

## **VISION 2020 PROJECT: OTHER ISSUES AND QUESTIONS**

### **How is our commitment to sustainability being achieved?**

One of our goals, from the beginning, has been to maximize our sustainability. We have explored three ways to do that.

First, we are fully committed to including solar energy by placing solar panels on the reconstructed south roof of the Parish Hall. We have included that in our plans and have initial approval from the Commission on Fine Arts and the Historic Preservation Review Board. We have identified potential vendors who will install and maintain at no initial cost to us so long as we purchase the resulting power from them and enable them to use our energy tax credits.

Second, we are fully committed to using sustainable materials, furnishings and building processes. We also have included money in the proposed budget to refurbish Parish Hall windows as a way to “tighten our envelope.”

Third, we have explored the possibility of geothermal energy. Because of our small footprint in an urban space, there are very real constraints on our ability to do that. We also have not as yet found a vendor who will install at no initial cost to us, similar to solar. We are continuing to work with Pamela Blumgart and Therese Dorau of the Green Lions to explore possibilities.

### **Will we have more or less space than we now do?**

In the “undercroft only” scenario, we would have less space than we now have, losing the equivalent of the Penniman and Gregory Rooms in Baxter House.

In the “second floor” scenario, we would have slightly more space than we now have and would replace Baxter House in its entirety with more efficient space.

### **Do we really need to leave Baxter House?**

Yes. Baxter House is increasingly a problem. It requires new plumbing and electrical systems. It is not and cannot feasibly be made accessible. It is inefficient. Most people who come into it regularly do not find it reflective of St. Mark’s welcoming spirit. The operating costs and cost of repairs would be eliminated by leaving it. Also, our occupancy does not fit with current zoning and could be challenged at any time.

### **Why do we need to move the stairs and elevator?**

The design for a second floor above the Parish Hall calls for moving the stairs and elevator. This is driven by the requirement that we make the second floor fully accessible, thus extending elevator service to it. We have extensively examined the alternatives for doing that. Our structural engineer, our architect and an elevator company have told us that the current elevator would need to be fully rebuilt in order to do that. It would require the top of the elevator shaft to punch through the north roof of the Parish Hall – this is something that the Commission on Fine Arts has already told us is not permissible.

It also was suggested that we put a second elevator somewhere else in the building but that would simply use up space there and require people who want to move between the undercroft and the second floor via elevator to cut across the building on the first floor to do so.

There is a significant benefit to moving the stairs and elevator. It creates much more space in the foyer, enabling us to redesign that entire area and make it more welcoming, with better traffic flow, eliminating the crowding on Sundays and during major events. It also allows for construction of replacements for the Penniman and Gregory Rooms in the current undercroft stair/elevator foyer.

### **What space is being provided for the choir and music?**

The Director of Music office will move into the office suite. His current office will become a combination music library and storage area for choir robes, enabling choir members to get both music and robes in one area. In neither design scenario can we provide new, dedicated warm-up space for the choir but, in the “second floor” scenario, the elevator extension would make it easier for them to move between undercroft and Dance Studio for that.

### **Will we have more storage space?**

Probably not. Indeed, we may have less, which may require us to move some storage off-site. This is one of the great losses of not being able to build our original complete design. Certainly, we will need to change our behavior about how we use our current storage space, to make it more efficient, better organized and more thoughtfully managed. Importantly, however, we will eliminate the use of a corner of the parish hall for the lift, unused chairs, and other storage.

### **Have we exhausted all possible design alternatives?**

We have discovered – both through our own discussions and from ongoing input from members of the parish – that it is possible to imagine a wide variety of scenarios. Couldn’t we dig out just a little bit more under the Parish Hall? Why can’t we save money by not building over the kitchen? Why not remodel behind the mural and have classrooms there? Why not do just a bit of the work now and hope we can do more someday?

But we also have discovered that there are three inherent flaws in these options. First, many simply don’t pass the test of what we feasibly can build because of building code requirements, particularly for egress. Second, most would not save money because they have ripple effects on the rest of the construction or are, in and of themselves, expensive to build. Third, they do not get us close to meeting our core program requirements in a reasonable way.

In a macro sense, there really are only three feasible solutions that we have found, the two outlined in this series of documents and the original complete design that combines the two, which we now know is much too expensive to build.

### **What happens to the mural?**

In the “undercroft only” option, the mural would remain. In the “second floor” option, the mural would be removed and destroyed. In either case, we plan to digitally preserve the mural so it can be displayed appropriately in another location. We also are making plans to do video oral histories with members of the parish who were here when the mural was constructed so we can preserve its story. Ultimately, we would like to turn that into a short video history.

We have explored the possibility of preserving the mural by moving it to a different location. But, because of its size, this would require an equally sized space, which we do not have, and would be expensive (initial estimate of ~\$125,000). We also explored cutting it into pieces and displaying those pieces as art work. But the work to do that would be essentially the same as that required to remove it intact and, thus, quite expensive.

**What will the Parish Hall look like? Will it be bigger or smaller?**

In area, the remodeled Parish Hall will be slightly smaller than the current one. But, we will gain usable space by moving the pub to a space behind the mural wall, adjacent to the kitchen and moving the equipment now stored in the southwest corner of the Parish Hall to renovated storage space behind the mural wall.

The Parish Hall will have 12 foot ceilings, much like most high quality hotel conference facilities. There will be four small pillars, no more than 5” square, spaced in the room, to support the second floor. Our architects have drawn a space use design that shows we should be able to seat 110 people at round tables of 10 each. The lighting in the room will be improved.

**What will happen in the kitchen?**

The kitchen will remain in its current location. It will be redesigned to be more efficient. The door to the trash area and the window on the west side will be flipped with one another. Most of the current equipment will be replaced. The venting system will be improved and reconfigured to allow for construction of the second floor above it.

**Why not convert the Dance Studio into space for other use? Why not move it somewhere else in the building?**

The Dance Studio is a formal program of St. Mark’s and has been for over forty years. At no time since the Vision 2020 process began in 2009 have any of the vestries directed the Steering Committee to remove it from our design plans and every design submitted to them and to the parish has included the Dance Studio. Whether or not there is a Dance Studio is a policy decision for the Vestry and Rector, not for the Steering Committee.

We did consider whether it could be moved to another space in the building. There were only two possible places given their requirement for a high ceiling. The first would have been in a new undercroft (which we now know we cannot afford to build) but would have required extensive additional excavation and underpinning to provide the height required – and would have meant that either the entire undercroft would need to be excavated to that level or there would need to be code-compliant ramps into it to ensure accessibility.

The second potential location would be on the far east end of the new second floor and would essentially shift the office space into the Dance Studio. Our architects, engineers and contractor felt that would require more extensive construction to restructure the current Dance Studio for no new space.

**Will we have completely new heating and air conditioning (HVAC) throughout the entire building?**

No. Preliminary estimates on the cost of replacing the entire HVAC system were very high. It was a choice between doing that and being able to do the work required to move us out of Baxter House. The current system will remain for the Nave and current undercroft. We know that components of the system are reaching the “end of their useful life” but we also know that it is unlikely that the entire system would fail and require replacement, thus enabling us to repair and replace as required.

### **What about other repairs that are needed to the building?**

By the very nature of the work we are undertaking on the Parish Hall, we will address most if not all issues related to it. We have budgeted, for example, to replace broken roof tiles, to repair significant damage to the exterior bricks and to refurbish the windows. The Nave is in good shape and any work required there can be done through our ongoing building maintenance and preservation work.

### **What else are we NOT doing that we had hoped to do?**

Initially, we did an assessment of the needs of the building as well as look at the entire list of dreams. The two most significant things we had hoped to do, other than replace the entire HVAC system, that we cannot are a remodeling of the current undercroft (estimated cost of ~\$300,000+) and replacement of the coverings over the stained glass windows (estimated cost of ~\$140,000). Other ideas that were proposed and priced included a new sound system in the Nave (~\$90,000), replacing the Nave floor (~\$100,000), installation of a bell in the tower (~\$25,000), redesign of the sidewalk at 3<sup>rd</sup> and A to create a green space (~\$14,000), and repairs to the organ (~\$46,000), though we are exploring an alternative funding possibility for the most needed organ repairs.

### **Do we need to worry about the stained glass windows?**

No. We had a complete assessment of their condition done and received a positive report. We need to continue our regular maintenance of them with particular attention to following up on the repair work done to the Tiffany window. The current coverings are in good condition although they are cloudy. The greatest benefit to replacing the covers, when it is possible to do so, is aesthetic as it will increase the light shining through them. The high estimated cost for doing that work (~\$140,000) is because of the need to build an exterior scaffold to provide access to the clerestory windows.