

DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT:

Proposed four houses on the land to the north of the Convent of Mercy, Gravesend 12/02/2025

clay architecture



Site:

Convent of Mercy, Hillside Drive, Gravesend DA12 1NY

Proposal:

Four 4-bedroom houses with garage, home-office and gardens on the land north of the Convent of Mercy Gravesend. Works include an extension of Hillside Drive ending in a new turning area, private driveway and off-road parking for each house, an electrical substation, and a managed biodiversity area along the north-east boundary of the site.

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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 includes 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.

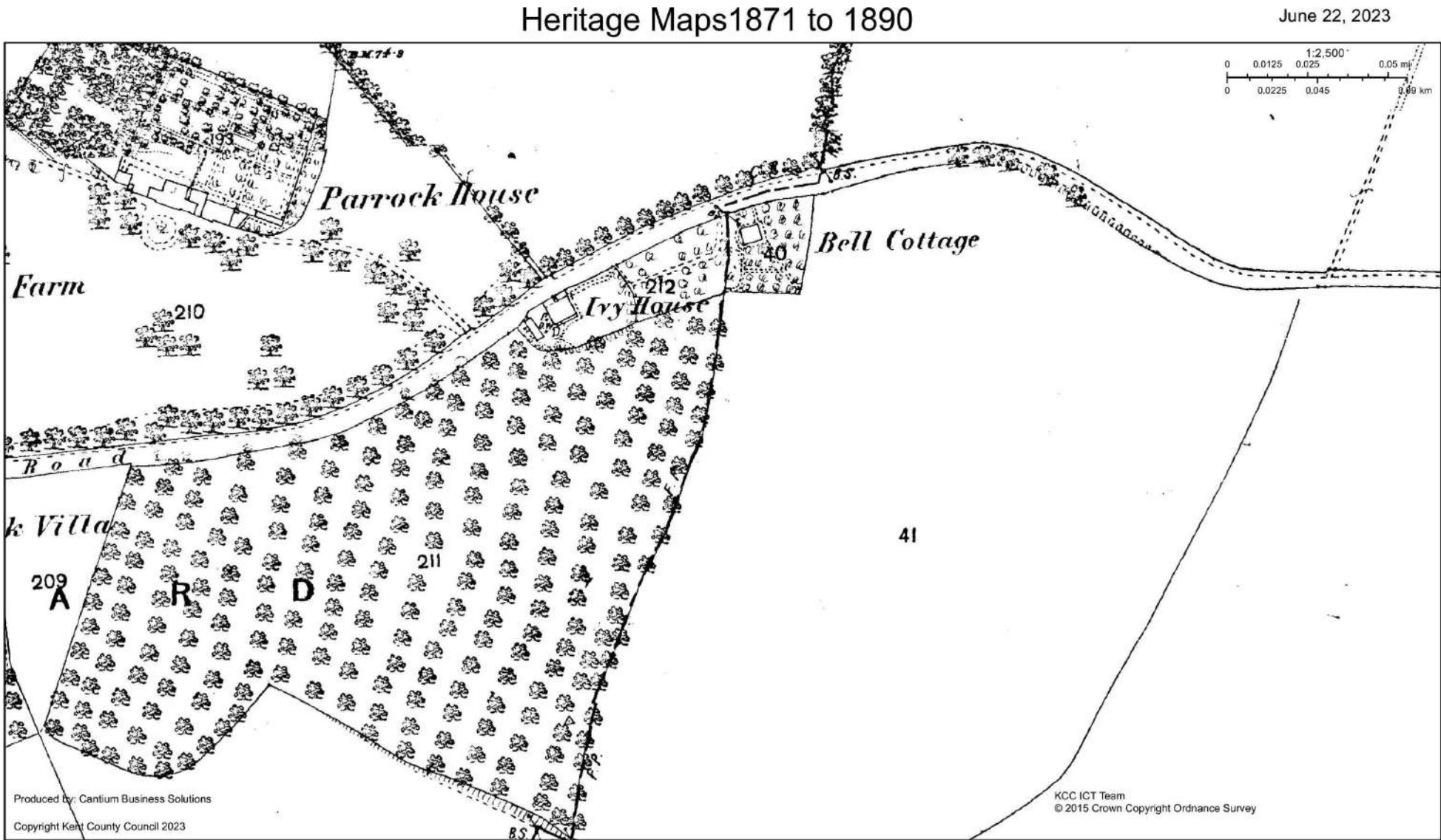
Planning permission (application reference 20231319) was granted in March 2024 to enable the downsizing of the Convent to occupy just half the buildings (Theydon, the chapel and the 50s block). Construction work for this project is underway and is due to be completed in Spring 2025.

A planning application (Ref 20241161) has been submitted to redevelop Hillside and Rydal back into townhouses and replace the single-storey extensions to the west of the mansion with a bungalow.

This is a planning application to develop 4 dwellings on the surplus land to the north of the Convent buildings.

It helps to understand the proposed development in this application in the context of 20241161.

Where certain issues (such vehicular access from Old Road East) are related to 20241161, we refer to this in our drawings and in our statement.



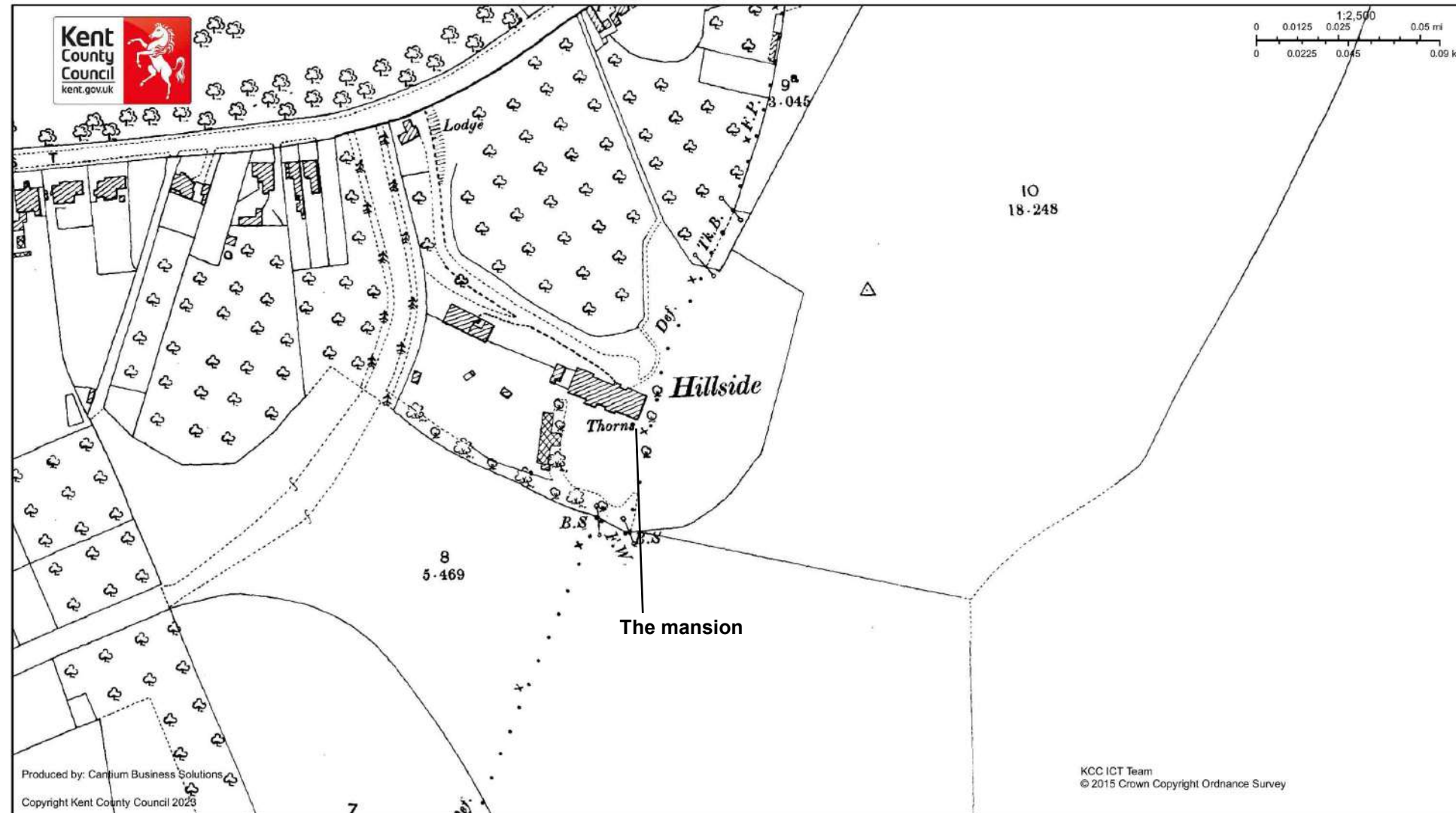
The Sisters of Mercy convent began in Gravesend in 1860, originally occupying 157 Milton Road and 1 Edwin Street, Gravesend.

Legend

The site before development

Heritage Maps 1897 to 1900

June 22, 2023



Legend

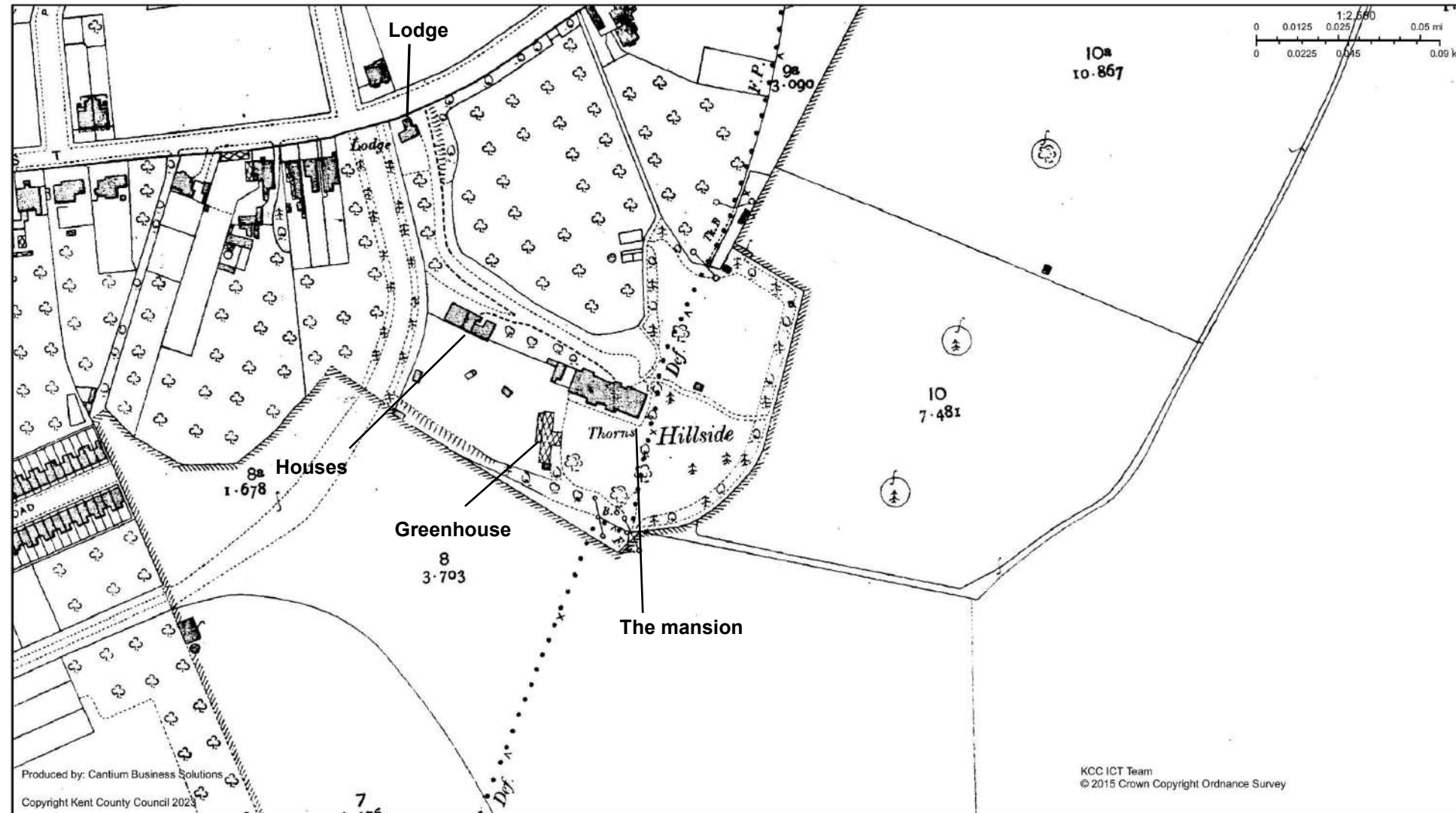
The mansion that forms the main building on Hillside Drive was built in 1895 by Lord John Russell, local brewer, and Gravesend mayor from 1876 – 1898. The land stretching to Old Road East was a single large plot of land known as Hillside.



Lord John Russell, from Gravesham Borough Council collection

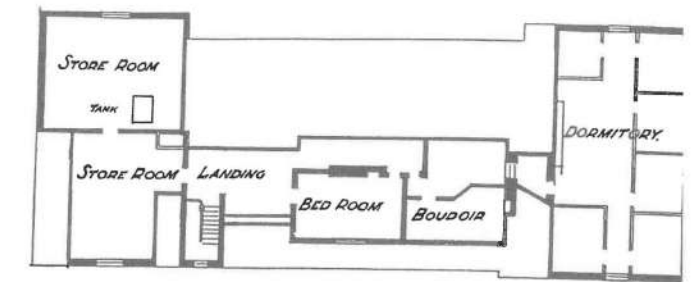
Heritage Maps 1907-1923

June 22, 2023

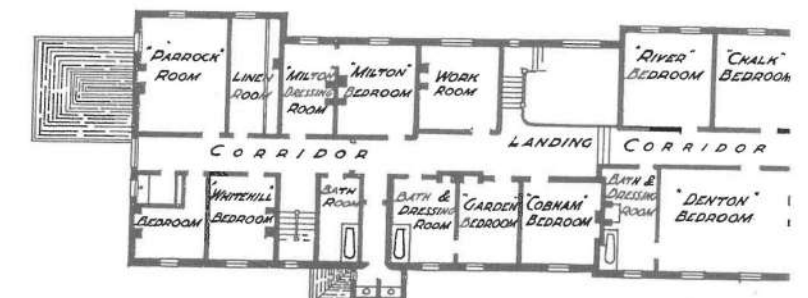


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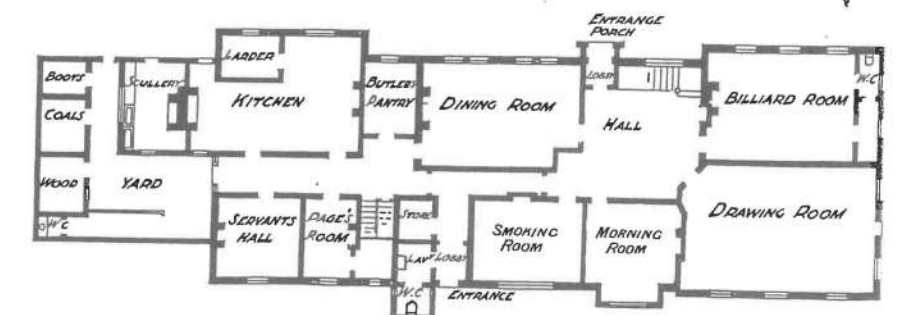
There was a Lodge at the entrance to the drive, and houses now known as no. 10 and 10a Hillside Drive. There also appears to have been a large greenhouse serving the mansion; by the 1929 to 1952 map, the greenhouse has been removed. The plot is surrounded by fields to the east, west, and south—the town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



ROOF PLAN



FIRST FLOOR PLAN



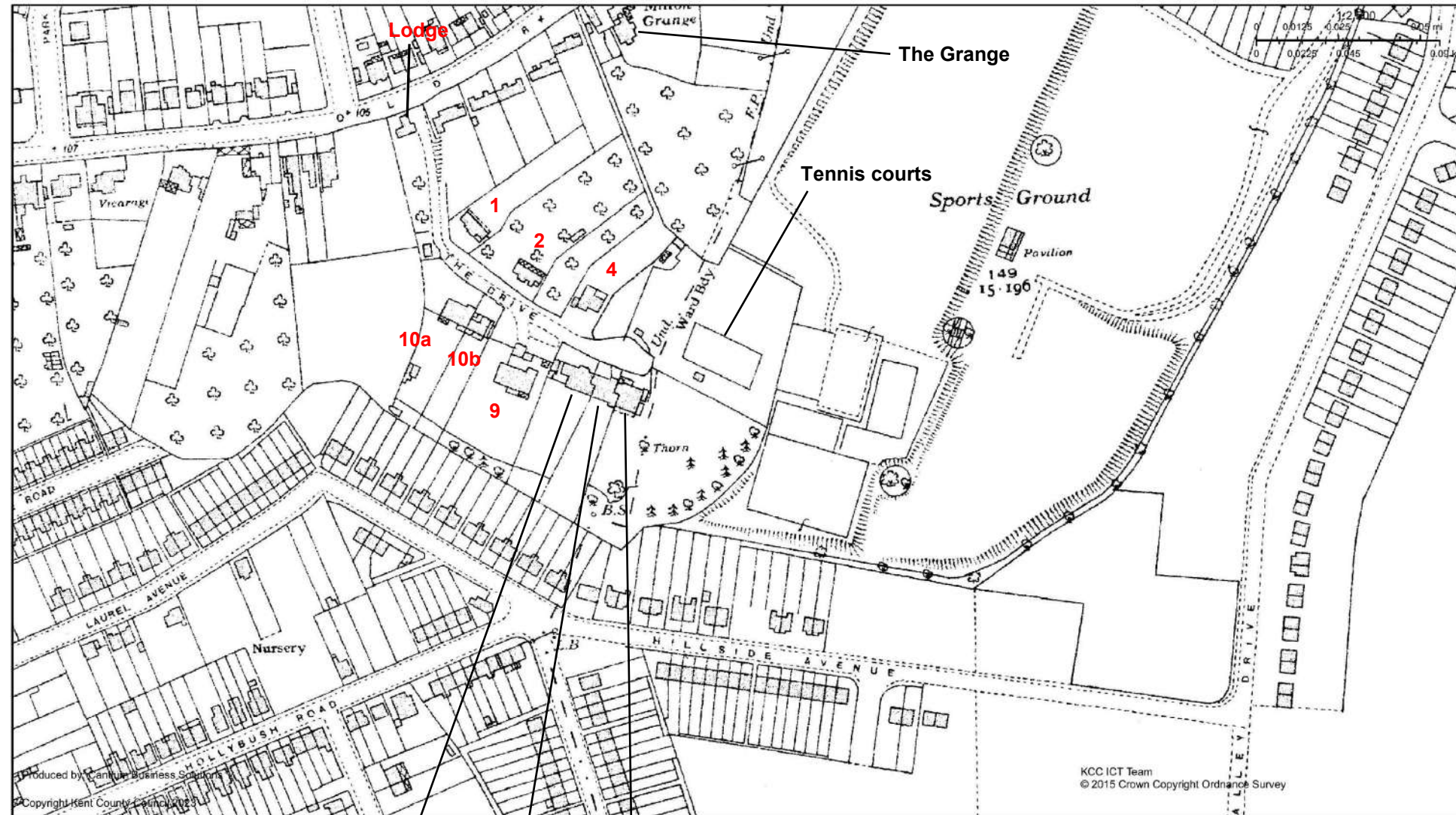
Scale 20 FEET = 1 INCH

GROUND FLOOR PLAN

Original house plans from the Sister's archive

Heritage Maps 1929-1952

June 22, 2023



Legend

Rydal Hillside Theydon

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, including properties now known as:

- 1, 2, 4, 9, 10a and 10b Hillside Drive

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.

Further development along the drive include the properties:

- Copthorne
- 3 Hillside Drive
- 5 Hillside Drive



Further development along the drive include:

- Elm Trees (circa between '61 and '71)
- Little Willows (circa between '61 and '71)
- Greystones (circa between '61 and '71)
- Redwood (circa between '70s to '80s)
- The Anchorage (between 2003 and 2006)

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

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.

As demonstrated by the maps on the preceding pages, the story of Hillside is the story of the growth of Gravesend town since the 1890s. As the town grew, the land formerly known as Hillside was divided and developed into house plots, with plots then further subdivided, and houses built and extended, from the 1920s up to as recently as circa 2006.

In this way, Hillside Drive has developed as an assortment of houses, many with long back gardens.

The convent 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'.

With the shrinking and aging community at the Convent of Mercy, thoughts turn to the future of the site when the convent eventually closes. One of the reasons for the Sisters to be undertaking the development is they wish to remain in place and enjoy their remaining time in Hillside Drive. They are concerned that a third party developer may act speculatively without necessarily taking such a level of care.

20241161 proposes to retain and enhance the character of Hillside and Rydal, restoring them 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.

This application proposes to continue the pattern of development on Hillside Drive by extending the drive and adding four new detached houses with long back gardens.

The convent site is characterised by its garden and the mature trees along its eastern and southern boundaries. The future of the trees along the eastern boundary of the garden have been secured by creating a managed biodiversity habitat area.

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.

The residents on Hillside Drive have been notified of the applications. The Sisters' agents remain in contact with the HDRC and are responding to queries and concerns raised by the residents.

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 pre-application was based on a scheme for 5 new houses. Comments mainly concerned the proximity of the houses to no. 5 Hillside Drive and the impact thereof from windows in the flank walls.

In response:

- Total number of houses have been reduced from 5 to 4.
- A slice of garden containing greenhouses has been retained, creating a buffer between no. 5 Hillside Drive and D1, the proposed first dwelling.
- The layout of D1 has been flipped so the longest projection is not the closest part of this building to this neighbour.
- D1 has been sited outside the 45-degree line from the centre of the first-floor rear windows of No. 5.
- A managed biodiversity habitat area is proposed along the eastern boundary of the site, retaining existing mature trees. This forms a buffer and visual screen between proposed new dwelling D4 and the properties along the Turnstones.
- D4 is more than 22m from the rear windows of the nearest property on The Turnstones, no. 22
- Windows on the flank walls of the proposed houses are all set at 1800mm above finished floor level to avoid overlooking between dwellings.

Please see section on Design on page 13—26 for more details.

Pre-planning consultation was also carried out with KCC Highways & Transportation. Please see section on page 27—28 for more details.

Planning History

20231319	20241161
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.	Change of use of surplus convent buildings into two 6-bedroom townhouses, demolition of existing single-storey extensions to the west and construction of a 2-bedroom attached chalet bungalow, reorganisation of the convent car park and alterations to create a front entrance, reception 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.
Approved	Submitted

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.

Specialist Information

required and submitted with this application include:	
- Ecology Impact Assessment and Biodiversity Net Gain Calculations: see report by Lizard Landscape and Ecology - Energy / Sustainability Assessment for residential sites of 0.5ha or 10 dwellings. The site is 0.49ha and 4 dwellings and therefore falls just short of the criteria for a full assessment. Please refer to the architect's Measures to tackle Climate Change on page 27—28 - Contamination Desk Top Study: see report by Meadow Environmental Consulting - Tree Survey and Report: see Arboricultural Assessment and Tree Protection Specification / Report by Sylvan Arb - Utilities Assessment: See Summary of Incoming Services Strategy on page 29	- Sewerage and Surface Water Drainage Strategy / Assessment: See flood risk assessment and drainage strategy report by the Alan Baxter Partnership and page 29 - Transport Statement: See Transport Statement by Hydrock (now Stantec) - Archaeological Desk-based Assessment and Impact Assessment: See assessment and report by Canterbury Archaeological Trust.



Site and Site Layout

The site comprises of the 0.4ha area of garden north of the convent.

Here, the land slopes evenly downwards in a north-north-easterly direction towards the northern boundary with a 0.6m 'step' roughly halfway down slope.

It is likely that the upper half was levelled for the grass tennis courts that appear on maps between 1923 and 1929 (see page 7).

The south-western corner of the garden, next to no. 5 Hillside Drive rises in a hump to the existing convent car park level: from here, a garden path leads to greenhouses and font in the north-eastern corner of the garden, crosses to the eastern edge of the garden past the statue of Our Lady, then follows along the eastern boundary towards the southern half of the garden.

The northern boundary of the garden is planted with ornamental hedges and trees, the eastern boundary is wooded with mature trees.

The font and statue of Our Lady will be relocated to the retained Convent garden to the south.

Photographs of the area are provided on pages **33—35**

This application proposes to continue the pattern of development on Hillside Drive by extending the drive, dividing the land into 4 long tapering plots of equivalent width, and adding one new detached house on each plot.

The extended drive will follow the existing curve of the Convent car park, continue eastwards, clear of the root protection zone of the Copper Beech in the centre of the Convent garden(T21 on the tree survey), and end in turning area T3.

Pre-planning application was previously submitted based on a scheme for 5 new houses. Comments concerned the proximity of the houses to no. 5 Hillside Drive and the impact thereof from windows in the flank walls.

In response to the pre-planning application:

- The total number of houses have been reduced from 5 to 4.
- For the purposes of this application, we have called the proposed houses D1 to D4 (D for Dwelling).
- A slice of garden containing the greenhouses has been retained, creating a buffer between no. 5 Hillside Drive and D1, the proposed first dwelling.
- The layout of D1 has been flipped so the longest projection is not the closest part of this building to this neighbour.
- D1 has been sited outside the 45-degree line from the centre of the first-floor rear windows of No. 5, in compliance with Gravesham's residential guidelines.
- A managed biodiversity habitat area has been proposed along the eastern boundary of the site, retaining existing mature trees. This forms a buffer and visual screen between proposed new dwelling

D4 and properties along the Turnstones.

- D4 is more than 22m from the rear windows of the nearest property on The Turnstones, no. 22 and complies with Gravesham's residential guidelines.
- Upper windows on the flank walls of the proposed houses are set at 1800mm above finished floor level to avoid overlooking between dwellings.

A strip of land on either side of the extended drive will be developed as a managed habitat area, with trees and native hedges to provide privacy and screening to the new houses and to the Convent (hedge-fronted properties are a characteristic of Hillside Drive).

The proposed properties are each accessed via a private driveway with 2 external parking spaces and 1 garage contained within the house.

House type and design

House Type

A single house-type has been designed for the 4 properties, with half of the houses mirrored or handed in plan.

The houses have been designed in a hybrid contemporary-vernacular style, with a more vernacular-leaning front facing the drive to the south and a more contemporary rear facing the garden to the north.

Sited on a slope the houses have level access at the front, and a ground floor raised on a brick plinth at the rear with steps down to garden level—the height of the plinth and number of steps varies depending on the slope the house is sited on. D3 and D4 are sited on more level ground and will have lower plinths and fewer steps to the rear.

The houses are 2.5 storeys high, with rooms in the roof. The roofs are of hybrid design, with the front, vernacular-leaning half expressed as half a gable roof with a central dormer up to ridge level, with the rear, contemporary half a shallow mono-pitch rising from ridge level to the south.

The houses are generous in size, with room sizes either meeting or slightly exceeding Gravesham residential guidelines.

Design

Designed as family homes fit for the 21st C, the proposed houses take into consideration growing trends such as:

- Working from home, hybrid or full remote working
- Young adults living with their parents for longer due to the lack of affordable housing
- An aging population
- Healthier, more energy efficient, breathable homes to deal with climate change and reduced environmental impact.

The design:

- Is relatively simple in plan, split into two halves on either side of a central staircase and stacked toilet / bathroom core to the front.
- Has a projecting single-storey ground floor bay to the rear of each house, this contains the living area which has views onto the garden and opens onto a side patio through glazed bi-fold doors.
- Has smaller windows on the front, south-facing elevation— glazed with solar glass to reduce the risk of solar heat gain
- Has larger windows on the rear, north-facing elevation— to take advantage of north light and views of the garden
- The top window to the stair is designed and sited for passive stack ventilation. With the addition of an automated actuator and smart controls, the passive stack system can provide, together with “coolth” stored in the thermal mass of the house, for night cooling in the summer months. This window is designed and sited to remove exhaust air built up within the common areas of the house.
- Clerestory windows on the flank walls sited 1800mm above finished floor level bring in natural light and ventilation while preventing overlooking of neighbours.

View from the South West



View from the North



Front



Rear



Section through open plan living area



Section through master bedroom



Formed in situ hempcrete wall



Building with hempcrete blocks



Construction

- The building will be a steel/timber frame with pre-fabricated hempcrete blocks in the walls, with a lime render finish. Hempcrete is made from hemp shiv and lime, is a better than zero-carbon material that combines insulation and thermal mass in one material. The interior of hempcrete buildings remain at a near constant temperature with less demand on heating or cooling systems. Hempcrete walls are chemical free, “breathable” (vapour permeable), and hygroscopic— eliminating condensation on the walls, preventing conditions for damp spores to grow, and keeping internal humidity levels within the range which inhibits the growth of viruses and bacteria without the need for mechanical ventilation systems.
- As a building material, hempcrete is proven, commercially viable, and growing in popularity due to its advantages— however, traditional builders tend to be wary of unfamiliar methods of construction.
- As an alternative, the building may also be built using more standard methods of construction: blockwork walls with external insulated render. The design will still provide thermal mass and enable night cooling, but will then not be better than zero-carbon, chemical free, breathable or hygroscopic.

Layout

The ground floor includes:

- An entrance lobby leading to a generous open plan kitchen-dining-living area with views of the garden, and bifold doors opening out onto a patio leading to the garden
- Garage for a single car, equipped with EV charging point and bicycle racks
- A utility room
- A room for air-source heat-pump plant

The first floor includes:

- Two standard sized double-bedrooms
- One larger double-bedroom with ensuite
- A snug, which can be used as a play area, study area, or small living area
- One family bathroom

The second floor, which is partly in the roof, includes:

- A master bedroom with ensuite shower room, wardrobe / dressing area and sleeping area with glazed partition and French doors out onto a recessed balcony overlooking the garden
- A home-office area

Parking, landscaping

The proposed scheme shares the front vehicle turning and parking area with the Convent. A second turning area has been provided at the end of the drive.

- The existing 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.
- The proposed turning area T3 serving D1 to D4 can accommodate turning for a 10.5m refuse vehicle, a Scania P280 fire tender, and a 7.5t box van

Parking has been provided at each house for the following:

Key	No. of spaces
D1 to D4	each with 2 off-road parking spaces + 1 enclosed garage space with charging point and bicycle racks

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 common verges on either side of the extended drive will be planted with trees and a hedge of mixed native species. This will help screen and provide privacy between the houses and the convent.

Hedged frontages are a feature of Hillside Drive.

Floor areas

Ref	Room/ Space	Unit Area sqm (design)	Prop Net Total sqm	Comment / Source
	New houses D1 to D4, each			
G Flr	■ Entrance lobby	1.90		
	■ Cloak	2.96		
	■ Living room	51.99		
	■ Dining room	incl above		
	■ Kitchen	incl above		
	■ Utility	4.09		
	■ Garage	23.68		
1st Flr	■ Plant room for ASHP, say	2.89		
	G Flr circulation / store	8.97		
	■ Bedroom 1	17.80		
	■ ensuite shower	4.04		
	■ walk-in wardrobe	NA		
	■ Bedroom 2	12.94		
	■ Bedroom 3	12.94		
	■ Family bathroom	4.20		
	■ Study / play area	8.70		
	1st floor circulation	12.12		
2nd Flr	■ Bedroom 4	18.43		
	storage	2.95		
	■ ensuite shower	4.09		
	Bedroom 5 (home office)	19.15		
	storage	2.49		
	2nd flr circulation	5.50		
	■ Stair / circulation @ say 20%			
	■ Internal walls say 3%			
			sq ft	
	Total each	221.83	2387.76	

External Finishing materials

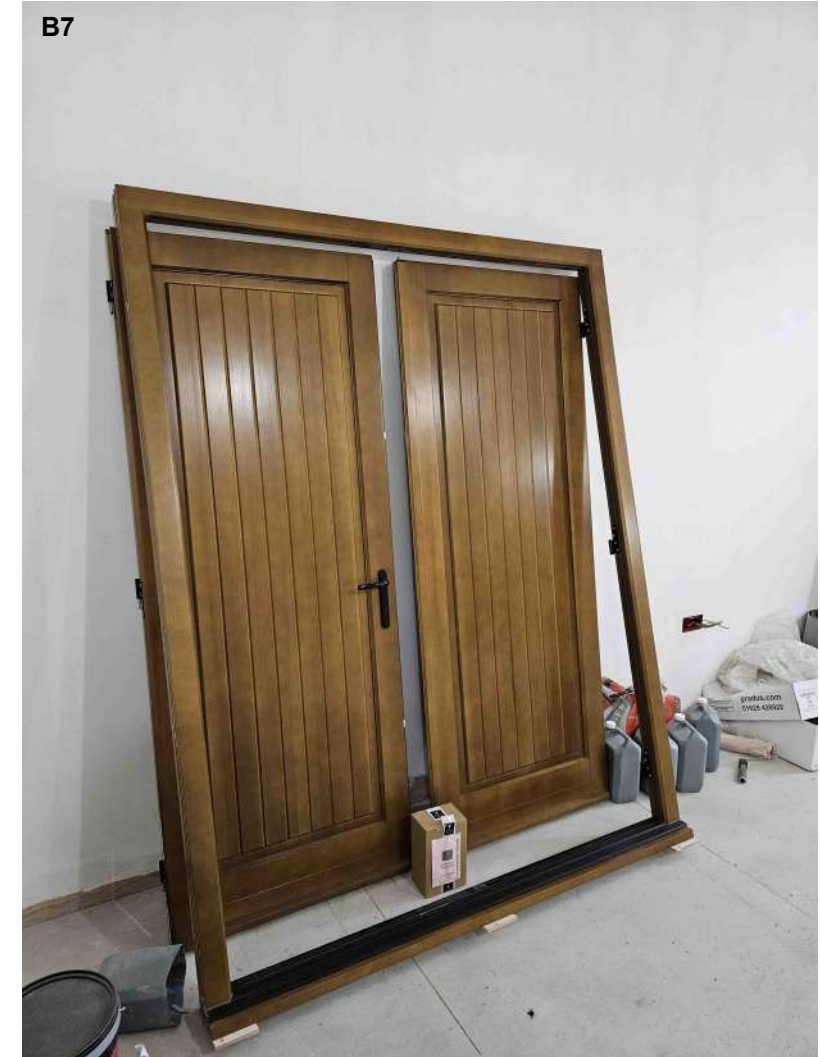
In order to maintain consistency with the redevelopment of the rest of the convent site, we have chosen finishes which match the rest of the convent:

- **B1:** The front half-gable roof will be finished with renovation blend handmade plain clay roof tiles or similar to match the roof tiles of the Convent.
- **B2:** The gables will be clad in vertical hung clay roof tiles to match B1
- **B3:** The monopitch roof will be finished in single-ply EPDM roofing membrane
- **B4:** The roof of the single-storey projecting ground floor bay will be a green roof: sedum or similar on EPDM / bituminous felt roof base
- **B5:** The walls above damp proof course level will be clad with an insulated render system.
- **B6:** Windows and bifold doors will be fitted with double-glazed aluminium windows. South-facing windows will have solar glass to reduce solar heat gain.
- **B7:** The front doors will be single-leaf solid timber doors with vertical panels, to match the new double-leaf timber doors to the convent.
- **B8:** Is an insulating garage door
- **B9:** The base of the walls below DPC level will be finished in frost resistant bricks, either in blue, or red to match the convent buildings.

B2

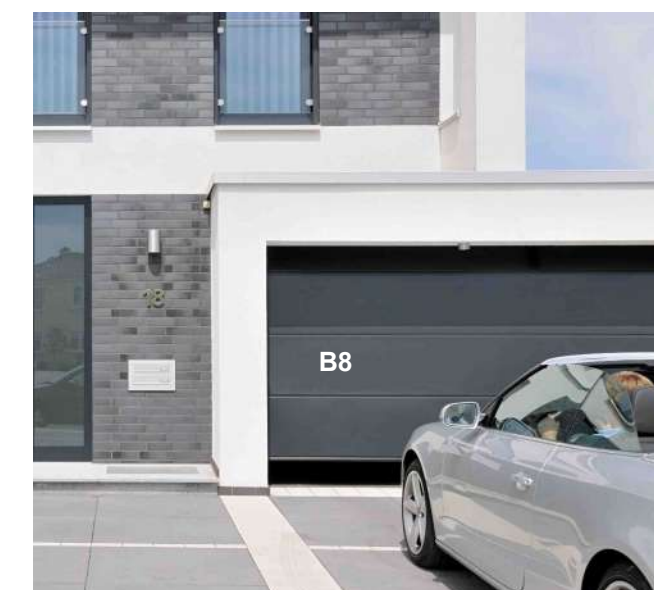


B7

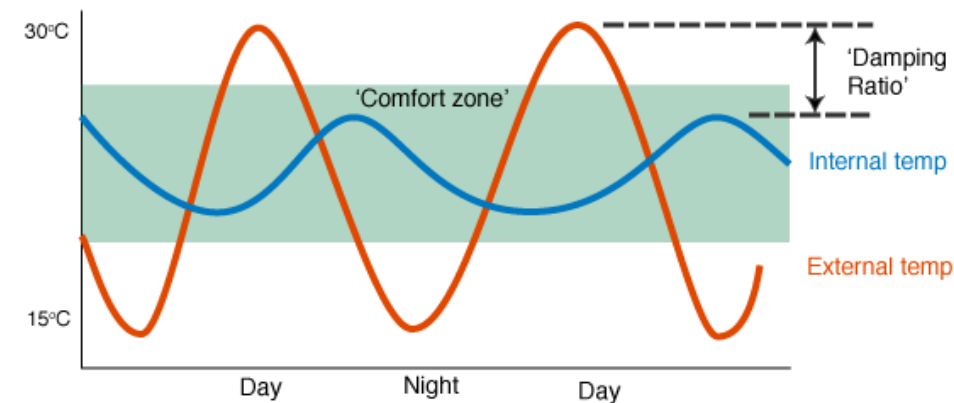
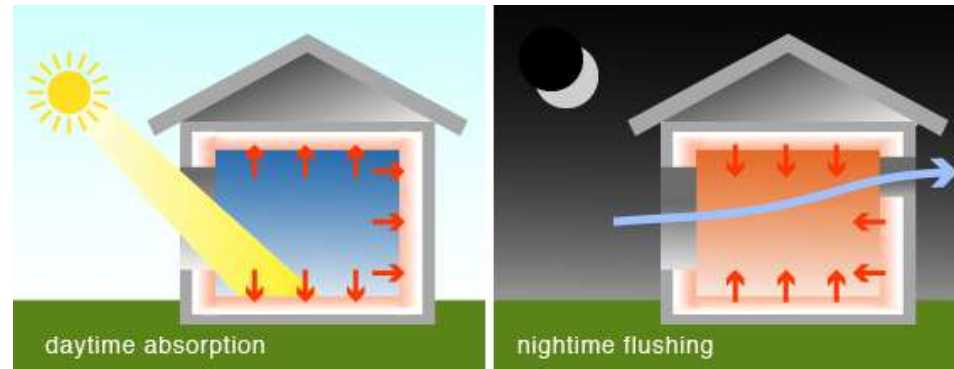


Material Swatch

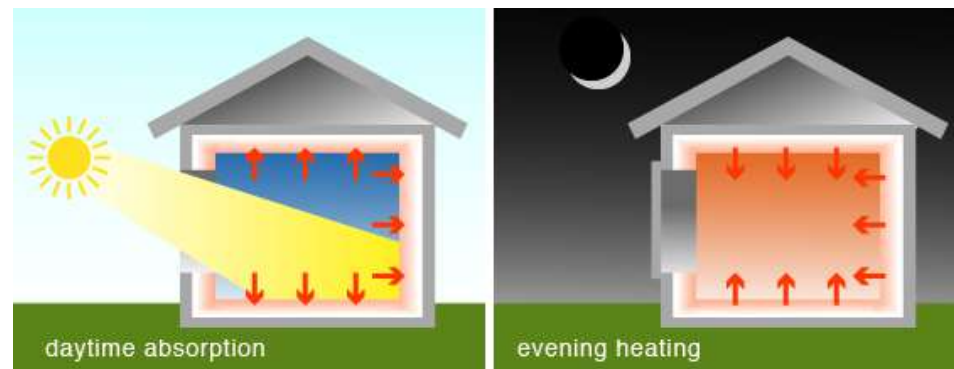
- B1** Renovation blend clay roof tiles
- B3** EPDM roof
- B4** Green roof
- B5** Insulated render
- B6** Double-glazed aluminium windows & doors
- B8** Insulated garage door
- B9** Brick plinth to match convent brick



Thermal mass: Summer cooling



Thermal mass: Winter heating



Sustainable design principles and energy and carbon reduction methods

- The proposed houses will be designed in compliance with Building Regulations Approved Document Part L1A Conservation of fuel and power in new dwellings, Part F1 Means of ventilation in buildings and Part O Overheating mitigation.
- The houses have been designed according to the passive sustainable design principles of thermal mass, passive stack ventilation, and night cooling.
- Thermal mass is the ability of building materials to absorb, store and release heat or coolth energy. This is detailed in the section on construction on page **22**.
- The stair core has been designed according to the principles of passive stack ventilation.
- Passive stack ventilation is a natural ventilation system that uses the stack or 'chimney' effect to circulate air in and out of a building. This is detailed on the section on design on page **15**.
- Combined, PSV and thermal mass can provide passive "night cooling" in summer. Windows let in cool air at night, and the coolth is absorbed and stored in the walls. The slow release of this coolth in the day keeps the ambient temperature of the interiors lower than temperatures outside.
- Windows on the south, east and west elevations will have solar glass to reduce solar heat gain in summer.
- Thermal mass, PSV, night cooling, overheating mitigation, insulation and air-tightness combine to:
 - Improve air quality and provide a healthier interior environment
 - Reduce daily interior temperature fluctuations and smooth out seasonal temperature variations inside the building
 - Reduce energy consumption, by efficient, low maintenance, passive means
- Designed as sustainable energy efficient properties, the houses can be heated using a low-grade heat source such as air-source heat pump (ASHP) all year round.
- 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 the vent system

- 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

- Please refer to the Biodiversity Net Gain calculations and recommendations by Lizard Landscape Design and Ecology

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.
- 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.
- In pre-consultation with KCC Highways & Transportation, the senior development planner indicated that he would prefer the pillars to be removed to avoid stopping on Old Road East when a conflict occurs but accepts Hillside Drive residents' wish to retain the pillars. He accepts Hydrock's assessment that there is a reduction in the number of vehicle movements and noted it would be difficult to raise an objection on highway safety grounds unless there is a crash history.

Education or new resident/occupier information pack

- An occupier information track will be provided to new residents.
- To ensure this, the following requirement 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.

Utilities

Please note that it is not possible to confirm if upgrades or substations are required until a formal approach in the form of an order is made to the utility company. We are some way off before the project is ready to place an order for any new services.

The Mechanical and Electrical Professional has made the following preliminary assessment:

Water	Will need 4 new domestic services
Electricity	Will need 4 new electrical services. This may require an upgrade of the incoming supply up Hillside Drive and / or a substation
Gas	No gas required as the houses will be heated with electrically powered air source heat pumps.
Fibreoptic	New building regulations Approved Document Part R Vol 1 Physical Infrastructure and Network Connections for New Dwelling: requires OpenReach to supply high speed data- with no charge from provider

Flood Risk and Drainage Strategy

The requirements for Flood Risk Assessment are provided in the National Planning Policy Framework and associated Planning Practice Guidance, together with the Environment Agency’s Guidance Notes. This policy and associated guidance have been followed in the preparation of this FRA.

The proposed development covers an area of approximately 0.35ha. The vast majority of this is greenfield land with the remaining area consists of a small area of tarmac used for vehicle parking and memorial structure.

Based on this desktop investigation, it can be concluded that the proposed development is located in an area with essentially no risk of flooding from all possible sources, and that the proposals will have no discernible impact on the flood risk associated with the development site, or those areas adjacent to it.

A robust surface water drainage scheme is proposed, incorporating permeable paving, catchpit gullies and chambers, and soakaways. All surface water drainage will run under gravity and be designed to accommodate a 100 year storm, with a 45% allowance for climate change.

In the event of an exceedance event (if the drainage system gets blocked for example), any waterflows will be routed to the external grassed area around the development, replicating the natural flows of the current site.

Foul wastewater from the development will be conveyed under gravity to a pumping station before being conveyed to the Public Sewer via rising main and break chamber.

It is therefore concluded that the proposed development will not increase flood risk off site, and that all occupants / users will be able to be kept safe in the most extreme of events. On that basis it is it is considered that the development should be considered acceptable in terms of the planning policy requirements.

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 likely to meet the criteria which would require consultation with Natural England.
- 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 full details.

- The Convent is an amalgamation of 3 historic, but unlisted houses which were formerly a single mansion. The Sisters of Mercy have lived in the convent since 1951. The community has shrunk in size and the Sisters are now elderly. There are no novices joining the order.
- Planning permission (reference 20231319) was granted in March 2024 to enable the downsizing of the Convent to occupy just half the buildings. Construction work for this project is underway and is due to be completed this spring.
- A planning application 20241161 has been submitted to change the use of the remaining buildings, Hillside and Rydal, back into family terraced townhouses, and replace the hodge podge collection of single-storey buildings to the west with a new two bedroom bungalow.
- The story of Hillside is the story of the growth of Gravesend town since the 1890s. As the town grew, the land formerly known as Hillside was divided and developed into house plots, with plots then further subdivided, and houses built and extended, from the 1920s up to as recently as circa 2006.
- This is an application for four new detached family houses in the garden to the north of the Convent. The proposals continue the pattern of development on Hillside Drive by extending the drive, dividing the land into four long tapering plots of equivalent width, and adding one detached house on each plot.
- Designed as family homes fit for the 21st C, the proposed houses take into consideration growing trends such as:
 - Working from home, hybrid or full remote working
 - Young adults living with their parents for longer due to the lack of affordable housing
 - An aging population
 - Healthier, more energy efficient, breathable homes to deal with climate change with reduced environmental impact.
- Pre-planning consultation has been carried out with the Hillside Drive Residents' Committee, as well as Gravesham Borough Council's planning department, and their feedback has informed the proposals. The Sister's consultant team continue to respond proactively to all new queries about the project.
- 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 east 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 downsizing scheme.

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	Project: Convent of Mercy, Gravesend: Proposed new houses on surplus land				
	Sheet No: 01				
	Drg No	Size	Title	CAD File	Scale
			SCHEME DESIGN (Planning)		
	5296/PL/	100	Existing Gf plan	5296_QX	100
	5296/PL/	101	Location Plan and Existing Block Plan	5296_QX	500
	5296/PL/	102	Proposed Block Plan	5296_Q	500
	5296/PL/	103	Existing Site Plan: Detail of Convent site	5296_QX	250
	5296/PL/	104	Existing Site Plan: Detail of Hillside Drive	5296_QX	250
	5296/PL/	105	Proposed Site Plan: Detail of Convent site	5296_Q	250
			Proposed plans		
	5296/PL/	110	Proposed Ground Floor Plans	5296_Q	100
	5296/PL/	111	Proposed First Floor Plans	5296_Q	100
	5296/PL/	112	Proposed Second Floor Plans	5296_Q	100
	5296/PL/	113	Proposed Roof Plans	5296_Q	100
	5296/PL/	124	NOT USED		
	5296/PL/	125	Proposed Elevations 1 & 2	5287_Ele	100
	5296/PL/	126	Proposed Elevation 4	5287_Ele	100
	5296/PL/	127	Proposed Sections 5 & 6	5287_Ele	100





P1



P2



P3



P4



P5



P6



P7



P8



P9