
Denmark: monastery of Dalum in Odense converted into a “green oasis”. The Church turns into a conference hall, then a crèche, houses and a hotel

The monastery of Dalum in Odense, where for 116 years the sisters of St Hedwig have been living, praying, working and taking in children, will be converted into a “green oasis”. After two years’ negotiations, as told by the website of the diocese of Copenhagen, an agreement has been signed with a big construction company, MT Højgaard Projektudvikling, for the sale of the buildings and 8.5 hectares of land. “No details of the selling price have been provided”, the diocese’s notice says. According to the preliminary project, which was submitted a few days ago by the project manager, Frank Østergaard Kristiansen, “the historical character of the buildings and the spirit with which the nuns worked” will be preserved. The idea is to build blocks of flats where the animal pens used to be, without pulling down the centuries-old trees, and a crèche. As to the church, it will supposedly be converted into a venue for cultural events, while the main building might be turned into a hotel. However, permits still need to be granted by the Municipality of Odense before the projects can be worked out. In the meantime, the nuns donated the interiors of the church of the monastery to two churches in Poland. And the two nuns who have stayed, Sister Berchmana and Sister Krystyna, will move into a house that the congregation bought for them in Hjallesø. Five nuns from St Hedwig’s had come from Poland in the early 20th century and had taken in orphaned children until the Seventies. Then, they had provided accommodation and care to old people.

Valentina Bombelli