

Discovery Workshop Notes

N. Garfield Property Transformation | *Reconstructed for portfolio purposes.*

WHO?

Understanding the Client

Who is Bent Tree Church?

Mission: Growing together into deep rooted disciples of Christ Jesus.

Core Values: Relational Discipleship, Generational Faith

Purpose: To create an environment where people encounter Christ through biblical teaching, authentic relationships, and gospel centered community.

Project Challenge

Bent Tree Church had the opportunity to purchase a former nightclub as its first permanent home.

Rather than simply renovating the building, the opportunity was to transform an unexpected place into an authentic expression of the church's mission and identity, using the power of story to create emotional moments throughout the guest journey.

WHY?

Why does this project exist?

Design Challenge:

How might we transform a former nightclub into a place where people immediately experience belonging, authentic community, and the redemptive hope of the gospel while honoring the building's history rather than erasing it?

Project Objectives

- Create an inviting first impression.
- Build trust before a word is spoken.
- Reinforce relational discipleship.
- Express the church's identity through the built environment.
- Steward limited resources creatively.

WHO FOR?

Understanding the Guest

Target Guest Demographic (Average):

 **Age:** Around 40 years old (slightly older than the U.S. average)

 **Household:** Married or living with family; about 2.4 people per household

 **Housing:** More likely to own than rent; lives in a single-family home

 **Employment:** Works in healthcare, education, manufacturing, construction, professional services, or commutes to Fort Collins

 **Income:** Household income around \$85,000-\$95,000 per year

 **Education:** Many have some college; a significant percentage hold bachelor's degrees or higher

 **Transportation:** Drives almost everywhere; limited use of public transit

 **Lifestyle:** Enjoys hiking, biking, camping, fishing, skiing, and other outdoor recreation

 **Pets:** Dog ownership is very common

 **Culture:** Appreciates local breweries, coffee shops, farmers markets, and community festivals

 **Identity:** Proud of Loveland's reputation as the "Sweetheart City" and its public art and sculpture program

 **Religion:** A mix of religious and non-religious residents, with a noticeable Christian presence alongside many who are unaffiliated

 **Politics:** Generally moderate, with a mix of conservative and liberal viewpoints; often viewed as more politically balanced than many Colorado Front Range cities

 **Values:** Family-oriented, values safety, quality schools, outdoor access, and a slower pace than Denver

 **Growth:** Increasingly made up of people who have relocated from other states, especially California, Texas, and the Midwest

Primary Audience

- First time guests
- Church members
- Young Families
- Children
- Seniors
- Community visitors

What should guests experience?

Guests should immediately experience:

- Warmth before words.
- Authentic community.
- Hope.
- Belonging.
- A desire to stay.
- Confidence navigating the building.
- A sense that this place is for them.

Emotional Journey

Arrival : Safe • Welcome • At Ease • Anticipation

Transition : Curious • Comfortable • Oriented

Departure : Hopeful • Connected • Inspired to Return

WHERE?

Understanding the Place

What story is the building already telling?

The building carried two very different memories within the community. Some remembered **The White Buffalo**, a family friendly country music venue and gathering place. Others remembered its later years as a succession of bars and nightclubs marked by declining reputation and changing ownership.

Today the environment communicated:

- A forgotten place.
 - Dark and neglected spaces.
 - Little intentionality.
 - A lack of belonging.
 - A building that had lost its identity.
-

Existing Constraints

Schedule

- Occupancy required within weeks.
- Renovation completed while preparing for launch.
- Volunteer labor.

Budget

- Limited capital.
- Donated resources.
- Reuse existing materials.

Architecture

- Existing nightclub layout.
 - Structural limitations.
 - Preserve meaningful elements where possible.
-

BIG IDEA

God Can Transform Broken Things

Rather than hiding the building's past, the design would celebrate redemption.

The building itself would become the first chapter of the guest experience.

Every creative decision would reinforce the truth that broken places and broken people can be restored into places of hope, belonging, and new life.

HOW SHOULD THEY FEEL?

Experience Goals

The guest experience should communicate:

- Warmth before words.
 - Authentic hospitality.
 - Beauty emerging from brokenness.
 - A city on a hill in an unexpected location.
 - Relationships over performance.
 - Homecoming instead of uncertainty.
-

Measures of Success

Guests should:

- Feel welcomed before speaking to anyone.
 - Easily navigate the building.
 - Understand the church's personality.
 - Stay after the service.
 - Return with friends and family.
 - Experience belonging before participation.
-

HOW DO WE MAKE THEM FEEL THAT?

Design Principles

- Every decision supports the story.
- Preserve authenticity.
- Transformation over replacement.
- Hospitality begins before the front door.
- Warmth over polish.
- Remove barriers to connection.
- Design serves people.
- Every space invites one step deeper into community.

Design Opportunities

Preserve

- Dance floor
- Patio
- Front entrance
- Commercial kitchen

Transform

- Bar
- VIP areas
- Mirrors
- Black finishes
- Restrooms

Introduce

- Gathering spaces
- Environmental graphics
- Warm lighting
- Natural materials
- Clear wayfinding
- Hospitality moments

DESIGN

Creative Direction

Every design decision was evaluated through one question:

Does this reinforce the story of transformation?

From spatial planning and material selection to signage, lighting, environmental graphics, and hospitality, each element worked together to communicate one unified story.

Discovery Outcome

Creative Compass

God Can Transform Broken Things

Rather than disguising the building's history, the design redeemed it.

The environment quietly told the same story proclaimed from the platform:

God can restore what is broken.

Every design decision became an opportunity to communicate redemption, belonging, and authentic community.