Before the new NUS college town is designed...

What will it take to make a really great university town? YouthInk writers weigh in with their views on what they think should be the dos – and don’ts – of this masterplan.

Still a financial barrier

SCHOOL is back in session and for most undergraduates, the upcoming weeks will burn a deep hole in their pocket with tuition payments due and academic material to be bought.

Even if one studies at NUS and lives in the most affordable hall on campus, it still means shelling out an additional $680 in accommodation costs each term.

Meanwhile at the SMU hostel, a double room goes for $1,350 for a 15-week tenancy. Varying meal plans and registration fees have yet to be added to those figures.

It hardly seems economically viable for Singaporean students to pay for additional accommodation with home and family just a number of MRT stops away.

Ultimately, the limited availability of rooms in the universities creates financial barriers – where students who qualify for a dormitory room also need to be financially capable of paying for it.

Hostel living may strengthen collegiality among residents. However, it will be a shame this widens the divide with non-hostel residents, especially with those who cannot afford it.

Alicia Ng, 23, is a final-year accounting student at Singapore Management University.

Foster bonding between students

THE concept of the new NUS college sounds impressive but it may not have the desired effect of promoting interaction between Singaporean and foreign students.

Even with the higher Singaporean-to-foreign-student ratio, students of different nationalities may prefer to spend time with those from their own country and culture.

This may happen even if occupants, comprising students from different cultures, find themselves living under the same roof.

There must be residents charged with responsibility to foster bonding and a sense of community between the occupants in an apartment or across different apartments.

Only then may the aims of the college be achieved.

Kenny Tan, 21, is a second-year Economics student at SMU.