

## Comment on a planning application

### Application Details

**Application:** 23/3208/FUL

**Address:** St Catherines School Cross Deep Twickenham TW1 4QJ

**Proposal:** The proposed development is a new Music and Art Building, to improve the facilities at St Catherine's School. The existing single storey music building and 20th century extension to the Lodge are to be demolished, to make space for the new two storey building. The external areas will be improved, with new paving, planting and trees.

### Comments Made By

**Name:** Popes Grotto Preservation Trust registered charity 1162424 Mr. Michael Cherry

**Address:** 75 Radnor Road Twickenham TW1 4NB

### Comments

**Type of comment:** Make a general observation

**Comment:** The Pope's Grotto Preservation Trust has no objection in principle to the proposed demolition and new building but we do have some concerns regarding the construction phase and its potential impact on Alexander Pope's grotto.

The Trust (registered charity 1162424) works in partnership with Radnor House School, owners of the structure, to achieve and maintain the preservation of Alexander Pope's grotto, a grade 2\* listed structure sited under Radnor House School and extending under the road Cross Deep into the St Catherine's School site. The grotto, described by Historic England as 'of outstanding national importance', has been the subject of a recent large-scale restoration project for which the National Lottery Heritage Fund has provided much of the funding. This has involved cleaning, re-fixing of minerals and fossils, removal of modern concrete floors and infill, and the installation of sympathetic lighting. The grotto and much of its decoration are 300 years old and represent the only remaining elements of Pope's famous villa and gardens. Following completion of the restoration project, the grotto was removed from Historic England's Heritage at Risk Register in November 2023.

The Trust's concerns relate to the possible impact of building works and piling, on the structure of the grotto, which sits only a matter of metres from the proposed construction site. The Trust notes the following recommendation in the Executive Summary of the Archaeological Statement:

'Owing to the location of the Study Site within the former Pope's Gardens and Tier II Twickenham and Twickenham Riverside Archaeological Priority Area, it is considered that the Local Planning Authority will require the archaeological monitoring of development groundworks in this instance. It is recommended that any such archaeological works could be attached to the granting of planning consent and be secured through an appropriately worded archaeological planning condition.'

The Trust requests that the requirement for archaeological monitoring is made a condition of any grant of planning consent.