now offers around 18,500 square meters of lettable space. The premise behind its establishment was twofold:

- A recognition, that early stage life science companies need access to space and capabilities that match their funding cycles. i.e. specialised space on short-term leases.
- The translation of public-funded science and the societal impact of such science is enhanced if academic communities exist next to, and are integrated with, commercial activities.

There are six themes which describe the business strategy of the organisation:

- Campus: The laboratories, offices and buildings.
- Capability: The science and business support that can be provided.

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- Community: A campus, not a science park, where we maximise and encourage interaction.
- Culture: An understanding of the translation and investment process.
- Connectivity: Extending the community beyond the boundaries of the campus.
- Commercialisation: A for-profit organisation, supporting companies that need to commercialise their science.

Members of the Babraham Research Campus community have access to the following facilities and services:

- Science laboratories and offices on short-term tenancies, with the opportunity to grow into larger space as the company evolves.
- Access to Containment Level I and II laboratory space, communal scientific support facilities and access to equipment.
- Venture Capital Investors on-site, and annual fund-raising conference.
- Scientific facilities – access to imaging, biological chemistry, bioinformatics, epigenomics, flow cytometry, gene targeting, sequencing and lipidomics via the Babraham Institute.
- Core campus capabilities and services – including conferencing and meeting room services, IT and Wi-Fi, health and safety, biosafety, waste disposal security, stores, a day-care nursery, phones, a restaurant and coffee shop, gym, and bar.

The services are designed to help early-stage companies by providing a way to reduce cash-burn during their formative years and a supportive environment in which nascent scientific enterprises can flourish. The exceptional facilities and flexible, competitive terms have ensured the bioincubator's success.

In 2001, the first bioincubator was fully occupied, and over the next decade the campus constructed an additional three bioincubator buildings. In 2011, BBT received £44m for investment at the Babraham Research Campus. This investment enabled the campus to develop a fifth bioincubator building, two follow-on buildings (one chemistry and one biology) for companies seeking increased space to remain on the campus for longer, a new Central Scientific Services building and improvements to infrastructure including roads, and utilities.



Figure 1. The Babraham Research Campus: Babraham Hall.

By 2014 the Babraham Research Campus had 51 companies on-site, occupying 99% of the lettable space, with more than 95 companies having benefitted from the Babraham Research Campus since opening. At this point, the campus provided around 8,900 square meters of serviced facilities to support new bioventures and was continuing its expansion.

In early 2015, it was announced that Imperial College London was to invest in a new facility at the Babraham Research Campus to support spin-out and scale-up companies. The move expanded Imperial's capacity to support fast-growing science and technology based companies and maximised the impact of research from universities. The initiative complemented Imperial's existing London facilities, including the College's research and innovation district, Imperial West in White City.

Between 2014 and 2016, two more biocubator buildings were built – the most recent of which, Eddeva, provided an additional 1,850 square meters of laboratory and office space and was fully let by January 2016, having been completed at the end of 2015. As well as research companies, the campus has attracted life-science investors companies and business offices from major pharmaceutical companies.

In 2017, The Cambridge Building opened to provide social and meeting room facilities, including a 200-seat lecture theatre, two 50-seat meeting rooms and a main campus restaurant, café and bar, and is fast becoming the hub of daily campus community activities.

Increasingly, the challenge for the campus was supporting companies that had started on site, but which have now grown and are in scale-up stage. For example, Kymab, which has grown from 6 staff in 2010, to 140 staff by 2017. Recognising the need for scale-up space, an agreement was reached in Spring 2017, for Biomed Realty, a US life science property organisation to invest £35m to construct two additional buildings on the campus. This will be complete by 2019.

Today, the campus is currently home to around 60 commercial organisations and is almost 100% full. Over £77m of public investment has been made into the campus.



Figure 2. The Babraham Research Campus: The Bennet Building.

Companies that base their activities at the Babraham Research Campus include:

- **Bicycle Therapeutics:** Bicycle Therapeutics is pioneering a new class of therapeutics for oncology and other disease areas based on its proprietary bicyclic peptides (Bicycles™) platform. Bicycles are a breakthrough new therapeutic class that combine antibody-like affinity and selectivity

with small molecule tissue penetration, rapid clearance and chemical synthesis. Bicycle Therapeutics is developing novel treatments for oncology using Bicycle Drug Conjugates™ to selectively deliver toxins to tumours and engaging in collaborative models in oncology and other areas to realise the full potential of the technology. Bicycle Therapeutics' technology is based on the work performed at the MRC Laboratory of Molecular Biology in Cambridge, U.K., by the scientific founders of the company, Sir Gregory Winter and Professor Christian Heinis. In June 2017, Bicycle Therapeutics announced the successful completion of a £40m Series B round of financing. Proceeds will be used to further the development of multiple drug candidates, including Bicycle's lead molecule, BT1718, a first-in-class drug for cancers of high unmet need [2].

- **Kymab:** Kymab is a therapeutic antibody company, working with partners to provide novel solutions in drug and vaccine development. Using its unique technology, Kymab rapidly develops broad diversity, high quality human antibodies against challenging targets. In January 2017, Kymab entered an alliance with The University of Texas MD Anderson's Oncology Research for Biologics and Immunotherapy Translation (ORBIT) unit. The collaboration will focus on developing novel monoclonal antibodies as well as on identifying biomarkers for identification of responder populations. The agreement is for an initial period of five years [3].
- **Crescendo Biologics:** Crescendo Biologics is a biopharmaceutical company discovering and developing potent, highly differentiated Humabody therapeutics in oncology. The company was established as a spin-out from the Babraham Institute, using intellectual property developed over many years in the area of heavy-chain only antibodies. The company is building a pipeline of new differentiated medicines, including multi-specific Immuno-Oncology (IO) modulators and Humabody Drug Conjugates (HDCs), through in-house development and strategic partnerships [4].

2. Who is involved?

The Babraham Research Campus is managed and developed by Babraham Bioscience Technologies Ltd (BBT) on behalf of its shareholders, the BBSRC and the Babraham Institute. BBT has responsibility for the administration and commercial development of the site for the benefit of the occupiers.

BBT facilitates access to scientific and technical facilities, as access to the world-class research of the Babraham Institute. Many successful partnerships are flourishing between academic research groups and resident companies on the campus.

3. The Success Story

The overarching aim of the Babraham Research Campus is to:

- Support jobs and growth in the bio-sciences especially supporting early-stage ventures and generating benefits to society.
- Provide flexible access to facilities, resources, services and capabilities to the campus and the wider community.
- Maximize the value and impact of the campus, and attract early-stage companies or mature organisations that provide synergy to the campus community to locate their operations on the site.

The success of the campus is about much more than just facilities – rather it's the combination of facilities alongside access to the right networks and the human and science resources clustered at Babraham Research Campus. For example, the majority of companies that locate at Babraham Research Campus already have funding in place, (with those from Cambridge University often funded via Cambridge Enterprise seed funds), however, there are also a number of venture capital firms like Medicxi and Touchstone with offices on site too; giving tenants access to opportunities on campus that they potentially wouldn't find elsewhere. From late 2014 to the end of 2016, over £500m of new investment into life science companies on the campus has been achieved and publicly announced. These investments come from a broad range of sophisticated investors from the US, UK, EU and Asia, demonstrating the international competitiveness and attraction of Cambridge based life science companies. Investors have included Chinese venture capital, The Wellcome Trust, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, Woodford Investment Management and corporate venture capital investments from leading pharmaceutical and technology companies such as Johnson & Johnson, Pfizer, Google, Takeda and Biogen Idec [5].



Figure 3. The Babraham Research Campus: The Minerva Building.

4. The Cambridge Life Science Cluster

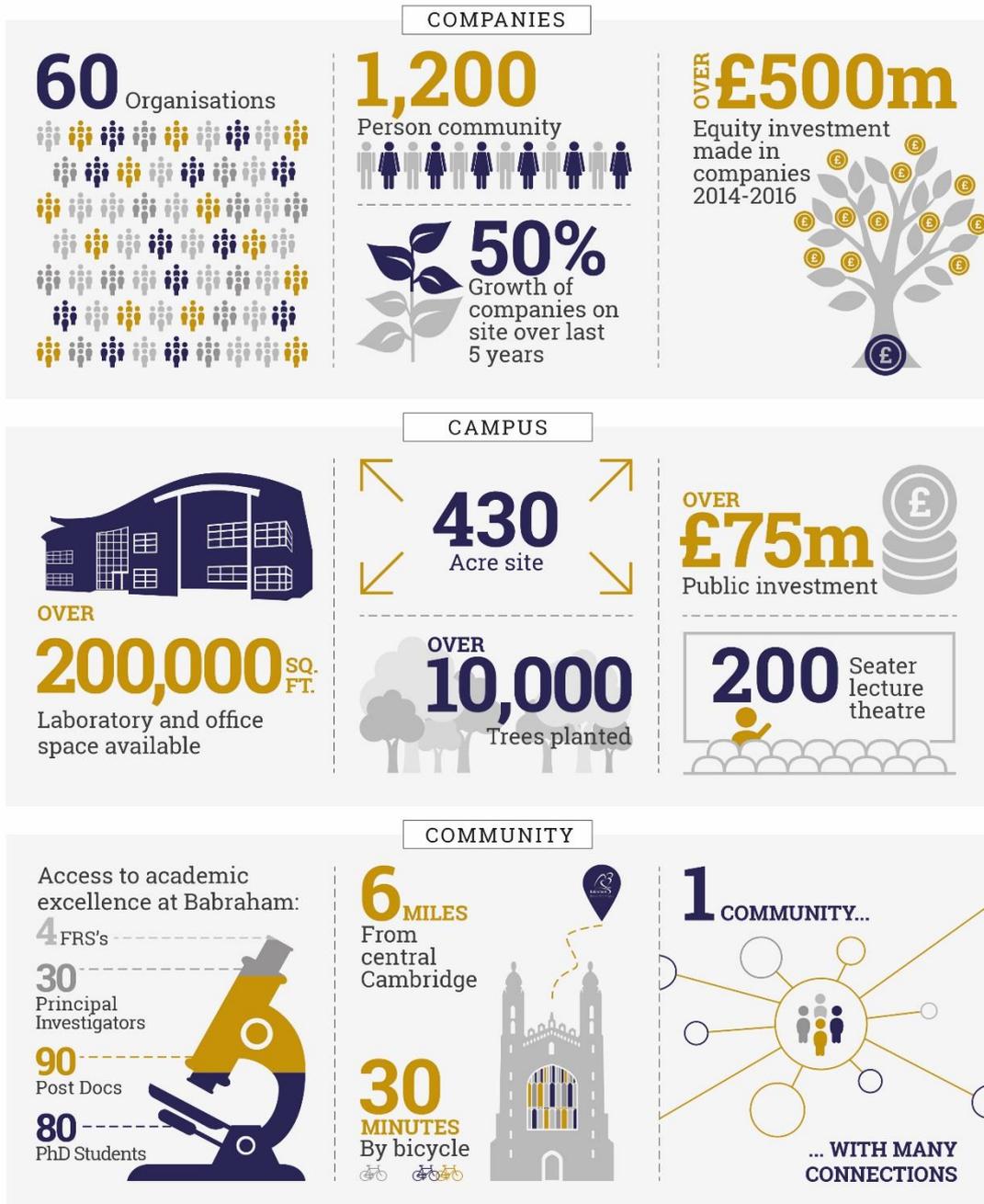
Cambridge has an active and integrated biotech networking community, making this a vibrant and stimulating environment in which to develop new bio-ventures. Outside North America, Cambridge UK is probably the biggest life-science cluster. The Babraham Research Campus is an active member of the Cambridge bioscience community. It also plays an active role in organising events, such as investment and science conferences to bring together the full spectrum of stakeholders involved in the roadmap through which blue skies research is commercialised into viable business propositions.

5. Looking to the future

With the Biomed scale-up buildings set for construction by 2019, BBT is now looking at the support it can provide across the whole life-cycle of bioscience companies. To that end, it is developing plans to support the earliest stage companies, through the creation of a new bioincubator and accelerator capability.



Start-up mindset, scale-up capability



The Company



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Derek Jones is the Chief Executive of Babraham Bioscience Technologies, the company responsible for the development and management of the Babraham Research Campus, a co-location of academic research with close to 60 early-stage and scale-up life-science enterprises.

Derek has worked in the biomedical sector for more than 25 years, and prior to his appointment at Babraham helped setup several bioscience companies. Initially a medicinal chemist with Merck, Derek moved into business and corporate development at Chiroscience, successfully negotiating several multimillion-pound licensing agreements including part of the team who licensed out the UK's first biotech drug, Chirocaine. In 2000, he co-founded his first company, BioWisdom, an IT/Drug discovery company. He was appointed COO at DanioLabs in 2002, a therapeutics company using zebrafish as a model organism for drug discovery, where he grew the company from 4 to 34 employees, before selling DanioLabs to Vastox, now Summit Plc, for £15 million in 2007. He was on the first cohort of students at the Cambridge University Judge Business School MBA programme, and a Chartered Director. He is also a member of Cambridge Enterprise Investment Committee, who invest in spin-outs from Cambridge University.

