

## Nominate a Heritage Asset

**Convent of the Incarnation, Parker Street (formerly Fairacres House and gardens) - Nominated by Iffley Fields Residents' Association**

1. <b>WHAT IS IT?</b> Is it one of the following?	Tick
a <b>building or group of buildings</b>	y
a <b>monument or site (an area of archaeological remains or a structure other than a building)</b>	
a <b>place (e.g. a street, park, garden or natural space)</b>	y
a <b>landscape (an area defined by visual features or character, e.g. a city centre, village, suburb or field system)</b>	

2. <b>WHY IS IT INTERESTING?</b> Is it interesting in any of the following ways?	Tick / Rank
<b>Historic interest</b> – a well documented association with a person, event, episode of history, or local industry	y
<b>Archaeological interest</b> – firm evidence of potential to reveal more about the human past through further study	y
<b>Architectural interest</b> – an example of an architectural style, a building of particular use, a technique of building, or use of materials	y
<b>Artistic interest</b> – It includes artistic endeavour to communicate meaning or use of design (including landscape design) to enhance appearance	
What is it about the asset that provides this interest?	
<p><b>Historic Interest:</b> Originally Fairacres House, an early 19<sup>th</sup> century country house built in the 1830s for Charles Daubeny, a noted scientist and the curator of the University Botanical Gardens, outside the built up area of the city of Oxford. It became the Convent of the Incarnation, home to the Sisters of the Love of God in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.</p> <p><b>Architectural interest:</b> The original building is an attractive Regency style country house that preserves its outward character despite much further building for the convent.</p> <p><b>Archaeological interest:</b> Daubeny used the grounds of Fairacres House to undertake experiments associated with his role at the Botanical Gardens. There is potential for the grounds to reveal some evidence of Daubeny's planting.</p>	

3. <b>WHY IS IT LOCALLY VALUED?</b> Is the interest of the asset <b>valued locally</b> for any of the following reasons?	Tick / Rank
<b>Association:</b> It connects us to people and events that shaped the identity or character of the area	
<b>Illustration:</b> It illustrates an aspect of the area's past that makes an important contribution to its identity or character	y
<b>Evidence:</b> It is an important resource for understanding and learning about the area's history	
<b>Aesthetics:</b> It makes an important contribution to the positive look of the area either by design or fortuitously	y
<b>Communal:</b> It is important to the identity, cohesion, spiritual life or memory of all or part of the community	y
How is the asset locally valued as heritage?	
<p><b>Aesthetics:</b> This is a large site of 2.1 hectares (5.1 acres) much being open grounds containing many fine specimen trees. It provides a quiet hinterland to all houses in Bedford Street and many of these in Fairacres Road. In addition, there are views into the grounds from the adjacent Kidneys Nature Reserve.</p> <p>The enclosure, greenery and tranquillity of the grounds are an important element of the site's role as an enclosed religious community and a spiritual retreat.</p> <p><b>Illustration:</b> The house and ground provide a good illustration of the early process of development of the suburb, in this case through the acquisition of a large plot for a single villa, providing an attractive rural home for one of Oxford's leading academics. The reuse of the building provides an illustration of the development of East Oxford as a focus for religious communities in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century, which is a distinctive characteristic of the area</p>	

## Nominate a Heritage Asset

**Communal:** The convent buildings and grounds have communal value as a shared place of worship and retreat for the community and their visitors with a history of such use for over a century and therefore of significance to a considerable body of people.

<b>4. WHAT MAKES ITS LOCAL SIGNIFICANCE SPECIAL?</b> Do any of the following features make the heritage significance of the asset stand out above the surrounding environment?	Tick
<b>Age</b> ... Is it particularly old, or of a date that is significant to the local area?	y
<b>Rarity</b> ... Is it unusual in the area or a rare survival of something that was once common?	y
<b>Integrity</b> ... Is it largely complete or in a near to original condition?	y
<b>Group value</b> ... Is it part of a group that have a close historic, aesthetic or communal association?	y
<b>Oxford's identity</b> ... Is it important to the identity or character of the city or a particular part of it?	y
<b>Other</b> ... Is there another way you think it has special local value?	
<p>How does this contribute to its value?</p> <p>The site pre-dates the surrounding residential development (AGE) yet remains complete (INTEGRITY) and forms a quiet green oasis within the developed area (RARITY)</p> <p><b>Age:</b> The building and grounds of Fairacres House were laid out well before the wider development of the East Oxford Suburb following the enclosure of the Cowley Open Fields to the north and east in the 1850s. Indeed development of the surrounding Iffley Fields area did not begin until the 1890s. As such it is particularly old in the context of the surrounding area, providing evidence of the landscape preceding the wider housing developments.</p> <p><b>Integrity:</b> In spite of the later additions for the convent, the house and gardens maintain their relationship with each other, whilst the house retains its character as an early 19<sup>th</sup> century villa, externally at least.</p> <p><b>Oxford's identity and Group value:</b> The continued use by the convent for over a century contributes to the distinctive character of East Oxford as an area that has been home to many religious orders. The green oasis of the convent also makes a positive contribution to the Iffley Fields neighbourhood as a green part of the suburb, despite the otherwise dense development of housing on the surrounding streets.</p>	