

TRENDS: CHURCH REUSE

In recent years, there has been an increase in the number of traditional religious structures that have been vacated by their congregations. Because many of these structures are architecturally or culturally significant to the community in which they are located, adaptive reuse has become a popular method for preserving them.

While preserving church buildings can add significant value to a community, renovations and repurposing can often be costly, as most church structures were built with specific uses and space requirements in mind. Oftentimes, community organizations, private funding sources, and institutional partners work together to leverage local and national funding.

Three case studies are profiled below. Looking for more? See also:

- **Winery:** The Winery at Holy Cross Abbey, Canon City, Colorado
- **Nightclub:** The Church, Denver, Colorado
- **Concert Hall:** Bourgie Hall-Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, Montreal, Quebec
- **Recording Studio:** The Church Studios, London, United Kingdom
- **Affordable Housing:** Immanuel Place, Long Beach, California
- **Restaurant:** Freemason Abbey Restaurant, Norfolk, Virginia

CHURCH STRUCTURES CAN BE REUSED AS..



RESTAURANTS, BREWERIES, OR WINERIES



ARTIST STUDIOS



OFFICES



HOUSING



COMMUNITY CENTERS OR EVENT SPACE



MUSEUMS

CHURCH OF THE NEW JERUSALEM, PHILADELPHIA REUSE: CORPORATE HEADQUARTERS



The Church of the New Jerusalem in central Philadelphia was modeled after European Gothic cathedrals and built in 1883. In the mid-1980s, the deconsecrated church was sold to Graduate Health System, which spent \$3 million in 1989 to convert it to office space. Architect Mark B. Thompson was retained to head the adaptation, and Edward S. Brown Group, a real estate developer, assisted Graduate Health with the conversion. The building is about 25,000 SF total, with 20,000 SF available for office space. In 2005, Jan and Robert Chevalier, founders of CFI (a high-end furniture dealer and sole representative of Knoll Inc.), purchased the building for \$3.8 million. Church of the New Jerusalem was occupied initially by the Graduate Health System Corporate Headquarters, later by an advertising agency, and is currently seeking a new tenant.

The building is protected by the National Register of Historic Places.

Sources: <https://streptococcus.com/2016/02/24/amazing-churchoffice-renovation-in-center-city/>
http://articles.philly.com/2012-08-04/news/33020661_1_church-cfi-emanuel-swedenborg
<http://www.bizjournals.com/philadelphia/stories/2005/03/21/newscolumn4.html>

UNION CENTER FOR THE ARTS, LOS ANGELES

REUSE: MULTI-USE ARTS COMPLEX

Located in the Little Tokyo area of downtown Los Angeles, the Union Center for the Arts was built as the Union Church in 1922, which housed a Japanese-American Presbyterian congregation. During World War II, Union Church served as a meeting point for people displaced to internment camps, and later became a community center for African-Americans seeking employment during the Great Migration. Today, the Union Center for the Arts is home to three community arts organizations: LA Artcore, East/West Players and Visual Communications. After sitting vacant for several years, a community development corporation, the Little Tokyo Service Center initiated the reuse process in 1997 with the intention of creating a community asset and acknowledging the rich history of both the site and the neighborhood.

The retrofit of the 14,000 SF Union Center for the Arts building cost \$3.4 million, and was completed in March of 1998. The project was funded by grants from both local and national governmental entities and organizations, as well as private donations.

Sources:

<http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/religionpublicsphere/2017/07/disused-churches-documenting-the-adaptive-reuse-of-religious-buildings/>
<http://www.ltsc.org/index.php/ltsc-programs/real-estate-development/housing-portfolio/328-union-center-for-the-arts>
<https://www.timeout.com/los-angeles/things-to-do/union-center-for-the-arts>
<https://www.kcet.org/history-society/traces-of-union-church-in-little-tokyo>



THE CHURCH BREW WORKS, PITTSBURGH

REUSE: BREWERY AND RESTAURANT

St John the Baptist Church was built in 1902 and included a rectory, school, church, and convent. The Diocese deconsecrated the church in 1993, and it was purchased for \$191,200 by Sean Casey, a developer.

The adaptive reuse project was able to utilize 10,000 SF of the church, 4,500 SF of the rectory, and 2,000 SF of the school. The church was given historic landmark status in 2001 by the Pittsburgh History and Landmarks Foundation because of the restoration work.

The site was granted a zoning variance for nonconforming use, and the brewery and restaurant opened in 1996. The entire project was privately funded by regional investors and local Pittsburgh owners, with 95% of the funds going toward development and the rest toward environmental contamination clean up and utilities.

Since the opening of the Church Brew Works, 44 full-time and 40 part-time positions have been created, and surrounding property values have increased.

Sources: <https://adaptivereuse.info/portfolio/the-church-brew-works/>
<https://www.cmu.edu/steinbrenner/brownfields/Case%20Studies/pdf/Church%20Brew%20Works.pdf>

Photo from: howderfamily.com, flickr.com



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