

There may come a time when consideration is being given to the deconstruction, demolition or partial demolition of any building and the following notes may be useful.

Demolition is the tearing down of buildings and other man-made structures. Demolition contrasts with deconstruction, which involves taking a building apart while carefully preserving valuable elements for reuse, repurposing, recycling and waste management purposes. It should be noted that any demolition of a Methodist building should first start with an appraisal of any elements such as monuments, glass, woodwork or items of heritage that should be carefully removed and stored for reuse, if possible.

Deconstruction is commonly separated into two categories; structural and non-structural. Non-structural deconstruction, also known as “soft-stripping”, consists of reclaiming non-structural components, appliances, doors, windows, and finish materials. The reuse of these types of materials is commonplace and considered to be a mature market. Structural deconstruction involves dismantling the structural components of a building. Traditionally this had only been performed to reclaim expensive or rare materials such as used brick, dimension (natural) rock or stone, and extinct woods.

In the UK it is usual for companies involved in this type of work to be called ‘Demolition Companies’ and so we will use that term, although we acknowledge that deconstruction is probably more accurate and in keeping with the report and study guide ‘Hope in God’s Future’, with proper planning, careful handling and a green approach to the removal of materials it is possible to achieve a landfill diversion rate of above 90%.

Important considerations around demolition

There are two types of demolition – complete or partial removal. Complete demolition involves the removal of all traces of the building above ground. This process is common and easily achieved by a competent demolition company. Partial demolition is trickier as support will be required for the remaining structure, which may include window strutting, floor props and shoring. It may also involve a lot of additional planning and effort as powered equipment may be unsuitable.

You must inform your local authority (England and Wales) in writing at least six weeks in advance of your intention to demolish (the building control department usually deals with demolitions). In Scotland, you must have a demolition warrant prior to starting. Utilities providers and adjacent or adjoining building owners must also be informed in advance, especially if party walls will be affected. Some buildings do not require notification such as:

- Buildings under 1750 cubic feet / 50 cubic metres
- Temporary buildings, standing for no more than 28 days
- Attached greenhouses, prefabricated garages, conservatories or sheds
- Detached agricultural buildings

However, prior to demolition you should check with your local authority to ensure compliance with any local by-laws. This is particularly pertinent for properties in the Scotland District, which require a warrant, and those in the Island districts, where you must consult your local authority as regulations differ.

Any work on a listed building or in a conservation area should be notified to the Conservation Officer (conservation@methodistchurch.org.uk) as soon as possible.

Pre-demolition requirements

The local authority will specify pre-demolition requirements, which may include shoring, protection of adjacent buildings against damage, collapse or water damage, debris-disposal and safety measures.

Detailed survey

As a managing trustee, you are expected to seek professional advice for all medium to large-scale projects. You should therefore commission a report from a structural engineer to assess the method of demolition and carry out a detailed survey that should include the impact of removing parts of the structure and the effect of demolition on neighbouring properties.

The Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015

Construction (Design and Management) Regulations (CDM) apply. This results in Health and Safety duties being transferred to the designer, contractor, and site workers. More information is available on the HSE website (www.hse.gov.uk/construction/safetytopics/demolition.htm).

Experienced contractors

Use an experienced contractor as demolition is skilled and potentially dangerous work.

Asbestos

Be aware of asbestos, you should commission a pre-demolition asbestos survey even if you have had a negative asbestos survey previously, then, if required, employ a specialist contractor to remove any asbestos materials from site before demolition starts, or ensure your demolition contractor has such expertise upon which they can call.

Salvage materials

As noted above, always think about salvaging materials and components such as bricks, tiles, slates and timber.

Consent

If you are looking to demolish a Methodist property, you will need to create a project on the Property Consent website (<https://online.methodist.org.uk>) to apply for consent.

Further guidance is given within the Property Consents Help and Guidance pages:

<https://propertyconsent.methodist.org.uk/guide/123>