

Charity Commission opens statutory inquiry into The Spiritualist Association of Great Britain

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The Spiritualist Association of Great Britain, formerly known as The Marylebone Spiritualist Association, is the subject of a statutory inquiry opened last month by the Charity Commission. The charity, whose objects include the advancement of the religion and religious philosophy of Spiritualism, has come under scrutiny following the 2010 sale of its former head office in London. The property was sold for £6m to a company based in the BVI, and shortly afterwards was sold on to another BVI registered company for £21 million.

The Charity Commission was alerted to the disposal in January 2013 and raised concerns that the property may have been sold for significantly less than its market value. The charity trustees were unable to demonstrate to the satisfaction of the Commission that the steps they took and their decision-making in relation to the disposal were in the best interests of the charity. The Commission has therefore decided to open a statutory inquiry, which will examine whether, and to what extent, there was any mismanagement or misconduct on the part of the trustees. This will include considering whether the trustees complied with their legal obligations and fiduciary duties when disposing of a charitable asset. The Commission is expected to publish a report once the inquiry has been completed, which will detail what the inquiry looked at, what actions were undertaken and what the outcomes were.