



Cathedral Square

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— Most Reverend Walter A. Hurley
Bishop of Grand Rapids

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Bishop Walter Hurley of the Catholic Diocese of Grand Rapids had a vision to transform the area surrounding St. Andrews Cathedral into a "Cathedral Square." The area already was home to the Cathedral, St. Andrews Elementary School and Catholic Central. His vision was to move the Diocesan offices to the square and to have an on site conference center. He engaged the services of Stan Wisinski, SIOR, CCIM, Chairman and Mary Anne Wisinski-Rosely, SIOR, CCIM, Co-Director of Office Services for The Wisinski Group to explore the options that would allow for this vision to become a reality.

Stan and Mary Anne began to explore the options. The Diocese already owned a building to the north of the Cathedral but it was not large enough. The option of purchasing the building north of that was explored. The building was a great building and about the right size but would be too costly to acquire. Stan had the idea of looking to the south of Catholic Central. The Diocese already owned the former Uptown Cleaners building that was rejected by the Historical Preservation Commission to be torn down. Another large building next to the Uptown building was currently available. Through successful negotiations, the Diocese was able to purchase that property.

The next process involved working closely with the City of Grand Rapids, attorneys, engineers and contractors to design the Cathedral Square itself and to determine if there was enough room to construct the entire project. Further exploration of adjacent sites was conducted, however again it was determined that it would be too costly to acquire them. The team then determined how to make the project work with the property already owned by the Diocese.

It was determined that the Diocese was going to have extra space on the first floor of the new office building. Stan and Mary Anne were already working closely with Saint Mary's Hospital on several projects. They approached the Hospital to see if they would have a need for the space. A long-term lease was negotiated between the two parties for Saint Mary's to lease the first floor for their pharmacy and to also share the use of the conference center.

Cathedral Square is currently in Phase I of construction - conversion of the acquired building to the Diocesan offices, conference center and lease space for Saint Mary's, two-story parking deck, campus wide landscaping and vacation of the alleys and streets. In January of 2008, the project was named "Project of the Year" by the Commercial Alliance of Realtors.

"For the past two years, I have worked closely with Mr. Stanley J. Wisinski, III and Ms. Mary Anne Wisinski-Rosely and find them to be highly professional and knowledgeable. The Wisinski Group has assisted the diocese and its parishes in some unusual and difficult real estate transactions. They do not hesitate to recommend the opinion of an attorney or other property professional. The Wisinski Group is highly respected in this community and recognized as a leader in commercial real estate."

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