

- [Research the history of your building](#)
- [Write a statement of significance](#)
- [Understand your need](#)
- [Write a statement of needs](#)
- [Why is this important?](#)
- [Case studies](#)
- [Next steps](#)

You need to know what is special about your building's architecture and history to see its potential and understand its limits.

## Documents

- [Chapter five: Developing your ideas \(4.1 MB\)](#)



## Research the history of your building

Most churches have changed over time, some more than once. You can find information about your church's history using:

- Your guidebook
- ~~The Church Heritage Record database~~
- The Incorporated Church Building Society collection (also called "Church plans online")
- The Building of England books (also called "Pevsners")
- ~~The Victoria County History books~~
- ~~The Arts Society's church records~~
- ~~The Historic England archive~~
- ~~The National Heritage List for England~~

Also visit your local library, museum or county record office. And don't forget to look into the archaeology.

Find out more about researching your building's history

## Write a statement of significance

The statement of significance will help you see the potential and limits of your building.

You will need this document later when applying for faculty, so you might as well start it now.

A statement of significance describes how the building has changed over time, inside and out. It sums up why some items are important and what they contribute to the character of the building.

It won't be enough to just include the listing entry from the National Heritage List for England.

## Understand your need

Think of what you need and why.

You've already spoken to your community, so you know what they need and also what they want.

Now go through the range of solutions. Look at the impact each one will have on your building. Do the benefits outweigh the harm?

Work out which option your team feels best solves the problem and is the most achievable.

See what else you should be thinking about

## Write a statement of needs

A statement of needs will help you explain your project and what you want to achieve.

It spells out why you think you should make changes to the building to meet your needs. And why the specific changes you are proposing are necessary.

## Why is this important?

Going through this process will help you when you come to make your case.

If your project involves making physical changes to the building, you will need to ask your diocese for permission. Your diocese will want you to give good reasons why you need to make these changes. And they will ask you to explain how your specific idea is sensitive to the cultural and historical importance of your church.

They will expect a statement of significance and a statement of needs if your church is listed.

### Warning:

If you develop your project without thinking of its impact on the importance of your building, then you will run into problems later when you present your idea to your diocese and other statutory consultees.

## Case studies

- [Case study: St Matthew & St James Moseley Hill](#) (287.52 KB)
- [Case study: St James Hampstead](#) (1.33 MB)

## Next steps

To make your vision become a reality you need to start thinking about:

- Putting together a team of people to take this forward
- Talking to your DAC about permissions
- Developing a structure to manage the project in the short, medium and long-term
- The long-term future of your project's activities
- Developing your project ideas a little more

## Want more help?

### [Get advice from Historic England](#)

[Find out what Historic England will be looking for in your statements](#)

### [Alterations and extensions](#)

[Read our advice about making changes to your building](#)

### [Conservation management plans](#)

[For complex projects](#)

### [Talk to your diocese early](#)

[Save time and energy](#)

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