

Design

The Doyle School of Design & Technology

It was in September 1997 that I arrived at Christ's Hospital to take over the Design and Technology Department, with the knowledge that there was to be a re-modeling of the existing building, with a large extension built on the back. My predecessor, Phil Williams, had spent many hours working on what he hoped was the best way forward, and I was only too pleased to take on these plans and hopefully see them through to

fruition. The possibility of this move was brought about by the generous donation by Jack Doyle, Old Blue. However, somewhere along the way, in came the Master Plan, which decided that a new building on the fourth side of the Art quad was the way forward, bring together Art, Design and Physics. In an ideal world perhaps this would have been true. To have a brand new building would be a great opportunity, but something niggled deep down inside me, because of my love for the old building; it is one of the most interesting designs on the site, and provides ample space for our needs. Perhaps it was

luck that knocked these plans on the head, not just the lack of money.

In 2006, I was asked to look at what could be done to the existing building to make it more functional, and a bit more up to date, without extending, and without spending a vast amount of money.

My first thoughts were focused on what we needed, and my reaction straight away was to somehow create a situation where pupils entered the building without either going straight into a workshop, or having to walk through another workspace in order to get to their lesson. Secondly, I looked at



Right: Jack Doyle with Sabrina Brookfield at the opening of the school.



which part of the building needed most attention; that was easy, the ground floor.

When I got my first thoughts together, I created a model of the ground floor, and a plan showing the layout of all the equipment which I could show to Jack Doyle for his approval. When I was talking to him about the plans, he quickly pointed out, that although he was funding the work, and new equipment, we had to retain the old benches.

So my first stage was to create an entrance hall, somewhere where we could display pupils' work. Secondly the two workshops to the right of the entrance were knocked into one to create a very large workspace. This allowed us to create a machine area, and a new heat treatment area. The end workshop, which had over the years become a dumping ground, was remodeled into one large workspace. It was at this time, that the last of the old forges and all the fan system that accompanied it were removed.

The Foundry? Well that was rather like a black hole, which still had the pit with the original furnaces in place. The décor of the building was awful, and the furnaces we currently used were old and slow. This space had a total makeover. The pit was filled in, the furnaces removed and the floor screed to make it level. Two new powered gas furnaces were installed which meant the melting time of aluminium was reduced by 75%. The entire room was then painted – what a difference.

So what has the re-furbishment meant for this Department? Firstly, we have an area where we can display work produced by the pupils, something that visitors like and expect to see. Secondly, three members of staff have their own, enclosed,

workshops where there is no need for other classes to have to walk through. Both these benefits create a much improved Department, and one that I will be sad to leave at the end of this academic year.

*Ken Leadbeater
(Head of Design & Technology)*



Left: Jack Doyle and John Franklin, formally opening the new school.