

Report
An Assessment of the Heritage Tourism Potential
of

St. Mary's Episcopal Church
Burlington New Jersey



Prepared for
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I. Overview

This report is the culmination of a brief assessment of the heritage tourism potential of St. Mary's Episcopal Church in Burlington, NJ. This report is meant for the Vestry and Parish Staff to review the historic church complex (New and Old Churches, Guild House, the Barn, historic cemetery, and Lych gate) as a heritage tourism destination.

Assessing heritage tourism potential helps prepare historic sites to welcome visitors. The assessment identifies specific actions that historic site stewards can take to improve visitor readiness. Some of the actions we discuss in this report include maintaining consistent open hours—especially on the weekends, creating informational brochures, updating the web site with visitor information, providing links and cross-promoting the site with other visitor destinations in the area, and placing interpretive signs for visitors to view when the site is closed. This report presents all of these strategies and others in the context of St. Mary's Parish.

This assessment report is organized in sections containing both observations and recommendations for current visitor readiness and the organizational capacity of St. Mary's Episcopal Church to welcome heritage visitors as a first step towards creating a thriving visitor destination. This report provides detailed advice to implement three projects identified by Vestry members, to better promote the historic church complex to heritage visitors now and in the near-term future. The primary projects that Vestry members and Parish staff were most interested in pursuing were:

1. Expand the current Parish web site to include more historic and visitor information;
2. Update and create new self-guided visitor brochures and use these as downloadable web site content;
3. Establish a volunteer tour guide or docent corps and training program to provide quality visitor information; and,
4. Offer regular public tours once a month on Sunday after the last morning worship service conducted by a volunteer docent.

The report also provides additional recommendations to:

1. Reprogram the six exhibit cases in Eyre Hall in the Old Church;
2. Identify locations and content of interpretive signage for the complex;
3. Identify other historic sites and tourism entities in the area and seek reciprocal web links with other sites;
4. Identify possible funding options for some heritage and tourism projects; and,
5. A list of brief project descriptions for several important heritage projects for volunteer recruitment purposes.

The report also includes an appendix that has two components: an updated visitor services map showing the location of various visitor services (parking, gas stations, other historic sites, ATM

machines, restaurants etc.) within a mile of the church complex; and, a memo prepared in April 2013, with observations on St. Mary's Episcopal Church's current visitor readiness and organizational capacity to host heritage visitors today.

Funding provided by the New Jersey Historic Trust

The New Jersey Historic Trust provided funding for this Assessment of Heritage Tourism Potential project. Heritage Consulting Inc. was a subcontractor to Westfield Architects & Preservation Consultants who were contracted by the Vestry of the St. Mary's Episcopal Church to undertake a Preservation Plan for the property. This report is one of several components of the Preservation Plan.

Brief background on the St. Mary's Episcopal Church complex

The St. Mary's Episcopal Church complex is comprised of several highly important religious buildings. Old St. Mary's Church of 1703 is the oldest surviving Episcopal Church in New Jersey. St. Mary's Parish was founded as a missionary church by the Church of England's Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts. During the American Revolution, this church served as the focal point of the activities of the American Loyalists.¹ The new St. Mary's Church was designed by Richard Upjohn, the noted American architect, and is a designated National Historic Landmark, significant for being the earliest and one of the foremost examples of the Gothic Revival style in this country. The 19th century Lych Gate is part of the complex and designed by George Hewitt. The Guild House, built in 1799, has housed many humane and community-minded undertakings, from acting as a hospital, a soup kitchen, to a meeting hall and more.²

The historic cemetery is an important feature of the grounds. War heroes and heroines from virtually every American war and conflict are buried here. A handful of architect-designed monuments sit among scores of beautifully designed 18th and 19th century gravestones. A dilapidated brick barn sits on the edge of the church property. The church complex itself is a distinctive and critical feature of the downtown Burlington Historic District.

Observations

Current conditions

We visited the St. Mary's Church complex on April 21, 2013 to view the interior and exterior of the Old and New Churches, Guild House, barn (exterior only), historic cemetery, Lych Gate and grounds. We also met with a small committee including the Rev. J. Connor Haynes SSC, Rector,

¹ <http://www.tourburlington.org/SeeSites16-20.html>, and http://www.stmarysburlington.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=57&Itemid=64

² <http://www.tourburlington.org/SeeSites16-20.html>

Barbara Frake, Clerk of the Vestry and Donald Anderson, a member of the Vestry and long-time Parish member to discuss the Parish's interest in expanding programming for heritage visitors.

Location

The St. Mary's Church complex sits on almost an entire city block in a residential neighborhood in Burlington, New Jersey. The property fronts on West Broad Street, a major thoroughfare, about three blocks from High Street—the spine of the town's commercial corridor. West Broad Street is also the location of New Jersey Transit's River Line, a light rail line connecting Camden and Trenton. An historic brick wall runs along West Broad Street and delineates the property. There is an historic iron fence and gate on parts of West Broad Street, Wood Street and Talbot Streets. Newer iron fencing surrounds the rest of the property.

The entire complex has well maintained paths and a large and well-marked parking lot. The historic cemetery has both formal and informal paths throughout, and new and historic trees and shrubs. The cemetery has three centuries of gravestones and monuments, some of which are no longer in their original position or have fallen to the ground. The grounds of the graveyard are uneven and may pose a trip hazard due to uneven surfaces, tree roots and remnants of shrubs.

The entire church complex is very clean and well maintained. The grounds are well kept, and the buildings, save for the historic brick barn, are restored and in good condition for the purposes of hosting heritage visitors.

This heritage tourism assessment is part of a larger Preservation Plan to identify maintenance and preservation needs throughout the complex. We are unaware of any other capital projects contemplated by the Parish that will impact visitors at the site. Our remarks in this brief report focus on opportunities to welcome heritage visitors to the complex.

Handicapped restrooms

The Old Church, which was renovated in 1999, has a unisex handicapped restroom. The New Church and Guild Hall have no handicapped restrooms. When we visited, all restrooms were well-stocked and very clean for both Parish and visitor use. Clear signage directs visitors to restroom locations in the Guild Hall and the Old Church.

Open times

The church hosts regular worship services in the New Church during the spring, fall and winter. Worship services are held in the Old Church during the summer months because it is air-conditioned, while the New Church is not. The Old and New Churches of St. Mary's are generally locked when not in use for worship services and special events. Residents and visitors may wander in the graveyard and on the grounds during the day when the gates are

open. The Guild Hall, which contains the church office, is open weekdays and on other special occasions.

The church hosts a variety of regular events when the Guild Hall is open to the public, such as weekly Rotary meetings, and Ladle of Love suppers, a feeding ministry. There are musical performances as well as church-related special event activities throughout the year that the public may attend. Finally, there are four major community events sponsored by other groups in town when the Church complex is open to the public.

Community events

The church participates in some but not all community events in the downtown area. In each case, the two churches are open for both self-guided and guided tours.

- St. Mary's Music Series in May – Bell concerts and other musical events at the church, visits to the Belfry are offered as well as tours of the buildings and grounds
- Wood Street Fair Arts and Crafts Show, first Saturday after Labor Day, organized by Colonial Burlington Foundation, with about 20,000 attendees annually.
- Christmas house tour in November/December – benefits go towards the City of Burlington Historical Society
- House and garden tour in June

II. WEB SITE

Observations

Most heritage visitors interested in the rich history of St. Mary's Parish complex will learn about the Parish via the Internet. They will use the Parish's web site for trip planning purposes as well as obtaining information for genealogical or architectural research purposes. All of this information can be placed on the Parish web site to make this important information available to anyone.

The current Parish web site is attractive and is organized using a content management system that can be updated at will by Parish personnel and volunteers. The web site is easy to navigate and has good quality information. The church's web site offers visitors accurate and high quality information about what a visitor will see if they come to St. Mary's. There are a variety of tabs and pages where a visitor can find information about the history or architecture of the Parish. Visitor information, however, is not organized into one location on the current web site.

Recommendations

We recommend that the Parish web site become a repository for the historical information, plans and reports pertaining to the church that would interest researchers of family history,

architecture, genealogy, key people associated with the complex and those buried in the cemetery. We recommend scanning and making key documents available to the public on the Parish web site, which will greatly expand web traffic and interest in the property and its rich history. Some of the projects we recommend below might be candidates for grant funding. We identify possible grant sources at the end of this report.

About Us tab

The current history information is located in a drop-down menu in the About Us tab. The current information including the church timeline, information about each building and church complex is a fine start. Much more historical and archival information can be uploaded to the web site, learn more in the History/Heritage tab section below.

Visitor Center heading

Currently, much of the information in the Visitor Center heading is intended for church visitors who come to the building for religious purposes. Heritage visitors not interested in becoming a member of the Parish will be confused by this. To better serve these heritage visitors, we recommend providing a link at the top of the Visitor Center page, redirecting people to the History/Heritage page. Alternatively, retaining the current content but renaming the Visitor Center page may be worth considering.

Christ Church in Old City in Philadelphia is a major tourist attraction in the historic district near the Liberty Bell. Their web site serves both Parish members as well as visitors, but visitor information seems to dominate. See how they organize their home page at:
<http://www.christchurchphila.org/>

History Box

Currently, the History box along the bottom of the home page redirects web visitors to the About Us tab where the current history drop-down box information is located. The History box occupies important home page “real estate.” If this box and location can be retained (even though it may be redundant if a History/Heritage tab is created, see below) it would allow heritage visitors more paths to the information they seek. Old Pine Street Church in Philadelphia has both a History Tab and series of Quick Links on the left side navigation column (<http://www.oldpine.org/>) aimed at visitors. Some pages are repeated in both Quick Links and in the History drop-down menu, much as we are suggesting here. Trinity Church in the City of Boston’s web site labels its tab devoted to visitor information Art & History
<http://trinitychurchboston.org/>.

New History/Heritage tab

We recommend reorganizing the web site to include a new tab along the top called History or Heritage. This is the place where you will locate all the historical information about the Parish. Please retain the History box as noted above. The new History/Heritage tab on the navigation area should include a drop-down menu.

Current pages in the history drop-down menu should be retained.

- Church history timeline
- Old Church
- New Church
- Churchyard
- Guild House
- Bells and Stained Glass

More information along with historic and new photos can be added to these pages. A link to any topical brochure PDF (mentioned later) should be included on relevant pages.

We recommend including the following additional pages to the History/Heritage drop-down menu in no particular order:

- directions (this will be redundant from the Visitor Center page with an area map),
- church complex architects (info about the architects of various buildings),
- past and current preservation reports (Historic Structure Report, 1994 Kieran Timberlake Harris report, HABS documentation, new Preservation Plan, other relevant documents),
- genealogical information (graveyard map, list of famous people buried in the churchyard, other genealogical information to be scanned),
- other places to visit (links to other history organizations or tourism groups in the area),
- photos old and new (current high quality and high-resolution photos with good labels of key buildings and historic features that would interest visitors. This is separate from the photo galleries of church events that should be retained in their current location),
- more info (anything relevant not already in another category) and
- Contact us (link to email, phone number etc. this will be redundant to other parts of web site)

Archival materials or links on web site

We understand that many archival materials of interest to local historians (including adults and school students conducting research for National History Day), are not currently scanned or uploaded to the web site. Others more familiar with the archival collections of the Parish should make recommendations about additional genealogical materials that should be uploaded and

made available to the public on the Parish web site in this History/Heritage tab. Scanning and uploading appropriate archival materials could be a volunteer project.

We understand that Dr. Hill's 19th century history of the Parish is available online, as well as the original Parish Register, and we recommend providing links to these resource locations as they would be useful to individuals conducting historical and genealogical research.

We also recommend that all historic and recently completed documentation, planning and restoration documents about the church buildings be scanned and uploaded to the web site. These are important resources for scholars and other professionals seeking quality reports to emulate.

Finally, cemetery records are highly valuable for historians and a clean database of all interred in the churchyard should be uploaded to the web site. We understand that there is a good current list that can be uploaded. This list would be greatly enhanced with good quality photos of monuments either of historic personages or of monuments of particularly noteworthy design. High design quality monuments and gravestones in the cemetery created by notable 19th century architects and other stone carvers could be highlighted in a brochure (as noted below) as well as on the Parish web site. Old Pine Street Church in Philadelphia has a nice history page on their web site about their Old Colonial Churchyard (<http://www.oldpine.org/history/historic-colonial-churchyard>) for reference.

III. VISITOR BROCHURES

Observations

Current brochures about church history

We were delighted to see that there was a small series of history brochures already prepared about the St. Mary's Church complex. These five black and white brochures about the church's history are copied on colored paper and currently available in the Old Church in a handsome Plexiglas holder. These brochures come in various sizes. One brochure called Old St. Mary's is legal sized paper folded in half with no photos or plans of the Old Church. There are four other tri-fold, letter-sized brochures Xeroxed on colored paper. Apparently, there was an effort to color code these brochures, but we found the same brochure on white, yellow and green paper. We found the following brochures during our visit in April 2013:

1. Brief Overview
2. Churchyard,
3. Old Church,
4. New Church,
5. Bells and Stained Glass and
6. Old St. Mary's.

These simple brochures were generally well-written and contain accurate information. Most contain at least one photo or a plan. The Old Church brochure needs a clear and large plan that can visually help explain the complicated construction history of this important building. The content of these brochures might need to be reviewed, rewritten or refreshed to make them consistent with the tone of the entire series if the series is to be redesigned and new brochures added as recommended below.

Recommendations

Brochure series

The complex history of St. Mary's church necessitates multiple brochures for visitors. Most of the brochures noted here are meant for a lay audience. We suggest a few brochures aimed at those interested in the Episcopal heritage or the important religious iconography of individual buildings. Providing a series of topical brochures will be helpful for lay visitors who wish to explore individual buildings and the churchyard at their convenience or when a guide may not be available. Because not every visitor will be interested in each building or all the stories that can be told about the church, a brochure series dividing up the material is the most appropriate. Visitors planning to visit should be encouraged to download these self-guided brochures prior to their visit (see information below on web site placement of brochures).

We recommend the following brochures based on our review of the Preservation Plan history chapter and Lorraine Schnabel's (Schnabel Consulting LLC) report on condition assessment of masonry in the church complex. A gifted writer should prepare these brochures so that they are consistent in tone and character with existing brochures.

Suggested new brochures

1. The architects of St. Mary's—brief biographies of Upjohn, Hewitt and Furness
2. War heroes and heroines in the church yard—brief biographies of men and women veterans of all wars/conflicts interred in the church yard
3. Fine Sculpture in the Graveyard—style and ornament descriptions of key gravestones in the churchyard including Furness and/or Hewitt designed monuments for Laura Barclay Wallace and both Grubb Family monuments
4. Religious Iconography in St. Mary--(meant for a religious audience) architectural, stained glass and decorative objects that illustrate themes of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, Episcopal Church or broader church history.

Brochure design and content

- Redesign all brochures into a consistent format. Increase the brochure size to be legal format, and fold all brochures into a standard format for use in a rack card format. The brochures should be designed in color so they can be printed on the church's laser printer. You may wish to pay to print the brochures on very nice paper, but that might be cost prohibitive.
- Create a consistent design for all brochures as a series. Distinguish one brochure from another by color, number or other visual device.
- Increase the text size to be at least 10 pt. font, preferably 12 pt. if possible. Include captions for any photos. Increase the size of site plans, floor plans and make sure the legends are at least 10 pt.
- Include at least three to five photos in each brochure and make them large enough to illustrate the point you want to make. Use captions for each photo, including the source of the photo if not the Parish archives, along the edge of the photo in smaller type.
- Add brochures with new content as suggested above. Most, if not all, of the materials needed to write these brochures is included in the history chapter of the Preservation Plan or in Lorraine Schnabel's research on the condition of key gravestones. Seek Margaret Westfield's advice about content of the new brochures.
- The content and quality of the writing of the current brochures is excellent. You might want to update the older brochure content given the most recent research from the Preservation Plan. Regardless, have an editor review the text of the entire set of brochures to make them consistent in approach and tone and to remove any redundancy between brochures.
- Use footnotes or references to document all the historical information in the brochures.
- Include a date on each brochure to indicate when the writing was updated, i.e. July 2013.

Brochure racks/locations

- If there are additions to the brochure series, a different kind or larger brochure rack may be needed. The free standing round Plexiglas brochure rack works well since it does not have to be mounted on a wall. You may want to consider having two round racks or buy a larger round rack instead. These racks needed to be filled with brochures regularly.
- We suggest the following locations for the brochure racks: Old Church narthex area (current location), Old Church Eyre Room, New Church South Porch (narthex), Guild House living room/library and Guild House bank table in entrance hall.

Online use of brochures

- Make PDFs of each brochure and post these to your web site in two locations. Put all of them together in one page titled 'Church History Brochures' under the History/Heritage tab. In addition, include the appropriate brochure on the page dealing with that history topic, i.e. the graveyard brochure on the bottom of the page about the Graveyard in the History/Heritage tab.

- The redesigned series of new brochures are excellent content for web site posts and newsletter articles. Post the PDF's one at a time to your Facebook page over the course of a few months. Include one or two brochures as content each month in your Parish e-newsletter.
- Investigate if a Parish volunteer would be willing to identify more historic photos from the Parish archives to gather a sufficient number to create one of the Arcadia Press publications such as their Images of America, Then and Now, or their Postcard History Series for St. Mary's Church (<http://www.arcadiapublishing.com/>) These publications can be excellent fundraising efforts for small projects, but require a very dedicated volunteer to write and gather photographs.

IV. VOLUNTEER DOCENT CORPS

Observations

Tour guides

We understand that the Rector provides most, if not all, of the tour guide duties when groups visit. Individual parish members are called upon to help out at particular buildings to provide directions/interpretation for larger events. There is no specific training for tour guides at the current time.

Recommendations

Docent corps

If the Parish wishes to make a concerted effort to provide additional tour opportunities for visitors, either in groups or during events, there is a need to create a group of dedicated volunteer tour guides or docents that are able to provide high quality tours on an as-needed or scheduled basis.

We recommend training docents for two specific kinds of jobs: as a tour guide for occasional or once a month public tours (see suggestions below for regular scheduled tours) and as a "guide on demand" to be stationed in one location in the church complex to provide brief interpretative remarks about that space/location if approached by a visitor.

Starting a tour program will require inspired leadership from the Parish. One person needs to be the leader of the effort, preferably someone trained as a teacher of adults. They would need to create the tour program and a curriculum. We recommend using *Great Tours!: Thematic Tours and Guide Training for Historic Sites*, as a starting point for developing a curriculum and training process for St. Mary's tour training.³

³ Levy Barbara Abramoff, Sandra Mackenzie Lloyd and Susan Porter Schreiber. *Great Tours! Thematic Tours and Guide Training for Historic Sites*, Nashville TN: American Association for State and Local History, 2002.

This docent corps can also be used as a “guide on demand” and stationed in specific locations. The purpose of a guide on demand is to provide information to a visitor when they approach the guide for further information. The docent does not offer remarks or a “canned” recitation unless approached by a visitor, thus offering the visitor a self-guided experience.

An important 2009 article based on national research of audiences who visit historic sites notes that 55%— more than half of visitors to historic sites—dislike guided tours and prefer to visit “on their own” and at their own pace.⁴ A guide on demand provides visitors with additional information beyond a written brochure and adds to their enjoyment, while still permitting them to visit at their own speed.⁵ Historic sites must be able to provide both experiences—a typical guided tour, as well as a self-guided experience—because providing one or the other will alienate half of your visitors based on this research.

We recommend the following locations for placement of a “guide on demand” depending on the size of the event and/or number of docents available.

- Eyre Room in Old Church,
- Old Church nave or chancel,
- New Church chancel,
- New Church nave,
- New Church crossing,
- Guild House living room,
- near the world war monument in the cemetery,
- near the Bishop Doane monument in the cemetery, and
- Near each of the three recommended interpretive panels around the perimeter of the property.

Youth group involvement

The yearly Confirmation Class or another youth group within the Parish would be an especially good group to recruit for docent duties. We recommend working with students at the middle school age and above. These young people would need a separate training program and coordinator. A slightly modified curriculum structure is needed so that they can become high quality tour guides. Their trainer would ideally be a current or retired history teacher or someone skilled in working with young people. Well-trained young docents would be

⁴ Reach Museum Advisors, The Love/Hate Relationships with Guided Tours, February 11, 2009 http://reachadvisors.typepad.com/museum_audience_insight/2009/02/the-lovehate-relationships-with-guided-tours.html

⁵ Reach Museum Advisors, Interpretation Preferences: How 40,000 museum-goers prefer to experience museums, May 19, 2010, http://reachadvisors.typepad.com/museum_audience_insight/2010/05/interpretation-preferences-how-40000-museumgoers-prefer-to-experience-museums.html. See also

especially good ambassadors and tour guides during large events, when they could provide “guide on demand” services throughout the church complex as mentioned above. Use the *Great Tours!* book for advice on working with young people as tour guides.

V. REGULAR TOUR SCHEDULE

Regularly scheduled public tours

The Parish leaders we met with in April 2013 seemed interested in being open more often for heritage visitors to the extent that there are sufficient trained Parish staff and more volunteer docents to host them. The creation of a well-trained group of volunteer tour guides or docents is essential for this effort, especially when the Rector is not available to conduct tours. A small group of well-trained volunteer docents/guides is needed to implement any new guided tour or “guide on demand” program.

At our April 2013 meeting, we discussed the need to provide interpretation of the complex on a regular basis. A reasonable initial project would be to offer a public tour of the church complex once a month on a Sunday after the last worship service of the morning. These public tours should be offered year round on the same Sunday each month and advertised widely on the Parish web site and Facebook page as appropriate and on other local and regional tourism, visitor web sites (see section below on reciprocal links).

Trinity Church in the City of Boston uses one of their slide show photos on their web site home page to announce the monthly tour schedule. The page announces where to buy tickets (gift shop). There is also a link to a simple monthly Google Calendar with the dates and times of tours listed (although the type size is far too small for anyone to read).

<http://trinitychurchboston.org/art-history/tours>

Insurance agent advice

The graveyard as previously mentioned is an important feature of the ground. However, the uneven surfaces throughout offer potential hazards for twisted ankles or worse. We understand that Westfield Architects is also recommending the removal of old stumps and overgrown shrubs in the Preservation Plan. These actions would help mitigate these trip hazards. We suggest contacting your insurance agent to seek their advice about the need for any warning notices in the graveyard itself, web site or on visitor publications to adequately warn visitors of these potential trip hazards that will remain due to uneven surfaces after shrubs and stumps are removed.

VI. EXHIBIT CASES

Observations

Display cases in Eyre Hall, Old Church

There are six furniture quality six-foot tall, locking and lighted display cases around the perimeter of the Eyre Hall large meeting room in the Old Church. These display cabinets are now filled with church memorabilia, photos, plates and artifacts on more or less permanent display. One display cabinet holds a very interesting exhibition of documents and objects from a Parishioners' father who was an Army Chaplain during World War II. Other cases have some thematic content, but not all have a specific story to tell visitors. Some of the exhibit cases have hand written labels, which does not give a professional appearance.

Recommendations

Rotating exhibits

These exhibit cases present many opportunities for education about the church history, service groups, religious doctrine or to celebrate special events and occasions. We recommend that a small committee or a church historian be identified to create themed exhibits in these cases. It would be ideal to rotate displays seasonally, but to place new exhibits in these cases once or twice a year might be more realistic. Summer time church services are held in the Old Church and the cases will be highly visible to Parishioners as they use the Eyre Room for fellowship after the services. Preparing new case displays before the services move to the Old Church would be ideal. Information about the new case displays can be included in the church bulletins during the summer.

Photos, objects and paper-based materials can be used to make interesting and compelling stories for Parish members and visitors alike. It is not necessary to have one theme for all six cases, but it would be useful to have a consistent story or theme in each case.

The display cases are handsome and useful, but we doubt that they are of museum quality, meaning that paper, historic photos or other objects needing specific temperature or humidity controls should not be stored in these cases as they are likely to degrade. Some historic photos and original documents and books should not be stored in these cases, especially if they are in poor condition. Copies can be made of photos and paper documents to be displayed here. If you are going to use original objects and paper based displays consider the potential for fading from the large windows in the Eyre Room. If this is a concern, consider placing UV film on the exterior windows to prevent these damaging rays from fading historic materials.

The rarest materials including precious silver and other one of kind objects should not be stored in these cases as their locking mechanisms may not be completely secure.

VII. INTERPRETIVE SIGNAGE

Observations

Interpretive and way finding signage

Way finding and interpretive signage through the complex is lacking. There are several systems currently in use to guide visitors through the church complex. Margaret Westfield has considerable information about the existing signage systems on the property in the Preservation Plan, which we will not repeat here. We understand the Preservation Plan project has funding for one interpretive sign which Margaret Westfield will design and have installed. We provide additional suggestions below for additional interpretive signs for the complex.

Recommendations

Interpretive signage

One of the Preservation Plan grant products is a new interpretive sign that Westfield Architects is designing. We understand these are meant to be about waist high, including photos, text and site map, etched on a metal panel that slopes for easy reading. The three interpretive signs we recommend should be consistent in design, and each one should have a site plan to orient the visitor. We suggest that each sign focus on a specific topic, such as a building or the cemetery.

We suggest three locations for interpretive signage. We recommend that Margaret Westfield identify the exact location for each sign to take into account views and seasonal tree/shrubs. The sign should face the reader, when they view the sign from the public right of way (on sidewalk, outside the fence or brick wall.

- Just inside the brick wall along West Broad Street, as the visitor is facing New St. Mary's,
- Just inside the iron fence along Wood Street, as the visitor is facing Old St. Mary's, and
- On the edge of the parking lot, as the visitor is facing the graveyard.

If the budget does not include sufficient funding for all three interpretive signs, we suggest making an application to the New Jersey Historic Trust License plate fund (see below on funding opportunities).

VIII. RECIPROCAL WEB LINKS

Observations

Visitor center

Promoting St. Mary's as a quality visitor destination will require expanding relationships with the other historic sites in the area as well as tourism entities. When we visited in April 2013, we stopped by the local Visitor Center on the corner of West Broad and High Streets. This office

was closed at 1PM on a weekday, and there was no sign to say when the office was open for regular hours or by appointment, or a phone number to call. In effect, the visitor center is not helpful for casual drop-by visitors if it is not open regular hours, especially for both days on the weekend.

Area tourism web sites

Burlington, unlike most cities its size in the state, does have a handsome and highly useful visitor web site for the Burlington Historic District (<http://www.tourburlington.org/>). The home page of this City of Burlington sponsored web site mentions St. Mary's as The Oldest Episcopal Church in New Jersey, dating from 1703 with a web link to another part of the web site with information on both Old and New St. Mary's with good photos and descriptions.

Recommendations

Reciprocal links with other historic sites and tourism entities

We recommend approaching the following organizations to seek their help in creating web links to St. Mary's Church to permit their organization's visitors to know about the tourism program at the church and to use the historic resources uploaded to the History/Heritage tab. Promoting St. Mary's while encouraging visitors to view other historic sites, extends the stay of visitors in the area and expands their economic impact. Our research identified many other web sites that would be worth approaching to create web links between sites. We also include a volunteer job description in the section below for this particular project.

State of New Jersey official tourism web site

Web site: www.visitnj.org/burlington

Comments: Links to limited number of historic attractions, Burlington County Historical Society web site, and Tour Burlington web site on the Attractions and Things to Do page—<http://www.visitnj.org/property-search/3/Burlington>. Also provides links to historic shops such as the Olde City Quilt shop and the Antiques Emporium. There is no link or mention of St. Mary's Episcopal Church on the State of New Jersey official tourism web site <http://www.visitnj.org/>. This is unfortunate but not uncommon, and advice is needed from the City of Burlington tourism officials about their relationships with the State tourism officials and how Burlington is viewed by the state as a tourism destination.

City of Burlington Historical Society

Web site: N/A- description found on <http://www.08016.com/2011/09/city-of-burlington-historical-society.html>

Comments: The www.08016.com web site is housed on a blog host site (Blogger) and provides internal links to different pages of descriptions of historic attractions in Burlington within the Historic City of Burlington, NJ web site. It does not provide external links

to specific historic attraction web sites, but it does provide links to the www.tourburlington.org web site (below) as well as the locations of different historical sites in Google Maps. The web site provides links to its own descriptions of historical organizations and historical sites here, with links to Google Maps for each attraction listed: http://www.08016.com/p/site-map_29.html

The City of Burlington Historic District

Web site: www.tourburlington.org

Comments: Links to other web sites of regional and local attractions on the entertainment page— <http://www.tourburlington.org/DoEntertain.html#RvrCon>, ranging in historical, recreational, performances and events, and amusement activities. More links are provided on the Arts and Culture page, <http://www.tourburlington.org/DoArts.html>, connecting to local and regional community organizations that hold art, music, and other cultural events in South Jersey and surrounding towns. Available in the sidebar of every page is a link to the Historic City of Burlington Official Online resource (see City of Burlington web site below). There is no link to the Parish web site anywhere on the city's tourism web site <http://www.tourburlington.org/>. We encourage that the Parish engage in a conversation with city tourism officials, to include a link on this web site, as this would be an ideal way to encourage visitors to learn more about the many interesting things to see at the church complex.

Burlington County Historical Society

Web site: <http://www.burlingtoncountyhistoricalsociety.org/>

Comments: This web site does not link or reference the web sites of any historical organizations or attractions beyond what is included in the Burlington County Historical Society campus. The web site is primarily concerned with describing the historical society's own services and fundraising.

Colonial Burlington Foundation

Web site: N/A

Comments: We could not find an official web site for the Colonial Burlington Foundation. The closest URL is for the Wood Street Fair, which is organized by the Colonial Burlington Foundation- <http://www.woodstreetfair.com/>, which links to www.tourburlington.org on the main page.

Historic Yorkshire Alliance

Web site: N/A

Comments: They do not have an official web site, but appear to do their promotion via their Facebook page— <https://www.facebook.com/HistoricYorkshireAllianceHomeAndGardenTour>, which was created about a month ago and mostly consists of photos and event outreach. Otherwise their internet presence can only be found on business information

aggregate sites (businessfinder.com, <http://non-profit-organizations.findthebest.com/l/118986/Historic-Yorkshire-Alliance-Inc>, etc.)

Burlington County New Jersey- Cultural Affairs and Tourism

Web site: <http://www.co.burlington.nj.us>

Comments: This web site provides links to historic sites in and surrounding Burlington County on the History page—<http://www.co.burlington.nj.us/pages/pages.aspx?cid=507>. Links provided include historical societies as well as historic attractions in the area. The Related Links page—<http://www.co.burlington.nj.us/pages/pages.aspx?cid=540> also connects to general New Jersey Tourism web sites as well as the Burlington County Historian web site.

Burlington County Historian

Web site: www.burlcohistorian.com/

Comments: This web site is dedicated to the history of Burlington County. The Related History Links page—<http://www.burlcohistorian.com/links.htm> provides links to general tourism and resources, historic sites and museums, natural historic sites and municipal history sites within and surrounding Burlington County.

Burlington Main Street

Comments: No web site exists for this organization.

City of Burlington

Web site: www.burlingtonnj.us

Comments: Homepage provides a prominent button link to the Tour Burlington Main Page. Other pages on this site that link to the Tour Burlington webpage include—<http://www.burlingtonnj.us/business/index.php> and http://www.burlingtonnj.us/departments/public_affairs/index.php. No other links to historic sites or resources are provided.

Doane Academy

Web site: www.doaneacademy.org

Comments: School web site is primarily concerned with institutional organization; no external links exist to historic sites. We would suspect external links would be located under the Campus Life, Arts and Music, or the News and Events sections, but no links were found.

Top opportunities for reciprocal tourism links based on Google search for Burlington tourism terms:

1. The City of Burlington Historic District Web site: www.tourburlington.org
2. Historic Burlington City, NJ web site: www.08016.com
3. City of Burlington, NJ web site: www.burlingtonnj.us

4. Historic Burlington Antiques and Art Emporium: <http://www.antiquesnj.com/>
5. Burlington County, New Jersey Web site: <http://www.co.burlington.nj.us> (specifically <http://www.co.burlington.nj.us/pages/pages.aspx?cid=507>)
6. City Data Web site on Burlington, NJ: <http://www.city-data.com/city/Burlington-New-Jersey.html>
7. Official Tourism Web site of New Jersey: <http://www.visitnj.org/burlington>
8. Burlington City, NJ Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Burlington-City-NJ-on-NJcom/106662762701545>
9. Burlington County Historical Society: <http://www.burlingtoncountyhistoricalsociety.org>
10. Fun New Jersey, Top 50 Attractions web site: [http://www.funnewjersey.com/upload_user/COOL_THINGS_TO_DO/Top_50 Attractions/top_50_attractions_in_burlington_county_nj.htm](http://www.funnewjersey.com/upload_user/COOL_THINGS_TO_DO/Top_50_Attractions/top_50_attractions_in_burlington_county_nj.htm)
11. Trip Advisor profile for Burlington, NJ: http://www.tripadvisor.com/Tourism-g46334-Burlington_New_Jersey-Vacations.html
12. The Lily Inn (a local B&B) web site: <http://www.thelilyinn.com/history.html>

St. Mary's visitor amenities map

In the appendix, we have included a visitor amenities map. We prepared this map as part of the research portion of this small project to assess the heritage tourism potential of St. Mary's. If useful, this map might be included on the Parish web site to illustrate locations of other historic sites open to the public, restaurants and ATMs.

IX. FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

There are a variety of funding sources to pay for small historical projects that might be produced based on advice in this report. We provide some general advice here, but we recommend that you read the grant guidelines in detail to make sure the project qualifies and that they will accept applications from the religious organization.

New Jersey Historic Trust- License plate fund

Deadline: Anytime throughout the fiscal year, July 1 – June 30, until the annual allocation has been exhausted.

Maximum Allotment: \$5,000

Description: The Discover NJ History License Plate Fund provides small grants to develop and promote visitor ready sites as heritage tourism destinations. Eligible applicants are agencies or entities of state, county or municipal government and nonprofit organizations organized under the New Jersey Nonprofit Corporation Act that qualify for tax-exempt status under Section 501(c) 3 of the Internal Revenue code and are current with their NJ Charitable Registration. These technical assistance grants may be used to promote interpretation, marketing links among heritage sites; to assess visitor-readiness of a heritage site or sites; to establish performance evaluation systems; and to provide training initiatives, workshops and

educational activities that foster the goals and objectives of the NJ Heritage Tourism Plan. This is the most likely source of support for every recommendation listed in this section.

New Jersey Historical Commission

General Operating Support Grant

Deadline for Fiscal Year 2014, Fiscal Year 2015 (assuming similar each year):

Intent to Apply: March 1, 2013

Application Deadline: April 5, 2013

Notification: July 2013

Funding Level: Minimum Request: \$5,000

Budgets under \$30,000: \$5,000 to \$10,000

Budgets of \$30,000 or more: Up to 33 percent of the average of the non-state operating income from the last completed fiscal year and the current fiscal year.

Description: The New Jersey Historical Commission is a state agency within the Department of State dedicated to the advancement of public knowledge and preservation of New Jersey history.

ELIGIBILITY: Operating support grants are available only to organizations. There are general standards of eligibility as well as specific requirements for programs. For details regarding eligibility see guidelines available on website. All applicants will be notified of grant decisions. Successful applicants will receive notification of the grant award for FY 2014 and a provisional commitment to fund for FY 2015.

The NJHC GOS grants might be a good source for support to develop a larger, multi-phase program to address many of the projects identified in the recommendations section.

Project Grants

Deadlines for fiscal year 2014 (assuming similar each year):

Intent to Apply: August 8, 2013

Grant Submission Deadline: September 10, 2013

Notification: December 2013

Funding Level: \$3,001-\$15,000

Description: Funding is available for expenses of specific projects relating to New Jersey history. Eligible categories include conservation of historical materials (manuscripts, books, costumes, historical visuals); editorial and publication projects; educational initiatives; exhibitions; media (films, radio, videotape, digital media); public programs; and research (including archaeological projects, fellowships, oral history, and National and New Jersey Registers of Historic Places nominations).

Mini-grants

Deadlines for Fiscal Year 2014:

Intent to Apply: August 8, 2013 Round I, December 10, 2013 Round II

Submission Deadline: September 10, 2013 (I), January 10, 2014 (II)

Notification: December 2013 (I), March 2014 (II)

Funding Level: Up to \$3,000

Description: Mini-grants provide support for smaller projects related to New Jersey history. Applicants may request support for planning (long-term, strategic, interpretive) but they may not use Mini-grant funds for other types of operating support. Eligible categories include conservation of historical materials (manuscripts, books, costumes, historical visuals); editorial and publication projects; educational initiatives; exhibitions; media (films, radio, videotape, digital media); public programs; and research (including archaeological projects, fellowships, oral history, and National and New Jersey registers of historic places nominations). Guidelines for FY 2013 Project Grants and Mini-grants are posted above.

New Jersey Humanities Council

Grant Types	Maximum Request	Draft Application Deadline	Final Application Deadline	For Projects Taking Place
Major	\$20,000	April 1 September 2	May 1 October 1	August 1 or later January 1 or later
Mini	\$3,000	January 15 April 15 July 15 October 15	February 15 May 15 August 15 November 15	May 1 or later August 1 or later November 1 or later February 1 or later
Festival	\$500	N/A	June 17	In the month of October

For major and mini-grants, applicants must provide at least a 1:1 match (cash and/or in-kind) for every dollar requested from the Council.

Description: The New Jersey Council for the Humanities invites New Jersey-based nonprofit organizations and public entities to submit requests for funding in support of their public humanities projects. The Council regularly receives applications from public libraries, historical societies, museums, arts groups, service organizations and institutions of higher education. The Council does NOT provide grants to individuals, check to see if churches may apply. The Council is especially interested in projects that address the Council's theme of Justice, which encourages historical, philosophical, legal, political and/or cross-cultural reflection upon the concept of justice and its application in community and social institutions. Grants are awarded through a competitive review process several times each year. As a state partner of the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Council receives federal funding for its grants program.

New Jersey Arts Council

Deadlines for Fiscal Year 2014 Organizational Grant Programs GPS/APS (assuming similar year after year):

Notice of Intent to Apply: deadline is past

Application Deadlines: deadline is past, see web site for next year

Grant Amount Range for General Program Support and General Operating Support: \$4000- \$1.12 Million with required 3:1 cash or in-kind match for every dollar requested.

General Program Support (GPS) Grant

Description: Support for the costs of full-time, on-going public arts programs that are maintained by nonprofit organizations, agencies, institutions or units of local government and which uphold high standards of artistry, public benefit, outreach program management and accountability. These programs should have their own mission and goals, have on-going direction, be considered permanent within the sponsoring institution and contain multiple events or activities. Programs should be wholly dedicated to the arts and the sponsoring organization should clearly demonstrate its commitment to support of the arts program through the allocation of its resources and funds raised in the community. Review and consideration of GPS requests will occur every three years. Receipt of a GPS grant usually carries the commitment of the Council to fund the program over a three-year period, although the funding level will be determined annually.

Arts Project Support (APS) Grant

Description: Support for a single arts event that upholds high standards of artistry, management and accountability and provides significant public benefit. A project is defined as a public activity or event that occurs once during the year either as a single day or weekend presentation, or a series of the same presentation occurring within a very limited and specific timeframe generally not exceeding 6 weeks. Examples include a concert, an exhibition, a reading, the run of a single theatrical production, or a festival, ET. Al. Please note: This category does not support on going, multiple programs or an annual series of events or the general operations of the sponsoring organization. The Project must be wholly dedicated to the arts and the applicant should clearly demonstrate its commitment to the arts project through the allocation of its resources and funds raised from the community. Applicants unclear about the distinctions between a Project and a general on-going program as defined here should contact the Council staff.

While the following source may not seem likely, it is worth additional research. If there is a Parish member that is a board member of the Bridge Commission, it would be worth a conversation to see if any of the heritage tourism or preservation projects would qualify as economic development in the eyes of the Bridge Commission.

Burlington County Bridge Commission

The Commission also offers assistance to Burlington County municipalities with their economic development, redevelopment, and community revitalization projects by offering—free of charge—grant-writing services (which have garnered \$14.8 million since 2006) and professional services.

Available Programs:

- Burlington County Small Business Loan Program
- Burlington County Route 130 Revolving Loan Fund Program
- Pooled Lease Purchase and Governmental Loan Financings
- Grant-writing for economic development-related projects
- Financing for infrastructure improvements for local communities
- Professional services for redevelopment and development projects

X. VOLUNTEER JOB DESCRIPTIONS

Volunteer job descriptions

To facilitate the completion of a variety of volunteer projects related to upgrading the visitor experience at St. Mary's, we prepared these brief volunteer job descriptions for use to solicit volunteers for these jobs. Please consider them drafts and add detail as needed. We suggest placing one or two of these volunteer job descriptions in the church newsletter or on the Parish web site to solicit volunteers. A coordinator is needed to be the contact person should a volunteer come forward, to make a match and get the volunteer started as soon as possible on the work.

Editor- church history brochure series

A skilled writer and editor is needed to update six existing history brochures and create five or more new ones based on topics suggested in the Report on Assessment of Heritage Tourism Potential for St. Mary's Church. This project will take about a month or more, and involve reading existing historical materials, especially the history chapter of the recently completed Preservation Plan and writing copy and captions for all brochures. Historic photos and current photos are also available to illustrate these brochures. There will be a total of between 8-12 brochures. This volunteer will work with a designer to produce a handsome series of brochures for visitors. The supervisor for this project is a member of the Church Vestry.

Designer-church history brochure

A skilled graphic designer is needed to create a design concept for a series of about 8-12 brochures on various aspects of the history and architecture of St. Mary's Parish as noted in the recently completed Report on Assessment of Heritage Tourism Potential for St. Mary's Church. The designer will work with a writer/editor who will provide the copy, captions, photos and work with you on display options for the folded brochures. We estimate that this project will take less than a month to complete. The supervisor for this project is a member of the Church Vestry.

Coordinator-adult docent corps

A current teacher or retired educator of adults is needed to manage and create a new volunteer guide or docent program for St. Mary's Church. This program will identify and train adults to provide tour guide and "guide on demand" services as noted in the recently completed Report on Assessment of Heritage Tourism Potential for St. Mary's Church. The coordinator will create a curriculum and training program as suggested in the *Great Tours!* book mentioned in the report. An ideal number of volunteer docents for the first year of this effort would be eight (8) to start. We anticipate that designing the curriculum and sourcing materials for docents to read would take several months. Preparing a short training program, say a four to six hour training, would take an additional month. Working with volunteer guides as they prepare their presentations and training them on its delivery would take another few months. The

coordinator would also take charge of scheduling these docents for monthly tours of the property on a selected Sunday each month throughout the year. The coordinator does not need to be present at the tours, but make sure that there is at least one guide available as needed. The coordinator will also schedule docents to work during large events when the public visits the site, such as during the Wood Street Art and Craft Fair each fall. The supervisor for this project is a member of the Church Vestry.

Coordinator-youth docent corps

A current or retired educator is needed to manage and create a new volunteer guide or docent program for St. Mary's Church for the Confirmation Class or other youth group. This program will identify and train young people of the Parish to provide tour guide and "guide on demand" services as noted in the recently completed Report on Assessment of Heritage Tourism Potential for St. Mary's Church. The coordinator will work closely with the Coordinator providing similar programs for adults. The Youth coordinator may modify or create his/her own curriculum and training program as suggested in the *Great Tours!* book mentioned in the Report on Assessment of Heritage Tourism Potential for St. Mary's Church. The ideal number of volunteer docents for the first year of this effort would be eight to ten young people. We anticipate that designing the curriculum and sourcing materials for docents to read would take several months. Preparing a short training program, say four to six hour training, would take an additional month. Working with young volunteer guides as they prepare their presentations and training them on its delivery would take another few months. The youth coordinator will work closely with the adult coordinator (these could be the same person) who will schedule these trained guides. We anticipate that these young people will be especially helpful as docents during large events when the public visits the site, such as during the Wood Street Art and Craft Fair each fall. The supervisor for this project is a member of the Church Vestry.

Coordinator-graveyard database

A volunteer interested in local and Parish history is needed to review, and update current information about the church cemetery so that a complete list can be uploaded to the Parish web site. Photos of key views and monuments have already been taken as part of the Preservation Plan, but these need to be identified and coordinated with the database. We estimate that this work would take a few months to complete. The supervisor for this project is a member of the Church Vestry.

Archivist and scanner of key archival documents for web site

A volunteer interested in local and Parish history is needed to work in the archives and with the Rector to identify key archival documents that can be scanned and uploaded to the Parish web site for public viewing. Architectural plans, reports and materials produced about the restoration of the Old and New Churches should be prepared and scanned for upload as PDF

documents to the web site. This work might be ongoing or undertaken in a concentrated period of time. The supervisor for this project is a member of the Church Vestry.

Coordinator-Eyre Room Exhibit Cases

A volunteer interested in local or Parish history is needed to coordinate the preparation of changing exhibits in the tall exhibit cases in the Eyre Room in the Old Church. The person would be responsible for conceptualizing exhibit ideas for each case and gathering appropriate materials for themed exhibits in each case and preparing labels or other interpretive handouts. The supervisor for this project is a member of the Church Vestry.

Coordinator-reciprocal tourism links

A volunteer is needed to help coordinate with other historic sites and city tourism personnel to establish reciprocal web links with their historic sites/tourism entities including the updated web links to new tourism materials on the St. Mary's web site. This work will involve contacting the sites mentioned in the Report on Assessment of Heritage Tourism Potential for St. Mary's Church and others to seek their help in creating an appropriate web link to and for St. Mary's to their web site. This work might take a few months. The supervisor for this work is a member of the Church Vestry.

There are many other volunteer jobs that can be created to foster greater tourism awareness of St. Mary's and assist with making the historic complex more appealing for visitors. We hope this assessment of heritage tourism potential is a good first start toward making improvements in the visitor experience for St. Mary's Episcopal Church.

Credits

Donna Ann Harris wrote this Assessment of Heritage Tourism Potential for the St. Mary's Episcopal Church, Burlington NJ. Di Gao, an intern with Heritage Consulting Inc. supplied additional research on web links and funding sources as well as the visitor amenities map.

Donna Ann Harris is the principal of Heritage Consulting Inc., a Philadelphia-based consulting firm that works nationwide in several practice areas: downtown and commercial district revitalization, historic preservation, heritage tourism, program evaluation and nonprofit organizational development. Prior to starting her firm eight years ago, Ms. Harris was state coordinator for the Illinois Main Street program for two years and the manager of the Illinois suburban Main Street program for four years. During her tenure, Ms. Harris served 56 Illinois Main Street communities, led a staff of 12 and managed a budget of over a million dollars. Prior to her Main Street career, Ms. Harris spent 15 years as an executive director of three start-up and two mature preservation organizations, each with its own organizational and fundraising challenges. Prior to her Main Street career, Ms. Harris spent 15 years as an executive director of three start-up and two mature historic preservation organizations in New Jersey, Illinois, Philadelphia and Bryn Mar PA. Since starting her firm, Ms. Harris has worked with state, regional and local Main Street programs in 22 states. She has written five feature articles in The National Trust Main Street Center's monthly journal *Main Street News*, and scholarly articles in the American Association for State and Local History's *History News* and the National Trust's *Forum Journal*.

Contact

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Appendix

See Attached for St. Mary's Visitor Amenities Map.

St. Mary's Episcopal Church Visitor Amenities Map



© 2013 Heritage Consulting Inc.
Research and Map by Di Gao

LEGEND

- | | |
|-----------------------------|--------------|
| St. Mary's Episcopal | Lodging |
| Visitor Center | Shops |
| Restaurant | Gas Stations |
| Public Historic Site/Museum | Park |
| Private Historic Site* | ATMs |

*Includes sites that are now private residences or operating businesses



Commercial District Revitalization ■ Historic Preservation ■ Non-Profit Organizational Development

April 21, 2013

To: Barbara Frake
CC: Margaret Westfield
From: Donna Ann Harris
Subject: Assessment of heritage tourism potential—St. Mary's Episcopal Church, Current conditions

This memo provides observations and some initial recommendations about current visitor readiness and the organizational capacity of the St. Mary's Episcopal Church Parish to host heritage visitors as part of an assessment of its heritage tourism potential.

Web site

The current church web site is attractive and is organized using a content management system that can be updated at will by Parish personnel and volunteers. The web site is easy to navigate and has good quality information for church visitors.

Most heritage visitors interested in the rich history of St. Mary's Parish complex will learn about the Parish via the internet. They will use the Parish's web site for trip planning purposes as well as to obtain information for genealogical or architectural research purposes.

The church's web site should offer visitors accurate and high quality information about what a visitor will see if they come to St. Mary's. We recommend that the Parish web site become a repository for the historical information, plans and reports about the church that would

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interest any researcher interested in family history, architecture, genealogy, key people associated with the complex and those buried in the cemetery. We recommend scanning and making key documents available to the public on the Parish web site, which will greatly expand web traffic and interest in the property and its rich history. Grant funds may be available for such purposes but additional research is needed.

About Us tab

The current history information is located in the About Us tab. The current information including the church timeline and information about each building and churchyard are a fine start. Much more historical and archival information can be uploaded to the web site, learn more in the History/Heritage tab below.

Visitor Center heading

Right now, much of the information in Visitor Center heading is intended for church visitors, who come to the building for religious purposes. Heritage visitors not interested in becoming a member of the Parish will be confused by this, so we recommend providing a link at the top of the Visitor Center page, redirecting people to the History/Heritage page. Alternatively, retaining the current content but renaming the Visitor Center page may be worth considering.

History Box

Right now, the History box along the bottom of the home page redirects web visitors to the About Us tab where the current history information is located. The History box occupies important home page "real estate." If this box and location can be retained (even though it may be viewed redundant if a History/Heritage tab is created, see below) it would allow heritage visitors more paths to the information they seek.

New History/Heritage tab

We recommend reorganizing the web site to include a new tab along the top called History or Heritage. This is the place where you will locate all the historical information about the Parish. Please retain the History box as noted above.

Barbara Frake explained that many archival materials of interest to local historians (including adults and school students conducting research for National History Day), are not currently scanned or uploaded to the web site. Scanning and uploading appropriate materials should be a volunteer project priority. Additional research is needed to determine if any of this work would be eligible for grant support.

The new History/Heritage tab on the navigation area should include a drop-down menu with the following additional pages:

- directions (this will be redundant from the Visitor Center page with an area map),
- new page for every building, including the graveyard and the bells,
- architects (info about the architects of various buildings),
- preservation reports (HSR, Preservation Plan, other relevant documents),
- genealogical information (graveyard map, list of famous people buried in the churchyard, other genealogical info you will scan),
- other places to visit (links to other sites in the area),
- photos old and new (photos with good labels of key buildings and historic features that would interest visitors, this is not photo galleries of church events (retain these)),
- more info (anything relevant not already in another category) and
- contact us (link to email, phone number etc.)

Brochures and other interpretive opportunities

Current information about the various buildings on the current About Us tab should be revised and updated with new information from the history section of the new Preservation Plan. New brochure content can be created using this new research.

The information about each building now appearing on the web site, can be repurposed or repackaged as a series of online self-guided brochures for heritage visitors to download or print. These new brochures need to be well designed, 8.5 x 11 inches, in color (but print well as black and white documents) with good photos and interesting text. Heritage visitors should be encouraged to download these self-guided brochures prior to their visit. These brochures should also be available in the church office and at logical locations throughout the church complex for use by drop-in visitors.

The most logical new or revised interpretive brochures would be:

- Brief Overview (general history of the complex),
- Churchyard,
- Old Church,
- New Church,
- Guild House,
- Bells
- Other brochures on specific themes may be added based on discussion with Parish officials.

Displays

There are opportunities to have rotating displays using the archives. The Eyre room in the Old Church has the display cases, but these are not of archival quality. They could be used for rotating interpretive displays of new or non-historic/original photos and copies of original documents.

Special events

There are a variety of existing special events that occur in town that the church participates in yearly. In each case, the two churches are open for self-guided or guided tours.

- St. Mary's Music Series in May--Bell concerts and other musical events at the church. Visits to belfry are offered as well as tours of the buildings/grounds.
- Wood Street Fair held in summer—organized by another group about 20K people attend
- Christmas house tour in November/December—organized by another group
- House and garden tour in June –organized by another group

Docents

We understand that the Rector provides most, if not all, of the tour guide duties when groups visit. If the Parish wishes to make a concerted effort to provide additional tour opportunities for visitors, either in groups or during events, there is a need to create a group of dedicated docents able to provide high quality tours on an as-needed or scheduled basis. This docent corps can also be used as a “guide on demand” and stationed in a specific location—i.e. graveyard, Old church, New church, to provide interpretation during special events. A training agenda and curriculum is needed for this effort, as well as a volunteer manager of this effort. We also suggest, once this docent corps is recruited and trained, that you promote a regularly scheduled monthly heritage tour immediately after last worship service on Sunday mornings as a public service.

Visitor services issues

We understand that there is a unisex handicapped restroom in the old church (renovated in the 1999). The New church and Guild Hall have no handicapped restroom. The Old Church is air-conditioned, but the New Church is not. Way finding and interpretive signage through the complex is lacking. One of the Preservation Plan grant products is a new interpretive sign that Westfield Architects is designing. Additional grants should be investigated for additional way finding.

Other interpretive possibilities

The visitor services map will help identify more partners and create linkages between heritage sites. Parish personnel should identify how the current partnerships can be extended.

Reciprocal web links with other historic sites and tourism offices should be encouraged.

This memo represents the current conditions of heritage tourism visitor readiness and the organizational capacity for St. Mary's Church. This information will be updated and revised and a new memo created after our April 25 meeting. This memo will be the final deliverable for the project.