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I, Bethany L Taylor, hereby submit this original work as part of the requirements for the degree of:

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Negotiation of Transparency and Privacy in the Urban Context

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Negotiation of Transparency and Privacy in the Urban Context

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Architecture is physical and literal. It can be touched and seen. A building can not in itself change or improve society or culture. People compose society, and to affect change in society, it is people who must change. A building is a product of a society and its culture, a manifestation of a society’s values. Someone might be tempted to wrap a social program in a building, but this becomes a sociology project rather than an architectural one. Architecture is an aesthetic expression—a reflection of society as it is, rather something that acts on society.

Transparency is an attempt to go beyond the purely physical and literal nature of architecture. As Colin Rowe puts it, “Provided with the reality rather than the counterfeit of three dimensions, in architecture literal transparency can become a fact. However phenomenal transparency will, for this reason, be more difficult to achieve; and it is indeed so difficult to discuss that generally critics have been willing to associate transparency in architecture exclusively with a transparency of materials.”

Bernhard Hoesli elaborates: “Transparency arises wherever there are locations in space which can be assigned to two or more systems of reference—where the classification is undefined and the choice between one classification possibility or another remains open.”

As it applies to Architecture, transparency can be literal or phenomenal, physical or intellectual. Literal transparency involves the varying degrees to which one may see through some material. To the architect, the degree of literal transparency is a tool by which he may reveal or partially obscure what is behind some layer. Transparency may create literal visual connection between spaces. Phenomenal transparency is also a tool to reveal or imply whatever may be beyond, but involves proportions and relationships between pieces and parts, rather than the physical quality of being clear. Transparency, then, can be used to imply relationships between the spaces within a building—Transparency is about connections. Placing two rooms side by side does make a connection, but there are other ways to make that connection. Connections can also be made in the relationships between a building and its context—context is much more than simply a site or surrounding buildings, as will be illustrated in the study of the context.
# Negotiation of Transparency and Privacy in the Urban Context

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1 Introduction to Phenomenal and Literal Transparency
It is important to understand what is meant by transparency. Additionally, the distinction between phenomenal transparency and literal transparency should be made. The purpose and use of each are conceptually different.

**Phenomenal Transparency**

[Phenomenal] "transparency exists where a locus in space can be referred to two or several systems of relations—where the assignment remains undetermined and belonging to one or the other remains a matter of choice."\(^{13}\) This portion will focus on the devices of phenomenal transparency, which is a quality of space, or of spatial order. There are a number of devices of this type of transparency, among which are: Clear ambiguity\(^{13}\); Inherent quality of organization in plan, elevation, and section and relationship between plan and elevation\(^{13}\); Contradiction of spatial dimensions\(^{14}\); 'Dialectic' or conflict of fact [real space] and implication [imagined space]\(^{15}\); Gridding or stratification of volume\(^{16}\); Assertiveness of corners\(^{17}\); and The use of glass as a planar surface.\(^{18,19}\)

**Clear Ambiguity**

Clear ambiguity\(^{20}\) exists when the other tools of phenomenal architecture have been used since the user or observer that contemplates the organization or form of the building comes to different but simultaneous conclusions about how the building works, or how spaces may work together.
Inherent Organization

A building with qualities of phenomenal transparency possesses an inherent quality of organization\(^{21}\) in plan, elevation, or section, where proportions or relationships found in the plan of the building are also found in the section or elevation, or the reverse of this. More specifically, this is found where the relationships of these lines or proportions or walls or some building element to other building creates an organization within the building. A building user can encounter transparency sectionally in a building from floor to floor by elements that are continuous from floor to floor, such as a special wall, the end of a space on one floor might line up with the end of floor line or stairway somewhere else in the building. The use of a grid- regular or irregular can aid in the creation of organization within the building. (Image 2)

Stratification of Space

Gridding or stratification of volume\(^{22}\) is instrumental in the creation of spatial order. Consider any empty parking garage. The gridded order of the building’s structure serves as a major indicator of circulation spaces vs. parking space. (Image 3) Such order can be a powerful tool in the control and organization of space. Irregularities in such a grid can also indicate other important elements of the program of the particular building, such as pedestrian paths and vertical circulation, or in a double helix parking garage, where to transfer between the up direction and the down direction circulation by car. (Image 3)
Contradiction of Spatial Dimensions

Contradiction of spatial dimensions, or a 'dialectic' or conflict of fact [real space] and implication [imagined space] is found in a building that exhibits phenomenal transparency. The elevation of a building might seem to show one organization, while the interior of the building might be in direct conflict with it. For example, at Le Corbusier’s Villa at Garches is horizontal in elevation with ribbon windows that imply one long space along the length of the windows, while in plan, the rooms are organized perpendicular to the assumption, several rooms sharing the ribbon window. (Images 4)

Assertiveness of Corners

Assertiveness of corners maintains control of the flow of space. While ambiguity of categorization of space through provision of alternatives and stratification of volume may be a prominent characteristic of phenomenal transparency, if inside is outside or if every aspect is visible completely, no ambiguity is left for contemplation. Corners that assert themselves assert themselves as such. Contained space ends or turns here, but the implied lines that continue parallel off the building might be picked up further along, or imply the containment of space past the edge of the corner. (Image 5) Where space isn’t contained, or doesn’t look to end, implication of order or boundaries cannot be made.

Glass as a Surface

Following this assertion about corners, to achieve phenomenal transparency, the translucent qualities of glass are not the aspects necessarily showcased. "At the league of nations glass provides a surface as definite and taut as the top of a drum." As a building material, it is used to delimit space as a planar surface, rather than the task that is imbued by literal transparency of serving as the absence of material.
Literal Transparency

Literal transparency allows the simultaneous perception of different spatial locations; it is an ‘optical characteristic.’ This portion will focus on the devices of literal transparency, which is a quality of materials and is not as concerned with plan, section, or elevation as it is concerned with the material. There are a number of devices that may be used for this type of transparency, among which are: The ‘absence of ambiguity, since everything is seen with clarity’ and how clear a material is or how you can see through it; The use of reflections and shadows to create dynamic character; The inherent quality of a material substance such as glass, plastic or expanded or perforated metal, and the celebration of the material’s clearness; The superimposition of materials in space; and ‘dematerialized’ corners and the use of glass as an ‘absence of material’;

Material Quality

The aspects of literal transparency are visually accessible. The display of the material characteristics of transparent materials or the display of what lies just past these materials becomes the purpose of transparency. Thus in the use of literal transparency the main concern is the inherent quality of a material substance such as glass, plastic, expanded or perforated metal and the celebration of its clearness. (Image 6,7,8) According to Rowe and Slutsky, “the transparent ceases to be that which is perfectly clear and becomes instead that which is clearly ambiguous.”
The superimposition of materials or forms in space is also a tool of literal transparency. From something as simple as seeing the soffit of a dropped ceiling behind the window that rises past it (Image 11), to the varying transparency of a loosely corrugated perforated metal screen (Image 12), or a double skinned façade that moderates views in or out of a building. The methods and reasons for layering numerous materials of varying transparency are abundant.

Qualities of Light

As an extension of the celebration of material quality, light, reflections, and shadows are used to create dynamism in a composition. As a direct example of this technique, Leibeskind’s addition to the Jewish Museum in Berlin stands out. In the sunlight, the canted vertical elements of glass present varied reflections and shadows on their surfaces (Image 9). In the evening the enclosed courtyard shines like a gem, and the interior is clearly visible from the outside. (Image 10)

Superimposition

The superimposition of materials or forms in space is also a tool of literal transparency. From something as simple as seeing the soffit of a dropped ceiling behind the window that rises past it (Image 11), to the varying transparency of a loosely corrugated perforated metal screen (Image 12), or a double skinned façade that moderates views in or out of a building. The methods and reasons for layering numerous materials of varying transparency are abundant.
‘Dematerialized’ Corners

According to Rowe and Slutsky, corners that are ‘dematerialized’ (Image 13) do not facilitate flow of space; they allow space to spill out (44). This tool promotes a feeling of direct connection between the inside and the outside. The east end of the Steger Student Life Center does this. With floor to ceiling glass wrapped around walls that meet at an acute corner in a double height space, inside and outside blend (Image 14). In this way, glass is also used as an absence of material but still enables climate control within the building. The sharpness of the angle of the building is blunted from the inside of the building (Image 15). In the right lighting conditions, reflections and shadows transform an open corner into an assertive line (Image 16).

Phenomenal and Literal Transparency

The devices of phenomenal and literal transparency may be used to create views out of a building for the occupants, at the same time as preserving a sense of security and privacy. They limit the views of the building and into the building from outside the site, and control views to the outside from the interior.
2 Transparency applies to the urban scale
It is not the goal of this thesis to change or “improve” the state of the city. As architecture does not change society since it is a cultural expression of society, so a city—which is formed by a gathering of people—is an expression of society. Through the addition of a building to the city, and only this since any larger intervention may be in the realm of city planning, although architecture should certainly recognize and be informed by the conditions that surround it—through the addition of a building to the city, a set of values is expressed as one of many participating voices of the city (Image 17). Without the variety of voices and conditions and the intersections of these voices and conditions, a city ceases to be a city—it becomes “simulacrum” (Image 18). The city then only expresses one voice; it no longer represents society and culture, but the singular idea of one person even to the point that it may become repressive or unjust. (Image 19,20)
Urban Transparency

Fragmentation and connection, then, become aspects or tools by which we may understand the transparency of a city or the neighborhood context of a building project. These can be evaluated at the levels of the city, neighborhood, and specific site. For example, a neighborhood or block with a fragmented street system (or street system that only reflects the travel of cars but not that of pedestrians will develop a sense of phenomenal transparency. The experience of the pedestrian, spatially, in terms of how any open space may feel, the sense of distance between destinations (Images 21,22), and even the route that may be taken to go from one place to another, in this case have nothing to do with one another. Shifts in scale within a neighborhood or shifts in building use may also affect transparency\textsuperscript{48}, the former having more to do with travel distance, and the latter being related to access to the buildings (porosity\textsuperscript{49,50}) and concepts of public and private (see appendix 2 for diagrams). (Image 23).
The form that a city takes may be related closely to the geography it inhabits. A city on a hill depends on long ravines for easier street access from the valley. It is provided with views from ridges where parks are placed to take advantage of spectacular views. Parks may increase the transparency of the city by providing accessible, public spaces to view parts of the city—connecting social transparency with literal spatial visual transparency (Images 24, 25). The City of Cincinnati is divided clearly between downtown proper and its inner ring suburbs at the slopes of its hills, as well as between its east side and its west side at the Mill Creek Valley, and the rail yard that occupies it. (Image 26) Beyond this, the main arteries of the city that lead through and out of the city follow the ridges and ravines of the city’s hills (Image 27). This further determines the positioning of the neighborhoods and their commercial centers.

Reading Rd is one of these main arteries that lead out of the city. And the neighborhood that lies at the top of the hill along this road is Avondale. Many of the neighborhoods that formed on this hills surrounding Cincinnati formed as places to get away, for those who could afford a vacation home, from the noise and the smells of this historic hog-packing town. The city incorporated heavy industry uses right next to residential buildings, and green space was always at a premium. The city’s famous Spring Grove Cemetery not only served as a cemetery, but as a park and arboretum, and still does today. So the first ring of Cincinnati neighborhoods were formed on the way out to the countryside.
Neighborhood: Fragmented Scale

Today, businesses and institutions tend to line up along Cincinnati’s Reading Rd as they do along most of the city’s main arteries. This is especially evident at the intersections. This creates a major shift in scale when one turns off of the arterial road, and enters the neighborhood itself—since even the older small businesses within the neighborhood are dwarfed by the strip malls, schools, libraries, and churches that line Reading Rd.\(^{53}\) The car-based linear perception of a city is a limited and one-dimensional understanding. When one turns off of those main roads the neighborhoods themselves are seen. Commercial developments fragment the fabric of the neighborhoods at the arterial seams when commercial and residential areas are zoned separately. The interface of these intersections is left raw since there is no mediation in scale (Image 28). Now, commercial developments and other large scale projects are not inherently bad; they provide certain resources to a neighborhood, but disparity in scale, visually and socially, fragments a neighborhood (Image 29). These characteristics also though tend to indicate a suburban space. Residential areas with integrated commercial functions tend to indicate urban space (Image 30).
Neighborhood: Fragmented Grid

The form of the street grid can also indicate whether a space is urban or suburban, each of these being more or less transparent. A regularly connected grid, characteristic of an urban space, will inherently be more transparent and promote continuous flow (Image 31). Curved roads and cul-de-sacs that are characteristic of suburban spaces are less transparent and block the flow of people and traffic through the space. They also increase travel distances between places and decrease the number of ways to access a place (Image 32).
Cincinnati’s neighborhood of Avondale is one of the city’s first suburbs, but when it is compared with North Avondale for example, Avondale’s gridded form exudes an urban feel, while North Avondale with its curved roads and intentionally disconnected spaces is certainly suburban in character. The suburban type spaces here (Image 33) are in gray to allow a better reading of the urban-type spaces that will be considered. Avondale is outlined with a bold blue line, and it can be clearly seen that little of the suburban type space bleeds over the border and is limited not coincidentally to the hilly part of the neighborhood, which dictates curved roads. Spaces that are disconnected are outlined and blued out and mostly appear in North Avondale (Image 34). In Avondale, they occur where the grid has been altered for various reasons; for the University development, I-71, a strip mall, an apartment complex, and other developments. The area of the site that has been chosen is on one of the roads that have been cut off for a strip mall and is indicated in red on the map to the side (Image 35).
The [non]intersection between Rockdale Av and Reading Rd provides an interesting study in transparency. West of Reading Rd, there is a literal visual connection between the traveler and Rockdale Av, but, Rockdale Av is cut off here and Forest Av, which should connect with Reading Rd one block north, curves down to capture the intersection (Image 36). That which is just yards away is actually three blocks away by car (Image 37). It is the disruption of the grid that creates this phenomenal transparency. On foot the interior of the block is steps away. The level of phenomenal transparency is thus mediated by a choice of transportation.
Block: Flow

The connection of Forest Av diagonally across the block makes sense if the goal is to flush cars through the neighborhood as quickly as possible. This is since Forest connects to Vine Street to the west and Rockdale connects to Victory Parkway to the east (Image 38). Both of these are main arteries leading north and south in Cincinnati (Image 39). If the goal were instead to slow traffic to increase pedestrian safety and to increase the possibility of interest in local businesses, it would make more sense to restore Forest and Rockdale to their initial situation. This would force through traffic to transfer between Forest and Rockdale at one of the many streets within the neighborhood that connect them and they would send traffic across the neighborhood in conjunction with one another (Image 40). This situation may even allow for a situation of paired roads with increased commercial activity on them, for example, Calhoun/Taft, and McMillan Roads. (Although these two cooperate as one street with a wide median, since they both flow one way.)
670 Rockdale Av is located at the right where Rockdale and Reading used to intersect, before Forest Av was routed to connect one block south of its original intersection. The adjacent church, Peace Baptist Church—652 Rockdale Av, has acquired the lots that compose the site over several decades and has occupied its site since 1958. Forest Av was moved in 1982 and the strip mall that was placed in the diagonal space that was created by the moving of the road was built the next year. There are several businesses that were cut off from Reading Rd when the street was moved, including Peace Baptist Church. In order to access this space by car now, it is necessary to drive four more blocks (Images 41, 42). But it is exactly this condition that creates phenomenal transparency. This area of the block that looks so close to Reading Rd is actually far away, but is only far away by car. It is close when the pedestrian experiences it. This phenomenal transparency gives the site two fronts for the two possible ways to approach the site; one front for the person traveling by car, and one front for the person that travels by foot. Literal transparency accompanies the duality of phenomenal transparency that is discussed here; from Reading Rd one can see all the way down Rockdale Av.
Site and Transparency

Not only does the site possess aspects of phenomenal and literal transparency, but the building program does also, since there are different user groups in the building with completely different needs as far as security and privacy are concerned. These main two groups are women who will occupy the emergency shelter, and women from the community who will be using the learning center. The emergency shelter required anonymity and protection from intruders, while the learning center benefits from a street presence and community identity. This corresponds to the duality present in the site. Opportunity presents itself here, since the front of the site that faces Reading Rd takes advantage of the literal transparency of the site that gives it visibility from the street, as well as being located closer to the bus system that stops at the intersection of Forest and Reading. (Image 43). But the front that presents itself on Rockdale takes advantage of the natural sheltering provided by the aspect of phenomenal transparency that isolates the site from car traffic. So the image that would be projected by an entrance to the learning center located facing Reading Rd protect the identity of the building as a women’s emergency shelter, and an entrance off of Rockdale to the emergency shelter would have the benefit of its location within the neighborhood. (Image 44).
3 Transparency, Privacy, and Design
Privacy and Transparency

Privacy and transparency are ideas that go hand in hand. Privacy is understood in a social context and transparency in a spatial or material context. Privacy exists at the point where "tension of revelation and concealment" exists. Proper modulation of revelation and concealment (through the various deployments of transparency that are possible) creates an environment where people can most fully exercise their individual liberty. Thus, neither concealment nor revelation can promote well being and freedom each on its own.

Modulation of transparency should allow for the kind of privacy that promotes well being and freedom rather than privacy that shields abuse. Modulation of transparency can do this since "self realization crucially involves freedom to grant or withhold access to oneself or the capacity to reveal or conceal aspects of ones being as one chooses." Revelation or concealment of aspects of one’s being is both social and physical. Privacy happens both in concealed space as well as highly visible ones, but only after the part of a person which is most private is defined by its various boundaries. When the self is defined by its boundaries, the movement between these spaces of disparate character can be simple. Movement between the concealed spaces of life and the crowded ones becomes exposure rather than revelation when these boundaries have been shattered, as in the case of a violent crime or domestic abuse. As Paul Fairfield puts it: “Ultimately, the harm that privacy violations cause is to remove or diminish the title one holds over one’s existence and personal affairs,...[and it] becomes a little less one’s own.”
Privacy and Program

The paramount importance of privacy is most evident in the design of an emergency shelter for battered women. A woman who leaves an abusive situation and seeks shelter is acting on the realization that “to be a person, an individual must... recognize that [s]he has an exclusive moral right to shape h[er] destiny,” and choose to define the boundaries of her person. The chance to make choices about the level of privacy between herself, others around her, and the outside is key to reclaiming the title to her self. (Image 45, 46). Multiple types of spaces will be provided that each function at different levels of privacy.

Within the women’s shelter there are three types of space: the living unit, which is private to the individual; shared spaces where a woman will need to go for daily needs, such as the kitchen or laundry; and spaces where a woman might want to go, like the common living space, or the quiet study space. The spaces become increasingly public as a woman goes further out of the shelter, beginning with the courtyard which is shared with the learning center part of the time, and the classrooms that are always part of the learning center. The community gathering space is the most public part of the building, and completes the range of privacy zone available to the women in the building.

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<td>Conference rooms</td>
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<td>Small Conference Rooms</td>
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<td>Computer Lab</td>
<td>Children</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Multi-purpose rooms</td>
<td>Staff</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Small Teaching Kitchen</td>
<td>Teachers</td>
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<td>Classrooms</td>
<td>Counselors</td>
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<td>Fitness and Health</td>
<td>Multi-purpose Rooms</td>
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<td>Cardio Machine Room</td>
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<td>Small Studio</td>
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<td>Nursery Rooms</td>
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<td>Children Size Restrooms</td>
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<td>Administrative</td>
<td>Offices</td>
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45. Program categories

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<td>Computer Lab</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nursery</td>
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<td>Small Teaching Kitchen</td>
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<td>200</td>
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<tr>
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</table>

Total 6385 48

The program should provide services for around 25 women and their children, with temporary residence for 1/3 of them. Classes are not limited to women, as some of the classes are intended for family participation, but residence is limited to women.

Category key
E—Education
F—Fitness
A—Administrative
R—Residential
*to be modified pending room layout studies

46. Program space allocations
Personal and professional classes would be provided to the residents and to women in the neighborhood. The classes may include finance, nutrition, cooking, parenting, and group fitness classes. Support groups, legal advocates, and counseling will also be offered to residents. These values are reflected in the programs provided by the Mother’s Club Family Learning Center in Pasadena, CA and the YWCA Battered Women’s Shelter in Cincinnati, OH. The joining of these disparate programs becomes a stitch to rejoin a societal fracture. Women who recognize their need for privacy are not so much hidden away as given a medium to redefine their boundaries.
Tools of Transparency

Tools of phenomenal and literal transparency may be utilized to promote feelings of privacy and security within a building and within the site of the building. To promote these feelings, the use of gridding or more importantly, stratification of space or volume may be used to provide a space that feels more protected or secluded. These tools of phenomenal transparency can promote privacy. The tools of literal transparency can also promote privacy. The use of layers of transparent materials, even along with opaque or nearly opaque materials, can provide a surrounded feeling in the space. The use of multiple walls that may or may not be simultaneously visible, or turns in a space to limit visibility. Turns in a hallway may not be a good strategy since this provides hiding spaces where someone could lie in wait. However, turns at an entrance are often used in public restrooms to limit views into the room when the door is open, and even are used in lieu of a door.
Interface with Context

The interface of the building with the immediate site and with the larger context is important. The first strategy to make a proper connection between building and context is to protect the emergency shelter from Reading Road and to emphasize the presence of the learning center. The second strategy would be to promote a phenomenally transparent reading of the building, not allowing views in or through the building except where they are welcome and beneficial.

Forest and Reading

The interface of the building with the site and with the larger context is important. The site is bounded differently at each of its sides. To the East and Northeast, Forest Avenue and Reading Road run by. Reading Road is a main artery in Cincinnati, and Forest Avenue connects Vine St, Reading Rd, and Victory Pkwy from east to west. Across Forest is a strip mall and a large parking lot. Reading Rd is lined with strip malls, businesses and institutions.
These two sides of the site are highly visible and public. People coming to the building to use the learning center will seek access to the building from these streets, as will people who come by bus and are let off at the intersection. Vehicle access to the site should be provided from Forest Av. The learning center should be visible and inviting from these roads. It should shield the emergency shelter and draw attention away from it. The emergency shelter should be lifted up away from general access physically and visually.

The entry lobby to the learning center, which will be the most public portion of the building, is the ideal space to draw this attention. Attention from the street does not threaten the security of the space, but is welcome and beneficial. Attention here can encourage people from the neighborhood to use the building. This space will be tall, filled with natural light, and open to views from the street. A window wall and double height space will be used to create this feeling. The entry will be along existing paths through the site since people will pass by here on their way to the mall, school church and bus stops that are all adjacent to the site. The entry should be level with the street and not lower or higher, to allow views in and to line up with people on the street and sidewalks.
Rockdale Boundary

The South side of the site is bounded by Rockdale Avenue. Rockdale used to intersect with Reading Rd but does not anymore. While view down Rockdale from Reading is unhindered, it does look like it might connect. The disconnection of Rockdale leads to a three block discrepancy in travel distance by car from one boundary of the site to the next. This street with limited access provides a good place to make access to the site for the shelter. From any direction, views of the women’s parking area should be shielded. The steep topographical change at the north of the site allows only a small increase in topography in front of the women’s parking to be added to block views of the women’s cars from Forest Avenue. The building can be used to block views from the south by placing parking behind the building. The women’s entry will be placed in this sheltered area as well. (see image 47)
West Boundary

The boundary of the site closest to the women’s entry is the interior of the block, which includes the side of Peace Baptist Church and the back yard of the funeral home that fronts Forest. The interior of the block here is the beginning of the formation of a ravine that folds away from the site all the way to Mill Creek. This topographical change strengthens the boundary of the site and limits access between lots.

The emergency shelter portion of the building will also be sheltered from views from Reading Road. Views into this portion of the building should be limited. To achieve this, the shelter will be positioned behind the learning center in relation to Reading Rd, or look like it is behind. High windows, screens, and plants in the windows and landscape can be used to prevent views into the building where windows are needed for light and ventilation. Dark or reflective glass may also be used to decrease views in while allowing views out. Layers of movement or containment within the site between the shelter entrance and the street can add more distance of separation through the use of paths, low walls, vegetation, and topographical changes. An example of effective separation of a living space from the street while still only yards away from the street can be found at The Meadows apartment complex in Culver City, CA. Between the living unit and the street are: bushes, an eight foot fence, a four foot hill, more plantings, the floor plane lifted up from the ground at the top of the hill higher than the height of a person, a balcony, and blinds in the sliding door of the apartment. (Image 47).
To any person who visits the learning center, the shelter will seem opaque, lifted up, and solid. The living spaces which are most private and enclosed are placed on top of the open and less solid portion of the building, the learning center. The weight of the massing of the living units will be visible where it interrupts the airy volume of the learning center’s gathering space. This serves as a statement of the separation between the women’s shelter and the community. The separation and juxtaposition of the spaces is an illustration of how battered women discredited of their needs and value, and excluded from fully participating in society. This building might be a stitch in the rift that is created by this disenfranchisement.
Privacy Layers

The way that people enter the building is important to how different user groups experience the building. Two different primary entrances will be provided to the building. One to be used mainly by women staying at the emergency shelter, and the other entrance will serve the community-learning center. The two entrances both should be inviting, but they will function differently. The entry to the emergency shelter will provide privacy and security for women entering the building. The community-learning center will be open, accessible, welcoming, and safe.

There are a number of user groups in this building. Battered women and their children are the first group. Women from the neighborhood will be another user group. Teachers, administrators, and counselors are the last main group. The building will have two entry points, the entry to the emergency shelter and the entry to the learning center. Movement through the building will be directional, based on the type of user and the type of space.
Entry: Learning Center
The entrance to the community learning center should be open and inviting, as discussed in a previous section. People coming to the building for a class should not have to guess where to come in. If they come by car, they should not become confused and try to enter by way of the shelter entrance. When they come into the building there should be a place to learn about the classes and programs offered at the learning center. There should be a place to sign up for these classes. A gathering space for the community should be provided in this space, or just off of this space. This lobby also has the entry to the administrative educational spaces. An intermediate hall or opening should provide a transition between this highly public space and the more controlled space beyond. Only registered students will be allowed through. The placement of the reception desk will verify this. The transition may be indicated by a door or hall, change in floor level or ceiling height, change in materials on surfaces, or changes in lighting and acoustics (dimmer, quieter, or the opposite.)
Entry: Women’s Shelter

The entry to the women’s shelter should be protected. Therefore, it should not be visible from the main roads, but it should be easily accessible by a person moving between a vehicle and the building. The positioning of the entry on the building in relation to the street, and the shape of the building, walls, plants, and topography can all contribute to the privacy of the space. To the North the space will be above the street, sheltered with raised topography and a retaining wall. It will be screened by trees. To the south the driveway will enter under the building and the rest of the parking lot will be shielded by the building. Although the entry should be protected, it should not feel like a bomb shelter or prison. A better impression that could be given should be that of a hidden garden or private courtyard. Since this entry will be accommodating guests to the building like a hotel or other similar building, the entry will be protected from the elements with an overhand of the building. An interior space for unloading luggage or other belongings. There should also be a space in the immediate area to sit and wait, and a place to ‘check-in’ and monitor the identities of those entering the building. To further increase the effectiveness of this entrance, the women entering here will have direct access to the shelter portion of the building by way of vertical circulation that is directly adjacent to the entry. They will not have to pass through other more public parts of the building.
Creating layers of privacy will allow women to choose the degree to which she will share with the surrounding world. As a theme the building will be divided visually between the women’s shelter and the learning center. This is the main distinction between levels of privacy. These two portions will be divided into sub-layers.

**Women’s Shelter**

The women’s shelter will be divided into three sub-layers: living units, necessary amenities, and optional amenities.

Women who come to the emergency shelter will enter the building and be able to quickly come into a secure zone where they will have access to a room that will become their own personal space during their stay. A bed for the women and each of her children will be provided, along with a restroom, kitchenette, closet, drawers and desk. The living units will vary in size to allow for the differing needs of women with no children, and those with several. The restroom will be placed at the front of the unit to create an entry hall and additional privacy in the living unit.
Besides these personal spaces, there will also be a common living space, a common full kitchen, children’s play space, a quiet study space, and a small meeting room for individual meetings with administrators and counselors. All of these spaces will belong exclusively to the emergency shelter part of the building, but do require differing levels of privacy. They will be sub-layers of privacy within the emergency shelter.

The common living space and kitchen are the most public of the spaces. They are shared between all of the women occupying the shelter and will encourage interaction and shared experience. These spaces will be open for casual use at all times. They may also be used for planned activities such as cooking classes, group meals (in the kitchen;) and support groups (in the common living space.) The children’s play space should be a secure space and able to be visually monitored from both the kitchen and the common living space at all times. The shared study space will provide an intermediate space to withdraw. It will be a quiet place that provides somewhere to go where the women are not completely isolated but also not in the middle of things. The individual meeting room will be a private space where confidential meetings can be held without leaving the emergency shelter. In this way, spaces of differing levels of privacy will be provided within the emergency shelter.

Indicators of change, such as lighting levels, ceiling height, interior finishes, and furniture might indicate privacy within the space. Layers of transparency at the boundaries between these different levels can control who enters the space and how they enter.
Learning Center

An important aspect of the building will be that a woman staying in the emergency shelter can move between all of the layers of the building, according to her situation and comfort level. So as she redefines her boundaries and reclaims herself, she might come further through the building. (Image 49). She would begin at her personal living space, and then move out to interact with other women in the shelter to differing levels in the different spaces. Moving out to the less private layers, she would begin to interact again with the community from the safety of the learning center, in its different sub-layers. (This would occur depending on the safety of her situation. At any point, any woman should be able to make a quick exit back to her own individual space. In order to allow unhindered access between secure layers of the building, the women might be provided with a key fob or card to unlock any doors that require locking, and to unlock her own door.
The learning center will, likewise, be divided into layers: entry, community gathering space, classrooms, the courtyard, and the administrative spaces. The community will have access to the gathering space. Registered students will be allowed in the classrooms and courtyard. Only administrators will have access to the offices except in the event of meetings with community members.

The courtyard will be accessible to registered students at certain times, but will belong to the women’s shelter all the time. View between the classroom hall and the courtyard will be screened, but adjustable from the courtyard side of the wall. The courtyard is the critical joining point of the emergency shelter and the learning center. Its use may alternate and combine depending on the time of day. It also depends on the safety situation of the individual woman, her own personal choices about privacy, and her comfort level.
At the boundaries of layers of privacy, literal and phenomenal transparency becomes important. Visual contact with a space should be provided before a woman enters the space. This will allow a woman to evaluate the space before she enters, and to decide if she even wants to enter. This will be one of aspects of the layers of transparency provided at the boundaries of spaces of different levels of privacy. This visual contact should be directional. It might be provided by changes in level, mirrors or reflections, windows, doors, curved halls, or screens of single or varying opacity. Changes in the floor material or ceiling height might also be provided to indicate a transition in the space. On the University of Cincinnati campus, a good example of the use of reflections, level change, windows, and a partial height wall to provide a relatively hidden space with views all around exists in the Starbucks in the east end of the Steger Student Life Center. (Image 50). (Image 51). Sitting at a table by the window a person is mostly hidden from view from the outside, but can see everything that happens and everyone that passes by on ‘Mainstreet’ via clear reflections on the adjacent recreation center. On sunny days reflections to the outside of the glass window wall of the building decreases the visibility of the person sitting at the table, as does the depth of the mullions and building structure that places the tables further from the window.
Final Thoughts

Transparency is an important aspect of every building. The tools of transparency can direct the level of privacy within a building.

Privacy is important in a building since it is through privacy that people establish their individual identities. When these identities are damaged or threatened, it is through privacy that individual meanings are redeveloped.

Phenomenal, literal and urban transparency are all part of the development of privacy. Phenomenal transparency involves the spatial understanding of the building. Literal transparency is used to modulate views, texture, and light in a building to enhance the privacy in the spaces of a building. Urban transparency places a site within its context and influences the understanding of the location, meaning and use of a building on its site.

The tools of transparency, literal and phenomenal, are used in the building and in the site to create zones of privacy in layers. Transparent boundaries define these layers, and it is by moving between these layers that the redefinition of personal boundaries and meaning may be facilitated.
End notes:


13. “A further level of interpretation—that of transparency as a condition to be discovered in a work of art—is admirably defined by Gyorgy Kepes in his Language of Vision: ‘If one sees tow or more figures overlapping one another, and each of them claims for itself the common overlapped part, then one is confronted with a **contradiction of spatial dimensions**. To resolve this contradiction one must assume the presence of a new optical quality. The figures are endowed with transparency; that is they are able to interpenetrate without an optical destruction of each other. Transparency however implies more than an optical characteristic, it implies a **broader spatial order**. Transparency means a simultaneous perception of different spatial locations. Space not only recedes but fluctuates in a continuous activity. The position of the transparent figures has equivocal meaning as one sees each figure now as the closer, now as the further one.’

By this definition the transparent ceases to be that which is perfectly clear and becomes instead that which is clearly ambiguous. Nor is this the meaning entirely an esoteric one; when we read (as we so often do) of ‘transparent overlapping planes’, we constantly sense that more than a simple physical transparency is involved.” Pg 22-23. Rowe, Colin, Robert Slutsky. *Transparency*. Boston, Birkhäuser. 1997.

14. “Thus the glazing of the garden façade might have suggested the presence of a single large room behind it and might have inspired the belief that the direction of this room was parallel with that of the façade. But the internal divisions deny this statement....” Pg 38. Rowe, Colin, Robert Slutsky. *Transparency*. Boston, Birkhäuser. 1997.

15. “On first examination this space appears to be an almost flat contradiction of the façade; particularly on the principal floor, the volume revealed is almost directly opposite to that which we might have anticipated. Thus the glazing of the garden façade might have suggested the presence of a single large room behind it and might have inspired the belief that the direction of this room was parallel with that of the façade. But the internal divisions deny this statement....” Pg 38. Rowe, Colin, Robert Slutsky. *Transparency*. Boston, Birkhäuser. 1997.

16. “Each of these planes is incomplete in itself or perhaps even fragmentary; yet it is with these parallel planes as points of reference that the façade is organized, and the implication is all is of a vertical, layerlike stratification of the interior space of the building, a succession of laterally extended spaces traveling behind the other.” Pg 38. Rowe, Colin, Robert Slutsky. *Transparency*. Boston, Birkhäuser. 1997.

18. “Neither [Garches by le Corbusier, or the Bauhaus by Gropius] admits an interruption of the horizontal movement of the glazing, and both make a point of carrying the glazing around the corner. But now similarities cease. From here on, one might say that le Corbusier is primarily occupied with the planar qualities of glass and Gropius with its translucent attributes.”Pg 35. Rowe, Colin, Robert Slutsky. *Transparency*. Boston, Birkhäuser. 1997.

19. “At the Palace of the League of Nations glass provides a surface as definite and taut as the top of a drum; but at the Bauhaus, glass walls ‘flow into one another’, ‘blend into each other’, ‘wrap around the building’, and in other ways (acting as the absence of plane) ‘contribute to that loosening up a building which now dominates the architectural scene.”Pg 53. Rowe, Colin, Robert Slutsky. *Transparency*. Boston, Birkhäuser. 1997.


27. Rowe and Slutsky write in description of the Palace of the League of Nations that the building directs the flow of space similarly to the manner in which a dam and irrigation system would direct the flow of water with such words as “contained, embanked, tunneled, sliced, and finally spilled…” Pg 53. Rowe, Colin, Robert Slutsky. *Transparency*. Boston, Birkhäuser. 1997.


35. “Thus Gyorgy Kepes,... appears to consider that the architectural analogue of these [transparent paintings] must be found in the material qualities of glass and plastics, and that the equivalent of their carefully calculated compositions will be discovered in the haphazard superimpositions produced by the reflections and accidents of light playing upon a translucent or polished surface.” Pg 33. Rowe, Colin, Robert Slutsky. *Transparency*. Boston, Birkhaüser. 1997.


37. “Sigfried Giedion seems to assume that the presence of an all glass wall at the Bauhaus, with ‘its extensive transparent areas’, permits ‘the hovering relations of planes and the kind of ‘overlapping’ which appears in contemporary painting’.” Pg 33-34. Rowe, Colin, Robert Slutsky. *Transparency*. Boston, Birkhaüser. 1997.


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45. “The utopia lay in stubbornly continuing to hide the fact that the ideology of planning could be realized in building production only by making clear that the true Plan could only take shape beyond the [building] sector; and that, indeed, once the Plan came within the scope of the general reorganization of production, architecture and urban planning would become its objects, not its subjects.” —Manfredo Tafuri

46. Jean Baudrillard’s “Simulacrum.” A simulation of the real thing meant to stand in for it, a symbol. For example, a commercial center that is built to look like a traditional main street is only an image and not the real thing.

47. See appendix 1, which discusses the implementation of Modernism in Cincinnati, and its repercussions. In some cases, thousands of housing units and hundreds of businesses in mixed use urban spaces were razed under the auspices of slum clearance. In the case of Park Town, fewer residential units were constructed, over the course of years, than those that were razed. Though initially the project was intended to provide space for low-income households, along with market rate units (as well as being a racially mixed neighborhood), in the end it did not meet either of these goals and went all market-rate.

48. See appendix 2, which discusses linear understanding of cities, and how this creates a fragmented perception of the fabric of the city.
49. “One extreme is the city with multistory buildings, underground parking facilities, extensive automobile traffic, and long distances between buildings and functions… in such cities one sees buildings and cars, but few people, if any, because pedestrian traffic is more or less impossible… Outdoor spaces are large and impersonal.” Pg 33. Jan Gehl. Life Between Buildings; Using Public Space. Translated by Jo Koch. Van Nostrand Reinhold Company. New York. 1987.


51. See appendix 3, which discusses the formation of Avondale as one of Cincinnati’s neighborhoods on the hills. Neighborhoods for business owners and others with the means to build a vacation home formed up on the hills in order to have separation from the noise and smells of the city, since it was difficult to travel between the locations. In one case when there was a move to create connection from the city to the Cincinnati Zoo, there was resistance to the idea, due to fears that elements of the city would move out to the Clifton area.

52. Nikki M. Taylor, Frontiers of Freedom: Cincinnati’s Black Community, 1802-1868, (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2005), 13. [This description of Cincinnati shows clearly the reasons why the mixed uses and compact nature of the city were considered undesirable to those who elected to move out to the early suburbs]

53. See note 48.

54. William Brayshaw, “Property Search”, Dusty Rhodes, Hamilton County Auditor, http://www.hcgauditor.org/realestate/rover30.asp [accessed November 27, 2008]. [This map system gives a clear and specific look at almost any property in Hamilton County, except for churches, it seems. But I was pleased to be able to find the date that most buildings were built and their use and last owner and a plethora of other information that was useful in making the diagrams of a portion of Avondale
55. “Privacy’s function, as with concealment more generally, is to render inviolable the dimension in life that in being exposed is violated or destroyed. It is to preserve the tension of revelation and concealment that is essential both to individual well-being and to a free social order.” Pg 145. Paul Fairfield. Public/Private. Oxford. Rowman and Littlefield. 2005.

56. Quoting Judith Wagner DeCrew, “Feminists want to do away with the whole public/private dichotomy as it has been understood in the past. Thus feminists stress that they do not intend to have the state insinuating itself into the most intimate parts of people’s lives. They are instead emphasizing that the state must stop ignoring the unbelievable abuses that have been protected in the name of privacy.” Pg 12. Paul Fairfield. Public/Private. Oxford. Rowan and Littlefield. 2005.

57. “Self-realization crucially involves freedom to grant or withhold access to oneself at the capacity to reveal or conceal aspects of one’s being as one chooses.” Pg 16-17. Paul Fairfield. Public/Private. Oxford. Rowan and Littlefield. 2005.


59. “Profundity seeks distance from the public, the ordinary, and the readily accessible… to be what it is the self must regulate what degree and kind of access others will have to it. Pg 16. Paul Fairfield. Public/Private. Oxford. Rowan and Littlefield. 2005.


Space, boundaries, and the right to regulate the level of exposure are important to privacy, but privacy can be created in a crowded place, since it is the creation of personal boundaries and the respecting of these boundaries that establishes privacy.
60. “Far deeper than the physical injury [physical and sexual] assaults the cause, as victims of violent crimes often attest, is the psychological and moral indignity to the person while its means are physical, its purpose is to demean, to strip away dignity and self-respect.” Pg 16. Paul Fairfield. *Public/Private*. Oxford. Rowman and Littlefield. 2005.

“At the level of interpersonal relationships, for example, psychologists describe the incapacity to assert personal boundaries (an incapacity often rooted in abuse) as being fatal both to intimacy and to self-realization.” Pg 17. Paul Fairfield. *Public/Private*. Oxford. Rowman and Littlefield. 2005.

61. “Ultimately, the harm that privacy violations cause is to remove or diminish the title one holds over one’s existence and personal affairs.” Pg 28. Paul Fairfield. *Public/Private*. Oxford. Rowman and Littlefield. 2005.

“As the possibility of refuge from public scrutiny, judgment, or embarrassment diminishes, the title to one’s personal existence becomes a little less one’s own.” Pg 18. Paul Fairfield. *Public/Private*. Oxford. Rowman and Littlefield. 2005.


63. Mother’s Club Family Learning Center, Pasadena, CA. www.mothersclub.org/V1/Programs.html

64. YWCA Battered Women’s Shelter, Cincinnati, OH. www.ywca.org/site/pp.asp?c=agLGXNOE&b=273325
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History/Context:


Over the last century, society’s perception of the city has changed, and really, whether a place is good or bad has everything to do with how a person looks at it. Cincinnati serves as a model of that change in perception. There are many different criteria through which one may consider a city. Four main ways consist of: social, political, economic, and formal criteria.

At the earliest part of the century, and at the end of the previous century, people rallied to the call of progressivism and reformism. Social groups formed to solve or alleviate the ills of society—smoky cities, low quality housing, crime, drunkenness, and generally, the chaos of civilization. These groups determined to save the city, and to save urban residents. Among the groups involved in such endeavors were the Women’s Club, the Chamber of Commerce, and the Democratic and other Charter Parties.

In the eyes of groups aiming to improve society, the city was rife with crime, with unbreathable air, noise everywhere, and filled with blocks and blocks of decaying, old, and unlivable buildings.

In 1925 Cincinnati’s Chamber of Commerce asked the question, “What is the matter with Cincinnati?” While they singled out specific economic factors such as the disappearance of the carriage, whiskey, and beer industries, and the decline of the leather and meat packing industries, they cited a “stand pat” attitude as a general cause of decline in the city. The idea that the Cincinnati stood by as it fell into decline, and has continued to do so is ridiculous. The business leaders of the city were not aloof of the conditions of the city—they were the ones commissioning and writing the report. The women of the city were demonstrably active, trying to do something to improve their city. Political parties were even formed to make Cincinnati a better place.

Contrary to the absolute self-determinism embraced by the Chamber of Commerce, the decline of a city is neither entirely attributable to, nor altogether preventable by members of a city. This would be to boast of a power they could never attain.

While a city cannot entirely save itself, always reliant in the rules of the era and outside conditions of the nation, politically, Cincinnati pulled itself out a hole. By 1924, under the direction of a corrupt Boss Cox and corresponding machine, Cincinnati was deeply in debt, even near bankruptcy, and the processes of the government of the city ran with no efficiency do the corrupt systems that had developed under Boss Cox.

But by 1924, Cincinnatians had had enough, and had formed a committee to create a new city charter. At large elections, which did away with voting by wards, dissolved the machine, and a new, city appointed, city manager position reduced the power of politicians, giving some control of the workings of the city to a trained expert. Additionally, government workers had to pass a civil service exam (preventing the appointment of unqualified people to government positions. In 1925, those who supported the charter gained the majority in an at-large election in Cincinnati.

In the same year, Cincinnati drew up a plan for itself. City planners began asking the question: what is a city? Congruent with their profession, the issues inherent to the city were seen through a filter, which dictated the organization of the built environment as the one characteristic if a city with the most important and most profound impact in the “saving of the city and the saving of urban residents.”
So, who is the city for? How do you use a city? How should you get around a city? What is built there, and what are the appropriate parts of a city? How are all of the parts of a city placed in relation to one another? How did planners decide what is wrong with a city, and where the problem parts were? How did planners go about saving a city? Maybe you should just leave the city, and go somewhere else, like the suburbs.

I have noticed a pattern. There has been an attitude that the city, as it is, is a problem. Additionally, the attitude has become that if you create the ideal city, or if you improve the form that the city takes at every scale, you can make the city a better place. City planning as a profession was adopted at its earliest stages in Cincinnati, and Cincinnati’s first city plan was drawn up in 1925.

Many of the policies were even anti-urban in nature, serving more as a depiction of aspirations to make the city more like the suburbs. Roads were reworked to ideally accommodate the automobile, rather than the streetcar, or the pedestrian. Zoning was set in place to separate the functions of the city, and subdivisions were postulated to be the best way to design new neighborhoods. They even wrote in the plan that, “decentralization should be encouraged by every means.” They then went on to suggest that the best places of residence should be neighborhoods that fell outside of the boundaries of the city, and remain outside of the boundaries of the city to this day! It seems like planners considered the city as an urban center far less than ideal, and actually to be undesirable.

In actions that the planners took to modify the city, they often target the most congested, and least affluent as the target of the modifications that they enacted on the city. Large projects, such as the construction of the Union Terminal which completed in 1933, were used as an excuse to remove large portions of the city that were viewed as problematic. “The final plan [of the Union Terminal] placed the entire complex within the built-up fabric of the west end. Waite described the neighborhood as a ‘mass of dumps, railroad yards, freight houses, streets, viaducts, houses, and everything else.” (Hahn) Station construction meant ‘the cleaning out of a huge hunk of ... the congested residence sections of the city.” In total, 927 residential buildings were removed, and 59 commercial buildings were removed. Mixed-use areas were a problem to planners, who preferred to separate the functions contained in a city.

About a decade after the flood of 1937, a new city plan was drawn up (begun in 1945, finished in 1948.) This plan targeted the flood prone areas of the city, namely, the waterfront. It directly states, “Immediately adjacent to the heart of downtown Cincinnati lies this large stretch of wastefully used land which has no hope of self redemption and which is a social and economic liability to the city.” The plan for this part of the city was to simply tear it all down. The clearance of areas considered to be slums was a cure-all for these planners. The riverfront that was proposed included a stadium, a helipad, and wide transportation spaces, to make travel by car easier and quicker, and to accommodate the separation of functions that planners envisioned for a successful city. Between 1940 and 1960, residence near the riverfront went from 4,900 people to 120 people.
In the 60’s, more chunks were torn out of the city (in the west side, which was still considered to be a slum.) A new, more suburban type neighborhood was planned, to replace a large area of housing that the city did not want to have standing anymore. Housing for 1,623 families was torn down, and then replaced with 823 apartment units in 3 story buildings. Many more families than this were displaced, due to the compactness of the neighborhood, but only half the number of units were even replaced. Park Town was originally to be a middle income, integrated neighborhood, therefore limiting the number of residents of the original neighborhood who would live there; many were forced to go elsewhere, like Over-The-Rhine, for housing.

In addition to this, when the interstate highways were planned, going through the city of Cincinnati, I-75 was routed, in a snaking pattern, to go directly through the west side, further destroying the fabric of an unwanted neighborhood. (Rather than being placed just a little further west, where the rail lines are, which run up in the same direction and the highway was planned to go.) Again, many people were displaced.

So, what is the purpose of the city? In the light of these examples of the clearance of tightly woven city fabric, and its replacement with much less dense residential areas, or with transportation related infrastructure—a railroad terminal, and later, a highway for vehicular travel, the city is series of “nodes” between which people must travel, to fulfill basic daily needs. A highway facilitated the movement of people in an out of the city, on a daily basis, and today, many of the people who inhabit the city during the day, do not even need to live there—they come in from suburbs (un-annexed cities) that lay further out, fulfilling the vision of the writers of the plan of 1925. The relationship of the Cincinnatian changed also, with the construction of skywalks in the city, the construction of the riverfront stadium, and the standardization of hotels in the downtown area. Each of these reinforced the perception that the city was meant to be driven through, that each function of the city should belong in its own separate place, and that the people of the city should avoid the urban-ness of the city. Skywalks insulated pedestrians from the dangerous and immoral influence of daily urban life, the stadium was built to accommodate suburban visitors in such a way, as they never ever even had to be IN the city itself, unless they were looking at it from the highway in the comfort of their car. Even the hotels of Cincinnati experienced a standardizing change, visitors to the city could get the same experience in a hotel in Cincinnati as Dayton, as Chicago, as some small town I don’t even know the name of! The city became a place to visit, but not to experience.

Even while this aspect of the use of the city was becoming more concrete, people began preserving parts of the city that they thought were the most valuable. In several stages this is leading to a changed perception of the city—as a place to live, a place to find again. In Cincinnati, portions of Over-The-Rhine are being preserved, and re-inhabited, after a sharp decline in population in recent decades. Rather than a place to tear down and rebuild, the city is becoming a place to reconstruct. The city of the past, the walking city, of mixed use, and mixed population is realizing a rebirth. And while this rebirth is being realized sooner in other cities, Cincinnati, with certain particular situations of its own, is also an echo of the rest of the country, which must follow the rules of its era.

A city is for everyone; it is a place to live, and a place to work. It is a place to carry out every part of your daily needs. You drive, and walk and ride a bicycle or a bus where you need to go, and all of your daily needs are housed in the city, all within proximity.
Appendix 2
But if one turns from the main road, suddenly one has entered another realm of entirely different scale. When one leaves the throughway of Reading Road, the scale shifts from a dispersed area with mostly large buildings, or other shops isolated in seas of pavement, into an intimate neighborhood setting. One leaves this space of relative obscurity and enters a space where one draws stares, as though people know that one is not supposed to be there.

What did this place used to be? When did all of these fragments occur? Each of these discordant shards of city battle one another for control of the form of the city.

As one travels north on Reading Road from the city, and one heads out toward the suburbs, the one thing that one notices is a segmentation of the city. It seems that a band of wide-open concrete separates every neighborhood. But this is a very car-centric mode of understanding the city—Reading Road as a throughway, a secondary highway—dipping from one place to another. At each intersection with a major artery or with a highway, another band of concrete parking lots and island businesses crops up!

But this is not the city as it is meant to be experienced. The passerby sees it this way, but the one who lives there, in another way entirely. The resident does not experience the city in a linear fashion. The resident experiences the city in a number of dimensions. Yes, along the artery, but additionally, they know what lies beyond the artery, just out of sight. At many of the areas where the passerby sees only parking lot and box buildings, the resident knows that just beyond this are compact streets filled with homes, parks, peoples’ lives.

For a look at a representative sample of Reading Road, consider the stretch of Reading Road between North Avondale and Reading, both of these neighborhoods being formed in the mid-or late-1800s. (Avondale is a neighborhood of Cincinnati, and Reading began as a town of its own, with commercial activities being mixed in with residential buildings.)

Post-WWII suburbs have sprung up in this space between these older neighborhoods. These islands of residential space, separated from other elements of the city by function—living, working, recreation—lead to the fragmented sense that the city exudes, especially as experienced linearly. (In a car.)
Appendix 3
The Cincinnati neighborhood of Avondale today is seen as a dangerous place where you don’t walk alone, even in the daytime. And while the volume of violence and drug trafficking that takes place in the area might verifiably found this image, it is still only a snapshot in the long lifetime of this old neighborhood. Since the beginning of its population in the mid-1800’s, Avondale has grown and developed and thrived and changed, affected by national and local forces of varying origin. The wide mix of buildings standing in Avondale is a testament to the diversity of forces that have acted there. The point of this paper is to get an idea of the heritage of Avondale, and begin to understand what the key forces were that created the neighborhood we know as Avondale today.

From its inception, Avondale—first as a village, then as a neighborhood, has developed in tandem with the City of Cincinnati. To sketch a broad picture of the progression of major movements of thought about the city and major events that influenced the development of the city, I will touch on six representative aspects of the history of the city with special attention given to Cincinnati, and Avondale in particular. Chronologically, I will start with the early development of suburbs around the central city; I will move on to the 1925 Master Plan of Cincinnati, the influence of modernist thinking, and the rise of city planning as a profession separate from architecture; from there, the great depression makes a mark on history. The economy returns during world war two, with an explosion of suburbanization following quickly after, along with an updated Master Plan for the City of Cincinnati in 1948. As the center city declines, “urban renewal” commences, along the lines set forth in the 1948 plan, and public housing is built, first with good intentions, but as time progresses, becomes a “receptacle” for the poorest in society.

In the 1800’s Cincinnati was a center for pig slaughtering and packing, among other things. The city of the 1800’s did not have sewers, or garbage collection. Industry and peoples homes were intermingled in the city. Roaming livestock and pigs did not make city life smell any sweeter. Even deer creek ran with the blood of slaughtered pigs. People who could afford to leave the city did so, but they were not so much leaving the city, as leaving behind the bad influences of the city. Many of the people who left for the suburbs were wealthy businessmen, with ties to the city itself. They did still consider themselves part of the city, and this is indicated by the fact that almost all of the inner ring of suburbs were annexed by the city rather early. People leaving the central city led to the formation of early suburbs around Cincinnati, along with developments in transportation technology, such as horse cars. Avondale was among these early suburbs. In 1848, the first subdivision was created on some farmland, and some more of the land was subdivided in 1854. In 1864, the Village of Avondale was incorporated. In 1869, the City of Cincinnati tried to annex all outlying suburbs at once, in order to streamline the local governments, and to gain taxes, but a successful vote was declared illegal. “The result was that Avondale remained an independent village until 1896, when annexation was voted lawfully.” As the diagrams showing progress of building in a representative area of Avondale by decade demonstrate, until 1899, almost all of the buildings constructed are large single family homes. (Fig. 2) In the first decade of the 1900’s, two apartment buildings go up, and two retirement homes are also constructed, along with a handful of additional large single family homes. (Fig. 3)
The second decade shows very little building going on. Five houses were built, and one apartment building, which was completed at the end of the second decade, 1919.(Fig. 4) Three of these houses were built right at the opening of the decade, and one at the end, when the apartment building was being built. The one house that was built in the middle of the decade was built just before the US entered World War One. After the First World War, the economy took an upturn, and movement out of the central city continued with strength through the 20's, up until the stock market crash in 1929. During the 20's there was a mix of apartments and houses being built.

The Garden City movement of the beginning of the century also helped fuel the movement of people out of the central city into the surrounding suburbs. Ebenezer Howard, as the greatest voice of the movement, characterized the city as a dirty, dangerous, and undesirable place to live, (in addition to characterizing the untamed country-side in an equally undesirable manner.) His magnet diagram (Fig. 23) illustrates this way of thinking very clearly, attributing all the best parts of life and society as being contained in the area which lies at the boundary of the two. Mariemont was conceived as the model of town-country, built this way from the foundations up, much of the construction occurring in the mid-twenties. This mindset helps to explain why there was so much movement of population—and thus, building, going on in the early suburbs. See Fig. 5 for clear illustration of the volume of buildings that were added to the landscape of Avondale during the decade of the 20's. An increase in building in Avondale was not the only thing that occurred in Cincinnati during this period, the government of the city was overhauled in 1924, breaking down George Cox’s machine. The failing city government was turned around to become “the best-run big city in the United States” according to a 1956 edition of Fortune. This also must have been a contributing factor to the increase in construction during the decade.

Another historic event that took place in the 20’s was that the first Master Plan of the City of Cincinnati was published in 1925. This plan for the city included the heavy use of zoning to separate residential, work, and recreational functions of a city to their own spatial areas. Much emphasis was put on automobile transportation, even completely reorganizing traffic flow in the city, removing streetcars. Parks and schools were also planned, along with the placement of the union terminal within the West End. The writers of the plan also emphasized the “decentralization” of Cincinnati, and suggested different areas that were far outside of the city limits as new sources of land for residential functions in the future. Much of this thought came from CIAM (the International Congress of Modern Architecture), and from the architects that were involved in the formulation of this kind of thought, like Le Corbusier. This group categorized different functions of the city, and separated them, making the planned city a large abstracted modernist diagram. The desire of the modernist vision of a clean abstracted version of a city, and the emphasis that was placed on transportation, along with the authority of the newly formed profession called planning enabled the destruction of nearly one thousand residential buildings beginning in August 1929, without forethought as to where all those people would go to live. Most of the People displaced by this city improvement project were African American. Those of the displaced residents of the west end who were white had little problem finding a new place to live, but due to institutionalized and codified racism in Cincinnati, the majority African-American’s who were displaced found few places that were open to them. Those that were of greater means were able to move to other nicer areas, like portions of Avondale, which were already partially populated with other African-Americans. But the poorest areas of the city became even more congested than they already were. And this was only two months before
the crash of the stock market and the beginning of the great depression.

The great depression officially lasted from 1929 until the early 40’s, the most severe portion being until 1933. Fig. 6 indicates that very few buildings went up during the 30’s. And while an explanation why there was very little building happening in the 30’s in Avondale (and probably anywhere else either) is close at hand, it is harder to explain why this building construction slump lasted all the way through the 40’s in Avondale (Fig. 7). During harder economic times, construction and related fields always are among the first to suffer. Projects get put on hold, or are cancelled, since suddenly, there is not enough capital for the project, or else there is no longer any reason to build—lack of expansion in a company, or fewer people looking to buy new homes. Now the 40’s mark a time when the United States was enjoying renewed and elevated prosperity, the war had ended, the economy of the country had grown and become much stronger, why would there be very little building in Avondale during this period?

After World War II, the suburbs, as we now know them formed. Cincinnati’s older suburbs seem urban by comparison. The 1925 Master Plan had read into the future, the best housing in the city would not be located in the city at all, it would be located outside of the city in other suburbs; but these would not be neighborhoods, of the city, they would be separate cities unto themselves. Now, before this exodus from the city to the suburb began, poor portions of the city, and segregated portions of the city were overcrowded. As people moved out of the city, and out of the first ring of suburbs, opportunity arose for people who before had been restricted by economic reason or by race to move from the central urban area, into Avondale and the other older suburbs. Avondale is located just to the west of Walnut Hills. Walnut Hills contained an existing community of African-Americans. As African-Americans moved out to the suburbs, they tended to group around pre-existing African-American communities, since real estate agents followed an officially established racist policy discouraging the placement of minorities in all white neighborhoods. But the African-American Community did expand. Although housing was short before for minorities, after WW2, large numbers of African-Americans moved north to the cities and up to 99 percent of housing for African-Americans was occupied. So, as whites moved out, African-American’s able to afford a house, or the higher rent of Avondale, moved in.

Urban renewal by “slum clearance” was picked up again after the nation was lifted into economic prosperity after World War II. People who could afford to leave the super-congested city left, populating the nation’s second major wave of suburbs. The depopulating city center began to suffer, and the flag of ‘urban renewal’ was lifted high once again.

In 1948, the City of Cincinnati updated its Master Plan, for the Master Plan of 1948. While much of the plan focused on avoiding another flood disaster, emphasis was also placed on transportation, and the division of city functions. Following this, “slum clearance” went underway. One representative project was Park Town Cooperative Homes, place in the West End. But while it displaced more than 1,600 families, it produced half as many housing units. Park Town itself was not even intended to house the people whose homes were destroyed to make way for the project. Park Town was originally intended as an integrated middle-class neighborhood. A suburb within the city. The 50’s saw an increase in public housing and housing programs. Fig. 8 illustrates this. In the area studied in the diagram, what is built are a number of apartment buildings, in an area that had become mainly African-American by that time. That is convenient timing, considering the fact that housing in the city was strained, and thousands of people were being displaced by “urban renewal.” During this period, sentiment had changed from simply tearing down “blighted” areas, to providing an uplifting public
program to those poor who “deserved” it. Even among the building projects in the small study area of Avondale are included a Church, and a home for single mothers, constructed by the Salvation Army. The Public Housing that was built was meant for the purpose of uplifting the population, it was later that public housing would become considered a place that poor people were placed because society didn’t want them.

Park Town itself illustrates this point. While the original goal of the project was to provide an integrated middle class neighborhood, people were slow to buy into the project, and rent levels and the income cap for the project was dropped for applicants to the neighborhood, Inspiring wealthier residents to move out, whether due to lack of tolerance for less affluent neighbors, or due to guilt over taking another less privileged person’s opportunity to live in a nice place. In the same way, over time, public housing went from being a place for the deserving poor, or a place to experiment at higher forms of society, to being viewed as the place where poor people lived, who couldn’t afford anything better.

Renewal projects in Avondale itself even serve to illustrate the point! While urban renewal was being carried out in the rest of the city, public housing was proposed for Avondale for the purpose of housing people displaced from the West End. Avondale happened to have located within it the hospitals and two universities. According to Casey-Leininger, though, the renewal plan that was developed mainly benefited the large institutions, and allowed them to expand into the residential portions of the neighborhoods that surrounded them. The University of Cincinnati even expanded to the point that it removed half of the neighborhood of Corryville, in its expansion. To this day, the Children’s Hospital continues to remove blocks of Avondale for parking, and other projects that are intended to benefit the hospital, and draw hospital workers to live closer by.

Beyond projects like this, in the 60’s, there was the interstate highway system that overlaid itself onto cities across the country, displacing thousands, as city planners strategically snaked them through the most crowded areas, and in the least powerful neighborhoods of cities, like the West End, in Cincinnati. Through the 60’s and 70’s, in Avondale, there was a steady construction of large apartment buildings, and even nursing homes, much needed due to the decrease in housing made available to African-Americans in Cincinnati because of the displaced populations of the urban renewal projects. This can be confirmed by comparing Figs. 9 and 10 with Figs. 18 and 19, which indicate the typology of the buildings that were being built at the time in Avondale. Casey-Leininger also confirms this when he states that “Indeed, new construction funded by the program provided only twenty eight units for non-elderly, low-income families and individuals.” (By 1970.)

In the 1960’s, across the country, racism comes to the center of attention, and in 1968, Martin Luther King, Jr. is assassinated. Riots happened all across the country in reaction, including in Avondale, where local businesses were looted and destroyed. (Fig. 24). All through along Burnet Avenue, businesses remain vacant, articles that I read that discussed the riots, from papers from 1968 are all too racially charged to serve as objective resources to be used, but they do give a good look at why strategies toward building may seem to have changed so pivotally after the 70’s.

Now, in the 80’s, only one building was constructed in the study area (Fig.11). During the eighties, interest rates on loans were high, discouraging new construction during this time. During the 90’s, new construction in the study area (Fig. 12) consisted of a row of duplex houses and a couple of large single family houses. Between this period and the 60’s/70’s, modernism gave way to what many people consider to be post-modernism, recognizing that the large
scale and anonymity of modernist housing generally alienated people from the buildings and neighborhoods that they were supposed to be living in. When I look at the data provided by CAGIS and the Hamilton County Auditor’s web site, I discover that the majority of people who own the buildings that were built during the 90’s are women, and that the row of buildings on Harvey were built by the Avondale Redevelopment Corporation. These particular buildings are two family houses, with separate entrances for each occupancy. This model of building new homes is much more focused on the individual than the public housing inspired under the guidance of modernism. Between 2000 and now, one community building, (the Boys and Girls Club) and two Habitat for Humanity houses have gone up in the area of study within Avondale. (Figs. 13, 17, and 19) Habitat for Humanity makes housing even more personal for the people who receive a home. Home-owners-to-be even participate in the building of the home, along with other members of the community.

The varied buildings in a neighborhood, of every different type, and from every different era, give a rich and unique story about the parts that the neighborhood played in the history of the city to which it belongs, and even the part that the neighborhood has played in the history of the country. The buildings in a neighborhood tell a story to those who will open their eyes and listen.
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