



The Hall Senior School Development Project

The Hall

Design & Access Statement
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PART 1
INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

This **Design & Access Statement** accompanies a Section 73 planning application to vary planning permission 2016/06319/FUL for the redevelopment of The Hall Senior School site located on the east side of Crossfield Road opposite the junction with Adamson Road.

The Hall School operates on three other sites not covered by this application. These are, the Junior School on Buckland Crescent, the Middle School on Crossfield Road and the playing fields at the Wilf Slack Memorial Ground in Barnet.

PROJECT BACKGROUND

The School has identified that the existing buildings on the site are out-dated and no longer meet the long term needs for a modern prep school. The buildings are becoming an obstacle to the successful operation of the school as piecemeal development over the past 30 years has resulted in a congested and cramped layout.

A once in a generation opportunity has therefore arisen to redevelop the site, to retain and enhance the setting of the original Victorian fabric of the school whilst replacing the less successful extensions with a cohesively planned building which compliments and ties in with the original to deliver a holistic solution. The proposed solution will deliver the space required for the long term needs of the School future-proofing the building.

PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT

The purpose of this Design & Access Statement is to:

- Outline the design amendments to the permitted redevelopment scheme following the grant of planning permission in July 2018
- Explain the sound principles behind the design process which have culminated in the proposed development
- Justify the design scheme that is subject to this planning application
- Demonstrate how good, inclusive design has been achieved enabling access for all users.

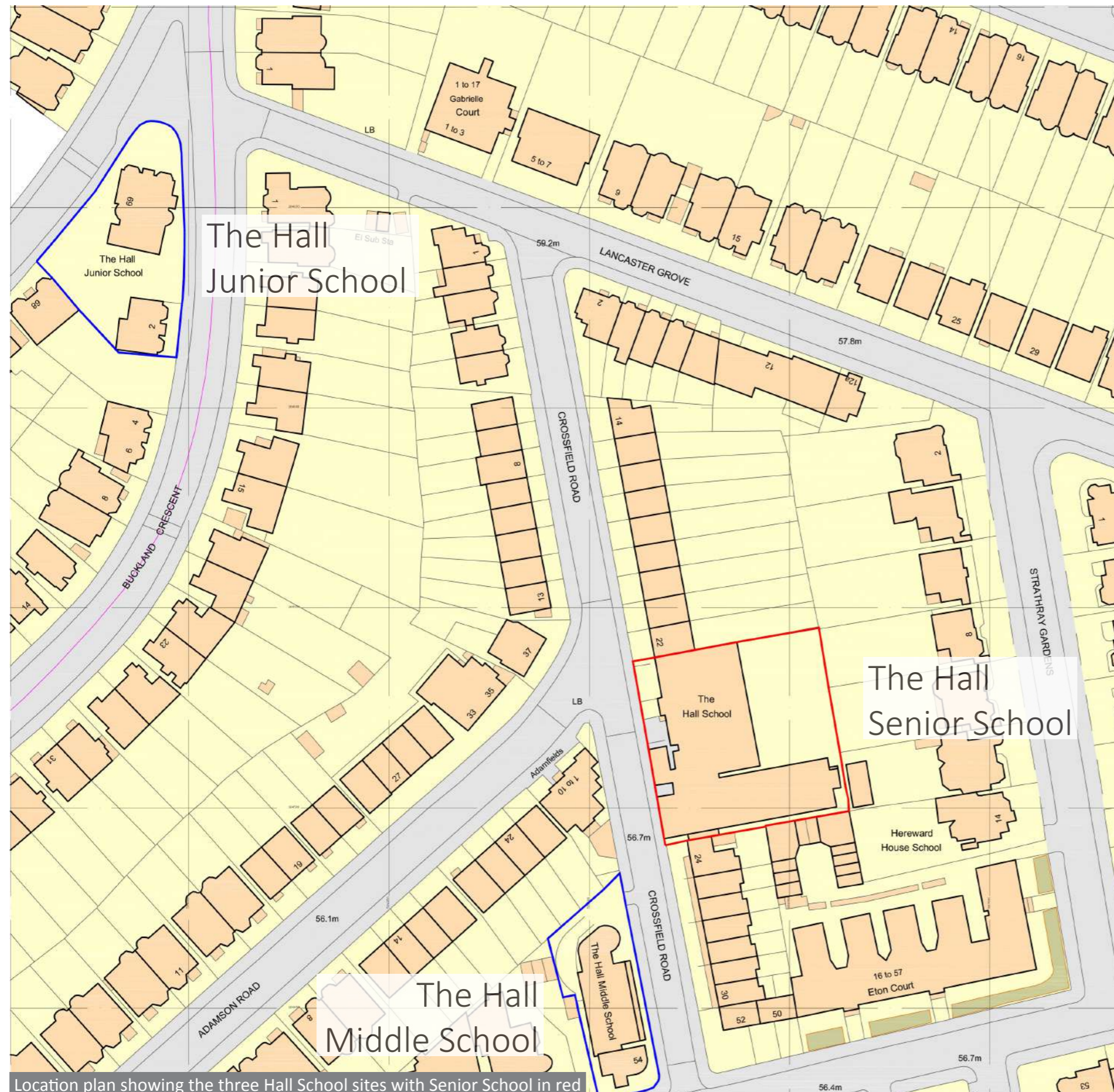
The Hall





PART 2 SITE ANALYSIS

LOCATION ANALYSIS



Location plan showing the three Hall School sites with Senior School in red

THE SCHOOL SITES

The design proposals relate solely to the Senior School on the east side of Crossfield Road.

There are 162 pupils on the senior school roll and this will not change.

The Hall School is located in Hampstead near Swiss Cottage tube station. It has three sites all within a few hundred metres of each other in the Belsize Park Conservation Area:

Junior School – Two adjacent former residential buildings on Buckland Crescent. Hosts Reception, & Years 1, 2 & 3. Some of the administration offices are located here.

Middle School – Late 1990's purpose built educational facility opposite the Senior School on Crossfield Road. Hosts Years 4 & 5. The dining facilities for Years 1 to 8 are located here.

Senior School – Original Victorian School building with later extensions. Hosts Years 6, 7 & 8.

Educational facilities such as the Wilf Slack playing fields in the London Borough of Barnet are shared. These are located in Finchley and are 15 minutes from the school. The facility has recently been upgraded with the refurbishment of the pavilion and improvement of the pitches.

The School has several partnership institutions – Richard Cobden Primary School, Brookfield Primary and The Winch in Camden, Our Lady of Muswell Hill in Haringey and St. Saviour's Church of England Primary School in Westminster.



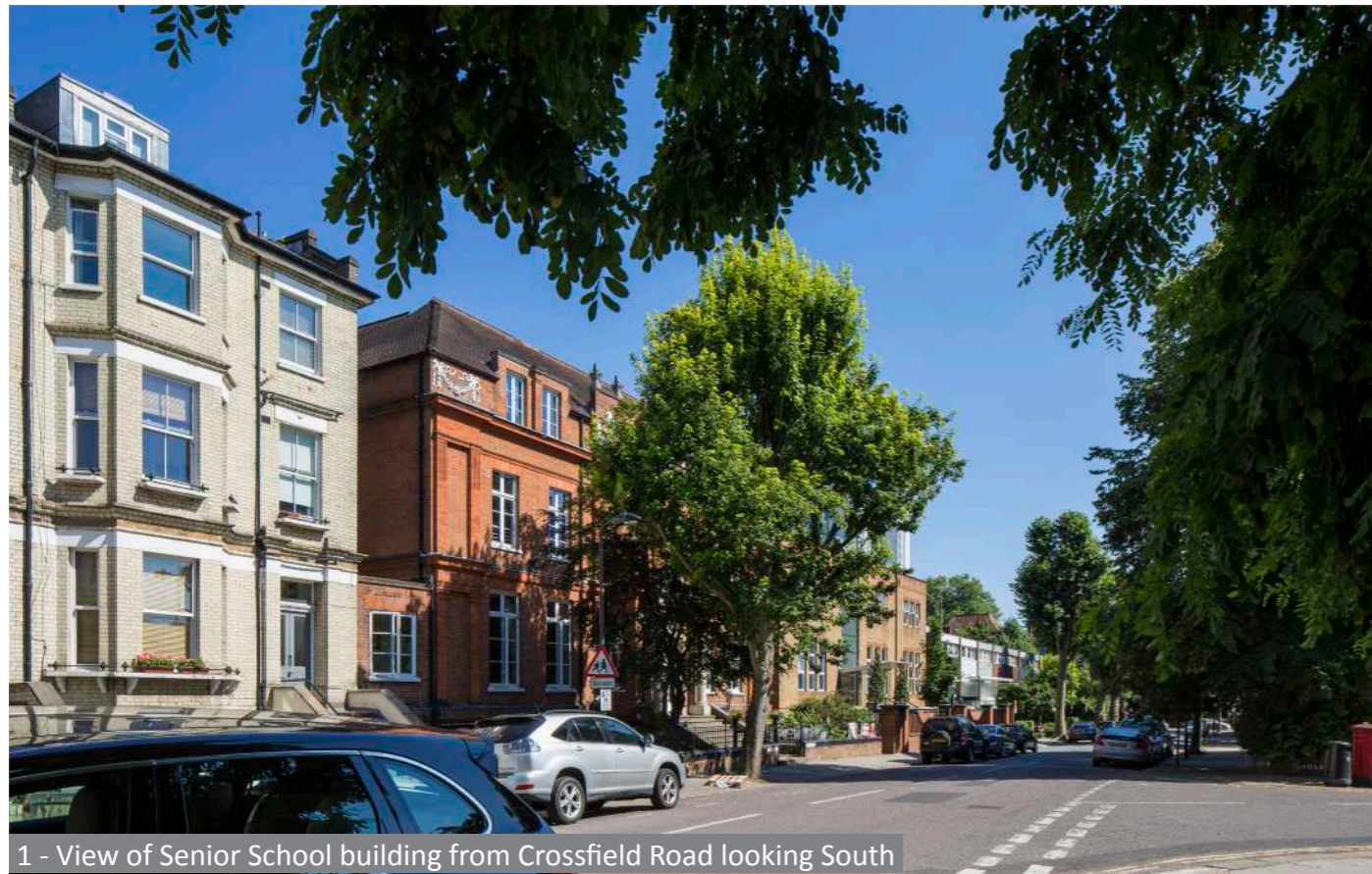
Aerial photograph showing the Senior School site outlined in red

SITE PLAN



Site plan showing the existing buildings and site photograph locations

SITE PHOTOGRAPHS



1 - View of Senior School building from Crossfield Road looking South



2 - View of Senior School building from the end of Adamson Road



3 - View of the Senior School building from outside the Middle School



4 - View of Senior School from the playground

HISTORY

Recognising the importance of heritage and conservation matters, the Hall School has engaged the services of Montagu Evans to advise on the design of the proposals.



Historical photograph of the original school building from the playground, dated 1894



Historical photograph of the original school building from Crossfield Road, dated 1894

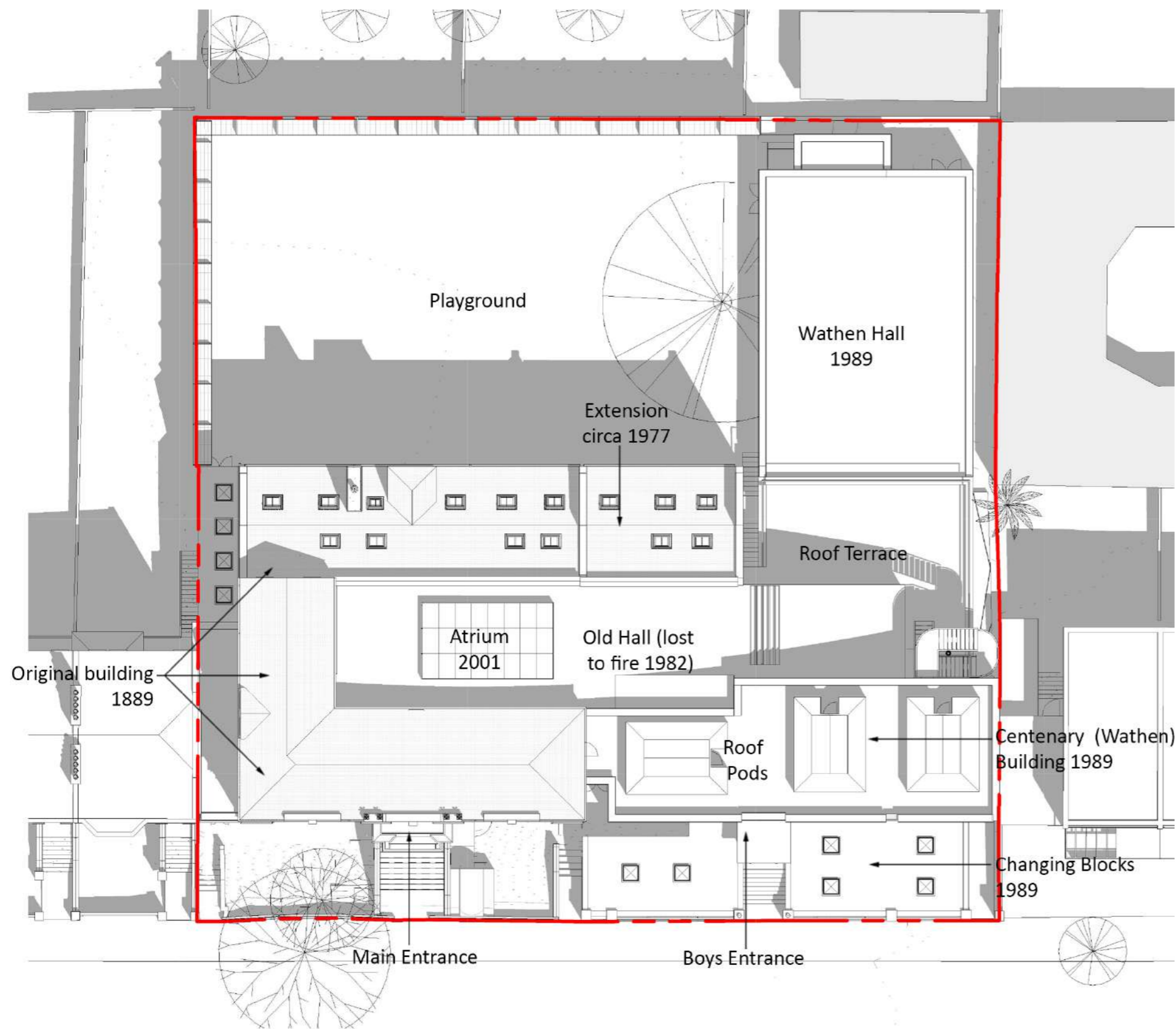
THE HALL SCHOOL

The Hall School is an independent day school for boys aged 4 to 13. Established in 1889, it is one of the leading independent schools in London and is committed to excellence in education. The School is the driving force behind the proposals presented today and has appointed a team of experts to ensure excellence across all aspects of the development.

The Hall School has been based in Camden for the entirety of its existence. The School is clear that the long term future of the School is at the current site on Crossfield Road.

A long and proud history in the local area demonstrates that this will remain the right location for the School for years to come.

The school can trace its history back to 1889 when it was set up as the Belsize School for Boys. In 1905 the school outgrew its building and so a swap was undertaken with a girl's school at The Hall. This building, now the Senior School, has been added to in a piecemeal fashion over time and this has led to a sub-optimal layout.



Building Plan labelling different stages of development

BUILDING DEVELOPMENT HISTORY

1889

Original school building on northern half of the site. This part of the building is noted in the Belsize Park conservation area document as being of notable quality.

1977

The rear gable was extended adding a staircase and further classrooms. Architecturally this is a diminished version of the original but being at the rear of the site its impact is limited.

1982

The original main hall was lost to fire in an arson attack. Old photographs and drawings show how this space was of great quality and the heart of the school.

1986

The fire damaged hall space was filled in with flat roofed accommodation which was later covered by the current atrium.

1989

The Centenary Building or Wathen Building on the southern half of the site was added, this included the Wathen Hall. Specifically noted in the conservation area as not having the same design/heritage merit as the original building, this extension was done on a tight budget with poor finishing materials within and without.

2001

The in-fill of the old hall was partially cleared to make way for new circulation and additional classrooms. Though the architecture is of finer quality than earlier additions it is slightly alien to the context and presents a missed opportunity as some of the key issues regarding daylight, ventilation and circulation have been compounded by cramming in more classrooms.

2018

Planning permission granted for redevelopment scheme involving demolition of the 'Centenary' and 'Wathen Hall' buildings and erection of new four storey building with glazed link to original school building, two storey rear extension with external terrace and enlarged basement replacing the existing Wathen Hall. Works to enlarge the rear roof storey and insert three dormer windows to the old school building were also permitted.

TREES

There is a large mature London plane tree subject of a TPO in the rear of the site adjacent to the Wathen Hall.

The application is accompanied by a Arboricultural Statement from Barrell Tree Care that sets out more detail on the condition of trees around the site and the impacts of development on them.



Aerial view identifying trees in and around the site



Aerial view identifying trees in and around the site

An application for extensions and alterations to one of the school buildings was refused (and dismissed at appeal) in 2006 because of impacts on this tree.

This tree has been pollarded earlier in its life but since then has formed a full crown. The tree is carefully maintained and the crown periodically reduced. Indications are that it is in good condition and is many decades from decline. It is in the School's interests for this tree to be retained as removal could be detrimental to the buildings foundations.

The trees on the eastern boundary are valuable in terms of softening the appearance of the tall fence required due to ball games in the playground and will not be impacted by the proposals. These trees also provide useful acoustic screening to the playground and are a feature of the townscape character of the conservation area.

Current proposals have been designed to ensure the TPO tree can be protected and retained through the redevelopment. It will be incorporated with the architectural design to become a key feature.

TREE SCANS & SURVEYS

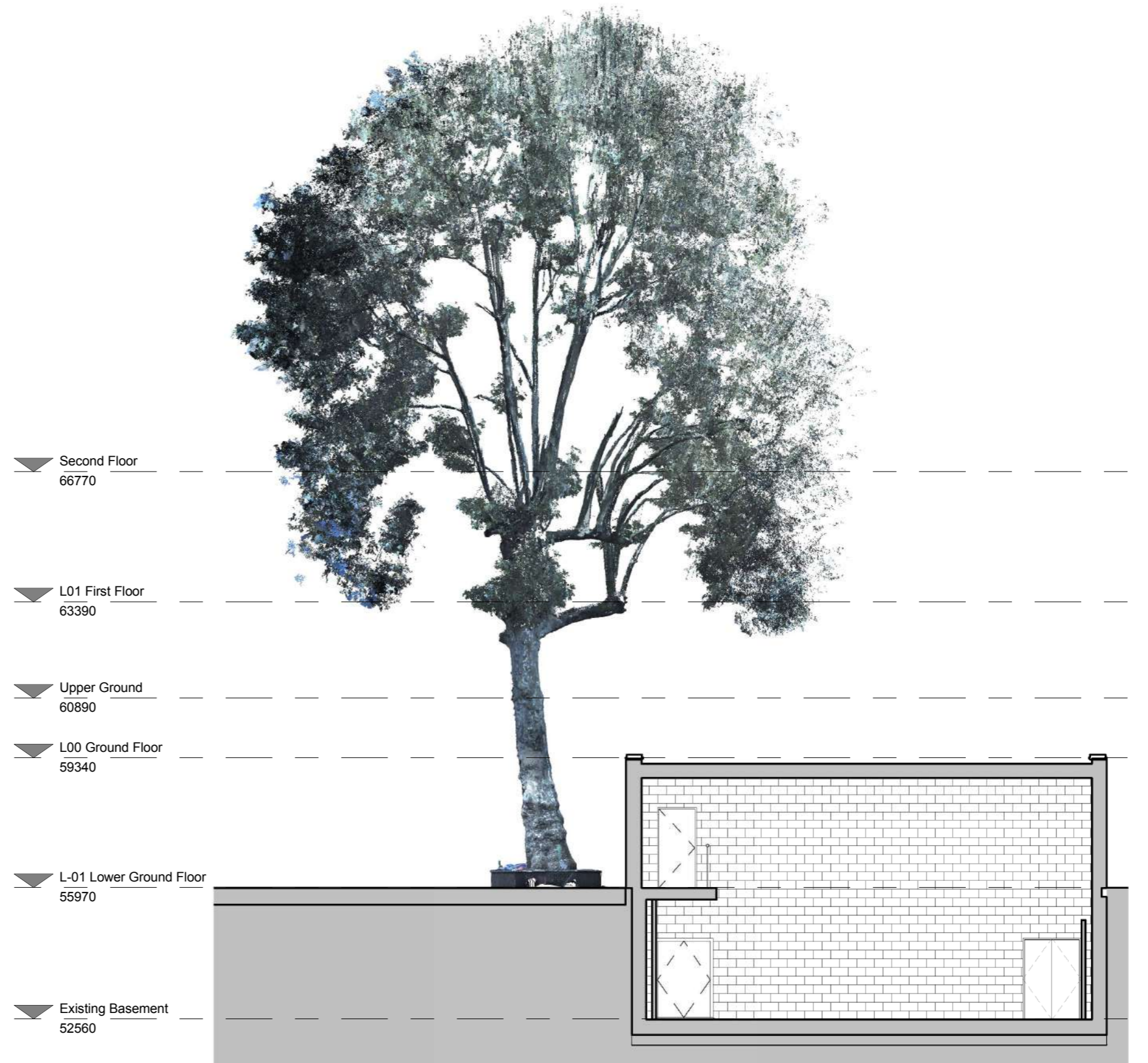
Due to the proximity of the TPO tree to the existing Wathen Hall and the proposed building works it has been deemed necessary to survey the tree in detail so as to ensure its future health.

Ground penetrating radar (GPR) has been used to determine the extents of the tree roots. It has been shown that they are not underneath the buildings and are limited to the playground where no works are due to take place. This has informed the development strategy and construction methodology detailed in the Arboricultural Statement.

Above ground a 3D LIDAR scan of the tree has been undertaken. As the section to the right shows this can be inserted into the design model to check the position of the proposals relative to the tree trunk, branches and canopy.



The TPO tree adjacent to the Wathen Hall

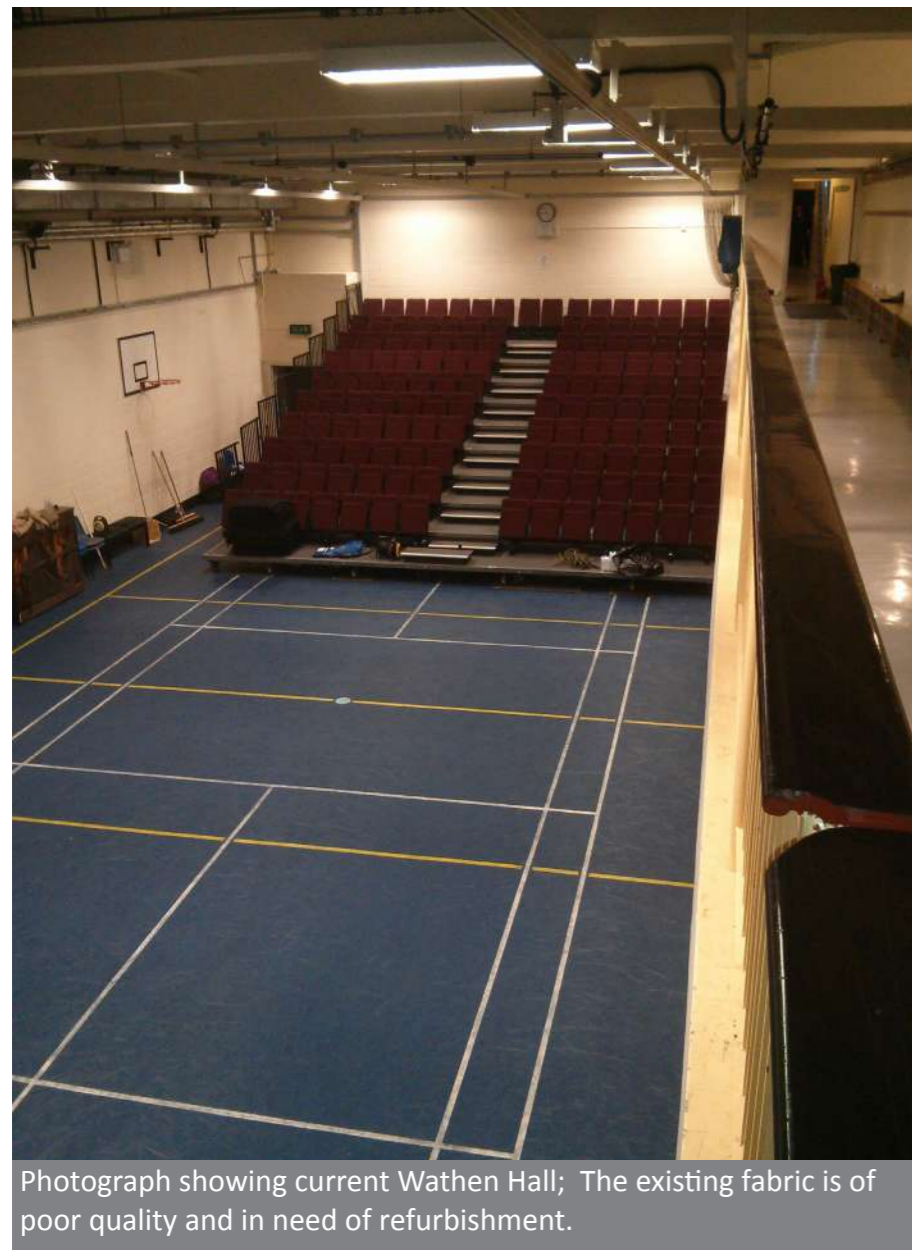


NEED FOR DEVELOPMENT

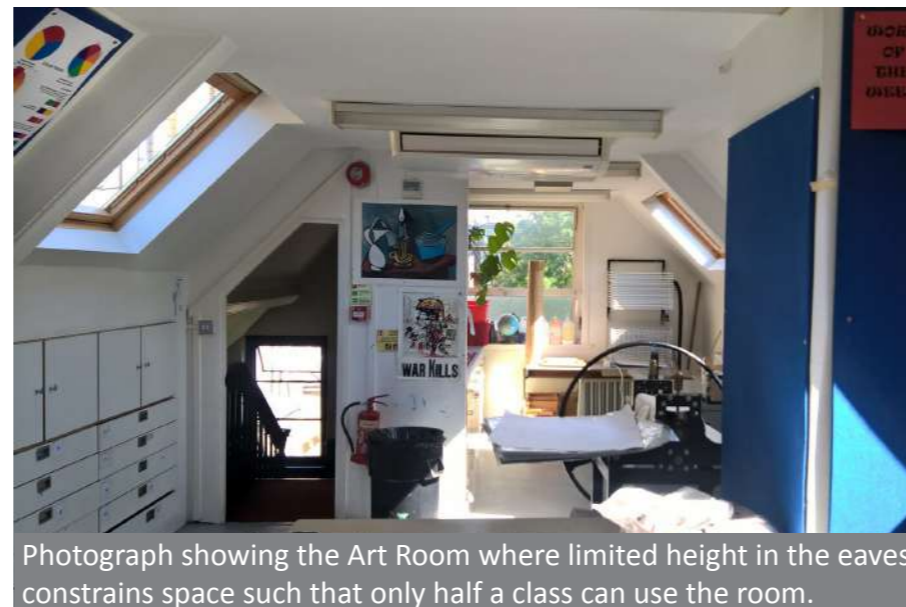
The Hall School has an outstanding reputation for excellence in education, but its ability to continue to drive excellence is being constrained by the school's layout and facilities.

Over the past two years, the School has conducted a review of teaching and learning, including a comprehensive review of school facilities. Our ambition now is to create a new environment in the Senior School which will complement the changing approach to modern education, ensure that pupils continue to experience the most appropriate facilities for learning and which will maintain The Hall's position as one of the leading preparatory schools in the country.

The decision to redevelop is one which has been very carefully considered by the School, with parents of the pupils fully involved in decisions being taken. Rather than continuing with piecemeal repairs and upgrades as we have done for over 100 years, our vision is to comprehensively refurbish this site and build modern teaching facilities fit for the 21st Century.



Photograph showing current Wathen Hall; The existing fabric is of poor quality and in need of refurbishment.



Photograph showing the Art Room where limited height in the eaves constrains space such that only half a class can use the room.



Photograph showing small classroom; There is only enough space to tightly pack the desks in rows.

THE MAIN REASONS FOR REDEVELOPMENT ARE:

BUILDING CONDITION

Parts of the School, notably the Wathen Hall which is the School's main indoor hall space, are in poor condition.

TEACHING AND LEARNING NEEDS

The buildings and facilities do not meet the full needs of modern teaching and learning. Detailed examples of the building's shortcomings can be found across the page.

ACCESS

There is no level access to the building and its piecemeal evolution has resulted in numerous changes in levels, limiting the School's ability to provide level access within the buildings.

PUBLIC USE

The School's facilities are not of a suitable standard to enable its use by the wider community. The School therefore cannot play the wider community role it would like to in offering use of its facilities to other schools or community groups.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

As an old building the environmental sustainability of the buildings is low, and refurbishment would present a significant opportunity to improve the performance in terms of carbon emissions.

VISUAL AMENITY

The 20th century extension to the school on Crossfield Road makes an, at best, neutral contribution to the conservation area. Replacing it is a significant opportunity to improve the character and appearance of the Conservation area, particularly by removing the changing blocks in the front garden.

TRAVEL PLANNING

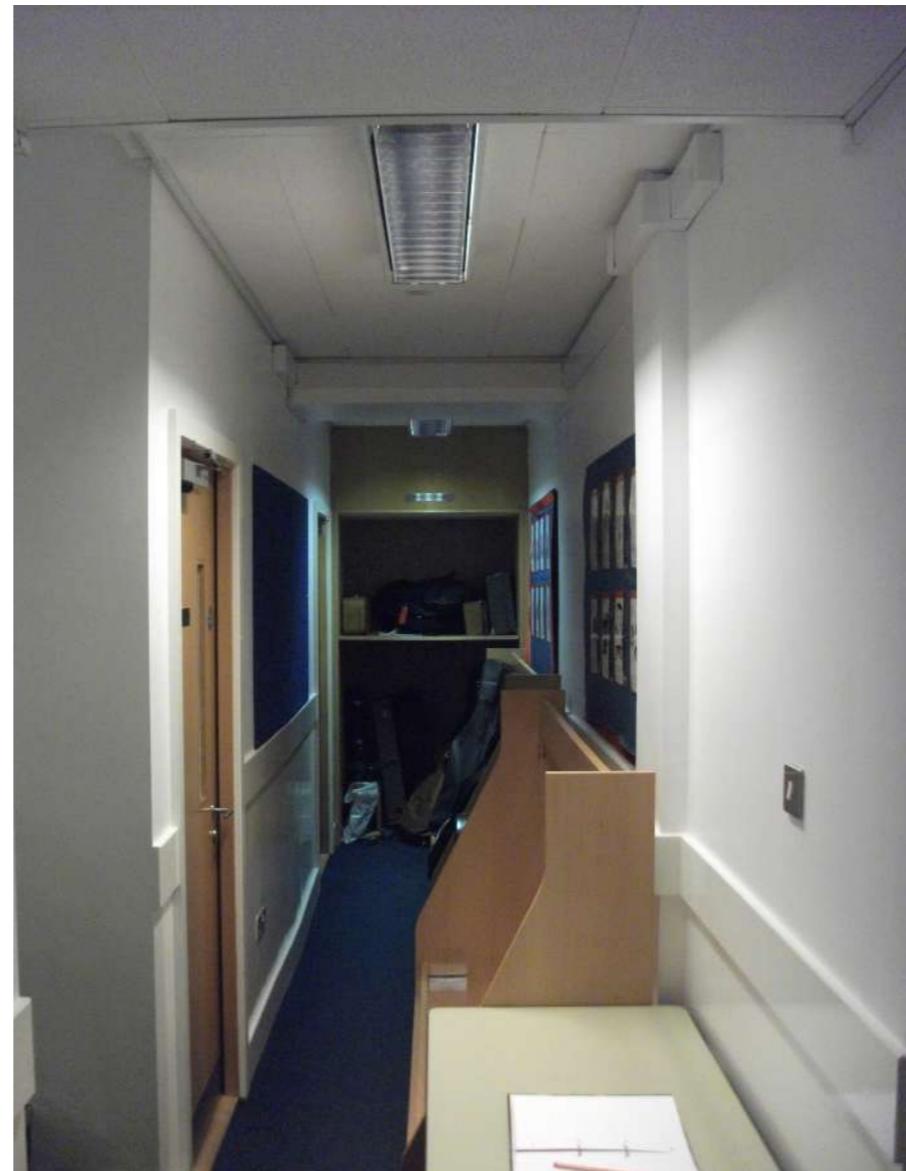
The School is currently unable to provide suitable cycling and showering facilities which is making it difficult to implement its Travel Plan to its full potential. There is also a clear demand for storage of scooters.

“Every new era brings fresh challenges and opportunities. We wish to provide even richer educational experiences in order to prepare our boys inventively for the fast changing world in which they will continue their learning adventure. This development is about much more than extensions and refurbishment. Our ambition is to re-orientate the fabric of the Senior School to match our existing culture and enable our future ambitions”.

Chris Godwin, Headmaster, The Hall School



Photograph showing a corridor in the Centenary Building; The layout is a warren of tight corridors with little natural daylight.



Photograph showing a dead end corridor in the music department full of musical instruments due to lack of storage space.

NORR has considerable experience in school development. We have examined the school closely to understand its operation and understand its needs.

The main issues we have identified are as follows:

1. The Senior School primarily caters for Years 6, 7 & 8. However the Middle School boys use the Senior School for specialist subject lessons adding to the pressure on space.
2. Several of the classrooms are too small. Of the current 21 teaching spaces only 6 meet the recommended floor area for a group of up to 20 when assessed against relevant standards. Of the remainder 4 are so small they are better suited to a half class group.
3. The rooms and corridors of the Senior School are generally cluttered suggesting a chronic shortage of storage provision. A wide range of storage spaces are required to be added and suitably distributed through the building.
4. The building layout is chaotic and disconnected due to piecemeal development and excessive density, and this results in a disruptive atmosphere.
5. Currently not all teachers have their own subject specific classroom adding to timetable pressure. In order for this to be rectified four additional classrooms are required.
6. The halls within the building are either poorly located or badly designed. Due to the wide range of activities such as sport, music, drama, examinations or assembly these spaces are in high demand and often unavailable.
7. Changes in statutory requirements, since the 2001 upgrade of the building, in areas such as safeguarding, catering for special educational needs, data protection and human resources have resulted in a large increase in the number of support staff. The building no longer has sufficient office space, meeting rooms or one to one teaching rooms to cater for these demands.
8. The building is environmentally inefficient using an unsustainable amount of resources and energy. It is expensive to run and also difficult to control in terms of lighting, heating, cooling and ventilation.

PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

Planning policy at all levels, from National to Local level, promote the improvement of all community facilities including schools. It seeks to promote enhancements to existing facilities, and where possible, increase their usage by the wider community.

HERITAGE

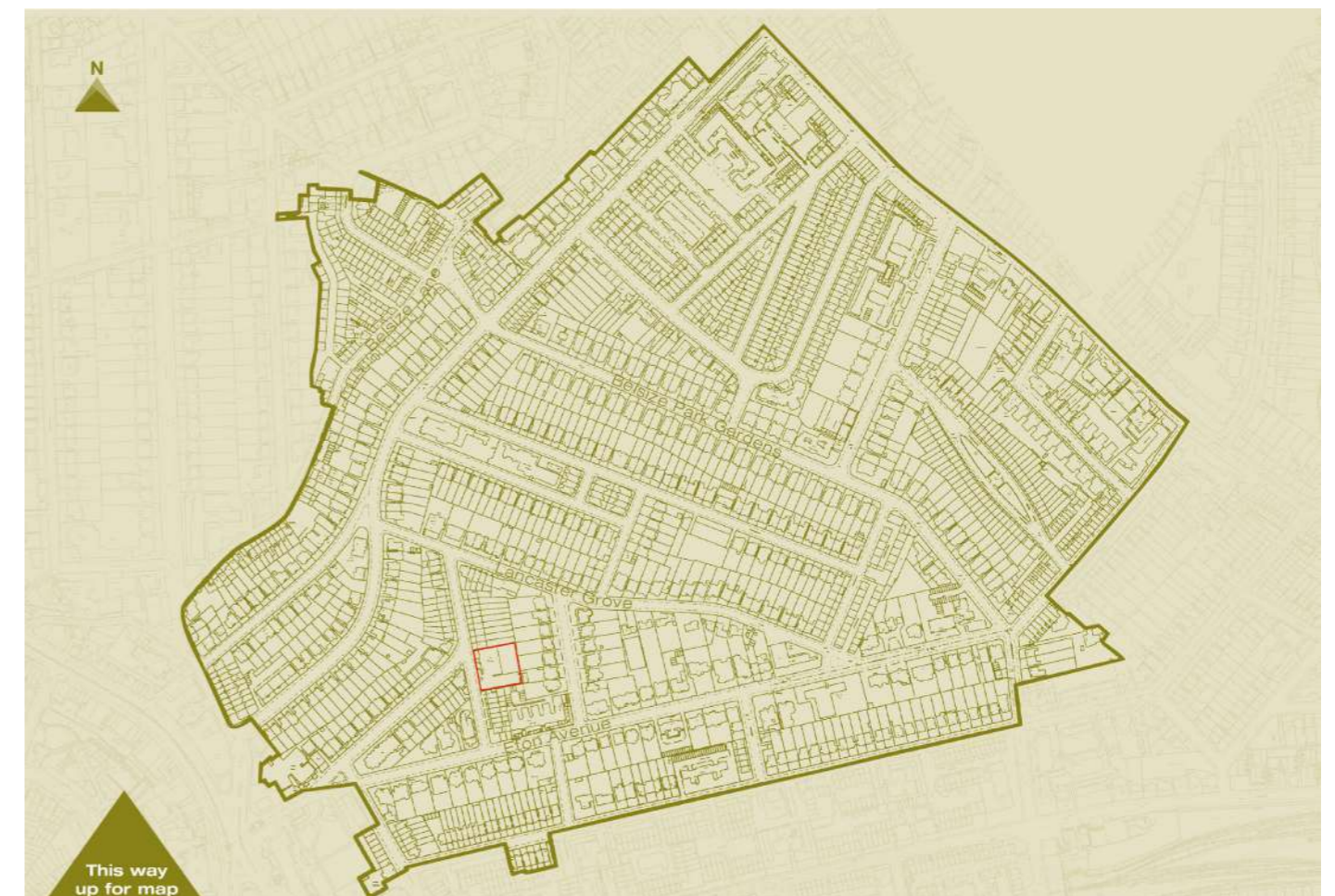
The School is located within the Belsize Conservation Area, which was designated in 1973.

The area is distinctive through its use of red brick and with Queen Anne and vernacular revival details fashionable in the late 19th century. There is a strong consistency in the height of buildings, which sit mostly at three storeys with lower ground and sometimes an attic level.

The original red brick Hall School building (excluding the later brick extension) is defined as making a positive contribution to the conservation area.

The buildings are not listed and the nearest listed buildings are on Eton Avenue to the south.

The Senior School on Crossfield Road is served by two tube stations: Swiss Cottage and Belsize Park.



Camden Borough Council planning policy map showing Belsize Park Conservation Area, site outlined in red

THE BRIEF

- Take cognisance of the School's existing situation and historical context.
- Return the Hall to the heart of the School as a defining feature.
- Provide a flexible multi-functional hall.
- Provide additional classrooms and replace where feasible the most compromised classrooms.
- Improve the frontage to Crossfield Road.
- Provide a comprehensive future-proofed solution serving the long-term needs to the School to make best use of this once in a generation opportunity.
- Design for delivery with minimum disruption to the School and neighbours.
- Improve the sustainability and environmental comfort of the facilities.
- Reconfigure the school building in such a way that it is made accessible to those with disabilities including wheelchair users.



CONSTRAINTS ANALYSIS

