

**Diocese of San Diego**

**BUILDING AND RENOVATION GUIDELINES  
FOR WORSHIP SPACE**

**I. PRELIMINARY DISCUSSIONS AT THE PARISH LEVEL**

- A. Form parish exploratory committee. It is advisable for this committee to include representatives of the pastoral staff, liturgy committee, Christian Initiation team, religious education staff, parish council, and finance council.
- B. Prepare list of needs, questions, possibilities, hopes.
- C. Prepare initial evaluation of the current or contemplated worship space.
- D. Consider options for financing the project.

**II. PRELIMINARY DISCUSSIONS AT DIOCESAN LEVEL**

- A. Contact the Director of Construction Services who will advise the parish committee on diocesan policy for building and renovation projects.
- B. Contact the Finance Officer for preliminary approval of a project for which parish funds are available and on deposit in the diocesan bank or if it is determined that a diocesan loan is required.
- C. Contact the Director of the Office for Liturgy and Spirituality to begin liturgical consultations.

**III. FIRST STAGE - PROGRAMMING AND LITURGICAL EDUCATION**

- A. Form a Parish Building Committee. The parish exploratory committee can be expanded to become the Parish Building Committee. It is advisable that members reflect the profile of the parish community in, e.g. age, gender, ethnicity, marital status, etc.
- B. Select a Liturgical Consultant. The Liturgical Consultant will assist the parish in developing a comprehensive education program and in designing a worship space that will suit the needs of the liturgy and the personality of the local community. The expertise of such a consultant is invaluable in dealing with architects, artists, and other professionals. This consultant remains with the project from inception to conclusion. The Office for Liturgy and Spirituality maintains a list of approved liturgical consultants.
- C. Design a comprehensive education program on the principles governing worship spaces. With the help of the Liturgical Consultant, a comprehensive education program should be developed in order to make the building or renovation of a church a time of renewal in

terms of the assembly's spiritual growth and appreciation of themselves as Church. This program must address concretely:

1. The needs of the contemporary liturgy.
  2. The impact of the environment on worship.
  3. The design and placement of the major furnishings of the building (e.g. altar, ambo, presidential chair, baptismal font, choir space, organ/piano, cantor stand, benches/chairs/pews, tabernacle/Eucharistic chapel, daily Mass chapel, reconciliation chapel, etc.).
  4. The devotional needs of the community, especially in respect to racial and ethnic preferences.
  5. The need for a suitable gathering space within and outside the church building.
  6. The importance of quality art.
  7. The special needs of the physically challenged.
- D. Assemble a Building/Renovation Team. The team is to include an architect and specialty consultants, such as an acoustician and lighting specialist. While the architect enters into agreement with the diocese the specialty consultants will generally enter into agreements directly with the architect. The Director for Construction Services has a list of architects and contractors who have provided services to the diocese. The Office for Liturgy and Spirituality maintains a resource file of professional consultants. The Parish Building Committee may add to these lists, if they desire.
- E. Develop a program of project design requirements based on a parish's preliminary discussions regarding needs and evaluations from I. B and C.

**IV. SECOND STAGE – SCHEMATIC DESIGN PHASE [prior to Conditional Use Permit (CUP) submission if applicable]**

- A. Develop a schematic design acceptable to the Parish Building Committee.
- B. Present the schematic design to the Art and Architecture Committee and the Liturgical Consultant. The schematic design must include:
1. The site plan.
  2. The floor plan with proposed placement of primary liturgical elements.
  3. The exterior elevations.
- C. Refine the schematic design to incorporate the recommendations of the Art and Architecture Committee.
- D. The Art and Architecture Committee obtains liturgical approval of the schematic design from the bishop. Please note that the concept approval from the Building and Renovation Committee is required prior to starting construction documents (see ADMINISTRATION, Diocesan–16 IV in the Diocesan Handbook).
- E. Obtain Conditional Use Permit (CUP) if required.

**V. THIRD STAGE – DESIGN DEVELOPMENT PHASE [following Conditional Use Permit (CUP) submission if applicable]**

- A. Select designers/artists for liturgical furnishings and art. Resumes and portfolios of liturgical artists are on file at the Office for Liturgy and Spirituality. Recommendations of additional artists are welcomed.
- B. Present design development documents to the Art & Architecture Committee. The design development documents are to include:
  - 1. All liturgical furnishings and appointments.
  - 2. Lighting and acoustic/sound system designs.
  - 3. Major instrumentation (organ, piano).
  - 4. Interior/exterior colors and finishes.
  - 5. A liturgical furnishings cost estimate.
- C. Refine the design development documents to incorporate the recommendation of the Art & Architecture Committee.
- D. The Art & Architecture Committee obtains final approval of the design development documents from the bishop.
- E. Continue to maintain contact with the Director of Construction Services to ensure that progress is consistent with the concept approval.

**VI. FOURTH STAGE – CONSTRUCTION DOCUMENT STAGE**

- A. Prepare the detailed drawings and specifications that will be used for bidding and construction purposes.
- B. Obtain final approval from the Diocesan Building and Renovation Committee.

**VII. FINAL STAGE – PRESERVATION OF RECORDS AND RITE OF DEDICATION**

- A. Contact the Office of the Bishop and Office for Liturgy and Spirituality to set the date and plan for the dedication ceremony.
- B. Provide continuing education. It is advisable to focus continuing education on the merits of the new design, on why changes were made in the former design, and how the new environment has improved the celebration of the liturgy.
- C. Preserve written records describing the rationale behind the design of the new or renovated church.

## **APPENDIX: DIRECTIVE ON LITURGICAL FURNISHINGS**

In addition to adherence to the above guidelines, the design and placement or relocation of the following liturgical furnishings, regardless of the cost involved, require prior consultation with the diocesan Office for Liturgy and Spirituality.

- Altar
- Ambo
- Presider's Chair
- Tabernacle\*
- Baptismal Font
- Oils Ambry
- Altar Railing\*

\*The approval of the Bishop is also required for these liturgical furnishings.