

# Projects for Churches

## Using the Skills and Experience of Studio B Architects

Studio B Architects aims to serve church organisations to provide buildings and property that will facilitate each the church's specific mission needs in the best possible way. This includes:

- Understanding local mission and culture
- Encouraging relationships through design
- Expertise in designing worship auditoria or sanctuaries
- Presenting an image of welcome and relevance
- Becoming the central focus for the community in the marketplace
- Getting value from property
- Designing sustainably; respecting God's creation.

These elements apply to buildings needed by the church's mission in any country. Whilst most of our work has been in Australia, and the UK, our skills enable us to consider the specific needs, culture and climate in any situation and make proposals for each particular situation.



*Surfer's church, The Wave, Ocean Grove, Victoria, Australia*

What do we mean by...?

## Understanding local mission and culture

We start by asking church leaders about their specific "Mission", what is their calling before God. What are their priorities for the future? What do they need right now? What adds meaning to worship for the people?

What makes your young people enjoy life? Do you need a place for a sewing group / a youth group / a men's breakfast group / homework club / media studio? Do you feel called to set up a gym or sports club like [Goodlife](#) in Budreim, Qld?

Then we can make a building that can serve the needs of the future church.



*Worship at St Aldates Oxford, UK, after refurbishment*



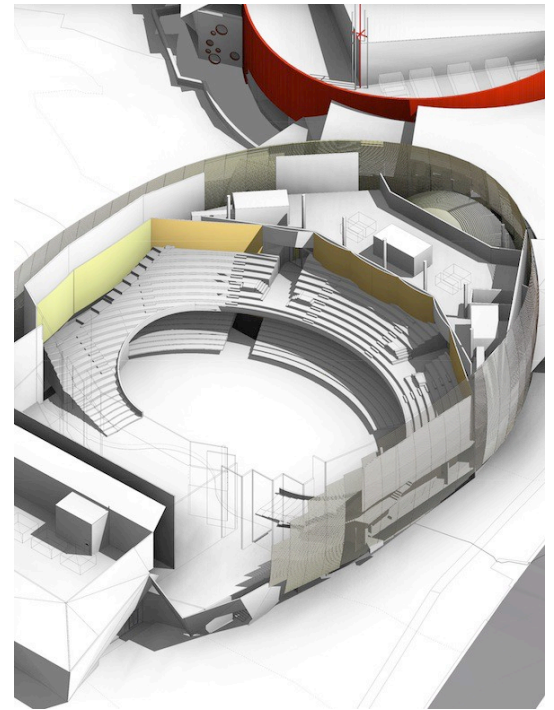
## Encouraging relationships through design

We know that rooms need to be made the right size to suit the activity. Where few people are talking and praying together over a deep personal matter, it is better that they are in a small room. Sometimes people need to be in a space that has a sense of sacredness and quiet. Other times it is good to be in a lively worship space, engaged with others in worship. At other times there is a need to simply have space to relax and enjoy fellowship, possibly in a cafe atmosphere. The shape and character of the room together with its finishes and outlook affect the relationship between people using it and between individuals and their perception of God.

We make buildings that consist of rooms which help people relate.

## Expertise in designing worship auditoria or sanctuaries

Sloping floor worship auditoria are necessary where large numbers of people need to be accommodated and the focus of the room will always be in one direction. Flat floor auditoria are useful for approximately 600 or less, and enable movable seating to be provided which can be configured in different layouts or removed altogether. Sightlines to the platform are very important for people to feel connected to the platform activity. The type of seating needs to be comfortable but can also have an impact upon the acoustics. The layout needs to allow sense of participation in worship with others around you and this can be achieved by combination of acoustic finishes and seating layout. The location and style of the sound desk will also be important together with the audiovisual installation, if required. There are many more issues to consider as well.



*New shaped worship auditorium for 2500 at Crossway Baptist with all seats within 34m of the platform*

Designing a successful auditorium involves considering lots of issues and planning for them all.

## Presenting an image of welcome and relevance

The entry point to your building needs to be inviting and transparent, encouraging newcomers to feel welcome and enter.

The entrance foyer should be a place of hospitality, where people gather for fellowship. The entrance doors should be obvious from a distance and if possible, facing the passing public. The design of the building should present the image that Christian faith is relevant to contemporary life.



*Obvious entry at St Alfred's Church Blackburn North, Victoria, Australia*

The design of the church's buildings is its "Street Art" - our public image.





## Becoming the central focus for the community in the marketplace

If you have a choice of where to locate your building, it is good to put it at the centre of the community. Just as faith is central to life, the location of the building can make it a focal point for people.

We can advise on the selection of a site and the location of the building on that site that will best suit the church's mission.

## Getting value from property

Do you have land or buildings that are no longer needed for the church's mission? Could these be used for some other purpose that would support the church's mission aims such as housing for people in need or to build a school? Sometimes the property can be sold in order to provide funds for new building work or other mission activity. We are Heritage Victoria listed consultant architects.

We have obtained permits for churches before property is sold that will improve its value.

## Designing sustainably; respecting God's creation.

The design of the building needs to control the sun, rain and wind, providing comfort for people who will use it. The orientation of the building and its shading can help to provide passive cooling or heating through controlling the impact of the sun at different seasons.



*New entrance and office for St Peter's Anglican church creates visible activity between the library and town hall in the main street in Box Hill, Victoria, Australia*



*St Alfred's has a solar chimney that uses the sun to draw air out of the auditorium, pulling cool air in from below ground, avoiding the need for air conditioning as well as creating a community focus*



Prevailing winds may need to be channelled to provide cooling, or blocked to avoid uncomfortable draughts. Rainwater can be collected for re-use and used as thermal mass for cooling or heating. Energy can be generated by absorbing the Sun's radiant heat to provide warm water or space heating. Energy can be generated by wind turbines if there is constant wind energy. The construction materials should be obtained locally where possible and they should come from renewable sources such as plantation timber. Building materials should have low embodied energy. The installations in the building should use as little external energy as possible. Location on the site and construction work should respect the existing landscape features, preserving habitat for plants and animals.



*Auditorium extension to serve 110 at South Oakleigh Gospel Church*

All of our work is based upon sustainable design principles.

## Conclusion

We think that it is important to design buildings for churches and other clients holistically; taking into account all of these elements listed above. We design to our client's brief, and assist them to draw up a clear brief if they do not have one. We listen carefully to our clients to be sure we meet their needs. Our buildings are not extravagant, but elegant and good value for the long term.

We are keen to meet clients and discuss their needs in detail. We can be contacted at:

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### Photo credits

St Alfred's: Aaron Pocock

St Peter's: Andrew Lloyd

Others: Fred Batterton



*New church complex for the Salvation Army at Chirnside Park, Victoria*

