Interpreting Religious Heritage

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Developing the Problem
Background

- Churches are community centers and have been for thousands of years
Background

- Need alternative methods to showcase the valuable heritage items
The Problem

- Churches are not being reached by the general public
- Lack of promotion of religious heritage items within churches
Project Goal and Objectives
Overall Project Goal

To improve the promotion and curation of and access to the religious heritage of the UK.
Research Objectives

1. Determine how London churches are viewed as heritage sites
2. Explore how heritage sites in London curate and interpret heritage
3. Identify barriers that exist in terms of access to heritage sites for the disabled community
4. Determine the opinions of members of heritage organizations on the current state of religious heritage
What We Did
Opinions of Stakeholders in Religious Heritage

• Interviewed church staff and administrators
• Interviewed representatives of religious heritage organizations
• Interviewed church watchers
Interpretation and Curation at Heritage Sites

• Performed site visits
• Analyzed locations using a site visit checklist
## Churches We Visited

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>All Hallows on the Wall</th>
<th>St. Dunstan-in-the-West</th>
<th>St. Michael Cornhill</th>
<th>Great St. Mary’s Church</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>St. Andrew by the Wardrobe</td>
<td>St. James Garlickhythe</td>
<td>St. Olave Hart Street</td>
<td>Kings College Chapel</td>
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<tr>
<td>St. Anne &amp; Agnes</td>
<td>St. Lawrence Jewry</td>
<td>St. Sepulchre</td>
<td>All Saints Jesus Street</td>
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<tr>
<td>St. Benet Welsh Church</td>
<td>St. Magnus the Martyr</td>
<td>St. Stephen Walbrook</td>
<td>St. John’s Duxford</td>
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<tr>
<td>St. Botolph Aldgate</td>
<td>St. Martin Ludgate</td>
<td>Dutch Church</td>
<td>St. Peter’s Duxford</td>
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<tr>
<td>St. Bride Fleet Street</td>
<td>St. Mary Abchurch</td>
<td>St. Paul’s Cathedral</td>
<td>The Michael House</td>
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<tr>
<td>St. Clement Eastcheap</td>
<td>St. Mary-at-Hill</td>
<td>Westminster Abbey</td>
<td>Norwich Cathedral</td>
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Accessibility for Individuals with Disabilities

- Interviewed key individuals
- Analyzed visited locations with an access specific checklist
Opinions of Members of Religious Heritage Organizations

• Developed a survey with questions pertaining to the current state of religious heritage in the UK
• Sent survey to members of religious heritage organization
Findings
Stakeholder Opinions of Religious Heritage

Are churches being promoted well enough?

- 88% Being well represented
- 12% Not being well represented
Stakeholder Opinions of Religious Heritage

Use of Technology in Churches
- Support the use of technology: 81%
- Oppose the use of technology: 19%

Type of Technology
- All types of technology: 41%
- Non-intrusive technology: 59%
Stakeholder Opinions of Religious Heritage

Accessibility for People with Disabilities

- 42% Temporary changes
- 16% Permanent changes
- 42% Remain current state
Stakeholder Opinions of Religious Heritage

Survey responses aligned with stakeholder opinions.
Curation and Interpretation of Religious Heritage Items

- In Museums
Curation and Interpretation of Religious Heritage Items

- In larger well-known churches
Curation and Interpretation of Religious Heritage Items

- In City Churches
Interpretative Methods Used in Churches

- Promotional Materials: 19
- Pamphlet: 19
- Interpretive Text Plaque: 7
- Tours: 4
- Technology: 3
Access to and within Churches

- Physical access
- Intellectual access
- Lavatories
- Alterations to buildings
Accessible Features of Churches

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feature</th>
<th>Number of Churches</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Public Toilet</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accessible Toilet</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accessible Entrance</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpretive Technology</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audio Systems</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpretive Materials in Large Print or Braille</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Recommendations
Recommendations to the City Church Administrators and Clergy

1. Measures to *increase* church resources.

2. Creation of or *improvement* upon existing interpretive materials.

3. Provisions to *improve accessibility*.

4. Community programming to *reach out* to a wider audience.
Recommendations to the Friends of the City Churches

1. Adaptation of the role of the Church Watcher
2. Measures to increase footfall in the city churches
3. Measures to improve communications within the organization
Recommendations to All Religious Heritage Organizations

1. Better *promotion*

2. *Networking and collaboration* between religious heritage organizations for better outreach
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7. City Church Clergy Members and Administrators
8. Klaus Miesenberger
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   • The City of London Access Team
   • The Victoria and Albert Museum
   • Historic Religious Buildings Alliance
   • The Diocese of London
   • National Churches Trust
Any questions?