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Gentrification No More! Preserving the Character of Atlanta's West End

Roderick Williams

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Gentrification No More!
Preserving the Character of Atlanta’s West End

Request for Approval of Final Thesis Project Book
Presented to:

Mine Hashas-Degertekin, Phd.

And to the
Faculty of the Department of Architecture
College of Architecture and Construction Management

By

Roderick J. Williams

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree

Bachelor of Architecture

Kennesaw State University
Marietta, Georgia

Spring 2018
For You,

I dedicate my thesis and period of architectural education to my mother, grandmother, and brother.

My mother, who has always taught me the care of treating others with a good heart, the importance and realism of life, and not to judge others based on their current state. Remain steadfast in my studies and never let anyone stop me from achieving my dreams.

Blessed is the man who preserves under trial, because when he has stood the test, he will receive the crown of the life that God has promised to those who love him.

James 1:12
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The demographics and density of Atlanta is changing due to a migration of people back into the urban core of the city. The ideal location for new, private urban redevelopments has been low-income, African-American neighborhoods in Atlanta for the new inflow of people. These urban redevelopments are gentrifying low-income neighborhoods and displacing many residents who can no longer afford to live there; shifting local and cultural identities overnight. This type of shift has been visible in Atlanta over the last few years with the introduction of the Atlanta Beltline. Land use opportunities for local businesses are relying on policies to prioritize economic developments over community developments. As a result of redevelopments targeting higher income populations, affordable living has become an issue for local residents who were displaced because of higher costs of living and retail, most common in revitalized neighborhoods adjacent to the Beltline.

The West End is one of Atlanta’s oldest suburbs and a community of history that showcases remnants of art, monuments, and a variety of architectural styles. Today, the West End is a low-income neighborhood of civic and cultural pride; that is in jeopardy of being gentrified due to the completion of the Beltline’s Westside trail in that neighborhood. Even with close social ties between the community’s restaurants, shops, and major corridors; the community can encounter raised property taxes and new economic infrastructure that could cause a mass displacement of the current residents and change the diverse cultural landscape of their community; into one that is a contemporary replica to today’s newly redeveloped in-town neighborhoods, drained of cultural activity and community substance.

A different type of urban redevelopment proposal will focus on the sustenance of the existing community in the West End neighborhood, and address gentrification. It will prioritize community development instead of economic development, by first identifying the cultural characteristics of the community from the resident’s memories, sensory observations, and daily routines. The economic development opportunities, for the local community, will be explored to be embedded in the physical environment. And lastly, land use will be diversified with opportunities for various income levels, community services, and the daily needs of various life styles that will satisfy both current and new residents. By applying this strategy to the context of the blocks surrounding the West End Mall, it will help develop an equitable design solution to avoid gentrification in the West End.
As a new wave of private urban development sweeps our American cities, many low-income neighborhoods have found themselves in the path of gentrification; as to be the remedy of providing economic stability for, and ridding the presence of crime and blight about the urban core. The creation of greenway paths, unofficially notated as “Rail to Trail” design strategies, have provided a new usage to former railways that no longer serve the city as an industrial contributor. These new trails in theory provide a new look and new use for underused areas and open new opportunities for commercial, residential, and employment. In theory these trails such as; New York City’s High Line and Atlanta’s Beltline, bring the city together through these walk paths, greenways, and the promise of sufficient public transportation. In return for this sprouting rejuvenation, the communities surrounding these trails have become gentrified, as these new interventions into the urban fabric attract tourists and those who can afford the new residential complexes and upscale commercial retail and eateries. In return these new inhabitants make life and the current environment difficult for existing residents who have moved or lived in the area for years because of the low property taxes and low housing costs. These “Rail to Trails” are known to displace residents through economic inequality, poor ethics, and lack of equitable inclusiveness. Most of the redevelopment that is happening around the Atlanta Beltline and NYC High Line are private developments that occur freely through misregulated policies and obscene living costs. In efforts to revitalize a blighted area, many surrounding communities experience the affect of the lack of contribution that current residents can provide for their neighborhood.

As a response to gentrification in low-income, African-American neighborhoods, gentrification can be avoided by applying design strategies that involve the input of the current resident’s memories and sensory observations, the continuation of the community character and rich culture, and involve the idea of a mixed community of diverse land use for different economic choices. This type of design strategy can be a solution to the issues of private development that prioritizes economic development over community development rather than focusing on the community and its character as a primary element for an equitable revitalization of a historical urban neighborhood. An equitable design will ensure that current residents are not displaced and are inclusive with new residents of a different economic status.

This current problem in low-income communities in Atlanta have raised many questions of government policies that make or break a community. Policies in Atlanta are in place to protect the citizens of its urban residential communities, but many times the rule of “Eminent Domain” comes in to play to forcibly remove residents from their homes, to make room for new expensive architecture and parking decks; without giving residents a residential replacement. Residents who have become displaced from Atlanta politics, policies, and developments; have included single family homes, seniors, children, and the employed. Jobs have been lost or either moved. Homes razed and communities restructured as a method of solving years of crime, prostitution, and building scars to the architectural typologies. The character and culture of these communities have changed overnight to accommodate what should be there, then what was there. In efforts to avoid displacement, the Atlanta government has instilled Anti-Displacement policies into low-income communities in the Southern sector of the city. These policies are to keep residents in their home even with the threat of the Beltline (Atlanta’s new major gentrifier) lingering in their backyard.

Research of a variety communities, that have changed due to gentrification and have overcome or avoided gentrification, will assist my thesis in looking at methods and designs to avoid gentrification, while revitalizing a low-income neighborhood without displacing the current residents by encouraging their voices to be heard. Providing adequate services, social spaces, economic growth, education, and community financial growth is a must to avoid gentrification and displacement. The research will strive to answer the questions about design, gentrification, political influence, and local community culture.

Questions to be asked:
1. How can design be a catalyst for avoiding gentrification in low-income communities?
2. Why and how does gentrification start?
3. How can policies and programs aid in the design strategies for an equitable and inclusive community?
4. How can history, memory, and culture be included in design?
5. When does architecture begin to play a vital role for the local economy and land use?
Today’s low-income neighborhoods were once thriving communities of middle class and elite families. These historical neighborhoods during their infancy in the urban core were vibrant commercial centers of top-brand companies and economic centers for investment and fortune. The community network featured public transportation that linked surrounding neighborhoods to the inner-city downtown with ease and reliability.

Though, these neighborhoods were attractive and functioned well for the modern family of the 19th and early-20th century; they were predominantly white owned, operated, and inhabited. During the Great Migration, the introduction of streetcars, and availability of homes; these growing communities were starting to seek the attention of surrounding African American residents from slum-like neighborhood conditions. Able to afford the homes and travel to these communities by way of streetcar and other modes of public transportation; the current residents out of fear of lowering property values and loss of investments, began to migrate to new suburbs, like Levitt Town, through what is called the era of “White Flight.” To further disconnect themselves from the changing demographic of their former neighborhoods; local government discontinued all modes of public transportation from those neighborhoods to new surrounding suburbs.

In 1933, President Franklin D. Roosevelt’s “New Deal” instituted a Home Owners Loan Corporation (HOLC) to refinance homes for those who struggled to maintain their mortgages (Powell, ff.org). Though a relief for homeowners, there were still risks to be reassessed. To manage these risks within the HOLC program, neighborhoods began to be marked from desirable to less desirable in a housing discrimination act of racial segregation known as “Red Lining.” Within this system newly constructed suburbs with low crime and middle class professionals were marked A as desirable. Neighborhoods within the older inner city with crumbling buildings and infrastructure and high crime were marked D as less desirable or dangerous. Neighborhoods marked D were mainly minority where “White Flight” occurred (Powell, ff.org). Red lining practices can be dated back to 1909 when the New York City Department of Taxation and Assessment produced land value maps.

What did red lining do and how did it affect aging neighborhoods where minorities were moving into? Red lining was a racially segregated process of categorizing land for the favor of white residents to receive the most affordable mortgages for the desirable property designated by the government as safe, new, and clean. Red lining marked minority and other neighborhoods of nationalities as either least desirable or dangerous, regardless of the actual condition of the neighborhoods. Many neighborhoods marked as dangerous were primarily African American, which became housing projects infested with crime, very low literacy rates, and poor access to community services and desirable parts of the city.

As seen to the left, an image of the Redline map of Greater Atlanta extracted from the National Archives Catalog, Record Group 195, shows the indication of the different areas of Atlanta that were labeled from Best to Still Desirable to Definitely Declining to Hazardous. The shades of blue located north and south of the central declining area of Atlanta is an indication of new suburban areas where younger generations were beginning to leave aging inner city suburbs for newly constructed suburbs, completely distancing themselves from the new influx of minority families into the neighborhoods.

The image below is of the Whitehall streetcar, apart of the Atlanta Street Railway Company, pioneered by George Washington Adair and Richard Peters [1870]. The streetcar system in Atlanta moved people from the inner city communities into the downtown area, increasing economic value, job opportunities, and social connections. During the era of White Flight from the 1940s through the 1960s, the streetcar was discontinued as the car became more attractive and readily moved people to newer neighborhoods. Eliminating the streetcar also kept minorities out of the new suburbs as well.

Atlanta regained public transportation services in the 1970s with the introduction of MARTA to move residents throughout the inner city but still limited access to the northern and southern suburban neighborhoods.

(Source: atlantawestend.com)
West End Atlanta is founded as “Whitehall” as an important crossroads for the emerging railroads.

Whitehall receives a charter and is renamed “West End” in referencing London’s theater district.

Macon & Western railroad lines are established to provide access to downtown Atlanta. An increase of economically viability emerged.

George Washington Adair & Richard Peters joined to form the Atlanta Street Railway Company. Atlanta to West End connection.

The streetcar route operated along major street corridors: Gordon St. (RDA) Porter Pl. (Lucile Ave.) Ashby St. (Lowery Blvd.)

Vibrant Business District emerges along Gordon & Lee streets. [Sears, Goodyear, etc.]

Population: 22,000

Community begins to age and young residents began to migrate to the suburbs, initiating the period of [White Flight]

Demographic shift from predominantly white to primarily African American [Redlining]

Brown High School (Brown Middle School) integrates with three African American students, whom all graduated in 1963.

Community begins to age and young residents began to migrate to the suburbs, initiating the period of [White Flight]

Demographic shift from predominantly white to primarily African American [Redlining]

Brown High School (Brown Middle School) integrates with three African American students, whom all graduated in 1963.

Atlanta Beltline-West End corridor opens to the public in September 2017.

The West End embraces for an establishment of new, young professionals & demographics that are expected to move into the neighborhood. [Gentrification]
Gentrification [noun], the restoration or upgrading of deteriorated urban property especially by middle-class or affluent people, often resulting in displacement of lower-income people from their neighborhoods (The American Heritage College Dictionary, 4th Edition).

Gentrification derives from the word gentry of the French word gentrize meaning “of gentle birth.” England denoted the gentlement social class as Landed gentry. Ruth Glass, a British sociologist, coined the term gentrification in 1964, as a description of the influx of middle-class people displacing lower-class worker residents in urban neighborhoods such as Islington in London. (wikipedia: Gentrification).

Process of Gentrification
Gentifiers are people of higher social status and economic status that move into a low cost neighborhood. Early gentifiers are typically artists.

Artists corridors attract investors and real estate developers, local government, and community activists; that are willing to offer economic development and lower crime rates as a benefit to current residents.

As a result of new development and economic opportunities, higher property rates leads to population migration and displacement of current low-income residents. (wikipedia: Gentrification)
**Census Tract 42 | Gentrified**

2000 - Present Census

- Population: 2,532
- Median Home Value: $134,800
- Median Household Income: $18,722 (2013 dollars)

Data Source: governing.com/gov-data/atlanta-gentrification-maps

Calculations are from 2009 - 2013 American Community Survey estimates

---

**Census Tract 42 | Un-Gentrified**

1990 - 2000 Census

- Population: 2,493
- Median Home Value: $75,900
- Median Household Income: $13,880 (1999 dollars)

Data Source: governing.com/gov-data/atlanta-gentrification-maps

Estimates are from the US2010 Longitudinal Tract Data Base project - Russell Sage Foundation & Brown University.

---

**West End Boundary**

Data Source: governing.com/gov-data/atlanta-gentrification-maps

---

Adults (over 25 y.o.a.) with Bachelor Degrees

- Tract Gentrified: 29.9%
- Tract did not Gentrify: 11.5%
- Tract not eligible to Gentrify: 11.5%
This diagram shows a description of the common issues found in low-income African American neighborhoods in Atlanta today. The City of Atlanta has adopted certain policies and programs to keep residents in their homes during new construction of housing & public/private infrastructure. As a part of keeping residents in their homes and maintaining the existing culture of the community, different programs present ways for avoiding displacement, and funding for revitalizing low-income neighborhoods through Tax Freezes on current affordable property taxes, Hope VI Grants, Section 8 Voucher systems, and the Atlanta Housing Authority (AHA) resident incentives such as; scholarships for high school teens who reside in a AHA housing community.

See Chart in Appendix II for description of terms used.
The Physical Environment, according to Dolores Hayden in her book, *The Power of Place*, involves a landscape of complex economic & social forces that endures rapid change through varying layers of activity and opportunity. Most physical environments are produced by agencies which are: builders, developers, planners, and policies & codes. (Hayden).

The physical environment involves the use and needs of a particular area called space.

Space is the production element of making an attraction for a purpose. Production of space involves: manufacturing, commerce, and real estate. The reproduction of space evolves overtime throughout its extensive use for whatever the need it serves. Dolores Hayden identifies reproduction as the needs of space for either biological purposes, labor, or social relations. Thus, space creates a socio-economic framework for the identity of a community.

The Productive Landscape of space creates memorable & celebrated activity, thus creating a place. Space becomes a place when the senses interact with the surrounding or interior on a daily basis. Space is place through attraction not distraction.

Place involves four categories of sensory conditions:

- **Territorial**
  - Limitations to specific groups
- **Cognitive**
  - Collective memory to identify an area of importance
- **Working**
  - Benefits of a space for economic and social behaviors
- **Vernacular**
  - The character or main identity of a place as characterize by indigenous people (ethnic groups).
Sensory Conditions

Power of Place Concept, Hayden

Vernacular layers of traces of previous generations struggles to live, raise a family, and participate in community life

Working social economical forces of the urban landscape that provide sustainable growth for the inhabitants

Cognitive mental process of knowing, including aspects such as awareness, perception, reasoning, and judgement

FRAMEWORK

Dolores Hayden’s Identification of Place

COGNITIVE
- Historical Memories
- Meaning
- Perception
- Memories
- Cognitive Mapping

WORKING
- Production & Reproduction of space
- Economic & Social Forces
- Productive Landscape

VERNACULAR
- Layers of traces of previous generations
- Community participation
- Social History

ANALYSIS

Categorizing Case Studies

COGNITIVE

VERNACULAR

Glass Street Revitalization [Chattanooga, TN]

East Lake Meadows Revitalization [Atlanta, Georgia]

Tiuna el Fuerte Cultural Park [Caracas, Venezuela]

Community Outreach

Financial Funding

Social & Natural Well-Being

Figure 1.7.01
Diagram Created By: Author

Design Case Study for Low-Income Neighborhoods

Tassafaronga Village [Oakland, California]

Avoid
Gentrification
Glass Street Revitalization | Glass House Collective

Location: Chattanooga, Tennessee, USA
End Users: Residents of the Glass Farms Neighborhood
Client: Community Members, Residents, & Designers
Site Area: Glass Street (Tennessee Highway 17 Junction)
Bldg. Area: Unknown
Outreach: STAND Survey Initiative
Programs: Community social events, public art, and design interest by architects who are willing to do pro bono studies under the AIA Tennessee and AIA Chattanooga.
Funding: Pro Bono

Historical Background:
Glass Farms is a neighborhood in east Chattanooga, Tennessee most notably known by its cut through street, Glass Street; and is the central commercial corridor of a low-income, African American neighborhood. The Glass Street area was a street life that was once filled with stores, banks, less passerbys but more stoppers and shoppers. Glass Street is a reflection of downtown Chattanooga. It serves as the Tennessee Highway 17 junction between Enterprise South to downtown via Bonny Oakes Drive, Campbell Street, Dodson Avenue, North Holtzclaw Avenue, and East Main Street (nooga.com).

Glass Street has fell to disinvestment and decline over the years, leaving many of the low-income residents without proper services, food, and safety. In efforts to revitalize the area, a local group by the name of the Glass House Collective, was formed to create a community bond of local residents to engage with invited designers to plan out a strategy and a feasible design to uplift the neighborhood. The primary focus of design is centered around the major corridor, Glass Street, which at one time was “The Commercial Hub” of east Chattanooga. The plan to revitalize the area comes in connection with the city’s efforts to revitalize the downtown area.
The Glass House Collective was formed in 2012 by three members from the STAND survey initiative. This initiative was an original outreach for members and residents of the Glass Farms community to share their ideas about their community (nooga.com). As a continuous effort of including residents into their community revitalization, Glass House initiated a strategy of including artisans and architects as a part of public workshops to develop low cost plans for new sidewalks, bus shelters, streetlights, and green spaces along Glass Street. Artisans settled in the East Chattanooga neighborhood to train young residents to make furniture and other skilled crafts of trades (By the People).

Community Meaning:
The Glass House Collective particularly chose Glass Street for its historical character and remnance as well for its market position been improved by the economic development projects at Enterprise South (nooga.com).

Community Outreach:
The STAND survey was conducted by the founding trio of Glass House Collective, with 600 responses from the 37406 zip code (nooga.com). Teal Thibaud, director of Glass House communications and outreach explains, “Bringing together community leaders and finding solutions to our community issues through action spurred momentum and encouraged us to take the excitement and creativity to a specific place,” (nooga.com).
**East Lake Meadows Revitalization | Cousins Development**

**Historical Background:**

East Lake Meadows was a housing project that was constructed in 1971 in East Atlanta; adjacent to the aging and dilapidated East Lake Golf Course and Country Club. at the time The community became an area of increased crime, drugs, a low employment rate of 14%, low education advancement, and poor infrastructure and maintenance.

With an area as dangerous as East Lake Meadows, the community became known as “Little Vietnam” with regards to its condition of high crime.

This case study will focus on the economic opportunities before and after revitalization, and the particular programs that were put in place to provide relief efforts for an area that not even the elderly, let alone children, could bare to live in.

Zoning criteria for this case study will indicate a community divided by political indifference in governance of the area between Dekalb and Fulton counties; and the adjacent location to one of Atlanta’s prestigious golf courses of today. Lack of support services for the community will indicate the equal ratio of adults to children was not provided to care and serve for the community.
The East Lake Redevelopment Strategy [East Lake Model]
A three-stage holistic approach to revitalizing a community drenched in poverty, crime, and poor employment and education.

Stage 1 | Mixed-Income Housing
Stage 2 | Cradle-to-College Education Program
Stage 3 | Community Wellness (Support Services)

These three stages work collectively with a “Quarterback” Lead Organization to economically fund the stages and to continuously provide aid and support to the community overtime.

Purpose Built Communities:
A non-profit organization founded in 2009 by Atlanta developer and Philanthropist Tom Cousins along with Warren Buffett and former hedge fund manager Julian Robertson.

The Villages of East Lake became the precursor to Cousin’s Purpose Built Communities initiative, founded with Warren Buffett and Julian Robertson. Former Atlanta mayor Shirley Franklin serves as the non-profit’s Executive Board Chair.

The new mixed-use community development featured community services for daycare, healthcare, safety, security, and improved education. Before the new development took place in the early-1990s, 5% of children from East Lake were passing the basic Math test, and crime was at a national high, with the employment rate being 14% to an 80% unemployment rate. After its completion to today, math test scores have risen, employment is higher, and crime is much lower. Unfortunately, not all residents were able to return, as the requirements to live there were to be an unconvicted felon and employed.
Tiuna el Fuerte Cultural Park | Lab. Pro.Fab Design-Build

**Location:** Caracas, Venezuela  
**End Users:** Residents of Tiuna el Fuerte  
**Client:** Local artists  
**Site Acres:** 0.26 sqm of park space per inhabitant  
**Bldg. Area:**  
**Program:** Offices, classrooms, dining spaces, green spaces, sports arenas, and organized workshops to promote a development in the arts and sciences.  
**In-Use:** Store, cafeteria, administrative offices, radio station, and music-editing studio.  
**Construction:** Cost-effective, low-energy technologies to minimize costs with recycled shipping containers.

**Historical Background:**

As a reference to a nearby military base, the name Fuerte Tiuna was chosen for the cultural park. Originally Tiuna was originally the name of a native warrior from that region (urbanista.org). The name was chosen as a meaning to restore the natural and social well-being.

**Funding:**

- Self-commissioned
- No government assistance
- Civic involvement was used to promote public art and funding.

Tiuna el Fuerte was erected on underused land in the community of Calle Longaray within the city of Caracas. The project is a collaboration of artists and architects in which designers Alejandro Haiek Coll, Eleanna Cadalso, and Michelle Sanchez de Leon of Lab.Pro.Fab, worked to develop a park on an abandoned parking lot. The site was available due to a legal loophole that made the area available.

The area of Tiuna el Fuerte experienced slow infrastructure development and low quality social housing interventions. It is also surrounded by modern road networks and slums.
Tassafaronga Village | David Baker + Partners Architects

Location: Oakland, California, USA
End Users: 550 residents of the Oakland Housing Authority
60% annual incomes of the AMI
Client: Oakland Housing Authority, Habitat for Humanity East Bay (Kinsell Commons)
Site Acres: 7.91 acres (5.33 buildable acres)
Bldg. Area: 23,960 sqm / 257,903 sf
# of Units: Originally 87 units on 5.5 acres
Designed for 157 units + 22 Habitat for Humanity houses on 7.5 acres
Cost: $232 USD per sf [$431,000 - $439,000 USD per unit] $75.2 million USD for total development

Financial Funding:

Hope VI Grant (requirement: originally condition must be severely distressed)
Section 8 Vouchers (public housing replacement)

Tassafaronga Village is a variety of affordable apartment, townhomes, and single family dwellings for the low-income residents of the Oakland, California community. With financial funding and promises from the Oakland Housing Authority, residents were able to relocate with the promise of moving back into their community, which was revitalized with sustainable designs. The new community features three-story high apartments, an industrial factory for adaptive re-use to function as affordable housing with an available medical clinic, and 22 single-family townhouses addition to the site under Habitat for Humanity. Tassafaronga Village has received both LEED Gold and LEED Platinum certifications.
Three story apartments that flank an interior parking deck.

Newly built 157 units of Village Square.

Pockets of social spaces above the parking deck.

Community Center of the Village Square facade.

Old Pasta factory renovated into affordable apartments & a neighborhood medical-clinic.

Number of Units

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Studio</th>
<th>Townhomes</th>
<th>1 Bedroom</th>
<th>2 Bedroom</th>
<th>3 Bedroom</th>
<th>Habitat for Humanity</th>
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<td>Total units</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>23</td>
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Density Ratio (OHA + Habitat for Humanity)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project SF</th>
<th>Site acres</th>
<th>Total Bedrooms</th>
<th>Bedrooms/acre</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>441</td>
<td>58</td>
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Parking (OHA + Habitat for Humanity)

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<th>Type</th>
<th>Spaces/unit</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Habitats/unit</th>
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<td>Garage + Surface</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>1.2</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Data Source: David Baker + Partner Architects | Tassafaronga Village
www.dbarchitect.com
CONCLUSIVE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

**Research**
- **Literature**
  - Power of Place, Dolores Hayden
  - Situationist International, Adam Barnard
  - Manhattan Transcripts, Bernard Tschumi
  - Aspiring to the Beloved Community, Atlanta City Studios

- **Case Studies**
  - Glass Street Revitalization
  - East Lake Meadows Revitalization
  - Tassafaronga Village
  - Tiuna el Fuerte Cultural Park

**Place Character**
- **Power of Place Concept, Hayden**
  - Vernacular layers of traces of previous generations struggles to live, raise a family, and participate in community life
  - Working social economical forces of the urban landscape that provide sustainable growth for the inhabitants
- **Cognitive**
  - mental process of knowing, including aspects such as awareness, perception, reasoning, and judgement

**Site Characteristics**
- **Unitary Urbanism, Barnard**
  - Art & Techniques
  - Moments of the Spectacle
  - Chance Encounters
  - Events
- **Terms, Tschumi**
  - Limits: Relationship between space & program
  - Disjunction: Lost Unity - No Recourse
  - The Experience
  - Event, Space, Movement
  - Contradiction or Reciprocity
  - Conflict, Indifference
  - Reading
  - Notation of Movement
  - Notation of Events
  - Synthesis of the Situation

**Design**
- **Recommended Acts, Atlanta City Studio**
  - Equality
  - Fair access to Economic Prosperity
  - Bridge geographic, demographic, economic, & environmental divides
  - Investment & Policy Priority
  - Shared benefits in the implementation of any project, policy, or idea
  - Civic Participation
  - Market v. Meaning
  - Community history is destroyed by rising costs & pressures driven by the bottom line than by civic integrity
NEIGHBORHOOD SELECTION

CRITERIA

1.28 y.o.a.
est. 1890
1-2 miles fromDowntown ATL
Vine CityMARTA Station
Mercedes-BenzStadium

CRITERIA

1.124 y.o.a.
est. 1894
3-5 miles fromDowntown ATL
Oakland CityMARTA Station
AtlantaBeltline

CRITERIA

2.183 y.o.a.
est. 1835
2-4 miles fromDowntown ATL
West EndMARTA Station
AtlantaBeltline

Figure 2.1.01 Image Source: Google Maps Diagram Created By: Author
Figure 2.1.02 Image Source: Google Maps Diagram Created By: Author
Figure 2.1.03 Image Source: Google Maps Diagram Created By: Author
The Atlanta University Center (AUC)

The AUC is the major academic center for the West End neighborhood and Southwest Atlanta. The connection between the AUC & the West End is a historical relationship starting in the 1960s when the neighborhood demographic changed from White to Black during the "White Flight" era of the United States.

The Renaissance in the West End in the 1980s show a growth in real estate with faculty and students gaining home ownership of historic houses & local businesses.
NEIGHBORHOOD CHARACTER MAPPING

VERNACULAR
layers of traces of past & current lifestyles, community interactions, and culture

- **West End Park**
  - Host to the annual Malcolm X Festival

- **Howell Park**
  - Host to the annual Music in the Park celebration

- **Old Jamaican Corner Store**
  - Former local eating & hang out spot for residents & AUC students

- **West End Mall**
  - Outdoor seating
  - Large stores, local businesses, food court, & a grocery store.
  - Also host to community events

- **Shrine of the Black Madonna**
  - Provides a next door bookstore, museum, and learning center on black culture

- **Krispy Kreme Donoughts**
  - Opened in 2002 as a staple dessert delight for residents

- **West End MARTA Station**
  - Provides access to downtown Atlanta, AUC, & Fort McPherson.
  - Soccer in the Streets and the Farmer’s Market take place here as well

- **Ralph D. Abernathy Blvd.**
  - Street-side shops & restaurants

Figure 2.3.01
Map Created By: Author
socio-economic forces of the urban landscape that provide sustainable growth for the inhabitants
Hammonds House Museum
Victorian home originally built in 1872 by Malcolm Johnston, ATL Attorney General
In 1979, Dr. Otis Thrash Hammonds purchased the home

Hammonds House Museum
Victorian home originally built in 1872 by Malcolm Johnston, ATL Attorney General
In 1979, Dr. Otis Thrash Hammonds purchased the home

West End Park
Host to the annual Malcolm X Festival

The Wren's Nest
Queen Anne style house built in 1870 by Joel Chandler Harris, editor of the Atlanta Constitution and author of the "Uncle Remus" stories.
Serves as a museum since Harris' death.
Community outreach includes:
- Storytelling
- Tours
- Writing Programs
- High School run literary journal

West End Mall
Developed in 1970 by Mark Taylor
Community Spaces:
- Conference Rooms
- Meeting Rooms
- Special Event Spaces
Reflects the spirit of the AUC

Shrine of the Black Madonna
Founded in 1975 as the 9th congregation of the Pan African Orthodox Christian Church
Belief that the Hebrew nation is a "Black Nation"
Social services:
- West End Learning Center
- Shrine Cultural Center & Bookstore

West End Community Services Center

West Hunter St. Baptist Church
Formerly, Gordon Street Baptist Church before being purchased by Dr. Ralph David Abernathy during the height of the Civil Rights Movement.

Howell Park
Host to the annual Music in the Park celebration
Contributors to the Core
1. Betling Overlay
The West Side trail of the Atlanta Beltline forms the southern border of the West End, and is predicted to provide an increase of public transit along with new business growth and housing. The idea revitalization in the West End with private funding from the Atlanta Beltline only sparks the conversation of Gentrification and Displacment.

2. West End MARTA Transit Station
Marta is the transit operator for moving most of the low-income, African American population around the city of Atlanta. The West End station provides a prime location for exposure to the Core [West End Mall area] and the AUC.

3. The Atlanta University Center (AUC)
The AUC is the major academic center for the West End neighborhood and Southwest Atlanta. The connection between the AUC & the West End is a historical relationship starting in the 1960s when the neighborhood demographic changed from White to Black during the ‘White Flight’ era of the United States. The Renaissance in the West End in the 1980s show a growth in real estate with faculty and students gaining home ownership of historic houses & local businesses.

The map shows a geographic location of three strong contributors to the West End community. These contributors provide an influx of economic, social, and cultural movements into the commercial corridors and residential neighborhoods of the West End.

Though, West End is predominantly an African American community; many people who are students, workers, or business owners reside outside of the West End and commute to work through means public transit, MARTA, and car.

Shops, restaurants, and stores are easily accessible due to short walking distances that provide transit choices of biking and walking alongside driving.
NEIGHBORHOOD CORE ANALYSIS

Figure 2.7.01
Map Created By: Author

PATHS HIGHLIGHTED THROUGH NEIGHBORHOOD SITE VISIT

Route A - Oak Street
Route B - Ralph D. Abernathy Blvd.
Route C - Joseph E. Lowery Blvd.

AREAS OF CONCENTRATION AROUND LEE & RDA CORRIDORS

Zone A - West End Mall
Zone B - MARTA Rail Station
Zone C - Varying Businesses
Zone D - Varying Commercial

BELTLINE WEST SIDE TRAIL

ATLANTA UNIVERSITY CENTER

ROUTE A
ROUTE B
ROUTE C

Figure 2.7.01
Map Created By: Author
SITE NAVIGATION & SITUATIONS

ROUTE B

JOSEPH E. LOWERY BLVD.  LEE STREET  RALPH D. ABERNATHY BLVD.

OBSERVATIONS

Historic Churches
Local Community Meeting Spot
Public Green Space & Small Local Shops Corridor
Cultural Art Murals

Figure 2.9.01
Map Created By: Author
### Housing Type

- **Single-Family Detached**: 61.07%
- **Single-Family Attached**: 6.26%
- **Multi-Family (3 or More Units)**: 21.66%
- **Duplexes/Twin (2 Units)**: 11.02%

### Age of Homes

- **Pre - 1940**: 23.66%
- **1940 - 1969**: 30.85%
- **1970 - 1979**: 11.61%
- **1980 - 1989**: 11.42%
- **1990 - 1999**: 10.08%
- **Since 2000**: 12.38%
Atlanta Policies implemented into a design strategy for Affordability & Inclusion to Avoid Gentrification

**VERNACULAR**
- Inclusionary Zoning
- Tax Abatement (Tax Freeze)
- Urban Enterprise Zone
- Community Benefits Agreement

**WORKING LANDSCAPES**

**COGNITIVE**

**DESIGN PROGRAM**
- Affordable Housing
- Community Center
- Health Services
- Grocery Store
- Public Plazas
- Outdoor Events
- Playgrounds
- Local Businesses
- Historical & Cultural Art
- Community Porches

Figure 3.1.01 Diagram Created By: Author
Atlanta Community groups that advocate for the benefits and needs of low-income African American neighborhoods

Community needs of the West End are considered in the Design Program for revitalization of the core.

Figure 3.2.01
Diagram Created By: Author

NEIGHBORHOOD CLASSIFICATION
ZIP CODE: 30310
NPU - T
COUNCIL DISTRICT 4
To avoid Gentrification & Displacement in the West End, four policies will be applied to the design strategy to ensure the needs of the residents are met. Different programs will be applied for financial and educational assistance. Financial assistance for development will occur from Section 8 Housing Vouchers, Hope VI Grants, and the Anti-Displacement Tax Fund Program. The Atlanta Housing Authority (AHA) Resident Incentives are for teens/students who reside in a AHA housing developments. These incentives ensure that these young residents receive scholarships to attend college.

Community Advocacy is based off of the Community Benefit Agreement that is established with the West End neighborhood.

Referenced Case Study
Design Case Study | Tassafaronga Village, Oakland, California

Relatable Content
Redevelopment design for a low-income minority community
Funding for full redevelopment of housing, construction of new housing, and adaptive re-use of large commercial buildings.
Residents were not displaced and their culture was not altered.

See Chart in Appendix II for description of terms used.
The design strategy shows the development of the 13-acre site of the current West End Mall. The site will serve as the core of which surrounding situations will connect to accrue the community needs, the neighborhood culture and meaning, and working landscape.

**EQUITABLE STRATEGY**
1. Community Culture
2. Diverse Land Use Opportunities
3. Physical Environment
4. Use of street transit to effectively connect residents and drive economic value

**WEST END MALL**
1. Largest Social Space
2. Services
3. Jobs
4. The Heart

**LEE STREET & RDA**
1. Major junction in the West End.
2. Host to many cultural

**LEE & RDA STREET CORRIDORS REACTIVATION**
- WALK
- CAR
- TRAM
- CAR
- WALK

Figure 3.4.01  
Diagram Created By: Author
CULTURAL CENTER (Cognitive)
1. Encourage connection between all residents, regardless of income
2. Large space for congregation for the public & AUC annual events
3. Will serve as the “Heart” of West End

PRODUCTIVE LANDSCAPE (Working)
1. Office Space
2. Retail Space for local and brand businesses
3. Fresh market, grocery stores
4. Revitalization of the Mall to include fresh market spaces & green spaces
5. New Health Services center will easily accessible for both young & old residents

AFFORDABLE HOUSING (Vernacular)
1. New housing to low-income residents
2. Housing strategies will follow the policy of Inclusionary Zoning set by the City of Atlanta
3. New housing will be designed for college students, senior living, multi-family, and temporary housing.
4. Incentives for residents will be provided through programs initiated through the Atlanta Housing Authority (AHA)

With the use of appropriate funding from the HUD Hope VI Grant, Section 8 Vouchers, & the Anti-Displacement Tax Fund; the core can be redeveloped at affordable rate with attractive construction for residents of all incomes. Job placement will also be available.
Design Iterations show the division of the site into small parcels for new programming. Each building and land usage indicates a particular service relevant to the community’s needs, lifestyles, neighborhood culture.
Design Iterations show the division of the site into small parcels for new programming. Each building and land usage indicates a particular service relevant to the community’s needs, lifestyles, neighborhood culture.
Revitalizing the Mall West End
The master plan of the new West End Mall area shows a design that incorporates the three conceptual elements of place character: Vernacular, Working Landscape, and Cognitive.

The existing 13-acre site will be converted to a mixed-use/mixed-income core for the community of the West End as well as connect to the Atlanta University Center, Oakland City, Westview, and Adair Park I&II.

New & existing buildings exist to serve the community needs and affordability in efforts to avoid gentrification.
4. COMMUNITY CENTER
Recreational Activities
Governmental Services
Senior Services
After-School Programs
Adult-Learning Services

5. MIXED-INCOME HOUSING
Senior Housing
Student Housing
Multi-Family Homes

6. MIXED-INCOME HOUSING
Senior Housing
Single-Family Homes

7. PUBLIC PLAZAS
Pedestrian Spaces
Urban Greenscape
Community Event Spaces
Social Interaction

Revitalizing the Mall West End
The design of outdoor spaces, mixed-income housing, and community center services will help assist the daily needs of the residents of the West End and the community of the AUC. The Vernacular for the mixed-income housing is expressed in the design of open pockets in the facade that integrate moments of activity and interaction between those who live in the housing with those who will interact with the new redevelopment and surrounding businesses and shops.

Open green spaces and plazas were designed to integrate community activities, events, & daily usage into a fresh air environment. These spaces become social & interactive.
Revitalizing the Mall West End

The working landscape of the revitalized core engages in the socio-economic forces that are placed near the economic corridors of Lee Street & Ralph D. Abernathy Blvd. The grocery store serves a purpose to provide fresh food to residents instead of mini-mart items. The grocery store works in connection with the community urban gardens to provide fresh ingredients and meals for families, students, and seniors.

The adaptive re-use of the West End Mall serves a multi-function program of health services for seniors, students, and families. The office space provides local business owners, who use the mall area to attract clientele, a space to conduct business. Retail stores continue the original function of the mall, but integrated with the new framework of health services and office.

Market owners who wish to sell their product at the busy intersection of Lee St. & RDA, can use the kiosk stands to generate of self income. The kiosk stands will provide unlimited economic resources to those who wish to use them for business.
Revitalizing the Mall West End

The history, culture, and meaning of the West End is extended into the master plan to show the public/external interaction. The public plazas are designed for residents to express their culture through events or artistically exhibit their creativity on provided art surfaces. The plazas and central green make an ideal location of historic art installations as well.

The housing component resembles the meaning of porches in the West End. Porch parties are very common in the neighborhood and the design extracts that into the facades of the mixed-income housing.

The community center serves as an area of enclosed programming and a depository of history for residents to view at their leisure.

The area between the grocery store and the mall has been highlighted to indicate the community garden that serves the redeveloped core and surrounding areas around the mall area.
Revitalizing the Mall West End
Street Sections A & B show activity of the daily life (Vernacular) and community culture (Cognitive) of what would occur along Oak Street in the West End.
Revitalizing the Mall West End

Street Sections C & D show activity of the daily life (Vernacular) and socio-economic forces (Working) of what would occur along Lee Street in the West End.
Revitalizing the Mall West End

The building typology is designed to function for the redeveloped core, offer services needed by the community, establish an area for daily needs, and an open environment for social interaction.

Housing was specifically designed to reflect the building typology of the historical houses in the West End. The porches & balconies are what brings together the residents of the West End; and the housing in the core will continue to enhance the connections between existing & new residents.

PROGRAM
1. Community Center
2. Residential
3. Retail/Restaurant
4. Office Space
5. Health Services
6. Grocery Store
7. Porch/Balconies
Revitalizing the Mall West End
The core becomes an active landscape of mixed uses for the residents of the West End, faculty & students of the AUC, MARTA transit riders, and new residents of the West End. The rendering highlights the community services that the residents of the West End advocated for. With an addition of mixed housing, current residents will not be displaced from their community due to Gentrification, but will find home in a new, redeveloped area that will serve as a major socio-economic core for the West End, Westview, the AUC, Adair Park, & Oakland City.

The most important aspect of the new design, is the central green space which serves as an outdoor public venue for the community to use.
The primary intent of this thesis is to research strategies to avoid Gentrification in low-income minority communities, specifically in Atlanta’s Southwest, African-American communities.

Research strategies throughout this thesis focus on the physical environment & place characteristics of the West End neighborhood in Atlanta, Georgia. The guiding framework of Vernacular, Working, and Cognitive characteristics positioned my research to focus on the daily needs and lifestyles of the residents of the West End, and the socio-economic forces that are needed to maintain the culture, history, and meaning of the neighborhood.

Design techniques are directed by the Community needs that are advocated by community groups such as; The Transformation Alliance, Georgia Stand-Up, and Wonder Root. The groups advocate for the needs of the people rather than the economic value of property that most developers see their community as. Incorporating the needs of the people into the design strategy insure that the physical environment will not only change for economic development but community development as well.

The West End was a chosen focus due to its location in the city of Atlanta in conjunction with the MARTA transit station, the Atlanta University Center (AUC), Westview, Adair Park, Oakland City, Fort McPherson, Interstate 20, and downtown Atlanta. The West End serves as a core, as it history tells that it was developed in 1835 as the first Atlanta suburb. The West End also began the first street car line into downtown Atlanta increasing the economic value of the neighborhood.

Over time, the West End has changed its demographic, but its history & culture remain stagnant through the historical houses, schools, parks, and churches. The West End was the epicenter of the Atlanta Black Renaissance in the time of Civil Rights and the 1980s. It serve as the example of Black Culture and Meaning.

The final iteration of this thesis shows a redevelopment that does not negate the Black Culture and Meaning, but retains it and opens the door for new residents of a different era and culture in Atlanta to enter through the Atlanta Beltline’s development and the increasing tech and film job markets.

In conclusion, This thesis presents itself as a proposal in an effort to avoid Gentrification in low-income minority communities in Atlanta, Georgia.
Thank You,

To the following community organization for extending an internship alongside my involvement with the West End Community Character Study through Kennesaw State University:

Georgia Stand-Up | Deborah Scott, Executive Director

To the faculty of the Kennesaw State University College of Architecture & Construction Management who guided me through my thesis:

Mine Hashas-Degertekin, Phd. | Thesis Advisor
Marcel Cardeval | Focus Studio Professor, Fall Semester 2018

To additional outside resources at the City of Atlanta [Renew Atlanta] office:

Garfield Peart, AIA, NOMA, M.Arch | Program Management Officer

To my thesis advisor, for allowing me the opportunity to be a part of the West End Community Character Study & Georgia Stand-Up Internship:

Mine Hashas-Degertekin, Phd. | Primary Thesis Advisor
REFERENCES


Studo, Atlanta City Design. Aspiring to the Beloved Community. City Planning Report. Atlanta, Georgia: City of Atlanta Department of City Planning, 2018. Web HTML.


https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gentrification

https://atlantawestend.com/our-history/

https://catalog.archives.gov/id/6082397

https://www.fff.org/explore-freedom/article/fdr-promoted-racial-segregation/

http://www.glasshousecollective.org/about/

https://www.atlantahousing.org/housing-programs/


https://purposebuiltcommunities.org/who-we-are/history/
## Chart & Definitions

<table>
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<tr>
<th>ISSUES</th>
<th>POLICIES</th>
<th>PROGRAMS</th>
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</thead>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Affordable Housing.</strong> Housing that is a rental or owner-occupied unit is considered affordable if the cost of housing is at or below 30% of an individual’s income. <em>(Source: Affordable Housing Online)</em></td>
<td><strong>Inclusionary Zoning</strong> An affordable housing strategy that links the production of affordable housing units to the production of market rate housing units; requiring or encouraging new residential developments to make a certain percentage of their housing units affordable to low or moderate income residents. <em>(Source: NYU Furman Center, Center for Housing Policy, PDF)</em></td>
<td><strong>Section 8 Housing</strong> A Housing of Urban Development program (HUD) that assists renters with paying their rent for any costs that exceeds 30% of their income. <em>(Source: Affordable Housing Online)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Equity</strong> Justness or fairness based on the needs of the individuals in relation to their surroundings.</td>
<td><strong>Anti-Displacement Tax Fund Program.</strong> An public initiative launched by the Westside Future Fund (WFF), to provide a grant funded program in Atlanta, Georgia to help aid qualifying homeowners of the English Avenue, Vine City, Ashview Heights, and Atlanta University Center communities from being displaced due to rising property taxes; by paying their property tax increases without residents having to pay back any funds received. The funds which are administered by the Westside Future Fund, come from philanthropic sources.</td>
<td><strong>Section 8 Housing Voucher</strong> An affordable initiative where a renter guarantees to pay only the portion of the rent that is affordable to them based on their income. <em>(Source: Affordable Housing Online)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Equality</strong> Equal sharing or exact division without concern for justness or fairness.</td>
<td><strong>Ethics</strong> A moral philosophy that involves systematizing, defending, and recommending concepts of right and wrong principles. <em>(Source: Wikipedia, Ethics)</em></td>
<td><strong>Subsidized Housing</strong> Housing that is considered to have rental assistance, with all or a portion of the monthly housing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Economic Mobility</strong> The ability of an individual, family or some other group to improve (or lower) their economic status. Economic mobility is often measured by</td>
<td><strong>Judicial in Rem (in rem Jurisdiction)</strong> Jurisdiction in rem assumes the property or status is the primary object of the action, rather than personal liabilities not</td>
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*Figure 6.1.01 Chart Created By: Author*
### POLICIES & PROGRAMS

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<th>Movement between income quintiles. May also be considered a type of social mobility, which is often measured in change income. (Source: Wikipedia, Economic Mobility)</th>
<th>Necessarily associated with the property. Within the U.S. federal court system, jurisdiction in rem typically refers to the power a federal court may exercise over large items of immovable property, or real property, located within the court’s jurisdiction. (Source: Wikipedia, in rem jurisdiction)</th>
<th>Cost paid directly by the government. (Source: Affordable Housing Online)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Food Desert</strong> Parts of the country vapid of fresh fruit, vegetables, and other healthful whole foods, usually found in impoverished areas. This is largely due to a lack of grocery stores, farmers’ markets, and healthy food providers. (Source: Mari Gallagher, American Nutrition Association)</td>
<td><strong>Expedited permitting</strong> A cost-efficient and effective way of reducing the costs incurred by developers during the development review process. Under this permit service, affordable housing projects become more attractive; with a fast-tracking review and permitting process that reduces developer costs at no-cost to local jurisdictions. (Source: Washington Area Housing Partnership, Expedited Permitting)</td>
<td><strong>Tax abatement</strong> Programs that are offered to reduce or eliminate the amount of property tax, owners pay on new construction, rehabilitation, and/or major improvements. These tax incentives won’t completely eliminate your property tax bill, but tax is still paid on the value of the property before improvements. (Source: Investopedia)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Area Median Income (AMI)</strong> The average level of income for each market area with varying living costs, determined by the government of different cities.</td>
<td><strong>Urban Enterprise Zone (UEZ)</strong> A designated district that is located within an economically-depressed area of the city of Atlanta where property owners receive tax abatements over a ten-year period, if certain conditions are met. (Source: atlantaga.gov, Urban Enterprise Zone)</td>
<td><strong>HUD hope 6.</strong> A plan by the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development. It is meant to revitalize the worst public housing projects in the United States into mixed-income developments. Its philosophy is largely based on New Urbanism and the concept of Defensible space.</td>
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FIN