Cultural Education, Play, and Community Development in Over-the-Rhine

Working with non-profit and community groups, students created a variety of neighborhood design projects including: Urban Design Plan for the OTR Brewery District entertainment area; Streetscape and new housing in the North Vine Street commercial district; Redesign of the OTR recreation center entry and public play area; Designing “defensible space” for the Sharp Village residential district; Designing a housing and commercial plan for the blocks south of Findlay Market in OTR. Each of these projects was developed and conducted by students who worked closely with individual community organizations to provide feasibility research and visualizations that are utilized to advance the further planning and implementation of the project.

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Winter 05
Terracing can be created by making concrete walls and adding land to fill up the area to the new height. It not only creates more usable land but it also creates less space that criminals can hide in and limits access to the backyards. Building height has a relationship to safety in that buildings taller than 3-5 stories lose their intimate connection with the street.

Using Light to Deter Crime
Street lighting has been shown to reduce violent crime but sometimes at the expense of property crimes. By placing lighting in places that are highly used by pedestrians both types of crimes go down. New lighting also has an effect on community spirit because of the new investment and attention it brings.

Encouraging Pedestrian Traffic
Pedestrian traffic is important for defensible space and should be guided into appropriate areas. The stairs above lead up to a basketball court, blacktop area, and a church which makes this path ideal for focusing traffic.

Using Terracing to Create Defensible Space
Terracing is both aesthetically attractive and effective for creating defensible space. It severely limits access to the area from the street and gives the owner of the terrace a safe place to observe the street below.

Restoring the Corner Store
Jane Jacobs inspired the planning motto "Leave room for the corner store" because it plays an essential role in generating pedestrian traffic. Storeowners are also more protective of the area outside their business to assure customer safety. Local Economic Vitality is a major factor in the safety of a neighborhood. Jobs keep people from hanging out on the streets all day.
Responsibility for area is shared by surrounding residents making the area seem controllable and encouraging social intermingling among neighbors. Some courtyards should have a passive use and others a more proactive use. This increases the use of the courtyards by different peer groups.

New Single Family Residences that are owner occupied have an anchor effect on the rest of the community. It shows a long range commitment to the community. It also inherently decreases crime due to the privatization of the space surrounding the home.

The Broken Window Theory by James Q. Wilson and George Kelling states that a neighborhood that looks like it is in poor shape actually invites foreign criminals into the area since it appears as if there is no authority. People withdraw and become less willing to intervene to maintain public order. Sensing this, teens and other possible vandals become bolder and intensify their harassment and vandalism. Any graffiti should be cleaned up immediately and neighborhood clean up days should be established.

A community garden is one way to bring residents together and to start to looking out for each other’s property. Gardens also encourage people to come outside for extended periods of time, both to work and enjoy.

Brian Wamsley
The Over the Rhine Rec Center is squeezed between Green, Race, Republic and Elder streets. It is located just East of Historic Findlay Market. The Rec Center currently serves the general public of Over the Rhine. There is currently a 10 dollar membership fee to use many of the Rec Center's facilities. The Site houses a 25 meter pool, indoor basketball, a roller rink, and fitness rooms. The center is primarily used by residents of neighborhood. The center is currently surrounded by many low income housing units many of which share the same outdoor space as the Rec Center. The Rec Center has operated and served the community providing an outlet and recreation for many OTR residents.

1 Safety
the outside of the facility has high crime and has become littered with trash and graffiti.

2 No Playground or Green Space
existing green space has become littered with trash and there are no outside playground facilities.

3 Parking
there is very little on-site parking for the Rec also the parking lot has become a high drug activity zone.
Michael Yerman

This corner building is vacant and casts a negative image for the market and the rest of the street.

Findlay Market

The inner courtyard is primarily used for parking. The green space is trashed and has turned to mud because of overuse. Also the Rec has no way to protect the area.

Low income housing and small businesses that maintain their buildings. Most of these units have tenants.

This vacant courtyard area behind many of the vacant buildings on Vine has created a zone to deal drugs and use them. Many of the buildings are broken into and serve as squatter settlements for the poor.
The **Vine Street North District** is an area of great potential. Through several proposed projects a **sense of identity** can be created for the area and **Grant Park can be revitalized**, These interventions will bring diversity and new life to the area, becoming once again a **vibrant and vital neighborhood** within Over-

New Streetscape along Vine Street and Elder Street, includes new street lamps matching those at Findlay Market, along with corresponding street furniture and paving. This will help provide a sense of identity to the Vine Street North district, tying it to the market. Special pavers in the streets, especially at the intersection with Elder will alert passers-by on Vine Street of the proximity of the market.

A new residential neighborhood would be located around the renovated Grant Park. Linked to Vine street by a new tree-lined street, the new district would be oriented toward the existing residential area to the east and have a more quiet character than the commercial area on Vine.
An important gateway into the Market neighborhood, Republic Street after a facade lift.

A new connection or pathway will lead south one half block to the new widened portion of Elder Street at Republic Street. Another new walkway will lead from Findlay Market east one half block to Vine, where the entrance to the Cincinnati Black Theater Co. will be located.

Elder Street widened from Race St. at Findlay Market east. This will extend the open space of the market place closer to Vine Street and create a new open space that can be used for special events. The current buildings on the south side of Elder Street will be replaced with new structures fronting the space.
The Findlay Market is Ohio’s oldest surviving public market and a major attraction for urban shoppers looking for fresh farm produce. The market is one of the biggest projects for the neighborhood’s revitalization. Development projects have the potential to become catalysts for the revitalization of the business district and improve the outward image of the neighborhood.
**Findlay Market South District**

- Improve the appearance of the Findlay Market area.
- Integrate the character of Findlay Market with the surrounding residential neighborhood.
- Promote mixed-uses in the Findlay Market area.
- Bring in the basic elements of a sustainable community.
- Incorporate one or more strong anchors into the project.
- Incorporate housing and office on upper floors along Elder and Pleasant streets.
- Ensure access to public transportation.
- Provide adequate and convenient parking.
- City of Cincinnati and "Resnaissance on Race."

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**SWOT Analysis**

**Strengths**
- Proximity to Findlay Market
- Mixed use and commercial land uses
- Business and Community commercial
- Pedestrian zoning

**Weaknesses**
- Several vacant parcels
- Dilapidated buildings
- Safety issues, lighting
- Lack of leadership
- Lack of critical mass and money

**Opportunity**
- Street vending on Elder Street
- Commercial on ground level with residential above on Elder Street
- Renovation and reuse of buildings

**Threats**
- Lack of initiative from residents
- Insecurity about sustained returns
- Lack of community/political support

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**Goals and Objectives**

- To transform the Findlay Market South District into a vibrant and active neighborhood.
- To attract residential and commercial population by providing adequate housing and parking

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The goal when developing the housing is to create a mix of incomes and age groups, while maintaining the character and historic appeal of the Findlay Market area.

Aditi Mantrawadi
The **Brewery District** combines several components, creating an overall vision for the area. Over-the-Rhine will be a community that will **support** the lives of a diverse user group. This will be done by changing the community to suit the needs and lifestyles of these groups as well as creating a community of **social acceptance** in Over-the-Rhine.

The adaptive reuse is critical in the sense that many buildings have a significant history behind them, and are contributing to character of the neighborhood.
Improvements Include: Hillside Housing Development provides market rate housing targeted at young professionals seeking an urban lifestyle and a home in close proximity to their place of employment. Brewery Heights is a townhome development on the hillside that utilizes views of the OTR Basin and the downtown CBD. Mixed-rate housing will promote the mixing of incomes with federal and city based funding programs.

The Cincinnati Metal Blast Building may be converted into an entertainment anchor housing, an eclectic/cultural restaurant, microbrewery, and beer museum make this building one of many highlights foreseen in the Brewery District. Use of this building is critical in creating a vibrant entertainment area due to its size and scale sitting at top of Over-the-Rhine.

There is great significance of the proposed linear park in relation to the proposed housing. The effect of defensible space both in the tenant commons and the enclosure created by the housing structures makes this area feel safer and more incorporated into the Over-the-Rhine neighborhood.