



THE CLOSED CHURCH OF ST PETER'S, MAIN ROAD, ASTWOOD
BUCKINGHAMSHIRE


SMITHSGORE

ST PETER'S CHURCH, MAIN ROAD, ASTWOOD, BUCKINGHAMSHIRE

An attractive Grade II* Listed ecclesiastical building dating from the 12th Century with later additions through the centuries, now available for a range of alternative uses subject to planning. Set on the edge of the rural hamlet of Astwood midway between Milton Keynes, Newport Pagnell and Bedford on the Buckinghamshire/Bedfordshire border, the building offers a range of opportunity for discerning buyers.

Milton Keynes 11 miles • Newport Pagnell 8 miles •
J14 M1 9 miles • Bedford 8 miles • Buckingham 22 miles •
London 54 miles

St Peter's Church has been closed recently due to a dwindling congregation. The combined Parish can no longer support it as well as other local churches. The Diocese are now looking to find a new use for the building and are inviting interest from parties who believe they could obtain planning consent for a new use, purchase the building and convert it sympathetically to the new and viable use to ensure the long term survival of this historic building, preserving where possible the key features and its historic architecture.

SITUATION

Astwood lies about eight miles from Newport Pagnell; it comprises a small rural community of less than 300 people; there is a pub and village hall but no school. The church yard fronts onto the public road that comes into the village off the A422 road to Bedford and the building is well set back from the road with its own driveway, shared with the former vicarage and another house.



DESCRIPTION

The church building is constructed in stone under a part tiled part copper roof, and a stone bell tower. The existing space extends to about 2039 sq ft – see the floor plan. There is a concrete truss roof over the Nave – there was bomb damage during the war and the roof was only replaced in 1963. The building is Listed Grade II* so its future use and any conversion work needs to respect that status and be sympathetic in design and scale.

St Peter's is situated in a churchyard extending to about 0.8 acres (0.35 ha); there are a number of mature trees round the churchyard particularly to the west side of the drive where there are few if any burials; existing burials will have to be respected and access given to families visiting graves. (See Data Room for more details). The drive into the churchyard comes off the village road and is shared with two houses to the south.

The nave has clerestory windows at what could be a first floor level. There is a porch on the south side, a side chapel, vestry, bell tower, nave and chancel. The nave has the height to accommodate a first storey mezzanine level, subject to planning.

HISTORICAL NOTE

St Peter's was first recorded at Astwood before 1154 when it was named among the gifts of the lords of Newport to Cluniac Priory at Tickford. Built into the upper part of the tower of St Peter's are fragments of moulded stonework dating from 1200; in 1340 the original Chancel was rebuilt using 12th and 13th century material; there were later additions in the 15th Century reusing an original 14th Century window. More additions and alterations were made in the 16th and 19th centuries, and the whole building was restored in the 20th Century after damage was sustained during the Second World War. Inside there are wall monuments dating from the 16th and 17th centuries, and two brasses - one commemorating Roger Keston who died in 1409 and the other Thomas Chibnale who died in 1534 and

his two wives. There are a number of larger tombstones in the floor (members of the Lowndes family mainly). The Bell tower has three bells which date from the 15th Century and mid 17th Century, and the Turret Clock is dated 1774.

GENERAL INFORMATION

LOCAL INFORMATION

Astwood has a pub and a village hall. The nearest primary schools are in Bedford, North Crawley, Newport Pagnell and Olney with secondary schools in the same towns.

SERVICES

There is electricity connected, but no water or sanitary facilities in the church. We believe there is a sewer in the street and the Old School House (property adjoining to the north east) is connected to it.

RIGHTS OF WAY, EASEMENTS & WAYLEAVES

There are vehicular rights of way preserved through the property over the drive for the benefit of two neighbouring houses – one property also has its own separate access. The septic tank of the house may be located in the south west corner of the site.

PLANNING

The building lies in Milton Keynes Council area and a pre-application process has been carried out. A copy of their response is in the Data Room. The Council's preference is to see the building remain in a community use – however Astwood is a very small settlement and already has its own village hall. To date no local community user has been forthcoming as far as the Vendors are aware.

The planners would consider residential use although how a conversion impacts on the listed building will be a key consideration. The building has an existing D1 use so other uses in that Use Class would be acceptable in principle. Commercial user B1 might be possible, eg a studio or office but the Vendors need to be confident that the use will be

viable long-term and such a use will have traffic impact implications as well as similar issues relating to its listed status.

Other uses to which other churches of similar status have been put include educational, arts and crafts, music or drama, museum, continuing use by other Christian bodies or even a gym or climbing centre!

Security of the building when not in occupation might be an issue – this would apply if some form of retail use was involved e.g. antique furniture or gallery.

If a community use is not possible, the Vendors' preference may be for a residential use if it is felt that will best secure the long-term future of this important historic building. 35 other Grade II* churches have been converted to residential use round the country so it would not be unique.

LOCAL AUTHORITY

Milton Keynes Council
Civic Offices, 1 Saxon Gate
Central Milton Keynes MK9 3EJ
t 01908 691691
web www.milton-keynes.gov.uk
English Heritage, 44 Derngate, Northampton NN1 1UH

SOLICITORS

Winkworth Sherwood
16 Beaumont Street
Oxford OX1 2LZ
t 01865 297200
DX 145843 Oxford 6

TITLE DEEDS

The title is registered. See the Data Room for more detail.

SALES CONDITIONS

The Vendors will impose a number of restrictions on the purchaser by way of covenants. These will depend on the use for which planning consent is granted.

IMPORTANT NOTICE

Whilst every care has been taken in the preparation of these particulars, all interested parties should note: (i) the descriptions and photographs are for guidance only and are not a complete representation of the property; (ii) plans are not to scale, are for guidance only and do not form part of the contract; (iii) services and any appliances referred to have not been tested, and cannot be verified as being in working order; (iv) no survey of any part of the property has been carried out by the Vendor/Lessor or Smiths Gore and JLL; (v) measurements are approximate and must not be relied upon. Maximum appropriate room sizes are generally given, to the nearest 0.1 metres. Outbuildings are measured externally (unless otherwise stated) to the nearest 0.5 metres. For convenience an approximate Imperial equivalent is also given; (vi) only those items referred to in the text of these particulars are included; (vii) nothing in these particulars or any related discussions forms part of any contract unless expressly incorporated within a subsequent written agreement; (viii) please note that if you make an acceptable offer for this property we will have to confirm your identity, as required by the Money Laundering Regulations 2007

The sale of the property will require a Scheme under the Mission & Pastoral Measure 2011 to authorise its sale or lease and its change of use.

If used for religious, community or commercial use, there will be imposed a clawback overage provision should the use eventually change to a more valuable use, e.g. residential. The Vendors will retain 40% in any uplift in value achieved within 50 years.

If consent for a residential use is obtained then it will be restricted to one single family dwelling on the whole site.

In all cases the Vendors reserve the rights to approve all plans prior to planning or any alterations prior to work commencing.

Wall and floor monuments and other permanent fixtures will be included in the sale and must remain within the building as part of the historic character and the listing.

Pews and organs – may be included in the sale – some pews are in the listing.

Font – this will be removed by the Vendors.

Bells – these are of historic significance and may need to be removed (at the Vendors' expense)

We draw your attention to the rules relating to tombs and graves in the building and churchyard. Rights will be reserved for families to visit graves in the churchyard. See the Data Room for the rules applied by the Vendors.

Purchasers must make clear whether they want to purchase the whole churchyard.

Rights were reserved for the benefit of the two adjoining properties for vehicular access at all times. One property has created a separate access so is not completely dependent on the drive through the church. Maintenance of the shared

drive is 50% to the Church 50% to the two dwellings over the drive coloured brown on the plan

DATA ROOM

Further background information will be provided in a Data Room to which applicants can be given access on request. Such as

- Quinquennial Survey for St Peter's
- Standard restrictive covenants imposed by the Vendors
- Church Commissioners Guidance on 'New Uses for Closed Churches'
- Informal Planning Brief including: Location Plan, Site Plan, Tree Preservation Orders, Photographs, Sketch layout of the Church, Statutory Listing Description, Statement of Significance.

TENURE

Freehold with vacant possession on completion.

VAT

The building is not opted for VAT.

METHOD OF SALE

Private Treaty

POST CODE

MK16 9JS

DIRECTIONS

From J14 of the M1, take the A509 towards Olney; after about one mile, follow the A509 and after about two miles at the roundabout take A422 to Bedford, Astwood is signed off to the right after about four miles. The church is found on your right soon after the turn. Please do not block the driveway which is used by others.

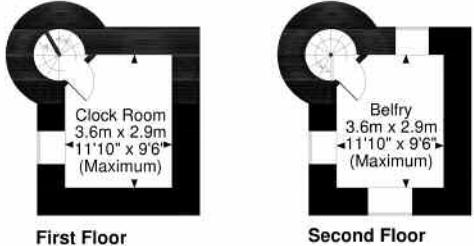
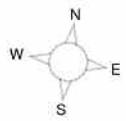
VIEWING

Strictly by appointment with the Sole Agents.

DATE OF INFORMATION

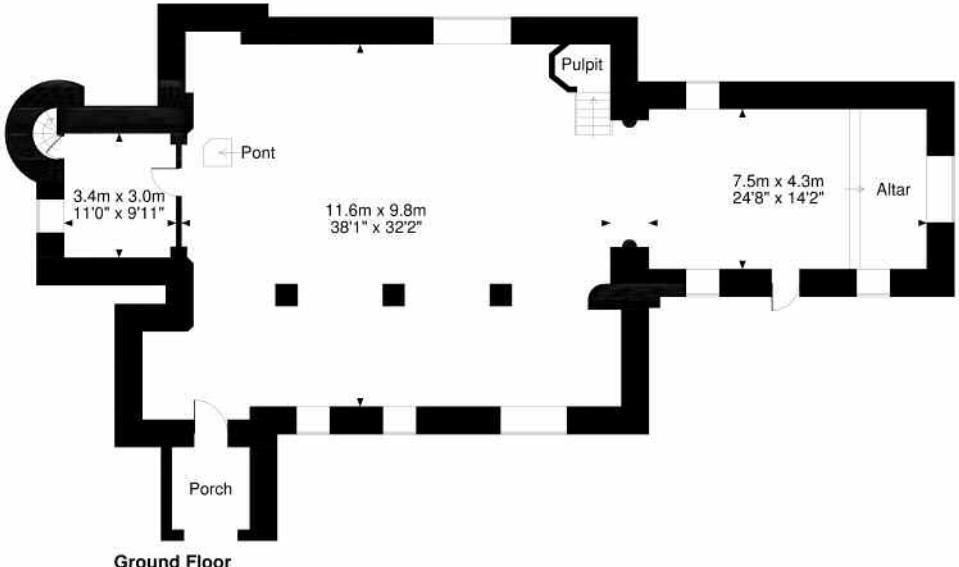
Particulars prepared – Summer 2014
Photographs taken – Spring 2014

St. Peters Church, Main Road, Astwood
Approximate Gross Internal Area
2039 Sq Ft/190 Sq M



First Floor

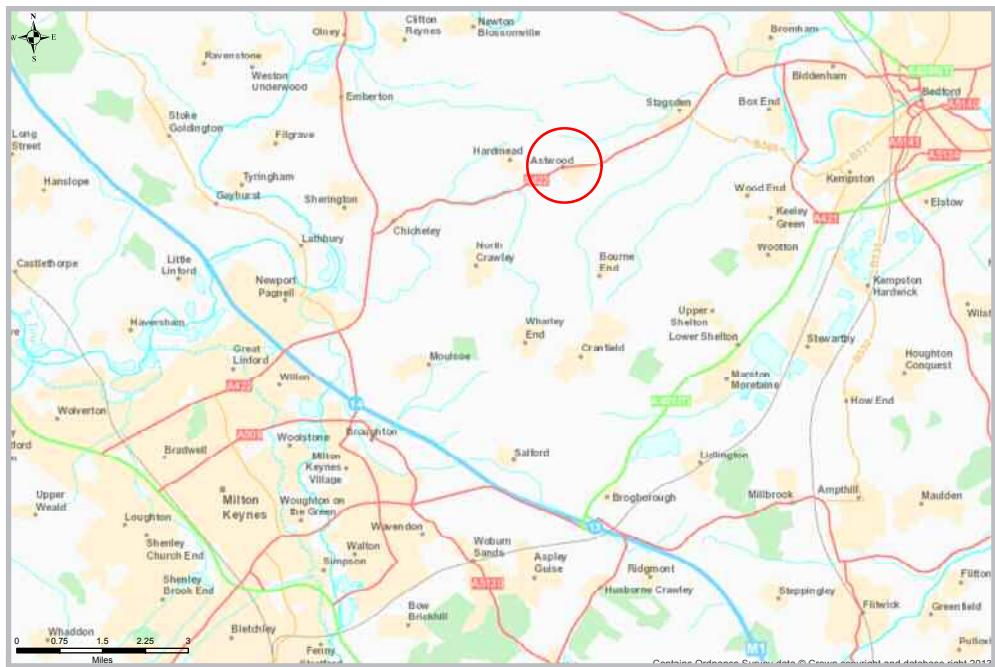
Second Floor



Ground Floor

FOR ILLUSTRATIVE PURPOSES ONLY - NOT TO SCALE

The position & size of doors, windows, appliances and other features are approximate only.
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