



The Royal Ballet School was founded by Dame Ninette de Valois in 1926. It is now established as a world centre of excellence in Ballet teaching, with the junior school (ages 11-16) having been housed in White Lodge, Richmond Park since 1955/56. On renewal of the lease with the Crown Estate, the Governors of this maintained school embarked on a major programme of refurbishment and new building through a worldwide appeal, with support from the Government's Music and Arts Scheme.

BH&M were appointed as Architects for the whole project. The works included new buildings for boarding houses, Headteacher's house, dining hall & kitchens and ballet studios, as well as an extension to one ballet studio and the refurbishment of classrooms, studios, common rooms, staff rooms and offices. This involved the challenges of a Grade I Listed Building, Grade I Listed Landscape and the creation of new pathways, roads, courtyards and performance spaces. The project required the School to remain in occupation during the redevelopment of the 1727 building and provision of an additional 3,000 sqm of built footprint within Metropolitan Open Land, Green Belt and a National Nature Reserve. This was an exercise in English Palladianism and described as a masterpiece of space planning by the DCSF. It was all achieved within budget and on time.



Top: White Lodge  
 Middle: New Boarding Accommodation  
 Bottom: Pavlova Studio



The philosophy throughout has been to humanise the external spaces through the form of enclosure that the buildings can provide. The School grounds have areas of public, semi-public, private and intimate spaces, all **created through the buildings' forms and iconography**. In addition, we mitigated effects on adjacent badger setts and have enhanced the planting in the park by creating a green hedge around the School, providing more diverse habitats for wildlife.

The Royal Ballet School has a unilateral undertaking to ensure that the expertise of the ballet training is developed and shared with GLA Schools. The new studios (named after Dame Darcey Bussell and the Director of the School, Gallene Stock) are specifically provided and sited to give necessary facilities to allow schools throughout the country to engage with other pupils not fortunate enough to attend the School. We **have also worked on a programme to open the School's** new Ballet Resource Centre, completed in January 2009, to Primary Schools.

Above: New Dining Hall with Boarding to the right  
Below: Extension to The Pavlova Studio