

Education and Office Buildings Award

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★ **Joint Winner:** Hoare Lea, *Shireland CBSO Academy*

The project involved the repurposing of an office building into a new specialist home for Shireland Collegiate Academy, the first state school in England associated with a professional orchestra, the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra (CBSO).

It was driven by a pragmatic, cost-effective, design solution approach to sustainably re-use the existing building form, materials, and services where possible and one of the key innovations of the project was the utilisation of the existing atrium to form a triple height performance hall for classical music rehearsal, performance and recording and a larger volume hall to the benefit of the room acoustics.

One of the driving forces of the Academy is to generate more evidence on the wider benefits that high quality practical music instrumental study can bring, and the completed project appears to have achieved the fine balancing act of a cost-effective acoustic design, an inspirational venue for educational use and also a high quality neutral chamber hall acoustic suitable for recording and performances from pupils and CBSO members alike.

The judges noted this was an excellent example of repurposing an existing building, especially considering the challenges involved with doing so next to a busy road and the acoustic issues this raised. The specific requirements of the CBSO were noted including maintaining their reputation which meant that the design of the project was genuinely at the heart of the scheme and something which the CBSO were ultimately pleased with as shown in the Academy Principal's enthusiastic testimonial: "our performance hall is an inspirational venue with excellent acoustic performance; our practice rooms give students the opportunity to hone their skills while minimising disruption to others; and our music classrooms, recording studios and choral space provide students with facilities that exceeds what would be found in many other schools."

ACOUSTIC AWARDS 2024

These awards demonstrate the unique skills of UK based acoustic consultants in addressing challenges, championing innovation and originality and showcasing the significance of a profession which blends art and science to transformational effect.