



# Faculties and other records concerning the fabric of church buildings.

## What is a Faculty?

Any alteration to the fabric of a building owned by the Church of England, from a complete restoration of a church, to the erection a memorial tablet, requires official consent. In York diocese the Chancellor of the Diocese exercises power to grant Faculties on behalf of the archbishop. In many respects it is the Church of England's form of planning permission.

## The procedure for granting a Faculty

A *petition* is submitted by the parish, requesting that they should be allowed to carry out certain specified works. A *citation* is then issued to all interested parties, giving a chance to those who have objections to state them. If an application is unopposed a *faculty* is granted. If opposed, the application might proceed to the church courts for resolution. Before 1902 applications for faculties were heard in the Chancery Court, after this the Diocesan Chancellor permitted all unopposed faculties to be granted in the Diocesan Registry without hearing in the Chancery Court. A Diocesan Advisory Committee was established in 1920, and this oversees Faculty jurisdiction.

## When were they issued?

The earliest evidence of the faculty procedure in the York diocese dates from 1613 and is found in the Chancery Court Books. The separate files of faculty papers (petitions, citations, drawings, plans) which correspond to the entries in the Chancery Act Books, survive from 1620, but survival is sporadic for the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. We continue to receive faculty records from the diocese of York to the present time.

## Where can material concerning faculties be found?

Evidence of faculty jurisdiction can be found in a number of types of diocesan records. The main sources are:

- Faculty Files, 1620 - Lists of faculties are available in our searchrooms and are normally the best place to begin a search.
- Faculty Books, series begins 1737, contain full transcripts of faculties issued from the Chancery Court.
- Chancery Act Books, 1613-1875.
- Archbishops Registers, from 1724 until 1902 these contain registered faculties which are not recorded in the Chancery Court books.
- Institution Act Book 10a, 1710-1723. A list of faculties found in this act book is included in our searchroom copy of *Church Fabric in the York Diocese*.

## What sorts of thing can you find out about?

Faculties deal with all manner of changes to fabric: complete renovations of churches, pews and seating, re-roofing, organs, pulpits, lofts, galleries, stained glass, memorial tablets, churchyards, and alterations to other building belonging to the church, for instance parsonage houses. They provide important evidence for how doctrinal changes and fashions impacted on church arrangement, furnishing and how technical innovations were adopted in the life of the Church.

### *Plans and Drawings*

The earliest surviving plan (inserted in an archbishop's register) is a pew plan for Holmfirth 1635, and the earliest plan in a faculty file is dated 1697 (Hatfield). It is not until the 19<sup>th</sup> century that plans survive in any great number in the faculty files.

## Could alterations be made without a Faculty?

The evidence shows quite clearly that sometimes alterations and restorations went ahead without formal record. Influential patrons sometimes seem to have avoided the formal faculty procedure, presumably having obtained the informal consent of the archbishop.

Sometimes problems with a church's fabric would come to light at an archdeacon's visitation – the archdeacon would then issue an order for the matter to be put right and, once acted on, the church would certify they had done as asked. Typical matters include laying flat paving slabs within the church, white washing walls, repairing graveyard walls, stubbing up of trees. These repairs and alterations leave no trace in the faculty records.

On other occasions alterations were made without prior consent – if detected this could result in litigation in the church courts. Lists of cases held in the York church courts can be consulted in our searchrooms. Doubtlessly other changes sometimes went undetected or un-prosecuted.

## Where can I find a list of faculties held at the Borthwick?

*Church Fabric in the York Diocese: the records of the archbishop's faculty jurisdiction, 1613-1899.* Peter Evans, Borthwick Text and Calendar 19, 1995. (Some copies of this list are still available for purchase from the Borthwick, a copy is also available in our searchrooms). Includes a list of all faculties concerning churches, churchyards, and some parsonages & glebe buildings, issued by the archbishops of York 1613-1899. It is important to remember that the geographical boundaries of the diocese of York changed within this period, with the foundation of the diocese of Ripon in 1836, Nottinghamshire archdeaconry being transferred to Lincoln diocese in 1837, and the foundation of Wakefield diocese in 1888. This list also includes the archbishop's liberty of Hexhamshire and certain provincial *sede vacante* business (matters dealt with on behalf of the dioceses of Chester, Durham and Carlisle when they had no bishops). An index of architects, artists, bell-founders and organ builders is included. The copy in the searchrooms includes a typescript list of faculty material appearing in Institution Act Book 10a.

For the period 1900 to the present day, lists of Faculties are available in our searchrooms.

Some peculiar jurisdictions had the right to issue faculties up until the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. We have faculty material for the following peculiar jurisdictions: Dean & Chapter of York [D/C.Fac] 1674-1832; Dean of York: [DY.Fac] 1728-1824; Alne & Tollerton [AT.10] 1812-1814. There is also a very small amount of *sede vacante* material: [D/C/SV/Fac] 1687-1688 (3 items). Lists of this material are available in the searchrooms.

## Other sources of information about church buildings.

### Diocesan Records

*Note that modern diocesan records may be subject to closure and some can only be consulted with permission from the Diocesan Office. In addition various statutory regulations, for instance the provisions of the Data Protection Act, may preclude the consultation of some material up to 100 years old.*

### Medieval Indulgences

In the medieval period indulgences were granted to help fund church building and repair. Evidence of indulgences can be found in bishop's registers, collections of bishops' *acta*, and recorded in monastic cartularies.

### Church Court Records

Guides to cases in the court of York 1301-1499, to the Dean and Chapter Court 1350-1843, and to cases transmitted to the York courts from the dioceses of Chester, Carlisle and Durham 1500-1883 are available for purchase. See our publications catalogue for further details, [www.york.ac.uk/inst/bihr/Publications.htm](http://www.york.ac.uk/inst/bihr/Publications.htm). These, and lists for all other court records, are available in our searchrooms. Closed for 30 years unless there are Data Protection issues which might restrict access for a longer period (up to 100 years).

### Visitation Records of the archbishops and archdeacons

Defects in the fabric of church building were brought to light at Visitations, and instructions for their remedy issued. Place indexes to the archbishops' visitation court books have been published as:

BORTHWICK INSTITUTE FOR ARCHIVES, UNIVERSITY OF YORK, HESLINGTON, YORK, YO10 5DD.  
(01904) 321166. [www.york.ac.uk/borthwick](http://www.york.ac.uk/borthwick). © University of York, 2006.

- *A Place Index of the Visitation Court Books of the Archbishops of York: Chester Diocese 1571-1694 and Carlisle Diocese 1590-1694*, compiled by Peter Evans. 1999.
- *A Place Index to the Visitation Court Books of the Archbishops of York. York Diocese 1567-1786* compiled by Peter Evans.

Copies of these indexes are available for purchase. These and other finding aids, including a place index to the visitation court books of the archdeacon of York, 1598-1836, are available in the searchrooms. Further information is available at [www.york.ac.uk/inst/bihr/guideleaflets/guidevis.pdf](http://www.york.ac.uk/inst/bihr/guideleaflets/guidevis.pdf).

Closed for 50 years from date of visitation unless there are Data Protection issues which might restrict access for a longer period (up to 100 years).

#### *Glebe Terriers*

These surveys of the endowments of church livings begin at York in 1608 but there are very few until the late 17th century, the frequency of such records usually being determined by the dates of archiepiscopal visitations. Note: Terriers for the archdeaconry of Nottingham are at Nottinghamshire County Record Office. Closed for 30 years.

#### *1875 Church Returns (Ch.Ret:)*

These record the numbers of churches restored or built since 1841 at a cost exceeding £500.

#### *Mortgages Under Gilberts Act [MGA]*

The Clergy Residences Repair Act, 1776 (Gilbert's Act) allowed the Governors of Queen Anne's Bounty to lend money for the repair and rebuilding of parsonage houses. Surviving records include surveys and plans, accounts, and correspondence. 1793-1976. A list, indexed by place, is available in the searchrooms.

#### *Sales of Old Parsonage Houses [SPH]*

The Parsonages Act 1838 made it lawful for an incumbent, under certain circumstances, to sell his parsonage house and land. The money was to be paid to the Governors of Queen Anne's Bounty who used the sum towards the building or purchase of a new parsonage. Records from 1873-

Note that it is not possible to consult files under 30 years old, without the permission of the Diocesan Office.

#### *Sites for New Parsonage Houses [NPH]*

Concerns the building of new parsonage houses from 1811 onwards. Records include: draft conveyances & correspondence.

Note that it is not possible to consult files under 30 years old, without the permission of the Diocesan Office.

#### *Diocesan Advisory Committee on Faculties [DAC]*

The York Diocesan Advisory Committee on Faculties was established in 1920. Its purpose was to advise the Diocesan Chancellor in respect of faculty applications. The Committee became the Diocesan Advisory Committee for the Care of Churches in 1947. Includes: Minute books 1920-1989; Secretary's correspondence 1945-1974; Chairman's correspondence, 1986-1991.

Note that it is not possible to consult files under 30 years old, without the permission of the Diocesan Office. There may also be Data Protection issues which might restrict access for a longer period (up to 100 years).

#### *Diocesan Church Extension Society [DCEC]*

The Diocesan Church Extension Society was established in 1878 in order to promote, the building of churches, chapels and parsonage houses, and other church buildings. The Committee's name was changed to that of Council of Church Extension in 1939 and was again changed to Council for Church Buildings in 1965. Papers include: Committee minute books 1878-1970; Returns of restoration and new building 1945-1951.

#### *Diocesan Dilapidations Board [Dilap]*

The York Diocesan Dilapidations Board held its first meeting in August 1924 and was reconstituted as the York Diocesan Parsonages Board in 1974. Includes: Minute Books, 1924-1969; Dilapidations registers; Surveyors' files correspondence and papers of individual surveyors 1924-1957.

#### *Quinquennial Inspections [DICC] & QR*

Since 1955 churches should have been inspected every 5 years by an architect. Lists of these Quinquennial Inspections are available in our searchrooms. Note that it is not possible to consult files under 30 years old, without the permission of the Diocesan Office.

### *Diocesan War Damage Committee [DO/DRC]*

The Diocesan War Damage Committee was formed in March 1941. It was later called the York Diocesan Reorganisation Committee. In 1969 all reorganisation affairs became the business of the new Diocesan Pastoral Committee. Includes: Registers of war-damaged church property in the diocese; Demolition files relating to demolition of war—damaged churches and sales of sites 1952-1965; Parish Files reports, correspondence and accounts, arranged by parish and specifying property damaged or destroyed 1940-1969.

### *York Redundant Churches Commission [YRCC]*

A commission set up by the Archbishop to consider the future of the churches in no longer needed for pastoral uses. These records are subject to a 30 year closure, and access to some material may be restricted for longer periods (up to 100 years) under the Data Protection Act. The searchroom list also includes a list of Closure Orders.

## Other Records

### *Maps*

The Borthwick Institute houses a collection of over 800 diocesan registry copies of tithe awards and map for parishes in the diocese of York, the majority dating from the fourth and fifth decades of the nineteenth century. A summary list has been published by C.R. Fonge, *Tithe Awards and Maps at the Borthwick Institute: a Handlist* (Borthwick List and Index 11, 1994), and is available in the searchrooms. Note that Nottinghamshire tithe awards have been transferred to the Nottinghamshire County Record Office. Other Maps are listed in *Maps in the Borthwick Institute* compiled by Matti Watton, Debbie Usher. 2000, available in our searchrooms or for purchase.

### *Parish Records*

Parish records can include all sorts of material useful for a study of church buildings including records of applications for faculties, accounts concerning the repair of church buildings, the purchasing of furniture, installation of bells, organs, heating and much more.

Note that some parish records under 30 years old may be closed, and access to other material may be restricted for longer periods (up to 100 years) under the Data Protection Act.

The *National Association of Decorative & Fine Arts Society (NADFAS)* have deposited a number of their church surveys with us. A list is available in the searchrooms under MD 126.

***Records of Architectural Practices, Stained Glass makers:*** lists available in the searchrooms.

*Atkinson Brierly Architectural Drawings Archive*

*Hodgson Fowler Collection:* Architects plans relating to the York churches All Saints North Street, All Saints Pavement, Holy Trinity Micklegate, St Cuthbert, St John Ousebridge, St Lawrence and St Sampson, York Training School Chapel, Acaster Malbis church, Bishopthorpe church, Bishopthorpe Palace, Copmanthorpe church and Upper Poppleton church, 1875-1928. List available in searchrooms.

*Knowles Collection:* The archive of the stained glass window designer J.W. Knowles

*Steel and Fletcher Collection:* A small collection of designs and patterns for stained glass windows by C.E. Steel and A.M. Fletcher.

*Mabel Leaf:* Mabel Leaf painted stained glass in York churches between the years 1906-1922. We have paintings for Holy Trinity, Goodramgate; All Saints North Street, St Martin cum Gregory (Micklegate) and York Minster.

*Myers Records [MY]:* A series of account books kept by various members of the Myers family (joiners & builders) beginning with the restoration of Wheldrake parish church in 1778 and continuing, with only a short break, until 1920. Including details of work done to Wheldrake church & rectory, and also alterations and repairs to East Cottingwith chapel and to Wilberfoss and Bubwith churches.

## Where will I find faculties for other areas of the country?

A search should start in the relevant diocesan record office. For a list of archives see <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/archon/>.

The Church Plans on-line site is also an excellent place to look for church plans <http://www.churchplansonline.org/>