



THE CHURCHES CONSERVATION TRUST

GUIDANCE NOTES ON REMOVING A FIXTURE, FITTING OR FURNISHING

1. The Trust's statutory objective is defined as 'preservation, in the interests of the nation and the Church of England, of churches and parts of churches of historic and archaeological interest or architectural quality.....together with their contents so vested'. This means that the contents of our churches are afforded the same protection as the building fabric – preserving them is our statutory duty.
2. The Trust's policy is to conserve as found, i.e. maintain the building and its fittings as it was on vesting, unless there is good reason to do otherwise. Such reasons might be replacing a long lost roof over ruined walls to reduce the rate of decay to those walls and thus future repair costs, or install new toilets and services where this would greatly increase use of the church by the local community. With this in mind, it is only with very good reason that the Trust will allow removal of something vested as part of the contents or fabric.
3. The Conservation Policy is the document that gives guidance on the adaptation and alteration, as well as repair and conservation, of Trust churches and their fixtures and fittings. The policy goes on to provide a procedure for ensuring that any additions or alterations are considered in the light of the significance of the church and its setting. This procedure is to be followed by Trust staff in making a decision on any proposal to remove a furnishing or fitting. Removal of fixtures (legally the term 'fixture' is not defined very easily) will be a matter for the Conservation Working committee. For that committee, a fixture is defined as quite literally anything that is fixed down in the church, e.g. pews, possibly an organ.
4. The salient points of the procedure outlined in the conservation policy, and which staff must consider after any request, are summarised for information:
 - What is significant about the item in question, and what is its relevance to the church and, where appropriate, the setting
 - What are the needs of the users/CCT
 - How key is removing the item to the success of the final objective
 - Can the item be placed elsewhere in the church, either permanently or on a temporary basis
 - How will its removal affect what is significant about the church/setting
 - Have other interested parties been consulted, what were their views and have these been taken into consideration
5. In some instances statutory consents will be required e.g. for the removal of pews, from the local authority, English Heritage and the Advisory Board for Redundant Churches, and these will overrule any wish that the Trust might have to allow a request. If agreed (and statutory consents obtained if relevant) the Trust may ask those making the request to remove an item to pay any associated costs, as this is work that we would not otherwise undertake. If the Trust wishes to remove an item that was donated as a gift in the past, it must obtain the consent of the Charity Commission, as we will no longer be responsible for something that was given for its intended purpose. It is likely the Charity Commission will be pragmatic.

6. Although the Trust will do everything to come to a mutually acceptable arrangement, in the event that this is not possible, the Trust ultimately has the power of decision.

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