



ULI TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PANEL REPORT

ELMS COLLEGE – HOLY NAME OF JESUS PARISH

CHICOPEE, MA

APRIL 22, 2024



Boston/
New England

URBAN LAND INSTITUTE (ULI)

The Urban Land Institute is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit research and education organization supported by its members. Its mission is to shape the future of the built environment for transformative impact in communities worldwide. Founded in 1936, the Institute has grown to over 48,000 members worldwide, representing the entire spectrum of land use and real estate development disciplines working in private enterprise and public service. ULI membership includes developers, architects, planners, lawyers, bankers, economic development professionals, and other related fields.

The Boston/New England District Council of ULI serves the six New England states and has over 1,300 members. As a preeminent, multidisciplinary real estate forum, ULI Boston/New England facilitates the open exchange of ideas, information, and experience among local and regional leaders and policymakers dedicated to creating better places.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PANELS (TAPs)

The ULI Boston/New England Real Estate Advisory Committee convenes TAPs at the request of public officials and local stakeholders of communities and nonprofit organizations facing complex land use challenges that benefit from the pro bono recommendations provided by the TAP members.

A TAP consists of a group of diverse professionals with expertise in the issues presented in the sponsor's application. The Panel spends one to two days visiting and analyzing existing conditions, identifying specific planning and development issues, and formulating realistic and actionable recommendations to move initiatives forward consistent with the applicant's goals and objectives.

An independent study by Rivera Consulting surveyed municipalities that received assistance from the TAP programs and reported a positive impact by the TAP process on communities. Eighty-two percent of participating municipalities said their behavior and approach to municipal planning and economic development strategies were affected; 67% said there were increased municipal investments related to the stated goals and recommendations of their TAP report; and 62% said at least one key developable asset addressed in their TAP report had been redeveloped, consistent with ULI Boston/New England recommendations.

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Executive Summary

ULI and the TAP Process

Provides an overview of ULI's District Council and its Technical Assistance Panels (TAPs) and includes a list of the panel members and stakeholders who took part in the information-gathering sessions. The section also highlights key elements of the tour of the study area for the TAP and describes the process undertaken by panelists and stakeholders to arrive at their recommendations.

Purpose of the TAP and Project Background

Gives a brief synopsis of the purpose of the TAP, including the questions posed by the sponsors to help them identify solutions. This chapter also provides an overview of the site, its history, and stakeholder input regarding the project.

Assets & Opportunities

This section identifies the strengths of the church site being considered for redevelopment and highlights the support of the City of Chicopee, the Diocese of Springfield, and Elms College.

Challenges

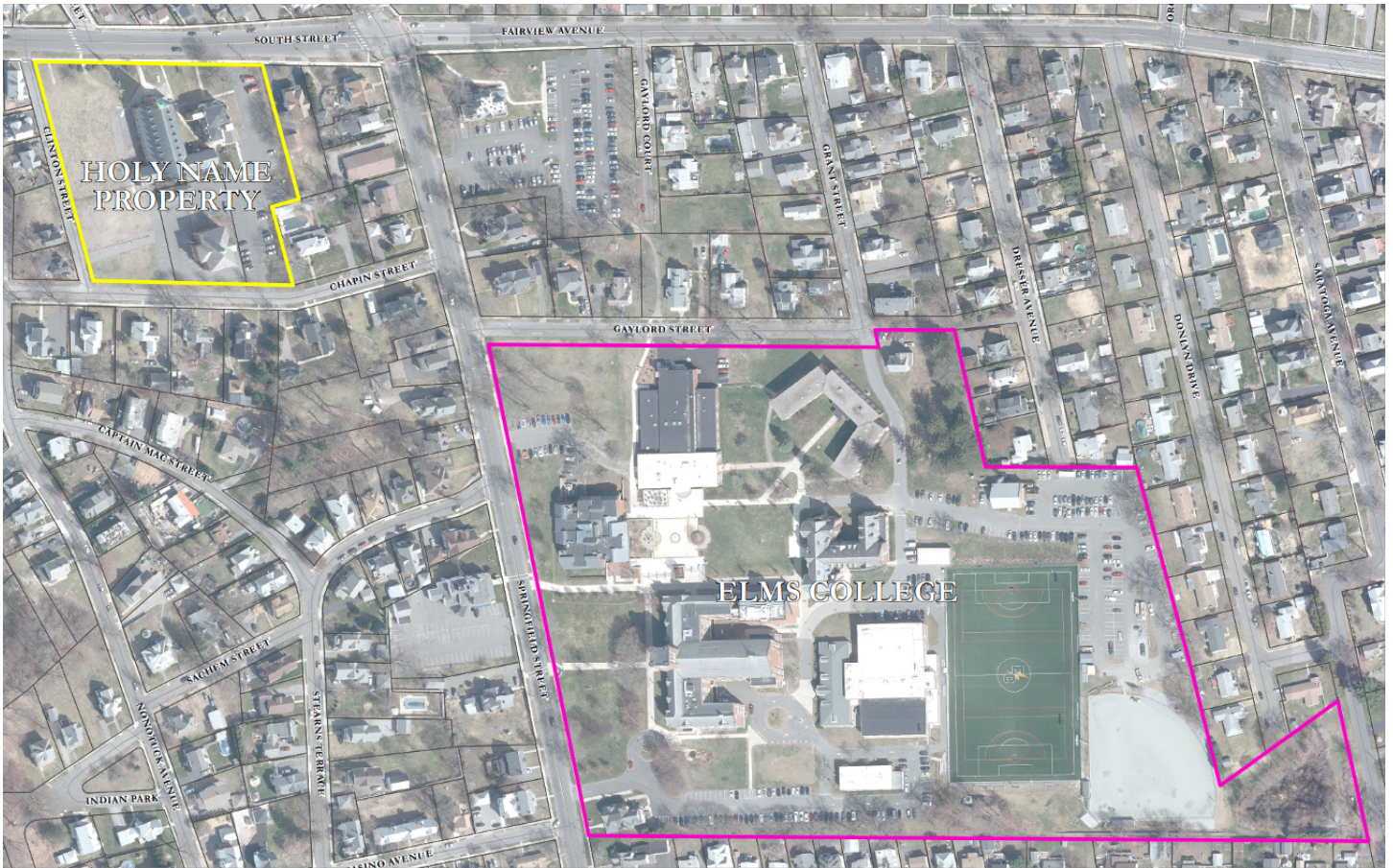
This section outlines the potential problems a redevelopment of the church property may encounter, including funding issues, the feasibility of adapting buildings on the property, and potential community opposition.

Recommendations

Panelists offer several potential redevelopment scenarios, including preserving the church and other buildings fully or partially and adding community space and student housing.

Conclusion

Provides a brief assessment of the panel's findings.



The TAP study area.

ULI and the TAP Process

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MassDevelopment

MassDevelopment is the Commonwealth's economic development and finance authority. The quasi-public agency works closely with state, local, and federal officials to increase housing and create jobs. With the power to act as both a lender and developer, MassDevelopment also works to fill in gaps in infrastructure, transportation, energy, and other areas that may be holding back economic growth. MassDevelopment has worked with ULI since 2011 to help sponsor and support the TAP process in cities and towns across the Commonwealth.

Panel Members

ULI Boston/New England assembled a volunteer group of members with diverse skills and expertise to assist Elms College and the City of Chicopee with their due diligence process for the potential redevelopment of the Holy Name of Jesus Parish property. Member practice areas included architects, developers, real estate attorneys, a construction professional, a landscape architect, and a finance expert. The following is a list of panelists:

Chairs

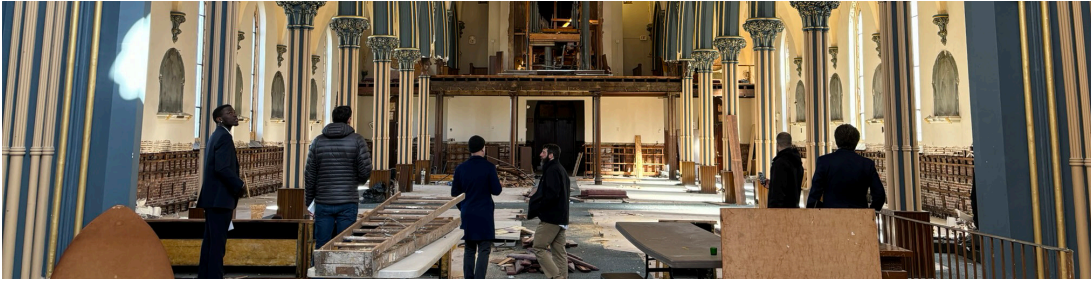
James Heffernan, Partner, Rich May Law
Emily Keys Innes, President, Innes Associates

Panel

Scott Bates, VP, Erland Construction
Spencer Beebe, Project Manager, MDLA
Edd Hamzanlui, Founder, MassCan Capital
Paul Momnie, Director, Goulston & Storrs
Ben Murphy, VP of Real Estate, MassDevelopment

Michael Wang, Principal, Form + Place

Panelists have donated their time.



ULI Staff

Timothy Moore, Manager
 Zakeem Pitter, Senior Associate, ULI Boston
 TAP Writer: Mike Hoban, Principal, Hoban Communications

Stakeholders

The TAP also benefited from the participation of multiple stakeholders, representing Elms College, the City of Chicopee, the Polish Center of Discovery and Learning, the Diocese of Springfield, and the Chicopee Historical Society.

Group I

Jack Dill, Real Estate Advisor to the Diocese, Trustee of Elms College
 Dr. Harry Dumay, President, Elms College
 Jeff Dupaul, Director of Facilities, Elms College
 Michael Ford, Chief Finance Officer, Diocese of Springfield

Melissa Gillis, Trustee, Chair of the Building and Grounds Committee, Elms College
 Joanne M. Gruszkos, President & Chairman, Polish Center of Discovery and Learning
 Dr. Joyce Hampton, VP of Academic Affairs Elect, Elms College
 Bryant Morgan, VP of Finance and Administration, Elms College

Group II

Ray Hoess-Brooks, Vice Chair, Chicopee Historical Commission
 Kathleen Lingenberg, Community Development Administrator, City of Chicopee
 Linda Mruk, Clerk, Chicopee Historical Commission
 Mike Pise, Mayor's Chief of Staff/Polish Center Board Member
 Lee Pouliot, AICP, ASLA, Director of Planning & Development, City of Chicopee
 Paul Stelzer, Elms Board of Trustees Chair



A tour of the study area included several historic buildings on the campus.

Project Area Tour

On the morning of April 22nd, ULI TAP panelists gathered at the Polish Center of Discovery and Learning (situated within the Holy Name property), a beautifully restored historic mid-nineteenth-century building. They were greeted by Lee Pouliot, Planning Director for the City of Chicopee; Dr. Harry Dumay, President of Elms College; Paul Stelzer, Board Chair, Elms College; Joanne M. Gruszkos, Polish Center President & Chairman; Michael Ford, Finance Officer, Diocese of Springfield, John Vieau Mayor, City of Chicopee, and Mike Pise, the Mayor's Chief of Staff.

Following a short briefing, Pouliot led the panelists on a tour that began with a viewing of the façade of the church facing South St. The façade is intact, with window openings boarded up. The tour proceeded down Clinton St., and panelists observed a burial site with two graves on the church property located near the front of the church and a large parcel of vacant land (435 feet x 130, 1.33 acres) where the convent and dormitory once stood (they were demolished in 2016). Clinton St. is a narrow residential street that runs the length of the church property and has a combination of single and multifamily homes. The tour then proceeded onto Chapin St. and re-entered the church property, stopping first at the two-story office and school building, surrounded by a paved parking lot. Inside the building, panelists observed structurally intact classrooms that would require significant renovation but are currently being used as a haphazardly organized storage facility and a finished basement being used for storage. The tour stopped briefly at the (non-functioning) boiler house before entering the church.

Inside the church, panelists observed that the sanctuary's interior had been essentially gutted, with debris scattered throughout the structure. Most of the historic details of the interior, including stained glass windows and wainscoting, had been removed. Rows of pews were removed from their moorings and stacked at the back of the church.

The tour exited the building onto South St., past the Polish Center, and turned onto Springfield St. towards the Elms College campus. Springfield St. is home to several restored historic single-family homes, some of which have been converted into two-and-three unit structures. The group passed the Gaylord Mansion, a late-nineteenth-century restored French Second Empire-style home at the corner of Fairview Avenue purchased by the college in 1962. The former home now houses students on the upper floors and classroom/study spaces on the first floor. The group took a brief tour of the campus, which was comprised primarily of historic buildings and some newer structures focused around a central quad space, presumably constructed during the latter half of the twentieth century. The campus also features the Lyons Center for Natural and Health Sciences, a 22,000-square-foot building built in 2013, and the Cheryl Condon and newly renovated Leary athletic fields.

The tour returned to Springfield St. and made its way up Chapin St., where panelists observed a large two-story restored home on a nearly half-acre lot the college had purchased in 2021. After concluding the tour, panelists conducted two separate hour-long interview sessions with stakeholders. The City had previously given the panelists a comprehensive briefing book, and they combined that information and observations from the tour and stakeholder interviews to develop potential redevelopment strategies for the church property. That evening, the panelists presented their recommendations to the stakeholders and the general public at the Mary Dooley College Center faculty dining hall.

Purpose of the TAP and Project Background

The City of Chicopee reached out to ULI Boston/New England to organize a TAP to assist in the due diligence process for the shuttered property of the Holy Name of Jesus Parish, which the Roman Catholic Diocese of Springfield has offered to transfer to Elms College. The College and the Diocese signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that allows Elms College time to complete due diligence and planning before accepting the transfer. Elms College (which is the only institution of higher education located in the City of Chicopee) has been working collaboratively with the City of Chicopee, the Diocese, and the Polish Center of Discovery and Learning (which currently occupies one building on the Holy Name campus) to complete the process to determine whether it was feasible to redevelop the property in a manner that would support Elms College programming and respond to campus needs.

The City asked the panelists to consider the following questions in their analysis:

Question 1: What is the feasibility of redevelopment of the Holy Name Property, considering best use(s), city and regional needs, financial viability, and potential funding sources?

Question 2: If the building(s) can be rehabilitated, what is the best use of the space(s)?

Question 3: What partnerships could be economically feasible and beneficial for all?

Question 4: How can redevelopment of the Holy Name property connect the property to the surrounding neighborhood and enhance the Springfield Street Historic District?

The City of Chicopee Snapshot

Located on the Connecticut River in Hampden County, the City of Chicopee is built around several smaller former mill communities on its namesake, the Chicopee River, whose name is derived from the Nipmuc language. Chicopee's early industries included cotton and woolen mills, textiles, brass and iron foundries, paper making, footwear factories, the first friction matches, and shipbuilding. Chicopee Falls became a major bicycle manufacturing center during the late nineteenth century.

Originally part of Springfield, Chicopee seceded from the larger city in 1848, incorporating as the Town of Chicopee before becoming a city in 1890. Although once defined by the predominant nationality of its early immigrant occupants, primarily Polish and French Canadian, these neighborhoods are now occupied by people of many cultures while maintaining their historical and ethnic charm.

Chicopee is now primarily a service economy with a mixture of small, local businesses and national chains. The City is home to a number of Polish-American food product manufacturers, reflecting its history. It is also home to a Callaway Golf plant, which produces more than 5 million golf balls a year. The City of Chicopee has a historically long-standing and collaborative relationship with Elms College, the Diocese, and the Polish Center of Discovery and Learning.

The Study Area

Following the Diocese of Springfield's declaration of Holy Name as a surplus site in

2022, the 4.2-acre property has continually been assessed and evaluated, including a 2011 structural assessment of the church building by Casella Design Associates and an Environmental Site Assessment (ESA) in 2022 by O'Reilly, Talbot, and Okun (OTO).

Elms College and the City of Chicopee see the Holy Name property as a chance to further expand the College's already significant contribution to the community and to help revitalize nearby Chicopee Center.

The study area is located within the Springfield Street Historic District, listed on the State and Federal Historic Registers. The Holy Name property is located at 63 South Street and 64 Chapin Street, a five-minute walk from Elms College. Abutting properties include multi- and single-family residences to the north, east, south, and west. Four buildings are on the property: the Polish Center of Discovery and Learning, the Holy Name of Jesus Christ Church, the church's former offices, the school building, and a former boiler house that once powered the facilities. The Diocese demolished a convent and dormitory along Clinton and South Street in 2016 and 2017. There is also a small burial ground with two graves along South Street.

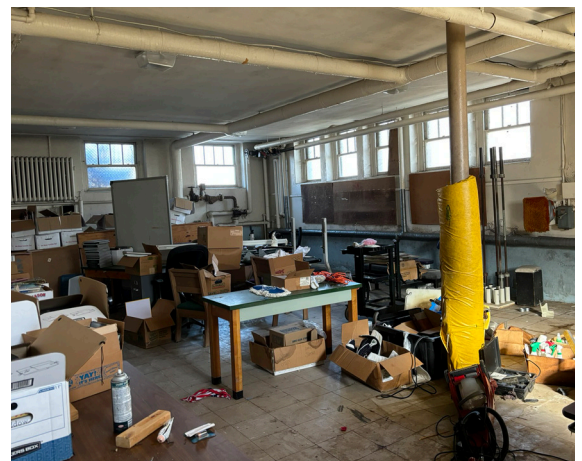
The Polish Center of Discovery and Learning at 33 South Street is a two-story, 8,895-square-foot building with a flat roof and an unfinished basement. The Polish Center has occupied this building since 2004 under a 99-year lease agreement with the Diocese that is expected to survive any property transfer. They have invested heavily

in the building to maintain their considerable historical and cultural collections and to advance their cultural programming.

The 63 South Street property consists of the church building, office, school, and former boiler house. This property is a patchwork of pavement and landscaped, vegetated areas that surround the building to the west. The church building was constructed between 1857 and 1859 by Irish immigrants and includes approximately 11,618 square feet of space. The church has a main chapel, auxiliary chapel, and balcony areas. There is no basement, but there is a crawl space below the building. The roof has a gable and hip construction. The church has not been in use for over a decade, and according to the Diocese, the building has been condemned due to structural damage.

The two-story office and school building with a finished basement was constructed in 1942 and has a total of 11,478 square feet of occupiable space. The first and second floors were formerly used for classrooms, faculty, and staff offices but are currently used as storage for the Diocese. The basement once served as a cafeteria/recreational space and as the boys' dormitory. The former boiler house (construction date unknown) is built approximately 20 feet below the ground surface and totals 1,332 square feet.

The boiler remains but has been disconnected from its power source. The boiler house also provides access to the crawl space that extends under the church building.



The tour of the buildings and campus revealed a variety of challenging conditions and renovation needs.

Stakeholder Input

During the stakeholder meetings, each group detailed its needs and preferred outcomes for the redevelopment of the property.

Elms College (Short Term)

Auditorium/Meeting Spaces – The College currently has two meeting spaces, one that can accommodate 800 people and a second with a capacity of 100. However, the College expressed a need for a meeting space/auditorium that could accommodate 200-300 people.

Financial Constraints – Like many smaller liberal arts colleges, Elms College enrollment may be affected by uncertainty about the future of federal student loan programs. The College was described as “financially healthy but not wealthy” and has no capacity for large-scale investment in the rehabilitation of the Church/School buildings, so there needs to be revenue associated with capital investments.

College Connection with the Polish Learning Center – The Polish Center has partnered with Elms College since 1995, providing learning resources and

programming that mutually enrich the educational and cultural opportunities of Elms College students. The Polish Center has a long-term lease (99 years) with the Diocese of Springfield, signed in 2004.

Elms College (Long Term)

Continue to Foster Ongoing Relationship Between Elms College, Chicopee, and the Polish Center – The College is seen as a vital component of the City’s economic and cultural health.

Upper Class/Graduate Housing – The College wants to expand its upper-class and graduate student housing and provide accommodations for visiting scholars.

Increase Facilities – The College would like to add additional classrooms and administration/office space and expand its sports facilities (fields and fieldhouse).

City of Chicopee

Community Center – The City wants to establish a community center south of the Chicopee River.



Connect Elms College to Chicopee Center –

Elms College is seen as a vital player as the City seeks to increase commercial activity and revitalize Chicopee Center.

Preserve the Historic Holy Name Property –

The City understands the historical and cultural significance of the church property to the people of Chicopee and would like to see it preserved and/or memorialized.

Housing – Like most cities in Massachusetts, there is a shortage of diverse housing options. The City has already committed its Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and HOME funds to three large-scale housing developments and does not have the resources to invest in any potential housing component of the site's redevelopment for the foreseeable future.

Encouraging Growth of Elms College –

Chicopee recognizes that Elms College is a vital component of the City and would like to see the institution continue to thrive and grow.

Polish Center of Discovery and Learning

Auditorium/Meeting Spaces – The Center also expressed a need for a meeting space/auditorium that could accommodate 200-300 people.

Establish Stronger Connections with the International Polish Community –

Representatives from the Polish Center are actively communicating with the Polish government to invest in and establish programming at the Center.

Increase Storage and Display Space – The Center's storage and display capacity is maxed out, and they would like to continue to grow to support the cultural needs of the Polish community.



The Gaylord Mansion houses the College's Living-Learning, Community and Cultural center



The Polish Center provides an important connection point into the broader community.



The stately interior of the Holy Name Church remains beautiful as it awaits repair.

Assets and Opportunities

Size of Site – The Holy Name property is a 4.2-acre site with four distinct assets: the Holy Name Church, the school/office building, the vacant land, and the Polish Center.

Relationships Between Institutions – Elms College and the Polish Center of Discovery and Learning are well-regarded institutions, and both would ideally like to expand their facilities. The institutions enjoy a strong working relationship with the City of Chicopee and each other.

Proactive Planning and Community Development Departments – The City of Chicopee Planning Department is spearheading this study and will be actively engaged in any redevelopment efforts.

Established Zoning Tools and Efficient Permitting Process – According to stakeholders, the City's zoning processes are efficient and flexible, with relatively quick turnaround times for permitting and approvals.

Strong Community Support for the Church – The neighborhood and the wider Roman Catholic Church community have expressed support for preserving aspects of the “Mother Church” property, the oldest parish in the Diocese of Springfield.

Location – The church property is well-located, close to Chicopee Center, and has convenient access to highways and the City of Springfield.



Built in 1922, O'Leary Hall is the oldest building on the Elms College campus and provides student housing.

Challenges

Funding/Financing – Locating funding sources for the redevelopment of the site may be difficult, given that Elms College does not have resources available for large-scale investment.

Identifying Revenue-Generating Uses – Any redevelopment plan involving adaptive reuse would need to include revenue-generating uses in order to be feasible.

Building Adaptability – The existing floor plans of the church and other structures may not be suitable for conversion to other uses due to the prohibitive cost of rehabilitation to bring them to readiness for conversion. While there is precedent for converting churches, or certain components of church complexes, into housing, particularly in markets like Boston, the current condition of the Holy Name building – including its structural vulnerabilities – would most likely make this type of conversion too costly.

Need for Swift Action – The church has been vacant for over a decade and is deteriorating rapidly. Swift action is needed to preserve it, but due to fiscal constraints, this may not be feasible.

Community Opposition – There may be strong local opposition to significant alterations to the historic church building.

Major Constraints to Redeveloping Existing Buildings

To illustrate the difficulties that conversion of the church and/or other buildings may present, here is a breakdown of some of the potential issues:

Demolition Costs (Partial vs. Full Demolition) – While selective demolition of the structures, particularly the church, would appear to be the less expensive option, selectively demolishing the building may be cost-prohibitive because it may require



The plaster walls in the sanctuary need significant repair.



The columns and beams in the sanctuary are also in need of repair.

extensive upgrades to the remaining structure to make adaptive reuse of the building possible.

Structural Integrity – The structural integrity of the building(s) would need to be thoroughly analyzed to better understand the scope of the cost of redevelopment.

Hazardous Material Studies and Abatement – An additional study would be needed to identify any potentially hazardous materials (asbestos, lead, etc.) that would need to be abated.

Supplemental Costs Associated with Historic Preservation – Restoring a historic building like the church can be cost-prohibitive as it often requires preserving or replicating historic elements to satisfy historic commissions.

ADA Compliance – Any building being considered for redevelopment will need to be brought up to ADA code (exterior entrances, bathrooms, and current energy code standards). For example, the school building would need to install an elevator to provide access to the second floor and basement level.

Fire Code Issues – Each building would need to bring its electrical/fire suppression systems up to code.

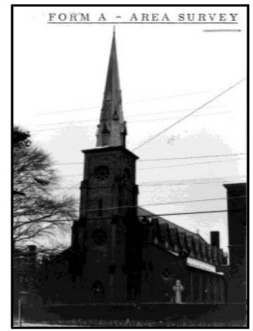
MEP/Utilities – The old central boiler plant system would need to be replaced with updated MEP systems designed specifically for the building's proposed repurposed use(s).

Other Constraints

Parking – If the site is to be redeveloped, there is a lack of adequate parking within walking distance. Future parking requirements could be difficult to accommodate on-site – especially if an auditorium use is incorporated – without relief from zoning and/or the use of satellite parking areas, which Elms College may be able to provide.

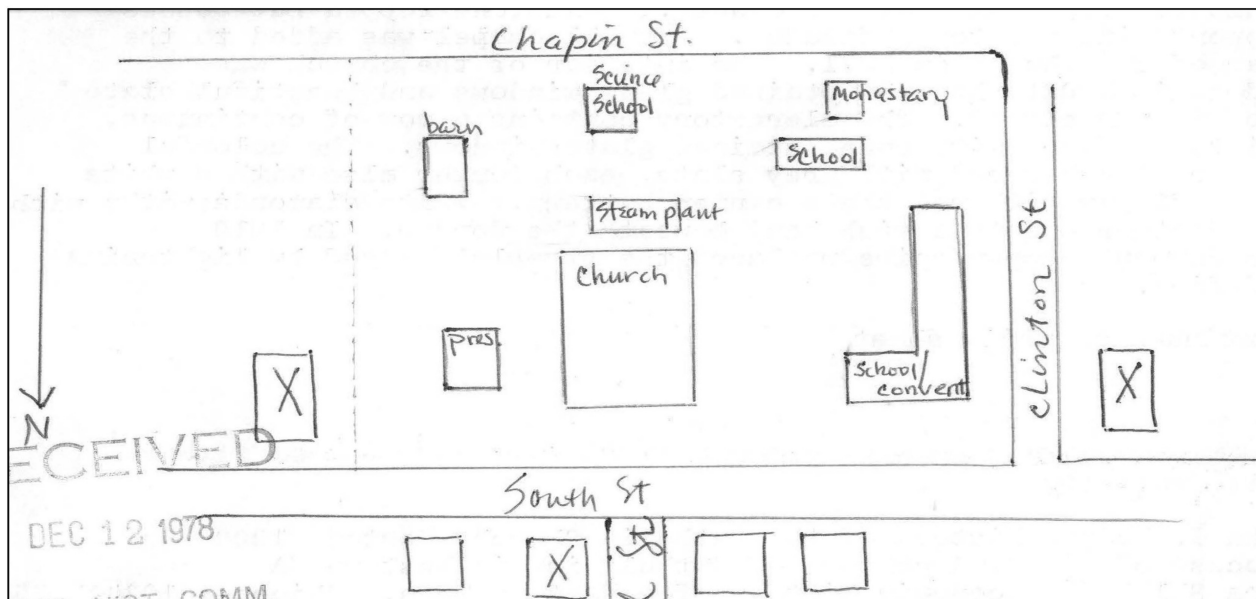
Burial Site – There are two graves on the property, so any redevelopment plan would need to consider allowing that portion of the site to remain untouched (unless relocation was an option).

Abutting Neighbors – Any redevelopment plan would want to consider the scale and architectural vernacular of the existing neighborhood, which is located in a historic district and is comprised of single-family and multifamily homes.



Historic photos of the church and College campus are important reminders of the site's history.

HOLY NAME SITE HISTORY



A 1978 sketch of the the church campus shows the placement of several buildings that are no longer standing.

Recommendations

It should be noted that the four entities – the City, the Diocese, the Polish Center, and Elms College – have some clearly defined shared needs, and sharing responsibility for redevelopment costs would be the most beneficial approach for all entities involved.

There is a question of whether it would be best for the church to deed the property to the college or retain ownership through a long-term ground lease. Any redevelopment plan should also consider the Polish Center's needs.

Recommendations for Holy Name Church

Conduct Updated Structural/Feasibility Study – While a structural/feasibility study was conducted in 2011, a new one must be performed to reflect the deterioration that may have occurred over the past dozen-plus years. If historic restoration is the path forward for the structure, historic tax credits may be available to help defray a percentage of the cost.

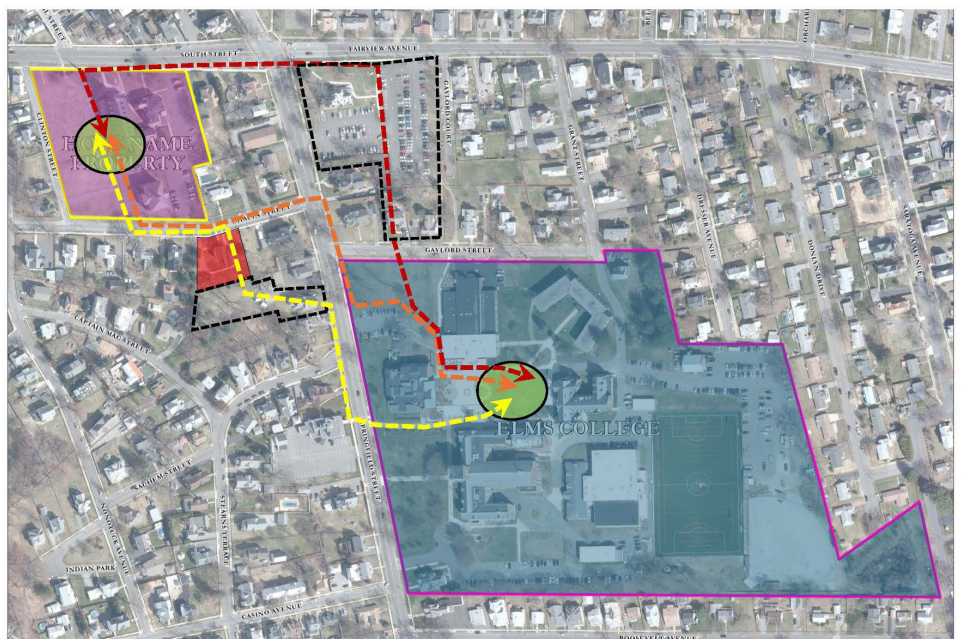
Conduct Abatement Analysis – As previously noted, a study should be conducted to identify any potentially hazardous building materials (asbestos, lead, etc.) that would need to be abated and to understand mitigation costs.

Public Outreach: Keep the Community Informed – Experience has shown that it is critically important to keep the neighbors and larger community informed about the decision-making process as the project moves forward.

Below are potential redevelopment scenarios for the church:

Plan A: Restore and Preserve the Entire Church Building

This plan would restore and preserve the entire church. While many churches are suitable for redevelopment into apartments or condominiums, the floor plan and structure of Holy Name are not conducive to housing. Elms College and the Polish Center have both expressed a need for an auditorium/meeting space, and the main sanctuary (in



This map, produced by the panel, depicts potential movement between the church property and College campus.

front) could be an ideal location. The rear of the church could be transformed into office space for the Polish Center, which is in need of administrative and storage space.

Plan B1: Restore and Preserve a Portion of the Church Building

This plan would include the preservation and renovation of the front of the building into auditorium meeting space but would remove the back of the building. This plan would be a less expensive option because there would be a reduced cost of upgrading structures or preserving historic elements as with a full preservation plan. New construction would also allow for an easier path to compliance with ADA regulations. The rear portion of the church could then be rebuilt as an office/administrative/storage space for use by the Polish Center.

Plan B2: Restore and Preserve the Front Facade of the Building Only

A third option would be to preserve select elements of the building and incorporate them into any design of a future use as a memorial to the original building. This could be a full façade (like at MGM Springfield or the Bruce C. Bolling Municipal Building in Boston) or the incorporation of artifacts from the original structure into the new building.

Recommendations for School Building

Plan A: Restore and Preserve Entire Building

This plan would incorporate a wider scope of redevelopment of the property, so a multiple-phased development should be considered. It should be noted that the building structure is not optimal for residential conversion or sports facility uses but may be ideal for classroom and administrative uses for Elms College or for office use by the Polish Center.

Plan B: Winterize and Seal the Building

While the school building can be a useful asset, given the present funding issues, it may be best to preserve it for Elms College's future needs until a long-range redevelopment plan becomes clearer.

Note: While the idea of demolishing all of the structures on the church property and

building from the ground up was considered, it was not considered a reasonable option.

Recommendations for Vacant Land

This parcel offers the most flexibility for redevelopment. It is not large enough for most sports field uses, so the Panel recommends using the vacant land for college housing, specifically targeted to upper-class students, graduate students, and visiting faculty. While partnering with a third-party developer to construct housing would be an option, there are concerns that the community would not be amenable to the idea. Building housing may also be a way to generate revenue that would help fund other redevelopment projects on the site.

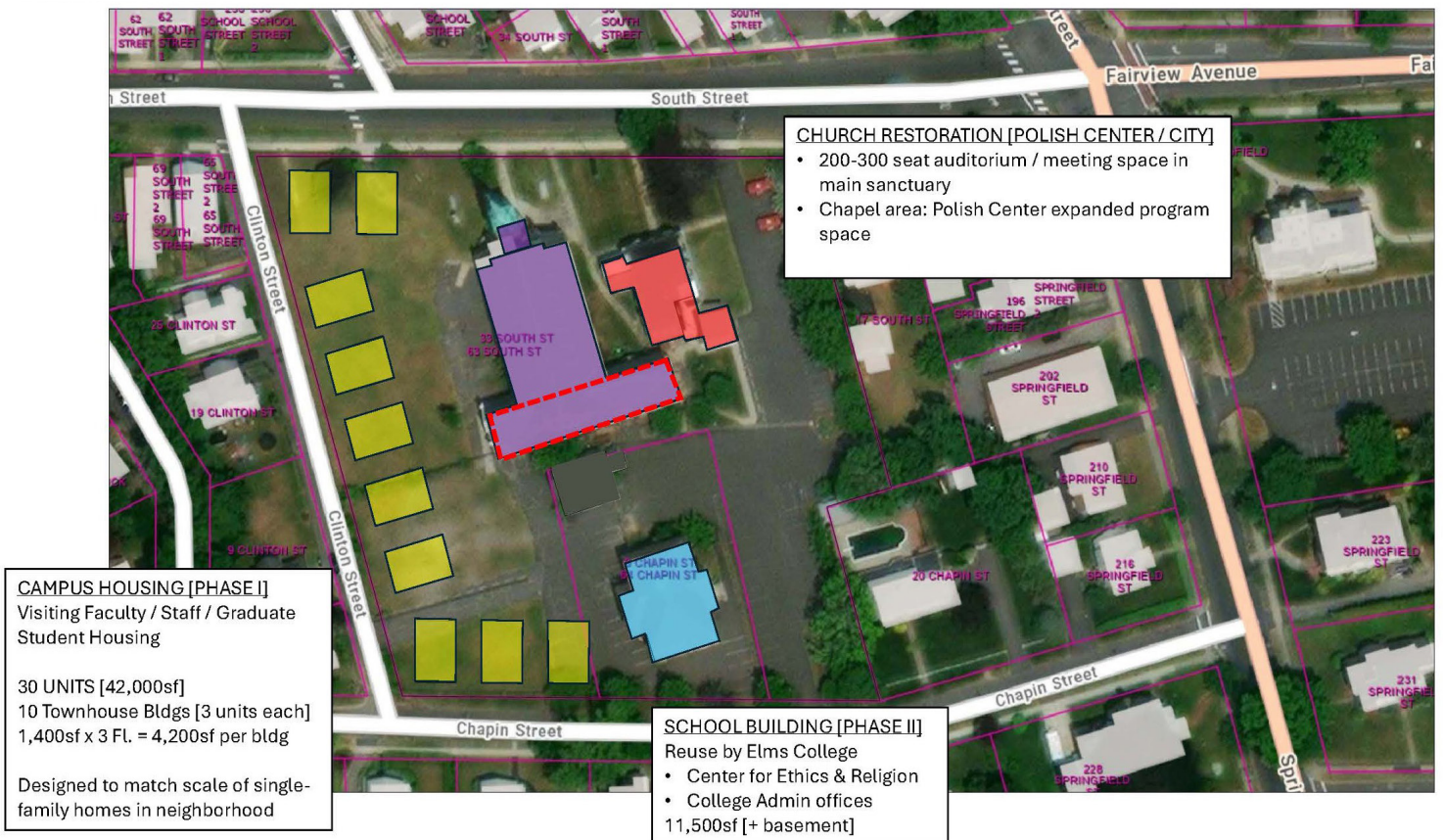
It is important to note the significance of not only the connections between the college and the church campuses but also the connection between the campuses and Chicopee Center. From a campus planning standpoint, while the main quad is often the focal point of the campus, there can be multiple open space "quads" that are activity or department-focused and can enhance campus subcultures.

While the community has come to appreciate the vacant land as a neighborhood amenity, a redevelopment plan that would include housing could still offer some open space for the neighborhood. While financing the redevelopment as a whole will be challenging, the housing component in the scenarios below would generate revenue for the College to provide funding for the redevelopment of the school building for administrative purposes. The plans below are not meant to be a concrete representation or a proposed solution; they only illustrate possible scenarios of three redevelopment options:

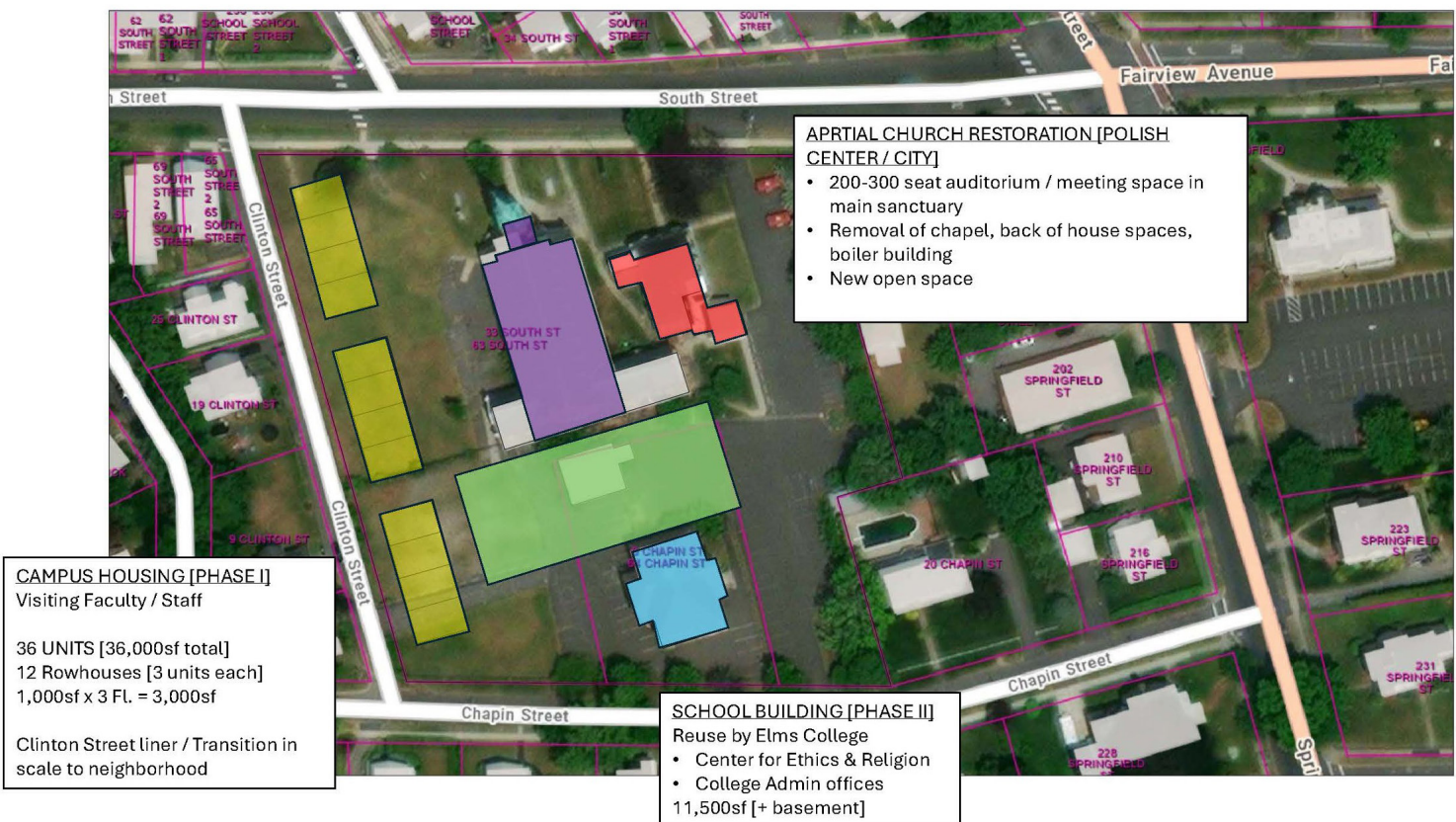
Plan A: Multiple Buildings

Phase I of this plan consists of constructing ten three-story, 4,200-square-foot townhouse structures, each with three units, that would provide housing for graduate students and/or faculty. Built to the scale of the neighborhood's single-family homes, the design essentially knits the neighborhood together. While

PLAN A



PLAN B1



financing the redevelopment as a whole will be challenging, the housing component would generate revenue for the College to provide funding for the redevelopment of the school building for administrative purposes. In Phase II of this scenario, the sanctuary portion of the church would be redeveloped into a 200-300-capacity auditorium/meeting space, and the chapel would be redeveloped as an expanded program space for the Polish Center. The school could potentially be redeveloped as the Elms College Center for Ethics and Religion, with ample basement space used for storage by the College or the Polish Center.

Plan B1: Townhouses

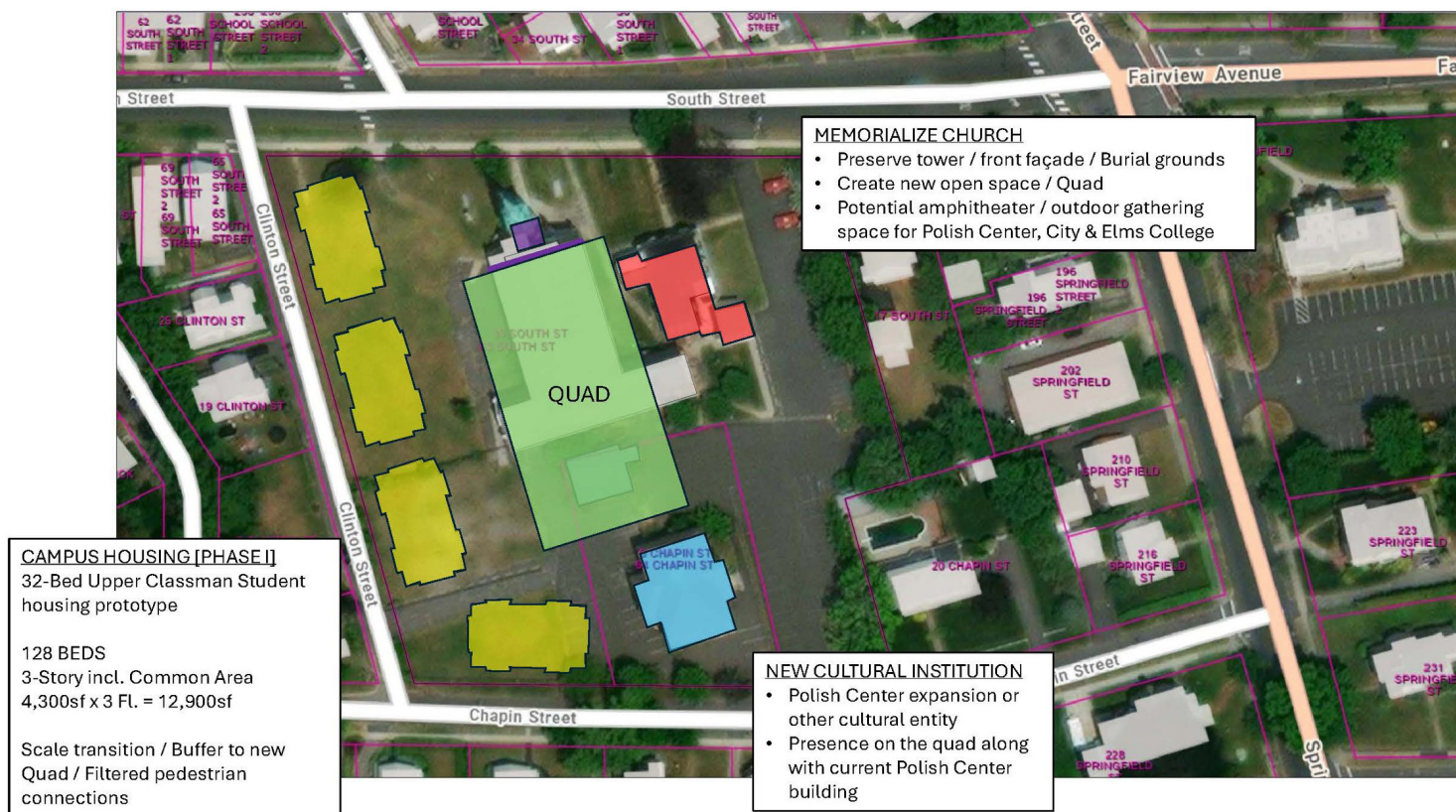
A second proposal would implement a row-house approach, providing 36 housing units for graduate students and/or faculty. This plan would construct three 12,000-square-foot buildings, each with four connected townhouses with three units each. This design would remove the chapel portion of the church to create green space (see rendering) while maintaining the sanctuary for the auditorium/

meeting space. The school would still be preserved for use by the College.

Plan B2

The third proposal would be to construct four 12,900-square-foot buildings that would each provide 32 beds (128 total) for upper-class students. The suite design would also allow for a common area in each building. In this scenario, the front facade of the church, the tower element with the burial grounds, and potentially some other parts could be preserved, with the remainder of the church removed to create a centralized secondary quad. There would also be space to potentially create an amphitheater to be used by the College, the Polish Center, and the City. The Polish Center and the school building (which may be converted to use as a cultural institution or for a Polish Center expansion), would have a presence on the quad. The three types of typologies presented would provide considerable housing capacity while being compatible with the character of the surrounding neighborhood.

PLAN B2



Recommendations: Landscape Design Philosophy

Improve Pedestrian Circulation Between Elms College and Chicopee Center

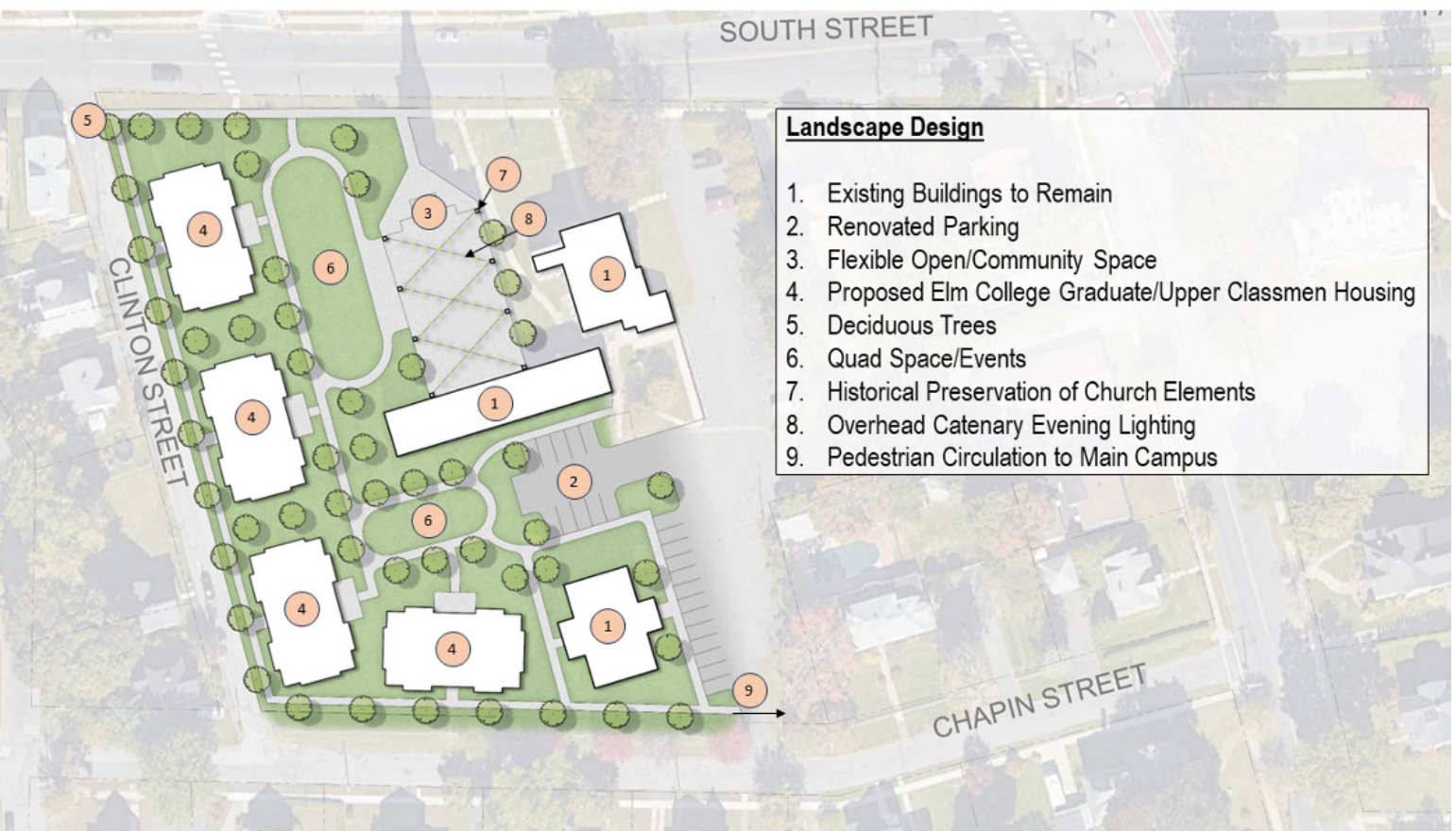
As previously stated, the Elms College campus is vital to the City's economic and cultural health. So, in addition to improving pedestrian circulation within the proposed extended campus, the walkability from the Elms College Campus and through the extended campus into Chicopee Center needs to be improved. Improvements would focus on green buffers and vertical separations between vehicular and pedestrian circulation using vertical curbing and strategic plant material. The proposed connections would work seamlessly with the City of Chicopee's recently published Comprehensive Plan, which highlights complete streets.

Provide Usable Green Space for Students and the Public

The site would be composed of both green space and flexible gathering spaces. These spaces would be able to serve multiple functions, such as community events, movie nights, Farmer's Markets, food competitions, etc. The usable green space and flexible open space are far easier to implement in the short term and can provide the College with an active site prior to the completion of any building renovations.

Provide Native Drought and Salt Tolerant Plantings Throughout the Site

In order to follow sustainable practices, native plantings would be utilized throughout the landscape to ensure long-term plant health. Tree and shrub species would be selected for their heartiness to the harsh New England environment and ability to withstand drought, salt, snow compaction, and intermittent flooding.



This rendering depicts a landscaping design concept Plan B2.

Integrate Stormwater Infiltration Basin Plantings

Infiltration basins are another example of sustainable practices. By allowing on-site stormwater to percolate into the soil, the pollutants are filtered out, and the groundwater and water tables are naturally recharged. In addition to serving as natural stormwater management, these basins will be strategically planted with native materials that will create a beautiful and elegant design. Infiltration basins can allow for a reduced or net zero amount of stormwater that needs to be moved and treated off-site. Alternatively, a civil engineer can provide an on-site underground Culvert system to treat stormwater runoff and allow it to percolate into the soil over time.

Incorporate Historical Church Elements Into the Landscape

Following a review of the interior of the existing church, it was noted that a majority of the historical design features have been removed. In the event of demolition/renovation of the historical church, various elements from the structure could be salvaged and re-used in the landscape to pay homage to its history. As an example, the remaining building columns could be salvaged and re-used in a flexible open space as vertical art elements

to create a semi-enclosed gathering space for events with overhead catenary lighting, as shown in the proposed landscape design plan. In addition, the Church's front façade, which is a majority of the remaining historical significance, could be salvaged. The façade would act as a historical element and provide a gateway/threshold into the Elms College extended campus (Shown as #3 in the Landscape Plan).

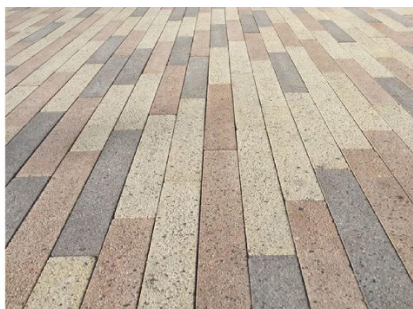
Removing the majority of the church would create flexible open space (#3) that could be used for markets or social gatherings. This space would be utilized for a variety of purposes not only by Elms College but also by The Polish Center of Discovery and Learning. In addition, structural elements reclaimed from the church (such as the columns) could be incorporated into the framework of a structure, and catenary lights would be strung from above for evening events to create a warm and welcoming environment. This design also includes a protected sidewalk that serves as a pedestrian connection from Clinton Street to South Street to the main campus (#9). Open green spaces (#6) would distance the proposed housing (#4) option from the reclaimed Church and school building. These open green spaces would serve as quads for all to use to expand the College's reach and identity.



Armstrong Maple – Spring



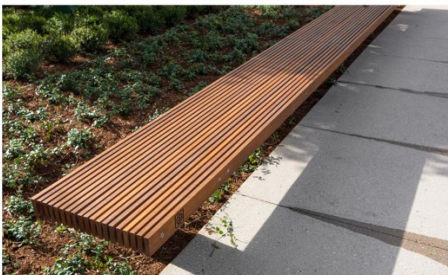
Armstrong Maple – Fall



Decorative Concrete Unit Pavers



Multi-stem Serviceberry



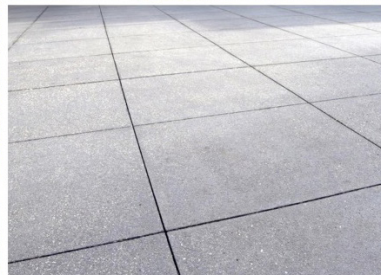
Wood Bench



Sweet Pepperbush



Rhus 'Gro-low'



Pavers or Stamped Concrete

Financing and Funding Resources

A project of this size requires multiple financing sources. This section is designed to offer financing suggestions from the appropriate sources and assign responsibility for the redevelopment of each segment of the church property to the proper entity. Regarding identifying funding sources, Elms College has indicated that any new construction (such as student housing on vacant land) would need to be revenue-generating. The school and church redevelopment may be eligible for the MassDevelopment's 'Underutilized Properties' program and tax credits. One recommendation for raising funds for the redevelopment/preservation of the church would be to solicit private donations. The historic nature of the church and its ties to the Polish community make for compelling reasons for the community to donate. Funds may also be available through the various U.S. EPA Brownfields programs, and the City is

exploring the EPA's new Environmental and Climate Justice Community Change Grants program.

Although the City has not adopted the Community Preservation Act, this project may motivate voters to do so. While CPA could not fully fund the redevelopment, it would contribute to the capital stack. Federal and State Historic tax credits (which can be applied to up to 40% of the project costs if the buildings are preserved) may also be used to make the project viable.

Responsibility, Purpose, Financing

This section summarizes the three major components of the site: the open land, the school building, and the church. Each section identifies the primary actor in addressing the component, a possible purpose for the component related to the actor's needs, and the relevant financing options.

	Responsibility	Purpose	Financing
Land	Elms College	Graduate student/faculty housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bond supported by housing revenue
School Building	Elms College OR Polish Center	Academic centers; administrative space; graduate housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bond supported by housing revenue and set aside from new enrollment MassDevelopment Underutilized Properties Historic Tax Credits (State and Federal)
Church	Polish American Discovery and Learning Center/ City of Chicopee / Elms College	Main space: auditorium; Chapel: meeting space/storage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Private Donors Brownfields Grants/EPA Community Change Program CPA (if the City adopts the program) MassDevelopment Underutilized Properties Cultural Facilities Fund Historic Tax Credits (State and Federal) Potentially New Markets Tax Credits (requires additional research)

Contributions

This section identifies how the main partners, working together, could support, over time, a campus-wide solution for all three components. Each participant – Elms

College, the Polish Center, and the City – has a unique role in funding options and driving community support. Working together, these three partners may be able to collaborate on a phased solution for the site that addresses the varied needs described above.

Contributions	Funding	Zoning	Community Support
Elms College	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Float bond to support the development of student housing; Phase II renovation for renovation of the school • Raise funds for scholarly centers from foundations that provide funds for specific programs • Cultivate donor base (alumni) 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build a positive reputation in the community • Participate in community/ neighborhood meetings
Polish Center of Discovery and Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cultivate donor base: The Polish Center for Discovery and Learning probably has the most substantial potential donor base and an already established outreach program. Potential donors could include the Polish diaspora and government, community members who want to see the church retained, and former parishioners. The Polish Center could consider offering naming rights for the auditorium space. • Provide room for tenants: Consulate; other local cultural groups. • Rent auditorium space: Elms College, City, private groups (weddings, performances) 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participate in community/ neighborhood meetings
City of Chicopee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support for adopting the Community Preservation Act • Assistance with U.S. EPA Brownfields Grants • Apply for the U.S. EPA Community Change Program • Assist or apply for other relevant grant programs (i.e. underutilized properties) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide zoning relief for different proposals (e.g., parking and dimensional) • Expedite the permitting and review processes, perhaps through a master plan development for the site that would allow a phased approach 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitate community/ neighborhood meetings • Build political support for solutions that benefit the wider community

Funding Resources

MassDevelopment Underutilized Properties

<https://www.massdevelopment.com/what-we-offer/real-estate-services/underutilized-properties-program>

Massachusetts State Historic Tax Credits

<https://www.sec.state.ma.us/mhc/mhctax/taxidx.htm>

Federal Historic Tax Credits

<https://savingplaces.org/historic-tax-credits>

U.S. EPA Brownfields Program

<https://www.epa.gov/brownfields/types-funding>

Inflation Reduction Act Community Change Grants Program

<https://www.epa.gov/inflation-reduction-act/inflation-reduction-act-community-change-grants-program>

Cultural Facilities Fund

<https://massculturalcouncil.org/organizations/cultural-facilities-fund/about-the-fund/>

Community Preservation Act (CPA)

<https://www.communitypreservation.org/about>

Conclusion

Addressing redevelopment of this site is complex because of the age, size, and condition of the buildings. The strongest case for redevelopment is the overlap between the needs of Elms College and the Polish Center of Discovery and Learning for meeting and auditorium space. With the combined efforts of both organizations and with regulatory and other assistance from the City, it may be possible to turn this site into a multi-functional and multi-use asset for all stakeholders, including the neighborhood.

However, the process of getting from today to that future condition is likely to take significant time and resources. The resources will need to be pooled – none of the entities involved in this TAP can individually address the needs of this site, and no single entity has a use for all parts of the site. A partnership with clear responsibilities and roles (including fundraising) is needed.



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