



# Presbyterian Church of Australia

in the State of New South Wales

## GUIDELINES FOR BUYING OR BUILDING A MANSE

When Committees of Management are asked to consider the accommodation needs of ministry staff, difficulties can arise in determining what is an adequate standard for a manse. The attached document titled *Design Guidelines for Manses* has been prepared by the Superintendent of Ministry & Mission to assist local church officers in their task.

The core principles of the *Design Guidelines* can be summarised as follows –

A home provided for a minister should be configured to do two things:

- (i) Maximise relational opportunities for the minister's family so that church-related activities do not interfere unnecessarily with domestic activity or intrude upon a family's privacy; and
- (ii) Maximise the ministry potential of the home.

These principles require a manse to include –

- Not less than four bedrooms;
- Two separate living rooms;
- A study with ample book shelves and sufficient area to accommodate two desks and ideally with both external and internal access;
- At least two toilets with one to be near the living room that will be used for ministry and other meetings so as to be accessible without disturbing the minister's family; and
- A lock-up garage for at least one car.

The Trustees when considering a request from a Committee of Management to purchase or construct a residence for use as a manse will defer to the *Design Guidelines* issued by Ministry and Mission to determine whether the proposed residence is suitable for use as a manse.

In addition I do remind all church officers that the usual requirements of *The Code* must be complied with when requesting approval from the Trustees for the purchase of an existing property (*Part III C2.7*) or the construction of a new residence (*Part III C2.2 and C2.6*).

If your Committee is considering buying or building a manse please contact the Rev Matthew Oates, Superintendent of Ministry and Mission (phone 9690-9337 or email [moates@pcnsw.org.au](mailto:moates@pcnsw.org.au)) as soon as possible to discuss whether the proposed residence is suitable for use as a manse, before approaching either Presbytery or the Trustees.

If you have any questions about *The Code* requirements or obtaining the approval of the Trustees then please do not hesitate to contact me.

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# Design Guidelines For Manses

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# Design Guidelines

## For Manses within the Presbyterian Church (NSW)



### 1. GENERAL

The accommodation of ministers is a continuing challenge for the Presbyterian Church. To help congregations considering this challenge, the Ministry and Mission Committee has provided these design guidelines. They should be applied at the design stage where a church is proposing to construct a manse. They should also be applied at the analysis stage where a church is proposing to purchase an existing dwelling and use it as a manse.

Before that decision is made, however, the first issue to be faced is this: should a church provide a house for occupancy by successive ministers (i.e. a “manse”), should it rent a house, or should it provide a residential allowance so that ministers might acquire their own homes?

Different considerations apply for each scenario and each alternative has both advantages and disadvantages. This paper sets out, therefore, to do three things:

- (i) outline some of the advantages and disadvantages of the first and third alternatives,
- (ii) describe what should be included in a manse if a church provides a house for the minister, and
- (iii) consider what is required if a church provides a manse allowance.

These factors are addressed against the backdrop of relevant recommendations made to the Assembly by the Ministry and Mission Committee in 1998 and the Assembly’s subsequent decisions.<sup>1</sup>

#### 1.1 ON PROVIDING A MANSE:

Providing a house has several advantages for a church but few for a minister and his family. It makes it possible for a church to call a minister and have him live in the area without that minister having to be able to buy a house there. Few ministers would be able to secure accommodation in, say, Rose Bay. It may also give a sense of stability within the parish in that people know where the minister lives. Further, it secures a significant asset for the congregation and prevents the erosion of capital. There are, however, real (and sometimes expensive) maintenance obligations.

From the minister’s perspective, living in a church house can have undesirable consequences. Ministers and their families frequently feel restricted in what they can do with the house since it belongs to someone else. Many churches fail to inspect their manses to ascertain emerging maintenance issues, leaving it to the minister to inform the Committee of Management when a matter needs attention. Ministers, not wanting to appear “grasping”, and often aware that the church is short of funds, are reluctant to draw attention to such situations. Also, from time to time, some ministers, exhausted by the demands of ministry, might happily find other employment for a time if only they had somewhere to live. But they do not. They occupy ministerial offices without the energy to engage in effective ministry and so perpetuate a cycle of negativity. And should they die, become seriously ill, or become incapacitated, they or their family will feel obligated (if not be required) to vacate the manse quickly so that someone else can move in and take over not only their job but their “home”. At the end of their ministerial service, ministers who have lived in church houses complete their service with no place to call their own and no inheritance for their children.

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<sup>1</sup> Attention is drawn to GANSW BB 1998 p.23 and also to GANSW BB 1998 Min. 142 11 (B).

In addition to these considerations, the location of many manses has been identified as a source of difficulty on many occasions. While it is convenient for the minister to live beside the church, and while it is cheaper for the church to consolidate its assets in one place, that practice is unhelpful. It isolates the minister and his family from the community by minimising their potential for engagement with neighbours. It intrudes upon the privacy and independence of the minister's family. And it subtly imposes on the minister the expectation that he will attend to **all** of the church's needs, including those of the janitor, the security officer, and the doorman. He will give access to the buildings for all manner of functions, tidy up after other people have used the facilities, and then ensure that the buildings are safely secured. These distractions militate against effective ministry and undermine the application of Biblical priorities.

Many of these disadvantages may be overcome where a church provides a residential allowance to enable the minister to secure his own accommodation. And the cost, on examination, is similar. Where a church provides a house, capital gain on that house accrues to the church's advantage but the income that could otherwise have been gained on the value of the manse, had it been invested in appropriate income-generating assets, is foregone. The opportunity cost associated with investing in a manse is significant, even if, being unseen, it is rarely considered. Should a church provide a residential allowance so that the minister – like anyone else in the community – might buy his own home, the capital gain accrues to his estate but the church enjoys a rate of return on its investment that almost always outstrips the rate of capital gain while not incurring costs for maintenance, rates or insurance. Additionally, where a minister is receiving a residential allowance, churches are not required to provide white goods, floor coverings, window coverings, security doors or book shelves, contrary to the church's obligation where it provides a manse.

Where a church does elect to provide a house for ministerial occupancy, the house will, necessarily, be substantial. It will be expected to serve several different families through various stages of life and last for many years. It will therefore have to be large enough to allow for occupancy by larger families. In all likelihood, it will also be occupied by children, and so will have to be of solid and durable construction with a low maintenance requirement.

Such a home should be configured to do two things:

- (i) maximise relational opportunities for the minister's family so that church-related activities do not interfere unnecessarily with domestic activity or intrude upon the family's privacy, and
- (ii) maximise the ministry potential of the home. With what has been written earlier, these factors will require a manse to include:
  - not less than four bedrooms,
  - two separate living rooms,
  - a study with ample book shelves and sufficient area to accommodate two desks (this room, ideally, to have both external and internal access),
  - at least two toilets (one to be near the living room that will be used for ministry and other meetings and so to be accessible without disturbing the minister's family) or passing by the family bedrooms, and
  - a lock-up garage for at least one car.

## **1.2 ON RENTING SUITABLE ACCOMMODATION**

The requirements imposed on a church providing a manse do not fully apply where the church rents a house. In that situation it will be sufficient for the church to rent "a mutually acceptable 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." Where a house is rented, the church will still be responsible to provide a refrigerator and washing machine and to ensure that there are suitable floor coverings and window coverings, and that the study is equipped with sufficient bookshelves. (If the church provides the minister with an office away from the home, there will be no need to duplicate office facilities in the home, hence there will be no need to provide the additional room or the bookshelves for this purpose.)

### **1.3 ON PROVIDING A RESIDENTIAL ALLOWANCE:**

Where a church provides a residential allowance, it should ensure that the amount to be paid will bear a reasonable relationship to the market rate for the rental of a house or unit as described in the preceding paragraph, but it will not be required to provide for any of the contents of the home. In this regard, the Assembly determined (BB 1998 Min. 142 11B) as follows:

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.<sup>2</sup>

The congregation's intention, to provide either a manse or a manse allowance, should be clearly stated in the Terms of Call or Terms of Appointment. Once those Terms have been approved by the presbytery and the Ministry and Mission Committee and accepted by a minister, they may not be changed except by consent of the congregation and all other relevant parties. That means that a minister, while he may propose to the Committee of Management that he would like to live in his own home and receive a manse allowance, has no automatic right to make that choice. Nor does the congregation have the right to turn a minister out of the manse should it find a more lucrative arrangement. The matter is subject to debate and negotiation through which neither the congregation nor the minister should be disadvantaged. Where Terms of Call have been accepted and have thus become Terms of Settlement, any variation to those terms through alteration of the residential arrangement may involve significant changes to the budget upon which the Terms of Call have been framed. These factors should be fully considered so that an outcome is achieved which is not only fair to all parties but involves mutual benefits.

In ascertaining a reasonable rental, it may be necessary to have regard to differences in the type and quality of residences that are within a reasonable distance of the church or ministry centre so that a genuine average is obtained and not one which is biased towards either a cheaper or dearer part of a parish. Establishing a reasonable basis for rental may be assisted by reference to the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS).

Where a minister is provided with a residential allowance, the amount of that allowance must be reviewed annually. To that end, the Assembly will determine an appropriate indexation in line with advice from the ABS. Any such allowance should be paid into the minister's benefit account and be regarded as "fringe benefits in lieu of, and equivalent in value to, a manse allowance determined in accordance with the Assembly-approved formula".

### **1.4 SAMPLE PLANS**

The Ministry and Mission Committee is compiling a folio of tried and tested plans and these are available on request to stimulate thinking and enhance the design process. Standard project house designs do not normally prove satisfactory as manses. Although some project home companies may adapt their designs to meet the Church's standards, it will normally be necessary for manses to be designed uniquely to allow for the variety of properties and locations on which they will be

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<sup>2</sup> BB 1998 Min. 142 11B (a) continues in force, but paragraph (b) is no longer relevant.

built as well as the individual need, tastes and budget of congregations and the impression they want to convey in their local communities.

## 2. SITING

The following matters should be considered in siting a manse:

- the aspect of the building.
  - major living spaces including external living areas should be oriented to the north or north east
  - the building should be protected from the severe western sun, particularly in summer
- taking advantage of cool summer breezes, or protecting against prevailing strong winds
- provision of an adequate sunny private drying area
- outlook from the building and yard
- privacy of the family areas related to visibility to and from the remainder of the site or adjacent sites, noise privacy from potential noisy activities on the site or adjacent to it
- the long term potential of the site and the need for future extension or development either of the manse or of other church buildings if the manse is located in the church complex
- security for young children and pets etc. straying from the yard
- the need for private access for cars and visitors apart from church activities
- the preferred distance of the manse from the street, either with its own frontage or behind the church

## 3. DESIGN AND MATERIALS

The following factors should be considered in design and choice of materials:

- several activities may take place in a manse at the same time, both work and family focused
- low maintenance materials should be used, particularly on the exterior of the building
- painted timberwork should be kept to a minimum externally
- the local environment may render some materials unsuitable: e.g. concrete roof tiles are not good in coastal areas and some cheaper bricks generate problems by containing, absorbing or retaining salts etc.
- eaves should have good overhangs, particularly in hot areas, to provide shade to windows
- verandahs or hoods should be provided to all external doorways to provide protection from the weather both to the door and to visitors waiting at the entrance
- entry doors to the office and the residence should be distinct and easily recognisable in order to preserve the privacy appropriate to both uses
- provide good lighting to all external doors steps and paths
- keep external doors to a minimum and provide all doors with security locks and security screens
- window sills should be low enough to see out of windows comfortably when seated at a desk, particularly for the study
- where possible orient the residence to locate major window areas to the north and east and do not provide large unshaded windows in western walls
- ceiling insulation should always be provided
- double sided anti-glare sarking should be provided to all tiled roofs
- consider good sun-shading to any exposed windows
- a garage must always be provided (with room for two cars). Where possible there should be direct access from the garage to the house.
- the following relationships between rooms are desirable:
  - the kitchen should be separable from both the dining/living area and the family area
  - there should be a door separating the entrance hall or foyer from the bedroom areas
  - bedrooms and bathrooms should not open directly off the family room, entrance hall or living areas
  - the main bedroom should not be separated from the family area

- the study should be either adjacent to the front door or have a separate entrance at the front of the residence
- the visitors' toilet should be adjacent to the study and living area.

## 4. REQUIREMENTS OF ROOMS

### 4.1 ROOM SIZES

The minimum room sizes allowable are:

ROOM NAME	DIMENSIONS	AREA
	Metres	m2
Lounge (if separate room)	5.5 x 3.7	20
Dining (if separate room)	3.4 x 3.0 (4.0 x 2.4)	10
Lounge / Dining (if combined)		29
Study	4x2.6 (3.7 x 3.7)	10
Family room	3 x 5	15
Bedroom 1	3.7 x 3.5	13
Bedrooms 2-4	3.3 x 3.3	11
Kitchen		

Note: these are minimum sizes only. Actual room sizes should be determined according to the particular needs and budget of a Congregation.

### 4.2 LOUNGE ROOM

- The living room should be large enough to hold small church meetings, e.g. for groups of up to 15 people.
- It should be well ventilated and well lit.
- It should be designed to accommodate a piano on an internal wall with minimum disruption to the seating layout.

### 4.3 DINING ROOM

- While the dining room may be separate from the lounge room, it is preferable that it be connected to the lounge through an arch or similar device. If it opens off the lounge room it can be used as an adjunct to the lounge room for larger functions.
- it should be capable of holding an extended dining table with at least 8 chairs and a sideboard.
- The dining room should not be a thoroughfare to other rooms and should be separated from the kitchen by a door.

### 4.4 STUDY

- The study should be capable of containing the following furniture:
  - desk (approx. 1800 x 850) and chair
  - visitors' chairs (either 4 small chairs or 2 comfortable chairs)
  - filing cabinet
  - desk or desk-return for computer
  - shelving (minimum 27.5 linear metres of various heights, preferably adjustable)
  - cupboard space (either built in perhaps under bookshelves or freestanding).
- The doors and windows should be arranged to allow adequate space for furnishings.

- Access to the study for visitors coming to the manse should be possible without being seen by the family. Likewise, visitors should not be able to see into (or have to pass through) family areas.
- The study must be properly soundproofed particularly if adjacent to family areas. This can be achieved in the following ways:
  - using 16mm plasterboard on walls
  - providing 12mm caneite or noise stop board behind plasterboard to internal walls
  - providing 50mm fibreglass insulation to stud walls maintaining an air space on one side of the insulation
  - providing fibreglass insulation to the ceiling area
  - fitting doors with seals on all sides (such as Raven seals)
  - providing solid core doors to the study
  - locating bookshelves on internal walls to increase the mass of the wall
  - providing pinboards over walls.

All of these techniques will reduce sound transmission although the last two will have a minimal effect.

#### **4.5 TOILETS**

- At least two toilets are required for all manses. One should be adjacent to the study.
- All toilets should have a small hand basin in them or immediately adjacent to them.
- All toilets must be fitted with exhaust fans.
- There must not be a direct view from any other room to the WC and care should be taken to avoid reflections from WC's to other areas.

#### **4.6 KITCHEN**

- The kitchen should be located to allow vision to the family area and to outside play areas.
- The kitchen must be adequate for the family and for entertaining for the congregation.
- General requirements for the kitchen are:
  - hard-wearing cupboards and benchtops of heavy-duty construction
  - good bench space, with good lighting over
  - good cupboard space, preferably with a pantry
  - ample power outlets
  - an exhaust hood (externally ducted, if possible) should be provided over the stove or cook-top)
  - space should be provided for a dishwasher.

#### **4.7 FAMILY ROOM**

- The family room should be located adjacent to the kitchen and kitchen eating area (if provided) but must be capable of separation from the kitchen.
- It should have direct access to the private yard of the manse.
- It should not be a corridor with access to other rooms.

#### **4.8 KITCHEN EATING AREA**

- If this area is provided it is located with the kitchen as an alcove or small area linking to the family room capable of holding a small dining table and chairs for family meals.

#### **4.9 MAIN BEDROOM**

- The main bedroom should be equipped with built-in (or walk-in) wardrobes and should have room for:
  - either two single beds or a queen size bed built-in or walk in wardrobe
  - two bedside tables
  - dressing table.
- An en-suite bathroom is desirable but not mandatory.

#### **4.10 BEDROOMS 2-4**

- Secondary bedrooms should have a built-in wardrobe and be capable of sleeping two people with all necessary furniture.

#### **4.11 BATHROOM (FAMILY)**

- The family bathroom should have a bath, shower recess and vanity basin but not a toilet.
- A desirable option is to have a shared vanity unit with separate areas for bath/shower and toilet.
- There must not be a direct view from any other room to the bathroom and care should be taken to avoid reflections from mirrors to other areas.
- An exhaust fan should be installed to ensure good ventilation.
- Bathroom windows should not be located near public access areas outside the building.

#### **4.12 BATHROOM (EN-SUITE, IF PROVIDED)**

- There are two options for the en-suite bathroom:
  - bathroom opening off main bedroom
  - bathroom adjacent to main bedroom but not opening into it so that it is capable of being used by others without infringing the privacy of the main bedroom.
- If provided, the en-suite bathroom should contain:
  - shower recess
  - WC
  - small vanity basin.
- An exhaust fan should be installed to ensure good ventilation.

#### **4.13 LAUNDRY**

- The laundry should be located near to the kitchen and rear entry.
- The laundry should contain:
  - (at least one) large stainless steel laundry tub
  - space for washing machine (large, top loading)
  - space for clothes dryer (floor mounted)
  - if the hot water unit is to be floor mounted space should be allocated to it in the laundry.

#### **4.14 GARAGE**

- Space should be provided for two cars.
- If a garden shed is not provided space should be allowed to store garden tools, bicycles, etc.
- Direct access to the garage from the house is desirable. Careful attention must be given to the security of this access.

#### **4.15 STORAGE**

- Cupboard storage should be generous in size.
- Storage should be provided for:
  - linen (cupboard)
  - cleaning goods (cupboard)
  - food (pantry)
  - visitors' cloaks
  - boxes and suitcases. (This space may be provided on a platform in the garage, in which case the platform should be strongly constructed and be approximately 1000mm deep).

## **5 FITTINGS AND SERVICES**

### **5.1 BUILT-IN WARDROBES**

- Wardrobes should be at least 600mm deep internally.

- They should be fitted with top shelf, hanging rail and bottom shelf.
- Drawer units should be provided in each wardrobe.

## **5.2 ELECTRICAL LAYOUTS**

- An electrical layout for the residence should be submitted with working drawings, and, where applicable should show locations of:
  - mains supply and meters
  - exhaust fans in bathrooms, toilets and laundry exhaust duct in kitchen
  - telephone points and if a “Commander” type system is used, the location of the switchboard)
  - TV coaxial cable outlets
  - intercom
  - power points (general purpose outlets or GPO's)
  - light fittings
  - location of hot water unit (gas or electric)
  - major kitchen appliances.
- Allow sufficient GPO's particularly in family and bedroom areas.
- Provide sufficient circuits to different zones of the house.
- Consider the position of the TV aerial.

## **5.3 PLUMBING AND DRAINAGE**

- A plumbing and drainage plan for the residence should be submitted with working drawings and should provide details of:
  - sewer connection or septic installation
  - stormwater drains and method of disposal
  - hot water service.
- If a septic tank is to be installed, ensure that the siting is adequate to dispose of effluent away from the dwelling and other structures on the site.
- Check the availability of sewer and determine any special costs associated with connecting past the property boundary.
- Where possible install off-peak hot water units preferably located externally. Consider the relative benefits of electric or gas installations.
- Wherever possible all plumbing should be in copper
- All sanitary drainage should be in terra cota in preference to PVC.
- All stormwater should be in UPVC.
- Ensure that adequate stormwater drainage is provided particularly on cut and fill sites and behind retaining walls or areas likely to flood. Always provide a natural overflow to areas likely to retain water and possibly flood the building.
- Care should be taken to drain driveways sloping towards the garage of the residence.

## **5.4 STAIRS AND HALLWAYS**

- All entry doors, hallways and stairs should be wide enough to allow for the easy movement of furniture through the house. (Minimum width for halls is 1000mm).
- When designing stairs, the rise and tread must comply with Ordinance 70, as must the height of railings. The formula setout in the Ordinance for determining stair sizes is:
  - $(2 \times \text{rise}) + \text{tread}$  should equal a number between 585 and 630
  - this allows a comfortable range of stair sizes to be determined, and limits the maximum and minimum sizes of treads and risers as follows:
    - o riser = from 115mm - 190mm tread = from 250mm - 395mm
  - e.g. for a stair with a rise of 175mm the formula applies as follows:
    - o  $(2 \times 175) + 235 = 585$   $(2 \times 175) + 280 = 630$
    - o the minimum tread size is 250mm, therefore the acceptable tread size is between 250 and 280mm.

**OTHER FITTINGS**

- Smoke detectors should be installed in sufficient numbers and in such locations as to provide maximum protection to residents.