How to Begin, Organize and Successfully Complete a Capital Campaign Building Project for a Church or Synagogue

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Step 1: Recognition of Need

On the most basic level, a capital campaign project begins when the members of a congregation or the professional staff recognizes that their facility is not functioning as well as it could, and some improvements are in order.

It could be that

- There is not enough space
- There is not enough of the "right" kind of space
- There has been a deterioration of the building's systems (mechanical, electrical, plumbing, life safety)
- The facility has begun to look and feel "shabby" or outdated
- The facility does not meet current life safety and accessibility standards and codes
- The site's plantings and paved areas need sprucing up
- Parking and vehicular circulation is no longer adequate

As this awareness grows, the leadership may organize committees to study the nature of the deficiencies and the types of strategies that may be employed to correct them. Different congregations may give them different labels, including:

- Long Range Planning Committee
- Visionary Committee
- Strategic Planning Committee
- Capital Campaign Committee
- Building Committee

For the purposes of this discussion, we'll assume that your project is the renovation of your existing building. For congregations planning to build a new building, the process is largely the same, except that the first stage of the design process will involve choosing the right site. While the architect selection process is essentially the same whether you are planning a renovation of your current facility, building a new building on an empty site, or reusing a building that was something other than a house of worship, the design concerns and work product will be somewhat different. These nuances are described in more detail in Step 3: The Initial Design.

Whatever your committee is called, it will generally have two functions. One is to begin to develop an understanding of how the physical plant and site need to be improved, and the second is to begin to determine how the project may be funded. It is common to have two committees that work separately on these equally important missions.

It is very important that the congregation has a member who is willing and able to serve as a committed **Building Committee Chair** throughout the life of the project. This is a job that requires a significant time commitment. Having the steady, consistent guiding presence of a knowledgeable, committed Chair will help to ensure a successful project. He or she, more than any other individual, will serve in the role of "client" to the design team and will act as the intermediary between you and the architect. Don't underestimate the amount of time this position will take or its importance to the project and the capital campaign.

A good place for you to start is to develop a **Mission Statement.** This clear, concise recording of your core principles and goals for the capital campaign can then be used throughout the process to measure the project's progress and to serve as a touchstone when making important decisions.

At the conclusion of this first step you should be in a position to produce a **Statement of Need** document that describes the goals and objectives of the capital campaign. While the Mission Statement speaks of the congregation's core principles, the Statement of Need describes in general terms the deficiencies in the physical plant and the reasons for undertaking the project. This document will serve as the starting point for the selection of the design team.

Step 2:
Selecting an Architect

Now you can begin the process of hiring the architect. It is best to hire someone who has the experience and understanding of leading the design process and working with non-profit institutions. You will want to find the best match between the design professionals and the congregants as well as the professional staff who will be active in this campaign.

Think of this relationship as a marriage. In order to ensure the best marriage between an architect and a congregation, it is necessary to go through a multi-step process of first identifying qualified firms and then determining which of those firms will result in a successful and enduring relationship.

These steps include:

- Writing an RFQ (Request for Qualifications)
- Compiling a list of firms to be considered
- Reviewing the qualifications that are received and the elimination of unsatisfactory firms
- Writing an RFP (Request for Proposals)
- Organizing a mandatory site visit for interested firms
- Reviewing the proposals that are received and compiling a "short list" of qualified firms
- Interviewing the short-listed firms
- Selecting the design team
- Negotiating a fee and signing a contract

The selection of the design team is usually the responsibility of the Building Committee or a task force of the Building Committee.

The **Request for Qualifications (RFQ)** is a relatively short document that describes the institution and the general scope of the project and asks interested firms to submit information that describes the design team and the team's relevant experience. The RFQ does not ask for specific information regarding how the team may approach the design of the project or what the fee may be.

While this work is going on, you'll want to begin compiling a list of architects that you might want to consider for the project. The names of possible firms come from many different sources: other congregations and religious institutions; congregants with real estate, design or construction experience; publications and the internet. The American Institute of Architects has a very helpful website and is an excellent place to start. www.aia.org

A note of caution: It is strongly recommended that the congregation does NOT consider hiring a congregant either as the architect, one of the consultants the architect may employ or as the builder of the project. It will almost certainly result in an awkward and problematic situation.

You should not be surprised if every firm does not respond to the RFQ. There are many reasons why an architect may decide that the project is not right for them at this time.

Once you have received the responses to the RFQ, you can review the information and eliminate those firms that you feel do not have the adequate experience or do not seem appropriate for the project.

While you are waiting for responses from the RFQ the **Request for Proposals (RFP)** can be written.

The RFP asks for information more specifically related to the particular project. The interested architects will be asked to provide information that indicates that they understand the nature and scope of the design project, and they should also be prepared to describe how they intend to solve the design problems and come up with appropriate design solutions.

This does not mean that you should ask the candidates for free sketches. It would be much more useful and appropriate to ask for information that would describe their office culture, their approach to working with groups and their design philosophy.

In writing the RFP, it often makes sense to divide the design process into **two phases.**

The first phase includes the initial planning/programming of the project (some of which you may have already started when you produced the Statement of Need) and the Schematic Design. The Schematic Design phase should also include the preparation of a preliminary cost estimate for the construction.

The second phase is the remainder of the project -- the more detailed development of the design, the production of the construction drawings and specifications, the selection of the general contractor and, finally, the construction administration.

The reason for these two phases is that it will be impossible for the architect to quote a meaningful fee without having an accurate idea of what the total scope of the project is. The architect should be able to quote a fee for the first phase based on your general understanding of what you are trying to accomplish, but usually this understanding is not specific enough to quote a fee for the entire project. For example, it may not be known at the beginning of the process whether the building's mechanical systems can be reused, so it may be impossible for the architect to quote a fee for the design work to upgrade or replace the equipment.

In the RFP, the time and date for a **MANDATORY SITE VISIT** should be noted. It is not necessary to provide individual appointments for each candidate. It is quite customary for all of the design teams to attend a site visit together. Interested firms should respond to the contact person noted in the RFP (usually the Committee Chair) to signify their intention to attend. In order to be considered, the architect should be willing to participate in this mandatory site meeting.

After you've reviewed the proposals, you will want to create a "short list" of the candidates that you'd like to invite for an interview. You may also want to contact each candidate's **REFERENCES**. You will want to know how responsive a firm has been throughout the design and construction, the level of involvement of partners and other high level, experienced personnel and the degree of understanding the firm has regarding working with volunteer groups and building committees. It is also a good idea, at this time, to visit examples of the firms' work, if this is practical.

The **FEE** is, of course, one of the most important parts of the proposal. You will want to do a careful analysis to ensure that the different firms' fee structures represent comparable scopes of work. This is much easier to do when you are considering fees for only the first phase of the work. It is almost always preferable to get a fixed fee for a fixed scope of work than to risk uncertainty by agreeing to hourly rates for a less definite scope of work.

Besides a fixed fee, you should also expect to see a list of exclusions for work that is not covered as a basic service. These are often called **ADDITIONAL SERVICES** and the architect should describe in the proposal the fee arrangement for these Additional Services. Often this work will be billed hourly or will

require separate negotiations to arrive at a fixed fee.

Following this process of "due diligence" and the creation of a short list of candidates, you are ready to schedule interviews. The **INTERVIEW** is the best way for you to gauge how happy the "marriage" will be with the design team. An hour for each candidate is about right. The first 20-30 minutes should be reserved for the design team to give a presentation and the remaining time should be spent in a more informal question and answer session. It is important that the members of the selection committee take good notes during the interviews. When a committee is interviewing several firms in a single evening or over the course of several days it is easy to forget which firm said what or which firm did which project. Taking careful notes will minimize this.

Keep in mind that by inviting these firms to be interviewed, you have already determined that they are competent and experienced to successfully complete your project. The candidates should spend the time discussing how they plan to successfully solve your particular problem.

That being said, it is best to let the individual firms determine how they prefer to present themselves. Some firms will have a PowerPoint presentation and some will arrive with boards or drawings. Some firms may choose to have some or all of their consultants participate in the interview and others may come alone. You may want to have each candidate prepare answers to specific questions that are provided in advance or request that each candidate bring the specific person that will be working on the project.

How the firm members organize themselves for the interview will give you a lot of information about how they see themselves and how they like to work. For this reason it is best to give them as much leeway as possible in determining the format and content of their presentation.

Much of the interview process is about feeling the "chemistry" between you and the architect. Will this be a good fit? Will we like working with this person?

Following the interviews you will want to reconvene to make a **FINAL SELECTION** of the design team. It is best to conduct this meeting soon after the interviews are completed. It is quite easy to confuse the firms, and it is best to have this discussion when impressions are fresh.

If it would be helpful, it is not uncommon to have a second interview with one or more candidates. This interview should be more specifically directed to the issues raised in your deliberations and to answer specific questions.

Once the selection is made, a **CONTRACT** should be drawn up to formally bind the two parties to a mutually agreeable business arrangement. In the simplest terms, the contract should clearly state what Scope of Work is expected, who will perform the work and what the fee will be.

The AIA has developed contracts that are the standard agreements used in the industry and are generally considered to be fair and equitable. Using the AIA documents, not only for the Owner/Architect Agreement, but also later for the Owner/Contractor Agreement will ensure that there is contractual continuity throughout the life of the project. Most of the time, the architect will prepare the contract, but it is important to have your lawyer review it.

Step 3: The Initial Design

Program / Master Plan / Feasibility Study

With the design team hired, the Building Committee is ready to start the design process.

This begins with the architect quantifying the congregation's needs by producing the **Program** and, if necessary, the **Master Plan** or **Feasibility Study**

Program: At the most basic level, the Program should include the list of spaces to be included in the building, as well as the size and function of these spaces. The Program builds on information gathered during the Recognition of Need phase and is refined by the architect by having a series of interviews with the major stakeholders in the congregation. This includes professional staff,

officers and committees. The architect should review the Program with you and have you "sign off" on the final version before proceeding further.

Master Plan: If implementation of the Program requires the phasing of the project, either because there is not enough money to go forward with the entire building program at one time or because the building must remain in operation during the construction, it will be necessary for the design team to produce a Master Plan. The Master Plan is a document that describes the sequence of construction phases that must be taken to achieve the implementation of the final Program. It should describe what is driving the sequence -- budget, schedule or possibly both. The Master Plan usually does not include detailed architectural design, but is confined to more conceptual diagrams of how the building is organized. It serves as a "blueprint" for future growth and anticipates phased construction without having to "undo" completed work. A conceptual cost estimate that corresponds to the various phases of the construction should be included.

Feasibility Study: If you are planning to construct a new facility on an open site or purchase a building to adapt and renovate, it is critically important that **before purchasing the property**, you engage an architect to complete a Feasibility Study. The purpose of the study is to determine whether the site or building being considered will be appropriate for meeting your needs. Even before a specific property is found, the Feasibility Study can be a valuable tool for "shopping" for a site or structure by providing specific guidelines. There are many considerations that will determine whether a site will be an appropriate candidate for a new building. All of these issues should be addressed in a Feasibility Study:

Zoning & Land Development – Whether a site is urban or suburban, the Zoning Code will determine whether a house of worship is a legal use for a specific site. Under most local codes, houses of worship require "special consideration" and will require public hearings and variances. Zoning ordinances will also regulate setbacks from property lines, open space requirements, building height limits and parking space requirements. These restrictions alone can determine whether a site may be unsuitable for your program. Regulations will limit construction in wetlands, on some slopes, within flood plains and even near certain wildlife. Traffic and water management will also affect site conditions. Zoning and Land Development ordinances vary greatly from place to place as do the agencies that regulate them. These differences could be critical in deciding where to look for a site. The right choice could save months of time during the approvals process.

Utilities – The study will also determine whether the site has adequate access to the required utilities such as gas, electricity and public sewer and water.

Adaptive Reuse – In the case of an existing building, the study will determine whether the program will fit in the existing space with or without the need for an addition, what the extent of renovations may be, whether the building meets building, mechanical, electrical, plumbing and accessibility codes and what the costs may be to make the building work for you.

Schematic Design

Once you have approved the Program and Master Plan or have purchased property that will become the site for your new building, the design team can begin the Schematic Design.

Schematic Design: During the Schematic Design phase the building first begins to take shape. If there

was a Master Plan completed, the architects begin with the conceptual diagrams in the Master Plan and start to develop the **floor plans** in more detail. If there was no Master Plan, then they will take the program and begin with some diagrams of how the project can be organized. During this period there should be regularly planned meetings between you and the architects. The architects should also go back to the various groups and committees, if necessary, for clarifications of data gathered during the programming phase.

It is important to note that this phase MUST have a frequent and easy flow of ideas and sketches between you and the architect. Regularly scheduled meetings that review the progress of the design should be set up to ensure open discussion and feedback. The more dialogue at this stage of the process, the fewer changes later.

As the floor plans become more developed, the architects will also start developing the building **elevations** and **sections.** The building elevations describe the exterior appearance and the building sections and cross section views taken through the building. Building sections are used to describe the vertical relationships between floors and the volume of spaces. The floor plans, building elevations and building sections are the three basic types of drawings architects use to describe a three dimensional building in two dimensions.

As the building begins to take form, the architects will start to have discussions with their structural and mechanical engineers so that these consultants can begin their work. Just as the architect begins to understand the building's plan, materials and appearance, the engineers begin to make the first determinations of the building's structural system and how the mechanical, plumbing, electrical and life safety systems will operate.

During this phase the design team will also begin to develop an **Outline Specification**. This document begins to list the various components of the building in a standard format. The spec will become far more detailed and voluminous in the later stages of the project.

At the end of the Schematic Design, the architect will present a package of floor plans, building elevations and building sections that will be a comprehensive understanding of the building's basic characteristics.

As the name of the phase implies, the information is still in a schematic stage of development. There is not enough detail for a contractor to construct the project, but the basic decisions that the rest of the project will rely on have been made.

The Schematic Design package will also include a **Preliminary Cost Estimate.** This estimate is either done by the architect or by a professional cost estimator. The architect or estimator uses the Schematic Design drawings to quantify the many different elements of the building and assign construction costs to them. For this reason, the estimate is more detailed and more reliable than the square foot cost estimate that may have been done during the Master Plan. The level of detail is still preliminary, however, and while it can and should be used for planning purposes, there is still a margin of error that must be anticipated. For that reason it should include a **Contingency**. This is a percentage of the construction cost ranging from 5%-20% that is for unanticipated items, recognizing that many features of the building have not been fully designed or developed.

Once the Schematic Design package is completed, you should take the time to review the drawings and ask the architect whatever questions you may have that will help you understand the drawings and enable you to move forward with the project. At this point in the process, it's still easy to reconsider decisions and make changes.

Step 4: Detailed Design

Design Development

After you have reviewed the Schematic Design and you are comfortable with the direction of the project, the architect will begin the Design Development Phase.

Design Development: In Design Development the building design becomes more detailed. Sometimes, it is at this point that changes in scope are made to bring the costs into compliance with the budget.

Often the cost estimator will provide updated information on how much the budget will change because of these changes.

Once you and the architect reach a consensus on the scope of the design and any revisions that need to be made from the Schematic Design, the Design Development Phase can truly begin.

During Design Development the design becomes more detailed. In addition to this new layer of information, additional drawings will be added to the drawing set. These drawings will show portions of the building at a larger scale and are used to describe how the different building materials are being put together. Probably the most important of these drawings is the **Wall Section**. The wall section is a drawing of selected locations of the exterior wall that describes in detail how the construction components fit together from the foundation to the roof parapet.

The completed set of Design Development drawings, while still not of sufficient detail to bid or construct the project, gives you, the design team and the estimators a fairly complete understanding of how the building is put together. The Design Development drawings are frequently thought of as being about 75% of the completed Construction Documents.

Using these drawings, the cost estimator will update the Schematic cost estimate. Because of the added detail the estimate will also become more refined and the percentage of contingency used to cover the unknown elements in the building can be reduced accordingly.

Following the completion of the Design Development drawings the architect should meet with you to go over the drawings and be prepared to answer any questions that you may have. After this meeting, it is important for you to review the drawings and be sure that you are comfortable with the design. Let the architect know if you have any questions or comments.

Construction Documentation

The Construction Documentation phase of Step 4 is really just a continuation of the Design Development Phase. In this phase the construction drawings and project manual (often called the specifications) -- known together as the **Construction Document Set** -- are completed.

This phase begins immediately after you have signed off on the Design Development drawings. Usually there are some revisions that need to be made, either because you have rethought some decisions, or because the updated cost estimate requires the scope of the work to be adjusted.

It is important, at this stage, that any revisions be relatively minor. The detailed design work is too far along at this point to make changes easily, and there have to be strong, compelling reasons to switch direction at this point. Usually, the budget is that compelling reason. In most cases, if the project is running over budget, it will be the architect's responsibility to make revisions to reduce the cost, but if the changes are generated by you, the client, because of a change in scope, the architect may request an additional fee.

Keep in mind that what may seem like a "simple" change can be deceptively complex. The addition or deletion of a single door may affect not only the floor plan, but often a surprising number of other drawings in the set. If you are contemplating such a change at this time it is best to talk to the architect about the implications of the change before you ask that it be made.

Concurrent with the drawings being completed, the **Project Manual** is also being produced. The Project Manual contains the Specification, but also includes important additional information that the bidders, and eventually the successful contractor, will need to understand how the job will be administered. This information is contained in the first section of the manual, usually titled "Division 1: General Requirements". The architect should be responsible for compiling this information and should review it with you before the final version of the Manual is published and distributed. The other divisions of the Project Manual are the completed, detailed construction specifications that describe all the components that will go into the project and how they will need to be assembled into the building.

The construction drawings and the project manual form a single, coordinated set of information. Each is incomplete without the other and you cannot have a truly comprehensive understanding of the project without using the two together.

Step 5: Selecting a Contractor

At some point during the design process, and with the advice of the architect, you must decide whether the contractor will be selected using the competitive bid model or through negotiation. Each model has its pros and cons, and one may be more appropriate to a specific congregation and its situation. The following brief description will summarize the differences between the two methods:

Competitive Bid – This method is the most traditional and conservative. In many ways it is also the most appropriate for a non-profit, volunteer organization with fiduciary responsibilities that must answer to a Board and congregation. Very simply, a well-detailed and complete set of construction documents is distributed to a small, pre-qualified group of contractors who are given a specific period of time to review the documents, visit the project site, solicit prices from their subcontractors and submit a bid on a predetermined date and time. For publicly funded projects, the bid process may be open to any and all interested contractors; but for a private project, five or six contractors who have been chosen to participate because of reputation, referral or past experience with a trusted source are a reasonable number to solicit. This model demands that the drawing set be as complete as possible in order to minimize varying interpretation. This means that the architect usually requires more time to include as much detailed information as possible. In addition, the contractor is usually seeing the project for the first time when he receives the bid documents and will require an appropriate amount of time to understand the project and receive meaningful bids from his subcontractors. Consequently, it is important that for the Competitive Bid model, adequate time is allotted for the architect to produce a "tight", unambiguous, coordinated set of documents.

Once a satisfactory list of bidders is compiled and each bidder confirms his interest in the project, the bid documents are released to each contractor. Included in the documents are **Instructions to Bidders** which includes a description of the project, any unusual or specific issues that may be particular to the project, a summary of important dates in the bidding process, to whom they should be delivered and in what format. In addition to cost, projected construction period duration is an important consideration that should be required in the bid. Soon after the documents are distributed, you should schedule a **Mandatory Pre-Bid Walkthrough.** Every bidder must attend this meeting to become familiar with the project, meet the various team members, be given opportunities to ask questions and hear any additional requirements or clarifications. These walkthroughs are customarily attended by members of the Building Committee and the architect, and will often include the building's maintenance supervisor and some of the architect's consultants. The bidders often bring along their estimators and various subcontractors. This results in an equal distribution of information and overall fairness. Following the walkthrough, the architect should distribute a record of questions asked and their answers, which will become part of the job record. Any changes in scope that are issued before the bids are due are called **Addenda** and become part of the bid documents and, ultimately, part of the contract. Often the **Instructions to Bidders** includes a date by which all questions must be asked. This ensures that there will be adequate time to distribute the answer to all bidders. The bids can be delivered to you, to the architect or to both.

After the bids are opened, they must be analyzed in order to fully understand them. Often, they do not all include the same scope because

the documents, no matter how specific, can be misinterpreted.

Even the best set of documents is open to some interpretation. A well-organized bid process will help to minimize the uncertainties.

Sometimes the documents request that the bidders include specific "line items" to compare pricing. Sometimes the documents request that discreet portions of the project be called out separately. These items are referred to as **"Add Alternates"** or **"Deduct Alternates"** that can be included or deleted from the project depending on whether the bids are within the budget. These alternates are useful in avoiding having to rebid the project if the bids are all too high. The architect will review the bids and create a matrix that will illustrate in a clear way the variations and components of the bids. The matrix will apply an order to the bids that can be more easily understood. As a result, all, or a limited number of bidders, can be interviewed in order to clarify any open issues with their submissions, ask questions about their firms and generally get to know them.

On private projects, it is not required that the lowest bidder be selected for the job. A well-conducted interview may reveal that the lowest bidder did not completely understand the project and left out an important component. You may ask the bidders for suggestions for possible savings to test creativity and enthusiasm. Before the selection is made, it is always important to check references.

Negotiated Model – This model has many more options than the Competitive Bid model and has generated a raft of confusing terms and jargon that tends to be loosely and inconsistently defined. Whether the model uses a Contractor, a Construction Manager, an Owner's Rep, a Negotiated Fee or a GMP (Guaranteed Maximum Price), the model usually implies that a builder is selected somewhat early in the documentation process by a selection process similar to the method used to select the architect. The builder becomes part of the project team, offering knowledge and experience that helps the architect keep the project on budget. Because the builder is familiar with the project from the start, the architect may be able to complete the documents sooner with less details and the builder may require less time for pricing the job. In this role, the builder, who may be referred to as a Construction Manager, provides cost estimating services throughout the design process and, based on a fairly early set of drawings, offers a GMP for which he is responsible. The cost of the project is usually the builder's actual cost plus a fee for his services. This model can shorten the documentation time but surrenders some control of the project and the cost. Trust among the project team members is at the heart of this model's success.

The Start of a Happy Marriage

With the selection of the general contractor, you will hire the last critical member of your project team. If this selection process is undertaken with commitment and diligence, you may proceed into construction with the confidence that you have selected the best team to successfully deliver the building that matches your budget, your dreams and the vision of your congregation.

Brawer & Hauptman, Architects LLC is an architecture, planning and interior design firm.

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