

Enabling Development - What is it?

I have heard, “This church used to own lots of property around here and it sold it off over the years. If only we had it now!” And what would most do with it if they had it now, probably sell it, just as their predecessors had done, “because we need the money now”. This is frequently the comment heard; as if the footprint of God’s property ownership is lamentably shrinking. The truth is that many church communities are buying property in new locations to meet their needs.

Over the next few blogs I would like to consider Enabling Development and what that means to the Christian church. Let’s start by understanding what is meant by Enabling Development.

When any church finds that it owns more property than it needs for its mission purposes, should it continue to hold onto it in case of some future revival when the space might be needed? It will need to be maintained, cleaned and repaired which will be an ongoing expense. It could lease the space to someone who needs it and receive an income. Alternatively in areas where real estate values have risen, mostly without any action by the church, releasing land for development of apartments or offices can result in a windfall financial benefit to the church.

This is allowing “Enabling Development” that can financially enable the church to achieve some other purpose which in many cases will be adapting its buildings or providing new facilities to meet a mission need that would not have been achievable otherwise. In some cases heritage churches have to carry out costly repairs to heritage fabric and Council planning authorities often look favourably upon appropriate enabling development that covers costs that extend the life of Heritage Church buildings.

In the scenario mentioned above, perhaps the church with the slimmed down, but more effective property portfolio will be able to use its new facilities to extend its mission, increasing its membership to a critical point where it will need more space. It may then be in a position, with the newly committed membership, to acquire property in another location to continue to grow its work.

Releasing the value of some of the church’s property, if done wisely, can facilitate and enable the church’s mission. It can also achieve other goals such as meeting a housing need of some kind, creating a community activity hub with the church as its centrepiece and making the life of the church community more visible and attractive.

Next time - Enabling Development – what can it enable?

“[Making Property Serve Mission](#)” has received 6 favourable independent media reviews from reviewers in Australia and the UK.



New development will position the heritage church as a focus for community life in this shopping street