

The window openings vary in height, providing a hierarchy between floor levels, with the largest windows at the first floor and the smallest at the second floor. The facade is capped by a dentil cornice and parapet with two shallow-pitched slate roofs behind.

The current entrance to the house is approached through the setting of the carriage yard. This presents a more utilitarian and service-like appearance to the property, with no clear sense of entrance and approach. The reading of the rear (west) facade composition is less intentional and was originally conceived to serve as a back-of-house yard for the stables and carriages.

Entering the yard, both the east and west wing facades are presented together. The east wing sits taller but is set back and is partly obscured by the west wing, which has a dominant, later addition, pitched slate roof and chimney stack. The west wing has a plain facade containing only one window at the second floor and is covered at the ground floor by later extensions, which muddle and detract from the setting of the building.

At the end of the yard is a small stepped door opening in the masonry boundary wall, which leads to the pedestrian walkway along the southern branch of the stream that crosses the site. The walkway leads to the current entrance of Grandpont House.

The reading of the plan form of the principal house has remained mostly unaltered and contains a large number of original and historic decorative features, including joinery and plasterwork.



Image 11: View of entrance yard and rear facade of Grandpont House

4.2 20TH CENTURY ALTERATIONS

Grandpont House has undergone a number of interventions during the course of the 20th century. These include the conversion of the south principal room of the east wing into a chapel, alterations to the west wing rooms east of the chimney breast at the first and second floor to provide improved sanitary facilities, subdivision of the west wing ground floor rooms to provide plant/sanitary facilities, extensions to the north and west facades of the west wing to provide additional staff/service accommodation, the replacement of the west wing roof with a steep pitched roof with overhanging hips, and the addition of window openings to the south facade at the ground and second floor of the west wing.

The subdivision of the ground floor of the west wing rooms was carried out to provide a boiler room, guest toilet, and a bedroom. The insertion of the guest toilet required raising the floor level and forming a new doorway, accessed from a reconfigured top step, leading to the east wing stair hall. The addition of the boiler room required a structural intervention to the side of the central chimney breast wall in order to form the required space for the equipment. During this time, the property also suffered from the loss of chimney pieces and blocking of fireplaces.

Other alterations carried out during the 20th century included works that affected the service outbuildings. The coal and wood store was reduced in plan form, and the east facade replaced to make space for the toilet extension to the western portion of the west wing. The roof of the stables block was replaced, and the central gable removed. All the windows and doors facing the carriage yard were also replaced, and new window openings formed along the north river wall of the stables block.



Image 12: Internal view of the chapel at 1st floor of the east wing principal room



Image 13: View of altar and later addition decorations



Image 14: Detail view of later addition decorative pilaster



Image 15: Internal view of west wing 20th c. Pantry at ground floor



Image 16: Internal view of west wing 20th c. communal bathroom at first floor

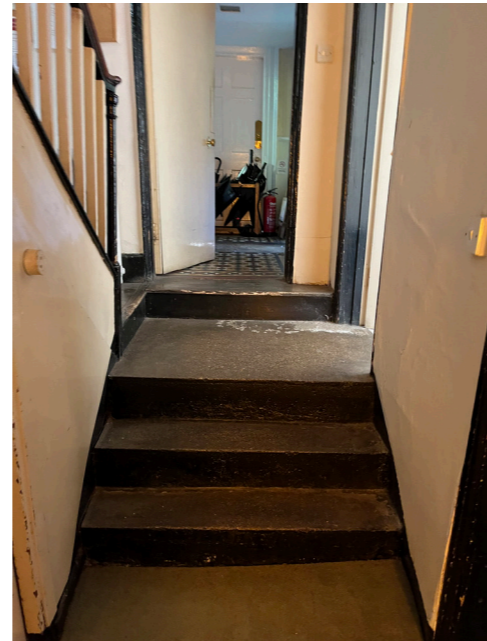


Image 17: Internal view of altered steps leading to the west wing 20th c. toilet addition with raised floor



Image 18: Internal view of west wing 20th c. Boiler room addition at ground floor



Image 19: View of north service yard 20th c. additions

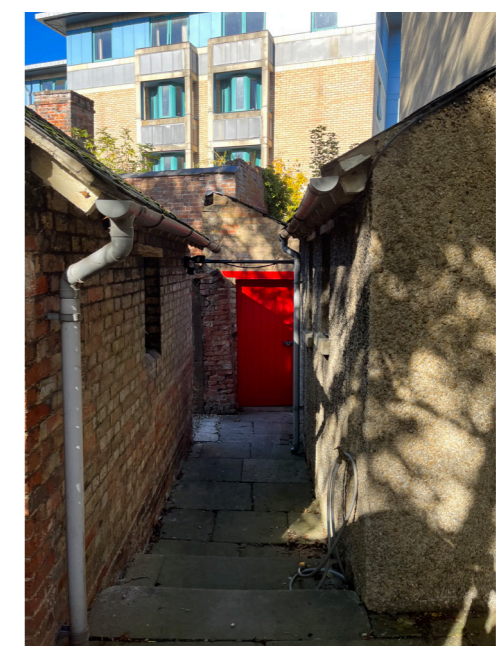


Image 20: View of 20th c. toilet addition to the west wing and altered coal and wood store

4.3 CONDITION AND NEED OF REPAIR

Externally, the property has suffered from a lack of maintenance. The historic fabric is in poor condition and in need of repair. The east wing facades have lost most of their lime render finish, and the exposed brickwork requires repointing.

More than half of the front timber stud facade is covered in plywood sheeting as a result. The remaining surviving lime render has been unsympathetically repaired with cement, particularly evident on the second floor of the west facade, along with other patch repairs throughout.

The east wing's north chimney stack, previously repaired, is significantly bowing outward and is in need of rebuilding. The north facade, originally exposed brickwork, has lost all its lime wash render, which needs to be replaced, and its weathered mortar joints repaired.

The upper levels of the property show signs of water damage, and the leadwork is at the end of its life. The parapet apron, guttering, and flashing all need replacement, along with all the latter addition Spanish slates and non-sympathetic rainwater hoppers and downpipes.

The north boundary river wall enclosing the servant's cottage and the north service yard is partly in a precarious condition and is recommended to be carefully demolished and rebuilt using salvaged brickwork.

Overall, the building is not accessible and its energy performance is below acceptable standards and requires thermal improvements and modernization of its services to become more energy-efficient.

The gardens are overgrown and would benefit from minor landscaping and facilities to encourage outdoor use of the gardens and watercourses.



Image 21: External view facing west of north service yard, ruined servants cottage, stables block and entrance yard



Image 22: External view of east wing south facade and later addition window



Image 23: External view of east facade canted bay with surviving render and adjacent plywood paneling



Image 24: St Josemaria Escrivá (centre) outside Grandpont, in 1959

5. CLIENT BRIEF AND SHORTCOMINGS

Grandpont House has been operated by the Netherhall Educational Association since 1959 as a center for educational, cultural, and religious formation, providing accommodation for staff and students studying in the larger Oxford University area. Additionally, Grandpont House is open to guests and friends who are not residents and can participate in the activities and events organized by the charity.

The facilities that support the operation of Grandpont House and form the key brief uses are as follows: Lecture room, Seminar/meeting rooms, Lounge, Library, Study bedrooms, Chaplain bedroom and office, Director bedroom and office, Laundry, Catering services, and the gardens. Many of these facilities are no longer adequate to support the operation of Grandpont House.

To safeguard the property's long-term viable use, the brief requires an increase in the number of study bedrooms, along with improving and making more accessible the poor standard of accommodation and facilities. Currently, Grandpont House provides accommodation for 11 residents, including the Director and Chaplain. These study bedrooms are undersized and lack the required sanitary facilities. Presently, all study bedrooms are supported by a single shared facility consisting of 3 showers, 3 sinks, and one WC.

The dining room and kitchen are located in the former stables outbuilding. The detached nature of the building makes these functions impractical to use and unable to cater for the common rooms located in the principal building. The Lounge and Chapel are located on the ground and first floors of the east wing, and the library on the ground floor of the west wing. These common rooms support higher occupancy levels and lack adequate ventilation and support facilities. The library has insufficient daylight and is fragmented due to the size and cellular nature of the spaces, while the chapel lacks required support functions such as the sacristy, lobby, and confession room.

The existing entrance is located at the rear of the property, concealed behind the pedestrian walkway. The approach is not clear, restricted, and stepped. The entrance hall has inadequate space to support facilities such as cloaks and visitor seating.

These significant shortcomings are resolved within the submitted design proposals, which provide a sensitive approach to extending and refurbishing the property as a coherent whole.