

Part 3

RENEWING AND ALTERING

.1 Introduction

As Meeting Houses get older, the question as to whether to stay or to move to new premises can arise. It is generally better to improve the building over the years, so that it keeps up with current standards and yet retains the aura of historical association and patina of age, and its known presence in the community.

Try to think of the alterations and extensions in the context of the whole building, and always avoid piecemeal development. Plan the changes so that they fit together as part of a strategy for the regeneration of the whole Meeting House over the coming years.

.2 Understanding the needs

If you are about to build a new meeting house or to alter an existing one, it is good to approach this task as an exercise in group responsibility. It is important to sit down together and write out exactly what you expect your meeting house to do for the meeting and for those outside it.

Try, also, to interest any friends within or beyond the meeting who may possess helpful expertise in design, decoration or management of buildings, to help you to assemble a small group whose job it will be to compile a final working brief.

However, before this can be done the meeting must face three very basic questions:

- How do you expect your meeting house to meet today's needs?
- What facilities for worship and social service are you offering to the future?
- What can the meeting afford?

.3 The basic brief

In the first instance it is advisable not to have any preconceived idea about 'the building' but to make a list of all the functions you expect or hope the building will fulfil. A checklist of possible requirements appears as appendix A 301.1 The preparation of a clear outline of your needs must precede any attempt at design.

.4 Choosing the architect

The Royal Institute of British Architects (66 Portland Place, London W1N 4AD) will provide you with a list of suitable architects in the area. It is helpful to seek out satisfied clients. Having a few names, ask each to describe and illustrate some recent buildings, and to discuss your problem, without commitment on either side. There is no need for your architect to be a Quaker, though a respect for spiritual and social motivation will help. Having made your choice, agree terms and sign a letter of appointment before proceeding to the work.

.5 Starting to plan

The first meetings with the architect should be taken up with getting to know one another, refining the requirements and setting out priorities and constraints.

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This attempt to engender in client and architect a sense of joint responsibility for the design, although time consuming like all Quaker business meetings, is handsomely repaid by a sense of sharing and involvement.

There is, however, one caveat; having decided what you want, leave your expert free to carry it out, do not change your minds and don't breathe down his neck.

It is usually advisable not to expect any drawings at the first few meetings, this is a later activity. All of us use the written word for communication but few of us can understand the full size three dimensional implications of a small scale plan.

If you do not already have a site, you should leave the final decision about its choice until you have an architect to advise you. Location, access, orientation, exposure, nuisances, sub-soil, public services, and future planning proposals will all affect the design, costs and the future enjoyment of your building.

.6 Design considerations

It is to be hoped that every new Meeting House is an 'architectural unity': all of a piece, with the various elements such as the roof, walls, windows, doors and down to the smallest items, even door furniture, all contributing and combining towards a feeling of oneness and completeness, wholeness. Thus, when there are to be extensions and alterations, the fundamental aim must be to ensure that a new architectural unity is created and the character of the Meeting House is retained but in its new form.

Extensions and partial demolition need to be carried out sensitively, and it is important to consult an architect for even comparatively small jobs so that effort and money put into the work will yield the best results. The success of any alteration or extension depends to a great extent on the use of good quality materials appropriately employed. Never expect building work to be cheap, and do not imagine that standards appropriate for ordinary housing are good enough. The meeting house is a public building and needs careful planning and heavier fixtures and fittings for that reason.

Appendix A301.2 contains conditions in respect of Wardens' accommodation.

.7 Programming costs

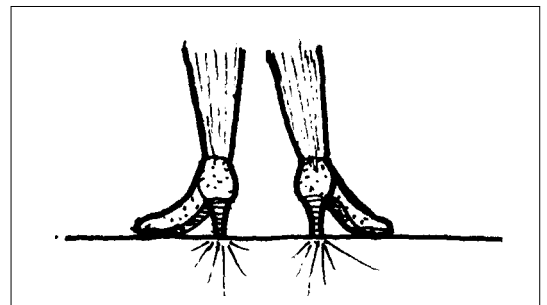
With any building work it is valuable to have a programme so that all Friends will realise that there will be a commitment needed and an understanding of the effort, cost and disruption involved. The first step is to decide what is needed and the extent of the funds available. A survey and feasibility study are essential preludes to matching the needs of the meeting with its resources. Bricks and mortar are not the only costs: fees, Local Authority charges and VAT must not be forgotten; nor changes in running costs. The treasurer must know that, once a building contract has been signed, the meeting is under a legal obligation to pay within a very few days whatever sum the architect states is due on his monthly certificate.

.8 First cost, later maintenance

Maintenance starts on the drawing board. A good design will take into consideration the ease and frequency of the processes necessary to keep the building in good order. This applies particularly to finishes. It is the final finish to any surface that takes the wear and tear of daily use and so it must be durable; it must be capable of being cleaned on a regular basis without undue expenditure of time and materials; the need to replace it should be as infrequent as possible; and when the time for renewal comes, the process should not be unduly difficult or costly.

Meeting Houses are being used more and more for public purposes as well as the relatively gentle occupation by Friends, and the internal finishes should be decided upon with that in mind.

Floors, for example, should be able to withstand the stiletto heels of playgroup mums. Clay tiles and vinyls in kitchens and sanitary areas should be non-slip when wet and easily cleaned. Maintenance systems which result in a heavy build-up of wax or resinous material should be avoided. The destructive sanding of wooden floors can result from over-application of polish. Lobby floors should be easily cleanable and there should be generous mat provision.



'Floors, for example, should be able to withstand the stiletto heels of the playgroup mums.' 301.8

An adequate expanse of wall tiling in kitchen and sanitary areas will simplify maintenance, as will work surfaces which are easily cleaned and which have no awkward corners. Cheap kitchen fitment with inferior hinges and catches are a poor investment.

Plaster needs maintenance, especially to exposed corners, and regular redecoration. Exposed brickwork may be a more durable alternative where it is appropriate and where there are no acoustic or cleaning difficulties.

Another matter to be borne in mind when deciding upon finishes is the extent to which voluntary labour is likely to be employed when redecoration is needed, and when accessibility without undue risk may be an important factor.

.9 Review of standards

All Meeting Houses at some time need improvement to keep up with rising standards of efficiency and comfort. It is important that improvements should be made periodically, perhaps when repairs are done, so that a back-log does not develop.

Access Can the approach to the Meeting House be made more attractive and direct for all. Is the entrance obvious and the sequence of entry clear, so that a newcomer will know where to go. Can the entrance be easily supervised to welcome Friends and visitors and deter thieves.

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Safety Should the electrical installation be protected by residual current circuit breakers to prevent the dangers of fire and electric shock. Are there adequate handrails on both sides of stairs.

Thermal comfort Can insulation be added to conserve energy, reduce costs and improve comfort. Generally, it is well worth insulating the roof of the Meeting House, if it has not already been done. A pitched roof can easily have glass fibre added to bring the thickness to 150 mm (6") but the space above the insulation must be ventilated to prevent condensation. Flat roofs can also be upgraded by adding a layer of external insulation.

Whenever structural alterations are made, a high standard of insulation should be incorporated into the external walls and ground floor. There may be opportunities to line the walls with insulated board or even build an insulated cavity wall within the building.

If the Meeting House ceiling is very high, lowering it could reduce the volume to be heated and may well improve the acoustics. Should the meeting house be a listed building, or the ceiling be high and a beautiful feature, consider installing slow-moving punka fans to re-circulate the warm air convected upwards from the radiators. Note the possibility of suspended and insulated ceiling: see Appendix A 201.2

Whilst some sunlight can make a room delightful, too much can be uncomfortable and destructive; ultra-violet light fades furnishings and degrades books. On the other hand, sunshine can be used to advantage for passive solar heating. Large south-facing large windows would turn a tiled concrete floor into a heat-store in winter months and a generous overhanging roof would keep out the hot mid-day sun in summer.

Lighting If you are contemplating changing your lighting, give it very careful thought. Lights illuminate our activities, give shape and form to the space they illuminate and are strong decorative objects themselves. Too many Meeting Houses have been lit as if they were workshops. Seek advice.

Acoustics Conditions can be improved. Echoes can be reduced by the use of curtains, panelling or textured wall surfaces. The provision of a hard ceiling helps to distribute sound, a soft floor covering helps to prevent unwanted noise (as well as making the floor marginally more insulating). A sound absorbent ceiling and carpet tiles in the lobby will make it much quieter. Remember though, that impervious floor coverings such as carpet tiles and cushion vinyl can cause condensation and subsequent rot.

A loop or infra-red system in the Meeting House will help those with hearing aids.
See: A302.2 Hearing Difficulties

Structure Is the structure sound? Even when the Meeting is financially hard-pressed, maintenance must not be deferred: the decay will accelerate. A flat roof, unless very well-built and maintained, frequently gives trouble, needing re-covering every fifteen to twenty years. Consideration should be given to replacing with a pitched roof, which will last upwards of a century if the materials are of good quality. Access to gutters should be easy in order to allow annual or more frequent cleaning.

When timber window frames are to be replaced, consider using hardwood or pressure-impregnated redwood frames. If the design of the building is suitable, plastic frames can reduce maintenance provided that the ironmongery is of good quality. Maintenance costs can be reduced by painting the timber with high-build stains or micro-porous paints.

Finally In all these endeavours, always remember that everything you do to your meeting house should be an 'improvement'. Whether it be adding a new room or only adding a light switch, nothing should be regarded as of no importance. Do not leave the odd-job man to make your decisions for you. Anything you replace or add should leave your meeting house better than before, in both function and appearance.

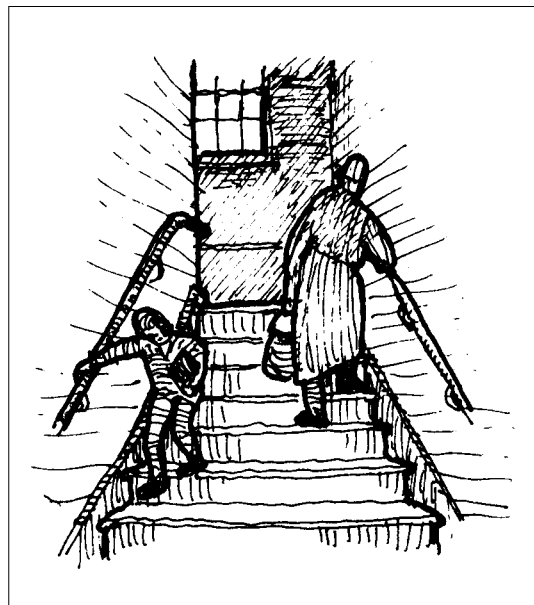
.10 Safety of building works

Under The Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 1994, called in brief the CONDAM regulations or now more commonly the CDM regulations, building owners have an obligation regarding health and safety of building operations.

Except for very small scale work, a body which intends to carry out building works must appoint a Planning Supervisor and a Principal Contractor. The body must be satisfied that both of these persons or firms are competent and have adequate resources. Anyone commissioning a designer must be reasonably satisfied that they are competent.

The building owner has a duty to make available to the Planning Supervisor all relevant information so that the preparation of both a 'Health and Safety File' and 'Health and Safety Plan' can commence. The building owner must not permit construction work to start until satisfied that the Principal Contractor has adequately developed the 'Health and Safety Plan'. At the end of the contract the building owner must take possession of the 'Health and Safety File' which the Planning Supervisor has ensured is suitably updated. This must be available for others including tenants to consult.

A breach of the CDM Regulations is a criminal offence.



'Are there adequate handrails on both sides of the stairs?' 301.9

.1 Introduction

The main disabilities which can be alleviated by improved building are the disabilities of physical, hearing, sight.

.2 Advice

Wherever possible the services of an occupational therapist (OT) should be sought for even the simplest undertaking. OTs are expert in advising on provision in buildings for handicapped people of all kinds. As far as we are concerned, they cover hearing and sight as well as physical disabilities. Where anything more substantial than say erecting a handrail is involved they often work in association with an architect.

If the Meeting has no contact with an OT, an approach to the Social Services Department of the local authority could result in their arranging a consultation.

The Centre for Accessible Environments is a body concerned with improving the design of buildings to accommodate the needs of all users, including the elderly and people of all disabilities.

Address: 35 Great Smith Street, London SW1P 3BJ. Telephone: 071-222 7980
(Send SAE).

When Friends are seriously contemplating new work to provide better facilities enquiries of this and the specialist organisations such as the RNID and the RNIB will produce very useful information.

The Royal National Institute for the Deaf (RNID)

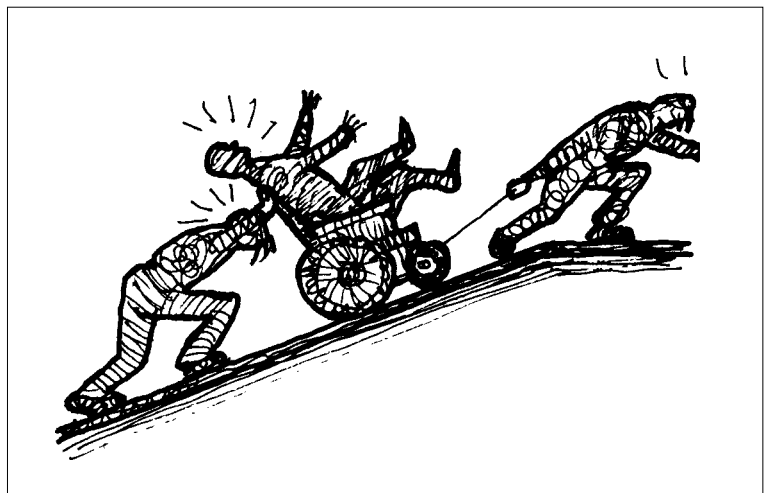
Address: 105 Gower Street, London WC1E 6AH. Telephone: 0171-387 8033
(Send SAE).

The Royal National Institute for the Blind (RNIB)

Address: 224 Great Portland Street, London W1N 6AA. Telephone: 0171-388 1266
(Send SAE).

The Sound and Communication Industries Federation (SCIF)

Address: 46 High Street, Burnham, Slough SL1 7JH. Telephone 01628 667633



*'Preferred ramp gradient
1:20. Max 1:12' A302.1*

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.3 Dangers of DIY

A Meeting would be prudent to follow the above course. What may appear to a non-expert a simple matter, where money could be saved by a few active members of the Meeting doing it themselves, could have unpleasant and expensive side effects. (But note that a hearing loop may well be installed by members of the meeting).

.4 Physical disabilities

Overall aim To enable people with physical disabilities to use buildings as far as possible like the rest of us. For example, they should not have to go to a side door to enter a building, but come in at the main entrance with everyone else. This may involve forming a ramp for wheel-chairs, but steps should also be provided for those who find them easier.

Legislation If contemplating any alterations or additions to the building, particularly if it is listed; consult your local Planning Department for the latest legislation that may affect what you propose to do. See: A302.1 Facilities for disabled people.

.5 Better hearing

Hearing in meeting (leaving aside the personal characteristics of speakers) is affected by the characteristics of the building, by room acoustics and by outside interference. See A302.2. Only when these matters have been resolved as well as may be should one proceed to a system of sound amplification. Such amplification is for the benefit only of those who need it, so speech is not reinforced by loudspeakers but through the use of hearing aids or special receivers. There are two systems: the induction loop, see A302.2; and the infra-red, see A302.3.

The system in use will benefit from some person being specifically responsible for its care, for example seeing that it is switched off after use and attending to lorgnette batteries.

Where Friends do not know a specialist in this field, sources of information and advice could be:

- an occupational therapist in the Social Services Department of the local authority;
- Friends in Meetings where a system has been installed;
- loop installers mentioned in A302.2;
- general information from the RNID;
- lists of companies who specialise in the manufacture and installation of induction loops, obtainable from the RNID and from SCIF. These are not lists of approved companies; and neither organisation can guarantee their work.

.6 Visual handicap

At very little extra trouble or expense a number of adjustments can be made to an existing meeting house to make it easier for visually handicapped people to move around independently without danger or anxiety.

See: A302.4 Provision for visually handicapped

.1 Introduction

The concern of this Handbook with outreach is chiefly in matters of the notice boards and poster boards, and the impression given by the premises as a whole upon the passer-by. For the wider aspects of outreach, see *The Outreach Manual*, Quaker Home Service, 1990, and the chapter on The Meeting House reproduced here as A 303.1.

.2 External Notice Boards

The functions of external notice boards are:

- to draw attention to the location of the Meeting House;
- to convey information on times of meeting, etc;
- to display, by means of posters, something of Quakerism.

Clarity and simplicity are the essential requirements, coupled with obvious care in use.

Legislation All new external notices and poster boards are subject to control under Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) Regulations, the latest of which is 1989 (no. 670). Schedule 3, section 2 relates to displays which are allowed without formal application. These are: a small notice (up to 0.3 square metre in area) to identify the meeting house, and a panel (up to 1.2 square metre) at each of two entrances (both sides of which may be used). Displays which were in existence before 1 April 1974 and in use since then are allowed whatever their form: this is one good reason for keeping old boards in good repair, so that the permission does not lapse. If in a Conservation Area, or associated with a Listed Building, then stricter controls will apply. In all proposals for new boards it is sensible to consult the local Planning Department, who are able to offer advice and current knowledge of the legislation. A booklet *Outdoor Advertisements and Signs* is available from the local office.

Remote Meeting Houses Where the meeting house is off the beaten track, either in town or country, a direction sign may be allowed on the main road: consult the Highways Department.

.3 Meeting House Grounds

The land on which the Meeting House stands can change from attractive to unattractive far more rapidly than the building. Litter collecting may need to be frequent, and if so a re-think of the forecourt planting and shrubbery might help. See: 206 Gardens and burial grounds.

.4 Internal Notice Boards

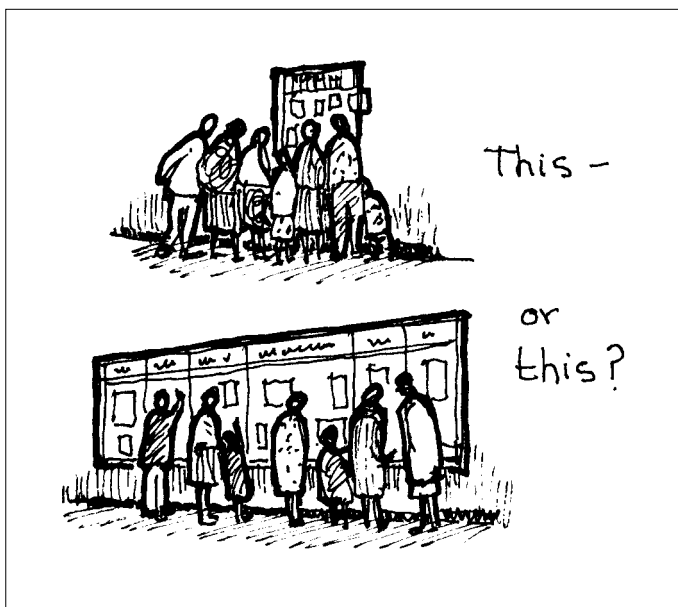
The display of posters, notices, leaflets and so on in the lobby or meeting room can have an important bearing on the impression given to visitors. It is not only the careful design of boards and racks, and the allocation of notice board spaces to different purposes, but the way they are looked after over the years.

There may be a case for allowing almost unlimited internal wall display instead of trying to control small and limited panels, thus allowing a variety of posters to be visible to

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users. On the other hand in a Meeting House often let to outside bodies a wish to keep some material private to Friends may be met by a folding unit opened up only when Friends wish to display their notices, visitors book and meeting house diary.

A variety of materials are used for internal notice-boards. Cork board panels are presentable but expensive, semi-hardboard (eg, Sundeala A) are cheaper; both are effective. Perhaps the best is to use the latter, covered with fabric to conceal the pin-holes. This may match the curtains, or may be hessian, which wears well and can be had in a wide range of colours. Thus the noticeboard, either in panels or in whole walls, will look good when old as well as new.



'The display of posters, leaflets, etc in the lobby can have an important bearing on the impression given to visitors.' 303.3

.1 The Basis

Fund raising requires much careful preparation, followed by contact with many organisations and individuals, over 12 to 18 months of patient and continual activity. It must have:

- a strong and committed fundraising group to carry it through;
- a thorough and careful planning and investigation;
- clear, positive, well-defined aims and presentation.

Working together to raise money can improve the spiritual strength of the meeting, as well as local awareness of it. One meeting spent a whole day building a 'vision' to raise consciousness and enthusiasm. Ideally, Preparative and Monthly meeting should be equally involved.

An appeal for alterations or a new building should be based on adequate architectural drawings, and on a full assessment of the cost, (including all the professional fees, VAT, and Local Authority charges, which together can add 25% to the bricks and mortar cost). Allow also for the cost of equipment and furnishings; and for inflation, as it may well take two years from the first decision to go ahead to the start of the building work.

.2 The Organisation

Fund raising Committee This should be adequately representative and served by a clerk or co-ordinator, whose job is often a lonely one. Links with other Meetings undergoing similar fund raising exercises can be helpful. The help of Friends experienced in marketing and media should be sought.

Fund raising courses Encourage your MM to send someone, ideally the co-ordinator, on a fund raising course. Your local Council for Voluntary Service might give useful advice. Both the National Council for Voluntary Service and the Directory of Social Change provide courses around the country.

Charitable status Every Quaker Meeting is a charity for the advancement of religion. The co-ordinator should write to the Inland Revenue, Claims Branch, Charity Division, St. John's House, Merton Road, Bootle L69 9BB (Tel: 051 922 6369 ext. 3202) to obtain confirmation that they accept this charitable status. They will do this by issuing a reference number, which can then be quoted on tax claims made by the Meeting. Claims for the repayment of tax can be made for (a) covenanted donations, (b) single payments of £600 or more under the Gift Aid scheme and (c) investment interest paid net. The Meeting will also be entitled to receive tax donations made by charity voucher or the payroll-giving schemes, but does not have to reclaim tax on these payments; that is done by the agency operating the scheme.

Deeds of Covenant Set up a local covenants scheme. A guidance note is available from the Finance Department, Friends House.

Bank account Open a separate account for your building fund to receive all in-coming payments. Shop around for the best rate of interest, eg a building society account or a money market deposit (useful for large amounts likely to be required at short notice); or

place the proceeds in the meeting's high-interest account, thus gaining better interest than two smaller accounts would yield.

Charities Aid Foundation (CAF) In responding to Meeting House appeals, Friends are encouraged to make a donation via CAF with the tax relief benefits they provide. Details can be obtained from their office at 48 Pembury Road, Tonbridge, Kent TN9 2JD. Tel. 0732 771333

Appeal leaflet Must be attractive, informative, concise, and interesting to a wide variety of donors. It should show a substantial sum of money already raised, and the signatures of responsible people, to inspire the donor's confidence in the project.

Appeal letters Tailor each letter to meet the criteria of the Trust to which you are writing (Word Processor essential). It is hard to persuade general trusts to fund Meeting Houses; they are more likely to fund a specific community use to which you wish to put the Meeting House.

Public activities The most cost-effective seem to be - sponsored walks and cycle rides, craft and boot fairs, concerts in the Meeting House or local churches; with the players giving their services free. Encourage folk to donate their valuable heirlooms, eg taking old china to Christies' Auctions. Make events work in several ways: eg at a concert at the meeting house have interval refreshments, postcards, preserves available for sale.

Publicity Produce a regular newsletter on the progress of the project and the fund raising effort. Mail it to every member on the list. Make a short report to each MM to keep people's interest alive. Keep the local press informed.

.3 Quaker sources of funds

Meeting Houses Funds Committee The purposes for which funds are available are: to meet part of the cost of building new meeting houses; the purchase and adaptation of properties to make them suitable for use as meeting houses; major alterations to existing meeting houses and major repairs to historic meeting houses.

If you expect to apply for a grant or a loan it is advisable to notify the Committee by writing to the General Secretary, Finance at an early stage; it is not wise to advance as far as a purchase or a building contract before making the initial approach. In preparing the detailed application the meeting should obtain professional advice, properly costed estimates of the work to be carried out, a realistic indication of the financial support available from sources other than the Meeting Houses Funds, and the approval of the monthly meeting. The amounts available from the Meeting Houses Funds vary according to need but are unlikely to exceed half the total cost up to a specified ceiling. Of the total amount offered for each project it is normal for up to 10% of the total cost of the project to be in the form of grant and the balance as an interest free loan repayable over four or five annual instalments.

Applicants are encouraged to submit their proposal to the Advisory Committee on Property for comment before, or at the same time as, their application for financial assistance.

304. Fundraising for Major Work

Assistance is not normally given towards the cost of loose furniture and furnishing, or the costs of routine maintenance and decorating.

Friends and Meetings Sources to include PM., MM. and General Meeting members, other Friends (ex-members of your Meeting)/ friends. An appeal leaflet in *The Friend*, stating the total funds donated or promised by local Friends, could raise around £2,000. Budget a reasonable sum for printing, advertising and other fund raising expenses. Contact every MM Member and Attender, seeking their support.

.4 Other sources of funds

Meeting House lettings Aim at major users, eg NHS, Social Services, 'Help the Aged'. Calculate the income over several years to repay loans and interest. Negotiate for a capital contribution, if you are suiting the building to their needs. Take care however to avoid compromising the principal purpose of the meeting house. Investigate the impact of taxes on specially-designed commercial buildings.

Deposited covenants, Gift Aid, Payroll Giving and interest-free loans should be investigated.

Local companies and charities especially those giving to the kind of activity going on in your Meeting House (consult *A Guide to Company Giving* published by Directory of Social Change Publications, Radius Works, Back Lane, London NW3 1HL, tel: 071 284 4364) and who have local branches. Track down local charities which might help, consult the Directory of Social Change at their London address.

Directory of Grant Making Trusts Consult this essential directory published by Charities Aid Foundation: all reference libraries have copies. Look for trusts which specialise in whatever activities might take place on your premises, eg worship, baby care, meals for senior citizens, the needs of blind persons or those with disabilities. Make personal contacts, if you have the right connections. A number of Trusts will give over several years, and expect to see an annual report and accounts.

Listed Building Grants Do not start negotiating for grants from English Heritage and the Local Authority until you are reasonably certain of the cost of the repair element in your building scheme, nor start the work until their grant is finalised. A grant figure, once finalised, is difficult to increase.

See: 104 Listed Buildings
A 304.1 State Aid for Churches

Local Government County and District Councils have given help for old buildings in some cases, as have National Parks and the Department of the Environment for outstanding buildings in a Conservation Area (section 10 of 1972 Act).

Church Trusts Any trust supporting Anglican and other churches may be worth approaching, eg Historic Churches Preservation Trust, Redundant Churches Fund.

MM Members' contacts Identify MM. Members who might have connections. Many Friends sit on trusts, some have connections with District and County Councils, some have links in the City.

Radio and TV Stations. Get in touch with the local stations to develop local interest.

Community Chests are organised by Local Authorities or by a local Rotary Club, to provide financial assistance for local activities (eg. help for old people) as and when a need arises. They collect their funds from groups and organisations in the locality. A telephone call to the Local Authority will reveal whether or not a ‘Community Chest’ exists locally.

- .5 See:** *Treasurers Handbook*
- Charity trust law and practice
 - Banking
 - Tax effective giving

Directory of public sources of grants for the repair of historic buildings
(English Heritage, Fortress House, 23 Saville Row, London W1X 2HE).