

A NEW VISION FOR CHRIST CHURCH CATHEDRAL AND NEARBY ANGLICAN CHURCH PROPERTIES



A Proposal for Discussion

The Right Rev. David Edwards
Tenth Bishop of Fredericton

November 15, 2016

A NEW VISION FOR CHRIST CHURCH CATHEDRAL AND NEARBY ANGLICAN CHURCH PROPERTIES

For many years, Bishops, members of the Cathedral Chapter and members of the Diocesan Council have wrestled with the challenges of owning and maintaining five old Fredericton buildings (most of them historic) and paying their annual operating costs. Bishop Medley's beautiful Cathedral is almost 170 years old and many of its aging parts cry out for another multi-million dollar restoration project. To that end a local heritage architect has given us a very comprehensive, multi-year maintenance plan that will be followed as funds become available. Cathedral Memorial Hall sits idle most of the time and, while structurally sound, it is in need of extensive and expensive renovations. Neither Bishop's Court nor Odell House (the deanery) are being used as homes for the bishop or the dean, but we continue to spend good portions of our annual income to maintain them. The synod office at 115 Church St. is another beautiful old residence but it falls far short of being contemporary office space, and renovations are needed.

Annual maintenance and operations expenditures for these properties are substantial. In recent years, the Cathedral congregation's average expenditures have totalled just less than \$200,000 per year for the Cathedral, the former deanery (Odell House) and Memorial Hall, not including insurance. Even with that level of expenditures the deferred maintenance on these three buildings is in the hundreds of thousands, if not millions, of dollars. The diocese is spending approximately \$ 36,000 each year to maintain Bishop's Court and the diocesan office.

The weekly offerings of the Anglican Church family pay these costs every year.

The Anglican Church owns another important piece of property near the Cathedral – the strip of waterfront land from the end of Church Street to the walking trail bridge, part of what is commonly known as 'The Green'. This strip of land is maintained by the city (at no cost to the church), and is commonly assumed to be city-owned. While church-owned, it is of no day-to-day value or benefit to the church.

By provincial law the church pays no property taxes. Nevertheless, its buildings are assessed annually by the Province. The Cathedral and the above-described portion of The Green are assessed at \$3.9 million. Memorial Hall, Odell House, the synod office building and Bishop's Court have a current total assessed value of \$2.6 million. No 'market value' assessments have been done recently. In 2013 a professional real estate appraiser estimated that these four properties would be worth approximately \$1.8 million on the open market.

Following the decision two years ago not to pursue the concept of renovating Memorial Hall for the purpose of moving the synod office into shared space there, Bishop David Edwards has been quietly talking about a new vision for the Cathedral and, across the diocese, has been encouraging parishes to think about 'a new and different look and purpose' for many Anglican Church properties. With support and information from a small group of willing volunteers he is now putting forward for discussion a new and exciting concept for the Cathedral properties.

This new concept comes as a result of discussions that flowed from the answers to some fundamental questions, including: What is God's purpose for His church? How do these properties contribute to our 5 Marks of Mission? In having to maintain and operate these properties are we being good stewards of our environment, our human resources and our money? Are church leaders the best people to manage and maintain our properties? Is there a way for us to turn property ownership around – so we can create income streams from properties that are now eating up our money?

PRINCIPLES ON WHICH THIS NEW VISION IS BASED

- The Anglican Church across New Brunswick has been in a slow and steady decline for many years. The Cathedral is no exception. It is obvious that we need to re-focus our efforts, and be better at, mirroring God's love for us by reaching out into the community – in faith, in love and in service. This is what we, as Anglicans, are biblically called to do and this is what we must do if our church is to be healthy, vibrant and sustainable in the decades ahead.
- Even though sometimes hard to accept, Anglicans are slowly recognizing that changes are needed in many aspects of our shared life together – many things that we have come to expect as normal and on-going must change.
- As we pursue a renewed focus on the true purpose of the church and on improved financial sustainability over the long term, it is also important that we continue to be good stewards of our heritage properties. A new and different approach could make our heritage properties sustainable, remove the burdens of property management, and at the same time supplement annual income.
- The Cathedral itself is the 'mother church' of the whole diocese. It is an icon of the City of Fredericton and the Province of New Brunswick. The Anglican Church family has a shared obligation, on many levels, to ensure the Cathedral is restored and well-maintained for future generations.
- The four buildings adjacent to the Cathedral are widely acknowledged as being 'valuable' because they are in a prime location in Fredericton's downtown, near the beautiful St. John River – and in that part of the city the real estate market is, and will continue to be, very strong.
- It is essential that the future of all of our properties be considered simultaneously, and that decisions be based on their value in contributing to the church's primary mission or purpose.
- There are businesses that are better equipped than the church to manage properties, and if we were to partner with them it would free up church leaders and congregations for the more important work of the church – God's work.
- A decision to sell any church property should contribute to the long-term goals of the church. Experience has shown that in most cases the cash from a sale ends up being a 'quick fix' to supplement a shortage of regular income, and is used to help pay the bills for 'a few more years'. Experience has shown that, very quickly, money and property are both gone. There are many successful examples of the long-term benefits of retaining property for economic gain (e.g. in other dioceses such as Nova Scotia and Ottawa and at U.N.B.)

A NEW VISION

Note: The statement that follows is not a plan. It is a vision statement that describes a possible, even hoped-for, future. It does not answer all questions; rather it puts forward, for discussion, a concept. Its purpose is to help determine the level of support for this vision within the Anglican Church family. If a decision is made to take planning to the next level many, many details will have to be considered. At that point other potential professionals, partners and stakeholders – both inside and outside the church – would be consulted and involved. What follows is the proposed vision for the Cathedral and nearby church properties.

Imagine it is the year 2022. As we look at the Cathedral and the properties that surround it we see there have been changes.

The Cathedral looks much the same as it has for nearly 170 years. It is obvious that important work is being done to restore the Cathedral's roof, its beautiful stained glass windows, aging doors, parapets and masonry. Inside, while it is still architecturally and aesthetically beautiful, it looks and feels different. It

remains the worship space for a vibrant and growing congregation, but refurbishments have made it more modern, more suited to the congregation's community outreach programs and more welcoming to community organizations and partners, who sometimes use it during the week. It still stands proudly as a unique and important heritage icon and tourist attraction for the Capital City. The large treed area surrounding the Cathedral is as green, as beautiful and as aesthetically pleasing as ever.

Memorial Hall has been sold and is now owned and operated by a private company. It has been renovated and is being used for commercial and/or residential purposes.

Odell House (the former deanery) has also been sold. It is now occupied by a family that values its heritage and architectural beauty.

Most strikingly there is a large new structure on the other side of Church St. directly across from the Cathedral's west door. The new building is architecturally compatible with the heritage area in which it stands, but it has a more modern design. The physical structures, formerly known as Bishop's Court and the synod office, are part of the new building, although each has been refurbished and re-purposed to 'fit'. Between these two heritage buildings is a multi-story contemporary structure that has been designed by a talented and experienced architect. It houses street-level institutional space, a large number of condominiums/rent-producing units above, diocesan and Cathedral offices in a shared space, a large, open multi-purpose area and meeting rooms that are jointly used by those who live on the upper floors and by the Anglican Church. The property is professionally managed by a well-known company and there is a 40-year lease agreement in place to ensure smooth arms-length operational stability and user-coordination, and – very importantly – a healthy income stream for both the diocese and the Cathedral.

With the approval of the City of Fredericton, the master plan for the property provides an adequate number of 'integrated' parking spaces for vehicle owners who utilize the Cathedral and the new facility.

From an operational point of view, the Cathedral and the diocese are completely removed from the burden of property management and maintenance of this new structure. By formal contractual agreement, income is sent every month from the developer/property manager to the diocese and the Cathedral. By-and-large it is sufficient to offset annual property-related operational costs of both the Cathedral and the diocese.

WHAT NEXT?

1. The Bishop will share this discussion paper with the Cathedral congregation, and with Cathedral and Diocesan decision-makers to gauge the level of support for this new vision.
2. If a decision is made to proceed, he will then appoint a special committee of capable and experienced people to guide and oversee the advancement of this project to the next level.
3. Without giving up any of his episcopal authority over the properties involved, he will empower this committee, as his agent, to proactively move this project forward with the clear understanding that it must be in the best long-term interest of the Anglican Church. The committee will be free to initiate discussions and negotiations – for example with the three levels of government, property and finance professionals, funding organizations, designers/architects/engineers, project developers and property managers as well as, of course, Anglican Church stakeholders.
4. The Bishop is hopeful that there will be support for this new vision by early 2017, that a committee will be formed soon thereafter, and that a firm a decision on a more detailed 'how to move forward' plan can be made no later than November 2017.

APPENDIX A – EXISTING ANGLICAN CHURCH PROPERTIES



- 1 Cathedral & grounds
- 2 Bishop's Court
- 3 Synod Office
- 4 Green
- 5 Deanery / Odell House
- 6 Memorial Hall

APPENDIX B – FUTURE PROPOSAL FOR PROPERTIES



- 1 Cathedral & grounds
- 2 Proposed rough footprint of development on axis with Cathedral, incorporating adjacent heritage buildings, respecting neighbourhood landscaping & form, and allowing for rear parking
- 4 Green