

- Cathedral architects
- Cathedral archaeologist

Each cathedral is required to employ both an architect and an archaeologist.

They give expert advice on the care and conservation of the historic fabric of a cathedral.

We can help you understand their roles and responsibilities.

## Download our guidance

- [The role and duties of the cathedral architect or surveyor](#)



James DeMers

## Cathedral architects

### Their role

The cathedral architect is responsible for:

- Overseeing all repair and conservation work
- Any maintenance work that would materially affect the fabric
- Acting as lead consultant for any repair or conservation work

They have a key professional and statutory role in all matters concerning the fabric of your cathedral and its ancillary buildings, including aesthetic issues.

### Their duties

The cathedral architect's main responsibilities include:

- Writing a report every five years on the work that needs to be done and how urgent it is (i.e. the quinquennial inspection)
- Setting out a plan for maintenance, repairs, and improvements
- Writing a report every year on the work done the previous year
- Going to all meetings of the Fabric Advisory Committee
- Advising Chapter with regular and methodical reviews of contingency planning for fire or other disasters
- Advising Chapter with development projects
- Advising Chapter on the acquisition of new works affecting the aesthetic character of the cathedral

### Choosing an architect

This might be the most important appointment you make. You should search widely for suitable candidates and always interview several qualified applicants.

You should always hire an independent architectural assessor to help you with:

- Writing the job description
- Shortlisting
- Interviews

We are glad to suggest suitable names.

There should be a three-to-six month overlap between the new architect and their predecessor so that they can go to meetings and become familiar with ongoing projects.

It can also be helpful for the succession to happen just before the quinquennial inspection so that the new architect can become familiar with the cathedral.

We can advise you further on the process of advertising and interviewing a cathedral architect. [Contact us](#)

## Key relationships

Good relationships and communication are essential for the cathedral architect to properly perform their role.

You should have:

- Clear management structures between the architect, Chapter, the archaeologist, the administrator, the member of Chapter with responsibility for the fabric, and the Clerk of Works
- Regular meetings
- Lines for reporting

## **Thinking about a major new building project?**

We recommend an open selection process to appoint the architect most suited. This may or may not be your cathedral architect.

However, your cathedral architect should be fully involved in discussions of the project brief and remain closely involved during the project as the guardian and “friend” of the building’s fabric.

[Back to top](#)

## **Cathedral archaeologist**

### Their role

The cathedral archaeologist is your professional adviser on matters relating to archaeological remains above and below ground in the cathedral and its precinct.

They:

- Prepare appraisals and assessments of the cathedral’s archaeology
- Advise you on the relevant permissions required
- Advise you on the likely archaeological scope of a project
- Advise you on the cost and timescale of works
- Publish or disseminate the results of archaeological work (along with Chapter)

You should consult them as early as possible when you are proposing to do any changes, demolitions or restoration work.

And make sure that they are a member of any emergency disaster management group.

### Their duties

The cathedral archaeologist is responsible for:

- Writing a report every year on the work done the previous year
- Regularly assessing or making strategic plans for the management of the cathedral's archaeology

If you are proposing new works, your archaeologist will:

1. Write an appraisal identifying any significant archaeological implications and what work will be required
2. Write a desk-based assessment or field evaluation to look for significant remains
3. Agree suitable mitigation procedures with Chapter (if the remains are significant)
4. Write a brief for a programme of work (if archaeological investigation is decided upon)
5. Vet any specification, project design or method statement prepared by contractors
6. Monitor the work

### Choosing an archaeologist

A cathedral archaeologist must be qualified to give professional advice of a high standard. They should normally be:

- A graduate or hold a post-graduate qualification in archaeology or related discipline
- A member of the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (preferably but not necessarily)
- A person of proven experience in the study and understanding of historic buildings, monuments and archaeological sites, particularly with regard to church archaeology
- Able to carry out small-scale programmes of archaeological recording, monitoring and excavation, or to coordinate such work by other qualified parties

In appointing your archaeologist, you should consult with the Commission. We may suggest an independent assessor to help with defining a job description, shortlisting and interviews.

### Key relationships

Your archaeologist makes a valuable contribution to Chapter and should be accorded proper professional status.

They should have regular meetings with the architect and the Fabric Advisory Committee.

**Remember:** Every application made to your Fabric Advisory Committee or to the Commission which potentially has an archaeological impact should be accompanied by, at minimum, a brief statement from the cathedral archaeologist indicating their views on the proposals.

[Back to top](#)

## Also of interest

### Archaeology in churches

[Find out more about archaeological recording](#)

### Contact us

[Ask the secretariat for more advice](#)

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