

The Connexional Team – Support Services in Manchester

Statements of Significance and Need

Introduction:

These statements are an essential element of the documentation set out in **Submission of Projects for a Listed Building or a Building in a Conservation Area** which must be read in conjunction with this Guidance Note. Managing Trustees intending to submit an application for significant changes to a listed chapel should prepare a Statement of Significance and a Statement of Need to accompany the application. These should be two distinct documents, one balancing the other. The purpose of this is twofold:

- 1 The primary purpose is to help the church to be clear about the wider significance of their listed building, to delineate the needs behind the application and to explore the strengths and potential the building holds for worship and mission.
- 2 To help those charged with considering the application, the Listed Buildings Advisory Committee, secular authorities and interest groups, to form their opinions quickly and fairly, equipped with the basic facts, secure in the knowledge that the church has a clear idea of its chosen direction and the consequences of this.

It is important to identify the author of the statements and whether the statements have been endorsed by, say, the Church Council or its Property Committee or equivalent

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

A Statement of Significance is a document which summarises the historical development of the building and identifies the important features that make major contributions to its character. The following notes are intended to help churches to achieve this goal.

Format: The Statement of Significance should be written in a readable style. It should include a floor plan and at least two photographs. Additional photographs and drawings will, in any case, be required to accompany the formal submission. In assessing the significance it will be helpful to use the following terminology:

- **High** – important at national to international level
- **Moderate-High** – important at regional level
- **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 the site or detracts from it

The Statement of Significance should be in two parts:

Part 1: The chapel in its urban/rural environment - should seek to provide an overview of the significance of the building, which could be re-used to support each application for significant changes. This should be included in the quinquennial inspection report, and regularly reviewed. Any historic or heritage importance should be noted - such as links with the Wesleys or other leading local or national individuals in Methodism, equally other significance such as for the historic branches of Methodism. How are such heritage aspects used within the mission of the church?

Part 2: The significance of the area affected by the proposal - focuses on the particular part of the building, curtilage or archaeology affected by the proposed scheme and the potential impact of the

proposed works. This part will be written specifically for each separate proposal. It is not the justification for the scheme; this is contained within the Statement of Need.

How to start: When describing your building, start from a long way off and appreciate it in its setting. The chapel might be prominent in the village or town, or be isolated or tucked away down a path. Describe the building, starting at the entrance and working systematically round. A check-list is provided of the things to look out for. This does not have to be filled in and submitted, but is for your own use only if you find it helpful. Then move inside, and again describe the building, going through the check list. When you come to write the Statement of Significance, it is not necessary to list every item. If the fittings are all of one date and modest, this is all you need to say.

Such things as the font, pulpit, stained glass or seating might be significant; these can be described in more detail, as will those areas or features directly affected by the proposal, described in Part 2 of the Statement of Significance. This second part needs to focus on the specific parts of the building affected by the proposal. Having identified and described them set out the **significance** of these parts: **low, moderate or high**. Next, describe and assess the impact of the proposal on these parts, and on the whole. Characterise impacts as either **low, moderate or high**. Finally, explain how you intend, where possible, to mitigate the impact of the proposed works on the significance of the parts affected and the whole.

Useful sources: Many churches may feel that they do not have the expertise to produce such a document. There is however much help available, either from the Connexional Conservation Officer who may be able to help or to suggest someone who can. Your quinquennial inspector may also be of help. Check the available literature, which is often far more extensive than one might think. It would be helpful if the author of the supporting statements is identified.

Useful sources include "Nonconformist Chapels and Meeting-houses" by Christopher Stell (four volumes covering England), "Welsh Chapels" by Anthony Jones and the "Buildings of England (and of Wales)" series, often referred to as "Pevsner's". There will also be a Listing description which, if not in the building logbook (it should be!), can be obtained from the Connexional Conservation Officer. These may also be available through the English Heritage and Cadw websites. The local library, museum and County Record Centres may be worth a visit. Such sources should only be used as a guide, as they are often out of date or contain errors. You should also refer to the local Historic Environment Records (HERs); these are at various levels within local government. In England, contact details for HERs can be found on the Heritage Gateway: www.heritagegateway.org.uk. Look at the chapel and its surroundings with your own eyes, and express yourselves in your own words.

STATEMENT OF NEED

A Statement of Need is a document which sets out the reasons why it is considered that the needs of the church cannot be met without making changes to the building and the reason why the changes are regarded as necessary to assist the church in its worship and mission. It is your opportunity to explain, justify and rationalise the proposals to all interested parties, having regard to the Statement of Significance. It needs to be factual, informative, clear and concise. The following headings offer suggestions as to what should be included but feel free to adapt as necessary.

General Information

- How many people live in the area you serve?
- What is the type and frequency of services?
- What is the age profile of the congregation?
- What other activities take place within the building(s)?
- When was the last quinquennial report?

What do you need?

- Better facilities
- More space
- Improved access

- Changes for worship
- Other e.g. heating)

Why do you need it?

- How will the proposal help with the ministry of the church?
- How will it help the mission of the church?
- How will it help your financial situation?

Why do you need it now?

Describe any recent changes which have taken place which have led to the need arising, for example:
An increase/decrease in the congregation or a particular age group within the congregation

- Changes in the local area: in population, employment etc
- Changes to the building such as damage or deterioration
- Changes in the church's financial situation

What is the evidence for the need?

Please explain who has been consulted, such as:

- Church members
- Wider community
- Circuit/District
- Existing users of the building
- Potential user groups
- Voluntary and statutory organisations

How is the proposal contributing to the need for environmental sustainability?

- How is the proposal reducing the carbon footprint?
- How do all elements of the proposal deal with sustainability?
- How can your proposals influence the way people use the building so that environmental impacts are reduced?
- Is the proposal part of an overall long-term environmental strategy?

What other options to meet the need were considered?

- Larger or smaller schemes
- Different designs
- Using a different part of the building(s)
- Making no change at all
- Providing a management solution rather than a change in the fabric
- Using a different building altogether

What were the pros and cons of the different options?

Checklist for compiling Statements of Significance			
Village/town: County:	Name of chapel:	Circuit:	Listing grade Conservation Area? Y/N
Location and setting:			
Historic and present use by the congregation and the wider community:			
Building history (include architects, artists etc):			
Significant events or personalities associated with the building:			
Ground Plan:			
General Dimensions:			
Building Materials:			
General Description:			
Burial Ground (monuments, flora and fauna etc):			
Walls, railings, gates			
Archaeological significance:			
Pulpit:			
Lectern:			
Font:			
Stained Glass:			
Seating:			
Wall Paintings:			
Monuments (internal, external):			
Organ:			
Registers (where kept?):			
Other woodwork:			
Other metalwork:			
Communion Table			
Communion Rails:			
War Memorials:			
Miscellaneous:			

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