



**CHAWTON
HILL** CHARTERED
SURVEYORS

Construction & Maintenance

Tips for Church Projects



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Education - Ecclesiastical - Healthcare
Project Management - Surveying

Tips for Engaging Professionals

Why Seek External Help?

Should you use a construction advisor on your church project, and if so, why?

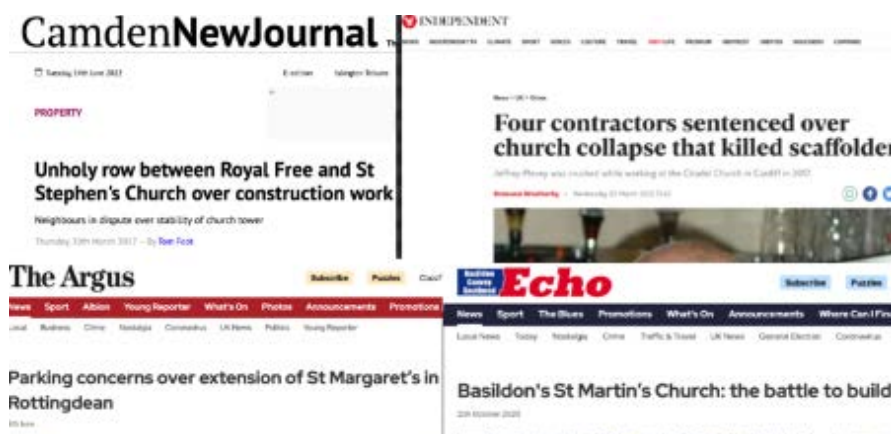
Churches are, of course, made up of people. The spiritual and liturgical needs of the people are key for any church. However, most people will remember the rhyme, "Here is the church, here is the steeple, open it up, and see all the people". Whether or not you have a steeple, there's likely to be an element of your church which involves a building.

Buildings require continual maintenance and care. Sometimes they need extension or alteration. Occasionally, you need an entirely new building. The question is, should you consider bringing in professional support, or can you do the work yourself? As always, the answer is, "it depends".

What are the Risks?

There are many risks involved in construction work. Those risks may vary depending upon the size and scale of the work, but rarely is building and maintenance work without risk. The risks might be related to safety, or they may be the risks of cost escalation and delayed projects.

In the worst cases, church construction projects have made the news. For all the wrong reasons. But these are exceptional cases. Most of the time, the risks are limited to cost, time and quality.



Our Directors

We pride ourselves on our director-led service and attention to detail.

David Edwards is one of the founders and Managing Director. He has a wealth of project management and employer's agent experience spanning more than 25 years.

James Matthewson is a skilled and proficient Chartered Building Surveyor. He has a wealth of experience in residential work and is an expert in Party Wall and insurance matters. He has excellent Project Management skills and has worked with us for over eight years.

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Things to Consider

Regular Planned Maintenance & Care

Sometimes known as Quinquennial inspections, regular planned maintenance is an important part of the upkeep of church fabric.

A properly qualified surveyor will be appointed to provide a church with a report outlining the key items of maintenance needed for a church. This is usually in the form of a five-year plan.

The report itself is a key document in assisting in the care and repair of a church building. It gives an overview of the repair needs of the building and lists repairs according to priority.

Generally, the survey will cover items such as:

- Any necessary repair of the building.
- Maintenance defects and maintenance plans.
- Safety of the structure and floors.
- Access issues.
- Environmental sustainability. This might include lighting, heating, rainwater drainage, use of renewable energy, and opportunities to reduce heat loss.
- Trees in the churchyard if they are protected by a Tree Preservation Order and any tree impacting on the building.
- Ruined structures in the churchyard.
- Moveable items of high value or significance.
- The risk of climate change on flooding, drainage & stonework.

The surveyor or 'Quinquennial Inspector' will use their professional judgement in highlighting other matters of concern. For example, if the safety of boilers and heated water systems (e.g. Legionnaires disease) has been addressed. They might also check paths, public rights of way, utilities, issues concerning the boundary walls, lych-gates and other structures and monuments.

Chawton Hill can provide all the above. Do get in touch should you need any assistance. In the event you need help with work needed on your church, we can also assist.

Value

How will your consultants structure their fees?

There are many ways of managing costs and fees for consultants, some better for clients than others.

At Chawton Hill, we pride ourselves in offering lump sum fee quotations where requested or percentages based upon contract values.

Our hourly rates reflect our competitive position in the marketplace. We are flexible in meeting particular requirements of the client.

We aim to provide the most commercially competitive rates possible, whilst maintaining the high levels of quality you would expect from an RICS Regulated practice. Each project is overseen closely by a director, so you can be sure of dedicated attention to detail.

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Construction Design Management

Projects and CDM

If you are undertaking building works, then the project is likely to fall under the Construction Design and Management (CDM) Regulations (2015). These are intended to ensure the safe delivery of construction projects in the UK. In this case you may need to consider the role of a Principal Designer.

This role is slightly confusing in name. It isn't necessarily a role for anyone involved in what you might usually think of as 'design', in the conventional way. The Principal Designer takes responsibility for safety on a project.

Their role covers many issues, including:

- Checking and putting in place systems for **asbestos** and other risks.
- Ensuring the **safe operation** of the site throughout the project.
- Ensuring **welfare facilities** are available to workers.
- Identifying risks and putting in place systems for **risk management** and method statements for works.
- Maintaining **health and safety** records and ensuring foreseeable risks are minimised.

There are significant legal implications for not having a suitably qualified person in the role of Principal Designer. So far, there have been around 100 prosecutions since the law changed in 2015. The most serious breaches can lead to prison sentences for those responsible.

Chawton Hill can help with this role or advise whether it's required on your project

Experience

Our 15+ years of experience has delivered a wide range of support to a range of religious projects, including the award-winning Oakhall Church in Caterham.

We also have a proven track record in obtaining planning permission for new projects.

If you are looking to develop, extend or simply repair and maintain your church or meeting place, we would be delighted to help.

Please feel free to contact us for an informal discussion.

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Other Services

Project Manager / Employer's Agent

Depending upon your own resources and abilities, you may find a project manager or employer's agent helpful. The two roles often overlap, but may have a slightly different focus.

Project managers are often brought in a little earlier and are involved in the project decision making process in more detail. They help ensure the project is delivered on time and to budget. A project manager can bring valuable experience and support to a project, providing independent advice to parties across the project throughout its execution.

In the case of the Employer's Agent (EA), the surveyor will usually monitor progress on a project after the appointment of contractors. They will work directly for the employer to monitor whether a project is running to time and to budget. The EA provides impartial assessments of whether the information received by the Employer (Church) is accurate. They will help to assess whether key milestones in the project have been achieved and whether payments and certificates should be released.

Both can provide an important role in a project. Chawton Hill are happy to advise on the various roles within a construction project.



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Regulation & Legal Issues

Regulation, Planning and Contracts

The world of regulation and planning can be a minefield of complexity, particularly where heritage buildings are concerned.

Some examples of regulations you may need to consider that Chawton Hill can assist with include:

- **Access and the Equality Act:** Buildings should be accessible and suitable for use by all who need to access them, we can ensure your project complies with the relevant legislation.
- **Party Walls:** These exist where a wall adjoins an adjacent property. There are specific legal requirements for any work being carried out in such positions. We can assist and support you in any issue related to party walls. For more help, see our blog here: <https://www.chawtonhill.com/party-wall-faq/>
- **Planning:** Any project, particularly where new buildings are involved, is likely to require planning consent. Again, there are substantial procedural requirements associated with this, something Chawton Hill are qualified and happy to assist with.
- **Building Control:** You will likely find that you need to ensure any project you undertake complies with building control, particularly in places of worship where groups of people gather.
- **Contracts:** Larger projects may require the formal appointment of parties such as contractors and sub-contractors. In such a case, you will want to be sure that the contract fairly allocates risk to the different parties and does not expose your church to unnecessary risk. Chawton Hill can assist in ensuring contracts are suitable for the project you plan to undertake.

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Tips for Choosing Advisors

How to Choose An Advisor

A few common-sense tips for choosing an advisor:

- **Experience:** perhaps most obvious, but ensure your advisor has worked on church projects in the past.
- **Experience (2):** Ensure that experience includes projects of a similar scale or nature. If you are renovating a Grade 1* listed property, then it may be helpful if your advisor has experience on that type and size of project previously.
- **Qualifications:** What professional qualifications do the team have – are they members of organisations such as the RICS, or another respected professional body?
- **Cost:** This should not necessarily be the only or indeed primary criteria for selection, but it is worth taking time to understand where costs come from and ideally when selecting advisors, get them to submit costs in a standard format or according to a standard formula.
- **Faith:** It may be advantageous having an advisor who shares your faith. However, this may not necessarily be essential to ensuring a quality outcome on a project. This will likely be something you need to balance. It may be that by working with different consultants you bring them closer to your faith or culture.
- **Other considerations:** Business culture may be a big factor – regardless of religious belief. Does the consultant share your core values? Will you be working with the directors, or once appointed, will work be handed to someone junior? What levels of professional indemnity or public liability insurance does the firm have, in the event that a claim has to be made?

This brief guide provides insight into some of the many considerations in the maintenance, care, restoration and construction of church buildings. Should you need further help, please don't hesitate to get in touch.

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