What is a Church Buildings Report?

A Church Buildings Report is part of the formal legal process set out in the Mission and Pastoral Measure 2011, which a diocese follows when it has received a petition for closing a consecrated church (or part of it, see Legal Options), following the Options Appraisal process.

It comprises an assessment of the significance of a church building, its furnishings and its churchyard. It covers the architecture of the building and its place in the landscape, the archaeology of the church and churchyard, the work of craftsmen and artists, the history of the church and its people and the natural environment. We use the guidelines for assessing significance set out in our guidance on Statements of Significance and Statements of Needs and on Conservation Management Plans.

It also assesses the potential for change to the building that might help it become sustainable if the decision is made to keep it open. This is considered in a wide sense in line with our policy to promote open and sustainable churches. It might involve additional uses that support mission or alternative uses that could sit alongside worship and mission and provide an income. The report helps the diocese in their discussion about the future of the building. It will be considered alongside pastoral and financial factors in the context of the diocesan strategy.

The Structure of the Church Buildings Report
A Summary Report (Part 1) is compiled in the first place, focusing on defining the church building's significance, sustainability and condition in its local, diocesan and national context. This may involve making suggestions about changes that might be made if the church were to continue to be used for worship. This report will generally be ten pages long, suitably illustrated with maps and plans. It will be formally considered and, if necessary, revised at a full meeting of the CBC.

Should the church building, following receipt by the diocese of this report and any necessary consultation, be recommended for closure as a place of regular worship and a Scheme under the Measure is approved by the Bishop, the detailed Inventory (Part 2) is added, and the CBC's Statutory Advisory Committee considers this fuller report. This body then advises on the possible future uses of the building and site as part of the closure process, as set out here.

### How to request a Church Buildings Report

Requests should come from the diocese, usually the Pastoral Secretary. We recommend that you ask for the report as early as possible, generally after a formal petition for closure has been submitted to the diocese by the PCC.

To request a Church Buildings Report:

1. Obtain a resolution from the PCC as set out in the Mission and Pastoral Measure 2011

2. Download our form
   - [PDF copy](#)
   - [Word copy](#)

3. Fill it in and make sure it is endorsed on page 2 by the diocese's Pastoral Secretary.

4. Please send it to us by email with your supporting documents and any information you wish to add (see instructions and contact information in the downloadable form)

### What happens after we receive your request for a church buildings report?
We do some research and arrange a site visit with the local contact.

Once a draft report is ready, it must be approved by the Church Buildings Council. In the rare cases where the CBC has previously compiled a full Options Appraisal Report, this will be reformatted and submitted to the Council as the Church Buildings Report.

We send the final report to the Diocesan Pastoral Secretary for circulation. We also send a copy to the incumbent and the Church Commissioners.

**Next steps**

The CBC will recommend the level of our future involvement:

- **Level 1:** Report and letter with recommendations
- **Level 2:** Report and letter, follow up with advice (e.g. on grant aid)
- **Level 3:** One or more follow-up visits and advice
- **Level 4:** Intensive support (this will be rare) with advice on
  - Complementary use
  - Funding
  - Setting up trusts
  - Conservation management plans
  - Environmental audits
Also of interest

Think outside the box

Make wider, more imaginative use of your church building

Develop a community project

Let us help you through all the project steps

Request an archived church buildings report

We give access to groups with a formal interest in historic churches

Diocesan strategic reviews

Integrated thinking about church buildings with mission and ministry

Source URL: https://www.churchofengland.org/resources/churchcare/church-buildings-council/how-we-manage-our-buildings/church-buildings-reports