

One
School

St George's School



Overview

As part of a carefully considered strategy for the future of St George's, we plan to bring all the school's facilities and pupils together on our main Ravelston campus, creating a more united school.

This means that the Lansdowne site (which currently houses our Lower School pupils) will be sold and we will create an innovative additional building on the main campus.

With this project, we marry our past with the needs of 21st century learning, as we continue to pioneer the best possible education, school experience and facilities designed especially for the needs of girls.



Strategy

Our strategic document, [*A Voice for the Future: St George's Strategic Plan*](#) included a commitment from the School Council to undertake a ten-year ***Estates Development Strategy*** of upgrades, refurbishment and development to the Ravelston campus. Launched in August 2023, the plan includes a project to improve the opportunities available to students to develop their digital, technical, problem-solving and design skills; areas of the curriculum that were understandably not a priority for our founders when the buildings were established.

We are now ready to put the first stage of the strategy into operation and are delighted to share our exciting plans.

Lansdowne

Since 1914, St George's main location has been the Ravelston campus, and this was extended to include Lansdowne House in 1976.

The history of Lansdowne House as a stand-alone school, and indeed as part of St George's, is a highly valued part of local and school history. We are fully committed to keeping the legacy of Lansdowne House part of the identity and history of St George's as we move into this new chapter.

Putting the Lansdowne site on the market understandably may evoke mixed emotions. Please rest assured that plans for developing the site will respect the character and the unique nature of the building, our wider site and beautiful local neighbourhood.



Challenges

The existing Lansdowne campus houses our Lower School pupils, where careful attention is paid to the educational and developmental needs of the age-group (10- to 13-year-olds). A distinct Lower School is a much-valued feature of St George's education and will continue to be so.

However, the buildings and facilities at Lansdowne were not designed with 21st century teaching in mind and pose challenges to an effective and sustainable operation.



These challenges include:

- Managing two sites can cause security and supervision issues and have cost implications.
- The building is separated from the main campus by a road, which puts pupils at higher risk and leads to the logistical challenges of road crossings and management of staff time.
- The building was not designed with modern pastoral needs in mind and there is an absence of quiet and indoor recreational spaces.
- Our historically important archive is in an unsuitable, inaccessible space in the top of the Lansdowne tower.
- The specialist Food and Nutrition classroom is remote and cannot accommodate a full-size class.
- The site lacks a sense of arrival for visitors new to the school and can be confusing to navigate.
- As Lansdowne House ages, its ongoing maintenance becomes ever more impractical and expensive.

Vision

Our vision for the first stage of the *Estates Development Strategy* is to bring all the school's facilities together on our main Ravelston campus, and to create an innovative new building to enable St George's to meet its ambitious educational and charitable aims.

We are extremely excited about these plans and will consult further with various stakeholder groups in the coming months about design, location and planning.



The new building is intended to fulfil the following purposes:

- 1** Versatile, well-equipped, innovative teaching and learning spaces that facilitate multi-disciplinary learning e.g.
 - Problem-solving (e.g. Science, Technology, Engineering, Maths (STEM) and creative projects)
 - Enterprise or design group work and presentations
 - Extended project-based learning
 - Digital and computing skills (which can be extended to the wider community to reach as many girls as possible)
 - Opportunities to work in new ways with external experts from industry and universities, collaborating and designing solutions to real-world issues.

- 2** A new bespoke designed Lower School hub and wellbeing centre with the needs of 10- to 13-year-old girls at its heart.

- 3** A main reception and welcome area for the whole school that also provides opportunity to display our valuable historical archive material.

- 4** Meeting and video-conferencing facilities to support communication and projects with partner-schools, including those overseas.

This new development will be funded by the future sale of the Lansdowne site to ensure that the financial cost of these new purpose-built facilities will not fall upon existing families or require the school to fund the project through borrowing.

Construction

As might be expected, it will not be possible to undertake any planned improvements to the school without some disruption, but every effort will be made to keep this to an absolute minimum.

The school will continue to function as normal during the works; safe routes will be created around school to access all facilities and, when there are any particularly noisy works, activities that might be affected will be relocated. The pupils' needs are uppermost in our mind, and we will be prioritising the operations and safety of the school and its pupils in all aspects of planning, communicating any necessary changes of routine or practice proactively with the school, community and neighbours at each stage.



Future

We have tentative preliminary dates for the development; however, it is an evolving plan that can adapt to changing circumstances. The scope of this work will be subject to several factors and the development pace will also carefully consider a pupil's journey through the school, to cause minimum disruption.

We will be actively communicating with all stakeholders throughout the build to ensure that everyone is kept informed with set dates.

- **August 2024 - Marketing commences**

The pre-application for planning on the Lansdowne site has now been submitted, based on the principle of residential development, and marketing will begin in earnest from the end of August 2024.

- **2024-2025 - Temporary Lower School relocation**

Depending on the pace of the land sale, we plan to relocate Lower School pupils to temporary Lower School hubs within the main campus Junior and Upper Schools. We expect the relocation to begin during the 2024-2025 academic session.

- **2024-2025 - Design of the new building**

Planning the design of our new building on the main campus will also begin in the 2024-2025 academic session, subject to finding the right buyer for the Lansdowne site.

- **2026 - Anticipated commencement of works**

Work on our new building will commence at the earliest in 2026 and we intend for the build to take no more than two years from breaking ground to completion.

Throughout its long history, Heads and Councils of St George's have chosen to take bold and forward-thinking decisions in the best interests of the school and its pupils. The original school move from Melville Street to Ravelston in 1914, is one such decision. We genuinely believe bringing all the school's facilities together on one cohesive campus at Ravelston is another. We look forward to creating a safe, beautiful and exciting new element to our campus, full of opportunities for our students and the wider community.

Q&A

Q: What is happening?

A: The project is part of a carefully considered strategy for the future of St George's and will see the school coming together on one campus. Lansdowne House will be sold and there will be a new modern building on the Ravelston campus for the Lower School pupils.

There will be new spacious and versatile teaching areas which will enrich and extend the teaching in many disciplines using digital technology.

Q: When is it happening?

A: The Lansdowne site will be marketed from end of August 2024. The most important step after this is finding the right buyer, which will determine the timing for construction on the site.

Construction on the Ravelston campus will begin at the earliest in 2026 and we intend for it to not take more than two years.

Q: How does it affect me?

A: Every effort will be made to keep disruption to an absolute minimum to pupils, staff and neighbours. More details can be found in the 'Construction' section and stakeholders will all be kept informed as the build progresses.

Q: How can I find out more?

A: We would be delighted to hear from anyone who would like to help us with this initiative. Please email us on: estatesproject@stge.org.uk and a member of the project team will be in touch.





ST GEORGE'S

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