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Contact:

Melissa Urbietta

115 Fifth Avenue

New York, NY 10003

+1.646 358 8715

m.urbietta@perkinseastman.com

PERKINS EASTMAN PUBLISHES FINDINGS ON THE BENEFITS OF CONVERTING COMMERCIAL SPACES TO EDUCATIONAL ENVIRONMENTS

Through Adaptive Reuse, Schools Can Be Agents of Revitalization and Positively Impact
Local Development

Perkins Eastman
Architects DPC



Avenues The World School New York. © Chris Cooper Courtesy Perkins Eastman

New York, NY (May 31, 2018) – Perkins Eastman has recently published a new white paper, **“Commercial Conversion: Adaptive Reuse, A Catalyst for Educational Innovation.”** The paper’s authors examine the unique opportunities that former commercial, industrial, and even retail properties can offer school districts, education providers, and their communities—as demand for convenient, safe, and healthy environments that also support the latest in educational technology, pedagogy, and achievement standards outpace traditional supply or means in many communities across the country.

The goal of the study was to examine whether the adaptive reuse and conversion of commercial properties for educational use provide a solution that educators need and

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ignite a broader remedy for the rapid obsolescence and creeping blight of the separated-use commercial landscape.

While adaptive reuse of commercial buildings is far from novel, the strategy is becoming a more established option for educational program space. As the number of underperforming commercial properties increases, so, too, do Americans' acceptance of differentiated instruction, recognition of the success of unconventional pedagogies, and comfort with educational innovation. As a result, the authors posit, there is greater diversity in the scholastic environment and an expanding realm of possibilities.

Citing shifting community and economic conditions, the authors demonstrate through a series of case studies that adaptive reuse of commercial properties in particular is a viable strategy to achieve state-of-the-art educational facilities that are cost-effective, responsive to changing pedagogies, environmentally responsible, and also reflect shifting lifestyle preferences of young families.

Culled from Perkins Eastman's recent K-12 portfolio, the case studies represent urban and suburban, high density and low density, and former commercial spaces, including a landmarked warehouse, call centers, corporate headquarters, and floors in an office tower. The projects are located in Dallas, Texas; Fremont, California; McLean, Virginia; New York, New York; and Scotch Plains, New Jersey. Together, the case studies demonstrate the rich possibility embodied within these existing assets and suggest that commercial reuse is not a compromised solution but rather a beneficial, and potentially transformational, development scenario that can positively impact local development.

"Commercial Conversion: Adaptive Reuse, A Catalyst for Educational Innovation" is available for download at perkinseastman.com/white_papers.

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