

Church Commissioners
Mission, Pastoral and Church Property Committee
Closed Church of Bacup Christ Church (Diocese of Manchester)
Representations against draft Pastoral (Church Buildings Disposal)
Scheme
Note by Harvey Howlett

Summary

- (i) The Committee is invited to consider three representations concerning a draft Pastoral (Church Buildings Disposal) Scheme (one in favour, one against and a letter of comment) providing for the sale of the closed church building of Bacup Christ Church and the annexed land in the Diocese of Manchester for use as offices and for purposes ancillary thereto.
- (ii) The representor against objected to the proposed plans due to concerns about the impact of the proposed development on this quiet residential area and also raised concern about overlooking of their own neighbouring property.
- (iii) The PCC represented to welcome the proposed plans which appeared to be in sympathy with, and recognised, the heritage and former use of the building. In particular the PCC noted and welcomed the safeguarding of access to the Garden of Remembrance, as well as reserved access arrangements for future interments.
- (iv) Historic England originally submitted a representation concerning the closure of the church. In supplementary correspondence they have confirmed that the proposed office use would seem, in principle, to be a positive one, dependent on the exact details of the proposals, which would need to be assessed when the relevant applications for planning permission and listed building consent are submitted.
- (v) The Bishop of Manchester had responded to the matters raised and indicated that the Diocese wish the Scheme to proceed as drafted.
- (vi) The case has been examined by the Committee's case sifting representatives who agreed that the case should be considered on the papers alone.

- (vii) In considering the representations, the Committee will need to have regard to the legislative requirement as to the suitability of what is being proposed. If the Committee considers the proposed use to be suitable in principle, it is still possible that it might be unsuitable in the particular circumstances of this building because of its location or other factors relating to achievability and the potential impact of the use.
- (viii) The main issues to be considered are therefore, as follows:
- is the proposed use of the building as offices a “suitable” use within the meaning of the Mission and Pastoral Measure 2011?
 - are the concerns expressed in the representation against the draft Scheme of such substance and weight that the proposed use is to be considered unsuitable for the building in this location?
 - will the proposals, taken as a whole, support the furtherance of the mission of the Church of England?

Recommendation

The Committee is invited to consider the representations and the issues set out in this report and, in the light of these, whether the draft Scheme should proceed.

Introduction

1. The Committee is invited to consider three representations relating to the draft Pastoral (Church Buildings Disposal) Scheme (one in favour, one against and a letter of comment) providing for the sale of the closed church building of Bacup Christ Church and the annexed land in the Diocese of Manchester for use as offices and for purposes ancillary thereto.
2. Grade II listed Christ Church was built in 1854 to designs by Sharpe and Paley on a site bequeathed by a local manufacturer in response to the rapid 19th century growth of Bacup as a Lancashire mill town. It sits in an elevated position on Beech Street, on the edge of the town, alongside residential streets of Victorian terraces with a backdrop of sloping moorland.
3. Constructed in an 'Early English' style, of sandstone rubble with stone dressings under a 'wagon' roof covered in slate, Christ Church features a 4-bay aisled nave and chancel with south vestry. It also has a three-stage south-west tower with a polygonal stair turret terminating in a lantern with a conical cap, which gives the building considerable vertical emphasis. The small churchyard is predominantly laid to grass but there are ashes interred around the south perimeter of the church and there is a small Garden of Remembrance. There are also a number of sets of ashes deposited under faculty in various locations within the church building itself.
4. The church was closed for regular public worship in August 2012. The building was not well located within the parish and had limited facilities and needed considerable expenditure on repairs and maintenance which the small congregation had been unable to finance.
5. The building has undergone lengthy marketing since its closure. Whilst over the years there have been several expressions of interest in converting the building to a single dwelling, none was sustained, largely because of uncertainty over viability, given the low residential values in Bacup. An offer for conversion to a residential 'Mother and baby Unit' was also not sustained because of the perceived risk to the lender backing the project.
6. The buildings has been included in the 'Find a Use Manchester' project¹ looking to secure the future of a number of long-standing closed churches. Pre-application advice from the local planning authority was sought to inform a re-marketing strategy and the proposal which has now emerged is for use as offices, with a focus on acting as a digital business centre for start-up companies.
7. The Commissioners' former statutory advisor, the Advisory Board for Redundant Churches, in its early advice on the building indicated that this is a Victorian church of some significance, but that there was some scope for changes to the interior of the building in order to accommodate a future new use.

¹ The Commissioners and Historic England are jointly funding a three year post, which sits in the Churches Conservation Trust's Regeneration Team, focussed on securing a future for a number of problematic listed closed churches in the North West.

8. Planning permission and listed building consent will be required for the proposed office use as a digital business centre, which is intended to consist of approximately ten office units. A car parking area for use by the occupants of the former church is being provided on the north side of the building as a condition of the adjoining land being developed for housing; the proposals are also going to include encouragement to tenants to use public transport.
9. Access to the Garden of Remembrance on the south east side of the church building for those wishing to visit and tend family plots is to be safeguarded by means of covenants attached to the sale of the property.

10. Attached are:

- | | |
|---------|--|
| Annex A | Background to the case; |
| Annex B | The initial advice report on the building from the Advisory Board for Redundant Churches; the Critical Information Summary and Informed Change Assessment; |
| Annex C | A copy of the draft Scheme and site plan and accompanying explanatory note; |
| Annex D | A copy of the letter referring the representations to the Bishop together with a copy of his reply; |
| Annex R | A copy of the representations; and |
| Annex S | Supplementary comments by the representors. |

Representations Received

11. Following the publication of the draft scheme providing for the sale of this closed church building and the annexed land for use as offices and for purposes ancillary thereto, we received three representations (one against and one in favour) and a letter from Historic England regarding the draft Scheme.
12. The representation against came from *Mr and Mrs Leach*, who are concerned that the area around the building is one of the quieter residential locations left in Bacup and is relatively safe for children to play out due to the small amount of traffic that passes through the area. They have argued that conversion to ten offices has the potential to dramatically increase traffic both from those working at the building and from visitors and deliveries.
13. They also raise a concern at the potential loss of privacy to their home and the possibility of their garden being overlooked by anyone working in offices on the upper floors, including any working undertaken at weekend and in the evening. They believe that using the church for business use in a purely residential area

will be a disaster for residents in situ and affect the value of property for anyone wanting to move away from the issues this causes.

14. The representation in support of the Scheme comes from the *Revd Derek Allen*, writing on behalf of the PCC. The PCC welcome the willingness to retain certain features within the interior, which they believe to be in sympathy with and recognise the heritage and former use of the building. In particular the PCC note and welcome the safeguarding of access to the Garden of Remembrance as well as reserved access arrangements for the interments within the church. They also write to confirm arrangements for the future interment of the remains of one parishioner in the Garden of Remembrance.
15. The letter from Historic England originally submitted was a representation concerning the closure of the church. In supplementary correspondence they have confirmed that the proposed office use would seem, in principle, to be a positive one, dependent on the exact details of the proposals, which would need to be assessed when the relevant applications for planning permission and listed building consent are submitted.

Diocesan response to the representations

16. Following normal practice, a copy of the representations was sent to the Bishop of Manchester to seek his comments. The correspondence with the Bishop is attached as **Annex D**.
17. The Bishop has set out the background to the current proposal and the long marketing campaigns which had preceded it. He has explained that the current offer for conversion to office use (more specifically, as a start-up hub for digital businesses) has come about after a period of negotiation through the 'Find A Use Manchester' project, which is helping the Diocese to tackle some of its more 'difficult' closed churches. He writes that the Diocese believe the offer to be is a realistic one and that the prospective purchasers have not only the necessary finance but also a sound business plan to enable them to realise their ambition for the building. They are also a Bacup-based company which is seeking to encourage the growth of new digital businesses in the area.
18. The Bishop also confirms that the prospective user has received positive early support from the local authority conservation officer for the proposals, which are also backed by Valley Heritage (the local buildings preservation trust).
19. The Bishop explains that he believes the proposed use will have a relatively low impact on the neighbouring property, not only because of the type of activity being undertaken but also because any alterations to the building will be restricted to the interior, with the exterior remaining largely unchanged. In his view, a sensitively restored and converted building which accommodates a low noise activity taking place largely in normal working hours during week days can exist in harmony with its residential neighbours, while securing a sustainable long-term future for this closed church will also remove uncertainty, raise confidence and enhance the locality.

20. The Bishop considers that the potential impact of traffic generated by the proposed business use will not be significantly greater than that which might result from a conversion of the building to several residential flats, or to a children's day nursery, or indeed to that which would have prevailed had the building continued in full use as an active church. The focus on accommodating small start-up digital businesses in the building suggests that many of the people working there were likely to be local, and that a focus on digital business was likely to need few deliveries and other visits. The Bishop would expect parking and access to be considered as part of any planning application but notes that there would appear to be plenty of space for cars to be parked adjacent to the church on Beech Street, and in addition several spaces are being made available on the other side of the church as a planning condition for the new residential development now underway there.
21. The Bishop writes that he believes it is part of the mission of the Church of England to be responsible in the way we handle our buildings, even where they may no longer be required pastorally or for regular public worship. In the case of Christ Church, there is a proposal which will ensure that this important heritage asset will be preserved for future generations and will continue to play a role in the local community. He had been encouraged by the assurances given by the prospective purchasers that this building will not only provide new employment opportunities but will also make available some communal areas for community purposes.
22. The Bishop concludes by pointing out the difficulties the Diocese has been facing in securing future uses for its closed churches in the Rossendale area. He writes that the proposal for Bacup Christ Church is a window of opportunity to begin to make real progress in dealing with these buildings, and he believes it is a proposal worthy of the Commissioners' support.

The Further Views of the Representors

23. The Bishop's response has been shared with the representors. Further comments were received from Historic England, in which they confirmed that the proposed office use would seem, in principle, to be a positive one, dependent on the exact details of the proposals, which would need to be assessed when the relevant applications for planning permission and listed building consent are submitted. This e-mail is attached at **Annex S**.

The Sifting Group's decision

24. The case has been examined by the Committee's case sifting representatives who considered that the issues raised were clear and limited in scope and they concluded that they had sufficient information in the written papers to fully understand the objectors' concerns. The Sifting Panel therefore decided that the case should be considered on the papers only

The issues for the Committee

25. In considering the representations, the Committee will need to have regard to the legislative requirement as to the suitability of what is being proposed. The Mission and Pastoral Measure Code of Recommended Practice gives examples of alternative uses which have been found to be acceptable in other cases and these include office use. Section 17.4 of the Recommended Code states:

17.4 The most common alternative uses include:

- Worship by other Christian bodies
- Civic, cultural or community purposes (includes community centre; lecture or concert hall; conference hall and exhibition centre; art gallery or heritage or tourist centre; county record office; urban study and architectural interpretation centre; youth work and night shelter; library; Scout and Guide headquarters; children's nursery)
- Monument (for preservation)
- Residential
- Storage (includes university book store; scenery and props; warehouse; diocesan furnishings store)
- Arts and crafts, music or drama centre (includes arts centre; theatre and restaurant; orchestral or operatic rehearsal hall; Fine Art auctions; craft workshop)
- Light industrial / office / retail (includes: pottery manufacture; studios and offices; antiques market; retail shops)
- Private and school chapels
- Educational purposes
- Museums (includes: natural history; archaeological; regimental)
- Adjuncts to adjoining estates
- Sports use (includes: squash courts; gymnasium; indoor climbing centre)

26. If the Committee considers the proposed use to be suitable in principle, it is still possible that the use might be unsuitable in the particular circumstances of this building because of its location or other factors relating to the impact of the use. These could include concerns regarding traffic and parking, viability and the potential impact on the proposed use on neighbouring properties.

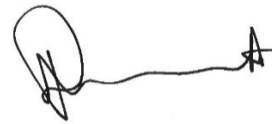
27. Finally, the Committee must be satisfied under the general duty of the Mission and Pastoral Measure 2011 that the proposals, taken as a whole, support the furtherance of the mission of the Church of England.

22. The main issues to be considered are, therefore, as follows:

- is the proposed use of the building as offices a “suitable” use within the meaning of the Mission and Pastoral Measure?
- are the concerns expressed in the representation against the draft Scheme of such substance and weight that the proposed use is to be considered unsuitable for the building in this location?
- will the proposals, taken as a whole, support the furtherance of the mission of the Church of England?

Recommendation

The Committee is invited to consider the representations and the issues set out in this report and, in the light of these, whether the draft Scheme should proceed.

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large, stylized initial 'H' followed by a long, horizontal, wavy line that ends in a small, sharp hook.

(Signed) Harvey Howlett

Church House
Great Smith Street
London SW1P 3AZ

30 April 2020

**Closed Church of Bacup Christ Church (Diocese of Manchester)
Representations against Pastoral (Church Buildings Disposal)
Scheme**

Background

The Building

Built in 1854, the Grade II listed Christ Church was designed by the architectural practice of Sharpe and Paley. The church was built in response to the rapid 19th century growth of the mill town of Bacup and sits alongside streets of Victorian terraces with a backdrop of sloping moorland.

Constructed in an 'Early English' style, of sandstone rubble with stone dressings under a 'wagon' roof covered in slate, Christ Church features a 4-bay aisled nave and chancel with south vestry. It also has a three-stage south-west tower with a polygonal stair turret terminating in a lantern with a conical cap, which gives the building considerable vertical emphasis. The small churchyard is defined by a castellated stone wall with gate piers and iron gates.

Use Seeking

The church was closed for regular public worship on 31st August 2012, on the basis that the building was not well located within the parish, had limited facilities and needed considerable expenditure on repairs and maintenance which the small congregation was unable to undertake.

The building had been marketed since closure. While there had been several expressions of interest in converting it to a single dwelling none had been sustained, largely because of uncertainty over viability, given the low residential values in Bacup. An offer for conversion to a residential 'Mother and baby Unit' was also not sustained because of the perceived risk to the lender backing the project.

As part of the 'Find a Use Manchester' project to secure the future of a number of long standing closed church cases, pre-application advice from the local planning authority was sought to inform a re-marketing strategy. The proposal which subsequently emerged was for use as offices, with a focus on acting as a digital business centre for start-up companies.

The Views of the Commissioners' Statutory Advisors

The Commissioners' former statutory advisor, the Advisory Board for Redundant Churches, in its early advice indicated that this is a Victorian church of some significance. It also has local historic interest because its construction was made possible through the generosity of a local mill-owning family. As a prominent building within its immediate setting, it is an important feature in the townscape. The Board

advised that Christ Church had some scope for changes to the interior of the building in order to accommodate a future new use.

The Board's advice, Critical Information Summary and Informed Change Assessment **are attached at Annex B.**

Planning and Access

Planning permission and listed building consent will be required for the proposed digital business centre, which will consist of approximately ten office units. A car parking area for use by the occupants of the former church is being provided on the north side of the building as a condition of the adjoining land being developed for housing and the proposals are also going to include encouragement to tenants to use public transport.

Burials and the Churchyard

There is a Garden of Remembrance on the south east side of the church building, and access to this for those wishing to visit and tend family plots will be safeguarded by means of covenants attached to the sale of the property. Access arrangements will also be reserved to visit the areas of the interments within the church building.

Click Here to go
back to paper

Norman Bilborough,
Closed Churches Division
Church House
Great Smith Street.

Jeffrey West Ph D, FSA
Senior Advisor, closed and closing churches
Statutory Advisory Committee

Your Ref: RC 24/020BK

19 October 2011

Dear Norman,

BACUP, CHRIST CHURCH (Manchester)

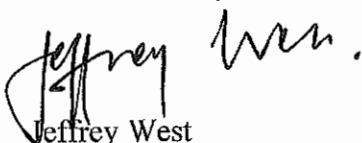
Your request for the Council's early information and advice on Christ Church, Bacup, was considered by the Statutory Advisory Committee at its meeting on the 5th October.

Having reviewed the available information in the light of a recent site visit, the Committee endorsed the Critical Information Summary and Informed Change Assessment as representing its early information and advice, concluding that Christ Church was a Grade II church of moderate to high significance with some scope for change and the mitigation of impacts. With regard to the current listing, which the Committee considered worthy of uplifting to Grade II*, attention was drawn to the high value of the church in its immediate setting, and to its historic interest as an example of ecclesiastical provision in the mid 19th century mill towns of Lancashire. The Committee also advised that, despite some small addition in the late 19th century and re-ordering in the late 20th, the church remained a good example of a medium-sized church by one of the nationally notable architectural practices of the 19th and 20th centuries and was arguably the foremost practice of church architects in the north-west during the period.

In considering the future of the church the Committee noted constraints on development and advised that the church should be preserved by conversion to suitable alternative use. While the scope for the alteration of the exterior was limited, the Committee advised that preference should be given to a use that preserved the architectural qualities of the interior.

In the event that no suitable use was found for the building, and despite the view that the listing of the church was worthy of re-assessment, the Committee agreed that in the last resort it would not recommend the church for vesting in the Churches Conservation Trust.

Yours sincerely,



Jeffrey West
Senior Advisor on Closed and Closing Churches

Statutory Advisory Committee
advising the Church Commissioners and the Churches Conservation Trust on behalf of the
Church Buildings Council
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STATUTORY ADVISORY COMMITTEE
on closed and closing churches advising the Church Commissioners
and the Churches Conservation Trust on behalf of the
CHURCH BUILDINGS COUNCIL



CRITICAL INFORMATION SUMMARY

This Critical Information Summary has been issued by the Statutory Advisory Committee to provide a synopsis of heritage and planning information relating to the named church which is subject to procedures under the Pastoral Measure 1983 as amended. The document is intended to assist the Church Commissioners and other ecclesiastical and secular planning authorities in the management of casework, and is issued without prejudice to the process of the 1983 Measure and to the needs of a third party to comply with the requirements of ecclesiastical or secular planning procedures. The information, for which the Committee gives no warranty, was (to the Committee's knowledge and belief) correct as at the date given on the document and is based on secondary sources and personal observation only.

Parish	Bacup	Dedication	Christ Church
County	Greater Manchester	Diocese	Manchester

Address Benefice & Archdeaconry Local Authority	Christ Church, Beech Street, Bacup, OL13 9DR Bacup (Christchurch) and Stacksteads; Archdeaconry of Bolton Rossendale Borough Council, The Business Centre, Futures Park, Bacup, Rossendale OL13 0BB. Tel: 0845 053 0011. Email: enquiries@lancashirehighwayspartnership.gov.uk
NGR SMR/NMR/HER	SD 873 233 -

Date of redundancy	
Uses approved	

Designations: LB, CA, SAM, SSSI, SINC, TPO etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grade II [LEN 1072858]
Outline history of site & building  <p>Photograph in church album of interior view W, pre-1999</p>	<p>Consecrated in 1854. Through a bequest of a local manufacturer, James Heyworth (d. 1844), the site was given and the church built by Sharpe & Paley of Lancaster (though probably designed by Edward Paley alone [Price]).</p> <p>In 1893 an organ chamber and N vestry was constructed to the N of the chancel. Evidence of a blocked window can be seen on the interior N chancel wall. The lady altar was dedicated in 1926. The remembrance garden was planned in 1952 and is located along the S wall.</p> <p>A fire in 1958 damaged the roof over the N transept and vestries, the organ, altar, floors, roof timbers, choir stalls and stained glass. Following the fire, the church was refitted. Repairs carried out in the 1980s involved the removal of plaster from the internal walls, these remain exposed. The W bay of the nave was screened off in 1999 to form meeting rooms, a kitchen and disabled lavatories.</p>  <p>Interior view W today</p>

Location in townscape or landscape



S elevation from Christ Church Street

Bacup is situated N of Rochdale, between Blackburn (W) and Halifax (E). The town has grown up around the steep valley either side of the River Irwell. The church stands in an elevated position on Beech Street which runs parallel and to the N of Todmorden Road (A681) and E of the river. View S from the church down cobbled Christ Church Street across housing. Fields extend to the N. The site is on a gradient, rising from S to N.

Building: materials, plan form/constituent parts of building & site



Interior view E

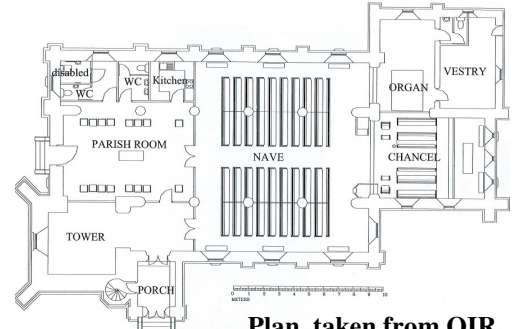
Materials:

Exterior: local sandstone rubble, stone dressings, slate roof tiles.

Interior: exposed rubble stone walls and dressed stone details. Purbeck marble shafts to chancel arch. Roof: nave – arch-braced trusses, chancel - scissor-braced. Floors; nave – wood plank flush pew platforms with stone flags to outer edges and carpeted aisles, chancel – encaustic tiles, metal grates. Wood screen partition to W. Glazed SW porch.

Plan form/constituent parts:

3-stage SW tower (with polygonal stair turret to SE corner), S porch, 4-bay aisled nave, 2-bay chancel with transeptal N organ chamber and adjacent vestry. [Lady chapel at E end of S aisle.]



Plan, taken from QIR

Notable features, fittings and characteristics of building (in chronological order)



C18 (?) chair on encaustic tile floor.

- 2 chairs of C18(?) date, or elements thereof;
- Encaustic floor tiles in chancel including blue and white tiles with symbols of the Evangelists;
- Stone (painted) reredos with purbeck marble shafts, c.1854;
- Hexagonal stone (painted) pulpit with figure heads, c.1854;
- Stone (painted) font with symbols of the Evangelists with flat wood cover with ironwork c.1854;
- White marble wall tablets on black marble background in chancel. That in memory of Rev McCubbin with crocketed Gothic gable, d.1888 (S wall), that in memory of Rev J S Doxey, d.1908 (N wall) by H Hargreaves;
- Oak eagle lectern on pinnacled tower-like base, c.1891.



Lectern

Stained Glass



S aisle, E window, by James Powell & Sons?

- SW (base of tower) – *St. Alban, St. George and St. Martin* in memory of Brigadier General Frederic Heyworth killed in France May 1916, by Walter J Pearce of Manchester, c.1927 [see war memorials];
- W end – rose window above 3, 2 light windows [not seen];
- W (within WCs) – 2 figures, *Miriam* and ? by Shrigley and Hunt, c. 1931;
- NW (now outside WCs) - *Purcell* - by Shrigley and Hunt, c.1932;
- N aisle – *Crucifixion* and *Christ crowning a young man* by Shrigley and Hunt – WWI war memorial [see below];
- E window – loosing definition;
- S chancel window – *choirister*, photo-like quality, by Shrigley and Hunt (?), c.1932;
- S aisle, E window – *Virgin Mary with Child above workshop* by James Powell & Sons (?), c.1915;
- S aisle – *St. George and St. Martin* by Shrigley and Hunt – WWI war memorial [see below].

S chancel window by Shrigley and Hunt (?)



Organ

1959 by J W Walker & Sons Ltd. of London.

War memorials



SW window by Walter J Pearce

- 3:
- WWI - Shrigley & Hunt stained glass windows in N and S aisles with brass plaques, 1918 – signed.
 - WWII - wood altar rails and brass plaques [original oak rails dedicated in 1946 and lost in fire, these a replacement]
 - [see stained glass: SW tower]



N aisle memorial windows by Shrigley & Hunt

Bells

- 8 – founded at Whitechapel Foundry:
- 2 founded by Mears & Steinbank in 1922.
 - 6 by Charles & George Mears, 1854.

Other buildings or pieces of land

None

Historical associations: people & events

Paley joined with Hubert Austin in 1868 to form a highly successful architects' firm.

Human remains

Evidence of burials within church

Various stone, marble and brass tablets laid in chancel, sanctuary, Lady chapel and S aisle floors. A vault is said to be beneath N aisle – not confirmed.

Condition

<p>State of repair QIR, Structural Engr Rpt.</p>	<p>QIR: Feb-09 by Christopher Langstone, ARIBA</p> <p>Generally fair condition. No urgent repairs immediately necessary. Recommended clearing rainwater goods, some repointing.</p> <p>Site visit notes, Sept-11: netting installed across nave at clerestory level to catch fragments of falling masonry from upper walls.</p>
<p>Building at Risk Register: Local, national</p>	<p>Not on national Heritage at Risk Register.</p>

Planning and amenity issues

<p>Local social & amenity profile</p>	<p>Edge of market town.</p>
<p>Local plan</p>	<p>Rossendale Borough Council adopted their Local Plan in 1994. Although the Local Development Framework (LDF) is under construction, certain policies (including E4 – TPOs and H2 – Listed buildings) from the Local Plan have been saved until the LDF is completed.</p> <p>The Local Plan can be accessed here: http://rossendale.leadpartners.co.uk/document.aspx?display=contents&document=16</p> <p>Saved policies can be viewed here: https://www.rossendale.gov.uk/downloads/Rossendale_District_Local_Plan_Saved_Policies.pdf</p> <p>In line with changes in the planning system a new Core Strategy document has been prepared and is currently undergoing consultation. For further details see here: http://www.rossendale.gov.uk/site/scripts/documents_info.php?categoryID=374&documentID=199</p> <p>As part of this process an area including Crawshawbooth is the centre of an Area Vision study to guide future development. For the draft document see: http://www.rossendale.gov.uk/downloads/Core_Strategy_-_Crawshawbooth_Loveclough_and_Goodshaw_Area_Vision.pdf (this information was valid as at 30-Aug-11)</p>
<p>Identified risk of flooding</p>	<p>Not located in area identified as being at risk (Environment Agency)</p>
<p>Availability & provision of mains/services/WCs</p>	<p>Electricity, water, drainage (kitchen and WCs). Gas heating system and under pew electric heaters.</p>
<p>Archaeological implications of alternative use (church/churchyard/site)</p>	<p>Bacup is a small mill town into which the railway arrived in 1852. By 1854 there were around 40 cotton mills [BOE]. The surviving stone mills still characterise the townscape. Despite its industrial growth, Neolithic arrowheads and a Bronze Age flint adze have been found within 1km of the site suggesting earlier settlement of the area. Broadclough Hall, to the NW dates to c.1606. Many C18th weavers' cottages survive and are listed.</p> <p>There is no existing evidence for earlier use of the church site.</p>
<p>Human remains</p>	<p>Possibly a vault beneath N aisle [not seen]. Ashes to S side of church</p>

considerations	[25 – a plan exists].
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Churchyard, Curtilage and planning

Status of churchyard	No burials. Remembrance Garden along S wall of nave and chancel.
General character and setting of churchyard and curtilage	Mature trees to S boundary. Raised grassed area contained by stone retaining wall to S. Views across town from S steps.
Churchyard monuments, memorials & chapels	Cremation burials marked by miniature granite markers.
Commonwealth war-graves	None
Boundary walls & lychgate (N.B. war memorial gates)	Castellated stone retaining wall, topped by metal railings, with gabled gate piers. Iron arch over S gate. Stepped stone walls to E and W, dry stone wall to N.
Churchyard or adjacent burial ground subject to Open Spaces Act	
Use dependent on availability of amenity land (not within churchyard or curtilage)	
Enabling development required/in place	
Relevant S.106 Agreement	
Access/egress to site (highways issues)	Access from pavement via 8 steps under iron overthrow (further 5 steps into porch and 2 into church). Blocked gate to W.
Parking on/off site, street	Street parking

Biodiversity

Churchyard designations, e.g. Local Nature Reserve	No
Protected species as listed by Countryside Officer	-
Trees & Tree Preservation Orders	No

Records and references

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pastoral Measure Report: 28-Jun-06 PM 2114 • P10 form: 16-Aug-11 • Church Inventory: 23-Mar-08 • QIR: Feb-09 by Christopher Langstone, ARIBA • DRO: • Rossendale Borough Council (http://www.rossendale.gov.uk) • Dove's Guide for Church Bell Ringers (http://dove.cccbr.org.uk/home.php) • George Dawson's National Bell Register (http://georgedawson.homestead.com/) Refs: 43-50 • Environment Agency flood maps (http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/subjects/flood/) • Heritage at Risk Register (http://risk.english-heritage.org.uk/)
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Heritage List (http://list.english-heritage.org.uk/) • National Monuments Record of England (NMR), accessed via the Archaeology Data Service website (http://ads.ahds.ac.uk) • National Pipe Organ Register (http://www.npor.org.uk), Nos. N01702 • UK National Inventory of War Memorials (http://www.ukniwm.org.uk/) UKNIWM Refs: 54957 and 42477 • <i>Christ Church: 150 years, 1854 – 2004.</i> • C Hartwell and N Pevsner, <i>Buildings of England: Lancashire.</i> Yale University Press, 2009. • James Price, <i>Sharpe, Paley and Austin; A Lancaster Architectural Practice 1836-1942.</i> Centre for NW Regional Studies University of Lancaster, 1998.
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Date compiled	06 September 2011
Updated	26 September 2011; 10 October 2011



STATUTORY ADVISORY COMMITTEE
on closed and closing churches advising the Church
Commissioners
and the Churches Conservation Trust on behalf of the
CHURCH BUILDINGS COUNCIL

INFORMED CHANGE ASSESSMENT

Parish	BACUP	Dedication	Christchurch
Diocese	Manchester	County	Lancashire
Address	Beech Street, Bacup, OL13 9DR		
LPA	Rossendale Borough Council		
Listing & Designation	Church: II	Conservation Area	N
		Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty	N
Outline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Built by 1854 by Sharpe and Paley (though probably just Paley), [Sharpe, Austin & Paley <i>et al.</i> was a firm of national standing established in Lancaster in 1834 and in practice until 1944]. • Site given and funded by the late John Heyworth, a local manufacturer whose wishes were carried out by his son. • Organ chamber and N vestry added N of chancel in 1893. • Fire in 1958 damaged interior [refitted & redecorated]. • Repairs made in 1980s included removal of interior plaster. • W end partitioned in 1999 to form parish room, kitchen & WCs. 		
Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Prior to partitioning</i>: Rectangular plan, 3-stage SW tower (with polygonal stair turret to SE corner), S porch, 4-bay aisled nave, 2-bay chancel with transeptal N organ chamber and adjacent vestry. [Lady chapel positioned at E end of S aisle.] • <i>Since partitioning in 1999</i>: Nave reduced to 3 bays with full-height partitions across aisles and single-storey partition across nave creating storage space above and parish room beneath with kitchen and WCs to N side. 		
Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Exterior</i>: local sandstone rubble, stone dressings, slate roof tiles • <i>Interior</i>: exposed rubble stone walls and dressed stone details. Purbeck marble shafts to chancel arch. Roof: nave – arch-braced, chancel - scissor-braced. Floors; nave – wood plank flush pew platforms with stone flags to outer edges and carpeted aisles, chancel – encaustic tiles, metal grates. Glazed SW porch. Wood screen partition to W. 		


The Committee's advice as outlined in this document has been offered to the commissioning body [Church Commissioners or Churches Conservation Trust] and should not be taken to indicate that listed building consent and / or planning permission will be granted for the alterations discussed.


PART 1

ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE AND OVERALL HERITAGE VALUE


*This assessment is based on the **Criteria for determining heritage values and the scope for change in closed Anglican churches**, issued in May 2008 by the Advisory Board for Redundant Churches after public consultation and adopted by the Statutory Advisory Committee in June 2008 on behalf of the Church Buildings Council.*


In Part 1 of this document **L, M & H** refer to **Low, Moderate & High** significance

1	CONTEXT	
	The church stands in an elevated position on Beech Street which runs parallel and to the N of Todmorden Road (A681). The site is on a gradient, rising from S to N. Fields extend to the N side. Modern development lies to E and W, Victorian terraces to S.	M
	While the tower is a minor local landmark, the church stands across the N end of Christ Church Street; a wide cobbled street of (partly modernized) Victorian terrace houses. The church appears as the culmination of a sequence of items.	M
	The site is bounded by stone walls which enhance the value of the street setting. An iron overthrow stands over the gates to the S. These features contribute to the appearance of the site and the texture of the locality.	M
	CONCLUSION	MODERATE-HIGH

2	CHURCHYARD	
	As the setting of a Grade II listed church, the churchyard carries some value.	M
	The site was given by a wealthy local manufacturer linking	L-M

	the church to the history of the town. There is no evidence for previous use of the site and as such archaeological significance is limited. Ashes have been interred along the S elevation. There are no other burials.	
	The churchyard is predominantly laid to grass. Mature trees line the S boundary. The site has value as a green space and the trees serve to enhance the character of the street.	L-M
	Stone walls enclose the raised churchyard on 4 sides.	L-M
	CONCLUSION	LOW - MODERATE

3	CHURCH	
	The church is of national interest as a Grade II listed building.	M
	The design of the building is recorded as being by Sharpe and Paley, architects of national standing, based in NW England and is an example of their great scholarship.	M-H
	The church is indicative of an increasing C19th population and consequently development. The design draws upon the local idiom and idiosyncrasies, expressing the industry of the mill towns. It is of local historic interest.	M-H
	The church is a balanced, carefully constructed composition, predominantly built in 1 phase, with a subtle extension to the N which is fully integrated with the original design of the building. A sub-division carried out in 1999 at the W end provides community facilities [partitions could be reversed].	M
	CONCLUSION	MODERATE-HIGH

4	CONTENTS	
	The fixtures contribute to the national interest of the building which is listed Grade II.	M
	8 bells from the Whitechapel Foundry.	L-M
	The choir stalls are of some interest as a high quality example of wood-grained pine to appear as oak (possibly pre-1960).	L
	Memorials and war memorials (including stained glass windows, by Shrigley and Hunt and Walter J Pearce) are of local historic interest.	M
	CONCLUSION	MODERATE

PROVISIONAL CONCLUSION:


The church is of **moderate to high** significance as a nationally designated heritage asset.



PART 2:**SCOPE FOR CHANGE AND POTENTIAL IMPACTS ON SIGNIFICANCE**

In the event that a change of use involves proposals for alterations or development affecting the site, building, contents, monuments or memorials, need must be demonstrated and evidence provided that options, impacts, and mitigation strategies have been adequately explored. Comment on the scope for alteration takes account of significance and is offered without prejudice to the requirements of relevant legislation and current planning policy guidance.


In Part 2 of this document L, M & H refer to **Low, Moderate & High significance**

1	CHANGE TO THE CHURCHYARD AND CURTILAGE
1.1	NOTABLE CONSTRAINTS
	The church is a notable local landmark and of moderate value as a feature in the streetscape.
	Site restrictions limit extensions. The churchyard is limited in size with the church sitting close to the N boundary with residential development to E and W.
	Pedestrian access to the S includes steps from the pavement to churchyard and steps from the churchyard into the porch. A 2 nd path to the W is blocked by neighbouring properties.
	The site is enclosed by stone walls which contribute to the texture of the streetscape.
	The churchyard contains mature trees along the S boundary, although not protected they are a notable feature of its setting and the street scene.
	The church occupies an elevated site; the churchyard is raised above street level. The plot rises from S to N.
	No on-site parking.

1.2	SCOPE FOR CHANGE, POTENTIAL IMPACTS AND POSSIBLE MITIGATION	
IMPROVED PEDESTRIAN ACCESS 	Scope	Some scope: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – provision of all-weather path around church where currently grass/gravel with moss; – provision of graded path from road to porch.
	Potential impact	Moderate <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – <i>affecting</i> setting
	Mitigation	By design and sensitivity to materials



PROVISION OF VEHICULAR ACCESS 	Scope	Limited scope: - option to cut into churchyard at SE corner to create 1 or 2 spaces not explored. [Note: there are no burials]
	Potential impact	High: - <i>affecting</i> setting and key views such as on approach from S; - <i>affecting</i> boundary including trees and stone walls.
	Mitigation	By design and sensitivity to materials
DEVELOPMENT WITHIN CHURCHYARD 	Scope	Little or none [limited by tight curtilage and proximity of neighbours]
	Potential impact	High - <i>affecting</i> setting and principal views
	Mitigation	None envisaged.

2	CHANGE TO THE EXTERIOR OF THE CHURCH
2.1	NOTABLE CONSTRAINTS The church is a Grade II listed building of moderate significance. The church is of local historic interest as a gift from a local manufacturer. The church is predominantly of 1 phase of construction and was designed by architects of national note. The church, with its tower, is a local landmark with value within the local landscape and its immediate setting. The view of the church from the S is particularly important and is a focus of views up Christ Church Street. Garden of remembrance abuts S wall of nave and chancel.

2.2	SCOPE FOR CHANGE, POTENTIAL IMPACTS AND POSSIBLE MITIGATION	
ADDITION TO THE EXTERIOR 	Scope	Little or none
	Potential impact	High - <i>affecting</i> setting, principal views and streetscape
	Mitigation	None envisaged
ALTERATION OF THE EXTERIOR	Scope	Limited [e.g. solar panels on tower roof, rooflights to N roof slope]

	Potential impact	Moderate - high – <i>affecting</i> principle views and original design composition
	Mitigation	Sensitive and well considered design in sympathetic materials.
Note: consequential impacts on the exterior generated by alterations to the interior are likely to arise from horizontal sub-division, of which the introduction of roof lights has the highest potential impact. The potential visual impact is likely to vary according to site, impact is usually mitigated by restricting lights to N facing roof slopes or valleys. The impact of new windows might be mitigated by flush-fitting roof-lights.		

3	CHANGE TO THE INTERIOR OF THE CHURCH
3.1	NOTABLE CONSTRAINTS
	The church is a mid C19 Grade II listed building of moderate significance.
	Decorative encaustic tile floors in chancel and sanctuary are of aesthetic value.
	Steps to E end (2 to chancel, 1 to sanctuary).
	The plaster was removed from the walls in the 1980s. Although their appearance may be considered as of aesthetic merit, the walls were intended to be finished with a render.
	[<i>Note:</i> Fabric as well as furnishings and fittings were replaced following a fire. Since then the interior has been altered to enable the space to be used for wider activities. The design of the divisions ensures that the sense of height and length of the church interior can still be appreciated, though views of the W window are obscured.]

3.2	SCOPE FOR CHANGE, POTENTIAL IMPACTS AND POSSIBLE MITIGATION	
SUB-DIVISION OF PRINCIPAL SPACE 	Scope	Some scope [Interior sub-divided in 1999 – this could be reversed or better use of the upper level could be made. If possible reintegrating W windows.]
	Potential impact	Moderate – <i>affecting</i> the architectural quality of the interior.
	Mitigation	- sensitive and well considered design, retaining sense of the building, in sympathetic materials.
UNIFIED FLOOR LEVEL 	Scope	Some scope [nave to be assessed after removal of carpet]
	Potential impact	Low to moderate – <i>affecting</i> the aesthetic value of the chancel floor; – <i>affecting</i> local historic interest of memorial slabs in nave floor.
	Mitigation	– Preservation by record; – Preservation by relocation of tiles within the building.

4	CHANGE TO THE CONTENTS OF THE CHURCH
4.1	NOTABLE CONSTRAINTS
	Contribution of tiles in chancel and sanctuary to aesthetic quality and historic interest of the interior.
	Though some have been removed original (?) pews, with a numbering system, remain <i>in situ</i> .
	Contribution of the 8 bells to the historic interest of the church.
	Contribution of War Memorial windows to the local historic and aesthetic interest of the church.
	Contribution of other commemorative items to the local historic of the church and community.

4.2	SCOPE FOR CHANGE, POTENTIAL IMPACTS AND POSSIBLE MITIGATION	
REMOVAL OR RELOCATION OF CONTENTS	Scope	Scope
	Potential impact	Low – moderate <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – <i>affecting</i> the aesthetic interest of the church interior – <i>affecting</i> local historic records
	Mitigation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Preservation of the interior furnishings by record; – Preservation of the fixtures and fittings by relocation; – Preservation of the organ by relocation; – Preservation of the bells in the church if converted to a community use, or by relocation if not; – Preservation of the monuments and memorials, including war memorial stained glass, within the building if converted to community use or by relocation in the locality if not.



PROVISIONAL CONCLUSIONS:
The church is a Grade II listed building of **moderate to high** significance with some scope for change and the mitigation of impacts.

For office use

<i>elements > aspects ▼</i>	Landscape/ townscape	Churchyard	Church	Contents	Overall High-moderate- low
Statutory and non-statutory designations/ planning considerations	Low	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate
Historic interest	Moderate	Low - moderate	Moderate	Low - moderate	Moderate
Archaeological interest/sensitivity	Low-moderate	Low - moderate	Low - moderate	Low	Low to moderate
Architectural / aesthetic quality	High	Moderate	High	Moderate	High
Overall High-moderate-low	Moderate to High	Moderate	Moderate to High	Moderate	Moderate to High

Low
Low to Moderate
Moderate
Moderate to High
High

Church House
September 2011 [updated October 2011]

Draft Pastoral (Church Buildings Disposal) Scheme

This Scheme is made by the Church Commissioners (“the Commissioners”) this day of 20.... under the Mission and Pastoral Measure 2011.

Background

By a Scheme of the Commissioners made under the said Measure on the 10th day of July 2012 the parish church of Christ Church, Bacup (“the building”) in the parish of Christ Church with Saint John, Bacup in the diocese of Manchester was declared closed for regular public worship.

NOW, it is provided as follows: -

Future of the building and annexed land

- 1. The building and the land annexed or belonging thereto shown hatched on the annexed plan (together referred to as the property) shall be appropriated to use as offices and for purposes ancillary thereto subject to the Existing Matters specified in Schedule 1.

Disposal

- 2. The Commissioners are hereby empowered to sell the property for the said use subject to the Existing Matters specified in Schedule 1.

Contents

- 3. The contents of the building shall be disposed of as the Bishop shall direct subject to listed building consent being granted.

Coming into operation of this Scheme

- 4 This Scheme shall not come into operation until such date or dates as the Commissioners shall determine following the making of this Scheme and the Commissioners shall not be obliged to bring the Scheme or any part thereof into operation until such time as they are satisfied that the conditions specified in Schedule 2 have been complied with but may do so if they so determine.

In witness of which this Scheme has been duly executed as a deed by the Church Commissioners.

Executed as a Deed by the Church Commissioners for England acting by two authorised signatories:

.....
Signature of Authorised Signatory

.....
Signature of Authorised Signatory

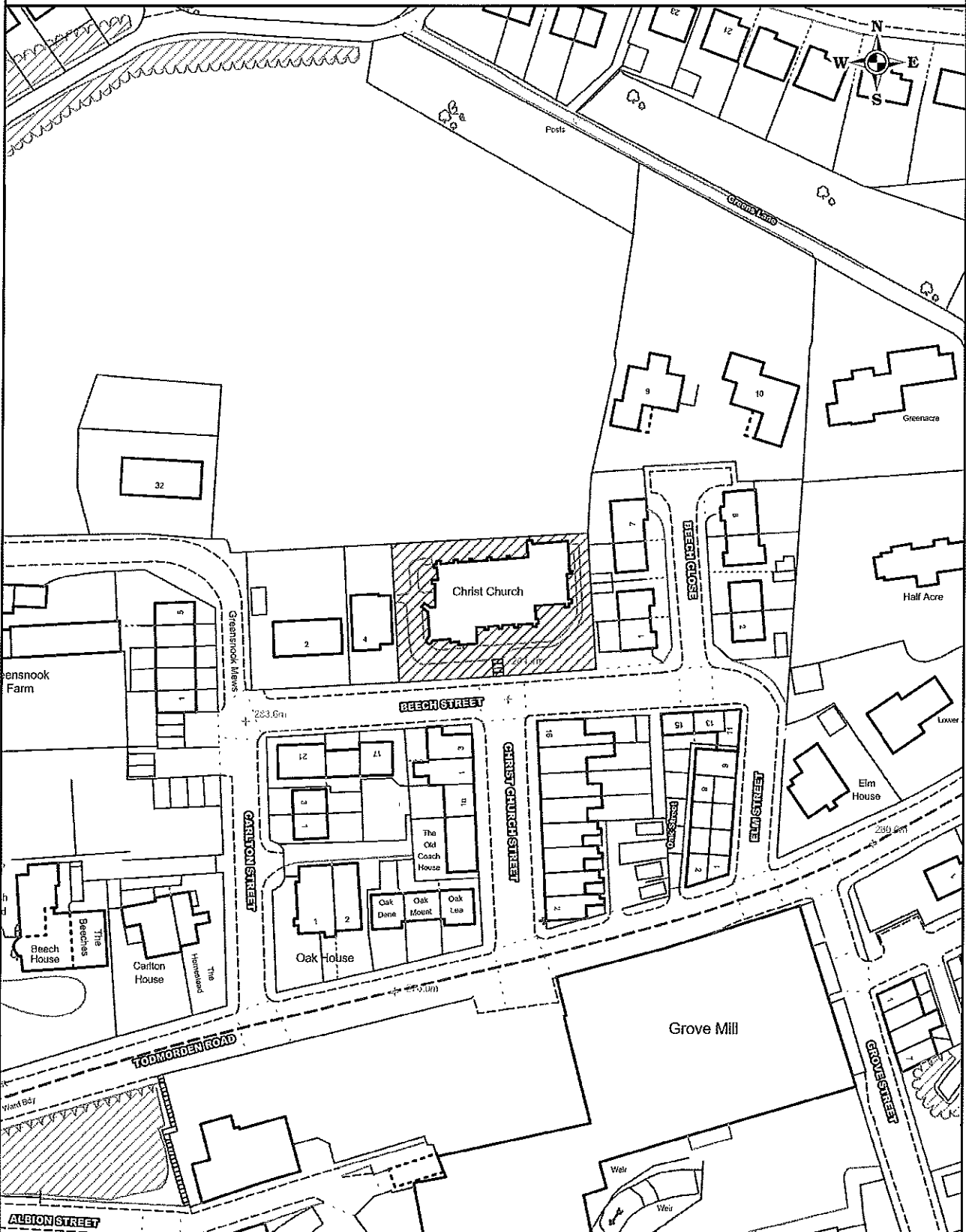
Schedule 1: Existing Matters


The rights, reservations covenants and stipulations contained or referred to in a conveyance dated the 26th day of July 1854 between the Reverend James Heyworth and the Most Noble Walter Francis Duke of Buccleuch and Queensberry (1) and Her Majesty's Commissioners for Building New Churches (2) reserving to the Duke of Buccleuch and Queensberry and successors all coal, mines, metals and minerals, quarries of stone, slate in or under the land and free right to work the same, in so far as the same are still subsisting and are capable of taking effect.

Schedule 2: Conditions

- (i) That Planning Permission has been obtained for the proposed use.
- (ii) That Listed Building Consent has been obtained for such alterations as are necessary to enable the implementation of the proposed use.

BACUP CHRIST CHURCH
Diocese of Manchester



	Bacup Christ Church Diocese of Manchester			Rev No.	© Crown copyright and database rights 2017. Ordnance Survey Licence number 100040148
	Drawn by	Scale	Date		
	P.S.	1:1250 at A4	15/09/2011	16/02/2017	
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EXPLANATORY NOTE

MISSION AND PASTORAL MEASURE 2011 DRAFT PASTORAL (CHURCH BUILDINGS DISPOSAL) SCHEME BACUP CHRIST CHURCH DIOCESE OF MANCHESTER

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 a draft Pastoral (Church Buildings Disposal) Scheme providing for the closed church of Bacup Christ Church to be appropriated to use as offices, with a focus on acting as a digital business centre for start-up companies.

The draft scheme, which this note accompanies, contains provisions for the sale of the property by the Church Commissioners for the proposed use and the disposal of the contents of the building as the Bishop of Manchester shall direct, subject to listed building consent being granted.

Background

Christ Church was closed for regular public worship on 31st August 2012 on the basis that the building was not well located within the parish, had limited facilities and needed considerable expenditure on repairs and maintenance which the small congregation was unable to undertake.

The Building

Built in 1854, Christ Church was designed by the architectural practice of Sharpe and Paley. The church was built in response to the rapid 19th century growth of Bacup and sits alongside streets of Victorian terraces with a backdrop of sloping moorland.

Constructed in an 'Early English' style, of sandstone rubble with stone dressings under a 'wagon' roof covered in slate, Christ Church features a 4-bay aisled nave and chancel with south vestry. It also has a three-stage south-west tower with a polygonal stair turret terminating in a lantern with a conical cap, which gives the building considerable vertical

emphasis. The small churchyard is defined by a castellated stone wall with gate piers and iron gates.

The Views of the Statutory Advisory Committee

The Commissioners statutory advisors, the Statutory Advisory Committee of the Church Buildings Council (SAC) have indicated that this is a Victorian church of some significance. It also has local historic interest because its construction was made possible through the generosity of a local mill-owning family. As a prominent building within its immediate setting it is an important feature in the townscape.

The SAC advised that Christ Church has some scope for changes to the interior of the building in order to accommodate a future new use.

Planning and Access

Planning permission and listed building consent will be required for the proposed digital business centre, which will consist of approximately ten office units. A car parking area for use by the occupants of the former church is being provided on the north side of the building as a condition of the adjoining land being developed for housing.

Burials and the Churchyard

There is a Garden of Remembrance on the south east side of the church building, and access to this for those wishing to visit and tend family plots will be safeguarded by means of covenants attached to the sale of the property. Access arrangements will also be reserved for the interments within the church.

Making the Draft Scheme

Before they allow the Scheme to proceed the Commissioners will need to be satisfied that: planning permission has been obtained for the proposed use and that listed building consent has been granted for any necessary alterations to the property.

Correspondence

Further information about the proposals may be obtained from the Case Officer, Norman Bilsborough by e-mail at norman.bilsborough@churchofengland.org or by telephone on 01254 958851.

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 13 March 2020 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.

Norman Bilsborough

6 January 2020



[Click here to go
back to paper](#)

Annex D

The Right Reverend the Bishop of Manchester
Bishopscourt,
Bury New Road,
M7 4LE

Harvey Howlett
Casework Support Manager
Pastoral and Closed Churches

Your ref:
Our ref: RC24/020
6 April 2020

Dear Bishop

**Mission and Pastoral Measure 2011
Closed Church Building of Bacup Christ Church
Proposed Pastoral (Church Buildings Disposal) Scheme**

Following the publication of the draft scheme providing for the sale of this closed church building and the annexed land for use as offices and for purposes ancillary thereto, we received two representations (one against and one in favour) and a letter from Historic England, regarding the draft Scheme.

The representation against came from Mr and Mrs Leach who are concerned that the area around the building is one of the quieter residential locations left in Bacup and is relatively safe for children to play out due to the small amount of traffic that passes through the area. They have argued that ten offices has the potential to dramatically increase traffic both from those working at the building and from visitors and deliveries.

They also raise a concern at the potential loss of privacy to their home and the possibility of their garden being overlooked by anyone working in the offices on the upper floors, including any working undertaken at weekend and in the evening. They believe that using the church of business use in a purely residential area will be a disaster for residents in situ and affect the value of property for anyone wanting to move away from the issues this causes.

The representation in favour come from The Revd Derek Allen writing on behalf of the PCC in support of the scheme. The PCC welcomed the willingness to retain certain features within the interior which appear to be in sympathy with and recognise the heritage and former use of the building. In particular the PCC noted and welcomed the safeguarding of access to the Garden of Remembrance as well as reserved access arrangements for the interments within the church. They also write to confirm arrangements for the future interment of the remains of one parishioner in the Garden of Remembrance.

The letter from Historic England refers to Bacup Christ Church but then appears to comment on a different matter and the letter is being clarified with them.

It will be necessary for our Mission Pastoral and Church Property Committee to consider the matter and I should be grateful for your comments on the representation[s] in general and on the following, more specific points:-

Church House, Great Smith Street, London SW1P 3AZ
Direct Line: 020 7898 1782 *London Switchboard:* 020 7898 1000
Email: harvey.howlett@chofengland.org *DX:* 148403 Westminster 5
Website: www.ccpastoral.org
The Church Commissioners are a registered charity (number 1140097).

1. What were the main considerations that led to the proposal to recommend the sale of this closed church for the proposed use?
2. Would you comment on the questions raised about the impact of the proposed use on the neighbouring property?
3. Would you comment on the potential impact of traffic and parking from the proposed use?
4. How do you believe the proposals will impact on the mission of the Church of England in this community?
5. Are there any other factors which the Commissioners should be aware of in their consideration of these representations?

In considering what information to include in your reply, I should be grateful if you would bear in mind that the Commissioners are now required to consider the representation under the quasi-judicial process laid down by the 2011 Measure. A legal challenge may arise from the Commissioners' decision if, among other things, it is based materially on incorrect information. In some cases, this might necessitate the withdrawal of the Scheme. Of necessity, the Commissioners rely on others to provide the information to assist their deliberations and to this end I should be grateful for your help.

I am hoping that this matter can be discussed at the 6th May 2020 meeting of our Mission, Pastoral and Church Property Committee. If the matter is to be discussed at that meeting, we will need to receive your response by 20th April please. This is to allow time for this letter and your reply to be considered by our Sifting Panel, to determine whether the representors and diocesan representatives should be offered an opportunity to make oral representations to the Committee, and for them to be sent to the representors, for them to make any further comments and, if necessary, for you to respond. As you know we also ask representors if they wish to speak to their representations to the Committee.

If oral representations were to be heard, there would also be an opportunity for you or a diocesan representative to speak in favour of the proposals. The diocesan representative may be any appropriate person (e.g. the Chairman or a member or the Secretary of the Diocesan Mission and Pastoral Committee or an Archdeacon) but should not be the Diocesan Registrar or other legal representative. We do not wish the Mission and Pastoral Measure process to take on the characteristics of an adversarial tribunal and have advised the representors that they too should not be legally represented.

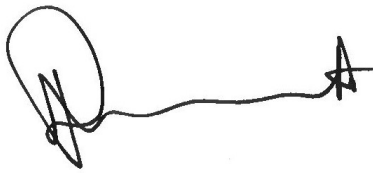
Our normal practice is, as you probably know for oral representations to be made at a public hearing. In the present circumstances that is, of course, not possible but it may be possible for representors and diocesan representatives to make presentations and answer questions by video conferencing. That would depend in each case on the practicability of whether all those concerned were contactable on line and able to participate in a video conference. It would be helpful therefore if you would confirm whether you or your representative(s) would be able to participate in this way. Otherwise, if a hearing is not to be held, the case will be considered in private and you will be informed accordingly.

Please note that while the Committee is able to discuss cases by video conference it is not able to take decisions remotely. Decisions would have to be made by a subsequent correspondence procedure and there would therefore be a further two or three weeks after the 6th May meeting date before they could be announced.

We would normally expect the representations to be considered at the earliest opportunity but please let me know if you are unable to meet the timetable for the 6th May meeting or wish to give the matter further consideration or undertake further local consultations before replying. Once we have informed the representors of the meeting date (which we will do when sending them a copy of your reply) we would hope not to have to defer it. However, all parties will have the right to ask us to defer the matter to a subsequent meeting if justifiable reasons arise. The two following meeting dates for the Committee are one of 15th, 16th or 17th June and then 22 July.

I am sending a copy of this letter to the Revd Alan Simpson in your Diocesan Office and to Norman Bilsborough, the Commissioners Case Officer, for information.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large, stylized initial 'H' followed by a long, wavy horizontal line that ends in a small, sharp upward stroke.

Harvey Howlett
Encs



Mr Harvey Howlett
Casework Support Manager
Pastoral and Closed Churches
Church House
Great Smith Street
London
SW1P 3AZ

Your ref. RC24/020

Dear Harvey,

**Mission and Pastoral Measure 2011 - Proposed Pastoral (Church Buildings Disposal) Scheme
Closed Church Building of Bacup Christ Church**

Thank you very much for your letter of 6 April 2020 regarding the representations received in connection with the draft scheme for Bacup Christ Church. With regard to the specific questions you have asked me, my comments are as follows:

1. What were the main considerations that led to the proposal to recommend the sale of this closed church for the proposed use?

The recommendation that Bacup Christ Church be sold for office use came at the end of a fairly long and comprehensive marketing process which began in 2012, fairly soon after the church was closed for regular public worship. Over the following four years a number of offers were received by the Diocesan agents at the time (Dunlop Heywood), mostly for conversion of the building to some form of residential accommodation. However, none of these was sustained as a serious bid, generally because the cost of conversion was deemed too high in relation to the final property value.

The appointment of new agents (W T Gunson and Co.) in 2017 produced further offers for either straightforward residential conversion or mixed schemes combining residential use with either an art gallery or a 'Mother and Baby Unit'. As before, the offers were not taken forward because the proposals were deemed ultimately not to be financially viable – in the case of the Mother and Baby Unit the perceived risk to the lender proved to be the stumbling block.

The current offer for conversion of the building to office use (more specifically, as a start-up hub for digital businesses) has come about after a period of negotiation through the 'Find A Use Manchester' project, which is helping the Diocese to tackle some of its more 'difficult' closed churches. We believe the offer is a realistic one and that the prospective purchasers have not only the necessary finance but also a sound business plan to enable them to realise their ambition for the building. They are also a Bacup-based company which is seeking to encourage the growth of new digital businesses in the area. We are heartened that they have received positive early support from the local authority conservation officer for their proposals, which are also backed by Valley Heritage (the local buildings preservation trust).

2. Would you comment on the questions raised about the impact of the proposed use on the neighbouring property?

I think a digitally based office use in this former church will have a relatively low impact on the neighbouring property, not only because of the type of activity being undertaken but also because any alterations to the building will be restricted to the interior with the exterior remaining largely unchanged. Should new upper floors be introduced I would expect the planning authority will require any roof windows to be located on the north side of the building, thus reducing the possibility of the houses on Beech Street and Christ Church Street being overlooked.

I am not of the opinion that an office use in this location would be a 'disaster' for the nearby residents. Rather, a sensitively restored and converted building which accommodates a low noise activity taking place largely in normal working hours during week days can exist in harmony with its residential neighbours.

I am similarly not persuaded that the proposed office use will have a negative impact on property values; rather, bringing about a sustainable long-term future for this closed church which has been disused since 2012 can only be a good thing – it will remove uncertainty, raise confidence and enhance the locality.

3. Would you comment on the potential impact of traffic and parking from the proposed use?

I believe the potential impact of traffic generated by the proposed business use will not be significantly greater than that which might result from a conversion of the building to several residential flats or to a children's day nursery, or indeed to that which would have prevailed had the building continued in full use as an active church. Most of the vehicular movements associated with the building and its use as office premises will be concentrated around the beginning and the end of the working day, with the likelihood that movements at the weekend will be minimal.

The focus on accommodating small start-up digital businesses in the building suggests that many of the people working here are likely to be local and able to get to their place of work without relying on a car. Similarly, a focus on digital business leads me to the conclusion that deliveries and other 'comings and goings' are likely to be relatively few.

With regard to parking, there would appear to be plenty of space for cars to be parked adjacent to the church on Beech Street, and in addition several spaces are being made available on the other side of the church as a planning condition for the new residential development now underway there. I also expect that this important issue will be a matter which the planning and highway authorities will address in the fullest detail under any future planning application.

4. How do you believe the proposals will impact on the mission of the Church of England in this community?

I believe it is part of the mission of the Church of England to be responsible in the way we handle our buildings, even where they may no longer be required pastorally or for regular public worship. In the case of Christ Church, we have a proposal which will ensure that this important heritage asset will be preserved for future generations and will continue to play a role in the local community.

I'm also encouraged by the assurances given by the prospective purchasers that this building will not only provide new employment opportunities but will also make available some communal areas for community purposes. On a more personal level, rights of access will be reserved for people visiting and tending plots in the Garden of Remembrance. The prospective purchasers are also keen to retain important features and memorials in the church as a way of respecting and displaying its history.

It's good to note that the PCC has expressed its own support for the proposed future use of Christ Church and has been able to embrace this as part of its own mission to serve the local community.

5. Are there any other factors which the Commissioners should be aware of in their consideration of these representations?

I'm sure the Commissioners will be aware of the difficulties the Diocese has been facing in securing future uses for its closed churches in the Rossendale area. The proposal before us for Bacup Christ Church is a window of opportunity to begin to make real progress in dealing with these buildings, and I believe it is a proposal worthy of the Commissioners' support.

Yours ever,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David Walker". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a small cross at the beginning.

The Rt Revd Dr David Walker

Representations – Bacup Christ Church

From: Mr and Mrs Leach

Date 2 March 2020

Good Afternoon

I am writing in reference to the correspondence I have received from Norman Bilsborough with regards to the above closed church building. Both myself and my husband are strongly against the draft proposals, the area around the church is one of the quieter residential locations left in Bacup. It is relatively safe for children to play out due to the small amount of traffic that passes through the area. Ten offices has the potential to dramatically increase traffic, not only will there be cars for the people that work there but also cars for visitors to the building, depending on the businesses using the office they could potentially have many visitors during the day (for example a finance company could have people visiting regularly to drop off paperwork such as their ID etc)

Turning the church into offices will also invade our privacy, we live at [...] - so our garden will potentially be overlooked by anyone working in the offices on the upper floors, as many businesses now include weekend work this has the potential to disrupt any use we have of our garden, depending on their working hours this could extend into the evenings in summer as well.

In short we believe that using the church for business use in a purely residential area will be a disaster for any residents already in situ, I am concerned this will also affect the value of my property and should we wish to sell to get away from the issues this causes we would not be able to do so! Not many people intentionally move opposite a business premises for the reasons I have given above.

We hope you will consider the above and another use can be found for the building.

Regards

Mr & Mrs Leach



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

27th February 2020

Re: Mission and Pastoral Measure 2011.
The closed building of Bacup Christ Church.
Diocese of Manchester

Dear Sirs,

With reference to the draft Pastoral (Church Buildings Disposal) Scheme providing for the appropriation of the closed church of Bacup Christ Church for use as offices, the Parochial Church Council for Christ Church, Bacup met on Wednesday 19th February 2020 and having discussed the Scheme is in support of said Scheme.

The PCC welcomed the willingness to retain certain features within the interior which appear to be in sympathy with and recognise the heritage and former use of the building. In particular the PCC noted and welcomed the safeguarding by covenant of access to the Garden of Remembrance as well as reserved access arrangements for the interments within the church.

As a PCC we are aware of one Parishioner and lifelong Church member, Mrs E Stevenson, who is in her nineties and who at the time of the Church closure, expressed her wish for her remains to be interred in the Garden of Remembrance along with her husband and Mother. We would therefore request that this request can be attached to the sale as a covenant; further details can be provided on request.

Yours Sincerely,

Rev Derek Allen

Team Vicar – Bacup and Stacksteads Benefice

cc. Norman Bilsborough – Church Commissioners

From: Richard Broadhead, Historic England

Date 6 March 2020

Dear Mr Bilborough,

Thank you for your letter of 10 February 2020 regarding the Pastoral (Church Buildings Disposal) Scheme for Christ Church in Bacup under the Mission and Pastoral Measure 2011.

The Church of St Leonard is a grade II listed building of national interest and we are very sorry to hear of the scheme to close the church to public worship. While we do not wish to object to the scheme we would urge consideration of alternative options, such as grant funding, to address the issues identified and keep this valuable heritage asset in regular use.

Should the decision be made to close the Church, we would strongly advise that a positive strategy for the sustainable use and maintenance of the building is prioritised to facilitate the long term conservation of this valuable heritage asset. Our web pages on closing places of worship <https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/caring-for-heritage/places-of-worship/places-of-worship-at-risk/closing/> sets out key considerations. You may also find our advice document on "Vacant Historic Buildings" <https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/vacanthistoricbuildings/> useful in adopting interim measures while plans are developed.

Kind regards,

Richard Broadhead

Inspector of Historic Buildings and Areas

Historic England | North West



Historic England

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ANNEX S

**Closed Church of Bacup Christ Church (Diocese of Manchester)
Representations against Pastoral (Church Buildings Disposal)
Scheme**

Supplementary Correspondence

From **Historic England**
Date **21 April 2020**

Dear Mr Howlett,

I must apologise, I realise that there have been some crossed wires on this one, solely at my end I think. I have spoken briefly to one of my colleagues and to Norman Bilsborough, and although I appreciate that the consultation period has been missed, please see comments below

To confirm, Historic England is supportive of new uses for redundant churches, as a means by which to ensure their long term viability, maintenance and purposes, In relation to Christ Church, the proposed office use would seem, in principle, to be a positive one, as it is a use which is more flexible than a residential conversion, and could in theory be achieved with the minimum of harmful subdivision and alteration. However, this will be dependent on the exact details of the proposals, which will need to be assessed when the relevant applications for planning permission and listed building consent are submitted.

It will also be important for the landscaping around the church to be given appropriate consideration, particularly in relation the associated car parking, and to the potential for retained public access to the associated churchyard.

Kind regards,

Richard Broadhead

Inspector of Historic Buildings and Areas
Historic England | North West