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I, Kristin Langenberg, hereby submit this original work as part of the requirements for the degree of Master of Architecture in Architecture (Master of).

It is entitled:
Making Connections:
An Inclusive Approach to Urban Revitalization

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Making Connections:
An Inclusive Approach to Urban Revitalization

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In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of:
Master of Architecture
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Revitalization is defined as the act of “giving new vitality or vigor,”¹ a definition of excitement and optimism. When applied to urban development; however, this word takes on several new meanings, few of which are as encouraging. Urban revitalization, regardless of its title, is instantaneously associated with such policies as: urban renewal, eminent domain and gentrification; all of which carry negative connotations in conventional conversation.

This thesis will reflect on the procedures and consequences of urban renewal, and combat the resultant displacement by taking a new perspective; one that focuses on the retention of existing people and activities in impoverished neighborhoods, rather than a strict devotion to replacement. As Jane Jacobs hypothesized in her book *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*: “unslumming hinges, paradoxically, on the retention of a very considerable part of a slum population within a slum.”² In order to solve a problem, you must work with it, not around it. Therefore, this thesis will promote redevelopment of inner city neighborhoods with the inclusion of residents in the process.

This work will be looking specifically at the revitalization of Cincinnati’s Pendleton District in the historic Over-the-Rhine neighborhood. It will analyze Over-the-Rhine’s current condition and propose a redevelopment project that can serve as a facilitator of future change within the community. The project will be based on community inclusion and function as a cornerstone for the neighborhood – a place that is tied to the community’s history and is also utilized as a center of interaction. It will be through this interaction that residents will be able to better understand the needs and desires of their neighbors; and thus, be able to discuss the future of their community together.

1.  www.dictionary.com
2.  Jacobs: 356
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PART I: INTRODUCTION
[PROBLEM]

I want to combat gentrification within the urban revitalization process because of the resultant fragmentation in both population and social perspective in order to sustain a rich urban community that serves as a mosaic of perceptions, lifestyles, and cultures.
Downtown Cincinnati.

shaded: Over-the-Rhine
encircled: project focus area
square: project site
[DEFINITIONS]

Revitalization
(from dictionary.com): to give new life to.
(from online Merriam-Webster): to give new vitality or vigor to.

Gentrification
(from dictionary.com): a process by which middle-class people take up residence in a traditionally working-class area of a city, changing the character of the area
(from online Merriam-Webster): the process of renewal and rebuilding accompanying the influx of middle-class or affluent people into deteriorating areas that often displaces poorer residents

Community
(from dictionary.com): a social group of any size whose members reside in a specific locality, share government, and often have a common cultural and historical heritage.
(from online Merriam-Webster): an interacting population of various kinds of individuals (as species) in a common location

Interaction
(from dictionary.com): reciprocal action, effect, or influence
(from online Merriam-Webster): mutual or reciprocal action or influence

Connection
(from dictionary.com): association; relationship
(from online Merriam-Webster): causal or logical relation or sequence

Hub
(from dictionary.com): a center around which other things revolve or from which they radiate
(from online Merriam-Webster): a center of activity
PART II: SUBURBANIZATION
It all started at the turn of the twentieth century with the advent of the electric trolley and the automobile. These two innovations provided unprecedented efficiencies in personal travel, making treks between city centers and rural lands achievable in less than a day’s time. Many wealthy city dwellers began to take advantage of the new technologies on a regular basis by establishing their permanent residence in the countryside, away from the noise and health concerns of the overcrowded inner city, and commute daily to the city for their business activities. This was an exciting time for many city dwellers, especially the wealthy, and it marks the beginning of suburbanization.

The idea of separating work from home was wildly accepted, and urban sprawl continued to progress for multiple decades. The elite nature of private automotive travel restricted urban sprawl to wealthy Caucasian families; thus, making the suburbs exclusive and seemingly safe places to live. Rural lands were also less crowded than the city center, with large open fields available for recreation; and the lack of air and water pollution were added health benefits. As the middle class began to form, they too started to move out the city for many of the same reasons. The middle class also sought an added benefit: the affordability of rural development. For many, suburbanization provided an increased personal satisfaction through homeownership.

With great amplification in automotive transportation by the mid-twentieth century, the federal government constructed highways systems to ease travel throughout the country. With this, there was an even greater increase in mobility and suburbanization continued to boom – this time, however, entire businesses, rather than single families, began to leave city centers. No longer did suburbanites need to travel to the city for work, shopping and entertainment - all conveniences and necessities were available in local developments. A newfound suburban independence was born, and downtowns were all but forgotten by the masses.

What was an exciting time of innovation and opportunity for many also coupled as a time of devastation for remaining city dwellers. While some business and economic activity held fast in downtowns, few people of economic means retained their residence in the city. The suburban movement left behind the poor citizens, those without much influence in development, to deal with cities’ declining conditions. And these conditions still linger in many American cities today, over half a century later, because of the destructive effects of urban sprawl’s mass migration.
Perhaps one of the more significant reasons for suburbanization's lasting effect on city life is the support it received from federal policies. The National Housing Act of 1949, for example, was enacted to address the national housing shortage following WWII. This Act allowed the Federal Housing Administration to provide financing for rural homeowners; and promoted new homeownership through federally supported mortgage insurance programs. By subsidizing home ownership, the government contributed to the popularity of affordable development in the suburbs. The Housing Act of 1949 also extended federal monies to build hundreds of thousands of public housing units, sparking the urban renewal movement that will be discussed in more detail later.

Another policy, the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1956, contributed to suburbanization by easing the progress of urban sprawl. The Highway Act authorized over 40,000 miles of highway to be constructed – the largest public works project of its time. The additional roadways made commuting more efficient, further promoting the attractiveness and feasibility of suburban living for those who worked in city centers. Another effect of the interstate construction included the physical deformation of the urban landscape. In an effort to connect downtowns with newly established suburbs, many interstates cut through, and in some cases even bifurcated, urban cores. Everyone, even the federal government, seemed to be promoting the suburban lifestyle without any regard for well-established historic city lifestyles or landscapes.
The most significant and obvious effect of suburbanization was the change of landscape and density in both city centers and rural communities. Yet, the migration of residents from downtown settings transferred not only bodies and businesses, but also financial and political resources. And it even brought about new environmental, health and social problems—some of the very issues that initiated the suburban movement.

With a lack of financial and political resources, cities were not able to counteract the devastating effects of suburbanization on their own; they needed regional support. However, “the more the cities became the home of the nonwhite poor, the less willing were the suburbs to cooperate in solving the problems of the metropolitan area.”1 This refusal to cooperate only lead to further decline of city centers and “accelerated the extent of suburbanization and the problems of physical and governmental sprawl.”2

Many fail to understand, or acknowledge how such a mass exodus of residents from city centers, and their subsequent lack of support for needed revitalization efforts, affects each of us, not just city dwellers. One of the most encompassing effects is environmental. Suburbanization, due to its increasing land usage, spreads pollution, depletes natural resources and processes, exponentially increases the greenhouse gas emissions, and has simply created a wasteful society. Air and water pollution were two main reasons the wealthy first began to flee the inner city; but, the spread of pollution has only increased with the onset of urban sprawl.

The second often overlooked consequence of suburbanization corresponds to personal health. Although one of the main triggers of suburban living was the detrimental health effects of crowded city living, suburbanization has lead to a new health epidemic: obesity. With the dependence on automobile transportation in rural communities, citizens are riding instead of walking to accomplish almost all of their daily errands. As a result, people are engaging in less physical activity—a main contributor of gross weight-gain.

The third significant consequence of suburbanization that affects everyone is socially-oriented and two-fold. The first, more intentional, social ramification was segregation. Since most of the wealthy Americans during the twentieth century were Caucasian men, their move out of the city not only segregated incomes, it also segregated races; thus, the term white flight is often applied to the early suburban transition. Although this was preferred in the early twentieth century, it is now understood that segregation has many negative consequences on our society as a whole. The simple lack of interaction amongst people of varying socio-economic and cultural backgrounds leads to numerous misconceptions, and even prejudices. Furthermore, these misconceptions often manifest themselves in stereotypes, leading to narrow-minded and ill-founded conclusions—which, in turn, only lead to further problems. An ill-founded understanding of the urban poor, for example, may be one reason why suburbanites do not support metropolitan revitalization policies.

The second social ramification revolves around the understanding of community. In dense urban settings, people are in near constant contact with their neighbors, whether it be sitting together on the front porch or simply passing by on the sidewalk. By contrast, the large lots and absence of sidewalks in suburban settings are meant to maintain a

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1-2. Gans: 279
distance between neighbors, both physically and socially. Without regular interaction with other people, one will lack a sense of belonging, and therefore not have a well-developed sense of place. Additionally, increased distances between neighbors make it difficult to develop a communal atmosphere. The casual interaction often taken for granted in urban settings offers a chance for personal growth by building relationships with others; by drawing people out of the city and into rural developments, the American society as a whole is coming up short on healthy lifestyle fundamentals such as community and sense of place.
Colin Gordon’s demographic mappings of white flight in St. Louis, Missouri.
PART III: REVITALIZATION + GENTRIFICATION
Half a century after suburbanization began, significant problems developed in cities as a result. With a large proportion of cities’ residential population fleeing during white flight, especially affluent residents; a concentration of the poor was left within city centers. “An increase in the number of poor city dwellers thus means lower tax receipts and at the same time more costly municipal services.”  

In response to this urban crisis, policies were formed on the national level, namely the National Housing Act of 1949, which focused on bringing the upper- and middle-classes back into the cities and improving the living conditions of the inner city poor. The common tactics to achieve urban renewal included physically removing the problem (the slums), and replacing it with new public housing projects and other housing options for the affluent. These efforts were aimed not only at bringing people back to the cities from the suburbs, but also at retaining the few middle-class residents that resided in the city. The slums were considered the appropriate problem to address because: “a slum may be defined as an area which can create problems either for the residents or for the community at large.” Thus, gentrification, the “process by which middle-class people take up residence in a traditionally working-class area of a city, changing the character of the area,” became the accepted means to address the dilapidating urban state.

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1-2. Gans: 279, 211  
3. www.dictionary.com
Gentrification quickly became a highly debated social policy, and retains a negative connotation even today. For this reason, it is necessary to take a holistic approach to gentrification and recognize some of the policy’s benefits. Proponents of the movement focus on the improved quality of life within renewed neighborhoods and cite “benefits such as lower crime rates, more attention from municipal governments, increased police patrols, and even better garbage collection.” Economic advantages also existed for gentrified neighborhoods, such as an increased tax base, improved property values and better retail activity. This is not to mention the psychological “lift” the city receives from increased residential interests.

The opponents of gentrification; however, have developed quite an extensive list of problems with the process. Preservationists are concerned with how cities have been physically transformed; activists are disgruntled with public housing solutions; and still other theorists disagree with the choice of problems addressed in the urban renewal policies altogether. Collectively, they all seem to agree that the urban renewal movement focused too much attention on bringing in new residents to cities and not enough on improving the conditions of their existing residents.

The strongest opposition to gentrification is based in the belief that it lead to segregation and displacement of cities’ low-income residents during the urban renewal process. The common understanding of gentrification is that “gentrifiers push out nonwhite residents from predominantly minority neighborhoods, disrupting the social culture which attracted many of the native residents to the area.” And even if low-income residents are not directly pushed out of their homes, gentrification “certainly changes the quality of life in these neighborhoods, often making the area less desirable to native residents.” For example, “affordable neighborhood stores that serve lower-income families may be replaced by specialty stores that cater to those of higher incomes” — a form of indirect discrimination. Thus, leading to the hypothesis that “high- and middle-class residents are of benefit to the city, whereas low-income residents are only a burden.” It is also believed that displacement of low-income residents did nothing more than worsen the problem of slums within cities, by overcrowding other low-income neighborhoods with the displaced residents.

This overcrowding of other slums leads to the third point of contention with gentrification. Theorists believe that the urban renewal policy did not properly define the causal problem of deteriorating downtowns; instead of addressing slums, they propose, it would have been more appropriate to address poverty. Herbert Gans hypothesizes that:

One of the most important tasks in the improvement of cities is the elimination of urban poverty and of the deprivations of lower-class life. Poverty and deprivation are what makes cities so ugly and depressing, and they hasten the flight of more fortunate people into the suburbs, which in turn contributes to economic decline of the city.

By addressing the superficial manifestation of the problem instead of the rooted issue, urban renewal only displaced the poverty – it did nothing to solve it.

1. Lambie-Hanson: 44
2. Freeman & Barconi: 48
3-5. Lambie-Hanson: 45, 44, 44
6-7. Gans: 213, 246
These two pages showcase Cincinnati publications depicting opposing views on gentrification in Over-the-Rhine.
These Bones will Rise Again
Originally published in Streetvibes, February 1997, three months after buddy was murdered.

By MELISSA TUCKER
(inspired by traditional 'Them bones will rise again')

Over the Rhine is under attack
By the rich who neglected her
and now want her back
and everywhere I look I see the signs of war
led by bankers and bulldozers
and greed to consume more

buddy gray was a friend of mine
he was under attack
for feeding the hungry
and teaching them to fight back
for loving the children of Over the Rhine
for standing in the way
while others stood by

You can kill buddy gray
but not Over the Rhine
the spirit that lives here
continues to rise
these bones will rise again
these bones will rise again
these homes will rise again
these homes will rise again
the sun will shine again
in Over the Rhine again
you can kill buddy gray
but not Over the Rhine
the spirit that lives here has been around
a long time
these bones will rise again
these bones will rise again
until we all have homes again
until we all have homes again.
Subsequent studies of gentrified neighborhoods have concluded that the opposition’s fears of displacement were well founded. They also concluded; however, that “although displacement may be a problem in certain neighborhoods, it was probably not as widespread as the popular wisdom of the time perceived it to be.”\(^1\) In a study of a “sample of outmovers from gentrifying neighborhoods, it was determined that 23% were displaced.”\(^2\) It was also inferred that “disadvantaged households are less likely to move away” because “trade-down options exist even within gentrifying neighborhoods.”\(^3\)

Another concern about gentrifying neighborhoods was also found to hold some truth. The hypothesis that there was a greater focus on renewal than there was on improvements for the poor was supported through simple budgetary analyses. Relocation efforts were found to be “secondary to redevelopment because the funds allotted [to relocation] were less than 5% of the total cost of taking and clearing the land, and only 1% of the cost of clearance and redevelopment.”\(^4\) Furthermore, “only \(\frac{3}{5}\) of all federal expenditures for urban renewal between 1949 and 1964 was spent on relocation of families and individuals.”\(^5\)

The greater focus on renewal displays itself in what seems to be a complete disregard of lower-class society by the urban renewal policy makers. Foremost, “the federal and local housing standards which are applied to slum areas reflect the value pattern of middle-class professionals,”\(^6\) not of the native residents. For example, most low-income “residents are willing to put up with outwardly shabby housing because of its low cost and in order to participate in a vital social life.”\(^7\) For these people, a sense of community is more important than the appearance of the neighborhood. However, it was exactly this understanding of community that was denied during urban renewal.

The disregard of lower-class values is most likely not intentional, rather it is the result of a lack of understanding and recognition of the differences between varying social classes.

The evaluation of the behavior of slum residents is also based on class-defined standards, and these often confuse behavior which is only culturally different with pathological or antisocial acts. In most cases, people move into what are known as slum areas because they have problems or unacceptable behavior patterns; economic, social, and psychological conditions, rather than the slum cause these.\(^8\) First; therefore, policy makers must become aware of the determinants of slum life. Poverty is “largely the result of unemployment and underemployment.”\(^9\) It is generally not due to laziness or lack of desire to become successful and improve one’s social standing. “Poor people have the same expectations” as middle- and upper-class people; “useful and dignified jobs are, after all, the way by which people judge whether or not they are wanted and needed by their society and by their family.”\(^10\) What does play into the unemployment epidemic in slums is a lack of motivation among its residents. This because the “lack of access to crucial opportunities brings about social and emotional

\(^{1-3}\) Freeman & Barconi: 40, 41, 48
\(^{4-10}\) Gans: 220, 263, 210, 257, 210-211, 280, 281
difficulties.”¹ It is “out of such conditions that a lower-class culture develops.”² A better understanding of this culture, especially by those who play key roles in its future, would result in the development of a more appropriate process of addressing the urban poverty crisis.

¹-². Gans: 236, 236
Can urban revitalization achieve the balance of supplying the crucial opportunities necessary for growth and improvement without becoming a dictator of how the community is to grow and improve? Not easily; but, it is feasible as long as there is a clear understanding that: “redevelopment should be pursued primarily for the benefit of the community as a whole, [including] for the people who live in the slum area.”\(^1\) It is necessary to involve the residents of the area in the improvement process and work with the problem, not around it.

Although vitally important, it is not only the resident’s needs and opinions that should be maintained during the process, but also the people themselves. As Jane Jacobs states: “unslumming hinges, paradoxically, on the retention of a very considerable part of a slum population within a slum.”\(^2\) This is simply because without preserving the slum population the problems associated with low-income neighborhoods are only displaced and not solved.

Other key factors to a successful non-gentrifying urban revitalization process include: engaging the community, improving economic opportunities, and developing partnerships.\(^3\) The community members need to be inspired and excited by the redevelopment efforts in order to “keep local residents actively involved for the long term.”\(^4\) Economic opportunities should be developed not only for potential incoming shareholders, but also for the existing residents and business owners. This is especially true for the low-income residents, as they will need opportunities for employment in order to “afford the new market prices”\(^5\) of the revitalized neighborhood. In this instance, “it is possible to kill two birds with one stone by replacing slums with good housing and create jobs in the process; if the majority of [low-income residents] are to be helped, then the ghetto ought to be rebuilt for them and by them.”\(^6\) Lastly, developing partnerships between community members, officials, developers, employers, and educational resources will further ensure appropriate communication and longevity of the revitalization goals.

In conclusion, the best way to overcome the negative effects of gentrification is to include the potentially gentrified population in every stage of the development process. This not only ensures that their voices are heard, but it also encourages the community members to get involved in their neighborhood’s future. By involving everyone, revitalization efforts will appropriately and successfully address the negative aspects of slum life, and will more likely sustain the richly diverse nature of urban neighborhoods.

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1. Gans: 221
2. Jacobs: 356
3-5. Myerson: 1-5, 5, 1
6. Gans: 289
PART IV: COMMUNITY
Mixed communities are diverse neighborhoods that have been developed to encourage living situations among people of varying social groups. They are diverse not only in the range of socioeconomic and racial characteristics of their residents, but also in the composition of their facilities and attractions. Mixed communities are the epitome of the American ‘mosaic’ culture; yet, only a hand full of cities in the entire world have come close to achieving and sustaining a true mix of uses and population.

A diminutive quantity of mixed communities exists because they are an ideal. Studies have shown that the range of differing social groups and activities in existing mixed communities is less than in theorized propositions. The differences between natural and intentionally developed mixed communities help illustrate this point: “in a naturally occurring mixed-income neighborhood [the mix of incomes] is much narrower.”

For these reasons, theorists, such as Herbert Gans, have provided some practical guidelines for maintaining mixed communities. For instance, “the proportion of middle- and low-income tenants would have to be regulated, to minimize fears of the former and to give the latter enough peers.” This statement showcases an important limitation of mixed communities: that a certain proportion of the differing social groups needs to be actively maintained. If this did not happen, market conditions would take over and one or the other of these groups would slowly gain majority. Also notice that Gans clearly states middle- and low-income tenants, not high- and low-income. This demonstrates that although diversity can be established, shared or similar social characteristics need to exist amongst the varying groups. Another observation Gans made, for example, was that “housing integration is successful when whites and nonwhites are both middle-class and the latter are in a minority.” Again, showcasing that some similarities do need to exist amongst the residents; and that a specific proportion of this mixture needs to be maintained.

The New York City Housing Authority, for example, has a specific ratio of social groups they prefer to maintain within the city: “a mix of 1/3 working people, 1/3 retirees, and 1/3 people on welfare.” Chicago, Seattle and Boston are other U.S. cities that have established programs or developed new neighborhoods with the intention of emulating the mixed community model. The primary challenge of diverse communities; however, does not lie in their formation, it is in establishing the delicate balance required to sustain these communities.

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1. Lydersen
2. Gans: 270
3. Ceraso
Mixed communities have garnered much attention and research because of their associated benefits. Variety is not only the spice of life, but it also helps sustain economic equilibrium and unbiased social perspectives when applied to a community’s industry and residents, respectively.

Economic diversity is necessary for any healthy and stable neighborhood, regardless of its resident composition. Diverse business investments ensure that the area will remain active regardless of fluctuations in one market segment or another. If one attraction is no longer popular amongst patrons (an art gallery, for instance), others exist that will supplement the lack of interest (possibly a restaurant); thereby the overall appeal of the neighborhood does not suffer and the economic base for the community remains constant.

The second, and arguably more important, benefit of mixed communities is social integration. As outlined previously in the section on suburbanization, segregation stands as our historic precedent on how to accommodate variation in social groups. This approach, however, has resulted in unpleasant consequences. Differing social groups are understandably uncertain of one another’s practices; but, segregation only exacerbates this lack of knowledge, and often leads to the formation of stereotypes and prejudices.

Prejudice, “an irrational attitude of hostility directed against an individual, a group, a race, or their supposed characteristics,”¹ is a negative resultant of stereotyping. It allows us to form the perception of out-group homogeneity: the belief that “they” (anyone in a social group dissimilar to our own) are all alike. This perception often leads to a decrease in empathy towards members of the out-group; and can even result in dehumanizing attitudes toward the out-group members, often with violent conclusions.

Mixed communities understand these undesirable ramifications of segregation and have, therefore, approached the challenges of diversified communities with an integrative perspective. Not dissimilar to the inclusive approach to revitalization, integrated communities develop knowledgeable residents, ones that have a better understanding and respect for people who hold different beliefs than their own. As Herbet Gans states: “If children are to become intelligent adult citizens, they need to learn that the myths and stereotypes are inaccurate.”² Living amongst people who have differing beliefs is one important way to begin gaining this knowledge.

¹. www.merriam-webster.com
². Gans: 294
The diversity of building use around the project site.

- single family
- multi-family
- condominium
- apartment
- mixed-use
- commercial
- institutional
- for sale
- vacant

24
Although diverse, the demographics surrounding the site are clustered.
north: single family residential
east: apartment complexes
west: mixed-use + mixed income
Stereotyping is a natural process of categorization that helps people understand the world around them. Prejudice is an extreme form of this categorization that is neither necessary for survival, nor beneficial – even for the perpetrator. For this reason, social psychologists have proposed a theory as a means for combating prejudice, and have aptly dubbed it the Contact Hypothesis. This Hypothesis predicts that: “regular interaction between members of different social groups will promote inter-group harmony.”¹

The implementation of the Contact Hypothesis, however, requires much more to be successful than mere contact between social groups. In fact, there are four favorable conditions that must be met in order to adequately portray the Hypothesis. They are: equal status, common goal, mutual interdependence and institutional support. Equal status is in reference to the members of the opposing groups; contact between groups of equal social status is much more successful than between group members of different social statuses. A common goal needs to be realized between the opposing groups; and mutual interdependence to achieve the common goal is also necessary for the Hypothesis’ success. This need for interdependence is the reason why simple desegregation (in context of a racial prejudice) does not work; in fact, if group members are not dependant on each other to reach a goal, the prejudices might even intensify. And lastly, the success of overriding prejudices between opposing groups is greatly increased when the contact is supported by an institution, whether a specific authority or society at large.

The link between mixed communities and prejudice reduction is apparent in the Contact Hypothesis. “Regular interaction between members of different social groups” is a shared definition between the Hypothesis and the integrated approach of mixed communities. In addition, the four favorable conditions that test the adequacy of the Hypothesis can be applied to diverse communities.

The first condition, equal status, is the most difficult to achieve in mixed communities as it contradicts the neighborhood’s core purpose. Herbet Gans’ practical guidelines, however, help mediate this conflict. As was explained at the beginning of this section, Gans proposed limitations to mixed communities and their ability to support fully diverse populations. He explained that equal status needs to be achieved with a certain group characteristic (such as income) but other group characteristics need not correspond, thereby allowing equal status and diversity to occur simultaneously.

The remaining three conditions necessary to successfully reduce prejudice are more or less inherent in the mixed community approach. The common goal of a mixed community would be to sustain variation in population and industry. Mutual interdependence is achievable as long as there is an inclusive approach to neighborhood activities – making sure to include everyone in decision-making processes will facilitate the development of mutual interdependence. And institutional support is provided by the community itself, as it is a proponent of overcoming prejudices.

A mixed community’s ability to promote equal status, common goal, mutual interdependence and institutional support, while providing “regular interaction between members of different social groups” is the reason they are defined as healthy neighborhoods of reduced prejudices and heightened understanding. And, thus, why

¹ Durrheim: 19
urban redevelopment efforts need to focus on sustaining the whole community, not just certain “favorable” fractions.
PART V: OVER-THE-RHINE
Over-the-Rhine is a unique historic neighborhood in downtown Cincinnati, Ohio, located directly north of the Central Business District. According to a local resident, it is a “rough, artistic, real, musical, colorful, and richly diverse” place to live. It has historically been a working-class neighborhood, and now stands as one of the largest historic districts in the country. And although much rehabilitation is currently occurring within the neighborhood, it is still comprised of mostly rental properties inhabited by low-income residents and is suffering from a great deal of vacant and deteriorating properties.

Over-the-Rhine (OTR) was founded by a German immigrant population in the early 19th Century, and continued to be home of multiple immigrant populations for several decades. In 1850, there were 43,000 inhabitants in Over-the-Rhine and industry was booming! In fact, by 1860, Cincinnati was the 3rd ranking industrial center in the United States, and OTR was its premium entertainment district.

However, by the turn of the century, the population began to decline in Over-the-Rhine as people began to migrate elsewhere due to the spread of disease and other undesirable implications of the dense industrial neighborhood. With the advent of WWI several years later, the predominantly German population was the target of much anti-German sentiment, pushing many residents out of the area. The neighborhood continued to decline even after WWI when Prohibition closed OTR’s multiple breweries. The same year as Prohibition affected the breweries, the canal which served as the heart of the industrial community (and from which the district got its name: rhine, in reference to Germany’s Rhine River) was closed to be developed nearly a decade later into a boulevard.

Unfortunately, things only continued to worsen well into the mid-20th century. In the 1930s, there was an influx of Appalachians into Over-the-Rhine because of the low cost of living; and after WWII, the neighborhood became known for affordable housing. In the 1960s, the African American population that had been located predominantly in the West End was displaced into Over-the-Rhine as a result of the highway developments around the city. By this time, there was a nearly complete shift in the demographics of the OTR population, and the density only continued to lessen. “In the span of a little more than 100 years, Cincinnati had gone from being one of the 10 largest U.S. cities to leading the nation in population decline.”

By the end of the century, the population had fallen from its peak of nearly 45,000 residents to just over 7,000.

With the dawn of the 21st century, 100 years after the neighborhood’s downturn, Over-the-Rhine is once again beginning to change - this time; however, it is seemingly for the better. There has been a considerable amount of investment in the past decade, by both the city and private parties, in an effort to revitalize the neighborhood. And with these efforts, people are slowly beginning to move back to Over-the-Rhine, particularly young professionals. Most importantly, the neighborhood is once again beginning to showcase its roots as Cincinnati’s premier entertainment destination.

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1. Survey conducted by author, see appendix
2. Young: 9
3. Sackenheim: 6
[DEMOGRAPHICS]¹

Central District (between Vine + Sycamore, south of Liberty):
- Total population: 6,915 (all of OTR)
- 48% Black, 44% White
- Male Occupation: 25% service, 21% arts
- Female Occupation: 57% sales/office, 23% service
- 96% renter-occupancy; $363 median rent
- 42% below poverty level
- $28,712 median per capita income
- 75% of people born in Ohio; 3% foreign born residents
- average household size: 1.6 people

Pendleton District (east of Sycamore, south of Liberty):
- total population: 1,095
- North: 52% black, 43% white
- South: 15% black, 80% white
- Male Occupation: 24% management, 23% sales/office
- Female Occupation: 23% service, 17% sales/office
- 80% renter-occupancy north, 100% south; $435 median rent
- 26% below poverty level
- $21,080 median per capita income
- 80% of people born in Ohio; 0% foreign born
- average household size: 2.0 people

¹ www.city-data.com, April 2010
Various levels of development in Over-the-Rhine.
Over-the-Rhine's current urban development is primarily in the hands of one organization: the Cincinnati Center City Development Corporation (3CDC). 3CDC is a private non-profit organization whose “mission and strategic focus is to strengthen the core assets of downtown by revitalizing and connecting the Fountain Square District, the Central Business District and Over-the-Rhine.”

3CDC was formed in 2003 through a joint effort of the City of Cincinnati and local corporations. Most of 3CDC’s funding comes from corporate sponsorships, development funds, and city monies. “When 3CDC started its work, there were 500 vacant buildings, 700 vacant lots and 1,667 vacant housing units in all of OTR,” and since then, over $108 million has been invested in the area. These investments have thus far resulted in the retention of 160 buildings and 169 vacant lots; with development of 193 housing units, over 47,000 square feet of commercial real estate, and streetscape improvements.

As a result of these improvements, crime has fallen dramatically around 3CDC’s area of focus, the Gateway Quarter on Vine Street. “Between 2004 and 2009, Part I crimes (murder, rape, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, larceny and auto theft) dropped 51%; less serious Part II crimes dropped 41%; and overall, crime between 2004 to 2009 in the Gateway Quarter is down nearly 48%. As can be imaged, this drastic decrease in crime has draw many newcomers to the Gateway Quarter. “As of May 2010, 65% of the completed residential units were sold, and 60% of the completed commercial space was leased.”

3CDC will continue working along Vine Street, moving northward to begin their fourth phase of development in the Gateway Quarter. They are also undertaking the redevelopment of Washington Park, a six acre green space a block west of Vine Street, that promises to become a renewed community anchor. The fourth phase of development will also include building renovations off of Vine, intending to fill in the gap between Vine Street and Washington Park.

As can be imagined there is much debate over 3CDC proceedings. Although their investments have lowered crime and improved outside interest in the community, the increase market value of the residential units has pushed several native residents out of the area. The extreme speed and concentration of development is also a concern, as the Gateway Quarter lacks a sound base on which to grow. The continued investment with only 60% occupancy of current projects is an example of this expedited development. Overall, 3CDC’s impact on Over-the-Rhine has been great – although it is still up for debate whether it will play out for better or for worse in the long haul.

To compliment 3CDC, there are also multiple private investors in Over-the-Rhine. These investors include entrepreneurs, small business, residents, community organizations, art organizations, and educational institutions. Cincinnati Music Hall, the Art Academy of Cincinnati, the School for Creative and Performing Arts, and Cincinnati Public Schools have all invested in the Over-the-Rhine community. Local residents and business owners show their support for the neighborhood by hanging wreaths on the light posts for the holidays; taking part in community-wide art endeavors, such as “paint the street”; and support monthly events, such as “Final Friday” and “Second Sunday.”

1-5. www.3cdc.org, December 2010
Aside from their efforts with 3CDC, the City has also taken action in Over-the-Rhine by making streetscape improvements. This is not to mention the many charitable organizations, such as Future Blooms, that paint the boarded windows on vacant building to be more appealing. Needless to say, current development efforts in Over-the-Rhine are going strong!
So That’s Where All the Money Went...

Recently we entered an economic recession (a.k.a. The Great Recession or The Second Depression); as if you didn’t already know. Apparently 3CDC and the City of Cincinnati have not figured this out yet. Last week, 3CDC broke ground on an approximately $47 million project to renovate Washington Park in Over-the-Rhine. Some may say, “Well this will create jobs, so it’s a good thing.” The truth is that this project will create many temporary jobs and only a few permanent jobs. The other truth is that Washington Park is literally only two-square blocks. That’s right; $47 million is being spent on two-square blocks in the middle of the greatest economic depression since the Great Depression. This doesn’t even include the fact that 3CDC estimates it will take $400,000 to simply operate Washington Park every year after completion. Meanwhile, every night in Cincinnati 1,200 to 1,500 people spend the night outside, in a shelter, or in transitional housing. This figure does not include the many people who are bouncing from friend’s couch to friend’s couch each night. Now knowing this, would it not make more sense, if 47 million public and private dollars are available, to spend this money on creating affordable housing? Would it not make sense to actually decrease the number of people experiencing homelessness? Wouldn’t this be more moral and in fact more economically sound? In addition to humans having a right to housing, it is far more expensive to the community for someone to be homeless than housed.

Also, pay attention. We have warned 3CDC that they must either stagger construction of the park such that a portion of the entire park is always open or they must provide an alternative space for people during construction. 3CDC has not committed to doing either one. Contrary to the opinions of some, we know that a park that has been well-used for a century will not suddenly become unnecessary. Without provision, the “park” will become the front of stores and the corners of streets. In a concrete neighborhood without back yards, people need a space to gather and experience rest. Washington Park currently provides this space.

So next time, you walk past Washington Park or think of Washington Park remember that many people need housing and remember that 47 million available dollars are being spent to renovate two-square blocks of park. Renovation includes the construction of a two-story underground parking garage at the site where OTR’s highest performing school was torn down, the removal of OTR’s only deepwater swimming pool and the removal of Washington Park’s basketball court. In return we will get an ornamental fence around the perimeter of the park designed to prevent people from sitting and socializing on the wall around the park; because we all know socializing is bad for community, right?

An article in Streetvibes, Cincinnati’s street paper, on 3CDC’s redevelopment of Washington Park in OTR.
A rendering of Washington Park’s renovation (top), and an image of completed 3CDC development projects on Vine Street in Over-the-Rhine (bottom).
PART VI: PENDLETON + OLD WOODWARD
Timeline images of Old Woodward High School and their relative associations to Pendleton development. (The current Woodward site is outlined on each map).
school: 1910
map: 1912

2011
The historic Old Woodward High School is located in the Pendleton neighborhood of Over-the-Rhine, which encompasses the eastern corner of the district. Pendleton was the last neighborhood to be developed in OTR, and is a predominantly residential community with a substantial collection of 19th century apartment complexes. The commercial and industrial activity within the neighborhood is almost exclusively on the southern edge; and there is much concern about the erosion of district’s historic fabric in the southwestern portion of Pendleton, as it is home to multiple city-owned surface parking lots.

The Old Woodward High School itself is located on the western edge of Pendleton, just north of the surface lots. It has been at home in this location even before Pendleton was fully developed as a residential neighborhood. The High School was founded by William Woodward in 1831 to serve the poor, and was the first high school west of the Allegheny Mountains. The school was highly successful and was quickly developed into a college. However, soon after being chartered as a collegiate institution, the board lost funding and the school was dissolved into the Cincinnati Public School system in 1851 as a high school.

The building that currently stands on the corner of 13th and Sycamore was not the original 1831 schoolhouse. The original school was a much smaller wooden structure and was replaced by a gothic building when it transitioned into a college. The existing Renaissance Revival building was designed by architect Gustave Drach, a Cincinnati native. Drach was an alum of Woodward High School, and after graduating from the M.I.T. School of Architecture, returned to do much of his work in the Cincinnati area. He was known for technological innovation in his buildings, and some other Cincinnati examples include: Good Samaritan Hospital and the Harrison Building at 7th and Walnut Streets. He was also President of the Cincinnati Chapter of the American Institute of Architects for many years (specifically: 1900-1902, 1905-1907, 1920-1921), and was honored as a Fellow of the AIA. Drach’s High School was opened in 1908 with William Howard Taft, a 1874 graduate, as the guest of honor.

The building continued to serve as Woodward High School until its relocation to a larger campus north of the city. In 1976, the renowned School for Creative and Performing Arts took up residence and continued to utilize the space until the fall of 2010 when it too relocated to a new facility. The turn-of-the-century masterpiece currently stands vacant, with much speculation surrounding its future.

1. Young: 34
2. Grace: 43
3. www.aiacincinnati.org
The area surrounding the Old Woodward High School is very diverse. There are young professionals moving to condos and apartments on Main Street (a mixed-use corridor that runs parallel to Sycamore on the west), and there are many town homes and single family residences to the north and east. The area to the south of the school is primarily commercial, with the bulk of low-income apartment complexes to the southeast. Therefore, the challenge for the Pendleton neighborhood is not to increase its diversity, but rather to maintain it.

The chief development threatening this diverse community is the approval of the upcoming Cincinnati Casino to be built directly south of the Pendleton border. Many propose that the casino will be a great economic asset to the community; yet, the increased public exposure of this predominantly residential neighborhood is worrisome. It will be a great challenge for the Pendleton neighborhood to take advantage of the economic benefits and develop the community without displacing the current population.

These worries may seem premature, but with the development currently taking place in other parts of Over-the-Rhine, it is well-founded. In particular, there has recently been much investment and attention being given to Vine Street, the main avenue running through OTR that connects the central business district with the University of Cincinnati. This investment is almost entirely from sources outside of the OTR neighborhood, and is resulting in a neighborhood whose primary objective is to bring new residents in rather than retaining the existing. Therefore, Vine Street risks become a “fad” neighborhood that does not have a sound base and may disappear as quickly as it has been developed.

The development of Main Street; however, has so far occurred mostly through local private enterprise. Main Street is home to many art galleries and bars, and is rising as one of the staple night-life destinations in the city. Main Street, as opposed to Vine, has also maintained its existing diverse residential population fairly well. There are several renovated housing units that appeal to newcomers; however, there are also several studio apartments, low-income and charitable housing complexes, and single-family townhouses; thus, a wide range in housing options is maintained. The primary challenge for Main Street is to diversify its commercial base. If the art galleries or bars were to relocate, there would be few businesses left to draw income for the neighborhood.

The Pendleton neighborhood as a whole suffers from a lack of economic activity all together. There are small business scattered throughout the neighborhood, with the bulk again existing along the southern edge, near the central business district. The primary exception is the Pendleton Arts Center which is located in the northern portion of the community. Being a predominantly residential neighborhood, Pendleton is fairly segregated from the rest of Over-the-Rhine. For example, the vibrant night life that takes place a block away on Main Street rarely migrates into Pendleton. This would typically be preferred; however, the lack of eyes on the street combined with rough history of Over-the-Rhine results in Pendleton becoming a hot bed of crime, particularly drug activity.
Images demonstrating the lack of activity transitioning from Main Street into the Pendleton neighborhood, even on a busy Final Friday evening.
Call to order at 6:05pm.

Police Report:

Reviewed crime report—see attached for specifics. 19% increase in 2010; however there has been a large influx in telephone harassment crime complaints. Theft From Auto (TFA) is the only crime statistic that is steadily rising. Question rose about whether or not people committing crimes actually live in Pendleton, police were unsure because people are not always honest about where they live. Updated felony most wanted list passed out. “Dodger” graffiti has become an increasing problem in the city. Please report (591-6000) if you see it. Police have some leads, but are looking to find him. It is important to report, so they can press criminal charges. People can call Keep Cincinnati Beautiful Graffiti Abatement to have graffiti removed.

Bridging Broadway:

Non-profit began this year to maximize positive effect that Casino has on surrounding communities. The city has funded a Broadway impact study, a ½ mile radius around casino sight. The city is looking for a proposed district line because there is going to be a high level of use around Broadway Commons sight. Major focus is how to make Casino a viable member of the community. Possibility of work force housing has been proposed. This would be 500 units of middle (not market or section 8) range housing. Proposed corridors of how people should travel throughout the district have been the 2 major take aways from community meetings. They are looking for more volunteers from the area. Next meeting is Saturday, January 22 and the focus will be visioning.

OTR Rec Center:

Open 24 hours a day now, running emergency sleep shelter. The city is still facing budget cuts, possibly going to close 20 pools this summer.

Recycling Program:

Christian Hillsman is on the community outreach team for recycling bank. This is a first overhaul of recycling program in 25 years. New bins with bi-weekly pickup for all single family homes and 1-4 multi-family structures. This includes mixed use buildings and anyone who can currently recycle. There are 3 different sizes currently being rolled out based on size of family. People can get a different size on a case by case basis. The bins will be scanned and monitored for misuse and lack of use. City will take away container if people are misusing them. They are offering rewards for recycling by signing up for Recycling Bank. Points are awarded by weights which are a neighborhood average. Points can be used get discounts at more than 100 local retail and can be donated to charities. The website has the list of participants. All of the same items are accepted as were before. The more people recycle the more the city will save on landfill fees.

Copy of the Pendleton Neighborhood Council’s December 2010 meeting agenda.
The context surrounding the redevelopment of the Old Woodward High School in Over-the-Rhine is complex. The neighborhood of which the school is a part of, Pendleton, is in the mist of a struggle between development and retention. The potential economic benefits spurred by the casino would be helpful in developing commercial activities throughout the neighborhood and keep eyes on the street at all times of the day. However, this increase in economic activity and attention from the public needs to be carefully regulated as to not overwhelm the residential nature of Pendleton.

The development of the Old Woodward High School could potentially play a key roll in maintaining the careful balance between public and private. The school has a prime location on Sycamore Street, between Pendleton and Main Street; and it is a large structure of over 185,000 square feet, sitting on four acres of land. Apart from its large size, the school also serves as a prominent symbol of the Pendleton community – the residents take great pride in the beautiful structure and currently use its yard as a sort of “informal community center.” Because of its historic, physical and social significance, the development of Old Woodward is very likely to lead future development in the area. For instance, if it is taken over by the casino and renovated for a hotel, the surrounding neighborhoods will likely be developed to also cater to the casino patrons. However, if the local community takes control of the school and redevelops it for civic purposes, then the current residential population and diverse nature of the area will more likely be sustained.

Therefore, in order to achieve density without displacement, Old Woodward needs to be developed for and by the community. Not only is this a key aspect in assuring proper urban revitalization efforts, as previously outlined; but it is also necessary due to the unique role the school has held, and continues to hold, within the neighborhood.

1. Hamilton County Auditor
2. survey conducted by author, see appendix
PART VII: PROJECT
Figure/ground series showing the business-related activities in Pendleton and Over-the-Rhine's Central District, and how the two can be connected through proper repurposing of the Old Woodward site.
Understanding the history and context of the Old Woodward High School community, I am proposing to develop a center for the neighborhood – a hub of interaction and activity specifically tailored to the Over-the-Rhine residents. My goal is to give the Over-the-Rhine community a collective voice in future development by creating connections between places and people. Connections would be made so that there is a more fluid movement of people and resources between Pendleton and the surrounding communities, particularly with the rest of Over-the-Rhine. This approach would allow for increased social and economic vitality within Pendleton without repurposing the neighborhood as something more than a residential community.

Connecting places, connecting neighbors, and connecting to change will be the three primary goals to achieve throughout the redevelopment process. The connecting places aspect will strive to develop the Old Woodward site into a physical connector between the distinct neighborhoods surrounding it in order to promote a physically cohesive community. This is necessary to ensure an adequate flow of people and resources between Pendleton and Main Street, particularly. Connecting neighbors refers to the interactions between residents and business owners of all socio-economic backgrounds, of all races, genders, and creeds, and of all living conditions that will be necessary to increase mutual understanding of their differences and maintain the diversity of the neighborhood. And lastly, connecting to change reminds us of the project’s primary objective – to promote a socially cohesive neighborhood that is able to develop a collective voice and thus, prompt change from inside the community. Overall, the process will draw on the existing potential of the community to become a cohesive and vibrant place to live and work by creating an empowering place for residents to take control of their future.
While searching through numerous architectural topologies in an effort to find design precedents relating to my project proposal, I have realized that there is no one type that exemplifies the ideal precedent. Looking for built forms that not only serve as connectors, but also as examples of adaptive reuse and community gathering spaces proved to be a nearly impossible task. Thus, the search led me to reference multiple typologies, including: historic and modern architecture, landscape design and civic spaces. The following precedents exemplify one of these typologies and a specific design strategy that will be incorporated into the redesign of the Old Woodward High School.

The first project referenced has become an influential program precedent: the St. Louis Children’s Museum. This museum is an intriguing combination of art and play, as conceived by artist Bill Cassilly. The Children’s Museum is located in a mixed-use area of St. Louis, very similar to the Over-the-Rhine neighborhood; and it serves an enjoyable destination for people of all ages, races, and income levels. The St. Louis Children’s Museum is also a unique adaptive reuse/mixed-use precedent, as it is housed in conjunction with an apartment complex in an abandoned shoe factory.

Cincinnati’s Fountain Square was another project researched for its relation with the community and its programmatic capabilities. Fountain Square, much like the Old Woodward site, is a historic cornerstone for the downtown Cincinnati neighborhood. It serves a variety of functions, such as a commencement point for large city-wide activities, a lunch destination for downtown employees, a place for weekend concerts, and as a local attraction for visitors and locals alike. The Square’s motto is “where Cincinnati connects” – something to be emulated for the Over-the-Rhine neighborhood in the redesign of the Old Woodward High School.

Understanding the Children’s Museum and Fountain Square precedents to be a way of connection people within a neighborhood, I began to also look for architectural projects that served as physical connectors between places. Two projects that serve this purpose well are the Wyly Theater in Dallas by REX, and the New Academic Building at the Cooper Union in New York by Morphosis. Both of these buildings have focused on making connections with their urban surroundings, both physically and visually, on the ground floor – something highly applicable to the Old Woodward site. The Cooper Union building also bore a striking resemblance to the courtyard parti of the Woodward building, making it a precedent for not only horizontal, but also vertical connectivity.

Another project that serves as an excellent example of physical connection between places is the Olympic Sculpture Park in Seattle by Weiss/Manfredi. The Sculpture Park became a focus because of its ability to not only serve as a connector of activities within an urban setting, but also for its aesthetic attraction. It has been stated that the Park “offers an exhilarating experience in and of itself.”¹ This is important because it is yet another goal for this thesis project, a way of making a place attractive without a full program in order to maintain flexibility of use and audience type.

Lastly, the works of Carlo Scarpa were reviewed as a general precedent on architectural style. Scarpa’s projects are significant for two reasons. First, his great attention to detail and material choices led him to become a master of adaptive reuse.

¹ Farr
Scarpa distinguished between the old and the new in his designs, a practice that will be carried through in the adaptation of Old Woodward, a way of preserving its significance. Secondly, Scarpa paid great attention to the transitioning sequence between a building’s interior and exterior. This, combined with Scarpa’s mastery of natural light, has played an important role in blurring the boundary between inside and out - an objective of this project.

Although none of these six precedents individually exemplify my project’s design sensibility, they collectively give voice to its potential. Through studying not only architectural precedents, but also landscape and civic spaces, I hope to develop a flexible, attractive and inclusive design for the development of Old Woodward High School into an activity hub for the Pendleton community.
Precedents.

[1] Olympic Sculpture Park  
[2] Carlo Scarpa’s Fondazione Querini Stampalia  
[3] Fountain Square  
[4] St. Louis City Museum  
[5] New Academic building at Cooper Union  
The primary obstacle in developing the Old Woodward High School into a community activity hub is the unwelcoming nature of the site. The large masonry building is more forbidding than inviting, and the retaining walls located on the southwest corner of the schoolyard prohibit entry into and cross traffic through the site. This, therefore, becomes the initial design challenge, addressed through façade and landscape alterations.

The Old Woodward High School is transformed from a fortress-like structure into a facility that merges with its surroundings through the physical opening of the building. All windows on the building’s rusticated base are removed, thus creating a colonnade in place of a solid façade. This allows the first floor to become an open-air public space that is easily accessible. The site itself is also made more accessible through the regarding of the topography and deletion of retaining walls. The regarding provides for direct access onto the site from any point along its perimeter. The topography also continues through the first floor of the building to allow for a seamless transition between inside and outside. Bringing the topography indoors additionally provides an elegant solution for connecting each of the unique entry elevations of the historic building. By promoting ease of movement into the site and blurring the boundaries between inside and out, the Old Woodward develops a more casual feel and becomes an enjoyable place for the multiple user groups within the community.

The interior of the historic Old Woodward High School also undergoes a transformation to allow for increased connectivity. While regrading the site and opening the building’s first floor increased accessibility, the treatment of the building’s interior has potential to allow movement through the site. To achieve this objective, the first two floors of the building will be stripped to their structure, leaving only columns and beams in place. This not only increases physical accessibility through the building, but also allows for visual connectivity through the building and the entire site. Additionally, the majority of the stripped two-story space will be treated as one volume. This decision was made partially because the regarding of the site will not allow for two full-height floors; but also because the combined height and volume of the first two floors creates sensory similarities between inside and out, further blurring the boundary.

After redeveloping the existing building and site into an open framework, the next task was to develop a programmatic definition. Although there are specific community needs that could be met with the redesign of the Old Woodward building, its successful function as a community activity hub thrives on flexibility of use. The Old Woodward building and its site are currently being used as an informal community space, with the schoolyard home to various sporting and community activities. This variation in use is something that is not only appealing for a community space, but also necessary for such a diverse population. The design challenge, therefore, is found in balancing spatial definition with flexibility of use. The appropriate solution: an adjustable spatial system.

The adjustable method used in this project is a dynamic floor system. A moveable floor system rather than a movable wall system was chosen because it maintains visual connectivity throughout the building and site, as well as highlights the importance of the
ground plane throughout the project. The flooring system was also designed to increase interaction between community members, with the system elements movable only with the coordinated effort of 3 or more people. The floor system is set up in a grid-like pattern and each of the segments can either be raised or lowered by a small group of people standing on the segment (to lower it), or standing on a neighboring segment (to raise it). The segments could also be raised or lowered in groups to create larger spaces, creating not only flexibility in location but also in size. The raising and lowering of the grid segments thus creates spatial definition through floor elevation rather than through wall placement, as well as providing an opportunity for various community members to interact and work together.

Another flexible element developed in the redesign of the Old Woodward High School is the use of the existing auditorium space. This space will be developed so that the seating balconies can be adapted for typical auditorium-style seating, for dining, or as small stages in-and-of themselves. This will again be achieved through a fluctuating floor system. The balconies will also be able to be raised or lowered inside the auditorium space to allow for various programmatic arrangements. The final objective of this project will be to emulate the flexible floorscape system on the roof of the Old Woodward building. This tactic will allow the community function and focus of the site to continue through the building and up onto the roof, completing the reuse of Old Woodward into a fully functioning community activity hub.

For the purposes of this thesis project, the redevelopment of Old Woodward has focused on fluid and adaptable community spaces on the ground floor and roof of the building. In addition, however, programmatic conjectures have been made for the remaining portions of the building and site based on community necessities. The first of these necessities is a grocery store, which will be accompanied by a family-friendly restaurant on the second floor balcony. The third and fourth floors will be dedicated to office space, providing a much-needed economic boost to the Pendleton neighborhood. These businesses will also serve as a constant daytime activity on the Old Woodward site - keeping the area active at all times of the day by complementing the community activities taking place on nights and weekends. The top (fifth) floor will be focused on childcare, a safe haven for young children after school or while parents are at work. The existing running track and plunge pools on the fifth floor will be restored for this purpose. And, lastly, the schoolyard will be maintained as an open lawn suitable for a variety of needs, including: sports, picnics, dog walking and large community gatherings.

By promoting physical, visual and social connections within and through Old Woodward, the site’s function as a community center will be formally activated and heightened. The site’s redevelopment will also enhance the building’s relationship with the Pendleton neighborhood, elevating it from a community landmark to a symbol and culmination of the neighborhood experience. Furthermore, by achieving the objectives of connecting places and connecting people, along with increasing the prominence of the Old Woodward building and site, the needs and desires of the area’s existing population will be more pronounced and better able to connect to change.
Design Parti.
Conceptual Renderings.
Existing Site Plan / First Floor Plan.
Proposed Site Plan / First Floor Plan.
Second, Third, Fourth, and Fifth Floor Plans (left to right): Existing (top) and Proposed (bottom).
Existing North (top) and South (bottom) Elevations.
Proposed North (top) and South (bottom) Elevations.
Existing West (top) and East (bottom) Elevations.
Proposed West (top) and East (bottom) Elevations.
Transverse Site Section: Existing (top) and Proposed (bottom).
Longitudinal Site Section: Existing (top) and Proposed (bottom).
Preliminary Renderings of the Dynamic Floor System.


APPENDIX
Suburbanization continues to be a problem for many cities even today. This is primarily because the social fragmentation and physical dilapidation resultant of the initial wave of urban sprawl has left few people desiring to move back into central cities. High crime rates and unpleasant living conditions are often-heard critiques of the urban landscape, and there have even been scientific studies of how the urban life affects a person’s psyche and health. Furthermore, city life rarely appeals to a huge percentage of any society’s population: families.

Things are beginning to change; however, and “for the first time in history, the majority of people reside in cities.”\(^1\) Although this may be surprising given the list of negative implications for residing in urban areas, many are beginning to understand that these problems can be altered and that “often, the assumptions of conditions in downtowns are much worse than the reality of the situation.”\(^2\) In fact, there are several often-overlooked benefits to a metropolitan lifestyle.

First, let’s address the problems. Crime, for instance, is a valid concern when living in a city. Yet, people moving out of the city does nothing to solve the problem; it only feeds it. The only way to truly combat inner-city crime is to increase the population density. Jane Jacobs’ hypothesis of “eyes on the street” directly references this situation. With more people living in the city both day and night, there will literally be more eyes watching the streets, and therefore, a greater surveillance of unlawful activity. In addition, with more people moving back to the city, the city will again regain the financial resources necessary to provide proper educational and rehabilitation programs to prevent and treat criminal actions. Another, closely associated, concern is that the metropolitan lifestyle is not appropriate for children. Downtowns are often seen as attractions for adult nightlife, yet many child-oriented activities also take place in urban settings. Zoos, aquariums, museums, community centers, and performance venues are geared toward all age groups. There are also sport and leisure facilities comparable to those in suburban settings, and usually a great number of city parks and playgrounds within any given area.

And lastly, the psychological effects of city living are well-founded hindrances to the metropolitan lifestyle. It is not quiet, nor is necessarily relaxing at all times; however, improvements can be made that will allow for moments of serenity when needed. The best way to achieve this is to increase the frequency of interactions with nature. This does not necessarily mean more parks need to be created (most urban parks are already underutilized), but rather to spread nature throughout the city. Tree-lined sidewalks and small infill parks would be one way to achieve this objective.

Now, let’s address some of the benefits of city life. The variety of physical amenities, for example, such as entertainment, cultural, health and educational venues create a uniquely urban landscape. Conveniences, such as delivery and transportation assistance and an array of commercial services from which to choose to conduct business are also available. Residents experience economic attractions to city living as well, such as savings in transportation costs and a variety of employment opportunities.

In addition to all of the tangible benefits, there are several social advantages to city living. The most prominent of which is a diverse population. Immersed within this

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1. Lehrer
2. Sackenheim: 15
population, city dwellers learn much about the world, including varying perspectives on its history, politics, and opportunities. An urban population, due to its size and diversity, is a welcoming place for nearly everyone; people of all races, ethnicities, sexual orientations, creeds, and interests are represented in an urban society. Another social advantage to city living is the inherent preservation of a country's history of growth and development. If all citizens were to move into rural areas, the cities would be left behind to deteriorate into ruins. This is a social concern because the cities help identify a society; they are social hubs that give not only the urban dwellers but also the suburbanites a sense of place and belonging.

A city's preservation could also be considered a global concern because of its environmental aspects. Cities are dense settlements and thereby decrease the developmental footprint of a given population, diminishing the spread of pollution. Additionally, the reuse of existing structures in city centers utilizes the embodied energy already within historic buildings, restricting the depletion of natural resources.

Admittedly, living in cities is by no means a perfect situation, but it does come with more advantages than most people acknowledge. Regardless of personal preference to urban or suburban living, there is no denying that cities grant invaluable opportunities for learning and self-expression – one of many reasons that has contributed to the current increase in urban living.
[QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSES]

What originally attracted you to Over-the-Rhine?
“A great property in an interesting neighborhood; we are kept here by easy living, good neighbors & great long-term potential.”
“1. Architecture and history of the area. 2. Diversity of race, gender and income. 3. Walkable night life, shops and restaurants.”

What are the benefits of OTR?
“Diverse, interesting, fun people, gorgeous historic buildings, cool shops, good restaurants, easy walking city, fantastic neighbors, great cost of living.”
“Walking distance to the Central Business District and the River & affordable housing (there are becoming less options though).”

What are the downfalls of OTR?
“Drug dealing, shootings, weak city planning and organizational structure.”
“Not enough police presence and no ambassadors (such as the CBD has) for trash clean up. The city does not remove trash as often as other neighborhoods either. Not too safe to walk around in the evenings either. Better lighting might help this.”

How would you describe the character of OTR?
“Rough, artistic, real, musical, colorful, richly diverse.”
“Transitional.”

Do you feel OTR has a good mix of residents, and do they interact?
“Yes - OTR is diverse in nearly every way. Age, race, income, ethnicity, religion, life stage, political views, etc. How much people interact may vary by person, but the dense nature of OTR forces interaction to a degree... I never would have been part of a civic group in the suburbs. It’s really not my thing. But in OTR & Pendleton I feel compelled to take part and contribute because I see the potential of the people of the neighborhood and want to improve life in OTR for myself and my neighbors.”
“VERY diverse. There are rich, poor, middle class, black, white, straight, gay, children, senior citizens and business owners. Yes they do interact. When you live in close proximity to one another (literally) you are more than likely to interact. I grew up in the suburbs and can say Downtown is more of a neighborhood than any other area of Cincinnati.”

In an ideal situation, regardless of financial or political restraints, what changes would you like to see that would improve the quality of life in OTR?
“#1 - Safety is big concern, specifically the drug trafficking and gun-related crime. Although much of the crime in OTR is over-reported on the news and often drug-related, living in OTR still comes with a much higher level of risk than many other Cincinnati neighborhoods. #2 - Education is a close second priority for our family. If we leave OTR, the local schools would be the #1 reason.”
“More retail and restaurants/bars. Although this is currently happening it would be nice to see businesses such as a book store open. Easier parking options for residents would be improve the quality for those who live in OTR. There is no reason OTR could not be comparable to the French Quarter in New Orleans!”
[ONLINE SURVEY RESPONSES]

Are you a renter, homeowner, or businessman?
Renter – 20%
Owner – 60%
Businessman – 20%

How long have you lived or worked in OTR?
0-2yrs. – 20%
2-5yrs – 40%
5-10yrs – 20%
10-15yrs – 20%
15yrs+ - 0%

OTR is a diverse community.
Strongly Agree – 40%
Agree – 40%
Disagree – 0%
Strongly Disagree – 20% (the population is diverse, but also segregated)

How do you view current OTR (re)development?
1- It is not necessary – 0%
2- too much too fast – 20%
3- it is appropriate – 60%
4- not enough change – 20%

What should be the primary focus for future development?
1- neighborhood amenities – 30%
2- housing – 20%
3- attractions for visitors – 10%
4- general commercial/economic activities – 40%

The community would benefit from redeveloping the former SCPA building on Sycamore Street as a community center.
Strongly Agree – 40%
Agree – 40%
Disagree – 20%
Strongly Disagree – 0%

What activities would you like to see at a community center?
1- Recreation – 25%
2- Fitness Center – 17%
3- Adult Education – 7%
4- Children’s Activities – 17%
5- Entertainment: – 17%
6- Food: – 17%
7- Commercial: – 0%
Over-the-Rhine map.