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If your church is listed, then you need to write a statement of significance and needs to apply for faculty.

We can help you focus on what's important.

Download our guidance

- [Statement of significance and needs](#)



Stephen Makin

What is a statement of significance?

A statement of significance is a document that describes:

- How the building has evolved over time
- When the various parts of the building were constructed
- And when notable additions were made to the interior (e.g. pews, pulpit, organ, stained glass, etc.)

It should provide a summary of why they are important and the contributions they make to the character of the building. And it should describe the impact of the changes you are proposing.

You should revisit this statement at regular intervals over the years and consider it to be a working document.

[Find out more about statements of significance](#) and [download our template](#)

Important:

If you've [developed your vision](#) with little or no regard for its impact on the significance of your church or how changes to the building will affect people's appreciation of the wider setting of the church, then you will undoubtedly come into problems when you present your proposal to [your Diocesan Advisory Committee](#) and other statutory consultees.

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What is a statement of needs?

A statement of needs is a document that allows you to explain your proposal having regard to your statement of significance and the impact of your proposed changes.

It should set out the reasons:

- Why you think your needs cannot be met without making changes to your church building
- And why you think the proposed changes are necessary to assist you in your worship and mission

For example:

- [Changing liturgical requirements](#)
- Enhancing the building for easier access
- Allowing for wider use by the community

The statement of needs serves both you and those involved in the faculty process.

[Find out more about statements of needs](#) and [download our template](#)

For very large and complex projects, you may need to draw up more detailed statements using the above templates.

Don't forget to include a copy of the standard information (form 1A) with your statements of significance and needs when applying for faculty.

It contains basic facts about your project.

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Major churches

Some churches are of such complexity and significance, or the impact of the project is so large or controversial, that statements of significance and needs may not be sufficient.

If this is the case, you should consider producing a conservation management plan rather than a statement of significance.

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Why are statements of significance and needs important?

To make a faculty application for a listed church, you need to produce statements of significance and needs (under the Faculty Jurisdiction Rules 2015 and the 2019 amendment).

They help you define and explain your proposals. And they help those in the faculty system advise you and assess your plans for change.

Completing these two documents will help you understand:

- Your place of worship
- Its history
- Previous changes that have taken place
- And reveal the building's potential as well as its limits

Show that your scheme is based on a sensitive understanding of the cultural and heritage significance of your church.

Explain how you will minimise the harm to its significance.

Help the relevant advisory bodies understand the impact your proposal will have on the building and whether that impact is appropriate.

Perhaps there is another, less intrusive way of achieving the same outcome.

Important:

You need to get permission for your project if it involves changes to:

- The interior of your church

- The exterior of your church
- Its contents

If your building is listed, you may not be able to make all the changes you want. You might have to think about different ways of achieving your aims.

Find out more about how we manage our churches

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Also of interest

Church Heritage Record

See what makes your building unique

Plan your building project

A step-by-step guide

Source URL: <https://www.churchofengland.org/resources/churchcare/advice-and-guidance-church-buildings/statements-significance-and-needs>