

Facts & Figures

Owner: St. David's Episcopal Church, Wayne, PA

Type of Project: An addition and renovations to a church complex

Architect: Atkin Olshin Schade Architects, Philadelphia PA

Construction Manager: W.S. Cumby, Springfield, PA

Size: 24,000 square feet (addition); 9,000 square feet (renovated space)

Cost: \$8.3 million

Construction Time: October 2004 - April 2006

The Need: An addition and renovations to help the church better serve its members

The Challenge: Fitting the large addition on the site without overwhelming the existing buildings

Supportive Team Members

E&M Engineering, Inc.
Consulting Engineers

Goebelwood Ind Inc.
Architectural Millwork/Casework/
Woodwork

Pella Window & Door Company
Window & Door Manufacturer



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Wayne, Pennsylvania

St. David's Episcopal Church Addition & Renovations

The cornerstone of the original St. David's Episcopal Church building in Wayne, Penn., was laid in 1715 by the Welsh colonists who had settled there. Named after the Patron Saint of Wales, the church's long history and continued growth of both the congregation and the building itself has resulted in St. David's Episcopal Church being the largest parish in the Diocese of Pennsylvania. The decision to add a new 700-seat sanctuary to the church and to renovate the existing circa 1956 sanctuary into a fellowship hall helps the church better serve its members and the surrounding community as it gets closer to celebrating 300 years of religious service.

Located on a beautifully wooded 35-acre site, the existing church includes five buildings constructed at various times throughout the church's existence, as well as a historic cemetery. As a historic complex, it was important that the project team respect and maintain the long-established buildings, while also ensuring the addition blended in with the existing architecture, especially the adjacent 1956 sanctuary. According to W.S. Cumby,

the project's construction manager, this was done with the careful selection of the addition's exterior materials. For example, the facade of the new sanctuary is comprised of a six-inch-thick, rubble-stone veneer and operable mahogany shutters to match the old sanctuary.

Since matching the interior of the addition to the church's other buildings was also a consideration, the walls are made of a custom-colored synthetic plaster similar to the plaster in the original church building. The existing side pews from the old sanctuary were refinished and installed in the new sanctuary, and additional pews and modesty panels were designed to match, strengthening the connection to the previous sanctuary.

The project also included renovations to the existing sanctuary in order to turn it into a fellowship hall with classrooms and administrative spaces. In addition, the renovations brought the facility up to current Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements. Also, three new parking lots made of porous asphalt paving were poured to create supplementary parking for the growing congregation.

More than just visually connecting the new building with the choice of materials, it was important to place the large addition on the site without overwhelming the existing buildings. This was the greatest challenge the project team faced throughout design and construction. According to Atkin Olshin Schade Architects, the project's architect, this problem was solved by orienting the new sanctuary 90 degrees from the existing sanctuary, which creates a new courtyard garden and sets the site for extra parking space. This design detail helped unify the entire complex.

With more than 2,900 members and a variety of religious, educational and social activities offered, St. David's Episcopal Church is a thriving community. The majesty and tranquility of the church was such that in 1880, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow composed the poem, "Old St. David's at Radnor." Soon to celebrate its 300-year anniversary, St. David's Episcopal Church is continuing to grow strong. ■

— Marci Grossman

