

2011 B.L.E.N.D. Award Submittal Church Addition & Remodel – Project Description

The addition and remodeling of this Church was initiated to enhance flexibility, circulation, and accessibility throughout the facility while adding program area and better utilizing existing spaces. At the outset it was clear that an addition would be necessary and that the only feasible part of the property was that which faces the avenue, in front of the existing Parish Hall.

Size, Massing, & Orientation

The first priority was to ensure that the addition would not visually overpower either the Church to the north or the home to the south. It was also important that the addition not compromise the visual integrity and access to the south Parish Hall entry, which is the main entry to a daycare facility. In-filling the “L” shape of the Parish Hall allowed us to tuck approximately 1/3 of the new square footage behind the primary mass of the addition. An elevator was carefully positioned to accommodate the required over-run within the attic, thus avoiding any additional complexity in the roof form. These moves allowed the addition to read as a simple single-gable form extruded along the front of the Parish Hall. This in turn masked the lower pitched roofs and stark stucco walls of the Parish Hall while incorporating the charm of its south entry. The result is a clear but layered massing that is residential in scale and deferential to the Church.

Building Exterior & Materials

The former Rectory (now a private home to the east) and the Office/Sacristy on the southeast portion of the Church served as a perfect example of how to both resonate with the stone structure and differentiate the addition. These structures feature half-timber trim-work with stucco and an eave detail that we chose to echo. Full-thick stucco proved to be cost prohibitive but the half-timbering allowed us to restrain the size of fiber-cement “stucco” panels to avoid the tell-tale seams that give away an otherwise acceptable compromise. Copper gutters, careful color selection, simulated divided light windows/doors, and shingles matched to the Sanctuary provide a sense of quality and unity. As such, the materials and details of the addition tie together the various generations of the existing facility and resonate with the adjacent homes.

Landscape & Exterior Space

A short link from the addition to the Sanctuary was constructed to conceal a slight level change and provide a second and more generous interior path for circulation. The Link made it possible to enclose an awkward left-over space between the Church and Parish Hall thus forming an exterior courtyard and resolving a problem area that had troubled the church for years. Alternately contemplative and lively, the court is attractive throughout the seasons and gives light to the spaces that surround it. The Link also allowed the removal of an awkward exterior wheel chair ramp on the north, resulting in an extended planting area, a reduction in impervious surfaces, and a clearer emphasis on the primary entry to the Church.

The soils in the area proved to be very favorable for water percolation. Three rainwater gardens were formed; one adjacent to the former Rectory property to the east; and two parallel to the avenue flanking the new grade level entrance. Lush in season and textured throughout the year, the rainwater gardens provide year-round interest and soften the grade change that occurs between the building and the sidewalk.