

Alleyn's in Dulwich: A History

Alleyn's has a wonderful history that we cherish along with our desire to deliver a first-class future facing education.

Four hundred years ago, the College of God's Gift was founded by the Jacobean actor and philanthropist Edward Alleyn to provide an education for '12 poor scholars'. The College was endowed under letters patent of James I dated 21st June 1619.

In 1882, The College of God's Gift split into two schools: Alleyn's School and Dulwich College. Alleyn's School was established to provide transformative education to academically able students from a wider range of social backgrounds in London.

In 1887, Alleyn's School was re-born in its current identity and space when it moved half a mile across Dulwich to Townley Road, our current beautiful school site with its distinctive carriage drive facade and striking red brick Victorian architecture.

Ever since, Alleyn's has stood here in the heart of Dulwich, delivering a first-class education, driven by the spirit and generosity of our founder and inspired by his actions to create a future that is creative, pioneering and philanthropic.



I am a true pleyn man, my heart and tongue must always go together.


Edward Alleyn




Alleyn's Today

Today, we remain rooted in our rich history while continuing to innovate in all areas of school life: from our pioneering AiQ curriculum, which blends human insight with emerging technologies, to our commitment to creativity, sustainability and wellbeing.

We are immensely proud of our pupils and their exceptional achievements. This year;


94%

A Level leavers achieved A–B*


95%

GCSE pupils attained grades 9–7

But academic outcomes are only part of the story. Through our Aspiring Minds programme, pupils are encouraged to think boldly, question deeply and engage with the world beyond the classroom. Activities such as TEDxAlleyn's School Youth, Model United Nations, the CanSat satellite challenge and our MET Talks broaden horizons and develop curiosity, confidence and global awareness.

A commitment to our community sits at the heart of Alleyn's School. Alleyn's Together, the school's partnership programme, brings this vision to life with 929 Alleyn's pupils taking part each year, which further benefits 1429 pupils from partner schools who also take part. 340 of which take part in the Alleyn's Academy; a set of programmes run by Alleyn's teachers and 125 pupils over several weeks for children from local primary and secondary schools, with the aim of building joy and confidence in learning across Music, Digital Literacy, Sport, History and Science.

Alleyn's pupils also volunteer throughout the community for different projects and causes including Elms Care Home, Albrighton Community Fridge, Harris reading support, Bessemer sport and after school support, Dulwich Hamlet co-curricular and after school clubs and Reach Out Mentoring.

We are also proud to share our facilities with our local community and local schools, in 2023-24 we provided 1332 hours of facilities hire at reduced or no cost. From regular swim swimming lessons to end of term shows and sports days, local primary schools make use of our facilities all year round.

Our plans for Project Crucible will allow us to continue that work.



Welcome to Project Crucible

Alleyn's School has been an educational cornerstone in our community for hundreds of years. The school has always had a unique and special connection with the people of Dulwich. And, during the course of school life, we are lucky to have so many opportunities to give back to our local neighbourhood, through our work with residents, partnerships with local schools, groups and charities.

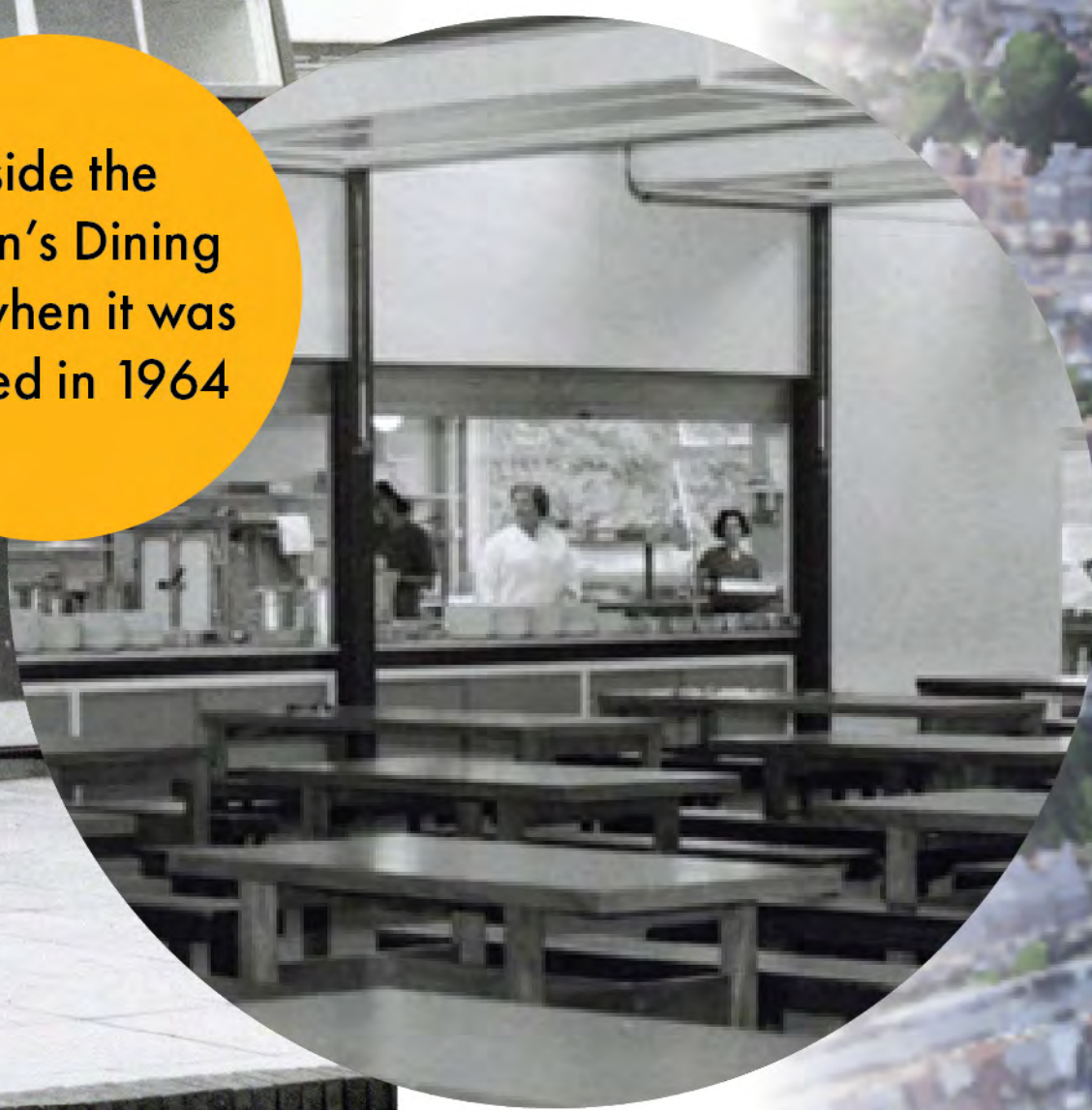
Our school site, and how we run everything here is always evolving, and Project Crucible is the next evolution. From long term investment decisions, to working with local council on changes to our surrounding roads; we want to keep you informed and give you the platform to have your say.

Alleyn's has evolved our partnership and communication with our neighbours over the past three years, including regular communication briefings, a half-termly Neighbours Advisory Group, and a commitment to consult on all planning applications formally before submission to Southwark, via our neighbour webpage, written communication and stakeholder sessions where appropriate.



Alleyn's Dining Hall opened in 1964

Inside the
Alleyn's Dining
Hall when it was
opened in 1964



Alleyn's School Site from the Air

What we are proposing

Project Crucible constitutes an investment into the future of our school. Our goal is simple but ambitious: to make sure our spaces inspire learning, connection, curiosity, creativity, and care for generations to come, while strengthening our ties with the local community in Dulwich and reducing our environmental footprint.

Across several carefully planned phases over the coming two years from Summer 2026 we will:

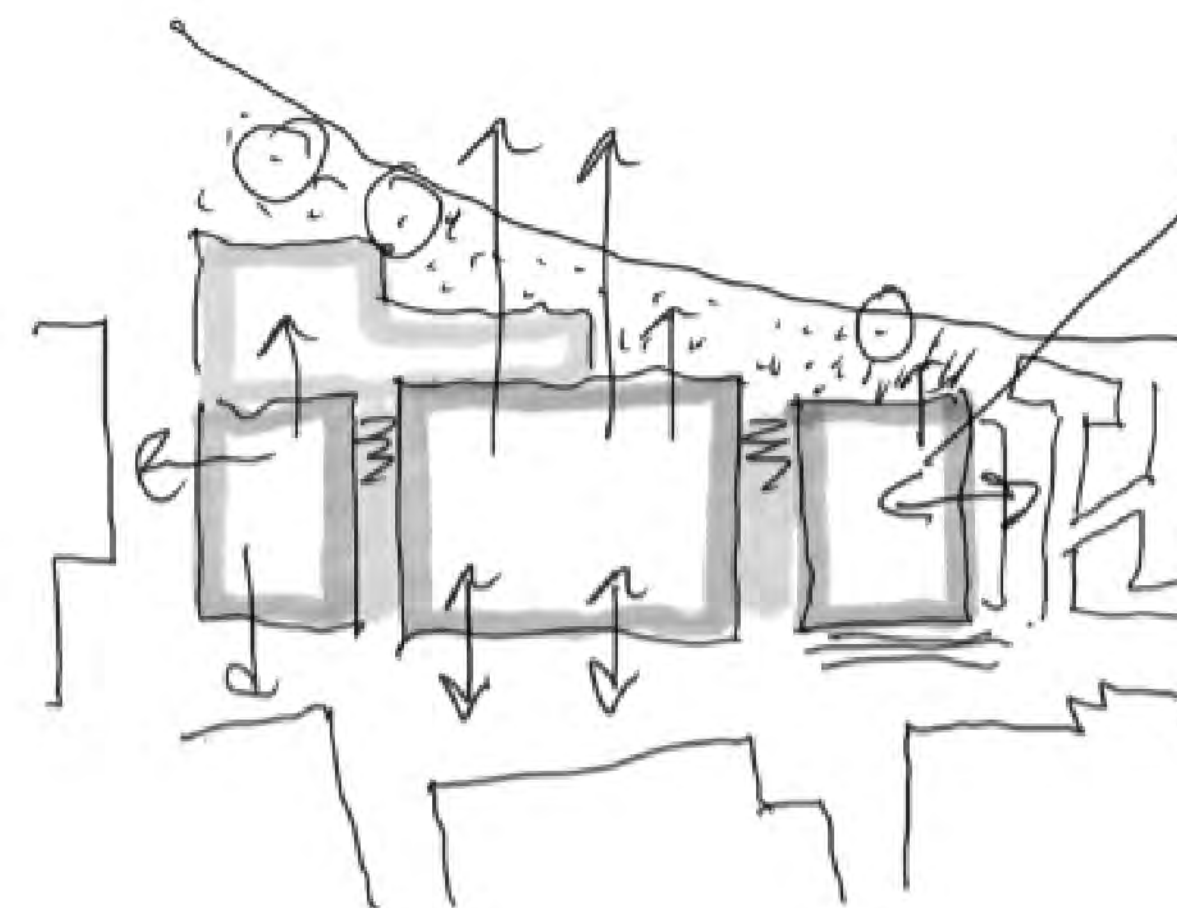
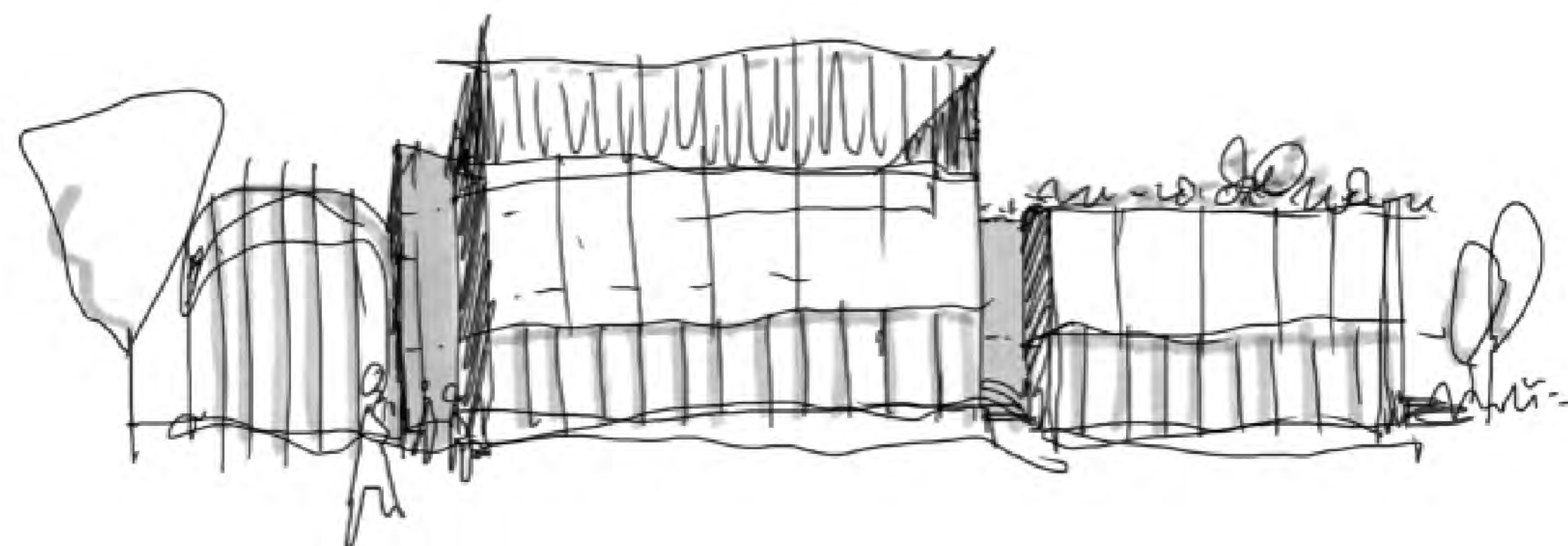
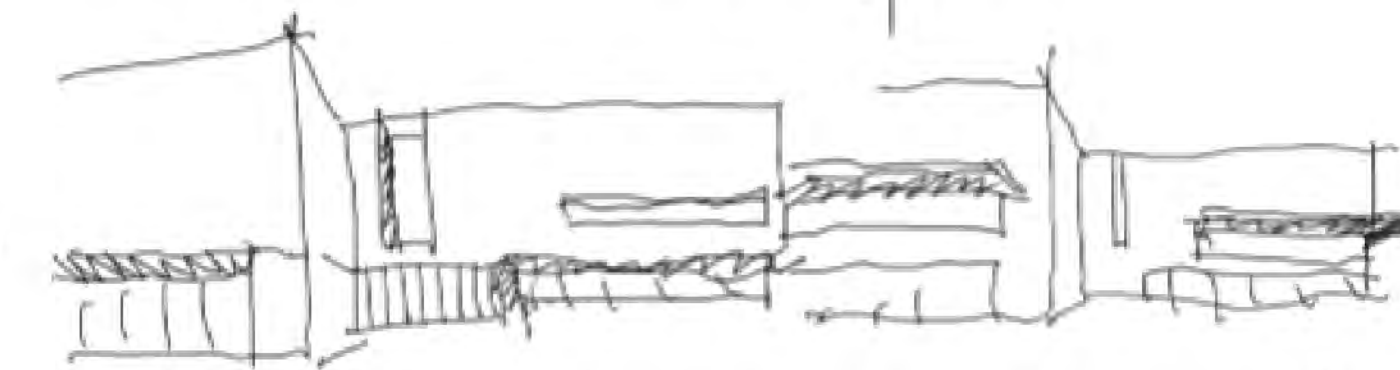
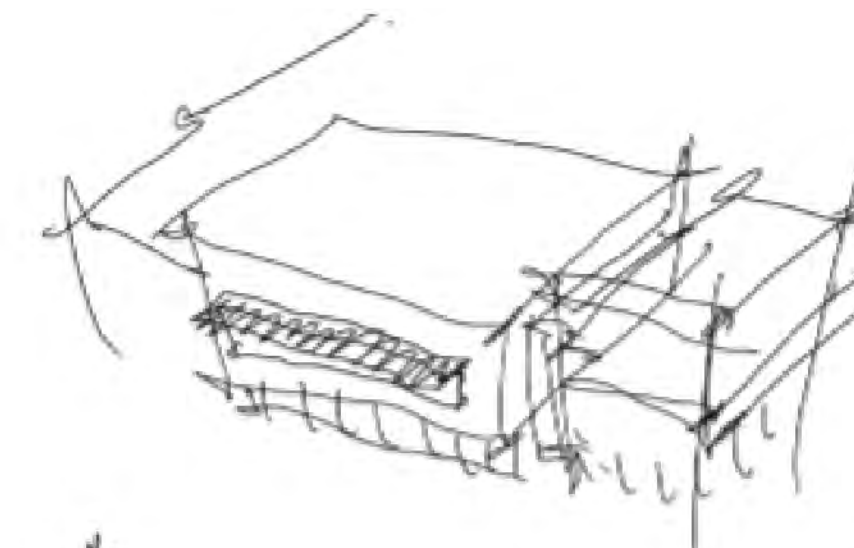
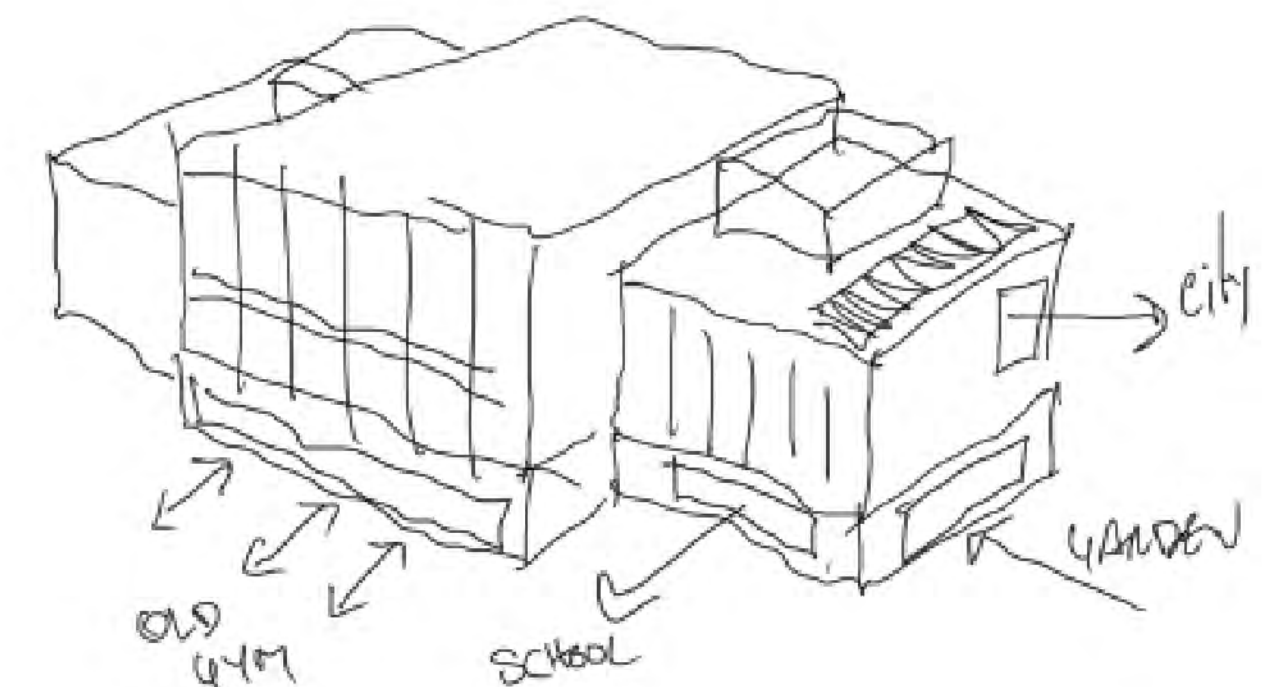
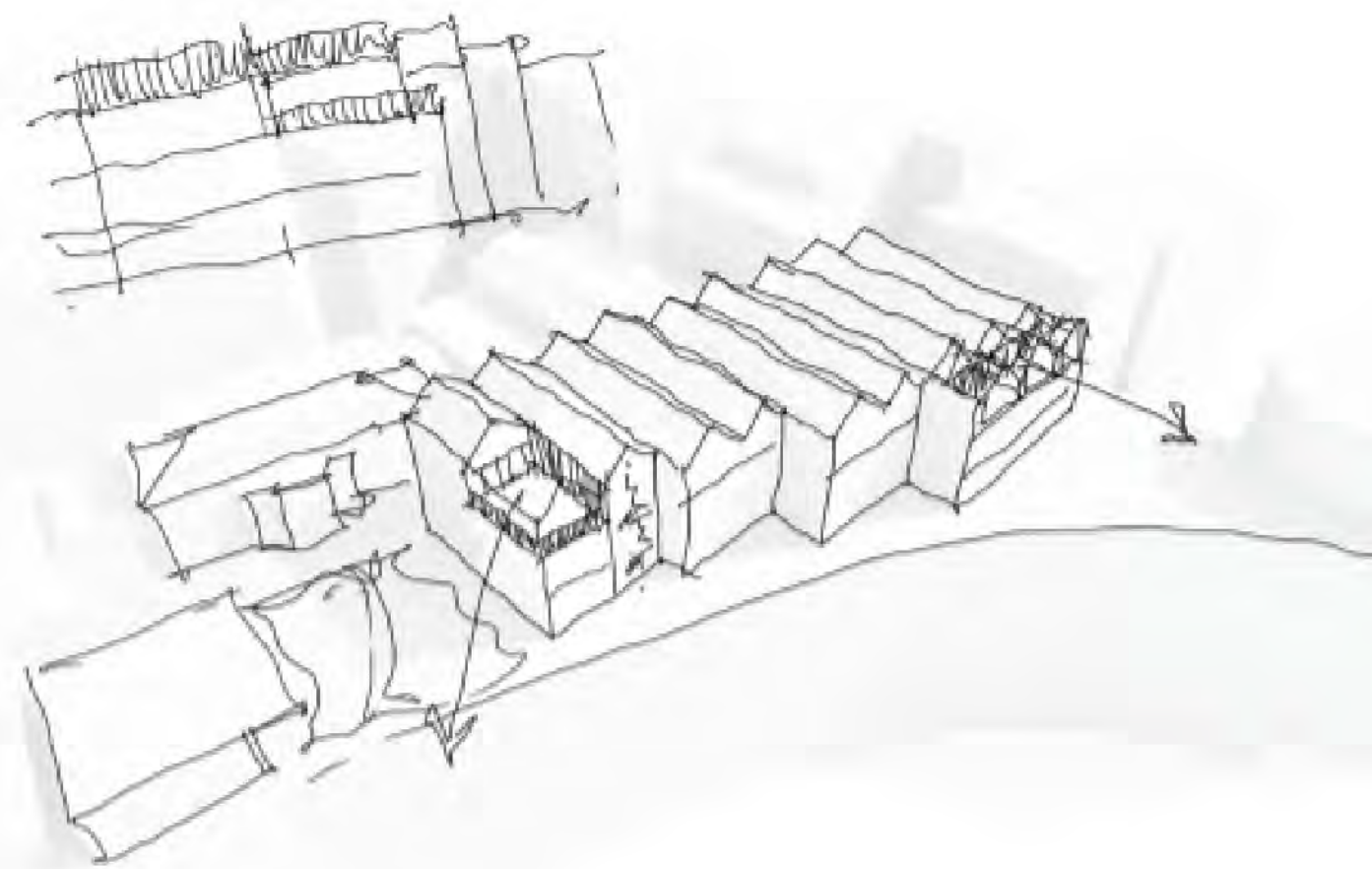
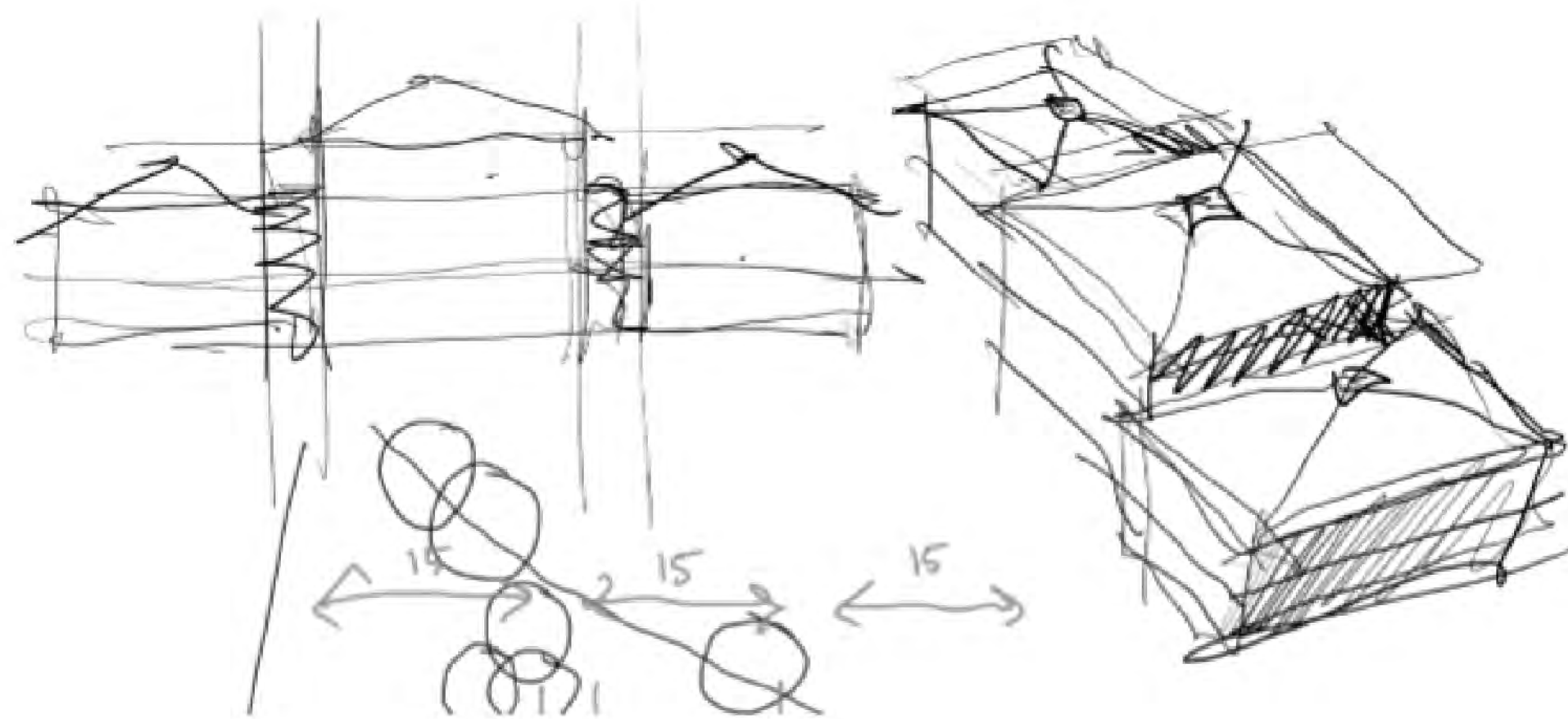
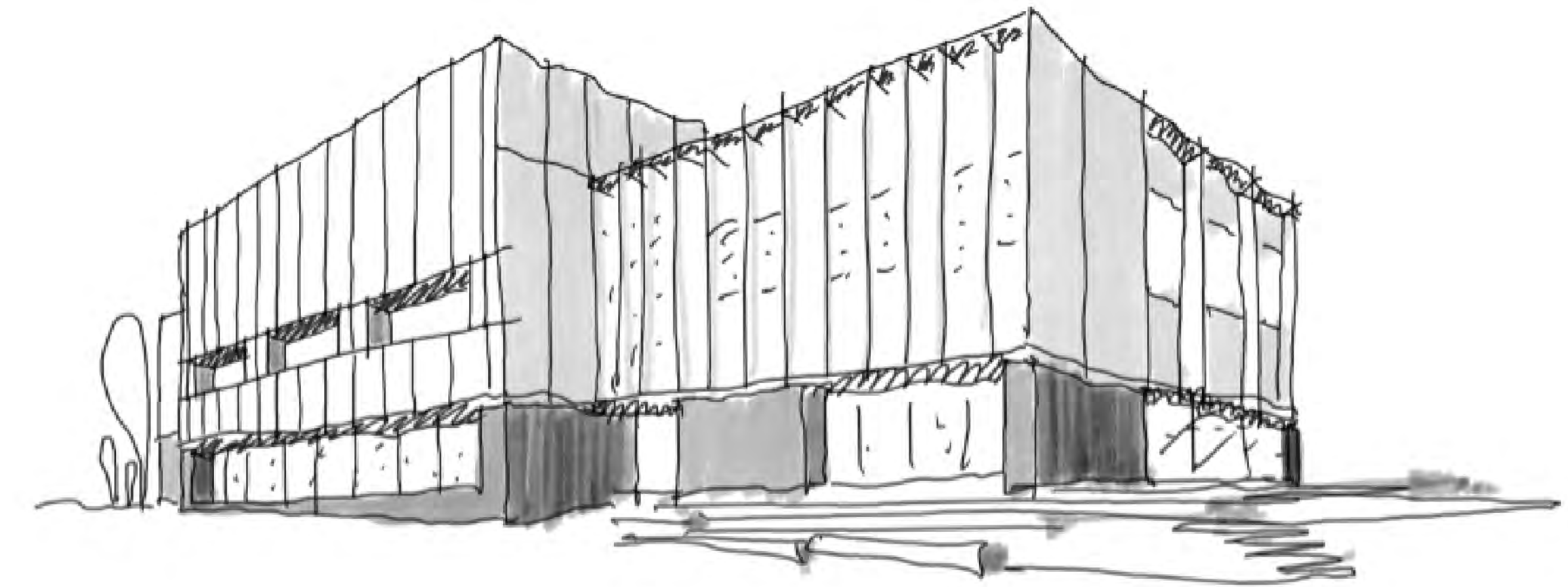
- Install new catering facilities on our Upper Quad, in two purposely adapted shipping containers to provide modern, flexible food service space for pupils and staff.
- Refurbish our “New Gym” (part of our swimming pool building) into a temporary dining hall for the whole school (this will become a permanent facility that accommodates both dining and sports for the Junior and Lower Schools after the project completes), including a satellite kitchen space in an existing storeroom.
- Create temporary kitchen facilities in the Junior School Car Park to support our catering operation during the build process, and a temporary marquee by our pavilion for our staff dining.
- Demolition of the existing current 1960s dining hall, to be replaced by a new building called The Crucible.
- Refurbish “The Buttery”, to become the new Sixth Form and Careers Centre.
- Move our Library from the top floor of The Buttery building to our current Great Hall.



Design Evolution

Our architects, AHMM, have carefully considered the massing since they were first appointed to work on the project. As you can see from these sketches, the design has evolved significantly since work initially started, particularly in respect of the relationship between the building and Hillsboro Road.

More significant step backs from Hillsboro Road have been introduced over time, whilst we have still maintained the level of space needed to meet the school's needs.



The Crucible Building

The main change we are proposing as part of the project is the replacement of the existing dining hall with a new building, that will be known as The Crucible. The previous dining hall was built in the 1960s and is in need of updating. We feel that now is the right time to replace it with a modern, high-quality and sustainable building that will serve this generation, and those to come just as our current dining hall has done for the last 60+ plus years.

In it we will host:

- > New kitchen facilities, a new energy and data centre, and sustainable systems designed to make Alleyn's a near net-zero campus in years to come.
- > A central dining hall which will serve our middle and upper school pupils in a food-court style environment.

- > A dedicated staff dining and community space will double as a venue for breakfast clubs, coffee mornings, and Alleyn's Academy events.
- > Twelve modern teaching spaces will offer flexible, future-facing learning environments, improving on existing facilities on site which were built for a different era of teaching.
- > An assembly and performance hall, which will be home to the creative arts and our vibrant events programme.

Education has evolved in the past few decades and, in the 21st century, there is a greater need for flexibility and space to meet the modern needs of pupils. This project will allow us to meet that need for the long-term, and to adapt more easily for changes to come. This project is not about pupil numbers, but about providing modern, fit for purpose teaching spaces for a school of Alleyn's reputation.



Building Design

Our designs have been created with our surrounding environment in mind, and our architects have worked hard to evolve the design to be sympathetic locally to the residential nature of Hillsboro Road. Starting as a single storey building, it steps back from Hillsboro Road on each floor to ensure it does not dominate and provides a more human scale to residential properties opposite. We have chosen materials and colours that reflect the distinctive Alleyn's style of brick buildings, with a brick akin to London Stock. It will be a building that fits with our campus, unlike the current 1960s dining hall.

Addressing Hillsboro Road

The building has been carefully designed to ensure that Hillsboro Road is not treated as a back of house as it is now. Instead, the proposal introduces active edges through new windows overlooking the street from a range of internal spaces, including the staff and community café, stair cores, and kitchen areas, enhancing visual connection and natural surveillance.

Landscaping improvements

The proposal seeks to introduce a rich and biodiverse landscape along the Hillsboro Road edge, incorporating habitat-creating planting, colourful native species, and herb gardens that can be directly accessed from the kitchen. This upgraded green frontage enhances ecological value and seasonal interest while remaining visually permeable, allowing clear views between activity inside the building and the street. The result is a more engaging, welcoming, and ecologically vibrant edge to Hillsboro Road.

Massing

The proposed massing has been shaped to minimise the building's impact on neighbouring properties along Hillsboro Road. Each floor steps progressively back from the street, creating a tiered profile that reduces the perceived height and bulk when viewed from adjacent homes. This approach helps the building sit more comfortably within its context while maintaining an appropriate relationship with the surrounding residential scale.

Acoustic screening

Screening to the air-handling units and plant equipment at roof level is proposed to be fully integrated into the building's façade through the use of hit-and-miss brickwork. This approach provides visual continuity with the overall architectural language while avoiding drawing attention to the location of plant. All equipment will also be acoustically attenuated to minimise noise impact on neighbouring residents and the adjacent school buildings.

Deliveries

The delivery and servicing strategy remains unchanged from the current arrangement. All operations will continue to use the existing service yard gate and loading bay, ensuring that vehicle access, circulation, and servicing activity function exactly as they do today. This approach avoids introducing any new impacts on the surrounding streets.



CGI Impression of building from Hillsboro Road

Crucible Visuals

A CGI of the site looking from Hillsboro Road



A CGI of the site looking towards Hillsboro Road

Crucible Visuals



A model of the existing building on the street level as if you were looking from East Dulwich Grove



A CGI of the proposal on the street level as if you were looking from East Dulwich Grove



A model of the existing building on the street level as if you were looking from the eastern end of Hillsboro Road



A CGI of the proposal on the street level as if you were looking from the eastern end of Hillsboro Road

Sustainability

At Alleyn's, we have big ambitions when it comes to sustainability. We want our estate to achieve net zero: a balance between the greenhouse gases we put into the atmosphere and those we take out, to help reduce global warming and tackle climate change.

The refurbishments we have outlined will improve the environmental performance of those buildings, and the Crucible building will be the most sustainable ever built at Alleyn's.

By using sustainable building materials, creating energy generating capacity, and utilising most up to date temperature control technology, we will seek to meet the highest sustainability standards possible. It will have a new, efficient, Energy and Data Centre to support renewable energy use and our net-zero ambitions. The energy centre will support the decarbonisation of the wider estate.

Biodiversity

Working with our team, we are exploring what we can do to improve biodiversity through the project.

This includes:

- > The use of green roof areas, designed specifically for local biodiversity.
- > Opportunities for enhanced planting surrounding the proposed Crucible building, including enhancing our frontage onto Hillsboro Road.
- > The use of native or pollinator-friendly species where possible.

Our approach to landscaping will be finalised ahead of the submission of our planning application early next year. We will exceed the planning requirement to achieve at least 10% Biodiversity Net Gain.



Reduce



Reuse

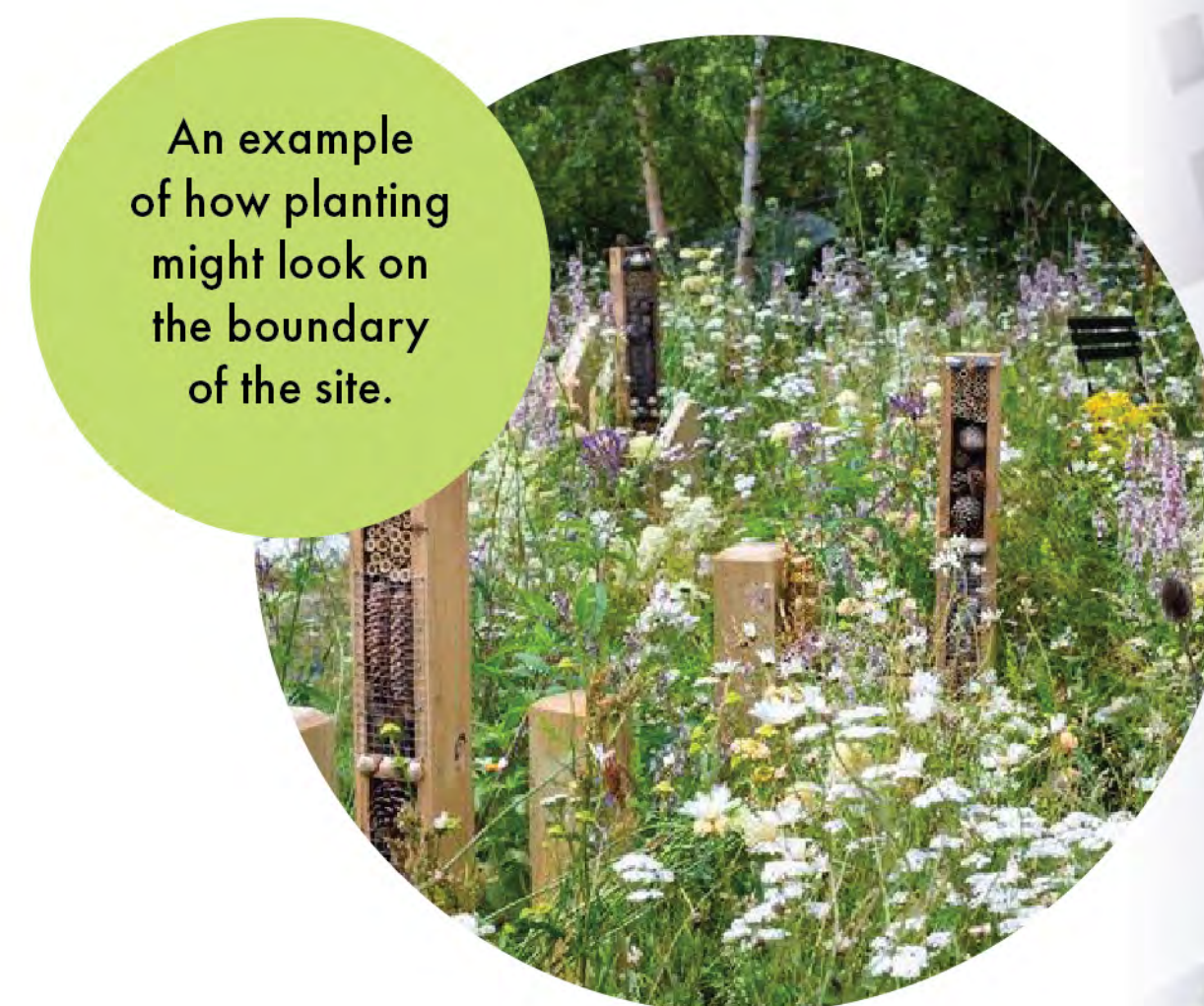


Responsibility



Regenerate

Alleyn's
Now



An example of how planting might look on the boundary of the site.



We are looking at how we might integrate herb gardens into the project.



Where possible, we will integrate spontaneous, colourful and biodiverse planting.



Why are we doing it?

Alleyn's has been on our current Townley Road site for just under 150 years. In that time, our site has grown with the needs of the school and community, leaving us today with a variety of buildings for different requirements, and indeed of different generations. To summarise, our reasons for this bringing forward the project are as follows:

- > We've been here for 150 years, and several of our buildings are showing their age. The Dining Hall was built in 1960s which no longer fulfils our requirements. Our current arrangements mean we have to stagger times for feeding our staff and students which means more noise and more stress. Our plans address this.
- > Expectations for modern, flexible teaching spaces are for 60 sqm minimum, and the Crucible building will allow us to accommodate this.
- > We have a requirement for a specialist space for dance, music, art and drama, which cannot be served by our Great Hall. The Crucible building addresses this.

Project Crucible in essence is a tetris puzzle across our site, ensuring all the different parts of our site work for a modern, forward-looking school, and designed in a way which minimizes disruption, or resources wasted on lots of temporary facilities. It will create a more sustainable campus, and ensure that learning, wellbeing, and community connection remain at the heart of school life for the next generation, as the School did in the 1960s when we last reimagined the Hillsboro Road frontage.



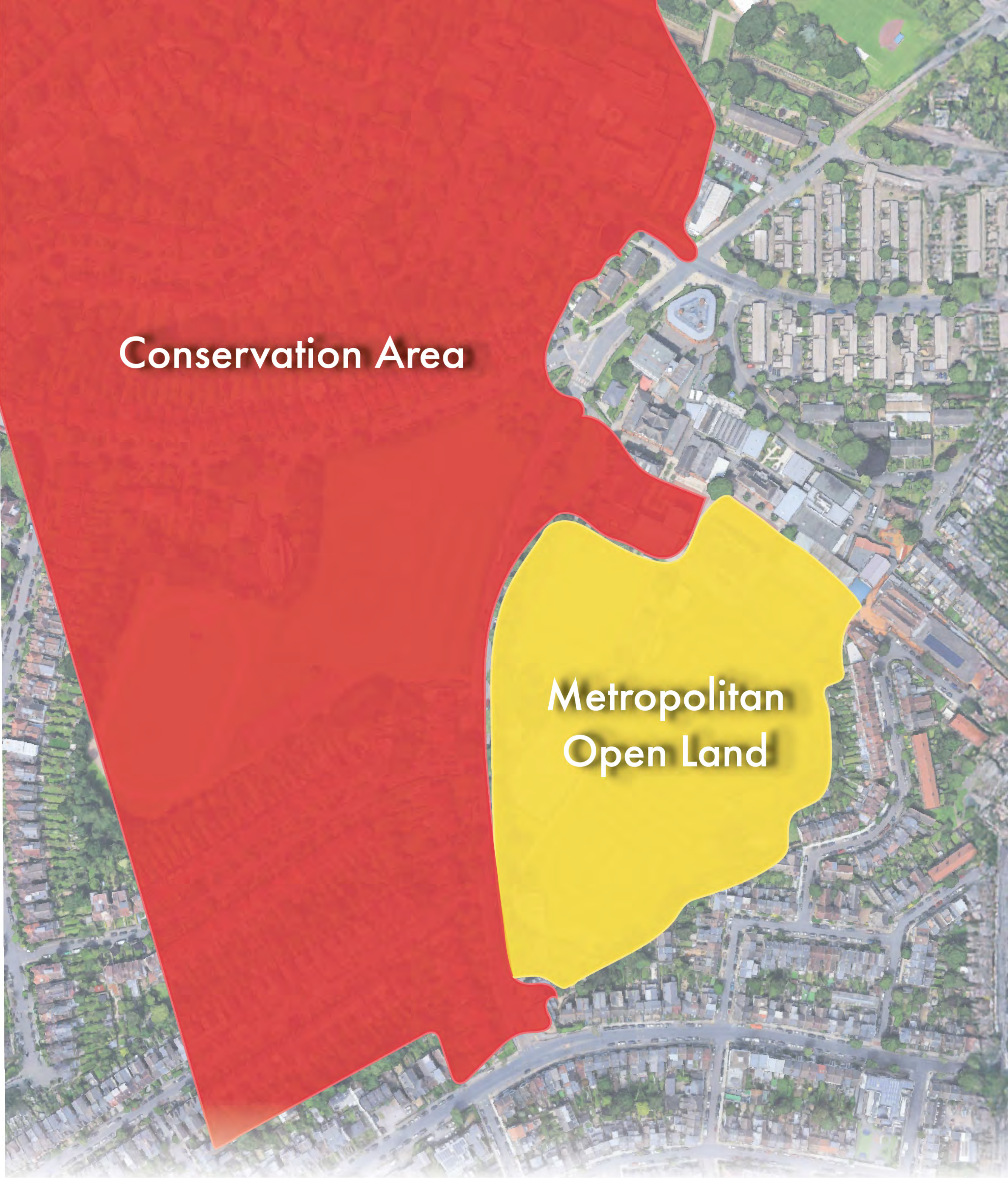
Construction & Phasing

The construction of any building project comes with complications, especially when it involves replacing a facility that our entire community uses daily and in such high volume. Our priority with this project has always been to minimise disruption across our community by reducing our reliance on temporary buildings and carefully thinking through the problems of the project.

With the planning application, we will submit a full Construction Management Plan (CMP) setting out full details of how construction impact will be minimised. This will include:

- > The use of off-site, modular building techniques, so that the build can be done as quickly as possible.
- > Restrictions on when construction works can take place.
- > Arrangements for the arrival and departure of construction traffic, including managing the safety of pedestrians and cyclists.
- > The appointment of a contractor signed up to the Considerate Constructors Scheme.
- > A dedicated Community Liaison Officer to be appointed to act as a point of contact with our neighbours.
- > Measures to ensure that noise and dust are controlled and making sure the surrounding roads remain clean.

The next board outlines how you can stay in touch with our team.



December –
January 2026
Public Consultation Ends



February –
August 2026
Planning Application
Submitted and Determined



June –
August 2026
Enabling Works



September 2026 –
Autumn 2028
Main building works



Next Steps

Thank you for attending this drop-in session. We would like your feedback. Please use one of the feedback forms available or visit alleyns.org.uk/crucible to fill out an online form. We will be taking feedback up until 12 January 2026.

Once we have analysed the feedback, we will share it with the design team who will reflect on it prior to the submission of our planning application.

In line with our commitment to keeping our neighbours informed, we will publish our revised plans on our website for a further consultation period, highlighting key changes.

Once that has happened and any amendments have been made, the application will be submitted to the London Borough of Southwark.

Beyond that, we are committed to keeping our neighbours updated on the progress of the project. Any contractor appointed will be required to appoint a Community Liaison Officer who will be tasked with keeping you up to date on the construction process.

The school is also committed to hosting additional drop-in events about the project in the future.

You can visit www.alleyns.org.uk/crucible to check for updates on the project, and we will be publishing a set of Frequently Asked Questions to address the issues raised at this session, and others.

You can also email neighbours@alleyns.org.uk to sign up for further updates on the project

