

# FINDING A NEW BUILDING USE

## Top 10 Things to Consider When Selecting a New Use for Your Older or Historic Building

With new construction, we always start with the space needs. But, with reuse projects we often do the opposite: start with a space and then find a use to put in it. The following are key things to think about when selecting potential new uses for your older or historic building.

- 1.** What is (are) the current use(s)?
- 2.** What is (are) the previous use(s)?
- 3.** What types of uses are currently allowed by the Zoning Ordinance?
- 4.** How might your building's use compliment the nearby business and residences?

*Sometimes the best new use is the existing use. Some repairs and minor functional updates might be all that's needed to reposition the building in the market.*

*Returning the building to the original or earlier use may be simpler than created a totally different use in the building.*

*Zoning Ordinances change over time. Always check with the current zoning to see what is allowed now for your building site.*

*Review nearby current uses by walking around the neighbourhood. Review the local chamber of commerce members or online local directories.*

5. Are there other similar buildings that have been restored in the area or elsewhere? If so, what are their uses?
6. What types of business or residences are wanted or needed in your area?
7. What types of transportation are available to or near your building? Does the current (or planned) transportation in the area support your proposed use?
8. Is there a redevelopment or master plan for your area?
9. What are the current sales or lease rates for the proposed use in your area?
10. How much space do you have, in the building and on the site? How much space is needed for the proposed use(s)? Does the proposed use fit?

*Look for similar buildings in preservation awards or stories in local newspapers.*

*Review the area and identify gaps in housing, services, offices and retail.*

*Check with state, county and local government websites for information on transportation information and plans.*

*Check with your local planning department to get any relevant local master plans. There may be multiple, overlaid plans so be sure to get them all.*

*Check local online listings or talk to a real estate broker.*

*If you don't have plans showing the size of your building, you can get an approximate size by measuring the footprint on Google Earth.*

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*For more assistance selecting a new use for your building, please schedule a [Reuse Consultation](#) or request a [Strategic Reuse Study](#).*