



Introduction

The Church Buildings Council is the Church of England's national advisory body, helping churches and dioceses on the care, conservation and development of church buildings, their furnishings and churchyards.

The [Faculty Jurisdiction Rules](#) explain when the Church Buildings Council may or must be consulted over proposed works that are subject to faculty. This guidance note explains how the Rules are used in practice.

It is most often at an early stage that advice from the Church Buildings Council, along with that of other statutory consultees, can have the greatest impact.

The Council's role in the faculty process contributes to its general remit to foster and encourage churches to be open and sustainable. In cases where a struggling church is trying to bring about a sustainable future in worship use and where the diocese identifies a particular need for outside advice, the Council is willing to engage. More details can be found on our [website](#).

Early consultation

Early referral can save the potential for frustration if advice is received after considerable time and expense has gone into working up detailed proposals. Referrals should always be with the knowledge of the DAC (and will usually be from the DAC Secretary).

To help the Council to provide advice the parish must have made a start with preparing the statements of significance and needs (Rule 4.4). When these documents are not available (even in draft form) the Council will advise that they are prepared before giving substantive advice. Guidance and templates for the statements can be found [here](#).

Where there are several possible ways to achieve the stated need, an options appraisal is a useful way to show the alternatives the PCC has considered. An example for a heating options appraisal can be found [here](#).

Early advice by Historic England and the national amenity societies is dealt with by Rule 4.5. However, the Council can often be usefully consulted at the same time as the amenity societies but is dealt with under Rule 4.6.

What is appropriate to refer to the Church Buildings Council?

Compulsory consultation

Where conservation, alteration, disposal or introduction of an article of special historic, archaeological or artistic interest, including new works of art, is proposed, consultation with the CBC is mandatory. Where the Council has been consulted at an early stage, this can satisfy the mandatory consultation by the Chancellor under Rule 9.6. The Chancellors can also refer any other case at their discretion (Rule 9.7).

In addition to the provisions made in the Rules, the Diocesan Pastoral and Mission Measure 2007 requires the CBC to consider requests more widely for advice over applications or possible applications for the grant of a faculty (although the Council is not obliged to comment when it is asked). The following section sets out the type of works that it is most likely to consider.

Assessing the impact of proposals

The Church Buildings Council expects to be asked about cases which involve significant impact to Grade I and Grade II* listed church buildings. Significant impacts are those which would result in a lasting change to the character of the building, its interior or setting.

In coming to a view about the potential impact of the proposals, DACs may find the following grid helpful. As a guide, cases should be considered for referral if they tick two or more of the shaded boxes. For example a new extension on the existing footprint would need to have a high impact to be considered for referral from a Grade II* listed building.

| PROPOSAL | Grade I | Grade II* | Grade II |
|--|-------------------------------------|----------------------|----------|
| | Where impact is HIGH or MODERATE | Where impact is HIGH | |
| Major liturgical reordering | yes | yes | yes |
| Major reordering and reseating | yes | yes | no |
| Major lighting schemes | yes | yes | no |
| Subdivision | yes | yes | no |
| Entirely new extensions | yes | yes | yes |
| Extensions on existing footprint | yes | yes | no |
| Landscape and curtilage | yes | yes | no |
| Archeological remains | yes | no | no |
| Affecting ancient trees, protected species, wildlife | yes | yes | yes |

Note: The Council will usually only consider Grade-II listed buildings where there is a major proposal; usually this will be where there is a high impact on the liturgical arrangements or where an extension is proposed. When it is helpful to do so it will consider exceptional unlisted 20th-century ensembles.

Other factors that should prompt a referral

- Novel or unusual proposals which may set a precedent that could help CBC to disseminate knowledge and experience,
- Cases where there are widely differing views,
- Cases where the DAC cannot provide expert advice, or such advice is at variance with others' views,
- Sensitive context (e.g. historic importance, major visitor attraction),
- Untypical and historic building services installations
- Where a church is at a critical point in its life and an outside discussion about the building would be helpful.

Policy and precedents

In order to understand how the Council is likely to view proposals, it is useful to refer to the [Casework Policy and Precedents](#) paper which can be found on our website.

Conservation issues

There is one situation where consultation with the CBC is mandatory: Rule 4.6 relating to articles of special historic, architectural, archaeological or artistic interest and their introduction, conservation or disposal. This Rule clearly covers a potentially wide range of faculty applications:

- Monuments (all historic monuments and 19th-century and later monuments of special historic or local significance)
- Churchyard structures listed Grade I and II*
- Timberwork (all historic timberwork and 19th-century and later timberwork that provides an example of the architect's or craftsman's work)
- Historic metalwork (including external railings) and church plate
- Textiles (all historic textiles and 19th-century and later works with a known artist/maker)
- Historic books and manuscripts
- Wall paintings (all historic wall paintings and works by a known artist/maker)
- Historic and/or artistically significant paintings on canvas and wood
- Historic and/or artistically significant stained glass and plain historic glazing (all historic stained glass and work by a known artist/maker)
- Organs (particularly those that have a BIOS [Historic Organs Certificate](#)) that are intact examples of their builder's work and/or instruments of outstanding character
- Bells (particularly works that involve change to or loss of a bell or bell frame identified on the Council's [list of bells and bell frames](#) of high historic significance). This includes proposed tuning and recasting, works that involve the loss of timber frames, or conservation of frames including significant amounts of new material
- Historic clocks (all proposals involving turret clocks; timber-framed clocks; change to/relocation of historic metal- and timber-framed clocks; total loss of any historic clock)

Resource churches

The CBC supports the initiative for city centre resource churches, recognising that they are an important element for delivery of Renewal and Reform. For many church buildings this will involve making adaptations approved under faculty. The CBC can offer help at every stage in the process, from the initial selection of appropriate buildings to advice on the faculty process and on specific proposals for change.

Early consultation with the CBC is encouraged as this can help to ensure a successful outcome. The CBC has a guidance note on [Resource Churches](#).

Net Zero Carbon 2030

Following the Synod target, all proposals should aim to reduce the church's carbon footprint. This is applicable to all proposals, from felling a tree to a major reordering. To understand the measures that the church can take to achieve Net Zero Carbon, follow the steps set out in the [Practical Path to Net Zero](#).

How the Council will respond to requests

The Council will always use its discretion to decide if it needs to comment on a case or not. If it does not need to comment it will try to let you know promptly. Where possible it will try to speed up its response using its delegated advice policy.

In the majority of cases considered by the full Council, a visit will be arranged to the church to discuss the proposals. The CBC will always be represented by an officer who will often be accompanied by a member of the Council. The visit is to ensure that the delegation has fully understood the proposals and seen the site at first hand in order to report to the CBC to enable a full discussion of the scheme and relevant issues.

The visit will be arranged with a representative from the Parish, liaising with the DAC Secretary, and the CBC will welcome the attendance of the incumbent, architect and PCC members closely involved in the proposed works as well as representatives from the DAC. Some DACs may wish to arrange meetings of all interested parties at an early stage. This is usually very productive and wherever possible the CBC will arrange for an officer, at least, to be in attendance.

The report of the visit will be discussed at the next CBC meeting and the resulting advice will be sent in writing to the DAC within 10 days of the meeting.

The CBC meets on seven occasions throughout the year. Dates of the CBC meetings are available on the [ChurchCare](#) pages of our website.

In some cases, the Council may have comments to make on a proposed scheme which can be made without a visit to the church. In such cases, the advice will be provided under the Council's delegated advice policy within the 42 day consultation timeframe. If a matter is deferred to the DAC this will be indicated within 42 days and usually sooner.

