Introduction

I selected this project because I have an interest in areas of obscurity. A sequence of broken patterns of development and building typologies could all be found in the same area, such as the single family with relaxed setback and the warehouse typologies. The direction or structural address, use/function, age, arrangement, and large scale composition of the area was in a state of great conflict. Regionally, there existed a spatial void between urban Madisonville and urban Oakley (Ridge Road to Red Bank Expressway); this area had undergone several distinct changes which had very clear patterns and harsh effects on the area.

The fact that the City of Cincinnati had identified this area for potential office park redevelopment sparked my interest in both the concept of the office park and the use of office parks as a way to reconnect. The concept of the suburban office park could be broken down into volumes of use (structure, parking, green) connected but with little connectivity through a series of roads. The potential use of an office park (which lacks quality connectivity) in an area that lacks existing connectivity proved to be an interesting experiment. By experimenting with existing programmatic typologies for the office park, I was able to understand the needs and reallocate them on the project sites in a more efficient way.

Two primary theories were used as a basis for study on the site. First, Rem Koolhaas’s study on spatial volumes of development from his work in Malaysia, revealed an understanding on basic structural typologies (office, residential, commercial) and the capacity of sites. The combination of these studies aided in his master planning of a city in Malaysia which required multiple typologies. The spheres of influence were my interpretation of his concepts and my study of the project site in Madisonville. The theory used was the S.O.I, which are studies on capacity and use typologies in which each sphere is assigned a primary use (residential, commercial, transitional – brown, blue, pink) and design recommendations are made based on the remaining spatial capacity of the sphere. Ex: If 90 percent of the identified sphere is used in the existing style of development, then the remaining 10 percent should be used in a similar style to achieve capacity as dictated by the study of Koolhaas’s theory. The physical designation of a sphere of influence on the project site was dictated by bulk or consistency of clusters of like things as well as topography and the overlap of other identified spheres.
This diagram looks at the larger context for the sites under study. The brown lines highlight the stark contrast between scale and use (form and function are intertwined in my theories). The contrast creates a large corridor highlighted by many forms of transportation (blue lines) which create fragments or sectors to the corridor. The red lines highlight the isolation of the three residential clusters inside of the larger corridor. This identification is what served as the basis of examination for my project.
The spheres of influence were a technical study on the existing composition of the community as well as a process for defining a study area. The First Four colors (blue, brown, pink, and red) were the composition study based on building type and general location. Once the specific spheres of influence were identified, the buildings were removed as a factor and the natural or terrascape study began. The final three colors (grey, green, and black) provided a breakdown of the originally identified spheres into conceptual land patterns. These patterns provided an understanding of the underlying system as well as a potential design solution. The black color provides an indication of scale and the urban pattern of development as well as a suggestion for future development through a lot line projection technique.
The final diagram in this series is a culmination of the previous diagrams. The goal of this overlay process was to provide a better understanding of the existing conditions through a non-standard approach. The results are very telling and provide a good understanding of the form in the area without looking at building footprints. The pink areas provide a location for conjoining intervention, where currently a void exists in which there is no scalar or building typology transition. The white lines tell us the general direction of the existing built form and provide guides for new development. The large white voids are areas which cannot be built but should be bridged (permeated) to provide better connectivity amongst the fragments of the site. In large, this diagram shows the de-evolution of the spheres concept and provides a more natural understanding of the area.

site identification, site study 3
Conceptual diagram depicting the mixture of the natural and built landscape before the addition of new buildings can come. To form the office park we must understand the nature of an office park, and the derive new ways of understanding and using the pieces. (From left to right) We begin with the basic office structure program and a breakdown of required spaces. Then a mixture of the landscape (built and unbuilt) occurs, followed by a mesh or mixture of the two program spaces into a contiguous “terrascape”. Finally, we can examine the larger space to identify good spaces for buildings which can serve as connectors between spaces, not interruptions.

Note: The grids and boxes you notice in many of my diagrams are derived from two sources 1) through this analysis (notice the understood program requirements in the left diagram) 2) Through lot line projections with provide an average scale and direction for development.
Diagram Left: Model diagram depicting the features of the design for one experimental office park typology where parking is clustered in two modules accompanied by two passive modules which contain the structures.

Diagram Middle: Similar to the left diagram, this is another interpretation on the office park in which each module contains all of the facilities (parking, green, structure) and allows for the natural reaction and built form reaction to take place.

Diagram Right: This diagram depicts total capacity for the available office park land using the module approach.

conceptualization 2

- Clustering uses inside a sphere of influence.
- Structural reaction to buildings, transport reaction to topography.

CAPACITY
5 Acre Lot Blocks
45,000 Sf buildings
200 space parking lots
Diagram Left: Photomontage depicting the natural intentions of the office park inside the study area.

Diagram Right: Partial site plan showing the core location for the project and key interjections including a central space (highlighted in pink) as well as the east-west expansion of housing across the site to provide lateral movement.
The site plan provided on the next two pages is a conceptual site plan implementing three typologies of office park arrangement inside their respective spheres of influence. Each of the experiments follow the constructs of the study, parking and drives react to topographic features which provide shape for the landscape and built form reacts to the lot line projections through both direction and scale.
I greatly enjoyed the process but could have taken the design to a new level. Instead, like Chinua Achebe said, sometimes things just fall apart. Much was left to be desired with my project, and many things were left unexplored. I wish I could have spent more time designing and experimenting with these concepts. If there is any additional information you need, please don’t hesitate to email or call:

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