

# Bobby Moore Academy

The Bobby Moore Academy marks the completion of architect Penoyre & Prasad's work for the David Ross Education Trust in the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park.

The Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park continues to grow apace as one of Europe's major regeneration projects. Alongside the burgeoning commercial, retail and cultural services, additional education and community facilities are required to serve the growing residential community. The recently completed Bobby Moore Academy, located in the heart of the Olympic Park, serves these needs through the provision of a new all-through school.

The single institution is spread over three buildings – a primary school, secondary school and sports facilities – on three separate sites, each with its own site and planning constraints. The 6 Form Entry secondary school, a building of 9,450m<sup>2</sup> spread over six floors, is located on the smallest secondary school site in London – a 3500m<sup>2</sup> triangular shaped piece of land overlooking the City Mill River.

The 2 Form Entry primary school, designed with the capacity to expand to 3 Form Entry, hugs the River Lea Navigation Canal thus avoiding two large Thames Water pipes bisecting the site. The smallest building – an articulated pavilion housing changing and storage facilities for the school's all-weather pitch, playfully

**Sunand Prasad writes:** Back in the early days of the Building Schools for the Future programme we were commissioned by the Government's education department to produce an Exemplar Design for full sized secondary schools on restricted inner-city sites of around a hectare. 15 years later the excitement and ambitions of the BSF programme are just a memory, and we hear more about its overstated failings. However there are still clients with deep belief in what good design can do for school communities: in this case the David Ross Education Trust and the London Legacy Development Corporation who via the Education & Skills Funding Agency contracted with Balfour Beatty to build a new school. The result is a through school on two sites – one primary and one secondary – 500 metres apart either side of the Olympic Stadium. Whereas our BSF Exemplar site was a hectare, the site of the secondary school illustrated here is only one acre, 0.4 Ha. The fantastic location, a river edge and the Olympics practice track alongside are a considerable compensation; design has to do the rest.



Sunand Prasad is a partner in architects Penoyre & Prasad and past president of the RIBA







ALL PHOTOS  
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LEFT:  
The entrance to the school

BELOW:  
A central triple height atrium rises up the centre of the building forming the heart and focus of the school

reconciles conflicting demands of security and privacy, scale, and the planners' high aspirations.

We worked closely with the London Legacy Development Corporation, as well as the David Ross Education Trust and Balfour Beatty, to ensure the designs maximised the potential of their unique sites and delivered genuinely inclusive facilities for the whole community. Together, the three buildings fit together to form a striking new assemblage that enhances the public realm and provides much needed educational and cultural infrastructure for the Olympic Park and its growing community.

Rafael Marks, Associate Partner at Penoyre & Prasad, explains: "The new school is a beacon of learning in the rapidly developing Olympic Park. It provides first-class educational spaces while capitalising on the world-class sports facilities around it.

The big challenge for the design was accommodating the large programme of spaces on such a tiny triangular site of less than 3900m<sup>2</sup> while maximising external play space for the students. Set in the pantheon of great Olympic architecture, it also had to punch above its architectural weight.

Given the site's exposure on all sides, the building is conceived as an object, seen in the round and from afar. Its distinctive form and architectural expression serve to create a strong identity for the school while rooting it in context and creating a civic realm where none existed before.

The building is like a tardis. From a distance, and in comparison to the Olympic Stadium and the vastness of the Park, it appears small and diminutive. On closer inspection, it has a more dominant and civic presence, commanding its site and the adjacent canal.

Once inside, the building reveals itself as a series of complex







RIGHT & BELOW RIGHT:  
It is carefully positioned  
along the site's northern  
boundary to maximise  
south-facing external play  
space

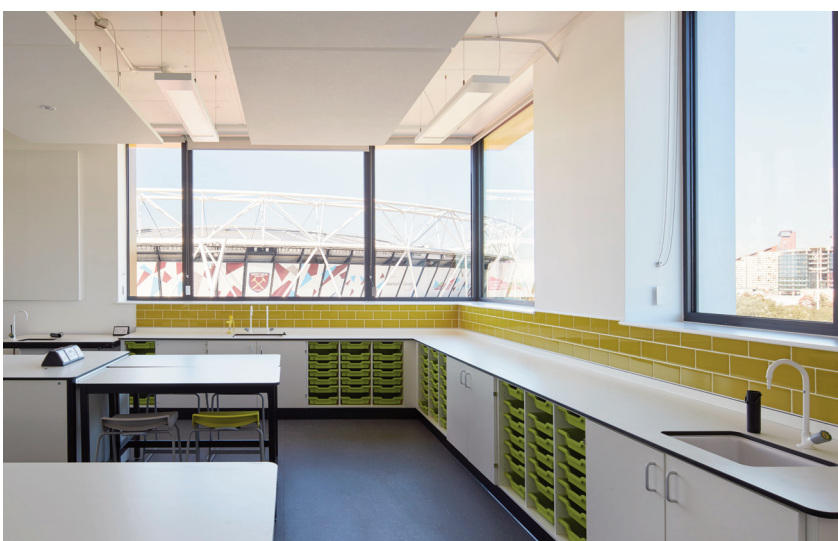
>>> and interrelated spaces. The use of double and triple height volumes, voids cut into the circulation spine, and extensive use of glazing creates ever changing experiences and continuous vertical and horizontal connections. Wherever you are in the school, one is oriented to the outside with extensive views across to London and the Olympic Park. The building is rooted in the Olympic Park while providing the students with wider horizons to the city beyond."

BELOW:  
Large windows maximise  
views to London to the  
south and the Olympic  
Park to the north

The secondary school is carefully positioned along the site's northern boundary to maximise south-facing external play

space. The main large spaces – assembly hall and sports hall – are raised to the first floor providing outdoor covered social space at ground level. A series of roof terraces step up the south elevation to provide additional external social space, commanding distant views over London and Canary Wharf.

The building was designed in extensive consultation with the David Ross Education Trust and the London Legacy Development Corporation, with complex educational and community needs. It has been organised as a truly inclusive facility to be used in evenings, weekends and holidays by the wider public.







Community-accessible facilities – dining, gathering, assembly hall, music and IT teaching and sports facilities, are located at ground and first floor, with inclusive changing facilities at both levels, with the school’s teaching spaces on the upper levels. An extra large lift accommodates parasports teams using the sports hall.

Packed into its compact form is a school of generous proportions, incorporating a web of large and small spaces, visually and physically connected through voids, screens and walkways. A central triple height atrium rises up the centre of the building forming the heart and focus of the school, and providing orientation along the corridor’s length. Above this sits a double height library, with a roof terrace above.

A triple height sports hall and double height assembly hall and drama studio are inserted as distinctive volumes at first floor, while a double height dance studio bookends the building at one end. Windows and screens maximise transparency and views

through and into these spaces.

A generous internal ‘street’ forms the backbone of the school with voids punctuated on each level to connect the floors and provide light from skylights above. Coloured floors and signage provide identity and orientation. Arranged either side of this wide central spine are teaching spaces organised by faculty. Throughout the school, large windows maximise views to London to the south and the Olympic Park to the north while providing plenty of daylight and a sense of openness to the teaching spaces.

The majority of teaching spaces are naturally ventilated, utilising low energy heat recovery units fixed to the windows. The flat-slab insitu frame provides thermal mass while allowing long-term adaptability, and LED lights and low-flush toilets reduce energy and water use. The heating system is linked into the Olympic Park-wide district heating network. The school is on course to receive BREEAM excellent certification. ■