

MANSE GUIDELINES

as amended to take account of National Manse guidelines
approved by General Assembly 2003

The Manse is an important factor in the life of the pastorate, not merely in the life of the minister and his or her family. Too small, and there is no possibility of a study, or private conversations with people seeking help, consolation and advice. Too large, and the heating and repair bills become astronomic. Provide for an unmarried person, and the next minister will in all probability have a number of children!

This requirement for flexibility should be carefully considered when the manse is purchased. In the case of smaller modern properties care should be taken that there is adequate accommodation for interviews when the study itself is not large enough for that purpose. The choice and maintenance of a manse therefore calls for a good deal of attention and a fair amount of expenditure.

To the minister, the facilities in the manse provided represent not only a considerable part of their remuneration but an indication of the care and esteem of the church for the minister, so that a poor manse may be a disincentive both to minister and family. The manse is not merely a home for the minister and their family. It is also their "office", the base of his work and ministry.

To the church, the manse may well be an extension of the church premises for small meetings and groups. It is also a sizeable and saleable investment. Churches should avoid as far as possible the need to change a manse each time a minister is called – although there may be circumstances when this may be necessary.

The enclosed notes try to set out some of the points that should be borne in mind. Assembly recognised, as this Synod has always done, that in seeking to set guidelines it is important to offer some flexibility to take account of local circumstances. For example, it is felt that a garage *should* be provided and indeed that should be seen as a requirement. But it has to be recognised that this is not always a practical possibility. It may not be possible for a variety of reasons wholly to realise the standard of accommodation and facilities aimed at, but we feel it may help any churches envisaging the purchase of a new manse or thinking of replacing or upgrading the present one to see how the standard of accommodation offered matches up to what seems to be ideal as a dwelling and a place of work.

Within that flexibility Synods should take care to ensure that standards are maintained when considering the provision of manse accommodation. A responsibility is placed upon District Councils – taking advice from Synod – to take note of the condition and facilities of the manse or, if alternative arrangements are to be made, should approve the details of the arrangement. These considerations should be undertaken before a vacancy is declared and certainly before concurring in Calls, and regularly thereafter.

TYPE AND LOCATION

- (a) The building should conform to the number of rooms specified; over-large accommodation would increase the burden of maintenance and running costs.
- (b) The age and condition of the building, and its location, should be such that in the event of resale the property would be an attractive proposition to would-be buyers and thereby a sound investment of the Church's resources.
- (c) The house should be of good sound construction. Where the purchase of older-type property is contemplated, extra care should be taken to ensure that the initial cost of bringing the house up to standard plus possible future increased maintenance and running costs would not present the Church with an uneconomic proposition.

A full professional survey must be obtained prior to the purchase and this should be carefully assessed. It is important to give consideration to the condition of the roof, walls, gutters, wall plaster, glass, drainage, water supply, gas & electricity installations, ventilation and woodwork. Internal decoration may present less of a problem if the structure is sound. Poor external decoration may point to structural problems e.g. rotting woodwork and this should be looked at with great care.

Redecoration work may be relatively inexpensive – but to remedy structural defects can be very costly.

- (d) It is important that the house should be located in an area where it is considered that property values in the future would be maintained or appreciate. Where possible, it is also desirable that it should be reasonably accessible to the congregation(s), whilst at the same time affording a degree of privacy for the occupants yet within a community and with reasonable access to schools, shops, public transport, etc.

HEATING AND HOT WATER SYSTEMS

The manse should have full central heating with an appropriate water heating system. When considering the type of heating and hot water systems to be used, regard should be paid to the present and future availability of the different fuels and their relative costs; to the Church's obligations to meet those costs; and to the need to meet the occupants' reasonable requirements.

To achieve economy in both fuel and money, churches should examine closely ways and means of effecting savings by the following measures:

loft insulation

draught excluders in appropriate places

regular servicing of heating systems

lagging of pipes and hot water cisterns

double glazing, particularly where large areas of glass are involved.

RECOMMENDED ACCOMMODATION AND FITTINGS ETC.

This should include:

Dining Room

Lounge

Kitchen: large enough to accommodate kitchen, table and chairs or breakfast bar and including:-
modern sink and double draining board
cooker - gas or electric
adequate closed cupboards, shelves and working spaces
provision for food storage and storage of kitchen utensils
Hot and cold running water
gas and electric supply to cater for either types of domestic appliances

Bedrooms: not less than 3, but 4 if possible of reasonable size able to accommodate at least two people.

Hall: large enough to include provision for cloaks.

Study: downstairs if possible and large enough to accommodate:-

desk and chair

two other chairs

telephone

bookshelves

filing cabinet

Bathroom and toilet: fitted with modern equipment to include bath, shower, washbasin, toilet, towel rail, hot and cold water supply.

A downstairs toilet: is seen as essential.

General All rooms should contain curtain rails and light fittings and should have adequate power points and telephone points.

External doors and windows should have adequate security locks.

Garage: large enough for storage space and / or adequate parking

Grounds: paths, gates and fences in satisfactory repair. Sufficient ground to provide amenity value for occupants. The garden should be capable of being easily cared for by the Minister yet not providing him with an intolerable burden in keeping it in reasonable condition.

Storage Space: There is a need for storage space within a Manse to allow Ministers to store items of furniture, curtains etc. which cannot be accommodated in the new manse yet may be needed in a future pastorate.