

## Retired, Rehabbed, Reborn: The Adaptive Reuse of America's Derelict Religious Buildings and Schools

Paula Mohr

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supplements personal interviews and anecdotes with data to bolster his arguments throughout.

In the book's stronger second half, Pennell breaks down the various challenges facing midwestern wineries. He identifies the usual suspects and market forces at work in all four of his target states. These include the three-tiered distribution system, labor issues, money/investment difficulties, problems at harvest or during production, quality control, and that one great big obstacle to success—reputation. At a time when affordable wines from the world's leading regions are available, how do majority first- and second-generation grape growers/vintners distinguish themselves *and* make ends meet? For Pennell, it is the people and their dedication to the product and their patrons that will determine the future. There is a boom underway, but major challenges loom and Pennell is not naïve about this.

The diversity Pennell encountered at wineries in his target states suggests that the industry is bigger and more complex than one might assume. And this is without including the state of Michigan, which is arguably the biggest player in the region. Also, although Pennell does mention the work of university extension services, it would have been appropriate to include something about Elmer Swenson (formerly at the University of Minnesota), whom many recognize as the person responsible for hybridizing grapes able to both withstand midwestern winters and make good table wine. This and the majority of any other quibbles are minor. Ultimately, Pennell's book presents a nuanced look at the industry. It is sure to interest professional and casual readers alike.

*Retired, Rehabbed, Reborn: The Adaptive Reuse of America's Derelict Religious Buildings and Schools*, by Robert A. Simons, Gary DeWine, and Larry Ledebur, with Laura A. Wertheimer. The Sacred Landmarks Series. Kent, Ohio: Kent State University Press in cooperation with Cleveland State University's College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences, 2017. ix, 382 pp. Maps, tables, charts, illustrations, notes, glossary, index. \$45.00 paperback.

Reviewer Paula Mohr is an architectural historian for the State Historical Society of Iowa.

In the mid-1990s, the conversion of St. John the Baptist Church in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, into a microbrewery and restaurant was both praised and condemned (the beer is made where the altar was located). Historians and theologians held up that project and others like it as evidence of the commodification of "the sacred" in the postmodern era.

(See, for example, Paula Kane's article, "Is That a Beer Vat Under the Baldochino?") For those of us who work in historic preservation, however, the potential loss of some of our most monumental and architecturally rich buildings in the wake of profound shifts in American religious life is also significant. Changing worship patterns and demographics as well as church scandals that strain budgets have led to hundreds of buildings becoming vacant or being demolished each year. In the midst of this period of decline, the number of congregations in the United States actually rose in the last two decades of the twentieth century. Unfortunately, that does not necessarily mean good news for our old buildings. New congregations build new facilities and in other cases convert secular buildings into worship space, leaving old buildings empty and needing a new purpose.

*Retired, Rehabbed, Reborn* is intended to provide a road map for the conversion of these vacant historic buildings into new uses. Written primarily for an audience of developers, architects, public officials, and building managers, the book defines the problem, explains how to assess the feasibility of a project, and provides case examples. The primary authors are academics at Cleveland State University joined by an urban planner. Selected chapters are written by other design practitioners. While the focus is on religious buildings, the book also includes discussion of the adaptive use of historic schools, likewise accompanied by case studies.

Historians and preservationists will find value in the authors' chronicling of trends in Americans' spiritual life that have led to this preservation crisis. The real contribution of the book, however, is its pragmatic advice on how to determine the feasibility of a project, conduct market analysis, leverage financial incentives, and navigate the approval process. A glossary of financial, development, and governmental terms and acronyms is a handy reference. The level of detail in the book is impressive; a few examples are a checklist for holding a community meeting, sample pro formas, and a lengthy "developer's toolbox" of financial sources.

The case studies are detailed as well. The authors note that they present projects of varying financial and preservation success. The conversion of the Duetsche Evangelical Reform Church in Dayton, Ohio, into a rock-climbing gym will make some preservationists wince. St. Joseph Church in Fayetteville, Arkansas, turned into apartments, is one of the few case studies that used historic tax credits, ensuring that the work was done according to the Secretary of the Interior's standards.

All told, this book is an important contribution to the fields of planning, preservation, and real estate development. It should be noted that

much of the guidance and tools presented here can be applied to other historic buildings types. While outside the scope of this publication, it does highlight the need for guidance on the architectural challenges of converting these buildings. Large sanctuaries (and other similar assembly spaces) that give religious buildings their unique character are among the most difficult spaces to sensitively convert to a new use. One hopes that this book that deals so thoroughly with the pragmatic concerns of adaptive use will result in more successful projects and that those, in turn, can be the basis of a work that explores the challenges and solutions from the preservation architect's point of view.