

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 their 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 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