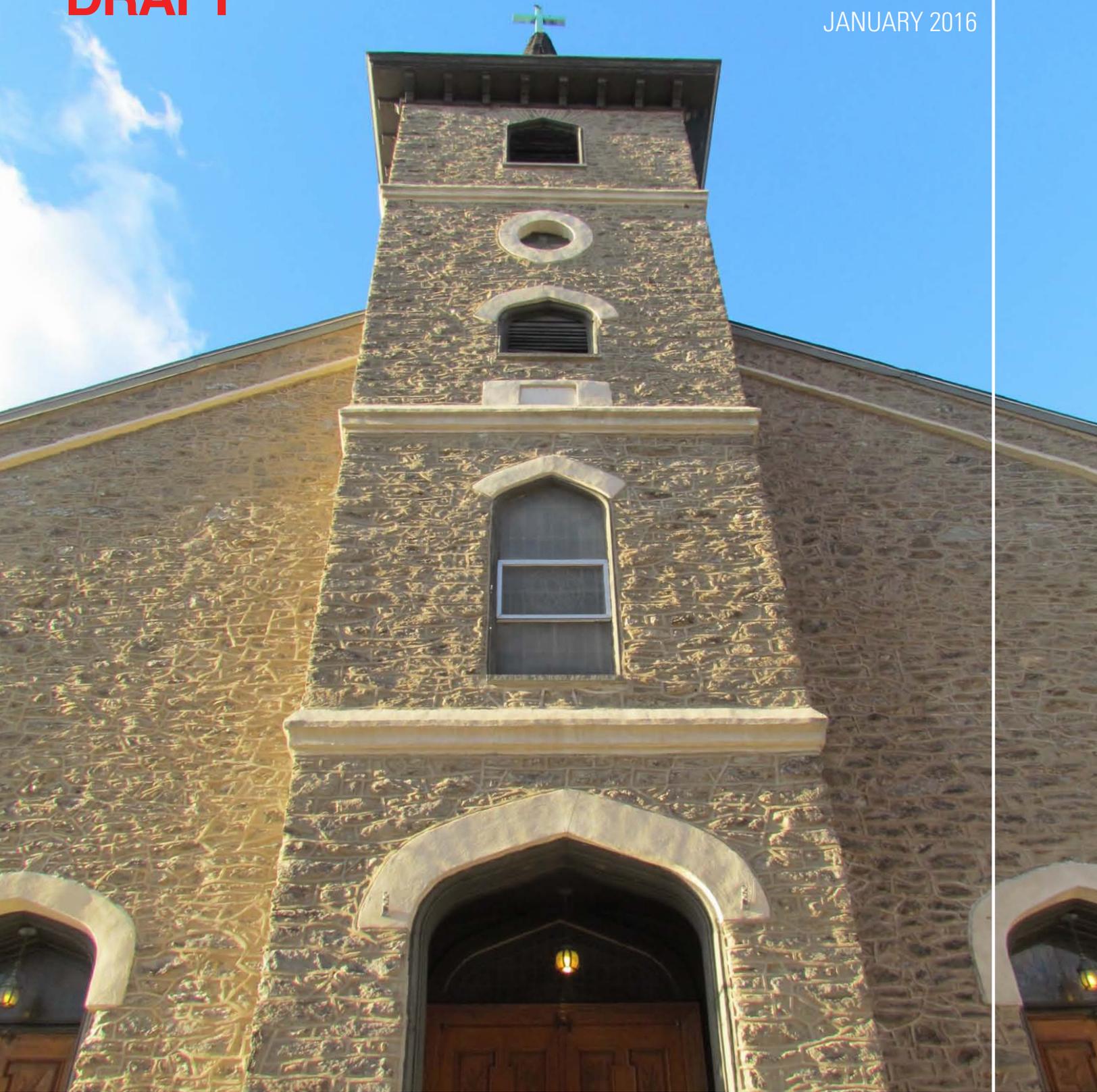


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PHILADELPHIA CITY PLANNING COMMISSION
JANUARY 2016



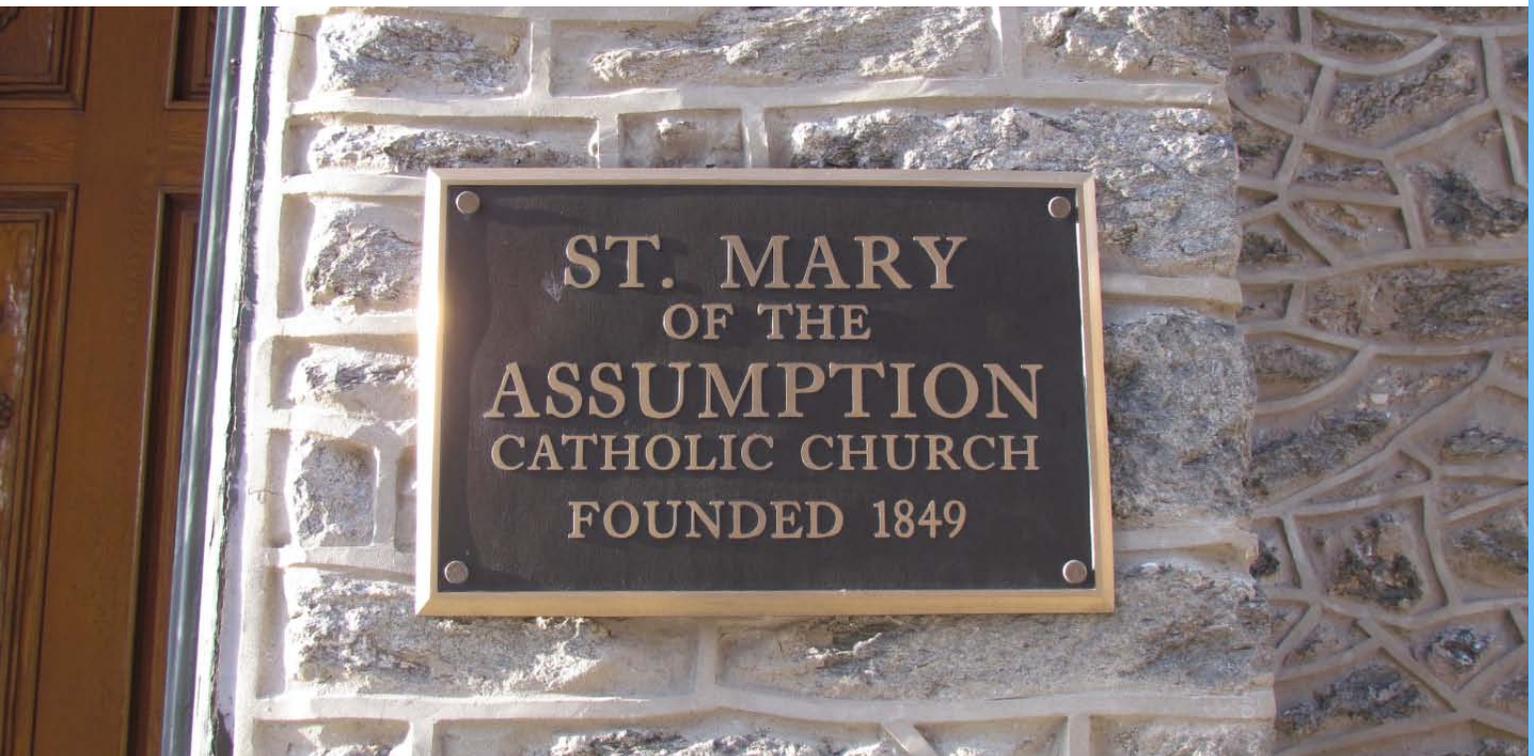
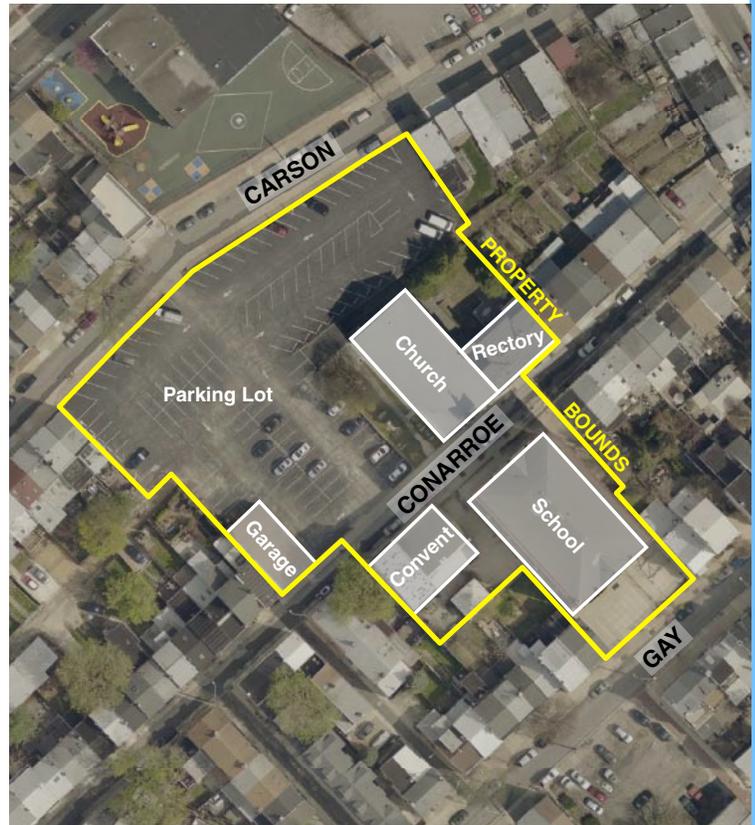
Adaptive Reuse and Redevelopment Analysis of
ST. MARY OF THE ASSUMPTION
Catholic Church, Manayunk



Introduction

On November 1, 2015, St. Mary of the Assumption was closed as a Roman Catholic Church. The intent of this document is to present an analysis for the potential redevelopment and reuse of this church property located in Manayunk. It is owned by the Archdiocese of Philadelphia and is currently for sale. The site contains five buildings and a large parking lot, which together will most certainly attract development interest. The church buildings have significant historic and cultural value within the Manayunk community and contribute to the urban fabric of Conarroe Street and surrounding blocks. The site is in close proximity to Main Street and the Manayunk Regional Rail Station and it is one of the largest infill development opportunities within the neighborhood. A development analysis is warranted to ensure that new development will complement, preserve, and reinforce the unique character and history of Manayunk.

Philadelphia City Planning Commission (PCPC) staff proposes a full residential redevelopment scheme, in which three of the five existing buildings could be reused and the remaining areas of the site could be utilized for new construction. It is important to note that this proposed scheme is not a “by-right” project within the existing RSA-5 zoning district. It will require zoning legislation or relief in order to be implemented.

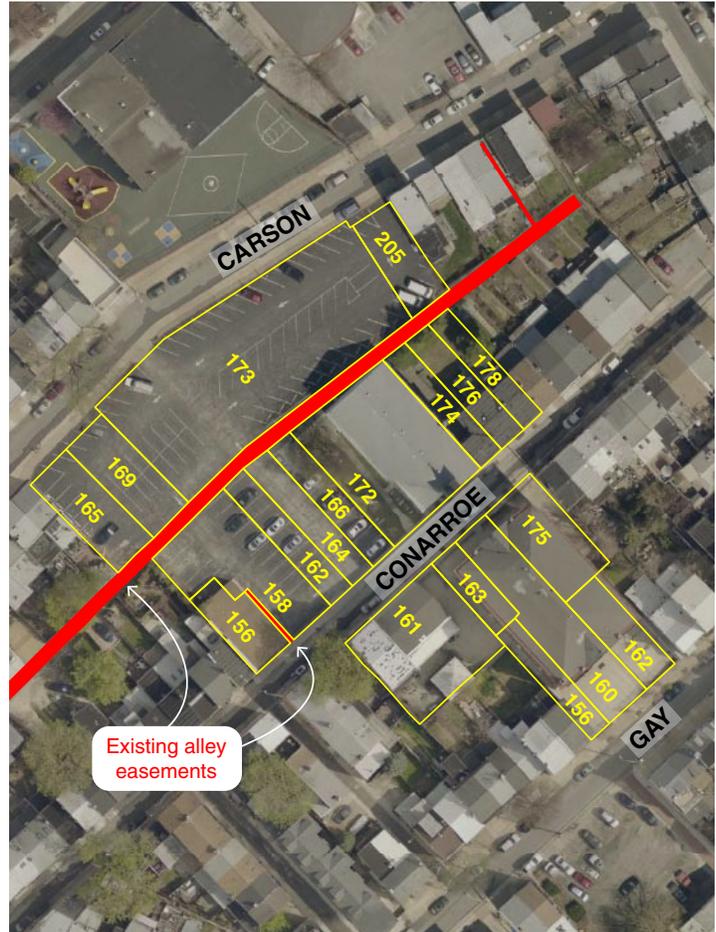


Property Description

The St. Mary of the Assumption site is roughly 1 2/3 acres in size and is located across two blocks bounded by Carson Street, Silverwood Street, Gay Street, and Baker Street.

The site consists of the following parcels:

Address	Size
165 Carson Street	2,890 ± sf
169 Carson Street	2,894 ± sf
173 Carson Street	18,034 ± sf
205 Carson Street	2,241 ± sf
156 Conarroe Street	1,945 ± sf
158 Conarroe Street	5,236 ± sf
161 Conarroe Street	5,943 ± sf
162 Conarroe Street	2,140 ± sf
163 Conarroe Street	1,433 ± sf
164 Conarroe Street	2,157 ± sf
166 Conarroe Street	2,102 ± sf
172 Conarroe Street	8,182 ± sf
174 Conarroe Street	1,910 ± sf
175 Conarroe Street	3,337 ± sf
176 Conarroe Street	1,948 ± sf
178 Conarroe Street	1,656 ± sf
156 Gay Street	1,652 ± sf
160 Gay Street	5,052 ± sf
162 Gay Street	2,145 ± sf
TOTAL	72,897 ± sf



It is important to note that a 10-foot wide alley bisects the block bounded by Carson Street, Silverwood Street, Conarroe Street, and Baker Street. This alley serves other properties on this block, which are outside the scope of this analysis. The alley would need to be extinguished and/or rerouted in order to redevelop the parking lot area according to the recommendations of this analysis.

Another alley exists, abutted by 156 and 158 Conarroe Street. This alley would also have to be extinguished.



Existing Structures

The St. Mary of the Assumption site has street frontage upon Carson, Conarro, and Gay Streets. All existing structures front upon Conarro Street and include the church itself, a rectory, convent, school building, and garage. The buildings are in fair condition. The church, rectory, and convent date to the mid-19th century; the school to the early 20th century; and the garage to the mid- to late- 20th century. Together they frame a uniquely scaled space on Conarro Street, the roadway of which is only about 15 feet wide.

The rectory and school building present the most practical reuse opportunities, while adaptive reuse of the church may prove more challenging. The remainder of the site is occupied by a large parking lot, garage, and convent, which together present the most lucrative development opportunity.



Rectory fronting along Conarro Street (adjacent to Church)



(Left to right) Church, School, Convent - all fronting along Conarro Street

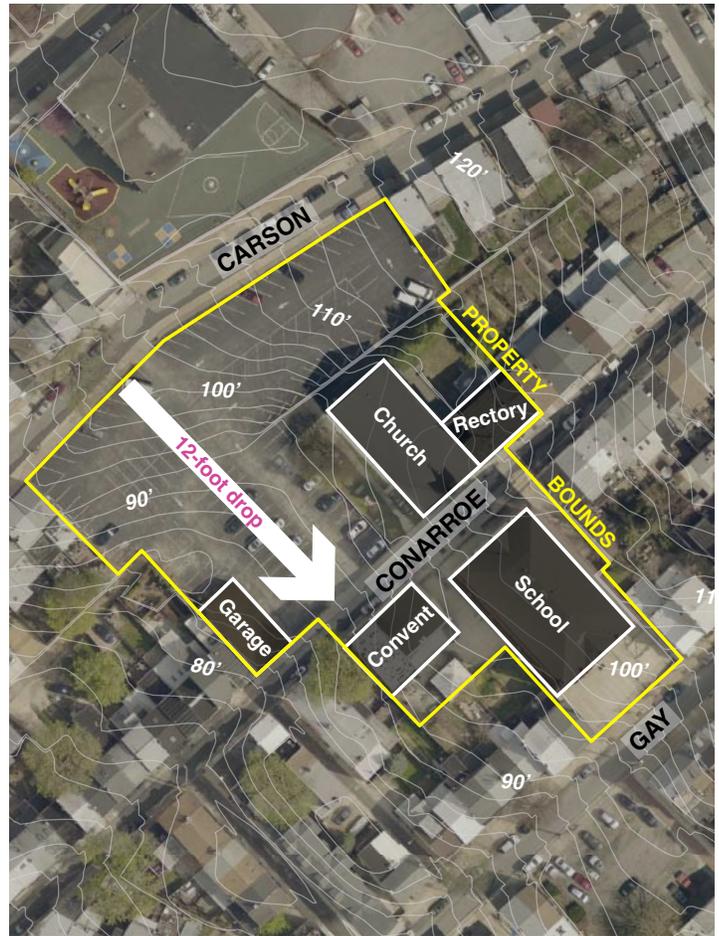


Topography

There is a significant downward slope south and west across the site. At its most extreme, the grade change is approximately 30 feet. This presents opportunities to “tuck” parking into the hillside. By doing so, a redevelopment scheme can maximize the number of parking spaces while minimizing negative effects upon the pedestrian realm of these intimately scaled streets. The optimal location for a “tucked” parking structure would be perpendicular to Carson and Conarroe Streets in the location of the existing parking lot, where the grade change is approximately 12 feet.



Parking lot with Carson Street in background



Site Topography



History

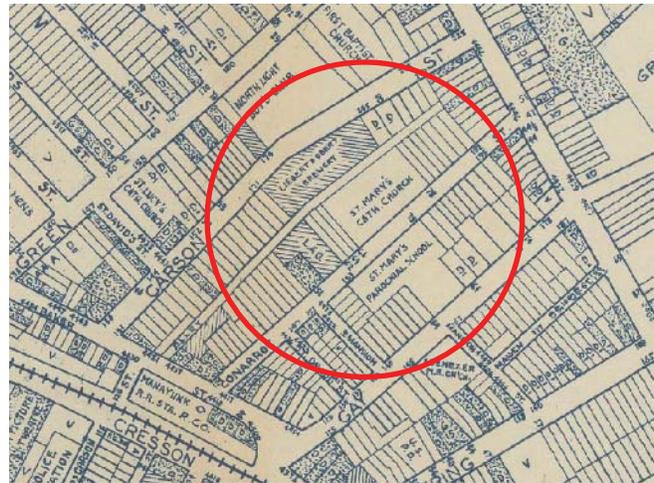
St. Mary of the Assumption Catholic Church was founded in 1849 as a German congregation within the rapidly growing mill town of Manayunk. The original buildings include the church, convent and rectory. The school building was constructed in the early 20th century.

By the early 21st century, the population of Manayunk's historically Catholic congregations had shrunk significantly while its physical assets began to deteriorate. In order for the Archdiocese to remain strong, it needed to consolidate its assets within the neighborhood. The St. Josaphat's and St. Lucy's properties have both been sold and are currently being redeveloped with residential uses. St. Mary of the Assumption is currently for sale. The Church of the Holy Family and St. John the Baptist remain.

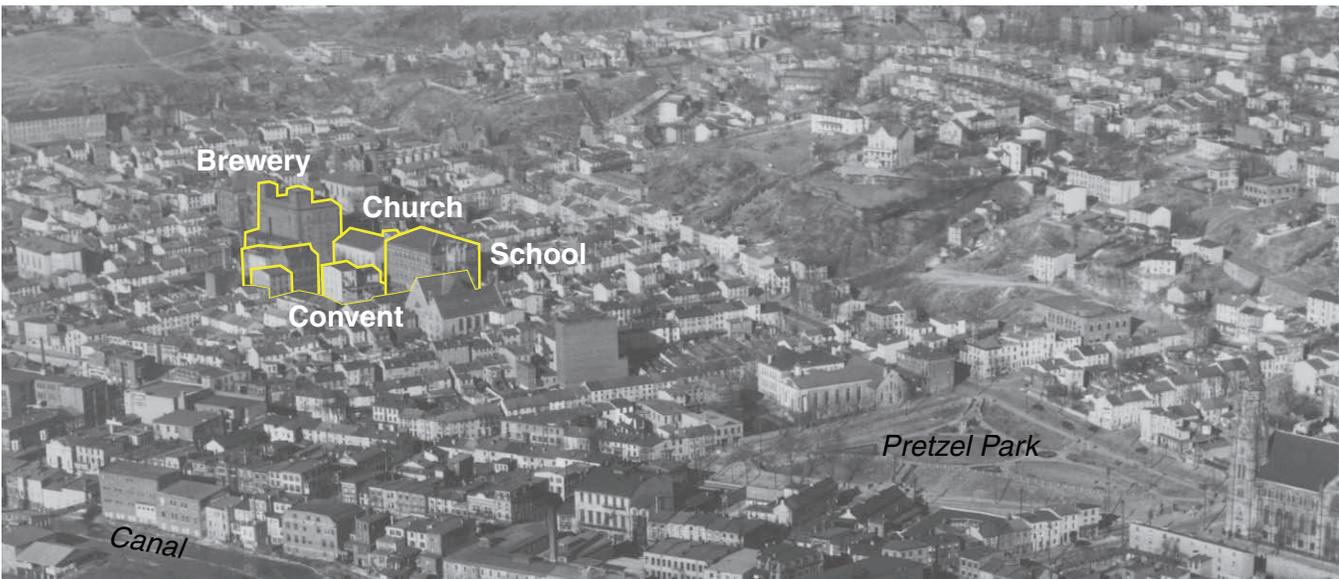
At its founding, the land containing the existing parking lot was not part of the church property. It was the site of the of the former Liebert & Obert Brewery and a few homes. The mid-block alley that parallels Carson and Conarroe Street is appropriately named Brewery Alley. The brewery closed its doors shortly after World War II and the land was eventually acquired by the church and razed for a parking lot.



1895 Bromley Map



1942 WPA Map



1926 Aerial Photo



Development Potential

The results of this analysis support the preservation and reuse of the existing church, rectory, and school building; and the utilization of the parking lot, garage, and convent for new construction.

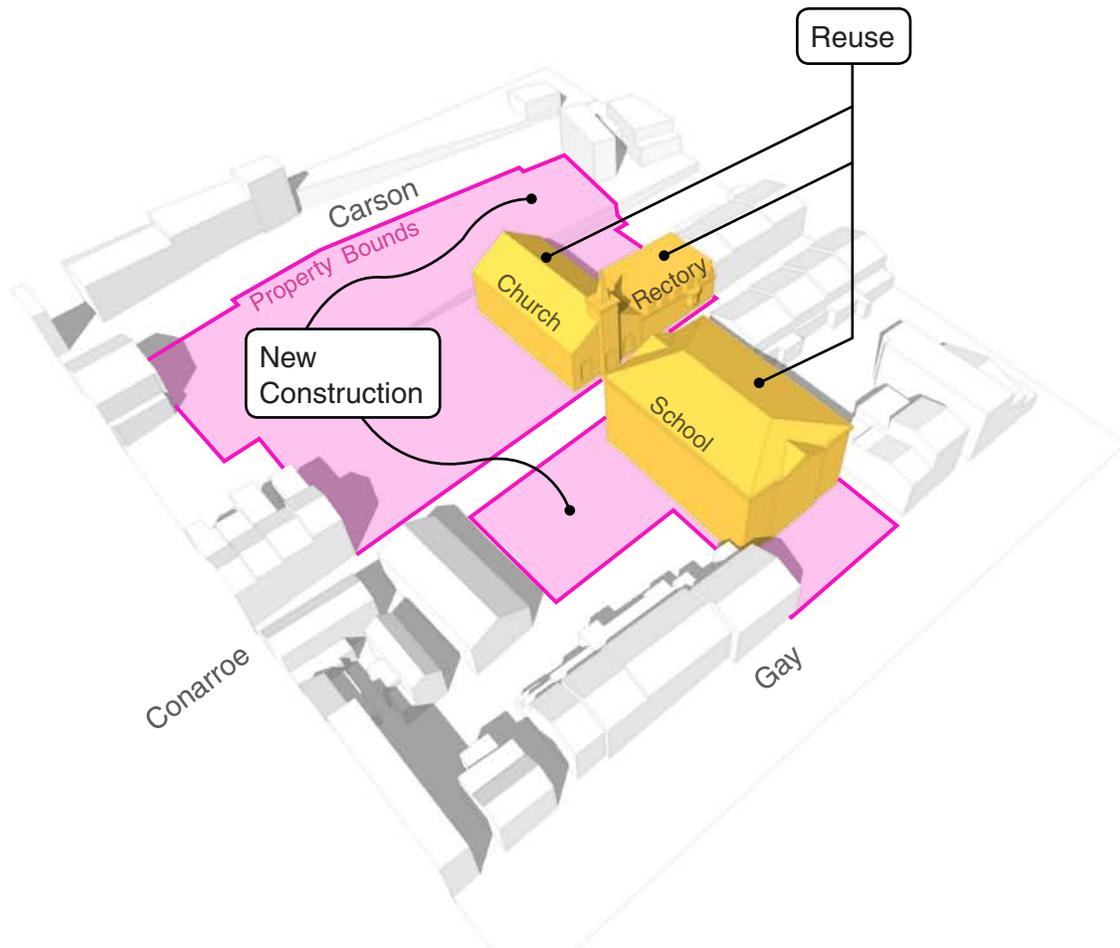
The topography of the site across the existing parking lots provides an opportunity to “tuck” a new parking structure into the slope. This structure can provide parking for new residential units with room to spare for additional community parking spaces. Single or stacked townhouses can be built atop the parking structure.

The parking lot area to the rear of the church and the site of the convent allow for the construction of a more simplistic

townhouse or stacked townhouse unit type, with parking provided at the rear of the units.

The church, rectory and school building provide an opportunity for multi-family residential units on four floors (including the basement).

PCPC staff supports two conceptual scenarios for development based upon this program of preservation and utilization of site topography for a parking structure. These concepts are elaborated on the following pages.



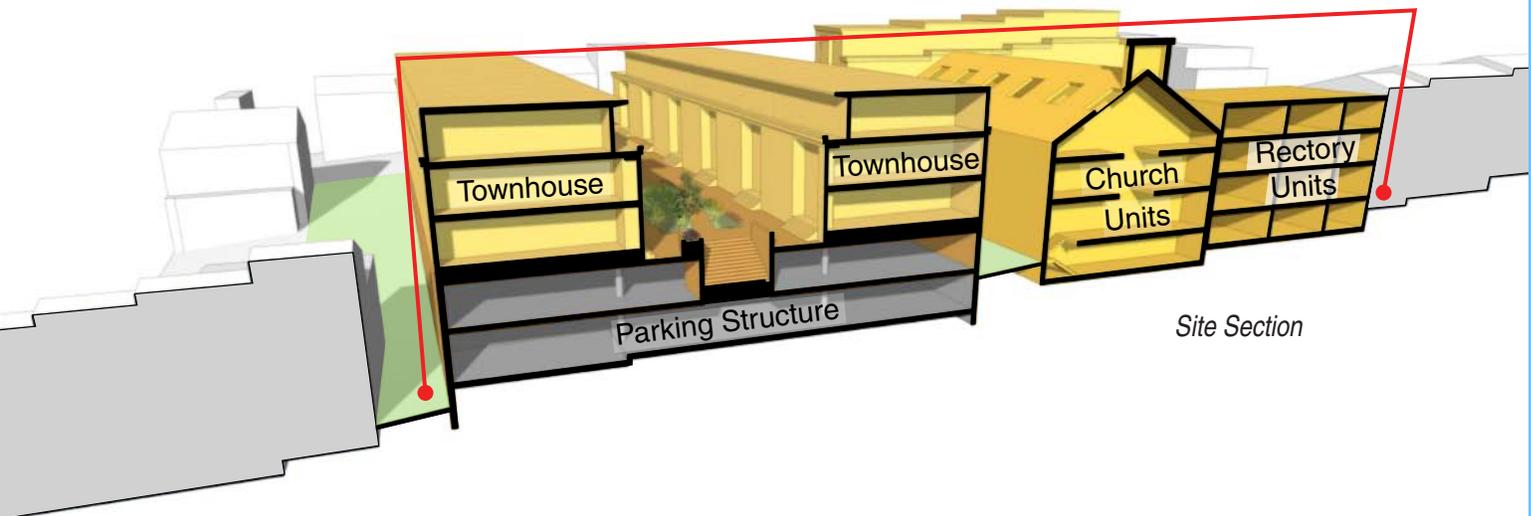
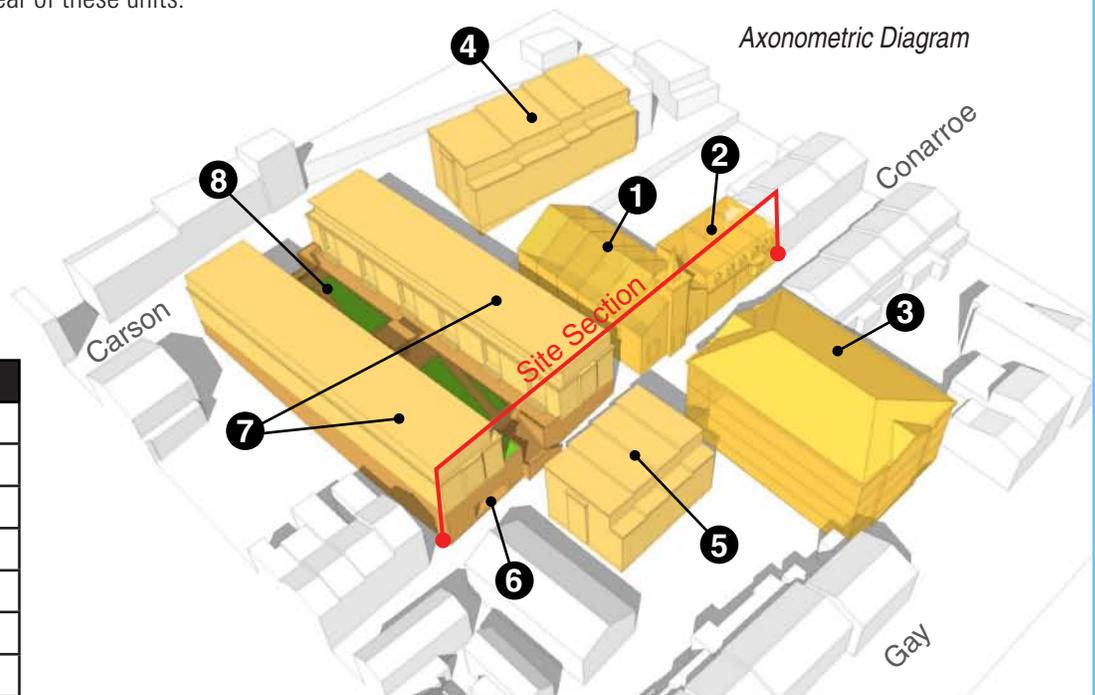
Scenario 1

The first scenario starts with the preservation and reuse of the existing church (1), rectory (2), and school building (3). These buildings provide an opportunity for apartment, loft, or condo units on three to four floors.

The parking lot, garage, and convent present the opportunity for new construction. The parking lot area to the rear of the church (4) and the site of the convent (5) allow for the construction of a stacked townhouse unit type. Limited parking can be provided at the rear of these units.

The topography across the existing parking lots provides an opportunity to “tuck” a new 2-level parking structure into the hill (6). This structure can provide parking at a 1:1 ratio for new residential units with room to spare for additional community parking. Ingress can be provided from Conarro Street and egress to Carson Street. Single townhouses (7) can be built atop the parking structure and front upon a pedestrian promenade amenity that follows a northwest-southeast axis (8).

Development Program	
91 Total Dwelling Units	
24 Single Townhomes	
22 Stacked Townhomes	
45 Apartments/Lofts/Condos	
130 Parking Spaces	
130 Structured Parking Spaces	
6 Surface Parking Spaces	



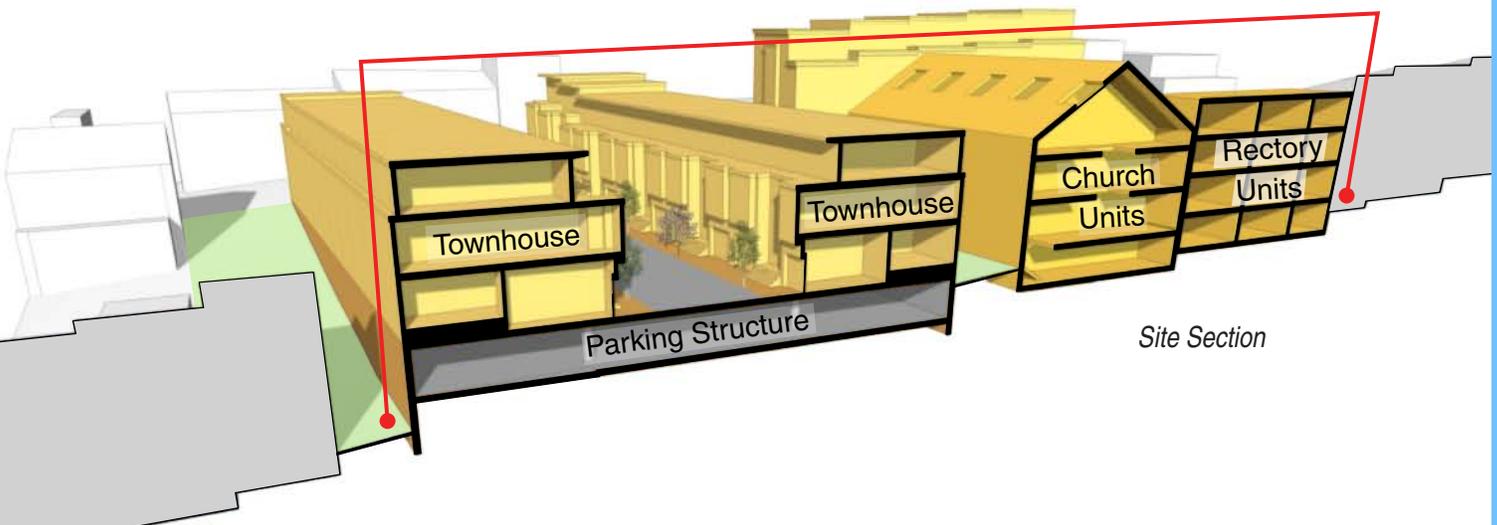
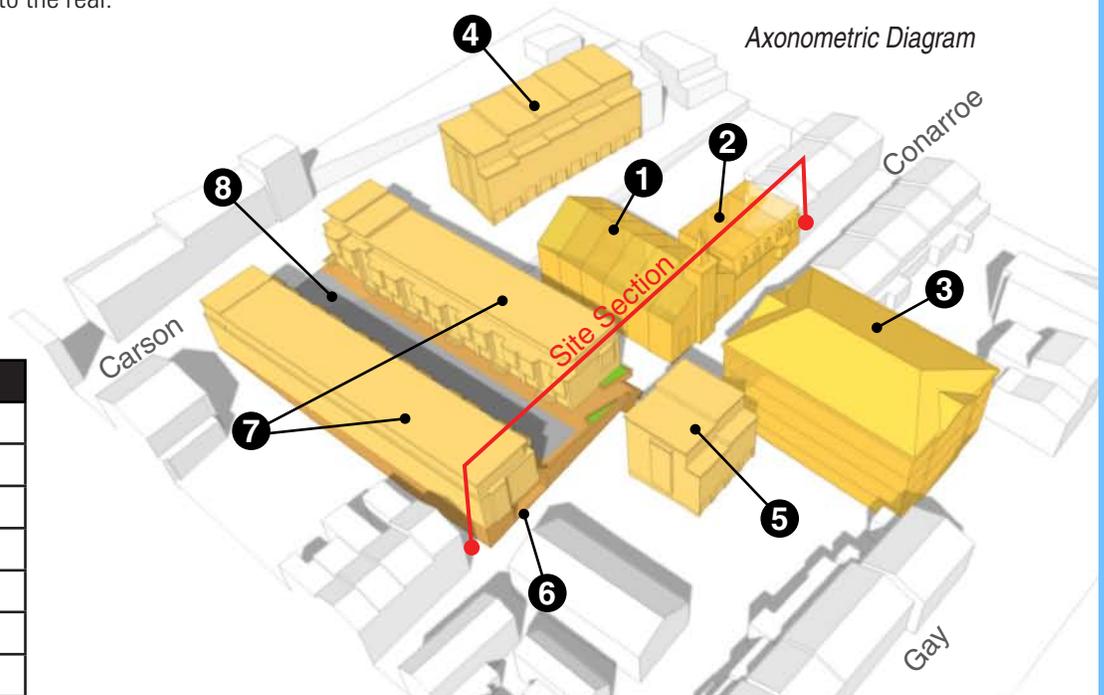
Scenario 2

The second scenario mimics the first, in that it preserves and reuses the existing church (1), rectory (2), and school building (3). These buildings provide an opportunity for apartment, loft, or condo units on three to four floors.

Again, the parking lot, garage, and convent present the opportunity for new construction. The parking lot area to the rear of the church (4) and the site of the convent (5) allow for the construction of a stacked townhouse unit type. Parking for these units can be provided to the rear.

The topography will be utilized for a 1-level parking structure to be built into the hill (6). This structure can provide parking primarily for new residential units at a 1:1 ratio, with a few additional spaces for community use. Ingress and egress can be provided to and from Conarroe Street. Single townhouses with front-loaded garages (7) can be built atop the parking structure and front upon a private mews that follows a northwest-southeast axis (8).

Development Program	
82 Total Dwelling Units	
23 Single Townhomes	
14 Stacked Townhomes	
45 Apartments/Lofts/Condos	
120 Parking Spaces	
80 Structured Parking Spaces	
40 Surface Parking Spaces	



Regulatory Framework

The two development scenarios are intended to be implemented as a “planned unit development” (PUD), which the zoning code classifies a multi-family use. The site is currently zoned RSA-5, which does not permit multi-family uses. As such, there are three regulatory paths towards building either of these scenarios. Development standards for each are listed in the tables to the right (tables are not exhaustive).

1. Variance Relief (No Zoning Change)

The current RSA-5 zoning district does not permit multi-family uses and would necessitate a zoning appeal in order to pursue either of the development scenarios contained in this analysis. An appeal would include a meeting with the local Registered Community Organization (RCO) and a hearing before the Zoning Board of Adjustment (ZBA). However, there is a likelihood that a developer may instead pursue a “by-right” single-family development. In this case, a reduced unit count would likely create financial barriers to the preservation of the existing buildings and provision of community parking. This path is not recommended.

RSA-5 Development Standards	
	Permitted
Use	Single-Family Residential *
Units	45 units (as calculated by lot width)
Parking	Zero
* Variance Required for Scenarios 1 & 2	

2. RM-1 Zoning Change

A zoning change to RM-1 would allow for the two development scenarios to be built “by-right”. However, it also permits a by-right unit count that may lead to an overbuild of the property. This path is not recommended.

RM-1 Development Standards	
	Permitted
Use	Multi-Family Residential
Units	152 units
Parking	Zero

3. RMX-2 Zoning Change

A zoning change to RMX-2 requires an accompanying master plan of development to be reviewed by the Planning Commission and approved by City Council. This provides for a legislated “by-right” plan that contains specific parameters for development. Community collaboration is not required, but likely necessary to ensure support from City Council and PCPC. RMX-2 provides a great deal of flexibility to allow for a development that is best suited to a complicated site and the needs of the developer, community, and City. **This path is recommended.**

RMX-2 Development Standards	
	Permitted
Use	Multi-Family Residential
FAR	250%
Units	Determined by FAR
Parking	3 spaces per 10 units

It should also be noted that any development of 50 units or more is required to go through Civic Design Review (CDR). The CDR process requires one RCO meeting and one hearing before the CDR panel, upon which a representative of the local RCO sits. CDR provides advisory design recommendations regarding a proposed development’s impact upon the City’s public realm.



Credits



CITY OF PHILADELPHIA

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Philadelphia City Planning Commission

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Gary J. Jastrzab, *Executive Director*

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January 2016

