
Your Quinquennial Inspection

The Inspection of Churches Measure 1955 requires every church to be inspected on a five year cycle by an approved architect or building surveyor, who will report on the condition of the building and recommend any works required. The Secretary of the Diocesan Advisory Committee (DAC) oversees the timing of inspections and keeps a register of buildings in this Scheme.

What does the inspection entail?

The inspection is visual, made from ground level, ladders and any accessible vantage points. Only selected areas are examined in detail; parts of the structure, which are inaccessible, enclosed, or covered, need not normally be opened up unless specifically requested. The inspection includes so far as practicable all features of the building, and covers all aspects of conservation and repair but does not include organs, for which a separate system now exists. The Parochial Church Council should provide ladders and attendance as necessary in accordance with the Health and Safety at Work Act, 1974. The architect or surveyor will recommend what is required to complete the survey, including any uncovering of concealed spaces which is considered prudent, subject to the obtaining of any necessary authority.

What happens after that?

Within one month, the architect or surveyor will send reports to the Parochial Church Council, to the incumbent, and to the archaeological adviser:

David Baker 3 Oldway, Bletsoe, BEDFORD. MK44 1QG

Two copies will also be sent to the Secretary of the DAC, who will forward one to the relevant Archdeacon. We prefer these to be sent by e-mail. A further copy will be retained by the architect or surveyor.

How much should we expect to pay for the report?

As the architect's or surveyor's fees for an inspection, together with reasonable expenses, are paid by the Parochial Church Council, the basis should be agreed between the parties *before* it takes place and should have regard to the Conditions of Engagement laid down by the relevant professional body. The Parochial Church Council should ask for an estimate of the total cost for the inspection, including the preparation of the report and the visit to present it to the PCC, before it is carried out.

What will the report tell us?

The report and recommendations will be set out as on pages 2 & 3. It will indicate, by a number in the right hand margin, the priority of recommended repairs:

- Category 1: of utmost urgency
- Category 2: essential within the next 18 months
- Category 3: essential within the next 5 years
- Category 4: within the next 10 years
- Category 5: items of routine maintenance
- Category 6: items requiring specialist advice

The report will also summarize the recommendations in order of priority and suggest a feasible timescale within which necessary works might be tackled. A separate report, confidential to the churchwardens, should identify any particular article (include a moveable article) which is considered to be:

- i) of outstanding architectural, artistic, historical or archaeological value; or
- ii) of significant monetary value; or
- iii) at special risk of being stolen or damaged.

So can we get straight on?

The report is *not* a specification for repairs and will be written as simply as possible to allow you an easy overview of the situation. So before proceeding with any of the work other than routine maintenance, you should obtain a proper specification from your professional adviser. If this is acceptable to the PCC, it should be sent for consideration by the Diocesan Advisory Committee. In giving their response, the Advisory Committee will indicate whether a faculty or some less formal authority is required for the work. You can find out more about this from the DAC's leaflets - Schedules A & B. If appropriate, a faculty petition form will be sent to the applicant, together with further instructions as to how to proceed. When completed, the petition and supporting papers should be sent to the Diocesan Registrar.

Is that the whole story?

Not necessarily! Serious trouble can develop between quinquennial surveys if minor defects are left unattended. Therefore, the law also requires the churchwardens to inspect or cause a careful inspection of the fabric to be made once a year and to report on this to the PCC meeting before the APCM. If agreed, the report then goes to the APCM itself. It is strongly recommended that the churchwardens should arrange for immediate attention to such minor matters as displaced slates and leaking pipes.

OUTLINE FORMAT OF THE QUINQUENNIAL REPORT

1. Summary of works carried out since last inspection
(This information will be compiled with the help of the PCC)
2. General Condition of the fabric
3. Outside walls, *(including masonry of windows and doors, but excluding tower and/or spire)* with notes on foundations, buttresses, stability, dampness etc.
4. Windows, Glazing and Ventilation
5. Tower and Spire
6. Roofs, including coverings, structures and ceilings but excluding tower
7. Lightning Conductor *(date of last test and result)*
8. Rainwater gutters, downpipes, and surface water drainage systems
9. Bells, Bellframe & Clock
10. Internal walls
11. Internal partitions, screens, doors, plaster and decorative state
12. Floors and galleries
13. Furniture and fittings, including pews and other seating
14. Monuments, brasses, etc.

15. Heating System
 - i) Date of last service
 - ii) Boiler
 - iii) Flue
 - iv) Fuel storage
 - v) Safety
 - vi) Efficiency
 - vii) Insulation
16. Electrical System (*lighting and power*) (*include date of last test*)
17. External iron and wood, including condition of paintwork
18. Fire Precautions
 - i) Number, type and location of fire extinguishers
 - ii) Is there a fire plan?
 - iii) Is there a fire risk assessment?
 - iv) General
19. Sanitary Facilities and Foul Drainage
20. Churchyard, including boundary walls, fences, gates, paths, trees and any monuments or memorials that are of special merit.
21. Tree Preservation Orders
22. Recommendations as to steps to be taken for the general care of the buildings and its contents.
23. Recommendations to meet Disability Discrimination Act requirements
24. Recommendations for grants from outside sources
25. Security
 - i) Can outside doors be securely locked, and how?
 - ii) Can vestry door be locked, and how?
 - iii) What is the condition of the vestry safe?
 - iv) General security of the building and contents.

Appendix 1.

Priority summary list of recommended repairs and timescale.

Appendix 2.

Key plan of church. (*This is helpful for orientation within the text*)

Date of report

Signature of architect or surveyor

Further reading

The Church Buildings Council publishes: 'A Guide to Church Inspection and Repair' available from Diocesan Resource Centre,
tel: 01727 818158 e-mail: resources@stalbans.anglican.org

Additional information and advice is available from the DAC team:

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