Spring 2005

East Busway Living

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EAST BUSWAY LIVING
BAUM & CENTER • WILKINSBURG • EDGEWOOD • SWISSVALE

THE URBAN LAB
Carnegie Mellon
School of Architecture
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Spring 2005
For the past fifteen years the Urban Laboratory has used Pittsburgh as its laboratory. Students in the Urban Lab work directly with the people who live in the towns and neighborhoods of the Pittsburgh metropolitan region.

Through empowering the citizens to express their aspirations, the recommendations of the Urban Lab have become, year after year, a tangible and accountable force in the evolution of the urban communities in the region.

There are 380 communities in the Pittsburgh region divided by topography, economics, class, and ethnic and racial differences. This fragmentation and separation has been and is a major regional problem. Such diversity, however, presents opportunities as well as challenges. This year, students studied both the factors that divide communities and those that promote connections between them. Building upon the experience of the Urban Lab in studying regional issues on the local neighborhood scale, we focused our efforts on three communities along the East Busway: Swissvale/Edgewood, Wilkinsburg, and the Baum/Centre corridor. By promoting connectivity, new transit concepts can reinforce the region’s social, cultural and economic life.

The overall goal of the project for this year is to produce a set of design and policy recommendations that will help overcome the impediments to cooperation and promote those elements that would strengthen connections in light of present and future demands. This semester, our focus has been on the creation of specific recommendations within the urban frameworks produced during the Fall of 2004. Altogether, the work presented in these two volumes represents how we understand the aspirations of the citizens of those communities that so kindly spend time working with us in the development of urban design visions and implementation strategies of physical and programmatic connections within and between their communities.
The Baum/Centre Corridor is a unique location within Pittsburgh, because unlike the rest of the city’s distinct neighborhoods, the corridor lacks both a strong identity and a resident population. The site selected for this project is at the intersection of the East Busway with both Baum Boulevard and Centre Avenue. This location is special and important for several reasons. It is directly adjacent to UPMC Shadyside and the Hillman Cancer Center and therefore there is a large amount of vehicular and pedestrian traffic on Baum and Centre. Additionally, thousands of people travel past the site via the East Busway everyday. The site is also within walking distance from Carnegie Mellon University and the University of Pittsburgh. Currently the closest East Busway stop to the site is several blocks East at Negley Avenue. A historic Ford Automotive plant also resides on the site as a record of the area's heritage. There is a beautiful early 20th Century church across the street on the Morewood Avenue-Centre Avenue side of the intersection.

This proposal seeks to define the corridor’s identity by strengthening its ties to its historic monuments by introducing a new East Busway stop to the site within the Ford building and introducing a local farmer’s market and residential and commercial space that create an axis that focuses on the historic church across the corner.
A new pedestrian bridge spans the East Busway and allows easier access in and out of the site. The market acts as a pedestrian corridor for people using the Busway stop or just passing through the site. A 4-story building to the east of the market and stemming off of the Ford building houses first floor retail and restaurant space and upper level high-end apartments. A three story building to the west of the market also houses first floor retail and has high-density residential space on the upper two floors. The three buildings together help to draw people into the site, while focusing attention to and highlighting the existing architecture. Additionally, the two opposite corners from the site and the church are cut back to open up views and to provide additional outdoor space to the area.

As the two site sections below suggest, this once surface-parking filled site is turned into a dynamic and lively space by burying an ever higher capacity below-ground multistory parking structure and thus opening the surface up to more possibilities. The parking structure acts on three levels: first as a park-and-ride location for the East Busway; secondly as parking for the occupants of the new residential buildings and retail; and finally as parking for the Hillman Center and the rest of the neighborhood.
A new gateway arch spanning from the Ford Building to the new high-density residential building marks the entrance to the site when arriving via the pedestrian bridge to the north. The arch emulates the terra cotta ornamentation on the Ford building arches. A second level cafe above the market cantilevers directly outward the church to mark the entrance to the site from the south. Additionally, terraces cantilevered off of the residential buildings create a vertical landscape of trees and movement that draw inspiration from the rolling hills of Pittsburgh. An area once difficult to access is now transformed into an inviting and useful amenity for the neighborhood.
The architecture of the market creates a rhythm with its undulating form that provides semi-sheltered outdoor space as well as portals for light to enter the building. The wood cladding is louvered to diffuse the light into the space in order that it be daylight as much as possible. Glass curtain walls on either end of the building allow for visual transparency along the axis pointing toward the church. Refrigerated kiosks offer vendors a location to store their goods throughout the day. A greenhouse above offers the local community a place to grow their own fruits and vegetables. Additionally, as aforementioned, there is a cafe above the market that projects toward the church.
The space around the market and residential buildings is transformed into a public square with space for a variety of outdoor uses and activities. A dedicated platform can be used for performances in the warmer months and it can also be transformed into an ice skating rink in the winter. Additionally, there is space for outdoor dining for the restaurants. The undulating form of the market place allows for outdoor vending as suggested in the view below. The cafe above the market frames a beautiful view of the church across the street as seen in the perspective to the lower right. The vertical landscape of the low-density residential building draws pedestrians by the site from the Friendship neighborhood as seen to the right.

This project seeks to provide a variety of amenities and activities for this unique area of Pittsburgh. From introducing a new architecture, to honoring the existing architecture, this place can become a vibrant and useful location for residents, commuters and the Baum/Centre community.
As it stands today, the Ford Motor Plant has no street presence on Centre Avenue. The redevelopment of this site is crucial to improving the pedestrian quality on this street. Because of the site's proximity to both UPMC Shadyside, and multiple college campuses, an excellent opportunity exists for the site to become a center of activity in the area. Traffic through the site is intensified through the integration of a bus stop on the East Busway.
From a programmatic standpoint, the project includes functions that will attract activity 24 hours a day. The residential is targeted at young professionals working either downtown or at UPMC, and older students. The ground level is stocked with amenities that would appeal to this user group. Diversified retail surrounds the perimeter, while the interior of the courtyard is mostly restaurants and bars which can benefit from outdoor seating. The street level businesses have support spaces either on the level above or below, which allows for a densified street front.
The uses are distributed vertically so that daytime functions act as a buffer space between the nightlife and the residential spaces. Because the building has such a deep floor plate, light wells are punched through the center of the building, allowing larger apartments to get light from two sides. The sub-street levels of the site are filled with parking which services both the functions within the building, and can act as Park n’ Ride for those who work downtown, but prefer not to pay hefty parking fees. The courtyard is filled with a variety of seating and landscaping, and a stage which would allow for small performances of musical or theatrical nature.
The Urban Laboratory  Baum/Centre Corridor

The existing Ford Motor Plant has a very beautiful façade along Baum and Morewood, which although somewhat uncared for, has a great degree of character. It speaks greatly of the Pittsburgh of the past. Because these facades enrich the urban fabric, rather than destroy them the scheme works to revive them, through cleaning and window replacement. The only other change to these facades is an articulation of the enterances to emphasize where the corridors are that lead to the courtyard within.
From an architectural approach, the courtyard is designed to have a defined identity, one that would draw in pedestrians, and make them want to return. It attempts to give the space a dynamic feel, allowing it to become an active community space. Because the area currently has no consistent architectural character, the design is also intended to set a precedent for the area of architectural creativity. Additionally, through the use of pneumatic tubes, installed seasonally, the courtyard is fully functional year round.
courtyard interior

approaching from upmc

approaching from morewood ave.
BRIDGING THE GAP
THE BAUM/CENTRE COMMUNITY CENTRE
Baum Boulevard and Centre Avenue run roughly East/West, parallel to each other in East Pittsburgh. The two highly trafficked streets become a corridor linking multiple neighborhoods to Downtown Pittsburgh, but at the same time, they create a defined split between the local neighborhoods to the North and South. The areas of Bloomfield, Friendship and East Liberty are separated from Shadyside, Oakland and Squirrel Hill by a one-block linear void between Baum and Centre.

The square-block area bordered by Baum and Centre to the North and South and South Graham and Liberty Avenue to the East and West, respectively, is a particularly interesting zone on this corridor. It is the point where Bloomfield, Friendship and Shadyside all meet at two beautiful churches set in the area between Baum and Centre, creating a prominent religious center for the area. Sadly, the importance and stature of these churches has been affected by random fast-food restaurants and chain stores occupying the valuable land in between the two landmarks.

Our goal in this project is to bridge this gap created by the Baum/Centre Corridor, linking the neighborhoods with a community center and various public spaces for continuous day and night activity to bring more people into the area. The addition of new residential towers will house new occupants of the corridor to increase density.
The Idea of the Community Center is not just one structure, but a series of buildings and outdoor spaces creating a varied destination in the area. The main focus of this project is to create a sports facility and arts center on the south side of Centre Avenue that is linked to a sculpture garden and public plaza set across the street from the prominent church facade. We are also proposing luxury apartments above the arts center, a community theater, Senior Day Center, Child Care Center and public fields across the street, a converted movie theater and the addition of new retail bordering the streets.

1. Independent Movie Theater and Apartment Complex
2. Outdoor Park and Pond
3. Retail Spaces
4. Senior Care Day Center
5. Public Playing Fields and Park
6. Child Day Care Center
7. Community Theater with Green Roof
8. Sports Complex
9. Arts Center and Luxury Apartments
10. Public Plaza and Outdoor Stage
11. Raised Sculpture Garden
The Urban Laboratory | Baum/Centre Corridor

Urban Redevelopment - Community Centre

Plaza

Community Theater
The plaza creates an outdoor gathering space fronting the church across the street. Stone platforms in the center step up to a large elevated area that can double as a performance stage for varied activities. The grand steps leading up to the multi-level green sculpture garden behind also double as a seating area for the stage, overlooking the plaza.

The plaza is bordered by stores and restaurants, creating a semi-enclosed space where occupants get a sense of safety and have multiple area where they can relax in both a public or more private setting.
The entrance for the Arts Center is off of the Plaza. The occupant first steps into a two-story gallery space that is divided into sections by heavy stone walls that run throughout the entire building. The walls define boundaries for the rest of the program as well as give a repeating pattern on the street facade that relates to the local architecture. The ground floor has classrooms and a wood and metal shop, and the second floor houses drawing, painting and sculpture studios as well as a large computer cluster for the digital arts. Our Arts Center compliments the popular existing businesses of The Pittsburgh Glass Center and Pittsburgh Filmmakers, which are both located nearby.

The Arts Center building merges smoothly into the athletic facilities of our community center. The main entrance, off Centre Avenue, opens into a two-story space that fronts the check-in desk and the locker rooms behind. The indoor basketball court and swimming pool are also on the ground floor along with a raquetball/squash court and streetfront retail spaces and a cafe that take advantage of the street presence on Centre. The second floor contains a dance room, a mixed-use activities room and two workout rooms that overlook the churches and parks across the street.

The East side of the Sports Center visually flows into a covered Pavilion that occupies the corner of the site at Centre and South Graham. It houses an outdoor basketball court and can double as a large sheltered space for market stalls or other outdoor community activities.
Residential Tower

A five-story luxury apartment complex rises up from the Arts Center and overlooks the Plaza. The structure is set back 20 feet from the sidewalk on Centre Avenue below, giving the streetfront a lower scale, more typical of the surrounding neighborhoods. The setback also creates a private, multilevel garden at the front of the apartment tower, on the roof of the Arts Center.

There are five apartments on each floor that range from a one through three bedrooms with sizes varying from efficient (900 sf) to spacious (2500 sf) so that most needs can be met. Each apartment also has its own balcony that is semi-enclosed by the folding exterior walls for a very private outdoor relaxation place.

Occupants enter the apartment complex adjacent to the Arts Center entrance off of the Plaza. There is also space for up to two parking spaces per apartment for residents behind the building as well as ample spots for guest cars.
Wilkinsburg, Pennsylvania

We began our study of Wilkinsburg by documenting what is currently in the area. From the building stock to the business, we developed an understanding of what was positive and negative. We then began to find ways to improve the existing city through urban renewal.

Wilkinsburg has a number of well built brick buildings, and we tried to work within that language when designing. We also looked for opportunities to bring new business to the area, and housing to the downtown.
Proposed Site Plan

This is a site-use urban lab diagram studying downtown Wilkinsburg. Each building is categorized, and then an analysis is completed of what is positive and what should be redesigned.

Each building is allotted a suggested use to enrich the community. Wilkinsburg currently has an excess of certain institutions, such as banking, with a lack of places for entertainment and community interaction. We are also proposing to move the library out of the Town Hall so as to make it more visible and accessible to the community.
Plans for the Wilkinsburg Community Art Center

The Art Center is an opportunity for Wilkinsburg to attract new residents, as well as become an integral part of Pittsburgh. We propose this complex to serve a wide variety of arts, including those which are not currently available in the county, such as ceramics and textiles. The Art Center will provide the artists with studios, a gallery to display their work, and spaces to sell their art. This building also incorporates three floors of apartments. Downtown Wilkinsburg needs to bring people to keep the neighborhood alive throughout the day. We hope this building will be a first step in bringing mixed-use buildings to the area.
Art Center – Third, fourth, and fifth floor plans of housing

Wilkinsburg Art Center - Penn Avenue

School of Architecture - Carnegie Mellon University
The Urban Laboratory Wilkinsburg

Rendered Elevations Wilkinsburg Community Art Center

This building sits on a corner lot, and is the first structure one sees when emerging from under the busway. Therefore, it is critical that the building command attention, and read at a number of different levels. For the windows we studied African textile patterns for how to weave materials and scales together.
The Wilkins’ Community Theater

We propose a small community theater for the Wilkinsburg community. This theater will be a place for the neighborhood to gather, and an artistic outlet for those in the area. This theater will also draw people from the surrounding areas to Wilkinsburg, making it a destination.

This building makes a statement, separating itself from the architectural language. Since it is not located in the heart of downtown Wilkinsburg, its scale and design allow it to be a noticeable presence in the area. At the same time the retail spaces located on either side respect the surrounding context.
Community Theater – Front Elevation

Daphne Firos & Sara Ngan
SWISSVALE CENTER

A NEW MULTIPURPOSE COMPLEX THAT SPANS THE EAST BUSWAY AND CONNECTS TWO DISTRICTS WITHIN SWISSVALE TO CATALYZE THE CREATION OF ONE, CENTRAL UNIFIED CORE. WITH ITS VARIETY OF FUNCTIONS, THE BUILDING BECOMES A DESTINATION AND Turner DOWNTOWN SWISSVALE INTO A VIBRANT AREA THAT IS OPEN ALL HOURS OF THE DAY AND GENERATES REVENUE FOR THE TOWN.

NOBLE STREET FACADE
The Urban Laboratory Swissvale

BUILDING FEATURES

• NEW TRANSIT HUB WITH INTEGRATED EAST BUSWAY STATION
• INDOOR PUBLIC CONCOURSE WITH EATERIES AND PUBLIC ARTWORK
• 5 NEW FULL-SERVICE RESTAURANTS WITH INDOOR/OUTDOOR SEATING
• 5 NEW RETAIL ESTABLISHMENTS
• 100,000+ SQUARE FEET OFFICE SPACE
• 57 STUDIO AND ONE-BEDROOM CONDOMINIUM APARTMENTS
• 300 INDOOR PARKING SPACES
• HEALTH CLUB WITH POOL
• NEW LANDSCAPING AND WATER FEATURE ALONG NOBLE STREET
• TERRACES ON ALL FLOORS WITH VEGETATION
• GREEN BUILDING DESIGN PRINCIPLES

ARCHITECTURE AND SITE INTEGRATION

FLOOR PLANS

1. LOWER LEVEL (EL. -10.0')
2. CONCOURSE LEVEL (EL. +0.0')
3. BUSWAY LEVEL (EL. +20.0')
4. SECOND LEVEL (EL. +32.0')
5. LEVELS 3-6

NOTE: THERE IS A MEZZANINE LEVEL BETWEEN THE CONCOURSE AND BUSWAY LEVELS ABOVE THE GARAGE ONLY.
The East Busway passes through the building (on top of the base) and a new station for the busway is included within the complex. Those utilizing the bus station arrive via automobile and park in the garage or on the street, via a local bus that stops in front of the building on Braddock Avenue, or by foot. Passengers then pass through a grand public concourse reminiscent of traditional opulent transit facilities throughout the world. The concourse contains various eateries and places to sit and relax. There is a grand staircase that takes passengers from the concourse level to the busway platforms and board their respective buses. A future light rail transit stop may also be integrated into the building should the Port Authority ever begin to use the railroad tracks that exist next to the busway for light rail transit. The glass tube that covers the busway protects passengers from inclement weather while they wait for a bus to arrive.
THE EXTENSION OF NOBLE STREET UNDERNEATH THE EAST BUSWAY AND ITS CONNECTION TO CHURCH STREET ALLOWS SWISSVALE TO FINALLY HAVE A CENTRAL, UNIFIED DOWNTOWN HUB AREA. THE EXISTING NOBLE STREET, ON THE SOUTHEAST SIDE OF THE BUSWAY, IS AN ARCHITECTURALLY BEAUTIFUL ROAD THAT AT ONE TIME WAS A VIBRANT PLACE TO SHOP, EAT, AND BE ENTERTAINED. HOWEVER, IT IS CURRENTLY RUN-DOWN AND DESOLATE. THE NOBLE STREET FACADE OF THE SWISSVALE CENTER IS BROUGHT DOWN TO PEDESTRIAN SCALE AND CONSISTS OF A HANDFUL AND RESTAURANTS AND SHOPS THAT HAVE TRADITIONAL STOREFRONT DESIGNS. THE RESTAURANTS HAVE UPPER LEVELS THAT CAN BE OPENED TO THE OUTSIDE IN NICER WEATHER TO ENLIVEN THE STREET SCENE. THE SCALE OF NOBLE STREET IS BROUGHT DOWN TO THAT OF A TRADITIONAL SMALL TOWN MAIN STREET, WITH A CORRESPONDING SET OF RESTAURANTS, SHOPS, AND ENTERTAINMENT FACILITIES ON THE OPPOSITE SIDE OF THE STREET FROM THE SWISSVALE CENTER. BRICK SIDEWALKS, NEW TREES AND LANDSCAPING, AND STORE AWNINGS BEAUTIFY THE SCENE.
A New Town Center

The goal of this project is to transform an existing shopping center in a prominent central location in the Borough of Swissvale into a mixed use, pedestrian friendly, town center.

Existing Conditions

Currently the site has a CVS pharmacy, thrift store, post office, a Citizen's Bank, Perla's Kitchen Appliances, and a few other stores. The architecture is that of a typical suburban strip mall that could be anywhere in the United States and has no relation to the historic fabric of the neighborhood.

Surrounding the site is a diverse mix of uses and building typologies. Along Irvine Street are typical single family pattern book houses. Along Monongaheia Street there is a historic commercial building with shops on the ground floor and apartments, as well as a senior housing apartment tower, and the public library. Along Church Street is a number of Church properties, houses, and offices. The Busway forms a boundary from Noble Street and the rest of Swissvale's business district.
Town Center Masterplan

In a masterplan created last semester by Noah Adler, Thomas Brown, and Jessica Tidd, the stated Goals were:

- Create Connections between Edgewood and Swissvale,
- Modify Commercial Areas through diversification
- Break through walls surrounding Commercial Areas
- Enhance/Establish the Core of Swissvale

Much of my project is based on these goals and the subsequent plan developed by these students.

I have assumed that Noble Street will be continued under the busway to connect to Church Street, thus completed the so-called "Swissvale Business Loop."

I have also assumed that there will be a mixed use project between Braddock and Noble Street on either side of the busway to be developed further by Noah Adler and will contain shops, offices, apartments, and a mass transit hub.

The new plan is sympathetic to the scale and character of the surrounding neighborhood and adds to the diversity of uses within a walkable distance. The plan includes a new town hall, market house, fire station, a public works garage, new houses, new shops with apartments above. The plan also retains the old uses of the post office, bank, and Perla’s Kitchen Appliances in new facilities. The plan also provides for a Neighborhood Playground and new open spaces for the community.

McCague Street has been reconfigured to connect the bridge over the busway on Washington Street to Church Street and terminates at the courtyard between two church buildings from which the rear of the main church can be seen. The parking areas are brought into the center of the development while new buildings are built closer to the street.

Town Hall, Market House

The Market House and Town Hall face the new intersection of McCague and Church Streets and create new public spaces in front. The new Town Hall will allow more room for both city offices and police offices to expand. It’s three finger plan contains city offices in the north wing, a council chamber in the center, and police offices in the south wing. Courtyards in between the wings create landscaped paths by which people enter the main lobby from the parking lot.

The Market House will allow residents of Swissvale access to fresh produce and create new links between rural and urban communities. With educational programs, it will create more awareness for healthier living and environmental issues. It will also act as a regional destination drawing people from surrounding neighborhoods. With a cross axis, it can be accessed from plazas on all four sides, and has two loading areas accessed from the parking lot.

The combination of two prominent buildings plus the church buildings across the street creates a dialogue between the religious and secular institutions of Swissvale.
Shops, Apartments, Offices

Facing the site on this block of Monongahela Street is a historic building with shops on the ground level and apartments accessed from the rear. In order to complete this section of the street, I have proposed the addition of new shops with apartments above that are also accessed from the rear. The apartments have garages and stairs that lead up to the second and third levels. The shops have a corridor in the rear between the garages for service access.

On Monongahela Street there will be 12 - 1,100 sq. ft. one bedroom units on the second floor with a roof garden above the garage and a terrace facing the street and 12 - 950 sq. ft. one bedroom units on the 3rd floor with a balcony over the roof garden and a terrace facing the street. On Church Street there will be 4 - 2,050 sq. ft. family units with kitchen and living spaces on the 2nd floor and 3 bedrooms on the third floor.

On the corner will be a restaurant and pharmacy with offices on the second and third floors that are accessed from a lobby in the rear.

The functions currently fulfilled by the CVS, Family Dollar, and other chain stores can be broken up into smaller stores that can be privately owned by members of the community so that the money spent here will stay here and go back into the community.
New Houses

In the reconfiguration of the urban landscape, nearly 24 houses of substandard quality will be removed. Most of good quality will be retained. A new block of houses will be created that will mirror the existing houses along Irvine Street, completing this block as a residential street. Like the existing pattern, the houses will have garages accessed by an alley behind. The Alley will also service the garages of the apartments above the shops and will provide access to the parking area in the center of the block.

5 new detached single family homes will be added with addresses on Irvine Street and 8 townhouses will be created facing the new McCague Street. By increasing the density of housing on the site, more people will be able to live within walking distance of most necessary daily tasks.

The North Site

A number of functions that currently exist on the site will be retained and given new facilities along the extension of Noble Street. The bank will take a prominent corner location with vehicular access to a drive through teller with two lanes. The post office will occupy the center of the block with parking for the postal trucks in the rear. Both of these functions are daily necessities for most residents and should remain in a central location in the neighborhood that most residents can walk to. Perla’s Kitchen Appliance store is more of a regional destination since it occupies a specialty niche market. It also contributes to home remodeling and repair in the neighborhood which raises property values.

The current volunteer fire station on Washington Street has only enough room for one Fire Truck and has limited space for offices and dormitories. Relocating the Fire Station adjacent to the Town Hall completes the municipal complex of Town offices, Police and Fire. It also frees up real estate on Washington Street that can be converted to new commercial uses. The Public Works Department will occupy space along the busway. This building will provide and office and lounge area for city employees and a garage for city trucks. It will be within a short walking distance of the town hall so that the city manager can keep a close watch on his employees.
Along South Braddock Avenue

After observing South Braddock and its surrounding area, it became obvious that it serves as the main artery of traveling through Swissvale. The area is a nice place to live, with enough amenities to support a comfortable daily routine. With further analysis, it was discovered that the street also has some issues:
- It is not wide enough for the amount of daily traffic
- The sidewalks are not pedestrian friendly
- The conditions of some housing is poor and needs to be renovated or replaced
- There is not much sense of community or identity along the street.
- Residents living along the north part of the street have to use steep stairs to reach their house.

The focus of this proposal is to address these issues and remain sensitive to the context.
After evaluating the observed issues of South Braddock, it was decided that the proposed design solution is to turn South Braddock into a tree lined boulevard, which would widen the street. This will address the issues relating to its narrowness and the traffic. To remedy the issue of the poor conditions of the houses on the hill, a proposed high-density living building will replace them. The ultimate goal of this proposal is the following:

- Slow down the traffic that passes through Swissvale via South Braddock and provide more street parking
- Improve the condition of the sidewalks to welcome more pedestrian activity
- Provide living units that are available for both rent and ownership
- Create a pleasant sense of space and identity

The new building will replace the indicated houses on the hill.
The building has a total of 27 units and a parking garage for the residents. There is a backyard that is the “secret garden” for the occupants, which has stepped terraces and a waterfall. Each unit on the ground level has a street entrance, which is consistent with the existing houses. The 1st and the 2nd floors offer single-family units. The 3rd floor offers units with two bedrooms for the larger families. To deal with the scale and the sound issues, the 3rd floor of the building steps back, allowing for a front deck for those occupants and a pleasant view of the boulevard. The facade of the building aims to celebrate the architectural language that is prominent in the pattern book houses along South Braddock.
While observing the activity along South Braddock, it was noticed that cars tended to drive through fast. There are stop signs along the street, but the cars simply drive rapidly from sign to sign. Also the street is too narrow for the amount of daily traffic and there is only parking on one side of the street. The purpose of the boulevard is to slow down these speeding cars, widen the street, and provide parking on both sides. With the trees lining the boulevard, South Braddock will gain a strong sense of space and capture an identity that will inspire travelers to slow down and experience this area of Swissvale.
Celebration and Introduction

There is a strong presence of history in the houses along South Braddock. Most of the houses share the same architectural characteristics. The pattern book qualities of the houses are very typical to this area. Examples of these houses are shown in photo above. In order for the new building to work in this context, it has to respond to these characteristics. For the mentioned reasons, the building is a celebration of the existing. As indicated below, many of the architectural elements that are consistent from house to house are present in the new building. The emphasis on the style of architecture is the driving factor in the design of the facade. The new building also makes use of glass to allow for more transparency along the street and makes use of metal to introduce more a different material into the context. These materials together symbolizes the future of South Braddock Boulevard.