

# Churches Conservation Adviser

<b>Job Title:</b>	Churches Conservation Adviser
<b>Reports to:</b>	Director
<b>Responsible for:</b>	The Victorian Society's casework relating to places of worship in England and Wales
<b>Hours (weekly):</b>	35
<b>Document revised:</b>	1 March 2017

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## **JOB DESCRIPTION**

### **Key tasks**

1. Dealing with places of worship casework notified under the Ecclesiastical Exemption and as required with notifications of applications for listed building consent received as a result of the Secretary of State's directions of 2015 – Arrangements for Handling Heritage Applications - and with any associated planning applications.
2. This work includes
  - identifying relevant notifications within the period 1837–1914
  - keeping detailed records of the numbers and periods of notifications
  - assessing the importance of applications, both in terms of the building affected and of the scale of work projected. This may involve both research and liaison with local volunteers, conservation officers, Historic England and other amenity societies, architects and others.
  - responding to straightforward cases
  - identifying significant or difficult cases for discussion by the appropriate buildings committee, presenting them to the committee and acting on their recommendations
  - attending site visits
  - dealing with the press at local and national level
  - preparing for, attending and giving evidence to public inquiries, consistory courts or equivalent hearings.
3. Attending and servicing the monthly meetings of the buildings committees, producing and circulating the agenda, minutes and other papers
4. Helping to coordinate the Society's response on matters of general policy or national importance, and putting buildings forward for spot-listing or upgrading
5. Monitoring the efficiency and effectiveness of the control systems set up by the Church of England, Roman Catholics, Methodists, Baptists and the United Reformed Church under the Ecclesiastical Exemption, and lobbying for improvements where necessary.

6. Liaising with the Society's other caseworkers and regional groups over casework within their areas, cultivating and maintaining local volunteers, and participating in casework conferences
7. Dealing with members of the public, offering support or advice for local campaigns
8. Contributing to all aspects of the Society's work, including preparing casework reports for the Society's magazine, and occasional publications, and reporting to the Society's AGM.
9. Other duties as may be required.

### **Key skills**

This is one of the most interesting – and challenging - caseworker jobs in the building conservation world. A high proportion of the best Victorian and Edwardian architecture consists of churches, or Victorian alterations to earlier churches. Many parishes are attempting to reorder their churches, either by extending them, or by removing Victorian pews and fittings to create flexible space. While many of these proposals are unobjectionable, some involve significant harm to the buildings concerned, and call for a difficult balance to be struck between heritage considerations and the church's needs of both mission and financial survival. This position will place you at the heart of this debate. It requires high intellectual ability, **excellent writing skills**, diplomacy, judgement and tact, as well as a good knowledge of 19<sup>th</sup> century ecclesiastical architecture. A genuine interest in church architecture is essential for this job, which is focused on the details of church reorderings. Two vital skills are the ability to assess large numbers of applications quickly and judiciously; and the ability to write superlative, persuasive casework letters that will persuade unsympathetic arbiters of the merits of our position.

## **TERMS OF APPOINTMENT AND BENEFITS**

### **Location and hours of work**

The Conservation Adviser will be based at our office in West London, but travel throughout England and Wales may be required. Normal hours of work are from 9.30am to 5.30pm Monday to Friday (inclusive), with one hour for lunch. Time-off in lieu is given for work necessarily performed outside these hours.

The Churches Conservation Adviser must attend meetings of the Southern Buildings Committee, which take place monthly in the evening in London (usually the third Thursday), and of the Northern Buildings Committee, which take place monthly in the evening in Manchester (usually the first Monday). The Churches Conservation Adviser is also expected to attend and report to the Society's AGM which normally takes place on a Saturday in July.

### **Salary**

Salary band £24,000-£28,000. The starting salary is expected to be £24,000, but this may be varied if a particularly skilled or experienced candidate is identified. If an exceptional candidate is identified, the Society may be willing to pay above the top of the salary band. In addition, the Society will pay a sum equivalent to 5% of the gross salary into a personal or stakeholder pension scheme of the employee's choice.

### **Annual leave**

Annual leave allowance is 25 days. In addition, the office is closed from Christmas Eve to New Year's Day (inclusive).

### **Probation**

The Victorian Society requires all staff to serve a nine-month probationary period.

## SELECTION CRITERIA

CRITERIA	ESSENTIAL	DESIRABLE
<b>Education / Qualifications</b>		
1. Education to degree level or equivalent	✓	
<b>Skills and knowledge</b>		
1. Demonstrable knowledge of British ecclesiastical architecture from 1837-1914	✓	
2. <b>Very strong</b> writing and analytical skills	✓	
3. Knowledge of the secular planning system, the Ecclesiastical Exemption and of current conservation issues	✓	
4. Computer literate, including the use of email, the internet, and Microsoft Office	✓	
<b>Managing work and personal effectiveness</b>		
1. Able to organise, plan and prioritise own work and to meet deadlines and to work under pressure	✓	
2. Capable of working independently and as part of a team	✓	
3. Encourages suggestions and ideas from others and is willing to take on board their ideas	✓	
4. Persuasive; has excellent communication skills, both oral and written, and can present complex information in a concise, accurate and understandable way	✓	
5. Analytical; is able to take information from a variety of sources and interpret it quickly and effectively	✓	
6. Enthusiastic and self-motivated and able to work without constant supervision	✓	
7. Able to work with and supervise volunteers	✓	
<b>Experience</b>		
1. Previous experience in the heritage or planning sector		✓