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

It is entitled:
Architecture and Urban Redevelopment in Over-the-Rhine: Celebrating the Brewery District’s Heritage through Respectful Contrast

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Architecture and Urban Redevelopment in Over-the-Rhine:  
Celebrating the Brewery District’s Heritage through Respectful Contrast

A thesis submitted to the Graduate School of the University of Cincinnati  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of  

Master of Architecture

in the School of Architecture and Interior Design  
of the College of Design, Architecture, Art, and Planning  
by

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Bachelor of Arts in Architecture  
Miami University, May 2008

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Abstract:

Cincinnati, Ohio's Brewery District is located in the northern half of the historical urban neighborhood of Over-the-Rhine (OTR). Because of the recent increased interest in urban living and the City of Cincinnati's and corporate leaders' recent interest in redeveloping the southern half of OTR, the Brewery District is in the prime position of experiencing the next wave of significant redevelopment and revitalization. The Brewery District Community Urban Redevelopment Corporation (BDCURC) has procured the responsibilities of producing master plan strategies to initiate, implement and direct redevelopment in the Brewery District as they envision its repopulation and new business investment.

This thesis analyzes and critiques the BDCURC's 2011 Brewery District Master Plan (Master Plan) and its relationship to other redevelopment occurring in the city and OTR, as well as the city’s future streetcar system. Additionally, the Master Plan’s embedded design strategies and implications are analyzed and critiqued. The criticisms establish the foundation for this thesis’ proposal of a new catalyst project that situates itself within the 2011 Brewery District Master Plan, but provides a stronger application of the catalytic development approach the BDCURC is utilizing by creating a clear, distinct node of catalytic activity through the integration of the adaptive reuse of a visually prominent historic brewery building, new development and a streetcar stop. The catalyst project’s location facilitates and encourages public accessibility and use of the historic brewery building and the site it occupies to ultimately celebrate the Brewery District’s heritage, activate nearby residential zones, and spur adjacent business investment and real estate development.

Facing the design questions associated with engaging a past and present context and integrating new with old, the design seeks to utilize both restrained and referential contrast—categories identified by Charles Bloszies, in Old Buildings, New Designs: Architectural Transformations—to respect and celebrate the existing structure. Utilizing methods of respectful contrast through new architectural interventions and design elements that serve functional and programmatic roles to facilitate the reuse of and accessibility to historical structures, an urban neighborhood’s historical context can be celebrated and leveraged to induce business investment and real estate development.
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01 Over-the-Rhine, the Brewery District and Redevelopment

In all of America, there is no more promising an urban area for revitalization than your own Over-the-Rhine. When I look at that remarkably untouched, expansive section of architecturally uniform structures, unmarred by clashing modern structures, I see in my mind the possibility for a revived district that literally could rival similar prosperous and heavily visited areas.

Arthur Frommer, the famed travel writer, spoke those words during a visit to Over-the-Rhine in September 1993. Over-the-Rhine (OTR) is located within what is commonly referred to as the urban basin of Cincinnati, Ohio. It is situated immediately north of Cincinnati’s Central Business District (CBD). It is bounded by Central Parkway to its south and west, McMicken Avenue and the basin’s hills to its north and east, with Sycamore Street and the Pendleton neighborhood also at its east. [see figures 1.03 and 1.04] The OTR neighborhood has experienced numerous changes since its establishment in the early nineteenth century. Despite these changes, it has miraculously retained a large amount of its famous nineteenth century architecture. The notable building stock is primarily Italianate style, but also includes examples of Federal, Greek Revival, Second Empire, Queen Anne and Renaissance Revival styles. This dense architectural and urban fabric serves as a reference to the vitality that once existed in the heavily German-influenced neighborhood.

OTR’s uniqueness derives from the visual continuity of its historical remnants, or the perception of the ‘whole’ historic neighborhood one experiences walking through it, as opposed to scattered individual historical buildings. Though its buildings have seen vacancy, neglect and demolition, many aspects of the original neighborhood are still intact—including, commercial, residential, religious, civic architecture, and much of the original street layouts. These aspects are recognized for the sense of time and place they create within the neighborhood. Since the 1970’s, this recognition has served as one of the primary reasons for OTR’s preservation and revitalization.

01. Daniel W. Young and Christopher A. Cain (Historic Conservation Office), Over-the-Rhine: A Description and History; Historic District Conservation Guidelines (Historic Conservation Office, Cincinnati City Planning Department, 1995), 7.

02. Young and Cain, 8.

03. Ibid., 8.
In the last few decades, OTR has been a target for increased redevelopment and revitalization, due to its historical fabric and proximity to the CBD, Uptown, and major transportation corridors. Early development efforts faced significant setbacks; however, the creation of a public-private partnership between the city of Cincinnati and a group of the city’s corporate leaders in 2003 has made significant strides in redeveloping portions of OTR. The partnership was formalized into the non-profit Cincinnati Center City Development Corporation (3CDC). Their focus is on investing in Cincinnati’s urban core, primarily OTR, in order to improve the city’s image and maintain and attract new businesses. The most recent wave of development has been implemented through 3CDC’s multi-million dollar investments. These investments have established catalyst projects that have evoked public confidence and adjacent investment. 3CDC’s efforts in OTR have been confined to the southern half, the area below Liberty Street. [see fig. 1.04] This thesis is focusing on the next anticipated wave of redevelopment in the northern half of OTR, referred to as the Brewery District. A master plan has recently been released, focusing on redevelopment strategies and goals for the Brewery District with the intention of guiding city and private investment. This thesis analyzes and critiques the 2011 Brewery District Master Plan (Master Plan) and its relationship to other development occurring in the city and OTR, as well as the city’s future streetcar system.

Fig. 1.01
Music Hall, constructed in 1878.
OTR’s Beginnings and German Heritage

OTR was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1983, in recognition of its architecture and for its association with the waves of German immigrants that came to America and primarily settled in this Cincinnati neighborhood. OTR served as the center of the German-American community for most of the nineteenth-century. The edifices remaining today document and reflect the rich German heritage of the region.

Expansion into the land that is now OTR occurred naturally as Cincinnati’s population grew in the early nineteenth century because of the geographic basin—hills to the north and east and rivers to the south and west. Also, the Miami and Erie Canal opened in 1829, on the route that is now Central Parkway, providing new job opportunities. As the canal was completed and land opened up, German immigrants were lured to the area from other parts of the city because of the relatively low cost of land and housing. In reference to the Rhine River in Germany, the area was soon labeled Over-the-Rhine because of the large amount of German immigrants who lived north (or over) of the canal. The year 1848 brought additional German immigrants with a group referred to as the “Forty-Eighters,” who left behind economic depression and political instability in their European German states. By 1850, Cincinnati’s population was at 115,435 with OTR’s population at approximately 43,000. Of those 43,000, sixty percent originated from German states, with fifty percent still

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04. Young and Cain, 8.
06. Young and Cain, 10.
07. Ibid., 10-11.
Fig. 1.03

Note where the hillsides form the natural boundaries to the north and east, while the Ohio River forms the southern boundary and Mill Creek the west. Also, I-75 and I-71 are significant forces in containing the city’s urban core.
Over-the-Rhine neighborhood boundaries

Fig. 1.04

Note the location of McMicken Avenue to the hillsides and where Liberty Street bisects the neighborhood into two halves.
present in 1860.⁰⁸ Although largely of German state origin, OTR also attracted a diverse group of people who lived in high densities amongst a variety of land uses—similar to many other mid-nineteenth-century urban neighborhoods.⁰⁹ During the nineteenth century, OTR residents were associated with all economic classes, including impoverished immigrants, laborers, shop owners and wealthy businessmen.¹⁰

Brewery Heritage and the Brewery District

Liberty Street was the northern boundary of the city until 1849, when the city annexed the area, that is currently the northern half of OTR or the Brewery District. [see fig. 1.02] Prior to the 1849 annex, this area was known as the “Northern Liberties” because it provided Cincinnatians the opportunity to defy Sunday blue laws against “drinking, gambling and wenching.”¹¹ German immigrants continued to expand north into this area encapsulating it into the OTR neighborhood. The annex included the hills that form the northern boundary of OTR and Cincinnati’s urban basin, where McMicken Avenue parallels them. [see fig. 1.04] These hillsides provided an opportunity for the brewing of beer. Easily accessible tunnels and deep basements under brewery buildings were excavated into the hillsides to take advantage of the earth’s constant cool temperature to extend the brewing months. The first of these breweries was established in 1829 at the site of the Jackson Brewery.¹² [see fig. 1.05] With the introduction of lager beer in the 1830’s, German entrepreneurs developed a profitable brewing industry that became identified with OTR. Breweries like Jackson Brewery, J. G. Sohn & Sons Brewery, Christian Moerlein Brewing Company, and John Kauffmann Brewing Company commanded the industrial use of the McMicken Avenue area by 1866. These proliferated into a total of seventeen breweries (out of the thirty-six throughout the city) being located in OTR between 1875 and 1900.¹³ The brewing industry and its associated industries became one of the largest industries in Cincinnati. By 1890, Cincinnati was the third largest beer producer in America based on population, shipping about four barrels of beer per person annually. Almost half of the beer produced by the industry was consumed by Cincinnatians. In 1893 the national consumption per capita of beer was sixteen gallons, while Cincinnati averaged a forty gallon per capita.¹⁴ The industry was so large, even in the middle of the nineteenth century, that during the financial panic of 1857, a large amount of Cincinnati’s German immigrants entrusted their savings to the brewers instead of the banks.¹⁵ The beer was supplied to residents through
OTR's numerous beer gardens (*biergardens*). The beer gardens developed into prominent social centers for the German culture, attracting a broad range of customers of different economic and ethnic backgrounds. Along with the beer, a variety of German foods were served at these establishments. They provided a place for OTR's residents to gather on Sundays after church to enjoy each other's fellowship, music and other social activities.\(^\text{16}\)

**1860-1900 and the Sense of Place**

OTR developed the distinct sense of place, associated with it today, between 1860 and 1900. During these decades OTR became a dense and established neighborhood. German influence shaped it, both physically and culturally, through institutions that embodied the German spirit and character.\(^\text{17}\) Many of the historical buildings still standing today were built during this period. New masonry buildings replaced the smaller wood framed buildings. A majority of these were three to five story tall residential row houses with commercial storefronts at street level. Most of OTR's residents lived near their places of work—either as business owners or employees.\(^\text{18}\) Additionally, numerous single-family homes, meeting halls, theatres, churches, stores, breweries, and light industrial buildings were constructed during this period. By the end of the nineteenth century, OTR was regarded as Cincinnati's premier entertainment district by a majority of Cincinnatians.\(^\text{19}\) As a precursor to what the next century would bring, construction of five new inclined-plane railways in the 1870's provided easy transportation from the urban basin to the surrounding hilltops. This allowed new German immigrants and OTR's existing residents to disperse to the adjacent suburbs.\(^\text{20}\) Despite the dispersal of its German residents, OTR remained the social-cultural center for the German-American community for a major portion of the first half of the twentieth century.\(^\text{21}\)

**World War 1 and Population Shifts**

The year 1917 brought World War I and public distrust towards German Americans, causing many of OTR's remaining German-American residents to disperse from their centralized community to the outlying region.\(^\text{22}\) In 1919, Prohibition brought another blow to the German culture in OTR, closing all of its breweries and severely impacting the industry and its associated businesses.\(^\text{23}\) Leading up to these events, most of the affluent populations that resided in OTR had already left. By the 1920's OTR could have been characterized as an American slum, "an old and declining area of mixed land uses and mixed
peoples that formed part of a band of similar neighborhoods surrounding the central business district. Soon after OTR's longtime residents left, the longtime businesses started closing shop.

As buildings became vacant, Appalachians, primarily from eastern Kentucky, began migrating into the neighborhood because of its cheap housing and their hopes for job opportunities in the city. The Appalachian population remained relatively transient from the 1930's to 1960's as they would move away from OTR in the search of better opportunities; however, in the 1960's the Appalachian population that remained could be identified as a relatively permanent community. This community was significantly less dense than the community that once existed. OTR's population gradually declined from its high of 44,475 in 1900 to 27,577 by 1960, although there was a slight rise between 1940 and 1950 with the first influx of Appalachians. The Appalachian community was also significantly less well-off than previous OTR populations—most of them renting from landlords or "slum lords" who did not care to maintain the neighborhood's historical building stock. These conditions caused the city government to consider OTR a slum between 1920 and 1950, when they proposed a few different cultural transformations. Miraculously, unlike other urban basin neighborhoods, OTR was repeatedly spared from urban renewal.

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25. Young and Cain, 18.
26. Ibid., 16.
27. Miller and Tucker, xv.

Fig. 1.06
Cincinnati Aerial Map from 1949. Note the density of buildings and the public housing projects in the West End neighborhood.
programs due to lack of funds or other higher priority projects. Urban renewal proposals shifted to programs for conservation after 1950.28

Major Population Decline

The population dropped even more significantly from 27,577 in 1960 to 15,025 in 1970. However, during this period a migration of displaced residents from the nearby West End, a predominately low-income African-American neighborhood, caused the African-American population to increase from 2,720 in 1960 to 5,830 in 1970, revealing that OTR continued to appeal to lower-income earning residents, even as Appalachian residents departed.29 By 1990, the total population had dropped to 9,572, and a large majority of the 1990 population were poor and under-educated, with an annual median household income averaging around $5,000.30 About one quarter of the apartments in OTR were vacant in 1990 with most of them being uninhabitable and not suitable for rehabilitation. These conditions sparked the organization and founding of multiple church and social agencies to try and meet the needs of the OTR community. These included programs and organizations providing low-income and affordable housing options.31 The 2000 census showed a total population of 7,638 for the OTR neighborhood.32 In 2010, the total population for the census tracts 9, 10, 16 and 17 which make the primary area of OTR, equaled 6,064,33 [see fig. 1.07]

![Fig. 1.07](image-url) Graph showing OTR's population decline from 1900 to 2010.

28. Ibid., xvi.

29. Young and Cain, 18. The construction of Interstate 75 and urban renewal projects in the West End neighborhood displaced a large amount of low-income families from the primarily African-American community. According to Miller and Tucker (page, xviii), "slum clearance techniques consisted of zoning inner-city neighborhoods for non-residential land uses or demolishing them to make way for community building public housing projects" Fig. 1.06 reveals some of these public housing projects.

30. Ibid., 18.

31. Ibid., 18-19. These programs included “ReStoc” and the Western-Southern Insurance Company’s affordable housing project.


Redevelopment and OTR's Prime Location

For almost the past sixty years OTR has been identified for its proximity to the Central Business District (CBD) with the potential as an urban residential neighborhood to compliment the business workforce in the CBD. The 1957 Planning Commission incorporated OTR with the riverfront and CBD into a renewal plan for the urban basin. In the renewal plan, the Planning Commission indicated it would consider OTR “as a residential neighborhood oriented to downtown rather than a site for a community development public housing project.”

In the last few decades, OTR has been an increasing target for redevelopment and revitalization efforts. Beginning in the late 1980's, small business owners began showing a renewed interest in OTR. They were attracted to the lower property values and rents, its adjacency to downtown, and its access to the major transportation corridors—similar reasons for its original settlement. The 1990's saw similar interest and engagement primarily with new restaurants and clubs along the Main Street corridor. In 2001, the shooting and death of Timothy Thomas, an unarmed black nineteen-year-old, by a white police officer halted most OTR redevelopment, as riots and violence followed. These violent events in addition to increasing crime, drug use and prostitution that were being associated with OTR at a national level, triggered the intervention of Cincinnati's government and corporate leaders. Their goal was to save the city's image and keep business corporations from leaving the city. These efforts ultimately resulted in the creation of the Cincinnati Center City Development Corporation (3CDC).

3CDC

3CDC was established in 2003 after the City of Cincinnati and the city's corporate leaders mutually committed to stimulate economic development in Cincinnati's urban core. 3CDC chose to focus their efforts in the southern half of OTR—the one hundred and ten square block bounded by Central Parkway to the south and west, Liberty Street to the north and Main Street to the east. This area is often referred to as the “Gateway Quarter.” Since 2004, 3CDC has invested over $255 million in OTR. This includes about $64 million in public support from the city with the rest coming from two loan funds managed by 3CDC, state and federal historic tax credits, and additional private sources.
According to 3CDC’s website these investments have resulted in:

- 107 historic buildings restored (or in process),
- 496 new and rehabbed residential units (developed or in process),
- approximately 127,000 square foot of new and renovated commercial space (developed or in process),
- 869 public parking spaces in lots and garages (developed or in process),
- streetscape improvements, and
- 8 acres of civic green space (renovation of Washington Park).  

As of January 2013, ninety-nine percent of 3CDC’s developed 186 condominium units are sold while all 68 of their market-rate apartments are leased. Additionally, eighty percent of the completed 103,000 square feet of commercial space is leased. Phase V of 3CDC’s ongoing development will include the $62 million Mercer Commons project (currently under construction) which will yield another 96 market-rate apartments, 30 affordable apartments, 28 condominiums, 17,600 square feet of commercial space and 359 parking spaces. Additionally, Phase V will include the renovation of 18 buildings on Race, Elm and Republic Streets; contributing another 65 condominiums, 23 apartments and 17,900 square feet of commercial space for a total cost of $29.7 million.  

In addition to 3CDC’s investments, other significant redevelopment and development projects have recently occurred in the southern half of OTR including the relocation of the School for the Creative & Performing Arts, the renovation of a building for the Art Academy of Cincinnati and numerous restaurants and commercial retail businesses along Main Street and Vine Street.  

Smart Growth

The qualities mentioned earlier of OTR’s proximity to major employment centers and its intact urban and architectural fabric that create an easily accessible, pedestrian-oriented neighborhood also contribute to OTR’s targeting for revitalization (beyond the City of Cincinnati and its business corporations  


41. According to 3CDC’s website about their Fountain Square Project in the CBD: “the renovation is achieving the goal of acting as a catalyst for additional economic development on Fountain Square and in the Fountain Square District. ... To date, the renovation has also resulted in approximately $125 million in new, privately owned restaurants and retail establishments on the blocks surrounding Fountain Square, none of which would have happened without the energy generated by Fountain Square.” Accessed February 12, 2013, http://www.3cdc.org/where-we-work/fountain-square/
initiatives to heal the city’s image and combat crime). These qualities and desires for OTR’s redevelopment align with *smart growth* movement principles. Crime reduction strategies, also align with smart growth principles, according to Cincinnati mayor, Mark Mallory, “Smart growth itself is a crime fighting initiative. The more people on the streets the safer you are.”

Charles Bloszies states in his book, *Old Buildings, New Designs*, that mainstream planning principles emerged (though discussed by urban planners for decades before) at the beginning of this century “to address the problems of prevailing urban growth patterns,” these are referred to as *smart growth* principles. Bloszies references the Smart Growth Network as defining the movement as being predominately influenced by “demographic shifts, a strong environmental ethic, increased fiscal

Fig. 1.08
“OTR Gateway Quarter Wayfinding Map”
Note, new eateries have opened and are in the process of opening that do not appear yet on this map. Also, 3CDC’s “Mercer Commons” and “Phase V” work under construction are not reflected on this map.

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concerns, and more nuanced views on growth." Bloszies cites demographic shift examples; immigrants moving into cities or populations (who previously lived in the suburbs) returning to city cores for the cultural experiences and benefits of the city or to eliminate long work commutes. Advocates for OTR's revitalization are aligned with this principle, as young professionals are choosing to live an urban lifestyle, even in midwestern cities. This was recently highlighted in Architectural Record for the nearby cities of Cleveland and Pittsburgh. Speaking about Cleveland, “an influx of young professionals, ... has led to a tight downtown rental market with a residential population of about 10,000 and growing, and an occupancy rate of nearly 96 percent.”

The environmental ethic influence of the smart growth movement, Bloszies explains, includes discouraging development on undeveloped land because of carbon emissions associated with the transportation networks of sprawl and the preservation of farmlands and wilderness. This shift is also visible among advocates for OTR's revitalization, specifically seen in the City of Cincinnati's Streetcar Initiative (which will travel through OTR) and also by local residents' support of the project and alternative means of transit. Finally, Bloszies expounds that supporters of smart growth understand that fiscal concerns affect smart growth patterns. In OTR's case 3CDC and other developers have leveraged government tax incentives for this historical district to make project's economically viable.

According to the Smart Growth Network website, smart growth principles are:

- Mix Land Uses
- Take Advantage of Compact Building Design
- Create a Range of Housing Opportunities and Choices
- Create Walkable Neighborhoods
- Foster Distinctive, Attractive Communities with a Strong Sense of Place
- Preserve Open Space, Farmland, Natural Beauty and Critical Environmental Areas
- Strengthen and Direct Development Towards Existing Communities
- Provide a Variety of Transportation Choices
- Make Development Decisions Predictable, Fair and Cost Effective
- Encourage Community and Stakeholder Collaboration in Development Decisions

44. Bloszies, 27. He cites these three from an excerpt from the “Smart Growth Overview,” which was stated on the Smart Growth Network's website (www.smartgrowth.org)

45. Ibid., 27.


48. Ibid, 28

49. According to Anastasia Mileham, 3CDC's vice president, “Without it [Ohio Historic Tax Credit] we would be unable to preserve the historic character of as many buildings as we have. The cost to restore and develop them costs more than the what you can sell the condos for and lease the commercial space for. Historic tax credits help fill that gap and make the math work.” See UrbanCincy blog, December 24, 2012, http://www.urbancincy.com/2012/12/ohio-awards-nearly-9m-in-historic-tax-credits-to-seven-cincinnati-area-projects/

Fig. 1.09
Map showing future streetcar system’s route through the urban basin and the adjacent amenities, attractions and service agencies it will be near. The yellow highlights areas with recent development projects or business investment. Specific projects are noted.
“Creative thinking will be required to break old habits that led to low-density sprawl, like the smart growth movement’s nuanced views that encourage high-density, mixed-use developments within existing urban frameworks. Many projects stemming from this thinking will include the retention of existing buildings.”51 This is a primary reason OTR is being targeted for redevelopment—preservation of its historical building stock. As is evident from the smart growth principles and as Bloszies reiterates, smart growth advocates favor higher population densities, especially close to transportation nodes.52 Ultimately a goal of repopulating the OTR neighborhood is shared by a majority of those involved in revitalization efforts, including advocates for the streetcar system. Specifically, a community corporation for the northern half of OTR is making this their ultimate goal, which will be highlighted in the next section. Apparent in the census figures [see fig. 1.07] the creation of a higher density could be OTR’s, and the City of Cincinnati’s largest hurdle. Increased population density for OTR, also relates to job availability and growth in the CBD and elsewhere in the city—a problem not solely tackled by providing rehabilitated residential units in the historic urban neighborhood. However, the revitalization and creation of a vital, cultural historic district with a prime location will help the city’s appeal for future business investment. In light of this issue, Bloszies transitions to an architectural scale of thought, “for these areas to become denser, interaction of new designs with old buildings is unavoidable.”53 He explains how these will lead to more visual diversity and smart growth polices that “will encourage developers to build structures that meld new and old construction.”54 Ultimately, architects and designers will need to consider the design and aesthetic implications of these policies and projects. The questions associated with these new architectural interventions and the questions asked by this thesis are explored and discussed after the summary and analysis of the 2011 Brewery District Master Plan.

As revitalization continues to expand in OTR, it garners more national attention. The public-private partnership of 3CDC and Cincinnati’s government was recently highlighted by the Smart Growth America organization. Smart Growth America cites the “unique partnership between city leaders, local corporations and private developers” that “helped to pave the way for what is becoming one of America’s greatest smart growth success stories.”55 According to blogotr.com, the nationally known newspapers and institutions, New York Times, Chicago Tribune, and the Urban Land Institute have all also recently written about exciting development happening in OTR.56

52. Ibid., 28.
53. Ibid., 28.
54. Ibid., 35.
56. See www.blogotr.com/otr/about/
The Brewery District and the BDCURC

After highlighting the development taking place in the southern half of OTR, it is important to recognize the redevelopment efforts materializing in the northern half of OTR. The Brewery District (the northern half) is in the prime location for the next wave of redevelopment. The Brewery District is recognized as being bounded by Liberty Street to the south, Central Parkway to the west, and McMicken Avenue and the hills to the north and east.\(^{57}\) [see fig. 1.04]

Redevelopment efforts are primarily led by the Brewery District Community Urban Redevelopment Corporation (BDCURC). The BDCURC is seeking to capitalize on the neighborhood's and city's brewing heritage. Therefore they have initiated branding efforts to establish the area as the Brewery District. Their efforts earned the area an Ohio Historical Marker [see fig. 1.10] that was installed along McMicken Avenue and honors Cincinnati's brewing heritage. The BDCURC's Mission according to their website: “The Brewery District Community Urban Redevelopment Corporation is a non-profit organization committed to making the Over-the-Rhine Brewery District a healthy, balanced and supportive neighborhood economy by preserving, restoring and redeveloping our unique brewing history and historic urban fabric.”\(^{58}\) They are a 501c3 non-profit, grass roots organization corporation. Their Board of Trustees consists of business owners, architects, attorneys, real estate agents, and real estate developers. The BDCURC conducts their mission through social programming, educational and advocacy activities—they are behind social events like Bockfest and the Prohibition Resistance Tours. Additionally, they carry out their mission through business partnering and strategic urban planning.\(^{59}\) The BDCURC helped implement the recent zoning change for a majority of the Brewery District to an Urban-Mix zone. As of October 2011, the corporation was developing a feasible loan program to help promote small-scale building rehabilitation. Most recently, the BDCURC partnered with the AIA Cincinnati Chapter to hold an architectural competition for the rehabilitation of an existing Brewery District warehouse structure into a live-work-make space. See pages 18-19 of this document for more information on these three efforts.

The BDCURC sees great potential in the Brewery District because of OTR's location between the largest and second largest employment districts, the CBD and Uptown, home to the University of Cincinnati and its associated healthcare affiliates. [see fig. 1.04 and 1.09] Because of the Brewery District's position...
to receive the next wave of investment and redevelopment efforts, BDCURC saw the opportunity to produce redevelopment strategies to guide and direct revitalization efforts. The BDCURC has attempted to deliver these strategies through their recently released 2011 Brewery District Master Plan document. Many of their goals and initiatives also align with smart growth principles.

This thesis critiques the redevelopment strategies and efforts initiated for the Brewery District, specifically through an analysis of the 2011 Brewery District Master Plan and its relationship within the OTR neighborhood, its relationship to the city of Cincinnati, and its congruency with the future streetcar system. The resulting criticisms establish the foundation for this thesis' proposal of a new economic catalyst project that situates itself within the 2011 Brewery District Master Plan. The catalyst project has the goal of better defining the Brewery District as a significant destination by coupling it with a unique streetcar stop for the future streetcar system. The design engages and reuses a visually prominent historical brewery building in the district. By focusing on the circulation and accessibility to the brewery building and the adjacent residential zones’ access to the streetcar system, a key link and economic catalyst will be provided for a stronger and clearer redevelopment strategy for the Brewery District that will engage the contextual design conditions of its site and the district’s heritage. Utilizing methods of respectful contrast with new architectural interventions and design elements that serve functional and programmatic roles to facilitate the reuse of the historical structure, the urban neighborhood’s historical context can be celebrated and leveraged to induce business investment and real estate development.

The relevance for an analysis of a master plan’s strategies for redeveloping a historic urban neighborhood increases as one acknowledges the trends towards smart growth patterns and policies, as well as individuals’ desires for urban and pedestrian lifestyles. Primarily developed for economic stimulation, growth and sustenance, the questions designers and architects will be faced with as a result of such policies and ‘master plans’ will involve the relationships of new architectural interventions to old styles and how to evoke conceptually-strong and imaginative spaces respecting a neighborhood’s (and city's) past and present context, while still standing on their own foundations, prepared to handle future trends, functions and densities.
The BDCURC’s Efforts

Urban Mix
A majority of the Brewery District is zoned as an ‘Urban Mix’ district. It is the first and only Urban Mix zone in the city. BDCURC helped develop and implement the zoning change with the City Department of Community Development and Planning. The zone encourages the historical mixed uses of OTR where residential and office uses can coincide with light manufacturing uses.

The general purposes of Urban Mix districts are to:

a. Provide a balance of uses and amenities fostering a vital economic, livable and cultural area and enhance its urban aesthetic qualities.

b. Protect and enhance historic, cultural, economic and architectural resources.

c. Preserve, create and enhance pedestrian-oriented streets to encourage retail, entertainment, residential and office vitality and improve the quality of life for district residents, visitors and workers.

d. Provide quality public spaces, such as urban street corridors, by maintaining the physical continuity of the street edge created by buildings.

e. Bring most daily activities within walking distance, giving the elderly, young and disabled increased independence of movement.

f. Reduce the number of automobile trips, minimize congestion, consumption of resources and air and noise pollution.

As one will see from reading through the 2011 Brewery District Master Plan document, the language of the Urban Mix district is influenced by the BDCURC and their initiatives for the district. Whether purposeful or not, this framework allows Cincinnati’s future streetcar system to integrate well with the zoning regulations.

Owner Redevelopment Loan Task Force
BDCURC members developed a feasible loan program that will help encourage more small-scale building rehabilitation. The task force suggests finding owners who are willing to buy property and do construction work themselves (sweat equity), “and then subsidizing their construction costs
with public loan programs.” Property owners will be matched up with construction financing from the Cincinnati Development Fund and then refinance with traditional lenders.03

**Live-Make Industrial Arts Center Competition**

The Cincinnati Chapter of the American Institute of Architects recently partnered with BDCURC to hold the LIVE-MAKE architectural competition for proposals for live-work-makes spaces in an existing Brewery District warehouse structure located at 126 W. McMicken Avenue. Participants were asked to consider the key themes of Design for Innovation, Living While Making, Preservation, Renovation, Demolition, Mixed-Use Confrontation, and Sustainable Micro-Environment (follow the Living Building Challenge standard). Winners were announced January 26, 2013. Some finalists were from international locations.04
Fig. 2.01
Existing historical brewery sites in and near the Brewery District of OTR. Brewery sites are identified in green. The dashed line represents the future streetcar route.
02 Brewery District Master Plan: Summary

BCDURC released the *Brewery District Master Plan* in October of 2011. It is
recognized as a significant plan and document for guiding further economic
and real estate development in the Brewery District and OTR. Therefore,
the *2011 Brewery District Master Plan* document’s observations, goals,
initiatives, recommendations and strategies are influential to this thesis
document research and design project. However, the thesis is arguing for an
alternative approach and application of the *2011 Brewery District Master Plan*’s
recommendations and strategies as a result of analysis of the Master Plan
document, its relationship to OTR, the rest of the city, and its relationship to
the future streetcar route. The following section (chapter 02) summarizes the
*2011 Brewery District Master Plan* to orient the reader to what is being analyzed
and critiqued in later chapters.

**Summary**

The mission for the *2011 Brewery District Master Plan: A Strategy for Re-Populating
Cincinnati’s Brewery District*, as defined by BDCURC: “To envision investment and
development opportunities for businesses and real estate developers that will be
supported by the neighborhood, and that will help guide efforts for physical public
improvements to accommodate such development.”

The Master Plan document begins with a brief background about the BDCURC,
citing their past organized events and their current involvement within the
Brewery District and Cincinnati. The document then explains how the Master
Plan’s strategies and initiatives were derived and determined. This section is
titled, “Gathering Input & Producing the Plan.” A workshop was held on April 9,
2011 with three sessions: The Way It Is, The Way It Should Be, and Group Think
to gather ideas for driving the Master Plan. “The Way It Should Be” session was
divided into three subgroups: Marketing and Business Development, Land Use,
and Public Spaces. The document notes that about 80 people attended the
workshop—people knowledgeable about OTR, the Brewery District and with
“expertise in urban development.” Pages seven through 18 of the document
provide specific information from the workshop sessions, including attendee’s
observations, conceptions and vision for the Brewery District.

01. See [www.otrbrewerydistrict.org](http://www.otrbrewerydistrict.org) to
view the full *2011 Brewery District Master Plan: A Strategy for Re-Populating
Cincinnati’s Brewery District*, released by the Brewery District Community Urban
Redevelopment Corporation. Available as of February 2013 in a downloadable
PDF format. This is a summary of Version 1.1.

02. According to a November 26, 2012 post on the OTR Brewery District Facebook
page, the City will be officially approving the Brewery District Master Plan: “This
year also saw great strides in developing and implementing our most recent
Master Plan. Working with city planning staff and other city departments, we are
on track to take our plan to the Planning Commission and City Council for official
approval as part of the city plan within the next month.” See [https://www.facebook.com/OTRBreweryDistrict/posts/122809617877856](https://www.facebook.com/OTRBreweryDistrict/posts/122809617877856)

03. See Chapter 03, beginning on page 37, for this thesis’ analysis and criticisms of
the *2011 Brewery District Master Plan*.

04. [Brewery District Community Urban Redevelopment Corporation, 2011
*Brewery District Master Plan*, 3.](#)

05. Ibid., 6.
Page 18 explains how the Planning Committee and BDCURC’s consultant sorted through the workshop session outcomes and “evaluated ideas for their viability, impact, immediacy, cost, benefit and partnering potential.” The Planning Committee and consultant then compared these findings and ideas to the Over-the-Rhine Comprehensive Plan of 2002, AIA Brewery District Charratte of 2009 and interviews with individuals they saw as key to redevelopment of the district. Next, they took what they determined to be the best ideas and placed them into three categories of initiatives—each category determined by who would implement the initiative.

“Defining the Brewery District” is contained on pages 19 though 23 of the Master Plan document. This section outlines specific traits of the Brewery District followed by their presumed potential. BDCURC identifies the Brewery District’s valuable location between the region’s largest and second largest employment centers; the Central Business District and Uptown’s higher education and health care campuses. The narrow two to five story historical brick buildings (with little or no setback from the street) characteristic of OTR are recognized for giving the neighborhood’s pedestrian-friendly scale and its potential for “walkable urbanism.” BDCURC discerns the uniqueness of the large manufacturing and warehouse buildings specific to the Brewery District. Many of these buildings, typically two to four stories tall, originally contained nineteenth-century breweries. [See fig. 2.02] The Master Plan has vision for the adaptive reuse of these historical brewery buildings because of their “large, dramatic interior spaces” including barrel-vaulted basement structures.

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06. Ibid., 18. The Planning Committee consisted of BDCURC members and members of its Board of Trustees. The corporation hired the local architecture and urban design firm, Glaserworks as their consultant. According to their website (www.glaserworks.com), Glaserworks has urban design and planning experience with projects in OTR and other local urban neighborhoods.

07. The Over-the-Rhine Comprehensive Plan was released in June, 2002. It was prepared for the OTR Community by the City of Cincinnati in collaboration with community stakeholder organizations. The plan addresses issues like housing, economic development, safety, transportation, quality of life, etc. The AIA Brewery District Charratte of 2009 was a similar event to the workshop held for the 2011 Master Plan, which generated design and planning ideas for the district.

08. 2011 Brewery District Master Plan, 20.

09. Ibid., 21.

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Fig. 2.02
Analysis of a figure-ground graphic reveals a general dividing line between the two building typologies identified by the BDCURC. The line is just north of Findlay Market. There are more large scale industrial and warehouse buildings north of Findlay Market while smaller scale residential and mixed-use buildings are near and south of Findlay Market. Note, this dividing line is not specifically identified by the BDCURC.
Page 22 begins to reveal the basis of BDCURC’s redevelopment strategy; it identifies the “Anchors and New Catalytic Businesses” of the Brewery District. First, the district’s primary anchor, Findlay Market, is cited as a cultural hub that attracts over 800,000 people per year and is noted for being “one of the nations oldest continuously running farmers’ markets.” It is clear BDCURC recognizes the significance and business stability of Findlay Market. Next, the document specifies two businesses they believe to be catalysts for the district—the Rookwood Pottery Company and the Christian Moerlein Brewery Company. They selected the Rookwood Pottery Company because of its 100 year established presence in Cincinnati, its relocation to a manufacturing building in the Brewery District, and its plans to expand to become a destination for tourists and shoppers. The Christian Moerlein Company was selected because of its recent purchase of a historical brewery building to be reused as a new beer production facility and eventual event center. BDCURC notes the Christian Moerlein company originated in the Brewery District in 1853. BDCURC is hopeful for the success of these newly relocated businesses and sees their potential for economic impact and influence in the District.

Page 23 simply identifies the existing public spaces as being six outdoor playgrounds, and one indoor recreational center, a majority of which are located near McMicken Avenue. It states that a majority of the playgrounds have received new playground equipment. The corporation recognizes the playground’s potential for being, “great public places, which are amenities for residents, businesses, and visitors.”

The next section is titled “Defining the Brewery District’s Problems.” BDCURC defines the problems under the sub-headings: Anchors and Assets are Islands, Incomplete Streets and Disconnections, Borders and Boundaries, and Unpolished Gems. BDCURC uses this section to explain what they see as inhibitors to revitalization of the neighborhood. This sets the tone for the next section where they propose their coordinated strategy and initiatives. Primarily, they recognize that a large portion of the district’s assets (including anchors and catalyst businesses) are isolated. They believe that some of the assets are separated by “surface parking lots and garbage dumpsters.” BDCURC also correlates this problem to the Incomplete Streets and Disconnections problem and claims a majority of the primary street corridors have been modified (trees removed, widened, or changed to one-ways) in response to crime and
an emphasis on vehicular travel. They argue that this has made the Brewery District uncomfortable for pedestrian and bicycle travel, further negatively impacting storefront businesses who rely on pedestrian customers. The *Borders and Boundaries* sub-section is also attributed to the emphasis on vehicular travel and the engineering out of walkability. BDCURC is primarily referring to Liberty Street in this section, which is infamous for bisecting OTR (Liberty Street serves as the southern boundary to the Brewery District). [see fig. 1.04] They cite the widening of Liberty Street in 1957 that seized private property and demolished adjacent buildings. Lastly, in the *Unpolished Gems* sub-heading, BDCURC articulates the problems of the parks and playgrounds mentioned in the existing public spaces section. They explain how the spaces have become uninviting and stale surrounded by chain link fences and only containing children’s playground equipment. They recognize that the trees have been knocked down due to safety and crime concerns. BDCURC believes the playgrounds are important for the district; however, the parks lack variety and only facilitate uses for children. They want the parks to be usable and desirable for “all types and all ages of people.”

Page 27 begins BDCURC’s plan and strategies for accomplishing their goals of repopulating the district. The BDCURC presents the next section as a “Coordinated Strategy.” They believe by focusing their efforts on a few key areas and in certain locations, they will achieve the greatest impact on real estate development and proliferate more development in the future as a result.

We have devised this strategy based on the objectives that our first and largest efforts should be selected for their likelihood to be catalytic, their potential immediacy, and their conspicuous proximity to already established areas of activity or eminent development.

Page 28, explains the BDCURC’s efforts will be focused along the southern edge of the Brewery District to re-connect with the southern portion of OTR and downtown. The Master Plan acknowledges the proposed future streetcar system, explaining it will loop through the Brewery District and connect OTR with downtown and uptown. It states that the “streetcar system will have an area of economic influence in the three or four blocks adjacent to it.”

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16. Ibid., 25.

17. Ibid., 27. Note, this strategy is similar to 3CDC’s; where a certain project (or zone) is selected for significant investment in the hopes of being catalytic for further development occurring at adjacent properties. See Chapter 01.

18. Ibid., 27.

19. Ibid., 28. BDCURC’s strategy of focusing efforts at the southern edge of the district is one of the primary criticisms made by this thesis. See Chapter 03.

20. Ibid., 28. According to the Master Plan document, the streetcar system was conceived by the BDCURC, The concept eventually became the “Cincinnati Streetcar Initiative” and was adopted by the City of Cincinnati who is currently in the process of implementing the project.
Plan continues by pointing out how Findlay Market and the new Christian Moerlein Brewery and future Event Center are located within a 1300’ distance or approximately five minute walk, to many blocks in the southern portion of OTR. They believe this is relevant considering “in recent years the southern half of Over-the-Rhine, the area south of Liberty Street, has experienced a nationally recognized period of revitalization.” The BDCURC therefore justifies focusing their efforts on the Liberty Street corridor and the blocks immediately north of Liberty Street. “We establish this focus to capitalize on the development momentum taking place in southern Over-the-Rhine.” See fig. 2.03 for a visual representation of the BDCURC’s strategy. The corporation states they do not wish to ignore the remainder of their neighborhood and understand their control is limited in completing all of their goals.

Page 29 lists the BDCURC’S eight initiatives for their coordinated strategy. They claim each initiative is in response to the wishes voiced by their stakeholders and Board of Trustees. The following three categories acknowledge BDCURC’s level of control and responsibility for each Initiative:

“*We’ll Do It*” - Initiatives undertaken primarily by the BDCURC

“*Partnering*” - Initiatives undertaken by the BDCURC in partnership with others

“*Encouraging*” - Actions taken by others at the urging of the BDCURC

The Initiatives (under the three categories):

**We’ll Do It:**

- Brewery Heritage Trail
- Rediscovering a Mixed Use Economy

**Partnering:**

- Revisioning Our Recreation Facilities
- Branding and Gateways
- Brewers’ Triangle

**Encouraging:**

- Complete Streets
- Neighborhood Zones
- Parking and Placemaking

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21. Ibid., 28. The document does not cite specifically who recognizes OTR’s revitalization nationally; however, general public opinion in Cincinnati and OTR would most likely agree with the Corporation’s statement. See Chapter 01 for further acknowledgement of the southern half’s (Gateway Quarter) success.

22. Ibid., 28.

23. Ibid., 29. Categories and Initiatives quoted directly from *2011 Brewery District Master Plan*. 
The Brewery District has four strong, well traveled primary streets that circulate around and through it: Liberty Street; Central Parkway; McMicken Avenue; Vine Street. It also has a street network of secondary and tertiary local streets which provide some internal connectivity.

Soon, the Brewery District will have a modern Streetcar system looping through it (Blue Line on map) connecting to downtown Cincinnati - the region's largest employment center. This streetcar system will have an area of economic influence in the three or four blocks adjacent to it. Findlay Market and the new Christian Moerlein Brewery and Event Center are located within 1300 feet (a 5 minute walk) of several blocks of the southern half of Over-the-Rhine. In recent years the southern half of Over-the-Rhine, the area south of Liberty Street, has experienced a nationally recognized period of revitalization.

Our strategy will be to focus our efforts on the Liberty Street corridor, and the blocks just to its north - though we will not neglect the rest of our neighborhood. We establish this focus to capitalize on the development momentum taking place in southern Over-the-Rhine. Our efforts will cover a broad range, but we will recognize the reality that we can’t control all that we would like.

Pages 30 and the remainder of the Master Plan document focus on general strategies for some Initiatives, while giving specific suggestions and plans for others. Each Initiative section begins with stating the goal for that Initiative.

“Brewery Heritage Trail” (Pages 30-35)

The BDCURC’s goal is to create a trail celebrating Cincinnati’s brewing heritage to contribute to “a positive, marketable image for the City.” The Brewery Heritage Trail will leverage Cincinnati’s deep and intriguing history and celebrate an asset BDCURC believes is not typically highlighted by the City of Cincinnati. They cite Boston’s Freedom Trail and Kentucky’s Bourbon Trail as precedents. The group believes, in addition to providing historical information and attracting visitors, the Trail will more importantly attract real estate and business investment (which they state “many studies have determined that well marketed heritage trails attract”). BDCURC explains that heritage trails have been a success in economically depressed areas because they breach people’s perceptions of not wanting to visit such areas. BDCURC wishes to tell the story of Cincinnati’s brewing heritage through its historical places as part of the Heritage Trail experience. BDCURC intends for this Initiative to happen immediately, believing it will bring attention, respect, and ultimately investment for the Brewery District. The Master Plan cites the recent development and investment in the downtown and riverfront, specifically the Banks Development as attracting more visitors and suburbanites to the city. They believe to leverage these investments, the city needs to sell it’s brand and image—BDCURC believes the Heritage Trail
can play a significant role in that identity and image. They desire to attract the
downtown and riverfront visitors north to the Brewery District, by means of
the Heritage Trail. Fig. 2.01 shows the existing brewery related structures that
could be highlighted on the Heritage Trail. The corporation started Prohibition
Resistance Tours in 2006, leading people through historical brewery buildings,
vaulted basements, bottling plants, and brewer’s homes. The tours proved to
be a success and sparked other OTR tours. BDCURC states that on a typical
weekend it is common for as many as 800 people to be partaking in walking
tours of OTR. The Brewery Heritage Tour will consist of traditional plaques at
the historical brewery sites and an informational website that can be accessed
via smart phone and Quick Response codes. They state a committee will be
organized to implement the Heritage Trail through precedent research and
analysis, and to select the specific historical sites. It is clear BDCURC envisions
the Trail attracting visitors to the district to ultimately attract investment.

“Rediscovering a Mixed-Use Economy” (Pages 36-37)
The BDCURC wishes to help redevelop the district’s historical buildings by
using their community knowledge to pair investors, developers and resources.
The Master Plan explains that the corporation will create a data base of
available spaces within the district—sorted by condition and potential use—
for distribution to realtors, economic development groups, and real estate
developers. The corporation realizes that the density that once existed in OTR
may never return and that recognizing “both the advantages and limitations of
the building stock” is important to envisioning reuse of the building stock. They
believe the building stock holds opportunities for uses by “the new, creative-
based economy.” Additionally, they believe the brewery buildings are ideal for
service professionals who do not rely on sidewalk traffic, such as accountants,
lawyers, architects, massage therapists, psychologists, consultants, and internet-
based businesses. They proclaim that these types of businesses could allow
occupants to live and work in the same building.

“Revisioning Our Recreation Facilities” (Pages 38-41)
This initiative refers to the six outdoor public spaces identified in the “Defining
the District” section, which are also referred to as parks or playgrounds. They
believe the recreation sites are too similar and bland. The corporation suggests
making the facilities more usable by adding improvements for a broader range
of activities, and more unique by giving them each an identity. They suggest

26. Ibid., 34.
27. Ibid., 37.
28. Ibid., 37. The Master Plan document includes an article from the Business Courier, titled, “P&G’s storytelling ‘lofts’
set scene for innovation: Transformed spaces allow ideas to take center stage.” by Jon Newberry. The article explains
a creative idea Proctor and Gamble’s assistant director of corporate design function had for utilizing vacant loft space in OTR.
improvements through the addition of “shade trees, benches, sitting walls, game tables, and other activating amenities.” See fig. 2.04 for playground locations. Page 39 goes into more detail about adding trees and additional amenities, like bike racks, grills, fountains, skateboard ramps, eating tables and bandstands. They concede that the original benches and trees were removed to defend against crime; however, the result has been creating a space more conducive to crime. It is clear that BDCURC sees the potential in these public spaces for the contribution to the walkable community they envision.

The corporation sees a specific opportunity with Grant Playground, located adjacent to their identified catalyst business, the Moerlein Brewery and future Event Center. Because of the large private investment required for the Moerlein Brewery, the BDCURC believes public funds should be invested in the surrounding infrastructure, including Grant Playground. They believe Grant Playground could provide more active entertaining programming for both daytime and nighttime activities to compliment the new Moerlein Brewery. They acknowledge the building vacancy surrounding the playground and they believe investment in the park, in addition to the new Moerlein Brewery, could help rejuvenate the vacant buildings. They suggest using the adjacent blank facades as backdrops for outdoor movies showings. Also, they suggest that the park have sculptures reinforcing their desired brand and image of the district. The corporation states that they will form a committee to solidify more ideas for park improvements and renovations to ultimately partner with the City and Parks officials to facilitate improvements.

“Branding and Gateways” (Pages 42-43)

The corporation has the goal of giving the Brewery District a specific and marketable brand identity to ultimately attract real estate development and business investment. They believe installing branding elements at identified gateways and other strategic locations will help reinforce the district’s brand identity and clearly let people know when they have entered the Brewery District—giving a feel for their, “fun-natured attitude, [their] business vitality and of course [their] love of beer.” The branding elements would be signage, sculpture, and lighting installations. A diagram [fig. 2.05] highlights the specific gateways for branding elements to be the intersections of Liberty Street and Central Parkway, Liberty Street and Vine, Liberty Street and McMicken Avenue, Vine and McMicken Avenue, Mohawk Place and McMicken Avenue, and at the
corner before Central Parkway turns north away from the city. They explain the branding will be reinforced through new benches, streetcar stops, signage and streetlights within the District.

“Brewers’ Triangle” (Pages 44-47)
Brewers’ Triangle is the corporation’s vision of improvements for the land adjacent to the new Moerlein Brewery and future Event Center, which was first mentioned in their suggested improvements to Grant Playground. In this section, they continue to advocate for public infrastructure improvements to surrounding roads, parking facilities and public open spaces to compliment the private investment. The corporation is willing to endorse reallocating surrounding land “to serve communal uses for the good of the entire neighborhood.”32 Again, they speak about the activation of Grant Park through renovations and new programming. Importantly, the Master Plan recognizes the Moerlein Brewery and future Event Center are unfortunately not located on a primary street. As a result, the corporation suggests similar branding tactics (like those mentioned in the “Branding and Gateways” section) at the nearby intersections to attract visitors and identify the site. The Master Plan then goes into more site specific design suggestions and strategies. One strategy recommends repaving the adjacent streets in cobblestone (many of the historic streets in OTR utilized this material) that would signify pedestrian use but would still accommodate the semi trucks required for beer distribution. The corporation states that if the brewery trucks need additional room they will advocate expanding city streets. In this section, they also recognize the need for more structured parking in the district and specifically to accommodate the future Moerlein Event Center. Their proposed design for “Brewers’ Triangle” includes a new parking structure that replaces an existing surface lot. Additionally, a location is identified for beer distribution truck parking; they see the potential for using its privacy fence as another branding opportunity. See fig. 2.06 for their “Brewers’ Triangle” proposal.

“Complete Streets” (Pages 48-55)
The goal for this Initiative is to persuade the City of Cincinnati to upgrade streets in the Brewery District into “multi-model” corridors. They believe these renovations will allow for “the creation of vibrant public spaces that will encourage the development of private property into a mixed-use, sustainable neighborhood.”33 Once again, they suggest that the complete streets have
streetlights, sculptures, bike racks, benches, etc. to reinforce the branding of the district. They envision the streets serving as the connective tissues between the neighborhood’s assets.

Consistent with their overall strategy, they suggest beginning the “Complete Streets” Initiative with Liberty Street, again citing its widening in 1957 and the resulting pedestrian separation of OTR. They imagine Liberty Street’s renovation as the healing pedestrian connector between the southern and northern halves of OTR. They believe focusing on Liberty Street will take advantage of the development momentum occurring in southern OTR. Their hope is that the street’s renovation will produce new business investment and real estate development along the corridor.

The Master Plan document includes drawings from a study they produced on Liberty Street’s renovation. [fig. 2.07 and 2.08] They show five lanes devoted to automobiles. The two outer lanes are devoted to parallel parking, while the central lane is designated for left hand turns and the remaining two for continuous traffic in each direction. Bicycle lanes are provided in each direction, separated from the parallel parking by a minimum two foot wide raised concrete curb. The pedestrian crossings are significantly reduced by extending sidewalks into the outer parallel parking lanes. The corporation calls attention to four acres of underdeveloped land along Liberty Street (between Main Street and Central Parkway) for potential development. [See fig. 2.07] They believe new buildings could have primary street frontage on both Liberty Street and the north and south corridors of Elm Street and Race Street with the addition of the future streetcar system. Lastly, on page fifty-three they recognize opportunities for Brewery District branding and sustainable features to be included in the street renovation, “such as storm water collection, photo voltaic streetlights, etc.”

Page 44 addresses the district’s northern thoroughfare, McMicken Avenue, whose path is determined by the topography to its north. The BDCURC states that McMicken Avenue experiences a large amount of traffic including buses and trucks; therefore, they believe it should be made more pedestrian friendly. They also acknowledge that McMicken contains a majority of the district’s brewery-related structures. This they believe would justify sub-naming the road, “Brewer’s Boulevard,” supporting their “Branding and Gateways” Initiative.
Complete Streets
Liberty Street - The Complete Street
We believe Liberty Street should have 5 lanes for motor vehicles, 2 lanes for bicycles and personal motorized transports (e.g. - Segways) and wide sidewalks on both sides of the street (see street plan from Republic to Elm at right).

The 5 vehicle lanes should include a center lane used for left turns. The street should have one continuous travel lane in each direction. The outermost vehicle lanes should be for parallel parking. The two bicycle lanes should be 5 feet wide and should located outside the vehicle lanes. The bicycle lanes should be separated from the parallel parking lanes with raised concrete curbs at least 2 feet wide. These curbs will allow people in parked cars to open their car doors without interfering with the travel of bicycles. These curb should hold parking meters, signage and perhaps street lights.

Street intersections should have prominently ‘zebra’ striped crosswalks. The radii of concrete curbs should be as short as possible - 12’ to 15’ - so that each corner can have two separate curb ramps for pedestrians.

Vehicular access to all secondary north-south streets (i.e. - Pleasant, Republic & Clay) should be maintained.

Additionally, they believe the sub-name will help market the street for “a wide array of businesses—from manufacturing to professional services.” They suggest renovations similar to the Liberty Street renovations, such as extending sidewalks into the parking lane at intersections thus shortening pedestrian crossings.

To conclude the “Complete Streets” Initiative, page 55 suggests strategies for enhancing the Brewery District’s smaller (short block streets) to feel more intimate. They propose returning the pavement types on some of these streets to cobblestone and brick. Again, they believe an appropriate level of branding elements, such as signage, would be beneficial.

“Neighborhood Zones” (Pages 56-62)
BCDURC makes recommendations on zoning the district based on “historic development patterns, new desired uses, and preservation-minded forethought” with the goal of developing properties for mixed use and pedestrian-friendly patterns. They desire the zones to facilitate a wide array of sustaining uses, including residential, retail, office, institutional, entertainment

Fig. 2.07 and 2.08
Drawings taken from 2011 Brewery District Master Plan, pages 50 and 51. The Corporation’s proposal for renovations to Liberty Street. The dark roofs represent potential developments. Images credited to Glaserworks.

37. Ibid., 54.
38. Ibid., 56.
and manufacturing. They believe the current zoning regulations (as of October 2011) are “at odds with what we know to be healthy urban development patterns.” The corporation explains that they understand the City of Cincinnati is in the process of designing a Land Development Code. This will include Form-Based Code, which will regulate how property develops by means of character and scale, taking an emphasis off of land-use designations. The corporation defines zoning designations for six areas in the Brewery District, in an effort to influence the City’s decisions about Land Development Code for the district. Their new zones are listed below, including a brief summary of the corporation’s observations and specific recommendations for each zone. See fig. 2.09 for the zone locations. The Master Plan includes photos of each district and photos suggesting a desired “look” for new development. The corporation is avid about not permitting drive-through facilities in any of the zones.

Stonewall Hillside

Highlighted in this zone is the substantial vacancy rate, the topography that surrounds the urban basin, and its detached residential building typologies with occasional street corner commercial units. They recommend the area be a “Sub-Urban Residential” zone, keeping narrow streets, street parking, trees and sidewalks. They recommend that new construction “be low density, residential single family and attached units.” They want to keep the corner commercial uses. They state new buildings should be two to four stories tall and be placed immediately adjacent to the public sidewalk.

Fig. 2.09
Central Parkway

The BDCURC states that this area is primarily one to five story tall commercial buildings adjoining the wide, vehicular-dominant Central Parkway. A large portion of the buildings were built after the significant historical period of OTR. They qualify the zone as a “Urban Core Mixed Use,” acknowledging that the street’s width allows its buildings to be taller. New construction is to be two to five stories tall with fifteen foot or smaller setbacks from the public sidewalk. They state that Central Parkway should permit multi-modal transportation similar to their recommendations for Liberty Street, and be considered a pedestrian-friendly street—although “it will continue to carry a significant number of vehicles.”\(^{42}\) They perceive retail, entertainment, manufacturing, institutional, office and multi-family residential uses as appropriate for the zone.

McMicken & Findlay North

This is the largest zone the corporation designates in the Brewery District.\(^ {43}\) They are asking that this zone be labeled a “Brewery Heritage Urban Center” zone with specific recommendations qualifying it as a special development zone. They wish for the current development patterns to continue enabling a variety of uses—multi-family, manufacturing, brewing, office, retail, entertainment, religious and academic. The BDCURC states the zone should be developed at a medium density, with a focus on keeping the area pedestrian-oriented by maintaining on-street parking, using existing street profiles and restoring existing building stock. They state that if new construction is built, it should be between two to five stories tall and directly adjacent to the public sidewalk.

East Clifton Residential

The BDCURC acknowledges that this area is primarily multi-family residential buildings, typically three to four stories tall and constructed directly adjacent to one another and directly behind the public sidewalk. The corporation recommends naming it, “General Urban Hillside Residential” because a majority of the area is on the topography that surrounds the urban basin. They recommend future development be focused on restoration, with new construction, if necessary, being three to four stories tall abutting the sidewalk.

Findlay Market South

This area the corporation recommends be deemed, “General Urban Residential” while concentrating on restoration of the existing retail, single family and multi
family residential uses and its narrow tree lined streets. New construction should be two to four stories tall matching existing buildings setbacks.

Liberty Street

BDCURC highlights the same problems as mentioned before in the “Complete Streets” Initiative for Liberty Street. They underscore the vacant land on the south side of the street and the lots on the north side. They proclaim the buildings that are still present are occupied and include institutional uses as well as commercial and entertainment—typically two to four stories tall. They recommend labeling the neighborhood zone, “Urban Center Mixed Use.” They cite their “Complete Street” Initiative for development recommendations, while asking that new construction be between two to five stories tall and within ten feet of the public sidewalk.

“Parking & Placemaking” (Pages 63-69)

BDCURC’s goal for parking is “to encourage the Corporation of Findlay Market and the City of Cincinnati to find the best location and size for structured and surface parking to serve the Brewery District in its entirety.” They believe the parking should serve Findlay Market, catalytic businesses such as the Rookwood Pottery Company and the Moerlein Brewery, small businesses, and future residential development. They state providing such parking will strengthen the district’s businesses’ future viability, while leveraging the future streetcar system’s potential. Another purpose of this initiative is to identify surface parking lots that can be acquired for alternative uses, such as civic spaces or new development projects. On page 63, the corporation acknowledges that a more thorough and detailed parking study needs to be completed for the Brewery District and OTR. They suggest strategies for completing the parking study, but share that they have not completed such a study and are instead making specific recommendations for this Master Plan.

The corporation believes structured parking should be implemented to replace the surface lots, which “erode continuous walls of building facades that form a pedestrian-friendly environment.” They believe the positives of structured parking outweigh higher costs. Page 64 speaks about the Corporation for Findlay Market’s desire for a parking garage in between the Market and Central Parkway. The BDCURC suggests three alternate locations, which they believe better disperse the structured parking in the district by serving more then just
Findlay Market; they prove this by showing 1300 foot radius circles and 400 foot radius circles from each suggested garage. They state that structured parking will be able to meet the peak demand of Saturday mornings for Findlay Market, while providing parking for businesses and retail the rest of the week. They believe the addition of structured parking will allow more of the upper stories of the historical buildings to be developed into residences by providing residents with a secure place to park. Street parking is still desired to serve retail storefronts.

Pages 66 through 69 are the corporation’s specific recommendations for re-purposing two existing surface parking lots. The first one is the surface lot north of Findlay Market, which they suggest changing to a public plaza, “Findlay Market Piazza.” They note its proximity to the Market and its potential for encouraging public interaction by catering to activities including street artists, musicians and exhibitions. They suggest the plaza contain water features, gardens, shade trees, sculptures, tables and chairs. The Master Plan notes that vehicular access should still be permitted for the vendors to the farmers’ market shed. Next, they suggest providing an underground parking garage with a public green space on top (similar to Washington Park) in the block south of Henry Street and just west of the Rookwood Pottery Company. They refer to the proposed public open space as “Brewers’ Yard.” They see it as being in a critical location adjacent to Rookwood Pottery and just north of Findlay Market. They believe its implementation would make the redevelopment of the historic Moerlein Bottling Plant building more appealing to investors as well as provide an opportunity for new development. They envision “Brewers’ Yard” complimenting the “Findlay Market Piazza” allowing “people to enjoy passive recreation activities, such as picnics and frisbee throwing.” They state that the space could be programmed for concerts, organized games and activities for both kids and adults.

The BDCURC concludes the Master Plan document with sentimental and positive rhetoric as they claim the Brewery District’s future. They reiterate the district’s strengths and the adversity it has faced. They believe Cincinnati’s heritage can be told through the recognition and celebration of the Brewery District as Cincinnatians begin to associate it with the city’s identity. “By making better places, and solving development problems, we will attract new investment. We will provide fertile ground for new business and residents.”

47. Ibid., 64. 1300 foot radius representing business patrons and 400 foot radius representing residential parking.

48. Ibid., 69.

49. Ibid., 69. Note, the location of Brewer’s Yard is now the future home of the Streetcar Maintenance and Operations Facility.

50. Ibid., 73.
In order to repopulate the Brewery District with businesses and residents, we will need more parking. This parking must be wisely planned and efficient because the parking challenge in Over-the-Rhine is best solved block by block, not lot by lot. We should avoid surface parking lots because they are inefficient and, when located on streets, erode continuous walls of building facades that form a pedestrian-friendly environment. The BDCURC will advocate for structured parking. We acknowledge parking garages are expensive, but we believe they are the best, most efficient way to provide the quantity of parking needed to redevelop our neighborhood.

The Corporation for Findlay Market has expressed a desire to have a parking garage for its patrons—primarily to satisfy its Saturday morning, peak parking demand. The Corporation has identified a site Central Parkway as a preferred site for such a garage (#1 on the map to right; figure #5 on opposing page). While this location may benefit Findlay Market’s Saturday morning demand, we believe a new parking garage should serve as many businesses and residents of the Brewery District as possible—or there should be more than one.

We have identified three other locations that could be used for structured parking (2, 3 and 4 on the map). These locations would spread parking garages throughout the neighborhood benefitting many businesses and residential development (1300’ orange circles, 400’ red circles respectively).
03 Brewery District Master Plan: Analysis

This thesis' study and analysis has distilled the goals of the 2011 Brewery District Master Plan's coordinated strategy and initiatives into the following general strategies and goals:

• Establish a more dense, walkable, and pedestrian oriented urban community within the historical Brewery District neighborhood.
• Celebrate the district's brewery heritage and leverage it to bring in people and ultimately business investment.
• Identify, develop and utilize district anchor businesses as catalysts for further business investment and real estate development—support the catalysts through strategic and specific initiatives and by removing barriers that would hinder their success.
• Redevelop and create spaces for public use and enjoyment that cater to multiple ages for various programmed and unprogrammed activities and compliment adjacent catalyst businesses.
• Facilitate the growth of a mixed-use economy through zoning recommendations and regulations and the strategic reuse of the Brewery District's existing building stock.
• Repopulate the Brewery District with both residents and businesses, as the Master Plan explicitly states.

Only time and full implementation of the 2011 Brewery District Master Plan's coordinated strategy and initiatives can accurately measure the success and effectiveness of its goals. However, comparing the BDCURC's strategies, initiatives and goals to smart growth principles, as well as to the development strategies in the adjacent Gateway Quarter (southern half of OTR), and to certain elements associated with thriving city districts, one can measure the potential success of the Master Plan. The first part of this analysis looks at these general comparisons and tools for measurements, then makes specific criticisms resulting from the analysis of the 2011 Brewery District Master Plan and its relationship within the OTR neighborhood, its relationship to the city of Cincinnati, and its congruency with the future streetcar system. Three primary criticisms are detailed in the following chapter relating to the application of the BDCURC's catalyst development strategy. Additionally, the Plan's architectural design strategies and implications are critiqued.

01. Specifically, these elements are identified by Jane Jacobs in her seminal text, The Death and Life of Great American Cities.
As acknowledged by the BDCURC, the redevelopment occurring in the southern half of OTR is continuing to proliferate and revitalize the neighborhood; it is one of the primary forces that will contribute to the Brewery District’s redevelopment success because of their shared neighborhood boundaries. Additionally, the Brewery District, like the rest of OTR, has the irrefutable advantage of having once successfully supported a dense, mixed-use neighborhood. Clearly, the Brewery District historically (prior to its decline as outlined in Chapter 01) served a similar role to what the BDCURC envisions for its future. Therefore, the BDCURC’s ultimate goal of repopulating the district with residents and businesses has the conveniences of an in place infrastructure and much existing building stock that facilitate a walkable community.

Smart Growth

Originally listed in Chapter 01, the Smart Growth Network website displays the following smart growth principles:

- Mix Land Uses
- Take Advantage of Compact Building Design
- Create a Range of Housing Opportunities and Choices
- Create Walkable Neighborhoods
- Foster Distinctive, Attractive Communities with a Strong Sense of Place
- Preserve Open Space, Farmland, Natural Beauty and Critical Environmental Areas
- Strengthen and Direct Development Towards Existing Communities
- Provide a Variety of Transportation Choices
- Make Development Decisions Predictable, Fair and Cost Effective
- Encourage Community and Stakeholder Collaboration in Development Decisions02

Immediately, one can see how the BDCURC and their Master Plan are aligning with many of the smart growth principles. The BDCURC’s promotion of the “Urban Mix” zoning district,03 the Master Plan’s “Rediscovering a Mixed-Use Economy” and “Neighborhood Zones” Initiatives all point to retaining the historical mixed land uses of OTR. Though less direct, the Master Plan is taking advantage of compact building design by promoting the rehabilitation of the existing building stock, which has a significant amount of densely packed rowhouses. By citing the upper floors of these rowhouses as available residential units and proposing the district’s large amount of warehouse
buildings for adaptive reuse as live-work spaces, the BDCURC is suggesting a range of housing opportunities. However, as is criticized later in this chapter, there is a lack of initiative to promote new residential construction in a largely abandoned residential zone. Supplementing this observation, the Master Plan does not expound upon any initiatives that promote a variety of housing types relating to income levels, or purchase versus renting options; although, the corporation’s “Owner Redevelopment Task Force” feasible loan program begins to address this issue. The Master Plan is explicit about desiring a walkable neighborhood through its preservation of the neighborhood’s character, the “Complete Street” Initiative, and suggestions for public space and infrastructure renovations. The BDCURC is certainly attempting to foster a distinctive and attractive community and to promote the neighborhood’s existing “sense of place” with a majority of its initiatives. Their primary goal of promoting and celebrating the district’s brewing heritage amplifies this. The Master Plan wishes to preserve existing open spaces and develop new ones, which they believe contribute to its pedestrian oriented atmosphere. Suggestions for multi-modal streets, the preference given to the pedestrian, and recognition of the future streetcar potential are all congruent with the smart growth principle of providing multiple transit choices. The Master Plan’s coordinated strategy of identifying and utilizing catalyst businesses as focus areas for energy and investment reveal the corporation’s belief that this will be the best use of energy and economic funds. Ultimately, the 2011 Brewery District Master Plan is a proponent for smart growth because it is a vision for strengthening and directing development toward the Brewery District community, which (according to the plan) is a result of community and stakeholder collaboration.

Catalyst Development Strategies Utilized by 3CDC

The BDCURC’s coordinated strategy of attention and investment at identified catalyst businesses and locations is similar to 3CDC’s development practices in the Gateway Quarter and downtown Cincinnati. 3CDC’s implementation of the catalytic development approach has proven relatively successful in creating area revitalization by sparking surrounding real estate development and business investment. It is not surprising that the BDCURC would devise a similar strategy. The catalyst approach works well within an existing urban neighborhood that has experienced significant decline and vacancy because an existing public infrastructure (street organizational layout) exists to provide the connective tissue between the catalyst projects. Additionally, the existence

04. See “The BDCURC’s Efforts” on pages 18-19.

05. Brewery District Community Urban Redevelopment Corporation, 2011 Brewery District Master Plan, 3 and 6. Despite the initial workshops which invited people “knowledgeable about Over-the-Rhine and the Brewery District,” the final document is primarily the result of key stakeholder input and BDCURC’s Planning Committee and consultant.

06. See Chapter 01 for more information on 3CDC’s revitalization efforts.
of historical buildings or landmarks (despite being neglected and deteriorating) that the public associate with a place can provide the framework for a new catalyst anchor or business. In the case of 3CDC, they began their development work by renovating the historic Fountain Square in the Central Business District (CBD); an iconic area to the city since the nineteenth century because of the fountain landmark. The public plaza containing the fountain with the parking garage underneath, had not seen much attention for nearly 40 years causing it to become rundown and uninviting to the public. The investment and attention focused there averted the negative decline taking place and established a center for increased business activity for the CBD, which 3CDC claims has created $125 million in adjacent private investment. Similarly and specific to OTR, 3CDC identified Washington Park as a significant redevelopment project. Washington Park has been a public park and civic space for over 150 years, but for years prior to the renovation had not seen much attention or investment.
It sits adjacent to the historic Music Hall and the new School for the Creative & Performing Arts (SCPA); therefore, its location is familiar to Cincinnatians. According to 3CDC, “The Park and Garage will serve as a catalyst for future development of at least 25 surrounding vacant properties.”

3CDC identified Vine Street as the location for some of its first investments (Gateway Arts and Gateway Condo projects) which can be seen in yellow in fig. 3.01. Interestingly, Main Street had typically been the location of new business investment in recent decades becoming home to “shops, art galleries, restaurants, and night spots.” However, 3CDC chose to focus redevelopment efforts at Vine Street two blocks west of Main Street. Decisively, 3CDC acknowledged the central location of Vine Street to OTR and its relationship to the existing cultural institutions to its west (Music Hall) and the existing development at Main Street. 3CDC recognized Main Street was already serving as a catalyst to some degree and the cultural institutions to the west were doing the same, therefore attention at Vine Street was crucial. The Vine Street investments proved to be catalytic to additional projects along Vine Street and east at Main Street. Focusing on Vine has provided a broader economic impact to the Gateway Quarter then if the investment had been elsewhere. Having the multiple—yet distributed—catalyst sites, allows further business investment and real estate development to utilize the existing infrastructure and building stock to connect between the initial catalyst sites.

The BDCURC is essentially using this same anchor development strategy through the identification and selection of their three “Anchors and New Catalytic Businesses.” If implemented in a method similar to 3CDC’s implementation, this strategy could prove to be successful for the Brewery District as well; however, some criticisms of the application of the anchor development strategy will be highlighted in the following sections.

**Specific Criticisms**

As detailed above, the BDCURC’s coordinated strategy, initiatives and goals are on track to contribute to a successful neighborhood district; however, there are three primary criticisms that resulted from the study and analysis of the 2011 Brewery District Master Plan. The first criticism is the corporation’s decision to concentrate energy and focus in the southern portion of the Brewery District. The second is the proximity of the identified catalysts to one another. The third criticism is the Master Plan’s lack of integration with the proposed streetcar
system. The combination of these three does not facilitate any reason for real estate development or business investment north of Henry Street. These deficits result in missed opportunities to engage “Brewer’s Boulevard” and to create a destination unique to the Brewery District that directly identifies and celebrates the Brewery District’s heritage and identity the BDCURC is establishing. These points mean economic impact will not fully reach the entire Brewery District and the opportunity to activate a substantial residential zone that could increase streetcar users and Brewery District residents is not fully realized. Lastly, there are criticisms from the designer’s perspective, of the implied design strategies and implications made, as well as omitted by the 2011 Brewery District Master Plan. These criticisms and missed opportunities are detailed in the following sections and visual diagrams.

**Area of Focus**

The first criticism is the corporation’s decision to focus their efforts at the southern edge of the Brewery District because of the momentum taking place in OTR south of Liberty Street. Although their “Complete Street” strategies would help mitigate the pedestrian divide between the northern and southern halves of OTR, the development momentum from the south is precisely the reason the Corporation’s focus should be in an alternate location. That momentum will continue to bring attention and investment to Liberty Street regardless of the corporation’s additional attention; therefore, their focus should be at an alternate site that will affect a greater portion of the Brewery District while enhancing its branding an image. The investment and attention at Liberty Street is a critical component to linking all of OTR; however, it does not directly help to make the Brewery District a place or support its Brewery Heritage image. There are no historical brewery sites directly fronting Liberty Street between Central Parkway and McMicken Avenue.

**Catalysts**

In addition to Liberty Street, the Corporation is focusing on the three projects they identified in the “Anchors and New Catalytic Businesses” of the Master Plan. Two of those projects—Findlay Market and the new Moerlein Brewery and future Events Center—are within two blocks north of Liberty Street and are included in their southern focus area. The third catalyst is the Rookwood Pottery Company’s headquarters located at 1920 Race Street, just north of Findlay Street. [see fig. 3.02] For each catalyst, the corporation has proposed


11. A similar situation is 3CDC’s decision not to focus at Main Street, recognizing the need elsewhere to accomplish a broader impact.
an adjacent outdoor public space. The public space that includes the renovation of Grant Playground is described in the “Brewers’ Triangle” Initiative. It is located just north of the new Moerlein Brewery and future Events Center. The other two are addressed in the “Parking and Placemaking” Initiative. The “Findlay Market Piazza” is proposed at the existing surface parking lot north of Findlay Market, while the “Brewers’ Yard” is suggested just north of the proposed piazza at the corner of Henry and Race across from the Rookwood Pottery Company. [see fig. 3.03]

The most established OTR neighborhood anchor, Findlay Market, is properly identified by the corporation as serving as a catalyst for adjacent business investment. It has served a catalytic role for much of the last century.12 Their proposal for converting its north surface parking lot into the, “Findlay Market Piazza” would provide additional outdoor public space that could handle various levels of programming, while taking advantage of the customer crowd from the market. Additionally, the piazza conversion would help address the “Anchors and Assets are Islands” problem identified in the Master Plan13 by bringing pedestrian activity next to Race Street, instead of the current fence and parking lot. If adequate and easily accessible parking can be provided to serve Findlay Market,14 this added public space could prove to be very beneficial—adding another element to the catalytic qualities of Findlay Market.

The new Moerlein Brewery and future Events Center is located on a secondary side street (Moore Street), but is relatively close to the Liberty Street corridor. The brewery occupies a historical brewery structure, which contributes to the Master Plan’s goals. The corporation’s proposed changes to the adjacent infrastructure and Grant Park contribute to its catalytic qualities. The BDCURC cites the proximity of the new Moerlein Brewery to Liberty Street and the revitalization occurring in southern OTR as being advantageous to the new brewery’s location because it is within a five minute walk from Liberty Street and the blocks just south of it.15 [see fig. 3.02] Despite this proximity, the new Moerlein Brewery still suffers from an isolation problem, as realized by the BDCURC. The corporation’s Liberty Street renovations and suggested branding elements could serve to close this isolation gap; however, a lack of visibility from Liberty Street and the other nearby primary street, McMicken Avenue, remains. Also, its accessibility and visibility from the future streetcar route is less than ideal. The new Moerlein Brewery has great potential to become a significant

12. Young and Cain, 37. Findlay Market was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1972.


14. Ibid., 63. The Master Plan explains how the Corporation for Findlay Market is searching for an adequate location for structured parking to accommodate market visitors, especially during peak hours.

15. Ibid., 28.
Fig. 3.02
Diagram showing the three “Anchors and New Catalytic Businesses” the 2011 Brewery District Master Plan has identified. Note their proximity to each other by the 1300 foot or five minute walking radius. The BDCURC uses this as a tool to measure the comfortable walking distance from a parking garage to businesses for patrons. This tool for measurement is commonly used in transit-oriented design to measure how close residential units or businesses should be located to a transit node to fall within a reasonable walking distance. In this case the measurement is used to measure how far users of an identified catalyst would walk to other businesses nearby (those assumed to be created from the initial investment. The Liberty Street Corridor is also recognized as being a driver for new business investment and real estate development and is where the BDCURC is choosing to focus their efforts.

1. Findlay Market
2. Rookwood Pottery Company
3. Moerlein Brewery and future Event Center
4. Liberty Street Corridor
Fig. 3.03
Diagram showing the catalyst businesses with their adjacent proposed public spaces according to the 2011 Brewery District Master Plan. Note that “Brewers’ Yard” is now the future home of the Streetcar Maintenance and Operations Facility. Diagram by author.

1. Findlay Market
2. Rookwood Pottery Company
3. Moerlein Brewery and future Event Center
4. Liberty Street Corridor
5. Findlay Market Piazza
6. Brewers’ Yard
7. Brewers’ Triangle (Grant Playground renovation)
Catalysts' Proximity

Regardless of the level of potential impact for each, the primary criticism of the corporation's identified catalysts is their proximity to one another, especially considering the 1300 foot radius measured from each location, which is a visual tool to show the approximate average five minute walking distance away from a catalyst.17 [see fig. 3.03] These circles of impact reveal a proximity to one another that is considerably concentrated. The concentration inhibits the catalysts' ability to provide economic impact to the entire district. Unfortunately, with the BDCURC focusing only in the southern portion of the Brewery District and at the three identified locations there is no reason for business investment or real estate development to occur north of Henry Street, according to the Master Plan.
Integration with the Streetcar

An analysis of the streetcar route through the Brewery District reveals a similar lack of attention north of Henry Street. The corporation acknowledges the streetcar system will provide a much needed connection to the Central Business District, the new Banks development at the riverfront, and potentially the universities and hospitals Uptown; however, the Master Plan does not adequately address the streetcar’s route through the Brewery District. The Master Plan cites that the streetcar will have an economic impact three to four blocks from its path;\textsuperscript{18} however, the corporation does not elaborate where its proposed stops could influence future development, or if those stops are easily accessible from the identified catalyst projects. It is understood by the City of Cincinnati’s description and the “Cincinnati Streetcar Feasibility Study”\textsuperscript{19} that the streetcar system is seen as an economic catalyst for redevelopment. The feasibility study states the streetcar will spark redevelopment along its route based on studies of other cities who have implemented streetcar projects. Developer confidence in the area increases after the route area experiences a large public investment. Also, properties that were not conducive to parking are now accessible though transit.\textsuperscript{20} As is shown in the map in figure 3.04, the potential for development adjacent to the route is measured by the number of blocks at a perpendicular distance from the route. The “core” (red) makes up the blocks directly surrounding the route, the “center” (orange) is the area two blocks away, while the “edge” (yellow) area is three blocks away from the route. According to this method, the Cincinnati streetcar system could impact a substantial portion of the Brewery District; however, this method does not consider the locations of stops along the route. Examining the designed streetcar route discloses that there are only three proposed stops in the Brewery District. [see fig. 3.06] The stops are huddled around the established anchor, Findlay Market. After measuring the 1300 foot radius from each stop, their level of impact is shown as severely overlapping one another while being centrally concentrated in the district. [see fig. 3.07]

It is clear that the Streetcar Initiative being implemented by the City of Cincinnati has similar aspirations as the BDCURC for neighborhood revitalization [see pages 48-49], yet potential significant economic impact for the Brewery District is being missed by not integrating the streetcar system more appropriately with the 2011 Brewery District Master Plan. According to the “Goals and
City of Cincinnati’s Streetcar Initiative

According to the City of Cincinnati’s website, “The Cincinnati Streetcar is an electric mode of transportation operating in its first phase on a 3.6-mile loop connecting key communities in the city’s urban core. Running up to 18 hours a day and 365 days a year, the streetcar will be a vital complement to the city’s existing Metro and other transportation systems.”01

The City claims the following benefits from implementing the streetcar:

More jobs. Due to the jobs needed to install the system and primarily due to business investment anticipated along its route.

More development. The city cites the Streetcar Feasibility Study and its validation by the University of Cincinnati’s Economic Center for Education and Research, which measure the positive development benefits. The vacant buildings in OTR are acknowledged for potential business and residential development.

More livable communities. “By creating denser, mixed-use development with a population that is less reliant on automobiles, the streetcar will reinforce the walkability of the City.”02


02. “About the Cincinnati Streetcar.”

Fig. 3.05
The designed route—the culmination of numerous iterations according to the feasibility study—will connect the CBD to Findlay Market and OTR, providing access to popular destination points in between. [see fig. 3.05]

The city’s justification for the specific route through downtown is due to the CBD being the largest employment center for the City with approximately 70,000 people in the area everyday. They believe the thousands of potential riders will lead to investment in new business and residential development. Jobs will be created as result, increasing tax revenue.04


04. “About the Cincinnati Streetcar.”

Fig. 3.06

Fig. 3.07
Diagram of impact from each of the city’s proposed stops and each stop’s relationship to the 2011 Brewery District Master Plan’s proposed catalyst projects. Blue are anchor businesses. Green are public spaces.
Opportunities” established by the Project Management Team\cite{Cincinnati_Streetcar_Feasibility_Study} who conducted the original feasibility study, the streetcar system has the goal of supporting existing and proposed development of neighborhoods adjacent to downtown. This includes “encourag[ing] revitalization and livable and walkable communities through development of good streetscapes and pedestrian environments.”\cite{Ibid.,_5}

The route going through the Brewery District will help accomplish these goals; however, analysis reveals that more opportunities need to be provided for streetcar users to enter and exit the system via appropriate stops—more than just the three concentrated at Findlay Market. Comparing the proposed stops to the BDCURC’s identified catalysts reveals the Rookwood Pottery Company is relatively close to the stop on Race Street. [see fig 3.07] The Master Plan’s proposed public open spaces, “Findlay Market Piazza” and “Brewers’ Yard” are also relatively close to this stop; however, as noted earlier, “Brewers’ Yard” is no longer a viable location because of the future streetcars maintenance and operations facility. [see fig 3.03] The new Moerlein Brewery and “Brewers’ Triangle” initiative are unfortunately a considerable distance from the streetcar route and its stops (two to three blocks), although not beyond its assumed potential impact. Based on this analysis, the 2011 Brewery District Master Plan does not advocate for opportunities for additional stops beyond the three near Findlay Market, nor do they propose new appropriate catalyst or attractions along its route. This contributes to this writer’s criticisms earlier of the Master Plan missing opportunities to directly highlight the Brewery District’s heritage through a catalyst project enforcing its image and sense of place. Essentially, the analysis reveals no significant catalyst north of Findlay Market, nor one that symbolically recognizes the Brewery District’s Heritage, and therefore, no streetcar stops to officially recognize the Brewery District as an attraction. Additionally, there is a need for a catalyst not subject to visual isolation or the proximity of other catalysts.

**Engaging “Brewer’s Boulevard” and the District’s Brewery Heritage**

Similar to the criticism of the BDCURC’s area of focus and their selection of concentrated catalysts, the primary criticism of the streetcar system is not its ability to serve the role of catalyst, but of the route not extending an additional block north to McMicken Avenue and engaging “Brewer’s Boulevard.” The Cincinnati Streetcar Feasibility Study explains how multiple routes and variations were studied to determine the final design. According to the study, the route was first designed to extend to McMicken Avenue; but, “stakeholders suggested

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{Fig_3.08}
\caption{Photograph of Jackson Brewery.}
\end{figure}
that the study alignment be modified slightly in the northern end to go beyond Findlay Market to serve McMicken Street [Avenue] and the ‘brewery district.’ Further inquiry exposed why the extension to McMicken Avenue was eventually removed and revised to turn west a block south at Henry Street. First, “the oblique angle of the turn from northbound Elm to eastbound McMicken presented real challenges. The streetcar would have had to made a very broad turn, perhaps blocking traffic going westbound on McMicken.” Additionally, “The maintenance facility will be at Henry and Race, and they want to bring the building out to Race Street. The Henry Street approach allows them to do this.”

These reasons should be weighed against the potential economic impact of providing an extension and stop at McMicken Avenue. By extending the route one block and providing a stop north at “Brewer’s Boulevard” better accessibility would be provided to the many historical breweries along McMicken Avenue. [see fig. 3.10 and 3.11]

A catalyst in one of these historical breweries at McMicken Avenue would provide the opportunity to reuse a “dramatic” interior space and utilize it as a place to enforce the BDCURC’s branding initiative and celebrate the district’s

23. Ibid., 6.
25. 2011 Brewery District Master Plan, 21. BDCURC acknowledge many of the historic breweries contain large dramatic interior spaces, including barrel-vaulted basements and sub-basements. They believe there is “dynamic” potential for adaptive reuse.
brewing heritage. Congruently, a streetcar stop at McMicken Avenue near a catalyst project would reinforce the catalyst and the Brewery District as being a unique destination and attraction along the streetcar route. A catalyst and streetcar stop at McMicken Avenue could also provide a more visually prominent catalyst. The streetcar user experience could be enhanced exposing the user to McMicken Avenue and providing them the opportunity to explore and utilize the street, versus traveling past the maintenance and operation's facility on Henry Street. [see fig. 3.09 and 3.10] Two existing historical brewery sites are highlighted in figure 3.11 that are currently vacant and could benefit from an adaptive reuse. This diagram also reveals the level of impact these brewery sites could have if properly implemented as catalysts. As seen in the diagram, if the BDCURC focused attention at a northern catalyst along McMicken Avenue, it would spread the economic impact of investment throughout the entire district. A prominent catalyst located at this northern boundary could more clearly define the Brewery District as a destination and better compliment the development happening in the Gateway Quarter of OTR, as well as the Banks Development at the riverfront. It could establish itself as a distinct node on the streetcar route. Clear nodes of development with a streetcar route

Fig. 3.11
Diagram showing two existing vacant historical brewery sites (in green) that could potentially serve the role as catalyst projects. Note each has the ability to spread economic impact to the entire Brewery District when considered with BDCURC's identified catalysts. The pink dashed line represents "Brewer's Boulevard." The blue are BDCURC's identified catalyst projects.
connecting them will better facilitate investment and development between them. A distinct northern catalytic-node at McMicken Avenue would be a better application of the “Anchors and New Catalytic Businesses” Initiative the BDCURC is trying to employ.

Stonewall Hillside Residential Neighborhood Zone and Economic Impact

One of the most notable criticisms from the analysis of the 2011 Brewery District Master Plan is the missed opportunity to activate a significant residential zone in the northern portion of the district. This residential zone is labeled the “Stonewall Hillside” neighborhood zone in the Master Plan. Currently it is zoned multi-family residential (RM-1.2)\(^{26}\). The zone contains over 100 vacant lots that could fall within a five minute walk of a catalyst and streetcar stop at McMicken Avenue. The land vacancy provides a unique opportunity for new residential construction in the district and OTR. If OTR were to see an exponential growth in revitalization and a rapid increase in residential demand this residential zone would be a primary location for additional residences to supply the demand.\(^{27}\) As noted by an observer in one of the Brewery District Master Plan’s workshop sessions, the “Stonewall Hillside” residential zone contains spectacular views to the city because of its location on the topography at the edge of the urban basin.\(^{28}\) It was also observed in a workshop session, that there are currently few residents in the Brewery District.\(^{29}\) Critical to glean from this observation is the nature of speculation of the increased development and “repopulation” of the district; significant opportunities need to be identified for potential development for varying residential uses. The identified residential zone can accommodate a variety of future residential related uses, including assisted living, multi-family, bed and breakfasts, and transitional housing.

The industrial buildings in the urban mix zone have been identified by the BDCURC for live-work programs, while, the upper stories in the area south of Findlay Market have been identified for residential units.\(^{30}\) Adding the ability for new residential construction (with a variety of potential uses) through this identified zone increases the variety of residential options available to accommodate a variety of resident user groups, which will promote a healthy, vibrant and mixed demographic neighborhood district. This is an established smart growth principle—“Create a Range of Housing Opportunities and Choices.”\(^{31}\)

\(^{26}\) “RM-1.2 Multi-family. This subdistrict is intended to provide for mixed residential uses at moderately high densities. This is an intense district with an urban character. The minimum land area for every dwelling unit is 1,200 square feet.” City of Cincinnati, Ohio, Code of Ordinances, Title XIV Zoning Code of the City of Cincinnati. Chapter 1405 - Residential Multi-Family Districts, Section 1405-03, accessed February 17, 2013, http://library.municode.com/index.aspx?clientId=19996&stateId=35&stateName=Ohio

\(^{27}\) See Chapter 01 for information on 3CDC’s near one hundred percent occupancy rates for and new and renovated residential units.

\(^{28}\) 2011 Brewery District Master Plan, 10.

\(^{29}\) Ibid., 7-8.

\(^{30}\) Ibid., 37.

\(^{31}\) See beginning of Chapter 03 for complete list of principles.
Fig. 3.12

Zoning Designations:
CCP: Commercial Community Pedestrian
CN-M: Commercial Neighborhood - Mixed
RM-0.7: Residential Multi-Family (700sf)
RM-1.2: Residential Multi-Family (1,200sf)
RM-2.0: Residential Multi-Family (2,000sf)
RMX: Residential Mixed
SF-2: Single Family Residential (2,000sf)
UM: Urban Mix District
Fig. 3.13
Diagram showing the residential zones a northern streetcar stop could activate. Zones shown in blue. Yellow circle represents five minute walking radius from stop.
The Cincinnati Streetcar Feasibility Study clearly states a streetcar’s primary function is being an “urban circulator” and “pedestrian accelerator”; however, they acknowledge that the downtown and OTR residents who work in either area could take advantage of the streetcar for their commute to work. A higher commuter ridership could be a unique feature of Cincinnati’s streetcar system because of its route within the naturally confined urban basin where urban neighborhoods are immediately adjacent to the CBD. Historically, these neighborhoods contained high-density populations that supported businesses and amenities in the downtown area.

Based on evidence from other cities with streetcar systems, the Streetcar Initiative Project Management Team believes construction of a streetcar system will lead to increased development density in its vicinity, stimulate housing demand around its stops, and cause greater appreciation in adjacent property values. It is assumed that this is appropriate for the properties within a quarter to a half mile of a streetcar stop. This further supports activating the vacant residential zone identified as “Stonewall Hillside,” and suggests the residential neighborhoods near West Clifton Avenue could also be impacted by a streetcar stop at McMicken Avenue. [see figure 3.13]

Adding residential units and providing access to more residential zones in the Brewery District would provide more daily streetcar users traveling to work and to amenities along the route. This would increase daily commuter ridership on a system primarily being identified for its linking of attractions. Analysis of the route reveals it is primarily accommodating travel between attractions. For example, Findlay Market is the noted attraction north of Liberty Street, while the sports stadiums are noted at the riverfront. Adding daily residential users to compliment visitors and tourists will increase the streetcar’s viability. The importance of such diversity is not understated by Jane Jacobs, “The district [...] must serve more than one primary function [...]. These must insure the presence of people who go outdoors on different schedules and are in the place for different purposes, but who are able to use many facilities in common.”

Service Professional Jobs

The BDCURC believes the existing industrial and brewery buildings hold opportunities for uses by “the new, creative-based economy,” ideal for service professionals who “do not rely on sidewalk traffic.” These include professionals
such as “accountants, lawyers, architects, massage therapists, psychologists, consultants, as well as people whose business is primarily internet-based.”

This observation by the BDCURC could serve as another vital use for a catalyst project at one of McMicken Avenue’s historical brewery buildings. It would be a direct application of the Master Plan’s “Rediscovering a Mixed-Use Economy” Initiative and provide an additional group of users to access and utilize the streetcar stop. Again, this supports the diversity of users and primary uses being activated through a catalyst at McMicken Avenue, needed to make the streetcar system viable and ensure the success of the catalyst. “The first, primary uses, are those which, in themselves, bring people to a specific place because they are anchorages. Offices and factories are primary uses. So are dwellings.”

Design Strategies and Implications

It is understood that a multi-disciplined group of stakeholders formed the Planning Committee who devised the 2011 Brewery District Master Plan and that the primary goal was to initiate and direct economic development and repopulation in the district; however, there are some design strategies embedded. These are primarily apparent in the “Banding and Gateways,” “Complete Streets,” and “Parking and Placemaking” Initiatives. These design strategies are less architectural and more urban in scale, as they suggest improvements to make streets more pedestrian friendly. Where the Master Plan does give guidelines for new construction, for example in the “Neighborhood Zones” Initiative, they are also toward keeping the pedestrian-oriented atmosphere of the neighborhood (maintaining current setbacks and buildings heights). The embedded design strategies are suggesting reproducing or keeping the traditional forms of the neighborhood, while changes suggested for the existing building stock are usually only programmatic (adaptive reuse of warehouse and historical buildings). Despite the goal of maintaining (or returning to) the character and sense of place of the overall neighborhood, there are no suggested design strategies for how new architectural and site designs can engage the multiple contextual layers of the neighborhood. Redevelopment and new construction will help stimulate interest in the Brewery District, just as it has in the southern half of OTR, but how does the designer approach designing in such a context? More specifically, how does the designer celebrate the Brewery District’s heritage through new architectural and design interventions that are catalytic to new business investment, real estate

36. Ibid., 37.

37. Jacobs, 208.
development and the repopulation of the neighborhood? This question can also be addressed in the broader architectural discourse of the relationship of new architectural and site interventions to old, existing and historical building styles. These questions are explored in the following site analysis and design methodology sections of Chapter 05.

**Conclusion of Analysis**
This analysis determined there is not a significant catalyst north of Findlay Market or one that symbolically recognizes the Brewery District. Additionally, there is a strong need for a development catalyst that is not subject to visual isolation or the proximity of existing anchors. Engaging McMicken Avenue could solve many of these problems, as well as provide additional development opportunities through the integration of the future streetcar system. This would strengthen both the BDCURC’s and the Streetcar Initiative’s efforts.
New Catalyst Proposal for the Brewery District: *A Catalytic-Node*

The analysis and criticisms detailed in Chapter 03 establish the foundation for this thesis’ proposal for a new catalyst project that will situate itself within the *2011 Brewery District Master Plan*, but provides an improved and stronger application of the catalytic development approach the BDCURC is utilizing. This thesis proposes a catalyst project at the site north of the Elm Street and McMicken Avenue intersection—where Elm Street terminates. This site includes the historic Jackson Brewery complex and the public land immediately to its east. [see fig. 4.01] The building, which is now only accessible via Mohawk Street, will be made accessible from the prominent intersection at McMicken Avenue through the design project proposal.

The Catalyst’s Roles

Determined from the analysis, the primary roles the proposed catalyst project must perform to be successful and to have the most impact are listed below:

1. Serve as a catalyst to the surrounding area to fill the gap missed by the Master Plan and provide economic impact to the entire district.
2. Engage the northern district boundary of McMicken Avenue to further support role number one, and make McMicken Avenue more pedestrian friendly.
3. Celebrate the Brewery District’s heritage through its *place* and establish a unique destination associated with the Brewery District by engaging and reusing a historical brewery building and integrating with the streetcar system through a unique stop.
4. Activate and connect the adjacent residential zone to the streetcar system to supply it with additional riders and provide opportunities for new real estate development and ultimately more residents for the Brewery District.

Program

The proposal involves an extension of the designed streetcar route to McMicken Avenue that will engage the site with a unique stop. This stop will be the “node” of the “catalytic-node.” The streetcar stop will serve to establish this catalyst as
a unique destination within the Brewery District. A public space component will be incorporated similar to the catalyst projects the BDCURC identified. However, unlike the BDCURC’s catalysts, the proposal includes multiple business and program elements, in addition to serving as the headquarters and start of the “Brewery Heritage Trail” (one of the BDCURC’s Initiatives and ongoing projects).

The site at McMicken Avenue will be activated by the new streetcar stop, a public plaza space, a new coffee shop, deli, small retail space, and a brewpub and tasting room occupying a portion of the existing sub-basement levels (at grade with McMicken Avenue) of the Jackson Brewery. Additionally, an approximate 80 space parking garage, accessible from McMicken Avenue, will be provided to serve the new catalyst project.01 This activity will draw users up to the second level of programmed spaces—a new restaurant component that compliments the brewpub at McMicken Avenue. It will take advantage of views overlooking OTR and the city. This will also be the level where the “Brewery Heritage Tour” will be headquartered, providing access to the basement-level vaults that run underneath the Jackson Brewery building. These vaulted spaces will contain displays and information on the district’s brewing heritage and the brewing

01. Note, the parking garage requirement assumes half of the required parking spaces because of an allowance in the Cincinnati zoning code that allows for a 50% reduction if the parking is near a streetcar stop in an Urban Mix district. City of Cincinnati, Ohio, Code of Ordinances, Title XIV Zoning Code of the City of Cincinnati. Chapter 1425 - Parking and Loading Regulations, Section 1425-01. - Reduced Parking, accessed February 18, 2013, http://library.municode.com/index.aspx?clientId=19996&stateId=35&stateName=Ohio
process. The corporation’s guided tours around the district will start and finish in these dramatic vaulted spaces. These vaults will also be available for rent for private events, such as wedding rehearsal dinners, where food can be provided by the adjacent restaurant. [see fig. 4.14 and 4.15]

Continuing up from this level, is the existing first floor space of the Jackson Brewery. This level is approximately the same elevation as Mohawk Street. The first floor of the Jackson Brewery will contain a micro-brewery component at its west end to serve the users of the brewpub, the restaurant, and the “Brewery Heritage Tour.” However, the primary re-use of the existing building’s first floor will be offices for creative service professionals. Additional parking (accessed via Mohawk Street) will be provided at this level, west of the building. Mohawk Street will have less public activity than the spaces at McMicken Avenue—providing access for the occasional customers to the creative-service professional businesses, as well as pedestrian connections to the streetcar system for the adjacent residential zones. The parking garage roof will be at level with Mohawk Street, providing a lawn space with park components serving the adjacent residential and live-work zones. The second and third floors of the Jackson Brewery will also be made accessible for additional office space.

Ultimately, the catalyst project will serve as an activator for the adjacent residential zone and its connection to the streetcar system, while inducing business investment and real estate development immediately centering around the streetcar stop at McMicken Avenue. This will compliment the anchor business of Findlay Market and the two other BDCURC identified catalyst businesses—the Rookwood Pottery Company and the new Moerlein Brewery and future Event Center to provide a stronger redevelopment strategy. Focus and investment will be made at the northern location of McMicken Avenue instead of the BDCURC’s area at Liberty Street, to better compliment the redevelopment occurring in OTR’s Gateway Quarter and the redevelopment occurring at the City’s riverfront—clear nodes of activity that will be linked by the future streetcar system. [see fig. 4.02 and 4.03]

The program was derived directly from the 2011 Brewery District Master Plan and the thesis analysis, based on what was determined to be logical uses for the existing space, as well as uses that would provide activity at the site during various hours of the day—promoting mixed uses and users. Most elements

![Proposed Catalyst Site](image-url)
A: Commercial Neighborhood

The commercial neighborhood zone has many intact commercial buildings with residential above. An old theatre is in a prominent location. A nearby catalyst could help spark business growth and building improvements in this district—an easy walk from the proposed streetcar stop at McMicken.

B: Live-Make-Work

This area identified by BDCURC for live-work spaces

C: Vacancy and Potential

150 residential lots
48 residential units
includes some multi-family
102 vacant lots
LLC property ownership (land banking)
Unique opportunity for new construction and new residential in the Brewery District.
D: Existing Residential

125 residential lots
94 residential units
includes multi-family
majority of rentals
largest age group between 20-24 (college students)
An existing market that could make good use of the development and access to the streetcar system.

Fig. 4.06
Diagram highlighting nearby zones to be activated by proposed catalyst zone.
of the program were driven specifically by the Master Plan’s initiatives and by observations made during the April 9, 2011 workshop held by the BDCURC, which are included in the Master Plan document.

**Initiatives the Proposed Catalyst will Contribute To**

Evident from the 2011 Brewery District Master Plan summary and analysis, the proposed program seeks to situate itself within the Master Plan by contributing to the following seven (of the eight) Initiatives:

- **Brewery Heritage Trail**
- **Rediscovering a Mixed Use Economy**
- **Revisioning Our Recreation Facilities**
- **Branding and Gateways**
- **Complete Streets**
- **Neighborhood Zones**
- **Parking and Placemaking**

The program directly engages the “Brewery Heritage Trail” Initiative by providing the headquarters and office space needed to operate the tour at this location. The existing vaulted basements are currently an important stop on the Prohibition Resistance Tours and can play a more prominent role in the Brewery Heritage Trail with this proposal. Using an existing historic brewery will contribute to the Brewery District’s identity, while making the Brewery Heritage Trail an official destination and attraction within the district.

By utilizing the vast amount of square footage in the upper floors of the Jackson Brewery building for creative service professionals, another vital use will be added to bringing activity to the site. Additionally, this reuse can contribute to the “Mixed Use Economy” that the BDCURC envisions for the neighborhood. The professionals will be located away from the direct public activity at McMicken Avenue, but will still have easy accessibility to the streetcar system to conduct business in the Central Business District.

Like the other catalyst sites, this proposal will provide adjacent public space to serve the community in the form of a public plaza near the streetcar stop at McMicken Avenue. The surrounding program and daily users will provide eyes watching the park (especially from the restaurant above) that will help

02. Ibid., 29.
to keep the space safe and comfortable. It will include the four elements of successful park space, as defined by Jane Jacobs: “intricacy, centering, sun and enclosure.”\(^{03}\) Additionally, a park component will be included at the level of Mohawk Street to take advantage of views from the higher elevation; however, it will be primarily for the use of the residents in the nearby live-work and residential zones. “Like all neighborhood parks, it is the creature of its surroundings and of the way its surroundings generate mutual support from diverse uses, or fail to generate such support.”\(^{04}\) The surrounding program activity will contribute to the success of these public spaces, contrasting what the BDCURC has identified in the problems of the existing playground parks.

The proposed catalyst will address the “Branding and Gateways” Initiative differently then the suggestions laid out in the Master Plan. It will contribute to this initiative because of its prominent location on the streetcar route and because of being located at the intersection of Elm Street and McMicken Avenue. The branding will be accomplished through the reuse of the historical brewery site and its contribution to the Brewery District. Additionally, this will serve as an active reuse of a historical brewery structure along the sub-named “Brewer’s Boulevard.”

It was observed in *2011 Brewery District Master Plan* “Complete Streets” Initiative section that McMicken Avenue currently acts as a throughway for semi-trucks, buses and cars. It was also observed that McMicken had many sites for potential development.\(^{05}\) The design proposal will directly engage McMicken Avenue with the streetcar crossing it. “Complete Street” strategies outlined in the Master Plan for Liberty Street will be utilized at the Elm Street and McMicken Avenue intersection to provide more pedestrian friendly qualities through shortened crossings and streetscape elements. This will not only make the intersection and McMicken Avenue pedestrian friendly, but will extend the economic and catalytic elements south across McMicken Avenue, inviting more opportunities for adjacent business investment and real estate development.

The “Neighborhood Zones” Initiative is not necessarily being directly addressed by the catalyst design proposal; however, its location will be strategic in activating a significant residential zone identified as the “Stonewall Hillside” neighborhood zone in the Master Plan, which was extensively addressed in Chapter 02 of this document.\(^{06}\)


\(^{04}\). Ibid., 128

\(^{05}\). 2011 Brewery District Master Plan, 54.

\(^{06}\). See page 53 of this thesis document.
Finally, the catalyst proposal will contribute to the “Parking and Placemaking” Initiative by providing a prominent public space similar to those proposed by the BDCURC and a structured parking garage that will conceal parking from the public view, but still provide the amenity for catalyst users.

Site Selection
The general location of the site was selected because of the reasoning detailed in the analysis of Chapter 02 and its relative adjacency to the designed future streetcar route. The site contains a historic brewery building which is highlighted and visited on the BDCURC's Prohibition Tours. Specifically, the site was primarily chosen because of its prominent position within the Brewery District; when traveling north on the one-way Elm Street, the site acts as an axial terminus. Notably, the streetcar's designed route will provide the same experience; however, it will turn east on Henry before reaching the terminus, unless this design proposal is considered. The prominence is due mostly to the large Jackson Brewery edifice whose visual presence dominates the hillside—it is commonly called the “Metal Blast” building because the name is still painted on the front from a previous occupier. In the 2011 Brewery District Master Plan’s “The Way It Is” section generated during the April workshop, an observer recognized that the Metal Blast building terminated the Elm Street Vista. Elm Street, therefore is a recognized axis with an easily recognizable terminus at its northern end. [see fig. 4.07 and 4.08] Considering this observation, the Jackson Brewery immediately becomes more important to the district, because of its visual presence. It is not subject to the isolation experienced by other district assets that the Master Plan discusses in the “Anchors and Assets are Islands” portion of the documentation. Other reasons for selecting this specific site include the views available from the site as one traverses up the hill, and the fact that the site to the east of the brewery building is mostly vacant, consisting of public land and right of ways.

Despite the visual prominence of the Jackson Brewery it is unfortunately, not as easily accessible by foot or automobile, and requires approaching from Mohawk Street. This problem will be remediated through the design proposal. Additionally, it should be noted that the significant topography also inhibits pedestrian travel from the proposed streetcar system at McMicken Avenue to the residential zone at West Clifton Avenue. [see fig.4.12] The design proposal will also address this issue. There was an observation made in the “Way It Is”
section of the 2011 Brewery District Master Plan about the pedestrian connection made by the Ohio Stairs [see pages 68-69] to the neighborhoods north of Clifton Avenue, which helps connect them to OTR.\(^9\) Steps like this used to exist at this site near the Jackson Brewery. A similar pedestrian circulation path is provided to connect the residential zones. This element seeks to address the goal established in the Cincinnati Streetcar Feasibility Study of providing convenient access to the transit system by using various "modes and means of travel (e.g., pedestrian, bicycle, bus, automobile)."\(^10\) [see 4.12 and 4.13]

If studying from a plan or aerial view, the pedestrian circulation is usually only assumed to be along the street grid. Some of the studies completed for the streetcar route and its assumed surrounding economical impact were done from an aerial plan view. Unfortunately, this method misses the important details of the significant rise of topography and the lack of pedestrian connections through the existing street grid. Realistically, in the northern location of the basin, many of the properties identified within the 'edge' of the feasibility study maps would require an extensive walk to get to and from a transit stop, because of the location's extreme elevations changes. [see pages 68-69]
Pedestrian Connections

If a pedestrian throughway (learning from the benefits of the Ohio Steps) is provided as shown in figure 4.09, the residential and commercial zones to the west can access the streetcar stop directly from Renner Street and Mohawk Street. Additionally, if a connection was made to West Clifton, the existing northern residential blocks could significantly reduce their walk to the streetcar stop, providing them greater access to the Brewery District, OTR and downtown.

Fig. 4.09
The aerial map from 1949 reveals the steps that once connected McMicken and West Clifton just north of Elm Street. Also the image reveals the numerous footpaths that used to cross the site.

Fig. 4.10 and 4.11
Photographs from Ohio Steps.
The existing topography hinders mobility to the proposed streetcar stop. The 1300 foot / 5 minute walking radius, drawn in plan, does not consider the steep topography features, lack of connecting roadways, lack of pedestrian paths or pedestrian access points that are missing to make travel convenient to a McMicken streetcar stop.

Rethinking the site allows for greater ease of access to the streetcar stop and future Brewery District amenities.
Fig. 4.14
Diagram of circulation patterns during design process
Fig. 4.15
Diagram of programmatic spaces during design process

- Creative professional office space
- Heritage Brewery Tour related
- Restaurant related
- Public / recreational
- Service / restrooms
- Circulation

Second floor
First floor
Basement and restaurant level
Sub-basement and McMicken

McMicken Avenue
Elm St.
Fig. 5.01
Aerial map of site.
Site Analysis, Design Methodology, Precedents, and Design Development

Site Analysis

Contextual analysis of the site was conducted extensively in the analysis of the 2011 Brewery District Master Plan,\(^1\) and researching the history and current development changes in OTR, which has gained the author an accumulation of information pertaining to the neighborhood. Visits and exploration of the site, Jackson Brewery building, and surrounding area, including participation in a BDCURC sponsored brewery tour (Prohibition Resistance Tour), exposed more site nuances. These are documented in photographs and diagrams of this section.

As mentioned, the site is located at the northern boundary of the Brewery District and Cincinnati’s urban basin. Therefore, it sits on the hillside’s southern slope. A majority of this slope falls within the “Hillside Overlay District” (see fig. 5.02) which provides standards and regulations “to assist in the development of land and structures.”\(^2\) The green hillside is recognized multiple times in the 2011 Brewery District Master Plan because of the green space it provides for the neighborhood.\(^3\) These hillsides were also recognized in 1995, “undeveloped hillsides, which form Over-the-Rhine’s northern boundary, should be preserved as passive recreation areas or natural preserves to the maximum extent possible.”\(^4\) Cincinnati’s hillsides, especially around the urban basin, are susceptible to and have experienced numerous landslides since the city was founded. The catalyst proposal site is near one of more recent and significant landslides. [see pgs 74-75] Landslides are one of the main reasons the “Hillside Overlay District” exists. “In hillside areas, the existence of a 20 percent slope, in combination with the KOPE geologic formation, is evidence of a condition of natural critical stability and development under conventional regulations may precipitate landslides or excessive soil erosion.”\(^5\) These conditions were a key driver for keeping new construction toward the base of the hill and landslide location. Additionally, this soil instability problem is influential to the parking garage portion of the design which helps with soil retention and stabilization strategies working toward strengthening the site, instead of continuing to weaken it. Soil stabilization strategies were also considered when selecting vegetation and trees for the portion of the park north of the parking structure.

01. See Chapters 01, 02, and 03.


03. 2011 Brewery District Master Plan, 7.

04. Young and Cain, 44.

05. City of Cincinnati, Chapter 1433 - Hillside Overlay Districts, Section 1422.01

Fig. 5.02
Map reveals the site is overlaid by a historical district and a hillside district.
Clifton Avenue Landslide June 1972

According to the Cincinnati Post, the “massive" landslide happened around midnight June 5, 1972. The slide was believed to be initiated by the construction of the apartment complex at the bend of West Clifton Avenue, and triggered by the construction of the adjacent parking lot, which was not being properly drained. The steps that ran from Elm Street to Clifton Avenue were damaged extensively during the slide. The City of Cincinnati took legal action against the apartment complex owner and ordered him to pay for the corrective measures of stabilizing the land. A gas station that was located at the Elm Street and McMicken Avenue intersection had to be vacated and the 6000 gallons of fuel from its underground tanks removed.

Most of the other buildings at the base of the hill were condemned. The head scarp of the slide was estimated to be 30 feet high and 180 feet long. The landslide was most likely a “rotational slide,” which is a “mass movement” landslide. Rotational slides are commonly exacerbated by overloading (in this case, the dirt fill of the parking lot) and due to the deep layer of colluvium, can cause large amounts of soil to slide down a slope leaving behind high scarps. In the case of the Clifton Avenue slide, heavy spring rains had probably contributed to more weight in the colluvium soil, which finally triggered it to give way. Drainage is therefore critical to hillside stability. Because of the weight water can add to a soil, trees and vegetation play an important role in keeping landslides from becoming more active by gathering up the water in their root systems and removing it through transpiration. Their root systems also help bind colluvium together and are especially helpful if they are deep and near the bedrock layer. Note though, that the deeper the colluvium, the less the vegetation can take effect.

Fig. 5.03
Diagram of landslide location and surrounding building damage. Image from “City Condemns five buildings in path of huge earthslide,” The Cincinnati Post, June 7, 1972
The Kope Formation - mostly mudstone. “Making up the honeysuckle-covered portions of the hillsides surrounding the city, this unit is very soft. Its soils are very prone to landsliding, which has made developing the Cincinnati hillsides exceptionally challenging.”

Fig. 5.04
An aerial view of the Clifton Avenue landslide. Note the major head scarp in the middle, the minor scarp above, and the toe pushing into buildings at base of slope.

Fig. 5.05
Panorama of landslide damage at parking lot

Fig. 5.06
Diagram of typical rotational landslide. From “Exploring the Geology of the Cincinnati/Northern Kentucky Region”

From Dr. J Barry Maynard’s website, http://homepages.uc.edu/~maynarjb/Frontpage%20sites/CintiGeology/bedrock_index.htm
1. Rotate existing vaults 90 degrees.

2. Distribute conceptual vaults north into hillside for more area. Recognize current street edge and Elm Street's terminus.

3. Distribute conceptual vaults to accommodate program and establish referential rhythm. Street edge is adjusted to recognize Elm Street's impact and a public plaza space is created.

4. Conceptual vaults translate into retaining walls to accommodate lateral forces from hillside. Circulation and public entrances center around the public plaza space. The streetcar stop borders the plaza's edge and helps activate the space.
Existing hillside.

Conceptual vaults and their structural forces.

Vertical load bearing capabilities reinterpreted; lateral forces provide hillside stabilization.
Bellevue Incline

Further analysis found that an incline—the Bellevue Incline—once operated at the site east of the Jackson Brewery building complex. It was in operation from 1876 to 1926. Remnants of its stone piers can still be found on the site and at the north side of Clifton Avenue. The memory of this past site use will be evoked through elements in the new proposal, as a new pedestrian path will be constructed to provide the link again from McMicken Avenue to Clifton Avenue, ultimately providing more users access to the proposed streetcar stop. This past use also adds merit to making this site a unique streetcar stop which will require the streetcar switching directions. Informational signage can be included at the streetcar stop to speak about this past use. [see fig. 5.08, 5.09, and 5.10]

Fig. 5.08.
Image of Bellevue House with Bellevue Incline. Note the edge of the Jackson Brewery building at the left hand side of the image. There also appears to be a covered garden, perhaps a beer garden adjacent to the incline depot building.

As seen in figure 5.08, the Bellevue House Resort sat at the top of the hillside north of the proposed catalyst site. It provided dancing, drinking and entertainment for Cincinnatians. Another notable nearby building was McMicken Hall for the University of Cincinnati. At different times from 1875 to 1925, it served as the academic department, the medical college, and the law school.\textsuperscript{07} It has since been torn down.

**Jackson Brewery**

The proposed catalyst site contains the historical Jackson Brewery, but it also was the site of the first brewery established in OTR. A German immigrant initiated OTR's brewing tradition here in 1829.\textsuperscript{08} The original brewery building, which sat near McMicken Avenue was eventually razed for newer facilities. “In 1854, Meinrad and Fridolin Kleiner, two Forty-Eighters from Wurtemberg, purchased the Jackson Brewery, which had been founded 25 years earlier. In 1859 the brothers constructed a large new brew house at the north end of Elm Street north of McMicken Avenue.”\textsuperscript{09} The brothers also each built a


\textsuperscript{09}. Young and Cain, 39.
large home for their family just east of the brewery. Jackson Brewery became the fifth largest in Cincinnati by 1871. It has been noted that the iconic building existing today (constructed in 1859) was most likely inspired by the Rundbogenstil syle that was popular in Germany in the early to mid nineteenth century. Rundbogen—from Rundbogenstil—translates to arch; the style was based on the structural unit of the round arch.

George Weber proceeded the Kleiner brother’s operations in 1873. The brewery experienced its greatest success under Weber’s ownership—the name was changed to George Weber Brewing Company in 1884. The brewery produced 100,000 barrels a year in 1885. The complex expanded during these years. An ice house was built in 1866, allowing production of beer year round. These are located in the present location of the remnants at the level of McMicken Avenue. Weber declared bankruptcy in 1887 after a fire destroyed a malt house he owned at another location. The brewery was purchased again in 1889 by a group of attorneys who ran it until Prohibition, when they resorted to producing non-alcoholic beverages. The Squibb-Pattison Brewing Company inhabited the brewery complex after Prohibition. New buildings with modern equipment were constructed in 1933, along McMicken Avenue, some of these still front the street today. [see fig. 5.11] Brewery operations finally ceased shortly after in 1941. The Gibson Wine company utilized the building later for storage and were occupying it at the time that the landslide occurred in 1972. [see fig. 5.12] The Cincinnati Metal Blast Company also owned it for a period and painted their logo on the front façade; the reference still exists today. A food service company also used it for storage. Despite several different owners and short-term uses since brewery operations shut down, the prominent historical structure has not had a significant use or role within the Brewery District or OTR

[10. Ibid., 39.]


[12. Ibid., 96]

[13. Ibid., 99.]

[14. Ibid., 100]

[15. Young and Cain, 39.]

Fig. 5.11. Image of Jackson Brewery Complex after new buildings were constructed in 1933 (along McMicken Avenue).
since that time, other than being a prominent presence on the hill. Lacking any occupant or vital component that would have overseen its upkeep, the building has experienced much deterioration and damage to its surfaces, although its bones are generally still strong. A portion of its windows have been blocked up, while the brick façade and roof have become worn. The remnants of the ice house, the basement and the sub-basement vaults that are located closer to McMicken Avenue are now overrun with vegetation—these remnants have begun to blur with the landscape.

Fig. 5.12.
Image of Jackson Brewery Complex during or shortly after Gibson Wine company used it for storage. Note the gas station storefront at the bottom of the photo.
Home of the first brewery site in OTR, the site contains many remnants of the buildings utilized in the brewing process.

Even a minor rise in elevation reveals an astonishing view of OTR and the city.

The site has grown over with vegetation after the last few decades of little use or maintenance.
The site contains remnants of the old steps that once connected McMicken Avenue to West Clifton Avenue.

Jackson Brewery’s vaulted basements accessible from Mohawk Street and with this catalyst proposal project, McMicken Avenue.

Fig. 5.13
Site photo collage compiled from visits to the site and surrounding area.
Site Photos
Fig. 5.14
Site photo collage compiled from visits to the site and surrounding area.
Design Methodology

The design methodology for the proposed design project is driven by the questions that arose from the analysis and criticisms of the 2011 Brewery District Master Plan, addressed in Chapter 03. How does the designer approach designing in a context of revitalization? More specifically, how does the designer celebrate the Brewery District’s heritage through new architectural and design interventions that are catalytic to new business investment, real estate development and the repopulation of the neighborhood? Subsequently, this highlights the broader question in architectural discourse of how do new architectural interventions dialogue with the existing?

Driven by this thesis proposal’s site location for a stronger application of the catalytic development approach the BDCURC is utilizing (by creating a clear, distinct node of catalytic activity through the integration of the adaptive reuse of a visually prominent historic brewery building, new development and a streetcar stop), a focus is placed on celebrating the Brewery District’s heritage by providing improved public access and use of the site’s existing brewery structures. It is important to note that the thesis’ new development proposal switches the current pedestrian approach to the Jackson Brewery building away from its original Mohawk Street approach to being primarily from the activated intersection at McMicken Avenue and the Elm Street terminus. The catalyst site’s visually prominent location and integration with the streetcar system establishes the focus of celebrating the Brewery District’s heritage at an urban and neighborhood scale. This same focus translates to the site and architectural scales by utilizing the new circulation elements to respectfully contrast the existing brewery structures in order to further celebrate the historical brewery building.16

Respectful contrast is realized by material selection and construction detailing through the dialogue and placement of new materials to the existing building elements. Black-matte galvanized steel is used as the primary material in many of the circulation elements and new programmatic insertions into the existing structure as a material that references the industry that once existed in the district. The new materiality of the black steel also compliments and highlights the qualities of the various colors and tones of the existing masonry and stone. Additionally, glass is utilized to separate and frame the existing materials—leaving the existing gradation of materials and surfaces exposed.

16. See pages 94-95 for images of the Forte di Fortezza project by Markus Schere and Walter Dietl, a precedent project where new functional elements are used to respectfully contrast the existing.
for the presence of new uses and users. A precedent for this detailing strategy can be seen in the Intermediae Warehouse 17c project in Madrid, Spain by Arturo Franco Office. [see fig. 5.15, 5.16, 5.17, and 5.18] The architect's new architectural interventions into the previous slaughterhouse form the spaces and thresholds for the cultural center facility's new program. The interventions are composed of glass and standard dimension industrial steel products, which compliment and contrast the slaughterhouse's existing masonry and plaster surfaces. A detailing strategy similar to this is applicable for this thesis' existing brewery building which served as an industrial building in a predominately industrial district prior to the neighborhood's general decline. Utilizing an approach that honors the historic brewery building structure at multiple scales ultimately celebrates the district's and city's brewing heritage by establishment of a place, associated specifically with the Brewery District.
Circulation and Convergence

The existing Brewery District circulation patterns [see fig. 5.21, 5.22, and 5.23] are examined because of their particular role at the proposed catalyst site. The catalyst site is at the convergence of where the traditional (original) street and block grid is abruptly stopped by the staunch hillsides that form the northern boundary of the urban basin. The original street grid's organizational pattern expanded from the center of the city and was met by the natural circulation forces at the edge of the basin. This is apparent in McMicken Avenue's variance from the rectilinear grid. The natural has conquered the manufactured, although the prior incline made a valiant attempt to reverse that outcome. The natural imposed again upon the manufactured in the 1972 landslide, triggered by residential development, causing physical and economic damage to the neighborhood.

Conceptually, the convergence of the circulation systems is an important design driver as it relates contextually to both the Cincinnatian populations' development and also the geographical elements that have always been at play in the area. In the design proposal, the existing infrastructural circulation patterns form the organizational path for the streetcar's integration and the general directionality of the pedestrian circulation paths and approaches that lead to a central node of activity. This provides the space of convergence where the important circulation elements occur, providing access to the historical brewery structures, and to the areas not currently accessible from a McMicken Avenue approach. The circulation element situates itself as a contrasting, but respectful design language, linking the new construction with the old. The memory of the landslide is evoked in the design of the new construction where the landform and "rotational" landslide process are articulated through the forms and massing. The strong massing and materiality elements of the new—although contrasting—will be reverential to the historical multiple-wythe thick masonry and stone walls, archways and vaults of the existing brewery.
Fig. 5.19  Figure / Ground

Fig. 5.20  Surface / Landscape

Fig. 5.21  Street Grid

Fig. 5.22  Topography / Slopes / Contours

Fig. 5.23  Convergence of organizational systems
The New and the Old

In 1995, the *Over-the-Rhine: A Description and History, Historic District Conservation Guidelines* calls for new construction to be well-designed and to not replicate the existing buildings. It cites the "exceptional quality" of the neighborhood's existing buildings for providing an outstanding framework for new designs. This guideline is calling for new designs to be of a design quality comparable to the design quality that exists, thus respecting what is there. That respect will ultimately create some level of contrast between the new and the old.

And given the fact that in most parts of the world our built environment is still largely determined by already existing buildings and constructions rather than new developments, one of the great challenges faced by today's architects is the creative handling and inspiring transformation of such architectural remains. Dealing with what is already there is one of the greatest tasks facing the building industry today. But the change from an industrial to an increasingly pluralistic service and information society has opened up new possibilities for using old and outdated infrastructures in fresh and surprising ways.

Jane Jacobs speaks to the importance of a variety of aesthetics, in addition to her argument for a variety of uses. She argues that mixed uses (and new construction mixed with old) avoid monotony. She states that monotony, carries a deep disorder with it, “the disorder of conveying no direction.” Avoiding monotony is critical for a district trying to repopulate itself. “In districts where densities are too low, they can be raised and variation increased by adding new buildings simultaneously [...]. The very process of increasing densities gradually but continually can result in increasing variety too, and thus can permit high ultimate densities without standardization.”

Charles Blozszies recently addressed this topic of the new and old in his book, *Old Buildings, New Designs: Architectural Transformations*. He states that, “Architectural diversity, a crucial component of a livable city, is enriched by the resulting mixture of old and new.” The intent of his writing was to explore and illustrate, through case studies, successful design applications of the
visible interaction between new and old architectural styles. He examined
interior and exterior interventions, as well as additions to old buildings—the
commonality being each design's "thoughtful and clear vision of how new can
interact with old."22 When building new in a historical context, Bloszies sides
with the perspective of John Ruskin from the nineteenth century, agreeing that
"for a design to have integrity, it must be a product of its own time—an honest
expression of the cultural forces active when the design was executed."23

Levels of Contrast
Bloszies categorizes his included case study projects under three categories
of contrast, from the “subtle to overt”: extreme, restrained and referential. He
believes that architectural unions made between new interventions with old
that aim to achieve contrast through one of these categories (strategies) can
lead to a powerful design proposition. He believes that extreme contrast can
cause an enhanced appreciation of both new and old. Bloszies categorizes
restrained contrast as contrast employed to differentiate similar new and old
architectural elements and asserts this method can be as clear as the extreme
method. Referential contrast is a method of contrast where "new is referential
to compositional rhythms of the old."24 Although referential is more subtle than
extreme or restrained contrast, it nonetheless serves as an effective approach
to designing new with old. He explains that the categorization between
extreme and restrained contrast is "a matter of degree";25 however, both result
in a coherent distinction between the new and the old. On the other hand,
referential contrast is a more subtle method because architectural references
among the new and old components may not be immediately obvious.26 See
pages 92-95 for examples of projects from each contrast level.
Levels of Contrast:  *Extreme, Restrained, and Referential*

**Extreme:**
Project: CaixaForum Madrid  
Architect(s): Herzog & de Meuron  
Location: Madrid, Spain  
Year: 2008  
Pages in book: 106-109

The existing structure was a form power plant built in 1899. They removed everything but the shell. They removed the shell at its base to create a ground level plaza space, resulting in the existing masonry form floating above with an additional new form enveloped in rusting steel plates on top of that.

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Fig. 5.24  
Photograph showing contrast between new and old. Note where the plaza space has replaced the façades at the first floor.
Restrainted:
Project: Walden Studios
Architect(s): Jensen & Macy Architects
Location: Geyserville, CA
Year: 2006
Pages in book: 90-93

The existing structure is a large, century old concrete barn; a utilitarian mission-style building. The new insertion is a rectilinear glass enclosure that protrudes from the barn roof to contain the new program uses—studios, living spaces, offices, and interior and exterior entertainment spaces. The intervention inserts itself well, leaving an appropriate amount of the existing structure to complement the new language.

Fig. 5.25 and 5.26
Photographs show insertions of new glass elements protruding out of old concrete.

Fig. 5.27
Photograph shows insertions of new glass elements protruding out of old concrete.
Referential:
Project: Il Forte di Fortezza
Architect(s): Markus Schere and Walter Dietl
Location: Fortezza, Italy
Year: 2007
Pages in book: 80-83

The existing heavy and powerful granite constructed fort was built in 1838. The new intervention started by returning the fort to its first raw form and then adding new elements in concrete and matte-black galvanized steel—simple materials that compliment the existing granite. The new elements are for functional purposes, but are finely detailed and located.
Fig. 5.30
Photograph showing the relationship of new masonry elements to the existing. The matte-black galvanized steel serves as a link between the two.

Fig. 5.31
New matte-black galvanized steel elements serve the functional roles of providing circulation for the new program.
Fig. 5.32
Opportunity for new design element within an existing aperture.
Design Development (Conclusion)

This design proposal seeks to utilize contrast between the new intervention, specifically with the new circulation elements, as a method to respect and celebrate the existing historical brewery building structure and ultimately the Brewery District’s heritage. The contrast is both **restrained** and **referential**—restrained through the new circulation elements that are providing access to and from the existing brewery structure, and referential through the new design elements that are providing additional program, use and activity at the site and streetcar stop. The referential contrast will speak to the materiality, scale, and rhythms of the existing brewery structures, while the restrained more clearly contrasts, yet compliments, through material selection and form placement.

This design strategy is linked to the conceptual drivers as stated earlier by the relationship of the new strengthening the old, both visually and physically. The old is represented by the existing historical brewery structure, as well as the unstable natural topographical feature that existed long before Cincinnati’s development. New interventions strengthen the existing brewery structure by enhancing its aesthetic qualities and making physical improvements. New interventions strengthen the existing natural topography through stabilization strategies. The convergence of the new and old is where the major activity of the proposed project will occur through the new circulation elements, thus providing the energy and substance needed to establish a prominent economic catalyst for the Brewery District. The focus at the circulation elements tackles the site’s problems of accessibility to and from the site and surrounding residential zones, while also providing access from a more public approach from McMicken Avenue instead of Mohawk Street.

Examining the design proposal of this thesis, it is evident that by utilizing methods of respectful contrast through new architectural interventions and design elements that serve functional and programmatic roles to facilitate the reuse of and accessibility to historical structures, an urban neighborhood’s historical context can be celebrated and leveraged to induce business investment and real estate development.
Bibliography


