

Full size  
cleaned up.

22, The High Street  
Notting Hill Gate



2 cm = 5"

ALTERNATIVE AND CONVERSION OF  
36-60 CHEPSTOW VILLAS &  
13-23 DENBIGH ROAD  
LONDON W 11

FOR CENTRAL & PROVISIONAL HOUSING TRUST LTD



ARCHITECTS



## CONVENT OF OUR LADY OF SION

### INTRODUCTION

Situated on the corner of Chepstow Villas and Denbigh Road the Convent, with its high tower and heavily moulded red brick facades, presents a dominant aspect in views along either street. Built in phases between 1890 and 1898 the East Wing was the first to be completed in 1892 at a cost of £7,618 and occupies the sites of Nos. 36 and 38 Chepstow Villas. This formed the Boarding School with its classrooms on the upper ground and first floors; kitchen and dining rooms on the lower ground floor and sleeping accommodation on the second, third and fourth floors. It is interesting to note that when construction of this phase had reached the first floor, the Provincialate, a most determined and resourceful woman by all accounts, reprimanded the Architect, Mr. Young, for designing the floor to ceiling heights too low. Upon her insistence the work was demolished and rebuilt to a more satisfactory ceiling height.

Although considered initially as part of the first phase, construction of the chapel was postponed, because of the high cost, until 1891. However, the tender received at this time from Nightingales, the builders, of £2,453 was £753 more than the original.

The next phase was for the construction of the day school (North Wing). Negotiations secured the purchase on No.40 Chepstow Villas and Mr. Young proceeded to prepare his design. Plans were finally approved in January, 1896, and Nightingales submitted their estimate. Unfortunately this estimate was double the figure expected and Mr. Young was forced to go out to competitive tender. The lowest at £10,000 from a Mr. Holloway was accepted and construction works started in April 1896.

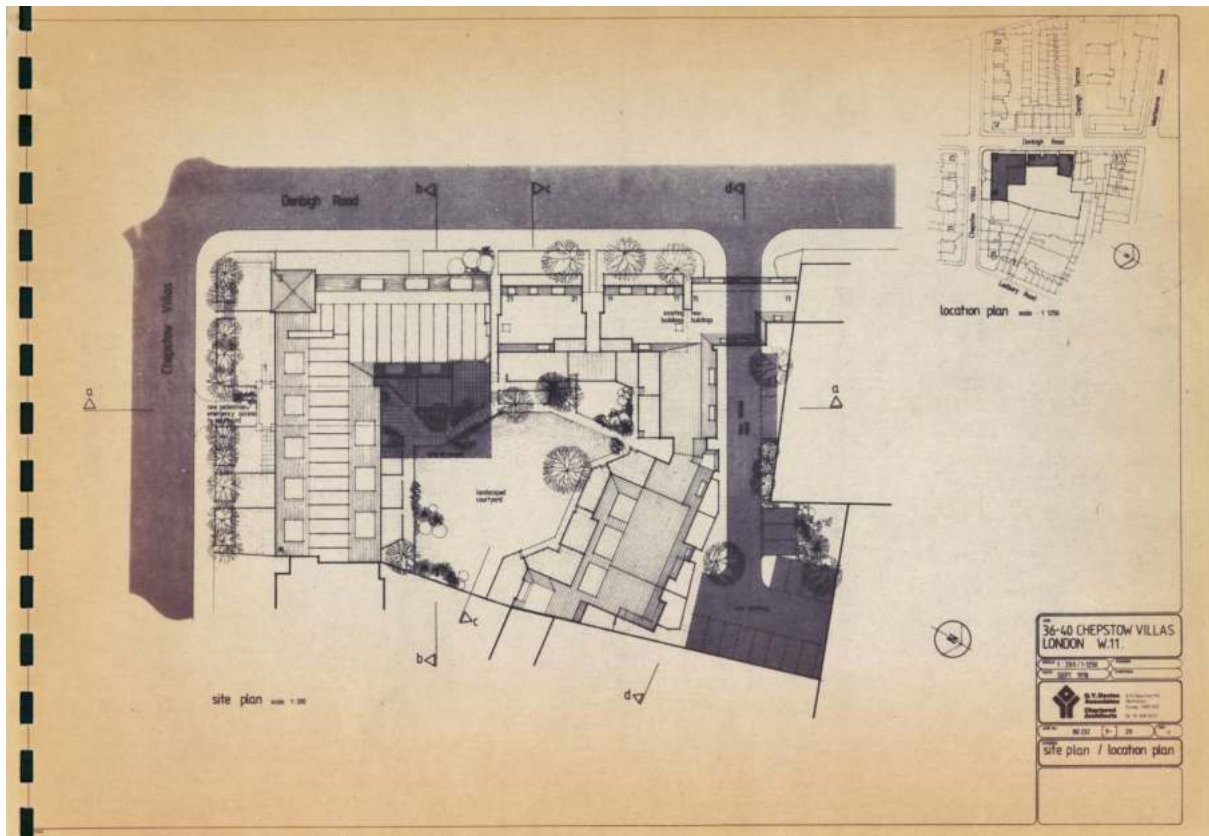
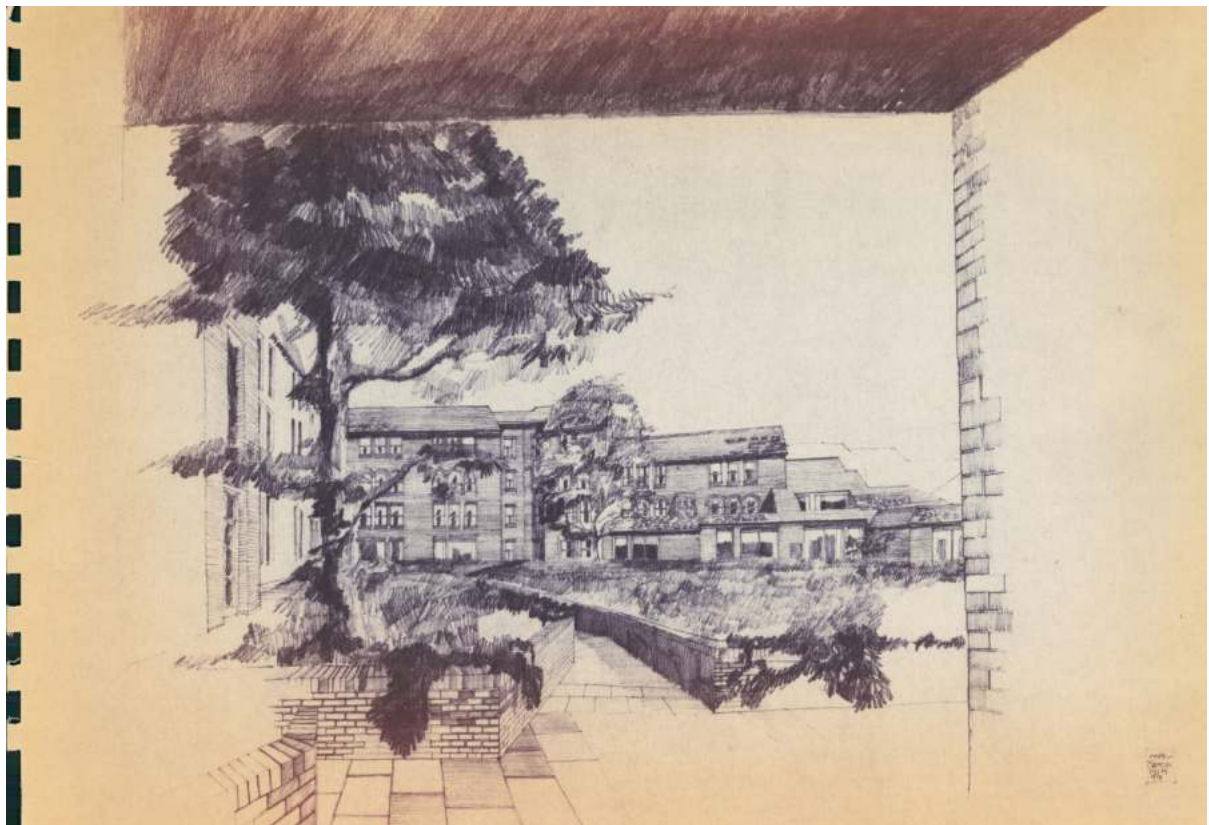
During the time up to completion of the North Wing in January 1898, additional properties were acquired on lease, the Denbigh Road houses which were eventually purchased to become the home of Corpus Christi College.

Despite the initial delay the Chapel was completed in 1892 shortly after the East Wing. Sited as it was on the boundary with No.40 Chepstow Villas it must have been inevitable that compromises had to be made once the implications of the construction of the North Wing were known. The results can still be seen today. Of major consequence was the necessity for the lightwell which has become a haven for pigeons, dead and alive. It is easy to understand why the windows onto this lightwell have obscured glass in them.

Negotiations for land purchase continued after completion of the North Wing with the acquisition in July 1898 of several of the properties in Lambton Mews and Ledbury Mews. These provided the much needed open space to the rear of the building which by the 1920's had been developed into magnificent gardens. The Convent it has been said by those Sisters of our Lady of Sion who have fond memories of these early years, was at its peak. Photographs depict a gracious life style befitting a religious establishment of this magnitude and reflect the times in which it then existed. The dormitories and Sisters' quarters were beautifully furnished and the Chapel adorned with elaborate decoration and fixtures.

But time marches on and change is inevitable. The more austere years that followed left their mark. The trappings have diminished. The wars have left their scars. With the Chapel stripped of its finest adornments one is suddenly aware of some of the means by which it once maintained its appearance. The walls no longer give the impression of being solid stone. It becomes obvious that they are no more than false panels. The columns and their capitals and the cornice appear far too heavy when not balanced by the richness of carved alters, pews and the brightness inherent in a space that is used to its full purpose. The gardens become drowned under asphalt and outbuildings sprout in profusion. Paintwork in corridors and classrooms is selected more for its practicality than its decorative effect. It is the end of an era. The principles that Mr. Young implemented in his designs are no longer relevant.

Conversion to residential use as proposed here is flexible enough to implement the available space to advantage without totally destroying the original concepts. The presence of the Chapel, however, inhibits this full use of the space. The available garden area would be overshadowed and of an insufficient size to provide any amenity. It does not readily convert to a worthwhile use. Instead it would reduce the residential use of the neighbouring buildings which would be contrary to the desired intent. To try and convert it to some use would only destroy that for which it may be worth retaining.



Practically no garden - half a - been trees

For too many dwellings

Too high density

Too many cars.

Why not follow design of existing buildings.

Car entrance in Chepstow Villas very ugly.

Two car entrances provided in Denbigh Rd.  
Why another necessary?

Current Building	1	2	3	4	5
Lower Ground Floor	7	1	-	-	-
Upper Ground Floor	7	1	-	-	-
First Floor	3	-	2	-	-
Second Floor	3	-	2	-	-
Third Floor	3	-	2	-	-
Fourth Floor	5	-	3	1	-
Mezzanine Floor	-	-	3	-	-
<b>Sub total</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>-</b>

Denbigh Road (existing)	1	2	3	4	5
Ground Floor	2	-	1	-	-
First Floor	-	-	1	-	-
Second Floor	-	-	1	-	-
Third Floor	-	-	-	1	-
<b>Sub total</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>-</b>

New Build	1	2	3	4	5
Ground Floor	3	-	1	-	-
First Floor	-	-	1	-	-
Second Floor	-	-	1	-	-
Third Floor	-	-	1	-	-
<b>Sub total</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>

TOTALS OF UNIT TYPES	1	2	3	4	5
	39	-	60	5	-

247 flat R. TOTAL OF ALL UNITS 104  
 People 156 120 0  
 Total people 281

