

# Guidance Note

## Statements of Significance and Statements of Needs

# ChurchCare



16,000 buildings. One resource



**This form should be used for all projects other than very complex ones. For major complex projects an expanded version of this form is likely to be more appropriate. The Council would strongly urge that these documents are prepared at an early stage of the faculty process so as to help inform decisions and identify areas of conflict. A word version of the templates in this document is available on the ChurchCare website at <http://www.churchcare.co.uk/churches/guidance-advice/statements-of-significance-need>**

### **Statement of Significance**

The Faculty Jurisdiction Rules 2013 define a Statement of Significance as “a document which describes the significance of the church or other building in terms of its special architectural and historic interest (including any contribution made by its setting) and any significant features of artistic or archaeological interest that the church or other

building has so as to enable the potential impact of the proposals on its significance, and on any such features, to be understood”.

A Statement of Significance is an important tool to help everyone understand the significance of the church building and its fabric and fittings.

It is a useful resource for anyone with responsibility for your churches fabric and encourages good stewardship of your heritage building.

It should be prepared independently of any Faculty application, and ideally reviewed annually so that any recently obtained historical material or changes, such as an extension or reordering, can be incorporated, and a copy should be given to the Church Architect to include in his Quinquennial Inspection Report.

A Statement of Significance should accompany every faculty application that involves making changes to a listed church. It will help

those in the Faculty system advise you and assess your plans for change.

This guidance includes a template to help you to write your Statement of Significance. It should include a ground plan and map of the local area and at least two photographs, normally one of the exterior, one of the interior. The notes in the boxes will guide you as to the sort of things to include.

In assessing significance you may wish to use the following customary terminology:  
**High** – important at national to international levels  
**Moderate-High** – important at regional or sometimes higher  
**Moderate** – usually of local value but of regional significance for group or other value (e.g. vernacular architecture)  
**Low-Moderate** – of local value  
**Low** – adds little or nothing to the value of a site or detracts from it

### Statement of Needs

The Faculty Jurisdiction Rules

2013 define a Statement of Needs as “a document setting out the justification for the proposals” and stipulates that “If proposals are likely to result in harm to the significance of the church or other building as a building of special architectural or historic interest, the document setting out the justification for the proposals must set out the basis on which it is said that the proposals would result in public benefit that outweighs that harm”.

A Statement of Needs should be a document which serves both the parish and those involved in the faculty process. It should be a tool for the parish, enabling the PCC to focus its vision and agree on what it seeks to achieve. For others, such as the DAC, CBC and English Heritage it serves to provide easily accessible information to help assess the scheme which is being proposed for a faculty.

Statements of Needs are the parish’s opportunity to explain, justify and rationalise the proposals to all interested parties.

Consider that some people will not have the opportunity to visit the church and will need to base opinions on the information you provide in these supporting statements.

Bearing this in mind, you are strongly encouraged to ensure that the Statement is factual, informative, clear and concise.

Try not to be emotive or over-dramatic. The facts of the situation should speak clearly for themselves.

### Basic facts about the project

Statements of Significance and Needs must be accompanied by the Standard Information form 1A which will contain the basic facts about the project.

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## Statement of Significance

**Section 1: Brief history and description of the church building(s), contents, churchyard and setting**

**Section 2: The significance of the church (including its contents and churchyard) in terms of:**

**i) Its special architectural and historical interest**

**ii) Any significant features of artistic or archaeological interest**

Please state if you have taken expert advice to help you define the significance, and from whom.

**Section 3: Assessment of the impact of the proposals on the significance defined in Section 2**

## Statement of Needs

### **Section 1. General information**

This should provide an overview of the parish and the current use of the building.

### **Section 2. What do you need?**

Briefly explain your needs (not your proposals). Append any brief for your architect.

### **Section 3. The proposals**

Set out what you are proposing to do in order to meet the needs set out in section 2.

### **Section 4. Why do you need it and why do you need it now?**

Justify your proposals by explaining why you can't meet your needs without making changes. Also include anything which may have prompted the proposals.

### **Section 5. Justification**

If the proposals are likely to harm the significance outlined in the Statement of significance, explain how the proposals would result in public benefits which outweigh such harm (public benefits include matters such as liturgical freedom, pastoral wellbeing and putting the church to viable uses that are consistent with its role as a place of worship and mission).

## Statement of Significance - Guidance on completion

Use the following guidance and key questions to help you complete the form

### **Section 1: Brief history and description of the church building(s), contents, churchyard and setting**

#### **Church Building(s)**

What is the history of the church; when was a church first established on the site and how has it changed over time; who are the architects, artists and other craftsmen who have been involved; have there been any significant benefactors and has this affected the choice of architect / artist or the incorporation of any monuments in the church? How does work carried out on the church link to international, national, regional or local architectural and artistic movements? What is its plan form, spatial quality, building materials used? how it is lit and heated? What is the theological 'message' communicated by the exterior and interior of the church? Are there any significant events or personalities associated with the church? Are there important memories associated with the church or churchyard?

#### **Contents**

These may include; Altar; Reredos; Pulpit; Lectern; Font; Stained glass; wall paintings; Bells and Bell frame; Monuments; Organ; Communion plate; Registers; Pews and other woodwork; Metalwork; Communion rails; floor finishes. Do the contents relate to any particular historical changes to the church and do they contribute to the significance of those changes? Are any of the artists or craftsmen of international, national, regional or local importance?

It is reasonable to group these if there is a contemporary scheme which is significant as such, for example one could say a complete scheme of 18<sup>th</sup>-century furnishings.

#### **Churchyard**

Is the church or churchyard used by protected species or species with Biodiversity Action Plans? Are there any ancient, very prominent, rare or unusual trees? How good a habitat is the churchyard for fauna and flora?

#### **Setting**

Are there distant or near views which are valued by the congregation / wider community / visitors / experts? How do the trees contribute to the setting? What is known of the landscape design and history of the churchyard, including extensions? Are there archaeological remains? Are adjacent buildings similar, complementary or contrasting in age, style, materials or age? How are the boundary and entrances marked? Are the monuments, war memorials significant?

### **Section 2: The significance of the church (including its contents and churchyard) in terms of:**

**i) Its special architectural and historical interest**

**ii) Any significant features of artistic or archaeological interest**

This should provide an overview of the significance of the church, and the contribution of its setting to that significance. This should be compiled before any specific proposal has been worked up, and can be re-used for each faculty application, although of course it will have to be kept up to date. Refer to the terminology in the introductory section of this guidance document to help you define significance.

Please state if you have taken expert advice to help you define the significance, and from whom.

### **Section 3: Assessment of the impact of the proposals on the significance defined in Section 2**

Section 3 will be prepared in draft form for any pre-application consultations, and finalised to accompany a faculty application when a scheme has been worked up.

This should not be a justification of your scheme, which should be in the Statement of Need. The level of detail provided should be proportionate to the importance of the heritage asset and sufficient to understand the impact of the proposal on the significance of the heritage asset.

Identify the parts of the church and/or churchyard which will be directly or indirectly affected by your proposal. Describe and assess the impact of your proposal on these parts, and on the whole. Impacts could include loss, alteration, obscuring, change of setting and change of use. Characterise impacts as either low, moderate or high.

Explain how you intend, where possible, to mitigate the impact of the proposed works on the significance of the parts affected and the whole.

#### **Sources consulted**

List the sources consulted. These may include:

- 'Buildings of England' series by Pevsner
- Reports by the Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England (RCHME), now part of English Heritage
- The local history society
- The local museum
- Diocesan Record Centre
- County Record Centre
- County Biological Records Centre
- Historic Environment Record (HER), maintained by your local authority.
- Victoria County History (VCH)

Statutory designations and descriptions for churchyards, churches or objects within them can be checked through your local planning authority, English Heritage and Natural England (Nature Conservation significance).

Useful web sites include:

- ChurchCare <http://www.churchcare.co.uk/>
- Shrinking the footprint <http://www.churchcare.co.uk/shrinking-the-footprint>
- Heritage Gateway [www.heritagegateway.org.uk/](http://www.heritagegateway.org.uk/)
- Magic [www.magic.gov.uk](http://www.magic.gov.uk)
- Caring for God's Acre [www.caringforgodsacre.org.uk](http://www.caringforgodsacre.org.uk)

## Statement of Needs – Guidance on completion

Use the following guidance and key questions to help you complete the form

### Section 1. General information

This should provide an overview of the parish and the current use of the building.

This may include:

How many people live in the parish/ village/ town?

What different type of services take place in the church each week/ month and how many people attend each of the different services on average?

How many people are on the electoral roll?

What is the age profile of the congregation? What children's provision is there? On Sundays and midweek? How many children attend these activities?

Is the church normally left open during daylight hours?

What other activities happen in the church alongside prayer and worship?

What is the financial position of the church (e.g. reserves, payment of quota). Are funds available now? Or have funds been applied for or are being applied for? Please state to whom applications have been made and if applications have been successful or refused?

When was the last Quinquennial report? What were the major issues which were highlighted? Are you on top of these issues? Do you have a maintenance plan?

### Section 2. What do you need?

Briefly explain your needs (not your proposals). Append any brief for your architect.

You may find it helpful to divide the needs up into areas such as:

Facilities e.g. we need one accessible toilet and the ability to serve refreshments.

Space e.g. we need a meeting room to accommodate up to 25 people sitting and 40 people standing.

Access e.g. we need to provide a permanent route into the building which is accessible for wheelchairs.

Liturgy e.g. we need to make arrangements to use a nave altar.

Other e.g. we need to install a new heating system

### Section 3. The proposals

Set out what you are proposing to do in order to meet the needs set out in section 2.

### Section 4. Why do you need it and why do you need it now?

Justify your proposals by explaining why you can't meet your needs without making changes. Also include anything which may have prompted the proposals.

How will this proposal help the ministry of the church?

How will it enhance the liturgical space and services?

How will it help small group work and midweek meetings?

How will it help the mission of the church?

What new groups of people will be drawn into the life of the church?

What new activities and events will be able to take place in the church?

How will it help your financial situation?

How is the proposal contributing to the need for environmental sustainability?

Describe any recent changes which have taken place which have led to the need arising, for example:

In the church congregation: rise in numbers attending, growth in particular age group such as children, introduction of new services and activities, arrival of new Vicar or church plant.

In the local area: new housing development, increase/decrease in population, major regeneration scheme, major change in infrastructure such as transport links, employment opportunities

In the church building: deterioration of fabric, vandalism or other damage, subsidence, etc.

In the financial situation: a large bequest may have been made, there may be a pressing need to generate more money through the use of the building due to rising costs of ministry and mission.

### **Section 5. Justification**

If the proposals are likely to harm the significance outlined in the Statement of significance, explain how the proposals would result in public benefits which outweigh such harm (public benefits include matters such as liturgical freedom, pastoral wellbeing and putting the church to viable uses that are consistent with its role as a place of worship and mission).

What other options to meet the need were considered?

These may include: larger or smaller schemes, different designs, locating the scheme/proposal in a different part of the church building, not making a change at all, providing a management solution rather than a change in the fabric, using a different building in the wider community e.g. school, community hall, another church. What were the pros and cons of each option?