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There can be a lot of work to do before you apply to your [Fabric Advisory Committee](#) or to the [Commission](#).

We can help you increase your chances of success.

Download our guidance



Always consult early on

Early consultation offers you a chance to get free expert advice. You should always contact:

- Your [Fabric Advisory Committee](#)
- ~~The Commission~~
- Historic England
- Your local planning authority
- Relevant national amenity societies
- The [Association of English Cathedral's](#) project support panel for major development projects

This can help you identify and negotiate any problems with your proposal early and get everyone to agree on the underlying principles of a project before you've spent time and money on detailed designs.

Helpful hint:

Don't forget to share your aspirations with your congregation and the local community.

This will go a long way towards winning people round to your plans for the future.

Consult the Commission

We may want to organise a site visit and send a delegation from the Commission to discuss the proposal with members of chapter, your professional advisers, and members of your [Fabric Advisory Committee](#). We may also recommend that you invite representatives from Historic England and the national amenity societies.

Our early advice will deal with any aspect of your proposal that we (or the FAC) are unlikely to approve. We may tell you if the application is ready to be made. But our early advice will never say that an application will definitely be approved.

We can also give you helpful, independent advice on applications to other authorities, even when approval under the [Measure](#) is not required.

Important:

Views expressed on site by members of the Commission do not constitute the advice of the entire Commission.

You will receive our formal advice in writing following the visit.

Plan ahead

If your project needs formal permission, then you and your architect or archaeologist should put together a timetable leading up to your application.

Think about the time you will need to:

- Prepare your supporting documents (include time to commission them)
- Get advice from your Fabric Advisory Committee, the Commission, and other relevant consultees
- Meet the deadlines of your Fabric Advisory Committee, the Commission, and grant-giving bodies.

Commission reports

Prepare the following documents independently of any specific scheme.

Conservation management plan

This document sets out:

- The significance of a place
- How it should be preserved
- And how it could be enhanced in future alterations, repairs or management (if possible)

Find out more about conservation management plans

Liturgical plan

This document explains what you want your building to say about:

- The nature of the Christian gospel
- The liturgy
- And what the liturgy says about your building

Find out more about liturgical plans

Visitor engagement plan

This document sets out the strategic context, aims and objectives of the cathedral's engagement with its visitors, whether tourists, pilgrims or regular worshippers.

Find out more about visitor engagement plans

Your policies

Come up with relevant policies for managing matters such as collections and repairs.

Helpful hint:

Your proposals should also align with your diocesan mission action plan.

Your supporting documents

Always include the following supporting information with your application to your Fabric Advisory Committee or the Commission:

Cover statement

Be brief. Explain your proposals and put them into context.

Statement of significance and needs

Explain why the works need to be done.

And assess the significance of the area, fabric or contents affected. You might have already done this in your cathedral's conservation management plan.

Impact statement

Include a statement from your architect or archaeologist explaining the impact of the works and any mitigation proposed. This might include proposals for recording the fabric before and during the works.

Photographs

Include good quality photographs of the areas affected by the proposed works.

Drawings

Include accurate drawings and other illustrative material such as visualisations and photomontages.

Advice from your Fabric Advisory Committee

We will expect you to include the advice of your FAC as part of any application.

Where appropriate, your application should also include:

- An assessment of the implications that new works may have for the future maintenance and conservation of the fabric
- An options appraisal which looks at alternative solutions, why they were rejected, and the reason you chose the option put forward
- A liturgical statement setting the works in their context: this could be the relevant section of your liturgical plan
- An indication of how the proposals relate to the cathedral's conservation management plan, together with any relevant sections of the plan
- An indication of how the proposals relate to the cathedral's visitor engagement plan, together with any relevant section of the plan
- Relevant technical reports, specifications and other detailed information
- A reference to relevant cathedral policies (e.g. art, collections and loans, stone conservation, repairs, etc.)

You must also make your supporting documents available to statutory consultees.

Helpful hint:

Your supporting documents should always be proportionate to the size of your proposal. They should be concise and targeted.

Circulate them electronically.

What do we want to know?

Your supporting information should help us reach a fully-informed view on your proposals. It should address the following questions:

- What work and where?
- Why are you proposing the works? How will they relate to any broader issues the cathedral faces?
- Who is doing the works?
- What impact are they likely to have on the architectural, archaeological, artistic and historic character of the building and its contents?
- How are you mitigating those impacts?
- What are the benefits?

Your checklist for preparing an application

Have you:

Discussed the proposals with your architect or archaeologist?

You should ask for their advice on:

- Who to apply to: your Fabric Advisory Committee or the Commission?
- How long the work will take

Find out more about your architect's or archaeologist's role

Discussed your objectives with your Fabric Advisory Committee?

You should do this early on even if, in the end, your application goes to the Commission.

The FAC should remain involved in ongoing discussions as the proposal develops.

Consulted with the Commission?

If your application is likely to go to the Commission, then you're encouraged to consult us at an early stage.

Discussed your proposals with secular planning authorities?

It might be appropriate to discuss your proposals early on with:

- The local planning authority
- Historic England
- Relevant national amenity societies

Think about if you also need to apply for:

- Planning permission
- Listed building consent
- Scheduled monument consent

Prepared your supporting documents?

They should be targeted, relevant and proportionate to your proposals.

Don't forget to include detailed plans, drawings, specifications and any other documents that will help us understand what you want to do and why.

When does the Commission meet?

We meet roughly every six weeks.

Our calendar contains our meeting dates and submission deadlines.

Download our calendar

- [CFCE Calendar 2023](#)
- [CFCE Calendar 2024](#)

How long do decisions take?

This varies according to:

- The type and complexity of your proposal
- The Commission’s meeting calendar
- How long it takes to organise a site visit
- How long it takes you to prepare additional information requested by the Commission (if required)

The following is a rough guide:

Applications for minor works (e.g. preliminary archaeological investigation or object loan)

Likely timescale for determination: 2-3 months.

It might not be necessary to formally seek advice prior to an application, but an informal conversation with the Commission’s secretariat may be advisable.

Most applications

Likely timescale for determination: 6-12 months.

This could involve:

- 1 or 2 rounds of advice prior to a formal application
- Obtaining further information to support your application (if requested)
- Having to consider other options (if advised)
- Seeking pre-application advice from other statutory consultees

We may approve your proposal with conditions that govern the discovery of archaeological or human remains.

The approval of final details may be left to the FAC.

Major development projects (e.g. new-build or demolition)

These projects typically involve a grant application to the Heritage Lottery Fund.

Likely timescale for determination: 18-24 months (or longer).

This could involve:

- 2 or more rounds of advice prior to formal application
- Obtaining further information to support your application (if requested)
- Having to consider other options (if advised)
- Consulting other statutory consultees several times

Any approval is likely to come with conditions that govern the discovery of archaeological or human remains.

The approval of final details may be left to the FAC or reserved to the Commission.

Next steps

Once you have prepared your supporting information, you need to:

- Find out who to apply to
- Apply to your Fabric Advisory Committee
- Apply to the Commission

Also of interest



[Our grants](#)



[Our advice and guidance](#)

[Everything from new art to lighting and sound equipment](#)



[Contact us](#)



[Project planning advice](#)

[Let us help you develop your project](#)

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