



Beach United Church Renovation Project Facts

Location: 140 Wineva Avenue (at Queen Street East) in Toronto

Owner: Beach United Church, a congregation of the United Church of Canada

Project managed by: HOME Commission of Beach United Church

Architect: Black & Moffat, Architects

Contractor: Kembic Construction Inc.

Construction cost: \$4.7 million

Timeline:

HOME Commission (a team of congregation volunteers) formed January 2010

Architect hired September 2010

Construction began February 2012

Construction completed August 2013 (18 months)

First worship service held in renovated building on September 29, 2013

Mandate for renovation:

To create a building that:

- reflects the vision and values of Beach United Church
- meets the current and future needs of the congregation and the wider community
- is welcoming and spiritually uplifting, encouraging a sense of community and responding to the needs of our neighbours
- is more energy efficient and environmentally sustainable than the existing building
- is accessible for people of all ages and abilities

How Beach United's renovated church building came to be

Beach United Church was formed in 2007 by the amalgamation of two congregations: Bellefair United (located at 2 Bellefair Avenue) and Kew Beach United (located at 140 Wineva Avenue).

After the amalgamation, with much consideration and analysis of the two properties, Beach United decided (with Presbytery's permission) to sell the Bellefair Avenue building and renovate the Wineva Avenue building. The Bellefair building sale was finalized in October 2009. Monies from the sale fully funded the renovation project.

The HOME Commission of Beach United Church was struck in January 2010. ("HOME" stands for Housing Our Ministries.) This eight-member commission was mandated to manage the renovation project. The commission included congregation volunteers with extensive project management, construction and accounting experience. HOME reported directly to the congregation, while keeping Beach United's Council informed about its progress.

The HOME Commission's work began by identifying the congregation's requirements for the new building. This involved:

- Consulting groups involved in specific activities (eg. food preparation, music programs, office administration, children's programs), to document the space and functionality they needed;
- Visiting other churches and community organizations that had completed renovations which were similar in spirit to what Beach United wanted to achieve; and
- Sharing the information and gathering feedback from the entire congregation.

To hire an architect, HOME followed the "Quality-Based Selection" process recommended by the Ontario Association of Architects. In September 2010, HOME contracted Black & Moffat, Architects for the renovation project.

Construction began in February 2012. The contractor, Kembic Construction, was selected through a pre-qualified bidding process coordinated by Black & Moffat on behalf of Beach United Church.

While HOMe was doing its work, other projects related the sale and renovation were undertaken by the congregation:

- The contents of both buildings were fully inventoried
- Memorial plaques, stained glass windows and other special heritage items in both buildings were archived and stored
- The pipe organs at both buildings were assessed for their quality and value, to determine which one should be kept
- Furnishings, supplies and some stained glass in both buildings that would not be needed after renovations were sold.
- Furnishings, office equipment, the organ and other supplies that would be used in the renovated building were put into storage or used at St. Aidan's Anglican Church, where Beach United rented office and worship space for the duration of the renovation project.

In addition, Beach United was moving ahead with its solar power project. This required that the roof of Beach United's building meet required specifications for the installation of rooftop solar panels. The construction of the roof was managed by HOMe. The sourcing and installation of the solar panels was managed by a separate group connected with Beach United.

The Beach United renovations reached substantial completion in August 2013. Another month was needed to clean the space and move in furnishings and supplies. The first worship service in the renovated building was held Sunday, September 29, 2013. An open house celebration was held on Saturday, October 26, 2013.

What we learned from the renovation experience

As a result of Beach United's experience, offer the following advice to any congregations or community groups undertaking major renovation projects:

Be clear about what you aim to accomplish

Ensure that your project objectives are carefully, specifically and narrowly defined. Refer to these objectives throughout the project. Resolve any questions about the mandate of the project as soon as possible. Obtain buy-in from all stakeholders in your project.

Put experienced people on your project team

Whether they are volunteers or hired professionals, these roles are essential to your project's success:

- An experienced project manager to be assertive on scheduling and budgeting issues, to maintain tight control of the project and to manage issues proactively.
- An experienced construction oversight manager to make regular, frequent visits to the renovation site to monitor progress
- An experienced financial manager to monitor the financial position throughout the project, to monitor spending and cash flow.

Spend your money carefully

Define your budget and obtain all spending approvals early in the project. Include a large project cost contingency (minimum 10%). The cost estimate provided by the architect will only be as good as the currency of the firm's expertise on projects of a similar size and cost. Ensuring all funding is in place early. Obtain cash flow projections from the contractor at the beginning of the project and as it progresses (but be wary of the quality of these projections). Ensure a timely process to obtain HST rebates. Monitor spending and cash flow. Check invoices of architect and contractor carefully and insist on corrections if the errors are significant (know the terms of your contracts well).

Manage your risks

Negotiate contracts carefully and strive to insulate your project from major uncertainties. Check the references of your architect and contractor; ask specific questions related to major project uncertainties. For the architect's fee: negotiate contract fee rate percentage; negotiate exclusions which will be billed at an hourly rate and what that rate is; negotiate the percentage rate on change orders. For the contractor: obtain several

competitive contractor bids; incorporate any strategy with respect to possible inclusions/exclusions; watch especially the removal of hazardous materials component (be wary of an underpriced demolition subcontract).

Stay on top of things

Ensure that all parties understand their roles and responsibilities: the architect and construction contractor, and the fee structure for the both architect and contractor.

While the architect is responsible for construction contract administration, this process holds some innate conflicts (such as the architect's markup on change orders requiring redesign). As a result, you need to carefully manage the architect's contribution during construction. During construction, require frequent and regular meetings (at least bi-weekly) with the contractor and architect to monitor progress and issues, and proactively resolve issues as they arise.

Make communication a priority

It's important to keep your stakeholders informed about your plans and progress. Make sure you have forums where people can share their questions and ideas as well as hearing from the project team. Share information in different ways and build in opportunities for people to respond. Some ideas to consider:

- discussion groups
- presentations at meetings
- surveys and opinion polls
- bulletin board displays
- slideshows posted on websites
- blogs
- newsletters

Useful resources:

Ontario Association Architects (oaa.on.ca)

United Church of Canada Architecture Resource Group (unitedchurch.ca/renewal.org)