



**Our New Home  
Potomac Project Update #4  
Architect Selection**

**May 31, 2021**

In our third [update](#) covered the major milestone of consolidating our two parcels of land into one so that we could make optimal use of the space for the construction of Soorp Khatch Church's future home at 9490 River Road. In this issue, the Board of Trustees will share our progress in selecting an architectural firm.

The fall of 2020 was a dark period for the greater Armenian community due to the pandemic, explosions in Lebanon and the war in Artsakh.

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Nonetheless, with deep faith and commitment, the Board of Trustees continued to push forward on the building project while at the same time managing through the devastating impacts of the heavy events surrounding our community.

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## **Hiring an Owner's Representative**

The Board of Trustees is intent on managing this project with the utmost professionalism and transparency, earning the trust and commitment of the community we serve. To that end, we interviewed "owner's representatives," a role commonly hired to manage the process of a construction project, including design, entitlements, permitting, and construction. The owner's representative serves as a liaison and ensures that the owner's best interests are carried out throughout the project. We received several recommendations from builders and community members and interviewed four owner's representatives via Zoom. Three did not fit what we were looking for but the fourth was the right match for the project and community -- Jim Wilson of Gaithersburg-based [JFW Inc.](#) With more than 20 years of experience in this domain, he has managed 100+ projects for an impressive list of clients, 40+ religious institutions and many schools including Sidwell Friends School, Maret School and Mercersburg Academy. After several virtual and in-person meetings, the Board hired him in January 2021.

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## Selecting an Architect

Our owner's representative Jim Wilson got to work immediately to develop our Request for Proposal (RFP) for an architectural and engineering firm, and within a week, he had expressions of interest from six qualified firms from his network. Simultaneously we developed the RFP with Mr. Wilson and in early February issued it to nine qualified firms:

1. Atkin Olshin Schade
2. Bowie Gridley
3. DCS Design (Davis Carter Scott)
4. Hord Coplan Macht

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5. Kerns Group
  6. Lemay Erickson Willcox
  7. MTFA (Michael T. Foster)
  8. Tanz
  9. Waldon Studio

Eight firms submitted bids, one firm withdrew due to their heavy project load. Throughout February and March, we reviewed the bids and selected four firms for follow-up interviews based on a thorough assessment and scoring of the proposals. The interviews entailed a detailed discussion of the project, their proposed approach and how they work with church organizations like ours. In the course of these discussions, they also shared suggestions and ideas that we found useful and are now adopting into the scope of our project. Two of the firms stood out in particular as the finalists. After a thorough vetting and discussion on the two finalists, the Board of Trustees agreed that both firms were strong candidates and ultimately voted on [DCS Design](#) for the project.

DCS Design is a highly reputable firm with a 50 year-long track record of successful projects in the Washington DC region, including several commercial buildings, churches and Arlington Mill Community Center. Their work has earned them countless awards within the architecture, design and construction industry. We encourage you to explore their qualifications and experience on their [website](#).

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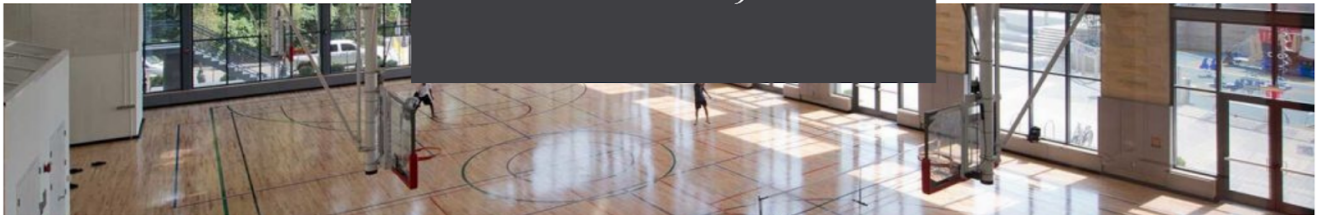


Architecture  
Interior Architecture  
Master Planning  
Sustainability  
Branding

**Design is  
Everything.**  
Everything  
is design.



DCS DESIGN  
*Selected Community  
Center Projects*



**Questions? Contact the Potomac Project Communication Committee at the Church email below.**

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Archives