
Statements of Significance and Needs

INTRODUCTION

The Faculty Jurisdiction Rules 2013 (Rule 3.3) sets out the following requirements:

(1) Where proposals involve making changes to a listed church or other listed building intending applicants must provide the Diocesan Advisory Committee with —

(a) a document which describes —

(i) 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

(ii) 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**”); and

(b) a document setting out the justification for the proposals (commonly known as a “**statement of needs**”).

(2) 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.

The Statements of Significance and of Needs are two separate but complementary documents, which will:

i) help the parish assess in their own words

- what makes their church especially significant to people, whether it is a tranquil rural setting, fine architecture or monuments, a notable organ or local historical associations
- the effects – positive or negative – of the proposal on these and other features of the church
- the balance of advantage and disadvantage in the proposal

(the effects and balance of advantage and disadvantage are together referred to in paragraph (2) above as “public benefit” and “harm”).

ii) enable those charged with considering the application, including the DAC, Chancellor, and where appropriate the secular authorities and interest groups, to reach their decisions quickly and fairly, equipped with the basic facts, secure in the knowledge that the parish has a clear idea of what it wants to achieve and is aware of the potential consequences.

Statements of Significance and of Need are the parish’s opportunity to explain and justify their proposals to all interested parties. In the secular planning system this is a standard requirement for obtaining listed building consent. 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 Statements are factual, informative, clear and concise. Try not to be emotive or over-dramatic. The facts of the situation should speak clearly for themselves and be based on evidence wherever possible.

STATEMENTS OF SIGNIFICANCE

A Statement of Significance can be defined 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”. It is more than simply a descriptive history of the building; it should show why it is important to all who are interested in it.

Format: The Statement of Significance should be in text rather than tabular form, and written in a readable style. It should be at least one side of A4 in length but normally not longer than three, and include a ground plan and at least two photographs, normally one of the exterior, one of the interior. More photographs, maps, plans and other important information can be included if necessary as appendices.

The Statement of Significance should consist of two parts:

Part I: A general account and overview of the importance of the church, to those who use it and the wider community. This background information could support all faculty applications for significant changes. It should be reviewed with each Quinquennial Inspection Report. A useful approach organises it in sections:

- the setting of the church and the churchyard
- the plan elements (tower, nave etc) and exterior appearance
- the interior (views, levels, arcades, uses of plan elements, etc)
- notable fittings and contents (font, monuments, woodwork etc)

The Statement should include: the listing (Grade 1, Grade 2*, Grade 2 or unlisted), whether it is in a Conservation Area and whether the churchyard has been designated as a County Wildlife Site. The listing description could be included as an appendix, but this is not essential. Much of this information will also be available in the Standard Information Form for the church building which is now required to be submitted with each faculty application.

Part II: The significance of the particular area affected by the proposal including the potential impact of the works. This part will be written specifically for each individual proposal and should be more detailed. Do not include any justification for your proposals, because that properly belongs in the separate Statement of Needs.

How to start: When describing your church, start from a distance and appreciate it in its environment. The church might dominate the village or town, or be isolated or tucked away down a path. The churchyard might be full of monuments and a home to wildlife, or a cramped space. Move in and describe the external appearance and plan of the church, starting at the west end and working systematically round. Then move inside, and again describe the church from the west end to the east. It is not necessary to list every item; if the fittings are all of one date and modest, this is all you need to say.

Those particular areas or features directly affected by the proposal should be described in more detail. Then consider the changes the proposal would make. Think about the physical impact on the building, churchyard or contents; for example insertions into the fabric, churchyard trenches or removal of pews. Think also about visual and aesthetic changes, whether views would be affected and how new work will look beside the old. Take into account how use of the church by the congregation and the wider community might be affected.

Useful sources and advice: Many parishes may feel that they do not have the expertise to produce such a document. There is however much help available, from:

- the DAC, who may be able to help or to suggest someone who can,
- your architect,
- the local authority (perhaps the Conservation Officer) or
- the available literature, often quite extensive, including the guidance of the Church Buildings Council available at: <http://www.churchcare.co.uk/churches/guidance-advice/statements-of-significance-need>

Useful sources include:

- The “Buildings of England” series, often referred to as “Pevsner”.
- The Victoria County History - www.victoriacountyhistory.ac.uk
- Hertfordshire churches may have been described by the Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England (RCHME).
- The local library, museum and Diocesan and County Record Centres are always worth a visit, and the Church Buildings Council’s (CBC) library and case files may also be useful.
- If your church is listed, there will be a listing description, available by e-mail from the DAC office.
- “Bedfordshire Churches in the Nineteenth Century” by Chris Pickford. (Bedfordshire Historical Records Society series)
- Some churchyards, or parts or objects within them, may have statutory designations; English Heritage, Natural England and the county council’s Biological Record Centre or the county Wildlife Trust are the organisations concerned here.
- For archaeological information, contact the Diocesan Archaeological Adviser through the DAC.
- The local authority Sites and Monuments Record (SMR) or Historic Environment Record (HER), Contact details are at <http://www.heritagegateway.org.uk/Gateway/CHR>
- The churchyard and church may be of ecological significance, as a home to flora and fauna (not just bats and flowers). The Diocesan Environmental Adviser, contactable via the DAC office, may be able to help you with this. Another source is “Caring for Gods Acre” - www.caringforgodsacre.co.uk

Such sources should only be used as a guide, as they are sometimes out of date or contain errors. Look at the church and its surroundings with your own eyes, and express yourselves in your own words.

Optional terminology for assessing levels of significance:

- **Outstanding** – one of England’s best; usually Grade 1 or 2*.
- **Special** – a high quality historic asset; usually Grade 2
- **Local** – mainly valued as a feature of the local scene; usually unlisted

Optional terminology for assessing the impacts of proposals on the character and appearance of the building:

- **Positive** – enhances character and appearance
- **Neutral** – neither enhances nor detracts
- **Negative / Intrusive** – detracts

Avoid over-valuing something just because you like it, or under-valuing it because you feel it might be an obstacle to your proposal.

Optional outline check list for compiling Statements of Significance:

Administrative: Diocese, County, Village/town, Benefice, Parish, Dedication, Listing Grade; Conservation Area? Y/N

Location and Setting: principal views; churchyard (monuments, flora and fauna etc), lych gate

Exterior and plan: Architect (if known), plan, dimensions, materials

Interior and fittings: Stained glass, Altar, Reredos, Pulpit, Lectern, Font, Communion rails, Wall paintings, Graffiti, Ledger stones, Screens and other woodwork, Pews, Roof structure, Floor tiles, Monuments, Hatchments, Charity and other boards, War memorials, Bells and bellframe, Organ, Communion plate (where kept?); Registers (where kept?) [*Include artists where known*]

Other: associated historic events or people; archaeological significance of building(s) and site; historic and present use by the congregation and the wider community

STATEMENTS OF NEEDS

The Rules define a Statement of Needs as " a document setting out the justification for the proposals ". They also require 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 who are involved in the faculty process. It should be a tool for the parish, enabling the PCC (which should endorse and support the document) to focus its vision and agree on what it seeks to achieve. For others, such as the DAC, the Church Buildings Council, English Heritage and the Local Planning Authority, it serves to provide easily accessible information to help assess the scheme which is being proposed for a faculty.

The following note sets out a way of presenting a Statement of Needs in order to cover all the relevant information. You may need to adapt this to suit the nature of your parish and its particular needs.

Section A. General Information

Your Statement of Need should provide information about the parish, congregation and community and help interested parties understand what activities are already going on within the building (and on other related sites, such as the church hall, if appropriate). It is useful to have this information available for any proposals, but you may wish to tailor the level of detail according to the scale of the parish's needs and of the impact of meeting these.

The following questions are a guide to the sort of information that the first section of the Statement could include.

- How many people live in the parish / village / town?
- How many people are there on the electoral roll?
- How many people attend services on average?

- What services do you regularly hold throughout the week / month? e.g. 8am Communion average of 10 attendees. Monthly family service average of 60 adults and 20 children.
- What is the general make up of the congregation e.g. predominantly elderly / wide variety / growing numbers of pre-school children?
- If there is a Sunday school or crèche give details of what age-groups meet together and what the average attendance is.
- Is the church normally left open during daylight hours?
- What other community facilities are available in the local area?
- Does the parish have a church hall or other buildings? Give details of size, facilities, distance from church and state of repair.
- When was the last Quinquennial Inspection Report? Are there any major outstanding issues that were highlighted in the QIR?
- Explain briefly how the project will be financed. i.e. grants, existing funds, bequest, fundraising.
- Have there been changes in the parish or community that are relevant to how the needs of the parish have changed or which have prompted the proposals now, e.g. a new vicar, introduction of music group, new housing development in the village bringing new families, worsening situation with church hall, a bequest to spend?

Section B. The needs

The next stage in the Statement is to explain the needs of the parish now and in the longer term. You may find it helpful to describe needs under headings such as:

- *Facilities*
- *Space*
- *Access*
- *Liturgy*
- *Other,*

explaining why they are currently not being satisfied, Keep it simple with a few bullet points as headlines. For example you could say:

Facilities. We need one accessible toilet and the ability to serve refreshments. *There is no toilet in the building and if people need to use one they have to use the pub in the village (10 minutes walk). An existing Parent & Baby group would like to meet in the church but cannot because there is no toilet.*

Space. We need a meeting room to accommodate up to 25 people sitting and 40 standing. *The only separate space in the church at the moment is the vestry, which is used for its original purpose. PCC meetings are held at the Vicarage.*

Access. We need to provide a permanent route into the building which is accessible for wheelchairs. *There are two steps down from the porch to the church. We have temporary ramps for occasions when wheelchair users attend services. The north door is not frequently used but has level access. The path to the north door is uneven and not suitable for wheelchairs.*

Liturgy. We need to make arrangements to use a nave altar. *The pews in the nave are too far forward to position a nave altar satisfactorily. For family services we use a small table and position it on the chancel step.*

If you have prepared a brief for your architect explaining what you want to achieve then you could include this for reference.

Be clear about whether uses and activities are aspirational or more definite – are there particular existing groups that want to make use of the church, but cannot due to the lack of heating or other facilities? Explain why you consider meeting the need(s) outlined is necessary now and in the immediate future in order to assist the church in its worship and mission.

Section C. The proposal

The next stage is to explain what it is that you are proposing in order to meet the needs that you set out in section B.

You need to explain what other options you have considered and why they were dismissed, especially if they involve impacts on elements included in the Statement of Significance. Be honest and don't exaggerate. If there was a viable alternative but the PCC preferred this proposal then explain why. Others will ask this question.

If the project is at an early stage then you can use simple amateur sketches or marked photos to illustrate ideas. Wherever possible include a complete floor plan of the church as this greatly assists people in visualising the layout of the building.

If the project is large and you need multiple rooms / toilets then explain how you envisage the space being used. Explain which rooms will need to be used simultaneously. If it helps, include a chart or timetable of projected weekly use to illustrate what you are expecting.

If the project has a particular element of liturgical reordering it could be helpful to explain your expectations and what you want the result to achieve. The word 'flexible' is often used but does not necessarily demonstrate what you are hoping for. Try and be more specific if you can. Use examples and explain how you would use a flexible space to meet the needs you set out in Section B.

Section D. Support and practicalities

Your project may provide a facility for wider users than the church congregation. If so, explain here what research you have undertaken into possible uses and explain why you believe the project to be viable. It may be useful with larger projects to prepare and include a Business Plan. This is also an opportunity to show evidence of support from potential users.

Will the project affect the maintenance and upkeep of the church building? If it increases costs, is it likely to generate income that can meet these? If it will not generate income, how will what is needed be found? Include this information here.

Section E. Impacts and Significance

The final stage is to explain how the proposals relate to the Statement of Significance and to justify the alterations that are to be proposed in the context of your particular building.

If you are proposing something that will impact on, change the setting of, or move something that has been highlighted as important in the Statement of Significance, this is the opportunity to explain why you consider this is necessary. Refer back to other options that you considered and explain how you weighed up the benefits against the significance of the object/item in question.

Additional information and advice is available from the DAC team:

Emma Critchley, Pastoral and Advisory Secretary, ecritchley@stalbans.anglican.org
Ann Jansz, Pastoral and Advisory Officer (P/T) ajansz@stalbans.anglican.org
Debbie Cochrane, Team Secretary dcochrane@stalbans.anglican.org

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Adapted from a Guidance Note issued by The Church Buildings Council
Revised January 2014

Statement of Significance Example

St David, Loxton (Grade I)

Part I: The church in its rural environment

Loxton lies in a low-lying rural part of North Bassetshire, between Weare, Blowell and Cryton. The hamlet of Loxton consists of a group of attractive houses and farms clustered around the church at a minor crossroads. Several of the Loxton farmhouses are at least 17th-century in origin, while the drainage and enclosure of the surrounding fields for agriculture have been shown to date back to the 10th century. Loxton and its church are mentioned in Domesday Book as part of the manor of Blowell, which had belonged to King Harold before the Conquest. The hamlet is in a Conservation Area.

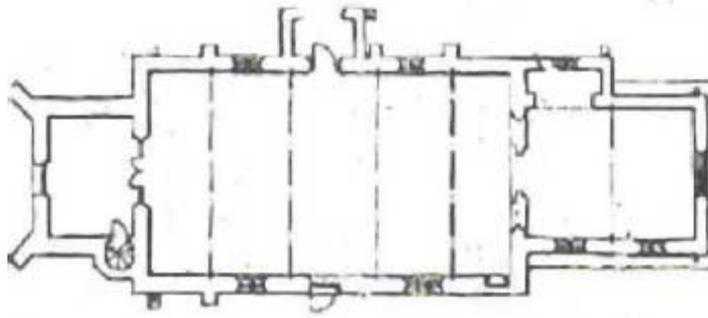
The medieval parish church is of the highest quality and exceptional significance in terms of the architecture, the archaeology of both the building and the site and of its wealth of important furnishings and fittings. It stands roughly centrally on a slight mound within an immaculately kept grassed churchyard with many monuments and headstones of interest dating from the late 17th century, enclosed by a medieval bank and ditch, with hedgerows and sedges deliberately managed to provide a wildlife habitat and of considerable ecological significance.

The church is small (nave 14m x 6.6m), and consists of a 3-bay nave and 2-bay chancel, a west tower, north porch and north-east organ chamber. The walls are of coursed rubble with rough-cast rendering with freestone quoins and dressings. The oak roofs are covered in Cornish slate, with lead over the pyramidal tower roof. The building is dominated visually by the (now leaning!) Perpendicular tower. The architectural details now visible attest a programme of work in the late 14th and early 15th century. The church was restored during the reign of Mary I, in 1557, when the north porch was added, and the present roof installed. Victorian restoration appears to have been limited to fabric repairs, limited and sensitive rebuilding of the chancel and the addition of the small organ chamber.



The church seen from the south (left) and the interior looking east (right)

Much of the furniture including the benches, communion rails and pulpit is of the late 16th and 17th century, while the box pews, bell-frame and tower roof are of the 18th century.



Plan of the church adapted from the QIR (Scale 1:200) North↑

One large bell of the 15th century, hung from an iron girder and no longer rung. Norman (12th-century?) tub font with remnants of moulding around the rim. The font stands on an earlier, possibly Saxon tub font, which has been inverted and plastered over. It has a 17th-century strapwork oak cover. There are ledger stones commemorating the Hippey family set into the stone floor, late 17th-century in date and of high quality and interest. A very fine oak chest stands in the south-east corner on top of one of these, with beautifully carved panels, probably of the early 17th century. Royal Arms of George II, dated 1751. The chancel furniture is Victorian. Marble World War I memorial with soldiers carved in relief. The historic communion plate is kept in a bank safe.

This tiny church is kept in good condition, and there are no serious structural defects. There are no modern facilities within the church and none such are available nearby, as the hamlet has no other public buildings.

Part II: The significance of the area affected by the proposal

The proposal is to install a kitchenette and biotoilet suitable for disabled access into the ground floor space of the tower, which is at the moment empty and unused. This would clearly involve some penetration of the masonry of the 15th-century tower to bring the water in and out, and a shallow pipe and drain run through the churchyard to the road. This would require an archaeological evaluation and development of a mitigation strategy to reduce the impact to the fabric and underground archaeological remains, including burials. The units themselves would be free-standing and removable. There are already double oak doors in the tower arch which enable access to the planned facilities and ensure privacy (see appended photographs and plans).

Bibliography: Pevsner, N (1959) *The Buildings of England: Barsetshire*.
Tippoff, B (1998) *Roman and Medieval Settlement in North Barsetshire: and (1996) Survey and excavation at Blowell and Loxton, 1996*. In: *Barsetshire Archaeology II*.
Listing description.
VCH for Barsetshire, p 245-247

A further example of a Statement of Significance is available on the diocesan web site:
www.stalbans.anglican.org