# NEW WORK IN HISTORIC PLACES OF WORSHIP

2012

ENGLISH HERITAGE

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This second edition of *New Work in Historic Places of Worship* was being prepared as the draft *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF) was emerging. Once the NPPF has been finalised, the guidance will be revised as necessary and re-issued.

# INTRODUCTION

English Heritage believes that this country's historic places of worship should retain their role as living buildings at the heart of their communities. We want to help congregations accommodate changes that are needed to achieve this, in ways which will sustain and enhance the special qualities of their buildings. Our formal role is to act as a consultee in the statutory processes for controlling works to listed places of worship, but we can also offer pre-application advice to congregations to help them develop proposals, based on our experience and expertise in working with the historic environment.

Most historic places of worship retain a settled pattern of use, based around worship and mission, but often involving a range of events and activities, for the congregation or the wider community. English Heritage supports the efforts of congregations to keep their places of worship in use wherever practical, mindful of the threat posed by closure to the special architectural and historic interest of the buildings.[1] We welcome proposals for appropriate additional uses and new facilities such as kitchens and toilets which will help to sustain these important parts of our heritage in use.

Places of worship from earlier centuries have generally been altered or rearranged a number of times in their history to meet changing needs and the evidence of change is often part of our appreciation of them. The process of change has not, however, been a neutral one: alterations which were once acceptable may now be regrettable, while people may be content with certain changes today which in the past would not have been permitted. The need for consent to make alterations provides a means of managing change which recognises the importance of sustaining and enhancing the values of listed places of worship for this and future generations. We believe that successful schemes of new work come from a shared understanding of, and respect for, both the cultural significance of the building and the needs of its users.

This guidance sets out the issues that English Heritage believes need consideration when new work is being proposed for places of worship and indicates our general views on those issues. Not all factors will be relevant in all cases and the guidance needs to be applied proportionately, on a case-by-case basis, according to the significance of the historic interest and the extent and nature of the works proposed.

## GENERAL PRINCIPLES

English Heritage considers that new work in historic places of worship should:

- be based on an understanding of the cultural and heritage significance of the building;
- minimise harm to the special historic, archaeological, architectural and artistic interest of the building, its contents and setting;
- bring with it public benefits, such as securing the long-term use of the building, which outweigh any harm to significance;
- achieve high standards of design, craftsmanship and materials.

1. See English Heritage (2010) *New Uses for Former Places of Worship*.

# CONSTRUCTIVE CONSERVATION: MAKING CHANGES TODAY

*"To the incumbent the church is a workshop; to the antiquary it is a relic. To the parish it is a utility; to the outsider a luxury. How to unite these incompatibles?"*

Thomas Hardy, Memories of Church Restoration, 1906.

The question that Thomas Hardy asked at the beginning of the 20th century is still a challenging one today, but the context in which we now try to answer it is very different. Over the intervening years the conception of how a place of worship can be used has changed and, at the same time, the development of legislation for the protection of historic buildings, of planning guidance and of conservation philosophy has resulted in an apparatus for trying to unite Hardy's "incompatibles".

Historic places of worship are very often central to the character and distinctiveness of the places in which we live and enhance the quality of our cultural, social and spiritual lives. They do so not only by providing a site for acts of worship, but increasingly by acting as a venue for community events and activities, a location for local amenities or a point of delivery for public services. To take too utilitarian a view of them, however, risks harming the very strong tangible and intangible values of such places. As sacred spaces, as places of solace or quiet contemplation, as important historical documents and as composite works of art of a high order they have a wide enduring appeal.

Some historic buildings have a degree of special archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic interest that merits statutory designation. Approximately 14,500 places of worship in England are designated as listed buildings – the majority in the higher grades of I and II* and over a quarter listed at grade I, the highest category. This is a reflection of the remarkable survival of ecclesiastical heritage and the high value that is placed on it.

Listing does not freeze a building at a point in time – as shown by the illustrations in this document – but is intended to ensure that when change becomes essential or desirable, the significance of a building and its setting can be protected. This is achieved through the consent processes of local authorities or, for the majority of listed places of worship, the equivalent processes of their denomination, all operating in the context of government planning policy.

Government policy on the management of change relating to historic buildings and archaeology is intended to achieve the conservation of the historic environment and heritage assets (e.g. listed buildings) so that they can continue to contribute to the quality of life of this and future generations. It contains a presumption in favour of the protection of heritage assets from unnecessary demolition or unsuitable or insensitive alteration, while also recognising that historic buildings should be kept in active use and that this may involve change. The policy is set out in *Planning Policy Statement 5, Planning for the Historic Environment* (2010) (PPS 5), supported by the *Historic Environment Planning Practice Guide* (2010), which helps to interpret the policies in PPS 5 in practical ways.

Further guidance is contained in *The Operation of the Ecclesiastical Exemption and related planning matters for places of worship in England – guidance* (2010). English Heritage's *Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance* (2008) is a statement of best practice for the care and management of the historic environment. Most pertinently, it includes an approach to assessing significance (paragraphs 30-83) and policies on new work and alteration (paragraphs 138-148).

**First steps – thinking about significance and need**

Understanding significance – all the things that are special about the building in terms of its architectural, historic, archaeological or artistic interest – will help to identify where change can be made without harm and what sensitivities need to be taken into account as plans take shape. At the same time it is important to establish if there is a need for any work which is likely to cause harm to the significance of an historic building. Any harm to the significance of a listed building is a loss of value to society and needs to be weighed against any public benefits the proposal will bring.

If a proposal for new work at a listed place of worship reaches the stage of a formal application for consent, the applicant will need to supply written statements outlining the significance of the heritage asset(s) and how it would be affected as well as their reasons for carrying out the proposed work. The length and level of detail of these statements should be proportionate to the extent of the work proposed, the significance of the asset(s) and the nature of the effects upon it.

## Identifying significance

Anyone proposing works to a listed building is required to 'provide a description of the significance of the heritage assets affected and the contribution of their setting to that significance' (PPS 5, HE6.1). Where proposals would affect the archaeological interest of a listed place of worship, or ground which contains archaeological remains, the description will need to cover these aspects of its significance too.

It is important that an assessment of significance focuses on the affected area(s) of the place of worship, rather than just being about the building in general and that it goes beyond simple description to explain what is important or special about the things it describes. In the case of large or complex buildings or where major works of alteration or extension are being considered, it may be helpful to obtain professional assistance with the research and writing of the statement of significance.

Relevant aspects of significance would typically be the following:

Community. Historic places of worship often derive significance from their ability to bring a community together through symbolism or shared identification. Places which have seen centuries of worship can provide a powerful sense of continuity with the past, while memorials might evoke particular past lives or events. Other sorts of community, for instance bellringers who might come from further afield to ring the bells of a church, might also value the building. Explaining how particular communities value a place of worship will provide a useful context for discussions with external organisations that are not familiar with the building or the people who use it.

Setting. The surroundings in which a place of worship is experienced form its setting. Many places of worship lie at the heart of an historic landscape or townscape and may provide a focal point. An assessment should take into account key views and aspects of setting that should be preserved or enhanced, such as grave markers, churchyard structures and landscape features. It could also note negative features where improvements might be made.

Site. The site and immediate surroundings of a place of worship are often of considerable antiquity and may contain valuable early remains, sometimes of pre-Christian or even prehistoric date. Such physical remains have potential to increase our understanding of past human activity. In most cases, and certainly when the building contains medieval fabric or occupies a medieval or town centre site, the immediate surroundings of the building are very likely to contain historical evidence. Archaeological advice should be sought at an early stage. The county archaeologist is usually the readiest source of advice, but Church of England parishes should also seek the help of the diocesan archaeological consultant.

Architectural and historical development. Many older places of worship have grown by processes of accretion and re-building over centuries and it is important to try to establish the building sequence. Each of these developments will be of some significance. Changes to places of worship and their furnishings may be of historic interest because they illustrate changing styles of worship and architectural design. Historic interest may also result from an association with a significant person or event. Newer places of worship are more likely to have been built in only one or two phases and may be the work of a single architect, but whatever the age of the building, an assessment should be made of the aesthetic qualities and historic interest of its architectural design and character; external composition and internal plan form; spatial qualities and decorative schemes. Where the building is by a known architect, it may be helpful to compare it with other examples of that architect's work in order to identify both typical and unusual features of the design.

Fabric. The fabric of a place of worship, that is the material substance of which it is formed, is likely to hold evidence about the past and careful study of it can reveal much about the building's development. The fabric is also the embodiment of the architecture of the building and the distinctive product of the materials, craftsmanship and building methods of the time and place in which it was constructed.

Furnishings. The age, rarity and quality of the internal furnishings and fittings should be assessed, particularly in terms of their historical and aesthetic values, and the extent of completeness of the overall arrangement. Any past history of re-ordering or alteration should be taken into account. Fittings of the 19th and 20th century, although relatively recent in date, may nevertheless comprise the most important features of an interior. Modest examples of local craftsmanship should equally be given recognition.

Gaining an understanding of significance will require study of the affected structures and objects themselves, backed up by reference to the available documentary sources. Documentary sources of information which may be helpful include the following:

- The place of worship's own records, such as churchwarden or trustee accounts, quinquennial inspection reports, guidebooks and published local histories
- The statutory lists of historic buildings contain at least a brief description of each listed place of worship. They are held by the local authority and also available online at www.english-heritage.org.uk/list
- Other readily available published sources of information include the relevant county volume of *The Buildings of England* (often known as a 'Pevsner', after the founder of the series) and, for some areas, the inventory volumes of the Royal Commission on Historical Monuments. *The Victoria County History* can also provide detailed historical information for some parts of the country.
- The collections of the local Historic Environment Record, County Record Offices or local museums may have some relevant material. Most collection catalogues can be searched online, either at the institution's own website or via www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/a2a/ or www.heritagegateway.org.uk

### Determining need

The reasons for carrying out new work will need to be explained to those advising and deciding on proposals so that they can understand whether the impact on the significance of the building is justifiable. Informal discussions with the denominational advisory body, English Heritage and others can start from the basic objective – better heating for the congregation for instance, or a toilet in order to allow for regular events in the building.

Some new work will help to enhance or better reveal the significance of an historic place of worship or will be neutral in its effects; other new work will cause harm to a greater or lesser degree. The more harm the proposed changes are likely to cause to the significance of the building, the more they will require justification in terms of the public benefits they will bring. Such benefits might include securing viable long-term use for the building, mitigating the effects of climate change or making the building more accessible.

If once specific proposals have been drawn up they seem likely to conflict with any aspect of the building's significance, a detailed statement of need should be written to justify it. This should explain not only why work is necessary, but also why the need has to be addressed in the particular manner proposed. A detailed statement of need should set out:

- What the objectives of the congregation are in proposing changes
- What changes are necessary to achieve the objectives
- Why the proposed works are needed now
- What evidence there is for the stated need
- Who will benefit from the changes
- How the changes will affect the use of the building in the medium and long term
- What other options have been considered and why they were rejected
- How the harm caused by the changes has been minimised or mitigated

Formulating a clear statement of this kind will help external bodies to understand the proposals, making the consent process more straightforward. To aid this further, background information about the locality and the circumstances of the place of worship should be included where relevant.

### Developing a scheme

Schemes of new work vary in their nature and impact, so some will be more straightforward to develop than others. Anything that will require formal consent, however, is best approached in a measured way which allows for sufficient consultation with all relevant parties.

Formulating its objectives and gaining an understanding of the significance of the building, as described above, should enable a congregation to arrive at some options for achieving those objectives and an assessment of their likely effects on significance. If they have not at this stage started discussions with external bodies, this would be the time to do so.

We strongly urge congregations to consult with their denominational advisory body, local authority, English Heritage and other relevant external bodies before schemes become fixed and before a formal application for consent is made. This will allow us to offer helpful advice at a formative stage.

Having discussed the options with the relevant bodies and taken advice on their likely impacts, the congregation will then be able to develop designs for the new work which avoid, minimise and mitigate any negative impacts. For the detailed design work there are likely to be considerable benefits to employing a professional adviser who has an understanding of historic buildings and experience in their sensitive and imaginative alteration.

In order to make a formal application for consent to carry out new work, a congregation will need written statements of the significance of the heritage asset(s) affected and the reasons for the proposed work. Together the two statements should enable those in advisory and decision-making roles to reach an understanding of:

- the heritage significance of the building, in particular the parts affected by the proposed work.
- the effect of what is proposed on the building's significance.
- the reasons for the proposed work and the justification for any harm to significance.

The statements need to be factual and informative so that someone who has not visited the place of worship and does not already know the background to the proposals can form a reasonable opinion on them.

**Investigation, recording and analysis**

Many places of worship are immensely rich in archaeological interest: windows that have been blocked up or wall-painting schemes covered over for instance; or surviving remains of lost structures such as bell-towers or charnel houses in the churchyard. All these things constitute valuable information about the historical development of a building and the way it was used in the past. Much of this evidence will never have been seen or studied before. Making changes to a place of worship provides an opportunity to investigate, record and analyse the evidence from those parts of the site which are affected.

Such investigative analysis has three objectives:

- primarily, to inform the development of a scheme of new work
- to make a record for the future
- to contribute to wider academic study of places of worship

In the event of consent being granted for any new work, we recommend that the affected area(s) of the building and affected furnishings are recorded before work starts. This applies even when permission is only for temporary change (for instance, work carried out under an Archdeacon's licence).

In addition to formal recording conditions, any opportunity for observation and recording should be taken, in order to add gradually to our understanding, especially when work is under way. Scaffolding can provide access for closer inspection of the fabric and the recording of features which had not previously been apparent.

The level of recording, and the costs associated with it, should be proportionate to the significance of the affected area and the extent and nature of the alteration. The local Historic Environment Record (or Diocesan Archaeological Adviser (DAA) for Church of England churches) may be able to advise on the methodology.

🕮 *Understanding Historic Buildings: a guide to good recording practice* (2006)

# 2

1
Extensive re-orderings can raise many design challenges, from the size and finish of inserted structures to the style of seating or the installation of new heating and lighting. A thorough understanding of the significance of the building and its contents will be helpful in developing such a scheme.

2
Good materials and workmanship help to integrate the new floor surfaces within this historic interior. A traditional local flooring material has been used in the nave.

3
Portable benches can give the same sense of order and visual rhythm to the interior of a place of worship as traditional pews, but allow for more adaptability.

# 2

# GENERAL ADVICE ON RE-ORDERING AND EXTENSION

This section contains advice on works for the re-ordering of the interior of a place of worship and the creation of additional space. Whether the provision of new facilities is more appropriate within a place of worship, in an extension to it, or in a detached structure nearby will depend on the nature of the building and its setting and the scale of facilities needed.

More detailed advice on work which might form part of an extensive re-ordering scheme, such as new heating and lighting, is given in Section 3.

### Interiors

We recommend that internal alterations and rearrangements take account of the spatial qualities and main architectural lines of the interior, the significance of individual fittings and the existing arrangement as a whole. Most places of worship can accommodate some internal change, but there will be cases where the nature or quality of the interior is such that there is little scope for internal adaptation. These cases should be identifiable through the preparation of a statement of significance. In general, the rarer or more complete a historic interior, the stronger will be the case for its preservation.

Such furnishings as altars, pulpits, choir stalls or reading desks are often of high quality and are likely to make a significant contribution to the special interest of a place of worship. In the past, changes driven by liturgical considerations have sometimes involved the removal or unsympathetic adaptation of important historic fittings. Harmful changes of this nature can be avoided, either by reducing the prominence of such items (for example, in the way they are lit or adorned) or, in some cases, by their careful adaptation or relocation. Chancel screens are generally important to the character of a church – as well as often being important objects in their own right – and we would encourage their retention in situ. Where liturgical change has left a significant chancel little-used we recommend that it be retained as a chapel.

The majority of historic places of worship have fixed seating for the congregation. This is often seen as an impediment to change, but depending on its importance we may be able to support some removal or rearrangement of the existing seating to suit the needs of the congregation. Medieval and immediately post-medieval fixed seating in its original state is very rare and we will always argue for its retention. Complete preaching interiors with benches or box pews, prominent pulpits and galleries are also comparatively rare and we would encourage their retention intact wherever possible.

Most historic places of worship, however, have Victorian or Edwardian seating, which can vary greatly in significance. In assessing the significance of congregational seating we would give consideration to the following:

- its relationship to the general character of the interior of the building
- its historic interest, which might relate to the history of the building or to liturgical or social history
- its aesthetic character
- the quality of its materials and craftsmanship
- the completeness of its survival as a seating scheme

Unless Victorian or later seating is of very high quality and is either contemporary with the building or forms part of an important historic scheme of re-ordering or restoration, some rearrangement is often possible. Total removal of a good Victorian or later seating scheme is likely to be harder to justify.


3

# 2

4
The new screen (on the right) incorporates old woodwork and has been finished to match the other woodwork in the church, giving the interior a visual integrity despite the different ages of the various elements.

5
In a church without aisles or a gallery, a suite of toilets, kitchens and storage space has been created behind an architectural screen of good design and craftsmanship.

6
A small kitchen such as this can fit happily into an historic interior if it is well-detailed and crafted and is of appropriate size and position.

# 2

We recommend that major re-seating schemes should not run counter to the main architectural axis of the building and that new seating should be of good design and construction and appropriate to the character of the building. Portable benches have the benefit of being more robust than most chairs, while allowing for relatively easy re-arrangement. Since the removal of fixed seating will reveal the floor beneath, careful thought should be given to the new floor finishes.

When a meeting room, toilet or crèche is required, a space that can be easily divided from the rest of the building might already exist, such as the base of the tower or the area beneath a gallery. In interiors without galleries or discrete spaces, it may be possible to form a room at the liturgical west end, perhaps under a new gallery or at the end of an aisle. Single-storey spaces are generally easier to integrate, and to reconcile with access requirements, than structures with multiple levels. Where there are no discrete spaces into which they could be fitted, facilities such as tea-points can be housed in specially designed pieces of furniture.

We recommend that any new internal partitioning should be placed so as to respect the main spatial divisions and fixed in a way that avoids damage to the building fabric. Partitions should be set back behind arcades or gallery columns so as to avoid damage to mouldings or could, if the detailing of an arcade is quite simple, be set on the centre line. It is often best to treat such partitions as panelled screens, in keeping with the tradition of screened enclosures within churches. Glazed screens are sometimes appropriate but large areas of glazing can be out of scale and character with historic church interiors and lack the visual interest that even simple panelling has. Internal glazing can not achieve complete transparency in all light conditions so we recommend that glazed screens are treated in a way that acknowledges their solid presence, with appropriate framing. Consideration should also be given to the effect of the lighting in the church on the appearance of any glazed screens.

7

8

7
Tea points can be housed discreetly in specially-designed furniture, minimising their visual impact.

8
Making beauty out of utility: a row of toilets with a finely crafted timber front, fitted into the end of a north aisle.

# 2

9

10

9
A contextual addition which has been integrated successfully by use of matching materials and a considered choice of window design.

10
This extension, on the site of a long-vanished chapel, uses some characteristics of the historic building without replicating it. It is connected to the church through an old, blocked doorway.

11
A porch-like addition in matching materials and constructed to a high standard.

# 2

## Additions

When additional space is needed, the best solution will depend upon the impact on the architectural character of the building and its relationship to its setting as well as the impact on the physical fabric of the building (both the standing structure and below-ground building features) and archaeological remains, including burials. In thinking about the need for an addition, congregations are advised to consider the cost of building a new structure and the extra burden of maintenance in the future.

Successful designs result from a close understanding of the building and sensitivity to both scale and detail. It would not normally be justifiable for any addition to dominate the existing building or its setting as a result of its scale, materials or situation. Some sites, particularly large urban ones, may be able to accommodate quite substantial additions successfully, but significant enlargement of smaller places of worship is much more difficult.

Many places of worship, particularly medieval ones, are accretive in nature and therefore often accepting of further, proportionate additions. Less easy to add to are single-phase buildings – possibly displaying the distinctive style of a particular designer – and those that possess a degree of architectural completeness. Since the integrity of the design contributes to their significance, there may be a strong argument against any addition.

It is our experience that the most satisfactory additions to historic places of worship are those which form a harmonious composition with the building to which they are attached and consequently appear to be a natural development of it. Aisles, transepts, chapels, vestries and porches all provide an established vocabulary for the extension of churches.

Detached rooms linked by a corridor to the main building, while minimising the impact on historic fabric, are difficult to design without detracting from the setting of the historic building. In many places, access to a new extension can be obtained from an existing or blocked doorway and this would normally be preferable to making new openings in significant historic fabric.

We recommend that materials should harmonise with those of the existing building. In many cases this will mean matching materials, although where a close match cannot be achieved, a complementary material or finish may be appropriate. Materials should be durable and of high quality and display a high level of workmanship and detail.

In those cases where it is not possible or desirable to locate new facilities within the place of worship or in an extension, the possibility of locating them in an existing or new detached building should be considered. It is often possible for existing ancillary structures to be adapted to accommodate new uses, and this is recommended generally.

In designing a new detached building in the grounds of a place of worship the main issues will be location – guided by an assessment of archaeological significance – and the effect on the setting of the listed place of worship and other surrounding buildings. Scale, design and materials would still be important, but there may be more flexibility than would normally apply to an integrated addition.

As well as forming part of the historic setting of a church, churchyards may be sites of archaeological, townscape or wildlife importance. Discussion with the relevant authorities should provide guidance as to any constraints of the location of a detached building.

11

# 2

12
Due to its remoteness from the church building this detached addition could be designed with the local vernacular in mind instead of attempting to replicate the style of the church itself.

13
Detached additions often need to take account of the wider context. Here the new structure with its pyramidal roof responds sensitively to both the church and the village street.

# 3

# DETAILED ADVICE ON SOME COMMON ISSUES

Works described in this section are those that arise regularly in the use and management of historic places of worship and can involve making changes to buildings. The advice set out here should help anyone proposing changes to make the works appropriate to the historic character and significance of their place of worship. Other advice on many of these issues is available either from denominational bodies or national amenity societies (see Further Information for details).

🕮 Where more detailed advice from English Heritage is available in other publications or on our website, this is mentioned at the end of each section.

### Installing new equipment, cabling and pipework

Many of the works covered in Section 3 of this document are affected by the same general considerations regarding the visual and physical impacts of new equipment and associated cabling or pipework. Even if the impact of any one installation is minor, the proliferation of equipment and service runs around a building can cause harm to significance, unless impacts are minimised. We recommend that the following principles are adopted in carrying out such work:

**The visual impact of new equipment should be minimised by careful choice of location, size and design**. Choice of location should take account of significant elements of the building and the principal views of the interior and exterior. Depending on the type of equipment, it may be possible to accommodate it discreetly in existing openings in walls such as putlog holes, under eaves or at a high level in the interior where it will not be seen easily. The casing of equipment can be painted to make it less obtrusive.

**Fixings, cable runs and pipe routes should be planned so as to minimise physical impacts in significant fabric**. Mouldings and decorative details should not be cut through, and routes should be designed to minimise the lengths of cable runs while respecting the character of the building. Damage can be minimised by routing through conduit or on battens with fewer fixings. The use of existing service runs and breaches of masonry can in some cases help to make them less obtrusive. Fixings should normally be made into joints rather than into masonry. New equipment is often relatively ephemeral in the life of a building so its installation should allow for easy later removal wherever possible.

**Ground disturbance should be minimised to protect significant buried remains and archaeological features**. A prior archaeological assessment will usually be required in order to establish the impact of any installation involving significant amounts of below-ground work.

A close understanding of the fabric of the building is an advantage in designing the installation of services, so we recommend that **the inspecting architect or surveyor for the place of worship should be involved**, to ensure that what is proposed is appropriate.

**Any opportunity for investigation and recording, presented by the opening up of historic fabric for the installation of services should be taken**, especially where normally inaccessible parts of the building are exposed.

🕮 *BsEST Practice I: Principles of Conservation Practice* (2008)

# 3

## Building services

Historically, most places of worship were not expected to provide sophisticated levels of comfort and servicing was more localised (for example, a stove for heating and candles for light). If continued (or extended) use of historic places of worship is to be secured, however, effective and comfortable heating, lighting and plumbing is necessary. Where a long-term additional use such as a shop or café is introduced into a place of worship it is likely to have significant implications for the building services, the way in which they are used and the cost of running them. The introduction of more comprehensive servicing can have a considerable physical and visual impact on the building as a whole.

Building services are often relatively ephemeral in the life of the building and allowance should be made for easy adaptation when renewal or improvement of the system is required. Access for future maintenance should also be made as convenient as possible. Some historic building services can themselves be of interest for their contribution to the design of the church or as rare examples of historic technologies. Examples might include light fittings or radiators, which in some 19th and 20th century churches are an important part of the design. We would encourage the retention of such items in situ and, where possible, in use.

Current codes of practice and standards, including British Standards, should be taken into account but it may be appropriate to modify non-statutory codes to take account of the particular needs of historic buildings. Provided that such modifications are made with the benefit of specialist advice they should not compromise health and safety. Where specialist technical advice is necessary, there are considerable advantages in seeking it from an independent source rather than from a supplier or contractor.

🕮 *BsEST Practice 1: Principles of Conservation Practice* (2008)

## Heating

Effective heating is essential for the continued use of historic buildings, but the wrong sort of heating can have damaging effects on building fabric. Historic fabric benefits from a stable environment, which can be assisted by providing a low, constant temperature to help to dispel damp and reduce condensation. The best temperature for the fabric is likely to be 8-10°C (46-50°F), although this would need to be boosted in advance of services and other events, to a more comfortable temperature. In our view heating an historic place of worship to typical home or office temperatures is not advisable because of the strain it puts on historic fabric.

Heating the building only in occasional rapid bursts is undesirable because it will create fluctuations of temperature, which will do nothing to control damp, might exacerbate condensation and might subject the fabric – especially the roof timbers – to stress resulting from movement. We recognise, however, that some places of worship are and will remain in only occasional use and the heating regime will need to reflect this pattern and level of use.

A new heating system may entail various alterations to the building, ranging from excavation or the penetration of walling to accommodate pipes to the displacement of pews to allow space for radiators. It is also important to consider the ventilation of the building at the same time so that the danger of the new heating creating condensation problems can be avoided. The impact and cost of these alterations should be assessed when considering the options for new heating.

# 3

## Types of heating

The following paragraphs summarise English Heritage's views on the various methods of heating commonly used – a combination of these might provide the best solution for some buildings.

**Hot water systems** remain the best means of heating a place of worship as they are the most suited to maintaining the building at a constant temperature and can be adjusted as necessary. Many places of worship retain 19th or early 20th century under-floor ducts or radiators and these should be re-used whenever possible. In places of worship that have never had such a system, the installation of a new hot water system may entail some difficulties in respect of its effect on the historic fabric or character of the building. In view of the advantages of this form of heating it should nevertheless be considered before others.

**Balanced-flue heaters** are gas-fired convector heaters each with their own boiler and flue. As each heater requires a flue their installation requires the creation of a number of openings in the wall, causing loss of historic fabric. Furthermore, the flues and their protective cowls are likely to mar the external appearance of the building. English Heritage does not encourage use of this system.

**Electric storage heaters** provide background heat which can be raised when the building is in use. Modern storage heaters are fairly small and slim and can often be located relatively unobtrusively around the perimeter walls. Provided their installation does not require the removal of, or detract from the setting of, significant furnishings and monuments, this form of heating can be recommended.

**Electric pew heaters** can be used to supplement background heat economically, particularly where only a small area of the building is in use. They can also be used independently, providing fairly short bursts of heat. They are relatively unobtrusive and their wiring can often be concealed within pew platforms. They should not, however, be fitted to seating of significant historic or aesthetic interest, because of the damage that their attachment involves and because they may dry out the wood.

**Radiant (quartz ray) heaters** do not generally provide a satisfactory means of heating places of worship. Rather than heating the building to a steady temperature they provide short bursts of heat and are almost always conspicuous and unsightly. Their radiation can damage objects placed within close range. As the radiation heats the object it strikes rather than the building, they heat the heads of the congregation without creating a general feeling of warmth. While English Heritage generally discourages the use of such heaters, they may sometimes be justifiable in discreet locations or, exceptionally, in places of worship that are only used occasionally where there is no economic alternative.

**Hot air systems** can be noisy in operation and crude in appearance and are seldom a good means of heating a place of worship. Their installation may require the creation of a substantial opening within the external walls of the building to accommodate the air intake. Direct-fired air heaters should be avoided because they pump water vapour into the building, increasing the danger of condensation and producing deposits on the fabric. Indirect-fired heaters are less harmful. Although they can be used to maintain a steady low temperature in the building, in practice such systems are generally used to heat the building rapidly for short periods, creating the problems discussed above.

**Portable heaters**, whether gas or electric, are commonly used to produce instantaneous, localised heating, but cannot be recommended. They carry increased fire risk and portable gas heaters discharge water vapour into the place of worship, thereby increasing the risk of condensation problems in the building. English Heritage discourages use of this system.

**Underfloor heating systems** can provide a background level of heating which is beneficial for the conservation of historic fabric. They also lend themselves to working with ground and air source heat pumps (see p.17). Their installation, however, requires wholesale alteration of the floor, either by taking up the existing floor or creating a new one above it. The former can have a significant impact on architectural character and archaeological remains, including of earlier levels, vaults and previous phases of building; the latter may be less physically damaging but will have a major impact on the appearance of the interior by hiding the historic floors, truncating columns and changing the proportions of arched openings. In such instances the importance of existing floor finishes and levels should be assessed to help understand the impact of the proposals.

Underfloor heating systems may indirectly cause damp problems, through the introduction of damp-proof membranes which, if incorrectly specified, can draw moisture into walls and piers. Consideration should be given to leaving a sacrificial gap around the perimeter or to using a breathable substrate to allow moisture to evaporate. (See also p.20).

# 3

## Lighting

The design of a lighting scheme and the light fittings themselves can have a positive impact on the aesthetic values of an interior as well as being functional. Uniformly bright lighting throughout a building will not be in keeping with the character of an interior that was historically lit by daylight, supplemented by candles, oil or gaslight as necessary. Historic decoration and architectural detailing will have been designed to be seen in such conditions. The most sympathetic lighting therefore will simply reinforce natural light in the daytime, while night time lighting will reflect historic methods of illumination. Where advice on new lighting is needed there are considerable advantages in seeking it from independent consultants rather than from lighting suppliers or contractors.

Changes in lighting regimes and technology can make an important contribution to the building's energy efficiency. European Union directives are steadily reducing the availability of the most inefficient forms of incandescent lamps (i.e. light bulbs) so new light sources will need to be found for places of worship over the next few years. The cost of purchase, length of life, quality of light and appearance of the lamp are all considerations in choosing which type of lamp to use.

New lighting should be installed in a manner that minimises physical impacts on historic fabric and reduces visual intrusion. Accessibility for maintenance is also a major consideration. Pendant lighting is often a practical and sympathetic means of providing functional lighting and can be designed to be an adornment to the building. Spot or flood lighting is the most common alternative to pendant lighting, and can sometimes be employed to dramatic effect, although the equipment can be obtrusive and its location needs careful consideration.

External floodlighting schemes should avoid causing light pollution and may not be appropriate, particularly for isolated rural churches. Archaeological advice may be required in respect of sunken lamps and cabling routes.

🕮 *BsEST Practice 5: Principles of Conservation Practice [lighting]* (2010)

🕮 *External Lighting for Historic Buildings* (2007)

## Energy efficiency

Historic places of worship are unlikely ever to equal the environmental performance of new-build structures, designed in conformity with modern Building Regulations. Nevertheless, more energy efficient use of buildings can normally be achieved and congregations wishing to address this issue are advised to draw up a comprehensive energy strategy for their place of worship and associated land and structures. This should identify measures to reduce the existing level of energy use, which typically have little impact on the significance of a building. Such measures might include:

- changing the patterns of heating and lighting in the building and controlling them more efficiently
- upgrading equipment such as boilers and light bulbs
- the provision of better insulation and the elimination of draughts (without impeding necessary ventilation)

Government planning guidance recognises the desirability of taking measures to respond to climate change, but requires that the public benefits of renewable energy projects are weighed against any harm to the significance of a listed building or other designated asset. Some measures which might be suitable in other contexts, for instance secondary glazing, are unlikely to be sympathetic to an historic place of worship and we would discourage their use.

As an adjunct to the installation of efficient heating and environmental controls, micro-generation equipment such as solar panels can be beneficial for overall energy efficiency. In general, we would support the provision of micro-generating equipment if the visual impact is minimal, the installation of the equipment causes minimal damage to historic fabric and is reversible and the need for it can be demonstrated in the context of the energy strategy for the place of worship.

🕮 *Energy Efficiency and Historic Buildings* (2011)

🕮 *Microgeneration in the Historic Environment* (2008)

🖳 www.climatechangeandyourhome.org.uk

# 3

### Types of renewable energy generation (microgeneration)

The following paragraphs summarise English Heritage's views on the methods of microgeneration most commonly considered for use at places of worship

### Ground source heat pumps

In many places the ground disturbance necessary for ground source heat pumps – either a deep pit or a large, shallow area – will have serious implications for archaeological remains. This is likely especially at sites which have been occupied for several centuries. An archaeological assessment of the affected area should be made at an early stage to find out what the constraints are. Ground source heat pumps generally work well with underfloor heating systems (see p.15).

### Air source heat pumps

Minimising visual impact and damage to historic fabric caused by air source heat pumps, inside and outside a place of worship, can be very difficult and as a result we discourage their use in most cases. They can sometimes be installed in a church tower, if there is a silence chamber or other such space that is well-ventilated; otherwise, heat exchange units outside the building would need to be screened or positioned in such a way that their visual impact is minimised. With ingenious use of existing service runs and breaches in masonry it might be possible to make the necessary pipework and ducting less obtrusive and physically damaging. The location of condenser units inside the building would need to take account of monuments and other significant features of the interior. Such systems are noisy in operation (similar to the noise of an air-conditioning unit) and usually require planning permission from the local planning authority.

### Solar panels and solar 'slates'

Since roofs are often highly visible and make a major contribution to the character of the building in its setting, putting solar panels or slates on them can potentially cause substantial harm to significance. The possibilities for installation will depend upon the form of the roof and the situation of the building. Shallow-pitched roofs behind parapets and valley roof slopes are most likely to be able to accommodate solar panels with minimal visual impact. An alternative may be a ground-mounted solar collector or finding another, less sensitive building on which to put the equipment.

Even when carefully designed and managed, the installation, maintenance and eventual decommissioning of solar electric panels or solar slates is likely to cause some damage to the existing historic fabric of a place of worship. To mitigate this it is important that the means of fixing, maintenance and eventual removal of the panels or slates are planned and agreed in advance. Equipment should be located so that it does not impede rainwater disposal or hinder maintenance work such as cleaning gutters.

- *Solar Electric (Photovoltaic) Panels and Slates on Listed Places of Worship* (2011)
- *Small-scale solar electric (photovoltaics) energy and traditional buildings* (2008)

### Other piped services

The provision of toilets or kitchen facilities will require water, drainage and ventilation. A prior archaeological assessment will usually be required in order to establish the impact of such installations. Subject to archaeological advice, these should be routed underground rather than directly through walls. The use of composting or macerating lavatories can remove or reduce the need for drainage trenches. In rural buildings where use is not heavy and where space allows, the Trench Arch system can avoid deep excavation and complex drainage.

Ventilation for toilets and kitchens can often be discreetly provided, for example, within the upper stages of towers, by introducing mesh grilles into windows or flush, cast-metal or stone-tile grilles into walls, or by setting the vent-pipe back in the wall and fitting stone or slate louvres. New ducts drilled through historic masonry should be avoided wherever possible, as should external fan units and cowls.

### Drainage and groundworks

A degree of dampness is not uncommon in the walls of old churches, especially where external ground levels have risen over time. Ground lowering (sometimes associated with the laying of drains) is not normally recommended as a remedy for this since it is likely to damage archaeological features, foundations and wall surfaces, and may lead to excessive drying out with subsequent cracking and even subsidence.

Rainwater is best disposed of by downpipes to gulleys and soakaways, thereby getting water away from the walls of the building. Dampness is best managed by regular clearance of gutters and downpipes, good ventilation and by allowing for permeability in the wall surfaces through the use of 'breathable' mortars, plasters and finishes.

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### Repair using replacement materials

In the repair of historic buildings, English Heritage encourages the use of authentic and appropriate materials because they are fundamental to the historic integrity of buildings and in most cases are the most suitable in terms of performance. We discourage the use of new materials the long-term performance of which is not known. If a change of material is proposed for any of the main external elements of a building, planning permission from the local planning authority may be required in addition to listed building consent or denominational consent.

The general principle applies in the case of replacing stolen metal roof coverings, but where a theft (or an attempted theft) has occurred a change of material may in some circumstances be the best option for the building. Each case would be considered on its own merits, but the harm to significance caused by a change in material may be justifiable if there is no prospect of preventing further thefts through deterrent measures and if the substitute material is appropriate in terms of its technical performance and appearance. Terne-coated stainless steel, slates or tiles would normally be the most appropriate options for an alternative material.

We would not oppose changes of material where the existing material is inappropriate and the replacement would reinforce the significance of the building, for instance the removal of cement render from external walls and replacement with lime render.

🕮 *Theft of metal from church buildings* (2011)

### Doors and porches

Where existing doors contribute to the special interest of a church by virtue of their age, design or traditional role, we would encourage their retention in situ and in use. As a way of creating a sense of welcome and reducing draughts, it is sometimes possible to introduce an additional, inner set of glazed doors and to keep the historic door(s) open when the building is in use. Good levels of lighting at the entrance can also assist in creating a welcome.

In situations where an historic door is no longer capable of keeping the building secure we recommend that it should be repaired, retaining as much historic fabric as possible. Where this is not possible the door should be recorded in situ using photographs and drawings before being removed.

An old door of exceptional historic interest might be displayed somewhere within the building but otherwise we would recommend that any elements that are sound, including ferramenta and locks, should be re-used on the replacement door and it should be hung on the existing hinges or pins if possible.

Where the outer entrance of a porch has always been open this arrangement is best retained as part of the historic character of the building, reflecting the traditional pattern of use. If there are compelling reasons for enclosure of the porch, this is generally most successful where it is designed as a partially open screen – in metal or timber, possibly with the incorporation of some glazing – rather than fully glazed doors.

### Access

English Heritage is committed to broadening physical and intellectual access to the historic environment and will encourage congregations to be generous in their approach to access where this can be achieved in a manner which is compatible with the special interest of the building. In our experience, there are only rare occasions when nothing whatsoever can be done to improve or facilitate access.

In seeking to comply with legislation (the Equality Act 2010) congregations should bear in mind that its requirements relate to the accessibility of the service, not of the building. Making physical alterations to the building, therefore, is only one option. The legislation does not override existing secular or ecclesiastical laws governing historic buildings, and the obligation is to take 'reasonable' measures. Decisions about alterations to improve access must, therefore, balance the benefits against the potential damage those same alterations might cause to the significance of the building.

🕮 *Easy Access to Historic Buildings* (2004)

### Security

Security plays a part in protecting the significance of historic places of worship by deterring theft of valuable objects and building fabric such as lead sheet on roofs; by reducing damage through vandalism and by creating a safe environment in which people are happy to use the building. Security equipment such as alarms, CCTV cameras or lighting should be installed in a manner that minimises physical impacts on historic fabric and visual intrusion. It is often possible to accommodate them discreetly in existing openings in the walls such as putlog holes, or under eaves.

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Methods of protection for historic window glass vary according to the nature of the building and the glass, and the level of risk. Protective measures will have an effect not only on the external appearance of the place of worship but also on the appearance of the glass when seen from inside. Black-finished stainless steel wire guards, cut to follow the window or tracery pattern and fixed into joints, are often the most appropriate solution. Polycarbonate protection is seldom aesthetically satisfactory since it produces a bland and reflective surface and will discolour and become opaque over time. Protective treatment should not obscure or cover window divisions or tracery and should allow for adequate ventilation of the original glass.

We recommend that metal roof coverings, in particular lead, are protected by a number of measures, best used in combination.

- Property marking of metal with forensic marking products or simple mechanical stamping
- Intruder alarms for external roof areas and any scaffolding
- Additional fixings to make lead sheets and flashings more secure

Detailed advice on security and lead theft is available from insurers and in English Heritage's guidance note.

🕮 *Theft of metal from church buildings* (2011)

### Redecoration

Proposals for redecoration should take account of any evidence of historic decoration, derived from investigation of the fabric and documentary research. Work in medieval churches can reveal important wallpaintings, covered over for centuries, and an assessment of their potential existence should be made before removal of any surfaces. Renewing historic decorative schemes or restoring lost schemes can have a beneficial effect on the interior of a place of worship, but incorrectly specified redecoration can seriously damage the building and its historic features. Congregations are strongly advised to seek the advice of an architect or surveyor with experience of historic interiors before undertaking redecoration, to ensure that the appropriate materials are used and applied in the most effective way.

Few pre-20th century historic places of worship have a damp-proof course, so any moisture in the walls should be allowed to evaporate naturally. Many modern paints contain plastics which form a skin on the wall surface, trapping damp inside the wall and leading to unsightly blistering of plaster and paint surfaces. They should not therefore be applied over masonry, old plaster or any painted schemes of decoration. Such paints are also difficult to remove. Traditional coverings such as limewash permit greater evaporation and can be safely used on masonry or plaster.

We would discourage the removal of plaster or historic limewash from walls or ceilings for purely aesthetic reasons. Where plaster has been removed in the past, however, replastering or limewashing can lighten the interior, reduce heating bills and improve the setting of wall monuments.

### Glazing

England's legacy of stained glass, both medieval and post-medieval, is among the best of its kind in Europe. Whether plain or decorative, window glass often has important artistic, historic or associative value. It has an impact on the appearance of the interior and the quality of light, both of which can contribute to the overall significance of the building. Windows of interest should be retained wherever possible and individual elements should not be removed from larger compositions, for instance figurative elements which are designed to be seen within a decorative setting. We recommend that windows re-used from elsewhere should be placed in openings of closely matching dimensions.

The introduction of new stained glass windows should involve an assessment of the existing glazing in the place of worship (which may be notable for the absence of stained glass), of all the fabric to be removed (not just glass, but also lead and ironwork) and of the artistic merits of the new glass. Some denominational bodies have stained glass consultants whose views should be sought.

Isothermal protection can be considered for windows of outstanding importance, but the desirability of protecting such glass needs to be balanced against the visual and physical impact of this technique.

(For protection of historic glass, see Security on pp.18-19.)

# 3

## Flooring

Floor surfaces often make a significant contribution to the general character and aesthetic qualities of the interior of a place of worship and are also of historic interest where they have memorial stones and brasses or reflect past alterations to the building. In such cases we would advise that they be retained and not carpeted over.

In our view, the wall-to-wall carpeting of an interior should be avoided because it tends to create a domestic character at odds with the interior of an historic public building. The laying of fitted carpets on stone, tiles or unventilated timber floors can trap moisture, causing damage and decay by preventing evaporation. This is particularly true of rubber-backed carpets and underlays, which should not be used. Natural materials which allow moisture to evaporate, e.g. wool, are much less likely to cause damage.

Mats or carpets that can be moved and turned easily are more satisfactory in most circumstances and are less likely to detract from the character of the church interior. Care is needed, however, to ensure that they do not become a trip hazard. If a carpet is needed we recommend that consideration is given to obtaining one of good quality or commissioning one with a design relevant to the building or the location within the building, so as to enhance the interior.

We recommend that the design of an entirely new floor should, like many historic floors, reflect the divisions of the architecture and the different use of parts of the interior. In our experience, the undifferentiated use of a single material throughout can create a sterile effect which detracts from the character of an historic interior. The use of lime rather than cement based screed is less likely to lead to problems with damp. For the same reason a ventilation gap should be left around the perimeter and around column bases.

Methods of making good the floor after the removal of fixed seating need careful consideration to ensure that the new flooring works with the surrounding historic flooring in terms of the overall design and is appropriate to the intended use for the space.

## Bells and bellframes

English Heritage wishes to encourage continuity in use of historic bells and bell frames. Some bell-frames are of considerable antiquity and many exemplify important stages in the development of structural carpentry, bell-frame technology and bell-ringing practice. In some important cases, medieval or 16th century bell-frames have been adapted and re-used for change-ringing in the 17th century. English Heritage recognises that the purpose of bell-frames is to facilitate change-ringing and we have found that it is very often possible to repair and adapt existing bell-frames rather than replace them when they become decayed or are deemed unsuitable for modern requirements. It should also be remembered that foundation beams, for all their utilitarian appearance may pre-date the bell-frame and be of considerable historic interest in themselves.

Our advice will start from a presumption in favour of the retention of historic bells and bell frames, preferably in use and repaired as necessary. Even when a frame becomes redundant, perhaps on account of augmentation of the ring, it is often possible to leave it and its supporting foundation beams in situ. Proposals to upgrade or replace bell installations are sometimes accompanied by the creation of new ringing floors, which require new access. We recommend the provision of a safe ladder or stair access within the tower wherever possible, rather than the formation of a new opening from the existing tower stair. In older churches, tower areas are often among the least 'restored' parts of the building and the sensitivity of the historic fabric to major intervention may be accordingly stronger.

The Church Buildings Council has a Code of Practice for the conservation and repair of bells and bell frames, and congregations are advised to consult this document at an early stage when developing proposals.

🕮 *Bells and Bellframes: Guidelines for consultation* (2010)

🕮 *Church Bell Frames: guidance notes for identifying historic significance and preparing reports* Church Buildings Council and English Heritage (2011)

# 3

### Telecommunications equipment

The installation of telecommunications equipment on church towers can be a source of valuable income to congregations, but there will often be an impact of such installations on the fabric, appearance and future maintenance of the building. Proposals for the replacement of wooden or slate louvres with new louvres in a material which facilitates transmission from towers will need to be properly justified.

Where appropriate, telecommunications companies should be encouraged to share equipment, thereby preventing the proliferation of it in and around a place of worship. Measures to allow for continued safe access to the church tower for the purposes of inspection and maintenance will need to be considered. Provision should be made for the safe storage of any items of value which are displaced by the installation and for the restitution of the church to its previous appearance when the installation is no longer needed.

Where such work is carried out by and on behalf of the telecommunications company rather than the church itself, it might be considered to fall outside the coverage of the ecclesiastical exemption and therefore require listed building consent (see p.22). The church should seek advice from their denomination and the local authority on what sort of consent would be needed. The work may also require planning permission.

### Bats

Management of the effects of bats in places of worship is circumscribed by the fact that the creatures are protected by law from injury or disturbance. Advice should always be sought from Natural England as to the legality of any proposed measures to exclude bats from the building or to deter them from using it. It may be possible to obtain a licence from Natural England for work which would otherwise be illegal. Where major works are planned it is advisable to undertake in advance a thorough survey of the use of the building by bats. Natural England or the Bat Conservation Trust should be asked for specialist advice on carrying out such a survey.

If an object in the place of worship is exposed to damage from bat excreta, it may be possible to move it to an area where there is less bat activity, but the liturgical and historical significance of the object in its position would need to be considered.

Temporary covers for important objects or structures may be appropriate where there is localised damage, but synthetic fibre or plastic materials should be avoided because they can cause problems with condensation or high humidity.

Erecting screens to keep bats away from sensitive areas of the building, or boards to deflect excreta may be appropriate but their widespread deployment would have a damaging effect on the character of the interior, so are unlikely to be a good long-term solution. Boards can be erected during the summer, when bats are active and removed at other times (or for cleaning).

### Organs

Organs can be among the most significant features of a church or chapel interior, not least because of their size. Sometimes designed to be an integral part of the fitting-out of the building, many display considerable quality in design and craftsmanship. In such cases we would encourage their retention in situ. English Heritage is not able to offer advice on questions relating to the musical value of pipe organs or their relative merits when compared with electronic alternatives, but many denominational bodies do have specialist organ consultants.

### New works of art

The artistry and craftsmanship of previous centuries contributes to the special interest of most historic places of worship and English Heritage supports the continuing tradition of commissioning art for places of worship. The design of the work, its relationship with significant elements of the interior or exterior and the way in which it is fixed will all affect the extent of its visual and physical impact and hence the assessment of whether there is any harm to significance. The significance of any fabric or fixed objects removed to make way for the new work would also have to be taken into account.

If the work is to be a permanent, fixed addition to the building it will require statutory consent (and even if not fixed, some denominations may require an application for consent). Temporary works of art or exhibitions may require approval from the appropriate denominational body, but would not need statutory consent provided they do not involve any permanent alterations to the building.

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# AUTHORISATION OF WORKS

### Legal requirements

Any works involving the demolition of a listed place of worship, or for its alteration or extension in a manner which would affect its character as a building of special architectural or historic interest, will require listed building consent or its equivalent.

The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 provides that ecclesiastical buildings which are for the time being used for ecclesiastical purposes are not normally subject to local authority listed building and conservation area controls (although they are subject to planning permission). The Ecclesiastical Exemption Order 2010[1] restricts the exemption to the following denominations in England:

- Baptist Union of Great Britain
- Church of England
- Methodist Church
- Roman Catholic Church
- United Reformed Church

Each operates its own system for authorising works (as described below), equivalent to local authority processes.

All denominations and faiths which are not exempt by virtue of the 2010 Order should seek listed building consent or conservation area consent from their local planning authority to undertake works to a listed church or an unlisted church within a conservation area. If there is any doubt about whether consent is needed, the local planning authority should be consulted.

The effect of the 2010 Order is that not only are listed churches or chapels considered to be exempt but also separately listed structures attached to or within the curtilage of a listed church building, which are ecclesiastical buildings for the time being in use for ecclesiastical purposes. The guidance on the Exemption suggests that it would be reasonable that the definition of ecclesiastical purposes could cover such structures as bell towers, chest tombs, parish halls or rooms, school rooms, charnel houses, lychgates or boundary walls. It notes, however, that it would be useful for congregations to establish with their local planning authority whether or not the exemption applies to any particular structure.

The exemption does not cover works carried out by or on behalf of a third party (which may be the case for example, where a telecommunications company installs its equipment in a church tower), except where Church of England Faculty Jurisdiction applies.

Where the work is done with the full agreement of the church and under its control, however, it may be reasonable to consider that the work was done on its behalf and therefore exempt. This is nevertheless a 'grey area' and churches should take advice from their denomination and local planning authority on what sort of consent would be needed in each case.

Exceptionally, churchyard features may be scheduled monuments, in which case they would be subject to separate statutory consent requirements (supervised by English Heritage). Many churchyards lie in conservation areas where permission for works to trees may be required from the local planning authority. Both town and country churchyards can be the habitat of rare plants and wildlife which enjoy legal protection.

Planning permission must be obtained from the local planning authority for any new building and for any alteration or extension that materially affects the external appearance of an existing place of worship. If a development affects the setting of a Grade I or II* listed place of worship (and in London the setting of any listed place of worship) the local authority will consult English Heritage before determining the application. New structures may also require approval from the local authority under building regulations.

Building in a churchyard or conversion of a crypt or mausoleum (whether or not it has recently been used for burial) may require further authorisation concerning the exhumation, reburial or disposal of human remains or the relocation of memorials and headstones. Advice should always be sought from the denomination's legal adviser if human remains may be disturbed or if building on the site of a disused burial ground is being considered.

### Non-exempt denominations and local authority consent

For faith groups which do not have the ecclesiastical exemption, listed building consent or conservation area consent from the local authority would be required to undertake works to a listed church or an unlisted church within a conservation area. Their denomination or faith group may choose to exercise additional controls over work, but such controls do not remove the need for statutory consent from the local authority. If there is any doubt about whether consent is needed, the local authority should be consulted.

Most cases are determined by the local authority within 8 weeks, which includes a statutory 21 day consultation period where neighbours, amenity

1. The Ecclesiastical Exemption (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (England) Order 2010 (SI 2010 No 1176).

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societies and other interested and relevant parties will be consulted. Local authorities have enforcement powers relating to work to listed buildings and in conservation areas. Appeals can be made against a local authority decision through the Planning Inspectorate.

General advice on listed building and conservation area consent can be obtained by visiting the government's planning portal web site or the relevant local authority website.

www.planningportal.gov.uk

### Operation of the Ecclesiastical Exemption

The exempt denominations operate systems of control over listed churches which are considered equivalent to the secular system of control operated by local authorities and which comply with a Government Code of Practice[2]. In addition to the formal application procedures, all denominations encourage informal, pre-application consultation.

Under the Code of Practice, denominational processes should make provision for public advertisement of proposed works and consultation with the local planning authority, the relevant national amenity societies and English Heritage. Any representations made in response by members of the public or statutory consultees should be taken into account in the denomination's decision making. Each decision-making body should also be 'under a specific duty to take into account, along with other factors, the desirability of preserving ecclesiastical listed buildings, the importance of protecting features of special historic, archaeological, architectural or artistic interest and any impact on the setting of the church'.

Each denomination must have the means for hearing an appeal against a decision and for dealing with any breach of the control system, including reinstatement of works to listed buildings carried out without consent.

The following are outline descriptions of the processes only. Full details should always be sought from the appropriate denominational body when works requiring consent are envisaged.

### Baptist Union of Great Britain

Applications for authorisation of works of alteration, extension and partial demolition of a listed church or demolition of an unlisted church in a conservation area must be made in the first instance to the relevant Trust Corporation. The proposals must be approved in principle by the Trust Corporation before an application for consent is made to the national Listed Buildings Advisory Committee (LBAC) of the Baptist Union Corporation (BUC). Advertisement of the proposals and consultation with the local authority and other statutory consultees is carried out by the Trust Corporation. In making a decision, the LBAC considers the church's application along with any representations made by statutory consultees or members of the public.

An appeal can be made by the church against refusal of consent by the LBAC, to the Legal Committee of the Baptist Union of Great Britain.

The Trust Corporation can take appropriate steps to remedy breaches of procedure, prevent commencement or continuation of works and, where unauthorised works have been completed, the reinstatement of what has been damaged, removed or demolished will be sought.

*BUC Guidelines LB1 Introducing the Listed Building Advisory Committee*

*BUC Guidelines LB2 Applying to the Listed Building Advisory Committee*

www.baptist.org.uk/legal-property-a-charities/property/listed-buildings.html

2. The Code of Practice which gives the details on the principles which should be embodied in a denomination's system of control can be found at Annex A of the Government Guidance, The Operation of the Ecclesiastical Exemption and related planning matters for places of worship in England, (Department of Culture, Media and Sport, July 2010).

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## Church of England

The Faculty Jurisdiction Rules of the Church of England cover all types of work, including repairs, to listed and unlisted church buildings (including their contents) and churchyard structures. In order to undertake all but the most minor new works a parish will require a faculty (permission to undertake work) granted by the chancellor of their diocese. Before seeking (or 'petitioning for') a faculty, a parish should consult their Diocesan Advisory Committee (DAC) and where work is of the kind that would otherwise require listed building consent, should consult the local authority, English Heritage and the appropriate national amenity societies. The parish must also publicly advertise the proposed works when they petition for faculty.

In making a decision on whether to grant a faculty the chancellor considers the parish's petition along with the advice of the DAC and any representations made by statutory consultees, the Church Buildings Council or members of the public. Where a formal objection is made by anyone to the grant of a faculty, the case is heard at the Consistory Court (the ecclesiastical court of the diocese), either as a public hearing or through written representations.

An appeal against a chancellor's decision can be made, either by the applicant or by any individual or organisation which has made a formal objection, to a higher ecclesiastical court: the Court of Arches for cases in the Province of Canterbury or the Chancery Court of York for cases in the Province of York.

The chancellor may deal with breaches of procedure by issuing an injunction restraining anyone from doing work to a church without faculty; or, where work has been carried out, requiring the restoration of the building as close as reasonably possible to its previous state.

## Methodist Church

Applications for authorisation of works, including repairs, to a listed church or an unlisted church in a conservation area must be made through the national Methodist Connexional Offices. The Connexional Conservation Officer manages the process, including consultation with the local authority and other statutory consultees. The local church is responsible for advertisement of the proposals locally. Decisions are issued on behalf of the Methodist Council by the Head of Support Services. He/she is advised by the Conservation Officer (and, for major schemes, the national Listed Buildings Advisory Committee) and must take into account any representations made by the public or statutory consultees.

Consent must also be obtained from the Consent Giving Body in the relevant Methodist District before any works can take place, but listed building or conservation area approval from the Property Office must be secured first.

An appeal may be lodged by the local church in the event of a refusal of consent or against the imposition of conditions on a consent. An independent Appeals Panel will hear the appeal in accordance with a formal procedure laid down in Standing Orders. The decision of the Appeals Panel is final.

The Methodist Council has the power to require managing trustees to restore or reinstate any buildings altered without the necessary consent and, in default of compliance, has the power to carry out the required works of restoration and to charge the cost to the managing trustees.


*Faculty Jurisdiction Rules 2000*

*Making Changes to a Listed Church: Guidelines for Clergy, Churchwardens and PCCs*
Rule Committee of the General Synod (1999)

The Church Buildings Council has a very wide range of guidance available at www.churchcare.co.uk

Street K. and Serjeant, I. *Heritage and Mission*
Methodist Publishing House (2000)

Resourcing Mission Office pages on www.methodist.org.uk

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## Roman Catholic Church

In order to undertake works of alteration, extension or partial demolition of a listed Roman Catholic church, the authority of a 'faculty' granted on behalf of a diocesan bishop is required. (Although the term 'faculty' is used, Roman Catholic churches are not subject to the faculty legislation of the Church of England). Applications must be made to the Historic Churches Committee (HCC) for the diocese. The Secretary of the HCC carries out consultation with the statutory consultees on behalf of the church and provides public notices which must be displayed on or near the affected building, by way of public advertisement. In making a decision, the HCC considers the church's application along with any representations made by statutory consultees or members of the public.

An appeal against a decision of the HCC can be made to the bishop by the church or any person or organisation that had made written representations to the HCC. The bishop will not normally hear the appeal himself but appoint a commission to hear it on his behalf. The decision of the commission is final.

Breaches of procedure are dealt with by order of the bishop, who will order works to cease; this is followed by reinstatement, as far as is possible, or retrospective application to the HCC for consent to allow the works. Where such applications are refused reinstatement may be required.

## United Reformed Church

Applications for consent to carry out alterations, internal or external, to a listed church, or substantial demolition of an unlisted church in a conservation area, should be made to the Synod, which will send the application on to their Listed Buildings Advisory Committee (LBAC). Consultation with statutory consultees is carried out by the LBAC, but the church is responsible for advertising their proposals. If the LBAC does not support the application it will give the applicant an opportunity to amend it before it goes to the Synod Property Committee (SPC) for a decision. In making a decision, the SPC considers the church's application along with the advice of the LBAC and any representations from statutory consultees and members of the public.

An appeal against a decision of the Synod Property Committee is dealt with firstly by informal negotiation; only if that was inconclusive would a formal appeal go to the Appeals Commission, appointed by the General Assembly of the URC.

The Synod Property Committee can take steps to deal with cases of unauthorised works by preventing commencement of unauthorised works or demanding reinstatement or restoration.

*Consecrated for Worship*
Catholic Truth Society, (2006)

*Directory on the Ecclesiastical Exemption from Listed Building Control*
Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales (2001)

www.catholic-ew.org.uk/Catholic-Church/The-Bishops-Work/Heritage-and-Patrimony

*Procedure for Control of Works to Buildings* (2007)

www.urc.org.uk/what_we_do/plato/procedure_for_the_control_of_works_to_buildings

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## Consulting English Heritage

Work about which English Heritage should be consulted:

- All works for the alteration or extension of a Grade I or Grade II* listed place of worship or churchyard structure, which would affect their character as a building of special historic, archaeological, architectural or artistic interest.
- Alterations to a Grade II listed place of worship or churchyard structure which comprise the demolition of all or a substantial part of the structure of the interior. This includes the removal of principal internal elements such as staircases, galleries, load-bearing walls, floor structures, roof structures or of major internal fixtures such as a whole set of fixed seating, rood screens or organs. Extensions, additive alterations, works to windows, or the partial removal of fixed pews are not included.
- Works likely to affect the archaeological importance of the listed place of worship or archaeological remains within a listed place of worship of any grade, or its curtilage (grounds).

### For Church of England buildings:

If the proposals fall into one of these categories, applicants should send details to the relevant English Heritage office (contact details opposite). If you are not certain whether your proposals require notification, our staff will be happy to advise you. With major schemes early consultation is encouraged. Some dioceses will notify English Heritage on behalf of the parish and the Diocesan Advisory Committee secretary will be able to advise on this.

### For Baptist Union, Methodist Church, Roman Catholic and United Reformed Church buildings:

There is normally no need for applicants in these denominations to approach English Heritage directly. Details of any proposals requiring consent under these denominations' procedures should be sent to the decision-making or advisory body for that denomination. They will carry out the necessary consultation with English Heritage, the local authority and the national amenity societies. With major schemes early consultation is encouraged and this can be initiated through the offices of the relevant decision-making or advisory body.

### For buildings which do not have the ecclesiastical exemption from listed building and conservation area consent:

Applications for listed building consent or conservation area consent should be made to the local planning authority, which will consult English Heritage as necessary. Again, for major schemes, early consultation is encouraged, initiated through the offices of the local authority.

### For grant-aided buildings

If you have received a grant from English Heritage or the Heritage Lottery Fund under the Repair Grants for Places of Worship (RGPOW) scheme, the offer will have included a condition in the Stage 2 grant contract that you notify English Heritage in advance when you are seeking consent from your denomination or local authority for works which affect your place of worship or its curtilage. We do not need to be told about maintenance or minor repairs, works in the churchyard (other than extensions) and reversible works of liturgical adaptation that do not have an impact on the building. This condition ceases to apply ten years after the last grant payment.

### Information needed for consultations

We will require sufficient information to gain a full understanding of the proposal. This should include a description of the work, statements which describe what is special about the building and the reasons for what is proposed (for example, Statements of Significance and Need), a plan to identify the building and plans and drawings showing the building as existing and as proposed. Photographs are particularly helpful, both general and closer views of the area affected by the proposed changes.

### Our advisory service

English Heritage is committed to providing constructive, clear and concise advice, consistent with our *Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance*. We aim to respond to notifications within 21 days, from the point that sufficient information on the proposal has been received, or to an agreed alternative timetable.

*Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance* (2008)

www.english-heritage.org.uk/professional/advice/our-planning-role/charter/

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## ENGLISH HERITAGE OFFICES

### EAST OF ENGLAND

*Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Essex, Hertfordshire, Norfolk, Suffolk*
Brooklands
24 Brooklands Avenue
Cambridge CB2 8BU
01223 582700
eastofengland@english-heritage.org.uk

### EAST MIDLANDS

*Derbyshire, Leicestershire, Lincolnshire, Northamptonshire, Nottinghamshire, Rutland*
44 Derngate
Northampton
NN1 1UH
01604 735400
eastmidlands@english-heritage.org.uk

### LONDON

*Greater London*
1 Waterhouse Square
138-142 Holborn
London EC1N 2ST
020 7973 3000
london@english-heritage.org.uk

### NORTH EAST

*County Durham, Northumberland, Tees Valley, Tyne and Wear*
Bessie Surtees House
41-44 Sandhill
Newcastle upon Tyne
NE1 3JF
0191 269 1200
northeast@english-heritage.org.uk

### NORTH WEST

*Cheshire, Cumbria, Gtr Manchester, Lancashire, Merseyside*
Suites 3.3 and 3.4
Canada House
3 Chepstow Street
Manchester M1 5FW
0161 242 1400
northwest@english-heritage.org.uk

### SOUTH EAST

*Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, East Sussex, Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Kent, Oxfordshire, Surrey, West Sussex*
Eastgate Court
195-205 High Street
Guildford GU1 3EH
01483 252000
southeast@english-heritage.org.uk

### SOUTH WEST

*Bristol, Cornwall, Devon, Dorset, Gloucestershire, Isles of Scilly, Somerset, Wiltshire*
29 Queen Square
Bristol
BS1 4ND
0117 975 0700
southwest@english-heritage.org.uk

### YORKSHIRE AND THE HUMBER

*East Riding of Yorkshire, North-East Lincolnshire, North Lincolnshire, North Yorkshire, South Yorkshire, West Yorkshire*
37 Tanner Row
York YO1 6WP
01904 601901
yorkshire@english-heritage.org.uk

### WEST MIDLANDS

*Herefordshire, Shropshire, Staffordshire, Warwickshire, West Midlands, Worcestershire*
The Axis
Birmingham B1 1TG
0121 625 6820
westmidlands@english-heritage.org.uk

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# FURTHER INFORMATION AND CONTACTS

In addition to the following publications which are of general application, most denominational bodies provide specific guidance for the buildings with which they deal.

English Heritage guidance may be amended, updated or added to from time to time. The latest versions can be found online at www.helm.org.uk and www.english-heritage.org.uk, or by telephoning English Heritage Customer Services on 0870 333 1181.

### Legislation

Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

The Ecclesiastical Exemption (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (England) Order 2010

Care of Churches and Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction Measure 1991

The Faculty Jurisdiction (Care of Places of Worship) Rules 2000

The Equality Act 2010

All legislative texts are available online at www.legislation.gov.uk

### Government guidance

- Department for Communities and Local Government (2010)
  *Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning for the Historic Environment*
- Department for Communities and Local Government, Department for Culture, Media and Sport, English Heritage (2010)
  *PPS5: Historic Environment Planning Practice Guide*
- Department for Culture, Media and Sport (2010)
  *The Operation of the Ecclesiastical Exemption and related planning matters for places of worship in England: Guidance*

### Websites

- Churchcare [Church Buildings Council of the Church of England]
  www.churchcare.co.uk
- National Churches Trust
  www.nationalchurchestrust.org
- Shrinking the Footprint [Environmental campaign of the Church of England]
  www.shrinkingthefootprint.org.uk
- Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings
  www.spab.org.uk

### Other published sources of information and guidance

- Chartered Institute of Building Services Engineers (2002)
  *Guide to Building Services for Historic Buildings*
- Natural England (2011)
  *Bats in Churches: a management guide*
- Prince's Regeneration Trust (2010)
  *The Green Guide for Historic Buildings*

The Church Buildings Council (formerly the Council for the Care of Churches) of the Church of England has useful guidance on heating, wiring, stained glass, care of churchyards, commissioning new works of art and other subjects, which are generally also of some relevance to traditionally built places of worship of other denominations and faiths. They are published by Church House Publishing www.chbookshop.co.uk and some are available on the Churchcare website (see bottom left).

### Registers of conservation accredited professionals

#### Architects

Architects Accredited in Building Conservation (AABC)
01625 871458
www.aabc-register.co.uk

RIBA Conservation Register
020 7580 5533
www.architecture.com/UseAnArchitect

#### Conservators

Conservation Register
020 7785 3805
www.conservationregister.com

#### Building Surveyors

Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS)
Building Conservation Accreditation Scheme
0870 333 1600
www.rics.org/accreditation

#### Engineers

Conservation Accreditation for Engineers (CARE)
020 7665 2102
www.ice.org.uk/care

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## National Amenity Societies

**Ancient Monuments Society**
020 7236 3934
www.ancientmonumentssociety.org.uk

**Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings**
020 7377 1644
www.spab.org.uk

**Council for British Archaeology**
01904 671 417
www.britarch.ac.uk

**Twentieth Century Society**
020 7250 3857
www.c20society.org.uk

**Georgian Group**
0871 750 2936
www.georgiangroup.org.uk

**Victorian Society**
020 8994 1019
www.victoriansociety.org.uk

This is the second, substantially revised edition of *New Work in Historic Places of Worship*. The text was compiled by Nick Chapple with contributions from Clare Campbell, Tom Foxall, Francis Kelly, Trevor Mitchell, Richard Morrice and John Neale. It was edited and brought to press by Nick Chapple.

The photographs were taken by members of the English Heritage photography team, as detailed below. All images are © English Heritage.

We are grateful to the incumbents and churchwardens of the buildings illustrated for permission to take these photographs.

List of illustrations
Front cover: Church of St Andrew, Farnham, Surrey (Derek Kendall)

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2. Church of St Peter, Boxted, Essex (Pat Payne)
3. Priory Church of St Mary and St Blaise, Boxgrove, West Sussex (Derek Kendall)
4. Church of St Peter, Ellastone, Staffordshire (Steve Cole)
5. Church of All Saints, Thorndon, Suffolk (Pat Payne)
6. Church of St George, Wrotham, Kent (Derek Kendall)
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Designed by REAL451

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