

New Work in Historic Places of Worship



English Heritage wishes to secure the future of this country's historic places of worship as living buildings at the heart of their communities. We believe that they should be well used, and visited and enjoyed by all. To this end, we will work with congregations to accommodate changing patterns of use while seeking to protect the special architectural and historical interest of the buildings.

This document sets out the principles that English Heritage applies when considering proposals for the alteration or extension of historic places of worship. It is aimed at all those responsible for formulating proposals and making decisions about such buildings. For the sake of simplicity, the word 'church' has generally been used to mean a place of worship of any denomination or faith, and 'congregation' to mean the users of that place of worship.

INTRODUCTION

England possesses a richly varied inheritance of historic churches and chapels. The term 'historic church' may conjure up the image of a medieval village church, and indeed a high proportion of historic churches is of this type. However, this heritage also includes Georgian, Victorian and 20th-century buildings, both urban and rural, and encompasses every denomination and faith.

Most historic churches remain in use for worship and English Heritage will support the efforts of congregations to keep them in use wherever possible. This is their purpose, and as a rule historic buildings are best used for their intended purpose. Alternative uses are not always easy to find and can be damaging to the special architectural or historic interest of the building.

Historic church buildings are the heritage of all, and interest in their care and development extends well beyond the worshipping communities. They are frequently the finest buildings in their surroundings, central to the settlements they serve and of major townscape or landscape importance. They are repositories of the best that previous generations could offer in terms of design, craftsmanship and skill. They tell us how previous generations lived, thought and worshipped. They are integral to our sense of place and belonging.

1.1 Patterns of change

Most churches have been altered or rearranged several times over the centuries to meet changing needs, and the evidence of change is often an essential part of our appreciation of such buildings. Medieval parish churches were regularly enlarged or

beautified to accommodate the liturgies of the living and the wishes of the dead. In the post-medieval period they were radically altered to suit the requirements of the reformed liturgy. Nor, of course, did the building of new places of worship cease. From the end of the 17th century religious dissent was increasingly allowed architectural expression and many fine Nonconformist chapels are the result. During this period new places of worship also began to be built by incoming religious and ethnic groups who were often escaping persecution in other countries. The 18th-century Methodist and 19th-century Catholic revivals produced distinctive buildings, from small chapels to larger churches, and many existing Anglican churches were altered and enlarged (for example, in the provision of galleries to increase seating capacity). In the 19th century all denominations built prolifically, including new ancillary buildings for Sunday schools and social purposes. Post-medieval changes to old parish churches were often swept away in an attempt to 'restore' buildings to an idea of their correct medieval form. Through the 20th century up to the present, places of worship for all denominations and faiths have continued to be built and adapted, reflecting a wide range of architectural styles and cultural influences.

In recent times liturgical, social and economic changes have often led to a radical reappraisal of the way that historic places of worship may be used. Thus community participation rather than hierarchy has been emphasised, and the architectural settings associated with previous modes of worship often seen as inappropriate.

Coupled with these changes has been an increased emphasis on comfort and convenience. It is now widely expected that public places of worship should have

comfortable heating and seating, a lavatory, a modest kitchen and a space for meetings. There is also an increasing emphasis on broadening the use of church buildings, especially the main congregational space, beyond that of regular worship.

While places of worship have changed over time, this has not been an entirely neutral process. Some changes have been for the better and some have not. Inevitably there is sometimes a tension between the desire for change and the aims of conservation. It is the purpose of this document to reduce the scope for conflict and to ensure that a proper balance is reached between the needs of the users of the building and the desirability of conservation.

2 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)

Buildings of special architectural and historical interest are a finite resource and an irreplaceable asset. Their special interest can be damaged just as much by unsympathetic alteration as by works of demolition. Listing of such buildings is undertaken by the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport. Listing creates a presumption in favour of the preservation of the building but does not in itself rule out the possibility of change. Indeed, it is only through continued use,



Figure 1 The enduring image: A medieval parish church in its village context.

and thereby sometimes change, that the long-term conservation of the building can be best assured. What it does ensure, however, is that when change is contemplated those responsible for making decisions have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building, its setting and any special features that it may possess.

Buildings can be listed for their architectural interest, their historic interest, their historical associations and their value in contributing to a group of buildings.

Most listed buildings (over 90 per cent) are listed Grade II. A small percentage are listed Grade I or II*; these are buildings of particularly great importance to the country's built heritage. Of the 20,000 or so listed churches and chapels in England, about 5,000 are listed Grade I, reflecting the particular importance of places of worship in the historic environment.

Government policy governing historic buildings and archaeology is set out in two documents, Planning Policy Guidance Note (PPG) 15 *Planning and the Historic*

Environment (1994) and PPG16 *Archaeology and Planning* (1990). These documents set out best practice for the care and management of the historic environment and are the policies which English Heritage and other bodies involved in the care of the historic environment will seek to follow. (Further details of these policies are set out in Section 3.)

Good conservation practice places a strong emphasis on understanding the significance of an historic building before change is made. When drawing up



Figure 2 Patterns of change: This former Congregational chapel is now a Sikh temple.



Figure 3 Extended use: The chancel of this medieval church remains in use for worship. The nave, which had previously lost its historic furnishings, now houses a cafeteria and other community activities.

proposals to alter their church, congregations and others with responsibility for the building should think through what the requirements are, the likely impact of the proposed changes on the building's special interest and strive to ensure that changes can be made without damaging that special interest. Those proposing works to any listed building are expected 'to assess the likely impact of their proposals on the special interest of the site or structure in question, and to provide such written information or drawings as may be required to understand the significance of a site or structure before an application is determined' (PPG15, Paragraph 2.11). Where historic buildings 'are either of intrinsic archaeological interest or stand on ground which contains archaeological remains...it is important...that there should be appropriate assessment of the archaeological implications of development proposals before applications are determined' (PPG15, Paragraph 2.15).

Similarly, under the Church of England's Faculty Jurisdiction Rules 2000, parishes intending to apply for faculty approval to carry out significant changes to a listed church are required to prepare a Statement of Significance and a Statement of Need to accompany that application. The Methodist Church has also adopted this practice. English Heritage recognises that not all faiths and traditions have the same understanding of the terms 'significance' (when applied to a building) or 'need' (when applied to liturgical requirements). What matters is that all those with responsibility for historic places of worship should adopt procedures which ensure that sufficient information is made available by those initiating proposals, so that a full and fair assessment can be made.

2.1 Identifying significance

To understand the architectural and historic significance of a church it is essential to study the existing building and its development. The church's own records, such as churchwarden or trustee accounts, as well as published histories and guidebooks are a good starting point. Advice on where to look for further information can usually be obtained from denominational sources and church history societies. The county archaeologist or local authority conservation officer, county or diocesan record office, the local history society and reference library may also be consulted. All listed churches are described at least briefly in the statutory lists of historic buildings held by the local authority and there are usually other readily available published sources of information. These include the county

volumes of *The Buildings of England* series by Sir Nikolaus Pevsner and, for some areas, the inventory volumes of the Royal Commission on Historical Monuments. *The Victoria County Histories* may also be consulted on matters relating to family and social history. With the help of these sources, an assessment of the significance of the building, and of the relative significance of its parts, can be prepared. This assessment might include the following headings:

- **Community.** The significance, both past and present, of the building in the worshipping and social life of the community. This assessment will provide a useful context for discussions with external organisations.
- **Setting.** The place of the church in the broader landscape. Many churches lie at the heart of an historic landscape or townscape and may indeed provide their focal point. An assessment should be made of the contribution that the church makes to its local setting, identifying key views, positive features that should be preserved or enhanced and negative features where improvements might be made.
- **Site.** The site of a church is often of considerable antiquity and may contain valuable earlier remains, sometimes of pre-Christian or even prehistoric date. In most cases, and certainly when the building contains medieval fabric or occupies a medieval or town centre site, 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. Any assessment should include the structures and grave markers that may make up the churchyard setting, and any landscape or wildlife features of note.
- **Architectural and historical development.** Many older churches have grown by accretion over the centuries and it is important to seek to establish the building sequence. It should be borne in mind that many churches have undergone thorough restoration at some point and that this restoration may in itself be of considerable interest and quality. More recent churches and chapels are more likely to have been built in only one or two phases and may be the work of a single architect. Whatever the age of the

building, an assessment should be made of its architectural design and character; the external composition and internal plan form; aesthetic and spatial qualities and decorative schemes. Where the church 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 church is primary historical evidence 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 craftsmanship and manner of building of the period of its construction.
- **Furnishings.** The age, rarity and intrinsic merit of the internal furnishings and fittings should be assessed, together with the historic interest and extent of completeness of the overall arrangement. Any past history of re-ordering or alteration should be taken into account. Do not discount 19th- and 20th-century fittings simply because they may be relatively recent in date – they may comprise the most important features of the interior. Equally, modest examples of local craftsmanship should be given proper recognition.

2.2 Determining need

If we wish to hand on what we value to future generations, we should ensure that what is valued is not damaged in the process. The need for any work that is likely to have a significant impact on a historic church building should therefore be established at an early stage. *'Applicants... must be able to justify their proposals. They will need to show why works which would affect the character of a listed building are desirable or necessary'* (PPG15, Paragraph 3.4).

The Church of England's Faculty Jurisdiction Rules 2000 define a Statement of Need as *'a document which sets out the reasons why it is considered that the needs of the parish cannot be met without making changes to the church building and the reason why the changes are regarded as necessary to assist the church in its worship and mission'*. Such a statement will be of considerable value to the congregation in formulating its proposals, and to external bodies when considering the rationale behind the proposals. Most importantly, it will help to minimise misunderstanding and delay.

It will be necessary to establish the nature of the need and whether the

changes proposed are essential or merely desirable. The more impact that such change is likely to have on the special interest of the building the more it will require justification.

2.3 Developing a scheme

Having reviewed their needs in the light of the assessment of the significance of the building, the congregation should take stock and consider the likely impact of their proposals. An architect or other professional adviser should be involved at an early stage. Sensitive, appropriate alterations demand particular skills and it is essential to appoint an adviser with an understanding of historic buildings and experience in their careful alteration and adaptation.

If the congregation has not yet started discussions with its own denominational bodies, this is the time to do so. If it appears that their proposals will involve significant internal alteration and/or an extension, they should also at this stage consult the local planning authority, the relevant national amenity societies and, if appropriate, English Heritage. (For details of when and how to consult English Heritage see Appendix 1.) We strongly urge congregations to consult ourselves and other bodies before schemes become too advanced. This will help to avoid abortive development costs and delay.

3

THE AUTHORISATION OF WORKS

3.1 Policy background

PPG15 establishes a general presumption in favour of the preservation of listed buildings and emphasises the need to protect them from unnecessary demolition or unsuitable and insensitive alteration. At the same time it recognises that historic buildings should be kept in active use and that this may involve change. When change is proposed, the special architectural and historic interest of the building should be protected wherever possible. The PPG acknowledges that well-considered change within the context of long-established ownership is often conducive to the long-term preservation of an historic building.

PPG16 establishes a presumption against the disturbance of important archaeological remains and recommends that when works take place which bring about such disturbance, then those responsible for the works must make arrangements for any mitigation and recording required by the controlling authority.

Under the terms of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, local authorities are required to have special regard to the desirability of preserving listed buildings, their settings and features of special architectural or historic interest in considering whether to grant planning permission.

The Care of Churches and Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction Measure 1991 aims to ensure that Church of England churches are properly cared for and works carried out in the best possible way. However, the policy behind the Measure also stresses the fact that churches – while being of great significance to the historic environment – exist primarily for the worship of God and His Church. The Measure therefore provides that those carrying out functions of care and conservation of churches shall have regard to the role of the church as a local centre of worship and mission.

3.2 Legal requirements

Any works for the demolition of a listed church, or for its alteration or extension in any manner which would affect its character as a building of special architectural or historic interest, will require listed building consent or its equivalent. The Ecclesiastical Exemption (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Order 1994 provides for an exemption from listed building and conservation area consent for the Church of England, the Church in Wales, the Roman Catholic Church, the Methodist Church, the United Reformed Church, and the Baptist Unions of Great Britain and Wales, all of which operate systems of control over listed churches which comply with a Government Code of Practice. Under these arrangements, the congregation must advertise their proposals and consult the local planning authority, the relevant national amenity societies and English Heritage about works that would otherwise require listed building consent.

All other denominations and faiths may require listed building consent or conservation area consent from their local planning authority before they undertake works to a listed church or a church within a conservation area. If there is any doubt about whether consent is needed, the local planning authority should be consulted.

Under the Church of England's Faculty Jurisdiction Rules all works to churches are subject to faculty, whether carried out on behalf of the congregation or for a third party. With the other exempt denominations, works carried out to a listed church by or on behalf of third parties (for example, CCTV cameras and

telecommunications equipment) are subject to listed building control in addition to any controls that the denomination may exercise.

Even for exempt denominations, listed building consent or conservation area consent is required for the demolition of a church, except in the case of Church of England churches demolished under the provisions of a pastoral or redundancy scheme under the Pastoral Measure 1983. In such cases the Church Commissioners will request a non-statutory public inquiry if there are reasoned objections from the local planning authority, English Heritage or the national amenity societies.

Planning permission and, if necessary, building regulations approval, 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 church. If the development affects the setting of a Grade I or II* listed church (and in London the setting of any listed church) the local authority will consult English Heritage before determining the application.

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 disposal of human remains. 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.

Churchyard features such as memorials, lych-gates and boundary walls may be listed buildings in their own right or, exceptionally, scheduled ancient monuments and subject to separate statutory consent requirements. Many churchyards lie in conservation areas where permission for works to structures and 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.

Under the terms of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, churches are regarded as 'service providers' who are required, with effect from October 2004, to take reasonable steps to remove, alter or get around physical features that make it impossible or unreasonably difficult for disabled people to use a service. This legislation applies to all public places of worship but does not supersede or take precedence over existing legislation governing the conservation of historic buildings.

4 ADVICE ON NEW WORK IN HISTORIC PLACES OF WORSHIP

4.1 General principles

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

- be based on a full understanding of the architectural, historic, archaeological and cultural significance of the building;
- be founded on a clearly stated and demonstrable need;
- respect the special architectural and historic interest of the building, its contents and setting;
- minimise intervention in significant historic fabric;
- achieve high standards of design, craftsmanship and materials.

4.2 Major alterations to historic places of worship

Major schemes for the alteration of churches fall broadly into two categories. Firstly, there are those schemes of internal re-ordering generated by new patterns of worship or liturgical changes. Then there are schemes for the provision of additional facilities, such as meeting rooms, kitchens and lavatories. Many projects involve both.

Liturgical changes inevitably concern the interior of a church, but ancillary accommodation can be provided within the building, in an extension or in a detached building. Which is the preferable solution in any given case will depend on the optimum balance of the special interest of the church and the needs of the congregation.

4.2.1 Major alterations: Interiors

Locating new facilities within an existing building offers several advantages. It is more convenient and avoids the difficulties that often accompany proposals to extend historic places of worship. It is always worth looking at as an initial option.

Internal alterations and rearrangements need to take account of the spatial qualities of the interior and the main architectural axes as well as the significance of individual fittings. There will be cases where the quality of the interior is such



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Figure 4 An example of sensitive liturgical re-ordering which retains the historic furnishings.



© Eric Berry

Figure 5 Here a flexible space has been created by the removal of the late 19th-century pews. Such solutions are often controversial, and must be informed by an understanding of the significance of the furnishings as well as questions of need.

that there is very little scope for internal adaptation. Such cases are rare and should be identified at the time of the preparation of the Statement of Significance. In general, the more rare or complete an interior the stronger will be the presumption in favour of its preservation.

Chancel and sanctuary furnishings of all periods will often be of high quality and can make a significant contribution to the character and special interest of the church. In recent years changes driven by liturgical considerations have often involved the removal or unsympathetic adaptation of important historic fittings. However, damaging changes of this nature can usually 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.

The majority of historic churches and chapels have fixed seating. Medieval and immediately post-medieval fixed seating is so rare that it should always be retained. Complete preaching interiors with box pews, prominent pulpits and galleries are also comparatively rare and should be retained intact. However, most historic churches have seating that dates from the 19th century. If this is of very high quality and is contemporary with the church or forms part of a significant historic scheme of re-ordering, the degree of flexibility may be limited. Elsewhere, rearrangement is often possible, especially in the less-used areas of the church. Major re-seating schemes should not run counter to the main architectural axis of the building and careful thought should be given to floor finishes.

Where there is a need for additional 'social' spaces, whether primarily for the congregation or for broader community use, it is sensible to first carry out an audit of existing church and other nearby facilities that might be used for these purposes. This can be followed by setting out a list of the desired facilities and floorspace, together with the functional criteria for each space, so that dual or multiple use of spaces can be considered.

When a small meeting room, lavatory 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 churches 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



Figure 6 Enclosing the space beneath galleries can create additional separate rooms.

levels. Where discrete spaces do not exist, it is often possible for utilitarian features such as small kitchens to be ‘designed’ as items of furniture and thus made visually more acceptable.

Internal partitioning should respect the main internal spaces and avoid physical damage. Partitions should be set back behind arcades or gallery columns or, where the detailing is simple, be set on the centre line. The design of partitions requires care. Generally, their finish should reflect those of the principal internal wall surfaces or existing screens, be they plastered or panelled. A glazed solution is sometimes possible, although large areas of glazing can be prominent and out of character with historic church interiors.

4.2.2 Major alterations: Exteriors

If the congregation’s assessment of the significance of their building and their needs lead them to conclude, in agreement with other parties, that a wholly internal solution is not possible or desirable, they



Figure 7 New facilities have been created here by enclosing the western bay of the nave and tower area.



Figure 8 Constructing a porch-like addition to this church has provided a lavatory and small kitchen.

may then wish to consider some form of external solution.

It is often possible for existing ancillary structures, both within the church's boundary and beyond, to be adapted to accommodate new uses. Where these are available, their use for such purposes is recommended. Where they are not available, or where there is an accepted need for linked facilities under one roof, an extension to the building can be considered. Whether an extension is likely to be regarded as appropriate depends on a number of factors. These include the architectural character of the church and its relationship to its setting. They also include the physical and visual impact of such additions, both on the standing structure and on below-ground building features and burials.

The issues of scale and compatibility are paramount – *'...extensions should not dominate the existing building in either scale, materials or situation...Successful extensions require the application of an intimate knowledge of the building type that is being extended together with a sensitive handling of scale and detail'* (PPG15, Paragraph C.7). Some churches, particularly large urban ones, may be able to accommodate quite substantial additions successfully. Significant enlargement of smaller churches is more difficult, although in such cases it may be possible for new facilities to be provided in porch- or vestry-like structures. Many churches, particularly medieval ones, are accretive in nature and such buildings are often capable of further addition, provided the necessary care is taken. Less easy to add to are buildings that betray the hand of a single designer or display a degree of architectural completeness. In such cases there may be a strong argument against any addition.

It is the experience of English Heritage that the most satisfactory additions to



Figure 9 A successful example of an integrated, contextual addition to a medieval church.



Figure 10 A large addition to an urban church taking the form of a second 'aisle'.

historic churches are those which form a harmonious composition with the building to which they are attached and consequently appear to be a natural development from the building. Aisles, transepts, chapels, vestries and porches all provide an established vocabulary for church extension.

New structures attached to churches by narrow, often glazed links are seldom aesthetically satisfactory. Linked additions generally do not compose well with the buildings to which they are attached, especially when attached to free-standing churches in churchyards. It is recognised that such linked extensions have often been provided in an attempt to avoid obscuring or damaging historic fabric. However, if the architectural design or archaeological significance of the fabric is so sensitive as to preclude an integrated addition, then an extension may not be the appropriate solution.

In many churches, access to a new extension can be obtained from an existing or blocked doorway. Whether new openings in historic fabric are likely to be acceptable depends on the significance of the fabric in question and the persuasiveness of the argument of need. English Heritage starts with a presumption in favour of minimising intervention in significant historic fabric.

As a rule 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 building or in an extension, the possibility of locating these in a detached building within or outside the churchyard boundary should not be discounted. Discussion with the relevant authorities should provide guidance as to what locations if any might be suitable for this purpose. Churchyards may be sites of archaeological, townscape or wildlife importance and they form part of the historic setting of the church. However, where acceptable, detached buildings can offer significant advantages to offset their relative inconvenience. They can be designed to serve their purpose with fewer of the constraints in terms of scale, design and materials that would normally apply with a linked addition. They also avoid the problems of noise that ancillary activities within church buildings sometimes present. The result can be a more useful, flexible and less costly building.

5 WORKS TO HISTORIC PLACES OF WORSHIP: COMMON ISSUES

Works described in this section reflect the issues that crop up regularly in the everyday casework of English Heritage and other statutory and advisory bodies. Such works can have a significant impact on the special interest and character of the church, and should follow the principles set out in this document. More detailed advice on some of these matters is available from English Heritage, the Council for the Care of Churches and other bodies.

5.1 A sense of welcome

The desire to improve the sense of welcome is best achieved by an open church and a welcoming human presence. However, it is often also expressed in proposals for new signs, additional external lighting and the replacement of solid wooden doors with glass ones. Provided careful thought is given to their location, size and design, signs and external lighting can usually be introduced without difficulty. Where existing doors contribute to the special interest of a church by virtue of their age or design, they should be retained. It is sometimes possible to introduce an inner set of glazed doors which can become the effective main entrance by fixing the solid door open when the church is in use.

5.2 Access

In seeking to meet the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (see Section 3.2) congregations should bear in mind that the duty falls upon the service provider and not the building itself. Therefore, making physical alterations to the building is only one of a number of options. The legislation does not override existing secular or ecclesiastical laws governing historic buildings, and the obligation is to take 'reasonable' measures. There will be cases where 'physical barriers' cannot be overcome without causing unacceptable damage to the historic asset. However, in the experience of English Heritage, such cases are rare and a solution is usually possible, given sufficient care and thought.

English Heritage is committed to broadening 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.

Congregations are encouraged to arrange for an access audit of their historic building and to draw up an Access Plan. Each Access Plan must be site specific, reflecting the constraints and opportunities inherent in the design, function and setting of the church in question as well as the needs of its users. English Heritage will consider proposals in the light of our own existing published guidance and the principles set out in this document.

5.3 Servicing the historic church

Historically, most churches were not expected to provide sophisticated levels of comfort and servicing was localised (for example, a stove for heating and candles for light). Expectations now are rather higher, and an effective and comfortable level of heating, lighting and plumbing is necessary if we are to secure continued and extended use of historic churches. It should, however, be realised that the introduction of more pervasive systems can have a considerable physical and visual impact. New services are often relatively ephemeral in the life of the building and every effort should be made to avoid damage in their installation and to allow for easy later removal. With the possible exception of light fittings, modern service installations are usually utilitarian in appearance and they should be designed and located to be as unobtrusive as possible.

The church architect or surveyor should always be consulted about the installation of services and independent specialist advice should always be sought. The architect should ensure that what is proposed is appropriate to the building. The specialist should provide the best technical advice.

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 churches. Provided that such modifications are made with the benefit of specialist advice they should not compromise health and safety.

Some historic services may 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, which in some 19th- and 20th-century churches are an integral part of the design. Where possible such survivals should be preserved, preferably in use.

5.3.1 Heating

An effective and affordable heating system is essential if use of the church building is to continue and grow. The choice of a new heating system will vary according to circumstances, but English Heritage considers that some methods of heating are better suited to a historic church than others.

At a time when many congregations are encouraging a wider use of their church, keeping the building constantly warm has the obvious advantage of making it more welcoming. A low, constant temperature is also better for the building; it will help to dispel damp, reduce condensation and maintain the fabric in a stable condition. The best temperature for the fabric is likely to be 8-10°C (46-50°F). This can be boosted in advance of services and other events, when a temperature of 16-18°C (61-64°F) should be comfortable. Heating a church to normal home or office temperatures is unsustainable, both financially and on account of the strain that this is likely to place on the fabric.

Occasional and rapid heating is less desirable because it will create extreme fluctuations of temperature. Moreover, it will not control damp, may exacerbate condensation and subject the fabric – especially the roof timbers – to stress resulting from movement. While English Heritage wishes to encourage wider use of church buildings, we recognise the fact that many churches are and will remain in occasional use and therefore need a heating regime that reflects this level of use.

The installation of heating may involve 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. The impact of these alterations must be assessed when judging a proposal.

The following paragraphs summarise our views on the various methods of heating commonly used – a combination of these might provide the best solution to the needs of some churches.

- **Hot water systems** remain the best means of heating a church as they are the most suited to maintaining the building at a constant temperature and can be adjusted as necessary. Many churches retain 19th- or early 20th-century under-floor ducts or radiators and these should be re-used whenever possible. In churches 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. These can be used to heat a church in the same manner as a conventional hot water system. However, 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 mar the external appearance of the building. English Heritage therefore discourages 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, particularly if it is more economical to supplement that heat in a small area used by the congregation rather than by boosting the temperature of the church as a whole. They can also be used independently, providing relatively short bursts of heat to those who need it. They are unobtrusive and their wiring can often be concealed within pew platforms. However, they should not be fitted to pews of significant historic or aesthetic interest, both on account of the damage that their attachment involves and because they may dry out woodwork.
- **Radiant (quartz ray) heaters** do not generally provide a satisfactory means of heating churches. 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

acceptable in discrete locations or, exceptionally, in churches that are only used occasionally where there is no economic alternative.

- **Underfloor heating systems** are not usually an appropriate means of heating a church. They may indirectly cause damp problems, since the introduction of damp-proof membranes, if incorrectly specified, may draw moisture into walls and piers. More fundamentally, their installation requires the wholesale alteration of the floor, either by taking up the existing floor or creating a new one above it. The first can have a significant impact on archaeological remains, including of earlier levels, vaults and previous phases of building. Only in exceptional cases would this be justified. Where such disturbance is accepted, the cost of archaeological recording may be significant. Adding a new floor above the existing may be less physically damaging but may have a major impact on the appearance of the interior. In such instances the importance of existing floor finishes and levels should be taken into account.
- **Hot air systems** can be noisy in operation and crude in appearance and are seldom an appropriate means of heating a church. 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 used to heat the building rapidly for short periods.
- **Portable heaters**, whether gas or electric, are commonly used but cannot be recommended. They carry increased fire risk and portable gas heaters discharge water vapour into the church, thereby adding to any condensation problems the building may have.

5.3.2 Lighting

The primary reason for lighting a church is to provide sufficient additional light to allow the congregation and clergy to read texts and follow the liturgy. Lighting schemes often have the illumination of the architecture of the church as a secondary

purpose. Historically, churches were lit by daylight supplemented by candles or, in more recent buildings, oil or gaslight and electricity, so proposals to illuminate the architecture of a church for its own sake may run counter to its intended character.

- **Pendant lighting** is often a practical and sympathetic means of providing functional lighting. It provides light to the users of the building and can be designed to embellish it. Pendant lighting is also often more readily accessible for maintenance than lighting fixed higher up in the building. In some churches, however, the installation of such lighting would be inappropriate as the fixings would damage significant fabric or impair an important decorative scheme.
- **Spot or flood lighting** is the most common alternative to pendant lighting, and can sometimes be employed to dramatic effect. However, care must always be taken to ensure that the fittings are unobtrusive and the work involved with their installation avoids significant damage to the fabric. Thought must also be given to ensuring that such lights do not produce glare.
- **External floodlighting** schemes should avoid causing light pollution and may not be appropriate for isolated rural churches in particular. Lighting units should not be fixed to the building and should be unobtrusive. Archaeological advice may be required in respect of sunken lamps and cabling routes.

5.3.3 Cables and pipework

Careful planning and supervision of cable runs and pipe routes can avoid unsightly and physically damaging alterations. 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 interior. Fixings should be made into joints rather than into masonry, avoiding damage to arrises.

Where there is historic plaster, cables should be discreetly surface mounted and painted to blend with the background. Surfaces with important painted decoration, whether visible or concealed, should be avoided. If disturbance of old plaster is unavoidable, it may be necessary for a conservator to investigate the area for evidence of wall paintings which, if found, will require a rethinking of the installation. Damage can be minimised by routing through conduit or on battens with fewer fixings.

Where disturbance of floor surfaces is proposed, ledger slabs and floor tiles should be recorded before they are lifted, so that they can be returned to their original positions.

5.3.4 Other piped services

The provision of lavatory 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. The use of composting or macerating lavatories can remove or reduce the need for drainage trenches.

Ventilation for lavatories 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. New ducts drilled through historic masonry should be avoided wherever possible, as should external fan units and cowl.

5.4 Redecoration

Incorrectly specified redecoration can seriously damage the building and its historic features. Few historic churches have a damp-proof course and any moisture in the walls should be allowed to evaporate naturally. Many modern paints contain plastics which form a 'skin' on the wall surface inhibiting the evaporation of moisture. They are also difficult to remove. Such paints should therefore not be applied over masonry, old plaster or any painted schemes of decoration. Traditional coverings such as limewash permit greater evaporation and can be safely used on masonry or plaster.

Removing plaster or historic limewash from walls or ceilings should not be undertaken for purely aesthetic reasons. Where this has been done in the past, replastering or limewashing can lighten the interior, reduce heating bills and improve the setting of wall monuments.

5.5 Flooring

Decorative stone, tile or high-quality historic floor surfaces should generally not be removed or carpeted over. The wall-to-wall carpeting of interiors should be avoided since this tends to create a domestic character at odds with most historic church interiors. The fitting of carpets over steps can obscure their architectural purpose and detail and can be unsafe; risers and nosings should therefore not be so covered. 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. Mats and rugs 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. However, care is needed to ensure that rugs do not become a trip hazard.

Methods of making good the floor after the removal of pews need careful consideration to ensure that the new flooring blends with the surrounding historic flooring.

5.6 Organs

Organs can be among the most important features of a church or chapel interior and are often furnishings of considerable quality. In such cases they should be retained. Many denominational bodies have organ consultants, whose specialist advice should be sought on questions relating to the musical value of pipe organs or their relative merits when compared with electronic alternatives.

5.7 Bells, bell frames and associated works

English Heritage wishes to encourage continuity in use of historic bells and bell frames and thereby the tradition of change ringing. The Council for the Care of Churches has drawn up a Code of Practice for the conservation and repair of bells and bell frames, and congregations are advised to consult this document and all interested parties (including English Heritage) at an early stage, before proposals are developed too far. These days the most important historic bells are scheduled for preservation and lists are regularly updated. Much less research has been carried out on historic bell frames and there remains a common tendency to replace these as they become decayed or are deemed unsuitable for modern requirements.

English Heritage will start from a presumption in favour of the retention of historic bells and bell frames, preferably in use. As with all proposals for major change, we would expect proposals for historic installations to be accompanied by Statements of Significance and Need. Assessment of the significance of the existing installation should take account of its rarity, completeness, the quality of the work, known dates and maker, and whether the frame is contemporary with the tower. As always with significant historic fabric, careful repair is preferable to replacement. 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*. Where historic fittings or fabric are to be removed or adapted, we would wish to see the damage minimised and any necessary provision made for recording.

Proposals to upgrade or replace bell installations are sometimes accompanied by the creation of new ringing floors (often driven by a desire to introduce other facilities in the tower area). In such cases provision should be made to allow for the safe and easy removal of the bells for the purposes of future repair. Access to new ringing floors should avoid damage to historic fabric, for example, by the provision of safe ladder or stair access within the tower area. In some cases, space or other considerations make this practically difficult and the formation of a new opening from an existing tower stair might be proposed. Such proposals should be assessed on the relative weight of the stated need (and the availability of non-destructive alternative solutions) measured against the significance of the fabric affected. 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.

5.8 Glazing

An assessment of the significance of existing glazing should reveal whether windows contain important schemes of decorative or plain glass, or whether individual windows are of artistic, historic or associative value. Windows of interest should be retained and windows re-used from elsewhere should be placed in openings of closely matching dimensions. Figurative elements should not be removed from their original decorative settings which form part of the artistic entity.

The introduction of new stained glass windows should involve an assessment of the existing glazing in the church (which may be notable for the absence of stained glass), of the fabric to be removed (including historic clear glass and possibly ferramenta) and of the artistic merits of the new glass. Many denominational bodies have stained glass consultants whose views should be sought.

5.9 Window protection

Methods of window protection vary according to the nature of the building and the glass and the perceived risk. Protective treatment should not obscure or oversail window divisions or tracery and should allow for adequate ventilation between the original glass and any solid protective covering. Black-finished stainless steel wire guards, cut to follow the window or tracery pattern and fixed at the joints, are often an acceptable solution. Polycarbonate protection is seldom aesthetically satisfactory since it produces a bland and reflective surface and tends to dull and discolour over time. Isothermal protection can be provided for windows of outstanding importance, but the desirability of protecting such glass needs to be balanced against the visual and physical impact of such measures.

5.10 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 recommended as a remedy for this. 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 church. Dampness is best managed by good maintenance, good ventilation and by allowing for permeability in the wall surfaces through the use of 'breathable' mortars, plasters and finishes.

5.11 Telecommunications equipment

The location of telecommunications equipment on church towers can be a source of valuable income to congregations. However, such installations often give rise to public concern and listed building consent and planning permission may be required. English Heritage's chief concern is with the impact of such installations on the fabric, appearance and future maintenance of the building.

The church architect should be asked to advise on the installation and on any making good to the fabric it may require. Where appropriate, telecommunications companies should be encouraged to share equipment, thereby reducing the proliferation of this in and around church buildings. The visual and fabric implications of antennae (either wall-mounted, free-standing or disguised as flagpoles), cable runs, service trenches and junction boxes will need to be considered. Proposals for the replacement of louvres to facilitate transmission from towers will need to be considered carefully and may not be acceptable. Measures to allow for continued safe access to the church tower for the purposes of inspection will be required. 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.

6 SUMMARY

English Heritage hopes that the approach outlined in this document will lead to the accommodation of change in ways that preserve the special value of our unique inheritance of historic places of worship. We hope it will ensure that all proposals are grounded on a firm understanding of the building in question; understanding of the building increases appreciation for it, and thereby encourages a virtuous cycle of care. For our part, we remain ever conscious that these are buildings built for a purpose; places, in T S Eliot's words, 'where prayer has been valid'. We recognise that it is through that continuing purpose that the future of these buildings will be best assured.

Appendix I

CONSULTING ENGLISH HERITAGE ON WORKS TO HISTORIC PLACES OF WORSHIP

Q *About what type of work do you need to consult English Heritage?*

A **For Church of England churches:**

All works of alteration or extension affecting the character of Grade I or II* churches.

Consultation on Grade II churches is limited to alteration which comprises 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 all fixed pews, 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 church or archaeological remains within a listed church of any grade, or its curtilage (grounds).

If the proposals fall into one of these categories, applicants should send details to the relevant English Heritage regional office. If you are not certain whether your proposals require notification, our staff will be happy to advise you.

A **For Roman Catholic, Methodist, United Reformed Church and Baptist churches and chapels:**

There is normally no need for applicants to approach English Heritage directly. Details of any proposals requiring consent under these denominations' own 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 should be initiated through the offices of the relevant decision-making or advisory body.

A **For other denominations and faiths who do not have the ecclesiastical exemption from listed building and conservation area consent:**

Applications 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.

Q *Have you been in receipt of grant aid for your place of worship?*

A If you have received a grant from English Heritage or the Heritage Lottery Fund under the Repair Grant Scheme for Places of Worship 2002 to 2005, the grant offer will have included a condition that you notify English Heritage when you seek faculty or any other approval for works to your place of worship. We do not need to be told about maintenance and minor repairs, works in the churchyard (other than extensions) and reversible works of liturgical adaptation that are compatible with the building.

This condition ceases to apply ten years after the last grant payment. Churches grant aided by English Heritage before this scheme came into operation no longer need to obtain our separate approval for changes. If you are in any doubt, your English Heritage regional office will be able to advise further.

Q *What information do we need?*

A We will require sufficient information to gain a full understanding of the proposal. This should include a description of the work, statements which describe 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 proposed for change. A copy of the list description should also be supplied. We will endeavour to reply to notifications within twenty-eight days.

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Appendix 2

FURTHER READING

Legislation and Government Guidance

Department of the Environment and Department of National Heritage (DoE/DNH) 1994. Planning Policy Guidance Note 15: *Planning and the Historic Environment* (PPG15). London: HMSO

Department of the Environment (DoE) 1990. Planning Policy Guidance Note 16: *Archaeology and Planning* (PPG16). London: HMSO

Department of National Heritage and Cadw (Welsh Historic Monuments) 1994. *The Ecclesiastical Exemption: What it is and how it works*. London: HMSO

The Ecclesiastical Exemption (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Order 1994. London: HMSO

Care of Churches and Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction Measure. 1991. London: HMSO

The Faculty Jurisdiction (Care of Places of Worship) Rules 2000. London: The Stationery Office

Stationery Office/HMSO texts are available on-line at www.hmso.gov.uk

English Heritage and other Guidance

British Standards Institute 1998. *British Standard Guide to the Principles of the Conservation of Historic Buildings* (BS 7913). London: BSI

Chartered Institution of Building Services Engineers 2002. *Guide to Building Services for Historic Buildings*. London: CIBSE

Clark, K 2001. *Informed Conservation: understanding historic buildings and their landscapes for conservation*. London: English Heritage

English Heritage 1995. *Easy Access to Historic Properties: our policy*. London: English Heritage (new edition forthcoming)

English Heritage 2000. *Lightning Protection for Churches: a guide to design and installation*. London: English Heritage

Information on English Heritage publications: Customers@english-heritage.org.uk

Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales 1984. *The Parish Church*. London (out of print, new edition being prepared)

Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales 2001. *Directory on the Ecclesiastical Exemption from Listed Building Control*. London: Liturgy Office

Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales 2001. *Guidelines for Appeals*. London: Liturgy Office

Cocke, T 2003. *The Churchyards Handbook* (4 edn). London: Council for the Care of Churches/Church House Publishing

Council for the Care of Churches 1993. *Care of Churches and Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction Measure: Code of Practice*. London: Church House Publishing

Council for the Care of Churches 1996. *Church Extensions and Adaptations* (2 edn). London: Church House Publishing

The Council for the Care of Churches has also issued useful guidance booklets on heating, lighting, sound amplification, wiring, care of stained glass and historic glazing, organs, bells, bell frames and other subjects. Church House Publishing. www.chbookshop.co.uk

Diocese of Chelmsford/Diocesan Advisory Committee 2000. *Installation of Telecommunications Equipment in Churches. Guidelines to Assist Parishes*. Chelmsford: Diocesan Resources Centre

Lake, J, Cox J and Berry, E 2001. *Diversity and Vitality: The Methodist and Nonconformist Chapels of Cornwall*. Cornwall Archaeological Unit (in association with English Heritage and the Methodist Church)

Penton, J 2001. *Widening the Eye of the Needle* (2 edn). London: Council for the

Care of Churches/Church House Publishing (Access/DDA advice including new Code of Practice)

Street, K and Serjeant, I 2000. *Heritage and Mission*. Peterborough: Methodist Publishing House

LOCATIONS OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Front cover: St Stephen Walbrook, London

Figure 1: St Barnabas, Snowhill, Gloucestershire

Figure 2: Ramgarhia Sikh Temple (Gurdwara), Birmingham

Figure 3: St. Michael, Cambridge

Figure 4: St. John's RC Church, Wigan, Lancashire

Figure 5: Methodist Church, Truro, Cornwall

Figure 6: St. Bride, Liverpool

Figures 7 & 8: St. John the Baptist, Elmswell, Suffolk

Figure 9: All Saints', Stock, Essex

Figure 10: St. John, Stratford, London

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Cover image: The Henry Moore altar in Sir Christopher Wren's church of St Stephen Walbrook was installed after fierce controversy. The process of understanding significance and need outlined in this guidance is intended to avoid similar difficulties in future.

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