affordability  
sustainability  
entertainment  
community  

Newport Living

Kelly R. Sloan  
LA 404 5th Yr. Comprehensive Project  
Spring 2008  

Ball State University  
College of Architecture and Planning  
Department of Landscape Architecture
Newport Living:
An Affordable Mixed-Use Community in the Heart of a City

Kelly R. Sloan
LA 404 5th Yr. Comprehensive Project
Spring 2008

Ball State University
College of Architecture and Planning
Department of Landscape Architecture
Abstract

Many cities in the United States are in need of redeveloped urban spaces to reverse the decline of the city and its neighborhoods. Urban redevelopment can help to reconnect communities and draw more people downtown rather than to the suburbs, while saving rural areas for natural resources. Redeveloping these spaces and providing sustainable affordable housing will rejuvenate neighborhoods to include residents on all economic levels.

Brownfields have become a major crisis in the urban fabric of American cities. These areas are frequently eyesores that are contaminated by waste and therefore a safety hazard to the public. After intense clean-up and revitalization these spaces can become engaging attractions that include amenities and places to live and work.

After a brownfield or dilapidated neighborhood has been revitalized, it is important that its new use will be conducive to the context of the neighborhood. The amenities, including the scale of the development and affordability of housing and services within the development, are important factors to consider when planning for a new community. The new and existing neighborhoods must correlate together to create an effective patch in the urban fabric.

The greater Cincinnati area lacks affordable urban communities that are in good working and living conditions. This study explored the possibilities for and impacts of the development of a sustainable urban mixed-use community to draw all types of people to downtown areas rather than to suburbs and contributing to urban sprawl. Its particular focus is providing affordable housing in a new development.
# Table of Contents

Abstract........................................................................ iv  
Table of Contents.................................................... v  
Acknowledgements...................................................... vi  
Introduction............................................................. 1  
Background............................................................... 1  
Review of Related Literature  
  Elements................................................................. 2  
  Redevelopment......................................................... 3  
Problem Statement  
  Statement of the Problem....................................... 5  
  Significance of Project............................................. 5  
Project Requirements  
  Goals & Objectives.................................................... 6  
Program...................................................................... 7  
Site Description & Context......................................... 9  
  Client Description  
  Location Maps  
  Site Map  
Inventory..................................................................... 10  
  Inventory Images...................................................... 11  
Site Analysis.................................................................. 13  
Concepts  
  Concept 1: Overlooking the City.............................. 14  
  Concept 2: Incorporating Green............................... 15  
Master Plan.................................................................. 17  
Rain Garden Detail...................................................... 18  
Community Center Detail............................................ 19  
Central Plaza Detail.................................................... 20  
Conclusion................................................................... 21  
Appendices  
  A: Works Cited......................................................... 23  
  B: Definitions of Terms.............................................. 25
Acknowledgements

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the following people:

Chris Marlow, Advisor
Ron Spangler, Instructor

Thank you to my parents, my family, and to Evan, who have supported and encouraged me.
Introduction

An abandoned site in Newport, Kentucky was selected for the development of an affordable mixed-use community. The community is geared toward young professionals, families, and senior citizens who desire an urban lifestyle where attractions and amenities are easily accessible and affordable. The approximately 50 acre site is located on the Ohio River directly across from Cincinnati, Ohio.

The aim of the new Newport community is affordability by including dense multi-unit housing and retail opportunities that are economical and necessary. Additional developments are being constructed along the Ohio River in the urban core of the Greater Cincinnati area. These housing units are considered high-end accommodations which the average middle-class citizen cannot afford. The new neighborhood is a welcoming and affordable community for all people and is accessible to major attractions while providing its own unique environments and amenities.

Through extensive research and design exploration, a master plan for a mixed-use community in Newport has been created. The new development features affordable housing, retail opportunities, and office environments for the elderly, young professionals and their families, necessary facilities and services, a connection to Newport on the Levee and downtown Newport, and community gathering spaces. These features rely on sustainable practices where possible and draw residents and visitors from the tri-state area to interact through entertainment and recreation. Newport Living is an economic opportunity for the city of Newport and a beneficial attribute for the people of Greater Cincinnati.

Background

Newport, KY was founded in 1795 and quickly developed as a military outpost. The city was a center for trade, industry and culture in the 1800’s and became a capital for gambling and entertainment in the 1920’s. Within the last ten years, Newport has regained its entertainment status after developing Newport on the Levee entertainment complex, Newport Aquarium, and other restaurants and attractions.
Community and brownfield redevelopment is a necessary smart growth option in today’s urban world. As cities expand outward, more and more sites within them become dilapidated and unused. In order to take a step toward sustainability, research must be done to explore the opportunities and constraints of revitalization within the city. The purpose of this literature review is to investigate the many stages, methods, and parties involved in the community and brownfield redevelopment and design process.

**Elements**
When revitalizing an existing community or designing a new community, there are certain necessary elements to include in the design to make those neighborhoods successful. Pedestrianism, historic preservation, high density housing and employment, transportation, and open space were some of the essential factors discussed throughout the readings. These elements are tools for creating communities that will be vibrant and appealing places for people to live, work, and socialize.

Pedestrianism was mentioned in almost all of the sources that were researched. The act of walking is as old as man, so it makes sense to include the principle of walking as a vital design element in any redeveloped or new community plan. The concept of pedestrianism is discussed in the book Downtowns: Revitalizing the Centers of Small Urban Communities in terms of urban design. In order for pedestrianism to be successful in a city, aesthetics, form, and design must work together to create an atmosphere with character and interest (Burayidi 121).

Pedestrianism can be so successful and beneficial to a city if it is included in a thoughtful and well-planned manner. Alexander Garvin discusses how to plan for pedestrians in his book The American City: What Works, What Doesn’t. Garvin describes Rotterdam as the first city to banish automobiles and the many American cities that followed its lead. Pedestrianization sparked beautification by adding outdoor seating, plantings, decorative paving, fountains and artwork along the widened downtown sidewalks. The trend also brought commercial districts back to life with strolling customers (Garvin 142). The book goes on to describe case studies including Kalamazoo, MI, Louisville, KY, Portland, OR, and Denver, CO. Louisville’s pedestrian mall became so successful because of its proximity to a mall, convention center, and performing arts center; Denver’s automobile-free mall thrives in part because of its suburban transit terminals and free bus system from one end of the mall to the other; and other pedestrian malls are prospering because of the interested markets of shoppers and business people they cater to.

Pedestrian corridors and pedestrianism in general, are such essential elements to include in any design or redesign of cities today. One reason to emphasize walkability is because many people do not own automobiles. In order for a city to survive economically, people must be able to have access to all of its commercial, business, residential, and recreational districts. Creating a pedestrian friendly atmosphere ensures that most of a city’s citizens will have access to most of its amenities. Other reasons to stress pedestrianism include: it produces less air and noise pollution, less traffic and congestion, retail establishments are more apparent, and it forces people to be active and social. Major vehicle-free corridors should be near people-attracting amenities and transportation nodes. Pedestrianism should be included as a part of any city design.
Historic preservation is another important element to include in any community (re)development plan. Restoring and preserving existing pieces of a city can promote character and save time and money that it takes to build new buildings, landscapes, and other features. In Burayidi’s book Downtowns: Revitalizing the Centers of Small Urban Communities, he discusses two approaches to downtown revitalization: the “catalyst” approach, in which cities use a major new or rehabilitated development project as a catalyst for revitalization; or the “incremental” approach, where cities emphasize small scale, long term investment in buildings, public improvements and businesses (Burayidi 68). The second approach, “incremental”, is for communities with weaker economies and should be used with design controls and effective downtown management and organization (Burayidi 68). Both of these methods lay emphasis on historical preservation and although the first approach seems more effective and immediate, the second approach is probably more realistic for most communities.

Additional imperative elements for any community design or redevelopment include high density housing and employment, transportation, and open space. High density housing allows for more housing to be available for more people who cannot afford home ownership. Affordable housing with low rent is an option for redeveloping communities to attract residents that will be active community members and help to revitalize the area, and high density employment provides jobs for those eager citizens. In Sharon Baerny’s article “From Blight to All Right”, she describes Rainier Court in Seattle, WA. The development includes 20,000 sq ft of commercial space and 500 units of high density, affordable senior and family housing where tenants must meet income guidelines (Baerny 27). The article proves that it is possible to revitalize a community, as well as surrounding communities, while focusing on affordable housing and brownfield renovation.

Redevelopment
As concluded from the sources researched, community redevelopment is a long and complicated process for most parties involved. All of the correlated sources identify economic development as one of the primary reasons for revitalizing a neighborhood. Economic success is achieved with thriving retail and other businesses which attract local and outside clients. To begin the process of economic development, it is important for communities to have well organized downtown associations and city governments (Burayidi 12), and strong support from the community.

Brownfield redevelopment is one of the most popular and profitable smart growth options for city development today. “Brownfield Redevelopment as a Smart Growth Option” is an article that evaluates brownfield redevelopment compared to purchase of land, restrictive growth policies, changing
transportation patterns, promoting compact development designs on the metropolitan edge, and regional government (Greenberg, Lowrie, Mayer, Miller, and Solitaire 1). The article gives suggestions for drawing attention to communities with neglected brownfields, compares brownfield development to five other smart growth options, and concludes overall that brownfield redevelopment seems to be the smartest growth policy. Though the article focuses primarily on factual information rather than design, it provides a reliable rating of brownfield development based on six criteria: ecological and public health, short and long-term economic feasibility, government reaction, public and special interest reaction, moral imperative, and flexibility and time pressure.

There are many pieces to take into account when planning for brownfield redevelopment. The article written by Greenberg, et al. clearly illustrates the process of brownfield revitalization and the advantages of the smart growth option. “From Blight to All Right” also demonstrates the many different parties and steps involved in renewing a blighted piece of land. Baerny describes Rainier Court, a mixed-use development in Seattle, WA. Creating the urban village called for help for clean-up of the area and construction from the county, the city of Seattle, the EPA, and other institutions (Baerny 25). This development is an enlightening example of how successful brownfield revitalization can be. This specific article was written from a technical and business point of view, but the new neighborhood proves brownfields can be turned from unsightly settings, into affordable housing opportunities and economic growth.

The purpose of this literature review was to investigate the many stages, methods, and parties involved in the community and brownfield redevelopment and design process. After much research, it is clear that community and brownfield redevelopment deals with a comprehensive design process that involves input from all parties benefiting from the final outcome, and the design should include many standard – but unique – elements in order to create a successful neighborhood. Community and brownfield redevelopment truly is the smartest growth policy today.
Problem Statement

Problem:
This study examined the necessary elements in active and growing mixed-use communities that have been redeveloped and how services in the neighborhood are affordable to all community members. The information gathered was then interpreted to illustrate how these characteristics can be modeled to design a mixed-use and mixed-income community in Newport, Kentucky.

Subproblems:

What are the necessary elements in a redeveloped mixed-use community design?

How can these elements be affordable to everyone living in the community?

How can affordable and necessary mixed-use neighborhood elements be modeled to design a prosperous mixed-use and mixed-income community in Newport, Kentucky?

Significance of the Project:

Affordable housing is an important feature that is necessary in most cities. It benefits those who are unable to afford high-priced, market-rate housing, but still want to live comfortable lifestyles in safe communities. By providing inexpensive residences, rather than focusing on building new high-end developments, cities can appease citizens and keep streets and communities safe.

An affordable mixed-use community for the city of Newport is an extremely beneficial asset to not only Newport, but to the entire urban area. The new neighborhood will provide reasonably priced housing for middle-class individuals wanting to live in an urban setting. Creating a new urban community will also encourage people to move into the city rather than move to the suburbs, contributing to urban sprawl. Newport Living will bring new residents and visitors to the area, boosting the economy of the city and making it a destination in the Greater Cincinnati area.
# Project Requirements

## Goals & Objectives:

This project examined the characteristics of existing affordable mixed-use communities, how they are successful, and how they can be applied to a site in Newport, KY. The following list of goals and objectives was utilized to produce a design for the city of Newport that creates a destination for visitors and potential residents.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal</th>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Goal</th>
<th>Objective</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Affordable Housing</td>
<td>Provide multi-unit and attached housing to buy or rent that costs less than single family residences</td>
<td>Connection</td>
<td>Connect the new development to Newport on the Levee entertainment complex with an active boulevard and streetscape</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Include services and amenities that are economical and necessary to the community</td>
<td></td>
<td>Enhance current connections to downtown Cincinnati, OH and Covington, KY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Interaction</td>
<td>Design open space including plazas, boulevards, and parks for passive and active recreation</td>
<td></td>
<td>Link the existing Newport neighborhoods to the new community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Include a community center with classrooms and event spaces for neighborhood gatherings and/or outside rental</td>
<td></td>
<td>Include pedestrian connections in and around the site to ensure light emphasis on the automobile</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Provide entertainment venues for community use and to attract visitors</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Program

- **Dense multi-unit housing** aimed toward middle-class young professionals, families, and senior citizens
  - Mixed-use
  - Multi-Unit Residential
  - Town Home Units

- **Community Center** to encourage community interaction
  - Community sponsored events
  - Large event rental space
  - Recreation facilities
  - Classrooms

- **Open space**
  - Large open spaces
  - Plazas
  - Tree-lined boulevards
  - Park

- **Hotel** with entertainment

- **Entertainment**
  - Restaurants
  - Museum
  - Theater

- **Scale** that reflects the scale of surrounding neighborhoods
  - Building heights not more than 6 stories
  - Buildings do not completely block view to the Ohio River
  - Building materials similar to nearby buildings

- **Sustainable design elements**
  - Green roofs
  - Rain gardens
  - Storm water management systems
Site Description & Context

The location of Newport Living is in the urban core of the Greater Cincinnati area. It is easily accessible for automobiles and pedestrians, and is located along the TANK Bus route. Because the site of the development is situated at the confluence of the Ohio and Licking Rivers, many opportunities are presented for access and recreation along the water. The Newport site’s proximity to downtown Cincinnati and Newport on the Levee entertainment complex make it an ideal location for a destination community.

Approximately fifty acres in size, the project site is located on the Ohio River across from Cincinnati, Ohio. The area of land that is redesigned includes an abandoned field approximately 15 acres in size, a large parking lot, a run down liquor store, and an automobile service center. The site is bound by the Ohio River on its north side, apartments, Campbell County Courthouse, and a post office on the east, apartments on the south, and Taylor Park and the Licking River on its west side.

There are currently plans for an $800 million development on the Newport site, featuring housing units, office space, hotel, and retail space. This development caters mostly to upper middle-class citizens, rather than the average middle-class resident in the area.

Client Description:

The client for this study, which owns most of the land where the new development is designed, is the city of Newport, Kentucky. Previously, the site consisted of residences operated by Newport Housing Authority, but now stands as an empty field. Newport has visions of transforming this derelict space into an exciting destination.

Residents of the community and surrounding communities and visitors to the site will be the primary users of the new development. Community members will generally consist of middle-class families, young professionals, and senior citizens. The neighborhood will attract clients of the community center event spaces and people searching for a community that offers park space, retail, dining, and entertainment.
Inventory

Although the project site is in a good location, it offers more unattractive features than appealing amenities. Features of the site include: an abandoned portion of land along West 4th St. containing many electrical poles, existing roads and a small parking lot; a large parking lot used for event parking and Newport on the Levee shopping center parking; Big Daddy’s Liquor, a run down, eye sore, and not a positive commercial entity for family-oriented neighborhoods; Kentucky Motor Service, a slight eyesore with an unnecessarily large parking lot; Riverchase Apartment buildings on the north-east side of the site which are in relatively decent condition; and Travelodge Hotel which is slightly neglected and unattractive.

There are some amenities near the Newport site that may be beneficial for attracting residents and users to the new community. These amenities include: a paved riverwalk atop a grass berm/floodwall that connects surrounding neighborhoods to Taylor Park and the Newport on the Levee shopping center; Taylor Park located on the opposite side of the grass berm/floodwall along the edge of the Ohio River where the Licking River splits from it and runs south; its features include a play area for children, picnic shelters, benches and grassy areas; Newport on the Levee entertainment complex featuring an AMC movie theater, restaurants, retail, night clubs, and the Newport Aquarium; many people from around the tri-state area travel to the Levee for dining and entertainment; Cincinnati, OH, Paul Brown Stadium, Great American Ballpark, and the National Underground Railroad Freedom Center are directly across the Ohio River from the Newport site.
A. View across site to downtown Cincinnati, OH

B. View to Kentucky Motor Service parking lot

C. View across parking lot to Campbell County Courthouse

D. Big Daddy's Liquore store

E. Kentucky Motor Service

F. St. Paul's Episcopal Church on W. 3rd St.
Newport Living

affordability
sustainability
entertainment
community
Site Analysis

Opportunities:

Connections to Newport on the Levee entertainment complex, downtown Newport and Cincinnati, OH, and existing neighborhoods to the south were major opportunities considered while designing the project site. The existing walk atop the floodwall is a recreational feature that is already in place, and therefore a great opportunity for connections and activity. Views along the riverfront provide an additional attraction for the new design.

A. Views to Cincinnati, OH
B. B&B Riverboats dock
C. Taylor Park
D. Existing walk on 20’ floodwall
E. Riverchase Apartments
F. Newport on the Levee Entertainment
G. Travelodge Hotel
H. 4th Street Elementary School
I. Empty field
J. Parking lot
K. Campbell County Courthouse
L. Post Office
M. Kentucky Motor Service

Constraints:

Dilapidated buildings on and around the site are negative features for a new site design. These buildings have been removed or renovated to produce a more unified community. The possibility of flooding proves to be a threat, but the floodwall should provide adequate protection.
Design Concepts

Overlooking the City:

The first concept focuses on the community center sitting on the flood-wall, overlooking the river and Cincinnati, OH. The community center offers classrooms, event space, and space for community interaction. The hotel is near the Taylor-Southgate Bridge which crosses the Ohio River, ensuring adequate and easy access to Cincinnati, OH. A central node is located in the center of the new development along a major connecting boulevard. Mixed-use buildings are located in the interior of the site, while multi-unit residences are along the development’s perimeter. Green space is located along the Ohio and Licking Rivers.
Incorporating Green:

The second concept focuses on the community center in the center of the community. It sits in a park, bringing green space into the neighborhood. The community center offers classrooms, event space, and space for community interaction. The hotel is near the Taylor-Southgate Bridge which crosses the Ohio River, ensuring adequate and easy access. Major connecting boulevards form the axis of the development. Mixed-use buildings are located in the center of the site, while multi-unit residences surround. Green space is located along the Ohio and Licking Rivers.
The final master plan takes ideas from both preliminary concept plans. A tree-lined boulevard leads from the existing Newport on the Levee, past a new hotel (C) and into the heart of the new Newport Living community at the central plaza (F), surrounded by mixed-use buildings. Visitors then travel southeast into existing neighborhoods, or northwest to the new community center (E).

A. Amphitheater
B. Walk atop 20’ floodwall
C. Hotel
D. Rain Garden
E. Community Center
F. Central Plaza
G. River Plazas
H. Large Retail
I. Post Office

- **Mixed-Use**
- **Residential-Med. Density**
- **Residential-Low Density**
- **Retail/Office**
Rain Garden:
The largest rain garden in Newport Living is contained within four mixed-use and residential buildings. Its plants, which are native to the area, will absorb runoff from surrounding parking and excess rainwater. The rain garden will also include a large plaza and overlook with a boardwalk for pedestrians. This space, with three other rain gardens in the development, will serve as an example of sustainable systems for the community and outside visitors.
Community Center Overlook:

Focusing on community interaction, the community center (A) sits against the floodwall overlooking the Ohio River. There will be space for classrooms and exercise equipment, and its location provides excellent views from the large event spaces on its top floor. An ampitheater and park space border the river, providing recreation. A small rain garden (B) is located between the community center and townhomes. It draws attention from pedestrians using the walking path, pulling them through the community center into the neighborhood. Townhomes (C) sit against floodwall and have easy access to the existing walk. This area of focus serves as a community destination after traveling a boulevard through the mixed-use zone.
Central Plaza: A roundabout and central plaza is located in the center of the development. Surrounding the roundabout is a commercial and entertainment zone of mixed-use buildings. A boulevard with an appealing streetscape leads from the central node to the hotel and then to Newport on the Levee and other entertainment.
Conclusion

After extensive design exploration, the Newport Living community has been designed for a prime location in northern Kentucky. The barren site is transformed into an affordable mixed-use community with entertainment and attractions. Middle-class families, young professionals, and senior citizens will live affordably and comfortably in a neighborhood easily accessible to services, jobs, and entertainment. The new community is a practical solution that fits the context of existing Newport, rather than the high-end developments currently proposed along the Ohio River.

Newport Living offers space for active and passive recreation through its plazas, tree-lined boulevards, large amounts green space, and community center. Residents of neighborhoods south of the new community and visitors to Newport on the Levee will be drawn into Newport Living to experience the amenities it has to offer. Rather than fleeing to the suburbs, Greater Cincinnati residents will return to the city.

Newport Living is the new place to live on the river.
Appendix A:

Works Cited:


Project for Public Spaces. 2007. 24 October 2007 http://www.pps.org/


Urban Redevelopment Authority of Pittsburgh. 2007. 24 October 2007 http://www.ura.org/
Appendix B:

Definition of Terms:

Brownfield: abandoned, idled, or under-used industrial and commercial facilities; may be contaminated with hazardous waste or pollution

Mixed-Use: combining commercial, office, residential and other functions in one development

Pedestrianization: to convert a specific area into a pedestrian only passageway

Smart Growth: an urban planning and transportation theory that concentrates growth in the center of a city to avoid urban sprawl; and advocates compact, transit-oriented, walkable, bicycle-friendly land use, including mixed-use development with a range of housing choices

Sustainable: capable of being continued with minimal long-term effect on the environment

Urban sprawl: the spreading out of a city and its suburbs over rural land at the fringe of an urban area