Revitalizing The Village:
A Redevelopment Proposal for Ball State University's Commercial District

An Honors Thesis (HONRS 499)

by

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Abstract

"The Village," the commercial district serving Ball State University and the surrounding community, is in need of redevelopment and revitalization. The south 1600 block of University Avenue has the most potential for redevelopment. The conceptual framework for redevelopment is based on the history of the area and successful commercial districts near other universities, and the architectural design is cohesive with the style of the Ball State University Campus and the surrounding buildings in "The Village." The proposed complex includes the relocation of some existing businesses on the block, new businesses that are lacking in "The Village," high-end apartments, and an open plaza. The proposal is economically viable for the Muncie area, as well as culturally and environmentally sustainable.
Dr. Emert,

Included here is a black and white copy of my honors thesis for your review. The document is intended to be printed in color, and the color copy scanned for electronic records. The images being printed in black and white verses in color has no impact on the text of the document, but revisions could potentially cause images to shift and many pages to be reprinted. Color printing is significantly more expensive than black and white, so I am trying to only print the color version once. I will be happy to provide a color copy with any necessary revisions. If you would like to see a color copy before the final revised copy, I would be happy to email you a PDF version of the file, or the color copy of the “90% finished” version of the document that I submitted for consideration for the Trimmer Award is at the Honors House. I look forward to your feedback.

Thank you

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Preface

With the evolution of big box stores, fast food franchises, and urban sprawl, downtown and college village areas are fighting for survival. Local small businesses and mixed-use housing units are fighting a battle of David versus Goliath against the one-size-fits-all mega-chains. To survive, commercial areas like the Ball State University "Village" must consistently evolve to thrive in our rapidly-changing world. While the entire 8-block area that makes up the Ball State "Village" would have to evolve to successfully face the challenges of the future, I chose to focus my efforts on the block that is currently the least successful and has the most potential for redevelopment. The plan I have developed is based on the history of the Ball State University "Village", the success of two commercial areas shared by universities and the surrounding communities that faced similar challenges, and my experience in the Ball State "Village" both as a Ball State student and a life-long Muncie resident. Other designers could have different approaches to the architecture and details of the project, but the basic principles and program could be applied a range of similar urban settings as a conceptual roadmap for success.
Most universities located in small or medium size cities in our country have commercial districts that serve both the student population and the surrounding communities with places to eat, shop, and live near campus. "The Village" serves this function at Ball State University and a selected Muncie population. What was once a vibrant, busy part of Muncie has experienced a decline resulting into an under-utilized and neglected area. Thankfully, things are starting to look up as new businesses are taking root and people are coming back to "the Village." This project focuses on one block in "the Village", defined to the west by Martin St., to the east by Dill St., to the north by University Ave., the main road through "the Village," and to the south by North St. The success of "the Village" depends on the entire area being redeveloped in a coordinated fashion. However, the selected block has the greatest potential for redevelopment. The decision as to what types of buildings and businesses are proposed for the site is based on


1. Scotty's Brewhouse
2. Crave Hair Studio
3. Insomnia Cookies
4. Wizard's Keep Gaming
5. The Cup
6. White Rabbit Used Books
7. Greek's Pizzaria
8. Village Pantry Gas Station
9. First Merchant's Bank
10. Ball State Federal Credit Union

1. Cleo's Bourbon Bar
2. University Square
3. National Guard Recruitment Center
4. cardinal cupcakes and coneys
5. Dill Street Bar
on patterns of businesses in "the Village," past proposals\textsuperscript{1,2}, case studies of two successfully revamped university districts, and my experience in "the Village" as both a Ball State student and a life-long Muncie resident. The buildings are flexible to have allowed for businesses to change over time, as "the Village" contains a mix of long-time establishments and short-lived, rapidly changing businesses. The two case studies used to inform and inspire the proposal for "the Village" are Market Square in Knoxville, Tennessee, and The District in Columbia, Missouri, serving the University of Tennessee and the University of Missouri, respectively. While these cities and universities are larger than Muncie and Ball State, the recent successful redevelopment from situations similar to that of "the Village," and my first-hand observations of these village-like districts make these case studies a good starting point in determining what "the Village" needs.

Figure 5 "Market Square." 35°57'53.98"N 83°55'10.43"W GoogleEarth. Accessed March 23, 2013

\textsuperscript{1} Fish, Lauren K., "A Life of a Restaurant in the Village: An Analysis and Creation of a Successful Restaurant in Muncie's Village" (Honors Thesis, Ball State University, 2010).
\textsuperscript{2} Jeffery Glinke and Joshua Schum, "The Village: A Plan for Identity, Diversity, and the Future" (Honors Thesis, Ball State University, 2006).
Currently, "the Village" has some thriving businesses, but also has a number of empty storefronts and under-utilized spaces. It has been a successful location in the past, proving that the area can work if the right ingredients are present. In the 1970s, "the Village" catered to the surrounding community, particularly families. "The Village" included a grocery store, shoe store, clothing store, candy shop, drugstore, and a variety of restaurants. In the 1980s, top restaurants in "the Village" included Buffalo Wild Wings, La Bamba (a small, made-to-order burrito shop), and the Blue Bottle (a local coffee shop). Since then, all three of these establishments have relocated elsewhere in the Muncie area, and both La Bamba and Blue Bottle have closed all operations in the area.

Since 2010, "the Village" has experienced an unusually large number of businesses closing and new businesses opening. Two years after the economic collapse in 2008, the owner of several buildings in "the Village" filed for bankruptcy, resulting in the closing of many businesses. Since then, several new businesses have opened in "the Village," including Grandma Betty's ice cream shop, QL's Bar-B-Que, cardinal cupcakes and coneys (See Appendix C), Cleo's Bourbon Bar, The Cup coffee shop (formerly MT Cup, 3 Boswell, Sarah. "Muncie Residents Recall Village of Past." Ball State Daily News, April 28, 2011, accessed April 30, 2012, http://www.bsudailynews.com/muncie-residents-recall-village-of-past.html.
5 Boswell, Sarah, "Muncie Residents Recall Village of Past."
6 Editorial Board. "Our View: Back to Life."
7 Boswell, Sarah, "Muncie Residents Recall Village of Past."
13 Dickey, Kelly, "Picking Up the Pieces."
a long standing, popular establishment), Insomnia Cookies, and Red Bird Tequila and Taco Bar.

The block that is the focus of this proposal currently contains five buildings. The two most successful buildings on the block are the two story, brick-façade building at the corner of University and Martin housing Cleo's Bourbon Bar with apartments above, and the building housing Dill Street Bar on Dill St. Those would remain in this proposal, while the University Square building, National Guard building, and the cardinal cupcakes and coney building would be demolished. These businesses would be given preference if the elect to be relocated within the proposed building complex, University Place. The proposed University Place complex would retain the following existing businesses:

- Oh Fusion Japanese Restaurant
- cardinal cupcakes and coney
- National Guard Recruitment Center

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Based on the perceived needs of Ball State's students, faculty, and staff as well as a specific clientele that have supported "the Village" in the past, the current proposals and growth in "the Village," and using the successes in Columbia, Missouri and Knoxville, Tennessee university-related "villages," the proposed complex would also include:

1. A small grocery store with
2. A small pharmacy
3. A small, casual dining restaurant
4. Bicycle and skate shop
5. Plaza space to accommodate outdoor dining and small festivals and gatherings
6. Eight high-end, two-bedroom apartments

Figure 8 Proposed Commercial Buildings
Design Approach:

In designing University Place, three primary goals were defined early in the project:

- The proposal must be economically viable to build and maintain.
- The proposal must be sustainable from a cultural and environmental perspective.
- The proposal must be flexible, adapting to the rapid change seen in "the Village" and similar urban areas in the past and, no doubt, are destined to take place in the future.

These goals are intentionally broad because this proposal is meant to provide the conceptual framework for a vision of "the Village," a framework that can be used as a basis for the revamping of similar urban areas across the country.

The façades of the proposed commercial buildings are inspired by the other buildings on the block and historic streetscapes of similar scale like the block to the north, across University Avenue. The goal was to focus the development on a pedestrian-oriented plaza with welcoming buildings to house the current and proposed businesses to draw people back to "the Village" with a fresh and inviting space. Maintaining a consistent color and material palette throughout the block will help to unify the space rather than a conglomeration of different styles and scales, as seen in much of "the Village." The proposed apartments are based on a long-held, historic model of "living above the shop" and, more currently, mixed use development that attempts to foster 24/7 activities. They are clad in a gray, matte-finish metal panel rain-screen. This material was chosen to set the apartments apart from the commercial buildings and give the apartments a lighter,
more airy feel. The metal panels and the metal trim around doors and windows in the brick walls offer a color and texture that both contrasts and balances the brick well.

The main structural system for the proposed buildings is load-bearing masonry walls, a fairly simple, common, and inexpensive system for this scale of buildings. In addition to being cost effective, concrete masonry units (CMUs), also commonly known as concrete blocks, are manufactured locally in Shelbyville, Indiana, a little over an hour drive from Muncie. The use of local and regional materials is not only cost effective because it reduces shipping and transportation costs, but because it puts money into the local economy, which is a step toward economic sustainability, and the reduction in shipping results in a reduction of greenhouse gas emissions transporting materials. CMUs can be made using recycled or repurposed materials such as recycled concrete ground up or fly ash, a waste product resulting from coal power generation. Because CMUs are modular and manufactured all over the country, this structural system has and will continue to be used in similar urban settings for versatile, affordable, sustainable buildings. For more on the proposed structural system, see Appendix A.

Even with a consistent CMU wall design that can be used throughout the country, the wide range of possibilities for exterior finish materials would allow this framework for revamping a depressed urban area to reflect each individual community differently. Red brick was chosen for University Place in order to unify the development of the block as a micro-community within "the Village" and Muncie, and to visually connect the area with the materials and styles of Ball State and downtown Muncie. Brick façades are easily maintained and are incredibly durable. Although energy-intensive to manufacture, brick lasts much longer than many other exterior finish materials. In some cases, brick can be
reused from buildings that are demolished, which offers a more sustainable option for the use of brick.

Restaurants and bars are currently the main attraction in "the Village." Restaurants are placed strategically to draw people into the plaza and other commercial businesses in University Place in this proposal. Oh Fusion Japanese restaurant, one of the tenets of University Square, is in the same location, but in a new building with outdoor seating in the plaza. The small, casual dining restaurant is located at the south end of the plaza with outdoor seating on the north side of the restaurant. The casual dining restaurant is intended to be a Mexican restaurant, similar to the well-established Puerto Vallarta restaurants in Muncie. In fact, they may even be approached to establish and operate it as

![Figure 9 Conceptual Sketch of Restaurant Interior, Process Work](image-url)
this move would bring a "known entity" in the development. "The Village" has a variety of cuisine, including American dining, pizza, sandwiches, Chinese, Japanese, and hot breakfast served most of the day at The Cup. Mexican food is usually affordable and is popular with the college-age population, which suggests it would be successful in "the Village."

Cardinal cupcakes and coneys is located south of the casual dining restaurant in a new building close to its current location. The new building is almost double the size of the current building, providing indoor seating, a larger kitchen, and a patio dining space. A large portion of the lunch customers at cardinal cupcakes and coneys drive from outside "the Village" area to get a quick meal during their lunch breaks, making close parking essential. This particular restaurant sees more vehicular traffic than the rest of "the Village," which sees a mix of cars, buses, bicycles, and walkers.

The grocery store with a pharmacy is located at the northeast corner of the block. Two lines of the Muncie Indiana Transit System (MITS) bus stop at this corner. (See Appendix B) The closest pharmacy (other than the Ball State Health Center, which has limited hours and a limited range of medications) is more than a mile away from "the Village," and the closest grocery store, not counting "pantry-size" convenience stores often found with gas stations, is more than a mile and a half away.

Figure 10 Conceptual Sketch of Grocery Store, Process Work
In this proposal, the National Guard Recruitment Center is relocated to a new building on the south side of the complex along Martin St. from the corner of University Ave. and Dill St., which becomes the new location for the grocery store. It is anticipated that a larger percentage of people traveling to the National Guard Recruitment Center would be traveling by car than on foot, which is not necessarily the case for the other businesses in the complex. This suggests that the National Guard Recruitment Center would benefit from being located close to the parking area. Many restaurants and shops are located along busy streets with large signs to attract "impulse buyers" who will stop in on a whim. The National Guard Recruitment Center, much like a dentist or law office, does not significantly benefit from the street traffic as a restaurant would.

The bicycle and skate shop is located next to the National Guard Recruitment Center. With biking becoming a more and more common mode of transportation, especially on the Ball State campus and in the greater Muncie community, and skateboarding rapidly gaining popularity among Ball State University students, there would be a market for bicycles, skateboards, and repair parts for both. The nearest bicycle shop to "the Village" is downtown, almost a mile and a half away. With so many students using bicycles and skateboards on campus, a bicycle and skate shop is a logical addition to

Figure 11 Conceptual Sketch of South Side of Complex, Process Work
make it easier for people in the surrounding neighborhoods to bike more, which is a step toward a more sustainable community.

The eight apartments above the commercial businesses are proposed as high-end, two bedroom, two bathroom apartments marketed toward Ball State University faculty, Indiana University Health Ball Memorial Hospital (IUHBMH) doctors and staff, and potentially masters and doctoral students. "The Village" is within walking and biking distance of both Ball State University and IUHBMH, two of the largest employers in the Muncie area. Student housing is abundant on and off campus in the forms of dormitories, apartments, and rental houses. There are far fewer options between a college rental property and owning a house in the area. The apartments are two story units with an open plan first level and both bedrooms, as well as a bathroom on the second level. The open plan allows each tenant to configure the space to his or her needs using movable shelving and storage units that act as partitions. Each unit has a balcony on the first level facing out to the plaza. The interior wall of the second bedroom would be a folding partition so that if the room is used as an office, lounge, or work area, it can be open to the first level,
making the apartment feel more spacious. The space between the two bedrooms is open to the first floor below.

These apartments would be partially furnished, including kitchen appliances, living room, and dining room furniture. A comparable apartment in the 17hundred complex on Bethel Avenue that was constructed in 2012 rents for $1100 per month. The proposed apartment units would rent for approximately $1200-1500 per month. The proposed units have balconies, enclosed bicycle storage, and access to laundry and fitness equipment in the complex, all of which the 17hundred complex does not have. People are generally willing to pay more to live close to where they eat, shop, and work. These apartment units would be of high quality, including top of the line appliances, granite countertops, quality tile in the bathrooms, and hardwood floors. The main leasing office would be located south of Dill Street Bar, facing the parking lot. A section of the parking lot would be reserved for the tenants of the apartments and their guests. The main stairs and elevator

Figure 13 Sketch of Section View of an Apartment, Process Work

for the apartments would be located inside the leasing office. Tenants would have card
swipe access into the complex after normal business hours. Each apartment would have
locked, enclosed bicycle storage outside the leasing office.

The proposed plaza serves as the "front porch" for "the Village." The plaza is a
hardscape area providing space for outdoor dining and small festivals. The area would be
paved with permeable concrete pavers in a rotated grid pattern that complements the
surrounding buildings. The plaza would contain kiosks for vendors to sell food and
merchandise. The kiosks would allow for small vendors to cater to both the festival and
late night student crowds. Carter's Nearly World Famous Hot Dogs\(^{18}\) and Greeks Pizzeria
both successfully operate late-night food carts at the intersection of University Avenue and
Dill Street, and the addition of a plaza with kiosks would allow the late-night food offerings
to grow, which could help attract students not old enough to go to the bars to "the
Village."

Figure 14 Conceptual Sketch of the Plaza

http://www.bsudailynews.co/features/hot-dog-man-follows-his-dream.html
One of the design goals for this proposal is sustainability. The main goal of this proposal is to look at the redevelopment of "the Village" as primarily a commercial area, but one that also integrates residential units, that can sustain itself. Areas where people can work, play, go out to eat, and shop for basic groceries close to where they live tend to have a stronger sense of community. Living close to work and basic stores allows people to rely less on their cars and bike or walk to work, which is economically sustainable because it saves people money on gasoline, and environmentally sustainable by reducing the pollution caused by cars. The MITS bus system is another way for people to travel to and from "the Village" sustainably.

Figure 15 Conceptual Sketch of Bus Stop, Restaurant, and Apartment Fire Stairs with Vegetation Wall
The plaza is paved with permeable pavers, which allow storm water to percolate through them and drain into the soil instead of running off into the city storm drain system, where in the event of heavy rain it can overflow, causing wastewater to drain into the White River. Permeable pavers cost more than traditional concrete paving initially, but they will ultimately save the owner money by reducing the storm water runoff bill. CMUs can be manufactured regionally with recycled materials, reducing the cost and pollution in manufacturing and transporting them to the construction site. In some cases, brick can be reused from demolished buildings. The commercial buildings have permanent awnings that shade the windows from hot, summer sun, reducing the amount of air conditioning needed. The awnings block the high summer sun, but allow the low, winter sun in to warm the buildings. The abundance of windows allows indirect sunlight to light the buildings during the day, minimizing the need for electric lighting. A light-weight, extensive green roof covers the flat roofs of the complex. This low-maintenance system insulates the buildings and helps mitigate carbon dioxide in the atmosphere. The pitched south-facing roofs are angled to maximize the efficiency of solar hot water heaters. Solar hot water heaters use solar radiation from the low winter sun to heat water to be used in radiant floor heating. Photovoltaic (PV) solar panels, used for electricity generation, are not yet efficient enough or cost effective to be used year-round in Muncie for power generation, but that will change in the coming years. The overhangs on the south side of the proposed buildings are pitched to maximize PV panel efficiency when the system becomes an economical energy option for this area. PV panels could also be accommodated on the roofs of the buildings.
Many of the proposed sustainable technologies would cost more upfront, but would save money during the life of the building. Sustainability is a balancing act between initial, "first time" cost and long-term costs associated with the operation and maintenance of a building. The architecture of this proposal is not dependent on having these sustainable technologies, but it does incorporate these elements in a seamless manner when they become economically viable to pursue. Some elements make sense to incorporate immediately, like the green roof system, which can triple the life of the roofing membrane, the replacement of which often exceeds the initial cost of the green roof. Others, like the PV panels, are not yet as economical yet but continue to become more efficient, smaller in size and weight, and more affordable.

This proposal is meant to be the framework for redevelopment in "the Village" in Muncie, Indiana, but it is also designed to be flexible enough to work in many commercial districts with similar characteristics. As we work toward a more sustainable future, we are beginning to rethink how our communities work. If the under-utilized parts of "the Village" are redeveloped in a thoughtful way to maximize future success, business will pick up in the area, and "the Village" will once again be "the place to be" in Muncie.
Appendix A: Structure

The main structural system used in this proposal is reinforced concrete masonry unit (CMU) walls. CMUs are laid in a running bond with steel rebar reinforcement. Concrete lintel units are used to span door and window openings. Brick is placed in front of the CMU wall as an exterior finish. The brick is tied to the CMU wall with steel ties.
The main structural floor/roof system for the grocery store is open-web steel joists, which is a system common to grocery and drug stores. Steel joists are spaced 2-4 feet apart and are anchored to the CMU walls. Metal decking is attached to the top of the joists, and a concrete slab is poured on top of the decking.

Figure 18 Open-web Steel Joists on CMU Wall

Figure 19 Open-web Steel Joist with Metal Decking and Concrete Slab
The structural system for the floor/roof of the other proposed buildings is of precast, hollow-core concrete slabs. Precast slabs are anchored into the CMU walls and often have a tongue-and-groove connection with one another. Precast slabs have hollow cores that run lengthwise through the slabs to reduce the weight and allow utilities to run through the floor. Finish flooring can be placed directly on top of the precast slabs, but in most cases, a two-inch lightweight concrete "topping slab" is poured on top of the precast slabs to provide a smooth and level base for finish flooring.

Figure 206 Precast, Hollow-core Concrete Slab Atop CMU Wall
Appendix B: MITS Bus System

Muncie Indiana Transit System (MITS) is the public bus system in Muncie. All routes run every half hour, Monday through Saturday, except for the Walmart route, the main route through Ball State University campus, which runs every fifteen minutes during the academic year. One-way fare is 50 cents and students ride free with student ID. Two MITS routes stop at the intersection of University Avenue and Dill Street. The 16 Walmart route travels back and forth from the downtown bus station to the north Muncie Walmart, with multiple stops in "the Village" and Ball State University campus along the way. This route runs every fifteen minutes during the academic year, and every half hour during the summer and university breaks. The 1 Ball State route travels back and forth from the downtown bus station to the west central region of Muncie, stopping in "the Village" every half hour.19 A "bus stop pavilion" has been incorporated at the corner of University and Dill St. where buses currently stop. The design is consistent with the design of the kiosks and the plaza.

Appendix C: Notes

cardinal cupcakes and coneys

   The name cardinal cupcakes and coneys is all lowercase letters. Their logo, facebook page\textsuperscript{20}, and multiple articles appearing in the Ball State Daily News,\textsuperscript{21,22} the Ball State University student newspaper all show the name in all lowercase letters.


\textsuperscript{21} Dickey, Kelly. "Picking Up the Pieces."

Appendix D: Additional Process Drawings