

REPORT OF THE RCMUC BUILDING-HERITAGE WORKING GROUP

Presented to RCMUC Council, June 3, 2020 and to the Congregational Newsletter, June 12, 2020

WHAT WE LEARNED from the February workshop

On February 23, 2020, 30 participants gathered after worship for a Building Workshop. Participants sat at table groups, with three sets of plans: the building expansion plans drawn up for us by Transept Architects; and two plans that involved renovation, but not expansion, one with the offices maintained on the main floor, and another with the offices moved upstairs. Facilitators moved from table to table, getting that group's input on one aspect of the plans, then moving to another table to talk about that same topic. The facilitators have compiled their notes, and posted them at http://ralphconnor.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Feb-23_20-Workshop-Summary.pdf . In addition, the original documents being discussed, which analyze the results of and response to the well-subscribed 2019 survey, are posted at [http://ralphconnor.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/Building-Heritage-Committee e-Recommendations-12-09-19.pdf](http://ralphconnor.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/Building-Heritage-Committee-e-Recommendations-12-09-19.pdf)

Five key words emerged from these discussions, consistent with the survey results as well, that frame our way forward: our Church building (the Hall as well as the Sanctuary) needs to be

- **WORSHIPFUL (Sacred space)**
- **WELCOMING**
- **ACCESSIBLE**
- **EFFICIENT**
- **EXPANDABLE**

In addition, **one additional word** that was not widely discussed, now needs to be added: **SAFE**. The global COVID-19 pandemic was declared by the World Health Organization a mere three weeks after the workshop, and that raises the need for all public institutions to consider public safety concerns in all their discussions.

NARROWING THE FIELD: two options for further investigation

The table discussions on February 23rd suggest that we can reduce the number of options being considered, from three to two. (1) There was a broad-based support for doing further investigations on moving the offices upstairs; further planning and preliminary costing of this plan will be pursued. See "option 2" at <http://ralphconnor.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/Preliminary-Bldg-Plans-Opt1-Opt2.pdf>

(2) Even amongst those supporting upstairs offices, many had a sense of loss at not having a main-floor presence for people who come to meet with Church staff, or visitors wishing to see our historic Sanctuary. It became clear during the table discussions, that in order to keep the common main floor meeting area from becoming too small to be of practical use, keeping re-positioned offices on the main floor would necessitate some sort of main-floor expansion. The concept plans developed by Transept Architects are at <http://ralphconnor.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/RCMUC-Concept-Plan-for-discussion.pdf> . Costs associated to this option will be investigated.

(3) the one option that will not be pursued further, is attempting to keep re-positioned offices on the main floor without expanding the present footprint. (see "option 1" at <http://ralphconnor.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/Preliminary-Bldg-Plans-Opt1-Opt2.pdf>). There appears to be no support whatsoever for a plan that would diminish the size of our main floor meeting space. (Note: no matter which plan was favoured, renovating the hall was of much higher priority than structural amendments to the Sanctuary).

WHAT COMES NEXT

Our commitment as a Building-Heritage group, is to

- Continue to respect the results of the survey, the input received in face-to-face consultation, our Mission and Affirming Vision as a Church, the requirements of Alberta Heritage, and the financial concerns that have been raised by congregants; and with these in mind,
- Hone and determine the approximate costs of two plans, (1) one with offices upstairs and no expansion to the footprint, and (2) another, with offices repositioned on the main floor and main-floor expansion. These will be brought back to the congregation by <date???

Our request to Council and the congregation, is to prayerfully consider the six words listed above, as they relate to the future shape of our Church building.

In what way will this plan contribute to the entire Church building being **WORSHIPFUL**? How can the hall, and the way the offices are positioned, convey a sense that this is a place where spiritual exploration and actions in Christ's name are pursued?

How will people feel **WELCOMED** from the first time they enter the building, and for the entire time they are in the building? How will the architecture and the way people move through the building convey this?

Will all aspects of the building, and our life as a congregation, be **ACCESSIBLE**? This ties into the sense of welcome, above, but also our commitment to be a place of justice and invitation, where all people are able to utilize the full building and participate fully in the life and work of the congregation.

Is there an **EFFICIENCY** to the plan? Is there a natural flow to the way the space is utilized? Are existing spaces well-used? Do new spaces, if any, enhance our ability to do Mission? Will storage spaces be sufficiently sized and efficiently placed? Will the funds spent on this specific plan be funds well-spent, as we anticipate the future relationship between Ralph Connor Church and the Canmore community?

Will this plan allow future **EXPANSION** or re-imagining of the building, or will building elements prevent future expansions or adaptations? Does this plan give room for additional or different staffing in future, or will it only work for the way we presently shape our life as a community of faith?

And finally, with respect to public **SAFETY**: how will the COVID-19 pandemic affect aspects of our building plans moving forward, as well as any necessary accommodations right away (such as handwashing/sanitizing stations)? Is the plan able to accommodate distancing and spaciousness and any other foreseeable measures that might be required in future health emergencies?

Thank you for your ongoing participation in this process. It continues to be so vital that everyone's voice and perspective is heard and considered so that, as a community, we can make the best possible decision about RCMUC's building.

Respectfully submitted: Paul Elfner, Karen Fraser, Ian Schofield, Dale Stanway, Greg Wooley.

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