

THE NFI BUILDING TEAM

December 2011 Report

A new facility conceptual design and related high level cost estimate were presented to Council on November 23, 2011 and to a congregational town hall on December 4, 2011.

I think it is time that we document and review the rationale behind the spaces depicted on the conceptual design floor plans from McCallum Sather Architects Inc. The floor plans resulted from numerous site visits and exchanges between the PNUC representatives and Joanne McCallum and other MSA professionals. The PNUC representatives included:

- June Wright, NFI Committee Chairperson
- John Zinkie, NFI Building Team Chairperson
- Bill Mercer, NFI Finance Team Chairperson
- Pat Gilmore, Council Chairperson
- Michael Brooks, Staff Liaison

In addition, opportunity for input was provided to the entire NFI committee. A wide variety of compromises and new considerations were entertained by everyone.

Where We Began

The instructions the NFI Building Team ultimately communicated to the architect included the following points:

- a preference for more parking with consideration towards rain water management
- landscaping with space for a peace garden, waste management / garden hut
- main and lower level floors to match existing sanctuary structure
- ministerial and administrative space approximately the same as existing with separate space for photocopying & paper storage
- male / female barrier-free washrooms with water closets to serve estimated headcounts
- separate cloak room
- social gathering space of approximately 1650 sq ft
- keyless elevator to serve all floor levels
- dining facility to seat 250 at round tables
- dining room buffet food serving space, dais and portable bar space
- a kitchen the approximate size as existing
- portable furniture storage on same level as dining room
- space for a library, chapel, meeting room size to accommodate church board
- custodial closets
- mechanical space for HVAC to serve new and existing sanctuary building
- longer term storage space

In addition, it was made clear that the new facility would be energy efficient, appear to belong with the sanctuary building and provide a renewed sense of welcome to all congregants and new visitors.

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The following section is an attempt to explain how most of the design spaces were decided upon.

THE SITE

One guiding objective was the retention or expansion of the number of correctly sized parking spaces. Costing allowances were made to address resurfacing the parking lot using permeable techniques and for new landscaping.

A permanent external waste management / garden equipment hut was identified as a requirement. The location shown on the conceptual site plan (south east corner) is simply a place holder for future consideration. It is anticipated that its internal floor and wall surfaces would enable power washing and it would include electrical service.

MAIN FLOOR

Midway through the dialogue about the new facilities it was clear that most of the PNUC representatives hoped to see the highest priority functional spaces located on the same level as the sanctuary. The resulting main floor plan includes:

- administration
- banquet
- support

ADMINISTRATION

Administrative Area

A key provision requested of the architect was to have good sightlines to the entrances from the administrative area. The **administrative office** space would be about the same as the existing space (ex = 323 sq ft verses new = 475 sq ft)

Other ideas were to separate the photocopy machine and all related paper storage (**support**) from the administrative office space and to have a room (**meeting / counting /etc**) in which volunteers could work without disruption to the operation the main office staff.

The space would have its own single **barrier-free staff washroom** and the main administration area would receive natural light through skylights.

Ministerial Offices

The offices have been designed as equal size (ex = 223 & 132 sq ft verses new 224 sq ft each) areas affording appropriate private visitation and small meetings with either minister.

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BANQUET

This space was deemed to require the most flexibility of all the main floor spaces. It was felt that it should adjoin the gathering foyer but separated from it by a folding glass partition. The banquet hall seating capacity was revised to 200 (at round tables) and would have adequate space for a portable raised dais, a portable bar and buffet style food serving (convertible to a dance floor) area. In addition, it would be dividable across the width with a full height folding panel partition.

The space would serve as a flexible and reconfigurable facility such as:

- a dining room for the congregation and rental groups
- reception / banquet space for rental groups
- an overflow from the gathering foyer with hot and cold beverage serving tables(s)
- seating area with groupings of living room style soft furnishings, lamps, side tables, area rugs
- meeting space for scouts and other youth groups
- musical concerts, small (low) stage performances
- etc.

SUPPORT

Gathering Foyer

This space would be the primary area for meeting and greeting all congregants and visitors. It would be a welcoming new entrance way to the sanctuary, administrative offices and the banquet room. The new main **entry** was deemed to be off of the parking lot and as such houses staircases and a self-operated keyless elevator. Access would be maintained off of South Drive. Natural lighting would be offered by skylights located in the flat roof. The flat roof, with a higher ceiling, is a required feature to enable the connection between the new facility and the sanctuary.

Cloak Room

This space would serve events staged in the sanctuary or those held in the banquet facility. It is approximately 9 ft wide and 35 ft long and provides access to the two main level BF washrooms.

Main Floor Washrooms

The term barrier-free washroom means that at least one water closet stall is the appropriate size within which to manoeuvre a wheelchair and it is equipped with appropriate grab / support bars for transferring purposes. In the case of a single WC washroom, the entry door and room walls represent a stall.

It is assumed that the women's washroom will be larger than the men's and the women's would have a minimum of three stalls.

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A single barrier-free WC washroom would be located at the east end of the banquet space.

Kitchen / Pantry

These are important facilities with a combined area of 432 sq ft. The original “going in” thinking about the new facility was that larger hot (multi-course) meals would normally be catered. Since the existing kitchen measures 501 sq ft, it may be necessary to revisit the size and configuration of the new kitchen / pantry after more consultation with regular users of the kitchen and with potential caterers.

In any case, there would be two doorways and a pass-through serving window both for food and bar service.

Storage

It is envisioned that there will be a requirement to reconfigure the banquet facility often and that a dedicated space is required for the storage of portable (not in use) furniture. The proposed storage space has been sized to accommodate 25+ round tables, folding chairs, portable dais / stage pieces and a portable bar.

Entry

As the arrangements of the banquet space took shape the assumption that the number of private rentals would increase and it was agreed that a separate entrance for such events would enhance the appeal for potential renters. It would also serve as an emergency exit.

LOWER LEVEL

The lower level at Port Nelson United Church is not the basement! The earlier design of the sanctuary building ensured that the lower level offered large windows which extend above grade and therefore provided plenty of natural light.

The following spaces, in the conceptual design, were relegated to the lower level in order to limit the overall building footprint (preserve parking spaces) while affording complete accessible, visibility and a sense of welcome:

- Library
- Meeting Room
- Foyer
- New Washrooms
- Lower sanctuary access
- Storage
- Shell Space

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Library

This space compared to the existing library is ex = 506 sq ft verses new = 847 sq ft. It would have at least two tall south facing windows, similar to the lower sanctuary, and glazed wall panels at its entrance. The space is still considered to be multi-use.

Meeting Room

This space is intended to serve as a meeting room suitable for council meetings and as a chapel space. It would have at least one south and east facing windows.

Foyer

This space would be a welcoming space where the staircase, elevator and new washroom access would be housed. The actual shape and size would be determined if a more detailed design was undertaken.

New Washrooms

These barrier-free facilities would be smaller than those on the main floor but would satisfy the current accessibility building code for the lower level.

Lower Sanctuary Access

The primary objective here is to ensure free and welcoming access to the lower sanctuary facilities.

Storage

The allocated space is intended for longer term storage such as Christmas decorations and stacking tables.

Shell Space

On advice from MSA, the main floor should be “constructed” verses “slab on grade”. This choice simplifies construction and offers flexibility regarding future lower level space development. This space would have insulated concrete exterior walls and a concrete floor. In addition, it would have minimal HVAC, lighting and drainage provisions.

RENOVATION / REPAIR COSTING

In addition to cost allowances associated with the new facilities, it was clear from the outset that there was a requirement to renovate, repair and/or upgrade the sanctuary building. The repairs involve items such as exterior concrete work while upgrades include those items identified in the Byrnes Report and those related to necessary refurbishment of the lower level rooms.

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Exterior Concrete

The Property Committee has already taken steps to obtain estimates to replace and/or repair concrete staircases to the lower level, which represent a serious safety concern.

Windows & Doors

The Brynes Report identified a need to upgrade the windows and exterior doors to energy efficient replacements. In keeping with the energy efficiency principles for the new facility, this is a priority.

Mechanical Room(s)

In order to reduce the time when the sanctuary would be unusable, due to demolition, a secondary mechanical room has been proposed. It would serve to house the HVAC for the sanctuary building.

The other mechanical room would serve the new facility and would accommodate any future electrical equipment should we pursue renewable energy generation.

Youth and Children Ministry

This office space was previously used by the Montessori School. After modifications, it would accommodate at least two desks.

Kitchenette

It is envisioned that users of the lower level would appreciate access to a hot and cold beverage serving kitchenette. A permanently installed coffee brewing / hot water dispensing unit is envisioned along with a sink and small refrigerator.

Room Partitions

The existing classrooms are currently larger than required for Sunday school classes. It is envisioned that two (2) partitions would be required to sub-divide the larger rooms for smaller meeting spaces.

Music Room

It is clear that the current music room function needs to be moved to make way for the proposed new mechanical room and to accommodate a growing choir. An existing classroom may very well be converted for that use.

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WHAT HAPPENS NEXT

The NFI Building Team has just about reached the point where it should be disbanded.

However, the NFI mandate has not been fully completed. We were asked to “gather information and needs assessment from the congregation”.

It has been suggested that a small group of the NFI committee members proceed to conduct discussions with various small groups who use our facilities to hear input on the proposed designs. The information gathered would be compiled into a new facility compatibility assessment report.

The NFI Committee chairperson, June Wright, has tentatively scheduled the discussions to begin in early January 2012.

A follow-up town hall has been scheduled for Sunday, January 29, 2012.

There was a deliberate decision made between the introduction of the conceptual design to council and the December town hall to not provide elevation detail. For now there is no agreement on how the roofline might look. This detail may be resolved should the congregation decide to proceed in the future.

We must remember that the conceptual plans we have should serve to stimulate interest and questions within the congregation. It is very likely that after discussions with a variety of groups and individuals who use our facilities some details will change. In the meantime, we now have a concept and related cost estimates to consider.

Council has received a petition asking that a full and complete renovation plan be investigated. Council has agreed that this would be a wise course of action so that we have all the facts before us. Council also anticipates that a completely independent PNUC team would be struck to pursue the renovation plan.

John Zinkie, Chairperson, NFI Building Team