



The Unfinished Church as it stands today



Paul James's "finished" version of the Unfinished Church

Finishing up the Unfinished Church

By Paul L. James

Accepting the challenge to architecturally document the Unfinished Church came after more than a decade of working primarily in ecclesiastical architecture. Few projects, however, captured my interest like this beautiful classical gothic structure, never finished, and whose foundations were laid in an era when high rise steel construction, in both Europe and North America, was coming of age.

The original architect, William Hay, chose instead the discipline and order that the "stacking of great stones" demands. And, from his ruling pen and T-square came a classical design which did not disappoint the congregation. None of the accounts as to the actual reasons the project was finally abandoned could subtract however, from what has become a most exquisite combination of natural and constructed beauty.

Finishing it "on paper" was to serve both practical and artistic needs, in that only sparse archived drawings of the intended building existed, along with only small elevation drawings of what it would have looked like. In addition, short cuts and changes made during construction further obscured that vision. The use of sophisticated modelling and rendering software, now used extensively to document historic structures, gives us a permanent record of not only what was actually built, but also what was, in this instance, intended to be built.

In the following months, with the model now completed, I am planning animated walkthroughs and aerials to give an even more intimate feeling and an appreciation of this treasured historic landmark. *NI*

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