

DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT:

Proposed residential redevelopment of the surplus buildings at the Convent of Mercy, Gravesend 5/12/2024

clay architecture



Site:

Convent of Mercy, Hillside Drive, Gravesend DA12 1NY

Proposal:

Change of use of surplus convent buildings Hillside and Rydal into two 6-bedroom townhouses; replacing the existing single-storey extensions to the west with a 2-bedroom attached bungalow. Works include a reorganisation of the convent car park, alterations to create a front entrance to Rydal, the addition of two single-storey bays to the rear elevation, dividing up the existing garden, and forming a new driveway to access the gardens to the rear

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St Joseph's Chapel at the convent undergoing refurbishment

The Sisters of Mercy is a religious order and charitable organisation of Catholic women founded in 1831 in Dublin by Catherine McAuley. There are about 6,200 sisters organized into several independent congregations providing education and health care facilities around the world.

The Sisters of Mercy have been in Gravesend since 1860 and have resided at the Convent of Mercy on Hillside Drive since 1951. The Sisters ran the nearby St Joseph's Convent Preparatory School in Gravesend from 1957 to 2021. They support congregational members in their old age and provide social and pastoral care through local parish work and community-based programmes. This included a local charity they set up called the House of Mercy, which provided shelter for the homeless.

Numbering over 50 nuns at their peak in the 1960s, the community has shrunk to a small number of elderly sisters.

The convent is now too large for their needs, and costly to run and maintain.

Planning permission (reference 20231319) was granted in March 2024 to enable the downsizing of the Convent to occupy just half the buildings (Theydon, the chapel and the 50s block). Construction work for this project is underway and is due to be completed early next year.

Once the downsizing project is completed, the Sisters, now temporarily residing in the other half of the convent (Hillside and Rydal), will decant into their newly refurbished accommodation.

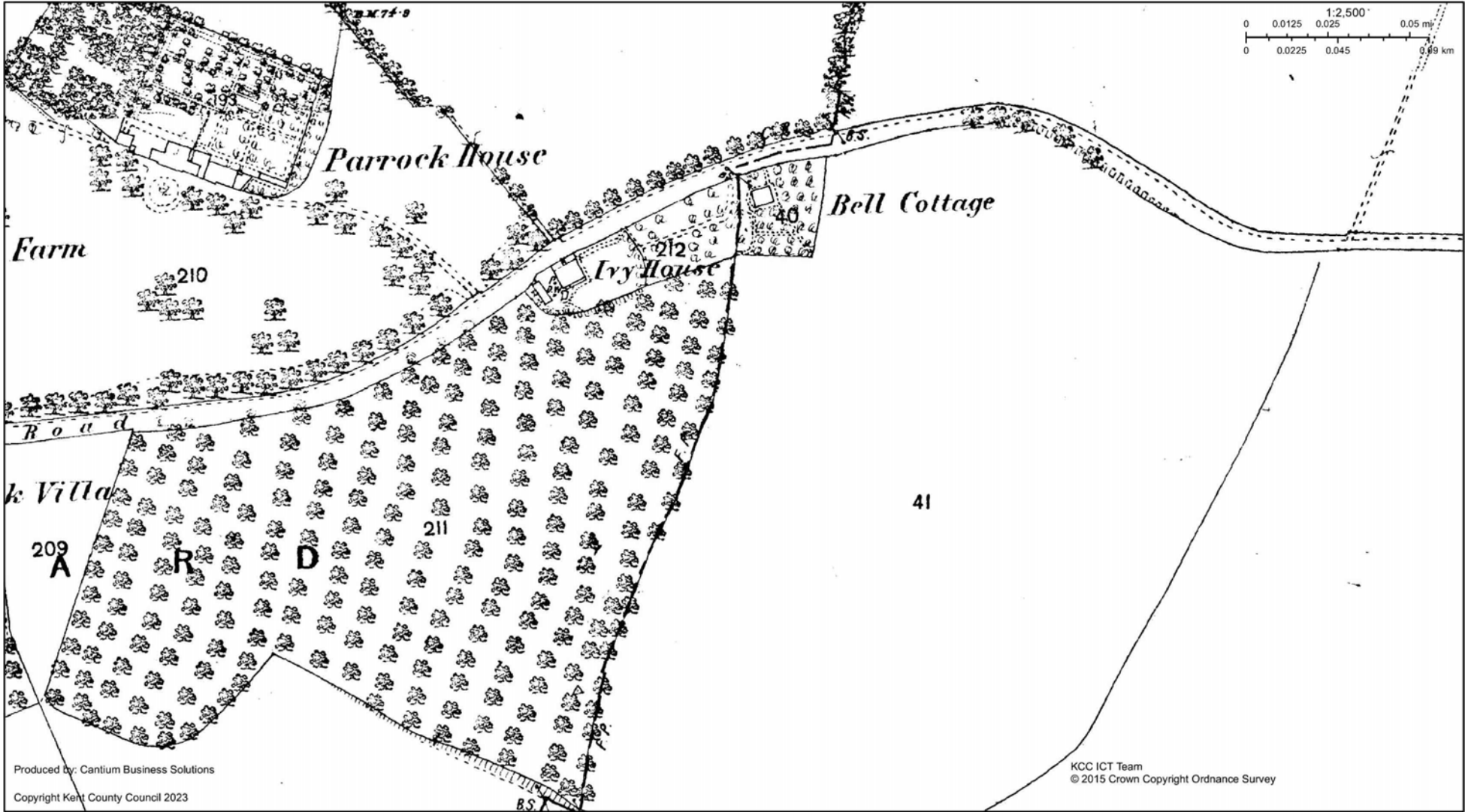
The plan is to then redevelop Hillside and Rydal, which will be vacant and surplus to requirements, and to change them back into townhouses, which was their use for a period between the 1929 and the 1950s.

There is a hodge podge of single-storey buildings to the west of the buildings, which include a former scullery, flat-roofed 20thC extensions and a converted garage— currently used as the laundry for the convent. The plan is to replace these buildings with a new-build attached bungalow.

Plans for the development of the surplus land to the north of the Convent buildings will be the subject of a separate planning application to follow.

Heritage Maps1871 to 1890

June 22, 2023



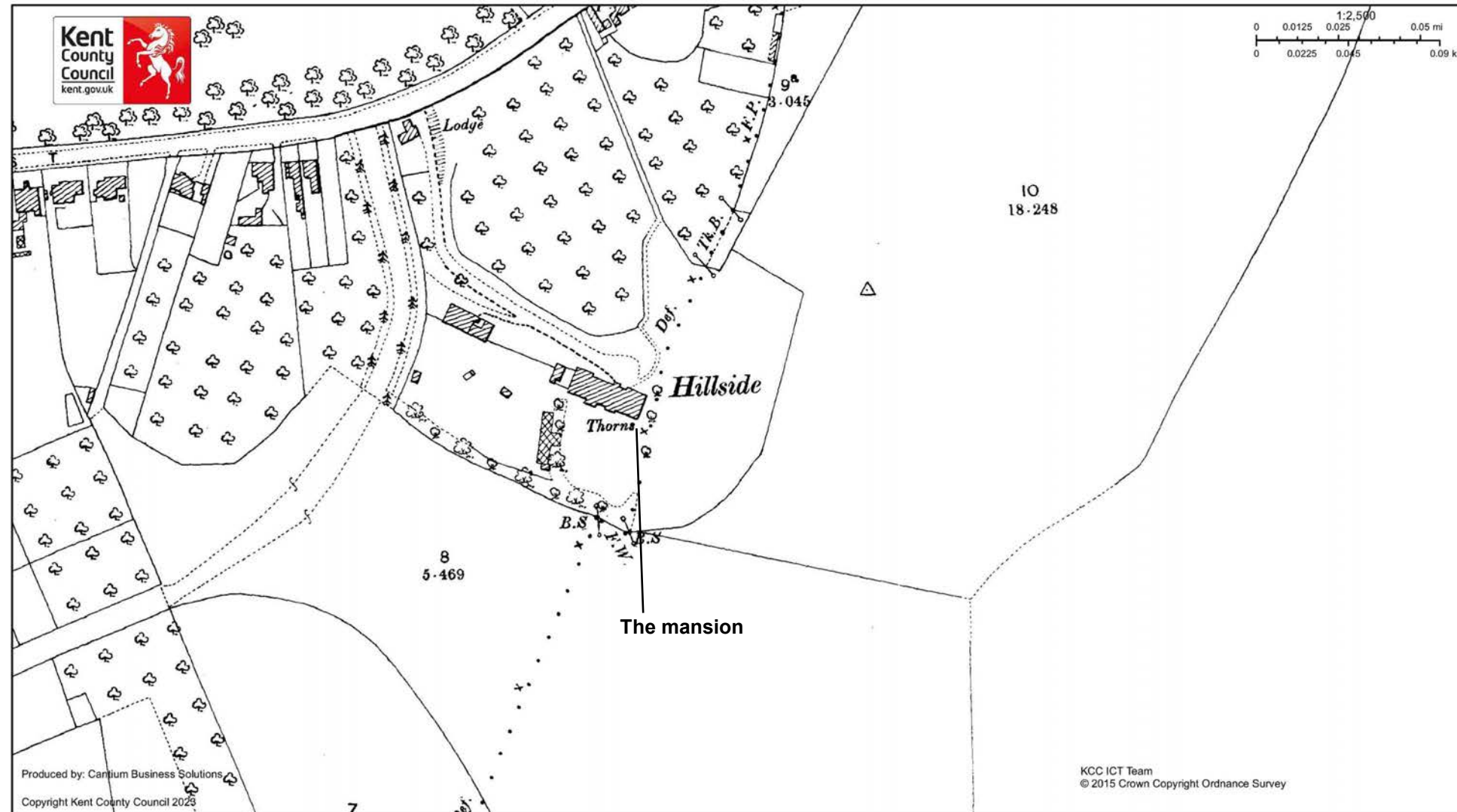
The Sisters of Mercy convent began in Gravesend in 1860, originally occupying 157 Milton Road and 1 Edwin Street, Gravesend.

Legend

The site before development

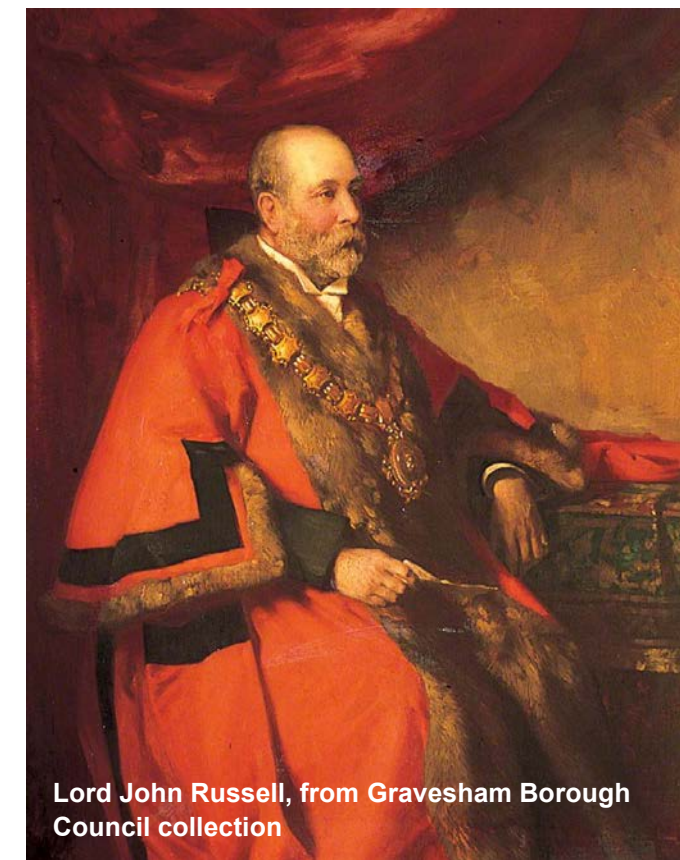
Heritage Maps 1897 to 1900

June 22, 2023



Legend

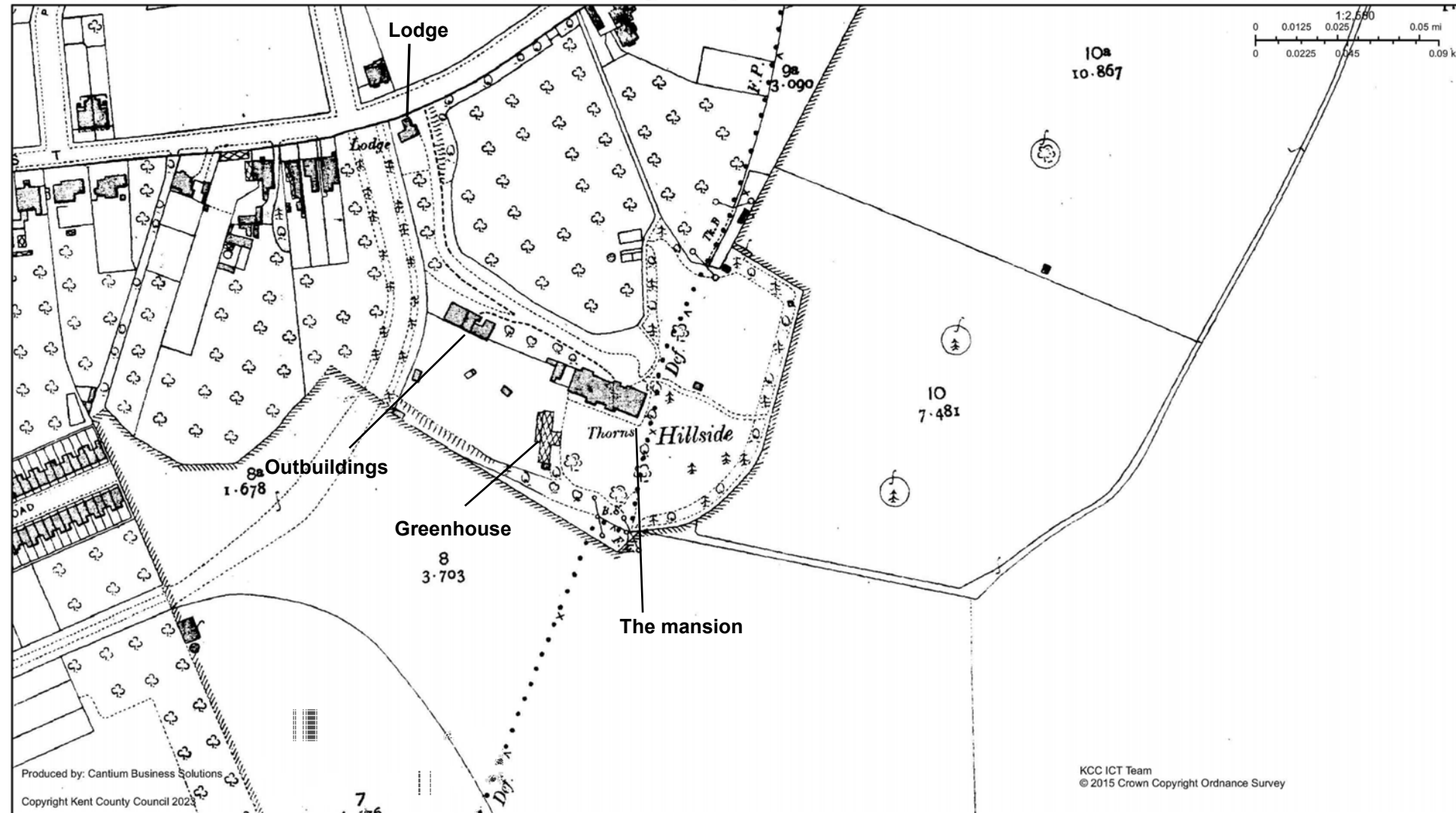
The mansion that forms the main building on Hillside Drive was built in 1895 by Lord John Russell, local brewer, and Gravesend mayor from 1876 – 1898. The land stretching to Old Road East was a single large plot of land known as Hillside.



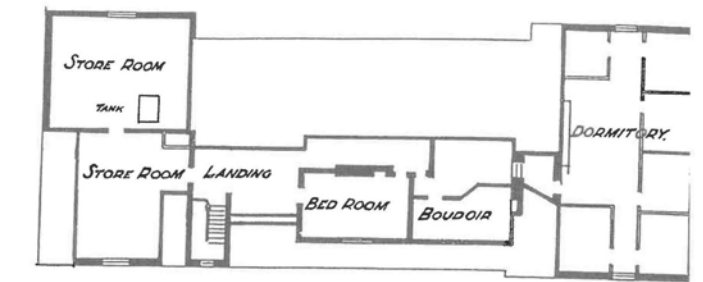
Lord John Russell, from Gravesham Borough Council collection

Heritage Maps 1907-1923

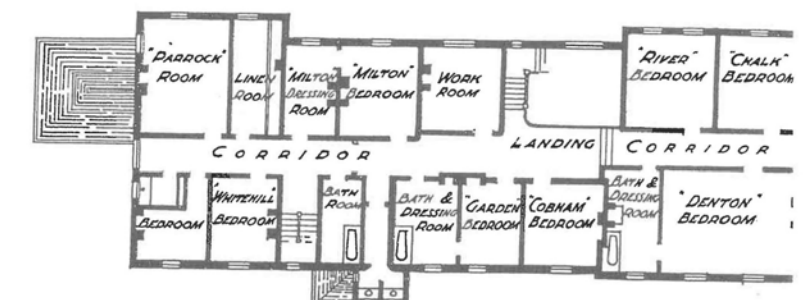
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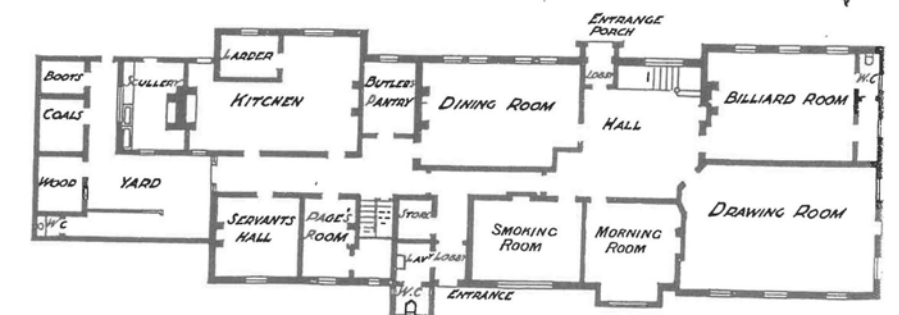
There was a Lodge at the entrance to the drive, and houses now known as no. 10 and 10a Hillside Drive. There also appears to have been a large greenhouse serving the mansion; by the 1929 to 1952 map, the greenhouse has been removed. The plot is surrounded by fields to the east, west, and south—the town is growing, and development in the form of housing is steadily creeping in from the west.



ROOF PLAN



FIRST FLOOR PLAN



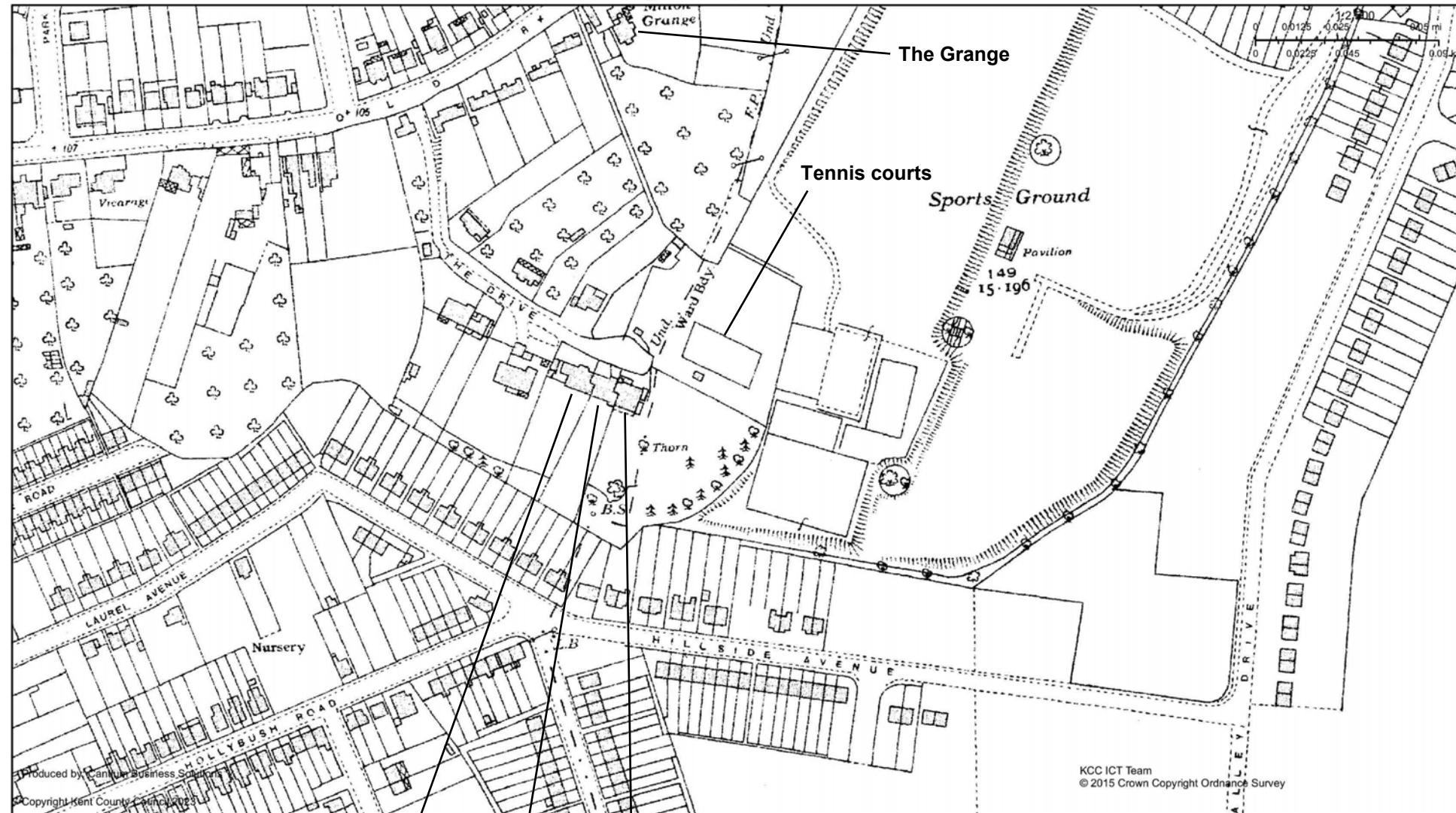
Scale 20 FEET = 1 INCH

GROUND FLOOR PLAN

Original house plans from the Sister's archive

Heritage Maps 1929-1952

June 22, 2023



By 1940, the mansion has been divided into 3 houses— Theydon, Hillside, and Rydal. Along Old Road East and along the drive, land has been parcelled up and developed into houses and gardens. The fields to the east have been developed into a Sports Ground.

The Sisters acquire and move into Theydon and Rydal in 1951, and later acquire the middle house, Hillside, sometime between 1959 and 1961.

Building of the nearby St Joseph's Preparatory School, run by the sisters, is completed. Before this the Sisters ran 2 temporary classrooms for the prep school in the Grange. These are moved into the completed school buildings in August 1957.



The chapel was built between 1950 and 1951 by local architect Edmund J Bennett ARIBA. The vestry extension, designed by the George Clay Partnership, was added after 1962.

The 3-storey slab block behind the mansion and the chapel, also by Bennetts, was completed in 1959. The Sisters call it 'New' Block.



Now completely surrounded by housing, the site has remained relatively unchanged until the recent planning permission, and subsequent works to downsize the convent

St Joseph's Preparatory School closed in August 2021.

Heritage Statement

The mansion that forms the main building on Hillside Drive was built in 1895 for Lord John Russell, local brewer, and Gravesend mayor from 1876 – 1898. The land stretching to Old Road East was once a single large plot of land known as Hillside.

The mansion has been the Convent of Mercy, Gravesend since 1951.

The building is not in a conservation area, nor is it listed or locally listed. Gravesham Borough Council is mindful of the buildings heritage value and wishes it to be 'safeguarded' (former Assistant Director of Planning, Wendy Lane in an email).

Until this year, very little work, apart from some repair and maintenance, has been carried out on the mansion since the 1950s.

This project proposes to retain and enhance the character of Hillside and Rydal, restoring the buildings back to their former glory, while adding a few contemporary touches to help adapt and update the buildings for 21st Century use and extend their useful life.

Pre-planning Consultation

Hillside Drive Residents' Committee

A meeting was held with the Hillside Drive Residents' Committee (HDRC) on the 17th of August 2023 to explain, in broad terms, the Sisters' plan for the future of the Convent site, and to enable the neighbours to provide feedback on the Sisters' plans. The only plan shown at the meeting was the title deeds plan as development was still in the early stages.

There was a full turnout at the meeting, which was held at the convent. Only 2 of the neighbouring properties did not attend; they were away on holiday.

- The HDRC was concerned about the potential wear and tear of the unadopted drive during construction and due to the additional traffic.
- Residents subscribe to a fund to maintain the road.
- The Sisters pointed out that of all the residents, they contribute the largest portion to the fund.
- Residents were under the impression that the large, tarmacked area in front of the convent, which almost everyone uses to turn their vehicles around, was shared property.
- The title deeds make clear that the majority of this area (apart from a small portion not registered on any deed) is actually convent land.
- There was a discussion about the pillars at the entrance to Hillside Drive and whether they could be taken down temporarily to improve vehicle and pedestrian safety when large delivery vehicles enter the drive during construction, or permanently, to generally improve access in and out of the drive from Old Road East.
- The HDRC were unanimous in insisting that the pillars should be kept. They feel that the pillars act as a speed deterrent,

contribute to the local townscape, and add to the exclusivity of the drive.

- Residents had some concerns about the potential disruption due to construction traffic, but many conceded they themselves had carried out major construction work in the past.
- We shared the approximate numbers of proposed dwellings being considered at the time (5 houses). On the whole, HDRC were supportive of the Sisters' plans and relieved that the site was not being over-developed by a commercial developer.
- The above has been taken into consideration in the development of the submitted proposals.

Pre-planning Application

A site visit and pre-planning consultation meeting was held with Gravesham Borough Council senior planner Alison Webster on the 9th January 2024; written advice followed on the 29th January 2024.

- The principle of converting part of the convent into houses is acceptable.
- It would appear that the part of the convent to be converted would contain sufficient space to convert into two dwellings and the space to the side would be large enough to accommodate a bungalow whilst also providing gardens that meet the adopted residential standards.

These proposals are developed in direct response to the written advice.

Planning History

20231319

Alterations to the convent to include: proposed installation of new entrance at Theydon, closing of the party wall between Theydon and Hillside, extension to the staircase, alterations to the existing 1950s block to include cladding, re-glazing and re-roofing. Addition of a first floor to the chapel with roof lights and re-ordering of rooms and new lift.

Approved.

Planning Constraints

The Convent is owned by the sisters and does not come under the jurisdiction of the Diocese. A faculty application is therefore not required for the chapel or other buildings.

A search of the local plan does not reveal any specific policies or Article 4 Directions which apply directly to the site.

The Convent is an amalgamation of 3 historic, but unlisted houses which were formerly a single mansion. In an email exchange with the Assistant Director of planning, we were advised that Gravesham 'would want to understand how the remaining part of the convent buildings, that are not going to be occupied by the community, would be kept in productive use or at least maintained so that their heritage value is safeguarded.'

- In the short term, the sisters will be decanted into Rydal and Hillside, which do not form part of plans for the downsized Convent. They will stay there until the works are completed.
- The sisters plan to redevelop Rydal and Hillside once the downsizing project is completed and the sisters have moved into the refurbished convent.
- Should there be a period where the decanted houses are left vacant, measures will be taken to mitigate against trespass, frost damage, rats and pigeons.
- The sisters and their staff will retain a presence on the site throughout.

Constraints listed on the planning portal relevant to this application include:

Groundwater SPZ2:

- The amount of extension proposed is very modest, with a footprint of approximately 16m². This should have a very low impact on existing surface or rainwater discharge. Should EP propose a condition we can look at this.

Smoke control:

- There are no plans for any new fireplaces in the redevelopment.

Historic Landfill Sites Buffered:

- Pine Avenue and 'Holyoake Mount' are listed as historic landfill sites. We are unable to locate a 'Holyoake Mount' on the map.
- Gravesham Borough Council to advise

Thames Estuary and Marshes Ramsar Buffer Zone:

- 3 new dwellings are proposed in this application

Areas of Archaeological Potential:

Archaeological finds close to the site include:

- TQ 67 SE 1221: Pine Avenue WWII air raid warden's post
- TQ 67 SE 19: Dene hole on Coombe Road
- TQ 67 SE 1201: Lamorna Avenue WWII air raid warden's post
- The Canterbury Archaeological Trust have been commissioned to carry out an archaeological desk-based assessment and site visit on the Convent of Mercy to assess the site of the next application (for the new houses).
- The amount of excavation of new ground involved in this application is very modest and unlikely to unearth any new finds.



The Brief

The mansion was originally divided into the three terraced houses, Theydon, Hillside and Rydal, before the 1950s when the Sisters of Mercy acquired the building and eventually joined the houses together to form the convent.

Recent planning permission 20231319 subdivides Theydon from the rest of the mansion for the continued use of the convent, albeit downsized. The Sisters have decanted into Hillside and Rydal while building work as per the approved scheme is being carried out on the downsized Convent. Once the building works are completed the sisters will move into the 'new' downsized Convent, leaving Hillside and Rydal temporarily vacant and surplus to requirements.

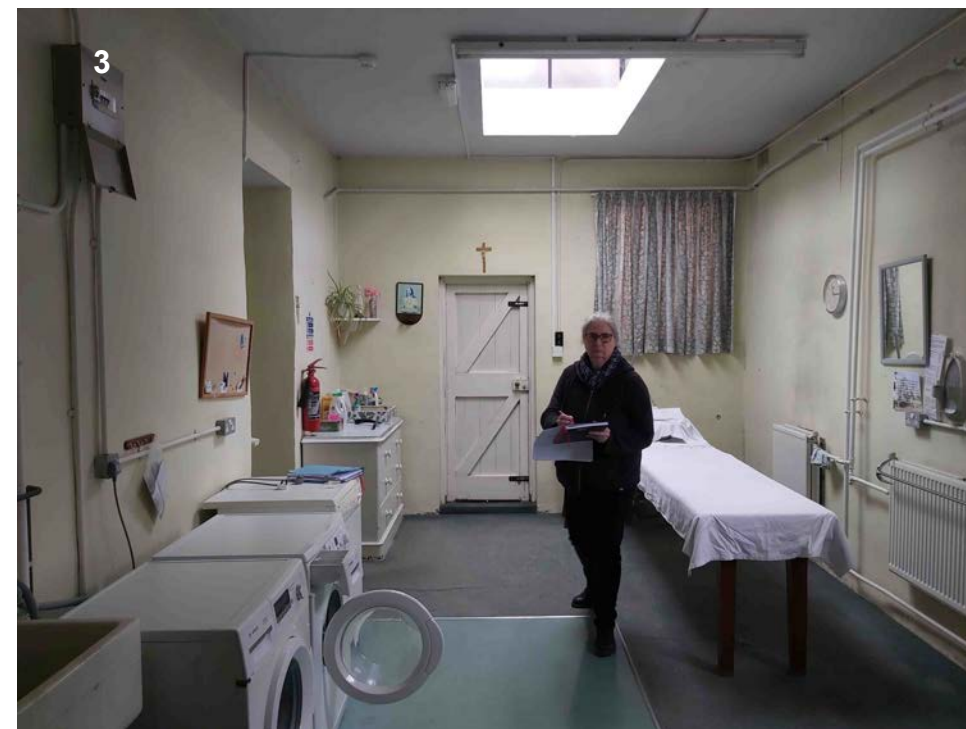
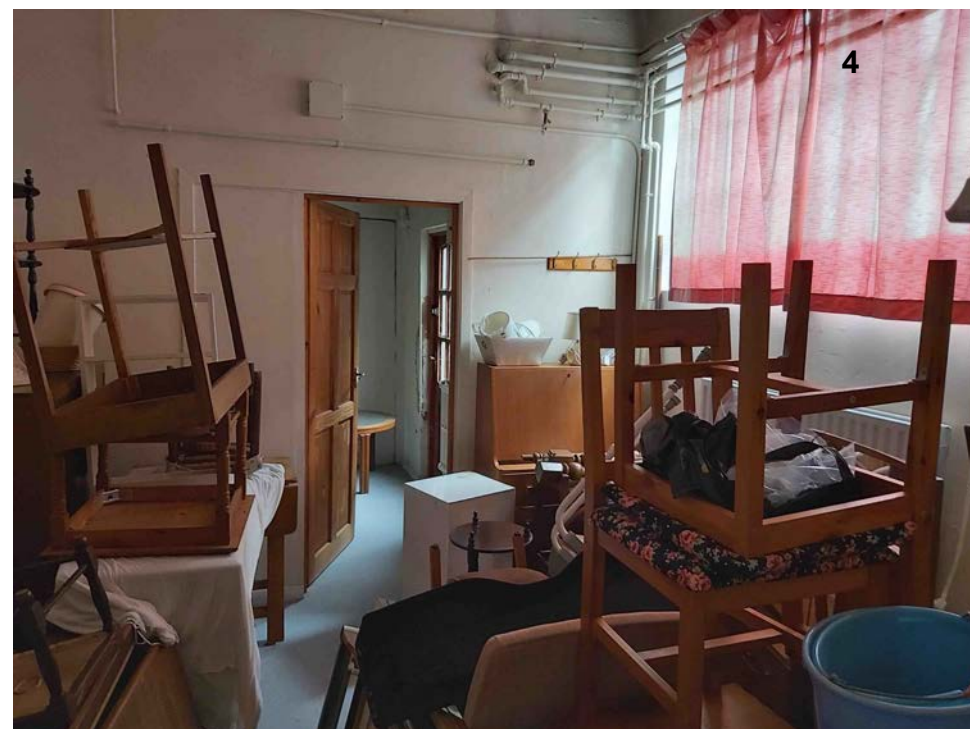
This planning submission, then, is a proposal to redevelop and convert the buildings surplus to the downsized Convent, i.e. Hillside and Rydal, back into the houses they once were. These terraced townhouses would be unique, exclusive properties with a history attached, with six twin or double bedrooms each, and with generous gardens— all suitable for large extended families.

To the west of the main building is a hodge podge collection of single-storey buildings and sheds including a former scullery, flat-roofed 20thC extensions and a converted garage. The 20thC extension is currently used as the laundry for the convent. The lean-to garage was at one time converted to serve as temporary accommodation for a homeless person. Overall, this is not an attractive group of buildings.

The former scullery is a small part of the original mansion, but the glazed roof lantern above it has subsided and is no longer level. The space is too small to serve a useful function, has seen better days and has little architectural merit; retaining the scullery will restrain future development for no strong reason. The glazed roof lantern is beyond repair— the only way to 'retain' or level the lantern would be to replace it with a replica. A replica of a not particularly unique roof lantern would be an added cost and serve no particular function.

Instead, the plan is to replace these buildings with a new-build 2-bedroom attached bungalow. In pre-planning consultation, the planners indicated that this was acceptable in principle.

The sisters wish to retain and lease out the bungalow; the plan is that it will in the future serve as their home when the downsized convent becomes too large for the remaining community.



"Hodge podge collection of single-storey buildings to the west"

- 1 Front (north) elevation with tilted roof lantern
- 2 Rear (south) elevation
- 3 The laundry
- 4 Garage which was converted into temporary accommodation for the homeless. Now a store

Design

Hillside and Rydal

The plan is to retain and enhance the character of Hillside and Rydal by:

- Adapting the existing layouts to create two 6-bedroom houses
- Insulating and refurbishing the existing roof, replacing failed tiles with renovation blend handmade clay tiles, cucks comb crested ridge tiles and ball roof top finials to match existing
- Replacing the current mix of single-glazed timber windows, single-glazed Crittall windows, and double-glazed uPVC windows with double-glazed timber windows selected to reflect the late 19thC period style of the original mansion

It is proposed that the roof and window specifications will match the refurbishment currently being carried out on the downsized convent.

When completed, the mansion will be restored back to its former glory.

Contemporary touches will add modern comforts and help adapt and update Hillside and Rydal for 21st Century family life, including:

- Generous open-plan kitchen dining rooms with new south-facing bay extensions with glazed bifold doors and paved patios opening out onto the rear garden
- Decent sized en-suite bathrooms and family bathrooms to the upstairs bedrooms
- Generous master bedroom with walk-in wardrobe and ensuite bathrooms within the lofts
- More sustainable building services (see 'Measures to tackle Climate Change' for details)



The mansion is characterised by three open-hipped gable roofs, with the dominant gable roof over Theydon, the secondary gable roof over Rydal, and a tertiary gable roof centred over Hillside. A butterfly roof runs the length of the building linking the roof over Theydon and the roof over Rydal, with the roof over Hillside splitting the butterfly roof into 2 halves.

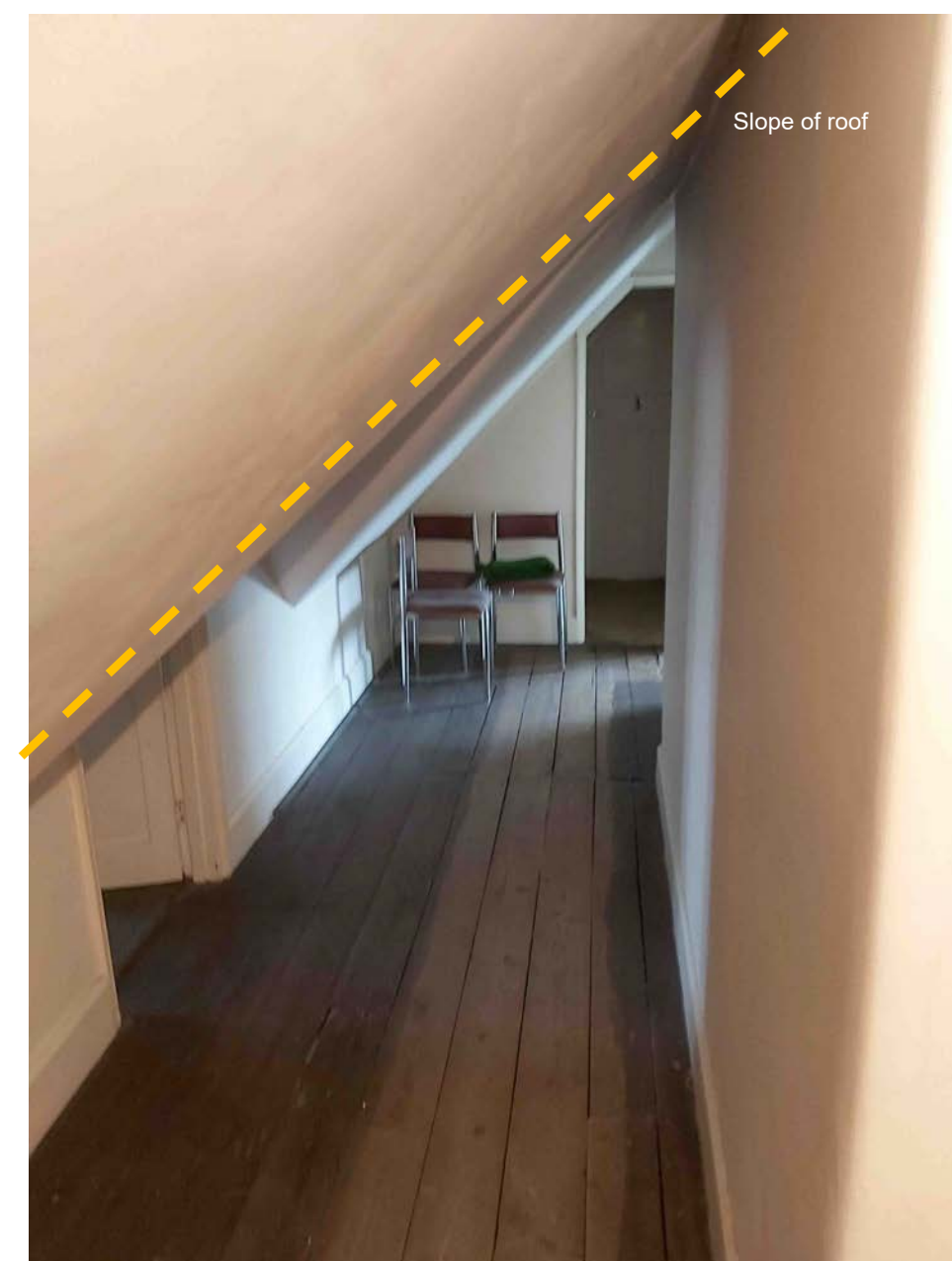
The butterfly roofs have one internal valley gutter split in two by the central gable roof over Hillside; each half of the gutter leads to a roof gulley at each end of the building. Each gulley drains through a box gutter which runs through the front roof void of the butterfly roof to a chute on the front elevation of the building (see existing cross-section drawing 5287/PL/117). Because the valley gutters are difficult to access and maintain, they are in a poor condition. The box gutter to the east has already failed and there is currently water ingress above the entrance stair to Theydon.

The form of the butterfly roofs also creates bottlenecks within the roof loft where the ceilings are very low and difficult to stand up in.

To overcome these issues, we propose to roof over and close or remove the internal valley gutters. This change will have a minimal impact on the character of the mansion and be barely perceptible on the front elevation (see proposed cross-section drawing 5287/PL/127 and view of similar detail completed on Theydon, page 23 of this document).

But it will help to:

- Do away with the need to access or maintain the internal valley gutters or internal chutes. Rainwater will be discharged directly to the front roof gutters and reduce the risk of roof failure and water ingress. We will specify an insulated single-ply EPDM roof, which has a 60-year material life-span, to span across the valley gutter.
- This will enable us to remove some rafters and greatly improve the head height in the loft spaces



Area of low head height in the loft



The back half of the bungalow is a single-storey structure with a shallow sloped roof. This contains part of the kitchen, and all the living and dining area as a single open-plan space. Like Hillside and Rydal, the bungalow will have a south-facing bay with bifold doors opening out onto a patio and the rear garden.

Basements

There is an existing, interconnected basement between Hillside and Rydal.

As part of the redevelopment, the basement will be subdivided at the party wall line. New staircases have been planned to access both basements.

For the purposes of this planning application, the basements have been designated as plantrooms for incoming services and mechanical and electrical plant serving the building, and as storage areas for each house. We have not provided layouts simply because the mechanical and electrical services have not been designed.

Proposed bungalow

The proposed bungalow is designed as a compact 1.5-storey and 1-storey structure shaped to fit between the existing windows on the west elevation of Rydal without impeding natural light to the rooms on the first floor of Rydal.

The front part of the bungalow is 1.5-storey, formed as a raised tiled gable roof with the gables on the sides. The front structure includes the ground floor kitchen, a bedroom on each floor, a compact winder stair, a cloakroom on the ground floor, and a family bathroom on the first floor. A front dormer provides head height for the family bathroom and the front half of the top bedroom. A rear dormer provides head height for the rear half of the top bedroom.





Sketch rear view of the proposed development (not all landscaping proposals shown on model)

Floor areas

Ref	Room/ Space	Unit Area sqm (design)	Prop Net Total sqm	Comment / Source
Hillside				
LG Flr	■ Incoming survices, storage and plan.	40.70	Layouts to be determined.	
GFlr	■ Living room	40.40		
	■ Cloak	2.30		
	■ Utility	18.60		
	■ Kitchen/ Dinning	49.50		
1st Flr	■ Bedroom 1	15.80		
	B1 Ensuite	3.20		
	■ Bedroom 2	15.50		
	B2 Ensuite	3.20		
	■ Bedroom 3	17.70		
	B3 Ensuite	3.70		
	■ Bedroom 4	13.00		
	■ Bedroom 5	13.70		
	■ Family Bathroom	7.70		
	2nd Flr	■ Bedroom 6		45.90
B6 Ensuite		6.30		
		sqft		
Total each		256.50	2760.94	
Rydal				
LG Flr	■	26.70		
GFlr	■ Living Room	42.90		
	■ Cloak	1.80		
	■ Kitchen/Dinning	39.40		
	■ Utility	6.70		
1st Flr	■ Bedroom 1	17.90		
	B1 Ensuite	3.80		
	■ Bedroom 2	17.40		
	B2 Ensuite	3.80		
	■ Bedroom 3	15.00		
	■ Bedroom 4	15.40		
	■ Family Bathroom	4.50		
2nd Flr	■ Bedroom 5	54.50		
	B5 Ensuite	3.90		
	■ Bedroom 6	23.70		
	B6 Ensuite	4.00		
		sqft		
Total each		254.70	2741.57	

Ref	Room/ Space	Unit Area sqm (design)	Prop Net Total sqm	Comment / Source
Bungalow				
GFlr	■ Bedroom 1	12.20		
	■ Cloak	2.20		
	■ Living/Kitchen/Dinning	41.60		
1st Flr	■ Bedroom 2	14.20		
	■ Family Bathroom	4.30		
			sqft	
Total each		74.50	801.91	

Parking, landscaping, entrances

The proposed scheme shares the front vehicle turning and parking area with the Convent. To accommodate the needs of the proposed and existing properties the entire parking area, forecourt landscaping and the entrances to the different properties have been reorganised and extended as shown on drawing 5287/PL/105.

- Currently, parking to the convent is located on Hillside Drive. No formal bays are present with vehicles parked on either side of the road opposite the convent.
- It is proposed that formal bays will be marked out based on local parking standards and explained in detail below. This rationalisation will result in a more space being created on Hillside Drive opposite the convent suitable for the turning of servicing vehicles.
- Existing residents' deliveries and servicing currently informally use the space at the eastern end of Hillside Drive next to the convent to turn. The rationalisation of parking spaces to create an improved turning area will provide a betterment compared to the existing situation.
- Therefore the scheme accommodates deliveries, servicing and parking in an improved manner.
- The extended turning area T1 in front of the convent can accommodate turning for a 10.5m refuse vehicle, a Scania P280 fire tender, and a 7.5t box van.
- Most of the residents along the drive use T1 for turning.
- It should be pointed out that T1 (except for a small patch which is unregistered but has 'a caution against first registration' submitted on behalf of the Sisters) **is on convent land.**

- Parking has been provided at the front for the following:

Key	Property	No. of spaces
s	Convent	5 spaces including 1 accessible space
a	Hillside	2 spaces
a	Rydal	2 spaces
a	Bungalow	1 space

- The drive has been extended to the east provide parking for the following:

Key	Property	No. of spaces
h	Convent	3 spaces for staff or help
v	Convent	2 spaces for visitors (including 1 van)

- A private drive has been extended to the south to serve the back gardens. Entry to the drive is controlled by a vehicular and pedestrian gate. The drive has been laid out to avoid tree root protection zones identified in the arboricultural survey report.
- The proposed turning area T2 on this private drive can

accommodate turning for a large car and a 4.6t light van.

- Parking has been provided at the rear for the following:

Key	Property	No. of spaces
s	Convent	1 space
a	Hillside	1 space
a	Rydal	1 space
a	Bungalow	1 space

- The front area to the buildings has been laid out to allow for parking, paved areas, and soft landscaping.
- Each property has or will have a distinctive porch marking out its front entrance:
 - A new pedimented entrance porch with a Cross of Mercy on the roof, to Theydon / Convent of Mercy
 - The original arched entrance porch to Hillside
 - A proposed clay-tiled and brick lean-to porch to Rydal
 - A proposed single-ply EPDM roofed lean-to porch (chosen to accommodate the shallower roof pitch) to the bungalow
- The surplus garden to the rear will be split into individual gardens for the bungalow, Rydal, Hillside and the convent, as well as a managed biodiversity area to the south.
- Garden boundaries will be demarcated with a 1.8mH fence— this will be either a close-boarded timber or a chain-link fence with planting.
- The drive, which crosses the gardens, will not be fenced, i.e. the gardens are effectively open to the drive; there will be a right of way agreement enabling common use of the drive by the neighbours.

External Finishing materials



Doors for the new entrance to Theydon

In order to maintain consistency over the whole site, we refer to the existing and approved finishes on the downsized convent:

- The existing mansion is built with red brick walls and roofed with plain clay roof tiles.
- The main roof gables over Theydon and Hillside on the front elevation are clad in vertical hung clay roof tiles and include rows of plain hanging tiles and rows of fishtail hanging tiles.
- The existing roof over Theydon is being insulated and refurbished. Tiles which have failed are being replaced with renovation blend handmade tiles, cucks comb crested ridge tiles and ball roof top finials to match existing.
- The walls of the 1950s block and new staircase extension have been overclad with an insulating render system finished mainly in terracotta, with white on the elevation which is in the shadow of the mansion— white helps reflect and improve natural light in this darker area. The windows have been fitted with double-glazed aluminium windows. South and east-facing windows have solar glass to reduce solar heat gain.
- The roof of the 1950s block and the stair extension have been over-roofed with a black insulated single-ply EPDM roof.
- Windows to Theydon have been replaced with double-glazed timber windows selected to reflect the late 19thC period style of the original mansion

The proposed redevelopment of Hillside and Rydal will on the whole use materials matching those specified above in the redevelopment of Theydon, i.e. clay tiles and period timber windows.

- The contemporary bay extensions to the rear of Hillside and Rydal will match the 50s block and be roofed in black insulated EPDM, have walls finished in insulated render in terracotta colour, and south-facing double-glazed aluminium bifold doors with solar glass.
- The proposed bungalow will use a mix of plain roof tiles and plain hanging tiles to express the form of the gable roof and dormers, with black EPDM for the shallow sloped roofs to the top of the dormers and the entrance porch.
- The shallow pitched roof over the 1-storey half will be black EPDM with a sedum roof growing on top to attenuate rainwater and add to biodiversity.
- The walls of the bungalow up to eaves level will be finished in insulated render in terracotta colour, and with double-glazed aluminium windows and bifold doors, and solar glass on the south and west elevations. Frost-resistant brick in blue or matching red will be used to form the base of the walls up to damp-proof course level.
- The doors to the entrance porches at Rydal and the

bungalow will be single-leaf solid timber doors with vertical panels, to match the new double-leaf timber doors to the convent.

Material Swatch

- B1** Renovation blend handmade plain clay roof tiles
- B3** Black EPDM single ply roofing membrane
- B5** Double-glazed timber windows in matching period style
- B10** Insulated render in terracotta finish
- B12** Double-glazed aluminium windows



Sustainable design principles

- The development involves the refurbishment and extension of an historic building, by improving its viability and extending its useful life.
- The development will retain most of the existing buildings and their embodied carbon. Therefore, taken as a whole, the development's carbon footprint will be significantly less than that for a new build of equivalent size.
- The proposed bungalow and bay extensions will be designed in compliance with Building Regulations Approved Document Part L1 Conservation of fuel and power in new dwellings.
- Reroofing works, new windows, and other alterations to the existing building will be designed in compliance with Approved Document Part L1 Conservation of fuel and power in existing dwellings.
- Windows on the south and west elevations will have solar glass to reduce solar heat gain.
- The thermal performance and conservation of fuel and power of the completed development will be a significant improvement on the existing.
- All habitable rooms are designed for natural ventilation, reducing the need for mechanical ventilation and energy use.

Energy and carbon reduction methods

In line with the works already carried out on Theydon, we propose that the following be similarly carried out on Hillside and Rydal:

- Refurbishment and insulation of the existing roofs
- Installation new double-glazed windows
- Insulation of the suspended ground floor deck, with underfloor heating

A mechanical and electrical services feasibility study was carried out on the convent. Its findings and recommendations are summarised as follows:

- Apart from a relatively recently installed condensing boiler in Rydal, much of the mechanical and electrical installations within Hillside and Rydal are old and inefficient, have poor or no controls and need to be replaced.
- Older properties such as this need high-grade heat to keep warm,

the most energy efficient way of providing this is with a gas condensing boiler in each house. It is possible that the boiler at Rydal can be reused.

- Subject to viability, an alternative would be to insulate the walls internally and use a hybrid system consisting of a low-grade heat source such as air-source heat pump (ASHP) all year round, to be supplemented with a high-grade heat source such as a gas boiler for Winter.
- Depending on incoming service capacities, there is an option to heat the new-build bungalow with either a gas condensing boiler or a low-grade heat source such as a ASHP.
- Thermostatic Radiator Valves on all radiators will enable room by room control
- Mechanical Ventilation Heat Recovery can be provided to reduce energy loss through reclaimed heat on vent system
- New control systems offering control and zoned operation of all plant will be provided.
- LED lighting will be provided to Building Control standards.

Biodiversity net gain, protected species

- Please refer to page 27.

Water efficiency and recycling

- The proposal will comply with water regulations.
- Low volume showers are suggested as part of the fit-out.
- No water recycling is proposed.

Waste reduction

- No hazardous materials have been specified for the project.
- An asbestos survey will be carried out before demolition and construction; any asbestos identified or found on site will be safely disposed of by a licensed contractor appropriate to the type of asbestos and level of risk.
- Resource efficiency: the building is of a modest scale and utilises standard construction materials that are widely available, which the contractor can order in the quantities required, to minimise

construction waste.

Sustainable transport methods

A Transport Statement prepared by Hydrock Consultants Limited was submitted to Kent County Council for pre-planning consultation.

In summary:

- There is currently not any cycle infrastructure in the vicinity of the site. Local roads are subject to a 30mph speed limit and feature street lighting.
- The Echo Square bus stops are the closest stops to the site approximately 300m from the main site access. The main service serving the stops is the 482, which runs from Gravesend town centre roughly every half an hour.
- Gravesend station is located 1.6km to the north of the site, providing frequent services to a range of regional destinations such as London St Pancras, Luton and Ramsbury.
- Tracking demonstrates that a refuse vehicle, fire tender and 7.5t box van can turn in the turning head provided.
- It is considered, based on the findings of the transport statement, that there are no unacceptable impacts that could be interpreted as being severe in the context of the NPPF. The assessment demonstrates that the number of new vehicle trips generated would not represent a significant increase when compared with the existing traffic flows and the trip generation of the currently consented land use. It is considered that Hillside Drive has sufficient capacity to accommodate the proposed development.

Education or new resident/occupier information pack

- An occupier information track will be provided to new residents.
- To ensure this, the following requirement (or similar) will be included in the tender documents when the project is tendered to prospective contractors and subcontractors:
 - The Contractor shall allow for the preparation and issue of a simple 'userguide' for issue to the homeowner.
 - This shall be similar in format to what one would expect from say a new motor vehicle or expensive appliance.
 - It shall be A5 in format and presented with a glossy cover and should look professional reflecting the high calibre property being offered.
 - This shall cover all systems installed within the property and include the following sections:

1. System description
 2. Day to day operation
 3. Maintenance requirements
 4. What to do when there is a problem (including emergency numbers)
- This shall be issued no less than 30 days prior to practical completion as a draft. The contractor shall allow for comments and feedback to be incorporated in the booklet.

Ecological Impact Assessment summary

Please refer to the EIA for full details.

- The main body of the site is dominated by modified grassland and sealed surface, including buildings, habitats of broadly low ecological value. The mature trees across site, particularly along the southern boundary are of higher value and many would be retained and protected within this scheme.
- The site is located within the Impact Risk Zone of Thames Estuary and Marshes SSSI / SPA / RAMSAR, however development proposals are unlikely to meet the criteria which would require consultation with Natural England.
- Badger monitoring provided evidence of the likely absence of badgers with the mammal holes on site. As a precautionary approach, the mammal holes should be treated as disused badger sett and precautionary working methods have been recommend.
- Bat emergence surveys recorded evidence of 1 no. day roost of 2 no. single common pipistrelle bats within the western most gable end on the south aspect and within the eaves of the southern aspect of the building.
- Mitigation measures in relation to the identified bat roots will be agreed as part of a licence application to Natural England.
- Habitats within the construction zone offer low value potential suitable habitat for hedgehogs, badgers, invertebrates, and breeding birds. Avoidance and mitigation measures have been built within the design of the scheme in accordance with the mitigation hierarchy and BS42020:2013.
- Once avoidance, mitigation, and compensation measures have been taken into account, the impacts of the planned development upon biodiversity will be **negligible** and **non-significant**.

Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment summary

Please refer to the BNG assessment for gull details.

- Metric calculations have identified that the proposed scheme would result in a 3.55% net loss in biodiversity. Alongside the provision of a legal agreement / conservation covenant to guarantee the delivery of proposed on-site habitats for at least 30 years, purchase of off-site units will be required to meet the mandated +10% Biodiversity Net Gain and to comply with the current Local Planning policy.
- To ensure the proposed post-development on-site habitats are managed into the future, a suitable management plan shall be produced. This shall include management prescriptions for the proposed habitat creation and enhancement including aspects such as pruning and mowing regimes, which shall ensure the target conditions are achieved.

- The Convent is an amalgamation of 3 historic, but unlisted, houses which were formerly a single mansion. A 50s block and chapel were added in the 20thC.
- Planning permission (reference 20231319) was granted in March 2024 to enable the downsizing of the Convent to occupy just half the buildings (Theydon, the chapel and the 50s block). Construction work for this project is underway and is due to be completed early next year.
- This is a planning application to change the use of the remaining buildings, Hillside and Rydal, which will be surplus to the convent, back into family terraced townhouses. It also proposes to replace the hodge podge collection of single-storey buildings to the west with a new 1.5-storey to 1-storey bungalow. Rear gardens will be apportioned to the proposed new dwellings.
- The sisters wish to lease out the bungalow when it is completed; the plan is that it will in the future serve as their home when the downsized convent becomes too large for the remaining community.
- The plans also include a reordering and improvement of the vehicular access and carparking facilities on site.
- Existing residents' deliveries and servicing currently informally use the space at the eastern end of Hillside Drive next to the convent to turn.
- Many of the residents assume that the existing car park in front of the convent is common land but except for a small patch which is unregistered but has 'a caution against first registration' submitted on behalf of the Sisters, most of this is in fact convent land.
- Of all the residents on Hillside Drive, the Sisters contribute the largest portion to the fund to maintain the drive.
- The turning area T1 in front of the convent has been improved and can accommodate turning for a 10.5m refuse vehicle, a Scania P280 fire tender, and a 7.5t box van.
- The rationalisation of parking spaces to create an improved turning area will provide a betterment compared to the existing situation.
- Therefore the scheme accommodates deliveries, servicing and parking in an improved manner, this will also benefit residents on the drive.
- Pre-planning consultation was carried out with the Hillside Drive Residents' Committee, as well as Gravesham Borough Council's planning department, and their feedback has informed the proposals.
- Combined with the approved scheme for downsizing the convent,

the proposals in this application will improve the building's thermal efficiency and restore the mansion back to its former glory, whilst adapting and updating Hillside and Rydal for 21st Century family life.

- The transport assessment demonstrates that the number of new vehicle trips generated would not represent a significant increase when compared with the existing traffic flows and the trip generation of the currently consented land use. It is considered that Hillside Drive has sufficient capacity to accommodate the proposed development.
- An Environmental Impact Assessment has been carried out by a qualified ecologist. The scheme includes a proposal for a managed habitat area to the south of the site; the significant mature trees which lend the site much of its character will be retained.
- Once avoidance, mitigation, and compensation measures have been taken into account, the impacts of the planned development upon biodiversity will be negligible and non-significant.
- We trust that the information submitted is in order and ask that the Local Authority grant planning permission for the change of use back into houses and the bungalow.

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	Sheet No: 01				
	Drg No	Size	Title	CAD File	Scale
			SCHEME DESIGN (Planning)		
	5287/PL/100		Location plan	5287_OS	1250
	5287/PL/101		Existing Block Plan	5287_QX	500
	5287/PL/102		Proposed Block Plan	5287_Q	500
	5287/PL/103		Existing Site Plan: Detail of Convent site	5287_QX	250
	5287/PL/104		Existing Site Plan: Detail of Hillside Drive	5287_QX	250
	5287/PL/105		Proposed Site Plan: Detail of Convent site	5287_Q	250
			Existing plans		
	5287/PL/110		Existing Basement Plan	5287_BFX	100
	5287/PL/111		Existing Ground Floor Plan	5287_GFX	100
	5287/PL/112		Existing First Floor Plan	5287_FFX	100
	5287/PL/113		Existing Second Floor Plan	5287_SFX	100
	5287/PL/114		Existing Roof Plan	5287_RFX	100
	5287/PL/115		Existing Elevations 1 & 2	5287_EleX	100
	5287/PL/116		Existing Section through extension & Elevation 3	5287_EleX	100
	5287/PL/117		Existing Cross Section through Hillside	5287_EleX	100
			Proposed plans		
	5287/PL/120		Proposed Basement Plan	5287_BF	100
	5287/PL/121		Proposed Ground Floor Plan	5287_GF	100
	5287/PL/122		Proposed First Floor Plan	5287_FF	100
	5287/PL/123		Proposed Second Floor Plan	5287_SF	100
	5287/PL/124		Proposed Roof Plan	5287_RF	100
	5287/PL/125		Proposed Elevations 1 & 2	5287_Ele	100
	5287/PL/126		Proposed Section through extension & Elevation 3	5287_Ele	100
	5287/PL/127		Proposed Cross Section through Hillside	5287_Ele	100



Front elevation before refurbishment began on the downsized Convent



Rear elevation before refurbishment works began on the downsized Convent