



DAC Guidance

Reordering your church

Throughout history, the interior of the local parish church – furnishings, space and internal subdivisions – has been regularly adapted to meet the prevailing patterns of worship. In the present day many congregations are finding certain internal arrangements difficult to work with and are trying to find new ways of using the building. Adaptation in some churches will be relatively straightforward but in others there will be much to consider if the scheme is to be a success.

This guide offers practical guidance to PCCs about sources of advice, how to draw up proposals, and how to obtain the necessary permissions.

REORDERING – WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

“Reordering” involves internal changes to the existing arrangements of a church. There may in some cases be an external dimension as well – for example a parish which is planning to open up its interior may want a new, welcoming entrance or porch as well – but generally this leaflet is concerned with changes within the building itself.

The aim of any reordering project is to make the building work more effectively for worship and its other community functions. Just as every church building is different from the next, so each parish is unique in the way that it uses its premises. Church reordering schemes can range from the very modest – perhaps the removal of two or three pews to create a crèche or welcome area – to a radical internal refitting and/or the subdivision or opening-up of interior spaces.

PART ONE – STARTING TO PLAN FOR CHANGE

At the very earliest stages the PCC will need to discuss a number of questions, such as:-

- What is the building like? What are its advantages and disadvantages?
- Is there another building which could be used?
- Do we need radical changes or simple, less expensive options?
- What is the age and character of the church? How does that affect what we want to do?
- Is it listed? (In that case it may well be necessary to consult various external organisations.)

- What are the liturgical considerations?
- What are the real priorities? Are some of our ideas non-essential?
- What is the budget, and where are the funds coming from?
- If there is to be new furniture, how long will it last and will it give good value for money?
- Will we need to engage an architect?
- Will the changes be worthy of the building, and how will it look in a few years' time?
- Will there be opposition from any person or group?
- How likely is it that we will obtain the necessary formal consents?

There are many sources of advice and inspiration. Liturgical aspects are covered in a number of books and magazines, some of which are listed at the end of this leaflet. The diocesan Liturgy Committee has experience of a wide variety of styles and emphases in worship; contact the Chairman as listed below. Finally, visits to other churches which have carried out reordering schemes can be very helpful; contact the Archdeacon or DAC for suggestions.

Where the parish is considering a very major project, it is worth commissioning an architect to carry out a feasibility study at this stage. It is essential to produce a clear brief for this if the parish is to get full value from the study. The PCC may appoint its inspecting architect or surveyor on the basis that he or she knows the building well. Alternatively, if the project requires particular design skills, the PCC may decide to look for someone who has known strengths in church reordering.

THE LEGAL BACKGROUND – FACULTY AND PLANNING REQUIREMENTS

- * A faculty will be required for almost any type of internal adaptation, and you should contact the Archdeacon or DAC Secretary for advice on how to proceed.
- * Planning permission will be required only if the building is listed AND the changes will affect the exterior appearance of the church and/or churchyard. Examples could range from the unblocking of a disused doorway to the building of an extension.
- * Building Regulations may apply, particularly if mains services are to be installed or in the case of major building works to subdivide the interior.

AN OPPORTUNITY TO EXPERIMENT – THE ARCHDEACON'S LICENCE FOR TEMPORARY REORDERING

Very often, and particularly where only a modest re-arrangement of furniture will be required, the parish needs time to experiment. In this case the PCC can request the Archdeacon to issue a Licence for Temporary Reordering. Provided that any changes could be reversed at the end of the trial period, and as long as they are not too radical or contentious, this would give you up to 15 months to see whether the new arrangements would work in practice. By the end of the Licence period the parish must apply for a faculty if it decides to make the changes permanent. (In a listed church this may involve an external consultation process, for which you should allow ample time – please see below.)

During this experimental period you could assess samples of the furniture that you have in mind, for example if the parish is planning to change from pews to chairs. You may discover that the new chairs are not as comfortable as expected, or that colours or sightlines need to be reassessed.

If the church is listed it is wise to take proper archive-quality photographs before any furnishings are moved. Contact the DAC Office for advice.

Unfortunately a Licence for Temporary Reordering is not usually a realistic option where major alterations or building works are proposed.

CONSULTING THE DAC

The DAC has extensive experience of reordering schemes. Its aim is to help the parish find the best possible scheme for its own unique situation, balancing the needs of mission with those of the fabric and history of the building.

It is best to contact the DAC early for advice. A site meeting can be arranged and the PCC will get useful “feedback” about many questions – whether the opportunities have been fully explored, whether the plans may be controversial at the faculty stage, and whether there are implications that the PCC has not yet considered.

LISTED CHURCHES

The Faculty Jurisdiction Rules allow for consultation of various external organisations in cases where the following circumstances apply:-

- the church is listed AND the works will have a “material affect” upon the interior, or will affect the archaeology* of the church or churchyard, or
- the works would involve a historic item or items or would affect the setting of such items, or
- the church is unlisted but is in a conservation area AND part of the exterior is to be demolished. (This is unlikely to apply in internal reordering projects.)

The DAC will advise as to precisely which organisations are to be consulted. These may include English Heritage, the local planning authority, the County Archaeologist, the relevant amenity society (eg the Victorian Society) and/or the Council for the Care of Churches.

The external consultation process should take place at an early stage to allow the comments of the relevant organisations to be taken into account in the final version of the proposals.

You will need to send a Statement of Significance and a Statement of Need. The Statement of Significance is a summary of the church’s history, architecture, contents and general character. The Statement of Need outlines the PCC’s reasons for proposing the change. The DAC will provide you with guidelines for drawing up both documents.

The PCC should carefully consider any comments received. If these are helpful and acceptable, then they should be incorporated into the proposals. If there are comments which are clearly impractical – perhaps on the grounds of cost or use – then you should feel free to take this up in correspondence.

Finally, in cases where external consultations are required, the proposals will be advertised in selected local newspapers as well. Contact the Registry for further information.

(* Archaeology in this sense includes the historic fabric above ground, so disturbance of ancient walls or roofs would qualify.)

PART TWO – THE STAGES TO FOLLOW

STAGE 1

* Discuss the options at parish level, agree the PCC’s priorities, and draw up outline proposals.

* Commission a feasibility study if it is to be a major project.

* Start to plan for the funding.

* Invite the DAC for a preliminary site meeting to talk over the options before plans become fixed.

- * Ask the DAC for advice as to the process of obtaining faculty and any civil planning consents.
- * Ask the Liturgy Committee for advice if the changes are to have an impact in that field.
- * Visit other churches where similar schemes have been achieved.
- * Where applicable, apply to the Archdeacon for a Licence for Temporary Reordering (see the relevant section above).

STAGE 2

- * Discuss the feedback from the DAC and reconsider the proposals accordingly.
- * If the church is listed and external consultations are necessary (see “THE LEGAL BACKGROUND” and “LISTED CHURCHES”) the parish will need to draw up a Statement of Significance and Statement of Need and forward these with the outline proposals to the statutory consultees. Reconsider the proposals in the light of the comments received; the point about the consultation process is that it allows the parish to deal with potential objections well before the scheme reaches the faculty petition stage. Keep the DAC in touch with any comments received.
- * Discuss any internal or external opposition and reconsider the proposals accordingly.

STAGE 3

- * Once the preliminary comments have been discussed the parish can move to a final version of its proposals. An architect will almost certainly be necessary if there are to be building works or in the case of major changes to a listed church. You will also need to take advice about other points such as health and safety, fire, disabled access requirements, etc.
- * Obtain firm costings.
- * Obtain a PCC resolution in favour of the scheme.
- * Forward the final version of the proposals to the DAC for the issue of a Certificate of Recommendation. In some cases, the Certificate may include certain conditions for how the work is to be carried out.
- * Submit the faculty petition (enclosing the DAC Certificate and a copy of the PCC resolution).

STAGE 4

- * The faculty petition will be considered either by the Archdeacon (in the case of minor works) or by the Chancellor (in more major cases and in particular in listed buildings).
- * Where external consultations have been necessary, then the proposals will be advertised in selected local newspapers.
- * Formal objections are not always received but if any are made the faculty petition will be decided by the Chancellor, who will take any objections into consideration. He may also decide to cite external organisations with a right to comment, if he feels that they have not already been adequately consulted. He will also take into account any conditions in the DAC Certificate.

STAGE 5

- * The issue of a faculty means that the works may go ahead.

* If completion of the work is delayed for any reason, the term of the faculty can be extended – contact the Registrar for details.

PART THREE – FURTHER INFORMATION

The Church of England's website www.churchcare.co.uk gives general advice particularly on the liturgical aspects of reordering.

The "Church Times" (www.churchtimes.co.uk) and other publications regularly feature interesting reordering projects. The bi-monthly "Church Building" is a well-illustrated publication with articles about recent new-build projects and reordering, across a number of denominations. Subscription details are available from www.thecatholicuniverse.com.

"Re-pitching The Tent" by Richard Giles (£20, ISBN 1853115711, Canterbury Press) is a well-illustrated guide to the reordering of church buildings concentrating on creative thinking and imaginative design. It is available from Church House Bookshop (tel. 020 7898 1300, www.chbookshop.co.uk).

The Council for the Care of Churches (CCC) produces a booklet "Church Extensions and Adaptations" obtainable from Church House Bookshop (tel. 020 7898 1300, www.chbookshop.co.uk).

Of special interest to listed buildings is the English Heritage publication "New Work in Historic Places of Worship" (Product Code 50810) available free of charge from the address given above or downloaded from www.english-heritage.org.uk.

The CCC leaflet "Guidelines for Producing a Statement of Significance and Statement of Need" (for projects where external consultations are required) is available from the DAC Office. The DAC Secretary will be happy to advise on your early draft Statements if you are unsure how detailed they should be.

If you are adapting parts of your church for the purpose of improving disabled access, "Widening the Eye of the Needle" 2nd Edition (ISBN 071517589, £10.95 from the Church House Bookshop gives detailed advice and examples. For listed churches, English Heritage publishes a leaflet "Easy Access to Historic Buildings" (available from the EH Customer Services Dept, PO Box 569, Swindon SN2 2YP, tel 0870 3331181, email customers@english-heritage.org.uk).

The DAC Office maintains lists of recent projects completed in the Diocese of Bristol and can contact the Council for the Care of Churches (CCC) about notable cases elsewhere in the country.

"Fundraising for Churches" 2nd edition (ISBN 0281050589) by Jane Grieve is available from the SPCK or Church House Publishing (www.chpublishing.co.uk), £12.99. "The UK Church Fundraising Handbook" (ISBN 1853115169) by Maggie Durran is available from Canterbury Press, £17.99.

The Faculty Jurisdiction Rules 2000 can be downloaded from the website of the Office of Public Sector Information, www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si2000/20002047.htm.

PART FOUR – USEFUL CONTACT ADDRESSES

LOCAL COUNCILS

Bristol City Council

Mr R Jones, Planning and Development Services, Brunel House, St George's Road,
BRISTOL BS1 5UY

Tel: 0117 9223044 Email: bob_jones@bristol-city.gov.uk

South Gloucestershire District Council

Archaeology and Conservation Officer, Mr D Haigh, Civic Centre, High Street,
KINGSWOOD, S. Glos BS15 2TR

Tel: 01454 863434 Email: david_haigh@southglos.gov.uk

North Wiltshire District Council

Ms J Enticknap, Senior Conservation Officer, North Wiltshire District Council, Monkton Park,
CHIPPENHAM, Wilts, SN15 1ER

Tel: 01249 706660 Email: jenticknap@northwilts.gov.uk

Swindon Borough Council

Liz Smith, Conservation and Design Officer, Premier House, Station Road, SWINDON SN1
1TZ

Tel: 01793 466327 Email: ismith@swindon.gov.uk

COUNTY ARCHAEOLOGISTS

Bristol City Archaeologist

Mr RH Jones, Dept of Planning, Transport & Development Services, Brunel House, St
George's Road, Bristol BS1 5UY (tel: 0117 9223044)

Email: bob_jones@bristol-city.gov.uk

South Gloucestershire Council Archaeologist

Mr D Haigh (as above)

Wiltshire County Archaeologist

Mrs Melanie Pomeroy Kellinger, Wiltshire & Swindon History Centre, Cocklebury Road,
Chippenham, Wiltshire SN15 3QN (tel 01249 705511).

Email: melaniepomeroykellinger@wiltshire.gov.uk

EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS

English Heritage

SW Regional Office, 29 Queen Square
BRISTOL BS1 4ND

Tel: 0117 9750700
www.english-heritage.org.uk

Church Building Council
Church House, Great Smith Street
LONDON SW1P 3NZ
Tel: 020 7898 1866
www.churchcare.co.uk
Contact: Jonathan Goodchild, Casework and Legal Officer

Ancient Monuments Society
St Ann's Vestry Hall, 2 Church Entry Walk
LONDON EC4V 5HB
Tel: 020 7236 3934
Contact: Matthew Saunders
Email: office@ancientmonumentsociety.org.uk

Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB)
37 Spital Square
LONDON E1 6DY
Tel: 01306 627 048
Contact: the Churches and Cathedrals Officer, Catherine Cullis
Email: churches@spab.org.uk

The Georgian Group
6 Fitzroy Square
LONDON W1T 5DX
Tel: 020 7529 8939
Contact: Josephine Brown
Email: Josephine@georgiangroup.org.uk

The Victorian Society
1 Priory Gardens
Bedford Park
LONDON W4 1TT
Tel: 020 8747 5893
Contact: the Churches Adviser, David Garrard
Email: david@victoriansociety.org.uk

The Twentieth Century Society
70 Cowcross Street
LONDON EC1M 6EJ
Tel: 020 7250 3857
Contact: Cordula Zeidler
Email: cordula@c20society.org.uk

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