

On the Boards: Corvallis church expansion

By: [Josh Kulla](#) in [Architecture and Engineering](#) December 20, 2018 1:51 pm



A new social hall in the works at the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship church in Corvallis will be built as an attachment to the existing meeting hall.
(Courtesy of DiLoreto Architecture)

The **Unitarian Universalist Fellowship** church in Corvallis, like many other entities in Oregon, is facing challenges associated with growth.

The church opened in 1958 after purchasing a pair of government surplus buildings from **Camp Adair** and reassembling them on a 2.25-acre lot on Northwest Circle Boulevard. One building became a meeting hall, and the other became the Religious Exploration building. Volunteers contributed architectural drawings and labor to complete the job.

A kitchen was added in 1987, along with the Fellowship Hall sanctuary. Then, in 2016, work began on the latest expansion effort: a new social hall.

“They’ve been trying for a long time to use their (existing) resources, but they finally decided they needed to (raise money to) build a new hall,” said Stephanie Fitzhugh, a project manager with **DiLoreto Architecture**, the Portland firm tasked with designing the project.

The new social hall will be north of the existing buildings. It will be physically attached to the meeting hall, and include a commercial kitchen and restrooms to serve the whole building. The meeting hall’s existing kitchen will be converted into office and meeting space.

Existing landscaping will be left in place. Bicycle parking and benches will be added throughout the grounds, while ADA ramps and driveway aprons will be installed in the parking area.

DiLoreto Architecture often works with nonprofits and churches, but few are as energy-conscious as this one, Fitzhugh said. To that end, an array of techniques and features will be incorporated, she said.

"It won't likely be officially (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) certified, but our intent is to make it as efficient or sustainable as possible," she said. "It's often not possible to do that with nonprofits, and really, you try to take all the money that's available and make the building as efficient as possible."

To maintain scale and a residential feel in line with the neighborhood, the new hall will have an offset gable roof connected to the existing building. This, Fitzhugh explained, will provide volume inside.

Much of the new building's glazing will face west toward the church's garden space, while the roof will support both living vegetation and possibly a photovoltaic solar array.

The living roof will improve stormwater management and increase insulation, and even increase the roof membrane's life span.

In line with the theme of efficiency, the interior will feature natural wood finishes highlighted by exposed glulam structural beams as well as wooden flooring and ceilings.

Currently, the project team is in the process of applying for a conditional use permit from the city of Corvallis.

"Once the entitlements are done, we'll get a contractor to price it and that will let us know how close we are or how far we are," Fitzhugh said. "On top of the addition, they have to sprinkler the entire building, so there are also other upgrades that need to happen to get us to where we need to be.

"It's a commercial project," she added, "but it's not a huge project, so I'd hope it could be somebody local to Corvallis who could very easily do this job."