

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 Mission and Pastoral Measure 2011 on the 16th day of May 2023 the church of Saint Mary (“the building”), being one of two parish churches of the parish of Sittingbourne Saint Mary and Saint Michael in the Diocese of Canterbury, was declared closed for regular public worship.

NOW, it is provided as follows:-

Future of the church building and annexed land

1. The building and the land annexed or belonging thereto shown outlined by a red line on the annexed plan (together referred to as ‘the property’) shall be appropriated to use for Christian worship, services and other religious activities in accordance with the rites and customs of the Apostolic Church UK or any other Christian body, which are members of the Churches Together in England or the Council of Churches for Britain and Ireland, and for purposes ancillary thereto.

Disposal

2. The Commissioners are hereby empowered to sell the property for the said use.

Contents

3. The contents of the building shall be disposed of as the Bishop shall direct.

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.

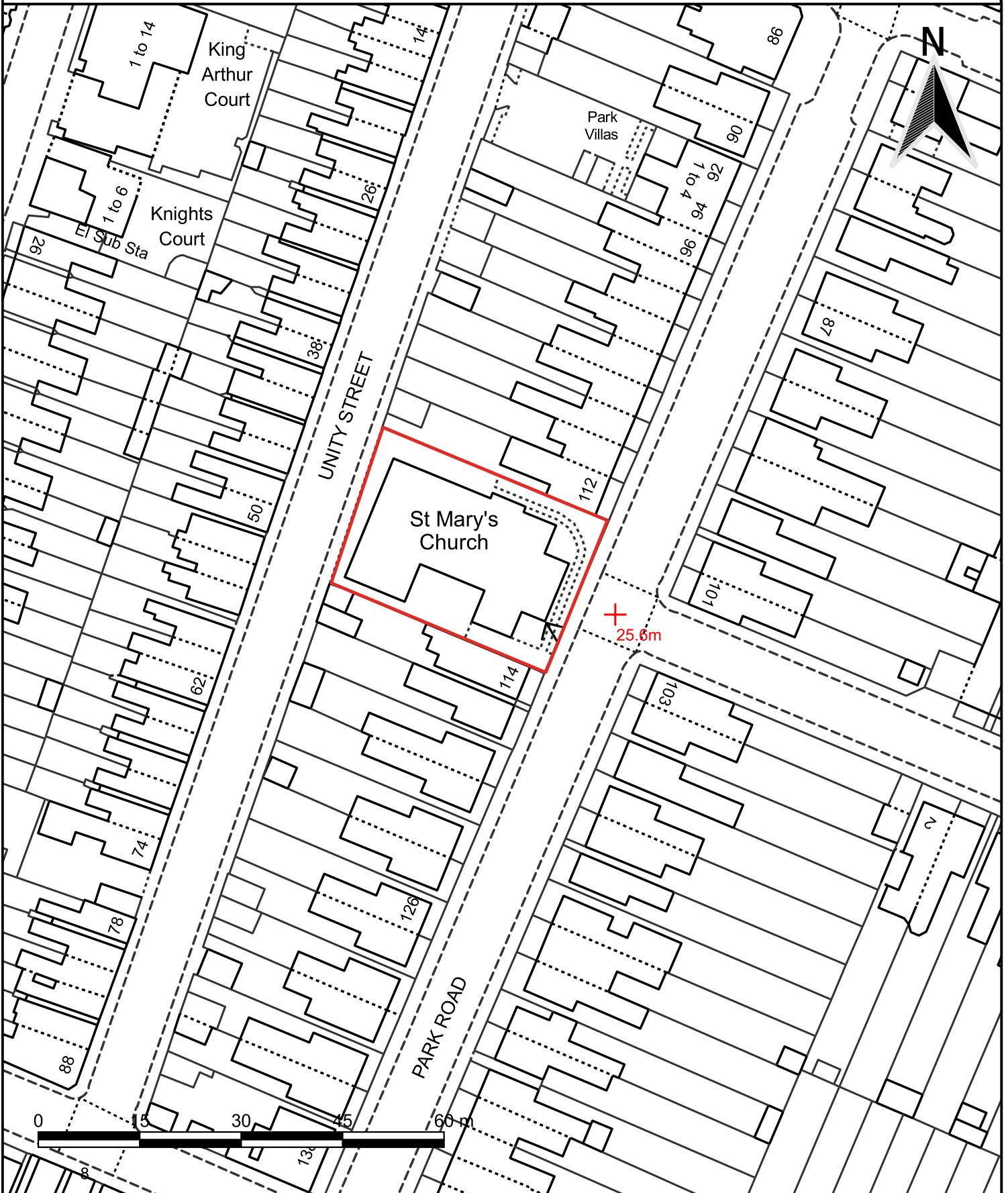
In witness of which this Scheme has been duly executed as a deed by the Church Commissioners.

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

Signature of Authorised Signatory

Signature of Authorised Signatory

SITTINGBOURNE ST MARY



Drawn by
Graham Handley

Scale
1:750

Date
16/07/2024

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EXPLANATORY NOTE

MISSION AND PASTORAL MEASURE 2011 DRAFT PASTORAL (CHURCH BUILDINGS DISPOSAL) SCHEME SITTINGBOURNE ST MARY DIOCESE OF CANTERBURY

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 Church Commissioners have agreed to publish a draft Pastoral (Church Buildings Disposal) Scheme providing for the closed church of Sittingbourne St Mary to be sold to Maidstone International Church (part of the Apostolic Church UK) for worship use in accordance with the rites and customs of the Apostolic Church UK.

Background

The church of Sittingbourne St Mary was declared closed for regular public worship by a Scheme, which was made on 16th May 2023 and took effect on 1st July 2023.

Following closure, the Diocese considered options for the future of the building and placed the building on the market. Marketing generated several expressions of interest and an offer by Maidstone International Church (part of the Apostolic Church UK), who intend to use the building for Christian worship and community outreach activities, has been recommended to the Church Commissioners by the Diocese. The Apostolic Church UK has been a member of Churches Together in England since 2019.

The Building

The former church of Sittingbourne St Mary is located between Park Road and Unity Street in Sittingbourne. The property is located in a predominantly residential area close to the town centre.

The church was designed by R. Philip Day (the Diocesan architect) and built in 1901-02 (as noted on the dedication stone set in the north wall of the chancel). It was consecrated on the 25th January 1902, initially as a chapel of ease in the parish of Holy Trinity, Milton Regis, the population of which was increased by workers employed in the local brick and paper industries. St Mary Sittingbourne became a separate parish in 1925, and in 2000 returned to a united benefice, this time with St Michael the Archangel, Sittingbourne. The church is a red brick building with Bath stone dressings and designed in the Early English style. It has a three-bay nave, north aisle, north transept, Lady chapel to north-east, chancel, and vestry to south-east. A red brick, flat roofed, church hall extension was added in 1937 and a red brick, slate roofed lobby, toilets, and kitchen extension were added in 2001. The church is not listed, nor is it located within a conservation area.

The Views of the Statutory Advisory Committee

The Commissioners statutory advisors, The Statutory Advisory Committee of the Church Buildings Council (SAC) have indicated that the building is of low significance overall but makes a modest and positive contribution to the local street scene.

They advise that church would lend itself to a variety of alternative uses and the significance and interest is not of a level that a more intensive subdivision of the worship space would be unacceptable.

Burials and the Churchyard

There are no burials in the curtilage of the church property. There is no churchyard as such, and the current curtilage includes small, paved areas with a few shrubs.

Correspondence

Further information about the proposals may be obtained from the Case Officer, Edward Youngson by e-mail at edward.youngson@churchofengland.org.

Representations against or in support of the draft Scheme

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

Representations should be sent to:

**Rex Andrew
Mission and Pastoral Services
Church Commissioners
Church House
Great Smith Street
London SW1P 3AZ**

Or by e-mail to: rex.andrew@churchofengland.org

Any communication received after **12th February 2025** 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' web-site at <https://www.churchofengland.org/resources/parish-reorganisation-and-church-property> where there are also links to download copies of these notes and the draft scheme.

E J H Youngson, Church Commissioners, January 2025