

Notes on Gawsorth (New) Rectory.

1. The arrangement under which the small detached building in the stableyard was adapted to serve as a study was not regarded as satisfactory by either of my predecessors - Edgar Clarke and Harry Sanders - and almost the first thing the then Rural Dean (Canon Glynn Jones) said to me after my arrival in 1967 was 'What are you going to do about a new study?').
2. Reference to the files and to the P.C.C. minutes will show that the P.C.C. had favoured the plan of selling the present Rectory, which with its garden etc. would have fetched a very good price and then building a new rectory on part of the glebe. But a) there was opposition to selling a house next to the churchyard; b) preliminary planning applications regarding two sites in the field to the West of the present rectory had a discouraging reception from the planners; c) the only site on which the planners looked more favourably, namely, the 'Drying green' only provided for a cramped building too near to the existing house, and d) the ratio between the cost of building a new rectory and the probable receipts from the sale of the present one, began to move markedly against us. Finally it was agreed to return to the attempt to find a way of adapting the existing rectory.
3. The last legacy of John Seward, who had designed houses for 3 separate sites, was the suggestion that the present house might be extended westward along the road instead of southward, the direction to which all previous plans had looked. We were able to draw up a brief on these lines for Mr. Harry Kennedy, the architect recommended by Mr. Seward, and he produced plans and elevations which were accepted without serious question by the Diocese, the Church Commissioners, the local Planning Authority and the Ministry of the Environment (N.b. the Rectory is a listed house). The planners refused permission for the removal of the large porch to the new front door - and the proposal to provide a second staircase was abandoned because of cost.
4. There was a delay of nearly a year between acceptance of the plans and completion of negotiation for the commencement of building. During this time building costs spiralled and various refinements (e.g. double glazing of the new study and bedroom windows on the north side) had to be abandoned. But the extension was eventually built between May and December 1972. The oak panelling of the study (like the dining room fireplace) came from Pershore Old Hall (c.1620) and were given by Mr. Raymond Richards.
5. No money was then available for the modest modernisation of the kitchen; but the solid fuel Aga stove, which had for years been unsatisfactory, owing to down-draughts caused by position in relation to church tower, got to the stage when it either had to be replaced or removed. Several unsatisfactory attempts had been made to prevent rainwater seepage into the alcove where the Aga was placed. A workable, if somewhat long and narrow kitchen and family feeding area, was finally achieved in 1974 on lines we had suggested to the Diocesan Surveyor.
6. Unfortunately the oil-fired central heating installation was designed and completed only a few months before the drastic rise in oil prices. When the system was designed oil cost £20 for a tankful of 250 gallons. At that time we counted on maintaining day-long heat in all rooms in use at the cost of £120-150 per annum for oil - using electric fires only for short transitional periods in autumn and spring, and the open fire (chiefly wood) only occasionally when entertaining. With the rise in cost of oil fuel to £65 for a tankful, a drastic reduction has had to be made in the number of hours of heating, and a tank full now lasts 2 months instead of 4 or 5 weeks - but the expenditure on oil has gone up to around £200-250 per annum and we are having to use additional electric and coal fires. (All ceilings have been insulated).

Francis & Margaret House

February 1976.

✓ 1978 - £80 a Tank full
about £300 p.a.