

ABSTRACT

Title of Thesis: PLANNING FOR THE SUCCESSFUL ADAPTIVE USE
OF AMERICAN NATIONAL GUARD ARMORIES

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The premise of this thesis is that the American National Guard armory, a unique building type, is worthy of preservation based on its historical and architectural significance. Furthermore, remaining historic armories in this country are threatened resources, presenting resource managers and potential developers with a number of challenges for redevelopment.

This study begins by establishing an historic overview of the National Guard and the development of the armory as a building type. It then examines the management and care of armories while under National Guard ownership, evaluating possible inconsistencies and shortcomings in preservation legislation and National Guard policy. In order to develop resource management strategies for this building type, the study examines published literature, which highlights successful armory adaptive use case studies. In addition, four armory reuse projects in Illinois are analyzed and compared. One example, the Chicago Military Academy in Bronzeville, shows how an abandoned

and decrepit armory in an inner city neighborhood has become a success story for preservation teamwork.

The case study evaluation determines that the key to preserving historic armories through adaptive use is effective resource management. This begins with the armory's original owners, the National Guard, and continues with state and local resource managers. Although finding a new use for the buildings is an important part of their preservation, this thesis concludes that it is careful planning, administration, and monitoring which will enable historic American National Guard armories to remain viable community assets.