



DIOCESE OF  
SAN JOSE

# Diocese of San José

## Building and Renovation Guidelines

### Introduction

Building and renovating any worship space is a challenging time in the life of a parish. Even the smallest of renovations is an opportunity to renew the liturgical life of the community. The success of a building project is revealed in its effect on the liturgical life of the community.

The mission of the Environment and Art Committee (Committee) of the Diocese of San José is to promote the liturgy of the Church by reviewing and approving changes to the environment in which that liturgy takes place. These approvals are based on the conciliar and post-conciliar documents of the Second Vatican Council as well as the directives of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) and the Bishop of the Diocese of San José.

The Committee serves parishes involved in the construction, restoration, enhancement and renovation of liturgical space by facilitating the implementation of the Design Review Process in collaboration with diocesan offices and outside experts. (This document will use the word “parish” to mean any parish, high school, cemetery or other diocesan community that is building or renovating a place of worship.) This document outlines the process every parish community is to undertake in the building and renovation of its worship environment.

### Outline of the Design Review Process

A Design Review Process is required of all projects affecting the worship environment. The Committee is charged by the Bishop to review and approve any permanent art, furnishings and changes to the existing arrangement of worship spaces and to review and approve plans for the creation of new worship spaces. (“For the proper construction, restoration, and remodeling of sacred buildings, all who are involved in the work are to consult the diocesan commission on the Sacred Liturgy and sacred art. The Diocesan Bishop, moreover, should use the counsel and help of this commission whenever it comes to laying down norms on this matter, approving plans for new buildings, and making decisions on the more important issues” General Instruction on the Roman Missal, 291.) The Committee also evaluates landscaping projects that

form or affect gathering areas related to the worship space and areas that will be used for the Triduum liturgies and other outdoor rituals as these are also liturgical spaces.

The Design Review Process consists of two phases:

- 1) **Concept Review** - This is done as soon as the parish community has identified the scope of the work anticipated. The Committee is interested in the planning process that is being undertaken, the desired goals of the projects, the artists and designers being considered and the integration of this project into the overall plans for the parish. Depending on the scale of the project, this review may be accomplished via site visit by a member of the Committee. **See Appendix A** for discussion questions and items needed for this Concept Review meeting.
- 2) **Final Design Review** - This must be completed before any construction drawings are generated or any final design commissioned to an artist or craftsperson. This review is usually accomplished through a meeting with the full Committee. **See Appendix A** for discussion questions and items needed for this Final Design Review meeting.

## Preparing for the Design Review Process

### Preliminary Discussion on the Local Level

The pastor, administrator or director of parish life forms a local planning team that is representative of the pastoral staff, parish leadership (e.g., pastoral and finance council, worship committee, building and grounds committee, etc.) and parishioners. It is advisable that the members of this team include a variety of ages, genders and ethnicities reflecting the parish, as well as persons with recognized competencies in architecture, building, art, finance and communication.

Especially during this preliminary discussion, the planning team actively seeks the input of existing parish groups and organizations (e.g., choir, liturgical ministers, prayer groups, youth groups, etc.). The planning team also provides parishioners with appropriate catechesis that reflects current liturgical documents and offers opportunities for prayer, discussion and formation to form the parish in the Church's liturgical design tradition. This may take the form of town hall meetings, focus groups, questionnaires, bulletin inserts, etc. Communication and consultation is on-going throughout the process.

It is critical that before any formal contract or commitment for the entire project is made with an architect, liturgical design consultant or designer, the parish discerns its own specific needs in light of its current space, the Church's liturgical documents, sacramental practice and local traditions. This preliminary space analysis will help to clarify the liturgical, art and architectural needs of the parish in light of its history, spirituality, current situation and future goals and forecasts. These needs will also strive to reflect a faithfulness to the Church's liturgical and architectural tradition and guidelines, incorporate requirements for liturgical actions, address inadequacies in the parish's current worship space, apply responsible stewardship of resources, comply with local building codes, and integrate the communal discernment of the good of the whole parish. A Committee member (or liturgical consultant on a temporary contract for this analysis phase) can assist with this discernment process.

Even though an intended project may seem minor, it could significantly alter the liturgical environment. For this reason, this preliminary space analysis must be done early in the process when considering a new building or when renovating or doing major repairs to an existing building. The Submittal Package items detailed in Appendix A can assist with delineating issues to be examined in this preliminary space analysis.

## Preliminary Discussion on the Diocesan Level

- A) Contact the diocesan Associate for Liturgy to begin consultation with the diocesan Environment and Art Committee and to review the diocesan guidelines. A member of the Committee will usually make an on-site visit, consultation and assessment. After this on-site visit and meeting with parish representatives, the Committee will provide an initial report to the pastor, administrator or director of parish life of the Committee's assessment of the project and the next steps to be taken by the parish.
- B) For major projects, contact the diocesan Office for Parish and Planning for information regarding parish demographics and assessment of how the planned project may affect deanery and diocesan plans.
- C) Contact the diocesan Vicar General, the Building and Maintenance Committee and the Diocesan Chief Financial Officer for an initial discussion of the financial feasibility of the project.

## Selection of a Liturgical Design Consultant

A liturgical design consultant assists the parish leadership in:

- organizing appropriate building committees,
- educating staff and congregation about liturgical issues,
- assisting with the selection of architectural, acoustical and other design and artistic services, and
- monitoring design development for consistency with current liturgical practice.

Depending on the scope of the project, a liturgical design consultant may need to be retained. All renovation projects identified as significant (determined in dialogue with the Committee, Building and Maintenance Committee and the parish community) will need to retain a liturgical design consultant at the start of the project. It is suggested that even for small renovations, the advice of a liturgical design consultant be obtained since alternative solutions could provide greater enhancement of the liturgical space as well as more efficient use of long-term financial resources. The Associate for Liturgy maintains a list of approved liturgical design consultants.

## Design Review Process

### Concept Review

#### **Submittal Package (see also Appendix A):**

Three sets of the Submittal Package need to be given to the Chairperson of the Environment and Art Committee two weeks before the scheduled Concept Review meeting. The Submittal Package includes any photos or drawings of the current space that will be affected and the Project Statement developed by parish leadership that identifies:

- the scope of the project,
- the issues which the project is meant to address,
- any demographic data parish leadership deems important, and
- the process the leadership will use to bring this project to completion.

Members of the Committee are available to assist the parish leadership develop the Project Statement. The Committee Chairperson will follow-up with a written response sent to the local parish, to the Associate for Liturgy and to the chairperson of the diocesan Building and Maintenance Committee.

### Presentation of Submittal Package:

The local planning team presents the initial project idea which addresses the issues identified in the project statement to the Environment and Art Committee. Enlarged plans and photos of any existing space affected by the design are most helpful on the day of the presentation.

### Final Design Review

#### Final Presentation:

The local planning team presents the developed project addressing any issues raised by the Committee in earlier presentations. Additional photos, updated design plans and a standard materials board showing the texture, color and finishes of the material to be used should be included in this presentation. At this point in the process, the final design may be approved with no needed changes, further changes may be requested with no follow-up presentation needed, or further changes may be requested with a follow-up presentation to review the modifications before construction may begin. After this meeting, the Committee chairperson will submit a written report of the Final Design Review to the pastor, administrator or director of parish life and to the diocesan Building and Maintenance Committee.

#### Additional Approvals

Final design plans must also have the approvals of the Building and Maintenance Committee and the diocesan Chief Financial Officer.

#### Approval by the Bishop

Lastly, final design plans must be approved by the Bishop.

#### Construction Phase

Once all approvals have been granted, construction can begin. Any changes proposed to the approved final design must be brought back to the Environment and Art Committee and to the Bishop for review and approval before these changes may be made.

## Preparing the Rite of Dedication

The pastor, administrator or director of parish life requests a date from the Bishop at least three months in advance for the dedication of a new church or altar (or for the blessing of a significantly renovated space). Ideally, the building or altar is not to be used until formally dedicated. The Associate for Liturgy assists the parish in completing preparations for the Rite of Dedication or Rite of Blessing.

## Post-Occupancy Process

The local planning team might consider undertaking a post-occupancy process that helps the community utilize the space to its fullest potential and evaluates the needs of the community in this new worship space. The Committee is available for assistance during this process.

# Appendix A

## Submittal Package

The primary item in the Submittal Package is the Project Statement which is a written report given to the Environment and Art Committee for the Concept Review meeting. The Project Statement addresses how the proposed scope of work will impact the parish's liturgical life and includes the following:

- Anticipated changes in current rituals and worship,
- Anticipated changes in seating count,
- Accommodation for the celebration of the sacraments: e.g., reconciliation, baptism, marriage,
- Relationship of a suitable gathering/hospitality space to the main worship space,
- Relationship of major symbols and furnishings in the building and grounds (e.g., altar, ambo, presider's chair, baptismal font, music ministry, assembly seating, Eucharistic reservation, weekday Mass chapel, reconciliation chapel, Easter fire space),
- The worship and devotional needs of the community, especially recognizing and respecting
  - cultural and ethnic diversity,
  - The accessibility of the space for all people, especially the disabled,
  - Planning process being undertaken (include catechesis for congregation),
  - List of design team members (liturgical designer, artists, architect, etc.), if already selected.

Also included in the Submittal Package, if useful:

- Photos of existing space
- Drawings or designs of existing space
- Other relevant materials that will assist in presenting your project at the Concept Review meeting

### Check List for Final Design Review

- Standard design development drawings - architectural plans
  - Floor plan with location of any changes clearly identified
- Elevation
  - Interior elevation(s) as experienced by the worshipping community
  - Exterior elevation(s) if applicable, including changes to glass art
- Site plan (if seating arrangements are being impacted)
  - Show main points of entry, access to parking and other significant structures
  - Show any views being impacted
- Artist renderings of any permanent art pieces or furnishings
- Colors/Material board
- Sound and lighting studies, if applicable

### 10 Steps to A House of Prayer

Step	What happens	Who is involved
Step 1: Discussion on the local level	Gather input from parish; Catechize parish on theology and impact of worship space; discern needs.	Local planning team Liturgical Consultant, if desired E & A Committee member, if desired
Step 2: Discussion on the diocesan level	Contact diocesan offices to initiate design process.	Local planning team Associate for Liturgy Office for Parish and Planning Vicar General Building & Maintenance Committee Diocesan Chief Financial Officer
Step 3: Select a liturgical design consultant	If your project requires, choose a liturgical design consultant	Local planning team Associate for Liturgy E & A Committee member Building & Maintenance Committee

Step 4: Prepare submittal package	Prepare submittal package (see Appendix A) and send to E & A Committee chair.	Local planning team Liturgical Consultant, if used E & A Committee chairperson
Step 5: Present submittal package	Present submittal package, ask questions and receive feedback at this Concept Review meeting with the E & A Committee.	Local planning team Liturgical Consultant, if used E & A Committee
Step 6: Development of design	Further develop your proposed concept design and make any changes requested by E & A Committee	Local planning team Liturgical Consultant, if used Architects and other specialists
Step 7: Final Presentation	Present final design to E & A Committee for approval	Local planning team Liturgical Consultant, if used Architects and other specialists E & A Committee
Step 8: Other necessary approvals	Request approval from Building and Maintenance Committee. The E & A chair submits approved final designs to the Bishop for his required approval.	Local planning team Building & Maintenance Committee Diocesan Chief Financial Officer E & A Committee chairperson Bishop
Step 9: Construction	Building takes place. Changes to the final design are submitted to the E & A Committee and to the Bishop for approval before making the desired changes.	Local planning team Liturgical Consultant, if used Architects and other specialists E & A Committee and Bishop
Step 10: Rite of Dedication or Blessing	Prepare for the dedication or blessing rite.	Pastor, admin. or dir. of parish life Parish liturgist Associate for Liturgy