

Architect Selection Committee Report

October 18, 2004

In September, Menders, Torrey, and Spencer (MTS), an architecture and preservation firm in Boston, was chosen by the Board of Trustees to lead the next phase of North Parish's preservation and expansion effort.

The decision to hire MTS followed three months of work by the Architect Selection Committee, who was appointed by the Board to recommend an architect to complete both the design for a new building and to oversee the preservation work authorized at our Annual Meeting last May. The committee consisted of members involved in North Parish's preservation and space planning effort: Cathy Bakkensen, Kurt Julinek, Clem Karl, Carl Mellin, Linda Tremblay and Harry Voorhees.

In June eight architectural firms were invited to bid on the next phase of the project – to provide "design and engineering services for the preservation and upgrade of the existing historic meeting house and for the new addition." The bid package, expertly prepared by Karl Kober, included a 14-page Request for Proposals as well as copies of studies conducted during the previous year. A "walk-through" was held on June 29 for bidders to see the building and steeple. On July 19 five proposals were received and reviewed by the Architect Selection Committee. (Paul Minor, who completed our Space Needs Feasibility Study in May, was invited to bid, but declined to submit a proposal.)

The committee met on July 28 to discuss the proposals and invited four firms to interviews on August 19 – Michael Rosenfeld, Inc.; CSS Architects; Mangel Architects; and Menders, Torrey and Spencer, Inc. The committee met immediately after the interviews, called references for the top two candidates, and met again on August 31 to make a final recommendation. All the candidates had impressive credentials in church work or preservation.

MTS was recommended because they demonstrated strong credentials in both areas. Over half their work concerns religious structures. They lead the preservation work for Old North Church in Boston, among other projects involving the Massachusetts Historic Commission. MTS's expertise includes day care and accessibility needs and building code interpretation for historic structures. MTS's team of consultants includes firms who have worked with the North Parish before: Richard D. Kimball Co. (mechanical, electrical, plumbing and fire protection engineers), and Structures North (structural engineer).

David Torrey, principal and lead architect on our project, renovated the Brick Store Company (across the street from North Parish) early in his career and recently completed an addition to Allin Congregational Church in Dedham, a project similar to ours. Lynne Spencer, also a principal of the firm and former property director of SPNEA, will lead our historic preservation work. Lynne serves on Nahant's Community Preservation Commission and Historic Commission.

*Respectfully Submitted,
Harry Voorhees and Carl Mellin*