



This advice will help in the identification of buildings that will work well for a resource church and on obtaining advice and permissions for adaptation.

A city centre resource church is a church which, working closely with the local bishop, intentionally resources mission across a city, by planting and revitalising churches, developing leaders and providing other resources for mission. Its aim is to help evangelise the city and transform society.

The Church Buildings Council recognizes that a church building that is fit for the present day needs of its congregation, and the mission of the diocese, will have a more sustainable future than one that is not.

It supports the initiative for city center resource churches, recognizing that they are an important element for delivery of Renewal and Reform, and recognizes that for many

church buildings this will involve making adaptations approved under faculty.

For the effective and transparent operation of the faculty system this guidance is intended to show how to start a project in a way that potential difficulties can be managed from the start. This may include choosing a building that is already a good match with what is needed if this can be achieved in the right place. Early advice cannot prejudice the outcome of a faculty application for a resource church or plant, but it will help in forming well-made applications for permissions.

There are three situations where a church plant can occur: Using an existing non-church building for

worship, building a new place of worship, or reordering of an existing listed or unlisted church building.

The Church Buildings Council has no role to play when a church worships in hired premises. If permission for change of use is required this is a matter for the local planning authority.

When a new place of worship is built the Church Buildings Council has to be consulted if the work requires the demolition of an existing place of worship that is subject to faculty jurisdiction. For a new church building on a new site and for the conversion of an existing secular building planning permission, and not a faculty, is needed.

In this case the Church Buildings Council would be pleased to assist in forming plans for its development if requested, but rarely has a formal role.

The Church Buildings Council has a role for proposals when a building that is already subject to faculty jurisdiction is reordered for use as a church plant or a resource church.

Choice of Building

The Council is able to offer help in the choice of a building to be a plant or resource church. It knows from the Church Heritage Record where its large buildings are and, linking this with other information (including its list description) identify ones that are least likely to be sensitive in planning terms.

Initial scoping

The Council can assist the diocese and the DAC at an early stage in assessing how best to approach adapting the building. This will include support with producing statements of significance and needs and, if the building is complex, a Conservation Management Plan. The information in these documents will be essential in gaining permissions for change.

Faculty advice

A resource church in a listed building that benefits from the Ecclesiastical Exemption will need to apply for a faculty like any other church. When its faculty

petition is considered, and assuming that it is seeking to make significant changes in the building, the Diocesan Chancellor will have to balance the benefits of the proposed changes against any loss of significance, with special attention to the character of a listed building.

The fact that a resource church is part of a national initiative to renew the life of the church means that the benefits of any changes may be high. However, this needs to be set out clearly (and succinctly) in the statement of needs for each faculty application. This will assist those with a legitimate reason to comment on the proposal to better understand it. It will also assist the Diocesan Chancellor when he considers it. It will also be helpful to set out additional benefits specific to the place and the building.

Proposals that have an impact on the heritage significance of the building will need to be clearly articulated and addressed. It may assist the PCC to work with an appropriate heritage consultant at this stage as the right one will be skilled in understanding the church and heritage. When your faculty application is considered the quality of proposed new work will be taken into account as part of the justification for any loss of heritage. When proposals involve significant change to a building of heritage

significance it will be necessary for there to be consultation with relevant amenity societies and in certain circumstances Historic England. The DAC will guide you in this, but it would be helpful to ask at an early stage what consultation will be necessary in order to avoid the possibility of frustration arising from delays from objections at a late stage in proceedings.

The canons of the church require that every church building has certain furnishings. These are set out in Canon F (<https://www.churchofengland.org/more/policy-and-thinking/canons-church-england/section-f>).

The principle requirements are that a place of baptism is provided in every church where baptism is administered and that proper provision is made for the celebration of Holy Communion. Although the canon refers to a font subsequent guidance from the House of Bishops encourages the provision of a single place of baptism where immersion baptism can also take place when this is required.

(<http://www.ecclesiasticallawassociation.org.uk/images/fonts1992.pdf>)

