



Advice for organ builders on preparing reports (Produced in association with the Institute of British Organ Building)

An organ builder's report is written, in the first place, for the information of the organ's owners and their advisers. It may also be used to obtain grant aid or a diocesan Faculty. This leaflet is intended as a guide to the basic information that is expected, particularly if a grant application is to succeed.

It is not the intention to lay down a standard formula. On the contrary, individuality in reports is strongly encouraged.

If a report is accurate, intelligible, concise and well presented, contains adequate technical detail, and shows a genuine understanding of the organ concerned, its usefulness to the client will be assured.

Reports should be based on a conscientious professional examination, and the organ builder must be prepared to justify any recommendations. If successful, a report may form part of a legal contract or Faculty application, so careful drafting is important.

The Instrument

- Name (dedication) and location of church
- Location of organ within church
- A summary of the organ's history (including National Pipe Organ Register reference and Historic Organ Certificate details if applicable), with name(s) and date(s) of previous builders
- Specification (including compass of manuals and pedals)
- Pitch of the organ (e.g. a=440/ c=523.3 [standard pitch] at a given temperature)
- Temperament (if not equal temperament)
- Type(s) of soundboards and action
- Brief description of organ case
- Is the organ in original condition? If not, summarise any alterations
- An assessment of the organ's quality. Is it significant at a local, national or international level? If so, give reasons (e.g. it is musical, technical or architectural qualities, or as an important example of its builder's work).



Condition

- How clean is the **interior** of the organ?
- Is the **pipework** in good condition? Are tuning slides fitted or are the pipes cone-tuned? Are the pipes well stayed?
- Are the **actions and soundboards** in good condition and do they work well? If not, specify remedial work recommended.
- Are the **reservoirs** in good condition? Is remedial work necessary now or in the near future? Is any work necessary to **trunking** and/or **conveyancing**?
- Does the **blower** appear to be adequate and working well? Is it, or should it be, regularly serviced by a specialist? Does the sound-proofing enclosure contain material which might be asbestos?
- Is there a **humidifier** – if so, is it regularly serviced?
- What is the condition of any **swell boxes** and does the mechanism operate effectively?
- Is the **casework** in good condition? If not, will the organ builder attend to

necessary work or should a conservator be consulted?

Environment

It is good practice to draw the attention of church officials to any of the following matters which may affect the organ and need attention when work is being carried out:

- Evidence of water penetration or damp
- Evidence of woodworm, mice or other infestation
- Evidence of problems with the roof, walls or windows in the vicinity of the organ
- Apparent weakness in the floor on which the organ stands
- Heating pipes or elements situated too close to the organ
- Any factors (e.g. heating or ventilation) which are likely to have a detrimental effect on the organ
- The presence of asbestos

Recommendations and Proposals Estimate

- Cost and indication of payment schedule
- Indication of any extra costs (such as scaffolding,

accommodation, transport, blower service, electrical work etc.) excluded from the estimate

- Whether VAT is payable
- How long the quotation remains valid
- An indication that the contractor has appropriate insurance
- What insurance the church will be expected to provide
- Details of any guarantee offered

Photographs

Photographs of the organ (both interior and exterior) are essential for grant applications and are useful generally.

Remember, the interior of the organ is foreign territory for most people. Well-chosen illustrations (e.g. of damaged or badly-stayed pipework or badly deteriorating leatherwork on reservoirs) will help clients who are not familiar with the interior of pipe organs to understand and assess a report.

Photographs to be used for historic documentation should have a resolution of at least 300 dpi and be submitted in an archivally durable form, e.g. PDF or PDF-A on a CD.





Summary

General points to remember when **writing a report**:

- The Instrument

Builder(s), history, specification, any alterations, compass, pitch, type of mechanism, casework.

Assess the organ's quality/ importance.

- Condition

Condition of the instrument and its individual components.

- Environment

Any problems with the building or its environment.

- Recommendations

What work is required and why is it necessary?

- Estimate

Indicate what is included in the main price, and list additional expenses.

- Photographs

Pictures of the organ and significant details, especially those requiring attention, will be helpful and are essential for grant applications.

For work on historic organs, a valuable source of reference is *Historic Organ Restoration* by Dominic Gwynn (Church House Publishing 2001), particularly Chapter 8.

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