

Chair of the Board of Trustees

Context and Strategic
Overview

THE LONDON
SCHOOL
OF
ARCHITECTURE

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The London School of Architecture

1.1 Summary

The LSA is an architectural school designed to meet the challenges of the 21st century: to empower our learners to design the spaces, homes and cities that will allow humanity and the planet to flourish. It is a school committed to addressing barriers to attainment and progression, innovating accessible and affordable models of education and learning open to all. We are seeking to appoint a Chair as the successor to our Founding Chair, Crispin Kelly.

We are a small school with big ambitions; alongside our pioneering Part 2 programme, lauded by the sector for its imaginative integration of practice-based learning with academic study, we are now seeking to further diversify our educational offering. We're redoubling our commitment to access and widening participation through our 'Part 0' offer of sub-degree programmes for young people focused on green skills in design and construction. We're also turning our attention to the professional education market, devising modular learning experiences addressing the need to strengthen competency across the built environment sector.

1.2 Introduction

The **London School of Architecture** (LSA) is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) and independent higher education provider based in East London. It is England's first independent school of architecture to have been established since 1847. It was launched in 2013 as a school for the 21st-century, where students combine practice-based work experience with academic study. The LSA was registered as a charity and admitted its first cohort of students in 2015.

The driving mission of the LSA is to encourage and support wider diversity and access for students from under-represented backgrounds. Access and affordability is at the heart of what we do, and we have an ambitious Access and Participation Plan agreed with the Office for Students that is focussed on achieving this. Our new strategic plan has a significant focus on reaching underserved and underrepresented young people in the built environment, and in doing so hopes to contribute to meeting the green skills shortage across the construction industry. The LSA believes passionately in providing learning programmes which unite the best of academia with practice, and in working with our students and learners to imagine a critical practice in the service of humanity and the planet.

This reciprocal relationship between practices and students in an endeavour to tackle the growing crisis in the funding of architectural education has led to the school gaining considerable standing in its position as a practice-focused school of architecture, with its students being closely connected to industry. The LSA works closely with a Practice Network of over 200 industry partners who support the school, its educational programme and values.

1.3 Vision and Mission

VISION

Our founding vision is that people living in cities experience more fulfilled and more sustainable lives. Our school educates future leaders to design innovations that contribute to this change.

That vision endures. Climate emergency, the tragedy of the fire at Grenfell Tower, ever stronger demands for social justice: our communities and our planet need responsive forms of built environment practice – a new generation who will design, develop, and build more equitable and more ecologically flourishing environments. To fulfil our vision, we must act with increasing urgency

MISSION

Network – To bring together outstanding students, practices, professionals, educators and social entrepreneurs to generate and champion essential new approaches to the design of the urban built environment

Institution – To maintain the school as independent and financially sustainable, achieving the highest standards of governance and academic delivery, in our physical and virtual studio, with a spirit of agility, openness and responsiveness

Programme – To provide career-long learning programmes that generate incremental and disruptive innovations in the design of cities and urban environments and which critically equip our graduates for the green economy and a just transition

Talent – To be the route of choice for gifted learners to become spatial leaders, recruiting talented candidates from across the whole of society by proactively addressing soft and hard barriers to the profession/industry

Impact – To influence the future of architecture and the city – and particularly London – by producing provocative design/research for global dissemination and by being nimble agents of change within the capital itself.

1.4 Context

Over the next 2 years, the LSA will celebrate its 10th birthday and mark the 10th anniversary of the launch of our Part 2 programme, which has produced over 300 industry-ready, critical practitioners now active in the world of architecture and the wider built environment. Following the departure of our Founder and Director, Will Hunter, the Board of Trustees appointed Dr Neal Shasore as Head of School/Chief Executive in June 2021. Shasore, along with Academic Director, Samantha Hardingham, and the wider Operations Team will lead the school into its next phase of growth, diversification and consolidation.

PART 2

Our MArch in Designing Architecture (Part 2), accredited by the RIBA and recently re-validated by the RIBA, has been commended for the 'level of engagement with the profession in the design of a sustainable and innovative programme' and 'the sense of empowerment and independence that the students demonstrate'. The LSA currently has 110 enrolled students across both years of the MArch, and is seeking to expand its cohort size over the coming years amidst a highly competitive post-graduate market.

As a Higher Education Provider we are registered with the Office for Students.

Formerly in partnership with London Metropolitan University, our degrees are now awarded by the University of Liverpool. Our Academic Partnership with Liverpool extends to developing a strategic partnership with Liverpool School of Architecture. We are, however, an independent school and programme with a distinct identity and course offering.

2024-25 STRATEGIC PLAN

In December 2022, the Board of Trustees approved a new Strategic Plan for the school's development up to 2024/25. With a short strategic sprint, the next 3 years will allow the LSA to position itself at the vanguard of a rapidly shifting regulatory framework for higher education and technical education generally, and architectural and built environment education more specifically. Alongside the scaling and refinement of our Part 2 programme, the Strategic Plan focuses on two new major programme initiatives.

PART 0 – Supporting Fair Access and Participation, Deepening Social Value

A holistic and integrated vision for widening access to built environment careers to young people and career-changers. Part 0 will fulfil and exceed our Access and Participation Plan (APP) targets while providing a robust framework for the Practice Network to fulfil Social Value and Equality, Diversity and Inclusion requirements in procurement processes. It will focus on emerging and urgent forms of built environment practice, including retrofit and circular economy. It will create: a ladder of learning from Level 2 to Level 5 in built environment practice; a framework for a currently fragmented offer, offering an equitable and accessible route through to architectural and other forms of built environment education; a bridge to close the gap between 'professions' and 'trades', focussing on new forms of practice to enhance green skills and deliver retrofit.

PART 4 – Modular Learning Experiences for Professional Practice

These will arm alumni, practice and industry with the tools to maintain and demonstrate competency through Collective Peer Development. They will create 'modular' learning experiences and micro-credentials designed to meet practice's training needs, in a blend of synchronous and asynchronous delivery.

Other strategic priorities include the strengthening of the LSA Practice Network, securing capital funding for major investment in premises and digital technology, and forging closer connections with wider civil society to support the betterment of the built environment.

The LSA is seeking a Chair for its Board of Trustees that will champion this Strategic Vision and support the development of a longer-term strategy under the school's new leadership. The Chair will ensure the high standards of governance which have characterised the school's early years are maintained, fulfilling the fiduciary responsibilities required by the Office for Students and the Charity Commission, and providing consistency and advice to the Board's various Sub-Committees.