

Tom Mack

The organ in three chapters

Chapter 1: The early years, selecting CB Fisk

Chapter 2: Where to put it?

Chapter 3: Last five months; doing the unthinkable

Chapter 1: The early years

2013 – Project Parish Survey, including organ preferences

2014 – an organ committee is formed

Designated gift of \$1.25million for a new pipe organ

Considered several makers of fine organs, got serious with two: Fisk and Cassavant, both highly regarded

Fisk has some added design flexibility and special expertise in Tracker organs – the type preferred in the 2013 Survey

Visit to St. Matthew's Pacific Palisades – a similar Fisk organ and a long-term relationship with Fisk

Winter of 2016, Vestry approves \$1.25million (inclusive of taxes) contract with Fisk, which included a 20% non-refundable deposit

Chapter 2: Where to put it

For 6-9 months, there was a spirited debate about where to put the organ

Fisk strongly advocated for the back of the nave, and acoustical experiments validated that this would likely be most effective acoustically

All Saints could not resolve architectural and people-flow issues with a rear location, so Fisk reluctantly acceded to front location

This led to Fisk strongly recommending several costly acoustic improvements

Chapter 3: Last five months; doing the unthinkable

June 1, 2018: bids for the General Contract come in \$2.5million over budget

As Chip just said, scouring the construction bids (including acoustic improvement scrubbing) left us \$500,000 to \$1million short

So, we did three unthinkable things

Re-considered a digital organ

Approached donor to lift restriction

Terminated the Fisk contract

Unthinkable #1: consider the feasibility of a digital organ (rejected years ago due to perceived inferior sound and durability)

Dispatched Nelson Huber to “interview” recent models; concludes that all three makes in the market produce sound indistinguishable from real pipes

Major advantage: antiphonal (back) speakers can create reverberation

Acoustic enhancement by strategically placing speakers throughout sanctuary (not possible with a pipe organ)

Interviewed distributors, got quotes approx. \$250,000

Durability today does not seem to be the issue we thought

Unthinkable #2: Approach donor of the \$1.25million dedicated gift

Explained the overall project situation

Laid out the digital organ option, including cost and sound benefits

Very quickly and graciously they agreed to un-designate the gift!

Unthinkable #3: Terminate the Fisk contract

A drastic but essential step to save the project

Negotiated a partial payment of a 5% cancellation penalty in the contract

Saw no practical way to further address the non-refundable deposit, which Fisk indicates has been spent

The numbers:

The gift	\$1,250,000
Payments to Fisk	-\$266,000
Cost of Elec Organ	-\$250,000
Funds freed up	\$734,000

Next Steps:

Organ committee has been reconstituted

Final report pending from Nelson Huber, who has played and heard all three models of digital organ being considered

Organ committee will make a selection of a digital organ builder and recommend to Facilities Committee.

Because no architectural accommodations necessary, final drawings and bidding not dependent upon the timing of picking an organ.

MISSING: ALL THE ATTRIBUTES OF THE DIGITAL ORGAN: ACOUSTICS, NO SPECIAL HVAC, NO REBUILD OF THE BASEMENT, SPEAKERS IN FRONT AND BACK; REREDOS UNAFFECTED, EASY TO INSTALL AND MAINTAIN, TAKES VIRTUALLY NO SPACE, CAN MOVE THE CONSOLE, VIEW OF BACK OF CHANCEL EXACTLY LIKE WE SEE NOW