

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP)  
for  
**PROFESSIONAL DESIGN SERVICES**  
for  
**CONSULTING, CONCEPT / SCHEMATIC DESIGN, & COST ESTIMATING**  
for  
**UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH OF NASHUA**  
Nashua, New Hampshire

September 2021

## **Introduction**

The Unitarian Universalist Church of Nashua is requesting proposals for professional Architectural Design Services for consulting, concept/schematic design, and cost estimating. Proposals are requested from Architects with experience in the design and construction of similar projects.

The intent of this Request for Proposal (RFP) is to have the professional design firms under consideration specifically address the services required and provide a well-considered price proposal for those services. A proposals with three options is being requested. They would be classified as small, medium, and large to allow for a range of costs. More details on this topic are provided later in this document. The proposal should entail the full scope of the project including design planning and project management services.

## Project Background

The UU Church of Nashua is located at 58 Lowell St in the heart of the historic district in downtown Nashua, NH. The original Unitarian Church sanctuary building was constructed in the spring of 1826 and has had various additions and renovations completed over the years. In 1835 the church appropriated the grounds contiguous to the church for a burial place, known as the Nashua Cemetery. Later that year additional space was added to the cemetery. A parish house was added in 1929, which required moving the original structure several yards to the right. In 1957 the Nashua Unitarians and Universalists merged and they built the White Wing Annex helped by proceeds from the sale of the old Universalist church building on Main Street in Nashua. Various revisions and improvements have been made over the years, including installing an elevator to the parish house 20 years ago.

Currently the church campus is bounded by Lowell & Canal Streets on the front, Grove Street on the right side, Whitney Street in the rear, and Lemon Street on the left side. There is a small parking lot off Lemon Street and a larger parking lot in the rear of the White Wing Annex off Grove Street. [See Campus layout diagram in Appendix]

In 2019, with our church's 200th anniversary in sight, a *Building Our Vision Team* was commissioned to create a future vision for our church and campus aligned with our new church mission and values. The team collected inputs from the congregation via a series of deep listening sessions, each focused on different church programs. The collection of almost 400 different items, along with our long-range planning inputs were used in a joint session of the *Building Our Vision Team* members and the Board of Trustees to construct a vision for our buildings and campus. On November 15, 2020, the congregation voted on adopting the vision and endorsed developing a detailed set of plans to modify and improve our campus to be in better alignment with our new mission and values. The *Building Our Vision Team* has developed key project areas and priorities and are now seeking the assistance of a design professional to help us compile all of our assessment and master planning materials into a cohesive design. The goal of such a partnership is to develop tangible concepts for renovation and place them into realizable phases of work with cost estimates.

## Summary of the Church Building History

- 1826: Original Unitarian Meeting House constructed
- 1835: Nashua Cemetery Grounds added Spring and Fall phases (Nashua Cemetery Association)
- 1929: Parish House added
- 1957: Unitarians and Universalists merged and White Wing Annex added
- 2001: Elevator added to Parish House with associated renovations.

## **UU Nashua Building & Campus Vision Statement**

**Welcoming/Accessibility:** We are a welcoming community of faith that works to dismantle oppression and privilege within our congregation by removing obstacles to entering and using our campus. To this end, our campus is accessible to all by including the elements needed for our programs and services to meet various accessibility needs. Our campus provides a clear welcome, offering a sense of warmth, belonging, acceptance, and safety to all who pass by or enter our spaces.

**Worship:** In our worship spaces we balance honoring our past with the flexibility needed for the diverse use and changing needs of our modern church, while inspiring wonder, authentic connection, courageous community, and love in action.

**Greening:** We are good stewards of the Earth, helping to combat climate change by working to limit our use of energy, using sustainable materials, and striving to attain carbon neutrality.

**Technology / Physical Systems:** We effectively use technology to provide better access, enable many forms of communication throughout and beyond our buildings, and allow for greater flexibility for all. We have appropriate physical systems to efficiently do the work of our mission.

**History:** In order to know our authentic UU Nashua identity, we honor those who helped create our story while embracing change in ourselves as we serve as stewards for our future. We honor the heritage of our campus, which serves as a visible connection to our past and our future.

## **Present Building Use / Future Goals**

The buildings are presently used for weekly worship, faith formation for children and adults, and church meetings. The White Wing Annex is also used as a preschool by the “Children’s Winter Garden with White Wing School”. Our space is traditionally also made available to external social action community groups such as AA and other addiction recovery groups, as well as hosting monthly community dinners for members of the Nashua French Hill community. As the current pandemic becomes better controlled, we wish to resume more of our community support and outreach work.

### **Sanctuary Building:**

Worship Services. Special Meetings, Concerts

### **Parish House Building**

Lower Level: Fellowship Meeting Room, Foyer, Dining Room, Kitchen. Restroom

Upper Level: Youth Meeting Room, Auditorium, Restrooms

### **White Wing Annex**

Upper Level: Administrative Offices, Classrooms, Restrooms, Chapel

Lower Level: Children’s Winter Garden with White Wing School Classrooms



## Project Overview

Our campus and buildings are a platform for our ministry. The UU Church of Nashua seeks to renovate our facility to be more in line with our current vision statement. This includes issues of accessibility and life safety issues, and to create space that is bright, safe and welcoming for our worshipping community and the wider community. It is, in part, through our building that we reach out to social service providers, non-profits, community organizations, and self-help groups to benefit members of the wider Nashua community. The church desires to honor the historic nature of the building while making changes so that it can work well in our contemporary context. It is not a priority to focus on strict historical authenticity. Although the sanctuary is beautiful, the building is not particularly user friendly. Through an extensive visioning process, the team has developed a list of priorities, which are summarized below. [Also refer to the "Existing Drawings and Materials" section later in this RFP and the Appendix .]

### Church Building Project Goals Summary:

- 1) Making the building more energy efficient. This includes an overall review of our entire HVAC system to be modern and energy efficient, and well managed heating/cooling to keep people comfortable. When possible, not impact our historic appearance. For example: Energy efficient windows; Insulation; Fans to bring warm air down from the tall sanctuary that could also offer cooling; Ways to use less artificial light; Make all lighting energy efficient; Energy efficient appliances.
- 2) There is safe passage between the education / administration wing and the parish house without interrupting an event in the sanctuary.
- 3) All entrances and areas of the church are accessible to all, including the chancel area in the sanctuary.
- 4) We have modern technology which allows for multi-platform worship. Congregants who are either off site or elsewhere in the campus can be part of an event occurring in the sanctuary or chapel. This includes Teleconferencing / worshipping and livestreaming abilities in our meeting rooms, classrooms, sanctuary, and chapel, with internet capabilities. Also, a capability to experience Sunday service/programs (i.e. audio and visual) in other spaces (ie. dining room and kitchen).
- 5) Family/gender neutral bathrooms
- 6) Becoming carbon neutral by either eliminating carbons or offsetting carbons we use. Possible examples include: Switching out our gas burning heating for heat pumps or using solar.
- 7) A safe, defined walkway to the front of the church.
- 8) A designated main entrance with signage that provides direction on where to go
- 9) We have maintained the ambience of an older New England church while allowing flexibility for broader, more inclusive use of our sanctuary and chapel
- 10) Tell our story: who we are, our key contributors, our social justice contributions with the community, and how we've help change the world. Place an emphasis on stories about the contributions and accomplishments of the people of our church, not just the buildings

Note: We desire to have these upgrades be sustainable over time at a low cost to decrease current operating and maintenance expenses with a focus on roofing, exterior siding, HVAC, and windows.

The church realizes that the whole is more than the sum of the parts, and as such, the list of project goals are pieces of a larger whole to revitalize and enhance to allow the building to serve better the congregation and community. The intangibles, or the spirit of the place, are where the vision lies. It is the hope of this RFP process that the church finds an ally with whom a rapport is developed to work collaboratively, while tapping into additional expertise and perspectives.

## Proposal Requirements

### Contact Information:

- 1) Name of firm
- 2) Address, phone, email, and web URL.
- 3) Contact person

### Statement of Qualifications:

- Provide a General Statement of Qualifications that responds to the project background information given in this RFP .
- Provide brief comments on any challenges and opportunities this project presents, as well as lessons learned from similar projects.
- Provide a brief description on how you would differentiate your firm from your competitors.
- Indicate level of familiarity with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties.

### Personnel:

- Describe the professional and support positions your firm provides
- List professional consultants outside your firm whom you propose would provide services not available in your firm. Provide specific information documenting their work on similar projects.

### Religious/Church Facilities:

- Submit a list of similar projects, that your firm currently has in progress including client contact information.
- Submit a list of several similar projects your firm has completed, detailing the following: name of project, client contact, owner's total initial budget, total project cost, date of construction.
- For both lists, highlight the following: exceptional, challenging, or relatable features; historic renovation components; cost estimating and control, compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and any energy efficiency or sustainable practices employed.

### Architectural Design Services:

- Describe the process you propose to follow, including your understanding of our needs, from consulting, to concept/schematic design, to cost estimating.
- Outline the design schedule you propose to implement and follow to understand and meet our needs.
- Describe your method for consensus building, including your role, the methodology employed, the outcome, and a contact person for a recent project where you employed this method.
- Describe the types of problems you have encountered on similar projects, and explain what you did to resolve the problems and what you would do differently to avoid such problems on future projects.
- Describe how your firm can add value to this project and the process and include examples of situations from comparable projects where the owner realized tangible value.

**Construction Costs:**

- Describe cost control methods you use and how you establish cost estimates. Include information on determining costs associated with construction/renovation in existing facilities.

## Legal Concerns:

- Explain the circumstances and outcome of any litigation, arbitration, or claims filed against your company by a client or any of the same you have filed against a client.
- Explain your General Liability Insurance coverage and your Professional Liability Insurance coverage.

**Scope of Services:**

- Outline your scope of services, based on your understanding of this RFP, any pre-proposal on-site visits, and questions & answers (which will be made available to all) from the *Building Our Vision Team*. Include anticipated reimbursable costs.

**The primary components in your fee proposal should include:**

- A review, analysis, and commentary on all assessments and provided materials, master plans, and reports.
- An extended tour of the building in detail with members of the congregation.
- Meetings with the *Building Our Vision Team* and members of the congregation coupled with advice and consultation with the group as a partner/team member.
- A review and discussion with the *Building Our Vision Team* of a proposed schedule for completion of the proposal's tasks.
- A thorough review of all applicable codes and ordinances as they apply to this project.
- A review and understanding of any Nashua historic preservation requirements. Discussions and recommendations with the Building Our Vision Team regarding choices and/or ramifications of any code, grant, or preservation requirements in terms of their effect on scope of work and cost.
- Preparation of any concept/design drawings needed to convey design concepts and for use for cost estimating.
- Preparation or obtaining of cost estimates, divided into applicable construction phases as applicable and appropriate, to adequately inform the Building Our Vision Team and congregation regarding next steps, which may include a financial feasibility study and a capital campaign.
- Working with the Building Our Vision Team, members of the congregation, and grant partners to cooperatively collect information, cost estimates, and design and construction expertise that exists within those groups.
- Build consensus with us and inspire us
- Note that proposed fees are understood to be inclusive of all reasonably anticipated Basic Services. As part of the proposal, identify activities that your firm would consider to be Contingent Additional Services.

## Agreement Terms

UU Church of Nashua and the Building Our Vision Team reserve the right to waive or correct any defect or informality, reject all proposals, reissue the RFP, modify the RFP, etc. Receipt of proposals does not bind UU Church of Nashua to enter into any agreement unless it decides to do so. Upon receipt, submissions in response to the RFP become the property of UU Church of Nashua. UU Church of Nashua is not responsible for any costs incurred by the proposer in preparing the proposal, any pre-proposal site visits, as well as an interview, if held.

## Existing Drawings and Materials Available from UU Church of Nashua

Please note that existing floor plan & section drawings for some of the buildings are available and are accurate. This includes the Parish House and White Wing Building. No formal plans are available for the original church building, which is the current sanctuary.

A complete list of available materials includes:

- This RFP
- Comprehensive list of needs and goals
- Existing schematic plans
- Structural drawings
- Site boundary maps
- Select existing photos of the church building (JPG)

Please note that your base bid proposal should include working with these provided existing building drawings to create any concept drawings of your own. Your drawings will become tools to adequately convey ideas to the Building Our Vision Team and congregation and be useful, along with any narrative descriptions of work, for cost estimating. If you wish, you may indicate measuring and documenting the existing building as an additional service. As mentioned earlier, in order to support the associated capital fundraising campaign, we request a set of three options called small, medium, and large. The *medium* option would be the baseline plan, with the *small* option a scaled down version and the *large* option a more extensive proposal.

## Use of Materials Provided by Design Professional

The architectural design professional will make available, and allow the use of any graphics, drawings, and/or models of the project for the *Building Our Vision Team* and the team's efforts to communicate about the project with the larger church community.

## Financial Constraints

The church has not yet determined its budget for the project, in whole or as part of phases, although it believes that the final project will be in the \$1 million to \$ 2 million dollar range. Funding is in place to secure professional design services; however, funding and/or a potential capital campaign has not yet been started or decided upon by the congregation. The services provided by the design professional selected via this RFP will inform those efforts.

## Contract

The selected individual or firm will be required to enter into a standard contract for the timely completion of the project. The contract should be based upon AIA Standards to be prepared by the selected design firm and reviewed/negotiated/approved by the *Building Our Vision Team* and the Church Board of Trustees. UU Church of Nashua reserves the right to mutually-agreed-to modifications to the contract. The award of the work on this RFP is not complete unless the church and firm come to an agreement on the terms of a contract.

## Selection Process and Criteria

Upon receipt of the Proposal, the *Building Our Vision Team* will evaluate each firm's response. The team will schedule interviews with candidates during the time period outlined in the "Schedule" section later in this RFP. Upon completion of the interviews, the *Building Our Vision Team* will choose a firm. Officers of the church will sign contractual papers.

Selection of the finalist will be based on the following criteria, in no particular order:

- Vision, enthusiasm
- Ability to meet the stated project goals
- Experience with similar projects
- Familiarity with applicable regulations
- Fiscal management
- Awareness and appreciation of the local community, of the nature of the church congregation, and of the availability of local resources
- Compatibility and "fit"
- Fee proposal
- References
- Presentation of the firm in the RFP and interview

## Submission Requirements

Applicants should submit all materials requested within this RFP to:  
Unitarian Universalist Church of Nashua , 58 Lowell St, Nashua, NH  
Attention: *Building Our Vision Team*

Material delivery by email is also acceptable. Such materials should be emailed to the *Building Our Vision Team* at the UU Church of Nashua via the email address [bov@uunashua.org](mailto:bov@uunashua.org)

Proposals are due at UU Church of Nashua by **October 15, 2021** unless the date is changed by addendum. Please see the “Schedule” section later in the RFP for more information. Please note that every reasonable effort will be made by the *Building Our Vision Team* to ensure that all invited candidates receive or have access to all provided RFP information, including addenda. However, it is the responsibility of each candidate to verify that they have all issued information.

## Questions

**All questions should be submitted in writing.** Emails are acceptable. All questions must be received no later than the date indicated in the “Schedule” section later in this RFP. Questions are to be forwarded to the *Building Our Vision Team* at [bov@uunashua.org](mailto:bov@uunashua.org). Answers to all questions will be issued to all firms in the form of an emailed addendum. Addenda will be issued no later than 72 hours before the due date.

## Phases and Schedule

Please note that the schedule listed below is subject to change via addenda, issued by the *Building Our Vision Team*. Each candidate should verify that they have all of the latest issued information.

- Issuance of RFP: **Sept 1, 2021**
- Walk-through tours of UU Church of Nashua: Available the **week of September 20** by appointment.
- In addition to the walk-through, the existing facility will be made available for viewing/ inspection during pre-arranged dates and times. Prior to visiting, please contact the UU *Building Our Vision Team* to make an appointment.
- Last day for questions: **October 8, 2021**
- Last day that addenda will be issued (unless an extension is issued): **October 12, 2021**
- Deadline for submission of proposals: **October 15, 2021**

## **Interviews**

Interviews will be held with each of the selected finalists. Interviewees should plan to provide a brief review of the design team's qualifications, but should focus on the data required in the RFP portion of this document. Interviewees may present their data in any way that they feel will best demonstrate their abilities.

## **Conclusion**

The planning of how to better use our building and campus as a platform for ministry is an exciting and sacred endeavor for us as a vibrant congregation in Nashua. On behalf of the congregation and community of Nashua, we thank you for your attention and look forward to hearing from you.

### Appendix A

### UU Nashua Campus Layout





UU Church of Nashua Front (Lowell & Canal Street )



Parish House (Lowell Street)





White Wing Annex (Grove Street view)

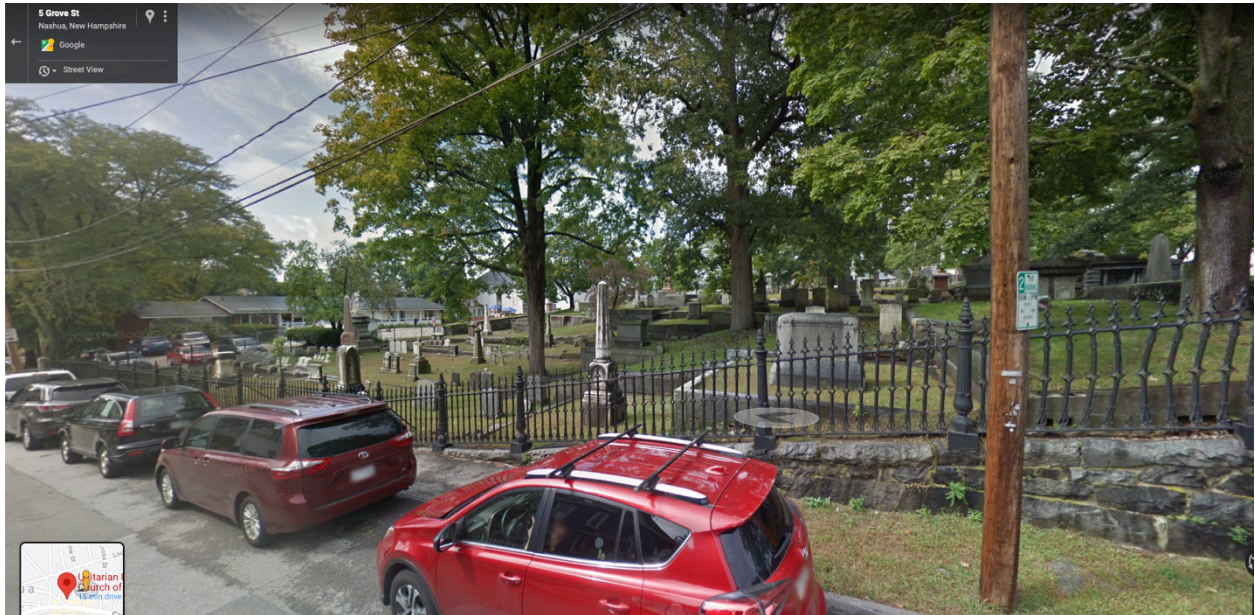


White Wing Annex Rear (Grove Street Lot)





Cemetery (Grove Street)



Cemetery (Grove & Whitney Street)

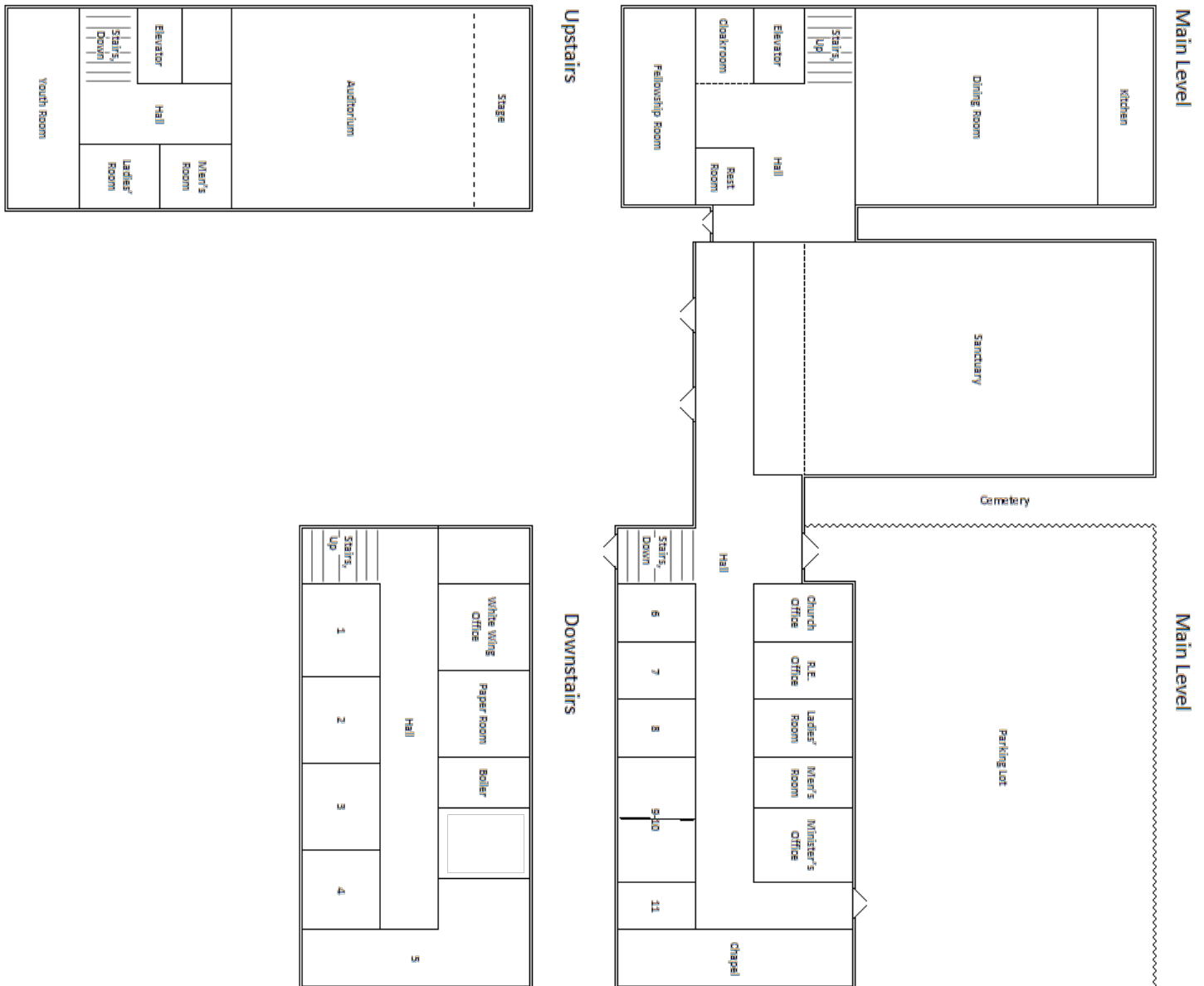


Lemon Street Parking Lot



### Appendix B

Functional Floorplan





Sanctuary



*Sanctuary*

Parish House - Main Level



*Dining Room – View 1*



*Dining Room – View 2*



*Parish House Entry to Sanctuary*



*Parish House Elevator / Stairs Area*



*Parish House Entry to Dining Room*



September 2022 *Fellowship Room*

Parish House – Upper Level



*Auditorium*



*Youth Room*



White Wing Building – Main Level



*Sanctuary Entry to White Wing Building*



*White Wing Main Hallway*

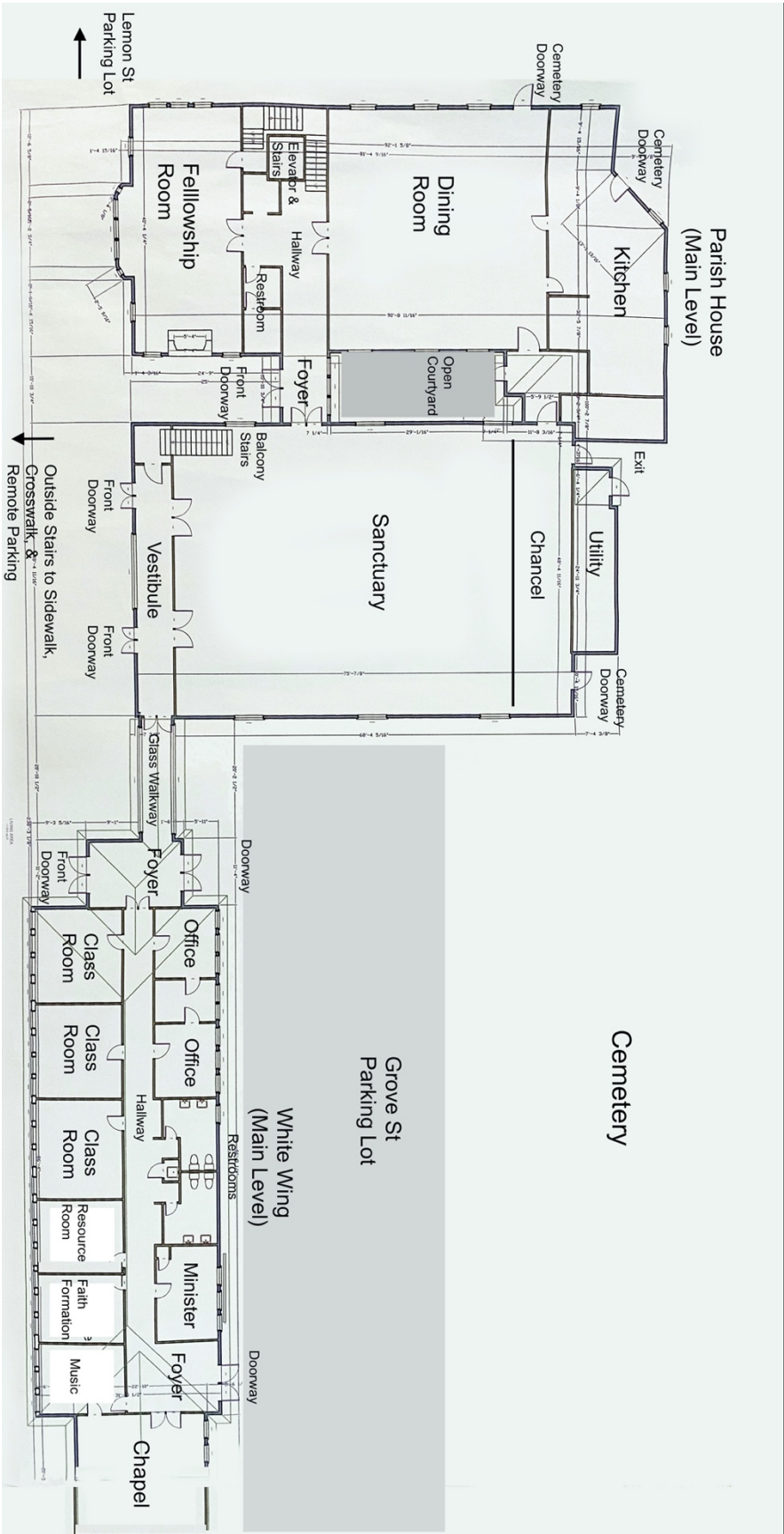


*White Wing Rear Entry by Chapel*



*Campbell Chapel*

Buildings Scale Floorplan



## RFP Addendum Issued in Response to Architects Questions

To: General response

1. Are there specific requirements that must be included in the proposal?

The BOV Team was created by our Board of Trustees and charged with the task of: A. collecting input from members, friends, and other key stakeholders on how our current campus is, or is not, serving our mission and those stakeholders visions for the future of our facility; B. Using that input, create a comprehensive vision for our physical facility; C. Consult with architects, contractors, and other experts to turn the vision into one to three concrete plans; D. Present the plan or plans to the congregation for feedback; E. Incorporate the feedback into one final plan for the congregation to vote on.

Note that there is no mention of a required change, but it may be helpful to discuss priorities, the order of which might vary slightly among the team and board members.

One of the hottest “buttons” for us is Climate Change. Changes and improvements which affect our footprint should yield the greatest “buy-in”, and therefore, the most potential for financial support. To this end, upgrading our HVAC system to be more efficient and reduce our consumption of fossil fuels as well as any other “greening” activity such as replacing windows throughout the campus would be a high priority.

We look at accessibility in two groups. First, there is the need for all parties to be able to participate in church programs whether in another part of the facility or in some off-site location. Then there is the need to access the buildings as well as the various parts of the buildings. To this end, we need to consider ADA requirements, which probably includes an elevator or lift between floors of the White Wing annex, better distinguished entrances, better exterior lighting, and passage between buildings that by-passes the sanctuary.

Other changes such as modernized appearance, larger gathering space, sanctuary flexibility, and more functional office space are also often mentioned.

2. Who will sign the contract, and how were the various dollar references in the RFP derived?

The contract will be signed by one or more officers of the church.

Our initial range of funds that we could plan on being available for the project has been based on information provided by our denomination which provided a multiplier of the annual pledging for normal church operations.

It is our understanding that we will receive proposals from each architect who remains interested in our project showing their ideas with ballpark costs attached. We would start a screening process which would lead to the selection of a firm to create detailed plans. Upon selection we would enter into a contract with the firm and expect to pay a design fee in the range of what other churches have paid. Money for the fee is already in a reserve fund.

3. Copies of the White Wing energy audit and any detailed plans of the three buildings:

White Wing Energy Audit can be found here:

[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1ac02efvNqHiXI1tm1\\_CeN1toxp-8z-L/view?usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1ac02efvNqHiXI1tm1_CeN1toxp-8z-L/view?usp=sharing)

We are in the process of assembling the various drawings that we have available. We will forward electronic copies to you.

4. Clarification regarding our idea of low, medium, and high cost ranges to be included in the proposal:

It is our thought that the top range would be the most inclusive within the \$1 to \$2 million range. The low cost project would suggest the minimum that would be cost effective to complete, and the medium project would be something in the middle.

5. Are additions to the existing building configurations possible?

We would certainly consider additions that encompass the area between the sanctuary and the parish house as well as the entrance in that area. Other additions would need to be justified in terms of any loss of our limited land area. All changes to the exterior will need approval from the Nashua Historical District.

6. Are there any known code issues that need to be addressed?

We are regularly inspected by city inspectors and immediately correct any deficiencies. For instance we recently replaced many areas of fire protection sprinkler heads to bring the system up to code. There are no known code issues at this time.

7. Most often used exterior entrances:

Sanctuary: The two original doors on Lowell Street are only used for services taking place in the sanctuary. The left door is the most often used because of the location of the walkway leading to the front of the building. The two exterior doors on either side of the pulpit lead to the cemetery and are sometimes opened for ventilation. However, the door on the left is difficult to utilize due to the built-in risers for the choir.

Parish house: The door between the sanctuary and the parish house is open when there is an event in the sanctuary or the parish house. It also provides entrance by outside groups which utilize the meeting spaces during the week without allowing access to the rest of the campus. There are also doors to the cemetery in the dining room and kitchen.

White Wing Annex: The area connecting the annex with the link to the sanctuary has two outside doors. The north door, from the Grove Street parking lot, is accessible and is the main entrance during the week due to the location of the church offices as well as the stairs to the pre-school classrooms. The door on the south side is accessed via a walkway from Canal Street. It is not accessible due to the stairs that must be negotiated to reach the lower classroom level or the upper classroom and office level. Both doors are locked during the week due to the presence of the children. A doorbell summons someone to allow entrance. There is another accessible door at the northeast end of the upper floor. There is no doorbell at that door, and with the present office configuration, the only person who might be close by is the minister. Personnel from the pre-school as well as anyone from the church administrative staff would

have to walk the entire length of the building in order to provide entrance at that location. Each classroom on the lower level has an exterior door into the play yard.

Regarding the frequency of use, early arrivers, as well as those who need to use the accessible entrance, tend to use the Grove Street entrances, when the buildings are open for services or an event, due to parking along Grove Street and the parking lot. Others tend to use one of the entrances off Lowell or Canal Streets unless they prefer the exercise of walking around the building. It is difficult to say which entrance is used the most for services and events, but during the week, the north door in the link between the annex and the sanctuary receives the most use.

8. Number of toilets within the buildings:

There are no toilets in the sanctuary building. The parish house has an accessible, neutral gender restroom with 1 toilet fixtures plus a sink on the first floor and two gender specific restrooms on the second floor that are accessible and have two toilet fixtures and sink each. The first floor of the annex has a total of three child-size toilets typically located between classrooms with sinks in each classroom. There are no adult facilities on the lower floor. The upper level has two gender specific restrooms with two toilets and sinks in each. These facilities have inaccessible entrances.

9. Have we considered solar in our thinking?

Solar is definitely a potential improvement, but we have not pursued a feasibility study or a cost estimate.

10. Safe passage from the White Wing to Parish House:

There are a couple of things to consider with this item: During services and events within the sanctuary the only interior connection between the two exterior buildings is through the sanctuary. Doors opening and closing as well as rustling and whispering can be disturbing to those participating in the service. Sunday mornings those needing to pass through the sanctuary are children and teachers who need to utilize space or facilities in the parish house. Another drawback of the present configuration is that food and supplies needed for an event in the kitchen are typically carried from the Grove Street parking lot through the sanctuary and into the kitchen. After an event in the parish house, leftovers and trash have to be carried through the sanctuary. Also, sometimes a piece of equipment needed to be moved between buildings is very awkward to negotiate past pews and thresholds.

11. Architectural Design Services (Pg 6); asks that we describe the process we propose to follow. Are you familiar with the AIA standards for Schematic Design, Design Development, Construction Documents, etc? If not, would you like us to describe these phases of work in detail?

If you plan on using this standard you can just point us to the standard.

12. Safe walkway to the front of the church- would the BOV consider an addition between the Sanctuary and the Parish House, an interior solution, or should this answer be best developed during the design process?

We are open to this kind of solution. We do not have a preference on a specific solution at this time.

13. If a new volume (an addition to the existing building) is added would you be more inclined to think “blend in”, or “contrast” or would this opinion be best developed during the design stage?

This would be decided during the design stage.