

**Adaptive reuse of historic buildings and the potential of experiential retail:  
case studies and development ideas**

by

**Alice Chen**

**MS Real Estate Development, 2018**

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**Submitted to the Program in Real Estate Development in Conjunction with the Center for Real Estate in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Science in Real Estate Development**

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Center for Real Estate  
January 19, 2018

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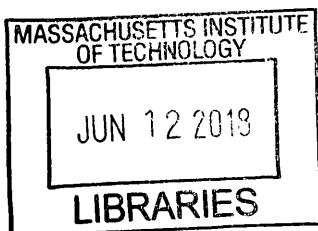
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**ABSTRACT**

This thesis explores relationships between experiential retail and historic adaptive reuse, and develops an understanding of their mutual potentials. The emergence of e-commerce is pressuring traditional brick-and-mortar retail to focus on enhancing experiences irreplaceable by online shopping. Meanwhile, an adaptive reuse approach on historic structures carries forward the city's legend via story-telling. A space and a story make a place, with uniqueness, character, innovation, and sustainability.

Between online and offline retail, physical space is the differentiator that activities take place and emotions are felt in person. I look beyond the boundary of asset types to study an experiential trend shared by hospitality, residence, office, and retail. The main difference between experiential and traditional retail is understanding customers' social needs as part of the experience. The socializing effects are partially reflected by social media posts, sharing about unique products, digitalized service, various activities beyond merely shopping, and special space.

Historic redevelopment is centered around continuing the heritage and creating synergy. Adaptive reuse is a resourceful alternative to save historic buildings from demolition, but not to be confused with historic preservation. The success of adaptive reuse depends on the right creation of program, one that matches the history and activates the place by engaging users. Historic redevelopment conveys meanings and references to the past that enhance the experience of users. This synergy can be a powerful mechanism to create value in real estate. After examining 10 cases involving experiential retail and adaptive reuse, I see unique opportunities that match the space characteristics in experiential retail and historic buildings, especially in a mixed asset type. Experience is intensified by the collaboration of multiple programs, and strengthened by interacting with a unique historic story.

With a theoretical framework summarized from case studies, I compose a practical "menu" of space revamps and program creations for developers to "order from". Based on a sample of approximately 2500 social media hashtags, I characterize unique retail experiences. Applying the menu, I make recommendations to redevelop LA's Bradbury Building, one of the oldest commercial landmarks in Downtown LA, to be a mixed-program experiential center.

**Thesis Supervisor: Dennis Frenchman**  
**Title: Professor of Urban Design and Planning**

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## Chapter 1

### E-commerce and the emergence of experiential retail

This chapter covers literature reviews and case studies to define, explore, and evaluate the concept of “experiential retail”. To explore a broader concept, I include cases about different types of experiences or activities, not limited to retail. Among the factors that compose successful experiences, the external and internal space of the building play a specific role, which leads to the next chapter about historical buildings.

Before narrowing down the discussion to experiential retail, I first describe the general picture of an experience-oriented trend in different real estate product types. Technology disruptions and customers’ changing preferences have been affecting features of properties where people live in, work at, and travel to. Retail properties, where people used to shop for necessities or for leisure, are also adapting towards the experience-oriented trend. The diminishing performance of traditional brick-and-mortar retail, signified by the dying of big-box shopping malls, is a negative outcome resulted from the fast-growing online shopping. (Isner, 2017) On the positive side, the pressure from e-commerce urges retail operators and space owners to re-evaluate customer needs and activity patterns, so as to reinvent the offline retail model with a new experiential concept.

#### 1.1 The experience-oriented trend: literature review

Experience in urban lifestyles is not a new concept. It was a heated urban study topic in 1980s-90s, when the so-called millennial generation was just born. Before the internet became an alternative shopping method or even a more dominant market place, thought leaders in the 1980s saw the trend of a geographical shift from sub-urban malls to urban mixed-use complexes. (Zukin, 1989)

Young urban professionals prefer a lifestyle with goods and services of high quality and good variety, which usually take place in dense cities that gather ideas, resources, and users. Experience is rooted in the urban lifestyle, which is enabled by a combination of “live, work, play”. Today “live, work, play” is such a catch phrase in real estate that it is constantly used as a measurement for successful mixed-use developments. (Muffy, 2015)

What urban study experts and real estate practitioners call “re-urbanization” started with millennials’ backlash to the city. Urban lifestyles were missing for the generation that grew up in the suburbs, as a result of Generation X’s escape from cities in exchange for bigger space and better living quality. (Zukin, 1989) In contrast to their parents, millennials grow up in the digital age, when things move faster and commuting makes less sense under the contemporary time frame. Re-urbanization enables more integrated experiences of “live, work, play”, as mixed-use urban developments provide housing, office, and retail in a collaborative neighborhood. (Ryan, 2017)

Today the collaboration of “live, work, play” is even tighter, and we see not only the proximity of different properties, but also crossover of housing, office, and retail in one property type. While most standardized goods and services can be delivered through online ordering, people still go to brick-and-mortar locations to have “experiences” that cannot be replaced by E-commerce. While E-commerce is a channel for sales, the offline world is a hybrid place for mixed activities and experiences and real-person interactions. I consider the crossover of asset types an upgrade to re-urbanization.



Offline is the in-person touch point between end users and goods and service providers. (Grieder, Buck, Banfi, Kment and Fitzner, 2014) A shift towards irreplaceable experiences is happening in all property types. Physical locations are still essential, with 80% of sales still occurring in traditional brick-and-mortar stores. (Ruby, 2015)

The necessity of physical presence is evident through Amazon's actions in opening brick-and-mortar bookstores and acquiring grocer Wholefoods, after the online giant of retail pressured brick-and-mortar retail extensively. (Huang, 2017)

Amazon is using physical bookstores and grocers to capture the foot traffic offline, and have accessibility to the 80% sale opportunities. While online shopping is more need-based, target-driven, and technology-adaptive, offline foot traffic come from people who don't like shopping online and waiting for delivery, or those who tend to pick up things out of convenience even when they didn't plan on shopping. (Huang, 2017) As Amazon's CFO Brian T. Olsavsky explained in a public interview, Amazon is expanding to the offline world and using physical shops as "another way to reach the customer and test what resonates with them". (Huang, 2017) Physical stores are important touch points for Amazon to cover a full range of customers, to collect valuable data on consumer behaviors, and to fill in the experience gap that an online retailer is missing.

Amazon's strategy proves that offline experiences are irreplaceable. It is important to recognize two separate but corresponding trends: brick-and-mortar has a focus on experience, while e-commerce serves as a communication platform and distribution channel.



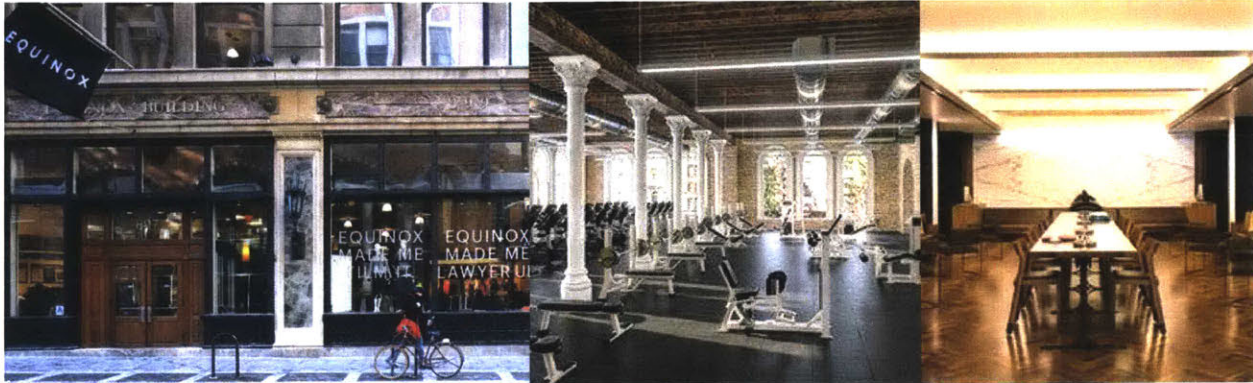
*Amazon enters the physical world to capture offline traffic and consumer data in Amazon-books (left) and Wholefoods (right)*

As a response to not necessarily competing with, but rather supplementing e-commerce, offline experiences stimulate multiple senses at one time with combined functions. An offline location can be a showroom, an event venue, an interactive museum, a playground, an eatery – an important component in the pursuit of a sale. (Ruby, 2015) Earlier studies of re-urbanization emphasized visual attractions, while now they extend to all senses in experiential retail, the upgraded urbanization. In the 90s wave of sub-urban backlash, visual attraction created the main experience in urban diversity, the embryo introducing experiential retail. (Zukin, 1989)

In the Westfield's 2015 retail trend report *How We Shop Now*, the term "retail-ery" (retail-gallery) was referred to as one of the next forms of mixed retail. The experiences provided in "retail-ery" align with contemporary shoppers' emotional needs to turn shopping into a social experience, to do several things at one time, to connect with friends and family both in the real world and for social media. (Westfield, 2015)



Based on a survey of 20,000 consumers in the U.S. and the U.K., Westfield makes trend recommendations for retailers, which are all about experiences in non-retail part of the industry. (Westfield, 2015) Goods become less of the focus in retail, services and experiences in the non-retail part play a bigger role. In an experience-oriented trend, the interface blurs between retail and museum, galleries, restaurants, coffee shops, barbershop, markets, instead these functions tend to integrate. A primary example maybe Equinox, an integration of sportswear shop, spa, café, and specialized gym, promoting workout activities as social occasions and lifestyle choice.



*Equinox combining sportswear retail (left), gym (middle), and café area (right), like a lifestyle hub*

The Westfield survey also reveals that in-person experiences appeal to shoppers with multisensory effects, and have evolved from the preliminary focus on visuals. (Westfield, 2015) The brick-and-mortar models is waiting for a major upgrade, which requires deep and accurate understanding of shopper's overall experience so that each part of it can be more pleasant, memorable, and interactive. (NAIOP, 2016)

As this literature review suggests, multisensory effects and non-product-related experiences are the two key attributes in evaluating experiential retail. In conclusion, experiential retail has emerged to reinvent and upgrade offline retail under the impact of e-commerce, to be a supplementary channel of shopping to shoppers and an important physical presence to collect data and provide experience.

## **1.2 Key questions about “experience”**

The failing of traditional malls in the digital age has become heated discussion in the world of commercial real estate. How can offline retailers react to the sweeping online consumptions, and utilize resources in the 80% market place? Is it fair to say that brick-and-mortar retail business is not dead, but in transition into new forms?

Looking from an industry practitioner's viewpoint, I see missing gaps in a theoretical framework, even though “experiences” and “live, work, play” are frequently mentioned as important concepts in the upgraded forms of offline retail. What's the new formula to cure for a successful experience to compete with or rather to complement e-commerce? Is the key element in that formula art, culture, sports, space, or an integration of all? Is the new experience anchor evolved from museums, galleries, libraries, stadiums, food markets, movie theatres?

Looking from the consumer's point of view, what do millennials value the most in their lifestyles? Apart from millennials who take information efficiency for granted as they grow up, how about people of other

age groups whose shopping patterns are affected but not integrally shaped by e-commerce? If offline retail is not solely about shopping any more, what is it about? How do we shop now, who and what do we shop for? What's next in tomorrow's retail industry?

### **1.3 What is experience?**

Before looking at experiential cases specifically in the retail world, I will go beyond the border of asset type and look at experiences created in all kinds of commercial activities. This is to show the experience-orientated trend on a bigger scope, not limited in the retail industry.

It is important to look at experiential elements in different sectors to understand what attracts buyers, residents, workers, travelers, shoppers. Users of all types of spaces share common interest, and collectively demonstrate a common experience-oriented trend, which not only take place in different asset classes, but also bring together several asset types to diversify the experiences.

The trend relies heavily on human factors. For example, sharing economy has been disrupting the hotel industry with Airbnb, the housing market with co-living models, and the office sector with co-working spaces. Sharing spaces become popular not only due to economic or environmental considerations, but also because it creates opportunities to meet with different people, to find inspirations unexpectedly, to go on adventures. The seemingly random opportunities are a big part of experiences. These opportunities resemble the excitement and unpredictability when online communication first started: you don't know the person behind the computer screen on the other end.

We will look at 1) Airbnb Experience further disrupts the hospitality and tourism world, on top of space sharing, 2) experience in co-living residential complexes, 3) experience in co-working offices.

#### **1.3.1 Hospitality and tourism – Airbnb**

The newly launched Airbnb Experience is an example of reforming the hospitality and tourism industry, after the home-sharing model first took away the thunder of standardized hotels. The home-sharing model provides much more than a room or standardized front-desk services. Booking an Airbnb instead of a chain hotel, a traveler may experience local life through interaction with the landlord, or simply the authentic displays in the house.

The addition of Airbnb Experience goes beyond home-sharing and enters a new era of experience sharing, through programs like "Places", "Tours", "Experiences". These new programs create crossovers between hospitality and tourism. (Gallagher, 2017) Airbnb Experience enlarges travelers' experience in several different sectors: experience of strangers' homes, experience of wandering around local attractions under the directions by other users, experience of an authentic local life that would never appear on a traditional travel agency's itinerary.

By extending user experience from accommodation to local activities, and diversifying travelling experience with authentic activities, Airbnb once again challenges the hospitality and tourism industry. Even though Airbnb is not focused on the real estate business, it is providing experience to attract people to come to real estate like vacation resorts or empty metropolitan apartments. The hybrid experiences blur the edges of property types, as well as industries, and should be adopted by property owners and industry players.





*Examples of Airbnb Experience on the website*

Airbnb Experience has proven to be a success, with a much higher market popularity response compared to when Airbnb was first launched. Compared to guests using Homes in the first year of the original Airbnb, there are more than 13 times the number of guests using Experiences. (Gallagher, 2017) This impressively uplift also shows the increasing trend towards experiences since the earlier years when Airbnb's home-sharing model was doubted.

### 1.3.2 Residential amenities – co-living space

Experience is the new must-have residential amenity in the increasingly competitive housing market, according to key words search on real estate broadcasting websites such as Curbed New York. Residential developers, especially those in busy city centers, are watching out for residents' overall living experience, in a curated community. (Sugar, 2017) New residential projects can hardly get away with a standard gym, laundry, and concierge.

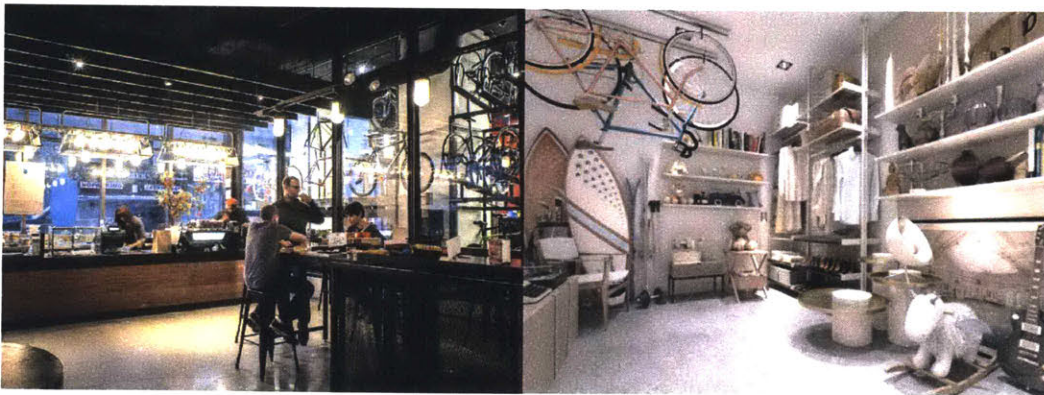
While some out-of-box amenities might be merely luxury show-off or sales gimmicks, many experiential amenities are aimed for physical and mental health of the residents, hence the term "wellness program". The time of closed doors and cold neighbors has passed. Having a healthy balanced life with exercise and positive communication leads to stable minds and happier living experience. (Sugar, 2017) Happier residents tend to lease for a longer term, accept the rent premium despite limited apartment space in the city, and spread positive word-of-mouth for the project. (Hu, 2017)

These wellness experiences extend beyond a well-equipped exclusive gym, and take socialization into account. The social needs come from younger residents who choose to live in the city, as oppose to the suburbs. They trade in features like bigger rooms, cheaper price, backyards, to live in the center of activities, and to feel less lonely and more engaged. After all, the atmosphere and character of where you live may define and shape one's social personality. (Sugar, 2017)

Via6 in downtown Seattle, is a residential project that emphasizes on creating a community based on interactions and activities. Experiential amenity is the design focus and remains a focus for operations in order to retain and support residents. Via6 turns the lobby into a bar, a coffee shop, and a gaming room, open to public and residents. The common space becomes a viable activity center all day long, attracting people with different interests. The bike shop, rental and storage services are another important amenity that appeals to target residents. (ULI, 2017)

Not owning a car is sometimes the drive and the benefit for young people choosing to live in the city. “Bikability” replaces the stress and high cost associated with car ownership with a sense of flexibility and freedom. The bike shop acts as a bridge between building residents and other people in the community. The Gotham West project in New York partners with an established bike shop in the city, offering services not only as an amenity to residents, but also to bikers in the area. The residential project utilizes its location proximity to the Hudson river and several bike trails connecting there by creating a bike-oriented community from inside out. Biking can be a good form of exercise, as well as a social sport. (ULI, 2016)

Apart from eating, drinking, playing, and exercising together, residents can socialize in a more special and eventful way. The Ritz-Carlton Residences at Miami Beach features a luxury sharing room for second-hand pieces, which can be exchanged among residents or donated for charity. The sharing room is facilitated by a mobile app that displays the items and links item owners, such as residents with similar tastes, on a virtual social platform. (Flamer, 2017)



*Experiential amenities: Via6 and Gotham West work with Velo Bike Shop (left)  
The Ritz-Carlton Residences at Miami Beach has a sharing room for all residents (right)*

### 1.3.3 Office transformation – co-working space

The rise of co-working space has been prominent in the emerging shared economy. The new office type is the product of a few attributes: abundant vacant office spaces, a changing work nature that lead to increasing number independent workers, and the need of causality and socializing during work.

The co-working model reinvents office spaces to fit the trend of more individualized work style, and the combination of “live, work, play”. Shared working space adds more flavors to work life, and therefore creates experiences. Again, co-working products blur the edges of coffee shops, home, gym, event venues etc.

The socialization in shared offices indicates a changing working style, which includes more experience than being stuck at one desk all day. As put by one of the business development members of the Great Room (a Singapore co-working space provider), offices are becoming more like cafes or hotels, where office workers or business travelers effectively get most of their work done.



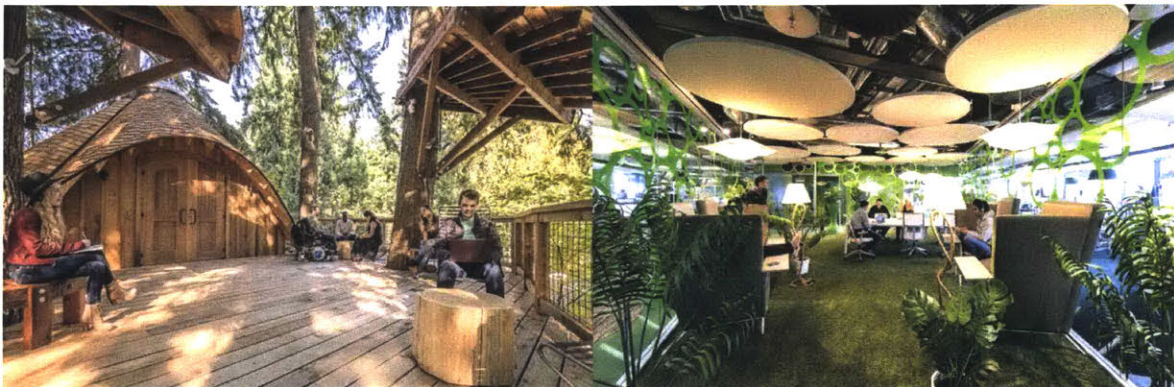


*Examples of co-working space: The Great Room in Singapore (left), WeWork in Shanghai (right)*

Experiential office is affecting not only how freelancers and entrepreneurs work, but also how corporates design their offices. An online magazine, Q daily, looked at several emerging trends for modern or future office space, in terms of space, function, and design. These trends all provide unique worker experience, aiming for better creativity and productivity. Office trends include customization towards teamwork versus independent work, the expression of corporate culture, the use of technology for better worker experience, and sustainable design enabling worker wellness. (Xu, 2014)

Implementing and improving experiences are considered key to designing working environment. ULI's new global headquarter in Washington DC adopts a co-working style design, so that empty seats of travelling employees can be utilized for other uses. The dynamic space also suits the ever-changing and multi-cultural work nature of ULI. (ULI, 2016)

Big technology firms are the pioneer of replacing traditional cubical office space with an all-purpose campus. Having various experiences gives active breaks to human brains and encourages innovation and creativity. Microsoft is building tree houses for employees, because employees value outdoor experience and proximity to nature. (Ong, 2017) Similarly, Google's Dublin campus brings veritable jungles into the office, not only for the feeling of the nature, but also to create a playground-like childhood experience. (Medina, 2013) These non-work-related experience increase workers' level of happiness and therefore productivity.



*Nature experience in office: Microsoft Treehouse (left), Google's Dublin campus (right)*

The experiential trend leads to mixing related uses in one collaborative space and creating multiple experiences to make the working hours more interesting, including networking, brainstorming, meeting



with people from unrelated fields, connecting to nature, doing yoga or having coffee, as if at home.

### 1.3.4 Retail – a framework for understanding

Many retailers or shop owners are afraid to say that retail is dying, since e-commerce seems to take care of most shopping needs. The real situation should be that retail calls for a “rebirth” with “sassiness”-stimulations on all senses that cannot be experienced in front of a computer screen. Everything standard can be shipped to the door, while everything else not deliverable through click-and-order needs to be experienced in person. Some retailers believe that physical retail is going to a new golden age that is more dynamic and well-thought, with new technology and various innovations put into the cultivation of experiential retail. (Westfield, 2015)

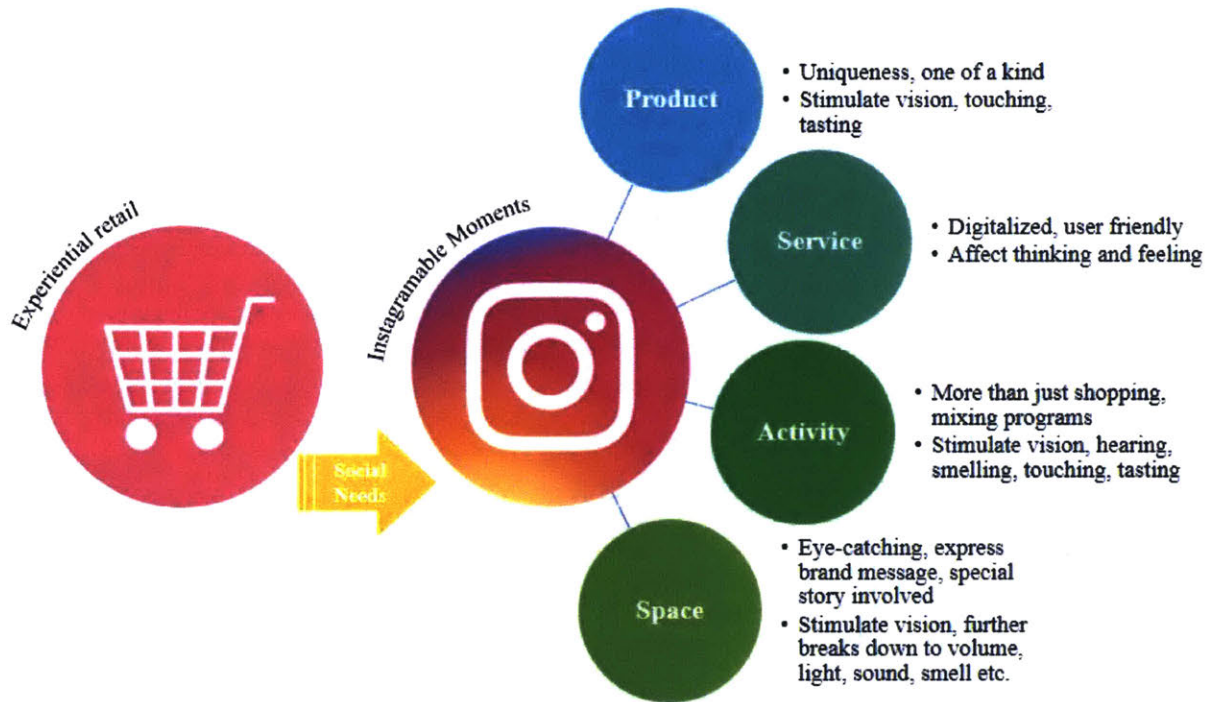
A primary example of retail’s new golden age is the success of Apple, today’s biggest physical retailer rising in the Internet age. Apple’s physical stores are “experience shops”, where consumers are free to try out all products, charge their own apple products, attend workshops to learn Apple features or share technology trends. Apple thinks that retail in the new golden age requires numerous new ideas for interactive consumer experience.



*Apple Park Experience Center (left) and Apple store’s experience-oriented interior (right)*

Compared to hotel, office, and residential, experiential retail has more instruments to play with: the product, the store design, the service, the events, the communication, all of which collectively impress consumers on multiple senses. As discussed in the Westfield report, the idea of social shopping blurs the line defining shopping excursion versus social outing. What was once cool about spending the weekend in a suburban big-box mall, needs to be adapted to the use of social media. (Westfield, 2015) The more interesting and unexpected experiential retail is, the more photos and videos will appear on social media like Instagram.

I hereby develop a framework to illustrate what factors in experiential retail fulfill consumers’ social needs, on top of shopping needs. The four attributes of a physical retail space -product, service, activity, space (Westfield, 2015) will be evaluated on their characteristics and senses of stimulation. Experiential retail is ultimately fulfilling social needs, expressed in “instagramable” moments in the age of social media. All features will then be illustrated by corresponding cases.



*Framework of attributes in experiential retail (by author)*

- Product: uniqueness, one of a kind

Just like fashion has cycles to return to the vintage, retail has returned to the starting point of mom-and-pop shops on a main street style. National chain stores are too standard for social media posts. CNBC reported the coming-back of mom-and-pops, whose micronized business size and authenticity strengthen brand uniqueness against the falling of traditional and standardized retail. (Ransom, 2013)

CNBC reasoned the sustainability of mom-and-pops to be local recognition and loyal customer base. (Ransom, 2013) With that being true for old local stores, new stores today are adopting the same concept of keeping a small size and creating a sense of authenticity. The scarcity of “one-of-a-kind” urges social media bloggers to search all over town in fear of missing out.

- Service: digitalized, user friendly

Part of experiential retail acts as complementary to online retail. While final purchase may still be done through e-commerce, offline shops serve as the showrooms and physical touch points between the company and the customers. In these cases, experience is the sole purpose for the physical presence, and therefore the focus in the offline strategy. No matter how convenient online shopping is, physical touch points are essential for retailers to cover all target customers, and to provide the chance to see and touch the real products.

Technology companies like Apple, Samsung, and Microsoft are turning their physical locations into experience centers, where customers are free to try out the latest models, ask for returns or fixing services, interact with real sales representatives. Beyond products, these experience stores are showrooms for company’s latest technology progress, which can be shown in a concept setting before being turned into



market-ready products. Such experiences engage customers at earlier stage for understanding of market needs, and for trust building through direct interactions.



*Experiential flagship stores of technology companies: Samsung (left), Apple (right)*

Even successful online retailers are returning to the physical world for bigger exposure. Farfetch the website for independent and luxury designer brand, as well as Warby Parker the online retailer for quality design glasses at affordable price, both expanded to the physical world after successful e-commerce. Their reasoning is the same as why Amazon returned to its serendipity of physical bookstores: they need to have presence both online - for the convenience and mass communication, and offline - for the in-person experience. (Shontell, 2017) Physical stores of an e-commerce business fill the gap where the internet cannot reach, A big part of sales come from casual shoppers, and consumers valuing instant feedbacks and real touches. It's interesting to hear that the founder of Warby Parker say e-commerce will be outdated soon, and physical retail is the long-term solution. (Shontell, 2017)



*Return to brick-and-mortar from two online retailer: Farfetch (left), Warby Parker(right)*

Such evolving retail model that integrates online and offline give rise to opportunities like offline tailor shops. While orders and payments of custom-made suits can be made online, the in-person experience of measurements and adjustments is irreplaceable.

- Activity: more than just shopping, mixing programs - e.g, retail-lery, retail-tainment

To stimulate multiple senses, physical stores are incorporating several functions within one brand or one space. Experiential retail grows into a much more expansive model. Mix-and-match happens not only in crossover productions, but also multi-purpose flagship stores involving events, art, entertainment, etc.



Mixed stores gain success not from selling a single product type, but by promoting a lifestyle under a branding umbrella. The mix of products and functions gives shoppers various options other than shopping, give them more reasons to spend time and budget in the store space.

Crossover function can be within the same retail category. Eataly, the Italian grocery and food hall gets its name from “eat” and “Italy”. Eataly is the first grocery store with an Italian theme, and with equal proportion of retail and restaurant. Eataly does not like to be called a food hall, because it does much more than sell food, beverage, or services. Eataly uses high-quality grocery and various offline activities to showcase and educate about Italian food and drink, while giving a nod to local culture. As consumers receive education about Italian quality ingredients through regular workshops at Eataly, they appreciate the quality of groceries and restaurants there more. This combination makes grocery shopping fun, and dining experience educational. (Rail, 2017)

Mix-and-match sparks are more interesting between two seemingly unrelated categories. Thailand’s biggest fashion brand Greyhound is a good example of using crossover lifestyle concept to create experiential retail. As far apart as it seems between clothing and restaurants, yet Greyhound started Greyhound café, where waiters and waitresses all wear Greyhound branded clothes. The crossover makes Greyhound a desirable fashion brand that symbolizes good taste in life, also a fashionable restaurant where everyone dresses in style. The innovative and corporative attitude is reflected in both cloth design and a Thai-Western fusion food menu. Greyhound also becomes favorable tenants to main street landlords and shopping center owners, because the café part draws food traffic to activate several other clothing stores nearby. (Mir, 2017)



*Food experience mixed with grocery – Eataly (left), or fashion – Greyhound Café (right)*

Fashion brands can interact with lots of other fun sectors, entertainment and art being the ideal matches. Space Ninety 8 by Urban Outfitter demonstrates how “retail-tainment” and “retail-lery” work as a hybrid of style and attitude. The hybrid is much more than simply adding different elements together. The retailer uses commonality in retail and entertainment, creates synergy, builds a strong brand image, and appeals to several target groups at one time. Space Ninety 8’s Brooklyn location provides shared retail space that span 5 floors, simultaneously hosting retailers, second-hand exchangers, galleries, yoga studios, and even a rooftop restaurant and bar. Space Ninety 8 provides such a vast variety of experiences that one can spend quality time there, having friends’ gathering with good food and beverage, wandering around to appreciate arts in the galleries, browsing through designer pieces with a glass of wine in hand. By reflecting the flexible nature of modern life by creating a versatile store that conflates social and retail space, Space Ninety 8 has perfected the art of retail-tainment and retail-lery. (Caramanica, 2014)

Wynwood in Miami is another case of successful “retail-lery”, whose scale is influential enough to turn around a distressed neighborhood. Developer and place-maker Tony Goldman turned 6 abandoned



warehouses into canvases of street art. The reborn mural walls and public open space enabled an artist chic area for hippy retail and restaurants. What is provided in the neighborhood is a rare collection of world-class street arts purposely customized to local culture, and an artist atmosphere of shopping and dining. Customer experiences here are distinctive, memorable, and worth sharing on social media. The Wynwood project sets a model for innovative art district. Its success was obvious, as the neighborhood was transformed from a dead place with only one restaurants, to a vibrant attraction with over 30 popular restaurants and numerous boutiques. (ULI, 2017)

Experiential retail can take the hybrid concept to the next level by including even more elements than arts and entertainment. The House of Vans, originally a sportswear retailer, maximizes its London flagship location to fit in fashion, entertainment, street culture, sport, music. Vans' 30,000 square feet buildings features concrete ramps remained from an abandoned tunnel. The ramps are turned into free skateparks, where skaters practice and perform, which fits Vans' brand image of street culture. The space is also used as unique event venues, music clubs, art galleries, independent cinemas, art galleries. These changing programs act as art incubator for artists to display their works. Each program attracts different customers, the pop-up nature creates a sense of scarcity that urges customers to come check out before the program calendar moves on. The flexibility also allows spontaneous socializing, which is the experience all participants will really remember. (Lowe, 2017)



*Mixed experiences of retail-tainment / retail-ery: having brunch at a fashion shop – Space 98 (left), eating with street arts – Wynwood Walls (middle), attending concerts in a sneaker shop – House of Vans (right)*

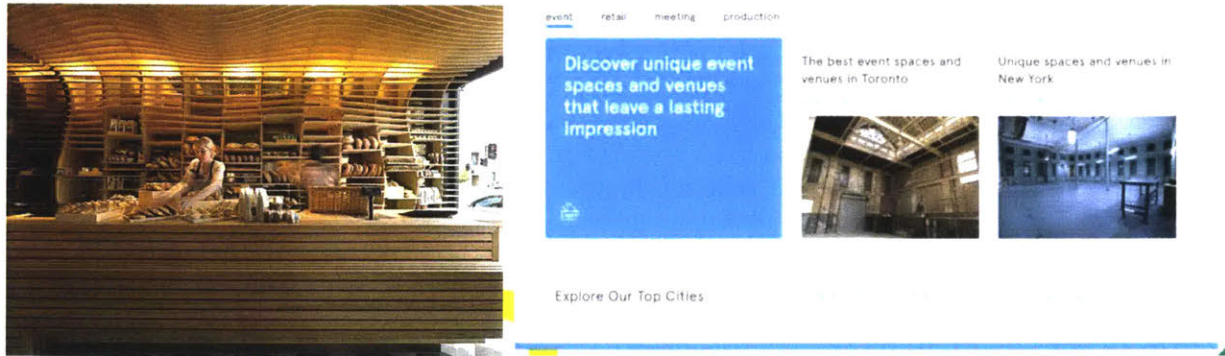
- Space: express brand message, unique story involved

The store space, as the stage for experiences, has important impact on the outcome. A unique store space is much more than interior design, but rather the essence of place-making. While retailers bear the burden of providing more innovative products, crossover branding strategy, mixture of activities, developer must work closely with the retail tenant to incorporate space design as part of experience strategy.

A single retail store can create special experience when the store architect goes out of his way to for the ambition to “sell more than just bread”. Interior design in the Australian bakery, Baker D.Chirico, strikes customers with its creativity and quality, and communicates part of the brand value in producing quality baked goods. The store interior is covered by wood texture and water-flowing shapes. The founder of the shop believes that effort shown in store design reflects how much they value product quality and customer experience. The store space shows that they see bakeries as art pieces that deserve to be presented in an artist fashion. Customers take photos of bakeries in front of sculpted wood, which makes bakery shopping experience more special. (Frearson, 2012)



The idea of incorporating unique space as part of experiential retail is also a sound business model itself. Examples include websites like *thisopenspace* and *peerspace*, which are the Airbnb equivalent for retail spaces. These websites see how unique space can add value to experiential retail and how retailers are interested in having pop-up shops under short-term leases. From urban lofts, art studios, to empty warehouses, the previously useless spaces become hot spots for experiential retail as they can do mix-and-match, pop-ups, special events in unexpected places and create socializing retail experiences. (Zubairi, 2017)



*Baker D.Chirico that sells bread and design (left), sharing economy model to fill-up unique spaces (right)*

House of Vans in London can deliver all sorts of experience with the ramp feature redeveloped from a vic tunnel and carrying a war time story. (Lowe, 2017) Eataly is not only innovative in cultivating a model that sells Italian lifestyle, it also spices up the grocer-restaurant experience by placing the experience in special space. Eataly in Torino Italy is located in what was originally a brewery factory. Eataly in Rome has unique space transformed from old airplane, old cruise ships, and old warehouses. (Parla, 2012) These spaces make customer experience unique and memorable. Eataly purposely places their quality lifestyle teaching in these renewed historic places, where customers can feel the quality of time, appreciate a “slow” lifestyle in contrast with today’s fast pace, which gives an escape to busy modern citizens.



*Warehouse style gives House of Vans (London, left) and Eataly (Rome, right) a unique experience*

#### 1.4 Conclusions about experiential retail

To conclude, retail transformation calls for special experiences irreplaceable by online shopping. Experiential retail can be enabled by digital implementation, distinctive brand uniqueness, mixing

activities, and special space. The building type and store space play a big part in creating unique experiences. The physical space is retail's opportunity to reinvent the standard traditional business model, differentiate from e-commerce, and use unique experience to attract customers.

The above experiential retail cases provide special in-store experiences in different ways. The methodologies may be different, but 5 consistent underlying elements can characterize successful customer experiences:

- **Interaction:** Experiential retailers ensure that all senses are connected – memories of what we feel, hear, see, smell, and touch, may last a lifetime.
- **Originality:** Ideas are all authentic and natural, making customers feel as if they have entered a different world.
- **Connectedness:** Customers must feel that the experience has been created for them. This can be done through the utilization of elements from previous visits, or design of products customized for niche tastes.
- **Unexpectedness:** Good surprises are critical to ensure positive memories about the brand.
- **Reliability:** The experience is executed through tested methods to achieve consistency and excellence. This is to ensure that the in-store experience strives and is sustainable.

## Chapter 2

### Adaptive reuse of historic buildings

Now that I summarized features of the experiential features in real estate products and usage programming, I am zooming in on the “place” attribute. In the Chapter 1 framework, an experiential place should be expressive of brand messages, and embodied with a unique story. Historic buildings play a unique role in telling stories of a space. A space with a story becomes a “place” of unique experience. In this chapter I will shift gear to focus on the specific building type that carries historic values, and examine how history evolves through preservation and redevelopment.

Historical buildings suitable for adaptive reuse include warehouses, churches, train stations, etc. If maintained in good conditions, these buildings have grand space suitable for many other purposes. Apart from building typology, intangible assets also reflect on the reuse program, either to keep the historic heritage or to contrast it. To examine these considerations more thoroughly, I discuss cases not limited to retail uses, but extended to all asset types including office, hotel, residential, and public uses.

One of the conclusions in Chapter 1 is that experience is a common trend in all asset types, and a force to merge different asset types for more variety. Following the same rational, I discover that historic experience is also suitable for several asset types, separately and collectively. Historic buildings are preserved for their architectural and cultural uniqueness, which contribute to unique experience not only within the building, but also to the city as a whole.

The magic match is that historic buildings call for new lives to continue the legend, as much as retail calls for regeneration. Experience is the bridge connecting old shells and new contents. The chemistry between architecture and real estate, culture and business, can be practiced and evaluate in the new lives of historic landmarks.

#### **2.1 The state of historic adaptive reuse: literature and interviews**

Since architecture is most valuable tangible asset of historic buildings, I sought for architects’ viewpoints on adaptive reuse. The literature review of this chapter is based on architecture journals and interviews with practitioners in signature landmark redevelopment projects.

Adaptive reuse is beneficial to both the building and the city in general. To the building, adaptive reuse saves significant costs by avoiding major time and financial consumption on demolition and new construction. Extra incentives include tax credits that can cover as much as 20% of the restoration work. (Henson, 2016) Less budget pressure gives more room for design innovation, especially with the rich materials and meanings provided in a historic context. Environment protection is another important save brought by adaptive reuse. Bypassing wasteful demolition and construction, the city and neighborhood is less disrupted since the most energy-consuming part is already embodied in the original structure. (Henson, 2016) Saving history collectively on a city scale is beneficial in terms of preserving intangible values, especially from an ideological and cultural perspective. By preserving historical buildings, developers can preserve what the locals are proud of. Such intangible asset gives the city a character. (Henson, 2016)

To understand better about the intrinsic value in historic buildings, I conducted interviews with two

industry practitioners for their perspectives on both the project level and the city level. Both interviewees have years of experience in city planning, architecture, and development. Visshan Chakrabarti, an MIT alum who once served under Mayor Bloomberg as the Director of the Manhattan Office for the New York Department of City Planning, generously shared his views on the value of historic buildings to developers and the city. His perspectives will be carried out by two New York City projects, which are further elaborated in the case studies about Penn Station's rebirth and the Domino Sugar project. The other interviewee, who may remain anonymous in this thesis, gave his views in a different city context. The different characters between Boston and New York are defined by each city's unique fabric, partially contributed by the preserved historic texture, and redeveloping approaches for adaptive reuse.

- Value to city:

As put by a Boston architect and planner, who remains anonymous, the most important value brought by historic buildings are the embodied stories. Like people's stories, buildings' stories define a city, gives differentiating characters, and avoids mediocracy. The stories set the backgrounds for why a particular building was designed in certain styles and placed in certain city blocks. A cluster of historic buildings tell the story about the evolvement of a neighborhood, including demographic changes, the involved industries, and relationship with other parts of the city.

Historic buildings are merely just old buildings, but rather buildings unique in a time frame over the life of a city. All architecture features, including ceiling height, column width, size and position of windows, all served for a purpose that only occurred in that time. While modern buildings may share similar styles globally, historic buildings at different times and in different locations have distinguishing designs individually. Therefore, the redevelopment process respects the uniqueness in history. As cities develop through time, modern buildings continue to add characters to the city, but in a clearly separate manner without confusing the city's heritage.

- Value to architecture:

Before I illustrate his perspectives in two cases below, Visshan Chakrabarti shared his views about architectural value in historic buildings. Since the majority of designated landmarks are in core city locations, energy and cost saving, as well as limiting disruptions are among the priorities.

The grandness articulated by classic architecture symbolizes openness and harmony, a message worth saving as part of civilization. It was especially stressed in his interview that every period in history is worth preserving. Even a bad part or a mistake should not be simply removed, because the architecture shows the layering in history. Adaptive reuse is more than preserving a past, but creating a future for the past, adding layers to show city's process of evolvement. The architectural redesign is a delicate art of balance, between creating a future and not overwhelming the past, between celebrating the history and leaving room for breathing.

## 2.2 The whys and hows of historic redevelopment

- The whys:

What is the building's historic value in terms of demonstrating a piece of history, or an era of the city? Why preserving the history, while new buildings can also serve the same uses? How is the experience different, between using a historic building and building new ones? What's the potential value of historic buildings to developer, tenant, consumer?

From the literature reviews and interview, we summarize value in historic adaptive reuse to be:

- Story value: the layering of history, no confusion, contrast show evolvement, preserving even the mistakes to show progression, story telling, uniqueness-characters of the city that differentiate horizontally and vertically, the civic pride
  - Value in cost saving and energy saving
  - Real estate value: higher rent because of uniqueness (convert intangible values to tangible), financial incentive because of tax credits.
- The hows:

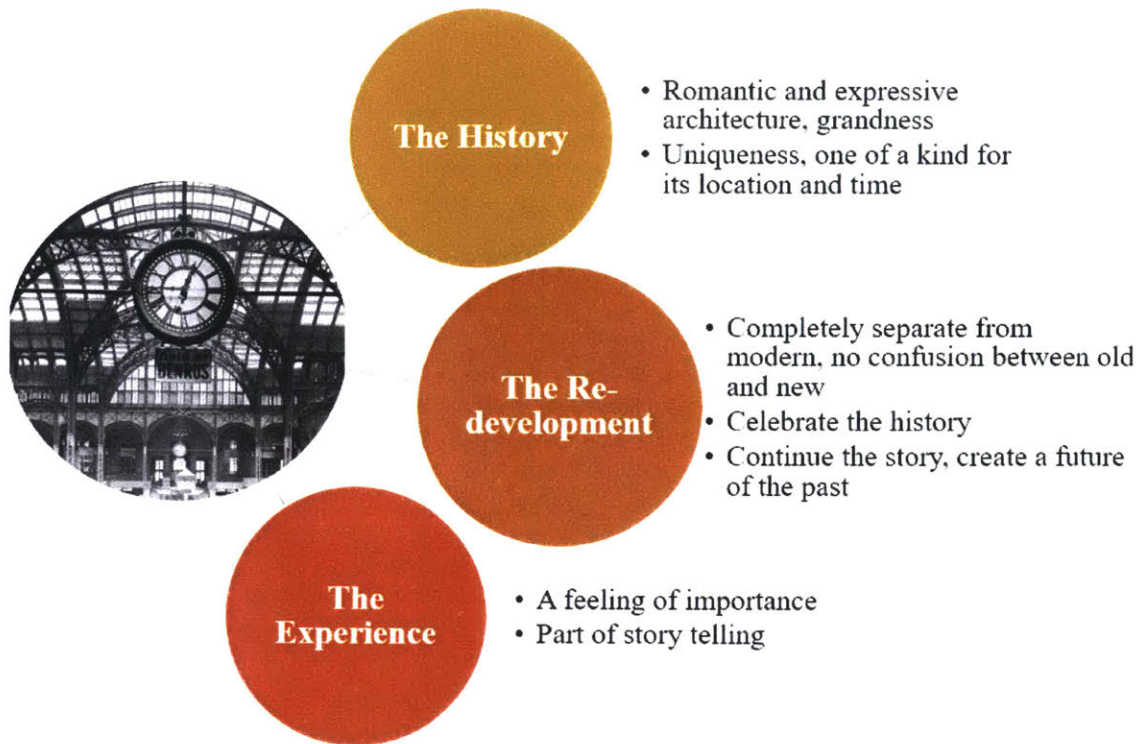
How to decide the most suitable use or design a compatible program for historical reuse? What are some factors of consideration when converting a historic building, i.e. building type, structure capability, market need, market trend, community relationship, profit? How does historic adaptive reuse differ from historic preservation, does it diminish the history or add value to it? How to balance between preservation and innovation? How do historic buildings contribute to user experience, especially to retail value vis-a-vis e-commerce?

Main discussions about historic adaptive reuse cases are focused on:

- The re-creation process to bring histories back to life: redevelopment takes both history and future into account. To find a program with the right fit, the developer needs to vision for the next several decades about related industry, market conditions, and the asset trend in the future. Dealing with existing building, it's important to examine building conditions and consider architectural values, including adaptivity of the typology, interaction with the historic fashion, the approach to contrast or to present the evolvement.
- Experience: the stories embodied in historic buildings are unique in time and place. The building may be fixed at one point, but the story doesn't freeze and carries on by future users. The dramatic expressive architecture and space make people feel important as part of a historic story. The unique experience appeals to architects and developers, provides value to consumer, tenants, and the city.

I hereby summarize an evaluation framework to study several historic adaptive reuse cases, to see their redevelopment approach and the experience evolved, to answer the whys and hows above.





*Framework of attributes in historic adaptive reuse (by author)*

### 2.2.1 Case 1: Penn Station, New York - Reclaiming a lost landmark

New York's Pennsylvania Station (Penn Station) is a key case for historic preservation and redevelopment. The rise and falls of Penn station tell the story of how in the past people learnt an important lesson from the loss of a landmark, and how in the future historic redevelopment may correct a mistake and bring a legend back to life.

Being the city's biggest regret, the demolition of the station in 1960s was a significant tipping point for the city to accelerate adopting the New York Landmark Preservation Law. Before then, zoning laws only monitored the new without considering the old. The loss of a landmark reminded planners to not only rush forward, but also look back in history. Even though the Preservation Law didn't get passed in time to save Penn Station, it saved Grand Central which was facing similar financial difficulty. The end of one landmark saved many more landmarks and gave birth to a new age of city development, where next episodes were to be built upon the respect towards histories, the old were to be preserved and incorporated into the new. (Maeder, 1998) Today upgrading actions to expand Penn Station are underway, and this time the new plan includes repurpose of existing structures. The lesson learnt from a mistake will eventually correct the mistake.

The Penn Station demolition and redevelopment case is presented chronologically and divided into three main stages: the rise, the fall, and the reborn. We will go through the story in detail, discussing

- The rise - what was once valuable and could have been preserved given the historic significance of Penn Station
- The fall - what caused the demolishment and how did the demolition change people's mindsets.

- The rebirth - we would then look into the upgrading proposal for Penn Station, when all the good and bad will not be erased but preserved as part of the evolving process. We will discuss both the redevelopment of James Farley Post Office that is underway, and a potential . 2 plan towards the end of Madison Square Garden's lease.

### 2.2.1.1 The rise and fall of the historic Penn Station

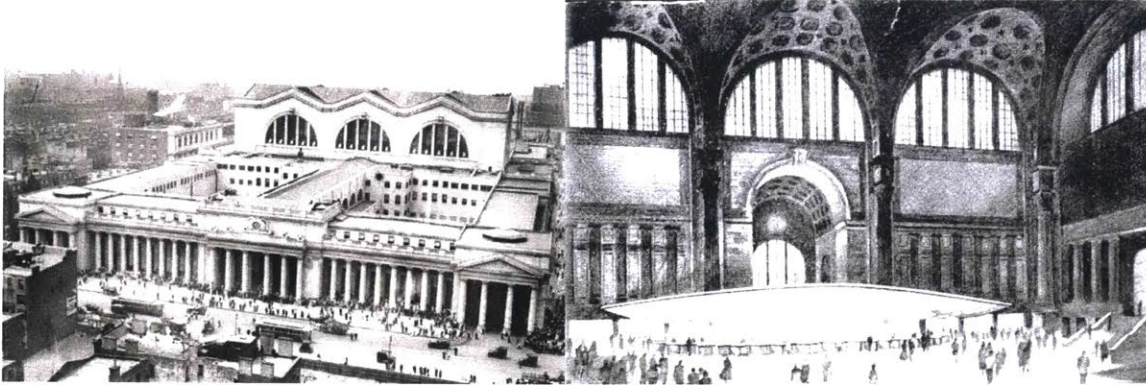
Almost all of New York would agree that the demolition, and even the abandon before the demolition, of Penn Station is such an architectural and cultural vandalism that it gave rise of Landmark Preservation Laws in the city. Revisiting the rise of the Penn Station, we can see what could have remained present if the station was preserved, which is also why historic preservation is valuable to a city's experience.

Penn station was a landmark not only as a showcase of high-quality architecture and great power of railways, but also as a marking point of an era of America's rapid growth. Under the leadership of Pennsylvania Railroad Company president Alexander Cassat, Penn Station was one of the largest private development for public use in history, symbolizing corporation rather than conflicts between public sectors and private enterprises. The historic importance also brought along emotional values to users of the station and the city. (MacLowry, 2014)

At the point in history prior to World War II, the Pennsylvania Railroad Project was the product of fast economic development and technology advancement. The station and tunnel project became jewel in the crown for Pennsy (short for Pennsylvania Railroad Company) as Cassat realized the grand vision of taking the world's largest railway company into the strongest wave in time. The construction of the underwater railway tunnel beneath the East River connected the last mile between Manhattan and the rest of New York, as well as the rest of the US. Bringing commuters into Manhattan from Queens and New Jersey, the power of railroad changed the demographic of Manhattan as a part of re-urbanization. The sprawling transportation connectivity gave opportunities to the outer boroughs, and strengthened Manhattan's leading status as the center of commerce. (MacLowry, 2014)

Penn Station had symbolic historic meaning beyond the power of railroad, but the impressive social responsibility singlehandedly taken on by a private enterprise. Pennsy built the first and largest, as well as the most complicated infrastructure project as the transportation hub of Northeast US, without any public subsidy. It was a \$50 million (\$1.2 billion in today's value) gift to the city, a grand gesture to show New York's ambition, to become the top fast-emerging city and center of the world. The financial strength and grand vision of Pennsy coming from the private sector showed a high level and economic strength and commercial power in America pre-war. Unfortunately, it was exactly the later failure at these advantageous aspects that brought down Penn Station. (MacLowry, 2014)

While the giant underground and underwater railway system marked significant progression in history, the architectural elegance of Penn Station impacted on New York culturally and emotionally. Charles Follen Mckim, the same architect for grand public projects like the Columbia University, inherited ancient Roman style for Penn Station in a modern context. The scale of the station was so enormous that even during construction time the site attracted visitors and attentions. The architecture design expressed New York's ambition to lead America, and America lead the world as the next super power after Roman Empire. When completed, Penn Station excelled in its task as the gateway impression of a top world-class city. The grandness and beauty translate into emotional values for tourists and commuters with a sense of positivity and pride. Penn Station was the subject in art and literature for its civic importance, as it did not make people feel comfortable; it made them feel important. (Ballom, 2014)



*The grand exterior and interior of the original Penn Station*

How a historic landmark like Penn Station makes a city stand out with its distinguishing historic and cultural value, and how that historic importance cultivates unique city experience, is precisely the value in historic preservation. This value was only realized when the experience was terminated by a devastating demolition.

While Pennsy's grand gesture was remarkable because of the power of railway and the corporation's financial strength, the decline of which happened in just a few decades and caused difficulty in maintaining the grand gesture. The cultural and emotional value of this landmark was present, but wasn't acknowledged by people until the station was removed and replaced by a structure carrying no such value.

What made Penn Station great once starts diminishing, the station was stuck in difficulties. Starting 195, Pennsy suffered financial loss due to improved affordability of air travel alternative and increased automobile travel thanks to the interstate highway system in that time. Besides declining railway business, Pennsy was bearing burdening cost to maintain Penn Station without having sufficient rent income in return. By the end of Penn Station's life, the station wasn't in good condition due to a lack of maintenance work. Pennsy must consider alternative plans to turn Penn Station into income-generating property.

All redevelopment proposals at the time included demolition of entire or part of the above ground structure. Since the train station doesn't produce rent to realize real estate value, even an automobile parking lot was economically more favorable. The historic or cultural value seemed to be undermined or purposely neglected, since the word "demolishment" was not explicit in public proposals to raise public attention. (Mooney, 2017)

Eventually Madison Square Garden became the successor of the above-ground portion of Penn Station, while the railway service continues underground. MSD purchased air rights with a winning bid of a mixed-use office building and sport event facility, which could take advantage of the commuting convenience. While the replacement plan made sense economically, there was no thoughts given to the architectural design. Replacing the grand hall by a non-characteristic enclosed design, railroad passengers were then entering and existing the city without seeing any natural light. "once entered kings and queens, now exit as rats". (MacLowry, 2014)

As the city lost a symbolic landmark, a few points were realized about the cultural importance of historical buildings:



- Cultural responsibility: The mindset of respecting and preserving history as it is:

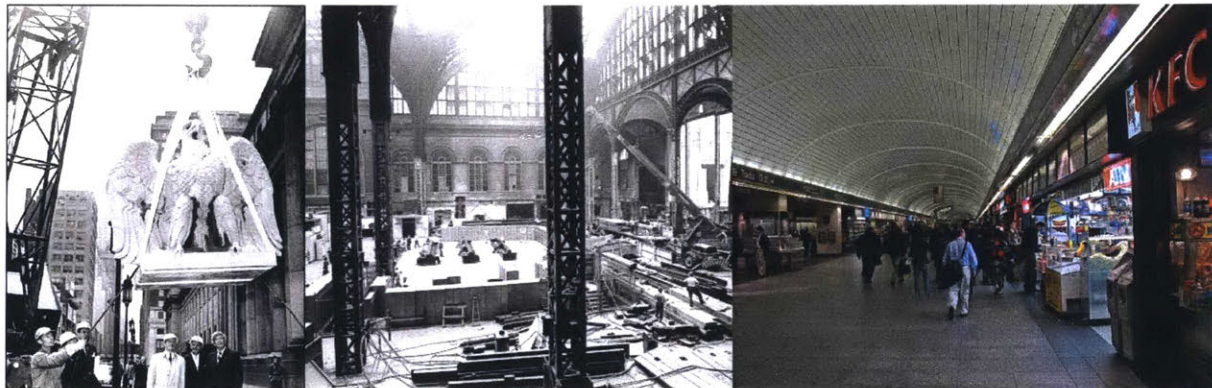
The historic significance of Penn Station was present but did not translate into financial returns, therefore not considered an option to save Pennsy's financial difficulty. What is considered essential to historic preservation today was exactly what was missing in the consideration of creating value out of a historic site – there was no alternative proposal other than demolition.

The commercial wave took away respect of history simply when the original use became outdated. Sustainability was overlooked with the neglect of the energy consumption and wasted cost in the process of tearing down and rebuilding. As how the zoning law was structured at the time (not concerning existing structure on the land), there was no looking back or flexible thinking, whereas looking straight forward on a blank slate was a natural thought.

Once the great stories were gone with the lost Penn Station, there remained no record about the rise of power of railway, the re-urbanization bringing prosperity to the inside and around Manhattan, New York's growth status at one point as it was climbing up the ladder of global impact. Always restarting with clean slate, a city's story was interrupted. Practical buildings under the sole purpose of economies could not continue the city's story telling without paying respect to the history. What caused the demolition was the missing mindset of saving what's valuable and utilizing what's available.

- Financial capability: incentive to preserve and reuse historic building

To establish these mindsets of using alternative solutions to utilize rather than demolition, efforts need to be spent in both public and private incentives. Public incentives can come in the form of permits, development rights, tax benefits, namely benefits that can be transacted or executed at dollar value. Private incentives come from real estate value appreciation due to historic uniqueness of building type or neighborhood atmosphere. Private incentives will be further elaborated in later case studies how unique historic characteristics add value to real estate.



*The demolition of the original Penn and the current Penn*

Although having the same ownership and financial difficulty, Grand Central was spared from the tragedy by the Landmark Preservation Commission that was quickly established after losing Penn Station. In a lost lawsuit brought by Penn Central (joint ownership of grand central) towards the city, a message was clearly sent to developers and historic property owners that proposals to improve financial performance must be built upon respect to the original historic presence.

The case highlights two arguments about development rights:



- Air rights can be transferred to other sites to provide the same financial return without tearing down or stacking upon historic building. This is alternative thinking incentivized by the public sector, so that financial returns can be realized elsewhere.
- Not only historic exterior must be maintained, it also should not be overwhelmed by the new structure. This shows a higher level of respect concerning the quality of preservation.

The Grand Central case presented strong arguments that urged developers to think of alternative ways to utilizing existing structure rather than simply tearing it down. Note that the case was brought to court when Pennsy was still facing bankruptcy even after replacing Penn Station with MSG. Court's judgement affirmed the importance of preserving history, after learning a lesson that losing a landmark and aggressively building new do not solve financial difficulties.

Although Penn Central nominally lost, the historic owner was still compensated and incentivized to maintain the historic structure. Eventually, the Metropolitan Transportation Authority assumed responsibility and restored it at public expense, which was what Penn Central contended for to begin with. Landmark Preservation Commission continues to protect some 1,000 individual landmarks and 72 historic districts that encompass another 21,000 buildings. (Dunlap, 2015)

### 2.2.1.2 Rebirth I: adaptive reuse of the Farley Post Office

Looking into the future, there's an opportunity to correct the mistake and to upgrade Penn Station for better experience and bigger capacity. When it once appeared to be a declining trend for railway transportation, today Penn Station continues to serve more passengers than JFK Airport, La Guardia Airport and Newark Airport combined. As the train station structure becomes dated and out of capacity, there is an opportunity to upgrade and build something new on a rich historical foundation. Decades after Landmark Preservation was introduced here, this time redevelopment plans will make the new Penn Station a viable, non-suffocating project that celebrates the rises and respects the falls in the history. Progress is underway to redevelop James Farley Post Office, which sits across 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue from the current Penn Station. The converted Farley building will be a mixed-use property including a railway terminal and 700,000 square feet of commercial, retail, and dining venues. (Bagli, 2014)



*Exterior of James Farley Post Office today (left) and rendering of the future Farley-Penn Station (right), Rendering: Courtesy of Skidmore, Owings & Merrill (SOM)*

Studying the building typology is among the initial considerations for historic adaptive reuse. Originally built as a fortress out of security considerations for a post office, the Farley building is a rather enclosed



structure that do not communicate to street level. The center courtyard will have transformed to an arrival hall with glass ceilings, whose enclosed structure gives a sense of safety for passengers. The surrounding buildings will be adapted to retail and commercial usage, which acts as the connecting bridge between the station and the city vibe.



*The section plan (left) and interior rendering (right) of the future Farley-Penn Station  
Rendering: Courtesy of Skidmore, Owings & Merrill (SOM)*

The division gives priority to the public usage of transportation and makes commercial programs as supporting uses. The priority is a clear distribution of commuters and travelers, while retail is pushed to the sides to not distract the travelers. Similar division can be seen in the Oculus Station at World Trade Center, the retail part of which is suffering from low occupancy and low efficiency, but the monumental spirit is grandly celebrated by a pure white architectural piece. There are other cases of successful transit-oriented retail, but experiential retail adapted from historic redevelopment will be elaborated later. In the case of Farley-Penn Station, the architectural re-creation successfully inherits the spirit of historic adaptive reuse. (Warekar, 2017)

The financial capability in the Farley-Penn project will be achieved by efforts from both the public and private side. The developers, railway companies and the city will form a model of public-private partnership to obtain funding for the project. The project will be financed by federal funds, the transmission of unused air rights, and the creation of a redevelopment revenue. (Bagli, 2014)

### **2.2.1.3 Rebirth II: alternative and complementary plan of Madison Square Garden**

As the Farley building goes through reformation but only covers 20%-25% of commuters, Penn Station still urgently needs a capacity upgrade at its current location. While waiting for Madison Square Garden to finish the lease and relocate, there are different proposals about what's the solution to the overcrowdings. (Kimmelman, 2016) Some recreates the Roman style masterpiece to restore the original masterpiece, some maintains MSD's structure to once again retain part of history. (Higgs, 2017)

It's interesting to look at a volunteer plan proposed by Visshan Chakrabarti at New York Times' invitation. This alternative plan preserves MSD's round structure even though it is not designated as landmark preservation. Years after historic preservation fill in the gap and become an established mindset, Penn Station would no longer remain a regretful piece of evidence, but nor should that story be re-written completely.

Both right and wrongs are part of the truth that's telling a complete story and is worth saving. Starting



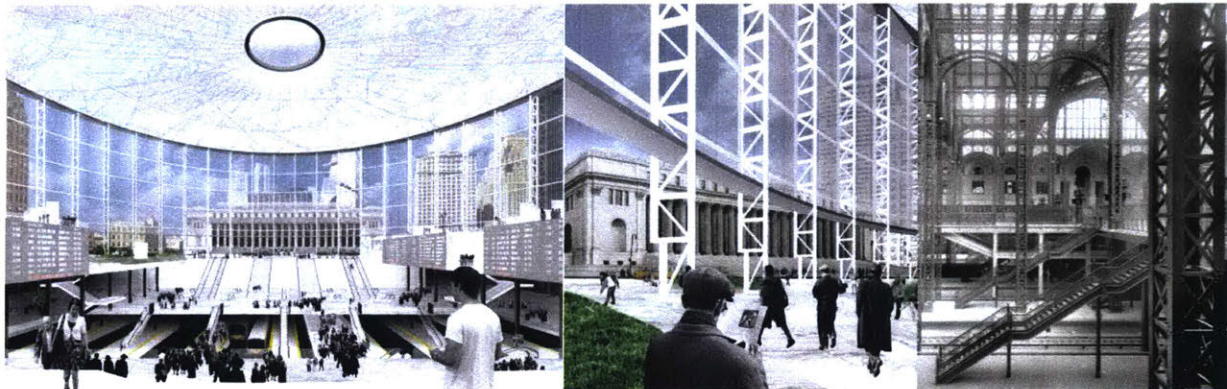
new from completely clean slate is the old mindset that led to the demolition of original Penn Station, this mindset has been changed over the years applying Landmark Preservation Laws. Preserving the MSG structure and redesigning the drawbacks into useful advantages, the redevelopment plan preserves layers of histories, both good and bad. Having the presence of architectural structures from different times, and utilizing the structure by incorporating modern uses, the depth of history in this region is thickened. The progress of recognition and understanding is presented by layers of histories.

Visshan's approach is to respect the history by not simply erasing any part of it, either good or bad. Besides, the grand round shape at a magnificent scale symbolizes harmony, a message suitable for a transportation hub. (Kimmelman, 2016)

In our framework about value for historic preservation, an historic structure embodies story value and energy value. Keeping the structure and changing the mistake to something meaningful, is part of story-telling. Saving time and energy of demolition and reconstruction, there would be less disruption to railway operations and to the neighborhood.



*The alternative plan to preserve the round structure of MSD, rendering (left) vs. status quo (right)  
Rendering: Courtesy of Practice for Architecture and Urbanism (PAU)*



*The grand arrival hall utilizing the round structure (left),  
The same column style in tribute to that of the original Penn Station(right)  
Rendering: Courtesy of Practice for Architecture and Urbanism (PAU)*

The alternative plans for expanding Penn Station is currently on-hold, as a potential second phase of the Farley-Penn project. Similar to Farley-Penn, the alternative plan needs to form public-private partnership for financial feasibility.

### 2.2.2 Case 2: Faneuil Hall Marketplace, Boston - Continuing tradition

Having gone through redevelopment several times over the course of over centuries, Faneuil Hall has a rich history that not only honors the city of Boston, but also significant moments in the American history. Studying the redevelopment history of Faneuil Hall unfolds the process of historic evolution, and each time period is preserved in certain ways as part of the building.

With the original market use mostly maintained and timely adjustment to update tenants, the preservation and continuous development of Faneuil Hall Marketplace demonstrates the rationale of why and how historic projects contribute to the city's experience. Faneuil Hall Marketplace was a pioneer redevelopment project in its time to introduce a new type of retail in an old building. Unique experiences are enabled by two sets of features:

- Place, that is the substance of the place and the story articulated by the substance
- Programming, that is the floorplan layout and merchant selections

The case study will answer the questions following the why-how framework:

- The why
  - What's the historic story of this building?
- The how
  - Recreation process: What was the examination in a redevelopment proposal to invent a festival market out of a previous meat market?
  - Unique experience: How did the historic features of Faneuil Hall tell part of the story and how does that story relate to customer experience?

Originally built as a marketplace, Faneuil Hall has gone through several expansions. This section will focus on the changes after the 1950s, when the building program remained as a marketplace, but the retail mix was upgraded. The redevelopment after 1950s examined several major considerations, including market need, adaptability of building typology, and suitedness of the new program.

- Market Needs:

In the 1950s, there was a neighborhood redevelopment project in Boston's West End that did not work out well. Bearing a similar mindset as Pennsy about "progressing on a blank slate", the Boston Planning Authority was initiating a "New Boston" project that would turn West End to a luxury housing district by wiping out the old. Similar to the loss of Penn Station, the West End clearance project reminded people of the precious cultural value that could have been preserved by historic buildings. When the time came to call for redevelopment proposal for Faneuil Hall, the public was strongly against demolition. A balance needs to be reached between the highest-best-use of the downtown waterfront location, and the public will to preserve the existing structure and curate a characteristic atmosphere in downtown Boston. (Boston Landmarks Commission, 1994)

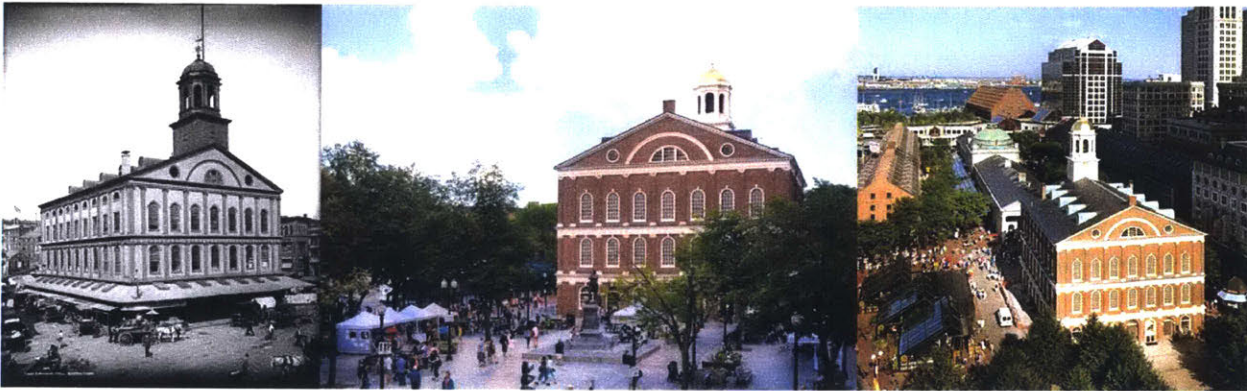
If not luxury housing, what is the highest-best-use of the downtown area that needs major cosmetic changes. The original use of meat market was considered too low-standard and Boston could use some vibrant and interactive programs to activate the downtown area for better city branding. Between historic values and economic values, Ben Thompson (the later lead architect for Faneuil Hall redevelopment) decided that preserving the declining historic structure simply for monumental purposes was not worthwhile. (Boston Landmarks Commission, 1994) Adaptive reuse of Faneuil Hall needs to be income-producing, welcomed by the public, inheriting city's history, bringing characteristics and sentimental values to shape Boston as a chic cosmopolitan.



- Building typology:

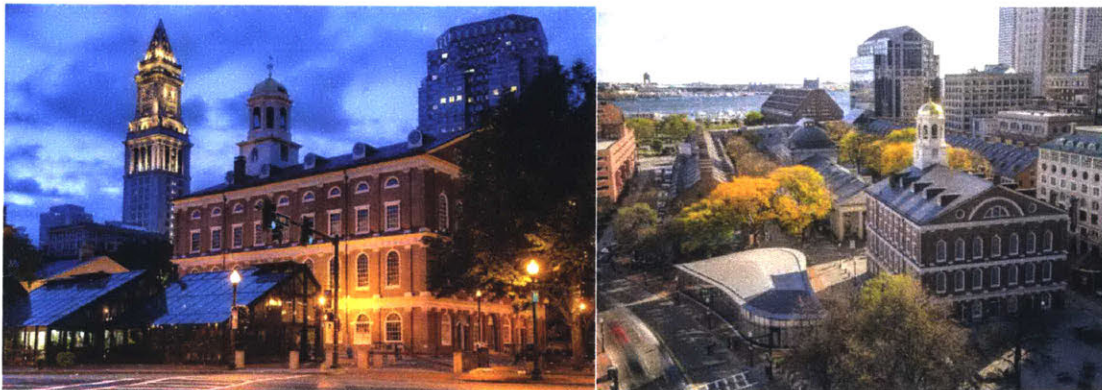
Faneuil Hall is a unique piece of architecture, for its special linear shape, and for its typology that blends with the neighborhood fabric. Different from almost any other cities in America, Boston acts as the history carrier for the nation. The fabric of the city is composed of delicate small streets that has deeper meaning and modest subtlety. Each building and each street existed as the way it is for a reason. Taking out an entirety of Faneuil Hall's scale and building ground-up will not fit in the historic fabric the same way as the original.

Faneuil Hall has a unique linear shape that calls for special attention. The building shape was designed for a market place, features like a long hall, small individual stalls, and shallow store space make the structure hard to adapt to modern retail or commercial uses. During its latest tenant upgrade, many potential tenants were rejected because they request to add external structure to expand the space. Exterior change is especially delicate for Faneuil Hall, not only because of the texture of the exterior wall but also due to the building shape.



*Faneuil Hall Marketplace keeping the same form and program throughout its history*

Then, what can be done to adapt the project to modern use and to increase capacity? Additional new structures are located completely separate from the historic part, and built in a vastly different modern style. While the MSG proposal “adds layers to history”, the Faneuil Hall redevelopment process insist on building new as new, and keeping old as old, so as to distinguish the layers and cause no confusions.



*Keeping modern additions and historic building separate and avoiding confusion*

- Program:

Faneuil Hall redevelopment thesis focuses on the marketability and viability of the program. A marketplace can be most easily transformed to a new market selling different merchants. Meanwhile the linear and rigid walls conflict with modern retail's needs to loudly and constantly advertise itself. Because the original retail use was maintained, the place-making in the setting of a marketplace was more coherent.

Adapting the same scale for same usage but different content, it's like in statistics regression, keeping one fixed constant and see changed in the variables. The tenant changes over the course of Faneuil Hall's existence, from meat dealers, to food hall, to fast fashion, illustrates different shopping needs over time, from necessities to experiences. The change in market content also tells the change of demographic and urban function in the area, the change of urban lifestyle. What makes Faneuil Hall special is the stress on local merchants over national chains.

- The Experience:

Everything about Faneuil Hall was maintained one-of-a-kind, including the symbolic historic value, the unique building type from its origin, and local merchants that are only available here. Such uniqueness contributes to consumer experience that continues Faneuil Hall's popularity as experiential retail, and competitiveness against online retail.

The linear building shape and small stalls originally designed for butchers, only designed this way for the specific use at a specific time, one-of-a-kind, the existence of typology is the live showcase of how the city changes over time. History to a city is like stories to a person. What differentiates one city to another is the story that tells the evolution of the city, just like how every person is unique given where he/she comes from. Historic uniqueness contributes to consumer experience by incorporating story telling as part of the activity. Eating and shopping in a place once sold groceries and raw food shows a heritage of the city legend.

### **2.2.3 Case 3: Domino Sugar Project, New York City - Industrial adaptive reuse**

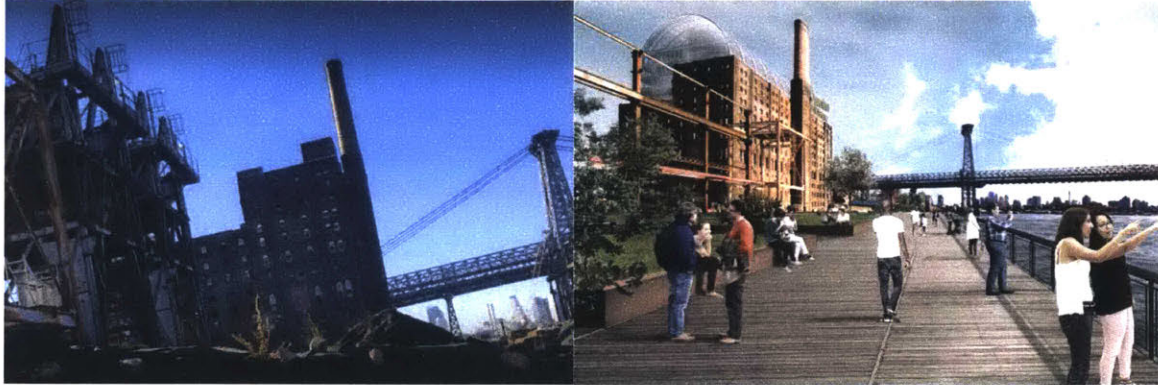
The redevelopment of Domino Sugar site is a masterplan project in Brooklyn, the scale of which will transition the industrial waterfront of Williamsburg to a trendy mixed-use neighborhood. The New Domino create more open space to utilize the waterfront, taller and creative buildings for residential and commercial uses, street-level experience spaces that are not big box retailers. Since most of the industrial leftovers are not in good shape to be preserved, it is left to the refinery building to carry the responsibility of historic heritage. (Dalley, 2013)

Adaptive redesign for the refinery building is challenging, in terms of defining New Domino's personality while having a weak structure to work with. The remaining exterior of the refinery building sets the tone for historic fabric of the area, while the center of the building needs some innovative makeover. Although grand and romantic, a drawback of industrial leftover is its unsuitability for modern use and challenge on de-engineering. The mission impossible is to "move from apparently intractable problem to apparently inevitable solution". (Warerkar, 2017)

The design went through a major change during the redevelopment process. What was once set to be a boxy glass topper, is redesigned to be a separate glass box building within the original building. The unsuitable layouts are unaligned floor levels are scraped out, with only the exterior preserved as historic

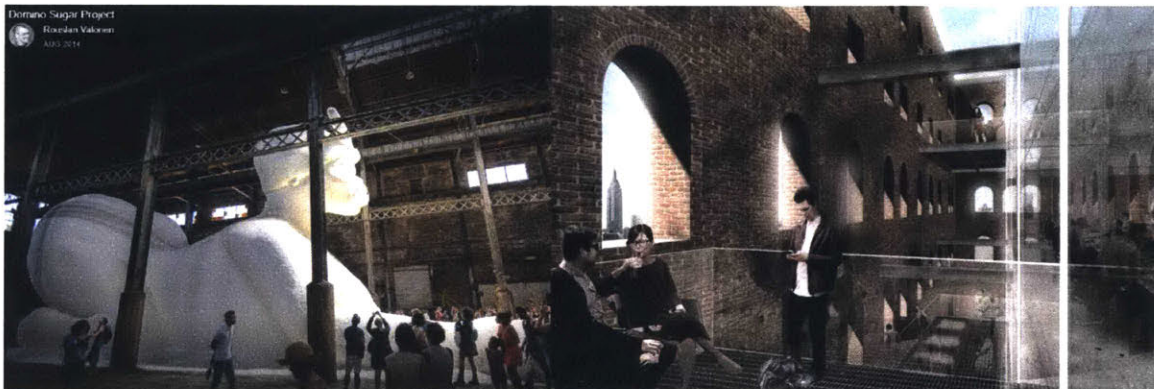


identity. This dramatic redesign is a nod to American Round Arch Style, used as a model for the original design of the sugar factory. (Warekar, 2017) The building-in-building structure floor provides unique office experience: full window on every floor, sun and rain pouring down right in front of you, almost like experiencing the ancient Roman Colosseum. A bold design and strong contrast upgrades the office experience to be one of a kind.



*The remaining exterior of the refinery building (left) and a rendering of the redesign plan (right)*

As commented by David Lombino, the managing director of developer, the redesign honors and highlights the landmark, provides a mix-and-match office experience, as well as preserving a piece of New York's history. (Warekar, 2017) As Visshan Chakrabarti explained in a side note to the Penn Station interview, redesigning historic buildings is “not to dazzle, not to fix, but to reveal what’s recorded in history and move it forward”. Adopting Visshan’s vision, historic adaptive reuse tells a story about the future of the past. An organic evolving story is part of the historic experience.



*Unique mixed experience from collaborating nature, industry, and history*

The transformation of Domino Sugar site shows that history is the differentiator that makes real estate less like a commodity, but a unique creation that has meaning and depth. With the right redesign that continues the historic story contrasts and innovation, the New Domino provides unique experience in all spectrum, across different asset types. To diversify the experience throughout different stages of the master plan, the refinery building displayed huge art installation before construction. The contrast between rough industrial ruin and modern art, and the creation of art genes for the building’s future story, are clearly appreciated by creative tenants, who are willing to pay higher rents. (Plitt, 2016)

#### 2.2.4 Case 4: Hearst Tower, 550 Madison Avenue, New York - Office adaptive reuse

Due to its central location, core office redevelopment largely impacts on street experience and neighborhood vibe. We will look at two New York Midtown cases in comparison: Hearst Tower and 550 Madison Avenue.

The adaptive design of Hearst Tower is explicitly demonstrating layering of history: an innovative diagonal grid modern structure sitting on top of a six-story base of historic cast stone building. Showing the interface of historic base shell and modern structures, the interior of the main lobby is designed to be a vast internal plaza and serves as “urban living room”. (Foster, 2016) The urban living room takes up the entire space within the historic base, the experience is authentic, contrasting, but enclosed. The bold entrance impresses users from inside but is rejective on the outside.



*Hearst Tower in 1928 (left) vs. 2006 (middle), and interior of the historic base (right)*

550 Madison Avenue with the iconic postmodern Chippendale top is receiving makeover to upgrade its public, retail, and office spaces. The theme of the change is to “open-up”, by transforming its "fortress-like base" with glass curtain walls, remaining the recognizable top but upgrading the transparency. (Howarth, 2017)

The fortress style building is a reflection of its use in its time – a landmark financial headquarter that’s rejective at street level. Today the experiential trend in office transformation requires street-level activation. The glass façade “stitches the life of the building back into the street”, while increased open space doubles the amount of public accessibility. (Rosenberg, 2017) The transparency and accessibility of the lower floors provide more opportunities for restaurants and shops, and multiple tenants for the building. The history of the building sets the origin of the story, and the contradiction between glass and fortress makes an interesting experience.





*The status quo (left) vs. the brighter and lighter future of the fortress-like 500 Madison*

### 2.2.5 Case 5: The High Line, New York - Residential neighborhood

The transformation of the High Line is not about a single residential property. The urban redevelopment of a public project transformed Chelsea's industrial vibe into artsy neighborhood, which creates high residential value, translated from the cultural authenticity of a former manufacture and transportation area (Rothenberg & Lang, 2017). The value-add part done by retail anchor Chelsea Market will be further discussed in Chapter 3.

Originally an elevated railway track, the High Line has a physical shape that can act as a ribbon connecting several aesthetic experiences, including park, museum, art gallery, retail, creative office, and trendy apartments. On an ideology level, the High Line is also a ribbon that connects several pieces of history. History turns into stories. Story gives a purpose for visit. Visitors enjoy aesthetic experience inherited from the history. The physical presence of the High Line resembles to what we discussed in Chapter 1, where retail acts as the thread that connects a mix of programs to strengthen experiences.

Partly influenced by the nearby SOHO area, the meatpacking district threaded through by the High Line also has an artistic atmosphere after local industry diminished. The art anchor New Whitney Museum of American Art brings a contrast between old and new, industry and art. The New Whitney sets an artistic tone and leads to more variety of art galleries and auction houses. Trendy and expensive apartments come next, after a high-end tasteful neighborhood is curated surrounding a historic piece for public space. The art anchor also attracts organic growth of local merchants in the field.



History plays a differentiating role in the process of evolution. The rise and fall of railway transportation, along with the industries relying on railroads for transportation, provides meaningful cultural materials to the creation of “Chelsea Phenomenon”. Art is Chelsea’s selling point to both public and private sectors. The High Line provides a purpose for visit, not for consumption, even though retail and residential consumption are inevitable once you arrive. The redevelopment of an elevated park makes financial sense, for its effect to increase property value and tax revenue, and branding effect that identifies the attractive area-special experience.

Within the residential asset type, history itself is not for sale, but historic experience curates a neighborhood that has characters, positions differently, attracts users of all asset types who hold similar values in life-hence a community.



*Vertical comparison: The High Line as NYC Railroad's West Side Line in 1934 (up) vs. connecting public park in 2017 (down)*

*Horizontal comparison: in different times, highline's changing relationships with the neighborhood (left), the surrounding properties (middle), the city in general (right)*

### **2.2.6 Conclusions about historic redevelopment and adaptive reuse**

Historic landmarks are worth preserving for their symbolic meanings about the city in specific times. Historic redevelopment is to carry out story values (history enriched over time), energy efficiency and cost saving values. Combining stories and unique space that was one-of-a-kind in history, historic adaptive reuse enables unique experience in all asset types, especially retail-oriented ones. The unique historic experiences stimulate users' feeling and engage their emotions. The experience that has been



inherited from history will continue to be enriched overtime. Use the extended retail scope in Chapter 1 and create program mix that matches the unique story, historic redevelopment provides more potential for experiential retail.

To summarize the cases in a matrix:

|                                 | Historic Value   |  | Adaptive Reuse  |   |   |
|---------------------------------|--|--|---|---|---|
|                                 | <i>Symbolic Meaning</i>  | <i>Redevelopment story</i>   | <i>Unique typology</i>  | <i>Building recreation</i>  | <i>Experience uniqueness</i>  |
| <b>Pennsylvania Station</b>     | Economic progression with the great power of railways, New York's tipping point for landmark preservation. | Show respect to rise and fall of landmarks, document the right and wrong in history.                               | Original post office built as fortress, MSG's round structure.                    | Stress on the grandness of space, incorporat public and retail uses, preserve layers of history.                          | Feel important and confident upon arrival in NYC, educational with a historic lesson.                       |
| <b>Faneuil Hall Marketplace</b> | One of the first marketplace in the country, pioneer experiential retail in history.                       | Stay consistent with Boston's city texture, keep the original retail program, continue focus on local merchants.   | Linear master building shape, small individual stands.                            | Celebrate historic features, no confusion between the old and new.  | One-of-a-kind retail experience in where it all started, trace the country's oldest history.                |
| <b>Dominos Sugar Refinery</b>   | Industrial heritage in Brooklyn.   | Maintain only the historic exterior, redevelop interior with innovative material, space, and experiential program. | Romantic expressive industrial design, iconic chimney, American Round Arch Style. | Building-in-building, strong contrast between modern and old, glass and brick, bring nature inside.                       | Feel the change of Brooklyn, experiential office space interacting with history and nature.                 |
| <b>Hearst Tower</b>             | The first "green" high-rise office building completed in New York.   | Modern addition built upon historic base shell, strong contrast to show progression in building technology.        | Fortress base, cast stone building material, heavy and light at the same time.    | Use internal open space on base floors for foundation of new building, urban living room for commuters.                   | Feel important and confident upon arrival, natural light in big building, witness history.                  |
| <b>550 Madison Avenue</b>       | Postmodernism icon with Chippendale top.   | Revamp a historic symbol of economic wellness by tributing and upgrading.  | Iconic Chippendale top representing a historic trend.                             | Open up the fortress style to activate street level.  | Feel included on street level, participate as part of history   |
| <b>The High Line</b>            | Industrial heritage and artistic makeover in Chelsea.  | Connecting neighborhood, curate art atmosphere, preserve railway memories of the city.                             | Elavated railway, connecting buildings and blocks on the second level.            | Keep train tracks for history, turn into public park to improve invironment, use historic depth to curate community vibe. | Witness the economic growth and urban changes of the city, be in an artistic area with character and taste. |

## Chapter 3

### Experiential retail in historic buildings

After studying experiential retail and historic redevelopment cases respectively, I see commonality between the two sets of characteristics. Experiential retail focuses on place-making, uses physical existence to curate unique atmosphere, and tells interesting stories to engage customers for in-person experiences. Meanwhile, the unique stories embodied in historic buildings are attractive experiences that enhance physical retail. Chapter 1 and 2 lead to this chapter, about the match between experiential retail and historic redevelopment.

In this chapter, I summarize two sets of characteristics of experiential retail (Chapter 1) and historic redevelopment (Chapter 2), then merge the them into one hybrid framework. The merge of two trends in real estate products leads to a unique creation of experiential retail within historic context, where unique stories are told and physical experiences are strengthened.

The hybrid framework is elaborated with two types cases about experiential retail in historic buildings: 1) single-type retail with experiential factors strengthened in historic settings, for instance food markets; 2) “all-in-one” retail that combines multiple programs to create all-round experience, utilizing specific historic stories for the site.

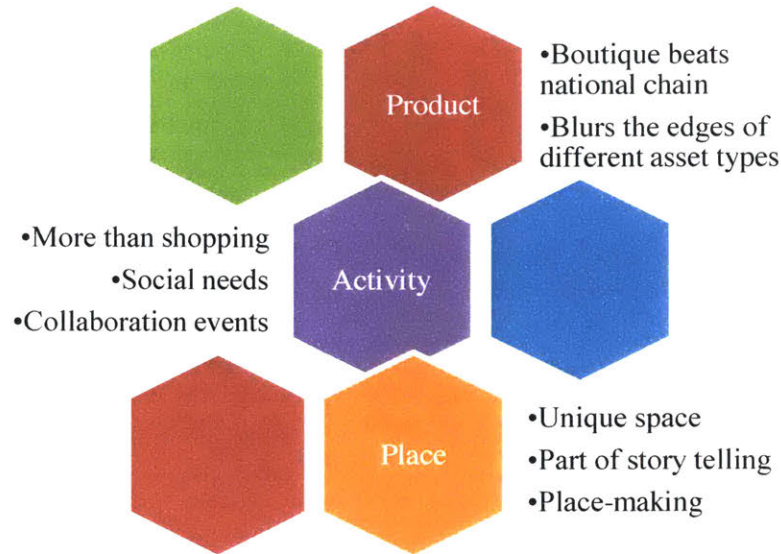
Under the extended conceptual scope of retail, a mixture of several programs shares common user groups and uses the correlation to intensify experiences. There are more varieties added to the traditional retail asset type. Under the experience-oriented trend, retail is leaning towards mixed-use, merging related asset types to create an interesting mixture of experiences. Another way to look at the new scope of retail is that retail acts the thread that links various asset types and merges them into a mixed-use type for intensified experiences. In this chapter, I use three cases to discuss why historic redevelopment is particularly suitable for “all-in-one” experiential retail.

The case studies focus on the creation of experiential retail, both the programming “software” and the historic shell as the “hardware”. We will explain the stories behind those historic buildings, their past and future, what’s the uniqueness and what experience does the story entail. The cases will be evaluated based on property background, redevelopment design, experience evolved, and continuous impact.

#### 3.1 A merged concept

Reviewing the two frameworks from Chapter 1 and 2:





*Chapter 1 framework: the main attributes of experiential retail (by author)*

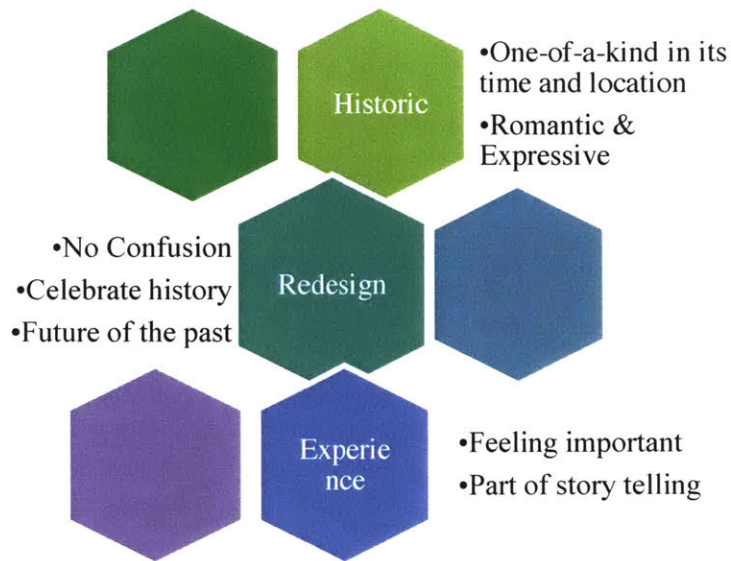
Experiential retail emerges under the impact of online shopping. While standard shopping needs are taken over by e-commerce, physical retail evolves to emphasize on what's irreplaceable in physical existence, those that are one of a kind, that must be experienced in person.

Physical retail is a survival game now, which requires unique “fit” between what consumers are looking to do offline and what physical places have to offer. (Williams, 2017) The pressure from e-commerce pushes physical retail to a unique position: to sell products that aren't standardized, to offer a variety of experiences that encourage in-person participation, to provide venues for social needs. Customers, or rather experiencers, are interested to do not just one thing, but to spend time doing several things, and to stay for a while. The places tell stories, encourage in-person participation, and engage consumers into the stories as part of place-making.

$$\textit{Place} = \textit{Space} + \textit{Story}$$

Place-making is a people-centered approach in curating a space with stories, which creates emotional bonds between people and the space. (Molavi, Mardoukhi, Jalili, 2016) When making a place, the physical brick-and-mortar is not a disadvantage that's disrupted by online technology, instead it's the advantage that draws visits. The key of place-making in the expansive retail world is to tell a story with a unique space. Stories are about uniqueness, such as boutique branding, mixing a hotel/restaurant/theatre etc. in one building, providing “instagramable” moments to fulfill social needs both online and offline.

Telling the story in a unique space makes the place memorable. Now let's turn to review Chapter 2 to see what's unique about historical spaces.



*Chapter 2 framework: the main attributes of historic redevelopment (by author)*

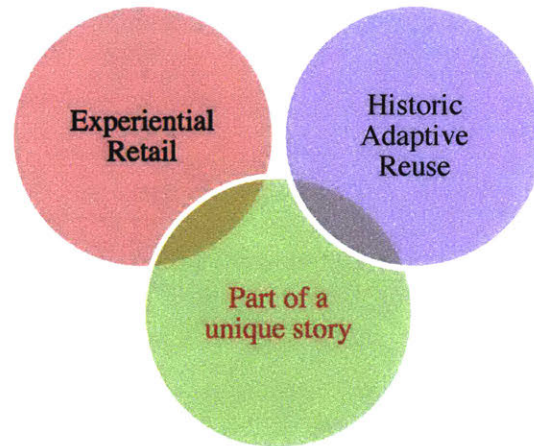
When examining historic redevelopments for adaptive reuse, I look at the past and future of the historic buildings, the contrast or harmony of which provides unique stories and define the place. The framework in Chapter 2 evaluates the historic importance of the building itself, the redesign process that celebrates the history and reinvents a future of the past, and the end-product that provides a unique experience and tells a unique story. Historic buildings are part of a city's story, which is carried forward by restoration or redevelopment.

Back to the formula "place=space + story", historic places are unique in each factor of the equation. For historic buildings, the brick-and-mortar is not a burden, but the essence of an asset. Building styles and architecture details originated from specific historic reasons mark the buildings to be one of a kind. Historic architecture has location and time specific features, contrary to modern designs that follow the same trend wherever in the world. While modern designs follow the rule of simplicity, historic buildings usually have romantic and expressive styles, whose delicate details provide lots of ingredients for modern interpretation and digestion.

The rich past in a historic building adds flavors to the story and provides base material for redesign logic. The stories carried forward in historic buildings are what new buildings don't have: the "soul". The historic story and soul are experiential with its uniqueness and romance. User experiences with a building's "soul" differs from other retail experiences, as users are drawn to be part of story-telling.

Now I merge the two sets of characteristics to find out the commonality:





*Chapter 3 framework: the match between experiential retail and historic redevelopment (by author)*

Both experiential retail and historic redevelopment stress on “story-telling”. Experiential retail tells stories with innovative collection of products and activities. The building substance and redevelopment process transform historic buildings to modern uses, involve users to be part of a unique story.

How does history strengthen retail experiences? Battling online retail, experiential retail must embrace consumers’ changing appetite, and historic buildings are useful weapons. As analyzed in Chapter 1, consumers and subsequently retailers gravitate to either the discount and off-price sectors or luxury. (Williams, 2017) Historic experience are not only luxurious, but also unique. Historic experiences create a special type of luxury with a niche fit: the heart and soul of history that sculpt a building with craftsmanship, and differentiate from commodities.

What experiential retail calls for is exactly what historic buildings have to offer and better: a unique story. Historic story is something what old buildings that can’t be recreated by new buildings, a soul. (Lee, 2017) Being part of an important historic story, in combination with the intensified experience with boutique-like products and various activities, retail customers are impressed by the upgraded version of brick-and-mortar.

### **3.2 Food markets transformed**

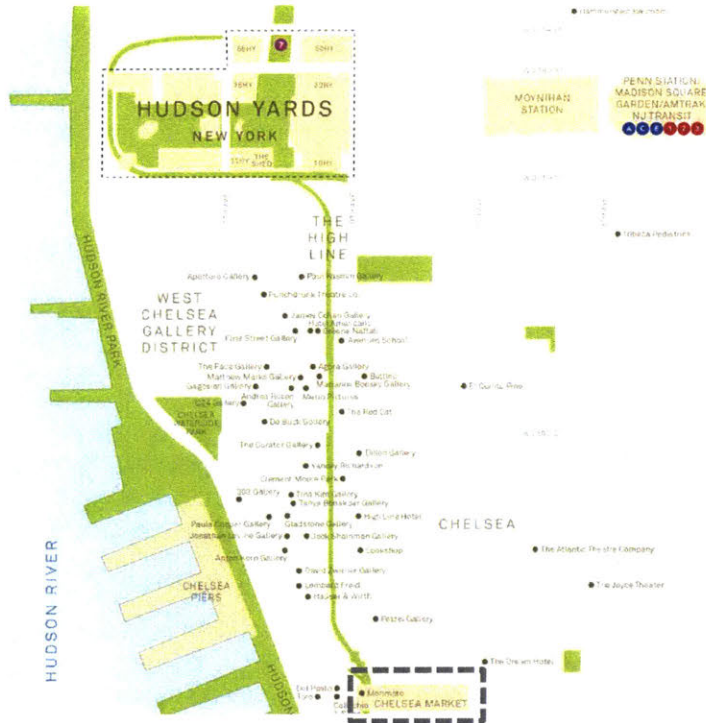
Let’s start with simpler cases before retail gets more complicated with the add-ons. For all the cases, we go through three stages of analysis:

- The History- what was the past of the historic building and the area it belongs to. The history is the origin of the story, sets the foundation of the redevelopment. This background affects redevelopment plan of the project in terms of building condition, neighborhood nature, retail programming.
- The Redevelopment-how does the new program or the new mix of a few programs interact with the historic building. The redevelopment is the recreation or extension of the historic story, either inherit it or contrast it.
- The Experience-what’s customer experience of doing different activities in a historic building. As the

redevelopment program aim to engage customers as part of a unique story, customers develop emotional bonds that reinforce the experience.

### 3.2.1 Case 6: Chelsea Market, New York

Chelsea Market sits at the start of the High Line as one of the retail anchors of the neighborhood. In the last case study about highline in Chapter 2, we discussed how historic redevelopment of highline park transformed an industrial area to a hippy artsy residential neighborhood. While the High Line creates a unique public space that threads through several dozen blocks, Chelsea Market as a full-block retail anchor defines the vibe and sets the tone.



*Map: Chelsea Market and Hudson Yards as two ends of the High Line (from Hudson Yards Official Website)*

- The History:

Chelsea Market locates in a part of Manhattan known as the meatpacking district. The name meatpacking indicates the area's food heritage. When the High Line was still transporting trains, wholesale butchers used to pack their meat (hence the name "meatpacking") and deliver via trains. The building of Chelsea Market was originally the factory of the National Biscuit Company, who located there to take advantage of the logistic system. The industrial texture fits into the architectural typology of the district, and adds unique characters to Chelsea Market today. The history makes sense for a neighborhood market with global perspective.





*National Biscuit Company in 1898 vs. Chelsea Market in 2014*



*Chelsea Market sits at the start of the High Line and the High Line runs through the second floor*

- The Redevelopment:

The food heritage of the area is foundation of the historic story. (ULI, 2017) The meatpacking past naturally links to meat market, while a food hall in an old factory tells a good story with great contrasts. Together with the High Line, the new life of Chelsea Market transforms what was once a dark and foreboding section of the city, to what is now a hot spot.

History is one of the defining keys of the food hall redevelopment, it was the canvas for innovations in both the building and the program content. Chelsea Market was one of the original pioneers in the “next-generation food hall” movement, with the innovative contrasting program of eating in a rough industrial program of eating in a rough industrial program. The new format appeals to millennials looking for good quality food in an environment other than a restaurant.

Today Chelsea Market is one of the most recognizable indoor food halls in the world, not only because of its industrial and food heritage, but also because of its innovation in the content of the market. Eating and drinking are among the few physical experiences that cannot be completely replaced by online purchase. The owner-developer Jamestown Properties realizes that locality of food is the uniqueness that attract foodies from all over the world. Jamestown works with local suppliers to source quality raw materials

and establish innovative food ideas. To make the market sustainable and financially feasible, Jamestown also supports a food-worker training program and business incubator, so that the quality of food services at Chelsea Market has solid backing-up mechanism. (ULI, 2017)

Besides food, Chelsea Market adds other programs into the food market model to increase variety of the experience. Boutique retailers, designer brands, flea market, and gallery spaces turn Chelsea Market into a place that's more than a lunch/dinner spot. Food is still the center of Chelsea Market, "a place for people to gather around food in a financially sound way." (Phillips, 2017)

- The Experience:

Visitors of Chelsea Market first get the food hall experience, they then experience a food hall with a historic authenticity, then an authentic food hall in a district with art and creativity. Food hall experience differs from that of isolated restaurants. The variety of food choices, the flexible seating, the change of shops or stands along the walk, all adds to customer experience and engage them more.

Chelsea Market as a portion of the High Line and meatpacking district, is just a starting point of even more varieties of experiences. The historic heritage of the Chelsea Market building, as well as the meatpacking district, uplifts the food hall experience and enlarges it to a bigger story.

### 3.2.2 Case 7: Chophouse Row, Seattle

Chophouse Row in Seattle is another industrial project turned into food hall-boutique store mix. This case shows how different city context contributes to shaping experiential retail and redeveloping industrial heritage.

- The History:

Chophouse Row is part of a larger block-sized redevelopment effort that consists six parcels. The area, also known as the Pike-Pine corridor is one of Seattle's most vibrant pedestrian areas. Unlike the big blocks in the meatpacking district surrounding the Chelsea Market, the Pike-Pine area is characterized with pedestrian-friendly small-scale streets and buildings.

Chophouse Row combines a historic auto row building with a new steel and concrete loft office building. The combination of industrial leftovers and modern industrial textures gives strong characters to the project. Originally a small 1924 heavy-timber-and-masonry auto parts factory, the buildings seem remotely relevant to today's retail theme. The pedestrian alleys provide inspirations to new concept retail.

- The Redevelopment:

The developer Dunn + Hobbes is a small Seattle-based firm focused on small-scale infill projects in urban neighborhoods. Dunn, the founder stresses on "small-scale developments that characterize the city vibe" and strives to Keep the small-infill city fabric. Chophouse Row is an example project of the firm that specializes in both rehab and skinny infill. (ULI, 2017)

The architectural design of the redevelopment project flows with the industrial leftovers. The preservation of the old and the adding of the new present a strong contrast side by side, or layer by layer. "Knitting" through layering makes the contrast seem naturally evolved, as both old and new buildings keep the same scale. Besides building typology, contrasts also occur in the texture. Wood decking taken from parts of



the demolished old building was placed on the outer wall of the mews, the exposure presents contrasting textures and makes the touring experience full of surprise. (jseattle, 2015)

“Small” not only describes the scale of the buildings and streets, but also refers to the retailers and tenants. Smaller leasable retail spaces form an open market configuration and give more opportunities to creative localized tenants. The retail mix on the ground floor carves the vibe of the neighborhood, becomes the visitor attracter, and serves as amenity for overall mixed-use project.



*A mixture of old and new building typology and texture*

- The Experience:

Chophouse Row shows a different example of marketplace adapted from historic buildings. Chophouse Row has an open-air setting and much smaller scale, which fits Seattle but is contrary to Chelsea Market in New York. While Chelsea Market stays food-oriented, playing its part in the bigger neighborhood of the meatpacking district, Chophouse Row has mixed programs within one project - a more blended mix of local craftsmanship, art, and food.

In Chophouse Row, the concrete steel with modern addition gives the project strong contrasting character. With housing and office space within pedestrian scope, Chophouse Row attracts more artsy and creative crowd, who continue to spread the words about their experience. The retail experience is intensified in a contrasting yet coordinating building atmosphere, as well as a various mix of asset programs. The small scale uniquely characterizes this Seattle project.

### **3.3 “All-in-one” - blended experience doing several things in historic settings**

What I mean by “all-in-one” is a multi-programmed retail location that allows a variety of activities, including boutiques, restaurants, art, music, events, office, hotel, theatre, even gym. More integrated retail organically puts together a few functions that targets the same group of shoppers/experiencers, attracts target customers to be a frequent visitor and to stay a while each time. Breaking down boundaries between asset types helps intensify the experience, while historic context gives more credibility and uniqueness to that experience.

Three projects redeveloped from historic buildings, in New York and Chicago respectively, are good

show cases exploring the intensified experience combining shopping, eating, watching movies, working out, etc. The historic heritage in the buildings adds both tangible value with the physical space, and intangible value with the story that turns a space into a place. Historic buildings seem especially suitable for such “all-in-one” mixed retail program.

### 3.3.1 Case 8: ACE Hotel, New York

- The History:

Originally built as Hotel Breslin, the property is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Ace Hotel worked with Architect Roman and Williams to redesign the 1904 building in Midtown Manhattan. (Blum, 2009)

At the time, Breslin Hotel impressed New York Times with several pioneer concepts such as featuring a ladies’ grill room. The ownership of the building changed several times over the years, witnessing the rise of the Broadway hotel phenomenon and the move of the theatre district to the Time Square causing the decline. In several owners’ hands, the building always remained a hotel but been degraded over time due to lack of maintenance. It was desperate for some loving touch (Whitehead, 2017)

- The Redevelopment:

Ace Hotel is almost like the successor of Breslin Hotel to rediscover the legend of this corner building on Broadway. Today Ace Hotel is the pioneer hotel brand that combines hotel residence and co-working space, along with a handful of other retail programs. Ace continues the story by writing a new pioneer chapter at the location where pioneer ideas were once shaped.

Ace Hotel develops a unique mixed program, combining all asset types-hotel residence, coworking space, fashion store, food and beverage-in one. The hotel lobby, where all these functions share the common space, especially makes Ace “the model of modern borderless world”. It’s neither all work nor all play, rather a naturally evolved mixture, exactly the experiential trend that’s blurring the edges of live, work, play. (Goodman, 2011)



*The majority of lobby area are seated by customers of the bar, Stumptown coffee shop, Breslin restaurant, and the coworking space*





*The Ace Lobby attracts different crowds in different hours during the day, serving for working (left) or leisure (right) purposes, keeping the place vibrant all day long*

Ace Hotel takes pride in its unique boutique hotel narrative focused on “a collection of individuals”, as people’s experiences are their main thesis of the business model. Ace Hotel opens to public, with a mix of all types of program, including fashion retailer like Opening Ceremony and Converse (the hotel also does product crossover with the fashion brands), a Seattle-based organic coffee shop Stumptown, a Michelin restaurant Breslin (restaurant name in tribute to the original owner), co-working space, bars, etc. The lobby becomes so crowded in the day that the traditional lobby function, check-in counter, is hardly noticeable.

Ace Hotel intentionally looks for historic redevelopment sites for the brand’s new locations. Alex Calderwood, Ace’s founder has a strong belief in distinct architectural identity as well as human history. Ace always utilizes building features to create a unique match. Unlike the bright lobby of Ace LA, the New York branch adjusts to the building’s enclosed style, and gives a sense of intimacy to the busy lobby. The interior design is also quite thoughtful, following a storyline to select furniture and decoration, recreating a film’s atmosphere about the hote’s history. (Whitehead, 2017)



*Breslin Hotel in 1904 vs. Ace Hotel in 2009*

- The Experience:

Ace Hotel founder's description of the redevelopment process best explains how history blends into the experience: creative salvage is something that fits well with Ace's ethos. Contrast makes the experience exciting, due to the challenge of bringing new life to a historic property or fitting in to a neighborhood that doesn't seem like an obvious match. Telling a new story with an old building is like a treasure hunting experience, which gives guests a way to interact with history or interpret in their own way. (Gross, 2011)

The design narrative of Ace New York is to make place feel like "an old-money retreat where the kids throw a party when parents away" (Goodman, 2011) This is a unique story taking place in a historic setting, and with a party-like atmosphere. Today's visitors in a 1900s hotel would feel the exciting experience as if teenagers sneaking into parent's place.

The retail in Ace Hotel is no longer a side business in the corner of the lobby, but the main character: everything is happening in the lobby where all the functions are mixed. Glancing around and you'll see visitors taking selfies in a vintage photo booth, suede sofas occupied by affluent travelers and young techies typing away on laptops at the long library-styled table. The boundaries between work and leisure, office and bar are broken down. This experience cannot be imitated by shopping online, eating alone, or working in office cubicles. The mix makes all activities naturally evolving, reminding visitors of the 1960s French salons in the age of conversation.

Fun fact is that most of this thesis is produced in the co-working lobby of Ace New York.

### 3.3.2 Case 9: RH Chicago, The Gallery at The Historic 3 Arts Club

Chicago's historic Three Arts Club was adapted as the Restoration Hardware (RH) flagship Gallery after being vacant and neglected since 2004. The redevelopment project won the ULI 2017 vision award for Transformational Retail, for both continuing a significant history into the modern world, but also for its innovation in a wholistic retail concept- one that expresses all aspects of a lifestyle and blurs the lines between shopping, home and hospitality.

- The History:

The historic building of Chicago Three Art Club was originally home and club for women in the "three arts" of music, painting, and drama. Art is in the building's genes. Founded in 1912 by Jane Addams and 31 women from the city's moneyed elite, the building also had a prestigious social status in an upper-class area. (Isaacs, 2006)

Designated as an institute and residence, the building was designed for both common uses on the ground and upper floor residential uses. The mixture of uses leaves room for redevelopment into mixed-programs of retail. In the complex there were three floors of dormitory rooms, an elegantly flowing main floor that included a library, tearoom, open courtyard, and dining room where residents took breakfast and dinner together daily. (Isaacs, 2006) With the original residential features, upper floors can be turned into more exclusive uses. Suitable for commercial uses, the grand public space in the lower floors can be turned into galleries, cafes, the programs that would appreciate grand space. Mixing programs is also in the building's form.

The history brings legend to the building, but puts restrictions on redevelopment proposals. Examining

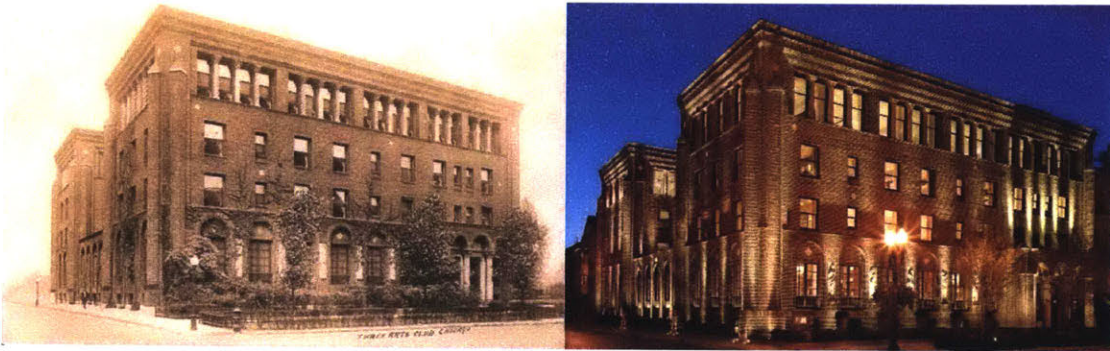


the location, it is tricky trying to establish commercial in a residential area. Project feasibility was under challenge considering the zoning changes and the neighborhood vibe. To design an appropriate program for redevelopment, lots of community outreach and coordination are needed. (Harris, 2015)

- The Redevelopment:

The restoration pays tribute to the original private artist residence while repurposing the building as a public destination within the neighborhood. (Pepper Construction, 2016) The new project design utilizes the space and adds modern features for a contrasting celebration. While enclosed architecture in historic buildings can usually be a disadvantage to retail, three art club helps RH to get the rezoning passed with the enclosed structure.

Besides the buildings expressive romantic interior, columns and façade, a main feature makes the building a unique opportunity for restoration- a grand center courtyard. The exclusiveness keeps RH from disturbing the neighborhood residential atmosphere. Thanks to a new pyramid of glass and steel, the courtyard can be turned into a unique place with natural lighting, nature greens, the feeling of both outdoor and indoor. As noises and traffic can be separated from the surrounding residences, the adapted courtyard makes an ideal venue for a showroom, restaurant, and event venue. (Martin, 2015)



*Three Arts Club VS RH Flagship Store*



*Three Arts Club Courtyard VS RH three art garden cafe*

Providing much more than luxury furniture, RH brings a new retail concept that blurs the lines. Incorporating the building's history, an art-centric redevelopment concept continues the building's art heritage, and is residential-friendly given the circumstances of the area. The RH flagship store continues the story of the "three arts" of music, painting, and drama.

The "all-in-one" RH flagship store express a lifestyle about how you live, eat, and socialize. (RH website,

2015) RH's basic business, luxury furniture, presents pieces and serves as the background in all programs comprised in the building: a café, a wine tasting room operated by restaurateur, a music venue, a courtyard, a roof garden, an interior design studio, a gallery.

- The Experience:

The project's most compelling feature is that it is not going to be a typical Restoration Hardware, but much more than a furniture showroom. Interior design is naturally evolved in the background, the ultimate sales goal but not explicit. The "story-telling" experience is to talk about art while in the art itself, to live and experience art like in the old times.

A "all-in-one" retail is not selling any isolated product but the experience of all, striving to elevate your retail environment to something beyond the transactional. (Brennan, 2015) The product and experience RH sells at its Chicago flagship location is everything from the space, the design, the story, the feeling, the special occasions. Imagining the waiter asks, "would you like some Champaign with that sofa", a customer is consuming an all-rounded experience with visual, smelling, touching, tasting features.

I select this case to demonstrate the approach of continuing historic heritage and incorporating historic "genes" into retail innovation. Experiential retail is more organic when the program has a theme inherited from the building's history. Before this Chicago flagship, RH focused on its core business of high-end furniture. The history behind Chicago's 3 Arts Club is an inspiration to RH: to build a gallery before selling furniture. The project is not at all separate from 3 Arts Club, but rather a continuing new chapter to bring the arts back to life. Surrounding the arts theme, a contemporary art gallery, a music performance venue, a garden café all fall into places to form the experiential retail program, one that's customized to the art history in Chicago. The experience is unique, as the modern program is an extension of the building history, telling a story that's unique and natural.

### 3.3.3 Soho House, Chicago

Soho House Chicago is located in the Allis Building, a historic five-story industrial warehouse in Chicago's West Loop. Converted from a 1907 industrial left-over property and turned into one of the hottest social spot in the city, Soho House Chicago is the proud winner of ULI 2016 vision award for catalytic redevelopment.

- The History:

The history of the building and the area is a story of the rise of Chicago in the age of industrialization. Allis building was headquarters of the famous Chicago Belting Company, one of the biggest leather manufacturers during the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The symbolic meaning of the original factory positions the building for many future potentials.

The building's architecture also has its historic importance, as Chicago's best example of concrete industrial loft design in the beginning of 20<sup>th</sup> century. (Santiago, 2014) The romance in old industrial buildings is one-of-a-kind in its time in history, brought by an architect with mixed background: the Swedish-born-American-educated Lawrence Hallberg. His industrial design adds romantic decorative touches to practicality of manufacture function: terrazzo tiling, an embellished elevator cab, a wrought iron double staircase, and a neo-classical portico at the front entrance inscribed with the building's name. (Santiago, 2014) The mixed culture from his Swedish and American background, and the interesting timing of his move in the year of the great fire, give unique characters and historic depth to the building.

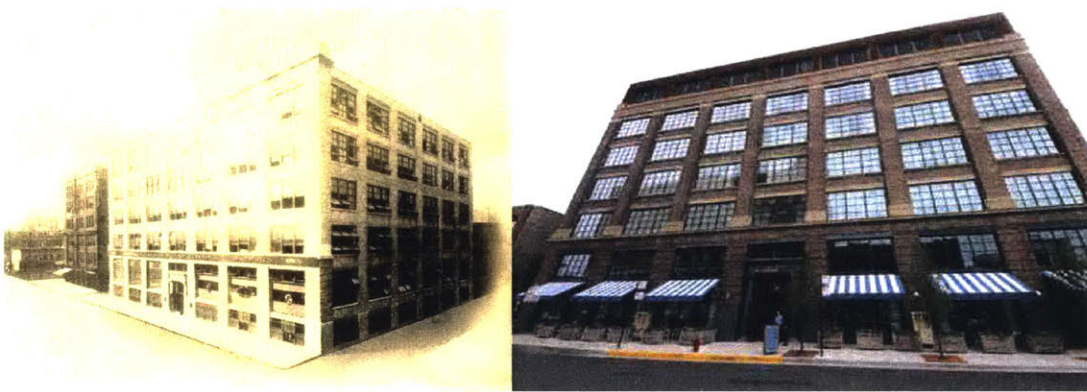


Similar to New York's meatpacking district, Chicago's west loop has an industrial background and is transforming towards the city's no hip area. The overall reposition of Chicago's West Loop in the past few years also resembles that of meatpacking, shifting from industrial uses like meatpacking operation, commercial storage and food distribution, to more commercial and residential uses. (Glusac, 2015) The industrial history leaves the area with tall ceiling spaces, which are suitable for creative activities and adds artistic attitudes to properties, namely loft homes, boutique hotels, art galleries, and trendy restaurants.

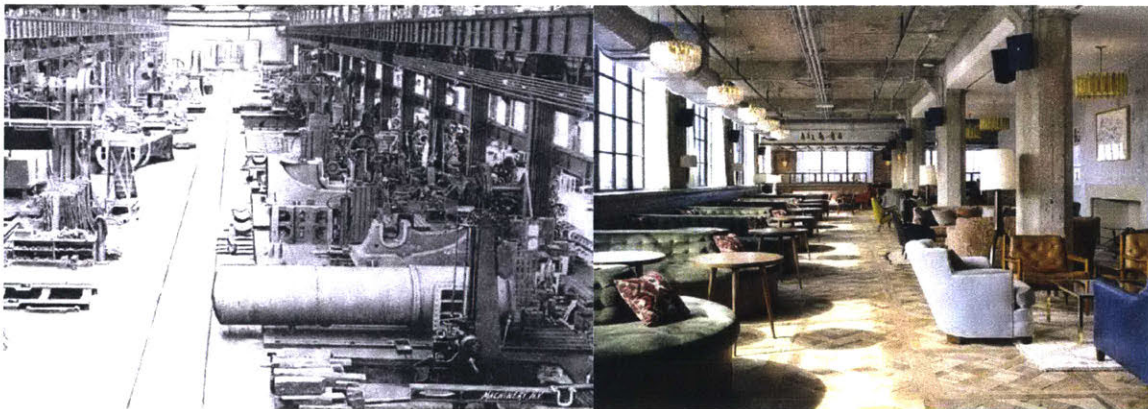
The people involved in the historic story are legends to remember. Allis, who owned the belt business, had a passion for collecting arts. (Elejalde-Ruiz, 2014) Allis' appreciation of arts led him to hire Lawrence for a design with an artistic touch. More than a century later, it makes perfect sense to reverberate the building for the artist and creative crowd. Allis' name is kept for the public lobby area to contain the story.

- The Redevelopment:

The match between artistic creative people and rough industrial historic space was seen as a potential fit for the UK-based SOHO House. It was considered "the perfect building in the perfect area" by SOHO House founder and CEO Nick Jones. (Santiago, 2014) As a members' club and hotel, Soho House intentionally seeks unique buildings to curate an environment to attract people with creative minds and want something different.



Exterior: Chicago Belting Company *in 1907* vs. Soho House Chicago *in 2014*



Interior: Allis manufacturing factory *in 1907* vs. Allis Lobby at Soho House Chicago *in 2014*



The setting of Soho House is not to be defined by any constraints. Like we discussed how experiential retail blurs the lines between different programs and brings a wholesome story, Soho House adds even more variety and creativity to the mixture. The building has everything that makes a member's club and boutique hotel outstanding. Similar to Ace Hotel New York, the lower levels open to the public with trendy restaurants, bars and vintage lobby. Members have exclusive access to a film screening room, a gym with a full boxing ring, a rooftop pool bar: over-the-top amenities that gives guest plenty of room to socialize, both in person and in conversations.

The unique business run by Soho House needs a unique place to carry. The word "SOHO" started as the initials to name an area in New York, South of Houston Street. What is today the base for fancy galleries and retail shop, New York's SOHO used to be a cheap rent area affordable to artists before their success. (Li, 2017) Art is the reason SOHO is an area of great vibe and the name of a sophisticated innovative lifestyle. The Allis building, on the other hand, has art genes because of the original owner's interests in art.



*Differentiating features with memorable experience: boxing ring and rooftop pool bar*

Allis' abandoned factory also followed the historic route, from abandoned industrial place, to broke artists, to successful creative industry practitioners. The unique match was recognized by CEO Nick Jones, when he saw a distinctly energetic, electric quality of the building's past life that makes the structure seem younger than its hundred-odd years. (Santiago, 2014) The lofty open plan and rough-hewn concrete walls and ceilings formed the perfect template for Soho House's VIBE. Loft-style half-work-half-home residence evolves naturally from the industrial leftovers.

The story goes on between the mixed experience at Soho House and the post-industrial repositioning of Chicago's West Loop- the equivalent of New York's SOHO.

- The Experience:

Soho House is one of the leading private clubs in the world. The blended programs provide a mixture of experiences and adds an artistic and historic flavor to the mixture. Soho House differentiates itself from other social groups with an emphasis on art and creativity, through an invite-only membership system, "no-suit" dress code that distinguishes creative people from the financiers, features like filming room and painting room that you don't find in other clubs. The redevelopment process is the process to repaint the history of industrialization and to write about the future of art, while the old warehouse space caters towards today's creative work and social space.

Keeping the name of Allis for the lower level public programs, Soho house is bounding the history as part of the experience. The creativity vibe and the historic background bring "authenticity" and "soul" to the



building's new life. (Bertche, 2014)

I select this case as a model for many abandoned industrial buildings with an appealing potential for art transformation. While art theme comes naturally from the buildings history in the case of RH Chicago, art theme in industrial setting creates contrasts and chemistry, like in the case of Soho House. Industrial space and creative activities may seem far apart, but in fact practically compatible. Industrial structures in history have more expressive and romantic architectural features, compared to the simplicity style in modern industrial facilities. The grand space, the delicate details, and the sense of roughness, make industrial buildings exotic and authentic for creative groups. The unique match between industrial space and art programs are user-oriented, appealing to art and creative community. Just like inspirations occur in the least expected places, creative people are attracted to industrial places for its contrast and unexpectedness.

### **3.4 Conclusions about experiential retail in historic redevelopment**

Chemistry exists between experiential retail and historic adaptive reuse. The rich past inherited in historic buildings tells stories about the city, the neighborhood, people's legacy, and industry the building once served for. Story plus space makes a "place" of uniqueness, depth, meaning, and full of experience - exactly what experiential retail is calling for.

One of the trends in experiential retail is blurring the lines between traditional asset types, which is also a unique fit for historic adaptive reuse. The depth of history story matches the complexity and variety in a mix of programs. The mix of programs provide different products and services, yet following the same story theme and targeting the same user vibe. "All-in-one" program mix intensifies users experience, merges different customer groups and activities, stimulates multiple senses, and builds stronger emotional connections.

Modern activities in a historic place are developed around some features in the heritage, either about the building architecture, the original occupier, the owner's legend etc. Continuing the historic heritage and contrasting with modern elements to create a new story, adaptive reuse projects engage users to be part of the story and to be emotionally attached. The emotional bonds create more meaningful experience and builds stronger customer loyalty.

To summarize the cases in a matrix:

|                             | History  | Redevelopment   | Experience   |
|-----------------------------|--|---|--|
| Chelsea Market              | Economic progression with industrialization and transportation, urban evolution in New York, the artistic makeover in Chelsea. | Natural transition from meatpacking, to meat market, to food hall, add fashion and design elements to the retail, interact with the artistic vibe in Chelsea .  | Visitors see both locality and internationality, experience an authentic food hall in an industrial district with art and creative vibe.             |
| Chophouse Row               | Industrial leftover, originally auto parts store, "small" city fabric unique to Seattle.                                       | Contrast modern steel and concrete with the industrial wood style, follow the "small" fabric and use small scale retail.  | The area's creative crowd is attracted to the small scale, industrial heritage, and modern contrast.   |
| ACE Hotel New York          | Originally a pioneer hotel, the move of theatre district from Broadway to Time Square, remained theatre vibe.                  | Hotel program mixed with co-working, fashion, food and beverage services, people-oriented focus, boutique vintage hotel in a real historic estate.  | The mix of program brings different user groups that keep the place busy all-day-long, feel both creative and artist vibe, live a vintage lifestyle. |
| RH Chicago Flagship Gallery | Art heritage from the original three arts club, flexible space designed for both commercial and residential uses.              | The RH program mix hospitality, home, and retail, a glass ceiling in the central courtyard creates contrast and a retail anchor.  | Visitors can do many things and stay for a while to feel the historic story, no hard sale in the art atmosphere.                                     |
| Soho House Chicago          | Originally a manufacture facility, owner's appetite for art gives romantic touch to the industrial property.                   | Soho House is a half-membership-half-public place, a social club that prioritize creativity over wealth, a mix of features including restaurants, gym, filming theatre, rooftop pool bar, and hotel, creative vibe in an industrial leftover. | Creative crowd curates the atmosphere, the history of social club meets the history of industry.   |



## Chapter 4 Findings and directions

After discussing cases in experiential retail and historic redevelopment, I conclude that the commonality is to engage users as part of a unique story. With the frameworks summarized in previous chapters, I recommend a few development ideas to a historic site with great potential to be transformed.

### 4.1 A “menu” of development concepts

Historic buildings have unique and rich stories, which are good raw material for customization towards experiential programs that can continue the story-telling. To redevelop historic projects for experiential retail uses, a developer should work closely with the architect and the retailer.

To find out more about user experiences, I collect, analyze, and categorize 2500 Instagram hashtags of the five cases in Chapter 3. (see Appendix I) To ensure that I analyze customer experience from user angle, I specifically choose the posts tagging the studied case as its location, not those posted by the project’s official account. Experiential retail fulfills not only shopping needs, but also social needs. Customers post online about their experience on the spot, including hashtags to label that experience and to be categorized in virtual social groups under each hashtag. Common among the five selected cases, hashtags are mainly on memory of important occasions, showcase of self-brand, trendy lifestyle, food-related satisfaction, appreciation of art, historic education, holiday celebration etc. This sample research shows that user experience is closely related to human emotions, feelings, personal connections. The interactions between people and place creates unique emotional bonds, and “sweeten” the experience.

Both the heritage of the building and the innovation of the program are essential ingredients for a unique experience in historic redevelopment. I’ve discussed different ways to maximize the historic effect, which creates mix-and-match chemistry. Adopting the frameworks in this thesis, I present a checklist about creating experiential retail in historic redevelopment, regarding space redesign, customized program, the story to tell. The checklist can be used rather as a “menu” than as a “recipe”. The redesigning and programming do not need to check off all items on the list as if following a “recipe”. The list serves as a “menu” for developers to “order” from.

I name the “dishes” in a three-course menu, to illustrate considerations in three main aspects: the space, the story, and the experience. Space makeover is the first step and sets a tone for the atmosphere, hence the appetizer. Story-telling is the project’s main character, that differentiates among buildings, histories, and retail programs, hence the entrée. A story is told both about the historic structure, its past and future, and a retail program uniquely designed to match with the building. While the general flavor of history redevelopment has layers evolving via time, industrial romance stands out as an example of contrasting vastly different times and uses. Experience is the cherry of the cake in historic projects, hence the dessert. From the hashtag research, users have feelings, build emotional bonds, fulfill social needs, create memories – personal experience is the final taste to remember by.

## Appetizer Space makeover

- **History celebration** Preserve architecture details that's one-of-a-kind in its time and location
- **Modern addition** With no confusion, add modern structures to enlarge the space and create contrasts
- **Grand opening** Utilize the grand historic space, add transparency, and open up street-level accessibility

## Entrée Story-telling

- **Industrial romance** The contrasting chemistry between industrial fabrics and an artistic revamp
- **Layering of history** New stories to create a future of the past, and display the layers of evolvement
- **A bowl of surprises** Mix-and-match several asset types for user interactions and intensified experiences

## Dessert Unique experience

- **Instagramable moments** Use offline experience to fulfill social needs and for social media posts
- **Memorable days** Important memories related to special occasions, life milestones, season's greetings
- **City & life** An urban lifestyle that's trendy, diversified, and characterized by the city's vibe

*Chapter 4 framework: "menu" of development concepts (by author)*

- **Appetizer: Space makeover**

"History celebration" is suitable for buildings with extensive details and unique typology. From an architectural viewpoint, each historic building is unique in its time and location, or for its designated use. Preserving architecture features, including building form, finishing texture, and decorative details, has value in maintaining culture and displaying evolvement. The celebrating approach restores the buildings to its original glory, as shown in the case of Faneuil Hall in Boston.

"Modern addition" is a useful measure to enlarge the capacity and improve practicality for historic structures. The modern materials and designs add contrast to the original building. The contrast shows the evolvement of time, taste, and technology, while avoiding confusion between the old and the new. The common way is to add glass structures, like the glass box in Domino Sugar Project, or the glass ceilings for courtyards in New York's Penn-Farley Station and Chicago's 3 Arts Club. Other material additions also create interesting contrast, like the use of wood and steel in Seattle's Chophouse Row. An ultimate modern contrasting case would be New York's Hearst Tower, which puts a magnificent 40-story glass-and-steel tower on top of a 6-story historic base.

"Grand opening" refers to historic buildings with grand space, usually those built for industrial or public uses. A primary example is the proposal to reuse Madison Square Garden's round structure to be the grand arrival hall of New York's Penn Station. Besides the grand space, "open" is another key word in this approach. While retail must be easily accessible and constantly advertising itself to be successful, some historic buildings have enclosed structure for safety purposes. As shown in the office case of 550 Madison in New York, a major adjustment to activate retail on the ground level is the partial glass façade.

- **Entrée: Story-telling**

"Industrial romance" is the unique chemistry between industrial fabrics and an artistic revamp. The open space and central location make abandoned industrial properties ideal sites for today's creative industry, as a flagship retail store -RH at the Chicago 3 Arts Club, or a social club -Chicago's Soho House. On a



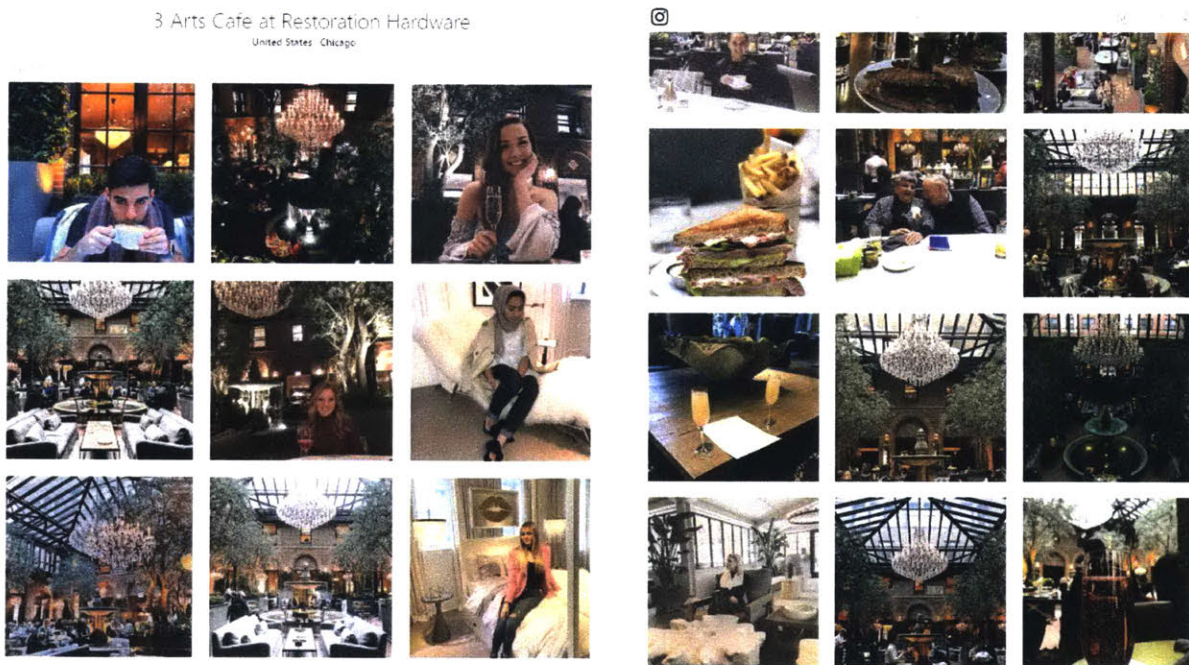
bigger scale, the mix-and-match art can transform an entire industrial district, just like how the High Line changes New York’s once declining SOHO area to a high-end residential neighborhood.

“Layering of history” lays out the rise and fall in history, engages visitors to feel like part of the story. Historic redevelopment adds new uses to an old shell, creates a future of the past, instead of simply rewriting the history. Two New York development, Hearst Tower and the Domino Sugar projects, are outstanding examples that use “modern addition” to display layers of the evolution process.

“A bowl of surprise” refers to the “all-in-one” mixed retail program, which is especially suitable for historic adaptive reuse projects. User experience is diversified and intensified by multiple activities blended in a historic context. The theme of the mixed program can be inherited from the building’s history, as discussed in the case of RH Gallery in Chicago’s 3 Arts Club, and New York’s ACE Hotel redeveloped from the historic Breslin Hotel.

- Dessert: Unique experience

“Instagramable moments” are the online products of user’s social experience in a physical retail place. As illustrated in Chapter 1, customer’s social needs are among the major considerations of experiential retail. Unique building features and diversified programs provide users with a variety of social media material. Examples including abundant Instagram posts about having brunch on RH sofa and under RH chandeliers at Chicago’s 3 Arts Club.



*Unique space and story provides social satisfaction, evident through constant posts about the courtyard café at RH Chicago flagship Store*

“Memorable days” are experiences related to special occasions, holidays, personal milestones. Experiential retail redeveloped from historic projects provide venues and activities for special celebration. For example, a variety of food and drinks options, a unique historic setting, and the mixed vibes in Chelsea Market and ACE Hotel make the two places popular destinations for new year celebration.



“City & life” is user experience on a city level or a personal level, channeled through his/her activities at these projects. Experiential retail includes a variety of programs, which collectively sells a lifestyle rather than a single product. Historic buildings are unique in the life of a city, relating customer memories to not only the building and the retailer, but also to the city. The emotional bond is therefore stronger, and make these projects more memorable.

#### 4.2 Development ideas for the Bradbury Building, LA

The Bradbury Building is the oldest commercial building remaining in Downtown Los Angeles, most widely known for its significant appearances in major movies. (Barragan, 2017) Its extensive details in the magical light-filled Victorian interior court makes the masterpiece a longstanding LA landmark. Since a full restoration in 1990s, the building has been kept in great conditions. (Kelly, 2017)



*Bradbury’s modest Romanesque exterior (left) and an exquisit Victorian court (right)*

Despite its impressive architectural presence, the property is not at its best performance, with unorganized ground floor retail and vacant office spaces above. The current owner of the property adopts a conservative strategy, runs the property for stability, and avoids major alteration that may disrupt current leases.



*A well-preserved interior comparing the past (left) and the present (right)*



With its reputation throughout LA's history and various movies, the Bradbury Building has tremendous potential to be adapted into a mixed-program experiential retail location. In this chapter, I "order" from the menu for historic redevelopment and recommend possible options to re-activate this masterpiece.

- Appetizer - space makeover

Behind the building's humble exterior, the inside is filled with a variety of textures and extensive amount of details. Entering from a narrow lobby and low ceiling, then opening to the natural brightness and a grand cathedral-like center court, visitors experience a strong contrast with rich historic heritage. The Bradbury building is like a movie itself, and naturally a movie setting with great romance, dramatic tension, and stories. The building's makeover should focus on retaining the original form, celebrating the delicate style, and nurturing a movie-like atmosphere rooted in LA.



*Bradbury Building DTLA: a legend in movies*

- Entrée - story telling

The Bradbury building hasn't had quite significant large tenants or major program. In the movie industry, however, the building has appeared in so many scenes that it's almost regarded as overused. The original architect George Wyman, not strictly a trained architect, based his design on one of the greatest sci-fi movies of all time. (Kelly, 2017) Movie is in this building's genes, as well as specific to LA's city vibe.

Movie can be a theme for Bradbury's redevelopment. I may order "a bowl of surprises" from the entrée menu, and blur the boundaries of office, retail, art, entertainment - an "all-in-one" program mix. Similar to the 3 Arts Club and Soho House in Chicago, LA has an abundant supply of creative minds and movie practitioners. The natural lighting, romantic grandness, and interior details serve as great hardware for double-loaded retail corridor. Trendy bars, restaurants, galleries, boutique fashion retailers in the central corridor and court can activate the street level, and serve as amenities for creative offices upstairs. To further curate an artistic and creative vibe, the offices on upper levels can be tailored towards the film and art industries.

In the central court, vertical retail is another approach to intensify consumer experience and increase interactions between different levels. Since the central yard acts as the gravity center and the upper-floor terraces are wide enough for retail, I propose to strategically place pop-up cafes, flea-market-style stalls, street arts on the internal terraces, transparently visible through the iron-carved fences, drawing up ground-floor traffic, activating visitors horizontally and vertically. The terraces would also be great auditorium during regular performance or spontaneous show in the central court, and large-scale art installations in the air. The vertical layout activates circulation entirely and encourages user communication on all levels.



*Vertical retail communication example:  
art installation in the air, performance in the court, retail on upper floor terraces.  
(Covent Garden, London)*

- Dessert – unique experience

Visitors are participating a historic story inherited from landmark, and carrying it forward with creative activities in the building of movies. The movie theme is in the architecture, the past uses, the specialized offices, the retail, the art installations, the performances, and the crowds attracted to different parts of the building. Having the options to experience a variety of things, customers have a place to stay for a while and do several things to fulfill social needs.

The interior of the Bradbury Building is certainly “instagramable”, and shows one’s tasteful lifestyle. The project’s movie theme is city-specific to LA, as well as artistic and festive. Doing movie-related leisure activities represents a LA lifestyle, but different from global chains like Universal Studio.

Comparing with thesis findings and applying the “menu”, I discover and utilize the movie genes in the Bradbury Building. The building had a glorious past recorded in movies generations ago, it will continue to exist for many more years – making visitors feel like a part of a never-ending story. The artistic and creative vibe redefines the place, brings history back to life, and enables unique experience for visitors to remember by.



## Postscript

Real estate is not just about modern skyscrapers and new technologies, but also about historic buildings and old stories. While modernization and globalization shape cities to be more alike, historic buildings, along with the city fabric around them, identify and differentiate each city. Characters and stories embodied in historic buildings are intangible assets and invaluable to the city. “Story” is a word I constantly apply in this thesis, because it brings buildings to life and makes real estate warm.

It takes as much visionary determination to look towards the future, as to look backward in history. Developers and planners learnt an important lesson from the demolition of the historic Penn Station and the rebirth of the future Penn-Farley Station, that it is meaningful to treasure a rich past and bring it forward. Innovation does not mean abandoning the past, rather inspirations built upon the past. “Forward” and “backward” are not contradictory in this context, rather complementary with different substance.

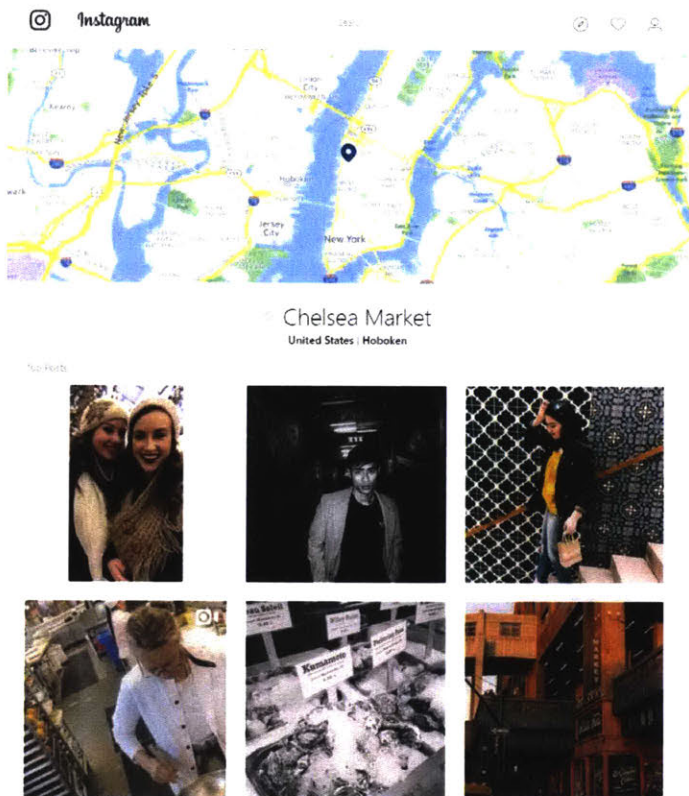
Experiential retail in historic buildings is like the right play in the right theatre, giving visitors the opportunity to slow down, to appreciate, and to experience. History being one of the experiential factors, experiential retail program must find the right balance amongst many factors. The right portion of food, entertainment, art, and designer good, the right vibe that fits the story of the building, the branding effect, the mix-and-match, all aspects make the programming process resemble art. The creative process makes real estate not just a commodity in the alternative asset category.

Time flows, turning what’s once history to the present and future. When I go to historic places for activities, functions, and events, I think about the building’s previous life and its unknown future. Cities, streets, landscapes, and architecture existed long before I arrive, and will stay much longer than me. I used to think of all places as a part of my day, my week, or my life, while in fact I’m part of theirs. Writing this thesis, it struck me how I am part of a story much bigger than me, yet I can be a composer and carrier of the part. Since the story goes on for generations after me, it’s responsible that I, as a developer, see the whole picture and act my part.

In the end, key words I want to extract from this thesis are: story, craftsmanship, soul, and memory.

## Appendix I Hashtags on social media

### Location Tag: Chelsea Market



Category Summary: restaurants, city, country, neighborhood, weather, season, time, date, year, tv, food, wine, interior, architecture, brand, event, art, travel, photography, friendship, insta-specific hashtags, expressions, business showcase for the self-employed

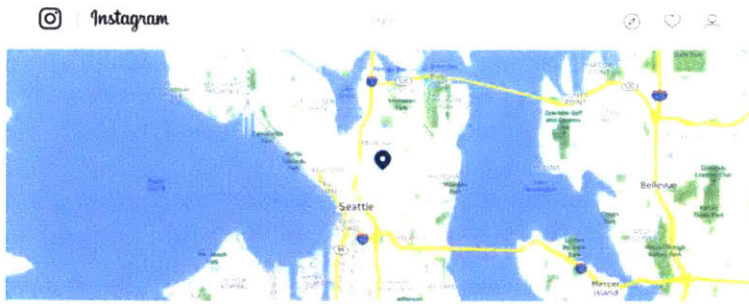
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 #burgerlove #eattheworld #beautifulcuisines #tastingtable #feastagram #favorites #huffposttast #eeeeeat  
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 #zagat #trip #travel #travelgram #photo #photography #photooftheday #pic #picoftheday #night  
 #newyorkatnight #foto #fotografia #traveling #iphone #like4like #likeforlike #vintage #life #lifeisgood  
 #street #lights #happiness #industrial #interior #sigfig in #ChelseaMarket in #NYC #NewYorkCity  
 #NYNy #sigfigadventures #SigFigfamily #Legophotography #Evansfamilylegoproject #sigfigTravels  
 #SigFigPhotography #newyork#trip#chelseamarket #chelseamarketny #shopsmall #market #food #art  
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 #cenaalternativa #fastfood #lobsterroll #YouEats #YouTravelsToNewYork #self #selfie #chealseamarket  
 #lobster #thinkofyoueveryday #thelittlethings #thankyou #bestgift #anthropologie #lobsterroll  
 #costaniente #apericena #vacanza#family #familyintour #exit #vacation #noodles #JapaneseFood #deli  
 #instafood #wine #wino #winelover #winelife #winelabels #winenight #saturday #saurdaynight  
 #acoupleandacork #winestagram #wineporn #blindtasting #corkbuzz #chelsea #chelseamarket #redwine  
 #somanymquestions #mastersommelier #notreally #reasonswhyidrink #idrinkalot #newyear  
 #goingpitwithabang #2017 #newyear2017 #nyc #chelsea #chelseamarket #shopping #lights #newyorkcity  
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 #spices #herbs #foodie #foodporn #foodlover #marketlife #chelsea #eatlocal #foodpics #fresh #winter  
 #food #noodles #onlyinNY #chelseamarket #newyork #trip #friends #family #nitenite #Turisteando  
 #NoMoreWalking #gourmet #genuine #dismantled #lobster #foodie #thankyou #dietrying #donkeyproof



#itsfine #fuckitiloveyou #gonzomademedoit #italianspreaching #trimdegoatboi #trimdegoat #patois  
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 #chelseawinevault #chelsea #chelseany #mkexplore #shotzdelight #rsa\_streetview #vscoportrait  
 #urbanandstreet #gearednomad #uncalculated #symmetricalmonsters #quietthechaos #thecreative  
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 #manhattanarchitecture #unlimitedmanhattan #igmanhattan #manhattanstreets #manhattanphoto  
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 #chicken #carneasada #mexicanfood #lostacosno1 #everythingisawesome #noticketnotaco #foodstagram  
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 #streetfood #iamsohappy #foodie #foodpics #getinmybelly #sharifaeats #myfoodstyle #myfoodjournal  
 #ilovefood #eatstagram #nycadventureswithbae #winterishere #seangrissom #freezing #newyork -6C  
 #chelseamarket #nyc #winteriscoming #got #gameofthrones #gameofthronessoundtrack #dessert  
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 #womenempoweringwomen #meetthemaker #shoedesigner #meetheartist #goldenhour #holidayseason  
 #liveintoday #treasurememories



## Location Tag: Chophouse Row



Chophouse Row

Top Posts



Category Summary: life events, holiday, food & drink, fashion, lifestyle, location, city, weather, activities, camera, quotes, emotions, fitness, music, relationship, objects, pets, insta-specific hashtags, phone apps, business showcase for the self-employed,

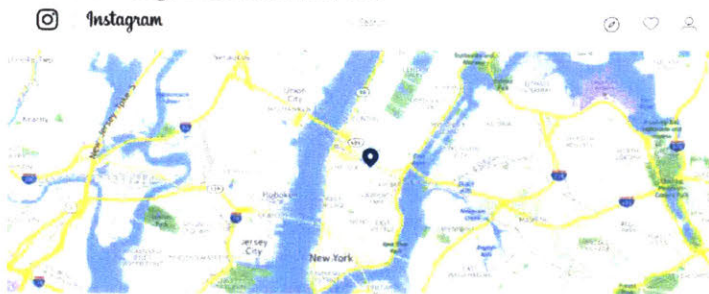
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#womeninbusiness #prank #christmasgifts #groomsmengift #gift #freightlevator #disco  
 #capitolhillartwalk #seattle #chophouserow #comic #love #relationship #seattleblogger  
 #seattlefashionblogger #seattlefashionbloggers #seattlefashionphotographer #seattlelifestyle  
 #seattlelifestylephotographer #tilinsiders #pnw #pnwlife #flashesofdelight #theeverygirl #seattlestyle  
 #seattleportraits #seattleportraitphotography #travelgirl #travelphotographer #fashionblogger  
 #winterfashion #bestfriends #bestfriendgoals #besties #bff #swolfephoto #festive #fun #evening  
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 #holly #hollyberry #pinecone #rosehip #wire #pruners #capitolhillseattle #shopsallfinds #shopthehill  
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 #whereyouare #brandidentity #brandstyling #styledphotos #capitalhill #akita #americanakita #dog  
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 #akitaworld #akita\_rater #doggiesofthe\_instaworld #akitalife #akitalover #akitagram #akitapics  
 #dogoftheday #pets #seattle #pnw #goprty #seattlenightlife #restaurant #bar #seattleeats #seattlefoodie  
 #capitolhillseattle #vSCO #seattle #capitolhill #chophouserow #seattle #handmade #ceramic #dinnerware  
 #set #shopseattle #shoplocal #madeinseattle #capitolhillseattle #capitolhill #seattlemakers #seattlemade  
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 #tnchustler #colorventures #darlingmovement #photoshoot #intrepidlywe#chophouserow  
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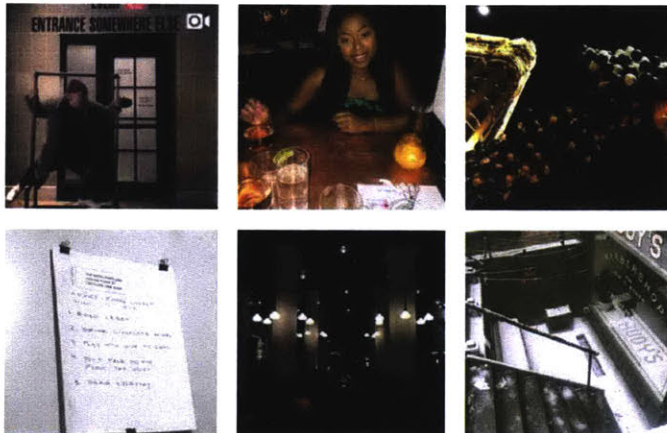


## Location tag: Ace Hotel NYC



○ Ace Hotel New York  
United States | New York

Top Posts



Category summary: Food, weather, occasion, holiday, nearby spots, city, fashion, travel, work, animals, emotions, special decoration/features, personal relationships, insta-specific hashtags, quotes, random thoughts, landmarks,

#acehotel #acehotelnyc #newyork #nostalgiainnyc #instatravel#newyorkcity#nyc#acehotel  
 #stumtowntowncoffee #RouseTinsleyAdventure #itscoldoutside #joy #nyc #newyorkcity #holidayinthecity  
 #citystreets #manhattan #newyork #newyorkcity #travel #trip #landscape #daily #winter #vacationtime  
 #photography #photographer #photo #snap #snow #snowyday #acehotelnyc #facehotel #nyc  
 #highlightvisit #newyork #nyc #photography #blackandwhitephotography #socialmedia #life #friends  
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 #madcollection #morning #newyork #coffee #croissant #entrepreneurlife #hustle #coworking  
 #coworkinglife #venturex #newyork #nyc #manhattan #acehotel #stumtowntowncoffee #donuts #redvelvet  
 #muffin #croissant #acehotel #newyorkcity #goodtimes #love #model #korean #asian #babe  
 #photooftheday #ootd #whatimwearingnow #whatimwearing #fashion #blogger #fashionstyle  
 #fashionblogger #acehotel #newyorkcity #mindfulness #love #2018 #happyholidays #callnow  
 #digitalnomad #nyc #newyorkcity #landscape #cityscape #citylife #agameoftones #way2ill #artofvisuals  
 #justgoshoot #exploretocreate #streetphotography #streetscene #neon #neonlights #nightowl #wintertime  
 #winterwonderland #lookingup #fromwhereistand #lifeofadventure #posttheordinary #liveauthentic #vsco  
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 #reflections #manifest #holistichealing #urbanwell  
 #lateart# #wallart #artwork #graffitiart#nycphotographer #nyc#newyork#newyorkcity#ny##holidaysea  
 sons#happyholidays#familytime#travelholic#wanderlust#teavel#traveling#weekendgateway#acehotelnew  
 york #denim #coffee #fur #asos #canadian #grey #mensstyle #winter #snow #merrychristmas #christmas  
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 #photobooth #nyc #newyorkcity #texasuxedo #denimjacket #bespoke #thatsdarling #newyorkcity  
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 #redhead #style #styleblogger #branding #beauty #nycfashion #nyc #followme #follownow #following



#follower #skinnyjeans #Wellbeing #Acupuncture #Naturopath #AceHotel #Bicoastal #Ecopreneur  
 #TopangaCanyon #ErewhonMarket #Ggetla #WorldCentric #BCorporation #StumptownCoffee #Coyuchi  
 #Patagonia #CafeGratitude #SweetGreen #JohnDoryOysterBar #ChaChaMatcha #TeslaMotors  
 #EileenFisher #WestElm #IntelligentNutrients #ABCHome #PratimaSkincare #HathaYoga  
 #CraftingTheFutureOfFood #MoonJuice #JuicePress #PalaisDesThés #Wellbeing #Acupuncture  
 #Naturopath #AceHotel #Bicoastal #Ecopreneur #TopangaCanyon #ErewhonMarket #Ggetla  
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 #BookGeek #LoveToRead #pregnancy #mommyhood #pregnantbelly #preggers#nyc #w29 #style  
 #comfort #decor #trendy #acehotel #acehotelnyc #iloveny #lobby#smile #smily #secondlab #usa #room  
 #rug #interior #faniture #home #decor#living #products #lifestyle #goods #homeware #bathroom#design  
 #gear #toilet#design #interiordesign #japanmade #general #generalgoods #lidcover#washlet  
 #house#madeinjapan#newyork #newyorkcity #nyc #nyclife #FlaviainNY #winterishere #happyholidays  
 #christmasvibes #vsco #ootd #ootdfashion #streetwear #like4like #winterfashion #1stchristmasinnyc  
 #christmas2017 #ootddaily #christmasinnewyork #sayitwithneon #12daysofshellfish #oysters#doors  
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 #electricmusic #dancepop #shirleyhouse #eventsNYC #liveshow #livemusicrocks #lgbt #stage  
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 #ig\_nycity #artnet #artporn #artstagram #graffiti #graffitiart #acehotel #streetart #vsco #vscocam #vscony  
 #vsconyc #vsconewyork #vscocam #thatsdarling #darlingmovement #flashesofdelight #livethelittlethings  
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 #lighting #lobbies #hotel #nyc #manhattan #interiors #ambiance #moodindigo #architecture  
 #meetingspace #costumedesign #dance #twerk #metallics #beyourowngoddamnhero #nyc  
 #empirestatebuilding #onedoorclosesanotheroneopens #opportunityknocks  
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 #magic #opportunity #inspiration #entrance #exit #acehotel #manhattan #nyc #coffee #thirdwavecoffee  
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 #travel #travelusa #travelnyc #floristry #inspire #vscocam #street #lovely



## Location Tag: Three Arts Café at RH Chicago



Top Posts



### Category Summary:

Relationships, emotions, life events, food, city, location, travel, family, photography, lifestyle, architecture, insta-specific tags, objects, adjectives,

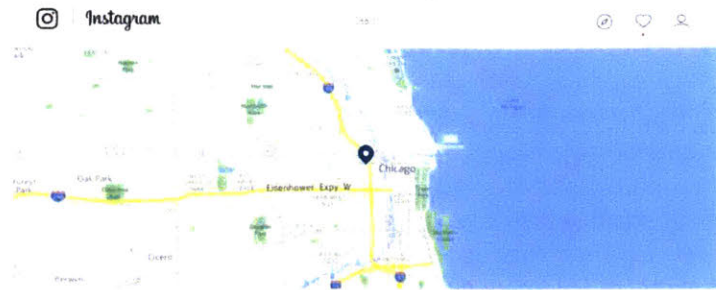
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 #topchicagorestaurants #topcitybites #myfab5 #brunch #happynewyear #lastdayof2017 #2017 #chicago  
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 #newyearsresolution #quotestoliveby #inspirationalquotes #inspire #goodvibes #peace🕊️ #love  
 #kindnessmatters #bethebestversionofyourself #fancyshmancy #3artscafe #chitown #brunch #rosé  
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 #keepingclassy #classyaf #classy #myboo #10years #chitownlife #chicagoliving #rivernortholdtown  
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 #ig\_photography #photooftheday #ilovechi #chicago\_usa #girlscreating #chilove #restorationhardware  
 #fountain #chandelier #christmas #Chicago #ChicagoEats #chicagofoodauthority #Yum #Nom  
 #onthetable #chicagofoodies #instayum #instafood #foodstagram #chicagofoodanddrink #foodgasm  
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 #chicago#mychicagopix#chicagoshot#pink#flower#nature#food#bread#cuisine#furniturestore  
 #turnedrestaurant #chicago #fancyhuh #lifestyle #chicagogram #foodcoma #moderndesign #decor  
 #interiordesign #christmas2017 #fancybrunch



## Location Tag: Soho House Chicago



Soho House Chicago  
United States Chicago

Top Posts



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City, year, adjectives, occasion, holiday, camera, location, fashion, fitness, decoration, art, travel, phone apps, instatags, religion, work,

#chicago #illinois #newyears #happynewyear #newyarseve #2018 #soho #house #90s #throwback #flannel #party #insta #instagram #broadway #tour #wicked #beautiful #caroleking #broadwayinchicago #happynewyear #ninetieskids #partyon #NYE2018 #90s #SohoHouse #WaynesWorld #Chicago #Luvabulls #90sTheme #Bulls #sohohouse #sohohouse #canon60d #drinkingbefore5 #judgeus #sohohousechicago #westloop #Chicago #newyearsresolution #myfavoriteneighborhoods #sirandmadame #firsttuesdays #happyhour #winddown #ilovechicago #lawrencemichael #realtor #chicagoliving #chicago #sirandmadame #sohohouse #2018 #gooddrinks #funpeople #newyear #marriage #love #latergram #utilitymaximization #newyear #newyear #newyears #newyarseve #newyearsparty #90s #the90s #90sparty #sohohouse #sohohousechicago #shc #90skid #uglysneakers #dadsneakers #dadshoes #spikedhair #whitesocks #tubesocks #turtleneck #techdeck #canadiantuxedo #cheetos #dadjeans #flaminhot #flaminhotcheetos #jeanjacket #hairgel #lalooks #extremesport #level10hold #stellar #dabulls #nyeoutfit #nye2017 #sohohouse #houseseven #chicago #NYE #luvmyluvs #luvmycoach #sistas #andmom #throwbackluvs #90snight #thankful #danceovereverything #ladieswholunch #backtowork #chicagoskyline #shcmembers #yoga #yogaretreat #costarica #ownyourglow #yogateacher #yogaeverydamnday #chicagoyoga #yogachicago #yogateachertraining #corporateyoga #corporatewellness #retreats #corporatemeditation #wellnessretreats #lifecoach #lifestyle #blogger #influencer #chicagogirl #bye2017 #thomasjefferson #hamiltonchicago #nye #happynewyear #sohohouse #chandelier #lookUp #symmetry #iphonex #mobilephotography #color #colorphoto #colorphotography #photo #photos #photography #streetphotography #streetart #art #cool #alley #coolart #lit #itslit #city #graffiti #chicago #chicagoart #outside #instagood #contrast #streetart #alley #instacool #instagram #instaart #abstract #sick #LAtChi #soHo #chicago #photobooth #memories #newyears #holidays #sohohouse #chicago #party #dance #housemusic #90s #fashion #style #music #chicago #agameoftones #views #xposuremag #wanderlust #highsnobsociety #createexplore #vsco #vscocam #streetdreamsmag #sohohouse #interiordesign #choosechicago #insta\_chicago #chitecture #goals #happynewyear2018 #lizveth #lizzyv #lizvethlivinglife #LOLO #soho #sohohousechicago #themedparty #smartgirl



#millionairenextdoor #linkinbio #90sbabies #90sfashion #90snewyear #sohohouse #eatstretchnap  
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 #artofvisuals #livethelittlethings #communityfirst #instamood #style #makemoments #igers  
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 #postthepeople #chicagoblogger #sohohouse #2018 #agameoftones #kawaii #nye #chicityshots  
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 #boogersugar #poshspice #sohohousechicago #sohohouse #drag #makeup #dragqueen  
 #absolutelyfabulous #cheers #cheerssweetiedarling #happybday #becareful #monday #mascot #cuginas  
 #thecutest #loyalty #babydeer #becarefulwiththesherb #papaamericano #fandjtietheknot #happybdaykev  
 #FTD #12thousandflowers #prayforshukis #gutters #lastday #aboutlastnight #Championships #90sBenny  
 #Luvs #FlyGirl #JLo #BambooHoops #DocMartens #Overalls #AboutLastNight #HappyNewYear  
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 #sohohouse #chicago #2018

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