

DIOCESE OF ROCHESTER
Employing an architect/surveyor? Read this first!

For churches in the Church of England, the only legal requirement is that the architect or chartered building surveyor who is to undertake the quinquennial inspection must have been approved by the Diocesan Advisory Committee (DAC). The reason for this is to ensure that the inspection is carried out by a person who has the necessary and appropriate expertise in respect of (a) churches and (b) listed and ancient buildings (if appropriate).

When it comes to implementing the recommended repairs, or indeed other work in a church, the parish has a free choice. This is the time when problems can arise. For a variety of reasons, parishes sometimes choose those without the necessary or appropriate experience. Where PCCs have nominated their own choice of quinquennial inspector, the DAC will expect that person to be consulted on all matters affecting the fabric or structure. If your church is listed and it qualifies for English Heritage grant funding or lottery funding, your chosen professional adviser will need to be 'accredited' by English Heritage.

It is vitally important to the success of your project that you engage the right person for the job. Some architects/surveyors specialise in conservation repair work. Some, not necessarily the same, may have a flair for designing new buildings attached to old churches, and yet others may have a greater understanding of liturgical matters and internal re-ordering.

The PCC is advised to scrutinise possible candidates before making its choice, and set out below are a number of points the PCC may wish to include in any selection process.

Seek advice from the DAC., RIBA., RICS., asking for names of those who have a proven track record in dealing with a similar type of building (age, materials and grade) and the work to be undertaken (repairs, re-ordering, new building).

1. Ask about qualifications, year of RIBA/RICS registration, details of continued professional development training undertaken, and if they are registered with English Heritage as 'accredited'. (Important if hoping for EH or lottery funding for repairs to a listed building.)
2. Ask about experience of church work, listed buildings, historic fabric, negotiating with local authorities, English Heritage and National Amenity Societies.
3. What era is of special interest to them; are they members of the following?

The Ecclesiastical Architects and Surveyors Association
The Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings
The Ancient Monuments Society
The Georgian Group
The Victorian Society
The Twentieth Century Society
Any other similar body?
5. What do they know about "Ecclesiastical Exemption"?
6. Have they read The Council for the Care of Churches Booklet "A Guide to Church Inspection and Repair"?
7. Are they familiar with The Care of Churches and Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction Measure 1991 and the Faculty Jurisdiction Rules 1992 (revised 2000)?
8. Are they familiar with the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995?