Creative Re-Use of Buildings

Sustainability at its Best!

Agenda

- Rise of the Box Store
- Effects on Communities
- Effects on Environment
- Abandoned Superstores
- Creative Re-adaptions
- Solutions
- Summary
- Sources

Thoughts to Ponder

- What does it mean for us and for the future of America if the spaces of commerce built by a few monolithic corporations become the sites where
  - Education
  - Medicine
  - Religion, and culture
- Are dispensed wholesale to the populace?
Thoughts to Ponder

- Each renovation displays a community’s resourcefulness and creativity.
- It also raises questions about how big box buildings affect the lives of communities.

In 1962 the Box Store was Born with Wolco Spin off of F.W. WoolWorth Co.

Since 1962

- Big-box stores of 20,000 to 28,000 square feet have dotted the American landscape.
- Their 'bare-boned' appearance, according to artist Julie Christensen, (Author of the Book Big Box Reuse) promise 'bare-boned bargains.'
However what happens after the box is vacated?

A community is left with a decision about what to do with the structure

Interesting Facts Since 1990

Retail development in the U.S. has consumed about

- 500,000 acres, or 780 square miles—
- More than half the size of Rhode Island.

Urban Sprawl

Sprawling development on the outskirts of towns and cities has caused a number of other unexpected problems for rural, suburban and urban communities, including

- The loss of open space and unique natural areas
Urban Sprawl

- Over-dependence on the automobile and superhighways
- The impact of traffic on air quality standards
- The threat to water quality and aquifers

Reference Points

- Average Rite Aid: 13,000 sq. ft.
- Average Barnes & Noble: 25,000 sq. ft.
- Average Best Buy: 37,000 sq. ft.
- Supermarkets: range from 10,000 to 90,000 sq. ft.
  Average 44,000 sq. ft.
Reference Points

- Average Home Depot (including garden area): 128,000 sq. ft.
- Wal-Mart supercenters: range from 99,000 to 250,000 sq. ft. and average 187,000 sq. ft.

How Big is Too Big?

- Gray space is parking lot typically 17 acres

Interesting Facts

- A typical Walmart or Target Supercenter with its parking lot, occupies an area:
  - Equal to more than a dozen football fields
  - An average football field is 57,000 sq. ft
  - 12 of them =’s 684,000 sq. ft.
Average Size of a Wal Mart

- The company has 952,203,837 square feet of retail space, or roughly 34.16 square miles.
- That’s just about 1.5 times the size of the borough of Manhattan
- Not even including their offices or distribution facilities ... or their gigantic parking lots

The Decline of Box Stores

- Toys "R" Us kicked off the trend, shutting dozens of stores in 2006.
- In 2007, CompUSA, shuttered all 103 outlets.
- In 2008, Linens 'n Things went under, leaving behind 371 stores.
- Then came — or, rather, went — Circuit City, with nearly 600 stores
- In 2011, Sears shut 80 stores.
- This year, heavy losses forced Best Buy to put the kibosh on 50 stores
Spoiled Local Character

Big-box stores surrounded by asphalt are out of proportion with the scale of traditional commercial districts and residential neighborhoods, which fuels sprawl and undermining the character of our cities, towns, and rural areas.

A By-Product of Weather/Economy?

- New Orleans two years post-Katrina, East side of the city.
- Most striking were the dozens of empty big-box stores surrounded by acres of weeds.
- The Home Depots, Staples and Pet Smarts were not coming back.
- Because there were no longer enough people in the area to support them.

A By-Product of Weather/Economy

- The abandoned big boxes were, in a way, more devastating than the loss of homes.
- Houses, after all, stand on small lots.
- Big Box stores are by definition big.
A By-Product of Weather/Economy

- When they sit derelict, as they did in New Orleans,
  - They ruin the entire landscape.
  - Not that they were architectural gems to begin with, but they certainly look better when they are in use.

Box Store Dilemma

- When a big box store upsizes to an even bigger box a supercenters own the road
- It leaves behind more than the vacant shell of a retail operation
- It leaves behind a changed landscape that can't be changed back

Box Store Dilemma

- Acres of land have been paved around it
- Highway traffic comes to it
- Local roads end at it
- With thousands of empty big box stores spread across America
  - These vistas have become a dominant feature of the American landscape
Box Store Dilemma

- Has a History of abandoning stores and rebuilding a short way away
- The problem comes up what to do with a 20-40,000 sq ft space?

Imaginative Projects Include

- Imaginative and successful projects converting boxes into a library,
- A Head Start center and a senior resource center, among others.
- Charter schools have moved into empty big boxes,
- Churches, for whom, Christensen says, the big box may be 'the revival tent of the twenty-first century.'

How to Reuse?

- Oberlin professor Julia Christensen documented ten such conversions in her 2008 book, Big Box Reuse, and a Wiki she set up shows as many as 27.
- Finding a use for 40,000 to 200,000 square feet of space is one of the biggest challenges of reusing box stores, says Christensen.
From Price Checks to Dewey Decimals

When a Wal-Mart retailer moved to a larger facility down the road in McAllen TX, the city of McAllen TX purchased the old building and created their new Public Library. The town of McAllen had a 5 1/2 year journey from choosing the site to financing the work to cutting the ribbon December 2011.

Minneapolis-based architects Meyer, Scherer & Rockcastle, Ltd. breathed fresh life into the warehouse, about as big as two and-a-half football fields.

Size of 2 ½ Football Fields

The primary challenge of reusing the building was to create a highly functional, flexible library of 124,500 square feet on a single level. This area is equivalent to nearly 2 1/2 football fields, making the new library the largest single-story library in the U.S.
A laser-cut wood wall at the entry folds into a ceiling plane that runs the length of the building, forming a central service spine that guides patrons.
The intersection of the wood ceiling plane and a secondary service spine—delineated in vibrant orange—serves as the main service point.

The orange service spine separates major program areas (such as the adults’ and children’s collections) and connects patrons to a variety of study options.

**To provide easy wayfinding and encourage self-servicing,** **Service desks and collection areas are designated with Colorful, textural landmarks.**
How an Abandoned Wal-Mart Became an Award-Winning Public Library

From 12-packs of paper towels to *The Count of Monte Cristo*: A deserted Wal-Mart in McAllen, Texas, is stocking a new kind of item on its shelves.

The addition of super-graphic-clad ceiling pendants and lighting and flooring choices delineate program areas within the expansive library.
IIDA 2112 Library Design Award

Public Libraries over 30,000 sf

Designed to mimic a spy cave, "area 3918" is a popular teen hang-out, which is acoustically separated from the rest of the library.
Interim director Kate Horan says that the numbers of new registrations and book loans at the library are “through the roof.”

Great re-use of the space

- We used to be really busy on Sunday afternoons,” she added. “Now, every day is a Sunday afternoon.”

Great re-use of the space because

- Wal-Mart won’t sell the empty stores to competitors
26 Million in Costs

- While I couldn’t find the breakdown of how much tax money, donations, and loans contributed to the total.
- $6 Million was shaved off because of low interest rates.

SEE MOORE PICS
http://mcallen.smugmug.com/Library/New-Main-Library

An abandoned Kmart became a charter Elementary school for 500 students in Charlotte, N.C.

Round Rock Texas

The interior of the RPM Indoor Raceway in a renovated Wal-Mart building in Round Rock, Texas. The indoor track used 40,000 square feet of the Wal-Mart’s 92,000 square footage.
The building was eventually redeveloped as a strip mall.
Hosting a Gold's Gym, a smoothie shop, a health food store, a men's hair salon, and a tanning salon.

BORDERS

- The Borders bookstore chain shut down in 2011.
- This winter in Mansfield, Mass., Mansfield Crossing, the owners of one of the chain’s former buildings, turned the store into an indoor ice skating rink.
Bankrupt K Mart
Lebanon Mo

- It is depressing because it is a reminder of a business that went bankrupt
- Property is off the Tax Rolls
- When a Kmart there went bankrupt, its building was left vacant for three years, and the area became depressed.
- So the community raised money to turn it into a new and bigger county library.

Lebanon Mo

Since the structure was too big for just the library, they broke it up.

& turned an old Kmart into a county library, cafe, and Route 66 museum.
Cathy Dame, the library’s director, says it took awhile for some people to adjust. “Sometimes, honestly, it was easier to say, ‘Remember where the shoe section was? That’s our children’s room,’ “ Dame says.

The garage door in the back of Route 66’s gas station exhibit is an original from the building’s days as a Kmart.
The Calvary Chapel in Pinellas Park, Fla. Moved from an abandoned Winn-Dixie grocery store to an old Walmart.

Austin Minnesota

K-Mart moved out of the building on Main Street. To move a new building on the edge of town many years ago. This location sat empty for many years.
As a result

- The entire end of town began to decline in business, and eventually in value.
- A grocery store across the street also closed down
- Leaving another empty big box across the street for many years.

In 2001:

An old Kmart made the perfect location for a new Spam museum in Austin MN. “Spambassadors” guide visitors through a mock assembly line, under giant spam patties, and by a wall made of 3,390 spam cans.
Hormel Corporation

- The building is 33,000 square feet-
  - 16,500 for the Spam Museum,
  - 16,500 for official Hormel offices.
- There are 35 employees in the museum, and about 200 employees in the offices.

Why K-Mart?

- 2 reasons that seem to be prevalent in every big box purchase:
  - Location and $$$. 
  - The abandoned K-Mart was in a prime location in town
    - easy to get to from everywhere,
    - Just a half a mile from other Hormel offices.

$$$

- Cost efficiency was a factor, as it usually is
  - It is generally cheaper to renovate the big box than it is to build from the ground up.
The decor in the Spam Museum has a retro flair, a throw back to the 40's and 50's-- Spam was first introduced in 1937.

SPAMARAMA!
Surrounding businesses have benefited greatly from the arrival of the museum. This diner right across the street offers a Spam-filled menu.
In 2008 Wisconsin Rapids redeveloped an old Walmart into a Senior center that houses a Library, Meeting rooms, Walking track, Pool tables, a kitchen and computer center.

Other Examples: At 80,000 Sq Ft. The building was big enough to allow for a "walker's indoor circuit."

According to a report by the Department of Housing and Urban Development, the town purchased the building for $400,000—$800,000 below asking price—after it stood empty for several years.
HEAD START - NEBRASKA

The building houses 13 classrooms
4 larger rooms for infants and toddlers
A parent room
A resource center for people who have recently immigrated to the US,
Computer labs, cafeterias, conference rooms and offices.

Services Include:
• Summer programs
• Immunization clinic
• After school programs
• Early childhood education
• Numerous programs for migrant families
Community

- The school has around 120 Head Start students (ages 3-5)
- 200 Title I Migrant students (ages 3-21)
- 64 Early Socialization students (ages 0-3)
- The center employs over 100 people.

Why K Mart?

- Reasoning was similar to that of most renovated big box projects:
  - cost efficiency
  - the pre-built parking lot
  - location, location, location.
- Superstores generally are placed in areas where the roads lead from all over–especially in rural areas where the original superstore may have served an area of several towns or counties.

Too Many Cooks

- One party owned the land
- The building was owned by another
- K-Mart leased from the building owner.
- This is often the case with big box buildings, and as the people at the Head Start shared, the more parties that are involved, the longer it can take to seal the deal.
- The building was empty for 10 years
- Renovation took 6-9 months, and the doors were opened for school in September of 2001
Renovations

- Exterior renovation on the building was minimal
- They basically just painted it
- Put on a new roof
- Put up a new sign

Interior Renovations

- Was Extensive
- Everything was re-built
  - Heat
  - Air conditioning
  - Electricity
  - Lights Walls & Ceilings

70 Plus Rooms were Constructed

- Along with:
  - 19 bathrooms, which means a lot of new plumbing
  - There are 3 major hallways that run the length of the building in 3 directions.
  - The less space that is used for hallways, the more space is available for classrooms.
Bardstown Kentucky- “My Old Kentucky Home”

- The bourbon capital of the world.
- Bardstown has a charming, historic downtown, with little cafes and boutiques.

Tourism is a vital part of Bardstown's economy.

People come from all over to visit the distilleries and the 18th century mansion that inspired Stephen Foster to write “My Old Kentucky Home.”

To keep the historic buildings intact, there are very strict design regulations downtown.

Like cities everywhere, the outskirts are a different story.
Bardstown Kentucky- “My Old Kentucky Home”

- Strip malls are just a few minutes' drive away
- Wal-Mart has already opened and outgrown two buildings here.

GALVESTON TX

Turned into a Charter School
Odyssey Academy

Hurricane Ike

- Flooded both HEB Pantry on the west side of town and Odyssey Academy on the East side of town
- HEB decided not to reopen as they were closing these types of stores
The Project
The total build out was 73,000 square feet
Plus the full size basketball court covered pavilion.
The remodel was took approximately 10 weeks and cost right at $4.M.
We had to finish school in June and immediately vacate

The Project
They had a very temporary situation the first school year in the facility and they had us back in for the next school year August 15th.
Anslow Bryant was the Construction Manager at risk
Collaborate Architects was the architectural firm.
They were both excellent firms that met our budget, timelines and educational needs.
Past Uses Makes One Chuckle

- People in the communities where big boxes have been renovated do remember and joke about what the buildings were in their past lives.
- The day spa at the Wellness Center is in what used to be the produce department of the grocery store.
- There is always such a drastic difference after the renovation of the big box, and it makes one laugh to think they can be laying amidst candle light, listening to relaxing music while having a massage in what used to be the lettuce and spinach aisle of a grocery store.

STORE SIZE CAPS

- Store size cap ordinances foster small-scale, walkable business districts

Cap Size Regulations

- OVER 150 Communities in the US have fought box box development in their town
- Vermont is the only state without a Walmart
Big Box Reuse

- It's important to note that sometimes, when a big box is left empty
- It's not necessarily the fault of retailers; they don't always own the buildings themselves;
- Often they lease them

Sources

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