



By the Rev. Don Muir Deputy Clerk , The Presbyterian Church in Canada

Equipping for Eldership: Committee on Church Architecture

What does the Committee on Church Architecture do?

You are thinking about installing an elevator to improve accessibility. You've decided to build an addition to create more meeting space. You are dealing with an older building that requires repairs and need help prioritizing the work or finding the right people to help guide the process. Your congregation realizes your existing church is too large and wonders what opportunities and options the church could consider. You've outgrown your current building and are dreaming of another location and erecting a new building. The Committee on Church Architecture can help congregations that are pondering possibilities like these.

Naturally, there are several groups that need to be involved in such projects. Some of them are needed to grant approvals along the way. Depending on the scope, nature and cost of the project, discussions and decisions might involve the session, the board of managers, the congregation and presbytery.

It is important to remember that the Committee on Church Architecture is also there to help.

The committee, which is accountable to the Assembly Council, is made up of architects and church members experienced in various aspects of building projects. The committee is assisted by the General Manager of the Presbyterian Church Building Corporation, the Associate Secretary for Canadian Ministries and the Deputy Clerk of the General Assembly. Together they generously donate their expertise and knowledge to support congregations that are undertaking exciting and challenging construction endeavors.

This committee's primary function is to review architectural plans drawn up for new buildings, additions and major renovations. Comments are sent to the congregation and its presbytery. They may note alternative construction ideas or simply confirm that the drawings look fine in terms of design, public safety and cost-effectiveness.

In short, the committee provides an independent and impartial "second set of eyes". This can be a helpful service to congregations that sometimes results in helpful drawing revisions and long-term significant cost savings.

And it's free!

Get connected

For more information, you are encouraged to visit the committee's website at presbyterian.ca/gao/assembly-council/coca.

When you scroll down a bit on that page, under the heading of Approvals COCA you will see a link called "Notice of Project" that provides an initial contact between congregation and committee.

After you have completed the schematic design with your Architect/Design Team, you should submit the Application Form, which also has a link on the same page.

The committee wishes you God's blessing and stands ready to walk with you along this journey.