



Green Urbanism: Old Boxes Can Learn New Tricks

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What do they have in common?

Adidas Village in Portland, Oregon: Large international corporation sought downtown headquarters

Bethel Fellowship Church in Philadelphia, PA: Growing church looked for a location that mirrored its community



Both turned old boxes that had lost their purpose into vibrant new spaces



Adidas Village Overview



Adidas had many goals for new headquarters:

1. Consolidate buildings that were scattered in 9 locations from Portland to Beaverton
2. Locate closer to downtown for cultural attractions and mass transportation
3. Work with neighbors to make a positive impact
4. Build in an environmentally responsible fashion

Site History

- Kaiser Permanente wanted to find a ‘good neighbor’ when they sold Bess Kaiser Hospital
- New owner/developer Jim Winkler envisioned office space on the 11-acre site
- Winkler recruited Adidas as the tenant; Adidas liked Winkler’s plans and eventually bought him out



Final Site Plans

Adidas' final plans called for renovating the existing Bess Kaiser buildings and new construction, including an underground parking garage, two additional office buildings, a sports complex, outdoors sports facility and plaza.

The site was physically separated by busy Greeley Ave., so a sky bridge was included.



Moving In

- Renovation and construction was finished in December 2003
- Buildings have Olympic colors and are named after Olympic venues (Rome – yellow, Tokyo – blue, Athens – green, Chamonix – red, Mexico City – black)



Other Improvements

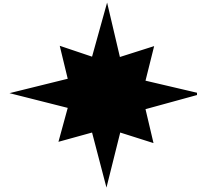
Other improvements to the site include:

- A new bus stop
- Better sidewalks and lighting on Greeley Avenue
- Bicycle paths
- Pedestrian paths for access to Greeley and transportation
- Regrading and new playground equipment for adjacent Madrona park and a new path linking the park to the Village

Adidas Village Awards

Adidas Village won the Mayor's Award for Design Excellence in 2003.

The site caught the mayor's eye because it was an infill site, respected the Urban Growth Boundary and integrated successfully with the surrounding community.



Bethel Fellowship Overview

- Bethel Fellowship outgrew its original location, a funeral home in the Lawndale section of NE Philadelphia
- Criteria for the new location included easy access to main thoroughfares and a demographic and economic mirror of the congregation
- Unsuccessfully searched for greenfields for 2 ½ years
- Finally started looking at existing buildings; polled members to find out where people ate and shopped
- The vacant theater at Franklin Mills fit criteria

The 'White Elephant' at Franklin Mills

- Theater was originally owned by General Cinemas; the chain sold the theater to mall owner Mills Corporation and moved to a 'better' location inside the mall
- The interior was gutted and everything re-usable was sold
- The building (45,000 SF) sat vacant for six years and was an easy target for vandals
- The building was a hard sell; renovations would be expensive due to sand-filled cinder block walls and sloped floors

Answer to Prayer

- Bethel Fellowship won the right to ‘lease to own’ the old cinema
- Spent \$1.9 million to renovate 20,000 SF of the building; the rest of the first floor and most of the second floor will be renovated when they raise more money



New Uses

Theater #1: Subdivided; New drop ceilings installed and floor leveled; Front becomes classroom, back becomes nursery.



New Uses



Theater #2:
Subdivided into
two classrooms.
Retained original
ceilings.

New Uses

Theater #3: 'Youth' area. Floor leveled in the back half of the theater for foosball, couches, recreation. Front half of floor still slopes towards a new stage. The only screen not vandalized hangs in the front.



New Uses

Theater #4&5: Sand-filled cinder wall dividing the two theaters torn down. Floor leveled in the front and a new stage constructed. Stadium seating with cup holders installed in the back. Seats 1,100.



New Uses

Foyer: New carpeting, lighting, counters installed. Tables and chairs purchased and 'information booth' created. Grid over counter is one of the few original pieces.



How are they alike?

> Community Input

- Adidas Village communicated with the local neighborhood association every step of the way, including newsletters and a website
- Neighborhood concerns prompted changes to site plan, including leaving the plaza and sports fields as buffers
- Compromises on landscaping and lighting issues
- Improved pedestrian pathways smoothed access to Greeley Avenue and sky bridge was handicapped-accessible

How are they alike?

> Community Input

- Bethel Fellowship consulted with its ‘community’ (congregation) before looking for a new location
- Members were polled for their eating and shopping preferences
- When two malls became top choices, steering committee researched area demographics to ensure a good fit



How are they alike?

> Promoting Community

Adidas Village was designed with many features to promote interaction with the employees and the public.

- Facilities placed on opposite sides of the street (for example, the parking garage on one side and the restaurant on the other)
- Elevator from parking garage leads to Village plaza instead of right to the buildings
- Outdoors sports facilities and fields open for public use
- Pedestrian paths crisscross the Village

How are they alike?

> Promoting Community

Bethel Fellowship uses its new, large space to foster familiarity.

- Lack of seats and parking spots meant members had to rush out of services to make room for others. New, larger facility means members can stay and mingle.
- Foyer retrofitted with couches and tables, so members can relax and catch up over coffee.
- Information booth helps new visitors feel welcome
- Stadium seats have cupholders so everyone feels casual and welcome

How are they alike?

> Transportation

Transportation was a key element in choosing both sites.

- Adidas employees wanted to be closer to downtown Portland and cultural activities. Also, the Bess Kaiser site was already served by bus and soon to be light rail.
- Franklin Mills is close to Routes 95 and 1 in NE Philadelphia. Also, there is already a bus route with stops around at the mall. For members without cars, the church has started a 'No Attendee Left Behind' program to arrange car pools.

How are they different?

> Green & Recycled Materials

Strong emphasis on green materials and reusing existing materials at Adidas site.

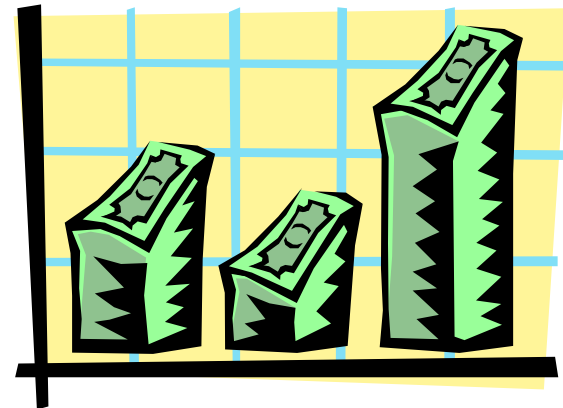
- Adidas hired 'harvesters' to collect old hospital equipment, which was donated to hospitals in other countries.
- Soil excavated during construction was donated to the construction of a new food bank
- Used materials with recycled content, such as carpet, ceramic tile, aluminum siding and steel studs

How are they different?

> Green & Recycled Materials

Bethel Fellowship did not have the option or money to use green materials.

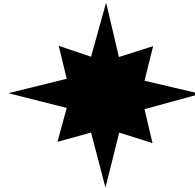
- Theater totally gutted and everything useful sold by original owner
- Vandalism destroyed the little that was left
- Costly retrofitting meant more expensive green materials weren't feasible



Conclusion

Adidas Village and Bethel Fellowship are proof that reuse of existing buildings is a viable alternative to new development.

Both projects are a success because of community involvement and a willingness to think ‘outside the box.’



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