

## **'Stepping into the world'**

At the centre of this glass screen will be the sun – symbolising the growth and optimism which defines our education at school. This central light source is overlaid with several flying birds, representing pupils at Haberdashers' Aske's School for Girls stepping into their adult lives. Throughout history birds have been revered as spirit guides with the power to bring messages, teach, guide and protect people. They are also associated with flight, freedom and adventure which are all symbolized by their feathers.

The glass screen will be structured around the circle – a prevailing design symbol dating back millennia and often thought to represent the power of the female. Referencing 'Mother Earth' and also the sun, the circle is often associated with infinity, being complete and being whole. It also reminds viewers of feminine energy and the many influential teachers at the school including and especially the former head Penelope Penney who held a strong, inspirational Christian faith and motivation for excellence. Finally, the circle is also a statement of sanctity, and this is reinforced by the design featuring a background of fishes which represent faith in Christianity.

A gradually varying colour wheel palette will meanwhile create an impression of the four seasons shining through the glass screen. A solar cross – demarcating the four seasons that occur in a solar year – will also structure the composition. The visible lines that form this cross may furthermore be interpreted to symbolize the annual solstices and equinoxes. A key element of the design will be the silhouettes of girls engaged in various learning activities and shaded with fragments of feathers. Feathers have a deep spiritual meaning across many cultures – representing a connection to the spirit and to divinity. Ancient cultures believed that feathers fell to Earth as gifts from the sky.

**302 words**