

Three Parish Redevelopments in Ottawa, Ontario

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Executive Summary

Shifting lifestyles and decreased religious participation in Canada have negatively affected churches. This report investigated three Anglican Church of Canada parish redevelopment projects in the City of Ottawa. Each church was evaluated based on physical and heritage evaluation criteria as well as social values in order to understand how the congregation's values were incorporated in the redevelopment project.

Adaptive reuse may be a situation facing many local level churches under pressure to close. However, by taking a proactive position to recognize the strength and weaknesses of a church, one is able to plan for the future. By assuming a preemptive role, a congregation can achieve consensus-based decision-making in the long-term, resulting in an outcome to their satisfaction. Understanding how to emphasize the strengths and address the weaknesses is essential to the long-term success of any venture. Balancing the physical and heritage values with the social values, as well as financial considerations, of a parish is a difficult task.

Method

The research method utilized in this investigation focused on qualitative analysis. A literature review, reinforced by interviews and development documents formed the basis of discussion. Evaluation criteria (Table E.1) were based on municipal guidelines for compatible development, as well as national best practice. Semi-structured key informant interviews were utilized to gain an understanding and comprehension of the redevelopment process from the parish perspective. Parish mission statements, supported by the key informant interviews, were used to demonstrate the social values that guided the redevelopment project.

Cases

Three parishes in the Anglican Diocese of Ottawa with previous redevelopment projects were selected as the units of analysis for this research: St Luke's, St Matthew's and St John the Evangelist (Figure E.1). All of the parishes are urban, subject to development pressure and have a long history with heritage value and historical associations. Each of the parishes has a strong commitment to mission and outreach, as demonstrated by their individual programs and social work. The redevelopment projects considered in this research were completed in the past twenty years. Two of the projects involved the sale and redevelopment of former

parish halls and the third developed a vacant parking lot that was owned by the parish.

Table E.1: Evaluation Criteria

Indicator	Analysis
Physical and Heritage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Massing -Profile -Character -Materials and Finishes -Heritage Elements -Shadows -Street
Social Values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -What, if any, social values guided the redevelopment process? -Evidence of social value from the Mission Statement, Redevelopment Plans from consultation process and key informant interviews

Cases

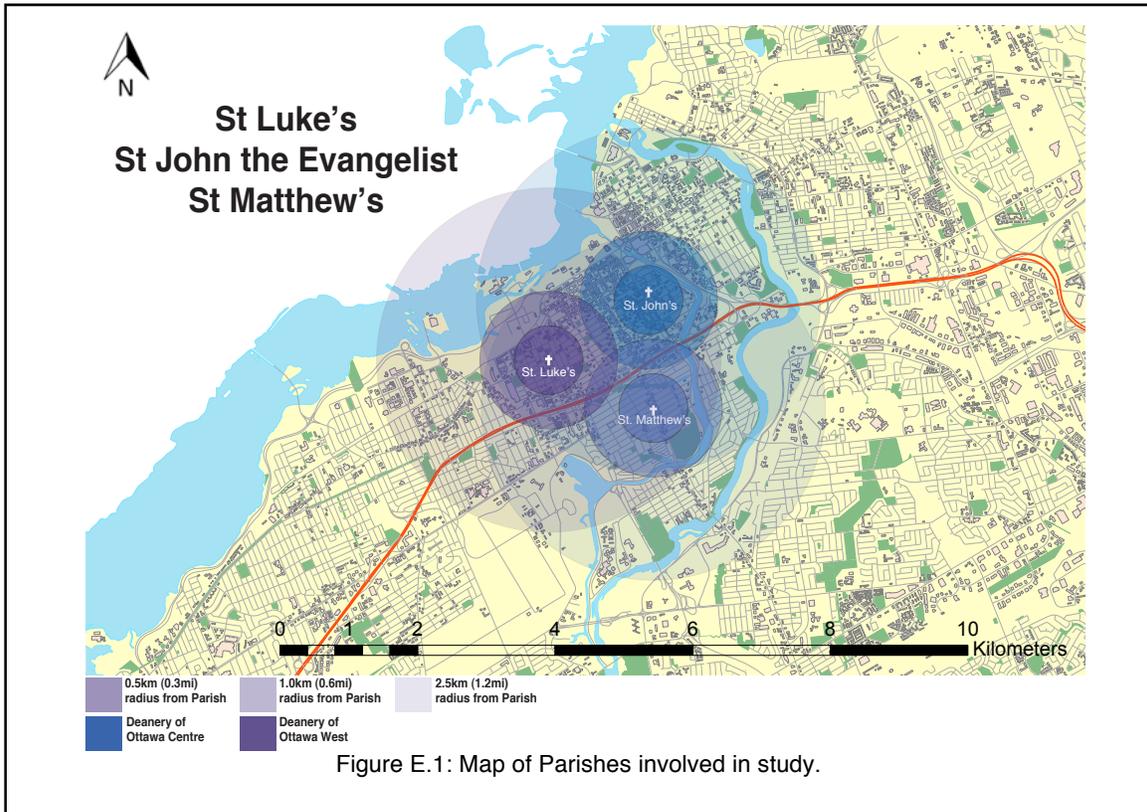


Figure E.1: Map of Parishes involved in study.



Figure E.2: St Luke's & Serson Clarke Apartments

St Luke's

St Luke's (Figure E.2) was founded in 1872. The present church was constructed in 1922, with a parish hall, Serson Clarke Hall, constructed in 1954. By 1989 the congregation felt it should do something with the Hall of social value for the community. The Hall was demolished and a non-profit social housing development, Serson Clarke Apartments, was constructed. The interior of St Luke's was renovated to better accommodate the aging parish.



Figure E.3: Jefferson Hall Condominiums with St Matthew's in the background

St Matthew's

St Matthew's (Figure E.3) was established in 1898, with the present church and original parish hall, Jefferson Hall, constructed in 1930. Increased operation costs and decreased use prompted reconsideration of the future of Jefferson Hall. Initially conceived as an affordable housing project, lack of public financial support resulted in Jefferson Hall being sold to a developer and converted into condominium units in 1997.



Figure E.4: Somerset Gardens & St John the Evangelist

St John the Evangelist

St John the Evangelist (Figure E.4) was constructed in 1890. By 2001, the parish was considering options to finance the necessary renovations to the church, the parish worked with a socially-minded developer to create affordable housing, Somerset Gardens, as well as allowing the parish to retain ownership of some of the new parking garage.

Findings

By identifying the redevelopment narrative of each of the three selected cases, a clear evolution in process emerged. In each case, evidence supported the hypothesis that values guided the redevelopment process for each parish. Timelines for the redevelopment process increased, as did the amount of public participation from within the parish as well as the larger community. Churches included in this investigation demonstrated a commitment to social welfare and the larger community through outreach and charitable ventures. Values played a significant role in the planning and outcome of each redevelopment project considered.

Recommendations

This research investigated three urban parishes in the City of Ottawa that were subject to development pressure, declining parish population, limited resources and demonstrated values to guide the redevelopment process. The following recommendations arose as a result of this investigation, but may have limited applicability, except in similar circumstances:

- Redevelopment of Church properties should only proceed after a thorough analysis of current and projected needs of the parish.
- Balance of social values and financial requirements is difficult, but should be a major goal of the redevelopment.
- Working with qualified professionals will help to guide the process; developing trusting relationships is critical to any redevelopment.
- Heritage designation is not an obstacle to development.
- Understand that urban church properties are, in many circumstances, under extreme pressure to redevelop due to their desirable locations. Rural and suburban churches may have fewer options and subject to contrasting pressures.