UNIVERSITY OF CINCINNATI

Date: 5/30/8

Andrew Roberts

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

Master ________________________________________

in:
Architecture ________________________________________

It is entitled:
Evolutionary Community Building ____________________________

This work and its defense approved by:

Chair:  Jay Chatterjee
 Thomas Bible
Evolutionary Community Building
An examination of community involvement and adaptation to fulfill a need in the neighborhood of Over-The-Rhine:

Master of Architecture
University of Cincinnati Thesis Document
For the School of Architecture and Interior Design within the College of Design, Architecture, Art, and Planning
May, 2008

Andrew Roberts
Bachelor of Science in Architecture
University of Minnesota, 2005

Thesis Chairs:
Jay Chatterjee
Professor of Architecture and Planning

Tom Bible
Associate Professor of Architecture
Abstract

In order for a piece of architecture to truly serve its community, to encompass the notion of community valuing, there needs to be a tightly interwoven identity connected to the purpose of the design. Once a community truly values the architecture, it will become fully utilized and its potential realized. This project will discover a process to develop a community-involved construction methodology, in the context of community design, construction, and management. The intent is to determine a level of involvement that the community can realistically participate in by developing a set of plans and objectives that could be performed with relative ease. The building will be constructed over time to accommodate the costs and immense size as well as other factors, including neighborhood demographics. In essence, the building will grow and mature to accommodate a changing culture that is perceived to take place in the community. In addition, there will need to be successful aesthetically designed solutions that the community can come to appreciate and value. The resulting building/program will be realized as a mixed-use building containing a grocery co-op that is built by the community for the community. The site will be located in the river basin of Cincinnati, in the famous Over-The-Rhine district.
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Introduction
Architecture has always dealt with issues of social meaning and duty. Our opportunities and styles for design haven’t changed, but available technologies have. In many ways, new technologies give our buildings the potential to be bigger, better, and most importantly, healthier than they’ve ever been. However, in this post-modern, techno era, decentralization, information, capitalism, and the lack of social reform have imprinted on our culture, slowly allowing for the decay of responsible and meaningful design.

So what is the solution? How has architecture lost that social connection? The landscape of architecture design in the most recent decades has lacked a certain depth and meaning; design has become shortsighted and trivial regarding use, purpose, material, and building method. A new method must be made, a social reform of process that involves the community in some expression. The project will discover a process to develop a community-involved program of construction methodology, within the context of community design and community management, in an attempt to create a sense of value and identity of said community within the building and design.

Both community design and management are relatively successful in execution when given enough momentum. Design examples can be seen in active designers and architects creating a dialogue with local
citizens on their visions and desires for the design. Management examples can be seen in local cooperatives or community centers, which require a motivational base that inherently comes from the grassroots level. However, the greater challenge is perhaps this aspect of community build and its exact implications into the design.

In many parts of the world, it isn’t uncommon to see eager designs, which actively incorporate the services of citizens in nearly every phase of their constructions. While inspiring, one must ask how successful this specific method could be in a neighborhood that is both in the United States and in such a dynamic and divisive area like Over-The-Rhine. Can we realistically expect every member of the community to participate in almost every aspect of construction such as The Gando Primary School in Gando Village, Burkina Faso? Not likely. There are very few examples in American design, none of which are more prominent than Sam Mockbee and his Rural Studio. What we lack in the Over-The Rhine location is the deep and tried presence that Mockbee was able to create in that community. As a result, traditional methodology in community building is called into question. At this point, we refer back to the initial goal of this thesis: creating a sense of value and identity of a design. Two solutions come to the surface to help support the concept of community building to achieve this goal; evolutionary design and applicable regionalism.
Evolutionary design recognizes the incredible task of community-built architecture. This process attempts to resolve issues concerning costs and finances as well as imposing upon construction labor the liability of unskilled volunteers. Through this staged process, the building can increase as demand and financing sees fit. It will also allow for a learning curve or unskilled workers to adapt to the challenges of construction and seek out a greater amount of skilled laborers in the community as the project gains attention. This element also suggests that perhaps the neighborhood of Over-The-Rhine is not united enough for true community participation, in addition to the fact that it lacks the appropriate demographic types to support a more grassroots, organic-style cooperative. This design solution would create a new type of building process, which easily allows members of the community to equip the building, over time, to new programs, materials, relationships, and purposes.

Regionalism is yet another way to help support a sense of identity and worth. However, this isn’t to be confused with critical regionalism. Rather, it is a sort of applicable regionalism. This means using elements of the region and neighborhood in both direct and indirect ways. This is to suggest that elements of and the theoretical purpose of materials, techniques, as well as relationships within the neighborhood should be applied to the design. As a result, we will end up with a building that may
fit within the context of the neighborhood, but will in no way resemble its neighboring buildings.

To start to realize how to begin this new methodology, an examination of society, community, and local vitality needs to be made. First we pick a site from where we can successfully view these discoveries. As noted, the site is located in the Over-The-Rhine neighborhood of the Cincinnati, Ohio River basin. It will occupy the parking lot situated next to the German restaurant, Grammers,’ on the southeast corner of Liberty and Walnut streets. This site is incredibly dynamic, not only in its locality to the geographical core of the neighborhood, but in its proximity to the Food Bank, downtown Kroger’s grocery store, and relative proximity to Findlay Market.

**Images:**
Human interaction is key to a community’s social fabric. The success of individuals to interact, value, and care for one another’s interest translates into success for their environment. So how do we calculate this success in the urban environment? We start by defining community and society. Looking at the social ecology theory, we begin to determine the will of the people; what determines their identity, their culture, and their methods of carrying out their daily lives. Ferdinand Tonnies distinguishes the terms *community* as being inherently folk and interwoven and *society* as independent and fearful. The community is termed Gemeinschaft, while society is labeled Gesellschaft. Gemeinschaft represents a rural, family-driven way of life. Gesellschaft suggests a city setting, where relationships are structured on trade, personal need driven economics, and fear. It isn’t hard to determine what Tonnies delineates as a result of Gesellschaft. Gesellschaft, which is a natural evolution from Gemeinschaft, will inherently lead to the breakdown of social relationships based on homogeneous beliefs and ways of life; a situation where natural law is completely overruled by nation law. It becomes a place where people live in fear of breaking the laws laid down by the ruling body, instead of fearing their moral objections.

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1 Most of the Social Ecology section is derived from class teachings by Bruce Clayton’s Urban Sociology course taught at the University of Cincinnati during the Fall 2007 quarter. The teachings relating to Gesselschaft and Gemeinschaft were often referenced from Jan Lin’s *The Urban Sociology Reader*.
Tonnies’ reaction is apocalyptic to social relationships. By his means, urban environments should be ultimately damaging to a community’s fabric. However, many would not agree with such a conclusion, including Émile Durkheim. He acknowledges an inherent difference between urban and rural relationships. While he agrees that rural communities are bound by their similarities, he believes urban environments are bound by their differences. Durkheim describes a mechanical society, where people share intimate, homogeneous, and collective values. But this is only the beginning of a society, which has an inevitable end. Human beings evolve into an organic solidarity society. Here they are functionally independent, reliant on one another’s specializations to survive, and valued based upon their contribution to society as much, if not more, than their kinship. This is a positive aspect, however, not a dooming end to human civilization. Durkheim attributes Tonnies’ negative light
to a factor of the times. At the age that Tonnies was observing cities, they were going through what Durkheim alludes to as growing pains.

While we can conclude that the urban environment does not completely destroy the sense of urban community and identity, there are certainly issues that arise in our contemporary environment where “the breaking down of barriers taxing our lives is also part of the project. Such a breakdown affects society at the core. Isolation, remoteness, time loss, monotony, social and cultural vacuums can become minimal or ‘voluntary’ costs instead of being a ‘fixed tax’ on all. Testing the limits of desegregation vis-à-vis discrimination is in the realm of empiricism, and is an indispensable learning process.”

Cultural Pluralism:

Postmodernism hasn’t been around for very long (roughly thirty years). It gained influence from the decaying Modern era in the late 1970s/early 1980s. We have seen a sort of morphogenesis of other movements responding to postmodernism in forms of deconstructivism, post-structuralism, critical regionalism, and the like. But it is the effects on American culture and lifestyle that postmodernism has influenced and propelled that we are most interested in.

Postmodernism has been witness to a series of peaks in informational globalization, corporate media, and American suburban decentralization.

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2 Paolo Soleri’s Arcosanti: An Urban Laborator? pp. 35
Postmodernism cannot be solely attributed to suburban sprawl, but it has created a sort of technoburb transformation. In this, we have lost our cultural pluralism, and even though these cycles have been apparent many times in American history, we have become greater isolationists, internationally and locally. The decentralization, information, capitalism, and lack of social reform that the Postmodern movement has imprinted on our culture has slowly allowed for the decay of our diversity.

Modernism was a response to the age of enlightenment and its lack of success to form a utopian lifestyle in the 20th century. Modernism’s creed “Form Follows Function” (made famous by American architect Louis Sullivan) dictated the need of design to be pure, lacking ornamentation, and simply functional. Modernism declared a need for social reform and public policy, likening it to socialism. However, this may have been modernism's greatest failing. Often we associate successful modernism with the elite, and by the end of the modern era, its social experiments were degrading in the public’s eye.

As modernist projects failed across the world, a new response was formed: postmodernism. While modernism believed traditionalism to be a hindrance to creative and appropriate design in a newly industrial age, postmodernism focused on a return to that traditionalism and a decentralization of government and society. It was a return to more
traditional capitalism, which often means a lack of concern for the greater whole and a focus on individual achievement. It can be “characterized by the emergence of the postindustrial information economy, replacing the previous classes of the aristocracy, middle class, and working class with the new paradigm: information elite, middle class, and underclass... Postmodernism rejects the modernists ideals of rationality, virility, artistic genius, and individualism...and [commits] to radical egalitarianism,”\(^3\). It is further argued that postmodernism makes the claim that modernism required a level of education and rational understanding that was interpreted as elitist. Thus, the language of postmodernism was inherently understandable.

Ultimately, postmodernism is an attempt to make architecture a means of expression. As architects remove themselves from the social aspect, they begin to design more for themselves and less for the public.\(^4\) This can be interpreted as a sort of isolation from the surrounding context and this breakdown of the larger urban focus (or decentralization) is seen best in the postmodern movement of Deconstructivism. Western thought and mentality is highly reliant on centers and origins, and only through “deconstructivism or decentering do we escape the language and society’s inherent marginalization of the other. Similar to Foucault’s notion of rupture, deconstruction involves allowing the central terms to become marginalized

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\(^3\) Paul Hartman’s What is “Postmodernism”?  
\(^4\) Mary McLeod’s article in *Architecture Theory Since 1968* pp. 678-702
so that the marginalized terms temporarily overthrow the power that has oppressed them.” This sort of isolationist architecture has been highly criticized as ignoring the surrounding context and, sometimes, the user. Deconstructivists will argue that this is the goal of their work. Architecture can’t save the world, and they aren’t trying to.

With this inward concern of postmodernism, the understanding of decentralization, and the importance of the digital, information era, the language of postmodernism may be categorized into the following elements:

- **Information Economy**: The creation of knowledge as a commodity and performativity, the creation of knowledge not based on a search for truth, but in search of research that will lead to more research.
- **Digitality as meta-narrative**: The role that mass media plays in the construction of both reality and hyper-reality.
- **Power, knowledge, and language**: The role of traditional language usage in the creation of and perpetuation of power.
- **De-centering**: The empowering of the other by removing the false center from language.

It is this hyper-reality and information economy that has helped to perpetuate the idea of capitalism and consumerism onto society with such

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5 Keith Murphy’s *Fear and Loathing in Forensics* pp. 6
6 Keith Murphy’s *Fear and Loathing in Forensics* pp. 7
effectiveness.

America is familiar with isolationism, but it has taken a form that definitely does not reflect precedent. Suburban mentality has conquered America’s middle class, and it has reached the point of local isolation. In addition, suburban populations gained dominance in total population and, by the 1970s, the population of suburban residents was nearly double than what it has been in the 1940s, with more Americans living in suburbia than the urban or rural alternatives.⁷

Postmodernism’s work is eclectic and highly formal toward traditionalism. Because social reform died with the modern movement, postmodernism embraced the victorious: capitalism. Regionalism recognized the public’s general affection for traditionalism and familiarity. All features of culture began to be made for consumerism, from daily design to architecture to cultural lifestyles. The information era saw opportunistic chances for corporate and product branding, and in mass quantities.

The postmodern information age created a mutation of the modern suburbia, forming the more appropriate technoburb. As Robert Fishman defines it, a technoburb is categorized as a “peripheral zone, perhaps as large as a county, that has emerged as a viable socioeconomic unit. Spread out along its highway growth corridors is shopping malls, industrial parks, campus like office complexes, hospitals, schools, and a full range of

⁷ Robert Fisherman’s article in The City Reader pp. 78
housing types.”

In the last 25+ years we have seen a growing decline of small business, especially in the retail and food industries. The techno era allowed for the conquering of corporate branding. Soon American culture yearned for sameness.

This has all lead to a frequently self-concerned, isolated lifestyle. “The middle-class home-owning family is detached in the outer spaces of the suburbs, self-contained and self-reliant, looking in upon itself and inhabiting a completely equipped autonomous dwelling.” Even daily transportation outside of the family dwelling is self-contained. Many technoburb residences find their daily services within their own core and most jobs are within the same technoburb or a neighboring technoburb. Everything is only accessible via automobile, an isolated and contained method of travel. This lack of interaction with one’s surrounding community produces a sort of ignorant naivety, often resulting in fear; a result of the decentralized environment, appropriate since the language of postmodernism calls for decentralization.

Frederick Olmsted believed the suburb to be a positive, healthy, and relaxing alternative to the urban lifestyle, while still providing the services and infrastructure that rural living could not. However, the arrival of the

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8 Robert Fisherman’s article in The City Reader pp. 79
9 Humphrey Carver’s Cities in the Suburbs pp. 99
postmodern era and the transformation to the technoburb has resulted in just the opposite. Decentralization of the technoburb and the larger techno-city (the greater metropolitan) has resulted in a social and economic segregation, a “disaster for the old city and for the poor, who have been increasingly relegated to its crowded, decayed zones. It has resegregated American society into an affluent outer city and an indigent inner city.”

As a result, the rich cultural diversity once found in the urban environment is wasting away, while the technoburb develops a sprawling, formulated, simplified identicalness. A cultural void is created, and this is where the strong influence of the digital information age becomes so relevant. This propagation of corporate media and fear, along with a self-contained lifestyle, and the well-heeled technoburb, creates a mentality that accepts solely uniformity. Ultimately postmodern and economic success has bred a culture that has “been used to create an ugly and wasteful pseudocity, too spread out to be efficient, too superficial to create a true culture.”

The cultural void that is left explains why Émile Durkheim concluded that the differences in dense urban cultures that bind us together, fail in many urban environments such as Cincinnati. The suburban strife that has occurred throughout the turbulent history of Cincinnati’s river basin has diminished the cultural relevance of the community. There’s a strong inner

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10 Robert Fisherman’s article in *The City Reader* pp. 84
11 Robert Fisherman’s article in *The City Reader* pp. 84
struggle of how to prosper while maintaining an identity that many have trouble defining due to a loss of cultural pluralism in our post-modern era. In the next chapter, an examination will be made of the political and social conflicts in the post-modern era, which have resulted in a draining of this community's culture and distinctiveness.

Images:
Image 1 - Diagram by author
Chapter Two

Cincinnati’s Ohio River Basin History:
An examination of the dynamics of societal groups
1948 was a year of change in the city of Cincinnati. Like many other urban centers, it needed urban redevelopment following an increase in suburban expansion in a post-modern, post-World War II era. The city of Cincinnati recognized this need and devised a method to target, isolate, and resolve dying communities and slums, based on community housing plans of the 1930s. What took place helped to transform the residential basin area of Cincinnati (primarily the West End and Over-The-Rhine neighborhoods) into the highly segregated, lower-income, and severely jaded community that it is today. The area has been witness to political strife, social clashes, and unrest. It is an area waiting for salvation while factions fight over how to proceed. As a result, the Cincinnati basin has been relatively unresolved.

The Cosmopolitan resolution grew out of the beginning of the 20th century. Urban planners desired cosmopolitan citizens who would bring unique cultures and experiences to the urban core and be law-abiding, socially aware, tolerant, accepting, and even appreciative of different types of individuals. They saw the slums as the most threatening element to cosmopolitan life, where crime, high-density populations, and low quality living would alienate both sides from one another. Their solution was not to integrate these cultures, but rather isolate and separate them into defined neighborhoods while using key retail, political, and civic activities to allow
these cultures to interact.¹ This is inherent of Ferdinand Tonnies’ social ecology theory, where a community may only survive by maintaining a level of homogeneity amongst its members, something that is not considered to represent urban life.² The urban planners of the first half of the 20th century had determined a way to achieve this.

Slum removal continued to be unsuccessful through the first several decades of the 20th century. The notion in the 1920s to eliminate all housing in the basin via zoning passed and two possibilities laid available: One was to rehabilitate slum housing and the other “called for the demolition of all slums to make way for industrial and low-density residential redevelopment projects in the inner city and expressway systems,”³ displacing blacks, as well as local businesses. This method of starting from a clean slate was rapidly popular throughout the national urban environment in much of the century. The extreme demolition/reconstruction would then establish segregated neighborhoods, a “community as separate but equal, and proposed to stabilize for a generation the population of each community and to moderate the rate of incursion from other communities.”⁴ The city government saw Cincinnati to exist within an outward set of rings, with

¹ Zane Miller’s Changing Plans for America’s Inner Cities pp. 11. Most of this document is a review and extraction of this book. So while direct paraphrasing and quotes are cited, many overall elements are conjectures derived from the knowledge gained in this article.
² Lin and Mele’s The Urban Sociology Reader pp. 19
³ Zane Miller pp. 29
⁴ Zane Miller pp. 32
the inner rings being the oldest and most dilapidated dwellings, thus rationalizing the blighted situation. Oddly enough, the plan did not actually discourage suburban life. It rather “aimed to encourage suburbanization while…the plan sought also to preserve the area’s segregated and social and racial geography.”\(^5\) It in fact strived to decrease the area’s population by 50% within 20 years. (It was determined that the basin area would decline by 27% on its own.)\(^6\) Part of the rationale was to use the displaced population in supporting surrounding neighborhoods and preventing them from becoming blighted.

The saving grace of Over-The-Rhine was city politicians’ preoccupation with the West End. The Planning Commission, city administration, and city council focused primarily on the slum clean-up of the West End due to the construction of the highway system. However, the previous chairman of the Planning Commission, Alfred Brettman, was a key figure in passing the state and federal laws that helped fueled the demolition of slum neighborhoods for redevelopment. Under these laws, the government had to secure housing for those being relocated. Charles Stamm, the city’s representative in the redevelopment, realized that issues would arise in both the black and white communities over relocation; the blacks would feel displaced and the whites would feel threatened by black

\(^5\) Zane Miller pp. 35
\(^6\) Zane Miller pp. 35
residents in their neighborhood. Ultimately, the measure failed a voter bond approval and the redevelopment continued to go through lengthy attempts to set up community residential areas for displaced people. Most of these developments were received negatively and, politically, the city did not have any momentum to continue their clearance of the rest of the basin, saving Over-The-Rhine.

In the late 1950s and early 1960s, urban redevelopment steered away from the cosmopolitan design and there was a push for a greater “pursuit by individuals of their self-defined cultures and lifestyles, a notion that suggested the utility of encouraging residents to control their neighborhoods for the purpose of designing their physical social fabrics.” Ultimately, this led to an urban plan that utilized the history and culture of a community in driving the design and purpose of the plan. In the early ’60s, fights occurred concerning destruction of what some residents deemed as historic buildings, and a social push to preserve these buildings erupted. As a result of the newer city stance to allow for cultural individualism, many of the residents’ cries to promote historic preservation were heard. There was a strong belief that the architecture of the city should be valued and cherished and in 1964, the “city council approved a design plan for the

7 Zane Miller pp. 37-38
8 Zane Miller pp. 43
9 Zane Miller pp. 55
renewal of the core that laid out preservationist philosophy.” This notion not only included the preservation of the historic buildings themselves, but to some degree the preservation of the zoning structure, which supported mixed use of residential, civic (the Music Hall), and retail (Findlay Market) buildings. There was still concern that the plan did not account for the housing of lower-income and minority peoples, both in the available supply in the basin nor the relocation to other neighborhoods. Of course, at this time The Fair Housing Act of 1968 had yet to be established and the act of blocking residents from moving into a neighborhood on the basis of race was a hard truth.

This lead to a new social and political force, the concept of using ethnic pride to empower and secure the neighborhood into a unified group. By this point, the Appalachian migration into Cincinnati had gone full force, and Over-The-Rhine had transformed into a primarily Appalachian enclave, butted next to the primarily African-American ghetto of the West End. With the razing of the slums in the ’40s in the West End and the construction of the highway system, many blacks felt either displaced or isolated from the rest of the city. The West End Community council utilized ‘ethnic pride’ to gather support to create the Queensgate II plan, located between West End, the central business district, and Over-The-Rhine. It consisted of

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10 Zane Miller pp. 56
11 Zane Miller pp. 68
low-income residential units, as well as shopping and service centers and African-American and Appalachian community centers, aiming “not merely to create an ethnic enclave as a source of ethnic identity and strength but also to link Queensgate II and its residents more effectively to the rest of the West End, to Over-The-Rhine, to the central business district, and to the metropolitan area.” The project received strong support from the mayor, newspapers, and the Department for Urban Renewal, and was approved in 1970; due in large part to Nixon’s administration in changing policy for HUD funding, the finances fell short. While the plan was never realized due to a new generation of political restructuring in low-income housing and vouchers, the low-income residents of Cincinnati had become a powerful and meaningful voice in the development of the city.

“The Nixon administration decided to encourage racial residential integration and the scattering of low-income residents by mandating the dispersal of federally subsidized low- and moderate-income housing.” This led to a plan by the city council in 1974, “encouraging but not mandating the development of balance in neighborhood housing…but also restated city council’s commitment to dealing with neighborhoods through process of maximum feasible participation for their residents.” This essentially was

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12 Zane Miller pp. 69
13 Zane Miller pp. 70
14 Zane Miller pp. 82
15 Zane Miller pp. 83
an acknowledgment from the Cincinnati Council that diversity of incomes and race was, governmentally, a more efficient way to manage the city as a whole. However, the city was open to the opinions of the residents of the West End and Over-The-Rhine, as well as the surrounding communities, on how they would like to see such a transformation achieved. This was against the plans of the ‘60s, which promoted segregation, both on lack of feasibility of integration, as well as cultural pride and unity. The initial suggestion was that Over-The-Rhine would become a cosmopolitan site, in danger of drastic gentrification of its lower-income base.

In the late 1970s, Harris Forusz, a planning professor at the University of Cincinnati, entered the scene, determined to find a solution to empower the poor. He felt that integration was the most desired outcome, but this had to happen after the current community had rectified itself, “after the residents had lived for several years in a neighborhood redesigned specifically for the purpose of empowering them.” He would achieve his plan by slowly beautifying the neighborhoods and increasing the quality of the city with its current demographics. However, this idea conflicted with elements of the West End, who felt Forusz’s plan was too costly, complicated, and lengthy. They also believed that they were better suited in creating quick and effective solutions.

16 Zane Miller pp. 85
17 Zane Miller pp. 94
In the mid ‘70s, applications were filed for the Music Hall and an increasing number of buildings in Over-The-Rhine to be considered for the nation’s Historic Preservation list. The ultimate plan was to racially and economically integrate the Washington Park and Music Hall areas, again amongst fears of gentrification and displacement. During this time, Buddy Gray, owner of a homeless shelter, “secured city council support...when he moved the Drop-Inn Shelter to quarters a block south of Music Hall.” This motion was obviously received negatively by the preservationists, creating a social deterrent to revitalizing the Washington Park area. Still, the city decided to move forward with the project, using the historic preservation tag to help promote the revamp of current buildings while passing programs to monitor and prevent any further displacement.

Buddy Gray was not opposed to the outcome of this plan, but to the method the city had chosen to achieve it. In his mind, it would indubitably lead to developers buying up parcels of land at lower prices and selling them to middle- and upper-class individuals, displacing poor residents who were not fortunate enough to own their dwellings.

In the early 1980s a strong battle ensued between the city, the planning commission, Buddy Gray, and the Over-The-Rhine community.

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18 Zane Miller pp. 100
19 Zane Miller pp. 106
20 Zane Miller pp. 108-109
21 Zane Miller pp. 109
on how to proceed with the current state of the neighborhood. The issue at stake: how to protect the demolition of buildings, either by historical means, bureaucratic means, or by no means at all, and how to prevent the displacement of low-income individuals. Through many charettes and community discussions, it was generally agreed upon that there would be both strong prevention methods from building demolition, as well as a stringent rent and anti-low-income displacement system. Many of these plans never made it to city council, which settled on “stiffer anti-demolition rules but no incentives to create more low-income housing.”

During the application process for the placement of Over-The-Rhine to the National Register list (in Washington, D.C.), a split in city support emerged, resulting in city council having three votes for the application and three votes against it. Ultimately the application went through, but not without some victory by the opponents. In the end, Buddy Gray and his supporters “secured the passage of a low-income neighborhood housing retention district for the entire area…and secured promises from the city government that at least some low-income housing would be preserved in Over-The-Rhine,” though it was not specified to what extent.

The Over-The-Rhine renewal plan culminated in a climaxing but perhaps not final conclusion. At this point Jim Tarbell, a local businessman

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22 Zane Miller pp. 124
23 Zane Miller pp. 127
24 Zane Miller pp. 137
and resident, took a strong stance against Buddy Gray. While he did not support the displacing and discarding of the poor, he did not feel it was appropriate to: group both ‘bad’ and ‘good’ poor people into one category; and assume that all poor people wished to be segregated, potentially depriving themselves of any attempts to gain ground in socioeconomic status. The plan began a stiff battle between Gray’s supporters, who promoted segregation and isolation from other communities, and a grouping of individuals who promoted either historic preservation, integration, socioeconomic change, or a combination of all three. A proposal was finally ‘accepted’ where “the chances of its yielding a significant level of mixed-income residential and commercial development looked slim because of the low-income housing priority.”

The city council was attempting to adhere to a promise it had made decades prior, where cultural individualism would be heard, and the community would decide the direction that it would take. However, Gray’s supporters were under the assumption that this was the true voice of the community, and that those voicing themselves were truly educated about the social and political underlying elements. Ultimately, Gray’s promotion of a socioeconomic separatism and homogeneous low-income being, Tarbell’s concern of a continuing and exponentially isolating black slum, and the city council’s inability to truly create a defining and binding plan that supported some side, has led to the increase in segregation, crime, and

25 Zane Miller pp. 151
population decreases over the last two decades.

These elements of strife culminated in the race riots of 2001. Charlie Luken, the mayor at the time, received public disapproval in his actions to control and heal the city after the event. This sparked further confrontations with police and protestors, scandals, federal lawsuits, police quasi-strikes, ridicule of Cincinnati government structures (including a change to have a separate mayoral selection), city boycotts, and further commercial and residential despair. In 2006, Cincinnati reached a crime peak, with a record 89 homicides. Since then, crime has been a main ticket issue in political campaigns. And while the residents continue to cheer for a sanctuary of their cultural identity, that identity appears lost and confused. Many people have yet to address what Zane Miller and Bruce Tucker pointed as the ultimate fault: that no one appeared willing to address the problem as a city as a whole, but rather as individual issues and situations, examining a problem ignorantly to the issues surrounding it.

26 wikipedia.org/wiki/2001_Cincinnati_riots
27 As a general rule for the latter part of this chapter: while no specifics can be directly cited, some information for Buddy Gray was taken from this source: http://vvawai.org/sw/sw34/buddy-gray.html
Images:
Image 1 - Miller’s *Changing Plans for America’s Inner Cities* pp. 4
Image 2 - www.cincinnati-transit.net/75-60.html [accessed May 2008]
Image 3 - www.flickr.com user ddsiple [accessed May 2008]
Image 4 - www.mpkellyrealty.com/photos1.htm [accessed May 2008]
Image 5 - Diagram by author
Chapter Three
Urban reGrowth
Many cities share blighted urban, residential areas similar to Cincinnati’s Over-The-Rhine. The redevelopment of these areas tends to receive significant political opposition, and this can be seen in the nearby Rust Belt of the great Midwestern city of Chicago. But can the ghetto be rebuilt in context to Chicago’s growing city? Also known as the Black Metropolis, Chicago’s South Side and New West Side have had strong historic roots in the city’s defining age¹.

It’s amazing to realize the diversity and culture that has sprung from Chicago, the Midwestern powerhouse thriving in the heart of the ailing rust belt. Great music and culture once grew out of the now-blighted areas. Figureheads such as Louis Armstrong and Nat King Cole emerged from these overpopulated lower-income sections of the city. The once lively South Side neighborhood’s population peaked in the 1950s at nearly 200,000 people². The African-Americans and Latinos who lived there were mostly impoverished, but the area was at least well populated. By 1990, the area’s population had plummeted to just over 65,000 people³, leaving a ravished urban ghost land. Dr. Sokoni Karanja, director of the Centers for New

1 House by House, Block by Block by Alexander von Hoffman is an examination of the urban community and its history and re-growth over the last 40+ years. Hoffman is a specialist in urban and community development, currently holding the senior research fellow at the Joint Center for Housing Studies at Harvard. He has written numerous books and articles on topics that examine urban housing over the past decades, and is currently working with the United States Geological Survey on a project examining suburban sprawl.
2 Alexander Van Hoffman’s House by House; Block by Block pp. 117
3 Alexander Van Hoffman’s House by House; Block by Block pp. 117
Horizons, recalled returning to the neighborhood of South Side Chicago after several years in Tanzania. Karanja held Chicago’s perception that the ghetto neighborhoods were more valuable as vacant pieces of land accountable for the failing communities and tormented individuals⁴. It took many years for the demolition of buildings to stop and the construction of new ones to begin.

There were several other pioneer preservationists for Chicago’s declining neighborhoods, like Tim Samuelson, who took it upon himself when he was a teenager to preserve architectural and historic landmarks of the city. In the late 1980s, he successfully approved the addition of several buildings in South Side to the National Register of Historic Landmarks. This wasn’t without much hardship, especially when his top building was destroyed only a couple days after gaining historic landmark status, due to thieves stealing the brick⁵.

A concern of gentrification occurs whenever discussions of preservation and re-urbanization take place. However two vital ingredients are needed for gentrification to occur. The first is a large availability of urban housing. This housing tends to be converted warehouses or elegant, west-coast style row houses. The housing either requires proximity to arts and entertainment districts or proximity to transit lines that have ease

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⁴ Alexander Van Hoffman’s House by House: Block by Block pp. 118
⁵ Alexander Van Hoffman’s House by House: Block by Block pp. 122-123
of access to such districts. The second is a growth of and demand for employment in central business districts. As a result, many young singles and couples desire an active urban lifestyle in relative propinquity to their place of employment. Traditionally, bohemians enter the neighborhood, fixing up large spaces for low rates. Slowly upper-middle class citizens start to reshape the rest of the neighborhood, until investors and upper-class individuals drive prices above the limit for almost all of the original, modest-living inhabitants of the neighborhood. This is full-displacement or uncurbed gentrification. This is the negative of gentrification, as it often removes lower income residents from their homes. Gentrification has to be controlled, but the ultimate goal is undeniable. Uncurbed gentrification gives no thought to integrating racial and social issues into the community, often injuring the poor and elderly members of the population. It tends to push inhabitants out into the outer slums.

The destruction of public housing by HUD of such places as Stateway Gardens made way for the idealistic developments of medium scale mixed-income development. The replacement of public housing with high-rise projects was viewed as a positive step forward. The delicacy, however, is not allowing the temporarily displaced to become lost in the system or not given the opportunity to return once the vision is received.

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6 Ingredients for gentrification are gathered from pages 124-125 in Alexander Van Hoffman’s *House by House; Block by Block*.
7 Alexander Van Hoffman’s *House by House; Block by Block* pp. 143
Where Cincinnati has struggled in comparison to Chicago is in community leadership, neighborhood stakeholders (such as universities and hospitals), and governmental authorities coming together and assembling for a community-driven, long-term impact. However, there is a fear that private development and upscale individuals, both black and white, will move into the Rust Belt neighborhoods for transit qualities, entertainment amenities, and historic values. With the plentiful vacant lots at below market-rate land values, the gentrification of the neighborhoods would have a “snowball” effect, driving the lower income inhabitants away and destroying the dream of a working-class, diverse neighborhood. If the identity of the once vibrant Chicago Black Belt could be recaptured and solidified, then hopefully the residents and city would be that much more aware of preventing uncurbed gentrification.

8 Alexander Van Hoffman's *House by House; Block by Block* pp. 155

**Images:**
Image 1 - Van Hoffman's *House by House: Block by Block* pp. 117
Image 2 - Van Hoffman's *House by House: Block by Block* pp. 142
Chapter Four
Applications in Reality:
Community Build Precedents
Examples of community-involved projects can be seen all over the world. However, the number of projects that exist in Western cultures is limited, as well as the number of grand projects that have proved to be successful. Among those projects and leaders, both old and new, are Arcosanti and the Rural Studio in the U.S., Hassan Fathy in Egypt, the Gando Primary School in Burkina Faso, and the Waldorf School in Cologne, Germany. These projects range from smaller, individual buildings to a larger community and city scope.

**Arcosanti:**

Arcosanti is perhaps one of the most ambitious Western community projects conceived. In almost every way it intends to achieve each goal this thesis has set out. It uses communal activity and involvement in design, construction, and facilitation to achieve a certain unity between the built form and the social environment. As a result, the residents have tremendous pride and appreciation. In addition to the community-built element, Arcosanti has developed over time, in a somewhat evolutionary manner. While the reasons for this are different from this thesis, the observation of this nearly half-century project proves to be informative. In the situation of Arcosanti, the scope of the plan was so grand and the funding so meager that a slow and steady process of community construction had to occur, all while fitting
into mastermind Paolo Soleri’s theories on urban living:

*Arcology* - The balance of architecture and ecology. It is the process of utilizing the most useful and productive human environment, the city, in a way that takes up as little land, energy, and resources as possible. The spatial organization and form utilizes the hot Arizona sun and the movement of wind through the old ravine between the mesas that Arcosanti sits on. The forms, both in section and plan, act similar to a satellite dish, collecting large amounts of the sun’s heat and resonating towards the center, while shading the activity from the harshest times of day.

*Hyperbuilding* - The arcology city would take up less than 5% of the land that is normally required for a city. Its inherent principle is to build up, rather than out, limiting the need for urban and suburban sprawl, which often consumes a great amount of land for infrastructure (such as road systems). In the hyperbuilding, the single structure system allows for a harmonious layering of daily activity in life: “work, education, culture, leisure, and health in a dense, compact system which also puts the untouched open

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1 Summary of the following three definitions of arcology, hyperbuilding, and build-live-work come from the Arcology Theory section on www.arcosanti.org.
countryside at the fingertips of the residents," (Soleri). The hyperbuilding’s preferred site was located in an area between Las Vegas and L.A. awaiting suburbanization from both growing metropolitans. It would help to preserve the Mojave Desert environment by creating density and eliminating the need for roads. The Exedrae (female) consists of an inner and outer shell, creating two zones, but with a mixture of grey areas. It is a truncated apse, shown in the diagrams above, allowing for spaces that aren’t quite exterior, nor quite interior. This allows for appropriate seasonal shading, and if using thermal mass, effective passive-solar heating and cooling.

Build-Live-Work - The complex known as Arcosanti, north of Phoenix is an urban prototype for a pedestrian-based, high-density, self-sustaining way of living. The significance is this three-fold element of architecture and community. Here, the members of this small village helped to construct, run, and live in their program. The result is a functioning facility that creates an identity for its inhabitants. The close layering of each component of living is intended to form a stacking, vertical element. There is a harmony of all aspects of life, as well as a harmony of the environment. The first arch of the larger gathering space was cast in place without equipment; when additional funding was made, the later pieces were placed using a crane. The facility primarily uses concrete, which is created using local materials. The formwork contained pigmented sand to help achieve the

Image 4 - Arcosanti residents constructing the complex

Image 5 - Initial construction of the vaults
different colors.

“To integrate living, learning, and working is one of the main
goals of the Project. The results and the consequences could
be momentous. It could mean the reshaping of the whole
(continental) landscape and the culture such landscaping
supports.”

Rural Studio:

The Rural Studio in Newbern, like Soleri’s Arcosanti, incorporates
this idea of Build-Live-Work in its design process. It is in this format that we
see the Rural Studio “pursuing an ethical practice of architecture, providing
assistance to the disadvantage communities, and exploring building
methods that foster responsible resource use,” for so many years. The
rural, onsite element of the studio is their initial element to success. It
easily allows the students to study the “vernacular” of their context, which
ideally helps to decipher the “agrarian” method of design. Here, students
are limited to local methods, techniques, technologies, and supplies. Their
life is within the community, creating a comradery instead of an opposition
to tradesmen, contractors, and city officials. Ultimately, the Rural Studio
proves the usefulness of the agrarian methods “that place matters, that
imagining and making enjoy their fullest power only when intimately linked,

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2 Paolo Soleri’s Arcosanti: An Urban Laboratory? pp. 32
3 John Forney’s article “Learning in Newbern” in Samuel Mockbee and the Rural Studio
4 John Forney’s article “Learning in Newbern” in Samuel Mockbee and the Rural Studio
that good work depends on the practice of responsibility that exists only when the worker feels a stake in and affection for the work.”

The striking differences between these two organizations are their overall scope and local application. What is key is the general success that Samuel Mockbee achieved in comparison to Palo Soleri. In Arcosanti, the scope is incredible grandeur and encompassed in a single overall project. It also intends to create a community, using radically socialist ideals, from the ground up. The Rural Studio, however, takes its cues by applying its theories one modest project at a time and within an existing community. The differences in environment that these two chose to instigate their work should be noted. Soleri’s work was done in an isolated context in the middle of the desert, acting as a clean laboratory. This allowed for uninhibited experiments in not only community building, but also unique urban living. However impressive his project may be, he has achieved only a fraction of his goals, and progress as well as population has dwindled since the more progressive movements of the 1960s and 1970s. Mockbee and the Rural Studio enjoyed more success via methods that are applicable to this thesis. Their work, while perhaps not as all-inclusive as Arcosanti, allowed for this non-direct regionalism, using reused local materials, and incorporating community efforts in many threads of the design.

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5 John Forney’s article “Learning in Newbern” in Samuel Mockbee and the Rural Studio
Hassan Fathy:

One of Egypt’s most notable architects, Hassan Fathy, pioneered his brand of community architecture throughout most of the 20th century. Fathy was an adamant proponent of traditional mud and adobe brick architecture, opposing the steel/concrete fad in favor of something more sustainable, meaningful, and regional. He employed the following six techniques in his work⁶:

- **Belief in the primacy of human values in architecture**
- **Importance of a universal rather than a limited approach**
- **Use of appropriate technology**
- **Need for socially oriented, cooperative construction techniques**
- **The essential role of tradition**
- **The re-establishment of national cultural pride through the act of building**

These principles are a direct reflection of his building styles and methods, especially his use of brick construction, courtyards, and domes. For his town design in “New Gourna, he utilized natural resources using mud-brick…and features of Egyptian architecture…He worked with the local people to develop the new village, training them to make the materials to construct their own buildings with.”⁷ This method not only gives an identity to the community, but also furthers their skills and trades and builds their relationships with their fellow citizens and their built environment. His

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⁶ Hwaa Irfan’s article “Hassan Fathy: The Barefoot Architect”
⁷ Hwaa Irfan’s article “Hassan Fathy: The Barefoot Architect”
followers have taken after him, strictly studying and involving themselves within the community of their site for lengthy periods of time. Michael Graves has been influenced by Fathy’s method of traditional technology, convincing the construction of the Miramar Hotel in al-Gourna, Egypt to be built of brick with Egyptian domes and vaults.

What Hassan Fathy brings is an example of success in employing members of the community, many who were vastly unskilled, in developing and constructing their entire town. His key to this success was an understanding of simple yet acceptably brilliant architecture. During his travels, he was able to discover methods to construct Egyptian domes without the modern process of scaffolding. Scaffolding would have required too much funding and skill by the townspeople. As a result, Fathy created architecturally aesthetic elements that were simply manufactured.

**Gando Primary School:**

The Gando Primary School in Gando Village, Burkina Faso is a touching example of personal determination and community cooperation. Diébédo Francis Kéré, originally from Gando Village, was studying at the Technical University in Berlin when he decided to help build a school for his hometown. He was the first of his village to study abroad, in a country that sees only a 50% enrollment for school children. In this case, the regional

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8  Hwaa Irfan’s article “Hassan Fathy: The Barefoot Architect”
9  Hwaa Irfan’s article “Hassan Fathy: The Barefoot Architect”
and financial issues, such as building materials and methods, limited Kéré. As a result his plan was “designed to be built without any need for important materials or heavy-lifting equipment.”

He gathered funds from fellow classmates to help create the Brick for the Gando School Foundation. His choice for design materials and techniques were less about historical nostalgia and more about the limit, or should we say blessing, to “agrarian” design. The use of mud-brick, community labor, and local government involvement helped to make a simple yet special space to teach children. Much like Fathy's work, “the villagers were involved in every aspect of the school’s construction...[the people] used their bare hands to dig out and sieve the clay...[children] were at the school carrying stones to the construction site...” The result is a smooth and beautiful, passive and sustainable structure that holds more than double the amount of students it was intended for; it has inspired and set a standard for new schools in neighboring villages, often employing the workers who were trained for the construction of the Gando Primary School.

When we look at these most recent two precedents, Gando Primary School and Hassan Fathy’s New Gourna, we see much more successful community involvement. New Gourna and Gando School epitomize the goal that this thesis would strive to achieve. A true city crafted by its

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10 Architecture for Humanity’s Design Like You Give a Damn pp. 252
11 Architecture for Humanity’s Design Like You Give a Damn pp. 252
12 Architecture for Humanity’s Design Like You Give a Damn pp. 254
residents, employing them as well as imploring them to come together. However refreshing these two examples may be, the ultimate failing is their locations. While they may not exist in a similar environment, socially, to the one that this thesis resides in, their methodology and innovation in simple, yet stylish, building materials and techniques are of utmost importance.

In this design, we must determine the virtuous means and that one has the capacity to acquire these means, and then practice them. Most designers, as well as general citizens, would argue that providing good design to people who otherwise could not receive it in a successful, tender, and intimate way that strengthens one’s identity and value to said design, would be a virtuous act. These virtues from Soleri’s build-live-work to Mockbee’s agrarian theories hold the key in bringing together citizens to participate in astonishing projects. The innovation and creativity used in the materials and methods in all these projects are impressive and it is this innovation and creativity that will result in success.

**Waldorf School in Cologne:**

Peter Hübner, an architect who specializes in social and community-orientated design, designed The Waldorf School in Cologne, Germany. The school is located in the slum projects of Chorweiller, mostly due to the low price of available land. The project was funded with loans from the parents of the schools’ students. The building’s design reflects the
spiritual teachings of the Waldorf philosophy, with the classrooms creating a reflection of the user, “allowing each child to identify with his or her classroom, and making classrooms of different kinds according to the age and stage of the development of the child. The anthroposophists share this general attitude, like Scharoun reading the individuality of classrooms within the whole complex as parallel with individuals in society – each with her own characteristics yet combining to make a community.”

Thus, every room and column was unique, symbolizing the harmony of different people in a community. These individual-styled classrooms surrounded one of the two large public areas, the auditorium/central hall and the sports hall, comprising two separate buildings or communities. This individual-unifying concept was transmitted to the actual construction and design. Hübner utilized his standard method of community involved design charettes, while also having the major construction contracted out. Students, faculty, and parents were involved in some of the construction and nearly all of the finishing work and were notified of every element throughout the design and construction phases. This same group also completely facilitated and constructed stone workshop houses that were later added in a lean-to fashion against the sports hall. Finishes are changed and altered by the user to constantly adapt to their tastes and styles and the cheap doors and

13 Peter Jones's Peter Hübner: Building As A Social Process pp. 87
14 Peter Jones's Peter Hübner: Building As A Social Process pp. 89
other details were intended to be handcrafted and replaced over time.

Overall, the building embodies several key aspects of this thesis’s intentions. It represents a contemporary, community-built facility in a lower income and impoverished community, much like the Over-The-Rhine. It also uses simple wood post and beam construction, while supporting an extensive green roof. The downfall of his design in relation to construction was the complexity and uniqueness of each structural element in the central hall. This, however, was essential to his more organic and randomized method of design. The inclusion of a method of adaptation was also useful. Similar to this thesis, Hübner anticipated the addition of spaces done much more independently of contractors, and the upgrade of facilities and design elements as financing and availability increased over time. This represents the evolutionary – adaptation theory in which residents feel free to expand and change based on their needs and tastes.
Images:
Image 1 - Photo and drawing by author
Image 4 - Paolo Soler’s *Arcosanti: An Urban Laboratory?* pp. 81
Image 5 - www.arcosanti.org/project/background/history/main.html [accessed February 2008]
Image 6 - Drawings by author
Image 7 - www.cadc.auburn.edu/soa/rural-studio/projects_HEROplayground.htm [accessed May 2008]
Image 9 - Hassan Fathy’s *Architecture for the Poor* illust. 18
Image 10 - Hassan Fathy’s *Architecture for the Poor* illust. 128
Image 11 - Photo from AFH’s *Design Like You Give a Damn* pp. 255; diagram by author
Image 16 - Peter Jones’s *Peter Hübner: Building as a Social Process* pp. 186
Image 17 - Peter Jones’s *Peter Hübner: Building as a Social Process* pp. 191
Image 18 - Photo by author
Image 19 - Photo by author
Image 20 - Photo by author
The nature of the design, as described in the Introduction, evolved from a simple community-build project to the evolutionary methodology that incorporates the concept of community involvement to adapt to the complexities of the unique environment of Over-The-Rhine. What we conclude is a process of simple and repetitive construction that is yet sophisticated and purposeful in its form.

Two elements, the grid and the construction, derive the form of the design. The grid incorporates three orientational axes. The buildings facing the front of the site (along Walnut Street) develop the first axes. These buildings sit along the city grid and replicate this initial axis. The second axis results from the neighboring Liberty Street and its less structured grid north. This axis is important not just because it’s neighboring the site, but because it represents a major thoroughfare that the site must address. The third axis transforms from the horizontal plane to the vertical plane. The slopes and heights of the surrounding row houses design this axis. By following these three axes, the project will be able to relate to its surroundings, and function aesthetically.

The second major element that controls the process of the design is the element of simplified construction for the common man. This works in two major ways. The first is on a larger, more theoretical scale and incorporates the evolutionary theory that is defined by the thesis. Its
purpose is to slowly adhere to the stages of the design as it grows and accommodates the changing demographics of the neighborhood, while constraining itself to the overall master plan. The multiple construction stages are intended to be individually constructed, but not independent of one another. The interior spatial elements can be adjusted independently of the spatial elements of the modular phases, but not in a way that disregards them. The third diagram showing the axis and modular process alludes to this result. The additional element of the design will be implemented in a much more substantial way, via materials.

For the portions that the community will be involved in constructing, a prefabricated modular wall panel and two simple rain screen walls will be specified for ease of construction. The wall panels are standard SIPS (Structural Insulated Panels) that are formed of two OSBs (Orientated Strand Board) that sandwich an expanded rigid foam insulation. A simple vertical aluminum siding will be applied to the first stage, with a slightly more complex pinned stone rain screen system replacing the construction process in later designs. The reuse of some of the aluminum siding and SIPS will be specified in later stages.

The overall design can be summed up as follows:

- Staged Growth:
Construction will come in multiple stages, with each stage changing the appeal of the store based on its changing patrons.

- Modular-Simple Construction:
  - The modular SIPs and relatively plug and play rain screen design will allow for community participation in the construction of the building.

- Local Aesthetic:
  - While materials will play some part, the building must fit within its context without necessarily resembling its context.

- Adaptation:
  - The building will allow for the user to adapt it to the perceived changes and growth that its community will bear. These adaptations should be easily made at an inner spatial level, as well as applied to the overall phases of the growth of the entire program.

As stated, the design will incorporate several phases to appeal to this evolutionary and adaptive theory. The rationale here is that over time, as the project achieves funding, local citizens are trained, and the public accepts the building’s ultimate program, the entirety of the design can become fully realized with a sort of baby steps methodology. Ultimately, how-
ever, the community will not be involved in every aspect of the construction. Specific elements, which are constricted by city and state code, as well as structural requirements, will be contracted out.

**Staged Growth:**

The staged growth mechanism will appease three elements. The first is the adaptation theory, and the second two are the financial and daunting constructional tasks. Adaptation allows for the appropriate changing and expansion of the cooperative program to take place over time and appeal to the current demographics. Given that this project would be perceived as a grassroots organization, it is also reasonable to conclude that financial support will slowly grow over time. With a more unique architectural form, a phased construction program appeals to this task the most. It also allows for residents to slowly learn constructional methods and improve their skills and apply them to succeeding with larger and more complex additions.

Program-wise, the four anticipated phases will change the complexities of the grocery cooperative, expanding and elaborating its provided services.

**Phase One – roughly 3,400 s.f. total complex:**

Phase one will incorporate a standard urban marketplace. Space will be limited to the three main fresh services – meats, baked goods, and produce – and will require regular delivery to replenish its stock. During this initial growth period, several program elements will be added in anticipa-
tion of the building’s expansion. Gardens maintained by the grocery store for its own sale will be located on the north and south areas of the phase one buildings (the footprints of the eventual phase three expansion). The unused auto repair garages located behind Grammers’ Restaurant can be used for storage of materials and equipment. The excess parking lot space can also facilitate to seasonal German markets and festivals.

Phase Two – roughly 15,500 s.f. total complex:

Phase two will provide the bulk of the complex. Most departments will find their location to be within range of their permanent area. At this point, the entrance to the store on Walnut Street will be relocated to a more central location along the northern façade on Liberty Street. The parking lot will be officially linked to the Uptown Art’s parking lot. The removal of the auto garages will be made to accommodate parking for both the grocery co-op and Grammers’ restaurant. The garage doors from the repair shop will be salvaged and stored for use in phase four. After the construction of this phase, the agriculture gardens will be relocated to the roof of phase two.

Phase Three – roughly 17,500 s.f. total complex:

Phase three will flank the northern and southern land of the original phase one building. At this point, all of the necessary façade of phase one will be removed. It will be up to the community whether or not to replace
the remaining west aluminum façade of phase one with the updated stone panels. The northern element will house a semi-autonomous bakery while the southern wing will hold a butcher. Each of these programs will allow for direct access to Walnut Street, but will remain completely open, circulation-wise, to the core of the store. This will help to reduce the feeling of an overbearing complex in a predominantly residential local. Patrons will feel free to enter the bakery or butcher sections and purchase their fresh produce and leave without entering the hassle of a larger check-out procedure.

Phase Four – roughly 19,000 s.f. total complex:

Phase four is meant as a sort of celebratory graduation to the community members. This addition is meant to be highly independent of contracted work, and is seen as a non-essential perk to the grocery cooperative. Much like the Waldorf School in Cologne, phase four will consist of a restaurant, facilitated by the cooperative, and constructed in a lean-to fashion against the existing structure. The structure itself is rather modest and the reuse of SIPs and aluminum siding will be utilized for its construction. The restaurant will incorporate the old repair shop’s garage doors to allow for open-air patio like seating during summer months. Similar to the butcher and bakery areas, there will be access from the larger cooperative complex into the restaurant; however, the access will be controlled, allowing for different operating hours for the two systems.
Modular-Simple Construction:

As stated, the building’s main skin component will be SIP panels. One important reason for this material’s selection is people’s general familiarity with wood joints and anchors. Referring to the axon diagrams the SIP panels will be wedged in between wood studs every 4 ft. These wood studs will serve also as anchor points to the rain screen system. The studs will also periodically anchor the entire skin system into the concrete columns that will provide most of the structural support to the building’s roofs. The heavier structural elements as well as the roofs will all be contracted out for obvious safety and practical reasons.

Phase one will use the SIPs wall panel system with a vertical aluminum siding rain screen. This rain screen system is a cheaper, simpler, and lighter technique than the later proposed stone rain screen system. The design of the siding is made to illustrate the 4x10 SIP panels with a silver aluminum cap that will follow the lining of SIP’s seams. When the majority of the walls are slowly removed throughout phase two and three, SIP panels will be salvaged when possible, and reused in their respective phases. The aluminum siding can be recycled, producing additional funds, or reused in phase four where the community almost completely independently creates a grocery store-run restaurant.

To coincide with the theme of this project, phase two, which will pro-
vide the largest and flattest roof area, will be structurally enhanced for the creation of an agricultural green roof. A service elevator will be provided in the warehouse and the different elevations of the phase two flat roofs will be connected by ramps and steps, for ease of transporting equipment. The roof’s membrane will consist of a standard intensive green roof system, comprising a water membrane, insulation, drainage board, root barrier, and eight to sixteen inches of growing medium.

**Local Aesthetic:**

This idea of non-critical regionalism is meant to be applied in two forms. The first is a much more tangible method, via the materials of the façade. The first phased façade will differ in being aluminum, but the color is to match the dark red earth tone palate that marks many of the buildings in Over-The-Rhine. The second phased façade will become more familiar with the common use of brick in the area, utilizing a rust-like orange hung stone panel. The simple matching of earth tones and lack of structural brick in the project is an effort to create an homage rather than a mimic of the traditional materials.

The much more intriguing design decision is the crossing of the two city grids coupled with the pitches of nearby roofs. This act largely shaped the entire form of the final building and intends to break what could have been a large retail box like-shape into human scaled dimensions directly
referenced by existing neighboring structures. The grid also extends into the interior of the building, creating hierarchical zones to define the location of certain elements and departments of a standard grocery store.

Adaptation:

There are several forms of adaptation throughout the building’s growth. The most obvious is the expansion of the building’s program, slowly evolving into a more legit and comprehensive facility. Part of the rational behind a staged growth, aside from a financial and constructive point of view, is that the current demographics of Over-The-Rhine may not be fully receptive to a traditional grocery cooperative. This allows for the services and produce that the store may provide to expand and change over time, based on the assumption that the neighborhood would begin to thrive and become something of a young, artistic area.

Aside from the preprogrammed design, the design is intended to allow the user to change the layout and finishes as needed. Similar to the Waldorf School, it will encourage the builders to add artistic flare (such as the mosaic tiles) as well as hand-crafted or higher-quality components to replace cheaper alternatives made in cost-saving moves during construction. The addition of an agricultural green roof is also an adaptation, not only specifically to this building, but to the green roof philosophy (or lack thereof) throughout Cincinnati. This project will be able to evolve to a qual-
ity cooperative, representing the success and effectiveness of sustainable design in both a social and environmental standard.
City Grid and North of Liberty Grid Axes intersection and Spatial Programming Diagram
BUILDING SECTIONS

Section Towards North

Section Towards South

Section Towards East

Section Towards West
INTERIOR SHOT NEAR BAKERY
INTERIOR SHOT OVERLOOKING CHECK OUT


Muprhy, B. Keith. Fear and Loathing in Forensics: The View from Postmodern Suburbia. Education Resources Information Center,1999.


