

Jesuits sell prime London Heythrop site to a developer



The Society of Jesus confirmed the sale to property developer Jonathan Sanderson, reportedly for over £100 million

Heythrop College, the 400-year-old Jesuit-run institution in London which specialises in theology and philosophy, has been sold.

The Society of Jesus this week confirmed the sale of the premises and the 2.7 acre site in Kensington Square, West London to property developer Jonathan Sanderson, reportedly for over £100 million.

It was first announced that Heythrop was to be sold in 2015 “due to rapidly mounting costs”. Following the breakdown of partnership negotiations, first with St Mary’s University, Twickenham and then with the University of Roehampton, the College will not now be transferred to another centre, Fr Paul Nicholson SJ, Assistant to the Provincial of the Jesuits in Britain, told The Tablet.

Heythrop will close at the end of the 2017/2018 academic year but its resources, most notably the library, will remain a central part of the Jesuits’ future plans, which it is hoped will include offering postgraduate research, he added.

The Jesuits said in a statement that they were: “Committed to a re-modelling of their intellectual apostolate and have begun a new phase of broad consultation at home and abroad.”

The Jesuits of Britain bought the site’s freehold in 1993 and have been leasing it to Heythrop College, which is part of the University of London. Heythrop originally opened in Louvain, Belgium in 1614.

Secretary to the trustees Stephen Power said that as well as re-investing funds from the sale into the Jesuit’s future work in further education, an undisclosed percentage of the profits from the sale will go back to the Religious of the Assumption, who had sold the Jesuits the building for educational purposes.