



## Why do I need an Architect?

When we are trying to make best use of the modest resources available to care for our places of worship it can be tempting for volunteers to wonder whether they can deal with that urgent repair project or tackle the redecorating without involving their professional adviser. Here are a few of the many reasons why churchwardens should always make sure that they involve their professional advisers in the ongoing care of their buildings:

**Knowledge:** As a result of a long training process architects and building surveyors have acquired the necessary expertise to specify, coordinate and manage your repair project effectively. Some architects and building surveyors are also accredited in building conservation – you may need to employ an accredited professional adviser if you are hoping to secure some types of grant aid for your repair project.

**Experience:** Your professional adviser will have accumulated a considerable wealth of experience as they deal with a variety of problems in a variety of buildings. For example they may have experience of the latest thinking on the best way to protect lead roofs from theft or alternatively the most appropriate choice of materials to replace lead if necessary.

**Creativity:** Sometimes solving a tricky repair problem requires a creative approach to help find the right answer. Building professionals are trained problem solvers and they will use their imagination and skill to devise pragmatic solutions to a variety of challenges.

**Cost effectiveness:** Using your professional adviser may help save you time and money. A carefully specified repair is likely to last longer and may be easier to care for in the longer term, leading to lower maintenance costs. A skilled professional adviser may also be able help you to avoid future problems and give you advice on ways of keeping running costs down.

**Prioritisation:** The five-yearly fabric inspections carried out by architects and building surveyors are a first step in prioritising the repairs needs of your building. Your professional adviser will understand the ‘big picture’ as well as the detailed needs of the building fabric and will help you determine a sensible programme of repairs that takes into account your organisation’s resources, potential sources of grant aid and other issues.

**Consistency:** Building up a long term relationship with your professional adviser enables that person to acquire a great deal of knowledge about the history, materials, construction and maintenance problems specific to your place of worship. When they are asked to tackle the next repair project they are able to draw upon this accumulated knowledge rather than starting from scratch every time. This ensures that there is a consistent approach to the materials, specifications and techniques used in the repairs as well as saving you time and money.

**Communication:** For all building projects it is important that you are able to articulate your proposals clearly. Your professional adviser will help you to communicate effectively with denominational bodies, funding agencies, the local authority, and contractors. Good communications will also ensure that any problems are resolved quickly and straightforwardly.

**Freedom from worry:** Your professional adviser will make sure that your project runs smoothly. They can also offer advice on your responsibilities as a client with regard to health and safety as well as advising on the choice of suitable contractors and monitoring the building works through to completion.

**Administration:** Your professional adviser will guide you through the complex web of legislation, regulations and contractual obligations. In larger building projects the role of your professional adviser will also include coordinating the team of specialist consultants such as engineers, quantity surveyors, builders, subcontractors and conservators.

**Energy efficiency:** Your professional adviser may be able to offer advice on steps that you can take towards achieving an environmentally responsible ('green') building. Well planned repairs and improvements will not only cost less to operate but may help to lessen the building's impact on the planet.

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