

# **Building Committee Report for 2007 Annual Meeting**

## **Doug Lapp**

### **Background**

To address problems created by an overcrowded narthex and a shortage of gathering space, several years ago St. Alban's Church embarked on a Capital Campaign, created a West End Committee, and hired an architect to recommend a broad array of improvements that might be undertaken to improve our facilities. In mid-2004, after receiving these recommendations, the Vestry appointed a Building Committee to implement a renovation project which would be funded by the Capital Campaign.

However, the events of 9/11 and their effect on the economy had required the Vestry to extend the Capital Campaign effort through the end of 2004 and to delay initiating the renovation work until sufficient funding was available. This delay resulted in increased construction costs as a result of inflation. In addition, further analysis revealed that there were some serious structural and engineering problems that needed to be addressed, such as an aging heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) system.

As a result, it became necessary to confine the planned architectural improvements to the Nourse Hall and the Narthex, with the following goals: (1) increase the gathering space adjacent to the Narthex; (2) reconfigure the layout of the assembly area in Nourse Hall to make more efficient use of this space; (3) reconfigure and upgrade the restrooms that serve Nourse Hall and the church; (4) improve the circulation routes between the Narthex and the upper and lower levels of Nourse Hall; and (5) make more efficient use of the space on the lower level of Nourse Hall.

### **Selection of Project Manager and Architect**

In the fall of 2004, the Vestry directed the Building Committee to identify an experienced project management group that could help plan and supervise the renovation work, and in December, 2004 a contract was signed with Realco Project Management Services. About this time, the architecture firm that had been working with the church for several years withdrew from the project. In May, 2005, with the help of the Realco team of Gary Baker and Ken Aultice, the Building Committee issued a Request for Proposals for the architectural and engineering work that would be needed for the project. After interviewing six firms, the Building Committee recommended the selection of MTF Architecture, which was approved by the Vestry.

During the summer of 2005, MTF Architecture prepared a Schematic Design Submission which included detailed schematic plans that described the proposed renovations, as well as reports from structural and mechanical engineers. The Schematic Design Submission was reviewed by the Building Committee, presented and discussed at a Parish Meeting on September 25, and approved by the Vestry on October 9, 2005. The

Schematic Design Submission was then used to obtain preliminary construction cost estimates for the proposed improvements from contractors.

## **Selection of Contractor and Initiation of Construction Work**

In November 2005, during the next phase of the project, the MTFAs architects and engineers began to develop more refined architectural drawings and detailed explanations of the proposed structural and mechanical designs. The results of this analysis, combined with a clearer understanding of code requirements and the impact of our over-heated construction market, suggested that we might not be able to afford even our scaled-back renovation project. However, further examination of the proposed renovations revealed some possible cost savings and strengthened our belief that the most reliable way to determine construction costs would be to complete our documents and seek bids from several qualified contractors.

In February, 2006, the Vestry authorized the Building Committee to seek bids from construction companies in order to obtain firm cost estimates for the renovations. The bids were received in June. After evaluating these bids, the Vestry voted on July 30, 2006 to enter into a contract with the low bidder, Whiting-Turner Construction, to perform the renovations and authorized the expenditure of \$3, 614,819 for the project.

Whiting-Turner Construction began work on August 7, 2006, starting with the demolition of the interior walls and floors of Nourse Hall. On September 5, the DC Government issued a building permit for the new construction work. The construction work continued throughout the past winter and is now nearing completion.

The plumbing, electrical, fire alarm, and elevator approvals required by the DC government were obtained in March and April, and the Building Final Inspection was approved on April 17. As a result, the church now has permission to occupy all three levels of Nourse Hall. However, Whiting-Turner and its sub-contractors will continue to carry out their final work on the project throughout the next two months.

## **Special Contributions to the Building Project**

The Building Committee and the Vestry are very pleased with the design that was developed by MTFAs Architecture, with the quality of the construction work that has been carried out by Whiting-Turner Construction, and with the excellent oversight of the project that has been provided by Realco Project Management. We are also pleased that the project has been completed on schedule, and within the budget authorized by the Vestry.

In addition, we would like to recognize the special contributions of some individual members of the Building Committee. These include Ann Bissell, who prepared lighting designs for the project and donated the sconce lighting fixtures for Nourse Hall, as well as the ceiling lighting fixture for the upstairs robing room; Lee Foster-Crowder, who

guided our interior design team in the selection of wall finishes and floor coverings; Rick Dirksen, who was instrumental in helping us to identify a project management group and in preparing financial analyses for the project; Nick Karas, who provided workers from his firm to assist with the moving and storage of the contents of Nourse Hall; and Ron Hicks, who devoted many extended hours in order to address unexpected problems as they arose. And we would like to express our special appreciation to Marc Fetterman, who lent his professional skills as an architect to the project and devoted many hours to the meticulous analysis of problems and to the development of cost-effective solutions.

Doug Lapp, Chairman, Building Committee

### **Members of St. Alban's Building Committee**

Gordon Avery  
Ann Bissell  
Lee Foster-Crowder  
Rick Dirksen  
Marc Fetterman  
Ron Hicks  
Nick Karas  
Doug Lapp  
Karen Strimple