

MIDDLE TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY

FROM SACRED TO SECULAR:
THE ADAPTIVE REUSE OF AMERICA'S RELIGIOUS BUILDINGS

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO
THE FACULTY OF THE COLLEGE OF GRADUATE STUDIES
IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

BY

KRISTEN BALDWIN DEATHRIDGE

MURFREESBORO, TN
MAY 2012

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KRISTEN BALDWIN DEATHRIDGE

APRIL 24, 2012



DR. CARROLL VAN WEST
MAJOR PROFESSOR




DR. MARY S. HOFFSCHWELLE
READER



DR. SUSAN MYERS-SHIRK
READER



DR. DAWN MCCORMACK
READER



DR. ROBERT HUNT
CHAIR, HISTORY DEPARTMENT

DR. MICHEAL ALLEN, DEAN
COLLEGE OF GRADUATE STUDIES

ABSTRACT

The adaptive reuse of historic buildings is widely practiced but little debated by historians. Advocates encourage adaptive reuse as a preservation technique, but most often they argue in favor of the economic and aesthetic benefits of the practice without encouraging developers to provide any historic context. Religious spaces have been adapted throughout American history. These buildings are such a culturally charged aspect of the landscape that they provide a logical departure point for an exploration of what adaptive reuse means and the public historian's role in that dialogue.

Four case studies from across the United States form the basis of this investigation. In Buffalo, New York, Roman Catholic St. Mary of Sorrows has found new life in an institutional reuse as King Urban Life Center and Charter School. An Architectural firm, Tuck-Hinton Architects, has adapted Elm Street Methodist Church, in Nashville, Tennessee, as its new commercial space. The United Hebrew Synagogue, in St. Louis, Missouri, has been reused as the cultural center housing the Missouri Historical Society Library and Research Center. In San Francisco, the Bush Street Temple has hosted the Congregation Ohabai Shalome, the Sokoji Zen Temple, Macedonia Methodist Church, the Zen Center, and now provides a residence for those living at Kokoro Assisted Living for Seniors. Evidence from religious buildings suggests that communities are more

likely to rally around buildings which have cultural significance for those communities. In order to ensure the long-term sustainability of historic buildings, adaptive reuse requires a connection to the audience through interpretation of their historic context.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I've heard rumors that scholarship is a solitary exercise, but that definitely has not been my experience. I owe many debts of gratitude. The Provost's Writing Fellowship, Center for Historic Preservation, and Public History Program at Middle Tennessee State University have all provided project and research funding that proved essential in helping me complete this work.

I am grateful for the support and guidance of many professors throughout my education. In particular, I'd like to thank the members of my dissertation committee, Dr. Carroll Van West, Dr. Mary S. Hoffschwelle, Dr. Susan Myers-Shirk, and Dr. Dawn McCormack, for giving their time to truly mentor me in this process. As chair of the committee, not only did Dr. West always make time for me--no small thing!--he provided me with professional responsibilities and opportunities. I cannot thank him enough.

Special thanks to Dr. Michael Tomlan of Cornell University. It was his class that inspired the topic of this dissertation. All of the professors at MTSU that I encountered taught me meaningful lessons, but Dr. Amy Sayward and Dr. Stacey Graham, in particular, were always available for a chat. Whether they are aware of it or not, professors from my MA in Archaeology program at the University of Reading, particularly Dr. Roberta Gilchrist and Dr. Richard Bradley, helped by treating me as a colleague and believing in the value of my ideas.

Several individuals assisted with research. Thanks to the following: Dr. Charles Massey, of the King Urban Life Center and Houghton College, for his time and the information that he provided; Christopher F. Guerra, AIA, for providing copies of the architectural plans for the adaptive reuse of St. Mary of Sorrows in Buffalo, New York; Kem Hinton, FAIA, and Seab Tuck, FAIA, for access to their business and the archive of information they have collected on Elm Street Methodist Church in Nashville, TN; Karen Goering, for her time, expertise, and for providing images from the Missouri History Museum Library and Research Center; Donna Graves, for introducing me to several helpful people in Japantown, San Francisco, and for providing access to her own research on the area; and Steven Suzuki, for his time, information, and the tour of Kokoro Assisted Living.

Colleagues in the programs at MTSU have provided an indispensable support network. Jane Davis, I could not imagine this experience without you. Katherine O'Bryan, our coffee shop talk and work sessions literally made this happen. Thanks to Jane, Katherine, Abigail Gautreau, and many others who have passed through the program in the past few years for both the countless discussions that have improved my thinking and work, and all of the laughs that

kept me sane. Thanks to Tracy Marsh for reviewing a couple of chapters for me. I am certain that mistakes have crept in, despite the best efforts of others; all errors are my own.

I would like to thank my friends and family for their unwavering support and encouragement throughout the years. Finally, I would like to thank Jason for supporting my dreams, keeping me grounded, and not kicking me out when I got too stressed. There are not words to fully express my gratitude.

CONTENTS

List of Figures	vi
Chapter I: Adaptive Reuse and the American Built Environment	1
Chapter II: Adaptive Reuse and Public History	20
Chapter III: From Catholic Church to Charter School in Buffalo, New York	51
Chapter IV: From Methodist Church to Architectural Firm in Nashville, Tennessee	80
Chapter V: From Temple to Research Center in St. Louis, Missouri	103
Chapter VI: From Religious Center to Assisted Living Facility in San Francisco, California	123
Chapter VII: Conclusions and Next Steps	150
Bibliography	157

FIGURES

3.1	St. Mary of Sorrows, 1887	51
3.2	View of King Urban Life Center from the street	53
3.3	Distance from downtown Buffalo to King Urban Life Center	56
3.4	The neighborhood around St. Mary of Sorrows, 1915	58
3.5	Current view of the neighborhood	60
3.6	Political cartoon highlighting the Diocese's mixed messages	63
3.7	Glass doors in vestibule	69
3.8	Interior, facing east. Repurposed doors, concealing kitchen space	70
3.9	Interior, facing southwest, view from inside the kitchen	70
3.10	Interior of King Urban Life Center, showing all four classrooms	71
3.11	Interior view showing ceiling, cafeteria, apse conference room	72
3.12	Inside conference room, facing "skylight" ceiling	73
3.13	View of western classrooms	74
3.14	Interior facing south, showing loft library	75
4.1	Elm Street Methodist Church, ca. 1900	80
4.2	Elm Street Methodist Church and the surrounding neighborhood in 1908	83
4.3	Prints of stereographic images of Elm Street, ca. 1900	88
4.4	Elm Street Methodist Church in 1950	90

4.5	Rev. Shuggart Martin in Elm Street Methodist	91
4.6	Elm Street Methodist before renovations	96
4.7	Interior facing away from altar, during PMT's renovations	97
4.8	Interior facing altar, during PMT's renovations	98
4.9	Interior facing altar area, after PMT's renovations	98
4.10	Exterior of Tuck-Hinton Architects, upper portion of buttress and historic church sign visible	99
4.11	Interior, facing former altar area, Tuck-Hinton Architects	100
4.12	Tuck-Hinton Architects, 2011	101
5.1	The recently completed United Hebrew Temple at 225 S Skinker Blvd, 1927	103
5.2	Map of Wydown/Forsyth National Historic District	107
5.3	Architectural drawing showing the Library and Archive, including the collections annex	111
5.4	Photograph of sanctuary as it appeared with MHM acquired the property in 1989	113
5.5	The frieze had been shopped out in places for HVAC installations	114
5.6	Detail of hidden architectural features	114
5.7	Renovation where the altar used to rest, 1990	115
5.8	Remodeled reading room, taken from the entrance to the room	115
5.9	Restored Star of David medallion in the dome	116
5.10	Interior of Temple, 1927	117
5.11	Remodeled reading room, photo taken from former altar area	118

6.1	Drawing of Bush Street Temple, 1895	123
6.2	Bush Street Temple as adapted by Kokoro Assisted Living	126
6.3	Bryon Colman delivering his 1906 confirmation speech	128
6.4	Bush Street during the early days of the Temple	129
6.5	Bush Street block during WWII	133
6.6	Zen Soto Mission, 1964	135
6.7	untitled photo shows state of the Bush Street Temple when Kokoro began work	139
6.8	Fundraiser ticket from Congregation Ohabai Shalome's time capsule	142
6.9	Kokoro Assisted Living for Seniors	143
6.10	Reconstructed stained glass windows	144
6.11	Kokoro dining and event room set up in the former worship space	145

CHAPTER I: ADAPTIVE REUSE AND THE AMERICAN BUILT ENVIRONMENT

As communities change and demographics shift, buildings and spaces that had been used for worship and sacred activities remain as community landmarks in our cultural landscape. This dissertation investigates how new uses for these community institutions not only provide a facelift to the built environment but also how the new purposes infuse communities with life that speaks to contemporary culture. Religious buildings in the United States have been reused for commercial, institutional, cultural, and residential purposes. These reuse projects achieve “success,” but that is often limited to a simple real estate consideration; success should extend into the nation’s cultural vitality.

Public historians and preservationists are well suited to address such questions because they both strive to meet the public at the level of their needs. Preservationists ask if there are some quality ways that developers can honor the history of a building and the changing character of communities while still turning a profit. Further, they wonder if merely saving the facade of a structure counts as a preservation victory. Preservationists and town planners often disagree on the how to resolve these issues and discussing adaptive reuse and cultural success will contribute to that ongoing conversation. In addition, there are some tough questions that this dissertation will begin to discuss in relation to

cultural success. For example, it can be important to ensure that the community that has made a space sacred will continue to have access to it.

In his book *Keeping Time: The History and Theory of Preservation in America*, William Murtagh argues that the adaptive reuse of religious buildings and theatres often prove more complicated than other adaptive reuse ventures because of the large interior spaces. Murtagh claims that “when a conversion takes place, all buildings of this nature lose their interior integrity when their unbroken spaces are divided in the interests of economic viability.”¹ Regardless, religious spaces are often reused. One is hard-pressed to find a city or town that does not have an adaptive reuse of a religious building. While Murtagh’s concerns about the large sanctuary space are valid, the case studies in this dissertation show several possible reuses of religious buildings that do not deprive the interiors of architectural integrity.

Following this introduction is a chapter that analyzes the ways in which public historians and historic preservationists discuss adaptive reuse. Chapters three through six center on four case studies of the adaptive reuse of religious buildings. Chapter seven provides some conclusions and recommendations for further study on the cultural success of adaptive reuse. Particular buildings will

¹ William Murtagh, *Keeping Time: The History and Theory of Preservation in America*, (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1997), 122.

be examined for in-depth case studies. These four case studies span the regions of the United States: North, South, Mid-west, and West to illustrate that the reuse of religious buildings is quite a common phenomenon. It does not appear that reuse types are particular to certain regions in the United States, but these buildings represent the various types of reuse in their current primary function: institutional, commercial, cultural, and residential.² The goal is to discuss various religious traditions and types of reuse in order to represent and highlight the range of possibilities that adaptive reuse opens up to developers and communities. The northern case study is the King Urban Life Center and Charter School in Buffalo, New York. This is an institutional reuse of the former St. Mary of Sorrows Catholic Church. The southern case study is the commercial reuse of Elm Street Methodist Church as Tuck Hinton Architects, PLLC in Nashville, Tennessee. The mid-west is represented by the Missouri History Museum Library and Research Center, a cultural reuse of the United Hebrew Congregation Synagogue. The western example comes from San Francisco, California, where a building that began as the Congregation Ohabai Shalome Synagogue became a Japanese Soto Zen Temple before being once again reused as part of the Kokoro Assisted Living Community.

² Secondary functions may make use of the other reuse types.

In each case study, I document the current use and structure of the property, and discuss the historic use and structural changes that have taken place as I evaluate the cultural success of the adaptive reuse. Generally, cultural success means connecting a place to its history and/or the surrounding community. There are a variety of paths to cultural success, including, but not limited to, historical interpretation and continuation of mission. Exploring these issues will add to the historiographical discussion of adaptive reuse and will influence public history theory by helping to provide context for current practices as we continue to help preserve the historical character of religious buildings. This project focuses on the public through an evaluation of structures that matter and how communities can continue to profit from them. It also grounds itself in history by centering on the historic contexts in which buildings are constructed and reused, encouraging other communities and public historians to honor that history.

The phrase “adaptive reuse” has come to be used whenever a building constructed for one particular purpose, in this case for worship, is fitted to a different purpose. Adaptive reuse is currently the most common term, although some say “adaptive use.” Any change in the primary purpose of a building constitutes an adaptive reuse, although most often it is accompanied by at least some changes in the fabric of a building, either on the exterior or the interior.

Adaptive reuse need not follow any particular guidelines, but the Secretary of the Interior offers *Standards for Rehabilitation* of a historic structure. These standards define “rehabilitation” as “the process of returning a property to a state of utility, through repair or alteration, which makes possible an efficient contemporary use while preserving those portions and features of the property which are significant to its historic, architectural, and cultural values.”³ A building may be rehabilitated to its former purpose or adapted to a new use; therefore all adaptive reuse is rehabilitation, but not all rehabilitation is adaptive reuse.

The Secretary’s *Standards* are primarily used to evaluate construction on buildings listed on the National Register of Historic Places, to determine the appropriateness of construction that has been completed on buildings that owners wish to place on the Register, and to decide if a building’s owner has earned the rehabilitation federal tax credit. However, often people who are undertaking a rehabilitation or adaptive reuse project reference the Standards as they plan their work in order to earn tax credits as well as to maintain the character of a building. The *Standards* consist of ten statements aimed at

³ Anne Grimmer and Kay Weeks, *The Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation & Illustrated Guidelines for Applying the Standards*, National Park Service, 1992, <http://www.nps.gov/hps/tps/tax/rhb/index.htm> (accessed July 30, 2011).

preserving the historic characteristics and materials in a building. The Secretary of the Interior's *Standards for Rehabilitation* do not comment on whether or not the former use of a building should be interpreted to the public after rehabilitation. In practice, particularly in the last forty years, preservationists and entrepreneurs have presented some sort of interpretation, ranging from a hidden plaque to a centrally located exhibit, a generally accepted norm.

Historic buildings that have been adaptively reused are judged, by preservationists, developers, governments, and communities, as successes or failures through a couple of typical measures. Preservationists often consider the value of the design, or re-design, of the building. They judge the design success based on the architectural and aesthetic merit of the changes that fit the building to new purpose.⁴ Developers, however, often privilege whether or not adaptive reuse projects meet with financial success. For a building reuse to be a fiscal success, it conserves original materials and labor expended, proves less expensive while often requiring more labor (thus employing more individuals)

⁴ For example see William C. Shopsin, *Restoring Old Buildings for Contemporary Uses: An American Sourcebook for Architects and Preservationists* (New York: Watson Guptill Publications, 1989), and Sherban Cantacuzino, *Re/Architecture: Old Buildings/New Uses*, (New York: Abbeville Press, 1989).

than new construction, and fits in to a community's desire to be perceived as "green" and supporting sustainability.⁵

Public historians can add to this conversation about success by asking whether the adaptive reuse of buildings reflect a cultural success. For an adaptive reuse to be a cultural success, it must honor its history in some way and offer meaningful, well-grounded interpretation of that history to the public. For an adaptive reuse project to be a cultural success, it need not tie in to a national historical theme. Local history and culture prove just as significant to the communities who preserve and use these buildings. For example, the Shiloh Rosenwald School in Notasulga, Alabama, has national connections to both other Rosenwald schools and the Tuskegee Syphilis Experiments, but locals have worked hard to save and reuse the building as a community center because of their personal ties to the space. The school and community events bind locals to

⁵ Donovan Rypkema, *The Economics of Historic Preservation: A Community Leader's Guide*, (Washington, D.C.: The National Trust for Historic Preservation, 1994); *Historic Preservation and Affordable Housing: The Missed Connection*, (Washington, D.C.: The National Trust for Historic Preservation, 2002).

the building and inspires them to do whatever they can do preserve the structure to help tell their story.⁶

Until recently, there has been almost no historical literature on adaptive reuse, much less the specific adaptive reuse of religious spaces. However, in the last few years there has been a growing interest in researching adaptive reuse trends.⁷ In 1994, Stewart Brand fueled this research by writing *How Buildings Learn: What Happens After They're Built*. Brand challenged architectural historians to look beyond the original design intent of buildings. Further, he challenged

⁶ This is strongly demonstrated through the interviews conducted in research for The National Register nomination for the site. See Elizabeth Moore, Katie Merzbacher, Elizabeth Smith, Kristen Baldwin Deathridge, Carroll Van West, "Shiloh Missionary Baptist Church and Rosenwald School, Macon County, AL," National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form, Alabama Historical Commission, April 2010.

⁷ A quick search of the phrase "adaptive reuse" in the Proquest dissertation database reveals several recent Masters of Architecture theses on the subject, two Architectural dissertations and a handful of Masters' theses from landscape, interior design, and urban planning departments, many of them focusing on a single building. A sample: You Kyong Ahn, "Adaptive Reuse of Abandoned Historic Churches: Building Type and Public Perception," (PhD diss., Texas A & M University, 2007), In ProQuest Dissertations and Theses, <http://bit.ly/Ic5AsO> (accessed March 10, 2011) (Architecture); Imani Brown, "Adaptive Reuse as Economic Development in Downtown Los Angeles: A Resource Guide for Start-Up Developers, Community Based Organizations, and Stakeholder Groups," (PhD diss., University of Southern California, 2009), In ProQuest Dissertations and Theses, <http://bit.ly/IrgIfR> (accessed March 10, 2011) (Policy, Planning, and Development); Kristina Marie McIntyre, "Adaptive Reuse in Martinsburg: The Interwoven School of Crafts," (Masters Thesis, University of Maryland, College Park, 2008), In ProQuest Dissertations and Theses, <http://bit.ly/JCPIQb> (accessed March 10, 2011) (Architecture).

them to bring their study of the social and cultural contexts of buildings to bear on the whole lifecycle of a structure. Brand goes on to challenge architects to design buildings for maximum flexibility and adaptability.

Brand asked these questions nearly twenty years ago, but few scholars have followed up on them until recently. Perhaps this is because Brand formally studied biology at Stanford and design at the San Francisco Art Institute, rather than history or architecture.⁸ In their 2011 review of the scholarly literature, Plevoets and Van Cleempoel survey works on adaptive reuse of international significance from heritage conservation and architecture. They found that these works fit largely into three types: those that discuss buildings based on their original purpose (typological), those that advise on how to reuse historic buildings (technical), and those that discuss outstanding examples based on the architectural strategy (strategic) used to modify them (for example, modernization, building around, replacement, etc). Plevoets and Van Cleempoel criticize the authors reviewed who do not consider, or only do so in a minimal way, the meaning and history of the buildings being reused.⁹

⁸ Stewart Brand, "Bio..." *Stewart Brand*, http://web.me.com/stewartbrand/SB_homepage/Bio.html (accessed January 14, 2012).

⁹ B. Plevoets and K. Van Cleempoel, "Adaptive Reuse as a Strategy Towards Conservation of Cultural Heritage: A Literature Review," in C.A. Brebbia and L. Binda, eds, *Structural Studies, Repairs, and Maintenance of Heritage Architecture XII*, (Southampton, UK: WIT Press, September 15, 2011), 155-164.

Noticeably absent from this discussion of historical resources is the voice of the historian (and, by extension, the public historian). Public historians can step in and address the issue of how community renewal can lead to the loss of historical memory and meaning as groups get priced out of their neighborhoods.¹⁰ Public historians and preservationists are beginning to encourage the type of neighborhood revitalization which enables the neighbors to stay. Scholars such as Delores Hayden have recognized the significance of preservation in creating environments for community renewal.¹¹ Public historians in particular must consider these questions as adaptive reuse becomes a more popular trend, but little public history literature has addressed the role that adaptive reuse can play in providing effective stewardship of our collective historic resources.

As this practice continues through calls for responsible, green, use and reuse of resources as well as through historic preservation, it important that a line of inquiry be extended into the theory and practice of this process. Religious

¹⁰ For example, see James Marston Fitch, "The Philosophy of Restoration: Williamsburg to the Present," in Martica Swain, ed., *James Marston Fitch: Selected Writings on Architecture, Preservation, and the Built Environment*, (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2007),172-181; Nancy Raquel Mirabal, "Geographies of Displacement: Latina/os, Oral History, and the Politics of Gentrification in San Francisco's Mission District," *The Public Historian* 31, no. 2 (Spring 2009): 7-31.

¹¹ Delores Hayden, *The Power of Place: Urban Landscapes as Public History* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1995).

spaces have been adapted throughout American history. These buildings are such a culturally charged aspect of the landscape that they provide a logical departure point for an exploration of what adaptive reuse means and the public historian's role in that dialogue. Groups such as Partners for Sacred Places continue to work to preserve America's cultural heritage, although they are the only organization that works specifically with religious groups. Partners for Sacred Places works with shrinking congregations to help them find creative ways to afford the upkeep on their historic buildings so that they can continue to serve the communities around them.¹²

Religious buildings and others have long been abandoned for new neighborhoods. Americans are a people on the move, leaving once cherished buildings and neighborhoods behind in the search for better futures. This process is not new, but in the second half of the twentieth century, it has intensified as the suburban explosion has expanded across the landscape.¹³ Urban historians have focussed on these demographic shifts, particularly as people of the middle- and upper-middle classes seem to be moving back to city centers while lower- and

¹² Partners for Sacred Places, "What We Do," *Partners for Sacred Places: At the Intersection of Faith, Heritage, and Community*, <http://www.sacredplaces.org/what-we-do/> (accessed October 1, 2011).

¹³ Kenneth T. Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier: the Suburbanization of the United States* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985).

lower-middle class people are moving into the suburbs.¹⁴ While this revitalization and migration can be seen in some central business districts, the outer city and suburbs experience these shifts at different rates, if at all. However, demographic shifts are just one area that scholars have used to discuss buildings.

Scholars have also addressed questions of agency, attempting to recognize that various individuals and groups make choices that affect the material record, including structures. This trend largely arose in response to structuralism, a theory that cultural interactions, including the creation and uses of material culture, are governed by rules similar to those which govern language.¹⁵ Critics argue that a strict structuralist approach leaves no room for the intentions of the people who create and manage culture.¹⁶ Scholars disagree on the extent that

¹⁴ For a solid review of Urban Renewal and its effects through the lens of historic preservation, see Andrew Hurley, *Beyond Preservation: Using Public History to Revitalize Inner Cities* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2010). Reviews through the lens of the law also demonstrate these effects, for example in Todd Schneider, "From Monuments to Urban Renewal: How Different Philosophies of Historic Preservation Impact the Poor," special issue, *Georgetown Journal on Poverty Law & Policy* VIII, no. 1 (Winter 2001).

¹⁵ Jean Piaget, *Structuralism*, (New York: Basic Books, 1970).

¹⁶ For example, see William H. Sewell, Jr., "A Theory of Structure: Duality, Agency, and Transformation," *American Journal of Sociology* 98, no. 1 (July 1992): 1-29, in which Sewell argues for modifying structuralist theory to include room for human agency.

agents, be they individual humans or not, are able to act outside of the underlying structures of societies.¹⁷

Recognizing that people respond to the physical world of material culture in addition to creating it, some scholars also ascribe agency to artifacts, including buildings, giving them anthropomorphic qualities.¹⁸ Like any theory or metaphor carried to its extent, this theory in turn diminishes the agency of the people who created the material culture. It proves tempting when discussing material culture, including buildings, to anthropomorphize, as Brand did in his provocatively titled *How Buildings Learn*, and many accept that objects work on those that come in contact with them. Partly as a result of the urge to discuss topics in active voice, the anthropomorphizing of objects is indeed more than that. As scholars have attempted to describe the relationships people have with material culture, some have argued that the concept of agency should be applied to objects. Agency has become a popular topic in scholarship in order to emphasize the influence of an individual or groups of actors in history and to

¹⁷ Carl Knappett and Lambros Malafouris, eds., *Material Agency: Towards a Non-Anthropocentric Approach* (Berlin: Springer, 2008), 6; Robert W. Preucel, *Archaeological Semiotics* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 2010).

¹⁸ Notably, the scholars in Knappett and Malafouris, as well as Chris Gosden, whose work will be discussed below.

show that culture and events come from more than the underlying structure in society.

Ensuring that agency is ascribed to as many cultural groups as is possible helps to add minority and marginal voices to historical narratives. For example, by discussing how slaves intentionally used and created material culture, as Leland Ferguson does in *Uncommon Ground: Archaeology and Early African America, 1650-1800*, colonial American history becomes something that slaves *did* and participated in, rather than something that *happened to them* or that only the higher class whites created.¹⁹ As a further example, scholars recognize that slaves used imported European dishes in ways different than the colonists in the main house did. In turn, the European plates were different from those that Africans made in Africa and so affected/modified how slaves used the items in their captivity. However, the plate did not make the choice to be used differently. The plate did not choose to be a different material that would require modification of

¹⁹ Leland Ferguson, *Uncommon Ground: Archaeology and Early African America, 1650-1800* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1992).

the rituals that the slaves performed. Therefore, the plate itself affected the ways in which it was used, but it did not exert agency in those situations.²⁰

Scholars often metaphorically discuss how objects influence the people and culture. As Chris Gosden put it “things shape people.”²¹ Memorably, Alison J. Clarke used a case study of Tupperware to investigate the meaning in mundane objects and how people interacted with them to contribute to a culture.²² I call these uses of agency “metaphor” because scholars are using the term agency to indicate the ways in which artifacts affect people and sometimes act *like* people but objects do not, in fact, make choices or behave as people do.

Scholars such as Chris Gosden argue that because objects affect people and influence society they therefore can be said to have agency.²³ Gosden

²⁰ Scholars argue that changes in the use of material culture from that of original purpose to new purposes can be traced in the archaeological record: Whitney Battle-Baptiste, ““In this here place” : interpreting enslaved homeplaces,” in Akinwumi Ogundiran and Toyin Falola, eds., *Archaeology of Atlantic Africa and the Afrian Diaspora* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2007), James Deetz, *In Small Things Forgotten: an Archaeology of Early American Life* (New York: Anchor Books, 1996); Theresa Singleton, *The Archaeology of Slavery and Plantation Life* (Orlando, FL: Academic Press, 1985), and others.

²¹ Chris Gosden, *Archaeology and Colonialism: Cultural Contact from 5000 BC to the Present* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 153.

²² Alison J. Clarke, *Tupperware: The Promise of Plastic in 1950s America* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1999).

²³ Chris Gosden, “What do objects want?” *Journal of Archaeological Method and Theory*, 12, no. 3 (September 2005): 193-211.

correctly notes that particularly in prehistory, artifacts prove abundant while direct evidence of human agency proves highly problematic. Objects are not without problem, but Gosden contends that the effects of a group of objects on people remain significant. He goes on to acknowledge that assigning agency to objects is a rhetorical strategy used “so that artifacts are not always seen as passive and people as active.”²⁴ I concur to a degree with his contention, yet I argue that the rhetoric has been carried too far because, while people do respond to material culture, artifacts are, in fact, passive. For example, the advent of the television in homes undoubtedly changed American culture, but televisions did not exercise agency in order to get into those homes.

In their edited volume *Material Agency: Towards a Non-Anthropocentric Approach*, Carl Knappett and Lambros Malafouris acknowledge that if one includes the possibility of personal reflection in the concept of agency, it is more difficult to convince scholars to ascribe agency to material culture. They also acknowledge that agency is the “capacity to act.”²⁵ They go on to say that “when agency is linked strictly to consciousness and intentionality, we have very little scope for extending its reach beyond the human.”²⁶ The only way, then, to ascribe

²⁴ Ibid., 194.

²⁵ Knappett and Malafouris, *Material Agency*, 4.

²⁶ Ibid., 5.

agency to objects of material culture is to change the very definition of agency. Knappett and Malafouris contend that it is acceptable both to deny agency to objects or to extend it to them so long as authors explain what they mean when they use the term agency.²⁷ It is in that spirit that this discussion is included in this dissertation. I argue that, while I may refer to buildings using active verbs, agency is a concept reserved for human actors and groups of actors although objects can influence the actions of human agents.

Many of the arguments in favor of extending agency to objects, including those of Gosden, do so from the position of structuralist and poststructuralist theory. Gosden states that there are “sets of rules that things impose on people if artifacts are to have social power.”²⁸ It is interesting that arguments for the agency of individuals and marginal people groups stemmed from those finding fault with structuralist tenets. In an article discussing this subject, Gosden states: “Changes in the nature of pottery or metal types take place over many human generations and not under the direct and willed control of individuals or groups.”²⁹ I would argue that this is yet another contention that removes agency from people. Large-scale changes may happen as Gosden describes above, but

²⁷ Ibid., 19.

²⁸ Gosden, “What do objects want?” 194.

²⁹ Ibid., 195.

those large-scale changes are made up of many small actions taken by individuals. Arguing any differently obscures their agency and role in the creation of culture.

There must be a better way to discuss the impact that objects and groups of objects can have on people rather than assigning those objects agency. If the purpose of assigning agency to objects is to acknowledge that material culture is both created and used by humans as well as that it affects human actions, then perhaps we need a new term for this interaction. Seemingly pointless debates about whether objects should be anthropomorphized are exactly the sort of thing that separates the academy from the public.

This discussion about rhetoric and terms proves that sometimes semantics matter. By saying that objects have agency, scholars continue to demean the agency of people and marginal peoples, by subordinating their wills to the whims of "mass" culture. This is true, particularly in Gosden's case, as he argues from a standpoint that groups of objects are more likely than individual ones to exhibit agency over cultural groups. The relationship(s) and interaction between people and material culture proves complex and worthy of more nuanced treatment, but not one that obscures the choices and actions of individuals and cultural groups.

Buildings are material culture, and this discussion of agency serves as a reminder that when I write about buildings using active verbs, I do not mean to imply that these buildings have agency. Agency implies intent. Rather, people created these buildings with the intention that worshippers would be affected in particular ways. Worshippers and other users create their own experience of the space through their interaction with the building. Material culture influences the world, but not in an active, intentional manner. People designed, responded to, and repurposed the buildings in this study.

CHAPTER II: ADAPTIVE REUSE AND PUBLIC HISTORY

Public historians come from a broad range of academic disciplines, and some who earn degrees in urban planning and architecture have gone on to work in public history with State Historic Preservation Offices and other groups. The majority of these public historians and historic preservationists enthusiastically support the adaptive reuse of spaces that might otherwise be destroyed. Main Street programs, which started in the early 1980s, are an excellent example in which community leaders come together to invigorate downtown areas with new businesses while retaining at least the facades of historic structures to maintain community identity.¹

Planners, architects, and other public historians are beginning to produce handbooks to guide those interested in adaptive reuse, such as Rabun and Kelso's 2009 volume *Building Evaluation for Adaptive Reuse and Preservation*.² This handbook is the only publication by public historians that discusses theory on adaptive reuse, although many are practicing it. With a rising interest in adaptive reuse from both public historians and the green movement, the time proves ripe

¹ National Main Street Center, *Revitalizing Downtown: the Professional's Guide to the Main Street Approach* (Washington, D.C.: The Center, 2000).

² J. Stanley Rabun and Richard Miles Kelso, *Building Evaluation for Adaptive Reuse and Preservation* (Hoboken, NJ.: Wiley, 2009).

for a scholarly inquiry into adaptive reuse. This chapter contains a discussion of the history of preservation policies and practices in the United States, followed by a more specific discussion of adaptive reuse, which is an example of how these laws are often applied, and its commonly applied measures for “success.”

Historic preservation in the United States is grounded in the succession of preservation laws and federal programs. These laws and practices and their evolution provide the context for adaptive reuse and current preservation initiatives. Scholars Max Page and Randall Mason remind us that historic preservation and adaptive reuse have always been a part of Western culture. The focus on the late nineteenth-century and twentieth-century national movements and federal laws can obscure the persistent efforts of local preservationists.³ Page and Mason go so far as to argue that, by tracing the history of preservation through late-nineteenth-century successes and national laws and programs, historians imply that the upper class and the federal government have driven preservation.⁴ Contrarily, the federal laws and programs of historic preservation have been driven by workers in the field of preservation, be they professional

³ Max Page and Randall Mason, *Giving Preservation a History: Histories of Historic Preservation in the United States* (New York: Routledge, 2004).

⁴ Page and Mason, *Giving Preservation a History*, Location 159-63. A good example is Robert Stipe, *A Richer Heritage: Historic Preservation in the Twenty-first Century* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003).

preservationists, real-estate developers, or communities fighting to save a place that matters to them. Changes to preservation law have often been driven by the needs of communities.⁵ While the emphasis on preservation laws can obscure the work of local groups, the evolution of those laws and practices remain the framework for discussions of local preservation efforts.

Though communities have long worked to preserve and reuse significant buildings, the official story of historic preservation in the United States begins with grassroots movements to save particular buildings. In 1853 the women of The Mount Vernon Ladies' Association fought a winning battle to save the home of President George Washington. This was followed by other successful battles, such as that of the Ladies' Hermitage Association in the 1880s to save President Andrew Jackson's home.⁶

Along with these private movements, the federal government began adding its own layers of protection to special places. Federal protection of nationally significant sites began as early as 1872, with the establishment of

⁵ Norman Tyler, *Historic Preservation: an Introduction to its History, Principles, and Practice* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 2009).

⁶ Charles Hosmer, *Presence of the Past: a History of the Preservation Movement in the United States Before Williamsburg* (New York: Putnam, 1965); William Murtagh, *Keeping Time: the History and Theory of Preservation in America* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1997).

Yellowstone National Park.⁷ Vandals and looters in the early National Parks and other public domain western lands led to public outcry.⁸ In response to this, Congress passed the Antiquities Act of 1906, which enabled the president to create national monuments out of public domain land in order to protect sites of prehistoric, historic, or natural value. Many of these national monuments were placed under the jurisdiction of the National Park Service (NPS), after its establishment through the National Park Service Organic Act of 1916.⁹

Also in the early twentieth century, Dr. W.A.R. Goodwin and John D. Rockefeller financed work on preserving and restoring Colonial Williamsburg in Virginia and so established one of the first historic districts to protect a particular neighborhood.¹⁰ In 1931, Charleston, South Carolina, went further by passing a

⁷ Kristen Baldwin Deathridge and Katherine Merzbacher O'Bryan, *Phase One Drafts of Federal Historic Preservation Program Task Force Papers*, produced for Preservation Action, 2010. These papers form the skeleton of the history of the federal preservation programs that follow. The final report has been published as *Federal Historic Preservation Program Task Force, Aligned for Success: Recommendations to Increase the Effectiveness of the Federal Historic Preservation Program* (Washington, D.C.: Preservation Action Foundation, 2011).

⁸ Alfred Runte, *National Parks: the American Experience* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1979).

⁹ James A. Glass, *The Beginnings of a New National Historic Preservation Program, 1957-1969* (Nashville: American Association for State and Local History, 1990), xiii; Hal Rothman, *Preserving Different Pasts: the American National Monuments* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1989).

¹⁰ Hosmer, *Presence of the Past*.

historic zoning ordinance that required all changes within the historic district to be subject to approval of a local board.¹¹

President Franklin D. Roosevelt further expanded the National Park system in the 1930s by transferring historic battlefields and forts from the War Department to the Park Service. Additionally, under the New Deal, the Park Service assumed responsibility for the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS), begun in 1933, in which architects prepared measured drawings and photographed historic architecture throughout the country. However, with the Historic Sites Act of 1935, Congress established a national program in order to preserve, rather than merely record (as with HABS), properties with historic value outside of the Park Service. In his study of the beginnings of the National Historic Preservation program, James A. Glass notes that “the Historic Sites Act of that year authorized the Park Service to inaugurate surveys of nationally important historic sites and to work cooperatively with other units of government and private citizens to preserve such properties for the ‘inspiration and benefit’ of the American people.”¹²

¹¹ Andrew Hurley, *Beyond Preservation: Using Public History to Revitalize Inner Cities* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2010), Location 180-202.

¹² Glass, *The Beginnings of a New National Historic Preservation Program*, xiii.

With the entrance of the United States into World War II in 1942, federal preservation activity waned, as the National Park Service budget shrunk, but there is little evidence to suggest that people stopped working to preserve significant places on local and regional levels. After the war, the Park Service resumed its activities, but funding did not reach pre-war levels; and neither the Historic Sites Survey nor the Historic American Buildings Survey was reactivated at that point.¹³

At the time, the only means of preserving a threatened historic building or site under the Historic Sites Act was for the federal government to acquire the building or site within the National Park System, which was a costly and slow-moving process. By the 1950s, only a few nationally significant landmarks and sites could be saved through the Historic Sites Act and inclusion in the National Park system.¹⁴ It proved impractical for the US government to purchase all threatened property. At the same time it became clear that the sort of preservation that requires federal intervention on that level had come far from its grassroots organization days. However, in 1954 the Supreme Court ruled that the government could destroy dilapidated buildings in order to preserve or uplift the

¹³ Charles Hosmer, *Preservation Comes of Age: from Williamsburg to the National Trust, 1926-1949* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1981).

¹⁴ Glass, *The Beginnings of a New National Historic Preservation Program*, 4.

appearance of a neighborhood.¹⁵ Preservationists began taking advantage of this ruling because it established that city zoning rulings could be based on aesthetic principles as they argued for the protection of buildings which contributed to the look of a community.¹⁶

In 1947 the National Council for Historic Sites and Buildings began with a national meeting attended by grassroots preservationists as well as members of the National Park Service. Activists created the council in order to investigate the establishment of a National Trust, and in October 1949 the charter for the National Trust for Historic Preservation unanimously passed Congress and President Truman signed it into law. In 1951 the National Trust acquired its first property, Woodlawn Plantation. Throughout the 1950s, the Trust rapidly grew and advised an increasing number of individuals across the country.¹⁷

As the Interstate Highway Act and Urban Renewal policies began to carve up urban neighborhoods and displace their residents in the 1950s and 1960s, historic preservation was put forth as an alternative strategy to revitalize central

¹⁵ *Berman v. Parker*, No. 22, Supreme Court of the United States, 348 U.S. 26; 75 S. Ct. 98; 99 L. Ed. 27; 1954 U.S. LEXIS 1463, October 19, 1954, Argued , November 22, 1954, Decided.

¹⁶ Hurley, *Beyond Preservation*, Location 203-7.

¹⁷ Murtagh, *Keeping Time*, 26-30.

business districts, most memorably by Jane Jacobs.¹⁸ Preservation activists all over the country, including members of the National Trust, began working to save historic buildings and neighborhoods that other national policies were destroying. In the early 1960s, preservationists lost the fight for Penn Station in New York City. These events helped provide the impetus for the study that produced *With Heritage So Rich* in 1966.¹⁹ This book was a chief lobbying tool for the passage of the National Historic Preservation Act.

Many of the concepts that were included in the 1966 National Historic Preservation Act originated in the Rains Committee's report, including the creation of a National Register of Historic Places, federal government matching grants to public agencies for acquisition and preservation of historic structures, the creation of an Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, and the requirement that federal agencies account for historic sites and structures prior to initiating projects.²⁰ Since the 1960s and the passage of the National Historic Preservation Act, the federal historic preservation programs have been largely

¹⁸ Jane Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (New York: Random House, 1961).

¹⁹ Albert Rains and the United State Conference of Mayors, *With Heritage So Rich: a Report of Special Committee on Historic Preservation* (New York: Random House, 1966).

²⁰ Glass, *The Beginnings of a New National Historic Preservation Program*, 8-13; *With Heritage So Rich*; Ernest Allen Connally, "Origins of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 – Part II" in *CRM Bulletin* 9, no. 2 (April 1986).

under the auspices of the National Park Service within the Department of the Interior. These activities have included providing grants-in-aid to State and Tribal Historic Preservation Officers (SHPO, THPO)²¹ to assist them in identifying significant historic properties, as well as providing grants-in-aid to the National Trust for Historic Preservation, and administering the National Register of Historic Places.

The Act also created the Advisory Council for Historic Preservation, which, among other duties, mediates historic property disputes involving federal funding. Since 1966, these programs and activities have been reorganized several times and further changes have been proposed.²² The subordination on the federal level of many preservation activities under the auspices of the NPS requires that the history of the preservation programs within the NPS be covered in order to gain a greater understanding of the climate in which preservation programs have grown and flourished (or not) in the decades since the passage of

²¹ For more on the role and duties of SHPOs and THPOs, see Patrick W. Andrus, *Manual for State Historic Preservation Review Boards* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service Interagency Resources Division, 1992).

²² For further discussion of the role of the Advisory Council and the various changes that have been proposed since 1996, see Thomas F. King, *Cultural Resource Laws and Practice: an Introductory Guide* (Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press, 1998), and the proposed bills and the hearings on those bills in the Congressional Record.

the National Historic Preservation Act and the establishment of the National Register of Historic Places.

Early on, some preservationists feared that the organization of the federal historic preservation programs raised the possibility of the natural resources preservation function of the NPS would take resources and attention away from its new historic preservation responsibilities. In May 1966, NPS Director George B. Hartzog, Jr. appointed a committee to examine the then-existing historic preservation responsibilities of the NPS and the new roles that would come with the passage of the National Historic Preservation Act. The Brew-Connally-Lee Committee reported to Director Hartzog in September 1966, as the National Historic Preservation Act was being reviewed in Congress, and expressed concern, similar to Schneider's at the passage of the Historic Sites Act of 1935, that historic preservation might not be best served by inclusion in the NPS. The committee went on to emphasize that the public as well as many Park Service officials believed that the natural resources of the park system were the main focus of the Service.²³ The Brew-Connally-Lee Committee, while not exactly recommending a separate bureau for historic preservation, was clearly concerned about the potential for fragmentation within the National Park Service. It

²³ Barry Mackintosh, *The National Historic Preservation Act and The National Park Service: A History* (Washington D.C.: History Division, National Park Service, Department of the Interior, 1986). (There are no page numbers for this source.)

encouraged Director Hartzog to ensure that historic preservation professionals were welcomed in order to meet the new demands of the 1966 Act. The committee also recommended that the staff in history, archaeology, and historical architecture be moved from their current dispersed locations within NPS offices to a new Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation (OAHP). Mackintosh notes that the OAHP “would consolidate the Service’s top-level historians, archaeologists, and historical architects, although some would retain their duty stations in the regional offices, archaeological centers, and three existing planning and service centers.”²⁴ Early in 1967, the NPS created OAHP, and located its offices in Washington, D.C., headed by Ernest Connally.

Following the creation of the OAHP in 1967, the NPS went through several internal reorganizations. Mackintosh argues that during these reorganizations responsibilities and staff were moved from the OAHP in Washington, D.C. to regional offices, and the OAHP therefore experienced lower levels of unity and effectiveness. These staffing and responsibility changes were often initiated because management felt pressure to reduce expenses in the D.C. office and hoped to provide the benefit of increased collaboration in regional service centers. By 1971, the OAHP was further diminished within the NPS by

²⁴ Ibid.

having Connally report to an associate director for professional services instead of the director.

In *National Parks for the Future*, the Conservation Foundation argued that both the national and historical parks would be better administered separately and recommended the removal of the historical parks from Park Service administration.²⁵ Hartzog and many others strongly opposed this recommendation, but the proposal gained momentum in President Nixon's second term. In 1973, Nixon appointed Ronald Walker as NPS director (replacing Hartzog). Nixon replaced several contentious directors with those more amenable to his administration. Nixon publicly encouraged the environmental parks, expanding funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund, and he proposed the creation of new parks from underused federal lands. Environmental issues were in the fore of the nation's psyche, and Nixon capitalized on this to some effect, signing the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) in 1970, although he had opposed it initially. He likewise signed several other environmental bills just before the 1972 presidential election. It was

²⁵ Ibid.

politically advantageous for Nixon's administration to privilege environmental parks, even at the expense of the historical ones.²⁶

Walker formed a committee to investigate reorganization possibilities. Not surprisingly, the committee recommended dismantling the OAHP. Connally and others persuaded Walker, however, to reorganize it instead of abolishing it. Beginning in September 1973, the OAHP was only charged with those services relating to administering external preservation programs, including the National Register for Historic Places Division, the Grants Division, the Historical and Architectural Surveys Division, and the Interagency Services Division for Archaeology.

Prior to this reorganization, some within the NPS had accused the OAHP of favoring these external programs to the detriment of park needs. Connally may not have done much to quash these sentiments, as he felt that management of the government's cultural resources were inefficiently shared between the Smithsonian, the NPS, and the arts and humanities endowments. Connally did not believe that historic preservation was a priority in the Department of the Interior and feared that it would be even less of a focus in the Nixon

²⁶ J. Brooks Flippen, *Nixon and the Environment* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2000), 90-91ff.

Administration's proposed Department of Energy and Natural Resources.²⁷

Throughout the 1970s and into the early 1980s, Connally and others proposed several reorganization schemes that would have provided historic preservation efforts with more government support. For example, in one proposal, Connally wanted to create a new cabinet-level department that would oversee the OAHP, the historical parks (which would be removed from the NPS), the Smithsonian Institute, the national endowments, the National Archives, and performing arts administration. These proposals were never accepted.²⁸

Fears of preservationists that the NPS did not value their programs have been consistently affirmed as budget cuts have often fallen first and hardest on history and preservation programs. For example, in 1975, Gary Everhardt became director of the NPS and his administration halved the OAHP's budget request in 1977 in order to use those funds to repair the water system at Crater Lake National Park. The State Historic Preservation Officers, who now had access to half the funds since their grants-in-aid came through the OAHP, naturally protested this move, as did members of the National Trust for Historic Preservation and other concerned members of the public. Truett Latimer,

²⁷ Mackintosh, *The National Historic Preservation Act and The National Park Service*.

²⁸ Federal Historic Preservation Program Task Force, *Aligned for Success*.

president of the National Conferences of State Historic Preservation Officers, wrote to the chairman of the Senate Interior and Insular Affairs Committee:

“When a choice must be made between identifying, preserving, and protecting historic resources across the country and upgrading park sanitation systems, it is time for the two to be separated.”²⁹ Truett and others called for historic preservation functions to be removed from the NPS to another organization.³⁰

In May 1976, the NPS again reorganized the OAHP. Connally became the Associate Director of Preservation of Historic Properties and no longer worked with preservation within the Park System (those responsibilities were removed to the newly formed Cultural Resources Management Division). The OAHP, originally conceived to house all preservation activities and unify preservation professionals, now only worked with external preservation programs.³¹

The ability of the NPS to effectively mediate between its preservation responsibilities and providing public access to resources was questioned, and conflict of interest became an issue with the organization of federal historic preservation programs. This is most evident regarding the Advisory Council for

²⁹ Mackintosh, *The National Historic Preservation Act and The National Park Service*.

³⁰ Federal Historic Preservation Program Task Force, *Aligned for Success*.

³¹ Mackintosh, *The National Historic Preservation Act and The National Park Service*.

Historic Preservation and its reorganization. In 1976, the Advisory Council was removed from the Park Service Administration due to a conflict of interest and placed directly under the Secretary of the Interior. Prior to that date, the OAHP, under the NPS, prepared the official comments on the Section 106 review cases that came before the Advisory Council.³² Glass notes that, working within the regulations created for implementing Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, the OAHP not only had the charge of conducting the preservation evaluation of a federal project, but the OAHP also prepared statements for the Advisory council on behalf of the federal agency conducting the project. It became clear that this was a conflict of interest within the OAHP.³³

The case that brought this conflict of interest to the spotlight occurred in 1972.³⁴ In Gettysburg, near the National Battlefield Park, a local businessman wanted to construct a tower where visitors would pay to overlook the Battlefield. Harthon Bill was both deputy director of the NPS and executive director of the Advisory Council. Bill, in his NPS role, asked Benjamin Levy to “prepare a justification for the bureau to grant an easement for the tower,” and in his council role, asked Levy to “prepare an assessment of the impact of the tower on the

³² Glass, *Beginnings of a New National Historic Preservation Program*, 51.

³³ *Ibid.*, 49.

³⁴ *Commonwealth v. National Gettysburg Tower, Inc.* Supreme Court of Pennsylvania, 1973 454 Pa.193,311 A.2d 588.

historical qualities of the battlefield.”³⁵ Many people, including those within the Department of the Interior, opposed the construction of a viewing tower overlooking Gettysburg National Battlefield, but Assistant Secretary of the Interior Nathaniel Reed sent someone to negotiate secretly with the project developer. They reached an agreement that the site of the tower would be moved east of Taneytown Road, the developer would be given a twenty-two-foot right-of-way across the battlefield land, and, in return, five percent of the tower’s taxable income was to be donated to the NPS.³⁶ Following this clear conflict of interest, Park Service officials and others began working to solve the problem. In 1976, a rider was attached to the Land and Water Conservation Act that removed the Advisory Council from the Department of Interior and made it an independent federal agency that reported to the President.³⁷

In a move to further distance federal external preservation programs from the NPS, in 1977 Congressman John F. Seiberling, chairman of the public lands subcommittee, proposed a bill, “The National Historic Preservation Policy Act of

³⁵ Glass, *Beginnings of a New National Historic Preservation Program*, 62.

³⁶ John Latschar, “The Taking of the Gettysburg Tower,” *George Wright Forum* 18, no. 1 (2001): 24-33. The tower was removed in 2000.

³⁷ Glass, *Beginnings of a New National Historic Preservation Program*, 62.

1977.”³⁸ This bill proposed removing the remaining historic preservation functions from the NPS (at that time overseen by the OAHP) and place them with the Advisory Council. Director of the NPS Everhardt convinced the Secretary of the Interior’s Advisory Board on National Parks, Historic Sites, Buildings, and Monuments not to support this move and to act against it.

No action was taken on the proposed Seiberling bill, and under the Carter Administration there was a new move to combine preservation and recreation efforts. In May 1977, as the Advisory Council and others were mounting support for the Seiberling bill, the Secretary of the Interior Cecil D. Andrus formed a National Heritage Trust Task Force to review preservation of both cultural and natural resources as well as recreational options.³⁹

Based on task force recommendations, Secretary Andrus reorganized the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation in 1978. Transferring OAHP and the NPS National Landmarks Program to the bureau, it was renamed the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service (HCRS). While preservationists were hopeful about the new HCRS, they were soon disappointed as the outdoor recreation concerns outweighed preservation issues just as they had done in the

³⁸ Mackintosh, *The National Historic Preservation Act and The National Park Service*.

³⁹ Ibid.

NPS. Mackintosh notes that HCRS head Delaporte proved unconcerned and sometimes combative when it came to preservation issues. SHPOs particularly resisted the changes that he made, including moving most preservation personnel from Washington, D.C. into regional offices. This created an additional layer of bureaucracy for SHPOs to negotiate. Also, many in the preservation community felt that Delaporte forced respected preservation leaders Ernest Connally and Bill Murtaugh (Keeper of the National Register) out of the HCRS.⁴⁰

Following these disheartening events, Seiberling introduced another bill in August, "National Historic Preservation Amendments of 1979." This bill proposed creating the Historic Preservation Agency. This Agency would be independent and would take over the functions of the former OAHP. Further, the bill would reconstitute the membership of the Advisory Council, but it would remain separate from the new Agency. By the time the bill was passed, as the "National Historic Preservation Act Amendments of 1980," the independent Agency had been dropped.

There was continued resistance to Delaporte and his HCRS by SHPOs, Congress, and preservationists. At the National Conference of State Historic Preservation Officers, meeting in New Orleans in late 1980, SHPOs made a bold statement. They declared "we can no longer in good conscience urge anyone to

⁴⁰ Federal Historic Preservation Program Task Force, *Aligned for Success*.

seek participation in the national program."⁴¹ Echoing the statements of the NCSHPO, Wolf Von Eckardt, a journalist for the *Washington Post*, summarized the criticism of Delaporte:

Members of Congress and citizen organizations concerned with heritage and recreation seem unanimous, as one spokesman put it, that "Delaporte's outfit is an unmitigated disaster." Congressional dislike caused money cuts. Professional dislike caused resignations. "Chris [Delaporte]," as the executive of a leading citizen organization told me, "caused nothing but chaos."⁴²

In January 1981, Reagan appointed James G. Watt, a past director of the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation, as Secretary of the Interior. The new administration also eliminated the HCRS, placing its preservation functions under the NPS Archaeology and Historic Preservation associate directorate, attributing the change to funding cuts.⁴³ In 1983 the NPS History, Historic Architecture, and Anthropology divisions were combined with Archaeology and Historic Preservation under the Cultural Resources associate directorate.

Since the HCRS was received so poorly, preservationists supported the return of the federal preservation programs' to the NPS. However, by the

⁴¹ NCSHPO, statement from national meeting, 1980, quoted in Mackintosh, *The National Historic Preservation Act and The National Park Service*.

⁴² Wolf Von Eckardt, "Landmark Decisions: Stumbling Blocks to Preservation; Blocks to Preservation," *The Washington Post*, October 18, 1980: B1, B9.

⁴³ Joanne Omang, "Watt Launches Interior Cutback With Old Office," *The Washington Post* February 20, 1981, A16.

mid-1980s, some preservationists, including the SHPOs, once again voiced their dissatisfaction with the NPS administration of external preservation programs and advocated for their removal to a separate agency.⁴⁴ Based on these studies Senator Wyche Fowler, Jr. proposed two versions of a plan to establish an independent historic preservation agency, one in 1988 and one in 1989.⁴⁵ Neither bill was passed by Congress.

In 2006, other preservation professionals gathered for the Preserve America Summit in partnership with First Lady Laura Bush, the Advisory Council, and other groups in order to evaluate the national historic preservation programs and to propose ideas to improve those programs. Amongst the many proposals were several that called for a cabinet-level position focusing on historic and cultural heritage. An entire panel was dedicated to exploring the question of how to improve the historic preservation infrastructure at the federal level. This panel came up with several options for historic preservation programs independent of the NPS, or through restructuring the current NPS preservation

⁴⁴ See National Conference of State Historic Preservation Officers, "The Case for a Consolidated and Decentralized National Historic Preservation Program," (March 1986), and The Executive Office of The National Conference of State Historic Preservation Officers, "A Historic Preservation Bureau within the Department of the Interior: an Assessment," (July 1986).

⁴⁵ Senator Wyche Fowler, Jr., S. 2912 (100th Congress), September 1988, and Senator Wyche Fowler, Jr., S. 1578 IS (101st Congress), August 1989.

programs, and recommended these avenues be fully explored.⁴⁶ Based on the recommendations from the summit, in 2008 the Chairman of the Advisory Council and the Deputy Secretary of the Interior created a panel to explore options for improving the effectiveness of the federal historic preservation programs.⁴⁷

In 2009 this expert panel came up with seven key recommendations, most of which touch on some aspect of reorganization. They recommended that the Advisory Council chair be a full-time presidential appointee as well as a member of the White House Domestic Policy Council. They further recommended that an Office of Preservation Policy and Procedure be established within the Department of the Interior. This office would oversee and enforce preservation policies throughout the Department, including the NPS and Advisory Council, to help coordinate their efforts. In addition to recommending various funding increases to meet mandates, the expert panel recommended that further resources be made available to the Advisory Council so it can focus on Section 106 reviews, fulfilling its original purpose.

⁴⁶ Preserve America, "Preserve America Summit Preliminary Issue Area Reports," (Washington, D.C.: Preserve America, 2006).

⁴⁷ Doug Wheeler, et al., "Recommendations to Improve the Structure of the Federal Historic Preservation Program" (Washington, D.C.: Preserve America, 2009).

With the nation facing other problems that have priority in Congress, progress on restructuring historic preservation programs at the national level has stalled.⁴⁸ The brief history of national preservation policies above illustrates how preservation trends have changed in popularity several times in the past century. There have been failures and successes at both the local and national level. Scholars, such as Page and Mason, are also working to remind preservationists that the history of preservation remains entwined with other trends in the twentieth century. In particular, they argue that preservationists working today are influenced by the new social history, postmodernism, and the various movements to bring the stories of marginal people groups into the national narrative.⁴⁹

The limits of federal policy and leadership have led professional historic preservationists, entrepreneurs, and local groups to devise their own partnerships to encourage best practices in the field. Without adequate funding for federal initiatives, they turn to the private sector for support, which in turn

⁴⁸ Federal Historic Preservation Program Task Force, *Aligned for Success*, and Federal Historic Program Task Force, *Findings: Subject Matter Expert and Stakeholder Interviews, March 18, 2011* (Washington, D.C.: Preservation Action Foundation, 2011) go into further detail about the current state of historic preservation funding and the opinions of some of those involved in preservation programs.

⁴⁹ Page and Mason, *Giving Preservation a History*, Location 154-79.

has encouraged the practice of adaptive reuse to reach new levels of influence. Robert Stipe argues that the tools to use historic preservation for community building were included in the 1966 Historic Preservation Act, but that only in the last twenty years have people begun using them in this way.⁵⁰ Perhaps it is only relatively recently that professional preservationists have begun using the 1966 Act to foster communities, but individuals and groups have long worked locally on behalf of preservation efforts that have had the effect of maintaining a sense of place in a community. Again and again preservation lobbyists have worked for the government to support efforts that communities and individuals are already making. The Historic Preservation Tax Incentives Program began offering tax breaks for investment in historic buildings in 1976. The Tax Reform Act of 1986 established the current incentive standards. All of the developers of the case study properties in this dissertation availed themselves of these tax incentives.⁵¹ However, while tax incentives encourage historic preservation, they are not enough by themselves to preserve the important sites in the nation. Whether taking advantage of preservation laws and federal programs or working beyond

⁵⁰ Stipe, *A Richer Heritage*, Location 7554-61.

⁵¹ National Park Service, "Federal Preservation Program Notes: Federal Preservation Tax Incentives Program," (Washington, D.C.: National Park Service, 2006), http://www.achp.gov/docs/BRAC/Federal_Historic_Preservation_Tax_Incentives_Program-June_06.pdf (accessed November 18, 2011).

and without them, preservationists work with communities to preserve their stories.

The Secretary of the Interior's *Standards for Rehabilitation* and the criteria for significance according to the National Register of Historic Places prove an excellent starting point for historic preservation through adaptive reuse.⁵² However, it is important to remember that listing on the National Register or National Register eligibility provides no protection to buildings in the way of non-federally funded projects. Additionally, buildings do not need to be listed in order to be valued and protected by the communities which surround them. Some public history scholars are beginning to argue that depending too much on the National Register has led to lack of consideration for some aspects of heritage.⁵³

As early as the late 1980s, a North Carolina group worked to redefine the purposes of preservation so that they would impact more people's lives and environments. They wanted a preservation that would "possess form, character, and visual qualities derived from arrangements or combinations of topography, vegetation, space, scenic vistas, architecture, appurtenant features, distinctive natural habitats, natural formations, or places of natural or cultural significance,

⁵² The *Standards* were first written in 1977 and were revised in 1990.

⁵³ Stipe, *A Richer Heritage*, Location 7767-68.

that create an image of stability, comfort, local identity, and livable atmosphere.⁵⁴ This preservation focuses on the feeling and sense of a place rather than the particular architectural content required for placement on the National Register of Historic Places. Many preservationists today share this emphasis, as the National Trust for Historic Preservation works towards saving places that matter to individuals and groups across the country rather than those with architectural value alone.⁵⁵ The adaptive reuse of historic buildings works within the desire to preserve and recreate spaces and communities as entrepreneurs are free to make the changes necessary for a new building's function while retaining a sense of the history of a space.

As discussed in Chapter One, adaptive reuse occurs when a historic building is fitted to a new purpose. This change in the purpose of a building typically leads to some modification of the interior, while the exterior is often, but not always, only minimally changed so that the townscape can maintain its historic character.

⁵⁴ Legislative Research Commission on Historic Preservation, Report to the 1989 General Assembly of North Carolina, 1989 sess., Legislative Proposal 7, quoted in Stipe, *A Richer Heritage*, Location 7795-7800.

⁵⁵ National Trust for Historic Preservation, "This Place Matters," Preservation Nation, <http://www.preservationnation.org/take-action/this-place-matters/> (accessed February 18, 2012).

Much of the work on adaptive reuse from architects and preservationists alike focuses on two values to measure the success of a reuse project: the design value of the project and its economic value. Architects and preservationists evaluate how well the design of a new purpose fits into the old form of the building; they discuss the design value of a project. They also consider if the costs of reusing an existing building are at least on par with the costs of, if not cheaper than, new construction. Both of these values provide important measures of success for a reuse project, but remain less than enough to encourage further reuse of abandoned structures and to foster the crucial sense of place that maintains and builds community. Other measures, including the cultural value of an adaptive reuse building must be added to the formula.

Typically historic preservationists exhibit the tendency to privilege measures of the design value of an adaptive reuse project over other values. In her 2007 dissertation, You Kyong Ahn evaluated the adaptive reuse of religious buildings through researching the public perception of the transfer to a new purpose. Ahn discussed "the converted churches for new building types...in terms of the appropriateness for the new function, the extent to which their original integrity has been kept, and the overall quality of the conversions."⁵⁶ By

⁵⁶ You Kyong Ahn, "The Adaptive Reuse of Abandoned Historic Churches: Building Type and Public Perception," (PhD diss., Texas A&M University, 2007), 21.

“integrity,” Ahn followed the definitions provided by the Department of the Interior through the guidelines for completing nominations to the National Register of Historic Places and the Secretary of the Interior’s *Standards for Rehabilitation* that refer exclusively to the preservation of architectural features. The “quality of the conversions” was measured by the design values of the degree to which the architectural changes were appropriate to the new purpose of the space and the maintenance of the key architectural features in many religious buildings. Recognizing that the *Standards* do not consider public perception of adaptive reuse, Ahn worked to evaluate that perception, and found that public perception is indeed significant for the success of an adaptive reuse project.

The most popular apologist for the economic value of historic preservation, although he would not argue for the exclusion of design or cultural values, is Donovan Rypkema. Author of *The Economics of Historic Preservation: A Community Leader’s Guide*, Rypkema recognizes that developers and city planners will need to be encouraged by the economic benefits of preservation in order to make the investment. Preservation activists are encouraged to make arguments that historic preservation, including adaptive reuse, helps the downtown business districts, promotes local and regional tourism, and can often cost the

same or less than new buildings.⁵⁷ More recent economic value arguments in favor of adaptive reuse over new construction remind developers and investors that the natural resources have already been used in an existing building. Therefore tapping into the embodied energy of a building during an adaptive reuse project is considered a highly sustainable project.

However, scholars are beginning to argue that promoting preservation purely as a solid economic investment has its limits.⁵⁸ Stipe makes the point that preservation through rehabilitation or adaptive reuse often remains nearly as expensive as new construction and requires federal and state subsidies to help make it affordable. Stipe goes on to argue that while some of us view preservation tax breaks as valuable subsidies, others see them simply as more revenue lost to a special interest group.⁵⁹ The economic value of preservation for this reason will often be tied in with politics and subject to its whims and will not be enough in and of itself to keep historic preservation a worthy effort in the eyes of the public.

⁵⁷ Donovan Rypkema, *The Economics of Historic Preservation: A Community Leader's Guide*, (Washington D.C.: The National Trust for Historic Preservation, 1994).

⁵⁸ Page and Mason, *Giving Preservation a History*, Location 225-28.

⁵⁹ Stipe, *A Richer Heritage*, Locations 7592-98, 7615-20.

A chief criticism of privileging the design and economic values of historic preservation over any other factors is that the focus on those values divorces buildings from their historic context and from the communities that built and have used them over the years. Historic preservation driven by design and economic values alone has the potential to encourage the worst sort of façadism and gentrification which can increase social tension and remove people from their neighborhoods.⁶⁰ Preservation was presented in the post-World War II years as an alternative to Urban Renewal programs, but it often caused similar problems with displacement.⁶¹ Arguments in favor of the supremacy of aesthetics in preservation ignore buildings and landscapes, such as the post-war suburbs, in which the chief value for Americans is not the look of the buildings, but the events which took place there.⁶²

Andrew Hurley argues that the potential of historic preservation is to “not only [invigorate] local economies but strengthens communities by nurturing a

⁶⁰ Hurley, *Beyond Preservation*, Location 25-36.

⁶¹ For an example see Nancy Raquel Mirabal, “Geographies of Displacement: Latina/os, Oral History, and the Politics of Gentrification in San Francisco’s Mission District,” *The Public Historian* 31, no. 2 (Spring 2009): 7-31. For further discussion of gentrification, see Neil Smith, *The New Urban Frontier: Gentrification and the Revanchist City* (New York: Routledge, 1996), or Theodore J. Karamanski, “History, Memory, and Historic Districts in Chicago,” *The Public Historian* 32, no. 4 (Fall 2010): 33-41.

⁶² Dolores Hayden, *Building Suburbia: Green Fields and Urban Growth, 1820-2000* (New York: Random House, 2004).

deeper attachment to place, greater levels of social cohesion, and a collective agenda for local development.”⁶³ Preservationists have been so focussed on saving buildings that they often have forgotten the significance of the interpretation of those resources.⁶⁴ Divorcing preservation from interpretation that can prevent preservation projects from reaching their full potential. Ideally, preservation efforts involve whole neighborhoods rather than single buildings. However, on a practical level, buildings are often adaptively reused one at a time. If preservationists would consider the cultural value of their work and provide interpretation to the public, then degrees of cultural success can add to the potential of preservation to be a force that deepens sense of place.

I am interested in how communities and neighborhoods change as they interact with other groups and how these changes are reflected in their structures. As buildings are evaluated in these case studies for their cultural success, the questions of community change will also be answered. An adaptive reuse that is a true cultural success will incorporate the history of the building, which also conveys the stories of the people who have used the space.

⁶³ Hurley, *Beyond Preservation*, Location 25-36.

⁶⁴ Page and Mason, *Giving Preservation a History*, Location 282-284.

CHAPTER III:
FROM CATHOLIC CHURCH TO CHARTER SCHOOL IN BUFFALO, NEW
YORK



Figure 3.1: St. Mary of Sorrows, 1887. Image courtesy of *The Buffalonian*.

Located in Buffalo, New York, St. Mary of Sorrows Roman Catholic Church remains an architectural and cultural landmark in its neighborhood, although the demographic make-up of that neighborhood has changed. With the

arrival of electricity and other industries, immigrants flocked to Buffalo. As the city grew, ethnic and religious groups built religious buildings to which they could walk every few blocks.¹ Once complete, the tower and spires of St. Mary's created a beacon for the residents of the German-dominated neighborhood in which it stood. It remains visible from the nearby parks as well as the Kensington Expressway, which is the main highway to the center of Buffalo.² The advent of automobiles and the shift in industry in Buffalo, among other things, contributed to a shift in the neighborhood. The once bustling German American suburb became a poor African American neighborhood, and many spaces were left vacant. The Catholic Diocese closed St. Mary's in 1986, and it remained empty until its conversion into the King Urban Life Center and Charter School in 1998.

The adaptive reuse of St. Mary's as a public charter school and community center is an institutional reuse that infused some new life into a struggling neighborhood. While the board of directors of the King Urban Life Center could

¹ For history of Buffalo, including the rise of the electric industry and migration of immigrant groups, see Mark Goldman, *High Hopes: the Rise and Decline of Buffalo, NY* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1983); for an evaluation of the policies behind Buffalo's growth and subsequent decline, see Diana Dillaway, *Power Failure: Politics, Patronage, and the Economic Future of Buffalo, New York* (New York: Prometheus Books, 2006).

² New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation, "St. Mary of Sorrows R.C. Church," *National Register of Historic Places Inventory-Nomination Form*, completed by Claire L. Ross, (Albany, NY: 1987), Sheet 7.1. (Not National Register listed, New York State Register only).

be doing more to interpret the history of the building and the neighborhood, the institution has achieved a measure of cultural success, most significantly in returning educational and social services to the site that historically provided them to the area.

Designed by Adolphus Druiding of Chicago and completed in 1891, St. Mary of Sorrows, also known as the Church of the Seven Dolors, originally served the mostly-German community of Buffalo's East Side. Druiding designed



Figure 3.2: View of King Urban Life Center from the street, showing Rhennish Romanesque architectural details. (All photos by author unless otherwise noted)

St. Mary of Sorrows in the Rhenish Romanesque Revival style, with the use of

local Buffalo Plains blue limestone.³ Druiding based his design on the St. Peter's Cathedral in Worms, and other medieval churches of the Rhine Valley, in Germany.⁴ The congregation chose Druiding's design from an architectural competition. St. Mary of Sorrows has a German style basilica plan; oriented longitudinally, the transept is shortened, and each nave-end of the symmetrical building is apse-shaped. The exception to the symmetry of the building is the bell tower, which is 40 feet in front of the smaller cylindrical tower. This placement allows optimal use of the trapezoidal lot on which the building is placed.⁵ Contractors completed the soaring 235-foot bell tower in 1905.⁶ Romanesque columns and arched stained glass windows decorate the facade and side elevations of the church. All elevations are characterized by Romanesque belt courses of cut stone and corbeled cut stone dentils and have engaged cylindrical turret-columns.⁷ The bronze bells in the tower, installed in 1897,

³ Chuck LaChiusa, "King Charter School/St. Mary of Sorrows 2002 Photos - Facade," Buffalo as an Architectural Museum, <http://buffaloah.com/a/gen/938/facade/index.html> (accessed November 1, 2001).

⁴ Bill Koch, "St. Mary of Sorrows, King Urban Life Early Childhood School/Community Center," *Western New York Heritage* (Spring 2010): 22-23.

⁵ St. Mary of Sorrows National Register Form, Sheet 7.1.

⁶ Koch, "St. Mary of Sorrows," 22-23.

⁷ St. Mary of Sorrows National Register Form, Sheet 7.1-3.

remain as does the clock, which was installed in 1907.⁸ Craftsmen designed and made the stained glass windows in Regensburg, Germany, and local builders installed them at the church in 1897.⁹

Local officials declared St. Mary of Sorrows a Buffalo City Landmark in January 1986.¹⁰ State officials listed the sanctuary building, although not the other buildings in the complex, in the New York State Register of Historic Places in 1987. The majority of buildings in the state register are also in the National Register of Historic Places, but, as in the case with St. Mary's, some are not. Owner consent is not a requirement of the New York state register, but it is a requirement of the National Register. The Bishop of Buffalo, Rev. Edward D. Head, refused to consent to the National Register nomination, citing the separation of church and state.¹¹

Catholics established the first parish in Buffalo in 1829 and in 1847, the church designated the Diocese of Buffalo. As European immigrants were building large church buildings, they cut costs where they could. Often this entailed parishioners hauling stone and construction items before and after their

⁸ Ibid., Sheet 7.3.

⁹ Ibid., Sheet 8.4.

¹⁰ Koch, "St. Mary of Sorrows," 22-23.

¹¹ Edward D. Head to Claire Ross, May 11, 1987, New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation, Buffalo, NY.

long work shifts. Additionally, each parish often established a parochial school to serve its local population.¹²

As Buffalo expanded in the mid-nineteenth century, several waves of German immigrants settled in the East Side, forming a self-sufficient enclave. By 1850, nearly 30,000 German speakers lived in the East Side, and, like other immigrant groups, they built churches in which their own language was used for

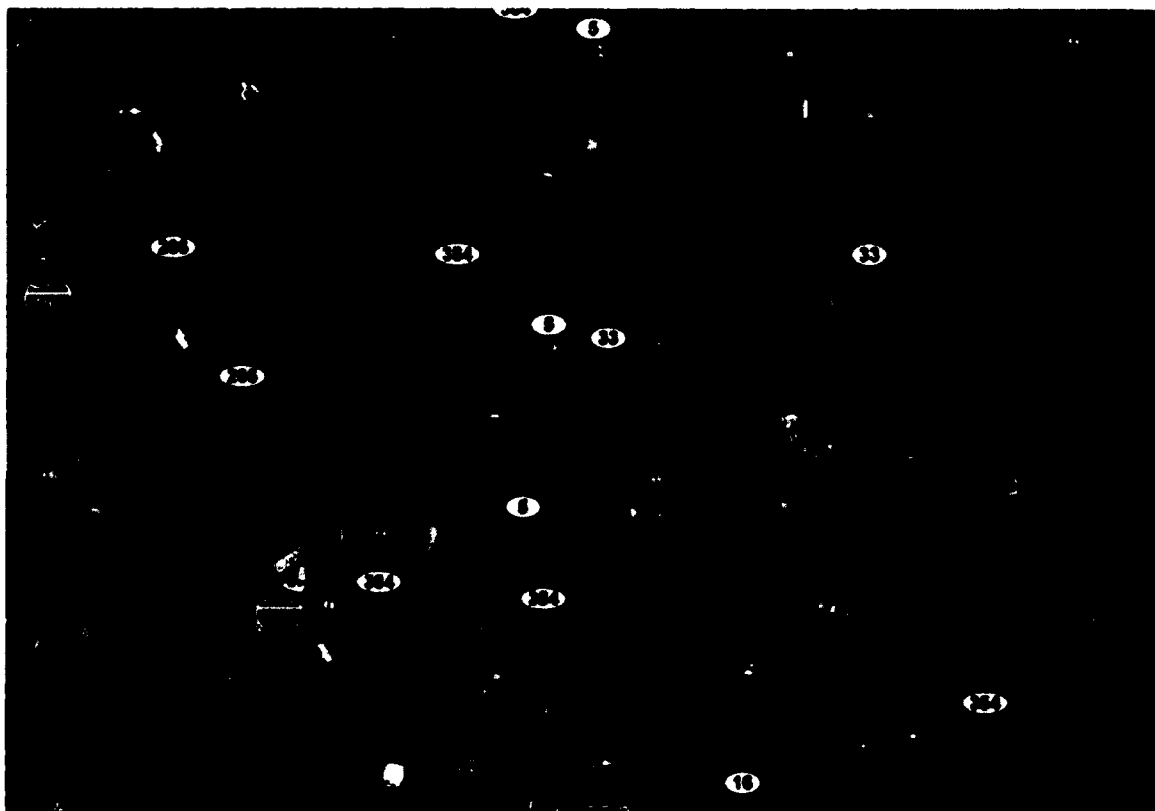


Figure 3.3: Distance from downtown Buffalo to King Urban Life Center, marked with "A." Image courtesy of Google Maps.

¹² Martin F. Ederer, "Introduction," *Buffalo's Catholic Churches: Ethnic Communities and the Architectural Legacy* (Buffalo, NY: digital@batesjackson LLC, 2003) <http://buffaloah.com/h/ederer/ederer.html> (accessed October 10, 2011).

services and that they could easily reach by walking.¹³ Figure 3.3, while a modern view of the city, shows the location of the German East Side in relation to the center of Buffalo. In the 1870s, Frederick Law Olmstead designed the Parade, now called Humboldt Park or Martin Luther King, Jr. Park. Developers purchased nearby tracts of land which they in turn sold to the immigrants for their homes, businesses, and religious buildings.¹⁴ Figure 3.4 (on following page) shows the area in 1915 and illustrates the proximity of the park to St. Mary of Sorrows.

The neighborhood grew quickly; the congregation decided to build the present St. Mary of Sorrows sanctuary only fourteen years after its establishment by the Diocese in 1872. Construction on the current building began in 1886.¹⁵ Several parishioners gave their time outside of normal work hours to finish building their church.¹⁶ St. Mary of Sorrows, being the fifth German Catholic parish in Buffalo, grew to be the largest and the only one of the five sanctuaries that remains without the loss of significant architectural features. St. Mary's was

¹³ James Nopora, "Houses of Worship: A Guide to the Religious Architecture of Buffalo, New York," (Masters' thesis, State University of New York at Buffalo, 1995); "Germania III," <http://buffaloah.com/how/19/ger.html> (accessed October 1, 2011).

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ St. Mary of Sorrows National Register Nomination, Sheet 8.4.

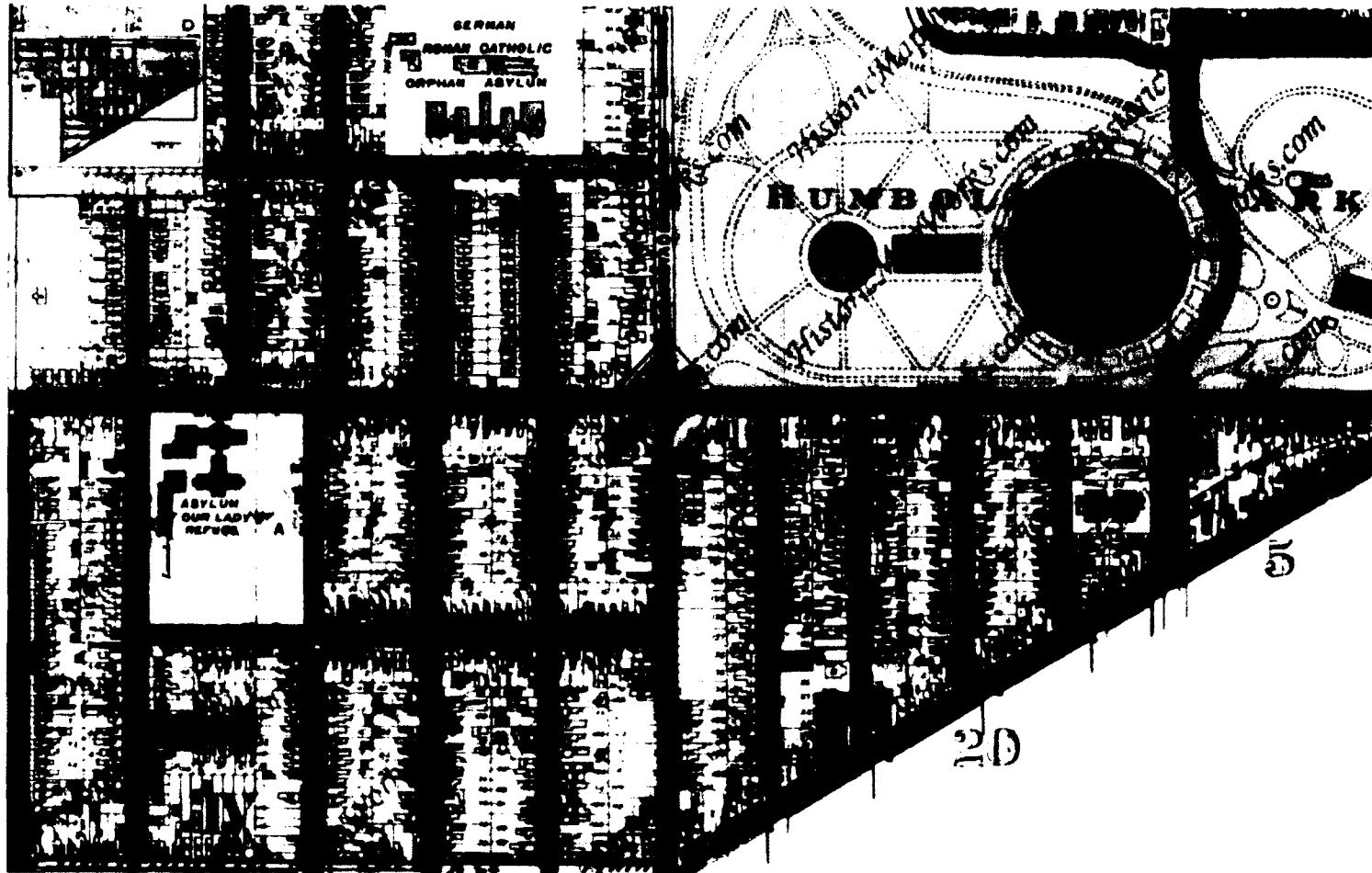


Figure 3.4: The neighborhood around St. Mary of Sorrows (grey building, near the bottom center) as shown in this 1915 map. "Plate 025," detail. *Century Atlas* 1915. Image courtesy www.historicmapworks.com.

not only the mother church of four other parishes, but its congregation had the charge of the German Catholic Orphan Asylum.¹⁷

The congregation reached its peak size in 1914, boasting of 5,000 parishioners and 1,400 students in its parochial school.¹⁸ In 1947, St. Mary of Sorrows suffered a major fire which destroyed the roof and the organ. Church leaders closed the building for two years. During the renovation, contractors moved the organ and replaced some of the pipes with those salvaged from the Larkin Building, a famous administration building designed by Frank Lloyd Wright that had just closed.¹⁹ Additionally, the contractors did not include the semi-circular clerestory windows, visible in Figure 3.1, in the reconstruction of the roof.²⁰

Urban churches in Buffalo, as in other cities, began experiencing a decline in membership and attendance during the suburban boom of the late 1940s and 1950s. St. Mary of Sorrows grew to its maximum congregation of 2,200 families in 1958, but by 1963, a mere five years later, enrollment had fallen nearly 50

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, Sheet 8.4.

¹⁸ Bill Koch, "King Urban Life Center," Sacred Spaces Reborn Field Session Handout, National Preservation Conference, Buffalo, NY. October 2011.

¹⁹ Charles Massey, interview with author, Buffalo, NY, October 18, 2011.

²⁰ St. Mary of Sorrows National Register Nomination, Sheet 7.2.

percent.²¹ As non-German speakers moved into the East Side of Buffalo, they were often not drawn into existing congregations that were formed on the basis of serving that language group. Additionally, the increase in automobile ownership meant that churches located within walking distance were no longer necessary. Moreover, there was a lack of parking around the churches, as everyone got into the habit of driving, no matter if the destination was just a few blocks away. The Roman Catholic diocese of Buffalo closed and consolidated

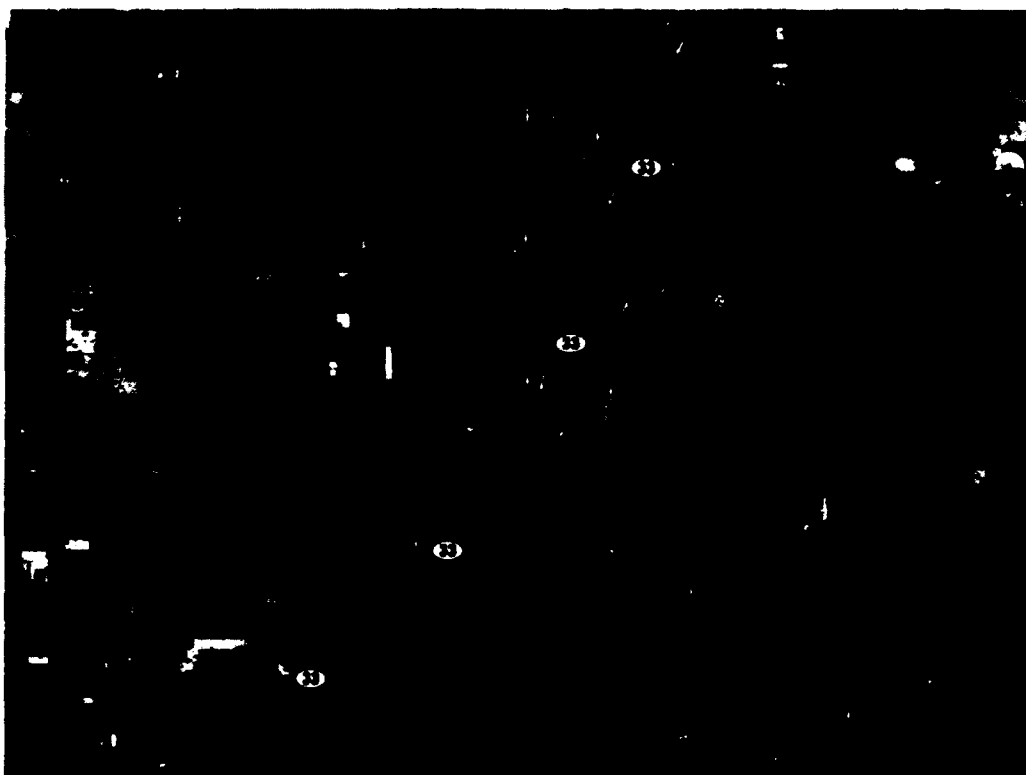


Figure 3.5: Current view of the neighborhood; King Urban Life Center marked with "A." Image courtesy of Google Maps.

several urban parishes, including St. Mary of Sorrows, in the late 1980s and early

²¹ Ibid., Sheet 8.6.

1990s as dwindling congregations meant dwindling resources.²² Figure 3.5 illustrates how much more green space currently exists in the neighborhood around St. Mary of Sorrows, as the many homes visible in Figure 3.4 were no longer needed.

In 1984 and 1985, the Diocese of Buffalo funded a year-long investigation of the stonework at St. Mary of Sorrows, and concluded that the cost of repairing the building was too expensive and decided to tear it down in early 1986.²³ Claiming deferred maintenance and needs beyond their means, diocesan leaders petitioned for a permit to demolish the church building. The Diocese was concerned that parishioners would expect any other service or use they offered for the building to be duplicated in all of the local parishes. In December 1985, priests held the last mass in the main sanctuary. Around 150 people were still regularly attending St. Mary of Sorrows, but hundreds filled the church for this final service.²⁴ After the church closed the main sanctuary space in 1985, approximately fourteen people continued to meet for services in the rectory. The

²² Napora, "Houses of Worship."

²³ Mike Vogel, "Sorrow Shrouds Final Days of St. Mary's Church," *The Buffalo News*, December 5, 1985.

²⁴ Stephen W. Bell, "Fate of Decaying St. Mary of Sorrows Evokes Sad Recitals of Glories Past," *The Buffalo News*, December 1985.

congregation of St. Mary of Sorrows continued to hold services in the rectory chapel, but in 2008 they consolidated with two other local congregations.²⁵

When the building was first empty, in 1986, many people wanted to save St. Mary of Sorrows, but there were no clear ideas for a new purpose for the building. The Preservation Coalition of Erie County sponsored a community brainstorming meeting at which people proposed using the building for such varied purposes as a day care or performing arts center. At this meeting, John H. Conlin, vice president of the Coalition, argued that any new purpose for the church should reflect its history.²⁶

It took almost three years for the idea of a school to emerge as the best fit for the community. Dr. Charles Massey got involved in the efforts in December 1987. The Sacred Sites Restoration group talked with a wide range of people in searching for a new use for the building, including people in the immediate neighborhood. Sacred Sites included community leaders and educators who worked to save the building for the neighborhood. Community members proposed various uses for the building, including a theatre, a television station,

²⁵ Jay Tokaz, "Nostalgia Felt at Final Mass for Parish," *The Buffalo News*, September 16, 2007.

²⁶ Joseph P. Ritz, "Preservationists Air Day-Care, Arts Uses to Save Old Church," *The Buffalo News*, July 27, 1986.

and office space.²⁷ However, the opportunity to meet various needs for young children in the community kept coming up, and the idea of an early childhood model school gained support. It was 1996 before there was any new use of the buildings and 1998 before it became the envisioned school.²⁸

The Diocese offered supportive words for saving and reusing the church building, yet they placed many roadblocks in the way of the Sacred Sites



Figure 3.6: Political cartoon highlighting the Diocese's mixed messages. Photo by author of original cartoon, hanging at King Urban Life Center. Cartoon by Tom Toles, originally appeared in *The Buffalo News*.

²⁷ Elmer Ploetz, "King Urban Life Center Opens for Business: Transformation of Old Church Finally Complete," *The Buffalo News*, October 27, 1998.

²⁸ Massey, interview.

Restoration Corporation as they worked to save the property. This did not go unnoticed by the community, as evidenced by the political cartoon in Figure 3.6. The Diocese removed and sold most of the items from the interior of the church, including the pews, interior statuary, and the side altars. The massive altar was considered too hard to move and was destroyed *in situ*. A small group of Catholics, consisting of former parishioners and nuns from the convent, considers the current use of the building desecration and would rather it had been destroyed than cease being a religious building. However, the majority of local Catholics and community members were very supportive of the project.²⁹

The city council and the state representatives worked to save the property and formed part of the broad base of support for the Sacred Sites Restoration Corporation. Jim Pitts, city councilman for this area, grew up in the neighborhood around St. Mary of Sorrows. During Pitt's childhood years, the area in front of the rectory was one of the few green spaces, and the neighborhood children would climb the fence to play football until the nuns chased them out.³⁰ Pitts became the President of the Common Council (city council) and proved instrumental in securing city funding for the King Urban

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid.

Life Center.³¹ It took a vote of the Common Council to prevent the Diocese of Buffalo from demolishing the building. Sacred Sites pushed for New York State Historical Landmark Status for St. Mary of Sorrows. The eventual designation also slowed the Diocese's efforts to demolish the building.

Eventually, the Diocese agreed to sell the St. Mary of Sorrows site for use as a community center. Church leaders turned the property over to Sacred Sites Restoration Corporation, which almost immediately gave it to the City of Buffalo. The City in turn granted a one dollar per year, ninety-nine-year lease to the King Urban Life Center.³² In order to receive state funding under the New York State Environmental Bond Act, the city had to match funds or resources. They could do this by owning the building and leasing it to the King Urban Life Center.

Currently, King Urban Life Center is the 501(c)3 group charged with managing the property. It was formed from Sacred Sites Restoration Corporation which was created for the purpose of saving St. Mary of Sorrows.³³ Between the 1987 and 2003, the King Urban Life Center has received over \$5.7 million in

³¹ Clinton E. Brown, "Pitts Deserves Credit for Key Leadership Roles," *The Buffalo News*, September 22, 1999.

³² Carl Herko, "New Life for Old Churches, but Transforming Buildings is a Task Fraught with Trouble," *The Buffalo News*, February 21, 1993.

³³ Massey interview.

funds from sources as varied as the federal government, New York State, the City of Buffalo, Erie County, and several foundations and corporations.³⁴

Catholic Charities bought the parochial school building and sold it to King Urban Life Center. Catholic Charities still owns the rectory, which houses the local Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), and the convent, which it uses as a counseling center.³⁵ The parochial school building on the property was at first reused as a day care, but now the charter school has extended into that space.³⁶

King Urban Life Center operates several other community outreach programs in addition to the charter school. The Parent-Child Home Program sends professionals into the homes of parents with preschoolers twice a week to model parenting for literacy development. The King Center partners with the University of Buffalo to run the Educational Opportunities Center Computer Lab to work with neighborhood adults. This program is located across the street from the school in what used to be a private home. There are several after-school,

³⁴ Charles Massey, "King Urban Life Center Funding Sources," Sacred Spaces Reborn Field Session Handout, National Preservation Conference, Buffalo, NY. October 2011.

³⁵ Catholic Charities of Buffalo, "WIC Program," Catholic Charities of Buffalo, <http://ccwny.org/Services/tabid/59/cid/15/cat/WIC%20Program/Default.aspx> (accessed January 25, 2012).

³⁶ Massey interview.

before-school, summer, and weekend programs administered by the Center. The Center is the umbrella required by the state so that the property can be used for these multiple purposes and still be used for the public charter school.³⁷

Additionally, the King Center partners with several groups in order to bring services to the students and the community. Current partnerships include the University of Buffalo, the State University Colleges at Buffalo and Fredonia, and Houghton College.³⁸ In the past, King Urban Life Center educators worked with other groups as well. For example in 2002, educators worked with the Buffalo Museum of Science and other educational organizations to develop curricula to go with the exhibits at the museum.³⁹

The Buffalo architectural firm Hamilton, Houston, and Lownie completed the restoration and conversion of the building.⁴⁰ HHL Architects began working together in 1969 and have worked in historic rehabilitation as well as new construction since that time. In addition to the St. Mary of Sorrows to King Urban

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Charter Schools Institute: The State University of New York, "King Center Charter School," Charter Schools Institute, <http://www.newyorkcharters.org/proKingCenter.htm> (accessed October 1, 2011).

³⁹ Tom Buckham, "Grants Will Help Museum Expand Focus on Education," *The Buffalo Post*, March 20, 2002.

⁴⁰ Chuck LaChiusa, "King Charter School/St. Mary of Sorrows 2002 Photos - Facade," Buffalo as an Architectural Museum, <http://buffaloah.com/a/gen/938/facade/index.html> (accessed November 1, 2011).

Life Center project, HHL Architects have worked on the restoration of the Roycroft Inn in Aurora, New York, and the restoration and reconstruction of the Frank Lloyd Wright designed Darwin Martin House in Buffalo. The American Institute of Architects conferred two awards on HHL Architects for their work on the King Urban Life Center 1999, including the first award ever earned expressly for adaptive reuse.⁴¹ As the designers from HHL worked with the King Urban Life Center board of directors, they focussed design efforts on creating multi-use spaces and negotiating the various standards of the State Historical Commission and the State Education Department.⁴²

Architects and the KULC board also needed to address immediate physical concerns of the building. All of the stonework needed to be restored. Water damage during the vacant years meant much work was required, and the architects also had to negotiate several competing interests. Maintaining the State Landmark status, which enables some funding sources, requires the maintenance of the historical character of the building, which includes the religious iconography in this case. The State of New York denied any proposed plans which altered the historical character. Some people questioned the religious

⁴¹ HHL Architects, "About Us: Recognition," HHL Architects, <http://www.hhlarchitects.com/recognition.html> (accessed November 20, 2011).

⁴² HHL Architects, "King Urban Life Center Early Childhood School," promotional brochure, 2008.

imagery in this public school, but it has not been challenged since the opening of the school because the building is treated as an architectural museum.⁴³



Figure 3.7: Glass doors in vestibule that provide natural light; Local art exhibit between doors.

New York State law for new schools requires natural light. In order to save the stained glass windows in the sanctuary, the architects replaced the wooden doors in the vestibule with glass. Some of these doors are visible in Figure 3.7. By law, the doors, both interior and exterior, must remain on the site and several have been reused. For example, there is a screen on the east side of the building which is made of historic doors from around the property (see Figures 3.8 and

⁴³ Massey interview.

3.9). Contractors built it for storage, but later officials converted it into kitchen space.



Figure 3.8: Interior, facing east. Repurposed doors, concealing kitchen space.



Figure 3.9: Interior, facing southwest, view from inside kitchen.

Using a large sanctuary space for classrooms comes with challenges, including those of noise and echoes, as the space was originally designed to help sound fill the large room. The building now has acoustic plaster to help minimize the echos; contractors sprayed plaster on portions of the walls and ceiling to help absorb sound. Additionally, they installed speakers and microphones for teachers, and these also help students focus only on their own classrooms. Teachers using the microphones are better able to hold the attention of younger students. Classrooms and cafeteria are visible in Figure 3.10, below.

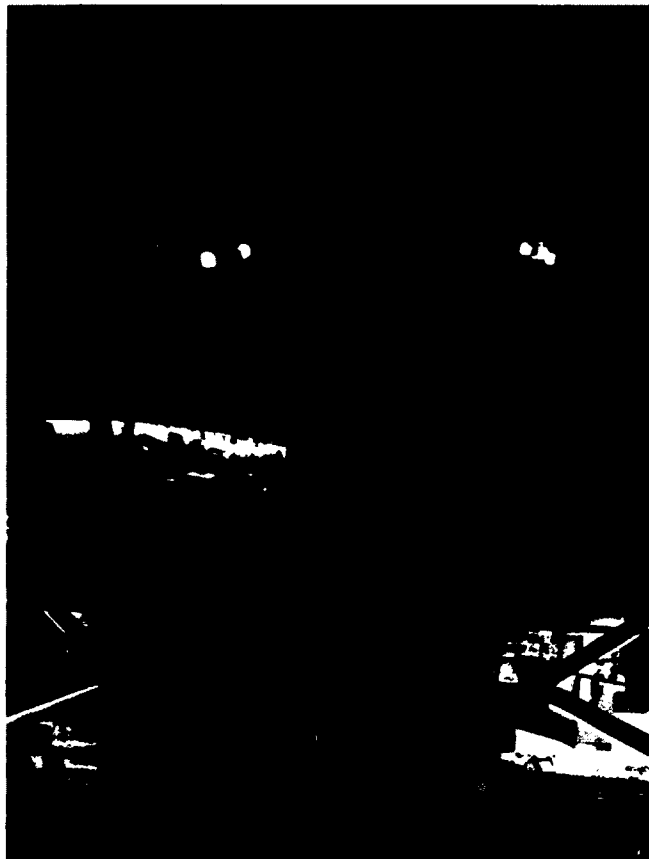


Figure 3.10: Interior of King Urban Life Center, showing all four classrooms.

The current structure on the “stage” raised area, visible in Figure 3.11, was originally intended as a distance learning technology center. There were cameras in the classrooms to permit education students at local universities to observe the classes. Classroom teachers then spent some time in the technology center answering the questions from education students. Now administrators and faculty use the space as a conference room for school and community events.⁴⁴ The conference room, seen in Figure 3.12, has a skylight in order to see the apse mural.



Figure 3.11: Interior view showing ceiling, cafeteria, apse conference room.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

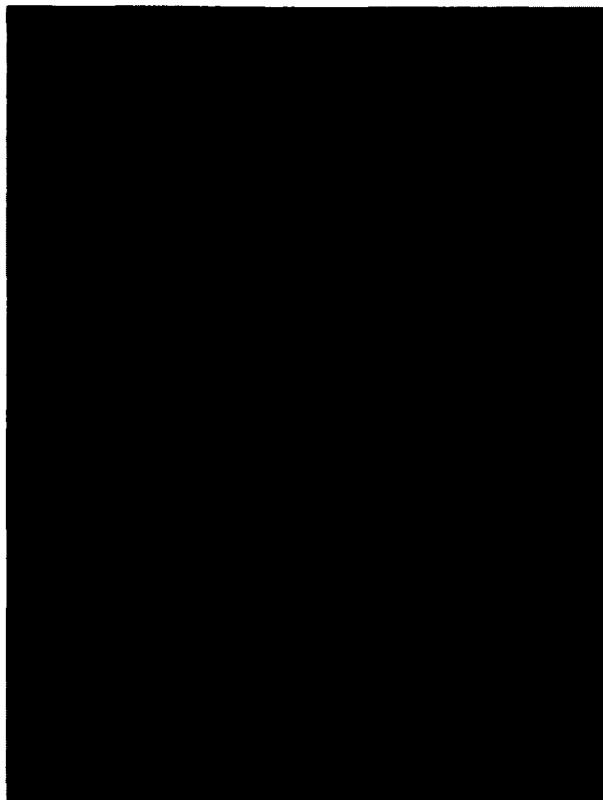


Figure 3.12: Inside conference room, facing “skylight” ceiling which allows viewing of apse painting.

Some earlier proposed plans for the school in the sanctuary space included constructing a second story, but as people began to realize the potential of the grand educational space they worked to keep it open. Part of the reason for a second story was the desire to break up the potentially overwhelming space for young children. The costs of a second story proved prohibitive, and people wanted to preserve the open sanctuary space and historical feel of the building. Instead, contractors installed lights on support columns, and this formed enough of a ceiling to prevent undue distraction to students, as shown in Figure 3.13.⁴⁵

⁴⁵ Hamilton, Houston, & Lownie, “Renovations to the King Urban Life Center,” Conceptual Drawings, May 1996.



Figure 3.13: View of western classrooms, showing how lighting forms a “ceiling” for the classrooms.

In 1998, the school opened as an annex of a nearby Buffalo public school, serving pre-kindergarten through second grades. The goal was for this to be a model program for other Buffalo Public schools, but the politics of the large public school system provided too many competing interests for this to be a true success. As an example, school directors of the pilot program argued that inner-city children, like those served by the King Urban Life Center, did not benefit

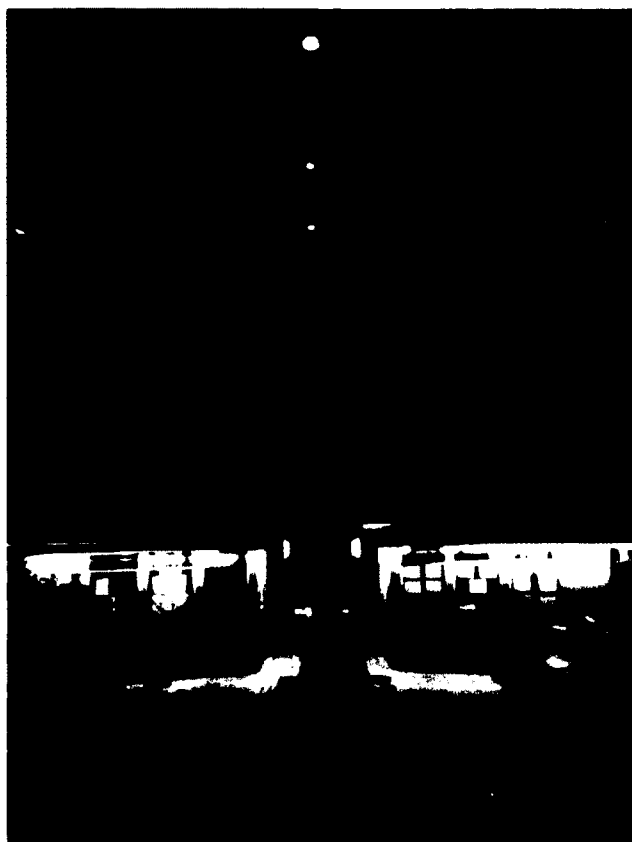


Figure 3.14: Interior facing south, showing loft library.

from the long summer break, but directors were unable to convince the city to run the schools on the year-round schedule.⁴⁶ The pilot program began in 1993, and students met in School 90, at 50 A Street.⁴⁷ In December of 1998, the State of

⁴⁶ Peter Simon, "Charters Chosen: Two Buffalo Groups to Open Vanguard," *The Buffalo News*, January 26, 2000.

⁴⁷ Margaret Hammersley, "New School Program May Move to Former Church: Old St. Mary of Sorrows, Now King Urban Life Center, Would House Early Learning Project," *The Buffalo News*, August 30, 1993. http://www.lexisnexis.com:80/Inacui2api/delivery/PrintWorking.do?d...nt+Document+%283%29&estPage=2&zipDelivery=false&delFmt=QDS_EF_HTML (accessed January 25, 2012).

New York passed a law enabling the establishment of charter schools. King Urban Life Center immediately applied and became the first charter school in western New York in 2000.⁴⁸ According to information published on the New York Charter Schools website, the King Center Charter School uses “the holistic model for early childhood development based on the multiple intelligences work of Howard Gardner.”⁴⁹ Gardner, a developmental and cognitive psychologist who works to understand success and creativity, posits that there are different sites in the brain for different skills. Gardner developed this theory of multiple intelligences while Joe Renzulli and Bob Sternburg were doing similar work and their theories have been built on by many in the world of education.⁵⁰

Most children who attend King Charter School live in the neighborhood, but due to economic difficulties, some families have had to leave the immediate area. The African American community of Buffalo remains centered in East Buffalo, but it has expanded in the last 30 years. The neighborhood around the King Urban Life Center remains mostly African American. The West Buffalo area is home to other ethnic groups: hispanics, new refugees from Burma, Nepal, and Iraq, among others. Buffalo remains very segregated. There are some children

⁴⁸ Simon, “Charters Chosen.”

⁴⁹ Charter Schools Institute, “King Center Charter School.”

⁵⁰ Howard Gardner, “Intelligence, Creativity, Ethics: Reflections on My Evolving Research Interests,” *Gifted Child Quarterly* 55:4 (2011): 302-4.

who attend the school who do not live nearby, but they have siblings who attended King. These families used to live in the neighborhood. Now the school provides transportation for those children.⁵¹

At the church today, there is very little official interpretation of the space to the students. Some teachers provide neighborhood history and a brief history of the church. Visitors, however, may receive a booklet on the stained glass which explains their history and symbolism. People do just drop in to see the building, but since it is a school, not everyone can be given a tour. The receptionist has become adept at giving tours when she can and asking people to return at another time when she cannot. Many of the parents of the students at the King Charter School grew up with negative experiences in institutional settings, such as traditional schools and other public service buildings. It has been easier for these parents to come to a former church to work with teachers and school administrators, as well as to access the other services of the King Urban Life Center.⁵²

Several community meetings and events take place in the space. This year King Urban Life Center participated in Open Doors Buffalo Niagara, which was a weekend in which architectural treasures which are normally closed to the

⁵¹ Massey interview.

⁵² Ibid.

public allow tours. When giving tours of the building, faculty and administrators discuss the architectural features of the church and provide a brief history. They spend time discussing how the neighborhood came together to fight for the survival of the building. This is a new annual event and the King Center intends to continue participating. On the Friday before Martin Luther King Day each January, the King Urban Life Center hosts a school celebration which includes some service to the community. In the past there have been five kilometer races for local charities; for January 2012, the KULC is working with AmeriCorps on a service project.

At the King Urban Life Center grand opening celebration in 1998, the following was printed in the program:

A towering structure built of stone, the King Urban Life Center has been reborn to serve the individuals, families, and children who live in the community surrounding it. Neighborhood children call it their school. Area residents can claim it as their community center. Western New York can take pride in its innovating educational programs and services. And other cities across America can find inspiration in this creative new life for an old Landmark building.

After years of work by hundreds of volunteers and collaborative contributions by scores of funding sources, the King Urban Life Center stands bright and new, opening its doors again to the people in the community it will continue to serve in the future.⁵³

⁵³ King Urban Life Center, "Grand Opening Celebration" program, (Buffalo, NY: King Urban Life Center, October 1998).

Over ten years later, the King Urban Life Center continues to live into that mission. The KULC does not do very much to interpret the history of the building to the neighborhood. There are several interpretive options available: they could place semi-permanent exhibit panels in the vestibule, provide a history brochure, or develop an online exhibit. Any of these would improve the success of this adaptive reuse in the community. However, the continuity of purpose in providing educational and other services to the community provides the institutional adaptive reuse of St. Mary of Sorrows into the King Urban Life Center a measure of cultural success.

**CHAPTER IV:
FROM METHODIST CHURCH TO ARCHITECTURAL FIRM IN
NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE**



**Figure 4.1: Elm Street Methodist Church, ca. 1900,
photograph courtesy Tuck-Hinton Architects.**

Congregants built Elm Street Methodist Church in a bustling neighborhood just south of Nashville, Tennessee. The neighborhood was long ago incorporated into the city of Nashville, and it has shifted from largely academic and residential to commercial. The building which housed the

congregation at Elm Street now serves as home to Tuck-Hinton Architects. The commercial nature of the adaptive reuse of this religious building as well as the character of the neighborhood do not easily lend themselves to cultural interpretation. However, the partners at Tuck-Hinton have embraced the religious iconography of working in a former church and do their best to honor its history.

Elm Street Methodist Church was completed in 1871 on the corner of Elm Street and 5th Avenue. The two-and-a-half story building is all brick and in the Italianate style., and it is the only religious Italianate building in Nashville.¹ The rectangular church has a gabled roof as well as a gabled center projection. The round-arched entranceway is centered on this projection. It has double-leaf doors and a lighted transom and sits beneath a tripartate round-arched window. All of the windows on the building except those on the basement story are round-arched. ² During the life of the building, congregants built square stair towers on either side of the central projecting section of the facade. Additionally, they lifted

¹ Metropolitan Historical Commission, "Nineteenth Century Churches of South Nashville Thematic Resources," *National Register of Historic Places Inventory-Nomination Form*, completed by John Compton, Shain Dennison, and David Paine (Nashville, TN: 1984), Section 7.1.

² Shain Dennison, "Nineteenth Century Churches of South Nashville Thematic Resources Architectural and Historic Properties Inventory Form: Elm Street Methodist Church," Metropolitan Historical Commission, Nashville, TN: 1983.

the entrance from the street-level, replaced the doors with shorter ones, and added stairs to the front of the building.

South Nashville is considered the city's first suburb and incorporated as its own town in 1850, before officially joining Nashville in 1854.³ Much of the land on which South Nashville sits was a part of the grant given to Captain John Rains, who came to the area with James Robertson in 1779.⁴ The South Nashville suburb developed around several universities, including the University of Nashville, Vanderbilt University Medical School, George Peabody College, and Montgomery Bell Academy, a secondary school.⁵ Educators and residents established these academies in the nineteenth century in the area around what was known as Rutledge Hill, so named after attorney and University of Nashville trustee Henry Middleton Rutledge. The area grew into a comfortable, distinct middle-class suburb and then slowly declined as the character of the

³ Metropolitan Historical Commission, "Nineteenth Century Churches of South Nashville," *National Register Nomination Form*, Section 7.1.

⁴ Nashville Neighborhood Reinvestment Council, "South Nashville," *Fifteen Nashville Neighborhoods*, (Nashville, TN: 1981).

⁵ For the history of Nashville's colleges and universities, see Christine Kreyling, et al. *Classical Nashville: Athens of the South*, (Nashville, TN: Vanderbilt University Press, 1996).

neighborhood changed and the last of the academic campuses moved in 1925. By the 1980s, far fewer residential homes remained in the neighborhood.⁶



Figure 4.2: Elm Street Methodist Church and the surrounding neighborhood in 1908. G.M. Hopkins, "Plate 13A," *Atlas of the City of Nashville, Tennessee: from official records, private plans and actual surveys, 1908*. Scale 150 feet to an inch. Image courtesy Special Collections Division of the Nashville Public Library.

Demographic and structural changes to the neighborhood around Elm Street accelerated after the Civil War. During the occupation by the federal army,

⁶ Metropolitan Historical Commission, "Nineteenth Century Churches of South Nashville," *National Register Nomination Form*, Section 8.1.

African Americans began to settle in South Nashville, and migration to this area increased during Reconstruction.⁷ The city developers created new streets and widened existing ones throughout the 1870s and 1880s.⁸ Additionally, the area expanded both commercially and in light industry as Nashville pursued a “New South” image.⁹ This desire to remake Nashville with some of the trappings of Northern industrial cities particularly influenced the changes in street infrastructure near the railroad running through this South Nashville neighborhood.¹⁰ The neighborhood’s demographics changed even further as some residents who left the area during federal occupation never returned, and still others left the neighborhood for the suburbs to escape the commercial and industrial growth.¹¹

⁷ For history of African American movement in and around Nashville, see Bobby L. Lovett, *The African-American History of Nashville, Tennessee, 1780-1930: Elites and Dilemmas*, (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 1999).

⁸ Steven Hoskins, “A Restless Landscape: Building Nashville History and Seventh and Drexel,” PhD diss., Middle Tennessee State University, 2009, 91.

⁹ For further discussion of Nashville as a New South city, see Don Doyle, *Nashville: In the New South, 1880-1930*, (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1985) and *New Men, New Cities, New South: Atlanta, Nashville, Charleston, Mobile, 1860-1910*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1990).

¹⁰ Hoskins, “A Restless Landscape,” 59.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 60.

Elm Street Methodist Church stands on the outside edge of a place once known as Black Bottom, so called because the nearby Cumberland River would flood and leave the streets muddy. The name also referred to residences where cheap tenements first attracted European immigrants and then free African Americans in the 1860s and 1870s. Many who lived in Black Bottom worked in the homes and growing industrial businesses in the areas to the west and south of the neighborhood. Black Bottom originally was the city's Sixth Ward, with boundaries of Broad Street to the north, the Cumberland River to the east, and Fifth Avenue North to the west.¹² The Black Bottom neighborhood expanded south into Rutledge Hill in the early twentieth century.¹³

By the time the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament announced the establishment of a Roman Catholic parochial school for African American girls four blocks west of Elm Street in 1905, they were able to argue that the location of

¹² Bobby L. Lovett, "Black Bottom," *Tennessee Encyclopedia of History and Culture*, <http://tennesseeencyclopedia.net/entry.php?rec=1565> (accessed January 2012).

¹³ Jeffery L. Morris, Marian G. Noltini, and Leslie G. Wilkes., "Building the Future in the Past: History of Elm Street Church," (Nashville: Tuck Hinton, PLLC, 1987).

the school among existing black homes was ideal.¹⁴ The school continued in the neighborhood until the 1950s when it was closed in favor of integration.¹⁵

Construction on Elm Street Methodist Church began in the 1860s and it is unknown exactly how much of it was complete before the Union occupation of Nashville in February 1862; they had a camp a few blocks away. There are unconfirmed anecdotes that it was the hospital for Union officers after the 1862-1863 Battle of Stones River, near Murfreesboro.¹⁶

According to oral tradition, the Elm Street congregation began meeting in the back room of one of the members' houses before the Civil War.¹⁷ Reverend Shugart Martin, the thirtieth pastor of Elm Street Methodist, recounted some of the history of the church to a local Methodist publication, *Your Church*. In the 1947 interview, Martin explains that Elm Street's congregation was formed from the combination of congregations at Andrew Charge (members built their first church in 1843) and Mulberry Street. Mulberry Street Methodist added the members of the older Elysian Grove congregation (members built their church in

¹⁴ Hoskins, "A Restless Landscape," 75, 82.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 95.

¹⁶ Kem Hinton, Interview by author, Nashville, TN, December 2, 2011.

¹⁷ O.H. Vanlandingham, "Elm Street," in *History of Methodist Churches and Institutions in Middle Tennessee, 1787-1956*, Cullen T. Carter, ed. (Nashville, TN: Parthenon Press, 1956), 87.

1848) to their rolls in 1859. Both Andrew Charge and Mulberry Street were doing well before the Civil War, but by 1866 each had lost many members to the war. They combined congregations, having about 370 members between them. In 1860 a Cumberland Presbyterian group began building the current Elm Street Methodist Church (which they called simply Dr. Goodlett's Church). It is unclear how much of the building was completed, but the congregation was meeting in the basement, and it did not grow throughout the years of the Civil War. In 1867, the congregations of the Cumberland Presbyterian church and Mulberry Street Methodist traded property, and the Methodists undertook the completion of the building. At that time Reverend C.C. Mayhew was the pastor of the Methodist congregation. Between 1870 and 1871, contractors finished the auditorium of Elm Street Methodist, and under the pastorate of Dr. R.A. Young, membership grew from 292 to 430. Bishop D.S. Doggett dedicated the building in 1871.¹⁸ At that time, the congregation had 430 members.¹⁹

Drawing from an image of Elm Street that was taken around 1897 for a booklet for the Tennessee Centennial, we know the brick Italianate structure had a central cupola over the front projecting section. Initially, Elm Street Methodist

¹⁸ "Elm Street Methodist, Second Oldest in Nashville, Now in its Eightieth Year of Fine Service," *Your Church in Nashville*, Vol. 1 No. 2, (November, 1947): 18-20.

¹⁹ Vanlandingham, "Elm Street," in *History of Methodist Churches*, 88.

had a pointed steeple, but the wind damaged it, and the congregation never replaced it. During this phase of the building, the wooden cupola and steeple and all of the brick were painted white for the illusion of uniformity of materials.²⁰



Figure 4.3: Prints of stereographic images of Elm Street, ca. 1900. Image courtesy Tuck-Hinton Architects.

In 1900 the congregation decided to raise and renovate the building's entrance since the city had widened and graded 5th Avenue. Figure 4.3 shows the church prior to these renovations. The congregation lifted their doors and built a shielded stair.²¹ They also remodeled the sanctuary in 1900, but additional renovations took place after a fire in December 1925. The fire destroyed the

²⁰ Hinton interview.

²¹ *Nashville Tennessean*, February 5, 1950.

cupola, clock tower, and the ceiling. Contractors rebuilt the sanctuary ceiling, replacing plaster octagonal medallions with a cross-beam ceiling. They did not rebuild the cupola and clock tower.²²

Captain Tom Ryman joined Elm Street Methodist shortly after his conversion to christianity in 1885, and he remained active at Elm Street until his death in 1904.²³ Ryman was a prominent businessman in Nashville who had made his fortune running gambling boats on the Cumberland River. Ryman was converted after attending a tent revival meeting run by preacher Sam Jones. Ryman supposedly attended the meeting in order to heckle Jones for preaching against alcohol and gambling; instead, Ryman had a religious experience at the meeting and raised the money to construct the Union Gospel Tabernacle so that such revivals and celebrations no longer needed to be held in tents. At Ryman's funeral, Jones suggested the building be renamed the Ryman Auditorium.²⁴ In later years the auditorium was adapted as a performance space, rather than a strictly religious one, and it housed the Grand Ole Opry for a time.

In the late 1930s, the congregation at Elm Street reached its peak membership of 1200 and Sunday School attendance of 600. At this time it was the

²² Morris et al, "Building the Future in the Past"

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Brenda Colladay, "Captain Tom Ryman," Ryman Auditorium, <http://www.ryman.com/history/tomryman.html> (accessed December 2011).

largest Sunday School in South Nashville and the second largest congregation in Nashville.²⁵ Rev. Shugart Martin served the congregation from 1941 through 1951. In an interview, Martin noted that of the Elm Street congregants who lived in the neighborhood around the church, only a third of them owned their homes. The rest lived in the tenements that had been built and carved out of the large homes and former university dormitories in the once wealthy neighborhood.²⁶ Figure 4.4 shows Elm Street as it looked in 1950, and Rev. Martin is in Figure 4.5.

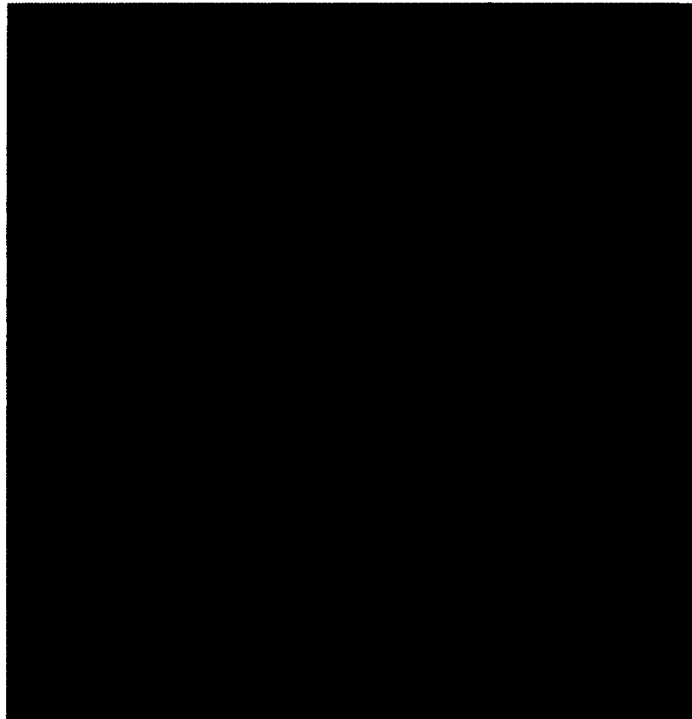


Figure 4.4: Elm Street Methodist Church in 1950, *Nashville Tennessean Magazine*, February 5; Image courtesy TN Methodist Conference on Archives and History.

²⁵ Vanlandingham, "Elm Street," in *History of Methodist Churches*, 88-89.

²⁶ Morris, et al, "Building the Future in the Past."



Figure 4.5: Rev. Shuggart Martin in Elm Street Methodist. Image courtesy Tuck-Hinton Architects.

In a 1942 report to the Tennessee Conference on the status of the congregation, Rev. Martin noted that:

Many of our people are out of touch with their church and the need in the community: war conditions and long hours of work are forcing others to be away from the church services and it makes it impossible for them to do many of the things that they would otherwise do for their church. Then the prospect of gas-rationing will make church work and church going difficult for some....We have planned as our first major emphasis the reenlisting of the great number of our members who are out of touch with the church.²⁷

²⁷ Shugart Martin, "Pastor's Report to the First Quarterly Conference of Elm Street Methodist Church," November 4, 1942, Elm Street Methodist Church, Nashville, Tennessee, Records 1869-1971, 40 vols. and 9 items. Microfilm Accession No. 684, Tennessee State Library and Archives, Nashville, Tennessee.

Martin's annual reports during the remaining years of World War II expressed similar concerns, along with his hopes and plans to increase service, attendance, and membership. Immediately after the war, prospects appeared brighter. In his August 1945 report, Martin indicated that membership had increased by twenty-four people and that participation in various church activities, such as Sunday School and boys and girls clubs, were increasing as well. However he also noted that a few members had passed away, and twenty-five people had moved their membership to other churches.²⁸

Between 1945 and 1955, the congregation continued to lose membership. O. H. Vanlandingham, pastor of Elm Street in 1956, attributed this loss to what he called a "steady drift in population to the east and the west in Nashville and the removal of Peabody College" nearer to Vanderbilt University's main campus.²⁹ Vanlandingham insisted that other neighborhood denominations suffered worse membership losses and considered it an accomplishment to be able to keep just under 500 members and to be able to meet the financial obligations of the church and conference.³⁰ Such optimism could not hold the Elm Street congregation together for long. In 1964, the congregation claimed 225 members that church

²⁸ Ibid., November 4, 1942 and August 17, 1945.

²⁹ Vanlandingham, "Elm Street," in *History of Methodist Churches*, 89.

³⁰ Ibid.

leadership had been able to contact, but over 500 that they were unable to confirm. In the years between 1960 and 1964, the congregation again remodeled the church, replacing its roof and furnace for about \$13,000. No images or reports are available to document what interior changes were made to the sanctuary.³¹ With a shrinking congregation and ever declining resources, Elm Street's members found it difficult to care for their aging building.

The tenor of the neighborhood was changing too. The Tennessee Conference was building new Methodist churches in the suburbs, and commercial interests continued to grow. By 1969, the congregation at Elm Street had joined administratively the group at Carroll Street Church; they reported to the conference as the South Nashville parish. Rev. W.E. Moore, pastor at Elm Street, reported the congregation's hard work and several efforts to increase attendance and service in the community, but to little result. To stem the loss of members, Rev. Moore asked for financial support for an outreach program for children at a local housing project. By April 1970, no new members had joined Elm Street, and the pastor was frustrated that the current members were not as

³¹ "Elm Street Methodist Church," 1964. (Photocopy from a book, in collection at Tuck Hinton, PLLC, Nashville, TN. The archivist of the Tennessee Conference of Methodist Churches has been unable to identify the source.)

interested in outreach as they could have been. This report, tellingly, was the last such report in the church records.³²

On April 21, 1971, Rev. Moore led a church meeting to vote on whether to discontinue services at Elm Street. Moore reminded the congregation that he was sent to help to reverse the declining membership. He blamed himself for not succeeding in saving the congregation. Moore admitted:

Time brings changes and not all changes are bad. Time has certainly brought change to this neighborhood. I have felt that there is something this church can do for this changing community, but this would certainly mean approaches that are different in many ways; approaches that some of the members have been reluctant to accept.³³

Moore added that the condition of the church building was also a consideration in the vote. The members voted to disband that evening.³⁴

After it had been officially dissolved by the Tennessee United Methodist Conference, Elm Street Methodist, listing 200 members on the rolls, held its final

³² W.E. Moore, "Report of the Pastor to the Charge Conference, South Nashville Parish, at Elm Street United Methodist Church," May 19, 1969, April 14, 1970. Elm Street Methodist Church, Nashville, Tennessee, Records 1869-1971, 40 vols. and 9 items. Microfilm Accession No. 684, Tennessee State Library and Archives, Nashville, Tennessee.

³³ W.E. Moore, "Meeting at Elm Street United Methodist Church." April 21, 1971. Elm Street Methodist Church, Nashville, Tennessee, Records 1869-1971, 40 vols. and 9 items. Microfilm Accession No. 684, Tennessee State Library and Archives, Nashville, Tennessee.

³⁴ Ibid.

service on June 20, 1971.³⁵ According to some correspondence from October 1971, the Tennessee Conference sold the church and parsonage, dividing the proceeds into three parts which were given to local Methodist charities.

McKendree Manor (a retirement community), Martin College, and Scarritt College each received \$8989.37 of the \$26,949.84 sum.³⁶ Scant more than rumor is available about how the remaining 200 members felt about this decision by the conference, but it is likely that fewer people were in attendance than were on the rolls as people left the neighborhood and began attending elsewhere without officially moving their membership. It should be noted that by the time the conference auctioned off the church in 1971, the bricks had been cleaned and the building was no longer painted white.³⁷ No records indicate when or why the congregation made that change.

When the United Methodist Conference sold the building in 1971, the Historic Preservation Tax Incentives of 1976 and 1986 were still dreams and not yet reality. Few developers were interested in the rehabilitation work that adaptive reuse of a church building would require.

³⁵ Bob Bell, Jr., "Final Service Set June 20 for Elm Street Methodist," *The Nashville Banner*, May 22, 1971.

³⁶ Records of Elm Street United Methodist Church, Conference Records, Tennessee Conference Commission on Archives and History, Nashville, TN, (unprocessed records, consulted 2010).

³⁷ Advertisement, *The Nashville Tennessean*, Sunday, July 18, 1971, 132.



Figure 4.6: Elm Street Methodist before renovations. Image courtesy Tuck-Hinton Architects.

This is perhaps one reason why the building sat empty for some time. At first a partnership purchased the property and began work to turn it into a restaurant, but their funds ran out before completing the work.³⁸ Eventually Rich Roberts of Professionally Managed Telemarketing Services, Inc. (PMT) purchased it and began to renovate and adapt it to the purposes of that business. Figure 4.6 shows Elm Street as it looked when Roberts bought the property.

Garold Goff, of Commerce Construction Company, was the project manager for the adaptive reuse work PMT did to transform Elm Street to their purposes, but the adaptive reuse design came from Gail Magli of Interior Design

³⁸ Seab Tuck, January 2012, e-mail message to author.

Associates.³⁹ The interior of the building during PMT's renovations can be seen in Figures 4.7 and 4.8, and the finished product is visible in Figure 4.9. In May 1988, the Metropolitan Historical Commission recognized Professionally Managed Telemarketing Services, Inc. (PMT) for its adaptive reuse of Elm Street

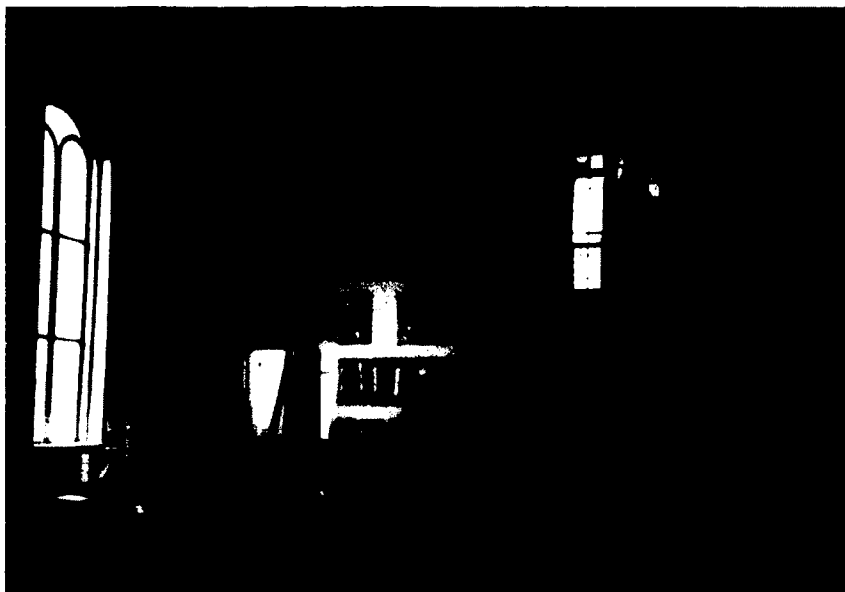


Figure 4.7: Interior facing away from altar, during PMT's renovations. Image courtesy Tuck-Hinton Architects.

Methodist Church. Metro government particularly commended the company for keeping the sanctuary space open and intact.⁴⁰ PMT Services had approximately 80 people working in cubicles on the main floor. PMT cut holes into the load bearing walls in their attempts to bring the building into compliance with city

³⁹ Bob Battle, "Firm Giving Historic Elm Street Church New Look," *Nashville Banner*, September 21, 1987. C-14.

⁴⁰ Metropolitan Historical Commission, "Architectural Award Winners," *History Gram*, (Spring/Summer 1988): 1-2.



Figure 4.8: Interior facing altar, during PMT's renovations. Image courtesy Tuck-Hinton Architects.

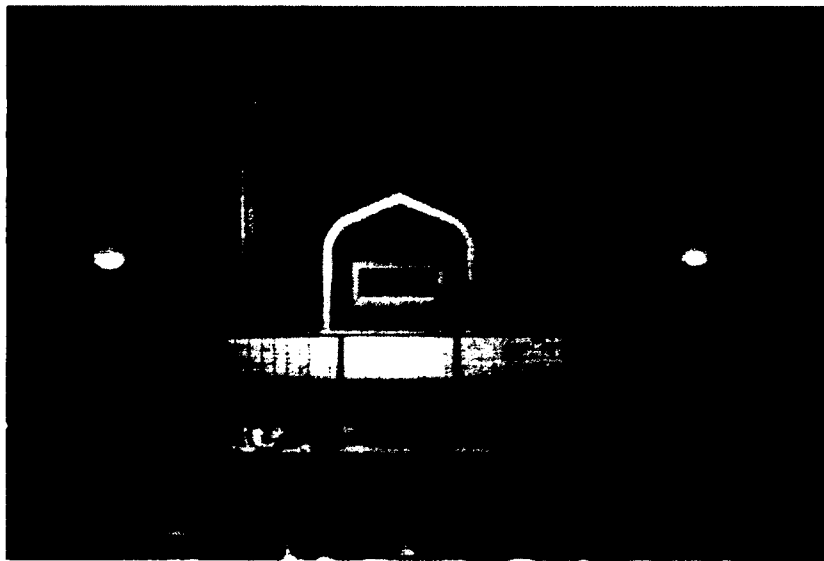


Figure 4.9: Interior, facing altar area, after PMT's renovations were complete. Image courtesy Tuck-Hinton Architects.

codes. When Tuck-Hinton Architects bought the building in 1995, the north elevation was unstable, therefore they had to add a load-bearing concrete

buttress which extends underground.⁴¹ The above ground portion of the buttress is visible in Figure 4.10. Also visible in is the church sign, which Tuck-Hinton keeps displayed on the side of the building.

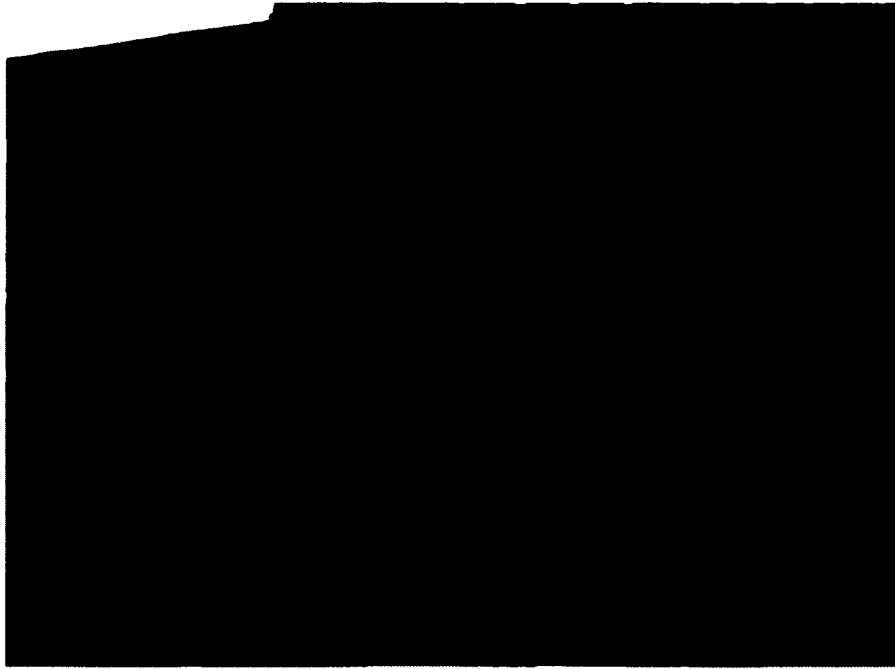


Figure 4.10: Exterior of Tuck-Hinton Architects, upper part of buttress and historic church sign visible.

Tuck-Hinton Architects purchased the former church in 1995 from PMT and began their own set of renovations. Aside from the significant expense of having to place the buttress, the architectural firm modifications were largely cosmetic and focussed on the interior. The firm repainted the interior, adding alcove-like cubicles along the two long walls. These have candelabra placed

⁴¹ Hinton interview.



Figure 4.11: Interior, facing former altar area, Tuck-Hinton Architects.

along the wall to add to the “religious feel” of the space, as seen in Figure 4.11.

The designers divided the center of the room into cubicles, but not nearly as many as PMT installed. To maintain the open space in the former sanctuary, the firm avoided lowered ceilings. Around 2009, Tuck-Hinton replaced the windows in the building (the stained glass windows used by the congregation had already been sold in the 1970s), using energy efficient and functional (they open) windows. The building has severe heat stratification. In 2010, Tuck-Hinton installed the two large ceiling fans to help offset this issue.⁴²

⁴² Hinton interview.

When Tuck-Hinton purchased the building in the late 1990s, the neighborhood had declined markedly. Prostitutes of both genders worked the street. As more businesses have returned to the neighborhood, the seediness of the area has largely disappeared, through increased police presence. As a commercial business, Tuck-Hinton Architects, does not actively interpret the

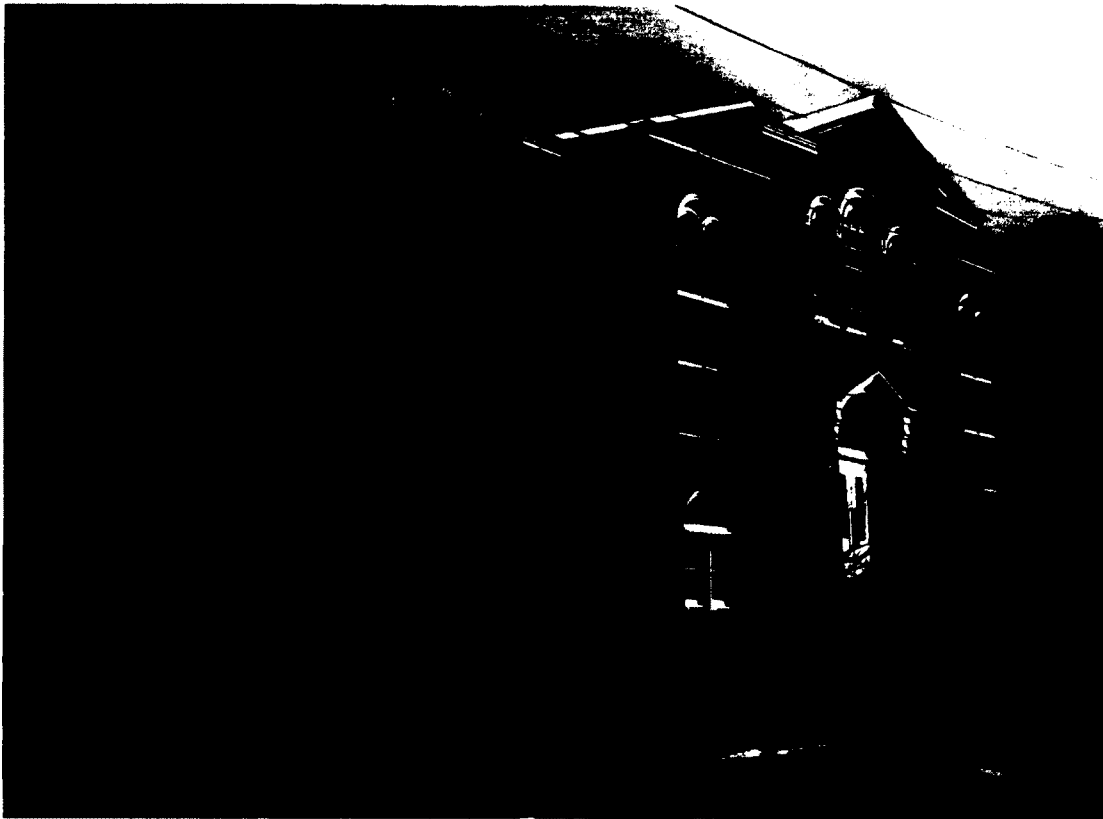


Figure 4.12: Tuck-Hinton Architects, 2011.

history of their space to the public. However, Kem Hinton, in particular, is active with local museum groups and provides tours of the facility to interested groups when he is available. The partners of Tuck-Hinton have actively investigated the history of their building, and they have compiled many relevant documents and

images. While it could be convenient for a commercial business to ignore the history of their religious building altogether, Tuck-Hinton Architects capitalizes on that history without implying that they are a religious institution. They have a couple of pews and several historic images of the building in the entryway.⁴³ A quote by architect Louis Kahn graces the foyer of the business: "Architecture must have the religion of light, a sense of light as the giver of all presences." Hinton noted in 2004 that, "Since we work diligently to have natural illumination in our buildings, that quote is sort of sacred to us."⁴⁴

Evaluating the cultural success of a building that was adaptively reused for commercial purposes is perhaps the most difficult as history is often peripheral to commercial enterprises. Some businesses can more easily interpret the history of their space through providing small exhibits or pamphlets than others. Tuck-Hinton Architects at least provide some public access to the space and make historic images of the building visible to all visitors and potential clients.

⁴³ They would have liked to have more of the furnishings from the building, but the United Methodist Conference sold some of the interior items to TGI Fridays' Elliston Place location, including some stained glass and the communion rails. When this building was demolished and replaced a few years ago, they auctioned these items but Tuck-Hinton was unable to purchase them.

⁴⁴ Cheryl Weber, "Beyond the Glass Door: the Best Architects' Offices are Designed from the Inside Out," *Focus* April 1, 2004.

**CHAPTER V:
FROM TEMPLE TO RESEARCH CENTER IN ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI**



Figure 5.1: The recently completed United Hebrew Temple at 225 S Skinker Blvd, in 1927. Photograph by W.C. Persons. Courtesy, Missouri History Museum, St. Louis.

Situated on the western edge of Forest Park in St. Louis, Missouri, the United Hebrew Temple was one of the three largest Jewish houses of worship in the United States when it was completed in 1927. The upper-middle class neighborhood, just south of Washington University in St. Louis retains its class associations but is no longer home to a large Jewish community, which has

dispersed further west, into newer neighborhoods.¹ When congregants built a new temple, they sold their former building to the Missouri Historical Society in 1989. An adaptive reuse primarily for cultural purposes, the Society uses the building as the Missouri History Museum Library and Research Center. As a cultural institution, the facility achieves a measure of success through interpreting the history of the building and the neighborhood to current neighborhood residents, United Hebrew congregants, and of the visiting public seeking to learn more about the space.

The land on which the United Hebrew congregation built their temple formerly held the Palace of Agriculture during the 1904 Louisiana Purchase Exposition. The Wydown-Forsyth neighborhood, of which the temple is a part, was built on former Exposition lands as well. The land to the east of Skinker Boulevard became Forest Park. In 1927, local architectural firm Maritz and Young worked on the design of the building with consultant architect Gabriel Ferrand. These architects designed and completed the United Hebrew Temple in the

¹ Forest Park, one of the nation's largest urban parks at 1,293 acres, opened in 1876 and was the site of the 1904 Louisiana Purchase Exposition. For a history of the park, see S. J. Altman, and R. H. Weiss, *Forest Park: The Jewel of St. Louis*, (St. Louis, MO.: St. Louis Post-Dispatch Books, 2007); For more on the exposition and how it shaped Forest Park, see J. B. Gilbert, *Whose fair?: Experience, Memory, and the History of the Great St. Louis Exposition*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009). For general history of St. Louis, see R. I. Vexler, *St. Louis: A Chronological & Documentary History, 1762-1970*, (Dobbs Ferry, N.Y: Oceana Publications, 1974).

Byzantine Revival style.² Ferrand came to the United States from France in 1906 and became head of Washington University's architecture department in 1916. Designers of synagogues in the 1920s considered Byzantine Revival to be a style which both expressed Jewish heritage and helped to distinguish temples from other religious buildings.³ The Byzantine influences remain visible in several details, including the rounded arches, dome, Byzantine capitols on the columns, and the alternating colors (brick and concrete) above the three arches within the large central entryway arch. The building is buff-colored brick with darker brick stretcher courses, and a semi-spherical dome which rests on an octagonal base that forms the interior sanctuary space (now the reading room at the research center).

United Hebrew's neighborhood sits just south of Washington University in St. Louis. Thomas Skinker and Robert Forsyth originally owned the land. The city of St. Louis acquired some of the land for Forest Park, and Washington University acquired some of Forsyth's land for its Hilltop Campus. The Louisiana Purchase Exposition leased all of this property for the 1904 event. In

² John Albury Bryan, *Missouri's Contribution to American Architecture* (St. Louis, MO: St. Louis Architectural Club, 1928), 262-263.

³ St. Louis County Department of Parks and Recreation, "Wydown-Forsyth District," *National Register of Historic Places Inventory-Nomination Form*, prepared by Esley Hamilton, (St. Louis, MO: 1988), listed May 30, 1988, Sheet 8.6.

the decades after the close of the exposition, landowners developed residential neighborhoods on their property and sold the lots. Maritz and Young designed thirty-four of the houses in the Wydown-Forsyth Historic District, which encompasses these neighborhoods.⁴ The area bears the further distinction of being partially in St. Louis City and partially in St. Louis County. While municipally, this can be confusing--the line even runs through a few homes--the neighborhood associations work across these institutions.

By the turn of the century, and certainly after the Louisiana Purchase Exposition, the neighborhoods of the Wydown-Forsyth district were attracting upper-middle and upper class residents from a variety of St. Louis neighborhoods, including the German and Jewish neighborhoods of south St. Louis.⁵ Many of the residents in this area were either professors at Washington University or owned their own businesses. While some homes have been replaced, the Wydown-Forsyth neighborhoods looked similar by the 1930s to the 1988 map in Figure 5.2.

⁴ Wydown-Forsyth District National Register Nomination, Sheet 8.1ff and 8.9.

⁵ Ibid., Sheet 8.12-13.

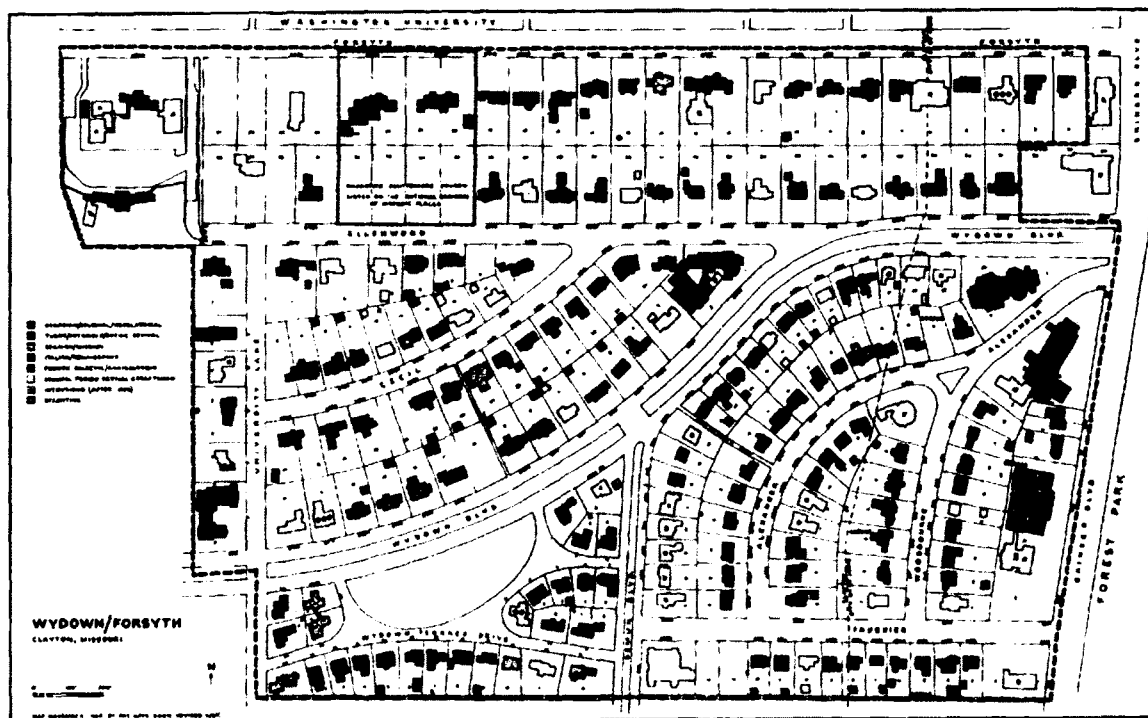


Figure 5.2: Map of Wydown/Forsyth National Historic District. The temple/library is the large grey-shaded building in the lower right quadrant. Courtesy, Missouri History Museum, St. Louis.

The United Hebrew Congregation in St. Louis is the oldest west of the Mississippi River, and they began meeting in 1836 or 1837. It is uncertain which date is correct, but congregation historians do know that the meeting took place in a room above Max's Grocery and Restaurant at Second and Spruce. Four local men convinced six traveling salesmen, all Jewish, to attend the traditional service to provide the requisite ten worshipers. By 1841, there were nearly 50 Jewish people in St. Louis and twelve of them came together to ratify a constitution and

bylaws for United Hebrew. The congregation has moved five times within the city and county.⁶

The most recent move by the United Hebrew faith community was to Conway Road in west St. Louis County, where they built a school in 1976.⁷ By the late 1970s, enough of the members of the congregation had moved westward that the school needed to be built in their new neighborhood. Congregants held on to services in the temple on Skinker for as long as they could, but in the end chose to move. In the late 1980s, Architect Pietro Belluschi designed the new temple with an eye towards blending new and old, as well as including elements that would maintain “the emotional bonds that many of the members have for the old temple.”⁸ In part, the architect achieved this by including a central dome in the new structure. Going further, there are two areas in the new temple dedicated to showcasing the history of the congregation, which now includes approximately 1,500 families.

⁶ Charlene Prost, “Testament to Tradition,” *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, December 22, 1989, p. 1F. For a more complete account of St. Louis’ Jewish history, see Walter Ehrlich, *Zion in the Valley: The Jewish Community in St. Louis*. Vol. I: 1807-1907, Vol. II: The Twentieth Century, (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1997 and 2002).

⁷ Charlene Prost, “Frieze Frame: Ornate Plaster Work Comes to Light in the Renovation of a Historic Temple,” *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, November 1, 1990, p. 1E.

⁸ Prost, “Testament to Tradition,” p. 1F.

The Missouri Historical Society was founded in 1866, and it has had several different homes. In 1913 the historical society took over as the first tenant of the Jefferson Memorial building in Forest Park (after the 1904 Louisiana Purchase Exposition). The society remained in that building until the 1980s, at which time the collections' needs outgrew the space. According to Karen Goering, current Managing Director of Operations at the Missouri Historical Society, building a large enough addition to the Jefferson Memorial building was impossible, so the society decided to leave the public, museum functions in that space and to look for another space for the collections, library, and archives, that would be called the Missouri History Museum Library and Research Center.⁹ Goering, who helped oversee the move of the library and archives, noted that a new building for these purposes was not out of the question, but they wanted to remain near the museum if at all possible. With much of the area around the museum and Forest Park already developed, that meant looking at adapting something to their purposes. The historical society leaders decided they wanted to preserve something important to the community. They looked at a nearby trolley station, but deemed it too small to house the collections.¹⁰

⁹ Karen Goering, Interview by Jane Davis, St. Louis, MO, November 28, 2011.

¹⁰ Karen Goering, Interview by author, St. Louis, MO, January 3, 2012.

The Missouri Historical Society is a part of an unusual tax district. St. Louis City and St. Louis County are separate political entities, but they share the Zoo Museum Taxing District (ZMD). In 1971, the zoo, the art museum, and the Museum of Science and Natural History (now St. Louis Science Center) formed this district in order to ensure ongoing financial support. St. Louis city reached its peak population in 1950, and after that more people lived in the suburbs than the city limits. In 1983 the Missouri Botanical Garden joined the ZMD.¹¹ Voters included the Historical Society's museum in the ZMD in November 1987.¹²

The five organizations comprise the ZMD and benefit from the property tax levy. The voters approve a maximum amount of tax dollars to be allotted to each organization, and it is non-competitive. Other organizations have attempted to join the ZMD since 1987, but none have succeeded.¹³ Joining the ZMD changed the Historical Society in that before they joined, the Museum barely made expenses, and afterwards they were able to hold a competitive nation-wide search for a new director.¹⁴

¹¹ Goering, Interview by Jane Davis.

¹² Charlene Prost, "Two Groups Vie to Buy Synagogue," *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, April 25, 1988, p. 3A.

¹³ Goering, Interview by Jane Davis.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

The United Hebrew building was listed on the National Register of Historic Places as a part of the Wydown-Forsyth District in 1988. When the Historical Society purchased the three-acre property for \$884,000, a year later, they immediately tore down the non-contributing school building in order to build a collections annex.¹⁵ St. Louis architectural firm Murphy, Downey, Wofford, and Richmond designed the renovation of the temple building as well as the construction of the annex.¹⁶ Principal architect on the project Ted Wofford

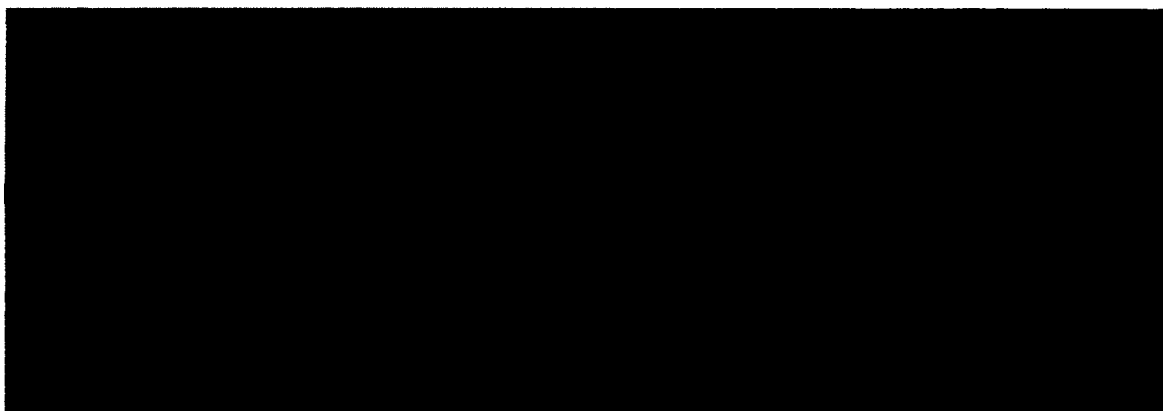


Figure 5.3: Architectural drawing showing the Library and Archive, including the collections annex. Image Courtesy of Missouri History Museum, St. Louis.

viewed this as a single project and designed the annex so as not to overwhelm the temple building. Wofford worked to match the brick pattern and colors with the temple and placed two of the four floors of the collections annex below the

¹⁵ When the National Register nomination was written, the school building was not yet fifty years old and did not match the period of significance for the historic district, therefore it was listed as a non-contributing building.

¹⁶ "Firm Chosen to Adapt Temple for Archives," *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, January 28, 1989, p. 5A.

ground, providing ample space without dominating the temple, as seen in Figure 5.3.¹⁷

In total, the purchase of the property, move, renovation of the temple, and construction of the annex cost \$12 million.¹⁸ These funds came from private and corporate donations as well as from the ZMD. A significant portion of the private donors gave funds in order to restore and preserve the molded plaster friezes which form a band around the former sanctuary, now reading room, at balcony level and embellish three arches along the front wall. In 1967 the congregation renovated the building.¹⁹ When the Historical Society purchased the building it appeared much as it had after those renovations, as seen in Figure 5.4.

¹⁷ Theodore J. Wofford, "From Temple to Library: The Architect's Point of View," *Focus* (January/February 1992), 3-4. According to Goering, the Temple's brick is local, but that of the annex is not, as many St. Louis brickyards have ceased operations.

¹⁸ Goering, Interview by author. This figure is at odds with one listed in a newspaper article. The article lists \$10 million for the renovation and annex construction. (Peterson, "A Temple of Religion," *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, December 3, 1991). This difference could be explained by the fact that Goering includes property purchase and moving the current collections.

¹⁹ Prost, "Frieze Frame," p. 1E.

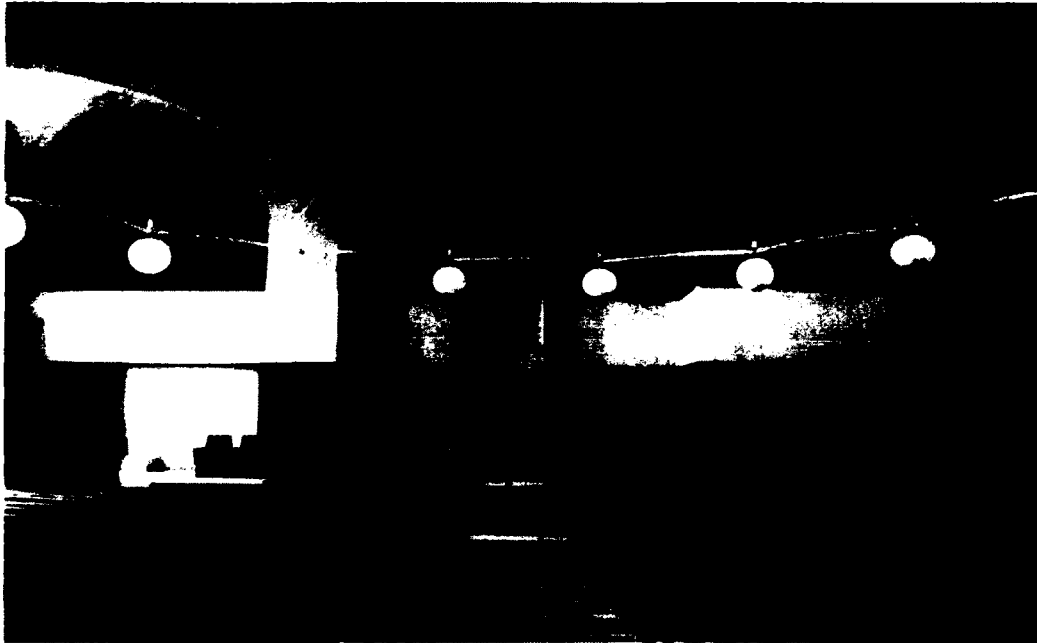


Figure 5.4: Photograph of sanctuary as it appeared when MHM acquired the property in 1989. Photograph by Karen Goering. Courtesy, Missouri History Museum.

Architect Edouard Mutrux supervised the 1967 renovations and covered the friezes, rather than destroying them.²⁰ Prepared by the 1967 look of the room and familiarity with Mutrux that the decorations might be present, Wofford encouraged contractors to carefully remove the plaster. The results of this care are visible in Figures 5.5 and 5.6. When the Historical Society adapted the sanctuary for their reading room, craftspeople restored the friezes and other decoration. Figure 5.7 shows the renovations in the reading room in progress, and Figure 5.8 reveals the finished product.

²⁰ Wofford, "From Temple to Library," 3.

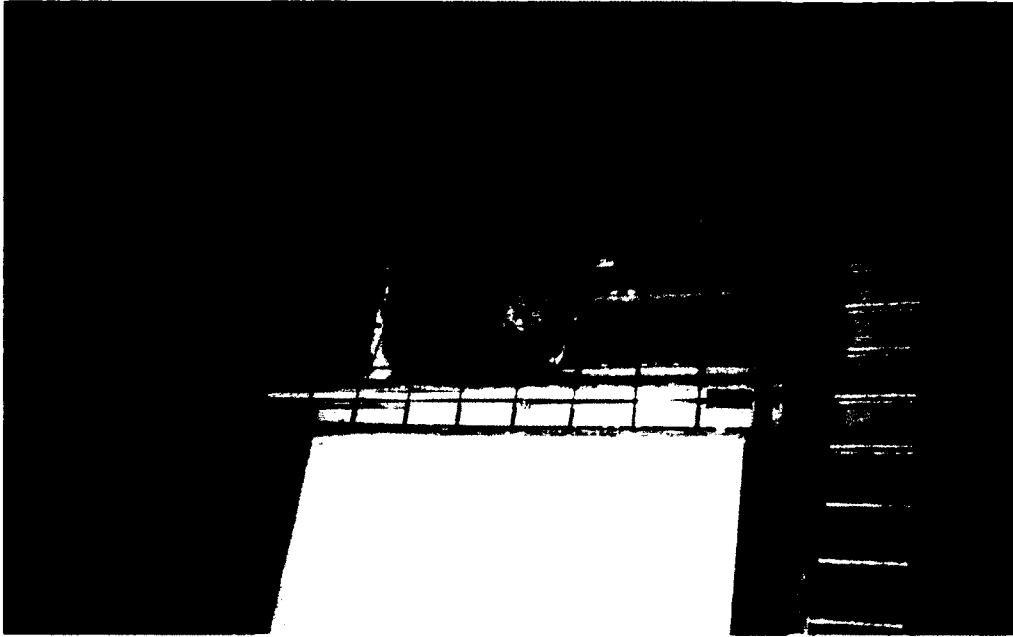


Figure 5.5: The frieze had been chopped out in places for HVAC installations. However, sufficient original detail remained that the plasterers were able to make a mold and cast the missing segments. Photograph by Karen Goering. Courtesy, Missouri History Museum.



Figure 5.6: Detail of hidden architectural features. Photograph by Karen Goering. Courtesy, Missouri History Museum.



Figure 5.7: Renovation where the altar used to rest, 1990. Photograph by Karen Goering. Courtesy, Missouri History Museum.

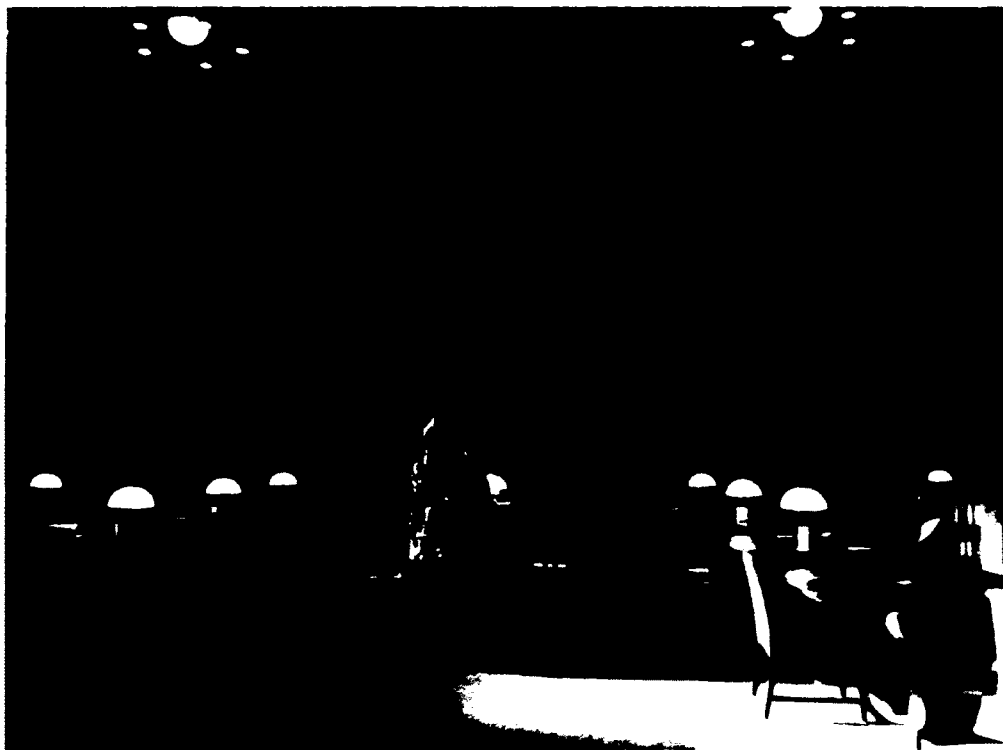


Figure 5.8: Remodeled reading room, taken from the entrance to the room.

In order to dampen the reflective sound properties of the dome, Wofford decided to cover the upper walls with a custom fabric-and-batten system. Concentrating insulation materials in a large cone at the center of the dome did not work well as an acoustical dampener. When the cone required repairs the Historical Society elected instead to restore the Star of David decoration that had graced the center of the dome originally, visible in Figure 5.9.²¹

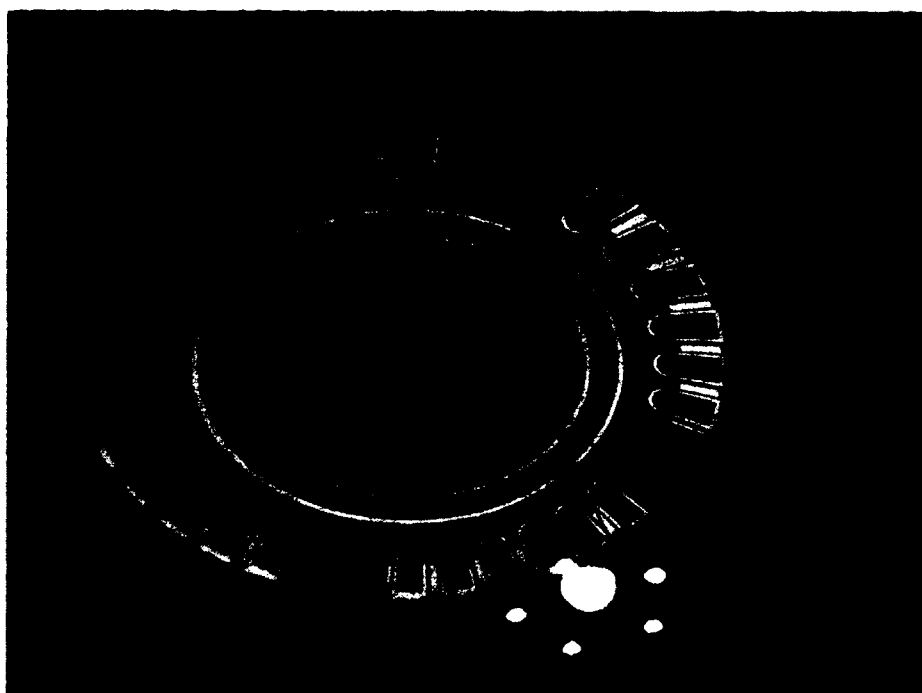


Figure 5.9: Restored Star of David medallion in the dome.

Wofford and the other architects worked to continue the decorative schemes of the original temple design, but they chose to go a different way with

²¹ Goering, Interview by author.

the interior coloring. The worship space was originally colorful, but dark, using gold and dark browns, as seen in Figure 5.10.

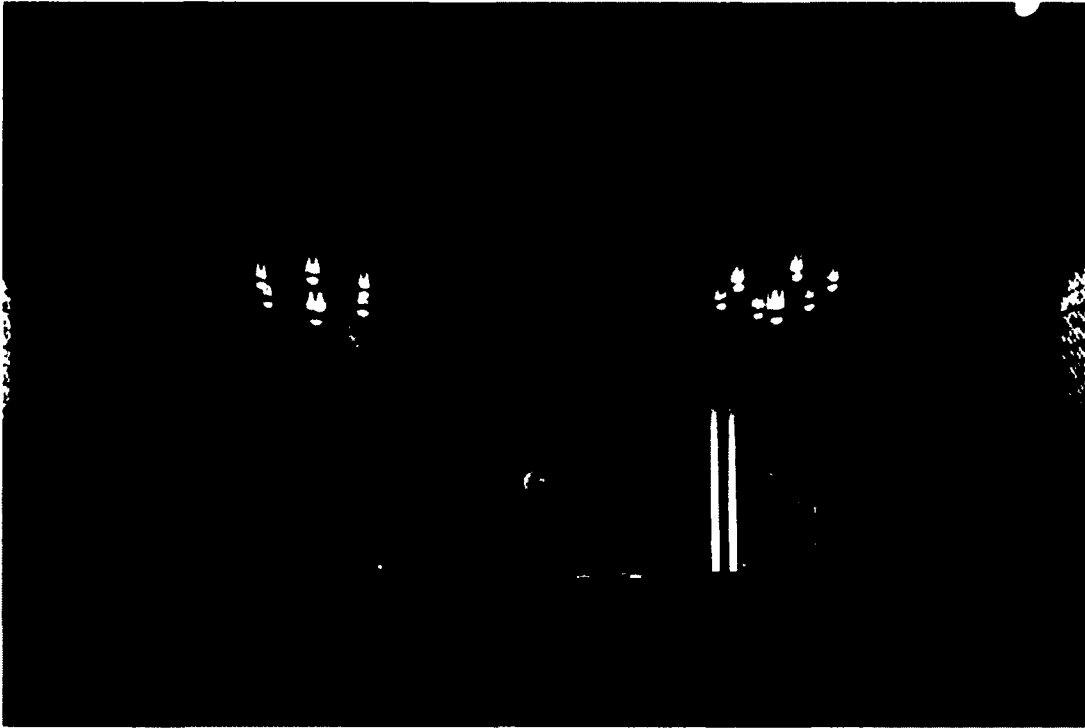


Figure 5.10: Interior of Temple, 1927. Photograph by, W.C. Persons. Courtesy, Missouri History Museum, St. Louis.

Sometime in the 1940s or 1950s the congregation had chosen brighter colors, but in the 1967 renovation the painters covered everything with basic beige.²²

Wofford and the Historical Society chose the current color scheme after painting several test panels. The chosen colors hide minor defects in the dome

²² Prost, "Frieze Frame," p. 1E. According to Wofford's *Focus* article, the brighter colors were attributed to Warner Drewes.

plasterwork as well as provide a comfortable background for research.²³ Figure 5.11 illustrates the effect of these choices.



Figure 5.11: Remodeled reading room, photo taken from the former altar area.

Unlike many other adaptive reuse projects involving religious buildings, there was never a time during which the property sat empty. At the time that the Historical Society purchased the property, the congregation's new building was not totally complete, and a deal was made to permit the congregation to continue to celebrate high holy days in the building. The pews remained in the space until

²³ Wofford, "From Temple to Library," 3-4. The paint is tinted epoxy in order to provide a vapor barrier that protects the artifacts in the collection.

after Yom Kippur (typically observed in late September). The Historical Society used this time to begin work on the collections annex and to complete the architectural planning for the rest of the building.²⁴ Additionally, the Library and Research collections were only closed to researchers a scant five months, from July through November of 1991.²⁵

Once the Library and Research Center had been moved into the former synagogue, journalist Deborah Peterson raised concerns that the grandeur of the facade and large reading room might be considered too imposing to the general public.²⁶ President of the Historical Society, Robert R. Archibald, argued, however, that no one should feel excluded from the facility and that the new location would be much easier for researchers to access. All of the collections were now in one place. Archibald went further, noting that "this building by its very nature sets a priority. You are saying that these things are very important."²⁷

²⁴ Goering, Interview by author.

²⁵ Thom Gross, "Move Creates Historical Hiatus: Researchers Await Archives' Fall Reopening," *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, July 5, 1991, p. 7A.

²⁶ Deborah Peterson, "A Temple of Religion is Now One of History," *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, December 3, 1991, p. 3A.

²⁷ Ibid.

The Missouri History Museum Library and Research Center maintains membership in the Ellenwood Neighborhood Association.²⁸ The Association fought against the proposal to tear down the synagogue and build condominiums on the land, and it supported the purchase by the Historical Society. Either option required approval by the Ellenwood Neighborhood Association. For the condominiums, approval was needed for multi-family dwellings. All the Historical Society needed was the approval for a small parking lot.²⁹ The Society hosts the neighborhood association meetings at the Library and Research Center, and every few years the Association requests a tour of the facility. The Historical Society provides these and includes information on the history of the building and the neighborhood during the tours.³⁰

The Library and Research Center maintains ties to the United Hebrew Congregation. The Library donated three stained glass windows from the second floor balcony to the new temple building. Reciprocally, United Hebrew donated those items from the temple that they did not intend to reuse to the Research Center. After the center opened, these items were displayed in the reading room,

²⁸ This association does not include the whole National Register Historic District. Three neighborhoods and part of a fourth are included in the Historic District; Ellenwood is one of those.

²⁹ Prost, "Two groups Vie to Buy Synagogue," p. 3A.

³⁰ Goering, Interview by author.

but they have since rotated out to make room for other exhibits. Additionally, Rabbi Grollman contributed to a historic marker in the reading room which commemorates the fact that the Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr., spoke there in the 1960s.³¹

In addition to their work with the Ellenwood Neighborhood Association and United Hebrew, the Library and Research Center staff interpret the cultural significance of the building in other ways. There is a four panel exhibit in the lobby of the Research Center which briefly explores the history of the building and its conversion, introduces the collections, and spotlights some items in the collections. The exhibit includes a brief paragraph highlighting the history of the United Hebrew as the first Jewish congregation west of the Mississippi through their current large group west of St. Louis. Additionally, photocopies of a journal article written by Wofford on the conversion remain on display and freely available at the information desk. A wide variety of groups request tours of the facilities, and these always include at least some information on the temple and the surrounding neighborhood. Goering trains all library staff to be able to give short tours, and once a month Research Center staff provides a tour for other

³¹ Ibid.

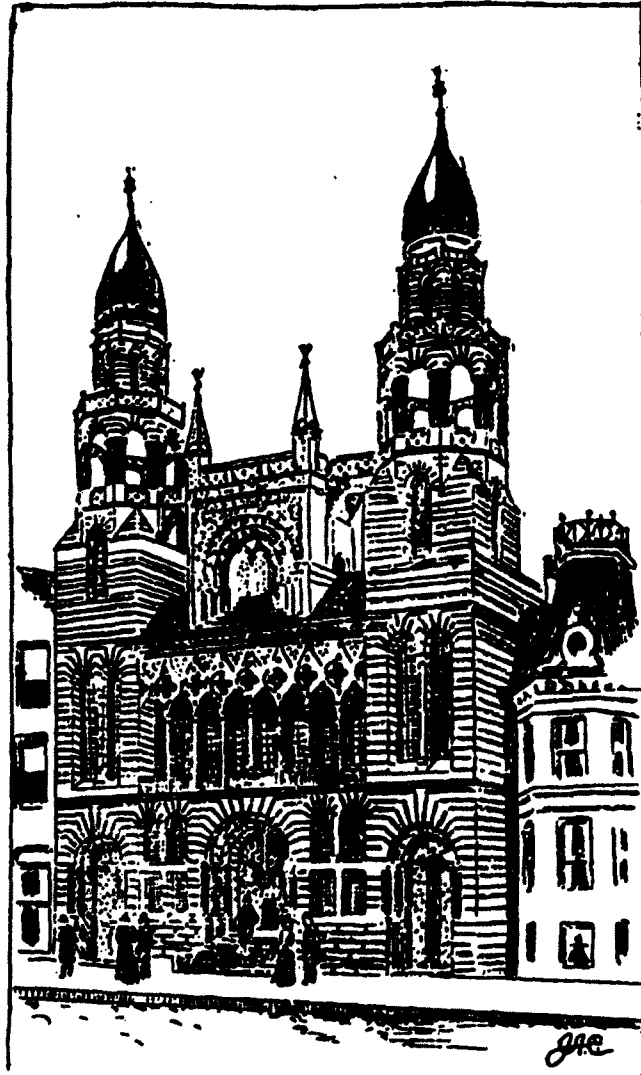
staff and interested community members. Attendance is not always large at these events, but they are rarely cancelled for lack of interest.³²

Just as the King Urban Life Center in Buffalo, New York, continues the teaching mission of St. Mary of Sorrows, so too does the Missouri History Library and Research Center. At the opening celebration for the new Library and Research Center, Rabbi Jerome Grollman, who had served at the former temple for forty years, drove this point home as he remarked, “‘the more things change, the more they stay the same.’ For this building has always been, and now shall always remain, a temple of learning and understanding, shedding light for the future by understanding the past.”³³

³² Ibid.

³³ Deborah Peterson, “Temple of Splendor: Historical Society Opens in Former Jewish Congregation Site,” *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, December 3, 1991, p. 3A.

**CHAPTER VI:
FROM RELIGIOUS CENTER TO ASSISTED LIVING FACILITY IN SAN
FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA**



THE OHABAI SHALOM TEMPLE, WHICH WAS FORMALLY DEDICATED
YESTERDAY.

Figure 6.1: Drawing of Bush Street Temple
Source: "Ohabai Shalom's Temple Dedicated:
Jewish People Honor the Event," *San Francisco
Chronicle*, September 16, 1895.

During the twentieth century, the San Francisco building best known as the Bush Street Temple had a restless history, serving several different purposes

from a religious facility for various congregations to social club to an abandoned building turned into home by the homeless. Then in the twenty-first century, it found new life, and stability, as an assisted living facility.¹ This building is one of the nation's best examples of how the adaptive reuse of a religious space can take different forms and meanings, while still achieving some cultural success.

The building's history cuts across racial, religious, and class lines. The conservative Jewish Congregation Ohabai Shalome originally commissioned the stately building in 1895. It next housed a Japanese Zen Buddhist congregation. During World War II, after the federal government forced the Japanese to leave, the building briefly hosted an African American Christian congregation. After the War, the Japanese Zen followers returned and shared their building in the 1960s with a center training non-Japanese Zen priests. Later in the twentieth century, a Japanese cultural club made the building home, and then it sat empty of official use and housed several homeless individuals. In the 2000s, members of the Japantown community came together to find yet another use for this space. Architects remade 1881 Bush Street into Kokoro Assisted Living for Seniors, a

¹ The building located at 1881 Bush Street was commonly known as the Bush Street Temple throughout its religious use, regardless of which sect was using the building at the time. This practice began as early as the first dedication ceremony. When referring to the building generally, this common name will be used throughout.

residential adaptive reuse which encourages elderly Japanese Americans to return to Japantown.

When constructed, the Bush Street Temple utilized the most modern heating and ventilation available and was equipped with electric lighting.² The San Francisco City Planning Commission designated the Bush Street Temple as a city landmark for its architectural significance in January 1976.³ The Bush Street Temple features several design influences, including Venetian, Romanesque, and Moorish details. Architect Moses J. Lyon designed the redwood frame building,

² "Temple Ohabai Shalome: It will be a Very Beautiful Structure," *San Francisco Chronicle*, August 9, 1895.

³ San Francisco City Planning Commission, *Resolution 7431*, (January 7, 1976).

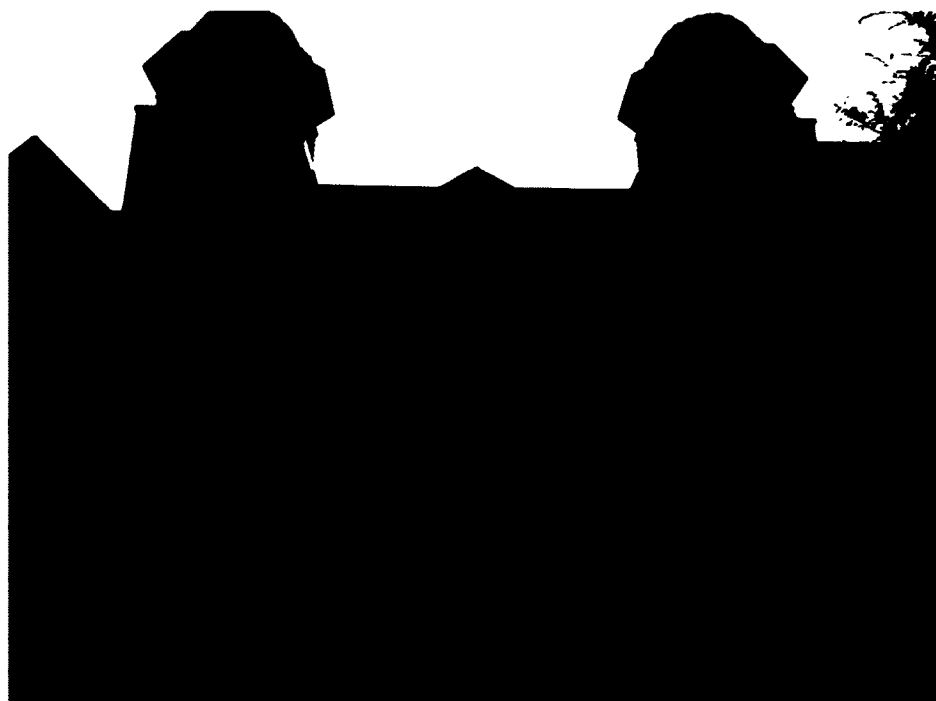


Figure 6.2: Bush Street Temple as adapted by Kokoro Assisted Living.

which was painted in some places to look like marble.⁴ The central arch visible in Figure 6.2, formerly serving as the main entrance to the temple and now enclosing a large window, provides the main Romanesque element of the facade. Lyon included Moorish details primarily in the towers on either end of the facade, through the imitation stonework striations and the paired rounded arches. Originally each tower was topped by a minaret-like spire which increased the verticality and Moorishness of the facade. It remains unknown precisely

⁴ Marilyn Joyce Segal Chiat, *American Religious Architecture: Sacred Places for Every Community* (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley and Sons, 1997), 409.

when the spires were replaced with the currently visible small domes.⁵ Lyon called on Venetian influences for the remainder of the facade details, including the tracery of the loggia screen in the center.

Congregation Ohabai Shalome broke away from Congregation Emanu-el in 1864, after rabbis at Emanu-el revised their ritual to incorporate aspects of Reform Judaism. Congregation Ohabai Shalome remained conservative and met in a variety of spaces around San Francisco as the congregation continued to grow. The congregation became one of the focal points for Zionism in the area.⁶

Congregation Ohabai Shalome dedicated the new building on September 15, 1895. Contractors had not yet finished the exterior of the temple; an artist's rendering, Figure 6.1, shows the facade of the temple. Workers ensured the completeness of the interior for the dedication, and the ladies' auxiliary decorated the worship space for the occasion. The cantors and new rabbi, Dr. Fryer, guaranteed that the program drew attention to the new organ and the incandescent lighting. In an act of community building, the Rev. Dr. J. Voorsanger, of Temple Emanu-El, spoke at the dedication ceremony.⁷ Figure 6.3

⁵ Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board, *Final Case Report: Bush Street Temple (Soto Mission) 1881 Bush Street*, (San Francisco, 1975), 2-3.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 1.

⁷ "Ohabi Shalome's Temple Dedicated: Jewish People Honor the Event," *San Francisco Chronicle*, September 16, 1895.

gives an indication of what the interior of the building looked like during this time.



Figure 6.3: Bryon Colman delivering his 1906 confirmation speech in the only known photo of the interior of the Bush Street Temple as a synagogue. Note the graded balcony seating. Photograph by Seal Rock Photographs, SF. Image courtesy Kokoro Assisted Living.

Ohabai Shalome had located the new temple in San Francisco's Western Addition. In 1852, San Francisco expanded to include the Western Addition, the area of the City north of Market Street and between Larkin and Divisadero Streets. In the second half of the nineteenth century, the city's population grew exponentially. By 1900, the population of the Western Addition remained largely

middle- and upper-middle-class, living along streetcar lines, and two-thirds of them were first generation Americans of European descent, including those who worshipped at the Bush Street Temple.⁸ The block around the Bush Street Temple is visible below, in Figure 6.4.

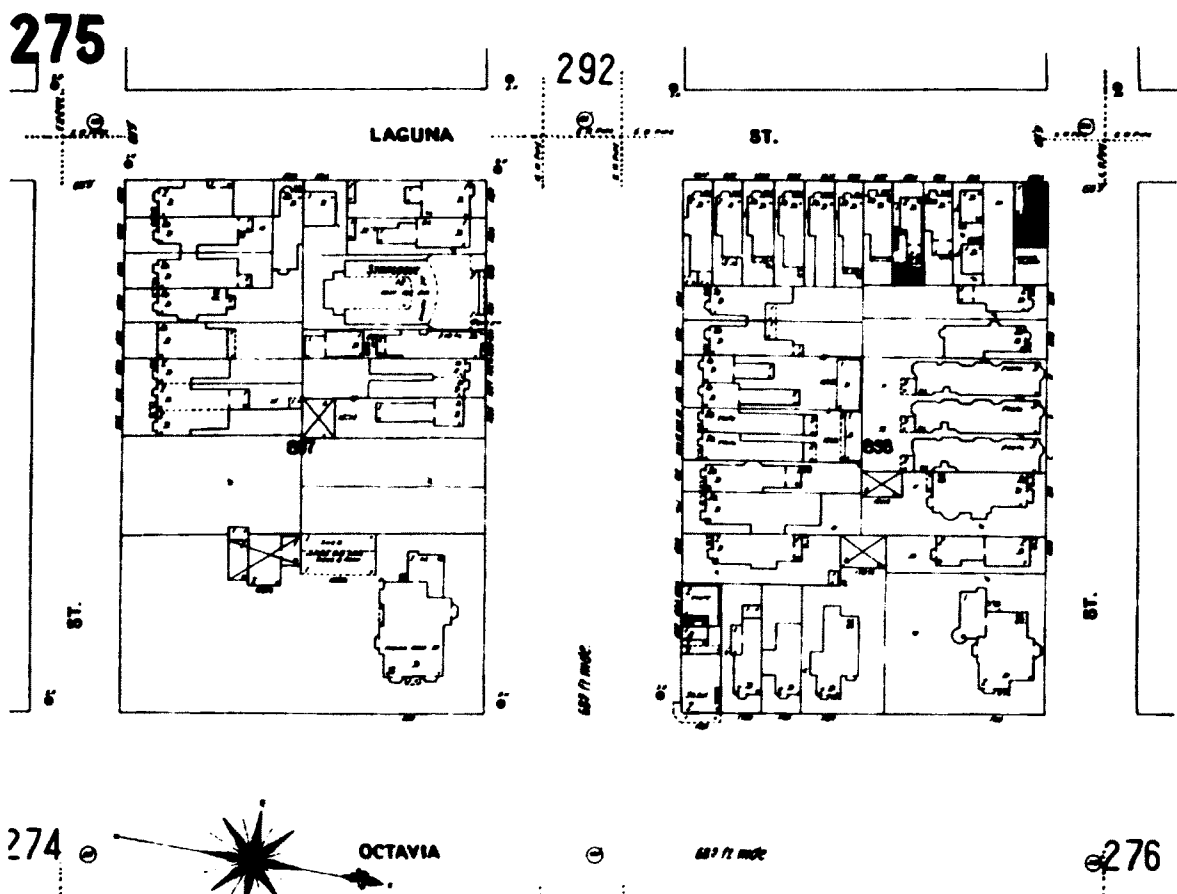


Figure 6.4: Bush Street during the early days of the Temple. *Source: "Sheet 275," detail, Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps, 1899-1900 - San Francisco, Sanborn Maps California, San Francisco Public Library (Accessed February 2, 2012).*

⁸ Donna Graves, *Japantown, San Francisco, California: Historic Context Statement* (San Francisco: Page & Turnbull, Inc, 2009), 10-13.

After the 1906 earthquake and fires, the Western Addition neighborhoods remained largely intact and hosted government, commercial, and residential refugees from the central business district until those areas recovered. People quickly claimed the remaining space in these neighborhoods, and many single-family homes were divided into flats and rooms for boarders.⁹ This dense occupation increased the ethnic diversity in the neighborhoods.

By 1934, membership at Ohabai Shalome declined to the point that the congregation sold the Bush Street Temple to Teruro Kasuga, a Zen follower. Reportedly congregation members continued to meet for a few more years, but disbanded in 1940, when their rabbi passed away. The shift from a Jewish to a Zen Temple is striking, but it reflects the impact of the Great Depression, as well as the size of the city's Japanese community. Kasuga and around twenty others met in the building under Hosen Isobe, zen priest. In 1939, they incorporated as the Soto Mission and transferred the building title from Kasuga to Soto Mission.¹⁰ Many ethnic groups lived in the Western Addition prior to World War II, with the largest being African Americans, Filipino immigrants, Japanese immigrants, and Japanese Americans. By 1930, about half of San Francisco's African American population lived in the Western Addition around Filmore Street, and, being

⁹ Ibid., 15.

¹⁰ Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board, *Final Case Report*, 2.

closed out of most manufacturing work due to union activity, those in the Fillmore neighborhood were largely middle-class.¹¹

The Japantown and Fillmore neighborhoods border one another. Japanese immigrants first came to San Francisco in 1869, and the city held the largest concentrations of Japanese and Japanese Americans until 1906. When San Francisco attempted to segregate Japanese students, the federal government became involved, and Theodore Roosevelt negotiated the 1907 "Gentlemen's Agreement" between the United States and Japan, which reduced Japanese immigration. Between 1913 and the 1960s, other California state laws restricted Japanese citizenship, and immigrants were not allowed to own property, become citizens, or marry into other ethnic groups. However, part of the "Gentlemen's Agreement" entailed that Japanese women who had husbands in the United

¹¹ Graves, *Japantown*, 18-19. For development of San Francisco, see William Issel and Robert Cherny, *San Francisco, 1865-1932: Politics, Power, and Urban Development* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987). For history of San Francisco's Jewish community, see Fred Rosenbaum, *Cosmopolitans: A Social and Cultural History of the Jews of the San Francisco Bay Area* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009). For Japanese immigrants, see Yuji Ichioka, *The Issei: The World of the First Generation Japanese Immigrants, 1885-1924* (New York: Free Press, 1990) and David Yoo, *Growing up Nisei: Race, Generation, and Culture Among Japanese Americans of California, 1924-1949* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2000). For development of Zen Buddhist teachings among non-Japanese, see David Chadwick, *Crooked Cucumber: The Life and Zen Teaching of Shunryu Suzuki* (New York: Random House, 2000). For African Americans in San Francisco, see Douglas Henry Daniels, *Pioneer Urbanites: A Social and Cultural History of Black San Francisco* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991) and Robert F. Oaks, *San Francisco's Fillmore District* (Mount Pleasant, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2005).

States could immigrate, and this led to a generation of Japanese Americans who were born citizens. By 1910, Japanese immigrants and Japanese Americans had established themselves in the area now known as Japantown, and by 1940 over 5,000 of them lived in the neighborhood.¹²

During World War II, the government forced the approximately forty congregants of the Soto Mission into internment camps, along with other Japanese immigrants and Japanese Americans in the area.¹³ Congregants of the Bush Street Temple stored their belongings in the building before reporting for internment. African Americans coming to San Francisco for opportunities during the war went to the Filmore neighborhood and moved from there into vacant spaces in Japantown.¹⁴ During the war, a nearby African American church leased the Bush Street Temple. According to the 1913-1950 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, Figure 6.5, the group was Macedonia Methodist. A 2003 *San Francisco Chronicle* article and the collection summary from the Magnes Collection of Jewish Art and

¹² *Ibid.*, 26-29.

¹³ Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board, *Final Case Report*, 2.

¹⁴ Graves, *Japantown*, 43-44.

Life refer to the group as Macedonia Missionary Baptist.¹⁵ The group was not listed in the city directory for the war years, nor were any other mentions of the group located in the archives at the San Francisco Public Library.

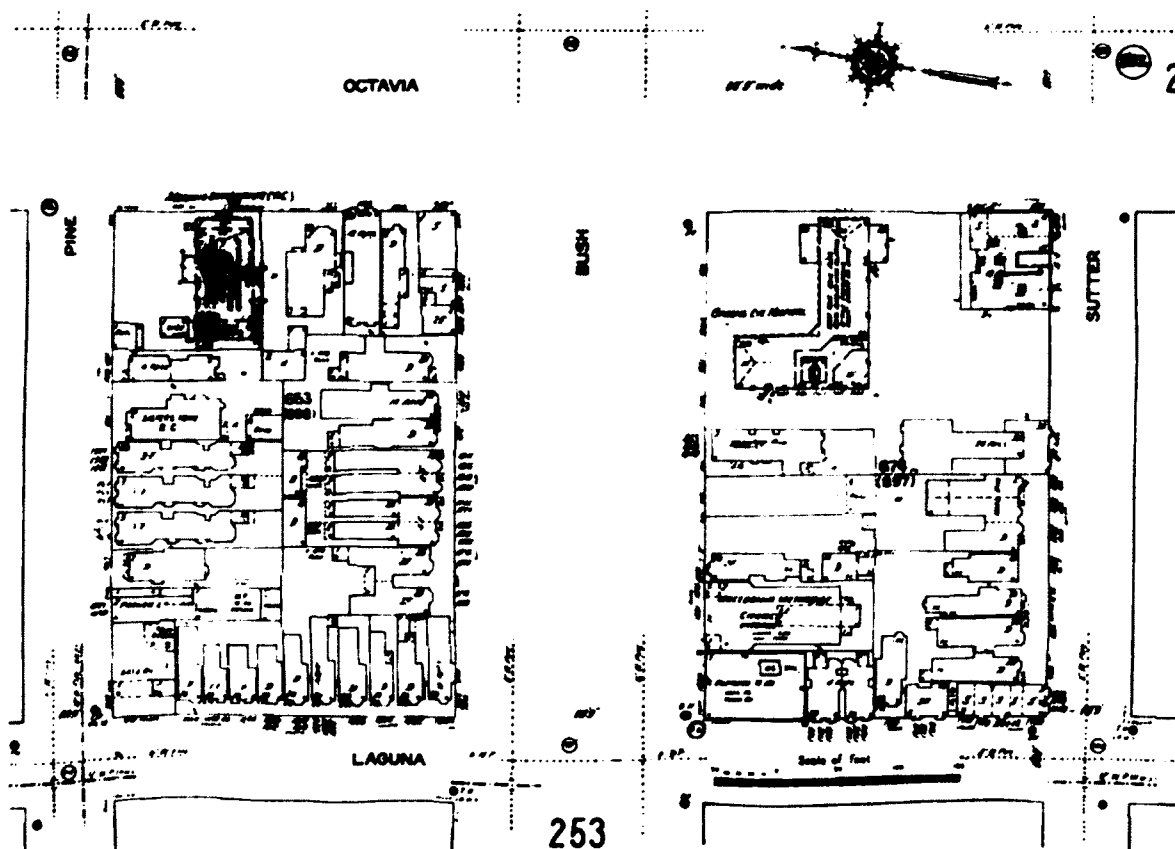


Figure 6.5: Bush Street block during WWII. Source: "Sheet 242," detail, Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps, 1913-1950 - San Francisco, Sanborn Maps California, San Francisco Public Library (Accessed February 2, 2012).

¹⁵ Gerald D. Adams, "Tug of War Over Old S.F. Synagogue Building Ends: Jewish Architectural Heritage to coexist with Asian American Center," *San Francisco Chronicle*, September 2, 2003; The Magnes Collection of Jewish Art and Life, "Magnes collection on Congregation Ohabai Shalome, 1871-1975," *The Magnes Collection of Jewish Art and Life*, <http://www.magnes.org/collections/archives/western-jewish-america/magnes-collection-congregation-obabai-shalome-1871-1-0> (accessed January 24, 2012).

After World War II, the Soto Mission (Sokoji) resumed meeting in the Bush Street Temple and the congregation grew to 250. In the late 1950s and early 1960s, residents of San Francisco's Western Addition witnessed mass clearing of their neighborhoods due to federal Urban Renewal projects. Once again, a federal initiative displaced many Japantown residents.¹⁶ For a few years in the 1960s, Soto shared the space with the Zen Center, which trained Zen priests working with non-Japanese.¹⁷ The Temple as it looked then is visible in Figure 6.6. Through the Zen Center, Sunryu Suzuki brought Zen Buddhism to many others, and it spread throughout the United States from here. A prominent member of Sokoji, George Hagiwara, whose family helped to create the Japanese Tea Garden in Golden Gate Park, encouraged the congregation to return to sitting meditation (from the use of pews adopted from Western traditions). Because of this desire to return to more traditional worship space and the growth of the Zen Center and the use of the Bush Street Temple by non-Japanese, the Sokoji Soto Mission built a new worship space at nearby Post Street in the 1970s.¹⁸

¹⁶ Japantown Task Force, *Draft Japantown Better Neighborhood Plan* (San Francisco: San Francisco Planning Commission, 2009), 18.

¹⁷ Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board, *Final Case Report*, 2.

¹⁸ Graves, *Japantown*, 37.



Figure 6.6: Zen Soto Mission, 1964. *Source: Alan J. Canterbury, Zen Soto Mission*, photographic print, August 20, 1964, San Francisco Public Library, <http://webbie1.sfpl.org/multimedia/sfphotos/AAB-0614.jpg> (accessed February 1, 2012).

The San Francisco Redevelopment Agency, one of several such groups across California charged with improving blighted areas, purchased the Bush Street Temple in 1973. The Agency then leased the building to the Go Club, which hosted Japanese cultural games, including Japanese chess, and showed samurai movies. After the club left in the mid-1990s, 1881 Bush Street remained empty.¹⁹

¹⁹ Adams, "Tug of War Over Old S.F. Synagogue Building Ends."

The Redevelopment Agency searched for tenants for the building. Local Jewish activist Felix Warburg wanted to turn it into a Jewish Community Center, and for years he pitched the project to the agency. Warburg claimed to have identified the necessary funding to acquire the Bush Street Temple, but the agency claimed he had not. Japantown advocates, including those working on the Japantown Task Force, viewed the Kokoro development as central to their plans for the revitalization of the neighborhood, one of three remaining Japantowns in the nation. While Warburg wanted the Temple for Jewish history, his main goal was to preserve the temple space. In the end, he was proud of his role in saving the space.²⁰

In 1996, the Redevelopment Agency opened the property to bids. Some wanted to tear down the Bush Street Temple and build condominiums. The Japanese American Religious Federation (JARF) won the bid with the proposal for Kokoro Assisted Living.²¹ JARF consists of several religious groups and began

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Steven Suzuki, Interview by author, San Francisco, CA, February 1, 2012.

in the 1950s.²² All of the congregations which are members in JARF were based in Japantown originally. While some have physically moved their facilities outside of the neighborhood, their cultural center of activity remains in Japantown. JARF had another project in the 1970s, in which they built 245 condos in Japantown. Due to a contractor mistake with that project, JARF won \$300,000, which it saved and put towards the Kokoro project.²³

In 1997, JARF created Japanese American Religious Federation Assisted Living Inc. (JALFI) in order to plan and develop the Kokoro project. In 2006, board members voted to dissolve JALFI and created Kokoro Assisted Living Inc. (KALI) to oversee Kokoro.²⁴ KALI continues to provide corporate leadership for the community, but in October 2009 NCP Senior Ventures, LLC took over

²² Current members of JARF include: Buddhist Church of San Francisco, Christ Episcopal Church-Sei Ko Kai, Christ United Presbyterian Church, Hokkeshu Buddhist Church of Honnoji, Konko Church of San Francisco, Nichiren Buddhist Church of America, Pine United Methodist Church, Rissho Koseikai Buddhist Church, St. Francis Xavier Japanese Catholic Society, San Francisco Seventh-Day Adventist Church, Sokoji-Soto Mission of San Francisco, Tenrikyo America West Church (“‘Our hearts to Japan’ in S.F. Japantown,” *The Rafu Shimpō: Los Angeles Japanese Daily News*, (March 2, 2012) <http://rafu.com/news/2012/03/our-hearts-to-japan-in-s-f-japantown/> (accessed March 26, 2012).

²³ Suzuki interview.

²⁴ Kokoro Assisted Living, Inc., “Kokoro Assisted Living, Inc. (KALI),” Kokoro Assisted Living, <http://www.kokoroassistedliving.org/475397> (accessed January 24, 2012).

management of the daily operations of the facility.²⁵ To reduce confusion, these groups in reference to the building are all called “Kokoro.”

Local architect and JALFI board member Steven Suzuki recalled much of the discussion that surrounded the temple’s transformation into Kokoro Assisted Living.²⁶ Many congregations and cultural groups came together to save the building. When JARF first became interested in acquiring the property at 1881 Bush Street, they held community meetings. Community members suggested a variety of new purposes for the building. Some suggested a community center, but one already existed. Others put forth the idea of a skilled nursing facility, but this proved uneconomical. Once people decided to support an assisted living residence, JARF and the fundraising board looked into partnering with another group that provides elderly care for local Japanese-Americans, but this group served a different economic segment of the population.²⁷

At community meetings discussing the conversion of the Bush Street Temple to an assisted living facility, neighbors, including those of non-Japanese descent, spoke in favor of the project. Neighbors wanted the building to be used

²⁵ Kokoro Assisted Living, Inc., “NCP Senior Ventures, LLC,” Kokoro Assisted Living, <http://www.kokoroassistedliving.org/475399> (accessed January 24, 2012).

²⁶ Suzuki served on the board, including some years as its president, from 1996 to 2007, when KALI officially took over leadership.

²⁷ Suzuki interview.

formally and for the squatters in the space to be forced out. Felix Warburg was not supportive of the project at first because the original design would have divided the sanctuary space. Warburg considered such plans as a desecration of a beautiful and sacred space. When JARF developed a new plan, preserving the sanctuary, Warburg became a vehement supporter of the project.²⁸



Figure 6.7: untitled photo shows state of the Bush Street Temple when Kokoro began work. *Source: Kokoro Grand Opening Gala* program, September 12, 2003. San Francisco History Center, SF. Assoc. Kokoro Assisted Living Folder.

The project took from 1996 through 2006 to finance. Construction began in the early 2000s, and by that time the building looked as seen in Figure 6.7. There are fifty-four units in total currently. Dividing the sanctuary space would have

²⁸ Ibid.

netted the project eight more units, but the Redevelopment Agency granted tax breaks to the project to compensate (in part) for this loss and to keep the space open. Kokoro originally purchased the property for \$1 from the Redevelopment Agency. After completing construction, Kokoro remained in debt and searched diligently for financial partners. When they were unable to find any, the Redevelopment Agency bought back the land (although not the buildings) in order to help Kokoro find solid financial footing.²⁹ The lease for the land is in the process of being transferred to the City of San Francisco, since the Redevelopment Agency closed.³⁰

Steven Kodama, FAIA, of Kodama Diseno designed the adaptive reuse of the Bush Street Temple and the construction of the new building, on an adjacent

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ In June 2011, the California Governor signed bills AB 26, which dissolved all 400 redevelopment agencies in the state, and AB 27, which permitted cities to keep the agencies provided they pay “community remittances” to the state. In July 2011, a lawsuit challenging these laws was filed (*California Redevelopment Association et al. v. Ana Matosantos*). In December 2011, the California Supreme Court decided to uphold AB 26 but not AB 27. As per the Supreme Court’s ruling on AB 26, the San Francisco Redevelopment Agency was dissolved as of February 1, 2012. This bill provided for the city to succeed the Agency in taking title to all of the Agency’s property and assets. City and County of San Francisco, “Transition of Redevelopment Agency to City and County of San Francisco,” *City and County of San Francisco as Successor to the Redevelopment Agency*, www.sfredevelopment.org (accessed March 26, 2012).

vacant lot which formerly was a car repair center.³¹ Kodama's San Francisco firm had overseen several regional projects which included both historic rehabilitation and assisted living work.³² The firm continues to build its reputation, and ninety percent of their projects are for non-profit and community groups. Additionally, the firm was a part of the 2008 thirteen-firm short list to design China's Olympic Stadium.³³

The building at 1881 Bush Street had been empty for two decades, and required major renovations. The roof had a hole and the interior of the towers was covered in bird droppings. The original altar was brown and rotting when Kokoro took ownership of the space. The stage had been built up to cover the bottom of the original altar. There were inset wall niches that the Zen occupants had covered. Zen followers also placed a red screen in front of the altar area. The ceiling was rotted and had to be reproduced based on historic images.³⁴ Contractors added crossbeams in the ceiling for structural stability, fire

³¹ Kodama Diseno, "Project list," Kodama Diseno, <http://www.kodamadiseno.com/projects/rehab/projectlist/projectlist.html> (accessed March 26, 2012); Ryan Kim, "Elderly May Bring New Life to Japantown," *San Francisco Chronicle*, December 7, 2000.

³² Kodama Diseno, "Project list."

³³ Kodama Diseno, "Firm History," Kodama Diseno, <http://www.kodamadiseno.com/firm/history/history2.html> (accessed March 26, 2012).

³⁴ Suzuki interview.

sprinklers, and completed some seismic modification, including reinforcement in the walls and a new foundation.

During the process of replacing the foundation to the building, contractors found the time capsule placed there by the Jewish congregation. Felix Warburg had warned them to be on the lookout for such a thing. The capsule consisted of a gallon square zinc box. Kokoro donated the box and its contents to the Magnes Museum in Berkeley. Magnes curated an exhibit from the time capsule: "Hidden in the Walls: The Time Capsule from San Francisco's Lost Sanctuary."³⁵ The Magnes museum has since closed, and its exhibits have been dismantled. Several

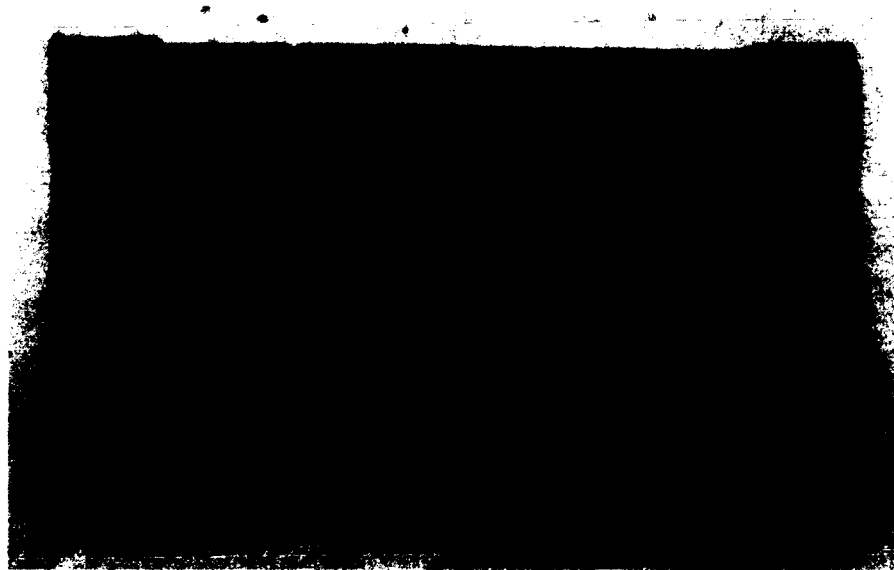


Figure 6.8: Fundraiser ticket from Congregation Ohabai Shalome's time capsule. Digital image of photographic reproduction, courtesy Kokoro Assisted Living.

³⁵ Joyce Nishioka, "From Synagogue to Senior Center," *San Francisco Examiner*, January 2001.

of the photographic reproductions, such as that in Figure 6.8, from the exhibit have been given to Kokoro for display in their lobby. The collections were transferred to The Bancroft Library (the Special Collections Library at the University of California, Berkeley) and became the Magnes Collection of Jewish Art and Life. The collection is housed in a purpose-built museum in downtown Berkeley. The gallery opened in early 2012, and the collections will be open to researchers in Fall 2012.³⁶ The Magnes Collection curators maintain the Congregation Ohabai Shalome collection, but it is currently unavailable to



Figure 6.9: Kokoro Assisted Living for Seniors.

³⁶ The Magnes Collection of Jewish Art and Life, "Collections," *The Magnes Collection of Jewish Art and Life*, www.magnes.org/collections (accessed January 24, 2012).

researchers.

The original temple building has six apartment units in it. In these units, original windows were saved when possible, as was the wainscoting in rooms formerly used for temple administration. The new building, visible in Figure 6.9, that Kodama designed to blend with the historic temple has six floors and the rear addition contains four housing units. A small rear addition stood behind the main temple building. It was rotting and the Kokoro project was able to rebuild on its footprint. Otherwise, due to more recent setback laws, they would not have been able to build that close to the rear street.



Figure 6.10: Reconstructed stained glass windows. Photo taken from roof of Kokoro addition.

The sanctuary space now serves as a dining room and performance space, as well as continued use for religious services. The remaining stained-glass

windows were reconstructed from the original windows. There was only enough undamaged glass to complete two of them, shown in Figure 6.10. The area that served as the women's mezzanine in the Ohabai Shalome Temple had a stepped floor. In the current balcony use, the floor level has been raised and a new railing was placed on top of the former enclosed railing. These features are visible in Figure 6.11.



Figure 6.11: Kokoro dining and event room set up in the former worship space. Note the raised, level floor in the balcony used as office space.

Kokoro administrators provide limited interpretation of the historic temple, and, by necessity, the public has limited access to the former sanctuary. Technically, since public funds are involved in this project, the bylaws require that anyone can access the space, provided he or she call ahead, but few individuals actually do so unless they are visiting a resident. The public funds also require that Kokoro provide its tenants with moderate income pricing, rather than market rental rates for the area. There is a section on the history of the Bush Street Temple both on the website and in the brochure for Kokoro, but administrators do not routinely make these brochures available at public events. In the lobby and hallway of the temple building, there are several historic images as well as a fundraiser ticket from the time capsule. The pews in the entryway are a pair of the original redwood pews from the building, but they have been reduced in size for use in the redesigned space.

A variety of events take place in the former sanctuary. Administrators host concerts, primarily for residents, although they are technically open events. The monthly schedule for events includes a variety of ministry events, and these are purposefully varied among several faith groups. Kokoro administrators privileged this religious diversity from the start. At the grand opening ceremony, eight ministers, including Felix Warburg, provided the traditional blessing of

their faiths to the space.³⁷ Twelve churches, members of JARF, mainly located in the surrounding neighborhood, use the sanctuary space for events. Another local non-profit group in 2011 used it for their holiday party.

The organization has maintained between 90 and 100% occupancy since opening. When the project broke ground in December 2000, Richard Eijima, then executive director of Kokoro Assisted Living, noted that over 70 inquiries had already been made from those who hoped to live in the space. Further, he said that many of them had been raised in the area and were eager to return. This achieves one of the express goals of the project, bringing families back into Japantown, in what had largely become a commercial area.³⁸

JARF board members chose the Bush Street Temple as the site for Kokoro partially because of its religious and cultural significance. Suzuki stated that “culture is the fabric of neighborhoods,” and in Japantown, the community and the Redevelopment Agency both wanted and worked for the adaptive reuse of the Bush Street Temple. Bush Street is on the edge of Japantown, and the affluent residents of Pacific Heights to the north see the benefit of having a permanent tenant at 1881 Bush Street. The Japantown proponents see 1881 Bush Street as

³⁷ Suzuki interview.

³⁸ Kim, “Elderly May Bring New Life to Japantown.”

literally holding down the corner of their neighborhood.³⁹ People in the neighborhood had worshipped and participated in community events in that space for many years, and they wanted to continue some of that use for the building in the Japantown neighborhood.

The word Kokoro comes from the Japanese character and “reflects a powerful blend of heart, mind and inner spirit. It symbolizes [the] vision to provide for the evolving physical and emotional needs of seniors, enabling them to live independently and thrive in the culture, family and warmth of the Japanese-American community.”⁴⁰ These words from the Kokoro brochure indicate the significance of the cultural history of the neighborhood to this new use of the Bush Street Temple.

Japantown advocates and members of the Japantown Task Force acknowledge that many in the Japanese-American community have little interest in saving buildings for their own sake.⁴¹ Regardless, some worked hard to

³⁹ Suzuki interview.

⁴⁰ Kokoro Assisted Living, “Kokoro: Assisted Living for Seniors,” (San Francisco: Kokoro Assisted Living, Inc.).

⁴¹ The Japantown Task Force report which discusses the community heritage of the neighborhood lists “physical heritage” (including buildings) last among five cultural resources. People, including those of Nikkei cultural identity and other groups with roots in the area, are listed first, followed by customs, events, and the arts, businesses that contribute to cultural life-ways, and community service groups. Japantown Task Force, *Draft Japantown Better Neighborhood Plan*, 15.

adaptively reuse the Bush Street Temple as Kokoro Assisted Living in order to help restore “the psyche of a culture.”⁴² These advocates remain interested in aesthetics only tangentially; it is the cultural significance of historic spaces which makes them worth saving and which must be communicated to continue to preserve them.

⁴² Linda Jofuku, executive director of Japantown Task Force, quoted in Adams, “Tug of War Over Old S.F. Synagogue Building Ends.”

CHAPTER VII: CONCLUSIONS AND NEXT STEPS

The adaptive reuse of religious buildings can take many forms. This can be extended to include the adaptive reuse of all buildings. Communities, organizations, and developers typically reuse buildings for one of four main purposes: commercial, cultural, institutional, or residential use. Elm Street Methodist, in Nashville, Tennessee, became a commercial enterprise, Tuck-Hinton Architects. United Hebrew synagogue became the cultural center of the Missouri History Museum's Library and Archives in St. Louis, Missouri. St. Mary of Sorrows, in Buffalo, New York, became the King Urban Life Center and Charter School, an institutional reuse. In California, San Francisco's Bush Street Temple became Kokoro Assisted Living, a residential reuse. These reuse types are not restricted by region or religious preference. In many cities around the world, one can see religious buildings reused to a variety of purposes. The case study examples of this dissertation cover churches, both high and low, synagogues, and buddhist temples. All have been successfully adapted and reused in their communities.

The case study neighborhoods in Buffalo and Nashville had changed quite significantly by the time of their latest reuse, serving almost totally different demographic groups. The neighborhoods around United Hebrew and the Bush

Street Temple shifted in somewhat slower and more subtle ways. The neighborhoods around United Hebrew shifted in only one way; the members of the congregation had moved further west, but the surrounding neighborhoods maintained their character and social class of residents. The neighborhood surrounding the Bush Street Temple had shifted to largely Japanese and Japanese-American long before users vacated the building. Neighborhoods change in various ways, but that change remains inevitable. The world is made up of people on the move.

Regardless of reuse type, the individuals behind these projects have worked for their success. They hired architectural firms to insure the maintenance of the historic feeling of each place as well as to help them to make the most of city, state, and federal preservation tax credits. Naturally, these groups also worked for the financial success of each project, hiring the appropriate craftspeople and dealing with local governments for advantageous landownership. All business owners do these things to ensure the profitability of their ventures; the difference is that owners of historic buildings have a further responsibility, should they choose to accept it. That responsibility is to respect and interpret the history of these buildings to those who use them and live nearby. It is important to note here that the findings and research questions of this dissertation apply to more than just religious buildings. People invest sacred

sites with such culturally charged meaning that they provide solid examples from which to discuss the meanings of adaptive reuse and how public historians can contribute to the discussion.

Historians, preservationists, architects, and planners all encourage the preservation and reuse of historic buildings. In dealing with local governments and property developers, these advisors have rightfully framed the arguments for preservation in terms most useful to those parties: economic and design appropriateness. By doing so, preservationists have often fallen into the trap of negotiating short term solutions. Activists work to have specific structures adaptively reused, and therefore saved for the community while that use remains. People will move, fortunes will change, and everyone will continue to strive for economic success. Preservationists of all stripes need to acknowledge and do their best to ensure the long-term sustainability of adaptive reuse projects. If preservationists would focus on the historic and cultural meaning of places, rather than only considering aesthetics, they could avoid this short term thinking. After reviewing the above case studies, one wonders what will happen to these buildings when their current tenants move on. Ensuring the cultural success of adaptively reused buildings could assist in the long-term sustainability for historic buildings.

San Francisco's Japantown provides a telling example. Less than a block away from the Bush Street Temple, at the corner of Pine and Octavia Streets, Stuart Hall Boys School, a School of the Sacred Heart Society, took over the land occupied by Morning Star School. Morning Star was a neighborhood primary school attended mostly by Japanese Americans. Stuart Hall took over this building in 2000 and built a second on the property. This space, historically associated with the Japantown community, is now totally cut off from the local neighborhood. The neighbors have no access, unless they are also Catholics who can afford to send their male children to a parochial school. Now that this space is unconnected to its cultural past, is it less sustainable for future adaptive reuse. It appears unlikely that neighbors would rally to preserve and further reuse a building to which their connection has been totally severed. The loss of this space to the community helped to galvanize support for the Bush Street Temple project. Going further, the Kokoro administration works to keep Japanese Americans in Japantown and to maintain the significance of the Bush Street Temple to the neighborhood.

All of these projects earned the benefits of preservation laws and tax credits, be they federal, state, local, or a combination of the above. The Secretary of the Interior's *Standards for Rehabilitation* helpfully provide property owners with a guide to maintaining the historical feel of a building. These laws and the

Standards have proven essential for adaptive reuse projects to move forward at the pace witnessed in the United States in recent decades.

The King Urban Life Center connects to the neighborhood around it through providing essential services to the community. Both King Urban Life Center and the Missouri History Museum Library and Research Center continue the educational missions of the previous, albeit religious, occupants of their buildings. Tuck-Hinton Architects, as a commercial business, works with the Nashville and regional architectural and design community, rather than with the immediately surrounding neighborhood. Commercial interests may have a different audience with which to connect, but they do still have one. The architects of the firm not only display historic images of the former Methodist church in their lobby, they draw design inspiration from the building in which they work, as indicated by the larger-than-life Louis Kahn quote in the vestibule. Kokoro administrators help elderly Japanese Americans remain and return to Japantown to bring families back to the largely commercial area. Further, Kokoro provides a variety of religious services in the former sanctuary space, continuing the traditions that earlier worshipped there and adding new ones, as well as making the space available to local religious and cultural groups for various functions.

Adaptive reuse works best when audience is considered, when project advocates work to connect the significance of a place to the neighborhood surrounding it. This effort to make a connection, the interpretation of significance and history, encourages not only the economic and aesthetic success of an adaptive reuse project, but its cultural success through a connection to a local audience. Public history is most often centered on audience, and this is where public historians have the opportunity to play a unique role in the revitalization and reuse of historic spaces. In many cases public historians work with communities to uncover their history and the stories which are important to them. People working with both the King Urban Life Center and Kokoro Assisted Living took time not only to preserve buildings, but also to ensure that these new uses would meet real needs and desires in the surrounding neighborhoods. People and communities get excited about and take pride in their stories, not simply the view, and public historians often have unique experience helping people share and present those stories. When preservationists consider the local audience for an adaptive reuse project, and integrate some of those audience needs, expectations, and /or histories into the project, it makes sense that the building would become even more important to its neighbors. In turn, this helps to ensure the long term sustainability of the historic resource.

Moving forward from this admittedly limited survey of the adaptive reuse of religious buildings, historians, public or otherwise, and preservationists should consider the cultural implications of buildings of which they advocate reuse. Further they should consider the audience for those reuse projects by connecting the history of a building to its new use. The ramifications of this study raise further questions. Evidence from religious buildings suggests that communities are more likely to rally around buildings which have cultural significance for those communities. Perhaps this applies to other types of buildings, but more research must be done.

Evidence also suggests that if adaptive reuse projects work to maintain or establish those cultural and historical connections to communities, that the locals will continue to value those spaces. This value might make people more likely to find new uses for these buildings once again in the future, helping to provide for their long-term sustainability.

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