



# Riverview United & Temple B'nai Tikvah

## A Case Study for Heritage Engagement

**Regenerating Places of Faith**

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CHI is a member-based city-wide volunteer group that advocates for built heritage.

### Workshop Questions

How is the unique character of historic churches (whether designated heritage or not) and of more modern churches, being capitalized upon in order to revitalize the activities they house?

What role are / could heritage organizations play to help congregations that are struggling with the long term sustainability of their building?  
Eg through engagement with their community

How can we break down the mistrust that congregations have for the heritage community, and dispel misunderstandings that heritage is only about freezing places in time

This is my personal story of what a 1950s character building means to me, Community Engagement and Sustainability

# My Engagement Story



Off to War 1943



KP: This is a view from my artist – grandfather’s basement studio window in Winnipeg.

It shows the relationship between the church, houses, shops backing on to the lane, street trees and art – that defines the community character which still exists there today.

The red brick Riverview United Church in the background is where I was Christened in the 1950s.

# Riverview United Church Temple B’Nai Tikvah



This is the mid-1950s community of Britannia in Calgary - another red brick church also called Riverview United Church; this one named for the Elbow, not the Red River.

KP: My connection with this building was at first intangible and emotional. It made the community that I moved into with my Jewish husband in the 1980's feel like home.

At the age of 14, our adopted daughter chose to convert to Judaism, learn Hebrew, have a Bat Mitzvah and join the Reform Temple B’Nai Tikvah, an inclusive, liberal congregation. One year later, the Temple moved into our community, sharing space with the amalgamated Living Spirit United Church that combined the congregations of Riverview,

The Temple's religious community is no longer local – geographically it is much broader

Residents and congregants are not one-in-the same as they were with the original United Church

What ever the use, the building is the authentic essence or character of our community as we see homes and commercial area being redeveloped.

# Adaptive re-use of the church as the Temple B’Nai Tikvah



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Historically the ca1955 Riverview United Church, at the centre of the Britannia community served as a place of worship for its congregation, and the hall provided a facility for public activities like nursery school and kindergarten.

Example of adaptive re-use of the church as the Temple B’Nai Tikvah. It retains original uses – the ideal for both the heritage of the building and the communities.

Living Spirit United Church was formed in 2002 from the amalgamation of the congregations of Riverview United Church, Southminster United Church and Westminster United Church. The merged congregations shared space with the temple – Jewish services are held Fri evening and Saturday mornings and United on Sundays. They successfully worked around a few conflicting dates – like Saturday weddings. A joint committee oversaw symbolism – the United Church cross in the sanctuary and stained glass windows were draped with beautiful banners and tapestries on Jewish service days.

They shared the space from 2004-7 before the temple completed the purchase. Living Spirit took over the smaller, previous Anglican Church in Elboya as their new home and a fresh start.

It is still used by Friends Church on Sundays.

# Temple B'Nai Tikvah



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Here is the temple in 2011

Alberta order of Excellence Architect Martin Cohos repurposed the building in 2011, for the reform Jewish congregation. The orientation was switched to face east (Jerusalem), incorporating a stone wall to symbolize the Wailing Wall with sculpture representing stylized menorahs (candelabras). Jeff de Boer, a local sculptor, designed 6 domes, suspended from the ceiling, to represent the 6 days of creation. Their shapes resemble kippah, the caps worn during prayer. The Giant cobalt seventh dome is meant to suggest the chuppah – the cloth canopy held aloft at Jewish Weddings.

The draped banner extending from the upper seating level is a tallit or a prayer shawl.

The original mahogany pews were repurposed to house prayer books and the temple's library. Movable seats, based on anticipated attendance, are set out in a semicircle to encourage participation and make the worship leaders more accessible. The seating can be turned 90 degrees and set theatre style to face a raised stage for performances and talks.

## Mid Century Modern-style Place of Worship



in addition, the new use has completely retained the exterior façades.

the Mid Century Modern-style architecture is characteristic, not only of this building, but of the surrounding community.

This red-brick faced building is noted in the City of Calgary's historic resource evaluation of Britannia. The hall on the west side was actually built first, followed by the sanctuary later on. Observe the arched cast-concrete support in front of the sanctuary doors. This "prefab" structure repeats throughout the interior of the sanctuary. The original open-beamed ceiling was finished in natural wood and ornamentation was minimal, just like some of the residential examples nearby. Similar United Churches, like what is now River Park Church just off 14th St. and 38th Ave SW were of a similar design and construction. An original design feature, the interior courtyard has been retained and now houses a sculpture. The idea behind these courtyards was to bring light and nature into the building. The bell tower was removed during the conversion to the Temple.

# Lost Heritage

## Mid Century Modern-style Place of Worship



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Calgary's second greatest building boom late 1940s through 1960s  
mid-century Modern-style architecture  
post war building materials & methods  
above example, Shaarey Tzedec Synagogue lost in 2013

Heritage buildings don't have to be 100+ years old we are losing buildings like these at an alarming rate

example – the Shaarey Tzedec Synagogue lost in 2013 in the Mission district

# My Association with the Bricks and Mortar



KP: My enduring relationship with, and advocacy for the building actually has nothing to do with Faith. When it was the Church, I only ever attended a funeral or two. From the late 1980s to the present:

- Britannia Community Assn – president
- Hall doubled as out community centre since the 1960s.
  - AGMs
  - Social Events – harvest dinner, picnic, skate day
  - Fundraising
  - Parking meetings
  - Redevelopment visioning and open houses
  - Playground
  - Neighbourhoods

Arts and crafts – the Heritage Weavers

Fitness – there was a time when the hall doubled as a gym – court lines

Concerts

Candidates forums

Kids activities

Talks – The 2 city mayors gave the sermon



# Temple Tenants



Friendschurch.ca



Support Groups

Meditation Group



CALGARY ACTORS' STUDIO

Friends – Sundays – not interested in their own Bricks and Mortar  
Old testament symbolism not an issue.

CMS – uses Sunday school rooms – expanding to higher elementary grades

Choral/musical groups

Dance – mirrored studio in multi purpose room downstairs

Actors Studio – use the hall with stage

Commercial Kitchen – kosher style – approved caterers.

Concerts – adaptable seating in sanctuary with raised platform at one end

Office space for tenants

Meeting/board rooms and library – historic mahogany pews repurposed

Probus Club – offshoot of Rotary for retired professionals, rents meeting space at the Temple. Coincidentally, one of the members was a consulting contractor involved in building the church in 1955 – responsible for the pre-cast support structures in the sanctuary. He regularly “inspects” them (visually) and reports “no cracks”.

Inn from the cold – social action – with Living Spirit – community program cancelled

## Architectural Feature: Clerestory Windows

- In architecture: a high section of wall that contains windows above eye level. The purpose is to admit light, fresh air, or both.
- Originated in the Temples of Egypt, Minoan Palaces in Crete, the Hebrew temple built by King Solomon.
- Historically, clerestory denoted an upper level of a Roman basilica or of the nave of a Romanesque or Gothic church, the walls of which rise above the rooflines of the lower aisles and are pierced with windows.



Church of St. Nicolai, Stralsund, Germany  
13th century

Wikipedia



Temple B'nai Tikvah Hall  
Calgary 1955




### Early Christian and Byzantine basilicas

Early Christian churches and some Byzantine churches, particularly in Italy, are based closely on the Roman basilica, and maintained the form of a central nave flanked by lower aisles on each side. The nave and aisles are separated by columns or piers, above which rises a wall pierced by clerestory windows.

On warm evenings, the singing from the Calgary Men's Choir and the Bach Society waft up and outward through the clerestory windows, turning the inside out.

# The Temple & Heritage Groups Today

**COMMUNITY HERITAGE ROUNDTABLE**  
New Uses for Old Places: Adaptive Reuse




Therapies for heritage communities can be contrasted with an average of quarters on the subject of adaptive reuse – one person will be discussing during the session.

**Featuring:**  
 • Richard East, Director of Heritage Dept., British Columbia  
 • John Fain, Director of East, Author of book project  
 • Michael Kruger, Director, John Simon Foundation  
 • Robert H. Proulx, President of the City of Vancouver, Heritage Department

**Thursday, November 24, 2011**  
**Doors 6:30 pm, Event 7:30 to 9:00 pm**  
**Temple B'Nai Tikvah, 960 - 47th Avenue SW No charge**

[www.jewishcalgary.org/heritage-roundtable](http://www.jewishcalgary.org/heritage-roundtable)


**JEWISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY**



**OF SOUTHERN ALBERTA**

**JANE WALK**

**'50s MODERNISM: Britannia Style**



**May 3, 2015, 1PM**  
**BRITANNIA SHOPPING PLAZA** **LED BY: KAREN PAUL**

The 1950s and 1960s Britannia neighbourhoods are some of the largest and most diverse in the city. The area is a mix of mid-century modern architecture, including the former Royal York Hotel, the former Royal York Hotel, and the former Royal York Hotel. The area is a mix of mid-century modern architecture, including the former Royal York Hotel, the former Royal York Hotel, and the former Royal York Hotel.

**JANE WALK** May 3, 2015, 1PM  
 It's a walk of 1950s and 1960s Britannia neighbourhoods. The area is a mix of mid-century modern architecture, including the former Royal York Hotel, the former Royal York Hotel, and the former Royal York Hotel.

The Temple's relationship with Heritage Groups like CHI is not all that well developed – we could do better.

Round table – partnerships with many heritage groups

Multiple examples of adaptive reuse

KP – my appreciation for the building took off from this session.

Temple president is on JHS board, Cantorial Singer works for them and volunteers at Little Synagogue at Heritage Park

<https://www.jewishcalgary.org/the-little-synagogue-on-the-prairie-project> - example of oral history

Jane' walk 2015 – link to other mid century architecture in neighbourhood – 1955 Trend House – municipally and provincially designated by the owner. Has clerestory windows like the temple. [www. Calgarymcm.com](http://www.Calgarymcm.com)

We need more links to mid-century era. Not really recognized yet for the heritage value it has.

# Engaging with the Community

- WHO
- WHY
- WHAT
- HOW
- WHEN

It's basic marketing

It's how the journalists tell news stories

# WHO

## **Your Audience... Your Building Stakeholders**

- Congregants, Clergy and Staff
- Anyone With a Life Event Connection
- Community Association and Residents
- Building Tenants and their Members/Patrons
- The Heritage Community
- Architects, Designers, Artists, Trades, Suppliers
- Ethno/Cultural Groups
- Tourists/The Stampede
- Your Elected Officials
- The City and Province
- Granting and Funding Bodies
- Students

***What is the shared value statement about the building?***

Life events – like weddings

Remaining relevant – all demographics

Ethno Cultural Groups with a link to the Faith

# WHY

## Your Objectives

- Building Improvement Fund
  - Endowment Fund
- Grant applications
- Rental income
- A market for selling the building
- Volunteer support for an improvement project
  - Building, Decoration or Grounds
- Shared spaces with community
  - (playgrounds, parking)
- Community support for expansions or change of use
  - Parking/traffic impacts

Temple – must serve the congregation  
Non just landlords  
Building is their primary asset

Riverview's original multi-use space may have been an enticement for the Temple to buy the building –but it's a lot to manage  
Tenants are life blood that enable the upkeep.

The Temple has not looked to the community for financial or volunteer support.  
Something all that is needed are no objections to their building and grounds plans and uses.

The distant future – who knows?  
Congregations are dynamic, there is a declining Jewish population in Calgary.

What the community would NOT want is redevelopment of the site for condos. What we would like to see is retention of the building. Could it be repurposed again for community/institutional use...or even another congregation.

# What

- Your Story... Your Message...Your Asset



## Regeneration Works Webinar

View the slides:

<http://calgaryheritage.org/wp/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/RW-Webinar-Telling-Your-Story.FINAL-Feb-6-2018.pdf>

- Use stories to engage, inspire and compel.
- Your story tellers are in your organization and in your community.
- Tailor stories to your audiences.
- Photos and videos bring your story to life.

Focus on the human interest, emotional, personal

Not just the facts of the building's age, design, materials, construction, decoration  
But why it is like it is – eg the direction or configuration, the windows and the place of the building in the community

WHY PRESERVE? Stories of the architect, materials (sandstone), early congregants

What makes a Place of Faith asset special and different?

You can't all be doing the same thing unless you attract another use all together eg Calgary Opera in Wesley United Church since 2005. It's on the Provincial Registry, and has been evaluated for the City's inventory.



CHI Can help with networking.

The Heritage Triangle – partners in research and training your volunteers – the CPL’s Local History Room, Glenbow Library and Archives, the City’s Archives.

Print and broadcast media – everything from CA newsletters to PSAs. Great stories about reno and shared faiths in Swerve, Avenue Magazine, building journals.

Social media – network! Share!

Schools (Gr 4 curriculum) and universities – eg religious studies, Environmental Design, SAI/Apprenticeship trades

Events – Janes Walks – free, they provide training, promotion, a neutral brand identity - in May

Local historians – Harry Saunders (pictured)

Community Associations



# CALGARY HERITAGE ROUND TABLES



- CHI Calgary Heritage Initiative
- Calgary Heritage Authority
- FCC Federation of Calgary Communities
- Calgary Public Library
- Archaeological Society of Alberta
- City of Calgary Heritage Planning
- Heritage Community Task Force
- Chinook Country Historical Society
- other friends of Calgary's heritage

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Representatives from a number of local heritage groups come together to plan and present topical education & networking events free to the public – sometimes located in historic churches

CHI and advocacy - advocacy for places that historically played a central role in communities

CHA –a search for religious sites on Inventory-of-evaluated-historic-resources yields 65 sites – lays the groundwork for the designation process; they also promote the heritage value of these sites (landmark value, symbolic value, spiritual value, social value, etc.)

Heritage Communities (task force) - e.g. historic community of Bridgeland is known for the variety and number of religious sites

Chinook Historic Society - Historic Calgary Week, promote histories like that of Morley Church

In addition to these groups, we bring in other heritage individuals and organizations for individual events – e.g.:

Heritage Park - historic churches and Little Synagogue on the Prairie - project to preserve this symbolic place.

Alberta Culture -for churches that have provincial designation- grants are available and southern Alberta staff in Calgary offer professional heritage consulting for free

Example: 2011 Heritage Round Table on adaptive re-use - poster shown here – featured the adaptive re-use of Britannia's original ca1955 Riverview United Church.

# Engagement Ideas

- Theme Based Walking or Bus Tours
- Historical or Architectural Talks
- Concerts, Theatre, Film Nights
- Family History/Genealogy
- Photo Scans, Online Galleries
- Library/archives
- Recording Oral/Video Histories
- Open Houses, Reunions, Memory Books
- Contests
- Arts, Crafts Exhibit Space
- Traditional Cooking/Baking
- Community Gardens/Tree Plantings
- Volunteer Restoration Projects
  - Heritage Building Trades Demos
  - Traditional Crafts (Needlework, Book Binding, Stained Glass, Silversmithing)

Partner with others –area tours of buildings of similar eras, other religions, Heritage Park...

People are curious – they want to get inside.

Keep the focus off the religious

A Google search for historic photos of Riverview United Church yielded nothing!

Focus on your building assets. E.g. bring in an artist (or craftsperson) in residence – tie in a restoration or art project with domes, classes and workshops – like textile transfer art and the Temple's domes.

What appeals to specific demographics?

Eg: aging baby boomers?

Retiring so have time

Want to keep active in their local community

Want to develop new skills, creative outlets

Want to give back

Or Ethno-Cultural groups

Dance, music, food demos/lessons/events/festivals

# When

- Continually
- Whenever there is an opportunity
- NOT When you Need Something
  - ✓ Partner Event Dates
  - ✓ Important Historical Dates
  - ✓ Building, Community Anniversaries
  - ✓ Celebrations

Partner Dates:

Janes Walks May

Historic Calgary Week – August

Alberta Culture Days – Sept

Historical Dates – like Canada's 150

# CHI Resources Delivered with Partners



- ✓ Workshops
- ✓ On Line Resources
- ✓ Heritage Trades List
- ✓ Tours
- ✓ Communication
- ✓ Networking
- ✓ Advocacy for Inventory/Designation

Workshops – Demystifying Designation, How to Research, Media Training for Heritage Advocates

Working on putting together workshops on Photography, writing, t tell heritage stories etc.

Awareness and appreciation in the community - Why preserve?

Benefits – economic, environmental, social, employment/skills

## 2010 Statement of Historical Significance for Britannia

-Marilyn Williams

The image shows two versions of the 'CALGARY HISTORIC RESOURCE EVALUATION FORM'. The top version is a 'SUMMARY' page with the following fields:

Property Name	Britannia Community
Address	478
Address	Boundaries: • North - Britannia Drive SW • South - 22th Ave. SW • East - River Drive SW

The bottom version is a full page with a text box containing the following text:

attractive streetscapes. It is estimated that about one half of the original fifties homes remain, and the community would benefit from an extensive survey to provide accurate data. Currently, no Britannia buildings are listed on Calgary's Inventory of Historic Resources, however, buildings which exhibit fifties modern style, including the Kovitz house and the former Riverview United Church should be researched for evaluation in the future.

At the bottom of the form, there are checkboxes for 'Built', 'Design', 'Contributor', 'City Area', 'City Area', 'City Area', 'Community', 'Community', 'Community', 'City Area', 'City Area', 'City Area'. The date 'October 10, 2010' and page number 'Page 2 of 10' are also visible.

Our goal is to protect buildings, through awareness, appreciation and designation.

Marilyn Williams suggested the building as a possibility for inclusion in the inventory in 2010

CHI has suggested 55% of properties on consideration list for evaluations

In prep for this workshop ...

I approached City – referred to CHA E&R committee – confirmed possibility

I approached Temple – typical objections - afraid it would hamper what can be done with the building.

Link to other examples on Inventory – Jewish Cemetery, Shaarey Tzedec Synagogue (not designated)

Will refer it to Building Committee

We walked around and identified a few possible character defining elements – I'm no expert!  
post and beam structure of hall with original exposed glue-lam beams  
precast concrete supports in sanctuary  
window placement

Research –who was the original architect?



Join CHI – If there was enough interest, a subcommittee could be set up to further explore regenerating places of faith from the heritage angle.

AGM Invite:

Reid Henry Appointed as the first President and CEO of cSPACE Projects, Reid is leading the development of a network of large scale, multi-disciplinary creative workspaces in Calgary, Alberta. The award-winning flagship project of cSPACE is the redevelopment of a 3 acre, inner city site including artist studios, rehearsal space, non-profit program offices, coworking space, cafe, meeting/event venues, new public park and private sector residential development.

2011 Heritage RoundTable at B’nai Tikvah – announced the project – now its open!

Grand Opening Sept 2017

“It’s not a bad new lease on life for the 115-year-old school—the renovation left vintage blackboards, classrooms, crown mouldings and other nostalgic touches in place—that closed in 2001. Unofficially, cSpace opened to tenants on Jan. 1. Twenty-nine groups moved in, including Quest Theatre, the Making Treaty 7 Cultural Society, the Alberta Craft Council, the Alexandra Writers’ Centre Society, the Alberta Magazine Publishers Association and several individual photographers, sculptors, filmmakers, jewelry-makers, painters and arts educators.”

These groups can help tell your story.



end

landmark dome of historic church in Renfrew