

APPENDIX A - NOTES FROM TOURS

ST JOHN THE DIVINE
CHURCH BUILDING DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Tours of Church Building 2014

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The following notes are based on observations by members of the Task Force present at the tours of the Church Building made on August 22nd and August 29th, 2014

The notes are arranged to follow the route taken by members on the tours and have been supplemented by description of the physical form and materials of the various elements of the Church Building.

This document is a work in progress.

SPACE ABOVE ORGAN (North side)

Former uses:

Once used for brass, choir and overflow space for congregation
Once used for radio broadcasts of services - electrics still there.
Currently "Overflow parking" for junk - the "Elephant loft"

Observations:

Choir situated above congregation is not ideal
Configuration of steps at entry to loft is unsafe.
Stairwell is dark - safety issue and not wired for lights
The floor of this space could be levelled
There is vaulted space above the current ceiling.

Possible future uses:

Storage (with levelled floor and screening from chancel)
e.g. Music storage / Archive space
Meeting space.
Meditation space with comfortable seating and cushions

SANCTUARY & CHANCEL

Description: existing furnishings and fixtures:

Oak reredos at East end of sanctuary with oak panelling extending along North and South walls of chancel. Oak wall panelling contains door to sacristy passage on North side, and door to chapel sanctuary on South side.
Panels behind south choir stalls can be opened to the Chapel

Lower portion of reredos contains compartments for altar frontal hangings.
Panels flanking cross in upper part of reredos were intended to have decorative tapestry hangings
High altar is raised on three carpeted steps and contains audio wiring/equipment.
Choir stalls of oak oriented toward central aisle.
Choir aisle carpeted
Organ console on North side of choir stalls (could be moved, organ pipes not).

Observations:

Current preferred orientation of choir reflects the Oxford Movement Anglican Choral tradition - different orientations have been experimented with in the past
St John the Divine is a "proscenium arch church" - chancel is not now focus of worship - now 'gathering' rather than traditional 'audience'
For concerts, performers usually situated at West end of the chancel facing nave.
Currently Eucharist is at West end of chancel with small movable altar.
Therefore, current confusion - i.e. where to bow with two altars.
For BAS eucharist, bread and wine taken, kneeling at rail in front of high altar sanctuary. This involves climbing steps over moveable rostra to the chancel floor level and returning via steps through door in North side of choir to lower passageway. (See observations for Chapel below)
For Iona services, bread and wine are taken, standing in a shallow arc in front of the small altar (Note: some people prefer to kneel.) Space for flow and return to and from pews cramped.
After communion, chalice and patten are taken from high altar Sanctuary through door in South wall to Chapel Sanctuary and after service taken to the Sacristy
Is the North side of the church a workable location for the Sacristy?

Possible future arrangements/alterations:

Removal of carpeting - advantageous for acoustics - absorbs 75% of sound. Aisle first.
Note: Curtain cut off the altar at one time in past.
Remove or reduce size of high altar, remove sanctuary rail and steps
Moving the reredos forward to sanctuary arch - would give space behind for sacristy and even choir robing room

CHAPEL

Description: existing space, furniture and fittings

Chapel consists of a Nave and a Sanctuary added in 1961/2.
Nave situated within the South transept of the original church building (now under the South organ loft)
Low flat plaster ceiling with hatch in South-east corner giving access to South organ loft over.
Two banks of oak pews with central aisle
One step up to carpeted Sanctuary
Flat roof over Sanctuary
Good modern stained and etched glass windows.
Removable wood panels between Chapel and choir
Wood/wood-product 'Pella' multifold doors between Chapel and South Aisle of Church
Doorway from Chapel Sanctuary to Sanctuary of high altar.
Two inset niches in splayed reveals of Sanctuary doorway, one containing bass-relief (metal?) panel
Place for 'healing' demarcated by wicker screen in South -west corner of chapel

Observations

Chapel is very highly valued by some members of the congregation.
Increasing numbers of congregation use chapel to receive bread and wine at Eucharist.
Floor level with that of main church building with one kneeling step at altar rail.
Healing space too exposed to flow of other communicants: insufficient space and no acoustic privacy.
Multifold doors not of appropriate quality.

Possible future arrangements/alterations:

Build purpose-designed healing station within chapel - possibly modifying width of chapel entry doorway.
Create new location for healing station within the church
Replace pews with chairs - for quiet meditation and prayer
Increase acoustic separation of Chapel from remainder of the church.

NAVE, incl. NORTH AND SOUTH AISLES

Description:

Nave consists of 5 structural bays each approximately 17' wide.
The width between stone columns across nave approx. 32'
The North and South aisles are approx. wide.
Both sides of the nave, the stone columns/piers (approx. diam.) support decorative brick gothic arches.
The brickwork over the arches, includes a range of tri-partite gothic arched clerestory windows glazed with plain obscured glass.
On the north side of the bay at the West end of the Nave, glazed clerestory windows are replaced by metal grill work (these openings give out onto the antiphonal organ loft located within the church tower).
Over all, the timber boarded pitched roof (1961) over the Nave is supported on series of timber trusses with steel cross ties (#2 per structural bay)
Entry doors lead to the nave through gothic arched openings in South Aisle wall at the West end of the nave (from the south porch), in the south wall of the Tower (from the north porch, and in the North Aisle wall at the east end of the nave (from the Garden Entrance lobby).
North and South Aisles have lean-to mono-pitch roofs supports on timber half trusses (Original (c.1961) decorative suspended lamps remain in both Aisles)
Ranges of tripartite stained glass windows in the outer walls of both North and South Aisles.
The West wall of the church contains the octagonal baptistry (centrally located) and one large stained glass window at the end of the South Aisle.
The baptistry includes an octagonal marble font and three small stained glass windows from the original 1912 church.
Above the baptistry in the upper part of the West wall is a large tripartite window with plain, obscured glass.
The western end of the North aisle contains the brick walls of the church tower containing the North Porch
The floor of the nave (linoleum on concrete) is graded down towards the chancel end (the total fall being 10" from west to east)

Seating in the Nave consists of 2 banks of oak pews
In the North and South Aisles seating consists of single bank of oak pews.
Access to pews is from a central aisle in the Nave and alongside the stone columns within each

of the North and South Aisles

Pews are located at approx. 3' centres.

The structural bay at East end of Nave contains Pulpit adjacent to the chancel arch on the north side and the Lectern likewise on the south side.

The Altar table currently in use is situated centrally, below the chancel arch. The original configuration of this bay did not include an altar - three steps led up from the Nave floor to the raised chancel. The present configuration relies on moveable rostra. The layout of the rostra can be altered for concerts and other special events.

At the West end of the Nave one whole bay is currently used as a Narthex gathering space. Here, after service, coffee, tea and fruit juice are served. Two rows of pews have been removed to accommodate these functions.

An 'al fresco' children's area occupies the second bay at the western end of the South Aisle. Audio control panel and equipment is situated at the western end of the North Aisle adjacent to the Tower

Air Vents and electric points currently located in some pew ends.

Observations:

During the BAS services, some members of the congregation making their way to take communion at the High Altar, find the moveable rostra at the entry to the Chancel difficult to negotiate.

During an Iona Eucharist there is too limited a space to accommodate the shallow arc of communicants and the flow of those returning to their seats. (Two rows of pews have already been removed at the east end of the Nave.)

Sight-lines and acoustics for pews in the North and South Aisles are poor - very poor at the western ends of the aisles.

Baptisms and confirmations are being currently held during Sunday Eucharist service, view of the ceremony very limited for most members of the congregation.

Linoleum flooring difficult to maintain - polished concrete or wood good for acoustics

Limited number and locations for wheelchairs.

Light from West window glaring, also excessive solar gain during evening services.

Inflexibility of the worship space is restrictive. Church designed in 1912 (and re-built in 1962) as a 'proscenium arch' church when the 'performers' were the priest, assistants and choir, the congregation being the 'audience'. Fixed pews, the limited width of the Nave, the large diameter of the columns and consequent restricted sight lines of the Aisles severely limit the variety of liturgical arrangements currently possible.

Possible future arrangements/alterations:

Replace pews with linkable chairs.

Level the floor of nave: this would permit flexibility of seating/liturgical layouts.

A level floor would result in a single step rise to the present Chancel floor level.

Level floor would permit various locations for Altar and Ambo and liturgical procession and possibly the Font.

Level floor would not make much difference for concert audiences.

A shallow ramp access in both North and South Aisles would provide access to/from Garden Entrance and Chapel.

Level floor would permit use of all or part of the church for other purposes e.g. community meetings, exhibitions.

The western bay of the church, currently used as meeting space before and after services and measures 17' from the west wall to the first of the Nave columns.

This area could be formalized as a 'Narthex' (possibly by installation of a partial screen) including welcome station, information display, as well as providing greeting/meeting/socializing area. Provision could be made for coffee/refreshment prep. and serving.

Narthex used for choir too - do not wall it off. Therefore openable timber and glass or wrought iron partial screen

The present octagonal font recess could be re-purposed as a welcome station.

Storage/coffee preparation area - counter, cupboards, fridge, dish washer could be built in along the west wall.

Alternatively, a side aisle (or part thereof) could be used for tables etc. for coffee.

Chair/ table storage needed.

'Crying space' for babies/toddlers + mothers

Sight-lines and acoustics for north end of aisles are poor - alternative uses?

Install 'healing' space in one of the aisles (with good aural and visual privacy)

Install children's area in one of the aisles

West windows - light is glaring (Window fund is intended for displaying the story of St. John the Divine)

Open church to public - Cathedral has done this. Time limits and/or spatial limits?

Access to "Whole space" question.

PORCHES

Description:

South Porch access by steep flight of steps.

South Porch doors: pair of solid timber 'gothic arched doors'

Inner doorway 'gothic arch' opening into church. Inner doors: pair 1960s flush doors with ply faced panel over.

Single window in South wall of porch

North porch: access by short flight of steps, inner and outer doors as for South Porch'

Single window in North wall

Grey painted walls

Grey painted timber 'open' staircase on east wall of porch: access to belfry floor above.

Observations:

Both porches are not welcoming.

Grey painted brick work drab

South porch is lighter but access to it involves steep flight of steps

South porch currently used for storage of rostra.

Minimal wall space in both porches for message/information display

Belfry stair in the North Porch seems like an 'elephant in the room'.

Possible future arrangements/alterations:

External stairs to South porch could (heritage stays allowing) be reconfigured to reduce total rise.

Screen belfry stairs in North Porch and use space under for cupboard (for coffee prep?)

Alternatively use North porch as healing space?

Replace belfry stairs with retractable ladder in North porch

Replace inner doors to both porches with glass doors and glass panel over. Outer doors could then be left open when church is open, providing sight of church interior from Quadra Street

Outside: welcoming well designed signage at both Quadra Street entrances

BASEMENT

Basement includes:

- i) under the eastern three bays of the nave, the Main Space (former Church Hall, now Food Bank and 'Out of the Rain' shelter), with three rooms off it to the North side of the church. These include former male and female choir robing rooms and a smaller room containing the music library.
- ii) under the South Transept (the present chapel nave) the food bank store (formerly the AYPAs room)
- iii) under the North Transept (the present washroom, Sacristy and passageway) a kitchen, women's washroom and passageway leading to
- iv) boiler room and fan room (under the Chancel and Sanctuary) and
- v) the Columbarium (under the 1962 addition currently the children's area.
- vi) under the Chapel Sanctuary on the South side of the Church is the Blower Room accessed through the Boiler Room

Natural lighting is provided by means of glass block-work (1962) built into each of the original (1912) masonry openings. These serve the following spaces : Main Space, former Robing Rooms, Music Library, kitchen, washroom and Food Bank store. A single metal-framed opening window provides ventilation. No other basement spaces have natural light or ventilation.

External access to the basement is by stairs within the light-well between the Church and the site boundary on Mason Street. From the entrance doors, inside the basement, a flight of 5 steps leads to the actual basement floor level.

Internal access to the basement is by staircase in the Garden Porch (Under this staircase is a small men's washroom)

Basement walls are plastered and painted over masonry and concrete, and drywalled and painted over stud framed partitions.

Concrete walls and ceilings in the Boiler, Fan and Blower Rooms are unfinished.

The ceiling of the columbarium is of acoustic tiling stuck to reinforced concrete over.

Observations:

Quality of space used for overnight shelter unacceptable.

Dampness, lack of ventilation and possible presence of mould is a significant problem.

Silverfish found within music library.

Evidence of rising damp can be seen in the lower sections of the masonry walls: peeling paintwork and soft powdery plaster.

Floor surfaces do not dry out quickly after washing.

Lack of ventilation: the small metal opening windows in the glass block-work panels do not appear to be used and cannot provide through ventilation due to intervening partitions

Basement is not accessible: entrance to basement is by stairs only. Emphasis of separation of 'upstairs' activities from those 'downstairs'.

Delivery of goods to basement (e.g to food bank) is awkward. Stairs inside Molson Street entrance are safety hazard

The three rooms on North side of basement used for inefficient and/or inappropriate storage e.g. "New to you" storage of unsold items, shelving and tables in former women's robing room

Music library/store needs controlled environment conditions

Columbarium - airless space - no ventilation. (Some ashes from cremation still not housed properly)

Ceiling tiles of Columbarium: failure of adhesive.

Possible future arrangements/alterations:

Check presence and type of mould.

Check extent of dampness ingress: walls, floors etc.

Take necessary steps to eradicate mould and dampness.
Provide adequate natural and/or mechanical ventilation throughout basement (e.g. by installing a 'positive pressure' mechanical ventilation system')
If necessary install waterproof membrane to basement floor, installing high density inflation and screed and floor finish over.
Provide ramped access from Molson Street to light-well level and within Main Hall from existing landing to basement floor level
Clear out and re-organize (combine?) rooms along North side of Main Hall to provide efficient storage area
Install new, male washroom off Main Hall
Enclosing outside area - glassed in?

UTILITY ROOM

Boiler, fan room and blower spaces are used for storage including flammable materials.
This should be cleared out
Material currently stored includes re-useable material and junk
Storage should be found for re-usable material

OTHER ISSUES

Toilets are too few
Children's area in church - improvements.
Garden entrance - railing to stairs
Crying room with visual/audio connection to service
Corridor spaces between church and parish house