



OPTIONS APPRAISAL EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

INVITATION

We are looking for specialists who can provide an Options Appraisal to examine the possible uses for the building to create a sustainable long term plan. This will reestablish its crucial place in the music, culture and heritage ecosystem of the town, while identifying an income generating use for the ground floor and arcade. The Options Appraisal should acknowledge the historical and cultural importance of the building and its value to the community, while bringing some visionary thinking to explore future options.

ST MARY IN THE CASTLE DRIVERS GROUP

This is an unincorporated group who passionately want the building to survive and thrive for decades to come. They are being supported by Hastings Commons as a heritage development trust. The drivers group is a team of individuals with a long history of supporting the building and a strong drive to find a solution as the building sits deteriorating. This is an intelligent step forward to understand better concepts for the building which may not have considered and bringing about fresh expertise who can bring a new vision to the building will help us with next steps.

QUICK BRIEF

A more comprehensive brief will be sent to the successful organisations at Stage 2, questions can be directed to drivers@stmaryinthecastle.com
Suggestions currently focus on creating a profitable space on the ground floor accessed from Pelham Arcade, which will complement the venue upstairs. Options identified:

1. Hastings History Experience and Tourism Centre
2. Food & Beverage led approach
3. Partnership with a national/regional cultural organisation
4. Wider scheme, including some residential development to cross-subsidise

Ideally the cultural venue would also be self-sustaining but we are aware there are potential current limitations that require further exploration. Considerations must include:

Regulations: fire safety / building regulations / listed status

Creating conditions for public access/community use

Likely staffing costs for suggested usages

REPORT

The final report must not exceed 20 pages A4. The chosen organisation will be expected to:

- * Complete the report in 12 weeks
- * Interview 8-10 key people including HBC, previous staff, management, stakeholders and event managers to get a better understanding of what has worked/failed in the past
- * Present viable options for a visionary outcome
- * Think creatively and independently to create new, inspiring and brave options

BUDGET

At this stage we have a **£10k fixed budget** to provide the final report including any research, development and completion of the report itself including any expenses.

PROCESS

Please respond to this EOI with a statement of interest, links to your previous work and experience on similar projects.

to: drivers@stmaryinthecastle.com

We will select 2 or 3 responses to move to Stage 2.

This is likely to involve an interview and further exploration of the suitability of the organisation to carry out the Options Appraisal.

HISTORY

St Mary in the Castle (1825-8) forms the centrepiece of Pelham Crescent, designed by Joseph Kay for Thomas Pelham, 2nd Earl of Chichester. See list description for more details. "The scheme provided all that the visitor could wish for. Within walking distance of the town centre, it included accommodation with unsurpassed sea views, set round a picturesque chapel. The enclosed arcade... advertised 28 shops 'for the sale of all fashionable merchandise' on the line of John Nash's Royal Opera Arcade (1816-18) and Samuel Ware's Burlington Arcade (1818-19) in London." The church ceased to be used in 1970 and was sold to a nonconformist congregation, which found itself unable to maintain the building. After various abortive plans whilst the structure decayed further, in 1990 the Council acquired it. Repairs were instituted under Adams Johns Kennard even before the future use of the building had been decided. Eventually it was turned into an arts centre and work was completed around 1998. Various organisations have taken on the running of the building for cultural purposes and by 2017 it was in regular use for such purposes until the Covid pandemic. It has been closed since November 2022 and continues to deteriorate.