UNIVERSITY OF CINCINNATI

Date: November 8, 2005

I, Kristin Schade

hereby submit this work as part of the requirements for the degree of:

Master of Design

in:

Graphic Design

It is entitled:

The Maitri Center: Place Identity and Identity Design

This work and its defense approved by:

Chair: Oscar Fernández
Mahyar Arefi
The Maitri Center:
Place Identity
and Identity Design

A Thesis submitted to the Division
of Research and Advanced Studies
at the University of Cincinnati

In partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of MASTER OF DESIGN
in the School of Design of the College
of Design, Architecture, Art and Planning

2005
Kristin Schade
B.A. Bryn Mawr College 2000

Thesis Committee:
Oscar Fernández
Mahyar Arefi
Thesis Abstract

This thesis focuses on the design of an identity system for the Maitri Center, a performance and dance venue in Cincinnati, Ohio. I explore how an identity system can provide the organization with a meaningful image. I also examine how the use of the Maitri Center building has evolved over the past 120 years and how these changes affect its ‘place identity.’ In this thesis, ‘place’ is defined as a site of emotional, cultural, and historical values manifested in local identity. I am particularly interested in the attachments people have to a place, the way a place forms their identity, and how, in turn, people form the identity of a place. The crux of this thesis is that an exploration into place can enrich neighborhoods, and that graphic design can engage with this process on many levels. The identity system design for the Maitri Center considers these issues.
Acknowledgements

Many thanks to my committee members, professors Oscar Fernandez and Mahyar Arefi, for their thoughtful and knowledgeable advice and guidance. It was an honor to have you both on my committee. A big thank you to all of the professors with whom I’ve had the privilege of taking studio classes: Leslie Blade, Joe Bottoni, Kristin Cullen, Maureen France, Jason Franz, Sean Hafer, Carrie Nixon, Robert Probst, Dennis Puhalla, Gordon Salchow, and Heinz Schenker. Special thanks to J. Chewning for his patience, guidance, and open mind. Thanks to Lou and Cindy Beckmeyer for their great work environment and all of their support! Thanks to my fellow students – both undergraduates and graduate students – who have become friends. Loving thanks to my family and friends for their support and sense of humor. Thank you, Dean, for your patience and support.
List of Figures and Credits

1  The Maitri Center. 2005.
4  Hamilton Avenue business district. 2003.
6  Third floor space. 2005.
8  Jacob Hoffner estate with the Hoffner Lodge visible in the background. Hoffner Lodge photography collection, c. 1900.
10 Post office. Cincinnati Historical Society, c.1908.
12 Hamilton Avenue, Northside, with a view towards the Hoffner Lodge. Clyde N. Bowden Postcard Collection, Cincinnati Public Library, c. 1908.
16 Hoffner Lodge room in its new location near Miamitown, Ohio. 2005.
The Maitri Center: Place Identity and Identity Design


23 The International Folk Dancers in the third floor space of the Maitri Center. 2005.

24 Sample of an event posting for the Maitri Center. 2005.


26 Imagery relating to themes of nurture, grow, and ‘maitri.’ Getty Images.

27 – 29 Preliminary logo concepts.

30 Final logos concepts.

31 Final logos.

32 Minimum size and free space around logo.

33 Minimum size and free space around logo.

34 Final logo in color.

35 Color palette.

36 Type Style.

37 Basic Grid for print pieces.

38 Photography.

39 Secondary Graphics.

40 Stationery.

41.1 – 41.2 Schedule.

42.1 – 42.2 Content page concepts.

43 Promotional concepts.

Appendix A


Appendix B


Introduction

We are reflections of our places.
David Orr, chair of environmental studies at Oberlin College (Orr 234)

The focus of this thesis is the design of an identity system for the Maitri Center (1), a performance and dance venue located in the Northside neighborhood of Cincinnati, Ohio. Housed in a beautifully renovated historic building, the Maitri Center is a growing organization in search of a visual identity. This is a unique opportunity to create and establish an identity system for a landmark building with tremendous potential as a community gathering, movement, and performance space. The Maitri Center can be a focal point for performance art in Cincinnati as it also strives to become a lasting part of the Northside community.

The primary question of this thesis is: how can an identity design for the Maitri Center best provide the organization an effective and useful image? Secondary questions include: how has the use of the building changed over time? How has the changing use of the building affected its identity? Why is it important to understand these issues? How can the identity design process include exploration into these issues? In referring to the place identity of the Maitri Center, I refer to the history of the building -- the social meaning of the building over time, who used the building and how, and the role it plays and has played as an icon in the neighborhood. Implicit in its meaning is the relationship between people and the places they inhabit. In referring to identity design, I refer to the visual expression of an organization’s character, personality, and vision (Haig 171).

These secondary questions delve into the meanings and implications of ‘place.’ In this thesis, I focus on the definition of ‘place’ as a site of emotional, cultural, and historical values manifested in local identity. I focus on place at the neighborhood scale and smaller; ‘a particular locale … that has a character of its own (Malpas 21-22).’ The Maitri Center is an example of a place that is small, local, and public, has personal meaning to people and fulfills a need in a neighborhood. By using it as a case study I suggest how the exploration of place on a small scale fits into a broader understanding
of place. I am particularly interested in the attachments people have to a place and the way place forms their identity, and how, in turn, people form the identity of a place.

The crux of this thesis is that an exploration into ‘place’ can enrich neighborhoods. Urban planners argue that place exploration and understanding can result in “collaborative projects to restore neighborhoods, to reclaim buildings, and to embrace community life (Reynolds 75).” Exploring place can help people feel that they belong, can help them create meaning, and can help nurture relationships with others (Reynolds 141). Exploration leads to understanding, which can lead to stewardship and respect for one’s neighborhood and one’s fellow citizens. Though this chain of effects from exploration to stewardship is not guaranteed, it is a process emphasized by many planners and urbanists, particularly those who focus on place (sometimes called ‘placemakers’).

Graphic design can engage in the process of place exploration on many levels. The design process, which involves posing questions and strategizing solutions, is applicable to diverse areas of research and practice. It is important for designers to be active, critical thinkers during the design process and take into account issues of political and social importance. My interest in these issues stems from a belief that the content, context, and purpose of design is just as important as its visual form. The First Things First Manifesto of the year 2000 asks designers "to look at our culture and our communities not just to see how we can make money, but to see how we can weave a stronger thread into the fabric of our society (Baugnet 96)." As Katherine McCoy notes, "Designers must be good citizens and participate in the shaping of our government and society (McCoy 2)." There are many examples of projects where designers and artists have engaged the issue of place. For example, Sheila Levrant de Bretteville helps to bring diverse neighborhood issues into a public space for discussion with her installation projects that highlight local oral history (Baugnet 108).

The design of an identity system is the primary focus of this thesis. I began the design process by examining sources on identity design, sources on the history of the building and its neighborhood, and sources on identity and place. Interviews with the owner of the building and its current patrons helped illustrate the character and vision of the Maitri Center. In addition, interviews with people who used the building in the past gave concrete examples of what the place has meant to people.

The identity system for the Maitri Center includes a logo, color palette, type style, grid, photography, and secondary graphics. Sample applications designed include stationery, an events schedule, webpages, and several concepts for promotional pieces.

First, I will address the historical and theoretical aspects of place identity. In Chapter 1, I focus on the location, current function, and future vision of the Maitri Center. What is in the name? What are the assets and liabilities of the building and organization? What does the Maitri mean to the owner and patrons? In Chapter 2, I delve into the Maitri Center’s neighborhood, Northside. And more
specifically, I describe the history of the building itself, which was formerly called the Hoffner Lodge. How did the former, long-term tenants, the Masons, utilize the building? From an analysis of the character and history of Northside, I hope to understand more about how the Maitri can create a vibrant, unique space in the city. In Chapter 3 I examine the changing meaning of the building. What influence does its past have on a contemporary identity? How can I incorporate the history of the place into an identity? Is it possible to include the history of a place while seeking to promote its current identity? In Chapters 4 and 5 I exhibit the identity design portion of the thesis. First I chronicle the process I went through to conceptualize the logo and identity system for the Maitri Center. Second, I present the identity system. Finally, I give examples of applications such as stationery, an events schedule, web pages, and other promotional materials.
Chapter 1: The Maitri Center

Northside is a captivating neighborhood. The liveliness, the architecture, and the eclectic mix of residents have always been of interest to me and also provide endless visual inspiration. Few other neighborhoods in Cincinnati shares Northside’s reputation for diversity and tolerance.

I first became interested in Northside as a subject while a graphic design student at the College of Design, Architecture, Art, and Planning (DAAP). Northside became my most frequent inspiration for photography, identity design, and information design projects. I photographed a series of storefronts, capturing both the interior and exterior through reflections in the windows. My interest in Northside continued with an identity design for the neighborhood based on an abstracted street map. The map served as a grid that framed typography, photos, and colors, allowing for a flexible identity. Another project focused on the issue of place and time. I designed a 24-hour calendar examining how one experiences time based on both internal and external time cues. A primary external time clue is environment and place. Through these projects I explored many of the ideas that present themselves in this thesis: neighborhood, place, identity.

Last year I attended a tango dance recital at the newly opened Maitri Center. The exterior of the building always struck me as very powerful and iconic. The interior, with the impressive staircase, spacious performances halls, and fine detailing, was equally beautiful. I began to envision the potential of this unique space and wondered about the history of the building.

I contacted the owner of the building, Maureen Wood, to discuss the possibility of working with her on a graphic design project. Wood is a former social worker who now devotes herself to community development. She runs Urban Village Developers, a community-building contractor that buys, renovates, and rents spaces in Northside. Along with the Maitri Center, Wood owns several other buildings in Northside including Off the Avenue Studios, which is a studio, office, gallery, and gathering space. I met with Wood and Volker Stroebel, an intern who oversaw renovations for Urban Village Developers and the scheduling for the Maitri Center. Both have a strong vision for the Maitri Center. Wood and Stroebel agreed to collaborate on an identity re-design and identity system design for the Maitri Center.

The Maitri Center

Northside is a community nestled in the Mill Creek Valley north of the “V” formed by the intersection of Interstates 74 and 75 (2). There are no direct off-ramps into the neighborhood from either Interstate. Instead there are several avenues that connect Northside to the surrounding parts of town.
The main thoroughfare in Northside is Hamilton Avenue. Crossing I-75, Hamilton Avenue is the major gateway into the community by car. As you drive into Northside, a mural on the side of a building dominates your view. The mural, by local artist Ursula Roma, proclaims, “Northside - Keep It Beautiful.” It portrays diverse families as well as images of nature, activity, homes and the Maitri Center. The mural presents a powerful and colorful image of Northside with the Maitri Center playing a prominent role. It is a memorable image that welcomes you to a unique part of Cincinnati.

Hamilton Avenue’s central business district is a mix of one to three story buildings, most from the turn of the century. Some storefronts are empty or rundown; others are freshly renovated and painted. Lining the street for several blocks are restaurants, bars, hair salons, banks, used clothing and furniture stores, coffee shops, a record store, a funeral home, an African food market, among other businesses. Religious and cultural institutions such as storefront churches, a gay and lesbian community center, and the Women’s Research and Development Center reside nearby. Populating the business district are almost exclusively local shops, except for two chain restaurants (Kentucky Fried Chicken and Taco Bell).

A city park and an industrial area also vie for space along Hamilton Avenue. Jacob Hoffner Park provides a quiet excursion from the main artery through the neighborhood as well a gathering place for community events. The park, managed by the city of Cincinnati, received an admirable face lift in the past decade that made the space more appealing to residents and visitors. Across the street a lumber yard sits vacant, waiting to be redeveloped into a drugstore. In fact several blocks in Northside are rundown and unused industrial areas.
The Maitri Center, formerly known as the Hoffner Lodge, stands on the east side of Hamilton Avenue in the center of the business district (4). The building is one of the most recognizable structures in Northside. It is quite an iconic landmark in the neighborhood. It shares the block with One Mo' Cup coffee shop and the Fifth Amendment bar and restaurant, where the Northside Business Association also meets. Behind the Maitri is the Buddhist Dharma Center, a center for buddhist practice and meditation.

The Maitri Center is in a building registered as a National Historic Landmark. It is an iconic structure, unique and memorable because of its size, architecture, and its varied uses. The building is a three-story red brick structure with white detailing. It is built in the Queen Anne style, characterized by decorative brickwork, varied window treatment, and an asymmetrical tower (City of Cincinnati 1996) (5). The building has housed the Maitri Center since 2001, when Maureen Wood bought the building from Lodge No. 253 of Free and Accepted Masons. The lodge moved near Miamitown because of difficulties in scaling the stairs and lack of convenient parking (Gregory). The Masons held monthly meetings, using the building infrequently in the twenty or thirty years before their move.

The building houses a wide variety of businesses and groups. Maureen Wood rents out the front central space of the first floor to the Northside Post Office. The office has been housed in this spot since 1885, making the building a familiar and central spot for Northsiders. Also on the first floor of the building, on the corner of Moline Court, is the Feldenkrais Movement Center. The Feldenkrais rents space from the Maitri Center and manages its own space separately, though it allows groups who use the other floors of the Maitri Center to use their space for special events.
The Maitri Center operates the second and third floor of the building. The second and third floors are spacious and beautiful, with a tremendous amount of character, charm, and potential. The second floor is an auditorium space with a small stage and a hanging balcony. The room has beautiful hardwood floors, high ceilings with their original tin covering, and windows of multicolored stained glass. The auditorium is currently used for lectures, music performances, and dance classes. The third floor is a spacious hall with wood floors and six large windows (6). It also has the original tin ceiling as well as two small stepped platforms on either end of the room. The International Folk Dancers, yoga classes, and various other movement, dance, and meditation groups use this space.

Name

The word Maitri (pronounced my-tree) is a Sanskrit word meaning “loving kindness towards oneself and others.” Sanskrit is one of the earliest attested members of the Indo-European language family. As an official language of India, it has a similar position to that of Latin and Greek in Europe, as a base for many languages and language structures. It is also a central part of Hindu/Vedic traditions. Sanskrit mantras are recited by millions of Hindus and most temple functions are conducted entirely in Sanskrit (en.wikipedia.org). Maureen chose the word for the Maitri Center because it evokes love, connection, and compassion.

Other meanings of maitri include to give happiness, universal love and compassion, joy, friendliness and a feeling of oneness with others, sympathy, and benevolence (Cappeler). Neither the pronunciation nor the meaning of ‘maitri’ is immediately apparent to many people. Hearing the name, pronounced “my-tree,” evokes the image of growth, stability, and stewardship for nature. This unintended association is still positive.

Wood plans to have the definition of maitri, ‘loving kindness towards oneself and others,’ visible over the doorway to the building. She notes,

People don’t know what it is, and they call it all kinds of things, so I should put some phonetic symbols with it. I like the looseness of it. Some people call it ‘may tree’. Some people call it ‘my tree’… I think it’s good; it makes it seem bigger than it is.
The name is unique and difficult to pronounce ‘correctly,’ which is both a benefit and a drawback. Though its pronunciation and meaning are not immediately apparent, the word is simple, memorable, and distinctive.

Mission
The initial briefing for this thesis included interviews with Maureen Wood and Volker Stroebel, as well as Maitri patrons Katherine Spencer of the International Folk Dancers, Michael Wizer of the Argentine Tango group, and Cynthia Allen of the Feldenkrais Movement Center. The goal of these interviews was to list the strengths and weaknesses of the organization, pinpoint its primary audience, and describe its vision and goals. Primarily I sought to find out what the Maitri Center is and what the Maitri Center could be. Some questions provided interesting answers, while others received less of a response.

The most important response as far as understanding the mission of the Maitri Center came from Maureen Wood. The main mission of the Maitri Center, according to Wood, is to build a stronger community by providing a space for community interaction:

I wanted to make into a space where we could do yoga and meditation and dance but also have performance and a real community gathering space. I really believe that in building back a neighborhood you’ve got to build relationships and the only way to build relationships is to have space where that can happen. The holiday party for the community happens there. Lots of people have their birthdays, their bar mitzvahs, their funeral receptions, and their celebrations. It provides an alternative to church space for people who aren’t comfortable there and also just provides a space for families to gather. Most people do commercial buildings like that primarily for profit, and I’m doing it to build community, which is a profit in my mind. If you build a community you’ve got a lot of profit there.

I asked the following questions in the interviews:

1. Describe the Maitri Center in a short sentence or two.
2. What are the strengths and weaknesses of the Maitri Center as both a building and as an organization?
3. What makes the Maitri Center unique?
4. What do you want people to think when they think of the Maitri Center?
5. If the Maitri Center were a plant or animal, what kind of plant or animal would it be, and why?
6. If the Maitri Center were a drink, what kind of drink would it be, and why?
7. If the Maitri Center were a car, what kind of car would it be, and why?
8. If the Maitri Center were a person, what kind of personality would they have, and why?
9. What is your vision for future of the Maitri Center?
10. List 9-12 words that describe your vision of the Maitri Center.
Of these, which 3 words describe your vision of the Maitri Center best?

What activities would you like to see take place at the Maitri Center in the future?

Who is your audience?

What sources of funding for the Maitri Center would you like to see in the future?

How does the Maitri Center involve or plan to involve Northside and the local community?

How does the Maitri Center fit into the Northside community?

How does the Maitri Center fit into the future of Northside?

What need does the Maitri Center fulfill for people in Northside and in the greater Cincinnati community?

Is there anyone who uses the Maitri Center now or might potentially use the Maitri Center that I could speak with about his or her image of the Maitri Center?

Does the Center have name recognition? What does the name evoke? Does the name represent what the Maitri Center represents? Should the name be changed?

I asked Wood these questions specifically:

1 Describe the different spaces in the Maitri Center. Who is using them and how?

2 What are the sources of funding for the Maitri Center?

3 Does the Maitri Center have a mission statement? If so, what is it?

4 What organizations do you admire? What organizations would you model the Maitri Center after?

5 Is there existing print material and collateral for the Maitri Center?

6 What kind of design appeals to you?

7 What design needs do you have?

8 Who will manage the identity if you use what I design?

From these interviews, I began to understand the current day-to day operations of the Maitri Center as well as the patrons’ commitment to its success. I also determined how patrons perceived the Maitri Center’s identity and its place in the larger community.

Stroebel notes that the Maitri Center will offer “versatile events” that may not take place elsewhere in Northside. “There is no other place where things like this are going on. Maybe the public library comes close to what we have in mind.” Even though the exact nature of the Maitri Center is evolving and changing depending on who occupies the building, the mission of the Maitri is about providing space for movement and community oriented groups. The name ‘Maitri Center’ or ‘Maitri’ and the building itself best represent this mission. Neither the name nor the building suggests a specific activity, though the space is well suited for community gathering and the name suggests a communal spirit. No matter what is taking place in it, Wood wants it to be an “exciting, constantly happening building.”

Others I interviewed spoke positively about the building and hoped that more activities would take place there. It is truly a terrific gathering space. Its strengths include its history, charm, beauty, potential, its modality, and its central location in Northside and in Cincinnati. The patrons perceive
Northside as a positive location because it is a quirky, eccentric, and multicultural neighborhood. Michael Wizer mentioned that some of his dancers likened the second floor space to venues full of ambience and charm where they had danced in Buenos Aires, Argentina. The folk dancing group found the third floor space very spiritual. Katherine Spencer noted that it has a “fascinating history, a beautiful atmosphere inside, a holy feel to it that contributes a lot to our experience as we use it,” as well as “beautiful architectural features.” She appreciated “its purpose, dedicated to movement and meditation arts.” She described it as a “wonderful and under-utilized community resource” and questioned why “more groups don’t come into the space.” One of the goals of Wood and many with whom I spoke was to attract more groups to the space.

Vision and Goals
Since the organization is still evolving, its vision and goals are particularly important. This includes assessing improvements needed for the building and organization, identifying a potential audience, doing outreach and publicity both for events and for potential renters of the space, and looking at potential sources of funding for the Maitri. Looking to similar organizations as inspiration is also important. According to Stroebel the Maitri Center should offer new and varied events for people, which would make the Maitri a part of the improving future of Northside:

New possibilities for people who live [in Northside], like classes, actions, and workshops, that haven’t had a place [in Northside] before. It’s a lot of public interaction that determines the future of the Maitri and Northside. Northside went a long way the last 10-15 years, it’s much much better than it was 15 or 20 years ago. There were barely any shops on Hamilton Avenue 20 years ago. The Maitri Center fits very well into an expected future of a growing Northside community, Hamilton Avenue business district.

Stroebel would like the Maitri Center to be accessible as possible “monetarily, time wise and age wise” for Northsiders and for those outside of Northside as well.

A primary need is good management of the space. A master schedule that is current, well maintained, and publicized is crucial. Many spoke of the need for print, web, and media publicity and also of the need for more street visibility and awareness of events, since the Maitri Center is on the second and third floors of the building. General maintenance and cleanup after events is also important. Many mentioned accessibility, since it is not handicapped accessible and has no elevator. The space also needs a better ventilation or central air system, especially for movement groups.

Outreach to the local and citywide community is vital. Roughly 1/4 to 1/3 of the current audience is from Northside, with the remaining patrons coming from outside the neighborhood. The audience
Currently consists of people interested in yoga, meditation, and dance, between the ages of 20 and 60. Many of the patrons noted that there is a need to reach out to other members of the community, in particular young people. Stroebel noted that “Northside has been slow to accept the Maitri, especially its more working class residents.” Maureen Wood is currently trying to attract more groups to rent the space. Renting the Maitri Center is a bargain compared to churches, schools, or the neighborhood community center. In addition, groups using The Maitri Center have offered ‘pay what you can’ classes in order to draw more interest. Wood hopes that other groups will embrace the Maitri Center as a viable space for long-term rentals.

Currently the Maitri Center’s only sources of funding are from rentals and Wood herself. Future funding ideas include creating a group of members or friends of the Maitri, becoming a tax-exempt, 501(c)3 organization, and searching for funding from the Ohio Arts Council, the Fine Arts Fund, Artworks, Summerfair Foundation, and other public and private donors. Stroebel believes that it is essential to “promote Maitri as a venue, as a space. Make it an entity, part of something evolving, where the teachers or groups at the center feel like they are part of something evolving…. The key is to publicize the name Maitri and the potential of the building and its spaces.

Though Wood envisions The Maitri Center as having a life and personality of its own, she acknowledged that there are inspiring models in other cities. Some could include: the Painted Bride Art Center, a performance and gallery space in Philadelphia; the Carnegie Center, a community-oriented facility in an historic building offering meeting and event space for “cultural enrichment, social interaction, and civic participation” in the Columbia Tusculum, Cincinnati; Space Lab, a non-profit, artist-run, alternative space gallery in Cleveland; New Urban Arts, an arts studio for high school students and emerging artists in Providence, Rhode Island; and Works, a non-profit, volunteer-run contemporary art and performance center that fosters community involvement in San Jose, California.
Chapter 2: Northside, The Hoffner Lodge, and Freemasonry

Northside

In order to place the Maitri Center in a geographical and historical context, it is important to look at the history of Northside as well as the history of the building that houses the Maitri Center. Northside, also known as Cumminsville, is one of Cincinnati’s oldest neighborhoods. In the 1700s and 1800s German immigrants, Irish immigrants, and African Americans worked as hog butchers, mechanics, and tradesmen in the area. Northside’s proximity to the railroad and the Mill Creek allowed for rapid growth of its industry and of the neighborhood itself (History of Cumminsville 1914).

By the first half of the 20th century, Northside was a busy and growing community. In 1915, for example, the Northside Business Club held a 9-day carnival under the Ludlow Viaduct attended by 200,000 people (Enquirer 1915). The neighborhood remained a bustling area during the 1920s and 1930s. The majority of the population was white German and Irish descent. Beer brewing and drinking were popular activities. The bars would open on Friday nights and the sidewalks would be so crowded one had to walk in the street. Families would send their children to get a bucket of beer for dinner (Strahn). Abundant goods and necessities could be found along Hamilton Avenue, with bakeries, markets, butchers, and dry goods stores. By the 1930s Knowlton’s Corner in Northside was the third largest secondary shopping area in Hamilton County (Enquirer 1988). Barber Oscar Lipka cut hair until midnight, there was a hot tamale wagon doing steady business until the late hours, and the movie theatres had sell-out shows (Enquirer 1981).

Race relations in 1950 were extremely poor. That year, 1950, the city selected Northside as a sight for a 340-unit housing project. 1,000 protested and 11,000 signatures were gathered against what was called “low-rent housing for Negroes.” People feared that the housing project would “increase crime and juvenile delinquency,” devalue homes and make the community a “less desirable place to live (Enquirer 1952).” Northside was starting to integrate further, and many of the residents were resistant to these changes.

By 1960, 15,000 people lived in Northside. During this decade, similar to many urban areas in the United States, Northside lost population as people moved to the suburbs. There was an influx of Appalachian families from the rural South and Midwest, and the population consisted mainly of working-class white and black families (Enquirer 1971). At the same time, people were displaced from their homes for the planned construction of a connector between Hamilton Avenue and the interstate highway. The connector was never built, and the plan was finally abandoned in 2005, largely due to active community resistance.
Suburban flight and highway displacement strained the community. By 1970 the population had dropped to 13,000. In the early 1970s, the Cincinnati Enquirer ran a series of articles on “Communities in Stress.” The article on Northside stated that anyone who had any money moved to College Hill and beyond (Enquirer 1971). During this decade, however, many residents were involved in neighborhood preservation. The building that today houses the Maitri Center was located in one of the main preservation zones that encompassed the Hamilton Avenue business district. Many commercial and residential buildings were renovated. However, the population continued to drop to 10,000 residents by 1978 (Enquirer 1978).

The 1980s saw store closings and a failing business district, but also the dawning of a ‘changing face’ of the neighborhood. Northside began to be described as diverse and ‘avante garde.’ Don Beimesche of the Northside Bank and Trust noted,

one of the unique features of Northside is the mix that we have all the way through, whether you’re talking about businesses, types of homes, education. We have people here with barely a high school education and people with PhDs. Even our age groups - we’ve got a lot of elderly people, and we’ve got a lot of young people moving into Northside (Enquirer 1983).

In 1995, there were 10,527 residents: 8,234 white and 2,106 black, 82 Asian, 56 American Indian, and 9 ‘other.’ The area was fighting crime, suburban flight, high unemployment, and deteriorating housing stock. However, Northside still showed its ‘changing face.’ Described as ‘a diverse community on the upswing,’ Northside contains a variety of cultures, income levels, social status, and ethnicities (Enquirer 1995). Northside also became known as a gay-friendly neighborhood, with a Gay and Lesbian Community Center, several gay and lesbian bars and a gay pride parade. It also became a busy center of the music scene, with an independent record store and several bars with live shows nightly. It was a good mix of old and new, working class and bohemian.

Northside’s reputation as a neighborhood of incredible diversity remains to the present day. An article in the weekly newspaper, City Beat, described Northside as a “mixture of rich and poor, eclectic and traditional.” The older, working-class generation mixes with the younger, creativity-oriented generation. In addition, the gay and lesbian as well as the African-American population has increased over the past two decades.

The residents are acutely aware of both the positive and negative effects gentrification has on a neighborhood. A recent façade renewal plan will improve the face of the Hamilton Avenue business district. Developers are renovating some buildings into high-end apartments. This often will lead to raising of property values and thus of rent and cost of living for lower-income residents. However, Northside’s economic diversity often allows for an increase in housing renovation and property value alongside lower-income housing. However, the district remains with a majority of its businesses small
and locally and independently owned. With its mission to create a place for community to gather and grow, the Maitri Center fits quite well into the present and future Northside.

Hoffner Lodge

The building housing the Maitri Center is a landmark building in Northside. It was originally built for the Lodge No. 253 of Free and Accepted Masons, a fraternal organization. This group, or ‘lodge,’ of Masons organized June 15, 1854 and secured a charter on October 19 of the same year, naming themselves the Cumminsiville Lodge. The group met in 6 different buildings around Northside until Jacob Hoffner donated land on the corner of Hamilton Avenue and Spring Street (now Moline Court). Hoffner was a Mason and a prominent Northsider, an owner of tin, copper and ironware company, as well as an hotelier and philanthropist. His large estate sat on Hamilton Avenue, across from the parcel of donated land.

On June 24, 1885, the Masons laid the cornerstone of the Masonic Hall and named themselves the Hoffner Lodge in honor of their benefactor. The ceremony included a parade with two bands and a banquet for lodge members and their families plus 600 guests (Wolf 10). The Lodge moved into the Hall permanently in April of 1886 (7). When facing the front gate of the Hoffner estate, the Lodge was visible in the distance (8).

The storefronts on the first floor of the building facing Hamilton Avenue originally housed a Kroger grocery, a laundry, and the Post Office (9,10). The Masonic Hall itself was accessible from the rear of the building. A set of stairs led from the balcony in the auditorium on the second floor to the
“Lodge Room” on the third floor (Wolf 10). The Masons used the second floor for special dinners and family events, with an average attendance of 100 people. It may have been used for plays in its early history. The Masons used the third floor Lodge Room for “degree work,” initiation ceremonies where members achieved the degree of apprentice, fellow craft, and master.

In 1893, the two-story section to the south side of the building was torn down and rebuilt as three stories. The addition included the entrance still used today and the stairwell leading to the upper floors. The upper part of the steeple was removed at this time as well (Wolf 11) (11). The remaining part of the steeple, however, still contained the bell that rang twelve times during initiation ceremonies and could be heard in all of Northside. Harold Gregory, a member of the lodge since 1975, often wondered if people in the neighborhood understood the bell’s significance. The Hoffner Lodge took the bell with them when they moved to a location near Miamitown, rededicating the new building on August 18, 2001.

A history of Northside published in 1914 stated, “Hoffner Lodge has been the pride and bond of fellowship of many of the most prominent citizens of Cummins ville, and its influence and benefactions are beyond calculation (12).” This pride and fellowship was still evident in 1979, when its members published a 125th anniversary history of the lodge. They included a poem by Frederick L. Cavally entitled “Good Old Hoffner Lodge:"

One Hundred And Twenty Five Years ago/ A watchful hour-glass started/The Sands of Time to Flow/The flowing sands record/Man’s footprints as he journeys/Toward Futures unexplored./Our Brothers saw the Light;/it gave them faith and courage/And guided them aright./They drew up plans
with care/And based those plans upon/The Level, Plumb and Square/Thus from their trestle-board/Arose an inspiration/That could not be ignored/From plans a Temple grew-/The Corner-stone they laid/Was truer than they knew./Their work drew others near /Who gathered 'round the Light/Of Friendship and Good Cheer./Those days and years have gone, /But good works once record-ed/Live on and on and on./Today, we all take pride/In good old Hoffner Lodge-/Our true Fraternal Guidel/Now, as we celebrate/Our Century Jubilee -/Let’s pause and meditate!/For now we’ve part to play!/As THEY served in the Past,/So may WE serve Today! -

Since 1975, the Masons met the first Saturday of every month at 7:30pm. These meetings functioned mostly as business meetings. Additional times for initiation ceremonies took place on the remaining Saturdays or during the week, depending on the number of candidates to be initiated (Gregory). Members choose to join a lodge based on convenience, proximity, and friendship. Members can belong to any lodge in any city in their district. There are about 30 districts in Ohio. Cincinnati, in the first district, and has 32 lodges (freemason.com).

The number of lodges and lodge members indicates the appeal of Masonry. However, Harold Gregory noted that membership is declining. The Hoffner Lodge had 640 members in 1980. In 2000 the lodge had 340 members (Gregory). The membership has decreased due to the greater number of community groups, clubs, and diversions such as television in the late 20th century. It is also due to the fact that Masons may not recruit or solicit members – new members must ask to become a Mason. Lodge members can only be men, though there are other Masonic chapters such as the Royal Arch Masons and the Order of the Eastern Star, which can include women. Although the members of Hoffner Lodge are predominantly white, there are African-American chapters of Masons as well.
Masonry's appeal lies in its history, its source of camaraderie, and its tradition of good works for the community. According to the Hoffner Lodge history, the platform for Masonry is “Faith in our God, Faith in our ability, faith in our future, and faith in ourselves.” Harold Gregory listed these Masonic principles: respect, peace, kindness, generosity, and courage.

He emphasized that the only thing private about the masons is the inner lodge and initiation ceremonies – 'privacy, not secrecy' is greatly valued. Though the degree work activities of the Masons are kept private, it is clear that the Masons’ aim is to serve as a support network for the lodge members and their families, and also to support the community and people in need. For example, the Hoffner Lodge supports the Eye Foundation and the cerebral palsy causes, among others (Gregory).

Freemasonry
Freemasonry first appeared in England in the 17th century but held its widest influence during the 18th and 19th centuries in Europe and the United States (MacKenzie 152). The word 'freemason' stems from stonemasons – medieval craftsmen who belonged to craft guilds. They were neither under the control of a feudal overlord nor of a municipal corporation, thus they were called ‘free’ (MacKenzie 158).

Masons helped build cathedrals, monasteries and castles, and would move frequently in order to find work. Since the nature of their work necessitated a migratory lifestyle, they organized groups in order to maintain a sense of cohesion and strength. Freemason groups kept certain methods of their work concealed from outsiders as a kind of copyright on their skills.
The guilds gradually became more exclusive, with secret passwords and initiation ceremonies (MacKenzie 159). Titles were given to members based on their level in the guild system. These titles are still used today to indicate different positions in a lodge (13).

In about 1619 the London Mason's company set up a parallel body called the Acception. This allowed men who were not stonemasons or architects to become “accepted masons.” The appeal for men who were not stonemasons may have been the privacy of the organization and the possibility of having access to the “hidden wisdom,” rich traditions, connections, and community offered by the Masons. Masons began to draw most of their members from the wealthy middle class (MacKenzie 161-162).

Eventually, Freemasonry began to take on more symbolic meanings. “The tools and methods used in the building trade were endowed with precise moral significance (MacKenzie 162).” Rough ashlar – unhewn stone – represented man in his primitive state. Polished stone represented man with morals and virtues well-formed. The “square of God’s word” and the “compass of his own self-convincing conscience” became symbols of Freemasonry (14). Masons could belong to any religious sect, but could not be atheists.

Rituals

By the mid-nineteenth century, the typical Masonic lodge room had acquired a ritually determined form. The space was constructed with little variation throughout the United States and continues to be reproduced in the meeting rooms to this day (Brockman 33) (15). The third floor of the Hoffner Lodge was arranged in a similar way. The lodge room at the new Hoffner Lodge location is almost an exact replica of the room's arrangement in the Northside building, complete with the same furniture (16). In Masonic lodges throughout history, this room was an “alternative realm set apart from day-to-day reality.”

During meetings the men sat encircling the room, facing the center, fostering a sense of engagement and community. Each person saw and was seen by everyone present (Brockman 35-36). Though there was a hierarchy among the members, this seating arrangement put the members on the same level.
Though initiation ceremonies and other rituals held by the Masons are private, records describe some of these rituals in their traditional form. The traditional rituals are highly formulaic, with complex movements, steps, and interactions between the Masons. They involve a great sense of drama and theatre.

In the traditional initiation ceremony of the Masons, the initiate enters the room exposing one arm, one knee, and half of their chest. He speaks following a script and enacts various movements around the room. During the climax of the ceremony, the initiate lies on a sheet and is symbolically slain. Traditionally, this ritual represents the slaying of Hiram Abif, a Mason who worked on King Solomon’s temple. Some of Abif’s fellow masons killed and buried him. He was later unearthed by the Masons and given a proper burial. The ritual symbolizes spiritual regeneration, with Abif representing the human soul.

Following this ritual, the initiate is lifted up following a certain pattern of movement: right hand to right hand, right foot to right foot, right knee to right knee, right breast to right breast, and left hand over the candidate’s back. The initiate then places one foot or arm in a perpendicular position, and marches in a straight line, pivoting at right angles. The movements during the initiation the geometric precision of the central icons of freemasonry: the square and the compass.

Masonry Today

Freemasonry today can be considered “a social club” with the added benefit of privacy. Since many Masons are businessmen, it can also serve as a business club. There are other
material benefits through Masonic charity, which raises large sums of money each year for the endowment of Masonic schools, orphanages, hospitals, and old-age homes, as well as internal support of its members’ families in case of need (MacKenzie 177). Like the Hoffner Lodge, however, many lodges have declining membership and there have been efforts made to attract members without direct solicitation.

The Masons exist as one of the oldest and largest fraternal organizations, with a current worldwide membership of 3.6 million members, 1.6 million of which are in North America. With 125,000 Masons and 540 local Lodges, Ohio has one of the largest Masonic memberships of any state in the country. Members come from more varied backgrounds than in the past, and their main focus is to provide internal support and camaraderie as well as sponsor various causes such as the Ohio Special Olympics, the Masonic Model Student Assistance Program, the Grand Lodge Scholarship Program, and the Ohio Masonic Home. To be a member, men must: have been an Ohio resident for at least one year, be at least 19 years old, have a belief in a Supreme Being, live a good moral and social life, do not advocate the overthrow of the government, can read and write English, and are recommended by two members of the Lodge (freemason.com).

Masons are men from a variety of ethnic, religious, and economic backgrounds who share a belief in the brotherhood of man and the fatherhood of God, work to improve themselves and their communities, and are an asset to all who know them. Membership in a Masonic Lodge is an honor that says a great deal about the character and personal integrity of a man (freemason.com).
Chapter 3: Place identity

The central argument of this thesis is that an exploration into ‘place’ can enrich neighborhoods. Urban planners argue that studying place can result in ‘collaborative projects to restore neighborhoods, to reclaim buildings, and to embrace community life (Reynolds 75).’ These projects can help people feel that they belong, can help them create meaning, and can help nurture relationships with others (Reynolds 141). Exploration leads to understanding, which can lead to stewardship and respect for one’s neighborhood and one’s fellow citizens.

Though this chain of effects from exploration to stewardship is not a given, it is a process emphasized by planners and urbanists. It is particularly important for those planners (sometimes called ‘placemakers’) who focus on place as a crucial ingredient in the vitality and revitalization of the urban environment. These include well-known urbanists William H. Whyte and Jane Jacobs, both active from the 1960s onward. Whyte wrote The Social Life of Small Urban Spaces (1980), where he studied time-lapse film of public spaces to study how people interacted with the space and with each other. Jacobs wrote The Death and Life of Great American Cities (1961) one of the most influential texts on the inner workings of American cities. Both Whyte and Jacobs emphasized place-based, community-centered approach to urban planning. More recently, in Planning to Stay: Learning to See the Physical Features of Your Neighborhood (1994), William R. Morrish Catherine R. Brown provide a handbook for community builders to explore the features of their neighborhood: homes and gardens, community streets, neighborhood niches, anchoring institutions, and public gardens.

Graphic design can engage in the process of place exploration on many levels. The design process, which involves posing questions and strategizing solutions, is applicable to diverse areas of research and practice. It is important for designers to be active, critical thinkers during the design process and take into account issues of political and social importance. My interest in these issues stems from a belief that the content, context, and purpose of design is just as important as its visual form. The First Things First Manifesto of the year 2000 asks designers “to look at our culture and our communities not just to see how we can make money, but to see how we can weave a stronger thread into the fabric of our society (Baugnet 96).” As Katherine McCoy notes, “Designers must be good citizens and participate in the shaping of our government and society (McCoy 2).”

There are many examples of projects where designers and artists have engaged the issue of place. Exhibits and installations often allow for a complex and multi-layered exploration of place. Identity design must distill the essence of the place into an iconic image and often results in more abstract representations of place. An investigation into place can become an important part of the

The Maitri Center: Place Identity and Identity Design 18
design process. Understanding the social and historical aspects of a place in addition to understanding its current character and its vision – is provides a strong base for communicating its identity through design.

*The New Charleston*, a 1991 installation in Charleston, South Carolina by designer Houston Conwill, poet Estella Conwill Majozo, and architect Joseph de Pace, deals with the spatial and social history of African Americans in Charleston over three centuries (19). *Biddy Mason: Time and Place* is a piece by Sheila Levrant de Bretteville. The 82-foot long mural on the wall of an interior street in downtown Los Angeles that tells the story of an African-American midwife who lived at the site. The installation combined text, photographs, and object impressions in concrete to give a history of Mason’s life and a history of Los Angeles (20). Completed in 1990, the installation was a collaboration with the Power of Place organization. Dolores Hayden, professor of architecture and urbanism at Yale University, founded The Power of Place with the belief that ordinary urban landscapes have the power to nurture citizen’s public memory (Hayden 9).

Levrant de Bretteville’s numerous installation projects across the country highlight local oral history and help to bring diverse neighborhood issues into a public space for discussion (Baugnet 108). Ellen Lupton describes Levrant de Bretteville’s work as follows: “through her deep research into the neighborhoods where her works are sited, her recording of residents’ voices, and her respect for the everyday life and memories of a community, de Bretteville is able to produce projects that are significant to all of their local populations (Lupton).”

An identity system is the visual expression of an organization’s character, personality, and vision (Haig 171); it gives an organization a coherent look that helps it stand out. Identity design as we know it is only a decades-old discipline. However, throughout history people have marked their
wares, their property, or their business to signify ownership and authorship (Cropper and Haller 2). Identity design is now an integral part of the business strategy for most organizations. In order for an identity to function effectively within a business strategy, designers must base their design on extensive research and analysis of the organization. This research allows the designer to understand the organization’s personality and vision. In addition, an understanding of the place identity -- the place-related social, physical, and historical aspects -- of an organization can also be an important part of the design process. Understanding these aspects provides a strong base for communicating an identity through graphic design.

The Cincinnati Parks logo by Siebert Design Associates (21), which conveys both the urban and natural features of the city takes inspiration from place in its design (Cropper and Haller 32). Another logo includes the Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor (22). The logo references the valley’s past to convey its heritage. The logo represents the flow of water through a mill as well as ‘through the lives of the people who lived in the valley (Cropper and Haller 50). Both of these logos emphasize the physical aspects of place -- the architecture and landscape.
Place and place literacy

What is ‘place?’ Its meaning is complex and fluid, with spatial, social, political, and psychological implications. Social meaning is implied in phrases like “knowing one’s place” or “a woman’s place (Hayden 17).” The significance of place ranges from abstract to concrete, and its scale varies from the size of a country to the size of a neighborhood or street (Arefi 180). J. E. Malpas, professor of Philosophy at the University of Tasmania, defines place as follows:

a. a definite but open space, particularly a bounded, open space within a country or town.
b. a more generalized sense of space, extensions, dimensionality or ‘room’
c. location or position within some order (whether it be spatial or some other kind of ordering)
d. a particular locale or environment that has a character of its own
e. an abode or that within which something exists or within which it dwells
(Malpas 21-22)

In this thesis, I focus on the definition of place as a site of emotional, cultural, and historical values manifested in local identity. I focus on place at the neighborhood scale and smaller; “a particular locale … that has a character of its own.”

Due to increased globalization, communication, and mobility, our environment is shifting into nonplace and placelessness. Mahyar Arefi, professor of planning at the University of Cincinnati who focuses on place and placelessness, suggests several causes for placelessness. These include the shift from a communal emphasis to a more solitary one and the shift from face-to-face interactions to secondary contacts between people over the internet, email, and phone. Our daily rituals and behaviors are no longer a part of a communal social experience, but are influenced largely by interactions with ATMs, freeways, and the norms that accompany these interactions -- or non-interactions. In addition, there is a shift from a “chronological connection to a broader physical, cultural, or emotional context” to a lack of connection (Arefi 181-183). This can be seen as a negative effect of globalization, global communication, and increased mobility.

However, one cannot ignore the positive aspects of mobility and lack of connection. There is a human need to be mobile and flexible against all odds, and to be able to escape damaging roots and strangling traditions. Geographer Yi-Fu Tuan indicates that rootlessness suggests social mobility and optimism about the future. In turn, rootedness can imply stagnation and entrapment (Tall 108). An identity that is rooted to one place may be “oppressive and imprisoning (Relph 41).”

Furthermore, mobility can paradoxically strengthen one’s attachment to place. Mobile and transient people “are not automatically homeless or placeless, but may be able to achieve very quickly an attachment to new places…(Relph 30).” I recently spoke to a woman who works in international
development and grew up in a mobile family. She says she is “from nowhere,” and that “home is where I have my family and my toothbrush.”

However, mobility is not a universal or vastly prevalent phenomenon. Nedra Reynolds – professor of writing at the University of Rhode Island who focuses on feminist geography – comments:

Although the world is indeed increasingly well connected, we must hold this in balance with the observation that most people live intensely local lives; their homes, work places, recreation, shopping, friends, and often family are all located within a relatively small orbit. The simple and obvious fact that overcoming distance requires time and money means that the everyday events of daily life are well grounded within a circumscribed arena (Reynolds 89).

Thus, it is important to address the meanings and implications of place. Furthermore, an understanding of place can be crucial to an understanding of self and of one’s environment. Paul Groth – professor of architecture and geography at the University of California-Berkeley whose focus of study is the history, form, and meaning of ordinary built environment (geography.berkeley.edu) – argues that a better knowledge of ordinary environments can foster deeper understanding of American people and American culture. Furthermore, it can lessen the environmental dangers caused by people who cannot see and interpret their surroundings (Groth 2).

This knowledge of ordinary environments and the ability to truly see and interpret one’s surroundings is a kind of ‘place literacy.’ Urban planners argue that place literacy can result in collaborative projects to restore neighborhoods, to reclaim buildings, and embrace community life (Reynolds 75). The awareness and respect of one’s immediate environment and the environment as a whole is crucial, particularly given the current state of the planet. I am not suggesting that learning about the history of one place will greatly impact the state of the planet. I am simply suggesting that the ability to read and understand a small, local place is a kind of literacy that creates a broader and deeper understanding of the world and our role in it. This literacy opens eyes to the diversity, complexity, and beauty of our everyday surroundings and the history and meaning contained within these surroundings.

In addition, a respect for place goes hand in hand with a respect for self. As David Orr noted, we are reflections of our places (Orr 234). If one has a deep connection to place, self-respect becomes place-respect and vice versa. Responsibility for one’s health and well-being becomes responsibility for the health and well-being of one’s place. This interrelationship of self and place is not merely incidental. It is a fundamental and even necessary connection, with implications for personal, interpersonal, and place relationships. Edward Relph is a professor of geography and planning at the University of Toronto whose focus of study is the phenomenology of place and sense of place; urban form, landscapes, and design; and environmental philosophy. He notes that:
a deep relationship with places is as necessary, and perhaps as unavoidable, as close relationships with people; without such relationships human existence, while possible, is bereft of much of its significance (Relph 41).

This relationship with place “is perhaps the most important and least recognized need of the human soul,” writes Simone Weil in *The Need for Roots* (Relph 38). To be rooted in a place is to feel a visceral connection with it and with other people in that place. If personal and place are fundamentally connected, then perhaps the instinctive impulse to care for one’s self and ensure self-survival also leads to an impulse to care for one’s place and others in it. Rootlessness “allows us to be indifferent to our towns and cities, to ignore their human and environmental plights, to say but this isn’t mine (Tall 108).” Whether one is rootless or rooted, place literacy can be important ingredient in understanding and improving neighborhoods and communities and creating a greater connection to a physical, cultural, historical, and emotional context.

Changing Identity

How has the use of the building changed over time? How has the changing use of the building affected its identity? How is place identity related to individual identity? Why is it important to understand these issues? In referring to the identity of the Maitri Center, I refer to the history of the building – the social meaning of the building over time, who used the building and how, and the role it plays and has played as an icon in the neighborhood.

Implicit in this meaning is the relationship between people and the places they inhabit. The identity of the building is directly linked to the people who use the building and the ways in which they use the building. People use places “to establish their identity, articulate their social relations, and derive cultural meaning (Groth 1).” As people use places to establish their identity, the place becomes almost inextricable from their identity, and even equivalent to their identity (Malpas 177). As philosopher Gabriel Marcel notes, “an individual is not distinct from his place, he is that place (Relph 43).” Place shapes people and people shape place to an extent that they can become an entity that is one and the same.

The Hoffner Lodge/Maitri Center building identity has changed from a private to a more public space and from a predominantly male space to a more female-oriented space. The building has, however, maintained its original purpose to a great degree. It has remained a group gathering space
for ritual, performance, and camaraderie. The types of rituals, performances, and groups have merely changed. However, its function as a gathering space has increased as the building has opened to a broader public than it had previously.

The physical aspects of the Hoffner Lodge/Maitri Center building have not changed drastically since the Masons moved to a location near Miamitown in 2001. However, the identity of the building has changed as its functions have become more public and the population using the building has broadened and diversified. The second floor of the building was previously open only to Masons and their family members; the third floor lodge room was open only to initiated Masons. The lodge room and its activities were kept private and indeed secret from non-Masons.

The symbolism of the lodge room was so powerful to the Hoffner Lodge Masons that they took the doors of the room with them to their new space. Hoffner Lodge member Harold Gregory explained that they were moved so that “members would go in and out of the same doors as they did one hundred and some years ago.” All of the furniture was moved to the new location as well, and arranged exactly as it had been in the lodge in Northside. The Masons also moved the bell that rang during initiation ceremonies and could be heard throughout the neighborhood. Nevertheless, many of the members still miss the old building. Harold Gregory notes, “we all miss the building. It was part of us, you know.” Though the attachment to the physical place is strong, the attachment to the social, historical, and emotional place of Masonry is just as strong. Masonry is described as a place in the “Ten Reasons to Become a Mason” listed by the First Masonic District Officers Association. Several of the reasons are as follows:

Masonry is a place where you will find unlimited opportunity to acquire leadership experience, self-development and personal growth. Masonry is a place where you can give encouragement and support to others as well as receive it. Masonry is a place to meet community leaders and take active part in community activities.

Though the building was a place for gathering and community, it was a relatively exclusive and private one. Now the second and third floors are places for public gatherings, performances, and dance and movement classes (23). However, in many ways, the third floor space of the Maitri Center is used in a somewhat similar fashion to how
the Masons utilized it. The initiation rituals most likely involved some amount of ritual performance, theatre, and movement. Movement classes, meditation, dance, and performance also require complex movements, steps, and interactions between people. These movements of bodies through the space have defined it in the past and define it today. Today, however, it is used more frequently and by a more diverse public than it was in the past. The Maitri Center opens its doors to a wide and varied audience, its rituals, dances, and performances open to the public.

The identity of the building has also changed from being a predominantly male place to a more female place. One’s physical as well as social place – one’s race, class, and gender – mark the body. The body and its gender, in turn, affects the identity of the physical places it inhabits: “…a body becomes marked with the residue of a place, but places are also changed by the presences of bodies (Reynolds 143).” The gendering of place is not only physical, but social as well. Gender is a socially constructed characteristic, as opposed to sex, which is biologically based. Stereotypically, opposing attributes are associated with gender: masculine/feminine, public/private, outside/inside, work/home, work/leisure, production/consumption, independence/dependence, power/lack of power (McDowell 12-13). The dynamic between these dualities of male and female, public and private, power and lack of power create gendered places. These dualities seem to divide place into fixed, opposing segments.

However, Recent anthropological work define gendered places more as a “social process of symbolic encoding and decoding” that creates relationships between the “spatial, symbolic, and social orders.” This interpretation gives a less fixed definition of gendered places – thus, the meaning of place is always changing and can be contested and renegotiated (Blunt and Rose 3). Likewise, the meaning of the Hoffner Lodge/Maitri Center is continually changing.

The Hoffner Lodge was founded at a time when Freemasonry became increasingly popular in the United States. Historians attribute this revival to the more dominant role of women in the domestic sphere at this time as well as the ‘feminization’ of the arts, the church, and the theatre. In Theatre of the Fraternity, C. Brockman proposes that “by the early twentieth century, many men were reacting to this far-reaching feminization of the former male strongholds. The growth of fraternal lodges … can be seen as part of that reaction.” Freemasonry became, in a sense, an escape from the female-dominated home, church, and culture. Brockman also suggests that “the Masonic world view accepted the ‘fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man’ while officially ignoring women and most relationships with them (Brockman 22-3).” One cannot assume that this was the case for the Hoffner Lodge members, but it is a possibility.

Former Masonic lodges often house new organizations such as bookstores, office buildings, and museums. What is interesting about this particular building is that it has retained its function
as a non-business oriented space, a gathering space, and a space for movement and theatre. The Masonic lodge was a private space open only to its members. The building itself was built to encourage the privacy of its spaces. This has proved difficult for the Maitri Center, as far as accessibility and openness of the space to the public. The mission of the Center, to create a space for the community to grow – a nurturing space open to all – is both similar and vastly different from the use of the space previously. The Masons were a group that supported each other, as kind of a businessmen's' guild, and also sponsored various causes and offered charity to many organizations. In this sense, it was and still remains a space for building relationships and nurturing the community.
Chapter 4: Maitri Center Identity Design

The primary question of this thesis is: how can the identity design for the Maitri Center best provide the organization a most effective and useable image? To begin the identity design process, I posed these questions: What materials and themes have they been using previously? What are similar organizations doing? What imagery do Maitri patrons associate with the organization? How do I incorporate history, architecture, and my clients' vision into an effective identity? How can the identity design process include exploration into issues of place and identity?

In the design process, I took into account the aspects of my research described in Chapters 1 – 3. I considered my conversations with Maureen Wood and groups that use the Maitri Center about the Maitri's mission and goals. I took into account the meaning of the word Maitri. I also considered the history of the building and of the Masons as well as the changing identity of the place.

During the design process I found it difficult to encompass all of these aspects into a single, coherent design. I struggled with how I could I incorporate the history of the building and also emphasize its new identity. Since the identity required a clear, coherent, and contemporary message, it was difficult to inject multiple meanings and histories into it. My solution was to emphasize the outline of the building in one version of the logo. This logo direction was favored by Maureen Wood because the building has such a presence in the neighborhood. Emphasizing the building also lends a level of historical reference to the logo.

In short, I decided to make Maureen Wood's mission my main priority, since I was creating an identity for the Maitri Center. In emphasizing the building in the final logo, I referenced its history and the issue of place. There is potential to include information on the history and the issue of place as well as communicate a more in-depth, layered history of the building through other media, including print materials, exhibits, and a website.

Visual Audit

I first conducted a visual audit of Maitri Center print materials. The current materials are from various groups that use the space and are printed from standard laser printers and photocopied. The pieces lack a coherent design language. Most events are advertised through 8.5 x 11 postings on bulletin boards (24) and through the northside.net website and word of mouth. The Maitri Center does not currently have its own website. Its identity is established with a sign on the exterior of the building, with the organization’s name and an image of a tree (25). The Maitri Center is also strongly identified with Maureen Wood herself, since she is a prominent and active member of the community.
In addition, I gathered materials from similarly oriented organizations, both in Cincinnati and elsewhere, to get a feeling for the type of identity design and materials that are designed for movement, nonprofit, and arts organizations. These includes examples of logos for similar organizations (Appendix A) and others with inspirational designs, as well as examples of inspirational low-budget design applications (Appendix B). I was struck by logos that had a simple, strong, lively, and organic visual presence. I looked at application designs that were simple, clean, and cost effective, yet expressive.

As part of the visual audit I also researched the history of the building, the results of which I describe in Chapters 1 through 3 of this thesis. I took photographs of the interior and exterior of the building, collected images relating to masonry, and gathered images from Northside past and present.

Themes and Attributes

Based on conversations with Maureen Wood, Volker Stroebel, and Maitri patrons, themes associated with the organization include: gathering, excitement, energy, idea exchange, anchor, grow, build, nurture. Attributes they associate with the Maitri Center include: dynamic, open, accessible, progressive, offbeat, cutting-edge, unusual, understanding, sustainable, stable, worldly, eastern thought meets western thought, gentleness, strength. After further discussion with Wood, the key themes for the Maitri are nurture and grow. According to Wood, since the concept of ‘maitri’ is quite complex and abstract, the mark needs to be simple, clean, and concrete.
To begin designing a logo, I gathered images as conceptual and visual inspiration. I gathered images relating to the themes of nurture and grow. These include more abstract organic images such as shells, budding plants, water ripples, roots, seeds, trees, spines, growth rings, spider webs, balanced rocks, bundles of cables, and local plants. I also collect images relating to eastern thought and the concept of 'maitri.' In addition, I collect images of the building past and present, and of Northside, which are shown in Chapters 1 and 2.
Logo

Preliminary concepts include logos based on themes of nurturing and growth, as well as logos that focus on the iconic image of the building. I present several of these to Maureen Wood and Volker Stroebel (27 – 29). Wood likes the idea of the building representing The Maitri Center and likes the logo concept that contained the vertical wordmark placed within the tower of the building. I started to refine the wordmark itself (30).

The final logo solution consists of two variations (31). One is a wordmark with the word ‘MAiTRi’ set vertically in Avenir. The M is altered slightly in order to mimic the form of the A more closely. All letters are in caps except for the i’s, which are set in lowercase to give the word a more approachable and lively feel. The advantage of a wordmark is that there are no symbols that people must learn to relate with the name of the organization. In addition, this keeps the logo simple, clean, and concrete. However, I keep in mind that names that express the attributes of the organization are difficult to design effectively (Haig 59-60). The second logo variation combines the wordmark with a simple and abstracted outline of the building in two line weights. The sizing of the logos and the free space around the logos are indicated in figures 32 and 33.

Color Palette

The color palette consists of a primary color palette of four colors and a secondary color palette of three highlight colors (34,35). The primary color palette contains bold and slightly muted colors: dark blue (PMS 5493), yellow-green (PMS 389), warm yellow (PMS 123) and dark red (PMS 1675). The secondary color palette contains brighter colors: bright blue (PMS 3105), yellow (PMS 109), and red (PMS 173.)

The color palettes were chosen as fresh, warm organic colors complementing bolder, muted colors. The blues were chosen to evoke tranquility, the green to evoke growth, the yellows to evoke vitality and joy, and the reds to evoke love. These attributes are based on western cultural symbolism that associates these meanings with the colors (Adams 51).

Type Style

The type style is the Avenir font family, chosen because it the font used in the logo. Avenir is clean and legible with an element of warmth (36).
27 Preliminary logo concepts, round 1.
Preliminary logo concepts, round 2.
Final logo concepts, typographic exploration.
Final logo solutions.
32 Final logo solution, free space around logo and smallest sizing of logo.
Final logo solution, free space around logo and smallest sizing of logo.
Final logo solution in color.
Color palette.
I wanted to make into a space where we could do yoga and meditation and dance but also have performance and a real community gathering space. I really believe that in building back a neighborhood you’ve got to build relationships and the only way to build relationships is to have space where that can happen. It provides an alternative to church space for people who aren’t comfortable there and also just provides a space for families to gather. Most people do commercial buildings like that primarily for profit, and I’m doing it to build community, which is a profit in my mind. If you build a community you’ve got a lot of profit there.
Grid
The grid is based on an 8.5 x 11 inch letter-size page, with the assumption that most printed pieces will be printed in-house and photocopied (37).

Photography
The photography will be black and white for most of the print material and the website. This simplifies color correction and allows for more economical printing. The style is honest, real, and lively, with a snapshot-like feel (38).

Secondary Graphics
Secondary graphics include dynamic textures based on themes of nurture and grow, as well as textures based on a two dimensional outline of the building (39). These textures can be used as background on the website as well as elements in printed materials.
Basic Grid for print pieces.
Photographic style.
Secondary graphics.
Chapter 5: Applications

How can the Maitri Center best implement and manage this identity system? How could the system be best designed to account for a low budget, minimal staffing and little time? I attempted create an identity that is simple, economical, and effective. The applications in this chapter are designed with these criteria in mind. Eventually, if the Maitri Center implements the identity, these elements will be provided in formats and templates that are most functional for the staff - as jpegs and word documents, for example.

Stationery

The stationery is black and white with no bleeds, which allows the Maitri Center to print from their in-house printers. Stationery could be printed on colored paper that meshed with the color palette of the identity (40).

Schedule

The schedule of events is designed in black and white with no bleeds and fits onto letter-size paper, which allows the Maitri Center to print from their in-house printers. The schedule could be printed on colored paper that meshed with the color palette of the identity (41.1, 41.2).

Webpage layouts

A website would be the most effective means of communication for the Maitri Center — as Maureen Wood said, it would be 'dynamite' to have one up and running (42.1, 42.2). Northside.net and its local web host would be an ideal location for a Maitri website. This allows for a greater use of color and reaches a broad audience. The cost of hosting and maintenance is an issues, however.

Promotional concepts

Promotional concepts are shown here in ideation stage. Their main goal is name recognition and events promotion. The outline of the building would serve as a frame for images of current events, with possible headlines or slogans such as "my place, my event, maitri," "my friends, my place, maitri," "my body, my self, maitri," "our community, our place, maitri" (34).
The Maitri Center
4120 Hamilton Avenue
Cincinnati OH 45223
513.542.0088
The Maitri Center

The Maitri Center is a unique blend of classic homes, eclectic and traditional businesses and entertainment venues, and a long tradition of community activism. Northside is the place to be for those who want an urban environment, yet also want to connect with their neighbors just as if they lived in a small town.

Shop at a local boutique, have breakfast, enjoy a bike ride, or visit the local coffee shop. If you live in Northside, that's just a sample of what Northside's business district has to offer, all within walking distance of your home.

<p>| | | | | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>David Marcus 5-7pm</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>David Marcus 5-7pm</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>David Marcus 5-7pm</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>David Marcus 5-7pm</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>David Marcus 5-7pm</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>David Marcus 5-7pm</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>David Marcus 5-7pm</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

November 05

41.1 Schedule, front.
Events

Title Goes Here
David Martin Bank
Wednesday 11.23.2005
9:30-11 pm
2ND FLOOR $10

In this paper I explore these questions through review of writings on place from the perspective of philosophy, geography, landscape studies, planning, and sociology. I am interested in examining the sense of place, the emotional attachments people have to a place, the way place forms their identity, and the differing implication of rootedness and mobility questions through review of writings on place from the perspective of philosophy, geography, landscape studies, planning, and sociology.

CONTACT: David Martin
davidmartin@fuse.net 513.533.9339

Title Goes Here
Tango Performance
Wednesday 11.23.2005
9:30-11 pm
2ND FLOOR $10

In this paper I explore these questions through review of writings on place from the perspective of philosophy, geography, landscape studies, planning, and sociology. I am interested in examining the sense of place, the emotional attachments people have to a place, the way place forms their identity, and the differing implication of rootedness and mobility questions through review of writings on place from the perspective of philosophy, geography, landscape studies, planning, and sociology.

CONTACT: David Martin
davidmartin@fuse.net 513.533.9339

41.2 Schedule, back.

The Maitri Center: Place Identity and Identity Design 48
Events

TANGO

8:30–10 pm
Saturday, November 13, 2005
The Matri Center First Floor

Los Barretines Milonga Tango with DJ MANUK and hostesses
Patricia & Barb. Bring your own wine. Snacks will be provided.
This is a once a month 1st Saturday event. Mark your calendars
to help support this new Saturday milonga as well as our
established 3rd Friday of the month Milonga del Barrio in
Northside.

42.1 Website content page concept.
Chris Chandler and Anne Feeney
April
Friday, October 21, 2005
The Maitri Center Performance Hall

Chris Chandler and Anne Feeney’s Taming Poetry Circus is on the move again. The multimedia act, which combines folk music, poetry, and humor, continues to travel the country, weaving its way from Nova Scotia, Canada to Nashville, Tennessee. This year, they have added a new element to their show: a live orchestra. The result is a dynamic performance that is both visually and aurally engaging. The show is not to be missed.
Promotional concepts.
Conclusion

There are a number of items that would be helpful for the Maitri Center in order to move forward. For print materials and the website, it would be helpful to have a mission statement outlining the Maitri’s goals, the problem it is addressing, and why it is important. A statement outlining the background of the Maitri, its history, size, sources of funding, location, activities, and member demographics would also be valuable. In addition, a one-page profile of spokespeople including basic biographical information, professional background, education, and some personal information would be helpful to include in any literature (Bonk 65).

Other possible applications to be designed include press-release forms, fax cover sheets, memorandums, shipping forms, mailing labels, brochures, newsletters, posters, and advertisements. Exterior, interior, directional, and informational signage are also possibilities as well as promotional shirts and stickers. Research on ways to keep under budget as far as materials and printing are practical questions that could be addressed.

As part of my process I conducted an informal survey of people in Northside to gather their opinion of the final logo. I spoke to eight people at these Northside establishments: the Northside Branch Library, Schaefers Pharmacy, Ali’s Boutique, Sidewinder Coffee, ACE Cash Express, Ace Hardware and Electric, Just a Chip bakery, and the Darou Salam store. I spoke to 6 women and two men between the ages of 20 and 70.

The outline of the building was not immediately legible to any of the people I spoke to. Some were confused by it, tilted the logo on its side, and wondered if the line was a state outline or map. One woman liked the shape around the logo because it drew attention to it, and was reminiscent of a map of the neighborhood.

Most responded well to the colors and found the word Maitri to be legible, and the logo simple and clean. Two people commented that the colors were a bit too muted for the Maitri Center. One person suggested very bright and lively colors for a place that offers dance and movement classes: “it needs to wake you up.” He suggested that the mark should be more focused on activities taking place in the building rather than the building itself. He also thought that a description of the Maitri Center and the definition of ‘maitri’ should be clearly stated with the logo.

Most people felt that the mark was compatible with the character of the Maitri Center. Positive comments included that the logo was “hip and up and coming, like Northside,” and that Northside was becoming more contemporary, so the logo worked well for the neighborhood because it has a contemporary feel. The owner of Ace Hardware thought the logo would look best in the colors of the
building itself and felt that the logo was too modern. He preferred the ways of the “old german neighborhood,” he joked.

Was the resulting identity for the Maitri Center able to incorporate the history and changing use of the building and the concept of place? My earliest designs focused on images representing nurturing and growth as well as the name of the Maitri Center. As I learned more about the building, its history, its changing identity, as well as the opinions of the patrons of the Maitri Center, I focused more on the structure of the building itself. The building and its community of patrons are the Maitri Center’s greatest assets. I seek to represent these with the abstracted depiction of the building and the word maitri, which represents the mission and vision of the Maitri Center as a community gathering place.
Appendix A: Logo Design Precedents

1 Logo for Integrated Living Communities, Chermayeff & Geismar.

2 Logo for Pilobolus dance company, Chermayeff & Geismar.

3 Logo for Muzak, Pentagram Design San Francisco.

4 Logo for Art Center College of Design Alumni Council, Earl Gee.
Appendix B: Application Design Precedents

1 Film Calendar Mailer for the Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, Flux Design.

2 Collateral for “Massage for the health of it,” Vaughn/Wedeen Creative.

3 Brochures for the American Center in Paris, Vignelli Associates.

4 Letterhead for the ICA Boston, Plus Design Inc.
5 Gunston Arts Center self-mailer, Hunter Wimmer/Neo Design.

6 Space needle identity, Hornall Anderson Design Works

7 Brooklyn Academy of Music postcards, Brooklyn Academy of Music.

8 Letterhead for 1508, as-graphics/sw/hk.
Sources: Chapters 1-3


__. “Lodge 100 Years Old.” (1954, October 25). Cincinnati Enquirer, p. 3:4


__. “1,000 Protest Selection of Northside Area For 340-unit Metropolitan Housing Project.” (1952, March 13). Cincinnati Enquirer, p. 8:2


Cook, Tony. “Upside at Northside: Cincinnati’s most diverse neighborhood seeks to maintain its mix,” (2004, April 5). *City Beat.*


Oldenburg, Ray. The Great Good Place: cafe’s, coffee shops, community centers, beauty parlors, general stores, bars, hangouts and how they get you through the day. New York: Paragon House, 1989.


Spencer, Kate. Personal Interview. February 9, 2005.


Sources: Chapters 4-5


