Adaptive Reuse of Former Catholic Churches as a Community Asset

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Adaptive Reuse of Former Catholic Churches as a Community Asset

A Project Presented
by
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Submitted to the Department of Landscape Architecture and Regional Planning at the University of Massachusetts Amherst in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of MASTER OF REGIONAL PLANNING MAY 2010

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Abstract

The Catholic Church has experienced changes in the past half-century that have resulted in the restructuring of many dioceses, especially in the Midwest and Northeast, which, due to the consolidation of parishes, has left many church buildings in disuse. Because the architecture and design of many of these buildings are unique to the use of a church, adaptive reuse strategies are challenging to implement but, due to their place in the vernacular of their respective neighborhoods and their ties to cultural heritage, the loss of the building is generally deemed tragic. Trends in the adaptive reuse of church buildings have been primarily commercial in nature, although, recently, there have been more cases of converting former church spaces into luxury condos. It is the view of this researcher that the original interior of these spaces should also be considered in the reuse strategy, and that these buildings should continue to play a positive role in their surrounding communities.

Currently, there is no general consensus on a set of best practices regarding the adaptive reuse of church buildings, and literature on the subject is limited. In order to form a set of adaptive reuse strategies specific to Catholic church buildings a variety of methods are used including interviews, a review of available literature, GIS analysis, and conducting case studies of previous reuse practices of converting Catholic church buildings for community-based uses. Recommendations for similar properties formed from this study will then be applied to the research site of Our Lady of Hope Catholic Church in Springfield, Massachusetts, a building recently closed by the Diocese of Springfield.
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Preface

I suppose that I have to preface this entire project by saying that I am in no way Catholic. While I do believe that Catholic Churches are a part of our built heritage, they are not a part of my direct heritage. This does not mean that I do not have a connection to them. As the loving daughter of an Early Music Musician who believes that the music that she plays and sings is meant to be preformed in the type of space that it was intended for, I learned early in my life to appreciate the majesty (and the amazing acoustics) of older church buildings, especially cathedrals and basilicas.

I am not sure if it is my amazement of the architecture, or the experiences that I have had in these buildings, but I have memories of seeing the shells of churches, after they had closed, and thinking that it was a shame that it could not be used for something else.

One year before I embarked on this project I had the opportunity to go see a band play, in a secret venue, which turned out to be an abandoned church. Then came the epiphany. It isn’t just me who sees the value and the potential in these buildings. There is life after functional death. I became determined to find a way to save and discover beneficial uses for many of these buildings as possible.
Acknowledgements

This project would have never come to fruition without my Committee Chair, Advisor, Professor, and Program Director, Dr. Mark Hamin and his infinite patience. He and the other member of this committee, Michael DiPasquale, guided me through this process, always with excitement and encouragement. I thank them both.

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Chapter One: Introduction

Church buildings, especially older buildings, have an architectural and cultural distinctiveness, if not a uniqueness, which make them good candidates for recognition by preservation organizations and agencies. People concerned with the history of a building and its links to the cultural heritage of a place often turn to historic preservation as a means of protecting the building from demolition or disrepair. In many cases of preservation these buildings are turned into museums or monuments to their own history. Foreseeable problems with reuse as solely a monument are that, while satisfying the needs of the history/heritage constituencies, a preserved building can become potentially alienating to the community at large, as the act of preserving the land renders it unavailable for other community uses, and can force new development to occur on previously undeveloped land. Thus, this “preservation as monument” phenomena works against growth management and conservation oriented practices in that it essentially consumes land on the behalf of a narrow purpose, and any other purposes have to look towards new development on green fields.

Adaptive reuse, when planned and implemented carefully, has the potential to serve multiple functions. A building can remain an artifact for its spiritual, cultural, and architectural past while housing new and/or different activities. If alterations to the building are respectful of its original design, and/or are kept at a minimum, people can still experience the building as a monument, while concurrently using the structure for another purpose.

In theory, building reuse is a more sustainable alternative to new construction because reusing the building would prevent having to build on green fields or to use new building materials. Many of
the original materials will still be used and will not have to take up room in landfills. Reuse of an existing building is also potentially cost saving, depending on the amount of rehabilitation and renovation that is needed. It can also prevent the emission of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere that would normally result from building construction. In addition, reusing a church that is already associated as a part of a community presents an opportunity for the current community to make it their own and contribute to the history of the building.

The recent waves of church closure by various Catholic Archdioceses in the Northeast and Midwest United States have created many opportunities for potential reuse, but may also pose more challenges: Firstly, Catholic churches are more likely to have an ornate interior compared to many other denominations, and while de-consecration removes all of the devices that are needed for performing the Eucharist, much of the religious art and the stained glass remain as a part of the building which may limit options for new uses. Secondly, many catholic churches are designed with one large central room (composed of the nave and sanctuary) with a foyer, a sacristy, and few if any other rooms. Naves are not (architecturally) designed to be divided; new uses that would be best for this space would need to be able to work within a large open floor plan. Thirdly, the organizational structure of the Catholic Church leaves the fate of the church buildings in the hands of the archdioceses following church closures, and many archdioceses have strong views about what is to become of the church buildings that they leave behind. These views can differ from one Archdiocese to another, but they all have seemingly strong views. For instance, the Springfield Archdiocese in western Massachusetts has a covenant which must be agreed upon by the purchaser that prohibits activities within the church premises that would not be condoned by the Catholic Church, though they are willing to make case-by-case exceptions. The Pittsburgh Archdiocese has condoned the razing of their former churches, and it is assumed by this researcher
that its leaders are of the belief that once a place is consecrated, it can no longer be used for anything but a church (Velthuis and Spennemann, 2007).

Learning the nuances of Catholic Church policies regarding reuse will be helpful in the future because, looking at recent demographic trends, it can be assumed that there will be even more closures and thus more vacant churches in the future. The trends are striking. The number of new priests in practice has dropped dramatically over the last 40 years, and their average age is increasing. The number of seminarians and nuns has been dwindling in a similar fashion, and priest-less parishes are increasingly common. Studies suggest that these will be continuing trends for the foreseeable future (Jones, 2003). Similarly, while the number of people who self-identify as Catholic for the sake of survey-taking or basic religious affiliation remains stable, church attendance has decreased and donations have waned. These problems have largely been attributed to changing demographics and development patterns and to the increasing secularization of society, but may be further exacerbated by the relatively recent public scandals and subsequent lawsuits.

A possible benefit for (specifically) Catholic Church reuse is that a recently closed Catholic church seems more likely to be well maintained and not needing as much rehabilitation as other churches, due to their hierarchical organization. The Dioceses do not necessarily close individual churches because of parish shortcomings or declining conditions; more often churches are closed in an effort to consolidate the Diocese. The churches slated for closure could be in great condition as in the case of this project’s site, Our Lady of Hope Church in Springfield, MA, which just experienced a major renovation in 2006 and was slated for closure just 3 years later.

It is now widely accepted that inner-city churches face the long-term consequences of suburban sprawl and/or white flight. All churches (not only Catholic) in urban core neighborhoods saw
their numbers diminish when people began to move out of the city and settle in the suburbs after World War II (DeCort 2003). Despite some parishioners’ loyalty and willingness to travel for mass, many switched churches or started new ones, forcing older urban churches to either adapt or to fail.

**Focus:**
The primary focus of this project is to examine the relevant issues and offer an opening into the relatively new, and ever-expanding area of strategic, holistic adaptive reuse of church buildings. The limitations of the lack of academic literature will be addressed. New possibilities for buildings that are stylistically problematic in the realm of adaptive reuse will be explored and best practices that are a balance between the schools of historic preservation and optimal functionality will be identified.

**Research Questions:**
- In what ways and to what extent can a community, especially its leaders, planners, designers, and developers, appropriately address the longstanding character of a site or structure as well as its historical and cultural significance in its reuse strategies?
- What are the best practices for engaging a community in the public process of identifying and implementing adaptive reuse strategies for the property?
- By what criteria, indices, or matrices should “successful” adaptive reuse be defined?
- What practices have been considered “successful” by their communities?; What approaches to place-making and community involvement were used?
- What is the most successful dynamic/balance of public and private involvement?
• How has the Catholic community reacted to the preservation of former church structures through a secular reuse, where and when it has occurred?

• In what ways and to what extent can the (former) religious use of a property affect the attitudes of the stakeholders and/or decision-makers to reuse strategies?

**Project Goals:**
There is no uniform practice or strategy concerning adaptive reuse. Using the comparative case study method it is assumed that similarities can be drawn between each different case in order to find themes and develop more generalized theories. Though comparisons can be made along denominational lines and types of reuse, there are obvious limitations given the near infinite variables: location, demographics, local politics, land-use, zoning, economic opportunities, real estate market, etc. Assuming that analyses can be built on both the comparisons between case studies and the individual variables, the main goals of this project are:

• To develop a best practices and strategic approach for preserving and reusing Catholic churches, while maintaining their architectural integrity, serving community identified needs, and reducing the need for new development.

• To identify appropriate ways in which public community history can be preserved and presented.

• To define the parameters for “maintaining architectural integrity” in the case of church reuse.

• To establish the economic, environmental, and cultural importance and value of preservation.
To assess actual and potential community “investment” in church property: analytically
gauge the extent to which the community would support and benefit from rehabilitation
and/or reuse.

Research Limitations and Delimitations:
One of the more challenging limitations in this research has been the lack of academic literature on
the adaptive reuse of religious buildings. In addition, general research demonstrates that the
documentation of religious buildings and their community history often defaults to the
responsibility of the community members, which can result in contradictory records. Another
result of this phenomenon is that many of these records are in hard copy and must be obtained in
person.

There is no national database of religious properties, and thus no general database of former
religious properties. This has made locating church buildings that are no longer serving their
original purpose difficult to locate, heavily relying on individuals with knowledge of the areas in
questions. Despite the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops recognition of church
building and renovation as being “one of the most significant and formative experiences in the life
of the parish community” (USCCB, 2008), details of such buildings are generally left out of the
information provided by various Archdioceses about their parishes.

Demographic data, obtained for mapping purposes, was reliant on 2000 Census data because there
is no American Community Survey data available on the block group scale. Population, economic,
and ethnicity data for each map is therefore nearly a decade old. However, 2008 American
Community Survey estimates are available on city scale, and assumptions can be made based on
the overall change in city demographics between 2000 and 2008.
A delimitation that was set for this project is that the study focuses on the main building of the church alone and not on additional parish buildings (such as rectories, schools, or convents), which many churches have on their property. Because the accessory buildings are either residential (rectory) or institutional (school), the process of adaptation to different uses appears less problematic. This study also limits the case studies to cities in the northeastern quadrant of the United States, all of which have experienced decreasing population and considerable demographic changes in the last half-century.

The scope of this project is focused primarily on reuse strategies that have minimal impact on the structure, both interior and exterior, and are limited to areas where the surrounding neighborhood is likely not to have many financial resources to direct toward such a cause. Therefore, reuse strategies that included a high volume of construction and change to the interior of the building were excluded from the case studies. Strategies with a good deal of gentrification implications such were also out of the scope of research, as were strategies whose end result are strictly for private use (e.g. office, residential, etc.).

**Assumptions and Definitions:**
This project is based on the assumption that adaptive reuse can work as a bridge between growth management, environmental benefit and community place-making, and historic preservation, cultural heritage, and public-history.

Other assumptions made pertaining to this project are: Firstly, that there is a general desire for preservation, that most of the stakeholders are open to the idea of reuse, and that despite some interest not everyone will be happy with the final decision(s). Secondly, it is assumed that the importance of the preservation of the interior features of a church building are comparable to that
of the exterior features, and that interior features of specifically church buildings are not included in preservation protection statutes. Thirdly, there are currently no comprehensive guidelines for church building reuse. Finally, each church buildings are generally distinctive among their structural surroundings, and that they are distinctive among other church buildings calling for a more flexible set of guidelines.

This project is basing the bulk of its research around a set of theories and practices, adaptive reuse, cultural heritage, place-making, public-history, and historic preservation. *Adaptive reuse* is the practice of adapting a building that has outlived its intended purpose to a new use. *Cultural heritage* can be defined as the legacy of a specific culture or social group that is left in the form of physical artifacts or traditions. In this project *place-making* is generally defined as the process in which a collective group assigns specific meaning to a specific locality. *Public-history*, whose meaning differs from source to source, for all intents and purposes is defined as the history of the people, falling in line more with the cultural heritage camp, although focused more on events rather than artifacts. *Historic preservation* is the process of preserving sites and structures deemed historically significant and includes identification, registration, protection, rehabilitation, and maintenance. All of these concepts will be further discussed in Chapter 2.

Following this introductory chapter, Chapter Two will include a comprehensive literature review including further discussion of the key concepts in this project. Chapter Three will outline and describe the methodology used for research. In Chapter Four the case studies of previous reuse will be introduced and explored. Chapter Five will cover the historical and current aspects of project site of Our Lady of Hope Church in Springfield, Massachusetts. Chapter Six will provide a discussion of the findings of the comparison of the case studies in order to make recommendations
for the project site. Finally, Chapter Seven will include the conclusions made from this research along with recommendations for further study on this topic.
Chapter Two: Review of Literature

Due to the contemporary nature of this project, the amount and availability of peer-reviewed academic literature on this specific topic is limited. Two master’s theses relevant to this study were copyrighted in 2004: “Socio-Economic and Political Issues in the Successful Adaptive Reuse of Churches” written by Tara A. Johnson (2004) of the University of Cincinnati and “Convert!: The Adaptive Reuse of Churches” written by Christopher John Kiley of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (2004).

Kiley’s thesis, titled “Convert!: The Adaptive Reuse of Churches”, fulfilled the requirements for the dual master’s degree in the fields of real estate development and city planning at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). This thesis focuses on the newer phenomenon of vacant churches, more specifically in the Boston area, and identifies and analyzes some of the major issues that accompany potential reuse. The methodology used for this study was two case studies of vacant churches that had experienced a transformation to another use. The format for the case studies included the context of the site, the analysis of various stakeholders (including potential developers), regulations, site analysis, new programming, and the conversion process (Kiley, 2004).

The thesis written by Tara Johnson to fulfill the requirements for a Master’s degree in Urban Planning focused on the socio-economic impact of church reuse. Her methodology was solely based on case studies of relevant properties and included strategies such as interviews, archival data, census data, and analysis of property value data. The information collected from the case studies was analyzed and applied to Johnson’s research site in order to make recommendations
based on patterns found in the case studies. The use of the case study method was cited as primarily in reaction to the lack of literature related to her specific research question (Johnson, 2004).

The most recent and comprehensive literature review on this specific subject was written on the past and present approaches of the Dutch to reuse redundant churches within their country in an effort to aid other countries in their efforts at church building reuse (Velthuis and Spennemann 2007, 43-66). Velthuis and Spennemann note in their introduction that some approaches that the Dutch have taken towards adaptive reuse for some of these churches may be viewed as “radical” but also mention that in all cases of reuse not all groups of stakeholders will be satisfied and “conflict (is) inevitable” (Velthuis and Spennemann 2007; 44). In their literature review they list the major components of church reuse and the arguments for adaptive reuse (cultural heritage preservation, economic benefit of building reuse, and environmental benefits), the national religious history, the current trends in church “redundancy”, the options/ opportunities left after a church has become “redundant”, and the general attitude(s) toward re-use.

Taking into consideration the fact that the United States is a relatively young country when compared to its European counterparts, and our historical structures are only a couple of centuries old at most, adaptive reuse is a relatively new practice in this country. Originally, the historic preservation movement in the United States was focused on saving landmark buildings like large rail stations and other sizable civic buildings. This movement broadened its scope to include other buildings of historical significance, and now some buildings are saved primarily for their reuse capabilities.

The most common examples of adaptive reuse have been of vacant but still functional industrial buildings such as mills and factories, which have been converted into commercial and residential
space primarily due to their open floor plans and a structural reinforcement which allows a great deal of uses and opportunity for subdivision. Finding new uses for churches is a much more challenging process due to a number of factors, one being the ornate detail and distinctive character of the architecture which includes, in many cases, one large hall with tall ceilings that was never (structurally or otherwise) intended to be subdivided or have added floors. This is an advantage for industrial buildings but not for churches because, generally, industrial buildings are less ornate and are structurally reinforced throughout the building, whereas churches are built with their reinforcements toward the periphery of the structure to open up for high, sometimes vaulted ceilings. In some European nations, such as the Netherlands and the United Kingdom, adaptive reuse is a common practice due to their limited real estate and/or housing shortages. Their experience can serve as a great asset to the United States as we begin to face this challenge.

Unfortunately, academic studies directly pertaining to adaptive reuse of churches are at a minimum, therefore general reviews of the literature of the components related to this particular analysis will be cited. The following sections describe some of the less-direct but still relevant areas of scholarly literature having to do with the rationales, policies, strategies, and techniques of preservation and reuse.

**Demographics: The Shrinking Church**

The Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life operates as an impartial information clearinghouse and town hall forum with the focus on promoting an understanding of the issues that fall between religion and public affairs. The Pew Forum has taken it upon itself to fill in a gap left from the U.S. Census’ lack of information on religious affiliation by conducting the U.S. Religious Landscape Survey, which provides estimates on religious activity and practices based on a sample of 35,000
Americans. The results from the most recent survey were released in report form in February of 2008 and provide insight to possible reasons for the most recent waves of church closure.

According to the most recent survey, in the United States “Catholicism has experienced the greatest net losses as a result of affiliation changes” (Pew Forum, 2008: 6). It is reported that while approximately one third of Americans were raised Catholic, today only one quarter of Americans self-identify as Catholic. This loss would appear more staggering if not for immigration, as immigrants (if Christian) are twice as likely to be Catholic than Protestant. In addition to affiliation changes, another factor revealed by the Religious Landscape Survey was the aging nature of the U.S. Christian population. The two religious groups recognized for their relative youth (age of members) are the Muslims and the group of Americans who are unaffiliated with any religion.

The Institute for the Study of Secularism in Society and Culture at Trinity College released a similar report in 2009. The American Religious Identification Survey (ARIS) is a religious self-identification survey that, in 2008, took a sample of nearly 55,000 Americans in both English and Spanish. The results were also offered in report form and focused on geographic factors in addition to other general socio-ethnic demographics (ISSSC, 2009). Consistent with the Pew Forum’s U.S. Religious Landscape Survey, the ARIS reports that the percentage of Americans who identify as Catholic has decreased from 26.2 percent in 1990, to 25.1 percent in 2008, a trend that is shared with other Christian denominations. The percentage of Americans who identify as unaffiliated or non-religious (referred to as “nones” in the report) has nearly doubled between 1990 and 2008 from 8.2 percent to 15.0 percent. New England is reported to have experienced a net loss of 1 million Catholics in this same span of 18 years (ISSSC, 2009; 17). Another notable demographic shift is the Northeast’s new role as an emerging “stronghold of the religiously unidentified”. While the bulk of the non-religious group used to be located along the west coast, new numbers suggest that a
second cluster has emerged in the northeastern United States between 1990 and 2008. Massachusetts is no exception: 22 percent of residents are reported as religiously unaffiliated and the percentage of Catholics in the Commonwealth has decreased from 54 percent in 1990, to 39 percent in 2008.

Compounded with the changing religious demographics in the United States, location and resources also contribute to the availability of churches for alternative uses. Churches that stand at urban centers (often the oldest in a community) are frequently at higher risk of closure not only because of the limited supply of clergy, but also because of migration patterns, increasing secularization, and the generation of habitual churchgoers aging out of the population. A similar challenge concerning abandoned Catholic churches is that, following closure, the dioceses retain ownership but have fewer resources to maintain the buildings. These factors all combine to create a tenuous position for these unique historical buildings: if markets cannot support redevelopment, demolition can be seen as the most viable option, should there be no party in the financial position to maintain the buildings. Closure of Protestant churches, on the other hand, due to the fact that they are often independent and lack an overseeing body capable of carrying their debts, is much more final, in many cases leaving the building for the city to deal with.

When evaluating the historic value of a church property, research shows that it is important to look at a range of historic aspects that include: Cultural heritage, architectural history and public history.

**Cultural Heritage**
The United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has broadened their definition of “cultural heritage” from just monuments and tangible remains of cultures to include newer categories such as intangible, ethnographic, and industrial cultural heritage.
(UNESCO, 2009). The International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) defines cultural heritage sites as referring “to a place, locality, natural landscape, settlement area, architectural complex, archeological site, or standing structure that is recognized and often legally protected as a place of historical and cultural significance” (ICOMOS, 2008; 2). Religion can be its own culture, and, in many cases, influences surrounding culture. In this case, one can make the argument that a structure that was once solely intended for the practice of religion is a significant piece of cultural heritage. In addition, if such a structure has historically significant architecture and craftsmanship it becomes not only a monument to the religious culture, but also to the architectural and industrial heritage that reflects the larger culture.

Much of the literature on Cultural Heritage is centered on the economical components and advantages of cultural heritage assets. Cultural Heritage Tourism, or Heritage Tourism, is the practice of communities, public entities, and private entities using their cultural heritage as a tourism destination. Additionally, there are projects based entirely on assigning an economic value to cultural heritage and conducting cost-benefit analysis of site protection and preservation (Navrud and Ready, 2002).

People’s attitudes toward historical buildings were the subject of a study in the Netherlands, conducted by J.F. Coeterier. This study assessed attitudes toward historic buildings in an area by conducting in-depth interviews of both residents from the study area and non-residents who lived in adjacent areas. Their responses were compared with those of experts in the area of historic sites. They were judged on four criteria: Form, function, knowledge, and familiarity. The study concluded that, as the evaluations of non-residents and residents differed only in the instance of having emotional ties to a place, historical buildings are important. Coeterier also noted that responses by laypeople generally acknowledged only the form of the building (i.e. aesthetic
quality/experience), while experts' responses were more intellectual and based on historical information (Coeterier, 2001). Coeterier further observed that, “it was the express wish of all the respondents to be involved in the decisions about the fate of historic building in their neighborhood” (Coeterier, 2001; 121). Coeterier continued that their desire to be involved was not the only reason to include laypeople into the decision making process over the fate of local historic buildings. Other reasoning included three levels of “existential value”: identity of place, personal identity, and group identity. These existential levels can have ties to the general cultural heritage of an area, or could contribute toward creating their own distinctive heritage, i.e., what Coeterier refers to as an “environmental anchor”, which will be further discussed in “Place-making”.

Related to the cultural heritage movement, public history focuses on history that is more relevant to smaller groups and communities, rather than entire cultures. Public History is a relatively new term, the definition of which is ambiguous and contested in the sense that there is not one generally accepted ‘consensus’ definition, and selected definitions by public history authorities have been steadily changing. The definition that the Public History Resource Center used in early 2008 is most relevant to this study:

“…a set of theories, methods, assumptions, and practices guiding the identification, preservation, interpretation, and presentation of historical artifacts, texts, structures, and landscapes in conjunction with and for the public.

an interactive process between the historian, the public, and the historical object.

the belief that history and historical-cultural memory matter in the way people go about their day to day lives.” (DeRuyver, 2008)

This is sometimes considered the “real” history of the world, i.e., of the many common people in their daily lives instead of the few wealthy and powerful in their elite enclaves. When arguing for the preservation of a church building for the reasons of cultural heritage, the public history of this
culture is what is wished to be protected. In the cases of many of these buildings it is unlikely that a person of major historical importance attended, or that there was a battle, or a treaty signing, or something of the like which would be of major national or international importance. However, the history of the people that helped to build the building, the people who attended, worshipped, celebrated major life events, or mourned loss, is now symbolized by these buildings.

**Historic Preservation**

In 1996, sociology professor Diane Barthel-Bouchier (then Barthel) published a book on historic preservation in the context of public history titled *Historic Preservation: Collective Memory and Historical Identity*. This work highlighted the current trends of church preservation, pointing out that church preservation is valued by preservationists as creating or maintaining “moral communities” (Barthel, 1996; 102-103). She identifies current organizations such as Inspired Partnerships, Sacred Trusts (which seem to have merged, creating Partners for Sacred Places), and Common Bond, all of which have the shared goal of saving religious properties for the sake of maintaining the important link between architecture and community history. All of these organizations emphasize the community-oriented role and cultural significance of the architecture, so as to support their reuse by a more secular community. To that end, there is a question of what to do when a building cannot be saved in its original condition, and the link between its form and its cultural significance is no longer explicit.

David Lowenthal’s essay, “The Heritage Crusade and Its Contradictions,” in the edited collection *Giving Preservation a History* essentially refers to humans as inherent preservationists, wishing to preserve nearly everything around us because we cannot bear letting the familiar go (Mason and Pages eds., 2004). This is a valid argument, as most preservationists can argue that anything that has lasted for some time has historical significance, whether it is a 300 year old church or a 40 year
old modernist office building. But, when taking all aspects into consideration, it should be recognized that the modernist office building, in all of its cement and drywall glory, could be more easily replicated, whereas a limestone chapel with handmade stained glass windows would be far more costly and time-consuming to build again and one could not guarantee the same level of quality of craftsmanship. Rather than neglecting to consider the value of building reuse, forcing new development in to address the community’s needs, we could instead maintain these buildings and use them, preserving the ever-diminishing open space from new development.

At the other end of preservation practice, John Brinckerhoff Jackson’s essay, “The Necessity for Ruins,” discusses the critical need for more ordinary reminders of our cultural past, or as he puts it: “preservation of reminders of a bygone domestic existence and its environment” (Jackson, 1980, pp 90). This implies a rationale for preserving things that may seem mundane or of little historical significance. Jackson continues, “this kind of monument is celebrating a different past, not the past which history books describe, but a vernacular past, a golden age where there are no dates or names, simply a sense of the way it used to be…” (Jackson, 1980, pp. 94-95). Camilo Jose Vergara and Sylvia Lewis use a similar argument concerning an area of downtown Detroit in 1995.

Considering that the building materials used for such buildings are not the same as the marble and stone that make up ancient ruins, but rather materials that are prone to rot or mold, or contain harmful agents like asbestos, this could be viewed as problematic. However, it may be possible, if a building is in such a state of disrepair that preservation is no longer viable, to de-construct the building and use some of its preservable pieces as monuments. Jackson argues that in some cases, like a specific war-torn church in Berlin, Germany, buildings should be left in decayed condition for the effect of remembering times of strife. Considering the landscape urbanist philosophies of works such as Drosscape (Alan Berger) and Terrain Vague (Christophe Girot), one might possibly
consider this conscious decay to be romantic and indirectly functional. In the context of an expanding and developing urban area, however, one cannot set aside such land when it can be reused, and many preservationists may consider the act of letting a historic structure fall into ruin to be disrespectful at the very least.

Instead of allowing them to decay, if possible, we can maintain the structural integrity of these buildings, while conserving documentation of their history. In this way, they can serve as a living monument to their cultural era, while still serving a functional purpose.

Adaptive Reuse
Adaptive reuse is most commonly defined as a process in which an old building is adapted for a new use (for which it was not originally intended). The practice of adaptive reuse generally comes into play when a building has outlived its original purpose.

William Shopsin, in 1986, published a guidebook for architects and preservationists on adaptive reuse entitled *Restoring Old Buildings for Contemporary Uses: An American Sourcebook for Architects and Preservationists*. While the focus of this book was on economic feasibility and benefit, he still makes the point that the reuse of these historic and/or significant structures should not be reserved for or limited to serving as museums or large-scale nostalgia sites for the affluent classes. Recognizing gentrification as a major obstacle, and knowing that it is often aided by cases of adaptive reuse, Shopsin points out that there is a need for all socio-economic classes to benefit from such practices.

Velthuis and Spennemann assert that the “raison d’etre of cultural heritage management is to manage heritage places in place” (Velthuis & Spenneman, 2007; 44), also stating that when these places cannot be preserved in the way that they remain unchanged, “problems” tend to arise, which is when adaptive reuse becomes a viable option.
In Derek Latham’s two-volume series The Creative Re-use of Buildings, he outlines the possibilities for the reuse of various buildings types including agricultural buildings, civic buildings, and churches. Latham argues that adaptive re-use of these buildings, which were obviously built with one purpose in mind, is not just conversion and rehabilitation but is a combination of the fore-mentioned with the new energy and activity. The art involved with achieving a “harmonious balance” between the character of the old building and the needs of the new user is not just adaptive, it is “creative re-use”. Latham outlines the elements of his self-titled methodology in Volume One, followed by a number of case-studies as examples of this methodology in Volume Two. He takes an inspiring approach to examining the context of adaptive reuse as a practice, outlining the five motives that we, as a society, have for preserving older buildings based on a lecture series given by Derek Linstrum at the York Institute for International Studies. These five motives are: Archeological, using buildings as historical evidence; Aesthetic Appreciation, which encompasses both subjective enjoyment and cultural heritage; Economic, pertaining to heritage tourism, re-use as a money/energy saving tool, and as job creation; Functional, the building ability to serve a needed purpose; and a Psychological component. The psychological component is applicable to church building reuse in opposing ways. On one hand, the common human reaction of “clinging to the familiar” (Latham, 2000;12) is an argument for reuse, as removal of buildings so prominent in the urban fabric, as churches are, can be very damaging to a community. However, Latham points out that the most limitations on creatively reusing a building are set by psychological preconceptions which can lead to a “lack of imagination” (Latham, 2000;14).

Latham continues by outlining the ways and means in which one can go about adapting a building for reuse. The inspiration and design processes can be directly applied in the United States, while
legal and financial directions are more specific to the United Kingdom. The chapter that most applies to the process of finding balance between the building and a new use is titled “Understanding the Building” and stresses the importance of recognizing the strengths of both the “architectural building” and the “vernacular building” and working with the distinctive aspects of both of these concepts when fitting the building for its new use, or vis- versa.

The benefits of adaptive reuse can be applied to the full spectrum of sustainability as building reuse is also identified as environmentally conscious. In 2008 Craig Langston, Francis K. W. Wong, Eddie C. M. Hui, and Li-Yin Shen published a study on the environmental benefits of building reuse and its importance in reducing the level of greenhouse gas emissions in their “Strategic Assessment of Building Adaptive Re-Use Opportunities in Hong Kong”. Because of the high levels of greenhouse gases released by Hong Kong it has become imperative that they change their practices to curb their growing carbon footprint and adaptive reuse of previously built structures had become a necessary option for the governments bent toward energy efficient design. Langston et al. cite the reuse of the material of demolished buildings as one efficient practice, but boast for a more effective practice of adaptive reuse which saves the cost and emissions related to demolition and rebuilding and also helps to conserve national heritage (Langston, et al., 2008; 1710). Langston et al. support that while adaptive reuse has the ability to make positive environmental, economic, and social contributions to a community, it is important to be able to calculate the potential for reuse as some reuse projects may be more beneficial than others. Formerly, Adaptive Reuse Potential (ARP) models were used which focused on economics and the varying degrees of obsolescence of a building. Now there are tools to measure impacts and benefits using multiple criteria, such as that used in SINDEX, sustainability index software. SINDEX assesses potential of reuse by identifying levels at which each practice will maximize economic benefit and utility while
minimizing the use of resources and environmental impact. Langston et al. claims that a multi-criteria index that is holistically-minded is “the only way… to achieve even a modest level of sustainability in the built environment” (Langston et al., 2008; 1717).

**Place-making**
Place-making is strongly rooted in the concept of “sense of place” and the ability to evoke such a sensibility. “Place-making” carries many definitions but is most basically expressed as “a collection of meanings, beliefs, symbols, values, and feelings that individuals or groups associate with a particular locality” (Williams et al., 1998). This concept carries a great deal of importance when considering the relationship that a community has with its built environment. People generally form relationships with their surroundings and, in many cases, they identify more with the aspects of their environment that are special or unique. This uniqueness could be a traditional building design among a sea of modern office buildings, or an irregular cobblestone pedestrian street within an otherwise generic urban grid. It is these nuances that are identifiers for an area, and the community in that area in turn identifies with them, for better or worse.

Churches, as well as other buildings that have ornate details, are often considered to be the focal points of their neighborhoods due to their distinctive physical presence and their often pronounced placement. Before a prominent government the church was the center of societal communication and governance as well as social events, which is the reason that many older churches are located in the genus loci of their respective communities, hence the term “parish church”. William Shopsin identifies churches as a natural centerpiece for a neighborhood based on their distinguishable architecture and placement (Shopsin, 1986).

Lynda H. Schneekloth and Robert Shibley identify place-making as the process of making places meaningful on multiple levels. They suggest that place-making is “not just about the relationship
of people to their places; it also creates relationships among people in places” (Schneekloth and Shibley, 1995; 1). They also assert that the community must be heavily involved in the place-making process, because otherwise the profession of place-making “denies fundamental human expression” (pg. 3). There must be a dialogue created about, within, and by the space, and the community must feel empowered to make decisions regarding the character of the space, in order for it to be successful in becoming and remaining a distinctive place.

In “This Special Shell’: The Church Building and the Embodiment of Memory” published in the Journal of Religious History, Jennifer Clark writes about the conflicting internal attitudes toward church closure and reuse that can be applied outwardly to the community. She first states that if the church remains intact it stays a monument to itself and the “ongoing relationship between the congregation and the building, between people and place, creates… congregational memory” (Clark, 2007; 62). However, she goes on, exploring the types of memory attached to a church building, and although stating previously that the building could be a monument and be used for other things, she states that eventually when a church building is closed “religious memory” for the building “is forgotten and rendered academic”, “congregational memory is severed and an acceptable version may be recorded in a written history” and while the “secular community” will rise to the occasion to save the building “separated from the religious practice and relegated to the status of heritage”, the practice of adaptive reuse will save the building but the point is lost; the real memory is gone (Clark, 2007; 77). In this case it should be pointed out that the memory that is “awakened” by the secular community should not be discounted, and that if the building is torn down, all physical reminders of that religious memory may be wiped out with it.
This literature provides a contextual basis for further analysis of adaptive reuse and its relationship with place-making, cultural heritage, and historic preservation. It also demonstrates a need for further study and analysis of these topics as well as the specific topic of adaptive reuse of churches. A comprehensive approach to the study of the adaptive reuse of church buildings would therefore be a valuable contribution to the field of planning.
Chapter Three: Research Methods

When first addressing this study the preliminary research questions were asked:

- In what ways and to what extent can a community, especially its leaders, planners, designers, and developers, appropriately address the longstanding character of a site or structure as well as its historical and cultural significance in its reuse strategies?
- What are the best practices for engaging a community in the public process of identifying and implementing adaptive reuse strategies for the property?
- By what criteria, indices, or matrices should “successful” adaptive reuse be defined?
- What practices have been considered “successful” by their communities? What approaches to place-making and community involvement were used?
- What is the most successful dynamic/balance of public and private involvement?
- How has the Catholic community reacted to the preservation of former church structures through a secular reuse where and when it has occurred?
- In what ways and to what extent can the (former) religious use of a property affect the attitudes of the stakeholders and/or decision-makers to reuse strategies?

In order to answer these questions, data collection was conducted by a variety of means including conducting a review of the relevant literature, demographic research including, but not limited to, the U.S. Census, American Community Survey, the U.S. Religious Landscape Survey, and the American Religious Identification Survey. Because of the contemporary nature of this subject, it was decided that the best way to study the specifics regarding adaptive reuse of church buildings was to employ the case study method. This included data collection practices such as interviews with various stakeholders, multiple site visits, obtaining and reviewing of historical documents, observation of related meetings of stakeholders, and survey of related news periodicals. Research from previous similar cases aided comparison and the development of a set of best practices. Our Lady of Hope Church in Springfield, Massachusetts served as the primary case study. It was
selected from a pool of four churches in Springfield, Massachusetts by touring the city to see the
curches that were slated for closure. This site stood out because it had the most characteristics of a
historically relevant building including age, building material, architectural style, and placement
within the urban fabric demonstrated by its immediate awe-inspiring impression left upon this
observer. The previous case studies for comparison were chosen based on their similarity to the
chosen site in terms of size, style, historical background, cultural background, and current
neighborhood demographics with a range of outcomes.

**Literature Review:**
The literature review of church building reuse as well as the related topics of cultural heritage,
historic preservation, adaptive reuse, and place-making was expanded to obtain a broader
understanding of the concepts being addressed. Because of the limited amount of scholarly
literature on the subject of church-building reuse, literature on the supporting topics is
concentrated on in order to properly gauge the role of these concepts in this specific topic.

**Demographic Information:**
The demographics of the communities surrounding and related to the case studies are important to
make general assumptions about the community. Religious identification demographics are also
relevant to this study because they can help to shed light on emerging patterns in religious
affiliation, and their current and possible future effects on the use of religious structures.

The religious identification information was collected from two different organizations: The Pew
Research Center, a self-identified non-partisan, non-profit, information clearinghouse that conducts
a religious identification survey known as the U.S. Religious Landscape Survey. The other survey
is conducted by an organization at Trinity College in Hartford, Connecticut and is titled the
American Religious Identification Survey (ARIS). Both studies provide insight to the changing
religious demographics in the country and in regions related to the case study.
The socio-economic demographics, collected from government sources such as the Decennial Census and the American Community Survey, are used primarily for comparing the selected case study with the previous studies. They are also useful for creating a more detailed description of the community characteristics, which are vital in creating a holistic set of best practices.

**Case Study:**
Neighborhood demographics are useful for identifying and describing the context of the site. More information is collected through direct observation. In *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*, Robert K. Yin draws the comparison between historical research and case study research, identifying one significant difference: case study research involves direct observation (Yin, 2009). Direct observation in this case study includes interviews with a member of the Springfield Archdiocese who played a major role in the decision process of the most recent wave of closures, and the head pastor of the church selected for the case study. Meetings where concerned citizens and community members spoke of their concerns for the selected church were attended in a strictly observational nature. Multiple site visits were also conducted, observing both the state of the structure and its presence in the community. In addition a regular survey of related news periodicals is conducted on a weekly basis to gauge community awareness of the case.

Historical documents related to the site were reviewed including, but not limited to, anniversary books of the parish that recorded pictures, news clippings, and personal anecdotes of parish members and original blueprints.

**Previous Case Studies:**
In order to generate a set of best practices to apply to the project site, a set of comprehensive case studies of previous adaptive reuse projects were compiled, and although less detailed then that of the current case study they will provide a context for which to make recommendations for the current project site.
Each of the previous case studies includes information in the following categories: History, architectural features, preservation, site in current context, new use, and a brief discussion. The history section is based on the historical context of the construction of the building, the parish, and the changes that led to its disuse. The architectural features section describes the style of architecture, building materials, size, and the characteristics unique to the building. The preservation section describes the process in which the building was spared from the wrecking ball, including protests, purchasers, and legal protection measures. Site in current context includes maps of up-to-date demographic data of each site for to gain a general knowledge of the neighborhood characteristics. The new use section will describe the new use for the church as well as the steps that had to be taken to reach completion. A brief discussion at the end of each of the previous case studies will address circumstances specific to the site as well as identify practices that could be carried out by other sites in order to develop a set of best practices.

Assessment:
The collected information is analyzed by using a series of matrices to compare and contrast the circumstances and practices of the previous case studies with the current case study. The factors in the matrices will be based on the type of involvement (public/private), economic backing, eligibility for economic incentives/grants, involvement in surrounding community for new use, presence of preservation authority or campaign, amount of change to structure, level of “church-likeness” preserved, appeasement of the various stakeholders, and new use’s presence in community.

Findings:
The findings, discussed in chapter 7, include the generation of a set of best practices as well as related observations to the practice of church building adaptation.
The next chapter will address three case studies that are relevant to the study of Our Lady of Hope Church in Springfield, Massachusetts in order to gain a better understanding of possible practices.
Chapter Four: Case Studies of Previous Reuse

In order to answer many of my research questions it became apparent that studies of previous cases of adaptive reuse of churches would need to be made. Studying other cases will allow forming a list of best and worst practices, or at least being able to assess the reasoning behind various successes and failures.

While adaptive reuse of churches has been in practice for decades (if not centuries) in Europe, it is a fairly recent phenomena in the U.S.. Some examples of current reuse practices include conversions to residential units such as luxury condos such as “Novare” in the West Village in Manhattan, “The Sanctuary” in the Fort Greene neighborhood of Brooklyn, and “45 West Broadway” in South Boston. All of these examples were excluded as case studies due to the amount of change to the interior of the church and because of the gentrification implications.

Another popular reuse practice is adaptation to entertainment venues. One fairly well documented reuse is of a Methodist church in Buffalo. What was originally the Delaware Avenue Methodist Church has made a transformation into the headquarters for artist Ani DiFranco’s record label Righteous Babe Records, as well as a performance/event space, a lounge, and an art space. This project has been titled “Babeville” and/or “The Church”. A detailed timeline of the process of this transformation is available on the Babeville Buffalo website.

Delaware Avenue Methodist Church was designed in 1871 and was completed in 1876. The building is gothic revival in style, and has a number of side galleries, stained glass windows, as well as series catacombs in the basement. After a merger with another church it was renamed the Delaware Asbury Methodist Church in 1917.

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1 http://www.babevillebuffalo.com/timeline.asp
The church closed in the early 1980s and was subsequently (and briefly) occupied by two other Protestant congregations, the latter of which declared bankruptcy and left the building vacant. After the building remained vacant for a period, many of the ornate fixtures were removed by scavengers. The city of Buffalo eventually acquired the title of the building midway through the 1990’s. Structural deterioration in the form of falling stones was the catalyst in the decision of the city to slate the building for demolition.

This move by the city was countered by vocal protests from community activists. The president of the current owning body, Righteous Babe Records’ Scot Fisher, launched a grassroots organization to prevent the demolition of the church and to raise funding for emergency repairs to the building. In 1999, Buffalo natives DiFranco and Fisher bought the building from the city under the agreement that the city would repair the damage to the outside of the building (as well as the sidewalk), and they planned on privately financing interior renovations.

Renovations of the main spaces were designed by Flynn Battaglia architects in Buffalo, and took approximately six years to complete. The owners have encouraged the local arts council to lease space for gallery showing, film screenings, and fundraising events. The former sanctuary is currently a multi-purpose performance auditorium, the catacombs in the basement were gutted and there is now a performance lounge located there. The exterior of the building retained its “church-likeness”.

Similar projects to this, many times with less funding, have been identified across the country. One of those is Saint Elizabeth’s church in the Norwood neighborhood in Cincinnati which has served as a music and arts venue as well as a worship space since its closing in 1995 when it was sold to a religious organization called Vineyard Central. Its maintenance relies heavily on donations, and Vineyard Central has a special fund that people can donate to which goes directly into saving the
church. The organization Vineyard Central has let the building keep its original name, Saint Elizabeth’s, and cites it as the building in which Vineyard Central is located, implying a respect to the building as having its own entity.

Probably one of the most infamous reuse projects was that of the New York City nightclub called Limelight. The building was once the Episcopal Church of the Holy Communion, a Gothic Revival church built in the 1850 by architect Richard Upjohn (Emporis, 2009) located at the corner of 6th Avenue and 20th Street. The church had been deconsecrated and became one of a string of nightclubs owned by Peter Gatien in 1983. (This was the case mentioned to this researcher as something meant to be avoided by the reuse of any Diocese of Springfield Church, although, this informant also referred to the nightclub as a “strip club”. ) The club seems to carry more collective memory than the church, as it was famous in the 1990s for its techno-rave environment and a place “kids” could go to obtain recreational drugs. Images obtained of the inside of the church which, despite the religious ties, was an ideal structure for a nightclub, included images of risqué activities such as cage-dancing. The club later turned into a different club called Avalon, and just recently has been planned to turn into a three-story marketplace (Shott, 2009).

The case studies used for this site were selected due to the similar size of the church buildings as well as having similar socio-economic characteristics, and all are located in post-industrial shrinking cities, like that of the city of the study site, Springfield, Massachusetts. These three case studies were studied previously by the National Trust for Historic Preservation (NTHP) under the header “Historic Houses of Worship Success Stories” (Preservation Nation, NTHP, 2009). These case studies expand on their case studies, as the NTHP may have a different idea of success than that of this researcher, also because there may have been further developments in these cases since reported on by the NTHP.
Case Study One: King Urban Life Charter School, Buffalo, New York
Church Name: Saint Mary of Sorrows / Church of the Seven Dolors
Year Built: 1891-1901 (dedication)
City: Buffalo, NY
Architect: Adolphus Druiding
Architectural Style: Romanesque Revival

History:
The parish of Saint Mary of Sorrows was formed out of a need for a Catholic church in the Genesee/Fillmore district in Buffalo after a sizable amount of German Catholics had settled in the area in the latter half of the 19th century. The first church building was dedicated in 1872. The congregation seemed to grow exponentially in the following 25 years and, after two expansions, it was decided to build a new building that would more easily suit their growing (spatial) needs. Adolphus Druiding, an architect based out of Chicago, was commissioned to design the new church. Druiding was a German immigrant who was known for building churches for German congregations (mainly in smaller mid-west towns, but also some larger churches in cities like Chicago and Cleveland). His popularity was primarily based on his neo-gothic / gothic revival style that is reminiscent of the congregants’ homeland (Springer, 2001).

A three alarm fire in 1947 did a significant amount of damage to the building. At this time the parish managed to raise the $500,000 to restore the church. Less than forty years later, the parish was not as fortunate; in 1985 the Diocese of Buffalo closed the church due to the growing costs of...
maintenance and repair for the building without the attendance numbers to support such costs. Similar to other cities in the rust belt, white flight and similar demographic changes were very apparent in this neighborhood, and at this point, it had become subject to poverty and blight. When the church closed its doors at the end of 1985, demolition was a major consideration.

Architectural Features:
The design of Saint Mary of Sorrows is considered to be a Romanesque Revival because it is modeled after the Worms Cathedral in Germany, which is considered as High Romanesque architecture. The design for Saint Mary’s was scaled back due to the cost of materials (Napora, 1995). The intent of the church design was to merge the cultural heritage of the congregation with their new location by using a German style with a local material (Buffalo plains blue limestone). The most distinguishing features of this building are the three towers: two of which are rounded, reminiscent of the Worms Cathedral, and the other is square with a sizable steeple. The large stained windows, which provide a great deal of natural light into the building are images of the seven sorrows (or dolors) of Mary. The nave has a high ceiling (approximately 68 feet), which is supported by a series of ornate columns and arches.

Preservation:
Demolition was planned by the Diocese of Buffalo, but a group of concerned citizens and community members brought a case for the building to the Buffalo Landmark and Preservation Board, in the hopes of having the building designated as a city landmark to delay demolition. An alliance of leaders within the community then worked with the Diocese to donate the building to the City of Buffalo, which subsequently formed a group of people to study the building, find ways and means to restore it, and to research new uses for the building which would “best serve its neighborhood” (Common Grant Applications, 2009). This committee later became the Board of
Directors of a non-profit organization called the King Urban Life Center, whose role is specifically to secure funding for and perform maintenance of the building. The lease of the church was grandfathered to this organization.

Site in Context:

*Map 4.1 (A-C) Socio-spatial Analysis of Buffalo New York*

The site of Saint Mary of Sorrows/the King Urban Life Center and Charter School is located in central Buffalo just east of the central business district. Map 4.1 A shows that the rather large area surrounding the site are composed of census tracts that have median household incomes that are between 0.5 and 1.5 standard deviations below the city’s average. Map 4.1 B displays the population density of the city, categorized by the race reported on the 2000 U.S. Census. The site is located in the center of the band of the city extending from the Central Business District, northeast, that is composed primarily of people of who self-identify as racially black.

This site is also in the area in Buffalo that as some of the highest housing vacancy rates (upwards of 25% vacant), as seen in Map 4.1 C.
New Use:
The King Urban Life Center identified educational needs for impoverished and low-income families as paramount, and something for which the building could be used. One of the goals was to use this space to “create and operate educational, health, social and cultural programs for the children and families of the Center’s poor urban neighborhood - as models - to provide hope and assistance”. The scope of use also included the component of turning a large part of the space into a charter school. The needed renovation/rehabilitation was estimated at between one and two million dollars. Funding was secured through different sources including New York Environmental Quality Bond Act, The City of Buffalo, the Margaret L. Wendt Foundation, and the U.S. Department of Education.

Hamilton, Houston, and Lownie (HHL) was the architecture firm responsible for the design for the adaptation, which successfully reconciled the regulations set by both the New York Department of Education and the New York State Historic Preservation Office. The area could be subdivided without compromising the original architecture of the church, by constructing floating walls with open ceilings which formed rooms including classrooms, computer rooms, and offices. The organ/choir loft in the clerestory of the space was converted into a reading room or “literacy loft”. As seen in image 4.2 the space still retains the architectural and artistic components that it had originally, but is successfully being used for a non-religious use.
This project exceeded its estimated budget, costing approximately $3 million (HHL, 2009). This being said, the building is still being used as a charter school and a reading room, and has expanded by buying a former “crack-house” across the street from the school and converting it into offices and additional space for community programs. Adjacent to the school, a convent, rectory, and elementary school were subsequently purchased by Catholic Charities of Buffalo in collaboration with the King Urban Life Center to create a campus that also includes a day care center, senior center, and offices for Catholic Charities.

In January of 2008, the Charter School Institute of the State of New York awarded the King Center Charter School with the highest level renewal that the State University Trustees award: a full-term, five year subsequent renewal. The renewal was awarded due to the sustained high scores in mathematics and science, and the notable improvements in “language arts” (Proctor, 2008).

Analysis:
This site had a great deal of success. The first success was the public’s ability to raise awareness of the originally doomed fate of the building enough to save it from demolition by attaining historic preservation status. Working with the Diocese to have the building donated to the city provided the opportunity for the Diocese to have some control over the the fate of their building. The formation of the task force to determine the next use for the building provided a way for various stakeholders to become involved in the process while utilizing the expertise of local professionals. The creation of a charter school opened the door for a variety of funding opportunities from state and federal sources and private education foundations, in addition to historic preservation grants and tax credits.
The conversion done by HHL serves as a model of what Derek Latham refers to as “loose fit”, fitting the new use within the parameters of the building, successfully balancing respect for the existing architecture with the ability to optimize the functionality of the space.

The success of the school gave way to the expansion of the King Urban Life Center to focus on other social services based out of adjacent properties, and the cooperative nature of the transfer of ownership between the Diocese and the city of Buffalo made for an easy transition to a cooperative effort between the city and Catholic Charities to provide services to this community.
Case Study Two: Christian Ministries Center, Cincinnati, Ohio
Church Name: Saint George/ “Old Saint George”
Year Built: 1873
City: Cincinnati, OH
Architect: Samuel Hannaford
Architectural Style: Romanesque Revival

History:
Franciscans established Saint George Parish in 1868.
At this time in the city’s history, it was a settling point for both Irish and German immigrants. Cincinnati acquired its own archdiocese in 1821, perhaps in reaction to the influx of Catholic immigrants. When a significant amount of German immigrants moved to the Cincinnati neighborhood of Corryville, just north of the heavily-German neighborhood called Over-the-Rhine, and began attending the Saint George parish. The congregation began to swell, and a new church building was planned to be built next to the original building (which has since been demolished). Locally renowned architect Samuel Hannaford was hired to design the new church.

Samuel Hannaford’s family emigrated from the English countryside when he was a child. He is credited with building a number of landmarks in the city of Cincinnati including, but not limited to, City Hall, Music Hall, the Cincinnati Hotel, and the Brittany Apartments. Much of his work was in the style of “second empire”, although the churches that he designed, including Saint George, were primarily of the Romanesque Revival style. The building of the new church for Saint George was completed in 1873. Past photographs imply that there was once a monastery and a
school on either side of the church. In 1993, after a great decline in attendance and an increase in maintenance costs, the Diocese permanently closed the church.

Architectural Features:
The building materials for Saint George were consistent with Romanesque Revival architecture, primarily brick and masonry. The nave’s approximate size is 65 feet in width, with a length of 160 feet, lined with large stained glass windows.

The most distinguishable characteristic for the building of Saint George is the set of twin spires incorporated into the front of the building. These spires originally had matching substantial steeples, both of which were destroyed by a fire in February of 2008. Ironically, the steeples also acted as chimneys, which are suspected to be the reason that the rest of the building only experienced minimal fire damage.

Preservation:
In order to save the church from demolition, a grass roots group of neighborhood citizens banded together and raised money to purchase the building, fending off possible purchasers of the land such as the drug store giant Walgreens. In 1994 the building was purchased for roughly $600,000. Their efforts and funding were mainly based on contributions and donations, as well as income from renting out the space for events.

Site in Context:
The site of Old Saint George is just north-northeast of the central business district of Cincinnati. As depicted on Maps 4.2 A, the site is in an area the city where the median household income is between 0.5 and 1.5 standard deviations below the city’s average. Map 4.2 B shows the population density distributed by reported race on the 2000 U.S. Census, portraying the area that the site is in
has a larger population of ethnic minorities. Both of these trends are similar to those in the other two case studies. However, unlike the other two studies, the housing vacancy rate is overwhelmingly low in this neighborhood, possibly due to the main campus of the University of Cincinnati’s close proximity to the site.

New Use:
The first “new use” of the church building was of an interfaith center called the Christian Ministries Center who used the space for a variety of purposes such as a religious bookshop with an attached coffee shop, as well as an event space for meetings, musical performances, weddings, etc.

Costs of maintenance under this owner were upwards of $350,000 and included roof and gutter repairs, as well as repairs to the interior and the doors. This became too costly for the current owners and they began to search for buyers who would share their desire for preservation.
Preservation:
In 2005, when the former group could not keep up with maintenance costs, the property was bought by the Clifton Heights Community Urban Redevelopment Corporation (CHCURC), and organization with roots in the nearby University of Cincinnati, and was made into the centerpiece in their community economic development master plan. The original plan involved incorporation of the building into the economic development plan for the neighborhood of Clifton Heights, which involve a network of mixed-use buildings along Calhoun Street where Old Saint George is located.

The fire that damaged the spires in 2008 complicated the situation. Due to the amount of damage, demolition was rumored again. The CHCURC assured people that Old Saint George would not be demolished, but began talking with a local adaptive reuse firm about the possibility of converting the property for a commercial use. Reportedly, after the fire, the CHCURC was “talking” with various firms that specialize in commercial adaptive reuse (e.g. boutique hotels, retail, etc.), but as of last reported in May of 2009, they intend to rehabilitate Old Saint George to its original form. Adaptive reuse for this particular project has now been tabled indefinitely.

Analysis:
The successes of this project are limited. One could say that they did succeed in the most important goal of saving the church from the wrecking ball. However, there were two large impediments that prevented this project from being a complete success, the first being the lack of networking and the narrow scope of the first owning party. The Christian Ministries Center, while using the space for multiple purposes, maintaining the building via low impact repairs, and opening up as an asset to the community, was not able to secure ample funding for their project. Grants for faith-based community programs could have been an option in addition to historic
preservation grants and incentives, as regulations for such funding loosened up considerably under President George W. Bush.

The second impediment was under the second owner, the Clifton Heights Community Urban Redevelopment Corporation, who let the building sit vacant for too long. Time is of the essence with older buildings, the longer that they are left vacant, the more opportunity they have to fall into disrepair and/or become victim to vandalism, both of which increase the costs for repair and rehabilitation. In the case of Old Saint George, “combustible material near an exposed light bulb” led to more damage by way of fire and water. Although it is now planned to be rehabilitated, nothing has yet come to fruition, and it is sitting there, vacant yet again.
Case Study Three: Church Brew Works, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
Church Name: Saint John the Baptist
Year Built: 1902
City: Pittsburgh, PA (Borough of Lawrenceville)
Architect: Louis Beezer, Michael Beezer (the Beezer Brothers), and John Combs
Architectural Style: Romanesque Revival

History:
According to the Lawrenceville Historical Society, Saint John the Baptist Roman Catholic Church was a direct result of the Irish Immigration into the Lawrenceville area of Pittsburgh in the latter half of the 19th century (Wudarczyk, 1993). The parish was founded in 1878 to serve the Lawrenceville area specifically. It was a territorial church whose original location was more toward the center of the assigned borders on 32nd street. The parish outgrew the building by the turn of the century, and a new plot was purchased as the site of the new church in 1901/1903 (disputed) four blocks away on 36th street.

The Beezer Brothers firm designed the building, but the plan was primarily completed by one of their associates, John Combs. The new church was dedicated in 1907. Eight years later the building reportedly sustained major damage from a fire but was subsequently repaired. The parish continued to grow, calling for the forming of both a girls and a boys high school in 1924. However, the boys school closed within the next 20 years and the girls school closed in 1960. The steel mills that employed much of the area (as the neighborhood was predominantly blue-collar, working-class) closed in the 1950s, which is cited by the Western Pennsylvania Brownfields
Center as a probable cause for the parish’s decline (Angeles, 2008). The attendance numbers following the steel mills’ closure declined. In 1993, due to declining attendance and increasing maintenance costs the parish was merged with two others in the area, which left the building empty.

Architectural Features:
St. John the Baptist Church was built in the Northern Italian style, of brick and masonry. Its most significant features are the large rose window in the front of the church, the series of large stained glass windows that line the periphery of the nave, the series of inner columns, and the high vaulted ceiling. The nave itself is approximately 10,000 square feet. The property also included a vacant school building and a rectory.

Preservation:
The building of St. John the Baptist in the Lawrenceville section of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania had been closed for three years when Sean Casey, a developer and current owner, bought it from the Pittsburgh Diocese, after a series of negotiations in order to approve the future use.
At this point, after lying vacant for a few years, the building had come victim to vandals, looters, and the elements. Windows had been broken, copper drainpipes had been stolen, and the bell tower had suffered a great deal of water damage in addition to previous damage from a lightning strike. A great deal of the rehabilitation work was done by the Casey family or family friends.
Site in Context:

Map 4.3 (A-C): Socio-Spatial Analysis of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

The site of the Church Brew Works is just north-northeast of the central business district of Pittsburgh and also abuts one of the former steel mills. As depicted on Map 4.3A, the site is in an area the city where the median household income is between 0.5 and 1.5 standard deviations below the city’s average. Map 4.3 B shows the population density distributed by reported race on the 2000 U.S. Census, portraying the site area as having a larger population of ethnic minorities. Both of these trends are similar to those in the other two case studies. Another trend that is similar to the Buffalo case study is shown in Map 4.3 C is that of housing vacancy rates. According to the 2000 Decennial Census, the site of Saint John the Baptist Church/ The Church Brew Works in located in an area with a substantial amount of vacant housing (approximately 15%), which could be indicative of some blight in the surrounding neighborhoods.

New Use:
Saint John the Baptist Church is now a microbrewery and restaurant called Church Brew Works which opened in 1996 and, according to a local resident, is still quite a popular place. The interior of the church has been completely refurbished to its original state with the exception of tables
instead of pew, large beer distilling machinery where the alter once was, and that all religious item have been removed. The business itself has created upwards of 40 jobs for the community, and has been cited as a possible catalyst for the increase in real estate prices in the adjacent neighborhoods. When the restaurant first opened some community members disapproved of a brew-pub being located in a former church, despite the Diocese’s involvement in the sale and the removal of all religious objects from within the church. The disapproval did not seem to harm the business.

*Analysis:
The case is a great example of privately backed reuse practices. Since grants are not necessary for funding, tax incentives for historic preservation are merely a perk. Similar to this practice are conversions to residential, retail, or office space. This being said, the conversion of the building succeeded in respecting the integrity of the original design. In fact, it is reported that Casey undid many of the “renovations” that the church had undergone in the mid 20th century (e.g. carpeting was removed), a great deal of effort was put into refinishing the floors, and fixtures that had been either removed by looters or harmed by vandals in the years it sat vacant were replaced.

The new use of this building, while technically commercial, does serve a community purpose as both a potential gathering spot/local watering-hole, as well as implicitly acting as an improvement to the neighborhood (bringing in foot traffic and subtly increasing property values). As stated previously, the local community was vocal about their disapproval of a former church being turned into a microbrewery, despite the Diocese’s approval of the action. This has not resulted in a waning customer base. Although, it is not known whether the former parish community is among the regular clientele.
Chapter Five: Project Site

Our Lady of Hope Church
Armory Street at Carew Street
Springfield, Massachusetts

Background:

In the summer of 2009, the Archdiocese of Springfield, Massachusetts released its plan for closures and mergers for the cities and towns closest to, and including, Springfield under the guise of the “Journey of Faith and Grace Consolidation Plan”. After years of research and strategizing, the Diocesan Pastoral Planning Commission had released its final report and recommendations for the measures that would need to be taken in the face of the current shortcomings of today’s Catholic Church (e.g. clergy shortages, changing demographics, shrinking congregations, etc.).

Within Springfield’s city limits alone, it was recommended that five of the 17 (nearly one-third) of the churches be closed. One of these churches is Our Lady of Hope church, which is planned to merge with the parish of Saint Mary’s church, create a new name for the merged parish, and use Saint Mary’s facilities. The remaining buildings that make up Our Lady of Hope’s campus are planned to be sold, with any profits from the sale to go to the new parish.
The parish is and has been located in, what is considered the Irish neighborhood in Springfield, Hungry Hill (more commonly known as “the Hill”). For the better part of a century, the residents of the Hill were overwhelmingly of Irish heritage, and many were immigrants. The parish of Our Lady of Hope was formed in 1906, and was housed in a chapel one block down, and across the street from the location of the current church. The parish grew, seeing need to establish a parish school, the original building built next to the chapel in 1923 (the location is now home to a Walgreens drugstore), and, while not a small or quaint building, the congregation still managed to outgrow the chapel and set out to build a larger church that better suited the needs (and size) of the ever-growing Irish Catholic parish. Plans were filed with the City of Springfield to build a new church on the corner of Armory Street and Carew Street in the spring of 1925.

Architectural Features:
What has been referred to as the “new” church was built in the architectural style of the Santa Maria Novella Church in Florence, Italy, and is made with building materials such as French grey
tapestry brick, and cast stone, as well as a roof that is made of red mottled tile. Most of the exterior remains the same, as the structure has been well maintained in the 80 years since its completion. The interior has been changed in the past, but not without controversy. Originally, a four-pillared baldachin covered the main altar, which was removed, and murals on the walls were painted over. The 100th anniversary committee of the church cited these physical changes of the church to have resulted in losing the allegiance of some parishioners (OLOHC, 2007; 63).

In addition to changes made to the main floor of the church, the chapel that was located directly below the sanctuary (originally for extra services) was converted into the Hope Center, and soon entered into an agreement with the City to found the Hungry Hill Senior Center. It is mentioned in the 100th Anniversary book, that there was originally some uneasiness in the conversion of the lower level of the church into a community center, stating:

“Some members of the parish were reluctant to make use of the Center and were somewhat apprehensive about using the church property for the community at large. On the other hand, some members of the community who were not associated with the parish were a bit uncomfortable with the Center’s connection with the Catholic Church. In time, these reservations have diminished …”

The report continues by claiming that the neighborhood demographic includes a relatively high percentage of senior citizens and that the Senior Center is a regularly used fixture by both community members and parishioners.
The building was designed by the Architect J.W. Donahue A.I.A and ground was broken in 1925. The building process took a number of years and was built in most part by community/parish members. The first service, December 18th 1926 was held in the church in the basement which fit a reported 1300 congregants. The main level of the church was not completed until 1929.

Though the building style is modeled after the Santa Maria Novella of Florence, which is a Renaissance-style basilica. OLOH is not considered to be a basilica. The façade of the building has four sets of two Corinthian style stone columns, as well as a cast stone eave with IN LOCO ISTO DABO PACEM carved across (meaning “in this place I will give you peace”). Similar Latin phrases are carved across the top of each of the three front entrances. The campanile (bell tower) was the last section of the original building plans to be completed, but has become a focal point of the structure as it extends to a height of approximately 135 feet.

*Site in Context:*
Demographic changes are cited by many as a primary cause of church closure (Barthel, 1996; Steinfels, 2003; Vethuis and Spennemann, 2007). The case of Our Lady of Hope and Hungry Hill is no different. The parish reports that many of their parishioners were lost to the suburbs in the last quarter century. In addition the former dominantly Irish neighborhood is becoming increasingly of Hispanic/Latin descent. Map (#) depicts the concentration of people of Hispanic descent (featured as red) to the concentration of people who classify themselves as non-Hispanic white
(featured as blue). The green dots represent the people who classify themselves as neither of these groups. It is visually evident that there is a greater concentration of Hispanic people in the northwest section of Springfield. The location of Our Lady of Hope church is in an area that appears to be in the more racially diverse and is bordering on an area that appears to have a high concentration of Hispanic people (2000 Census Block Group Data).

Demographic change from Irish to Hispanic is not necessarily a problem for the Catholic Church. Both groups have a high level of association with Catholicism, and nearly half (45 percent) of the Catholics under the age of 30 are Hispanic (Pew Forum, 2008). However, Our Lady of Hope does not offer what other parishes, such as Blessed Sacrament, have to offer: priests of a similar ethnicity who speak Spanish. Thus, according to the Archdiocese, the numbers of Our Lady of Hope have been steadily decreasing and in need of merging.

While the selection of Saint Mary’s to merge with OLOH was not explained to this researcher, it can be assumed that the selection of Saint Mary’s property over that of OLOH as the one to keep can be assumed, and it has nothing to do with the history of the parish or the building. It comes down to location.
Location is key, but in the Catholic Church it is not about being in a prime location for being stumbled across or seen. This location is about last rites and funerals. An official of the Springfield Archdiocese explained to this researcher about territorial churches. Every home in a Diocese has a parish. This is to ensure that if a Catholic person has not been able to make it to church, and all of a sudden needs a priest, they have a priest that is responsible for tending to them, based on geographic boundaries, and it comes in to play mostly with homebound seniors who need last rites, communion brought to them, or a place to hold a funeral. Saint Mary’s church is somewhat of an island as it is farther from the urban core of Springfield, and, if it closed, there would be a significant population that would need to be reassigned to other churches that are farther away. OLOH on the other hand, is very close to a few other parishes, and the territory could be more easily covered.

As much as the parishioners and the local community would like to fight this decision, Our Lady of Hope church is closing halfway between Christmas 2009 and Epiphany 2010. The question now is what can be done with the building? Formerly a compound, the old school was leveled to build a Walgreens, and the “new” school closed its doors in 2009 and was sold as part of a package deal to the City to be reused as a public school. The rectory, which originally housed 6 priests, is currently home to only one, and soon none, along with the church building (including the bell tower which is claimed as the highest point in the City) are the two remaining structures. Because of the architectural, social, and cultural value of the main church building, preservation is paramount.
Stakeholders:
It is this researcher’s attitude that, in the case of this specific church, the primary stakeholders are the parish and the community. The archdiocese should a stakeholder if the parish owes them money. As stated to the local media, and again to this researcher personally, the head of the Pastoral Planning Council, Msgr. Rev. John Bonzagni Esq. has stated that the revenue accrued from the sale of the church property would go directly to the parish of that property (or the parish to which it had been reassigned, unless said parish is in debt to the Diocese, in which case the money would go to pay off the debt and any excess would go to the parish. However, the Diocese has taken quite an interest in the fate of this particular building so, in this report, the archdiocese will be listed among the stakeholders.

Parish
The people who have made up the parish of OLOH have the most to lose if this building is destroyed. The church building is their structural reminder of their religious and social pasts, and the pasts of those who were there before them. Parish history is important enough to this parish to organize a committee and compile a report of the church’s activities and special occasions every quarter century. For many people this building is a place where they have been to baptisms, first communions, confirmations, weddings, and funerals. There have been many social clubs and events throughout the years including a drum corps, women’s guild, Irish heritage shows, talent shows and church picnics. For the Parish, the building of the church is a monument to their memories and a key to their past.
Community
The surrounding community may hold a larger, yet less sentimental, stake in the future of this building. A general theory is that church buildings serve as landmarks for communities, the loss of a landmark can be devastating. In the case of OLOH, not only is this church at a major intersection, but it has been there for the last 80 years. The history of OLOH and its deep roots in the neighborhood of Hungry Hill make the two almost synonymous. Loss of such a landmark can be associated with a loss of identity or sense of place which have been shown to be important components to a physical community’s overall health.

Building vacancy can also affect the community. Vacant buildings are easy targets for vandalism and loitering and can make an area less safe. Churches in particular have also fallen prey to looters, as ornamentation on and in the building could be worth money when scrapped. It is important that the building remain maintained and monitored at the least to keep the opportunity for crime at a minimum for the safety of the community and to maintain property values.

The community will also be affected by the buildings use or reuse. The National Trust for Historic Preservation cites adaptive reuse as one of the most cost-effective and successful modes of
community revitalization. If this building reuse is done in an expedient fashion, the local community will be the first to feel the effects and, hopefully, the benefits.

Archdiocese
The archdiocese holds the deed for this building, but as they are a religious entity, they do not have to pay property taxes, if it is unused, utilities will not have to be paid. If they choose, upkeep and maintenance would be an expense, but it is not required. This being said, the Archdiocese is motivated to sell this building. The motivation to put it in the hands of someone else is the only stake held by the archdiocese unless the parish is in monetary debt to them, in which case the stake is that of debt repayment. Any other interest in the matter would be in form of belief, attitude or opinion.

The attitude of this Archdiocese toward decommissioned church buildings is unknown. According to some, the Catholic Church does not condone reuse, and would rather the church be razed. According to others, the Catholic Church does not care what is done with the buildings after they are deconsecrated, as it is no longer a sacred space. Bonzagni stated that there is a covenant in the deed that states that the churches sold would have to be used for something that the Church approves; otherwise the Diocese can reclaim the property. Examples of such reclamation were not provided. It also appeared that the Archdiocese was strongly opposed to making OLOH a historic district, as their attorney argued on their behalf at the meeting of the Springfield Historic Commission on December 3, 2009.

City of Springfield
According to the final thoughts by the Historic Commission at the meeting on 12/03/2009 they viewed OLOH as an “architectural gem,” which also spoke to the cultural history of the city. It can
be inferred that the entire city holds a stake in the future of this building as it acts as a monument to the cultural roots of the city, and adds identifiable characteristics to the urban landscape.

The Site:

Our Lady of Hope Church was built on two separate parcels on the southeast corner of the intersection of Armory Street and Carew Street in the northeast section of Springfield, known broadly as Liberty Heights. The total square footage of land on this lot is 55,929, just under 1.3 acres. The Church building is approximately 192 feet long and 65 feet wide, with additional area taken up by the campanile that is 25 feet by 25 feet and rises approximately 145 feet. The rectory, on the back side of the church is a two story residential dwelling that is approximately 100 feet long and 45 feet wide in its widest areas. The majority of the land on the parcel surrounding the buildings is vegetated. The parking lot is on the property of what once was the parish school and is now Zannetti Montessori School.

On the other side of the Montessori school is another elementary school, followed soon after by an entrance to I-291. Because the site lays on an intersection of two highly trafficked streets, public
transportation is available, and because of the presence of sidewalks, the neighborhood is highly walkable.

**Analysis:**
The site of Our Lady of Hope Catholic Church has a great deal of potential. The structure itself is in good condition due to the renovations done in the past five years, meaning that if selected as an adaptive reuse project, little maintenance to the building is immediately called for, unlike the buildings that are left for years before addressed for other potential uses. The space is comparable to the case studies and therefore reuse is definitely possible, and the interior of the building carries all of the benefits of an Romanesque Revival church; ample natural light from the windows, large open floorpan, high ceilings, and good acoustics.

It is still located in the center of a vibrant neighborhood, though the demographics have changed. There is a overwhelming public support for its preservation, although the support comes more from the parish community (many of whom no longer live in the neighborhood of Hungry Hill) rather than the resident community. This being said, the resident community would benefit from the preservation and reuse of this building as it is centrally located, the most predominant structure in the neighborhood by far, acting as a structural centerpiece.

The building’s adjacency to two schools suggests that transforming it into another school would create another redundancy (the first being the excess amount of churches), but it does not discount the idea that this building could either be incorporated with one of the neighboring schools, or could compliment both of the schools as a place that both schools might utilize.

Reuse of this building would also serve as a benefit to the relationship between the Catholic community in Springfield and the Diocese. The community still holds a grudge for the fate of Saint Joseph’s Church and its demolition for the creation of a generic bank branch. (This came up
repeatedly in the city’s Preservation Committee meeting.) If the Diocese acted in the interest of saving the building, it is possible that some of the tension between the Catholic community and the Archbishop may subside.

It is from these multiple factors that reserving this church for reuse should be strongly considered by the various stakeholders.
Chapter Six: Discussion of Findings & Conclusion

The previous chapters cover the literature review, three cases of previous reuse, and the assessment of the study site of Our Lady of Hope Church as a potential candidate for adaptive reuse. In researching cases of adaptive reuse of former Catholic churches the following practices stand out as guidelines for pursuing adaptive reuse for community purpose:

First, raise the issue. This can be done by people place of power, or by a community group. It is important for the site to get ample attention because it can gain publicity, support, and can be exposed to possible contributors. Some reuse successes are due to private funders and the vacant building being in the right place at the right time (such as Babeville in Buffalo, or Church Brew Works in Pittsburgh).

Second, pursue historic preservation status. If the building has not yet found its way to the National Register of Historic Places, this may be the first step as many local historic preservation agencies will not grant historic preservation status to a site or structure that has not already gotten on the register. After this, normally a petition is filed to the local government’s preservation entity, which is either granted or denied. In the case of Springfield, once it is granted, it is brought before the city council and must be voted upon three separate times before finally passing. It is a lengthy process but once a historic preservation district it becomes much more difficult to demolish the building without experiencing legal repercussions.

Third, organize. Once the property has some legal protection against demolition it is important to organize. If taking a top-down approach, the government or overseeing entity should form a
committee or task-force to research the site and the community, involving the community as much as possible, to determine possibilities for new purposes for the buildings.

If approaching from the bottom up, it would be beneficial for the concerned citizens to have regular meetings, open to the public, and encourage local community members to participate. (It has become apparent that in some cases the most vocal activists are not members of the local community, but are former neighborhood residents, which can be completely different things.) Citizens with the message of what-not-to-do without an alternative suggestion of what-should-be-done are less likely to be heard. Producing a proposal with a plan may have better results.

Fourth, try to work with the diocese. The diocese has stake in the future of these buildings, especially when they are currently under their ownership. Transparency with the diocese about the plans for the building is key. Many Dioceses will not sell to an entity who is planning on using their buildings for unsavory purposes. If the purchasing party is outright about their plans it could result in a good business relationship. For example, the City of Buffalo and the group of concerned citizens worked with the Archdiocese to purchase the building and later, Catholic Charities returned to the site to cooperatively add to their social services complex.

Fifth, locate funding. It is important that funding come from a variety of sources from both public and private backers. There are a variety of grants from both private foundations and all levels of government that are available once the intended new use is determined, and there are also tax incentives offered on both a federal and state level for historic building rehabilitation, many of which can be reviews in Appendix A.
It is important to diversify the sources of financial backing for large projects such as these because, if dependent on few financial sources, there is greater threat if one or more of the funding sources falls through or is unreliable as seen in the case of Old Saint George’s Christian Ministries Center.

The sixth step comes from the set of recommendations provided by Derek Latham in his multiple volume text book *Creative Reuse of Buildings* (Latham, 2000): Work with the building, not against it. This is proposed in the practice of “loose-fit” adaptation, based on the belief that these buildings will outlive their new uses, as they have outlived their original use. “Loose-fit” is achieved by doing minimal alterations to the original building, while still achieving the structure and characteristics for the new use. This way, if the new use becomes obsolete, or needs to change buildings, there will have been limited change to the shell of the building, allowing for a new loosely-fitted use to move in. The reuse of Saint Mary of Sorrows for the King Center Charter School is a good example of “loose-fit”, as the room dividers as well as the added utility infrastructure are built within the church, around the existing structure, making the structural aspect of the adaptation flexible to change and/or removal.

Table 6.1 shows which of the six actions in the *Recommended Course of Action* each of the case studies included in their process. The King Center Charter School in Buffalo included aspects of all of these actions into their reuse process, while both Old Saint George in Cincinnati and the Church Brew Works only included aspects of four of the steps. It is worth mentioning that the two actions that Old Saint George did not address in their process may be two of the most vital components to the success of the project: Ample funding and financial stability can solely determine the outcome of a project. In addition, the support and/or cooperation from the Catholic authority is important because it has the ability to quash or severely hinder the progress of a project if they do not
condone it. Obviously, the Diocese may not always be cooperative, but if they are willing to work with the reuse effort, their cooperation could be a major asset.

Table 6.1: Recommended Course of Action as Applied to the Case Studies of Previous Use

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>King Urban Life Center/Charter School (Buffalo)</th>
<th>Old Saint George (Cincinnati)</th>
<th>Church Brew Works (Pittsburgh)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(1) Raise the Issue</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2) Historic Preservation Status</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(3) Organization</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(4) Work with Diocese</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(5) Locate funding from variety of sources</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(6) Design with the building, not against the building</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the case of Our Lady of Hope, having already applied for designating the building as a single parcel historic preservation district, the next step is to organize. The building is under the ownership of the Archdiocese, and there have not been any rumors of possible purchasers. If the people who want to save the building could organize, find a realistic new purpose for the building, and fundraise, they could work with the archdiocese to lease the building, or to purchase the building for the new use. Another possibility is for the local government to purchase the building and form an entity to determine the best use for the building, secure funds, and implement the project.

The findings from the various methods of research have aided in finding some answers to the research questions that were originally posed in the Introduction. The research questions have been restated and have been answered with the knowledge and information gained from the research:
• In what ways and to what extent can a community, especially its leaders, planners, designers, and developers, appropriately address the longstanding character of a site or structure as well as its historical and cultural significance in its reuse strategies?

The first step at addressing the longstanding character of a site of structure is to gauge the attitudes toward the site. These attitudes will come out in full force if and when the site is threatened. Unfortunately, it seems that people in general do not proactively seek to protect something unless it is threatened. This could be useful to decision makers, as it would provide the opportunity to engage concerned citizens in focus groups or similar activities in order to gauge which reuse strategies would best suit the community.

• What are the best practices for engaging a community in the public process of identifying and implementing adaptive reuse strategies for the property?

As seen in the King Urban Life Center, if feasible, it would be good to form a task force of a combination of officials, professionals, and community members to do extensive research into the possibilities of reuse. Questions that need to be asked are “Is there a void of service in this community that could be filled by using this building?”; “What are the changes that would need to be made to this building in order to provide these services?”; “Where will the financial backing come from?”; “Can the new use bring in revenue or make the project eligible for federal, state, or local grants?”

Provide opportunities for the local community to get involved. If possible hold meeting and/or focus groups in the building itself.

• By what criteria, indices, or matrices should “successful” be defined?
The findings from the case studies suggested that the elements that were indicative of the success of a reuse project of a Catholic church as a community asset are as follows: The retention of the original features of the architecture; if it is viewed from the outside (i.e. not from within the residential community) as an improvement to the neighborhood; if the residential community views the reuse as a community asset; if new use is able to sustain itself financially, or is not at risk of closing due to lack of funding; having the ability to maintain the building (as it is generally the greatest expense), or if the project is able to enhance the building; if the new use/adaptation process has minimal environmental impact; and if the new use parleys into economic development (e.g. job training, job creation, moderately increasing property values, makes neighborhood more attractive to businesses, etc.). Table 6.2 shows whether or not each of these elements were achieved in the three case studies of previous adaptive reuse.

- **What practices have been considered “successful” by their communities? What approaches to place-making and community involvement were used?**

While many preservation movements have been bottom-up, previous approaches made toward adaptive reuse of church buildings has been top-down, committees of decision-makers deciding what is best for the community. In the case of many of these churches, these decision-makers have the ability to empower the community by involving them in the process, and potentially opening up a new chapter for the building. This being said, the case of the King Urban Life Center, has been deemed a success on all sides. It has offered an educationally successful charter school as well as paved the way for the expansion offering a variety of services to the community.

- **What is the most successful dynamic/balance of public and private involvement?**
It is shown in the case studies that the reuse practice that experienced the highest degree of success (as defined by this study) had the greatest balance of public and private involvement. It appeared that the project that relied primarily on public/community involvement suffered financially and had to sell the property (Old Saint George). Whereas the project that was primarily backed by a private entity succeeded financially, but is not necessarily a success regarding the community (Church Brew Works).

Because these projects can be so costly it is important to have some sort of private backing if not just as a safety net if public funding is difficult or unable to be obtained. This being said, if the project is solely a private venture, it is also important to have the public involved if only to escape the hurdles of social objection and the issues (legal or not) that can accompany it.
• How has the Catholic community reacted to the preservation of former church structures through a secular reuse where and when it has occurred?

This seems to differ from community to community. For instance, in Lawrenceville there was a greater presence of community members who were not happy about the transformation from a church to a microbrewery, despite the Diocese’s involvement in the process. On the other hand, there has been little uproar over conversion to offices, condominiums, or schools. In Springfield, Massachusetts there was a case of a Muslim group wanting to purchase a former Catholic church to turn into a mosque. The surrounding parish community was surveyed by the archdiocese and few had any problems with the proposed sale, and it went through.

• In what ways and to what extent can the (former) religious use of a property affect the attitudes of the stakeholders and/or decision-makers to reuse strategies?

The case of the Church Brew Works was the only case study of the three that experienced some disapproval in transitioning from a place of religious worship to microbrewery. It seems as though the public react in a more positive light to transitioning such buildings into other community spaces such as schools and community centers.

Recent trends of using former church buildings as shells and façades residential space (commonly luxury condominiums), has gathered mixed reactions. It has been gathered from a variety of informal interviews among people of primarily creative class that, while living in a rehabilitated industrial property is “cool”, something about living in a place where baptisms and funerals took place does not seem quite right. This however has not seemed to have stymied the marketability of these units. More outspoken disapproval met the case of the Limelight nightclub in New York
City, although this also was not a deterrent for its use. (Even though now it is made a hyperbolic example of a new use that is generally frowned upon.)

When using church property (especially the buildings in which religious services took place), it is probably best for the new use to be viewed as something that would contribute to the community in positive ways. This way there is less likely to be any social backlash or protest from the related religious organizations.

**Additional findings:**
The factors that seemed most relevant to the success (or lack thereof) of the adaptive reuse included the varying degrees of public and private involvement, collaboration with the local government, collaboration with the diocese, the characteristics of the local neighborhood, the diversity of economic backing, the presence of an active preservation authority or movement that highlights historic buildings as a community asset, the amount of economic incentives for the new use (e.g. education, religious community center, etc.), and the amount of change made to the structure and the style of the building. A brief overview of those factors in relation to the three case studies as well as the project site is provided in matrix form in Table 6.3.

It is also apparent that the community attachment that drives the preservation of these buildings is not necessarily from the resident community but from the former parish community and from the people who have an attachment to the architecture or to the history of the building. To some people, the building is the only remaining physical link to the history of their parish, especially to those who grew up in an era when the church was *the* social outlet.
An opportunity for reuse for these church buildings is that the attachment of the church

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Public/Private Involvement</th>
<th>King Urban Life Center/Charter School (Buffalo)</th>
<th>Old Saint George (Cincinnati)</th>
<th>Church Brew Works (Pittsburgh)</th>
<th>Our Lady of Hope (Springfield)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

| Role of Local Government | Organized donation of the building to them. Formed task force to find/organize new use. | Identified building as historic landmark. | N/A | Preservation Council votes to make site a single parcel preservation district |

| Role of Diocese | Facilitated donation of property. Catholic ministries now working with the King Urban Life Center. | Approved sale of church to the Christian Ministries group. | Worked with the developer in sale of property (agreements on how building could be used/changed) | Currently suing the City of Springfield over historic preservation designation. |

| Neighborhood Characteristics | Urban, high percentage of housing vacancies, below average median household income | Urban, adjacent to the University of Cincinnati, below average median household income | Urban, high percentage of housing vacancies, below average median household income | Urban, high percentage of housing vacancies, below average median household income |

| Economic Backing | NY Environmental Quality Bond Act; City of Buffalo; Wendt Foundation; U.S. Department of Education | Private donations and income raised from renting out building space for events | Private investment, income from the restaurant/brewery | Parish talking of buying the church from the diocese |


| Economic Incentives for Choice of New Use | Funding from various education authorities | Originally none, just to save the building. Transfer of ownership to CHCURC based on Economic Development | Economic Development incentives and Preservation Incentives | N/A |

| Change to the Building | Change to the building minimal. Most new construction made around existing architecture. | Little to none, with the exception of repairs. | Did a great deal of work to restore the building to its original state. Replaced pews with tables and the altar with copper brewing machinery | N/A |

Table 6.3 Factors that Effect Reuse-Success Outcome
community can act as a catalyst for the building’s protection and preservation. Meanwhile, reuse strategies have the ability to benefit the resident community, creating new meaning for the building concurrent with the meaning that it already has for the parish community. In other words, there is an opportunity to make a place for the resident community while maintaining the structural link of the parish community to their history.

S.W.O.T. of Catholic Church Reuse
In the planning practice in order to gauge the likelihood of success for a given project it is necessary to conduct a S.W.O.T. Analysis, which is a common practice in the business/economics field. This analysis includes listing the (s)trengths, (w)eaknesses, (o)pportunities, and (t)hreats of a given project. Table 6.4 exhibits a brief S.W.O.T. analysis regarding specifically reuse of Catholic Church buildings formed from the findings of this study:

The research conducted from this project has produced answers to all of the questions posed at the inception of the study. In addition, the research has provided a set of indicators which may produce a successful reuse project. As the S.W.O.T. Analysis shows, there are still an ample amount of disadvantages and threats associated with reusing Catholic Church buildings. While project failure is possible, these projects are not doomed. The guidelines described at the beginning of this chapter will aid in the success of future projects.

The following chapter will conclude this study and provide recommendations for further examination. Chapter Seven: Conclusion & Recommendations
Conclusion
Adapting church buildings for reuse is not an easy, nor an inexpensive process. However, with the proper planning it can be successfully accomplished. In the previous chapters the goals and objectives have been identified, the research questions have been addressed, and a set of guidelines for adaptive reuse of Catholic Church buildings has been outlined and explained. While the literature on the subject itself was limited, supportive literature was examined in order to gain a better grasp on the subject and its planning implications. Further review of the case studies supports that reuse strategies should be incorporated into the planning practice.

Identifying proper reuse strategies is important to address at this time due to a number of factors including: First, the shift in religious demographics have caused recent waves of church closure; the increasing amount of church properties left behind from church closures means that there will

Table 6.4 S.W.O.T. of Catholic Church Building Reuse

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Catholic Church Building Reuse</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Strengths:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Buildings more likely to be in better condition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Former parish generally supportive of reuse if building is protected</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Architectural distinctiveness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Cultural distinctiveness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Connection with local history</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Central Locations</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Opportunities:</strong></th>
<th><strong>Threats:</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Waves of closures could provide opportunity for networked reuse strategies</td>
<td>• Inability to secure/maintain funding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Parish members motivated to save building</td>
<td>• Diocese failure to cooperate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Can give building new levels of meaning to different communities</td>
<td>• New use objectionable - prone to protest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Opportunities for place-making for resident community</td>
<td>• Local preservation law more stringent - harder to work with/around</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Apathy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
be an increasing amount of properties whose futures will need to be determined before blight begins to affect the surrounding neighborhood. Secondly, these buildings act as monuments to a community’s history in a time where street-scapes are becoming increasingly generic. The older buildings that are architecturally unique are becoming structural centerpieces which communities identify with, if lost, communities may proceed to lose their sense of identity. Thirdly, these building also act as a structural reminder of the cultural heritage of a greater community, such as the city or a town, which again is important in the maintenance of sense of place and group identity. And, finally, some of these buildings were forcefully taken from their parishes, and the existence of the structure is the only remaining evidence of their spiritual community. It is this community that is the most willing to fight to preserve these buildings.

The planning profession is intwined with the process of church adaptation for community use. Planning implications include but are not limited to historic preservation, land use, creating and supporting public/private partnerships, economic development, gentrification implications, neighborhood suitability, community development, and public participation. The reuse of former religious buildings can be a very sensitive issue, which needs to be researched in order to find the new use as well as the funding that will benefit the most people, and the most stakeholders in a community.

Catholic church closure also offers the potential for a network of reused properties as these churches generally have similar closing dates, and package deals could be possible for purchase from the Diocese.

**Recommendation for Further Study**
As the most outspoken community about the fate of these churches is more likely the parish community, not the resident community, it is recommended that the interest and the attitudes
toward church building reuse of the resident community be gauged. Since it is currently their neighborhood and community greater success is possible if they are involved in the process of decision-making.

This study focused on reuse strategies of post-industrial cities in the Northeast and the Steel-Belt of the United States. This study should be broadened to other areas of the country to explore the successes (and lack thereof) and compare them the that of this study.

Gentrification implications of reuse should be addressed. To explore whether these reuse practices are doing any disservice to the current resident community. Often times, improvements to the neighborhood can raise the prices of adjacent properties. If these improvements are raising the prices in excess current residents may be pushed out as they can no longer afford to live there. This is to be avoided. Thus, the extent to which these improvements have on property values should be explored.

Additionally, the other buildings belonging to the parishes were not addressed in this study (schools, rectory, recreation facility, etc). These buildings should be taken into the scope of further research as these buildings are included on the property of the church building and will need to be incorporated into the reuse strategy.

The primary take-away from this research is that while difficult, it is not impossible to successfully reuse a church building. However, there are many factors that can affect the varying degrees of success. There is a great need for programs and plans that could reuse church buildings but it will take cooperation and involvement from a variety of entities both public and private. The success of creating a community asset by way of adaptive reuse of church buildings is very possible but it will take a very strategic, researched, creative, and thoughtful approach.
Table A.1 National Funding Sources/Financial Incentives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Financial Incentive/ Funding Name</th>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Eligibility</th>
<th>Type of Incentive/ Funding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Federal Historic Preservation Tax Incentives Program</td>
<td>National Parks Service; Internal Revenue Service; State Historic Preservation Offices</td>
<td>Private Sector; Must be used for income-producing purposes for the next 5 years</td>
<td>20% Tax Credit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Trust Preservation Funds</td>
<td>National Trust for Historic Preservation</td>
<td>Non-Profit; Government Agencies</td>
<td>Match grants from $500 - $5000; Provide intervention funding for preservation emergencies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Johanna Favrot Fund for Historic Preservation</td>
<td>Private Grant</td>
<td>Non-Profit; Recapture Authentic Sense of Place</td>
<td>Grant $2,500 - $10,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cynthia Woods Mitchell Fund for Historic Interiors</td>
<td>Private Grant</td>
<td>Preservation of Historic Interiors</td>
<td>Grant $2,500 - $10,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Trust Loan Fund</td>
<td>National Trust for Historic Preservation</td>
<td>Federal, State, &amp; Local Governments, Non-Profit Agencies, For-Profit developers of older and/or historic buildings Residential, Commercial, Public Use projects: Predevelopment, acquisition, mini-permanent, bridge, &amp; rehabilitation;</td>
<td>Large-Scale Loans; Financial feasibility analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Trust Community Investment Corporation</td>
<td>National Parks Service</td>
<td>Commercial</td>
<td>Equity Investment in (commercial) projects that qualify for the Federal Tax Incentive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Save America’s Treasures</td>
<td>Public/Private Partnership: National Trust for Historic Preservation; National Park Service; President’s Committee on Arts &amp; Humanities; Federal cultural preservation agencies</td>
<td>Federal, State, Local Governments; Non-Profit Agencies</td>
<td>Large-Scale Grants</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
State of Massachusetts Funding Opportunities
(for application to the case of the former Our Lady of Hope church)

Table A.2 Massachusetts Funding Sources/Financial Incentives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Financial Incentive/ Funding Name</th>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Eligibility</th>
<th>Type of Incentive/ Funding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Massachusetts Preservation Projects Fund (MPPF)</td>
<td>Massachusetts Historical Council</td>
<td>Properties must be listed on the state register of historic buildings</td>
<td>Grant: Apply for up to 75% of project cost if willing to commit additional 25% toward endowment fund for long-range preservation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Massachusetts Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credit</td>
<td>Massachusetts Department of Revenue/ Massachusetts Historical Commission</td>
<td>Income-producing property</td>
<td>Tax Credit: Up to 20% (in addition to federal tax credit)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ma. Survey and Planning Grants</td>
<td>Massachusetts Historical Commission</td>
<td>Local historical commissions, Certified Local Governments, Local and state agencies, educational institutions, and private organizations</td>
<td>Match 50% of federal funding for preservation programs &amp; plans, community surveys, archaeological surveys</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
References


Appendix B: References


Proctor, Cynthia M., “SUNY Board Grants Highest Renewal to King Center Charter School (Buffalo)” Charter Schools Institute, State University of New York (1/15/08)


