



SAINT GEORGE GREEK ORTHODOX CATHEDRAL PHILADELPHIA, PA



REPORT TO THE PARISH FROM BULDINGS AND GROUNDS COMMITTEE

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1. Cathedral Maintenance

It is important to differentiate Building Maintenance and Church Restoration. Church Restoration refers to the 2008 Budling Restoration Plan (amended in 2020) and covers John Haviland's 1822 church. Building Maintenance refers to all other structures and systems outside the Restoration plan and covers the Rectory, the Hall, the School, and incidental repairs in the Church

Keep in mind that the juncture between the 1822 building and additions to the east of the church are not clear. For instance, the first-floor walls to the east of the church also date to 1822. If you look at the two windows behind the kitchen stove and oven, you will see the original shape of the 1822 windows; similarly, the iron column in the middle of the kitchen is also from 1822. When the Sunday School building was built in 1960, it partly occupied the Sunday School spaces of the original church but without a study of the historic structure. These aspects of the 1822 building are not included in the Church Restoration analysis but are considered historical. Keep in mind that the Rectory is also a historic building that is covered under strict regulations; it dates to 1875 and was designed by the prominent firm of Frank Furness (the star of Philadelphia's 19th-century architecture). We have no Restoration plan for the Furness building, partly, because we have had no catastrophic issues with the building or plans to make changes.

The Committee in its effort to be proactive to the Cathedral maintenance prioritized some future building maintenance projects.

- Heating system in the Social Hall. We have known since 2019, that the (oil) heating system for the social hall and kitchen is at its last years. It is wise to convert the system from oil to gas, as was done for the church. The estimates that we received in 2019 were close to \$70,000 (and are probably with the increase cost today of everything are much higher). Thus, this project can be expensive because it entails the conversion of the existing gas pipes, which are not wide enough, to allow the adequate gas flow to reach the church heater in the social hall.
- Fixing the roofs in school classes and Cathedral office. We should explore the condition of the roofs for the Rectory and School buildings. Since we have no records of when they were maintained, we need to make sure we are prepared. The roof for the social hall was redone in 2020, followed by the fixing of the floors and painting of the walls.
- Electrical. This is a small item but there is a lot of none-adequate professional work done by electricians in the past. We are in need to update or replace some of the electrical panels
- Fire escapes. In the previous Parish Council meetings, we had flagged the fire escape as possibly needing repair. We learned that fire escape stairs are designed to be flimsy and ours are working as originally designed. The recommendation was to paint them to avoid future rusting.



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2. Church Restoration

In May 2021, Historic Building Architects completed a Design Development Estimate for the restoration of St. George Cathedral (See attached p. 3 of *Catherdal of St. George DD May 27 - Rev.pdf*).

Phase IA “Roof repairs at the eaves, and cornice” estimated cost **\$691,472**.

Phase IB “Portico structural repairs, column repairs, stair restoration and interior finishes” estimated cost **\$1,390.365**.

The work on Phase 1A has been completed, but the job has not been officially closed as Historic Building Architects are still fighting on our behalf over unreasonable billing by the contractor. We anticipate one final AFP (application for payment) for \$39,000.

We had a meeting in the near future with Historic Building Architects to begin the planning for Phase 1B. Since we will not be able to do Phase 1B in one campaign, we discussed how to sequence the work. The two main components of Phase 1B involve rebuilding the foundations of the porch (that have eroded) and the repair of the wooden columns (see p. 3 of the attached report for summary). Under “Masonry,” you’ll see a cost of **\$255,487** (pp. 7-8); under “wood, plastics and composites,” you will see a cost of **\$415,074** (p. 9). The restoration of the columns must take place after the restoration of the porch because the porch cannot handle the necessary scaffolding required for the painting.

In our meeting with Historic Building Architects, we learned that the 2019 prices must be adjusted by a 25-30% markup. This is how dramatically construction costs has increased across the board since Covid. The process of moving forward with Phase 1B would be the same as Phase 1A. We would hire Historic Building Architects as project supervisors. They would first prepare the updated bid documents, announce the bid, interview all contractors, and select the winning company. They will then manage the contractor’s performance according to their contracted bid and have monthly meetings with us. As was the case with Phase 1A, the rebuilding of the porch will take close to a year from beginning-to-end.

The Building Committee received one bid for the painting of the columns, but it involved scaffolding which would not be dangerous given the condition of the porch structure. Historic Building Architects recommends against painting the columns before the porch. In order to repair the porch, the columns will be hoisted with a temporary structure, so it’s also advisable to repair them after this process.



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3. Repairs

- Painting of Narthex. The Parish Council is in full agreement to move forward with the painting of the Cathedral Narthex. We received estimates from W. M. Proud, Flacco, Borden, and Hawthorne painting companies. The Committee recommends going with Hawthorne.
- Plumbing Issues in the Church basement. There are two leaks in the water system. One of them had been already fixed by the Cardullo company.
- Vandalized stained glass window. We have solicited four estimates for the repair of the panel in the northwestern-most stained-glass window of the Cathedral that was vandalized during Covid time. One of the companies located in Vermont which originally restored all our windows (and would involve shipping the panel to them), and three other local companies recommended by Historic Building Architects. They are: Rohlf's, Willet Hauser, Beyer Studio, and Castle Studio.
- Freezer, Kitchen, Rodents. These items are dealt with more closely and adequately by the Festival Committee and are fully operational.