

MAY 2008

The process of deconstructing our ruined cathedral has begun. We have had the ruins evaluated for the presence of asbestos, as required by state regulation. The work of asbestos removal has now begun. Prior to the demolition of the walls, significant elements of the cathedral will be salvaged for future use. Some of the stone of the walls will also be salvaged, with the remainder staying on site and used as fill. In view of the delay we anticipate prior to the construction of a new cathedral, the site of the cathedral and its parking lot will be graded and planted with grass so that it does not detract from the appearance of the neighborhood in the meantime.

Deconstruction Schedule

May 19th – June 9th: asbestos removal
May 22nd – June 1st: stained glass window removal
June 9th – July 1st: steeple removal
June 23rd – July 1st: bell removal
June 23rd – July 10th: removal of mosaics and marble pieces
July 1st – September 1st: wall removal and demolition

Public Meeting

Some people interested in the Bassett Neighborhood and/or historic preservation have expressed concern about the demolition of the 150 year old walls of the cathedral. The City has asked us to have a public meeting for the exchange of views prior to the demolition. The meeting is scheduled to be held at Meriter MainGate on Monday, June 2nd.

Other Updates

Central mosaic of St. Raphael – It is no longer anticipated that we will try to preserve the central mosaic in place and build the new cathedral “around it.” That mosaic is mounted on a block wall constructed just inside the back wall of the sanctuary. It will be necessary to construct a “cradle” around the mosaic and wall in order to move it in tact, but it is believed that this can be successfully done. Conrad Schmitt Studios in New Berlin has been engaged to clean and restore the mosaic.

Silver statue of Blessed Virgin Mary – The Cathedral Heritage Committee has expressed a desire that this statue, which stood at the sanctuary steps of the cathedral, be restored and put back into use sooner rather than later . . . prior to the building of a new cathedral. It has been discovered that this statue was originally crafted by the Rambusch Company of Jersey City, NJ. The statue will be shipped to that company for evaluation and (it is anticipated) restoration.

Piano – The damage to the grand piano that had been in the cathedral was more serious than it had appeared. The very costly estimate we have received for restoration will make it necessary to re-evaluate whether this work should be undertaken.

Estate Sale – After a more thorough evaluation of the contents of the rectory, it appears there are relatively few pieces that will be sold which are of a quality to be included in an “estate sale.” The anticipated sale may be done by simply listing and describing available items, with interested parties invited to make specific inquiries.