

94 SELLY PARK ROAD, St Paul's Convent, Birmingham



Heritage Impact Assessment

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Authorship This document has been prepared by Oliver Jessop BA MA MIFA, with historical research by Karen Averby BA MA PGCert Arch Hist (Oxon) AlFA. Editing has been undertaken by Karen E Walker BA MPhil MIFA FSA.

- Site name / location:** 94, Selly Park Road, St Paul's Convent, Birmingham, B29 7LL
NGR: **SP 05680 82596**
- Date of survey:** 25th September 2014
- Nature of application:** Planning application for residential development
- Existing designations:** This application considers the impact of the proposed works upon three **designated heritage assets**, which are:
- St Paul's Convent a **Grade II** Listed building, No.1076184 (registered on 08.07.82);
 - 34 Kensington Road a **Grade B** Locally Listed building;
 - The **Selly Park Conservation Area** (designated on 13.05.09).

Description of site and setting: *Layout*

The proposed development site lies to the northeast of St Paul's Convent within the Selly Park area of Birmingham, which forms part of the Selly Oak Ward of the City of Birmingham (**Appendix 1.1**). The site has an irregular plan, but approximates to two connected triangular segments of land, measuring c.0.6ha. The Site is defined by the intersection of Kensington Road (**Appendix 3.7**) and Greenland Road (**Appendix 3.9**), which form the two public boundaries to the northwest and southeast (**Appendix 1.2**).

The north part of the Site has a grassed surface and is relatively level, c.130m above sea level (**Appendix 3.3**). The rear boundary is a hedge c.2.2m in height, which forms a dense visual barrier from the Convent buildings (**Appendix 3.1**) and cemetery (**Appendix 3.2**) to the southwest. The boundary facing both Kensington and Greenland roads comprises of a metal railing (**Appendices 3.7-3.9**), the detailing of which indicates that it may date from the first half of the 20th century.

The southeast section has a tarmac area providing access to a modern storage sheds and garage (**Appendix 3.6**). This part of the site is enclosed by high trees (**Appendix 3.5**), and is used for garden waste and storage.

The central section of the Site fronting on to Greenland Road (**Appendix 3.10**) is interrupted by two houses (No's 27, 29) that form part of the housing provision for the Convent. Adjacent to these houses is a tarmac drive and entrance gate.

Geology

The underlying bedrock geology is from the Mercian Mudstone Series (BGS 2014). No superficial deposits are recorded for the Site. No geotechnical data from Site investigations has been consulted as part of this assessment.

Heritage Assets - Listed Buildings

The core block of St Paul's Convent is a Grade II Listed building. It was constructed in brick with ashlar detailing in the early part of the 19th century as Selly Park Hall. The principal façade is two and a half storeys in height and faces northeast. It is comprised of three bays, the central one advanced and pedimented. This building is 200m to the southwest of the Site and is not visible, being shielded by a high hedge around the Convent cemetery.

Heritage Assets – Locally Listed Buildings

The property at 34 Kensington Road has been added by Birmingham City Council to their register of Locally Listed Buildings. It is regarded a good example of a brick and rendered house which demonstrates the character, and ethos of the Selly Park Conservation Area. It does, however, only have a Grade B status and is considered to contribute to the local street scene, but not of a high enough standard to warrant consideration for formal Listing by the Secretary of State.

Heritage Assets – Selly Park Conservation Area

The character of the Selly Park Conservation Area that surrounds the Site (**Appendix 1.1**), has a distinct feel of affluence and space when compared to the terrace streets of the surrounding districts of Birmingham. The roads are wide and individual plots are well-proportioned and contain houses from the late 19th and early 20th centuries many attributed to local architects. Important landmark buildings include St Stephen's Church, St Paul's Convent, St Edwards Church, Presbytery and School and St Mary's Hospice.

Historic development:

Historically the Selly Park area, has along with the adjacent Bournbrook, been regarded as separate settlements within the Selly Oak district of Birmingham (**Appendix 2.4**). In common with many other Birmingham suburbs, Selly Oak had been a rural area populated with scattered

farmsteads, but became increasingly developed within the 18th and earlier 19th centuries as an attractive rural retreat mainly for middle class professionals and those who had profited from expanding industry growth of Birmingham and the West Midlands.

As the 19th century progressed, farms and farmland gradually disappeared as the area of Selly Oak was developed, mainly with terraced housing to accommodate the workers from industrial developments in Stirchley, Selly Oak and Bournville. The main period of development took place between the 1890s and c.1914, and by 1911 Selly Oak had become subsumed as a suburb of Birmingham.

Selly Park is broadly demarcated by Pershore Road and the River Rea which run through its eastern side, with the Bournbrook to the north, Bournbrook Road to the west and Selly Park Road and Woodside Road to the south. It is characterised by well-proportioned large houses set in spacious residential plots, regular open spaces and occasional cul-de-sacs. It was developed as an upper middle-class estate in the mid-19th century, and is named from the estate and parklands of Selly Hall, that was built in the early 19th century between the turnpike roads of what are now Bristol Road and Pershore Road. The house itself, is now incorporated within the standing buildings that comprise St Paul's Convent.

A hall was present in this area by at least 1428, but it is seemingly not until 1702 that a hall at this location is reliably identifiable within historical documents. These include an Act of Parliament from 1702, which detailed the sale of various properties including a farm called Selly Hall (SRO HH500/4/9), and a an abstract of mortgage made by Edward Gower to Edward Webb and Rowland Ingram of the Selly Hall Estate (*ibid.*) in 1736.

The Estate then passed to the Chambers family who sold part of their lands in 1809 (Leonard 1933). It was acquired by J. Weatherby Phipson, but when he was declared bankrupt in 1835 his property was sold. A survey and report were made prior to the sale, in which the Selly Hall Estate is described as comprising "a mansion house, farm house, porters lodge, pasture and meadow land" which was occupied by Phipson, and also a villa leased to and occupied by a Charles Shaw for £45 per annum. The farmland was deemed to be in a poor state, with no livestock or crops and as such was

not expected to be purchased as a whole (SRP HH500/4/39).

Freehold quarter acre plots of the estate were sold to purchasers, with the stipulation that a minimum amount be spent on the erection of houses, to ensure that only quality homes were built.

Robert Dolphin bought Selly Hall with lands for £24,950, and in 1854 he sold 146 acres to a land society which led to the building of the Selly Park Estate.

Selly Hall itself subsequently passed into the ownership of John Rodway, an auctioneer who in sold it to the Roman Catholic Church in 1864 for use as the Convent of the Sisters of St Paul which was then at premises in Banbury. It has been in their tenure down to the present day.

Despite wider urban development in Selly Oak and surrounding districts, by 1888 Selly Park was still surrounded by fields, but following its incorporation into Selly Oak in 1906, ribbon development spread along Pershore Road outwards from Birmingham, with many fine examples of late 19th century buildings here and in surrounding streets. Land to the west of Pershore Road was laid out for development in the mid 19th century with spacious plots and tree-lined streets, where development is still restricted by covenant, while between Pershore Road and the River Rea there are several streets of superior 19th and early 20th century terraced housing.

Analysis of Mapping

The earliest reliable map that depicts the Selly Oak area of Birmingham and the surrounding countryside is the Ordnance Survey drawing of 1814 by Dawson (**Appendix 2.1**). The buildings of Selly Hall are shown with parkland and woodland stretching north and northwest. The site lies within fields to the east of Selly Hall, on slightly higher ground. These fields are coloured very light green, possibly indicating pasture.

An early 19th century estate plan (**Appendix 2.2**) prepared prior to its sale in 1835 shows the layout of the estate in more detail, with the land divided into numbered lots. Selly Hall and associated buildings are set in parkland, with the main approach from the northwest. A track leads north from the house, through woodland to four large lakes. The site lies to the northeast of Selly Hall in open fields, possibly pasture. A smaller lake, surrounded by trees, lies partially within the southern tip of the site. Together with the house and

buildings and three of the lakes to the north, the site falls within Lot 1.

The Northfield title map of 1840 (**Appendix 2.3**) shows little change. A looped, formal carriageway has been added to the southeast of Selly Hall but otherwise the land divisions remain the same as on the estate map, and none of the lots have been built upon. The site still lies within open land with the lake partially in the southern tip.

Blood's 1857 map of Birmingham (**Appendix 2.4**) and its environs again shows little material change. The dotted lines in the approximate position of existing roads, including Greenland Road and Kensington Road, suggest these were being planned but had not yet been built. The lake at the southern tip of the site appears to now be dry: it still appears as an oval but is no longer coloured dark grey like other lakes in the vicinity of the site.

The Ordnance Survey County Series 1:2500 maps of 1884 – 1890 (**Appendix 2.5**) illustrate the site and its surrounding area in considerable detail, being positioned at the northern extent of the grounds attached to the Convent of St Paul. Partially within the southern tip of the site is a circular feature, the remains of the former lake. Immediately to the west of the site are two oval wooded plots marked as burial grounds for use by the Convent.

The site is bound by Kensington Road to the northwest and by Greenlands Road to the east. A park and lakes attached to a large house at Selly Park lie beyond Kensington Road to the northwest of the site while land to the east of Greenlands Road, also formerly part of the Selly Park Hall estate (Dargue 2008-2014), has been parcelled up for development. Some plots have been already been developed: Selly Terrace has been built just to the north-east of the site on Pershore Road, while a few detached and semi-detached residences have been built on Greenland Road and Pershore Road.

By the beginning of the 20th century terraced and semi-detached houses have spread along the eastern side of Pershore Road, as can be seen on the Ordnance Survey County Series 1:2500 map of 1901-1904 (**Appendix 2.6**). To the west of Pershore Road, however, there is little change. The grounds of the Convent, including the site, appear to be less wooded, though this may only be a change in map making convention. Some of the

boundaries of the parcels of land have changed, perhaps reflecting a change in ownership.

Despite the parcelling of land, development in the immediate vicinity of the site appears to have happened slowly. The OS 1:2,500 map of 1916-1917 (**Appendix 2.7**) shows a new tramway along Pershore Road and also that three detached houses have been built on its western side. Apart from this, however, within the area surrounding the site, and within the site itself, there is no change.

By the late 1930s, as can be seen on the OS 1:2,500 map of 1937-1939 (**Appendix 2.8**), all of the plots along Pershore Road and Greenland Road as well as the northern side of Kensington Road have been built on, mostly with fairly substantial detached dwellings. The convent has been extended, with an infirmary and chapel in new wings to the south and a laundry and ancillary buildings to the north. Landscaping has also been carried out with paths is depicted to the north of the ancillary buildings and paths of terracing to the north of former lake which is now more oval in shape and lies wholly within the site.

Ordnance Survey mapping from 1955-56 (**Appendix 2.9**) shows few changes within the site or its vicinity. The semi-detached houses immediately adjacent to the site, No's 27 and 29 on the western side of Greenland Road, have been built by this date and the former lake is no longer visible. OS mapping from 1964 likewise shows no change within the site or its environs. By the time the OS map for 1970-1974 (**Appendix 2.10**) was produced, curving streets of residential properties have been laid out to the north of Kensington Road. Closer to the Site, properties at the northern end of Greenland Street have been redeveloped including a large retirement home, Neville Williams House, at No's 8-14. A large square area has been landscaped to the east of the convent, possibly for the playing fields attached to St Edward's Catholic Primary School, built at a similar time. OS mapping from 1974-1993 (**Appendix 2.11**) shows no change within the site or its vicinity, although by the early 2000s a garage and shed had been added in the southern part of the Site, in the general area of the former pond.

Archaeological context:

There have only been a limited number of archaeological investigations, or recorded discoveries within a 1km radius of the Site. The Birmingham Historic Environment Record included entries for listed buildings, many of which are incorporated within the Selly Park Conservation Area. Their records include details regarding more recent historical features, such as the remains of 18th-19th century development, when the rural landscape was gradually transformed into one containing large houses with expansive gardens – such as Selly Wick House (HER1370) and the Convent of St Paul, which was formerly Selly Hall (HER1369).

A research project involving an archaeological resistivity survey of the recreation ground to the southwest of the Convent (HER2078) was undertaken in 1995 to locate new evidence for the network of Roman roads leading to Birmingham. The survey did identify a linear anomaly of unknown date, but this was not considered to be a road, or of particular archaeological significance.

The principal archaeological feature within 150-200m of the Site is the remains of a medieval moated enclosure to the northwest of the gardens of the houses along Kensington Road. The site is known as Selly Manor Moat (HER862) and is listed on the Birmingham moated register. It appears to have been incorporated into the ornamental gardens and ponds that once extended to the northwest of Selly Hall (see 1840 tithe map **Appendix 2.3**).

No evidence has been identified that the development Site contains any archaeological remains, nor has it ever been built upon since being used as fields to the northeast of Selly Hall. **The archaeological potential can therefore be considered to be low, or negligible.**

Description of the proposals:

The proposals are set out in the drawings and other documents comprising the Design and Access Statement. They can be summarised as follows:

The construction of fourteen new dwellings, with adjacent parking and garden provision. These houses will be split into three zones: to the north will be a row of seven detached properties accessed from Kensington Road; to the south will be five detached properties forming a cul-de-sac and accessed from Greenland Road; and two comparable semi-detached

houses will be built adjacent to No's 27 and 29 Greenland Road, with direct access to the road frontage.

The only impact upon the boundary of the Site will be the creation of a new central driveway through the fence facing Kensington Road, the upgrading of the access road alongside 29 Greenland Road and the creation of a new roadside frontage to the houses immediately to the north of 27 Greenland Road.

The design of the new dwellings is of a high standard, with exception care in regards to the proposed external detailing, choice of materials and surface finishes. The scheme makes direct reference to the surrounding architectural designs of properties within the Selly Park Conservation Area and attempts to emulate their appearance, whilst creating sustainable buildings in accordance with modern domestic requirements and legislation. The buildings have a variety of roof pitches, arrangements of fenestration and design detailing to the entrance and garage doors.

Impact of proposals:

The proposed alterations will have impacts of varying degrees upon the three Designated Heritage Assets that are considered in this document - the **Grade II Listed Convent Building**, the **Locally Listed building at 34 Kensington Road** and the **Selly Park Conservation Area**. The impacts are considered in the sections below assessing each Heritage Asset in turn.

Impact upon the Listed Building

The impact of a new residential development upon the historic fabric or the setting of the Listed Building that comprises the early 19th century block within St Paul's Convent will cause **less than substantial harm**. The southwest boundary comprises of a substantial hedge, which in conjunction with the massing of secondary outbuildings adjacent to the Listed Building prevent any visual link, or association with the plot of land that comprises the development Site.

Impact upon the Locally Listed Building at 34 Kensington Road

The impact upon the Locally Listed building would be in respect of the creation of a new access drive on the opposite (south) side of Kensington Road. There would be no direct impact upon views of the building when viewed from the street frontage, nor in regards to views up and down the

pavement. The impact can therefore be considered as **causing less than substantial harm**.

Impact upon the setting of the Conservation Area

The proposals will have a limited impact upon the existing character and appearance of the Conservation Area (**Appendix 1.1**). The intention is to retain the existing boundary trees along Kensington Road (**Appendix 3.7**) and Greenland Road (**Appendix 3.9**). These trees are of a considerable height and will screen any new houses that would be built as part of this proposal.

When the vistas into the Conservation Area are viewed along either of the boundary roads, the creation of new discrete entrances for vehicular access to the new houses, will **not cause substantial harm** to the appearance, or field of view.

The construction of new houses within the Conservation Area could be regarded as a significant intervention, however, there will be minimal visual impact along Kensington Road, and only in a short section along Greenland Road where two new dwellings are proposed that repeat the architectural pattern and symmetry of No's 27 and 29. It is considered that this will contribute to the rhythm of the streetscape, and enhance the appearance of the street, unlike the appearance of the existing retirement home, Neville Williams House, at No's 8-14 on the opposite side of the road that detracts from the character of the Conservation Area.

Justification of the proposals:

Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Act) 1990

The Act is the legislative basis for decision making on application that relate to the historic environment. Section 66 and 72 of the Act impose a statutory duty upon local planning authorities to consider the impact of proposals upon listed buildings and conservation areas.

Section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 states that 'in considering whether to grant permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting, the local planning authority, or as the case may be the Secretary of State shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any

feature of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses’.

Similarly, Section 72(l) of the above Act states ‘with respect to any buildings or other land in a conservation area, special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a conservation area’.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

Any proposals for consent relating to heritage assets are subject to the policies of the NPPF (2012). The NPPF sets out the Government’s planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. With regard to ‘conserving and enhancing the historic environment’ the framework requires proposals relating to heritage assets to be justified and an explanation of their effect on the heritage asset’s significance provided.

At the heart of the NPPF is a **presumption in favour of sustainable development** (para 4).

The NPPF sets out **core principles** that should underpin decision making:

17. *that the planning process should:*

- *not simply be about scrutiny, but instead be a creative exercise in finding ways to enhance and improve the places in which people live their lives;*
- *proactively drive and support sustainable economic development to deliver the homes, business and industrial units, infrastructure and thriving local places that the country needs. Every effort should be made objectively to identify and then meet the housing, business and other development needs of an area, and respond positively to wider opportunities for growth. Plans should take account of market signals, such as land prices and housing affordability, and set out a clear strategy for allocating sufficient land which is suitable for development in their area, taking account of the needs of the residential and business communities;*
- *always seek to secure high quality design and a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings;*
- *support the transition to a low carbon future in a changing climate, taking full account of flood risk and coastal change, and encourage*

the reuse of existing resources, including conversion of existing buildings, and encourage the use of renewable resources (for example, by the development of renewable energy);

- *conserve heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of this and future generations.*

All of these core principles apply to what these proposals seek to achieve.

Regarding **new design**, the NPPF states:

56. *The Government attaches great importance to the design of the built environment. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, is indivisible from good planning, and should contribute positively to making places better for people.*

Important principles that constitute **good design** are listed as:

58. *Planning policies and decisions should aim to ensure that developments:*

- *will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;*
- *optimise the potential of the site to accommodate development, create and sustain an appropriate mix of uses (including incorporation of green and other public space as part of developments) and support local facilities and transport networks;*
- *respond to local character and history, and reflect the identity of local surroundings and materials, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation;*
- *create safe and accessible environments where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine quality of life or community cohesion; and*
- *are visually attractive as a result of good architecture and appropriate landscaping.*

In relation to **architectural style** the NPPF states:

60. *Planning policies and decisions should not attempt to impose architectural styles or particular tastes and they should not stifle innovation, originality or initiative through unsubstantiated requirements to conform to*

certain development forms or styles. It is, however, proper to seek to promote or reinforce local distinctiveness.

As regards the NPPF policies 56, 58 and 60, the proposals address all the matters raised in these policies. The intention of the development is that it will have a negligible impact upon the character, or appearance of the wider Selly Park Conservation Area.

Specifically on applications relating to **heritage assets** the NPPF states:

131. *In determining planning applications, local planning authorities should take account of:*

- *the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;*
- *the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and*
- *the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.*

137. *Proposals that preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to or better reveal the significance of the asset should be treated favourably.*

As regards **less than substantial harm** to a heritage asset the NPPF states:

134. *Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including securing its optimum viable use.*

Conclusion:

This report evidences that the benefits accrued from these proposals would amount to substantial, and would secure an appropriate use for the plot of land that forms the development Site, which is under used and redundant to the requirements of St Paul's Convent.

The proposed development seeks to enhance the architectural character of the Conservation Area by the use of high quality design that is in keeping with the existing buildings, and should be considered as a sympathetic

solution to address the shortage of new housing within the locality.

The proposals cause less than substantial harm to the designated heritage assets that are associated with the development Site, and it is therefore considered that the proposals would be acceptable in heritage terms.

Oliver Jessop MifA BA Hons (Dunelm) MA (Ebor)

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Archives

The Archdiocese of Birmingham Archives

Birmingham Archives and Local Studies (map collections; image collections; printed collections; ephemera; street directories)

Suffolk Record Office (Bury St Edmonds Branch)

HH500/4 Papers relating to Selly Hall and Broadhidley Estates, Worcs. Of J.W.Phipson, a bankrupt

Maps consulted

Underwood, T. 1835 *Selly Hall Estate Plan* (Suffolk Record Office HH 500/4/36)

Tithe map for Northfield, 1840

Blood, C. 1857 Birmingham and its environs, within a circle of 5 miles.

Ordnance Survey Mapping

1814 2": 1 mile by Robert Dawson

1884, 1890, 1901-1904, 1916-1917 25" maps

1937-1939, 1955-1956, 1957, 1964, 1970-1974, 1987-1992, 1992-1993 1:2,500 maps

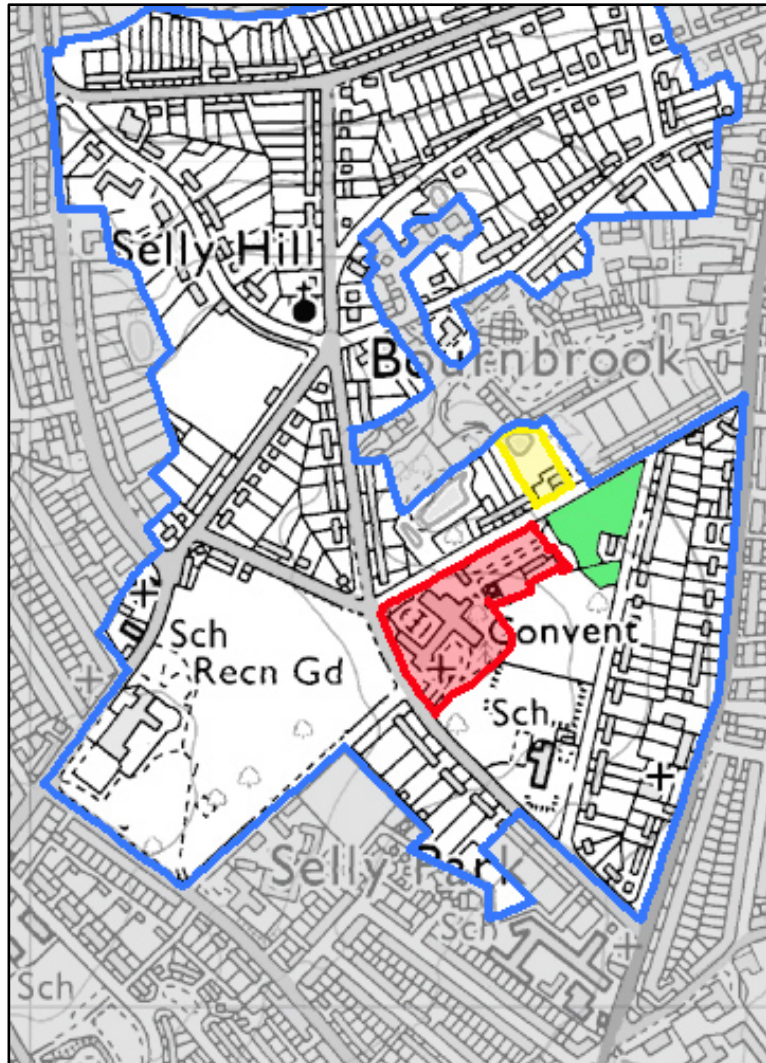
2014 Landline data

2014 British Geological Society Digital Mapping

Appendix 1:

Site layout and designations

Appendix 1.1



Site location and existing heritage designations within the immediate proximity of the boundary.
(green = Site boundary; blue = conservation area; red = Grade II Listed Convent; yellow = Locally Listed building).
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Appendix 1.2



Site location and red line boundary with indicative locations of new dwellings and plot layout.
After Brophy Riaz & Partners Architects 2014. OS map reproduced under Licence No.BLK4450021. Ordnance Survey © Crown Copyright ©.

Appendix 2:

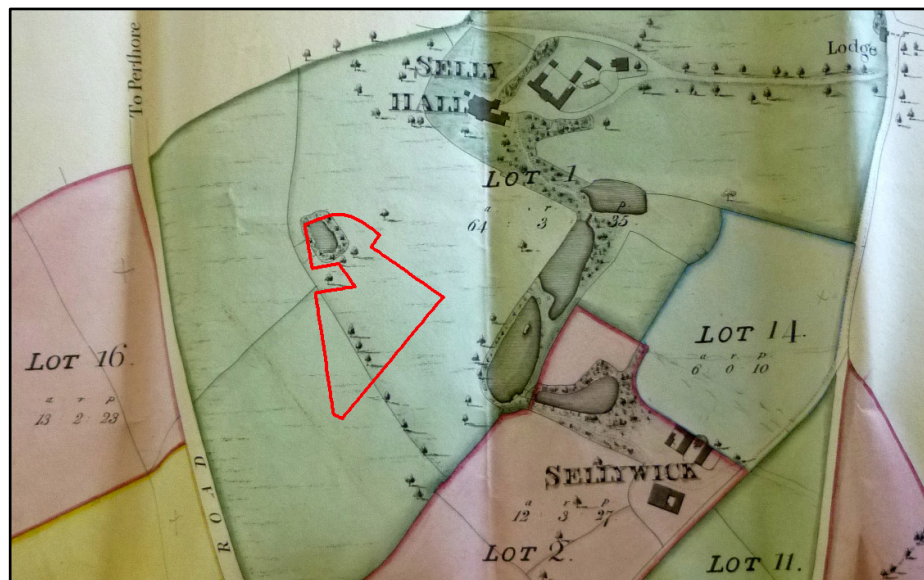
Historic Mapping

Appendix 2.1



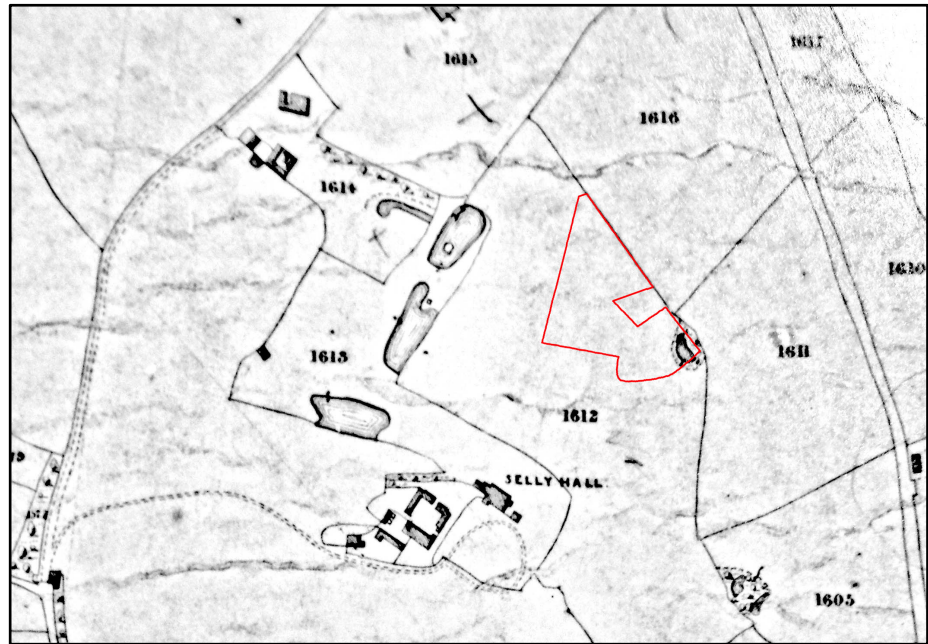
Extract from 1814 OSD map (red = approximate site boundary)
© British Library.

Appendix 2.2



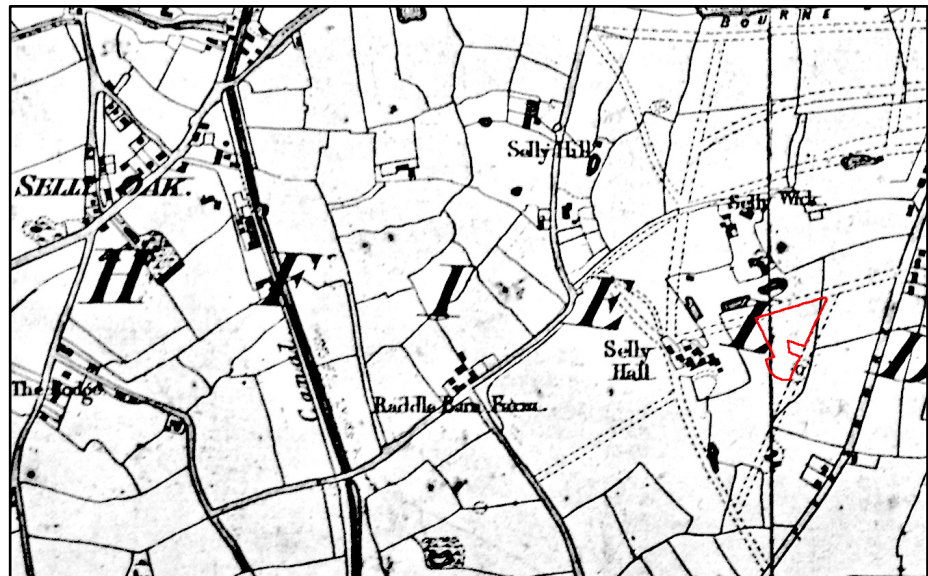
Extract from 1835 Estate sale plan (red = approximate site boundary)
© Birmingham Archives.

Appendix 2.3



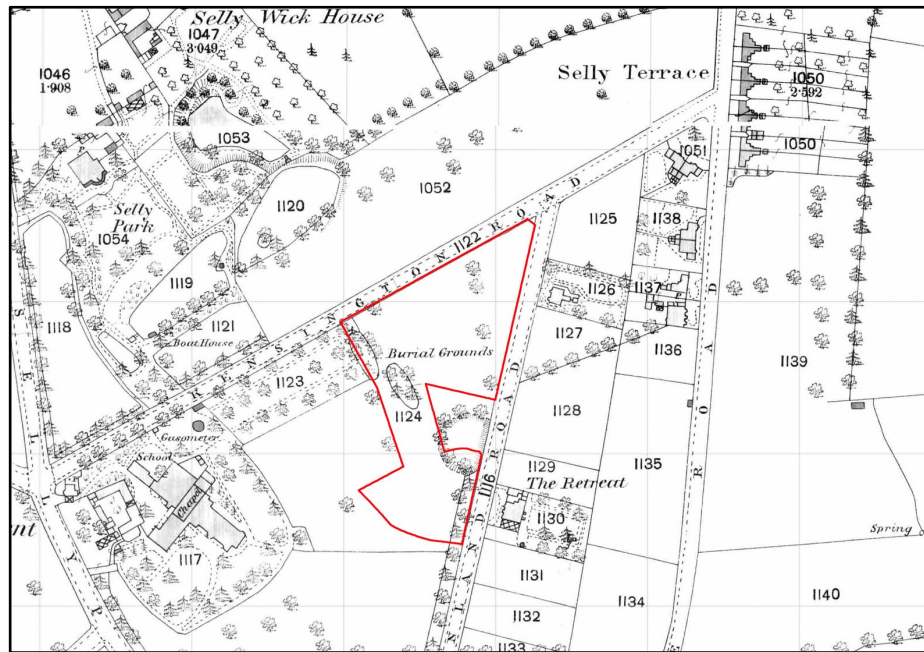
Extract from 1840 tithe map (red = approximate site boundary)
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Appendix 2.4



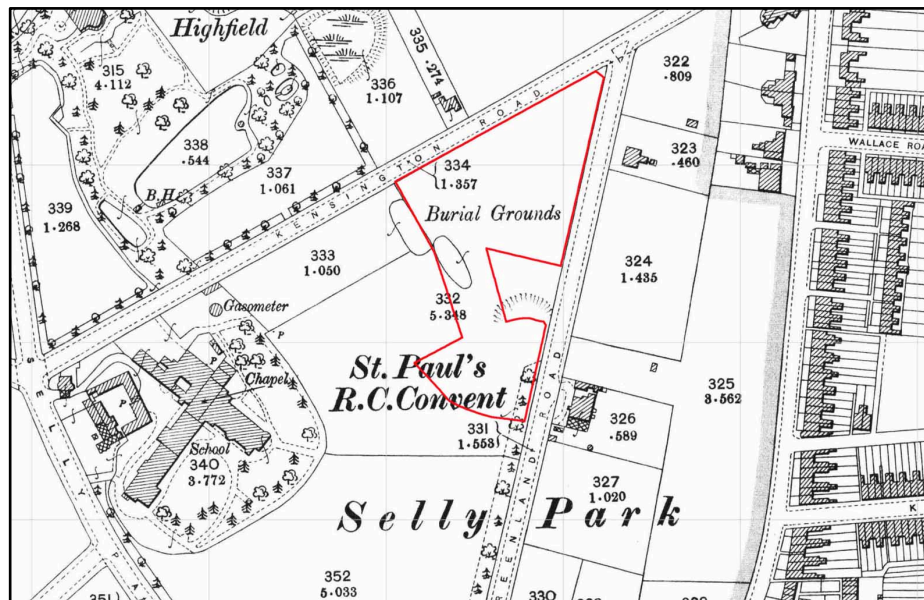
Extract from 1857 map by Blood (red = approximate site boundary).
© Birmingham Archives.

Appendix 2.5



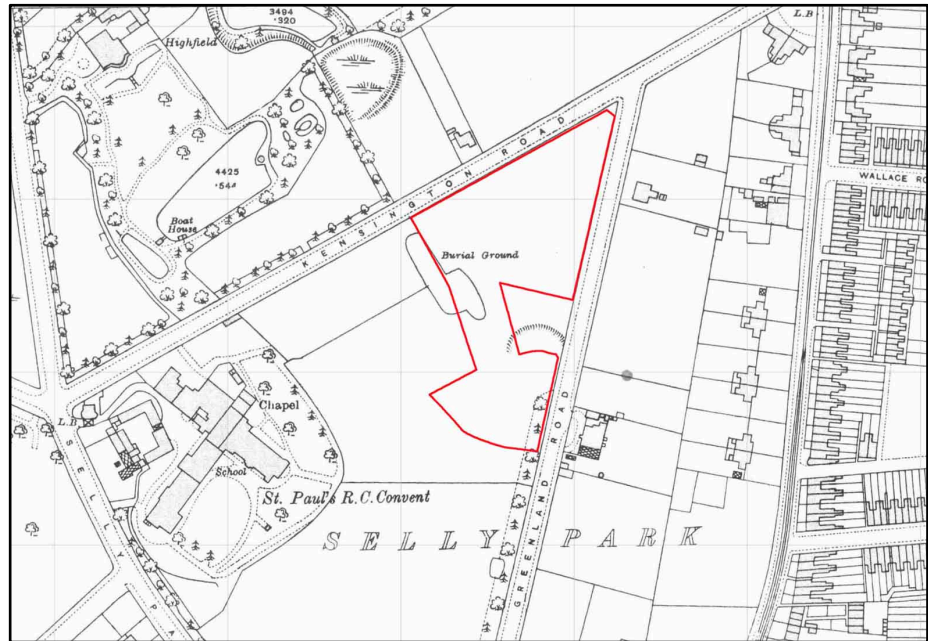
Extract from 1884-90 OS County Series map (red = approximate site boundary).
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Appendix 2.6



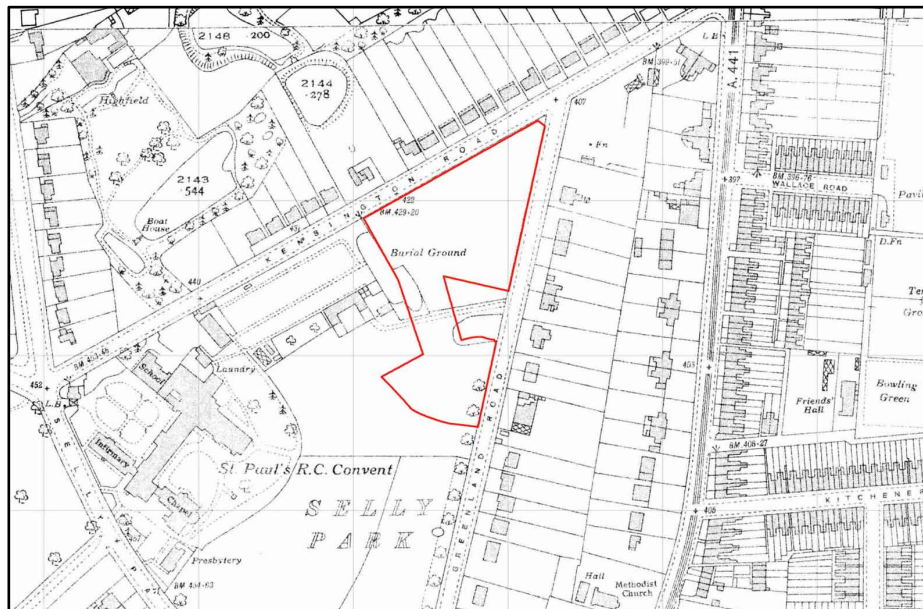
Extract from 1901-04 OS County Series map (red = approximate site boundary).
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Appendix 2.7



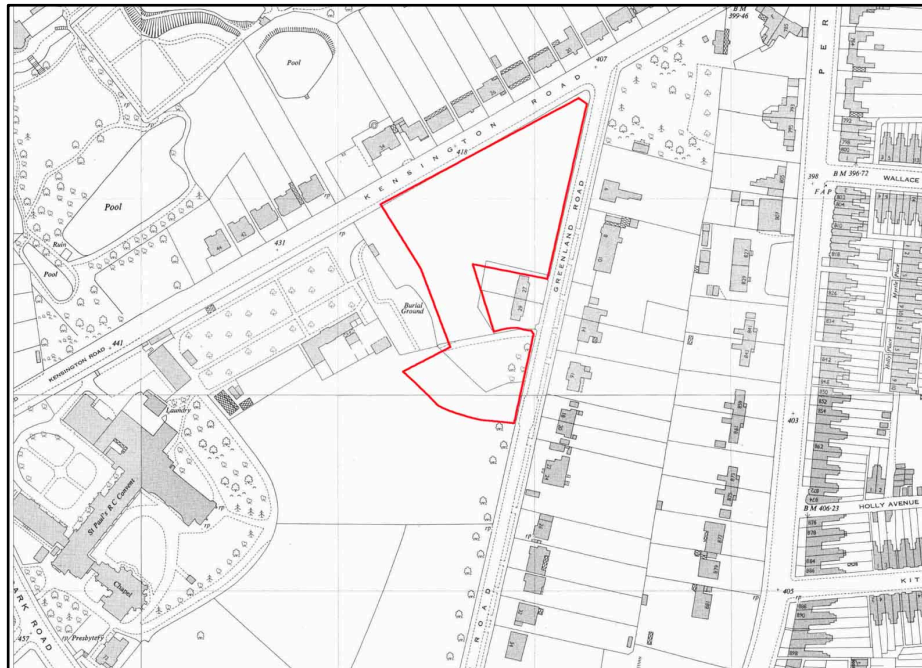
1916-17 OS County Series map (red = approximate site boundary).
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Appendix 2.8



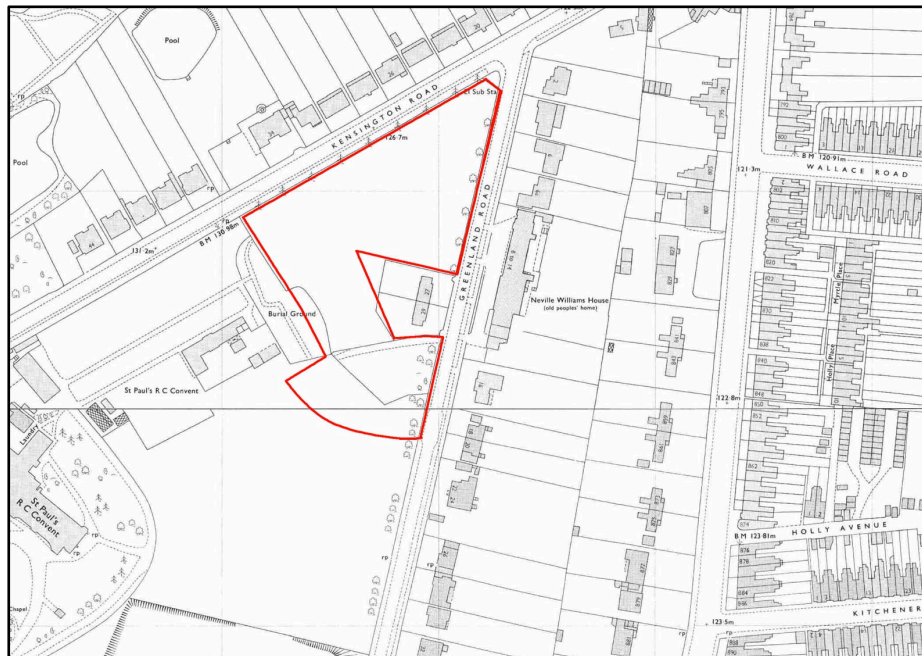
1937-39 OS County Series map (red = approximate site boundary).
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Appendix 2.9



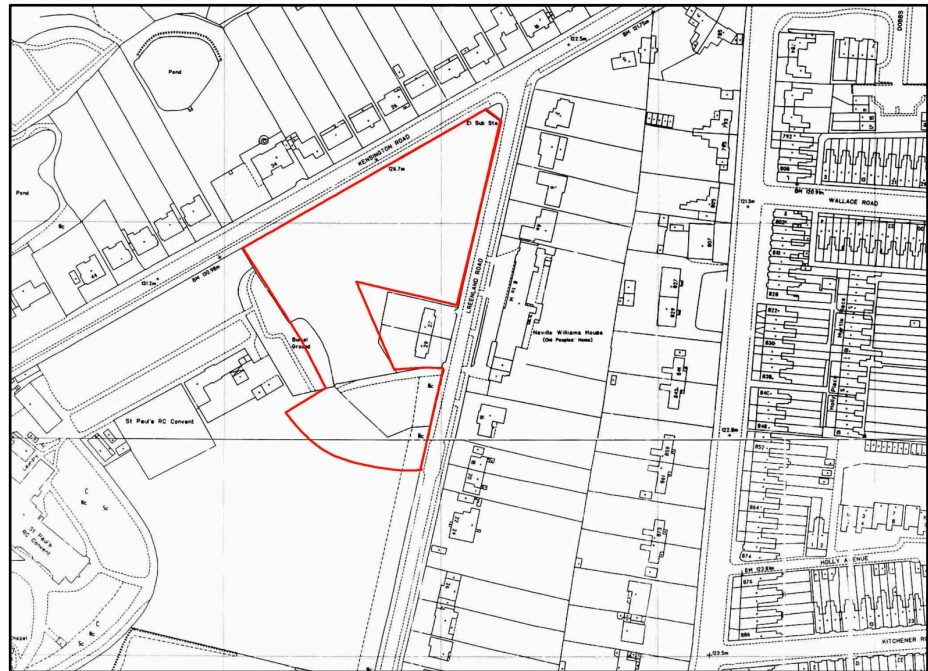
1955-56 OS County Series map (red = approximate site boundary).
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Appendix 2.10



1970-74 OS map (red = approximate site boundary).
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Appendix 2.11



1992-93 OS map (red = approximate site boundary).
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Appendix 3:

Site photographs

Appendix 3.1



General view of south façade of the former Selly Hall, now part of St Paul's Convent.

Appendix 3.2



View looking northeast across the Convent cemetery; note Site is beyond high hedge to the rear.

Appendix 3.3



General view looking northwest across Site towards the intersection of Kensington and Greenland Roads.

Appendix 3.4



General view across the Site looking west; note high hedge around the cemetery.

Appendix 3.5



General view looking east facing Kensington Road in southern section of Site (location of 19th century pond).

Appendix 3.6



Modern timber garages and shed in southern section of Site, looking north.

Appendix 3.7



General view along boundary fence fronting Kensington Road, looking southwest.

Appendix 3.8



Example of modern mock-Tudor housing on north side of Kensington Road.

Appendix 3.9



General view looking northeast along Greenland Road; note metal boundary fence and height of trees.

Appendix 3.10



View of No's 27 and 29 Greenland Road, looking north; note metal gates providing access to the Convent.