

2007 FAITH & FORM RELIGIOUS ARCHITECTURE AWARD

RELIGIOUS ARCHITECTURE

NEW FACILITIES

St. Bede Catholic Church
Williamsburg, Virginia

AWARD

Merit

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STRUCTURAL ENGINEER

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MEP ENGINEER

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ACOUSTICAL CONSULTANT

MuSonics

LIGHTING CONSULTANT

C.M. Kling & Associates, Inc.

ORGAN BUILDER

John-Paul Buzard
Pipe Organ Builders

PHOTOGRAPHY

Prakash Patel Photography

For many years the parish worshipped in two separate spaces. In an era of fewer priests, this parish recognized the need to consolidate worship around one table. The client desired a Georgian style church reflecting the local architectural character.

The church is sited in a serene setting deep into the wooded site, at the southern edge of an existing meadow. The massing and plan reflect the three primary functions: commons, baptistery, and nave. A place of welcome and hospitality, the commons is detailed as a Georgian manor house. Its gables, chimneys, arcades, and porticos provide scale to the 180-foot-long building. The baptistery is a transparent link between commons and the nave, bathed in natural light.

The nave is a 128-foot-diameter, copper-clad drum that rises from a 140-foot-square masonry base. Shelves of dichroic glass in the lantern above the altar refract the sun's rays, further animating the nave. The base contains an ambulatory, Stations of the Cross, reservation and reconciliation chapels. The nave accommodates seating for 1,500, 13-pews-deep. Copper-clad "knock-out" walls east and west of the nave allow for two 250-seat transepts to be added in the future.

A strong arts and furnishings program resulted in several splendid liturgical art pieces including a cross with corpus, Madonna and Child, St. Bede triptych, Stations of the Cross, tabernacle, and ambo. The baptismal font and altar were designed by the architects.



JURY COMMENTS

The Georgian architectural character of the church is an appropriate response for Williamsburg. It is used with invention, without merely copying classical details. The large worship space gathered around a central altar is successfully articulated. The perforated roof monitor adds much to the worship space, and provides ample day lighting.