

#76

From Mr Andy Murphy
7311 Bucknell Drive
Austin, Texas

December 14, 2006

To: the Austin City Council

It has come to my attention that Redeemer Presbyterian has plans to build a new sanctuary with particular attention given to architectural acoustics. They have engaged the services of Kirkegaard Acoustics from Chicago, one of the top acoustic room designers in the country, to make this possible.

May I say that, from a recording engineer's perspective, there is a great need in Austin for a reverberant, modest-sized room, which has been carefully planned not only to have beautiful acoustics but to have a quiet ventilation system. It is also my understanding that the room will be designed so that exterior noise will be isolated – all the better! In my experience we do not yet have a room in Austin for performances of acoustic music that performs to these specifications.

Knowing the requirements and demands of our excellent Austin-based musical groups as well as national recording companies and producers, we need this room. Please do everything within your power to encourage the church to make this building a reality.

Please do not hesitate to call if you desire any follow-up to my remarks 471-1370

Sincerely and respectfully submitted,

Andy Murphy
Chief Recording Engineer, UT Austin College of Fine Arts
Chief Recording Engineer, Austin Symphony Orchestra
Chair, Audio Engineering Society, Texas Section

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December 14, 2006

Redeemer Presbyterian Church
2201 North Lamar Blvd., Suite 100
Austin, Texas 78705

Re: 11.055 acres of land (locally known as 2015 Alexander Avenue)
Property Tax Exemption

To the Session:

Please be advised that the above-referenced property was granted exempt status under Sec. 11.20(a)(5) of the Texas Property Tax Code. Under this provision, the church is entitled to an exemption from property taxation of its real property consisting of (A) an incomplete improvement that is under active construction or other physical preparation and that is designed and intended to be used by the church as a place of regular religious worship when complete, and (B) the land on which the incomplete improvement is located that will be reasonably necessary for the church's use of the improvement as a place of regular religious worship.

If the church decides not to continue to use this land or any portion thereof for the church's use of its improvements as a place of regular religious worship, then the property tax exemption under Sec. 11.20(a)(5) of the Texas Property Tax Code would cease as to such portion of the land as of the date when such a decision is made.

Please do not hesitate to call me if you have any questions or need further advice regarding this matter.

Very truly yours,
R. Douglas Muir
R. Douglas Muir

Conspirare

Craig Hella Johnson & Company of Voices

September 12, 2006

Dear Planning Commission Members:

I am writing to you today in support of Redeemer Presbyterian Church's sanctuary construction project. I am the Artistic Director of Conspirare, a national non-profit professional choral organization based in Austin. In Conspirare's 14 years of existence, we have consistently experienced a lack of performance venues that are appropriate for a mid-size performing arts group. Several factors go into our venue selection process each year. Among them are: seating capacity, location, venue facilities and - most important of all - acoustics. Conspirare faces these challenges on an annual basis and is always looking to discover suitable venues for our performances.

I am aware that we are not alone in facing this challenge. Many other mid-size Austin-based performing arts groups find it difficult to secure appropriate venues. While we are all excited about the construction of The Long Center, this will still not meet the needs of many of Austin's fine mid-size organizations for venues with a seating capacity of 400 – 700.

I am so very grateful to George Dupere and his colleagues for recognizing this need and working to create a space that will not only be valuable to the worship community, but to the arts community as well. I am particularly pleased that noted acoustical experts Kirkegaard Associates have been involved in the planning of this space. The availability of an acoustically engineered concert space of this size will be extremely exciting and a great asset to our arts community!

This project is exciting and urgently needed for so many reasons. I wish to offer my full support of this endeavor and hope to see the project move forward.

Thank you so much for your consideration,
Craig Hella Johnson

CRAIG HELLA JOHNSON

Kirkegaard Acoustical Design

architectural acoustics, noise control and audio systems design

Notes on the Acoustical Design
Redeemer Presbyterian Church
Austin, Texas

Sept 12, 2006

I have enjoyed the privilege of working with the Redeemer staff and design committee since 2004. The programming and design process has been exemplary in both its clarity and its focus. We have done our utmost to design a building that reflects a concise and organic expression of the liturgy and theology of the church.

The traditional form, stone construction and detailing of the church result from careful study of historic precedent, not as an exercise in postmodern revivalism, but as an organic expression of an enduring church liturgy. The 34ft width of the nave is quite narrow by modern standards but consistent with traditional precedents. The narrow proportion of the nave is designed to support acoustical clarity of the word and support for congregational singing, while also emphasizing the vertical development of the sustained sound. The narrow width was achieved by shifting the side aisles outside the main volume of the nave; this allowed a significant reduction to the overall volume.

The building elevation is a logical progression given the traditional reformed arrangement with choir/organ leading the congregation from the rear gallery. The balcony height above the floor has been minimized to maintain a sense of connection to the main floor (12 ft rather than the more common 14-16 ft gallery height). Choir risers are required for sightlines and acoustic projection; the number of choir risers is minimized to maintain the close connection between the balcony and nave floor levels (2 choir risers rather than the typical 3 or 4 riser levels in many new churches). Space is provided at the rear of the gallery for a modest sized pipe organ sufficient to lead congregational singing. The 28ft height allotted for the organ is 10ft less than is typically provided for a church of this size. The clear dimension between the organ case and the bottom chord of the roof truss is minimal. Added together, these dimensions result in a ridge height of 58ft.

Given the logical development of the elevation, it is not surprising to see similar nave dimensions and proportions repeated throughout the centuries in the smaller urban and abbey churches. The architectural form was an organic development of the liturgy. Ceiling heights of these smaller churches were typically in the range of 56 to 65ft. The design for Redeemer shows a height of 58ft. These are clear interior heights to vaulted ceilings, not ridge heights. The truss work was above the ceiling vault and the ridge line was typically 20 to 40ft above the height of the ceiling vault. For example, Bach's Thomaskirche in Leipzig has an interior vaulted ceiling height of 59ft but the steep roof pitch of 63 degrees results in a ridge height that soars far above what is being proposed for

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Redeemer. The Redeemer design team considered this ceiling/roof issue carefully and elected not to pursue the vaulted ceiling tradition, but opted instead for the simplicity of an internal wood truss structure and a simple structural wood ceiling/roof construction. This has allowed a significant reduction in the overall building height, to the 58ft minimum ridge height required to meet the functional requirements of the liturgy.

In summary, the design team has endeavored to design a beautiful building that is the minimum height and the maximum width required to effectively serve the liturgy. The design has been meticulously tailored to these functional requirements, tailored like a tight fitting suit.

Sincerely
Dana Kirkegaard
Dana Kirkegaard
Principal

Kirkegaard Acoustical Design

architectural acoustics, noise control and audio systems design

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Dana Kirkegaard

Acoustical Design Consultant

Dana Kirkegaard has provided acoustical design services to more than 250 church and organ/choir projects ranging from parish churches to national landmarks like the Washington National Cathedral. The new chapel at the Duke University Divinity School was completed last year. Current projects include work with Yale Divinity School, the Yale Institute of Sacred Music, and Harvard University. Conservatory experience includes work at Eastman and numerous projects for Oberlin. Mr. Kirkegaard serves with an elite group of pipe organ builders and musicians on the reference committee for Eastman's EROI organ research/design initiative.

Prior to specializing in church acoustics, Mr. Kirkegaard won international acclaim as a pioneer in the field of ensemble acoustics. He has worked with many of the world's leading symphony orchestras, including Boston, Chicago, London, Philadelphia and San Francisco and has enjoyed the rare privilege of working at Carnegie Hall.

Mr. Kirkegaard is distinguished in research as well as design. He has been honored with invitations to present more than 20 technical papers to the Acoustical Societies of America (ASA) and Japan (ASJ), the British Institute of Acoustics, the Royal Institute of British Architects, the United Institute of Theater Technology and the Audio Engineering Society. He has served as Chairman of Technical Sessions for the Acoustical Societies of America and Japan.