

Worship FACILITIES



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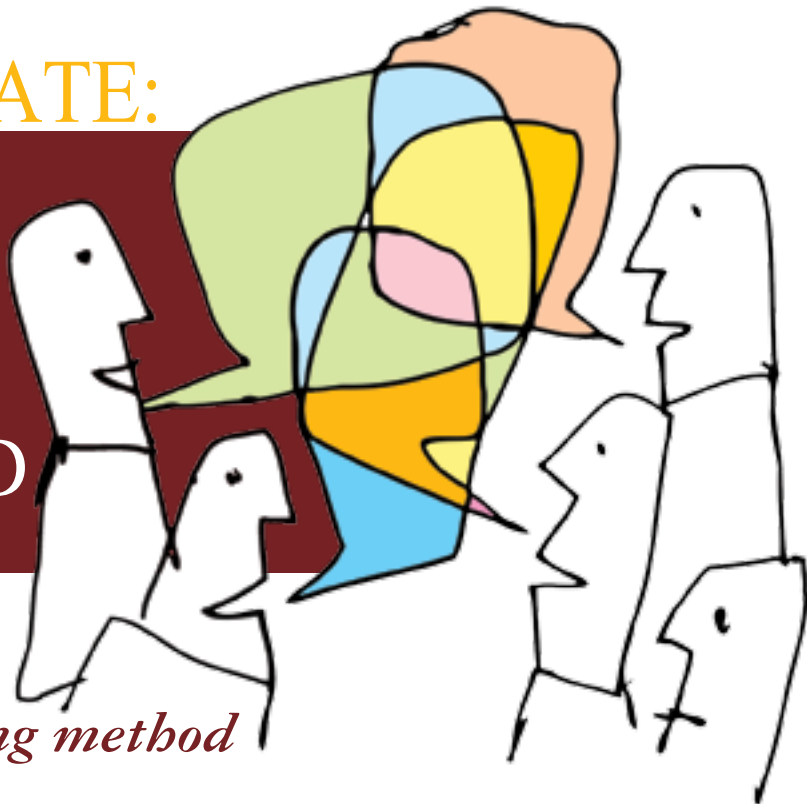
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the GREAT DEBATE:

DESIGN BUILD VS. DESIGN BID BUILD



Invaluable insights into selecting the ideal building method

A bit reminiscent of the recent raging race for the Democratic presidential candidacy nomination, industry experts have historically carried pointed views on the type of building method that makes the most sense for today's houses of worship. In one camp were those who stood firm on the belief that **DESIGN BUILD OFFERS A QUALITY PROJECT, ON TIME, AND AT THE GREATEST COST SAVINGS.** And on the other end of the spectrum were those who believe the **DESIGN BID BUILD APPROACH IS PARAMOUNT TO GETTING A TOP-NOTCH DESIGN BUILT AT A COMPETITIVE PRICE.**

Worship Facilities Magazine asked some leading experts on the topic, from builders to architects, consultants, and authors on the subject, to share their insights with our readers. The information that follows may help you make the best choice for your individual project needs.

The Issues at Stake

First off, church leaders need to know the basic differences between the two building methods and the potential strengths and weaknesses that each can bring to the table.

Just what is the Design Build method? According to the author of *Preparing to Build*, Principal Consultant Stephen Anderson with Clayton, North Carolina-based AMI Church Consulting Services, a company that provides guidance for growing churches, Design Build is a parallel process where the builder has input on the design from the beginning.

Architect Martin Sell, AIA, president and owner of MSA Integrated Project Delivery LLC, an integrated design, development, and construction management company in Beaver Dam, Wisconsin, says a simple description of Design Build is this: "Design Build ... has the owner contracting with

one firm for both design and construction services." Sell, who was president of the Wisconsin chapter of the American Institute of Architects (AIA) in 2007, reports that Design Build has grown from almost no share of the building market to more than 50% of the building market in the past 20 years.

Bob Adams, director of business development for Walkertown, North Carolina-based JH Batten Inc., a construction solutions provider for churches, refers to the Design Build method as "the classical method."

"In Design Build, the design builder team, comprised of both design and construction team members, works with the client to develop the design, price the project while in design, and then proceed with the project upon client approval," Adams explains.

The Design Bid Build method, on the other hand, can be described like this,

DESIGN BUILD IN ACTION

Huntersville United Methodist Church (HUMC) in Huntersville, North Carolina, broke ground in spring of 2007 using the Design Build method, courtesy of Walkertown, North Carolina-based JH Batten Inc.



Photo by Bob Adams.

according to Adams, who calls the approach “traditional”: “Design Bid Build is a process where the client secures design professionals to design their building first. Following the design process, the client secures multiple bids for the construction of the project. Once the client has awarded the project to the successful bidder, the construction process begins.”

According to Tom Panzica, executive vice president of Panzica Building Corporation in South Bend, Indiana, an architect-led design/build company, both methods have advantages. The advantages of Design Bid Build include an architect-led process that may result in better quality design, he claims. And of course, the method also allows for “multiple bidder and market competition at the end of the process,” he says. In addition, the architect can act as an intermediary between the owner and the general contractor.

Some disadvantages of the Design Bid Build method, according to Panzica, are that final construction costs are not known until late in the game. In addition, he reports that the bidding process “cre-

ates numerous opportunities for errors in calculations and judgment.” Emphasis may be placed on seeking the lowest priced provider, as opposed to ensuring the best team and value for the project.

When asked about the advantages of Design Build, Panzica states the following: the design/builder can provide early “real world” cost input and the opportunity to guarantee a maximum cost. “The time length of a project, too, can be greatly reduced using the Design Build method, where design and construction may be more ‘fast track,’” he reports. In addition, he adds, “Occurrence of costly change orders is drastically reduced or eliminated.”

The disadvantages of Design Build, Panzica states, are this: “Not all design builders are equal—some are far more qualified than others.” Another potential pitfall with the approach is “a tendency to rush into ‘bricks and mortar’ that can shortcut essential design steps,” he says.

Matters of Methodology

Beyond the merits and drawbacks of each model, the experts tend to support one

camp distinctly over the other.

In reviewing the differing opinions, church leaders may find kernels of wisdom that resonate particularly well with their own management approach and dreams for a new building program.

According to Anderson, “When circumstances dictate that the church minimize the amount of time and effort it must put into the building program, they should consider Design Build.”

However, Anderson further states, “If the church has the appropriate expertise and is willing to put in the extra time and effort to select a ‘best of breed’ approach for both the architect and the builder, then Design Bid Build might be the best solution.”

David Hatton, founder and CEO of Dallas, Texas-based ChurchWorx Inc., a professional project management firm focused on faith-based building, maintains that the competitive nature of Design Bid Build provides a win-win situation for the house of worship. “The Design Bid Build method provides accurate vision-based design to the specific needs of the ministry.... It creates a healthy, above-board environment and holds the independent project team members accountable to accurately deliver the agreed upon quality level of the project. High integrity financial accountability is inherent to the Design Bid Build process,” he says.

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On the other side of the fence, Rene Charest, CEO of CharestCorp Church Builders in Fresno, California, a company that designs and builds churches and trains pastors and boards in setting up building committees, maintains that Design Build is the solution for churches. "The pastor and his board should try to remove the burden off of their shoulders as much as possible." And he adds, "The Design Build process [allows] the architect and builder and major subcontractors [to be] involved with the owner in the initial planning and design, [providing] a guaranteed maximum price. Essentially, the design builder warrants to the owner/church that the plans are complete and takes the risk for any discrepancies in the plans," he reports.

As an example of his company's positive experience using the Design Build approach for churches, Charest points to a recently completed project for a 12,000-member church, Valley Bible Fellowship in Bakersfield, California. "The local architects and builders stated that the project would cost over \$12 million. The church was only able to get \$8 million. CharestCorp assembled the complete design/build team

and designed a structure that exceeded the needs of the church, saving \$4 million." And he adds, "It was completed on schedule (six months) and on budget."

Adams, too, relates a story where Huntersville United Methodist Church (HUMC) in Huntersville, North Carolina, began a building project under the traditional Design Bid Build method to find that they were dissatisfied with both the process and the result of the project's initial phases. "In 2005, JH Batten began working with HUMC under the classical method of Design Build. The church broke ground on their facility [Spring 2007], and we will turn the building over to them in mid-March—approximately 2.5 months ahead of schedule."

Hatton points to ChurchWorx's First Baptist Church (FBC) of Dallas, Texas, as a prime example of how well Design Bid Build can work for even the largest, most complex projects. "FBC Dallas was a downtown setting where we demolished buildings, excavated to construct the required superstructure underground, and built a vertical structure while the church [still] functioned, and downtown Dallas conducted business as usual," he says. And he adds that constant evaluation and value management help provide clients such as FBC with both a smooth delivery process and cost control.

Implications for Green Building

As churches increasingly look to become strong environmental stewards within their communities and to seek out green building opportunities, what are the ramifications of choosing one method over another in going green? According to the experts, the territory is somewhat uncharted to date.

Adams relates, "In either delivery method the team members need to have a thorough understanding of 'green' [Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design] (LEED) [Accredited Professional] AP status, Energy Star awareness and application, etc."

For Sell, green building is still building and he maintains his case for Design Build. As he states, "Generally, LEED-certified buildings can be produced for less cost using a Design Build method because the architect and builder are on the same page from day one making decisions that affect the sustainability of the project."

Anderson, on the other hand, takes a more neutral approach: "... 'green' design and construction expertise is still developing and ... the church may find that they need to select a best-of-breed solution for green design (who may not be local), and then find the best solution for a green builder that can build it."

No matter whether church staff is undertaking construction of the standard variety or opting for green building, it pays to realize why oftentimes there's a debate in the first place over building method. As Anderson sums up, "The debate over which construction method

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— David Hatton, founder and CEO, ChurchWorx Inc., Dallas, TX

to use is driven primarily by marketing by the companies themselves. If you are a Design Build firm, you will tout the advantages of Design Build, and if [you are] an independent builder or architect, you will do the same for [the Design Bid Build] solution.”

And he adds, “In the end, who you partner with to build your church is more important than the construction methodology. The best solution, regardless of what you call it, is a builder and an architect who can and will work together as a team with the church to provide a design and construction solution that has a guaranteed not-to-exceed price and is completely open book.”

***Carol Badaracco Padgett is editor of
Worship Facilities Magazine, and resides
in the Atlanta, Georgia, area.
She can be reached at
cpadgett@worshipfacilities.com.***