

**BUILDING WORKS APPROVAL PROCESS**

The URC Acts of Parliament (in clause 2 of Schedule 2) empower the trustees to permit church buildings and manses to be altered, enlarged, improved, rebuilt, supplemented or demolished upon the authority of a resolution of the Church Meeting. If the work does not substantially alter the character, appearance or value of the premises, no Synod approval is required. Otherwise it is.

**Policy**

1. Provided the building is not in a Conservation Area and is not Listed, the local church needs no external approval for repairs or maintenance.
2. If the building is in a Conservation Area or is Listed, the local church needs no other approval for repairs or maintenance provided the work in no way changes the appearance or construction materials of the building, either internally or externally.
3. If the proposed work is not exempted from approval under Policies 1 or 2, the local church shall seek approval for the work, having first obtained the consent of the Church Meeting.

**Procedure**

1. Under Policy 3, if the building is Listed or is in a Conservation Area special procedures must be followed (> 026). In all other cases, application for approval must be made on the Building Works Application Form which is available from District Secretaries.
2. If financial assistance from the Synod is sought, the relevant sections of the Building Works Application Form should be completed (> 041).

It is Synod policy that "the future of a pastorate will be reviewed by a team comprising both District and Synod representatives before approval is given for major capital expenditure on premises". This means that in addition to the procedure set out above, the congregation needs to respond to the challenges and questions posed by the 'Wessex Navigator'.

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3. If the work:
  - does not change the appearance of a building which is in a Conservation Area or which is Listed and
  - will not cost more than about £5,000 and
  - in the opinion of the trustees will not adversely affect the use of the building

the trustees shall give their approval or reasons for it being withheld within one month of the date of the application and shall notify the District Secretary of their decision.

4. If the work is not covered by Procedure 3, the trustees shall immediately refer the application to the District Council who, if they approve it, will seek the consent of the Synod.
5. If the works are of a minor nature and the synod does not require the trustees to enter any building contract (> 027), it is the responsibility of the local church to take appropriate professional advice. It will often be a requirement of grant-making bodies that suitably qualified consultants are appointed to oversee the work towards which they are providing financial assistance.
6. The Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 1994 (> 221) apply to the majority of works that a church is likely to undertake on either the church buildings or the manse. Failure to comply with these Regulations could attract severe penalties for members of the local church.