

Recommended Manse Requirements

The following material is made available by the Ministry and Mission Committee to assist congregations when preparing to build, buy or rent a house to be used as a residence for a minister or when considering the provision of an accommodation allowance.

Configuration

The report of the Ministry and Mission Committee to the State Assembly in 1998 described an adequate manse as,

a mutually acceptable dwelling house or unit containing at least a main bedroom plus the number of bedrooms sufficient to house all children of the family which can be shared by not more than two children of the same sex. It should also contain a room of reasonable size for use by the minister for prayer, study and counselling. This room should be accessible without the need to enter the family living area.

By common consent, the following requirements are also agreed across the church:

- Manses may be built of brick, timber or such other material as the congregation, the presbytery and the Trustees may approve.
- A second toilet should be located close to the study, if possible.
- The lounge room should be large to facilitate the exercise of hospitality and the conduct of meetings such as Bible studies should the minister so desire.
- A living room for the minister's family should be separated from the study and lounge room so that privacy is guarded and family disruption is minimised.
- A lock-up garage (or a carport with lock up storage room) should also be provided.

Contents of manse

The same report restated the required contents of a manse (as expressed in The Code II 1.26(b)) as follows:

Rent-free occupation of a suitable residence which should include, at least, floor-coverings, front door security screen, window blinds, curtains, refrigerator, washing machine, hot water, and adequate bookshelves in the study, ...

Evaluation of manse proposals

Beyond these statements, there are no set requirements for a manse. Instead, each presbytery is expected to ensure that appropriate accommodation will be provided for a minister. This matter should be considered:

- before a presbytery approves plans for the construction of a manse;
- during any vacancy and prior to its approval of proposed Terms of Call or
- during an established ministry, before it approves variations to existing Terms of Settlement.



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Presbyteries are empowered to withhold such approvals until they are satisfied that a suitable provision has been made.

House Rental

Where a house will be rented for a minister, the church will be responsible for the full costs of rental plus the provision of the inclusions listed above as “Contents of a Manse”.

Housing Allowance

Where an allowance is to be provided so that a minister might choose his own accommodation, the church is not required to provide the said inclusions and the allowance will be determined through negotiation between the minister and the Committee of Management based on the following resolution of the Assembly (recorded at Min. 142(11)B in the 1998 Blue Book).

If a Manse Allowance is to be provided in lieu of a manse, the allowance should be calculated by the following formula:

- (a) For parish ministers: rental value of a suitable house or unit, meeting the minimum requirements for a manse within the boundaries of the parish, calculated as the average of at least two appraisals from independent licensed real estate agents within the parish boundaries indexed yearly by reference to [the] rental property component in [the] CPI. The amount of the allowance must also be approved by the Presbytery and the Ministry and Mission Committee.
- (b) For Assembly appointees not in parish ministry, a sum not less than \$8,500. The amount of the allowance must also be approved by the Ministry and Mission Committee.

The 2005 Assembly refined the application of paragraph (b) with the following resolution (recorded at Min. 33(1)F in the 2005 Blue Book).

Manse Allowance:

Where a manse allowance is provided, reference should be made to GANSW 1998, BB Min. 142(11)B, provided that the amount determined as payable to a minister not serving in a pastoral charge shall be calculated on a basis consistent with the formula applicable to a minister in a pastoral charge.

Further information

Should you have further questions in relation to this subject, please direct them to the Ministry and Mission Committee by:

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