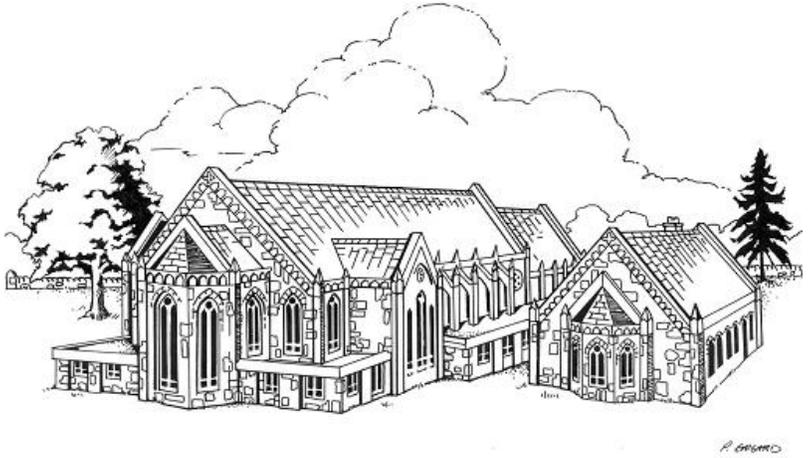


What Was and Isn't

By John Dziel

Recently, members of the property committee, Fr. Dave, and myself met with the original architect from the construction of Trinity. Needless to say, we were bubbling over with questions about all the property issues we have now, and were hoping he could shed some light on them. The light did shine! What unfolded was a long story of blunders, subcontractor shortcuts, insurance funding issues and church decisions during the project that led us to where we are now. Yes, there were lawsuits, arbitrations, and settlements all associated with this, and the money was received and spent, but this is not the focus of this article.



Swing Low Sweet Trinity! Members of the property committee have often wondered why our church isn't a little higher. Surely this would have helped with the groundwater issue. Well, as it turns out, the architect had specified the church to be twelve inches higher in elevation than it is! It seems that due to a civil engineering survey mistake during construction, Trinity ended up one foot deeper in the ground than it was supposed to be, and thus lower than the ground that surrounds it! The architect approved of Dave Manchester's ground berm (installed last year) as a good work around for some of these issues, as it is impossible to lift the church up at this point. (Dave is a volunteer member of our property committee.)

Water Water Everywhere! We all know about the roof leaks. Some are caused by the fact that flashing needs to be re-calked every few years as part of a maintenance campaign. However, the largest leaks are caused by shortcuts made by the subcontractor that put in our gutter system! Original specifications called for larger drains that were bonded (water tight) to the drain pipe system. The drains ended up undersized, and there is a gap between the drains and the pipes! During heavy rains, the water literally splashes up over the pipe and into the walls. That's not all! The architect's plans also called for flashing to extend from the gutter up to the capstones on the walls to provide extra capacity during extreme times such as heavy rains, snow damming, or leaf obstruction. The flashing was omitted. Basically, the gutters can fill up and overflow like a bath tub, and pour down inside the church! Again, property had been aware of the issue, and Dave Manchester had designed a new drain modification. The architect looked over Dave's drawings and agreed it was a suitable work around to help increase capacity. The drains would have to be installed at 13 locations in the parish hall, and an undetermined number of locations in the church. There is no practical way of installing the missing flashing without partial demolition of the walls as the capstones are bonded to the top.

Blow The Man Down! Among the more interesting idiosyncrasies of the church is the fact that the front doors blow open with explosive force on windy days. This time, you can blame our old insurance company! (We changed companies.) As part of the original design, there was supposed to be a bell tower between our main doors and the office wing. Besides being a handy place to hang bells, this tower was to serve several purposes. It was to serve as the main entrance to the church and act as an environmental buffer, keeping wind, water, salt, and other nasties out of the Narthex. It also was to serve as a natural cooling tower. The open ceiling design would help reinforce the airflow which was supposed to flow through the church and up the tower, reducing the need to operate our 40 horse power air conditioning system in the spring, summer, and fall. This lack of flow is also why our church seems stuffy in the spring and fall. The bell tower would also serve to connect the office wing to the church itself. The bell tower was cut in the middle of the construction process due to lack of funding. This came so late in the process that the foundations and wall sub structures had already been built. The tower simply ended at ground level.

Guild Hall ??? Yep! That was in the plans as well. Ironic, as we are now so tight on space that we feel like bees trapped in a glass jar. The hall was to be on the ground that is located between the Sexton's house and the Narthex. All structural ties were already in place, including a pass-through from the kitchen that is now covered in stone. In place of a guild hall, we now have a large set of unused doors from the narthex to nowhere.

I could go on and on about this meeting, but I didn't want to turn the Chimes into a novel. Suffice to say that there were many other issues which we gained insight into. Above all, we now have critical information that will allow us to better plan for the future of the church, and establish new maintenance programs.