Suburbanization of the City:
An examination of the built environment characteristics and social life of German Village, a historic urban neighborhood in Columbus, Ohio

THESIS

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree Master of City and Regional Planning in the Graduate School of The Ohio State University

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2017

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Abstract

German Village is typical of many inner-city areas, in that it enjoyed growth and vitality from its genesis in the mid-nineteenth century until a period of decline in the mid-twentieth century. With high vacancy rates and low-property values, parts of the neighborhood were even suggested for demolition in urban renewal schemes. But in 1960, the German Village Society formed to advocate for the preservation of the historic structures and for the creation of a protected historic district. In 1963, the City of Columbus established the German Village Commission to regulate demolition and exterior alteration of structures within the boundaries. Since then, property values have risen and the district has transformed into a highly desirable neighborhood—a process that could be characterized as gentrification.

The socio-economic impacts of gentrification have been explored by a variety of scholars (see Lee, Slater and Wiley, 2013). The case of German Village, a neighborhood that has been gentrified for over half a century, offers an interesting case study into a central question of this thesis: Is there a new phase of post-gentrification that suggests such urban neighborhoods are becoming suburban? More specifically, has German Village adopted physical and socio-cultural characteristics similar to those we attribute to the suburbs? The approach to this research advances a developing theory of suburban form and culture that looks past traditional definitions of a suburb to uncover a more nuanced understanding of both the land use, socioeconomic demographic characteristics and lifestyle of suburbanization.
I find that German Village has embraced a suburban lifestyle as indicated by its shift toward homeownership and privatism as indicated by the proliferation of private fences and pools as well as a stress on the home as a commodity and symbol of social status. The physical features of the neighborhood have changed to embrace a more autocentric lifestyle, adding garages and curb cuts. In addition, the neighborhood has become more single rather than mixed-use with an emphasis on the single-family home, a similar emphasis found in the suburbs. German Village, once a mixed use and heterogeneous immigrant community, has become a homogenous suburban environment largely for middle and upper-class homeowners.
Acknowledgments

This work is the result of a personal connection to German Village and Columbus history, as well as an academic passion for how cities develop and change over time. I would like to thank my family and friends for their support during my graduate study, especially the assistance and encouragement of Tyler Bender. The Center for Urban and Regional Analysis was also instrumental in my ability to spatially analyze changes in housing and real estate. In particular, Director Harvey Miller has supported my research and conference travel, and student affiliates Jake Carr, Shaun Fontanella, and Brett Morris continually provided technical advice and expertise. Lastly, gratitude for my advisor Bernadette Hanlon for encouraging and guiding me throughout this process and my co-advisor Kyle Ezell for constant enthusiasm and encouragement.
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Chapter 1: Introduction

The urban planning community, city politicians, and urban enthusiasts have sought the revitalization of the city for decades. After mass suburbanization in the mid-twentieth century emptied the cores of many U.S. cities, the prevailing narrative has been one of rebuilding and repopulating urban centers. For the most part, this process has been slow. The central cores of most cities, especially Midwest and Rustbelt cities, are less populated than sixty years ago but some city neighborhoods have witnessed redevelopment and resurgence, but escalating in the last decade or so. A case in point and a focus of this thesis is the historic urban neighborhood of German Village in Columbus, Ohio.

German Village is typical of many inner-city areas, in that it enjoyed growth and vitality from its genesis in the mid-nineteenth century until a period of decline in the mid-twentieth century. With high vacancy rates and low-property values, parts of the neighborhood were even suggested for demolition in urban renewal schemes. But in 1960, the German Village Society formed to advocate for the preservation of the historic structures and for the creation of a protected historic district. In 1963, the City of Columbus established the German Village Commission to regulate demolition and exterior alteration of structures in within the boundaries. Since then, property values have risen and the district has transformed into a highly desirable neighborhood—a process that could be characterized as gentrification.
The socio-economic impacts of gentrification have been explored by a variety of scholars (see Lee, Slater and Wiley, 2013). The case of German Village, a neighborhood that has been gentrified for over half a century, offers an interesting case study into a central question of this thesis: Is there a new phase of post-gentrification that suggests such urban neighborhoods are becoming suburban? More specifically, has German Village adopted physical and socio-cultural characteristics similar to those we attribute to the suburbs?

Recent trends reveal that society is pushing toward the center of what has been a traditional divide between the urban and suburban. Suburbs across the nation have been investing in walkable town centers for decades, a pattern which has recently accelerated. Bruce Katz of the Brookings Institution has said that “suburbs are mimicking cities just like cities were mimicking suburbs” (Brown, 2016). Even in the densest area of the U.S., the island of Manhattan, there is a mounting critique that the borough of 1.6 million people is now providing “the illusion of the urban experience without the diversity, spontaneity, and unpredictability that have always been its hallmarks” (Hammett & Hammett, 2007, p. 20). In a scathing reproach of Bloomberg-era New York, scholars Deborah Cowen and Neil Smith criticize the dilution of authentic urban elements: “Time Square’s success lies precisely in knitting a hint of urban danger into the suburban fetish for security. It serves up city-dangerous as suburban-safe and commodifies it to boot” (2007, p. 39). The logic of Cowen and Smith’s article leads the reader to understand that the gentrification of cities is a corollary process to suburbanization. The processes work in tandem. As Smith and Cowen suggest
In order to understand this process of suburbanization of the city, I examine the literature around what exactly is meant by “suburban.” I focus on two aspects: the physical or built environment characteristics and the sociocultural characteristics. In Chapter 2, I review this literature, and in the process identify the different elements that, in the context of the built environment, include such characteristics as single use, density and automobile dependence and, in the context of cultural or social characteristics, include homeownership, conservatism, privatism, and homogeneity.

Mumford, in referencing the suburban exodus from cities in the postwar period, spoke of the new suburbs as ideologically, “[a] new kind of community” (1961, p. 486) Taking the concept to the extreme, Mumford characterized the suburbs as veritable cultural wastelands, where consumerist drones purchase identical goods and subscribe to manufactured lifestyles that “[conform] in every…respect to a common mold” (1961, p. 486). Cities, on the other hand, are a “multi-form, non-segregated environment” (Mumford, 1961, p. 493). In fact, the suburban is often characterized as the opposite of the urban. The suburban is homogenous, the urban diverse. The suburban is consumerist, the urban cultural. The suburbs are private places; the urban is alive with public spaces.

Sylvia Fava (1956) declared that suburbanism is a “way of life.” She followed in the footsteps of Louis Wirth’s 1938 examination of the urban “way of life.” Fava (1956) also
argued that suburbanism is a social-psychological state. This realization opens the concept of suburbanism to a vast field of inquiry. The consequent associations with suburbanism can offer rich insight into the distinctive characteristics of “suburban” and how it might be possible to be “suburban” in an urban setting. Acknowledging that there is no official U.S. Census Bureau definition of “suburban,” economist Jed Kolko of the Terner Center for Housing Innovation at the University of California, Berkeley conducted a recent study in which 53% of respondents claimed to reside in what they perceive to be a suburban environment (Kolko, 2015). The ambiguity of what constitutes a suburban environment is a major focus of this work. From the perspective of two defining attributes, social and physical, the meaning of this phrase will be explored.

In Chapter 3, I provide the reader with the necessary background to the historical context of German Village, how it has evolved over time and the importance of the German Village Society in the redevelopment of the neighborhood. In Chapter 4, I describe the data I used in this study and a description of how I analyzed the data. The use of Geographic Information Systems (GIS) to quantify change in the built environment and real estate markets is critical to this research, as well as the results of an online survey of neighborhood residents and business owners to qualify perspectives on the district. In Chapter 5, I highlight the results of my analysis and discuss the most pertinent findings. In this chapter, I discuss how German Village possesses qualities of suburbia. The concluding chapter offers implications of this research on the field of urban planning and recommends further research on the topic. The next chapter, Chapter 2, offers a review of the literature that helps define both the physical and sociocultural characteristics of the suburban.
Chapter 2: Literature Review

The realms of urban, suburban, and rural are often discussed as wholly distinct typologies of human settlement. This conception of settlement type is reminiscent of early scientific efforts to neatly categorize the world. In the century since the establishment of the first inner-ring suburbs in the U.S., these typologies have blurred. North American suburbs have experienced tremendous growth and cities have expanded territorial boundaries without the commensurate urban form. For example, the Toronto suburb of Mississauga has a population of 713,443 and an impressive downtown skyline with buildings reaching 56 stories. On the other hand, municipal annexation of former suburbs and townships in some cities have included areas that offer little urban quality and add vast square mileage to cities. Of the 50 most populous cities in the U.S., there are 16 with more than 300 square miles of land area—one of which has a population density of just 956/sq mi. (people per square mile).

The lines between city and suburb are becoming even less distinct as suburbs strive to retain and attract residents by altering the built environment to resemble traditionally urban forms. Suburbs in major metropolitan areas of the U.S. have been becoming more urban for decades. Transit-oriented development in the Washington, D.C. region and sustainable development pressure in the Pacific Northwest have encouraged denser suburban environments. Served by the DC Metro system, Arlington County, VA has an impressive population density of

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8,814/sq mi. High density suburban environments also exist in areas without rail transit—such as in Rockville, MD and Kirkland, WA where population densities are 4,530/sq mi. and 4,521/sq mi. respectively.

Categorizing places as distinctly urban or suburban can be challenging. Yet, as Kiril Stanilov (Stanilov, 2004, p. 46) states: “Classifying metropolitan regions in terms of the generic categories of ‘city’ and ‘suburb’ – each with a range of defining characteristics – appears to be an important way in which people make sense of the complexity of landscape and urban form.” With a goal of making the world easier to understand, the work of bringing clarity to the urban-suburban distinction is important. As Sarah Ferber clarifies in her book on Australian suburbs: “In everyday language, the distinctive meanings of the terms suburb and suburban communicate the notion—‘suburb’ refers to actual places, while ‘suburbia’ refers to a state of mind…In some ways, suburbia does not possess a geographical location” (1994, pp. xiv, xvii).

So what then does ‘suburbia’ mean? In the reminder of this chapter, I outline the meaning of what I refer to as suburban by examining the literature related to the physical or built environment dimensions as well as the socio-cultural attributes, recognizing that suburban, in a sense, is not tied to any specific spatial location. I focus first on the built environment dimensions.
Physical Characteristics of the Suburban

The scholarly literature has identified a number of physical attributes of the suburban. They include density, homogeneity, single-family housing, and automobile-oriented infrastructure. I discuss these attributes in more detail here.

Density, Homogeneity and Single-Family Homeownership

As early as 1925, Douglas (1925, p. 6) called suburbs “a belt of near-by but less crowed communities which have ‘close connections’ with the city, made possible by physical arrangements for the rapid transfer of people and goods between the two.” The key insight is that suburbs are close to the city but less densely populated. In a sense, as you move further out to the edge of the city, there is less density. According to Jindrich (2012, p. 153), “population density is an effective method of dividing the area inside the city limits into regions reflecting their degree of urbanization.” Jindrich (2012, p. 8) further asserted the notion that “communities within the total metropolitan area which have a suburban density of population…are suburban.”

To have a “suburban density of population,” is typically noted by a mid-century development pattern of a large-lot subdivision with strictly single-family homes. The large portion of land devoted to single-family housing is recognized by Fava (1956, p. 35) when she differentiates suburbs from the city by recognizing “…certain physical qualities of residential suburbs, namely the predominance of private homes, low population density, and availability of open space.” One of the twentieth century’s most prominent social commentators, Mumford (1961, p. 486) eschewed the suburban community as “a multitude of uniform, unidentifiable houses,
lined up inflexibly, at uniform distances, on uniform roads, in a treeless communal waste.”

His description fits a common stereotype of suburbs as physically monotonous, also assigning negative value to the suburban built form. In contrast, Mumford (1961, p. 493) elevates the city, which he calls “by its nature…a multi-form non-segregated environment.” This austere portrayal of suburbia—which Mumford’s critiques helped create—is both acknowledged and challenged by contemporary scholars. Those who agree often cite the problem of low-density development and uniformity in their critiques of suburban sprawl (e.g. Kunstler, 1994).

Peter Larkham (2004, p. 242), writing in the context of the United Kingdom, states that, “the suburban landscape is often regarded as one of design mediocrity, blandness, and uniformity...The uniformity usually comes from national guidelines on design and highway standards which, one critic argues, are inappropriate and unthinkingly applied to all suburban design concepts.” Larkham’s analysis suggests a characterization of suburban environments as plain and uninspiring—a sentiment which often is translated to suburban inhabitants as well. Certainly, suburbs were historically planned communities with predictable separation of land uses, different to the more haphazard development of the city. Gans (1968) reminds us that Boston’s North End was ethnically and architecturally homogeneous, but displayed admirable urban vitality. His elevation of the North End exception fails to mention the harsh reality of ethnic enclaves in the early twentieth century and the public health hazards of living conditions at the time. Overcrowding, unsanitary waste disposal, and an environment conducive to the spread of disease was the experience for thousands of Italian immigrants in the North End around the turn of the century. What may have appeared as a thriving urban
environment—replete with shops, residences, employment, and community gathering spaces like social clubs and churches—was also a hotbed for tuberculosis, meningitis, typhoid fever, and other communicable diseases (Puleo, 1994). This realization serves not as a condemnation of population density or ethnic enclaves, but an acknowledgement of public health and social ills resulting from unsafe living quarters. These negative conditions motivated those with means to construct new, more palatable circumstances elsewhere.

Indeed, the haphazard development and hazardous living conditions of early industrial cities stand in stark contrast to the highly-regulated environments of early suburbs. Early planned communities like Radburn and Riverside left nothing to chance. Despite this, some early suburbs were denser than the center cities, even in the United States; worldwide there are several such examples (Forsyth, 2012). This suggests that a primary characteristic of suburbs was control, an important aspect of suburban life today, as the built environment is highly regulated to produce development considered desirable.

In fact, there has been a mixing together of the physical attributes of the suburbs with, in particular, a middle-class way of life inextricably tied to homeownership and notions of the American Dream. The home construction boom following the Second World War, in conjunction with federal subsidies for mortgages and highway building, created opportunities for homeownership for working and middle-class families. Suburbs have been called the “landscape of the American Dream,” (Ames, 1999, p. 222) a persistent ideal which mirrors the common trope of the white-picket-fence. This American Dream landscape is composed of—according to Ames (2003, p. 222)—a “single-family house on its own lot sited within the large-scale, self-contained subdivision with a curvilinear street pattern” In Crabgrass
Frontier, Jackson argues that homeownership is almost the defining characteristic of the American suburb (1985, pp. 7, 11).

Others have also ascribed a dream-like status to the physical qualities of suburbs. In a piece about American suburbs from 1900 to 1950, Richard Harris (1999, p. 95) wrote: “Home ownership and lower-density living were recognizable, and indeed central, aspects of the suburban dream in the United States.” The dominance of single-family residential land use as inherently suburban was also addressed by eminent sociologist Herbert Gans (1968, p. 41) when he identified suburbs as “built up with single-family rather than multifamily structures and … less dense.” He (1968, p. 43) also recognized that in “the outer districts of most American cities homeownership is also extremely high,” another acknowledgement that the built environment within municipal boundaries vary greatly and cannot be definitively distinguished. Homeownership, while associated as suburban, does of course occur in cities.

Gans, in his essays, explores the connection between the physical environment and human behavioral traits, but was careful not to overemphasize the role of built form. He (1968, p. 28) criticized notable urbanist Jane Jacobs for what he called the physical fallacy: a perspective that “ignore[s] the social, cultural, and economic factors that contribute to vitality or dullness.” Despite his cautious approach to the influence of the physical environment on human behavior, Gans (1968, p. 153) wrote that “physical distance between neighbors is important. So is the relationship of the dwellings—especially their front and rear doors—and the circulation system. For example, if doors of adjacent houses face each other or if
residents must share driveways, visual contact is inevitable.” The ways in which houses are positioned can encourage more interaction.

In response to a glowing account of the vitality and energy of Boston’s former ethnic enclave the North End, Gans (1968, p. 28) claimed the area was “not diverse, but quite homogeneous in population as well as in building type. The street life … stems not so much from their physical character as from the working-class culture of their inhabitants. In this culture, the home is reserved for the family, so that much social life takes place outdoors.” His argument is complex. Social homogeneity in this case has led to increased vitality; structural similarity has led to aesthetic consistency and density. Gans separated culture and built form by attributing urban behavior to traits of the subgroup class status, not to the built environment. Where Jane Jacobs may have credited the height and setback of buildings in a historic neighborhood for pedestrianism and walkability, Gans sees people forced into the streets by low incomes and different lifestyles.

The relationship between humans and the built environment is core to the discipline of planning, and to this research. The extent to which our homes, streets, neighborhoods, towns, and cities represent our values is an area of rich complexity. McCann (1999, p. 137) writes that our cultural values shape the design, architecture, and demographic composition in suburban areas. It is also true that our values, behaviors, and culture are shaped to a certain extent by the existing built environment. Scholars have already looked into cultural features that are commonly associated with suburbs—a relationship that is termed “suburbanism.” To
view suburbanism as a concept allows the theorist to remove it from its placement in a specific geographic context.

**Autocentric Development and Design**

Yet another key component of the suburban built environment is a reliance on and development almost exclusively for automobiles. To some, “A single-family, detached house was like a car: ‘a crucial element in the new economy of mass consumption,’ (Baxandall and Ewen quoted in Beauregard, 2006) a viewpoint which ascribes parallel value to both single-family homes and automobiles in the suburban project.

Following the strain of suburbs as propagating consumerist values, Mace (2013) quotes Harvey (2010, p. 77) “…the suburbs and the car both represent essential areas for capital accumulation based on the availability of cheap oil. The suburbs turned wants into needs through the provisioning of an environment favourable to mass consumption.” To Harvey, the suburbs and auto-centric culture go hand-in-hand, supporting each other to create a society that necessitates increased consumption.

The relationship between suburbs and automobiles precedes the characterization of the two as partners in a scheme to perpetuate capitalist consumption, however. In 1961, Mumford characterized the relationship as oxymoronic while also predicting the rise of autonomous vehicles:
All that is left of the original impulse toward autonomy and initiative is the driving of the private motor car; but this itself is a compulsory and inescapable condition of suburban existence; and clever engineers already threaten to remove the individual control by a system of automation.” (Mumford, 1961, pp. 492-493)

To Mumford, the cultural association of automobiles as liberating is problematic, considering the built environment of most suburbs requires residents to purchase automobiles, depriving residents of multiple options they have in urban areas.

Gans (1968, p. 41) also touched on this when he defined suburbs as “designed for the automobile rather than for pedestrian and mass-transit forms of movement.” Here Gans is contrasting suburban auto-centricity with urban pedestrianism and transit orientation. The city, he writes, is better suited to walking and communal transportation options over individual motor vehicles. This sentiment is also supported by Caulfield (1994, p. 23) in his study of gentrification in Toronto. “Traditional urban fabric, built before the hegemony of the car,” he writes, “is hostile to efficient motoring; ergo, refashion the city to mimic the suburbs, a landscape made in the auto’s image.” In order to make the city palatable for newcomers or outsiders, Caulfield argues, the preferences of auto-centric culture needed to be addressed through civil engineering. He asserts that the city’s organic, original built environment is inherently antagonistic to the automobile.
Socio-cultural Attributes of the Suburban

In 1925, sociologist Harlan Douglass (1925, p. 165) asked if suburbs should be defined “not primarily in terms of their physical separateness from the city, or of their spacial [sic] contrasts, but in terms of distinctive organization and consciousness.” The association of suburbs with a unique consciousness is an early insight suggesting peripheral communities were more than just locations, but that their residents display, as Douglass (1925, p. v) suggests “a sort of social philosophy” that drives them to migrate to these new places. Suburbanism construed as a culture and lifestyle has been referenced in numerous publications spanning disciplines and decades. The literature presents common themes: middle-class lifestyle and an expression of consumerism, particularly rootedness in homeownership, and shared values, homogenous demographic and a desire for privatism.

Homogeneity of Class and Culture

Duncan and Grey (1978, p. 5) state: “[B]y 1817…..with the onset of the industrial revolution and the later development of new methods of transportation, the meaning of ‘suburban’ appears to have evolved towards its current use and connotation of middle-class lifestyles.” This is an idea touched on by many more scholars. In 1956, Sylvia Fava described suburbs as “contain[ing] more than their proportionate share of young married couples and … made up largely of families of middle-class status” (1956, p. 34). A similar assignment to a middle-class demographic was cited by Walker (1981, p. 392) who equated suburbanization with, “creating a certain form of middle-class lifestyle” and, more negatively by Mattingley (1997, 39 as quoted in Larkam 2004, p. 241), through the value-laden term “ oppressively middle-class.” Gans (1968, p. 45) takes a slightly varied interpretation of the specific class status of
what he terms the “new suburbia,” which he writes is “nothing more than a highly visible showcase for the ways of life of young, upper-working-class and lower-middle-class people.”

Gans’ commentary hints at another strain of suburban characterization: suburb as mass consumption. He refers to the suburbs as a “showcase for…ways of life,” an assertion that speaks to the mid-century mindset of consumerism. A more negative take on this strain is offered by Mumford (1961, p. 486), who chides suburbia as “inhabited by people of the same class, the same income, the same age group, witnessing the same television performances, eating the same tasteless pre-fabricated foods.” Decades later, Larkham (2004, pp. 15-16) notes that suburbs are “increasingly associated with mass consumption” and Ferber (1994, p. 127) even argues that “suburban culture is packaged for consumption.” One of the strongest statements comes from McCann (1999, p. 137), who believes that “[s]uburbs are the vivid expression of our culture of consumerism.”

If suburbs are an expression of conspicuous consumption, then housing is the primary good. While the single-family home on a dedicated parcel is the physical manifestation of homeownership, the social function of homeownership is a separate component. McCann (1999, p. 137), again, recognizes the importance of owning a house in some communities: “Houses are amongst the most revealing items of cultural expression. Their external face usually projects material tastes and wealth; their interior spaces express attitudes of family structure and privacy” The concept of the home as an extension of one’s identity and financial value is offered by Ferber (1994, p. 149) when she considers the home as having “an exchange-value and being the site of display of social identity.” Undoubtedly, suburban
homes are intimately connected with occupants’ participation in a capitalist economy and help to display a specific external image of the occupant to the world. This is not to say that urban homes cannot serve the same purpose, but the built form of the suburbs more prominently isolates the private home as a spectacle, whereas a more urban fabric would harmonize and integrate structures along the streetscape.

Homeownership also impacts the outlook of residents because of the financial ties to property. In his discussion of capitalism and urban space, Richard Walker (1981, p. 391) asserts that “homeowners must take a conservative view of land values and change in their neighborhood, and exclude all who might diminish it” and claims that “the culture of American homes calls for a certain show of public display, with open facades and yards presenting the household to the world. Under such circumstances one becomes highly concerned with neighborhood effects which reflect badly on oneself and hence with keeping out those who might lower the appearance of the neighborhood.” The impact of this self-interest on the social dynamics of neighborhoods cannot be ignored. Again, homeownership in urban areas also produces self-interested property owners, but the higher diversity of land use in cities dampens the effect.

**Privatism and Shared Values**

Perhaps it is the mutual self-interest in property values that contributes to social cohesion in suburbia. The common values shared by many suburban communities are acknowledged by scholars. Douglass (1925, p. 36) recognized that suburbs were “largely composed of like-minded people to whom cooperation should not be difficult.” Not only are suburban
populations like-minded, but they are statistically alike as well. Gans (1968, p. 41) calls the populations of suburbs “more homogenous,” and Fava (1956, p. 37) concludes that “suburban residents are a selected social-psychological type, oriented toward neighboring and other rural values and practices.” The extent to which suburban residents feel socially connected also led Gans (1968, p. 137) to declare that suburbs are “much like the small town,” which is a sense that many suburban communities today strive to project.

On the opposite end of the spectrum, some have characterized modern technological suburbs, called ‘technoburbs,’ as a “nonplace” due to evidence of “aspatial social networks” (Vaughn, 2009). As social networks move online, the rootedness in physical community space may decrease. Consequently, some twenty-first century suburbs may not prioritize investment in community space. What’s more, the historic center of the social life in the suburb has been the home. Gans provides perspective that “social activities take place inside the home” in middle-class neighborhoods, and that the home is the “vital center of suburban life (Gans, 1968, p. 136). Given the focus on private space in suburban life, the opportunities for social interaction may be—in today’s world—routed to aspatial networks.

The importance of private space is not limited to the suburbs, but some scholars contend that the increasing privatization of public space in urban areas is related to cultural suburbanization. Smith and Cowen argue that New York is becoming “more private, more predictable, and more homogenized” (Hammett & Hammett, 2007, p. 20), without hallmarks of urbanity like “diversity, spontaneity, and unpredictability.” This relates back to Wirth’s (1938) assertion that heterogeneity is a defining characteristic of the urban experience. Smith
and Cowen (2007) present the concepts of spontaneity and unpredictability as inherently urban, which positions suburban life as planned and predictable. In their view, Manhattan is being re-shaped in a more suburban image, with the aesthetic result being influenced by cultural and social values imported from suburbs.

As the privatization of public space is linked to the suburban, so are suburbs linked to ideological conservatism. This does not necessarily equate to the current dominant partisan binary in the United States, rather it references conservatism in the sense of a traditionalist and conventional frame of mind. Douglas (1925, p. 225-226) discusses the perspective of the typical suburban dweller:

   Indeed a suburbanite is a man who is following a minority opinion. He is a separatist who believes that he is wiser than the majority. He may be more of an individualist or perhaps more of an adventurer. It is, however, an essentially conservative manner of life for which he is striving. He believes that the way to live in an urban situation is to preserve town forms, the small community, single-family dwelling, and as much as possible of family privacy.

Nearly a century ago, to be suburban meant to be more individualist and separate from the waves of society. This was before post-war mass suburbanization, when building a suburban home would have incurred a significant cost burden and might have meant a longer commute for basic services. Douglas’ primary concern is that seeking a suburban lifestyle illustrates a desire for a private, family-focused life rather than a life experiencing the shared public spaces and innumerable human interactions of urban settings.
Conservatism in suburban residents can also be attributed to a variety of self-preservation, in that a owner-occupied home is not just a dwelling, but an investment that buyers want to see increase in value. Walker (1981, p. 393) writes that homeownership converts people into “mini-property speculators…to preserve and enhance their investment, homeowners must take a conservative view of land values and change in their neighborhood, and exclude all who might diminish it.” Walker connects the financial arrangement of living in a single-family dwelling with an ideology of conservatism, one that is resistant to change and protective of the status quo.

Dovey (1994, p. 146) builds on this conservatism as a product of single-family homeownership:

The image of the owner-occupied detached house is a powerful symbol of status and identity which embodies an entrenched opposition to medium-density housing. It is used by conservative political forces to signify ‘family’ and ‘stability,’ conceptually opposed to a ‘flat’ or ‘unit’ where only the young, the elderly and the lower classes live. The primacy of the detached house image in the semiotics of status is a serious hindrance to the development of alternative forms and types of housing with a better relationship to the reality of household type and structure.

Dovey associates the detached home with conservative forces, tying together symbologies of family life with the archetype of suburban homeownership. Suburbs are seen as family-oriented while other types of housing are reserved for non-nuclear social groups. In this way,
the suburbs are seen as the domain of conventional family life, a place for those who ascribe to traditional norms and dominant culture.

**Concluding Remarks about Suburban Attributes of Focus**

This review of this literature demonstrates that the concept of suburban can be readily understood as having physical and socio-cultural attributes. Suburbia is undoubtedly both culture and built environment, as Archer and colleagues (2015, p. xv) state in the recent anthology *Making Suburbia: New Histories of Everyday America*:

“…suburbia is produced and propagated via discourse, concretized in built environments, performed with objects, and embedded in topographies. Instead of defining suburbanites in terms of the conditions under which they live (e.g., municipal boundaries, mass-produced houses, demographic profiles, tastes, automobile lifestyles), this approach demands close attention to local conditions, individual choices, specific discourses, daily activities, and particular places.”

In the case of this thesis, the place is German Village. I examine the ways in which German Village has embraced the suburban, both in terms of the physical attributes associated with the suburbs as well as the in the way of life of German Village residents. As the literature illustrates, American suburbanism is a powerful socio-cultural and physical phenomenon that is in the initial stages of deterritorialization—or an ideological separation from its original peri-urban geographic context. Table 1 provides a summary of the most important characteristics and the authors who describe them as such. As demonstrated by this review, American suburbs have become negatively associated with monotonous housing stock,
automobile dependency, social segregation and homogeneity, and rigid separation of land uses. Suburban proponents, on the other hand, would argue that suburbs have fostered safe and quiet environments for child-rearing, high-quality educational opportunities, and ample green space.

Recognizing these attributes, I will examine particular physical, socio-cultural dimensions of life in German Village. Before doing so, let me first describe German Village in more detail.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Attributes</th>
<th>Authors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Table 1: Suburban Attributes and Respective Authors
This chapter explores German Village as a case study. German Village is a neighborhood located in Columbus, Ohio. I begin this chapter by describing some of the changes that are happening in the Central Ohio region, Columbus and some of its urban neighborhoods, highlighted the renewed interest in urbanity. I then describe German Village in more detail.

Establishment and Maturity as an Urban Neighborhood, circa 1830 to 1940

Before the ‘German Village’ identity, the area was known simply as the South End, along with many other neighborhoods. The area was settled in the mid-19th century by German immigrants and has street names like Kossuth, Frankfort, and Jaegar, to prove it. Germans were pushed to leave their homeland by war and famine, arriving en masse between 1840 and 1880 (Clark, 2015), but many arrived even earlier.

A 1927 thesis by Ira Blanchard generalized the entire South Side as “another region of foreigners…mixed up with the colored people in the north part of the region and with the descendants of the old German settlers through most of the region in general” (Blanchard, 1922, p. 117). The area also contained many stores owned and operated by immigrants “composed of about a dozen nationalities,” indicating the diversity of ethnic groups—not
singly German. These characterizations do not isolate the current German Village area as particularly more German or distinct from the South Side as a larger neighborhood.

Even before the work of Blanchard, the German section was noticed by scholars as an especially strong ethnic enclave. Eminent Chicago School sociologist Roderick Duncan McKenzie described the South Side in his 1923 study *The Neighborhood: A Study of Local Life in Columbus, Ohio*. He wrote that in 1910, Columbus’ 5,722 foreign-born Germans were the largest foreign-born group in the city. Of the neighborhood, he wrote, “The renowned German section of the city extends along South High Street from Livingston Avenue as far south as Washington Park, bounded on the east by Parsons Avenue, and on the west by the Hocking Valley track… The whole community, just outlined, is fundamentally German.” McKenzie offered more detailed descriptions of life in the German section: “The dwellings represent the typical German village structure,” he wrote, “built close up to the sidewalk, with garden space and chicken house in the rear. Many of the alleys are lined with small residences. Frequently the owner of a fine home will have a small building on the rear of his lot occupied by a tenant family” (McKenzie, 1923, p. 156). The historic district boundaries of today, then, appear to include just a small portion of the heritage area populated by Germans in the past.

Along with Old World architecture, the neighborhood had social clubs, institutions, schools, and newspapers for German-speaking residents. The first local German newspaper began printing in 1833, and German businesses were popping up to accommodate the influx of people (Rippley, 1968). Their migration occurred during a tumultuous time in German
history, when multiple territories were being brought into the fledgling German Empire. A large portion of the migrants to Columbus were of the Swabian and Bavarian groups, bringing with them their own unique customs but having the Germanic language as a common denominator (Clark, 2015).

The neighborhood was an enclave of German-born and German-speaking residents until the early-mid 20th century. To serve the new residents, the south side supported “a variety of businesses; most focused on daily necessities…[b]ake houses, blacksmith shops, saloons, wallpaper shops, slaughterhouses, barbershops, wagon shops, tailors, grocers, stone cutters and upholsterers were scattered throughout” (Graichen, 2010, p. 65). An important piece of German Village’s identity has always been a mixed-use environment. The concept of separating land uses among residential, commercial, retail, and others was not considered during this period of the neighborhood’s history. Homes and shops “were mixed with dwellings, for this was a walking community where local merchants and artisans were also neighbors” (Campen, 1978, p. 7). The business mix was such that Campen considered it to be a “self-sufficient neighborhood” where “markets, groceries, confectionery shops and taverns were randomly dispersed amidst residences (Campen, p. 68).
To access the variety of shops and amenities, the primary mode of transportation was walking, though horses were also available. Evidence of horse transportation is still visible today through limestone steps along the sidewalk designed to assist riders as they dismounted from carriages. The figure below illustrates the step, directly in front of the door on the left.
The advent of the streetcar era around the turn of the 20th century included German Village. The neighborhood would have been nearly built-out by 1901 when a streetcar map shows lines on S. High Street, E. Livingston, E. Whittier, and Parsons Avenue to the east. By 1906, there was also a line running along Mohawk, around Schiller Park and down Jaeger Street, serving the interior of the neighborhood. Streetcars served the area until the late 1930s and early 1940s when busses replaced them.
Unlike other urban neighborhoods of Columbus, German Village was built-out before the construction of streetcar rails in the area. With a general gradient in age (older to younger) from the north to the south and from the west to the east” (Travis, 1973, p. 52), most structures in the neighborhood were built between 1830 and 1900—before streetcars.

Some areas of Columbus, like the Clintonville and Old Town East neighborhoods, are considered “streetcar suburbs” because they developed in tandem or because of the extension of streetcar lines, which made the more distant areas accessible to jobs in the downtown area. This was not the case in German Village, however. The neighborhood was also considered
urban in terms of public schools, according to historic listings in the city directory. Beginning in 1910, the City Directory listed public schools and suburban schools separately. Suburban listings included neighborhoods like Milo-Grogan, Clintonville, South Linden, and the University District—but never schools in or near German Village (See Appendix C for full school listings). This indicates that the near south end was always considered part of the central city. As such, the neighborhood has always been pedestrian-oriented. The infrastructure and architecture developed entirely before the advent of automobility, which has an approximate date of 1930 in the U.S. (Norton, 2011, p. 11). The rise of car-oriented infrastructure and culture was one of the many factors that contributed to the decline of the South End, according to historian Campen: “the growth of suburbs and the proliferation of the automobile, sent the Village into a decline (1978, p. 26).

Figure 4: Map of Former South Side Streetcar Lines, 1925
The economic state of the German immigrant neighborhood was, not surprisingly, regarded as working class. The neighborhood weathered the Great Depression better than other areas of Columbus, according to Elmer. It also maintained a sense of pride despite ranking low in a 1918 measure of personal property returns by sociologist McKenzie (see Figure 5: Columbus map of personal property value by ward, 1918). The average value for household furniture for an elector in Ward 2 was $67.56, the fourth lowest in the city. Despite this lower ranking,
the German area had a “greater mixture of economic levels” than anywhere else in the city, and residents were regularly “decorating their humble little cottages with flowers and plants,” a behavior that indicated “people's pride in their own homes.” Elmer also noted that even though many people were considered poor and there was deterioration of the physical structures, “the area had an exceptionally low crime rate” and “the Village area remained quite stable” during this period.

**Period of Decline, circa 1940 to 1960**

While there is not a distinct year that marks the decline of German Village, the prevailing narrative is that suburbanization led to depopulation and physical deterioration. In addition to automobility and suburbanization, “the loss of employment in the immediate area…left many a simple, deteriorating Village residence open to occupancy by the lowest and most disadvantaged elements of society who had either the means, nor the will to properly maintain it” (Campen, 1978, p. 10). There is also a claim that zoning of the neighborhood to allow manufacturing and commercial uses in 1923 contributed to a decline in desirability (Clark, 2015, p. 95). However, industrial firms were in the neighborhood much earlier than 1923. The Columbus Watch Company produced time pieces at 79 Thurman Avenue, in a building constructed in 1882 that housed a “small army of workers to turn out up to 150 pocket watches a day” (Clark, 2015, p. 151). There was also the Martin Carpet Cleaning company at Jaeger and Sycamore, a dry cleaning facility complete with a smokestack (Clark, 2015, p.103) as well as a small mineral water bottling company at 791 Lazelle street in 1910. One of the most popular name sakes of German Village also used the neighborhood for an industrial purpose. The Schmidt family, owners of the popular German-themed restaurant
that has attracted tourists to the area since 1967, owned a meat-packing and processing facility where hogs were slaughtered until the banning of slaughter in city limits by Columbus City Council in the 1960s (Clark, 2015, p. 110). The idea that 1923 was a watershed year that marked the loss of a more pure residential enclave is difficult to sustain when considering the variety of land uses present in the neighborhood before that time.

The narrative of the period of decline paints an image of a suffering neighborhood saved by the “initiatives of Mr. Frank Fetch in the 1950s and the formation of the German Village Society in January, 1960” (Campen, 1978, p. 26). In oral history interviews, one resident discussed how the neighborhood was “probably 30% to 40% boarded up and it was kind of lost” in the 1950s (Oral History Interviews; Phillips, p. 2). Another resident called it a “really broken down neighborhood” when she moved there in 1961 (Oral History Interviews; Lilly, 1) and another said her parents asked if she had “move[d] into Skid Row or something” (Oral History Interviews; Kight, 1). Contrary to the image of the south side as desperate, U.S. Census figures show stability from 1940 to 1960 in key indicator areas. Population figures declined minimally in both census tracts from 1940 to 1960, for a total loss of 960 people over 20 years. The unemployment rate decreased substantially over the time period, from over 10% to an average around 3% for both tracts. The rate of owner-occupied properties, an important indicator of neighborhood stability, actually increased by just over 5% on average between the two census tracts from 1940 to 1960. Despite these signs of stability, the vacancy rate for dwelling units did increase over the 20-year period, but by less than a 2% average. For reference, the vacancy rate in 1970 rose to 5.85% on average, even after ten years of structural renovations.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>White</th>
<th>Unemployed</th>
<th>Owner-Occupied Units</th>
<th>Vacant</th>
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<td>Tract 52</td>
<td>6105</td>
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<td>13.11%</td>
<td>28.32%</td>
<td>3.39%</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Tract 57</td>
<td>7024</td>
<td>99.57%</td>
<td>11.20%</td>
<td>37.95%</td>
<td>2.72%</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Tract 52</td>
<td>6270</td>
<td>97.35%</td>
<td>4.40%</td>
<td>34.95%</td>
<td>1.73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tract 57</td>
<td>6655</td>
<td>99.67%</td>
<td>2.65%</td>
<td>48.54%</td>
<td>1.78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Tract 52</td>
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<td>99.67%</td>
<td>2.66%</td>
<td>43.42%</td>
<td>4.58%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Select U.S. Census data for Tracts 52 and 57, 1940 to 1960

In his detailed case study of the German Village restoration, Elmer wrote that “census figures do not actually paint a picture of doom for the area, but with less than 37 percent owner occupancy and with over 36 percent of the properties in an advanced state of deterioration, it is understandable that lending institutions became hesitant to invest in the area” (Elmer, 1970, p. 26). This points to the negative influence of federal and banking policies over the lack of will or concern of the population to keep up their properties. With institutions unwilling to loan money for home repair in a working-class neighborhood, residents were left with little choice but to watch their homes deteriorate as federal programs subsidized suburban growth through mortgage tax write-offs and highway construction.
It is likely that the image of hardship is most centrally attributed to the deterioration of physical structures rather than the socio-economic composition of the area. The images below illustrate examples of pre-restoration properties in German Village.

Figure 6: Photo of a property on Mohawk Street before restoration (Source: Scheurer, 1966)
Figure 7: Unidentified property prior to restoration (Source: Elmer, 1970)
Figure 8: Rear of unidentified buildings in German Village (Source: Elmer, 1970)

Figure 6: Photo of a property on Mohawk Street before restoration (Source: Scheurer, 1966)

Figure 8: Rear of unidentified buildings in German Village (Source: Elmer, 1970) demonstrate the pre-restoration physical condition of some structures in the neighborhood, but do not provide a complete picture. By understanding the structural and demographic make-up of German Village in the period just before restoration, we can better imagine the neighborhood into which restorationists were moving. There is evidence to refute the narrative that the neighborhood was severely disadvantaged before the intervention of 1960.
Revitalization Period, 1960 to present

The revitalization story in German Village is unique from many other neighborhoods for a several reasons. First, the narrative focuses heavily on a figurehead founder, named Frank Fetch. Mr. Fetch has secured a prominent legacy in the neighborhood, and today is the namesake of a public park and an award given by the German Village Society. As the founder and long-time president of the German Village Society, Fetch was instrumental in organizing interest in the area beginning in the 1950s.

Figure 9: Photograph of Frank Fetch, founder and long-time president of the German Village Society

As was typical of many urban neighborhoods during the period of mass suburbanization in the mid-twentieth century, the south side experienced disinvestment and was not regarded as a particularly desirable residential area by those with means. “Depending on the section of
the Village area, as few as 40% of the homes were owner-occupied while approximately 10% of the buildings had no private bath or were dilapidated” (Stover, 2001, p. 10). Frank Fetch, an employee of the City of Columbus (Campen, 1978, p. 15) and resident of Gahanna, a Columbus suburb, purchased his first house in the area in 1943 “just to have something to do and to create an income for the future” (Graichen, 2010, p. 40).

By the early 1960s, Fetch had invested in and restored three properties in the area and founded the German Village Society (Stover, 2001). Created “to promote the preservation and rehabilitation of the neighborhood,” the German Village Society is a membership organization that brings neighbors together and advocates for the historic district (German Village Society, n.d.). One of the Society’s most notable efforts is the Annual Haus Und Garten Tour, which draws thousands of visitors who visit the interior of homes and view outdoor gardens in the neighborhood. Since 1960, the event has been an integral component of the German Village Society and has contributed to the growth in popularity and prestige of the historic district.

In addition to the Society, a resident-led membership organization, the German Village Commission has also been instrumental in the revitalization of the area. Through the advocacy efforts of Frank Fetch, the Commission was the City of Columbus’ first historic preservation regulatory governance structure and was given design review authority in 1963 (German Village Commission, 1989, p. 8). The City of Columbus supported preservation in the neighborhood by funding a secretary position for the Commission. There are seven members of the commission appointed by the mayor for three-year terms. The ordinance
dictates commission membership as follows: one city council representative, one member of the mayor’s staff, one architect, two people with a special interest or expertise in either historic preservation or German Village, and two persons recommended by the German Village Society. The commission reviews requests for all exterior alterations, additions, new construction and demolition. It also was authorized to make recommendations on related zoning issues. Property owners seeking to alter their property must first obtain a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) from the commission, a process which typically requires the submission of building site or streetscape photos, site plans, elevations, floor plans, and construction drawings by the property owner. According to the German Village Guidelines, by reviewing and approving proposed changes, the commission preserves the distinctive sense of place and historic ambiance provided by the neighborhood’s architecture.

With the help of aesthetic regulation facilitated by the City of Columbus, German Village was considered a less risky neighborhood by some of the city’s more affluent citizens by the 1980s. Throughout the 1960s and 1970s, the area attracted restorationists with an interest in historic architecture. A 1967 thesis by Matthew James Crofton at The Ohio State University divided the approximately 12,000 residents of German Village into three distinct categories: (1) resettled suburbanites, (2) German immigrants or descendants, (3) low-income families or people of Appalachian heritage. By 1976, “property taxes in the Village rose so high that some residents threatened to withhold paying them as most were facing a 100% to 400% increase” (Stover, 2001, p. 18). Clearly, the efforts of Fetch and other early restorationists had an impact.
More than two decades after Frank Fetch’s initial interest in the struggling south side area, the German Village Historic District was transformed into a well-regarded neighborhood drawing national attention. The neighborhood was covered by the *New York Times* in 1968, the *Boston Globe* in 1972, the *Chicago Tribune* in 1984, and the *Los Angeles Times* in 1989. Journalists heralded the private funding of the restoration and the quaintness of the architecture, while Fetch claimed the area had become a “prestige community” (Thomas, 1972). By 1982, the area was described as a “ghetto for wealthy young professionals” by *Columbus Monthly*, indicating the status inherent with a German Village address.

This upward momentum has continued to the present. In 2014, the *Wall Street Journal* wrote about a couple who spent $600,000 on renovations of a German Village home which they purchased for $300,000 in 2010. The same couple converted a duplex into a single-family home and purchased an adjacent cottage to convert into a garage—reducing three historic dwelling units to just one. The conversion of a two-family residence to a single-family home, as well as elimination of a dwelling to store automobiles, are—seemingly—changes in the built environment that accompany an increase in “prestige,” as Mr. Fetch termed it. This example is emblematic of the process underway in German Village that will be discussed in this thesis. As a demographic shift has occurred over the past half-century, a change in the structures and physical environment has occurred as well.

**Defined Boundaries & Unique Identity**

One of the most fundamental aspects of German Village relates to its boundaries. As a formally designated historic district with enforceable regulations, it is necessary for it to have
a defined boundary. With borders, a housing structure, for instance, is either within the area or not—no blurred lines. Establishing this geography at the beginning of revitalization efforts helped control the scope and incentivize investments within the historic designation zone and creating a clear boundary for regulation. Without the area boundaries and local governance structures of the German Village Commission and the German Village Society, the neighborhood could well have remained another deteriorating inner-city place competing for attention in a large city. The governance structures allowed for a certain amount of local control within the big city, and provided the stability and assurance attractive to owner-occupants and investment property owners.

At just the third meeting to bring interested citizens together around the concept of preventing the demolition of the German Section of the South End, a goal of the movement was already to establish boundaries (Cambell & Murray, 1967, p. 16). The boundaries were also relatively arbitrary, as they identified only a small portion of a neighborhood that was cohesively understood as the South End at the time. When the neighborhood was constructed in the mid- to late-nineteenth century, residents did not establish smaller regions with specific boundaries—especially not the jagged boundary on the eastern edge of today’s German Village. During a contentious period in 1977 when some residents just outside the historic district petitioned for inclusion, a City of Columbus staff member determined that a “hard border for German Village” could not be drawn, based on the similarities of the architecture of the areas (Lubrano, 1982, p. 78). According to students working with an Ohio State team in 1960, the boundaries were established “by characteristics that were common through the neighborhood…basically brick houses of similar proportion and scale, with slate roofs, clay
chimney pots, iron picket fences, and brick walks and streets” (Javor, n.d.; included in Appendix D).

Figure 10: Map of German Village District and other features

Nearly a century later, local historian and neighborhood resident John Clark writes that while “the term ‘German Village’ is used primarily to describe the 233-acre historic district…the
early Germans settled a much broader area—generally, from the Scioto River on the west to Parsons Avenue on the east and from a few blocks north of the I-70/I-71 split on the north to well beyond today’s Nursery Lane historic district boundary on the south” (Clark, 2015, p. 20). Again, the wider area inhabited by German immigrants shows that the historic district boundaries could be considered relatively arbitrary. For example, the boundaries could have been segmented to only the northern portion, closer to Livingston Avenue. This would have created a more chronologically homogenous district, as “there is a general gradient in age (older to younger) from the north to the south and from the west to the east” (Travis, 1973, p. 52). However, the northern section was regarded as more distressed. “North of Sycamore, many of the houses were empty,” resident Bill Scheurer told the *Columbus Dispatch* in 1986. “The fire department made many trips to the area to put out fires started in empty houses by transients trying to keep warm.” Third-generation German Village resident Mary Louise Hendricks asserted that "A lot of people have the misconception that the whole area was running down at the heels. The northeast section was pretty bad, but the area around the park was pretty solid” (Bohley, 1986).

Ironically, even the figurehead founder of German Village acknowledged that the neighborhood was no longer German by the late twentieth century. “It’s not German at all,” said Frank Fetch in an interview published in the *Christian Science Monitor* in 1983. “We kept the name because of the architecture, almost identical to the homes their builders left behind in Frankfurt, Stuttgart, and other cities” (Wood, 1983). It is curious that a neighborhood full of “Dutch double” cottages and “Italianate” homes is assigned the nationality-specific German Village title, but certainly understandable given the
concentration of German residents in the past. More importantly, the language that Fetch uses here is also indicative of his close relationship to the new neighborhood. He says that “We kept the name,” asserting that he and other new neighborhood residents with no history there possessed the authority to re-name a section of the city that had existed for over a century as simply “the South Side” or “South End.” This reveals Fetch’s paternalistic posturing toward the neighborhood, which is not a subtle hint considering the popular recognition of Fetch as the “Father of the rejuvenated Village” (Campen, 1978, p. 4). He believed he was starting something new out of something old—essentially forming a new neighborhood from one that had been neglected and abandoned.

Despite this more collective history of wider German heritage in the area, some post-1960 residents took the new boundaries very seriously. One particularly passionate resident asserted: “We built a perfect little jewel. We weren’t going to lose it” (Lubrano, 1982). The proposal of a group of adjacent residents was to expand the historic district by 11 acres, which would have brought them under the jurisdiction of the German Village Commission and likely increase their property values by using German Village prestige and aesthetic regulatory protection. The same passionate resident compared the proposed annexation to diluting good whiskey with water. German Village’s early leader Mr. Fetch, however, differed on the matter. Fetch used the term “snob” to describe the annex opposition and declined to serve as president of the German Village Society after the spat (Lubrano, 1982).

The fierceness with which some residents defended the borders of the new German Village illustrates a unique sentiment of exceptionalism. New German Village residents had not
moved to the South End. Nor had they necessarily moved into the City of Columbus, exactly. Rather, they had moved to German Village proper—an aesthetically policed enclave with enforceable borders and semi-independent governance structures. This new endeavor was an experiment and an experience, and being part of that was made the neighborhood and the incoming residents exceptional.

**A Typology of Change to German Village Structures**

With nearly 60 years of positive upward momentum in the district, the state of housing has been drastically altered. There are six primary ways in which the housing stock has changed. The first was an effort to valorize housing in the early days of revitalization by converting single-family units into multi-family. A common example of this is the addition of an exterior stairwell to allow access to a second-story living unit. The second is the opposite: converting a multi-family dwelling into a single-family dwelling. As I demonstrate later in this thesis, this shift from multifamily to single family is more common than vice versa. A common approach is to remove a portion of the dividing wall between a duplex, opening up the space. The third change is converting a building from retail or commercial use to residential use. Because of the area’s historic architecture, buildings originally constructed for retail or commercial use are readily distinguished from residential architecture. The fourth is changing a residential building into a business use. This conversion type proliferated in the 1980s, when attorneys found the German Village location attractive and converted dwellings into office space—enough to create a relative disturbance in the neighborhood. The fifth primary change is the combination of multiple residential dwelling units into one. There are a handful of examples in which owners purchase adjacent structures and connect them
architecturally, usually with subtle and recessed additions that preserve the historic façade and massing. The last major type of alteration is an addition. Some are small, like rear kitchen additions to cottages. Others are large, like additions that are much larger than the original structure.

With these changes occurring since the genesis of the neighborhood in the mid-nineteenth century through today, the cumulative impact has considerably reshaped the original built environment. There is no presumption that historic neighborhoods should retain their original structural and demographic qualities into perpetuity. However, there is a defensible standpoint of working to preserve elements of cultural heritage beyond architecture.
Single to multi-family
This 132 E. Whittier home was originally single-family, inhabited by Charles Dammeyer, a paving contractor, from 1884 to 1902. Maps indicate original single-family use, but a second front door was added to create two units, according to the Ohio Historic Inventory.

Residential to business
This law office at 592 S. Third St. is typical of many residential structures converted to professional offices. In 1920 it was the home the Stutz family. Converting homes to offices has been a point of contention in the neighborhood for decades.

Multi to single-family
This circa 1900 duplex at 692-694 Mohawk was likely converted a single-family home after it was sold in 2000 for $135,000. It was purchased four years later for $390,000. The price increase indicates a conversion from double to single occupancy.

Structure combination
These two residences at 138 and 142 E. Sycamore Street were combined—likely in 2004—to create a 4,732 square foot home with 4 bedrooms, 4 full baths, and 2 half baths. An addition and garage were added in 1998, and in 2016 it sold for $1.75 million.

Business to residential
This 1880 structure at 246 E. Sycamore was operated as the Streig Grocery store until the 1930s. In 2010 the building sold for just under $1.5 million and today is part of a 3,839 square foot home with 3 bedrooms, 3 full baths, and 2 half baths.

Home Additions
This single-family home at 619 Mohawk Street originally consisted of just the 1.5 story brick cottage (above, right). In 1987, a large addition was added, nearly quadrupling the square footage of the original footprint.

Figure 11: Typology of structure alterations
Trends Across Time: How German Village Evolved Over a Century and a Half

Business Dynamics

The business composition of the German Village neighborhood has changed considerably from its genesis as an immigrant enclave to its current state as a fashionable historic district. A scan of the 1926 Columbus Phone Book shows a wide variety of businesses located in the area, from the Linkenheil Planing Mill (182 E. Columbus) to Smith's Pharmacy (193 Thurman). In the German Village area, there were butchers, beauty parlors, doctors, dentists, drug stores, photography processing, cheese manufacturing, dry goods stores, and trades like plumbers, roofers, and machinists scattered throughout. With 18 groceries, the area had a plethora of options for purchasing food, as well as options for running into friends and neighbors. By 1963, the number of groceries declined to 12 and today there are no groceries within the boundary of the German Village historic district. There are groceries on the eastern border and near the northwest corner of the neighborhood, within walking distance of the district. Some of this change can be attributed to an evolution of retail at a national and international scale, but the decline in businesses also occurred in tandem with the neighborhood’s renaissance as a residential enclave, as imagined by its new inhabitants.

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<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restaurants/Bar</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flower shop</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3: Select business types, 1926 to 2014

Household Size Dynamics
In order to understand how German Village household size and demographic composition has changed over time, this research used historical census data for Mohawk Street, a 3,400 ft. road between E. Livingston Avenue and Schiller Park. The scan identified 29 individual census documents and produced data for 176 unique dwelling units in 135 individual structures, with an average household size of 3.57. The largest household was 828 Mohawk, owned with a mortgage by Richard and Frances Callahan and their eight children, ages 6 to 19. The average household size for owners and renters differed only slightly, at 3.59 and 3.55 respectively. Of properties with data available, 33% were owned and 57% were rented. Of homes that were owned, 74% were owned without a mortgage, while 26% were mortgaged. Both homes that were rented and owned took on boarders, though it was more common to have boarders as a home owner than a tenant. Only 8.6% of dwelling units recorded having boarders for the 1920 census.

Figure 12: Average Household Size, 1920 to present
Figure 12: Average Household Size, 1920 to present illustrates the change in average household size from 1920 to the present, using the Mohawk Street sample as representative of the neighborhood. The decline from over three people per dwelling unit to less than two is indicative primarily of a reduction in the number of families with children living in the neighborhood. More contemporary census data can also shed light on neighborhood change. Average household size in the two census tracts that comprise German Village (Tracts 52 and 57) has declined since 1970, the first decade for which the number of households is available. The figure continues to decline to the most recent 2015 American Community Survey (ACS) census data. The survey conducted for this research shows a slightly higher household size, at 1.88 for a sample size of 144 people.

Population decline

The number of people living in the two census tracts that comprise German Village has declined since U.S. Census figures became available at the tract level in 1940. Figure 13: Population decline since 1940 (Source: U.S. Census) shows that before restoration efforts began in 1960, the neighborhood was home to about 13,000 people. A decade after the revitalization period started, the neighborhood had just over 9,000. Then a relatively stability of around 6,000 people was achieved in 1980 and continues today. This trajectory points to the period of gentrification having been a 20-year era between 1960 and 1980, and that the transformation was complete by 1980. This assertion is supported by archival evidence presented in Chapter 5 that acknowledges the high-wealth status of German Village by the early 1980s.
That the population of a revitalized neighborhood would decline is particularly notable. To focus on the word "revitalize," we must look at the "vitality" of the neighborhood. Considering the root of the word vitality is Latin for “life” (vita), to put life back into a formerly struggling district would ostensibly mean increasing population, increasing commercial activity, and more generally restoring it the level of prosperity it enjoyed before its purported downfall. At the very least, one would assume the post-revitalization state would exceed the level of vitality during the pre-revitalization state. In German Village, however, there is evidence that the pre-revitalization neighborhood had more than twice the current population and offered a rich variety of retail and commercial options for residents, prompting the question of whether German Village was revitalized or more properly suburbanized.
In the remainder of this thesis, I describe the ways in which German Village has embraced the suburban both in terms of the physical elements of the built environment as well as the socio-cultural characteristics of local residents.
Chapter 4: Research Methods and Data

In this chapter, I describe the different data sources and methods for my examination of the built environment and socio-cultural elements of German Village. I begin with describing the data and methods for my analysis of Physical/Built Environment characteristics.

**Physical/Built Environment Characteristics**

I utilized rich data available from the Franklin County Auditor to examine changes in housing, real estate, the built environment, and land use over time. The auditor tracks dozens of attributes for each parcel in the county, primarily for taxation purposes. Using tax assessment parcel data and shape files from April 1997 to the present, I used Geographic Information System (GIS) and excel to identify the characteristics of housing, generating descriptive statistics related to transaction price, square footage, owner-occupancy, and property type. The data for this method was obtained from the Franklin County Auditor online data portal, in comma separated values (.csv) and GIS files (.shp, et al.).

I conducted extensive field work in the German Village historic district, recording alterations in the housing stock and commercial structures and taking photographs to illustrate the typologies of structural change. To identify changes in land use, a combination of historic maps and Franklin County Auditor data were used. The historic maps referenced were the
Baist Real Estate Atlas (1899, 1910, and 1920) and the Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps (1922). Auditor data available digitally begins in 1997, limiting the GIS mapping of land use change to that year.

Using real estate and rental marketplace data from Zillow, I conducted a content analysis to evaluate how property listings available in January 2017 are discussed in terms home descriptions and amenities.

**Demographic characteristics**

To evaluate how population composition of German Village and other areas change over time, this research relies on data from the U.S. Census Bureau. I used individual digital census sheets for 1920 and available in the Columbus Metropolitan Library, while all other census data was obtained through Social Explorer, a demographic data visualization and research website to which The Ohio State University maintains an institutional subscription. The primary purpose of using historic 1920 data was to identify household size by totaling the number of individuals listed per housing unit.

In order to understand how German Village household size and demographic composition has changed over time, I also used historical census data for Mohawk Street, a 3,400 ft. road between E. Livingston Avenue and Schiller Park. Mohawk Street was selected for the ease of locating historical records, as Mohawk is a unique street name and the chances of matching results returned from other locations was reduced. Using a segment of road that is entirely contained within German Village also reduced the labor of narrowing down address ranges.
On roads that travel through the neighborhood, the German Village address range would have need to be considered to filter out properties. The census records contain the names of individuals and ages of those who lived at a property, as well as their race and ethnic heritage. They also show whether the residence was owned or rented, and if owned, with or without a mortgage. There is also an indication of whether boarders lived at the residence, and some details of the occupation of the residents.

While Mohawk is just a small portion of the neighborhood, the data obtained from the historical record will be used as an admittedly limited representation of area norms for the time. A larger scan of historical census records was not feasible for the task at hand. A small number of addresses were not listed, and the Columbus City Polk Directory was used to investigate the householder in these instances. Other sources to cross-reference included the 1926 Columbus Phone Book and Franklin County Auditor property records.

Where available, census data from the mid-twentieth century to present was used to demonstrate change over time. Data for the number of households was available beginning in 1960. Unfortunately, the census tracts that comprise the German Village historic district also include other adjacent neighborhoods. This is an unavoidable issue that is acknowledged and illustrated with a geographic representation of the differing boundaries.

I calculated average household sizes by dividing the number of persons in households by the number of households (U. S. Census Bureau, n.d.). For contemporary figures, the average household sizes of census tracts 52 and 57 were average together to produce an average for
the area for each selected year. This combination was also used for population and household figures.

**Socio-Cultural Perspectives**

I utilized two main sources for this part of the analysis. The first data source is interview data from the German Village Society. The German Village Society has been conducting interviews with neighborhood residents for many years. Using 27 oral history interviews of individuals and couples, this research identifies prominent and recurring themes in the interviews. These interviews were not conducted by me or with my direction or involvement. The participants in the interviews were not told that their responses would be used in this research or to support any particular position. I read and reread the transcripts of 27 interviews to pull out topics about the neighborhood in areas of interest.

The interviews were conducted by German Village Society volunteers in an unstructured format, with different questions for participant in a conversational style. Considering this, the discussion of certain subjects across participants can be expected to be relatively unbiased. However, the interviews tend to touch on topics of significance to the history of the neighborhood, so many participants touch on the same ideas. Furthermore, some volunteers conducted multiple interviews and displayed a preference for certain questions. This inconsistency cannot be mitigated, but it can be acknowledged. The analysis of the interviews identified statements relating to the following concepts:

- Business composition/Building history
- Demographic Composition/Race/Class
- Exclusivity
The interviews were coded with these key concepts, and tagged statements were aggregated by topic. I analyzed and tabulated statements across interviews related to the same subjects. The goal for coding was to identify common themes and their connotations across the interviewees. The approach was to scan a number of interviews first to identify prominent themes, and then scan the remainder of the interviews to mark each instance of the identified theme throughout. The excerpts for each key term were then collected and organized into an index by subject, with the name of the speaker and frequency of appearance also recorded.

A second source of data for examining the socio-cultural characteristics of German Village is from a survey I conducted from February 2017 to March 2017. I conducted this survey in conjunction with the German Village Society to examine factors that draw residents and business owners to locate in the historic German Village district. The survey also sought to learn how residents and business owners feel about the direction of the neighborhood in terms of balancing retail and residential land uses and historic preservation. The primary goal of the survey was to determine if German Village has certain attributes that make it more attractive to people who have suburban housing history. As part of this larger question, the main objective in this research is to identify and analyze the preferences of the German
Village community for housing characteristics and land use patterns, and also how these characteristics might be similar to their previous residence.

Figure 14: Map of geographic distribution of survey responses

The sample surveyed included people who self-selected to take the anonymous, web-based survey. The sample was recruited through a partnership with the German Village Society
(GVS), a membership advocacy group for German Village residents and businesses. The GVS leveraged their email contact lists and social media accounts to share the survey link with the target participants, and participants chose to take the survey from the email they received.

The variables of interest were to measure the respondent’s perceptions of life in German Village—positive and negative. Additionally, the research explores a variety of built environment features to understand what features or amenities are desired (see the attached questionnaire). Participants first answered demographic questions (i.e. age, sex, income, housing tenure, etc.). Next, participants indicated their affiliation with the German Village community (i.e. Resident, business owner, or both). Depending on their response, the participant was presented with a unique set of questions. Residents were asked to identify the intersection closest to their home on a map in the survey, followed by questions about when they moved to German Village, where they moved from, and other questions like the size of their current and former residences. Business owners were asked another set of questions, focused on the current climate for commerce and any issues they are having with their location in the neighborhood. Business owners who are also residents were presented with the resident question set as well. Lastly, all participants were asked questions about historic preservation and demographic questions. These questions seek to identify strengths and challenges with the concept of preserving historic structures in a modern and affluent neighborhood.
The survey was designed to take about 10 to 15 minutes to complete. It was available online from February 22 to March 14, 2017. Anyone with the link could take the survey, and participants could leave the survey at any time. At the end of the survey, respondents were redirected to an external web page on the German Village Society website with an optional submission form to a raffle for the possibility to win one of three items: (1) two tickets to the 58th Annual German Village Society Haus Und Garten Tour, a total value of $50.00 or (2) a $25 gift card to G. Michael’s, a restaurant in the neighborhood. In order to avoid study bias and to control for threats to internal validity, most answers within each set of questions were randomized in Qualtrics, where appropriate. Answers that offer ordered responses, like levels of satisfaction or percentages, were not be randomized. Survey response data downloaded from the Qualtrics website was exported and analyzed within Microsoft Excel using descriptive statistics, frequency tables, and content analyses. Figure 14 demonstrates the response rates for the different sections of the neighborhood. There were a total of 121 respondents for the survey.

**General Archival Analysis and Data Sources**

This research includes information and quotes from various media sources, primarily *The Columbus Dispatch* and *Columbus Monthly*. These excerpts were located either through references to them in secondary sources or from archival searches through digital and microfilm records. To locate articles relating to German Village, the keyword ‘German Village’ was used in the NewsBank, Inc. database, which offers full text news articles from 1985 to the present. Media was also identified using the Columbus Metropolitan Library’s card catalog index organized by subject. Other materials were provided by the German
Village Society, such as previous academic work on the neighborhood and Society newsletters and photographs obtained through the organization’s website.

When necessary, Franklin County Auditor and Franklin County Recorder data was cross-referenced to ensure that the relocation narrative offered by residents or media sources was correct. For example, it was mentioned in an oral history interview that Fred Holdridge moved to German Village from “out near [Ohio Dominican University]” in a house that “looked exactly like a German Village two-story house.” To identify this, an inspection of Sunbury Road was conducted to identify a brick Italianate structure, and the Auditor’s transfer document was located. This cross-referencing method was used frequently to discover where German Village residents moved from.
Chapter 5: Results and Discussion

In this chapter, I describe the results of my analysis and discuss the relevance of the findings to my research question: has German Village adopted physical and socio-cultural characteristics similar to those we attribute to the suburbs?

Based on the literature review, I developed a list of physical and socio-cultural characteristics of the suburban. My findings are organized loosely around this list.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Attributes</th>
<th>German Village Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Physical attributes</td>
<td>Homogeneity</td>
<td>Architectural sameness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Low-density</td>
<td>Typical building height of 1 to 2 stories.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Homeownership</td>
<td>Owner-occupied units</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Single-family homes</td>
<td>Single-family home data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Auto-centric</td>
<td>Proliferation of garages; car dependency data; examples of controversy over parking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socio-cultural attributes</td>
<td>Homogeneity</td>
<td>Income, race, educational attainment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Privatism</td>
<td>Culture of homes; Features of German Village homes in interior decorating magazines and the Haus und Garten Tour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Class status and shared values</td>
<td>Income levels; Conservative political and social ideology.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4: Suburban Attributes and German Village examples
Part I: Physical Attributes

Density, Homogeneity and Single Family Homeownership

From the very beginning, German Village has been recognized for its architectural homogeneity. In the entire 223-acre district, there are only a handful of structural styles. The German Village guidelines list 10 architectural types, eight being residential, one being commercial, and the last simply outbuildings like garages and storage sheds (German Village Commission, 1989, pp. 24-27). The tallest structure is the spire of St. Mary’s Catholic Church, followed by a handful of scattered three and four story commercial buildings. The typical street is lined with one, one and a half, and two-story homes in the cottage or Italianate style with almost no setback from the sidewalk. This consistency provides predictability for the pedestrian and magnifies smaller details, like engraved lintels and flower boxes.

For some residents, the homogeneity of the built environment was viewed negatively. For instance, in a 1986 Columbus Dispatch article, a Canal Winchester resident commented about her community: “The nice thing is that we're not a German Village where everything looks the same. We have houses from different eras. We have Victorian, log cabin and farm houses. It's a wonderful combination," she said (Neighbor of the Week, 1986). Suburbs historically have faced fierce criticism regarding architectural sameness.

In some respects, architectural sameness is one of German Village’s greatest assets. Even Frank Fetch appreciated the similarity of structures. In a conversation recounted by Bob Corotis, the investor who coined the neighborhood’s new name, Fetch is said to have
appreciated the “wrought iron fences, slate roofs, [and] the homogeneity of the buildings” (Bohley, 1990). The collection of similarly-styled homes garners attention as a concentration of a particular architecture related to the heritage of German-American immigrants during an identifiable time period. Not only are the homes similar in style and building material, but some homes are nearly identical in construction.

Figure 15: Similar homes on Jaeger St. just north of Deshler Ave.

These homes on Jaeger Street are nearly identical, save for customized shutters and porches. In total, nine consecutive homes display remarkable similarity in architecture—wedged between two unique residences at the corner of the block. Again, there is some irony in the derision of suburbia as cookie-cutter and bland when examples of stark homogeneity exist in a historic district like German Village. This serves to demonstrate one way in which German Village exhibits a suburban characteristic.

Another element of suburbanization of German Village is around the topic of density. Figure 10 displays the local and extent of transformation from multifamily to more single family use
between 1997 and 2017. As this Figure 10 demonstrates, even homes in a premier historic district can be “cookie-cutter.”

Figure 16: Select parcel conversions between 1997 and 2017

Shortly after its creation, the German Village Commission requested that City Council rezone the neighborhood as entirely residential, which immediately classified commercial uses as
non-conforming (Cambell & Murray, 1967, p. 19). This action was important to re-frame the area as acceptable for middle-class occupancy. Throughout the early twentieth century, the number of industrial uses in the area increased. An investigation of city directories shows that in 1911, there were just 20 business listings classified as wholesale/warehousing or manufacturing. By 1956, that number grew to 67. According to the German Village Society, “Under Columbus’s first zoning ordinance in 1923, the South End was zoned for manufacturing and commercial use. Such zoning permitted virtually any land use and ended the original residential quality of the neighborhood” (German Village Society, n.d.).

The contention that non-residential zoning “ended the original residential quality” of the area is dubious, considering that a mix of land uses is a prominent characteristic of urban neighborhoods. Admittedly, the types of land use changed from more locally-oriented shops to less desirable uses, like warehousing and automotive shops. It is difficult to say exactly whether an increase of undesirable land uses accelerated the decline of the south side, or whether the decline of the south side brought in less desirable businesses. More likely, the general decline of inner city neighborhoods in the mid-twentieth century reduced land values enough to make the location attractive to businesses that would benefit from a downtown-adjacent location.

Shifting the land use away from commercial to solely residential is in line with suburban ideals, as explained by eminent urban sociologist Herbert Gans. He writes that “…middle-class people…do not want working-class—or even Bohemian—neighborhoods. They do not want the visible vitality…but rather the quiet and the privacy obtainable in low-density
neighborhoods” (Gans, 1968, p. 29). This assertion fits with the anti-business reputation of the German Village Society, as illustrated by opposition to new businesses and existing business expansions (Stover, 2001, p.49).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LAND USE</th>
<th>UNITS PER STRUCTURE</th>
<th>YEAR 1966</th>
<th>YEAR 1997</th>
<th>YEAR 2017</th>
<th>% change, 1966 to 2017</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Apts. 4-19 Family*</td>
<td>5*</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>-22.40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One-Family</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1020</td>
<td>1007</td>
<td>1090</td>
<td>8.20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two-Family</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>412</td>
<td>319</td>
<td>228</td>
<td>-28.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three-Family</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>-18.40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Condo Unit</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>226</td>
<td>143.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total dwelling units</td>
<td></td>
<td>2174</td>
<td>2097</td>
<td>2055</td>
<td>-5.47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total parcels</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>1738</td>
<td>1784</td>
<td></td>
<td>2.65%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5: Dwelling Units by Structure Type in German Village

*5 units per structure assumed as an average number of units per multiple family structure.
The dominant housing tenure in German Village is homeownership, a relatively rarity for neighborhoods adjacent to Downtown. Owner-occupied parcels number 1070 out of 1812 total parcels. The table below demonstrates that German Village’s owner-occupancy rate is the highest among downtown-area neighborhoods. Likewise, single-family home structures are the dominant architecture in the neighborhood. In the early restoration period, the German Village Society counted more than 1300 structures, with 937 as single-family residences—a dominance of 72% (Scheurer, 1966). There is a discrepancy between the number of structures and number of parcels because “two houses on a single lot is not unusual in the Village” due to the historic development patterns, and the previous existence
of accessory dwelling units (German Village Guidelines, pg 145 and McKenzie, 1923, pg 56).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Neighborhood</th>
<th>Neighborhood Code</th>
<th>Owner-Occupancy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>German Village</td>
<td>16.01</td>
<td>61.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harrison West</td>
<td>13.04</td>
<td>54.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victorian Village</td>
<td>13.03</td>
<td>54.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Old Town East</td>
<td>12.01</td>
<td>41.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italian Village</td>
<td>13.02</td>
<td>37.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deshler Park, South Side</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>29.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Franklinton</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>20.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6: Owner-occupancy rate by neighborhood code

**Auto-centric Culture**

Parking is a contentious issue in German Village, one that has recurred throughout the past half-century of revitalization. As early as 1966, the City of Columbus completed the *German Village Residential Parking Study* (Division of Planning, 1966). The research found 750 off-street parking spaces, and 711 garage parking spaced. Forty-eight years later, a group of graduate students at The Ohio State University determined there were 661 off-street residential parking spaces, but 1002 garage structures and 609 driveways (The Ohio State University, 2014).
According to the results of the online survey for this research, 69.68% of respondents indicated that they drive alone to work while nearly 10% indicated walking. The remainder used other means or worked from home. The figure above illustrates the difference between survey respondents and U.S. Census Data. The figures for walking are consistent, at 10%. Just five out of 159 respondents did not own vehicles, while 10 people indicated owning 3 or more vehicles. The majority of respondents own one (35.85%) or two (54.72%) vehicles.
These figures are not consistent with recent U.S. Census data, however. The table below shows that the survey population was more likely to have two vehicles in a household than the 2015 American Community Survey data.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>ACS 2015*</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Count</td>
<td>No vehicle</td>
<td>1 vehicle</td>
<td>2 vehicles</td>
<td>3 vehicles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>1608</td>
<td>936</td>
<td>209</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2.07%</td>
<td>56.32%</td>
<td>32.78%</td>
<td>7.32%</td>
<td>1.51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Online Survey</td>
<td>Count</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Percent</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3.14%</td>
<td>35.85%</td>
<td>54.72%</td>
<td>3.14%</td>
<td>3.14%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7: Vehicle ownership, comparing Census and Survey Results

*Census Block Groups 52.02, 57.02, and 57.03. Source: Tenure by Vehicles Available table.

Concerns about parking are so persistent that the German Village Society maintains a Parking Committee to study the issue (Ferenchik, Ohio State class tackles German Village parking, 2014). Today there are ample accommodations for personal vehicle storage on public and private property. The City of Columbus implemented a permit parking system for residents meant to alleviate parking woes and deter long-term visitor parking. Adjusting a 19th-century neighborhood to the spatial considerations of vehicles can be challenging, especially when attempting to preserve the historic atmosphere. The German Village Guidelines (1989) acknowledge this:
When the clip-clop of horses’ hooves was heard on Village streets, drive-ways were virtually unknown. Up to the mid-20th century, relatively few curbs were cut to accommodate driveways. Recently, the need for off, street parking spaces has increased requests for this suburban design element (pg. 125).

Cutting into the curb to create driveways in what used to be the front yard of a home is discouraged by the guidelines, though curb cuts are very frequent throughout the neighborhood. Even the guidelines acknowledge that driveways, of which there are more than 600, are a distinctly suburban physical feature.

The figure below illustrates the prevalence of parking accommodations through the district. Detached garages are frequent, and even attached garages are widely observable throughout.
Privatism

One feature of attached and detached garages in German Village is reducing the potential for neighborly interaction. Instead of parking on the street where entering and exiting a vehicle would allow drivers to run into passersby, parking inside of an attached garage puts drivers immediately into their home without stepping onto a sidewalk or having exposure to others. Likewise, parking in a detached garage creates the same issue, though residents would typically
walk through their backyard to access the garage if it is along an alley. During the pre-automotive era in the neighborhood, the front door of a residence would have been the primary entrance. Most, but not all, German Village homes have front doors facing the street, with a very limited setback from the sidewalk. The duplex homes would have had two main entrances facing the sidewalk, doubling the interaction potential for the dwelling unit.

Figure 20: Collage of "ghost doors" in German Village

Figure 20 illustrates a way in which the interaction potential has been diminished through architectural alterations. When homeowners want to renovate their interior, an exterior door opening may stand in the way of their preferred configuration. As such, homeowners may want to cease use of or prevent access to an exterior door. Removing the door, however, is not an acceptable course of action in terms of historic preservation and maintaining the
aesthetic rhythm of the pedestrian experience and building elements. The German Village Guidelines for architectural review comment on door openings:

If an entrance will no longer be used, avoid removing the door and filling in the opening. Leave the door in place and fix it shut. A small sign or some plant materials can be used to indicate that another door is to be used. Always make such alteration work as reversible as possible so that doorways can be used again in the future with minimal work. (German Village Commission, 1989, p. 58).

The guidelines aim to preserve the appearance of doors from the street and maintain the original number of doors on the structure at the time of construction. This is important as a historic district, but there are also unintended consequences of shifting primary doors away from public-facing spaces.

There are many instances where removing access to the door to the street changes the primary entrance to a private space, like the side or back of a home. In some cases, if a double cottage has been combined with an adjacent property, there may be two “ghost doors” on a structure, leaving pedestrian observers to wonder how residents enter their home. One motivation to move primary entrances to the side of a home is the use of a driveway to store a personal vehicle or access a rear garage. In this case, the primary door is moved to the side or rear so it is adjacent to the location of the vehicle, allowing the homeowner to come and go without the social interaction potential of the original architecture. The net impact of the ghost door trend is one that shifts energy from publicly-oriented space to private space. The street and sidewalk are community assets where critical interactions occur that help define
urban life. The reduction of activity in the community realm is detrimental to the urban quality of German Village.
Part II: Socio-Cultural Attributes

While Part I investigated aspects of the built environment in German Village, Part II investigates the social and cultural components of the neighborhood. The inquiry relies significantly on the results of an analysis of 27 oral history interviews conducted by the German Village Society, as well as archival media sources. The table below contains the key terms and their frequency from the oral history interviews.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TERM</th>
<th>COUNT</th>
<th># OF PEOPLE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Business composition/Building history</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demographic Composition/Race/Class</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exclusivity</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financing/FHA Mortgage</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home Size and Style</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kids/Schools</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Land use balance/Residential-Business Conversions</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Money</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Old South End</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small-town</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suburbs/Suburban</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban Pioneering/Private nature of restoration</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 8: Terms of Interest in Oral History Interviews

The results show that suburbs received the highest mention of any coded term, followed by the composition of businesses in the neighborhood. In a sense, the frequency of mention can loosely guide the weight of the key term in the collective conscience of German Village. The Old South End was mentioned only three times, by three people. This is an indication of how far the German Village has come since the restoration period began in 1960. The historic and original naming of the neighborhood is erased as gentrification took hold.
Social Homogeneity

Circumstances of its founding

The identity of today’s German Village is distinct from the South End neighborhood of which it was a part prior to its distinctive revitalization beginning in 1960. Before early restorationists like Frank Fetch saw value in the architecture of the area, it was an integrated part of the South End, not a separate district. The early creation of defined boundaries for the historic district, the creation of regulatory governance structures, and its rezoning as a residential district are important to understanding the context of the revitalization. The prominence of Mr. Fetch is also crucial to the German Village identity, as is paying homage to his vision and labor. Not only did Fetch guide the physical development and governance of the neighborhood, but he also carried influence for the target demographic for new residents. These factors demonstrate German Village’s genesis as a neo-suburb in the city and support the hypothesis that its success in real estate and desirability is rooted in its heritage as a project to refashion an inner-city neighborhood in the image of a suburb.

Aesthetic policing

Aesthetic policing is a rather harsh term to describe what is more commonly known as design review. Design review is a method to exercise control over exterior architectural components of the built environment in a community. The practice is often associated with suburban communities, where regulations dictate aspects of the home, such as exterior paint colors, building materials, and garage door styles. Controlling community appearance was one of the motivations of early suburban designers, and has been a lasting feature of suburban communities. Higley, in his discussion of upper class suburbs, considers the role of aesthetic
control. “Suburbanization allowed the upper class to have a much greater degree of control over land use in their individual towns and villages,” he writes. “It is much easier to control the politics of a small, single-class suburb than it is to change central city politics!” (Higley, 1995, p. 33).

In this way, German Village is a manifestation of that same ideal of control. As an aesthetically protected inner-city community, the district offers similar protection and control as suburban areas. This is especially important for homeowners looking for a secure investment opportunity, where value appreciation can be expected. Few other areas of the city can offer this protection, and the City of Columbus is not enthusiastic about creating new districts for design review. First, the German Village Commission exercises full control over exterior home alterations. Second, the German Village Society can advocate to both the Commission and Columbus City Council about certain issues as they arise. The Commission’s role is formally established in municipal code while the Society serves in an advisory capacity to other decision-making entities. Together, these two governance systems provide ample opportunity for aesthetic policing in the neighborhood. In effect, the German Village design review at a micro-scale mimics land use and design review authority pioneered in suburbs.

Regulations such as building setback have a long tradition in town planning, but more aesthetically oriented regulations like building materials and paint colors are not so traditional. The design for one street in colonial Williamsburg, VA, for example, required all houses “to be built six feet behind the front property line [and] to be fenced” (Plater-Zyberk,
Design review in a modern context dates to the 1950s and a national review of planning agencies in 1994 revealed that 83% had some form of the process (Scheer, p. 1). While design review is intended to improve the built environment, there is disagreement surrounding the success of the tactic in certain applications.

**Zoning as a suburban ideal**

The origin of zoning is traced to New York City’s 1916 zoning ordinance, but the legal defense of zoning did not arise until the landmark U.S. Supreme Court case, Euclid v Ambler in 1926 (Natoli, 1971). The application of zoning to divide industrial and residential land uses in the Cleveland suburb of Euclid is the dominate historical narrative of the concept, and for good reason. While cities certainly used zoning in the early twentieth century, it was truly suburbs that were able to start from scratch with zoning as a powerful tool to shape their communities. Planners and developers of notable inner-ring suburbs like Shaker Heights (1912), Upper Arlington (1918), and Mariemont (1923) used a rigid separation of land uses to enhance the residential quality of the built environment and offer a living experience in direct opposition to the chaos of growing urban centers. Restrictive property deeds prevented mixed-land uses, while minimum construction cost requirements created different levels of prestige on different streets within the same community (Burgess, 1994).

When some of the earliest investors in the post-1960 German Village were determining advocacy priorities, zoning rose to the top for several reasons. First, they knew that undesirable business uses would deter future growth. With the previous zoning classification as commercial and light industrial, it was easy for businesses to locate in the area. To some
new residents, this was potentially degrading to the quality of the village. Regarding the number of businesses in the neighborhood, long-time resident and one-time president of the German Village Society Fred Holdridge commented that neighbors did not “want to lose any more residences in the village to commercial development…With too many offices and stores, the residents will move out” (Dispatch, 1988).

**Resettled Suburbanites**

As I demonstrate later, many of the respondents in the survey I conducted came from suburban areas that had a strong tradition of separated land uses. There was a strong connection between Columbus suburbs and new German Village residents in the early years too. Fetch himself was from Gahanna, a suburb about 10 miles east of downtown. He lived there with his wife and father-in-law when he purchased his first property on Wall Street, which is now part of the Brewery District (Graichen, 2010, p. 40). In 1960, at the third meeting of an interested group of people that would come to form the German Village Society, the Columbus Dispatch wrote that 300 people attended, “Among them were residents from Upper Arlington, Bexley, and other neighborhoods who have joined in an Englishmen’s crusade to save the area” (Cambell & Murray, 1967, p. 15). This same study also noted that out of all original members of the German Village Commission, none lived the neighborhood or even in the City of Columbus (Cambell & Murray, 1967, p. 18 and 22).

The connection between German Village’s physical restoration and residents of Columbus suburbs was also recognized in a 1963 thesis by Matthew Crofton. One of his three primary demographic categories was “Resettled Suburbanites,” who he said were “professionals” that
admired the “quaint architecture of the area” and have reached a point in life where central living is more important (Crofton, 1963, p. 10).

Credit to suburban newcomers was liberally applied by Bob Corotis—who came up with the name “German Village”—when he stated that “German Village developed in spite of the people who lived here. They resisted us down here. It was the foreigners that came in from [Upper] Arlington, Worthington, Columbus, Gahanna” (Bohley, Village History Remembered, 1990). This narrative is also supported a 1973 scan of the German Village Society’s membership roster, indicating that:

- 276 or 54.9% live in the Village while 226 or 45.1% live outside the area. Nearly half of the members living outside the Village are highly concentrated in three areas: (1) the suburbs of Upper Arlington, Marble Cliff, and Grandview Heights...; (2) in or near the suburbs of Bexley and Whitehall...; and (3) the area immediately surrounding German Village proper. (Travis, 1973, p. 82)

As early as 1973, the German Village Society’s newsletter featured stories of well-to-do people choosing to leave desirable suburbs to settle down in the quaint up-and-coming neighborhood. *The German Village News* of May 1973 highlighted to move of Dr. Morris Battles and his wife June from a “large Arlington home” to 1017 City Park Avenue. Ironically, they described the move from suburban Upper Arlington to the downtown neighborhood as a return to “small-town U.S.A.” (Butler, 1973, p. 3). This perspective of moving into a tight-knit, Old World community contributed to the early success of the Village.
Local historian Jody Graichen—also one-time Director of Historic Preservation Programs for the German Village Society—suggested boldly “[y]ou might say we’ve always attracted suburbanites” (Graichen, 2010, p. 76). One of the most memorable couples of recent German Village history, Fred Holdridge and Howard Burns, moved to the neighborhood from suburban Mifflin Township. The couple, both in business and in life, grew to be community leaders and were a respected force for neighborhood advocacy at city hall. Today the German Village Society offers the Fred & Howard Award “to honor individuals who have gone the extra mile to carry the message of German Village and the German Village Society to the rest of the world” for these men who chose to relocate from a pastoral 1863 brick Italianate home along Alum Creek (German Village Society, n.d.). As German Village Society president in 1985, Holdridge told the Columbus Dispatch "People are finding you can live a suburban life close to the city" (The Columbus Dispatch, 1985). This is a decidedly significant remark on the neighborhood’s status and lifestyle during that period. Holdridge recognized the incongruity of German Village life with its geographic location next to Columbus’ downtown.

It seems that the early 1980s were an important time in the neighborhood’s appeal to suburban tastes. In 1980, future German Village Society president James (Jim) E. Daley moved to 877 Mohawk Street from a home in Upper Arlington. He served as president of the Society in the late 1980s, along with Fred Holdridge (German Village Society, n.d.). A 1982 feature by Alfred Lubrano in Columbus Monthly painstakingly details the rise of German Village, complete with about a dozen personal vignettes of residents. Then-German Village Society president Charles Janes said he “hated the commute and suburban shrubs,”
prompting him to move from Worthington (Lubrano, 1982, p. 86). Lubrano segmented the demographic of German Village into four distinct groups: (1) young professionals, (2) old-guard restorationists, (3) life-long villagers, and (4) middle-aged suburban transplants (p 76). The suburban connection for young professionals at the time was strong. Lubrano quipped that business-types congregating at Beck Tavern, a local bar, were often graduates of Columbus Academy, a prestigious Gahanna private school founded in 1911.

Recent media coverage of the area also demonstrates a strong connection between German Village and affluent inner-ring suburbs. Lifestyle coverage of real estate and remodeling frequently features German Village properties, accompanied by information about owners who are frequently transitioning from suburban to urban life.

President of an insurance group, Wes Wolfe relocated from Gahanna to German Village in 2016. His German Village home—featured on the German Village Society’s annual Haus Und Garten Tour—was originally a duplex but was converted into a single-family home by a previous owner (Weiker, German Village house tour will reveal ‘cottage’ far more than meets eye, 2016). Couple Ziad Shaheen and Angie Steinhauser moved to a 4,777 square foot home on Schiller Park in German Village from Westerville in 2016 (Weiker, 2016). In 2010, a renovation by a local CEO combined two cottages and a duplex to accommodate her move from near Hoover reservoir, some 15 miles northeast of downtown. The project used what were four dwelling units to create over 4,000 square feet of living space for the owner, complete with heated limestone floors and a “morning kitchen” in the master bedroom suite (Behal Sampson Dietz, n.d.).
One of the most striking examples of home renovations is the conversion of a former elementary and high school building into a single-family residence. In 2013, CEO Robert Walter of Fortune 50-company Cardinal Health purchased the building at 673 Mohawk St. and began renovations to create a 13,250-square foot home. Walter was seeking to relocate from Dublin, an outer-ring suburb where Cardinal Health is headquartered, in order to be closer to friends and to a downtown investment office (Weiker, 2013).

While a scan of recent media stories on this phenomenon reveals ample evidence of the connection, a deeper look into more personal narratives by German Village residents offers even more examples of the suburban connection. The German Village Society has been conducting unstructured oral history interviews with community members for many years. An in-depth reading of 27 interview transcripts reveals mentions of suburbs or suburban characteristics by 10 participants, with a total of 28 mentions. While only five interviewees plainly mention their former suburban residence, the interviewees were not asked structured questions.

In their 2013 interview, Ed and Barbara Elberfeld discuss their move from Westerville to German Village, with Ed explaining that his suburban friends insisted they move to a house on Schiller Park. Instead, they moved to Beck Street home, which Ed’s friends described as “the worst street in the Village,” and a “terrible place to live.” Barbara characterized the transition from suburban to urban life as “culture shock,” after having grown up in the
suburbs. Ultimately, Barbara said she became a “more well-rounded person” after living in a neighborhood with people of Appalachian and African-American descent.

Results of the online survey also indicate a strong connection between German Village and suburban areas. For the most part, respondents were relatively new to the neighborhood, with more than half of respondents having lived there for less than five years. Nearly 30% of respondents have lived there for more than 10 years. Where did most respondents move to German Village from? The majority of respondents, at 36.31%, relocated from a suburban area of Columbus (see figure below). Likewise, many respondents work in suburban areas of Columbus. Of 153 responses, the majority—at 35.95%—work in a suburban environment, and with low rates of transit use, most residents are driving to work. The figure below demonstrates the location of previous residence for survey respondents, grouped into five categories. While most respondents relocated from the Central Ohio region, a significant portion relocated from outside of the region.
Small-town Appeal

Different demographic groups may find certain aspects of German Village appealing. In addition to attracting resettled suburbanites, the area also draws those who value a small-town environment. Almost since its inception, German Village has been compared to a small-town, despite its immediate adjacency to the central business district of the 15th largest city in the U.S.

Oral history interviews of German Village residents also reveal a perception of the neighborhood as a small town. David Schooler, a resident since the 1970s, came to the area
from Coshocton, OH, and said "...I sort of view German Village as a small town...you have this small town environment.” Another resident, Robin Freeman, said she “lived in Yellow springs for five years and that was truly a small town and this [German Village] is very comparable.” In a 2013 interview, Bill Case asked German Village resident Judy Kitchen, “It’s kind of a small town in a big city, isn’t it?” Kitchen’s answer was definitive: “Yes it is. Yes it is” (Oral History Interviews; Kitchen).

The 1982 piece in Columbus Monthly strongly suggested a bucolic attitude with its title, “German Village: Small-town life in the big city.” One interviewee in the story called the neighborhood “quaint,” while another explained, “We’re not sophisticated. The word ‘village’ does not connote sophistication.” Yet another resident complained “The Village isn’t stimulating enough. It’s intellectually starving. We’re always running to New York” and used the words “wholesome, bourgeois, and convenient” to describe the neighborhood. Here there is nearly a hostile attitude toward the quaintness and simplicity of Village life, as if the area has failed to deliver on the promise of an urban neighborhood.

In 1984, the Chicago Tribune ran a piece by German Village resident Barbara Zuck that extolled the history of the neighborhood and encouraged tourism. She wrote: “To be perfectly frank, I am not a city person. I grew up on the outskirts of a tiny upstate New York village and thought everyone had cows for neighbors. When my downtown Columbus job made it impossible to continue living in rural surroundings, I faced urban life with grim resignation. The surprise has been that my life now more resembles what it was
growing up in that little farm town (sans cows) than it has been anywhere else. German Village is not just German in heritage, it also is truly a Village.

Considering the frequency of analogies between German Village life and suburban and even rural experiences, the attraction of non-urban dwellers to a revitalized city neighborhood is an observable pattern. To understand more about the historical narrative of German Village as an acceptable place for suburbanites to transition into the city, the story of the fabled Frank Fetch is crucial.

**Figurehead founder and mythologized beginnings**

The status of Frank Fetch as the figurehead of the German Village movement is cemented in dozens of sources, from newspaper articles to German Village Society publications. In 1985, a park at the corner of Beck Street and Dixon Alley was renamed from Beck Square to Frank Fetch Memorial Park “to commemorate Frank’s role in establishing the park and honor him as ‘The Father of German Village,’” according to the German Village Society (German Village Society, n.d.).

The genesis of Fetch’s involvement lay in the desire to secure steady income from a rental property as he and his wife lived through retirement. This initial motivation to invest in a Wall Street property soon changed into a community effort to preserve the unique architecture of the South End, which Fetch suggested was fairly simple: “…just return the houses to their original state,” he said in a 1959 *Columbus Dispatch* article (Graichen, 2010, p. 40). Ten years later, the Governor of the State of Ohio recognized the German Village
movement in the German Village Day Proclamation from February 22, 1969. The document describes the initial settling of the neighborhood by German immigrants with colorful and reverent language.

“A scant distance from downtown Columbus…is a pleasingly old-fashioned village of thick-walled houses fronting brick-paved streets, standing side by side like friend by friend, staunch and enduring, reflecting the character of those Germans who…broke the silence of the forests with their axes. They fought the snows of winter, the mud of spring, and the fever…they kept their silence and stayed, these Teutonic men and women of courage who brought with them the language and customs of their Fatherland, pride in home and family and faith in God.” (German Village Society, 1969).

With such a histrionic account of the area’s early days as an immigrant enclave, the narrative assumes an almost folkloric quality. So too has the figure of Fetch risen over the decades to a status which affords him the titles “Father of the rejuvenated village” (Campen, 1978, p. 4) and “Mr. German Village” (Cambell & Murray, 1967, p. 14). During her oral history interview, resident Ann Lilly also elevated the work of Fetch: “As we all know, our, Frank Fetch and our founding fathers decided that this was a residential community.” Her statement shows a deep respect for the work of early restorationists, as well as deference to the authority of Fetch to decide that the area would be residential in the new era of development.
Fetch Leadership and Neighborhood Exclusivity

While Fetch is rightly credited with spurring interest in preserving the notable architecture of the area, he established a reputation as a relatively authoritarian leader. A 1967 paper by Ohio State students Donald Campbell and Paul Murray interviewed 21 “informants” in their effort to explore the “Key Decisions and Leadership” of the neighborhood’s restoration. The work offers a detailed look into the power structure of the neighborhood in its early years of revitalization.

One informant to the study indicated that there had been “several attempts…to remove Frank Fetch and several trustees from office,” but those were unsuccessful at the time of the research. One of numerous disagreements involving Fetch was between him and future U.S. Congressman Bob Shamansky. In the early 1960s, Shamansky owned multiple properties in German Village and was a proponent of apartment living to support young professionals moving into the area. On the other hand, Fetch “would like to see the whole area of single family dwellings,” according to Campbell and Murray (1967, p. 31). Fetch was called “stubborn” and “cranky” by political opposition, and his leadership style was described as “autocratic” (1967, p. 33). This ad hominem attack demonstrates the intensity of emotions surrounding neighborhood change and redevelopment.

The oral history interviews of German Village residents also illustrate a hardline attitude from Fetch. In her interview with Bill Case, local realtor Virginia Welch explained her experience with German Village Society membership under Fetch’s leadership:
Bill: You go back far enough that you remember some of the early great people in German Village, of course Frank Fetch. Tell us about Frank and any involvement you had with him.

Virginia: Oh, he was very interesting, very dedicated. He lived in Gahanna, but he loved the Village, but I don’t think he cared much for women in business like me.

Bill: Ah and why?

Virginia: I don’t know why, but

Bill: You said that you tried to apply a few times for membership, but you never showed up on the ranks.

Virginia: That first few years, but whether that was anything to do I don’t know, but anyway it was interesting.

She is reluctant to go into much detail, but it is apparent that Ms. Welch was denied membership multiple times. Another long-time community leader had a similar experience when he first moved to the neighborhood. Jerry Glick, a Bexley native, discussed the possibility of being black-balled in his interview:

Bill Case: Now my understanding is you got active in Village affairs and the Society affairs right from the get go.
Jerry Glick: Interestingly enough she said, “I think you’ll be okay to join the Society” and I said, “What do you mean okay?” She said well she says, “You know every person who applies to be a member has to be voted on,” I said, “You’re kidding me.”

Bill Case: You could be black balled?

Jerry Click: Oh, they passed a thing around with black balls and if there was a black ball in there, “Uh sorry you did not get to become.” So, it was a very exclusive group of 200 people. Of course, that did change.

Bill Case: Now were Fred Holdridge and Howard Burns involved in that then?

Jerry Glick: No, they weren’t. They came just two years before I did in 1976

Bill Case: Okay

Jerry Glick: I think and I came in 1978. …they weren’t yet to the power. I mean they were fun they were active and so forth, but this was from the get go. Frank Fetch only wanted people on there that he wanted on there and so that’s how it happened.

Bill Case: You managed to survive the voting process.
Jerry Glick: Apparently, they didn’t know enough about me. The black balls didn’t fly. But we had controversy about you know letting everybody in. You know some people still thought it should still be restricted to those appropriate you know and I said, “You can’t be a 501C3, a community organization and restrict people who live in the community, period.” You know to some that was a strange position to take, but I didn’t see how possible in a democracy we could go any other way.

Mr. Glick explained that Fetch exercised considerable control over membership, even as late as 1978. In a retrospective Dispatch article in 1990, Bob Corotis admiringly called Fetch “a visionary and a manipulator” (Dispatch, Jan 10 1990). Considering the stern leadership and personal experiences of Welch and Glick, Fetch’s reputation was likely based in reality. Many years later, the perception of the German Village Society as an exclusive group persisted. During a heritage conference in 1986, national historic preservation consultants recommended that the Society change its name to the German Village Association, a move that would “improve reception” and emphasize that all were welcome to join (Bohley, Village Needs United Voice, Consultant Says, 1986). Compared to the black-balling tactics of the previous decade, opening up the Society membership would have been a bold shift from the more selective early years. Membership to the Society today may be more lenient, but the demographic composition of the neighborhood is not particularly diverse in any case.
Responses to the demographic questions of the online survey demonstrated that the survey participants were largely wealthy and highly educated. Of 144 respondents to the question, 61.8% had annual household incomes of more than $100,000. Of 148 respondents, 91.89% possessed at least a 4-year college degree, with over half of respondents holding a graduate, professional, or doctoral degree. About two-thirds of respondents own their home, and 14% do so without a mortgage. Just 19 out of 146 respondents had children, with only 7 having two or more. What’s more, every respondent that answered the question about school enrollment indicated they would not enroll their children in the Columbus City School district. Instead, respondents planned to enroll children in a private religious school, private secular school, or relocate to another public school district. The lack of children in the neighborhood is not new. Even in a 1978 history of the neighborhood, it was acknowledged that “the Village has great appeal for young working couples not yet ready to undertake the raising of a family” (Campen, 1978, p. 18).
Figure 22: Census Block Groups in German Village

**Privatism—Home as commodity**

The fully rectified German Village is on display through the neighborhood’s thriving real estate market. Strong appreciation and high returns on property investments are not new to the area. Even in 1970, just 10 years after the founding of the German Village Society, German Village was already regarded as “a most desirable area within the Columbus Urban Area to reside” (Florio, 1970, p. 6). Twelve years later, writer Alfred Lubrano called the
neighborhood a “ghetto for wealthy young professionals” (Lubrano, 1982). Clearly the area has been a premier residential district for many years. A look into the language of domesticity used to describe residential life in German Village reveals how far the neighborhood has come from its early days as an immigrant enclave. The online real estate company Zillow carries descriptions of homes currently on the market and recently sold properties as well.

The table below contains the address, number of bedrooms and bathroom, square footage, and an excerpt from the listing description from select German Village properties (spelling and grammar errors uncorrected). These listings use language that emphasizes autocentric attributes, boasts of expansive interiors, and highlights amenities like outdoor decks, in-ground heated pools, and even uses the terms “urban compound” and “secure grounds” to convey heightened safety amidst the perceived dangers of city life.

Table 10: Select Real Estate Listing Descriptions from Zillow.com

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Address</th>
<th>Size</th>
<th>Description - excerpt</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>684 City Park</td>
<td>4 beds 3 baths 2,546 sqft</td>
<td>This home has a 2-car garage plus 2 off-street parking on a brick pad behind the automatic security fence, private patio and fenced yard.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>639 Mohawk</td>
<td>3 beds 3.5 baths 3,049 sqft</td>
<td>All-brick with 3 bedrooms, 3.5 baths, and a gourmet eat-in-kitchen with all the high-end appliances you'd expect. Other amenities include a spacious 3-car garage + 1 off-street parking spot, formal dining room, large elegant living room with wood-burning fireplace, separate guest quarters with attached bath and den, a private atrium and a covered back patio for hours of summer enjoyment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>933 City Park Ave.</td>
<td>3 beds 3.5 baths 3,170 sqft</td>
<td>Oversized 2 car garage and 2 additional spaces 4 cars behind a 6' New gate!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Continued
Table 10: Continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Address</th>
<th>Bedrooms</th>
<th>Bathrooms</th>
<th>Square Feet</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1017 City Park Ave.</td>
<td>3 beds</td>
<td>3 baths</td>
<td>2,996 sqft</td>
<td>Almost 3000 square feet of newly redecorated living space in this lovely brick Italianate which was originally a double converted now into this spacious home situated on an over sized lot with beautiful landscaping and 2 car garage.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>291 E. Beck</td>
<td>4 beds</td>
<td>5 baths</td>
<td>4,677 sqft</td>
<td>Fabulous urban compound in historic German Village. This tremendously unique property combines an exquisite manor home, luscious estate gardens, and a lovely brick guest cottage - all nestled in a very private setting down a European styled stone lane. The 1-bedroom guest cottage has two full bathrooms, a fully equipped kitchen, laundry, a working fireplace, private gardens, and private parking.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>99 E. Deshler</td>
<td>4 beds</td>
<td>5 baths</td>
<td>5,374 sqft</td>
<td>The serene master suite has a fireplace, large walk-in closet, and a spa-like bathroom with an oversized double vanity, soaking tub, and glass-enclosed shower.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>649 City Park</td>
<td>3 beds</td>
<td>3.5 baths</td>
<td>3,422 sqft</td>
<td>Addition of family room w/wood-burning fireplace, in-ground heated pool, professional landscaped secure grounds. 2-car garage w/1-BR apt above. Additional 5-6 off street parking spaces.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>138 E. Sycamore</td>
<td>4 beds</td>
<td>7 baths</td>
<td>4,732 sqft</td>
<td>Boasting five star curb appeal, this classic home was originally two separate houses. One of Italianate architecture, the other Victorian, connected into one beautiful home via a light filled breezeway with floor to ceiling, wall to wall, transomed windows and glass paneled doors attaching two living areas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>538 S. 6th St.</td>
<td>3 beds</td>
<td>3 baths</td>
<td>2,113 sqft</td>
<td>German Village Trifecta: 3 bedrooms, 3 full bathrooms and 3 car garage. Beautifully updated brick home with one of the bedrooms with en-suite on the first floor, eat-in kitchen, wood floors, gas log fireplace, large fenced yard and first floor laundry. All 3 bedrooms have en-suite full bathrooms.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The language of home-selling is distinctly positive and boastful, with the intention of persuading potential buyers to at least visit the property. Enticing interested clients requires agents to craft descriptions that appeal to those interested in purchasing luxury homes in the historic district. Because German Village is one of Columbus’ most expensive
neighborhoods, it rivals home prices found in affluent suburbs. This creates a dynamic in which the German Village historic district is, theoretically, competing with similarly priced suburban areas. As such, the preferences of a certain strata of home buyer are reflected in these areas, and simultaneously being driven toward similar ends. The result is a re-shaping of German Village’s built environment in the image preferred by high-status buyers.

Figure 23: Map of average price per square foot of owner-occupied homes
Privatism—Features of the Home

Respondents were also asked about specific amenities in the homes, some of which have a cultural connotation with new housing and/or suburban-style living. For example, more than 90% of respondents indicated having a patio or privacy fence at the home. More telling, 49% of respondents have an “en suite” bathroom directly off the master bedroom, while one third have second-floor laundry. Out of 126 responses on this question, half had at least four of these features at the home.

Interior renovations like these are not new phenomenon. In a 1970 case study of German Village, the author took note of the extensive and elaborate nature of many home restorations:

Though modernized in a manner appropriate to its perceived antiqueness, the environment of German Village was also made acceptable to the social position of those who have restored...The architecture of restoration in German Village has generally been given an upper middle class image. Expensive patios, landscaped courtyards and house additions have been adapted in a manner appropriate to the Village’s old world atmosphere, but appropriate also to the social position of those who have restored. The aesthetic appeal which had rallied people to the cause of restoration has become not only a source of inner satisfaction but, also, a source of social prestige. The character of the restored environment of German Village has become that of a social or class aesthetic ideal, a plush antiqueness found nowhere else in Columbus. (Elmer, 1970, pp. 62-65)
This aesthetic of prestige is reflected today more than ever. An inspection of home characteristics for owner-occupied parcels reveals many German Village homes have uncharacteristic amenities. In a neighborhood where one- and two-bedroom homes dominate, there are 99 homes with four or more bedrooms. With the exception of some homes generally clustered around Schiller Park, the vast majority of these represent home expansions from the original structure. Similarly, where many structures had only outhouses originally, today there are 135 homes with three or more full bathrooms. The footprint of houses is also growing. While the median square footage for an owner-occupied home is 1664 sq. feet, there are 169 homes in excess of 2500 sq feet. Even more, there are 34 homes over 3500 sq feet. There is an outlier in the recent conversion of the old St. Mary school into a 13,250-square foot home, but excluding that the largest owner-occupied home is 6537 square feet, featuring a three-car garage and a two-car driveway. The dedication to home renovations and domestic luxury has even led homeowners to install in-ground pools, on lot sizes that many would consider cramped. As of this research, County Auditor records showed 25 parcels with in-ground pool permits.

Perhaps the pinnacle of the German Village cult of domestic opulence is the annual Haus und Garten Tour. The tour originated as a fundraiser to showcase structural restorations occurring in the early 1960s, and to pique interest in the concept of revitalizing the neighborhood through property investment. Today the tour continues to showcase “urban living” by opening private residences to curious visitors on the final Sunday in June. The 2016 Tour program contains the narratives of owners who have moved to the neighborhood from Columbus suburbs like Worthington and Upper Arlington after becoming “empty-nesters,” or
people who have use German Village as “the ideal transition to urban living” after years in a rural environment. Descriptions of each home also detail the extensive renovations that owners often undertake to align properties with their tastes. At 207 Deshler, “almost every inch of the property has been subject to renovation or restoration.” At 123 Deshler, the new owners put “their own stamp on the interior, including installing new flooring and lighting throughout the house, [and] finishing the basement,” despite a recent renovation by the previous owner. At 655 S. Grant, new owners “extensively updated” the kitchen, even though they called the house “move-in ready” before they arrived. These examples demonstrate the dedication to domestic interiors that many German Village homeowners possess, as well as a commitment to luxury renovations that mark the homes as acceptable for refined urban living.
Figure 24: Map of Parcels with Pools, Sheds, and Patio Permits (2017)

A history of German Village density: Mohawk Street

The results of the Mohawk Street inquiry—comparing population density from 1920 to present—indicates a substantial change over nearly a century. There is no expectation that a neighborhood remains stagnant for any period of time, but there is an understanding that the structures in the neighborhood were intended to function for the population that constructed
them. The vitality of the urban district was facilitated by a high population density, as were
the availability of multiple streetcar lines and a multitude of retail options.

The records indicate that the average household size in 1920 was 3.55, and today that figure
is under 2. Part of the decline can be attributed to an absence of children from German
Village. The figure below demonstrates the lack of young children in German Village. There
are virtually no residents younger than 18 in the neighborhood, according to ACS 2015
estimates. A nearby area of five census block groups bordering Livingston Avenue to the
south between Parsons Ave. and Miller Ave. has a much higher portion of young children,
with over 10% of residents between ages five and nine. The lack of children in German
Village is consistent with survey results that demonstrate relocation of residents when their
children reach school age.
Density and household size can also be reduced by smaller household sizes occupying larger spaces. The conversion of a duplex at 692 Mohawk Street illustrates the point. Prior to renovation, the two-unit building could support two households. In 1920, the structure supported three renters in each unit, for a total of six in the building. As a single-family home today, the structure is very unlikely to have a household of six, considering the average household size is under two. The cumulative effect of duplex to single conversions is a substantial reduction in the potential dwelling units and a reduction in the number of households that can call German Village home.
Figure 26: Duplex to Single-Family Home Conversion, 692 Mohawk
Political Geography and Ideology of German Village

German Village has earned a reputation for respecting tradition. Sometimes this adherence to tradition can be interpreted negatively, however. One survey respondent characterized the neighborhood as “[s]tuck in the past, guided too strongly by an old generation,” while another expressed, “[t]he efforts of some neighbors to reduce redevelopment and stimy [sic] new businesses is frustrating.” This sentiment speaks to the connotation of German Village in the Columbus community as relatively conservative. This connotation can be demonstrated in several ways, principally through political and cultural ideology.

Figure 27: Political Campaign Contributions, 2007 to 2016
The voting pattern and political contribution data of German Village demonstrate a relatively conservative resident base, especially pitted against the prevailing attitude that urban neighborhoods are liberal strongholds. In the author’s analysis of 10 years of political contributions to Democratic and Republican candidates in Ohio, German Village is the only central urban neighborhood to have substantially more contributions to Republican candidates than Democratic (aside from downtown, where many contributors list business addresses). The analysis found that the 43206 zip code contributed $316,324.81 to Republicans and $264,350 to Democrats from 2007 through 2016.

Likewise, election results demonstrate a smaller margin between Democratic and Republican candidates in the 2008 and 2016 presidential elections than other urban neighborhoods of Columbus. Moreover, voter registration data from 2017 illustrates that the margin between registered Republicans and Democrats is under 15%. Most other Columbus neighborhoods have stronger Democratic registration. The adjacent Merion Village and Schumacher Place neighborhoods, for example, have a margin of 30% between registered Democrats and Republicans, in favor of Democrats.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Neighborhood</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2016</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>German Village precincts</td>
<td>29.50%</td>
<td>26.97%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Old Towne East/Franklin Park precincts</td>
<td>9.39%</td>
<td>10.11%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 28: German Village area: COLUMBUS 02-D, 02-F, 08-C, and 08-D Old Towne East and Franklin Park area: COLUMBUS 55-A, B, C, and D. Source: Franklin County Board of Elections
There is also a long-standing cultural association between Republican political leaders and German Village. In a 1993 political exposé on Republican state politics in Ohio, the writer referred to the “tony German Village district,” and mentioned that the chairman of the Ohio Republican Party held an expense account at Lindey’s, a fine dining restaurant in the neighborhood (Suddes, 1993). The neighborhood is also home prominent Republicans:
former Columbus mayor Greg Lashutka, the chair of the Franklin County Republican Party, a Franklin County Republican Party Central Committee Member, and rising GOP star JD Vance, author of 2016’s best-selling *Hillbilly Elegy* all live in there. The relocation of JD Vance from the San Francisco area to German Village was a major news item in Columbus, and in a *New York Times* opinion piece he admitted that he and his wife “worry about the quality of local public schools” in their new urban neighborhood. This worry was shared by all participants of the online survey administered for this research, as no respondents indicated that they currently or plan to send their children to Columbus City Schools. Despite residents harboring serious concerns about the quality of life in the area, the attraction to live in German Village is strong enough to draw this type of resident.

The neighborhood has attracted conservative residents since revitalization began. Frank Fetch himself was a prominent local Republican who unsuccessfully campaigned for Columbus City Council. Fetch was an employee of the city under the Republican administration of Mayor Westlake during the establishment of the Society and Commission. Political tensions were so high after the 1963 election of Democrat Mayor Jack Sensenbrenner, that without the ties between Fetch and Westlake, the Commission may never have been established (Cambell & Murray, 1967). After considerable political turmoil, two neighborhood youths spray-painted a swastika on a post outside of the German Village Society headquarters to protest the “Gestapo method” of the German Village Commission, a term used by Mayor Jack Sensenbrenner to protest the aesthetic policing authority of the Commission. There is some irony in the positioning of Republicans as exerting excessive government authority through
the regulatory structure of the German Village Commission and the opinion of Democrats that the Commission was impeding on individual rights of homeowners.

**Cultural Ideology of Rugged Individualism**

Throughout the narratives of neighborhood revitalization, there is a strong emphasis on the private nature of the district’s renaissance—so strong that there is even evidence of anti-government sentiment. There is also a recurring use of the pioneer narrative to describe the early restorationists of the 1960s.

First, the assertion that the German Village story occurred with only private resources repeats throughout documents and media. In a 1966 article in *Historic Preservation*, resident Jane B. Scheurer wrote that “German Village is proof that downtown can be rebuilt and restored creatively with private resources…No federal funds have been involved. Private enterprise in cooperation with local government has equaled success…Property has never left private ownership or tax rolls” (Scheurer, 1966). There is clearly pride in her statement that the restoration effort was underway without government assistance. There is also a sense of rugged individualism in the emphasis on private enterprise achieving superior results to government action. More than two decades later, Shirley Kientz, then-secretary of the German Village Society told *The Dispatch* that the Society and neighborhood in general “didn't want the government to come in and screw it up,” a strong assertion that private individuals were superior in their restoration of the neighborhood than government would have been (Fiely & Bridgman, 1988). The statement itself is curious, considering government
facilitated the historic protection and design review for the district, as well as financed physical infrastructure like bricks and street lighting.

In the German Village Society’s 1969 commemorative pamphlet, the restoration program was characterized as having “no federal funds involved,” and a “strictly private enterprise working in cooperation with local government.” Numerous other sources follow the same account. A 1983 Christian Science Monitor article about the prospering neighborhood made of point to remind readers that homeowners revitalized the neighborhood “all on their own, without a dime of government money or involvement, a fact they're all very proud of.” (Wood, 1983). During the 1985 advocacy effort of German Village Society president Fred Holdridge, he told the Dispatch, “We've maintained the village for 25 years and the city has taken the credit for it. Now they don't want to help us because they say they don't have the money.” The statement was in reference to funding requests for street repairs and improved lighting. A few months later Holdridge repeated the feeling, claiming that German Village residents "pulled ourselves up by our bootstraps and never asked for assistance.” Decades later, in Jerry Glick’s oral history interview, he stated that “we’ve done [the revitalization] without federal, state, county, or city funds.” The point of private restoration has endured.

(Sub)Urban Pioneers

Embedded within the fixation on the private nature of the restoration, there is also a pervasive narrative that “[b]rick by brick, the ‘little guys’ rebuilt German Village with their own money,” as a 1988 Dispatch article put it (Fiely & Bridgman). The idea that the neighborhood had to be rebuilt by a new cohort of middle- and upper-class residents
perpetuates an ideology that saddles previous residents with the burden of the area’s decline. It also supports the idea of urban neighborhoods as a frontier to be conquered by newcomers—termed “pioneers”—despite more than a century of history in the neighborhood. Many of the restorationists identified themselves as urban pioneers, or were designated as such by media outlets. Similar to the “pulling yourself up by your bootstraps” mentality, the characterization of early preservationists as pioneers is common in the German Village annals. This is acknowledged as the “frontier motif” of gentrification, as detailed by Smith:

Urban pioneers seek to scrub the city clean of its working-class geography and history. By remaking the geography of the city they rewrite its social history as a justification for its future. Slum tenements become historic brownstones, and exterior facades are sandblasted to reveal a future past.” (Smith, 1992, p. 89)

There is even evidence that the revitalization movement sought to replicate the original settlement of the neighborhood in the mid-19th century. In the 1969 Governor’s proclamation to honor the work of the German Village Society, there was a near-mythological expression of the historic preservation efforts in the area:

“Whereas, the German Village Society, Inc. has demonstrated that thoughtful citizens accepted a challenge and, working together voluntarily recreated a pioneer period in the history of Columbus and rekindled men’s imaginations to build again on the firm foundation of faith…” (German Village Day Proclamation, Office of the Governor, State of Ohio; February 22, 1969 as quoted in The First Decade, 1969).
The language used here indicated that restoration-minded residents had “recreated a pioneer period” by investing in structures in the area. Property investment was deemed adventurous by one interviewee in a 1970 masters thesis, who said “people come to German Village from all walks of life to pioneer in a unique adventure” (Florio, 1970, p. 47). Another interviewee said her primary reason for getting involved in the neighborhood was “to see the Village progress and develop as the pioneers in the area hoped it would” (Florio, 1970, p. 68). Yet another interviewee said that she “had received innumerable pieces of advice and encouragement to pioneer in the neighborhood”—a rare instance of the word pioneer used as a verb rather than a noun (Florio, 1970, p. 34).

There seems to have been a camaraderie among German Village restorers. In his oral history interview, Ed Elberfeld described the atmosphere of the neighborhood: “…when someone did move in and start to rehab a house you had kind of an instant connection with them…pioneers moving into the prairie. A homesteading almost” (Oral History Interviews; Elberfeld). Another resident, who moved from a Grandview-area apartment to German Village described how her parents felt about the relocation. “When I first told my folks I was moving to German Village, it was a little scary down here,” she said. “It was still a lot of homes that hadn’t been restored. It was a little scary but I’ve always been a bit of a pioneer at heart I suppose.” (Oral History Interviews; Dickey).

For these residents, being part of the German Village community in the 1960s was to pioneer a new settlement in the city, an oxymoronic perspective that elevates the investment of largely suburban newcomers over the heritage of existing residents.
“Let them eat bricks”

One of the most contentious periods in the German Village revitalization was the debate over brick street repair. Brick streets have always been a distinctive feature of the neighborhood, and have generally been regarded as contributing to its historic charm. In the early 1980s, many brick streets needed repair, and the City of Columbus initially wanted to put asphalt over the bricks due to lower cost and easier maintenance. The German Village Society advocated against this, and then-President Fred Holdridge even went so far as to plant a tree in a pothole in the middle of Mohawk Street to illustrate the extent of disrepair. The episode is remembered fondly in German Village memory. T-shirts were created with the “Let them eat bricks” slogan, and then-Congressman John Kasich (a Republican) even participated in laying bricks in the road.

Figure 30: Then-Congressman John Kasich contributes to brick street repair

Source: Clark, 2015
Maintaining brick streets was a critical issue for the German Village Society, one that the organization still pushes today. In addition to preserving brick streets to maintain the historic charm, there is also an effect of illusion; an effort to create a wholesome 19th-century village in the shadow of a modern downtown. A 1988 Dispatch piece waxed poetic on the differences between residents of German Village and the up-and-coming Short North neighborhood. The author humorously wrote “German Village is a Currier and Ives print; the Short North is an Andy Warhol poster” (Fiely & Bridgman, 1988). Currier and Ives was a 19th-century manufacturer of lithograph prints depicting traditional American scenery, and was famously mentioned in the holiday song Sleigh Ride as an image of Christmas perfection. The company is regarded as a symbol of conservatism and tradition, and is also known for crudely depicting African-Americans in their “Darktown” series of prints from 1879 to 1890 as well as other immigrant groups, such as Chinese and Germans (Albion College Library, n.d.). The characterization of German Village as a Currier and Ives print speaks to the image that neighborhood had cultivated as an orderly and prestigious community—an image at odds with the more diverse and eclectic personality of the Short North at the time of the article.

Despite the rugged individualism and a prevailing antagonistic view of government, there are many examples of government resources that contributed to the success of German Village. The German Village Commission was created by Columbus City Council, and empowered by council ordinances to strictly regulate exterior home renovations and construction, the first example of this in government power in Columbus. The boundaries of the neighborhood were determined by the careful study of students and faculty at The Ohio State University, a
public institution. In addition, a city-funded secretary was appointed to staff the German Village Commission. Furthermore, many studies were conducted by the City of Columbus to address issues raised by the German Village Community, including: the *German Village Residential Parking Study* (1966), the 1967 *German Village Business Survey* (1967), the *Special Report on Commercial Development in German Village* (1968), and the *German Village Proposed Area Plan* (1971)—all authored by the Division of Planning in the Department of Development. Cumulatively since the revitalization period began, the German Village neighborhood has undeniably received considerable attention and resources from local government. Furthermore, the establishment of the neighborhood as a historic district on the National Register of Historic Places in 1976 leverages the federal government’s designation administered by the Department of Interior (German Village Commission, 1989). Despite the emphasis on the private nature of the neighborhood’s revitalization, the role of public resources to assist in the process is clear.

**Summary of Findings: Physical and Socio-cultural**

By analyzing the physical environment and cultural attitudes of German Village, I have demonstrated the myriad ways in which the neighborhood has become suburban since its revitalization. Physically, the neighborhood has seen a decrease in household size, an increase in house size, and an increase in auto-centric infrastructure. The built environment is largely low-density, with a typical building height of 1 to 2 stories and the architecture is regarded as homogenous. Socially, the neighborhood has become homogenous in terms of income-level, educational attainment, and race. There is also a culture of homeownership and interior decadence as displayed by the annual Haus und Garten Tour. The neighborhood also
demonstrates a conservative ideological strain through voting data and the perspectives of early restorationists as urban pioneers conquering the wild frontier. Together, these qualities contribute to the identity of German Village as suburban, an anomaly considering its adjacency to a major U.S. downtown.
Chapter 6: Planning Implications and Conclusion

The Central Ohio region is experiencing growth and is projected to continue growing. The Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission, Central Ohio’s metropolitan planning organization, commissioned a collaborative study released in 2015 called *insight2050* that projected an addition of “more than 500,000 people [to the region] by 2050” (Calthorpe Associates, 2015, p. 6). This would mean a 28% increase in population for the seven-county region from 2010 to 2050. Even now, the Columbus region’s growth has outpaced peer regional cities. Net migration for the Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) in 2015 was negative in both Pittsburgh and Cleveland, while the Columbus MSA added 24,324 people. Moreover, relatively healthy regions like Cincinnati and Louisville added just 9,269 and 7,241 respectively.

It is not only the region that has experience population growth. From 2002 to 2016, the residential population of downtown increased from 3,619 to 8,100, an increase of about 124% in 14 years. The downtown population is not likely to rebound to its previous height of 35,049 in 1950, but the demand for units is likely to continue. To keep up with population growth, developers in Central Ohio have been building housing at a fast clip. In downtown alone, there was $357 million worth of residential investment underway at the end of 2016, representing 1,360 units (Capital Crossroads & Discovery Special Improvement Districts,
Downtown Columbus has $137 million in proposed residential investment and a 97% apartment occupancy rate (Capital Crossroads, 2017). Public infrastructure investments in the downtown area total $388 million since 2011, which city officials claim has generated nearly $2 billion in private investment (Schneider, 2016). The renewed interest in downtown and urban living in Columbus is undeniable.

![Downtown Columbus Population, 1940-2015](image)

**Figure 31: Downtown Columbus Population, 1940-2015**

*Based on approximate area south of I-670, north of I-70, west of I-71, and east of the Scioto River.*

The Central Ohio region has experienced strong growth in housing sales to keep up with population growth. New home sales in 2016 were higher than they have been since 2007 and the average price of a lot rose from $65,000 to $83,000 from 2011 to 2016 (Weiker, 2017). Considering the demand, buyers are paying a premium for new and existing homes. Last
year, Central Ohio experienced the lowest supply of homes on record with the Multiple Listing Service (MLS) and 48% of homes sold in about a month (Buchanan, 2017). This points to a strong demand for residential construction in the region across the market of new and existing homes.

**Renewed interest in urban living.**

Much of this development reflects a renewed interest in urban living. A number of Columbus’s historic urban neighborhoods are similarly enjoying healthy real estate markets. The near north side neighborhoods, composed of Italian Village, Victorian Village, and Harrison West, have become trendy locations over the past couple of decades and have rapidly increased in price. The average sale price of a single-family home through 2005 and 2006 was $222,404. Ten years later, the average price increased 34.14% to $334,678. As a comparison, the traditionally middle-class Northland neighborhood between Morse Rd. and S.R. 161 experienced a decline of 11.28% in sales prices from 2005-2006 to 2015-2016. The near north side neighborhoods demonstrate the market strength of urban neighborhoods in Columbus relative to the decline or stagnation of newer areas of the city.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th># of transactions</th>
<th>Average Sale Price</th>
<th>Average Price Per Square Foot</th>
<th>Average Square Footage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2005-2006</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>$222,404</td>
<td>$141,849.9857</td>
<td>1567.885057</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015-2016</td>
<td>310</td>
<td>$337,678.00</td>
<td>$204,900.771</td>
<td>1647.907895</td>
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<tr>
<td>% change</td>
<td>71.29%</td>
<td>34.14%</td>
<td>30.77%</td>
<td>4.86%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 11: Residential Transactions in Harrison West, Victorian Village, and Italian Village
Source: Franklin County Auditor
Part of the success of the near north side neighborhoods has been their ability to add more housing units than previously existed. In the mid-20th century, many single-family homeowners left these neighborhoods for the suburbs. This encouraged the creation of multi-family housing out of single-family homes, and a spurred a reduction in owner-occupancy. For example, from 1960 to 1980, the homeowner occupancy rate in Italian Village declined by 11.7% while the vacancy rate nearly doubled. As reinvestment occurred from the late 1970s through today, many homes have been restored to their original single-family use—though unlikely to be inhabited by a household of more than two.
In addition, there has been much new construction of multi-family apartment and condo buildings on vacant or underutilized sites. Once home to industrial uses, the Harrison West and Italian Village neighborhoods both offered large parcels of land for redevelopment at higher densities. Examples of this include the Harrison Park and Jeffrey Place projects, both of which feature four-story apartments and condominiums. In Victorian Village, home construction has been largely in-fill, on single parcels of demolished homes. Despite efforts at building more densely, the population of the neighborhood has not increased to pre-decline levels. One census tract in Victorian Village, a neighborhood that experienced gentrification in the 1980s and 1990s, counted 7,526 people in 1960, and in 2015 that number was down to 3,174. It seems that even with intense reinvestment and so-called gentrification over decades, the population of the core urban neighborhoods is not approaching pre-revitalization levels.

This is relevant when we consider the German Village context. German Village is a historic district just south of Downtown Columbus where the built environment is relatively fixed due to historic preservation regulations and lack of vacant land. Unlike the neighborhoods of Italian Village, for instance, there is not an abundance of vacant land to build on. The neighborhood is considered “built-out,” a term indicating a very limited potential for additional construction. The area experienced revitalization earlier than the near north side neighborhoods, with the movement crystallizing in 1960 at the establishment of the German Village Society. Today, the district is regarded as a desirable residence in the city and enjoys a positive reputation for visitors as well.
German Village is hailed as a national success in both historic preservation and urban revitalization. Formerly derelict homes and businesses have been transformed into lavish displays of craftsmanship and affluence, attracting visitors from around the country. In other neighborhoods without historic regulations or with developable land, supply can increase with demand through the development of additional housing units at higher densities. In German Village, historic designation largely prevents the addition of new units.

Not only is supply strictly limited, but the increasing market desirability of German Village has increased the real estate value of homes. When buyers pay steep prices for homes in the district, they expect a certain level of comfort. If the current structure does not meet those expectations, homeowners with financial means do not hesitate to adapt the space to their desires. Pressure to live in the district is so high that buyers consistently purchase non-residential structures and convert them to residential use. Structures that once housed shops and groceries now are private residences. This type of conversion is detrimental to the mixed-use fabric that contributes to the charm of the neighborhood. Living in a retail-designed structure also presents pragmatic obstacles. For example, buildings designed to showcase the goods for sale often have full-length windows along the street to encourage window-shopping. When these structures become residences, the full-length windows are invariable shuttered or blocks with window treatments to prevent prying eyes. The figure below show three structures converted from retail to residential use. The commercial architecture is apparent.
This leads to the question of how much an urban neighborhood can change before it loses some of its urbanity. If revitalizing historic neighborhoods leads to larger homes, a loss of retail structures, an embrace of garages, fenced in backyards, and swimming pools, how much different is the urban area from the suburbs? In the case of German Village, there is the added characteristic of architectural and demographic homogeneity—a common feature of wealthy suburbs.

In German Village, however, evidence shows a concerted effort to construct a residential-only enclave. Since the establishment of the commission in 1963, many neighborhood residents have expressed dismay toward increasing retail activity in the neighborhood, citing the importance of a "balance" in the neighborhood between residential and retail. While a balance is certainly necessary, there are different interpretations of the right balance. Architects of the revitalization were largely from suburban backgrounds, where separation of
land uses was standard. They may have believed this land use strategy superior to integrated residential and retail, which was the model that prevailed during the neighborhood's decline.

Perhaps part of German Village’s success is due to the many ways in which it mimics suburbia. Attracting well-to-do suburbanites requires effort. For many, leaving the manicured lawns and perceived safety of suburban communities represents a significant risk. This risk could be in the form of financial security of real estate investment or in perception of security from crime. In order to be attractive to people who have means to live wherever they choose, German Village must offer considerable advantages. Just like in the suburbs, there is a boundary that distinguishes the community from others. Just like in the suburbs, the neighborhood offers aesthetic policing of exterior materials and the built environment. Many homes, like suburbs, offer protected parking for multiple cars, fenced in yards, and other amenities. Census data show that the population is largely high-income and highly educated. The similarities between this historic enclave and the popular perception of suburbs are many.

**Urban Land Institute**

There are other acknowledgements that German Village possesses suburban characteristics. In 2016, the Urban Land Institute published *Housing in the Evolving American Suburb* in conjunction with RCLCO Real Estate Advisors. The report applied a framework to census tracts in the largest U.S. metropolitan areas and groups them into one of five suburban paradigms “to reflect the impact of land value and availability on development trends and to group locations that are likely to have similar existing conditions, supply and demand
dynamics, property values, and types of available development sites among suburban areas. Those paradigms are (a) established high-end suburbs, (b) stable middle-income suburbs, (c) economically challenged suburbs, (d) greenfield suburbs, and (e) greenfield value suburbs” (Urban Land Institute, 2016).

The report was complemented by the development of an interactive web map called the RCLCO Suburb Atlas (rclco.com/suburb-atlas). This atlas visualizes the five paradigms of suburbia by census tract and classifies Census Tract 57 in German Village as an established high-end suburb. This classification is defined by “high home values and established development patterns that likely offer the best opportunities for market-based development but also tend to have strident community objection to new growth” (Urban Land Institute, 2016, p. 5).

This specific criterion for inclusion are not detailed in the research, so it is difficult to determine the exact combination of attributes that put Census Tract 57 into this category. German Village is the only central urban neighborhood in Columbus in the established high-end suburb category. The next closest tracts in the category are the inner-ring suburbs of Grandview Heights and Bexley, followed by the Berwick neighborhood of suburban Columbus.

The ULI report also referenced a 2015 survey that found “63 percent of millennials prefer living in a ‘car-optional’ neighborhood, which is hard to find in most suburbs. Yet when respondents were asked to look five years into the future, the share of millennials preferring
urban housing dropped nine percentage points, to 37 percent overall, and 71 percent said they expect to live in a single-family home” (Urban Land Institute, 2016, p. 28). German Village can offer both of these amenities, considering the preponderance of single-family dwelling units in the neighborhood. Over 1,000 of the neighborhood’s 1,600-some structures are single-family homes.

The inclusion of German Village in the ULI categorization of suburbs speaks to the unique social and spatial attributes of the neighborhood, further indicating its identity as a suburb in the shadow of downtown Columbus.
Another “German Village”

The appeal of German Village is so strong that one Cleveland-area developer chose to mimic the neighborhood in a New Urbanist development in Avon Lake, OH. The development, called Currant Village, began construction in the early 2000s and bills itself as offering "unique cluster-style homes...that echo a lifestyle of traditional values and turn-of-the-century charm." The Lorain County neighborhood is bold about its replication of the Columbus
historic district, using street names like Jaeger and Shiller Court, Brust and Kossuth Drive, and Handford Boulevard. All are names of German Village roads, save for the alternate spelling of Hanford Street which is just three blocks from the district’s southern boundary. Currant Village is also situated directly off Lear Road, a name identical to German Village’s Lear Street.

![Figure 35: Aerial view of Currant Village, a development in Avon Lake, Ohio](image)

In addition to road names, the built environment of Currant Village is also based on the aesthetics of German Village. Houses are tightly spaced onto small lots and the street layout uses rear alleyways for detached garage access, a rare feature in the post-war suburbs of Cleveland. Likewise, the houses have no driveways or street-facing garages. Every home in
the development uses brick as a building material, whether for the entire structure or just a façade veneer. A low-rise decorative black wrought iron fence runs along the front of every homes, just behind the sidewalk.

Figure 36: Brick cottages on Kossuth Dr. in Avon Lake, Ohio

The developer, Gamellia Homes, writes that Currant Village offers “unique cluster-style homes that reflect a New Urbanism that echo a lifestyle of traditional values and turn-of-the-century charm” (Gamellia Construction Company, n.d.) While new urbanism is now a thoroughly established development model, using a historic urban neighborhood as the model for new suburban construction is certainly unique. The old-world charm comes at a price, however. The most recent sale in the neighborhood was for $399,000 for a 1705 square foot home. Most home values are between $350,000 and $500,000. This is well above the median owner-occupied home value for the census tract, which was $271,800 for the 2015 American
Community Survey (ACS) conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau (Social Explorer, 2017). Median values for Lorain County are even lower, at $137,400.

Given the high price of living there, Currant Village has achieved a recognizable level of prestige in the area. Billing itself as unique and charming, the German Village-inspired suburban development is an example of the strength of traditional urban planning principles. It also illustrates that traditional principles are attractive to high-income suburban residents in a controlled environment. Even more, Currant Village is a census tract that is 94% white. This comes as no surprise, considering the well-known success of New Urbanist developments across the U.S. From Kentlands, Maryland to Seaside, Florida, New Urbanism has proved an extremely attractive lifestyle for the well-to-do. Prices in Kentlands are topping $1 million, while Seaside has sales over $5 million for single-family homes.

The physical concepts of urbanity—the streets, the density, the mixed-uses and pedestrian-friendly infrastructure—are modeled in developments like Currant Village. But the social aspects of urbanity—the diversity of backgrounds, income, race, religion—are often ignored in these replications. The success of New Urbanism among the elite demonstrates that a neighborhood like German Village had the physical attributes to appeal to this demographic, but lacked a suitable demographic composition prior to revitalization in beginning in 1960.

In this way, German Village can be understood as a project to rectify the social state of the neighborhood with the physical assets.
This research shows that German Village has transformed into a suburban environment, despite its adjacency to Downtown Columbus. In the field of urban planning, we should strive to maintain the legacy and heritage of our urban neighborhoods. This case study illustrates that the urban quality of the environment has degraded since the period of revitalization. This is not a diatribe against gentrification or displacement, but a proposal to consider the built environment more closely when redeveloping.

**What does it matter is German Village is becoming suburban?**

German Village is one of the most desirable communities of choice in Central Ohio. Clearly it is enjoying an unprecedented measure of success in terms of real estate and perception as a high-quality area of residence. Then, why does it necessarily matter that it mimics suburbia in the ways expressed throughout this research?

Negative impact of physical changes toward smaller households and larger houses. Smaller households and larger houses has led to reduced population density in the neighborhood. Less population density means less opportunity for local businesses to serve area customers, and as such, many businesses have a more tourism-oriented customer base. While from an economic standpoint businesses may benefit from such an orientation, the resulting effect is a sort of ‘German Village as spectacle’ situation in which the neighborhood is a quaint backdrop for gourmet businesses like the Pistacia Vera bakery or Lindey’s fine dining restaurant.
Larger homes also mean that less people can live in the neighborhood and enjoy the attractive qualities that define German Village. When people purchase two and three adjacent structures to combine for their personal urban compound, they have removed those structures from the housing stock. A childless couple living across multiple combined cottages is inherently contrary to the design of urban life. Altering structures by connecting them to other structures or substantially enlarging them also makes those structures difficult to retrofit for smaller home sizes and reduces the potential that they “filter down” to lower socio-economic strata in the future. So many homes in German Village have received substantial renovations that the idea that they may later become available to lower-income buyers no longer applies. Furthermore, real estate values are appreciating as a rule, removing the availability of properties for buyers with less resources than the current occupant.

**Negative impact of auto-centric built environment.**

The adaptations of German Village’s streetscape to accommodate cars has damaged the historic integrity of the neighborhood and has made personal vehicle storage an unnecessary priority. Curb cuts into the historic limestone have removed the historic infrastructure, which is impossible to exactly replace. The construction of attached garages and even homes with two-bay garages facing the street with driveways has scarred the streetscape. Car-oriented infrastructure also compromises the pedestrian experience and creates safety hazards by creating conflict points between people walking on sidewalks and vehicles turning into driveways of homes or businesses.

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Others have also noted the negative impact of car-oriented infrastructure. In his oral history interview with the German Village Society, attorney Scott Dewhirst discussed the contentious nature of parking: “Let’s face it, when German Village was established there were no cars. So, we would have carriage houses off the alleys, but you didn’t have curb cuts off the main streets where people would have their driveways. There was a lot of attempt to try to have people that were creating what we call ‘parking in the front yards.’ That was a big challenge … with people that you’re telling me I can’t park my car on my property. And it’s like, ‘Well, we’re not approving the curb cuts.’ It would not be appropriate to park your car in your front yard” (Oral History Interviews; Dewhirst, p. 9). Dewhirst provides the historical context that demonstrates how parking in the front yard of your home, cutting into the curb, and pouring concrete or laying brick is completely out of line with the development of the 19th-century neighborhood. Yet, parking demands persist and curb cuts abound throughout German Village. Off-street parking also shifts car storage from the shared public space onto private property, while removing at least one off-street parking space from public use through construction of the driveway and removing the curb.

**Negative impact of social exclusivity and homogeneity**

The lack of income and racial diversity in German Village demonstrates how exclusive the historic district, especially for home-owners. Economic and racial segregation are a problem in Central Ohio. Richard Florida’s recent book, *The New Urban Crisis*, ranks Columbus second in the nation for economic segregation out of metropolitan areas of more than 1 million people (Ferenczik & Price, 2017). Having concentrated pockets of high-income earners also contributes to pockets of concentrated poverty—a segregated society by wealth and class status. In a democratic society, neighbors of different incomes should be able to coexist. Instead, Columbus
reflects the antiquated development practices of the past that defined housing developments by construction cost and used restrictive covenants to exclude populations and land uses considered undesirable (Burgess, 1994).

German Village residents have a history of opposing inclusive housing options, even outside of its borders. In 2001, the developer National Church Residences proposed a subsidized housing complex on S. Grant Avenue, just north of Interstate 70 at the intersection of Fulton Street. The site is just across the Grant Avenue bridge from German Village, but not within the boundary of the district. The German Village Society president at the time argued that Columbus needed “market-value rate housing downtown” and “said the notion that a 100-unit apartment complex with a mix of homeless and low-income tenants won't affect a neighborhood [was] ‘silly,’ according to a July 24, 2001 Columbus Dispatch article. The paper also reported that “Nearby residents want assurances that the property will be well-maintained and not spark crime or traffic problems (Ferenchik, 29 Sept. 2001). "We are the ones who have to live with your golden calf," is what Sallie Gibson, a Republican City Council candidate, said at the time. Al Waddell, of the Council of Historic Neighborhoods, “was concerned about what he called an ‘experimental mix’ of low-income and formerly homeless residents,” and a city council member said the project had elicited “e-mails…that were ‘borderline racist,’ according to a Columbus Dispatch article on July 31, 2001. At a public hearing, one German Village residents called the project a “recipe for disaster” (Dispatch, 24 July 2001).
The project was completed in 2003 despite the opposition. The amount of attention and emotions this project received is representative of exclusionary sentiment among some neighborhood residents. Having neighbors of a different economic status was perceived as a threat to some residents, who clearly appreciate the homogenous demographic composition of the historic district.

**Privatism: a culture centered on home, not community**

In his 2013 publication, “Suburbanism as a Way of Life, Slight Return,” Alan Walks identified a dialectic between urban publicity and suburban domesticity, in the ideal sense. He put the attributes of “public sphere, publicism, division of labour, politics, and exteriority” into the urban ideal, while including “Domestic sphere, privatism, family, neighbouring, and interiority” in the suburban ideal (Walks, 2013). In German Village there is a strong culture of domesticity, privatism, and interiority as demonstrated in Chapter 5. In turn, this points to a lack of publicism and exteriority, to select two applicable components of the Walks dialectic.

Practically speaking, this means that the majority of people’s activities, like socializing and neighboring, happen inside the private space of home. This dynamic discourages spontaneous contact and privileges existing social networks over potential social interactions. Consider backyard pools as an example. With summer recreation available behind a private and secure fence or wall, residents are less likely to engage in public-facing recreational activities in communal spaces. This has the impact of reducing vitality in public spaces, like community centers or public parks, and re-focusing recreation in controlled private spaces. An effect of
this could potentially be reduced interaction with neighbors and a diminished potential for social relationships outside of existing circles. Another contributor to reduced social interaction is the lack of children in the neighborhood. Children are frequently a cause of social interaction with other families in a school environment. Without a large contingent of parents with school-aged children, families may be more insular than in other places.

**Application of this research in other contexts**

Is this research applicable in other contexts? Case studies present an obstacle for drawing out theories and concepts at a macro scale, as the conclusions reached here are context-specific to the case study. For German Village, the trend of suburbanization is indicative of wider trends toward smaller households and larger living spaces, to an extent. The growth in size of dwelling units is not exponential, but there will be a size the market is willing to bear at certain price points.

**Planning regulations**

Planning regulations at the municipal level, and the hyper-local level by the German Village Commission, have failed to consider the sum impacts of incremental changes on the built environment. Regulations have not tried to preserve or incentivize a revitalization of energy in historic neighborhoods. Instead, the regulation focuses on preserving structures and regulating the aesthetics of new structures. There is a need for regulation to preserve more than simply the aesthetic of place, but the characteristics that define them culturally. For German Village, this originally meant a sincere mix of land uses, with residential very often over retail establishments and a ratio of multi-family units that fostered higher population density. The approach to German Village was one that adapted to the desires of pioneering
suburbanites rather than one that required a committed adaptation of newcomers to an existing urban way of life.

To address this, leaders could consider a planning approach that will restore the urban vitality and respect the heritage of this South End neighborhood. Former German Village Society executive director Mike Widner asked: ‘Some of the charm of German Village is its origination as a working-class neighborhood. Can we, should we, try to preserve that heritage?’ (As cited in Stover, 2001, pg. 40). This question strikes directly at a major issue in historic preservation. Within the planning context, there is a potential to expand the focus of historic preservation to include the concept of heritage preservation planning, meaning not just structures but ways of life, or at least to the extent possible.

Harold Kalman, author of *Heritage Planning: Principles and Process* (2014) writes that heritage planning puts an “emphasis on retaining values, associations, and stories” of place, and that its goal is “to manage change wisely, not prevent change” (Kalman, 2014, p. 5). The perspective is not to create museums of neighborhoods, but to respect the values of the original inhabitants in a reasonable way.

For German Village, this could materialize through five policy approaches. The first is to restrict business to residential conversion, with a focus on promoting the use of commercially-designed structures for commercial enterprises. Furthermore, a preference should be given to uses that invite public interaction rather than by-appointment services like law offices and salons. Second, the neighborhood should seek to maintain a balance of single
and multi-family housing by restricting the conversion of multi-family to single-family. This would mean disallowing the combination of duplex units into one single-family unit. The rationale for this is to increase the number of people who can live in the neighborhood without additional construction. The recent surge in interest around tiny homes justify the salability of units with low square footage. The third suggestion is to enact a permit parking plan to incentivize alternative transportation and reduce reliance on automobiles. This could take shape as a tiered system that charges progressively more for multi-car households to utilize on-street parking. Fourth, German Village should embrace accessory dwelling units as a valid exercise of an owner’s property rights and a way to increase the number of residents. Practically this could mean converting carriage houses or garages into dwelling units and concurrently not requiring parking for those accessory units. Lastly, the neighborhood should seek opportunities to incorporate affordable housing in and around the historic district as a nod to the area’s origin as a working-class immigrant enclave.

**Opportunities for Future Research and Concluding Remarks**

This research has demonstrated that German Village has been transformed from a lively and economically diverse neighborhood with a variety of retail and commercial offerings into a tamed suburban enclave of wealthy former suburbanites. The built environment has been dramatically altered to accommodate the lifestyle preferences of high-income earners amid a neighborhood constructed for working-class immigrant laborers in the 19th century. Today’s neighborhood supports less than half the amount of people than the pre-restoration era and offers retail options that focus primarily on dining over more pragmatic offerings like pharmacies and hardware stores. This leaves one to wonder whether the neighborhood was truly “revitalized.”
Connecting the change in the built environment to the influx of suburbanites has been demonstrated through the physical and culture manifestations of the suburban ideal, and through archival research and survey results to illustrate the previous residential location of current German Village residents. There is a rich opportunity to further this line of thinking by illustrating the residential connection among German Village and key suburban areas of Columbus by analyzing parcel ownership records from the Franklin County Auditor’s office. Using this data, a link could be demonstrated, and an archetypal pathway illustrated. The premise would be that young professionals raised in higher-wealth suburbs like Upper Arlington and Bexley are drawn to live in German Village after college, whether as a single person or as a partnered couple. Once the couple has a school-aged child, they will leave German Village for a suburban school district. Again, when the children have graduated from the suburban school district, the couple may choose to move back to German Village as empty-nesters. While the pattern just described is common in anecdotal evidence, demonstrating this through parcel ownership data would be a positive contribution to the knowledge of urban and suburban population dynamics and life-cycle behaviors of people with financial means.

If German Village is to serve as an exemplar of revitalization, observers should take careful note to address the shortcomings of the district’s development. In any revitalization project, attention should be given to preserve housing affordability for existing and future residents in order to prevent economic isolation. The mix and type of retail establishments should also be considered, to avoid an oversaturation of one attraction and to preserve practical shopping options for residents. The German Village project, ultimately, was a physical restoration of a charming architectural district by suburban residents who were attracted to the unique homogeneity and
convenient location of the district. The resulting district is a re-imagined suburb in the shadow of
downtown, offering a suburban lifestyle that has attracted people for over 50 years and will
continue to do so long into the future. If future revitalization and development efforts in the city
resemble the German Village project, then our entire urban fabric will be transformed into
something less than a city, or *sub*-urban.
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Appendix A: Online Survey

German Village Survey, Spring 2017
Please indicate below whether or not you consent to participate in the survey.
Yes (1)
No (2)
Condition: No Is Selected. Skip To: End of Survey.

Q33 Thank you for your interest in taking this brief survey! It should take about 5-10 minutes. There are no right or wrong answers. We are interested only in your honest opinion.

Q34 Are you currently a resident of the German Village historic district?
Yes (1)
No (2)
Display This Question:
If Are you currently a resident of the German Village historic district? No Is Selected
Q32 Are you currently a retail business owner in the German Village historic district?
Yes (1)
No (2)
Condition: No Is Selected. Skip To: End of Survey.

Q34 What are the hours of operation and days of week for your business?

Q35 How does your business primarily serve customers/clients?
Walk-in customers (i.e. coffee shop, book store) (1)
By appointment only (i.e. salon, dentist) (2)
Walk-in and by appointment (3)

Q37 Please indicate the number of employees who primarily travel to work by the following means:
_____ Drive (1)
_____ Walk (2)
_____ Ride bus (3)
_____ Bike (4)
_____ Unknown (5)

Q38 Please indicate the number of dedicated parking spaces:
_____ # of spaces for employees (1)
# of spaces for customers/clients (2)

Q53 Do you plan to increase your number of employees in the next 6 months?
Yes (1)
No (2)

Q39 What portion of your clientele do you think is from the immediate neighborhood?
75-100% (1)
50-75% (2)
25-50% (3)
0-25% (4)
Unknown (5)

Q44 What portion of your employees live in the neighborhood?
75-100% (1)
50-75% (2)
25-50% (3)
0-25% (4)
Unknown (5)

Q40 What is the estimated range of your market area?
Immediate neighborhood (1)
Columbus urban neighborhoods (2)
Columbus and surrounding suburbs (3)
Central Ohio region (i.e. 12-county area) (4)
Statewide (5)
National (6)

Q43 How do you believe most customers travel to your business?
Car (1)
Bus (2)
Bike (3)
Walk (4)
Uber/Lyft (5)
Unknown (6)

Q45 How satisfied are you with German Village as a place to do business?
Very satisfied (1)
Satisfied (2)
Neutral (3)
Unsatisfied (4)
Very unsatisfied (5)

Q46 Are you considering moving your business out of the neighborhood in the next 12 months?
Yes (1)
No (2)

Display This Question:
If Are you considering moving your business out of the neighborhood in the next 12 months? Yes Is Selected
Q47 Please explain why you are considering re-locating your business outside of German Village:

Display This Question:
If Are you considering moving your business out of the neighborhood in the next 12 months? Yes Is Selected
Q48 Where do you plan to re-locate your business?

Q50 How many locations does your business have?
1 (1)
2 (2)
3 (3)
4 or more (4)

Q51 Does your company offer online business?
Yes (1)
No (2)

Display This Question:
If Does your company offer online business? Yes Is Selected
Q52 About what percentage of your sales are conducted online?
75-100% (1)
50-75% (2)
25-50% (3)
0-25% (4)

Q54 Does your business own or rent/lease its space in German Village?
Own (1)
Rent/lease (2)

Q55 What times of week do you receive the most business? (Please select top 3)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Morning (1)</th>
<th>Lunchtime/ Mid-day (2)</th>
<th>Evening (3)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sunday (1)</td>
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<td>Tuesday (3)</td>
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<td>Wednesday (4)</td>
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<td>Thursday (5)</td>
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<td>Friday (6)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Saturday (7)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Q56 What are your two most profitable months of the year? (Use the control or command button to select multiple.)
   January (1)
   February (2)
   March (3)
   April (4)
   May (5)
   June (6)
   July (7)
   August (8)
   September (9)
   October (10)
   November (11)
   December (12)

Q57 Please indicate how the following community events impact your business:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Positively (1)</th>
<th>Negatively (2)</th>
<th>No impact (3)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GVS Haus &amp; Garten Tour (1)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Columbus Marathon (2)</td>
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<td>Village Valuables (3)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Art Crawl (4)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Q58 What other shopping areas represent the most competition to your business? Select up to three.
   Downtown (1)
   Short North (2)
   Grandview Ave. (3)
   Easton (4)
   Polaris (5)
   Lennox (6)
   Lane Avenue, Upper Arlington (7)
   There is no direct competition, German Village is one-of-a-kind. (9)
   Other (8) __________________

Q41 If you have encountered any problems at your current location, please explain. If not, skip this question.

Q42 Please provide a general statement reflecting on German Village as a place to do business.
Q49 Please indicate your view on the balance of business types in German Village:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Too many (1)</th>
<th>Just right (2)</th>
<th>Need more (3)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bars (1)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Restaurants (2)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grocery (3)</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Coffee shops (4)</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Sweets (ice cream, bakery) (5)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Barber/Salon (6)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pharmacy (8)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hardware Store (9)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hotel/Lodging (10)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fitness club/Gym (12)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Professional Offices (law, CPA) (13)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gift Shops (14)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other: (15)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Q36 What does ‘Historic Preservation’ mean to you?
- Saving old buildings (1)
- Government regulation of historic buildings (2)
- Archaeological studies (3)
- Sustainability and green development (4)
- A way to identify a community’s sense of place (5)
- A tool for economic development and job creation (6)
- Historic places that attract tourists (7)
- Other (please specify) (8) _______________

Q37 What are the strengths of historic preservation in German Village?
- Tourism activity (1)
- Contributions to the local economy (2)
- Maintenance of a traditional/unique neighborhood (3)
- Protection of a traditional/unique neighborhood (4)
- The strong sense of identity and place (5)
- Local regulation of the historic district (6)
- Other (Please specify) (7) _______________

Q38 Which are the most critical issues or challenges facing historic preservation in German Village? (Please choose up to 3)
- Lack of support for historic preservation from local residents and property owners (1)
- Lack of support for historic preservation from community leaders (2)
- Lack of incentives or funds for preservation projects (3)
- Preservation being perceived as restrictive (4)
A need of historic preservation education or training (5)
High cost of historic building rehabilitation (6)
Lack of technical assistance in preservation projects (7)
Unplanned or poorly planned community development/growth (8)
Poor local historic preservation or management planning (9)
A need for survey and identification of local resources (10)
Expanding population and increased tourism (11)
A need for organization, communication, and partnerships to participate in preservation activities (12)

Q39 What do you think are the most serious threats to historic preservation in German Village/Columbus?
New construction in historic districts (1)
Construction of new parking lots or existing parking lots (2)
Highway construction and roadway widening (3)
Zoning and land use changes (4)
Alterations that negatively impact the historic building (5)
Lack of regulation and enforcement (6)
Lack of awareness about significant properties (7)
Abandonment or neglect of historic structures and sites (8)
Aging infrastructure (9)
Property insurance costs for historic buildings (10)
Technological, mechanical, and energy upgrades to buildings (11)
Vandalism (12)

Q30 Please click on the intersection closest to your residence.
Q13A When did you move to German Village?
I was born and raised here. (1)
More than 30 years ago (2)
20 to 30 years ago (3)
10 to 20 years ago (4)
6 to 10 years ago (5)
less than 5 years ago (6)

Q13B Where did you move to German Village from? (Please be as specific as possible. For example, "Beacon Hill neighborhood, Boston, MA.")

Q64 Did you own or rent at your previous residence?
Own (1)
Rent (2)
Neither (i.e. Lived with parents or other situation) (3)

Q11 How do you most often get to and from work?
Walk (1)
Bike (personal or CoGo bike share) (2)
Bus (3)
Car2Go (4)
Carpool (5)
Uber/Lyft (6)
Personal automobile (7)
Work from home (8)

Q20 Where is your place of employment located? (i.e. Downtown, Polaris, Easton, Dublin, My home, etc.)

Q20 How large is your current home?
Less than 1000 sq. ft (1)
1000-1500 sq. ft. (2)
1500-2000 sq. ft. (3)
2000-2500 sq. ft. (5)
2500-3000 sq. ft. (6)
More than 3000 sq. ft. (7)

Q35 How large was your previous home?
Less than 1000 sq. ft (1)
1000-1500 sq. ft. (2)
1500-2000 sq. ft. (3)
2000-2500 sq. ft. (5)
2500-3000 sq. ft. (6)
More than 3000 sq. ft. (7)

Q19 Please indicate if your home has the following attributes (select all that apply):
Privacy fence (1)
Garage (2)
Patio (3)
Second floor laundry (4)
En suite bath (5)
Gourmet/Chef's kitchen (6)
Indoor space for entertaining (+6 guests) (7)
Driveway (8)

Q33 How many automobiles does your household own and store at your home?
0 (1)
1 (2)
2 (3)
3 (4)
4 or more (5)

Q62 Please indicate your view on the balance of business types in German Village:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Business Type</th>
<th>Too many (1)</th>
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<td>Coffee shops (4)</td>
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<td>Sweets (ice cream, bakery) (5)</td>
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<td>Barber/Salon (6)</td>
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<td>Pharmacy (8)</td>
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<td>Fitness club/Gym (12)</td>
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<td>Professional Offices (law, CPA) (13)</td>
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<td>Gift Shops (14)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other: (15)</td>
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Q41 Please indicate your reactions to the following statements about German Village:

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<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly disagree (1)</th>
<th>Somewhat disagree (2)</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree (3)</th>
<th>Somewhat agree (4)</th>
<th>Strongly agree (5)</th>
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<tr>
<td>The neighborhood should be primarily residential (1)</td>
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<td>The neighborhood should have more retail (2)</td>
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<td>The neighborhood should have less retail (3)</td>
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</table>
The neighborhood should oppose new retail development (4)

Q29 German Village is well-known for its historic architecture and brick streets, among other characteristics. Should German Village continue to build a reputation as a tourist destination?
- Strongly agree (1)
- Somewhat agree (2)
- Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- Somewhat disagree (4)
- Strongly disagree (5)

Q1 What grocery store do you most often visit for the majority of your grocery shopping? (Select up to 3)
- Kroger - Parsons Ave. (2)
- Kroger - Brewery District, Front St. (3)
- Kroger - Chambers Rd. & Northwest Blvd. (14)
- Kroger - Short North/N. High St. at King Ave. (10)
- Kroger - E. Main at Alum Creek Dr./Bexley Area (7)
- Giant Eagle - Whittier St. at Jaegar St. (1)
- Giant Eagle Market District - Grandview, W. 3rd Ave. (5)
- Giant Eagle Market District - Upper Arlington, Kingsdale Shopping Center (6)
- Giant Eagle Market District - Bexley (13)
- Giant Eagle - Neil & Buttes (store closing) (9)
- Save-a-Lot - E. Main Street (8)
- Target - Lennox Town Center (11)
- The Hills Market - Downtown (4)
- Other: (12) ____________________

Q40 How important is it for you to live near the following amenities?

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<th>Amenities</th>
<th>Not important (1)</th>
<th>Somewhat important (2)</th>
<th>Neutral (3)</th>
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<th>Very Important (5)</th>
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<td>Restaurants/Bars</td>
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<tr>
<td>Coffee shops/Bakeries</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Library</td>
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Q32 Please rate your reaction to the following statements:
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<td>Historic buildings should be used for the purpose for which they were originally constructed.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Combining adjacent homes and converting duplex (two-unit homes) to singles (single-family home) is an acceptable way to alter the housing stock.</td>
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<tr>
<td>German Village should focus on being a residential district, not a mixed-use district.</td>
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<td>German Village needs more everyday businesses and less specialty shops.</td>
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</tbody>
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Q60 Are you a business owner in German Village?
Yes (1)
No (2)

Q2 What is your age?

Q3 What is your gender?
Male (1)
Female (2)
Non-conforming (3)

Q4 What is your total annual household income before taxes?
Up to $25,000 (1)
$25,000—$49,999 (2)
$50,000—$74,999 (3)
$75,000—$99,999 (4)
$100,000—$149,999 (5)
$150,000—$299,999 (6)
$300,000—$499,999 (7)
+$500,000 (8)

Q5 What is your marital status?
Married/Partnered (1)
Widowed (2)
Divorced (3)
Separated (4)
Never married (5)

Q63 How many people live in your household unit? This includes yourself and anyone who lives with you, including room mates and boarders).
1 (1)
2 (2)
3 (3)
4 (4)
5 (5)
6 (6)
7 (7)
8 (8)
9 (9)
or more (10)

Q6 How many children under age 18 live with you?
0 (1)
1 (2)
2 (3)
3 (4)
4 or more (5)

Display This Question:
If How many children under age 18 live with you? 0 Is Not Selected
Q7 If your children are school aged or soon to be school aged, are they enrolled or do you plan to enroll them into:
your assigned Columbus public school (1)
selective enrollment Columbus public school (e.g. Columbus Alternative, Ft. Hayes, Metro High School) (2)
private religious institution (3)
private secular institution (4)
plan to relocate to a different public school district when children are school aged (5)
currently homeschool or plan to homeschool (6)

Q8 What is your highest level of education completed?
Some high school, no diploma or GED (1)
High school graduate/GED (2)
Some college, no degree (3)
Trade/technical/vocational training (7)
2 year degree (4)
4 year degree (5)
Graduate or higher (6)
Q9 What is your employment status?
Employed full time (1)
Employed part time (2)
Unemployed looking for work (3)
Unemployed not looking for work (4)
Homemaker (8)
Retired (5)
Student (6)
Disabled (7)

Q10 Do you currently own or rent your home?
Rent (1)
Own, with a mortgage (2)
Own, without a mortgage (3)
Appendix B: Neighborhood Code Map, Franklin County Auditor
Appendix C: Historic List of Public Schools

The Columbus City Directory, produced by the Polk Company, included a list of public and private schools in the area. The public school listings separated the schools into “Public Schools” and “Suburban Schools” beginning in 1910. The schools listed in the suburban section in 1910 give an indication into what was considered “suburban” in a geographic sense at the time. Neighborhood schools in South Linden, the University District, Milo-Grogan, and Clintonville were considered suburban. The non-suburban schools (marked as “urban” in the table below) were closer to the urban core and included schools in and around German Village: Beck Street, Stewart, Siebert, and South High. To clarify, they were not marked as “urban” in the directory, they were simply listed under the “Public Schools” section. I have interpreted this as the default listing for urban locations, as they are contrasted with suburban schools, implying a binary. This is one way to consider how Columbus thought of urban and suburban environments in the early 20th century. The German Village area was never considered suburban.

Table begins on next page.
<table>
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<th>Public School</th>
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Appendix D: Source without attribution

This article was included in an archival folder at the Columbus Metropolitan Library as a photocopied document, but librarians were not able to identify the source or date of the article. It is shared here in its entirety.
Appendix E: Baist Map, 1920

This map was created by the author by stitching together separate images of the 1920 Baist Real Estate Atlas map. This is a composite image of the German Village historic district that allows views to observe the dwelling unit types at the time.
Appendix F: Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, 1922

This map was created by the author by stitching together separate images of the 1922 Sanborn Fire Insurance map. This is a composite image of the German Village historic district that allows views to observe the dwelling unit types at the time.