



National Trust *for*
Historic Preservation®

Preserving Black Churches

Creating a Stewardship Planning Framework

PHILANTHROPY AND THE BLACK CHURCH
2025 SYMPOSIUM

TIFFANY TOLBERT, SENIOR DIRECTOR FOR PRESERVATION
AFRICAN AMERICAN CULTURAL HERITAGE ACTION FUND

What is a Stewardship Plan?

A Stewardship Plan is a roadmap that defines approaches for heritage conservation (capital improvements and cyclical maintenance, documentation and interpretation, programming, and use) and the broader management and funding needs for implementation.

Stewardship Plan components include:

- Architectural Planning
- Business & Strategic Planning

Architectural Planning

Documentation

- Site Survey
- Laser Scan
- Hazardous Materials Assessment

Historic Structures Report

- Development History
- Condition Assessment
- Site and landscape treatments
- Mechanical, electrical, plumbing, fire protection, and audio systems
- ADA Compliance

Preservation Recommendation

- Stabilization
- Upgrades of mechanical, electrical, plumbing, fire protection systems
- Preservation of historic character
- Concepts for modifications/additions

Cost Estimate

Implementation Schedule

Cyclical Maintenance Plan

Interpretation Strategy

Business & Strategic Planning

- Operational Assessment
- Program Vision
- Fundraising Assessment & Plan
- Capital Campaign Feasibility Study
- Business Plan

How to Prepare for Stewardship Planning

Preservation & Rehabilitation

What are the current issues impacting the church building? | What are the priorities? | What has been done? | Estimated costs?

Stewardship Planning

What planning has been completed and when? | What were the planning recommendations?

Leadership

What is the current leadership structure or governing body of the church? | What is the structure of pastoral and laity leadership?

Programming

What is the mission of the church? | How does its current programming support the mission?

Community Engagement, Outreach, Partnerships

How does the church currently engage with the community? | How does the building support outreach and engagement in the community?

Historic Interpretation

How does the church currently tell its history? | Are there tours and interpretive programming/events?

Architectural Planning: Condition Assessment

All Assessed Facilities

CHURCH, FELLOWSHIP/EDUCATION, AND PARSONAGE

BUILDING NAME	CRV	PRIORITY DMB	PRIORITY FCI	1-5 YEAR FCI
Brown Chapel AME Church	\$4,999,549	\$384,965	FAIR	POOR
Brown Chapel AME Fellowship/Educ	\$1,120,780	\$134,494	POOR	POOR
Brown Chapel AME Parsonage	\$591,285	\$33,408	FAIR	POOR
TOTAL	6,711,614	\$550,367		

BUILDING NAME	CRV	PRIORITY DMB	0-5 YEAR DMB	6-10 YEAR DMB	11+ YEAR DMB
Brown Chapel AME Church	\$4,999,549	\$1,164,895	\$782,429	\$682,438	\$3,149,716
Brown Chapel AME Fellowship/Education	\$1,120,780	\$600,739	\$466,245	\$187,170	\$332,872
Brown Chapel AME Parsonage	\$591,285	\$218,184	\$184,777	\$171,768	\$201,924
TOTAL	6,711,614	\$1,983,818	\$1,433,451	\$1,041,376	\$3,684,512

CRV

\$6,711,615

ANNUAL COST TO MAINTAIN DMB

\$214,786

VITAL STATISTICS

Use Type

NAME	FLOORS	BUILT	AREA
Church	2	1908	6,260 sf
Fellowship	1	1913/1967	4,320 sf
Parsonage	1	1970s	1,782 sf

PRIORITY ISSUES 1-5 YEAR ISSUES

FCI 8.2%

FCI 29.6%

DMB \$1,983,818

DMB \$1,433,451

DMB EXCESS \$214,786

DMB EXCESS \$1,648,236

0 YEAR RATING

POOR FAIR GOOD



1-5 YEAR RATING

POOR FAIR GOOD



Architectural Planning: Condition Assessment

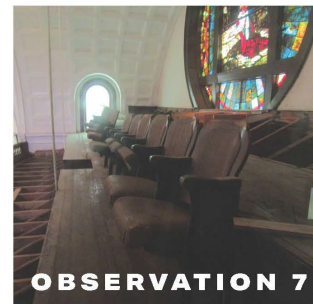
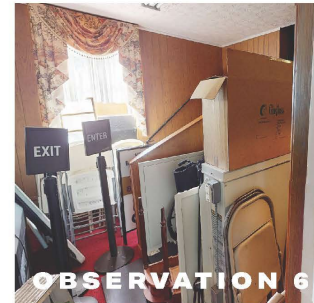


Brown Chapel AME Church

410 MARTIN LUTHER KING ST SELMA, AL

Observation Highlights

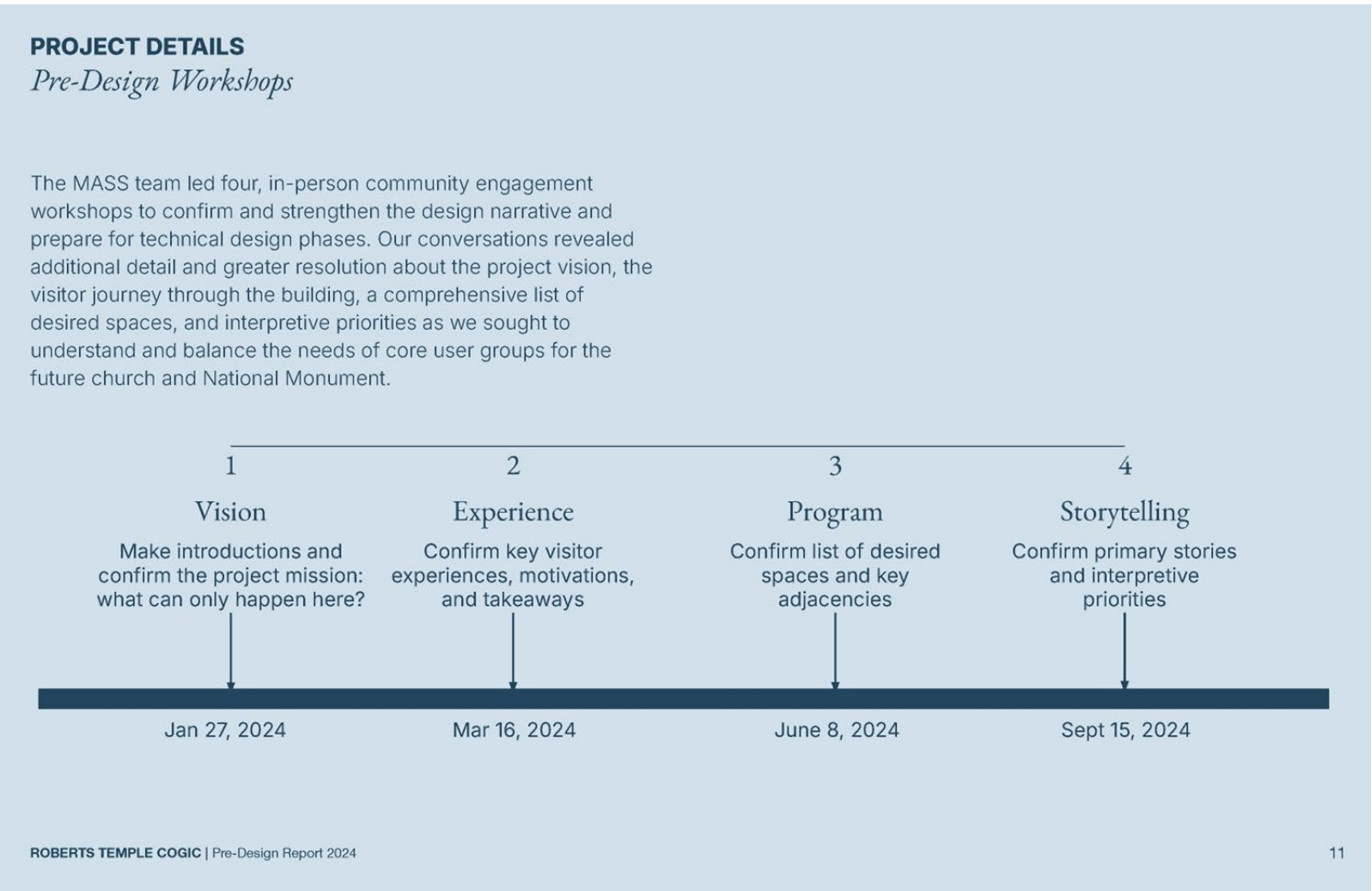
- Observation 1: Previous roof and gutter issues & water drainage issues at foundation. To be repaired in Phase 1 & 2 work
- Observation 2: Interior finishes and framing deficiencies to be repaired in Phase 1-6 work
- Observation 3: Bell Tower structural failures. To be repaired in Phase 1 & 2 work
- Observation 4: Window deterioration / Stained Glass deterioration. To be repaired in Phase 2-6 work
- Observation 5: Brick and stone cladding needs repointing
- Observation 6: Inadequate accessibility into the Sanctuary is required by law. To be corrected in Phase 2-6 work
- Observation 7: Balconies have structural problems and disrepair. To be addressed in Phase 1-6 work
- Observation 8: Electrical systems and mechanical systems are beyond their useful life. To be replaced in Phase 2 work



Architectural Planning: Preservation Treatments



Stewardship Planning: Use & Interpretation



Stewardship Planning: Use & Interpretation

Program

What can only happen here?

- Can you reflect upon the significance of certain spaces within the church, as it was in 1955?
- What are your memories of major events or regular activities?

"The balcony was the place to be!" – spot for kids – "First dances in the balcony" – "Met my first girlfriend in the balcony" – "It was a privilege to go the balcony"

Weddings, baptismal pool, choir stand... "We want it to look like it was!"

"It has to feel like church" – it's not a museum, it's a sacred space"

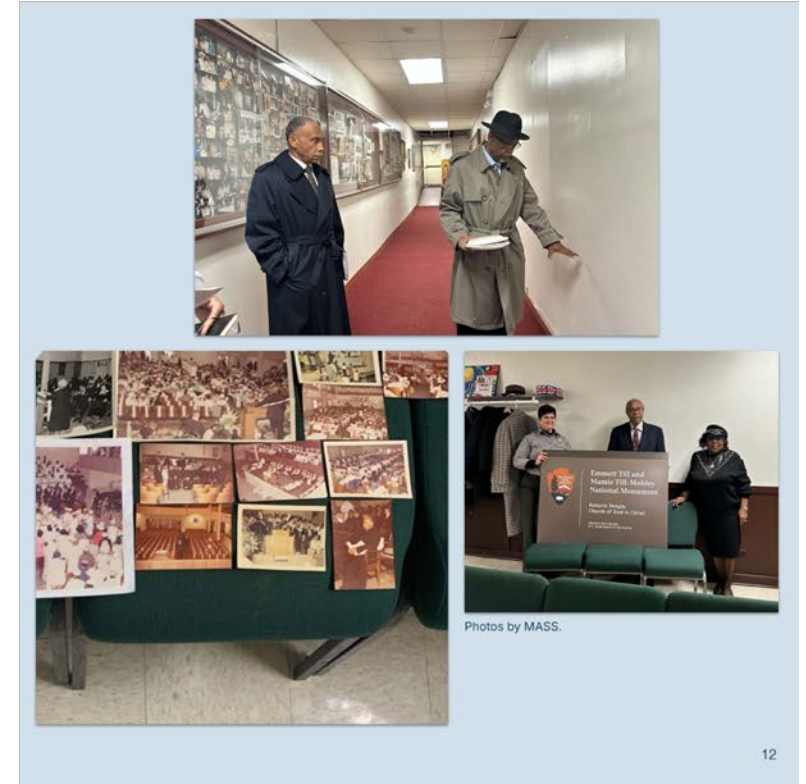
"His body came in through the long hall, made a right turn and went up a stairway into the sanctuary..."

"The exterior is important – the side of the building was used to console people during the funeral – honoring this space"

"It's a HUGE building to experience as a child... should there be a designated space for children?"

→ Place where Mamie and her mother usually sat?

→ From where was the radio broadcast?



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Stewardship Planning: Use & Interpretation

Story

What stories
must be
celebrated?

"Music!" – "memories of the bicentennial – entire choir stand was full... Surround sound!"

"Significance of the COGIC in general – MLK gave his last speech at a COGIC..." – "spirituality of this church, singing – sense of church and god – homegoing..."

"Till funeral... 100,000 people witnessing this horror – not until later that we understood the significance of the event – times were so different, understanding of trauma... impact on kids"

"My dad's service was 4 hours and he was not a bishop" the church offered such comfort"

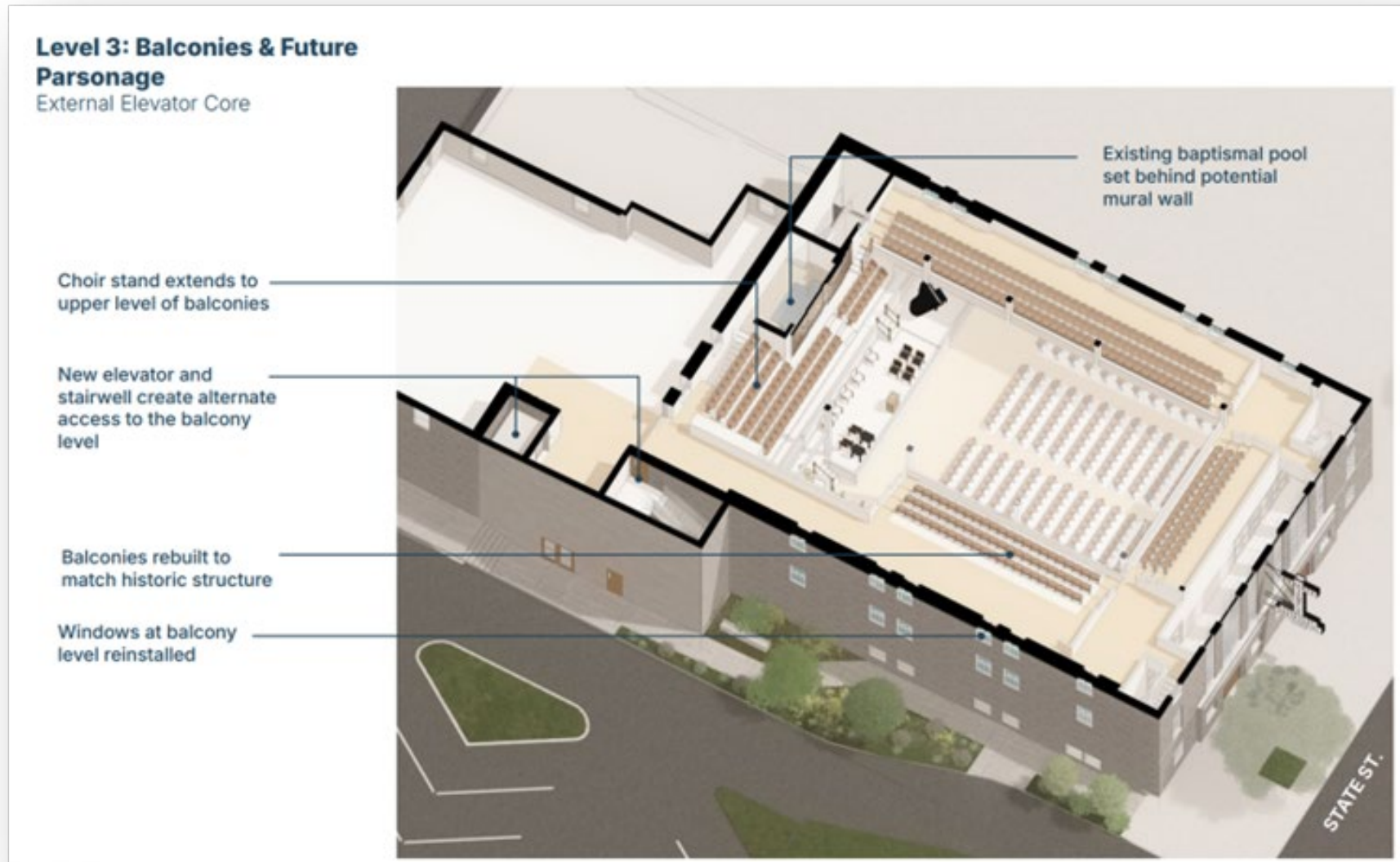
"Place of ongoing significance for folks unjustly murdered"

"Refuge from the South" – people lived here and were put up here"

"Hall of History like in Memphis... named rooms to celebrate people"



Architectural Planning: Preservation Treatments



Thank You!

TIFFANY TOLBERT

TTOLBERT@SAVINGPLACES.ORG

WWW.SAVINGPLACES.ORG/ACTIONFUND



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