

and an irreversible loss of values. After an amendment to the Act on Churches and Churchyards in 1992, church councils have been given greater freedom with regards to installations and decorations in churches. This means that it is even more important to maintain good relationships with, and cooperation between, the users, the authorities and the authorities' consultants.

The Church has constantly undergone changes and cultural heritage has consistently been threatened. But it is remarkable that buildings, artefacts, furniture and decorations have survived for centuries. There are no records of how much has been lost but the numbers must be immense. One often has to take conflicting interests into consideration while working with objects, which, like the churches, their decorations and their furniture, have both historical value and utilitarian functions. It would be truly unfortunate if the otherwise highly laudable wish to make the churches appear as appealing as possible meant that they were transformed into standardized buildings. As mentioned above, the National Museum has no wish to convert churches into museums. The main reason for this position is that it is the use of the churches that justifies the preservation of both buildings and furniture. Therefore, every age must be allowed to add something of its own, even if it is something that happens through necessity. Furthermore, the objects that are found in churches should have a function, even if this, in practice, means employing an often useful 'fall-back clause', whereby permission to replace an item of furniture is granted, providing the old item is safely stored in the church, so it can, if necessary, be put back in its former position or reused in other ways.

The role of the Church in modern society is the subject of debate, and cultural heritage is an important issue. Alterations are a necessity and are not only linked to fashion and liturgical modifications, but are also a response to demands for comfort. Furthermore, the level of general maintenance can frequently be a threat to heritage. Finally, the preservation of existing historical evidence, in the form of furniture and decorations, is given a lower priority for economic reasons, and these objects are in danger of neglect. These four above-mentioned issues – fashion, comfort, maintenance and preservation – are the most frequent subjects of discussions between church councils, the dioceses and consultants. Often, meetings are arranged to exchange ideas before projects are formalized. In this way, time-consuming administration can be avoided when the final project has to be approved by the authorities. The church council usually has no intention of neglecting cultural heritage and is proud of what previous generations have left under its protection. However, as they are also responsible for the church as a spiritual centre of the community with its daily demands, they are often forced to decide on priorities for economic reasons. Therefore as a consultant, one must understand present needs and be able to help the congregation implement their wishes or, if necessary, find a compromise. The following case studies exemplify the strengths and weaknesses of a system where the