



The exterior of the building



The recital hall space

## **EDUCATION PROJECT**

### **ARTS & TECHNOLOGY BUILDING**

St Albans, Hertfordshire

#### **CLIENT:**

ST ALBANS HIGH SCHOOL FOR GIRLS

#### **ARCHITECT:**

ACANTHUS CLEWS

#### **COST:**

£4,000,000

## **The School**

St Albans High School for Girls is an independent day school, with approximately 310 pupils in the Preparatory School, 480 girls in the Senior School and 160 Sixth Formers. The High School moved to its current location on Townsend Avenue at the heart of the historic city in 1908. When the Preparatory School took up residence at Wheathampstead House in 2003, Engdesign helped with new building services there.

We have recently worked with St Albans High School to complete a new Arts & Technology building on Townsend Avenue. The project started life in 2008 following a review of the whole school site and evolved through close collaboration between the design team, the school and local authority planners and conservation personnel. The Performing Arts Centre, and Art and Technology Block at St Albans High School for Girls was awarded the St Albans Civic Society's plaque as the winner for 2012.

## **Drama**

The new 300-seat recital hall at St. Alban's High School for Girls is a double-height open space which can also be used for recitals and

examinations. The multi-function recital hall allows the school to stage its own productions. Students make use of a wide range of skills, supported by departments including Music, Art and Design & Technology, who all share teaching space in the new building. Previous productions at the school include *The Sound of Music*, *Annie*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *My Fair Lady*, *A Christmas Carol*, and *Guys and Dolls*, and the new hall will allow students to become familiar with the kind of sophisticated technology used in London's West End theatres.

## **Teaching Space**

The art and technology building incorporates a workshop, art rooms, and classrooms for teaching food technology, IT and textiles. The project also includes a three-storey extension and refurbishment of the music department; a new single storey extension; and remodelling of an existing drama department. One of the most popular spaces with both pupils and staff is proving to be the circular café area in the new building!

## **Sustainable Services**

### *Ground Source Heating*

The highly-insulated hall is heated by a 35 kW ground source heat pump taking heat from vertical boreholes in the ground

around the new building. Underfloor heating is used to ensure that walls are clear of radiators or convectors. As well as being an exemplar of sustainable engineering, the low-carbon system is eligible for Renewable Heat Incentive payments.

### *Natural Ventilation*

Windcatchers are used to provide natural ventilation to the classrooms, via the roof on the first floor or through vertical air shafts for the ground floor. Careful design ensures that comfort cooling is not needed for the general classrooms. Local fans and ductwork have been installed for extract ventilation from the workshop and food technology classrooms.

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