



A view out to the theatre
(Photograph:Ariane Teyssou/Tuke Manton Architects)



The new drama studios and theatre
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EDUCATION PROJECT

MONTAIGNE THEATRE, NOTRE DAME SCHOOL

Cobham, Surrey

CLIENT:

NOTRE DAME SCHOOL

ARCHITECT:

TUKE MANTON

CONTRACTOR:

E R ARMFIELD

COST:

£2,000,000

The School

Notre Dame School was established at Burwood House in Cobham in 1937 as a member of the Company of Mary Our Lady, a Catholic Foundation founded by St Jeanne de Lestonnac in 1607. Now a charitable trust, Notre Dame School educates 760 children from primary to senior school.

The Theatre

A new performing arts centre has been developed, including a 370 seat theatre and new drama studio with rehearsal rooms and other support spaces. The main and studio theatres are both used for lessons during term time; performances and assemblies mainly take place in term time but on occasions during holidays. The world-class theatre combines an open stage and proscenium and is able to be adapted to a variety of configurations. The new drama studio can be opened up to the new foyer for use as one large space during performances. The foyer links into the existing dining room so that it in turn can be used for receptions associated with performances. The foyer incorporates as much glass as possible to allow views through the building and make use of natural daylight. Activity in the foyer and drama space can be visible to people passing.

Natural Ventilation

Natural ventilation is used to provide equable temperatures at all times for players and audience, thus avoiding the high capital running costs of mechanical ventilation and cooling. Studies were undertaken of the ventilation strategy and windcatchers were the preferred method, four in the main theatre and two in the studio theatre. These are controlled by temperature and carbon dioxide sensors. The considerable load from the theatre lighting was a concern but the advantage of the openings at high level was to allow the heat to be dissipated before it reached the occupants. The rears of the balconies were potential dead areas and gaps were incorporated at the back of the spaces to allow air flow by stack effect. Stacks with ventilation openings at high and low level at each balcony were also provided.

Heating

Spare boiler capacity was available from the main school and this was used as the heat source for underfloor heating at the

lower levels, including the stage, with natural convectors built into the base of the seats on the upper levels and in the central seating area at ground floor.

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