

FMW  
Property Committee  
Annual Report  
June 2010

Overview

Thanks to the generosity of earlier members, the Friends Meeting of Washington has inherited three historic buildings,<sup>1</sup> with beautiful gardens in the heart of Washington, of which we are all stewards. The purpose of our property is to enhance and revitalize our collective spiritual life. The responsibilities of the Property Committee for the campus include the condition, repair, and maintenance of building structures, exteriors, systems, furnishings, equipment, and major appliances. In addition, the Property Committee is to:

- plan for and maintain the safety, security, comfort and attractiveness of the buildings and grounds of the Meeting;
- arrange for and may participate in regular maintenance inspections of the property;
- anticipate future needs and prioritize projects while addressing the issues that arise more suddenly; and
- maintain a mid-to-long term plan for the maintenance of the Meeting's property.

For facilities of the size, age, and current condition of FMW's, the responsibilities are vast. We have backlogs that need to be addressed: backlogs on critical system maintenance/replacement, backlogs related to space planning, backlogs of inspections; backlogs on fire detection and suppression systems, and backlogs on occupancy permits. Addressing these needs will place demands on FMW resources and fund.

The Committee believes that the property of the Meeting should support the Meeting's activities and mission. Meetings for Worship, First Day School, adult religious education, committee meetings, service programs, fellowship and community events are just some of the uses of the property. At this time, we do not have a property plan that addresses the uses and needs of the entire FMW campus.

Transitions

Even though there has been a significant transition in committee membership from last year to this year, the Committee has been fortunate to have the service of long-time and committed Members and Attenders, as well as the ongoing counsel of former members and Clerks of the Committee. We are grateful for the leadership of former Property Clerk Ken Forsberg. Steve Brooks will be taking a six-month leave of absence from the Meeting in the second half of 2010 to volunteer at Hlekweni Friends Rural Service in Zimbabwe.

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<sup>1</sup> *The Meeting House with three levels, Carriage House which has the School for Friends on the lower level and an 'apartment' and deck on the second level, and Quaker House which has a lower level partially used by School for Friends and Peace Tax Fund, a second level including the Living Room, a small kitchen and bathroom, and three small rooms, one of which is used by School for Friends as a teachers' lounge, and a third level.*

Transition is occurring among space users at the Meeting as well. Long-time member and former Clerk Jackie DeCarlo moved out of the apartment on the second floor of Carriage House. This space has been converted for office use. The intent is to share the space with a non-profit organization that is consistent with our mission and that can share the costs of the building. Our long-time partner, School for Friends, will be moving to consolidate space at Church of the Pilgrims before the beginning of the next school year. There are other regular space users, such as Weight Watchers, and occasional users. These users have provided funds to help offset some costs of maintaining the buildings.

## Activities and Accomplishments

The Property Committee, in an effort to maximize use of the buildings and support the Meeting's financial needs, is now upgrading parts of Quaker House and Carriage House. The Committee will provide regular reports to the full Meeting.

The Property Committee meets twice per month, and we invite all who are interested to attend Committee meetings, participate in events, and enjoy the facilities. Property Committee meetings are announced on the website. More importantly, the Property Committee also holds regular "work days" open to all, where we join together as a community to undertake repair and renovation projects around the FMW campus.

During the year, we have:

- Outreach to members and attenders:
  - Organized volunteer workdays attracting over 50 helpers
  - Led tours of the property
  - Opened gardens to the public during weekdays
  - Made improvements to the physical welcome of the campus
- Increased building usage
  - Advertised availability of Meeting House for weddings
  - Worked with Office Staff and others to facilitate increased paid use of space for weddings, memorial services, meetings, and other programs
  - Helped office staff track and respond to use requests
  - Revised draft sliding scale event fee structure for use of buildings and campus
  - Drafted property rules and agreements
- Repair and maintenance
  - Produced five volunteer workdays of painting, cleaning, repairs, and upgrades.
  - Sealed exterior leak at Decatur Place Room, repaired water damage, and painted;
  - Painted and repaired Meeting House men's bathroom;
  - Cleaned and painted trim in Meeting Office;
  - Painted risers on Main Stairs to the Meeting Room;
  - Refinished Quaker House stairs;
  - Cleaned many areas, including windows, entries, and less used spaces.
  - Upgraded Carriage House apartment for office use;
  - Posted property maintenance form on-line;

- Increased property management and monitoring.
- Upgraded the Assembly Room and Children’s Library
- Gardens
  - Planted two trees planted, with School for Friends and in honor of Clem Swisher;
  - Opened sight lines in West Gardens to help unify the property.
- Green initiatives
  - Installed programmable thermostats, resulting in major energy and cost savings
  - Identified water leaks, the repair of which should result in cost savings
  - Conducted energy audits of Quaker House and Carriage House, thanks to the pro bono services of Pascale Maslin of Energy Efficiency Experts;
  - Researched heating system upgrades, with decision pending;
  - Fixed some light timers and added efficient lighting.
- Safety and Liability Hazards
  - Secured or removed loose entry stair coverings as needed
  - Removed moss and algae from QH brick steps and terrace
  - Secured loose railings
  - Repaired electrical problems
  - Removed overgrown shrub creating hiding place on Decatur
  - Explored safety and security monitoring
- Property research and improvement planning
  - Worked with Meeting Historian Hayden Wetzel to learn from Property archives;
  - Interviewed long-time Friends to garner lessons from past property management;
  - Sought the counsel of experts in building code and systems;
  - Received pro bono preservation counsel of historic architect, George Siekkinen
- Partial work on drainage [from last year’s minutes – please clarify]
- Post-snow storm roof and gutter repairs for Carriage House and Meeting House

### Committee Plans for Coming Year

The Committee has ambitious, multi-year plans. First, the Committee intends to develop a space plan to identify the needs and uses of existing space and to develop a vision for the campus. This, coupled with evaluation of backlogs identified above, will serve as the basis for prioritizing work. Second, the Committee will develop a ‘State of the Property’ to document the condition of the facilities, supported by inspection plans and maintenance records. Some or all of these objectives may be a multi-year effort. Sustainability, safety, and accessibility will be goals underpinning our efforts. We hope the FMW community will view our property as an asset rather than a burden.

### Special Challenges

- Gravity, weather, old systems
- Condition of sidewalk
- Key and lock management
- Determining what needs to be done; making optimum decisions on major systems when professionals have differing opinions
- Scope of the tasks

## Work with Others

Property Committee looks forward to continuing to work with the Office Staff and the entire Meeting to improve the maintenance and cleanliness of the buildings and to increase space usage. The Committee is grateful for the efforts of Tom Cooke, Laura Yeomans, the cleaning contractors Bill and Alice Kelly, and the often used Handyman Jon DeWitt. The Committee appreciates the work and support of the Hospitality Committee, as well as the collaboration with the new Welcoming and Fellowship Task Force, and the guidance and counsel that we have received from many other committees, including Garden, Marriage and Family, Membership, Ministry and Worship, Peace and Social Concerns, Records and Handbook, Religious Education, and Trustees.

The Committee appreciates the hard work, patience, and perseverance of the Planning Committee. Property Committee members have attended Planning Committee briefings and have submitted numerous questions and suggestions. Ken Forsberg serves as a member of both committees and is a liaison between the two committees. It is not yet clear what type of ongoing coordination is desired.

We have worked together with the Finance and Stewardship Committee to explore ways to more fully support the carrying costs and needed upgrades of the Meeting's campus. In view of the financial implications of bringing FMW buildings closer to current safety codes, restoring and modifying space, and creating overall accessibility, the Committee wishes to explore additional sources of funding. This would include funding available for renovating historical structures.

## Ways Friends Can Help the FMW Campus

- Participate in workdays
- Donate funds to the Meeting
- If you 'see something' that needs upgrade or repair, 'say something' to a Property Committee member
- Tell other people about our wonderful space

*Property Committee members: Steve Brooks and Martha Solt, Co-Clerks, Geoff Bannister, Loie Clark (ex officio), Steve Coleman, Tom Cooke (ex officio), Janet Dinsmore, Ken Forsberg, Neil Froemming, John Gale, Danny Hollinger, Bruce Kellogg, Basil Kiwan, and Bill Palmer.*

*Volunteers: FT Clark, Debby Churchman, Andrej Coleman, Farrah Darbouze, Kait Decker, Becca Dozier, Dan Dozier, Mike Duvall, Nathan Gale, Robinne Gray, Susan Griffin, Brian Greenberg, Julian Greenberg, Meg Greene, Tracy Hart, John Hurwitz, Joe Izzo, John Lawrence, Tom Libbert, Pascale Maslin, J. E. McNeil, Ruthie Morrison, Patty Murphy, Carol*

*Phelps, Arc Riley, Byron Sandford, Clem Swisher, Sue Swisher, Susan Thompson, Molly Tully, Chris Warren, Hayden Wetzel, Gerri Williams, and the students of School for Friends at Quaker House.*

*Staff Support: Laura Yeomans, Tom Cooke*