

The Methodist Property Office - Resourcing Mission

Quinquennial Inspections

1. Introduction

The Methodist Church requires the regular inspection of all Model Trust property on a five yearly (hence 'quinquennial') basis. These notes are intended to help property committees, property stewards and others who care for church property.

Please read this leaflet with that on 'appointment of quinquennial inspectors' (Information Leaflet T16), and you may also find it helpful to look at other information leaflets: see the references section at the end of this leaflet. You may wish to check our web site www.methodist.org.uk from time to time as we regularly add new or revised information.

QI stands for quinquennial inspector, and **QQ** for quinquennial inspection survey/report.

Standing Order 952 requires the circuit meeting to arrange for the QQ to be carried out by professionally qualified persons, for all local and circuit property (for the full wording, see section 9 below). Some circuits appoint one QI for all their property, others consider there are benefits in appointing several QIs, in order to ensure a range of expertise and a competitive element.

2. The temptation to avoid the issue

The neglect of church buildings, or the avoidance of QQs, on the basis of "we'd rather not know" or "we cannot afford either the cost of the survey fee or the works", is not reasonable stewardship. Ignoring known defects, neglecting adequate maintenance and failing to deal with necessary repairs are irresponsible and, more importantly, are a breach of managing trustees' obligations.

Problems should be faced up to and every effort made to find adequate financial resources; a considerable variety of grants are available, and our funding section are always happy to offer help. The Methodist Church has a continuing responsibility for the care and maintenance of the fabric and contents of Methodist property.

3 The purpose of QQs and reports

The object of a QQ is to ensure the early detection of deterioration or defects so that prompt action can be taken, thus avoiding later and more costly expense, eg replacing timbers affected by dry rot, or much more drastically, total demolition. A brief inspection, particularly if carried out by someone without adequate training and experience, may mean that the very defects that the scheme ought to establish in fact go undetected.

Many church buildings constitute a significant part of the country's heritage. Some are "listed" or in conservation areas and many more have architectural or historic merit. Many new churches are innovative and significant, both architecturally and theologically. It is important that these buildings are properly maintained for future generations.

The QQ represents a valuable contribution to the care of a building and a continuing record of the condition of the building, the importance of which should not be minimised.

4. Selection and appointment of Quinquennial Inspectors

Please see the separate Technical information leaflet T16 'Appointment of Quinquennial Inspectors'.

Churches are special buildings and therefore QQs need to be undertaken by professionally qualified persons who are expert in the care of church buildings, and who have a good working knowledge of construction and repair techniques. They need to have a sensitivity, understanding and appreciation of the qualities of design for all periods of art and architecture.

5. Church members carrying out work

We fully realise the enormous value of voluntary property work carried out by church members. In such instances, volunteers are acting on behalf of the managing trustees and should be covered by the church's normal insurance policy. It is, however, always worth checking the policy wording, and if necessary obtaining additional cover - Methodist Insurance (tel 0161 833 9696) are always prepared to discuss the situation.

Clearly, it is always unwise for church members to undertake anything other than simple, straightforward work unless they have suitable training. For instance, work above ceilings, at high level, from a tall ladder or scaffold or on roofs, requires specialist training and expertise. Do remember that it is also a legal requirement to have a suitable risk assessment in place.

6.0. The Report

6.1. Format of the report

6.11 It is important that reports are presented in a consistent format to enable not just the Managing Trustees but the Circuit and District officers to be able to maintain an overview of the state of the property. It is for this reason that the format adopted by the Church of England is recommended – QIs who carry out inspections for both Anglican and Methodist churches will welcome the consistency (and have often adopted the previous Anglican recommendations)

6.2. Content of the report

6.21 A first report will be more detailed than subsequent reports prepared by the same QI. Generally a report will include preliminary information, including particulars of the site and the buildings, and may include some description of the building and its history. The main part of the report should cover such matters as works since the last inspection; the general condition of the building; a summary of repairs needed; and recommendations for further detailed or specialist inspections. The QQ should also cover such matters as furnishings, monuments, the heating system, the electrical installation, the lightning protection installation, sanitary facilities, fire precautions, security, disabled access and external areas and boundaries.

6.22 It is sometimes argued that the building and its condition is well known locally and that only a minimum report is necessary. However, the QQ is not just for those acquainted with the building. Several managing trustees may not be particularly familiar with the "out of the way" parts of their building. The report may also have to be read and be understandable by those who are not familiar with the building, perhaps officers from the local authority or national amenity societies.

Sketch layouts can be helpful, but measured drawings are not required. Photographs – particularly of areas not normally visible – can be very useful (see the recommended format).

The QQ must not be regarded as a specification for repairs, although the QI may be asked subsequently to arrange for the works to be carried out.

7. Standard limitation/disclaimer clauses

It is normal for any survey to note various exclusions or limitations. There are good reasons for this, and some are required by the QI's professional indemnity insurance policy. The following are typical clauses which will often appear:

- The inspection will normally be made from ground level, floor level(s), a 3-metre ladder and other readily accessible positions. The inspection will be purely visual and, unless otherwise stated, no enclosed spaces, hidden timbers or inaccessible parts will be opened up for inspection. The report may indicate that further or more detailed investigations are necessary.
- Parts of the structure which are inaccessible, enclosed or covered will not be inspected.
- Ladders and attendance are to be provided, and the arrangements and cost for this will be met by the local church.

8. After the report

Managing trustees have the responsibility for taking all necessary action to deal with matters indicated in the quinquennial inspection report, even when the required expenditure may seem to be discouraging or prohibitive.

The QI will usually be willing to meet the managing trustees to discuss the findings of the QQ, and to agree any further work that may be necessary. Insensitive repairs and alterations can all too easily destroy the character of the premises and inappropriate technical solutions, or the use of unsuitable materials, may prove to be unsatisfactory and costly in the final analysis. Churches are special buildings which require care by specially trained professional advisers.

Instructions should be given to the QI if further investigations are to be undertaken; or if the QI is to prepare information about further repairs. Such instructions will result in additional charges. If the inspector is instructed to prepare a specification of works, to invite tenders and to inspect work in progress; then professional fees will have to be negotiated, plus expenses and VAT.

It will also usually be necessary for the managing trustees and the circuit to register the scheme on the Property Consents website (www.propertyconsent.methodist.org.uk) to obtain formal consent for the proposed work. Similarly, if the building is Listed or in a Conservation Area, statutory consents will be required and any work must be discussed with the RMO Conservation Officer.

Property Schedules are distributed every year, and the various on the schedules should be checked for current information and guidance.

9. Wording of Standing orders

Quinquennial Inspections. *(1) In relation to all local property the Circuit Meeting shall arrange for an inspection, which shall include an inspection for timber decay, at least once every five years by professionally qualified persons, who shall report to the Church Council and the Circuit meeting with recommendations as to any work required. The Circuit Meeting shall ensure that any further investigatory inspections shown to be necessary in the initial inspection report are carried out if the managing trustees have not acted.*

(2) In relation to circuit property the Circuit Meeting shall arrange for an inspection, which shall include an inspection for timber decay, at least once every five years by professionally qualified persons, who shall report to the Circuit Meeting, the circuit stewards and, in the case of manses, the District Manses Committee, with recommendations as to any work required. The district Manses Committee shall ensure that any further investigatory inspections shown to be necessary in the initial inspection report are carried out if the managing trustees have not acted.

(3) The Circuit meeting shall ensure that every inspector engaged to carry out an inspection under this Standing Order is an architect or building surveyor or has some other appropriate professional qualification and is adequately covered by professional indemnity insurance against any liability arising out of the inspection.

10. Before the inspection

The Circuit should notify managing trustees to carry out the following prior to the QI:

- The managing trustees are required to maintain a log book containing previous quinquennial inspection reports, details of repairs and other relevant information, and this needs to be made available to the inspector (a blank log-book can be downloaded from our web site – Technical Information Leaflet T5).
- The managing trustees should inform the QI of any rights of way, light or air and give details of building defects or problems during the last five years (including damage from storms, vandalism or fire).
- The managing trustees should ensure that the necessary keys are provided, and that access to all areas is provided, including that to voids in roofs, sub-floors etc, and their location should be brought to the attention of the QI.
- The report may indicate that further or more detailed investigations are necessary.
- The submission of a copy of the QI is a condition of the consent of any building scheme and may also be a requirement of any grant application.
- QIs are required for all Model Trust property including all churches, halls, graveyards etc, all manses or other housing and all property which is rented to third parties.

11. Typical Layout for a QQ of a chapel or ancillary property

The format of the recently adopted Anglican layout

http://www.churchcare.co.uk/pdf_view.php?id=200

for reports is recommended, although other arrangements may be acceptable by prior agreement. In particular, a 'room-by-room' description may sometimes be more appropriate:

Report prepared by:

Name -

Address -

Email -

Telephone -

Date of inspection and weather conditions -

Date of report -

Date of previous report -

Premises identification

(In an initial survey, a more detailed description may be provided)

Executive Summary

This should give an overview of the report, identifying major concerns and urgent priorities.

Previous report

Repairs undertaken since the last report should be noted, together with outstanding recommendations.

Brief description of the building (e.g. nave, chancel, west tower, north porch) **and building history**

Plan of the church (although not mandatory, it can be a useful reference when identifying areas of concern.

Listing grade of the church and any separately listed buildings

Limitations of the report

The report should state whether difficulties with access prevented a proper survey of the building, and if so whether further work is required.

Report main section

Paragraphs and pages should be numbered.

The report should state how it is structured: it should start from a set point and work around the building in consecutive laps from the top down. The first, dealing with the roofs; the second, rainwater goods, disposal and drainage; the third, walls; the fourth, windows. Then move inside and deal first with any tower from the top down then each 'room' individually, e.g. nave, chancel, transepts, vestry. The report should therefore be in a clear logical order.

The report should follow the following or similar format, set out in tabular form following the example below:

Component

This needs to clearly identify what is being looked at and where it is on the building. Be consistent, state the main section first such as roof, wall, window and then be specific as to what is being described. i.e. roof, chancel, north slope i.e. exterior wall, chancel, north elevation

Description

Include materials and construction of all components. Bullet points may be sufficient; lengthy prose is not necessary, particularly if no repairs are needed, and repetition should be avoided.

Condition

Give a general overview, then specifics. i.e. Fair condition, 2-3 broken tiles. It may be appropriate to refer to indicators of hidden or more substantial problems than are immediately apparent.

Repair needs

State repair needed, or what further investigation is required. In particular identify any specialist advice which the Managing Trustees should seek, e.g. structural or mechanical engineers, conservators, heating specialists, arboriculturalists. The report should comment on significant safety issues such as potentially unsafe ladders, on improvements to the maintenance programme, and on the long-term sustainability of the building.

The following is a list (not exhaustive) of the main components which should be included in the report, if present:

Exterior

- Roof coverings
- Rainwater goods and disposal systems
- Parapets and upstand walls, finials, crosses
- Walling and pointing
- Windows/doors and surrounds
- Below ground drainage

Interior

- Tower/spire
- Clocks, bells and frames (if any)
- Roof and ceiling voids and ventilation
- Presence of bats and other protected species
- Roof structures, ceilings

- Upper floors, balconies, access stairways
- Partitions, screens, panelling, doors
- Floors, Platforms
- Internal wall/ceiling finishes
- Monuments, tombs etc
- Toilets, kitchen, vestries, meeting rooms etc
- Fittings, fixtures, furniture and moveable articles
- Organ

Churchyard and environs

- Detached halls
- Boundary walls, railings and fencing, gates
- Paths and access issues, hardstanding areas and parking
- Trees.

(Trees protected by a tree preservation order must be inspected by the professional adviser. They should also consider whether further professional advice on trees should be commissioned, for instance in relation to safety concerns, the impact of trees on the church itself, and the importance of the trees themselves)

Services, installations and other matters

- Heating (including fuel (gas, oil, etc) boilers, radiators, etc)
- Electrical (including incoming mains, consumer unit, lighting and power)
- Insulation and air leakage
- Water supply, harvesting and conservation
- Sound system
- Fire protection
- Lightning Protection
- Maintenance Plan - the report should recommend a routine maintenance plan, including the regular clearance of gutters.

Items requiring further detailed or specialist investigation

Works of repair in order of priority

Use the following scale to denote urgency of work required:

- A** - Urgent, requiring immediate attention
- B** - Requires attention within 12 months
- C** - Requires attention within the next 18 – 24 months
- D** - Requires attention within the quinquennial period
- E** - A desirable improvement with no timescale
- M** - routine maintenance (i.e. clearing leaves from a gutter). This can be done without professional advice or District Consent.

Guidance to the Managing Trustees

The report should include the following standard advice:

- This is a summary report only as required by Standing Orders; it is not a specification for the execution of the work and must not be used as such.
- The professional adviser is willing to advise the Managing Trustees on implementing the recommendations and will if so requested prepare a specification, seek tenders and oversee the repairs.
- The Managing Trustees are advised to seek ongoing advice from the professional adviser on problems with the building.
- Contact should be made with the insurance company to ensure that cover is adequate.
- The repairs recommended in the report will (with the exception of some minor maintenance items) be subject to District Consent. Guidance on whether particular work is subject to formal consent can be obtained from the DPS.
- Fire Safety Advice can be obtained from the Connexional Fire Advisor, cbdomville@blueyonder.co.uk

- **Electrical Installation:** Any electrical installation should be tested at least every five years in accordance with the recommendations of the Technical Guidance Notes T8 and T8A. The inspection and testing should be carried out in accordance with IEE Regulations and an inspection certificate obtained in every case. The certificate should be kept with the Church Log book.
- **Heating Installation:** A proper examination and test should be made of the heating system by a qualified engineer each summer before the heating season begins, and the report kept with the Church Log Book.
- **Lightning Protection:** Any lightning conductor should be tested at least every five years in accordance with the current British Standard by a competent engineer. The record of the test results and conditions should be kept with the Church Log Book.
- **Asbestos** A suitable and sufficient assessment should be made as to whether asbestos is or is liable to be present in the premises. Further details on making an assessment are available in the Technical Information Leaflet T12. The assessment has not been covered by this report and it is the duty of the Managing Trustees to ensure that this has been, or is carried out.
- **Disability Discrimination Act:** The Managing Trustees should ensure that they have understood their responsibilities under the Disability Discrimination Act 1995. Further details and guidance are available in the Technical Information Leaflet on the Methodist website.
- **Health and Safety:** Overall responsibility for the health and safety of the church and churchyard lies with the Managing Trustees. This report may identify areas of risk as part of the inspection but this does not equate to a thorough and complete risk assessment by the Managing Trustees of the building and churchyard.
- **Bats and other protected species:** The managing Trustees should be aware of their responsibilities where protected species are present in a church.
- **Sustainable buildings:** A quinquennial inspection is a good opportunity for Managing Trustees to reflect on the sustainability of the building and its use. This may include adapting the building to allow greater community use, considering how to increase resilience in the face of predicted changes to the climate, as well as increasing energy efficiency and considering other environmental issues. Further guidance is available in the report "Hope in God's Future".
- The managing trustees are reminded that insurance cover should be index-linked, so that adequate cover is maintained against inflation of building costs. It is important to ensure that the sum insured is adequate. Methodist Insurance is able to offer guidance as to the appropriate level of cover or alternatively a professional valuation should be made.

12. Quinquennial inspection of manse, other housing or property

The following is a typical layout, although other arrangements are acceptable. In particular, a 'room-by-room' description may sometimes be more appropriate:

Report prepared by:

Name -

Address -

Email -

Telephone -

Date of inspection and weather conditions -

Date of report -

Date of previous report -

Premises identification

(In an initial survey, a more detailed description may be provided)

Executive Summary

This should give an overview of the report, identifying major concerns and urgent priorities.

Previous report

Repairs undertaken since the last report should be noted, together with outstanding recommendations.

Brief description of the building

Repair works or new works since last inspection (summary)

Detailed condition of the several parts of the building

- general structure (externally and internally)

EXTERNAL FABRIC

- walls
- roof coverings, chimney stacks and flues
- rainwater disposal system
- doors and windows
- metalwork, woodwork and paintwork

INTERNAL FABRIC

- roof structures
- walls, partitions and ceilings
- doors, windows, woodwork and fittings
- decorations
- floors and staircases
- insulation & energy efficiency

SERVICES

- heating system and room ventilation
- electrical installation
- sanitary facilities and drainage
- security
- fire precautions
- accessibility (disabled access)

GROUNDS AND OUTBUILDINGS

- external areas including trees & boundaries
- garage
- other outbuildings

Items requiring further detailed or specialist investigation

Works of repair in order of priority

- of utmost urgency
- essential within the next twelve months
- essential within the next five years
- advisable

See also the standard clauses which are part of the relevant schedules (eg, E & G):

13. Circulation of the QI report

Chapels or ancillary property: three copies of the report and Schedule 'G' are to be sent to the Circuit Property Secretary, who will send one set to the local Property Secretary and one set to the District Property Secretary.

Manses or other housing: three copies of the report and Schedule 'E' are to be sent to the Circuit Manse Property Secretary who will send one set to the Circuit Steward and one set to the District Manses Committee Secretary.

A copy of the report should be kept in the appropriate log book.

14. Further specialist testing or inspections

The QI may recommend further inspections or specialist testing of other services. The managing trustees should ensure that such recommendations are carried out, the cost of which will be additional to the cost of the QQ.

15. Subsequent action by the church

Managing trustees have the responsibility for taking all necessary action recommended in the QQ, and the QI will usually be willing to meet the trustees to discuss the position. If further work is required, or the preparation of drawings and specifications etc, then an appropriate fee needs to be agreed. The proposals may then need to be submitted on a schedule 1 as a property scheme.

16. Subsequent action by the circuit

It is the duty of the circuit through the Circuit Property Secretary to monitor the managing trustees' response to the QQ, and to bring to the attention of the circuit and the District Synod any serious cases where the church seems unable to take appropriate action. The district in consultation with the circuit will then approach the managing trustees to determine the best course of action.

17. References

Please see our information leaflets on the Methodist web site: www.methodist.org.uk/rm

These include:

Appointment of quinquennial inspectors - T16

New to property – a brief introduction for property stewards - T4

Manses: their valuation, acquisition & disposal - T11

Gas services – inspection and testing – T7

Electrical services –inspection and testing – T8

Manses Electrical Safety – inspection and testing – T8A

Asbestos – T12

Guidance on commissioning artwork

Property Points

See also:

The Anglican Churchcare website www.churchcare.co.uk for valuable guidance on the care and maintenance of church property and for the format recommended for the Inspection Report.

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