



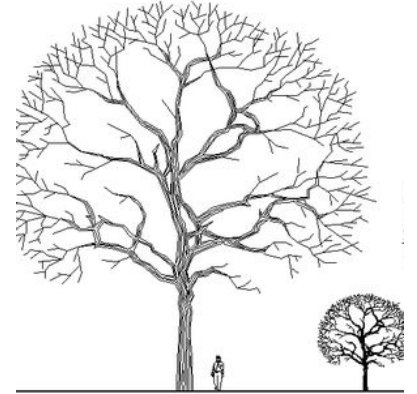
It was time for the monsoon rains to begin and a very old man was digging holes in his garden.

“What are you doing?” his neighbour asked.

“Planting mango trees,” was the reply.

“Do you expect to eat mangoes from those trees?”

“No, I won’t live long enough for that. But others will. It occurred to me the other day that all my life I have enjoyed mangoes planted by other people. This is my way of showing them my gratitude.”



At each of its meetings, the Church Council spends time in reflection and prayer. The story above was part of the reflection offered at the October 2015 meeting. Following this reflection, the meeting received a report on the process of property redevelopment, which had been slowly proceeding through several councils of the church during the course of that year (congregation, presbytery and synod). The Church Council resonated with the spirit of how to express gratitude to those who have gone before us – for the site and its buildings which we presently enjoy – and for what might be inherited by those who come after us.

The process has continued from that time, and this is an update as we approach the next exciting stage...

We have been actively thinking and talking about ‘planning for a sustainable future’ for some time now.

In November 2015, having secured the support of the wider Uniting Church at Synod and Presbytery levels, the Church Council decided to proceed with a “Feasibility Study and Business Case”.

In the update bulletin in March this year, we asked to you to save some dates in May, expecting that there

would be a presentation to the congregation of the preferred options for the property strategy. On May 1, we did indeed have a congregational meeting, but it was a partial presentation. In the March bulletin, it was suggested that the next bulletin would probably be an outline of the options in readiness for decision-making.

In this bulletin, a re-cap of the May presentation is provided, and also advice about the next meetings.

Upcoming Meetings:

May 24, 7:30pm: Regular Church Council meeting time, which will be an **open meeting** and dedicated to a detailed presentation of the **Feasibility Study** report by Quintin Mansell from *Synod Property Services*. **All are welcome. If you have detailed questions about the process or the ‘preferred option’ (described overleaf), you are encouraged to attend.**

June 5, 10 am -12 noon: following a shortened service including communion: **A single-purpose congregational meeting**, being an abbreviated presentation of May 24, delivered by Jeremy de Zylva of *Resolution Property Group*. *Resolution* are the property consultants contracted to undertake the property investigation and prepare the report.

What is the “property strategy”?

As presented to the congregation on May 1, in broad terms, the ‘preferred option’ is as follows. The strategy will be elaborated on by the consultants at the above meetings.

- **Rationalise buildings to reduce costs**
 - Remove the need for high costs repairs and renovations for some existing buildings
 - Reduce long term maintenance costs
- **Repurpose our existing Worship Centre to provide for our future mission needs**
 - Develop as a flexible and hospitable multi-functional space
 - Meet the needs of our affiliated groups
 - Improve the general amenity (toilets) and provide parking
- **Release excess land for commercial sale to developers**
 - 49 Croydon Road (‘spare manse’)
 - Tallent Street land (broadly speaking) west of the memorial garden
- **Funds from this are used for:**
 - Funding the property works for the remaining building complex and car parking
 - Providing additional ongoing revenue to support our future mission (through investment)
 - Support the wider Uniting Church through BOMAR contribution
- **Features of the changes to our physical surroundings:**
 - A number of existing buildings will be removed, including the Hall, Storage Shed and the Wooden Hall
 - The Memorial Garden will remain in its current location
 - The Church Building will be redeveloped, including *for instance*
 - an appropriate number and suitable location of toilets
 - more open areas for fellowship, including café style seating and outdoor space
 - a “commercial grade” kitchen
 - more visible presence to the community
 - integrated indoor and outdoor areas
 - flexibility in the main worship centre with movable seating
 - sufficient meeting rooms and office space to meet future needs

What will the ‘Business Case’ report look like?

The ‘Business Case’ documentation to be presented at the meetings above will be comprehensive. It will address our long-term mission goals and financial position to develop a plan for our property and buildings. It will provide a broad concept for the future, with allowance for detailed engineering, other specialised reports, and architectural drawings as part of the next stages.

Is there any change to the ‘preferred option’ since the presentation on May 1?

No. The preferred ‘property option’, as described above, is unchanged.

Why was there a delay?

The short answer is that because mission is complicated! There’s little point in building developments if there’s no-one to use them or no capacity to employ a minister to care for the people who are there; the property strategy will not provide sufficient funds to underwrite our current level of expenditure on staff indefinitely. What has been done, though, is to engage in productive conversations with both Presbytery and Synod, which has indicated to them that we at Croydon are well aware of the challenges ahead and have the capacity to meet them with sustained attention. Please note that the delays have not incurred additional costs, and that the outlay for the Feasibility Study is being met by a loan from Presbytery – which will be paid back from the proceeds of released property.

There is still much work to do?

Very much so. “A redevelopment of Croydon Uniting Church, in terms of Property and Mission” is a many-staged process. The Feasibility Study is the third step of around 10 before there is ‘project completion’ in terms of building works. And we are now more aware than ever that a parallel process focussed on mission must be a high priority.

How can I help?

We need significant focus on future mission and strategy, and in the broadest terms, church growth. We will need to convene working groups and think-tanks. The more people who can be involved in this dimension, the better. Church growth is not the task of one person or a small group – it is the task of everyone involved at Croydon Uniting Church. So in the months ahead, when our focus is less on property planning, we need you willing to be involved in the development of mission which is the clear focus. Let us know that you’re interested.

How can I give feedback to the property strategy?

A form was provided on May 1 for your feedback (and is attached here also). Everyone is encouraged to complete it. The Church Council will take all feedback very seriously when it meets on June 6.

When is the latest that I can give feedback?

Up until the Church Council meeting on June 6. You are encouraged to give feedback and ask questions NOW so that they can be addressed in the presentation on June 5. Please do not wait until after the June 5 presentation. If there are particular questions that you would like to ask verbally (or in writing), you are encouraged to come to the open Church Council meeting on May 24.

Who has responsibility for decision-making?

Uniting Church regulations (4.4.1), state the Church Council is responsible for the management and administration of all the congregation’s property (including acquisition or disposal of any property, demolition, alteration or enlargement of buildings) and it shall consult with the Congregation regarding any proposal concerning property. This consultation takes the form of opportunities at information sessions and formal meetings, and most importantly through the feedback form (attached). Over a month (1 May – 5 June) has been allowed for that feedback, and the Council wants to hear both positives and negatives of the strategy.

What other approvals are required?

Beyond approval at a local level, there is a sequence of approvals by Presbytery and Synod Committees. It is reasonable to think that a final approval might be given by September, and that detailed planning, technical

reports and architectural plans would be commissioned thereafter. Once a decision is made on June 6, there will be some ‘breathing space’ at the local level whilst the paperwork makes its way through these processes. This will allow us to turn our attention to the missional dimension of the work, growing the Church in Croydon.

As the PCG, are you (still) excited?

Yes, we are! We are a little frustrated, maybe, with the delays – but even out of that has been borne a series of up-lifting and energising conversations about the Church for the future. There is a genuine sense of discerning God’s purpose in creative ways. Croydon Uniting Church will have a bright and sustainable future for our children and young people to engage with and cherish, along with all generations. Our congregation will be better represented in the structure of our building. Our building will be like we are: worshipful, open, flexible, friendly and hospitable.

Will you continue to keep us informed?

Yes. The PCG and Church Council will keep the congregation informed. Be aware, though, that there is likely to be a pause until such time as all the necessary approvals have been reached for the ‘business case’ and the next stage commences.

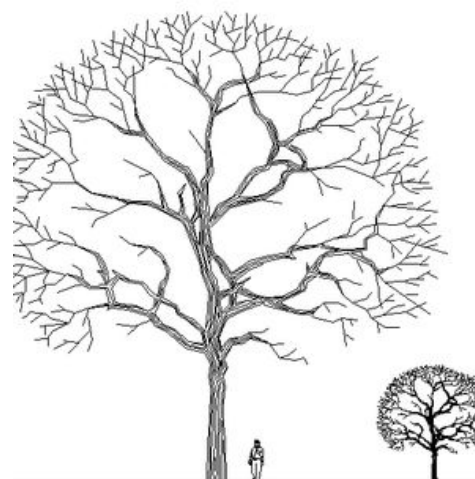
Who can I talk to?

You can talk with any Church Councillor or the Croydon Uniting representatives on the PCG: Rohan Pryor, Paul Chandler, Charles Popple and Kerry Shearer.

We ask for your continued prayers and support for the Church Council and the Project Control Group as this important work continues.

In Christ’s service,

The Croydon Uniting Church
Project Control Group
Rohan Pryor, Paul Chandler,
Kerry Shearer and Charles Popple



Croydon Uniting Church Property Strategy Feedback

Strengths	Weaknesses
Opportunities	Questions

Name: _____ (optional)