

ABSTRACT

Title of Thesis: RESPONSE: A CRITICAL APPROACH TO
RETHINKING OUR CITIES' VERNACULAR
NEIGHBORHOODS

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and Master of Historic Preservation, 2021

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Traditional architectural and preservation practices largely focus on methods and values attributed to high style architecture of prominence, overlooking elements important to vernacular neighborhoods and the communities that live within them. This fixation on the object rather than the human element does not lend itself to respond to community needs and heritages. This thesis proposes a new, community-based approach to preservation that diverges from traditional methods, instead drawing from human-centered design and values-based preservation.

Milwaukee's Center Peace neighborhood faces long-standing issues of disinvestment, displacement, and inequity. Implementing design strategies and policy recommendations formed from analysis of oral histories, ethnographic research, policy, and human-centered design methodologies, will allow the community to

transform the neighborhood's dilapidated building stock into an opportunity, confronting these issues. These strategies and recommendations will encourage the city, developers, and landlords to become more responsive to residents while giving agency to renters and homeowners at a grassroots level.

RESPONSE: A CRITICAL APPROACH TO RETHINKING OUR CITIES'
VERNACULAR NEIGHBORHOODS

by

Jared Michael Schmitz

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Part I: Rethinking the Preservation of Vernacular Neighborhoods

Traditional architectural and preservation practices largely focus on methods and values attributed to high style architecture of prominence, overlooking elements important to vernacular neighborhoods and the communities that live within them. This fixation on the object rather than the human element does not lend itself to respond to community needs and heritages. This thesis proposes a new, community-based approach to preservation that diverges from traditional methods, instead drawing from values-based preservation and human-centered design.

Chapter 1: Vernacular Neighborhoods and Current Preservation Practice

Vernacular Neighborhoods

A significant portion of the population spends the majority of their time living or working in vernacular structures. Vernacular, as used in this thesis, refers to the architect-less, ubiquitous buildings created largely out of response to local context and utility rather than a desire for grandeur and extravagance. These are the buildings that represent the majority of the built environment and were built with domestic and cultural values in mind. Vernacular architecture is distinguished from monumental or high style architecture that goes beyond mere function, representing the cutting edge of contemporary aesthetic taste and technology. Often commissioned by the gentry,

organizations, and governments, this architecture of the upper class focuses on trends in style and aesthetics while reinforcing power dynamics within society. Instead, vernacular architecture has its roots in the working class, occasionally borrowing from or mimicking the prominent style of the time. A distinctive characteristic of vernacular architecture is its evolution over time, continuing to meet the needs of its users throughout various cultural shifts and generations. While high style architecture invokes a sense of permanence, both through design and materiality, vernacular architecture is fluid and impermanent by nature, changing over time. Winston Churchill's observation about the high style House of Commons was astute: "We shape our buildings, and afterwards our buildings shape us."¹ Extending this expression to the idea of vernacular architecture only requires the implication of a continuous cycle. The evolution of a particular vernacular over time is directly reflective of the varying heritages and values of its locality. This not only includes the shaping of the building during the construction process and direct influence on its users but the transformation it experiences throughout its life and how it in turn informs the practices and behavior of its subsequent users. The study of this evolution, known as building morphology, can give insight into the heritage and cultural practices of a building's users. The same forces that shape society shape the built environment and vice versa.

A vernacular neighborhood is a collection of these buildings that forms an area of distinct urban character. The arrangement of these buildings, their

¹ Winston Churchill (October 28, 1943), <https://api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/commons/1943/oct/28/house-of-commons-rebuilding>.

streetscapes, and societal settings form unique districts with overlapping boundaries. The result is a physical grammar that informs social behavior and community.² Historic vernacular neighborhoods were traditionally occupied by a mixture of working and middle classes, but this makeup has shifted in many American cities. As suburban sprawl, deindustrialization, housing discrimination, and white flight occurred in many American cities during the mid-20th century, the mixed-income character of these neighborhoods shifted to a more segregated condition. This, along with other factors, resulted in concentrations of low-income, underrepresented groups inhabiting urban neighborhoods.

These residents face problems from both ends of the economic spectrum. Recently, middle and upper-class families have begun to take interest in the historic, walkable character of these neighborhoods and have contributed to displacement, or gentrification, within urban neighborhoods. Conversely, many older vernacular buildings in urban neighborhoods sit vacant and dilapidated while many others have been demolished, leaving holes in communities. Even buildings that have been continuously occupied fall behind their newer counterparts in the suburbs in terms of domestic amenities, as they are outdated and were built for entirely different demographics. Still, these buildings have important meanings to current and past residents, playing a key role in their heritages and daily lives. Preserving these buildings is important for these reasons and is more relevant than ever with the

² N. J. Habraken et al., *Conversations with Form: A Workbook for Students of Architecture*, (Routledge 2014).

conditions of many urban neighborhoods across the United States deteriorating at an alarming rate.

Traditional Preservation Practice

Unfortunately, the practice of historic preservation has historically ignored the heritages associated with vernacular neighborhoods and their residents for a number of reasons. Firstly, Western preservation practice and theory has its roots in the preservation of high style architecture. Based on ideals initially touted by those such as Le Duc, Morris, and Ruskin, the preservation movement has focused on the grandeur of buildings, whether in restoration or decay. In the United States, sites associated with prominent figures and aesthetic movements such as Mount Vernon, Colonial Williamsburg, and Penn Station were major contributors to the influences of the preservation movement as it formed. The formation of preservation law and policy was based around the values associated with these early efforts. The National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 established the criteria by which the nation's historic places have been judged, unchanging for over fifty years. The criteria created for this new National Register of Historic Places reflect elements associated with dominant culture:

The quality of significance in American history, architecture, archeology, engineering, and culture is present in districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects that possess integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association, and:

- A. That are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history; or
- B. That are associated with the lives of persons significant in our past; or
- C. That embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or

D. That have yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.³

These criteria reinforce dominant cultural values and leave out other important values such as cultural significance, representation of multiple heritages, and change over time. In this system, tangible heritage, fabric, and aesthetic are favored over intangible heritage, culture, and community values. The focus on integrity also presents an issue for the preservation of vernacular buildings. As vernacular buildings often don't exhibit integrity of location, design, setting, materials, or workmanship, they may need to rely solely on feeling and association that has likely been lost through change over time or is not understood by preservation professionals. This circles back around to the impermanence that vernacular sites often exhibit. Examining the various cultural values embedded within the fabric of a building by diverse users can tell rich stories about the past.

Preservation in many ways also fits within the general discourse of history, which has conventionally followed the dominant culture, victors, and groups in power. In the United States this group has always been identified as upper-class white men. This is evident in the breakdown of National Register listings with only 3% of resources listed as associated with underrepresented groups.⁴ What is meant to be comprehensive survey is obviously not. This reflects issues of representation and interpretation that stem from a top-down process and focus on dominant culture.

Scholars refer to these antiquated, inequitable practices in a number of different ways and propose new methods and frameworks to broaden the scope of

³ National Historic Preservation Act, 16 U.S.C. 470, October 15, (1966).

⁴ Ned Kaufman, "Historic Places and the Diversity Deficit in Heritage Conservation," *CRM: The Journal of Heritage Stewardship* 1, no. 2 (2004): pp. 68-85.

historic preservation to be more inclusive of multiple heritages. Australian scholar Laurajane Smith discusses Western heritage preservation as part of the Authorized Heritage Discourse (AHD), which is entrenched in dominant and legitimized practices. Smith defines the AHD as “a particular construction or way of seeing heritage that has gained dominance in public policy, archaeological narratives, and management practices, and it is this discourse that frames, constrains, or (de-)legitimizes debates about the meaning, nature, and value of 'heritage'.”⁵

Scholars Jeremy Wells and Lucas Lixinski explain the heritage discourse in terms of orthodox and heterodox preservation practice.⁶ They define orthodox preservation practice as empirical and based in past significance focusing on the tangible object associated with history. In contrast, heterodox practice is based in critical heritage theory and focuses on people’s intangible relationships with heritage.

⁵ Laurajane Smith, *Uses of Heritage* (London: Routledge, 2010), 29.

⁶ Jeremy C. Wells and Lucas Lixinski, “Heritage Values and Legal Rules,” *Journal of Cultural Heritage Management and Sustainable Development* 6, no. 3 (2016): pp. 345-364.

Preservation Practice



Fixation of Object
Upper-Class Aesthetic
Physical Integrity
Orthodox Practice
Singular Truth



Human-Centered
Community Values
Power of Place
Heterodox Practice
Plural Truths

Figure 1, Comparison of orthodox and heterodox practice with Pabst Mansion (left) and a vacant duplex in Center Peace (right). (Source: Sailko. Pabst Mansion, Milwaukee. Photograph. Milwaukee, October 31, 2016.; BLC Field School; Figure by Author)

In the United States, orthodox practice is manifested in the legal system through regulatory framework such as the National Register and Secretary of the Interior's Standards. Authenticity and integrity of fabric are key to regulating heritage in this framework and are determined by laws and standards. This process means that experts have control over what heritage meanings and values are perpetuated, often disregarding those of the community.⁷ Heterodox practice accommodates these multiple perspectives through the use of an adaptive regulatory framework. This value system recognizes the multiple heritages of communities by facilitating co-research with stakeholders.⁸ This allows evidence of how people value heritage to be

⁷ Wells and Lixinski, 349.

⁸ Ibid., 352.

used to understand authenticity and significance rather than assumption or outright imposition. The key difference between orthodox and heterodox practice lies in this distinction between experts and stakeholders determining values and reinforces the need for equitable community engagement in the preservation process.

Effects of Current Preservation Practice on Underrepresented Groups

Due to stagnation in development within the field of historic preservation in terms of being inclusive and considerate of multiple heritages, the heritages of Black, Latino, Asian American, LGBTQ+, and other underrepresented communities are often not preserved well or at all. Part of this is due to the overlap of underrepresented groups and vernacular architecture and the difficulty of preserving the associated intangible heritage. Another part of it is due to systemic racism embedded in policies at various levels. The combination of these factors makes researching, understanding, and recognizing the heritages of these groups extremely difficult in the current preservation discourse.

Traditional research methods that rely on well documented history and authentic physical integrity do not carry over well to underrepresented groups whose histories have been excluded, repressed, and erased. Many underrepresented groups have few “authentic” sources of information such as official written records, photographs, or drawings. Even in the cases where these narratives are tied to prominent figures or events in history, they have often been erased. Deterioration to the built fabric, due to disinvestment increases the difficulty of understanding and preserving these stories. A long-standing lack of communication and devaluing of community values has led to a distrust of preservationists in some cases. Because of

this disconnect, many of the places important to these groups have not received resources or aid from programs and rely on grassroots efforts. These factors all contribute to the existing diversity deficit.

Scholars and professionals recognize that current preservation practice contributes to inequity for underrepresented groups. Among others, David Rotenstein, has explored the relationships between displacement, gentrification, and erasure intertwine with the preservation movement.⁹ Under the umbrella of this inequity, there are numerous wide-ranging effects that have built up over time, resulting in the heritage of these groups being lost, destroyed, and forgotten. A lack of preservation resources flowing through vernacular neighborhoods contributes to disinvestment and deterioration. If and when capital is invested in these areas, displacement often occurs as wealthier residents move in and raise the cost of living. This cycle of gentrification has been a calamity for underrepresented groups in the United States. By being passive and allowing culturally important sites be demolished due to lack of research or inability to meet register criteria, preservationists are also contributing to the destruction of culture as silent bystanders. Although historic preservation is not necessarily a direct, or even a major, contributing factor to these issues, it can be used as a cooperative tool to fight them.

⁹ David Rotenstein, "Historian4Hire," *Historian4Hire* (blog) (David Rotenstein, October 21, 2019), <https://blog.historian4hire.net/2019/10/21/historic-preservation-and-folklore/>.

Chapter 2: Response - A New Methodology

In recent decades, preservationists have begun to acknowledge and address the relationships between preservation, race, and class. Numerous programs and initiatives have been created at the national, state, and local levels in order to recognize the heritages of underrepresented groups. Many of these programs are strictly limited to research and recognition of historic sites, funding theme studies and historic context statements, and reinterpretation of existing sites. Few address how to actually preserve these sites and their communities. This thesis seeks to provide design strategies and policy recommendations in order to preserve the heritages of underrepresented groups embedded in vernacular neighborhoods. By putting community first, these new methods break from traditional preservation practices focused on tangible heritage and integrity.

The conventional approaches of reconstruction, restoration, rehabilitation, and adaptive reuse share one thing in common, they are focused on the object rather than the community and its heritage. Inserting a new methodology, response, into the preservation toolkit, that incorporates methods drawn from values-based preservation, human-centered design, participatory action research, and public history approaches, will fill a colossal gap in preservation practice. This thesis will respond to Milwaukee's Center Peace neighborhood in order to develop and test this new methodology.

In order to properly understand and respond to the current community, one must first engage with them. Community engagement is often underutilized in architectural and preservation practices, either underfunded or blown off by

professionals that think their training and knowledge is sufficient or superior to what the community has to say. Integrating community engagement into the process of preservation is vital to preserving the heritages associated with any resource, especially those in vernacular neighborhoods and tied to underrepresented communities. Establishing trust and rapport with communities takes time and commitment from all parties, requiring equitable co-production and mutual benefit.

Using these methods to work alongside the community will help to facilitate change in the neighborhood and meet the ultimate goal of making the community a better place. One resident of Center Peace, Ms. Camille Mays recognizes that change cannot only come from a top-down perspective: “change is good . . . maybe we should start talking to some of the grassroots organizations and the people on the ground because what you find is sometimes organizations and the people higher up, maybe the chief of police or the mayor, they’re looking at data and statistics instead of actual situations.”¹⁰ Ensuring that community values are responded to will come out of a combination of methods from the preservation and architecture fields, namely values-based preservation and human-centered design.

Values-Based Preservation

Values-based preservation, or values-centered preservation as Randall Mason refers to it, puts a focus not only on the preservation of fabric but the values attributed to it. It focuses on perceived values of people in addition to the observed qualities of

¹⁰ Mays, Camille. interview by Stephanie Geaslin. July 13, 2017, in Milwaukee, WI. Audio recording. BLC Field School, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=22dV9Lu09Hc&ab_channel=BLCfieldschool

fabric, acknowledging the multiplicity, changeability, and limitless origination of heritage values.¹¹ This line of thought recognizes that places embody multiple values to different stakeholder groups and requires preservationists to understand and use these values to identify, designate, and manage sites. Mason brings up the contemporary memory culture, how people choose to engage with history and heritage as response to current trends, that “demands a different sort of preservation practice, in which preservationists' traditional focus on materiality is augmented by means for dealing with different cultural interpretations, competing political demands, and economic influences.”¹² This requires preservationists to incorporate the constantly evolving values of shifting stakeholder groups into practice over time. In order to do this, professionals must give up expert authority to stakeholders by including them in the preservation process. Also, it must be recognized that significance is not fixed to a specific set of standards but is dependent on those identifying it.

Values-based preservation in practice is led by Australia and the Burra Charter, which reflects their “desire to include the participation and values of their Aboriginal population in the heritage process.”¹³ The Burra Charter encourages collaboration with stakeholders in order to use local knowledge in determining the values and significances of sites. In the charter, complex layers of values are broken

¹¹ Randall Mason, “Theoretical and Practical Arguments for Values-Centered Preservation,” *CRM: The Journal of Heritage Stewardship* 3, no. 2 (2006).

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Pamela Jerome, “The Values-Based Approach to Cultural-Heritage Preservation,” *APT Bulletin: The Journal of Preservation Technology* 45, no. 2/3 (2014): 3-8, Accessed December 13, 2020. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23799521>.

down into five categories: historic, scientific, aesthetic, social, and spiritual.¹⁴ These values go beyond United States' own National Register Criteria, which leave out social and spiritual values as contributors to significance.¹⁵

Although values-based preservation aims to acknowledge all stakeholders, it requires significant effort and resources from experts and communities to ensure all values are recognized. Maintaining and assuring equitable distribution of power between stakeholders presents a challenge due to biases of those managing the process. Similarly, addressing all values equally is an impossible task, as some values are bound to be at odds with others. In response to these difficulties, Ioannis Poulis suggests the idea of "living heritage sites," which allows sites to retain their original use, process of management, and community presence.¹⁶ This gives fabric a lower priority, focusing instead on the intangible aspects of a site. Poulis argues that values-based preservation sees "the core community of a living heritage site simply as a stakeholder group to be identified, taken into consideration, and managed."¹⁷ This critique brings up a valid point, that values-based preservation does not necessarily put stakeholder values before fabric but only takes them into account when convenient. This brings the importance of considering community values first and restraining expert assumptions to the forefront.

¹⁴ Australia ICOMOS, *The Burra Charter: The Australia ICOMOS Charter for Places of Cultural Significance*, (2013).

¹⁵ Barbara J. Little, "Values-Based Preservation, Civic Engagement, and the U.S. National Park Service," *APT Bulletin: The Journal of Preservation Technology* 45, no. 2/3 (2014): 25-29, Accessed December 13, 2020, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23799524>.

¹⁶ Ioannis Poulis, "Moving Beyond a Values-Based Approach to Heritage Conservation," *Conservation and Management of Archaeological Sites* 12, no. 2 (May 2010): pp. 170-185, https://researchgate.net/publication/233621722_Moving_Beyond_a_Values-Based_Approach_to_Heritage_Conservation.

¹⁷ Ibid.

Human-Centered Design

Human-centered design is similar in many ways to values-based preservation, integrating end-users into the design process.¹⁸ Methods from ethnographic interviewing to playing games are used to capture meanings and needs. IDEO, a non-profit design studio, provides a field guide to human-centered design, which covers dozens of methods that can be used to collaboratively respond to stakeholder needs.¹⁹ The methods are broken down into three major categories: inspiration, ideation, and implementation. These activities help to creatively engage stakeholders throughout each stage of the process and allow for co-production.

Community-based design is a similar approach that draws upon the same ideas of designing with the community rather than for it. The ultimate goal is to understand and address community values while empowering stakeholders in decision making processes. With its roots in the 1960s and ideas from Jane Jacob's *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* and Kevin Lynch's *The Image of the City*, community-based design was a product of and a driver of social change.²⁰ While the effects of this early movement are visible today in many planning processes' requirements for engagement, the result has not necessarily been meaningful engagement of communities and instead is often cursory. Community design centers that help communities envision alternate futures and empower them to

¹⁸ Zeyad El Sayad, Tarek Farghaly, and Sara Hamada, "Integrating Human-Centered Design Methods In Early Design Stage: Using Interactive Architecture As A Tool," *Journal of Al-Azhar University Engineering Sector* 12, no. 44 (July 2017): pp. 947-960.

¹⁹ IDEO, "Methods," Design Kit (IDEO), accessed December 13, 2020, <https://www.designkit.org/methods>.

²⁰ Finn, Donovan, and Jason Brody. "The State of Community Design: An Analysis of Community Design Center Services." *Journal of Architectural and Planning Research* 31, no. 3 (2014): 181-200. Accessed December 13, 2020. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/44114603>.

make desired changes have also arisen from this movement. These centers provide assistance to disadvantaged groups through participatory engagement.

These methods also relate to evidence-based design, which is a process that uses scientific research to reach the best possible design solution.²¹ Generally used in healthcare for spaces of recovery, evidence-based design can also be informed by qualitative data from communities. While gathering qualitative data on community values is not an easy task, interpreting and using assembled information to inform design is a greater challenge. This step of the process will also require engagement and dialogue with stakeholders in order to reach equitable outcomes.

Community Engagement

Both values-based preservation and human-centered design hinge on extensive community engagement. For this engagement, Participatory Action Research, (PAR) and co-production are the most applicable methods. PAR is an iterative process that involves all stakeholder groups throughout the research process. The process involves three major steps: planning a change, acting and observing the process and consequences of the change, and reflecting on these processes and consequences.²² These steps are then repeated until all parties are satisfied with the results. This participatory process reshapes the role of researcher by including the community in the research design.

²¹ Piet Lombaerde and Foqué Richard, *Bringing the World into Culture: Comparative Methodologies in Architecture, Art, Design and Science* (Brussels: UPA University Press Antwerp, 2009) 227.

²² Jeremy Wells, "In Stakeholders We Trust: Changing the Ontological and Epistemological Orientation of Built Heritage Assessment Through Participatory Action Research," in *How to Assess Built Heritage? Assumptions, Methodologies, Examples of Heritage Assessment Systems*, (Florence and Lublin: Romualdo Del Blanco Foundatione and Lublin University of Technology, 2015): 249-265.

Similar to PAR, co-production engages stakeholders at each step of the process and shares resources, power, and decision-making authority in order to address the power inequalities of local decision making.²³ This allows strategies to be reassessed and adjusted as the process goes on, ensuring a desired outcome for the community. This approach is sustained as a long-term relationship to retain local control over the process and product. Co-production also recognizes the fact that power over the process is not enough for communities to facilitate change. Spaces of political and economic power need to be held open for communities in order “to build their capacity to gain, retain and exert control effectively.”²⁴

To appropriately respond to the Center Peace community’s needs, community engagement methods will need to be used to inform values-centered preservation and human-centered design. Embedded flexibility will be crucial to ensuring that shifting and evolving values are responded to over time. Contrasting the traditional preservation methods of reconstruction, restoration, rehabilitation, and adaptive reuse, this new community-based methodology will respond to the people of the neighborhood and their heritages rather than the buildings. Although the built environment may be the vehicle through which change is implemented, communities should remain at the forefront of the design intent.

²³ Jovanna Rosen and Gary Painter, "From Citizen Control to Co-Production: Moving Beyond a Linear Conception of Citizen Participation," *Journal of the American Planning Association* 85, no. 3 (2019): 335-338.

²⁴ Ibid.

Part II: Center Peace Neighborhood Case Study

In 2012, the University of Wisconsin Milwaukee's Buildings-Landscapes-Cultures Field School began community engaged research in Milwaukee's north side neighborhoods.²⁵ Led by Dr. Arijit Sen, the field school focuses on storytelling, heritage preservation, and civic engagement through participatory action research, spatial ethnography, oral histories, study of material culture, archival research, collaborative ethnography, and community events. Since 2017, the field school has focused on the Sherman Park neighborhood, documenting and engaging with the community hands-on. Straddling the border between the larger Sherman Park and Metcalfe Park neighborhoods is a lively community defined by residents as Center Peace.



Figure 2, Map of neighborhood boundaries. (Source: Author)

²⁵ The Buildings-Landscapes-Cultures Field School can be found at: <http://thefieldschool.weebly.com/>.

Milwaukee's Center Peace neighborhood is a product of neighborly relations and actions rather than a city defined boundary. Although sited on the edge of the Sherman Park and Metcalfe Park, Center Peace is defined by resident and community leader, Ms. Cheri Fuqua, as anything but a boundary: "I don't see the dividing line. I don't see that line. All I see is my community, and I just want to see it healthy."²⁶ The Center Peace neighborhood rose out of Middle Ground, an organization that fosters collaboration between communities on Milwaukee's north side, where community leaders from come together to tackle issues in their communities. Branching off from these Middle Ground meetings, block clubs began meeting once a month in Unity Orchard, a community garden and park sited on previously vacant lots. In this small neighborhood, participants of the field school identified a rich community full of diverse values and heritages. Facing issues of inequity, displacement, and disinvestment, the Center Peace community is eager for change and is advocating for it at the grassroots level.

²⁶ Cheri Fuqua, interview by Joy Huntington, July 13, 2017, in Milwaukee, WI, Audio recording. BLC Field School, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ofqxV3huAnY>.

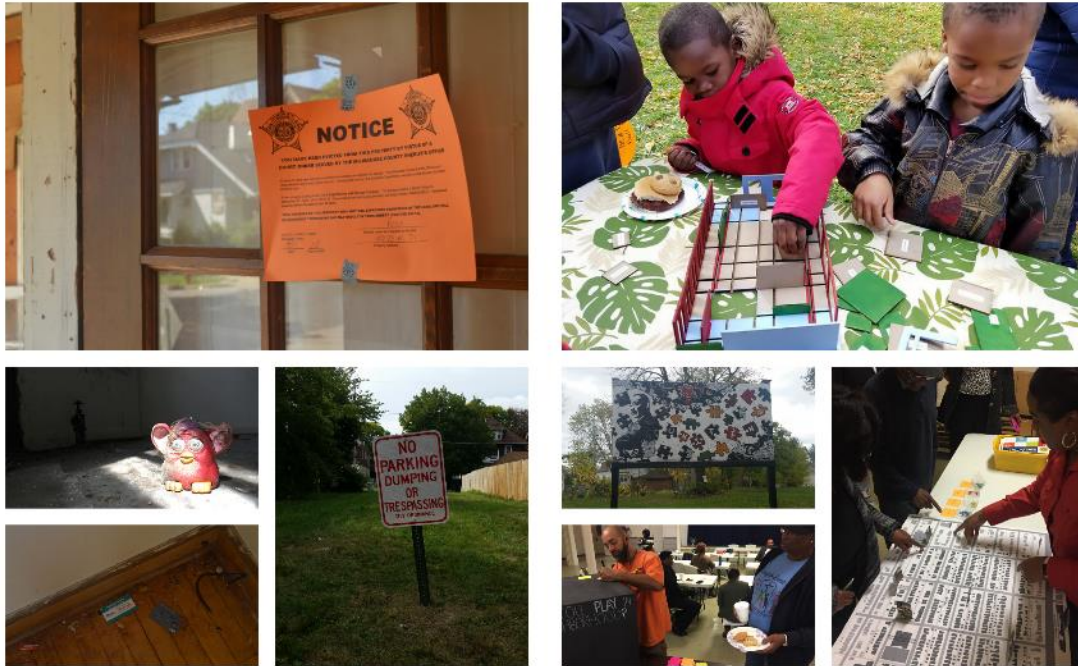


Figure 3, Photographs showing effects of foreclosure and vacancy (left) and community events inspiring change (right). (Source: BLC Field School)

Ms. Fuqua elaborates on change in the community:

You have to be a presence in the space if you want to see change. In order for change to go on, you have to be a part of that change and then you had to pull somebody else in because you're not going to be able to do it all. You have to find those willing able bodies that want to see change that will step up and do it as well. It's a chore. It's a fight. . . . [You have to] to just change the mindset, talk to your neighbors and let them know. The hood is a mentality. It's not the space that you're in. Your community is what you make it.²⁷

This case study of the Center Peace neighborhood draws from the stories, data, and tacit knowledge accumulated from the field school. In order to understand the neighborhood and its community, this case study examines the formative factors of the greater history of the surrounding Sherman Park neighborhood, stakeholder relationships within the community, and logic of the built environment. Analysis of

²⁷ Fuqua, 2017.

these three elements reveals intertwined themes and gives direction to design strategies and policy recommendations that respond to the community.

Chapter 3: The Sherman Park Story - The Rise, Fall, and Rebirth of a North Side Neighborhood

Milwaukee, Wisconsin faces the same issues as so many other Rust Belt cities in the United States.

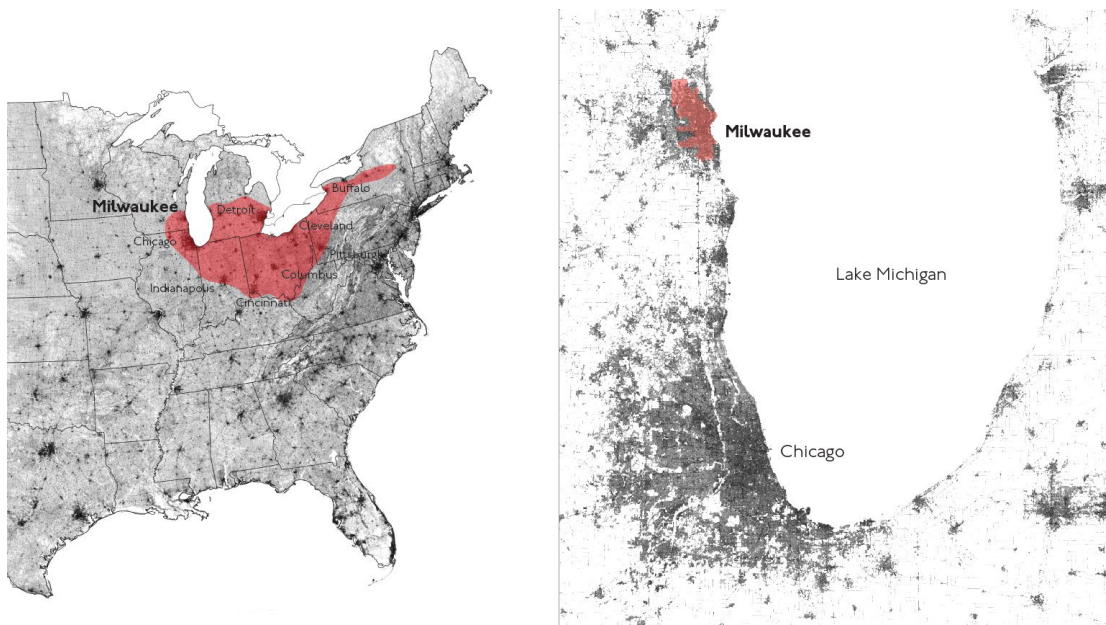


Figure 4, Location maps of Milwaukee within the Rust Belt. (Source: Author)

Inequity, displacement, and disinvestment have contributed to strife within Milwaukee's communities and the decline of its housing stock. Although the nostalgic stories of European immigrants and the early 20th century working class are recounted as a foundational part of the history of Milwaukee, the heritages and hardships of those that replaced them are left unrecognized and untold. The narratives of the marginalized communities of Milwaukee are largely ignored and are severely underrepresented in the cities' historic sites. This is evident in the locations of

registered historic sites within the city and the 2014 tourist map of Milwaukee neighborhoods, which omits the communities of the north side and in their place highlights the white suburb to the west.

Housing discrimination, deindustrialization and white flight led the working-class neighborhoods on the north side to become areas of disinvestment and isolation. In 2011, and again in 2019, Milwaukee was named as the United States' most segregated city.²⁸ The extreme degree of segregation is strikingly portrayed in the race dot map of the city, which shows the astonishing separation of Milwaukee's Black north side and Latino south side from the rest of the city's white population.

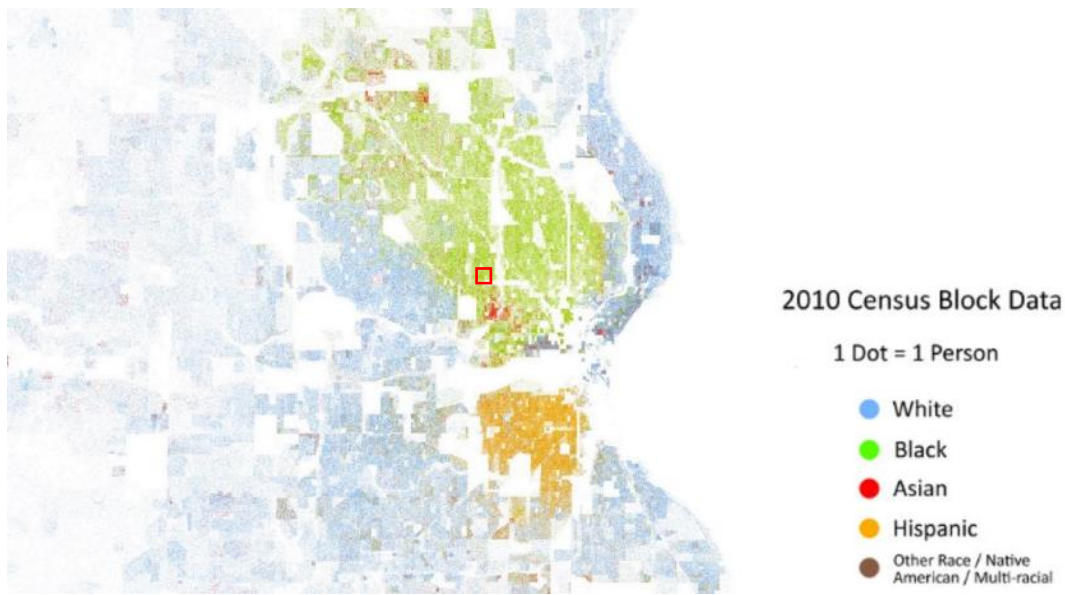


Figure 5, Race dot map showing extreme segregation in Milwaukee. (Source: Cable, Dustin A. "Milwaukee Race Dot Map." Map. Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service. Rector and Visitors of the University of Virginia, 2013. <http://racialdotmap.demographics.coopercenter.org/>)

²⁸ John R. Logan and Brian J. Stults, "The Persistence of Segregation in the Metropolis: New Findings from the 2010 Census" (US2010, March 24, 2011), <https://s4.ad.brown.edu/Projects/Diversity/Data/Report/report2.pdf>; <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/the-avenue/2018/12/17/black-white-segregation-edges-downward-since-2000-census-shows/>

The Sherman Park neighborhood represents one of the many working-class vernacular neighborhoods of Milwaukee's north side. This thesis focuses in on Center Peace in the southern portion of the neighborhood, an area abundant with rich heritage from the past and present and exemplary of the struggles of north side neighborhoods. By recognizing, understanding, and sharing the multiple heritages of the Center Peace community, the long-standing disinvestment and isolation of the neighborhood can begin to be addressed.

Milwaukee's Early Years

In order to understand the forces that shaped the greater Sherman Park neighborhood and the stories of its communities, a brief history of the development Milwaukee must be introduced. The early growth of Milwaukee begins when the area of was originally settled by Native Americans thousands of years before Europeans arrived. These "Paleo-Indians" left behind traces such as burial mounds and effigies, most of which have been lost to development.²⁹ Their descendants, namely the Menominee were joined in the 17th and 18th centuries by refugee tribes forced out of the east such as the Fox, Mascouten, Sauk, Potawatomi, and Ojibwe.³⁰ The name "Milwaukee" comes from the Algonquian word "Milioke" meaning good land and Potawatomi word "Minwaking" meaning gathering place.³¹ With the city situated on Lake Michigan at the juncture of the Milwaukee, Menomonee, and Kinnickinnic Rivers, it was favorable for settlement.

29 John Gurda and Milwaukee County Historical Society, *The Making of Milwaukee* (Milwaukee, WI: Milwaukee County Historical Society, 1999).

30 Ibid.

31 Ibid.



Figure 6, Early maps of Milwaukee from 1833 (left) and 1835 (right) with the Center Peace Neighborhood called out. (Source: Martin, M.L. "Map of Milwaukie, 1833." Map. *Wisconsin Historical Society*. Accessed December 13, 2020. <https://content.wisconsinhistory.org/digital/collection/maps/id/69>; "Rough Map of Milwaukee and the Adjacent Country 1835." 2013. Map. *Wisconsin Historical Society*. <https://content.wisconsinhistory.org/digital/collection/maps/id/4669>)

The area was discovered in the mid-17th century by French explorers and became a major fur trading post in the 18th century. While the European fur traders enjoyed relative prosperity, the Native American tribes struggled with exclusionary trade laws, disease, and the forced cession of their lands and were again forced westward. Of the tribes, the Potawatomi held out the longest, leaving after a three-year grace period in 1838.³² During the early 19th century, the trading post developed into a city, and the population grew to 20,000 by 1850.³³

During the latter half of the 19th century, industrialization took over, with foundries, breweries, and factories producing machinery quickly overtaking the city's trade roots. This called for rapid growth, and the city was settled, primarily by

³² Gurda, *The Making of Milwaukee*.

³³ U.S. Census Bureau, *Population of Places Included in the Census of 1850*, <https://www2.census.gov/library/publications/decennial/1850/1850a/1850a-15.pdf>.

European immigrants that had found jobs working in the city's growing industrial areas along the rivers. Around 1850 there was a large wave of German immigrants that came to the city, bringing industrial skills, Catholicism, and German cultural values with them.³⁴ Milwaukee promptly became the center of beer brewing in the United States and was known for its distinctive German character. Although Germans made up the majority in Milwaukee at the time, there were significant populations of Polish and Irish as well as other smaller communities from Western Europe.³⁵ These various immigrant groups, along with American born families brought their ideas westward to Milwaukee, informing the character of the built environment, which took on a distinctly German flavor. Around this time, the area occupied by southern Sherman Park today was undergoing a shift in character. Farmland previously owned by C. James in 1858 was broken up by 1876 and began to be subdivided and sold as lots around the turn of the century.

³⁴ Gurda, *The Making of Milwaukee*.

³⁵ Ibid.

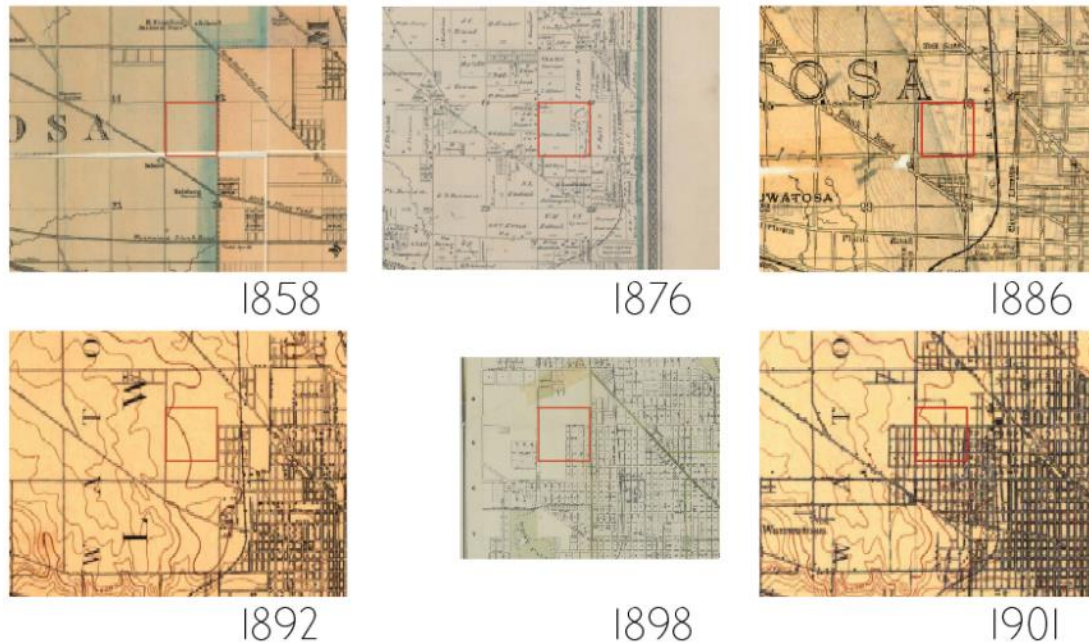


Figure 7, Maps from 1858 to 1901 showing the development of Sherman Park with Center Peace highlighted. (Source: Walling, Henry Francis. "Map of the County of Milwaukee, Wisconsin, 1858." 2015. Map. *Wisconsin Historical Society*. <https://content.wisconsinhistory.org/digital/collection/maps/id/14194/rec/7>; H. Belden and Co. "Map of Wauwatosa Township" in *Illustrated Historical Atlas of Milwaukee County, Wisconsin*. 2016. Map. *Wisconsin Historical Society*. <https://content.wisconsinhistory.org/digital/collection/maps/id/18416/rec/16>; C.N. Caspar Company. "Map of Milwaukee County and Plans of Pewaukee, Oconomowoc, Soldiers Home, Wauwatosa, Waukesha 1886." 2013. Map. *Wisconsin Historical Society*. <https://content.wisconsinhistory.org/digital/collection/maps/id/4677/rec/>; USGS. "Milwaukee 1892." Map. *The National Geologic Map Database*. USGS. Accessed December 13, 2020. https://ngmdb.usgs.gov/img4/ht_icons/overlay/WI/WI_Milwaukee_801225_1892_62500_geo.jpg; A.G. Wright. "1898: Wright's Map of Milwaukee." 2005. Map. *University of Wisconsin Milwaukee Libraries*. <https://collections.lib.uwm.edu/digital/collection/mkenh/id/673>; USGS. "Milwaukee 1901." Map. *The National Geologic Map Database*. Accessed December 13, 2020. https://ngmdb.usgs.gov/img4/ht_icons/overlay/WI/WI_Milwaukee_503399_1901_62500_geo.jpg)

Being on the far outskirts of town, the lots platted in the vicinity of Sherman Park developed slowly relative to those closer to the rivers.

By 1900, the city had grown to become home to more than 250,000 people.³⁶

During this period of growth, public works and amenities such as streets and parks were laid out. The street system of Milwaukee generally follows the orthogonal

36 U.S. Census Bureau, *Twelfth Census of the United States – 1900, Population Volume I*, https://www2.census.gov/prod2/decennial/documents/33405927v1_TOC.pdf.

plotting of land that was prescribed by the Federal Land Ordinance of 1785.

Commercial streets fall on the original 160-acre plot lines, and smaller streets fill in the parcels to create the residential blocks. The City of Milwaukee also began to set aside public spaces to ensure that open space was reserved for the future. North and West Parks, now Washington and Sherman Parks, were laid out near the current Sherman Park neighborhood in 1891, with West Park being developed by Frederick Law Olmstead.³⁷ These improvements by the city anticipated continued growth into the 20th century.

20th Century Neighborhood Development

The development of the Sherman Park neighborhood picks up significantly with the early 20th century expansion happening at the outskirts of the city. The 1910 Sanborn fire insurance map shows the beginnings of expansion near the city limits between North Avenue and Center Street.

³⁷ Gurda, *The Making of Milwaukee*.

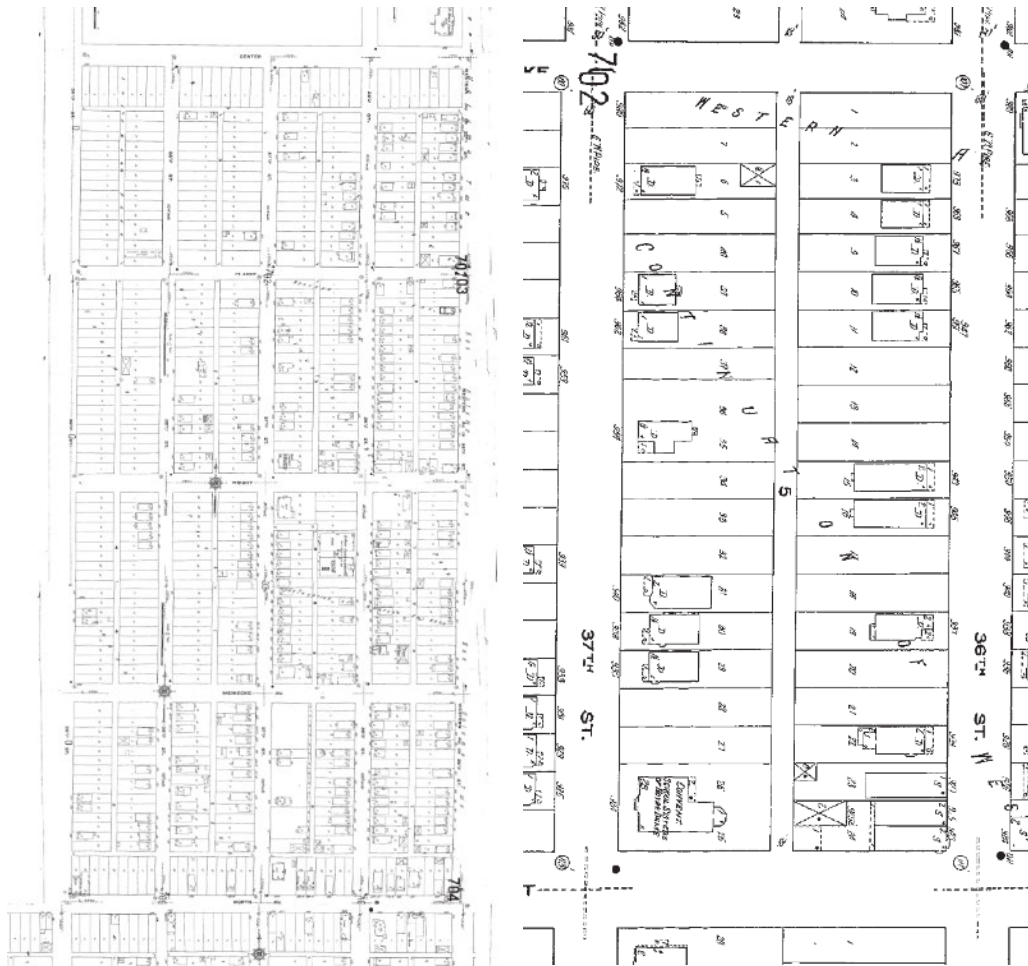


Figure 8, 1910 Sanborn fire insurance maps showing a portion of Center Peace. (Source: Sanborn Map Company, 1910. *Milwaukee 1910-1937 vol. 1, 1910, Multiple Sheets*. ProQuest Digital Sanborn Maps. <https://about.proquest.com/products-services/databases/sanborn.html>)

This expansion further from the city center was partially enabled by the advent of the automobile for those that could afford one and the establishment of the streetcar for those that could not. The streetcar lines running on North Avenue and Center Street provided residents with quick inexpensive transit to the rest of the city.

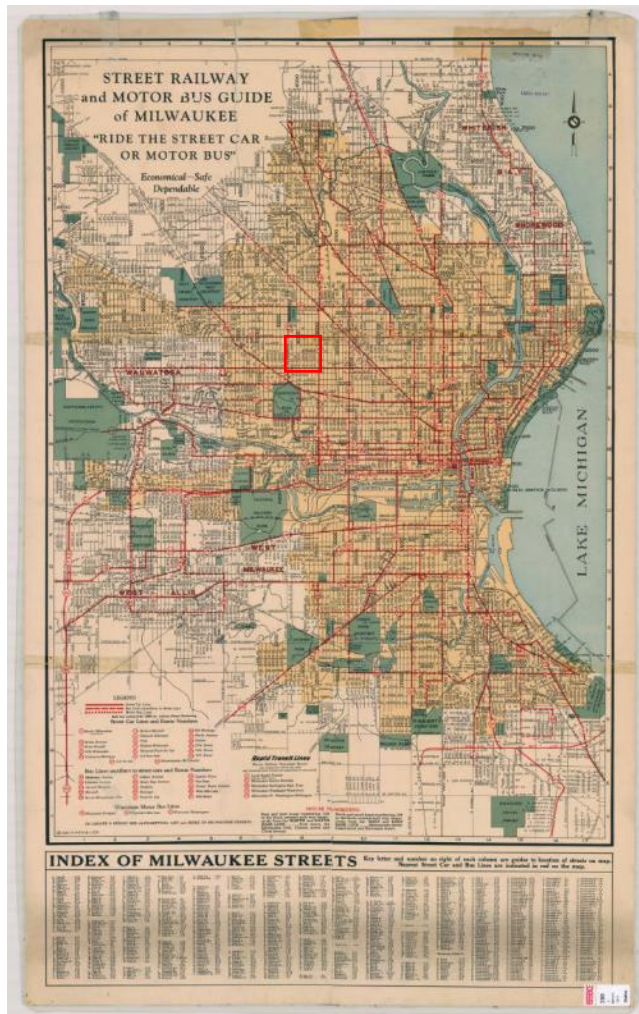


Figure 9, 1931 streetcar map with Center Peace highlighted. (Source: Milwaukee Electric Railway and Light Company. "Street Railway and Motor Bus Guide of Milwaukee 1931." Map. *Milwaukee Public Library Milwaukee Maps Collection*. Accessed December 13, 2020. <https://content.mpl.org/digital/collection/MKEMaps/id/33>)

With residents well connected to places of work, shopping, and recreation within the city, the community continued to grow. Many of the homes that residents built on these lots followed the vernacular duplex typology that constituted a significant portion of the housing stock on the north side of Milwaukee.

The community thrived for the next few years as new families immigrated and second-generation immigrants moved into the area. By 1927, the blocks were filled

out with duplexes and bungalows, extending Milwaukee's distinctive streetscape outward to meet the new city limits.

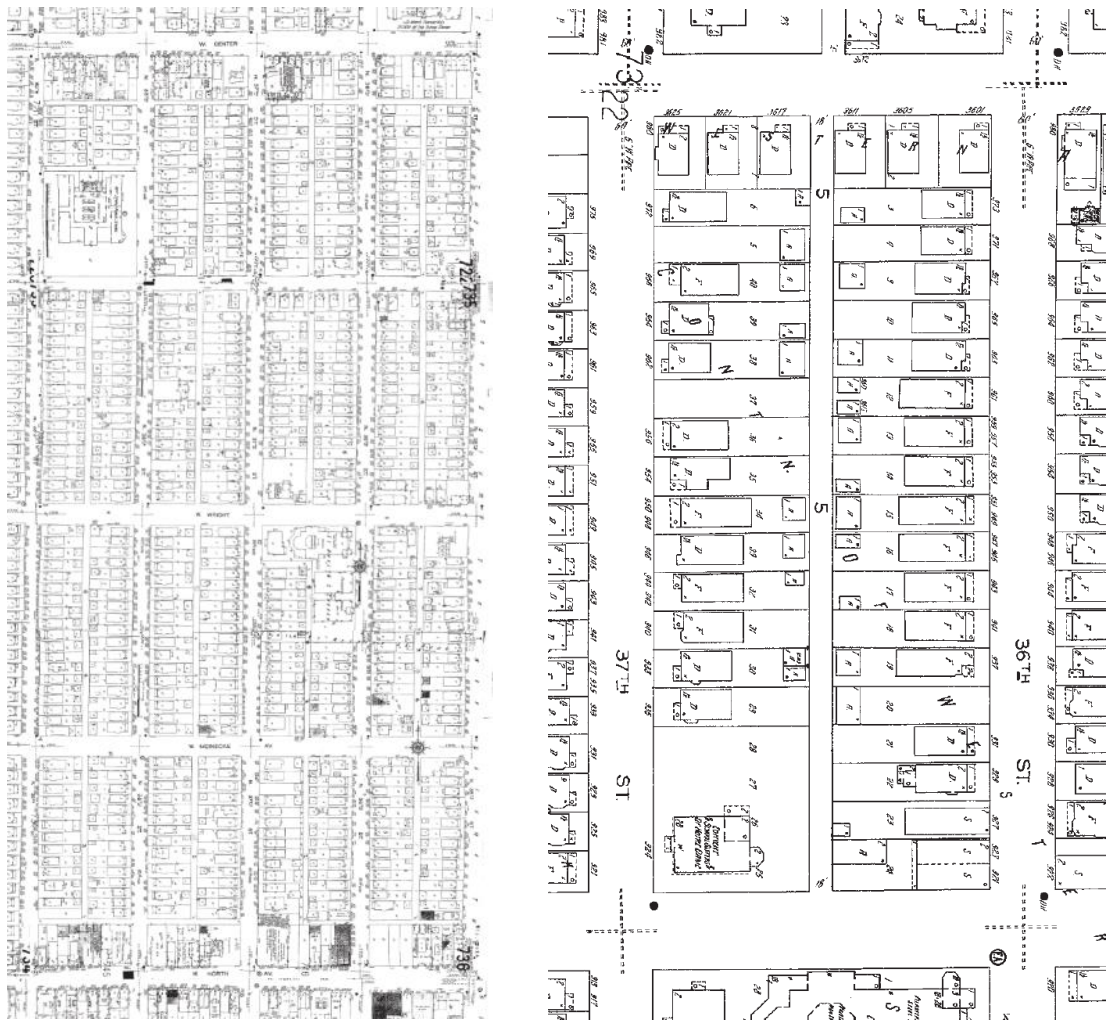


Figure 10, 1927 Sanborn fire insurance maps showing a portion of Center Peace. (Source: Sanborn Map Company, 1927. *Milwaukee 1910-1937 vol. 1, 1927, Multiple Sheets*. ProQuest Digital Sanborn Maps. <https://about.proquest.com/products-services/databases/sanborn.html>)

According to the United States Census of Milwaukee, residents moving into this area at the time were predominantly German with a mix of Eastern European Jews.³⁸

³⁸ U.S. Census Bureau, *Milwaukee, Wisconsin Census Manuscripts*, https://1940census.archives.gov/search/?search.result_type=image&search.state=WI&search.county=Milwaukee+County&search.city=Milwaukee&search.street=#searchby=location&searchmode=browse&year=1940.

These groups, along with others, brought new values, skills, and dreams across the Atlantic.

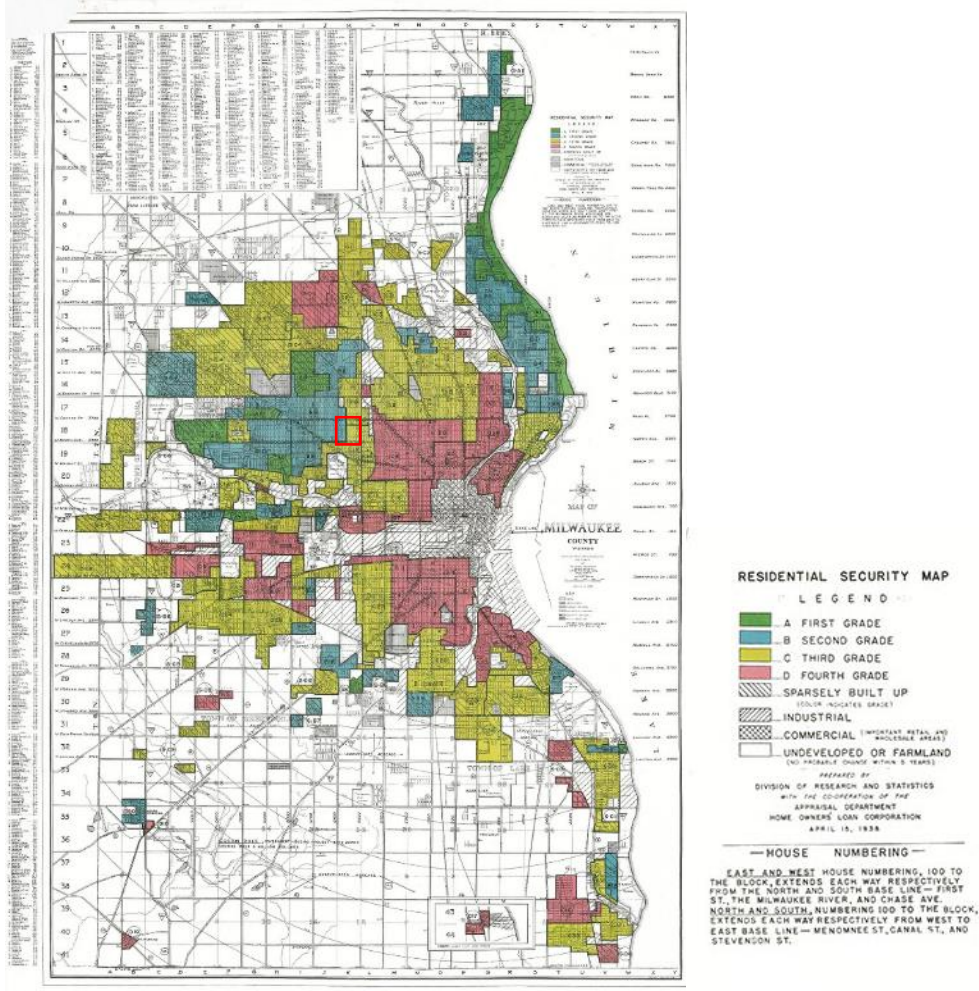
Although the first world war bolstered the economy, leading to relative prosperity for the working-class, the Great Depression hit hard. Due to unemployment and wage cuts, the sum of wages paid in the city dropped by 65% during the depression, leading to severe poverty and setting back the progress that many immigrant families had made.³⁹ The second world war swiftly brought the city out of the depression with a high demand for manufactured goods. This uptick in the city's economy along with a desire to escape the harsher Jim Crow society of the south brought many Black families northward searching for jobs and a new life. This movement was a part of the Second Great Migration from 1940-1970. Labor agents scoured the south for unskilled laborers to fill the growing industrial job market. This Black community migrated to Milwaukee's north side but were segregated into specific areas through discriminatory local policy and real estate practices. This area became to be known as Bronzeville and expanded as Milwaukee's Black population increased. The Jewish community had also started to enter the north side around this time, facing the same issues. Latinos share a strikingly similar story on the south side of the city. In the coming decades, these small enclaves began to grow outward, creating tension in historically white communities.

³⁹ Gurda, *The Making of Milwaukee*.

Housing Discrimination, Deindustrialization, and White Flight

Practices of housing discrimination such as redlining, blockbusting, racially restrictive covenants, and exclusionary zoning contributed to severe segregation and disinvestment within the city.⁴⁰ The practice of redlining denied “undesirable” minority communities equal access to loans, insurance, and housing opportunities created by agencies such as the Federal Housing Administration. Tracts within the city were ranked based on their housing stock, access to amenities, environmental hazards, and demographic makeup. Black, Latino, and Jewish communities were overtly targeted and relegated to the lowest grade areas. The 1937 redlining map of Milwaukee shows rankings of city areas based on “security.”

⁴⁰ Metropolitan Milwaukee Fair Housing Council, “City of Milwaukee Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing” (City of Milwaukee, 2005), <https://city.milwaukee.gov/ImageLibrary/User/jsteve/MilwaukeeAI.pdf>, 22.



2. INHABITANTS: Laborers and
a. Occupation
Ne'er-do-wells ;

5. CLARIFYING REMARKS: This is the Negro and slum area of Milwaukee. It is old and very ragged. Besides the colored people, a large number of lower type Jews are moving into the section. This section housed Milwaukee's wealthiest families seventy years ago.

Figure 11, 1937 Redlining map of Milwaukee with notes from a fourth-grade zone in the Bronzeville neighborhood. (Source: David White Co. "Security Map of Milwaukee County 1937." Map. *Mapping Inequality: Redlining in New Deal America*. University of Richmond Digital Scholarship Lab. Accessed December 13, 2020. <https://dsl.richmond.edu/panorama/redlining/#loc=11/43.03/-88.116&mapview=graded&city=milwaukee-co.-wi>)

The highest ranked areas were where lenders were encouraged to invest in while the lowest were labeled as areas to be left to decline. Inner city areas, particularly those with concentrations of these targeted minority groups, were those labeled as "declined

or declining.” Although the practice of redlining was officially ended with the Fair Housing Acts of the late 1960s and earlier court decisions, the city’s poorest areas today coincide directly with these two lowest grades. These gradings of tracts promoted other practices such as blockbusting to take place. Blockbusting was a predatory action by real estate agents to get white owners to sell their homes low out of fear of minorities moving into their neighborhood. The homes would then be sold at a higher price to the minority group used to impose the sale. Racially restrictive covenants were another discriminatory practice used in Milwaukee that used clauses in contracts and agreements such as deeds to prevent the sale of a property to a member of a particular race. Less overt measures such as exclusionary zoning, which restricted density and established minimum lot sizes, also served to further segregation within the city. With white communities forming segregated strongholds and areas of minority concentration left without access to capital, neighborhoods on the north side were unplugged from the city.

Despite the efforts of the city and its white population, Milwaukee’s Black community continued to grow. In 1940, just over 1% of Milwaukeeans were Black, concentrated in the Bronzeville area.⁴¹ By the 1960s, 15% of Milwaukee’s population was Black and had begun to spread out over the north side.⁴²

⁴¹ U.S. Census Bureau, *Characteristics of the Population Part 7, 1940*, 1943, <https://www.census.gov/prod/www/decennial.html>.

⁴² U.S. Census Bureau, *Characteristics of the Population, Wisconsin 1960*, <https://www.census.gov/prod/www/decennial.html>.

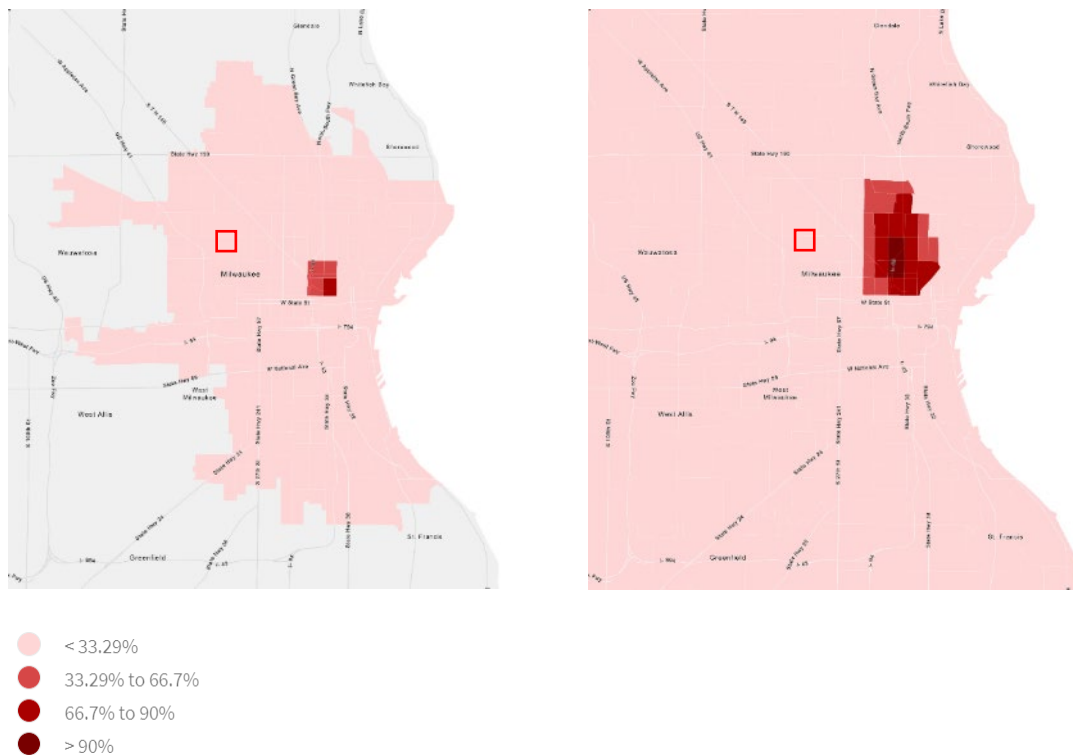


Figure 12, Milwaukee's black population in 1940 and 1960 with the Center Peace neighborhood highlighted. (Source: *Total Population: Black or African American Alone*, 1940. Social Explorer, based on data from U.S. Census Bureau. Accessed December 13, 2020; *Total Population: Black or African American Alone*, 1960. Social Explorer, based on data from U.S. Census Bureau. Accessed December 13, 2020.)

As the population grew, racial tension on the north side increased, and the Black community began to seek equity within the city. Fueled by the civil rights movement of the 1960s, groups such as the Congress of Racial Equity and Milwaukeeans United for School Integration Committee formed. These groups fought for representation, desegregation, and above all, issues of open housing. The desegregation of schools was one of the first issues to be tackled. Following the *Brown v. Board of Education* ruling a decade earlier, communities pushed for the integration of Milwaukee Public Schools. Although laws and policies were updated to reflect the Civil Rights Act out of necessity, the segregated neighborhoods that encompassed the schools reinforced the schools' conditions, remaining one of

Milwaukee's most challenging issues to this day. In response to the harsh segregation in the city and excessive housing discrimination taking place, communities on the north side demanded an open housing ordinance. After prior attempts, such as the failed open housing ordinance of Alderwoman Vel R. Phillips, Milwaukee's first Black and first female member elected to the Common Council, the open housing movement gained new allies.⁴³ Father James Groppi, an Italian priest, took a leadership role in this and other causes of the civil rights movement of Milwaukee through the NAACP Youth Council.⁴⁴ Groppi led numerous demonstrations, protests, and marches in favor of open housing. These peaceful demonstrations were interrupted by a violent riot in July 1967.⁴⁵ The National Guard was called in by a too eager Mayor Maier and over 1700 were arrested and three were killed, leading to a period of strict curfews. In August, the marches picked up again. Around 200 marchers crossed the 16th Street viaduct only to be met by 5,000 whites opposing their presence and message.⁴⁶ The following night, they were met by over 13,000 counterdemonstrators. Father Groppi continued to lead marches for over 200 consecutive days after, leading up to the signing of open housing laws by Milwaukee and its suburbs.⁴⁷ Although the open-housing laws were signed in 1968, lingering remnants of these policies are still being phased out today.⁴⁸ Studies show that renters

⁴³ Margaret Rozga, "March on Milwaukee," *The Wisconsin Magazine of History* 90, no. 4 (2007): 28-39, Accessed December 13, 2020, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4637228>.

⁴⁴ Gurda, *The Making of Milwaukee*, 368-370.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 371.

⁴⁶ Rozga, "March on Milwaukee."

⁴⁷ Peter R. Janecky, "Opposing Forces: The 'Open Housing' Debate among Citizens, the Daily Press, and the Mayor in Milwaukee, 1967-1968," *Journal of Urban History* 42, no. 5 (September 2016): 919-37.

⁴⁸ Don Behm, "Milwaukee County Board Votes to End Discrimination Against Tenants with Housing Assistance Vouchers," JS Online (Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, June 21, 2018),

and loaners still face discrimination today, buried in deep inherited practices.⁴⁹ These past and present discriminatory housing practices not only facilitate segregation within the city but disallow residents to invest in their own neighborhoods by taking out loans to improve or purchase homes.

As Milwaukee began to deindustrialize in the late 1960s, the workforce slowly shifted from factories to the service sector. The industrial activities that did remain, such as Milwaukee's breweries, Harley Davidson, and a few select manufacturers have been severely diminished in scale or shifted to less laborious automation. Of those who lost their jobs during deindustrialization in the 1970s and 80s, members of the Black working class were often the first to be cut. Jobs moved into offices downtown and out to new business parks and strip malls in the suburbs. The effects of deindustrialization coupled with the desire to move out of neighborhoods that were becoming majority minority led to white flight to the suburbs. Milwaukee's white population dropped from 675,000 in 1960 to 400,000 in 1990.⁵⁰ The abrupt exodus of residents leaving neighborhoods such as Sherman Park left Black communities to fend for themselves, isolated from the rest of the city. Many of the local businesses, and the tax revenue generated by them, left for the suburbs with their white owners.

<https://www.jsonline.com/story/news/local/milwaukee/2018/06/21/county-board-plugs-gap-housing-discrimination-law/714418002/>.

⁴⁹ Matthew Desmond and Kristin L Perkins, "Are Landlords Overcharging Housing Voucher Holders?" *City & Community* 15, no. 2 (2016): 137–62; Peter Rosenblatt and Jennifer E Cossyleon, "Pushing the Boundaries: Searching for Housing in the Most Segregated Metropolis in America," *City & Community* 17, no. 1 (2018): 87–108; Lance Freeman, "Black Homeownership: The Role of Temporal Changes and Residential Segregation at the End of the 20th Century," *Social Science Quarterly* 86, no. 2 (2005): 403–26; Ben Popken, "It's Not Easy to Borrow While Black in Milwaukee and Other Cities of Unrest," NBC News (NBC Universal, August 17, 2016), <https://www.nbcnews.com/business/economy/it-s-not-easy-borrow-while-black-milwaukee-other-cities-n631021>.

⁵⁰ Gurda, *The Making of Milwaukee*, 386.

The result of these factors was a drastic shift in the city's growth. Milwaukee's rapidly growing population peaked at 740,000 in 1960 and has been in decline ever since, dipping below 600,000 in 2000.⁵¹

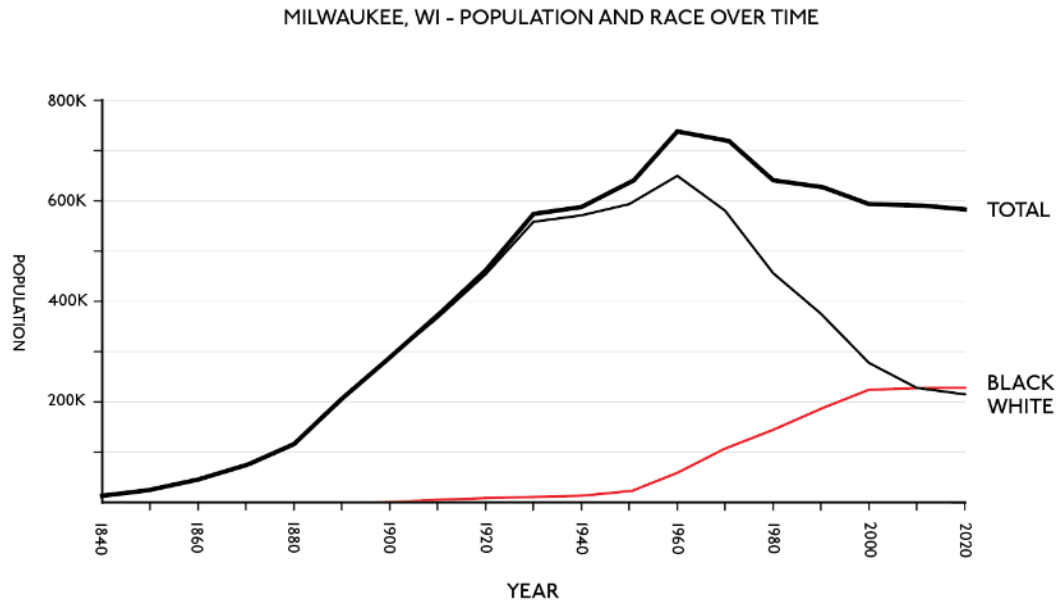


Figure 13, Milwaukee's total population overlaid with Milwaukee's black and white populations over time. (Source: Graph by Author, data derived from U.S. Census)

A history of discriminatory housing practices and white flight has left neighborhoods on the north side extremely segregated and disinvested in. Although Milwaukee's population is now nearly 40% Black, neighborhoods on the north side including Sherman Park are well over 90% Black alone with some census tracts having as high as a 99.7% Black composition.⁵²

⁵¹ U.S. Census Bureau, *Characteristics of the Population 1960 and 2000*, <https://www.census.gov/prod/www/decennial.html>.

⁵² U.S. Census Bureau, *Characteristics of the Population 2010*, <https://www.census.gov/prod/www/decennial.html>.

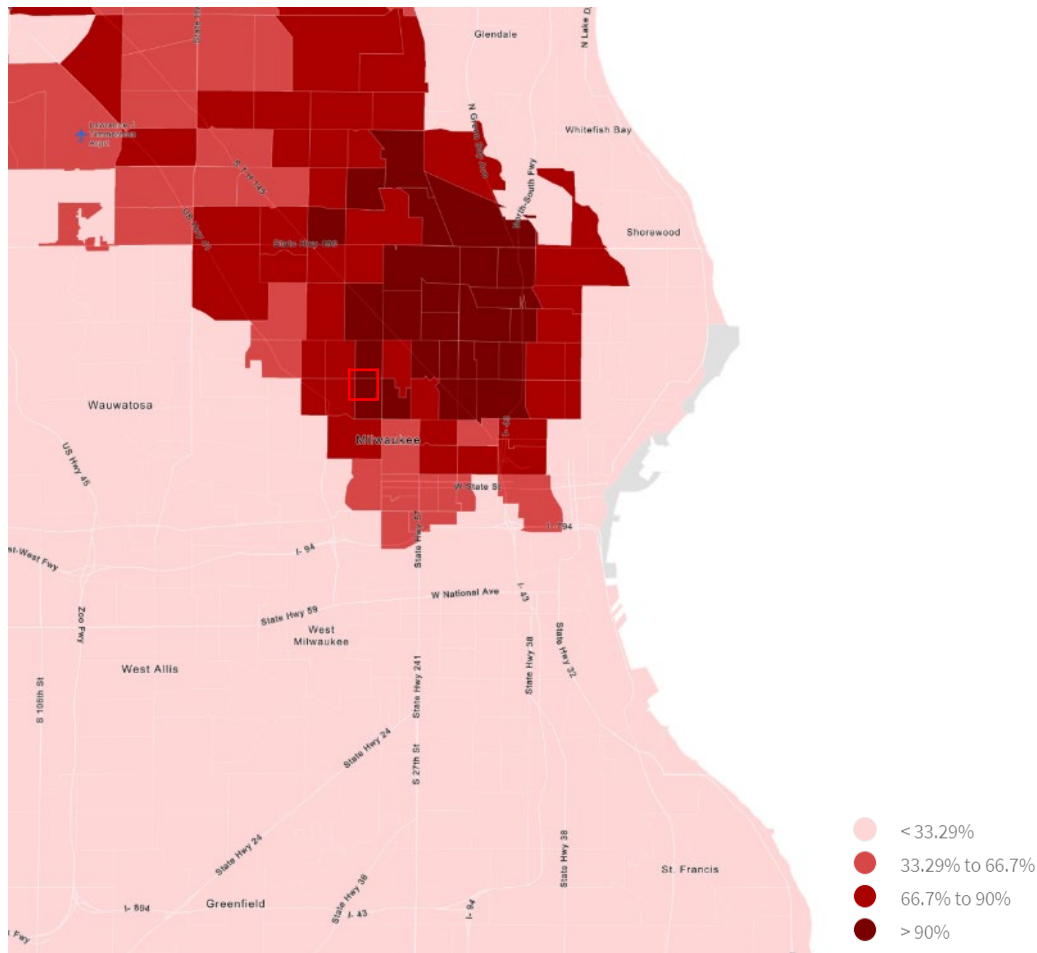


Figure 14, 2010 map locating concentrations of Milwaukee's black population. Note the darkest color indicating tracts above 90%. (Source: *Total Population: Black or African American Alone*, 2010. Social Explorer, based on data from U.S. Census Bureau. Accessed December 13, 2020.))

The opposite is seen in the suburbs, leaving Milwaukee with one of the highest dissimilarity indices in the nation. Again, a similar story is portrayed on the south side, with Latinos making up around 10% of the city's population.⁵³

⁵³ U.S. Census Bureau, *Characteristics of the Population 2010*, <https://www.census.gov/prod/www/decennial.html>.

A Scarred Landscape

Further exacerbating the disinvestment caused by deindustrialization and white flight were the urban renewal efforts of the 1960s and 70s. Freeway and housing projects were the talk of the town with the city having large aspirations to modernize, launching into the automobile age and alleviating the city of its dilapidated building stock. Extensive freeways were planned to bring in commuters from the suburbs, connect with the larger Interstate Highway System, and aid in the city's defense. These freeway projects further contributed to the city's population decline and created rifts in close-knit areas. Interstate 43, which cut through Bronzeville, the original center of the Black community in Milwaukee was built atop thousands of demolished homes. In Sherman Park, twelve blocks at the southern end of the neighborhood were cleared in anticipation of a section of the Park West Freeway, displacing the residents of around 300 homes.



Figure 15, 1970 aerial showing demolition for the proposed Park West Freeway with Center Peace highlighted in red. (Source: Milwaukee County Land Information Office. “1970 Orthophotography of Milwaukee County.” Map. *ArcGIS REST Services Directory*. Milwaukee County Land Information Office. Accessed December 13, 2020.
https://lio.milwaukeecountywi.gov/arcgis/rest/services/Aerial_Dynamic/1970_Aerial/MapServer)

Comparing the proposed freeway routes to the city’s redlining map and demographic map of the time reveals that the decision-making process for the placement of the freeways was rooted in race and class.

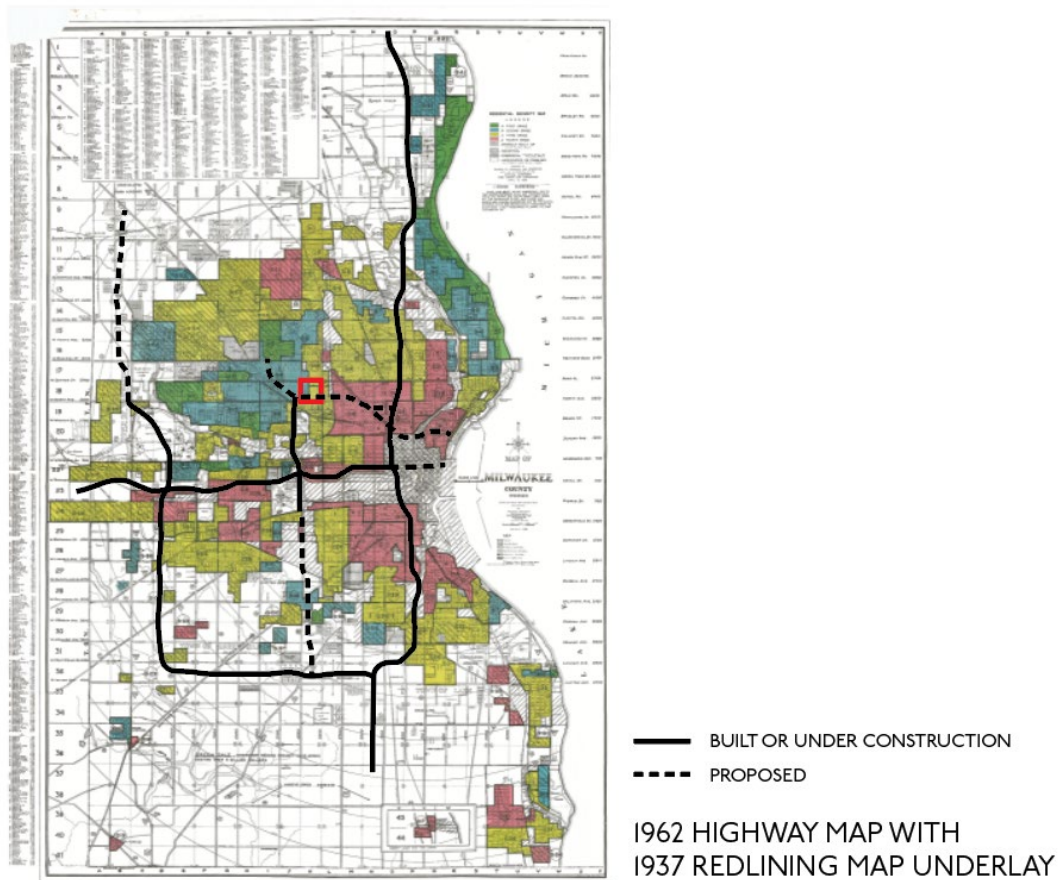


Figure 16, 1937 redlining map overlaid with 1962 built and proposed highways. (Source: Drawn by Author with underlay: David White Co. “Security Map of Milwaukee County 1937.” Map. *Mapping Inequality: Redlining in New Deal America*. University of Richmond Digital Scholarship Lab. Accessed December 13, 2020. <https://dsl.richmond.edu/panorama/redlining/#loc=11/43.03/-88.116&mapview=graded&city=milwaukee-co.-wi>)

Parallel to the development of the freeways were efforts to improve the city’s housing stock. Unlike many other major cities in the United States, Milwaukee was not a proving ground for large scale towers public housing. Much of the urban renewal that took place was in previously industrial areas and “slums” of the north and south sides and in many ways emulated the suburban development taking place outside of the city. Thousands of homes in these “blighted” areas that did not meet the new city codes were slated to be torn down, clearing the way for manufactured housing. The

already disadvantaged families that had lived in these houses were inevitably displaced despite their opposition.

It was only when the monumental buildings of the city were tore down such as the North Western Railroad Depot, demolished in 1968, that urban renewal met substantive white opposition.⁵⁴ The following years saw the formation of the Milwaukee Historic Preservation Commission and a disposition against urban renewal projects. Milwaukee's residents took a preservation-based stance over a focus on redevelopment, and the city introduced programs to aid in the preservation of homes, many of which were inaccessible to the city's minority groups. Similarly, a shift in thinking occurred regarding the freeway projects from this preservation crusade. Residents developed a nostalgia for the past and came to favor a walkable streetscape over an automobile driven one. Lingered freeway projects such as the Park Freeway were shut down. Although demolition had already occurred at the southern end of the Sherman Park neighborhood, the Park West Freeway was never built. This portion of the neighborhood has since begun to be rebuilt with parks, condos, and apartments. The eastern section of the freeway that was built closer to the downtown was eventually demolished in 2002. The scars of these freeway projects are easily visible today, as they are discontinuous with the surrounding fabric and were built with profit in mind rather than quality. While the neighborhoods of the north side were undergoing deterioration and demolition, the city's downtown was taking new shape. Millions of dollars went into the funding of new stadiums,

⁵⁴ Gurda, *The Making of Milwaukee*, 390.

museums, and skyscrapers beginning in the 1960s.⁵⁵ Little, if any, of the funding made its way into north side neighborhoods.

Continued disinvestment in neighborhoods on the north side led to severe issues related to housing and employment. Working class jobs continued to disappear in the city through the 1980s and 90s further compounding poverty within neighborhoods on the north side. Those unable to sustain enough income to pay their rent, taxes, or mortgages were forced out in vicious cycles of foreclosure and eviction. Approaching a century old, many of the homes on the north side were also going through tough times, especially because of the inequitable distribution of funds from homeowner programs. Many were deemed uninhabitable by building codes, and the worst of them were foreclosed on and slated for demolition after the fines built up. This was not a new problem. A 1946 study by the Citizens' Governmental Research Bureau found that 67% of the homes occupied by Black families were unfit for use or needed major repair.⁵⁶ These factors have led to a troubling amount of vacant homes and lots in north side neighborhoods.

Looking Ahead

The tumultuous history of the Sherman Park neighborhood and Milwaukee's north side presents a rich, but tragic story. The scars left in the landscapes, streetscapes, and communities are deep and in many ways are continuing to expand. Contrary to the hierarchical forces imposed externally, the community is eager to heal these scars and bring about change within the neighborhood and reinforce their

⁵⁵ Gurda, *The Making of Milwaukee*, 348-357.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 359.

identity within the city. Long term resident Diane Tharpe looks forward and backward simultaneously in her hopes for the neighborhood's future: "most of the people that still live here are homeowners and have been here for years and they still take pride in the neighborhood because they knew what it once was and everybody has the ultimate feeling that 'hey, if we stay here, we keep pushing, pushing maybe we can get it at least back to what it was.'"⁵⁷ It is the responsibility of governments, professionals, and the public to undo decades of prohibitive injustice, empowering communities to shape their own environments. By listening to the current community and responding to their troubles, stories, and dreams, preservation can be used as a tool to heal this scarred landscape and facilitate positive social change in the neighborhood.

⁵⁷ Diane Tharpe, interview by Joy Huntington, July 12, 2017, in Milwaukee, WI, audio recording, BLC Field School, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1aK6GZUggYw&ab_channel=BLCfieldschool.

Chapter 4: Stakeholders

Recognizing the various stakeholder groups and how they interact are important first steps to understanding a community. Meeting with, observing, and empathizing with these users gives an acute awareness of the unique perspectives, challenges, and aspirations of those within the neighborhood. Taking all of these divergent viewpoints into consideration makes characterizing communities a difficult task. Heritage, culture, memory, and experience individually and collectively shape the community. As it is impossible to fully grasp all of the nuances and points of view of a community, it is important to recognize this reality and factor it into every step of analysis and design.

Breaking down observations of the neighborhood using the ethnographic AEIOU framework reveals a large number of potential stakeholders and stakeholder groups.

ACTIVITIES	ENVIRONMENTS	INTERACTIONS	OBJECTS	USERS
PORCH SITTING	PORCHES	PEOPLE & CARS	CARS	PARENTS
GARDENING	PARKS	PEOPLE & PEOPLE	PLANTS	CHILDREN
BIKING	VACANT LOTS	PEOPLE & SPACE	FOOD	GRANDPARENTS
SCOOTERING	VACANT HOUSES	PEOPLE & ENVIRONMENTS	TREES	SIBLINGS
PLAYING CATCH	OCCUPIED HOMES	CHILDREN & CHILDREN	FRONT DOOR	FRIENDS
GATHERING	ALLEYWAYS	CHILDREN & ADULTS	FLAGS	AUNTS/UNCLES
FIXING CARS	CHURCHES	CHILDREN & PETS	DECORATION	COUSINS
FIXING HOUSES	SCHOOLS	CHILDREN & PLAYSPACE	ORNAMENTATION	BUSINESS OWNERS
COMMUTING	BUSINESSES		WIND CHIMES	EMPLOYEES
WALKING	YARDS		SIGNS	EMPLOYERS
SCHOOL BUSES	STREET		BIKES	VISITORS
WALKING DOGS	SIDEWALK		SCOOTERS	STRANGERS
CHURCH GOERS	GARDENS		SKATEBOARDS	COMMUTERS
CONVERSING	BACK YARDS		TOYS	CYCLISTS
WAITING FOR BUS	CARS		HOUSES	WALKERS
PLAYING SINGING	STEPS		GARAGES	DRIVERS
DRIVING	KITCHEN		BUSES	CITY
OBSERVING	MEMORIALS		GARBAGE	RESIDENTS
SKATEBOARDING	PEACE GARDENS			TENANTS
	GARAGES			HOMEOWNERS
	CITY BUSES			LANDLORDS
	SCHOOL BUSES			PETS
	BUS STOPS			ANIMALS

Figure 17, AEIOU ethnographic analysis. (Source: Author and participants of BLC Field School)

These groups range from users with very small stakes such as visitors and commuters to users with extremely high stakes such as children and homeowners.



Figure 18, Breakdown of stakeholder groups in order of most power and most impact. (Source: Author)

Each individual stakeholder has a unique stake in the community and belongs to various groups. For example, Ms. Tremere Robinson, a community leader, homeowner, business owner, wife, mother, grandmother, and more, understands and engages the community through a different lens than other stakeholders.⁵⁸ Each of these hats that she wears brings unique perspectives, needs, responsibilities, and dreams, intermixing with the others in the community.

In order to understand the complex network of stakeholders of the neighborhood, this analysis of stakeholder groups focuses on three aspects that define how they interact with each other and the environment: generation and family structure; occupation and income; and home ownership.

Generation and Family Structure

As with all other neighborhoods, Center Peace is home to a wide range of generations and families. From elderly grandparents to newborn children, there are many generational viewpoints and struggles to consider. The neighborhood has a fairly typical age breakdown compared with greater Milwaukee, having only slightly more children under 18 than the city average.⁵⁹ This younger demographic has access to multiple schools and parks within walking distance of the neighborhood. Although these amenities are easily accessible, many parents do not feel that it is safe for their children to be out on the streets unattended. Due to dangerous drivers, exposure to

⁵⁸ Tremere Robinson, interview by Joy Huntington, July 11, 2017, in Milwaukee, WI, audio recording, BLC Field School, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BSCMPHcCwu4>.

⁵⁹ Statistical Atlas, "Age and Sex in Sherman Park, Milwaukee, Wisconsin" (Cedar Lake Ventures, Inc.), accessed December 13, 2020, <https://statisticalatlas.com/neighborhood/Wisconsin/Milwaukee/Sherman-Park/Age-and-Sex>.

drugs, and the occasional shooting, many parents are cautious to even let their kids to play in their front yards.⁶⁰ Ms. Cheri Fuqua noted that half of the parents on the block don't even let their kids come outside to play, but it's coming around slowly.⁶¹

Unfortunately these concerns are all too real, as multiple children have been hurt or lost their lives to speeding cars and stray bullets in the past few years.⁶² Ms. Fuqua remembers one recent shooting where there were over seventy shots fired outside and the only person injured was a young child, killed while sitting in the living room watching TV in a nearby home. This tragic reality has immeasurably impacted the neighborhood and the lives of the next generation.

Ms. Robinson remembers her childhood and when she was raising her daughter, comparing it to the times today with her grandkids:

"My mother was strict. She raised us very strict so we couldn't leave off the block. . . . All the kids that lived on the block they used to come here and play . . . the kids could actually play outside and we didn't have any fear of anything. . . . [There] was no fear of the kids playing outside other than the natural things that we taught our kids, stranger danger and all that, but we didn't have to worry about gunshots. . . . Now it's a little different. . . . My grandkids live upstairs and they can't enjoy that like my daughter did. . . . They've never had to dodge any bullets ever but just to know that things have changed so differently that I don't want them to have to experience that. Now they've heard gunshots. They have heard them while we are in the house and it might be down one way or down the other way. . . . I would like to see it safer for our children to play everywhere not just here but everywhere, our kids should be kids."

⁶⁰ Robinson, 2017; Fuqua, 2017.

⁶¹ Fuqua, 2017.

⁶² David Schuman, "6-Year-Old Girl Killed, 2 Children Seriously Injured in Hit-and-Run at 22nd and Center," WDJT Milwaukee (WDJT, October 24, 2019), <https://www.cbs58.com/news/paramedics-called-to-22nd-and-center>; Mike Johnson, "8-Year-Old Boy on Sidewalk Wounded When at Least Two People Shoot at House in Sherman Park Neighborhood," JS Online (Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, July 31, 2018), <https://www.jsonline.com/story/news/crime/2018/07/31/8-year-old-milwaukee-boy-sidewalk-wounded-when-shots-were-fired-sherman-park-neighborhood-house/869713002/>.

Reflecting on this, it is clear that times have changed in the neighborhood and it is affecting how children grow up and socialize.

For teens in the neighborhood, there is a distinct lack of recreational activities outside of school. Some speculate that this is the reason why many younger folks in the neighborhood get into trouble. Resident and carpenter, Mike Staples, feels that there is a disconnect between older residents in the neighborhood and the younger generation.⁶³ Mr. Staples attempts to bridge this gap during weekly breakfasts at the Men's Network, a local organization devoted to providing mentorship to young men in the neighborhood. Members of the Men's Network value skills and labor as well as lifelong learning and hope to pass their knowledge on to the next generation. Mr. Staples believes in hands-on skills and advocates for reinstituting shop classes in the local high school. Mr. Arthur Brown, also involved in the Men's Network, sees younger people spending money on cars and amenities rather than homes and education and worries about their futures.⁶⁴ He recognizes and commends that some young folks going to the library and applying themselves, hoping that his involvement in the community can inspire more young folks to branch out and do good in the community. Ms. Cheri Fuqua engages with the youth of the neighborhood through the Earn and Learn and Clean and Green programs that give youth a chance to work and build their resumes.⁶⁵ Some of the youth from the neighborhood came and worked without pay during the program, demonstrating the strong drive of the

⁶³ Mike Staples, interview by Lena Jensen, July 14, 2017, in Milwaukee, WI, Audio recording, BLC Field School, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oULuveH8N4o>.

⁶⁴ Brown, Arthur. interview by Bella Biwer. July 14, 2017, in Milwaukee, WI. Audio recording. BLC Field School, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n0Gfknrcy70>.

⁶⁵ Fuqua, 2017.

younger generation. Mixed Up, another organization that works with youth to build skills and provide careers, walks through the whole career process, providing apprenticeships and internships in fields such as plumbing.⁶⁶ Although these programs provide a transition to adulthood and a career, there are still a lack of spaces that engage with this age group.

The majority of the neighborhood is made up of working-age adults, many of whom work to support their children, parents, or both. Looking at a breakdown of household types within the broader Sherman Park neighborhood reveals a large number of households with children and a large number of one-adult households.

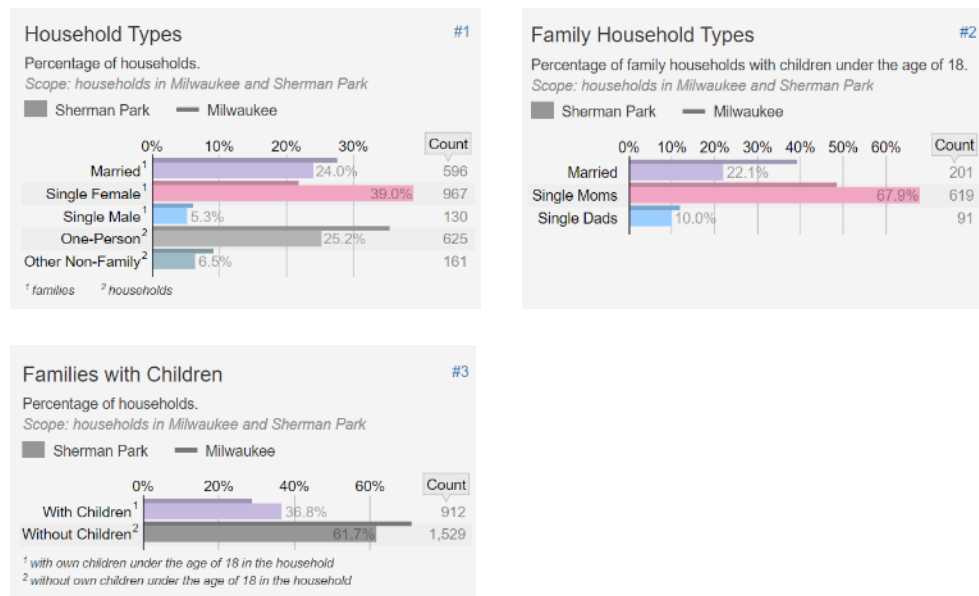


Figure 19, Breakdown of household types in Sherman Park. (Source: Statistical Atlas. “Household Types in Sherman Park, Milwaukee, Wisconsin.” Cedar Lake Ventures, Inc. Accessed December 13, 2020. <https://statisticalatlas.com/neighborhood/Wisconsin/Milwaukee/Sherman-Park/Household-Types>)

⁶⁶ Fuqua, 2017.

This possibly reflects a desire for smaller, more affordable housing units for single adults without children and larger units for those with multiple children. Statistical analysis also uncovers a strikingly high percentage of single mothers in the area. Compared to the national average of 24.6% and Milwaukee average of 48.6%, 67.9% of family households in Sherman Park are made up of single mother households. Single mothers commonly face struggles to pay the bills, challenges of balancing work and family time, as well as difficulty finding and affording childcare. It will be important to respond to their unique needs by providing supportive networks and infrastructure.

Some of the older residents in the neighborhood have observed the neighborhood's change over time and often have a nostalgia for the stronger sense of community and safety that once existed. Many residents, younger and older, have moved back to the neighborhood after living there as a child and plan to stay despite the changes that the neighborhood has undergone.⁶⁷ Although they find the neighborhood has changed, they see opportunities for positive social change and know what it has the potential to be. One resident, Ms. Marianne Hondel, grew up in the neighborhood in the late 1930s and fondly looks back on her childhood days.⁶⁸ She remembers how everyone knew each other and playing with other kids in the streets. Her family moved away after the race riots in 1967, and she has since moved back: "when the time came for me to consider where I'm going to live next, I got a

⁶⁷ Marianne Hondel, interview by Bella Biwer, June 20, 2018, in Milwaukee, WI, Audio recording, BLC Field School, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wcsyP8XNd6E&feature=emb_logo&ab_channel=BLCfieldschool ; Mays, 2017 ; Tharpe, 2017; Robinson, 2017.

⁶⁸ Hondel, 2018.

book from the library called *Suburbia's Coddled Kids*, showing how life is very wonderful in the suburbs but it's not always realistic when you consider humanity. So there I am moving back into the city and here I am many years later still in a neighborhood.”⁶⁹ Soon after, she moved in above her mother who had bought their previous home back. This longing for community and neighbor relations is something that came up in multiple oral histories and is highly regarded by returning members of the neighborhood.

In regard to older residents of the neighborhood, many recognize a need for services for the elderly, as it can be difficult for them to get groceries or find transportation to and from various services. Property maintenance also becomes more difficult with age and fines for home and yard maintenance can build up for those unable to access resources.

Interaction between generations goes beyond engagement on the street or at community events. Intergenerational living has always been a part of the neighborhood, embedded within the duplex form. It was not uncommon for extended family to rent the upper unit of a home in the early 20th century. This has not changed over the years as many residents pass their homes down to their kids.

Geoff Grohowski, local artist and SPCA member, notes that his bungalow, which was converted into a duplex at one point in time, and one of his neighbor's homes were intergenerational homes for families:

That was part of the original idea of having a duplex . . . extended family could be in the same building and have their privacy. The other argument was that it would be an on-site rental property that would help the owner carry the weight of his own mortgage. . . . The neighbors to my north, again there's a

⁶⁹ Hondel, 2018.

woman downstairs and her grown son upstairs, and before that someone's mother and siblings lived upstairs, . . . and her mother lived downstairs, so it's still used as intended.⁷⁰

Ms. Tremere Robinson also lives in an intergenerational household with her daughter and grandchildren in the upper unit:

I like having the grandkids around me. I just prefer to have her and her husband or nobody at all, just me and my husband. . . . My oldest granddaughter, she said 'this is her house.' They have the run of the house. . . . I enjoy having them here, I really do, and I feel safe with them here. . . . Having them here really has been a great help to us because her and her husband stepped in when my husband had his stroke and when I got sick so it's always good to have family around you. The grandkids, they're a big help. The oldest one just went out and helped my husband pick up some stuff out the yard so it's good to have them in the home with us.⁷¹

It is clear that this intergenerational tradition has not been lost over time or with shifting demographics, affirming the relevancy of duplex typology today. The intergenerational living arrangement provides numerous benefits including more accessible care for elders and young children, maintenance of family ties, financial security, and simply peace of mind.

Occupation and Income

The majority of residents in the neighborhood spend their days working, but there is a wide range of distinction within this group. An overwhelming majority of adults work in the healthcare and social assistance industries, followed by administrative and manufacturing occupations.

⁷⁰ Geoff Grohowski, interview by Stephanie Geaslin, July 12, 2017, in Milwaukee, WI, Audio recording, BLC Field School, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T0RDrz_XwGw&feature=emb_logo&ab_channel=BLCfieldschool.

⁷¹ Robinson, 2017.

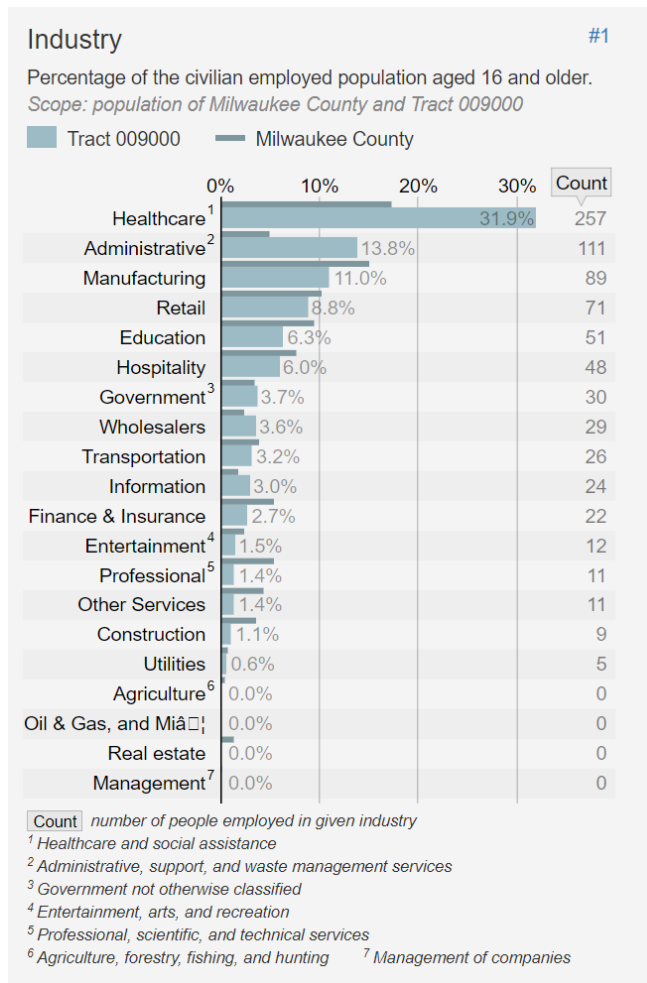


Figure 20, A chart of jobs by industry shows a large concentration of residents working in the healthcare and social assistance industries. (Source: Statistical Atlas. “Industries in Sherman Park, Milwaukee, Wisconsin.” Cedar Lake Ventures, Inc. Accessed December 13, 2020. <https://statisticalatlas.com/neighborhood/Wisconsin/Milwaukee/Sherman-Park/Industries>)

Most residents work outside of the neighborhood with 72% driving alone and 17% using public transportation to make their 26-minute average commutes.⁷² Many residents are likely traveling to the suburbs or downtown to work, as few jobs are available on the partially vacant commercial streets nearby. Automobility remains an important part of daily life, even with nearby access to the public bus system.

⁷² *Transportation*, 2010, Social Explorer, based on data from U.S. Census Bureau, Accessed December 13, 2020.

Many of the families in the neighborhood are well below the median income of Milwaukee and the United States. The median income in Sherman Park is \$26,971 compared to \$36,801 in Milwaukee and \$55,332 in the United States.⁷³ Out of 485 families in the neighborhood, 205 are under the poverty line.⁷⁴ Some of these residents are working multiple jobs, sacrificing the balance of family, social, and personal time to be able to pay the bills. There is a clear need for an increase not only in wages but also in jobs and training in the area. The local Business Improvement District, Center Street BID 39, and other organizations are working to meet these goals.

Although most community members hold steady jobs, there are many unable to find or keep work. Center Peace has a significantly high unemployment rate of 14.2%, leaving some residents without proper means of supporting themselves and forcing them to rely on precarious government programs for shelter and sustenance.

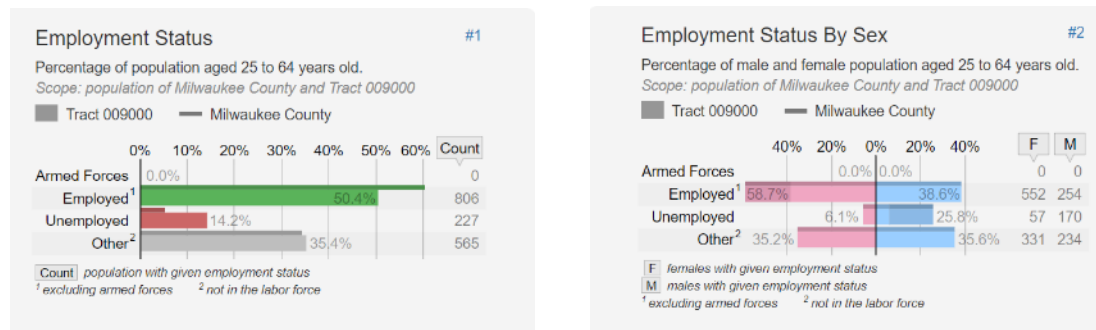


Figure 21, Employment statistics showing high unemployment rates. (Source: Statistical Atlas. "Employment Status in Sherman Park, Milwaukee, Wisconsin." Cedar Lake Ventures, Inc. Accessed December 13, 2020. <https://statisticalatlas.com/neighborhood/Wisconsin/Milwaukee/Sherman-Park/Employment-Status>)

⁷³ U.S. Census Bureau, *Summary Population and Housing Characteristics: 2010*, <https://www.census.gov/library/publications/2012/dec/cph-1.html>.

⁷⁴ *Poverty*, 2010. Social Explorer, based on data from U.S. Census Bureau. Accessed December 13, 2020.

For those not fortunate enough to find a steady job or unable to work, it can be difficult to get a fresh start. Part of the unemployment issue stems from the continued deindustrialization of the city and jobs leaving to the suburbs. Access to education also plays a role in the ability to find and maintain work. 20% of residents do not have a high school diploma, and many others have not went on to pursue higher education.

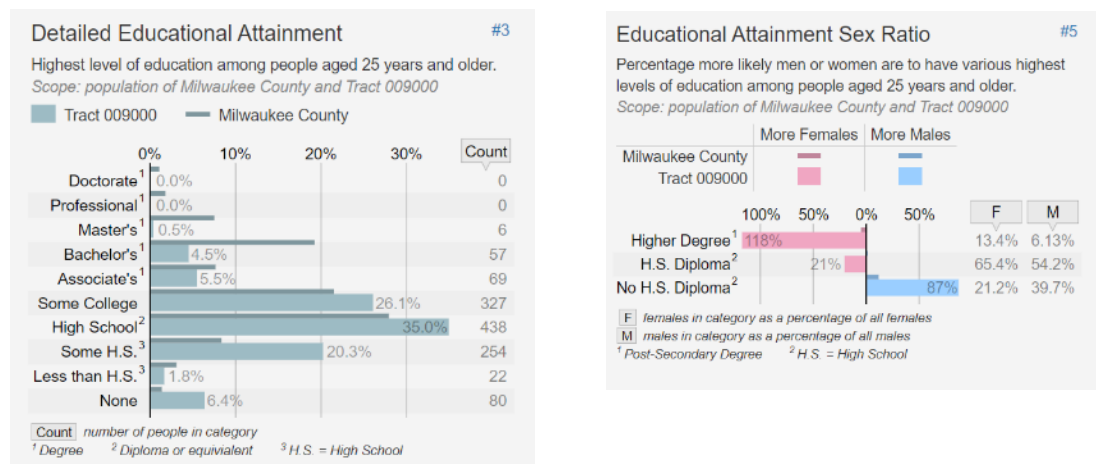


Figure 22, Education rates show a stark contrast between educational achievement of men and women in the neighborhood. (Source: Statistical Atlas. “Educational Attainment in Sherman Park, Milwaukee, Wisconsin.” Cedar Lake Ventures, Inc. Accessed December 13, 2020. <https://statisticalatlas.com/neighborhood/Wisconsin/Milwaukee/Sherman-Park/Educational-Attainment>)

The structure and operation of the Milwaukee Public School system are hotly debated issues in the city, and schools face the same issues of segregation and access to resources as the communities they are located in. Lack of quality primary education and access to secondary education have led to decreased economic mobility and contributed to the neighborhood’s unemployment rate. Another cause of difficulty finding employment is incarceration. Half of black men in Wisconsin have been

incarcerated at a state facility, and one in eight is currently incarcerated.⁷⁵

Incarceration leads to difficulty finding employment, renting a home, and transitioning back into society. Often, incarceration becomes a cycle in the lives of young black men. Unable to get back on their feet after reentry, some recently incarcerated people are brought back into the cycle of drugs or crime that put them in that position in the first place.

Home Ownership

Looking at home ownership rates in the neighborhood reveals that most residents of the neighborhood rent their units, indicating a more transient population. The rates of rentership have increased dramatically since the neighborhood was formed and have become the norm for the neighborhood, leaving home owners to feel that their values of stewardship and neighborliness are becoming subverted. A map of owner-occupied homes in the neighborhood shows the large number of units that are entirely rented.

⁷⁵ John Pawasarat and Lois M. Quinn, "Wisconsin's Mass Incarceration of African American Males, Summary" (2014). *ETI Publications*. 10.
https://dc.uwm.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1009&context=eti_pubs.

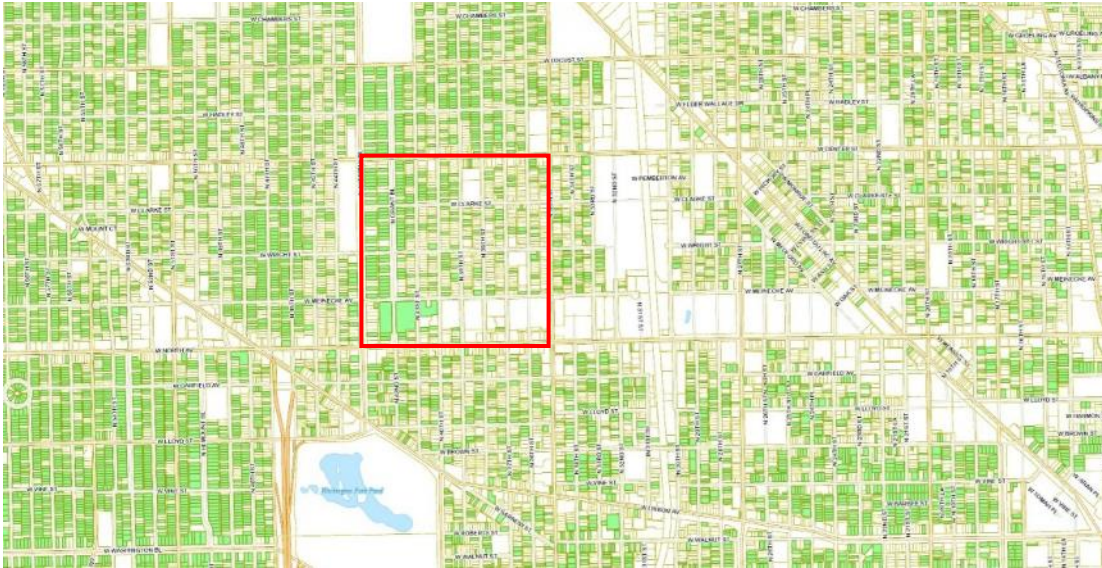


Figure 23, Home ownership indicating owner occupied homes in green. (Source: City of Milwaukee. “Residential Owner-Occupied Parcels.” Map. *City of Milwaukee Map Milwaukee Portal*. City of Milwaukee, 2020. <https://city.milwaukee.gov/mapmilwaukee>)

The Center Peace neighborhood is clearly distinguished from the Grant Boulevard Historic District to the west, with only 151 out of 675 housing units being owner occupied.⁷⁶ This low number indicates that a large number of homes are owned by landlords, going against the original intent of the Milwaukee duplex to be an owner-occupied arrangement. A look through property records reveals that many of the non-owner-occupied homes belong to landlords from outside of the city, often out of state.⁷⁷ This, compounded with the number of one-person households in the neighborhood, demonstrates a need for alternative forms of housing in the neighborhood.

To recap, there is a wide range of users within the neighborhood, each with their own unique needs and perspectives. The youth of the neighborhood need spaces

⁷⁶ *Housing*, Milwaukee 2019, Social Explorer, based on data from U.S. Census Bureau, Accessed December 13, 2020.

⁷⁷ City of Milwaukee, *My Milwaukee Home*, City of Milwaukee (2020). <https://itmdapps.milwaukee.gov/MyMilwaukeeHome/indexSidebar.jsp>.

of play and refuge, while older residents seek comfort and assistance. Large groups of single mothers, men facing incarceration, and others without sufficient jobs would benefit from increased access to resources and alternative housing. Homeowners desire an increase in caring and community, while renters are eager for better living conditions and landlord relationships.

These broad-brush groupings of stakeholders only begin to define the users of the neighborhood which each have their own individual aspirations and challenges. These categorizations leave out many important groups such as businessowners, landlords, visitors, and even the animals that inhabit the neighborhood. While it is not necessary, or even possible, to paint a fully accurate picture of the neighborhood, there is a need to grasp the general essence and build in the flexibility to accommodate for all stakeholder needs.

Chapter 5: Built Environment

Analysis of the built environment at two primary scales, the scale of the urban neighborhood and individual home, informs how these stakeholders interact with their surroundings. Looking at the urban character and surrounding context brings light to the extent of problems and opportunities in the neighborhood while analysis of the Milwaukee duplex typology tells stories of home ownership and upward mobility.

Urban Context

In context with the city, Center Peace is located on the north side, about three miles northwest of downtown Milwaukee. Center Peace is near the edge of the city where the typical urban streetscape begins to blend into the suburbs. The rest of the city is easily accessible to residents by car or bus.



Figure 24, Map locating Center Peace in Milwaukee. (Source: Author)

Looking closer at the neighborhood shows important landmarks in the landscape. Washington Park to the south, the former city zoo, and Sherman Park to the north provide spacious greenery and amenities to residents. Center Peace is bounded by two major commercial streets, Center Street to the north and North Avenue to the south. These streets face many of the same issues as the residential fabric in between but are undergoing positive change due to the efforts of the community and Business Improvement Districts. To the east, a swathe of various larger manufacturing and commercial buildings flank the railroad tracks. To the west, Center Peace is bounded by the North Grant Boulevard Historic District, a National register district featuring upper-middle-class brick bungalows. Today this street is home to a thriving black middle-class. This historic district is a prime example of one focused on aesthetic rather than values held by the community.

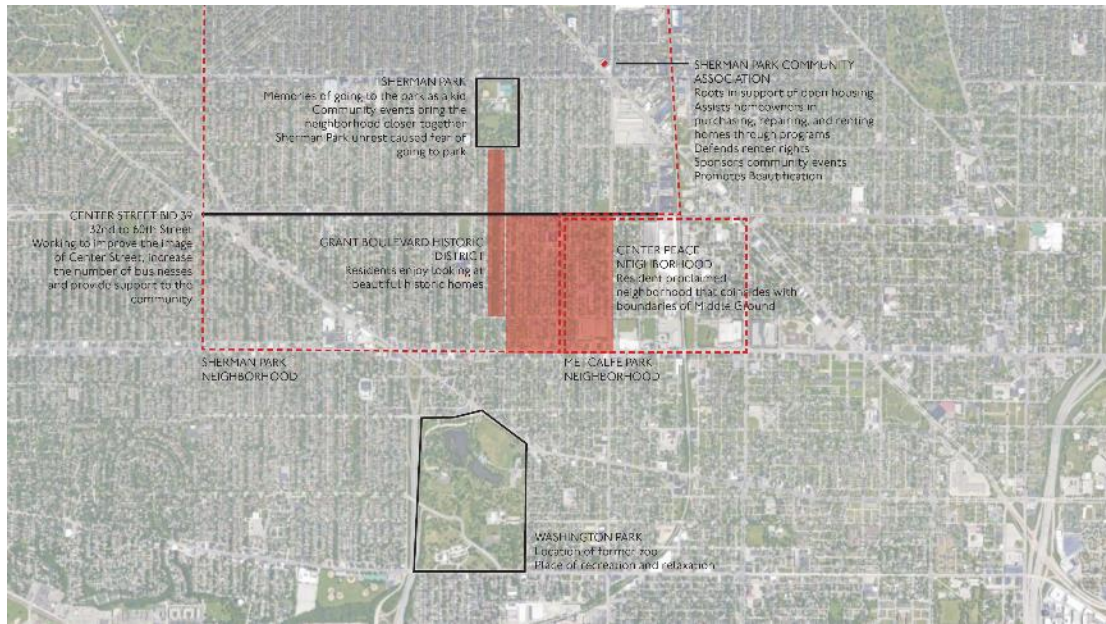


Figure 25, Map of important urban elements and neighborhood boundaries. (Source: Author)

Closer analysis of the Center Peace neighborhood unveils both issues of vacancy and inspirations of community intervention. Highlighting elements spoken about by residents in oral history interviews reveals the complexities of the streetscape. A number of vacant lots are balanced out by positive community efforts such as peace gardens, Unity Orchard, Butterfly Park, and Scholar's Park. Vacant houses dominate some areas, while homes in other areas demonstrate residents' stewardship through beautification and care of their corner homes.

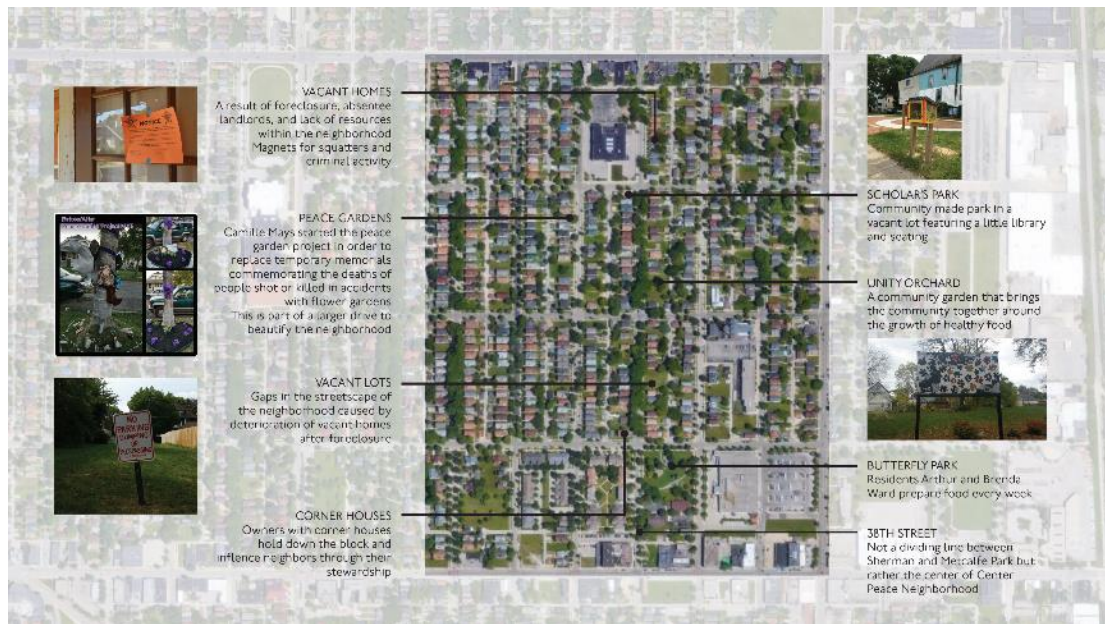


Figure 26, Map of neighborhood context with elements discussed in oral histories called out. (Source: Author)

The land use map of the area shows a significant number of duplexes mixed in with various types of single-family homes, vacant lots, and a few corner stores. The manufacturing and commercial areas are clearly distinguished on the street grid.

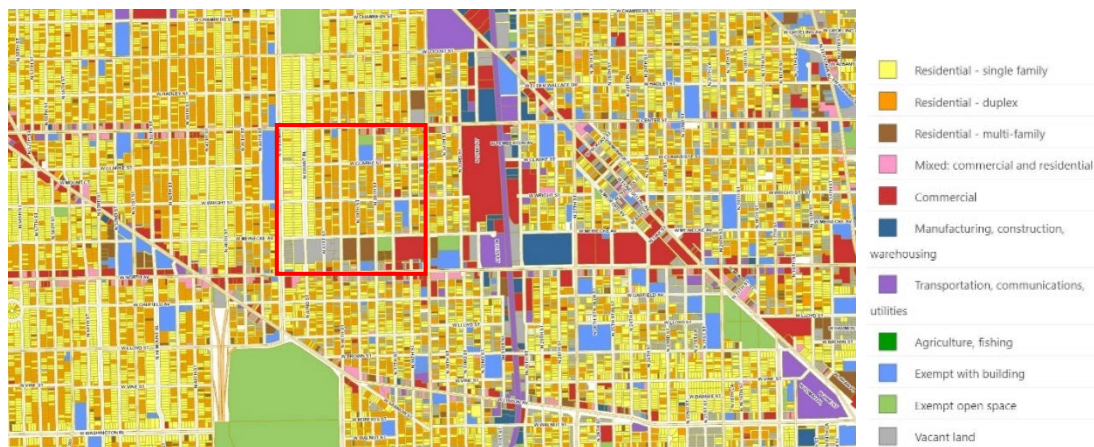


Figure 27, Land use map showing the mixture of uses around the neighborhood. (Source: City of Milwaukee. "Land Use." Map. *City of Milwaukee Map Milwaukee Portal*. City of Milwaukee, 2020. <https://city.milwaukee.gov/mapmilwaukee>)

Within this landscape are also a number of vacant lots and buildings. Looking at a current map of city owned lots and homes in Center Peace reveals the severity of the

foreclosure crisis in Milwaukee. Today, 238 of 913 housing units in the center peace neighborhood sit vacant with many lots also vacant.⁷⁸ The large swathe of homes missing from the southern portion of the neighborhood is a remnant of the demolition of the Park West Freeway. Some residents notice that the new homes built in this area do not fit in with the rest of the character of the neighborhood.⁷⁹ This landscape of vacancy not only detracts from the visual qualities of the neighborhood but also contributes to crime and insecurity.

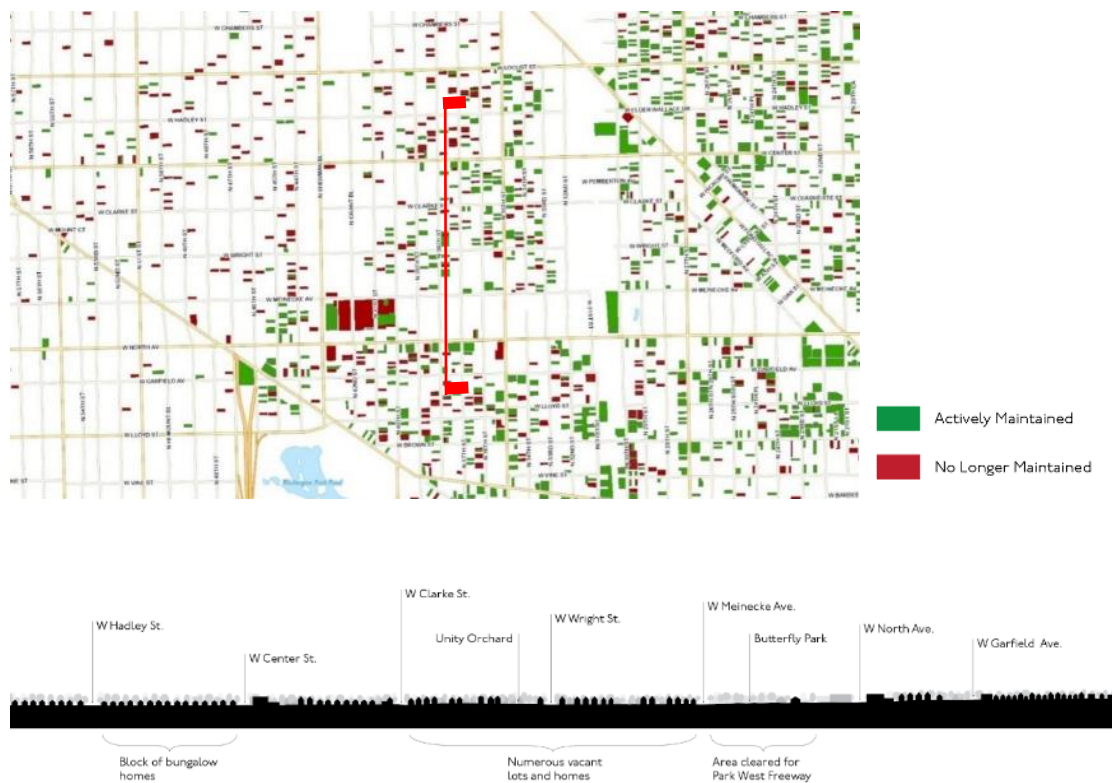


Figure 28, Map indicating city-maintained parcels near Center Peace (top). North/South section cut through the east side of 38th Street (bottom). (Source: “City-Maintained Parcels.” Map. *City of Milwaukee Map Milwaukee Portal*. City of Milwaukee, 2020. <https://city.milwaukee.gov/mapmilwaukee>; Below drawn by Author)

⁷⁸ *Occupancy Status*, Milwaukee 2019. Social Explorer, based on data from U.S. Census Bureau. Accessed December 13, 2020.

⁷⁹ Tharpe, 2017.

Many of the other homes in the neighborhood are currently at risk of facing foreclosure, hinging on their owner's ability to make ends meet in a difficult economic environment. Homes in the neighborhood have a median value of \$55,000, and rented units go for an average of \$827 a month.⁸⁰ This lowered value generally discourages homeowners from buying in the neighborhood and encourages absentee landlord activity. Also, with 40% of households paying more than half of income toward rent, the prospects building enough capital to purchase a home is a daunting task.⁸¹

Ethnographic analysis of the neighborhood also reveals key observations not visible from the top down or mentioned in oral histories. Walking around the neighborhood and witnessing interactions between people and their environments adds another layer to the complexities of the neighborhood. The AEIOU framework introduced earlier breaks down activities, environments, interactions, objects, and users seen on a summer afternoon. The streets are full of life with children out playing, people tending gardens, and repairmen working on cars or houses. Residents sitting on their porches engage with passersby, striking up conversations with both friends and strangers. This idyllic landscape is contrasted by boarded up homes, overgrown lots, litter, and dumping. Memorials mark out the somber locations of shootings or accidents.

⁸⁰ *Housing*, Milwaukee 2019. Social Explorer, based on data from U.S. Census Bureau. Accessed December 13, 2020.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*

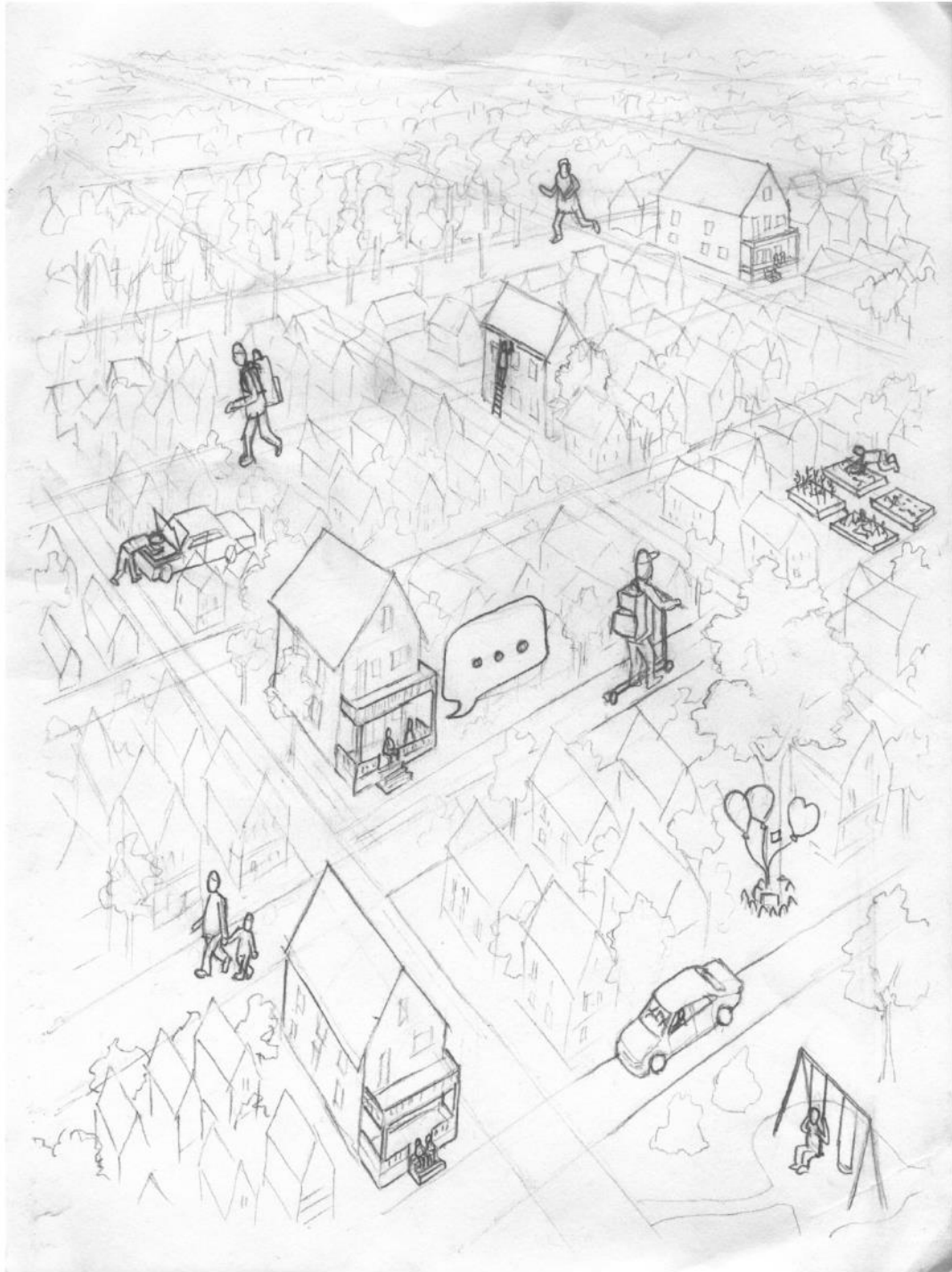


Figure 29, Ethnographic drawing showing activity in the neighborhood on a summer afternoon.
(Source: Author)

Despite the stark contrast of some aspects of the built environment, the community is advocating for positive social change in the neighborhood. The parks and gardens

popping up in vacant lots as well as the activity of the street push back against the negative elements. Residents and those who have experienced the neighborhood firsthand perceive Center Peace differently than those who have only driven by or seen the portrayals by the news.

The Milwaukee Duplex

Exploration of the formation, development, and evolution of Milwaukee, Wisconsin's vernacular duplex typology over time begins to give direction to design strategies for these homes. By looking at social, political, and economic contexts within the city in tandem with architectural analysis of the change over time within the built environment, patterns of culture and heritage within Milwaukee's residential vernacular emerge. Over half of Center Peace's housing stock is made up of a single building type, the Milwaukee duplex.⁸² Although the residential neighborhood contains various building types including corner stores, bungalows, and other single-family homes, the Milwaukee duplex building typology is the main focus of this analysis. The duplex is one of Milwaukee's most common and well-known building types among others including the Milwaukee bungalow, Polish Flat, and earlier worker's cottages.

⁸² "Zoning: Land Use Symbols," *City of Milwaukee Map Milwaukee Portal* (City of Milwaukee, 2020), <https://city.milwaukee.gov/mapmilwaukee>.



Figure 30, A photo of Pabst Avenue directly to the south of Center Peace shows what the streetscape looked like in the early 20th century with rows of duplexes and the streetcar in the distance. (Source: *Duplex Flats on Lloyd*. Photograph. Milwaukee, n.d. Milwaukee Public Library. <https://content.mpl.org/digital/collection/HstoricPho/id/7418>)

The duplex is a humble working and middle-class home that came to prominence around the turn of the 20th century and continues to be a relevant housing option today. Duplexes were intended to allow homeowners to have a supplementary source of income and gave new immigrants a chance to get a start in the city. There is one unit on each of the two floors, accessed through separate entrances at the front and a shared stair at the rear. These homes typically have a front gable, porch stretching the width of the façade, and bay window opposite the entrances. The plan is broken down simply with the living room, dining room, and kitchen in sequence on one side and the bedrooms and bathroom on the other accessed through a hall.

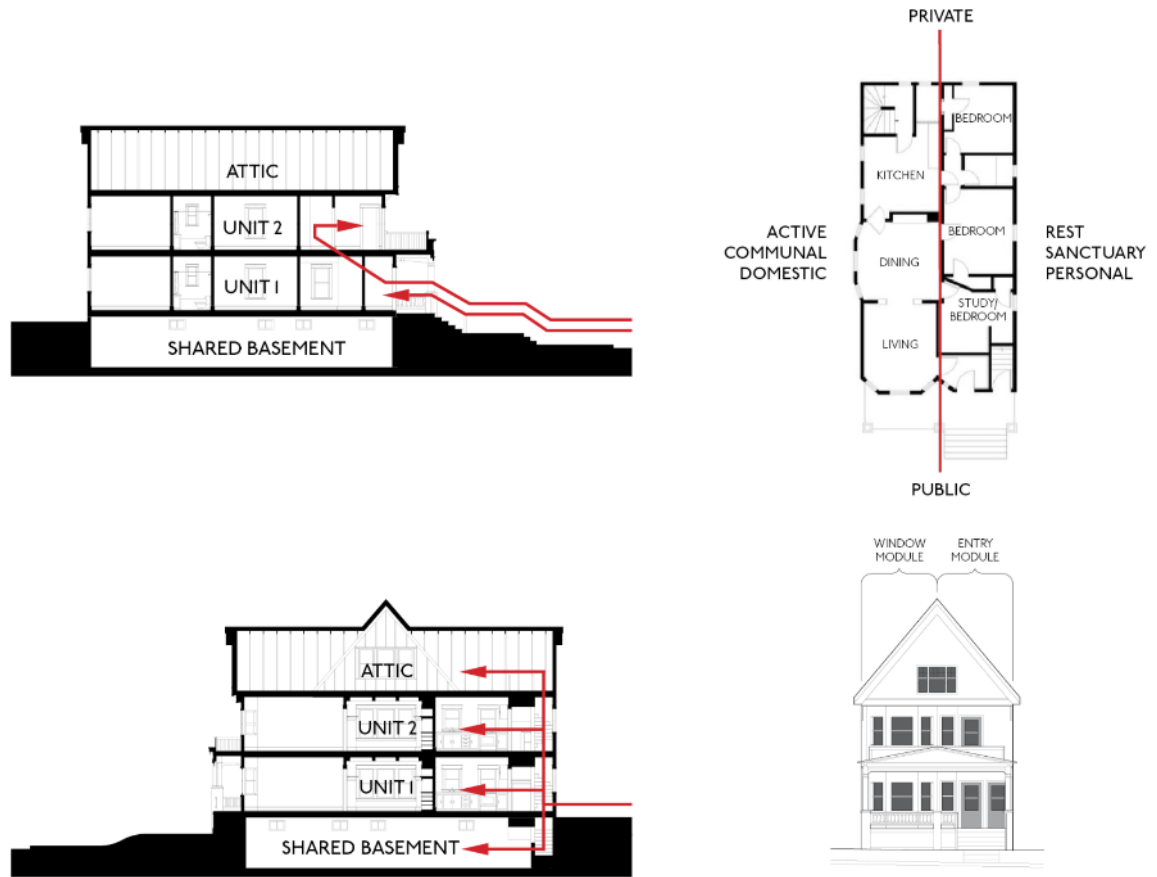


Figure 31, Sections showing separate front and shared rear entries. Plan and elevation indicate primary zones of the home. (Source: Drawn by Author with measurements from BLC Field School)

This layout continues to serve the residents of today, much in the same way that it did over one hundred years ago. These duplexes have been home to a diverse group of residents over time, with different heritages, values, aspirations, and troubles. In order to better understand the forces that shaped this building typology and the greater Sherman Park neighborhood that Center Peace is situated in, the broader patterns of development of the city and housing precedents must be analyzed.

Origins of the Duplex Typology

From the city's history, it is apparent that Milwaukee's housing stock was reflective of the values and traditions of its various immigrant groups. The city's character was also reflective of trends making their way westward from the east coast, such as increasingly manufactured building materials and kit housing. Looking more closely at the housing typologies that preceded or were contemporary with the Milwaukee duplex reveals patterns of strong desire for home ownership and the striving of the working-class to achieve American middle-class standards of living.

The first housing type in Milwaukee that bears resemblance to the duplex is known as the Polish Flat. These homes are mostly found on Milwaukee's south side in neighborhoods where Polish immigrants congregated, with a particularly large concentration in the East Village Historic District.⁸³ Built from around the 1880s into the early 20th century, Polish Flats are based on the earlier worker's cottage that dominated 19th century Milwaukee's housing stock.⁸⁴ The distinctive feature from the common one-and-a-half story worker's cottage is that Polish Flats are raised up a partial or full level. For this reason, they are also known as raised cottages in Chicago, Detroit, and other cities. The worker's cottage plan is a simple four room plan with an entry hall opening up into the kitchen and parlor on one side and two bedrooms on the other. The attics of worker's cottages were often used as unfinished sleeping areas, and the basements were used for cold storage. Often of a plain style,

⁸³ National Park Service, *East Village Historic District National Register Nomination*, Department of the Interior, Prepared by Susan Mikos, 1992, <https://npgallery.nps.gov/GetAsset/bb72af0d-3c3a-44c0-a46b-60c0146b78ad>.

⁸⁴ Thomas C. Hubka, and Judith T. Kenny, "The Workers' Cottage in Milwaukee's Polish Community: Housing and the Process of Americanization, 1870-1920," *Perspectives in Vernacular Architecture* 8 (2000): 33-52, 38.

these homes were constructed out of standardized and machined materials, often reused as a means of cutting costs.



Figure 32, Worker's cottage ad from Chicago showing typical layoutd. (Source: S.E. Gross. "A Home for \$100." *Tenth Annual Illustrated Catalogue of S.E. Gross' Famous City Subdivisions and Suburban Towns*. 1891. <https://archive.org/details/TenthAnnualIllustratedCatalogueOfS.e.GrossFamousCitySubdivisionsAnd/page/n65/mode/2up>. 63)

Later on, raising this initial structure up on posts made room for a partially sunken basement below. These timber posts were later replaced with brick walls, as owners worked up enough capital. Using the basement as a second unit below the original cottage allowed homeowners to rent one or the other units to assist with their mortgage.



Figure 33, Polish flat being constructed (left) and Polish Flat on the south side of Milwaukee (right). (Source: Kwasniewski, Roman. *South 20th Street, construction of Polish flat*. Photograph. Milwaukee, 1925. University of Wisconsin Milwaukee Libraries. <https://collections.lib.uwm.edu/digital/collection/mkenh/id/617>; Kwasniewski, Roman. *South Side, Polish Flat*. Photograph. Milwaukee, Digitized 2009. University of Wisconsin Milwaukee Libraries. <https://collections.lib.uwm.edu/digital/collection/mkenh/id/643>)

After the home was paid off, these flats were often converted back to a larger single unit. With many newly arrived working-class immigrants coming to Milwaukee at the time, there was a significant market for small, affordable rental units. This demand for housing combined with the beneficial revenue for homeowners also led to rear- or alley-houses, which were smaller rental structures facing the back of the lot. Sometimes the original worker's cottage was moved to the rear of the property and a new home constructed at the front. Some Polish Flats were even expanded rearward to more closely mimic the increasingly popular bungalow plan of the early 20th century.⁸⁵ All of these possible arrangements of expansion allowed flexibility for growing families, additional income from renters, and the opportunity to house extended family.

⁸⁵ Hubka, "The Workers' Cottage in Milwaukee's Polish Community," 39.

Although the initial cottages themselves were not reflective of traditional Polish building techniques, their modification over time represents the immigrant group's values. These flats reflected a mixture of American working-class values, a strong desire for home ownership, and pride in the vibrant community. With many of the Polish immigrants coming from rural farming backgrounds, they valued the financial security of property over money and other assets.⁸⁶ Polish immigrants coming to Milwaukee started out near the bottom of the social ladder, commonly forced into less desirable labor. Still, they held property ownership as a virtue and strived for it, no matter how humble their property may have been. This drive is what led to the uniquely evolutionary character of Milwaukee's Polish Flats. Scholar Thomas Hubka argues that these homes also embody a narrative of assimilation into American middle-class culture with the Poles' adoption of the dining room over time, separating food preparation and consumption.⁸⁷

While the plan types of Polish Flats and Milwaukee duplexes differ greatly, the embedded ideas of rentership and pride of owning one's own home are apparent in both. Other immigrant groups in Milwaukee, such as the Germans that built the majority of the duplexes, also held home ownership in high regard. One of the key differences between the duplex and Polish flat is that the duplex was not meant to be converted back into a single unit, thus being built as two separate units originally. Duplexes are also much larger than their cottage counterparts and contained dining rooms and bathrooms from the start. This is partially due to German immigrants

⁸⁶ Hubka, "The Workers' Cottage in Milwaukee's Polish Community," 44.

⁸⁷ Ibid., 46.

coming into the city with a step up on other immigrant groups, both in skills and capital, allowing them to build much larger homes right away. Although duplexes chronologically overlap with Polish Flats, which were sometimes referred to as “poor man’s duplexes” themselves, it seems that the flats acted as a bridge between the 19th century worker’s cottage and 20th century duplex typology.

Field research of other buildings on Milwaukee’s affluent east side also reveals traces of larger properties being subdivided and rented out. Evidence of locks on the outside of rooms within mansions along the lake, likely from the depression era, reveals that traditions of renting were not limited to the working class.⁸⁸ This history of rental across classes reflects a culture accustomed to boarders and adhering to values of home ownership. In some duplexes there are also signs of single rooms being rented out, especially in finished attics and basements.

Beyond the dreams of home ownership, the aspirations of having the middle-class domestic amenities were also found in the more grandiose homes of the east side. These characteristics can be found in the six-room plan type shared with many of Milwaukee’s single-family homes including the Milwaukee bungalow. This plan was used in affordable working-class homes and reflected the values and functions of middle-class homes of the early 20th century. Hubka argues that it was this plan type that “significantly contributed to an improvement in the quality of domestic life for the working class” in new and remodeled homes.⁸⁹ This shift in plan type from the

⁸⁸ Latoya Dennis, “Why Does Milwaukee Have So Many Duplexes?,” *WUWM*, October 13, 2017, <https://www.wuwm.com/post/why-does-milwaukee-have-so-many-duplexes#stream/0>.

⁸⁹ Thomas C. Hubka and Judith T. Kenny, “Examining the American Dream: Housing Standards and the Emergence of a National Housing Culture, 1900-1930,” *Perspectives in Vernacular Architecture* 13, no. 1 (2006): 49-69, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20355368>, 49.

earlier four room worker's cottage plans embodied the expansion of the working class into the new consumer economy. Hubka lists eight rooms and amenities that define middle-class housing standards: three-fixture baths, dining rooms, kitchen technologies, public utilities, private bedrooms, storage closets, front porches, and garages.⁹⁰ These elements allowed for an improved domestic life by bettering hygiene, contributing to separation of functions, and providing spaces for new domestic amenities. This was a response to consumerism of newly manufactured goods as well as shifting domestic values. Increased access to plumbing, appliances, automobiles, and other manufactured goods of the early 20th century created a demand for new housing typologies.

Combining these elements into a single plan, referred to as the Progressive Era Plan by Hubka, results in a five- or six-room plan with a bath, front porch, and garage.⁹¹

⁹⁰ Hubka, "Examining the American Dream," 55.

⁹¹ Ibid., 59.



Figure 34, Typical Progressive Era Plan. (Source: Author with measurements from BLC Field School)

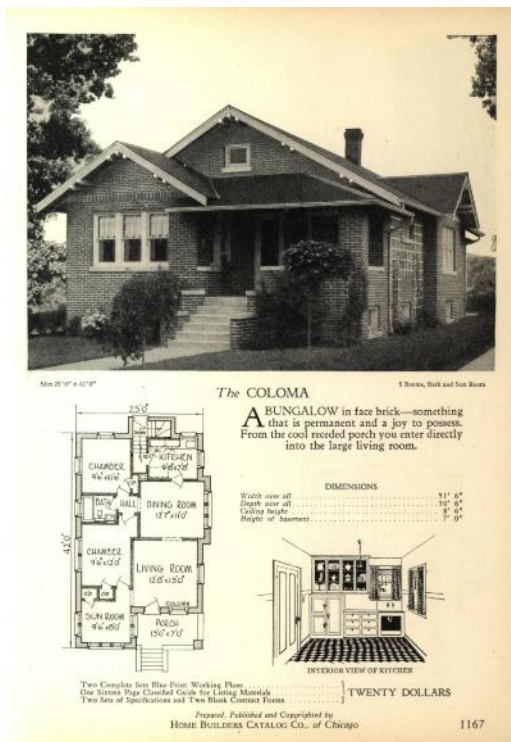
This plan type became the standard for single family homes and duplexes in Milwaukee and many other cities across the Midwest, spurred on by mass production of construction materials and rapid population growth. There is no clear origination of this plan type, as it appears to have developed in multiple parts of the nation simultaneously in the 1870s, but it spread rapidly due to mass communications between builders, industrialized products, and a speculative market.⁹² Hubka summarizes this newly attainable standard:

These improved housing characteristics were obtained for a large number of Americans before 1940 in a broad range of under-studied and rarely appreciated houses, such as multi-flats, modest single-family houses, and remodeled housing of all types. The various ways that the working-class obtained these improved houses represents a combination of technological

⁹² Hubka, "Examining the American Dream," 61.

progress, progressive reform, and working-class initiative that occurred with quiet determination on a national scale.⁹³

Not only were new homes constructed with this plan, but many homes were remodeled and added onto to accommodate the Progressive Era Plan. This made the six-room plan both a literal and figurative evolution of the earlier hall and parlor plan type. Although the Milwaukee bungalow did not appear in the city until after the turn of the century, the bungalow plan is synonymous with the Progressive Era Plan.



Harris Home No. L-1503

The Size 26 ft. x 40 ft. 5 Rooms and Bath

HERE is the beauty of all beauties, and not only does this apply to the exterior appearance, which really speaks for itself, but equally as well for the interior. The plan of the room is perfection itself. The building of such a Harris Home carries with it a grade of ownership that bespeaks of solid citizenship, dependability, comfort and sensible good taste.

The broad inviting front porch and the spacious living room are true adjuncts to a successful homelife and to a real home. As we enter this room we are impressed with its beauty. There is a handsome mirror door included that looks to the second floor. The view through to the dining room is wonderfully charming. The dining room has a long broad window seat backed by four attractive cushioned seats. Just the place for a few shaves for flowers and drooping vines to help cheer up the dull gray winter days.

The bedrooms are of ample size with plenty of window space for light and ventilation. Bathroom is conveniently placed between the two bedrooms. Each bedroom has a closet. The kitchen is arranged for every convenience with entry, pantry and plenty of room for everything.

The best yet—there is room in the second floor for three fine bedrooms, each about 12 feet by 12 feet, and a small bath or toilet. Entrance to second floor is right out of the living room, and entrance to basement is directly under main stairway. Wherever we show attic stairways we include attic floor and just heavy enough to enable to finish rooms on second floor.

Read our Free Plan Offer, as well as the wonderful good quality and the completeness of the material we furnish as described in the first pages of this book.



HARRIS BROTHERS COMPANY, 35th and Iron Streets, CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

Page 19

Figure 35, Plan book Bungalow designs from the Home Builders Catalog Co. and Harris Brothers Co. (Source: Home Builders Catalog Co. "The Coloma." *Home Builders Catalog: Plans of All Types of Small Homes* 1928, 1928.

<https://archive.org/details/HomeBuildersCatalogPlansOfAllTypesOfSmallHomes.1167>; Harris

Brothers Co. "Harris Home No. L-1503." *A Plan Book of Harris Homes*, 1915.

<https://archive.org/details/APlanBookOfHarrisHomes.19>

Hubka describes the prevalence of this plan: "when stripped of its architectural style, the single-story bungalow plan in its most popular five-to-six room-with-bath

⁹³ Ibid., 65.

configuration is indistinguishable from many of the era's most popular houses that evolved during the last quarter of the nineteenth-century.”⁹⁴ This idea of separating plan and style comes from one of Hubka’s earlier writings that critiques the classification of common housing types.⁹⁵ Hubka proposes a two-part naming system to address the common practice of uncoupling the historic relationship between façade and plan.

The Progressive Era plan type exists separately from the bungalow style in many instances including the simple front gable single family home and duplex. Single-family homes with this plan type are the second most prevalent form of housing in the Center Peace neighborhood, whether they are in the bungalow style or a simpler style with a street facing gable. While the duplex typology predates the bungalow, both building types evolved on parallel tracks in the early 20th century, manifesting consumerism and the working-class desire for upward mobility. In many ways the bungalow is simply half of a duplex and the duplex is simply two bungalows stacked on top of each other.

Housing types from other cities also may have had influence on the duplex typology. In particular, the Chicago Two-Flat, Philadelphia Rowhouse, New England Three Decker, Atlanta Double Shotgun, and Buffalo Telescope, all seemingly incorporate values or elements featured in the duplex to some extent. Duplexes akin to the Milwaukee duplex also appear in other midwestern cities such as Columbus and Cleveland. Although they are featured to a much lesser extent in the overall

⁹⁴ Hubka, “Examining the American Dream,” 66.

⁹⁵ Thomas C. Hubka, “Houses without Names: Architectural Nomenclature and the Classification of America's Common Houses” *CRM: The Journal of Heritage Stewardship* 8, no. 1 & 2 (2011), <https://www.nps.gov/crmjournal/Winter2011/view2.html>.

housing stock of these cities, they reinforce that the idea of the duplex was part of a larger movement toward homeownership and new middle-class values in the United States.

In nearby Chicago, where there was also a history of raised cottages, residents built two-flats which were very similar to the duplex in plan. Key differences include a porch offset to one side, masonry construction or cladding, and flat roof.



Figure 36, Harris Brothers Co. advertisement for a two-flat and recent photograph of a brick two-flat. (Source: Harris Brothers Co. "Two Family House Design No. 144." *A Plan Book of Harris Homes*, 1915. <https://archive.org/details/APlanBookOfHarrisHomes/page/n41/mode/2up>; Crawford, Brian. *Chicago Two-Flat*. Photograph. Chicago: Flickr, March 9, 2017. <https://www.flickr.com/photos/78039748@N07/33343782035/>)

A more ornate version of the two-flat, the Greystone, is widely recognized for its elegant stonework and distinctive grey limestone. Greystones and simpler two flats were also meant to be lived in by the owners, renting out the upper floor. This overlap of values with the duplex allowed working-class families to experience

"accommodations that were much larger and better-equipped than anything they had

been able to afford before.”⁹⁶ Other than style and materiality, the only major difference between the duplex and the two-flat is the duplex’s wider porch that allows more space for leisure, which indicates slightly different cultural values based around sociability between the two cities.

On the east coast, the Philadelphia Rowhouses, Twins, and New England Triple Decker exhibited different values centered around home ownership and rentership.



Figure 37, Photographs of Philadelphia Twin (left) and New England Triple. (Source: Treeemont. *Twin Houses, West Mount Airy*. Photograph. Philadelphia, January 8, 2018. Wikimedia Commons. [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Twin_houses,_West_Mount_Airy_\(Philadelphia,_Pennsylvania,_USA\).jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Twin_houses,_West_Mount_Airy_(Philadelphia,_Pennsylvania,_USA).jpg); Bcorr. *Cambridge Triple Decker*. Photograph. Cambridge, December 3, 2006. Wikimedia Commons. <https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:CambridgeTripleDecker.jpg>)

The Philadelphia Rowhouses were typically built as a single unit, but individual rooms on the upper floors were commonly rented out.⁹⁷ Rowhouses were affordable for homeowners to build and rentals generated good profits for developers due to their small footprints and low construction costs. Many rowhouse duplexes were

⁹⁶ Dan Wheeler, James Wheaton, and Tasneem Chowdhury, “The Historic Chicago Greystone: A User’s Guide to Renovating & Maintaining Your Home,” *The Historic Chicago Greystone: A User’s Guide to Renovating & Maintaining Your Home* (Chicago, Illinois: City Design Center at the University of Illinois, 2007) 9.

⁹⁷ Rachel Simmons Schade and Schade and Bolender Architects, “Philadelphia Rowhouse Manual: A Practical Guide for Homeowners,” *Philadelphia Rowhouse Manual: A Practical Guide for Homeowners* (Philadelphia, PA: City of Philadelphia, 2008), https://www.phila.gov/media/20190521124726/Philadelphia_Rowhouse_Manual.pdf.

transformed into a two-unit home years after they were built. Commonly having four or more bedrooms, subdividing rowhomes was a feasible option for those with smaller families. Twin rowhouses were also common in Philadelphia, often built by developers to cut construction costs. The practice of developers building out entire blocks of homes to rent, or even to sell, was not present in Milwaukee, where most homes were built by their initial owners. Although some single-family homes in Milwaukee were converted to duplexes, this practice is much less common due to the already small number of rooms in the bungalow plan. Philadelphia Twins followed the same logic as rowhouses but were semi-detached and more commonly built by single owners. The triple decker of New England, commonly built from around 1880 to 1920, acted as a compromise between single family homes and tenement blocks.⁹⁸ Stacking units three high allowed efficiency and affordability on small lots in Boston and other cities. Triple deckers were mostly built by those that lived on the first floors, sometimes being paired in doubles known as six deckers. Exhibiting many of the same properties as the duplex, the triple decker provided homeowners on the east coast a means to obtain home ownership and improved the living conditions of the working class.

The Atlanta Double Shotgun type housed Atlanta's black working class, providing a new form of affordable rental housing in the early 20th century.⁹⁹ Often

⁹⁸ Louise Elving, "Working Class Housing: A Study of Triple-Deckers in Boston," *Working Class Housing: A Study of Triple-Deckers in Boston* (Boston, MA: Boston Urban Observatory, 1975), <https://archive.org/details/workingclasshous00bost/page/n15/mode/2up>.

⁹⁹ Joseph K. Oppermann, "Three Double-Shotgun Houses 493ABC Auburn Avenue" (National Park Service, May 2017), <http://npshistory.com/publications/malu/hsr-double-shotgun-houses.pdf>.

built for tenants, not homeowners, these homes provided small, but affordable living for Atlanta's black communities.



Figure 38, Atlanta Double Shotgun home with side-by-side units. (Source: Oppermann, Joseph K. Rep. *Three Double-Shotgun Houses 493ABC Auburn Avenue*. National Park Service, May 2017. <https://npshistory.com/publications/malu/hsr-double-shotgun-houses.pdf>)

Much like the twin houses of Philadelphia, these modest homes were side by side rather than stacked. The double shotgun most commonly featured the two-room hall and parlor plan type with each unit sharing a party wall. Although the double shotgun and duplex were built with the same economy of space in mind, the duplex was able to provide more rooms and amenities because of its stacked nature.

The Buffalo Telescope bears some similarities to the Polish Flat of Milwaukee but sites the second unit behind the first. Also based on the worker's cottage, these homes were expanded rearward to accommodate growing families and gain

separation of spaces or to create space for renters.¹⁰⁰ These buildings worked incrementally within the confines of small lots to improve living conditions and allow for a supplemental income in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The progressive aims that these homeowners were trying to achieve can be seen in the duplex form as it was built.

From these precedents and contemporaneous typologies outside of Milwaukee, it is clear that other working-class individuals sought values of ownership and new 20th century housing innovations. It can also be observed that the stacked form of the duplex was an affordable way to achieve these goals. Unlike some of these examples, the Milwaukee duplex was not solely a rental and was used more often as a means to obtain home ownership rather than to make an income. Intentionally or not, these two-family housing typologies contributed to densification in their respective cities and drastically improved the standard of living for the common worker.

The Milwaukee duplex was also a part of the plan book and kit house movements of the early 20th century. Emerging from the standardization of building plans during the late 19th century and leaving the folk-building tradition behind, plan books and builder's guides became increasingly common in the late 19th century.¹⁰¹ Plan books and builder's guides came about in response to the standardization of lumber and the popularization of balloon framing.

¹⁰⁰ David Schalliol, "Telescope Houses in Buffalo," *Voices: The Journal of New York Folklore* 44, no. 1-4 (2017): pp. 74-77, <https://search.proquest.com/docview/2126532978/314A1B1B7D78496APQ/1>.

¹⁰¹ Jim Draeger, "Postal Perfect: My Pursuit of Mail-Order Homes in Wisconsin," *Wisconsin Magazine of History* 85, no. 1 (2001): pp. 24-33, <https://content.wisconsinhistory.org/digital/collection/wmh/id/42248>, 26.

Closer to the turn of the century, these builder's guides developed into catalogs for the common household, allowing prospective homebuilders to choose from a variety of house styles and options. Mail order homes from these catalogs were made possible by the rapid advancements and expansions of technology and industry. These ready-made homes were made popular in the Midwest by larger companies such as Sears Roebuck, Aladdin, and Gordon-Van Tine based in Chicago, Bay City, and Davenport respectively. Partnering with local lumberyards, these companies would precut or fabricate all the elements required and ship them out along with instructions to build the home. This allowed any carpenter, and even homeowners with little carpentry experience, to assemble these homes quickly and efficiently.

Although archival research has turned up little evidence that many of the homes in Milwaukee were necessarily mail-order homes, it is likely that the majority were built by local builders using plan books. Looking at a number of examples of duplex kit homes from the early 20th century reveals many similarities with the Milwaukee duplex and a few differences that give it its unique character.



Figure 39, Duplex kit homes from various catalogs. (Source: Aladdin Homes. "Two-Apartment Houses." *Aladdin Homes Catalog* 29 1917, 1917. https://www.cmich.edu/library/clarke/ResearchResources/Michigan_Material_Local/Bay_City_Aladdin_Co/Documents/1917_annual_sales_catalog.pdf. 97; Gordon-Van Tine Co. "Ready-Cut Home No. 559." *Gordon-Van Tine Ready-Cut Homes* 1916, 1916. <https://archive.org/details/GordonVanTinesReadyCutHomes19160001>. 46; International Mill & Timber Co. "The Grenadier." *Sterling Homes* 1920, 1920. <https://archive.org/details/InternationalMillTimberCoSterlingHomesno170001>. p72; Lewis Manufacturing Company. "The Gould, Manchester, and Raleigh." *Lewis-Built Homes*, 1917. <https://archive.org/details/LewisManufacturingCoBookA7ofonehundredhomes0001>. 97, 101, 102)

These duplex homes commonly used the Progressive Era six-room plan and featured wide front porches similar to the ones in Milwaukee. Some, such as Aladdin Homes'

1917 Dexter and Devon were side by side units while others were stacked like the Milwaukee duplex. Bay City, Michigan's Lewis Manufacturing Company has three duplex homes in their 1917 catalog that all closely resemble the Milwaukee duplex. The main difference with many of these kit homes, considering the wide variation in Milwaukee's own duplex stock, is the form of the roof. Gordon Van Tine and Sterling Homes both had duplexes with hip roofs that extended beyond the façade to cover the upper balcony. Possible explanations for Milwaukee's majority of front gable duplexes include a desire to keep a consistent character with the earlier worker's cottages or a need for taller, more usable spaces in the attic. These duplex kit homes appear to have been most popular in the late 1910s and early 1920s for duplex popularity, coinciding closely with the trends in Milwaukee.

The duplex form first appeared in Milwaukee in the 1880s and became the city's most popular housing type by the 1890s, peaking between 1904 and 1916.¹⁰² Outnumbering single family homes at the time, these homes both promoted affordable housing opportunities and contributed to density in the city. This popularization of the duplex occurred during a period of rapid expansion in the city. The outward development of Milwaukee created an expanse of duplexes that stands between the city's downtown and suburbs.

Leading up to the 20th century, duplexes developed increasingly larger front porches, eventually spanning the full width of the home.¹⁰³ Queen Anne and Colonial Revival styles were popular at this time, with the upper stories commonly patterned

¹⁰² Paul J. Jakubovich, "As Good as New: A Guide to Renovating the Exterior of Your Older House" (City of Milwaukee, July 1993),

https://city.milwaukee.gov/ImageLibrary/Groups/cityHPC/Books/AsGoodAsNew_OCR.pdf, 40.

¹⁰³ Jakubovich, "As Good as New," 40.

with shingles and porches sporting motifs from Georgian and Federal influences. Moldings, pedimented windows, and Palladian windows on the attic level gave the homes their most distinctive character. After the turn of the century, buildings were commonly decorated with elements from the Tudor and Craftsman styles including stucco, half-timbering, shingled second stories, and rafter tails. Construction of the duplex and bungalow tapered off between the world wars, and these types were replaced with the single-family cape and ranch homes springing up in the newly annexed suburbs.

Today, the single family and duplex typologies of this era still dominate the city's housing stock. Of the residential properties that cover 41% of Milwaukee's land, 89% of those are either single family homes or duplexes.¹⁰⁴ The distinct lack of larger multi-family apartment complexes in Milwaukee differentiates it from many other cities. In the Center Peace neighborhood, over half of the homes are duplexes, making at least two thirds of the total housing units in the neighborhood's duplex units. The remainder of homes in the neighborhood are mostly single-unit bungalows.

The duplex typology not only arose out of the intrinsic values of these early immigrants but has shaped and been shaped by the lives of subsequent residents. The Milwaukee duplex provided tenants the luxuries of a single-family home "including more rooms, a private entrance, attic and basement storage, a yard, and being part of a family neighborhood" when compared to apartment complexes.¹⁰⁵ The embedded

¹⁰⁴ "Milwaukee Citywide Policy Plan: Land Use" (City of Milwaukee), accessed December 13, 2020, <https://city.milwaukee.gov/ImageLibrary/Groups/cityDCD/planning/plans/Citywide/plan/LandUse.pdf>, 31.

¹⁰⁵ Jakubovich, "As Good as New," 40.

ideas of home ownership, rentership, and 20th century middle-class domestic values have continued to persevere, evolving over time.

Deconstructing the Duplex

Understanding the development of the architectural character and form of the duplex in context helps to dissect the typology in more detail. The typical duplex plan follows the six-room Progressive Era Plan that is divided into two major zones. The private spaces of sanctuary including bedrooms, bathrooms, and studies are most often located on the same side as the entry doors, while the communal domestic spaces such as the kitchen, dining room, and living room are located the side with the bay window and rear stair. This evolution and separation of spaces from the earlier hall and parlor plan demonstrates modernization of the home and allowed for new technologies such as plumbing, appliances, and utilities to fit within the structure of the plan. Bedrooms were distinguished from entertainment spaces, and food preparation and consumption were separated. Various specialized closets were also included to varying degrees in the duplex including pantries, coat closets, bedroom closets, and broom closets. The internal sequence of spaces leading from the public living room into the private bedrooms mediates privacy and domestic activity in the home.

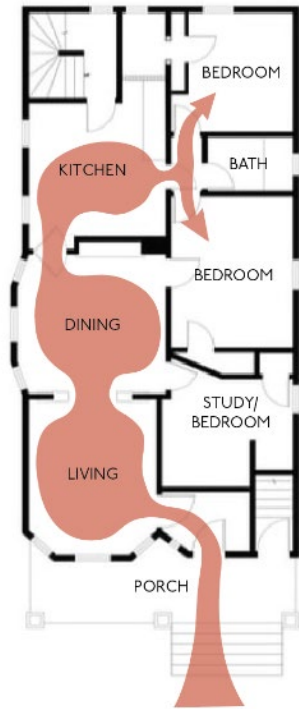


Figure 40, Diagram highlighting the sequence of spaces in the duplex plan. (Source: Author with measurements from BLC Field School)

Bay windows are commonly featured at the front of the living room and side of the dining room, projecting the interior space of the home into the public realm. These spaces, along with the porch and balcony begin to blend interior and exterior space.

Comparison of various duplex plans from in and around the Center Peace neighborhoods reveals the rigidity of the plan and a few key differences.



Figure 41, Comparison of various duplex plans from Center Peace and nearby neighborhoods. (Source: Plans from BLC Field School compiled by Author)

Two major subtypes of the Milwaukee duplex plan exist, the more common double side-entry and the split-entry. Differences between these two types are minimal but do create distinctive elevational arrangements. Other variations on the plan type include a third bedroom on each floor, the entries being swapped to the other side of the home, and alternative options in the foyer area, with some homes having larger entry halls and others using the space for a small, enclosed study. There were also differences in the bedroom and bathroom layouts with some plans having all three accessed individually from a small hall off of the kitchen and others where the primary bedroom had access to the bathroom and was itself entered through the dining room.

The second-floor plans are nearly identical to the plans below with minor alterations to accommodate the front stair. The stacked units of these duplexes reflect the simplicity of construction and the economy of a small footprint. Duplexes almost

always have two separate entrances at the front of the building, with the exception of some earlier homes having an interior vestibule leading to each unit. A private stair at the front solely for the upper unit indicates the intent of these duplexes to remain as two units and not be combined into a single-family home. The shared stair at the rear leads to the basement and attic spaces, which are used for storage and house the various utilities of the home. Some attics and basements have been finished over the years to provide recreational space or additional bedrooms.

Using Hubka's classification system for the duplex typology allows the exterior style to be separated from the plan.¹⁰⁶ A wide variety of exterior styles are used in the Milwaukee duplex, commonly including Craftsman, Queen Anne, and Tudor elements. The flexible form of the duplex allowed it to be clad in whatever style was popular at the time it was built. Elements from these styles were often simplified or mixed and matched, making it difficult to determine a definitive exterior style of these homes. Deterioration and change over time make reading the style of these homes even more difficult. While a variety of styles were used for the duplex most of the homes share common elements in elevation: a front gable roof, bay window at the front and side, and front porch.

¹⁰⁶ Hubka, "Houses without Names."



Figure 42, Present condition of duplex homes in Center Peace. (Source: BLC Field School)

The typical steep front gable and wood construction seemingly look back to the worker's cottage as precedent, as opposed to the nearby Chicago Two Flat's flat roofs and masonry construction. Cross gables were frequently included to create additional space for occupation of the attic. A bay, or projecting, window on the front and side of the home indicates the orientation of the living and dining rooms in the home, providing additional space, light, and views to the interior. The duplexes almost always feature a front porch with a balcony above. This porch generally spans the width of the home, but examples can be found of porches covering only the entry or even two separate porches for the split entry plan. These porches provided spaces of comfort and gathering after a day's work. They also gave spaces for children to play, laundry to dry, and festivities to occur. Garages, or auto houses as they were referred to on Sanborn maps, were also often found at the rears of later duplex homes. The stacked layout of the duplex allowed it to maintain a small footprint on the 30' x 125' lots, contributing to a spacious streetscape. With all of the important domestic spaces included in the plan, there was little need for other outbuildings, and duplexes retained large front and back yards for gardening and leisure.

The Milwaukee duplex was most commonly built from platform framed lumber, although some masonry examples exist in middle class areas of the city including Sherman Boulevard near the Center Peace neighborhood. Wood construction was familiar to the skilled laborers of the immigrant groups coming into the city and was spurred on by manufacture of standardized lumber, nails, ornamental features, and other construction elements. Duplex homes are supported by concrete foundations, and porches are built on masonry piers. A combination of manufactured ornaments and skilled craftsmen contributed to a variety of unique exterior details.

The interiors of the homes commonly feature ornamentation including built in cabinets and credenzas, cased openings and archways, leaded glass windows, and extensive woodwork in the public rooms of the home.

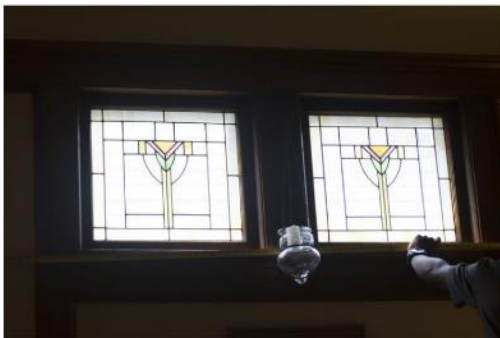


Figure 43, Interior details showing ornamentation. (Source: BLC Field School)

This ornamentation recedes as rooms become more private and is most prominent in the entry, living room, and dining room. Some homes have unique features such as laundry chutes, phone niches, and milk doors, which are all remnants of 20th century culture.

Looking more broadly at the streetscape that these homes create, reveals a fairly uniform urban character with a mix of variations that give each home a distinctive personality. The repetition of the duplex and single-family homes types creates elevational patterns of rooflines, porches, and façade bays. These patterns come together to create a grammar by which these homes are read by passersby, informing behavior on the street. The alternating bays of entry and window modules on the façades create notions of privacy between adjacent homes. The bay windows of the dining rooms are often facing the same direction, allowing duplexes to slot together in a way that few rooms look into the rooms of the next house.



Figure 44, Combined elevational and sectional drawing showing the streetscape of a residential street. (Source: Author)

In section, these façades create bookends for the streetscape, with porches and front yards mediating the zone between façade and street. The rears of the homes also provide spacious yards and garages that face narrow alleys. This back of house space

accommodates more of the domestic, day-to-day interactions than the public zones at the front.



Figure 45, Street section showing relationships of public and private spaces. (Source: Author)

With many of the streets in Center Peace being one-way streets, there is somewhat of a balance between automobility and walkability in the streetscape. Today, parking at the front of homes is common due to small garage sizes and the convenience of parallel parking. Although the rich zone between the homes fosters walkability, there are few amenities reachable on foot and most residents drive for work, recreation, and groceries. Looking ahead to the changes that occurred in the city during the 20th century begins to inform how this streetscape and house type have changed over time.

More than a Home

Although duplexes were still being constructed well into the 20th century, the major waves had passed by the 1930s. Since then, residents and external forces have contributed to significant change over time. The latter half of the 1900s brought numerous changes to both the city, the duplex, and its residents. This change over time was driven by a number of factors rising out of the tumultuous history of Milwaukee during the latter half of the 20th century. In the late 1960s, as these homes were nearing around fifty years old, Milwaukee began to deindustrialize, and many workers lost their jobs. In tandem, Milwaukee's Black population was growing at a rapid rate and white flight was occurring at a similar rate. This along with a long-standing past of housing discrimination left Milwaukee extremely segregated and

impoverished. At a point when the city's housing stock needed more care than ever, discriminatory practices made purchasing, and even repairing, homes extremely difficult. The result over the last sixty years has been continued disinvestment by the city, rapid deterioration of these neighborhoods, and vicious cycles of eviction and foreclosure for residents. From this history, it is clear that some of the values embedded in the duplex are shifting, either being eroded away by practices of neglect or being layered on top of by new values.

Renovations, personalization, neglect, and deterioration have shaped the city's vernacular. Homeowners have made the spaces their own and adjusted them to new standards of living. Less impactful, but highly personalized modifications include the filling of built-ins with nick-nacks, hanging family photos and art on the walls, changing the curtains, and painting over plaster and woodwork. These changes come and go with the residents of the homes over time but do momentarily allow them to project their identity into the home. More permanent, but minor alterations include the enlargement of closets or bathrooms, kitchen remodels, addition of more secure doors, and incorporation of ceiling fans. Some residents have also introduced more significant additions including finished rooms in the basement or attic, rear decks, fences, and larger garages. In the homes analyzed, there were no instances of residents opening up the plan and creating a more connected dining room, kitchen, and hall. Although mentioned by some in oral history interviews, this linkage of spaces was resisted due to reverence of the built-ins and woodwork. Some residents have conceptually combined the living and dining rooms into a larger public space, forgoing formal dining. Many homes have also undergone more behind the scenes

changes including the addition of air conditioning systems, upgrade of insulation, and the update of plumbing and electrical systems. Preventative maintenance and repairs also factor into the change over time of these homes with vinyl or aluminum siding replacing the original weatherboard or wood shingle siding, replacement or repair of wood windows, lead abatement, tuckpointing, and more. These changes by homeowners reflect constantly evolving ideas of what makes a home and reflect the ability of the duplex to provide a flexible framework for transformation.

The duplex typology has also influenced the behavior of its inhabitants, embedding sociability and ideals of home ownership in the daily lives of residents. Sociability is embedded within the streetscape, with porches, stoops, and even bay windows creating opportunities for interaction with passersby. A series of thresholds in between the façade and street mediate these notions of sociability. These thresholds, including the stoop, porch, bay window, and entries are formed by the permeability and protrusion of the façade of the building.

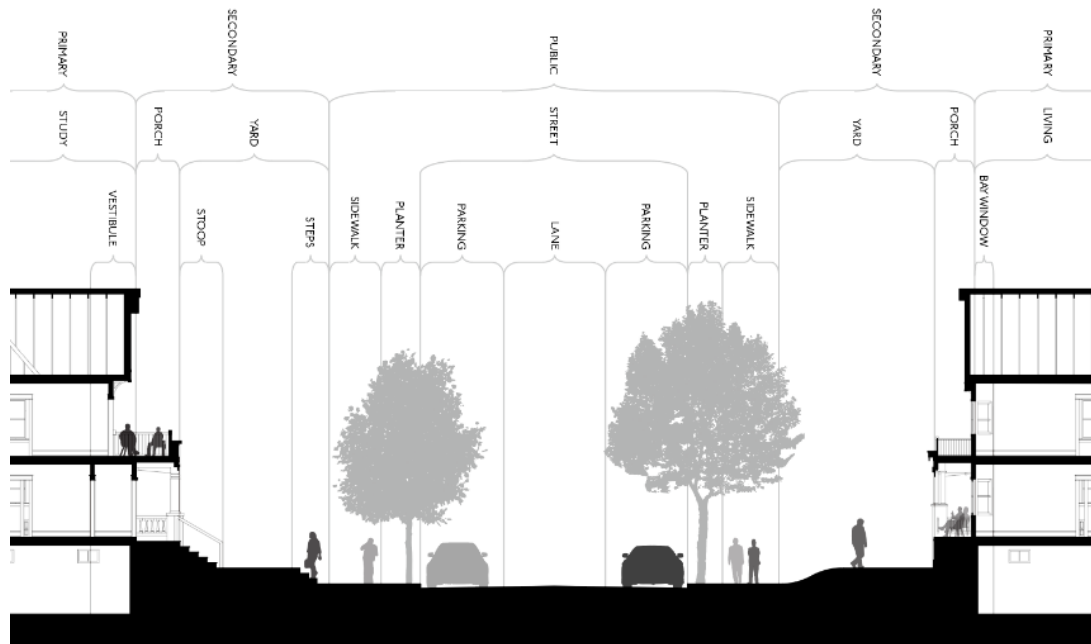


Figure 46, Street section showing thresholds and major zones that mediate relationships between the home and street. (Source: Drawn by Author)

Along with this sense of sociability, security afforded by keeping eyes on the street and stewardship from the care of these important spaces of public image contribute to neighborliness. The nostalgic porch culture that was present in the early 20th century can still be observed walking down the streets of the Center Peace neighborhood today.

Despite home ownership rates dropping since the 20th century, the duplex typology still promotes and enables values of ownership. A publication in the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development’s *FieldWorks* describes how the duplex continues to remain relevant: “the housing style continues to leverage homeownership for families of very modest means, allowing them to build equity. Milwaukee’s immigrant and minority groups of today—Hispanics, African Americans, Southeast Asians, and others—use the Polish flats and German duplexes

as a means of upward mobility.”¹⁰⁷ It is later mentioned that one local Milwaukee bank understands the importance of the revenue afforded by the duplex and includes 75% of the projected rent as income for the prospective homeowner.¹⁰⁸ In addition to promoting and enabling homeownership, the duplex helps to supply the community’s need for rental housing. The duplex also remains a viable option for intergenerational housing and accommodating extended family with many current residents choosing to stay in the neighborhood living above or below their kin.

Although the Center Peace community and the duplexes themselves have changed over time, the core values that shaped the duplex have remained firmly rooted in the neighborhood. In Milwaukee, the duplex has become a symbol of the hardworking individual and will continue to inspire sociability, home ownership, and social mobility within the city’s neighborhoods. Current residents take pride in their homes and seek to be stewards of the neighborhood, leaving their own mark and continuing their homes’ legacies.

¹⁰⁷ Schuyler Seager, “Affordability Advocates Rediscover Milwaukee’s ‘Polish Flats’ and ‘German Duplexes,’” *FieldWorks*, July 2000, <http://www.huduser.org/periodicals/fieldworks/0800/fworks1.html>.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.



Figure 47, Plan of home with important elements from oral history interviews called out. (Source: Author; Photos from BLC Field School)

Using lessons learned from the history of the duplex, the community, in collaboration with preservationists and designers, can look ahead to the next chapter of the neighborhood's story, infusing their own identities and values into it. Today's residents value the sense of community and architectural character found in the neighborhood despite its deteriorating state. It will be important for preservationists to understand these community values in order to respond to community needs. Repairing, rehabbing, and reusing Milwaukee's vernacular housing stock will take careful consideration of community and neighborhood heritage and values in order to combat gentrification and give current residents agency to take control of their own built environment. Preservation of these homes will also help to tell the stories of Milwaukee's black community and perpetuate the legacy of the Milwaukee duplex.

Chapter 6: Community Values and Struggles

Understanding how stakeholder groups interact with each other and their environment as well as the driving forces that shape these relationships reveals six major themes within the Center Peace neighborhood: socialization; safety and security; cycles of eviction, foreclosure, and vacancy; home ownership versus rentership; stewardship and caring; and beautification. Listening to oral histories from members of various stakeholder groups within the community, in particular those of homeowners and renters, provides internal perspectives on these six themes. Using Participatory Action Research methods to engage the community allows for more nuanced understandings as well.



Figure 48, Community engagement mapping (left) and qualitative analysis (right). (Source: BLC Field School)

Community members and students mapped out places of socialization, play, green space, and insecurity. This map reveals intersecting nodes of activity within the neighborhood that inform the character of spaces important to the community. Questions such as “What do you desire in a home?” and “What makes your neighborhood beautiful?” also prompted a variety of responses which led to further discussion. Further breaking down and connecting the themes that arise out of these forms of engagement begins to provide insight into the values important to the community and the struggles that they face in cultivating these values.

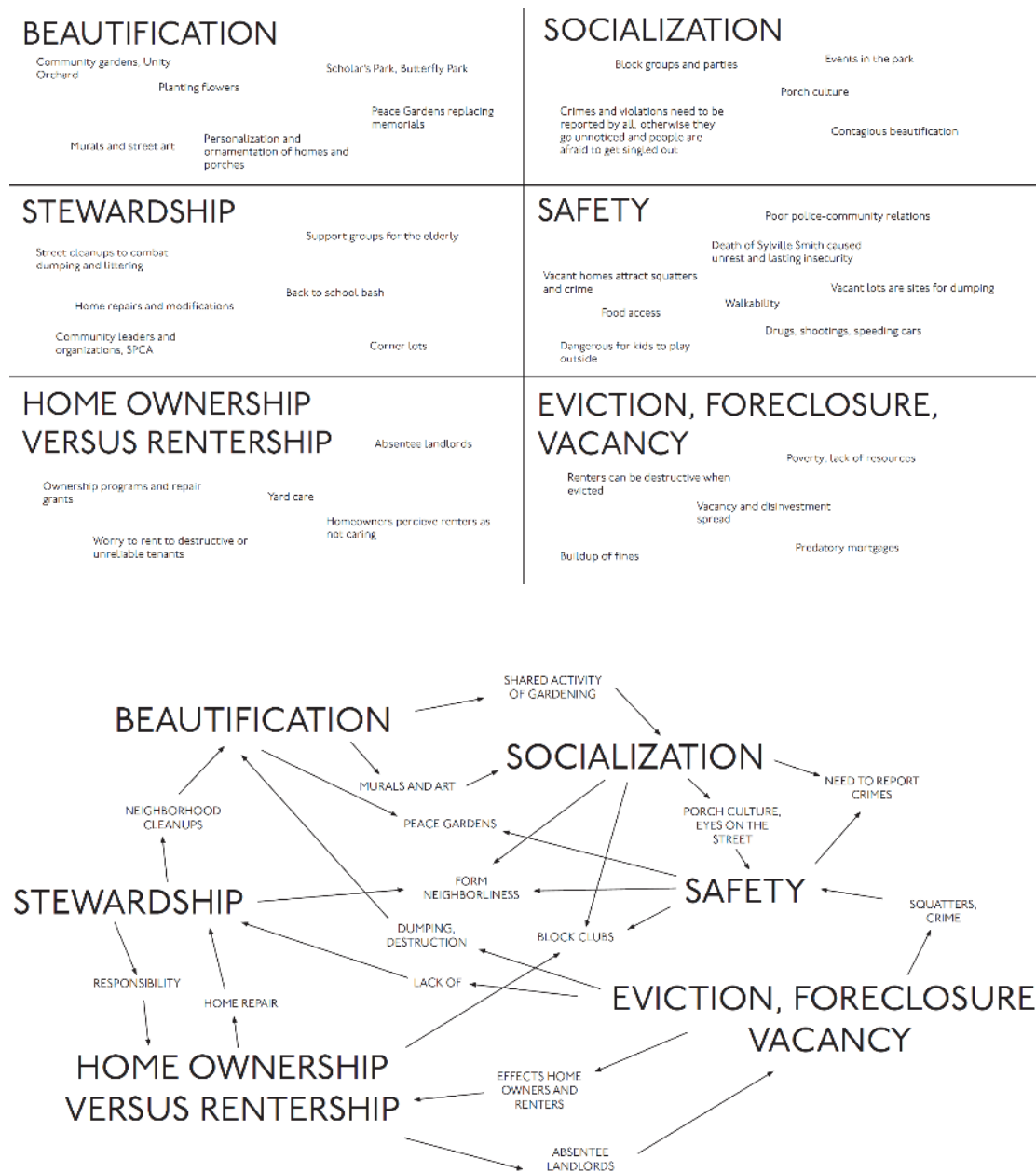


Figure 49, Arranging elements brought up by the community into six emergent themes and investigating the relationships between them begins to reveal the interconnected complexities of the community. (Source: Author)

Each of these themes came up repeatedly in the oral history interviews collected from community members, were apparent in ethnographic analysis of the neighborhood, and can be traced back to the historical development of the neighborhood.

Community and Sociability

One of the themes that arose out of the oral histories and engagement within the neighborhood was strong social relationships between community members. From casual interactions on the street to large community wide events in the park, it is clear that neighbors have built strong networks within the community at various levels.

Walking through the neighborhood on a hot summer's day reveals many folks sitting on their front porches or stoops. Conversations emerge with passersby and contribute to a sense of life on the street. It is not uncommon to see a family grilling out or neighbors sharing stories on their porches. According to some long-term residents, these types of activities have declined in the neighborhood but are more prevalent than other places they have lived.¹⁰⁹ Ms. Robinson elaborates, "I sit out there sometimes and watch the traffic go by. A lot of people they're going in and out. I guess people don't care about community, . . . but I guess people are just doing their own thing. They go in the door out the door. Sometimes they walk right past you and they look a total different direction so you can't speak to them. I guess it's just the mentality of people."¹¹⁰ Ms. Camille Mays, a community leader who came back to the neighborhood after living there as a child, says that she "makes it a point to speak to everybody who walks past my home or when I'm walking I speak to people and I think people choose to walk down our block because we're pleasant and they know it's a safe block."¹¹¹ Ms. Robinson also made a similar statement:

¹⁰⁹ Jackie Smith, interview by Teonna Cooksey, July 17, 2017, in Milwaukee, WI, Audio recording, BLC Field School, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=djz5LLJqvmw&feature=emb_logo&ab_channel=BLCfieldschool; Robinson, 2017.

¹¹⁰ Robinson, 2017.

¹¹¹ Mays, 2017.

I try to speak to everybody when I see them. . . . but I don't know everybody has that same mentality nowadays, especially the younger people, . . . everybody's into their own world and we have to look at what surrounds us also because that is our world also. . . . we need to know our neighbors and we need to look out for each other have a caring feeling about our neighbors because what affects our neighbors can affect us.¹¹²

Various stakeholders within the community value these interactions differently and have their own behaviors on the street.

There are also unique interactions more directly between neighbors. Ms. Robinson remembers having cookouts and parties, always inviting neighbors, especially her tenants upstairs.¹¹³ She remembers sharing food with the tenants upstairs from time to time and getting to know them well. The rear stair of the home provides a link between units and is used as a point of communication between units of duplexes. With her daughter and grandkids living above her now, Ms. Robinson says that the rear stair has become a major path of travel with people coming up and down to talk or borrow things. Other residents also maintain relationships with their close neighbors. Ms. Diane Tharpe finds herself chatting with neighbors while doing yardwork frequently.¹¹⁴ Mr. Arthur Brown often helps nearby neighbors with moving things around, giving a ride, or using his home repair skills to help with things like plumbing.¹¹⁵ These seemingly insignificant back and forth relationships of aid and conversation are foundational for strong communities and are the reason why many residents have a love for the neighborhood. Ms. Mays describes neighbors as special: “I like the diversity, the color, the life. It’s just a different kind of people in Sherman

¹¹² Robinson, 2017.

¹¹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴ Tharpe, 2017.

¹¹⁵ Brown, 2017.

Park.”¹¹⁶ She continues to say that many of the long-term residents of the neighborhood won’t leave no matter how it changes.

Community relations also happen at larger scales with various block groups, watches, and parties. These groups form a network for people on a block to connect and rely on, helping each other with things and banding together to report crimes or nuisances. Although there has been a decrease in these types of events recently, residents value getting to know their neighbors and forming these bonds.¹¹⁷

According to Ms. Mays there is always something going on for people looking to get involved.¹¹⁸ She sees volunteering and going to community meetings as a chain reaction that lead to what she calls “super residents,” community members that are all over, finding out what is going on and how to connect and help.

Larger community events that include the broader Sherman Park and Metcalfe Park neighborhoods take place as well, often located at Sherman Park. These events are started independently by community leaders, or “super residents,” and grow to include the support of community organizations and residents. Ms. Mays explains these events as coming out of a variety of things going on behind the scenes, both good and bad.¹¹⁹ Events start from a large network of community leaders, who “put the call out to the community and everybody pulled together and brought what they could to the table.”¹²⁰ Free food, vendors, bounce houses, and the people coming together are what define the strong sense of community found at these events in the

¹¹⁶ Mays, 2017.

¹¹⁷ Smith, 2017.

¹¹⁸ Mays, 2017.

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

¹²⁰ Ibid.

park. Ms. Mays describes these events as a coming together of people who don't necessarily know each other to help an unfamiliar neighbor. Unfortunately, some community events emerge out of the premature deaths of loved ones in the neighborhood. One such event was in response to a sixteen-year-old who was killed and involved collaboration with the local church. The community banded together in support and put on the event to comfort those mourning the loss of a loved one and promote caring within the community.

Ms. Cheri Fuqua, another community leader and homeowner in the neighborhood reflects on buying her first home in the neighborhood and getting involved "I've owned this property for over 18 years and actually when I was purchasing it . . . they gave me an option of a couple of them. [They said] 'it's going to change, change is in progress over here, you're purchasing at the right time.' . . . What they didn't tell me was I was going to be the change in the neighborhood."¹²¹ Ms. Fuqua uses her experience at AmeriCorps and passion of community outreach to start and build upon numerous initiatives and programs in the neighborhood. One of her tenants, Ms. Cynthia, set up an event that became to be known as "Cynthia's Back to School Bash." Centered around giving back to the kids of the community, the event provided book bags, school supplies, haircuts, food, and a sense of community on the block. Ms. Fuqua partnered up with her, and the event has grown each year since to include everything from DJs to clowns to bouncy houses. This event has brought together the block, and even put a pause to "the hustle":

"We talked to all the neighbors on the block. We talked to the guys hanging out on the block, letting them know, the hustlers or whatever they do, 'look

¹²¹ Fuqua, 2017.

you guys, we're having a plan, we're going to do this for the kids. We're going to do this on this day. We need the block . . . we need no smoking on the block, we need no hustling on the block. We need this day, and we need it for the youth.”

The event has also spurred community cleanups prior to the event and sparked the idea for a block club, further connecting everyone on the community.

Safety and Security

Impacting residents' willingness and openness to engage with the community are concerns about safety and security. The crime rate is relatively high in the neighborhood and gunshots are not uncommon sounds to hear at night, or even during the day. Some residents now feel more comfortable sitting in their rear yard than their front porch and are reluctant to let their kids play outside. Feelings of insecurity have crept from the street into the domestic realm.

Residents have a keen awareness for which blocks are “good” or “bad” and know when to steer clear of certain areas. Good and bad blocks are notions tied to poverty, home ownership, crime, and levels of caring. Numerous residents, including Dioncio Hernandez, attribute a lot of the crime to vacancies in the neighborhood, saying that vacant homes and lots attract drugs, gangs, and undesirable activities.¹²² Discussing some of the problem homes in the neighborhood, Ms. Jackie Smith says, “when you go to someone's house, and they tell you they don't want to be bothered, there's a reason why. I've seen it go from family oriented to drugs. . . . There's no sense really to call the police because you move one out another one moves in.”¹²³

¹²² Dioncio Hernandez, interview by Kelly Seniuk, June 13, 2018, in Milwaukee, WI, Audio recording, BLC Field School, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6b5PzzjKgG4&feature=emb_logo&ab_channel=BLCfieldschool.

¹²³ Smith, 2017.

Ms. Smith's perception of safety in the area has affected her daily routine and she doesn't feel safe walking early in the mornings like she used to. Still, her love for her home and her neighbors keeps her around. Other residents feel that demonstrating positivity caring for others and their properties pushes back against the persistent negatives encroaching on their blocks.

The issues of safety in the community are further exacerbated by police-community relations. Members of the community feels that there is a disconnect with the police and there needs to be increased collaboration. Monthly block watch meetings begin to fill this void, but residents feel more needs to be done. There is a fear in the community to call the police, as people find out who called and retaliate. This danger has led to many crimes going unreported. Ms. Mays often has neighbors call her to call the police because she has a more comfortable working relationship with them.¹²⁴ Community members still feel it is vital to let the police know, otherwise people think nobody cares. Ms. Robinson feels that a stronger community effort needs to be made in this regard: "A lot of people are afraid to know who is who. . . . They're afraid of police contact. . . . If everybody communicated with the police they would know . . . if it's something going on whether it's a drug house or whatever is undesirable. If we all talk then . . . it's like united we stand divided we fall."¹²⁵

This fear has extended beyond calling the police to engaging in the community as Ms. Fuqua elaborates, "Fear actually stops them from coming out and

¹²⁴ Mays, 2017.

¹²⁵ Robinson, 2017.

being a part of change, because if you try to make something happen and you try to see some change in your neighborhood a lot of people will associate that with ‘they talk to the police.’”¹²⁶ Not only can talking to the police be a danger, but simply advocating for positive change can be seen as a threat to those engaged in criminal activities.

In response to these issues, the community has been working on improving both relationships and the built environment. One example of this is the Light it Up for Safety project started by Ms. Fuqua.¹²⁷ With the city streetlights going out multiple times a month, the community banded together with the help of the local BID to put up lit address plates on their homes. After multiple failed call-ins to the city organized via the block group’s text blast, the community has taken matters into their own hands. This project not only provides light to homes that did not have porch lights before, it also creates uniformity in the community and brings residents closer together.

Cycles of Eviction, Foreclosure, and Vacancy

Directly related to safety and security are the reoccurring themes of eviction, foreclosure, and vacancy in the neighborhood. Vacant lots and homes provide spaces for troublesome activities and attract squatters. Tied to the broken windows theory, this creates problems for nearby residents as well. When one home becomes vacant, it puts pressure on adjacent owners and patterns of multiple vacant lots and homes in succession emerge on the street. Two blocks within Center Peace on 38th Street have

¹²⁶ Fuqua, 2017.

¹²⁷ Ibid.

four or five consecutive vacant lots and neighboring homes left vacant. One of these spaces has been turned into a community garden but still reads as a scar in the landscape.

Evictions occur many causes, but there are two major culprits for residents being kicked out of their homes. The first case is the homeowner failing to pay their mortgages to the bank, taxes to the city, or accrued violations. This results in the home being foreclosed on and tenants being evicted. The second cause of eviction is renter neglect of paying rent or following stipulations of the lease. In both cases, it is common for those evicted to retaliate in the only way they can, by destroying the property. Unfortunately, this action only serves to hurt the community and disincentivizes prospective buyers from purchasing the home. This does not happen in every case, but when the property sits as a vacant home with no one watching it, looters, squatters, and unruly youth often get to the property before a new owner is found. Vacancy also results from absentee landlords simply not keeping property maintained to the point that renters won't consider renting it. Vacant homes become a hub for parties, dumping, looting, and drug activity, and are often demolished due to the extent of disrepair. This leaves vacant lots, which create gaps in the street front and remain places of undesirable activity to a lesser extent.

Homeowners in the neighborhood are disheartened to see these beautiful homes go to waste. Ms. Diane Tharpe has a "slum lord" nearby that had inherited their property, doing nothing to keep it up. With an unkempt lawn and bricks falling apart, this person has trouble keeping tenants, and Ms. Tharpe wishes someone would buy the home and rehab it. She elaborates on vacant lots and homes:

All that affects your property. It affects everything. The crime rate affects your insurances and everything. . . . I'm not saying my house is the greatest but I think I have a nice house and I keep it pretty well together, and then look what I'm next door to, . . . the bricks about to fall down, it's an eyesore. Even though everybody is looking like 'wow that's a nice house' and they also be like 'look at the house next door,' and they will remember that house next door before they remember my house.¹²⁸

Ms. Tharpe does appreciate many other landlords and renters on her block, recognizing their contributions to the community by keeping their homes up.

Mr. Geoff Grohowski discusses local landlords in contrast to absentee landlords.¹²⁹ He says that some small-scale landlords do what they can do, having bought another home in their neighborhood for supplemental income. The absentee landlords are more like small scale corporations that buy up properties and exploit them and their tenants. By overcharging rents to those who have no other place to go, letting maintenance go, and not responding to tenants, these landlords are creating serious problems in the community. He believes that the community needs to put pressure on them and does so through his work on the housing condition survey with the SPCA.

Other residents in the neighborhood feel similarly, calling for landlord accountability. Mr. Staples believes these issues not only come out of laziness but a lack of experience and education.¹³⁰ In discussion about being a good landlord, Ms. Tharpe mentioned that she took the landlord course just to rent to her sister and says, "anything I do to my house I do to her house."¹³¹ She stresses that landlords need to be more knowledgeable, and believes people need to recognize their rights as tenants.

¹²⁸ Tharpe, 2017.

¹²⁹ Grohowski, 2017.

¹³⁰ Staples, 2017.

¹³¹ Tharpe, 2017.

Programs are available from the city to become educated on becoming a homeowner and being a landlord but are seemingly underutilized. Mr. Arthur Brown says, “If you feel your house gonna get closed up, there is somebody you can talk to that I would think would take the house over. Then if they take it over they can work with people who come in and help them fix it back up. They may not have all the money or whatever, but just to have somebody work with, . . . it's a good thing.”¹³² He feels that people would rather have a house next to them than an open lot. It is clear that the current system of eviction and foreclosure is not working well, as foreclosures do not benefit the city, bank, tenants, owners, or neighborhood. Although these vacant lots and homes can be seen as threats to the community, they also pose opportunities for interventions and insertions in the streetscape.

Home Ownership versus Rentership

Also linked with the issues of vacancy and foreclosure are tensions between homeowners, renters, and their landlords. Homeowners in the neighborhood feel that some renters have a lack of respect for people's property and the mentality that they have no stake in the neighborhood. This mentality, to whatever extent it does exist, reflects poorly on the community with people not keeping up their homes and lawns or throwing trash out in the street. Residents recognize that not all renters, landlords, or homeowners are the same, some do care and some do not. Ms. Mays believes that there are a lot of long-term renters who do care and take pride in their properties but also recognizes that “unfortunately people don't treat your stuff like you treat your

¹³² Brown, 2017.

stuff. That's just the bottom line. . . . All of that reflects on the community. When this property goes down, it makes the next one look bad.”¹³³

Ms. Yvette Washington, resident and landlord, discusses her opinion on the differences between renters and owners: “You go out there and you dig in that yard yourself and you come in the house and you take a bath in Epsom salt because you worked hard and your back is hurting. That's a different investment. That means something because that costs you something. If it costs you nothing, you don't care for it. That's the difference between renters and owners.”¹³⁴ She continues, saying that renters can still make it their own and take pride in their homes.

Long-term residents also find that people these days are often more transient and less interested in home ownership. Ms. Jackie Smith says that people are only sticking around for a year or two and that there are few owners on the two blocks closest to her, “enough to count on one hand.”¹³⁵ Ms. Bernadette Daval notes that this frequent overturn results in a diminished sense of community: “We do have one home directly across the street, it's a duplex, that is not owner occupied. . . . When they were owner-occupied it was a better situation. Across the street the problem is you have people moving in and out and don't get to know those people as well and sometimes especially with the home on the corner there isn't as much commitment to maintaining the property value.”¹³⁶ In addition to issues of care for the properties, Mr.

¹³³ Mays, 2017.

¹³⁴ Yvette Washington, interview by Bella Biwer, June 21, 2018, in Milwaukee, WI, Audio recording, BLC Field School, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p4EweY2wHBo&feature=emb_logo&ab_channel=BLCfieldschool.

¹³⁵ Smith, 2017.

¹³⁶ Bernadette Daval, interview by Tesia Zeitlow, July 11, 2017, in Milwaukee, WI. Audio recording, BLC Field School, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r7tP9EH77h0&feature=emb_logo&ab_channel=BLCfieldschool.

Arthur Brown finds that renters are not as willing to help neighbors and contribute to the important support networks of the community.¹³⁷

Part of the issue comes down to landlords looking to make as much money as possible, only putting minimal amounts back into their properties. These absentee landlords are seen as major contributors to disinvestment and deterioration in the neighborhood. Homeowners make complaints to the landlords and city, but the landlords are not around or have management companies that do not respond.

Some residents do not feel that being a landlord is worth the likelihood of trouble. Ms. Robinson reflects on the time when she rented her upper unit:

We had good relationships with most of the people that lived upstairs . . . other than a couple. Some people just not gonna be good tenants no matter what, and so, therefore once my daughter [was looking for a home] I said you know what you can move in here. I don't want anybody else over me. . . . If you got to live with the upstairs empty, we'll just do that, but I don't want anybody else over me because you never know who you get.¹³⁸

Ms. Tharpe also mentioned that she has a neighbor that does not want to rent out the other floor after the previous family moved out, saying that she would also probably sell if her sister moved out of the other unit.¹³⁹ This marks a distinct shift in thinking from the original owners of the duplexes, however it does align with some of the ideas of owners of Polish Flats converting their homes back into a single unit after paying their mortgages.

¹³⁷ Brown, 2017.

¹³⁸ Robinson, 2017.

¹³⁹ Tharpe, 2017.

Stewardship and Caring

Residents take great pride in their community and neighborhood's historic character. Taking care of their properties and each other are high priorities in the community and many residents go to great lengths to do so. In describing the homes, Ms. Mays says, "the homes are so beautiful they speak for themselves."¹⁴⁰ Yvette Washington remarks that keeping up homes is important to neighborhood image and that "corners are the anchors. . . . We're holding these corners down. . . . If the corners fall apart, we think the rest of the neighborhood will. . . . The corner's the first thing you see, on any block."¹⁴¹ Charles Hawkins has always lived in corner houses and also values keeping the corners looking good.¹⁴² These residents see the block corners as important places to set examples for those on their block and choose to act as leaders of stewardship within their community.

Home repair often becomes a shared practice between neighbors. Ms. Robinson explains her relationship with her neighbor: "So we had a guy that lived next door and he helped my husband do a lot of little handy things around the house. . . . The guy next door, he was always that extra hand. . . . We looked out for each other, so if he saw something suspicious in the neighborhood he would let us know, and we let him know too. . . . He was so dependable when my husband asked him to help."¹⁴³ Other residents, especially older ones, often get assistance and support from

¹⁴⁰ Mays, 2017.

¹⁴¹ Washington, 2018.

¹⁴² Charles Hawkins, interview by Kostyn Tyksinski, June 19, 2018, in Milwaukee, WI, Audio recording, BLC Field School, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OY31FMBftD4&feature=emb_logo&ab_channel=BLCfieldschool.

¹⁴³ Robinson, 2017.

their neighbors with small tasks in the home. This is especially evident in recent personal and community gardening efforts.

Long-time resident Ms. Jackie Smith bought the city foreclosed home across the street from her, “What I hate to see is when people moving out and tearing up these homes, they're so beautiful. That's why I purchased the house across the street.”¹⁴⁴ She has since restored it and was waiting to find a suitable tenant that she felt was qualified “I would rather take a loss personally as opposed to letting somebody move into the house and tear it up.” This remarkable example of stewardship demonstrates the strong relationship that community members have not only with each other but the built fabric itself.

Community members take great pride in their front yards and the appearances of their homes. Walking through the neighborhood reveals that, even if owners or renters don't have the resources to repair their homes, they keep meticulous yards and landscaping. Residents practice stewardship by carrying out neighborhood cleanups to combat dumping and littering. Ms. Tharpe finds the trash disheartening: “you wouldn't throw that in your neighborhood, so don't throw it in mine.”¹⁴⁵ Ms. Mays remembers that when she first started doing cleanups, neighbors would sit and watch without helping. With time, she found that “they're going outside every morning now cleaning their lawns out. So our block isn't full of garbage anymore. It takes time. When people don't know better, people say we'll do better, but if they don't know how can they do better you have to teach people better instead of judging them and

¹⁴⁴ Smith, 2017.

¹⁴⁵ Tharpe, 2017.

looking down on them you just show them.”¹⁴⁶ This idea of leading by example comes up repeatedly throughout the oral histories, reinforcing the concept of contagious behavior in caring for the community.

Beautification

Very close to the theme of stewardship is something that residents refer to as “beautification.” Beautifying the neighborhood includes practices largely centered around gardening but includes everything from the painting of murals to the creation of parks. Residents see no reason why their streets cannot look like those of the nearby Grant or Sherman Boulevard Historic Districts and aspire to increase the image of their neighborhood through introduction of art, color, and green space.¹⁴⁷

Community gardens such as Unity Orchard, which occupies previously vacant lots, serve the dual purpose of beautifying the neighborhood and turning vacant lots into safe spaces. Unity Orchard started as a HOME GR/OWN project from the city, initially intended to be on Center Street, but was moved to its current site on 38th Street after Ms. Fuqua suggested it be put somewhere where the community would get more use out of it.¹⁴⁸ The formation of the garden brought in community members and local artists, who made murals, set up little libraries, and hosted movie and art nights. The practices of gardening and the other activities have provided activities for youth in the neighborhood and created more intimate community spaces. These gardens and parks also serve many purposes apart from beautification, providing a

¹⁴⁶ Mays, 2017.

¹⁴⁷ Mays, 2017; Robinson, 2017.

¹⁴⁸ Fuqua, 2017.

space of gathering and socialization for the community. The activity of gardening has spread throughout the neighborhood beyond these larger gardens, bringing together people from diverse backgrounds. Gardens also promote healthy food alternatives to the food found in the convenience stores that are so easily accessible in the area. Ms. Mays and local café owner Ms. Christie Melby Gibbons use the gardens to take the idea of healthy lifestyles further with “Healthy Choices Workshops.”

One of the projects that also deals with gardens in the neighborhood, the Peace Garden Project, was started by Ms. Mays in response to a lack of landscaping, litter, and the large number of memorials from accidents and shootings, often involving children and young adults.¹⁴⁹ Mays feels that these memorials detract from the community image and commented, “I just think that that’s really a waste of time for the police to get involved or for the city workers to feel unsafe or for the homeowners to have to have those in front of their homes, but at the same time, I know that the family has a loss and you want to respect all parties.”¹⁵⁰ Ms. Mays’ idea replaces the balloons, beer bottles, candles, and stuffed animals, which decay quickly outside and become unsightly, with more permanent landscaping and flowers around the base of a tree.

Approved by the city, these small gardens bring life and beauty to area while recognizing the loss of the community and avoiding conflict with the city. On one particular block, two out of three memorials had been replaced with Peace Gardens, and there were also two pocket parks added earlier. All of this beautification on the

¹⁴⁹ Mays, 2017.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.

block has promoted nearby homeowners and renters to landscape their homes. Ms. Mays feels that she was successful in helping to beautify the neighborhood and give the community something they could take pride in on this block, promoting a healthy neighborhood.

Many residents on the street have lost children and loved ones and greatly appreciate Camille's work. Ms. Fuqua reflects on the meanings of the peace gardens:

One of my neighbors, . . . her grandson got killed and it's right there in front of her house, so every time she come out our house, this is what she sees. This is an everyday occurrence. . . . I told her what Camille was doing and she was like 'please have her do it because I would just love to sit on my porch, and I would rather see that than see all these bottles and things out there.' It is a much better visual, but it's still there what it is. It's senseless killing in our community.¹⁵¹

Ms. Mays is also working with local residents, artists, and organizations on a mural near her childhood home to add positivity and inspiration to the area, which has become much worse since she lived there.¹⁵² This project has brought the community together through an initial visioning process and prompted participation of young and old residents in the painting of the mural. The community's pride in the mural and its community-based origins have seemingly discouraged vandalism and contributed to a sense of identity.

These activities of beautification have led to a domino-like effect in the neighborhood with residents near these interventions engaging in beautification on their own properties. Ms. Mays notes that two other neighbors followed her example of gardening shortly after she started.¹⁵³ Kids on the block that were coming to help

¹⁵¹ Fuqua, 2017.

¹⁵² Mays, 2017.

¹⁵³ Ibid.

out every day also brought the practice back home to their parents. She compares this contagious effect to the broken windows theory, reflecting on how good neighborhoods and good-looking neighborhoods go hand in hand. Ms. Robinson, who keeps a meticulous front garden with many flowers, jokingly spoke about a “flower competition” on the block with other residents bringing out their own flowers to show off at the front of their homes.¹⁵⁴ Her love of flowers and sharing of resources has created a chain reaction on her block, contributing to the overall beauty of the area. Charles Hawkins also noticed the same behavior of other neighbors following his example after planting flowers in front of his home.¹⁵⁵

These practices of gardening do not directly preserve heritage, the networks, values, and practices put in place by gardening set the stage for grassroots community preservation. Increasing the number of resources available to the community for projects will allow them to continue to better the neighborhood and focus on more onerous elements of the built environment such as the building stock. Although not practicing preservation in a traditional way, residents are embedding grassroots preservation strategies into their daily lives. The community records heritage through street art, graffiti, memorials, peace gardens, and other small-scale interventions. Stewardship of their homes and streetscape through beautification and home repair have brought community members together with a common goal.

¹⁵⁴ Robinson, 2017.

¹⁵⁵ Hawkins, 2017.

Part III: Embracing Continuity

The final chapters of this document focus on the implementation of design interventions to respond to Center Peace's values and struggles. These interventions are built on theories of architectural and urban change, historical memory, and human ecology from scholars such as Trachtenberg, Rossi, and Holl. In response to current community values and the collective memory embedded in the built fabric of Milwaukee's Center Peace Neighborhood, building in time is pursued as a means to encourage continuity.

Chapter 7: Design Interventions

Urban neighborhoods can be seen as a palimpsest, a collective streetscape in which individuals' layer on their own values and identities over time. The buildings that make up these neighborhoods can be understood as urban artifacts, resilient, yet ever changing. In Milwaukee, Wisconsin and many other cities, these older urban neighborhoods are declining, particularly those that underrepresented groups call home. Beyond urban decay, this can eventually lead to displacement through foreclosure, redevelopment, and gentrification.

Vernacular neighborhoods develop over time, evolving in response to contextual shifts of their environments and users, which in turn inform a human ecology. Traditionally, there have been three methods to sustaining urban neighborhoods. The first, historic preservation, attempts to freeze the neighborhood as a snapshot in time, focusing on aesthetic values and integrity of the physical fabric. At the other end of the spectrum is demolition and redevelopment, disregarding who

and what was once there in favor of a blank slate for new construction. Although polarizing, both of these approaches share more commonalities than one would expect. Generally, both processes are top-down and can result in the displacement of people and their values. The third option to sustaining vernacular neighborhoods involves the embrace of time, building off of the past in order to respond to the present and anticipate future evolution. Pursuing this approach of continuity requires an intimate understanding of an area's histories, typologies, and communities.

Since the Field School took place in 2017, Center Peace has continued to both grow and decay, with the expansion of gardens and parks contrasted by the continued onslaught of foreclosure and demolition.



Figure 50, Recent grassroots efforts by the community to make use of vacant spaces in the neighborhood include parks and gardens. (Source: Author)

Now that the ground has been laid for what was and what is, what could be is explored through a series five interventions within the streetscape that evolve over the

next twenty years. Responding to the neighborhood's history, typology, and community, these design explorations make use of existing infrastructures and practices to promote continuity. By providing agency to residents and encouraging grassroots change in the built environment, these schemes serve as a way forward for the Center Peace community.

Community Hub

The first acts as a hub within the neighborhood, replacing a corner convenience store near Unity Orchard with a place for community gathering and events.

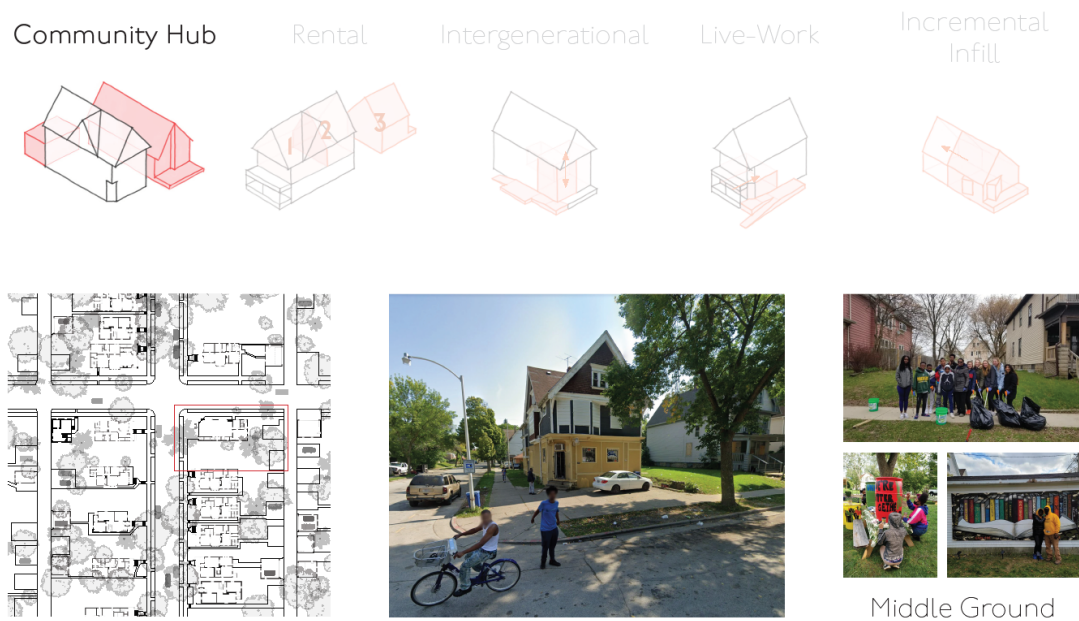


Figure 51, Location map and existing imagery of the site. (Source: Drawings by Author, photographs by BLC Field School)

This new space gives a home to Middle Ground, an organization devoted to bringing together the community with a focus on setting up its youth for bright futures. By also including an office to connect homeowners and renters to city programs such as the

Rental Rehab Program, Homebuyer Assistance Program, as well as other loan and grant programs this space can act as a catalyst for other change in the neighborhood, giving residents the agency needed to shape their own spaces.

Introducing a community hub into this corner convenience store with a vacant upper floor improves a street corner near Unity Orchard, ultimately contributing to the network of community spaces along 38th Street.



Figure 52, Isometrics show development over the next twenty years. (Source: Author)

The first design phase involves renovation of the upper unit to and the addition of an office and gathering space on the lower floor. A workshop at the rear provides a public venue for the implementation of community projects involving art, gardening, or even home repair and doubles as a space for teaching skills to the neighborhood's youth. The second phase introduces an event space that spills out onto a porch at the front of the building, providing additional room for gathering and larger community events such as meetings, markets, exhibitions, or other celebrations. This

transformation of a street corner previously identified by residents as a place of insecurity brings life to the site, establishing a safe space for youth activity.



Figure 53, A new porch-like space captures public activity near the street corner. (Source: Author)

Rental

This second design addresses the divide between renters and homeowners by allowing an owner to create additional units on their property, resulting in supplementary income for the owner while lowering individual costs for renters.

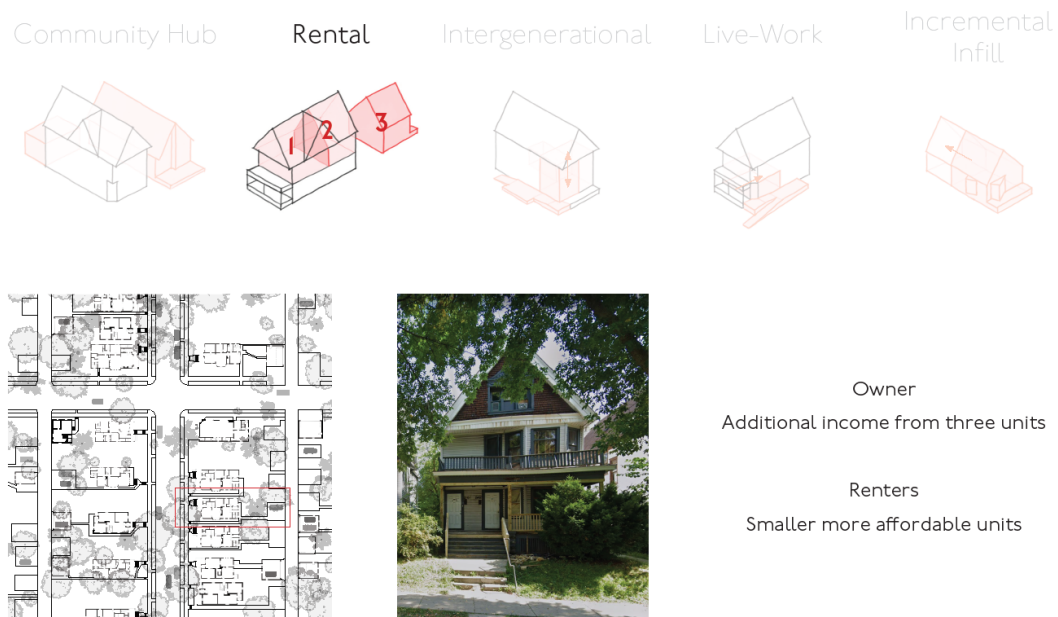


Figure 54, Location map and existing imagery of the site. (Source: Drawings by Author, photographs by BLC Field School)

This intervention is sited within a home that has already seen recent care by the owner, evidenced by new windows and porch repairs, and ensures future stewardship of the property with the owner remaining in the lower unit. These smaller, more affordable units also cater to the neighborhood's large single person household demographic, providing spaces for those who do not need an entire duplex unit and do not wish to rent a single room.

Creating additional units within this owner-occupied duplex increases the diversity of housing options in the neighborhood while contributing additional income for the owner.

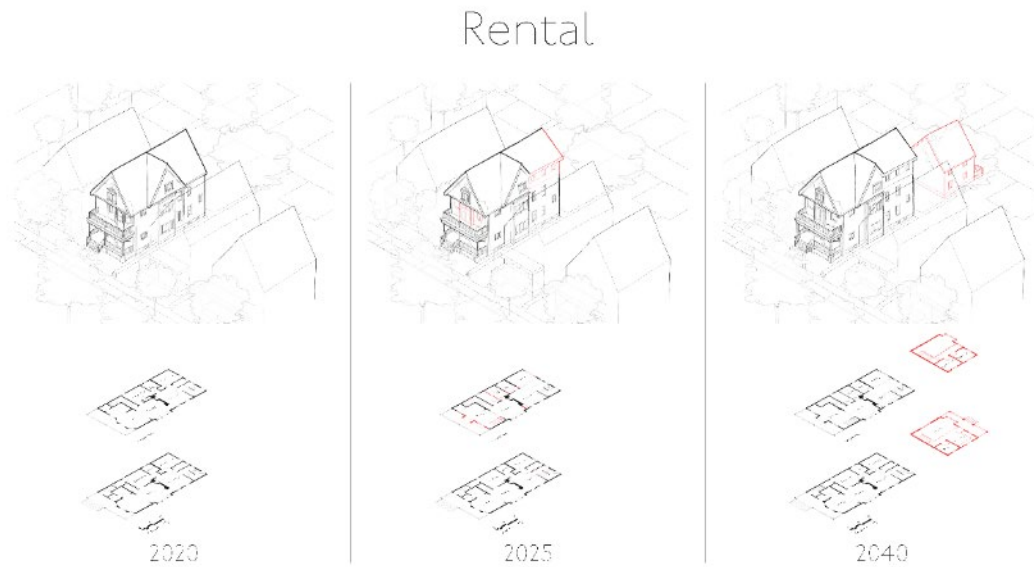


Figure 55, Isometrics show development over the next twenty years. (Source: Author)

The first phase splits the upper unit of the duplex into two smaller units, by making use of the attic as a loft space. Later adding an accessory dwelling unit at the rear of the home creates a third rentable unit on the property, reclaiming the underutilized alley as a space of activity. In section, the interrelation of the three units to the owner's unit can be seen. Creating a loft space in the attic not only uses previously unoccupied space but provides a unique new unit type in the neighborhood.



Figure 56, The new loft space in the attic exposes existing framing. (Source: Author)

Intergenerational

Building on the existing practice of intergenerational housing in the neighborhood, this intervention looks at how increasing accessibility and connectivity between the units can aid in aging in place and interdependent care for an intergenerational family.



Figure 57, Location map and existing imagery of the site. (Source: Drawings by Author, photographs by BLC Field School)

Without architectural intervention, intergenerational families are limited to propping open the doors at the rear stair as a way of connecting the two units and have limited access for those with mobility constraints.

Following the story of an intergenerational family in the neighborhood, this scheme takes an inherited duplex and transforms it into a space for an older couple to retire with their children and grandchildren living above.

Intergenerational.

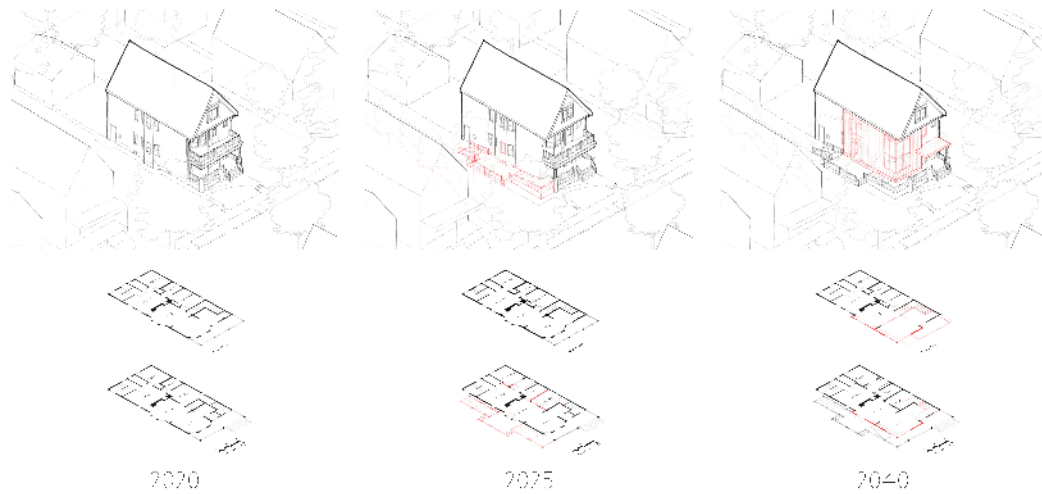


Figure 58, Isometrics show development over the next twenty years. (Source: Author)

The creation of a master suite on the first floor gives a more spacious living arrangement for the owners and opens up the plan. A ramp alongside the house allows for accessible entry while providing increased indoor-outdoor interaction. Connectivity is increased between the units in the second phase by opening up the front stair and creating a double height living room. This new space is expressed on the exterior of the home with a new skin wrapping the corner and replacing the bay windows. Connection to adjacent green space gives children a safe space to play under supervision from within the home.



Figure 59, The side-yard becomes a pedestrian sanctuary. (Source: Author)

Live-Work

By creating a strategy for the implementation of a mixed-use building in the duplex form, this idea provides a live-work space that allows owners to build their business within their own home.



Figure 60, Location map and existing imagery of the site. (Source: Drawings by Author, photographs by BLC Field School)

A dilapidated corner duplex provides an opportunity for more radical change on the gutted first floor. Bringing back mixed uses that used to be more common in the neighborhood promotes walkability and eyes on the street at what residents identify as an insecure intersection.

Creating a live-work space out of this vacant duplex allows for neighborhood entrepreneurs to grow their business within their own home.

Live-Work

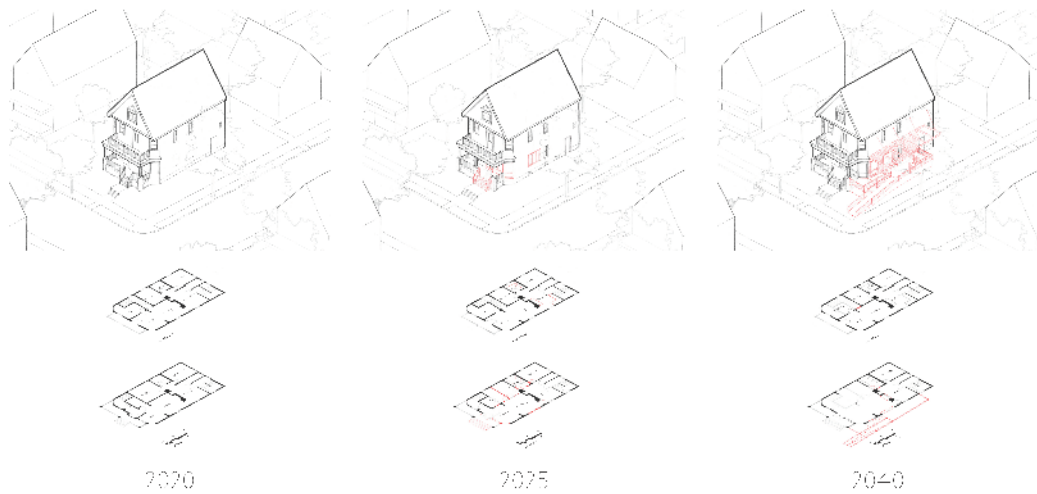


Figure 61, Isometrics show development over the next twenty years. (Source: Author)

Renovation of the upper unit and the transformation of the lower unit into office space for a startup organization, breathes new life into the vacant home. When the startup expands and moves to a mixed-use building on a nearby commercial street new owners take the opportunity to create a café that acts as another neighborhood amenity on the corner of 38th and Wright. Opening out onto the side street with a veranda further marks this site as one for interaction in the community. The simple structure of the duplex allows for the opening up of the lower level to accommodate for a spacious seating area at the front of the home.



Figure 62, The opened-up seating area creates a continuous space with the exterior veranda. (Source: Author)

Incremental infill

This final scheme investigates how the missing teeth in the streetscape might start to be infilled incrementally, giving aspiring homeowners a means to ownership while following the logic of the existing fabric.

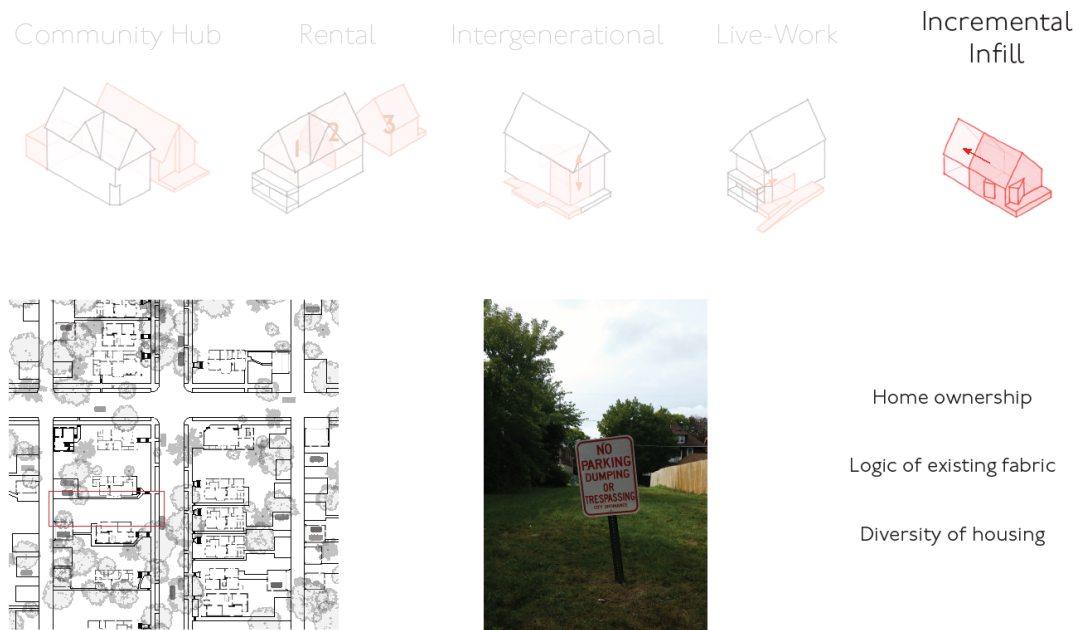


Figure 63, Location map and existing imagery of the site. (Source: Drawings by Author, photographs by BLC Field School)

By playing on the neighborhood's existing typologies, this home maintains scale and continuity while providing an additional option for housing.

Infilling vacant lots incrementally with contextually sensitive interventions begins to repair the streetscape.

Incremental Infill

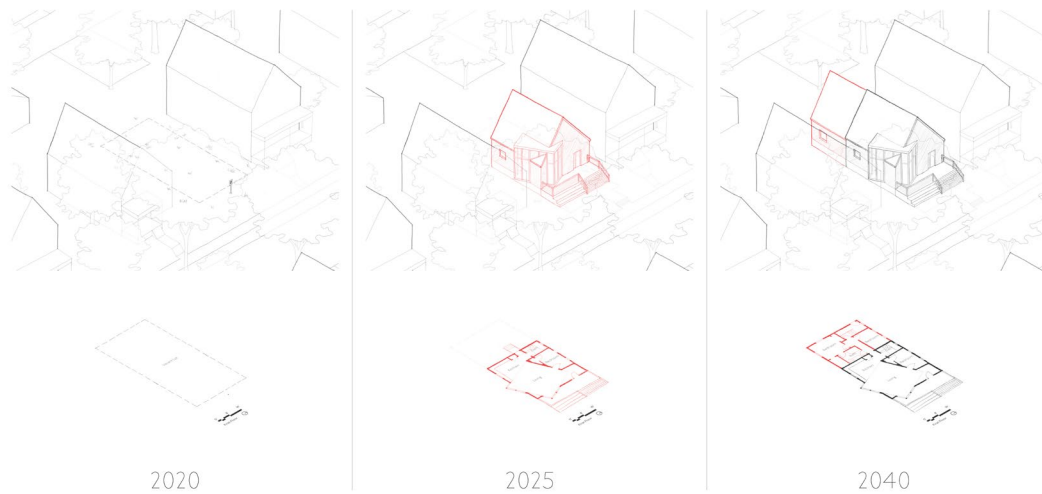


Figure 64, Isometrics show development over the next twenty years. (Source: Author)

The first phase gives a first-time homeowner the opportunity to build a home with a small footprint that slots seamlessly into the existing fabric. A rotated volume within the home serves as a new take on the bay window. A later addition at the rear accommodates an expanding family with two additional bedrooms and a bathroom with the possibility for further expansion upward or rearward. Maintaining the logic of the neighborhood with a front porch and bay windows, variations on the vernacular can begin to fill in gaps in the streetscape.



Figure 65, The street façade is repaired with familiar forms. (Source: Author)

Chapter 8: Community Impact

Looking at how these interventions interact while aggregated together in plan, section, and elevation gives insight into the greater effects on the community.



Figure 66, The collection of interventions in the site plan reveals major nodes near 38th and Wright.
(Source: Author)

Mixed-use buildings at 38th and Wright hold down the corners and create a hub near Unity Orchard. Accessory dwelling units have the opportunity to congregate at the rears of homes, retaking the alley as a place of connectivity. The vacant lots near an

intergenerational home create a mid-block pedestrian pass through, providing safe space for play.

While the general street section that has maintained notions of sociability in the neighborhood for so long is largely maintained, spaces at the rears of lots are rethought to provide new uses in previously underutilized space.

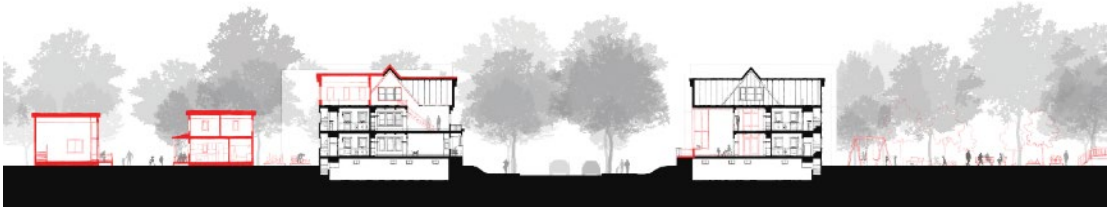


Figure 67, The alley is claimed as a pedestrian zone with nodes of green space and accessory dwelling units. (Source: Author)

Claiming the alleys as pedestrian space begins to signify a shift from automobility to walkability in the neighborhood.

Street elevations begin to tell the story of change over time and demonstrate the palimpsest-like quality of the vernacular.



Figure 68, The street elevation demonstrates the collective change over time. (Source: Author)

These shifts in character alter but sustain the existing rhythm of the street while expressing the individuality of the community's residents.

These proposed interventions layer together with the existing fabric and practices in the neighborhood to build off of and enhance the interconnected human ecology of Center Peace.



Figure 69, The interventions interweave with each other to create new spatial relationships in the neighborhood. (Source: Author)

What will it take to implement these types of projects? How do these design strategies fit into existing policy, economics, and preservation discourse? This thesis only begins to answer these questions. What is clear however, is that engagement and understanding will play a key role in the stewardship of declining urban neighborhoods in the coming decades. The flexibility of existing building code and changes to zoning regulations will be required to implement these types of new uses. Private and government funding in the form of grants and loans channeled through residents rather than large-scale developers will help to ensure agency is shared and displacement is avoided. Access to preservation resources will hinge upon broadened definitions of value and integrity. While great strides toward these things have been taken over the past few years, those involved in design, planning, and preservation will need to continue to strive for change. The lessons learned from this exploration

of continuity in the Center Peace neighborhood can contribute to this discourse and the continued stewardship of neighborhoods nationwide.

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