Adaptive ReUse, Walkability and the New Paradigm

Presented by
Mark Nickita, AIA
Unique Perspective

Mark Nickita, AIA

- Urbanist and Architect, President of Archive DS

- Elected Official
  Mayor Pro Tem, City of Birmingham

- Entrepreneur
  owner of urban retail establishments
  - Pure Detroit Stores, Stella Cafes
The RePlace Team

- J.C. Cataldo - Development
  - Planning

- Bill Freeman - Legal

- Victor Saroki, FAIA - Architecture
  - Adaptive Reuse

- Mark Nickita, AIA - Urban Design + Architecture
  - Adaptive Reuse
  - Public Interaction
Adaptive Re-Use and Walkability

OVERVIEW – The Paradigm Shift

North America has undergone a significant transformation, driven by issues of

- globalization
- economic restructuring
- technological advancements
- trends / social reconfigurations

resulting in work space and living conditions that have dramatically changed
SALE/LEASE

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The PROBLEM

- **Vacancies** of individual buildings – declining values

- **Foreclosures**
  - commercial, office, industrial, residential properties

- **Entire blocks and districts** declining w/ high vacancy
Walkability and the New Paradigm

The PROBLEM

• **Space requirements and demands**
  have dramatically changed

• **Obsolete building types**
  – existing buildings have been developed with a single purpose and now the market conditions indicate minimal demand
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The current question is.....

How Can

Unique, Adaptive Re-Use Concepts

be applied to

millions of square feet

and

thousands of underutilized buildings,

to make them productive into the future?
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WHO is AFFECTED......?

• Building and Land Owners

• Municipalities
  – losing tax revenue
  – visible signs of decline

• Adjacent Property Owners
  – loss of property value
Global Trends:
The Repositioning of Buildings and Districts

Industrial areas around the globe are being transformed into completely different environments.
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Precedent: The Ruhr Valley, Germany
Tom Walsh: Friends create their jobs at start-up design firm in Detroit

3:56 PM, Jul. 16, 2011 | 5 Comments
Developer Randy Lewarchik has always had his eye on green design. The East Riverfront's [Elevator Building](#) and the Cass Corridor's Brainard Apartments were both remodeled with recycled materials, grey water collection, double-paned windows, compressed foam insulation, U.V. reflecting roof coatings and gardens.

The two structures are becoming even more environmentally sustainable, as Lewarchik and SRI Energy prepare to install the first phase of 20-kilowatt solar panel systems on the roofs of both buildings. He hopes the solar panels will provide energy for all of the building's common area lighting, which would include hallways, parking lots, lobbies and laundry rooms. Eventually, Lewarchik says he hopes to install a total of 60-kilowatt solar panel systems on each building. "There will actually be solar carports in the parking lot, so they'll be really visible. And eventually, people will be able to plug their cars in the carports," he says. "It will definitely help curb the carbon footprint for the building."
Start-ups flood into Elevator Building on Riverfront

Start-ups and creative inclined companies have rushed to fill up the space in the Elevator Building, leasing all but one space in the old warehouse-turned-office building next to the Chene Park overlooking the Detroit River.

The 20,000-square-foot building has nine companies occupying space on its second floor and another eight on the first floor. Among the companies leasing space are M1/DTW, an architectural-design firm, and Grit Design, a smartphone application company. Other companies include tech firms that deal with touchscreen technology and entertainment firms in both film and music industries.

"That's just what the economy is bringing me," says Randy Lewarchik, owner of the Elevator Building. "All I'm doing is free Craigslist ads. I haven't paid for advertising for this building yet."

The 103-year-old building on Franklin Street has served as an industrial warehouse for most of its life, including a stint as a bootlegging hub for the Purple Gang, according to Lewarchik. The 30-something developer bought the building a few years ago with the idea of turning it into condos. The housing crisis forced him to switch business plans, turning the building into a loft-style office space for small businesses.
Elevator Building rides ups, downs of market: Owners scrap condo plan, try small offices

By Daniel Duggan

Though bank financing was secured and interest from potential buyers was strong, the owners of the Detroit Elevator Building made a tough decision in 2007 to pull the plug on their riverfront condo development.

Changing course, owners of the 102-year-old building pursued a commercial use and have been renovating the interior to be used as small office spaces.

And as they’ve slowly remodeled, they’ve watched plans for the other five residential developments in the neighborhood fizzle as buyers who were expected to flock to the riverfront never materialized.

The gamble is starting to pay off, said Randy Lewarchik, one of the owners. A certificate of occupancy is expected in August, and six tenants have put down their deposits to lease space.

"It's a case of us being quick on our toes and being in a position to still add something to the building and the neighborhood," he said. "We're lucky to not be just another sad 'could-be' story in Detroit."
The Young & Entrepreneurial: Q&A with Elevator Building developer Randy Lewarchik

Published: Saturday, July 31, 2010, 3:31 PM

By Model D

Jon Zemke | Model D

An old, rusted, steel door on the side of the Elevator Building bears a spray-painted skull and crossbones and a warning: "Beware. If you value your life as much as we value this building don't [insert expletive that rhymes with luck] with it."

That comes courtesy of Randy Lewarchik and his construction crew, who are turning what was once a crumbling industrial building into a place of business that is both state-of-the-art and a piece of art. The century-old structure on Franklin Street in the East Riverfront area was built at a time when the old economy was new. This reinvention promises to make the Elevator Building a new economy hub once more when it opens this fall. Half a dozen entrepreneurs and start-ups like M1/DTW have already signed on, and there is space for more.

It's all thanks to Lewarchik, a 30-something developer who sees opportunities in Detroit, and like any good investor, he is putting his money where he sees potential. He sat down with Model D to discuss the Elevator Building project.
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The Rail District
The Repositioning of Buildings and Districts

**Existing Condition:**
Declining district - commercial and industrial buildings and land areas underutilized and vacant

**Approach:**
Urban Design: area transformed into a new mixed-use pedestrian-oriented district
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Cole Street
The Repositioning of Buildings and Districts

**Existing Condition:**
Industrial Building – vacated for nearly 2 years

**Approach:**
Urban Design Plan: designed as part of the Birmingham Plan

**Architectural:** Interior and exterior redevelopment
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District
The Repositioning of Buildings and Districts

**Existing Condition:**

Office buildings on large site – vacated for nearly 2 years

**Approach:**

Urban Design Plan: designed as part of the Birmingham Plan

Architectural: new structure incorporating live and work spaces for lease
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Forest Street
The Repositioning of Buildings and Districts

**Existing Condition:**
Multiple underutilized single family houses

**Approach:**
Urban Design: designed as part of the Birmingham Plan

Architectural: New mixed-use structure incorporating retail, office, residential and parking uses
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- Legal Issues
- Code Evaluation
- Form-Based Codes
- Financing Options
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Financing Redevelopment

Public Financing Available to Communities
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Legal Tools

Planning and Zoning

Form Based Codes

Condominium
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Where does this all lead……..?
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Presented by
Mark Nickita, AIA
225 Avon Road ------200,000+ sf on 14.37 acres ------
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$13,410 per Acre
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The RePlace Team

• J.C. Cataldo - Development
  - Planning

• Bill Freeman - Legal

• Mark Nickita, AIA - Urban Design
  - Architecture
  - Adaptive Reuse
How To Maximize Tax Revenue with Intelligent Planning.

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