

Unitarian Church of Montclair Strategic Planning Committee Facility Master Plan

Plan Goals

The plan is designed to be “blue print” of improvements to our church over time will achieve the following goals:

- 1) Create a space worthy of our mission and those that use the facility. Our church buildings should be pleasant, inspiring, and safe. They should meet our real present and future needs.
- 2) Create space for at least 10 years of future growth. Space for growth should be available for RE, Sunday services, social functions and staff.
- 3) The space should be inclusive, not divisive. The building should facilitate community, not isolate users. Each area should serve a specific function, rather than having unfocused overlapping uses spread out over the buildings. Our buildings should have a common center.
- 4) The space should insure accessibility to all spaces by all. It should be as barrier free as possible.
- 5) The space should be designed with concern for the environment and to fulfill our Green Sanctuary commitment.
- 6) The plan should recognize the historic nature of our church and honor that tradition while insuring the needs of our future are met.
- 7) The plan should enhance the desirability of rental space in our church.

Plan Stages

The plan is a multi-year effort to reach our goals in the following general stages:

Stage I

Renew Sanctuary

Stage II

Create Town Center and link all areas

Expand Sanctuary

Stage III

Create New Social Hall in Annex

Create New Administrator Annex in Fletcher Hall

Reconfigure annex basement

Plan Concept

1) Turn the main floor of the Annex into our new social hall.

By removing almost all rooms and opening all walls, the Rotunda, Peirel's Room and all other space of the Annex will become a multi-use room that, when compared to the current Fletcher Hall, is: (i) bigger, (ii) brighter (south-facing), (iii) more beautiful (the Rotunda as focal point), and (iv) more flexible (can be divided with folding walls, if that is decided to be desirable).

Design Elements:

- No set stage- movable platform.
- Can divide into separate spaces if needed.
- New kitchen in space adequate for weddings, etc. Can be opened to hall if needed so that kitchen volunteers are part of event or closed off for more formal events.
- Hall space will open to the outside in rear onto decks to bring the inside out and outside in. The decks will connect to backyard playground for our community's children.
- Entry steps widened to create welcoming environment.

2) Create "Commons" between Sanctuary and New Fletcher Hall

Create an entranceway and crossroads for all those using the church to encourage interaction.

Design Elements:

- Space will have an inviting casual atmosphere to spend time, encouraging spontaneous meeting, discussions and fellowship.
- Space could be used for exhibits or have permanent design features (windows, sculpture, etc.) that tell the world who we are.

- Our “Commons” will be the main access point for the New Fletcher Hall and the Sanctuary. It will in part serve the purpose the Narthex does today and allow us to use the Narthex to expand the sanctuary as it is needed. It will also connect to the Administrative Annex.
- The space could be a modern counterpoint (glass?) to our historic buildings, bridging our past into the future.

3) Improve and expand our sanctuary while preserving its history.

Renew the center of our religious experience and insure it can be expanded as needed.

Design Elements:

- New or refurbished pews
- Replace stadium type seating in front at sides with flexible pews
- New carpet, sound system, hearing circle
- Paint, plaster, clean woodwork
- Improve lighting
- Allow for expansion into the Narthex

4) Create Administrative Annex in our present Fletcher Hall.

Create new home for our staff and fulfill miscellaneous other needs such as library, conference rooms and expanded RE.

Design Elements:

- Move current offices out of current Annex and create new, larger office area where all staff will have adequate space and be located close to one another.
- Create permanent library at east end of space using current library area and balcony.
- Create new meeting rooms for RE/rental/conference rooms using old kitchen/Alliance Room area. (Alliance Room will retain its current formal atmosphere.)
- Connect new annex to Town Center via exterior glass corridor on west side of sanctuary.

5) Make lower level of current Annex more usable by reconfiguring space.

Use lower Annex level more efficiently to create more classrooms and more areas to rent.

Design Elements

- Make Sub-Peirel's room dividable, remove interior supports
- Rationalize all other space to make maximum use of space.
- These changes along with new Administrative Annex add or create the possibility of between 5-8 new RE classrooms, depending on the configuration.

Plan Detail

1) Improvements throughout facility

- New carpeting.
- Repaint and clean woodwork as necessary.
- Repair wiring as necessary.
- Replace or repair doors and windows as necessary with energy efficient materials.
- Improve lighting as necessary.
- Add 2 showers in basement (church able to host IHN)(this will be reviewed by staff to see if we have the necessary other facilities to take part in IHN).
- All areas accessible and to the extent possible barrier-free.
- Air condition New Fletcher Hall, Town Center and Administrative Annex.
- New furnace for sanctuary.

2) RE space

- Windows in all doors.
- Intercom system.
- Enhance Senior Youth space.
- Space available for Junior Youth room.
- Nursery to have sink (review need for sinks in all other classrooms).
- Space made available to continue after school program.

3) Fundraising/Social Needs

- New Fletcher Hall to have excellent sound system and ability to show movies.
- New Fletcher Hall to have flexible stage system.
- Library established in Administration Annex.
- Movable pews to allow for flexible use.
- New, smaller tables for social functions.
- Play area in rear of church behind New Fletcher Hall with easy access to hall via decks so that parents can participate in social functions while children play within eyesight.
- New kitchen to be suitable for social functions and rentals.

- Storage for tables and chairs when not in use and "brides room".

4) Exterior

- Survey roof for necessary repairs. Repair roof to stop snow falling over entries.
- Sidewalks and driveway replaced as necessary.
- Repair retaining wall.
- New exterior light system.
- New security system.
- Storage area for lawn and snow removal equipment (w/ electrical connection).
- Office area for church facilities manager.
- Re-point exterior where needed.
- Screened garbage area.
- Continue to monitor Fletcher Hall for structural issues.

5) Sanctuary

- Insure carpet at front of church does not interfere with moving piano for music events.
- Sound system connections to balcony and other areas of sanctuary.
- State of the art sound system should insure that hearing impaired have best possible system.
- Insure balcony can support added piano.
- Consider enlarging door from new Commons to sanctuary to insure good access.
- Review number of zones necessary for AC and heat in sanctuary building and office area.

6) New administrative area.

- Consider larger rest rooms to support rentals in area.
- French doors from Alliance room to new entry hallway.
- Make sure via signage and security system (camera) that those in office can monitor main entrance and that those using facility know where office is.
- Insure space for music director in office area.

7) Rental

- RE area in sanctuary basement must be secured from entrance via commons area.
- Before finally configuring space, rentals must be considered to insure we have the right sized spaces.
- Insure office area is secure from rentals in area of Alliance room.

8) Archives

- Create well designed, secure archives room (currently planned for basement of annex) with adjacent space for work on the church's archival material.
- Clean and improve closet in balcony for use as music library and other music needs.

9) Other

- Work with town to insure adequate parking in area for staff and church functions.
- Insure adequate janitor closets, especially in annex.