

The Connexional Team

02/10 Quinquennial Inspections

1. General

Please see the latest edition of Standing Orders for the most recent information, especially Standing Orders 931, 932, 934, 941, 952-954, 964 and 966

1.1 Quinquennial inspections involve a thorough survey of all aspects of a building's fabric and are intended to identify problems which have developed since the last time it was inspected and to establish priorities for repair to ensure the preservation of the fabric. Quinquennial inspections are generally frequent enough to catch problems before significant damage might occur.

1.2 The object of the inspection 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.

1.3 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.

1.4 In the case of Listed Chapels and property within Conservation areas, the importance of regular inspections by architects and surveyors who specialise in the conservation and repair of historic buildings cannot be over-emphasised. Historic and 'traditional' structures deteriorate in a manner that is very different from modern buildings and it takes a specialist to correctly distinguish defects that require attention from the superficial results of the ageing process. Successful identification of the cause of a problem depends on a thorough understanding of the way materials and structures work (not only traditional/historic but also modern and innovative materials) and on identifying the weak points of the building in question in particular.

It is vital that specialists remain up to date. Scientific approaches are continually breaking new ground, and some assumptions made in the recent past are now being questioned. It is widely

recognised that the inspection of churches requires specialist skills, but it is not always easy for members of the Circuit Meeting or Church Councils to determine which professionals have the skills required – in their view, some professionals seem to qualify solely because they have always qualified, and it is likely that many continue to practice methods which are now known to damage historic buildings, simply because they have not been required to keep abreast of current developments.

1.6 The Quinquennial inspection 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.

1.7 Churches are perhaps at their most vulnerable where building works are carried out without any professional involvement. Often building contractors are appointed to carry out minor repairs and maintenance work without professional guidance. Those responsible for appointments need to be aware of the importance of obtaining the very best advice where the inspection and the repair of historic buildings are concerned, as mistakes may not be immediately apparent but may leave an expensive legacy for the future.

1.8 The neglect of church buildings, or the avoidance of Quinquennial inspections, 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.

1.9 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.

2 Selection and appointment of Quinquennial Inspectors

2.1 Please see the separate information on 'Appointment of Quinquennial Inspectors'.

2.2 Churches are special buildings and therefore inspections 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.

3 Before the inspection and preparation of the report

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

- 3.1 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.
- 3.2 The managing trustees should inform the inspector 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).
- 3.3 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 inspector.
- 3.4 The report may indicate that further or more detailed investigations are necessary.
- 3.5 The submission of a copy of the Quinquennial Inspection report is a condition of the consent of any building scheme and may also be a requirement of any grant application.
- 3.6 Quinquennial inspection reports are required for all Model Trust property including all churches, halls, graveyards, etc., all manses or other housing and all property unless no longer required for any purpose with heads (b) to (o) of paragraph 13, Model Trusts or are demised on a full repairing lease for a term of not less than 10 years (SO 952(4)).

4 The Report

4.1 Format of the report

4.1.1 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 – Quinquennial inspectors who carry out inspections for both Anglican and Methodist churches will welcome the consistency (and have often adopted the previous Anglican recommendations).

4.2 Content of the report

4.2.1 A first report may be more detailed than subsequent reports prepared by the same inspector but these subsequent reports should not assume that the previous report is readily to hand for members of a Church Council. 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 report 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.

4.2.2 It is sometimes argued that the building and its condition is well known locally and that only a minimum report is necessary. However, the report 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 nor its specific constructional methods; also, the membership of Church Councils might well have changed. 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.

4.2.3 Sketch layouts can be helpful, but full measured drawings are not required. Digital photographs – particularly of areas not normally visible and of specific defects highlighted in the report - should be included.

4.2.4 The Quinquennial Inspection report must not be regarded as a specification for repairs, although the inspector may be asked subsequently to arrange for the works to be carried out.

4.3 Standard limitation/disclaimer clauses

4.3.1 It is normal for any survey to note various exclusions or limitations. There are good reasons for this, and some are required by the inspector’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.

5 After the report

5.1 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.

5.2 The inspector should be willing to meet the managing trustees to discuss the findings of the report, 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.

5.3 Instructions should be given to the inspector if further investigations are to be undertaken; or if the inspector 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.

5.4 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. If the building is Listed or in a Conservation Area, statutory consents will be required and any work must be discussed with the Conservation Officer.

6 Typical Layout for a Quinquennial Inspection report of a chapel or ancillary property – Appendix 1

7 Typical Layout for a Quinquennial inspection Report for a manse, other housing or property – see Appendix 2

Note The inspection report can be in either landscape or portrait format. The advantage of the landscape one is that photographs can be input against descriptive paragraphs; the portrait format has the photographs grouped after descriptions. The size of the photographs also differs, but that should be for the Circuit to discuss with the inspector.

8 Circulation of the Quinquennial inspection report

8.1 Chapels or ancillary property:

One digital copy of the report (either .pdf or word format) together with three 'hard' 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. A copy of the report should be kept in the appropriate log book.

8.2 Manses or other housing:

One digital copy of the report (either .pdf or word format) together with three 'hard' 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.

9 Further specialist testing or inspections

9.1 The Quinquennial inspector 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 report.

10 Subsequent action by the church

10.1 Managing trustees have the responsibility for taking all necessary action recommended in the report, and the inspector 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 become a project on the Consents website.

11 Subsequent action by the circuit

11.1 It is the duty of the circuit through the Circuit Property Secretary to monitor the managing trustees' response to the report, 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.

12 References

12.1 Please see further information on the Methodist web site:

<http://www.methodist.org.uk/ministers-and-office-holders/property/handbook>

These include:

New to property – a brief introduction for property stewards

Gas services – inspection and testing

Electrical services – inspection and testing

Manses Electrical Safety – inspection and testing

Manses: their valuation, acquisition & disposal

Asbestos

Appointment of quinquennial inspectors

Guidance on commissioning artwork

Property Matters

See also:

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

The National Churches Trust have webpages on managing church buildings:

<http://www.nationalchurchestrust.org/building-advice/managing-your-building> or their site for maintenance: <http://www.maintenancebooker.org.uk/>

Contacts:

The Support Services Cluster

Facilities and Property Coordinator (London). Tel: 0207 467 5190

Conservation Officer (Manchester). Tel: 0161 235 6739

Registered charity no 1132208

Appendices

Appendix 1

Typical Layout for a Quinquennial Inspection report of a chapel or ancillary property

The format given below for reports is recommended, although other arrangements may be acceptable by prior agreement. Occasionally, a 'room-by-room' description may 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.

Photographs

The inclusion of photographs to explain a particular defect is now a requirement; inspectors should recognise that not all members of a church council are experienced in building constructional methods and a photograph will do much to explain a defect. It should also be recognised that the Inspection Report will be seen by others not familiar with the building details.

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, disposal systems and flashings

- Parapets and upstand walls, finials, crosses
- Walling and pointing, foundations, lintels, copings, cills, structural condition
- Doors and windows, and surrounds
- State of paintwork
- Glazing and casements; safety glazing
- Tower or spire, finials, safety, clock faces

Interior

- Interior of tower or spire
- Clocks, bells and frames (if any)
- Roof and ceiling voids and ventilation
- Presence of bats and other protected species
- Roof structures, ceilings, ventilation
- Upper floors, balconies, access stairways
- Partitions, screens, panelling, doors
- Floors, Platforms
- Internal wall/ceiling finishes, decorations
- Monuments, tombs etc
- Toilets, kitchen, vestries, meeting rooms etc
- Fittings, fixtures, furniture and moveable articles
- Organ
- Asbestos

Churchyard and environs

- Detached halls
- Boundary walls, railings and fencing, gates
- Paths and access issues, hardstanding areas and parking
- Below ground drainage
- 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)

- Access, including facilities for the disabled

Services, installations and other matters

- Heating (including fuel (gas, oil, etc) boilers, radiators, etc)
- Electrical (including incoming mains, consumer unit, lighting and power)
- Solar or PV Panels
- 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** - Of utmost urgency
- B** - Essential within the next twelve months
- C** - Essential within the next five years
- D** - Requires attention within the quinquennial period
- E** - A desirable improvement with no timescale

NOTE D and E may be combined, in which case the attention period would be within the Quinquennial period

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 recommendations and will if requested prepare specification, seek tenders and oversee 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 District Property Secretary.
- Fire Safety Advice can be obtained from Methodist Insurance.
(<http://www.methodistinsurance.co.uk/images/me553%20mic%20church%20guidance%20notes%20-%20fire.pdf>)
- Electrical Installation: Any electrical installation should be tested at least every five years. The inspection and testing should be carried out in accordance with IEE Regulations and an inspection certificate obtained in every case. The certificate to 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. 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.
- **Equality Act 2010 (Formerly Disability Discrimination Act):** The Managing Trustees should ensure that they have understood their responsibilities under the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 now superseded by the Equality Act 2010.
- **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, its use and relevance to the Mission. 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.

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

Appendix 2

Typical Layout for a Quinquennial inspection Report for a 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

A - Of utmost urgency

B - Essential within the next twelve months

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D - Requires attention within the quinquennial period

E - A desirable improvement with no timescale

NOTE D and E may be combined, in which case the attention period would be within the Quinquennial period

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