



## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The production of a Statement of Significance and, where relevant, an associated Statement of Need (see separate Advice Note), is a requirement of the Faculty Jurisdiction Measure and this advice note is intended to help parishes produce a useful and concise document, to be submitted as part of their faculty application.

The Faculty Jurisdiction Rules 2000 define a Statement of Significance as “a document which summarises the historical development of the church and identifies the important features that make major contributions to the character of the church”.

The purpose of the Statement of Significance is to help you, the parish, explore the strengths and potential that your church holds for worship and mission, and to help those in the Faculty system advise you and assess your plans for change. A Statement of Significance should be prepared by every parish, and should accompany any faculty application for significant changes to their church building.

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 and should be divided into two sections: the church in its environment and the significance of the area of the building affected by the proposal.

### **1. The church in its urban/rural environment**

This section should provide an overview of the significance of the church, and the contribution of its setting to that significance. It can be re-used for each faculty application, which means that you do not have to start from scratch each time, although of course it will have to be amended in the light of significant changes made to the building. In drawing up this section, the PCC should consider the following points:

- (a) How the setting of the church contributes to its landscape/townscape value and to its significance: including any archaeological remains, significant monuments or war memorials and the landscape history of the churchyard.
- (b) The significance of the churchyard: whether it is used by protected species; the variety of flora and fauna; and the presence of ancient, prominent or unusual trees.
- (c) The historic and present use of the church and churchyard, both by the congregation and the wider community, and its contribution to its significance: this could include significant events or personalities associated with the church; important memories associated with the churchyard or church; and the way in which the community has changed over time.

- (d) The church building: including the architects and craftsmen involved; any significant benefactors and their effect on the building through the incorporation of monuments; and links with wider architectural and artistic movements. A plan of the building should be included, together with details of building materials and how it is lit and heated. Details should also be provided of significant areas or phases of the church, for example remnants of an earlier Saxon or Norman building.
- (e) A description of the contents and their significance: including the altar, pulpit, lectern, font, stained glass, wall paintings, bells and bell frame, monuments, organ, communion plate; woodwork and metalwork etc. Where known the description should give details of the artists or craftsmen, for example whether they are of international, national, regional or local importance.
- (f) The strengths of the existing building for worship and mission: the potential for new uses with little or no change to the fabric.

## 2. Part II: The significance of the area affected by the proposal

This section should provide a more detailed description of the significance of the particular part of the church and/or its curtilage affected by the scheme, and the potential impact of the proposed works.

The level of detail provided will be dictated by the importance of the area involved and should be sufficient for the DAC and other interested parties to understand the impact of the proposal on its significance. **This section should not be a justification of your scheme.** That will be covered by the Statement of Need (see separate Advice Note) which should also accompany the application. In drawing up this section, the PCC should consider the following points:

- (a) The parts of the church or churchyard which will be directly or indirectly affected by the proposal. This may require a more detailed description than in Part 1.
- (b) The significance of the areas in question.
- (c) The impact of the intended works on the areas in question and also on the whole: this could include alteration, obscuring existing features, change of setting and change of use.
- (d) How far it will be possible to mitigate the impact of the proposed work on the significance of the area: this could include the degree of reversibility, the environmental impact etc.

In the majority of cases, the PCC should be able to produce the Statement in collaboration with the inspecting architect and the DAC; in the case of large and complex churches the PCC may

wish to consider acquiring professional help to produce a Conservation Management Plan. Further guidance on this can be found on the Church Care website:  
<http://www.churchcare.co.uk/legal.php>.

It may be that some of the points listed above are not relevant to your application and can be excluded. However, it is important to bear in mind that an application will be considered by a number of different bodies (the DAC, amenity societies etc.) who will not necessarily have detailed knowledge of your building. A clear description of the building and its surrounding area, together with the impact of the proposed works, will therefore be of great assistance in providing sufficient information for the relevant bodies to reach an informed decision on your proposals.

The DAC encourages parishes to produce Section 1 of the Statement of Significance as soon as possible, even if they do not currently have any proposals in mind. In addition to faculty applications it will provide valuable information for use in other events; for example in the case of a fire or flooding, where there may be a limited amount of time in which important items can be removed from the building. A clear description of the significance of each item will ensure that decisions can be made swiftly and potentially a greater number of items could be saved.

#### **Useful websites for further information on your building and surroundings**

<http://www.eastsussex.gov.uk/environment/archaeology/her.htm>

[www.imagesofengland.org.uk](http://www.imagesofengland.org.uk)

<http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/professional/archives-and-collections/nmr/>

<http://www.nadfas.org.uk/>