

The First Parish in Lincoln
Planning Board Hearing
For Site Plan Review
February 24, 2015

Dear Members of the Planning Board:

Beside all the reasons that have been expressed in two years of hearings with various boards, the fundamental reason we want update the modest addition to the historic church is to affirm the dignity of everyone who might be part of this community institution. Everyone is welcome, and we want to lift the spirits of all who participate in the various activities that take place within those walls.

This is not just a matter of code compliance. We certainly want those who may be physically challenged to feel as much a part of things as any able-bodied person. But more than that, we want people to feel spiritually uplifted when they are in the new spaces.

We want a true sense of arrival that conveys shelter, refuge and welcome - all the way from the curb on Bedford Road and up the gentle walkway to the covered porch. We want the circulation within the spaces to flow gracefully and comfortably so people are not caught in human traffic jams as they are now. Rather than a relatively dark and inward environment that exists today, we want a greater connection with the outdoors and a balanced distribution of natural light that will be better accomplished with windows on three sides of the main space. We want the gathering space to feel as spacious as possible, even if the footprint is relatively constrained, and therefore it is important to have as high a ceiling as possible. We want to have a decent view of the conservation field as recognition not only of a treasured value of the Lincoln community but as acknowledgement for the church's contribution to help preserve the field in 2002. Even if it's used infrequently, we want the terrace for the feeling of an outdoor room as a visual extension of where people gather for fellowship after services every Sunday.

The principles used in the proposed design are all interrelated, and like facets of a single object, they are inextricably bound together and work in concert to produce the feelings that we associate with a building at the center of a spiritual community. How we feel when we inhabit or move through a space or when we view a space while sitting in another is important; similarly, how we perceive the relationship of indoors to outdoors or the presence of natural light within the interior space is all grounded in how we humans experience the world. It is not our intent to simply build real estate, but to create an experience that is spiritually uplifting and satisfying to the soul as well as true to the values of Lincoln and an entire spiritual community.

Ken Hurd
For the First Parish Building Committee