ABSTRACT

Title of Document:	<u>COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT IN GREENMOUNT WEST</u>
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This thesis explores strategies of community revitalization through means of developing public zones in the highly vacated Baltimore neighborhood of Greenmount West. The building of community facilities including an after-school recreation center, public market and community café will bring various groups of people together at street corners once ruled by drug trafficking. At the corner, residents will participate together in everyday activities and be watchful over these public zones. In addition to creating casual forums for community discourse and strengthening bonds between disenfranchised neighbors, a sense of regional and local identity is created through references to local folk art traditions and provisions for neighborly sidewalk loitering through repeated use of certain street furniture and canopy systems. Greenmount West will gain a recognizable identity within the local arts district as a sustainable mixed-income community with an encouraged spirit and cooperative attitude toward defending public spaces.

COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT IN GREENMOUNT WEST

By

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Thesis submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School of the
University of Maryland, College Park, in partial fulfillment
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Dedication

I would like to thank my family and colleagues in supporting me during this research endeavor on community redevelopment. I believe that reinvestment in our urban neighborhoods is a vital responsibility of the architectural profession and I appreciate the advice and assistance I received from those professionals who share an interest in the challenges of this subject.

Acknowledgements

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Chapter 1: Introduction

This thesis explores affordable housing and mixed income communities in Baltimore. This city has sustained great population losses over the last half century due to shifting economics and deindustrialization. With too few residents and too much housing there has been a decrease in community watchfulness and Baltimore neighborhoods have fallen victim to drugs and crime activity. This thesis makes a case for the unappreciated historic urban fabric of Baltimore. The traditional rowhouse typology is valuable in the structure and identity of the city and should continue to play a role in housing the next generation of Baltimoreans. Along with careful consideration of community-based principles of planning and design, and strategically placed programmatic provisions for resident facilities and outlets for neighborly interaction, Baltimore's great communities can be brought out of their derelict conditions.

Chapter 2: History

History of The Baltimore Rowhouse

Stylistic and Functional Origins

Figure 1 – Postcard image fondly representing rowhouses of a Baltimore neighborhood[1]

The rowhouse is a Baltimore institution. Images of rows of flat red brick and white marble steps have characterized this city after the type's growth and popularity during the 19th and early to mid 20th centuries. It has often been said that Baltimore is

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[1] http://www.kilduffs.com/Homes.html

rare in that it relies almost entirely on this one architectural form to house its residents.

History found the rowhouse practical and stylish. In London this aesthetic first developed as a response partly to the Great London Fire of 1666, which resulted in building regulations that demanded the stripping of exposed woodwork and protruding cornices. Under such regulations architects embraced the two-dimensionality of the facades they were forced to create and took this opportunity to focus on the order and neatness of lifestyle these facades could represent. This building typology eventually became the Georgian brick rowhouse.[2]

The London rowhouses in Figure 2 were built in the 1780's. They were a precedent for the designers of later rowhouses in Philadelphia and Baltimore where the flatness of facades and ornamental restraint became the aesthetic. The correlation is clearly seen in the plans of Baltimore's Waterloo Row designed by Robert Mills in 1816. The strategy of lifting the formal reception rooms a half level off the street was well received by Baltimoreans. The composition of the façade breaks down into a tripartite base, middle and top. Here, the half-emerged basement floor became the base, the formal ground floor or the piano nobile was the shaft, the upper floor was the capital and the roof and dormers the entablature.[3]

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[2] Shivers 7
[3] Shivers 6,8,12

Figure 2 – Rows along Kennington Road from the 1780's typical of Georgian London[4]

Figure 3 – Baltimore's Waterloo Row was demolished but this elevation demonstrates its similarities to its predecessors 30 years prior in London[5]

Baltimore developed in the shadow of larger cities like Philadelphia until it established its own stylistic and cultural identity. Baltimore's population was largely bolstered by a number of Irish, Russian, Polish and Italian immigrants. With a large immigrant population, Baltimore naturally didn't have a unified identity. This is one reason that Baltimore looked to the more mature city of Philadelphia as a model to emulate. The Architects who visited Baltimore during the early 19th century altered the architectural tradition of the Baltimore rowhouse, eventually making it specific

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[4] Shivers 6
[5] Shivers12

and discernable. Architects of prominence like Benjamin Latrobe, Maximilian

Godefroy and Robert Mills saw Baltimore as an opportunity where they could be

stylistically influential to the growing city. They brought with them the tradition of

the Federal style. [6]
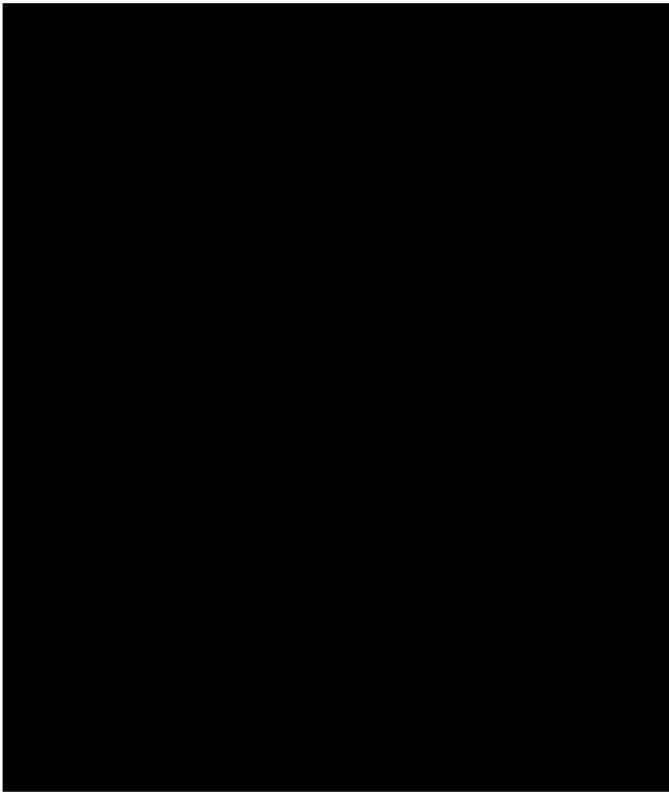
Figure 4 – Latrobe's Harper House exhibits many design characteristics of the
Federal and Greek Revival styles that influenced the local aesthetic in rowhouse
design. [7]

The Federal style's origins were, as with Georgian London, in the classical

tradition and emphasized relationships of solids and voids. This style was less

ornamented and even more rigorous in simplicity, and as such, found a great audience

in the working classes.[8] It demonstrated the economy, straightforwardness and

moderation that the working classes already lived by. Here the scale, not the form, of

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[6] Shivers 10
[7] Shivers 11
[8] Shivers 8-9

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a person's home differentiated the rich from the poor. Combined with a system of home ownership and ground rents permitting the rental of the property's actual land, made such designs affordable to people within a range of economic levels.[9] The residential system was so beneficial to the working class that by 1929, Baltimore had the highest home ownership rate for a large American city.[10]

Ground rents and the structure of a typical residential block

Ground rents, now common in Baltimore City residential neighborhoods, began in the 18th century. Baltimore ground rents now average $100 to $150 and are paid out annually to the property owners by the house owners. New regulations require that property owners must register their ground rents so that renters can contact their ground owners through a database and obtain information about renewing their ground rents or be given the opportunity to purchase the land their houses occupy.

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[9] Shivers 15

[10] http://www.kilduffs.com/Homes.html

Figure 5 – Engraving of the Poppleton plan for Baltimore, 1822.[11]

Also helping to naturally desegregate economic and social classes is the

residential block structure. The Thomas Poppleton Plan of 1822 was created upon the

orders of the commissioners appointed by the General Assembly of Maryland. In

1816, the city limits of Baltimore were expanded making necessary a master plan for

the expansion of the downtown Baltimore block structure. [12]Poppleton recognized

the need for people of varied income levels to live within proximity. Within wealthy

households, domestic housekeepers and other staff were commonplace. The need for

both the rich and the working class to have accommodations within walkable

distances was a functional concern. Thomas Poppleton proposed a network of

primary, secondary and tertiary roads that create different housing opportunities

marketable to different income levels within the same block. Poppleton's plan was

closely followed for about 70 years until the annexation of Baltimore's boundaries

again in 1888.

[11] Maryland Historical Society
[12] Maryland Historical Society

Depending on the location and proportion of a block, it could have housed 3 different classes of residents. The largest rowhouses would appear along the perimeter of the block with direct visual access to the largest avenues or amenity spaces. These would be the tallest, likely widest and deepest homes on the block. The wealthiest would live here. In figure 6, the homes along the streets running perpendicular to the square frontage would offer housing for the middle class on a slightly more modest scale but still generally created a strong street edge at 3 stories tall. Historically the center of the blocks were reserved for the working class. With less light from narrower streets and more restricted views to the block exterior, these smaller plots of land were less valued and generally had the most modest of structures built on them. Still within the rowhouse tradition, these rows were completely unadorned and often used whitewashed wooden steps to imitate the regal white marble steps afforded by the more wealthy and stylish.   As stated previously, these homes tried as much as they could to appear the same in style to the more influential residences of Baltimore's public avenues. The great difference was the scale. These center block buildings were the most minimal width never exceeding 20 feet and usually only 2 stories in height.

Figure 6 – Illustration representing diverse economic levels typical within a Baltimore block

The Evolution of Baltimore Through Out-migration

The flight of the middle and working classes
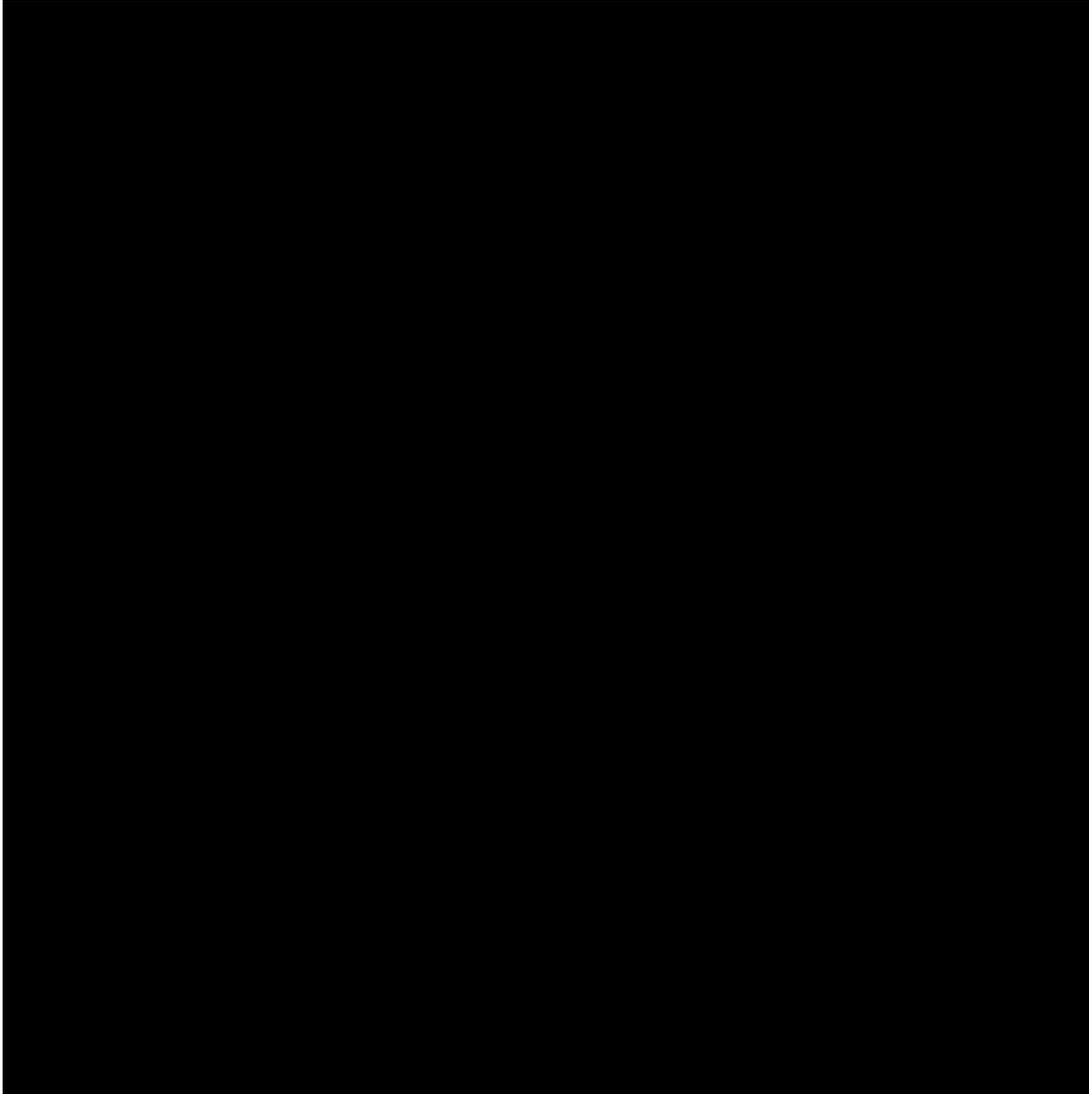
Figure 7 – Statistical maps of various 2002 economic and demographic information[13]

As with other aging industrial cities like Detroit and St. Louis, Baltimore has

faced an out-migration crisis over the last half century, which has lead to

"undercrowding" in its neighborhoods and a new social makeup. In the years

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[13] Litt

between the 1950 and 2000 census, Baltimore lost over 30 percent of its population.[14]

Baltimore had a strong immigrant population that found work in the local factories.

When manufacturing left Baltimore city, the workers left as well. As the working

class fled the city for employment, the middle class found the suburbs preferable.

Federal policies and programs that subsidized middle class out-migration and

redlining of certain areas by private lenders in real estate aided racial and economic

segregation.[15] As the immigrant and white populations left the city, this left a large

majority of African American residents to live in an area with an overabundance of

housing. These cheap rents have captured those populations that couldn't otherwise

afford rent elsewhere. With no economic muscle behind certain districts of Baltimore,

whole communities have deteriorated beyond recognition allowing drugs and crime to

creep in amongst the concentrations of poverty.

While manufacturing was once the main industry in Baltimore City, it now

represents only 7% of available jobs. Unskilled laborers find it difficult to find work.

This encourages more to leave or find unlawful ways of making money in the trade of

drugs. Health care and education are currently the leading fields of employment in

Baltimore. Together they encompass 33% of all private sector jobs. This means that

almost one in every four Baltimore jobs is in health care. The following chart breaks

down Baltimore's industries according to information gathered by Randall Gross /

Development Economics. [16]

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[14] Cohen 415
[15] Cohen 417
[16] Randall Gross / Development Economics 4
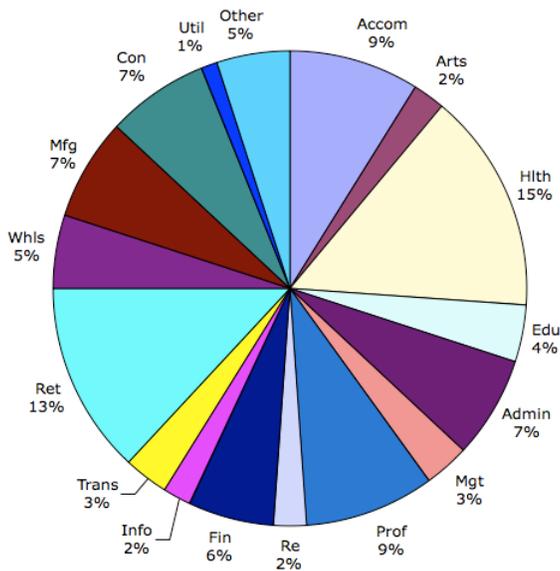
Figure 8 – Baltimore's industries[17]

Undercrowding and selective demolition

The term "undercrowding" describes a condition where there is too much

housing stock with too little demand. Economically, this leads to low rent prices and

an out-migration of upper and middle class residents from that area. The resulting

conditions plummet home values and decrease the physical conditions of the urban

environment. When buildings sit unoccupied they are attractors for nuisance activity

like trash dumping. Homeless use vacant structures for shelter often inadvertently

starting fires. Vacant rowhouses also serve as centers for drug activity and

trafficking, further destabilizing these communities. In Baltimore, there have been

initiatives to tear down the abandoned housing stock for decades. With many

neglected and burnt out rows, the unstable facades threaten adjacent buildings and

pedestrian safety on the sidewalks. Health concerns also stem from the rodent

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[17] Randall Gross / Development Economics 4

infestations that litter these sites. The city of Baltimore has torn down thousands of

rowhouses over the last couple decades but the results have not been entirely well

received. Millions were spent annually on scattered demolitions that "left gaps in

rowhouse blocks, creating an unsightly, 'snaggle-tooth' appearance," according to

many residents.[18] Mid-block demolitions also structurally destabilized some adjacent

buildings eventually leading to several subsequent collapses. This practice has been

largely suspended in favor of more rigorous demolition programs of clearing entire

blocks if more than half of the rows on a block are run down.[19]

Figure 9 – Abandoned rows along North Fulton Ave.

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[18] Cohen 421
[19] Cohen 425

City policy and pubic opinion

As the city continues its demolitions with no clear plans for rebuilding, preservationists look with worry at the underappreciated or forgotten value of Baltimore's great rows. Years of bad associations sprouting from the heroine and crack cocaine epidemic of the 80s have darkened what otherwise could be an asset and symbol of better times. Few can look at a derelict rowhouse and think of anything but the decades of abuse it and those it housed recently experienced. The city wants to distance itself from these years of social and economic despair by simply demolishing the historic housing fabric and forgetting Baltimoreans' longstanding aesthetic and social heritage. It's only been in the last 30 to 40 years that some of these 19th century forms have taken on bad connotations. The rowhouse block is still a cornerstone of social and community values and is worthy of rehabilitation.

The Rise and Fall of the Corner

Tradition of the corner store
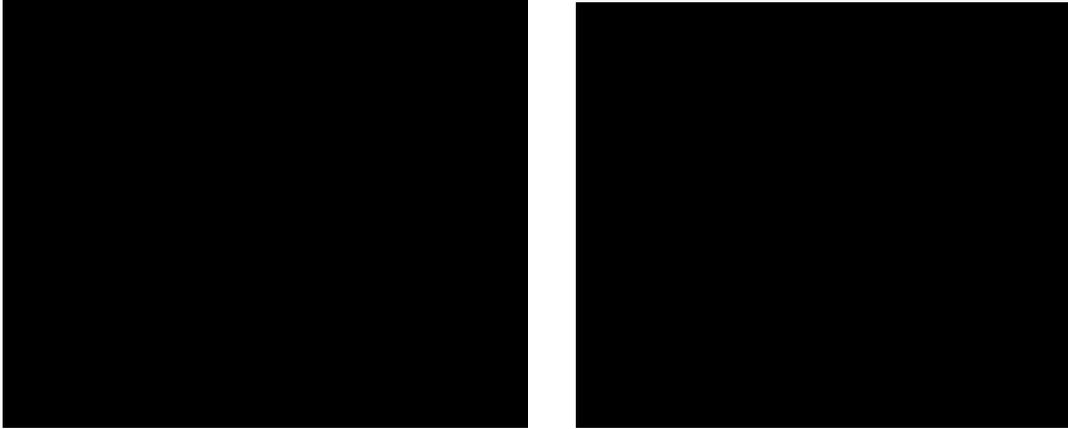
Figure 10 – Corner stores promote community socialization and identity[20]

On many Baltimore corners, convenience stores and other small service businesses developed on the ground floor. Blue collar residents with the capital to make alterations to their home could promote local industry and gain business independence by opening shop in what was once their living room. Other corner stores were planned and built as live/work stores rather than ad hoc responses to community needs. Regardless of form, they demonstrated an awareness of the social value of corners. The intersections offer the best views up and down the street and into adjoining neighborhoods. The neighborly interaction that was inspired at these locations made them "center(s) for community information" and "place(s) to be seen."[21]

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[20] Beasley
[21] *The Corner*. Charles S. Dutton

"We sitting here day after day making ourself a little less human."
~The Corner   Charles S. Dutton

Figure 11 – This corner store on Barclay St. didn't survive its area's undercrowding

The activity that once led to the rise of the corner as a positive watchful force over the community has dissolved with the nation-wide crack cocaine and heroine epidemics of the 80s. Growing poverty and abandonment have also fanned the flames, turning corners into crime magnets. Once a community has lost control of its corners, it seems plausible that it also loses its ability to work together and communicate. Without public social zones, communities have little chance of reclaiming their neighborhood.

Chapter 3: Design Goals and Precedent for Change

Design Intent

Redevelopment mission

The proposal in this document does not use the term "redevelopment" in the way a developer might speak of a means toward a profit. The focus is to return a district into a functioning mixed-income community reminiscent of the strongest traditions that once united Baltimore neighborhoods. This requires the preservation of the Baltimore rowhouse fabric where it is structurally and financially feasible and infilling modern variations on this form alongside community facilities and common spaces.

While Baltimore has become increasingly economically segregated, the backbones of its housing stock and block structure offered a means of creating mixed income communities as represented earlier in Figure 6 of chapter 2. By researching the physical and social characteristics of community, this intervention can be both marketable and socially sustainable.

The social indicators of community

The word 'community' is often used to describe a physical area or a group of people. Community can actually be related to more personal feelings and associations. These associations are the subconscious and conscious reactions we have to our physical environments and the people in them. According to University of

Maryland Professor Sidney Brower as published by Jason Eversole under the University of Maryland Department of Urban Studies and Planning, there are six key gauges of community that can determine the willingness of a neighborhood to unite and live well together. They evaluate feelings involving attachment, helpfulness, values, identity, manors and association.[22]

Six Indicators for community:

1. Trust: residents have closely bonded feelings for one another

2. Participation: residents form work groups to address topics of shared concern

3. Shared values: residents have similar interests and goals

4. Shared identity: residents see themselves as part of a group

5. Neighborly manors: residents demonstrate neighborly cooperation

6. Association: residents recognize and adhere to group standards[23]

Residents need to feel they are a part of a distinct and recognizable group of people they can relate to or share values with. Unfortunately in mixed-income communities of owners and renters, people of different lifestyles and backgrounds experience difficulty in relating to each other and are more resistant to taking a role in their community. This is a harmful attitude and can lead to a poor quality of life for residents and decreased watchfulness over public spaces.

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[22] Eversole
[23] Eversole
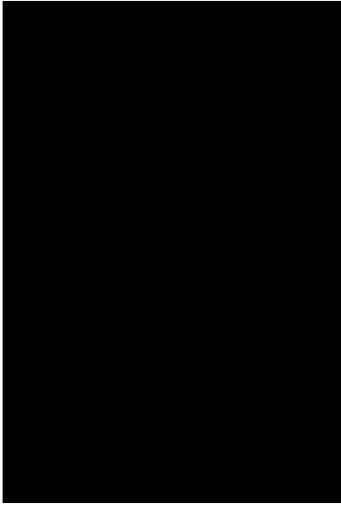
Figure 12 – Community and city leaders working together in Sandtown-Winchester[24]

Collective socialization is an essential aspect in the development of good social structure and active investment by all neighborhood members in the community. It's a system where the working adults serve as role models to set and enforce good community standards. Through responsibility, and examples of healthy and sustainable behavior, residents who have problems with abuse or marketable skills, can learn from each other. These more influential members can also petition for the involvement of local institutions and businesses in areas of community need.[25]

HOPE VI and redevelopment

HOPE VI, a program under the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), was created in 1992 to rebuild neglected public housing projects into safe and affordable housing. Its interventions focus on teaching their residents to be self-sufficient and valuable members of their communities. Financing quality housing is difficult but even more challenging are the problems that can't be

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[24] Arch Plan Inc.
[25] Eversole

fixed by brick and mortar.   Many Hope VI project shine under the lens of a

newspaper photographer because they look good and achieved their physical design

goals, but years down the line, will the residents make progress? Simply living in a

clean and supportive environment greatly improves the mental health of a resident,

but to those who rely on this affordable housing, there are many other obstacles that

stand in their way. Determining a socially successful from unsuccessful project takes

time. Many HOPE VI case studies fail to scrutiny within the social requirements of a

community. Many designers and developers overlook opportunities for shared

learning moments and cooperative living experiences within mixed-income

communities.

Case Studies

Sandtown-Winchester

Currently home to over 10,300 residents, the area now known as Sandtown is

a widely successful redevelopment project organized and conceived of by James

Rouse. This area of West Baltimore has suffered from crime, gang violence, drug

abuse, economic depression, abandonment, and racial and income segregation.

Deemed perhaps as Baltimore's roughest neighborhood, an extensive redevelopment

plan was implemented in the early 90s to clean up the area. This effort is nationally

famous for being the first 'neighborhood transformation process'. This

redevelopment transcends others that precede it by tackling all social and

environmental problems simultaneously. Rather than rebuilding or refurbishing just

the blighted housing, the project scope included full-service social facilities to rebuild resident's lives. Another key aspect in the planning of Sandtown was the inclusion of current residents in the design process. Any concerned resident would see the acceptance of their input and concerns as very meaningful. To the city, Enterprise Foundation and BUILD, who all worked collaboratively with the residents, this strategy offered not just valued design insight but also positive public relations that gained the support of the community.[26] Any redevelopment strategy for an area with severe physical and social problems requires holistic attention to community needs.

Jonestown/Albemarle Square redevelopment of Flag House Courts public housing

During the spring of 2007, students of the University of Maryland Department of Urban Studies and Planning completed an analysis of the HOPE VI redevelopment of Baltimore's Flag House Courts public housing. It is a good example of an attractive design that, while generally successful, still missed possible opportunities for sponsoring social growth among its affordable housing residents.[27]

After the implosion of its high rises, Flag House Courts was re-planned with a mix of ownership, subsidized ownership and affordable rental rowhouse properties. Financially, the project has been a success with all the mixed income units selling quickly. Aesthetically the project is also beautiful, with a high level of detail and craft put into the units. The facades are detailed equally between income levels representing income classes equitably and giving each resident a sense of pride.

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[26] Live Baltimore Home Center
[27] Eversole
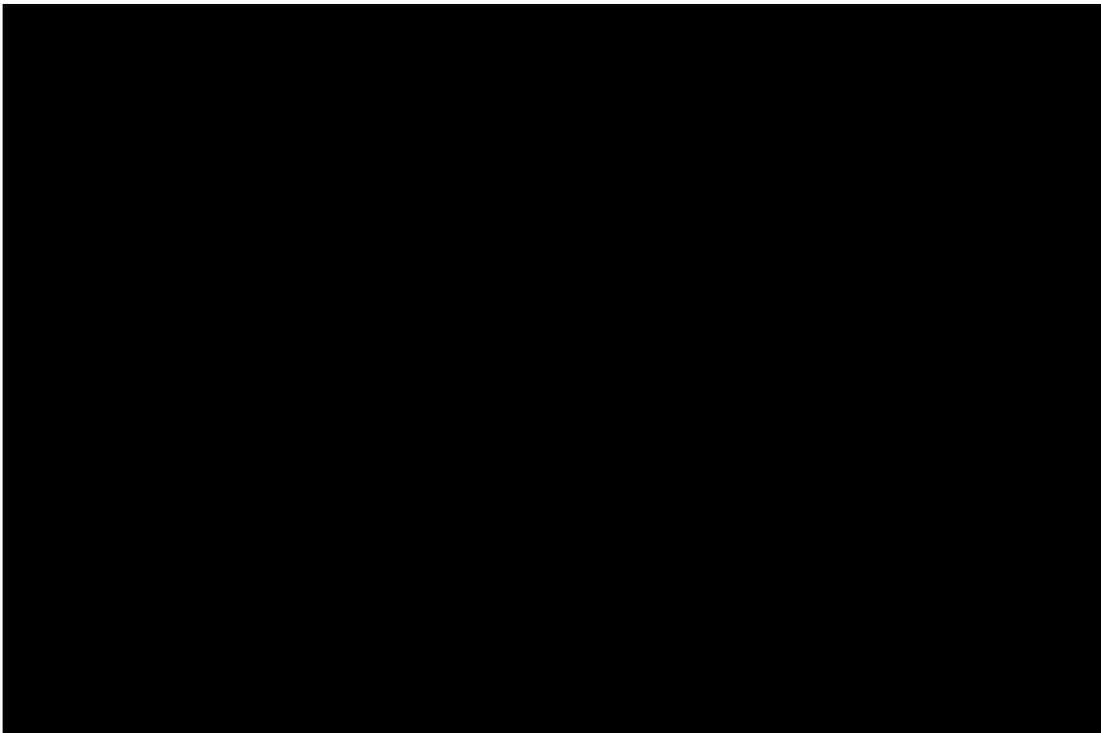
Figure 13 – These Albemarle Square rows are a mixture of rental and ownership[28]

Armed with surveys, researchers gathered information based on Sidney Brower's social indicators of community. The results showed a very weak bond holding the community together. Despite the proximity between people of different income classes, interaction did not occur. Owners demonstrated a lack of trust in all neighbors. They blamed conflicting and busy lifestyles for their lack of neighborly interaction. Some owners were not even aware they lived in a mixed income community. Generally, the renters made themselves more visible and approachable to other residents and demonstrated cooperative attitudes toward the community. Problems also exist in weak site definition. Not only could residents not agree on a boundary of their neighborhood, they also referred to it by three different names: Jonestown, Albemarle Square and Flag House Courts. Residents relate to the

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[28] *Baltimore Shown By Photos*

community within different contexts of its history demonstrating a lack of cohesive cooperation about what they are invested in protecting and building upon.[29]

The community facilities of Albemarle Square are lacking as well. There is not enough public open space for children to play and to facilitate interaction between income classes. The few facilities available for youth within walking distance were largely unknown to the surveyed due to a lack of marketing and signage within the community. A strong environmental graphic design campaign could inspire awareness of the functions the community has to offer and demonstrate ways residents could invest themselves.

Lessons from Albemarle Square

Albemarle Square is interesting because of the unforeseen consequences of the design. The survey analysis exposes the way that people react within the context of a mixed income community. It also presents the challenges that must be overcome by a design team on such a project. The design criteria for a socially sustainable community must include provisions of public open space.

To encourage interaction between even the most stubbornly introverted residents, nodes of socialization must be placed throughout communities at locations where people perform both daily and occasional activities including but not limited to mail collection and drop off, laundry services, trash collection, vehicular parking, bus stops, school zones, and shopping destinations. Signage and dynamic public art installations can also promote periods of hesitation and socialization.

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[29] Eversole

Design with goals for resident self-sufficiency
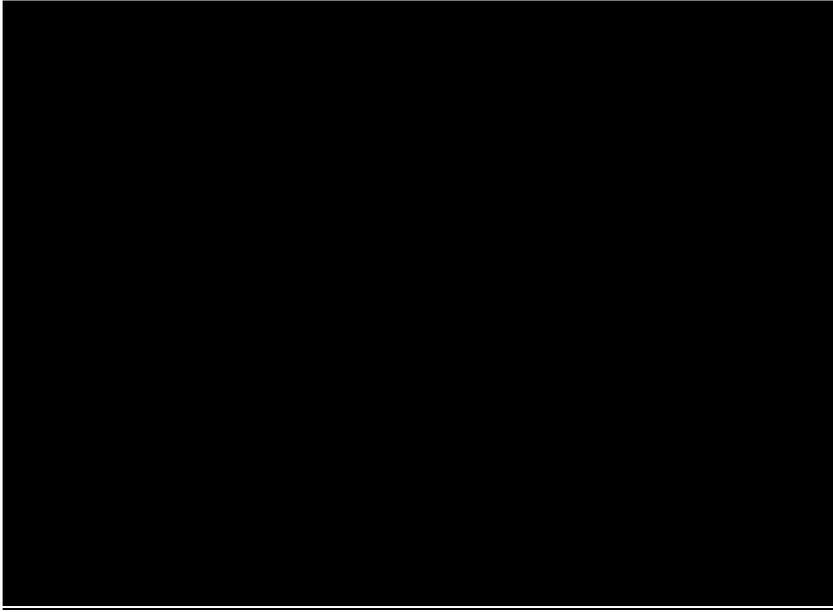
Figure 14 – Public service programs designed to reform residents in need

According to a survey conducted in 2000 by the Historic East Baltimore Community Action Coalition (HEBCAC), of its residents, "one of every six homeowners 'had' stopped paying property taxes, one of every three households 'made' less than $15,000 per year, half of all adults 'were' high school dropouts, half of all households 'did' not own a car, and one of every four residents 'were' addicted to drugs or alcohol."[30] Baltimore's highly neglected communities suffer severely from these demographical ailments.

Regaining control of a community from criminals and the depravity of economic and social depression first requires reforming existing residents in ways to sustain themselves in a healthy and productive manor. Redevelopments in such

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[30] Cohen 424

neighborhoods should always make provisions for residents who retain residence in the area. For first priority in the redeveloped housing, these residents would have to qualify for affordable housing and sign economic self-sufficiency agreements that give them incentives for procuring stable income within a reasonable period of time. The community design must accommodate these residents and their special needs through a range of community support programs worked into the fabric of community life. On-site facilities can help to train residents in skill sets and education programs that assist them in taking control of their futures. The program of such facilities must be extensive to combat issues of crime, education, employability and drugs and alcohol and adapt to serve the developing community.

Primarily, there will be 6 main categories of community program outside of the housing stock:

- Education
- Employment services
- Local industry
- Youth activities and after school care
- Community gardens
- Public installations of art as catalysts for community discourse

Education is paramount in any community but here it has the special responsibility of also aiding more mature residents. For those residents lacking a high school diploma, vocational guidance and education programs must be encouraged. Informing residents of professional options within or outside the community must be a priority to stabilizing their future success as productive and self-sufficient

community members. These kinds of programs may be located on site, or supported by nearby institutions. Employment services offer ranges of support types, from educational to counseling.

In addition to the educational and communal spaces previously listed, it is important to support local industry where possible. Small businesses promote and preserve the very historic traditions of industry that helped build Baltimore. Their preservation and promotion not only creates a stronger sense of place but also the jobs formed help promote an entrepreneurial spirit within the community. In areas of redevelopment, grocers or public markets often appear in conjunction with revitalization efforts. Public farmers' markets serve an important duel purpose in urban environments. They provide fresh and affordable foods to inner-city residents and support local farmers, entrepreneurs and craftspeople.

While all public facilities can function to some degree as informal nodes of community discourse, less rigidly programmed spaces can make welcoming public gestures to encourage gathering and use as a community forum. Such assembly spaces help unify the community voice by giving each resident an opportunity to speak their mind on topics of local, political or personal concern and give the community a center recognized by residents and passersby alike.

Adaptive programming; spaces change through the day and night

The city is not a static thing. It changes day to night. Therefore, the programming of spaces needs to change through the day to insure that watchfulness is

encouraged around the clock. Financially, this strategy maximizes the usefulness and economic feasibility of facilities.

Related program functions are naturally suited to be in proximity with each other. For instance, a community's educational facilities might be located very close to a community recreation center, outdoor play areas and after-school child care. During the school day, most of these supportive facilities would otherwise stand unused, allowing large windows of time for undesirable destabilizing activities to occur there. By placing them on a street corner closest to school buildings, the spaces will continue to be monitored during these times. During the late afternoon, employment counseling serving unemployed could use the same after-school facilities once the children have left for home.

To finance such an ambitious project will be difficult. The establishment of a successfully mixed-income community will be crucial. This means that a good percentage of the currently abandoned or demolished housing will have to be redeveloped for not just lower income artists, single parents and young professionals but also for middle income ownership because a financially segregated community cannot support itself. In addition to making the main public use programming areas adaptive to periods of the day, they must also appeal to varied incomes and have commercial components to raise money for operation and upkeep.

Creating a mixed-income community

As previously mentioned, the historic fabric of Baltimore neighborhoods deserves to be preserved where structurally and financially feasible. The rowhouse is

rooted in the economic and social history of the city. What opportunities might exist for new infill housing types where rows have already been cleared? Baltimore has historically relied on just one building type to house all social and income classes since the 19th century. New infill types should not abandon the historical grain of the city. The Baltimore rowhouse form can be retained while its layouts can be adapted to suit modern norms of marketable living spaces suiting people of varied economic, employment and family situations.
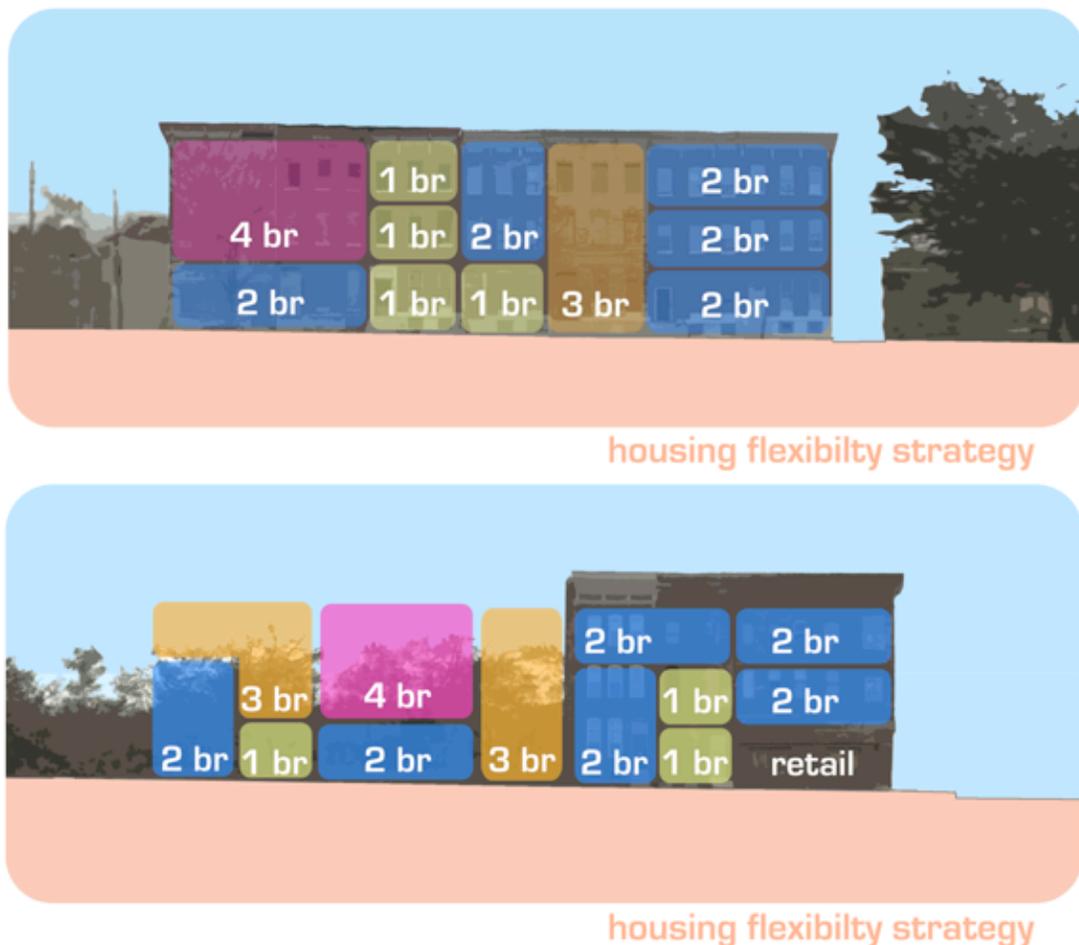
Figure 15 – Revised separation of unit layouts within rowhouses

The above diagram shows how series of rows could in theory be combined across levels and through parti walls to arrive at a variety of unit sizes that appeal to a

diverse range of residents. In the preservation and continuation of a rowhouse style street wall, the clean organization of windows and entrances at street level represent each unit type as if they were the same. Each door and series of steps appears to represent an equal quantity of housing behind the façade wall. In this strategy, a homeowner in a 4 bedroom unit could be living on a street with owners and renters of units ranging in size from spacious 4 bedroom units down to live/work units and even efficiencies while allowing even residents of the affordable housing stock to experience equal pride in where they live.

Chapter 4: The Site

Poised for Redevelopment

Figure 16 – Site location within Baltimore[31]

Selecting a site for redevelopment

With the vast expanses of abandoned housing stock in Baltimore, there are no

shortages of sites in need of redevelopment. A site characterized by the typical

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[31] www.baltimorecity.gov

ailments of failing Baltimore districts was selected to demonstrate a plausible

neighborhood transformation process. Higher levels of abandonment insure better

cooperation by members of the community and require the displacement of fewer

people. To achieve the project goals, several selection criteria were assembled to

evaluate sites based on proximity to center city, public transportation routes, business

and educational institutions and high vacancy levels.

Center city includes many of the traditional rows that will inform the housing

types of Baltimore's future. It is also where the greatest concentrations of poverty

are. With vehicle ownership being low among populations of financial instability,

connections to public transportation routes are important for residents who rely on

them for traveling to work or doing their shopping. Along with historic housing stock

and transportation, a local major institution can act as an anchor for job creation and

an indicator of the long-term survival of an area. Institutions often act as generators

of community activities and wellness programs that help pull together neighbors of

varied circumstance. With the strength of the education and health services sectors in

Baltimore, it was best to develop near these types of institutions.

Center city Baltimore
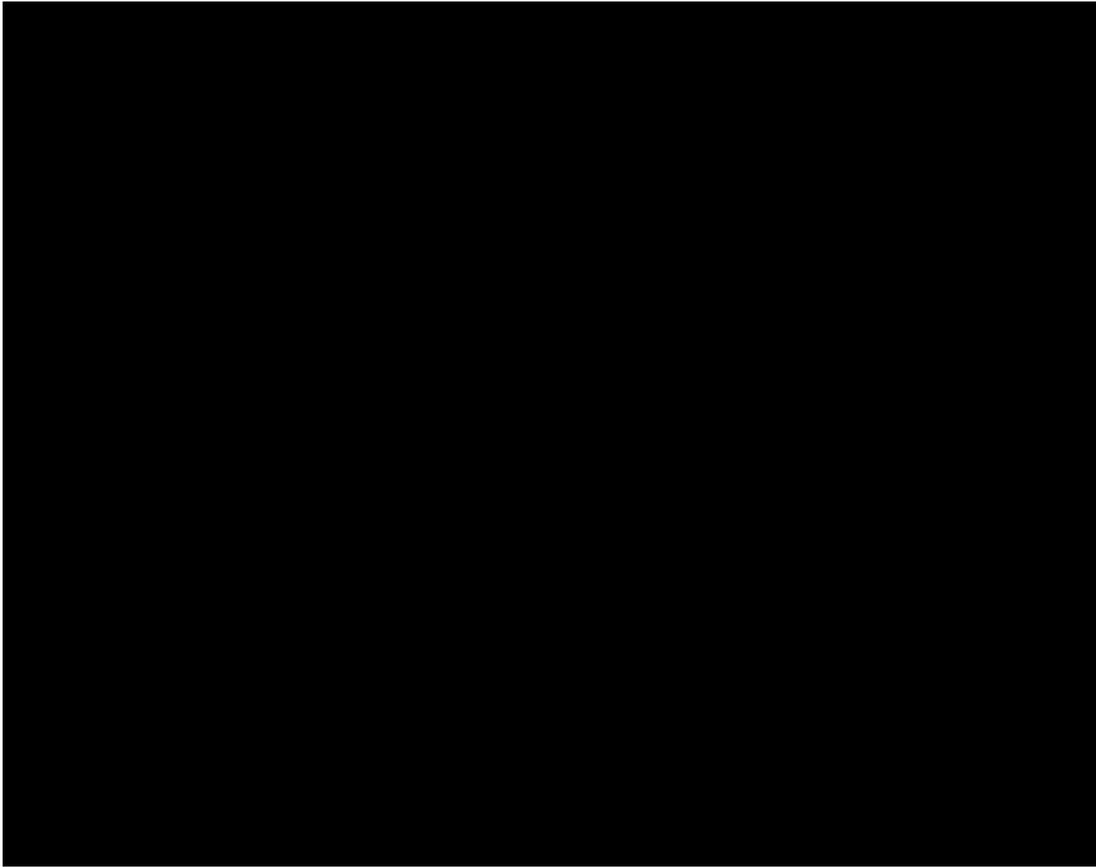
Figure 17 – Center city districts[32]

Center city Baltimore contains many districts that benefit from close
proximity to public transportation. Center city and the downtown have the greatest
connectivity to transportation including bus, light rail and MARC and Amtrak trains.
Baltimore's Penn station is a hub of all these systems and is located within center city
South of the Station North neighborhood.

Also located in center city are several institutions that would inspire the local
community. The University of Baltimore Campus sits in the Mid Town/Belvedere
neighborhood and is bounded by the Jones Falls Expressway to the North, N. Howard
St. to the West, St. Paul St. to the East and E. Eager St. to the South. The university

[32] www.baltimorecity.gov

teaches liberal arts, business and law and has been in operation in Baltimore for over 80 years. The Maryland Institute College of Art is another institution of higher education located in center city.   Its campus is integrated with the historic district of Bolton Hill and is bounded roughly by W. North Ave. to the North, Eutaw Pl. to the West, Dolphin St. to the South and N. Howard St. to the East.

Greenmount West

Figure 18 – The shaded area indicates the Greenmount West neighborhood

Greenmount West and the Station North Arts District

Station North is an area located just West of Greenmount Cemetery and South of E. North Ave in center city. The neighborhood contains a sub-district called Greenmount West that combined with Charles North across North Ave. makes up the North Central Historic District, which is on the National Register of Historic Places. Greenmount West also holds the honor of being the first district of Baltimore city to be classified by the state as an arts and entertainment district.

Greenmount West developed in the late 19th century as suburbs of the downtown. It was built as a middle class neighborhood of large homes utilizing North Ave. as a shopping destination for fine goods. After WWII, the grand houses were

split into separate apartments as the middle classes left the area.[33] Decades of further

decay have resulted in substantial symptoms of urban blight including poverty,

abandonment, racial rioting, drug abuse and crime.

Figure 19 – Vacancy in the Greenmount West area

Once a densely inhabited area of 795 homes a century ago, Greenmount West

now stands with 54% of its historic residential structures vacant awaiting demolition

or already cleared from the urban fabric. In the map above, the green areas represent

buildings that are abandoned or currently stand vacant.   Generally, the blocks East of

N. Calvert St. are more highly abandoned as they stand further from the commercially

lined N. Calvert St to the West and closer to the underdeveloped border of

Greenmount Cemetery along Greenmount Ave. Through the south of the site, the rail

lines once established an industrial band along their boundaries. Artists in loft style

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[33] Live Baltimore Home Center

housing use one of these brick industrial buildings, nicknamed the Copy Cat

Building, while other buildings in the area still sit underutilized and possibly

inhabited by squatters.
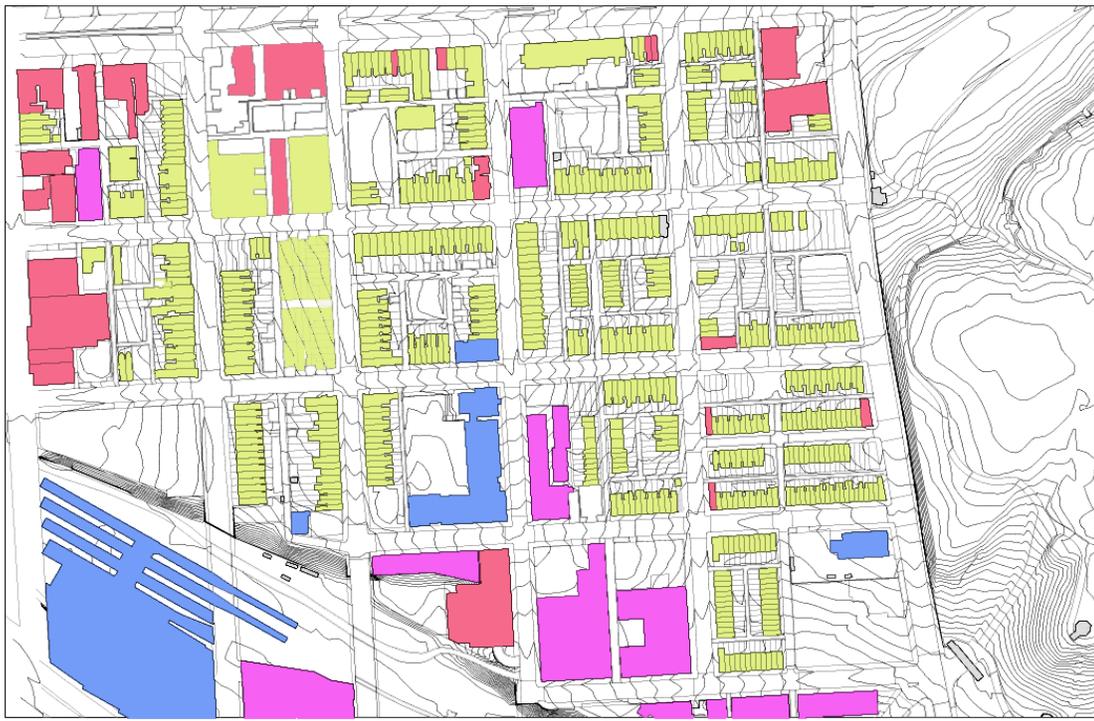
Figure 20 – Land Use Diagram

In the center of the site along Guilford Ave. the former Mildred Monroe

Elementary School reopened in the fall of 2008 as the Baltimore Montessori Public

Charter Elementary. During its inactivity, the building had temporarily been used as

a homeless shelter, resulting in some opposition from the community. The newly

renovated facility is kindergarten through 4th grade and will be opening a new grade

level each year as renovations continue. The facility will eventually serve students

through the middle school level.[34]

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[34] Baltimore Montessori
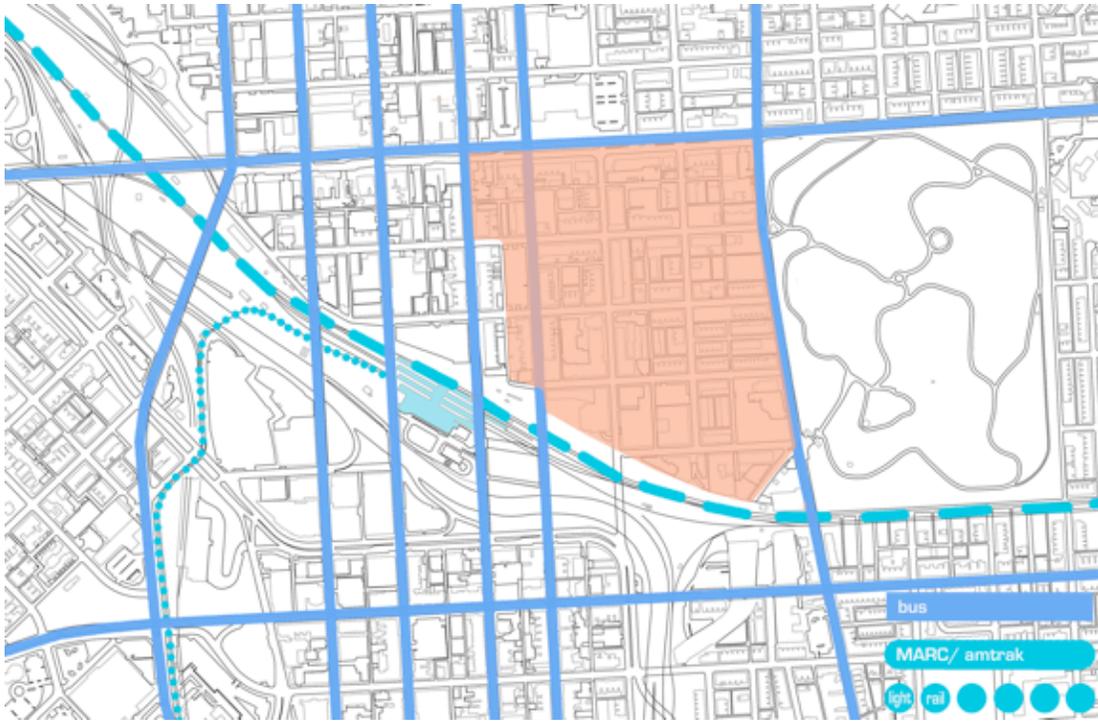
Figure 21 – Public transportation routes

Penn Station is located on the South West edge of the site within a ten minute walking distance from the center of the neighborhood. Further to the West is the Bolton Hill campus of the Maryland Institute College of Art (MICA). The Fox building's large MICA sign at the edge of campus can just be seen from the western edge of E. Lafayette Ave. Several blocks South of Greenmount West is the University of Baltimore campus directly connected to the arts district through bus routes running along N. Charles, N. Calvert and St. Paul Streets.
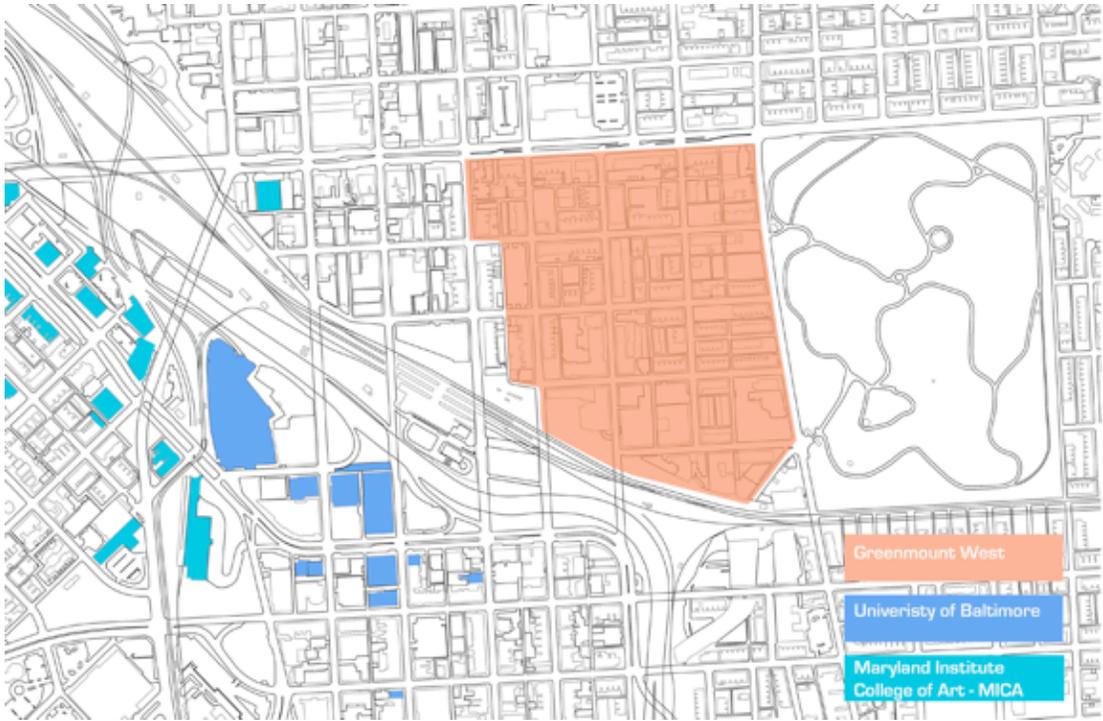
Figure 22 – Map of institutions around Greenmount West

do these trees mean that this is this public land? who uses it?

chain link fence- is there a better way to shield and contain these backyards?

is this storage in a sideyard, backyard or in a public space?

why is trash collected here?

Figure 23 – Early site annotations at site of cleared housing on Barclay St.

this corner is now abandoned. could it support non-residential community facilities that adapt through periods of the day?

can the historic rowhouse fabric be retained while changing a building's use?

what ways could these adjacent properties be combined to create a larger public interior space?
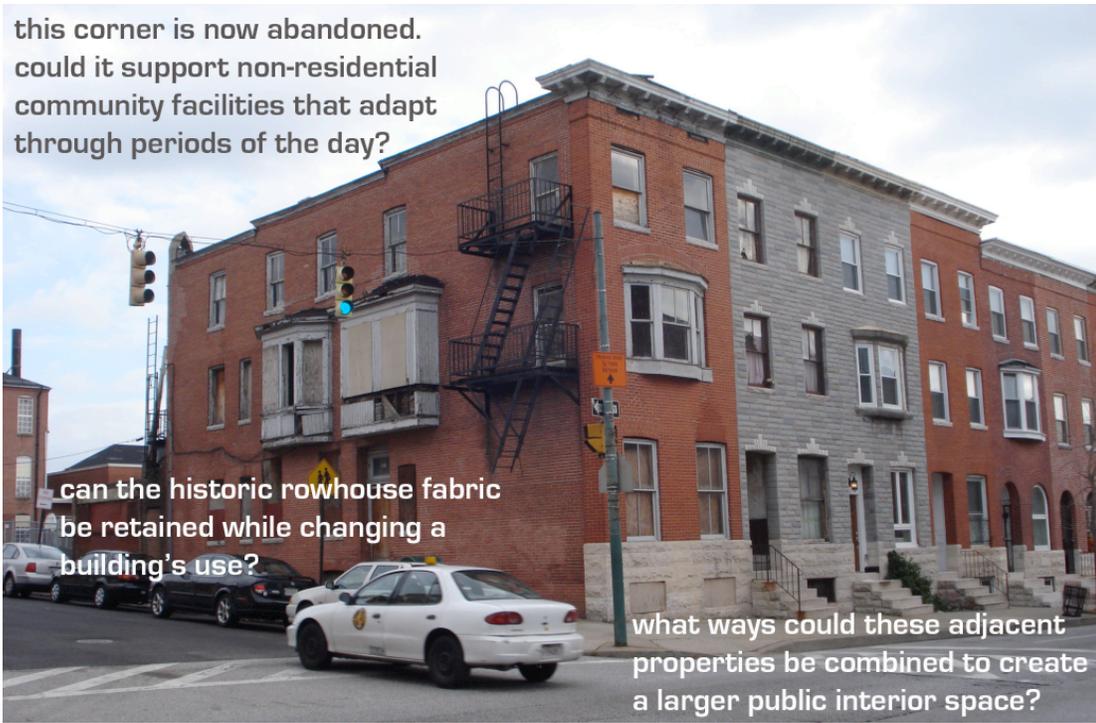
Figure 24 – Early site annotations at corner property on E. Lafayette Ave.

is this now residential or industrial?

could this be preserved as a community icon?

old Lebow clothes factory

these empty rowhouses can be refurbished to respond to the green

evidence of pedestrian trail diagonally through site

is this a public green? who uses it? how can this be more clear?

what programatic events should occur here? recreation? markets?

Figure 25 – Early site annotations at the corner of Greenmount Ave. and E. Oliver St.

Chapter 5: Design Approach

Crime Prevention Through Community Empowerment and Identity

Figure 26 – The intersection of E. Lafayette and Guilford Ave.

Taking back the corner

As mentioned earlier, the corner acts as a hub for community activity. If a community loses control over its corners to drug dealers then it has little chance of taking control back over its community without these corners. This thesis relies heavily on this principle.

Figure 27 – Current and previously existing corner store locations

There are several corners in Greenmount west that already support some forms of corner store activity. Others show signs that they were once in operation but fell with the urban decay of the area. Figure 27 is a map indicating the locations of commercial activity in the district. The darker circles indicate corner stores that are still active. A survey of community life at ground level indicates that blocks are mostly empty of community presence and activity. The corners with the most loitering occurred at the intersections of E. Lafayette St. and Guilford Ave and E. Lanvale St. and Barclay St. The corner of E. Lanvale St. and Guilford Ave could use strengthening to activate and protect the newly reopened school on that block. These three corners of primary interest are indicated on the following map.
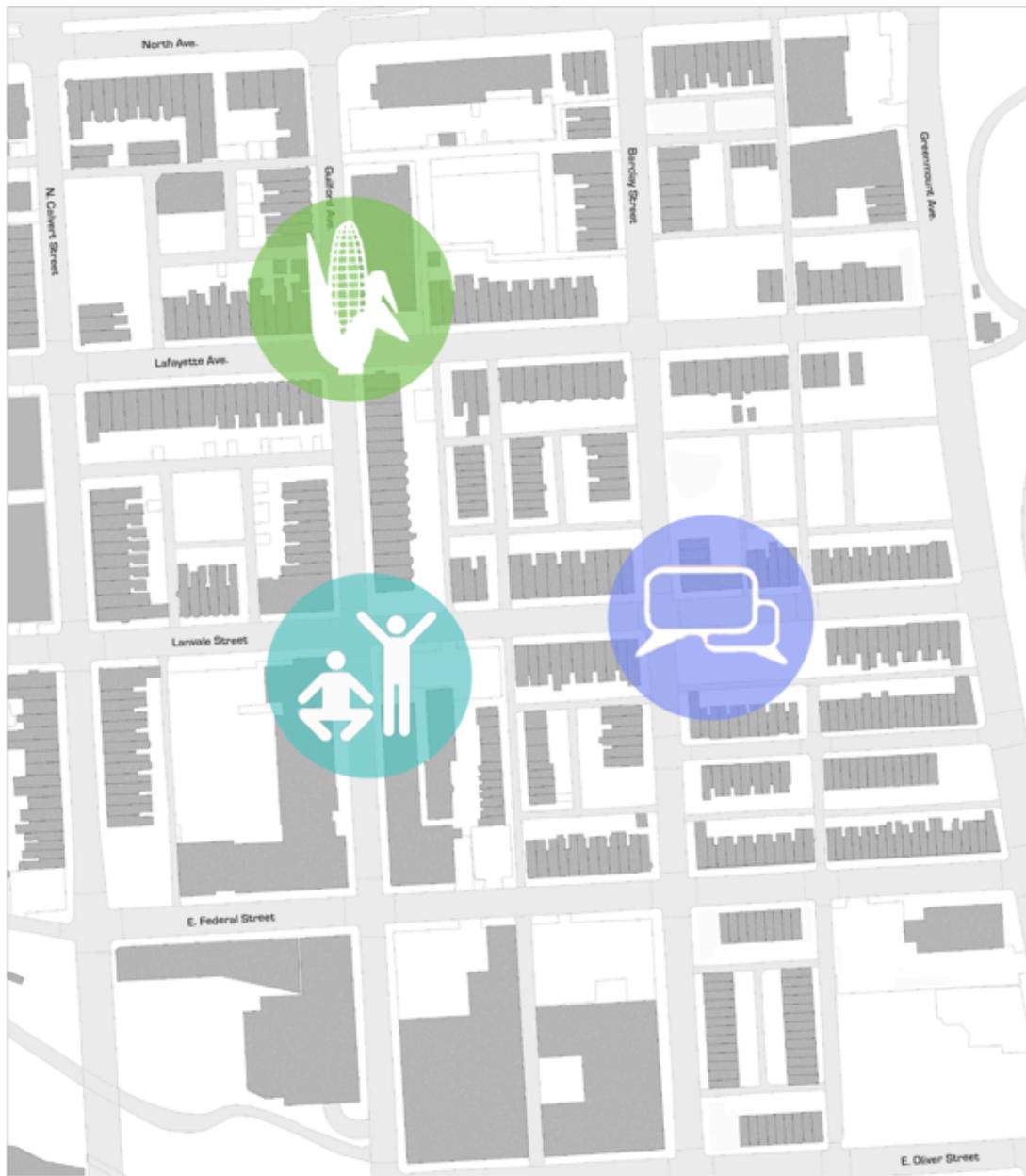
Figure 28 – Proposed corners for intervention

The programming of interventions on these sites focus on three areas that adapt through times of the day to include a range of related activities. Together, the ripple effects of work accomplished at these areas of community supervision would influence the rest of the neighborhood.

Sidewalk awnings and street furniture

Figure 29 – Master plan of awnings & street furniture

Any revitalization proposal for a neighborhood can only be as successful as its ability to inhabit public zones with watchful residents who can take an active interest in resident ownership and occupation over these spaces. To accomplish this in Greenmount West, a kit of semi-permanent elements can be used to encourage the

often ignored positive effects of sidewalk loitering within the corner zones

represented by specific colors in figure 29.

Figure 30 – Sidewalk corner temporary canopy structures

Ellen Beasley's book published about the National Building Museum's

exhibit on corner stores in Galveston Texas portrays covered areas of sidewalk as

neighborhood parlors.[35] A system of inexpensive and flexible sidewalk canopies can

be adhered to the facades of residential buildings situated near street corners. Figure

30 shows these simple aluminum frame and wire mesh panels, which can be affixed

without damaging invasive measures into a facade by means of a simple hinge and

cable. They may be raised and lowered as desired and would contain signage, or

public art murals applied by paint to the open wire mesh in the tradition of the

indigenous historic Baltimore painted screens that were created nearly a century ago

to beautify the streetscape and offer privacy to residents and shop owners.

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[35] Beasley
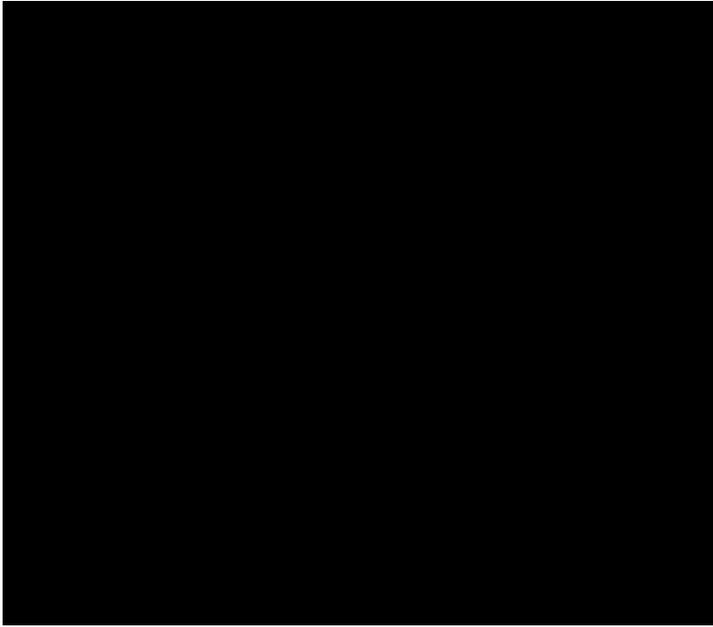
Figure 31 – Modern examples of the Baltimore Painted Screen

The implied sense of protection and hospitality offered by these awning panels sends a message that this is an area claimed for constructive public uses and creates a recognizable reoccurring elements that gives a sense of place and identity to a community which might otherwise feel borderless as one passes through the neighborhood on the heavily trafficked North/South routes into and out of the city.

Figure 32 – Painted wire street corner furniture

Similar to the awning element, street furniture is zoned for areas under these awnings, along public building facades, and other public spaces within a short distance from the corner. Fashioned of wire and painted intersection-specific colors, this street furniture is repeated throughout Greenmount West to build upon the sense of place and allude once again to the Baltimore tradition of the painted screen. These tables, chairs and benches would extend the seating planes of the famous white marble steps of Baltimore rows that provide smaller moments of seating for residents up and down the full length of a block. The public nature of the corner make this furniture facilitate activities like card games and chess matches but can also be places where amateur artisans can sell their products, where job fairs and interviews can be held in a less sterile atmosphere, or voter registration drives could be organized.

Corner Redevelopment Plans

Monroe After-School and Recreation Center
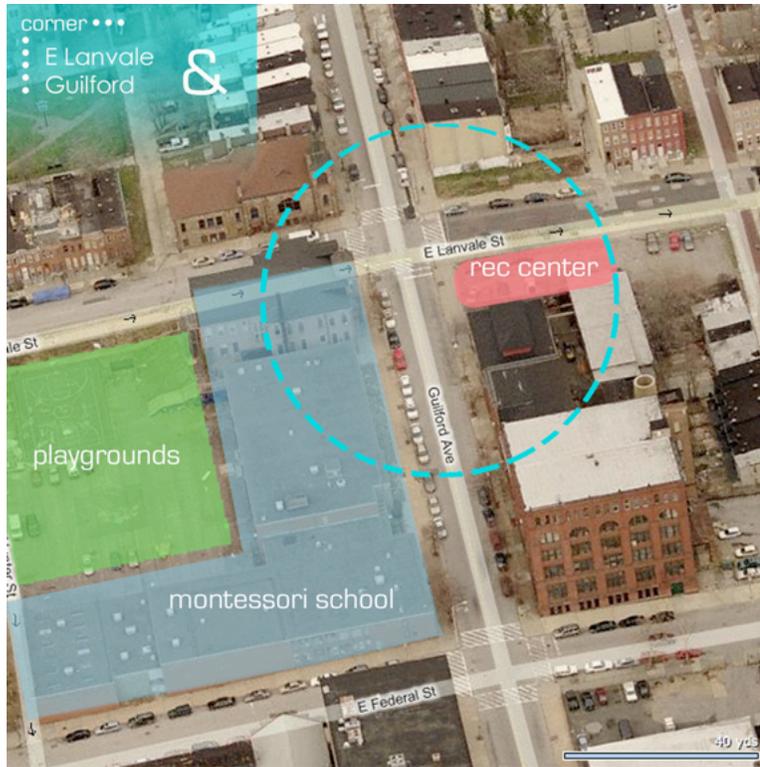
Figure 33 – E. Lanvale St. and Guilford Ave. corner strategy[36]

Education is critical in a city where educational statistics are disappointing among underprivileged youth and adults. The site strategy for the corner of E. Lanvale St. and Guilford Ave. proposes a recreation and after-school facility be built on previously demolished housing plots adjacent to the historic Crown Cork and Seal industrial site and across the street from the former Mildred Monroe Elementary School.

Programmatically, the recreation center would:

•provide safe and constructive activities for local children and students

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[36] http://maps.live.com/

•reinforce curricular activities, creativity, and the development of life skills

•provide after-hours employment counseling, skills training and substance

abuse counseling.

Figure 34 – Street level vignette of corner

The building façade makes provisions for sheltered seating on the exterior

with a pick-up zone that respects the strategic goals of the canopy and sidewalk

furniture systems. The recreation center will serve residents of the community or

students who attend school in the community. It will therefore receive local and non-

local children. The back third of the building contains formal classrooms, and tutoring

areas. The forward two thirds contain the activity spaces including computer lab,

lounge/game room, arts and crafts station, karate dojo/dance studio, and a small study

hall classroom. Generally, the second floor is an open plan containing the activities

for older children, ages 11-18 requiring less supervision, while the younger children

occupy the ground floor.

Figure 35 – Arts and crafts activity space

After dinner hours when the children have gone, the building can partially shut down while the corner continues to be activated by adult programs that occupy the small study hall classroom and activity space off of the lobby. This strategy of continually activating the programming of a corner makes this a highly monitored and safe location for the local children.

Figure 36 – Classroom and activity room adjoining lobby

Guilford Market and growing garden

Figure 37 – E. Lafayette and Guilford Ave. corner strategy[37]

       The neighborhood of Greenmount West is lacking a local grocer or market

within convenient walking distance that provides nutritious fresh food. A serious

issue with inner city impoverished residents is the unavailability of healthy foods that

may be purchased locally at an affordable cost. The corner of E. Lafayette and

Guilford Ave. is a hotspot for nuisance activity because its corner grocer has become

a liquor store while a one-story warehouse building occupies the adjacent non-

residential corner. By converting the liquor store back into a grocery store and

building a new public market building over the foundation of the current disposable

storage building, the corner can be activated to satisfy the following programmatic

goals:

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[37] http://maps.live.com/

•make nutritional foods accessible while supporting local industry

•increase awareness of agriculture and encourage healthy eating habits

•provide green-collar jobs for local youth and rehabilitated adults preparing to
reenter the workforce

Figure 38 – Corner store and new public market facility

Figure 39 – Longitudinal section through greenhouses and market aisle

The facility experiments with a new market type. It provides a central ground
floor interior vending aisle with meat cases, prepared foods, and a flea market
situated along the East wall and produce sold in rentable stations along the Guilford
Ave façade facing West. Produce vendors each occupy a bay of the façade complete
with individual drop-off/vending space sheltered by sloped walls over the sidewalk
and an attached interior vending space that can be shut off from the elements.

Figure 40 – Sidewalk produce drop-off and vending area

Figure 41 – Interior market vending areas with opening to greenhouses above

The second floor of the market is occupied by agricultural functions comprised of three individual greenhouses, their associated storage and preparation spaces, a small educational demonstration space and some office space. Each greenhouse is sealed by glass under a large skylight that is tarped during the warmer months and climate controlled through vents and fans. Runoff from the skylights will be channeled into collection for use in the growing garden on the block interior. These growing spaces will extend the growing season and allow the preparation of seedlings for later planning into the adjacent vegetable and herb growing garden and the year-round greenhouse cultivation of certain herbs, vegetables and flowers to be

sold in the market below. Revenue from fees paid to the Community Association
from venders and the money raised through its own agricultural profits will help pay
for upkeep of the facility and its staffing.

Figure 42 – Typical greenhouse

Figure 43 – Typical greenhouse preparation and storage space

Openings in the floors of the greenhouse preparation spaces allow glimpses
from the market below into the agricultural activities and a large glazed space with
seating on the North East corner of the building allows views between the market
interior and the growing garden that occupies the block center. The market combines
affordable foods with an experience of where farmed goods originate. This model of a

duel purpose public market can be used in other urban communities around the

country to educate people of the importance of agriculture and healthy eating habits.

Barclay Café and graffiti park
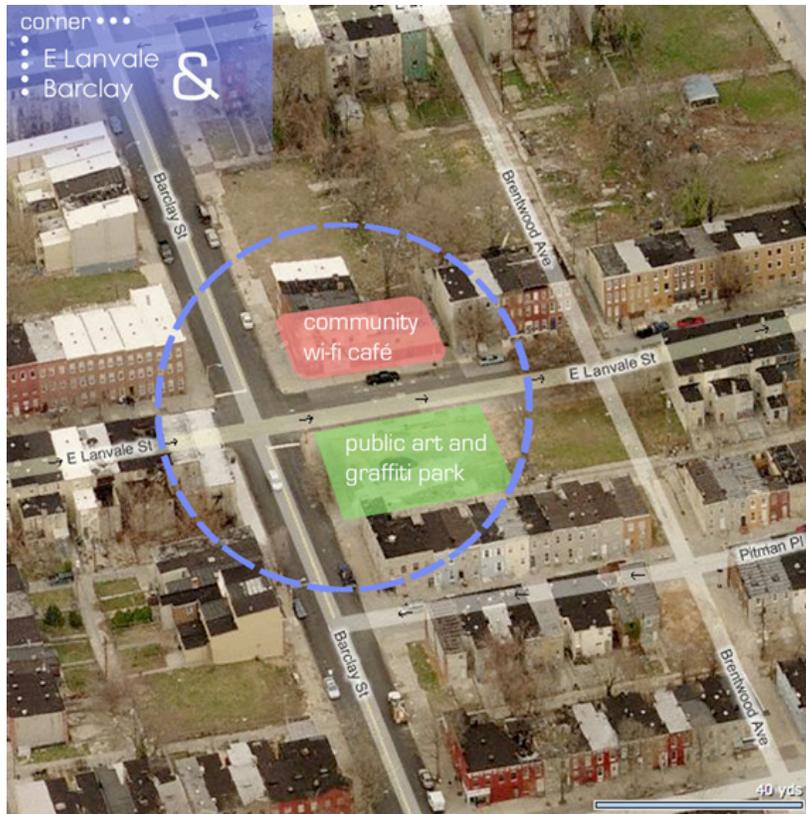
Figure 44 – E. Lanvale and Barclay St. corner strategy[38]

The third developed corner is to addresses a range of key programmatic goals.

This corner now stands abandoned in close proximity to most of the abandoned

housing stock of the neighborhood. A corner store once occupied this site but it

currently stands shuttered. A repurposing of this empty structure creates a multi-

function community oriented café that addresses the following objectives:

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[38] http://maps.live.com/

•creating a stage for the community voice to be heard

•forming a community forum where residents gather to debate and share ideas

•making a space that encourages involvement, the arts and performances

Figure 45 – Café intersection and graffiti park

I've based the café after the Busboys and Poets chain of restaurants in the Washington DC area that mix ideas of a café, lounge and performance space, making them perfect for community meeting events. I've included a stage-like, elevated platform, for speakers and performers, a couple computer stations as a place to quickly check the news, weather or email, art gallery space along the walls for local artists to exhibit and sell their works and a lounge complete with Wi-Fi internet access that extends into a free speech graffiti park in an empty lot across the street.

Figure 46 – Café sidewalk exterior

Figure 47 – Café interior with presentation and performance stage

Figure 48 – Café interior with amateur art gallery

I've used a language of symbols to convey the varied activities of the corner through picture boards affixed to the ends of the awning structure surrounding the café façade and in a custom frit pattern in the glass storefront inspired from Rem Koolhaas's IIT student center mimicking the human scale and duel public/private ambiguity accomplished historically with Baltimore painted screens.

Figure 49 – Graffiti park self-expression stations

Brick piers with glass block centers articulate the zone of the graffiti park, illuminating the park by night with power stored from solar panels on the South-facing roof sheltering the café spill-out space on the North side of the park. The piers also support wire mesh panels, painted by local artists. The end walls of the adjacent buildings are also canvases for murals created by local artists or existing community outreach programs of MICA. Within the park are piers clad in slate with a chalk shelf. Residents are encouraged to leave messages and pictures behind that are easily erased by weather and the elements to be quickly filled again.

Such a redevelopment on this corner would discourage trash dumping and drug activity by reclaiming both non-residential street corners at that intersection by forming a local destination for neighborly expression. With artists already living in the repurposed industrial building nearby to the South, this site makes sense as an outlet for these artists to have an impact on their community. The creation of a Wi-Fi space and public computer workstations well serve residents and children who don't have a computer or Internet connection in their home. The café could also serve as a gateway to a small area of new artist live/work gallery units to be built to the North on empty plots on Barclay Street. Additionally, its location on the West side of the

neighborhood can anchor connections to established creative venues to the West in

Station North and inspire the spreading of these activities through the entire

neighborhood arts district.

Chapter 6: General vs. Specific Strategies, Lessons Learned and Suggestions for Universal Implementation

Conclusions

General and specific redevelopment strategies

Within any urban redevelopment plan there are certain universally accepted design rules and strategies. Policies regarding defensible space and cooperative living are used wherever possible in the revitalization proposal of Greenmount West. Such strategies are proven effective in countless case studies. The use and placement of certain programming elements within the neighborhood context results from research of these universal design guidelines. The comprehensive and long-term success of any mixed-income community requires facilities addressing the needs of its lowest income residents.

As discussed in earlier chapters the development of a sense of place builds neighborhood pride in local culture and history. This pride insures better cooperative spirit and neighborhood involvement. To accomplish this, the rich and diverse origins of Baltimore's famous red brick rows with white marble steps are celebrated and preserved. This approach is preferable over replacing housing with non-regional architecture that doesn't speak to Baltimoreans' longstanding heritage. Additionally, the use of elements alike to the traditional Baltimore folk art painted screen will increase a sense of local identity as well as to beautify the streetscape and add a textural quality to public art and signage for neighborhood public facilities. Painted

screens are the inspiration for painted wire-mesh street furniture, a series of glass frit

patterns in the eye-level glazing of public buildings illustrating programmatic

functions, and signage and murals painted on the wire mesh of sidewalk canopies and

park space panels. Life-long residents as well as new city residents anxious to settle

amid the social culture of the area will appreciate the preservation of local traditions.

Paths of continued development

With the scope of work possible in such an ambitious undertaking as this,

much of the design work and master planning deserves continued refinement beyond

the scope of what a yearlong thesis can facilitate. Arising from discussions amongst

witnesses to a presentation of this material, several notable points were described as

possible avenues for further consideration: the treatment of the Greenmount Cemetery

edge, zoning sidewalk retail into a master plan, and considering opportunities for

adjusting street and sidewalk widths along less trafficked East/West streets.

The Master plan in Figure 50, and street sections in Figure 51, show the

changes to sidewalk usage and width that occur between a typical North/South street

and an East/West one. While vertical streets have higher traffic numbers and passing

walkers en rout to a destination, the cross streets can be more heavily dominated by

the sidewalk zone and moments of hesitation. A greater concentration of sidewalk

furniture placed in grouped arrangements encouraging social dialogue is now zoned

along these East/West roads. This strategy gives the plan a subtle hierarchy of space

that could over time develop into recognizable side retail streets for seasonal sidewalk

or street fairs. It also gives many of the residences a thicker transitional zone in areas between the public sidewalk and the private living room.


Figure 50 – Master plan for revised sidewalk widths and street usage

Figure 51 – Changes in sidewalk and street width between street types

Aside from street furniture, this sidewalk expansion also has consequences on the site planning of the three public facilities. The situation of the market building was the result of the availability of open land on which agricultural endeavors could occur. The long market edge with frontage along the highly trafficked Guilford Avenue makes this an identifiable amenity to passing vehicular and foot traffic. Figure 52 is a revision sketch overlay exploring a second possible location for the market. The fabric of the center block North East of the intersection of Barclay and E. Lanvale Streets has been cleared entirely, leaving a space for the restoration of housing or an opportunity for a new amenity space. The movement of the market building from Guilford Avenue to Barclay Street would allow the growing garden to become a more public space with frontage near the entrance to Greenmount

Cemetery. On the other hand, it would put the market building on a less trafficked and less visible site. If the garden were to occupy the whole center block space between Barclay Street and Greenmount Avenue, the market could stay on Guilford with its smaller associated growing garden and use this larger, more public garden, for the growing of herbs and flowers. Such crops would beautify the neighborhood with certain sections of flowers grown specifically for use in public spaces throughout Greenmount West.

Figure 52 – Possible second location for public market and growing garden
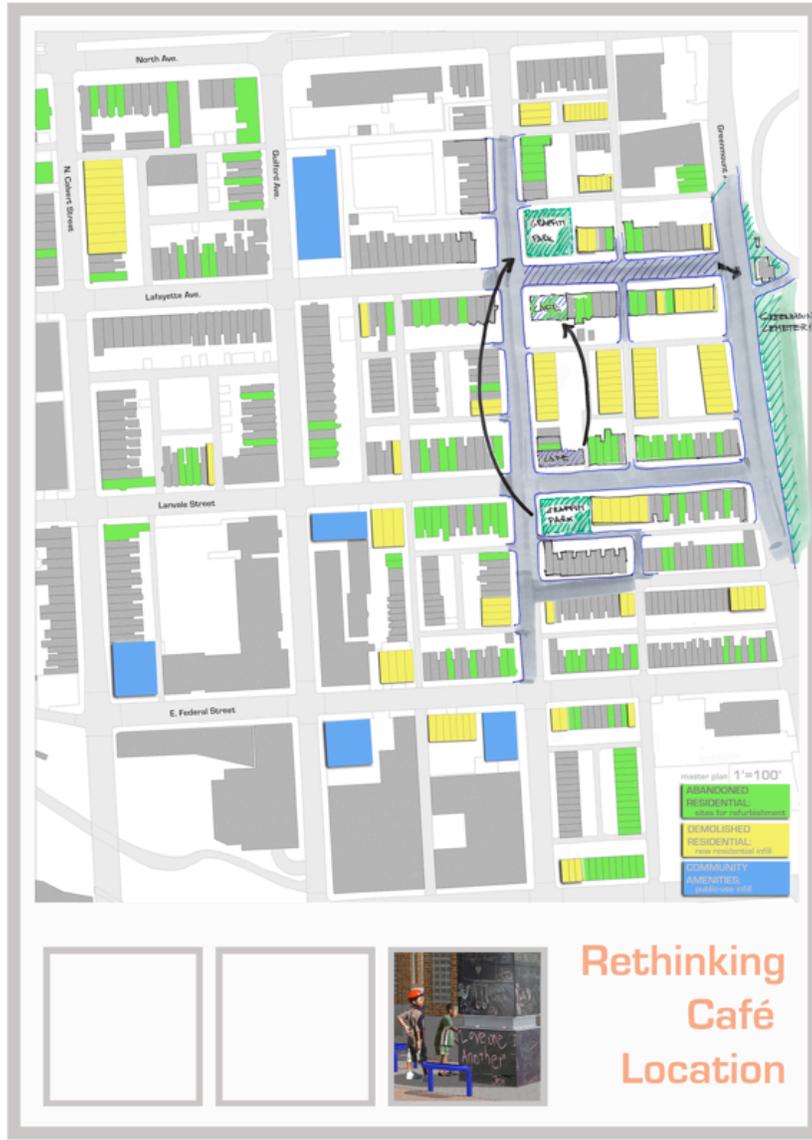
Figure 53 – Possible second location for café and graffiti park

The possible connection between Greenmount West and Greenmount Cemetery would be improved by moving the café and graffiti park a block North of the corner on which they were designed.   The intersection of E. Lafayette Avenue and Barclay Street has multiple abandoned rows and a large open lot. These could host the same café and park program as was described in the previous chapter. Lafayette Avenue is interrupted by Greenmount Cemetery. The neighborhood and this green space currently turn their backs to each other. The cemetery is raised

above street level and walled making visual connections to this possible amenity difficult. An entrance to the cemetery, situated at the Eastern edge of Lafayette could serve as the necessary connection point. Here, the cemetery ground level drops to become close to that of the sidewalk. If Lafayette Avenue became a recognizable destination space dominated by pedestrian activity, it might encourage the acceptance of this otherwise forgotten green space into a local amenity. The café and graffiti park are perfect programmatic generators for transforming the block of E. Lafayette Avenue between Barclay Street and Greenmount Avenue. A concentration of artist live/work galleries occupying the infill and refurbished housing zoned on this street could spill onto the sidewalk during weekend street fairs. With the activity of the public market located just a block West of this second possible café location, any cemetery connection might reach even further West.

Conclusions in the field of community redevelopment

As planners and visionaries of the built environment, architects have the great privilege and responsibility of addressing the challenges of blighted urban neighborhoods. For decades, city planners, architects and social activists have attempted to identify the causes for urban blight and reform the housing and social wellbeing of residents. Many of these redevelopments have since been deemed disasters like the very public and short-lived Pruitt-Igoe redeveloped public housing in St. Louis.

Causes for housing failure include: poverty isolation, making nonspecific architecture, providing no defensible public spaces and designing inadequate forums

for self-expression and resident involvement. The redevelopment proposal discussed in these pages is meant to outline a series of possible strategies for reclaiming a specific Baltimore neighborhood. The themes and strategies discussed are by plan designed to be both universal and specific in their implementation. This discussion on the redevelopment of Greenmount West can inform proposals for blighted communities in other American cities. The absolute locations and forms of specific architectural interventions in Greenmount West are not absolute or finalized. Further research is possible into continued exploration anticipating public reaction to and use of public facilities. What should be gained from this overview of research and design exploration is knowledge of the needs of not just this one community but of all struggling populations in American cities. It is with sincere hope of gained interest and involvement from the architectural community that these design guidelines, strategies and architectural interventions are proposed.

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