

The former Royal Alexandra Children's Hospital

[Home](#) [Places](#) [possible future visits](#) [hints n tips](#)



The Royal Alexandra Children's Hospital

We visited this site on 2 separate occasions: The first on 13th October, the second on 21st October.

Agents present: Ghost & Skyframe (both occasions).

October 13th, Trip1.

After an hour spent arsing around trying to beat Brighton's horrendous on street parking, Agents Ghost and Skyframe gave up with the car and got a bus from Ghost's house up to what was, up until quite recently, the Royal Alexandra Children's Hospital.

The site has been closed down for about 2 years at the time of our visit and despite it's gradual slide into dereliction, it has some very beautiful Victorian Architecture that is well worth saving.

Not only is this a chance to see the site up close, it is also a trip back in time for Ghost, who spent quite a few years at the hospital undergoing "Occupational Therapy" as a youngster.

As we had wasted quite a lot of time looking for a parking spot (which was f***ing impossible), we didn't have a huge amount of time to look round, but what we saw was quite interesting. We will be returning to try and see some of the older buildings in due course, so watch this space.

There is a security hut near the main entrance and there was a bike parked near it, but to be honest, we were so noisy that if there was any security on the site, they must have either been pretty crap or not given a toss as long as we weren't heard smashing things up.

What follows are some of the photos of the trek along with some narrative, where we think it's necessary.



It doesn't look all that from the street (especially as most of the site is now behind 8ft high boards), but the site of the Alex is absolutely packed with little portacabin thingies. There are some rather hefty flint walls around the place too and as the whole site is on a slope, to the south, there are some deceptive drops on the other side of some of these walls. We made a couple of rekke visits to the site and it is always time well invested. It allows us to understand the layout of the place, identify local geology and find the easiest ways around.



The main building is absolutely awash with fantastic Victorian details. It is one of the prettiest buildings of this era to remain in Brighton and it is easy to see why there is so much local animosity surrounding any potential redevelopment.



Quick! Hide! There's a security hut around the corner on the left and there was us blundering around making more loads of noise. While there was a bike padlocked to a railing outside the security hut, the windows and door were open and there was a fleece hanging up in the hut, we didn't encounter any security, although Skyframe thinks he heard some "dum-de-dum" noises from near the main gate.

We decided to skirt around the southern edge of the site first off, as this is where the eldest part of the site is.



Around the next corner, we found this fire escape. We think this might be one of the ways into the older part of the site, but anyone up here would be very visible from street level, so an early morning would be necessary for a return trip. We continued round to the rear of the site.



At ground level, most of the really yummy bits were boarded off and mostly appeared to be accessible only by crossing rooves or going up fire escapes.





TOP LEFT: At last! a door that opens!

ABOVE: Ghost indulges in his bizarre infatuation with industrial heating. I think it reminds him of the service tunnels at Hellingly...

BOTTOM LEFT: Pidgeon holes. Thankfully, no pidgeons.

BELOW: The southern end of the site. This is the rear of the building with the lovely curved glass window on the front. security (at ground level at least) was pretty good here. We had to be a bit careful here, because a street and houses are behind the fence on the right and your head just pokes over the top of the fence!



BELOW: Nice little chimney. Not really connected to anything, really... just there. The timber for the fencing is quite impressive!





Back round to the western side...



This is a view looking north-east, from the extreme south-west corner of the site. This is the view that everyone associates with "The Alex".





Eastern side of the site, next to Dyke Road: There is some lovely brickwork, stained glass (unusually for a hospital) and some very intricate tiling here. The original crest showing the inauguration details for the hospital has been removed. We are guessing that this is now in the new block at the Royal Sussex Hospital site.

Another full shot of where the inauguration crest would have been. The job is too tidy for pikeys (!) and we just hope it is safe somewhere. We guess so, because it appears to have been very carefully removed. This stone is unique. Research pending to find it - watch this space for a link soon!



2 more floors of exquisite detail above us...



ABOVE: Overtones of Hellingly?

BELOW: Detail shot of the curved windows. Very pretty.



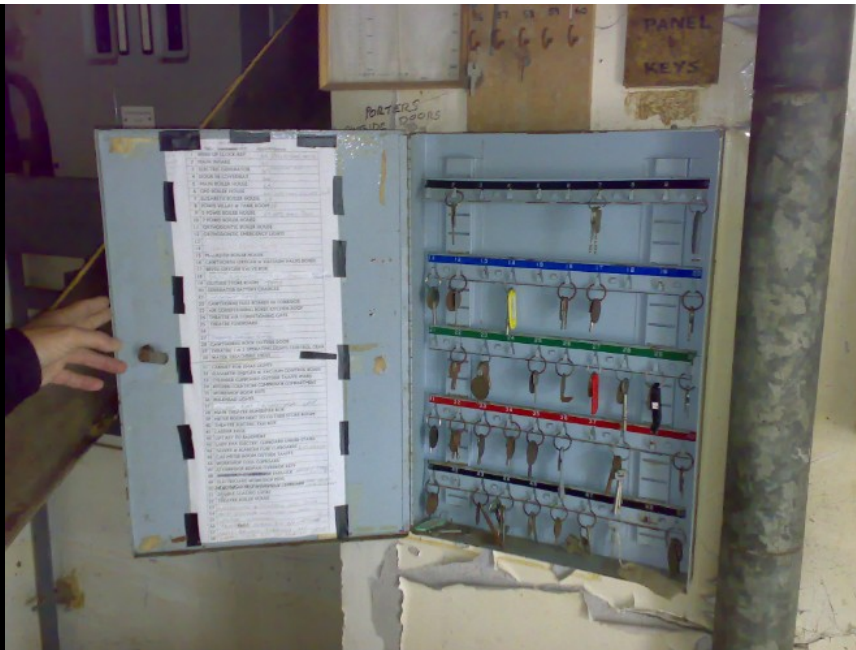
BELOW: Back to the south-west corner - retracing our steps incase we missed something. A well hidden way in, perhaps?



Doctor Who? Atilla the Hun? We did hear occasional footsteps and doors banging, though, so kept moving....



Security hut in the distance, behind the tree! Ghost and Skyframe take time out for a quick rolley and to see if the coast is still clear.



Loads keys. Nice, but not a lot of use against huge wooden fences all over the bloody place...



This was some sort of workshop at the south-western end of the site. It had been stripped out and there was a lot of evidence of pikeys and squatters round here. One of the outbuildings was full of turds wrapped up in carrier bags. the stench was almost tangible, but treading on a squishy turd in a carrier bag took Ghost's mind off the smell. EEeeeeewwww!



ABOVE: The world's most depressing heater.



Ahhhh. You can't beat a good old fashioned BFG. Ever hospital should have one. (A Big F***ing Generator). We did wonder if it would still work (quite possibly) but the entire planet would have heard it, methinks.



ABOVE: Switchgear next to the genny still appeared to be totally functional!



This was a bit of an eye-opener: Ghost had spent some time here as a youngster, undergoing occupational therapy. (it's a long story and I don't have space to explain here).

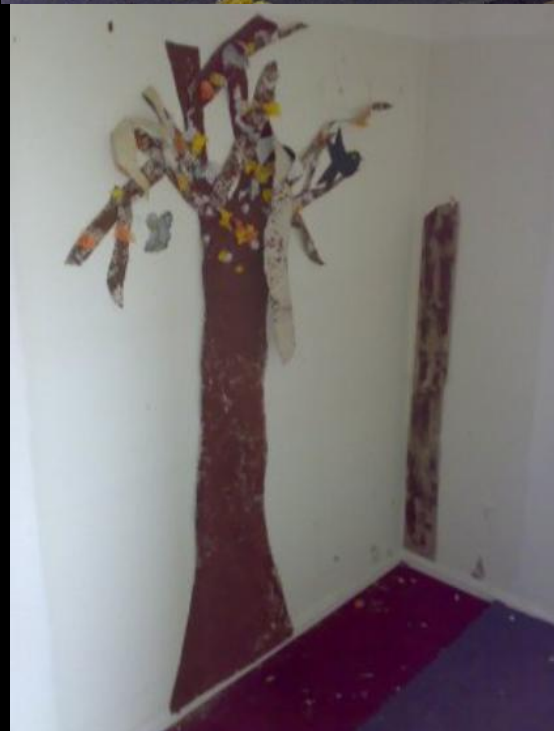
BELOW: Some nice graffiti around the site.





ABOVE: Inside the ground floor of the Mac Keith centre. There would have been cubicles here originally, but they've been stripped out. It was odd seeing all the two way sockets sticking out of the floor. We thought these would have been removed pretty soon after closure, as they are quite valuable.

BELOW: This room brought back a lot of memories for Ghost. As I've mentioned before, he visited the Mac Keith Centre for occupational therapy as a youngster due to suffering with organisational and coordination problems as a nipper. He spent a lot of time in front of a large mirror that would have been on this wall, learning how to move fluidly. It was quite a poignant moment for him. He says that it seems a bit smaller now, but he remembers it vividly.



There are still some kiddy artefacts that have survived the closure.



ABOVE: Sadly, it appears our friend "Sink Smashing Man" had got here before us. You may remember from the other trek pages that there wasn't a single sink we could find left intact at either Hellingly or Southlands Hospital! We have yet to understand the attraction...

LEFT: Hahargh! At last, some dark mysterious bits to lurk in. We did wonder about hiding in the cupboards if security put in an appearance. Another option we considered was hiding in the lift shaft between the 2 floors!





ABOVE: It's good to see that customer service is alive and well. Note the hand sanitiser next to the Reception area. Very handy for the Urbex fraternity.

October 21st, Trip2

Ghost and Skyframe were better prepared this time and got a bus! On arrival at the site, we found that there was some scaffolding work going on opposite the access point, so nonchalantly had a look walk around, then came back and had a quite smoke until the street outside was a bit quieter. Ghost managed to get over the wall without ripping any clothing or hurting himself, which he was quite chuffed about.

Once inside the perimeter fence, we headed straight for the fire escape, but just as we reached the bottom of it, we saw an open door which hadn't been open before. Was this what we needed in order to get into the older parts of the site? As it happens.....yes!

Again, seen here are the pictures of the trek with various silly comments where we think they're necessary.



ABOVE: Just as we were about to get to the bottom of the fire escape which we thought was the only way to get to the rest of the site (ie: inside the buildings), we found that some lovely person had opened a fire escape for us. Little did we know that this one door would lead us to the majority of the rest of the site.



ABOVE & LEFT: We're guessing that this was some sort of reception area or dispensary, with the large waiting room beyond.

BELOW: This was a storage area for patient's records. For some reason, it had a bit of a bad oppressive feel to it, so we didn't stay in here too long...



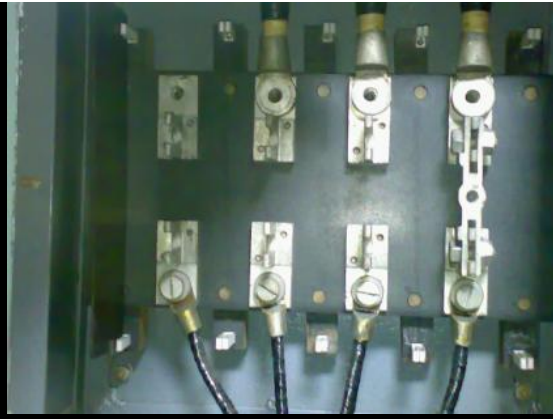


ABOVE: This would have been quite a nice shot of the access ramp from the main reception area, but because it is made up of 5 or 6 separate photos at quite a tight interval, the bottom half is a bit blurred where the stitching program has attempted to line them all up.





ABOVE: Okay, bit of a weird shot here, but I was trying to capture the way that the false ceilings had been put in with total disregard for the original window height. It's nice that the ivy was coming in both above and below the false ceiling. It would be interesting to come back in 3 months or so and see how the ivy has progressed.



ABOVE LEFT & RIGHT: Some gratuitous electrical gear shots. Both Ghost & Skyframe were heartily impressed by the size of cables involved here. There were some pretty hefty buss-bars here too, but most stripped for scrap. Despite our best efforts to electrocute ourselves, none of the electricians were live. A pity, as some of the darkest areas were home to some really interesting bits and illumination would have helped mightily.

BELOW: This mural was quite nice in a warped kind of way. It might have been sort of restful for some kids, but I thought it was a bit freaky to be honest.



ABOVE LEFT: At last, some of the wonderful Victorian detail starts to surface.

BELOW LEFT: This would have been the main entrance to the oldest building on the site. Surprisingly, the sliding doors are still in situ and wide open to the elements. I would have thought it would be better to have them closed to halt water ingress, allowing the place to be more easily redeveloped. maybe redevelopment isn't on the agenda...



ABOVE RIGHT: This is a classic photo and appears on just about every Urbex website on which the Royal Alex appears. These fabulous Victorian columns and the sweeping arches are totally pristine and feature widely on all 3 floors, albeit hidden for the most part by plasterboard or cupboards.

BELOW: This panoramic shot shows the doric columns and arches looking back down towards the ground floor from the mezzanine landing.





ABOVE: I think one of the key problems with converting this building into flats is undoubtedly the presence of huge rooms with full width windows, which cannot really be sympathetically split into 2 or 3 separate rooms without spoiling the effect of such a window. However, this room would make a fantastic studio room for someone somewhere - I can almost imagine the leather sofa in front of the window and a small kitchen area off to the right... nice!

STUDENT BOARD.

NAME	SHORT	DATES	MENTORS
ANNEE TAYLOR	09/03	29/5 - 18/8	LOURA / ALI
EMMA HEWARD	10/03	4/9 - 17/9	LINDA / HELEN
ELIZABETH TAEFFIE	10/05	4/9 - 20/9	ALI / LEMME
CAROL BARRETT	10/04	4/9	EMMAE / HELEN
SARAH RANDALL	05/05	25/9 - 22/10	
ASH GAY	05/05	25/9 - 22/10	
NICOLA CLAY	05/05	25/9 - 22/10	

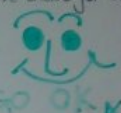

ALISON IS STUDENT COORDINATOR

JACKIE BENTLEY - DIRECTOR
01273-663939 HAH
HA

There are several files on the shelves opposite for your references & various articles of interest. Please feel free to photocopy any of use but make sure you return them for others!

TEAM TAEFFIE

JUST HAD MY LAST SHIFT!!
HOPE THE NEXT 2 WEEKS GO OK
IT'S BEEN A PLEASURE!!
SEE YOU ON THE OTHER SIDE
LOVE YOU ALL
LAURA X

ABOVE: This was quite a poignant discovery; the message at the bottom of the board must have been left just a few days prior to the closing of the place and I think is rather nice. I hope all the staff ended up at the new building at the RSCH site. I love the detail of the wallpaper too.



ABOVE: The lift shaft - looking like some horrid gateway to hell, there was a lift that served all 3 floors of the place. Thankfully, we couldn't get any of the doors open a huge amount - Ghost isn't too good with heights.



ABOVE & ABOVE RIGHT: The Taffee Ward.



ABOVE & BELOW: It looks as though someone had been living in this room and there are squatters still on the site (there is a whole floor on one of the buildings that we can't get into which is roped shut from the inside). There was a small fridge and oven and quite a lot of stereo equipment, so there may have been a small rave went off here at one time. I wonder if Mr. Security Guard heard it?

The long panoramic shot of the room below shows off the decorative aspects of the room: the arches, ornate support brackets and the beautiful windows. Note the garden benches put to good use inside...



BELOW: The same room looking in the other direction.





ABOVE: I wonder if this applies to children?



ABOVE: This was quite interesting when we found it: there were 2 of these (I suppose we should call them) buttresses, one on either side of a doorway. This was a very Victorian feature and was used extensively to strengthen tall walls - there are 2 further stories above. It also nicely illustrates the way the site has been extended as it has outgrown the original buildings so that some originally external features appear a little incongruous inside.



ABOVE: The hospital is literally littered with these little reception style hatches! We are guessing for signing into or out of a certain department or ward? There was not much space round the back to contain drugs so we don't think this was a dispensary.

RIGHT: This little room off the Taffee Ward was quite nice, lots of restful fish and dolphins around the doors. The Alex has always had some great murals inside and it must have been a lot of fun for both the kids and the staff whilst painting them.

BELOW: Kitchen on the ground floor. A lot of the fittings and pipework had been stripped out, but the oven was pretty much still intact. Agent Skyframe is negotiating his way into the next room.



BELOW: Dark? Mysterious? Underground? We're on it! We were badly spoilt with Hellingly and its miles of underground service tunnels - nothing since has even held a light to it. This just lead to a small boiler room, so Ghost could get his fix of Industrial Central Heating.

**** Be wary of asbestos here! ****



BELOW: ...and we're back to the access ramp from the Main Reception Area, this time looking the other way. The previous photo of this area was taken along the area to the right in this photo, looking the other way.





ABOVE: We made our way back to the stairs via this rather gloomy and half stripped-out corridor to the beautiful stairwell and proceeded to the top floor for a look around. In proper light and unstripped, this must have looked quite nice.



Some areas of the hospital which did not face the nearby roads had perforated metal shutters rather than boards over the windows, so there was a lot more natural daylight in these areas making for some good photos. We had to remember to dodge the threaded poles which secured the shutters to the window frames (ABOVE RIGHT)



ABOVE: Back to the stairwell and over to the other side of the landing.



ABOVE: As I have mentioned previously, a lot of the original Victorian arches are hidden behind plaster board on the lower floors. Thankfully, here they have been left alone and they look wonderful. This is just outside the doorway to The Blanche Ward.

BELOW: Blanche Ward has not been too badly stripped out yet.



BELOW: "Blood & body fluids 1 litre water 4 4.5g Ha2Tab added". We did wonder if they kept blood and body fluids in this cupboard, but this is probably more likely the formula for mixing cleaner. We hope.



BELOW: Reading room and library on the top floor. We did have a look for the cameras, but thankfully these applied to would-be book snafflers and not respectable Urbexers such as ourselves. The tower is very pretty and clearly visible from most of Brighton, the Alex being in a very dominant hillside location.





ABOVE LEFT & RIGHT: This room was quite peculiar. It was only small but the way that the windows were arranged suggested an absolutely enormous chimney breast which had been covered over. Nice views from the windows.

BELOW: Wards on top floor, a strange fusion of very pretty murals and harshly broken glass.



BELOW: Agent Skyframe admires the artwork on the ward. It was very cleverly done; the door with the horse on isn't a stable door, but the clever use of perspective on the top half on the wall looks very realistic when the door is closed and "Mr. Edd" is looking out.



ABOVE: Ghost managed to temporarily overcome his horrible fear of heights and managed to get a shot down the lift shaft from the top floor, then had to go and sit down in a corner for 5 minutes until the floor stood still and the walls stopped moving around.



ABOVE: Open Ward inside the South-Eastern frontage. I wish I'd taken a shot of the oval window looking through the arch. Again, note the installation of the false ceiling with total disregard for the height of the windows. Looking through the gaps in the ceiling tiles unearthed some quite ornate original ceiling roses.

BELOW: Again, the Ivy starts to take a hold on the Eastern side of the building, this little blue room is just to the left of the oval window in the photo seen above.



ABOVE & BELOW: Looking West from the 3rd floor.



BELOW: This was quite a nice room and had a lovely big open fireplace, but had been squatted (hence chairs and upturned pool table in front of the fireplace). There was a pile of rotting food on the table to the left of the photo and a couple of bags of poo behind the pool table. Lovely.





ABOVE: This is the view from the third floor immediately above the main entrance, looking due South towards the seafront. This picture shows some of the incredibly ornate brick and tile work on the exterior of the original building. Nature is taking a hold and is gradually reclaiming the Royal Alex Hospital.

-----***-----



[**GO TO THE FORUM**](#)



[**SIGN THE GUESTBOOK**](#)