



Statements of Significance and Statements of Needs



The Council encourages preparing these documents at an early stage when developing proposals as they to help establish need, understand significance and inform decisions about change.

Statement of Significance

The Faculty Jurisdiction Rules 2013 define a Statement of Significance as “a document which describes the significance of the church or other building in terms of its special architectural and historic interest (including any contribution made by its setting) and any significant features of artistic or archaeological interest that the church or other building has so as to enable the potential impact of the proposals on its significance, and on any such features, to be understood”.

A Statement of Significance is an important tool to help everyone understand the significance of the church building and its fabric and fittings.

It is a useful resource for anyone with responsibility for your churches fabric and encourages good stewardship of your heritage building. It should be prepared independently of any Faculty application, and ideally reviewed annually so that any recently obtained historical material or changes, such as an

extension or reordering, can be incorporated, and a copy should be given to the Church Architect to include in his Quinquennial Inspection Report.

A Statement of Significance should accompany every faculty application that involves making changes to a listed church. It will help those in the Faculty system advise you and assess your plans for change.



This guidance includes a template to help you to write your Statement of Significance. It should include a ground plan and map of the local area and at least two photographs, normally one of the exterior, one of the interior. The notes in the boxes will guide you as to the sort of things to include.

In assessing significance you may wish to use the following customary terminology:

High – important at national to international levels

Moderate-High – important at regional or sometimes higher

Moderate – usually of local value but of regional significance for group or other value (e.g. vernacular architecture)

Low-Moderate – of local value

Low – adds little or nothing to the value of a site or detracts from it

Statement of Needs

The Faculty Jurisdiction Rules 2013 define a Statement of Needs as “a document setting out the justification for the proposals” and stipulates that “If proposals are likely to result in harm to the significance of the church or other building as a building of special architectural or historic interest, the document setting out the justification for the proposals must set out the basis on which it is said that the proposals would result in public benefit that outweighs that harm”.

A Statement of Needs should be a document which serves both the parish and those involved in the faculty process. It should be a tool for the parish, enabling the PCC to focus its vision and agree on what it seeks to achieve. For others, such as the DAC, CBC and English Heritage it serves to provide easily accessible information to help assess the scheme which is being proposed for a faculty.

Statements of Needs are the parish’s opportunity to explain, justify and rationalise the proposals to all interested parties.

Consider that some people will not have the opportunity to visit the church and will need to base opinions on the information you provide in these supporting statements.

Bearing this in mind, you are strongly encouraged to ensure that the Statement is factual, informative, clear and concise.

Try not to be emotive or over-dramatic. The facts of the situation should speak clearly for themselves.

Basic facts about the project

Statements of Significance and Needs must be accompanied by the Standard Information form 1A which will contain the basic facts about the project.

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Statement of Significance

Section 1: The church in its urban / rural environment.

1.1 Setting of the Church

How does the setting out of the church contribute to its landscape / townscape value and to its significance?

1.2 The Living Churchyard

What is the significance of the natural heritage of the site?

1.3 Social History

What is the historic and present use of the church and churchyard by the congregation and wider community? How does this contribute to its significance?



1.4 The church building in general

Provide a description of the church.

1.5 The church building in detail

Assess the significance of either each historical phase of the building or of each area within it. For example, north aisle, south chancel elevation, Norman tower

1.6 Contents of the Church

Provide a description of its contents and their significance. It is reasonable to group these if there is a contemporary scheme which is significant as such, for example one could say a complete scheme of 18th-century furnishings, of high significance.



1.7 Significance for mission

What are the strengths of the building as it is for worship and mission? What potential for adapted and new uses does the church and its setting already have with little or no change?

Section 2 : The significance of the area affected by the proposal.

2.1 Identify the parts of the church and/or churchyard which will be directly or indirectly affected by your proposal.

2.2 Set out the significance of these particular parts.



Section 3: Assessment of the impact of the proposals

3.1 Describe and assess the impact of your proposal on these parts, and on the whole.

3.2 Explain how you intend, where possible, to mitigate the impact of the proposed works on the significance of the parts affected and the whole.

Sources consulted

List the sources consulted



Statement of Needs

1. General information

This should provide an overview of the parish and the current use of the building.

2. What do you need?

Briefly explain your needs (not your proposals). Append any brief for your architect.

3. The proposals

Set out what you are proposing to do in order to meet the needs set out in section 2



4. Why do you need it and why do you need it now?

Justify your proposals by explaining why you can't meet your needs without making changes. Also include anything which may have prompted the proposals.

5. What is the evidence for the need?

Please explain who has been consulted.

6. How is the proposal contributing to the need for environmental sustainability?

How is it reducing the carbon footprint, contributing to the Church's commitment to be 'net zero carbon' by 2030?

7. What other options to meet the need were considered, taking Point 6 and the impact identified in the Statement of Significance into account?

This guidance is issued by the Church Buildings Council under section 55(1)(d) of the Dioceses, Pastoral and Mission Measure 2007. As it is statutory guidance, it must be considered with great care. The standards of good practice set out in the guidance should not be departed from unless the departure is justified by reasons that are spelled out clearly, logically and convincingly.



Statement of Significance - Major projects - Guidance on completion

Use the following guidance and key questions to help you complete the form

Section 1: The church in its urban / rural environment

This should provide an overview of the significance of the church, and the contribution of its setting to that significance. This should be compiled before any specific proposal has been worked up, and can be re-used for each faculty application, although of course it will have to be kept up to date.

1.1 Setting of the Church

Are there distant or near views which are valued by the congregation / wider community / visitors / experts? How do the trees contribute to the setting? What is known of the landscape design and history of the churchyard, including extensions? Are there archaeological remains? Are adjacent buildings similar, complementary or contrasting in age, style, materials or age? How are the boundary and entrances marked? Are the monuments, war memorials significant?

1.2 The Living Churchyard

Is the church or churchyard used by protected species or species with Biodiversity Action Plans? Are there any ancient, very prominent, rare or unusual trees? How good a habitat is the churchyard for fauna and flora?

1.3 Social History

Are there any significant events or personalities associated with the church? Are there important memories associated with the church or churchyard? How has the community served by the church changed over time?

1.4 The church building in general

What is the history of the church; when was a church first established on the site and how has it changed over time; who are the architects, artists and other craftsmen who have been involved; have there been any significant benefactors and has this affected the choice of architect / artist or the incorporation of any monuments in the church? How does work carried out on the church link to international, national, regional or local architectural and artistic movements? What is its plan form, spatial quality, building materials used, how it is lit and heated? What is the theological 'message' communicated by the exterior and interior of the church?

1.5 The church building in detail

Assess the significance of either each historical phase of the building or of each area within it. For example, north aisle, south chancel elevation, Norman tower.

1.6 Contents of the Church

Provide a description of its contents and their significance. It is reasonable to group these if there is a contemporary scheme which is significant as such, for example one could say a complete scheme of 18th-century furnishings, of high significance.

Include; Altar; Reredos; Pulpit; Lectern; Font; Stained glass; wall paintings; Bells and Bell frame; Monuments; Organ; Communion plate; Registers; Pews and other woodwork; Metalwork; Communion rails; floor finishes. Do the contents relate to any particular historical changes to the church and do they contribute to the significance of those changes? Are any of the artists or craftsmen of international, national, regional or local importance?

1.7 Significance for mission

What are the strengths of the building as it is for worship and mission? What potential for adapted and new uses do the church and its setting already have with little or no change?



Section 2: The significance of the area affected by the proposal

This should provide a more detailed description of the significance of the particular part of the church and / or its curtilage affected by the proposal scheme, and the potential impact of the proposed works.

Section 2 will be prepared in draft form for any pre-application consultations, and finalised to accompany a faculty application when a scheme has been worked up, taking the information in Part I into account.

This should not be a justification of your scheme, which should be in the Statement of Need. The level of detail provided should be proportionate to the importance of the heritage asset and sufficient to understand the impact of the proposal on the significance of the heritage asset. In the case of large and complex churches the PCC may need to consider acquiring professional help to draw up this section. In some cases a Conservation Management Plan may be required.

2.1 Identify the parts of the church and/or churchyard which will be directly or indirectly affected by your proposal.

You may need to describe these in more detail than in Section 1.

2.2 Set out the significance of these particular parts.

Refer to the terminology in the introductory section of this guidance document

Section 3: Assessment of the impact of the proposals

3.1 Describe and assess the impact of your proposal on these parts, and on the whole.

Impacts could include loss, alteration, obscuring, change of setting and change of use. Characterise impacts as either low, moderate or high.

3.2 Explain how you intend, where possible, to mitigate the impact of the proposed works on the significance of the parts affected and the whole.

This should include an assessment of the environmental impact or effects of these changes. How reversible are the impacts?

Sources consulted

List the sources consulted. These may include:

- ‘Buildings of England’ series by Pevsner
- Reports by the Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England
- (RCHME), now part of English Heritage
- The local history society
- The local museum
- Diocesan Record Centre
- County Record Centre
- County Biological Records Centre

- Historic Environment Record (HER), maintained by your local authority.
- Victoria County History (VCH)

Statutory designations and descriptions for churchyards, churches or objects within them can be checked through your local planning authority, English Heritage and Natural England (Nature Conservation significance).

Useful web sites include:

- ChurchCare <http://www.churchcare.co.uk/>
- Shrinking the footprint <http://www.churchcare.co.uk/shrinking-the-footprint>
- Heritage Gateway www.heritagegateway.org.uk/
- Magic www.magic.gov.uk
- Caring for God’s Acre www.caringforgodsacre.org.uk

Statement of Needs – Major Projects - Guidance on completion

Use the following guidance and key questions to help you complete the form

1. General information

This should provide an overview of the parish and the current use of the building.

This may include:

How many people live in the parish/ village/ town?
What different type of services take place in the church each week/ month and how many people



attend each of the different services on average?
 How many people are on the electoral roll?
 What is the age profile of the congregation? What children's provision is there? On Sundays and midweek? How many children attend these activities?
 Is the church normally left open during daylight hours? What other activities happen in the church alongside prayer and worship?
 What is the financial position of the church (e.g. reserves, payment of quota). Are funds available now? Or have funds been applied for or are being applied for? Please state to whom applications have been made and if applications have been successful or refused?
 When was the last Quinquennial report? What were the major issues which were highlighted? Are you on top of these issues? Do you have a maintenance plan?

2. What do you need?

Briefly explain your needs (not your proposals). Append any brief for your architect.

You may find it helpful to divide the needs up into areas such as:

- Facilities e.g. we need one accessible toilet and the ability to serve refreshments.
- Space e.g. we need a meeting room to accommodate up to 25 people sitting and 40 people standing.

- Access e.g. we need to provide a permanent route into the building which is accessible for wheelchairs.
- Liturgy e.g. we need to make arrangements to use a nave altar.
- Other e.g. we need to install a new heating system

3. The proposals

Set out what you are proposing to do in order to meet the needs set out in section 2.

4. Why do you need it and why do you need it now?

Justify your proposals by explaining why you can't meet your needs without making changes. Also include anything which may have prompted the proposals.

- How will this proposal help the ministry of the church?
- How will it enhance the liturgical space and services?
- How will it help small group work and midweek meetings?
- How will it help the mission of the church?
- What new groups of people will be drawn into the life of the church?
- What new activities and events will be able to take place in the church?
- How will it help your financial situation?

Describe any recent changes which have taken place which have led to the need arising, for example:

In the church congregation: rise in numbers attending, growth in particular age group such as children, introduction of new services and activities, arrival of new Vicar or church plant.
 In the local area: new housing development, increase/decrease in population, major regeneration scheme, major change in infrastructure such as transport links, employment opportunities
 In the church building: deterioration of fabric, vandalism or other damage, subsidence, etc.
 In the financial situation: a large bequest may have been made, there may be a pressing need to generate more money through the use of the building due to rising costs of ministry and mission.

5. What is the evidence for the need?

Please explain who has been consulted.

This may include church members, wider parish, potential user groups, diocesan bodies. Outline the results of your consultations and the dates that they were made. Please confirm whether proposed new partnerships/ activities are aspirational or committed, and whether there is any opposition to your proposals.

What market research has been undertaken? You may wish to include the results of surveys or community audits, letters from potential user groups as appropriate. Please supply a business plan if it has been prepared.



What contingencies are prepared if the predicted levels turn out to be too low or high?

6. How is the proposal contributing to the need for environmental sustainability?

- How is it reducing the carbon footprint, contributing to the Church's commitment to 'net zero carbon' by 2030 ?
- Would the proposed changes increase or reduce the carbon footprint of your church? If increase, why is this necessary and will it be offset?
- How do the design, materials, water and waste handling address sustainability?
- What benchmarks does it meet, e.g. BREEAM?
- How has sustainable use and future reuse been planned for?
- How would it impact on the flora and fauna of the church and churchyard?
- How can your proposals influence the way people use the building so that environmental impacts are reduced?
- Is the proposal part of your long term environmental strategy?

7. What other options to meet the need were considered, taking Point 6 and the impact identified in the Statement of Significance into account?

These may include: larger or smaller schemes, different designs, locating the scheme/proposal in a different part of the church building, not making a change at all, providing a management solution rather than a change in the fabric, using a different building in the wider community e.g. school, community hall, another church. What were the pros and cons of each option?

