

Architectural Implications of St. John's Mission and Hopes

Architecture and Space Use Committee

January - May 2020

This is an annotated version of the 2020 Architecture and Space Use Committee report on the implications of our mission on the kind of space we should consider developing. The original document is shown in **bold** font and the annotated comments – originally an extensive set of footnotes - are shown in *italics*

Preface

The purpose of this document is to communicate to an architect what our needs are without dictating design. Here we organize in one place the hopes and dreams of spaces we need for our activities as a parish. We built and moved into Phase 1 in 2009. The 1998 version of this same document was used then, and our architect met a number of the elements. Phase 2/3 are still to build. (We use “Phase 2” to describe the office and classroom wings, and “Phase 3” as the Sanctuary. These could be built separately, or more economically all at once.) All three Phases have been approved in our Zoning permit.

We know that not everything can be accommodated; there just isn't unlimited space or money. We hope the architect can discover how to create spaces that all the groups can use and share. No group gets nothing, and no group gets everything. We may have to let go of some of these dreams, but we would like to be taken seriously enough that a professional has wrestled with their best ideas and can explain to us where some things are just not possible, and surprise us with the amazing things that are possible.

Worship Area

The worship area should balance the symbols of our faith: congregation, font, ambo (pulpit/lectern) and altar, and capture the essence of our gathering. Three themes have emerged from the discussion of our hopes:

1. the space welcomes everyone into the circle of community

The importance of the word “circle” is we want to look different than the traditional model of church where the priest is the “pilot” up in front and the congregation is passively seated in rows facing forward. We want a person coming to the door to feel like there is space for them and they can easily join the assembled people without having to break into ranks.

2. the space helps everyone to hear, see and participate in the celebration

We want the natural acoustics of the space to encourage participation in worship. It helps people to sing when they can sense their voice is contributing to the sound of the whole. We want every seat in the house to be “good”, none behind pillars or too far from the action.

(For example, our current line array speakers are designed to make the projected sound the same volume for the person at the back as it is for the person near the front.)

3. the space stimulates contemplation both of our religious traditions and the spiritual journey ahead.

Our worship space and décor should reference our links to long history, but also show that we can be flexible to embrace new ideas and expressions of our shared spirituality.

4. The entire building project is based on our community's belief in responsible growth. The worship space should both accommodate larger gatherings and also provide space for quiet reflection and individual contemplation.

- **Accommodate 250, but feel filled with only 100**

We meet every Sunday, but we also have special occasions like Easter, Christmas, Mother's Day, funerals and weddings that require accommodation of much larger gatherings. The other important aspect of deciding on the size of our worship space is the understanding of the modern economics of parish size. To maintain economic stability while affording the salary of priest and other staff, we must expect our membership and resulting Sunday attendance to be a certain size. If we haven't built big enough, we are certain to limit the size of the parish. (This document in 1998 simply said "accommodate 300". We have sculpted our expectations to meet current times.)

- **See each other in worship**

This is another reminder for the architect that we expect to be seated more in curves than straight lines.

- **Receive communion in one circle**

We feel strongly about our shared communion circle. For decades we have taken the bread and wine in a loose rubber band formation. We like to be shoulder to shoulder as a single entity rather than in traditional lines taking turns individually.

- **See and hear clearly**

- **Internally visible from entry/outside so people can see into the Worship space before they open the door.**

Our Victorian church building on Depot Hill had solid wood doors. Anyone arriving late had to build up the courage to open those squeaky doors without knowing what was happening beyond. We wanted the new church building to have glass in the doors to reduce the anxiety, especially for newcomers, of joining worship.

- **Can see out too, natural light is important**

- **Need interactive space for choir and organ, the organist and choir close enough that they can easily coordinate.**

Good music doesn't happen magically. Besides "tuning" the building acoustically to support music, we need to plan for the necessary interaction of the human beings that create live music. They need to be close enough to coordinate in the moment. (The organist in a loft can't read the mind of the choir director down behind the altar, for example)

- **Multiple instrumentation supported, but not dedicated**

This used to simply say "Multiple instrumentation". In our 2020 review there was a concern that we were asking the architect to create separate, dedicated space for a small orchestra. This was clarified with the phrase "not dedicated".

- **Hand bell performance space requires at least 24 feet of linear table space (non-dedicated), and storage for the bell cases, tables, pads and music.**

Our current worship space in the Parish Hall doesn't have room to accommodate a hand bell choir that can rehearse and perform regularly.

- **Light, open, inviting**
- **Welcoming for all ages**
- **Flexible**

This doesn't seem to need clarification; we all understand flexibility. but maybe just a reminder of the possibilities a large room can facilitate. With a dedicated Worship space, we can move immediately into fellowship in another room (Parish Hall). Similar to a home with a living room and a dining room. We can prearrange chairs and tables prior to an event. We can arrange chairs in curves for worship, in rows for a concert, or remove the chairs altogether for a dance.

- **Adjustable room with sound barrier from which you can see and hear (crying room for babies)**

Even this "crying room" can be flexible use if combined with the office space as a waiting room.

- **Reflecting our Anglican tradition:**

- **Can celebrate sacraments**
- **Most important symbols:**
 - **Gathered community**
 - **Altar**

- **Ambo (lectern/pulpit)**
- **Font (John the Baptist)**
- **Pleasurable**
- **Surprising (the What!?! Factor)**
- **Adventurous (the WOW factor)**
- **Meditation area/ chapel desirable (this would only require installing the partitions on either side of the current altar space.)**
- **Area for healing in Sunday service**
- **Sacristy: Current space crowded for number of people working simultaneously. More space needed for rolling carts where they assemble all the materials, dishes, candles, linens, and elements to dress the worship space. They would like a more counter space, or a worktable. (Maybe flower arranging could be moved elsewhere)**

Originally this bullet just said “Sacristy”. The current Altar Guild gave a lot of feedback. The architect will need to figure out how to improve their functional space while sharing with all the other use groups.

- **Facilitate outdoor services**

This needs idea is new for this document. We had no such direction for the architect in our original plan. It will be interesting to see what can be designed.

- **Integrate hanging art facilities for the Advent wreath, banners, paintings, stage lights, decorative lights, etc.**

This also is new. It is a listing of things that we felt were overlooked when our current building was designed.

Education

Formal and informal education is important for parish members of all ages. The spaces should be attractive, inviting, and appropriate for multiple uses by toddlers, young children, teens, and adults. Activities will range from formal study and discussion to music and sports. We have received a zoning permit to host a 50 child school, but we have no immediate plans to implement one.

- **Attractive and inviting**
- **Youth room (soundproof, with refrigerator)**

- **Adult education space for varying sized groups from 5 to 80. The spaces should be wired for electronic presentations.**
- **Nursery space in proximity to the entrance so it is easy for newcomers to find yet separated enough from worship space so it isn't distracting. It should have an indoor toilet and sink, and potential for a video monitoring system and pager for communication between Nursery staff and parents.**
- **Child education including a plan for toys, storage, outlets above little finger height, small chairs, and tables**
- **Outdoor education facilities preserving the basketball and volleyball court space**
- **Music education and practice (choir/rehearsal) There must be a soundproof space in addition to the sanctuary where the choir can rehearse when worship or other activities are in session.**
- **Library**
- **Potential for a school**

Outreach

We need space to serve diverse needs of the community around us, especially children, AA groups and the homeless. We also want to share the life of our parish by welcoming the community with weekend workshops, forum and art space, and banquet possibilities. These will be enhanced with clear communication and support facilities such as kitchen, volunteer offices and presentation support.

- **Latchkey children/After school children/tutoring/music lessons**
- **Food/clothes donation collection near the Sanctuary entry, out of the pathway but easy to carry to altar for blessing**
- **AA, and similar regular meetings (including lockable storage)**
- **Concerts/ art exhibits**
- **Community banquet area for 150 (seated), or 300 (standing)**
- **Weekend workshops (showers)**

This aims at the possibility of hosting visiting youth or other church groups to sleep overnight while participating in a workshop.

- **Forum for community education**

- **Clear signage with capacity for advertising current events**
- **High visibility**

This goal of ours is not supported by the County. We will have to fight tooth and nail for signage, neighborhood, and highway visibility.

- **Multimedia capability with consideration of future technologies**
- **Fenced outdoor play area near the children’s room(s)**
- **Sheltering homeless including kitchen for cooking group meals, bathing/shower/dressing space, storage for bedding, towels, and non-perishable breakfast/snack/food, use of Wi-Fi. Washer and dryer for towels and bedding.**

25 years ago our dream was just to have a “kitchen for feeding the homeless”. As we all know our reality has taken us much further. This element strives to detail the additional needs for our homeless housing effort.

- **Establish a location for a demonstration tiny home**

New in 2020: We have land. It is the greatest resource in our small county. We strive to be thoughtful generous leaders. We can do our part.

- **Helpful Shop reserved space/area for collection of donations, seasonal decorations, on church campus commitment of 10’ x 10’ maximum general storage**

New in 2020: The Helpful Shop has become a recognized part of our parish service to the community. It is possible that we can provide some facility on our church campus to support this ministry.

- **Accommodate youth group social events (age 11 to 18) for community youth events**

New in 2020: This is a new program that we are administering. It may be that the architect can identify uses that are different for this age group.

- **Potential disaster relief shelter/resource hub**

New in 2020: To be a good neighbor we can use our foresight and deeper pockets to help shelter and support our local community.

Fellowship

We want an open and inviting space to gather and serve new and old members of the parish, including indoor fellowship area for 300 people, and an adjoining outdoor courtyard or patio. We also need comfortable spaces for smaller meetings (12-30 people). All this should be served by a good kitchen, rest rooms and storage. All fellowship spaces must allow for/invite/encourage multiple uses.

- **Open and inviting**
- **Indoor fellowship area for 300 people**
- **Great kitchen to serve 300 people - adjacent to courtyard for outdoor dining, including a commercial dishwasher**

Our current kitchen was designed to include a commercial dishwasher, but budget limited our installing it when we built in 2009. It goes in/on the counter between the sink and refrigerator where the residential dishwasher is.

- **Youth room (with refrigerator) plus rugged outdoor area, sturdy play equipment, basketball, etc.**
- **Inviting and accessible nursery**
- **Library/conference space**
- **Parlor/meeting room for 12-30**
- **Space for community use**
- **Rest rooms/showers/laundry**
- **Attractive games, BBQ pit, labyrinth, patio**
- **Storage space for all of the above**

Entry/Access/General

We want a church that invites access, visible from a distance and obviously hospitable from the entry area. The overall feeling should be open, well-lit, airy and playful, reflecting our local environment. It should guide all types of people, from children to elders, to the spaces and activities they seek. It should be built for active use, with ample and sturdy work and play areas.

- **Wood/concrete structure**
- **Tower desirable - visible from freeway**

A tower is allowed for a church in this county to be up 25 feet higher than the regular building limit of 28 feet. One tenth of the building footprint can rise to 53 feet. A tower is important for a church because it helps the general public understand what kind of building it is. It is also more powerful for the people entering the building. Their eyes are drawn up. We want to think every time we enter the sanctuary – “wow, this is an amazing space”.

- **Architecturally obvious - from parking lot, direct people to church, fellowship, childcare, etc. The design of the architecture can make an entrance inviting. The building should speak for itself.**
- **Very handicapped and elder accessible**
- **Modular - some built later, if necessary, but according to good overall master plan**
- **Hospitality obvious and integral**
- **Low maintenance**
- **Sturdy and safe for much active use**
- **Dedicated work areas – secure sacristy / modesty preserving vesting space**
- **Playful details**
- **Well-lighted/open airy**
- **Accessible meditative area in an unlocked but sheltered space**

Big change from 1998. Then our hope was the church would be open at all times, with just sensitive areas secured with locks. (The Sacristy and bookkeepers office the most secure). In 2020 we have a new neighborhood and a new reality. Even so we at least want some place a longing soul can find a comforting space to pray.

- **Entry - inviting/mystery/playful**
- **Physically connected (physically and psychologically) with ocean, beach, surf**
- **Space for landscape details - permanent**
- **Sensitive to environment**

Administration

The new center should include a variety of space for all the regular activities of the parish, including adequate offices and small meeting rooms. The rooms make it easier to work on important projects (music, altar guild, publications, bookkeeping). Ample and innovative storage is required for all parish activities.

- **Place for altar guild to iron/clean/do flowers**
- **Separate Rector's office/counseling office**
- **Assistant Rector's office**

- **Small meeting room. Seating for 4 to 8.**

- **Publication workroom**

This is where the printing machines could be, like the Riso, and the big copier/printer. A place for noisy office work.

- **Reception area**

This is a space for visitors to the church office to wait for appointments, or rest without disturbing the office workers. (This is the space that could be used during worship as a crying room, with glass windows to the sanctuary)

- **Musician office (choir and instruments)**

- **Administrative Assistant space**

- **Desirable to have extra office spaces**

Back in 1998 it seemed like it would be wonderful if we could provide office space for other non-profit organizations or worthy causes. In this day and age of computers providing virtual “space”, the need for physical offices seems expensive and much less necessary.

- **Building maintenance/janitor’s room**

- **Bookkeeper space. Must be lockable.**

- **Enough space for volunteers to work**

- **Separate living space for an onsite caretaker**

Our zoning permit allowed for a jitney (small bus) garage with a studio apartment above. A church bus could collect parishioners for worship and thus reduce the need for parking spaces. The apartment could house a caretaker/sextant. Power, water and sewer are already plumbed to the location. (Current office trailer space)

- **Storage space for all above**