DENSITY AND PUBLIC SPACE AT BISHOP STREET

Niehoff Urban Studio
Senior Planning Capstone Spring 2015

Justin M. Lightfield
# Table of Contents

Overview ................................................................................................................................................... 3  
Design Objectives and Project Timeline................................................................................................ 4  
Site Information........................................................................................................................................ 5  
Elevation Analysis..................................................................................................................................... 6  
Slope Analysis........................................................................................................................................ 7  
Current Land Use, Zoning and Parking Analysis................................................................................... 8  
Concept 1 - Rebuild.................................................................................................................................. 9  
Concept 2 - Rebuild and Infill.................................................................................................................. 10  
Concept 3 - Preservation and Infill........................................................................................................ 11  
The 2D to 3D Process................................................................................................................................ 12  
Illustrative Master Plan............................................................................................................................ 13  
Illustrative Site Plan - Public Plaza Detail............................................................................................... 14  
Illustrative Site Plan - Residential Area with Greenspace Detail............................................................. 15  
Detailed Perspective - View 1.................................................................................................................. 16  
Detailed Perspective - View 2.................................................................................................................. 17  
Section of Residential Area with Open Space.......................................................................................... 18  
References and Bibliography.................................................................................................................... 19
By redeveloping two sites on Bishop Street, which currently contain old, dilapidated apartment structures into a public plaza and dense, modern residential structures, this proposal creates an eastern access point to Burnet Woods.

Proposed townhouses and apartment units provide a range of housing types and price levels to bring people of diverse ages, races, and incomes into daily interaction with one another. Strategic placement of the residential structures, walkways and open space near the Clifton Business District and Burnet Woods are designed to encourage walking, reduce the number of automobile trips, and conserve energy. The design of geometric walkways will literally lead residents from the urban environment into the natural one.
Design Objectives and Project Timeline

There are five design objectives I set at the beginning of the analysis process, which I followed through to the end of the project. These objectives include:

1. Develop a broad range of housing types to bring people of diverse ages, races, and incomes into daily interaction, strengthening the personal and civic bond.
2. Preserve the existing scenic landscape while capitalizing on the spectacular views of Burnet Woods.
3. Respect historical buildings and landscapes to affirm the continuity and evolution of Clifton.
4. Create an eastern access point to Burnet Woods to maximize opportunities for public access to the park.
5. Bring dense development near Burnet Woods to promote use of the park, while being within walking distance of the Clifton Business District, University of Cincinnati, and Uptown.

The project timeline, which is displayed below, highlights the major steps I followed throughout the project. First, I began analyzing the site as a whole and started examining case studies that would fit within the context of my site. This eventually led to the evaluation of my analysis and case studies where I determined two sites that would be well situated for development on Bishop Street. A large quantity of concept designs were proposed to my professors. One preferred plan was selected for the two sites and I began to create a detailed site plan, elevations, and detailed perspectives. A poster design and layout were designed in preparation of my final presentation. The final presentation occurred on April 23, 2015 and some insightful public feedback was given, which I will take into account moving forward.
Bishop Street is directly east of the 90-acre Burnet Woods Park. Bishop Street is within the Clifton neighborhood and is surrounded by neighborhoods including Avondale and Corryville. The University of Cincinnati, Clifton Heights, University Heights, and Fairview are all due south of Bishop Street. Several nearby amenities include: hiking trails, a fishing lake, bandstand, playground, and a disc golf course; however, there is no major eastern access point connecting Bishop Street and surrounding residential streets to Burnet Woods.

The two focal redevelopment sites are highlighted in red. The northern site currently has an old, dilapidated apartment structure owned by JBZT LLC shown in photo 4. The southern site currently contains three residential structures that do not take advantage of the scenic views, are outdated, and covered with asphalt with parking in both the front and rear of two of the three properties. The current site conditions of the southern redevelopment site are shown in photo 5 and 6. Photos 1 - 3 show the established historical character of the neighborhood with houses and apartments that date back to the late 1800s and early 1900s. The buildings in photo 1 and 2 are several examples of the buildings that would be preserved.
Site Elevation Analysis

The site elevation analysis plays an important role in site planning and design decisions for the two sites. The sites are both relatively flat, but have high points to the eastern side of each site and lower points to the western side. The design should capitalize on the potential views for residents and visitors, which currently do not exist.
The slope analysis is directly derived from the elevation analysis using Geographic Information Systems. Slope analysis as well as site visits were performed to identify the design and construction suitability. The majority of both sites are relatively flat; however, the western portion of the northern site contains a 15% - 24% slope, which means design features must respect the topography and the existing landscape.
The current land use, zoning and parking analysis plays a critical role in showing what already is established in the neighborhood. Bishop Street is currently dominated by residential multi-family and single family zoning. Office limited, parks and recreation, residential mixed, institutional residential, and commercial neighborhood all encompass Bishop Street. The two redevelopment sites themselves are currently covered by approximately 50% parking and fall within the multi-family zoning category.
Concept 1 - Rebuild

Concept 1 - Rebuild examines the site as a whole before I decided to focus on only two sites. This concept proposes to rebuild the entire western side of Bishop Street with only one housing type - townhouses with rear alley service access. The townhouses would be close to the street and in line with one another. The alleys provide space for parking access, service areas and utility easements throughout the development. Positives of this plan include proposed pathways that connect the entire new development to Burnet Woods. Additionally, the public plaza/park entrance to the northern portion of the site would provide direct access to the park for all surrounding residents. Several negatives include only one housing type, the demolition of historic buildings dating back to the late 1800s, and a monotonous, long street lined with townhouses. The negatives were thoroughly examined before moving on to Concept 2.
Concept 2 - Rebuild and Infill

Concept 2 - Rebuild and Infill examines the site as a whole before I decided to focus on only two sites. This time; however, you can see the evolution and movement towards a variety of housing types. This concept proposes both apartments and townhouses, providing opportunities for individuals to rent and own. The proposal is drastically different from Concept 1, as this plan has components to rebuild and infill. Unlike the first plan that proposed the demolition of all properties to the western side of Burnet Woods, this proposal preserves many historic buildings north of West Nixon Street. The buildings highlighted in light blue are buildings that would remain. Several positive aspects to this plan include preserving some historic buildings, providing a variety of housing types, and creating an access point off of Jefferson Street to Burnet Woods. Negatives include the demolition of all properties south of W. Nixon Street and altering the historic character of Bishop Street through the redevelopment of almost two-thirds of the street.

Concept 2 - Rebuild and Infill
Concept 3 - Preservation and Infill

Concept 3 - Preservation and Infill narrows down the once entire redevelopment of Bishop Street to two primary areas. The two areas of focus are the public plaza/park entrance and the apartment/townhouse village concept. Other amenities are proposed around the public plaza and residential component, which include a community garden, shared green space, entry point improvements, new signage, and proposed pedestrian paths. This concept encompasses the theme of preservation to keep as many historical homes untouched to affirm the continuity and evolution of the Clifton neighborhood. Additionally, the residential component would have multiple housing types, thereby bringing people of diverse ages and incomes into the redevelopment community. All of the greenspace south of W. Nixon Street cannot be redeveloped as it is owned by the University of Cincinnati and City of Cincinnati. This was my final concept plan before moving to the 3D process.
The 2D to 3D Process

The 3D process shows three proposed plans and one recommended final plan. The purpose of the 3D process is to fully understand the surrounding context and how the proposed development would fit within the area. Also, the proposed plans begin to come up with detailed plans of the residential area and public plaza. Proposed Plan I - “One Unified Community” shows 3-story apartment complexes around a central greenspace area. Proposed Plan II - “A Variety of Housing Types” proposes both townhouses and apartment complexes, but this proposal takes up more space than the other three proposals, thereby demolishing historic buildings. Proposed Plan III - “Capitalizing on Scenic Views” shows one 3-story apartment building lining the street with the inner greenspace surrounded by townhouses. The three proposed plans eventually led to the Recommended Final Plan - “Density and Public Space.” This final plan recommends a public plaza space for the northern site and two 3-story apartment buildings with townhouses surrounding the greenspace.
The public plaza detail illustrates the movement residents would encounter walking on the organic paths leading them from the urban environment to the natural environment. The public plaza space to the eastern side would provide seating areas for residents on benches and granite seat walls under large shade trees. The plaza space would be large enough to host small summer concerts, farmer’s markets, and a wide array of events. The gateway sign helps brand the underutilized Burnet Woods park and split the urban from natural journey residents will take each time they walk from the Jefferson Avenue/Bishop Street intersection into the park. Along the cobblestone walkway will be a variety of landscaping elements ranging from large trees, to small bushes, to diverse flowers. Due south of the path is an abundant amount of greenspace for children, families, and students to play catch or relax on a blanket while reading a book.
The residential area with greenspace detail illustrates the final design of the southern site. Two 3-story apartment buildings with 25 units and 14 parking spaces line Bishop Street. Townhouses surround the greenspace for residents with 16 units total and 12 two-car garages. The diverse housing types will provide a range of price levels, and ownership and rental opportunities. The strategic placement of the residential structures, walkways and open space are designed to encourage walking to and from Burnet Woods and reduce the number of automobile trips with the development strategically placed near the Clifton Business District. Many amenities are proposed to create an environment where all residents can play and live. Amenities include a gazebo, observation deck, community gardens, patio with an outdoor grill, seating, private fenced in courtyards, and a fountain.
Detailed Perspectives - View 1

View 1 - Looking west towards Burnet Woods from the observation deck brings the park and nature literally into the new development. The residents can now enjoy views of Burnet Woods from an elevated observation deck while sitting on wooden benches or standing and appreciating the wildlife that exists within the park. The observation deck leads residents to and from the park if they choose to walk down the wooden steps and into the natural environment.
Detailed Perspectives - View 2

View 2 - Looking west towards Burnet Woods along the townhouses depicts the potential style of townhouses. More importantly, it shows the private fenced in courtyard that all residents will have providing space from the public greenspace to their own space. This will provide essential space for the individual owners. The concrete or cobblestone path will lead residents through the variety of amenities and from the urban to natural environment. A cobblestone path was chosen to represent what once lined Bishop Street, but is now covered by asphalt.
Section of Residential Area with Open Space

The section of residential area with open space cuts horizontally through the residential area of the site plan. This is the final detail of the plan and shows the wide array of amenities and residential buildings within the site. Additionally, the section gives a good depiction of the elevation change from the eastern side of the site at Bishop Street all the way down to Burnet Woods Park.

Conclusion

The final design creates a sense of community, encourages walking, reduces the number of automobile trips, and conserves energy all while fitting into the historical character of the neighborhood. Finally, the design of geometric walkways will literally lead residents from the urban environment into the natural one.

BRINGING DENSITY & PUBLIC SPACE TO BISHOP STREET WHILE PRESERVING THE PAST
References and Bibliography


www.yankodesign.com/images/design_news/2012/10/17/lysning_07.jpg

www.cdn.cstatic.net/images/gridfs/5466e328f92ea1721902h9421/West%20Park%20at%20Essex%20Crossing-Broome%20St%20Frontage.jpg


www.ascribehq.com/assets/photos/mlarge/3e95d214ebca6ae48cccb894f16e116cb4818ae.jpg

www.modcell.com/files/cache/c983d1cd350ad65015b95ab90ac0c50_f844.jpg