



THE QUINQUENNIAL INSPECTION

The five yearly report on the state of the Church building – The Quinquennial Inspection – is one of the most important tools a Churchwarden has in maintaining the fabric. The report usually includes a list of recommended works in order of urgency.

All the repairs specified in the Quinquennial Inspection report require a detailed specification and schedule of works before they can be undertaken. The specification will require the consideration of the DAC before a petition for a faculty can be made to the Chancellor. It is at this point that problems so often begin. While the job may look to be a small piece of work, undertaken incorrectly it may well lead to a more major problem. The cost of the architect's fees for the preparation of a good specification will certainly be worth it in the long run. A local builder may be an expert on new houses or factories but the repair of an ancient church requires skills that most jobbing builders simply do not possess nowadays. Even something as simple looking as repointing can have its pitfalls: too hard a mortar mix and a few frosts and the bricks or stonework around the repair may well start to fracture.

It is not appropriate or good practice to photocopy extracts from the inspection report and use them to obtain quotations from local contractors. QI reports are not meant to be used for such purposes.

The DAC have asked every inspecting architect to ensure that they have a copy of the Church's most recent electrical test certificate at hand when preparing their Quinquennial Inspection report. A copy of this will be bound into the report itself. **Churchwardens must therefore ensure that a current test certificate is available and must give the architect a copy when he visits the church for his inspection.**

❖ Interior alterations

Reordering, rewiring, redecoration and new heating systems should all be undertaken after consultation with your inspecting architect or surveyor: the DAC will need to know that such consultation has been undertaken even if a specialist is offering advice or preparing a detailed specification of the proposed works. It is often advisable and in the interests of the parish for their architect (or other independent adviser) to check and sign off the work on completion. The DAC will usually recommend that the church architect directs the work and it is not an uncommon practice for such a proviso to be made on the DAC certificate.

Reordering is a skilled job for which the DAC expects architect's drawings. It often involves new furniture and relocating pulpits, lecterns, fonts and pews. An architect's eye is essential.

If structural work is involved it may be wise to discuss with your architect necessary supervision and, at the same time, negotiate a sensible fee. Architects may not have to set fees as a percentage of the overall costs and can be engaged on an hourly basis or whatever seems appropriate to the task.

Redecoration needs your architect's advice on two counts, first, materials, and, secondly, colour schemes (see the DAC's advice note 6 on Materials for Church Decoration). More damage has been done to churches in recent years by the DIY enthusiast with a paintbrush than in any other field. Churches cannot and must not be treated like your own home. They behave differently, are usually of traditional construction and have more variable and extreme temperature conditions. Changes of colour call for an artist's eye, especially if they are to enhance the building and its worship. Architects should be consulted about colour changes and paint materials.

Rewiring usually means relighting and that, like redecorating, can have an enormous effect upon the visual appearance of your church. Good lighting is not easy to achieve and requires specialist skills. Time spent with your architect and/or lighting designer may in the long run save you both time and expense.

A new **heating** system today usually means new fittings. Heating appliances have never been glamorous and great care has to be taken not only to achieve an efficient system for your congregation but one that is aesthetically acceptable and does not harm the building. This is what your architect is trained to do. He may well wish to work with a heating engineer who will offer technical advice but he will want to advise about the setting and concealment of heaters. Satisfactory heating often depends upon it looking good as well as feeling good.

❖ **New Work**

New work is an area where the partnership between parish and architect is often seen at its best. It is also in this field that the role of the architect is seen most clearly in contrast to that of the builder. The architect is briefed, or compiles a brief together with the parish members, and responds to that brief. He designs, taking into account the surrounding buildings, planning needs and regulations. He prepares production drawings, specifies materials and their use. He advises on the need for other consultants and specialists. He sets up building contracts and visits the site, as appropriate, to inspect the progress and quality of the work. He administers the terms of the building contract and generally looks after your interests.

The architect who is engaged to design a new hall or redesign the interior of the church need not be the same as the one who carries out the Quinquennial inspection. Architects understand this well since a wide variety of skills are needed for their work and you may need to choose someone who has a practical flair for a particular task. However, it is both good manners and good practice to let your regular architect know what you are hoping to do and assess his feelings before bringing in another professional.

❖ **Summary**

The key to good care of your church building is having a sound working relationship with your architect or surveyor. Although an inspecting architect or surveyor is only appointed for the purpose of the Quinquennial Inspection, there is a great deal to be said for keeping to the same person, each time and year after year. It makes for better planning and programming of work

over a number of years, and it ensures that an established professional relationship develops that can be both helpful and creative.

A long term relationship also means the architect or surveyor 'learns' a great deal about your church, about its history, its construction, and, most importantly, its problems. Such knowledge and information is added to at the time of each succeeding inspection or detailed survey, and also of course when repairs are undertaken. Your architect or surveyor should be regarded as the church's GP.

The DAC strongly recommends that the inspecting architect and author of the Quinquennial Inspection report should be the same person who administers and directs any subsequent repairs

If, however, you are not satisfied with the work of your inspecting architect or surveyor, you should discuss the matter with your archdeacon. You can appoint another architect from the approved list held by the DAC office, subject to informing the DAC Secretary in writing of your intention. Do not forget that it is the parish who employs the architect, not the other way round!

The care of an ancient building is a complex matter and many items, for example bells, monuments, stained glass etc, need specialist skills. Your architect is sometimes only one of the experts the parish needs to advise them. Your architect will have names of such contractors but the DAC will be more than pleased to supply them too.

Take good care of your architect and so help him to take good care of your church.