

THE COMMISSIONING PROCESS

The commission may result from direct contact with the client, or by way of a competition. Either way, a good commission grows from a respectful understanding between myself and the client.

The process usually begins with a conversation about reasons for the commission, the proposed site, the likely cost and any first thoughts about themes or content. These ideas are gradually refined into a brief. The location of the window will be of prime importance, because the intensity of light or shifting patterns of light and shade during the day will have a profound influence on the final design.

Once these basic ideas have been agreed, I make a site visit to look at the location in detail and begin to examine how the client's wishes can best be met. I then produce preliminary sketches. When the client is content with the basic concept, I make a scale design drawing in colour.

If the commission is for a window in a church, permission of some kind will be necessary from the ecclesiastical authorities. For example, in an Anglican church it is sensible to submit the design for the advice of the DAC (Diocesan Advisory Committee for the Care of Churches). The Committee may be able to make helpful and constructive suggestions.

Once the final scheme has been settled, a Faculty (effectively an ecclesiastical planning permission) will be essential before the window can be made and fitted. This will require the support of the PCC who are legally responsible for the church and its care. In some secular situations (in Listed Buildings, for example) other permissions may be required.

An approximate budget cost can be given at the outset, but the final overall amount will only be agreed once the preliminary sketches are underway as the scope of the design can have a considerable impact on the cost.

Payment of the overall cost is usually divided into five amounts. Initially a design fee will be agreed, variable according to the scale of the project, and payable on presentation of the colour design. This fee is non-refundable should the client decide not to proceed with the whole project.

When a window is commissioned, the remaining amount is divided into four equal instalments. The first instalment is payable after approvals and at the start of the commission; the second on completion of the full scale cartoon and glass cutting; the third on completion of the glass painting; and the final payment after completion of the leading and installation of the window.

Both actual and potential clients are welcome to come and visit Barley Studio, by appointment, to view my portfolio and examples of work in progress.

At Barley Studio we also produce associated products that may be needed, such as external protective glazing and wire guards.