

Issue 1

January 2026



LSE Estates Division

Capital Development

Dear Colleagues,

This newsletter provides an update on a variety of projects currently being undertaken by the Capital Development team in the Estates Division.

These range from major Capital development projects for new buildings to minor works aimed at enhancing and improving the student and staff experience.

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61 Aldwych Fit Out

Following a Design Competition held in August 2025, Feix&Merlin and Alison Brooks Architects were appointed as Lead Designer for the conversion of this building for School use.

RIBA Stage 1 started in October. This RIBA Stage relates to activities enabling design development, such as undertaking surveys, developing the brief, and assessing feasibility from functional, statutory, technical, and commercial perspectives.



A feasibility study for six scheme options is due to be completed in January, and a scheme option to be selected in February, for design development to start early in March.

At present, the scheme is due to be delivered by end of June 2028. However, this may depend on the scheme option that is selected.

In March 2026, Capital Development team will start consultations with stakeholders to develop the concept design.

Public Realm - Portugal Street Project (Phase 1)

The Capital Development Team have been working on the exciting Portugal Street Public Realm project, initiating a design competition to select a team to lead and develop early design proposals in collaboration with Westminster City Council.

The project looks to complete the expansion of the LSE campus by pedestrianising Portugal street alongside the delivery of Firoz Lalji Global Hub, extending the safe cohesive campus feel across the LSE quarter, and bringing together the fantastic previous public realm schemes from Portsmouth & Sheffield Street, Clare Market, and the John Watkins Plaza.

Four landscape architects were shortlisted from an initial selection of renowned international practices and, following a public exhibition held in the Marshall Building in November 2025, and a jury panel led by Estates Director Julian Robinson, the Capital Development team are now finalising the appointment of the winning design team - to be announced in the coming weeks.

The early-stage designs will be developed throughout 2026 before undergoing a handover to Westminster City Council, who will assess, develop, and implement the scheme.



Connaught House - 1st Floor Methodology Refurbishment

The Capital Development Team worked closely with Rock Townsend Architects to refurbish and enhance the first floor of Connaught House for the Methodology Department. The project focused on reconfiguring the open plan space to better support both staff and students, creating a functional and adaptable environment with a clear, contemporary design.

The refurbished area features a series of defined yet open spaces, using acoustic panels to improve comfort and reduce noise. A combination of soft seating and banquette seating has been introduced to support informal working, collaboration and study, all set within a light, modern colour palette intended to create a calm and welcoming atmosphere. Alongside the main open plan improvements, the staff kitchen was refreshed, a new tea point was added to the MSc study room, and two new meeting pods were installed to provide enclosed spaces for meetings and focused work.

Works were completed in the Autumn of 2025.



King's Chambers - RAG Vintage Shop Revamp

The LSE Students' Union and LSE Estates Capital Development are working together to deliver a revamp to the existing LSESU RAG Vintage & Charity Shop located on the Ground Floor of King's Chambers.

The shop has been operating for over 2 years and has raised almost £3K for several charities (nominated annually by LSE students). The goal is to make the space brighter, more inviting and repurposed to be used for various activities, with an overarching aim of developing a greater sense of community, for all those who work on charitable initiatives across the university.

Construction works are planned to start in Summer 2026.



Long Term Maintenance (LTM)

Long-Term Maintenance (LTM) is the planned improvement, renewal and maintenance of our building fabric and services across both our Aldwych campus and Halls of Residence. Below are updates from some of the headline projects we are undertaking this year:

Lift Improvement Programme

This year we will be undertaking a programme of improvement to targeted lifts in the Sir Arthur Lewis Building, Old Building, Cheng Kin Ku Building, Lionel Robbins Building and Clement House. A Contractor has been appointed, and plans are currently being prepared for delivering these important works. The dates of lift closures will be published, in advance, once a programme has been agreed with stakeholders and the Contractor.

Fire Safety Improvements

We are continuously looking for ways to improve and maintain our fire safety systems. This year we are undertaking minor improvements across the campus and are upgrading devices in Sir Arthur Lewis Building and Connaught House. These works are expected to finish in Spring 2026. In addition, the final phase of upgrading the Old Building fire alarm system will begin later this year.

Cooling System Upgrade (Sir Arthur Lewis Building)

The cooling system which maintains key IT infrastructure in the Sir Arthur Lewis Building is now at the end of its design life. Following a competitive tender, a Contractor has been appointed to replace the system. Work will commence on site in late January 2026 and will complete in April 2026.

In addition to the above works there are many other smaller works taking place to keep our buildings running. If you have any questions regarding LTM or any of the works above, please contact Principal Project Manager Daniel Segeth at: d.j.segeth@lse.ac.uk.

Firoz Lalji Global Hub: January 2026

McLaren Construction took possession of the site on 22 September 2025. Site set up and scaffold installation is progressing. Early design packages i.e structural, facade, mechanical and electrical are underway. Construction activities expected in January 2026 include:

- Internal block work to commence following upstand formation
- Basement waterproofing enabling works
- North elevation façade works
- External scaffold to progress on external elevations
- Perimeter hoardings to progress following scaffold
- Spine wall construction ongoing

The new building is scheduled for completion in late 2027, however we are anticipating the building to be operational from mid 2028. The new building is on target to achieve Passivhaus, BREEAM and WELL certifications. Measures to minimize the noise and disruption to the surrounding buildings are being implemented by the contractor at source, in accordance with statutory requirements and industry best practice.



Saw Swee Hock Student Centre - Denning Café & Three Tuns Bar Light Refurbishment



The LSE Students' Union and Capital Development are working together to deliver light refurbishment works to the Denning Café located on Level 1 and the Three Tuns Bar on Level 0 in SAW.

The goal is to improve the ambience of the Denning Café space, creating a contemporary social and learning hub featuring a microwave station, vending machines, and comfortable seating.



Works to the Three Tuns Bar will hopefully create a natural, warm, on-trend pub environment that fosters a sense of belonging. A space that functions as a daytime social hub and transforms into a trendy bar and late-night venue.

LSE's appointed contractor completed Phase 1 of the Denning Café in September 2025, Phase 2 should be completed before the end of the 2025-26 Winter Term.

Marshall Fire Safety Works

The works to install the smoke extractor on Level 9 and smoke doors on Levels 3-7 are now complete. The new installation has been certified by Building Control, and the London Fire Brigade wrote to confirm compliance with their requirements.

Contractors have now decanted the site, and building users will have full access to the Level 8-9 patio and all other areas that were previously restricted due to the building works.



Sir Arthur Lewis - Economics Undergraduate Common Room Refurbishment

The Department of Economics and LSE Estates Capital Development have converted room LG.05B in Sir Arthur Lewis building, previously used as a PC study room, into the Economics Undergraduate Common Room.

The construction works completed in October 2025, and the department opened the space to students in early November 2025.

Since opening, the common room has been incredibly popular with the Department's undergraduate students, in addition, the Dept have already held several departmental events in the space.



Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme (LRB)

Temporary heating is currently in use, where required, due to a defect with a compressor in one of the Air Source Heat Pumps (ASHPs). The compressor is due to be replaced on 19 January. The defect to the compressor is deemed to be the cause of the vibration experienced on level 5 in November 2025, this is being ascertained by the manufacturer.

Before the heating system can be fully operational, the only remaining boiler serving lower levels of the building and overdoor heaters must be repaired (due in January). In addition, to prevent loss of heat due to draughts, LSE Maintenance are planning works to replace windows actuators on levels 1 to 5, dates to be confirmed once the parts are sourced.

LSE Maintenance recently intervened to resolve localised poor heating output from radiators in R2.00 and R1.04.

Additional radiators were installed as part of the scheme on levels 1 and 4. This is due to the ASHPs providing heat at lower temperatures compared to gas fired boilers.

The project was completed on 18 December 2025.

If you have any queries, please contact Principal Project Manager Elena Forti at E.Forti@lse.ac.uk

Lakatos – 4th Floor Philosophy Common Room Refurbishment

The Capital Development Team, working alongside Rock Townsend Architects, has recently completed a series of enhancements to the fourth floor PhD Philosophy Common Room in the Lakatos Building.

The refreshed space has been thoughtfully updated to create a brighter, more welcoming environment that supports both focused study and relaxed social interaction. Careful attention has been paid to improving comfort and overall visual appeal, helping to provide a pleasant setting that PhD students can enjoy throughout the day. A particularly welcome addition is the new tea point in the adjoining room — a small but important detail — complemented by the introduction of a glazed panel to improve visibility, natural light and the sense of connection between the two spaces.

Works were completed in the Autumn of 2025.



We appreciate that some of these works will cause inconvenience to staff and students but we have been working with affected stakeholders to ensure these are mitigated and kept to a minimum. These works will increase the quality and efficiency of our estate and your forbearance is much appreciated.

Should you need any further information please don't hesitate to contact Cheryl Smitham, Deputy Director (Capital Development) on C.Smitham1@lse.ac.uk