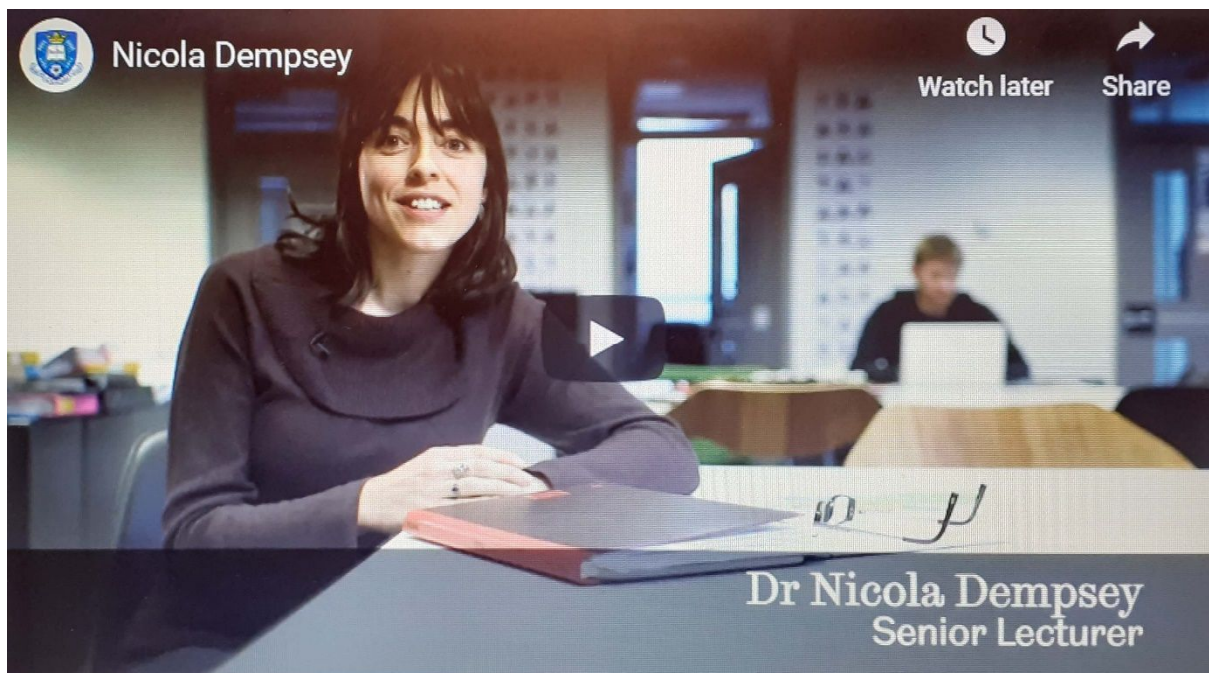


In our campaign to preserve the Owlthorpe oasis, we have been grateful for the involvement of Sheffield University students studying landscape and architecture under the guidance of [Dr Nicola Dempsey](#). Her students took an in-depth look at the proposal to build in Owlthorpe by reviewing the local objections. They also studied the interpretation boards that show the extent of environmental work carried out in 2012 under the guidance of Natural England.



While many came to the conclusion that the oasis should remain intact, as requested, they produced alternative plans to control the environmental impact, in case permission for the proposed development was granted. One suggestion was that the maximum number of properties on plot E should be not be 72, but 36.

As an alternative to this scheme, and if government pronouncements about preference being given to brownfield sites are serious, housing developments could be built on the disused aerodrome at Norton, which is brownfield land by definition and boasts many derelict buildings in need of redevelopment.

A further consideration is the need for new, environmentally friendly technology to be integrated into any plans. These should, for example, ensure that houses have south-facing aspects to capture the benefits of solar technology, with storage batteries capable of taking advantage of new government legislation that says properties with excess electricity can sell back to the national grid. High-speed charging points must be planned for, for electric cars and bicycles, with perhaps a car scrappage deal for residents moving into new housing and even possibly a ban on combustion engines from new housing estates.