



Appointing a new inspecting architect or surveyor

The Inspection of Churches Measure 1955, as amended in 1991, requires each consecrated church to be inspected every five years by an architect or surveyor approved by the Diocesan Advisory Committee ("DAC"). Although such a person is usually referred to as the 'church architect', it can equally be a surveyor by profession, and this Guidance note uses the general term 'architect' to encompass both sets of professionals.

The architect appointed by the PCC with the DAC's approval will carry out the Quinquennial Inspection ("QI") and will normally be asked to prepare specifications and oversee major works. The church architect, or another person of suitable competence, may also be required as a condition of a faculty to supervise or inspect works. It is of course in order for the PCC to engage the services of an architect other than the appointed QI architect to design and oversee work in the church but as a matter of courtesy the church architect should be informed.

Although the only legal requirement is that the architect or surveyor is appointed for a QI, it is anticipated that a good working relationship will be developed between him/her and the PCC. If for any reason the PCC is not satisfied with the architect's work, it is perfectly entitled to change to another architect for the next QI and to develop a new relationship. Competence, continuity and trust are the essential ingredients of a good working relationship which should ideally be akin to that between a patient and a family doctor. The architect speaks for the building - its aesthetic wholeness, unity, development and care. For this reason he/she should be brought in at the earliest stage to discussions about any maintenance and re-arrangements. He/she should also advise on specialist consultants, on working with Historic England and the Amenity Societies and on grant applications.

Changing your church architect

It may be that your previous architect has retired or that you have been dissatisfied with his/her service. Courtesy demands that the PCC write a suitable letter to any architect whose services it no longer requires. Any contractual relationship with a church architect should be terminated strictly in accordance with the terms of the contract. The Diocesan Registrar is available to advise where necessary. Once you have decided upon your preferred architect, the DAC secretary should be notified in order that the DAC can officially approve the appointment, and all records can be updated. This is important when each church approaches its next Quinquennial inspection as the DAC Secretary, on behalf of the Archdeacon, will initiate this and obviously needs to know who to contact.

Who can you appoint?

It is the PCC's responsibility to interview and select the most suitable person. It is advised that you keep all documentation to prove you have been through a tendering process and the reasons for selecting the appointed candidate. **This will be very useful when applying for Grants to show that you have considered alternatives.** Your church architect should be appointed not on cost alone but value for money.

The inspecting architect must be a registered architect or building surveyor who has appropriate qualifications and experience and they must have agreed to act in accordance with the Bristol Diocesan Scheme for the Inspection of Churches (adopted in 2019). The secretary for the DAC can provide the PCC with a register of all the Inspecting Architects and Surveyors who are engaged by churches in the Diocese of Bristol ("Register"). Please note that the Register is a list of individuals not the practices.

The PCC may wish to appoint an architect that is already on the Register or carry out their own research and appoint someone from outside this list.

If the PCC decides to appoint someone from outside the list it will need to provide the DAC secretary with a copy of the architect/surveyor's CV and a covering letter from architect/surveyor. Once the DAC has confirmed the candidate's qualifications and suitability to become the church architect the PCC will receive a formal approval of this appointment and the architect/surveyor will be added to the Register.

Remember it is the PCC who appoints and is the employer of the architect and the decision rests with the PCC at all times.

The PCC should seek the DAC advice by contacting the DAC secretary if they have any questions regarding this process.

What to look for in interview?

1. *Conservation experience and competence:* It is most important that our historic churches are looked after by an architect with suitable experience and skill in the use of traditional materials and methods. The DAC regards this as of the utmost importance.
2. *Church experience and knowledge:* It is important that the architect has some knowledge of, and is in sympathy with, the Christian faith and the requirements of the parish church and PCC. Other projects which have been undertaken by the architect should be visited and considered.
3. *Specialist skills.* If you are planning a major reordering your appointed Architect / Surveyor should have the distinctive skills (liturgical knowledge and flair) necessary for dealing with a major re-ordering or extension. If they are not competent in these fields, any such project work should be the subject of competitive tender from three invited architects.
- 4.. *Fees:* The Diocese sets a fixed fee structure for QI's depending on the size of your Church building but the PCC must be clear about the architect's fee structure if you plan to use the QI Architect for other works. It is important to know what their services will cost; the scale of standard fees; charges for extras such as travel, photocopying, phone calls etc; and the cost of casual advice.
- 5.. *Locality.* The architect should be reasonably local. Be sure to check on travelling expenses.
- 6.. *Qualifications:* Any grant-assisted work must be planned and directed by a Conservation Accredited Architect or Surveyor. Your chosen church architect may not be conservation accredited in which case another suitable accredited architect will have to plan and direct such grant-assisted work. You should be aware of your chosen Architect's professional qualifications and the possibility that any grant-assisted work will have to be undertaken by another professional. The Bristol DAC in principal supports conservation accreditation, but has yet to make it a requirement for inclusion on the list of approved architects and surveyors.

7.. *References:* The PCC is encouraged to ask for references of the architect about other appointments he may hold to churches for it would be very helpful to learn from another PCC direct.

A word of warning about appointing someone you know

You may want to appoint someone known to you. It is always dangerous to appoint someone with a close connection with the parish. If something goes wrong both parties find themselves in a difficult position. In any case there may be embarrassment if work is slow or fees are inappropriate.

Handover to new church architect

Please ask your new church architect to make contact with his/ her predecessor to obtain copies of previous reports, plans, specifications etc so that he or she is fully briefed about your church.

Some words of warning

*"It is unwise to pay too much, but it is worse to pay too little.
When you pay too much, all you lose is a little money - that is all.
When you pay too little you sometimes lose everything because the thing you bought was incapable of doing the thing it was bought to do.
The common law of business prohibits paying a little and getting a lot - it can't be done.
If you deal with the lowest bidder it is well to add something for the risk you run and if you do that, you will have enough to pay for something better."*

John Ruskin, 19th century poet and writer

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