

Built Heritage Statement

Land at LVS Hassocks, London Road, Sayers Common, West Sussex.

On behalf of Wates Developments Limited and The Licenced Trade Charity (LTC).

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Author: Hannah Armstrong, BA(Hons) MSc IHBC ACIfA

Director





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1. Introduction

1.1. Pegasus Group have been commissioned by Wates Developments Limited and The Licensed Trade Charity (LTC) to prepare a Built Heritage Statement to consider the proposed redevelopment of Land at LVS Hassocks, London Road, Sayers Common, West Sussex, as shown on the Site Location Plan provided at Plate 1.

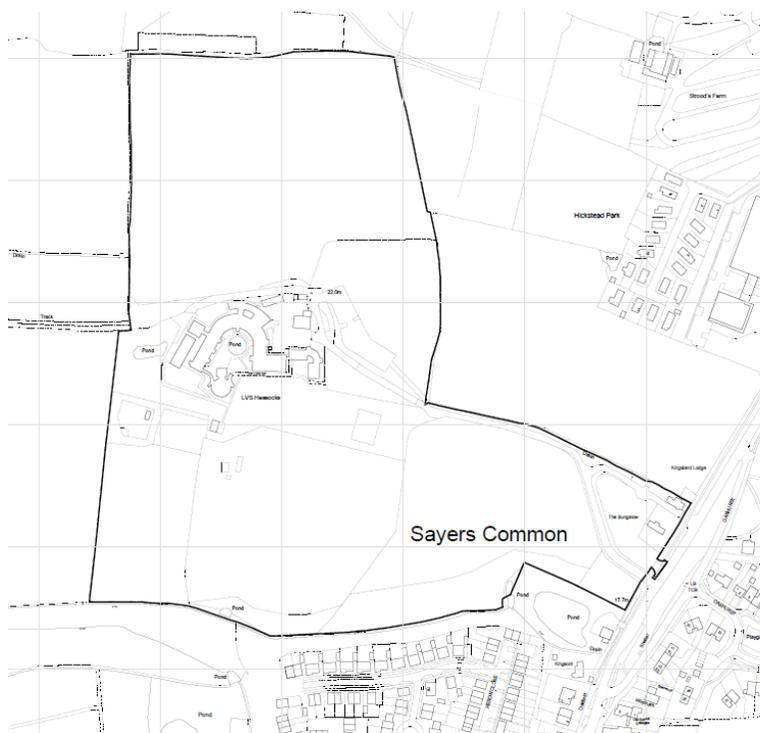


Plate 1: Plan with the approximate site boundary shown in orange.

1.2. The Site comprises the existing LVS Hassocks school site, consisting of the principal built complex in the centre of the Site and open space to the north and south. Built form within the Site includes a former 19th century dwelling, former Priory buildings constructed in the late 1970s, early 20th century educational buildings, and a range of ancillary building dating from the 19th to early 21st century.

1.3. There are no designated built heritage assets situated within the bounds of the Site, nor is the Site located within a Conservation Area.

1.4. Mid Sussex District Council have, however, confirmed via the Pre-Application process that they consider the 1970s Priory to represent 'non-designated heritage assets' in the terms of the NPPF.

1.5. Hybrid Planning Permission is sought for separate and severable elements comprising:

“Demolition of all existing buildings bar the chapel, to retained for use within Use Class F and:

a) Full planning permission for the development of the north western part of the Land at LVS Hassocks so as to accommodate a new SEN School with associated access from London Road, car parking, landscaping and drainage works; and

b) Outline planning permission (Appearance, Landscaping, Layout and Scale Reserved) for the development of the rest of the land at LVS Hassocks so as to accommodate up to 210 dwellinghouses

(including affordable housing) with associated access, car parking, landscaping, play areas, informal outdoor space and drainage works."

- 1.6. This Assessment provides information with regards to the significance of the built historic environment to fulfil the requirement given in paragraph 207 of the Government's *National Planning Policy Framework* (the *NPPF*) which requires:

"...an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting".¹

- 1.7. In order to inform an assessment of the acceptability of the scheme in relation to impacts on the built historic environment, following paragraphs 212 to 216 of the *NPPF*, any harm to the built historic environment resulting from the proposed development is also described, including impacts on significance through changes to setting.
- 1.8. As required by paragraph 207 of the *NPPF*, the detail and assessment in this Report is considered to be *"proportionate to the assets' importance".²*

Pre-Application Engagement

- 1.9. Pre-Application advice was sought from Mid Sussex District Council prior to the submission of this application, with this including a site meeting and ongoing liaison as the scheme developed.
- 1.10. Commentary was received from the Mid Sussex District Council Conservation Officer regarding the proposed development of the Site in November 2025.
- 1.11. In summary, the Conservation Officer set out the following:
- The 1970s Priory buildings within the Site were deemed to represent non-designated heritage assets in the terms of the *NPPF*.
 - The surviving 'rural setting' of the 1970s Priory buildings was considered to contribute positively to their significance.
 - The remainder of built form within the Site, including the 19th-century Kingsland, was deemed to be of insufficient interest to warrant classification as non-designated heritage assets.
 - The stone walling to the London Road frontage of the Site, whilst not identified as a non-designated heritage asset, was recommended for retention.

¹ Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (MHCLG), *National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)* (London, December 2024), para. 207.

² MHCLG, *NPPF*, para. 207.

- The scheme submitted for consideration under the Pre-Application was deemed to result in harm '*at the mid-level to an NDHA [non-designated heritage asset] of a mid-high level of interest within the local context.*' The harm identified to the non-designated heritage asset was identifying as requiring consideration within the decision-making process under Paragraph 216 of the NPPF.
- The only designated heritage asset within the surrounds of the Site that has the potential to be sensitive to the development of the Site is the Grade II Listed Kingscot. The Conservation Officer was of the opinion that the proposals had the potential to result in a '*low-mid level of harm*' to the overall heritage significance of Kingscot as a result of a change in '*setting*', which should be considered under Paragraph 215 of the NPPF.

2. Site Description and Planning History

Site Description

2.1. The Site comprises the existing LVS Hassocks school site, consisting of the principal built complex in the centre of the Site and open space to the north and south (Plate 2). The complex is accessed via a driveway from the B2118 to the east, with two residential dwellings situated within the Site boundary to the north of the access point.

2.2. The aforementioned ‘open space’ comprises a mix of recreational areas, car parking, agricultural land (primarily to the north) and a small cemetery associated with the use of the Site of as a priory in the late 20th century.

2.3. Analysis of archival sources and onsite assessment has identified that the built form within the Site can be divided into the following five categories, the locations of which are detailed at Plate 3:

- The 19th-century dwelling known as ‘Kingsland’ – highlighted in orange on Plate 3.
- 1970s buildings associated with the establishment of a monastic complex at the Site by the Priory of Our Lady of Good Counsel – highlighted in green on Plate 3.
- Remnant 19th-century ancillary buildings associated with the development of ‘Kingsland’ complex – highlighted in yellow on Plate 3.

- Early 21st-century buildings constructed as part of the educational use of the Site – highlighted in purple on Plate 3.
- The Bungalow, located adjacent to the B2118 – highlighted in blue on Plate 3.

2.4. Built form within the Site was subject to assessment by Historic England in 2025 with the resulting decision being not to designate the structures. A copy of the Historic England report is provided at **Appendix 1**.



Plate 2: Aerial photograph of the Site (approximate boundary shown in orange) and its immediate surrounds.



Plate 3: Annotated site plan detailing the location of the five categories of built form identified during the site visit.

Site Development and Planning History

- 2.5. The earliest source identified as part of this assessment to depict the Site is the Tithe Map and Appointment for the Parish of Hurstpierpoint dated 1842. This Map details a dwelling on roughly the same footprint as 'Kingsland', with the accompanying Apportionment detailing that the building was owned and occupied by James Valance. The plot within which the building is located (Plot 709) is described within the Apportionment as 'House & Garden', with the building named as 'Kingsland Farm'.
- 2.6. A detached building is detailed to the northeast of the main dwelling, with three further detached buildings to the north and west. A forecourt is recorded to the east of the dwelling, terminating an approach from the east, the entrance of which is marked by a small building, presumably a lodge. To the west of the dwelling is a circular pond.
- 2.7. The extent of landholdings owned and occupied by Valance as part of 'Kingsland Farm' is detailed at Plate 4, with such areas comprising a mix of arable and pastoral land. Of particular note is that the Tithe Map does not detail any land parcels which may be indicative of a designed landscape, nor is any such use indicated by field names and uses set out within the accompanying Apportionment.
- 2.8. When comparing the situation detailed on the Tithe Map and Appointment against the existing built form of Kingsland and the layout of its environs detailed on later sources (see below), the built form and landholdings detailed on the Tithe Map and Appointment are considered to be associated with an earlier farmstead,

with the existing Kingsland dwelling either being a reworking of the building shown on this source or a rebuild – see further discussion in **Section 6**.



Plate 4: Extract from the 1842 Hurstpierpoint Tithe Map. The approximate site boundary is outlined in orange, with the extent of the landholdings associated with Kingsland Farm shaded blue.

NB – the Site is located on a 'join' on the map and thus there is some distortion to the alignment of field boundaries and building footprints.

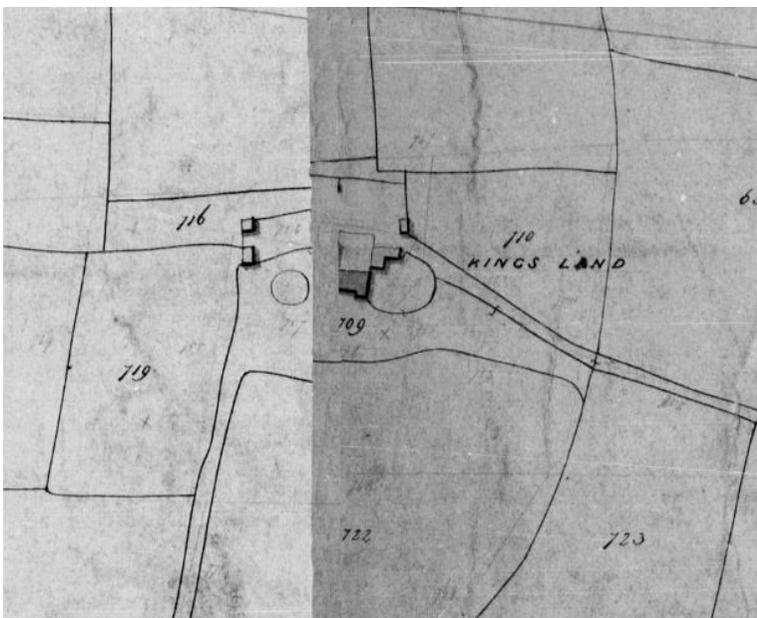


Plate 5: Extract from the 1842 Hurstpierpoint Tithe Map focussed on areas of built form.

NB – the Site is located on a ‘join’ on the map and thus there is some distortion to the alignment of field boundaries and building footprints.

- 2.9. The current built form of Kingsland is understood to have been established in the mid-19th century, based upon its style, and is first depicted on the Ordnance Survey Map of 1879 (Plate 6). This source details the principal dwelling, with a rear wing (presumably servants wing based upon its form and onsite assessment) extending to the northwest. A group of detached ancillary buildings is situated to the east and north, creating an enclosed rear courtyard, with further detached outbuildings to the northwest.

- 2.10. Designed grounds are detailed within the immediate surrounds of the principal dwelling, in particular to the south and west. The latter includes the circular pond depicted on the earlier Tithe Map. Beyond the designed gardens to the south is an area of open parkland, defined by a tree belt to the west. Access continued to be via the approach from the east, with a new lodge building constructed at the entrance to the approach from the B2118.

- 2.11. Further detail as to the composition of the Site during the late 19th century is provided via the Ordnance Survey Map of 1897 (Plate 7). With regard to the designed landscape, this source details:

- A clear separation between the immediate surrounds of the dwelling (i.e., the immediate lawns and gardens) and the wider parkland beyond. A stone ha-ha was identified during the site visit, with this marking the boundary between the two areas.
- A ‘grove’ / woodland garden to the east of the dwelling.
- Interspersed parkland planting in the areas of wider parkland to the south and southeast of the dwelling.
- ‘Productive areas (i.e., kitchen garden) to the west of the dwelling, enclosed by and separated from the gardens and parkland by treebelt.
- Treebelt planting adjacent to the B2118.

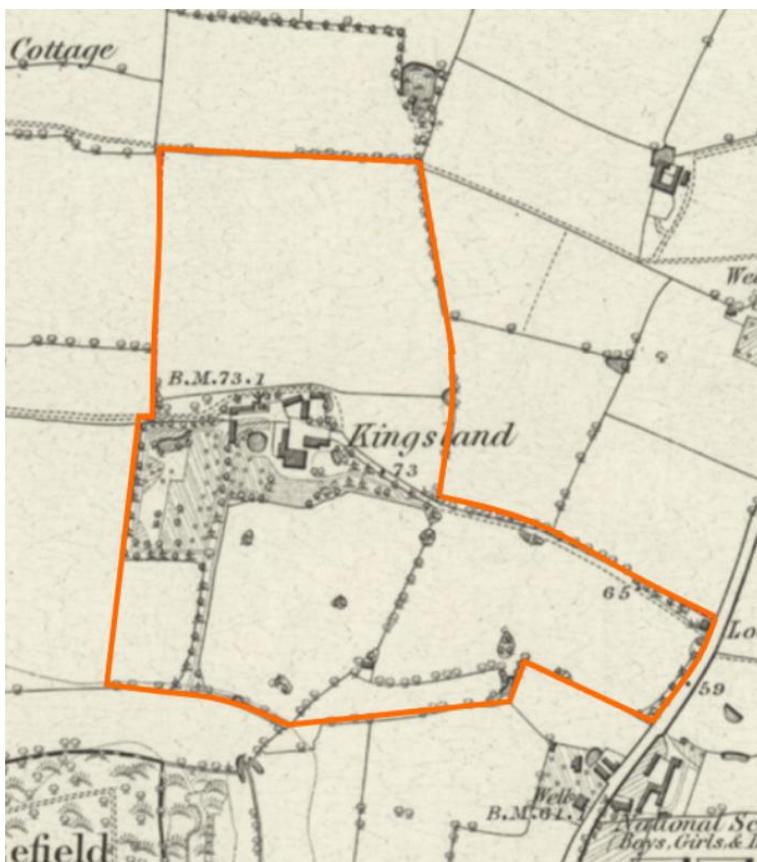


Plate 6: Extract from the Ordnance Survey Map of 1879. The approximate site boundary is outlined in orange.

- 2.12. Northern parts of the Site, to the north of the built complex, do not appear to have been subject to any particular design and most likely formed part of the wider ancillary landholdings.



Plate 7: Extract from the Ordnance Survey Map of 1897 focussed on the central and southern parts of the Site.

- 2.13. The composition of the Site remained largely as shown on late 19th-century sources until the mid-20th century (Plates 8 and 9). By 1956 a tennis court – as indicated by the Ordnance Survey Map of this date (Plate 10) – had been established to the south of the ‘grove’, with the eastern area of parkland in use as ‘Kingsland Nurseries’. The latter resulted in the introduction of new boundaries and a group of glasshouses and outbuildings. ‘The Bungalow’ had also been constructed by this date to the south of the lodge.
- 2.14. With specific regard to the built form of Kingsland, as discussed further in **Section 6**, the northwest wing of the building had been demolished by 1956.

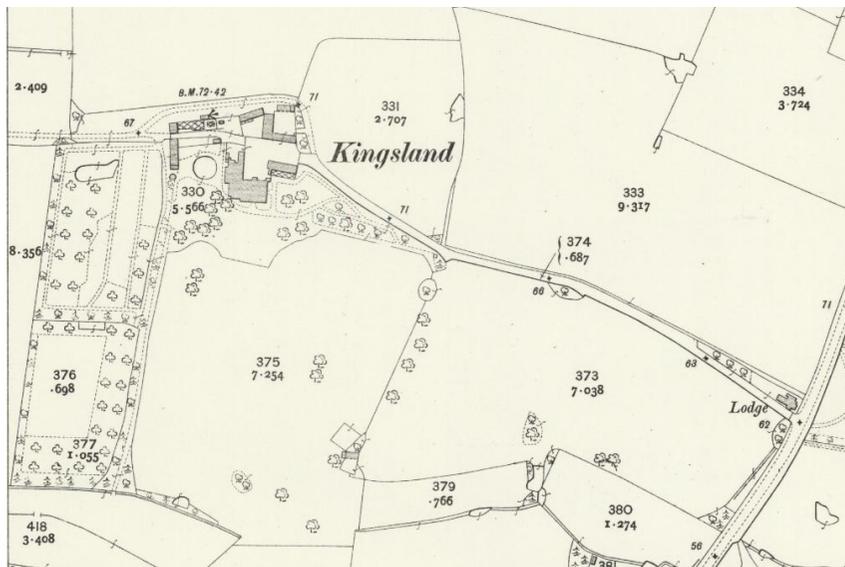


Plate 8: Extract from the Ordnance Survey Map of 1910 focussed on the central and southern parts of the Site.

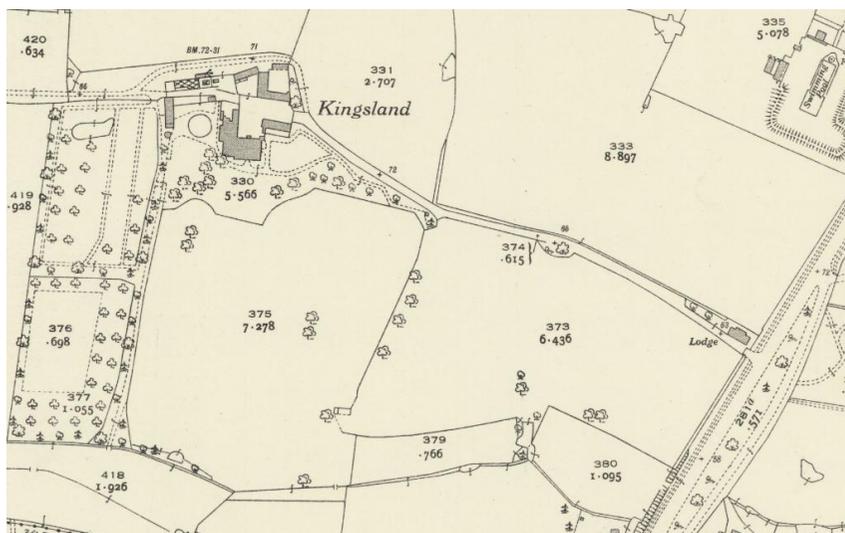


Plate 9: Extract from the Ordnance Survey Map of 1938 focussed on the central and southern parts of the Site.



Plate 10: Extract from the Ordnance Survey Map of 1956 focussed on the central and southern parts of the Site.

- 2.15. The Site was acquired by the Priory of Our Lady of Good Counsel (formally of Haywards Heath) in the 1970s. In 1972 Planning Permission was granted for the construction of 'a new Monastery with centre for pastoral work' (LPA Ref. F/72/1183), with Reserved Matters for the design granted in 1975 (LPA Ref. HP/060/75). In the same year, change of use was granted for a new burial ground within the Site (LPA Ref. HP/0828/75), with this located within the western area. As part of the redevelopment of the Site, the eastern parkland reverted back to pasture.
- 2.16. The new complex was designed by the architect Michael Blee and included the conversion and extension of Kingsland House – see further details in **Section 6**. The Priory of Our Lady of Good Counsel officially moved to the Site in 1978.

2.17. During the late 20th century, the approach from the B2118 was subject to alteration – specifically a new entrance point to the south of The Bungalow was created with a new driveway extending northwest to the west of The Bungalow meeting the historic drive northwest of Kingsland Lodge. This resulted in the first part of the historic drive no longer being accessible from the B2118, with access to Kingsland Lodge provided from the northwest via the new spur. The new drive was planted with an avenue of trees to match the character of the historic drive.



Plate 11: Aerial photograph of the Site (approximate boundary shown in orange), 2001.

2.18. The Priory complex was sold in the early 21st century, with the LVS Hassocks school opening in the former Priory buildings in 2009.

2.19. In 2009, as part of the conversion of the complex into the school, Planning Permission was granted for *'Elevational changes consisting of the removal of doors and full height glazing at ground and first floor level and replacing with a low level infill panel and window above as shown on the drawings. Change of use from agricultural land to allow the following; Installation of below ground LPG storage tanks to provide heating and cooking. Construction of additional car park and temporary storage compound'* (LPA Ref. 09/O3302/FUL).

2.20. The approved car park was situated to the northeast of the building complex, with this having been built out and forming part of the existing baseline. Works to the Priory buildings are discussed further in **Section 6**.

2.21. In 2012, Planning Permission was granted for the extension of the car park to the northeast of Kingsland (LPA Ref. 12/O4081/FUL) and the installation of temporary classroom building west of the Church (LPA Ref. 12/O2199/FUL). The extended car park remains extant, with the temporary classroom since replaced by a 'permanent structure' – see below.

2.22. The car park approved under LPA Ref. 09/O3302/FUL and the temporary classroom approved under LPA Ref. 12/O2199/FUL are both detailed on an aerial photograph of 2012 (Plate 12). This source also details the establishment of playing fields to the south of Kingsland, with the northern part of the western parkland having been subject to relandscaping works to establish a flat surface. Such landscaping is evident on site today.



Plate 12: Aerial photograph of the Site (approximate boundary shown in orange), 2012.

- 2.23. In 2013, a new 'shelter' was constructed south of the Church in accordance with LPA Ref. 13/O1800/FUL. The installation of the shelter has altered the historic character of this space, and forms part of the existing baseline.
- 2.24. In 2014, Planning Permission was granted for the following:
- 14/O1905/FUL - *Demolition of the outbuilding and erection of a new timber framed structure, comprising of rooms for water tanks, a garage, storage and workshop space.*
 - 14/O0213/FUL - *Erection of a new teaching block, a social building and a garage/store including associated works and demolition.*
- 2.25. Both structures approved under this application have been constructed and form part of the existing baseline. The new structures, and the extended car park approved under LPA Ref. 12/O4081/FUL are all detailed on an aerial photograph of 2015, with the temporary classroom having been removed by this date (Plate 13). This source also details the further establishment of recreational facilities within the Site, in particular to the south of Kingsland.



Plate 13: Aerial photograph of the Site (approximate boundary shown in orange), 2015.

- 2.26. As now extant, the main part of the Site reads as a modern school complex which has developed on the site of an earlier minor country house and 1970s institutional complex. With regards to the existing built form, the group – ranging from 19th-, 20th- and early 21st-century in date, reads as an eclectic mix, all reflecting the phase of change to which they are associated.
- 2.27. With regard to the surrounds of the built form, whilst elements of the 19th-century designed landscape associated with Kingsland remain intelligible, the current composition and character results from the substantive change that has occurred during the late 20th and early 21st century. This matter is discussed further in **Section 6**.
- 2.28. This change not only derives from the introduction of new built form within the Site, but also new areas of hardstanding, the relandscaping of the former parkland, changes to the principal approach, the introduction of new boundary treatments (in particular that which separates the immediate surrounds of Kingsland from wider former parkland).
- 2.29. The surrounds of the Site have also been subject to change during the late 20th and early 21st century. In particular, the land to the south has been subject to residential development (LPA Ref. DM/19/1148). New residential dwellings, and wider infrastructure, associated with the development is visible from Kingsland and the wider Site.

3. Proposed Development

3.1. Hybrid Planning Permission is sought for separate and severable elements comprising:

“Demolition of all existing buildings bar the chapel, to be retained for use within Use Class F and:

a) Full planning permission for the development of the north western part of the Land at LVS Hassocks so as to accommodate a new SEN School with associated access from London Road, car parking, landscaping and drainage works; and

b) Outline planning permission (Appearance, Landscaping, Layout and Scale Reserved) for the development of the rest of the land at LVS Hassocks so as to accommodate up to 210 dwellinghouses (including affordable housing) with associated access, car parking, landscaping, play areas, informal outdoor space and drainage works.”

3.2. The location of areas that are to be subject to Outline and Full Planning Permission are detailed at Plate 14.

3.3. For the purpose of this assessment the area which is the subject of the Outline Permission – shaded red on Plate 14 – will be referred to as Area A, and the location of the proposed school – shaded blue on Plate 14– as Area B.

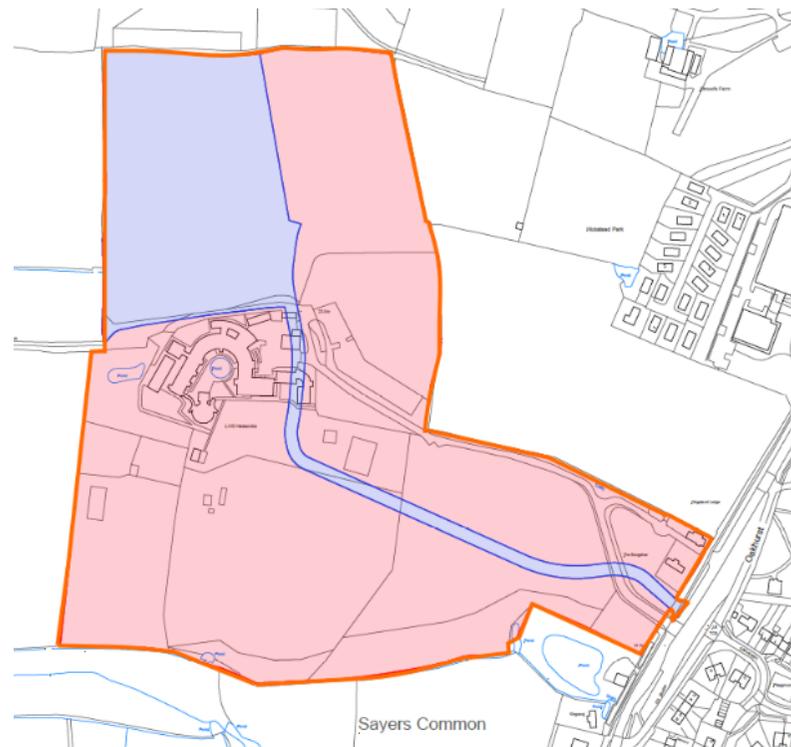


Plate 14: Plan detailing the areas that will be subject to Full Planning (blue) and Outline Planning (red) Permission. The approximate site boundary is shown in orange.

3.4. The proposals for the new school (i.e., the element which is subject to full Planning Permission) are detailed on the following plans which form the application package and which this assessment considers:

- DWG No. 323_3_04 – Proposed Site Plan.
- DWG No. 323_3_204 – Proposed North and East Contextual Elevations.
- DWG No. 323_3_205 – Proposed South and West Contextual Elevations.
- DWG No. 323_3_206 – Proposed South and West Contextual Elevations.

3.5. 'For approval' plans associated with the Outline element of the application, and which this assessment considers, comprise :

- DWG No. 24125 / SK102 Rev. D – Land Use Parameters Plan.
- DWG No. 24125 / SK103 Rev. D – Building Heights Parameters Plan.
- DWG No. 24125 / SK104 Rev. C – Access and Movement Parameters Plan.
- DWG No. 24125 / SK105 Rev. D – Green Infrastructure Parameters Plan.
- DWG No. 24125 / SK106 Rev. E – Density Parameters Plan.

3.6. The above parameters plans are supplemented by the illustrative Coloured Sketch Layout Plan (DWG No. 24125 / C101) which demonstrates how the Site could be developed in order to achieve the quantum of development, open space and supporting infrastructure proposed.

4. Methodology

4.1. The aims of this Report are to:

- Assess the significance of the built heritage resource within the Site;
- To identify any built heritage assets within the environs of the Site that have the potential to be sensitive to the proposals, and in turn any contribution that the Site makes to the heritage significance of the identified heritage assets via 'setting'; and
- Identify any harm or benefit to them which may result from the implementation of the development proposals, along with the level of any harm caused, if relevant.

4.2. This assessment considers built heritage only.

Sources

4.3. The following key sources have been consulted as part of this assessment:

- The Sussex Historic Environment Record (HER) accessed via Heritage Gateway for information on the recorded heritage resource in the Site;
- The National Heritage List for England for information on designated heritage assets;
- Planning records for the Site and its immediate surrounds, as held by Mid Sussex District Council;

- Historic England assessments of the built form within the Site.
- Archival sources as available online and at relevant depositories, and relevant secondary sources;
- Aerial photographs available online via Historic England's Aerial Photo Explorer and Britain from Above; and
- Google Earth satellite imagery.

Site Visit

4.4. Site visits have been undertaken by a Built Heritage specialist from Pegasus Group on numerous occasions during 2024 and 2025 during which the Site, the interior of built form and the wider surrounds were subject to appropriate, and proportionate, assessment.

Photographs

4.5. Photographs included in the body text of this Report are for illustrative purposes only to assist in the discussions of heritage assets, their settings, and views, where relevant. Unless explicitly stated, they are not accurate visual representations of the site or development proposals, nor do they conform to any standard or guidance i.e., the Landscape Institute Technical Guidance Note 06/19. However, the photographs included are intended to be an honest representation and are taken

without the use of a zoom lens or edited, unless stated in the description or caption.

Assessment Methodology

4.6. Full details of the assessment methodology used in the preparation of this Report are provided within **Appendix 2**. However, for clarity, this methodology has been informed by the following:

- *Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning: 2 – Managing Significance in Decision-Taking in the Historic Environment* (hereafter *GPA:2*).³
- *Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3 (Second Edition) – The Setting of Heritage Assets*, the key guidance of assessing setting (hereafter *GPA:3*).⁴
- *Historic England Advice Note 12 – Statements of Heritage Significance: Analysing Significance in Heritage Assets* (hereafter *HEAN:12*).⁵
- *Conservation Principles: Policies and Guidance for the Sustainable Management of the Historic Environment*.⁶

- *Historic England Advice Note 7 – Local Heritage Listing: Identifying and Conserving Local Heritage (Second Edition)* (hereafter *HEAN:7*).⁷

³ Historic England, *Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning: 2 – Managing Significance in Decision-Taking in the Historic Environment (GPA:2)* (2nd edition, Swindon, July 2015).

⁴ Historic England, *Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3 – The Setting of Heritage Assets (GPA:3)* (2nd edition, Swindon, December 2017).

⁵ Historic England, *Historic England Advice Note 12 – Statements of Heritage Significance: Analysing Significance in Heritage Assets (HEAN:12)* (Swindon, October 2019).

⁶ English Heritage, *Conservation Principles: Policies and Guidance for the Sustainable Management of the Historic Environment* (London, April 2008).

⁷ Historic England, *Local Heritage Listing: Identifying and Conserving Local Heritage, Historic England Advice Note 7 (Second Edition)* (Swindon, October 2021)

5. Policy Framework

Legislation

- 5.1. Legislation relating to the built historic environment is primarily set out within the *Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990*, which provides statutory protection for Listed Buildings and their settings and Conservation Areas.⁸
- 5.2. In addition to the statutory obligations set out within the aforementioned Act, Section 38(6) of the *Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004* requires that all planning applications, are determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.⁹
- 5.3. Full details of the relevant legislation are provided in **Appendix 3**.

National Planning Policy Guidance

- 5.4. National Planning Policy guidance relating to the historic environment is provided within Section 16 of the Government's *National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)*, an updated version of which was published in December 2024. The December 2024 version replaced previous

iterations published since the initial adoption of the *NPPF* in 2012.

- 5.5. The *NPPF* is also supplemented by the national *Planning Policy Guidance (PPG)* which comprises a full and consolidated review of planning practice guidance documents to be read alongside the *NPPF* and which contains a section related to the Historic Environment.¹⁰ The *PPG* also contains the *National Design Guide*.¹¹
 - 5.6. Full details of the relevant national policy guidance are provided within **Appendix 4**.
- December 2025 Consultation Draft**
- 5.7. A consultation draft of a revised version of the *NPPF* was published on 16th December 2025. As this is a consultation draft and the approach advocated within it may well change through the consultation process we have not sought to comment further on it within Report. That said we note that the revisions provided within the consultation draft in regard of heritage matters, the overarching of position of which is not notably different to that set out within the current draft.

⁸ UK Public General Acts, Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

⁹ UK Public General Acts, Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, Section 38(6).

¹⁰ Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG), *Planning Practice Guidance: Historic Environment (PPG)* (revised edition, 14th February 2024), <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/conserving-and-enhancing-the-historic-environment>.

¹¹ Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG), *National Design Guide* (London, January 2021).

The Development Plan

- 5.8. Applications for Planning Permission in Sayers Common are currently considered against the policy and guidance set out within the Mid Sussex District Plan 2014–2031 (adopted March 2018) and Hurstpierpoint & Sayers Common Neighbourhood Plan (adopted March 2015).
- 5.9. Of particular relevant is Policy DP34 of the Mid Sussex District Plan 2014–2031 which pertains to ‘Listed Buildings and Other Heritage Assets’. The wording of the policy makes it clear that *‘Proposals affecting such heritage assets will be considered in accordance with the policies in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and current Government guidance.’*
- 5.10. The wording of this policy, and other heritage policies relevant to the consideration of this application is set out in full in **Appendix 5**.
- Emerging Policy
- 5.11. Mid Sussex District Council are currently in the process of reviewing and updating the District Plan. The Mid Sussex District Plan 2014–2031 was submitted for independent examination on 8th July 2024, and the first stage of the examination took place between 22nd and 31st October 2024.
- 5.12. The Local Plan Inspector in their Stage 1 Post Hearings findings indicated that they considered the submission draft to be unsound, having, in their opinion, failed the Duty to Cooperate. MSDC have challenged these findings, and most recently, in light of the Minister of States letter on 9th October 2025 to the Chief Executive of the

Planning Inspectorate, have written to the Local Plan Inspector asking that the debate on the Duty to Cooperate be reopened and a further hearing session scheduled. The Inspectorate have agreed to this request, and a new Inspector has now been appointed.

- 5.13. Policy DP34 of the draft plan requires developments to protect Listed Buildings and their settings, and to conserve other heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance. The policy sets out that *‘Proposals affecting such heritage assets will be considered in accordance with the policies in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and current Government guidance.’*
- 5.14. Land at LVS Hassocks, is identified for mixed use development comprising both new housing and replacement Special Educational Needs school (SEN) in the Regulation 19 Submission Draft Mid Sussex Local Plan 2023 pursuant to Policy DPSC7
- 5.15. Whilst the wording of Policy DPSC7 was prepared prior to the recent consideration of the built form within the Site by both Historic England and the Mid Sussex District Council Conservation Officer, it is noted that the policy does not identify built heritage matters as a constraint to development. In this regard, it is noted that Listed Buildings in the environs of the Site were subject to designation at the point which the policy was drafted.

6. Built Form Within the Site

- 6.1. This section provides a discussion on the built form within the Site and remnant parts of the 19th-century designed landscape, alongside our opinion as to their potential heritage significance. The assessments provided are based upon archival review, onsite analysis, relevant industry guidance and professional judgement.
- 6.2. Analysis of archival sources and onsite assessment has identified that the built form within the Site can be divided into the following five categories:
- 1970s buildings associated with the establishment of a monastic complex at the Site by the Priory of Our Lady of Good Counsel.
 - The 19th-century dwelling known as 'Kingsland'.
 - Remnant 19th-century ancillary buildings associated with the development of 'Kingsland' complex.
 - Early 21st-century buildings constructed as part of the educational use of the Site.
 - The Bungalow, located adjacent to the B2118.
- 6.3. No built form within the Site is statutorily designated, nor is the Site located within a Conservation Area. As set out in **Section 2**, built form within the Site was subject to assessment by Historic England in 2025 with the resulting decision being not to designate the structures. A full copy of the Historic England report is provided at **Appendix 1**, with extracts provided below where relevant.

- 6.4. Mid Sussex District Council have confirmed via the Pre-Application process that they consider the 1970s Priory buildings to represent non-designated heritage assets in the terms of the NPPF. The following will provide a discussion on these buildings and their significance.
- 6.5. Mid Sussex District Council have confirmed that they do not consider the remainder of the built form within the Site to be of sufficient interest to warrant being classified as non-designated heritage assets. Accordingly, the remainder of built form within the Site will be discussed further below for clarity, with the level of assessment proportionate to their lack of significance.

1970s Priory Buildings

- 6.6. The 1970s Priory buildings were designed by Micheal Blee, a known post-War architect who practiced under Basil Spence in his early career. Blee was involved in numerous projects associated with ecclesiastical sites during the late 20th century, including 'new builds' such as Our Lady Priory and alterations to earlier Churches.
- 6.7. An article within the Arup Journal (henceforth referred to as 'AJ article') pertaining to the Priory complex is included at **Appendix 6**. This article provides information on the original layout and design concept for the Priory complex. In summary, the intent was to create a modern interpretation of a traditional monastic complex with recognisable themes to the layout and detailing, which responded to the needs of the community and their guests.

6.8. The Priory buildings can be divided into three principal areas:

- The former, deconsecrated Chapel, now commonly known as 'The Oast House' ('A' on Plate 3; Plate 15).
- The curved, two-storey structure which extends northwest from Kingsland and encircles the pond ('B' on Plate 3; Plate 16). This section is referred to below as 'the monastic arc' in accordance with the terminology utilised within the Arup Journal.
- The single storey 'guest wing' attached to the eastern side of Kingsland ('C' on Plate 3; Plate 17).



Plate 15: 'The Church' as seen from the north.



Plate 16: The inner face of the monastic arc as seen from the south.



Plate 17: The guest wing as seen from the west.

The Former Chapel

- 6.9. The former Chapel is situated at the western end of the Priory complex and forms a focal point of the design. The principal element comprises a straight conoid, similar in appearance to an oast house (hence the alternative name for the structure). A rectangular extension with a pyramid shaped roof is located to the north, with a connecting covered link to the dormitory element of the monastic arc extending to the northwest.
- 6.10. The Chapel as constructed was not reflective of Blee's original design intent for the complex. As set out in the AJ article, the original design for the Chapel comprised a principal skewed conoid structure with two small conoids connected to the chapter house and oratory (Plate 18). Structurally the building was to comprise of a system of laminated ribs stabilised by four skins of tongue and groove boarding laid in alternative direction. This structural approach (i.e., the use of a system of laminated ribs stabilised by four skins of tongue and groove boarding) and the presence of three conoids was abandoned on cost grounds, with the current arrangement being the resulting compromise.
- 6.11. The above is considered to reduce the architectural and aesthetic merit of the building, and the construction methods of the resulting structure are not considered to be of any particular technological or engineering interest in the context of buildings of the 1970s.

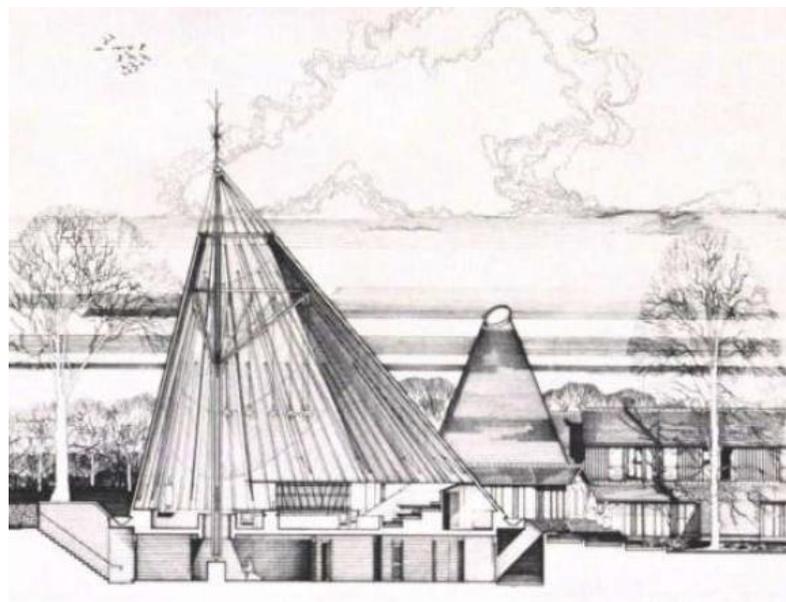


Plate 18: The original design for the Chapel.

- 6.12. In terms of architectural style, the Chapel can be considered to be the most successful of the Priory buildings. The building is an expressive structure, reminiscent of the traditional Oast houses seen in Sussex and Kent both in terms of shape and materiality. The glazing at the top also appears to mimic the cowl that rotates at the top of an Oast structure.
- 6.13. The 'Bless Sacrament Chapel' – the single storey pyramidal sided structure attached to the northern side of the main part of the building – is simpler in its form and appearance. Archival sources demonstrate that the current roof structure is an early 21st-century introduction following the removal of a small bell-tower.

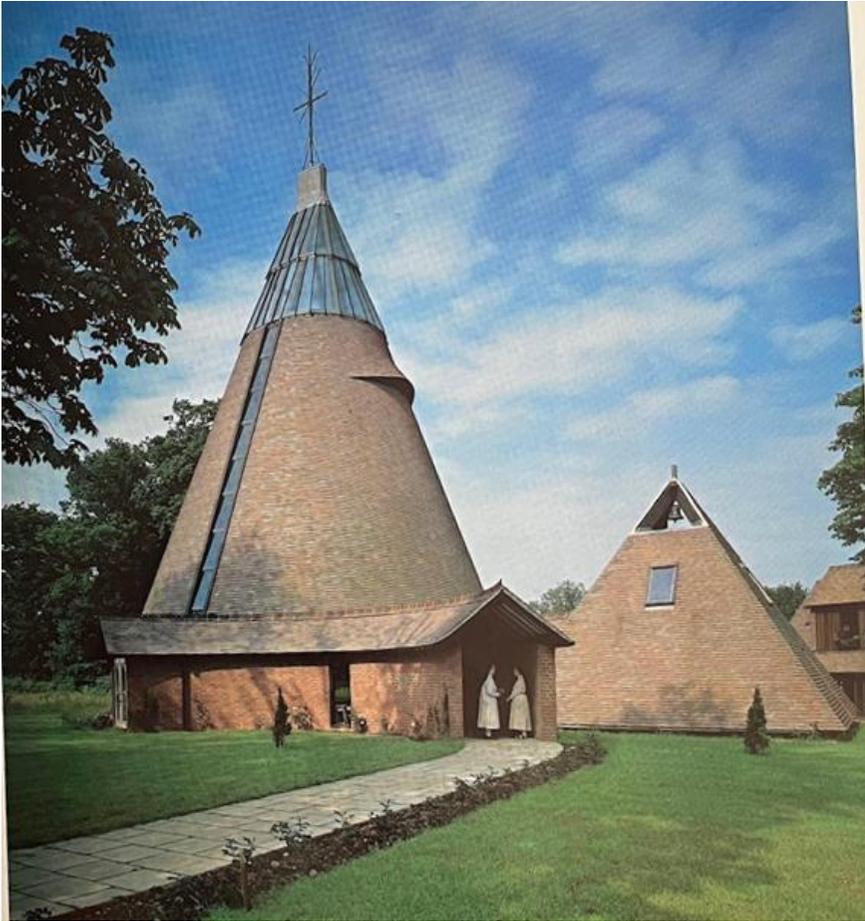


Plate 19: The exterior of the Chapel as constructed, 1981.



Plate 20: The exterior of the Chapel as now extant.



Plate 21: Existing form of the Bless Sacrament Chapel.

- 6.14. Internally, the Chapel comprises of two main spaces – the principal area within the conoid element and the Bless Sacrament Chapel’ – with the two connected by curved corridors. The principal area within the conoid element was the main place of worship and comprises a single open space. ‘Built-in’ furniture is limited to the organ on the southeastern side, with this understood to have been relocated from the earlier priory site at Hayward’s Heath. As demonstrated by archival sources, all other furniture would have been freestanding.
- 6.15. Such sources also indicate that the original light fittings have been removed and demonstrate the impact that the installation of new lighting and other equipment has had on the character and experience of the ribbed interior, and thus its original design intent.
- 6.16. The 1970s Priory Complex as a whole was awarded a ‘commendation’ in the RIBA Journal South East Awards of August 1980s. In considering the Chapel, the judges deemed the interior to be ‘too intrusive’. Thus, the overall architectural quality of the interior was clearly being questioned by the architectural community soon after construction. This is considered to be an important factor in assessing the ‘success’ of the interior architecturally.
- 6.17. The interior of the ‘Bless Sacrament Chapel’ is lined with carved monastic stalls from the 19th century chapter room at Haywards Heath. The incorporation of the internal fixtures associated with earlier buildings or complex associated with a site or community is not uncommon. The providence of this is not definitive, and there is nothing to suggest that the monastic stools are of high value in their own right. The presence of the relocated monastic stools (and the organ) is not considered to elevate the overall architectural interest of the Chapel.

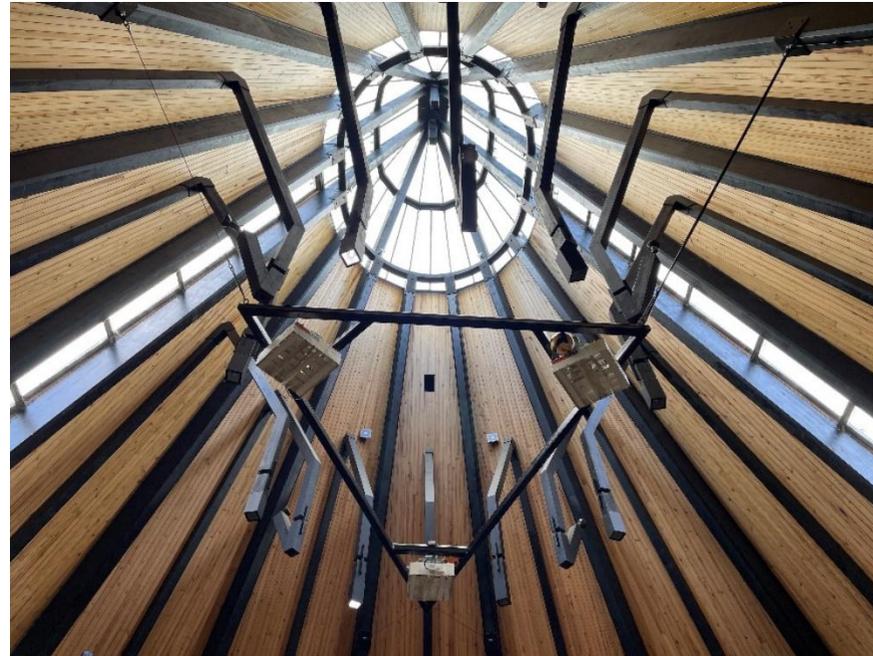


Plate 22: Current view of the roof structure, lighting and other equipment within the Chapel

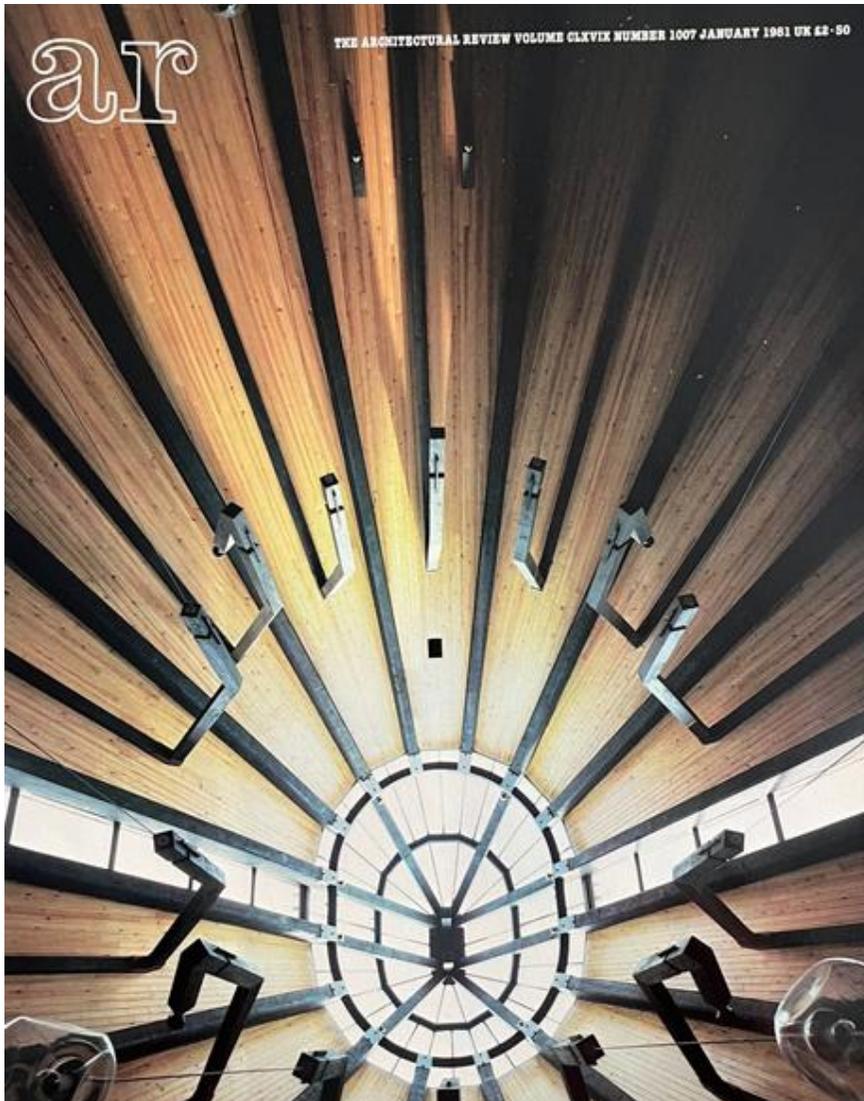


Plate 23: View of the roof structure and lighting in 1981. A comparison between this image and the current situation demonstrates that degree of which the original design intent and character of the interior has been lost, alongside original fittings, such as the light fittings.

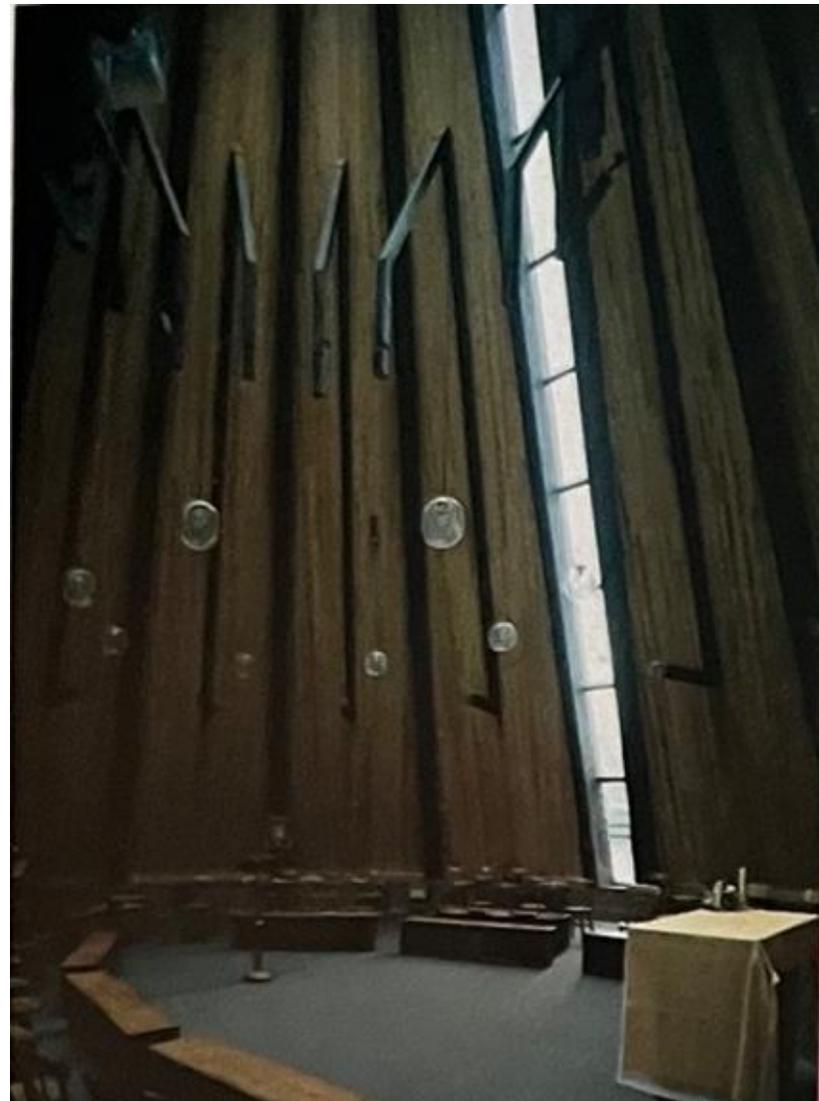


Plate 24: Interior of the Chapel, 1981. Comparison between this image and the current situation demonstrates that degree of which the original design intent and character of the interior has been lost, alongside original fittings, such as the light fittings.



Plate 25: Current internal view of the Chapel.



Plate 27: Curved corridor within the Church.



Plate 26: Current internal view of the Chapel.



Plate 28: The interior of the Bless Sacrament Chapel.

- 6.18. The Chapel is connected to the dormitory element of the Monastic Arc, with it understood that the original design intent was for the structure to also connect to the refectory to the northeast. This connecting corridor is not present on site, and it is not known if it was constructed and then removed or if this element of the design was never realised. The intention for the corridor is, however, understood via the footprint of the eastern entrance, and the alignment of the corridor is understood via the open pathway.
- 6.19. With regard to the hard landscaping which surrounds the Chapel and other buildings within the complex, it is noted that the pathway network does not reflect that shown on a 1981 plan of the complex, as included within an Architectural Review article of said date (henceforth referred to as the AR article), a copy of which is included at **Appendix 7**. This includes circulation pathways to the east and west of the Chapel and southeast of the Kingsland, with these reflecting both the central pond and footprint of the principal element of the Chapel. It may also have been that the circular pattern reflected the original design intent for the Chapel to comprise of three conoids. As with the covered corridor, it is not known whether this integral part of the associated landscaping has been removed or was never actually realised.

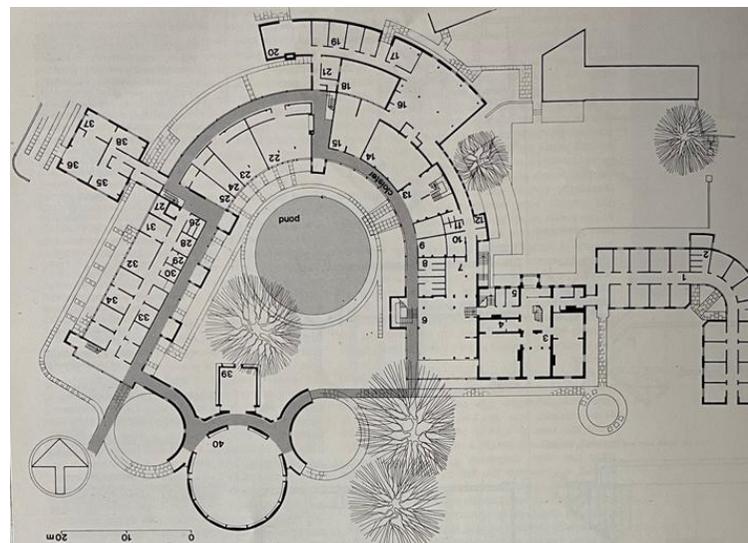


Plate 29: Plan of the complex, including pathway network, as detailed within the 1981 AR article.



Plate 30: Aerial photograph of the complex in 2001, prior to the acquisition by LTC with no evidence of the pathway network shown in the 1981 plan.

The Monastic Arc

- 6.20. The Monastic Arc comprises the principal building associated with the development of the 1970s Priory complex, and as originally constructed, was divided into private areas for exclusive use of the sisters, and communal areas to be utilised by the religious community and visitors.
- 6.21. In terms of architectural style, the complex was constructed at a time when there was a gradual movement from the expressive Modernist and Brutalist buildings associated with the 1960s and 1970s, towards a phase of 'post-modernism'. Post-Modernism is defined by Historic England in *Introduction to Heritage Assets: Post-Modern Architecture* as follows:
- “Post-Modernism is a movement and a style prevalent in architecture between about 1975 and 1990. It is characterised by its plurality, engagement with urban context and setting, reference to older architectural traditions and communication through metaphor and symbolism.”***
- 6.22. It is clear that the Monastic Arc, and to a degree the Chapel, are seeking to respond to the Post-Modernist movement, providing a 'modern' take on monastic complex typology and associated symbology, drawing upon the local vernacular in regard to materiality and timber-framing.
- 6.23. When considering the Monastic Arc, and the wider complex, in the context of Post-Modernist architecture it is not considered that the buildings represent a particularly refined or good example, in particular in light of the known alterations to the buildings discussed further below.
- 6.24. A review of archival resources and onsite assessment demonstrates that the detailing of the external envelope, and in particular the fenestration, of the Monastic Arc has been subject to notable change.
- 6.25. Changes to the 'internal' (south) elevation of the Monastic Arc are best understood via a comparison between historic and current photographs, as included at Plates 31-40. The following changes have been identified:
- The replacement of all doors on the first floor (historically forming a 'Juliette balcony' arrangement to each 'cell') with white uPVC window units and timber spandrels beneath.
 - The replacement of former louvered windows to the first-floor cells (situated adjacent to the former 'Juliette balconies') with solid glazing. In some locations the solid glazing is only half height, set above timber spandrels.
 - The replacement of window units in the library (first floor) comprising fixed pane glazed bottoms and louvered glazed uppers with fixed pane, timber units and uPVC openings casement windows, set above timber spandrels.

- The replacement of window units in the library (first floor) comprising full height fixed panes and full height louvred glazing uppers with fixed pane, timber units and timber and uPVC openings casement windows, set above timber spandrels.
- The replacement of a number of original door units with fixed glazing, and the upgrading of retained original doors with new furnishings.
- The replacement of louvred glazing on the ground floor with fixed, full height panes.
- The replacement of full height glazing to the south and west elevations of the Refectory with uPVC windows set above uPVC spandrels.

6.26. Such changes have impacted upon the integrity of the original design intent of the external envelope, and eroded the overall character and aesthetic merit.

6.27. No photographs of the north, external facing, elevation of the Monastic Arc at the point of completion have been identified; however, analysis of existing fabric and a comparison against architectural conventions exhibited on other elevation demonstrates that this elevation, and its fenestration, has also been subject to change.



Plate 31: Interior elevation of the Monastic Arc, 1981.



Plate 32: Interior elevation of the Monastic Arc, c. 1994.

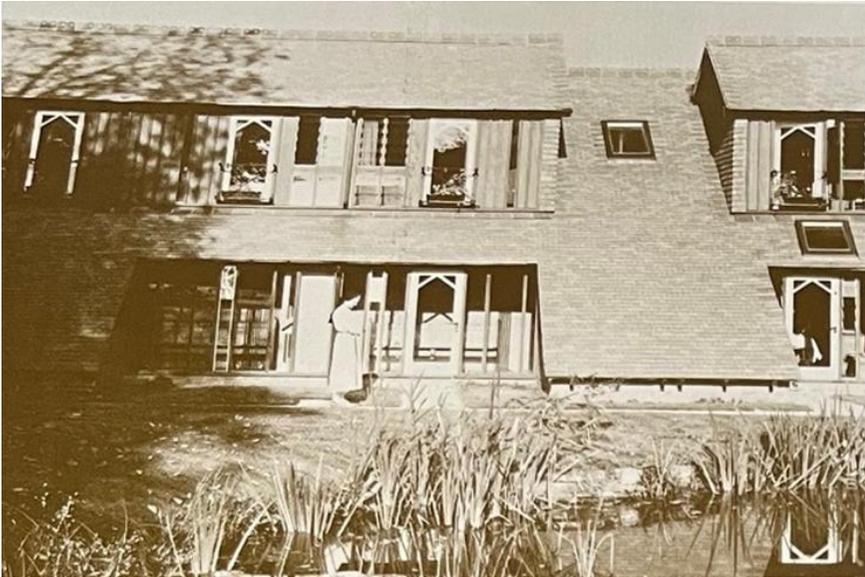


Plate 33: Detail of the interior elevation of the Monastic Arc, 1981.



Plate 34: Detail of the interior elevation of the Monastic Arc and window / door units, c.1994.



Plate 35: Current view of the interior elevation of the Monastic Arc.



Plate 36: Current view of the interior elevation of the Monastic Arc.



Plate 37: Current view of the interior elevation of the Monastic Arc.



Plate 38: Current view of the interior elevation of the Monastic Arc.



Plate 39: External elevation of the Monastic Arc demonstrating the changes to the window and door units and wider treatment of the elevation.



Plate 40: External envelope of secondary spaces to the north demonstrate replacement of original units with modern uPVC.

- 6.28. The Monastic Arc, as originally constructed, was divided into private areas for exclusive use of the sisters, and communal areas to be utilised by the religious community and visitors.
- 6.29. The Narthex served as the principal communal entrance to the building, with this described within the AJ article as follows:
- “This is the main hall with high ceilings and wide spans where the structure of substantial laminated timber beams and timber cruciform shaped columns form the basis of the architecture and immediately impress upon the visitor the religious nature of the building.***
- ...
- The Narthex continues onto a balcony overlooking the secular refectory where the secular guests will eat and converse. From the refectory there is access by means of a covered walkway to the church.”***
- 6.30. A review of archival sources and onsite assessment demonstrates that the original layout of the Narthex has been subject to change via the insertion of partition walls to create office spaces and a corridor which provides access to balcony within the secular refectory. The resulting change has altered the understanding and experience of what would have been one of the principal spaces of the original design, as demonstrated at Plates 41-46.
- 6.31. Works associated with changes in this area have also included the obscuring / painting of the original exposed blockwork and stonework, the recovering of the floor and the removal of original fixtures and fittings, such as the light fittings. Such changes have further eroded the understanding and experience of this space.
- 6.32. It is also possible to ascertain via archival sources, alongside information provided by LVS Hassocks and onsite assessment that the floor covering, light fittings and balustrades in the refectory have been subject to change.
- 6.33. The areas utilised by the Sisters were situated to the right of the Narthex, with the only space shared with secular users being the library.
- 6.34. Plans included within the AR article detail the connection from the Narthex to the library as being via a ‘bridge above the archives’, with this resulting in part of the archive room being a double-height space. The latter has been infilled to create a larger floor plate at the top of the stairs, removing ‘the bridge’ and altering the character of the space below. The resulting change in character is detailed at Plates 47 and 48.
- 6.35. The layout and character of the library has also been subject to change, via the insertion of a central corridor creating individual rooms as opposed to a large open space, and the removal of original partitions. The changes have eroded the understanding and experience of another principal space.



Plate 41: Entrance to the refectory from the Narthex, 1981.



Plate 42: Current view towards the entrance to the refectory (yellow doors) from the reception area (part of the former Narthex).



Plate 43: Current view towards the entrance to the refectory (yellow doors) from the reception area (part of the former Narthex).



Plate 44: Current view towards from the reception area (part of the former Narthex) from the entrance to the refectory.



Plate 45: View north from the Narthex towards the 'bridge above the archives', 1981.



Plate 46: Current view north within the former Narthex.



Plate 47: Current view of the former 'bridge above the archives'. The extent of the former 'bridge' is understood via the tiled flooring.



Plate 48: Current view of the former 'bridge above the archives'. The extent of the former 'bridge' is shaded in purple.

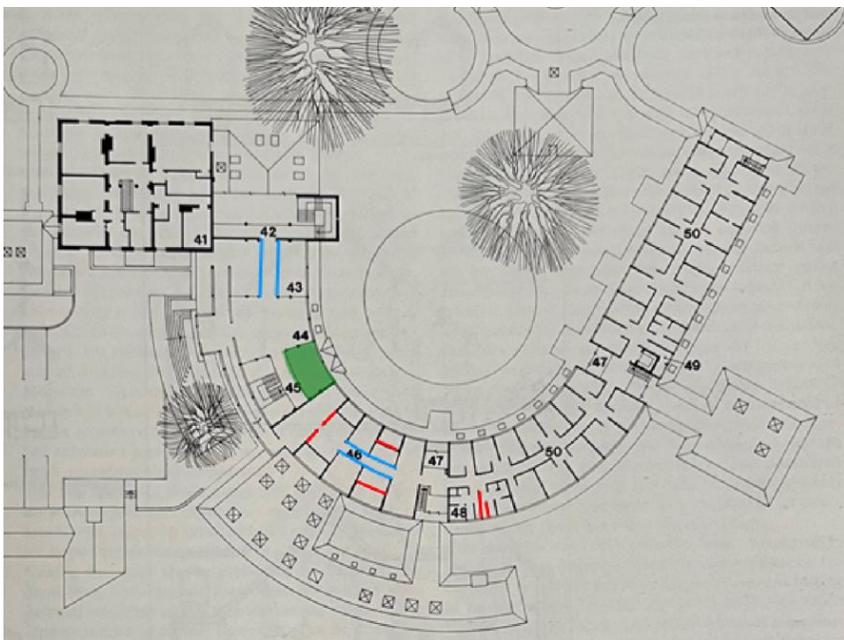


Plate 49: Annotated 1981 floor plan detailing walls which have been removed in the former library (red), walls inserted to create new corridor spaces (blue) and the enlargement of the former 'bridge' (green).



Plate 50: View along the corridor within the former open library space.



Plate 51: Current offices within the former open library space.

- 6.36. Changes to the wider layout are limited, although some changes are noted via the removal of original partitions and insertion of new partitions in the following spaces:
- ‘Parlours’ in the secular part of the ground floor (Room 9 on the AR article plan).
 - The novitiate in the private area of the ground floor (Room 15 on the AR article plan).
 - The ground floor storerooms and boiler room (Rooms 19 and 20 on the AR article plan).
 - The ‘guest room’ within the former infirmary on the ground floor of the private area (Room 32 on the AR article plan).
 - The discussion room and Mother Prioress room on the ground floor of the private area (Rooms 24 and 25 on the AR article plan).
 - Bathroom facilities on the first floor of the private area (Room 48 on the AR article plan).
- 6.37. By virtue of their intended use and users, the ‘cells’ were much simpler in their design and layout, with this also influencing the level of interest that can be attributed to them as purpose-built, late 20th-century institutional spaces.

- 6.38. Archival sources demonstrate that level of change to the character of the interior of the cells that has occurred via the notable alterations to the fenestration (see above). Sources also demonstrate that that existing ‘built in’ furniture does not date to the construction of the Priory and that existing doors are later replacements.
- 6.39. Secondary spaces such as the kitchens and laundry are positioned on the northern side of the Arc and at varying ground levels, resulting in them being understood as secondary to the main form of the Arc. This is further reinforced by the more sympathetic nature of their architectural styling. Specifically, the position and design of the secondary spaces ensures that they do not alter the experience of the main entrance to the Arc (as originally designed) or the interior face of the Arc. These spaces are not considered to be of any particular architectural merit, and whilst changes to the internal layout are limited, changes to the external envelope are noted (see above discussions).
- 6.40. Internal fixtures, fittings and finishes across all parts of the Monastic Arc have been subject to upgrading and replacement. No fixtures or fittings of merit have been identified.



Plate 52: View of a ground floor 'cell' within the infirmary area on the ground floor, 1994.



Plate 54: Internal view of one of the 'cells', 1981.



Plate 53: Current view of the interior of one of the former 'cell's demonstrating the character change.



Plate 55: Current view of one of the former cells.

The Secular Wing

- 6.41. The Secular Wing, situated to the east of Kingsland, provided accommodation spaces for guest of the Priory, separate from the monastic accommodation. Whilst displaying some common architectural themes with the monastic arc, this single storey structure is simpler in its overall presentation and architectural detailing.
- 6.42. Whilst the general plan form and layout of the Secular Wing remains as constructed, the following changes to the fabric have been identified:
- Wholesale reconfiguration of the design and materiality of window units – Sources demonstrate that as constructed each guest cell would have included a full height, six pane windows. In recent years these have been replaced with half height, three pane uPVC windows set atop of uPVC spandrels (similar to the refectory). The resulting change had eroded the original design of the external envelope of the Secular Wing and resulted in a notable change in character.
 - Internal doors to each of the guest rooms have been replaced.
- 6.43. The architectural interest associated with the original design of the Secular Wing is considered to be limited, with this further reduced as a result of changes that have been made. It is thus concluded that the Secular Wing is of insufficient architectural interest to warrant designation.



Plate 56: View of the exterior of the Secular Wing as construction (blue).



Plate 57: Current external envelope of the Secular Wing.

The Connection with Micheal Blee

6.44. Michael Blee is known to have designed four ecclesiastical buildings, or parts thereof:

- Church of All Saints, Hounslow – – Constructed 1967–1970. Grade II* Listed.
- Church of the Holy Innocents, Orpington – constructed 1980–1981. Not Listed and understood not to have been subject to assessment for designation.
- Church of St Paul, Brentford – completed 1990. Not Listed and understood not to have been subject to assessment for designation.
- Douai Abbey Church – Grade II* Listed, with Blee’s involvement dating to c.1993.

6.45. The form of the Holy Innocents can be seen to be reflective of the skewed conoid structure which Blee was seeking to deliver at Sayers Common. Externally the buildings as a whole can be viewed as more Modernist in its style; however, there are similarities to the interior including the use of laminated timber and expressive beam. Archival sources indicate that the fittings such as the light fittings mimicked those at Sayers Common, with Holy Innocents including more ‘built-in’ furniture. Research indicates that the interior of Holy Innocents (which remains in use as a place of worships) retained a number of fixtures and fittings associated with original design and construction.



Plate 58: External view of Holy Innocents, Orpington.

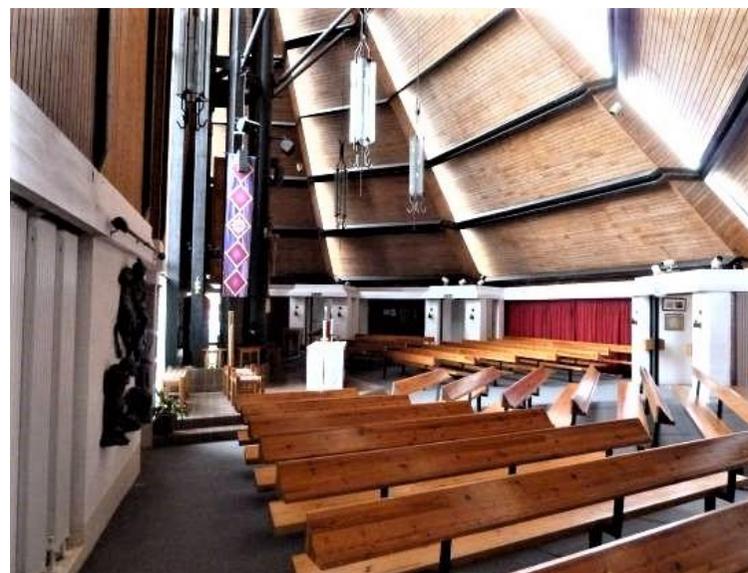


Plate 59: Internal view of Holy Innocents, Orpington.



Plate 60: Internal view of Holy Innocents, Orpington.



Plate 61: Interior of the Church of St Paul.

6.46. Laminated timber is also a feature of the interior of elements associated with Blee’s involvement at the Church of St Paul and Douai Abbey Church – see Plates 61 and 62. The overall character of the interior of the Chapel which is the subject of this assessment is not considered to hold the same degree of drama or aesthetic quality as other places of worship designed by Blee, including his extension to Douai Abbey Church and the Church of St Paul in Brentford.

6.47. The similarities between the ‘built-in’ pews at Holy Innocents and the Church of St Paul is noted, indicating that Blee was seeking to replicate the design of fixtures and fittings (including lighting, see above) across buildings with which he was involved. This limits the degree of interest which can be attributed to such fixtures and fittings as bespoke elements to their relevant structure.



Plate 62: Interior of Douai Abbey Church.

6.48. The exterior and interior of the Church of All Saints is distinctly different, with the structure as a whole being more reflective of the Modernist style. The external form of elements associated with Blee's involved at Douai Abbey Church are also more Modernist in style, and in turn is a late example of this architectural style.



Plate 63: Exterior of the Church of All Saints



Plate 64: Exterior of the Church of All Saints.



Plate 65: Interior of the Church of All Saints.



Plate 66: Exterior of Douai Abbey Church.



Plate 67: Exterior of Douai Abbey Church.

6.49. Despite the similarity noted above in terms of the interior of the Chapel, other examples of ecclesiastical buildings designed by Blee – both before and after the Priory buildings which are the subject of this Report – can be characterised as more Modernist in their style, and far more successful aesthetically. It is thus clear that Post-Modernist architecture was not a particular ‘specialism’ of Blee, nor one which he sought to implement on the majority of designs

6.50. In considering the connection with Blee, Historic England set out the following within their 2025 Report:

***“Blee’s design for the priory was a creative and sensitive response to its brief. The introspective planning of the complex, arranged around a circular pond, echoes the more familiar monastic arrangement of cloisters around a courtyard and the interior functions of the buildings are distinguished, more or less explicitly, in the massing and architectural treatment of the exteriors. The principal buildings (the chapel and monastic arc) combine understated late-C20 Gothic with contextual, vernacular references. The monastic arc has a level of interest for its sophisticated sectional planning and the powerful imagery of its timber frame, which is experienced well in the larger public spaces of the main refectory and in the former narthex and archives room. The striking conical chapel is the architectural focal point of the site, providing a strong, soaring interior and serving as a marker in the landscape – part church spire, part oasthouse. The site is a key work by Michael Blee, who built relatively little but who made an important contribution to his profession through his housing and ecclesiastical work, a long career in teaching, and his involvement with the RIBA.*”**

Set against these claims to interest is the more limited success of some aspects of the architecture. Blee’s approach was one of simple details and honest expression of materials and structure. However, within parts of the monastic arc these values translate less well. The building’s structure is complex, including concrete columns and beams, cantilevers and load-bearing cross-walls as well as the timber frame. In the more intricate, cellular parts of the plan and circulation spaces the expression of these elements reads fragmentarily, undermining the simple clarity of the materials and detailing. Externally, the formal massing of the monastic arc is not in all cases well resolved, for example in the bulk of the stair tower by the main refectory and to the south-west, where the chapel lobby meets the arc.”

Statement of Significance

- 6.51. In considering the 1970s Priory buildings for designation in 2025, Historic England provided the following assessment:

“The monastic arc has also undergone alteration. The concrete blockwork has been painted and the internal plank doors and screens replaced, undermining Blee’s emphasis on craftsmanship and simple, exposed materials. Furthermore, the subdivision of the narthex and archives area has compromised some of the most spatially interesting areas of the interior. Externally, the rhythm and proportions of the fenestration, specifically on the first floor, has been altered with the addition of spandrel panels to create a more horizontal emphasis and the guest wing and main refectory have both lost their original windows to uPVC replacements.

The chapel is the most striking single element of the site, both for its silhouette and its interior volume. However, with the exception of the lighting brackets, there are no bespoke features, only the organ and monastic stalls which date to the C19 and were brought from the priory’s earlier site in Haywards Heath. The planning of the worship space is straightforward and the detail and finishes generally consistent with those in the monastic arc. Overall, the building does not possess the architectural interest of comparable later-C20 churches on the List, such as the Church of St Anne, Fawley Court, Bucks, 1971–1973 by Wladislaw Tadeusz George Jarosz (National Heritage List for England entry 1393459), built for the Congregation of Marian Fathers.:

...

The former Priory of Our Lady of Good Counsel is an unusual example of a religious house dating from the late C20. In general terms, post-war architecture associated with such sites has been in the form of additions to earlier complexes. For example, Francis Pollen’s library of 1965–1970 at Downside Abbey (listed Grade II, NHLE entry 1482372) and Michael Blee’s 1993 completion of Douai Abbey Church at Woolhampton, Berkshire in 1993 (listed Grade II, NHLE entry 1156252). This gives the site a degree of historic interest as a late example of the typology, but not such that it overrides the matter of architectural interest.”*

6.52. The resulting conclusions of Historic England were as follows:

“Although undoubtedly of some architectural and historic interest, on balance, the architecture is not sufficiently strong, in part due to later alterations, to possess special architectural interest and although an

important work by Blee and unusual as a late-C20 religious house, it is not of special historic interest. It is therefore recommended that the priory is not added to the National Heritage List for England.

...

The former Priory of Our Lady of Good Counsel, 1976–1980 by the Michael Blee Whittaker Partnership is not recommended for listing for the following principal reasons:

Degree of architectural interest:

**** while a sensitive and creative response to its brief, its architectural success is not consistent throughout the complex and overall does not amount to special interest;***

**** the complex has been compromised by alterations to the plan, loss of original joinery and overpainting of interior finishes.***

Degree of Historic interest:

**** although an important work by Michael Blee and unusual as a late-C20 religious house, these factors***

are not sufficient to outweigh the limitations of the complex’s architectural interest.”

6.53. As set out above, the 1970s Priory buildings have been identified by Mid Sussex District Council as non-designated heritage assets in the terms of the NPPF.

6.54. The 1970s Priory buildings are considered to be of some architectural and historic interest as an example of late 20th-century monastic complex, designed by a known architect as a modern interpretation of the typology based upon detailed research.

6.55. The architectural interest has, however, been eroded and the integrity of the original design intent has been compromised by the extensive change to the external envelope of the building, and changes to the layout and character of principal spaces. The ‘success’ of the former Chapel also limits the overall level of interest that can be attributed this element.

6.56. In considering the buildings in the context of their typology and the historic interest that may derive from such factors, the following is noted:

- The establishment of the complex does not illustrate an important aspect of the nation’s religious history, nor the history of the Order to which the complex was associated.
- Although the buildings seek to draw upon the local vernacular, they are not considered to represent the most significant or distinctive of such examples.

6.57. Whilst the connection with Blee is considered to be of some interest – in particular in light of Blee being an architect known for his involvement with ecclesiastical sites – the level of interest that can be attributed to the connection is limited by way of the buildings not representing the best, or most intact, examples of Blee’s work.

6.58. Furthermore, not all of the Priory buildings, or parts thereof, are of equal architectural and historic interest.

6.59. The former Chapel and the principal elements of the Monastic Arc are considered to be the areas that would hold the most degree of any potential interest. It is, however, reiterated that:

- The former Chapel, as constructed, was not reflective of Blee’s original design intent for the complex, and the interior has been subject to change.
- The Monastic Arc has been subject to change internally and externally and thus does not represent a relic of its original form.
- The buildings are not the best examples of Blee’s work, nor Post-Modernist architecture.

6.60. Furthermore, there are also differing levels of interest associated with component parts of these two spaces, in particular the monastic arc, with this largely being reflective of the hierarchy of spaces and how this influenced their design intent *and* influenced by the degree of change. For example, the refectory space comprised one of the principal spaces of the monastic arc and has been subject to little change. Conversely,

whilst still ‘key spaces; in the context of the original design, the former Narthex and library have been subject to change. The dormitory areas, by virtue of their intended use and users, are much simpler in their design and layout, with this also influencing the level of interest that can be attributed to them as purpose-built, with this further reduced by the level of change that has occurred.

6.61. The ancillary areas of the Monastic Arc (i.e., the kitchen and laundry) whilst still of some interest in terms of the design and operation of the Priory complex, are not considered to have the same overall level of architectural interest as the main arc. The same is also the case for the Secular Wing.

6.62. On the basis of the above, it is deemed that the Chapel should be classified as of moderate local value only, with the Monastic Arc and Secular Wing of a lower local value.

6.63. The ‘setting’ of the 1970s Priory buildings also contributes to their heritage significance, although any significance derived from their ‘setting’ is less than that derived from their historic fabric. The ‘setting’ of the 1970s Priory buildings has also been subject to notable change during the early 21st centuries, as set out in **Section 2** and above.

6.64. In considering the ‘setting’ of the 1970s Priory buildings, the Mid Sussex District Council set out the following within their Pre-Application response:

“In terms of the contribution made by setting to the significance of the NDHA, the relatively tranquil, rural context of the site will have been contributory factors both in the original establishment of Kingsland as a country house and estate, and its later adaptation and development as convent with a focus on study and

retreat. As such, the surviving rural setting of the NDHA will be considered to contribute positively to its significance."

- 6.65. Whilst we do not dispute that the 'rural setting' would likely have formed part of the selection of the Site by the Priory of Our Lady of Good Counsel, it is important to take into account the level of change that has occurred. Overall, undeveloped areas within Area B are now largely characterised by changes associated with the evolution of the complex to the serve an education role. This is particularly evident to the south where a level playing field has been created.
- 6.66. Modern residential development to the south of the Site is clearly visible from the complex and its surrounds, such that the Site now reads as situated adjacent to the modern settlement.
- 6.67. It is acknowledged that Area A retains a greater sense of a rural character, it is important to recognise that this area reads as distinctly separate from the built element of the Site, and that the 1970s Priory buildings were not designed to address such areas.
- 6.68. The principal elements of the physical surrounds and experience of the 1970s Priory buildings (their "*setting*") which now contribute to the significance of the building comprise:
- The interrelationship between the three principal areas of the 1970s Priory buildings, and Kingsland.
 - The spatial relationship between the 1970s Priory buildings and their immediate surrounds, in particular the area enclosed by the monastic arc.

- The experience and appreciation of the 1970s Priory buildings from their immediate surrounds both individually and as part of the wider group alongside Kingsland.
- The cemetery associated with the use of the complex as a Priory; however, no strong visual connections are identified.

6.69. Based upon the above, Area A is considered to form part of the 'setting' of the 1970s Priory buildings which positively contributes to their overall heritage significance, whilst Area B is considered to make a neutral contribution.

Kingsland

- 6.70. Kingsland is situated in the eastern part of the complex of buildings within the central part of the Site. As discussed in **Section 2**, the existing built form of Kingsland may represent the substantial reworking of a structure detailed on the 1842 Tithe or a wholesale replacement.
- 6.71. The principal elevation is to the north, where the building faces onto what would have been the termination of the approach (which also historically extended to the eastern side of the building) and ancillary areas beyond. This arrangement is slightly unusual for a dwelling of this status, with there usually being a desire to separate principal and ancillary ('secondary') areas.
- 6.72. Architecturally the principal elevation is simple in its design, with a central projecting porch and evenly spaced window openings to both the ground and first floors. Window openings incorporate simple stone surrounds

with further detail provided by stone quoins and a plain string course. The arrangement and detailing of the principal elevation could be deemed to be reflective of a late 18th or early 19th-century date.

- 6.73. It is however noted that the detailing is not reflective of a farmhouse, with this being the recorded 'name' of the site in the 1840s, although the presence of a lodge on the 1842 Tithe would suggest a status higher than that of a farmstead, but without a parkland.
- 6.74. There is therefore the potential that the built form shown on the 1842 Tithe represents an earlier farmstead, with the built form present today, and as detailed on later 19th-century mapping alongside the designed landscape, resulting from a further phase of gentrification in the mid-19th century. This is not an unusual sequence of development.
- 6.75. Architecturally the east and south elevations display the same characteristics with decorative surrounds to the evenly spaced openings, including segmental pediments on the ground floor and hooded moulds to the first. Stone quoin detailing is carried onto these elevations, with further articulation provided via the two stone string courses. Both elevations incorporated a central opening at ground floor, with the eastern opening now converted to a window. Again, the arrangement and detailing of the principal elevation could be deemed to be reflective of a late 18th or early 19th-century date.

- 6.76. The west elevation is now largely obscured by the refectory associated with the principal 1970s Priory building; however, detailing visible would indicate that it followed the architectural conventions of the north elevation.
- 6.77. All window and door units, across all elevations, are early 21st-century insertions.
- 6.78. The footprint of the mid-19th century building was historically much larger and included a north / south orientated wing to the west (see Plates 6–9). The wing was demolished between 1938 and 1956 (see Plates 9 and 10). The former wing is considered to have formed a servants' wing as a result of a lack of historic 'secondary spaces' identified to the interior of the building. The removal of the 19th-century wing has negatively impacted upon the historic layout and hierarchy of the building, and the understanding of its original form. In this context, whilst the 19th-century wing would most likely have read as subservient to the principal dwelling, this cannot be said to be the case with the principal 1970s Priory building. The addition of the 1970s Priory guest wing to the east of Kingsland has further eroded the understanding and experience of the original dwelling.



Plate 68: The principal (north) elevation of Kingsland.



Plate 70: South elevation of Kingsland.



Plate 69: East elevation of Kingsland.



Plate 71: West elevation of Kingsland (blue).



Plate 72: Main ground floor hallway in Kingsland.

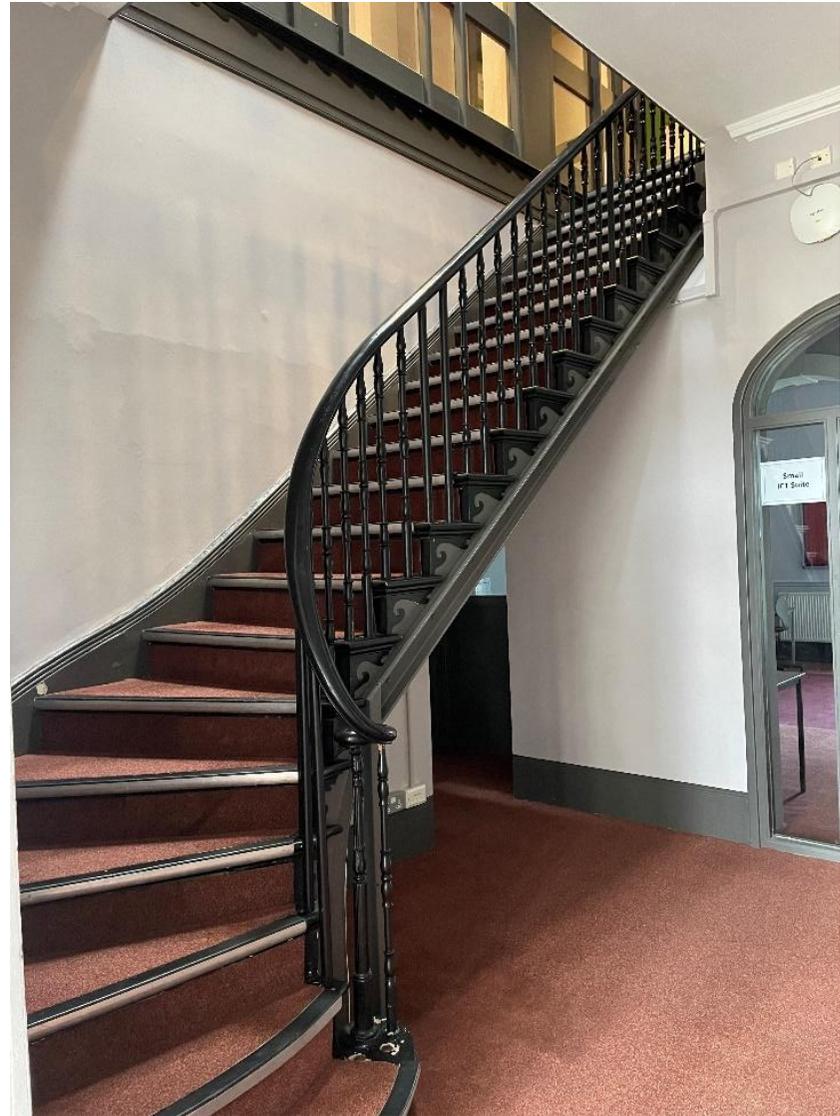


Plate 73: Detail of principal stair in Kingsland.