



Employing an architect/surveyor? Read this first!

Before selecting an architect for a project in your church, there are a number of points that should be considered. This guidance note is intended to draw some of these to your attention, and hopefully, make the process a little easier for you.

Every five years, churches in the Church of England should be inspected by an architect or chartered building surveyor who has been approved by the Diocesan Advisory Committee (DAC). The approval process includes an interview to ensure that the inspections are carried out by people with the necessary and appropriate expertise in working in churches and listed and ancient buildings.

However, the parish has a free choice when employing an architect for repairs or other works in a church. It is vitally important to the success of your project that you engage the right person for the job. Some architects/surveyors specialise in conservation repair work. Some may have a flair for designing new buildings attached to old churches, and others may have a greater understanding of liturgical matters and internal re-ordering.

The PCC is advised to obtain information from possible candidates about their relevant experience before making its choice, and may wish to consider the following points in any selection process.

- Seek advice from the DAC, RIBA or RICS, asking for names of those who have a proven track record in dealing with a similar type of building (age, materials and grade) and the work to be undertaken (repairs, re-ordering, new building).
- Ask about qualifications, year of RIBA/RICS registration, details of continued professional development training undertaken.
- If your church is listed and you wish to apply for English Heritage grant funding or lottery funding, your chosen professional adviser will need to be an accredited conservation architect or surveyor.
- Ask for details of their experience of church work, listed buildings, historic fabric, negotiating with local authorities, English Heritage and National Amenity Societies.
- What do they know about “Ecclesiastical Exemption”? Do they have an understanding of the faculty system?
- If your church is listed and you wish to apply for English Heritage grant funding or lottery funding, your chosen professional adviser will need to be an accredited conservation architect or surveyor.

- Have they done any work in the Diocese already? Can you visit some of those churches?
- What era is of special interest to them; are they members of the following?
 - The Ecclesiastical Architects and Surveyors Association
 - The Society for the Protection of Ancient Building
 - The Ancient Monuments Society
 - The Georgian Group
 - The Victorian Society
 - The Twentieth Century Society
 - Any other similar body

Whilst this list is not exhaustive, it includes some important points to consider. The DAC Secretary is happy to send you a list of architects known in the Diocese, with details of projects in other churches, and we always recommend that you take the opportunity to visit other churches which have completed similar projects.

Finally, for large projects, however experienced your architect, early consultation with the DAC is always valuable, to make sure that the Committee is happy in principle with what is proposed, before commissioning detailed drawings from your architect.

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