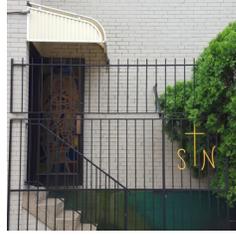
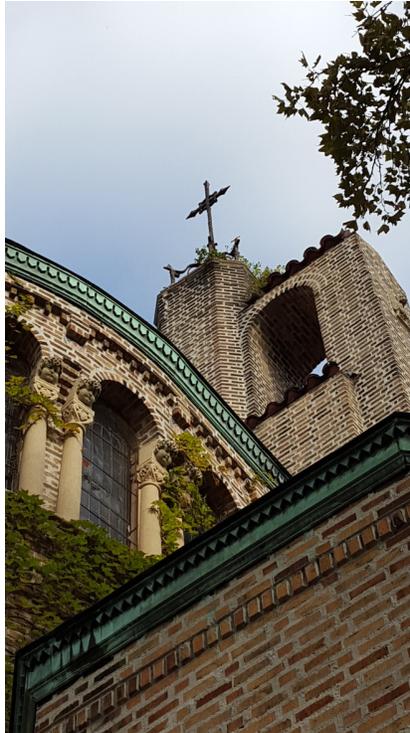


A report from



THE PEW CHARITABLE TRUSTS

| Oct 2017



# Philadelphia's Historic Sacred Places

Their past, present, and future

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## About this report

This report was researched for The Pew Charitable Trusts by PennPraxis, the center for applied research, outreach, and practice at the University of Pennsylvania's School of Design, with the assistance of Partners for Sacred Places, a Philadelphia-based national nonsectarian nonprofit organization that helps congregations of historic sacred places leverage existing and new resources, solidify their continued relevance, and ensure their sustainability. The research team was led by Randall F. Mason, associate professor and chair, historic preservation, at the university. From PennPraxis, the team consisted of Ashley Hahn, Molly Lester, Kalen Flynn, Stephanie Boddie, Aaron Wunsch, Mark Stern, Amy Hillier, Samantha Kuntz, Shrobona Karkun, Shannon Garrison, Jennifer Carr Robinson, Ben Buckley, and Larissa Klevan. Researchers from Partners for Sacred Places included Bob Jaeger, Rachel Hildebrandt, Tuomi Forrest, Dan Hotchkiss, and Katie Day. All of the information in the report, including most of the quotes from congregational leaders, comes directly from the team's work, unless otherwise noted. Writer Tom Infield drafted the report based on the body of research. It was edited by Larry Eichel, director of the Philadelphia research initiative at Pew, and Julie Sulc, senior officer, religion, along with Elizabeth Lowe, Daniel LeDuc, and Bernard Ohanian. The report was designed by Kodi Seaton, and photos are courtesy of PennPraxis.

## Acknowledgments

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**The Pew Charitable Trusts** is driven by the power of knowledge to solve today's most challenging problems. Pew applies a rigorous, analytical approach to improve public policy, inform the public, and invigorate civic life.

## Overview

Philadelphia is home to a large number and wide variety of buildings constructed as houses of worship. Many of them qualify as historic sacred places, a term defined for this report as those built for religious purposes before 1965, regardless of whether they are currently used in that way. This category excludes storefront churches, as well as school buildings and community centers where some congregations meet.

This report seeks to document Philadelphia's historic sacred places, to examine the role these buildings play in the city's public life, and to analyze what factors are likely to determine whether those currently functioning as religious facilities will continue to do so—or face different futures in the years ahead.

The research, led by PennPraxis at the University of Pennsylvania with assistance from Partners for Sacred Places, found that 839 historic sacred places (HSPs) were still standing in Philadelphia in 2015 and early 2016, one for roughly every 1,900 city residents. And it found the condition of the surviving structures, as judged by systematic examinations of their exteriors, to be mostly good or very good overall.

Even so, many congregations are likely to face tough decisions in the years ahead about what to do with their aging buildings, some of which face major and potentially costly repairs to their interiors and operating systems. Possible outcomes include abandonment of the buildings, which could lead to vacancy and deterioration or demolition; takeovers by other congregations; and reuse as schools and apartment buildings or other purposes.

Expensively built, many historic churches, synagogues, mosques, and temples have survived decades of deferred maintenance amid diminishing religious observance to remain architectural, historical, and cultural landmarks—and bulwarks of stability in their neighborhoods. The buildings provide value that goes beyond their importance to the congregations and religious leaders occupying them: Some host outreach programs that serve the needy, the jobless, and the addicted. Others house nonprofit groups, preschools, and even startup businesses.

If a building remains in active use, either by a congregation or other occupant, it can help its community weather change; if it becomes blighted, it can reduce the value and viability of much of what surrounds it.

Among the other key findings of the report:

- In 2015 and early 2016, the vast majority of the city's 839 historic sacred places—83 percent—remained in religious use, although nearly half were no longer occupied by the buildings' original congregations.
- About 10 percent had been adapted for other uses, including housing, offices, and child care centers. If participation in organized religion continues to decline nationally, as it has for many years, such adaptive reuse is likely to become more common.
- Roughly 5 percent of the buildings were vacant. From 2011 to 2015, at least 23 of the city's historic sacred places were demolished, mostly by developers.
- Legal protections that might buttress architecturally significant buildings are often weak or not applied; 79 percent of HSPs in Philadelphia had no form of historical designation.

In addition to cataloging the city's historic sacred places and their conditions, the research for this report included in-depth examinations of 22 of the structures—20 churches, a synagogue, and a Buddhist temple—and interviews with the leaders of their congregations. All were still in religious use, and they were chosen to provide a representative sample of the larger group in terms of geography, architecture, denomination, and how long the congregation had been in existence. The goal was to identify key factors of vulnerability and resilience that will

help determine whether the buildings continue to be used for their original purpose or adapted for a new use. (For a list of the 22 congregations and the selection process, see Appendix A.)

The research indicates that some of the challenges facing congregations that occupy these buildings are external—not least among them the decline of religious participation in 21st-century America, as documented in a 2015 report by the Pew Research Center.

Community change also presents challenges. On one hand, deterioration of a community creates pressure on many civic institutions, including religious ones. On the other hand, neighborhood revitalization and the accompanying higher housing prices have led some of the long-term residents who formed the core of Philadelphia congregations to leave their neighborhoods, reducing attendance at worship services and making houses of worship seem out of sync with the changed neighborhood.

Internal challenges, such as financial well-being (often tied to the level of religious participation) and the leadership abilities of clergy and other decision-makers, are at least as important as indicators of a congregation's stability.

The process that leads to a congregation thinking about leaving its historic building often starts with deferred maintenance, which is the result of declining resources and/or decisions by church leaders to devote funds to programs serving people rather than physical upkeep of bricks and mortar. Although researchers found most of the houses of worship surveyed to be in relatively good shape, they observed stonework that needed pointing, gutters that were missing or falling, and eaves and steeples that had sprouted weeds the size of small trees. More than a few structures bore the scars of water infiltration.

On the whole, Philadelphia's historic sacred spaces have proved to be remarkably resilient over the years: The structures were built to last, and mostly they have. But as the close-up examination showed, many of the buildings were in need of substantial investment for such items as damaged roofs and ceilings and failing heating and electrical systems. As buildings deteriorate and attendance at religious services shrinks, a significant number of congregations will have to determine what to do with their worship homes in the years ahead.

## The historical context

From its beginning in the 17th century as the seat of Englishman William Penn's Pennsylvania colony, Philadelphia was seen as more hospitable than its neighbors to the refugees of Europe's religious conflicts. A Quaker legacy of religious toleration is still evident in the diversity of religious institutions in what is now a city of roughly 1,568,000 inhabitants. Overwhelmingly Christian in number, Philadelphia's historic sacred places are ubiquitous in the oldest sections of the city and prevalent everywhere. Most were constructed from 1865 to 1929, between the Civil War and the Great Depression, the period of Philadelphia's greatest population growth. In lesser numbers, they extend to the Far Northeast, much of which was built up after World War II. They are the handed-down treasures of Philadelphians who helped build what was, as late as the 1950s, a city of more than 2 million people.

Gloria Dei (Old Swedes' Episcopal) Church, near the Delaware River in Southwark, is the oldest church in Pennsylvania and represents the Swedish settlers who, in advance of Penn, became the city's first inhabitants of European origin.<sup>1</sup>

The Arch Street Friends Meeting House, sitting in Quaker simplicity at Fourth and Arch streets in Old City, is a legacy of Penn's Quakers, who created Pennsylvania as a "holy experiment" and founded Philadelphia.<sup>2</sup>

Christ Church, also in Old City, was the first parish of the Anglican (Episcopal) Church in America and the preferred worship spot for some of the Founding Fathers.<sup>3</sup>

Pennepack Baptist Church in Northeast Philadelphia, founded in 1688, is the oldest surviving Baptist church in Pennsylvania, now located on its original site in a structure built in 1805.<sup>4</sup>

Mother Bethel AME Church, at Sixth and Addison streets, is the founding church of the nation's first black denomination: the African Methodist Episcopal Church, founded by Bethel AME's pastor, the Rev. Richard Allen. It is the oldest property in the nation continuously under black ownership.<sup>5</sup>

St. Augustine Roman Catholic Church, at North Fourth and New streets, served Philadelphia's early Irish immigrants; the current structure was built after the original building burned to the ground during the anti-Irish riot of 1844.<sup>6</sup>

These buildings, all of which remain in religious use, are among the most historic worship structures that have long been part of the city's religious life and its urban landscape. There are many others. Rodeph Shalom synagogue just north of Center City, with its Moorish architecture and cavernous interior, was a charter member of the Reform movement in American Judaism. St. Mary Magdalen de Pazzi (Catholic) Parish in South Philadelphia was formed in 1852 as the first Italian national parish in the nation; the current church was built in 1891.<sup>7</sup> St. Adalbert's Church, with its twin steeples towering over row houses in Port Richmond and easily visible from Interstate 95, has served generations of Philadelphia's Polish Catholics.

As the city spread north, south, and west in the 18th, 19th, and 20th centuries, churches and synagogues followed, mostly along commercial corridors such as Broad Street, Germantown Avenue, and Ridge Avenue. Historic sacred places, some of which have become mosques and Buddhist temples, are most concentrated in and around Center City and least in the Far Northeast.



Gloria Dei (Old Swedes' Episcopal) Church, the oldest in Pennsylvania.



Christ Church, located in Old City.



The Arch Street Friends Meeting House in Old City.



Pennepack Baptist Church in Northeast Philadelphia.



St. Augustine Roman Catholic Church in Old City.



Mother Bethel AME Church in Society Hill.

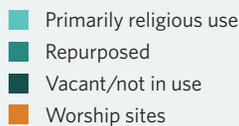
## Mapping and assessing the condition of historic sacred places

Using a 2011 survey by the Preservation Alliance of Greater Philadelphia and the Philadelphia Historical Commission as the starting point, the researchers, trained by PennPraxis, identified 839 historic sacred places in the city and conducted a field survey of each one, recording answers to 58 questions concerning the condition, architecture, layout, and use of the buildings. The researchers could answer all the questions based on visual inspection of the exterior, from the public right-of-way. For a list of the questions, see Appendix B.

The researchers found that 83 percent of the extant historic sacred places retained their primary religious use, with the conclusions based on evidence—such as signage and/or the presence of active users—of regular worship services and congregational activity in most or all of the building. An additional 2 percent served as “worship sites,” meaning they were used occasionally—but not fully, predictably, or regularly—for worship services; all of them are Catholic churches.

Ten percent had been converted for other uses, including residential buildings, office buildings, schools, and child care centers. Another 5 percent were considered inactive and unused. (See Figure 1.)

Figure 1  
How Philadelphia's  
Historic Sacred  
Places Are Used

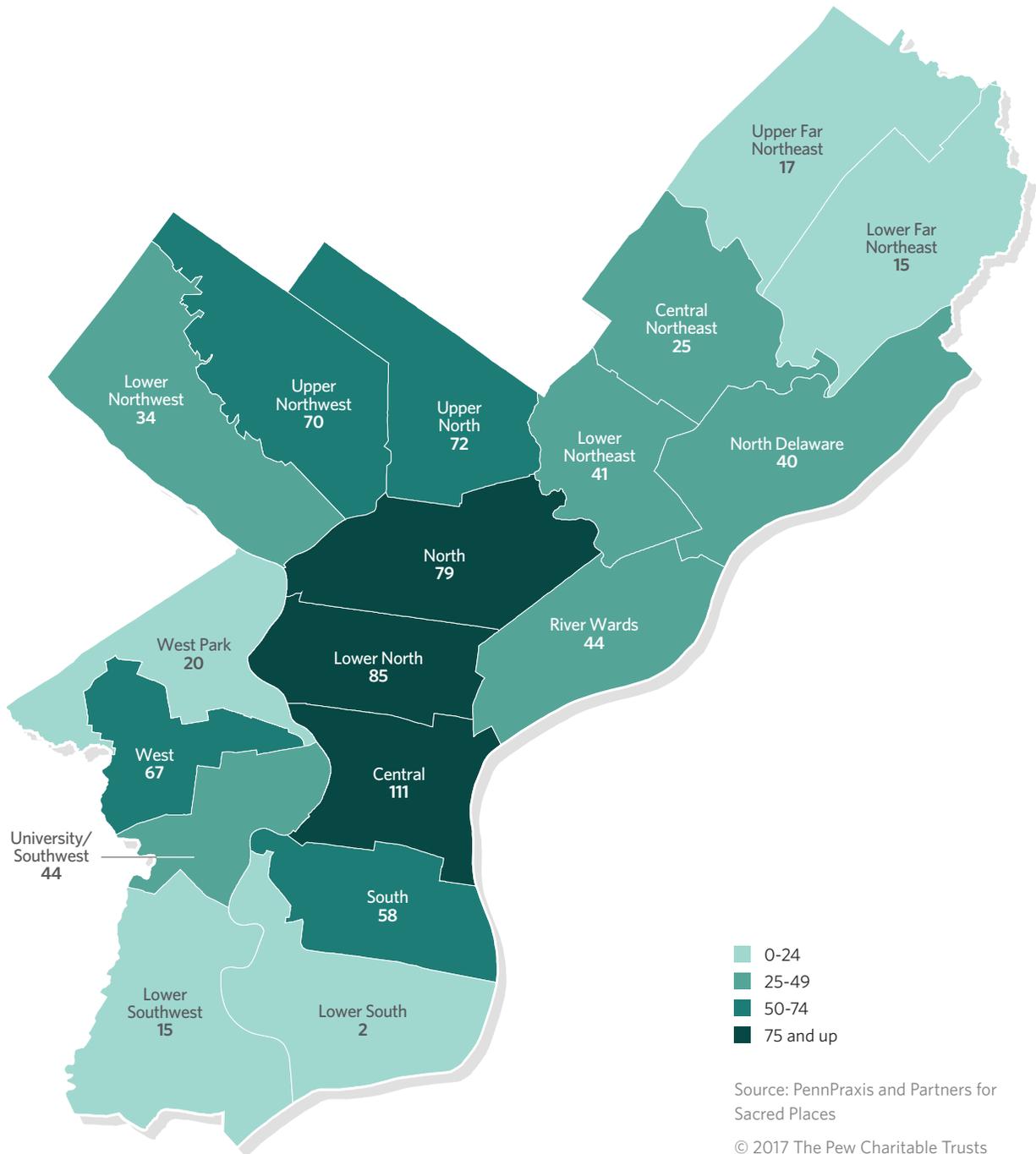


Source: PennPraxis and Partners for Sacred Places

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Figure 2

## Where Philadelphia's Historic Sacred Places Are Located By city planning district





Like many congregations in Philadelphia, the Ebenezer Church of God in Christ is not the original occupant of its current home. This North Philadelphia structure was built as a synagogue.

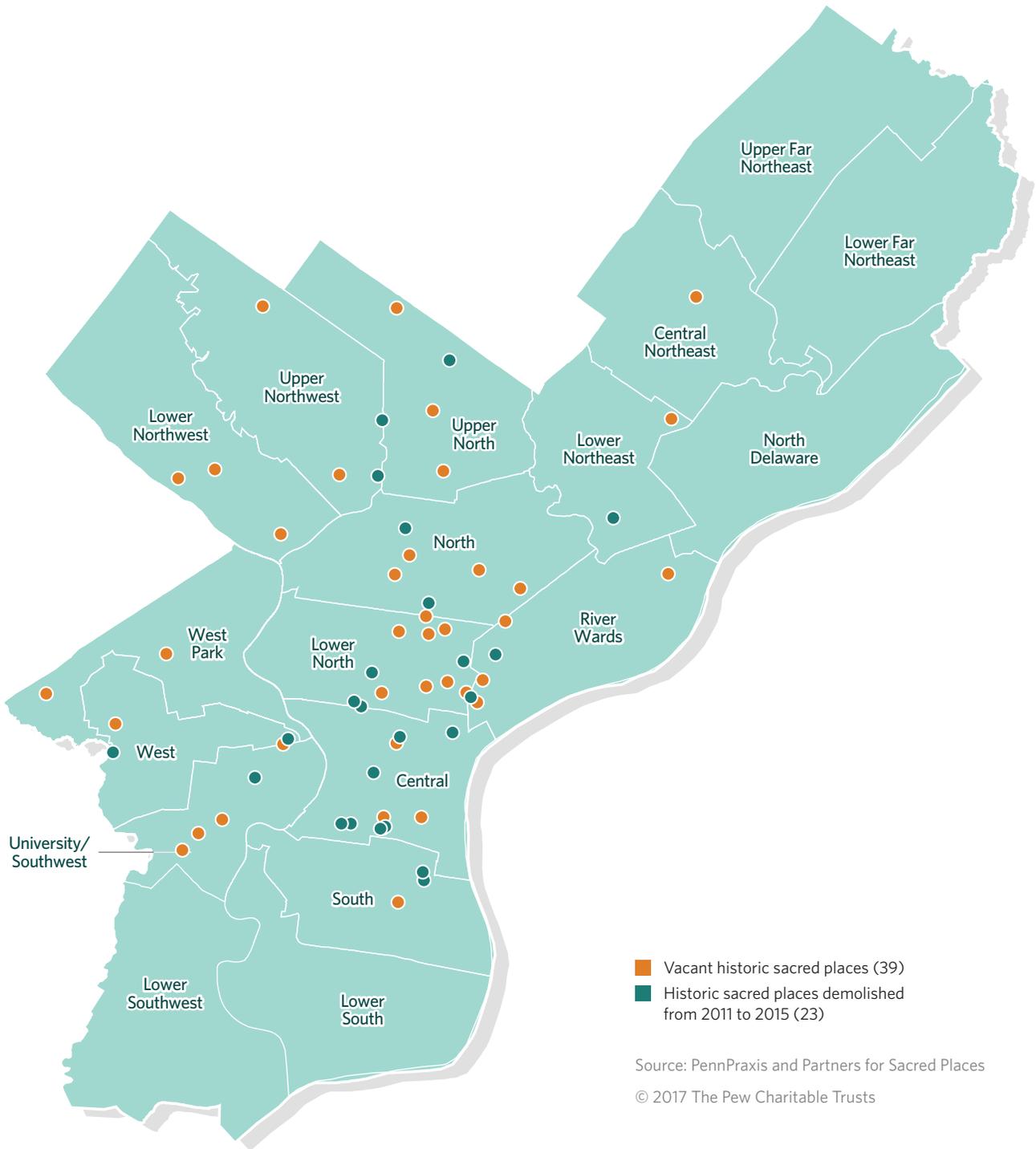
Among buildings in religious use, just 18 were categorized as non-Christian: 13 were Jewish, two Muslim, two Buddhist, and one interfaith. Another 11 were used by Quakers. Some Quakers consider themselves Christians; some do not.

The map in Figure 2 shows the locations of the buildings by city planning district, regardless of whether the buildings were in religious use. In keeping with Philadelphia's historical development patterns, the largest number of historic sacred places, 111—13 percent of the 839—were in the city's Central planning district, which includes Center City. But there were substantial numbers in most areas of the city, except near its northeast and southwest borders.

The locations of the 39 structures that were vacant at the time of the survey in 2015 and 2016, as well as the 23 that were known to be demolished from 2011 to 2015, are shown in Figure 3. Many were in North Philadelphia and other areas that have been losing population; others were scattered throughout the city. Of the 39 vacant buildings, 19 had histories primarily associated with Protestant denominations, 11 with the Catholic Church, seven with Jewish congregations, and one with the Quakers. The association of one building was unknown.

Figure 3

### Historic Sacred Places Demolished From 2011 to 2015 or Vacant at the Time of the Survey



Architecturally, Philadelphia's historic sacred places vary according to the time period in which they were built, the material wealth of their original congregations, and the nationality of the groups that founded them. The survey identified seven principal architectural forms: asymmetrical/spread-out, basilica, cruciform, hall/assembly, row house, stacked rectangle, and other. Stacked rectangle was the most common, representing 34 percent of the city's HSPs, and row house was the least common, representing about 1 percent. For a description of each style and its presence in Philadelphia, see Appendix C.

In many cases, the immigrants who built these institutions were seeking to preserve their faith traditions as well as the cultural traditions of the places they came from. This included the architectural style of buildings. For example, Historic Congregation B'nai Abraham, dedicated in 1910 in Society Hill, features a yellow-brick and terra-cotta exterior, Doric columns, and a huge rose window. According to Rabbi Yochonon Goldman, the congregation's spiritual leader: "The history is that there was a very large wave of [Jewish] immigration from Eastern Europe between 1880 and 1920, and this particular congregation was started by Eastern European immigrants at the early part of that immigration in the 1880s. ...The way they built this was ... trying to build a synagogue which was familiar to them from Eastern Europe."

Like B'nai Abraham, most HSPs were built of brick or stone. They represent immense investments by previous generations of Philadelphians in the sacred and social life of the city. They not only are rocks of stability, but they also enhance the



Historic Congregation B'nai Abraham, dedicated in 1910 in Society Hill, features a yellow-brick and terra-cotta exterior, Doric columns, and a huge rose window.

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architectural diversity of many neighborhoods that otherwise consist almost exclusively of row houses.

As part of the field survey, the researchers graded the exteriors of all 839 historic sacred places on 13 measures. Among them were the overall condition of the primary construction material, the state of the doors and windows, the presence of multiple boarded-up openings, visible cracks, bulging walls, the condition of the roof, and overall maintenance. The findings were scored and processed to create an overall building conditions index. For more information on the index and how it was calculated, see Appendix D.

Based on the index, 61 buildings were judged to be in very good condition overall. Of those, 39 had the best possible score (zero) on all 13 measures. The other 22 had perfect scores on all visible features, but at least one feature was obscured from view, so the researcher could not classify its condition. On the whole, the majority of Philadelphia's HSPs were in good or very good condition. In addition to the 61 with scores of zero, another 464 had scores of 0.2 or lower; the worst possible score was 1. The survey also found that the primary exterior material was in fair or good condition for 93 percent of the buildings. To some degree, this finding conflicts with the perception, reflected in press accounts, that many of these buildings are in desperate or near-desperate shape.<sup>8</sup> The survey did not, however, take into account such factors as heating and electrical systems, plumbing, interior walls, ceilings, and other factors that could not be viewed from outside.

The buildings that did not receive scores of zero exhibited at least one exterior maintenance issue, ranging in severity from untended grounds to significant roof damage. Deferred maintenance appeared to be prevalent.

Many historic sacred places with stained glass windows had sought over the years to protect them by covering them with what today is murky, darkened Plexiglas. Some of the coverings appeared unvented, a condition that could lead to moisture buildup.

These were among negative conditions observed by field researchers:

- 74 percent had windows or doors in fair/poor condition.
- 57 percent exhibited problems with materials intended to separate the building's interior from its exterior, such as masonry, wood, and vinyl.
- 16 percent showed signs that the property was untended.
- 15 percent showed problems with drainage systems.
- 14 percent had multiple boarded-up doors or windows.

Most roofs appeared to be in at least fair condition, although researchers could not get a good look at some of them. A total of 306 roofs, or 36 percent, were deemed to be in very good condition; some were new.

As noted earlier, the researchers further examined the state of those historic sacred places still functioning as active houses of worship with extensive on-site visits at 22 of them. Researchers talked with congregational leaders, mostly clergy, about a broad range of topics: the condition of the buildings, congregational composition, leadership, finances, and community connections.

The 22 sites represent a cross-section of HSPs. Most were experiencing membership declines, which had important implications for how their buildings were utilized. A few of the congregations had closed off expensive-to-heat or water-damaged sanctuaries and were using more intimate spaces for worship services. Women were typically the majority of active members, and many clergy described female volunteers as the backbone of the congregation. Finances were almost uniformly a concern.

“Essentially, every small separate congregation faces a scenario where it is struggling to appropriate funds to all of the necessary needs,” said the Rev. Benjamin Mishin, pastor of Lifeway Baptist, a church catering to Russian speakers that was formed in 2001 and occupies an old stone structure in the Far Northeast. “Sometimes, in the process, we have to cut somewhere in order to meet certain needs within the congregation. I’ve never seen a small congregation with an attitude of ‘We have so much money, and we don’t know what to do with it.’”

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Rev. Benjamin Mishin, *pastor of Lifeway Baptist Church*

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## Historic sacred places and the role they play in their communities

Most HSPs provide civic value to their communities that extends beyond their importance to their own congregations.

In some neighborhoods, HSPs serve as anchors of ethnic solidarity, as Lifeway Baptist does for its Russian community or as Preah Buddha Rangsey Temple does for the Cambodian immigrant community in South Philadelphia, where it occupies a former church. For Cambodians, the temple is very important. “It’s kind of like their home, their community, their identity,” said Muni Ratana, the temple’s chief monk.

Churches, synagogues, and other religious institutions often serve as neighborhood service centers and share their buildings with nonprofit groups. They provide free space for community meetings on land use issues, zoning changes, and proposed construction projects. They operate food pantries, free-clothing services, and ministries for the homeless. They host meetings of Alcoholics Anonymous or AI-Anon and run day care centers. Some offer free or low-rent space to art galleries, theater companies, and startup businesses.

An example is Shiloh Baptist Church in the Graduate Hospital neighborhood, a growing and gentrifying area. “We are now one of the major meeting spaces for South Philadelphia because we’re handicapped-accessible,” the Rev. Edward Sparkman, the church pastor, told interviewers. “And it is so convenient, and people can walk to it. That’s what we hear all the time.”

Pastor Joe Melloni of First Christian Assembly in South Philadelphia said he takes the view that “God provided the building” for the church to serve the broader community. For that reason, the church in 2003 established the Philadelphia Access Center, which provides information, referrals, and advocacy on emergency shelter, substance use treatment, public assistance, children’s programs, and other topics. “People from all over the community, from all over the city, even further—they come and they get help,” he said.

John Dilulio, professor of politics, religion, and civil society at the University of Pennsylvania, has written that religious congregations “tackle severe social and urban problems” unresolved by traditional legislative initiatives.<sup>9</sup> A 2006 study, *The Other Philadelphia Story: How Local Congregations Support Quality of Life in Urban America*, found that more 90 percent of all congregations in the city—including those located in historic sacred places—provided



The former home of the Bethel Holy Temple Church in North Philadelphia sits vacant and in disrepair.

at least some social services to the broader community. It estimated the direct annual value of those services at \$121,000 per congregation, not including an estimated \$23,000 in space allocated to house such functions as polling places, immunization sites, and day care centers.<sup>10</sup>

In addition, some congregational spending provides economic benefit to the broader community. Partners for Sacred Places has found that religious institutions stimulate local economies by providing employment, purchasing goods and services, and establishing programs.<sup>11</sup>

When well maintained, historic sacred places can be bulwarks that help neighborhoods resist decline.

“We don’t allow our building to fall apart so that we become an eyesore to the community,” said Elder Gregory Johnson Sr., pastor of Metropolitan Baptist Church in Philadelphia’s Powelton Village section. “We keep our grounds clean for that reason, because we are part of the community, we are part of the neighborhood, even though probably 85 percent of our membership base lives somewhere else. ... We have a stake in this neighborhood.”

The Rev. John Olenick of Visitation B.V.M. Catholic Church in the Kensington section credits skilled and hardworking congregation members, many of whom earn their living with their hands, for helping him keep up with needed repairs. “We had one bathroom in the lower church, and they remodeled the whole thing,” he said.

On the other hand, a crumbling, rarely used house of worship is, in many ways, much like any other large, rarely used, deteriorating building. In a declining neighborhood, its presence adds to the sense of despair. In a neighborhood where incomes and property values are rising, it can be seen by new residents as a problem and an eyesore.



Summit Presbyterian Church in West Mount Airy has a long history of opening its doors to community activities and organizations.

### Providing Civic Value

Summit Presbyterian Church stands on a residential corner in a leafy part of the West Mount Airy section of Philadelphia. Membership and attendance, though much reduced from decades ago, are stable, said the Rev. Cheryl Pynch, the pastor. The church is integrated racially and economically.

“The congregation considers itself very much rooted in the neighborhood, and most people in the congregation live in the neighborhood. Or perhaps they used to live here and are now retired just a little bit further away,” Pynch said.

The church was incorporated in 1894. In recent years, the congregation has invested heavily in the maintenance of its century-old campus, which consists of two interconnected stone buildings, by restoring the bell tower and replacing the sanctuary roof. The stained glass windows need repair, as do the masonry and stone work.

Summit is well known in West Mount Airy for its long history of opening its big red doors to outside activities and organizations, often on a lease basis. Pynch said the church “wants to be a good neighbor” and considers community outreach a big part of its mission.

*Continued on the next page*

The church houses a day care center, an after-school program, and a Jewish congregation, P'nai Or. It hosts community meetings and rents space to a small theater company, a dance studio, and a nonprofit group that promotes new classical music. It also rents offices to a therapist, a web publisher, and a company dealing in sports statistics.

The community benefits, and so does the church. The rental revenue helps fund the church budget, which pays for a full-time minister and office staff.

Summit's own outreach includes an "elder diner" lunch once a week that serves the church congregation and the broader community. The church has a social justice and environment committee that focuses on climate change, mass incarceration, voting rights, and public education.

"When I introduce myself as a pastor," Pynch said, "people say, 'Oh, I know Summit. That's a great place. My children went to the children's program there,' or 'I attended the children's program.' That's often the connection."

## When historic sacred places are repurposed

When neighborhoods change, the congregations of long-established religious institutions—mostly churches in Philadelphia—often wither as members move away. This happened in the decades after World War II in many neighborhoods, as large numbers of Philadelphians moved to the suburbs and a number of congregations moved within the city. Numerous historic sacred places were vacated and put up for sale.

More recently, the gentrification of neighborhoods in or near the city's core has brought in new groups of residents. In some areas, older members of religious institutions have left—to avoid paying higher real estate taxes, to cash in on the appreciated value of their homes, or because the changes make them feel uncomfortable. Although many of these people have tried to stay affiliated with their churches, the trips back to the old neighborhood can become a burden, with parking a particular headache. As a result, the future of a number of historic sacred places is in question. At the same time, the introduction of wealth into a neighborhood increases the odds that a historic sacred place will be converted into housing or some other use, particularly if the building has an adaptable architectural layout or historical designation that makes demolition more difficult and time-consuming.

Many vacated buildings have been taken over by other religious groups. Of Philadelphia's 839 historic sacred places, 378 (45 percent) house congregations other than the ones that built the structures. In one example, changing demographics and neighborhood trends have helped transform a large, sand-colored building on Limekiln Pike in West Oak Lane over the years from a synagogue to a church to a mosque: the Masjidullah.<sup>12</sup>



This historic church building in Center City survives as a house of worship by hosting two congregations, Liberty Church and First Baptist Church of Philadelphia.

### New Life for a Historic Church Building in the Heart of the City

By 2013, leaders of First Baptist Church of Philadelphia, which traces its history to the city's founding, had reached the reluctant conclusion that their diminished congregation could no longer support its massive stone structure in the Rittenhouse Square section of Center City. They prepared to sell the building, which was dedicated in 1900, to a developer for conversion into retail space.

Then came an unexpected offer from a growing startup church that had been paying rent to cohabit with First Baptist. Liberty Church, founded in 2009 to reach out to millennials and others in Center City, proposed to match the developer's \$2 million offer, raise millions more for renovations, and enable both congregations to remain on site.

Now Liberty Church owns the building, and First Baptist is the tenant.

*Continued on the next page*

“It was difficult for [First Baptist] to let go of the facility, but it would have been more difficult for them to let go if they would have sold to a developer,” said Mike Harder, Liberti’s former executive pastor. “We have a good relationship with the [Baptist] congregation, and we’ve been very deliberate in trying to serve the congregation and do things together—build a relationship, tell them what we’re doing with the renovation, and ask for their input at different points.”

Liberti Church, with the larger congregation, draws about 300 people to services each Sunday and another 200 at a satellite worship center on the Main Line campus of Rosemont College. The church emphasizes traditional Christian faith and helping ministries, such as outreach to the homeless in Center City. Including the purchase price, Liberti has raised \$6.3 million to update and alter the building.<sup>13</sup>

The Rev. Jared Ayers, Liberti’s founding pastor and senior minister, said the congregation is youthful and well educated and includes “an abnormally high level of transients”—people who spend a few years in Philadelphia before moving on for education or career advancement. More people attend Sunday services than join the church, which is the opposite of older churches that typically have more people on the rolls than in the pews, church leaders said.

Harder attributed the success of the church to its outward focus. “We’re not about us, [and that] is very important to the types of people who come in the doors,” he said. The church, which is planning to build a homeless-services center on its soon-to-be renovated lower level, has been welcomed in Center City even by people who have no affiliation with it, its leaders said.

“We want to serve the city,” Ayers said.

In the view of preservationists, transferring a building from one congregation to another is a positive outcome, in the sense that the structure retains its original function and need not face extensive internal renovation. On the other hand, if an old building was becoming too expensive for a congregation to handle, the new occupants may soon come to the same conclusion. Rachel Hildebrandt of Partners for Sacred Places cataloged demolitions of historic sacred places from 2009 to 2016. She categorized 22 as related to development pressure. Fifteen of those 22 stemmed from sales to developers by congregations that were not the original occupants of the building. None of the sales involved original occupants.<sup>14</sup>

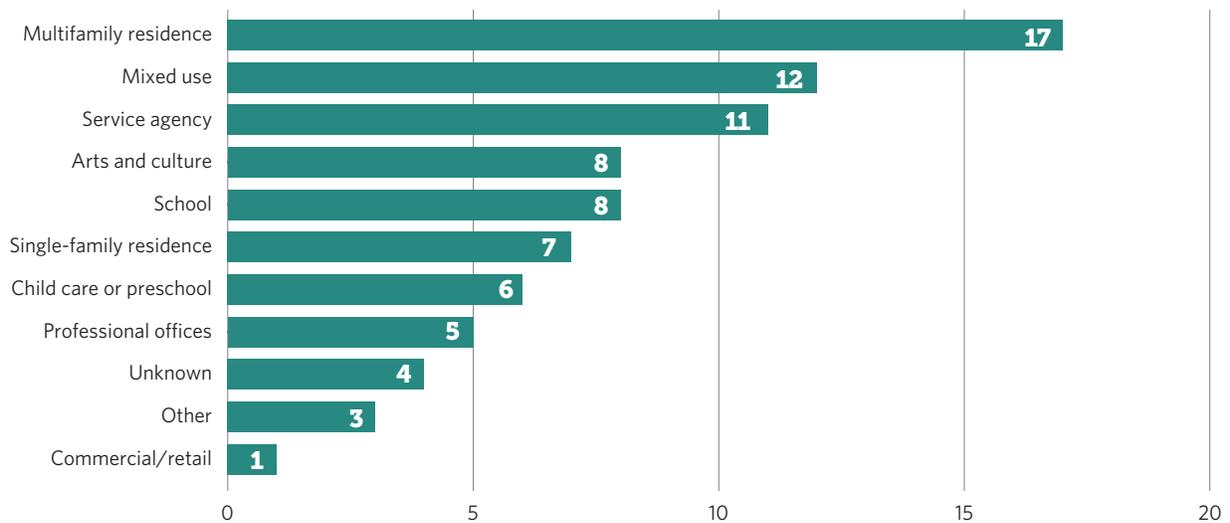
Sometimes there is no religious reuse feasible for an old building. Even then, historic sacred places can retain some civic value through being repurposed. Often-imposing structures rising from prominent street corners, they can remain the foundation of a community’s stability or become part of its revitalization.

Eighty-two historic sacred places, about 10 percent of Philadelphia’s total, had been put to a broad range of nonreligious uses at the time of the survey. As shown in Figure 4, the largest use was residential, including seven smaller buildings that had been converted into single-family homes.



La Iglesia De Dios occupies a former synagogue in the West Kensington neighborhood of Philadelphia.

### Figure 4 How Historic Sacred Places Have Been Repurposed in Philadelphia



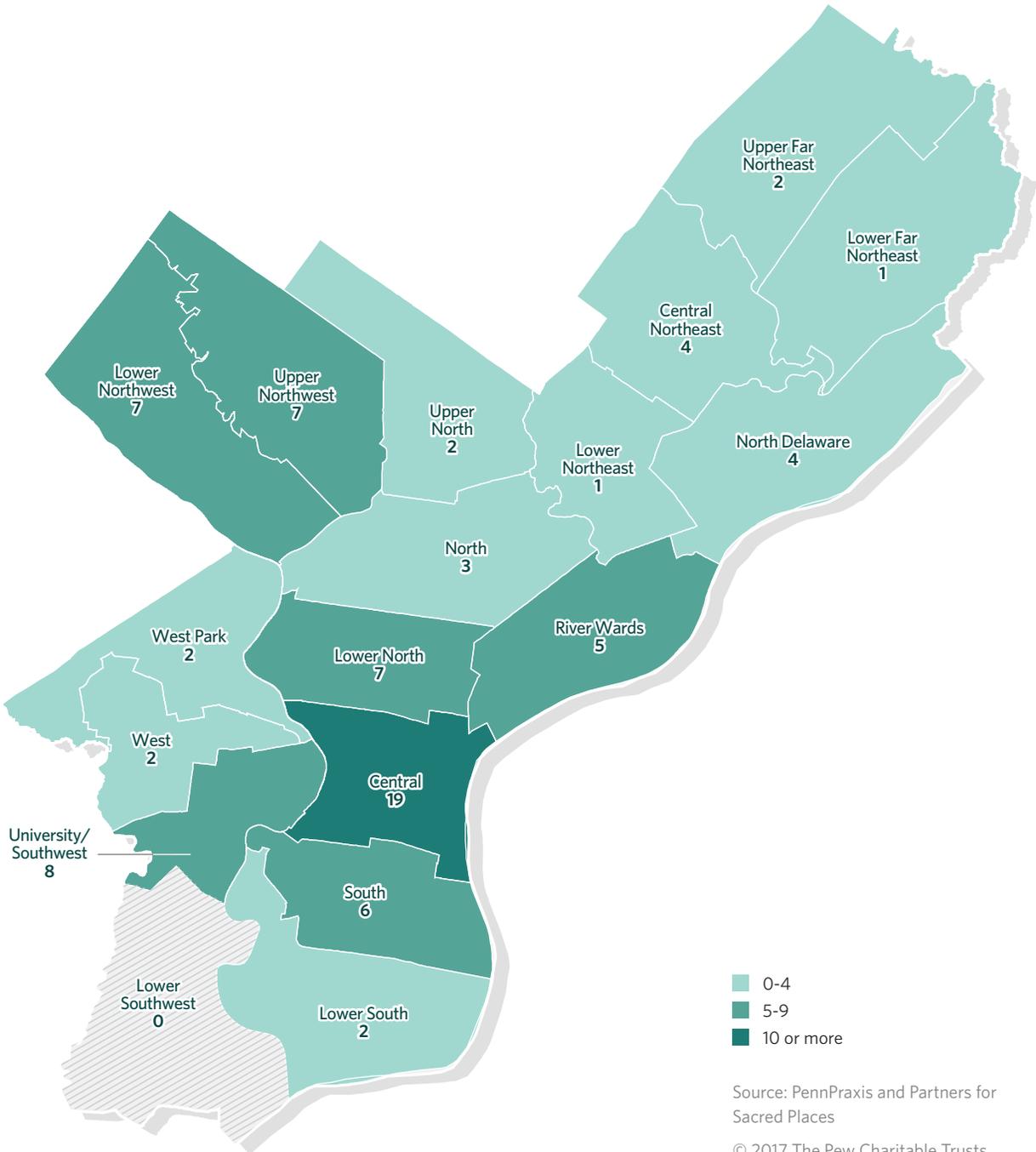
Source: PennPraxis and Partners for Sacred Places

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The Central planning district, which includes Center City and surrounding neighborhoods, hosted 19 of these properties, more than any other district. Only three were in the two Far Northeast districts. The rest were distributed fairly evenly throughout the city. (See Figure 5.)

Figure 5

## Locations of Historic Sacred Places That Have Been Repurposed By city planning district





A 128-year-old church building in the Graduate Hospital neighborhood of Philadelphia is now Sanctuary Lofts, a multi-unit residential rental property that promotes itself as “the answer to your prayers.”

Factors that determine whether a purpose-built religious facility can be adapted to other uses include the nature of the neighborhood—options are likely to be more plentiful in areas that are stable or undergoing revitalization—the condition of the building, and the layout/size of the building. Of the HSPs that have been repurposed, nearly half are “stacked rectangle” structures, most of which have relatively simple floor plans (typically with the main worship room on top of a floor devoted to offices and classrooms) and relatively modest footprints. Larger churches built in the shape of a cross or those with soaring vertical spaces can be more difficult to adapt. Older, larger buildings can be useful for a limited number of specific purposes but are difficult to heat, cool, and maintain.

Conversion examples include the vacated Protestant Episcopal Church of the Covenant in Brewerytown, which was recently redeveloped into a 16-unit residential complex called North Abbey Apartments. The developer sought to preserve the distinctive architectural and decorative elements of the 124-year-old structure.<sup>15</sup>

The former Christ Evangelical Reformed Church in the Art Museum neighborhood, a brownstone building dating from just before the Civil War, is now the Chapel Lofts. Many of the 17 residential units feature prisms of multicolored light shooting through the church’s 17-foot stained glass windows.<sup>16</sup>

In East Falls, a stone building that once housed the Falls of the Schuylkill Methodist Episcopal Church has been repurposed as an office complex. The building has housed a design firm, freelance writers, an illustrator, graphic designers, an artisanal baker, therapy offices, and a photographer.<sup>17</sup>

In 2015, the Waldorf School of Philadelphia moved into the former St. Peter’s Episcopal Church of Germantown. The church, which was designed by famed Philadelphia architects Frank Furness and George Hewitt in the 19th century, had sat empty for years.<sup>18</sup>

The former First Church of Christ, Scientist, built in 1911 in University City, was purchased by the University of Pennsylvania in 1996 and is now known as the Rotunda. It is used by the university, the Foundation Community Arts Initiative, and the University City District.<sup>19</sup>

And part of the Fleisher Art Memorial in Queen Village is a church conversion from 1922.<sup>20</sup>



Congregants attend a service at Shiloh Baptist Church in the Graduate Hospital neighborhood, which has changed dramatically in recent years.

## The Role of Gentrification and Neighborhood Change

Neighborhood change of any kind can threaten the stability of historic sacred places. Rising poverty and declining quality of life often have a negative impact on religious buildings and the stability of the congregations that occupy them. But the same is true for the sort of rapid, upscale change often labeled as gentrification.

The research found that:

- Areas that experienced significant, rapid changes in property values over relatively short periods had a higher number of vulnerable HSPs. These neighborhoods included gentrifying areas as well as those where values were falling. Many of the vacant buildings were in areas where both the population and property values had been declining long term.
- Areas with extensive population turnover were more likely than others to have religious structures facing vacancy, reuse, or demolition.
- Areas with higher, stable property values had fewer vulnerable buildings.

The analysis did not seek to measure or quantify the extent to which neighborhood change makes sacred places more vulnerable. Interviews with church leaders, however, provided ample

*Continued on the next page*

examples of congregations struggling to figure out how to thrive in gentrifying neighborhoods. Such changes can make it more difficult for them to attract new members, retain old ones, play active roles as neighborhood institutions, and even provide parking for members. Every story is a little different.

The Rev. Peter Grandell, pastor of Church of the Crucifixion, an Episcopal parish in the Bella Vista neighborhood, explained the situation his congregation faces. “Here is a minority parish with not a lot of money finding itself in the midst of a quickly gentrifying, economically moving, quickly upper-middle-class situation,” he said. “How do you [attract new members] when you don’t have the fancy music program, and you don’t have all of the bells and whistles?”

Historic sacred places in such areas sometimes are sold to developers looking for properties to overhaul. From the point of view of the community, if not the congregation, that can be good or bad, depending on a number of factors, including how the building will be used, how long the property sits vacant, and whether the building is torn down.

One gentrifying neighborhood where the pressure on historic sacred spaces has been intense is the Graduate Hospital area, also known as Southwest Center City.<sup>21</sup>

Since 2011, five predominantly African-American congregations that occupied historic sacred spaces have left the area, a former working-class black neighborhood that has become increasingly white and higher-income in recent years. Three of the small buildings were demolished; Greater St. Matthew Baptist was turned into condominiums; and First Colored Wesley Methodist Church is moving its congregation from 17th and Fitzwater streets, its home since 1943, to East Oak Lane in the northwest part of the city. In addition, New Light Beulah Baptist Church, a block away at 17th and Bainbridge streets, was knocked down in 2017 to make way for five homes.<sup>22</sup>

First Colored Wesley Methodist sold its property for \$1.6 million to a lawyer who plans residential development. Inga Saffron of *The Philadelphia Inquirer* explained the move this way: “[T]he web of neighborhood connections that gave Wesley its reason for being in this part of South Philadelphia is rapidly disappearing. In a sense, the neighborhood left Wesley.”<sup>23</sup> Similarly, churches in Fishtown, Pennsport, and other neighborhoods with rising real estate values have been redeveloped or demolished.

Decisions by congregations to leave gentrifying areas—or consider doing so—are not just motivated by the allure of developers’ money to purchase a church. There’s also the increased cost to those church members who live in the neighborhood, which creates the incentive for them to move out. Churches do not pay real estate taxes, but homeowners do.

“The values of the properties have a lot of homeowners, especially long-term homeowners, scared because of the [rising] tax assessments,” said the Rev. Edward Sparkman of Shiloh Baptist Church. “They’re worried about what they’re going to have to pay in taxes.”

## Looking to the future

Researchers for this report did not try to quantify how many of the historic sacred spaces in Philadelphia that remained in religious use were vulnerable to significant deterioration and/or the conditions that could lead to abandonment, demolition, or reuse in the years ahead. But the research did produce a sense of what factors contribute to vulnerability and resilience. Those complex factors are both internal—having to do with the buildings and congregations—and external, involving neighborhood changes and the decline in religious participation generally.

### Factors of vulnerability

Internal factors of vulnerability were found to include the following:

- **Poor financial condition.** Most of the historic sacred places in Philadelphia were built more than a century ago and require hefty maintenance expenditures. When the needed repairs are extensive and the congregation has limited funds at its disposal, a building is particularly vulnerable.
- **Poorly maintained buildings.** The older the building, the more upkeep it needs. The longer maintenance is deferred, the greater the cost. This can become a downward spiral for budget-constrained congregations.
- **Building size and configuration.** Elaborate or prominent architectural features—such as towers, exterior sculpture, large expanses of stained glass, etc.—require careful and often expensive maintenance.
- **Ineffective leadership or a poor relationship between the clergy and the membership.** In the absence of a strong religious leader, or in the case of frequent turnover in the pulpit, participation can dwindle. Beyond that, some clergy at historic sacred places lack the knowledge of money and property management, skills not taught in divinity school. They struggle to identify and work effectively with skilled lay leaders, including those who know how to restart the boiler on a winter morning.
- **Shrinking or distant congregations.** Some historic sacred places that once drew hundreds for worship services now draw dozens. Neighborhoods change; children grow up and move away. Worshippers often try to remain connected to their old churches, which their parents and grandparents may have attended. But the commitment to drive a long distance each weekend often fades over time.
- **No sharing of space or other connection to the community.** Isolation can lead to stagnation, and stagnation to decline.

External factors include:

- **The movement away from piety.** This is a long-standing trend that has continued in recent years. In 2014, a report by the Pew Research Center found that the number of Americans who are “absolutely certain” that God exists dropped from 71 percent in 2007 to 63 percent. The report also found that worship attendance “ticked down by a small but statistically significant” margin over the same period.<sup>24</sup>
- **Changing neighborhood quality of life.** Although some distressed neighborhoods have stabilized in recent years, many have not. The deterioration of neighborhoods can make churches more vulnerable by reducing the financial resources available and causing members to move away. Neighborhood changes related to gentrification also can be unsettling in ways that threaten a congregation—through the shift in the demographic makeup of the population, including the possible departure of longtime residents.
- **Issues related to denominational structure.** In some cases, belonging to a denomination can provide a congregation with a measure of support, financial or otherwise, enhancing stability. Being part of a hierarchy

such as the Roman Catholic Church provides resources, including umbrella insurance coverage and loans; it also limits the ability of individual congregations to make prompt and/or independent decisions on such matters as whether to stay open. On the other hand, many small black churches have independence but lack the resources that a more-developed denominational structure might provide.

In recent years, the Catholic Archdiocese of Philadelphia has closed a number of parishes and parish schools, saying they were too expensive to keep open. In 2012, two parishes, St. Mary of the Assumption and St. Josaphat, merged with St. John the Baptist Church in Manayunk. According to Monsignor Kevin C. Lawrence, that decision came with both minuses and pluses.

“We had debt; we inherited more debt,” Lawrence said. But, he added, “we also inherited a capital needs trust fund that was held by one of the parishes.”



A stained glass window adorns Mount Pisgah AME Church in West Philadelphia.

### A Closer Look at Denominational Factors

The vulnerability or resilience of costly-to-maintain historic sacred places still in religious use can be influenced by the structure of a congregation’s religious denomination, particularly the degree to which it allows congregational autonomy and/or provides support services.

Clergy members interviewed for this report said they valued their congregations’ ability to make their own decisions, which is more likely to happen when the church has few direct ties to a denominational structure. But being part of a church hierarchy, in which some decisions are made above the congregational level, can bring financial help and other forms of assistance.

*Continued on the next page*

For this study, active Christian congregations operating in historic sacred places were divided into three categories:

- **Independent/associational Protestant.** Among these are Baptist, Congregationalist, Anabaptist/Mennonite, and Pentecostal churches. Congregations in this category can make decisions about property and most other matters independent of any denominational authority. Denominational bodies often hold moral but not administrative authority.
- **Conciliar or semi-hierarchal Protestant.** Among these are Presbyterian, Episcopal, Methodist, Lutheran, and African Methodist Episcopal churches, plus others that have bishops working in cooperation with elected oversight bodies. Property decisions typically are made by an elected body (presbyteries, in the case of Presbyterians) composed of representatives from the member churches.
- **Hierarchal/top-down.** Roman Catholic churches are the largest group in this category, which also includes Orthodox churches. Within parishes, decisions are made largely by clergy who hold ultimate authority in most local matters but report to higher church authorities. The decision whether to close a parish, though, rests with the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Philadelphia, which has undertaken several rounds of parish closings in recent years in response to demographic trends and declining church attendance.

The research found that buildings occupied by independent or associational congregations generally were in worse condition than those without any denomination-based support networks. Clergy members said being part of some denominations can add financial strength to congregations through access to group insurance, loan-backing, and other services, even for the smallest churches.

“When we had to borrow the money to buy the building, we wouldn’t have been able to borrow money from a bank,” said the Rev. Jose Carrera Jr., pastor of Urban Worship Center in the city’s East Kensington section. “Our [Assemblies of God] denomination has its own loan fund. It eliminated a lot of red tape. We were able to close on \$160,000 in less than 30 days. That helped a great deal.”

At the same time, pastors said, if a church has a chance or is feeling pressure to sell to a developer, denominational support and restraint sometimes can slow a rush to make a deal that members might later regret. It might also impede a solid business decision through institutional resistance and bureaucratic delay.

Some of the external factors, starting with economic conditions in the neighborhood, reflect decades-long trends. Philadelphia once was a city of small manufacturing, and neighborhoods and historic sacred places grew up around factories and shops. Now those factories are mostly gone, and churches are left to struggle on as they serve communities with diminished resources.

“When Philadelphia had the jobs here, the people who worked here had more money,” said the Rev. Pearl Johnson, former pastor of Devereux Memorial United Methodist Church in North Philadelphia. “Now we’re living off the people who are on their pensions from the jobs that they had here in the city. The younger members ... tend to be low-income or no income.”

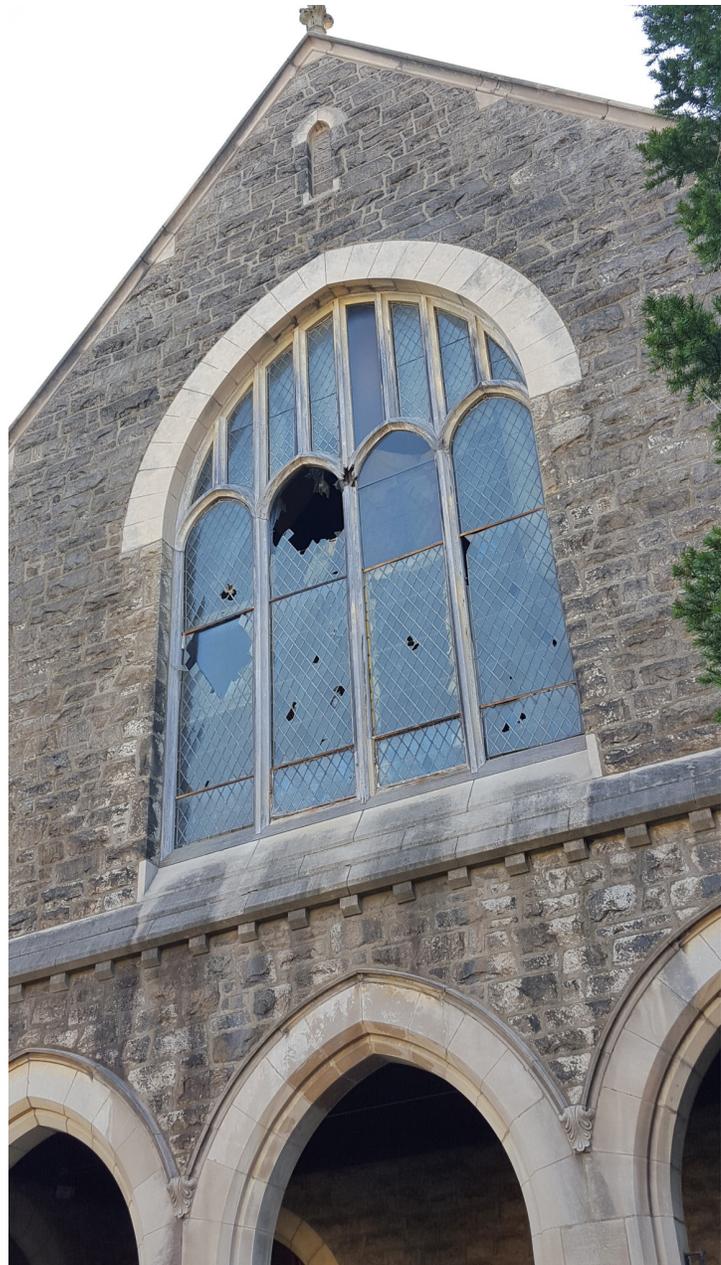
The high cost of maintaining an aging building is a threat to a congregation’s stability regardless of other circumstances. The will to fix up the structure may be strong, but the wherewithal may be lacking.

Nineteenth Street Baptist is one example of this phenomenon. The congregation owns multiple buildings and row-house lots in the gentrifying Point Breeze section of South Philadelphia. Water infiltration significantly damaged the main building, forcing its closure. Although the roof has been patched, the masonry is failing. Window frames are in poor condition, and pigeons roost in the sanctuary.

Church leaders recognize the historical significance of the high Victorian complex and have tapped into outside resources for help and guidance. But they do not have the money to make the necessary repairs. “I think the community is watching what’s going on,” said the Rev. Dr. Wilbur Winborne Sr., the church’s pastor.

“Fifteen years from now, we want to be a jewel of the community, an asset to the community—a place where, when people’s lives fall apart, they can come over to the green church, get some hope.” But whether there will be money for that future is unknown.

Some congregations and clergy are committed to their buildings, their neighborhoods, and their neighbors and are fighting to stay where they have been



The vacant former home of New Covenant Baptist Church in Germantown shows signs of disrepair.

for years. For others, the house of worship is just a building, and the fate of the congregation is separate and ultimately more important.

“The church still maintains the vision to be the organized body of believers who are called to lead, love, and lift a community to an abundant and spirit-filled life in Christ. The church building doesn’t determine whether or not we accomplished our goal,” said Elder Gregory Frison, pastor of Garden of Prayer Church of God in Christ in North Philadelphia.

That viewpoint—that the survival of the congregation is the priority—is widespread among Philadelphia congregations and clergy. And it means that a number of Philadelphia’s historic sacred places are likely to change owners, change uses, or face demolition pressure in the years ahead.



The building that houses Garden of Prayer Church of God in Christ is for sale.

### Struggling With an Old Building

Garden of Prayer Church of God in Christ is a Pentecostal church that occupies two brick buildings on the campus of a former Catholic parish and grade school in the Strawberry Mansion section of North Philadelphia. It is located in a neighborhood whose residents have felt economically bypassed for decades.

A church that once drew hundreds of people weekly to the healing ministry of the late Mother Elizabeth Juanita Dabney, Garden of Prayer lost its original building at 29th and Susquehanna

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streets in a fire in 1991. Three years later, the congregation purchased its current home, which was nearby and vacant, and slowly rebuilt its attendance.

The congregation did what it could to help the community. There was food and clothing assistance and an annual Thanksgiving meal. In late summer, the church provided supplies for children through its “Back to School Revival.”

“This is a poverty-stricken neighborhood,” said Elder Gregory Frison, who is the church’s fifth pastor, “and we are reaching out to poverty-stricken people. ... As a believer, you should try to reach as many people as you can.”

But the building was a problem. It was too big. The roof leaked, there was water damage, the heating system was inadequate, and there was no air conditioning.

“The congregation realized we were putting good money in a bad situation,” Frison said.

And so, in the spring of 2017, he began the process of putting the building up for sale.

## Factors of resilience

The evidence from the study suggests that financial stability and the leadership abilities of clergy and other decision-makers are the primary elements of resilience.

Internal factors include:

- **Strong leadership/good laity-clergy relationship.** Researchers found that the capability of congregational leaders, especially clergy, is paramount.
- **Financial health/endowment.** Even congregations that struggle to meet their annual budgets can perform major building repairs if they have funds in an endowment account. Well-managed endowments, while relatively rare, can provide financial stability in the face of declining membership.
- **Stable building condition.** Keeping up with building maintenance on a regular basis allows for stable financial planning.
- **Adaptability of buildings/mixed use.** Whether a historic sacred place remains in religious use or is offered for redevelopment, its long-term viability is likely to be affected by its architectural form. A basilica with a long nave and soaring, vaulted interior is less adaptable than a square or rectangular building with one coherent interior. Problematic, too, are complexes in which additions to the original structure were made at various times in differing styles.
- **Congregational growth and diversity.** The ability of a congregation to adapt to changing neighborhood demographics—to invite and welcome people of different races, ethnicities, and economic status—is a key to continuity.

- **Sharing of space/use with civic partners.** Just as isolation can lead to stagnation and decline, throwing open the doors by sharing space with community groups and offering programs that benefit the community can draw new life into a historic place of worship.

External factors include:

- **A stable or gradually improving neighborhood.** In such areas, congregations have a reasonable chance of maintaining and expanding their memberships and financial resources.
- **Being located in a historic district or listed on a historic register.** Official recognition of a building's historic value can help preserve an HSP and save it from possible demolition.

Of the 839 historic sacred places inventoried, 662 (79 percent) had no form of historic designation. Of the 177 that had such a designation, 71 were listed on both the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places and the National Register of Historic Places, 69 just on the Philadelphia register, and 37 just on the national register. Such listings can provide protection against demolition, offer incentives for adaptive reuse, and produce additional time to craft a plan of action for a threatened structure.

Resilient religious institutions survive and thrive by responding and adapting to change and by trying to keep existing members in the pews while attracting new ones. In interviews, senior clergy members varied in their outlooks for their congregations and the historic sacred places in their stewardship. The spectrum of attitudes ranged from



The Cathedral Basilica of Saints Peter and Paul is the principal church of the Catholic Archdiocese of Philadelphia.

pessimistic to optimistic, from futuristic to fatalistic. Most agreed that leadership is critical, with the focus depending on individual circumstances.

“Leadership has to conform to the particular context which it’s in,” said the Rev. Charles Messer, rector of the Holy Apostles and the Mediator Episcopal Church in West Philadelphia. “What I would perceive as effective leadership is to provide an atmosphere where others will feel empowered to do ministry. I see myself as a utility, as a connector, a bracket, something that holds two things together to one another.”

And effective leadership sometimes means adjusting to new circumstances, said the Rev. Michael Rock of Our Lady of Lourdes, a Catholic church in the Overbrook section.

“People are very consistent about they don’t like change, being uncomfortable,” Rock said. “But on the other hand, if you don’t have change in a positive sense on a regular basis, then you really have no growth. If you’re maintaining the status quo all the time, then there’s no growth. You’re like on life support.”

## Conclusion

The historic sacred places that are still used for their original religious purposes play a strong role in the civic life of Philadelphia as places of worship, as community centers, and as neighborhood anchors. These structures, as well as those that have been repurposed, represent a legacy of historical art and architecture. They stand as testament to the collective life and spiritual beliefs of generations of Philadelphians.

The survival of these HSPs is intricately linked to the strengths and weaknesses of the congregations that inhabit them, starting with the effectiveness of their clergy and leadership, financial stability, and denominational structure. But there are limits to what government and other organizations can do to help ensure that these buildings are sustained, even when there is broad public interest in doing so. Some cities are trying deliberate moves: In New York and Miami, for example, owners of some historic buildings have been permitted to sell development rights to owners of nearby lots, using the funds to preserve the historic structure. Los Angeles has an adaptive reuse ordinance designed to incentivize preservation. Since 1997, the Pittsburgh History & Landmarks Foundation has awarded more than 250 grants totaling over \$1 million and provided more than 60 technical assistance consultations to owners of historic religious properties in that city.<sup>25</sup>

For Philadelphia, a city that has long seen its history as an asset, the question for religious and civic leaders is to determine how historic sacred places factor into the city’s future and what steps should be taken to help enhance their prospects for continued viability. There are likely to be several options. One is for the city’s growing faith communities, including those that attract newly arriving immigrants, to take over some of the old structures, in keeping with the city’s history of buildings passing from one congregation to another. Another is to embrace more nonreligious uses. With the long-term future of many congregations in question, and the cost of maintaining old buildings on the rise, avoiding demolition in some cases may not be possible. But if the past is any guide, many historic spaces will adapt and survive.

## Appendix A

Most of the central conclusions in this report are based on a detailed examination of 839 historic sacred spaces. The survey tool used for gathering the data about each space is found in Appendix B. In addition, researchers chose 22 of the spaces still in religious use for interviews and in-depth analysis. These congregations were selected because of their geographic, racial/ethnic, architectural, historical, and denominational diversity, with the understanding that the sample, given its size, could not be representative of the 839 in every respect. In keeping with the overwhelmingly Christian nature of the historic sacred spaces still in use in Philadelphia, 20 of the 22 spaces chosen were Christian, including three Catholic churches—Our Lady of Lourdes, St. John the Baptist, and Visitation B.V.M. The rest represented various Protestant denominations, with the exception of one synagogue and one Buddhist temple. Neither of two historic sacred places currently used as mosques in Philadelphia was included. The 22 are listed below.

Name	Address	Neighborhood
<b>Campbell African Methodist Episcopal Church</b>	1657 Kinsey St.	Frankford
<b>Church of the Crucifixion</b>	620 S. Eighth St.	Bella Vista
<b>Congregation B'nai Abraham</b>	527 Lombard St.	Society Hill
<b>Devereux Memorial United Methodist Church</b>	2527 W. Allegheny Ave.	North Philadelphia
<b>First Christian Assembly</b>	1900 S. 11th St.	South Philadelphia
<b>Garden of Prayer Church of God in Christ</b>	2814 Diamond St.	North Philadelphia
<b>Holy Apostles and the Mediator Episcopal Church</b>	260 S. 51st St.	West Philadelphia
<b>Liberti Church/First Baptist Church</b>	123 S. 17th St.	Rittenhouse Square
<b>Lifeway Baptist Church</b>	9554 Bustleton Ave.	Bustleton
<b>Metropolitan Baptist Church</b>	3500 Baring St.	Powelton Village
<b>Nineteenth Street Baptist Church</b>	1253 S. 19th St.	Point Breeze
<b>Our Lady of Lourdes</b>	1941 Wynnewood Rd.	Overbrook
<b>Preah Buddha Rangsey Temple</b>	2400 S. Sixth St.	South Philadelphia
<b>St. John the Baptist Church</b>	146 Rector St.	Manayunk
<b>St. Michael's Lutheran Church</b>	2139 E. Cumberland St.	Kensington
<b>Sanctuary Church of the Open Door</b>	5923 Walnut St.	West Philadelphia
<b>Shiloh Baptist Church</b>	2040 Christian St.	Graduate Hospital
<b>Summit Presbyterian Church</b>	6737 Greene St.	Mount Airy
<b>Union Baptist Church</b>	1910 Fitzwater St.	Graduate Hospital
<b>United Missionary Baptist Church</b>	2500 W. Thompson St.	North Philadelphia
<b>Urban Worship Center</b>	2038 E. Cumberland St.	East Kensington
<b>Visitation B.V.M. Church</b>	2646 Kensington Ave.	Kensington

## Appendix B

The following survey was used to examine the 839 historic sacred places in Philadelphia. Information was recorded by researchers based on what they could see without entering any of the properties.

1. PPID (identifying the researcher): \_\_\_\_\_

2. Time stamp: \_\_\_\_\_

3. Enter building's name: \_\_\_\_\_

4. What is the building's primary use?

- 1  Religious
- 2  Arts/culture
- 3  Demolition
- 4  Mixed use
- 5  School
- 6  Service
- 7  Vacant
- 8  Worship site
- 9  Other \_\_\_\_\_

5. Is this a building or a complex?

- 1  Building
- 2  Complex

6. If complex, please describe, noting other buildings and describing site plan:

---

---

7. What is the basic building form?

- 1  Cruciform
- 2  Hall
- 3  Stacked rectangle
- 4  Asymmetrical/spread-out
- 5  Round
- 6  Basilica
- 7  Row house
- 8  Other \_\_\_\_\_

8. Describe the building's relationship with its neighbors:

- 1  Free standing
- 2  Semi-attached
- 3  Attached
- 4  Other \_\_\_\_\_

9. Does the property have any open space? Check all that apply:

- 1  Garden
- 2  Lawn
- 3  Playground
- 4  Burial ground
- 5  Other \_\_\_\_\_

10. Are any of these spaces open to the public?

- 1  Yes
- 2  No

Describe:

\_\_\_\_\_

11. Are there services posted?

- 1  Yes
- 2  No

12. If YES, when (enter days and times for all services)?

13. Is clergy/officiant name posted?

- 1  Yes
- 2  No

14. Contact information listed? (list all and photograph any related signage)

- 1  Contact info:
- 2  Address:
- 3  Office hours:
- 4  Other religious activities:
- 5  Other \_\_\_\_\_

15. Enter names of clergy/officiants not already entered above. (e.g., choir director, other officials/leaders):

\_\_\_\_\_

16. Enter contact info for clergy/officiants:

---

17. Enter any addresses listed:

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18. Enter office hours for clergy/officiants:

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19. Enter hours for other religious activities (other than the services) for the clergy/officiants:

---

20. Enter other contact or use information here:

---

21. Are there signs for auxiliary uses or other congregations sharing their space (and their schedules)?

1  Yes

2  No

Describe:

---

22. What is the primary exterior building material?

1  Schist

2  Brick

3  Brownstone

4  Limestone

5  Sandstone

6  Stucco

7  Permastone

8  Wood

9  Serpentine

10  Vinyl siding

11  Aluminum siding

12  Granite

13  Metal

14  Other \_\_\_\_\_

15  Don't know

23. What is the secondary exterior building material?

- 1  Schist
- 2  Brick
- 3  Brownstone
- 4  Limestone
- 5  Sandstone
- 6  Stucco
- 7  Permastone
- 8  Wood
- 9  Serpentine
- 10  Vinyl siding
- 11  Aluminum siding
- 12  Granite
- 13  Marble
- 14  Metal
- 15  Other
- 16  Don't know

24. Record notes on building material and overall conditions.

Describe:

---

25. Are structural cracks visible?

- 1  Yes
- 2  No

Describe:

---

26. Are any walls bulging?

27. Are there multiple boarded-up openings?

- 1  Yes
- 2  No

Describe:

---

28. What is the overall condition of doors and windows?

- 1  New/very good
- 2  Fair
- 3  Poor
- 4  Not visible

29. Record condition notes on doors and windows.

---

30. Is there a tower rising above the sanctuary roof?

- 1  Yes
- 2  No

31. If YES, describe the height of the tower above the sanctuary roof (e.g., tower rises one story above roof peak)

---

32. Is there visible evidence of a tower ever existing?

- 1  Yes
- 2  No

33. What is the basic roof form?

- 1  Flat
- 2  Pitched
- 3  Complex
- 4  Not visible

34. What is the roofing material?

- 1  Slate
- 2  Asphalt shingle
- 3  Wood shingle
- 4  Built-up tar/gravel
- 5  Membrane
- 6  Metal
- 7  Tile
- 8  Other
- 9  Not visible

35. What is the condition of the roof?

- 1  New/very good
- 2  Fair
- 3  Poor
- 4  Not visible

36. Record condition notes on roof.

---

37. Are there sections of the roof missing?

- 1  Yes
- 2  No

38. If YES, describe location of missing sections of the roof.

---

39. Are there visible holes in the roof?

- 1  Yes
- 2  No

40. If YES, describe location of visible holes in the roof.

---

41. Has the roof been patched in a clearly temporary way?

- 1  Yes
- 2  No

42. If YES, describe method and location

---

43. Is the drainage system properly attached and directing water away from the building?

- 1  Yes
- 2  No
- 3  Not visible
- 4  None visible

44. Is the property tended? (e.g., grass is mowed, no trash, flowers in pots, flags and signs maintained)

- 1  Yes
- 2  No

45. Describe condition of property.

---

46. Are there any permits posted?

- 1  Yes
- 2  No

Describe:

---

47. Are there any city citations or notices posted?

- 1  Yes
- 2  No

Describe:

---

48. Is any part of the property on the market?

- 1  Yes
- 2  No

Describe:

---

49. Is there active work being done on the property?

- 1  Yes
- 2  No

Describe:

---

50. Are there any ADA accessible ramps, lifts, or elevators visible?

- 1  Yes
- 2  No

Describe:

---

51. Is there dedicated parking?

- 1  Yes
- 2  No

Describe:

---

52. How many vacant lots and buildings share the block with this HSP? (Count lots and buildings on same side of the block and opposite side of the street.) \_\_\_\_\_

53. Architectural integrity: Has the exterior retained most of its original fabric? Is there some alteration? Is it highly altered?

- 1  Retains most original fabric
- 2  Some alteration
- 3  Highly altered

54. Describe degree of integrity or characterize alterations.

---

---

55. Cornerstone information?

---

---

56. Is there a historical marker or signage about history?

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---

57. If YES, describe the historical marker.

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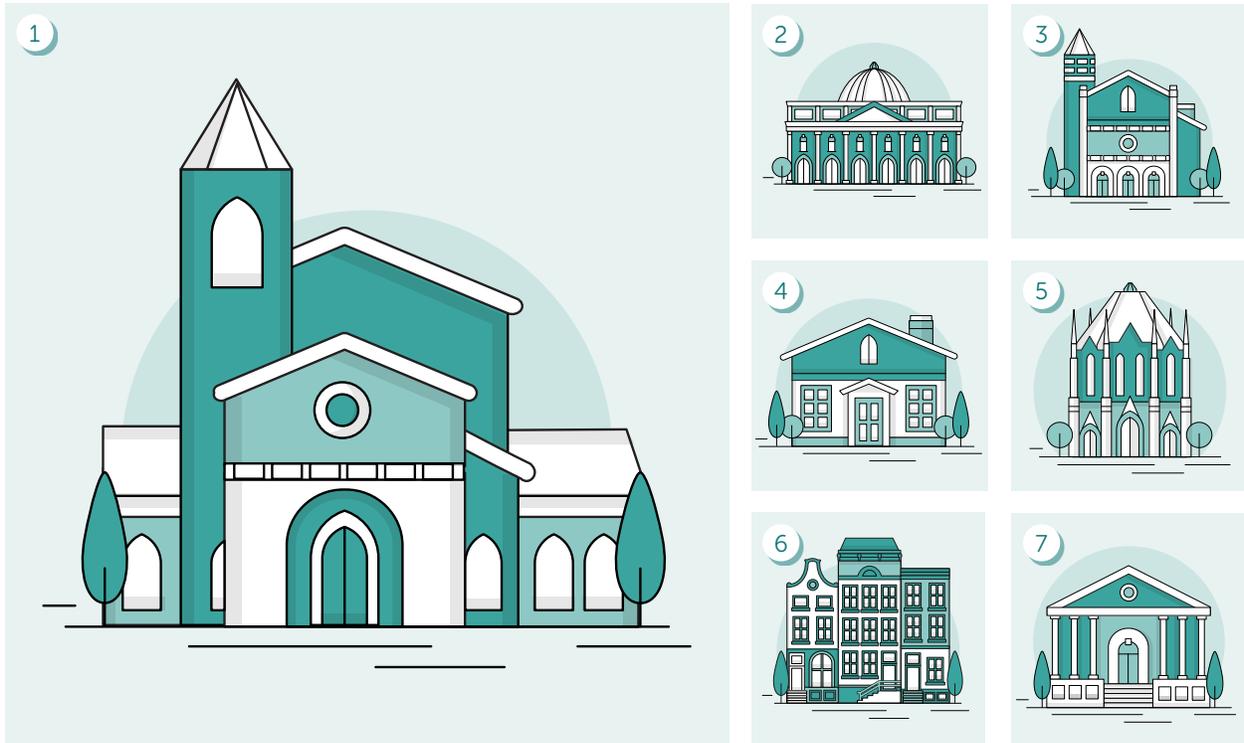
58. Summarize conditions or add final comments or notes here:

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## Appendix C

The following definitions were used to categorize Philadelphia's historic sacred spaces in terms of architectural type:



- 1 Asymmetrical/spread-out.** (11 percent of all buildings) Highly complex structures that draw from a multitude of traditional sacred place forms and adopt an irregular footprint.
- 2 Basilica.** (8 percent) Longitudinal (not centralized) plan with a complex interior volume (as distinct from hall/assembly). Typically a long nave and may include side aisles (with distinct rooflines) and/or a semicircular apse at the end.
- 3 Cruciform.** (22 percent) A building in the shape of a cross in plan, formed when transepts (transverse arms) cross the nave.
- 4 Hall/assembly.** (22 percent). Square or rectangular plan with one simple, coherent interior volume with a simple, unified roofline (as distinct from basilica). May include an interior balcony or balconies but is structurally concentrated on one story above grade (distinct from stacked rectangle).
- 5 Other.** (3 percent) Complex, stylized, and nontraditional building plans, including octagonal.
- 6 Row house.** (1 percent) A sacred place purposely built into the shared-wall fabric of the neighborhood. It may be attached or semi-attached.
- 7 Stacked rectangle.** (34 percent) Structure of relatively uniform height, built upward with additional space (offices, school, etc.) in the space below the main room of worship. Lower story or stories may be partially or fully exposed above grade.

## Appendix D

To evaluate the building condition of Philadelphia's historic sacred places, the researchers created a buildings conditions index based on the answers to 13 field survey questions that sought to assess physical vulnerability. All of the questions were designed to be answered by viewing the building from outside the property. The index is based on the assumption that some characteristics, such as holes in the roof, indicate more significant physical vulnerability than others, such as detached drainage systems. Individual answers were thus weighted and assigned point values according to their severity, from 0 (a positive characteristic) to 1 (a negative characteristic) to 2 (an acutely negative characteristic). A limited number of queries (e.g., roof condition) allowed for a possible response of "not visible," resulting in no data for that query.

Point values were totaled based on the number of possible points for contributing queries. That number was then divided by the number of possible points to produce an index score.

An index score could be as low as 0 or as high as 1. Actual index results from the field survey ranged from 0 to 0.85. The higher the score, the more the building was considered vulnerable. Many of the buildings with the worst or highest scores were in North Philadelphia.

Among the 839 buildings, the scores ranged as follows:

- 0: 61 buildings
- 0.01-0.1: 220 buildings
- 0.11-0.2: 244 buildings
- 0.21-0.3: 155 buildings
- 0.31-0.4: 96 buildings
- 0.41-0.5: 37 buildings
- 0.51-0.6: 11 buildings
- 0.61-0.7: 9 buildings
- 0.71-0.8: 4 buildings
- 0.81-0.9: 2 buildings

Answers were assigned points as follows:

### 1. Overall condition of primary material (e.g., masonry, wood, etc.)

- a. Good **(0)**
- b. Fair **(1)**
- c. Poor **(2)**
- d. Not visible **(no data)**

2. Overall condition of doors and windows

- a. New/very good **(0)**
- b. Fair **(1)**
- c. Poor **(2)**
- d. Not visible **(no data)**

3. Multiple boarded-up openings

- a. Yes **(1)**
- b. No **(0)**

4. Visible cracks present

- a. Yes **(2)**
- b. No **(0)**

5. Bulging walls present, from inventory field

- a. Yes **(2)**
- b. No **(0)**

6. Presence of a tower, from inventory field

- a. Yes **(1)**
- b. No **(0)**

7. Visible evidence of a former tower, from inventory field

- a. Yes **(1)**
- b. No **(0)**
- c. N/A [indicates a tower is already present, see #6] **(0)**
- d. Unknown **(no data)**

8. Overall condition of the roof, from inventory field

- a. New/very good **(0)**
- b. Fair **(1)**
- c. Poor **(2)**
- d. Not visible **(no data)**

9. Sections of the roof missing

- a. Yes **(2)**
- b. No **(0)**
- c. Not visible **(no data)**

#### 10. Visible holes in the roof

- a. Yes **(2)**
- b. No **(0)**
- c. Not visible **(no data)**

#### 11. Presence of temporary roof patching

- a. Yes **(1)**
- b. No **(0)**
- c. Not visible **(no data)**

#### 12. Drainage system is properly attached and directing water away from the building

- a. Yes **(0)**
- b. No **(1)**
- c. None visible **(1)**
- d. Not visible **(no data)**

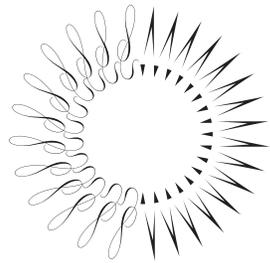
#### 13. Property is tended

- a. Yes **(0)**
- b. No **(1)**

## Endnotes

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- 13 Telephone interview with the Rev. Jared Ayers, March 22, 2017.
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