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Research Article

Striking elements — A lifebelt or a fad? Searching for an effective way of adapting abandoned churches

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Abstract Are avant-garde elements added to historical objects as a temporary fashion to fulfill the aspirations of designers or an attempt to draw attention to themselves? It may be the exact opposite, and this type of controversial project is the best lifebelt for such monuments. This article explores issues related to external avant-garde elements added to adapted churches and their influence on the efficiency of such adaptation projects. Gothic churches located in the north of Europe that have changed their religious function, entirely or in part, were considered. This work examined former churches in Maastricht, namely, the Minorite Church, the Church of the Kruisheren Monastery, the Dominican Church, as well as Polish churches located in Gdańsk, including St. John's Church and St. Catherine's Church. This article attempted to identify the factors that contribute to the successful adaptation of former churches and the benefits and drawbacks of adopting avant-garde design solutions. Results of this study might provide valuable inspiration for other churches that are losing worshippers. This study was conducted on the basis of a wide range of literature, statistical data, logical reasoning, and comparative methods. Observations from selected edifices were checked for their correlation over time. This study also included in situ investigations.
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1. Introduction

At present, the use of existing resources is increasingly important in the design process. The re-use of buildings is increasingly becoming a common practice and acts as a catalyst for the transformation and regeneration of areas surrounding an adapted building. Furthermore, such projects are valuable from an ecological and economic viewpoint (Latham, 2000). Although still at its infancy, the capability to redesign existing buildings for new functions and requirements is an important skill because adaptations have been treated as secondary to the design of brand new buildings for decades (Latham, 1999). In recent years, a variety of transformations to revitalize old urban areas, including religious structures, have been conducted. The progressive deconsecration of temples is observed as faith increasingly declines. Therefore, numerous churches have ceased to serve their original function, making their adaptation a contemporary pressing issue as evidenced by the number of European conferences on the subject (Cielątkowska, 2008; Fiorani et al., 2017). However, the subject of adaptive re-use of churches in eastern European countries is still a relatively new and considerably sensitive area. This condition may be caused by the lack of a broad understanding of the entire process of deconsecration, its reasons, and its consequences, especially within conservative communities (Kurek, 2011).

In countries where the problem is visible, campaigns to rescue abandoned churches are currently performed. Thus, an organization called *The Churches Conservation Trust* (CCT) was established. The CCT takes care of almost 400 abandoned churches in England ("The Churches Conservation Trust,"). A new concept developed by the CCT is "champing," an idea that involves camping in former churches. One event held in 2018 provided the opportunity to stay overnight in All Saints' Church in Billesley where William Shakespeare is rumored to have gotten married. Such events elicit significant interest and help attract financing for the maintenance of the buildings. However, the churches included in this project were still in a good state of repair and did not require major investments. Unfortunately, such events are occasionally insufficient. In the case of large Gothic buildings, the costs of maintenance are considerably large. Hence, undertaking initiatives with a broad scope is necessary.

In contemporary society, experts on architectural disciplines and laypeople alike are aware of the important role of churches in urban spaces (Garstka, 2012). Therefore, steps that should be taken to preserve these buildings for future generations must be determined. One way to determine the steps would be by adapting their previous functions; however, this approach may be insufficient. The edifice must be customized in accordance with the requirements and standards of the 21st century to execute a successful adaptation. Latham (1999) discussed the need to create a plan of action. The process of adapting a building to a new function usually involves not only reworking the interior but also making equally significant changes in the exterior; for example, the attachment of a lift or arrangement of a new entrance. The latter category of changes evokes many emotions in society (Velthuis and Spennemann, 2007; Garstka, 2012). However, considering the aforementioned approach might be the only way to preserve and protect a valuable building from falling into disrepair. Moreover, re-used churches may contribute to a renewed interest and benefit cities because of the much-needed financial input of tourism (Latham, 2000; ABN AMRO, 2017).

2. Methodology and process of the research

This study aims to determine the factors that affect the success of the adaptation of deconsecrated churches. A portion of this study analyzed the benefits and drawbacks of adopting avant-garde design solutions. Gothic churches from northern Europe, which included three churches in Maastricht (the Netherlands) and two churches in Gdańsk (Poland), were investigated for this purpose. These locations were chosen for comparative purposes. The Netherlands is a country that has performed deconsecration and adaptation of churches for a long time while Poland has only begun. Ongoing changes and the current status of such edifices were investigated on the basis of the available literature (Owczeruk, 2015; Niedałtowski, 2008; Di Biase, 2017; Kuśnierz-Krupa and Krupa, 2008; Harney, 2017; EAAE workshop V, 2015) and performing in situ observations.

The researchers then gathered information on social attitudes toward adapted and deconsecrated temples to determine the popularity of the five selected churches. This stage was conducted by analyzing the local data, verifying the appearance of churches in tourist guides, and determining the frequency of their online searches. Such methods are commonly used (Ginzarly et al., 2019). A further step was the verification of collected material and organization of data in tables. This stage highlighted the connection between the adaptive activities of the particular churches and their current state and popularity. Thus, the results were presented, the conclusions were drawn, and the study was summarized.

This article also used the comparative approach and the method of logical reasoning, which were supported by statistical data. These data were gathered by the Institute for Catholic Church Statistics SAC (Instytut Statystyki Kościoła Katolickiego SA; ABN AMRO, 2017). The comparison of the selected churches allowed the determination of factors, which may affect the long-term success of adapted churches and the advantages and disadvantages of the implemented design solutions.

3. General characteristics of the selected churches

Three Dutch churches, namely, the Minorite Church (now an archive), the Church of the Kruisheren Monastery (now a hotel), and the Dominican Church (now a bookstore), were chosen. These churches previously fulfilled a sacred

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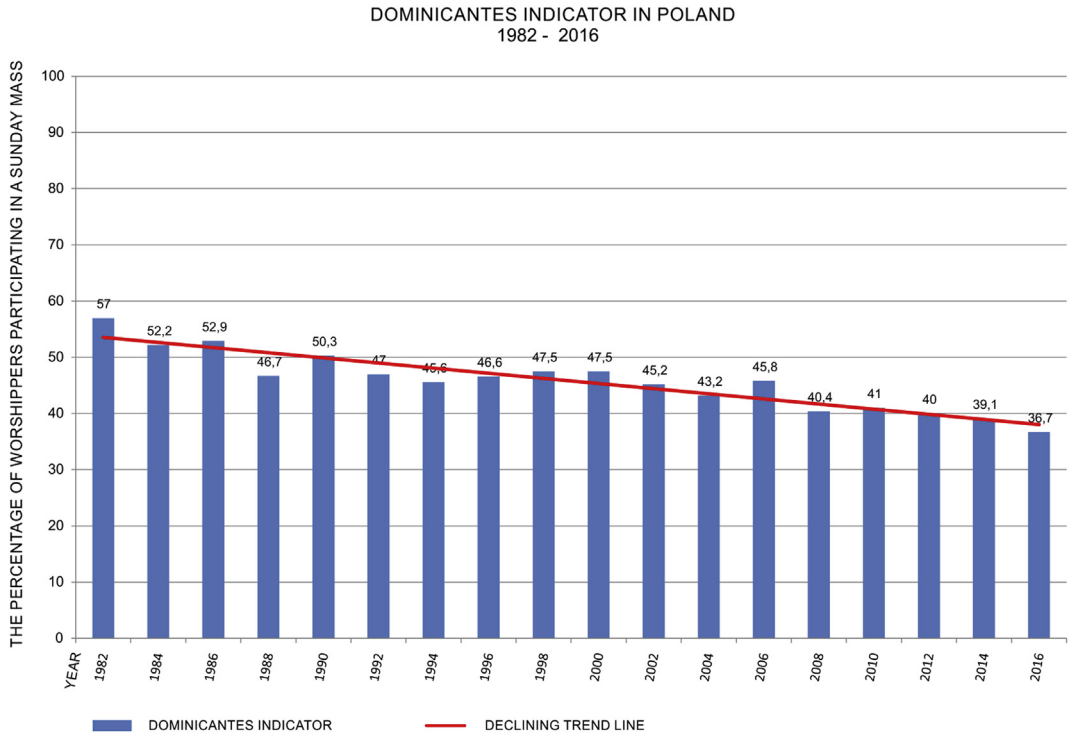

Figure 1 Dominicantes indicator in Poland over the last 30 years. The graph is prepared by using the data from annual surveys conducted by the Annuarium Statisticum Ecclesiae (SAC) in Polonia Ad (2018).

function. Two Polish churches, which are partly adapted for secular functions, were also studied: St John's Church (partly adapted for cultural events) and St Catherine's Church (which works partly as a museum and a viewpoint). All five churches are monumental. Gothic churches dating from the 12th to the 16th centuries are all located in northern European cities and share a similar architectural history. These churches currently stopped fulfilling their primary function due to the progressive decline in the number of people participating in Holy Masses (Fig. 1 based on the dominicantes indicator[1]). Parishes do not have sufficient funds for the maintenance of all churches, and the number of sacred buildings often exceeds the demand of worshippers. Lack of use of a building is equivalent to its gradual destruction; thus, finding new opportunities to reuse abandoned churches is necessary.

3.1. Churches in the Netherlands

3.1.1. Minorite Church, Maastricht

The Minorite Church (Oude Minderbroederskerk, also known as Eerste Franciscanerkerk) is located in Maastricht, the Netherlands. This church is the oldest among three Franciscan churches in Maastricht. The Minorite Church was built in the 13th century in the Gothic style and was closed in the 17th century soon after the Franciscans were sent into exile. This church was also used as military barracks by a garrison. When the Franciscans were allowed by the French invaders to return, they did not recover the Minorite Church but established a new monastery instead. The Minorite Church was used by the garrison until the 19th century (Di Biase, 2017).

At the end of the 19th century, the first Franciscan church and monastery were restored and currently serve as the Regional Historic Center Limburg (RHC Limburg) with a reading room and exhibition space. Minimal changes were introduced in the interior, and the façade does not feature any new elements, possibly indicating a change in the primary function of the church (Fig. 2) (Di Biase, 2017).

3.1.2. Church of the Kruisheren Monastery, maastricht

The Kruisheren Church and monastery are located in the tourist area of Maastricht. The 16th-century Gothic church ceased its religious function approximately 200 years ago. The church was owned by the municipality of Maastricht, which had neither a concept nor funds for its development. Thus, the building performed many different temporary functions. For example, this church served as an arsenal, hospital, and opera rehearsal hall until it was finally bought by a private investor. Before its final adaptation, the condition of the building was negatively affected because it had not been used for nearly 20 years.

The church and monastery were transformed into a hotel in 2005. The newly created prestigious hotel had all the features to suit the high requirements of the 21st-century society. The structure had conference rooms, a library, a restaurant, and a reception space. Apart from the interior changes, this church was also visibly altered externally with

[1] Dominicantes indicator — the percentage of worshippers participating in a Sunday mass among all Catholics.

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Figure 2 Former Minorite Church: a view from the outside and the inside (photo by J. Szczepański).

Figure 3 Former Church of the Kruisheren Monastery: a new entrance to the Kruisherenhotel — a view from the outside and inside (photo by J. Szczepański).

a newly designed distinctive entrance (Fig. 3) (Kuśnierz-Krupa and Krupa, 2008).

3.1.3. Dominican Church, maastricht

The construction of the Dominican Church in Maastricht started at the end of the 13th century. The estate was seriously damaged in 1557. The façade of the edifice was restored with the support of the city council. Since the French Revolution, the church and convent have fulfilled various functions, such as a school, a depot (at that time, newly erected walls seriously damaged the existing frescoed walls), an exhibition space, an archive, a library, a post office, and a bicycle storage space. The building was in poor condition in the 1990s, and a plan for its restoration was commissioned. However, the work was not undertaken due to financial reasons. The topic was revisited in 2000 as part of a revitalization plan for the Entre-Deux Center.

The former church had to be adapted to the new requirements with the introduction of basic electrical and heating installations. The Boekhandelgroep Nederland has shown interest in designing a bookshop inside the former temple. However, a bookstore needed approximately twice more space than was available. Therefore, a cellar under the existing floor of the church was unearthed and warehouses and toilets were located below the ground level. Additional space was created by introducing the church black, steel shelving, and an imitation of a bookcase into the interior; such changes allowed for two additional floors (Fig. 4). These interventions created a bookstore, which respected the historical character of the building. The exterior of the former church gained a newly redesigned entrance. The church currently serves as the Bookstore and Café Selexyz Dominicanen. This bookstore was ranked as one of the most beautiful libraries in the world (Harney, 2017; EAAE workshop V, 2015; 'Merkx + Girod'; "Dezeen: A shop in a church by Merkx + Girod Architecten").

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Figure 4 Former Dominicanen Church: interior of the Selexyz Dominicanen Bookstore ("Merkx + Girod,").

3.2. Churches in Poland

3.2.1. St. John's Church, Gdańsk

An interesting example of a Gothic church that combines sacred and secular features is St. John's Church in Gdańsk. This church was in ruins in the 1980s, and only the former sacristy and library were used as offices for the restoration workshops. Despite the catastrophic condition of the building, Archbishop S. Gocłowski applied to governmental authorities to have it transferred to the diocese of Gdańsk.

Figure 5 St. John's Church: view of the exterior and main entrance (photo by A. F. Szuta) and the interior of the Church during a cultural event.

Figure 6 St. Catherine's Church: on the left a view of the main entrance and entrance to the museum (which is marked by a red rectangle); on the right, a close view of the entrance to the museum and viewpoint (photo by A. F. Szuta).

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According to the agreement between the State Treasury and the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Gdańsk in 1992, the church again became the property of the diocese of Gdańsk. The reconstruction work began soon. The organization and funding plans involved the laity and clergy, whereas scouts and students participated in the excavation and cleanup.

However, the financing of St. John's Church became a problem because another parish was unnecessary in Gdańsk. Accordingly, a combination of ecclesiastical and cultural features was proposed to allow the property to acquire funds for its maintenance. This endeavor was the first project of this type in Gdańsk. An agreement was arranged between the secular institution "The Baltic Sea Cultural Center" and the Church. The institution agreed to fund further work in exchange for the use of the interior of the church for exhibitions, congresses, and concerts. After three years, a religious function took place in the church again Holy masses began to be celebrated in the chapel (which was under the control of the Church). This symbiotic relationship between the Church and The Baltic Sea Cultural Center still operates today. The interior of the church reflects its former form. On the outside, no new elements that may indicate the multifunctionality of the church have been added (Fig. 5) (Niedałtowski, 2008; Szczepański, 2008).

3.2.2. St. Catherine's Church, Gdańsk

St. Catherine's Church in Gdańsk has a turbulent history. The vaults and roof of this church were damaged during the war. Reconstruction was conducted in the second half of the 20th century, but the roof was immediately destroyed again and burnt down in a fire. The form of the edifice from the time before World War I was considered in a new construction project. Additionally, the scope of the project envisaged adopting the attic for museum purposes. St. Catherine's Church is an interesting example because this church is probably the only one in Europe that can fulfill a secular and sacred function simultaneously. This feature means that reaching the secular attic of the church is possible even during religious practice. In other known examples of partly adapted temples, the secular functions of the church are suspended during religious events (Guć-Jednaszewska, 1993).

The Museum of Science is currently located at the loft of St. Catherine's Church. Unfortunately, the attic has no disability access nor does it meet safety regulations for evacuation. Therefore, projects exploring various possibilities of bringing visitors to the church attic are continuously designed. One main difficulty is designing an entrance such that the religious and secular functions are separated. Another setback is posed by strict conservation guidelines.

Table 1 List of changes introduced in the selected churches. Data in column 5 are based on the statistics from ABN AMRO (2017), articles and magazines related to architecture (e.g., Kuśnierz—Krupa, D., Krupa, M., 2008. Nowe życie średniowiecznych kościołów z Maastricht. Wiadomości Konserwatorskie. 24, 103—106.), web rankings, and guidebooks.

1. Name of the church	2. Change in function	3. Internal changes	4. External changes	5. Popularity over last 10 years
Minorite Church	Total monofunctional – archive	Non-interfering, new furniture	Not introduced	Regional
Church of the Kruisheren Monastery	Total multifunctional – hotel, library, restaurant	Interfering, newly designed walls and division of the interior	Attention-grabbing, contrasting, avant-garde entrance	International + appears in many scientific articles and magazines related to architecture + appears in tourist guidebooks and places recommended for the night + appears in rankings such as "Top 10 places to visit", "The most beautiful libraries" + popularity of Maastricht has increased since adaptation of the Church of the Kruisheren Monastery and Dominican Church
Dominican Church	Total multifunctional – library, restaurant	Non-interfering but visible, new steel construction and furniture	Avant-garde entrance	
St. John's Church	Partial, cultural events	Non-interfering	Not introduced	Regional
St. Catherine's Church	Partial, museum, viewpoint	Non-interfering	Not introduced	Regional

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To date, the church façade does not feature anything new. The outside does not indicate the existence of a museum in the church attic (Fig. 6).

4. Connection of the structure's form, function, and popularity

A leading restorer, Viollet-le-Duc, claimed that the best way to preserve an edifice is to find a new use for it. A problem arises when this theory is applied to religious buildings. Thus, all actions must be undertaken with the intention to serve society and contribute to the improvement of living standards and public spaces. Unfortunately, in many cases, the main aim of investors is an adaptation that could frequently generate the highest possible revenue at the expense of architectural and aesthetic values. In this way, the cultural worth and individuality of former religious buildings and their surroundings might be lost. Cooperation among the designers, the religious community, society, and investors should be sought for the successful adaptation of an important building (Garstka, 2012; Cieślak, 2008; Mine, 2013; Khalaf, 2016; Smith, 2006; Dvornik Perhavec et al., 2015; Beste, 2019).

The attitude of the public to the adaptation of churches is revealed by a survey conducted among 124 people. The first question involved the perception of functions, which could be adopted by former churches. The most acceptable ones included cafés, kindergartens, and private apartments, while the least desirable were clubs, mosques, and supermarkets. The next question referred to the internal division of the churches. The responders did not consider internal changes as problematic. The next question referred to external modifications. Apart from the issue of demolition, external modifications show the importance of churches in society. Among the respondents, 78.23% generally agreed that changing the exterior appearance of the church would be detrimental to the local landscape. Overall, the research has shown that the respondents are aware that churches are an important element in cities that should be preserved (Garstka, 2012).

Society approaches matters related to deconsecrated churches emotionally; the society wants to preserve churches and appreciates their intangible value and important role in the city. Such an attitude is also an argument for preserving such buildings for future generations. At this point, the following question arises: are there any changes that may contribute to self-financing and increasing the profitability of a sacred object? This study attempts to answer the above question. Table 1 lists the changes introduced to each building with their popularity.

The graph below (Fig. 7) shows the percentage of online searches for the churches in question over time. These data were used in Table 1.

The chart and the table show that the most popular churches are the former Church of the Kruisheren Monastery and the Dominican Church. Both churches share the characteristic of multifunctionality (a bookstore and café as well as a hotel, restaurant, and library) and also feature a new avant-garde entrance. In the cases of the Minorite Church, St. John's Church, and St. Catherine's Church, these churches appear half as much in Internet searches as the former Church of the Kruisheren Monastery and the

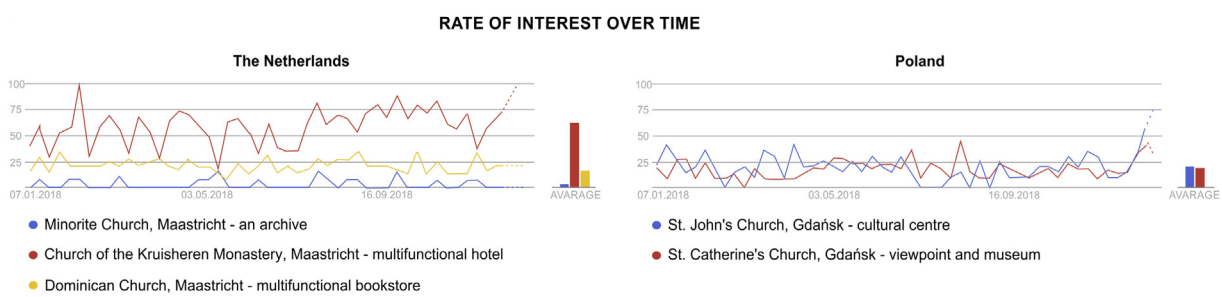

Figure 7 Percentage of online searches for the churches in question made by the Internet search engines. The chart was made via an internet search tool "Google Trends".

Fig. 8 Former Dominican Church: the newly designed entrance and a view of the outside café area.

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Dominican Church (where the trend line reaches the maximum). Based on the above data, the small popularity of the Minorite Church, St. John's Church, and St. Catherine's Church could be connected to their monofunctionality and the lack of a new avant-grade entrance or any other element. This finding could indicate the conversion of their former religious functions. The three adaptations were neither connected to the community nor provided any new space that could serve as a meeting place (such as the café in front of the Selexyz Dominicanen bookstore) (Fig. 8).

5. Discussion

The protection and preservation of cultural heritage for future generations is currently a salient issue. One method by which historically, architecturally, and culturally valuable buildings may be kept alive is their modification for fresh and contemporary uses. This modification is a practice known as adaptive reuse. Such buildings include deconsecrated churches (Mine, 2013). Elements added to the façade of the building elicit remarkable emotions due to the application of new functions to the interior of former churches (Garstka, 2012). However, attention-grabbing changes could be the key to furthering the use of a particular structure (Table 1).

After analyzing the selected churches, two main ways of adapting former consecrated buildings may be distinguished:

1) External innovation: contrasting elements and accentuating the entrance;
2) Smallest possible intervention on the outside of the building.

Many buildings are about to undergo renovation, and a choice must be made in terms of their customization to meet the new requirements (Chapter 3). The above analysis has shown that in opting for minimal adaptation (such as in the case of the Minorite, St. John's, and St. Catherine's Churches) or undertaking a contrasting approach (such as in the case of the Church of the Kruisheren Monastery and the Dominican Church), the minimal versus bold intervention remains unclear.

The design guidelines for historic buildings are governed by The Venice Charter. Article 12 states that "Replacements of missing parts must integrate harmoniously with the whole, but at the same time must be distinguishable from the original so that restoration does not falsify the artistic or historical evidence" (International Charter for the Conservation and Restoration of Monuments and Sites, 1964). In an attempt to interpret and discuss the selection of materials and the design of new forms relative to the records of The Venice Charter, R. Khalaf (2016) concluded that visible differences should exist between old and new architectures to help the general public distinguish the old forms from the new. Such a distinction is in accordance with the principles of conservation. Hence, intervention does not forge historic architecture (Khalaf, 2016). However, determining the compatibility of the original architecture and the adaptive work should not arise solely from a visual assessment of the relationship between the old and new architectures. At this point, the Castelvecchio in Verona rebuilt by Carlo Scarpa in 1957—1973 must be included. The remnants of the reconstruction from the turn of the 18th and 19th centuries were removed to expose the medieval structures. Simultaneously, monuments from earlier eras were introduced by using contemporary architectural elements. An equestrian statue of Cangrande I Della Scala from the 14th century was placed on reinforced concrete support. Thus, Scarpa juxtaposed historical sculpture with contemporary construction and created an architectural composition in which antiques and new elements play an equal role (Gamble, 1999). L. Smith (2006) proved that "heritage" is not merely an object or material item but also a cultural process. Cultural heritage combines tangible and intangible aspects and considers important cultural, sociological, and environmental aspects. The design should protect not only buildings but should also be extended to their surroundings (Smith, 2006). Monuments have a direct impact on the areas directly associated with them. The relationship of these objects with the other elements in a particular space (including those which are designed today) become a part of the urban landscape. Adapted temples, which are usually located in important parts of the city, could enhance a street landscape, thus exerting a social and economic impact (Mine, 2013; Cieślak, 2008; Beste, 2019).

The increasing popularity of former churches could afford them continuity of use and introduce long-term positive benefits. A further contribution could be provided by adding an avant-garde element to the adapted building, as shown in Table 1. In the process of adaptation, the addition of a new element that could facilitate the conversion of a former sacred function could be crucial. Although avant-garde solutions can be met with criticism or negativity (Garstka, 2012), extenuating circumstances, such as the reversibility of changes introduced (for example, the contrasting entrances in Maastricht), could also occur. In addition, if the means, scope, and form of the adaptation work are supported by reliable analyses, then the changes do not have to be the subject of conflict. Other aspects, such as location (urban landscape, technical condition, and the spatial layout of the edifice) and the needs of the community, should be considered. Through such actions, the acceptance probability of the society, the scientific community, and investors to re-use former churches increases (Garstka, 2012; Cieślak, 2008; Mine, 2013; Khalaf, 2016; Smith, 2006; Dvornik Perhavec et al., 2015). Decisions cannot be unilateral, and team cooperation is necessary.

Although projects aimed at reusing historic buildings, particularly those with religious significance, are considerably difficult because they require cooperation between stakeholders with different vested interests (architects, conservators, constructors, investors, and local inhabitants), such an undertaking is feasible. One positive example is the Bookstore Selexyz Dominicanen (former Dominican Church) presented in Section 3.1. In this case, a properly chosen function along with a new and distinct form achieved the following aims. The building is in constant use, which has a positive effect on its technical condition. The added elements do not attempt to fake the

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past and everyone can distinguish the new architecture from its historical form. The history of the place is preserved, and the property gains popularity among the locals and tourists. Such outcomes are beneficial to the economy of the city (growth in the number of tourists in Maastricht coincides with the adaptation of the two former churches) (Table 1; ABN AMRO, 2017).

Accordingly, changing the function of a former church and distinguishing this change by adding a new external element gains the attention of people and encourages their entrance. Hence, this phenomenon creates a sort of tourist attraction, which can introduce long-term benefits to the adapted building.

6. Applications and summary

In the 21st century, increasing emphasis is placed on the adaptation of edifices in urban areas. Old buildings create an identity and a sense of belonging to a given area in particular (Latham, 2000). One example of old and abandoned buildings are churches. This type of structure is connected to the declining role of the Church in society. Many European countries (Italy, England, and the Baltic States) have witnessed such development and struggled with it for some time. However, the problem in the eastern part of Europe has only emerged in recent years. Therefore, immediately undertaking some broad action before abandoned churches become a large-scale European problem is necessary.

The major aim of adaptive re-use is to maintain churches in their optimal technical condition and preserve them for future generations. Thus, adaptation programs have been implemented for the aforementioned purpose. Given that temples are special objects in terms of their impact on public sentiment, the entire process of re-use is a delicate issue for architects. Design in consultation with the representatives of different specialist areas (for example, maintenance workers, architects, investors, and the local society) is essential to develop mutually acceptable compromises and obtain a successful result. A key consideration in this process is that former places of worship should be able to finance their maintenance costs while also preserving their architectural values for future generations. At this point, countries in Western Europe, wherein the problem first occurred (the Netherlands could be considered a pioneer), must be considered to draw from their experience.

The studies were conducted to verify whether factors affecting the success of adaptation programs for former churches could ensure their continuous use. Deconsecrated (entirely or partially) Gothic churches located in the north of Europe were examined to answer the aforementioned question. A noticeable relationship exists among the chosen function, the introduction of new and external forms, and the popularity of an adapted structure. The analysis reveals that the factors boosting the interest in former churches possibly include their multifunctionality and the innovation of a new and distinctive form on the outside of the building. The addition of new elements must not destroy or negate the identity of the structure or location. New entities should be in harmony with the surroundings and match the original character of the area. Bold but properly selected architecture and construction could lead to the creation of fresh aesthetic value and sophistication. From the outset, bold projects could be beneficial to the former churches and the city as a whole. The primary benefit of these deconsecrated churches is the financial aspect as a consequence of increasing tourism.

The next research problem examines the benefits and drawbacks of adding new and distinctive architectural features to adapted churches. The respondents answered that the addition of a new item to an edifice may adversely affect the landscape (Garstka, 2012). However, this study has shown that significantly more benefits than drawbacks associated with the addition of a bold element can be obtained. Among the advantages of adopting avant-garde solutions, the following may be considered:

- A new form can create new aesthetic and landscape values;
- The popularity of an adapted church might increase;
- Increased interest in an adapted church could boost tourism;
- An adapted church covers not only its maintenance costs but may also bring income;
- Increased continuity of use preserves the architectural and cultural values of an adapted church for future generations.

However, a thin line exists between overly audacious projects, which may lead to the loss of authenticity and erode the identity of the building and its surroundings. Moreover, a considerably restrictive approach may forbid the implementation of any visible changes. Decisions regarding the form of newly designed elements should be made after extensive analysis of the current state of affairs and research in the local community. Finding a compromise between conservation ethics and the requirements of the 21st-century society, and the prevalent religious sentiment may be crucial.

Notably, heritage should not cause conflict. All parties should be linked by the same goal, which is to bring abandoned churches back to life and make them an integral part of the community. The re-use of abandoned churches can also encourage people to explore the history of such buildings. Abandoned churches are guardians of history and give character to their surroundings. Some adopted churches have created new public spaces around wherein locals and tourists can meet and spend time. In this respect, Jacobs (1961) stated that "Cities need old buildings so badly it is probably impossible for vigorous streets and districts to grow without them [...] Old ideas can sometimes use new buildings. New ideas must use old buildings."

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