

Royal College of Music
Estates Strategy: Space Utilisation
2010 to 2017

Estates Vision

The College's estate is one of its most valuable assets. The look and feel of the estate has a major bearing on perceptions of the College as a whole by staff, students and other stakeholders. The College takes pride in its open and accessible musical environment and the estates strategy seeks to reflect this, by providing a welcoming, open, yet secure estate for national and international students, visitors and staff. By 2017, the Royal College of Music will offer up-to-date physical access and circulation, with performance, concert and practice facilities that replicate professional conditions and reflect contemporary standards of sound insulation and lighting across its whole estate.

Space Utilisation

The College's Space Utilisation Strategy is incorporated in our Estates Strategy and this document is an extract from the Estates Strategy

Objectives for the College's Different Types of Space

Reception

The first impression of the College for most people is our reception in the Blomfield Building and by 2017 this will provide an entry to the College that will be inspirational and that we can all be proud of:

- we will develop modern signage outside the College to provide up to date information on what is happening in the RCM;
- entry will be by movement detection automatic doors, leading into the outer hall, which will be restored to its original glory and will host a small display from our museum in appropriate display cabinets – the display will be changed termly to support any performance themes for each term;
- both doorways to the Inner Hall will be open to provide a more inviting space and reception and box office services will be merged to provide a friendly, welcoming, well informed, front-of-house service;
- the Inner Hall will be refurbished to a high standard, the reception desk will be upgraded and appropriate seating will be provided for visitors;
- when additional temporary reception facilities are required, these will be in keeping with the Inner Hall;
- fire exits close to the north-side of the Concert Hall will be electronically controlled so that they can be opened when events are finishing to speed exit from the building.

Teaching Accommodation

The College will focus its teaching space in the Blomfield Building and by 2017 will provide at least a further 150m² of accommodation in the Blomfield Building for teaching. Also by 2017 the College will have implemented the following principles for its teaching space:

- all classrooms and teaching rooms will be fitted out to a high standard, on a par with the top end of similar provision at other conservatoires, this will include in each room:
 - comfortable, appropriate and sufficient seating;
 - an upright piano (or keyboard);
 - an interactive whiteboard;
 - appropriate AV equipment.
- rooms will be prepared to an acoustically appropriate standard;
- all storage units and office furniture will be removed from all classrooms and teaching rooms;
- heating and lighting will be adaptable for use in each room;
- facilities officers will service each room in advance of teaching or other events;
- food will not be allowed in teaching rooms except where provided for College events.

Practice Rooms

The College has set a target of achieving a ratio of at least 1 practice room for each eight students by 2017 and by that date we will have more than 80 practice rooms currently 42 at the Prince Consort Site. The College will have also implemented the following principles for its practice room space:

- all practice rooms will be fitted out to a high standard, on a par with the top end of similar provision at other conservatoires, this will include in each room:
 - comfortable, appropriate and sufficient seating;
 - an upright piano (or keyboard);
- rooms will be prepared to an acoustically appropriate standard;
- all storage units and office furniture will be removed from all practice rooms;
- heating and lighting will be adaptable for use in each room;
- food will not be allowed in practice rooms.
- Practice rooms will provide for different types of practice, including solo and group practice and will take account of the principles of a healthy musician.

The Percussion Suite will be located on the ground floor of the East Courtyard Building in purpose build sound proof rooms. Alternative sites will also be considered for feasibility.

Performance Space

By 2017 all of the College's concert, performance and rehearsal facilities will reflect contemporary standards of acoustic quality, sound insulation and lighting and this will include building a major new performance and rehearsal space in the East Courtyard (see section on East Courtyard).

- *The Amaryllis Fleming Concert Hall* was refurbished in 2008/09 to a high standard and our planned maintenance and refurbishment programme will maintain the Concert Hall at its current level, which places it among the best concert facilities in London.
- *The Britten Theatre* opened in 1985 and is in need of limited refurbishment, which will include:
 - installing air conditioning, heating plant and house lighting for the theatre;
 - replacing or reupholstering the seating;
 - redecoration;
 - replacing the Britten Theatre toilets and cloakroom with west-end theatre standard facilities, which will be accessible for all visitors to the College;
 - improving access to the Britten Theatre through the East Courtyard project;
 - upgrading bar facilities to provide west-end theatre standard facilities.
- *The East Courtyard Project*. By 2017 the College will have completed the redevelopment of the East Courtyard and this will provide additional performance space and rehearsal space. The new space will provide flexible performance facilities and will support performance in the College in several ways:
 - it will replace the Recital Hall and Durrington Room as small performance spaces;
 - it will provide concert, performance and rehearsal space that reflect contemporary standards of sound insulation and lighting. Use of this space for rehearsals for the Opera School and College Orchestras will release the Britten Theatre and Concert Hall for other events including commercial lettings - a space utilisation strategy for these areas will be an integral part of the East Courtyard Project;
 - it will also provide indoor and outdoor piazza type performance spaces, with the indoor space closely linked to the re-sited Museum.
- *The Parry Rooms* were recently refurbished, in 2005/06, to a high standard and our planned maintenance and refurbishment program will maintain the Parry Rooms at their current level. Access to this area is limited and it is not planned, within current resources to improve access. This area will be kept under review and if accessibility can be improved, we may reconsider our strategy.
- *The Students' Association* area will be redeveloped as part of the redevelopment of the South Building and will incorporate a small performance area.
- *The Recital Hall and Durrington Room* will be closed and the space will be reallocated as part of the South Building redevelopment.

Office Space

By 2017, the College will have implemented the following principles for office space:

- office accommodation and meeting rooms should be fit for purpose and decorated and furnished to an appropriate standard. The standard may differ for different types of accommodation

- student and other customer facing office accommodation should be decorated and furnished to a high standard, on a par with the top end of similar provision at other universities;
- backroom office accommodation should be decorated and furnished to a good standard, on a par with the top end of similar provision at other universities;
- administrative departments, research centres and faculty administrative staff should normally be in open plan offices¹, with individual offices for heads of department with waiting room and private space available for confidential discussions and meetings;
- wherever possible and practicable, heads of faculties and programmes should normally have their own offices and such office accommodation should normally be located close to their activities and be of good quality and of a size appropriate for the activities undertaken;
- part-time professors and will be provided with good quality “hot desk” space;

Communal Space

- *The East Courtyard Project.* By 2017, the College will have developed a new open space area above new concert facilities in the East Courtyard. This space will incorporate a piazza style breakout area serving the Concert Hall the Britten Theatre and the new concert space. This area will incorporate a continental style café/restaurant area, which will be available for staff, students and visitors, together with a west-end standard theatre bar, which will open only for performance and events.
- *The Museum of Musical Instruments and Portraits Collection* will be at the heart of this new area, providing ready access to students, researchers and the public. Space will continue to be provided at College Hall for Museum/Collections archive space.
- *The East Courtyard 2.* As part of the development we will create a new open air piazza style area on a terrace roof of the East Courtyard. This will be laid out in a pleasant, easy to maintain manner, with simple open-air all-year round seating. It will include a performance area for summer concerts and a secure area for student/staff bicycles.
- *The Senior Common Room* will be refurbished and refurnished to provide comfortable space for College Staff, with a limited food and drink service. Secure storage space and cloakroom will be provided adjacent to the SCR for part-time professors.
- *The Students' Association* will be moved to larger accommodation on level 2 of the South Building and this will incorporate a bar, snack bar, comfortable seating and a small performance space. The College hot food service will be in the East Courtyard piazza.

¹ All staff are entitled to at least a minimum floor space of 3.7m² (Section 5 of the 1963 Offices, Shops and Railway Premises Act)

- Locker Rooms. We will remove all student lockers and pigeon holes from current corridor locations and establish secure locker facilities on level 1 of the South Building. A high quality shower room facility will also be established in this area.
- Toilets. Most toilets will be refurbished to a high standard, on a par with the top end of similar provision at other universities, whilst toilets servicing the Concert Hall and Britten Theatre will be upgraded to West-end Theatre standard.
- Corridors will be refurbished and maintained to a high standard and kept free of clutter. Clear signage will be installed together with College artworks and appropriate notice boards.

Student Services and Administration

The South Building

By 2017 the South Building will be refurbished and will be used to house College support services:

- Support Services: sixty to 70 staff in open plan offices with individual offices for heads of support departments and breakout rooms for meeting:
 - 3rd floor (currently SA) to be converted to one-stop shop housing, student and staff facing services;
 - 4th floor (currently Recital Hall) will house the remainder of support services (including post and print services). A partial mezzanine floor could be installed to house research centres (currently at Kensington Square) and provide “hot-desk” space for hourly-paid professors.

Specialist Space

Academic Services

- the development of the East Courtyard and South Building will be co-ordinated with the Library’s vision for 2017, to ensure that appropriate space is developed for users, library staff, on-site collections, off-site archives, audio-visual facilities and digitised resources;
- the ICT Strategy outlines the RCM’s commitment to provide accessible computer facilities in the College for students. The Estates Strategy will be co-ordinated with the ICT Strategy to achieve this objective.

Workshops

The College has five workshops. Strings, Piano, Theatre, Opera Wardrobe and Maintenance;

- the Piano and Strings Workshops to be relocated to the East Courtyard Building so as to be in the heart of the College;
- the Theatre Workshop to remain where it currently is;
- The Opera Wardrobe to be relocated into the East Courtyard Building. Alternative sites will also be considered for feasibility;

- the Maintenance Workshop, to be reduced in size to provide workbench space and storage - maintenance staff will move to open plan office accommodation in the South Building.

Space Management

In 2010, the College commenced a regular programme of space audits for teaching and performance rooms. These will continue and will be enhanced to incorporate practice rooms, offices and communal space. Data from these audits will feed into the College's Space Management Processes and these will be reviewed in 2010. The College's space allocation is based on a number of principles, including:

- administrative departments, research centres and faculty administrative staff should normally be in open plan offices, with individual offices for heads of department and private space available for confidential discussions and meetings;
- wherever possible and practicable, full time professors should normally have their own offices and such office accommodation should be of good quality and of a size appropriate for the activities undertaken, by the professor;
- part-time professors will be provided with good quality "hot desk" space;
- The College operates a centralised timetabling for all teaching and practice rooms, which are managed and allocated by the Registry;
- performance space is centrally timetabled by Performance Management and Opera;
- performance space and teaching rooms not timetabled for College activities are available for commercial lettings.

A combination of effective management of space allocation, space audits and VFM reviews of space use will provide a strong basis for an improved use of space in the estate. The College is not planning to introduce space charging to faculties and departments however, space is an expensive and scarce resource and the option to charge for space will be kept under review as space charging may provide an additional driver for users to employ space more efficiently, by showing the cost of the space currently used by faculties and departments.