

Music school pupils take a look at their new home

Although it is far from ready yet – the work has just begun – some pupils from St Mary's Music School went to the site of the new National Centre for Music at the former Royal High School to take a look.

Richard Austin, a Trustee of the Royal High School Preservation Trust, led the tour. He is also an old boy from The Royal High, so this is where he went to school and he was able to give the young people a taste of what the school was like then.

Dr Kenneth Taylor, Headteacher of St Mary's Music School said: "We're delighted to see the project moving forward. The former Royal High School will create a glorious and very fitting setting to nurture and inspire young musicians from Scotland and further afield.

"As a school, to be able to bring education to the heart of the new National Centre for Music, which the site on Carlton Hill will become, opens up huge opportunity for the development of skills and talent for everyone passionate about music and the arts."

Richard Austin spoke about his time at the school when the masters wore academic gowns and when Latin and Greek still figured significantly within an otherwise progressive

curriculum. He had enjoyed his school years and benefited, not least, from the musical education on offer.

He said: "Returning to my old school and talking about it to some of the young folk who will revive the educational role of the Calton Hill site in the 21st century has been both exciting and moving. It was good to share my memories of the large octagonal room used for teaching music (it is one of two such large spaces, the other being the school library) and especially of the central Great Hall. It is marvellous to know that, with the restoration of the Thomas Hamilton building, these spaces will, once again, become accessible and resound with music."

The project to lease and convert the former Royal High into a National Centre for Music is backed by Carol Colburn Grigor and Dunard Fund who between them have funded the project to the tune of £55 million. The school also promise that this will be a site for public performances, and that the gardens will be public and accessible.

At present St Mary's Music School is situated in the West End next to St Mary's Cathedral. It is the country's specialist music school one of five government supported specialist music schools and the only one in Scotland. Entry is based on musical ability with means tested funding available through The Scottish Government's Aided Places Scheme.



L to R, India Reilly (SMMS pupil, S5), Michelle Huang (SMMS pupil, S3), John Hall (SMMS pupil, S6) and Paul Oggier (SMMS pupil, S1).



L to R, Paul Oggier (SMMS pupil, S1), India Reilly (SMMS pupil, S5), Richard Austin (RHSPT Trustee and former Old Royal High pupil), John Hall (SMMS pupil, S6) and Michelle Huang

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