



EXPLANATORY NOTE

MISSION AND PASTORAL MEASURE 2011 DRAFT PASTORAL (CHURCH BUILDINGS DISPOSAL) SCHEME GLOUCESTER ST STEPHEN DIOCESE OF GLOUCESTER

This note accompanies a draft scheme under the Mission and Pastoral Measure 2011 which makes provision for the future of a closed church building, The Church Commissioners provide this information so that individuals and interested parties can understand the background to the proposals, make a reasoned judgement on the merits of the draft scheme and, if they see fit, a reasoned expression of support or objection to it.

The Current Proposals

The Commissioners have agreed to publish an amending draft Pastoral (Church Buildings Disposal) Scheme providing for the Gloucester Diocese Board of Finance to demolish the closed church of Gloucester St Stephen and dispose of the site for residential and community use and purposes ancillary thereto.

The diocese has been working with an established social housing provider who have developed proposals for temporary and supported accommodation with a Community Hub to assist with local housing and community needs.

Background

St Stephen was declared closed for regular public worship on 1st September 2010 following a decision by the parish to focus its future ministry at the nearby St Paul's church.

A subsequent Pastoral (Church Buildings Disposal) Scheme in 2012 then authorised the Gloucester Diocesan Board of Finance to 'hold' the property for storage use and purposes ancillary thereto. A further Scheme in 2015 then authorised the Board not only to hold, but also to license the property for Christian worship, services, and other religious activities in accordance with the rites and customs of any Christian body designated by the Bishop of Gloucester and for community purposes in addition to the storage use and purposes ancillary thereto. The building was then used by a range of community groups, but this stopped in 2018 due to the deteriorating condition of the building.

Since then, the Board have been considering the future of St Stephen and have now recommended that the unlisted building be demolished to make way for a social housing development with a community hub to help meet local housing needs and serve the community.

The Building

The closed church of St Stephen is located on the eastern side of the Bristol Road in a mixed residential and industrial area on the south-western edge of Gloucester. It is a late Victorian Gothic church built in 1895-9 to designs by G W Planck in the Perpendicular style. It consists of a five-bay aisled nave with west baptistery, two bay chancel with flanking Lady Chapel, and organ chamber and vestries. The church is constructed of brick with limestone dressings and slate roofs. In the mid-1980s part of the interior was separated off to form an area used for community purposes. It is in poor condition. The building is not listed or situated in a conservation area and a proposal for listing was rejected by English Heritage in 2009.

It should be noted that there is no stained glass and, should demolition proceed, the monuments and memorials will be carefully removed and stored until a new home has been identified for them.

The Views of the Statutory Advisory Committee (SAC)

The Commissioners statutory advisors, The Statutory Advisory Committee of the Church Buildings Council (SAC) have indicated that overall, the building is of low to moderate significance and recommend that if demolition proceeds the demolition contract should provide for the maximum degree of architectural salvage so that conservation projects elsewhere might benefit from the availability of scarce materials and architect-designed details.

Planning and Access

Being unlisted and not in a conservation area the demolition of St Stephen does not require planning permission but the proposed redevelopment for residential with a community hub will require planning permission.

Burials and the Churchyard

There are no burials within the building or within the limited curtilage attached to the church.

Correspondence

Further information about the proposals may be obtained from the Case Officer, Sarah Mellor by e-mail at sarah.mellor@churchofengland.org.

Representations against or in support of the draft Scheme

Anyone may make a representation for or against any provision of the draft Scheme.

Representations should be sent to:

**Representations
Closed Churches Division, Church Commissioners
Church House
Great Smith Street
London SW1P 3AZ**

Or by e-mail to: closedchurches.reps@churchofengland.org

Any communication received after 29th July 2021 cannot be treated as a representation.

If we receive representations against the draft Scheme, we will send all representations, both for and against, to the Bishop, whose view will be sought. Individual representors will then receive copies of our correspondence with the Bishop (including copies of all the representations) and they may comment further in writing to us in light of the diocesan response if they so wish.

If no representations against the Scheme are received the Commissioners shall make the Scheme and bring it into effect as provided for in the scheme and explained above.

Information on the Mission and pastoral Measure 2011 and its procedures can be found on the Church Commissioners' website at www.ccpastoral.org where there are also links to download copies of these notes and the draft scheme.

Sarah Mellor

1st July 2021