

## GUIDANCE NOTE

Diocesan Advisory Committee for the Care of  
Churches



## THE INSTALLATION OF DIGITAL PROJECTORS AND SCREENS

The DAC understands that some aspects of liturgy change over time and that wider use of church buildings is an important part of their significance within their communities. Our church buildings demonstrate the impact that previous generations' theology and practice have had on the fabric of places of worship. Most of the buildings in the Diocese have borne witness to God's presence amongst his people for hundreds of years and have been changed to accommodate different social and ecclesiastical functions.

One of the major issues for PCCs today is the wish to improve the effectiveness of communication and to be positive about using technology within worship. Clearly, only the most modern of church buildings will have been designed to accommodate projectors, screens, audio-visual installations; in most cases there will be a tension between the fabric of an historic building and the requirements of modern technology. The key to a successful installation is identifying exactly what the parish needs, what technology is available, and how it can be accommodated within the church building.

In law, the DAC does not have a role in commenting on the use of digital projection in worship; that is an issue for the PCC. The Committee can only comment on the installation itself, including the way that screens and projectors might affect the fabric of the church and the impact on the aesthetics of the building.

This Guidance Note is intended to advise parishes where they are seeking to install such equipment on a permanent basis i.e. where it is physically attached to the fabric. Using a free-standing screen and electrical equipment that is stored after each use is permitted without any recourse to the DAC.

### Key Issues

- Any permanent installation of this kind must be reversible. This is important both for the long-term condition of the fabric of the building and the medium term likelihood that as technology develops the PCC will want to update equipment.
- The equipment should be as unobtrusive as possible, especially when not in use. Modern hardware does not always fit in with the fabric of the building, therefore the equipment must be as inconspicuous as possible, create as little damage as possible, and be reversible.
- In principle, every screen should be retractable so that it can be moved out of view. In considering this, the PCC needs to take on board the fact that excessive movement can in itself be the cause of damage to the building and the equipment and therefore a fixed position out of sight might be the best solution i.e. a retractable screen, rather than one on a stand.
- Not every service or activity in the building will require the use of the equipment. It should be possible to walk into the building and be unaware of the installation except when it is in use. This is especially important given the increasing awareness of

church buildings as places of pilgrimage for those in search of some peace, and heritage tourism by people interested in architecture and the historical elements of our buildings.

- The installation must be secure. These systems are a considerable investment on the part of any PCC. The equipment has a clear cash value and all efforts must be made to avoid theft of the kit itself and damage to the building by anyone trying to steal it.

### **Preparing to install the equipment**

- The PCC should prepare their Statement of Need, which can first be used to discuss the proposals with the wider congregation. This should cover such points as: What is the purpose of the installation? Who will be able to use it? Who will be responsible for it? How often will it be needed? What alternatives can be used? These installations can arouse strong reactions and some will probably find the installation of such equipment difficult to accept.
- It is therefore important to allow a time for experimentation by setting up the equipment on a temporary basis, both to allow people to see how it will work, and to establish the most suitable locations for both the screen(s) and the projector. So long as none of the equipment is permanently fixed during this experimentation, no formal permission is needed. **However** it is wise to discuss the project with your Archdeacon and your church architect at this stage. You must ensure that 'temporary' does not become 'permanent' by accident, and that when you are satisfied you have established the correct positioning for the equipment you apply to the DAC for a Certificate as soon as possible.
- Obtain a quote and specialist advice from an audio-visual specialist. They will be able to advise on the most suitable type of system for your church, and prepare a quotation to be sent to the DAC when you wish to apply for a Certificate to enable you to apply for the necessary faculty permission to make the installation permanent.
- You may also wish to visit other churches in the Diocese which have installed such equipment to see how it works there. The DAC office can provide details of such churches for you.
- In considering the siting of the screen, it is worth noting the following:

#### **If the screen is to be in the chancel arch position**

- The visibility when the screen is not in use
- Ensuring that the screen does not cut off the east window
- Any problems with light behind the screen
- Any sense of intrusion in services focussed at the chancel steps

#### **If the screen is floor-mounted or on a column or in a side aisle**

- Screens can be mounted on columns and fixed permanently to the floor, with a single fixing to a column or pier
- Wherever possible, taking into consideration reversibility and wear to the fabric, consider fixings that are temporary like a collar, or use of roof timbers if these *are not* historic timbers.
- In considering the siting of the projector it is preferable to avoid direct fixing into the stonework or wall. A single bar from the roof timber or similar often minimises

interference to the fabric, but if this is not feasible a 'collar' round a capital or slender support pole may be options. The colour of the column, pole or collar and the projector should be chosen so these blend into the background.

- Advancing technology may mean that a wireless system can be used, but at present this technology is not usually to a good enough specification to run video clips or DVDs with high quality projection. Complete integration of the equipment to be used, such as DVD, VCR, sound system and audio loop must be considered. There should not be a piecemeal approach but something that is capable of developing with more equipment in a neat and attractive way.
- The equipment must be considered so that, when used for talks, sermons and so on, the speaker or worship-leader is not isolated from the user and remote controls work successfully. This may also impact on the positioning of the screen(s).
- This equipment usually requires a lot of wiring and the church architect must be asked for advice on the installation to ensure that wiring routes etc are well planned and unobtrusive. Even 'temporary' installations must be set up properly – to ensure that excess cabling does not present a trip hazard to the operators of the equipment and the users of the building.

### **Applying for a DAC Certificate for permanent installations**

When you have undertaken your experimentation and consultation within the congregation, you will need to apply to the DAC for a Certificate in order for you to petition for a faculty. With your application for a Certificate, you will need to submit:

- An illustrated plan of the church showing: where the projector, screen(s), and equipment are to be positioned, wiring routes and method of fixing wires, and where any alteration needs to be made to the fabric as part of the works.
- Specification or quotation giving full details of the equipment, and how it is to be installed. Quotes for electrical work should be from NICEIC, ECA or NAPIT registered contractors.
- Catalogue illustrations of equipment/fittings to be installed.
- Photographs (digital or prints) of the area(s) of the church where the equipment is to be installed, marked as appropriate.
- Confirmation that the church's architect/surveyor is content with the proposals (if they have not prepared the specification).

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### **Further sources of information**

Exeter DAC Guidance Note on Sound Systems

Text adapted from a Guidance Note produced in 2006 by Peterborough DAC.