Adaptive Reuse of Worship Spaces in Contemporary Heritage Cities: A Tale of Three Churches in Ottawa

by

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Abstract

With declining attendance and financial strain affecting numerous churches across Canada, repurposing these buildings has become a viable solution to preserve heritage while meeting contemporary urban needs. Existing literature focuses on various issues of adaptive reuse of built religious heritage and the dynamic relationship between religious and secular societies. This thesis answers the call to understand communities' responses to their church reuse, the benefits and challenges of repurposed churches in a heritage city, and the role of reused churches in shaping the postsecular urban environment. More specifically, this study centers on three case studies in Ottawa: All Saints Anglican Church, St. Brigid Roman Catholic Church, and Dominion-Chalmers United Church to offer insights into the multi-scalar processes of transforming and reusing religious heritage sites. Through the lenses of creative, heritage, and postsecular urbanism, my research analyzes the impact of church adaptive reuse on community cohesion and sense of belonging. My findings highlight that repurposed churches not only preserve local cultural identity and community cohesion but also foster the coexistence of secular and religious values in modern urban landscapes. This thesis underscores the importance of adaptive reuse practices in worship spaces in supporting community-building, maintaining historical continuity, and navigating the complexities of heritage conservation in urban settings.

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CDCC—Carleton Dominion-Chalmers Centre

CMA—Canadian Museums Association

DCC—Dominion-Chalmers United Church

GTA—Greater Toronto Area

HCD—Heritage Conservation District

NGO—Non-governmental Organization

NL—Newfoundland and Labrador

PACT—Professional Association of Canadian Theatres

UK—United Kingdom

UNESCO—United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

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Chapter 1: Introduction

"That this is God, our God forever and ever. He will guide us forever."
——*The Bible (Psalm 48:14)*

While for some God may exist forever, worship spaces are far less permanent. Across Canada, churches grapple with declining attendance and financial strain, leading some to explore creative solutions for their adaptive reuse. For example, by 2014 the Cochrane Street United Church in downtown St. John's (NL) publicly announced their own troubles in meeting rising maintenance costs due to less money in collection plates from a dwindling congregation (Adey, 2014). In the same year, and only a few blocks over, the Roman Catholic Basilica Cathedral expressed concerns over high maintenance fees for the building and dropping attendance in the Sunday services. Cochrane Street United Church was eventually transformed into a community hub (Cochrane Centre) that provides social housing, performance space, and meeting space (McCabe, 2018). In 2017, the congregation returned to the same building and started providing worship service every Sunday (Bradbury, 2017). The Roman Catholic Basilica Cathedral was sold to a newly formed board in 2022 to compensate the survivors of church abuse (Smellie, 2022).

These cases in St. John's are part of a larger story. Overall, sharp declines in support for mainline religion reflect Canada's shifting religious landscape. Statistics Canada (2021) reported that both religious affiliation and participation in religious activities have declined from 1985 to 2019. For example, the United Church of Canada reports to be closing one congregation every week (The Observer, 2013), while the Anglican Church of Canada is facing the possibility of running out of members, attendees and givers by approximately 2040 (Folkins, 2020). In regions like the Greater Toronto Area (GTA), church buildings facing financial challenges are now routinely being sold for new uses that reflect the demands of secular urbanites. Indeed, converting

churches into live-work lofts is now hailed by some as the "holy grail of super cool condo-living" (Lamb in Lynch, 2014: 192).

Of course, there are other options for so-called 'surplus' churches. For instance, Indwell (2023), a Christian charity that supports vulnerable adults dealing with mental health challenges, has been working on developing new affordable housing in Ontario by converting old churches. As the trend of repurposing churches is becoming popular across Canada, some estimates claim that approximately 9,000 churches[1] and other faith-owned buildings will be lost in Canada in the next 10 years (CBC, 2019). While the accuracy of this estimation is in doubt—a new report has found that the number is more likely to be around 2000 (Wood Daly, 2021)—Canada is undoubtedly seeing more church closures, and the adaptive reuse of these buildings presents opportunities and challenges to maintain spaces for community and preserve cultural heritage.

Repurposing a church involves more than a reconfiguration of space. Adaptive reuse, the official practice of repurposing outmoded and vacant buildings for new uses, represents a complex process that includes transforming physical, social, cultural and even religious aspects of the built environment. In their inception, many worship spaces were built as community centres and social gathering spaces (e.g. soup kitchens, sanctuaries, housing non-profit organizations). For many residents, even those unaffiliated with any religion, the church in their residential area holds significant collective memory and is witness to generational changes and family milestone events (Clark, 2007). Transforming churches thus entails a set of more profound challenges like retaining or regaining the sense of belonging and supporting community cohesion.

Beyond acting as community centers, in many cases, these highly symbolic buildings are local heritage sites, spaces in and around which history and society have unfolded. Across Canada,

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[1] The number here by CBC is in dispute since there are still not enough comprehensive studies on the statistics of church closure in Canada.

heritage designations are enforced to protect older or meaningful buildings from demolition. Churches that are designated heritage sites significantly contribute to a city's heritage and religious landscape. In this thesis, I focus on one significant urban space, Ottawa, as a key research site since this city can serve as an excellent example of urban cultural transformation over the last 70 years. The study targets three transformed churches in three Heritage Conservation Districts (heritage areas designated by the Ontario provincial government) in Ottawa's downtown core: All Saints Anglican Church in Sandy Hill West, St. Brigid Roman Catholic Church in Lowertown, and Dominion-Chalmers United Church in Centertown. These churches were selected as they each represents different stages of changes of church adaptive reuse: reimagining the space, redeveloping the building, and the outcome of the adaptive reuse projects.

The first site, All Saints Anglican Church, lost many parishioners due to the displacement of long-term residents caused by the expansion of the student population at the University of Ottawa and short-term rental. All Saint was then purchased by a group of community members in 2015 after their congregation merged with another local church and has been transformed into an event space that hosts a variety of gatherings, including weddings, funerals, and formal meetings. The second site, St. Brigid Roman Catholic Church, deconsecrated in 2007 due to the lack of financial support from the diocese and suffered from residents' displacement led by urban renewal in the 1960s, was acquired by the members of Ottawa's Irish community in 2007 and was established as Saint Brigid's Centre for the Arts to host various social and cultural events, including concerts, conferences, and art exhibitions. The third, and final site, Dominion-Chalmers United Church was once a prosperous congregation in the 1950s. However, it was also affected by the residents' displacement caused by the urban renewal in Ottawa and lost many congregants. The church congregation kept getting smaller over the last 50 years, and the building was

eventually acquired by Carleton University in 2018 and was repurposed as an Arts, Performance and Learning Centre for the university and surrounding community. Together, these rich case study sites highlight how contemporary demands for heritage and religious spaces in the city have shaped new forms of reuse. Importantly, however, these examples also point out how adaptive reuse involves complex practices, values and ethics that reshape the built environment beyond simple reconfigurations of space to include dynamic social, political and religious values that reflect changing religious heritage in modern urban communities.

1.1 Research Objective & Questions:

This research explores the socio-cultural impacts of worship space conversion. I examine the phenomena of worship space reuse through these three lenses of contemporary urbanization – creative, heritage and postsecular urbanism – and investigate how the transformation of these places affects community cohesion and sense of belonging. This thesis will answer the following questions:

1. How did the communities respond to the church reuse?
2. What benefits and challenges do reused churches have in a heritage city?
3. How do reused churches contribute to the picture of a postsecular city?

In answering these questions, this research provides valuable findings for heritage conservation programs in all three levels of government (municipal, provincial, and federal); religious groups that are actively seeking new opportunities to conserve or redevelop their worship space; and communities that rely on local and historical buildings to plan for adaptive reuse as a means to support a sense of community and make meaningful places in the modern urban landscape.

By examining the role of adaptive reuse of worship spaces in affecting local communities (sense of place, cohesion), this study further develops an understanding of the role of church adaptive reuse in connecting heritage, creative, and postsecular urbanism, and how they shape the modern urban landscape. In short, this thesis contributes to an understanding of how the dynamic and ongoing relationship between religious and secular societies plays out in the spaces of the contemporary city.

I argue that the adaptive reuse of worship spaces demonstrates a significant force in shaping contemporary urban landscapes by supporting communities and providing a sense of belonging, as reusing churches as community spaces preserves the authenticity of the area and the historical layers of a city. This study demonstrates that in everyday life, adaptive reuse has been instrumental in (re)constructing the heritage, creative, and postsecular spaces of local neighbourhoods in Ottawa.

1.2 Thesis Structure

This thesis is comprised of five chapters and is in manuscript form. Following this introductory chapter, Chapter 2 reviews the literature on religious geographies in postsecular times, heritage urbanism and creative city, as well as religious heritage reuse and community making. Overall, Chapter 2 sets the basis for an understanding of the current academic view on postsecular, heritage, and creative urbanisms, which are essential concepts connected to this thesis.

Chapter 3 discusses the methodology, the study area, and the process of the study. Chapter 4 consists of an analysis and a discussion of the interview results. Finally, chapter 5 summarizes key findings, discusses directions for future studies, and highlights the importance of this work.

1.3 Methods

With the goal of understanding the socio-cultural impacts of worship space conversion on community cohesion and sense of belonging, this project employed a mixed-methods research design with a focus on key informant interviews from two distinct groups: heritage/reuse experts and local coordinators/community members associated with the case study sites. Interviews with key informants from the heritage adaptive reuse sector provided a multi-scalar understanding of the process of transforming and reusing designated heritage sites. Interviews with local coordinators/community members explored perspectives, experiences and ideas related to the role and impact of repurposing worship space from a local, community perspective.

In total, I conducted 16 in-depth, in-person and remote interviews with both key informant groups. This research began with five key informant interviews with heritage/reuse experts and included individuals in the municipal government and the public sector engaged with managing the case study sites (See Table 3.1). These interviews each lasted approximately 45 minutes and were semi-structured. These interviews focused on understanding the value and goal of heritage designations in the Heritage Conservation Districts and explored key informants' opinions on the impact of heritage adaptive reuse on shaping the urban environment.

I also interviewed 11 local coordinators/community members who have had long-time experience with the three church buildings. One of the 11 community members was a congregational member. These semi-structured interviews varied from 40-90 minutes in length. The interviews with core community members focused on the role of repurposed churches in supporting community cohesion and generating a sense of belonging. The interview with the congregational member reveals how the congregation perceived church transformation in a postsecular city. Furthermore, the interviews with community members focused on the

community's emotional response to the adaptive reuse project, which explained the impact of the transformation on the sense of belonging. All interviews were later transcribed and coded using NVivo software.

1.4 Positionality and Power

I moved to Canada in 2016 and have lived in the province of Newfoundland and Labrador ever since. As a non-white female immigrant, I am an outsider to Canadian culture and an outsider to the local cultures in Ottawa. During the fieldwork for this study, I conducted interviews with both religious and non-religious individuals. In preparation and to ensure the depth and accuracy of my research, I conducted extensive preliminary investigations. I first reviewed the religious history and religious geography in Canada from the 1850s to understand the significance of religion to generations of Canadians. Furthermore, I examined the evolving religious landscape in Ottawa over the past 50 years and its connection with urban planning changes to understand the dynamic nature of the changing religious environment.

Most of my interviewees were with community members who have lived in the three neighbourhoods (Centertown, Lowertown, Sandy Hill) for decades, and while some of them only have deep connections with the churches through their families, all of them recognized having place-based attachment to the area. I realized that some community members could get emotionally triggered by some interview questions that were related to the building transformation, and therefore, I informed my interviewees that they could skip questions if the questions made them feel uncomfortable. My recruitment letter and consent letter also provided viable ways of aiding mental crises.

During my interviews, I kept in mind that some of my interviewees were very faithful to their religious beliefs, while some were atheists. My interview questions were designed without biased language regarding religious belief.

Although I came from a non-religious family, Buddhism has had a profound impact on my country's cultural and social development and is deeply rooted in the regional culture. Therefore, I understood that when I conducted my research in Canada, Christian culture, as a "religious subconscious," is also retained as a hidden layer in Canadian society (Dora, 2018).

1.5 Findings

In Chapter 4, I explore the current context of former religious heritage in Canada, and highlight how the case study sites represent vital repositories of local collective memory and act as central spaces for building a sense of belonging. The second section of Chapter 4 illuminates the possibilities for creative adaptive reuse to connect secular and religious groups and how creative reuse can benefit the preservation of religious heritage. In short, this study highlights that the repurposed churches are important spaces for building and maintaining a coexistence of the religious and the secular worlds. Religious heritage sites form a crucial link in postsecular cities, heritage preservation and creative adaptive reuse, revealing the interconnectedness of postsecular, heritage, and creative urbanism. Such interconnectedness not only benefits the preservation of old buildings but, more importantly, also protects the local cultural identity and community cohesion.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

This literature review explores three interconnected dimensions of the broader issues of adaptive reuse of built religious heritage in postsecular cities. The first section, "Religious Geographies and the Postsecular City," critically examines the secularization of Canadian cities and the subsequent emergence of postsecular urbanism. This foundational review describes the evolving dynamics between worship spaces and urban landscapes. The second section, "Heritage Urbanism & the Creative City," shifts the focus to the preservation, conservation, and creative utilization of heritage in Canadian urban contexts. I highlight the complexities of heritage designations and the role of creativity in fostering heritage urbanism. The third section, "Reuse & Community Making," serves as the connective tissue between the preceding sections. Here, the discourse extends to the adaptive reuse of both general built heritage and, more specifically, religious heritage. This section explores themes such as the intricate relationship between religious heritage and community identities, the nuanced capitalization of cultural heritage, and the potential misuse of heritage spaces.

2.1: Religious Geographies & The Postsecular City:

"God keep our land glorious and free." – O Canada

Canadians' belief in God has changed significantly in the past 50 years (Thiessen & Wilkins-Laflamme, 2020), with many Canadians now describing themselves as having "no religious affiliation." It is widely recognized that Canadian religion had its "golden age" in the nineteenth century (Bibby, 2002). Beyer (1997: 276) argued that by the end of the nineteenth century, with the continuation of Catholic churches from the French colonial age and the entry of new, English-speaking immigrants, Canadians were "significantly churched." Data collected by Beyer also

reported that despite the change in population percentage in different religions, people who identified as having "no affiliation" dropped from 8.5% in 1842/1844 to 0.9 in 1901 (see Table 1.1). As this data shows, from 1851 to 1901, the number of official worship spaces dramatically increased for most denominations across Ontario and Quebec, as did affiliation numbers. Overall, from 1901 to the 1950s, mainstream religions in Canada saw a steady increase in their membership (Table 1.2), which means more people joined the congregations and identified as belonging to a church. Moreover, the demand for churches in major urban centres and surrounding suburbs increased after the world wars, as attending church became a practice of renormalizing experience in the post-war years (Stackhouse, in Lynch, 2013).

Table 1.1: Number of Churches Per Denominational Group in Ontario and Quebec, 1851-1901 (source: Beyer 1997, 277)

Denomination	1851	1871	1901	% Church Increase	% Affiliate Increase
Roman Catholic	511	903	1398	173.6	99.0
Anglicans	344	687	1179	242.7	67.4
All Presbyterians	344	791	1268	268.6	125.3
All Methodists	529	2055	2441	313.7	209.6
All Baptists	140	411	490	250.0	150.1
All Groups	2137	5164	7569	254.7	105.1

Table 1.2: Select Religious Membership in Canada, 1871-1966 (in thousands) (source: Beyer 1997, 278)

Denomination						
Year	United	Anglican	Baptist	Pentecostal	Lutheran	Presbyterian	Roman Catholic
1871	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	1586
1881	170	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	1773
1901	289	368	n/a	n/a	n/a	214	2256
1921	401	690	n/a	n/a	n/a	351	3427
1931	671	794	132	n/a	n/a	181	4047
1941	717	836	134	n/a	n/a	174	4806
1951	834	1096	135	45	121	177	6069
1961	1037	1358	138	60	172	201	8343
1966	1602	1293	137	65	189	200	9160

However, the story of the "golden age of religion" in Canada quickly took a turn in the 1960s as most of the mainline religious organizations experienced declines in membership growth (Lynch, 2013). By the 1970s, both Protestant and Catholic churches experienced lower weekly attendance rates (Bibby, 2002), which had a direct impact on revenue from weekly donations. Declining membership and revenues gradually made it more difficult for the churches to meet the maintenance and upkeep demands of their aging buildings (Martin & Ballamingie, 2016).

In some ways, a lower attendance rate can be interpreted as churches failing to maintain close ties with their congregants, considering their historical role as significant leaders in people's daily lives. On the other hand, some scholars contend that Canadians are more likely to "believe without belonging," a concept developed by Davie (1994) to explain how Britons in the mid-

twentieth century began practicing religion privately instead of in public worship spaces (Storm, 2009). Additionally, a similar trend, referred to as "spiritual but not religious" in younger generations, can be found among countries in religious decline, and such decline of religiosity is being perceived as a slow process across generations (Marshall & Olson, 2018). As both Voas (2009) and Storm (2009) have discovered, more recent generational cohorts tend to develop "fuzzy fidelity" to their religions, which can be perceived as a "halfway point between being devoutly religious and being secular" (Marshall & Olson, 2018: 3). This 'fuzziness' indicates a 'less than devout religiosity' in younger generations, and this includes less socialization through church attendance. Although "believing without belonging" or "spiritual but not religious" may not affect the overall religious affiliation rate, it partially explains the complexities of modern religious practice and observance: fewer congregants using worship spaces for formal practice means diminishing funds and community investments to support the churches.

Although lower attendance rates do not necessarily mean that Canadians have completely rejected organized religion, it nevertheless points to the wider phenomenon of secularization (Bruce, 2002). The affiliation rates for many mainline religious groups have been decreasing across Canada. From the 1970s to the turn of the century, Protestant denominations saw a constant drop in their membership. During the 1990s, mainline Protestant groups had a clear decline compared to the Catholics who maintained their membership size (Lynch, 2013).

As we entered the 21st century, data released by Statistic Canada (2022) demonstrated that although more than half of the Canadian population (53.3%) still identified as Christians, this number has dropped from 67.3% in 2011 and 77.1% in 2001. Meanwhile, the population who identify as having no religious affiliation has doubled since 2001, from 16.5% (2001) to 34.6%

(2021), and there have been some increases in non-Christian religions such as Islam and Hinduism (Statistic Canada, 2022).

The declining influence of religion in governing and guiding both social institutions such as education and health care, coupled with declining participation in church life, are central indicators of secularization (Castree et al., 2013). The evident decrease in Christian denominations' membership and attendance rates in Canada further substantiates the country's progression toward secularization. While comparisons to the historical trajectory of the United Kingdom (UK), where the Christian religion has declined in contrast to the religious resurgence in the United States, are tempting, Lynch (2013: 48) suggests that Canada occupies a middle ground between these two nations. Here, phenomena such as "de-churching, un-churching, and re-churching" are concurrently occurring, reflecting a complex religious landscape undergoing dynamic shifts. Such argument aligns with Habermas' notion of postsecularism, which posits that contemporary Western societies are products of both secularization and de-secularization processes, with religions and the "non-believers" moving back and forth in the political public spheres (2006; see also Baker and Beaumont, 2011).

It is worth noting here that there have been debates regarding the terminology of "post-secular" versus "postsecular," with "post-secular" emphasizing the historical reality of secularization and the entry into a post-secular age, while "postsecular" suggests an ongoing process of secularization with continuity in the present. Indeed, della Dora (2018) contends that despite varying degrees of secularization, Western European societies retain hidden layers of a collective "religious subconscious," which evidently situates Canada in a postsecular age. With

the ongoing process of secularization[2], this new age is demonstrating a profound influence on contemporary Canadian urban landscapes.

2.1.1 The secularization of Canadian cities and the Emergence of Postsecular Urbanism

Habermas (2006) argues that the wave of secularization after World War II goes hand in hand with societal changes, such as rationalization, modernization, and urbanization. In the Canadian context, patterns of secularization are largely attributed to four key factors: the separation of church and state; the rise of multiculturalism as a direct challenge to traditional Christian authority; the impact of the secular world on religious organizations as they are increasingly intertwined, and the relationship between secularization and the development and growth of modern urbanism (Bibby, 2002; Bruce, 2002; Bowen, 2004; Ostwalt, 2012; Lynch 2013; Hay, 2014; Theissen and Laflamme, 2020).

The first and perhaps most widely discussed aspect of secularization is the separation of church and state. Though Canada does not have a constitutional separation clause similar to America's First Amendment, the Canadian state and religious communities operate in separate spheres, and the state does not intervene in religious organizations (Woehrling & Jukier, 2010). Quebec, the primary francophone province in Canada, is a compelling example of church-state separation in Canada, where the impact of such separation on the church attendance rate and the secularization process is particularly evident. The Catholic Church was once the "soul" of people's life in Quebec and played a central role in their activities. Attendance at the local Catholic church was even considered a mandatory practice. Baum (1986: 437) attributes this phenomenon of

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[2] In different parts of this thesis, the concept of "secular" can relate to both the process of the separation of church and state or the religious values' influence on morality that can relate to multiculturalism.

affirming the Catholic Church as "the spiritual and cultural force that defined the social reality of French Canada" to the significant influx of French priests in the 1840s. The Crown guaranteed the rights of the Catholic Church in exchange for bishops' help to "pacify the colonies" during times of rebellion. Through the efforts of bishops and priests, the Catholic Church became deeply involved in the colonial history of Quebec including education, healthcare, and the general welfare systems. However, with the advent of political modernization in Quebec during the 1960s, the Catholic Church gradually lost its former sphere of influence. This marked the beginning of the secularization process (e.g. the Quiet Revolution), accompanied by the emergence of the new public philosophy— "secular nationalism," which led to a decline in attendance rates within the Catholic denomination (Baum,1986).

Christian influence was further challenged by modernization as Canada officially implemented multiculturalism as a socio-political agenda in the 1970s (Kymlicka, 1996). The significantly increased immigrant populations have brought their own cultures and beliefs to Canada. As Woehrling and Jukier (2010) highlighted, the 2001 Canadian Census revealed that the Islamic group experienced the largest growth in religious affiliations. According to Statistics Canada (2022), the proportion of Canada's population who report being Muslim has risen from 2.0% in 2001 to 4.9% in 2022.

Alongside rising pluralism, the complexity of modern urbanism has been argued to incentivize a shift to modern rationality, which prioritizes personal judgement over religious belief, particularly among teenagers (Bibby, 2002). In other words, personal judgement, and morality influence decision-making more than religious belief. In 2019, Canada's General Social Survey (GSS) reported that all the important indicators for the religiosity of Canadians, such as religious affiliation, the frequency of participation in group religious activities, and the importance of

religious beliefs in one's life, have decreased since 1985. In 2003, 71% of people reported that their religious beliefs were "somewhat or very important" to them, while the percentage dropped to 54% in 2019 (Government of Canada, 2021).

In the meantime, religious organizations also contend with internal pressures, some experiencing "a secularizing process of their own," whereby the religious culture is increasingly affected by the secular world around it (Lynch, 2013). For instance, there has been notable interplay between religious and secular perspectives in the discourse surrounding same-sex marriage. The question of whether the church should bestow blessings upon same-sex marriage has sparked intense debates over the past two decades. In 2021, Pope Francis approved a Vatican decree expressing disapproval of priests blessing same-sex unions since "God cannot bless sin" (White, 2021). Cases can be found around the world where priests or pastors have faced punishment or suspension for blessing same-sex marriage, while the secular world, particularly liberal factions, has demonstrated a growing acceptance of diverse sexualities. However, following the decree, numerous German priests defied the Church by offering blessings to same-sex couples and signed a petition calling for extending blessings (BBC, 2021). Similarly, in the past few years, as inclusiveness has become increasingly important to religious groups, some churches with more liberal leanings have displayed rainbow flags on their building to symbolize their evolving attitude toward same-sex marriage.

Lastly, larger and highly urbanized urban areas tend to show a higher level of secularization (Ley & Martin, 1993; Hackworth & Gullickson, 2013). In Canada, cities such as Montreal, Toronto and Vancouver have all experienced noticeable declines in religious affiliations in the past decades. For many major cities in North America, secularization can be partially attributed to the fact that they act as new immigrant gates and pathways, and many immigrants came as "religious nones"

or were affiliated with non-Christian religions. Such demographic change can clash with established Christian congregations in the neighbourhood.

The pattern of secularization in the inner cities caused by gentrification and the increasing number of churches in suburban neighbourhoods were noticeable in the 1970s and 80s (Ley & Martin, 1993; Lynch, 2013). From the 1950s to the 1970s, many neighbourhoods in Canada underwent urban renewal aiming at slum clearance, leading to the displacement of long-term residents. While urban renewal does not always directly result in gentrification, it often opens the door for gentrifiers to settle in those revitalized downtown neighbourhoods. Ley and Martin (1993; see also Ley 1996) described a 'new' distinctly urban middle-class group that emerged during this time. This group, characterized by their young age, high level of education, predominantly childless family structure, and liberal-leaning political views, emerged as "centres of religious unbelief." Between 1971 and 1986, the new middle-class established a foothold across many inner-city neighbourhoods, including Ottawa, further displacing lower-income residents and families.

The transformation of the built environment and changes in local land use not only resulted in a loss of sense of place but more importantly, brought about drastic demographic shifts in inner cities with the influx of "religious nones." While such transformations are evident across urban Canada, this thesis focuses on several neighbourhoods in Ottawa that have experienced significant demographic changes. In the 1960s, Ottawa underwent urban renewal with the implementation of the "Gréber Plan" -- a project proposed by the National Capital Commission and Jacques Gréber after World War II, aimed at developing better transportation and community planning for Ottawa and protecting the natural assets from the urban sprawl (Gordon, 2006). While Greber's plan (1949) focused on making Ottawa a capital "worthy of Canada's future greatness," the plan also aimed at providing Ottawa with "planned development" and to "enhance the possibilities of preserving that

which is, as yet, unspoiled" (Gréber, 1949: 3). Many neighbourhoods in Ottawa were identified as "in need of renewal" after the implementation of the plan. Surveys and data were collected with the support of funding from the federal government to identify deteriorating neighbourhoods. New public policies were recommended to the city to "prevent further deterioration of property," and the plan bluntly proposed "a total clearance" by relocating and displacing the original residents in several core neighbourhoods. One of the case studies of this thesis is St. Brigid's Roman Catholic Church in Lowertown East, an area targeted for urban renewal (Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation, 1971). In subsequent years, the renewal process provided an opportunity for younger new middle-class residents, many of whom had no relationship with mainline and mainstream religious institutions, to move into the inner city (Ley & Martin, 1993). By the late 1980s, these new residents redefined the social, economic, and material contexts of the downtown core. And, as will be explored further below (see Chapter 4), neighbourhoods like Lowertown, Centretown, and Sandy Hill are key spaces of this transformation.

Although mainline religions in Canada have diminished since their "Golden Age," critical social science scholars have repeatedly pointed out that religion is not annihilated but rather transformed – a context widely captured by the concept of 'postsecularism' (Molendijk et al., 2010; Beaumont& Baker, 2011). One articulation of postsecularism refers to "re-churching," a process in which some demographics are returning to church, as seen in the growing demands by new immigrants for religious services and forms of religious resilience other than attending church (Lynch, 2013). Since the separation of religion from politics is often understood as a major sign of secularization, postsecularity also implies the return of religion's "public voice" to join social and political discussions once again (Cloke et al., 2016). Lynch and LeDrew (2020) also summarized that the various kinds of cooperation between the faithful and faithless in a

contemporary urban context have been highlighting faith-based organizations' role in supporting welfare provision and contributing to regional development.

Reflecting the notion of the "returning public voice of religion," Beaumont and Baker (2011: 33) argue that while a postsecular city is a public space that is continuously being shaped by "ongoing dynamics of secularization and secularism," it also needs to "negotiate and make space for the re-emergence of public expressions of religion and spirituality." This co-existence of the secular and the religious is increasingly evident in both urban and rural settings. While Canada is witnessing an increasing number of churches and worship space closures (see CBC, 2019), religious buildings are also being repurposed for both religious (i.e., 'faith to faith' conversions) and secular uses (Lynch, 2022).

As repurposed worship spaces continue being actively used by the communities in urban areas, these religious heritage buildings become integral components of the modern urban landscape. Postsecular urbanism seeks to explore the co-existence of the secular and the religious in cities, recognizing the dynamic interaction of diverse elements in shaping public spaces (O'Mahony, 2018). From the perspective of postsecular urbanism, both religious and secular groups must acknowledge each other's legitimacy and engage in mutual tolerance. Religious groups must accept the modern, secular authorities presented by "admittedly fallible results of the sciences" and the "basic principles of universal egalitarianism in law and morality," while secular groups must never set themselves up as the only judge of "truths" (Valle, 2012). Worship spaces repurposed for creative businesses are perfect examples of the religious co-existing with the secular and require more research effort, since they are the evidence of Habermas' proposal of forming a mutual tolerance framework between the spheres (Cloke et al., 2016). Such space serves

as tangible evidence of emerging postsecular reconciliations and the evolving relationship between the religious and the secular in contemporary society.

2.2 Heritage Urbanism & The Creative City

The transformation of modern religious cultures and the future of worship spaces is deeply intertwined with the contemporary understanding of heritage, particularly as many old churches are at least 50 years old. Over the last several decades, urban and historical geography has increasingly explored the role and impact of heritage (Vanderborg et al., 1996; Ashworth & Tunbridge, 2000). This growing body of work explores the complicated relationship between heritage and its influence within urban contexts. Recent work by Šćitaroci and Šćitaroci (2019) highlights that heritage urbanism aims at revitalizing cultural heritage in its unique urban context and exploring potential sustainable development of the heritage in its contemporary life. To some, urbanization and tangible cultural heritage in the form of old buildings and houses have always seemed to be in conflict, given that urbanization and urban development are routinely wielded as 'progressive' and modern practices that ignore or destroy heritage. Urban renewal projects, for instance, commonly bulldoze historic neighbourhoods and heritage buildings that were deemed as 'in the way' of modernization -- both physically and morally (Jacobs, 1961; Berman, 1988). For many, the cult of the new -- shiny buildings, concrete structures, and fast-moving highways -- squeezed out outmoded buildings and their residents (Ashworth& Tunbridge, 2000). For decades, heritage was "simply not a priority" (Lynch, 2013: 90).

The buildings that have survived the controlled and rational urban development plans became a vital part of the historic urban fabric and provide authenticity to places (Zukin, 2009). Some cases are marked by a process of "curated decay," where the disintegration of the physical

structure of the building becomes "culturally productive" and brings meaningful social understanding to material change and loss (DeSilvey, 2017).

Nevertheless, the preservation of heritage structures remains a continual struggle, with many of these old buildings perceived as obsolete in the face of rapidly evolving modern urban environments. However, they hold immense cultural significance as representations of tangible and intangible heritage within local communities and as witnesses to regional history. As an alternative view, heritage urbanism highlights the notion that the development of a city should not merely prioritize or evangelize "the cult of the new" but indeed value the historical layers, what cultural theorists typically call palimpsest, that are inherent to urbanism (Lanz, 2023). Tangible heritage, such as cultural artifacts and the built environment, has substantial bonds with contemporary society and is part of the urban landscape.

UNESCO (2020: 3) defines urban heritage as "living historic cities, precincts and/or groups of buildings intricately engaged within the urban fabric of living cities," and it is not appropriate to "treat urban heritage as large, isolated monuments or groups of buildings." Therefore, even though older buildings are sometimes difficult to maintain and legitimize in contemporary (i.e., capitalistic) models of modern urban development, heritage urbanism seeks to make space for heritage in cities (Abramson, 2017).

Over the last few decades, critical urban scholars have increasingly advocated for approaching heritage urbanism in line with sustainable development ideas (see Nasser, 2003; Stubbs, 2004; Tweed & Sutherland, 2007; Abramson, 2017). Instead of viewing these complex spaces as burdens, work in heritage urbanism explores the role that older and outmoded buildings play as important spaces for social, cultural, and economic (re)development. That is, practices that reimagine and revalue obsolescence in the built environment contribute to the transformation and

revitalization of urban spaces. It has been recognized that heritage revitalization and transformation have influence beyond the individual buildings or landscapes (HSTCI Ontario, 2017), and can have significant impacts on local and regional socio-economic development (Falanga & Nunes, 2021). UNESCO (2020: 2) has also suggested that the urban settlements and their historic areas "have become centres and drivers of economic growth in many regions of the world" and have "taken a new role in cultural and social life." Nevertheless, urban heritage protection that commodifies heritage properties is sometimes implicated in the gentrification in older inner cities (see examples in §2.2.2).

2.2.1 Designation/preservation/conservation of heritage in Canada

Over the last few decades, Canada has provided increasing support for heritage protection practices (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, 2018). For example, while historic properties can be designated as heritage by the federal government, all provinces (including one territory, Yukon) also have provincial bylaws on heritage management, and most of them enable municipalities to designate heritage properties (National Trust for Canada, 2023). At present, there are 1004 national historic sites across the Canadian provinces and territories: 171 of those sites are administered by Parks Canada, while the majority are managed by different levels of government or private property owners (Parks Canada, 2023). The Federal Government (2023) suggests that national historic sites are witnesses "to this nation's defining moments and illustrate its human creativity and cultural traditions," and the categories of the sites range from private residences, sacred spaces, public institutions, lighthouses and railways to battlefields, archaeological sites, canals, and streetscapes. As the responsible agency for managing national heritage sites, the Parks Canada website (2023) recognizes the importance of heritage conservation

and preservation by pointing out that the heritage sites are beneficial for people to learn about Canadian history, including "the diverse cultural communities who make up Canada, and the history and culture of Indigenous people." In 2003, Canadian's Historic Places published The Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada to establish a consistent set of principles as the benchmark for heritage conservation in the country. The Standards help with the conservation decision-making process about preservation, rehabilitation, and restoration. The Guidelines provide practical advice for interventions at historic places.

In Ontario, the Ontario Heritage Act ("the Act") of 1975 allows provincial and municipal governments to designate districts or individual properties that are recognized as possessing cultural and heritage values. The Act has been modified over the years in response to different needs for improving heritage conservation practices, including the demolition controls for registered sites, and better protection for Heritage Designated Districts (HCDs) and marine archaeological sites (Government of Ontario, 2005). As of 2020, there are 134 HCDs and 7200 designated individual properties in Ontario under the protection of the Act (Government of Ontario, 2022).

An HCD in Ontario refers to a defined geographical area within the municipalities that can be characterized by cultural and/or built heritage, landscapes, diversity of lifestyles and the traditions of the people (Ontario Heritage Trust, 2022). HCDs are "protected under a local bylaw to ensure the conservation of its existing heritage character" since they often possess distinguishable features. Unlike designating an individual building, assigning a designation to an area is more complicated, and the pre-consultation stage requires a detailed study of the background information about the entire area. The HCDs can be located in any municipal area, urban or rural. Their sizes vary, and the area can be residential, commercial, institutional, or mixed-

use. Therefore, detailed research and studies of the potential designated areas are necessary. For instance, in Ottawa, before designating a new HCD, heritage planning staff provide information on the "implications of the designation" as well as the "timelines and the amount of work involved in designating a heritage conservation district" (City of Ottawa, 2023). During the designation process, the city council and heritage team are required to establish a study of the proposed area, consult with the local community and public, and host votes to finally determine whether the Heritage Conservation District Plan can be adopted (City of Ottawa, 2023). While the designation of HCDs is commonly regarded as a planning tool to protect and enhance the unique character of an area, its significance indeed extends beyond preserving the built heritage and structures and has profound social impacts. By safeguarding the urban fabric and the historical landscape, HCD preserves residents' sense of place and cultural identity. Moreover, these designations identify and defend the relationship between the patterns of local activities, collective memories, streetscapes and natural features that contribute to a better quality of life (Ontario Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport, 2006).

Within the registered HCDs, buildings without individual designation are, by default, still designated and protected by the Ontario Heritage Act. Meanwhile, buildings that meet the criteria for "cultural heritage value or interest" can also be individually designated in Ontario under the Act, regardless of whether they are located in an HCD. The owners of individually designated buildings and those located in HCDs are prohibited to "alter or permit the alteration of any part of the property, other than the interior of any structure or building on the property" without a permit from the municipality, along with other prohibitions on demolishing or removing parts or all of the property (Ontario Heritage Act, 2023). In other words, the Act protects the exterior of the designated buildings and the buildings in HCDs.

Meanwhile, since the buildings are often designated based on their features of heritage value, some also receive interior designations to preserve the doors, murals, floorings or other internal decorations. The designated interior features are also protected by the Act and cannot be altered without permission. Interior designations, however, are rare. St. Brigid's Centre for the Arts, one of three study sites for this thesis, is a rare example of both exterior and interior designation, and the following chapters reveal the benefits and disadvantages of such designation.

As of 2023, Ottawa has over 20 HCDs and approximately 3800 designated properties (City of Ottawa, 2022). These designations are located across the entire city, and they form the landscapes of a heritage city. The City of Ottawa website illustrated the importance of designating an area with special cultural heritage: the designation not only highlights the special values of the areas but also protects them "from decay and the intrusion of incompatible structures," which brings the areas a "renewed cultural and economic vitality." Importantly, while 'decay' hints rather explicitly at the notion of care and conservation, 'incompatibility' is arguably part of the language of 'authenticity' – a process of maintaining the aesthetic fabric and a wider historical narrative of the city (Zukin, 2009). Indeed, some studies have also argued that HCDs contribute to a better quality of life and satisfaction, as people who live in the area are "content" with the special recognition and satisfied with the stability and predictability of living in a heritage district (Shipley et al., 2011; Kovacs et al., 2015). The safeguarding of the tangible, historical built environment provides a strong basis for sustainable urban development.

Figure 1.1 Residents' Satisfaction in Heritage Conservation Districts (source: Shipley et al., 2011: 629)

Heritage Conservation District Study 2009
Residents' Satisfaction

A bar chart showing "Number of Responses" (y-axis, 0 to 350) against "Levels of Satisfaction" (x-axis):
- Very Satisfied: 318
- Satisfied: 193
- Neutral: 105
- Dissatisfied: 34
- Very Dissatisfied: 9
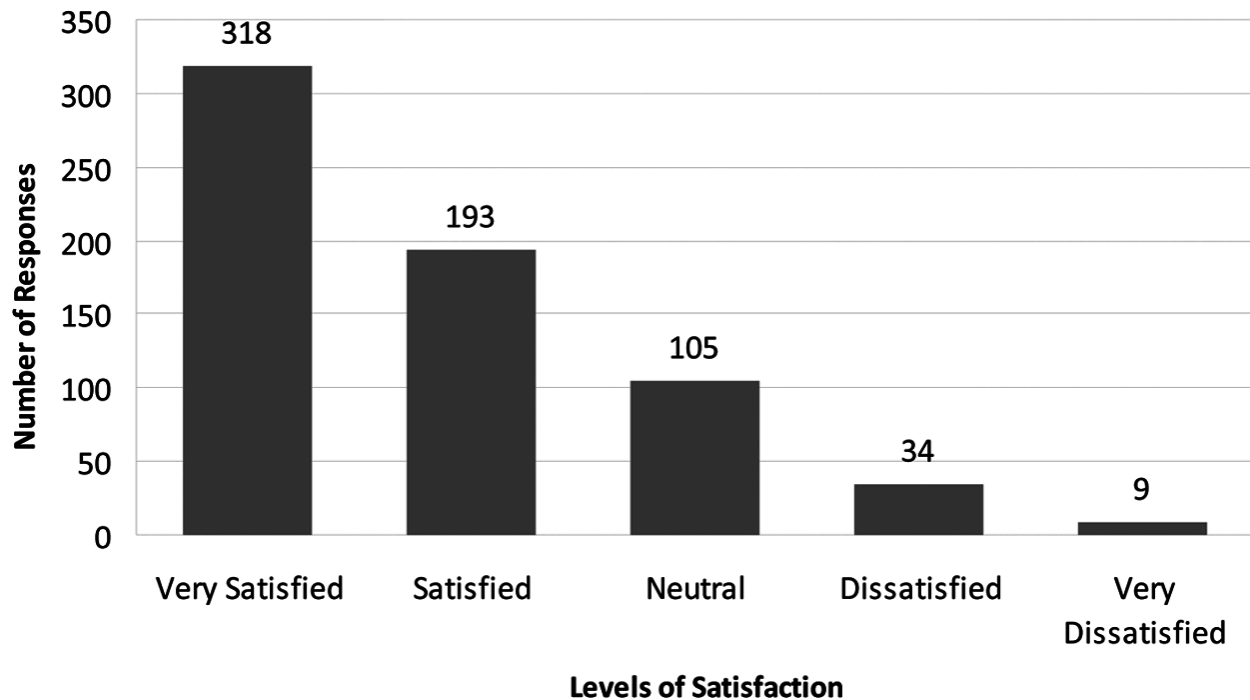
2.2.2 Finding Creative Urbanism in Heritage Cities

While heritage preservation and conservation are fundamental practices in building sustainable heritage cities, rather than 'fossilizing' cultural heritage sites, heritage urbanism develops new lifestyles, practices, and performances that spring from these so-called 'outmoded places' (Lynch and Greenough, forthcoming). Increasingly, many creative businesses are moving into heritage buildings and bringing life back to them. Like heritage urbanism, creative urbanism focuses on the role of culture as a key driver of innovation, competitiveness, and economic development. This relatively new urban theory, championed by urban geographer Richard Florida (2005), explores and supports the role of creative processes, industries, and urban environments as fundamental facets of urban societies and economies. Here, Florida (2005; 2006; 2012) contends that although creativity has been a force for city formation and growth for decades, in recent years,

it has become the "*principal* driving force" of growth and development—from regional to national scales. The 'creative city' then is the urban correlate or product of the rise of the creative class – a complex socio-economic group made up of 'creatives' in a diverse range of occupational and social milieus. In other words, for Florida, the creative class represents a group of people who act as the core driver of post-industrial economic re-development (Castree et al. 2013). In this case, the creative class is largely described as three distinct occupational groups: "highly creative" occupations who act as the "super-creative core"; "bohemians" who work in the art sectors such as music, theatre, visual and media arts, etc.; and "creative professionals," like architects (others) who help support economic development (Florida, 2005:4).

While Florida's work has popularized a global understanding of the creative class, Ley (1996:15) had argued for what he called the "cultural new class" – an emerging subgroup of the middle class in the inner city who "share a vocation to enhance the quality of life in pursuits that are not simply economistic," including professionals in "arts and applied arts, the media, teaching and social services." Creative business, in this context, is more than those "super creative" companies like Facebook and Snapchat, instead, they are enterprises emerging in cities and often take the shape of small and locally owned businesses (Chang & Teo, 2009). For example, cat cafés that have been popular in cities are creative businesses—although they make profit to support their operation, the main goal for many cat cafes is to help the cats find a "fur-ever" home. Rather than just having a coffee, customers enjoy dropping by the cafes to hang out with the cats when having their afternoon break. While some of the creative businesses may be very small, they still play important roles in producing creative urban spaces and supplying the growing demand for 'creativities.'

Florida's work on creative class offers valuable insights into contemporary post-industrial urban development, as evidenced by the efforts of many old industrial cities such as London and Yokohama, which are working towards better cultural services and facilities (Noda, 2010, as cited in Zukin & Braslow, 2011). However, Florida's theory has its limitations and has faced scrutiny over the years (see Peck, 2005; Evans, 2009; Cohendet et al., 2010). One notable critique is that Florida's theory provides affirmation, and much less critical enquiry, of the creative class, who self-idealized as a "leading" occupational group in modern capitalist society (Kratke, 2010). Moreover, Florida asserts that the creative class is the most decisive factor for economic development, yet he offered no accurate definition of "creative activities" (Kratke, 2010). In addition, Florida (2005) contends that "creative cities" exhibit a "high concentration of creative class," implying a relation/connection between places and people. These geographic features suggest that the government should increase openness, tolerance, and all other socio-cultural attraction factors to make their cities and regions more attractive to the creative class (Brenner & Theodore, 2002, as cited in Kratke, 2010). However, the implementation of such urban policies aimed at creating a "creative city" has quietly yet significantly led to neoliberal urban development, marked by phenomena such as interurban competition, gentrification, and a culture of consumerism (Peck, 2005).

Particularly, Florida's theory of the creative city has been extensively criticized as affirmatively conceptualizing the development of contemporary capitalist society and could lead to gentrification in regions (Peck, 2005; Atkinson & Easthope, 2009). Critiques have also proven that the creative class does not have a significant impact on the successful regional development of sustainable economic structures (Kratke, 2010). However, the creative city theory was right about creating a diverse socio-cultural environment with high openness and tolerance since

creative spaces in creative cities are seen as deeply connected to "a profound urge that desires openness, acceptance, learning, and belonging to a community" (Cartwright, 2017: 5). Therefore, creative urbanism argues that a vibrant culture can improve not only the quality of the place but more importantly, residents' quality of life. Florida's work can also be seen as a call for future study to focus on urban psychology and perceived quality of life.

While Florida's theory did not specifically focus on a downtown-centred development, his standards for creativity "implicitly favour elements of large downtowns, such as loft condominiums and arts and entertainment districts" (Lewis & Donald, 2010: 31). In response, Canadian geographers have widely documented the transformation of cities and urban spaces in response to the 'creative turn' (Bain, 2006; Mathews, 2010; Wolfe & Vinodrai, 2015; Gertler, 2016; Costa & Lynch, 2021). Lynch (2013) explored redevelopment in Vancouver, Toronto, and London's central areas as examples to demonstrate how the creative class has successfully transformed the older inner-city into "convivial 'live-work-play'" places. Meanwhile, in small-medium-scale cities like St. John's, Newfoundland, galleries, crafting shops and local music stores have also been emerging in the downtown area, attracting many creative and highly educated workers, and demonstrating a thriving arts and cultural scene (Lepawsky et al., 2010). From a foreigner who is visiting the city for the first time to local pet owners who want to bring their dogs with them when they visit a record store, creative businesses in downtown St. John's have collectively created a friendlier and more inclusive space with a distinctive sense of place (Costa & Lynch, 2021). Gradually, countryside and rural small towns are also exploring the creative urbanism idea (Waitt and Gibson, 2009; Bell & Jayne, 2010; Lewis & Donald, 2010; Scott, 2014).

Creative spaces like downtown cores are essential parts of creative cities, as they are the physical spaces where people "gather, work, inspire each other, learn new things, and connect"

(Cartwright, 2017). With the creative spaces being identified as where new creative economy clusters favour, the demand for unique spaces for creative practices increased immensely over the years. Ley (1996: 15) argued that creative classes' "imagineering of an alternative urbanism to suburbanization has helped shape [the] new inner-city environment, where they are to some degree both producer and consumer." Put another way, the creative class is not only "key players in the emerging cultural economies" but also "agents in the formation of new urban and inner-city spaces" (Lynch, 2013: 13).

Urban artists (the vanguard of early inner-city gentrification) and professionals in the creative class have long been seeking older and historic buildings in post-industrial cities (Zukin, 2009). Recent rounds of the revitalization of inner cities can be partly attributed to creative workers and young professionals, some seeking previously neglected and more affordable neighbourhoods while others (with financial capital) have targeted established yet 'edgy' spaces for both work and living.

In line with this, Florida (2012: 213) argues that the creative class is drawn to urban neighbourhoods with remarkable historic architecture, which provides an "abundance of charming yet affordable housing" and a vibrant cultural environment benefiting from the history. Florida also envisioned the older industrial-age cities as "potentially cauldrons of creativity" with warehouses, factories and "other buildings that can become the figurative garages where start-ups are incubated" (2012: 394). Notably, the initial exploration of the neglected yet intriguing pockets of the city was led by hipsters, artists and writers whose experiences have often been romanticized (Cole, 1987). An important contributing factor, as Zukin notes, was the availability of "cheap rents" (2009: 40). Many urban scholars have written about the complex relationship between artists and old buildings in inner cities. For example, Markusen (2006) argues that artists are involved in

neighbourhood turnover and redevelopment processes, since they usually fix up abandoned or cheap buildings after they move in, and their presence on the streets "stabilizes the neighbourhood." In this case, artists (re)build a sense of place in decayed neighbourhoods and attract businesses back to the area, which further benefits the area's revitalization.

Thus, some scholars have argued that artists are, in fact, key agents of gentrification (Zukin, 1982; Deutsche& Ryan, 1984), as their role in the production of culture and aesthetic values tends to attract middle-class gentrifiers. Over time, however, artists themselves often became the victims of gentrification and were forced out by the increased housing prices (Markusen, 2006; Pratt, 2012). Nevertheless, it is clear that artists were innovators of these raw industrial sites, and they transformed neglected places by producing captivating cultural spaces, which later formed new 'consumptionscapes' (Zukin, 2009; Pratt, 2012; Lynch, 2022).

As inner cities evolved into hubs of 'cool cultural consumption' with particular aesthetic and lifestyle values, older heritage properties that possess cultural significance or unique architectural features, were increasingly targeted for redevelopment and reuse.

Given the rising costs needed to renovate older structures, younger and wealthier urban professionals, those largely part of the creative economy, increasingly bought up these properties. And while initial rounds of recapitalization focused on former industrial spaces, by the late 1990s and early 2000s, property speculation shifted to include post-institutional spaces – from closed schools and hospitals to worship spaces (Basu, 2007; Adams, 2019). There is, however, a limited amount of research exploring the relationships between the creative class and religious buildings with heritage features, and adaptive reuse offers an excellent bridge to connect them.

2.3 Reuse & Community Making

2.3.1 The Reuse of Heritage and The Reuse of Religious Heritage

Adaptive reuse, often understood as a practice involving repurposing or altering the "capacity, function or performance" of a building for new uses, is not new (Douglas, 2006:1). Extensive research in engineering and architecture has traditionally focused on the sustainability of the materials, energy optimization, and improved preservation methods of heritage structures in the context of reusing old buildings. However, a growing body of work in the social sciences is now examining adaptive reuse through the intersecting lenses of social, cultural, and spatial perspectives (Lynch, 2022).

As mentioned above, the reuse of post-industrial sites initially provided alternative housing for those avoiding high rents but later became a housing choice for the middle- and upper class to express their "rejection of the standardization" or "mass-produced commodities of the modern age" (Lynch, 2022). Zukin (1982: 68) contends that historical and heritage buildings offer "authenticity," "identity" and a "sense of place" coming from years of continuous use, which is an element that new constructions and neighbourhoods lack. The practice of adaptive reuse undoubtedly allows users of old buildings to create a sense of place distinct from that found in new architecture. From the perspective of heritage urbanism, adaptive reuse is crucial for preserving city authenticity since heritage is a non-renewable resource, and none of the replicas (anything that is not the original) of heritages is authentic (Šćitaroci & Šćitaroci, 2019).

Furthermore, in recent years, the adaptive reuse of heritage buildings has been recognized as contributing to the reduction of construction waste and addressing climate change. Scholars emphasize the key roles that urban cultural heritage buildings play in environmental sustainability (see Bullen & Love, 2011; Yung & Chan, 2012; Foster, 2020). Although early

studies (Boardman et al., 2005, as cited in Power, 2008) suggested that the demolition of old buildings is "necessary" to reach the energy reduction targets in housing stock by 2050, some developers argue that the cost of adaptive reuse is too high. However, evidence shows that reusing refurbished old houses can achieve environmental efficiency standards as high as newly built houses (Shipley et al., 2006; Power, 2008). Power argues that compared to demolition, reuse offers more social, economic and environmental benefits including reduced landfill disposal, lower carbon emissions in transporting new materials, and decreased energy consumption in producing structural elements. On the other hand, cultural geographers have consistently emphasized that the adaptive reuse of heritage buildings protects the community networks by offering convivial and meaningful spaces for new public buildings, community centres, and medical/healthcare centres (Yung & Chan, 2012). Additionally, profit-oriented creative investors can still receive a much higher return, even with more costly reuse projects such as heritage repurposed into condominium lofts (Shipley et al., 2006). Although adaptive reuse has many significant positive outcomes, including encouraging economic development and environmental sustainability, this thesis focuses mainly on its socio-cultural impact on communities.

While higher returns in repurposing heritage may be limited to the cases with ample private financings, many heritage sites in Canada still struggle to secure public funding and attract investments. Despite the substantial efforts by the Canadian government in conservation and preservation, and the emergence of a growing number of advocates aiming to protect historically valuable properties, numerous designated places still fall by the wayside. In particular, 'demolition by neglect' has become a major challenge for many heritage sites (Goldwyn, 1995; Nasser, 2003; Scoones, 2011; Newman & Saginor, 2014). "Demolition by neglect" refers to a "deliberate omission of necessary repairs" that leads to the buildings' decay to the point that demolitions are

inevitable, and restorations become unreasonable (Columbia Law Review, 1963). In other words, demolition by neglect is a strategy that leads to the destruction of a heritage landscape or area through abandonment or lack of maintenance (Moshen & Leatherbarrow 1993, as cited in Newman & Saginor, 2014). While bylaws might discourage youths from throwing rocks at old house windows and curb developers from bulldozing buildings, creeping maintenance costs and the lack of revenue cannot prevent these heritage sites from withering away. Neglected buildings can be vacant or occupied, and the speed of deterioration of the structure varies. For example, since 2013, a strip of historic buildings in Gore Park, Hamilton, was left vacant and unheated, and the unheated situation exponentially increased its deterioration since the constant freeze-thaw cycle tore apart the building materials (Carter, 2015). National Trust for Canada also has records of multiple cases where heritage buildings suffered demolition by neglect, which indicates the need for more bylaws and policies to implement heritage conservation properly.

Since it takes time for policies and bylaws to be made and implemented, many heritage sites are actively seeking ways to sustain themselves, and adaptive reuse has long been an option for preservation (Mian, 2008; Wong, 2017). On the other hand, many old buildings do not even have that official 'heritage status' paper to protect them, and thus adaptive reuse has become a way for them to transform into new social and cultural spaces across Canada.

Among all types of built heritage in the cities, religious heritage is distinguished from others due to its spiritual importance (Lo Faro & Miceli, 2021). As a type of built cultural heritage, often in seeking preservation, religious heritage such as churches and other religiously owned buildings can also be converted into condominiums, lofts, community centers, pubs, and other public gathering spaces. However, it is interesting to note that we are also seeing historic Christian churches converting into worship spaces for other religions such as Islam and Buddhism (Krishna

& Hall, 2019). Although faith-to-faith conversion is still an uncommon way for church reuse, it has great potential in supporting religious heritage conservation, as abandoned or vacant churches are suitable to accommodate most religious communities looking for a space to establish their own place of worship (Krishna & Hall, 2019).

Compared to faith-to-faith conversion, there are many more adaptive reuse cases of worship spaces converting into spaces for residential or commercial uses. As a nation of the "churched," the reuse of religious heritage in a postsecular age is particularly intriguing and sometimes contentious (depending on the context) in Canada, since the worship spaces that once connected to a large percentage of the population are now being commodified and secularized. At one extreme, there are numerous church reuse projects that can be described as 'profane,' such as church-converted nightclubs or breweries (Stephenson and Lynch, forthcoming). In other cases, commercializing religious heritage has also exposed issues related to exploiting heritage through capitalization and commodification, raising concerns in local communities (Nasser, 2003; Mian, 2008; Hackworth & Gullikson, 2013). For instance, as the "latest frontier of housing redevelopment," many former worship spaces are repackaged and promoted through condo developers' marketing themes that rewrite the religious past and legitimize the use of religious heritage for expanding lucrative housing markets (Lynch, 2014, 2016). By examining church repurposing projects in cities like Toronto and Montreal that aim at increasing urban density and providing creative living space, Lynch argued that the repackaging of built religious heritage potentially leads to a sense of "diluted religiosity" and indeed aims at encouraging the consumption of the post-sacred spaces with heritage features. In other work, Lynch and LeDrew (2020) argued that outside of major cities, some rural churches are transformed into gastropubs to attract tourists and become part of the consumption culture.

Overall, the conversion of churches into lofts is a process of domesticating post-sacred spaces, catering to the urban middle class who largely "reject(s) mainstream housing" (Lynch, 2016; Zukin, 1982). Pubs, however, while encouraging consumption like church lofts in converted post-sacred spaces, are still public gathering spaces and can offer bonding space and opportunities for local communities. As Lynch and Stephenson (forthcoming) pointed out, establishing and promoting a "sense of community" is a central theme of the reused church pubs. Religious heritage is often strongly connected to collective memory and the identity of a place, playing a vital role in a community's life (Clark, 2007; Lo Faro & Miceli, 2019). Therefore, by staying involved with the local community, churches repurposed into public spaces like pubs can resurrect a sense of community lost from the local church closure. Whether the preservation of the religious features of the buildings aims at encouraging the consumption culture or is driven by local heritage bylaws, loft conversion significantly contributes to religious heritage conservation (Hackworth & Gullikson, 2013).

2.3.2 Religious Heritage and Community Identities

As the significance of cultural heritage often derives from its interaction with the surrounding environment, the sites of various cultural heritage are inextricably involved in local place images and contribute to the identification of people with specific places (Ashworth, 2013). As highlighted by many cultural geographers, the social and cultural value of urban heritage is closely related to societal production, mobilization and cultural identity, etc. (Hewison, 1987; Osborne, 2001). Demolishing cultural heritage that possesses socio-cultural value not only creates ecological waste but also potentially erases local identity (Misirlisoy & Gunce, 2016). Religious or not, heritage plays two crucial roles in the postsecular period: symbolizing cultural identity and

providing the socio-political space to communities to debate issues related to nation, identity and belonging.

In 2015, while recognized as a "highly secular nation" with almost half of its citizens identifying religion as "not at all important," Sweden had a nationwide debate regarding the ringing of church bells (Swedish Institution, 2023). For those advocating for abandoning the practice, by and large, the ringing of church bells represents "calls for worship," a reminder of the presence of worship in the surrounding communities. However, on the other hand, other people argue that the ringing of church bells should not be seen as a "call for worship" anymore, but as a tradition that is a part of Swedish cultural heritage, which should be kept even though the country is secularized (Hyltén-Cavallius, 2018). The Swedish History Museum also held a medieval religious heritage exhibition and received varied responses from local communities. Hyltén-Cavallius reported that some museum staff showed a lack of interest in working for the exhibition because it was "religious-related." However, it was also witnessed that some visitors were crying in the exhibition hall because of the "powerful emotional experience," as religions have once played important roles in their history (Hyltén-Cavallius, 2018).

Nevertheless, conflicts regarding religious 'calling for prayer' practices have been repetitively shown in the news in the past decade (Weiner, 2014). The church bell ring has also led to discussions of the priority of religious freedom and civil rights. For example, in the early 2000s, there was a dispute in Hamtramck, Michigan, regarding adhan (Islamic call to prayer), as the non-Muslim residents complained about the volume of adhan in the area (NBC News, 2004). Similarly, residents in Dolina, Italy also complained that the church bell ringing was "loud and excessive" (Giuffrida, 2022). Although in most cases, the non-religious group respects religious

freedom, many more cases of disputes regarding the practice of church bell ringing can be found all over the world.

For some, the postsecular represents opportunities for confrontation between the religious and secular world. However, it is also undeniable that the preservation of historical cultural heritage, including religious heritage, relays the messages from centuries ago and contributes to the understanding of the shaping process of present society and cityscapes (Nasser, 2003; Hyltén-Cavallius, 2018). Urban heritage reminds us that the past of a region/city is not dead, and it is not even the past—the cultural significance of the heritage echoes in modern cities like the ringing of church bells. While heritage preservation and adaptive reuse cannot "bring back what it (the building) once was", it aids our critical thinking in the process of "perceiving the past, which is today's essential condition" (Lo Faro and Miceli, 2019: 5).

In Canada, preserving churches needs to be encouraged more since these buildings sustain cultural identity and a sense of belonging, especially considering the nation's recent religious transformation. In the post-war religious "boom," where people searched for a sense of "back to normal," new churches were planted not only in the urban centres but also in the suburbs (Lynch, 2013: 44). Most of these suburban churches were centrally located in their community and provided a connection to those who were displaced through gentrification during the 60s and 70s from the urban centres. For many communities, their church provided not only space for worship but also places to gather as a community.

Adaptive reuse helps these formerly central places explore potential value beyond their historical function and use while preserving their historical and cultural significance. Falanga and Nunes (2021) pointed out that the transformation/reuse/redesign of cultural and heritage sites such as churches, convents, farms, and palaces could pose significant impacts on the local community's

cultural identity. As gathering places for a community, most churches carry collective memories—even for those who now identify as non-religious, the local church is often still involved in their family memories. Zukin (2009) argues that losing those places can create "soulless cities." Without those unique, local features, a city will become a place that could not offer its residents any local cultural identity. It is crucial for the existing heritage buildings, including the old churches, to work to preserve the city's authenticity. UNESCO (2020: 3) also suggested that heritage conservation approaches must be "people-centred" because cities are "the accumulation of people living and working." Many cases have shown that rather than private housing or facilities, most neighbourhoods prefer seeing their historical buildings being repurposed into a community public space that promotes an inclusive environment by keeping its accessibility open to the residents, which allows the preservation of the connection between people and the place (Polewski, 2021; Bhargava, 2022). For example, an almost 100-year-old dairy barn in Kelowna, BC, was turned into a social hub that provides live music, coffee, and craft beer in 2022, and the transformation was recognized as a "good example of adaptive reuse of a heritage site" since it successfully brings residents together and "celebrates its past" (Szeto, 2023).

Since residents may have a preference for how to reuse their old buildings, there are always debates around the conceptualization of urban heritage. Graham *et al.* (2000:14) argue that the will to conserve has been "the obsession of a passionate, educated and generally influential minority," and that "the social, educational and political characteristics of heritage producers have changed little since the nineteenth century." These authors argue that heritage conservation has long been manipulated by the elite groups, who used culture "as a means to control, defend and define national communities" (Hobsbawm *et al.,* in Lynch 2013: 79). In many cases, sites of cultural heritage were preserved and conserved by the choices of the elite group. As Tunbridge (1984: 1)

noted, a city's image and character are "a reflection primarily of the values of whichever social group is ascendant at the time." The elite class was a small, however powerful group that had stronger voices in conservation practices, which tended to result in top-down conservation practices. Whether the control of elite class over heritage conservation has come to an end, at the urban level today, selectively preserving built heritage remains a key tool for urban developers when making "meaningful places" and presenting the cities as more attractive and social spaces— as indeed, heritage is the "part of the past which we select in the present for contemporary purposes" (Graham et al., 2000: 17; Lynch 2013),

However, grassroots-focused culture heritage conservation advocates are becoming popular and have been increasingly posing impacts on urban developers' preservation choices, since bottom-up decision-making in heritage conservation is an important principle in reusing religious heritage for sustainable social purposes (Lo Faro & Miceli, 2019). As religious heritage is strongly linked to the character of local communities, many communities are fighting against the top-down conservation strategies from the cities and the capitalization of heritage from real estate developers. Indeed, communities are increasingly interested in reclaiming their old churches as social and cultural spaces and pushing against heritage privatization.

2.3.3 The Capitalization and Misuse of Heritage

Compared to its social and cultural values that provide people with identity and the sense of belonging, the economic uses of heritage are often considered secondary and less important. Ashworth (2009: 104) highlighted some heritage professionals' opinions regarding the economics of heritage as either "at best, a distasteful necessity to be tolerated" or "at worst, distracting and even degrading commercialization," which makes the relationship between heritage and the

economy even more complex. However, the reality is that heritage maintenance costs more than a passion for history. Given the nature of today's economy, financial capital is crucial to heritage maintenance, and the heritage itself can indeed function as an economic resource. Ashworth (2009: 104) also points out that the conservation of heritage must deal with both direct and indirect costs. The direct cost refers to the physical maintenance of the site, and the indirect cost refers to the "development opportunities forgone," such as missing out on the repurposing chances due to the buildings' heritage status. Maintaining a good financial status is necessary for the built heritage to extend its lifespan. Ashworth also summarized several key issues that impact the process of heritage economics, such as the economic production system in heritage (i.e., the highly diverse producers and consumers, vaguely demarcated products and market), the pricing of heritage (i.e., the unmeasurable value), and the investment and allocations (i.e., a more complicated investment-return relationship).

In short, the challenging nature of cultural heritage significantly influences how heritage sites earn money to support themselves. However, these features have also given heritage a wide range of possibilities in shaping its economic uses, from the price range of heritage products (having high prices for heritage merchandise) to the reuse style of these old buildings (unique style housing that makes significant profits). Additionally, since cultural heritage reflects residents' identity and contributes to placemaking, experts in the heritage sector have been deploying heritage in promoting and branding places. In this case, heritage is used to generate profit, and as Ashworth (2009: 104) argues, "once a result and beneficiary of wealth, heritage is now expected to be a wealth generator." The recognition of the entire industrial landscape, for example, is "a common strategy of the heritage tourism industry" and acts as a "lucrative element in local economic development" (Lynch, 2013:84). With a completed, well-established and functional

economic system, urban heritage can become resources to be consumed, packaged and marketed, allowing it to further play important roles in local development strategies such as tourism, place promotion, regional revitalization and economic clustering (Ley, 1996; Ashworth &Tunbridge, 2000; Goulding, 2000; Ashworth, 2013). As discussed in §2.2.2, the creative class has become deeply involved in heritage reuse and reveals the economic value of the heritage through commodifying the past. They are both the producer and the consumer of the commodified heritage. While the economic viability of heritage reuse is evident in its ability to generate revenue and contribute to the economic sustainability of heritage sites, the issue of capitalization and commercialization remains contentious within the heritage adaptive reuse debates. Cases of misuse of façade retainment (facadism) and misinterpretation of preservation guidelines are finding their way to prevalence. For instance, 800 Granville in Vancouver, BC, is a case of heritage preservation by constructing a 16-storey addition commercial building that includes office, retail and cultural space behind the heritage building's façade (see Figure 2.1) (Heritage Vancouver, 2022). While the Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada (2010) recommended the new additions and new constructions in a rehabilitation project to "make the new work physically and visually compatible with, subordinate to, and distinguishable from the historic place (standard 11b)," and the addition on 800 Granville can hardly be visually perceived as a "subordination," the redevelopment proposal insisted that their plans are reasonable since "subordination is not a question of size" and that "a small, ill-conceived addition could adversely affect a historic place more than a large, well-designed addition" (Heritage Vancouver). It is difficult to justify if this addition is a successful case of heritage conservation and reuse since higher density construction is desired in cities like Vancouver and new fancy glass buildings

encourage the consumption culture and economic revitalization. However, it is evident that such top-down redevelopment of the cultural heritage leads to concerns within the community.

Figure 2.1 800 Block on Granville Street, Vancouver (Heritage Vancouver, 2022)

2.4 Summary

Built religious heritage in Canada is at a crossroads. Increasingly influenced by postsecularism, the reuse of religious heritage not only offers a unique space for the coexistence of the secular and religious but also responds to the evolving preferences of the creative class who are drawn to structures with cultural significance and distinctive architectural styles. Built religious heritage has become a key agent connecting heritage and creative urbanism. However, despite their age and longstanding presence in local communities, some religious heritage buildings lack

official heritage designations, leaving them vulnerable to exploitation by developers keen on transforming old communal spaces into private residences.

This literature review has explored the existing literature dealing with complex social-cultural impacts of church transformation on community and has interrogated the attitudes of both the secular and religious communities towards religious heritage reuse. This study also fills the gap in addressing the struggles for the religious heritage reuse projects to balance between "build an inclusive space that fosters a sense of belonging" and "make enough money to sustain the building" through three lenses of contemporary urbanization – creative, heritage and postsecular urbanism. This research contributes to a comprehensive understanding of the struggles inherent in religious heritage reuse projects.

Chapter 3 Methodology

3.1 Methods

To investigate the socio-cultural impacts of worship space conversion on community cohesion and sense of belonging, and explore the role of transformed worship spaces in connecting heritage and creative urbanism in postsecular time, this project uses a mixed-methods research design. In the following chapter(s), I move from the examination of literature themes to explore the experiences, interpretations and challenges of local stakeholders dealing with transformed properties. In particular, this work incorporates key informant interviews and case study site visits to three churches in Ottawa: All Saints Anglican Church, St. Brigid's Catholic Church, and Dominion-Chalmers United Church.

An important data source for this work is in-depth interviews with key informants, a well-developed method in the critical social sciences and well-used technique in human geography (Hay and Cope, 2021). The interviews focused on exploring the opportunities and challenges associated with church building redevelopment, as well as the evolving cultural significance of these buildings within the community. A total of 16 in-depth interviews were conducted, both in-person and remotely, with key informants in the City of Ottawa (see Table 3.1). Initially, five key informants were interviewed, including a program manager for heritage planning in the City of Ottawa and four public sector stakeholders involved in managing repurposed buildings or advocating for community heritage conservation. These informants were contacted via publicly available information on their websites, using email and phone calls.

Table 3.1: List of Key Informants and Affiliations (author's data, 2022)

Interview	Site	Affiliation	Interview Type	Date (2022)	Direct Quotes
1	All Saints	Community Member	In-Person	Jul 29	N
2	All Saints	Community Member	Remote	Nov 8	Y
3	All Saints	Owner	Remote	Oct 20, 21	N
4	All Saints	Community Member /Heritage Sector Expert	Remote	Oct 5, 12	Y
5	Dominion-Chalmers	Community Member /Non-Profit Organization Founder	Remote	Aug 17	Y
6	Dominion-Chalmers	Community Member /Congregation Member	Remote	Aug 4, 8	N
7	Dominion-Chalmers	Staff/Community Member	In-Person	Jul 25	N
8	Dominion-Chalmers	Community Member	Remote	Jul 23	Y
9	Dominion-Chalmers	Staff	In-Person	Jul 25	Y
10	St. Brigid's	Community Member /Heritage Sector Expert	Remote	Aug 17, Sep 16	N
11	St. Brigid's	Community Member /Heritage Sector Expert	Remote	Jul 29	Y
12	St. Brigid's	Owner	Remote	Aug 9	Y
13	St. Brigid's	Community Member /Heritage Sector Expert	Remote	Sep 28	Y
14	St. Brigid's	Community Member	Remote	Oct 26	N (other than a certain sentence)
15	N/A	Heritage Sector Expert	Remote	Jul 28, Nov 17	N (maybe planning related)
16	N/A	Heritage Sector Expert	Remote	Oct 7	Y

Subsequently, these initial key informants referred me to an additional 11 informants through email, who consisted of core community members, public sector experts, and congregation members. The semi-structured interviews ranged from 30 to 90 minutes and took place between July and November of 2022. In some cases, interviews were divided into two sessions on different days due to the length of the conversations.

All participants received letters of introduction outlining the research objectives and informed consent forms; all participants consented to have their interviews voice-recorded, and

their permission was sought for the use of direct quotations. In instances where participants did not respond to the question about direct quotations, it was noted as 'no consent' for the use of direct quotations. A total of 15 interview recordings were transcribed verbatim using NVivo software and integrated into the NVivo analysis platform for coding. There were three parent codes representing three main focuses in this study: communities (their response to the transformation, the initiative of the project, and their future vision of the space), heritage (the benefits and disadvantages of heritage designation, the redevelopment of the property, suggestions for future heritage adaptive reuse), secularization (the changes in the space functions and internal decoration). The coding revealed a strong interconnectedness of religious heritage adaptive reuse and their communities. Many community members emphasized their attachment to their buildings and how they were involved in the buildings before and after the reuse. All informants (including community members) frequently discuss the redevelopment of these adaptive reuse buildings in-depth, revealing many challenges in these projects. Unfortunately, one interview recording was lost due to technical issues, and data from that interview are in the form of handwritten notes.

The interviews with key informants working in the heritage adaptive reuse sector provided insights into the process of transforming and repurposing designated heritage sites at various scales. Interviews with informants who self-identified as community members, however, provided a localized and community-oriented perspective on the repurposing of worship spaces. Overall, this mixed-methods approach enabled a comprehensive exploration of the socio-cultural impacts of worship space conversion, incorporating both expert insights and community perspectives. To ensure confidentiality, the informants' names were anonymized and assigned numerical codes. This study initially planned to reach out to all former congregations who used these churches. However, only one congregation member responded to my recruitment letter and consented to

participate in the study. The result of this study is not deeply religious related, and therefore, the participants were not inquired if their connection with the building was religious.

3.2 Study Area

This section provides a brief introduction to the historical background of the research sites and offers the necessary context for the following analysis and discussion. This study focuses on three selected sites for their geographic proximity, heritage status, and approaches to transformation: St. Brigid's Roman Catholic Church, Dominion-Chalmers United Church, and All Saints Anglican Church. All three sites are located within Heritage Conservation Districts (HCD), and St. Brigid's and All Saints are designated heritage properties by the City of Ottawa (see Figure 3.1). While Dominion-Chalmers United Church does not have an individual heritage designation, it holds significant cultural heritage value to the Ottawa communities and has been a prominent presence in downtown Ottawa for over 70 years (Rathwell, 2018). Each of these churches has been repurposed into public performance spaces after the buildings were purchased by local groups. St. Brigid's and All Saints were acquired by local community members, while Dominion-Chalmers was purchased by a public university, representing a group of community members.

Figure 3.1: Research Site for This Study in Ottawa

Case Study Sites

allsaints event space

Dominion-Chalmers United
Church

St Brigid's Centre for the Arts
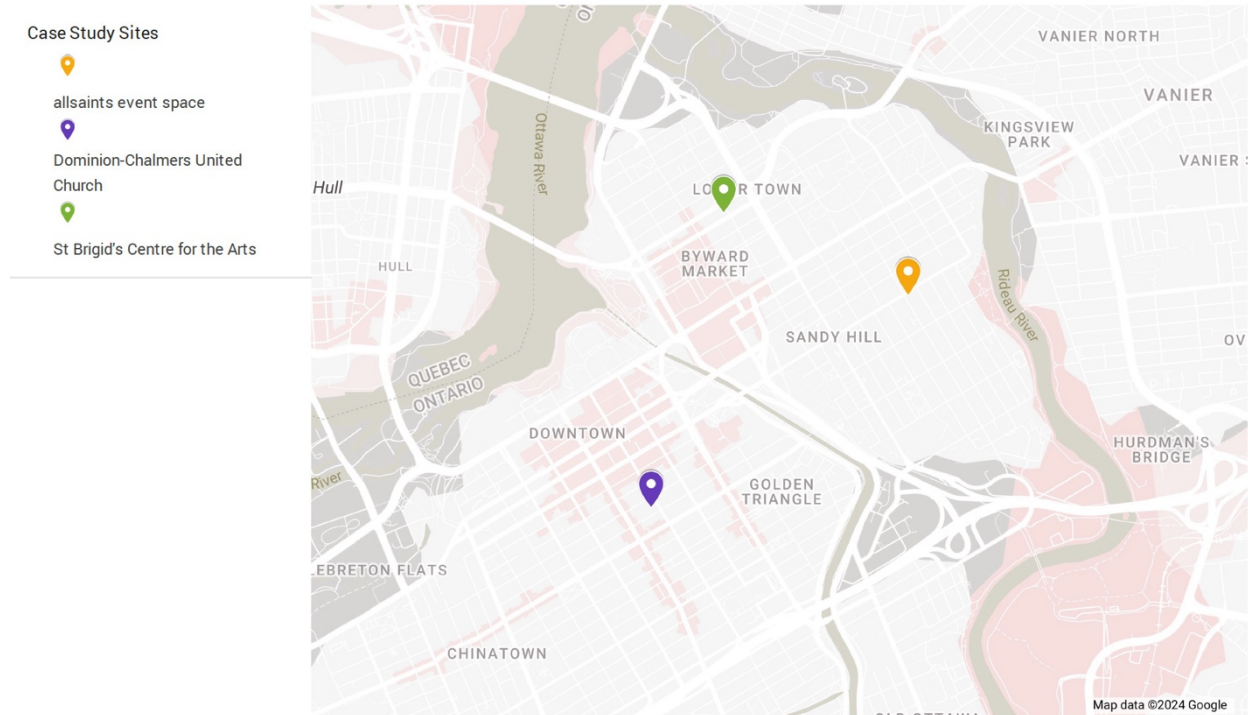
3.2.1 Dominion-Chalmers United Church

Located in the Centretown HCD, Dominion-Chalmers United Church's building was
constructed in the early 1900s, with its cornerstone laid in 1912. The United Church was formed
in 1962 through the merger of Dominion Methodist Church (later Dominion United Church) and
St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church (later Chalmers United Church). Both churches have served
downtown Ottawa communities since the 1800s (Carleton Dominion Chalmers Centre, 2022).
After a major fire in 1961, the Dominion United Church committee explored the possibility of
merging with another congregation. Given the ongoing collaboration between Dominion Church
and Chalmers Church, they were recommended to merge, and the amalgamation was officially
approved on April 26th, 1962. Dominion Church managed to save six stained-glass windows from
the fire and brought them to Chalmers to incorporate into the north wall of the sanctuary. It was
noticed that although the congregation at Dominion-Chalmers was large in the early 1960s, the

attendance dropped in the late 1960s, causing concerns about funding (Rathwell, 2018). In 2017, Dominion-Chalmers United Church sought solutions to better support the building due to a dwindling congregation and shortage of donations. Although Dominion-Chalmers United Church is not a designated heritage building, it holds significant socio-cultural and spiritual value in its community as a gathering space, and has undeniable aesthetic value attributed to its architectural design (Rathwell, 2018). Eventually, Carleton University purchased the building in 2018 with an agreement to retain the church congregation programs within the same building. The details of Carleton's involvement are discussed below.

3.2.2 St. Brigid Roman Catholic Church

Located in the Lowertown HCD, St. Brigid Roman Catholic Church was a church built to serve the local English-speaking Catholic population. Just one block away from St. Brigid, Notre Dame Cathedral Basilica was once the largest Catholic church serving the Catholics in the Lowertown neighbourhood. With the influx of Irish immigrants who worked on building the canal in the 1880s, the Lowertown English-speaking Catholics requested to have an anglophone parish, instead of sharing the cathedral with French-speaking Catholics. This Romanesque Revival church was designed by a local architect, James R. Bowes (Vidoni, 2009). St. Brigid's was intentionally constructed as an Irish church, as Saint Brigid is considered a goddess and patroness in Irish culture. The current owner of St. Brigid's explained that Saint Brigid is "kind of the head goddess in all the times in the world" and "the equivalent of the female patron saint of Ireland" (Interview 12). The decision to purchase the building was also influenced by the fact that the owners' hometown in Ireland also has a St. Brigid's church. Notably, the church features an Irish harp and painted shamrocks decorating the long pipes of the organ. Although the church was repainted in the 1960s,

the organ remained untouched. For nearly a century, the church has been the center of the Irish community and a pillar of their cultural identity in Ottawa (McDonald, 2017; Parks Canada, 2023). In 2006, due to financial challenges, the church was deconsecrated and subsequently purchased by a group of Irish community members in 2007.

3.2.3 All Saints Anglican Church

All Saints Anglican Church stands as an impressive example of Gothic Revival architecture. Situated on the corner of Laurier Ave. E and Chapel St, the church was constructed in the early(?) 1900s and is located within the Sandy Hill West HCD. The neighbourhood of Sandy Hill was known for its high concentration of wealthy parishioners in the 1900s, and it saw the establishment of All Saints Anglican Church as an attraction that would encourage other wealthy elites to settle in the area. The construction of the church itself deviated from traditional diocesan funding and was privately financed by businessman Henry Newell Bate. All Saints' primary purpose was to cater to the growing Anglican population in Sandy Hill and provide relief for the large congregation to St. Alban's Anglican Church, which is also located in the same neighbourhood (Action Sandy Hill, 2019).

Throughout its rich history, All Saints Anglican Church has been associated with many significant events. In 1924, it gained prominence by hosting the royal wedding of Lois Booth, the granddaughter of Ottawa lumber baron J. R. Booth, and Prince Erik of Denmark. This royal union stands as the only wedding of its kind celebrated in Ottawa (Ross, 2016). Furthermore, in 1937, All Saints Anglican Church held the state funeral of Sir Robert Borden, the former Prime Minister of Canada. However, in 2015, the shrinking congregation of All Saints Anglican Church relocated to St. Margaret's Anglican Church in Vanier, prompting the sale of the building.

Chapter 4 Analysis & Discussion

As Canada moved towards secularization, congregations faced declining membership and revenue, presenting challenges that compelled churches to explore adaptive reuse options. This chapter examines three case studies—Dominion-Chalmers United Church, All Saints Anglican Church, and St. Brigid's Catholic Church—highlighting the nuanced issues related to heritage preservation, including conservation policies, financial support, and local residents' sense of belonging to their heritage. Through these adaptive reuse cases of historic churches, this chapter offers insight into the challenges and struggles of the congregations in postsecular times, the creative approaches to church reuse, and how these transformations are perceived by their respective communities.

4.1 Challenges and Struggles of the Congregations

The decision to close a church is always difficult to make, whether the church building is deconsecrated, and the congregation moving to another worship space or becoming a tenant of their previously owned building. However, these church closures did not happen overnight. There are many historical and cultural factors informing the decline of these worship spaces. In this section, I provide historical and social-cultural contexts for each of the three case sites. Though every church closure has its unique features, there are also shared social, cultural and economic dynamics informing the phenomenon of church closure.

4.1.1 Dominion-Chalmers United Church (DCC)

The Dominion-Chalmers United Church (DCC) once boasted a thriving congregation in Centretown following an amalgamation in the 1950s, with approximately two thousand members and over 200 children actively participating in their Sunday school. However, a key informant revealed that DCC has been suffering from a dwindling congregation since the 1970s, marking a

continuous reduction in size over the past five decades (Interview 6), which corresponds to the reported declined Canadian population who identify as Christian (Statistic Canada, 2022). Additionally, as discussed in Chapter 2, the extensive urban renewal projects in the 1960s drastically affected the character and demographic structure of Centretown, Ottawa. Many Centretown residents were displaced and relocated to the suburbs during this period. The key informant, a longstanding member of the church, shared insights into the dynamics of the United Church families who were not directly affected by the urban renewal plan— their children moved away from downtown as they grew older. While some congregants continued to attend services at the DCC every week, the majority opted to participate in their local church instead (Interview 6). Furthermore, DCC also discovered that its congregation was aging, presenting a formidable challenge in sustaining congregational renewal. This realization underscored the increasing difficulty in maintaining the vibrancy and growth of the church community.

The key informant highlights a concerning trend in the church's financial situation, which mirrors observations made in other congregations. This trend involves a decline in weekly donations alongside a reduction in congregation size, a phenomenon that has been discussed by many researchers (Martin & Ballamingie, 2016; Thiessen & Wilkins-Laflamme, 2020). Notably, DCC has grappled with the reality that younger members lack a substantial financial foundation to make significant contributions, while older members contribute less due to decreased income post-retirement. The informant further disclosed that a report conducted a few years ago analyzed the congregational demographic and donation patterns. The report underscored a critical point— the most substantial contributors to the church were aged over 93. Consequently, the church is going to face a significant decline in donations once this demographic diminishes (Interview 6). Therefore, despite denials coming from some congregation members, in the early 2010s, the DCC

council already realized that there had been a financial deficit, and their budget was going to run out in a few years (Interview 6). The church started looking for possible partnerships to support the building in the early 2010s.

In the meantime, generational differences in the congregation have also influenced the administration and management of the church. Fewer young people are willing to volunteer or take on executive roles in the church. However, it is crucial to recognize that the younger generation, equipped with innovative ideas and technological powers, has the potential to introduce novel approaches for the church's development, including effective promotion through social media channels (Interview 6). This generational shift aligns with the trend of "believing without belonging" and identification as "spiritual but not religious," as observed by Storm (2009). In this context, the younger generation exhibits a reduced level of engagement in church events, reflecting a changing dynamic where traditional modes of participation are less emphasized. Adding nuance to the narrative, another informant mentioned that although their actual current congregation size is under 50, DCC experiences heightened attendance during their events for significant holidays like Christmas and Easter (Interview 7). This increased participation demonstrates the enduring significance of DCC within its local community and reaffirms the role of churches as vital sites for major life events (Clark, 2007; Lo Faro & Miceli, 2019).

4.1.2 St. Brigid Roman Catholic Church

During the 1960s urban renewal project in Ottawa, Lowertown endured a substantial impact. Historically, Lowertown served as a residential area predominantly for the working classes, characterized by a diverse mix of professional employment (Aubin & Chenier, 2011). The urban renewal initiative targeted a significant portion of Lowertown East, deeming it a "slum" and

necessitating the replacement of aging housing. As noted by Ley and Martin (1993), the construction of new and improved housing resulted in the gentrification of the once-work-class neighbourhood, displacing long-term residents who had called Lowertown home for over 50 years. This displacement contributed to a decline in the congregation size of the local churches, as the new middle class demonstrated lower levels of religious affiliation. Following the decline in the Anglophone Catholic population in Lowertown post-1960s, St. Brigid's underwent a transformation when it was later embraced by the Filipino community, facilitated by the presence of a Filipino priest (Interview 11).

Despite many appeals to the Archbishop and a Town Hall Meeting organized by Heritage Ottawa in April 2007 to prevent the closure of St. Brigid Roman Catholic Church, the church was eventually deconsecrated in 2007, and the closure was considered "unexpected" (Heritage Ottawa, 2023). The dwindling Sunday attendance at St. Brigid's was a contributing factor, and the decision to close the church was underscored by "the financial burden associated with the cost of restoring Notre Dame Cathedral and St. Patrick's Basilica," two other catholic churches in Ottawa (Heritage Ottawa, 2023).

4.1.3 All Saints Anglican Church

The impact of the urban renewal process was not as profound in Sandy Hill as it was in adjoining neighbourhoods. However, the expansion of the University of Ottawa contributed largely to the changes in local housing and land use. Short-term rental has been increasingly popular in Sandy Hill, and student housing is still increasing in the area today (Interview 2, 4). These housing transformations slowly displaced long-term residents over the years. As mentioned above, the long-term residents that were being lost in Sandy Hill were wealthy parishioners, and

displacements of such groups led to a diminished congregation and fewer donations for maintaining the building. An informant who has lived in Sandy Hill for decades revealed that even before the congregation moved out of All Saints, they observed that the congregation "grew smaller and smaller and older" (Interview 2). They have also observed that the older congregants (who have always been going to the church) started having mobility issues and "found it very hard to get into the church" because of the building's lack of accessibility infrastructure. Although the church hosted bazaars and fundraisers and rented out the venue for yoga classes for income to support the building, they "did not charge much for rent" (Interview 2). Eventually, the church was not able to sustain the building anymore, and the building was put up for sale.

It is noticeable that all of the three sites faced the common challenge of declining congregations due to demographic shifts. While each church has unique factors contributing to the population decline, they all reflect how the trend of secularization and demographic change impacted religious institutions in Canada. Despite these challenges, these worship spaces remain significant cultural landmarks to their communities and reflect the evolving role of churches in modern society.

4.2 Heritage and Creative Reuse

In this section, I explain the current context of the case study sites, paying particular attention to their role as designated heritage sites, including their designation status, current use, redevelopment process, and challenges encountered. As formerly religious buildings, Dominion-Chalmers, All Saints, and St. Brigid's have all been transformed into rental venues that offer performance spaces, which satisfied both the communities' need for gathering space and the

increasing demand for creative spaces in Ottawa from the new middle class (Ley & Martin, 1993; Ley, 1996).

4.2.1 Carleton Dominion-Chalmers Centre

As previously mentioned, although Dominion-Chalmers is not a designated heritage property, the building holds significant cultural and heritage value for the City of Ottawa. It is protected under the Ontario Heritage Act as an integral part of the Centretown Heritage Conservation District. The building was acquired by Carleton University in 2018 to provide a multi-purpose downtown performance space for its students and faculty. The building is in the process of redeveloping into a new cultural and community hub to benefit both the university and the community.

Today, Carleton Dominion-Chalmers Centre (CDCC) offers its sanctuary for various types of music concerts and art performances, and the other spaces in the building for lectures and classes. This converted building offers the students of the music faculty at Carleton University a fresh environment to hold their classes, practices and performance events. Several informants highlighted the significance of the pipe organ in the Neo-Byzantine-style sanctuary. Performing in such a space offers a great experience for students aspiring to participate in orchestras in the future. The sanctuary has always been, and still is, a popular venue for hosting concerts. Every summer, it hosts one of the largest yearly music festivals in Ottawa, the Chamberfest, which offers a unique opportunity for musicians and music enthusiasts to gather in this space and appreciate the arts. The user group of CDCC nowadays fits the profile of the creative class of "bohemians" described by Florida (2005) who work in art sectors such as music, theatre, visual and media arts. The reuse of Dominion-Chalmers highlights the contribution of worship space reuse in offering more creative space.

The redevelopment process for Dominion-Chalmers, including the sale and purchase of the building, was not an easy process. The decision for the congregation to put the building up for sale was difficult, as one of the main concerns of the redevelopment was the tenancy change of the congregation, shifting from the owner to a renter in the building. To give control of the building to a management team with a wider community mandate raises concerns and uncertainty for some congregants (Lynch & LeDrew, 2020). However, many informants consider that Carleton University "handled the sale very, very well" (Interview 5).

After Carleton acquired the building, instead of going into the sanctuary anytime to pray, congregation members were also required to book in advance for using the space (Interview 7). There were also concerns from the former tenants in Dominion-Chalmers regarding if they will stay, and what to consider if all the current tenants remain in the building. Eventually, the tenants (NGOs) were able to choose whether to stay and keep renting the space in the building. The director of CDCC commented that the redevelopment of the building is a process of various communities merging and listed out some core questions they had considered:

> So, we have a faith-based organization that can still call this home as a tenant. We have the arts community who are coming in [and] have very specific non-profit mandates or goals that are always innate to that industry. Then, we also have the education and university requirements and mandates. These three worlds often live fairly separately [from] each other, and now they are merging together in one building… How can the space be revitalized to be as conducive as possible to all these groups? And how can we start to introduce the three groups so the students and faculty can really benefit from these relationships and further their learning and education through collaborative efforts? (Interview 9)

Balancing the groups' needs in one building became the main focus of the early stage of CDCC's transformation. The 110-year-old building needed to be taken care of physically to meet the community's needs. There were plenty of considerations surrounding the building's physical structure, such as accessibility and replacement of redundant or outdated systems. After the

purchase, Carleton repaired the heating system and modified the south part of the building to be wheelchair accessible. The upstairs classrooms are currently going through renovations to solve the sound bleeding issues, as it is particularly important for CDCC to have soundproof walls in the classrooms because most of the classes and events are musically related. CDCC had to turn away some clients due to sound issues, where two musical-related activities wanted to happen simultaneously in rooms next to each other (Interview 7).

While Carleton is now responsible for maintaining the building, the United Church congregation remains in the building as tenants and continues their worship service every Sunday. The congregation also continues to host special events for times with the major Christian festivals of Easter and Christmas. For the non-profit organizations that used to call the Dominion-Chalmers United Church home, most of them also chose to stay as tenants in Carleton Dominion-Chalmers Centre. Secular activities such as drama classes, university lectures and various types of charity events take place in this building, as religious service is also provided in the sanctuary. A similar example of split/share governance can also be found in the study conducted by Lynch and LeDrew (2020) in St. John's, Newfoundland, where the congregation became a stakeholder in the building, and the church was redeveloped into a community hub, while also offering worship space. Such innovative ownership facilitates both the incorporation of the religious building into secular communities and the "rejuvenation of congregation's mission-work" (Lynch & LeDrew, 2020: 12).

When asked about their opinion on a building like CDCC that accommodates the co-existence of the secular and the religious, a staff who is responsible for events coordination at CDCC commented that by avoiding "dogmatism," the building has always been quite good about

distinguishing secular versus non-secular events, and both the religious and secular events co-exist harmoniously in the space (Interview 7).

4.2.2 All Saints Event Space

In 1998, All Saints Anglican Church received designation under the Ontario Heritage Act, recognizing its cultural and architectural significance (Ross, 2016). The Sandy Hill West Heritage Conservation District was designated in 1982. After a century of serving the local Anglican community, All Saints Anglican Church in Sandy Hill West was listed for sale by the Anglican Diocese in 2014. For more than 25 years, the church played a vital role in the community by renting out its basement to a daycare centre, offering an essential service to the neighbourhood. Additionally, the church also provided its space for religious and secular purposes at below-market prices (Newman et al., 2018). As highlighted by Misirlisoy and Gunce (2016), churches hold socio-cultural values related to residents' cultural identity, and evidently, All Saints has been deeply involved in neighbourhood life, playing a central role in neighbourhood development, making it an important carrier of local identity.

Considering that the expansion of the University of Ottawa has brought more student population to the Sandy Hill residential area, the local community was concerned at the time of sale that the church might be purchased by developers and simply be converted into a residential complex without public accessibility (Foote, 2014). However, the church was eventually purchased by a group of local residents in Sandy Hill and some business investors based in Alberta. After the purchase, the church was repurposed into a café on the ground floor, with an event space upstairs that serves as a venue for gatherings such as weddings, funerals, and meetings. The initial

plan for All Saints was to accommodate non-profit organizations, art galleries, multi-worship services and cafes in the building.

By the summer of 2022, no religious groups were using the building for worship services, and the organ in the sanctuary had been set aside. Interestingly, like in the past, All Saints Event Space remains a popular spot for weddings, especially in the summertime. One informant humorously noted that the only difference between the weddings in the past and now is the absence of priests "running the show" (Interview 1). Despite being deconsecrated, All Saints still holds an important place in its community for important gatherings and life events such as weddings and funerals, once again demonstrating churches as vital sites of major life events (Clark, 2007; Lo Faro & Miceli, 2019). While under secular ownership, the space welcomes all religious groups to use it, including hosting weddings and other events. From an informant's perspective, the venue is also popular for "hosting good quality private gatherings such as staff parties and anniversary celebrations" (Interview 2).

To enhance the community's experience within its nearly 120-year-old premises, All Saints underwent various renovations. These improvements included the installation of an elevator and a couple of accessible bathrooms, aimed at increasing the overall accessibility of the space. In 2019, just before the onset of the pandemic, All Saints expanded their restaurant service, known as the *Working Title Terrace*, by opening an outdoor bar and grill on a patio under the tree canopy.

In contrast to Dominion-Chalmers and St. Brigid's, which have retained many religious elements such as the pipe organ, murals, pews, and religious statues—though it is noteworthy that the interior of St. Brigid's is legally preserved due to the interior heritage designation—All Saints presents a distinctive approach. While CDCC and St. Brigid's emphasize the religious aspects

evident in their salience in the environment, the owner of All Saints shared a different perspective on the coexistence of religious and secular elements on site.

According to the owner, All Saints, now dedicated to establishing an inclusive environment, prioritizes the heritage aspect of the building over its religious components. It is interesting to note that the owner said that they grew up with a Catholic background but chose to be secular after growing up (Interview 3). The owner holds a post-secondary degree and is relatively young, which fits the profiling of the group that belongs to the "centre of religious none" (Ley & Martin, 1993). The transformation of this former Anglican church is viewed as a project aimed at reclaiming the building as a community space, with the overarching goal being to reclaim the church as a public space to the greatest extent possible (Interview 3). As discussed in Chapter 2, even as fewer people now identify as affiliated with religions, their family members in the 1950s regarded attending church as a return to normalcy after wartime, with the church serving as the hub of their community life in both urban and suburban areas (Lynch, 2013). Reclaiming such community space for both religious and non-religious residents helps to maintain their connections with the building and preserves collective memories and the identity of a place (Clark, 2007; Lo Faro & Miceli, 2019).

Despite assertions that church buildings only cater to specific groups as they were once occupied by faith-based organizations, a non-religious community member who has lived in Sandy Hill for over 30 years finds it hard to justify if the new All Saints is more inclusive. They noted that although they are infrequent church attenders, the old All Saints (church) was "very welcoming" to all the community members and people they have ever met from that church "were really very, very inclusive and welcoming" (Interview 2).

4.2.3 St. Brigid's Centre for the Arts

St. Brigid's received its heritage designation—both exterior and interior— under the Ontario Heritage Act in 1981 (Jones, 2017). The church was deconsecrated in 2007 and was purchased by members of Ottawa's Irish community. The building has been since established as Saint Brigid's Centre for the Arts and is the home of the National Irish Canadian Cultural Centre. The space is used for social and cultural events such as art exhibitions, musical events, conferences, and a wide range of Irish cultural programming. The building's infrastructure was greatly improved after the purchase—the owner installed a new electricity system, replaced washrooms, fixed the water pipes, and repainted the chipping away basement walls. During the redevelopment process, St. Brigid's has explored multiple possibilities for the reuse of its space, including hosting concerts and literacy events, and the space was rented out for movie sets.

In 2017, after being a rental venue for almost ten years, the church's basement was transformed into an Irish pub—Brigid's Well. Although wedding services and other events in St. Brigid's were granted liquor licenses on an event-by-event basis, it took quite some time for the owner to get the liquor license for opening a pub in this building since the local residents were concerned with too many pubs being in the ByWard Market area (adjacent to St. Brigid's), which is disturbing at night times (Interview 12).

St. Brigid's Centre for the Arts was put up for sale again during the summer of 2022, with an asking price of approximately six million dollars. In early July 2022, an organization named The United People of Canada (TUPOC), later questioned about their affiliation with the Canada Convoy Protest (Freedom Convoy) that took place in January and February 2022, expressed interest in purchasing the building. They proposed to finalize the deal in October. TUPOC began renting the building in July and organized weekly barbecues on the property. However, the

organization was eventually evicted in October due to non-payment of rent for the preceding months. Fortunately, as of April 2023, St. Brigid's, along with the Brigid's Well pub, has reopened as the home of the National Irish Canadian Cultural Centre and is now actively hosting fundraising events again, continuing to carry the local Irish population's cultural identity.

Among the three research sites, St. Brigid's stands out for maintaining the most tangible religious elements within the building. While CDCC has preserved the pipe organ in the sanctuary, adorned with colourful stained-glass windows depicting biblical events, there is no religious iconography in the sanctuary. Similarly, All Saints has no remaining religious iconography remaining in the sanctuary, and has stored the organ. Although stained-glass windows are retained, the pews in All Saints have been rearranged to accommodate various events for better use for creative space.

In contrast to CDCC and All Saints, St. Brigid's is stuck with its indoor religious decorations and setup due to its interior heritage designation. The pipe organ, murals, pews, and statues of religious characters are prohibited from being altered or moved around. The inhibition of altering its interior has made the building a salient venue for confrontations between the religious and secular worlds. The sanctuary has often been reused as a venue for various secular events, such as liquor-included gatherings and same-sex weddings. As mentioned in Chapter 2, the ongoing debate on same-sex marriages reflects the conflict between contemporary ideas and traditional religious views. The co-existence of religious elements in a predominantly secular venue like St. Brigid's is indicative of the postsecular age, wherein religion adapts rather than disappears in modern society (Molendijk et al., 2010; Beaumont & Baker, 2011). Meanwhile, many of the informants who identify as non-religious or, in their words, "not a church go-er," have

expressed acceptance of the church's religious aspects, emphasizing the importance of the space

being a "safe spot for everyone who comes to visit." A community member commented:

> For me, the same prejudices about the evolution of its [St. Brigid's] story and the fact that it was once [for] religious uses, [and] now has secular use is not something I actually think about until you make me think about it…I just, never have been troubled by that transition…For me, as a community person who's been here a long time, it's just really important that we have positive news for all of our spaces [including St. Brigid's]. I would like to see it being actively and positively used again for secular reasons. (Interview 11)

It is somewhat surprising that all the informants interviewed for this study consistently highlight

the mutual acceptance between religious and secular groups regarding the adaptive reuse projects

of these three churches. Traditionally, churches have often been portrayed as conservative and

traditional religious spaces that may be hesitant to 'mingle with the secular.' Such mutual

acceptance, first and foremost, aligns with Lynch's observation that the religious culture is

influenced by the secular world around it (2013). Furthermore, St. Brigid's serves as a successful

illustration of the dynamic nature of a public space with diverse elements and a mutual tolerance

framework, establishing a crossover narrative between the religious and the secular

rapprochements (Cloke et al., 2016; O'Mahony, 2018).

However, many community members, particularly those who have been long-time

residents in the neighbourhood, point out that the relatively smooth transition from religious to

secular functions can be attributed to these sites' history of hosting events that were inclusive and

welcoming to everyone, including the non-religious population. Many worship spaces contribute

to regional development by supporting welfare provision for both secular and religious

communities' needs, which established a cultural landscape that benefits the secularization of these

spaces. These churches, which once served as the focal points of their communities and embraced

every member, have evidently provided a profound sense of belonging to all the local residents.

Their buildings carry significant socio-cultural importance and play a crucial role in maintaining community cohesion in the postsecular age.

4.2.4 Benefits for the Research Sites and HCD

The majority of informants acknowledged that adaptive reuse has brought numerous benefits to the research site buildings and the HCDs. First and foremost, these repurposing projects have undoubtedly extended the buildings' lifespans, enabling them to once again actively contribute to their communities. In comparison to churches' dropping financial support, the revenue brought by the adaptive reuse projects has ensured the quality of physical maintenance by covering such direct costs (Ashworth, 2009). On the other hand, heritage conservation primarily involves preserving the façade of old buildings, particularly the public-facing urban fabric, highlighting its significant benefit within the heritage district as it meets the goal of the HCD designations (City of Ottawa, 2023). While heritage buildings have access to some government funding for preservation work, the transformation into spaces that attract the creative class—such as the artist groups and musician groups—has greatly contributed to the establishment of a more self-sustainable business model for old churches. This transformation has proven beneficial in generating substantial revenues, as many creative class groups have the ability to transform space by producing captivating cultural products and shaping new consumption-scapes (Zukin, 2009; Pratt, 2012; Lynch, 2022).

Despite the United Church's diligent care of its worship space, the building, however, is over 100 years old and requires regular maintenance. Carleton University, following its purchase, has undertaken substantial renovations to address these issues, including replacing the boilers and the roof, as well as the renovation of upstairs classrooms. Notably, the university's commitment to modernization is evident in the installation of a new internet service in the mechanical room,

enhancing networking capabilities throughout the building. Furthermore, a brand-new electrical system has also been installed in the building to support the theatre (sanctuary) since the old system "could not even provide enough power to run the air conditioners at the same time" (Interview 9).

Although Dominion-Chalmers is protected by the Ontario Heritage Act as a building in the Centretown HCD, locating in an HCD does not prevent the historical homes from potential disrepair, as noted by Interviewee 9. Many interviewees view Carleton University as a commendable caretaker for the building because a post-secondary educational institution has "more financial power" to keep up with the maintenance when needed (Interview 3, 6, 8). During interviews, CDCC explained that they only partially operate on funding from the university, with a large portion of their revenues generated from rentals, such as hosting events and gatherings. The collaboration between a repurposed church building and a university is innovative, and CDCC has undoubtedly succeeded in ensuring the physical maintenance of the building, thereby prolonging its lifespan and allowing it to continue contributing to its community. For instance, the Carleton team responded promptly to a flooding issue that happened in the winter of 2020, where the water went through three floors and damaged an entire wall of their library room. The wall was replaced quickly, and these quick repairs prevented further damage to the building (Interview 9). The Dominion-Chalmers building, through its repurposing project, receives timely repair and maintenance, a crucial aspect considering that the lack of maintenance can often result in the phenomenon known as "demolition by neglect" (Newman & Saginor, 2014). Additionally, the upkeep of individual buildings contributes to the preservation of a section of the Heritage Conservation District (HCD) and its unique features.

For All Saints, the adaptive reuse project proved successful in attracting investments to establish a creative business, ensuring the sustained maintenance of the building after the church

could no longer support it. According to the owner of All Saints, the business was established with

a primary focus on utilizing the heritage aspect of the building, viewing it not just as a community

asset but also as a potential financial asset (Interview 3). The All Saints Event Space is designed

to ensure the commercial viability of this heritage building, fostering its long-term development

in the future.

When asked about how the transformation of All Saints has benefited the building and the

HCD, a community member emphasized the significant contribution to the HCD by preserving the

building's appearance as an integral part of the heritage landscape on Laurier Ave. Another long-

term resident of Sandy Hill echoed this sentiment, stating:

> [The adaptive reuse project] does benefit the neighbourhood because it allows the neighbourhood [to keep its vibe]… We tend to forget the importance of history through the built form, whether it's through individual houses or through places of worship. It (the reuse) allows the building and the land to remain in the community (Interview 4).

In the case of St. Brigid's, as mentioned above, the church's closure resulted from the financial

strain of restoring two other catholic churches in Ottawa, indicating that the diocese could no

longer sustain St. Brigid's. However, the transformation into an arts centre has generated new

revenue, supporting building operation and maintenance for over a decade. During the interviews,

informants revealed that the most recent tentative sale of St. Brigid's was not prompted by

significant financial difficulties but rather concerns about management and operational future. The

owner clarified the situation, stating:

> The revenue was not going down, it was [actually] going up… initially [when we first opened] we had none. And you know, let's say, people [then] became aware of this space, and they got the artists in here. I got the venue rental [for] weddings too…So everything was going well, actually getting better until it (COVID-19) hit…The revenue was slowly becoming tighter for the budget for the building (Interview 12).

The thriving existence of St. Brigid's Centre for the Arts in Lowertown for over 10 years after the church's deconsecration is a testament to its success as a creative space. As the owner has highlighted, artists increasingly utilized the space as awareness of the venue grew (Interview 12). Moreover, the reopening of St. Brigid's Centre for the Arts post-pandemic further proves the sustainability of its adaptive reuse model.

4.2.5 Heritage Designation—A Mixed Blessing

While many informants were supportive of heritage designations because they ensure the conservation and preservation of the buildings, others raised concerns that heritage designation does not prevent the demolition of the buildings. One informant commented:

> [Heritage] designation does not guarantee that nothing can happen. I myself have witnessed a couple of times in Ottawa heritage properties that simply somehow burned down anyway… Although you can take comfort in that [the] church has a heritage designation, you can't be positive that [the building] will hold up (Interview 2).

Moreover, several informants also pointed out that demolition by neglect is still a threat to the designated buildings (Interview 2, 4, 16). Some old buildings "have been neglected, and nobody knows what to do with them, and then eventually they get torn down" (Interview 4). Especially with those designated heritage buildings, sometimes people "become afraid to bring, or are unable to bring any modification" and neglect them too. Even for the designated churches in a heritage district, it is still "extremely hard to come up with a usage pattern that will maintain it at a heritage level," and the buildings often end up with demolition by neglect (Interview 16). Therefore, heritage designation needs to be balanced with "a certain level of caution" because although the rules and protections for the buildings are meant to preserve the heritage, they have "that kind of counterproductive effect of turning off people like you and me to create [new] space" and create a

perception that a building "will be difficult to maintain, or it will be expensive to maintain, [which] limits what can be done from a building conversion" (Interview 4).

While each of the case study sites has embraced creative uses for old churches, heritage designation is sometimes portrayed as a distinct barrier, or as one interviewee explained, "[it] puts cuffs on their hands" (Interview 12). Throughout my fieldwork, multiple informants consistently emphasized that St. Brigid's has been hamstrung by its rare interior heritage designation. St. Brigid's cannot change its interior design and general aesthetics — details such as the murals, pews, windows, and the altar are all designated, and making changes to them will require government permission. Many of my informants (including those who were interviewed for researching All Saints and CDCC) have raised concerns that the interior heritage designation seems to be "hindering the redevelopment" of St. Brigid's as "it has limited what can be done with the sanctuary space and its destination," which is going to "further lower the chance of this church to 'survive properly'" (Interview 11). From the informant's perspective, St. Brigid's must contend with competition from other similarly styled creative-use venues in the area, including CDCC and All Saints. Reducing limitations on potential space use could enhance St. Brigid's appeal to catering groups and improve its competitive position. As Ashworth (2009) argued, "development opportunities forgone" such as missing out on chances of adaptive reuse due to the building's heritage status, is a type of indirect cost of the asset.

For instance, the fixed placement of pews, mandated by heritage designation, limits options for reuse, particularly for adaptations that require large, open spaces. Presently, the most practical use for these immovable pews is to be set up as the audience seats for art events such as concerts or performances. While the architectural structure enhances the acoustics, making it "exceptional for classic music singing," the owner, following the church's purchase in 2007, installed a new

sound system to improve the audience experience across various types of performances (Interview 12). However, a concert attendee described the seating experience at St. Brigid's as "the most uncomfortable" they had encountered during a concert (Interview 2). Moreover, statues depicting crucifixion and saints/venerable, along with murals of bible stories are also protected by the heritage designation and cannot be altered. Therefore, these religious elements unavoidably feature in all events held in St. Brigid's. While most informants told me that St. Brigid's has adeptly accommodated both religious and secular elements, and the deconsecrated church has served secular purposes for over a decade, some people still "found it disturbing to be confronted by such religious iconic figures," and the religious elements might "have limited some of the use of the sanctuary" (Interview 11).

Despite varying reactions to St. Brigid's interior heritage designation, it is recognized that different perspectives exist within the community. One informant held the opinion that the religious elements in St. Brigid's could indeed be seen as an attractive feature, instead of a liability, since the churches in contemporary cities act not only as (current/former) worship spaces but also as museums, reflecting the areal history (Interview 10). As highlighted by Clark (2007), the existence of church buildings encapsulates layers of history, personal stories, and community memory. Furthermore, the owner of St. Brigid's also agreed that, to some extent, the preservation of the exterior and interior of St. Brigid's could be seen as an advantage when it comes to supporting local tourism as well as preserving important historical architectural features. Additionally, the display of religious elements can also be seen as a part of "performative geography" to highlight the ongoing interplay between secular and sacred values (Lynch & LeDrew, 2020).

Although St. Brigid's seems to be often limited by its heritage designation when exploring adaptive reuse possibilities, The United People of Canada (TUPOC) successfully painted the church doors (originally blue) red colour during their occupation of the building, which has upset many local residents. When asked about TUPOC's alternation on St. Brigid's doors, a heritage planner explained that although St. Brigid's doors are designated properties and are protected by the Act, the designation did not specify the colour of the doors. In other words, TUPOC would need permission for the alternation if they were to replace the doors, but they do not need permission from the City of Ottawa to change the colour of the original doors (Interview 15).

4.2.6 Finance and Government Support

During my interviews, several informants highlighted that financing has consistently posed a challenge for the redevelopment of All Saints, given the need for renovations and the substantial cost associated with maintaining a heritage building. However, this concern appears to have become more pronounced for All Saints in recent times. A community member, who was previously also a shareholder, disclosed that profitability was elusive for All Saints, and even years after the purchase, they were still "bleeding plenty of money" (Interview 2). As mentioned earlier, the pandemic exacerbated the difficulties faced by All Saints, and the "lack of real management consistency," as pointed out by the former shareholder, further hindered the stabilization of All Saints' financial income.

The owner particularly emphasized that, while the physical infrastructure of All Saints presents a barrier in the redevelopment process, financial support would be instrumental in addressing the challenges and crises faced by All Saints (Interview 3).

Similarly, an informant for St. Brigid's also mentioned finances as "probably the biggest issue" since renovation and maintenance costs are the biggest challenge for adaptive reuse churches. Repurposed churches are expensive, not only because of the potentially high cost of purchasing them but also because of the financial input required to maintain them (Interview 10). As a professional in heritage conservation, the same informant also commented: "You always need to repair something," and issues like the air conditioning installation and roof repair are always costly for these heritage buildings.

Compared to All Saints, St. Brigid's faces even bigger financial challenges as the building is physically bigger, which leads to more intense maintenance. Additionally, maintaining the interiors (the murals, pews, organ, etc.,) also requires considerable financial investment. The owner explained that they had spent over a million dollars on restoration work after purchasing the church in 2007 (Interview 12).

While heritage sites are eligible to apply for funding for maintenance and preservation, informants for both St. Brigid's and All Saints, as privately owned buildings, expressed that the funding available is far from sufficient. A heritage conservation professional also bluntly remarked that "the Canadian government does not have deep pockets, nor does the Canadian public" when it comes to funding for heritage conservation (Interview 16). In 2024, five Canada-wide cultural heritage organizations (Canadian Association of Heritage Professionals, Canadian Museums Association, Indigenous Heritage Circle, ICOMOS Canada, and the National Trust for Canada) and the Professional Association of Canadian Theatres (PACT) expressed disappointment in the federal budget, citing a clear lack of recognition and funding for the cultural heritage spaces (CMA, 2024; PACT, 2024). Some professionals acknowledge that the different priorities in provinces and

cities, for example, focusing on building new housing, can also lead to the neglect of heritage conservation (CBC News, 2023).

Meanwhile, policies such as the property tax regulations have also become frustrating for All Saints, as it does not offset any of the building's restoration costs. On the other hand, the owner of All Saints mentioned that obtaining support from banks could also be a challenge due to the magnitude of dealing with the reuse of a heritage building like All Saints and the intricacies involved in a corporate-structural operation (Interview 3). Similarly, St. Brigid's also struggles with the property tax since the building became a taxable commercial property after it was sold to private hands. As a building that bears a heritage stamp, which applies many restrictions for alterations, compared to the substantial work and financial investment needed to maintain St. Brigid's, the available funding just "doesn't really financially help" (Interview 12).

As buildings that are over 100 years old, the case sites in this research have been facing challenges of physical upkeep. Moreover, the repurposing of these buildings has introduced a new dimension of competition. The similar nature of their adaptive reuse and their target customer groups overlapping have turned these sites into competitors. According to several informants, the redevelopment projects of these sites are constantly measured against each other, creating a competitive environment that demands ongoing improvements. While improvements are good, they also come at a significant financial cost, placing added strains on these heritage buildings. For example, upon its purchase, All Saints lacked air conditioning, which prompted concerns about potential competition from Dominion-Chalmers (who already had installed air conditioners). A community member from Sandy Hill highlighted that air conditioning was "a big thing and would make a huge difference to who would rent the building for cultural events" given its desirability in Ottawa's summertime. Ottawa hosts numerous music festivals during the summer, making

investments in air conditioning systems for performance spaces a strategic move likely to yield favourable returns (Interview 2).

4.3 Religious Heritage Reuse in a Postsecular Time

4.3.1 Community Attachment: Religious Buildings and their Secular Friends

This study highlights that, beyond their original purpose of serving local parishioners, churches, built as community centers, have significantly impacted non-religious residents over the years. These churches, functioning as community hubs, have played a vital role in preserving collective memories within their neighbourhoods. Community members, regardless of their religious affiliations, express a deep fondness for the heritage buildings as they mention their family memories involved with these churches. Their openness about their attachment underscores the integral role of cultural heritage sites in shaping local place images and contributing to the identity of the community (Ashworth, 2013; Mirsirlisoy & Gunce, 2016). Several community members expressed joy in knowing that these buildings continue to stand within the community, affectionately referring to them as "handsome buildings" (Interview 2). This sentiment echoes the emotional attachment experienced by visitors to the Swedish History Museum's religious heritage exhibition (Hyltén-Cavallius, 2018). This section explores how the communities respond to the adaptive reuse projects in these buildings that carry their cultural identity and sense of belonging. Moreover, the communities' efforts in purchasing and transforming their historic religious buildings in this study exemplify a grassroots approach to heritage conservation, challenging the traditionally dominant voice of elite groups in heritage preservation (Tunbridge, 1984).

The director of Carleton Dominion-Chalmers Centre described their mission as an art centre and community hub as "carrying the torch forward." This vision acknowledges the important role that music and a sense of community have played in the historical development of Dominion-Chalmers, and Carleton University is committed to preserving and perpetuating this cherished community spirit.

For the members of the United Church congregation, the building holds profound significance as their sacred space for almost a century. Despite the aging of the structure, the director acknowledges that "there was a lot of love [that] went into this building." Before Carleton's acquisition, the United Church not only utilized the building for its own activities but also opened its doors to the wider community by renting the space for numerous local events. This inclusivity fostered connections between community members and the building, regardless of their affiliation with the United Church.

Many non-religious community members have engaged with the building by hosting diverse events. For example, Dominion-Chalmers has been a host venue for two major music festivals in Ottawa every summer for approximately 20 years. Despite the non-religious nature of these festivals, the Ottawa musician community recognizes Dominion-Chalmers as a central stage for artistic performances. The popularity of the concerts is evident from people queuing for hours to purchase tickets, attributing CDCC's success in hosting these festivals to the church's history as a welcoming space in the Ottawa community (Interview 7). Beyond music festivals, the United Church has facilitated various community events within the building, such as hosting federal and municipal elections, community bazaars, afternoon teas, and holiday events. The church's commitment to providing support, including food and shelter, further underscores Dominion-Chalmers' deep integration into the lives and collective memory of the local community.

In Sandy Hill, as the student population increases with the expansion of the University of Ottawa, many old houses in the area have been turned into multi-unit housing aimed at accommodating the rising number of students. However, the designation of Heritage Conservation Districts, as emphasized by the Ontario Heritage Trust, is intended to safeguard not just physical heritage characteristics but also the cultural heritage, landscapes, diversity of lifestyles and traditions of the people in an area. Many community members in Sandy Hill West have expressed concerns about the impact of higher-density housing developments on the heritage landscape within this HCD. As highlighted by Ashworth (2009), heritage is increasingly expected to serve as a wealth generator, attracting developers keen on converting heritage sites into profitable ventures. When All Saints Anglican Church was listed for sale, the community members were apprehensive about the possibility of it "getting into the hands of an unscrupulous developer" (Interview 2). In response, the purchase of All Saints became a collective effort from the community investors in Sandy Hill and business investors from Alberta. This adaptive reuse initiative reflects a "strong community ethos" as it shows that "people who live here feel quite a bit of concern about how the community is surviving (Interview 2).

The informant who has lived in Sandy Hill West for 32 years explained the impact of church transformation on the community: while she was never a big "church go-er", as someone who has been very active in community affairs, she recognizes the church as an "important pillar in the community" and carries collective memories:

> I don't go to church, but All Saints Church is an important pillar in the community, and I often supported the church with [things like] attending various fundraisers, et cetera. And I have good friends who attend this church, and then I also sang in the choir. Occasionally, I enjoy singing and have great choral music and do things like that. And we rented the hall for a couple of big, important events in our lives. And so it was quite a plus. My mother, when she moved to the area, was a very stalwart member of that church, so I certainly didn't want to see it demolished…I'm just glad

that the church is still here. Maybe I'll have my funeral in it if we can afford it. (Interview 2)

In 2007, Patrick McDonald and a group of friends purchased St. Brigid's, not driven by financial motives but, as one informant stated, out of "philanthropic reasons" (Interview 13). Beyond the financial considerations, the decision was deeply rooted in personal connections, including the fact that the owner's wife shares the name Brigid, and his Irish hometown also boasts a "St. Brigid's" church. The acquisition of this Irish-themed church, the first of its kind in the city, was influenced by emotional bonds and cultural backgrounds. St. Brigid's Roman Catholic Church held significant importance as a centre for the Irish community in Ottawa, reflecting the idea that historical and heritage buildings provide authenticity, identity, and a sense of place through years of continuous use (Zukin, 1982). Additionally, resonating with Lo Faro and Miceli's research (2019), St. Brigid's, as a religious heritage building, is strongly connected to the Irish community, acting as a carrier of collective memory and a provider of cultural identity. Moreover, this church has "historically been a heart of the hero to the community" since it not only welcomed religious groups, but also offered its sanctuary for events in Lowertown like barbecues, cake sales, and different kinds of fundraisers (Interview 12, 13). Following the purchase in 2007, Patrick and his friends expanded the concept of this space and opened it up to the entire city as a community center. It quickly became a popular venue for hosting concerts, art exhibitions and weddings. While both the church and St. Brigid's Centre for the Arts function as gathering places, one informant commented that compared to when it was just a Catholic church, "St. Brigid's (Centre for the Arts) provides a better sense of belonging for the local arts community and also Irish community" (Interview 13). To many residents in Lowertown, the church is not just a landmark; it holds significance both physically and emotionally.

4.3.2 Religious Heritage Reuse: Bon Reuse, Bad Reuse

Diverse opinions and controversies surround the repurposing of old churches, with voices expressing sentiments like "Why bother?" and "Whatever happens to the old churches (is fine)," since some people hold the opinion that preserving religious heritage might serve as a reminder of the ongoing colonial experience for the Indigenous community, especially given Canada's history of residential schools (Interview 1, 9). However, despite these differing perspectives, the conversion of the three churches in this study has predominantly garnered positive responses from their local neighbourhoods and communities as they continue to serve as community-based public spaces, much like they did when under religious ownership, instead of being privatized. As Lynch (2016) argued, while the privatization of heritage properties, such as church loft conversions, can be beneficial to retaining historic urban fabric, it limits the potential for wider public engagement in heritage conservation efforts.

Reflecting on the Dominion-Chalmers Centre, one informant who represents a non-profit organization shared, "All of us who rented the space was nervous, and there were rumours…[we] were worried [to be] turfed out or the rent was going to go skyrocketing" (Interview 5), as they had to consider the possibility of having to find alternative venues if CDCC has become less financially accessible. Fortunately, they were offered very reasonable rents to stay in the building and continue thriving in Centretown. The non-profit organization's concern was warranted, as a historical building like Dominion-Chalmers would be suitable for capitalization through repackaging its heritage features.

The community expressed both excitement and concerns about the reuse of Dominion-Chalmers post-sale, uncertain about the subsequent processes (Interview 7). Worries were

particularly centred around the potential loss of the venue for music performances since the building has hosted music festivals for years, holding important significance in the local musicians' community. Musicians, as a part of the creative class seeking spaces that fulfill their "profound urge that desires openness, acceptance, learning, and belonging to a community" (Cartwright, 2017), found CDCC to be the place that provides them with such acceptance and belonging. It has been a home for not only the United Church but also the musician group.

Congregation members were apprehensive about the transition from building owners to tenants, with some expressing dissatisfaction with the decision to sell (Interview 5). It was not an easy decision for the United Church congregation to sell the building, but as a congregation member said, despite how much hope could be given to people, they eventually realized that the church would soon not be able to afford the building (Interview 6). Compared to many other churches that faced similar challenges, where the congregation must merge and leave their own worship building, the congregation member said that the United Church is fortunate enough because they still call the same building home (Interview 6). Having the United Church stay as a tenant in the building was part of the purchase deal for Carleton—and now the congregation can continue the worship service, but do not have to worry about the physical maintenance anymore, which is a huge relief for the dwindling donation.

Fortunately, as mentioned before, Carleton University recognized the importance of accommodating and fostering connections among these different groups. Community members consistently praise the director of CDCC, Mara Brown, highlighting her exceptional leadership in transforming the building (Interview 5, 6). Participants in the transformation process express overwhelmingly positive sentiments about their experience.

The benefits extend to the university community as well. With a newfound performance space capable of seating approximately 1000 people, Carleton has addressed a longstanding limitation—the absence of on-campus venues accommodating more than 400 individuals. According to Carleton University (2023), this large performance space not only meets the demands of the university's expanding music program but also fulfills the needs of various other departments. Moreover, the acquisition of Dominion-Chalmers has positioned Carleton University as a prominent contributor to the downtown community, actively participating in Ottawa's cultural and artistic events (Interview 5, 6, 7, 8). The converted church serves as a hub for musical events, fostering creative community engagement in a well-maintained heritage building.

Beyond musical performances, the building is utilized for classes, lectures, and community outreach programs, serving as an excellent gathering space. The university conducts classes and lectures upstairs, providing an opportunity for both students and community members to engage in educational and cultural activities.

Notably, the community composition has evolved since Carleton acquired the building. Young people, particularly students studying music at the university, are increasingly utilizing the space. While the church was always open to users of all ages, there is a discernible rise in participation from younger individuals, notably young musicians (Interview 5, 6). Carleton's commitment to inclusivity extends beyond its own Faculty of Arts and Social Science, reaching a diverse range of professionals, including engineers, journalists, and businesspeople. In addition, the ability to gather in such a public space and feel the inspiration of art events not only aids community cohesion but also marks the place as a creative space where creativity is produced and consumed, aligning with research by Cartwright (2017) and Ley (1996). Carleton's commitment

to opening the space to more varieties of user groups aligns with its educational and university requirements and mandates.

In conclusion, Carleton University's strategic approach to acquiring and repurposing Dominion-Chalmers United Church has not only addressed space constraints but has also become a catalyst for community engagement, cultural events, and educational outreach. The positive impact is evident in the diverse user groups, the vibrant cultural scene, and the strengthened ties between the university and the broader community.

In the case of All Saints, the local community was deeply concerned about the church's future when it was put up for sale. A community member said that they "were going to be the Nimby [and be unhappy about the transformation of the heritage community building] " if the developers were going to "put some really iffy thing on the top of the beautiful old building and [be] totally disrespect[ful]" (Interview 4). However, the community's apprehension turned to satisfaction upon learning that All Saints Event Space had taken over the church with the intent to turn it into a community hub.

From the interviews, several informants agreed that All Saints had become a nice "hangout place" in Sandy Hill, since there are "limited choices of nice places to go" in a student housing area (Interview 2). One informant commented that All Saints' quality dining is an amazing addition to a low-income area like Sandy Hill because it "help[s] to diversify the types of venues that are available to those who reside [here]," and it is nice to "have a different option at a different price point and for different types of activities" (Interview 4). Although some families of the Anglican congregation were "bitter about this [transformation]," the converted church building has undeniably benefited the community. It not only contributes to heritage preservation but also revitalizes the building, making it "lively again" (Interview 2). An informant commented:

Oh, we loved going to that bazaar [hosted by the church]…As I mentioned, they also had a concert there once a month, I think, and people from all over the place came to that. That was really well attended… Anybody was welcome to that, although they sometimes staged concerts or performances late at night…I think the community is very glad and proud that the church is still there, and it looks the same. (Interview 2)

While the repurposed church continues to be welcoming, it has expanded its demographic reach beyond the Anglican congregation. This church's appeal to tourists, coupled with its openness to both religious and non-religious groups, has broadened its community engagement (Interview 2, 3, 4). Notably, the introduction of quality dining has attracted a more diverse customer base, including relatively high-income patrons. In summary, the All Saints case demonstrates the successful repurposing of a church into a community hub, overcoming initial concerns and contributing positively to both the heritage preservation and the social and economic dynamics of Sandy Hill.

Since its purchase in 2007, St. Brigid's aimed to be a cultural centre for the Irish community in Ottawa, but its role has evolved beyond its initial cultural mandate. As various groups utilized the space for events, it quickly became a hub for the arts community in Ottawa and a central point for Lowertown residents. Numerous artists launching exhibitions in St. Brigid's have not only developed their careers within its walls but have also contributed to attracting tourists to Lowertown through exhibitions and concerts.

The introduction of Brigid's Well, a pub established as a safe and inclusive space for everyone, broadened the demographic engagement with Lowertown surpassing conventional boundaries of regular bar areas (Interview 12). According to the owner, the pub was intended to be "a safe space for everyone—despite gender, sex, or ethnicity" (Interview 12). St. Brigid's, now considered an iconic landmark, is celebrated by the community as a positive community influence,

and "people were then and continue to be delighted to see it being used in a positive way" (Interview 11).

During the interviews, community members expressed their gratitude for the augmented availability and accessibility of community centres in Lowertown, emphasizing their significance in a historically rich residential area that has been notably lacking in cultural facilities (Interview 13). They look forward to having more community centres and more accessible community centres in Lowertown. Compared to the newly developed suburban areas, Lowertown, as one of the oldest residential areas in the city, however, has very few cultural facilities, while the cultural community facilities are a "really important addition to the [local] culture" (Interview 13). On the other hand, compared to when it was a church, St. Brigid's as a secular building "has brought in all sorts of events which would [might] not be [here before]," such as same-sex marriages and events that involved serving liquor (Interview 10, 12).

However, recent developments have introduced a complex narrative of the adaptive reuse of St. Brigid's. The conditional acquisition of St. Brigid's by The United People of Canada (TUPOC) in the summer of 2022 sparked community concerns. TUPOC claimed St. Brigid's as their 'embassy.' Controversy soon arose regarding TUPOC's association with the Canada Convoy Protest (Freedom Convoy) in early 2022, particularly given the significant impact of the protest on Lowertown (Rana, 2022; Taekema, 2022). Residents contested TUPOC's presence in the area, with an informant expressing concern that it was a disrespectful way of reusing the community's religious heritage building that connects to the members' collective memory (Interview 11).

The situation escalated as TUPOC faced eviction due to a lack of rent payment, prompting discussions on platforms such as Reddit. TUPOC's response to protests, involving water guns and threats to arrest, further strained community relations (Crawford, 2022; Woods, 2022).

Despite the disturbances introduced by TUPOC, the incident has catalyzed widespread interest in supporting the repurposed church. Community groups, alongside local officials and news media, have actively deliberated on the future reuse of St. Brigid's, emphasizing the aspiration for a community-driven approach (Blewett, 2022; Jhalli, 2022; Pringle, 2022).

St. Brigid's case acts as a profound reminder of the intricate interplay between heritage preservation and community engagement in repurposing religious heritage buildings. The TUPOC episode has spurred renewed interest in preserving and respecting the heritage of St. Brigid's within the community, thereby incentivizing collective efforts to explore future possibilities for the building's reuse. As an informant commented:

> TUPOC helped us quite a bit by elevating the conversation around St. Brigid's [reuse], and now there [are] a lot of interests [in reusing the building]…and now we can look at all the possibilities we have, and there's interests [from] some people in power. (Interview 13)

4.3.3 Challenges of the Reusing Religious Heritage

To be sure, adaptive reuse has saved heritage buildings for these communities, and many people have benefited from the transformations. However, the relationship between the converted church and its community can also be challenging. This study reveals that the buildings reused by various organizations sometimes struggle with balancing working for profit and their obligations to the community.

With all the wonderful results following the transformation, it was mentioned by some community members that, despite how inclusive the spaces are trying to be, the low-income and homeless populations are often being overlooked—while they are indeed also members of the communities. For example, one informant said that while Dominion-Chalmers United Church used to provide food and shelter for the homeless people in the area, Carleton Dominion-Chalmers

Centre does not have a soup kitchen anymore (Interview 5). Similarly, while All Saints aims at reclaiming the space and building the community around the repurposed building, and all the informants agreed that the owner of All Saints had done an excellent job of reaching out and working with the community, several community members have pointed out that the price for their quality dining is not affordable for most residents in the area (particularly the student population). One informant felt that the church "was probably more for the community than the current setup" because affordability plays a role in deciding who uses the current space (Interview 2, 4). In addition, social enterprises that combine community investors and business investors also present challenges on the management level. In other cases where non-profit social enterprise took the leadership role for the building, tension existed between the congregation and other stakeholders as they worried about the religiosity of the building becoming "compromised" (Lynch & LeDrew, 2020: 13). In All Saints' case, however, the tension was between the community investors and business investors. A community member expressed a complicated feeling after being a shareholder of All Saints: first of all, the community was so happy when they heard that the heritage building was being bought by someone from the community that barely anyone realized that it was a profit-oriented organization, and the community shareholders have different expectations for All Saints from the business investors who were bluntly "in this for the business, not charity." The community investors indeed expected the building to be for "community use." Secondly, the potential conflict of interest was problematic at formal shareholder meetings, where people might have established personal relationships before they became shareholders of this company. The informant felt "confusing" to sit at a shareholder meeting with "people from the community who know each other" because the meeting became "partly very friendly, yet it was also business" (Interview 2).

The church in St. Brigid's also used to provide shelter to homeless people in the community, and the building can no longer do so as it has been converted into a performance space. On the other hand, the informants for St. Brigid's have also mentioned the space users' sometimes concerns regarding safety in the area. Many informants, including the owner, have mentioned that although homelessness and drug addiction should not be stigmatized, potential audiences for the art exhibitions or concerts in St. Brigid's are often concerned about the building's surrounding environment due to some "street people and street drugs" (Interview 10, 13). There are many shelters built around the building since the church used to provide food and shelter to people in need in the Lowertown area, and a 24/7 supervised injection site opened in Lowertown a few years ago (CBC, 2017). One informant pointed out that "the proximity to our growing population has really put pressure on businesses [in the area], including the church," and St. Brigid's has always been dealing with issues of trespassing and vandalism, which brings even more challenges to preserving this heritage building (Interview 11). Some community members are also hoping to connect with Patrick more, as they see this owner of St. Brigid's as a "quiet guy" who does not reach out to the Lowertown community for help when the building faces challenging situations (Interview 10, 11). As one informant commented, compared to Dominion-Chalmers and All Saints, St. Brigid's was less creative in reaching out to new customers in the community, while the Lowertown community members really want to help keep the church in their neighbourhood and watch it thrive again (Interview 11).

Chapter 5 Conclusion

5.1 Summary

This project examined the socio-cultural impacts of worship space conversion on community cohesion and the role of church adaptive reuse in connecting heritage, creative, and postsecular urbanism through qualitative interviews with 16 key informants. The study's central finding indicates that repurposed churches serve as crucial spaces bridging the secular and religious worlds. Their transformation significantly impacts their respective communities' sense of belonging and cultural identity. Overall, the informants for this study acknowledge the benefits of adaptively reusing worship spaces as part of a key process in preserving heritage buildings and maintaining community cohesion. And yet, these stakeholders also expressed apprehension about privatizing religious heritage and emphasized the need for respectful, bottom-up heritage conservation practices to benefit both the buildings and residents.

Beyond these important insights, I have shed light on how the redevelopment of religious buildings through creative urbanism and heritage urbanism shapes modern urban landscapes. This work focuses on the challenges and benefits of religious heritage reuse and its effect on communities' sense of belonging, further contributing to the evolution of the postsecular city – an increasingly relevant character and condition of contemporary urbanism. The key takeaway of this paper is that the interconnectedness of postsecular, heritage, and creative urbanism through church adaptive reuse can benefit not only heritage conservation but, more importantly, support community cohesion.

5.2 Concluding Remarks

Overall, this project highlights the interconnected relationships among religious heritage, creative reuse, secular reuse and community cohesion. Creative reuse and religious heritage can be effective partners, as creative approaches offer sustainable business models to heritage buildings, and the heritage aspect of the buildings serves as an attraction for developing creative use. However, heritage designation can unintentionally limit the creativity of reuse in these buildings as the rules can sometimes create false perceptions, such as the notion that maintaining the buildings will be difficult or too expensive.

Secular reuse, a subset of creative reuse, can lead to complex situations in formerly sacred spaces. Reused churches, as arenas for the co-existence of secular and religious values, reveal persistent challenges such as differing public feelings towards the exhibition of religious iconography when at secular events, and the colonial history of the church in Canada.

Returning to my research questions in Chapter 1, my research demonstrates the importance of religious heritage buildings to their communities. Despite challenges during redevelopment, repurposing religious heritage buildings into spaces for public gatherings is significant as it allows the buildings to continue acting as repositories of local collective memory and places that support a local sense of belonging. The cases of reuse explored in this work also highlight an ongoing appeal by communities for maintaining public accessibility to their heritage buildings and a request for sustained discussions and respectful approaches regarding future reuse. Moreover, community efforts to purchase or financially support religious heritage buildings are only the beginning. Initiatives such as establishing heritage conservation apprenticeship projects in schools to partner with the communities can benefit the students, buildings and community members simultaneously. My cases here highlight the importance of collaboration between the communities and historic churches. As mentioned in Chapter 2,

Ontario is not the only province facing the challenge of church closure. The idea of communities cooperating with their religious heritage buildings can be a viable practice for both community building and heritage conservation.

5.3 Future Suggestions

Throughout the interviews, many informants addressed their ideas and suggestions regarding the adaptive reuse of heritage buildings, and some described their visions of the future of these buildings. First, the local public sector stakeholders, including community groups and public sector experts, argued that the Ontario provincial and municipal governments need to work together to update and mend the heritage conservation policies in order to better protect heritage sites and help them fully develop the potential for reuse. For example, the exterior designation of St. Brigid's was blatantly ignored by TUPOC during their occupancy of the property. Not only did this group repaint the church doors but they also hung organizational banners, practices that severely impacted the cultural significance of the building. On the other hand, interior designations hinder the creative reuse of transformed spaces and lower their value compared to other similar sites in the city. St. Brigid's is not only municipally designated (by the City of Ottawa) but is also protected at the provincial level by an Ontario Heritage Trust conservation easement, as various parts of the building fall under different designation policies. Regulations and enforcement from different levels of the government will be needed if St. Brigid's needs to get untangled from some of the out-of-date protection rules and regulations.

Second, heritage places need much more financial support and incentives than they currently have (Shipley, Utz & Parsons, 2006). As a heritage planner mentioned, one of the most challenging aspects of conserving a church is to balance "the conservation of what makes a

church important with financial implications," since although the conservation of the building's cultural significance is vital, the cost of maintenance and upkeep of these church buildings is high (Interview 15). While many stakeholders of repurposed churches are working towards being financially self-sustaining, they are still in need of more financial support from all levels of government because of the costly maintenance. The owners and communities are also calling for tax breaks for businesses in heritage buildings to relieve financial pressures, since operating in a building with designation poses more restrictions to the business development than being in a regular, undesignated building.

Last, as one informant pointed out, if anyone wants to reuse the churches to benefit the local community, then the community needs to be "on board" (Interview 14). As many researchers have highlighted, the idea of split governance of repurposed facilities can help with expanding the funding and community activity types (Urbaniak, 2018; Lynch & LeDrew, 2020). Developing better means of integrating community efforts and establishing a socially sustainable model to support heritage conservation requires a collective effort from the new owners of the heritage buildings and their communities. Reviving a building and making it vibrant again in its community requires more than a top-down heritage planning design. Instead, it is vital that the community join the discussion table and explore the adaptive reuse possibilities of their heritage buildings. For example, one informant envisioned their ideal redevelopment of St. Brigid's as a community hub: a safe and caring space for everyone, from the elders to children, from middle-class families to the homeless population in Lowertown. The informant described the space as providing childcare, a small café with free coffee, and a library that provides computer access to promote self-learning, which aims at helping the homeless population cope with the hard times "they have fallen onto" (Interview 13). Overall, community members know their community's

needs better, and while some ideal designs may be unpractical at the time, these are still valuable

suggestions for better community development and heritage adaptive reuse.

Communities also have tremendous potential to support their buildings—one of the

informants proposed a local initiative where the trade schools and colleges could create co-op

programs for their students by sending their apprentices to help with renovating heritage

buildings using their skills, and the experience from renovation projects and in return, can be a

part of the curriculum. The apprentices can have hands-on practices on site, and the repair works

that need special techniques or materials in heritage buildings can be completed without

excessive costs (Interview 4).

Overall, when asked about what can be done to encourage the adaptive reuse of heritage

buildings, many informants focused on 'making changes' such as calling for mending the

heritage conservation by-laws to keep up with the increased awareness of heritage protection,

increasing government financial supports, and more proactive attitudes toward heritage-

community connections, since the heritage sector now tend to refuse to make changes even when

the communities and advocates make any proposals. One informant who works in the heritage

sector commented:

> I'm advocating for a far more nuanced and educated heritage sector because the
> heritage sector's general principle right now is [saying]'no'…it is really infuriating.
> Very often, the people who are hired into heritage jobs are taught that their jobs [are]
> to say no to everything…That's a super strong statement for me, [and] it is really
> problematic. (Interview 16)

The heritage planner I interviewed has mentioned that the City of Ottawa is working on

potentially changing the heritage designation status of St. Brigid's to encourage better adaptive

reuse, future research can keep an eye out for proposals for potential changes for the easement

from the Ontario Heritage Trust. Another informant who has worked in the heritage conservation

sector for decades also mentioned that they were involved in conversations proposing giving tax incentives to designated buildings several times when they were working in the federal government, however, the answer to the proposals was always a "no" (Interview 10).

5.4 A Note for the Special Time—COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic put a pause on all public events worldwide. Like other businesses that provide service to public gatherings, Dominion-Chalmers, St. Brigid's, and All Saints were affected by the pandemic and lockdowns in Ottawa. Other than the significant decline in rental revenues due to the limitation for gatherings, the pandemic also caused a number of management challenges. For example, CDCC experienced a difficult situation after the rollout of the vaccine mandate and the limitations on indoor spaces. CDCC staff revealed that since the requirements for vaccination proof could be different between religious-based organizations and universities, as a building owned by Carleton University, Dominion-Chalmers had to follow different vaccine mandates from the United Church congregation, which had potentially prevented the congregation from using the building (Interview 6).

Even in the summer, 2022, after all COVID-related mandates were lifted in Ottawa, All Saint is still recovering from the aftermath of the pandemic. While people are slowly returning to larger events and renting the upstairs venue, the impact of the pandemic persists. During the pandemic, the Working Title restaurant in All Saints had to adhere to the mandate of a limited number of customers indoors, significantly affecting their revenues. Moreover, after the Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB) was introduced to assist those facing employment difficulties during the pandemic, it proved to be a "mixed blessing" (Interview 2). Some individuals abused the welfare system, creating challenges for All Saints in retaining employees.

Newly recruited staff, aware of the CERB requirements, often worked only until they met the criteria for CERB applications. An informant mentioned that even the chefs were not staying for long terms, and the "sudden changes" to the take-out menu of All Saints during the pandemic reflected the high turnover rate of staff (Interview 2). Future research can also look into the long-term effects of the pandemic on these repurposed worship spaces.

5.5 Final Thoughts

In April 2024, 18 months after my fieldwork in Ottawa, a research participant connected to St. Brigid's updated me on the building's transformation. In that message, they stressed that "St. Brigid's is still trying to find its role." After the eviction of TUPOC in 2023, St. Brigid's reopened to the public, and Brigid's Well pub resumed operations. However, the quest for St. Brigid's to redefine its purpose highlights the broader challenges faced by postsecular religious heritage buildings. Repurposing churches into public spaces in postsecular times requires balancing multiple and complex considerations.

As heritage buildings, these properties need sustainable financial support to cover maintenance costs. At present, public funding is simply not enough. As former sacred spaces, these buildings could continue to serve both secular and religious communities given that these spaces carry religious memory and serve as a reminder of "religious precepts" to the congregation and the broader community (Clark, 2007: 2). Additionally, as community gathering spaces, they can continue to foster a sense of belonging and be accessible to all community members, regardless of their socio-economic status.

The redevelopment of former worship spaces is a complex and dynamic process that requires balancing the interests of various stakeholders. Without government and community

support, it is nearly impossible for owners to successfully convert, maintain, and develop these religious heritage buildings into vibrant community spaces. Community involvement in the adaptive reuse of worship space is crucial. Not only can it significantly affect local cultural identity, but it also provides unique and valuable insights into how these spaces can best serve community needs. Government support, in turn, fundamentally affects the redevelopment of the buildings. Increased funding or financial incentives available to heritage buildings can encourage their adaptive reuse. Heritage regulations and policies should facilitate the buildings' redevelopment rather than imposing restrictive limitations.

This project has been an emotional journey for me. I have had the privilege of listening to people's wishes and affection for their religious heritage buildings. These buildings belong to their owners, communities, and localities. As Churchill (1943) remarked: "we shape our buildings and afterwards our buildings shape us." Indeed, these potent spaces of the built environment encapsulate the memories of past communities and have the potential to shape the future. I hope this thesis highlights the importance of collective effort in ensuring religious heritage buildings thrive in modern cities.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Recruitment Letter for Key Informants

Date:
Name:
Title:
Address:
Dear [name],

My name is Siyi Zhou, and I am a student in the Department of Geography at Memorial University of Newfoundland specializing in urban geography and heritage research. I am conducting a research project called "Adaptive Reuse of Worship Spaces in Contemporary Heritage Cities: A Tale of Three Churches in Ottawa" for my Master's degree under the supervision of Dr. Nicholas Lynch (Memorial University, Department of Geography) and Dr. Barry Stephenson (Memorial University, Department of Religious Studies). The purpose of the study is to investigate the contribution of adaptive reuse of worship spaces to creating a sense of community, as well as the role of worship spaces' adaptive reuse in shaping contemporary city and urban landscape in a post-secular age.

Your participation is vital to my research and would be appreciated greatly. Your participation involves a 30 to 45-minute interview, consisting of a series of semi-formal questions. The interview would be conducted by myself in person or by telephone, or over video conference. If you are interested in participating in this study, please contact me and we can arrange a meeting time.

Please note that participation is not a condition of employers or organizations, and that the decision to participate or not will not be reported to anyone. Please see below for more information about the project. In addition, if you know anyone who may be interested in participating in this study, please give them a copy of this information.

Thank you in advance for considering my request,

Siyi Zhou

Title: "Adaptive Reuse of Worship Spaces in Contemporary Heritage Cities: A Tale of Three Churches in Ottawa."

Researcher: Siyi Zhou, Master's Student, Department of Geography, email: siyiz@mun.ca
Supervisors: Dr. Nicholas Lynch, Department of Geography, email: nicholasl@mun.ca; phone: 709.864.8413; Dr. Barry Stephenson, Department of Religious Studies, email: bstephenson@mun.ca; phone: 709.864.8113.

Purpose of study:
As with most buildings, churches (worship spaces) have life cycles. Increasingly, worship spaces in Canada are rapidly facing closure due to shrinking congregations, high maintenance costs, and the revaluation of urban and institutional property. Adaptive reuse gives worship spaces an opportunity to continue their life cycle in the modern urban environment.

While the closure of worship spaces has tended to signal a progression of secularization which includes the decline of religious worship, recruiting heritage-rich properties for creative urban processes has been an important trend that is increasingly explored by emerging scholarship. It became clear that all churches that have faced closure are not 'dead'. These buildings are engaged in new pathways along their life cycle – pathways that are both increasingly part of the modern urban landscape and shaping the contemporary city. Beyond simply sites of secularization, the trend of repurposing worship spaces represents a new context, and indeed geography, where secular values co-exist with religious practice and heritage.

Over the last decade, there has been a dramatic increase in the reuse of closed (or partially closed) churches into community hubs, dynamic spaces that provide social housing, community kitchens, community events spaces, and other religious and secular-functions. Reused worship spaces that act as shared spaces for local people to gather and socialize can potentially help regain local sense of belonging and reform communities.

This research investigates how repurposed worship spaces support community cohesion and impact the formation of contemporary urban landscapes.

This research has several key objectives:
1. To understand the contribution of adaptive reuse of worship spaces to creating sense of community.
2. To understand the role of worship spaces adaptive reuse in shaping contemporary city and urban landscape in a post-secular age.

Note: The proposal for this research has been reviewed by the Interdisciplinary Committee on Ethics in Human Research and found to be in compliance with Memorial University's ethics policy. If you have ethical concerns about the research, such as your rights as a participant, you may contact the Chairperson of the ICEHR at icehr.chair@mun.ca or by telephone at 709-864-2861

Appendix B: Informed Consent Form

Title: Adaptive Reuse of Worship Spaces in Contemporary Heritage Cities: A Tale of Three Churches in Ottawa

Researcher: Siyi Zhou, Department of Geography, Memorial University, email: siyiz@mun.ca

Supervisor(s):   Dr. Nicholas Lynch, Assistant Professor, Department of Geography, Memorial University, email: nicholas.lynch@mun.ca; phone: 709.864.8413
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You are invited to take part in a research project entitled *"Adaptive Reuse of Worship Spaces in Contemporary Heritage Cities: A Tale of Three Churches in Ottawa."*

This form is part of the process of informed consent. It should give you the basic idea of what the research is about and what your participation will involve. It also describes your right to withdraw from the study. In order to decide whether you wish to participate in this research study, you should understand enough about its risks and benefits to be able to make an informed decision. This is the informed consent process. Take time to read this carefully and to understand the information given to you. Please contact the researcher, Siyi Zhou, if you have any questions about the study or would like more information before you consent.

It is entirely up to you to decide whether to take part in this research. If you choose not to take part in this research or if you decide to withdraw from the research once it has started, there will be no negative consequences for you, now or in the future.

Introduction:
My name is Siyi Zhou, and I am a student in the Department of Geography at Memorial University of Newfoundland specializing in urban geography and heritage research. I am conducting a research project called "Adaptive Reuse of Worship Spaces in Contemporary Heritage Cities: A Tale of Three Churches in Ottawa" for my Master's degree under the supervision of Dr. Nicholas Lynch (Memorial University, Department of Geography) and Dr. Barry Stephenson (Memorial University, Department of Religious Studies).

Purpose of Study:
Over the last decade, there has been a dramatic increase in the reuse of closed (or partially closed) churches into community hubs, dynamic spaces that provide social housing, community

kitchens, community events spaces, and other religious and secular-functions. Reused worship spaces that act as shared spaces for local people to gather and socialize can potentially help regain local sense of belonging and reform communities.

This research investigates how repurposed worship spaces support community cohesion and impact the formation of contemporary urban landscapes in a heritage city (Ottawa) that has had multiple examples of creative reuse of worship spaces.

This research has several key objectives:

1. To understand the contribution of adaptive reuse of worship spaces to creating sense of community in a heritage city.
2. To understand the role of worship spaces adaptive reuse in shaping contemporary heritage city and urban landscape in a post-secular age.

What You Will Do in this Study:

Your participation is vital to my research and would be appreciated greatly. Participation involves a 30 to 45-minute interview, consisting of a series of semi-formal questions. If you are a public sector stakeholder (for example, a community member), then I will ask you about the challenges and opportunities of redeveloping a worship space in your urban context. If you are an adaptive reuse practitioner/ urban planner/local councilor, I will ask you about your city's local policy and approach to redeveloping and supporting the reuse of worship spaces. If you are a member of the congregation, I will ask you about the challenges and opportunities of redeveloping the worship space in your urban and religious context. Also note that you may skip any question(s) that you do not want to answer. The interview would be conducted by myself in person or by telephone, or over video conference.

Length of Time:

It will take 30 to 45 minutes to complete one interview.

Withdrawal from the Study:

Participation is entirely voluntary and you may refuse to participate or withdraw from the study at any time without jeopardy to you and you may skip any question(s) that you do not want to answer. If you choose to withdraw your participation during the data collection, I will destroy any data collected from you. Please note that you may request to remove your data from the study within two weeks after the interview, by emailing the researcher (siyiz@mun.ca). I will destroy any paper copies of the interview transcript and delete audio recordings of the interview should you request to withdraw your data from the study.

Possible Benefits:

My findings and their dissemination will build awareness about the challenges and societal benefits of the adaptive reuse of worship spaces in Canada. It is imperative that we have a

research-based understanding of the adaptive reuse of worship spaces that intersects with various stakeholders in the process.

Possible Risks:
The risks associated with this research are minimal, however, all information you provide will be treated confidentially. Your name will not appear in any publications stemming from the research, nor will it be associated with any information you provide. No personal or company names, nor direct quotes, will be used in publications and reports unless you give permission. Although the risks associated with this research are minimal, possible negative emotional responses/experiences can be triggered by some questions. If you feel uncomfortable during the interview, you can terminate the interview immediately. The interviewer will provide aid assistance should you need immediate support and help.
If you find yourself distressed after the interviews, please consider contacting your local professional mental health support lines:
- Ottawa and Region Distress Centre
  Distress: 613-238-3311
  Crisis: 613-722-6914 or 1-866-996-0991
  TEXT 343-306-5550 (10am-11pm)
- Telehealth Ontario: 1-866-797-0000
- Canadian Crisis Hotline: 1-888-353-2273
- Crisis Service Canada (toll free, 24/7): 1-833-456-4566
- Canadian Emergency Assistance (toll free, 24/7): 911

Confidentiality:
The ethical duty of confidentiality includes safeguarding participants' identities, personal information, and data from unauthorized access, use, or disclosure. The data from this research project may be used in publications and presentations; however, your identity will be kept confidential. This means that your name will not appear in any publication stemming from the research, nor will it be associated with any information you provide. Although I will report direct quotations from the interview, you will be given a pseudonym, and all identifying information (i.e. name of firm, job title, etc. will be removed from my report).

While I will make every reasonable effort to ensure confidentiality, there are limits to confidentiality in some situations. Because the participants for this research project have been selected from a small group of people, many of whom may be known to each other, it is possible that you may be identifiable to other people on the basis of what you have said or the church site you are associated with.

Anonymity:

Anonymity refers to protecting participants' identifying characteristics, such as name or description of physical appearance. Every reasonable effort will be made to ensure your anonymity, and you will not be identified in publications without your explicit permission.

Recording of Data:
The interview will be recorded using audio recorders during in-person interviews. Audio capture will be employed during remote interviews, and the interviewer will inform the participants to turn off the camera. The recordings will be used to transcribe the text verbatim. Having a transcript of the text allows me to analyze the information I collect through a process known as 'coding'. You may request to stop the recording at any point during the interview. If you would like to stop the recording but proceed with the interview, the interview will continue and I will make handwritten notes. Both myself and my supervisors (for transcription purposes) will have direct access to the recording.

Use, Access, Ownership, and Storage of Data:
I will have access to the raw data (audio recordings). These files will be password protected and the transcriptions will be identified by a code. Our University's policy on Integrity in Scholarly Research requires me to store the data collected here for a minimum of five years. Your consent form will be stored in a locked filing cabinet, separate from the data. Any data records (audio recording of your interview and transcript) will be password protected on my computer hard drive. Since this research project of the larger project The After Church Atlas, my completed Master's thesis will be made available on the website of Atlas, and the data collected may contribute smaller curated blogs with stories of key case studies to the Atlas.
The After Church Atlas:
https://mun.maps.arcgis.com/home/group.html?id=39f408e4f3de41ee96512b081f0c87e1#overview

Reporting of Results:
The data will be disseminated through a Master's Degree thesis (available here: https://research.library.mun.ca/view/departments/Geography.html) and an academic presentation for completing my Master's Degree. The data may also be used in co-authored articles with my supervisors and may be published in academic journals. Research reports using the data may be produced for partners and participants. In these dissemination venues, I may use direct quotations from interview participants, but will not use personally-identifying information.

Sharing of Results with Participants:
When the project is complete, all participants will have access to a 700-word summary of the findings via email should they wish a copy (email: siyiz@mun.ca).

Questions:

You are welcome to ask questions at any time before, during, or after your participation in this research. If you would like more information about this study, please contact: Siyi Zhou, Department of Geography, Memorial University, email: siyiz@mun.ca. Supervisors: Dr. Nicholas Lynch, Assistant Professor, Department of Geography, email: nicholas.lynch@mun.ca, phone: 709.864.8413; Dr. Barry Stephenson, Associate Professor, Department of Religious Studies, email: bstephenson@mun.ca, phone: 709.864.8113.

The proposal for this research has been reviewed by the Interdisciplinary Committee on Ethics in Human Research and found to be in compliance with Memorial University's ethics policy. If you have ethical concerns about the research, such as the way you have been treated or your rights as a participant, you may contact the Chairperson of the ICEHR at icehr@mun.ca or by telephone at 709.864.2861.

Consent:

Your signature on this form means that:

- You have read the information about the research.
- You have been able to ask questions about this study.
- You are satisfied with the answers to all your questions.
- You understand what the study is about and what you will be doing.
- You understand that you are free to withdraw participation in the study without having to give a reason, and that doing so will not affect you now or in the future.
- You understand that if you choose to end participation during data collection, any data collected from you up to that point will be destroyed.
- You understand that if you choose to withdraw from the study, your data can be removed within two weeks after the interview.

    I agree to the use of direct quotations   ☐ Yes   ☐ No

By signing this form, you do not give up your legal rights and do not release the researchers from their professional responsibilities.

Your Signature Confirms:

☐ I have read what this study is about and understood the risks and benefits. I have had adequate time to think about this and had the opportunity to ask questions and my questions have been answered.

☐ I agree to participate in the research project understanding the risks and contributions of my participation, that my participation is voluntary, and that I may end my participation.

☐ A copy of this Informed Consent Form has been given to me for my records.

_____   _____

Signature of Participant   Date

Researcher's Signature:

> I have explained this study to the best of my ability. I invited questions and gave answers. I believe that the participant fully understands what is involved in being in the study, any potential risks of the study and that he or she has freely chosen to be in the study.

_____   _____

Signature of Principal Investigator   Date

Oral Consent:

Your oral consent means that:

• You have read the information about the research.

• You have been able to ask questions about this study.

• You are satisfied with the answers to all your questions.

• You understand what the study is about and what you will be doing.

• You understand that you are free to withdraw participation in the study without having to give a reason, and that doing so will not affect you now or in the future.

• You understand that if you choose to stop participating during data collection, any data collected from you up to that point will be destroyed.

• You understand that if you choose to withdraw from the study, your data can be removed within two weeks after the interview.

You agree to the use of direct quotations Yes ☐ No ☐

By signing this form, you do not give up your legal rights and do not release the researchers from their professional responsibilities.

> **Researcher's Signature for Using Oral Consent:**
>
> I read and explained this consent form to the participant before receiving the participant's consent, and the participant had knowledge of its contents and appeared to understand it."
>
> Name or Pseudonym of Participant: _____
>
> _____   _____
>
> Signature of Principal Investigator   Date

Appendix C: Interview Design

The following interview design outlines the approximate and non-exhaustive questions that will be posed to the three groups identified for research: i) Public Sector Experts: includes heritage planners and policy makers employed by the City of Ottawa; ii) Public Sector Stakeholders: includes individuals, community organizations and institutions who have purchased and/or partnered on the sale and purchase of closed/redundant worship spaces; iii) Congregational members (both present and past members).

The interviews will last between 30-45 minutes.

Interview Group 1: Public Sector Experts from the City of Ottawa. These interviews focus on understanding the value and goal of heritage designation on Centertown, Lowertown and Sandy Hill West Heritage Conservation Districts (HCDs), and the impact of the three church adaptive reuse cases on shaping their HCDs and the urban environment in Ottawa.

Background of the organization/department/program (and individual in organization):
• What are the central aims/goals of your organization?
• How does your organization make decisions on designating heritage conservation districts?
• What does the designation of HCDs mean for your organization?

Role of Adaptive Reuse of Churches in Local HCDs Development/Urban Environment in Ottawa:
• What is the social and cultural value of church adaptive reuse?
• What needs to be done to facilitate/encourage adaptive reuse of worship spaces across the city/province?

Interview Group 2: Public Sector Stakeholders
Includes individuals present/former managers, coordinators and institutional leaders (i.e., Carleton University) of the repurposed churches, as well as the individuals who are recruited for interviews through the participant observation on sites. These interviews focus on the role of repurposed churches in supporting community cohesion and generating sense of belonging.

Background of individual/organization and property:
• What is your experience in adaptive reuse of worship spaces?
• What is the historical importance/background of the property/church building?
• Why/how did you acquire the property/the church building?
• What was the local response to the adaptive reuse of the church?

Decisions surrounding the repurposed churches:
• What major obstacles did you encounter in the redevelopment process?
• Did the repurposed church pose impact on the local community in terms of generating sense of belonging? If yes, how?
• Were others involved in the decision process? Note: do not provide names unless these are publicly known / available.

Benefits and challenges of reuse:
• What are the central challenges of maintaining the repurposed churches?
• What are the central benefits?
• What still needs to be done?

Interview Group 3: Congregational Members
Include individuals who are presently attending or formerly attended worship services in the three repurposed churches. These interviews focus on how congregations perceive church transformation in post-secular cities and its relationship with local communities.

Background of individual/organization and property:
• What is your experience in adaptive reuse of worship spaces?
• What is the historical importance/background of the property/church building?
• Why was the property/the church building transformed?
• What was the local (in community and in congregation) response to the adaptive reuse of the church?

Decisions surrounding the repurposed churches:
• What major obstacles did the church/congregation encounter before its adaptive reuse?
• What major obstacles did the church/congregation encounter during its adaptive reuse?
• What impact has the church had on the local community before its adaptive reuse?

The Connection between Church Transformation and Local Community
• Did the repurposed church have an impact on connecting the local community and the worship space? If yes, what kinds of impact?

Appendix D: Conceptual Framework