

ST. JAMES ARMENIAN CHURCH OF WESTCHESTER

PARISH ASSEMBLY OF 1988

REPORT OF BUILDING COMMITTEE FOR 1987.

The Building Committee held seven meetings during the year. Additionally, a subcommittee comprising George Davidian, Ed Essayan and Lionel Galstaun held three meetings with architects Cain, Farrell and Bell, and six more with the present architect, Thomas V. Ashbahian.

At the start of the year, work had been under way on the design of the church and community center in the offices of the architectural firm of Cain, Farrell and Bell, located in New York City. A tentative floor plan for the church had been provisionally accepted, but the layout of the community center was not progressing satisfactorily, nor was the development of an overall site plan. Due to unfortunate delays in the negotiation of a contract which led to a late start, and Mr. Cain's planned retirement which occurred shortly thereafter, it was felt that we had lost access to the full breadth of Mr. Cain's experience and authority as a senior member of the firm, and that this was an important reason for the unsatisfactory performance. It was decided that it would be in the best interest of the Church and the project to terminate the contract with Cain, Farrell and Bell, and to seek a new architect. The contract was terminated by mutual consent on February 19, 1987. Under the terms of the termination agreement, the Church was provided with all of the studies and drawings that had been prepared, some of which would be useful.

Thomas V. Ashbahian, an architect with offices in Ramsey, N. J. was interviewed, and on the basis of his presentation of qualifications, it was decided to enter into a contract with his firm. The contract was executed on May 29, 1987, and work has been under way ever since.

The contract, which follows the standard A. I. A. form, includes the following provisions:

- o Preparation of designs, specifications and bid solicitation documents for the church edifice, community center, site work, parking area, revamp of the present Parish House, and demolition of the existing Sanctuary.

- o Preparation of and participation in all submittals to the Harrison Town Planning Board.

- o Preparation of estimates of the cost of the planned facilities at various stages of development of the project.

- o Assistance in the analysis and evaluation of bids.

- o Reimbursement for architectural services to be based on a percentage of the final constructed cost, with a maximum cap of \$160,000. The maximum may be raised, according to a formula, in case work on the project is suspended at the request of the Church for longer than six months.

To date, we have held six meetings with the Architects to review and approve the following work which has been completed:

- o Seven studies of alternate site plans, one of which has been selected as the basis for design. This plan places the new church to the south of the existing Sanctuary covering the swimming pool which will be filled, and the community center mainly south of the present Parish House. Parking areas are concentrated around the buildings, thus leaving the space to the south open for future picnics and open air socials or athletics. Entries and exits from the church property will remain largely as at present.

- o Site leveling plans, establishing the grading requirements and serving as a basis for estimating drainage and storm water handling.


- o Sewer connections which will permit us to retire and fill in the existing septic tank.

- o Studies for providing water service. As the plans for the Community Center developed, a major requirement for water was revealed. Large enclosed spaces where fires may start, are required by law to have installed an automatic sprinkler system connected to a source of large volumes of water. Our existing well system is totally inadequate. Alternates investigated have included connection to the municipal public water system or the installation of a large tank and a diesel-powered pump. Economic considerations appear to favor the connection into the public water line. Discussions have been held with the Harrison Water Works, from whom we have learned that approximately a half-mile of buried large-diameter pipe will be needed to connect into their system. We have approached our corporate neighbor, Pepsico, for making a contribution to the Church which may cover the substantial cost of this connection.

o Contact has been established with the Islamic Center to review, and if possible benefit from their experiences with the Harrison Town Planning Board. They expressed optimism that their plans ultimately will be approved. We learned that their submittal was approved by the Town Planning Board. However, the Planning Board was taken to court by PEPA (Purchase Environmental Protection Association) for having approved the plans without calling for an adequately detailed study of the environmental impacts of the construction; and the court has sustained this objection.

o Preparation of the submittal to the Harrison Town Planning Board was originally planned for their December meeting. However, delays which were not the fault of the Architects have forced a delay to February.

We are optimistic that grading and site preparation can be completed during 1988, and that the facilities could be ready by Christmas 1989.


George Davidian, Chairman.