



Final Report

January 2020



CHRIST CHURCH  
**CATHEDRAL**  
FREDERICTON NB

January 2020

**Subject: Project 2045 Report to Bishop & Chapter**

---

**BACKGROUND**

Our task force was formed last spring to develop recommendations that would lead to important and far-reaching decisions respecting the future of the Cathedral and Memorial Hall in relation to the congregation's worship, ministry, fellowship and operational needs.

As our congregation looks ahead to 2045 – the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the date the Cathedral's cornerstone was laid – our report for Bishop and Chapter is primarily related to facility changes that would ensure (a.) we will be a sustainably healthy, vibrant, growing and mission-focused congregation and (b.) the Cathedral itself is structurally sound and able to serve as the 'Mother Church' of the diocese and as an iconic resource to our community.

From our first meeting 10 months ago the task force has therefore been focused on the future more than the present. We are very aware of the fact that our congregation is aging, and that means – if present trends continue – we are likely to experience a very significant decline in numbers and financial offerings in the next 10-15 years. Further we have been told that it is increasingly difficult for the Chapter to recruit willing volunteers who have the knowledge, experience and time needed to tend to the many and frequent issues that regularly occur in our aging facilities.

**CHALLENGES WITH EXISTING FACILITIES**

While the Cathedral and Memorial Hall have adequately served the congregation's worship, ministry, fellowship and administrative needs for more than five decades, these facilities present several challenges as we look to the future:

**Memorial Hall**

- **SPACE UTILIZATION** – While there are many important times throughout the week when the Hall is occupied, much of the existing 19,000 ft<sup>2</sup> space is underutilized. It is estimated that a new purpose-built facility to accommodate current and future congregational needs would require less than half of this existing square footage.
- **OPERATING COSTS** – Annual operating costs for Memorial Hall have averaged \$40,000 annually in recent years. Furthermore, a condition assessment of the building undertaken in 2014 identified several areas of deferred maintenance that are likely to require additional cash outflow in future years to address, the most urgent of which have been undertaken

(new roof, front step repair, a portion of the lower hall repair, new dishwasher, etc.). Other important upgrades and repairs were also recommended with a cost estimate of over a half million dollars (improved accessibility, modern lighting, replacement of all windows, plumbing and electrical modernization, etc.).

- **ACCESSIBILITY** – Access to and from the building poses a challenge for the elderly and those with mobility issues to the extent that some individuals are no longer able to attend functions there.
- **SAFETY** – The proximity of the Hall from the Cathedral requires individuals to cross Brunswick Street to attend events.
- **ENVIRONMENTAL FOOTPRINT** – The building is not energy efficient by today’s standards and does not portray a strong example of environmental stewardship.
- **CHANGING CONGREGATIONAL NEEDS** – Memorial Hall was built for the congregational needs of the 1960s, which are different from the needs of today and the future.

### Cathedral

- **SPACE UTILIZATION** – The Cathedral is a large space that is underutilized during most times of the week.
- **OPERATING COSTS** – Annual operating costs for the Cathedral have averaged \$60,000 annually in recent years. Furthermore, a condition assessment of the building undertaken in 2015 identified more than \$1 million of deferred maintenance that will require significant cash outflow in future years.
- **LACK OF SPACE FLEXIBILITY** – While large in size, the flexibility of the existing space within the Cathedral footprint is limited by layout, pillars, and the fixed pews.

### FUTURE SPACE REQUIREMENTS

The Project 2045 Task Force spent a great deal of time discussing what our worship, ministry, fellowship and administrative needs will be in the future.

By 2045, it is envisioned that we will:

- Offer a vibrant and welcoming environment to accommodate a variety of community and congregational ministry needs;
- Have accessible facilities which promote an increased inclusion of those with mobility challenges;
- Be a role model by demonstrating strong environmental stewardship in the operation of our buildings;
- Be financially sustainable even though our congregation will likely decline in numbers;
- Preserve and enhance the historical/spiritual integrity of our buildings and the surrounding properties; and
- Be a congregation that keeps up with the expectations of future generations.

At the congregational meeting held in November 2019, concerns were raised that the above vision lacks specific detail with respect to future worship, fellowship, outreach, and community programs. While the Project 2045 Task Force acknowledges and appreciates this concern, it also contends that regardless of the specific types of activities and programs that will exist in the future, the resulting space needs will almost certainly include:

1. Administrative Space (including offices and storage)
2. Small Group Meeting and Fellowship Space
3. Large Group Fellowship Space
4. Large Assembly Space (i.e. for special congregational gatherings)

In other words, as long as each of the above space needs are met, our congregation will have the flexibility to accommodate a wide range of worship, fellowship, outreach, and community programs to support its future vision.

## OPTIONS FOR ACCOMMODATING FUTURE SPACE REQUIREMENTS

### Option 1: Memorial Hall

- Description:**
- This option would see the status quo maintained, whereby Memorial Hall would continue to serve a key role in the ministry of the Cathedral.
- Rationale:**
- Memorial Hall has ample space to physically accommodate our existing and future ministry, fellowship, and administrative needs.
  - Despite its large and under-utilized space, we are unlikely to find another space which offers all the existing amenities at a cheaper price.
- Challenges:**
- The lack of accessibility will continue to be a deterrent to those with mobility challenges.
  - Deferred maintenance items will need to be addressed at some point in the future.
  - Although it has been regularly suggested as means of offsetting operating costs, there is limited opportunity for Memorial Hall to generate revenue from concerts, daycares, other third-party tenants due to the limited availability of parking.

### Option 2: Existing Cathedral Footprint

- Description:**
- This option would see modifications made to the interior of the Cathedral's existing footprint to improve its overall flexibility for accommodating a wide range of worship, ministry, fellowship and administrative functions. Options would potentially include 1) replacement of pews with chairs, or 2) repurposing of currently underutilized space to create new meeting and fellowship space.
  - Memorial Hall would be put up for sale under this option.
- Rationale:**
- The majority of the Cathedral's ministry and operations would be housed in a single facility.

- Would increase utilization of a uniquely beautiful space that is currently underutilized during most of the week.
  - Would potentially allow for accommodation of catered congregational meals.
- Challenges:**
- It is unlikely that sufficient administrative and storage space could be accommodated within the existing footprint, meaning that additional office space would still be required.
  - Modifying a 175-year-old building to suit modern and future purposes and expectations would not be easy.

### Option 3: Bishops Court

- Description:**
- This option would see the Cathedral secure space in Bishops Court (via purchase or lease) to accommodate administrative and small meeting/fellowship needs. Large fellowship events and congregational gatherings and meals would be held a) within the existing Cathedral footprint to the extent possible (see Option 2), or b) offsite at some other community or church facility.
  - Cathedral Memorial Hall would be put up for sale under this option.
- Rationale:**
- The annual operating costs for Bishops Court would be considerably less than for Memorial Hall.
- Challenges:**
- While functional, the layout of Bishops Court is not ideal and offers limited flexibility for accommodating the administrative, storage and small meeting/fellowship needs of the Cathedral.
  - Making the building easily accessible inside and out would need to be a priority.
  - Large fellowship events and congregational meals would need to be accommodated elsewhere.
  - Synod plans to divest itself of Bishops Court in the near future, meaning the Cathedral would likely have to purchase the property. Under this scenario, the Cathedral would essentially be trading one aging building for another (albeit a much smaller one) that has its own deferred maintenance items to address.

### Option 4: New Purpose-Built Facility

- Description:**
- This option would see a new purpose-built facility constructed on the vacant land between Bishops Court and the Synod Office to accommodate the Cathedral's ministry, fellowship and administrative needs.
  - Cathedral Memorial Hall would be put up for sale once the new building is ready for occupancy.

- Rationale:**
- New building would have a much smaller footprint, be more energy efficient, and have lower annual operating costs compared to Memorial Hall.
  - New building would be fully accessible and located closer to the Cathedral (i.e. would no longer require crossing of Brunswick Street).
  - There may be opportunity to combine ministry and administrative functions of both Cathedral and Synod within the new facility as a means of sharing and reducing capital and operating costs. Based on preliminary discussions with the Bishop, he believes the Synod would be open to exploring this option further.
  - If the Cathedral and Synod were able to work together on this project, a large portion of the project's capital cost could be funded through the sale of Memorial Hall, the Synod Office, and Bishops Court, meaning limited fundraising would be required.
  - Based on preliminary discussions with the City of Fredericton Planning Department, they are supportive of this option and do not foresee any unsurmountable zoning or subdivision hurdles in making this project a reality. This is based on the premise that the new facility would be a maximum of 2-3 stories tall and house church-related activities only (as opposed to condos and other uses that were being proposed when a new building on this site was previously considered).

- Challenges:**
- Due to space and potential budgetary constraints, the new facility is likely to offer a reduced capacity for congregational meals compared to Memorial Hall.
  - Ownership, capital financing and operational responsibility for this building would have to be worked out.

#### Option 5: Addition to Cathedral

- Description:**
- This option would see a new addition constructed on the south side of the Cathedral to accommodate ministry, fellowship, and administrative needs.
  - Cathedral Memorial Hall would be put up for sale under this option.

- Rationale:**
- All of the Cathedral's ministry and operations would be housed in a single facility.
  - The new addition could potentially transform the Cathedral into a "community hub" for hosting arts and cultural events.

- Challenges:**
- Any modifications to exterior of the Cathedral would almost certainly be met with significant opposition from the local heritage community. While not impossible, obtaining buy-in on the architectural concept for the Cathedral's addition will likely pose a challenge.

- Of all options considered, this one is by far the costliest and is likely not feasible without significant fundraising efforts or major donations by a philanthropist or benefactor.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

After months of thoughtful consideration, discussion, and debate, the Project 2045 Task Force unanimously recommends the following “next steps” for Bishop & Chapter’s consideration:

- 1) Enter into formal discussions with Synod about the potential for constructing a new purpose-built facility between Bishops Court and the Synod Office. Discussions would focus on the concept of sharing ministry and administrative space, and space for most of the activities currently held in Memorial Hall.
- 2) Continue to pursue opportunities to enhance the flexibility of the existing space within the Cathedral footprint to better accommodate Cathedral and community activities.