

Summary of Engineering Report on Holy Trinity Church

Background

Over the past two years, KGS Group has done a comprehensive engineering study of the 1884 church building. The final report is being produced and will be made available to those who wish to see it when it is ready. However, with our Annual General Meeting approaching, it seemed appropriate to produce an unofficial summary for the congregation as there are some important decisions to consider regarding the future of our building this year.

State of the Building

Critical

The 1884 church was constructed without a foundation of the sort most of us would recognize. There is a rubble wall to keep the earth from falling under the building and the structure is supported by a series of brick piles. Concrete footings were added to the piles after initial construction. Today, a structure like the church would have a concrete foundation sitting on piles driven deep into the earth. This lack of stable foundation means that the building moves from time to time. Over the years, the southeast corner of the church (south wall of the chancel, Fortin vestry, and east wall of the south transept) have begun to show significant damage due to this movement.

- Substantial damage to the exterior walls of the Fortin vestry
- Scaffolding has been erected in the chancel to protect the organist and organ console from falling plaster
- Level of the floor in the chancel, Fortin vestry, and south transept have noticeably shifted.

If nothing is done, this damage will continue to worsen and, eventually, the building will become unsafe for use.

Non-critical, but urgent

The engineering report offers a number of other observations based on the current state of the building and based on previous, similar reports at various points from now back to the 1980s. While these are not critical for attention in the way that the damage in the Fortin vestry is, it is worth considering them in any plans for repair. In particular, the nave floor was recommended

for replacement in the 1980s and has continued to deteriorate since then; some of our electrical system is very old and will require replacing in the near future.

Remedy

The remedy for the moving building and associated damage is the creation of a foundation under the church. Piles would be driven and a concrete foundation poured under the church. This will stabilize the building and prevent further movement and damage. This will not repair the current damage. Further work will be needed to repair and/or renovate the damage to the structure and interior of the church building.

The foundation could be poured to include a basement level under the 1884 church building, if the congregation desired.

Cost

The estimated cost for the building of a foundation under the 1884 church building is \$2,800,000. This cost reflects only the stabilization of the building and does not include the cost of repairing woodwork, plaster, and other damage to the walls, roof, and interior of the church.

Summary

If this congregation wishes to maintain its historic building, major work is required. There are other features of the building that, though not currently in critical distress, will require updating and replacement in the near future.

We must decide whether we wish to repair the 1884 church building and, if so, investigate options for financing those repairs. This is also an opportunity to consider our historic space, how it has been used in the past, and how it might be used going forward for the good of our congregation, the good of our parish, and how we might continue for another 150 years to offer ourselves as sanctuary for the city.