Summary

(i) Following the publication of a draft Pastoral (Church Buildings Disposal) Scheme providing for the closed church at Stanmer (dedication not known) and its churchyard to be sold by the Commissioners to KSD, the lessees of Stanmer House (Brighton and Hove Borough Council being the owners of the House and Stanmer Park), for social, cultural and community purposes and for occasional Christian worship we received one representation against, three in favour, three of comment together with an out-of-time comment.

(ii) The Stanmer Preservation Society says that the sale of the church to private developers represents yet another example of pernicious privatisation of the Stanmer Estate and regrets the further loss of amenity and public access to Listed Heritage Assets. Initially, it also objected to the inclusion of the Donkey Wheelhouse in the ‘annexed land’ as it had made an application for voluntary First Registration of the land on which the Wheelhouse sits. The SPS had requested a delay on this aspect of the Scheme at least until the Land Registry position was determined. However, although its application for voluntary first registration has since been granted, the SPS wishes its objection to stand.

(iii) The Stanmer with Falmer PCC and the Chichester Diocesan Board of Finance support the proposals, whilst the third representation in support is based on a misunderstanding that the SPS is the prospective purchaser.

(iv) The Bishop of Chichester explains that of the three bids received, the main reason for recommending the sale to KSD is that it is the only bidder with the necessary finances and expertise to ensure a sustainable future for the closed Stanmer building as a community asset, and which comes with the support of the PCC of Stanmer and Falmer.

The sifting groups’ decision

(v) The case has been examined by the Committee’s case sifting representatives who recommended that the matter should not be afforded a public hearing as they did not think the Committee was likely to gain significant additional information from hearing from the representors or diocesan representatives in person and did not think that fairness to the representors required there to be a public hearing.
Matters for the Committee

(vi) 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 the use might be unsuitable in the particular circumstances of this building and annexed land because of its location or other factors relating to the impact of the use.

- Is the proposed use of the building a “suitable” use within the meaning of the Mission and Pastoral Measure?

- Is the proposed use sustainable? Do KSD have the resources to repair the building and maintain it in the longer term?

- Is there local support for the proposals? Might perceived “privatisation” of the Stanmer Estate adversely affect the Church’s mission?

- Would the proposed use be significantly impeded if KSD and the SPS were unable to reach agreement on how to collaborate effectively now that the Donkey Wheelhouse is in the ownership of the SPS?

- Will the proposals, taken as a whole, support the furtherance of the mission of the Church of England?

(vii) The Committee is invited to consider the representations and the issues set out in this paper and, in the light of these, whether or not the draft Scheme should proceed.

(viii) Attached are:

Annex A: A copy of the draft Scheme, plan and accompanying Explanatory Note;

Annex A1: An amended plan, reflecting the SPS’s registration of the Donkey Wheelhouse site;

Annex B: The report on the church building by the Church Buildings Council and the Advice of the Statutory Advisory Committee;

Annex C: An overview map of Stanmer Park;

Annex D: A map of the parish;

Annex E: Photographs/pictures of the donkey wheel;

Annex F: A copy of the letter referring the representations to the Bishop of Chichester together with a copy of his reply;

Annex R: Copies of the representations;
Introduction and background

1. This church building is located within Stanmer Park (owned by Brighton and Hove Borough Council) just north of Brighton and forms an established feature of the Park. The current building (which has no dedication) dates from 1838 replacing a 13th century church on the same site.

2. The architect was a local man, Ralph Jeanes of Lewes. The church is designed in the Early English style, is cruciform in plan and constructed of flint with stone dressings and slate roofs. The church remains very much as built, though some fittings and furnishings have been introduced over the years. The lectern, altar and west doors of the church are known to have been made by Francis Jude Jones (died 1937) in the first decade of the 20th century. The church contains monuments and memorials from the medieval village church, as well as monuments associated with the Pelham family. It is listed Grade II and situated within a Conservation Area, Registered Park and Garden, and Nature Reserve.

3. The church was declared closed for regular public worship with effect from 29 December 2008. It had been one of two parish churches in the parish of Stanmer with Falmer and the parish had decided to focus its ministry at Falmer given Stanmer church's isolated location and state of repair.

4. In 2010 a proposal was received to use the building as a performance space and careers office for the performing arts but that did not proceed. Since then, the building has been looked after for the DBF under licence by the Stanmer Preservation Society. For some years the Diocese had been content to be responsible for the building but now some significant repairs are required, and the Diocese now wishes to transfer the building and attached churchyard to new ownership. Discussions were held during 2021 with local groups and an offer from the lessees of Stanmer House to buy the church and churchyard for cultural and community uses is now proposed.

5. The churchyard contains burials, including a Commonwealth War Grave, and has previously been closed for future burial by Order in Council. There will be restrictive covenants in the sale to prevent disturbance of human remains and of the tombstones, monuments and memorials. Access would be maintained for visitors to graves.

6. The Commissioners statutory advisers, the Statutory Advisory Committee of the Church Buildings Council (SAC), have indicated that the church is of moderate to high significance overall with the historic interest and aesthetic quality of the contents being regarded as an important part of the overall importance of the church.

Title position

7. Title to the church and churchyard at the time of closure of the church for regular public worship was based on a statutory declaration and title has not been
registered. The statutory declaration included the building known variously as the Donkey Wheel House, the Well House, or the Donkey House, which abuts the churchyard. The structure covers an ancient well and the attached, donkey-driven, wheel which was used to draw water.

8. The SPS subsequently applied, in 2022, for voluntary first registration of the Donkey Wheel House, which it had been maintaining for some 40 years. The Commissioners, Chichester DBF and the PCC did not oppose this application (the benefice is vacant, with a priest-in-charge appointed earlier this year) and the Donkey Wheel House has now been registered, in April 2023, in the name of the SPS.

9. The plan attached to the draft Scheme (Annex A) includes the Donkey Wheel House in the land to be transferred to the purchasers. If the Committee decided that the Scheme should proceed as drafted, it would be editorially amended to exclude the Donkey House (the revised plan is attached as Annex A1).

Summary of the representation against

10. The SPS says that when it was asked to submit proposals for the future of the church, it and the Stanmer Residents Association were unable to compete with KSD on financial grounds. The SPS says that the sale of the church to private developers represents yet another example of pernicious privatisation of the Stanmer Estate and regrets the further loss of amenity and public access to Listed Heritage Assets, e.g., the Horse Engine and the reinstated historic Stable in the Stable Block which have not been publicly accessible since their renovation.

11. It says it has watched in dismay all its good works at Stanmer being dismantled piece by piece, including now the iconic Stanmer Church, which it had maintained and kept open to the public every weekend for years before its licence ended in June 2021. The SPS welcomes the protection afforded by the stringent restrictive covenants imposed in the sale of all Church of England churches but is worried that they might be varied or disregarded in the future, as has happened elsewhere on the Stanmer Estate.

12. It is fully aware of the structural work needed and still considers an Historic England upgrade to Grade II* to be the best way to protect the extraordinarily high quality of the craftsmanship throughout the building, which has always played a central role not just to its Society, but to the village and the whole Estate.

13. The SPS also objected, in its initial representation, to the inclusion of the Donkey Wheelhouse in the 'annexed land' as part of the proposed sale to KSD given its application for voluntary First Registration of the land on which the Wheelhouse sits. The SPS requested a delay, on this aspect of the Scheme at least, until the Land Registry had responded.

Summary of the representations in support

14. The PCC of Stanmer with Falmer says that it supports the scheme to sell Stanmer Church and wishes the building to be kept in good order and used for the benefit of the local community.
15. The Chichester Diocesan Board of Finance supports the scheme.

16. James Drever – not resident in the Diocese has misunderstood who the proposed purchaser is (KSD) and says that he is delighted that the SPS will take on the church, and is especially pleased that it will facilitate a range of uses, including (and especially) occasional use for worship - the very purpose for which the church was built some 13 centuries ago; he also hopes that the benefice will be encouraged to make use of the church.

**Comments**

17. The Stanmer Estates Manager has a concern about the vague proposed use put forward by the prospective purchaser as he cannot see how it would benefit from it. However, as the purchaser is well funded, and, he believes, has put significant effort and resource into the Stanmer House, hopefully the same would be true for the fabric of the church.

18. In terms of the disposal, he feels it would be beneficial to transfer the ownership of the Well House to the SPS who have been using the building and opening it to the public for around 30 years. The Well House is a very prominent and fascinating feature of the park and provides an insight into how difficult life was for residents in the not-too-distant past which is great to share with the visitors.

19. He asks that the many artefacts inside the church, some from the SPS and others, that link to the cultural legacy of Stanmer and village life are not lost in the transfer process.

20. Historic England explains that the Stanmer Estate comprises the 18th century historic park and garden and says that it does not object to the principle of the sale of the church for the proposed uses as these have the potential to enable minimum sub-division of the main volumes of the interior, thereby helping to retain the significance of the building. The use for occasional Christian worship will also help to sustain its significance as this is the use for which the Church was built.

21. In addition, an appropriate disposal could secure funding for repairs to arrest further deterioration, the need for which has been described in the 2021 Condition Report commissioned by the Diocese.

22. HE would like to know more about KSD Group’s proposals and business plan for the church, including whether it is to be used in association with activities at Stanmer House, and how the proposed uses would be delivered in practice. This is so it can assess whether the scheme would maintain Stanmer Church’s significance and provide it with a long-term sustainable future. It has not seen any details of the proposed uses or conversion work and notes that the sale would be to KSD Support Services Ltd, a maintenance and facilities management company. It says it is aware, that until very recently, Stanmer House was in use as a café, restaurant and function venue. In 2021, KSD Group obtained the commercial lease for the house and subsequently reopened the ground floor café as well as using part of the building as office space. The building now is also being used for some functions.
23. It is also aware that the SPS has looked after the Well House and Donkey Wheel, and provided public access to it, for around 40 years, and wishes to continue to do so.

24. In light of this, it asks that consideration should be given to allow the SPS to continue its involvement with these buildings, including potentially taking on the ownership. This would have the benefit of maintaining public access to these interesting heritage features and would also allow for the SPS to continue its community activity.

25. Peter Sharrack says that he trusts that the Commissioners will have reassured themselves regarding KSD’s suitability, fitness, and intentions, as it would be a shame if the building was purchased only to be maintained as a tangible asset on a company’s financial balance sheet - or to be left to fall into further disrepair so that a conversion of its interior into luxury apartments would be the only reasonable way its outward appearance could be preserved. A building’s ‘listed’ status alone does not prevent its conversion into apartments if permission from a local authority is granted within current government guidelines.

26. In recent years there have been ideas for how the church could be used: as a venue for ecumenical and inter-faith retreats; as a centre for mindfulness studies; and as a hub for ‘social/green prescribing’ by local GPs. He says that maybe a new owner (KSD or whoever) would incorporate some of them.

Out-of-time comments

27. Kevin Westgate, a chartered building surveyor, says that as a former churchwarden of Stanmer church he is concerned to hear that the building and churchyard are proposed to be passed to the current owners of Stanmer House who use that property for commercial use.

28. In his opinion this church is a set time-piece frozen unchanged from the moment the Earls of Chichester departed Stanmer for Wiltshire in 1947, too special, too fragile to be lost from the local and national pool of historic places which commercial use would inevitably bring, but rather be preserved and kept available for public access by a charitable trust such as the Church Conservation Trust or a similar body, which would give it a certain future.

Summary of the Bishop of Chichester’s views

29. The Bishop of Chichester explains that of the three bids received, the main reason for recommending the sale to KSD, who currently hold the lease for Stanmer House, is that it is the only bidder with the necessary finances and expertise to ensure a sustainable future for the closed Stanmer building as a community asset, and which comes with the support of the PCC of Stanmer and Falmer. He therefore has no concerns that these proposals will negatively impact on the mission of the Church.

30. The SPS had initially wanted to take the building on, and the Diocese had offered support including temporary use of the building to allow it to develop its plans. The SPS had however sought other organisations to take on the building on its behalf, including both the Churches Conservation Trust and the Friends of Friendless Churches; both had chosen not to do so. The SPS had also not demonstrated how
it would fund such a proposition and did not have a proven track record in successful grant applications.

31. Additionally, the former church building served no missional purpose and the SPS’s wish to see this church reopen would not be a good use of Diocesan resources.

32. The Bishop says that in its written proposal for the church, KSD states that it intends to work in collaboration with the SPS, Plumpton College, and other local stakeholders to maximise the use of the church for meetings and community events, and in full recognition that using it as a visitor centre would attract more people to the park which will help support its other commercial ventures, such as Stanmer House.

33. There should also be no concern about any conversion into luxury flats or similar as that would be outside the scope of the uses provided for in the proposed Scheme; any changes would require the Commissioners’ consent. There would be a covenant included to ensure KSD puts the building in a wind and watertight condition.

The Sifting Group’s Decision

34. The case has been examined by the Committee’s case sifting representatives who recommended that the matter should not be afforded a public hearing as they did not think the Committee was likely to gain significant additional information from hearing from the representors or diocesan representatives in person and did not think that fairness to the representors required there to be a public hearing.

35. At that point the SPS’s Land Registry application had still not been determined and the Sifting Panel decided that consideration of the representations should be deferred until it had been. Given that the Application was subsequently approved, the Options discussed in the correspondence with the Bishop, and referred to in the supplementary comments, for how to proceed if SPS’s application had been unsuccessful are no longer relevant.

Supplementary views

36. Further comments were received from the Stanmer Estate Manager and Historic England, together with further submissions from the SPS in connection with its Land Registry application.

37. The Estate Manager reiterates support the Donkey Wheel being transferred to the SPS and Historic England asked that consideration be given to the SPS continuing to have involvement with the Well House and the Donkey Wheel, including potentially taking on ownership (since achieved by the Voluntary First Registration).

38. Historic England also expressed concern that the proposal by KSD lacks sufficient detail regarding how the proposed use would operate in practice with its other activities here to conserve the building and sustain it into the future and asks to see its business plan on this.
Further response from the SPS

39. The SPS, in addition to further reference to its Land Registry Application, wanted to know more about KSD's proposals so that it could then decide whether it would wish to enter a partnership with them as currently there exists little appetite for such a collaboration.

40. It also wanted confirmation that due diligence had been undertaken by the Commissioners and the DBF regarding KSD's financial records and that it had the resources to address the Stanmer building’s repair liabilities.

41. Additionally, it queried whether there had been any communications between the Church of England and Lord John and Richard Pelham about their family's vaults. As a Listed Heritage At Risk building of such significance to the Pelham family, the local community and the wider Stanmer loving public, it wanted to ensure the future retention of the church building in the longer term.

Response from Commissioners Closed Churches Officer

42. The Commissioners’ Closed Churches Officer was asked to respond to the SPS’s further concerns and confirmed to the SPS that both the Commissioners and Chichester DBF had undertaken the due diligence required into KSD’s financial records to establish that it did have more than sufficient resources to undertake the required repairs to the building.

43. Whilst a fully costed up schedule of the works required in the April 2021 Condition Report had not been commissioned, KSD has seen that report and accepted a covenanted requirement to attend to repairs of some £600,000 required within a given timescale. He also pointed out that it remained the case that there is no other proposal on the table that will enable any repairs to be undertaken within the foreseeable future.

44. Previous information has set out KSD’s proposals for the property, and it has indicated it will work with local stakeholders to maximise the use of the former church building for meetings and community events. This includes using it as a visitor centre to attract more people to the park, holding seasonal events such as Christmas carols and summer fayres which will in turn hopefully increase visitor numbers to the park from the city and wider county.

45. As there are no proposals to remove, disturb or relocate any human remains or tombstones, monuments or memorials there has been no communication with the Pelham family on this matter, who in any event have not made any approach to the Commissioners about the church building since its closure in 2008. Access for people wishing to visit graves will be protected in the restrictive covenants and KSD’s proposed use of the property will also allow ongoing access.

Correspondence subsequent to Land Registry determination

46. Following confirmation from the SPS that its Land Registry Application had been successful and that it is now the freehold owner of the donkey wheelhouse, SPS was asked whether in light of this if it wished to withdraw its representation. However, the SPS has confirmed by email (Annex S1) that it wishes to sustain its
representation as it remains concerned about the suitability of KSD as the prospective purchaser and reluctant to collaborate with KSD without additional information.

The Issues for the Committee

47. The process of securing a suitable alternative use for a closed church building is one which may involve consideration of various factors. As no definition of suitability is provided in the Measure, a judgement must be made in the particular circumstances of each case in assessing the ‘weight’ of their relative importance.

48. This is set within the context of the ‘general duty’ laid out in Section 1 of the Mission and Pastoral Measure 2011, placing a duty on those carrying out functions under the Measure to “have due regard to the furtherance of the mission of the Church of England.” Mission is defined as “the whole mission of the Church of England, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical”.

49. The Mission and Pastoral Measure Code of Recommended Practice gives examples of alternative uses which have been found to be acceptable, 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)

50. 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 the impact of the use.
51. 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.

**Issues**

52. The main issues for the Committee are:

- Is the proposed use of the building a “suitable” use within the meaning of the Mission and Pastoral Measure?

- Is the proposed use sustainable? Do KSD have the resources to repair the building and maintain it in the longer term?

- Is there local support for the proposals? Might perceived “privatisation” of the Stanmer Estate adversely affect the Church’s mission?

- Would the proposed use be significantly impeded if KSD and the SPS were unable to reach agreement on how to collaborate effectively now that the Donkey Wheelhouse is in the ownership of the SPS?

- Will the proposals, taken as a whole, support the furtherance of the mission of the Church of England?

**Recommendation**

53. The Committee is invited to consider the representations and the issues set out in this report and, in the light of these, whether or not the draft Scheme should proceed.

Rex Andrew

Church House
Great Smith Street
London SW1P 3AZ

16 May 2023
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 Pastoral Measure 1983 on the 31st day of March 2008 the church at Stanmer (dedication not known) ("the building") being one of the parish churches of the parish of Stanmer with Falmer in the Diocese of Chichester was declared closed for regular public worship.

NOW, it is provided as follows:-

Future of the church building and annexe 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 for cultural, social and community purposes and for occasional Christian worship in accordance with the rites and customs of any Christian body designated by the Bishop for the time being of Chichester and for purposes ancillary thereto together with the rights granted by Schedule 1.

Disposal

2. The Commissioners are hereby empowered to sell the property for any or all of the said uses together with the benefit of the rights granted by schedule 1.

Contents

3. The contents of the building shall be disposed of as the Bishop shall direct subject, so far as it is required, 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 different provisions of the Scheme may be brought into operation on different dates.

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:
Schedule 1: Grant of Rights of Way

To enable the property to be used for the purposes specified in the Scheme all rights and easements over land appertaining or reputed to appertain to the property shall vest in the Commissioners in common with all others entitled to the like rights.
EXPLANATORY NOTE

MISSION AND PASTORAL MEASURE 2011
DRAFT PASTORAL (CHURCH BUILDINGS DISPOSAL) SCHEME
STANMER CHURCH
DIOCESE OF CHICHESTER

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 at Stanmer and its churchyard to be sold by the Commissioners for social, cultural and community purposes and for occasional Christian worship. It is proposed to sell the property to the owners of Stanmer House.

Background

The church was declared closed for regular public worship with effect from 29 December 2008. It had been one of two parish churches in the parish of Stanmer with Falmer and the parish had decided to focus its ministry at Falmer given Stanmer church’s isolated location and state of repair.

In 2010 a proposal was received to use the building as a performance space and careers office for the performing arts but that did not proceed. Since then, the building has been looked after for the Diocese under licence by the Stanmer Preservation Society. For some years the diocese had been content to be responsible for the building but now some significant repairs are required and the Diocese now wishes to transfer the building to new ownership. Discussions were held during 2021 with local groups and an offer from the owners of Stanmer House to buy the church and churchyard for cultural and community uses is now proposed.

The Building

This church building is located within Stanmer Park (owned by Brighton and Hove Borough Council) just north of Brighton and forms an established feature of the Park. The current building (which has no dedication) dates from 1838 replacing a 13th century church on the same site.

The architect was a local man, Ralph Joanes of Lewes. The church is designed in the Early English style, is cruciform in plan and constructed of flint with stone dressings and slate roofs. The church remains very much as built, though some fittings and furnishings have been introduced over the years. The lectern, altar and west doors of the church, are known to have been made by Francis Jude Jones (died 1937) in the first decade of the 20th century. The church contains monuments and memorials from the medieval village church, as
well as monuments associated with the Pelham family. It is listed Grade II and situated within a Conservation Area, Registered Park and Garden, and Nature Reserve.

The Views of the Statutory Advisory Committee

The Commissioners statutory advisers, The Statutory Advisory Committee of the Church Buildings Council (SAC) have indicated that the church is of moderate to high significance overall. The historic interest and aesthetic quality of the contents were regarded as an important part of the overall importance of the church.

Burials and the Churchyard

The churchyard is proposed to be included in the sale. It contains burials, including a Commonwealth War Grave, and has previously been closed for future burial by Order in Council. There will be restrictive covenants in the sale to prevent disturbance of human remains and of the tombstones, monuments and memorials. Access will be maintained for visitors to graves.

Correspondence

Further information about the proposals may be obtained from the Case Officer, Adrian Browning by e-mail at adrian.browning@churchofengland.org or by telephone at 01722 438664.

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 28 November 2022 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.

A M G Browning
25 October 2022
Pastoral Measure Report: Stanmer church

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Diocese: Chichester</th>
<th>Dedication: Not known</th>
<th>Listing: II</th>
<th>NGR: TV 33 09</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>County: East Sussex</td>
<td>Parish: Stanmer</td>
<td>PM: 2065</td>
<td>SMR: See below</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Location and setting:** The small Gothic flint church of Stanmer village occupies an idyllic location in a large landscaped park. It is located at the south end of the eponymous farm and estate village and opposite Stanmer House to the south, a fine early 18th-century building currently under conversion into flats. The church is an integral and important part of Stanmer and its surrounding park, which is now open to the people of Brighton.

The churchyard is encircled by a flint wall with iron railings and a ha-ha, with a duck pond near the east end. It is laid to grass with some mature trees, particularly overhanging the pond. It is an attractive and popular spot for people enjoying a lunch break or a walk. A pair of yew trees at the west end flank the path from the simple iron gate here, which has short stone gate posts with pyramid caps. There are grave markers from the late 18th century, and a few tomb chests. An attractive small flint building within the churchyard on the north side, housing a well and donkey wheel, is looked after by the Stanmer Preservation Society.
At the time of the visit a large deep hole had opened up in the angle of north transept and chancel, which this visitor almost fell down, apparently part of a land drain which has subsequently been rebuilt.

**Building history:** There was a Bronze Age settlement at nearby Coldean and an Iron Age settlement at Hollingbury Castle Camp. Stanmer is mentioned in Domesday. After the Conquest tenants were put in most of the manors, except at Stanmer, which belonged to The Archbishop of Canterbury. There has been a church on the site of the present church at Stanmer since at least the 13th century. The medieval village is thought to have been located either to the west of the present village or on the land between the church and Stanmer House, though if the latter is true any surface traces of it must have been landscaped away. The house was built between 1722 and 1727 when two brothers, Henry and Thomas Pelham, acquired the estate. In 1801 Thomas Pelham’s son was created Earl of Chichester, and the 3rd Earl of Chichester, Henry Thomas Pelham decided to rebuild the church in 1838 to increase its capacity. The architect was a local man, Ralph Joanes of Lewes.

The church remains very much as built, though some fittings and furnishings have been introduced over the years. The lectern, altar and west doors of the church, are known to have been made by Francis Jude Jones (died 1937) in the first decade of the 20th century. Others, such as the Commandment Boards to either side of the reredos, the pulpit and maybe the bench ends seem to be somewhat earlier, but later than the structure of the church. Perhaps Jude Jones (1844-1919), the estate carpenter and father of Francis Jude Jones had a hand in some of this work (was he perhaps in turn related to the architect?).

In 1941 the Stanmer estate was requisitioned by the War Department, and the Pelham family and all those living in the estate cottages were forced to leave. The park became a training ground for battalions of Canadian soldiers later involved in the Normandy landings. During this use the church was protected with sandbags but still retains some scars from that time. After the war the Pelhams sold the estate to Brighton Council.

The site is clearly of considerable archaeological potential and reference should be made to the SMR before any development is contemplated.

**Ground Plan:** Cruciform in plan with the tower at the west end acting as a porch.

**Dimensions:** Nave estimated to be c 17m (55ft) x 6m (19.6ft).

**Building materials:** Flint with stone dressings, slate roofs, tower has shingled spire.

**General Description:** The church is designed in the Early English style, and despite the giveaway slender, “weak” tower typical of the early phase of the Gothic Revival is remarkably correct in its detail, and represents an important point in the development of true Victorian Gothic. The proportions are also excellent, it is a truly graceful, if quite modest, building.
Externally the architecture is symmetrical and simple. The west tower is of three stages, the lower stage with a pointed doorway of two chamfered orders with a hoodmould to headstops. The stage above, which is not demarcated in any way, has a slender lancet in the west face and a clock in the south. Buttresses of two weatherings climb to a string course demarcating the belfry stage, which has large lancets with hoodmoulds as the doorway. The crenellated parapet is corbelled out, the corbel table simply moulded, behind this the slender octagonal spire rises like a long needle, almost as tall as the rest of the tower, topped by a weathervane with “Pelham buckle”.

The nave, transept and slightly lower chancel bays are demarcated by single cusped lancets, there are stepped triple lancet windows in the outer faces of the transepts and in the east wall. The chancel east corners have short gabletted angle buttresses. Corbel table throughout as with the tower parapet, coped and shouldered gables. There is a pointed doorway in the east wall of the south transept, and 18th-century wall tablets set onto the walls.

Inside the church is as little changed as it is outside. Looking up and west, stairs on the south side lead to the west gallery, which has two slender columns supporting a wooden front with blind cusped lancets, and houses an attractively quaint organ with Gothick case, otherwise crammed with benches.

The chancel arch and transept arches have continuous mouldings and simple capitals, the windows are shafted with capitals, of one order. The nave roof is an arch braced structure with struts with cusped open tracery infill supporting a gabled boarded ceiling, the braces taken down to moulded corbels. Looking east, the nave is fully pewed, very nice benches with poppyhead ends, with similar choir stalls to the east of the openings to the transepts. The quality of the carpentry is high.

There are several memorials to members of the Pelham family in the south transept, which is basically a memorial chapel to this family, these include a dedicated wooden hearse. The north transept is used as a sacristy and vestry, behind a panelled screen. The chancel is very attractive, well-lit including the attractive stained glass in the east window, with encaustic tiles and a stone reredos, again gilded, flanked by oak commandment boards with gilded lettering. There is also an 18th-century ledger slab in the floor in front of the altar.

**Furnishings and Fittings:** All c1838 unless noted otherwise.

**Altar:** Oak table.

**Reredos:** Tripartite carved stone reredos with blind cusped lancets. Takes up the whole width of the east window, appears to have been added in the mid 19th century. Flanked by oak panelling with commandments.

**Pulpit:** The pulpit is of oak, hexagonal with carved tracery panels, 1906.

**Lectern:** Wooden lectern, 1906, presented by T H W P in memory of his brothers Walter and Francis, the 5th and 6th Earls (carved into side panel).

**Font:** Stone font, octagonal bowl, initialled CP.
The interior looking east

**Stained glass**: The east window has the Ascension, donated in memory of the 3rd Earl of Chichester (see below), by Mayer of Munich in 1887.

**Monuments**:

- Black marble oval tablet on the chancel south wall to Elizabeth and Henry Scrase, died 1732, 1793. Coat of arms on apron.

- Brass on the north chancel wall, Deborah Goffe 1626, “the wife of Stephen Goffe preacher“.

- Ledger slab in the chancel of Edward Michelbourne, died 1700.

- White marble tablet, Revd Thomas Baker 1831, north wall chancel.

- South nave wall. Square marble tablet in memory of Henry Thomas, 3rd Earl of Chichester, died 1856. Builder of this church, Lord Lt of Sussex, President of the Church Missionary Society. The window was dedicated in his memory by his siblings and children in 1887.

- Several photographic portraits of men of the Pelham family, Earls of Chichester.

- On the north wall of the nave is a fine Elizabethan wall monument commemorating Sir John Pelham (died 1580) and his young son, Oliver (died 1584). Husband and wife, in whose mournful voice the inscription below is
phrased, facing each other kneeling, son behind the father. Brought here from the church of Holy Trinity Minories in the City of London.

- Wooden tablet, Jude Jones 1844-1919, north nave wall, nicely carved frame and pediment.

- Brass rubbing on linen hung on the south nave wall, priest with chalice.

- Royal arms, carved oak, gilded.

- External wall tablet in red veined stone: Edward Bland MA, Rector, died 1789.

- External wall tablet in red veined stone: Robert Speak died 1792, servant to Right Honourable Lord Pelham.

**Bells:** There is a ring of two bells, both cast by Thomas Mears I of Whitechapel in 1791, and both simply inscribed with that date. The larger weighs about 3½-cwt and is 26¾” diameter. The bell frame is probably of the same date and has jack-braced sides. Unusually it is set diagonally in the tower.

Clock by Gillett, Bland & co of Croydon.

**Organ:** Small single manual organ made by W Pilcher of London, originally functioned as a barrel organ, barrels now in baptistery.

**Communion plate:** Not seen. Paten 1759, 1762, chalice 1816. Set of 2 chalices and patens, flagon and alms dish given 1889.

**Registers:** Not seen. Baptisms and burials from 1813, held at Falmer.

**Other woodwork:** Choir stalls with poppy heads and carved side panels. 2 chairs in the sanctuary. Oak hearse, inlaid with brass rails, in memory of Jocelyn Pelham, 6th Earl died 1928.

**Communion rails:** Gothic tracery oak.

**War memorials:** On the north wall of the chancel is a plaster relief of St George commemorating Herbert Lyttelton Pelham who died in 1914 at the Battle of the Aisne. This is a cast of the alabaster one in St Mary’s Church in Lambeth designed by Ellen M Rope where Herbert’s father, Francis Godolphin Pelham (later 5th Earl of Chichester) was the rector.

Below this wooden cross, Capt H L Pelham, Royal Sussex Regiment.

One war grave, as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Date of death</th>
<th>Type of marker</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Captain John Buxton Pelham</td>
<td>21 February 1944</td>
<td>Private Memorial</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
State of repair: Summarised from the latest Quinquennial Inspection Report by Clive Mercer Associates of Chichester, January 2001. In generally good condition, though the roof of the church is leaking and the wooden shingles on the spire need investigation. An English Heritage grant has been refused because of the uncertainty surrounding the future.


Other churches in the area:

Falmer St Laurence: 19th-century church on medieval parish church site, listed Grade II. Rebuilt in 1815 and thoroughly restored in 1856 as a neo-Norman church. Chancel, nave and west tower which also serves as a porch. Large graveyard in quiet rural location. ¾ mile south-east.

Comments: A fine early 19th-century church of considerable architectural quality. The juxtaposition of the church, mansion, church estate cottages and farm is an ensemble of high quality and beauty, no less of value for being planned. The furnishings and fittings are of very good quality, especially the woodwork by the Jones dynasty, and interesting medieval and post-medieval monuments. The Pelham connection is of local historical interest. The site is of considerable archaeological potential and significance.

Compiled 10th March 2005 by Joseph Elders, the Archaeology Officer of the Council for the Care of Churches after a visit to the site on 10th February 2005.
ADVISORY BOARD FOR REDUNDANT CHURCHES

CRITICAL INFORMATION SUMMARY

This Critical Information Summary has been issued by the Advisory Board for Redundant Churches 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 Board gives no warranty, was (to the Board’s knowledge and belief) correct as at the date given on the document and is based on secondary sources and personal observation only.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parish</th>
<th>Stanmer</th>
<th>Dedication</th>
<th>None</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>County</td>
<td>East Sussex</td>
<td>Diocese</td>
<td>Chichester</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Address</td>
<td>Stanmer Park, East Sussex</td>
<td>Brighton. Archdeaconry of Chichester Brighton &amp; Hove City Council</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benefice &amp; Archdeaconry</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Authority</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NGR</td>
<td>TQ 336 095</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SMR</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Date of redundancy: Still in use.

Uses approved

Designations: LB, CA, SAM, SSSI, SINC, TPO etc.

- Church listed Grade II.
- Gate piers and gate separately listed, Grade II.
- The church is situated in the Stanmer Park Conservation Area.
- Stanmer Park is (1) listed in the Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest in England; (2) listed as a Local Nature Reserve.
- Within Sussex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
- Tree preservation Orders (re: yew trees)

Outline history of site & building

- Earliest reference to Stanmer is in 765. The medieval village believed to have been located either W of present village or between church and Stanmer Hall.
- Existing church built in 1838 to designs by Ralph Joanes of Lewes, was erected on the site of a medieval church.
- The estate was acquired by Brighton Council in 1947

Location in townscape or landscape

A prominent position within the planned landscape of Stanmer Park, NE of, and close to, Stanmer Place.

Constituent parts of building & site

W tower; nave; transepts; chancel.

Building: materials, plan form, construction sequence

Walls of flint with stone dressings. Roofs of slate.

Single build. Early English style.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Low space below church, e.g. crawl space only.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Notable features &amp; fittings of building (in chronological order)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Wall monument to Sir John Pelham, d. 1580 (N wall of nave) – originally in Holy Trinity, Minories, London</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Brass inscription to Deborah Goffe, d. 1626 (N wall of chancel)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• C18 wall tablet S wall of chancel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 3 C18 wall tablets incorporated into exterior walls of chancel &amp; N transept</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Organ of 1839, built as a barrel organ by W Pilcher of London</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Royal arms of Queen Victoria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• C19 turret clock</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• E window stained glass by Heaton, Butler &amp; Bayne</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Battlefield cross and plaster memorial to Hon H. L. Pelham, d.1914 (cast of alabaster memorial in St. Mary’s church, Lambeth by E M Rope)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Adoration of the Magi, terracotta, by George Tinworth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Note:</strong> Wooden fittings carved by Jude Jones, 1844-1919, carpenter and foreman to the Earls of Chichester, and his son Francis Jude Jones.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>War memorials</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Battlefield cross and memorial to Hon H. L. Pelham, d.1914</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bells</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 bells of 1791 cast by Thomas Mears of Whitechapel.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other buildings or pieces of land</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The former donkey wheel house to the N of the church (outside the curtilage) is in the process of being converted to use as a museum (2007)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Historical associations: people &amp; events</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Close association with the Pelham family, Earls of Chichester from 1801. The Pelhams built Stanmer Place in the 1720s, and the 3rd Earl financed the construction of the church in 1838.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Human remains</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evidence of burials within church</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Condition</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State of repair QIR, Structural Engr Rpt.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building at Risk Register: Local, national</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Planning and amenity issues</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Local social &amp; amenity profile</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Local plan</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Identified risk of flooding</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Suggested classes of use</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Availability &amp; provision of mains/services/WCs</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Archaeological implications of alternative use (church/churchyard/site)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Human remains considerations</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Churchyard, Curtilage and planning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Status of churchyard</strong></th>
<th>***</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>General character and setting of churchyard and curtilage</strong></td>
<td>Rectangular churchyard. A flint building in N churchyard contains a well and donkey wheel.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Churchyard monuments, memorials &amp; chapels</strong></td>
<td>Numerous grave markers from late C18 onwards, including Pelham family graves on S side of church (Jocelyn &amp; Francis Pelham possibly by Eric Gill? or Macdonald Gill?).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Commonwealth war-graves</strong></td>
<td>1: J. B. Pelham (8th Earl of Chichester), d.1944</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Boundary walls &amp; lych-gate (N.B. war memorial gates)</strong></td>
<td>Flint wall (railings on W side) with gate (listed Grade II).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Churchyard or adjacent burial ground subject to Open Spaces Act</strong></td>
<td>[N.B. Church situated in a public park]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Use dependent on availability of amenity land (not within churchyard or curtilage)</strong></td>
<td>***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Enabling development required/in place</strong></td>
<td>***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Relevant S.106 Agreement</strong></td>
<td>***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Access/egress to site (highways issues)</strong></td>
<td>Church situated in a public park.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Parking on/off site, street</strong></td>
<td>Parking available within park [no dedicated parking area in curtilage]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Flora &amp; fauna</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protected species as listed by Countryside Officer</td>
<td>***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trees subject to Preservation Orders</td>
<td>2 yew trees in churchyard.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Records and references</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PM report: 10-Mar-05 Pm 2065 List Description VCH Sussex, vii The Victorian March 2004</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ABRC assessment</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visual contribution of building &amp; site</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment of archaeological potential</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall heritage significance in local &amp; national contexts</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date compiled</td>
<td>11-Jun-04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Updated</td>
<td>26-Aug-04; 11-Jul-05; 15-Feb-06</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Parish | STANMER | Dedication | Not known
---|---|---|---
Diocese | Chichester | County | Sussex
Address | Stanmer Park, Brighton & Hove
LPA | Brighton & hove UPA

**Listing & Designation**
- Church listed Grade II
- Gate & Posts listed Grade II
- Stanmer Park encloses 3 Scheduled Sites (SAM) and 10 Archaeologically Sensitive Areas (ASA)
- TPO re: Yew tree(s) NW corner of churchyard

**Conservation Area** | Y
**Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty** | Y
**Environmentally Sensitive Area** | Y
**Registered Parks & Gardens** | Y Grade II
**Local Nature Reserve** | Y

**Outline**
- the church stands on the site of a C14 church which might stand on the site of an earlier church associated with the medieval (pre-Conquest) village of Stanmer
- the existing church was built by the Earls of Chichester in 1838 to designs by Ralph Joanes of Lewes, and furnished by Jude & Francis Jones (estate carpenters) between 1844-1919. The church contains monuments and memorials from the medieval village church, as well as monuments associated with the Pelham family
- Exterior: randomly coursed flint with freestone dressings under a slate roofs, shingles to the spire
- Interior: finely coursed stone walls and architectural details. Good oak panelled roof, W gallery and seating

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. The Committee’s advice does not affect the “general presumption in favour of the preservation of listed buildings” and the need for developers “to justify their proposals” and to “show why works which would affect the character of the listed building are desirable or necessary” (PPG 15, paragraphs 3.3 & 3.4).
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

The full text of the Criteria and a report on the public consultation can be consulted at http://www.britarch.ac.uk/abrc/index.html [a link to the CBC website is in preparation]

1. Context
   1.1 The archaeological profile of the area extends from Bronze Age to the 19th century and includes the church and the medieval village of Stanmer [DMV], the latter recorded in Domesday Book [1086]. H
   1.2 The church site is part of the historic development of Stanmer, and might be the land referred to in a Charter of 760 x 771 which was granted for a monasterium [ecclesiastical centre] at Stanmer H
   1.3 Stanmer Park encloses 3 scheduled sites [SAMs], and has 6 further scheduled sites within a radius of 3kms of the church. H
   1.4 Stanmer House, its ancillary buildings, and gardens were designed and laid out by Nicholas Dubois in 1721-7. The park was extended and enhanced from 1748 to 1805, and is registered as being of Special Historic Interest (Grade II). M-H
   1.5 The existing church was built in 1838 by the Earls of Chichester (owners of Stanmer Park) and replaced a 3-cell 14th century structure comprising chancel, nave, and west tower with needle spire. M-H
   1.6 The church is a principal feature of value in a designated landscape of Special Historic Interest. H
   1.7 The site, setting, and wider area context of the church and churchyard meets the designation requirements for natural beauty and nature reserves, environmental sensitivity, historic landscapes, archaeological sensitivity. H

Conclusion: High

2. Churchyard
   2.1 The church is a key feature of an historic landscape and is assumed to stand on or near the site of its medieval predecessor and within a churchyard containing burials, monuments and tombstones, and mature yew trees – which are subject to statutory protection [TPO] M-H
   2.2 The church stands near the west boundary of the churchyard. A circular pond marks the NE corner of the site, and a stone built former donkey wheel house marks the NW corner (outside the churchyard). The S & E boundaries are marked by a flint-walled ha-ha, and the W wall by railings enclosing a Grade II listed gate and gate-posts. M
   2.3 The churchyard contains monuments and memorials dating from the C18, including Pelham family monuments (Earls of Chichester). M-H

Conclusion: Moderate to high
3 Church
3.1 The church is a Grade II listed building dating from 1838 with furnishings, fixtures and fittings of 1844-1919. M-H
3.2 The cruciform church is unusual for its date and is well proportioned and has a fine balance of elements and massing. M-H
3.3 The interior of the church is of notable quality as an architectural space and has fine stonework and architectural detailing, and timberwork of notable quality (roof, gallery, seating). M-H
3.4 The church is of national historic interest as an unaltered example of an early Victorian estate church of the nobility designed, built and furnished by local (estate) craftsmen. M-H
Conclusion: Moderate to high

4 Contents
4.1 Wall monument to Sir John Pelham, d. 1580 (N wall of nave) – relocated from the church of Holy Trinity, Minories, London. M
4.2 Brass inscription to Deborah Goffe, d. 1626 (N wall of chancel). M
4.3 Organ of 1839, built as a barrel organ by W. Pilcher of London. H
4.4 Royal arms of Queen Victoria. M
4.5 E window stained glass by Heaton, Butler & Bayne. M
4.6 Battlefields cross and plaster memorial to Hon H. L. Pelham, d.1914 (cast of alabaster memorial in St. Mary’s church, Lambeth by E M Rope). M
4.6.1 Adoration of the Magi, terracotta, by George Tinworth (1843-1913). M
4.7 Wooden furnishings and fittings carved by Jude Jones, 1844-1919, carpenter and foreman to the Earls of Chichester, and also by his son Francis Jude Jones. M-H
Conclusion: Moderate to high

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.

1. Change to the churchyard and curtilage
1.1 Notable constraints
   - The historic and archaeological sensitivity of the site. M-H
   - The significance of the church and Stanmer Park as complementary foci of an C18 planned landscape subsequently modified in the C18 & C19. M-H
   - The ‘group value’ of the church, churchyard with its protected trees, boundary walls and railings, the listed gate and gate-posts, and the former donkey-wheel house (incorporating medieval worked stones). M-H
   - Churchyard monuments & tombstones, and human remains. M
   - The lack of on-site parking
   - The lack of DDA compliant access
1.2 Scope for change, potential impacts and possible mitigation

- Improved pedestrian access:
  - **Scope**: Some scope – (1) provision of temporary ramp at churchyard gate
  - **Potential impact**: Low – affecting setting
  - **Mitigation**: by design and sensitivity to materials

- Provision of vehicular access:
  - **Scope**: None – road single width without verge; parking available to NW
  - **Potential impact**: High – affecting setting
  - **Mitigation**: None envisaged

- Development within churchyard
  - **Scope**: Little or none
  - **Potential impact**: High – affecting setting, architectural quality of the church, churchyard monuments, human remains, archaeology of site
  - **Mitigation**: any proposal for development within the churchyard would require full archaeological evaluation with the possibility of archaeological excavation and recording in advance of development

2 Change to the exterior of the church

2.1 Notable constraints

- Landmark value of the church as one of two key architectural features in a planned landscape of Special Historic Interest. **M-H**
- The overall architectural quality and aesthetic balance of the church as a feature of outstanding value its churchyard setting, in which the S elevation of the church constitutes its principal view. **M-H**
- The historic and archaeological interest of the site (incl. human remains). **M-H**

2.2 Scope for change, potential impacts and possible mitigation

- Addition to the exterior
  - **Scope**: None
  - **Potential impacts**: High – affecting setting, historic and archaeological interest of the building and site, the architectural quality of the church
  - **Mitigation**: None envisaged

- Alteration of the exterior
  - **Scope**: None
  - **Potential impacts**: High – affecting historic and archaeological interest of the fabric, the architectural quality of the church, the balance of elements & massing
  - **Mitigation**: None envisaged

3 Changes to the interior of the church

3.1 Notable constraints

- The architectural and aesthetic quality and historic interest of the furnished interior as an early Victorian estate church for the nobility. **M-H**
- The quality of the interior as an architectural space. **M-H**

3.2 Scope for change, potential impacts and possible mitigation

- Alteration of the interior:
  a. Sub-division of principal space:
Scope: Little or none – scope to be fully justified by need

Potential high impacts:
Moderate to High – affecting the architectural quality of the interior as a little changed example of a furnished mid C19 estate church complete with the monuments and family memorabilia of the Earls of Chichester.
High – affecting on the architectural quality of the interior resulting from the removal of the west gallery (and organ), the pews and pew platforms.

Mitigation: preservation by record; sub-division restricted to the provision of user/visitor facilities (possibly in the N transept – concealed behind the existing screen)

b. Unified floor level:
Scope: Scope to be assessed need – the chancel pavement is only slightly above the level of the nave

Potential impacts: Low to moderate – affecting the historic interest and archaeological quality of the interior

Mitigation: by temporary or permanent ramps

4 Change to the contents of the church other than seating

4.1 Notable constraints
- The contribution made by the contents to the historic interest and aesthetic quality of the interior, and to the overall importance of the entity as a relatively complete example of a mid C19 estate church fitted out by estate craftsmen.
- The historic interest of the Pelham family monuments – some of which have been preserved from the earlier church or have been brought to the church from elsewhere.

4.2 Scope for change, potential impacts and possible mitigation
- Removal or relocation of contents
  Scope limited by the moderate interest of the contents individually, and their moderate to high interest as an entity
  Potential impacts: Moderate to high – affecting the historic interest of the church interior as a reflection of the history of the C19 church furnishing
  High – affecting the preservation of the galleries and original raked seating;
  Mitigation: Preservation of the interior furnishings as an entity by record

5 Provisional conclusions

5.1 The church, which is a Grade II building [potentially Grade II*] of moderate to high significance, has little scope for change without moderate to high impacts which are unlikely to be fully mitigated.

Church House
Mar 2008 / revised May 2010
Water for Stanmer house was provided by means of a seventeenth century well house or horse gin engine adjacent to the house. This was presumably used until piped water was available.

This photograph was taken about 1900, note the size of the water buckets.
The Rt Revd the Bishop of Chichester

By email only

Dear Bishop

Mission and Pastoral Measure 2011
Closed Church Building of Stanmer (dedication not known)
Parish of Stanmer with Falmer
Proposed Pastoral (Church Buildings Disposal) Scheme

Following the publication of the draft scheme providing for the closed church at Stanmer and its churchyard to be sold by the Commissioners to KSD, the lessees of Stanmer House (Brighton and Hove Borough Council being the owners of the House and Stanmer Park), for social, cultural and community purposes and for occasional Christian worship we received a representation against, three in favour, three of comment together with an out-of-time one of comment. I attach a copy of the representations.

The representation against is from the Stanmer Preservation Society (“the SPS”), with those in support coming from the Stanmer with Falmer PCC; the Chichester DBF; and Mr James Drever (although based on a misunderstanding), with the comments coming from the Stanmer Estates Manager; Historic England; and Mr Peter Sharrack, a Brighton resident, and the out-of-time one from Mr Kevin Westgate, a former churchwarden at Stanmer.

Summary of the representation against

The SPS says that when it was asked to submit proposals for the future of the church, it and the Stanmer Residents Association were unable to compete with KSD on financial grounds. The SPS says that the sale of the church to private developers represents yet another example of pernicious privatisation of the Stanmer Estate, and regrets the further loss of amenity and public access to Listed Heritage Assets, e.g., the Horse Engine and the reinstated historic Stable in the Stable Block which have not been publicly accessible since their renovation.

The SPS objects to the inclusion of the Donkey Wheelhouse in the ‘annexed land’ as part of the proposed sale to KSD as it has made an application, which it expects will

Annex F
succeed, for voluntary First Registration of the land on which the Wheelhouse sits. The SPS requests a delay on this aspect of the Scheme at least until the Land Registry has responded.

It says it has watched in dismay all its good works at Stanmer being dismantled piece by piece, including now the iconic Stanmer Church, which it had maintained and kept open to the public every weekend for years before its licence ended in June 2021. The SPS welcomes the protection afforded by the stringent restrictive covenants imposed in the sale of all Church of England churches but is worried that they might be varied or disregarded in the future, as has happened elsewhere on the Stanmer Estate.

It is fully aware of the structural work needed and still considers an Historic England upgrade to Grade II* to be the best way to protect the extraordinarily high quality of the craftsmanship throughout the building, which has always played a central role not just to its Society, but to the village and the whole Estate.

The Commissioners’ Closed Churches Case Officer suggested two possible ways for the matter to proceed in order to safeguard the Commissioners’ interests if the SPS’s Land Registry Application is unsuccessful:

(i) leaving the Donkey Wheel in the draft Scheme, but transferring it to the SPS which would then take it on for £1, plus payment of the Commissioners’ legal costs; OR

(ii) leaving the Donkey Wheel in the draft Scheme and proceeding with the sale to KSD, on the understanding that the SPS would continue to use it, but KSD become owners.

both of which would involve the SPS withdrawing its objection in the first instance. The Society responds that its application to the Land Registry is progressing rapidly through its system and, in the unlikely event that its application should fail, the SPS would be happy to receive the Donkey Wheelhouse from the Commissioners for the sum of £1, but as a small charity says it would be irresponsible for it to agree to pay the Commissioners’ legal fees.

**Summary of the representations in support**

The PCC of Stanmer with Falmer says that it supports the scheme to sell Stanmer Church and wishes the building to be kept in good order and used for the benefit of the local community.

Chichester DBF supports the scheme.

James Drever – not resident in the diocese has misunderstood who the proposed purchaser is (KSD) and says that he is delighted that the SPS will take on the church, and is especially pleased that it will facilitate a range of uses, including (and especially) occasional use for worship - the very purpose for which the church was built some 13 centuries ago; he also hopes that the benefice will be encouraged to make use of the church.
Comments

The Stanmer Estates Manager has a concern about the vague proposed use put forward by the prospective purchaser as he cannot see how it would benefit from it. However, as the purchaser is well funded, and, he believes, has put significant effort and resource into the Stanmer House, hopefully the same would be true for the fabric of the church.

In terms of the disposal he feels it would be beneficial to transfer the ownership of the well house to the SPS who have been using the building and opening it to the public for around 30 years; such a direct transfer would make this a certainty rather than a vague statement. The well house is a very prominent and fascinating feature of the park and provides an insight into how difficult life was for residents in the not too distant past which is great to share with the visitors.

He asks that the many artefacts inside the church, some from the SPS and others, that link to the cultural legacy of Stanmer and village life are not lost in the transfer process.

Historic England explains that the Stanmer Estate comprises the 18th century historic park and garden and says that it does not object to the principle of the sale of the church for the proposed uses as these have the potential to enable minimum subdivision of the main volumes of the interior, thereby helping to retain the significance of the building. The use for occasional Christian worship will also help to sustain its significance as this is the use for which the Church was built.

In addition, an appropriate disposal could secure funding for repairs to arrest further deterioration, the need for which has been described in the 2021 Condition Report commissioned by the Diocese.

HE would like to know more about KSD Group’s proposals and business plan for the church, including whether it is to be used in association with activities at Stanmer House, and how the proposed uses would be delivered in practice. This is so it can assess whether the scheme would maintain Stanmer Church’s significance and provide it with a long-term sustainable future. It has not seen any details of the proposed uses or conversion work and notes that the sale would be to KSD Support Services Ltd, a maintenance and facilities management company. It says it is aware, that until very recently, Stanmer House was in use as a café, restaurant and function venue. In 2021, KSD Group obtained the commercial lease for the house and subsequently reopened the ground floor café as well as using part of the building as office space. The building now is also being used for some functions.

It is also aware that the SPS has looked after the Well House and Donkey Wheel, and provided public access to it, for around 40 years, and wishes to continue to do so.

In light of this, it asks that consideration should be given to allow the SPS to continue its involvement with these buildings, including potentially taking on the ownership. This would have the benefit of maintaining public access to these interesting heritage features and would also allow for the SPS to continue its community activity.
Peter Sharrack says that he trusts that the Commissioners will have reassured themselves regarding KSD’s suitability, fitness, and intentions, as it would be a shame if the building was purchased only to be maintained as a tangible asset on a company’s financial balance sheet - or to be left to fall into further disrepair so that a conversion of its interior into luxury apartments would be the only reasonable way its outward appearance could be preserved. A building’s ‘listed’ status alone does not prevent its conversion into apartments if permission from a local authority is granted within current government guidelines.

In recent years there have been ideas for how the church could be used: as a venue for ecumenical and inter-faith retreats; as a centre for mindfulness studies; and as a hub for ‘social/green prescribing’ by local GPs. He says that maybe a new owner (KSD or whoever) would incorporate some of them.

Out-of-time

Kevin Westgate, a chartered building surveyor, says that as a former churchwarden of Stanmer church he is concerned to hear that the building and churchyard are proposed to be passed to the current owners of Stanmer House who use that property for commercial use.

In his opinion this church is a set time-piece frozen unchanged from the moment the Earls of Chichester departed Stanmer for Wiltshire in 1947, too special, too fragile to be lost from the local and national pool of historic places which commercial use would inevitably bring, but rather be preserved and kept available for public access by a charitable trust such as the Church Conservation Trust or a similar body, which would give it a certain future.

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

1. What were the main reasons for the proposal to recommend sale to KSD?

2. What is the exact nature of the proposed uses? Please comment on Mr Sharrack’s concerns on any future conversion into luxury flats and confirm whether covenants would be included in any sale to prevent this and to ensure that the building is properly maintained.

3. Would you be happy for the matter to be put on hold until the outcome of the SPS’s application to the Land Registry is known? If SPS’s application does not succeed, would you be prepared for the Donkey Wheel to be dealt with in one of the ways suggested by the Closed Churches Case Officer?

4. Regarding the second of these options, have the purchasers agreed to allow the SPS to continue to use the Donkey Wheelhouse if it is included in the sale to KSD? If so, would this be formally documented and what
arrangements would be made to ensure public access to the Donkey Wheel and the Wellhouse would not be unduly, if at all, restricted?

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

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

The next meeting of the Mission, Pastoral and Church Property Committee at which this case could be considered is due to be held on 22 March. If the matter is to be considered at this meeting it would be helpful to receive your response by Friday 10 February. This is to allow time for this letter and your reply to be sent to the representatives, for them to make any further comments and, if necessary, for you to respond. It also provides some additional time to gauge where the Stanmer Preservation Society’s dealings with the Land Registry has reached.

The Commissioners are required to consider the representations under the quasi-judicial process laid down by the Measure. A legal challenge may arise from the Commissioners’ decision if, among other matters, it is based materially on incorrect information. Of necessity the Commissioners rely on others to provide information to assist their deliberations, and to this end I should be grateful for your help.

The Commissioners will decide on the basis of the written representations whether oral representations will be heard, or the case considered on the papers alone. The decision on whether to hold a hearing is one which will be taken by the Commissioners in the light of the particular circumstances of the case. We will confirm that decision in due course.

I am sending a copy of this letter to Emma Arbuthnot and Scott Ralph at your Diocesan Office and also to the Commissioners’ Case Officer, Adrian Browning.

Yours sincerely

Rex Andrew
Closed Church Building of Stanmer


I have read through your helpful summary of the representations, both for and against, the proposed pastoral (Church Buildings Disposal) scheme. I have also spoken to our Property Director, Scott Ralph, who has been with the diocese since the commencement of this case, he has aided me in compiling this response, and can assist if you need further questions answering.

Pages four and five of your letter lists six questions, I will take these in order.

1. The main reason for recommending the sale to KSD is that they were the only bidder with the necessary finances to undertake the repairs to the building that are required. Two other bids were received, both of these from organisations without their own funding, meaning they would then have to rely on grant applications. KSD also have a background of working with historic buildings and currently hold the lease for Stanmer House.

The SPS is an organisation that has been in existence for some considerable time but have not demonstrated that they have any proven track record in successful grant applications.

Indeed, the second paragraph of the SPS proposal stated: “We would like to work with the Diocese Board of Finance and Brighton Council and others to seek appropriate funding for emergency repairs as a matter of some urgency, to allow the reopening of the church without delay.”

As the church has been closed since 2007, and now serves no missional purpose, it would not be a good use of diocesan resources, both financial and in terms of staff time, in seeking to reopen the church.
The other proposal was put forward by a relatively new residents committee at Stanmer. It was an impressively put together proposal, but relied on grant and crowd funding to secure the necessary funds for repairs.

Given all of the above, it was felt that KSD have both the necessary funds and expertise to ensure a sustainable future for the building.

2. It might be helpful if I quote from KSDs written proposal for the church, they state:

“We intend to work in collaboration with Stanmer Preservation Society (SPS), Plumpton College, and other local stakeholders to maximise the use of the church for meetings and community events and are keen to discuss plans with them. They also go on to state: “...using it as a visitor centre to attract more people to the park, holding seasonal events such as Christmas Carols and summer fayre’s”.

Ultimately, they feel the Church has huge potential to become a local community asset, and in turn can be used to attract more users to the park from the city and wider county. The benefit to KSD in this is that more footfall in the park will help support their other commercial ventures, such as Stanmer House.

In terms of the concern about the church being converted into luxury flats or similar – this simply cannot happen under the proposed scheme, which is for cultural, social and community purposes and for occasional Christian worship. If KSD, or any other future owner to the church wanted to look at other alternative uses then they would need to obtain a revised scheme from the Commissioners.

There will be a covenant included that will put a positive obligation on KSD to put the building into a wind and water tight condition.

3. The resolution of future of Stanmer Church has taken many years, and we do not feel that delaying matters further by waiting for the outcome of the SPS’s land registry application is what is best for the church building. We do not have details of the documentation that has been put to Land Registry, so we cannot assess whether this application stands any chance of success. Nor have we seen any formal response from the Land Registry on the matter, so we have no way of knowing how this application has progressed, or is progressing.

In any case the application by the SPS is simply not needed. We have openly stated to them that we would be prepared to transfer the Donkey Wheel to them as part of this scheme. As you have noted, the Closed Church Case Officer Adrian Browning, put forward two options as a suggested way forward, these are:

1.) The Donkey Wheel remains in the draft Scheme, but it is transferred to the SPS;

or

2.) The Donkey Wheel remains in the draft Scheme, and we proceed with the sale to KSD. This would be on the understanding that the SPS would continue to use it, but KSD become owners.

We are content with either of those options, but would prefer option 1.
4. The purchasers are aware of the SPS’s interest in the Donkey Wheel, but there is no formal agreement regarding the SPS’s use or public access. This is why our preference is for option 1.

5. I have no concerns that these proposals will negatively impact on the mission of the Church of England. The proposed use is one that will see the church used as a community asset and comes with the support of the PCC of Stanmer and Falmer.

6. I think it is worth me pointing out the history regarding the SPS and the effort the diocese has put in to resolve the future of the building. I note on the second page of your letter that the SPS have stated that “they were unable to compete with KSD on financial grounds.”. However, the position here is more nuanced than that.

When the church closed in 2007 the diocese had discussions with the SPS about them formally taking the building on. We supported the SPS in doing this by offering them advice, and more importantly, allowing them temporary use of the building so they could develop their plans.

However, no firm proposal was ever put forward by them to take on the building, indeed they sought for other organisations to take the building on, on their behalf – this included both the Churches Conservation Trust and the Friends of Friendless Churches. Both organisations did not take any proposals forward.

The diocese undertook some holding repairs to the building, via an application to the Church Commissioners Temporary Maintenance Account. However, we had always been clear that maintaining the building was not a good use of diocesan resources, and that the answer was to secure a new owner that did have the necessary resources.

We have given every opportunity for the SPS to put forward an viable proposal for the building. Eventually when we did widen the scope of our search for a new user, the SPS did submit a formal proposal to take on the building, but that contained no information on how this would be funded, and as I have outlined in point 1, sought for others (The DBF and Local Authority) to work with them to secure funding.

I hope that answers your questions sufficiently, but please do come back to me regarding this matter if you have further questions.

Yours,

+Martin
Representations – Stanmer

Against

(i) Stanmer Preservation Society

For

(i) Stanmer PCC
(ii) Chichester DBF
(iii) James Drever – not resident in the diocese

Comments

(i) Stanmer Estate Manager
(ii) Historic England
(iii) Peter Sharrack – Brighton resident

Out-of-time

(i) Kevin Westgate – former churchwarden

Stanmer Preservation Society

Original submission

Your Name (required)
Sue Craig

Nature of interest in case
Chair of Stanmer Preservation Society

SPS response to Consultation re sale of Stanmer Church to KSD

The Stanmer Preservation Society has watched in dismay as all our good works at Stanmer are being dismantled piece by piece, including now iconic Stanmer Church. Having maintained the building and opened to the public every weekend for years before our license ended in June 2021, the church has always played a central role not just to our Society, but to the village and the whole Estate.

We were grateful to the Diocese for allowing the church to remain open for so long following its decommission in 2008. We also appreciate that structural repairs need to be made as a matter of some urgency – not least the subsidence under the Vestry, as we remain concerned at the current state of the Crypt. When we were asked to submit proposals for the future of the church, Stanmer Residents and the Stanmer Preservation Society were unable to compete with KSD on financial grounds.

The SPS still considers an Historic England upgrade to Grade II* to be the best way to protect the extraordinarily high quality of the craftsmanship throughout the building. It is possible that this option forms part of KSD’s sketchy plans for a visitor centre, but the fact that they intend to ‘work in collaboration with the SPS, Plumpton College
Representations – Stanmer

and other local stakeholders’ suggests we might yet have some involvement in the future of Stanmer Church. However, we can find no mention of the village residents who do not consider themselves to be ‘local stakeholders’. Surely their voices should be heard the loudest? After all, it was their estate church long before it became a parish church.

Our society welcomes the protection afforded by the stringent restrictive covenants imposed in the sale of all Church of England churches but is worried that they might be varied or disregarded in the future, as has happened elsewhere on the Stanmer Estate.

It is of regret to us that the sale of the church to private developers represents yet another example of pernicious privatisation of the Stanmer Estate, resulting in further loss of amenity and public access to Listed Heritage Assets, eg the Horse Engine and the reinstated historic Stable in the Stable Block which have not been publicly accessible since their renovation.

The Stanmer Preservation Society objects to the inclusion of the Donkey Wheelhouse in the ‘annexed land’ of this proposed sale to KSD and requests a delay on this aspect of the Scheme at least until Land Registry has responded to our application for First Registration.

SPS 2nd series of exchanges

Thu 05/01/2023 17:12

Dear Adrian

Thank you for your email.

We have again heard from Land Registry asking us to provide our Charity Commission Registration Certificate and Trustees' details and have been advised that an inspection of the building will follow soon after as Notices will need to be posted.

On this basis, it would seem that our application is progressing rapidly through the system. Regarding your concerns about the serious risk of being left with ownership of the Donkey Wheelhouse, which is not mentioned in Canon Robinson's Declaration nor in your Draft Scheme, in the unlikely event that our registration application should fail, we would of course be happy to receive the Donkey Wheelhouse from you for the sum of £1. As a small charity, however, it would be irresponsible for us to agree to pay your legal fees.

Accordingly, as both of your options require us to withdraw our objections, we would like to decline your offers and leave our objection in the Draft Scheme. We will of course continue to keep you posted of our application’s progress through the first registration process.

Looking forward to hearing from you.
Sue Craig
SPS Chair
Representations – Stanmer

On Tue, 3 Jan 2023 at 16:12, Adrian Browning <adrian.browning@churchofengland.org> wrote:
Dear Sue

Thank you for your e-mail.

In my e-mail of 13th December I set out a couple of options for your Society to consider. As the Commissioners need to determine how to take forward the draft scheme, we do need to hear how you wish to proceed.

Therefore, if we do not hear from you before midnight on Tuesday 10th January, we will assume you wish to sustain your representation against the draft scheme. We would then write further to explain the process of how your representation would be dealt with.

The location of the donkey wheelhouse was clearly marked on the plan included in the statutory declaration. We do not think there is any benefit in contacting Canon Robinson on this point as this would not in itself open up any further options for resolving the future of the building nor give any further weight to your claim over the building. We are prepared to convey the donkey wheelhouse to the Society but this would involve us having to proceed with the scheme as drafted.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Kind regards.

Adrian Browning

From: Stanmer Preservation Society
Sent: 30 December 2022 12:42
To: Adrian Browning <adrian.browning@churchofengland.org>
Cc: Scott Ralph <Scott.Ralph@chichester.anglican.org>
Subject: Re: Stanmer Church - Donkey Wheel

Dear Adrian

I must apologise for the delay in responding to your last email, but I have only just returned from visiting my family over the Christmas holidays.

We have replied to Land Registry today to clarify that we are seeking registration solely for the land beneath the Donkey Wheelhouse. We also confirmed that the only access to the building is via a public footpath to the north, over council land, and emphasised that there is no direct access from within the churchyard.

Thank you for your attachments which helped us to understand better your position. However, I can only conclude that Canon Robinson’s glaring omission of any mention of the Donkey Wheelhouse from his statutory declaration would suggest that he did not consider the building to have any connection with the church and churchyard.
Throughout his tenure at Stanmer, Canon Robinson would have been fully aware of the SPS and our society's management of the building, after all we held the only set of keys, and I feel sure that he would have mentioned these facts had he been aware that the building was being included on church land. There is only a faint outline of the building showing on the plan, so perhaps it could have been signed in haste?

Do you think it might be feasible to establish the facts with Canon Robinson himself?

I'd be happy to make contact if you think it would help.

Looking forward to hearing from you.

Best wishes.
Sue Craig
SPS Chair

On Tue, 20 Dec 2022 at 16:24, Adrian Browning <adrian.browning@churchofengland.org> wrote:

Dear Sue

Thank you for your e-mail. The church and churchyard being of ancient foundation, there are no actual title deeds. You will appreciate this is not unusual where Church of England churches are concerned. In these eventualities and with the approval of the Land Registry, we rely on statutory declarations to establish proof of title. This was the case at Stanmer where we have a statutory declaration sworn by the former rector Canon A Robinson. In addition the draft Pastoral (Church Buildings Disposal) scheme, given its status in law would, when made, provide us with parliamentary title and the power to dispose of the land as the scheme provides.

It is indeed true that the church and churchyard are also unregistered.

For your information the statutory declaration is included within the attached title report. I look forward to hearing from you further when you have considered this.

Kind regards

Adrian

From: Stanmer Preservation Society  Sent: 14 December 2022 12:55
To: Adrian Browning <adrian.browning@churchofengland.org>
Subject: Re: Stanmer Church - Donkey Wheel

Dear Adrian

Thank you for your email.

We are pleased to say that we have been in contact with Land Registry recently and have been informed that the Registration process could be lengthy. But they have
Representations – Stanmer

issued a temporary Title No and have banked our cheque, so we are optimistic for a favourable outcome.

However, Land Registry have also confirmed that the land beneath the church and churchyard is also currently unregistered.

Please could you send us a copy of your proof of ownership before we decide whether or not to withdraw our objection to the inclusion of the Donkey Wheelhouse in the Draft Scheme.

Looking forward to hearing from you.

Best wishes.
Sue Craig
SPS Chair

On Tue, 13 Dec 2022 at 13:12, Adrian Browning <adrian.browning@churchofengland.org> wrote:

Dear Sue

I refer to your recent email objecting to the inclusion of the Donkey Wheel in the draft Scheme.

I was wondering if there had been any further exchanges with the Land Registry following your email of 25 November on your registration of the building?

In discussion with the Diocese, the situation the Church of England wants to avoid is one where, should your application to the LR be unsuccessful, we are left as being the owners of the building. As it is by no means clear what the outcome of your application to the LR will be, we have to take that risk seriously.

We have a couple of options for the SPS to consider:

1. We leave the Donkey Wheel in the draft Scheme, but transfer it to the SPS, and you then take it on lock, stock, and barrel. We would sell this to you for £1, plus payment of our legal costs.
2. We leave the Donkey Wheel in the draft Scheme and proceed with the sale to KSD. This would be on the understanding that the SPS would continue to use it, but KSD become owners.

Each of these would involve you needing to withdraw your objection to the draft scheme.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Kind regards

Adrian

Adrian Browning BA(Hons) MSc CHE
Representations – Stanmer

For

Stanmer PCC

I am writing to inform you that the PCC of Stanmer with Falmer supports the scheme to sell Stanmer Church and wishes the building to be kept in good order and used for the benefit of the local community.

Susan Paine
Churchwarden
Stanmer with Falmer

Chichester DBF

Many thanks Adrian.

We do of course support the scheme for the reasons given.

Gabrielle Higgins
Diocesan Secretary

James Drever – there appears to be a misunderstanding over who the proposed purchaser is

Is your representation for or against the draft scheme or order (required)

For

Representation:

Dear Sir/Madam,

I have no direct connection with Stanmer, although I have visited the church and surrounding park on many occasions, and attended worship there after the closure scheme was made, but during a 6 or so month period a little over a decade ago during which it was used for Greek Orthodox worship whilst their church (the former St John's Carlton Hill) had been damaged by arson. At that time I was undertaking a pilgrimage/tour across Sussex, as part of a wider pilgrimage that I have been undertaking across the country for a number of years. I have also been inside on other occasions, when it has been open during Sunday afternoons, and it was on those occasions that I was able to speak with members of the Stanmer Preservation Society who might be in attendance. There have been occasions when the church has had an annual advent carol service, although I have not seen this advertised by the Stanmer Preservation Society on its website for a while (I asked the then incumbent about it nearly a decade ago, but he was unaware of any services and did not have any information, never mind a key). I understand that it has been deteriorating for over a decade, but on my last inspection just under a year ago, it did not appear to be deteriorating to any obvious degree, although the churchyard is frankly neglected.

The closure of the church was a disappointment, and at the time (with the closure of
Representations – Stanmer

Merston and Wiston at about the same time) I was concerned that it portended a wave of closures of ancient foundations; fortunately, that has not happened, as yet. Rather inevitably, the main attention of the benefice was focused upon Falmer, separated from Stanmer by the A27, which had functioned as a sort of estate village for the Park, and the two livings had been united since 1835. Indeed, the church having lost its primary function as an estate church following the gradual departure of the Pelham family for Wiltshire and elsewhere in the aftermath of the last war, and the acquisition of much the estate by the Brighton & Hove Corporation (following the strategy of Sir Herbert Carden, who sought to protect Brighton's water supply from development), the university was almost the church's only hope. That hope proved abortive: there had been some fitful attempts to have it function as a 'chapel' for the adjacent university, but this gradually faded away under a long, if devout, incumbency.

However, Stanmer is one of the oldest sites of Christian worship in Sussex, and claims have been made for it having an early minster status, based on chartulary evidence from the middle of the eighth century, but it later functioned as a prebendal church of South Malling. However, the main reason why I thought it disappointing that the CCT or like organisation did not come to its rescue is its association with the Church Commissioners: the third earl of Chichester, who is buried at Stanmer, was the founding First Ecclesiastical Commissioner (see the late Geoffrey Best's description of his work in 'Temporal Pillars' (1964)), and it was he who oversaw the reconstruction of the church. I would have thought that a transfer to the CCT would have been an act of 'filial piety' on the part of the Church Commissioners towards one of their main founders. It was, if course, fitting that Lord Chichester was made First Commissioner by Lord Melbourne, as the Pelham family had not only provided the Duke of Newcastle (the 'Ecclesiastical Minister'), but also two bishops, whilst one of the third earl's sons, the fifth earl, was rector of Lambeth and an inevitable associate of E. W. Benson. I mention this, because I do not think it enough for decisions about vestings to be made on the basis of limited aesthetic criteria alone: this history also matters.

Useful articles are here: https://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/sussex/vol7/pp238-240 (Louis Salzman, the great historian of medieval industry and construction, was resident at nearby Lewes), and here: https://archaeologydataservice.ac.uk/archiveDS/archiveDownload?t=arch-285-1/dissemination/pdf/vol_143/12Berry.pdf

So, I am delighted that the Stanmer Preservation Society will take on the church, and I am especially pleased that they will facilitate a range of uses, including (and perhaps most especially) occasional use for worship - the very purpose for which the church was built some 13 centuries ago. I am therefore most grateful to the Society, and to the Pastoral & Closed Churches Division (including Mr Browning) for having made this scheme possible, at long last, and I hope that it will be made without delay. I also hope that the benefice will be encouraged to make use of the church.

Thank you for your assistance in relation to this matter.
Representations – Stanmer

Comments

Stanmer Estate Manager

I am the estate manager for the Stanmer Estate employed by the city council. I have been working on the restoration project funded through the National Lottery and other partners over a 12 year period where we have transformed the park in terms of landscape, condition and management of visitors and providing facilities and interest for visitors.

I would like to express a concern with the proposals for the sale of the church, grounds and well-house regarding future uses put forward by the prospective purchaser. I feel the use expressed is very vague and I can’t see how the purchaser would benefit from the property with this proposal. However the purchaser is well funded I believe and has put significant effort and resource into the Stanmer House which it leases from the council so hopefully the same would be true for the fabric of the church. I would like to see a clause inserted to allow public access to view the church, whether this be on a set minimum number of days or more generally.

In previous correspondence with church management the diocese did not think it owned the well house, this position seems to have changed in the prospect of selling the properties in the park.

In terms of the disposal it would be beneficial, as I see it, to transfer the ownership of the well house to the Stanmer Preservation Society who have been using the building and opening it to the public for around 30 years. I understand the purchaser has said that this use could continue but the direct transfer to them would make this a certainty rather than a vague statement. The well house is a very prominent and fascinating feature of the park and provides an insight in to how difficult life was for residents in the not too distant past which is great to share with the visitors.

The text also describes the potential for the bishop to dispose of the contents of the church. There are many artifacts inside the church, some from the preservation society and others that link to the cultural legacy of Stanmer and village life so I would like to make sure that none of these are lost in the transfer process.

Hopefully the above can be considered as part of the process.

Best regards

Rob Dumbrill
Stanmer Estate Manager
Cityparks Workshop Office
Representations – Stanmer

Historic England

Representations
Closed Churches Division
Church House
Great Smith Street
London SW1P 3AZ
RH2 0SH

Your ref: RC10/317BT
Direct Dial: 0207 973 3627

25th November 2022

Dear Sir/Madam

Mission and Pastoral Measure 2011
The closed church building of Stanmer Church
Diocese of Chichester

Thank you for your letter of 26th October 2022 to Emily Gee, Historic England’s Regional Director for London and South East, regarding a draft Pastoral (Church Buildings Disposal) scheme for the closed church at Stanmer. Emily has asked me to reply on her behalf.

The draft scheme provides for the Church Commissioners to sell this church and its churchyard for use for cultural, social and community purposes and for occasional Christian worship.

Stanmer Church was built in 1838 in the Early English Style on the site of a 13th century church. It is listed at Grade II. It is highly picturesque, with galleried flint walls, stone dressings and a tall elegant shingle spire and forms a major landmark within the Stanmer Estate.

The Estate comprises the 18th century historic park and garden (Grade II listed), the classically inspired Stanmer House by the notable architect Nicholas Dubois (Grade I listed), the Stable Block (Grade II*), Weighouse and Donkey Wheel (Grade II) and the Stanmer Estate village and Home Farm. This collection of buildings forms the centrepiece of the historic landscape.

The church has a very intact interior including stone reredos, Victorian pews, choir stalls and organ, as well as a number of plaques and monuments. Sir John Pelham, who’s death in 1550 is commemorated on a monument in the north wall, was a member of the family who owned the estate right up until the mid-20th century. These fixtures and fittings contribute to a coherent and high-quality ecclesiastical interior.

The church sits within a small verdant graveyard bounded by flint walls and iron railings. The Village Well and Donkey Wheel, which are also part of the disposal, are in a small flint structure to the north of the graveyard.
Representations – Stanmer

Historic England does not object to the principle of the sale of the church for the proposed uses. This is because we consider that the use of the building for cultural, social and community uses, and for occasional Christian worship, has the potential to enable minimum sub-division of the main volumes of the interior, thereby helping to retain the significance of the building. The use for occasional Christian worship will also help to sustain its significance as this is the use for which the Church was built.

In addition, we appreciate that an appropriate disposal could secure funding for repairs to arrest further deterioration, the need for which was described in the 2021 Condition Report by Malcolm Simmonds, which was commissioned by the Diocese.

However, we have not seen any details of the proposed uses or conversion work. All we know is that it is proposed to sell the church to the leaseholder of Stanmer House, which is currently KSD Support Services Ltd, a maintenance and facilities management company.

We are aware, that until very recently, Stanmer House was in use as a café, restaurant and function venue. In 2021, KSD Group obtained the commercial lease for the house and subsequently reopened the ground floor café as well as using part of the building as office space. The building now is also being used for some functions.

We therefore think it would be useful to know more about KSD Group’s proposals and business plan for the church, including whether it is to be used in association with activities at Stanmer House, and how the proposed uses would be delivered in practice. This is so we can assess whether the scheme would maintain Stanmer Church’s significance and provide it with a long-term sustainable future.

We are also aware that Stanmer Preservation Society has looked after the Well House and Donkey Wheel, and provided public access to it, for around 40 years, and wishes to continue to do so. We recently advised the Society about installing suitable lighting to these buildings so that they are lit up at night and so the public can better appreciate the interior.

In light of this, we question, whether as part of the disposal process, consideration is given to ways that the Stanmer Preservation Society could continue its involvement with these buildings, including potentially taking on the ownership. This would have the benefit of maintaining public access to these interesting heritage features and would also allow for the Society to continue its community activity. We would be happy to discuss this further with you, if helpful.

Historic England would be pleased to offer further comments once more details on the scheme are provided, and we look forward to a further conversation at that point.

Yours faithfully,

Alma Howell

Alma Howell
Inspector of Historic Buildings and Areas
Representations – Stanmer

Peter Sharrack

To the Church of England Commissioners, Closed Churches Division

for Representations

and to Adrian Browning

Hello,

We spoke on the telephone, last week, and I said that I would write to you in this email about my concerns regarding the proposed disposal and sale of Stanmer Church in Brighton.

I have heard rumours (which have left me worrying) about the proposed buyers, KSD Group Ltd (company reg. 04212679). But I am not going to repeat hearsay. I simply trust your commissioners will have reassured themselves regarding KSD’s suitability, fitness, and intentions.

I am not saying these are KSD’s intentions, but it would be a shame if the building was purchased only to be maintained as a tangible asset on a company’s financial balance sheet - or to be left to fall into further disrepair so that a conversion of its interior into luxury apartments would be the only reasonable way its outward appearance could be preserved. And, as you will know, a building’s ‘listed’ status alone does not prevent its conversion into apartments if permission from a local authority is granted within current government guidelines.

However, as a frequent visitor to Stanmer Church - since you have reassured me that restrictive covenants will be in place, and that all parties are in favour of the building being used for “social, cultural and community purposes and for occasional Christian worship” - I am not stating any personal objection to this sale: although I would ask for my concerns (as described in this email) to be forwarded to the Bishop along with any ‘representations against the draft scheme’ as provided for in your Explanatory Note dated 25 October 2022.

In recent years there have been ideas for how the church could be used: as a venue for ecumenical and inter-faith retreats; as a centre for mindfulness studies; and as a hub for ‘social/green prescribing’ by local GPs. Maybe a new owner (KSD or whoever) would incorporate some of them.

Personally, I would love to continue sitting at Stanmer in silent contemplation, meditation, and prayer. It has not been possible to do that since before the covid lockdowns, but I hope that it will be possible when that fine looking building is once again open to visitors; and to all who live and/or work in the park and its surrounding areas. My concerns are that this might not happen and that many of us would then be disappointed.

You said that you would send to me further details of the buyer’s proposals and of the sale’s restrictive covenants if (and when) a sale is agreed, and so I look forward to hearing from you.
Out-of-time

Kevin Westgate

Dear Adrian

I understand that you are handling the proposed future of Stanmer church (I heard about this via a post on the Brighton Past group on Facebook).

As a former churchwarden of Stanmer church I am concerned to hear that the building and churchyard are proposed to be passed to the hands of the current owners of Stanmer House who use that property for commercial use.

As warden for several years I had an intimate knowledge of the church and its history. My time the Gillett & Johnson hand wound clock and its two faces were restored, new lighting added to the chancel, and various repairs to roofs and stonework carried out. As you will know Stanmer church is a set-piece of architecture and a remarkable survivor of an estate church complete with its internal joinery, pipe organ, glass, bells, clock, memorials and décor. It is especially fine in my view (I’m a chartered building surveyor).

In my opinion this church is a set time-piece frozen unchanged from the moment the Earl’s of Chichester departed Stanmer for Wiltshire in 1947, too special, too fragile to be lost from the local and national pool of historic places which commercial use would inevitably bring but rather it should, in my opinion, be preserved and kept available for public access by a charitable trust (not an uncertain future with a commercial entity) such as the Church Conservation Trust or a similar body.

Can you please tell me what efforts have been made to secure a future with the Church Conservation Trust or a similar body?
Email of 31 March 2023 from Adrian Browning to the SPS

Dear Sue

Thank you for your email.

I can confirm that we and the Diocese have undertaken the due diligence required into KSD’s financial records to establish that they do have more than sufficient resources to undertake the required repairs to the church. Whilst we do not have a fully costed up schedule of the works required in the April 2021 Condition Report, KSD have seen that report and accepted a covenanted requirement to attend to repairs required within a given timescale. They have estimated that at least around £600,000 will be required which they are able to provide. It remains the case that there is no other proposal on the table that will enable any repairs to be undertaken within the foreseeable future – the proposed sale to KSD is the only one that does so and they are ready to begin.

Previous information has set out KSD’s proposals for the property, and they have indicated they will work with local stakeholders to maximise the use of the church for meetings and community events. This includes using it as a visitor centre to attract more people to the park, holding seasonal events such as Christmas carols and summer fayres which will in turn hopefully increase visitor numbers to the park from the city and wider county.

As there are no proposals to remove, disturb or relocate any human remains or tombstones, monuments or memorials we have not communicated with the Pelham family on this matter. They have not made any approach to the Commissioners about the church building since its closure in 2008. Access for people wishing to visit graves will be protected in the restrictive covenants and KSD’s proposed use of the property will also allow ongoing access.

As Rex Andrew has mentioned, the Commissioners and Diocese responded to the Land Registry saying that we had no objection to the SPS registration of the Donkey Wheel House. We are, therefore, content to revise the plan to the draft Scheme to omit that from the provisions of the Scheme. It would, therefore, be helpful to hear whether the SPS will withdraw its representation on the basis of the Scheme being revised accordingly as Rex outlined below.

Kind regards

Adrian
Dear Rex

Thank you for your email and please accept our apologies for the very late response. We delayed in the hope of receiving final Land Registry confirmation of Title No. ESX423106 before the 22nd March deadline had passed. And this week we are keenly awaiting their response and will of course let you know as soon as we hear from them.

But in the meantime, are you able to share a little more information about KSD’s proposals so that we can decide whether or not we would wish to enter into a partnership with this particular company, as currently there exists little appetite for such a collaboration.

We feel sure it would be helpful if we knew a bit more about their plans.

May we safely assume that thorough investigations into KSD’s financial records have been carried out to ensure that they do indeed have the ‘necessary finances to undertake the repairs to the building that are required’. Given that the cost and extent of necessary repairs is currently not known, and given that every day the condition of Stanmer Church deteriorates further into decline, both internally and externally, we hope you agree that it is important that there is full disclosure at this stage.

And, finally, can you tell us if there have been any communications between the Church of England and Lord John and Richard Pelham about their family’s vaults?

As a Listed Heritage At Risk building of such significance to the Pelham family, the local community and the wider Stanmer loving public, it is imperative that a bright future beckons.

Looking forward to hearing from you.

Best wishes.
Sue Craig
SPS Chair

On Mon, 13 Mar 2023 at 14:37, Rex Andrew <rex.andrew@churchofengland.org> wrote:

Hello again Sue

Further to my holding response of 2 March, I have now had a chance to speak to colleagues about this, and also to Chichester Diocese, and the outcome is as follows:
Neither Chichester Diocese nor the Commissioners will object to the Land Registry notice of 1 March 2023 to have the Donkey Wheelhouse being registered in the name of the SPS.

On this basis, can you confirm whether the SPS would be happy to withdraw its representation against the proposed Pastoral (Church Buildings Disposal) Scheme, please? Could I trouble you for a response by 26 April at the very latest.

In the event that the SPS does not wish to withdraw its representation against, then the Commissioners might have to make a decision on the matter at their 24 May meeting of our Mission, Pastoral and Church Property Committee.

I look forward to hearing from you shortly.

All the best

Rex.

From: Stanmer Preservation Society
Sent: 02 March 2023 16:15
To: Rex Andrew <rex.andrew@churchofengland.org>
Subject: Re: Closed Church Building of Stanmer (dedication not known) - Proposed Pastoral (Church Buildings Disposal) Scheme

Dear Rex

Many thanks for your email which arrived within hours of the latest correspondence from Land Registry (attached). You should by now have been served Notice with a deadline of 22 March.

Your current plans include submitting your proposals to the Bishop, also on the 22 March.

We hope you agree that it might be wise to take appropriate action to avoid the potential embarrassment and legal implications of the SPS gaining ownership of the Donkey Wheelhouse in the morning and the Church of England selling it to KSD in the afternoon.

As a Charity set up over fifty years ago to protect and preserve Stanmer Park, we registered the Donkey Wheelhouse in order to protect the building from privatisation and/or development, so that the village well will belong to the Stanmer community in perpetuity.

Looking forward to hearing from you.

Kind regards.

Sue Craig

SPS Chair
Email of 9 May 2023 from the SPS

Dear Rex

Once again we must apologise for the late reply but, as I explained in our phone call, we had been awaiting news of the outcome of the litigation between KSD and the South Downs National Park and KSD and Brighton & Hove City Council before responding, as we felt you should be aware of the latest situation at Stanmer. Sadly, despite waiting over 4 months, we are none the wiser and now our helpful councillors have lost their seats.

However, aware that you require a response by today, and unable to reach Adrian Browning by phone as you suggested, the SPS is not happy to withdraw our objection to the Draft Scheme and would welcome an opportunity of explaining some of our reasons in person.

In the meantime, we are surprised that the CofE could entertain selling the church and churchyard to a company with no track record of community engagement who might not be suitable purchasers of such an important historic and cultural landmark.

We do hope that the Bishop was able to read all the representations and comments and did not rely solely on Scott Ralph's somewhat biased report, claiming, for instance, that there were 3 in favour of the draft scheme when there were only two. James Drever cannot be claimed as being in favour of selling to KSD as he was clearly in support of SPS taking on the building, as were others. Of the two in favour, neither Falmer Parish Council nor the Chichester Diocese could be considered to be impartial commentators.

It would be helpful to know the reason for the omission of this request from Peter Sharrack: "I would ask for my concerns... to be forwarded to the Bishop along with 'any representations against the draft scheme' as provided for in your Explanatory Note dated 25 Oct 2022"?

There would seem to have been no attempt made to update those of us who requested further details of KSD's proposals, including Historic England who stated that it would be "useful to know more about KSD's proposals and business plan for the church" to enable the long-term sustainable future to be assessed.

Unfortunately, as there is no-one within our organisation who is prepared to work with KSD, we feel every effort should be made to establish if there are any Stanmer stakeholders who might wish to collaborate with them, because without such assurances, Stanmer Church is at real risk of demolition.

Looking forward to hearing from you.

Best wishes.
Sue Craig
SPS Chair

Email of the same date to the SPS

Dear Sue

Thank you for your email from which I note the SPS wishes to sustain its representation against. The intention is that matter will be determined by the Commissioners' Mission, Pastoral and Church Property Committee at its 24 May meeting. My email of 1 March advised that the Commissioners' Sifting Panel had decided that the matter was capable of being dealt with via the papers alone.

You may recall that my email of 7 February included all the representations received by the Commissioners, which included Peter Sharrack's submission, so the Bishop has seen this.

The Committee paperwork will be available about a week before the 24 May meeting via this link: Proposals affecting the closed church of Stanmer in the diocese of Chichester. | The Church of England

With best wishes
Rex.