



New Oldfield – Educational Rationale

April 2019

John Lyon’s Strategic Plan

The John Lyon School’s (JLS) estates masterplan, which includes the rebuilding of Oldfield, forms part of the School’s Strategic Plan and is in keeping with the school values: Ambition; Excellence; Innovation; Creativity; Heritage; Community; Enquiry; Resolve. The School has several strategic imperatives within its School Strategic Plan which it is looking to achieve by 2024. Those most relevant to the new Oldfield building are used as subheadings below, followed by a comment on how the new building will, in part, facilitate these imperatives.

‘Continually review, plan, evolve and develop the School estate provision to meet changing educational demands and learning opportunities alongside the expectations of discerning independent school parents and families.’

1. By creating a state-of-the-art building, with a wow factor, this key building will be a distinctive selling point for the School. In particular it will embody the School’s values of Ambition, Excellence, Creativity and Innovation. It will visibly reflect the School’s academic identity and house modern technological facilities that the School does not currently have.
2. For the minimum disruption to learning, it would be better to build a new building alongside the current building (then demolish the old one), so that uninterrupted learning can continue during the year-plus construction period.
3. We would like the focus of Oldfield to be on learning. However, the current access (one of two main access points to the School) is located next to the refuse bin area. In landscaping the area, there is an opportunity to move the refuse bin area away from Oldfield, nearer the kitchens. Minibus parking can be moved and the car parking area could be designed to sit more sensitively in the surroundings.
4. The current Oldfield building has only one narrow access point between the ground and first floor, which is simply not practical, given the numbers of pupils using this main classroom block. This congested access point does not readily prepare pupils for learning as they enter the building.
5. Multi-comfort spaces can be created such that the learning environments have favourable light, CO₂, temperature, humidity conditions, etc. The legacy services in the current building do not enable this.

‘Deliver a distinctive curriculum that gives John Lyon pupils a unique, well-rounded learning experience that matches their current and future needs.’

6. A newly designed Oldfield building would deliver improved learning experiences and outcomes for all pupils. It would also enable the introduction of new curriculum options, such as Photography, and create a hub for STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, Mathematics) as a curriculum subject in its own right (currently STEAM is taught in Year 7 & 8 but in generic classrooms, laboratories and art classrooms). The School currently has a long-term aim of providing Design & Technology as a curriculum subject; the new Oldfield building will free up space on the rest of the site, enabling the future development of facilities to enable this.
7. Adjacent to the Science Laboratories, the new Oldfield building would better enable separate STEAM departments to work together closely in an atmosphere that enables collaboration between these subjects and the study of STEAM as a subject in its own right.
8. All our staff currently work in a heavily peripatetic manner, with teaching staff taking lessons in several different teaching spaces. This leads to inefficiencies as valuable lesson preparation time is lost transitioning between rooms. Increasing the number of teaching spaces would address this and would further give teaching staff ownership of their classrooms.
9. By creating a greater number of teaching spaces, the rest of the site can be reconfigured such that departments can function as hubs. Currently many subjects are taught in teaching spaces that are shared between departments (e.g. Geography & English). Our core subjects need 6 teaching spaces to enable them

to celebrate pupils work and for them to have specialist materials in each teaching space (hence moving Geography would enable English to have its own area). In particular due to the increasing popularity of the Sciences, a new Science laboratory needs to be created. This is particularly significant in the Sciences where, several Science lessons take place in a non-specialist laboratory and some take place in teaching spaces without laboratory equipment. In addition, some classroom subjects are now taught in laboratories. Both situations are unsatisfactory. Whilst most subject areas are affected in this way to some degree, perhaps most affected is Physics, whereby 18 (20 minute blocks) out of 181 lessons do not take place in any type of laboratory and of those taking place in a laboratory, 33 lessons take place in a specialist Biology or Chemistry laboratory. With the School's academic emphasis, it is easy to see why classroom accommodation matters – and may affect standards – when considering the extent of lessons delivered in rooms that are not subject specific. JLS does not currently follow the norm for independent schools in this regard.

10. Current teaching spaces are inflexible. They are typically rectangular and have a capacity of 24 pupils. By building flexible and modular teaching spaces they may be readily combined to form spaces that house larger groups of pupils (e.g. a lunchtime seminar for 40 pupils). Departments will also be able to choose to teach some course content in conference or seminar layout.
11. Given the traditional nature of the teaching facilities, modern pedagogy is restricted. A new teaching facility would enable the creation of forward thinking teaching spaces that conform to the most recent research; indeed, this year the School is launching both a Staff and a Pupil led action research programme to inform the design of future teaching spaces. JLS pupils will be taking the lead in the design and layout of these learning spaces.
12. Current morning teaching occupancy rates of classrooms across the site ranges from 88% - 94%, averaging 92% (afternoons are less affected due to at least one year group taking part in Games). Couple this occupancy with the complexity of timetabling leads to the unsatisfactory position of staff being overly-peripatetic and subjects being taught in non-specialist areas. The burden of teaching the same class in a different space is something we cope with daily but leads to wasted time and increased stress on pupils and staff. The School would like to move to peak occupancy rates of c. 80%. To enable this, 11 new teaching spaces across the site are needed. Oldfield would provide some and would further enable the reconfiguration of other parts of the site such that further spaces are developed.
13. Additionally, building a classroom block with greater capacity than the current building would enable other areas of the site subsequently to be temporarily closed and developed (e.g. Music School and Lyon Building) leading to less disruption during reconfiguration exercises.
14. A new building would enable the integration of aspects of the School library, such as STEAM, Art and Maths resources, within the core of a new building that also utilises technology. The School's philosophy is that technology should be employed when it enhances the pupil's learning outcomes. We still celebrate and encourage the use of books. Integrating library styled communal spaces and resources with the use of mobile technology and amalgamating our heritage and innovation values visibly demonstrates this philosophy.

'Maintain and extend the Extra-Curricular & Co-Curricular Programme so that all pupils are consistently benefitting from optional clubs on a weekly basis; all pupils will have the opportunity to take part in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award, Combined Cadet Force or Community Service for at least two years.'

15. Last year the School expanded its Co-Curricular Programme. Several activities now run with pupil numbers greater than 24. The activities (e.g. delivery of first aid) would be suited to larger spaces. To enable a better educational provision for the pupils we would like to provide a greater number of both Curricular and Extra-Curricular STEAM initiatives and it would be attractive to have a flagship building for this purpose. The building should have flexible learning spaces that could be adapted depending on their use (e.g. three teaching spaces with collapsible walls to create meeting spaces for larger groups) as well as maker spaces which promote digital innovation and creativity (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/libraries-and-makerspaces/libraries-and-makerspaces>).
16. The School is keen to grow its pupil led societies (e.g. Digital Society and Excellence Society). Again, much of their activities would benefit from appropriately sized seminar rooms. Currently sessions either have to be capped at 24 pupils or they need to take place in the Music School hall (thereby preventing music practices), the Boyd Campbell Hall (which accommodates over 300 pupils and does not make for a warm learning environment) or the New Memorial Dining Hall, the availability of which is limited during the times that the societies would operate.

‘Create a Digital Innovation programme that is used to enhance pupils' learning experience, organisation and productivity whilst also promoting healthy use of technology.’

17. With the growth of Computer Science nationally as an examined subject at GCSE and A-Level (in 2018 more than 10,000 students took this qualification, an increase of 2,000 from the previous year), it is unlikely that JLS will be able to timetable all Computer Science lessons in the current Computer Suites (note that BYOD (Bring Your Own Device) does not solve the issue as GCSE & A-Level courses require specific software and minimum specification devices). To enable its growth another bespoke computer science suite is needed. Computer Science is likely to continue being a growth area (for all schools) and therefore provision for this will need to be made.
18. The School would like to use current research to inform its practice in digital learning; it is envisaged that new spaces should be ICT rich and that digital literacy and blended learning is embedded throughout the curriculum. The School's ICT development plan will inform any emerging design options. A new building should be built in a manner that futureproofs our needs – the educational landscape will be quite different in 10 years' time, with the introduction of AI (Artificial Intelligence), AR (Augmented Reality), VR (Virtual Reality) and machine learning. The new building could be built in a way that would accommodate and celebrate these technologies in spaces designed to accommodate them.

‘Use the School Values to inform all that we do, from strategic and development planning to everyday activities and teaching and learning. Ensure all members of the John Lyon community are familiar with and aspire to these values.’

19. The front of the building points away from the Hill hiding behind the old brick wall adjacent to it. The open banked green space behind the building is underutilised but by moving the building down the slope, the amount of usable communal outdoor space will be increased. These outdoor spaces can be used to enhance learning experiences during lessons and provide better play areas during break times.
20. Communal learning spaces will be created in the new Oldfield building. In particular, private study hubs will enable pupils to work in public areas, such that learning during pupils' free time is seen as normal. Pupils will have easily accessible spaces in which to work together. Furthermore, appropriate landscaping and external furniture will provide pupils with outdoor learning areas, meeting and relaxation spaces.
21. The new design will provide attractive spaces to celebrate the School's art, with improved gallery space.

‘To enhance the Pastoral Framework with strong emphasis on the role of the tutor and to give pupils greater ownership of their journey through school to further education through self-reflection and target setting.’

22. Currently the School is limited in its ability to timetable tutor sessions in spaces that are suitable. For example, some pupils in lower years are registered in a Science laboratory. However they cannot take ownership of parts of that space because laboratories need to be locked during their break times. Ideally all pupils should be able to access their tutor space outside lesson times. This can only be achieved by increasing the total number of teaching spaces.

‘Provide an effective Staff CPD Programme incorporating a coaching culture that puts teaching and learning at the heart of all that we do.’

23. Much of the learning on the site is hidden, both because of the design of the spaces and because staff opt to close the blinds in the classrooms due to the direct sunlight entering teaching spaces. We would like to develop an open learning environment and one that enables a coaching culture amongst staff. This is far easier if what is happening in classrooms is visible and celebrated.

‘Develop beneficial community links and public benefit activity including reviewing the School's bursary provision and developing partnering or sponsorship links with other schools.’

24. The development of spaces that can be turned into seminar rooms would enable the development of our Primary School Projects programme and other community projects, the numbers of which are currently capped by the size of a classroom and number of spaces available. Seminar work between JLS and local schools with, for example, debating fixtures, would also benefit from such spaces.

Beverley Kuchar
Harrow Council
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26th December 2018

Dear Beverley

Harrow Council Design Review Panel: The John Lyon School

As you know, The John Lyon School was the subject of a design review on 5th December 2018, and I am writing to summarise the Panel's comments.

The Panel's comments on progress to date and recommendations moving forward are as follows:

General

The design team should be commended for their clear presentation and for providing lots of information about the design iteration and development.

The design strategy has been driven by a stipulation that the new footprint does not exceed the previous (340 sq m) – it was unclear from the presentation and feedback what the rationale for that was. The panel think that a shorter school with a wider footprint would have a milder impact on the surrounding context. If there was more flexibility in the footprint then other aspects of the building can be freed up. To have a building of 5 stories gives lots of complication in terms of accessibility and circulation.

The presentation was heavily focused on the exterior appear of the building but only a small amount of information was given on the internal layout of the building. Further diagrams showing the flows of people, the basic arrangement of space, and the access requirements and mitigations, should be provided within the application. Level of diagram (showing the numbers and the flow), site plan, and a section to properly understand the access.

The view from the playfields of the existing school is misleading and should be rectified. The building appears to have too large facing elevation, more of the playground should be shown.

Massing and Layout

The panel have a concern that the new open plan building arrangement, although commended in principle, is too heavily reliant on moving elements. The scheme should be properly future-proofed for change and adaptability.

Height

There is a concern with the height of the proposed school, and that on the elevation facing the Harrow School's cricket ground you're creating a difficult edge condition.

The eaves level is slightly too high and so muddles the hierarchy of buildings in the elevation in relation to the existing school. The building should be more sympathetic to the main school building – this could be articulated in choice of materials, or mass and form.

Access

As mentioned above, further drawings should be shown of the access to the building and around the site – both in diagram, in section, and as a clear ground floor plan (at playground level). At the moment it's unclear how someone will move between the different buildings, especially considering the road between the proposed building and the main building is not accessible in itself.

The scheme should look to improve the accessibility across the site and not just in the proposed additional building.

Architecture

At the moment there is little hierarchy in the different façade treatments facing either the cricket playing fields or the entrance to the school. The façade facing the playground should be the primary façade with the façade facing the cricket ground as a back.

There is no legibility to the access to the proposed building. The building should articulate the entrance to the building on the playground side with more clarity in detailing, diagram, and materiality. There is an opportunity to do something slightly differently which is being lost.

Landscape and Public Realm

A more detailed ground floor plan (at playground level) should be shown with clear indications of hard and soft landscape, what is usable for play etc.

Summary

Overall, the panel commend the design team for a clear presentation. It's nice to see the immigration and optimism in the design of new learning spaces in the borough.

The panel would push back against the idea that the newly proposed building should be of the same footprint (340sqm) as the previous block. This constraint is putting lots of pressure on other aspects of the scheme. If there is any way to bring down the height, the design team should do so. Although, it should be emphasised that it's very important to keep good high floor to ceiling heights. And the newly proposed building should respect the existing context in terms of mass, height, and material choice.

At the moment, there is a question mark about the distinction between the north and south façade in terms of materiality and articulation. The panel strongly believe that the south elevation should be treated as the primary, and the elevation facing onto the field should be read as the back.

Clearer diagrams and technical drawings should be provided for the flow of people, arrangement of space, access, and landscape strategy.

A detailed car parking and travel plan should be provided so the panel are able to comment on the arrangements in context to the scale of the development.

Further consideration should be given to properly future proof the building. On a site which doesn't have much room to develop and expand, what happens if in time the new block just becomes a series of classrooms?

Yours sincerely,

Richard Cottrell

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The Panel was attended by the following:

Richard Cottrell - DRP Chair
Pooja Asher - DRP member
Katy Marks - DRP member

Catriona Cooke – Harrow Council (Case Officer)
Kaiyil Gnanakumaran – Harrow Council (Review Manager)
Jake Arnfield – Harrow Council (Review Coordinator)

Beverley Kuchar
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10th April 2019

Dear Beverley,

Harrow Council Design Review Panel: John Lyon School

As you are aware, John Lyon School was the subject of a follow-up Design Review on 27th March 2019; I am writing to summarise the Panel's comments.

The Panel's comments on the development of the scheme, and recommendations moving forward, are outlined as follows:

General

The Panel is positive about the prospect of the proposed scheme, and feel there is the opportunity to make some very good architecture here. The overall design concept and style should be made stronger; whether is it 'flamboyant', or 'pared-back and ordered'. The Panel would like to see a strong demonstration of this, rather than several possible variations of the same thing. A stronger sense of the design aims would enable a successful relationship between massing, plan and elevation, which remains unresolved.

Site and Services

Moving the building location up the hill is positive, and helps mitigate impact of massing from the cricket ground. There is still some work required to negotiate the levels between the school and the playground, in order to provide equitable access. Is there an opportunity to accommodate a dog-legged ramp with a comfortable gradient?

The Panel enquired about the technical feasibility of the package plant and its impact on the adjacent trees. It is not clear how services will be routed through the ground to the school building. Although an initial cost plan has driven the decision to limit excavation, given there will be site works anyway, it may be just as cost-effective to locate the plant in the basement.

Entrance

It is accepted that school buildings require multiple entrances for operational purposes. However, the hierarchy of entrances lacks clarity. The side entrance seems to be the main entrance, and the central arch leads to 'The Society Room' instead of the Lobby. There are multiple ways to resolve the issue of primary vs secondary entrances, such as relocating the main entrance to the corner, or tying in the entrance to the central axis. In either scenario, the Panel felt that the corner needs to be resolved three-dimensionally, rather than being considered as the joining of two elevations.

Massing

The massing concept of 'small house, big house' is strong, and is a good way to break up the volume. The Panel are glad to see this followed through to the plan. The Panel also agree that the resulting shorter frontage of the building is more comfortable looking up the hill.

External Façade

The proposed scheme has a strong presence, which presents a real opportunity to make the external façade work harder. There seems to be a separation between elevation and plan, and there is a distinct approach to the long and short elevations. However, it is felt that the elevations read more residential than civic or educational. Could the façade be further articulated, using framing or architraves? The windows also appear a little ungenerous, whereas the plans show windows with wider openings and with deeper reveals.

With a deliberately 'flat' façade, a really good brick with interesting brick bonds are needed. A well-proportioned fenestration arrangement does more than overcomplicated brick details and patterning. The focus on the central axis in plan could be reflected in the façade with a special window. Is there an opportunity to create a view through the STEAM centre to the playing fields beyond, when entering through the central arch on ground?

The ornamental shading devices seem a little strange given the deep window reveals, and particularly with the hit-and-miss brick above them. The hit-and-miss brick could either be made into a full band across the facade, or integrated into the window reveal.

There is a hierarchy of plinth-middle-top that could be made more of by further articulation of the facade. Expressing the base in the round would also help tie the elevations together. The top roof storey also seems unconvincing, and feels like it should be expressed as part of the roof language, rather than creating 'blank' windows. A mansard roof, as worked through in earlier design studies, seems more successful.

Internal Arrangement

The Panel is generally convinced by the plans. On the upper floors, the use of the central lobby as a habited room will need to be assessed against the fire strategy. It seems there may need to be more doors for compartmentation, rather than the open plans that are shown.

Summary

In general, the Panel is satisfied that there is the potential to make a good educational building. However, they would like to see the architect making clear brave decisions relating to the idea of the design and by taking these to their logical conclusion, the designs would become more resolved.

Yours sincerely,



Richard Cottrell

The Panel was attended by the following:

Richard Cottrell - DRP Chair
Chris Fellner - DRP Member

Kaiyil Gnanakumaran - GLA/Harrow Council (Review Manager)
Catriona Cooke - Harrow Council (Case Officer)
Rebecca Eng - Harrow Council (Design Review Coordinator)

Wayne Head - Architect
Nick Pryor – Planning Consultant

James Govier

From: Catriona.Cooke@harrow.gov.uk
Sent: 08 April 2019 17:01
To: James Govier
Cc: Theclalin.Cheung@clth.co.uk; michael.gibson@johnnyon.org;
 wayne.head@clth.co.uk; Beverley.Kuchar@harrow.gov.uk; Joshua Daruvala;
 Kaiyil.Gnanakumaran@london.gov.uk
Subject: RE: John Lyon School - comments on revised plans

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Completed

Categories: 8871 Oldfield House

Dear James

Please see below our initial comments on the revised drawings:

- I note that a number of suggestions given at the DRP workshop have been taken on board, and it is encouraging to see that a lot of work has gone into resolving these issues since the last meeting
- We would welcome the move to locate the plant in the basement, however, this will need to be resolved in section. Currently, a hatch-type door in the ground floor could pose a safety risk, is there an opportunity to extend the west wing stair?
- Good to see the realignment of 'central axis' on ground floor and views through from the garden entrance to the playing fields
- Seating in the landscape unclear (site plan, and plans/elevations generally, would benefit from further annotation). Are these timber sleepers? Do the seats work with existing levels? A ramp to the lower level of the playground was suggested at the last workshop, in order to make this space more inclusive. A section through the landscape from school to play area towards the cricket fields would be helpful
- In general, we are satisfied with the description of materials, and welcome the copper accents to the conservation brick. As ever, we will need to review brick details to windows, including deep thresholds, pepper potting, dog tooth brick etc.
- We note there are approximately 2 WCs per floor, to accommodate approx. 70+ students per floor? Where are the accessible WCs? Also possible to show more urinals perhaps, rather than stand alone toilets
- I would question the necessity of the protruding balconies, as these are considered inappropriate for the building use. These currently lack justification; having spoken with planning colleagues, including the chief planner, we are concerned this poses a large safety risk. Our preference would be to omit all balconies.
- It is great to see the window openings have increased and become more generous. However, there are multiple window types shown (possibly 5+), can this be further rationalised by reducing the number of typologies? Variation of fenestrations, especially to the south elevation, could appear less chaotic if the number of window types is simplified.
- Will PVs be placed on the 'inside V' of the roof? If this is the case - that's fine, as they will not be seen from the hill or neighbouring residents
- Rendered elevations appear to undermine the scheme greatly; these should be shown either in context, fully annotated, or with zoomed in details. We would welcome another Forbes Massie render as demonstrated previously.
- Good to see the dormers have decreased in size; omit balconies as per previous comment

I hope the above is of assistance.

Regards

Catriona Cooke