



The
Diocese of Huron

Diocese of Huron Land and Property Committee

Project planning and Construction Issues for Parishes to be aware of and investigate.

The following are some issues that maybe overlooked by parishes when engaging in construction/maintenance work. The list is by no means complete.

Preconstruction Issues related to Municipal approvals.

Surveys – Any work that deals with building expansion or sitework may require an up-to-date survey. There are a variety of survey types.

- Property line locations only, this may or may not involve providing property stake markers.
- Building location, easements, right of ways as they relate to property lines.
- Ground elevations, tree, parking areas, walkways, lighting, and power poles etc.

Heritage designation – this can affect construction if the property has been designated either by the municipality or the province. It can also affect the property if it is within a heritage district, most commonly found in core areas.

Conservation Area restrictions. This restriction applies to properties within flood plans. The extent of this control is far more significant that might be assumed.

Environmental Assessment – These are required where there is a possibility of site contamination, normally the result of underground tanks or previous industrial use of the site.

Cemeteries or archaeological sites normally require a variety of investigations if building expansion or new site work is being proposed.

Zoning restrictions – Municipalities have designated a zone for every property. There are restrictions that include.

Property use, these restrictions often affect the possibility of using portions of the property for any use other than as a church. They can significantly affect opportunities to create rental income. Building and parking setbacks from property lines. Maximum building height and the minimum amount of green area.

Maximum coverage of buildings and paved areas. Municipalities restrict the amount of building coverage on a lot. Additions to existing buildings may be over the allowable percentage.

Parking, In the past most municipalities-based church capacity on its nave. Now more often they are basing capacity on the total floor area, a significant increase. This does not normally apply to simply maintaining the building. However, these standards can be imposed on the property if significant expansion or repurposing of a portion of the property is being considered.

Traffic access – municipalities can limit access to property and may require the owner to complete a traffic study for new building or major expansions.

Storm water management – Most municipalities require the owner to manage rainfall within the property. This includes stopping water from impacting neighbouring properties. Once again this would only apply to proposals that would expand building or pavement sizes.

Fire Fighting – Part of any new construction will be required to comply with condition imposed by the Fire Department

Ontario Building Code restrictions – Municipalities administer this provincial code. The restrictions on buildings are numerous but include.

Churches are classified as an 'A2' use which requires architects and engineers to be engaged in any work that changes building configuration. This means that simple maintenance is often exempt of the need to engage these professionals and sometimes the need for a building permit. Municipalities have different interpretations of this requirement and parishes should discuss any significant work with the Building Department before simply proceeding with the work.

Change of Use – Existing buildings are 'grandfathered' from the need to meet current code standards. If the building is to be used in a new way the municipality may determine it to be a 'Change of Use' which will require the building to fully comply with the current code. This situation can occur for adaptive reuse of existing churches or relocation of parishes to another commercial or industrial building.

Design requirements - The code address basic design issues which affect room size based on occupancy, structural, mechanical, plumbing electrical and fire alarm systems.

Fire Safety – a significant part of the code ensure property exit paths throughout the building, fire separations between floors, around mechanical areas, and stairwells. Most older existing buildings do not comply with current requirements. The building code does provide an alternative method to full compliance when significant alterations are planned.

Energy Conservations – More recent changes to the code have included significant requirements in the thermal resistance of the building envelope and the efficiency of mechanical and electrical systems. These requirements will only continue to be more significant in the future. Currently these requirements are not retroactive (do not affect existing structures)

Accessibility – The code now includes many requirements when floor areas are made accessible. They extend well beyond simply providing and accessibility lift or ramp. Walkway and door widths, significant washroom requirements. Beyond these upgrades there may need to be other fire safety concerns addressed now that a level of the building is now available to those with accessibility challenges.

Issues related to Construction.

Insurance – There must be liability and property insurance in place for any project. Normally the contractor will have liability insurance to cover accidents during construction. The type and level of this insurance must comply with standards set by the Diocese land confirmed before work commences. Property insurance protects the building. When it is an existing building, the industry standard is that the Owner's insurance covers any claims It is the parish's responsibility to contact the insurer to get confirmation that the building during the project remains covered. It is also required that a rider be placed naming the contractor and the principal consultant.

Hazardous Materials – The Owner (Diocese and Parish wardens) could be held responsible for exposing anyone to hazardous materials, especially during construction or maintenance work. This is the reason to have up to date reports and ensure that there is a record that contractors have been made aware of it.

Construction Safety – A Ministry of Labour Act requires the constructor to be aware and enforce all safety measure during any work of construction, repair, or maintenance. The Owner is considered the constructor if this position is not made the responsibility of the

contractor. If two or more projects are happening simultaneously the Parish must ensure that one contractor assumes responsibility for the entire property.

Use of Building during Construction – Areas of the building under construction need to be clearly defined if the remainder of the building is to continue to be used. All means of egress (exit paths) need to be maintained during construction. Areas of construction are not accessible to the public or church personnel without proper protection and the permission of the contractor. If clergy or anyone else from the parish demands work stop during normal construction hours the contractor has the right submit an expense charge.

Construction Act – The Owner is responsible to ensure that any person or company providing services or materials to a project is paid. Most construction projects have subtrades or supplier paid through the principal contractor. When there has been a failure to pay the trade or supplier has the right to lien or encumber the property, placing the responsibility on the Owner despite the fact the Contractor has already received compensation. The Act protects the Owner if its conditions and requirements have been met. It is advised that the consultant be made responsible for the administration required.

Occupancy Permit – The last step in the building permit process is to receive a municipal occupancy permit. Areas affected by the project cannot be occupied by the parish until this permit is received. The permit requires that all building code conditions have been completed. This process can significantly delay the parish's use of affected spaces.

Warranties and Operating Manuals – This information should be understood and safely stored. The period of warranty should be noted, and a review conducted before warranties lapse.