

NUNNYKIRK HALL ENCLOSURE 6

THE PROPERTY

Nunnykirk Hall
Nunnykirk
Morpeth
NE61 4PB

List Entry NGR: NZ 08096 92626
Scale: 1:1,000
Date: 10/03/2023

Heritage Category
List Entry No.: 1041251
Grade: 1

Nunnykirk Hall is a Grade I Listed Country House.

During the last 46 years, it has been occupied as an independent residential school occupied under a tenancy agreement by Nunnykirk Centre for Dyslexia, which subsequently closed last year.

The property which had been in the ownership of the Orde family since 1716 occupies a delightful position at the head of a wooded valley with frontage onto the River Font.

The current building, as it stands today, was built in 1825 by the renowned northeastern architect, John Dobson, and has been described as “the finest of all Dobson’s early houses” (Pevsner).

The property lies within attractive and mature landscaped gardens mainly laid to lawns and includes a large walled garden, former bothy, hard tennis court and recreational playing field.

Site History

The Nunnykirk Cross discovered in the wall of a cottage demolished in the 19th century and now within the collection of the Great North Museum implies that there have been dwellings on the site of Nunnykirk since Saxon times. This pre-dates the ecclesiastical settlement founded at Nunnykirk by the Abbot of Newminster in 1138, which is believed to have consisted of a chapel, tower and other edifices, which are now entirely gone.

After the dissolution of the monasteries, the site passed through the Grey family, coming into the Orde’s family in 1716 when purchased by Edward Ward, who proceeded to build a fine Queen Anne house on the site. In 1825, his greatgrandson, William Orde, commissioned John Dobson to completely remodel the house, creating the property in existence today. The shape of the original early-18th century house can still be clearly seen from the south.

In the 1920’s and 1930’s, the house was leased out, and then requisitioned by the army during the Second World War. The Orde family returned to occupy the house after the war had ended and remained at the house until 1977, when the house was leased out as an independent residential school.

Nunnykirk Hall

With an attractive Ashlar construction under a Lakeland slate roof, Nunnykirk Hall essentially forms two parts, the “Main House” and “Service Wing”, as depicted on the floorplans, (see Enclosures 7.1 to 7.5) and comprises of accommodation on three stories with the principal rooms facing south and west. The accommodation in total extends to approximately 20,091 sq ft (1866 m²). Whilst the property was used as an independent residential school (1976-2022), despite the ground and first floor reception rooms being largely used as classrooms and the bedrooms as dormitories, the property still retains many original period features including feature fireplaces, ornate plaster work, cornicing and excellent woodwork with doors and shutters veneered in a variety of native and foreign woods - a testament to the restrictive measures in place for a Grade 1 Listed building, ensuring that the character as a building of special architectural and historic interest is preserved.

