Residential Square in the 21st Century: Applying a typology to create a new urban morphology

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Residential Square in the 21st Century
Applying a typology to create a new urban morphology

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1.1 Summary
As a low-rise high-density mixed-use typology, the reconsideration of the residential square can provide a renewed urban morphology that densifies residential zones, while providing safe public spaces. In addition, I assert that through its combination of juxtaposed functional uses, unit typology the language of the façade, the historical European residential square, can articulate the identity of residents.

In many residential area of America’s mid-size, post-industrial cities, the detached single-family house, built in the 1920s through the 1950s, on a large lot is not always maintainable by its low/middle income inhabitants and lacks the sustainable density needed in the evolving city. The future of this city is characterized by safe, walkable and active neighborhoods. However, the residential square can exhibit American identity and be adapted from its European counterpart in the acknowledgement of unique neighborhood cultural context and notions of individualism and land ownership.
1.2 Thesis Abstract

“If residential buildings can be said to form a city’s body, then their facades can be called its face.”1 The “private realm” defines the “civic realm” of the city, and public spaces exist because of the accumulation of private buildings around them.2 The historical residential squares in London, Paris and New York provide examples of such an instance in the urban fabric. The aggregation of the historical townhouse around an open, public space can create urban housing that considers its locality and users, while facilitating diversity and growth. Moreover, the historical residential square eliminated the introverted urban block, creating new, open space for civic use.

This typology can be weaved into the urban fabric of American cities to create a housing morphology for current low-income residents that fosters community connectivity and diversity in neighborhoods where blocks are large and common space use does not exist. The residential square provides two types of models, proving that culture plays a significant role in the pairing of private and public spaces within the urban landscape of blocks and districts. The first consideration is the civic role that an open space had in the historical urban fabric. The second consideration is the articulation of the individual, private realm through architectural syntax. This identity is then relayed back to the public.

The potential of this housing typology exists in opposition to the urban conditions created by, what Jane Jacobs calls, “The Radiant Garden City Beautiful” movement of the twentieth century. According to Jacobs, to repair the disabled post-industrial city, such as Syracuse, several factors should be implemented to foster diversity. A re-stitching needs to occur between districts, enabled by an increased mixing of uses and users of street and block.3 Given criticism of the inability of the high-rise tower to foster a sense of community and security among residents, an alternate housing typology is needed. Moreover, the use of the park surrounding the tower was uncontrolled and unconsidered. Because of the self-sufficient nature of the tower, there was a strong segregation between landscape and building; “living in the sky divorced from the ground did not provide a vibrant environment.”5 This urban housing model needs to be re-evaluated for a more public and communal use in relation to more individualized dwelling units. The low-rise, but high-density, townhouse typology can be adapted to local demographics to repair the urban block, while defining a public space unique to residents and to the community.

The condition of the urban fabric is essential. Jacobs’ thinking intersects with New Urbanism’s respect for Clarence Stein’s Neighborhood Unit, Eliel Saarinen’s Functional Community and Leon Krier’s Urban Quartier.6 These models for a healthy urban fabric are significant because of their ability to create a matrix for social patterns and a community that encourages “ordinary human needs”.7 They facilitate sustainable growth, in terms of density, pedestrian walkability, and public infrastructure. This network enables mobility and flow between districts.8 The block significantly facilitates the disposition of the private and public realms within the city.9 The residential square is part of this pattern and matrix of urban blocks. The public realm is clearly defined through the aggregation of the private realm. The two realms merge in use and language of the square.

The historical juxtapositioning of private and public uses within residential squares creates a dynamic urban community. Through the adjacency of their dwellings to the public square, individuals living in within this block were part of the monumental civic institutions associated with the use of the square. These institutions were determined by the time
period, those in charge and thus by the culture of the city. For example, the Parisian royal processions and tournaments within Place Royale provided the sense of courtliness and membership that aristocratic residents desired. The tournament was originally a war game, but evolved into an organized event. They were also social events, including pageants and banquets.

Moreover, because each city had its own social qualities, the square's open space was used differently in London. For example, Covent Garden gained activity over time through the incorporation of the city market at its center. The market was part of a larger public and private network of commercial markets in the city. Its development was over a long period time and was heavily influenced by London's demographic and physical growth, along with the rising demand of the time period. Furthermore, Fitzroy and Bedford Squares included the English landscape garden in their public space. According to Joan Bassin, the English garden was its own "cultural institution" of the time. By creating a version of wildness within a bounded area, the control of economic and social changes by aesthetic balances within the landscape was attempted. Thus, culture-specific institutional uses were incorporated into the fabric of the square.

The residences around the square formally defined the civic space. The architectural language employed to face the residential units of the square is indicative of each city's notion of the relationship between the private individual and the public realm. Both Paris and London had strict façade requirements during the development of the square. With Place Royale, King Henri IV dictated the use of brick, a material typical of bourgeois and tradesmen dwellings in Paris, to articulate the facade residences. Although finally inhabited by aristocrats, the architectural language and materiality created an association between the previous manufacturing district and the new civic realm. Behind the strictly defined façade, owners could buy and build upon as many plots as desired.

Fitzroy Square in London indicates an evolution in this notion of image making through deployment of architectural language. It dramatizes and triumphs over the illusion of "wildness" bound within the square; it is an image of both a country house and its landscape. Though it appears to be a singular home through the unified façade, individual townhomes exist behind the vertical veil. In Fitzroy Square, the individual owner is no longer articulated within the public square. Thus, the façade demonstrates a tension, either taught or relaxed, between the private and the public realms. In both London and Paris, facades were built before the individual units behind them, which were then sold to individual owners for private development. Although individuals were subordinate to the public use of the open space, this is precisely what attracted them to the square. They were interested in being a part of a larger civic space, which was created either through royal place-making plans or private speculation.

Even though the residential squares in Paris and London were successful based on the fact that residents desired to participate in the collective identity of the square, American squares lacked the clear portrayal of the collective, civic environment. This is not unexpected because of the American regard for individuality and personal freedom. Though its architectural language, Gramercy Square in Manhattan shows that individual enterprise overshadows the collective activation of the public space. Townhouses employ different façade archetypes. Moreover, in terms of its use, the central square's garden is open only to residents, whereas the squares of both Paris and London were completely part of the public
realm, incorporating space for public play, commerce, and respite.

However, Wooster Square in New Haven shows that the residential square can adapt to change and is able to thrive in contemporary society if given the opportunity. It is composed of different housing typologies, growing from being strictly single-family residences, with private yards and drives, to the inclusion of the townhouse. As established by Michael Dennis, fashions and societal preferences influenced the type of architectural language chosen for the dwellings. Thus, after evolution over time, the syntax of Wooster Square is one of diversity through housing types and their associated use. This indicates that as the culture of the city changed, so did the square and its composition.

Other models show that architectural language can articulate interior complexities and the multiple private identities within a building, while relating them back to the public realm. Individuality is projected onto the vertical surface for public viewing. A New Civic Art assesses these facial characteristics of buildings as indicative of the lifestyle of inhabitants. New Urbanism uses the Byker Wall by Ralph Erskine and Canary Wharf by Koetter Kim & Associates to exemplify this idea. The International Building Exposition in Berlin also provides an example of how varied and individual buildings relate back to the urban fabric.

The building is just as influential as the district in presenting the patterns and culture of a society. Historical residential squares prove that through the historical placement of interior, private program in relation to exterior, civic space, a strong sense of community and sanctuary can be fostered. The degree that the individual and private realms are articulated varies according to the city. The residential square is the basis for an urban housing morphology, characterized by activity created by the juxtapositioning of residential and civic space in a defined area. In Syracuse, the current political, economic and social environments of the city define the current culture. This will provide the basis for a block and unit system that can enable cross-pollination between existing, distinct enclaves within the city, dissipating strong boundaries, physical and/or invisible, between them. New types of civic spaces will be created.

The transposition of the residential square will be part of a large-scale strategic plan for the re-development of low-rise low-density neighborhoods on the fringe of the central business district in the post-industrial city. A community garden will be defined by a public housing project. Thus, the neighborhood’s identity will be presented through the physical landscape, building volumes and façade. The project will become part of the system of communal spaces within the city. American individualism will express the civic realm, while creating a secure and connected environment. The new housing block provides a proto-type for an urban morphology that decreases anonymity within a neighborhood, while providing a spectrum of space types. It will also provide an identity that is closely linked with that of the district’s culture, leading to a sense of pride and ownership provided by clear entry sequences and points of access, and enforced through the facade.
1.2 Thesis Abstract

Selected Annotated Bibliography

The relationship between the growth of cities and the increase in villas, or country homes.

History of the growth of real estate development in London through “pattern book”, a combined economic and architectural guide.


Specific information about the development and history of Place Royale, including floor plans and historical images.

Explanation of the role that gardens played in English society: to bring order and control to a disorderly social and economic environment.

Overview of history of Boston neighborhood, includes historical images.


Survey of the relationship between urban fabric, private realm and public realms. Provides good examples of urban planning precedents and strategies for a new urban environment.


Information about demographics, social influences on and history of Place Royale.

Case studies of contemporary residential architecture, including perspectives on facade and volumes.

Case studies of contemporary urban housing, including degree of density and percentage of residential use.
Fernandez Per, Aurora. *This is hybrid: an analysis of mixed-use buildings by a+t / prologue by Steven Holl; authors*, a+t research group, Aurora Fernández Per, Javier Mozas, Javier Arpa. Vitoria-Gasteiz, Spain: a+t architecture publishers, 2011.
Case studies of contemporary mixed-use buildings.


Description of sociological concepts behind urban re-growth, including diversity of streetlife, uses, and users within city districts.

Theory on the urban culture of New York City.

Description of theoretical ideas, proposed standards, and diagrams.


Case study supported description of how circulation and programming can bring security to urban subsidized housing.
1.3 Key terms and concepts
Cultural context
social - demographic
political
economic

Urban fabric
public
semi-public
private

Syntax
individual
collective

Use
Mixed-use
Mixed-occupation

American Dream
Ownership and pride
Personalization
Individual identity

Issues
Security
Legibility
Economy
Connectivity
2.0 Context: Site

2.1 Blocks
2.2 Zoning
2.3 Land use
2.4 Routes
2.5 Walkability
2.6 Square superimposition
2.1 Blocks

The combination of negative visible and invisible organizational elements creates a harsh urban environment.

In the Near West Side, there are two opposite street grids that clash, creating a neighborhood that is not evenly developed and easily transversed. Studies in the directionality produced by these grids leads to the conclusion that the north eastern portion of the NWS is more permeable than the south western portion. These two areas are each defined by a separate grid type. The northern area is composed on shorter, smaller blocks, while the south western area is defined by very long and large blocks.
Block dimensions
2.1 Blocks

As a result, block types and dimensions are not consistent across the neighborhood. There are several types of long blocks, while the shorter blocks are more consistent.

Moreover, land vacancy is very high in the Near West Side. It is relegated to strips of land and blocks which are characterized by detached buildings. The only blocks that are fully occupied are those of the public James Geddes Housing Project and school. The Industrial warehouses to the north are also fully occupied by commercial and institutional uses. However, they are related more to the expansion of the CBD and the Near West Side Initiative.
Types of blocks in the Near West Side
Zoning in the Near West Side is very hard edged and there are few areas of mixed-use blocks. The single family and multi-family residential zones are encased within the local business district and industrial and commercial zones. There are some islands of business uses within the residential zones. However, the boundaries of this environment could be pushed further to include mixed-uses within the longer blocks of the south western portion of the NWS.
Zones within the Near West Side
2.3 Land use

There are multiple large scale and smaller, block scale parks that exist in the city of Syracuse. In the Near West Side, there are four main green and open spaces. The largest is Skiddy Park, which is sandwiched between the James Geddes Housing Project and the Blodgett School. It includes a baseball field, basketball courts, and picnic areas. One green space is part of the Youth Center and includes a playground. Another is a garden space with seating and plantings.
Land use of the Near West Side
The largest amount of commercial uses are found to the east and north of the neighborhood. They are located along major streets, which are part of the CENTRO system. There are 3 bus stops within the Near West Side and the bus lines only travel halfway down the long block streets. The long blocks are very isolated from the rest of the neighborhood.

The boundaries that surround the Near West Side include the railway that passes to the north of the neighborhood. It divides the district visually and almost physically from the CBD. The bus routes indicate the major streets within the neighborhood, while South Clinton, West Onondaga, and South Geddes streets are the major city streets that border it. These are also the major streets on which crime occurs.
2.5 Walkability

This is a harmful condition, compounded by the fact that it is a residential only area. If there were businesses along the other portion of the long block streets, then the bus would certainly pass down their entire length. This would create a very safe and active street. As it is now, this portion of the neighborhood is inactive both in terms of bus and pedestrian traffic.

As dictated by New Urbanism principles, the best walking distance in a connected neighborhood should be, at a minimum, 1/8 mile or approximately 700 feet. The maximum walking distance is 1/4 mile. At these distances, the walking time should range from 5 - 10 minutes respectively.

The optimal walking radius is shown in the diagram to the right. Currently, residents of the long block streets are not within a 5-10 minute walking radius to bus stops. They do not have the optimal situation for use of public transit and proximity to local businesses. This inhibits the walkability within the Near West Side, relegating it to zones that are composed primarily of commercial uses.

The circulation, street, blocks, and land use environment are not conducive of a well connected and sustainable community.
points of interest, bus routes and walking radii

Site for concentration

Types of blocks in the Near West Side
The relationship between the European model and the American importation is not one-to-one, however it evolves to re-present the identity of residents and the neighborhood. Therefore, an understanding of context, both visible and invisible, is key to defining the culture of an individual and of the larger neighborhood. The urban fabric, a network made up of streets, buildings, and blocks that promotes social patterns, defines the visible context.\footnote{Duany, Andres, Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk, and Robert Alminana. The New Civic Art: Elements of Town Planning. New York: Rizzoli International Publications, Inc., 2003. P. 86.} The invisible context is the socio-cultural and geo-political landscapes of a neighborhood as part of a city. Political, economic and social issues arise out of this scene. Both types of context embody the underlying identity of a community.
Accumulation of open spaces from residential squares in the Near West Side, also showing size relative to the NWS
There is a strong correlation between bus routes and degrees of walkability, along with the block size, type and crime occurrences. Crime occurs readily on the main streets from Syracuse into the Near West Side. These streets are also characterized by long blocks, residential-only land use, and lack of direct bus travel. This creates an inactive and dangerous environment, for residents and for visitors.

**Conclusion**

The residential square may show that the juxtaposition of private residences with public space use is key to an active and secure neighborhood. It can bring sustainable density and organizing techniques for re-developing the low-rise low-density zones of the Near West Side. It is an urban residential typology that is adaptable to the cultural context of this district. Scale of the block is an important factor, in terms of the location of commercial units, access to residential units, and live/work units. The variation of circulation type, block subdivisions and residential density are reflective of subdivisions within the community and are indicative of economic prosperity.
Diagrams showing building density and open spaces provided by accumulation of residential square, also showing size relative to the NWS
Clearly, the Near West Side is suffering from a lack of housing stock that supports its current demographic and city goals relative to individual and fringe communities.

The superimposition of historical squares onto the Near West Side, it is discovered that they offer more density and clearly defined and sheltered civic spaces.
Figure ground diagram of Residential Squares patterned onto the Near West Side, showing existing buildings underneath.
3.0 Context: Culture

3.1 Social context
3.2 Political context
3.3 Economic context
3.1 Social context

Near Westside | Syracuse

Neighborhood characteristics define social issues of the Near Westside. Data includes household size, family size, median household income, employment, housing stock, tenure (length of stay) and occupancy status.

**Household**

Out of a total population of 7,030 persons, there are 2,424 households and 1,511 are families. The Average household size is approximately 3 people.

**Income, median**

$14,474. This number is significantly lower than the rest of Syracuse. The median income in Syracuse is $30,075.

**Unemployment**

14.3% of males are unemployed. 9.1% of females are unemployed.

**Housing stock**

There are 3,059 units in the Near Westside. They were built in median date of 1943.

**Rentership**

Out of 3,059 total units, 1,917 of them are renter occupied.

**Ownership**

There are more renters than owners in the nearwest side.

---

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Households</th>
<th>Average Household Size</th>
<th>Families</th>
<th>Family Size</th>
<th>Median Household Income</th>
<th>Unemployment</th>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>7,030</td>
<td>2,424</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>1,511</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>$14,474</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
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</table>

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Unemployment</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
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</thead>
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<td>14.3%</td>
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<td>9.1%</td>
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</table>

Near Westside demographic overview

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Housing Stock</th>
<th>Tenure</th>
<th>Occupancy Status</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Median Age</td>
<td>Housing Units</td>
<td>Owner Occupied</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1943</td>
<td>3,059</td>
<td>509</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Near Westside housing, occupancy, and unemployment overview

16.7% of the population own their homes and 62.7% rent.

**Vacancy**
There is a vacancy rate of 20.7% in the Near Westside. There are 2,427 occupied units and 632 vacant.

**Conclusion**
Social issues of the Near Westside include vacancy rates and unemployment. This is compounded by low-income, affecting the ability of home ownership. As a result, most people rent their homes.

This may lead to problems with security and crime, as well as issues with territoriality, within the neighborhood. Since, most people rent, there is less of a sense of ownership and authority over a block and pride in the neighborhood.

**Key Social Issues of the Near Westside**
- **Vacancy**
- **Low Homeownership, High rentership**
- **Safety**
- **territoriality, “turf”**

**Population Demographics**

**Age**
The median age in the Near West Side is approximately 25 years. In Syracuse it is approximately 31 years.

**Race**
Most people in the Near West Side are Black, Hispanic or Caucasian.

**Citizenship**
Almost 70% of the residents of the Near West Side were born in New York State, while 16.4% were born in another State and 11.2% are native residents, but were born outside of the U.S.

**Language**
A small percent of residents in the neighborhood speak English not very well or not at all, but this amount is higher than the percentage found in Syracuse in general. The Near West side has a higher composition of foreign speaking, latino people then the rest of Syracuse.

**Education**
Approximately 50% of residents have less than a high school level of educational attainment. Approximately 30% of residents have a high school level of education and less than 10% have 1 year
or more of an upper, college level education attainment.

**Household size**
The average household size in the NWS is approximately 3 people, in comparison to Syracuse's approximate size of 2 people. The average family size is between 3 and 4 members, as compared to Syracuse's approximate 3 members.

There are more single-mother households than married couple with children families. Approximately 30% of the neighborhood has single mother families and approximately 10% has married couple with children families. Married couple families are approximately 18% of the population of the Near West Side.

**Dwelling unit size**

**Owner**
Owned houses typically have 6 rooms. 154 buildings have 6 rooms available. This is also the case in Syracuse.

**Renter**
Renter-occupied apartments in the Near West Side typically have 3 rooms, a similar occurrence is also found in Syracuse. The second highest amount of renter-occupied apartments have 5 rooms in the Near West Side.

In general, there are more detached owner occupied units than there are renter occupied units in the Near West Side.

**Value and Rent**
The estimated value of detached houses in the Near West Side is $60,000 less than the value of detached houses in Syracuse.

The value of townhouses or other types of attached units in the Near West Side is approximately $40,000 less than they are in Syracuse.

Rent in the Near West Side is approximately $100 less than it is in Syracuse.

**Mode of transport**
Most people in the Near West Side drive a car to work. Approximately 30% of residents carpool, with others riding public buses or walking. The fewest amount work at home or ride to work on a bicycle. This shows that although the neighborhood is close to the central business district of Syracuse, people still have to travel a significant distance to work, depending on cars instead of public transit.
Owners and renters by unit type, showing that there are more detached owner occupied units than renter occupied units.

Chart showing how people get to work. Almost 50% of residents of the Near West Side drive a car; approximately 30% carpool and the rest use public transportation or walk. A few bicycle or work at home.

Statistics showing comparison between values of detached and attached houses and townhouses in the Near West Side and Syracuse.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Housing Type</th>
<th>Near Westside</th>
<th>Syracuse</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Detached</td>
<td>$87,916</td>
<td>$141,292</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Townhouses</td>
<td>$32,500</td>
<td>$77,488</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Statistics showing comparison between household and family size and type in the Near West Side and Syracuse.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Household/Family Size</th>
<th>Near Westside</th>
<th>Syracuse</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Average household size</td>
<td>2.7 people</td>
<td>2.3 people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average family size</td>
<td>3.5 members</td>
<td>3.1 members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of married-couple families (among all households): Here: 18.2%; city: 27.5%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of married-couple families with children (among all households): Near Westside: 9.9%; Syracuse: 11.9%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of single-mother households (among all households): This neighborhood: 30.8%; Syracuse: 14.8%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.2% of population in other group homes
3.2 Political context

Near Westside | Syracuse

Community structure includes educational and safety forces in the Nearwest Side. Policies initiated by the Syracuse Police, Syracuse Housing Authority, Syracuse School system, Syracuse Parks Department, along with private institutional involvement, have been and continue to be key in the re-structuring of the neighborhood.

Public law enforcement

“As members of the Syracuse Police Department, our mission is to protect all lives and property and maintain a feeling of security in the community, and to enforce all federal, state and local laws over which the Department has jurisdiction. Our mission is carried out with a commitment to the philosophy and principles of community policing.”

As defined by the U.S. Department of Justice, community policing: “promotes organizational strategies, which support the systematic use of partnerships and problem-solving techniques, to proactively address the immediate conditions that give rise to public safety issues such as crime, social disorder, and fear of crime”.

“Community policing advocates three key components to pro-actively addressing neighborhood conditions: Community partnerships, organizational methods
and means available to communities, and problem-solving techniques and processes."³

Syracuse also has a higher crime index than the rest of the U.S. Thus, it is important for both city and community involvement in keeping a neighborhood and its residents safe. The process should be a joint effort between citizens and police. For this reason, police should strive to have a positive relationship with Near Westside current residents. Residents should also endeavor to have an open relationship with police.

Board of Education
The vision of the Syracuse Board of Education states that “the board is dedicated to improving achievement for all students, maintaining a safe, clean, civil and orderly learning environment in every school and using the District’s resources effectively and efficiently.”⁴

However, despite the idealistic vision that the board of education has proposed for its operations, the Near Westside schools continually perform under state-wide levels. According to the “Near Westside from 2010 Housing Plan”, Fowler High School is on New York State’s list of “Persistently Lowest Achieving Schools” (PLA).

Furthermore, elementary and middle schools are undergoing “Restructuring”, being identified as “in Need of Improvement”.⁵ Renovations are schedule for the near future. However, in the most recent 2012 listing of PLA schools, Fowler High School was not included. This may mean that some degree of progress was made to improve student learning.

Department of Parks, Recreation, and Youth Programs
“To Cultivate and sustain leisure programming while providing attractive parks that will enrich the quality of life for both residents and visitors, as
3.2 Political context
Near Westside | Syracuse

well as preserve it for future generations."¹

Departments include Special Events, Senior Programs, Aquatics, Adult programs, Ice Rinks, Golf, Youth Programs, and Forestry and Grounds.

Senior programs include fitness recreation, speakers, day trips, bingo, health screening events, holiday parties, legal services, and daily lunches.²

Adult programs are centered around athletic activities. Basketball, broomball, lacrosse, volleyball and softball games are all scheduled by the parks department.³

Youth recreation programs include, summer sports and learning camps, basketball leagues, sports clinics, and swimming. These programs and events occur at neighborhood community centers and school-based sites.⁴

Group cooking lessons and farmers markets are also offered weekly.⁵

Thus, current community and public programs are centered around group sports activities, exchanging goods, and group learning experiences for all age types. This effort is focused on enabling a healthy, both physically and mentally, community.

Fig 1. Map of SURA boundaries, including Near West Side and SALT District and public parks

Syracuse Urban Renewal Agency
The mission of the Syracuse Urban Renewal Agency (SURA) “is to acquire and dispose of properties in a fashion that is consistent with the identified needs of the neighborhood residents for better housing, commercial services, recreational facilities, employment opportunities, and, when appropriate, demolition of properties that in their
current form discourage investment and advance the further deterioration of neighborhoods."⁶

“Urban renewal areas include Washington Square, Northside, Lincoln Hill, Near Eastside, Hawley Green, Prospect Hill, Park Ave, Near Westside, Skunk City, Southwest and Southside”⁷

Syracuse University
Syracuse University is part of an ongoing initiative (Near West Side Initiative) to revitalize the Near Westside. “The NWSI involves economic and social recovery of the community through mixed-use and residential developments.”⁸

“The mission of the Near West Side Initiative is to combine the power of art, technology and innovation with neighborhood values and culture to revitalize Syracuse’s Near West Side neighborhood. NWSI aims to bring new elements into the blighted neighborhood to create new synergies and opportunities—economic, cultural and personal.”⁹

“This new vision focuses on an 11-block area (28 acres) at the northeast corner of the Near West Side that will include new commercial/residential mixed-use developments and investments in residential properties.”¹⁰

NWSI assumes the impact that art and artists have in spurring re-growth. This may or may not lead to gentrification, which is an unplanned process resulting in current residents leaving the neighborhood due to increasing housing values and rents. This occurred in larger cities such as in New York City with neighborhoods like SoHo (1970s) and Chelsea (2000s). As a smaller
city, Syracuse has fewer inner city locations for low-income residents to move to if gentrification occurs. Thus, it is imperative that new developments and rehabilitated residences and buildings should respond directly to the existing population, so that it is not necessary for them to leave their neighborhood when the community grows.

Near West Side Initiative
Other entities are involved with the NWSI, such as Syracuse Center of Excellence. “The Initiative also strives to encourage entrepreneurship through art and business related commerce, as well as clearly defined properties with regenerative potential. Such properties include existing industrial/manufacturing buildings, vacant lots, and existing residences. Live/work building opportunities are marketed to both business people and artistic professionals. Environmentally-friendly techniques in rehabilitating buildings are also key elements of the NWSI.”

The Syracuse Center of Excellence emphasizes sustainable neighborhood qualities, as defined by LEED. It is involved with the “technical portion”, as well as construction, of the neighborhood plan. It would like to:
“decrease energy use in homes and increase indoor air quality; help find environmentally-friendly solutions to storm water management; promote deconstruction practices; and create green collar jobs.”

2012 projects within the initiative domain include: Live/work warehouse condominium units. This is marketed to people who are interested in home ownership without the increased expenditure and stress of upkeeping a single-family residence and property.

As advertised, the residential “plans are in the works for 20 rough, affordable, live/work units in the former Case Warehouse. This turn-of-the-century structure has great light and ceiling heights, and is located directly across from the Delavan Gallery and Syracuse University’s downtown campus for the visual and performing arts.”

Conclusions
Several entities are involved with policies that encourage re-generation of the Near West Side through recreational, creative and sustainable measures. However, for sustainable growth to occur, attention needs to be placed on current crime and safety issues. If they are not resolved and if trust between police and residents does not
occur, then a strong divide will be created between new developments and existing residential blocks. Regeneration will not be far reaching for the Near West Side.

Oscar Newman provides programmatic and organizational strategies for combatting neighborhood crime. Through his approaches to defensible design, Newman argues that territoriality is key to keeping neighborhoods safe. Arrangements of private elements in relation to public streets, external and internal streets is key to self-monitoring within a residential block. Behavior of both residents and non-residents is on display for building occupants through the juxtaposition of circulation and program types and their degrees of privacy.

**Key Political Issues**

- Crime
- Civic programming
- Renewal
3.3 Economic context

Near Westside | Syracuse

Development initiatives characterize the economic environment of the Nearwest Side.

Economic Recovery Initiative
The Nearwest Side was part of the economic Empowerment and Empire Zone overlays in Syracuse that ended December 2011 and June 2010 respectively. Even though the programs are now over, local business growth and development was recognized and should still be considered in the planning of the neighborhood. Participating businesses are still being positively affected by these economic zoning overlays. Moreover, according to Jane Jacobs, small and neighborhood resident-owned businesses are vital to positive activities on sidewalks and important to streetlife.

Empowerment zone
(new entries ended December 2011)
This program offered “federal tax incentives to companies that operated within specially designated areas.”

“Components of the program included:
Wage-based credits
Employment credit of up to $3,000 per eligible employee
Work opportunity tax credit of up to $2,400 per eligible employee
Investment Incentives
Tax exempt bond financing for major projects
increased section 179 deduction
capital gains exclusion”

Empire zone
(ended June 2010)
This program included tax incentives, such as wage tax credit, zone capital credit, New York State sales tax refund, real property tax credit, and tax reduction credit.

Central Business District
Syracuse’s Central Business District (CBD) is characterized by both corporate and small businesses, as well as downtown, satellite locations of larger institutions. Syracuse University’s Warehouse and the Museum of Science and Technology are both located in Armory Square, directly adjacent to the Near West Side.

The Warehouse is an example of how institutional involvement in urban revitalization can beneficially impact the surrounding community. Before the Warehouse was rehabilitated, the surrounding downtown area was riddled with crime and gang movement. After several years of being at its location, the Warehouse proved that institutional presence positively affected on-goings of the neighborhood.

This same technique is being practiced in the rehabilitation of warehouses and promotion of live/work units in the north-eastern sector of the Near West Side. Although separated by the railroad, these burgeoning businesses will help connect the neighborhood with the armory Square, the Warehouse and the rest of downtown Syracuse. A cross-pollination of businesses and mixed-use blocks is already occurring between the CBD and the upper portion (SALT district) of the Near West Side, which are directly adjacent to Armory Square.

Public open spaces in the CBD include:
- Armory Square
- Hanover Square
- Clinton Square
- Columbus Circle

Organizations
- Habitat for Humanity (nonprofit)
- Near West Side Initiative (partnership)

Retail
- Nojaims Market
- Geddes Street corridor
3.3 Economic context

Near Westside | Syracuse

Delavan Art Gallery
Gear Factory
Lipe Art Park

**Businesses**
King + King Architects
WCNY
Lincoln Warehouse

**Institutions**
Syracuse University
Syracuse Center of Excellence

**Conclusions**
Key economic strategies of the Near Westside include promoting existing businesses and encouraging new small businesses owned or run by neighborhood residents. Mixed-use neighborhoods provide safety and activity for a healthy streetlife.

This is further supported by the Near Westside initiative. According to the initiative, an important outreach element is “marketing existing and new developments to the existing and future population”. Its promotion of affordable live/work units is in this same spirit.

1 ("Near Westside from 2010 Housing Plan" http://www.syracuse.ny.us/syracuse_housing_plan_2010.aspx)
6.0 Program

6.1 Inherent issues
6.2 Contextual Issues and Mission, goals, performance requirements
6.3 Social housing program
6.4 Community garden program
In a community-based, affordable housing project, the key issues to address relate to ownership in terms of territoriality, use and flexibility.

“Clearly marked grounds to indicate ownership and use

Sequence or continuum to help transition from public space to private space

Sides of buildings to help create and define different space use: public and private use special and service use

Flexible layout of units

Flexible layout of project

Differences in unit to reflect location within the site”

In addition, the relationship between an affordable housing project and the surrounding neighborhood is important to consider so that new boundaries are not created within the community.

1 Mixed-use communities

2 Mixed-incomes
Mixing uses within communities, blocks, and projects decreases boundaries between different types of residents. Impoverished individuals and families are not separated from the neighborhood. In addition, community amenities are available and easily accessed by everyone. According to the Urban Land Institute’s *Affordable Housing, Designing an American Asset*, the benefits of mixed-use communities are two-fold. First of all, residents of affordable housing benefit from this environment because it **decreases expenditures on transportation** and they benefit in their **proximity to multiple uses**. Secondly, there are more opportunities for a live/work environment, which further decreases stresses and costs of commuting outside of the district. This is also an environment characteristic of the process of revitalizing urban neighborhoods.

Furthermore, after studying the relationship between the Near West Side and Syracuse, the following sets of contextual issues are reconsidered:

**Social**
- Vacancy
- Safety
- Territoriality, “turf”

**Political**
- Crime
- Civic use
- Renewal

**Economic**
- Streetlife
- Entrepreneurship
6.2 Contextual issues

Mission, goals, and performance requirements

MISSION

To create an exceptionally diverse and flexible quality of life for current and future residents by building a physically and psychologically safe and connected environment.

The mission of this project and master plan for the Near West Side is to create a new "neighborhood quarter", responsive to current political, economic and social issues of the urban environment. The Quarter should respond to the existing neighborhood and its users, as well as to adjacent districts, keeping in mind current urban plans to identify, revitalize and enhance communities of Syracuse. This should create an adaptable and sustainable environment including walkable and active streetscapes and civic spaces. An increase in interaction between residents and users, to encourage a strong sense of place, and to create a secure environment that is naturally surveyed, should result while maintaining the integrity of the private realm of the neighborhood.

ISSUES

1. SECURITY

“protection from unwanted aggression by another person, i.e. assault, robbery, unauthorized entry, vandalism”

a) Safety
b) Territory
c) Personalization
d) Visibility
e) Comfort, psychological

The district should be clearly readable as its own entity and its parts (including buildings,
parks and residences) should be associated with this context. Common spaces should be easily recognizable as part of the civic realm, and as part of the larger sequences of urban spaces and infrastructural systems. There should be both larger group space to promote a sense of community and smaller space for the individual to promote privacy.

2a. IMAGE
“how a place look and is interpreted by the observer”, i.e. the visual impression that it creates, leading to an identifiable and unique place

a) Identity
b) Message
c) Ordering and proportion
d) Hierarchy

User and use type should be clearly legible and easily interpreted to promote a strong sense of identity of both the individual within the larger collective context of the neighborhood. Residences should be identifiable as individual and private domains. Orderings and hierarchies should be established to communicate ownership and private spaces.

3. ECONOMY
“the accomplishment of maximum benefits for the minimum means”

a) Elegant means
b) Quality
c) Convenience
d) Durability

Residential buildings and units should be affordable to current inhabitants. This is a reflection of residents’ capacity for rental or mortgage payments, based on current income statistics. Building and unit type should also consider future residents who may be of a different income bracket. Design should be simple and flexible for optimal adaptability and quality over time.

4. CONNECTIVITY in terms of INTERACTION
“a mutual action and interchange: between residents and non-residents (social), live and work (collaboration), businesses (collaboration), districts and among residents (social)”

a) Group participation
b) Social interchange
c) Circulation
d) Convenience
e) Visibility

Group spaces are very important in the creation
6.2 Contextual issues

Mission, goals, and performance requirements

of connected buildings and neighborhoods. Common areas, both interior and exterior create an open and social environment, where friendly exchanges can occur. Proximity to these spaces in relation to private, individual spaces is key for the ease of convenience and accessibility, for visibility and surveillance purposes.

Circulation between buildings and districts promotes interaction as well, and infrastructural systems should enhance this flow between individuals and groups within and between zones. Accommodations should be made for easing movement of pedestrians, creating a walkable and active sidewalk environment.

OTHER SUPPORTING ISSUES

5) FLEXIBILITY of multiple scales

a) Adaptable interior space use
b) Multi-use within district
c) Multi-purpose open, green space

Open space should be provided for adaptable and common use. Some should be permanently programmed for group use and others should be flexible.

6) ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

a) Inclusion of green space within blocks
b) Roof deck, patio
c) Parks for neighborhood use
d) Proximity to neighborhood amenities
e) Public transit to neighborhood

Civic space should be included as park space as part of city infrastructure. “Park-like” green areas as personal and group space within and without a building should be included.

GOALS

1. To promote community safety in the Near West Side.

2. To project a legible image of the community and of the private realms.

3. To provide affordable residential alternatives.

4. To stimulate interactions between the Near West Side and Syracuse.
6.2 Contextual issues

Mission, goals, and performance requirements

PERFORMANCE REQUIREMENTS considered for all scales of design

1. To promote community safety in the Near West Side.

(All adapted from Oscar Newman’s Defensible Space)

Unit
PR 1. Resident-only space for individual or group activity. (Newman, 53)
PR 2. Clear paths to front doors. (Newman, 64)
PR 3. Individual door lights. (Newman, 103)
PR 4. Front entrances directly accessible by street; set-back entry from street. (Newman, 56)
PR 5. Clearly defined lobby through the massing of units and shape of building. (Newman, 83)
PR 6. Juxtapositioning of activity areas within units with exterior public areas, to facilitate visual surveillance from the building interior. (Newman, 109)

Block
PR 1. Site design should sub-divide blocks into lots to define zones of particular buildings and units, enabling natural surveillance. (Newman, 53)
PR 2. Symbolic barriers of zones should be included to define hierarchy of increasingly private zones. (Newman, 54)
PR 3. Positioning of non-private areas and access paths inside and outside to facilitate surveillance. (Newman, 91)
PR 4. Non-circuitous access routes for clear and visible paths. (Newman, 56)
PR 5. Clearly defined transition zones to indicate an orderly progression from street to unit(s). (Newman, 63)
PR 6. Public spaces within private areas for natural surveillance. (Newman, 91)

Above. Juxtapositioning of activity areas within units with exterior public areas, to facilitate visual surveillance from the building interior. Alignment and orientation of building lots influences the amount of natural surveillance available on an open space.

PR 7. Clear and terminating sight lines on and from streets. (Newman, 60)

Neighborhood
PR. 1 Clear physical boundaries to denote vehicular versus pedestrian circulation zones. (Newman, 56)

PR. 2 Street design to restrict and define movement of vehicles; intentional circuitous movement around residential blocks and/or units to promote natural surveillance.

5 and 6. Clear and terminating sight lines on and from streets influences the planar organization.

1 and 2. Clearly defined lobby through the massing of units and shape of building. (Diagrams after Oscar Newman’s of Brownsville Houses, Brooklyn. (page 61)

4. Non-circuitous access routes for clear and visible paths.

3. Front entrances directly accessible by street; set-back entry from street; showing hierarchical linearity of zones.
6.2 Contextual issues

2. **To project a legible image of the community and of the private realms.**

Adapted from Oscar Newman’s *Defensible Space*

*Unit*

**PR 1.** Grouping of buildings should become prominent visual elements in urban fabric. (Newman, 102)

**PR 2.** Treatment of façade should include high quality materials and outdoor balconies or protruding elements. (Newman, 105)

**PR 3.** Class status of 2-3 level townhouse and the lifestyle that it symbolizes. (Newman, 106)

**PR 4.** All units should have an adjacent piece of ground. (Newman, 106)

**PR 5.** A decrease in institutional image of project should be accomplished through aesthetics. (Newman, 106)

**PR 6.** The treatment of materiality and fixtures should not be uniform. (Newman, 105)

3. **To provide affordable residential alternatives (to current high-rise and rowhouse building typologies).**

**PR 1.** The project should accomplish the design through a simple and elegantly proportioned expression. (Duerk, 234)

**PR 2.** Clear modules should be used, enabled a wide variety of outcome in unit configuration and external expression.

**PR 3.** Materials used should be of high quality, ensuring their durability and lasting quality.

**PR 4.** Optimal layout for units should make the most of available, open space.

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1. Optimal layout for units should make the most of available, open space. Service modules can be created to maximize wet system location and open space

2. The project should accomplish the design through a simple and elegantly proportioned expression. Sketch of perceived open space definition after diagrams in *A New Civic Art*
6.2 Contextual issues

Performance requirements and program requirements

4. To stimulate interactions between the Near West Side and Syracuse.

Block

PR 1. Communal space for residents should be included within the block.

PR 2. Juxtapositioning of functional zones and uses on blocks. (Jacobs, 115)

PR 3. Widening and creating “side-walk parks” can promote active sidewalks.

PR 4. Small and short blocks should be present to increase contact between users, economic prosperity and decrease monotony. (Jacobs, 179)

Neighborhood

PR 1. Existing and “aged buildings” should be left in place for diversity of tenant and user type. (Jacobs, 188)

PR 2. Concentration of people of residences should be a characteristic of the community. (Jacobs, 200)

PR 3. There should be a diverse mixture of uses within the community. (Jacobs, 146)

PR 4. There should be a diversity of income within a neighborhood to incorporate different types of people within a community. (Jacobs, 144)

PR 5. Communal spaces to be used by the community-only should be included within the neighborhood.

PR 6. Civic, public spaces to be used by the city’s public should be included within the neighborhood.

PR 7. Juxtapositioning of functional zones between the Near West Side and other Syracuse districts (Lakefront, CBD).
1 and 2. short blocks According to Jane Jacobs, by having shorter blocks, there are more instances of people crossing each other's paths and different viewpoints, enabling a more active sidewalk life. Moreover, by including sidewalk parks, there are opportunities for rest and social interchanges along the newly activated sidewalk.

3. neighborhood-only and civic spaces. Organization of large civic space (green) and smaller, satellite neighborhood spaces can create a new network of public realms. There are different ways to create green spaces, as either 1 large space (green) or several smaller ones (blue).

4. juxtapositioning of functional zones within neighborhood and blocks can create new types of use areas and "spheres of influence" (b). The small diamonds (purple) are shared spaces that created by overlapping uses (c).
6.3 Social housing program

Change needs to occur within the community to enhance the uniqueness of its residents while offering stimulating opportunities for potential and future residents. Variety, both visible and invisible, within the neighborhood needs to be clearly articulated for it to develop further. There are programmatic responses to this issue.

By implementing the mixed-use, low-rise high-density residential square, an alternative mixed-use housing typology will be cultivated. Moreover, the lifestyle of current residents will be clearly formulated and articulated within this evolved type. About the house, Christian Norberg-Schulz says that it is “the place where daily life takes place.”

It is a type of “cradle”, supporting us like a familiar ground. The following question arises:

“Why then do we have to throw ourselves into the world when we possess the cradle of the house? The answer is simply that the purposes of human life are not found at home; the role of each individual is part of a system of interactions, which takes place in a common world based on shared values. To participate, we have to leave the house and choose a path. When our social task is accomplished, however, we withdraw to our home to recover our personal identity. Personal identity, thus, is the content of private dwelling.”

Thus it can be argued that private and personal residences exist because of the relationship an individual has with the common space typical of the public realm. Norberg-Schulz also states that, “When the basic types of house are repeated, this background becomes manifest as an extended matric which supports daily life. The repetition... consists of what we have called ‘theme and variations’.”

Study of the demographic and social context of the Near West Side determined the programmatic choice of social and affordable housing.
Program
massing
townhouse and individual components
artist units and work component

gross square feet (gsf)
exterior face to exterior wall
includes usable storage space and hallways
also includes space occupied by interior walls

townhouse massing
(from 11th Avenue Townhomes
Escondido, CA)

townhouse and individual components
artist units and work component

live space
work space

multi-family residential unit

kitchen counter linear square footage
(for studio, 1 BR, 2 BR, 3+ BR)
6.4 Community garden program

The concept of ownership arises from this relationship between the individual, the house and the city. Thus, the public, community garden offers a second exploration into the identity of the individual within a collective and territorial environment. Ideas of ownership, territory and citizenship provide insight into how democratic practices are being cultivated in community gardens and by the community food-security movement. Through the practice of cultivating the soil, residents become aware of their role in shaping community events and identity, just as much as the land. Moreover, “power, culture, and the economy become clear and where the intersections between food and various other social, economic, and environmental issues are revealed.”

Demographic groups can “both produce and contest space through the assertion of their cultural identity. In the gardens, cultural diversity becomes connected to biodiversity, demonstrating how urban green space is infused with the cultural and political”. The resultant garden landscape is one filled with socio-cultural and geo-political meanings. If each resident can grow their own choice of plant or keep a certain farm animal, then the shared bit of land is a reflection of his or her own background, preferences, and identity. Moreover, the community garden becomes the physical manifestation of the neighborhood identity.

PERFORMANCE REQUIREMENTS and PROGRAM EQUIVALENCY

COMMERCIAL
Small businesses

CIVIC
Parks
Community garden and/or farm

INFRASTRUCTURAL
Bicycle rental and paths
Pedestrian only zones
Public transit (bus) routes

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11 Ibid. Page 323.
12 Ibid. Page 323.
13 Ibid. Page 322.
Generation X Community Garden
Red Hook, Brooklyn, NY
Blocks, buildings, and garden plots

- Field and beds
- Greenhouse
- Mower storage containers
- Buildings
- Sidewalk and fence zones
- Block

Measures:
- 162 sf
- 84 sf
- 490 sf
- 950 sf
- 160 sf
- 160 sf
- 160 sf
- 160 sf
- 260 ft
- 1645 ft
- 108500 sf
- 22000 sf
- 30080 sf
- 22000 sf
There are certain programs already in place in the Syracuse Housing Authority that relate to the determined issues of Affordable Housing and of the Near West Side. There are construction work programs for those who seek assistance and townhouse units are available.

**Housing Choice Vouchers**  
(Section 8)

Allow very low-income families to choose and lease or purchase safe, decent, and affordable privately-owned rental housing.

Any type of private rental housing is eligible. Single family dwellings, duplex units, row houses, high rise buildings and townhouses are eligible.

**Section 3**

This program helps foster local economic improvement, and individual self sufficiency.

It provides job training, employment opportunities, and/or contracting opportunitities for low or very-low income residents in connection with projects and activities in their neighborhoods.

HUD’s Low/very-low income is defined as 80% - 50% respectively of the area’s median income.

Job types include construction related-skills such as labor, painting, installation, electrical,
SHA properties include:

- family-only residences
- elderly-only residences

SHA properties do not include:

- family and elderly residences, which is an opportunity for interchange between the elderly and youth.

Users to consider include:

- the elderly
- youth
- couple-parent family
- single-parent family

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

Its mission is to “create strong, sustainable, inclusive communities and quality affordable homes for all”. Its goals include “to strengthen the housing market to bolster the economy and protect consumers; meet the need for quality affordable rental homes; utilize housing as a platform for improving quality of life; build inclusive and sustainable communities free from discrimination”

Programs include Community Planning and Development, Multi-family and elderly housing and Public and Indian Housing

([http://www.syracusehousing.org/employment-services](http://www.syracusehousing.org/employment-services))

5.0 Precedents

5.1 Residential Squares
5.2 Washington Square
5.3 11th Avenue Townhomes
5.4 Borneo Sporeenburg
5.1 Residential Squares

European residential square
Place Royale | Paris | 1605 - 1612

The Residential Square is the historical model for the aggregation of the townhouse unit around a public, open space. It is the prime example of how the private realm defines and shapes the public realm of the city. This public space was determined by the culture in which the square existed. The use of the space, whether strictly for city-wide use or intended for strict use by the surrounding residents, varied according to city and by period.

Moreover, they were influenced not only by social

Cultural Context functional use and collective identity
Political
Part of Royal urban plan to create more civic open spaces within the condensed and overcrowded medieval city
Economic
Project commissioned by King Henri VI to originally contain a new manufacturing district
Original plans included a silk works factory and worker housing
Square and facade built as part of the Royal budget. Design and development strictly regulated by royally degreed restrictions.
Social
Prestige of the tournament event
Demographics: aristocrats, with 2 units reserved for royal use
European residential square
Covent Garden | London | 1630 - 1637

The combination of the willingness of residents to participate in a collective environment and the institution of the English market as functional use make Covent Garden a model for articulating the individual identity within a public space. Here there is no individual identity presented through the facade as the collective identity and commercial functional use takes precedent. However, Covent Garden also relays that extreme active public use can make residents dis-satisfied and feel unsafe in their environment. A balance between the public and private uses and users must be achieved.

use, but also by politics and by economics of the time period. They were either built by royal decree, as with Place Royale, or by private speculation, as with Fitzroy Square and Gramercy Square.

Whatever the case, it was necessary for the ruler to make new open, civic spaces available for growing cities with growing populations with growing needs for not only residences and open spaces, but for prestige.

Historically, the residential square that served as model for English and American squares was
5.1 Residential Squares

European residential square
Fitzroy Square | London | 1792 - 1835

The combination of the willingness of residents to participate in a collective environment and the institution of the English Garden as functional use make Fitzroy Square a model for articulating the individual identity within a public space. Here there is no individual identity presented through the facade as the collective identity takes precedent.

Place Royale, in Paris. It was created during a time when the population of Paris was outgrowing the medieval walls and there was a resultant need for open, civic space. Place Royale fulfilled this urban plan and also created an environment of prestige for those who lived in the square. The square was built in the historical manufacturing district but this use decreased and the opportunity arose for the open space of the square to be used by the king for royal events, most notably for tournaments.

This use was just as important to the life within and of the square as were the residents. The
tournament was a historical ceremonial event, which lost its ritual aspects by the time its use was appropriated by the Place. The tournament was a social event, with feasts and theatrical performances and jousting games. Thus, the events occuring within the Place Royale attracted both temporary and permanent “users”.

London Squares show similar methods of creating public spaces for boh residents and the general public. However, the roles of the “institutions” of the commercial market, the real estate market (and speculation) and of the english garden were significant in the programming and usage of the interior open spaces of the squares. Still, the
private realm defined the public realm, however the public realm’s space use was less regal and more market driven. However, the residents of London’s Covent Garden, Bedford Square, and Fitzroy Square were lured to the residential squares by their addresses and subsequent images.

For this reason, the facade of Fitzroy Square is especially interesting for its negation of the individual image in favor of the collective image. Individuals were drawn to the square for the address, but were willing to be hidden behind the squares unified “veil” facade.

Moreover, Fitzroy Square shows the impact of the real estate market on urban growth as well as the cultural role of the garden within in English society. Both define the Square’s appearance and use.

Gramercy Square is investigated as the American couterpoint to the French and English squares. It evolved from the English model, and shows how cultural notions of the individual and collective realms impact development. The townhouse is still present at Gramercy Square, but is not articulated in the same unified manner as it was in Europe. The facades of the houses are of different styles, showing a disconnect between individuals and the public realm. There was no interest for the American owner to help form public space. Furthermore, the central garden of the square is closed off to the public and is only for private use. Interestingly, it provides a natural backdrop for the urban and civic realms, but is unaccessible to the public, except in view. American culture was and is more interested in the idea of ownership associated with the townhouse and open space instead of the type’s relationship with the urban environment.

American cultural identity is heavily based on the notion of private land use for displaying ownership and individuality. The concept of freedom gleaned from this desire has a strong influence on how much the individual (home)owner is willing to go in order to shape the public space around her. The private building has the capacity to display not only its individuality and personal identity, as a reflection of its owner or inhabitant, but to shape the civic realm and aesthetic environment around it.
European and American residential squares
1605 - 1840

Comparisons between European residential squares and American residential squares are defined by the relationship between the public realm and the private realm. The private realm includes residential uses while the public realm contains civic programs, such as ceremonial events, markets, gardens, and parks. Depending on the culture of the city, the public use is either public or private. This indicates that society’s perception of the individual’s identity within a collective environment. European residential squares are more accepting of a mixture of civic and private uses, whereas the American example is not lenient. Hierarchies in each culture are presented by the juxtaposition of private with public.

In both Place Royale and Covent Garden, the open air, but covered portico is used to define transition zones between the public functional use and the private zone above.

All residential squares are part of a larger urban planning strategy for the creation of more open space within a crowded or growing city, and for real estate development, for either the government or for private enterprise.

Residential squares in Europe place the public square in the middle of a block surrounded by housing buildings and accessed only by pedestrians. The American square at Gramercy includes the square as part of the city’s gridded road network. These different approaches create unique open spaces, but also roles.
5.2 Washington Square
Syracuse | New York | 1797

Investigation of:
Syracuse equivalent to a residential square
mixed-use neighborhood
circulation around square

Washington Square was originally part of the village of Salina and the land was bought in 1797.¹ Before it was made a park in 1839, it was used as a cemetery.² The Square and park became part of Syracuse in 1847, when the village of Salina was assimilated into Syracuse.³

This square is defined by both single family and multi-family residential zones immediately adjacent to the park, while commercial and industrial zones are located around the perimeter. Local businesses are easily accessible to residents. Residences surrounding the square are both single and two story, single and duplex houses.

Moreover, it is a 5 - 10 minute walk to get to the regional transportation center, farmer’s market, and stadium. The highway and main city streets keep this walk from being enjoyable.

Main vehicular circulation into the square is one-way. There are two smaller side streets that cut into the northern blocks surrounding the square providing for tertiary access routes to the secondary neighborhood grid streets.

¹http://www.syracuse.ny.us/parks/washingtonSquarePark.html
²Ibid.
³Ibid.
Washington Square
Syracuse New York

Diagram of axis
Access lines
Square use zones
Blocks cut through
Blocks general
Diagram of axis

Washington Square

I-81

park street, from rtc and market
The 11th Avenue Townhomes in Escondido California are an example of how units can be arranged to promote maximum natural surveillance by residents on open, semi-public space within a neighborhood. Through the inclusion of personal pieces of land, clear paths to front doors, clearly defined transition zones, this project promotes community safety.

It also takes into consideration its resident population, which is primarily Latino. This culture tends to socialize on the street or in front yards, instead of in backyards. Thus, the architect included the front stoop, small patio, and bit of ground in front of the units, facing the interior street. There is an involvement and concern for streetlife within the culture and in this aggregation of townhouse units.
Diagram showing perspective down the interior lane with repetitive units creating a strong definition of semi-private space. The alternating massing of the units creates individual pieces of land for residents to use as their own.

There are several personalization elements in this project. There are two different types of awnings to define an extension of private space into the public realm of the lane. A small front "yard" containing a planting bed and stone well, as well as steps indicate personal space as well as transition zones. Moreover, the garage is flexible space, to be used for either storage or as weak space.

Diagram showing hierarchy of open spaces, from private to public.
5.4 Borneo Sporenborg
Amsterdam | Netherlands | 2000

This project by West 8 shows the incorporation of individual units into the larger initiative including infrastructural systems, residential towers and commercial use. It serves as an extension of development outside of the traditional Amsterdam city center.

Each individual unit projects a legible image of the variety that occurs with the private realm. Moreover, class status is enforced through the townhouse typology. The townhouse units of the waterfront project at Borneo Sporenborg are evidence of the role that zoning and urban plan restrictions play on residential design as well as how facade can articulate individuality and ownership. The units are privately owned and are market-rate, however they provide an example of dimensions and a potential for the incorporation of open space within private dwellings.

As determined by planning ordinances, each unit has 30-50% of their volume as voids. Space that was previously public domain becomes private within the unit. This provides an opportunity for a variety of interior uses, including interior courtyards, winter gardens, large window protrusions, and roof patios. The inclusion of open space within the unit is mandatory and as a result a wide variety of volumes and associated uses are created. Borneo Sporenborg townhouses provide examples of the variety that can occur within units.
Diagrams of various townhouse units, showing 30-50% void in blue. This is a volumetric module that varies in dimension and use from unit to unit. Townhomes range in height from 1 to 3 stories.

Open space module use includes: garage, roof garden, and interior light atrium (middle module in this diagram).
The lots that the townhomes at Borneo Sporenburg were constructed on are very long and narrow. This allows for an efficient use of both interior and exterior spaces within the units. Each unit has both open space and interior space for its residents, both containing a spectrum of use-
types, including semi-public patios, semi-private open interior volumes with shared living spaces, and private bedrooms.

All units include patios and/or roof terraces and open spaces for flexible use, which are used for car parking and as studio spaces.
6.0 Appendix

6.1 Near West Side crime charts
6.2 Sanborn maps of the Near West Side
6.3 Zoning map of the Near West Side
6.4 Syracuse land use and development plan for 2040
6.5 LEED Neighborhood checklist
6.6 New Urbanism transition strategies
6.7 Site lots
6.8 Site strategy sketches
6.1 Near West Side crime charts

Conclusion

The crime charts as prepared by the Syracuse Police Department, show that the main socio-political issue of the Near West Side is crime. This impacts how residents feel in their neighborhood and the degree of security and safety that is present. There is a lack of psychological comfort if here is fear of assault, robbery, larceny, burglary, theft, rape and murder. The Near West Side experiences all of these types of crime. They are most common during the summer months and on long block streets. The areas where crime-types occur indicate zones that can be re-configured through strategic planning.

Streets of concern include the following:

Gifford Street
Seymour Street
Shonnard Street
South Clinton Street
West Onondaga Street
### Near Westside

#### 2012

**January - March**

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<th>Non-Ag. Manslaughter</th>
<th>Rape</th>
<th>Robbery</th>
<th>Aggravated Assault</th>
<th>Burglary</th>
<th>Larceny</th>
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**Total**

| Near Westside | 0 | 0 | 0 | 22 | 40 | 48 | 116 | 14 | 14 |
### 6.1 Near West Side crime charts

#### Near Westside

**2011**

**October - December**

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**Total**

| Near Westside | 1 | 1 | 0 | 7 | 10 | 31 | 71 | 13 | 3 |

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93
## 6.1 Near West Side crime charts

### Near Westside

#### 2011

##### April - June

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Crime reports from "Neighborhood Web Map with Reports" http://www.syracusepolice.org/statistics.asp
### Near Westside

#### 2011

**January - March**

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The cultural issues discovered in the Near West Side of Syracuse reflect the existence of an identity crisis within the neighborhood. After studying the political, social, and economic contexts of the community, it is determined that despite a diverse population with certain language and ethnicity qualities, the infrastructural and architectural response is inadequate to portray the variety found in the Near West Side.

The combination of negative visible and invisible contextual elements, including very long blocks and vacant lots, as well as a lack of educational attainment and low income, creates a harsh and crime-ridden environment and a poor image of the neighborhood. Most homes are old in age and lots are not used to their fullest potential, in terms of density and communal open space use. For this reason, there is an opportunity to re-organize the infrastructure of the neighborhood and create architectural responses that enable a strong sense of place and identity, promoted through concepts of natural surveillance, security and ownership over a defined territory.

The Comprehensive Plan of Syracuse for 2040 includes goals to enhance the ability of residents and visitors to live, work and play in the city. To accomplish this goal, it will be necessary to create liveable neighborhoods within the city-center. A parallel initiative strives to identify and foster growth within the distinct neighborhoods of Syracuse, to which the Near West Side belongs. However, because of its current identity crisis and poor image, this neighborhood will not be able to grow with this future city.

Furthermore, as a re-presentation of culture, this project will adapt the residential square typology to offer a model for low-rise high-density mixed-
Site for concentration
use growth for Rust Belt cities such as Syracuse. It will respond to current contextual issues, including those of security, image, legibility, and connectivity. It will strive to cultivate an image of the present identity for the Near West Side, while considering comprehensive plans for the re-development of Syracuse for 2050. The existing context will provide a foundation for the future evolution of the neighborhood and city through the adaptation of an urban housing morphology of the residential square.

**Conclusion**

Previous land use is just as important as current land use in relaying the historical cultural of the Near West Side. It provides a timeline of the development of the current Near West Side culture.

In 1892, there were principally low rise buildings, suggestive of residential use, throughout the neighborhood.

By 1950, however, all of the industrial warehouse buildings are present, but the Geddes Townhouse project did not exist yet.

This shows that there was an urban ecology that supported the significant amount of largely parcellled land with single, detached homes. However, the eco-system of industry and worker housing is no longer existent and is not sustainable in modern day Syracuse.
Site for concentration
The zoning map of the Near West Side provides important information regarding zoning and land use specifications for new developments. There is a spectrum of residential, commercial, and industrial district types. In addition, building lots are provided, indicating specific land ownership lines.
Site for concentration
6.4 Syracuse land use and development plan for 2040

“The specific goals and policy recommendations in this plan are organized according to five overarching goals and under five subject areas:

Overall Land Use Patterns

Preserve and build upon Syracuse’s existing transit-oriented, multi-nodal land use pattern—the network of interconnected commercial and mixed-use neighborhood centers and surrounding residential areas.

Character of Existing Neighborhoods

Protect and enhance the character and unique “sense of place” of Syracuse’s neighborhoods.

Design & Form of Infill Development & Major Alterations

Ensure high-quality, attractive aesthetic and architectural design throughout the city, in both residential neighborhoods and commercial areas.

Energy & the Environment

Promote environmentally sustainable land use patterns, transportation options, site plans, and construction practices.

Regulatory Process

Ensure that development processes and decisions are efficient, predictable, and transparent.”

1 “Syracuse land use & development plan 2040”, Page 5.
2 Ibid. Page 68.
“The following specific recommendations correspond to the future land use map prepared for the Westside TNT Area.

1. Reinvent the Erie Blvd. West corridor in the same fashion as West Fayette Street—as an Industrial Transition area of light-industry and mixed-use conversions. This stretch is located within walking distance of Downtown.

2. Explore the possibility of introducing a bicycle and pedestrian trail and green-way connecting Tipp Hill to Downtown through the corridor between Erie Boulevard, West and West Fayette Street through easement acquisition.

3. Encourage new development on Geddes to be more pedestrian friendly. Make right-of-way improvements to increase safety when crossing this busy arterial.

4. Allow the scattered commercial activity that is so characteristic of Tipp Hill to thrive without spot-zoning specific parcels.”
Conclusion

The LEED for neighborhood development provides a contemporary framework of strategies for a connected community.

Categories for consideration include:

Smart location and linkage
Neighborhood pattern and design
Green infrastructure and buildings

Thus, siting, connections can be established through walkable streets, compact and dense development. This in turn creates a connected, open, and diverse community. Mixed-use and mixed-income communities are also highlighted as a strategy to encourage neighborhood connections and social patterns. Emphasis is also placed in transit, the street network, and transportation management.

Moreover, the creation of a connected community is dependant upon the availability of civic and public spaces. Community outreach programs also help to involve all members of the neighborhood. LEED provides credit for local food production, which helps to foster a sense of ownership over the land, while providing a physical manifestation of the diversity within the neighborhood.
# LEED 2009 FOR NEIGHBORHOOD DEVELOPMENT PROJECT CHECKLIST

## Smart Location and Linkage

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<td>3</td>
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- **Credit 1**: Preferred Locations [10]
- **Credit 2**: Brownfield Redevelopment [2]
- **Credit 3**: Locations with Reduced Automobile Dependence [7]
- **Credit 4**: Bicycle Network and Storage [1]
- **Credit 5**: Housing and Jobs Proximity [3]
- **Credit 6**: Sleep Slope Protection [1]
- **Credit 7**: Site Design for Habitat or Wetland and Water Body Conservation [1]
- **Credit 8**: Restoration of Habitat or Wetlands and Water Bodies [1]
- **Credit 9**: Long-Term Conservation Management of Habitat or Wetlands and Water Bodies [1]

## Neighborhood Pattern and Design

### Prerequisite 1: Walkable Streets
- Required

### Prerequisite 2: Compact Development
- Required

### Prerequisite 3: Connected and Open Community
- Required

- **Credit 1**: Walkable Streets [12]
- **Credit 2**: Compact Development [6]
- **Credit 3**: Mixed-Use Neighborhood Centers [4]
- **Credit 4**: Mixed-Income Diverse Communities [7]
- **Credit 5**: Reduced Parking Footprint [1]
- **Credit 6**: Street Network [2]
- **Credit 7**: Transit Facilities [1]
- **Credit 8**: Transportation Demand Management [2]
- **Credit 9**: Access to Civic and Public Spaces [1]
- **Credit 10**: Access to Recreation Facilities [1]
- **Credit 11**: Visibility and Universal Design [1]
- **Credit 12**: Community Outreach and Involvement [2]
- **Credit 13**: Local Food Production [1]
- **Credit 14**: Tree-Lined and Shaded Streets [2]
- **Credit 15**: Neighborhood Schools [1]

## Green Infrastructure and Buildings

### Prerequisite 1: Certified Green Building
- Required

### Prerequisite 2: Minimum Building Energy Efficiency
- Required

### Prerequisite 3: Minimum Building Water Efficiency
- Required

### Prerequisite 4: Construction Activity Pollution Prevention
- Required

- **Credit 1**: Certified Green Buildings [5]
- **Credit 2**: Building Energy Efficiency [2]
- **Credit 3**: Building Water Efficiency [1]
- **Credit 4**: Water-Efficient Landscaping [1]
- **Credit 5**: Existing Building Reuse [1]
- **Credit 6**: Historic Resource Preservation and Adaptive Use [1]
- **Credit 7**: Minimized Site Disturbance in Design and Construction [1]
- **Credit 8**: Stormwater Management [4]
- **Credit 9**: Heat Island Reduction [1]
- **Credit 10**: Solar Orientation [1]
- **Credit 11**: On-Site Renewable Energy Sources [3]
- **Credit 12**: District Heating and Cooling [2]
- **Credit 13**: Infrastructure Energy Efficiency [1]
- **Credit 14**: Wastewater Management [2]
- **Credit 15**: Recycled Content in Infrastructure [1]
- **Credit 16**: Solid Waste Management Infrastructure [1]
- **Credit 17**: Light Pollution Reduction [1]

## Innovation and Design Process

- **Credit 1**: Innovation and Exemplary Performance [1–5]
- **Credit 2**: LEED® Accredited Professional [1]

## Regional Priority Credit

- **Credit 1**: Regional Priority [1–4]

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### LEED 2009 for Neighborhood Development Certification Levels

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100 base points plus 6 possible Innovation and Design Process and 4 possible Regional Priority Credit points.
6.6 New Urbanist transition strategies

Sketch of path, green and building zone transitions by author after Streetscapes in *The New Civic Art*, showing rhythm established through the linear layering of strips of street, sidewalk, grass, trees and buildings.

The median date of the Near West Side's housing stock is 1948. It is a representation of a lifestyle based on the industries of the northern section of the neighborhood, but it is also outdated for contemporary society and the culture of the NWS.
In the NWS there are large lots with small single family houses on them. Most properties include a large backyard, with smaller sheds dispersed within the centers of the blocks.
6.8 Site strategy sketches

Step 1
Identify block types and smallest block size. Extend existing streets following the two main, vertical and horizontal, axes.
Step 2

Create new short blocks in dedicated area for strategy concentration. This creates a new system for urban organization and circulation, both pedestrian and vehicular.
Step 3

In the Near West Side, this will eradicate the long blocks of the lower south west neighborhood. In this district, emphasis will be placed on replacing long blocks, with high crime occurrences, with shorter blocks to promote a sense of security and identifiable community, while creating an active streetlife and street scape.
Step 4

Locate current open spaces within the selected area. Identity parks, green spaces, as well as vacant lots within the newly created short blocks. This provides a foundation to shape open space as defined by residential use.
Step 5

Define vacant lots as potential green spaces. In the Near West Side, the compilation of vacant lots are not necessarily large enough to accommodate the larger scale civic spaces of the historical residential squares of Paris, London, and New York.

Step 6

The configuration of green spaces from vacant
lots creates a different types of aggregation of townhomes than the ideal presented in the residential square. Historical squares have very defined circulation patterns created by rectilinear massings and grouping of residential units. They created the tidy open space within. The creation of new open space was the ultimate goal in the residential square. However, open space already exists in the Near West Side, the process of formulating the square is opposite. The space type will dictate the formation of the built form, as building density is the desired outcome.
These 6 steps can be applied to other areas within districts on the fringe of the central business district.

Investigating the walking distance between centers within the central business district and within the neighboring district is key to understanding the connectivity of the area. It can also define zones within the neighborhood that are outside of the optimal walking shed. These zones are of interest because of this isolation.
A second site is determined within the Near West Side as a result of this process of investigation. It is 20 minutes, outside of the maximum optimal walking shed, from both the main routes of Geddes Street and from Armory Square, which has shopping and CBD related institutions.

It is composed primarily of residential uses, with a sprinkling of commercial buildings, anchored by the Blodgett School. The largest open space is Skiddy Park, but there are some vacant lots to the south of the school.
In some areas within the selected neighborhood, there are already existing areas of mixed-uses. However, they are not combined in a defined area or at all dense.

In these cases, it may be necessary to keep existing commercially used buildings and infill low-rise high-density residential buildings around them, while maintaining a relationship with green space.
The above diagram is an investigation in the upper portion of the Near West Side that already includes “aged buildings”, such as warehouses used historically for industrial purposes.

However, this is not the ideal site for developing a low-rise high density residential enclave. Although of commercial and institutional use, the scale of the existing buildings is not low-rise.
Articulating American Identity

Applying a typology to create a new urban morphology

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SYRACUSE, NEW YORK FOOD SECURITY PROGRAMS
Utica Syracuse Rochester Buffalo Cleveland Erie Toledo Detroit Grand Rapids Chicago Lafayette Pittsburgh Wayne Binghamton Allentown Philadelphia Trenton Baltimore St. Louis Evansville Owensboro 15. SQUARE SPACE AS DEMOCRATIC SPACE

Public space can be considered to be democratic space because of its multi-use nature, encouraging its inhabitation by a wide variety of people. The reinvigorated residential square can accommodate the individual’s desires and is shaped by the user’s identity. Thus, it becomes a landscape of the neighborhood’s social composition and characteristics. By maintaining the residential square as a public and open space, the surrounding inhabitants are free to determine use of the square and a wide variety of uses and activities can occur.

possible activities in squares

urban farm locations
farmer’s markets (9)
food pantries (96)
senior dining centers (43)
soup kitchens (11)
summer food service (63)

impression of a syracuse square, after Harburger Schlossinsel

SQUARE USE

Neighborhood Identity Over Time

The urban farm and garden can be one programmed use of a residential square, as they have the potential to involve all members of the neighborhood in the organization and development of the open space. It is a democratic use of a common space because all members of the community could participate in the farm and would share in the ownership of the ground. Urban agriculture is applicable in cities that participate in food security, where there are farmer’s markets, community gardens and food programs for the elderly.
In the Rust Belt City, the ecology of the residential neighborhood adjacent to the central business district changed and continues to diverge from its original social and infrastructural systems. This has led to a decaying and inefficient housing stock that misrepresents the current socio-economic environment.

By analyzing the urban and infrastructural components, such as the neighborhood’s boundaries, street and transit network, lot and block structure, and infrastructure, locations for the creation of public and private spaces are determined. These can re-connect the community through adjacencies with infrastructure and functional uses.

Moreover, a revitalized neighborhood identity can...
ARTICULATING AMERICAN IDENTITY
Applying a Typology to Create a New Urban Morphology

what are characteristics of a sustainable neighborhood?

- **INFRASTRUCTURE**
  - Utility grid
  - "Smart grid" integrated micro-grids
- **DENSITY**
  - Large lot figures
  - Small lot figures
- **SEQUENCE**
  - Neighborhood and sub-communities
  - Main street and public park-actor
  - Street grid and park location
  - Sub-communities and internal streets

By combining these three characteristics: active, healthful, and safe sub-communities with distinct identities are created that are expressive of the socio-economic environment.

CITY CONTEXT
Applying a Typology to Create a New Urban Morphology

what are the contextual issues?

1. **URBAN FABRIC PATCHWORK**
   - By superimposing the different patterns of Syracuse, a structural system is revealed that can be imitated within the Near West Side. Blocks (districts and neighborhoods) are joined through horizontal and vertical weavings (streets). Blocks and streets are the basic neighborhood structure.

2. **SECURITY**
   - The median age range in the Near West Side is 20-27 years. The largest ethnicity groups are Black, Hispanic, and White. Approximately 59% of the population has less than a high school level of educational attainment and 30% have a high school level of education. The Near West Side has the highest composite of foreign speaking Latino people in Syracuse.

3. **DEMOGRAPHICS**
   - The median income in the Near West Side is $117,200. In Syracuse, it is $33,075.
be created through the re-structuring of the urban environment. I contend that the residential square can accommodate the shifting demographic composition of these neighborhoods and is one alternative to the existing unsustainable single-family detached house. It catalyzes a new urban morphology, fostering a strong sense of place, identity and activity over time.

The Near West Side, a neighborhood adjacent to the central business district in Syracuse, New York, has the before mentioned characteristics. It can be treated as a laboratory to test the application of a residential typology, which has distinct social and infrastructural components.
NEIGHBORHOOD LAYERS
Applying a Typology to Create a New Urban Morphology

EXISTING

OPEN SPACES
Existing vacant lots in the neighborhood are categorized as grass lots and lots with vacant buildings. Both provide the opportunity to be used in the creation of private and civic activities. Vacant blocks and vacant buildings are defined by transit lines and main streets that run from the neighborhood to the rest of the city. Each sub-community has its own specific character, defined by land uses, community buildings, vacant lots, parks and residential typologies. Analysis of the current conditions can determine possible locations for interventions.

TRANSIT AND LAND USE
Public transit routes within the Near West Side define sub-communities within the overarching district. New land use determined by the placement of residential squares and civic parks and associated civic buildings.

STREET NETWORK
Existing street network is permeable and the middle portion is unconnected to the rest of the neighborhood. New street network creates a new network containing a main streets, neighborhood streets and back allies.

BLOCK STRUCTURE
Existing block structure shows that there are 3 distinct districts in the NWS. New blocks cut through streets and back alleys show a higher level of internal connectivity within the neighborhood.

NEIGHBORHOOD STRUCTURE
The NWS is characterized by large single family homes on large lots, as well as two types of blocks (square and rectangular) and a resultant circulation network. New block cut-through streets, neighborhood streets and back allies show a higher level of internal connectivity within the neighborhood.

NEIGHBORHOOD LAYERS
Applying a Typology to Create a New Urban Morphology

INTERPRETATION

NEIGHBORHOOD DECOMPOSED
Applying a Typology to Create a New Urban Morphology

The Near West Side can be broken down into several smaller sub-communities, which are defined by transit lines and main streets that run from the neighborhood to the rest of the city. Each sub-community has its own specific character, defined by land uses, community buildings, vacant lots, parks and residential typologies. Analysis of the current conditions can determine possible locations for interventions.
The residential square is just one residential typology that might be transformed to become a part of the American urban context and demographic composition. Although each square was created for and by very distinct entities in each city, there are certain similarities. Each square aggregates townhouse units around an open square, which becomes defined by the surrounding residences. All squares are articulated within the block and street structure of the city. They provide a clear scale for the aggregation of open lots, with very certain dimensions and internal uses.

The Near West Side can be broken down into several smaller sub-communities, which are defined by transit lines and main streets that run from the neighborhood to the rest of the city. Each sub-community has its own specific character, defined by land uses, community buildings, vacant lots, parks and residential typologies. Analysis of the current conditions can determine possible locations for interventions.

NEIGHBORHOOD STRUCTURE
The NWS is characterized by large single family homes on large lots, as well as two types of blocks (square and rectangular) and a resultant circulation network. The underlying structure is made of lots, some of which contain buildings and

RESIDENTIAL SQUARE FOR IDENTITY
Applying a Typology to Create a New Urban Morphology

The townhouse is a planning module already present in cities in Europe and America. By investigating its aggregation in a residential square, patterns for sustainability are discovered. Moreover, the relationship between the individual units, the square, and the surrounding streets establishes a sequence of criteria to test in the Near West Side.

Place Royale in Paris the first residential squares as part of an urban plan for the city. Facade design was controlled completely by the king and was constructed separately from the units behind it. The highly regulated facade is also present in Place Dauphine, but less stringently applied in Covent Garden and Bedford Square. The English squares were speculative and units were designed by individual designers. The use of each historical square shows that the open space was used by both city citizens and by neighborhood residents, and in some cases incorporated institutional buildings, such as churches and commercial buildings, such as markets.
RESIDENTIAL SQUARE FOR IDENTITY
Applying a Typology to Create a New Urban Morphology

RESIDENTIAL SQUARE IN THE 21st CENTURY
Applying a Typology to Create a New Urban Morphology

8. SQUARE CRITERIA

Criteria 1 open space, dimensions and scale

Criteria 2 characteristics of open space and built components

Criteria 2a characteristics of open space, associated uses and accessibility

Criteria 3 relationship of square to urban fabric - street and pedestrian-walk

Criteria 4 definition of open space by residences, proximity to square and juxtaposition of functional uses

Although Fitzroy Square appropriates the image of the English mansion for the square's residents (who could not afford such a large house on their own), the individual unit walls are visible behind the monumental veil of the facade. Individual identity is beginning to be seen.

The aggregation of different styles of townhouses around Gramercy Square shows that Americans value their individual identity over the collective identity of the adjacent park. Private ownership of lot is highly visible through the differences in architectural styles employed for the facades.

Syracuse has residential squares already present in its urban fabric, even though the townhouse is not the defining housing typology for the square. Single family and industrial buildings are incorporated into the square through proximity.
some of which are empty.

BLOCK STRUCTURE
Existing block structure shows that there are 3 distinct districts in the NWS. New block cut-through streets and back alleys show a higher level of internal connectivity within the neighborhood.

STREET NETWORK
Existing street network is impermeable and the middle portion is unconnected to the rest of the neighborhood. New street network creates a new network containing a main streets, neighborhood streets and back allies.

TRANSIT AND LAND USE
Public transit routes within the Near West Side define sub-communities within the overarching district. New land use determined by the placement of residential squares and civic parks and associated civic buildings.

OPEN SPACES
Existing vacant lots in the neighborhood are categorized as grass lots and lots with vacant buildings. Both provide the opportunity to be used in the creation of private and civic parks.
NEIGHBORHOOD LAYERS
Applying a Typology to Create a New Urban Morphology

PROPOSED
OPEN SPACES
Community squares, with 1/4 mile pedestrian radius

NEIGHBORHOOD STRUCTURE

TRANSIT AND PUBLIC LAND USE
Public parks and transit routes, with 1/4 mile pedestrian radius

STREET NETWORK

BLOCK STRUCTURE

OPEN SPACES
Two types of open space can be created using opportune areas with large amounts of vacant lots and close proximity to existing streets. The residential squares provide the centers for the defined subcommunities.

TRANSIT AND LAND USE
Transit defines the new main streets and runs through the public parks. The central public parks stitch these quarters together.

STREET NETWORK
Three different types of streets are established. A central main street that runs between the neighborhood and the city, a neighborhood main street that connects the squares, and internal alley streets that connect residential squares.

BLOCK STRUCTURE
The overall block structure morphs to accommodate housing blocks with back alleys and the residential squares. As a result, there are fewer large rectangular blocks and more short blocks, which enable an active street and community life.

NEIGHBORHOOD STRUCTURE
By using the Near West Side as an urban laboratory, a new urban morphology is created that will create a distinctive identity for a neighborhood. Subcommunities are established and then connected back and forth through public parks. Furthermore, transit routes and main city streets connect the neighborhood back to the downtown and other city districts, such as the hospital and university campuses.

PHASING
Neighborhood Connection Over Time

STAGES OF SITE WRITING
In order to organize the development of the Near West Side civic parks and residential squares, it is necessary to phase the project into 6 different stages of growth. The development of parks spur the development of private squares defined by residences.

1. Civic parks articulate the seams between the different tracts of the neighborhood.
2. New civic buildings define the parks and mix with existing community buildings.
3. Neighborhood residential squares juxtapose the civic parks.
4. Townhomes and single family units define squares directly adjacent to them.
5. Single family units with alley units facilitate internal connections.
6. Etchings define connections between circulation and open space. New patterns within the neighborhood are applied through paths and plantings to provide texture on the landscape.
New residential squares take advantage of existing open lots, while the civic parks are located on the seams between sub-communities of the district. They contribute to the establishment of a new main street that connects the NWS to Downtown. Parks zip together distinct sub-communities, acting as joiners.

Locations for the residential squares are determined through the location of vacant lots and their relationship with main streets within the sub-community. Fronts of townhouse rows fortify existing streets and the square. Pairings of units create the need for back allies, which provide access for residents. As a result, a new street network is established within each sub-community.

OPEN SPACES
Two types of open space can be created using opportune areas with large amounts of vacant lots and close proximity to exiting streets. These seams are potential locations for both residential squares and public parks. The residential squares provide the centers for the defined subcommunities.

TRANSIT AND LAND USE
Transit defines the new main streets and runs through the public parks. The central public parks stitch these quarters together.

STREET NETWORK
Three different types of streets are established. A central main street that runs between the neighborhood and the city, a neighborhood main street that connects the quarters, and internal alley streets that connect residential squares.

BLOCK STRUCTURE
The overall blocks structure morphs to accommodate housing blocks with back allies and the residential squares. As a result, there are fewer large rectangular blocks and more short blocks, which enable an active street and community life.

NEIGHBORHOOD STRUCTURE
By using the Near West Side as an urban laboratory, a new urban morphology is created that will create a distinctive identity for a neighborhood. Subcommunities are established and then connected back to each other through public parks. Furthermore, transit routes and main city streets connect the neighborhood back to the downtown and other city districts, such as the hospital and university campuses.

In the historical residential square of Europe, the facade was designed separately from the units behind it. In America, windows could become the extension individual resident and give definition.
Squares and Parks

Neighborhood Connection Over Time

Civic parks and residential squares become part of the urban fabric of not only the Near West Side, but also of the city of Syracuse.

Thornden Park counteracts the grid system around it, serving as a scenic and picturesque piece of infrastructure. It differs from the Walnut Avenue park because it breaks away from the grid, whereas the former fits into the grid.
to the collective square. Existing buildings incorporate a variety of users into the space throughout the day.

By testing different groupings of units, many varieties of support systems are discovered. Single mother families can be supported by their adjacency to nuclear families and extended families. Handicapped units can also be a part of this support system, while being located near circulation paths for ease of access. Couples are fortifying elements and can help nuclear families and single mother families. As a result of these many aggregations, the handicap and traditional family help define the centers and edges of these massings.

Public space can be considered to be democratic space because of its multi-use nature, encouraging its inhabitation by a wide variety of people. The reinvigroated residential square can accommodate the individual’s desires and is shaped by the user’s identity. Thus, it becomes a landscape of the neighborhood’s social composition and characteristics. By maintaining the residential square as a public and open space, the surrounding inhabitants are free to determine use of the square and a wide variety of uses and activities can occur.
UNIT TYPOLOGIES

10. URBAN HOUSING TYPOLOGIES

low rise

Urban housing typologies range from high rise to low rise, and both can provide increased density to a neighborhood. However, the high rise typology has been proven to lack the ability to shape the ground plane and decrease the inhabitant’s perception of domain, diminishing their sense of pride in their community. The low rise typology fits into the context of the mid-size city, becoming part of the infrastructural networks and current housing fabric.

A
2 single family units / 1 lot alternatives

B
townhouse alternatives / combined flats

11. USER TYPOLOGIES

single mother families  married couples  married couples, with children  elderly  youth

12. UNIT DESIGN GUIDELINES AND ALTERNATIVES

B
14" wide townhouse

D
20" wide townhouse

A
2 story detached

B1
3 story detached
13. FAÇADE DESIGN GUIDELINES

In the historical residential square of Europe, the facade was designed separately from the units behind it. Units were sold as separate entities behind the facade. Residents bought into the new collective identity defined by the facade, creating a communal and repetitive atmosphere. Place Royale demonstrates this repetitiveness and hierarchy of individual units within the greater square, signified by the row grouping. Fitzroy Square appropriates this repetitive grid pattern and scale of the urban village. Each square would not be able to affect such a house.

Each square has the potential to have its own individual identity and give definition to the collective square. Existing buildings incorporate a variety of users into the space throughout the day.

Windows act as an extension of the individual resident and give definition to the collective square. Existing buildings incorporate a variety of users into the space throughout the day.

Windows act as an extension of the individual resident and give definition to the collective square. Existing buildings incorporate a variety of users into the space throughout the day.

14. ALTERNATIVE AGGREGATIONS FOR COLLECTIVE SPACE AND INDIVIDUAL IDENTITY

Each unit type could accommodate a specific demographic group within the neighborhood. When grouping of townhouse units within a square was used, emphasis could be placed on support systems for families. Variations of spacing between townhouses break down the row, creating sub-communities with their own organizational systems and pedestrian paths. This also produces the rowhouses to transition into the neighborhood's context. A radial distribution was used along a radial facade.
UNIT AGGREGATIONS

14A. ALTERNATIVE UNIT AGGREGATION VOLUMES AND POSSIBLE LOCATIONS

By testing different groupings of units, many varieties of support systems are discovered. Single mother families can be supported by their adjacency to nuclear families and extended families. Handicapped units can also be a part of this support system, while being located near circulation paths for ease of access. Couples are fortifying elements and can help nuclear families and single mother families. As a result of these many aggregations, the social and physical family happens in centers and edges of these groupings.

SQUARE USE

15. SQUARE SPACE AS DEMOCRATIC SPACE

Public space can be considered to be democratic space because of its multi-use nature, encouraging its inhabitation by a wide variety of people. These aggregated residential squares can accommodate the individual’s desires and is shaped by the user’s identity. Thus, it becomes a landscape of the neighborhood’s social composition and characteristics. By maintaining the residential square as a public and open space, the surrounding inhabitants are free to determine use of the square and a wide variety of uses and activities can occur.