



DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT

Project: CFBL Roof Terrace
Project Ref: 2310
Client: Collège Français Bilingue de Londres (CFBL).
Address: 87 Holmes Road, London NW5 3AX
Issued: Patrick Bankhead, Director

1.0 Introduction

This Design & Access Statement is for the proposed adaptation of an existing green flat roof area, to serve as an outdoor learning resource for the children of the Collège Français Bilingue de Londres (CFBL).

The application includes the following main elements:

- Utilising an existing green roof as an accessible Roof Terrace to be used by pupils at all age groups (3-15 years), as an area for learning about nature and wildlife.
- Addition of glass balustrades with a translucent finish to the perimeter of the terrace, for privacy and safety. Where overlooking of neighbouring property could be a concern, the balustrade is raised to 1.5m for improved screening.
- Forming a new metal stairway to provide access from playground level, with a lockable gate and secured storage enclosure beneath.
- Adapting an existing window opening set within the 2011 extension, to provide level access to the new terrace.

The proposals are framed as a minimal intervention within the school campus, and to the setting of the Grade II Listed Building. The new stair and balustrades are simple, functional elements that will be barely visible from the public realm.

The school have summarised the objectives and benefits of the Roof Terrace in the following Client Statement:

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1.1 Client Statement

The Educational Benefits of Access to a Green Vegetalized Roof for Pupils in College Francais Bilingue de Londres

Our school's new building opened in 2011 and one of its roofs has been self seeded over a soil substrate. It now hosts a large amount of vegetal UK native species and most probably insects and other small invertebrates.

There is a unanimous consensus among educators and school trustees that access to this green vegetalized roof could offer significant educational advantages for students, fostering a deeper connection to nature and providing valuable learning experiences.

Among the key reasons why we think we should prioritise the importance of implementing access and maintaining our green roof we are listing:

Hands-on Learning Opportunities:

- *The "green roof" could provide an engaging and interactive learning environment for students, allowing them to directly experience and explore nature within their school premises.*
- *Pupils could participate in gardening activities, learning about plant life cycles, biodiversity, and the importance of ecological balance.*
- *The practical experience of caring for plants and observing their growth can enhance students' understanding of scientific concepts and ecological systems.*



Environmental Education:

- *The "green roof" could offer a unique platform for environmental education, allowing students to develop a deeper understanding of sustainability, conservation, and the importance of green spaces.*

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- *Students can learn about the role of plants in carbon sequestration, climate regulation, and the ecological services provided by green roofs.*
- *By engaging in hands-on activities, such as planting and maintaining vegetation, pupils can develop a sense of environmental responsibility and become advocates for sustainable practices.*

**Connection to Natural World:**

- *Access to green spaces, even within an urban environment, would foster a sense of connection and appreciation for the natural world.*
- *The presence and access to this “green roof” provides a peaceful retreat where students can escape the confines of the classroom and experience the calming effects of nature.*
- *Interacting with green spaces has been shown to reduce stress levels, improve mental well-being, and enhance cognitive function, positively impacting students overall learning experience.*

Stimulating Curiosity and Creativity:

- *Walking on this roof will inspire curiosity and creativity among students, sparking their interest in the natural world and encouraging exploration and inquiry.*
- *The unique environment of a green roof presents opportunities for observation, investigation, and the discovery of diverse plant species and wildlife.*
- *Students can engage in artistic and creative activities inspired by the natural surroundings, fostering imagination and a deeper appreciation for the beauty of nature.*

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It is therefore very clear that all possibilities should be explored to provide the school with this facility through access which has not been possible until today. We trust that you will acknowledge and share the same conclusion and will consider our application to provide students with valuable opportunities for holistic learning, environmental stewardship, and personal growth.

1.2 About CFBL

The Collège Français Bilingue de Londres (CFBL) opened in 2011, following a major restoration and conversion of the Grade II Listed former London Board School. To assist continuity, the architects responsible for the redevelopment are now involved as Bankhead + Partners, a RIBA Chartered Practice established in 2023.

The school delivers a bilingual and bi-cultural education, currently teaching the French curriculum to a total of 700 pupils from 63 nationalities. The requirement for pupils to speak French means that the majority of current pupils are of French nationality, or come from countries where French is one of the official languages. However, CFBL also holds Open Days in English to encourage more British families to join the school.

CFBL offers co-education for girls and boys ranging from 3 to 15 years of age, in three educational sections, commencing with the Year 1 ('Maternelle') section for 3 to 6 year olds, the remainder of the Primary school section from 6 to 11 year olds, and the Secondary school section from 11 to 15 year olds.

CFBL actively engages with the local community, and with other educational institutes, both UK and French speaking.

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2.0 Process

The submitted proposals follow a careful consideration of the options for a suitable outdoor learning environment, for the study of plants and wildlife. Due to the school's limited play areas, which are very busy at break and lunch times and are already used in rota, it was not deemed practical to create either a dedicated or a shared space at ground level.

The existing green roof area provides an easily controlled space, where students can benefit from the advantages of a natural environment, whilst separated from the main playground and so protected from disruption or inadvertent damage. The building structure, roof build-ups and drainage are already in place to facilitate this function.

3.0 Use

The school campus will continue to operate as before, with the Roof Terrace being utilised during school hours as a learning resource. This will generally be for smaller groups of pupils, under the supervision of a teacher and / or classroom assistant. There will be occasional access by school staff for necessary maintenance and watering purposes, both during and out of term-times.

4.0 Amount

The proposed Roof Terrace area is 154m².

5.0 Layout & Landscape

The new Roof Terrace will have two points of access: firstly via a new stair from playground level, and also directly at first floor level from the Multi-purpose Room. The roof space will be laid out with a mix of fixed and loose elements: raised beds, planters etc, with input from the pupils. The result will be a development of the current green roof area, with a more interesting general appearance and improved biodiversity.

6.0 Scale & Appearance

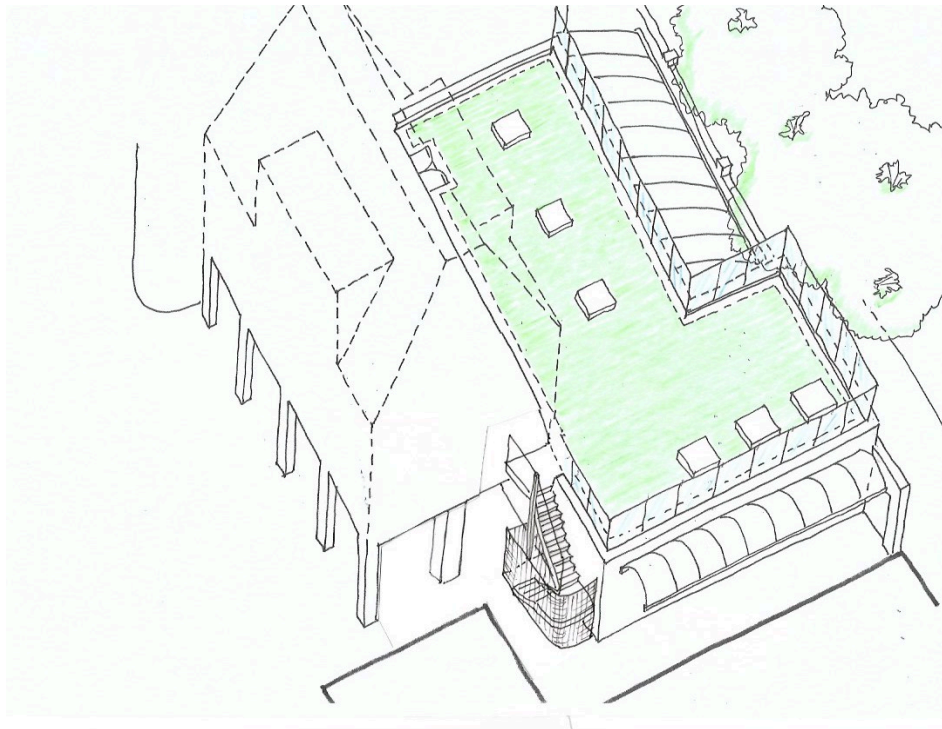
The fixed elements associated with the new Roof Terrace will be minimal in their impact, both when viewed from the public realm and in terms of the setting of the Listed Building. A translucent glass balustrade is proposed to enclose the roof area, set behind the existing parapets and generally 1.1m in height, rising to 1.5m where overlooking could be an issue (9 Cathcart Street).

From the nearest pavement viewpoint, on Cathcart Street, the terrace is screened by mature trees and for most of this aspect set well back behind the infants outdoor area, which has its own canopy structure for year-round play.

The stair which provides the main point of access will be formed in galvanised steel, with a lockable mesh enclosure at playground level to ensure no unsupervised access by pupils. This stair is tucked between the 2011 extension and the retained Laundry building, and will not be visible from the

public realm. The only viewpoints will be from the rear upper rooms of 9 Cathcart Street, and (potentially) glimpsed from some upper front rooms on Willes Road.

At first floor level, an existing window opening will be adapted to provide a pair of doors. This will be formed in a matching metal framed proprietary system, so as to blend in with the adjacent openings.



Isometric view

7.0 Access

Level access to the Roof Terrace will be provided at first floor level, via a new doorway from the Multi-purpose Room, which in turn is fully accessible via the main lift. The Roof Terrace is level, and for further accessibility will have pathways of hard surface (paving slabs) set into the green roof finish.

8.0 Heritage

The Collège Français Bilingue de Londres is a Grade II Listed Building, set within the Inkerman Conservation Area of Kentish Town. Designed by E.R. Robson, Head Architect of the School Board of London, and built between 1873-4, it has subsequently undergone many changes, alterations and additions. The original 1874 building fronted Mansfield Place (later renamed Holmes Road), and was

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further extended along Holmes Road toward the George IV Public House in 1891. Later extensions were added along Cathcart Street, and subsequently on Willis Road after World War One.

Following an extended period of dilapidation, the French Education Charitable Trust purchased the site in 2009. Listed Building Consent and Planning Permission were subsequently gained for major renovations and new-build extensions, with the CFBL school opening to pupils in September 2011, with a second phase completed the following year.

The proposed Roof Terrace makes no adverse material impact on the Listed Building, with no demolitions, adaptations or direct interface with the original Victorian fabric. In terms of setting, the additional glass balustrades are visually lightweight, without visible framing members, and are proportionally small / subservient in relation to the nearest point of adjacency, being the South-East facing gable overlooking the terrace.



Views of CFBL

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