Housing in Hidden Places
Challenges and Solutions
White Elephants

- Mansions
- Barns
- Schools
- Churches
- Office Buildings
- Factories
- College campuses
- Institutions
Challenge: Getting Owners to Sell

- Over-valued pricing
- Over leveraged/tied up in legal proceedings
- Altogether abandoned – no owner
- Mortgage holder doesn’t want to step in
- Municipality doesn’t want to do tax sale
- Owner institution wants to restrict future use
Solutions:

• Listen
• Learn about concerns
• Cultivate trust
• Build relationships
• Practice patience
• Explore win/win outcomes
Challenge: Existing Site & Building Constraints

• Lot shape, size, location of entry points, setting of existing building on lot

• Handicap accessibility in downtown historic buildings

• Historic features such as large entry halls, wide corridors, grandiose staircases, school gymnasiums

• Cavernous spaces
Solutions:

• Prioritize goals and be prepared to compromise
• Be creative especially with
  • Site design
  • Common area uses
Think outside the box...
Challenge: Reaching Economies of Scale

Solutions:

• Look for buildings sited on larger lots and add a new building
• Seek larger structures that can accommodate more units (factories, schools, churches with accessory spaces)
Challenge: Existing Conditions & Future Goals

- Historic preservation & renewable energy technologies (solar panels, air source heat pumps, pellet silos)
- Masonry & spray foam
- Energy codes & existing buildings
Solutions: Creative Design and Innovative Technologies

- Screening & Landscaping
- Low profile rooftop installations
- Insulated window panels
Unique Challenge: Sacred Spaces
Creative Solutions...