

New Music and Art Building  
St Catherine's School, Twickenham

# Supporting Planning Statement

November 2023

Tim Ronalds Architects

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# Introduction

This Supporting Planning Statement has been prepared by Tim Ronalds Architects in order to allow the London Borough of Richmond to fully assess the proposal for a new Music and Art Building at St Catherine's School, Twickenham. It should be read alongside the Design and Access Statement.

This statement sets out the background to the need for the scheme, describes the proposal and assesses its compliance with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the Local Development Plan policies.

This statement concludes that the public interest is overwhelmingly served by approval of this scheme. Very significant educational benefits will arise from allowing development to take place. The proposal is for a high quality building that will respect the heritage setting, and improve sustainability. The scheme is accompanied by landscaping works which will improve the appearance and biodiversity of the site.

## **Background to the Application**

This application has been prepared based on Pre-Application advice received from the London Borough of Richmond Upon Thames on 4<sup>th</sup> October 2023 (23/P0162/PREAPP), in response to Tim Ronalds Architects' submission in July 2023.

This application also follows advice in the Planning Report dated 7<sup>th</sup> March 2023 (22/3662/FUL), which was issued following a previous Planning Application in December 2022.

An earlier Pre-Application submission was made in February 2022, and a written response received in August (22/P0033/PREAPP).

# Supporting Documents

As well as this Supporting Planning Statement, with the Educational Needs Statement attached as an appendix, the planning application is accompanied by the following reports:

Design and Access Statement

Heritage Statement

Archaeological Statement

Fire Safety Strategy

Construction Management Plan

BREEAM Pre-Assessment

Energy Statement

Sustainable Construction Checklist

Arboricultural Survey and Planning Integration Report

Flood Risk Assessment and Sustainable Urban Drainage Statement

Flood Risk Assessment Checklist

Noise Report

Ecological Appraisal

Air Quality Assessment (within Design and Access Statement)

It is important to emphasise that the development of a new Music and Art Building is proposed in order to improve the educational environment, and not to expand the number of pupils being taught at the School. The proposals will not alter the traffic and parking implications of the School, and therefore it is considered unnecessary to provide a Transport Statement. The School operates a School Travel Plan and this will continue in future, to minimise the use of cars and increase other means of transport.

# Site and Surroundings

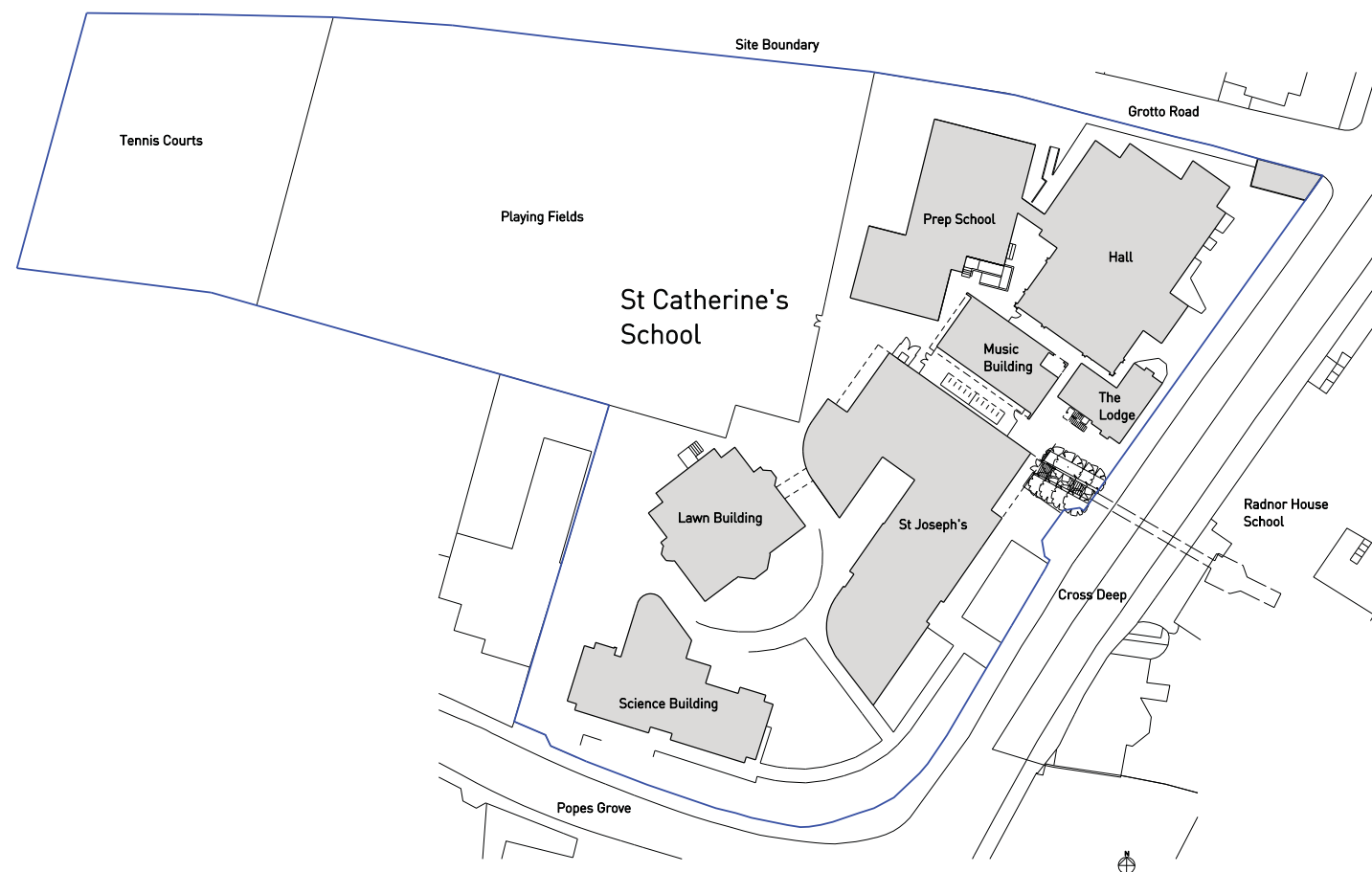
St Catherine's School is a Catholic Independent School for girls of all faiths, with a capacity of 455 pupils from age 6 to 18, contained on a 1.2 hectare site in Twickenham. The extent of the School site is shown in blue on the site plan, left.

The School is a major employer in the local area. A total of 120 people currently have employment at the school, including academic staff and catering, cleaning and support teams.

Approximately half of the School grounds are given over to playing fields and their margins. The eastern half of the grounds accommodates the school buildings and external areas around them.

The building stock dates mainly from the 1950s and later. The two earlier buildings are The Lawn and The Lodge - both from the mid-1800s, but constructed in different styles. To the North of the site, there are two-storey brick buildings from the 1950s and 80s. To the South, there are flat-roofed two and three-storey blocks with white render, originally built in the 1950s-60s and extended in the 2010s.

The Design and Access Statement and the Heritage Report provide more information on the built fabric and townscape character of the site.



# The Need for Development

The main issues that this development is designed to address are:

- Educational considerations arising from a lack of space;
- Poor quality building;
- Poor outside spaces.

The existing Music Building is dark and in need of modernisation. The acoustics are poor and the ceiling is too low for performances. The adjoining rooms are too small for teaching and group practice. Larger, improved Music spaces are required to cater to the students' needs and create a suitable space for performances and events.

The current Art facilities are not adequate to support the growing popularity of Art and Design at the School. There is currently only one Art classroom and one Photography room. Multiple classes cannot take place simultaneously, and Sixth Formers lack designated space to undertake independent work. There is a lack of space for Textiles, which is an increasingly popular subject in the School.

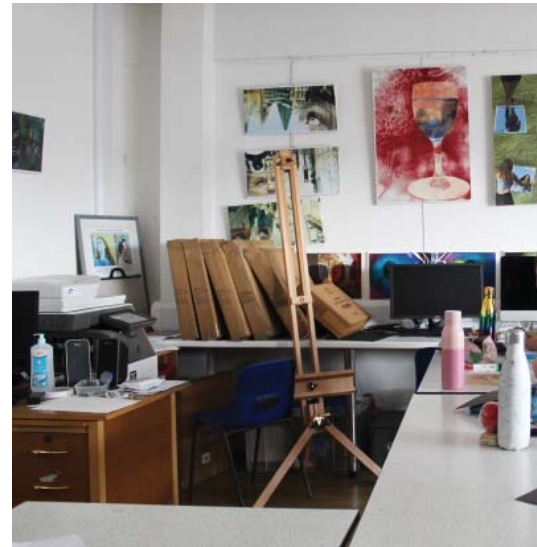
The existing Lodge extension contains a classroom which is too small, and it is cold and draughty.

The external spaces also need improvement. The alleyways around the existing Music Building and Lodge extension are narrow, unattractive and difficult to supervise.

More details are included in the Educational Needs Statement in Appendix 1.



Existing Music Room



Existing Art classroom



The 20th century extension at the rear of the Lodge.



Alleyway between the Music Building and the Hall.

# Educational Benefits of the Scheme



Music at St Catherine's School

The proposals will create more space for teaching Art and Music, which are much needed within the school.

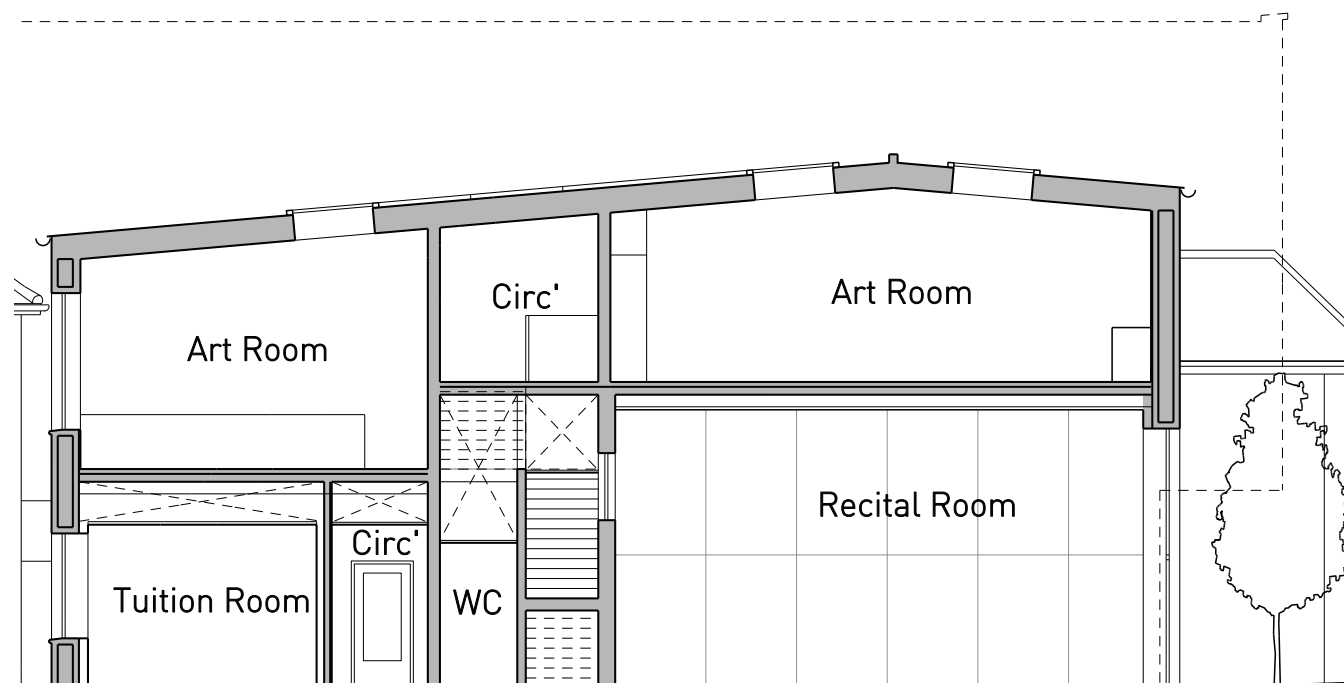
A large music room will be created, which will be suitable for rehearsals, performances and events. The acoustic performance of the space will be excellent. Four smaller music teaching spaces will be created, again with excellent acoustics, and large enough for lessons and group practice. This will be a very significant improvement to music spaces currently provided, which date from the 1980s.

Three new art classrooms will be provided, with specialist facilities and dedicated space for Sixth Formers to carry out independent work. This will be a great improvement to the art spaces currently provided, which are too small for the number of pupils studying art.

The glazed link will provide gallery space for students' artwork, and displays about the history of the site, including Pope's Grotto and Pope's Gardens.

The new building will meet very high sustainability standards. This will not only have environmental benefits but will also create an internal environment which greatly improves the learning and teaching experience.

Community groups and local schools will also be invited to use the new music spaces, and further detail is provided in the Educational Needs Statement in Appendix 1.



Section of Proposed Building

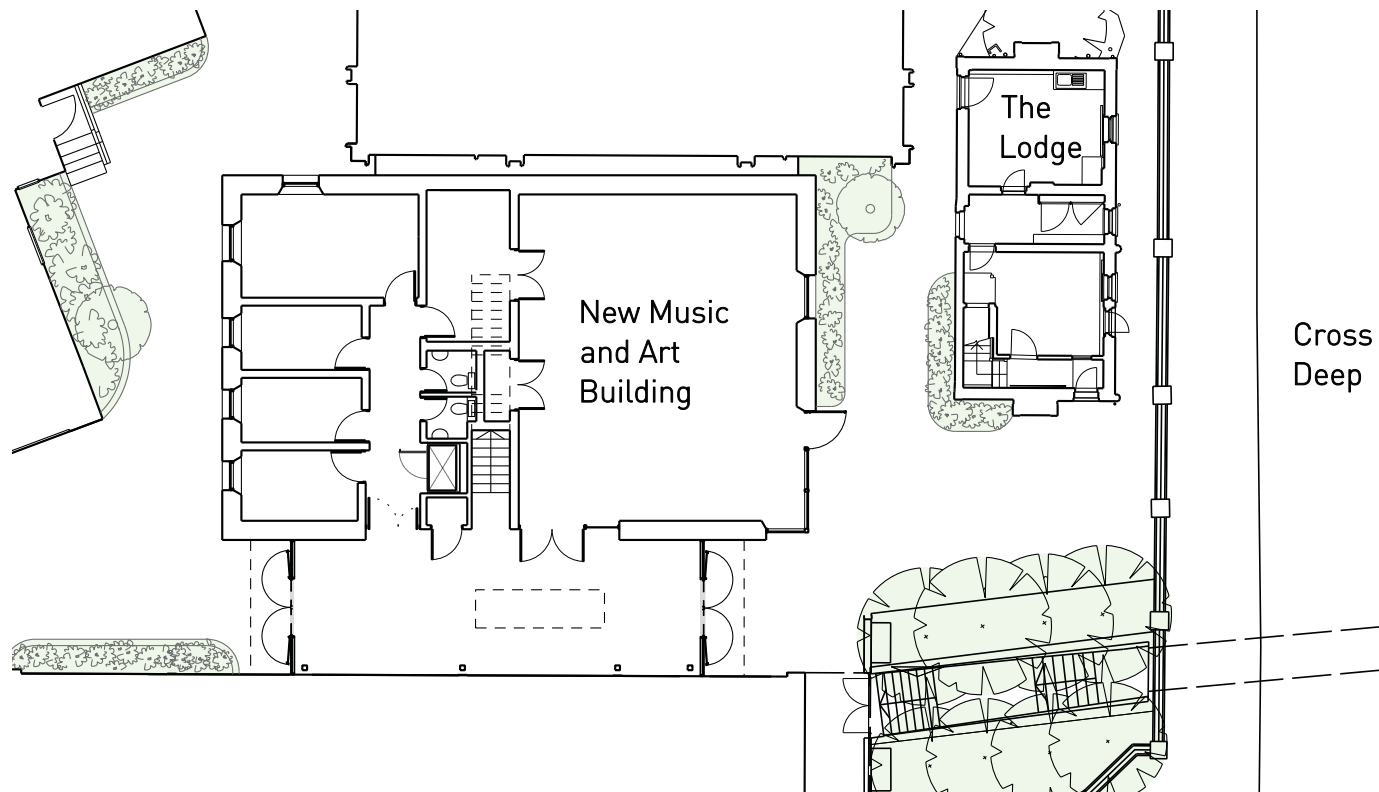
# Proposed Development

The proposed two storey Music and Art Building is described in detail in the Design and Access Statement.

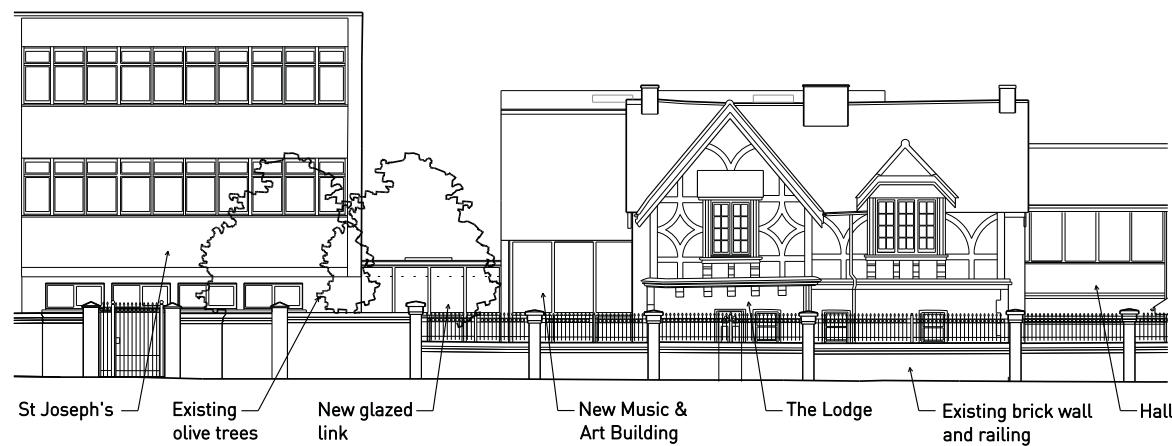
The design has been significantly revised since the previous planning application, in response to comments in the Planning Report and recent pre-application advice.

The new building has been reduced in size and set back from Cross Deep, to reduce its visual impact on the Lodge (a Building of Townscape Merit), the Twickenham Riverside Conservation Area, and the playing fields (Other Open Land of Townscape Importance).

The proposals will provide much improved music and art teaching spaces, and the new recital room will be a great asset to the School and the local community. This high quality, sustainable building and new landscaped areas will improve this part of the School, and will be appropriate to the setting.



Ground Floor Plan as Proposed



Proposed Elevation from Cross Deep



# Planning Policy Context

The site sits in CA8 Twickenham Riverside Conservation Area and there are a number of Listed Buildings and Buildings of Townscape Merit (BTM) to consider:

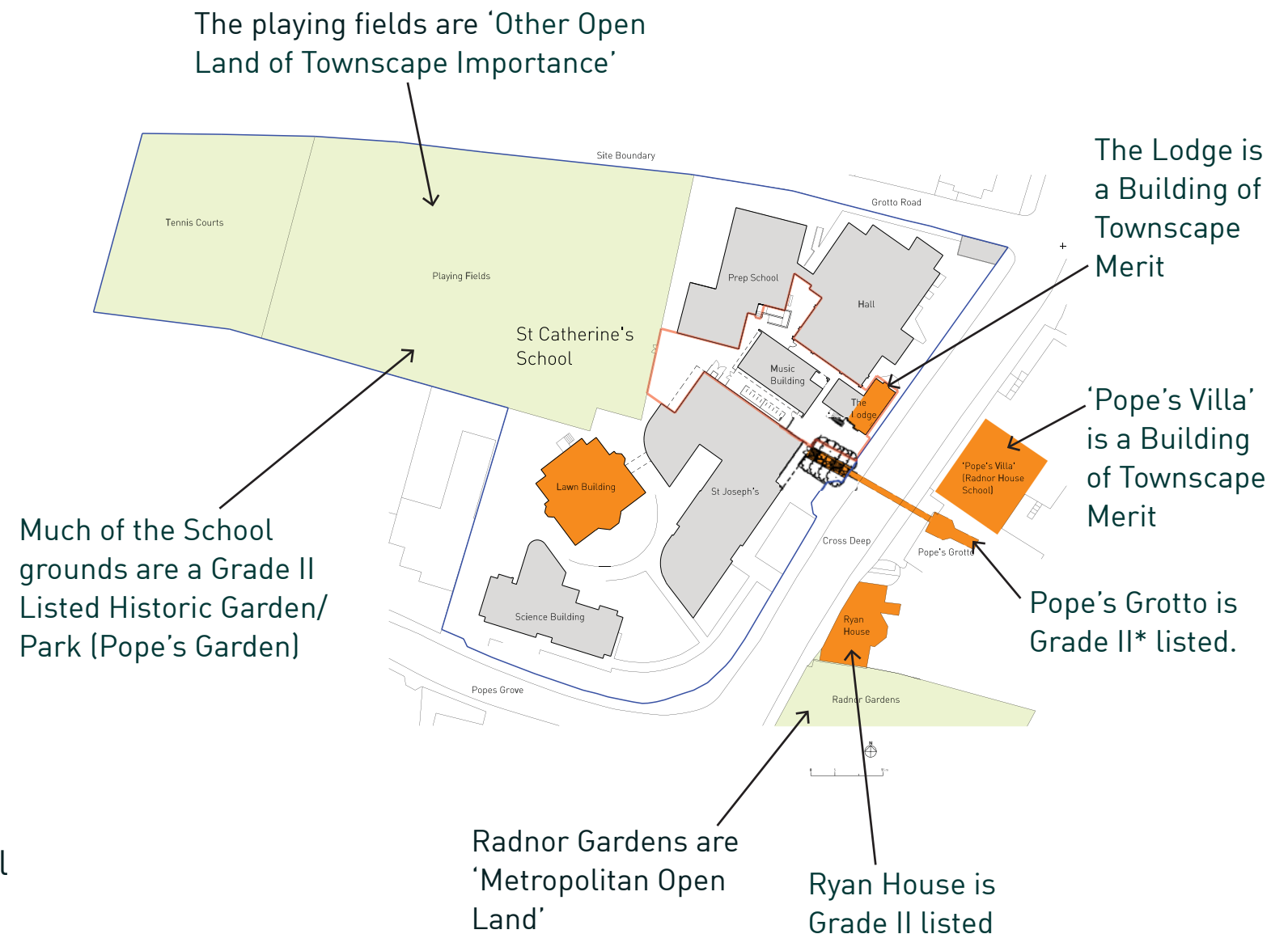
- The Lodge, within the School grounds and adjacent to the development site, is a BTM,
- Pope's Villa, now part of Radnor House School, is on the opposite side of Cross Deep from St Catherine's School. This also a BTM.
- Pope's Grotto is in the basement of Pope's Villa, and is Grade II\* Listed.
- The underground passage below Cross Deep, originally connecting the grotto to Pope's gardens is Grade II\* Listed. The steps to the passage are within the School grounds and adjacent to the development site.
- Ryan House is a Grade II Listed Building outside the School grounds to the south east.

More detail can be found in the Heritage Statement.

Several of the open spaces are also protected by planning law, as follows:

- The entirety of the school's grassed grounds to the west are designated Other Open Land of Townscape Importance (OOLTI).
- Much of the School grounds are also designated a Grade II Listed Historic Garden/Park (Pope's Garden). This was originally part of Alexander Pope's garden dating from the 1700s. The Historic England Listing states: "The garden survives only as part of the archaeological record."

- Radnor Gardens, outside the School grounds to the south east, is designated Metropolitan Open Land (MOL).
- The River Thames and the Ham Lands Nature Reserve to the east are designated MOL.
- The entire site is an Area of Archaeological Priority (Twickenham and Marble Hill - Early Medieval settlement).



# Planning Policy Context Continued

As well as the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2021), a planning application of this nature would typically be assessed against the following Local Development Plan policies and supplementary planning guidance:

## **London Plan (March 2021)**

- Policy D1 London's Form, Character and Capacity for Growth
- Policy D4 Delivering Good Design
- Policy D5 Inclusive Design
- Policy D12 Fire Safety
- Policy S1 Developing London's Social Infrastructure
- Policy S3 Education and Childcare Facilities
- Policy HC1 Heritage Conservation and Growth
- Policy G3 Metropolitan Open Land
- Policy G4 Open Space
- Policy G5 Urban Greening
- Policy G6 Biodiversity and Access to Nature
- Policy G7 Trees and Woodlands
- Policy SI 12 Flood Risk Management
- Policy SI 13 Sustainable Drainage

## **Richmond upon Thames Local Plan (2020)**

- Policy LP1 Local Character and Design Quality
- Policy LP2 Building Heights
- Policy LP3 Designated Heritage Assets
- Policy LP4 Non-Designed Heritage Assets
- Policy LP5 Views and Vistas
- Policy LP7 Archaeology
- Policy LP8 Amenity and Living Conditions
- Policy LP9 Floodlighting
- Policy LP10 Local Environmental Impacts

- Policy LP13 Green Belt, Metropolitan Open Land and Local Green Space
- Policy LP14 Other Open Land of Townscape Importance
- Policy LP15 Biodiversity
- Policy LP16 Trees, Woodlands and Landscape
- Policy LP20 Climate Change Adaption
- Policy LP21 Flood Risk and Sustainable Drainage
- Policy LP22 Sustainable Design and Construction
- Policy LP28 Social and Community Infrastructure
- Policy LP29 Education and Training
- Policy LP44 Sustainable Travel Choices
- Policy LP45 Parking Standards and Servicing

## **Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs)**

- Air Quality SPD (June 2020)
- Buildings of Townscape Merit SPD (May 2015)
- Design Quality SPD (February 2006)
- Development Control for Noise Generating and Noise Sensitive Development SPD (September 2018)
- Planning Obligations SPD (June 2020)
- Sustainable Construction Checklist SPD (January 2016)
- Transport SPD (June 2020)

## **Other Guidance**

- CA8 Twickenham Riverside Conservation Area Statement
- Construction Management Plan – Guidance Notes and Template
- Richmond Biodiversity Action Plan
- Strategic Flood Risk Assessment – Level 1 (Updated 2020 with further minor updates in March 2021)
- Sustainable Drainage Systems – Planning Guidance

# Planning Policy Context Continued

The Advice from the First Pre-Application in 2022 stated that the main planning issues for consideration are:

- Principle of development / Land use
- Character, design and heritage
- Archaeology
- Impact on the Metropolitan Open Land (MOL) and Other Open Land of Townscape Importance (OOLTI)
- Fire safety
- Neighbouring amenities
- Biodiversity and trees
- Local environmental impacts
- Flood risk and sustainable drainage
- Sustainability;
- Transport and highways.

The following pages provide information on the relevant policies, and the next section, Planning Assessment, looks at how they are addressed in the proposals.

## **Principle of Development / Land Use**

Local Plan Policy LP29 Part A states that the Council will work with partners to encourage the provision of facilities and services for education and training of all age groups to help reduce inequality and support the local economy, by the following means:

1. supporting the provision of facilities to meet the needs of primary and secondary school places as well as pre-school and other education and training facilities;
2. safeguarding land and buildings in educational use;
3. identifying new sites for educational uses as part of the Plan; the Council will work with landowners and developers to secure sites for pre-schools, primary and secondary schools as well as sixth forms to ensure sufficient spaces can be provided for children aged 2-18;
4. encouraging the potential to maximise existing educational sites through extensions, redevelopment or refurbishment to meet identified educational needs;
5. encouraging flexible and adaptable buildings, multi-use and co-location with other social infrastructure.

# Planning Policy Context Continued

## Heritage, Character and Design

The statutory duty in Sections 69 and 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires that in considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting, the local planning authority shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses, and to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a conservation area.

According to the NPPF, paras 193 - 202, great weight should be given to the conservation of designated assets when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset. Para. 203 states that the effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application.

Local Plan Policy LP1 relates to local character and design quality. Part A states that The Council will require all development to be of high architectural and urban design quality. The high-quality character and heritage of the borough and its villages will need to be maintained and enhanced where opportunities arise. Development proposals will have to demonstrate a thorough understanding of the site and how it relates to its existing context, including character and appearance, and take opportunities to improve the quality and character of buildings, spaces and the local area.

To ensure development respects, contributes to and enhances the local environment and character, the following are considered when assessing proposals:

1. Compatibility with local character including the relationship to existing townscape, development patterns, views, local grain and frontages as well as scale, height, massing, density, landscaping, proportions, form, materials and detailing;
2. Sustainable design and construction, including adaptability, subject to aesthetic considerations;
3. Layout, siting and access, including making best use of land;
4. Space between buildings, relationships of heights to widths and relationship to the public realm, heritage assets and natural features;
5. Inclusive design, connectivity, permeability (as such gated developments will not be permitted), natural surveillance and orientation; and
6. Suitability and compatibility of uses, taking account of any potential adverse impacts of the co-location of uses through the layout, design and management of the site.

# Planning Policy Context Continued

Local Plan Policy LP2 relates to building heights. This states that the Council requires new buildings, including extensions and redevelopment of existing buildings, to respect and strengthen the setting of the borough's valued townscapes and landscapes, through appropriate building heights, by the following means:

1. Require buildings to make a positive contribution towards the local character, townscape and skyline, generally reflecting the prevailing building heights within the vicinity; proposals that are taller than the surrounding townscape have to be of high architectural design quality and standards, deliver public realm benefits and have a wholly positive impact on the character and quality of the area;
2. Preserve and enhance the borough's heritage assets, their significance and their setting;
3. Respect the local context, and where possible enhance the character of an area, through appropriate: a) scale b) height c) mass d) urban pattern e) development grain f) materials g) streetscape h) Roofscape and i) wider townscape and landscape;
4. Take account of climatic effects, including overshadowing, diversion of wind speeds, heat island and glare;
5. Refrain from using height to express and create local landmarks; and

6. Require full planning applications for any building that exceeds the prevailing building height within the wider context and setting.

Local Plan Policy LP3 states that the Council will require development to conserve and, where possible, take opportunities to make a positive contribution to, the historic environment of the borough. The significance (including the settings) of the borough's designated heritage assets, encompassing conservation areas, listed buildings, Scheduled Monuments as well as Registered Historic Parks and Gardens, will be conserved and enhanced.

Policy LP4 of the Local Plan states that the Council will seek to preserve, and where possible, enhance the significance, character and setting of non-designated heritage assets, including Buildings of Townscape Merit.

Local Plan Policy LP5 relates to views and vistas. This states that the Council will protect the quality of the views, vistas, gaps and the skyline, all of which contribute significantly to the character, distinctiveness and quality of the local and wider area, by the following means:

1. Protect the quality of the views and vistas as identified on the Policies Map, and demonstrate such through computer-generated imagery (CGI) and visual impact assessments;
2. Resist development which interrupts, disrupts or detracts from strategic and local vistas, views, gaps and the skyline;

# Planning Policy Context Continued

3. Require developments whose visual impacts extend beyond that of the immediate street to demonstrate how views are protected or enhanced;
4. Require development to respect the setting of a landmark, taking care not to create intrusive elements in its foreground, middle ground or background;
5. Seek improvements to views, vistas, gaps and the skyline, particularly where views or vistas have been obscured;
6. Seek improvements to views within Conservation Areas, which:
  - a) are identified in Conservation Area Statements and Studies and Village Plans;
  - b). are within, into, and out of Conservation Areas;
  - c) are affected by development on sites within the setting of, or adjacent to, Conservation Areas and listed buildings.

Further guidance is provided in the Council's SPDs on Buildings of Townscape Merit and Design Quality, as well as within the CA8 Twickenham Green Conservation Area Statement.

## Archaeology

Local Plan Policy LP7 states that the Council seeks to protect, enhance and promote its archaeological heritage (both above and below ground),

and will encourage its interpretation and presentation to the public. It takes the necessary measures required to safeguard the archaeological remains found, and refuse planning permission where proposals would adversely affect archaeological remains or their setting. Desk-based assessments and, where necessary, archaeological field evaluation are required before development proposals are determined, where development is proposed on sites of archaeological significance or potential significance.

The application site is within two archaeological priority areas, and an Archaeological Statement is required.

## Impact on the Metropolitan Open Land and Other Open Land of Townscape Importance

Local Plan Policy LP13 Part C states that, when considering developments on sites outside Metropolitan Open Land (MOL), any possible visual impacts on the character and openness of the MOL are taken into account.

Local Plan Policy LP14 relates to Other Open Land of Townscape Importance (OOLTI). This states that when considering development on sites outside designated open land, any possible visual impacts on the character and openness of the OOLTI are taken into account.

# Planning Policy Context Continued

## Fire Safety

London Plan Policy D12 relates to fire safety. Part A states that in the interests of fire safety and to ensure the safety of all building users, all development proposals must achieve the highest standards of fire safety and ensure that they:

- 1) Identify suitably positioned unobstructed outside space:
  - a) For fire appliances to be positioned on
  - b) Appropriate for use as an excavation assembly point.
- 2) Are designed to incorporate appropriate features which reduce the risk to life and the risk of serious injury in the event of a fire; including appropriate fire alarm systems and passive and active fire safety measures.
- 3) Are constructed in an appropriate way to minimise the risk of fire spread.
- 4) Provide suitable and convenient means of escape, and associated evacuation strategy for all building users.
- 5) Develop a robust strategy for excavation which can be periodically updated and published, and which all building users can have confidence in.

6) Provide suitable access and equipment for firefighting which is appropriate for the size and use of the development.

Non-major applications need to be accompanied by a Fire Safety Strategy as a standalone report.

## Neighbouring Amenities

Policy LP8 of the Local Plan states that all development will be required to protect the amenity and living conditions for occupants of new, existing, adjoining and neighbouring properties. This includes noise, which is also covered under LP10 Part C, as below.

## Local Environmental Impacts

Local Plan Policy LP10 relates to local environmental impacts, pollution and land contamination Part A states that the Council seeks to ensure that local environmental impacts of all development proposals do not lead to detrimental effects on the health, safety and the amenity of existing and new users or occupiers of the development site, or the surrounding land. These potential impacts can include air pollution, noise and vibration, light pollution, odours and fumes, solar glare and solar dazzle as well as land contamination. Developers should follow the guidance provided by the Council on local environmental impacts

# Planning Policy Context Continued

and pollution as well as on noise generating and noise sensitive development. Where necessary, the Council sets planning conditions to reduce local environmental impacts on adjacent land uses to acceptable levels.

## **Air Quality**

Part B of Policy LP10 relates to air quality. This states that the Council promotes good air quality design and new technologies. Developers should commit to 'Emissions Neutral' development where practicable. To consider the impact of introducing new developments in areas already subject to poor air quality, the following will be required:

1. An air quality impact assessment, including where necessary, modelled data;
2. Mitigation measures to reduce the development's impact upon air quality, including the type of equipment installed, thermal insulation and ducting abatement technology;
3. Measures to protect the occupiers of new developments from existing sources;
4. Strict mitigation for developments to be used by sensitive receptors such as schools, hospitals and care homes in areas of existing poor quality; this also applied to proposals close to developments used by sensitive receptors.

The application site is within the Borough-wide Air Quality Management Area (AQMA). Air pollution in Richmond exceeds the legal objectives for both nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>) and PM<sub>10</sub> (particles less than 10 microns) levels. As with PM<sub>10</sub>, smaller particles (PM<sub>2.5</sub>) are also an issue for the borough, as they are throughout London. Sources of pollution from inside the borough include domestic heating, construction and vehicles.

The Council's Local Validations Checklist requires the submission of an Air Quality Assessment (AQA) for major applications only. However, all applications are expected to demonstrate compliance with Policy LP10 Part B, and this is particularly relevant given that the site is used as a school.

## **Noise**

Part C of Policy LP10 relates to noise.

The Council encourages good acoustic design to ensure occupiers of new and existing noise sensitive buildings are protected. The following will be required, where necessary:

1. A noise assessment of any new plant and equipment and its impact upon both receptors and the general background noise levels;
2. Mitigation measures where noise needs to be controlled and managed;



# Planning Policy Context Continued

3. Time limits and restrictions for activities where noise cannot be sufficiently mitigated;
4. Promotion of good acoustic design and use of new technologies;
5. Measures to protect the occupiers of new developments from existing sources.

Further guidance is also provided in the Council's SPD regarding noise.

## Construction

Part G of Policy LP10 relates to construction and demolition. This states that the Council will seek to manage and limit environmental disturbances during construction. A Construction Management Plan needs to be included in the planning application.

## Biodiversity

Policy LP15 of the Local Plan relates to biodiversity. Part A states that the Council will protect and enhance the borough's biodiversity, in particular, but not exclusively, the sites designated for their biodiversity and nature conservation value, including the connectivity between habitats. This can be achieved by:

1. Protecting biodiversity in, and adjacent to, the borough's designated sites for biodiversity and nature conservation importance (including buffer zones), as well as other existing habitats and features of biodiversity value;
2. Supporting enhancements to biodiversity;
3. Incorporating and creating new habitats or biodiversity features, including trees, into development sites and in the design of buildings themselves where appropriate;
4. Ensuring new biodiversity features or habitats connect to the wider ecological and green infrastructure networks and complement surrounding habitats;
5. Enhancing wildlife corridors for the movement of species, including river corridors, where opportunities arise; and
6. Maximising the provision of soft landscaping, including trees, shrubs and other vegetation that support the borough-wide Biodiversity Action Plan.

# Planning Policy Context Continued

## Trees

Policy LP16 Part A of the Local Plan states that the Council requires the protection of existing trees and the provision of new trees, shrubs and other vegetation of landscape significance that complement existing, or create new, high-quality green areas, which deliver amenity and biodiversity benefits. Policy LP16 Part B states that to ensure development protects, respects, contributes to and enhances trees and landscapes, the Council will when assessing development proposals:

1. Resist the loss of trees, including aged or veteran trees, unless the tree is dead, dying or dangerous, or the tree is causing significant damage to adjacent structures, or the tree has little or no amenity value, or felling is for reasons of good arboricultural practice;
2. Resist development which results in the damage or loss of trees that are considered to be of townscape or amenity value; the Council will require that site design or layout ensures a harmonious relationship between trees and their surroundings and will resist development which will be likely to result in pressure to significantly prune or remove trees;
3. Require where practicable, an appropriate replacement for any tree that is felled; a financial contribution to the provision for an off-site tree in line with the monetary value of the existing tree to be felled in line with the Capital Asset Value for Amenity Trees' (CAVAT);

4. Require new trees to be of a suitable species for the location in terms of height and root spread, taking account of space required for trees to mature; the use of native trees is encouraged where appropriate;

5. Require that trees are adequately protected throughout the course of the development, in accordance with British Standard (BS) 5837 (Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction – Recommendations).

All trees on this site and within the nearby vicinity are protected by virtue of their location in the Twickenham Riverside Conservation Area.

A BS5837:2012 Tree survey and Arboricultural Impact Assessment is required as part of a full submission.

## Flood Risk and Sustainable Drainage

London Plan Policy SI 12 relates to flood risk management. Part C states that development proposals should ensure that flood risk is minimised and mitigated, and that residual risk is addressed.

London Plan Policy SI 13 relates to sustainable drainage. Part B states that development proposals should aim to achieve greenfield run-off rates and ensure that surface water run-off is managed as close to its source as possible. There should also be a preference for green over

# Planning Policy Context Continued

grey features, in line with the following drainage hierarchy:

- 1) Rainwater use as a resource (for example rainwater harvesting, blue roofs for irrigation)
- 2) Rainwater infiltration to ground at or close to source
- 3) Rainwater attenuation in green infrastructure features for gradual release (for example green roofs, rain gardens)
- 4) Rainwater discharge direct to a watercourse (unless not appropriate)
- 5) Controlled rainwater discharge to a surface water sewer or drain
- 6) Controlled rainwater discharge to a combined sewer.

Part C states that proposals for impermeable surfacing should normally be resisted unless it can be shown to be unavoidable, including on small surfaces such as front gardens and driveways. Part D states that drainage should be designed and implemented in ways that promote multiple benefits including increased water use efficiency, improved water quality, and enhanced biodiversity, urban greening, amenity and recreation.

Local Plan Policy LP21 states that all developments should avoid, or minimise, contributing to all sources of flooding, including fluvial, tidal, surface water, groundwater and flooding from sewers, taking account of

climate change and without increasing flood risk elsewhere.

The site is in Flood Zone 1, therefore at a low risk of flooding, though it is also in an Area Susceptible to Groundwater Flooding (←75%). The Council's recently updated SFRA requires the submission of a Flood Risk Assessment, London Sustainable Drainage Pro-Forma and Sustainable Drainage Systems Statement for all planning applications.

## Sustainability

Chapter 9 of the London Plan includes the Mayor's policies to promote sustainable development.

Local Plan Policy LP20 relates to climate change adaptation. Part A states that the Council will promote and encourage development to be fully resilient to the future impacts of climate change in order to minimise vulnerability of people and property. Part B states that new developments, in their layout, design, construction, materials, landscaping and operation, should minimise the effects of overheating as well as minimise energy consumption in accordance with the following cooling hierarchy:

1. Minimise internal heat generation through energy efficient design.
2. Reduce the amount of heat entering a building in summer through shading, reducing solar reflectance, fenestration, insulation and green

# Planning Policy Context Continued

roofs and walls.

3. Manage the heat within the building through exposed internal thermal mass and high ceilings.

4. Passive ventilation.

5. Mechanical ventilation.

6. Active cooling systems (ensuring the lowest carbon options).

Part C states that opportunities to adapt existing buildings to the likely effects of climate change should be maximised and will be supported.

Local Plan Policy LP22 relates to sustainable design and construction. Part A states that developments will be required to achieve the highest standards of sustainable design and construction in order to mitigate against climate change. Development of 100sqm or more of non-residential floor space will be required to comply with the Sustainable Construction Checklist SPD and meet BREEAM 'Excellent' standard.

Part B of Policy LP22 requires developers to incorporate measures to improve energy conservation and efficiency as well as contributions to renewable and low carbon energy generation.

Part C states that this should be achieved by following the Energy

Hierarchy:

- 1) Be lean – use less energy;
- 2) Be clean – supply energy efficiently;
- 3) Be green – use renewable energy.

Part D of the Policy LP22 requires all new development to connect to existing decentralised energy (DE) system where feasible. Applicants are required to consider the installation of low, or preferable ultra-low, NOx boilers to reduce the amount of NOx emitted in the borough. Local opportunities to contribute towards DE supply from renewable and low-carbon technologies will be encouraged where appropriate.

A future application would need to demonstrate compliance with the above and that it would deliver a development of the highest standards of sustainability.

## Transport and Highways

Local Plan Policy LP44 seeks to promote sustainable travel opportunities. Local Plan Policy LP45 relates to parking and deliveries/servicing. These are both important issues for Schools and their neighbourhoods.

# Planning Assessment

## Principle of Development / Land Use

Local Plan Policy LP29 Part A states that the Council will encourage the provision of facilities for education, including maximising existing educational sites through redevelopment to meet identified educational needs.

This application relates to an existing school, and the educational needs and benefits are set out above and in the Educational Needs Statement in Appendix 1.

The educational benefits of development are a material planning consideration of significant weight. The Pre-Application Advice received in August 2022 confirmed that the application is considered to comply with Policy LP29 and that the principle of development is supported.

## Heritage, Character and Design

Policies LP1 (local character and design quality), LP2 (heights), LP3 (conservation areas), LP4 (non-designated heritage assets) and LP5 (views and vistas) are particularly relevant to this application.

A Heritage Statement has been prepared by specialist consultants and is included in this application as a standalone document.

The Design and Access Statement includes analysis of the site and streetscape, and further information on how the design has been developed in relation to the heritage assets.

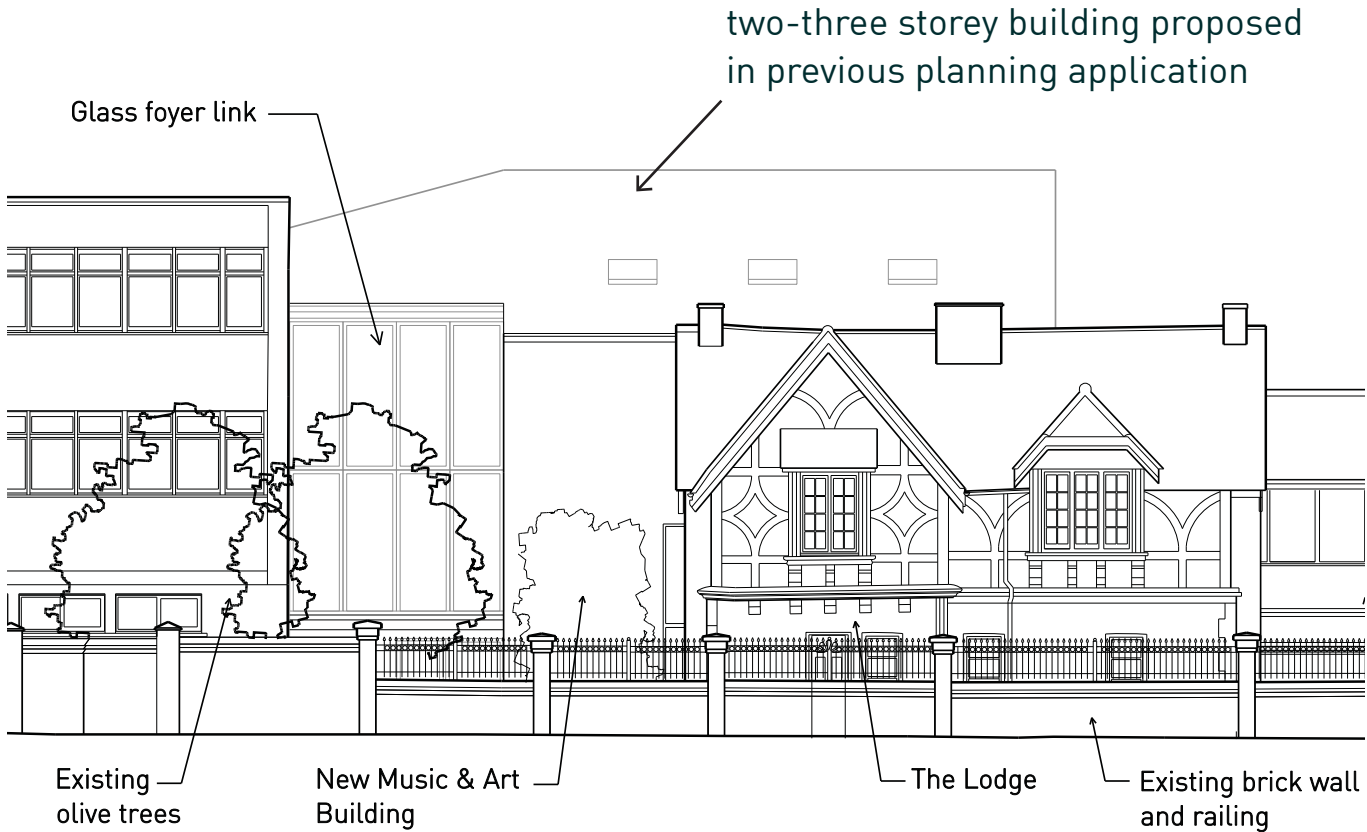
The site is within Twickenham Riverside Conservation Area, and the heritage assets closest to the site are:

- Pope's Grotto, which is Grade II\* Listed.
- The Lodge, a Building of Townscape Merit (BTM).

## Impact on Pope's Grotto

The Planning Report dated March 2023 commented that the impact of the proposals on Pope's Grotto would be neutral, and that there will be a small benefit in improved landscaping. The building has now been reduced in scale and moved further away, allowing more space around the steps to the tunnel and grotto.

# Planning Assessment Continued



2022 Planning Application - Elevation from Cross Deep

## Impact on the Lodge and Cross Deep - Height

The Planning Report dated March 2023 raised concern with the height and scale of the new building, which have since been addressed.

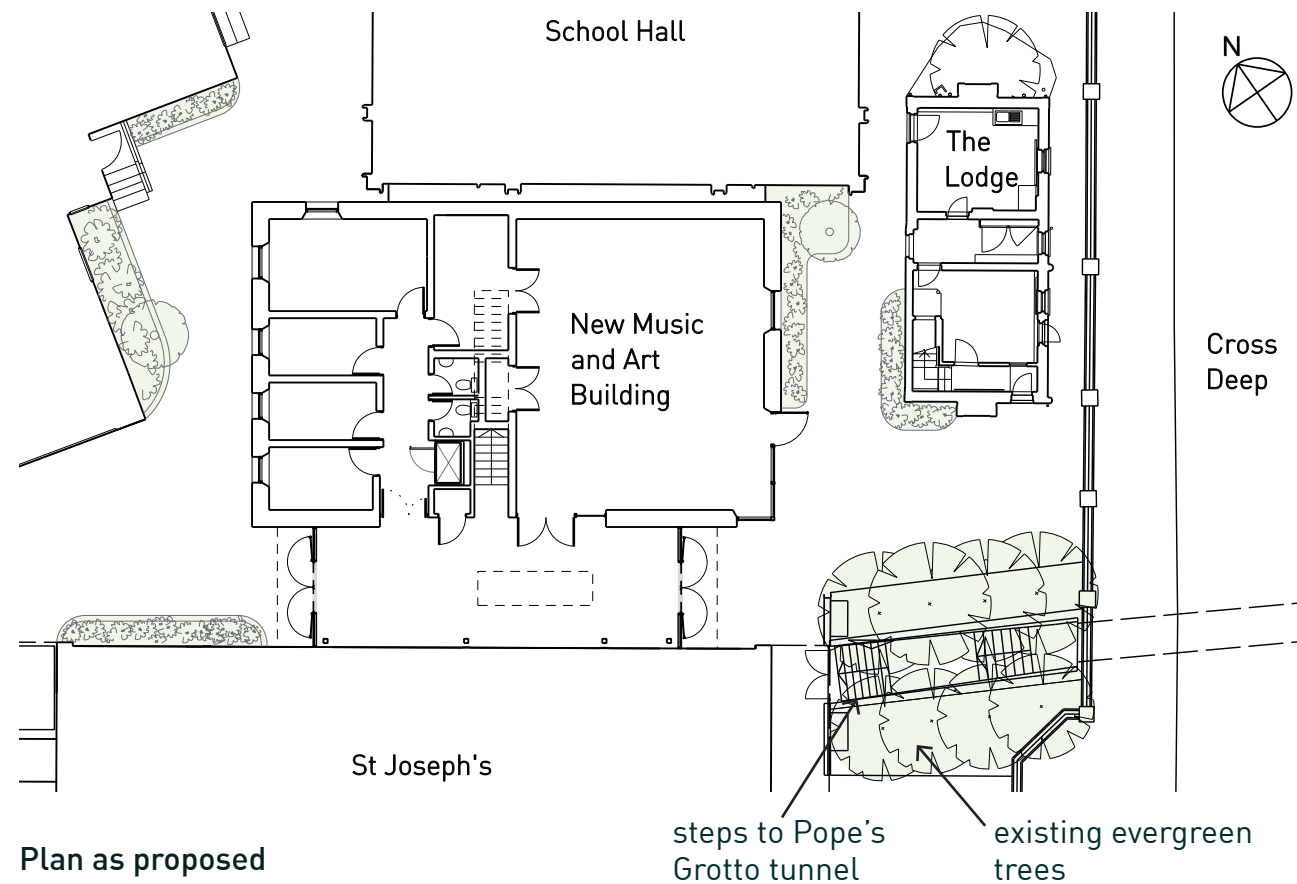
The main part of the building is now similar in height to the Lodge, and the link has been reduced to a single storey, allowing views through the site. Impact on the Lodge and Cross Deep is significantly reduced.

The pre-application response from October 2023 confirmed that the reduced height is a significant improvement, and did not object to the scale of the development.



Current Proposal - Elevation from Cross Deep

# Planning Assessment Continued



## Impact on the Lodge and Cross Deep - Position of building

The pre-application advice from October 2023 suggested that we consider setting the new building further back from Cross Deep.

The building has now been set back another metre, to reduce the impact on the Lodge and Cross Deep. The site is surrounded by existing buildings, so moving it back further is not possible. The size of the building has already been significantly reduced since the previous planning application, and the footprint cannot be reduced further. The new building will be well-screened from Cross Deep by trees and existing buildings, as shown in the image below left.

Advice from the local planning department has been followed, and the impact on the Lodge and Cross Deep is now low. The setting of the Lodge is also improved, by removing the unsightly extension and escape stairs. The Lodge will be restored to a free-standing building, with new planting and stone paving around it.



Proposed View from Cross Deep

# Planning Assessment Continued

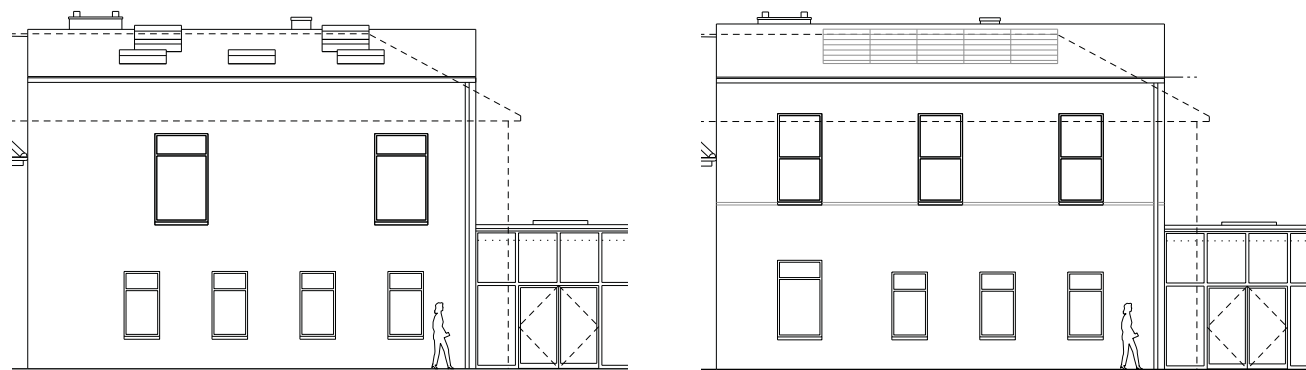
## Materials and Design

The pre-application advice from October 2023 made suggestions on the colour of the brickwork, and queried the choice of roofing material and the design of the rooflights. These comments have been responded to in detail in the Design and Access Statement.

## Rear Elevation

The recent pre-application advice commented that the fenestration on the rear elevation appeared to be too random, detracting from the building's appearance. This has now been addressed, as shown in the elevations to the left.

The proposals have been significantly reduced and improved since the previous planning application, in response to planning advice. The appropriate scale of the new building, and the retention and improvement of the landscaping, will ensure that views from Cross Deep are not adversely affected. The new building will be of much higher quality than the existing 20th century buildings, and the development will not cause harm to the setting of the Lodge or Cross Deep. Accordingly, the scheme complies with Local Plan Policies LP1 - LP5.



Previous rear elevation (as 2nd pre-app)

Rear elevation as proposed



Proposed view from Cross Deep



## Archaeology

An Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment has been prepared by specialist consultants and is included in the application.

The site lies within two archaeological priority areas:

- The Pope's Grotto Archaeological Priority Area, encompassing the western extent of the former landscaped gardens laid out for the poet Alexander Pope in the 18th century.
- The Tier II Twickenham and Twickenham Riverside Archaeological Priority Area.

The site has undergone built development since the 19th century. It is considered that past development will have had a severe impact on any archaeological evidence that had been present.

The site is identified as having a moderate potential for prehistoric evidence and a high potential for post-Medieval evidence of past phases of built development. A low potential is identified for evidence of all other past periods of human activity.

The proposed development is of a small scale and the Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment concludes that the proposed development is highly unlikely to have a significant archaeological impact. Archaeological monitoring of groundworks will be carried out if required. Therefore, the proposals are consistent with Local Plan Policy LP7.

## Impact on Metropolitan Open Land

The proposed new building will not impact on the nearby areas of Metropolitan Open Land - Radnor Gardens and the River Thames. The new building will largely be concealed from view by Radnor House School, nearby buildings and the existing evergreen olive trees. The proposals are consistent with Local Plan Policy LP13.

# Planning Assessment Continued

## Impact on Other Open Land of Townscape Importance

The previous application was refused because of impact on the playing fields, which are Other Open Land of Townscape Importance (OOLTI). Significant changes to the height and massing were made in the recent pre-app to address these concerns.

The height of the building has been reduced to two storeys, with a single storey glazed link, to allow views from the OOLTI to Cross Deep. Where the new building can be seen from the OOLTI, it will only be partially visible, and the gap is not fully blocked as before. The roof has been shaped so that the tower of 'Pope's Villa' can still be seen from the playing fields.

The recent pre-application advice commented that "It is not thought the open character of the site would be compromised by the scale or siting of the current scheme". The proposals will have low impact on the OOLTI, and they are consistent with Local Plan Policy LP14.



Site plan showing the new building highlighted in yellow, and the OOLTI in green



Proposed view from the playing fields



Long Section from Playing Fields to 'Pope's Villa', as Proposed

# Planning Assessment Continued

## Fire Safety

The proposed building is designed to meet the highest standards of fire safety, and a Fire Safety Strategy is included in the application as a standalone document.

This document also describes how fire safety to the Lodge will be improved.

These proposals will be developed through the detailed design, construction and occupation phases. When the building is complete, the strategy will be passed on to the School and periodically updated and published, to ensure safety for all users.

The scheme complies with London Plan Policy D12.

## Neighbouring amenities

The new building is sited within the existing complex of school building and will not directly adjoin neighbouring properties. There are no issues associated with overlooking, overbearing or loss of privacy.

There will not be an increase in staff or pupil numbers at the School, and there will be no additional traffic which could impact neighbouring residents.

The impact of noise generated by the proposals has been carefully considered, and is assessed under 'Local Environmental Impacts', below.

The proposals will not cause any adverse impacts on amenity and living conditions for neighbouring residents, and complies with Local Plan Policy LP8.

# Planning Assessment Continued

## Local Environmental Impacts

### Air Quality

A short Air Quality Assessment has been prepared by the services engineer, and is included in the Design and Access Statement.

The new Music and Art Building will be an Air Quality Neutral development. The proposed heating systems will not produce any NO<sub>x</sub> gases or particulate matter. The replacement of the existing building, which is heated by gas, will result in a net reduction in CO<sub>2</sub> and NO<sub>x</sub> emissions from the school site.

The internal air quality for pupils and staff will also be improved by providing mechanical ventilation systems that filter pollutants from the external air.

The proposals are therefore consistent with Part B of Local Plan Policy LP10.

### Noise

The impact of noise generated by the proposals has been considered in detail, especially as the new building will be used for music practice

and occasional performances. A Noise Report has been prepared by Ramboll Acoustics and is included in the application as a standalone document.

The development replaces an existing music building, and the new building will have much higher standards of acoustic insulation. The music spaces will be mechanically ventilated, and windows will not be opened when these spaces are in use.

The Noise Report concludes that noise breakout from music spaces will be at a significantly lower level than typical pre-existing background noise levels.

There will be some external plant associated with the new building, positioned away from the street behind St Joseph's. The acoustician confirms that noise from this plant will not impact on neighbours.

The Noise Report confirms that no adverse affects or significant impacts are predicted from noise associated with the development, and the proposals are in accordance with Part C of Local Plan Policy LP10.

The Planning Report dated March 2023 confirmed that there are no objections on the grounds of noise.

# Planning Assessment Continued

## Construction

Caneparo, a specialist transport consultant, have produced a Construction Management Plan for the project, which is included in the application as a standalone document. A summary is included in the Design and Access Statement.

The Planning Report dated March 2023 confirmed that the Council's Highways Officer was consulted in relation to the previous application, and raised no objections.

Construction access will be managed to avoid risks to public safety, and any disturbance to neighbours will be kept to a minimum. The CMP will be updated as the project develops.

The proposals are therefore consistent with Part G of Local Plan Policy LP10.

## Biodiversity

The ecology consultant, Engain, have produced an Ecological Appraisal for the project, which is included in the application as a standalone document.

The existing site has a lack of vegetation and a low ecological value. The appraisal reports that the site is of extremely limited ecological value to terrestrial invertebrates and that there is negligible potential for roosting bats. The appraisal concludes that the development will not have any adverse ecological impacts.

The proposals will enhance biodiversity through the provision of new planting and trees, a new green wall and brown roof, and the addition of bat and bird boxes. The ecologist has calculated a Biodiversity Net Gain of 100% for the project.

The measures put forward in the ecological appraisal are in accordance with the requirements of the NPPF, London Plan Policy G6, Local Plan Policy LP15 and the Richmond upon Thames Biodiversity Action Plan. The Planning Report from March 2023 confirmed that the Council's Ecologist was consulted in relation to the previous application and raised no objections, subject to details secured by a condition.

# Planning Assessment Continued

## Trees

The arboriculturalist, Quaife Woodlands, have carried out a Tree Survey and produced an Arboricultural Impact Assessment for the project.

All living trees on the site will be retained and protected during the works. Two new trees will be added, as shown on the Landscape Plan and described in the Design and Access Statement.

The proposals are consistent with Local Plan Policy LP16. The Planning Report from March 2023 confirmed that the Council's Tree Officer was consulted in relation to the previous application, and raised no objections subject to conditions on submitted arboricultural details.

## Flood Risk and Sustainable Drainage

A combined Flood Risk Assessment and Sustainable Drainage Systems Statement, and the Sustainable Drainage Checklist, have been completed by Eckersley O'Callaghan.

The current site consists of hard landscaping and roofing, with no

permeable areas or planting. Rainwater from these surfaces is directed to existing soakaways within the school grounds.

The proposals will increase the permeable area, by introducing planting beds. There will also be a new area of brown roof, which will slow the run-off rate. The existing soakaways will be reused and are considered to be sufficient, especially as the volume of rainwater being directed to them will be reduced. The levels of paving surrounding the building will be carefully designed to avoid the risk of surface water flooding, and new gulleys will be introduced.

The proposals are in accordance with London Plan Policies SI 12 and SI 13.

## Sustainability

The proposals incorporate climate change adaptation, in accordance with Local Plan Policy LP20. This is achieved through energy efficiency, to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, and design measures and ventilation systems that will prevent overheating.

The development will achieve BREEAM 'Excellent', and will comply with the Sustainable Construction Checklist SPD.

# Planning Assessment Continued

An Energy Statement has been produced by Max Fordham and is included as a standalone document. This evaluates the proposals against the Energy Hierarchy:

- 1) Be lean – use less energy;
- 2) Be clean – supply energy efficiently;
- 3) Be green – use renewable energy.

Energy use is reduced through passive design measures, high levels of insulation and energy-efficient systems. Renewable energy will be incorporated, including an area of photo-voltaic panels on the roof. Heating will be supplied using an air source heat pump. It isn't feasible in this project to connect to an existing decentralised energy system, but all heating will be electric, and will not emit NOx.

The Energy Statement shows that the new building will achieve a 36% CO<sub>2</sub> saving compared to the current (2021) Building Regulations.

The proposals are therefore consistent with Local Plan Policy LP22. The Planning Report from March 2023 confirmed that the development would significantly improved the Borough's stock of sustainable developments and that there was no objection on sustainability grounds.

## Transport and Highways

St Catherine's School has a School Travel Plan in place, which achieves Gold Accreditation under Transport for London's STARS scheme. This champions walking and cycling to school, to reduce congestion and air pollution in local streets.

There will be no increase in pupil or staff numbers resulting from the proposals, and no change to current travel arrangements. Details of current pupil and staff numbers are provided in the Educational Needs Statement in Appendix 1.

The Pre-Application Advice confirmed that neither a Transport Assessment nor an updated School Travel Plan are required as part of the application.

The School's parking and delivery arrangements will not be affected by the proposals. Deliveries in relation to the construction of the new building will be carefully managed, as detailed in the Construction Management Plan included in the application.

The proposals are in accordance with Local Plan Policy LP44, which seeks to promote sustainable travel opportunities, and Local Plan Policy LP45, which relates to parking and deliveries/servicing.

# Conclusion

The development of a new Music and Art Building at St Catherine's School will significantly improve facilities at the site and thereby benefit the educational experience for pupils, as well as the working environment for staff. It will also benefit local community groups and pupils from local primary schools, who will be invited to use the new building.

The Heritage Statement concludes that the proposed building, due to its much reduced scale and unobtrusive appearance along Cross Deep, will not be harmful to the Conservation Area or the setting of the Lodge. The removal of the existing extension, the landscaping improvements and the high quality of the new building will improve the appearance of the Lodge and its immediate surroundings.

Key views between Pope's Garden and Cross Deep will be retained, and the proposed development will have a neutral impact on the significance of Pope's Garden and the open land of the playing fields.

The development will not result in an increase in pupil or staff numbers, and there will be no increase in traffic generation associated with the site.

There will be no adverse effect on neighbours from noise or any environmental impacts relating to the new building. The air quality will be improved, by the use of non-polluting heating systems.

The development will be highly energy efficiency, and exceeds the energy reduction targets of the Local Plan Policies.

Overall, the proposals represent sustainable development and a presumption in favour of development should apply.

There is no planning harm as compared to significant educational benefits, and the public interest is therefore overwhelmingly served by the development proceeding.



## Educational Needs Statement

Prepared by St Catherine's School

# Educational Needs Statement

St Catherine's is a thriving school and one that is proud of its welcoming Catholic ethos, excellent pastoral care, wide co-curricular provision and academic success. All plans for improvements and capital developments are conceived as part of the school mission to offer outstanding education for girls.

The School seeks to make the most of its site, for the benefit of all pupils, and to ensure developments are in keeping with its heritage site. The existing music building is a single-storey brick building from the late 1980s. The building is in need of modernisation and the project will also enable more suitable provision for other subjects and for enhancement of the site.

This capital project follows a number of thoughtfully designed improvements to the site over the last 20 years: improved dining facilities, refurbished Science laboratories and a Sixth Form Centre have each allowed St Catherine's to improve and develop provision for pupils.

The opportunity to address the needs of Music and Art teaching and performances, is a chance to focus on an area of the School that has not

received investment for many years. This will be welcomed by parents and prospective parents who provide clear messages about the importance of this part of Prep and Senior education. Improved facilities for Music and Art will also help the School's provision to keep pace with competitor schools.

The School is proud of its heritage site. Alexander Pope's home and garden in Twickenham have been celebrated in pupils' Music and Poetry events. The Headmistress is a member of the Pope's Grotto Preservation Committee and the School enjoys this association too, which has meant the joint hosting of events for St Catherine's alumnae who have visited the Grotto. The opportunity to improve the appearance of this part of the school site offers a chance to reconnect with the attractive entrance to the Grotto.

This project will also enable a fitting celebration of Pope's vision for the site and, in particular, the 'arcadia' vision of his original garden. The new glass-fronted foyer to the new Music and Art Building will pay homage to the grotto which originally connected his house and garden, and will allow views from the street to the field and garden beyond.

# Educational Needs Statement Continued

Relevant details about the School are outlined below.

**Pupil numbers:** each year the School has around 430 pupils on roll. Although this may vary slightly year on year, there is no intention to seek an increase in the current LEA school capacity limit of 455 pupils.

The shape of the School has changed over recent years. The Prep Department, which several years ago regularly housed over 130 pupils, is now a department of approximately 90 pupils, meaning that there has been a corresponding increase in the number of Senior School and Sixth Form pupils (since the overall number has been generally stable). This restructuring has happened organically, and has also recently been aided by a strategic choice to manage a phased closure of Early Years and Key Stage one (Year 1 and 2), so that by 2024 St Catherine's will educate girls from Years 3-13 (ages 7 to 18).

These changes to the shape of the school - as regards the range of year groups and the number of older girls - has meant a rethinking of how to maximise the space this site offers and how to ensure the best and most suitable range of subjects. The Music and Art Project enables the rehousing of two important creative subjects, and two additional classrooms.

**Class size:** Prep classes currently have between 11-15 pupils per class, and classes of no more than 20 best suit the School's Prep programme. There are 15-22 pupils in Year 7-11 classes and the maximum class size is 22. Sixth Form classes can vary though all classes are smaller than in other year groups. This pattern works well for the School and there is no intention to alter class sizes.

**Subjects taught:** St Catherine's offers a wide range of academic and creative/practical subjects; the list of subjects offered at Prep, Senior and Sixth Form level has been mostly consistent over the last 10 years and there are no plans for significant alteration to the academic programme. However, some subjects (for example, Textiles and Computing) have become more popular; they are excellent subjects for pupils in this changing world and the School seeks to accommodate them properly.

As St Catherine's moves to a more whole-school Year 3-13 model, the current integration across the site will increase, such that Senior teachers offer more subject specialism to Prep pupils, and Prep pupils make more use of the facilities which may have previously been viewed as chiefly Senior spaces.

**Staff numbers:** A total of 100 staff are employed by the School, 33 of whom are part-time. Academic staff account for 62 of the 100 staff and a further 38 staff are employed in a support capacity, of which 4 are employed on an ad-hoc basis or as part of the school's cleaning team. There are also an additional 9 contract staff (catering and cleaning staff), and 11 peripatetic staff (chiefly for Music, and Special Educational Needs & Disabilities - SEND).

**Public Benefit:** St Catherine's is proud to offer means-tested bursaries to pupils who would not otherwise be able to access the educational opportunities the School offers. Many of these pupils especially enjoy the rich Music, performing arts and Art programmes - several current bursary pupils are regular concert performers and artists.

The School is also pleased to offer its facilities to a number of local groups, for example the Teddington Choral Society, which uses the site for its rehearsals, and local maintained sector primary schools which use the swimming pool. The project will allow the School to offer better facilities to groups with whom St Catherine's already has a relationship.

A Music Partnership with local maintained schools is also underway - the goal of which is to offer music tuition and assistance to local maintained primary schools. The plan is to welcome these local pupils to some specially designed music activities during the school day. This project sits alongside a broader commitment to public benefit by the School which includes supporting academic programmes within maintained schools, service within the local community, and volunteer roles taken by staff in local churches, cub/brownie groups and charities.

# Educational Needs Statement Continued

The main issues the development is designed to address are outlined below:

## 1. Educational considerations arising from a lack of space

**Music:** The central Music Room currently accommodates music lessons, composition classes (where IT facilities are needed), choir and orchestra rehearsals, and large meetings (for example, House Meetings). The small adjoining rooms are designed only for peripatetic teaching; two of these are actually too small (3.8 m<sup>2</sup>) for teaching and not appropriate in terms of the space needed for staff and pupils, especially in cases where two pupils share a lesson. There is currently no other dedicated Music teaching space; this also means the central Music Room is crowded with instruments and teaching resources.

**Art:** The current Art facilities are not adequate to support the growing popularity of Art and Design at the School. There is currently only one Art classroom and one Photography room. These rooms are crowded and having only two teaching spaces restricts timetable options as multiple classes cannot take place simultaneously and Sixth Formers lack designated space to undertake independent work. Textiles has long been a GCSE and A Level subject and it has become increasingly popular; at present a permanent teaching space for Textiles is not available.

The Art, Photography and Textiles curriculum - especially at GCSE and A Level - includes exhibition events which celebrate the girls' work and provide opportunities for those seeking further education in Art or Design to experiment with their work. At present, these exhibitions mean using the Drama Studio which hampers the running of other lessons and activities. This project would include an Art room large enough to accommodate attractive exhibitions of pupil work, without compromising other parts of the School.

**Other:** The School is committed to providing a dynamic programme for teaching and learning across all subjects, and to ensuring excellent provision for able, gifted and talented pupils and for SEND pupils. Well-designed and suitably sized classrooms facilitate a wide range of activities, allowing for team teaching and the provision of educational support.

The current Music Room is also a multi-purpose space, for example, it is used for House Meetings, small performances, and parent/teacher meetings. The ability to house large meetings and to host parents who attend regular school events is impeded by the size of the room. The proposed Music Recital Room would accommodate these activities.

## 2. Poor quality building

The existing music building has inadequate lighting and no longer meets the School's needs; the acoustics are poor and ceiling height is not suitable for the hosting of ambitious and rewarding performances.

The adjoining pupil toilet area is dated and designed chiefly for younger pupils; this needs redesigning to suit current pupil needs and recommendations for this type of facility. The proposed building has two separate toilets - suitable for pupils and for adults.

The adjoining Lodge classroom (which this project plans to remove) is an unattractive and small classroom; with three external walls it is an unpleasantly draughty and cold room. The Lodge classroom also diminishes the integrity of the heritage Lodge building, which could (without the current adjoining classroom) return to its original design as a handsome free-standing building, with attractive landscaping and paving to the rear of the building.

# Educational Needs Statement Continued

## 3. Poor outside space

The current Music block and adjoining Lodge classroom mean that pupil thoroughfare (to and from the Hall and the Prep Department) is cramped, narrow and difficult to supervise, especially during busy periods of the school day. The new development will address these problems.

Outside space at the rear of the current Music Block is restricted, thus preventing appropriate Prep play and social activities. The current over-large ramp access to the Prep Department is an additional restriction, which will be tastefully designed at the rear of the building. This - and the placement of the new Music and Art Building - would allow for the landscaping and design of this play area, in keeping with Pope's 'arcadia' theme outlined above.

## 4. Poor performance space

The current Music Room is crowded with musical and teaching equipment and so does not provide an appropriate setting for performance. The School is keen to provide pupils and parents with a performance space and experience similar to that which other schools within the sector provide. This means suitable ceiling height, better storage and a design which facilitates events. The design for the Music Recital Room creates a space to suit the aspirations and talent of the pupils. This space would also allow the School's current programme of drama and public speaking events to be hosted in a more attractive and comfortable manner.