University of Cincinnati

Date: 3/24/2015

I, Megan M Dougherty, hereby submit this original work as part of the requirements for the degree of Master of Architecture in Architecture.

It is entitled:
Education as the Everyday

Student's name: Megan M Dougherty

This work and its defense approved by:

Committee chair: Aarati Kanekar, Ph.D.
Committee member: Jeffrey Tilman, Ph.D.
Education as the Everyday

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
in the College of Design Architecture Art and Planning 2015
by

Megan Dougherty

Bachelor of Science in Architecture, University of Cincinnati, 2012
Master of Business Administration, University of Cincinnati, 2015

Committee Chair: Aarati Kanekar, PhD
Research Chair: Jeffery Tilman, PhD
Abstract

Architecture is often thought of as the monumental and the grand that is only experienced in special circumstances; however, architecture is also designs that people come in contact with every day. The architecture of the everyday is seen as ordinary and banal, but it can provide the opportunity for extraordinary moments. This does not mean that the everyday architecture in itself must be boring and mundane, but that it strives to be more than just monumental. Everyday architecture can create an identity for both the people who confront it daily and the surrounding neighborhood. People define themselves by the everyday tasks that they perform: going to the coffee shop, taking their children to school, going to work, etc. and everyday architecture can be a starting point for a change along this path. Through programing that combines everyday activities with methods for social change, everyday architecture can become a catalyst.

This thesis looks at how to make post-secondary skills education a part of the everyday lives of the residents of Avondale. Continuing education and job training is the social change that seeks to be made in Avondale in order to provide more jobs and a stronger economy for the area. The challenge is how to change the perception of post-secondary education from something that is looked up at to something that is part of the everyday. The project will therefore look at the everyday activities of the residents in, around, and through the site on the corner of Reading Rd. and Rockdale Dr. and find opportunities to enhance those activities and create moments to inspire change in the ordinary. By combining a skills education center with everyday activities of the residents it will create a cross-pollination and allow for the residents to see post-secondary education as something easily accessible to them and part of their everyday experience.
# Table of Contents

Abstract

Table of Contents

Illustration Credits

1. Concept of the Everyday .............................................................................................................. 1
   1.1 What is the everyday? ............................................................................................................. 2
   1.2 What are the characteristics of the everyday? ................................................................. 6
   1.3 Why is everydayness Important? ......................................................................................... 9

2. Architecture of the Everyday .................................................................................................... 12
   2.1 How to use everyday architecture to affect social change? ........................................... 13
   2.2 Why is skills education an important catalyst for social change? ............................. 15
   2.3 What are design considerations of the everyday? ......................................................... 26
   2.4 Avondale design aims ........................................................................................................ 33
      2.4.1 To be confronted, not looked up to, not looked down on .................................... 34
      2.4.2 Create a unique identity for Avondale to embrace .............................................. 37
      2.4.3 Design on a human scale ......................................................................................... 42
      2.4.4 Establish a sense of transparency ........................................................................... 45
      2.4.5 Allow for collaborative spaces ............................................................................... 47
      2.4.6 Program the building for daily interactions ............................................................ 50
      2.4.7 Create accessibility and comfort ............................................................................ 53
      2.4.8 Stimulating not monumental ............................................................................... 56
Table of Contents cont.

3. Project ......................................................................................................................... 60
   3.1 What is the ‘everyday’ of the people of Avondale? ............................................. 61
   3.2 What are the ‘everyday’ activities on the site? ..................................................... 64
   3.3 What are the programmatic elements that will enhance the ‘everyday’? .... 77

4. Design ............................................................................................................................. 81
   4.1 Site ........................................................................................................................... 82
   4.2 Exterior .................................................................................................................. 87
   4.3 Interior .................................................................................................................. 91
   4.4 Conclusions .......................................................................................................... 94

Bibliography .................................................................................................................... 96
List of Illustrations

1. Concepts of the Everyday


1.08 “Die”. Tony Smith. 1968. Steel with Oiled Finish.


2. Architecture of the Everyday


List of Illustrations cont.


2.05 “Avondale Map 1884”. Sanborn Maps. Public Library of Cincinnati. 1884.


2.10 Reading Road East of Site. Dougherty, Megan. Personal Photograph. September 20 2014.

2.11 Reading Road East of Site. Dougherty, Megan. Personal Photograph. September 20 2014.

2.12 “University of Cincinnati”. www.uc.edu


2.17 “Nighthawks”. Edward Hopper. 1942. Oil on Canvas.

2.18 “Bridge”. Edward Hopper. 1928. Oil on Canvas.

List of Illustrations cont.


List of Illustrations cont.


List of Illustrations cont.


List of Illustrations cont.


3. Project


3.04 Dougherty, Megan. “Existing Site Conditions”. 2014

3.05 Dougherty, Megan “Existing Everyday of the Site”. 2014

3.06 Dougherty, Megan. “Existing Everyday Health of the Site”. 2014


4. Design


4.02 Dougherty, Megan. “Site Section Parti”. 2014.

4.03 Dougherty, Megan. “Site Plan”. 2015.


1. Concept of the Everyday
The basis of this thesis is establishing vocational education as part of the everyday experience of the residents of the Avondale neighborhood in Cincinnati. The theory of the everyday is in essence an understanding that people are defined by the basic activities they do each and every day, such as dropping their children off at school, going to work, going to the grocery store, etc. and that extraordinary can be found in the interstitial time and space. This theory was developed by Henri Lefebvre, a French Marxist philosopher, in the late 1940s. Lefebvre was a graduate of the University of Paris studying philosophy in 1920 after which he became an influential figure in the French Communist Party. His first volume about the Theory of the Everyday was The Critique of Everyday Life, which was published in 1945 and set the definition of the everyday as experiences that happen between daily activities or on the way to those activities. Lefebvre also stressed that through an understanding of the everyday there was great potential to inspire change in peoples’ lives, “everyday life embodies at once the dire experiences of oppression and the strongest potentialities for transformation. However inhuman, it reveals the human that still lies within us.” Although Lefebvre was influential in Europe and especially France, the theories did not truly reach America until the 1990s when his two works Critique of Everyday Life and The Production of Space were translated into English.

Henri Lefebvre - French Marxist philosopher and sociologist; studied at University of Paris; developed theory of the everyday

Writings - *The Critique of Everyday Life, Le Droit a la ville, The Production of Space*

Denise Scott Brown - architect; theorist; planner; University of Pennsylvania; principal of BSBA

Robert Venturi - architect; theorist; Princeton University; American Academy in Rome; principal of BSBA

Writings - *Learning from Las Vegas*

Deborah Berke - architect; professor at Yale University; Rhode Island School of Design

Writings - *The Architecture of the Everyday*

Mary McLeod - architect; professor at Columbia University; Princeton University

Writings - *Architecture of the Everyday*

Key Players
Robert Venturi and Denise Scott Brown’s work also touches on a similar concept. They were interested in studying the everyday existence of Americans of all classes and exhibited their research in a 1976 Smithsonian exhibit titled Signs of Life, Symbols in the American City. Inspiration for this exhibit grew from their work Learning from Las Vegas and their research with Steven Izenour on the Signs and Symbols in Vegas in 1972 where the authors insist in a shift in architectural design from “self-aggrandizing monuments” to designs that relate more to the common ‘everyday’ person. The Smithsonian exhibit’s goal was to “survey the pluralist aesthetic of the American city and its suburbs, and to understand what the urban landscape means to people, through an analysis of its symbols, their sources and their antecedents,”\(^2\). Venturi and Scott Brown tried to keep their definitions of the everyday loose and open for interpretation and failed to establish a strong following. Critics of the show, however, failed to understand fully the goal which was to cause a pause and observation by both architects and Layman through the overwhelming exposure to images that they encounter every day. Venturi and Scott Brown began the seeds of ‘Everyday Theory in America’ and exhibited that defining the everyday depends on the user. Signs of Life depicted the variances in everyday life depending on the economical class and the location of the person, “the everyday embodies a common democratic culture with a modernist preference for experience over display and ceremony. It reflects the values of a culture that has taken the kitchen out of hiding and made it the most public room in the house.”\(^3\) The theory still lacked clear design principles and characteristics which Deborah Berke and Mary McLeod researched following up on Venturi and Scott Brown’s work.


\(^3\) Harris and Berke, *Architecture of the Everyday*, 191.
Deborah Berke is an associate professor at Yale University School of Architecture and a practicing architect in New York City who has written and lectured extensively on the ‘Theory of the Everyday’. In Architecture of the Everyday, by Deborah Berke and Steven Harris, various contributors try to define the specific characteristics that embody the everyday. Dell Upton, an architectural historian and noted professor of Art History, Anthropology, and Architecture at UCLA, explains that in order to develop standards for design it is important to understand how the concept of the everyday works, “through bodily memory instilled by repeated action in organized time and space.”

Meaning that according to this theory in order to have a successful design it must be something that is encountered every day and becomes part of the ordinary. Berke believes that the essence of the everyday can be found in architecture not designed by architects, in other words buildings not meant to be monuments, but to support a specific need of the community. Maragert Crawford, architecture professor at UC Berkeley, goes even further to suggest that completely unplanned spaces are preferred, “Everyday space stands in contrast to the carefully planned, officially designated, and often underused spaces of public use that can be found in most American cities.”

Every day architecture’s primary concern is to design a structure that perfectly responds to the functions of the building as well as responds to its local surroundings.


Everyday design should speak directly to the individuals who will encounter it throughout their typical daily activities, not to outsiders who may visit the building on special occasions. For the general public, Dell Upton explains that, “everyday life is both a colonized setting of oppression, banality, routine, passivity, and unconsciousness and the lows of an ultimate reality and as sources of potential liberation: there is “something extraordinary in its very ordinariness.”

The extraordinary moments are the key to beautiful everyday design. The concept came from Lefebvre that even in something considered as boring as daily life, there is a great potential to inspire change in that routine. Lefebvre states, “What is the goal? It is the transformation of life in its smallest, most everyday detail.”

None of the current writing elaborates on how to create these moments of extraordinary, except for a few hints. Dell Upton uses the modernist artwork ‘Die’ by Tony Smith to depict the scale that everyday design should take, “by making it as high as a person, Smith made Die a work to be confronted, not looked up to or down on.”

Similar to the Arts and Craft movement, Everyday is also concerned with the material and detailing that occurs when artisans work with craftsmen. Peter Halley confirms, “American architects have long been interested in how simple things are made – the exquisitely straightforward details of such materials as industrial steel, poured concrete, or plainly-joined wood. There is an identification with the independent craftsperson and with practical industrial technologies not intended for luxury use.”

This thesis strives to further define specific characteristics of the Everyday and hopes to better understand how to create extraordinary moments.


1.3 Why is everydayness important?

Utilizing the lessons of ‘the Everyday’ helps architects to understand the daily user and earn a greater appreciation for their needs that the program can be crafted to address. “Today the growing interest in Lefebvre’s ideas among American architects stems from a relatively modest aesthetic and political program: a rejection of avant-garde escapism, pretension, and heroicism in favor of a more sensitive engagement with people’s everyday environments and lives.”

The theory of the Everyday is particularly important when reaching out to lower economic classes because grand monumental architecture may at times be too daunting for them to comfortably experience. It is important in ‘the Everyday’ that the design does not alienate, which is something Lefebvre criticized about most modern architecture.


11. Harris and Berke, _Architecture of the Everyday_, 11.
Omodie No SHotokyo: Remembering Old Little Tokyo by Shelia Levrant de Bretteville in Los Angeles is a prime example of inclusion, using the sidewalk which is transgressed by community members every day and adding design elements to inspire them to stop and remember the history of the neighborhood. The inclusion of a historical timeline into the sidewalk allows for the creation of “moments” that allow an ordinary walk to turn into a history lesson about how Japanese Americans developed in the community. The simple images also allow for all community members to partake from the very young to the elderly as well as visitors who may not speak English.  

This sense of inclusion is vital in designs based on the ‘theory of the everyday’. Instead of alienating, Lefebvre argues that everydayness is important because not only can it be all-inclusive, but also has the power to lift the oppressive nature of daily life. “He (Lefebvre) asserted that everyday life “weighs heaviest on women” (as well as on children, the working class, and other marginal groups) and yet also provides women realms for fantasy and desire, for rebellion and assertion.” This can be achieved in Avondale by incorporating community functions into the complex that will draw users from all walks of life such as a laundromat, daycare, and farmers market. While fulfilling these everyday needs and wants, this thesis looks to inspire the desire for further education and raise the economic status of the residents of Avondale by exposure to skills education through interaction with the building.


13. Lefebvre, Critique of Everyday Life, 32.
1905  Manaka Restaurant

1913  Yasujirō Kawasaki buys this property in his Nisei daughters’ names.

1937  Kawasaki opens Matsu no Sushi.
2. Architecture of the Everyday
2.1 How to use everyday architecture to affect social change?

It is often argued that architecture in itself cannot create social change, however the combination of program and design has the potential to have long standing effects on the neighborhood that surrounds it. The key is to establish that moment of pause and reflection in the daily routine; in other words, to insert something extraordinary in the everyday. In order to accomplish this goal the design first must interact in people’s everyday life, this means it cannot come across as remote or exclusive, but must clearly establish itself as inviting to all. Second the architecture must become the backdrop to daily activities; the people that interact with it should be unconscious of it. This eliminates any preconceived notions users may have with regards to the deliberate insertion of elements in the program purely to promote social change. In particular, it is vital that the educational elements do not make the design come across as an elite university and thereby become daunting to the users. Once these two conditions have been established it will allow the building to create those moments of extraordinariness through foreground programmatic elements.
Dell Upton explains that, “the everyday is that which remains after one has eliminated all specialized activities,” however this thesis argues that specialized activities when mixed with daily activities can be the catalyst for moments of pause. Everyday architecture does not want to be looked up to purely based on its aesthetic, instead it wants to be confronted by society and cause users to reflect internally. Not all social issues can be affected by the theory of the everyday and the process of choosing which problem to address is key in determining its success. “…the practices of everyday urbanism should inevitably lead to social change, not via abstract political ideologies imposed from outside, but instead through specific concerns that arise from the lived experiences of different individuals and groups in the city.”

In other words, one cannot help someone who doesn’t want to receive the help, the change needs to be assessed and recognized as a need within the community.

2.2 Why is skills education an important catalyst for social change?

Understanding the history of the neighborhood and the people who live there is vital to evaluating what the neighborhood needs and wants. Avondale, a neighborhood in northern Cincinnati, was established in 1830s when downtown businessmen began building homes in the suburbs to get out of the city pollution. The first buildings were large homes and the homeowners incorporated the area as the Village of Avondale in 1864. Even in this early stage the village began to have issues with crime with no clear solution as the City of Cincinnati grew and expanded into the suburbs. When Avondale was annexed by the city in 1896, the community gained access to city police and fire departments, which helped to reduce the incidence of crime and improve safety in the community. The area in the early 20th Century consisted of predominantly of German and English businessmen and their families, however with the addition of the street car lower income Cincinnatians gained access to the suburbs and diversified the neighborhood. From this point Avondale went through a series of population waves starting with Jews from the 1920s till WWII ended, followed by African Americans when the white flight began. Following WWII, many GIs came home looking to begin families and with the increase of crime in city, they turned to new developments in the suburbs. The rise of the automobile also allowed for city workers to commute further distances minimizing the concerns of moving out of the city.15

27% of people with less than an associate degree earn MORE than the average bachelor degree recipient.

Vocational-related associate degrees earn an average of $4K to 19K more per year than humanities associate degrees.

Open Jobs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>726k</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>256k</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Manufacturing Jobs
Trade, Utilities, & Transportation Jobs
Blockbusting also contributed to the change in the area after Avondale was designated as an African American community and property values began to drop rapidly. When laws prohibiting discrimination through racially segregated neighborhoods, the business practice of blockbusting was used to try to maintain the segregation, where developers and real estate agents encouraged white homeowners to sell their houses at a loss by implying that the neighborhood dynamic was shifting towards racial minorities. By 1956 the neighborhood was divided into North and South Avondale, with the South designated as a blighted neighborhood by city planners. Rehabilitation efforts focused on the University and the hospitals instead of the residents which further offended and enraged the community. In both 1968 and 1969, the members of the Avondale community, by now primarily African-American, violently expressed their distrust of the police force and other institutions of local government after tension with the cops boiled over. The physical and mental damage caused by the riots is something the city is still struggling with to this day. The site of this study, the Avondale Town Center, became ‘ground zero’ for the riots and the movie theater, bank, and other business on the site were burned down in protest. Reading and Rockdale prior to the riots were highly activated by the small business that lined the both streets, after the riots there was a large scar on the site.¹⁶ In 1983, the community looked to repair some of the damage and with the help of the Avondale Redevelopment Corporation developed a plan for the site that included new retail and community buildings. The hope was to change the negativity surrounding the site with a new positive development, but the final result was drastically scaled down from original plans. This corporation also helped to form the Avondale Community Council who continues working to this day to improve the neighborhood.¹⁷


¹⁷. Avondale Community Council, Our Community, 2014
1967 Riots in Avondale

1967 Riots in Avondale

1967 Riots in Cincinnati
Today there continues to be redevelopment work in Avondale, but unfortunately the statistics have not changed for the neighborhood. The make-up of community today is predominately poor African-Americans with little to no education past high school. The median household income is $19,266 in Avondale while for Cincinnati the median household income is $31,301. This means that 48.1% of the population of Avondale is living in the poverty level. There are approximately 8,733 residents of Avondale with a high population density of 6,209 people per square mile and 46.7% of the household are families. While there are a lot of families in the neighborhood only 16.9% of households are headed by a married couple; this contributes to the low income level as most household have to support children on a single income.\textsuperscript{18} It is important to note that this number may be slightly skewed due to the fact that the State of Ohio does not recognize gay marriages. The income level is also affected by the lower level of education amongst the residents with 34.7% of residents having less than a high school education and only 21.8% having a post-secondary degree of any kind.\textsuperscript{19} Studies show that even those students who graduate perhaps should not have received a high school diploma, “in low-income communities, only 50% of students graduate from high school. On average, those who do graduate read at an 8th grade level.”\textsuperscript{20} While this data does not provide a clear interpretation of what the community needs, the Avondale Community Council have taken the numbers and their own experiences in the neighborhood into consideration and developed a Redevelopment Framework in 2005.


\textsuperscript{19} Mark Curnutte, \textit{Saving Avondale}.

The goals of the plan were:

1. Job Training
2. Education at all levels
3. Access to hospitals and university programs and jobs
4. Homeownership and home maintenance programs
5. Minority small business development
6. Access to contracts from UC and hospitals
7. Access to hospital provided health care

This thesis proposes that by incorporating skills education into the everyday life of the residents of Avondale will help the community to reach the majority of these goals.
Skills education could be a catalyst for change in the economic and social standings of the residents of Avondale. This is a hot topic issue in 2014 due to the fact that, “the skilled trades are the hardest jobs to fill in the United States, with recent data citing 726,000 jobs open in the trade, transportation and utilities sector and 256,000 jobs open in manufacturing,” however choosing a skilled trade career is not perceived as a wise choice. Even in low-income communities where it is a struggle to get students to graduate, never mind apply and attend college, skills trades is rarely presented as an alternative option to a four-year degree. When the numbers are run over a lifetime, it proves that in fact skilled trades should perhaps be preferred to a four-year degree in most cases. Studies show that in comparison between a Bachelor’s Degree and a Trade School education over the working life, considering schooling costs and salaries, at the time of retirement there is next to no difference in the earnings of the two workers. There is also proof that “participation in skills-training programs increased wages and earnings, raised the probability and consistency of employment, and led to work in higher-quality jobs,” therefore the question remains why this tract is not considered to be an intelligent choice for a high school graduate. The shift is clearly laid out in The Quest for Modern Vocational Education: “To us, vocational education is nothing more than job training; however, the original meaning of the term was a “calling”, and this thesis hopes to facilitate a shift back to a positive image. There are many schools throughout the country, including Cincinnati, that are striving to accomplish a similar goal, but they can seem unreachable to people like the residents of Avondale.


The United States currently has 120+ Job Corps Centers with more than 100,000 students as well as 28,000+ active apprenticeship programs with 460,000+ apprentices being over seen by the U.S. Department of Labor, which would imply that education in these skills is readily available but this is not the case. In Cincinnati alone there are schools such as Cincinnati State, Scarlett Oaks, Butler Tech, etc. that offer skilled trade education yet most of these programs are unreachable by Avondale residents. All of these facilities are operated and designed similarly to a traditional university, meaning they are campuses which typically require a vehicle to reach. The majority of the residents in Avondale utilize the bus system and therefore would find a great deal of difficulty attending classes. Another concern with these facilities is they are large daunting buildings that are reminiscent of traditional universities or high schools where many people may have had negative educational experiences in the past based on their low education levels. Utilizing the characteristics of the everyday when designing educational facilities can prevent these issues from arising.

Deborah Berke has been very influential in establishing what it means to design for the everyday aesthetic and describes 11 specific design considerations. The first characteristic of everyday design is that it may be generic or anonymous. While some architecture is intended to be a monumental, everyday architecture forms the background for extraordinary moments. Next, the designs may be banal or common. Instead of the design establishing its own meaning and symbolism it allows individuals to determine what it means to them. As mentioned earlier the Die sculpture by Smith comes across as ordinary and can be blunt and direct however this is the characteristic that provides it the potential to be inventive. Berke also explains that because of its perceived commonality everyday designs may also be perceived as crude or raw and unrefined. This design theory originated from architecture that was not influenced by an architect, but built by the common man and therefore was not always considered a finished or complete design. While everyday architecture forms a backdrop to life, it still needs to be sensual in that it provokes sight, touch, and hearing. The individual body is how the building scale and other design elements developed; the design for the everyday acknowledges users as unique individuals. In recognizing individual users it also recognizes domestic life, it may become part of personal rites and routines.25

This thesis hopes to create a space that does just that and becomes part of the residents of Avondale’s daily routines. For example, Robin Hood Gardens designed by Alison and Peter Smithson was a residential development for the lower class conceived in the ‘theory of the everyday’ focused on changing residents’ lives. The design was intended to allow for better everyday living by including interpretations of middle class amenities. Every third floor has large ‘street’ balconies that were intended to be used by communities as gathering spaces similar to porches in single family home neighborhoods. The large gardens in the center were intended for children’s play and social connections like a cul-de-sac. The concept was to create a vertical neighborhood environment with similar to traits of middle class neighborhoods. The designers believed that by blending these amenities into traditional apartment complexes, the inhabitants would have a more fulfilling life and stronger social relationships with their neighbors.26 These types of communities simply lacked the spaces to allow these connections to thrive; Avondale experiences a similar lack of positive social spaces. Due to its intimate connection with people, design for the everyday may take on collective and symbolic meaning even though it may not be monumental.

Perhaps one of the most important considerations according to Berke is that the design must respond to program and be functional. She even goes as far to state that the buildings program contributes directly to its meaning. Everyday architecture is also an elusive concept because its definition can change frequently as the people in the neighborhood are constantly changing, but that does not necessarily imply that design for the everyday is up to date on fashion and trends. The final point that Berke makes about everyday architecture is that it is built architecture. The very nature of its design means that it does not only remain concept-based and fills particular needs of the community contributing to its higher success rate of being constructed. I think the concepts are best summed up in an interview response when asked about her design for a studio space, “I felt enormously, not only comfortable with, but happy working on behalf of creative people,” she says. “In other words, the spaces that I was making for them in the Art School were not about making spaces that said, ‘Look at me. I’m a great architect. Look at this.’ It was more spaces that could be in the background, beautifully made, beautifully proportioned but very much background spaces so that the work of these young artist could be the thing that was in the foreground.”

While Lefebvre did not lay out extensive characteristics of everyday architecture, one of the few statements he made in regards to the everyday is explained by Mary McLeod stating that it, “called…for greater urbanity, centrality, street life, residential participation, and opportunities for spontaneity. It was necessary, he (Lefebvre) believed, to see the city as a collective oeuvre, an ongoing act of human creation, diverse but united.” Modernist Edward Hopper’s unique artistic style is simple in detailing but accurately expresses the feelings of everyday life in America. Looking at the typical activities and views of an average person gives insight into where inspirations can occur, such as in Nighthawks. The praise for these works of art comes from their ordinary and banal nature. The architecture he depicts is often not of monumental structures, but the typical urban scenery like the street facades in Early Sunday Morning, which is what the school and community center for Avondale intends to be for the community. Samantha Payne, in her graduate thesis, also utilized the theory of the everyday in her thesis research and developed a more simplified and specific list of considerations for everyday design. In order to incorporate the building into the daily existence of the neighborhood, she stresses that it is vital that individuals feel that they can take ownership of certain areas of the building. This allows the residents to carve out spaces for themselves amidst the oppression of routine and allows them the potential for spontaneity within everyday life. These considerations need to be interpreted in relation to skills training facilities and the community needs of Avondale.


After studying the community, eight specific design aims were established in order to best incorporate skilled trade education into the everyday life of Avondale residents. The first issue to be considered is that the building should confront the residents not be something they look up to or down on, this will allow it to become the background it needs to be to support change. Next it needs to create a unique identity based off the neighborhood of Avondale so that the residents will embrace the building as their own and take pride and ownership in it. A sense of transparency between the street life and the building program will allow the skills training spaces to become the backdrop of the residents’ daily activities so that the step into education becomes smaller due to their familiarity with it in their ‘everyday’ life. The instance where they take a pause from their ‘everyday’ and reflect on how skills education could impact their life is the extraordinary moment that ‘design of the everyday’ hopes to achieve. Collaborative spaces strategically placed throughout the design will also cause for pause in the everyday and a break for the residents. The program needs to consist of and be laid out in such a way that people interact daily with the building without conscious thought. Creating this sense of openness will also be encourage by the accessibility and comfort incorporated into the public spaces of the program. Finally the building hopes to be stimulating and not focus on becoming a monumental structure. The success of this design will be determined by its acceptance in the community.
2.4 Avondale design aims

In order to design successfully based on the eight established design aims, it was important to find key precedents for each goal. There are few direct programmatic design comparison; however, observing successful techniques in community centers, vocational schools, and traditional universities individually will create a kit of parts for designing the Avondale center.
2.4.1 To be confronted, not looked up to, not looked down on

The Flinders Street Revitalization was a challenge to turn a once successful pedestrian street back into both a vehicular street and a pedestrian square. The ‘Theory of the Everyday’ can be seen in the design decisions on this project because it was important that the space that began as a center to be looked up to and then was looked down on now became a space confronted and owned by the people living in the neighborhood. The program for the design included a canopied theatrical film space, information center, café and amenities while regenerating traffic in the area. Collaboration between the community and the designer ensured that the area was continuously activated contributing to the success of the revitalization. Activating the site is also a major concern for Avondale because the more people in and around the site the lower the crime rate. The pedestrian edge includes both spaces for movement and pause providing various shelter conditions. Each type of shelter also includes its own seating and lighting concept establishing a unique sub-identity within the complex. The architects referred to these shelters as ‘street lanterns’ and they draw in pedestrians with their vibrant glowing pieces and then allow them to interact directly with the architecture. The hardscape design also indicates changes in function with varying scales and detail levels. The ‘street lanterns’ were strategically placed in order to allow views to the river front while hiding some of the less desirable existing architecture.

Through the decades of decline, Flinders Street buildings fell into disrepair and the revitalization budget did not allow for repair or replacement of these structures which became a design concern for Cox Architecture.

Taking patterning derived from historical sources the designers developed a language of layering perforated metal screens. This allows for varying transparencies between the vehicles and pedestrians as well as a way to camouflage unwanted buildings. The nature of the metal screens also allows for further expansion of the street, when these buildings are able to be renovated it will be possible to open the facades back up to the public. Avondale will need to develop a similar strategy to control views into and out of the site due to the residential areas and learn the successes of creating comfortable and unique social spaces to reactivate an area.\footnote{31}
2.4.2 Create a unique identity for Avondale to embrace

This new center for Avondale is intended to take a background role in the everyday life of the residents and therefore while it needs to be inspiring and unique, it will need to connect back to the neighborhood. If the building feels too alien to the area, it will not create the kind of comfort and ownership needed to minimize the step from everyday activities to secondary skills education. The site slopes from the corner of Rockdale and Reading to the residential areas and imbedding the building into this topography without major modifications will establish it within the site and community amongst other benefits. The use of terraced floors on the steep site at the Jean Moulin High School by Off Architecture, allows students to feel connected to the outside while in classes. This boosts productivity and keeps the students happier. The circulation responds directly to the existing site and imply that the building is one with the area and could not be designed elsewhere which is a key design consideration of the everyday according to Deborah Berke.  

This local identity strategy is an important concept to be considered for Avondale because while the local architecture of the area is varied, the site history and topography is something that should not be lost upon the design of the new center.

Materials will also be a key factor in connecting the new center back with Avondale, using materials commonly found in the neighborhood, even if in innovative ways will create a sense of comfort within the design. Brick facades with wood accents are the primary materials of the area and manipulating these materials within the new center will establish a stronger connection to the everyday of the people of Avondale. The Tate Modern Addition by Herzog & de Meuron is a prime example of how to establish a unique neighborhood identity using common materials. Similar to Avondale, the surrounding environment of the Tate Modern is heavy in brick facades, but the new addition was also meant to be an icon. The architects established a system of perforated brick lattice for the façade that allowed for a unique effect while still connecting back to its surroundings. The lattice work pattern was also manipulated to allow for varying levels of transparency dependent upon what building function was occurring along the elevation. A similar strategy will need to be used for the Avondale center because while it does not contain works of art, some programmatic areas will require less public interaction. The designers wanted to ensure that building was fully integrated within the city’s urban fabric and therefore created a public passageway between the existing riverside entrance plaza and a new public plaza at the rear of the site. While the program of the building perhaps does not lend it to be an everyday visit for the citizens of London, this passage way encourages significantly more interactions than a traditional museum design. Understanding the neighborhood enhances the success of a design and will be important when creating a center for community members to take ownership of and feel comfortable in. The design can still be unique while fitting within the existing urban fabric.

Facade Detail in Daytime

Facade Detail at Night
2.4.3 Design on a human scale

A primary goal of designing based on the Theory of the Everyday is understanding that the design should become the background to the daily life of the neighborhood while the program becomes more prominent in the foreground. Monumental designs would not meet this goal and there for it is important that the building design have a strong focus on the human scale, this will also result in the users being more comfortable in the spaces. The Thebarton Community Centre by MPH Architects while still being a beacon for the neighborhood, manages to relate to the human scale of its users. Utilizing glazing and the roof the community center draws in the eye of passersby is something that will be important for Avondale. The building connects with the site on both axis allowing views into the interior from all sides. Angling the roof and extending it over the sidewalk makes passerby feel as if they are already in the building. The theory of the everyday talks about how buildings are felt by people even in the periphery and this building accomplishes this in a unique way. The screening of the glazing creates a layered condition that I have identified as a design strategy. MPH Architects utilizes a combination of the roof, wood screening, colonnade, and glazing to allow users into the building slowly through a discovery process.33
While the building is largely transparent, it plays a game of hide and seek by allowing pedestrians only glimpses of the interior that opens up more as they penetrate the various layers. This is an interesting strategy for Avondale due to the fact that it allows the individual community members to determine what level of interaction they want to have with the building while still encouraging them to penetrate further each time. The Avondale site has a history of loitering and by providing a space for this to occur it will allow interactions with people who may initially be opposed or unsure of the building. The layering concept will also be an advantage in developing more levels of security as users get further into the interior of the building. Certain areas of the building may need to be secured at different times and the Thebarton Community Centre shows how to use layering to create a more friendly secure access barrier. Another interesting strategy developed by MPH Architects is that there are clear sightlines throughout the building that allow users to see across the whole site at all times. The existing buildings on the Avondale site struggle with blind areas in the back of the site that allow for crime to take place, however if there was more visibility across the site it would deter these activities. The extended site lines also allow the line between exterior and interior to be blurred rooting the building to the site. These transitions help to put the architecture into the background creating a sense of comfort leaving space for extraordinary moments to occur.34

2.4.4 Establish a sense of transparency

Similar to Avondale, the site of Gennevilliers Training Center presented unique design challenges which Atelier d’Architecture Brenac-Gonzalez had to address, it is located near train tracks creating a noise concern. To solve this problem the building closest to the trains needed to be mostly solid construction that had sound dampening qualities, hence the red metal panels which are heavily insulated and yet also mimic the appearance of the trains. The Avondale site has similar noise concerns, but is concerned with keeping the noise of the school shop areas from polluting the surrounding residential and religious areas. Keeping glazing to a minimum in the school zones that face residences will be vital, but the design does not want to completely lose the language of openness and transparency in these areas either. Gennevilliers Training Center architects choose strategically based on the interior programs where to place the few openings that faced the train tracks and adjusted the language of the building to incorporate a local connection in these areas with the metal panels. The school also recognized the need for easy access between skills zones and visual connection. Large windows for natural light were incorporated into the building facing away from the trains and in the second building to allow both pedestrians and users to interact with all other programmatic areas within the building.35

The mezzanine space is also unique in that it allows visitors to see every aspect of the school while not entering training areas. The security issue between school zones and community zones is a concern for the Avondale center and the mezzanine strategy developed in Gennevilliers is a strategy that can be utilized for Avondale. By creating a mezzanine not only does it allow ‘everyday’ users to connect on various levels with the specialized learning spaces throughout the building, but it allows for community socializing spaces along the corridor.\textsuperscript{36} Avondale will need to develop similar strategies for noise control and transparency in its center in order to be a successful addition to the neighborhood.

2.4.5 Allow for collaborative spaces

Jatta Vocational High School, in Stavanger, Norway, is programmatically divided into two different zones, immersion and social. The immersion zones, called urban quarters, are where the classrooms and skills development spaces are held while the social zones, the central street, are designed to promote a meeting among the various students. The architects, Henning Larsen Architects, also spent time evaluating each individual skill for its specific spatial needs and then created spaces to accommodate them instead of trying to make the equipment fit into traditional spaces. One of the key features of the building are the large windows provided in each immersion zone to allow for the best lighting conditions for learning. The social zones are also accented by their student owned feeling. Spaces are designed to encourage sharing among students and cross education between the different skills taught in the school. The school is designed to function, “like a modern place of work with large open teaching environments and workshops for special subjects.”(Henning Larsen) The design also utilizes ramps and stairs to draw people from the entrance back through to a roofscape allowing them to experience the entirety of the building. The staircase is the hub of the complex, divided into circulation, socializing, and presentation spaces, further blurring the lines between school and community.  

The roofscape was designed to draw attention by offering 360 degree views of the surrounding landscape and the new entertainment area. Jatta was intended to be the entrance to the new fjord quarter in Stavanger and therefore needed to be a beacon. Henning Larsen Architects wanted to have a minimalistic exterior design that could highlight diversity of the interior. They choose to use large double height windows to not only stimulate learning with natural lighting, but to allow pedestrians a sneak peek into the school from the interior. The façade of the building is constructed with wood paneling reminiscent of the forestry of Norway. Jatta is both modern and local as well as a school and community center these are programmatic objectives similar to the Avondale project and the design strategies developed by Henning Larsen Architects are a good precedent when designing for the everyday.38

2.4.6 Program the building for daily interactions

Burton Hamfelt Architectuur focused on creating visual connection between learning spaces and community shared spaces in order to keep students curious about furthering their education when creating MBO College. This connection is established through the large circulation corridor that penetrates all three floors of the building, which similar to a mezzanine, provides views into a variety of spaces in one commonly used location. The horizontal circulation space for each level is also open to the public so that there are no exclusive spaces throughout the building. Not only were visual connections important but MBO College also has common spaces designed to promote a knowledge exchange between the various programs of study. This is accomplished by using small seating groups of various sizes and configurations to encourage students to interact with each other instead of focusing on individuals in their own path of study. This knowledge exchange concept was extended into the exterior pavilion of the building; there is only one entrance lobby for the college used for students, staff, and neighbors. Community functions were also incorporated into the building to develop a sense of ownership in the surrounding neighborhood. Allowing interaction with the community members also worked against the common university problem of being a daunting and invitation only area.39

The façade of the building also contributed to this sense of ownership, as a center and beacon for the neighborhood creating local pride. The brightly colored panels are meant to inspire whimsy and curiosity within the neighborhood and although there is minimal glazing, the center still maintains a sense of transparency. Entering the building leads users into the common spaces that are open and inviting to encouraging strangers to explore the building. MBO College presents itself in the foreground and requires new users to the building to consciously make the decision to interact, the Avondale center will need to create the same reactions of curiosity without requiring a conscious approach. The program of the Avondale site will also encourage more daily interactions.

2.4.7 Create accessibility and comfort

The typical secondary education environment, whether it be academic or vocational, can feel uninviting so someone with past negative school experiences. With 34.7% of Avondale residences not graduating high school and only 21.5% having any form of secondary degree, it is safe to assume that many residents did not have positive educational experiences. The Avondale Center hopes to eliminate the discomfort caused by past experiences when considering secondary education. The Chu Hai Hai College Campus in Hong Kong by OMA has developed an innovative circulation method that creates a sense of accessibility and comfort for both students and neighbors. OMA utilizes the sloping site, similar to Avondale, as an asset for creating these feelings for all users. The primary educational functions are in two parallel towers which are connected by the ‘mat’. Following the natural slope of the site, the ‘mat’ is a series of stairs and platforms connecting the two buildings. This space therefore becomes the center of campus life where students and professors of all studies can interact. From the ‘mat’, there are views both to the surrounding landscape and to the interior spaces throughout the college allowing for constant simulation and curiosity. Chu Hai has a long history of being a multidisciplinary college and this openness between circulation space and various learning environments is symbolic of that tradition.41

OMA also decided to follow the natural slope of the site in order to further connect the building to its surrounds. The climate of Castle Peak Bay, where Chu Hai College is located, allows for the open air space to be utilized year round whereas the Avondale site will need to contain much of the social space inside in order to be utilized by the community. The Avondale site is currently used as a cut-through for most of the Avondale residents. Adding areas along that existing circulation path for pausing and socializing will create a space for observation of the vocational school functions and hopefully spark enough curiosity over time to make the step into secondary education easy and comfortable.

42. David Basulto, “OMA Wins First Competition for Chu Hai College Campus in Hong Kong.”
2.4.8 Stimulating not monumental

Avondale is a unique neighborhood and the new center needs to reflect this and needs to be a catalyst for change in the area. This means that the design of the building must be stimulating. One strategy for stimulation while being grounded in Avondale is the use of local patterning in a modern way to nest the building within its neighborhood. The Walkerville Civic Community Centre by JPE Design studio does just that, the building is embed into the neighborhood while still being a modern and unique design. The column work along the street front of the Community Centre mimics the cornice detailing found on the historic building adjacent to the facility which JPE Design Studio then expanded and simplified. The second is the street extension and public corridor which are -used to force the building onto people within the building as well as those who travel near the building each day. Creating a portico that extends into the public sidewalk allows casual pedestrians to feel encompassed by the building and creates a sense of unconscious interaction. The public corridor has a similar affect by taking what appears to be an alley between the existing and new buildings and creating an extended sheltered social space. This area is intended for the public use and has various seating arrangements along its path to allow pedestrians to take a break along their route, but connects them with the functions of the community center during these pauses.43

The building brings in pedestrians in phases beginning on the sidewalk which then pulls them to pause in the public corridor which then brings them to interact with the inner workings of the facility. Pedestrians however are not the only users this facility looks to attract, similar to the Avondale site, this building is located on an important corner and is designed to capture the eye from every approach. Due to the existing building inhabiting the main corner, the Walkerville Civic Community Centre needed to be designed so to extend its exposure behind the existing and reach the busy intersection. JPE Design Studio accomplished this by skewing the shape of the building allowing two corners to extended past the existing building and be seen from any of the approaches to the intersection. This strategy works similarly to the pedestrian phases by establishing its presences on the street and then drawing in users through transparency along the street façade. Capturing the street is a successful strategy for how to connect the building to the everyday of the community, the goal in Avondale.

3 Project
3.1 What is the ‘everyday’ of the people of Avondale?

The Theory of the Everyday says that a person is defined by the daily and often “boring” activities that they do every day without a second thought. These activities are unifying in the fact that people in every walk of life have similarities in their daily lives. The typical day for Avondale residents involve taking care of their families, going to work, and finding time to relax the same as most Americans. Unfortunately the things that make Avondale residents daily lives different are not positive influences. The majority of residents have little education and live below the poverty line which puts stress on their daily lives. The new Avondale Center looks to help alleviate some of this stress by providing residents easy access to vocational training and as a result better paying careers. As stated previously, this will be accomplished by incorporating the center into the everyday activities of Avondale residents. In essence the Theory of the Everyday implies that if a new store opens up on your daily path to work while you may walk by a few times without second thought, chances are good that eventually you will stop, look in the windows and walk in. If included in the new Avondale center are programmatic elements that will become part of residents daily lives and they pass by the school areas every day, then the chances are significantly higher that their curiosity will be peaked and they will eventually take the step into the school and take a class.
Avondale Educational Status

- less than high school
- high school or equiv.
- some college
- associates degree
- bachelors degree
- masters degree
- professional school degree
- doctorate degree

3.01

Existing Site
There are some distinct differences in daily needs and activities that make Avondale residents unique and understanding these will allow the new Avondale Center to insert itself into their everyday lives. There are a large number of families living in Avondale and therefore child care is a crucial part of their day. Most families are single parent households meaning that in order for the adult to work there needs to be daycare available; however, there are few centers in the area. Also, if the goal is to promote secondary education then daycare will be needed for extended hours to allow parents to attend classes. Another important aspect is transportation, due to its location within the city and the average income, public transportation or walking is the primary methods of transportation. The Avondale site is located on a main transportation corner in the neighborhood meaning that it is already part of a key social exchange area. South Avondale Elementary School is located across Rockdale from and the school children walk back and forth across the site on their way to class. Laundromats are also community gathering spaces; the majority of residences in the neighborhood are multi-family units without laundry facilities. While doing laundry may not necessarily be an everyday activity, it is a frequent activity and creates a large amount of down time allowing for socialization. Similar to childcare facilities, there is a lack of adequate laundry facilities in Avondale. The new center will add these needed facilities along with other community functions alongside the school with the ultimate goal of improving the everyday lives of Avondale.
3.2 What are the ‘everyday’ activities on the site?

Understanding the “everyday” of the site involves knowledge of both the history of the site and the current daily activities. The neighborhood of Avondale is focused primarily on Reading Road, where the majority of the street activity is present. It is important that this center have a prominence in the community as well as stands as a beacon for people passing through to realize the progress being made in Avondale. The site chosen is located on the Northwest corner of Reading and Rockdale and it possesses great potential to host this type of center. This intersection is a primary location within the neighborhood, but risks losing some of this attention when the 71 MLK exit is developed. Currently people looking to go to the zoo from all parts of Cincinnati have to travel through this intersection, but with the new exit they will bypass it. At first consideration it would seem that this building should be placed closer to MLK as a result of this development; however, a key part of the center is that it is for the community. The Avondale center can change the draw to this intersection from passing through in route to the zoo to bringing community and outsiders here to stop and visit. Another community benefit from choosing this specific site is that it currently has a reputation for crime in the area and this center will hopefully turn this to a positive area.
Existing Communication on the Site
Existing Site Conditions
Existing Everyday of the Site
Existing Everyday Health of the Site
The crime that has occurred on this site is focused on some of the buildings currently present. There exists a Burger King on the site that while being one of the few food offerings in the community, it is offering a multitude of unhealthy things. This Burger King was once busted for selling drugs through the drive-thru window and was a huge scandal in the neighborhood, leaving a black mark on the site. Simply Fashion is also located on the side in a strip center that is mostly vacant and is a location of numerous thefts and property destruction. This site has had such a bad history that recently the Cincinnati Police have installed a temporary sub-station inside one of the vacant strip center spaces. The Avondale center benefits from being built in a location that is already associated with the various at-risk groups that it hopes to assist. There is one existing positive building on the site which is a local church; however, they do not plan to be in this location for much longer. This church is an original staple of the neighborhood but, the church is currently constructing a large new church in Norwood and will be moving their congregation to that location in the near future. This thesis will propose demolishing both the mostly empty strip center and the Burger King; however, there is great value in trying to preserve the church and perhaps repurpose it for use in relation to the community functions of the center. The edges of the site call for re-activation and a more positive connection to the neighborhood.
This site has very active surrounding buildings that it will have the opportunity to interact with. Directly across Reading from the site is a small strip center that, unlike the one located on the site, is thriving. These business draw a large amount of people to the area not only to shop but to socialize. South of the site is the local Elementary School which means that there are certain times of the day where the area is inundated with young children. Being located so close to a school offers the center a lot of interesting connection points. A relationship can be built with the school directly to allow students to take classes about certain skills during the school day. These classes can be taught by center teachers at their school or the children can travel across the street to the center to take classes. This will help to prevent the assumptions that skilled labor is not a career option and possibly reach children who struggle with traditional education and will not likely attend college and provide them with an alternative. Since this center will also have community function it can also provide these children with a safe place to go after school, this has the potential for after school classes and activities related to the technical center as well. These connections if well addressed by the center will improve the chances for success of the center.
The site has some challenges however that will need to be addressed throughout the design of this center. The topography of the site will provide the first challenge. A goal of this center is for it to be open and inviting to the community members which traditionally calls for a transparency throughout the building, however the site is counter-intuitive to this method. The primary corner at Reading and Rockdale is the highest point on the site from which it slopes down toward the back corner of the site. This means that a majority of the building will be below the primary eye line of the people on the street and the cars driving by meaning it will be more difficult to show what is occurring inside. The site also backs up directly to a residential street, which means that it will be a challenge to ensure that the building has no adverse effects on those residences. The programs within this building have the potential to cause some noise pollution to the surrounding areas and it will be vital to minimize these effects. It will also be important to consider what view of the building these residences will have in order to keep the building as a positive and not result in a negative reputation for these neighbors. The everyday of this site is defined by these connections; the Avondale center looks to strengthen them.
Residences North of Site

View of Site from Residences
How the people of the neighborhood interact with the site on a daily basis also creates its definition in the daily existence of Avondale. Through observations at various times of day, six activities were recognized as the current everyday activities that occur in and around the site: loitering, buying fast food, picking up and dropping off at daycare, traveling to and from school, shopping, and living or being at home. Loitering and buying fast food are categorized as unhealthy activities that provide means for improvement. Picking up and dropping off at daycare, traveling to and from school, shopping, and living or being at home are considered ordinary activities that do not necessarily have positive or negative connotations, but there is still room for improvements or expansion. The program of the Avondale center looks to address these areas needing improvement along with the facilities needed for each skill being taught.
3.3 What are the programmatic elements that will enhance the ‘everyday’?

The program of the Avondale center is divided into two categories: community center and trade school. The skills taught in the center directly reflect the needs of the community. Building trades are an important part of any neighborhood revitalization and by training the residents in these skills, it will allow them to begin the movement on their own. The students will be able to start with their own houses and according to “The Broken Window Theory” this will inspire others to follow suit. The specific skills chosen are: plumbing, HVAC, welding, electrical, and basic construction. Cooking will also be taught which not only could provide viable careers for Avondale residents, but also help alleviate some of the area’s food problems. Avondale is considered a food desert, meaning that there is little to no direct access to healthy eating establishments or fresh groceries. One strategy for solving this health crisis is to put grocery stores in the neighborhood; however, the concern with this strategy is that the majority of residents do not know how to prepare food using fresh, healthy groceries. Cooking classes at the Avondale center will teach the necessary skills to prepare healthy meals. The school functions will primarily occupy one side of the center and the community functions the other.


The community elements will look to fill in and improve upon some of the gaps mentioned in earlier research as well as provide for future growth. The Avondale center includes a daycare and laundromat which were established as needs in the community. The daycare facility will work closely with the school to ensure that childcare is not a hindrance to education. A gym is also a key part of the center because it will draw single young residents to the center on a regular basis. The existing retail on the site while not a huge success is earning money and contributing to the economy; therefore, there will be spaces in the center dedicated to retail. The stores from the existing site may take these spots or new business may come to the area. Classrooms will be dedicated in the school side for community use. These facilities will allow for GED classes, financial classes, or any other skills the residents may be interested in acquiring. The café within the building will look to replace the functions of the existing Burger King and will be run by cooking school students; creating a strong tie between the two sides. Avondale is beginning its growth process and has various community groups that work to improve the area. This new center will include ample office and meeting space to allow these groups a common area to work towards their common goals. There will also be a larger meeting space and lobby to allow for large community gatherings and potentially rentable space for receptions and neighborhood parties. The two programmatic sides will be united by a shared circulation space designed as a socialization zone. The design of the center from interior to exterior will focus on how to seamlessly incorporate these two programs and make the building a part of the ‘everyday’ of the people of Avondale.
4. Design
4.1 Site

Through precedent studies and an understanding of the history of the site, specific site design strategies have been developed to alter the perception of the site from a negative to a positive. The first move was to divide the site into two smaller sections, this allows for a future development of new multi-family residences on the back section and the community center on the front section. The new apartments would be developed without direct connection to the community center, but would allow for more activation of the center. The smaller community center section allows for street front activation on all sides and a more compact design means more crossing of the two programs. While the building massing of a traditional secondary school or community center is one large interior focused block, the massing concept for the new Avondale center calls for openness. The school and community center form two ‘L-shaped’ parts that have been pulled apart to reveal the sloping topography and socialization space. The topography of the site is steeply sloping from the corner of the Reading and Rockdale towards the Northwest and utilizing this terrain will imbed the building within the site. Since the site already functions as a cut-through for the residents of Avondale, the new center did not want to lose this activity and creating a central circulation zone maintains this function. Accessibility was a design aim for the building and by utilizing slopes as the primary means of circulation opens the same building experiences up to all users. The building using this strategy gets divided into a series of stepping levels.
Similarly exterior levels are created on the Southeast and Northwest corners as parquets doubling as entrance pavilions. The Southeast pavilion will serve as a waiting area for the bus stop currently on the corner as well as allow for gathering space for children after school. It consists of a large paved pavilion at the corner with slopes toward the building and large grassy steps for gathering. The slopes lead users from completely exposed areas to covered pavilions then down through the building. The Northwest pavilion is more residential focused, it has a large stepped mound that can be used for amphitheater purposes as well as creating areas for various group gatherings. These new pavilions are open to the public at all times and help to bleed the transition from exterior to interior.

The existing site has issues with crime because of the areas behind the buildings that are difficult to patrol. By cutting down the site area, it allows the building to more completely occupy the site. This creates no areas where criminals could hide and pushes activity to the street front. Not only will this cut down on crime within the site, but having more people present on the street will reduce crime in the whole neighborhood for fear of being caught. The new side streets created will have parallel parking on both sides to accommodate visitors to the center. The site organization brings back the positive qualities of the site before the riots and the exterior façade hopes to connect back to the neighborhoods as well.
Site Plan
4.2 Exterior

The exterior design of this building is challenging because it cannot be in direct competition with the interior socialization space, but still needs to be inspiring. The ‘Theory of the Everyday’ says that buildings can be boring, but this will not create the kind of intrigue needed to pull people through the building. Brick is the material chosen for the façade of the building because of its strong presence in the surrounding neighborhood; however, the way the brick is used in the center is a modern concept. Learning from the façade of the Tate Modern Addition, the bricks are used as a screening mechanism. The interior program determines what condition of screening will occur along the exterior façade. Three wall sections create differentiation: a solid wall with brick screen in front, a glazed wall with brick screen in front, or a glazed wall with no screening. There are two patterns of perforated brick used, one more open for the community side and one with less openings for the school side.

47. “The Tate Modern Project,” Tate.
An evaluation of the two programs determined how each pattern was created. The pattern chosen for the community façade is more closely related to the Tate Modern Addition patterning with a regular open/close rhythm. The majority of the community façade faces south and therefore a pattern with more perforations is beneficial. The program of the community center is also more susceptible to outside observation and should feel a stronger connection to the street life. The school façade on the other hand should create a sense of curiosity, but cannot allow the same level of transparency. The nature of the trade school means that many of the labs while interesting to look at, also tend to be messy and loud spaces. The heavier percentage of brick along the façade will allow for less noise pollution from within as well as have more controlled views into these spaces. The different levels of transparency along the façade will allow it to have an interesting design while not competing with the interior areas. At night the building will serve as a beacon similar to the Tate Modern Addition at night when the lights from within will glow through the brick perforations.\(^{48}\) As the brick approaches the two entrance pavilions it will begin to break away as the user enters into the interior.

\(^{48}\) “The Tate Modern Project,” Tate.
The primary interior space is the circulation zone between the school and community functions. The slopes from the exterior continue into the interior and serve as the primary circulation path with steps intermixed. The steps are designed to not be circulation, but to be break out areas for group socialization. These areas are intended for the people who currently loiter on the site to change that to a more productive means of socialization. The café is situated along the sloped circulation path to encourage visitors to stop and stay a while. Each side of the building also has nodes that funnel off the center to pull users further into the building. Shifts in the plan identify these areas and creates the ability for each side to be closed at different times for security reasons. This sloped circulation is designed as an interior pedestrian street so the activation along the interior is as important as it was along the exterior. While the brick screens were used along the exterior, in the interior wood latticed screens are used to control views. This is another twist on the existing architecture of Avondale, where wood fenestrations from porches to shutters are used to accent and control views. There will be more glazing in the interior street so that the vocational training labs that border the circulation can become the background to the socialization areas. The wood screening will also have to be movable unlike the exterior façade because depending on the activities going on within it may require more privacy. The center will also have the ability to open completely to the exterior on certain days. The entrance pavilions and the levels extending through the building will be large community event spaces as well, allowing for farmers markets and craft shows through the entire site.
4.4 Conclusions

This center through understanding of the “Theory of the Everyday” will create a positive change in the lives of Avondale resident. By making the step into a secondary education facility easier, the previous negative educational experiences of under-employed residents will not deter them. These skills will allow the residents to rebuild their community from within and improve the economy of the neighborhood long term. The design concepts used for Avondale will then be able to be modified to use in similar neighborhoods across the United States. This center will become the prototype for rehabilitating urban neighborhoods without the adverse effects of gentrification. These methods focus on the people and their lives. The success of this type center will be reflected in the improvements of the ‘everyday’ lives of people everywhere.
Bibliography


Bibliography cont.


