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New works of art offer a tremendous opportunity to engage visitors and congregations, and to bring new items of beauty into your cathedral.

They can also have a significant impact on the character of a cathedral.

We can advise you on the commissioning process to make sure the impact is the one you want.

Download our guidance



Where to begin?

Develop an arts policy

We strongly encourage you to develop an arts policy for your cathedral to provide a framework for the installation of new works of art, and to guide the development of specific proposals.

This policy should be reviewed and updated on a regular basis, and any application for a new art work should make reference to it.

Appoint someone to manage the process

We strongly recommend that a named member of Chapter or the senior cathedral team manages any proposal to install a new work of art. They don't need to be artistic themselves, but they should have a good understanding of what the cathedral wants from the commission, and take charge of the process.

Talk to your cathedral architect and archaeologist

You should develop proposals in close discussion with your cathedral architect and cathedral archaeologist so that the impact of the work is understood and any necessary mitigation measures are incorporated from an early stage.

Write a brief

Any new work of art should respond to a clear brief.

Set up an expert group

If you are going to select an artist by open or limited competition, it is advisable for you to establish an expert group to assist you in decision making.

What permissions do you need?

When the installation of a new work of art is proposed we assess its effect on the cathedral's character and fabric.

Permanent installations

They usually require permission from your Fabric Advisory Committee.

But the Commission has the right to "call-in" the application for its own determination if it feels that the proposal gives rise to considerations of special interest.

You will also need to apply to the Commission if an installation requires a permanent alteration to the cathedral fabric.

Temporary installations

They do not require permission under the Measure, **as long as** they do not have a material effect on the fabric of the cathedral (e.g. significant physical intervention)

But you should still take advice on an installation from your Fabric Advisory Committee

"Temporary" means a period of up to twelve months.

What do we look for in your application?

Your proposal will be assessed on its material effect on the architectural, archaeological, artistic or historic character of the cathedral. That includes:

- Its physical impact on the cathedral fabric
- And its visual impact on the building's character and appreciation

Include the following supporting information with your application:

- An introductory statement with background information that sets the work in context
- The cathedral's arts policy
- The cathedral's liturgical plan and conservation management plan or a statement of significance on the fabric affected by the work
- The brief to the artist
- A description of the proposed work
- Illustrative material (drawings, artist's impressions, photomontages, samples, etc.)
- A statement by the artist on the work
- Biographical details of the artist
- Any relevant technical information (e.g. installation fixings, fittings, hanging mechanisms, lighting requirements, maintenance issues etc.)
- Impact statements by the cathedral architect and, or cathedral archaeologist, as appropriate.

Also of interest



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Contact us

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