

Church to Move Campuses, Invest in Salt Lake City Redevelopment

By Lisa Ann Jackson, Church Magazines

With an expressed desire to keep the area around Temple Square vibrant, safe, and clean, the Church has announced major plans to redevelop several blocks in downtown Salt Lake City. Included in the plans are the relocations of LDS Business College and Brigham Young University's Salt Lake Center to downtown.

"I want to make it clear that we are irrevocably committed to the economic future of this city and to creating a vibrant and beautiful place," said Presiding Bishop H. David Burton at a press conference on 8 October 2003 unveiling preliminary designs for the redevelopment.

Two city blocks immediately south of Temple Square, which house the shopping centers Crossroads Plaza and ZCMI Center Mall, will be redeveloped. Plans include improving retail and office space and also adding residential space. In addition, the Church announced it would move the campuses of BYU's Salt Lake Center and LDS Business College from their present locations elsewhere in Salt Lake to downtown. They will be built west of the Family History Library and the Museum of Church History and Art.

Plans are designed to attract visitors and residents to downtown as well as spur investment in the area by other entities, said Bishop Burton. The campus relocations alone will bring 4,000 students to the downtown area.

"We feel we have a compelling responsibility to protect the environment of the Salt Lake Temple," President Hinckley stated during an April 2003 general conference address, shortly after the Church announced its intentions to purchase Crossroads Plaza. At the time the Church already owned the ZCMI Center and most of the land on the affected blocks. In September the Church finalized its purchase of Crossroads. "The owners of the buildings have expressed a desire to sell. The property needs very extensive and expensive renovation. We felt it imperative to do something to revitalize this area."

"The core issue is protecting the environs of the temple," reiterated Bishop Burton.

Bishop Burton also emphasized the venture is funded through the commercial entities of the Church. "None of this money comes from the tithing of our faithful members," Bishop Burton said. "That is not how we use tithing funds."

Planning for the new college campuses will begin immediately. The retail redevelopment is in its final planning stages, and work will begin sometime in 2004.