

# St. George's Episcopal Church Nave Renovation Task Force



Submission to the Parish  
September 25th, 2005

# Do This in Remembrance of Me

Change can be daunting. But at St. George's, it also can be exciting—and renewing. After all, we are an old parish with a history of new ideas, familiar with the concept of drawing from the past and living into the future.

Drawing from the past while living into the future is what we do every time we celebrate the Eucharist. It is then that we are called to “*remember*” our Baptismal death and resurrection made possible through the death and resurrection of our Savior Jesus Christ. Our lives, offered through bread and wine, come back to us as Christ's life and real presence, giving us a new, restored life.

*Remembrance* as a way to live into the future is not just part of our worship. We talked about traditions and aspirations while compiling our Parish Profile during the recent rector search. That Profile reflected our parish's best efforts to explain to rector candidates *and ourselves* who we are, where we came from, and where we hope to go.

Drawing from parishioners' answers to a questionnaire and their contributions to small-group discussions, we pledged to reach out “to bring new members into our family of faith.” But while exploring new ministries, we also vowed “to honor our history and traditions.”

You can find that same link between the past and the future in the work of the Nave Renovation Task Force. Indeed, the recommendations of that group would help us to live into the goals set in the Parish Profile. Specifically, the renovation plan will offer clearer, less cluttered symbolism for new members unfamiliar with our liturgy, while also creating an environment where present members can strengthen their spiritual connectedness.

The Task Force began its work with the understanding that the buildings of St. George's are part of the parish blessings shared by the congregation and the community. Though much work has been done on these structures recently, there is serious need for nave renovation—as there has been at other times in our history. Indeed, the evolution of our buildings over almost three centuries has been an interesting architectural journey.

No strangers to “cantankerousness” in our early days, parishioners burned down the 11-year-old first church in 1731, unhappy that it had been built 20 miles west of town. Our current sanctuary, an 1849 Romanesque Revival building designed by Baltimore architect Robert Cary Long, Jr., is actually the third church on the present site.

As the rector search proceeded, the Nave Renovation Task Force set criteria for the renovation, and selected James T. Wollon Jr., A.I.A., as our architect. Mr. Wollon, a Marylander and lifelong Episcopalian (a vestryman and Property Warden of his own parish), has done nearly all of his work on historic buildings, and is an authority on the work of Robert Cary Long, Jr.

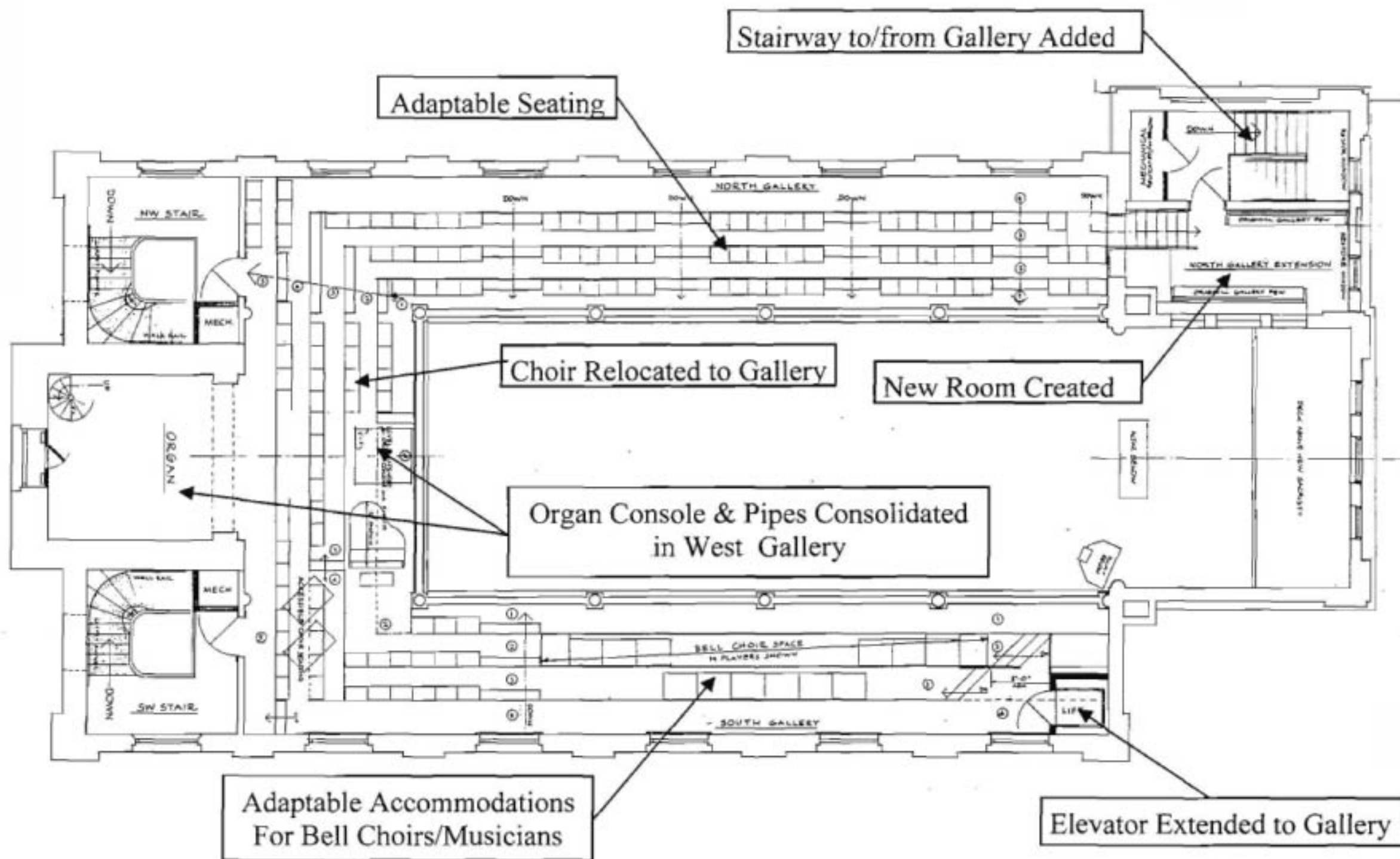
The renovation will rewire, replaster and repaint the church interior, while also renewing the lighting and sound systems. In *remembrance* of the original building of 1849, the renovation will bring our sanctuary into new life for a new time.

The organ and choir will be moved to their original place in the gallery over the Princess Anne Street entrance. The reredos will be moved forward (to near the location of the present communion rail) and the space behind the reredos will allow for extension of the very cramped sacristy shared by clergy, ushers and altar guild.

The chancel area will be defined by the communion rail at nave floor level, about six feet from the original pews, and by the reredos to the east. Within and before the chancel will be the three fundamental symbols of the action of Christians:

- (1) The font and paschal candle symbolize our entry into the living Christ as members (arms, eyes, etc.) of his Body.
- (2) The lectern and pulpit symbolize the Word of God, which has touched our hearts and minds, and brought us to Christ.
- (3) The altar table symbolizes our being fed by Christ’s life in bread and wine. It will be brought forward, standing nearly under the arch of the raised chancel.

By providing a clear line of sight between these fundamental symbols and parishioners in the pews, we will make it easier for the young and those unfamiliar with our liturgy to participate in the worship.



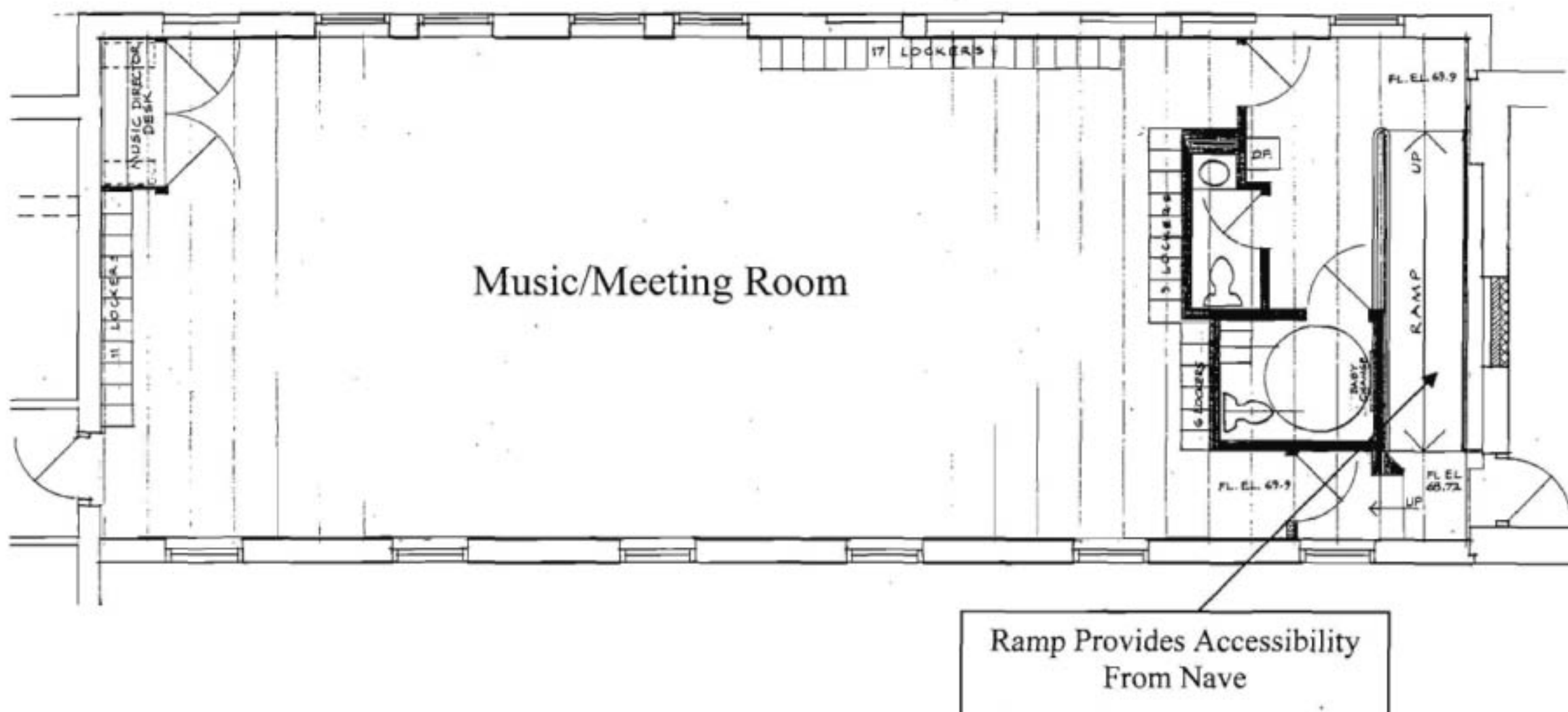
Gallery Floor Plan





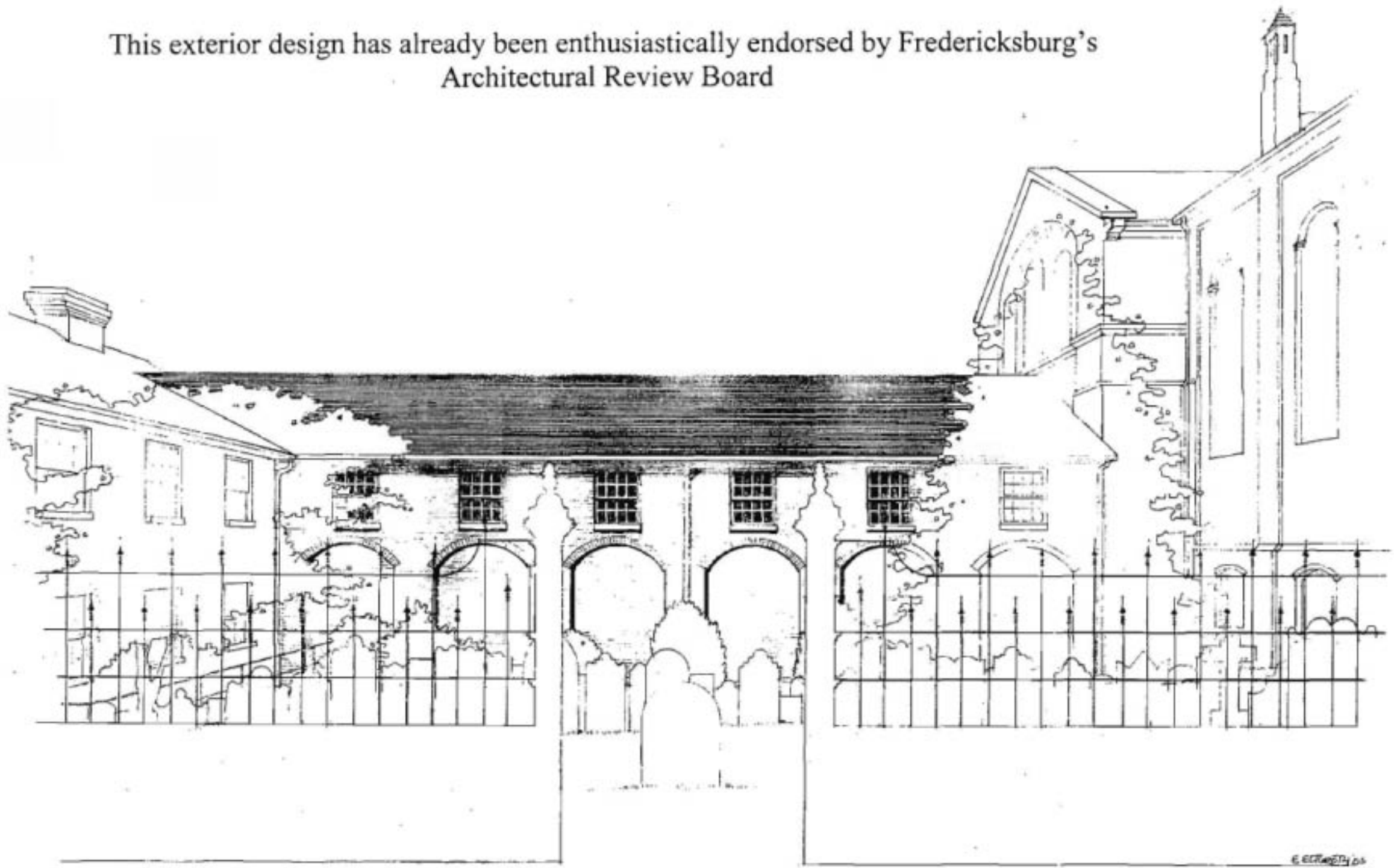


An additional floor will be added to McGuire Hall at the rear of the cemetery. This “addition” actually represents the completion of McGuire Hall as originally envisioned when it was constructed in the 1950’s. This addition will provide wheelchair access to bathroom facilities from the Nave. It will also provide a large room for rehearsals by the various musical groups as well as an additional and badly needed accessible meeting room.



Additional Floor on McGuire Hall

This exterior design has already been enthusiastically endorsed by Fredericksburg's  
Architectural Review Board



View from Princess Anne Street



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JAMES THOMAS WOLLON, JR., A.I.A.

*Architect*



Mr. Wollon, a graduate of the University of Virginia School of Architecture, opened his architectural practice in his native city of Havre de Grace in 1972, specializing in historic preservation. The Secretary of the Interior's *Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties* guide his philosophy in historic preservation.

He has received awards from the Maryland Historical Trust, the National Trust for Historic Preservation, Baltimore Heritage, Historic Annapolis Foundation, and city and county Preservation Commissions throughout Maryland.

He chairs the Historic Architects' Roundtable of the Baltimore Architecture Foundation, a volunteer research group studying historic architects of Baltimore, including St. George's original architect, Robert Cary Long, Jr. His understanding of the works of Mr. Long provides unique insight into the past of St. George's as that past is melded into the future.

His professional work for historic Maryland Episcopal churches includes several preservation projects similar to St. George's: St. John's, Ellicott City, 1860; Mount Calvary, Baltimore, 1844; Emmanuel, Chestertown, 1760s, radically re-styled in 1880 and parish house additions in 1905 and 1960; and presently, Christ Church, Columbia, 1809. All projects involve liturgical design and accessibility for persons with disabilities.

Mr. Wollon is a cradle Episcopalian; for many years he has served on the Vestry and as Property Warden for his church, Holy Trinity, Churchville, Maryland. His volunteer work for the Diocese of Maryland includes service on the Property Committee including consultations for many churches, especially concerning ADA issues. Currently he chairs the Archives Committee.