

Keeping the Faith in Philly: Barzilay Develops Apartments Within a Church

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Barzilay has announced his company's Sanctuary Lofts, an apartment project built within a 125-year-old church, is now available for lease. Situated at 2319 Fitzwater St. in the rapidly revitalizing South of South neighborhood, Sanctuary Lofts is home to 30 apartments built within the sanctuary of the old church, and another eight apartment homes carved out of the rectory building.



"I'm the first in Philadelphia I know of to turn a church into apartments," Barzilay tells *MHN*. "Barzilay Development specializes in adaptive reuse projects: churches, factories, mill buildings, warehouses, and we're trying to get into schools. We take the same place, and give it a new face. Everything's new, but it's juxtaposed with fabulous space."

From the outside, the hallmarks of Sanctuary Lofts include its iconic red doors, nine-story, 126-foot clock tower and dramatic stone façade.

Inside, residential options include one- and two-bedroom lofts; one- and two-bedroom bi-level lofts; three-bedroom lofts; and one- and two-bedroom apartments. The residences range from 381 to 1,382 square feet, and monthly rent rates range from \$1,200 to \$2,750.

Lofts feature European-styled cabinetry, granite countertops, GE stainless steel appliances and state-of-the-art Bosch front-loading washers and dryers. They also give new meaning to the term "cathedral ceilings" Add Barzilay: "The stained glass windows were turned into interior swinging shutters."

Residents will find the private, resident-only garden, bordered by tasteful benches, a blessing. It provides a contemplative place for residents to escape from the daily grind.

Sanctuary Lofts is located steps away from popular restaurants, eclectic boutiques, verdant parks, cozy coffee shops and specialty grocers.

The Center City Business District is a 10-minute walk away, and University City is a few blocks away, over the South Street Bridge.

"It's in an excellent location, because it's an area that has had a tremendous influx of for-sale housing," Barzilay says. "The area is so fantastic, and it's getting better. It's so close to the center city business district . . . It's a terrific time in the South of South neighborhood."

Some of the residents will be able to claim bragging rights to one-of-a-kind rental homes. The area in which the clergy once made their way to the rear of the altar was turned into a bi-level rental townhome. The highly decorative area that was home to the church organ became a unique apartment, Barzilay says.

"Sanctuary Lofts enabled me to take a church that was once part of the community fabric and turn it into something productive again," he adds. "I felt that it was my responsibility to not only save this historic church, but also preserve its unique character for the citizens of Philadelphia."

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