

NEWSLETTER

Vol. 4, No. 4, Winter 2024, Section A

CAF Events Calendar

The Cleveland Architecture Foundation continues its Lecture Series into 2025 with speakers and content that continues our strong tradition. Lectures are held in the Union Club of Cleveland at 1211 Euclid Avenue. Admission is \$20. Registration opens at 5:30 pm, followed by light hors d'oeuvres and a cash bar with the programs beginning at 6:00 pm. Our Union Club programs are jointly sponsored by the Midwest Chapter of the Institute for Classical Art and Architecture.

Spring 2025 Schedule:

March 19: William Blunden FAIA: "Large Projects," featuring his 11-year role as Campus Architect at the Cleveland Clinic.

April 16: Professor Steven Semes, University of Notre Dame: "Appropriate New Architecture in Historic Settings."

May 14: Cleveland State University Levin College of Public Affairs & Education **Professor Stephanie Ryberg-Webster, Ph.D.:** "Historic Preservation Among Urban Decline in Cleveland."

Continued next page

Below: Prof. Steven Semes



The REAL Plan Behind Haslam's Shakedown

Do Jimmy & Dee Really Want the City & County to Refuse to Fund Their Dome in Brookpark?

William T. Eberhard, AIA
President, Cleveland Architecture Foundation

Why does the Cleveland Architecture Foundation have the Haslams and the Cleveland Browns on our radar screen? Because the stadium they require is a significant magnet and asset to the community's urban form and represents an important cultural asset and brand identity for the team and the city.

When the Haslams turned down Mayor Bibb's offer of the Burke Lakefront Airport site for a new Browns stadium, it signaled bad faith on the part of the Browns. The cover story was that they did not want to wait what might take ten years for the FAA to allow Burke to go away.

But it sends the message that it's a 'Brookpark or Northing' shakedown since both Cleveland and Cuyahoga County have told the Haslams that beyond Bibb's original lakefront support proposal, no taxpayer money will be provided to move the Browns to the airport site.

The Browns even offered up a supposed study in December to attempt illustrate the **alleged** economic benefits of their Brookpark proposal when **every** economist's study of taxpayer subsidy of sports facilities has concluded that the **taxpayers always lose**.

Browns' Brand Identify Continues to Fall:

Jim and Dee Haslams' stock nationally and with Cleveland fans fizzled significantly with the outrageous Deshaun Watson deal involving a guaranteed \$230 million and the giving away of six draft picks – three in the first round - which gave up the Browns' opportunity to keep pace

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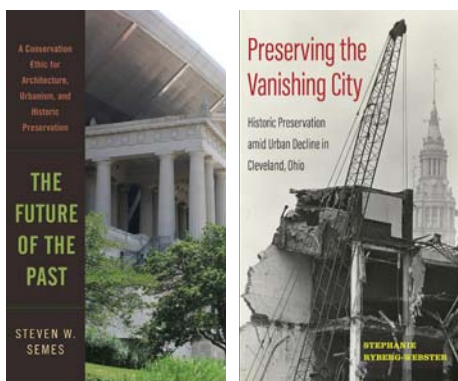
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CAF Events Calendar, Cont'd:



Above Left: Prof. Semes latest book, *The Future of the Past*
Above Right: Prof. Ryberg-Webster's recent book, *Preserving the Vanishing City: Historic Preservation amid Urban Decline in Cleveland Ohio*

Prof. Steven W. Semes was a practicing architect for over 30 years before joining the Notre Dame faculty in 2005. The author of two books and numerous articles, Professor Semes is interested in the recovery of the classical language of architecture and the impact that this recovery has on changing approaches to the conservation and interpretation of cultural heritage sites. His current research in this area focuses on the issue of defining appropriate new architecture in historic settings.

Prof. Semes served as Academic Director of the Rome Studies Program from 2008-2011, and continues to divide his time between the Notre Dame campus and the Rome Global Gateway.

His research there has focused on the architects of the inter-war period in Rome who continued the classical tradition in architecture and urbanism.

He is the author of *The Future of the Past: A Conservation Ethic for Architecture, Urbanism, and Historic Preservation* (2009), *The Architecture of the Classical Interior* (2004), and was a contributor to the republication of Georges Gromort's *The Elements of Classical Architecture*, all published by W. W. Norton & Co,

His articles have appeared in *The New Criterion*, *National Trust Forum Journal*, *American Arts Quarterly*, and *Traditional Building*, among other publications. Professor Semes received a Bachelor of Science in Architecture from the University of Virginia (1975), and a Master of Architecture from Columbia University (1980).

In May, **Stephanie Ryberg-Webster Ph.D.** will speak on Cleveland's preservation movement, covered in her recent book, *Preserving the Vanishing City: Historic Preservation amid Urban Decline in Cleveland Ohio*. **Prof. Mark Souther** will return in June to cover Cleveland's urban renewal successes and failures from 1970 to today.

The REAL Plan Behind Haslam's Shakedown, cont'd:

Continued from Previous Page

with league teams in the future. The brand identity of the Browns and the Haslams continued to deteriorate with Watson's off-field sexual misconduct and the disciplinary action then imposed on him by the NFL.

Sports writer Don Robinson observed that given Watson's history – and the fact that he had not played for a year – “it was a move that was greeted with derision and disgust... It was like buying Enron stock after the FBI opened the books.”

Watson's dismal on the field performance has further increased the pain and tarnished that brand's identity. And Watson's replacement, Jameis Winston, has his own history of sexual assault. And let's not forget that to make room for Watson, the Browns threw away Baker Mayfield four years after they made him the No. 1 pick in the 2018 draft. Mayfield has been thriving in Tampa Bay.

And as former *Plain Dealer* Editor Brent Larkin painted a damningly accurate picture in a November 24 article in *Cleveland.com* (“A Shakedown on Plain Sight...”), **the Haslams have been on a shakedown tour this year to try and get everyone else to pay for their pipedream of building a domed stadium in, of all places, Brookpark**, next to the airport – a site that requires them to **sink the field eight floors below grade** to comply with FAA regulations for takeoffs and landing at Hopkins Airport.

Larkin observed, “The biggest taxpayer shakedown in this community's long and at times glorious history is taking place in plain sight. Pretty much every thoughtful leader in town knows it. And if the perpetrators pull it off, the damage to Cleveland might last for decades.”

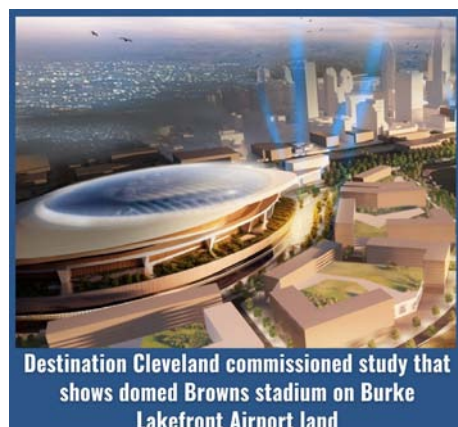
“Browns owners Jimmy and Dee Haslam want Ohio's taxpayers to fork over more than \$1 billion to finance their fantasy domed stadium project in Brook Park. Never mind that **anyone with a modicum of common sense knows the suggestion this project would pay for itself is utter nonsense.** And never mind that one of America's richest families wants working-class Ohioans to split their cost for this vanity project.”

Hundreds of thousands of people poured into downtown to see the Guardians make a run deep into the baseball playoffs in 2024 and the Cavaliers are off to the team's best start in 54 years, while owners of the most inept and expensive franchises in all of professional sports want to abandon downtown in a risky reach for more revenue.

“Denied the assistance they want from Cuyahoga County Executive Chris Ronayne and Cleveland Mayor Justin Bibb, the Browns are now spending generously on state government candidates and causes, knowing Columbus can be a place where public policy is shaped by the size of a



Above: Deshaun Watson on the field.
Below: Haslams' Brookpark Stadium Rendering



Below: Browns' Performance Graph=Most Losses in Last 20 Yrs.



The Real Plan Behind Haslams' Shakedown, cont'd:

contributor's contribution, rather than what's best for the people who live here. The House Bill 6 scandal that ruined lots of reputations and sent former Speaker Larry Householder to prison taught us the "for sale" is often planted outside the Statehouse door. It would be both unprecedented and highly suspicious if state leaders funded a major project Greater Cleveland's two most important elected officials oppose."

"Greater Cleveland is the smallest market with professional baseball, basketball and football franchises. If this community is to retain a shred of dignity and respect for the people who live here, for the time being, here is a fair counteroffer to the Browns' request for more than \$1 billion:"

"Zero. Not a single cent. Not now. Not until a plan exists to pay already-existing debts owed the Guardians and Cavaliers under terms of their leases with Gateway. Not only are the baseball and basketball teams better-run, but their ownership is far more loyal to downtown Cleveland."

"For sure, arguments can be made for moving the existing stadium off the prime lakefront spot it now occupies. But **no argument can be made for funding a predatory project that would harm a downtown neighborhood whose prosperity will always be fragile.** Respect can't be purchased. The ancillary development planned by the Haslams for the Brook Park site would create a project that directly competes for events now held in Rocket Mortgage FieldHouse, the convention center, downtown hotels, restaurants and maybe even Playhouse Square."

In November, Larkin sent questions about the Brookpark project to the Browns.

* He requested the total estimated cost of building the domed stadium and the public's cost of infrastructure work, including possible road relocations.

* He asked if the Browns would be willing to allow the people who would pay for the project to vote on a proposed tax increase to help pay for it.

* He asked if the Browns would promise not to cannibalize business and/or events from existing downtown venues?

* He noted that the facilities used by the Guardians and Cavaliers are five years older than the one used by the Browns, but that those two teams were willing to make renovations to those facilities that cost hundreds of millions less than what the Browns want. Larkin asked why, given the obvious fiscal limitations of the city and county, are the Browns demanding the taxpayers pay so much more?

The Browns have not responded. Larkin noted, **"The Browns are not eager for democracy to get in the way of this project. They know that asking voters to tax themselves would result in a massive defeat."**

Larkin also focused his laser on the Greater Cleveland Partnership: **"The Greater Cleveland Partnership's waffling on this issue is a total abdication of corporate responsibility. Not all parts of a region are equal. And without a vibrant downtown, all of Northeast Ohio suffers. If the GCP lacks the courage to defend its most vital neighborhood, businesses who pay dues to support it are wasting money that could be better spent elsewhere. Dee Haslam is a member of the GCP's executive committee"** – an irony of significant proportions.

Larkin: "On Nov. 14, the GCP offered up this nothingburger to me: "GCP is committed to both a world-class lakefront and a world-class stadium. We are actively engaged in discussions with public, civic and private leaders towards a solution that delivers long-term and lasting benefits to downtown, the city, and the region."

No one, including the Haslams and the NFL, want this to disintegrate into a controversy even remotely resembling what happened here in 1995. But that may very well be the Haslams' intent.

If corporate and civic leaders joined Ronayne and Bibb in sending a clear message to state government that nothing good would come of a domed stadium project 12 miles from downtown, it might be a difference-maker with state officials whose default mode is to reward contributors, even if it's bad public policy.

Ned Hill is the recently retired professor of economic development at the John Glenn College of Public Affairs at Ohio State University. Hill left Cleveland in 2015 after spending 30 years at Cleveland State University, including a stint as dean of the school's Maxine Goodman Levin College of Urban Affairs. Hill has a deep love for and understanding of Greater Cleveland. When Hill was here, he was never afraid to lead.

"Public money should not go to the Browns in any way, shape, or form outside of infrastructure investments that have meaningful and lasting spillover benefits to the public and the city and region's economic and community development," said Hill. **"Building professional sports facilities — especially football — is not economic development.** This spending subsidizes local entertainment and shifts dollars around the regional map, something that has taken place since the Roman Empire."

"What would be a public policy disaster, no matter the location," Hill added, "is a massive

Reject the Haslam Crime Syndicate's Childish, Ridiculous Stadium: People of Cleveland Should Do Everything In Their Power to Block Funding

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The timing could not possibly be worse for the Cleveland Browns and the City of Cleveland to announce its plans for a new dome stadium in Brook Park, of all places. The team is 1-6 with the worst QB in the entire league, who is greeted to the justified sound of cheers upon

Above: Block Haslam Funding Headline
Below: *Crain's Cleveland Business* 10-24-24 Headline

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public payout to the Browns and their private owners to subsidize their business and allow the real estate profits earned from a public investment to be privatized."

"Ten years from now, if the Brook Park project is complete and begins attracting shows, concerts and other events that would otherwise be downtown, the blame-placing will be enormous, changing forever the way some people are remembered. **The fact that civic and corporate leaders aren't now sounding the alarm will be viewed as another defining moment in Cleveland's decline.**"

Don Robinson: "For most of the 1970s, I was City Hall reporter for the *Cleveland Press*. Those were dark days for the city. In a fire-sale version of regionalism, Cleveland lost control of its transit system, lakefront parks, sewer system, and lakefront stadium. A federal court took temporary control of the school system and the Cavaliers left town for a 20-year run at new arena in Richfield."

"Cleveland has lost enough. Gouging taxpayers

Continued next page

The Real Plan Behind Haslams' Shakedown, cont'd:

for more than \$1 billion for Cleveland to lose the Browns would be **unconscionable**."

"Trying to Save Face"

Haslams are not *completely* tone deaf. The roar of outrage over their complete lack of civic citizenship and political awareness in abandoning downtown for Brookpark has compelled them to make a few small attempts at damage control.

In mid-November, the Haslams announced a \$30 million gift to the Cleveland Clinic to expand cardiovascular genetics research. Ten years ago, Haslam's sister was successfully treated at the Clinic for a full aortic dissection that caused the death of his mother at 42 and his grandfather at 31.

In late November, the Browns presented a proposed \$221 million development in Berea next to their existing training facility. An initial phase estimated at \$150 million shows a community athletic field with stands for 7000 spectators, a 200-car parking garage, and a three-story 45,000 sf sports medicine and health facility to be operated by University Hospitals with ground floor mixed-use occupancies.

At a proposed traffic circle, a Marriott hotel with 136 rooms is proposed. The same developer is building a 136-room hotel at Valor Acres in Brecksville – it looks like they plan to use the same drawings twice. Those projects come up approximately \$50 million short of the claimed \$150 million price tag for the first phase.

It has not been disclosed what money – if any, the Haslams are themselves putting into the proposed Berea development.

The UH project will likely be funded by UH or the developer with UH as a tenant. The developer is likely also funding the hotel and future apartments.

The team sought a \$15 million grant from the State for their mixed-use project last year and were denied. State capitol improvement monies typically and rightfully go to state institutions such as colleges, hospitals or cultural facilities, not private for-profit development. Last spring Haslam and Berea tried to re-brand their \$15M ask by re-defining it with community uses, this time telling State officials it was instead for a \$5 million recreation center and \$10 million for a multi-purpose sports fieldhouse. Nice try.

Phase two shows two 75-unit apartment buildings that are proposed along with a 102,000 square foot parking garage for 200 cars. A three-story structure that looks like an office building is shown but not defined.

The *appearance* from the released information and renderings and unreturned phone calls from



Above: Cleveland Invokes Modell Law vs. Browns
Below: Browns Berea Development Plan
Middle: Cleveland Enforcing Modell Law

Browns' Berea District 46 Plans Continue to Develop



CLEVELAND (WJW) — The city of Cleveland has decided to invoke the Modell Law in an attempt to block the Cleveland Browns from leaving the stadium downtown and building a dome stadium in Brook Park, the FOX 8 I-Team has learned.

reporters is that Haslams are investing in Berea. It is unclear if it is at all true, and if so, how much of their own skin – if any - is in the Browns' Browns' District 46 game plan.

Haslams Go To Court to Fight the Modell Law:

Haslams and the Browns now seek to strike down the protections enacted after Art Modell took the Browns to Baltimore. The Modell Law was developed to prevent teams from leaving cities that subsidize them with taxpayer money. Haslams' Browns undeniably fit that category.

The law requires that a professional sports team that reaps the benefits of a tax-supported facility

must take certain steps before it can "cut and run," as noted by Ohio Attorney General Chief Counsel Bridget Coontz.

Ohio Attorney General Dave Yost's office has asked US District Judge David Ruiz to grant it standing in the Haslams' suit to argue against the Browns. In late October, Haslams' attorneys Thompson Hine (TH) argued that the Modell law is unconstitutional. The law requires a team to give six months notice before leaving and to give the city or community a chance to buy the team first.

Thompson Hine argues that such provisions are vague and unenforceable because the law does not state how far a team must move to invoke the law or how team owners would put the team up for sale. It would seem clear enough that moving out of Cleveland who has been paying the mortgage and interest on the lakefront stadium's construction would be 'far enough' to cause the law to kick in.

But TH has always been a faithful voice for sports team owners instead of taxpayers as the Gateway leases proved. TH also argues that NFL rules prohibit selling the team without NFL permission. So the Haslams must get NFL permission to sell the team. That is not a legal problem but rather simply the sequencing obligations of the Browns.

The Modell Law was invoked in 2018 when the Columbus Crew soccer team was contemplating relocating to Texas. The Haslams bought the team for \$150 million and kept it in Columbus.

The Haslams have wanted taxpayers to fund at least half of their proposed domed stadium and ALL of the mixed-use development around it intended to create a sports village, though the Joe Scalzo October 28, 2024 article in *Crain's Cleveland Business* for the first time stated, "HSC plans to cover the cost of real estate development around the dome." So the Haslams have passed the buck - and the obligation to pay for the mixed-use development - to a developer.

The city and county officials have told the Haslams not to expect any contribution for their Brookpark dream project. Jake Zuckerman's story on 10-30-24 noted that the Haslam family has contributed over \$6.5 million on Ohio political contributions in the most recent two-year election cycle.

With Jimmy's brother Bill, the former two-term Republican governor of Tennessee, the family's giving falls on the conservative side of the ledger. The Haslams gave \$100k to defend the redistricting efforts in Ohio for legislative and congressional maps, which have seven times ignored directives from the Ohio Supreme Court.

But now, Haslams want a huge handout for their business in the blue part of NEOH. Haslams are hoping that state lawmakers will split the

Shakedown, cont'd:

\$2.4 billion domed stadium cost with them by adding the match to the 2025 two-year state biennium budget that must be voted on by June 20, 2025.

To do so, **state lawmakers would have to commit one third of the entire state's two-year construction funding to Haslams for the second half of the Brookpark stadium.**

The State's capital improvements bill is a ground-up appropriation for projects needed throughout the state for higher education, roads, bridges, state facility maintenance and new construction. To give the Haslams one third of the State's two-year kitty means stifling dozens of needed civic, infrastructure and educational projects for dozens and dozens of institutions and communities.

The Haslams have now found a developer to fund the additional \$2+ billion mixed-use facility intended to surround the new stadium to create a sports village environment.

In LA, Rams owner Stan Kroenke's \$5 billion privately funded SoFi Stadium presently "has space" on his 298-acre Hollywood Park site for a proposed mixed-use development to surround the stadium. Five years after the stadium's completion, the only other asset on site are administrative offices for the two football teams.

Kroenke is married to Wal-Mart billionaire heiress Anne Walton Kroenke. Their ranch is 1.6 million acres, making them the fifth-largest landowner in the US.

Another possibility is that Haslams are challenging the Modell Law now so that when they are convinced that they cannot get the subsidy that they want here, they will be able and forgiven by some for going somewhere else - Austin? - where they can expect open arms from a community whose taxpayers have not been bled to death by wealthy white team owners for decades at the expense of the legitimate needs of its citizens.

Quote:

**"A chair is a difficult object.
A skyscraper is almost easier.
That is why Chippendale is famous."**

Ludwig Mies van der Rohe;
1886 - 1969

Downtown Office Market Still Struggles

Serious Struggles Downtown and the Suburbs

The downtown Cleveland office market has struggled with massive job losses, the conversion of its older multi-tenant office buildings into building standard apartments, the embrace of hybrid work environments, decreasing tenant demand for space, the Covid pandemic of a largely vacant urban center and the resulting collapse of the value of downtown properties – including signature buildings – selling for fire sale prices as investors exit the market.

One problem that is rearing its head is the unsuccessful reconciliation of the loans used to acquire office buildings upon maturity. The lending market for such transactions has contracted to X-rated levels.

North Point I, II:

The Hertz Investment Group's local portfolio is coming under stress for such financing difficulties. Its North Point I and North Point II towers have a \$90 million loan that matured on September 6 and has not been refinanced. Unlike many properties, NP is stocked with blue chip tenants – Jones Day, accountants EY, the Mansour Gavin law firm and GSA. Jones Day occupies all of the 340,000 square feet in NP I and its lease expires in 2026.

600 Superior/ Fifth Third Center:

Hertz also lost operating control of the 27-story Fifth Third Center in late 2023 when a mezzanine lender foreclosed through a UCC auction. Hertz's Skylight Office Tower at the Tower City Complex has a \$25 million mortgage that matures in October 2025.

Hertz has been giving up its skyscrapers across the country to each property's lenders and presently has 11 in receivership. Hertz made the national news recently when its 22-story Capitol One Tower in Lake Charles, Louisiana was imploded after the building's damage from hurricane Laura in 2020 was not insured adequately to effect necessary repairs. The city took over the tower and used \$7 million from Hertz's insurance company to demolish the tower.

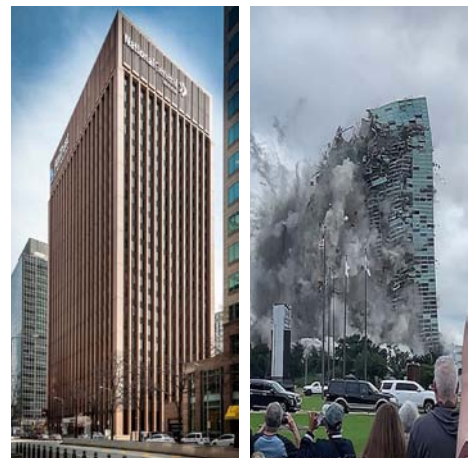
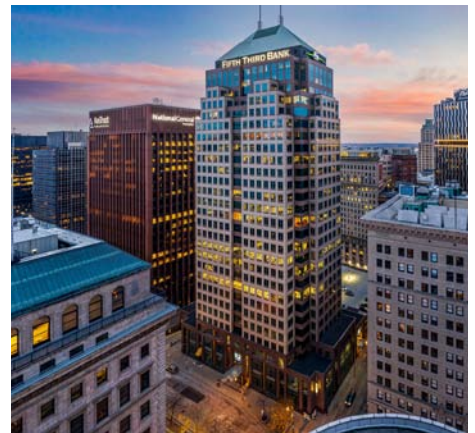
At a foreclosure auction on September 29, Prime Finance, the lender on the 27-story 5/3 tower, entered the winning bid for control of the property. The collateral up for bid was the membership interests in the limited liability company that owns the skyscraper. So there is now a new landlord at 600 Superior Ave., while a half-dozen downtown Cleveland office buildings are teetering financially or controlled by lenders or outside receivers.

800 Superior Building:

In May 2024, the 587,000 square foot 800 Superior building was put up for sale when it was



Above: North Point I (L), North Point II (R)
Below: 600 Superior/ Fifth Third Center
Bottom: 800 Superior (L) and Hertz Capitol One Tower (R)
Demolition in suburban New Orleans



was announced that an anchor tenant, AmTrust Financial, will not renew its lease. AmTrust and National General Insurance each occupy 150,000 square feet in the building which is 77% leased, with both leases schedule to expire on December 31, 2026. National General is owned by AllState Corporation which owns the building through an affiliate but also expects to terminate its lease upon completion of a sale or the expiration of its lease. Its continued occupancy in the CBD has not been determined.

Continued Next Page

Downtown Office Market Still Struggles, cont'd

KeyBank previously owned the building and relocated its occupancy to the Tiedeman Road KeyBank facilities in 2011. The building is currently valued at \$29.7 million for tax purposes but CBRE has acknowledged that the likely sale price will be “in the \$15 million range” – an incredible \$25.50/ square foot. CBRE has stated that the attached 800 Superior parking garage is “out of service and needs to be either repaired or torn down and rebuilt.” The brick façade of the office building is also again an issue. In 2023, \$400k in emergency repairs were initiated.

The masonry exterior was originally constructed with Dow Chemicals’ Sarabond mortar additive. The product was proven to react with water penetration and condensation to corrode embedded reinforcement steel and anchor attachments, causing façades to peel away and fall to the ground. Introduced in 1965, Sarabond was said to quadruple the strength of mortar. Dow no longer manufactures the product.

Since the 1970s, Dow has settled scores of lawsuits with building owners. Designed by Charles Luckman of New York, the 23-story 800 Superior Building was originally constructed as the HQ for Central National Bank in 1967. In 1977, bricks began falling off of the building and in 1979, it was announced that the problem was the Sarabond mortar additive. Central National Bank sued Dow and won and over two years, over two million bricks were removed, replaced and resealed.

Society Bank bought Central National Bank in 1986 and in 1991, McDonald Investments bought the complex. Key Corp bought McDonald in 1998 and the two buildings were acquired by the Toronto-based IPC US Financial REIT in 2002 for \$45 million. In 2011, the building was sold at auction to AmTrust North America.

Ohio Savings Plaza/Park Plaza:

The 1969 17-story Ohio Savings Plaza and its 9-story companion Park Plaza with the connecting parking garage is rumored to have a new owner. *NEOTrans* has reported that the prospective owner plans to keep the 1801 East 9th Street Tower as offices and convert the narrower Park Plaza building to apartments.

1100 Superior Building:

The 1100 Superior Tower remains up for sale after Oswald Companies left for the Flats East Bank Tower. At last report, the 625,000 square foot tower is 40% vacant. The lender has put up an asking price of \$22.5 million for the property, less than half of the \$47 million paid by the previous owner at \$36/sf, which presumably includes the attached parking garage.

Cohen & Co. Building:



Above: Ohio Savings Plaza (L); Cohen & Co. Building (R)
Below: 1100 Superior Building



Crains Cleveland Business’ Stan Bullard reported in November that the Playhouse Square US Bank Centre – now called the Cohen & Co. Building – has also been hit with foreclosure. Bullard characterized the Wolstein family’s rescue of their Flats East Bank Tower – now called Oswald Tower – as a “coup to rescue ownership,” but now faces a similar challenge on its Playhouse Square building.

The Cohen & Co. Building at 1350 Euclid Ave. is now the subject of a foreclosure suit filed Nov. 1 in Cuyahoga County Court of Common Pleas. The CMBS lender attorneys say monthly payments on the \$31 million loan were not paid and the owner failed to maintain the property because of roof leaks that have caused unidentified tenants to withhold their rent in protest. Attorneys for the lender on the 15-story building have asked Judge Jeffrey Saffold to appoint a receiver to manage the property while the case is heard.

The lender sued to collect on the remaining \$31.5 million from a \$33.2 million loan the building owner took out to refinance another loan on Dec. 28, 2018. Commercial loans such as this one typically do not pay down principal the same way residential loans do.

However, in this case, the mortgage would not have matured until Jan. 1, 2029. That is a dramatic difference between this building’s case and other recent office foreclosures. Most have been triggered by so-called “maturity default” because of the difficulty office building owners currently face securing replacement loans in the post-pandemic era.

The lender’s attorneys claim the building ownership, through a company called Renaissance Center Limited Partnership, also defaulted because it failed to file documents with the lender identifying who would replace the late Scott Wolstein after he died in 2022. That successor designation was required by the terms of the loan.

The foreclosure filing comes after the loan was assigned to special servicing in July. CoStar reports that the building is 38% vacant. The Cohen building’s tenant roster has been boosted recently with the relocation of the TransDigm Group’s HQ and the renewal of Cohen & Company’s lease for two floors along with naming rights.

When the building opened in 1989, it was named Renaissance on Playhouse Square. It was seen as another phase in the turnaround of the theater district and downtown since the city’s former vaudeville and 1920s-era movie houses were rescued from disuse or demolition.

In 2023, a foreclosure case in New York City and a UCC auction was set to gain repayment of a \$25 million mezzanine loan on the 17-story office building on Main Avenue now known as Oswald Tower. However, because the Wolstein family and the lender came to terms on a loan workout, the auction was dropped as the foreclosure case was dismissed. The Flats East Bank building then roped in Oswald Cos. as a three-floor tenant.

Rockefeller Building:

Previously planned for a 400+ small apartment renovation, the landmark Rockefeller Building is back on the market with no stated asking price.

Spotlight:

Below: Fairmount Presbyterian Church; Bloodgood Tuttle; 1924



Greenwash Reaches a New Height:

The term Greenwash refers to exaggerated claims or disinformation to hype an alleged environmentally responsible product or assembly. There is also no standard in the industry for what constitutes environmentally responsible or 'sustainable.' There is no comprehensive standard in the industry for 'net-zero emissions,' 'carbon-neutral' or 'carbon-positive.'

There is also no standard to address embodied energy to inform how much energy went in to producing a given product or assembly, such as a car.

The newest 2024 Greenwash Champion award goes to JPMorgan Chase and Foster + Partners for their claim that their 270 Park Avenue Tower in New York City is highly sustainable. Normally, BS claims are not attributable to such high profile architects as Sir Norman Foster, architect of the Samson Pavilion health educational campus building at the Cleveland Clinic main campus, or JPMorgan Chase.

Both recently stated that New York's 270 Park Avenue will produce "net-zero operational omissions." The key BS word here is 'operational.' That means that there is absolutely nothing about the building's design or construction that achieves any kind of high level of sustainability, let alone net-zero performance.

There are no solar panels or wind turbines at 270 Park Avenue, so any energy used by the building is simply bought and produced off-site. **This means that the term "net-zero operational omissions" is meaningless.**

As noted author Fred Bernstein observed in his September 2024 article "Reality Check" in *The Architect's Newspaper*, "If you can count clean energy produced at a remote location, you could build the world's most wasteful building and still call it net-zero."

And that is what Foster and JPMorgan Chase did. They tore down the 52-story Union Carbide Building mid-century tower that had stood on the property for sixty years to build their new tower. The Union Carbide building was designed by Skidmore Owings & Merrill in 1961 **and had undergone a complete renovation in 2017-2018 to achieve LEED certification.**

Bernstein observed, "...the (new) building is powered 100 percent by electricity sourced from hydroelectric plants... This isn't creative architecture but for creative accounting... In 2022, 71% of New York's energy was produced by burning fossil fuels... 270 Park Avenue will have no effect on greenhouse gas emissions from the production of electricity in New York State.... Chase's new building is not remotely "emissions free.""



Above Left: 270 Park Ave. in New York City by Foster + Partners which was sold to a Canadian investment firm in 2021
Above Right: The 52-story Union Carbide Building demolished to make room for the 70-story 270 Park Ave.



The new tower is 70 stories in height. A minor scuffle was mounted by preservationists to save the Union Carbide Tower. 270 Park replaces the Union Carbide Building, the 1960s skyscraper designed by Natalie Griffin du Blois of Skidmore Owings & Merrill, one of the few women to have worked prominently in mid-century corporate architecture.

Union Carbide - wrapped in glass, steel, and metal panels blackened with the company's own chemical products - was an elegant example of what critic Ada Louise Huxtable called it the Park Avenue School of Architecture.

New York's Justin Davidson described Union Carbide as one of the finest buildings of its kind and called its destruction an act of "ruthless architectural Darwinism."

Foster had no respect for the Union Carbide Tower. In the January 27, 202 issue of the *New Yorker*, Foster was comfortable with its disappearance. He said it "was obsolescent. It was recirculating stale fresh air. Low ceilings, very little natural light, no variety of space. The question that's never asked but I think is important is: What is going to replace it? What is the idealism behind the replacement?"

Now the new 270 Park Avenue Tower's idealism is one of the Disinformation Champ Prize to Foster and JPMorgan Chase for their net-zero claim.

In June 2024, the Department of Energy released a "National Definition of a Zero Emissions Building," which covered only operational emissions, "ignoring a significant source as a variety of greenwashing, and no less so because it's pervasive" by ignoring embodied energy.

Gateway Repairs:

Why are Taxpayers Paying for Maintenance When the Teams are SO Profitable - and Taxpayers are Not?

The leases between Gateway and the sports teams have never enabled Gateway to keep up with their lease obligations to maintain the facilities thanks to the one-sided leases originally crafted by Thompson Hine when TH was not only the attorneys for the Indians, but also preparing the leases for Gateway - a classic conflict of interest if ever there was one.

In 2023, the Guardians revenue was \$315 million with **profit of \$52 million**. Of the \$202.5 million renovation of Progressive Field, **the Guardians are contributing only 33.3%**. In 2023, the Cavaliers gross income was \$391 million with a **profit of \$96 million**.

If there is a gap between repair costs and Gateway's resources, the only responsible solution is for the teams to write the check. But in December, Cuyahoga County and the City of Cleveland each offered to come up with \$20 million to pay for more Gateway 'repairs.'

In the 12-9-24 issue of *Crain's Cleveland Business*, the *Crain's* editorial board wrote, **"It's certainly reasonable for the city's taxpayers to wonder why they always seem to be on the hook for more money, and whether they're getting sufficient benefit for that support."**

With the two clubs earning profits of \$148 million in 2023, why are taxpayers again footing the bill?

Quotes:

"Form ever follows function."

Louis Sullivan; 1856 - 1924

"Form follows form, not function."

Philip Johnson; 1906 - 2005

"You can put down a bad book; You can avoid listening to bad music; But you cannot miss the ugly tower block opposite your house."

Renzo Piano; 1937 -

Editorial: The REAL Reimagining of Downtown Cleveland

Barbara McQuade is a former US Attorney in Michigan after practicing law in Detroit and clerking for Judge Bernard Friedman on the US District Court. She served on the US Attorney General's Advisory Committee, was co-chair of the Terrorism and National Security Subcommittee, and was co-chair of the National Security Subcommittee.

McQuade made a presentation here in May 2024 organized by the local chapter of the League of Women's Voters, entitled "Attack From Within," the title of her new book. She spoke of Russia's intentional interference and attempts to sow discord in the US during the 2016 election campaign.

McQuade observed, "We live in a post-truth, post-shame world... If we disengage from the discourse, we give power to the disinformers... Our right to free speech is part of the problem which allows disinformation, misinformation and errors."

The "Reimagining of Downtown Cleveland" (RD) document that was produced in 2023 by the Greater Cleveland Partnership, the City of Cleveland, Destination Cleveland and Cuyahoga County is a *political* reimagining. It is simply PR.

It is not a legitimate reimagining developed by a collaboration of professional urban designers, architects, transportation planners and/or city planners. It's purpose is to attempt to convince us that the city, county, GCP and DC actually now care about downtown and now will to act together responsibly to improve its quality.

The RD team claims to have "created Mayor Bibb's plan to reimagine Downtown Cleveland into an 18-hour, 15-minute neighborhood that weaves districts and surrounding neighborhoods into a seamless urban fabric. The goal is to attract modern economic activity and provide a world-class experience for all who work, live, and play Downtown." The team claims to be responsible for "accelerating the transformation of the urban core." **There is no real evidence of that yet whatsoever.**

"Nearly twenty years ago, our community responded to the post-9/11 recession and Great Recession with a series of strategies designed to reimagine and transform Downtown Cleveland from a 9-to-5 central business district into a diverse, vibrant, mixed-use neighborhood." While one could, it is not worth the effort to debate that.

"This collection of strategies reimagined Downtown as a walkable, transit-oriented neighborhood. Over a ten year period, this led to 32% population growth, 15.3% private sector job growth, and the conversion of over 5 million square feet of underutilized space in historic buildings to housing, hospitality, and other uses."



Above: Sherwin-Williams HQ; Pickard Chilton Architects
Below: Bedrock, Cavs/ Cleve. Clinic Performance Training Facility
Third: Public Square; James Corner Field Operations
Fourth: Medical Mart/ GCHI; LMN Architects
Fifth: Rock-n-Roll Hall of Fame Addition; PAU/ Cooper-Robertson



The population growth statistic is not relevant inasmuch as 10 years ago, the number of downtown residents was foundational in scale. The conversion of five million square feet of "underutilized space" was the result of the loss of private sector jobs that caused multi-tenant office buildings to become vacant that were then converted to building standard apartments. That five million square feet once housed 15,000 - 17,000 jobs that are gone, **making the team's assertion about a 15.3% private sector job growth a fabricated illusion - a very large lie.**

One of our community's great weaknesses is the propensity of our so-called leaders to stretch the truth and manipulate circumstances like this in attempts to make themselves look good. Too often, they just lie via disinformation.

In our last Newsletter, we identified the 2023 irresponsible 'study' from Downtown Cleveland Inc. on downtown's retail market and their attempt to present a road map intended to improve retail square footage consumption without first addressing and therefore understanding the actual size and demographic of those who shop downtown. This is like buying shoes without seeing the user's feet.

Cleveland has lacked legitimate leadership in private and public sectors for decades. Cleveland State history professor Mark Souther has expertly chronicled Cleveland's dismal leadership after WWII in his book, "Believing in Cleveland: Managing Decline in 'The Best Location in the Nation'".

Souther puts forth the irrefutable thesis that for seven decades, **the act of believing in Cleveland was a sign of "managing decline" by providing slogans or developments that deflected local and outside attention from the city's experience of its own deterioration/ transformation.** Let's call that The Lie Machine - with a 70-year legacy.

Souther's book is a chronological catalog of failed administrations, botched urban renewal opportunities, failed city services, racial unrest and riots, big plans after big plans, limited downtown revitalization, even more limited neighborhood renewal initiatives, deindustrialization, and transitioning from the nation's sixth largest city at the return of the last century to, during a period of robust national growth, what *Forbes* magazine has now called the worst city in the US.

Clevelanders are routinely lied to by non-profit and elected officials in the 'selling' of 'improvements' when our legitimate needs - for adequate criminal justice facilities, road and bridge repairs, neighborhood redevelopment, etc. - are overlooked in what have been decades of Biblical examples of malfeasance.

Editorial: The REAL Reimagining of Downtown Cleveland, cont'd

The city has not capitalized on its lakefront, which is cluttered with water treatment, salt storage, shipping, sports and a tiny underperforming airport instead of recreational, upscale housing and entertainment occupancies that celebrate the lake and enable citizens to access and appreciate it.

The Reimagining document suffers from the same irresponsibility Souther identifies. And Kristen Hampshire's article in the July 2024 issue of *Cleveland Magazine* "Reimagining Cleveland" is the same kind of blind cheerleading piece that keeps one's eye on the aspirational 'vision' instead of the reality which will constrain and limit change because of its absence of facts.

National Magazine Award winner Matt Taibbi's March 2023 testimony before the House Select Subcommittee on the weaponization of the Federal Government addressed his reporting on Elon Musk's leaking of internal Twitter files to unsuccessfully allege a progressive media bias that saw Democratic Rep. Debbie Wasserman Schultz of Florida quoted from the code of the Society for Professional Journalists: **"Journalists should avoid accepting spoon-fed, cherry-picked information if it's likely to be slanted, incomplete, or designed to reach a foregone, easily disputed or invalid conclusion."** Ms. Hampshire's article is guilty of echolalia – just repeating what someone else says that lacks accuracy and/or integrity.

Michael Deemer, CEO and President of Downtown Cleveland Inc. says, "One year after implementing this strategic vision, with leadership of the city, buy-in from civic, regional and county partners, local businesses and stakeholders, we are aligned and pushing in the same direction." Nonsense.

Deemer claims that the DR team is "laser focused" to "make sure that we have a truly vibrant core that connects our two waterfronts – the lake and the river – and that we do everything we can to support the success of development initiatives." It is a lie.

Our current Lakefront Master Plan that does not even extend to the Cuyahoga River which proves that we are most certainly **not** doing everything we can to connect our two waterfronts.

The Lakefront

Let's start right there. The Bibb administration's current Lakefront Master Plan (LMP) is making no effort whatsoever to connect the two waterfronts. In fact, **the LMP is no lakefront master plan at all** – its scope is tragically addressing ONLY the 8-12 acres between the Browns' stadium and the lake. It is NOT extending to the west to the river – as it should – or extending to the east – at all.



Above: Downtown Cleveland Port
Below: Cleveland Planning Commission Approves S-W HQ
Despite Problems with Design
Third: Stagnant Jobs in Cleveland Headline
Fourth: Clevelanders Want Jobs Protest
Bottom: *Forbes* Ranks Cleveland Last for Job Growth

Cleveland commission gives first approvals to Sherwin-Williams' HQ plans, though has problems with portions

Updated: Jul. 20, 2021, 7:07 p.m. | Published: Jul. 20, 2021, 4:53 p.m.



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Cleveland ranks dead last as worst city for jobs by Forbes

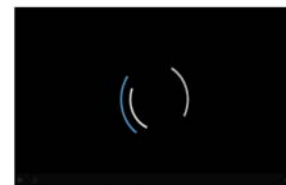


Photo: CLE with in-person meeting. Photo: CLE with in-person meeting.

By: Joe Paganiolo
Printed on 11/15/16, May 15, 2016 and last updated 12/1/16, May 15, 2016



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"Everything we can" to connect our waterfronts and support development initiatives would entail looking afresh at the downtown's lakefront – **all of it** – and making definitive provisions to – at long last – make the bulk of downtown's lakefront accessible to residents for recreation, housing, offices and retail.

If we ever recover any kind of a market for office space, it would be a terrific opportunity for live-work settings. And that means getting rid of – at long last – the underperforming Burke Lakefront Airport. And because it supposedly takes the FAA a long time to de-commission any airport, it is well past time to get those wheels moving – **now**.

In 1976, Johnny Carson joked, "I hear Lake Erie is the place fish go to die." That may explain why in the latter part of the last century, optimizing access to Lake Erie was not a campaign issue in Cleveland, and why no one screamed when the Shoreway was extended and widened in 1953, physically cutting off residents from the lake.

There was an excellent example created by landscape architect Donald Gray for the Great Lakes Exhibition designed in 1933 on the 3.5 acres north of the stadium. In the years since, Cleveland has betrayed Gray's vision, blocking off the lakefront with a parking garage next to the Great Lakes Science Center and the Rock-N-Roll Hall of Fame and Museum.

If you live in Cleveland, you have gotten used to a discussion that goes nowhere every 15 years or so that talks about how tragic it is that Burke Lakefront Airport (BLA) cuts us citizens off from our lakefront. That the *Reimagining Downtown* document did not even bother to address that issue says something terribly lacking about its limited vision.

Communities east and west of Cleveland have managed to develop access to their lakefronts, though it must be acknowledged that these communities have not had a commercial port, airport, and industrial uses as obstacles. It appears that the new mayor and county executive have given lip services to accessing the lakefront – without initially committing to the disposition of Burke Lakefront Airport.

County Executive Chris Ronayne has also skirted the BLA issue with his plan to promote water activities by building trails, public boardwalks and green space along the lakefront – none of which produce any revenue to pay for any of the improvements. He also mentions attracting water-related businesses to make Cleveland a "manufacturing center for water technology" – testing equipment? Not exactly a big market, Chris.

The 2011 Lakefront Master Plan from former

Continued next page

Editorial: The REAL Reimagining of Downtown Cleveland, cont'd

Mayor Frank Jackson left BLA completely in tact. Jackson was not known for his vision. Mayor Bibb hired New York's James Corner Field Operations to develop a lakefront master plan, finally provided at the end of 2024. **But it is only a tiny fragment of downtown's lakefront!**

They provided a "60%" plan for just the area north of the stadium. Bibb had a consultant that delivered a soft "economic benefit analysis" of BLA which Bibb and others are finally now in favor of closing.

BLA was opened in 1949 on fill with its original purpose per the 1946 Cleveland Region Airport Plan to "cater primarily to **amphibious** plane operations and will have all the facilities for sea plane and **hydroplane** operations." That never happened.

A major misperception of BLA is our Lie Machine's prior assertions that Burke is a net economic benefit for the city. It is not. According to the Federal Aviation Administration's Air Traffic Activity Data Base System (ATADS), Burke had 100,321 takeoffs and landings in 2000, which was its all-time peak. By 2010, that number was down to 53,987. In 2017, it had basically dropped off to 38,571. So between 2000 and 2017, **Burke's flight numbers dropped by 62 percent**. In 2021, BLA had 40,296 takeoffs and landings, the same as before the pandemic.

Those are striking numbers made even more striking by the fact that **one third of those takeoffs and landings were actually for the pilot flight schools located at Burke**, which have nothing to do with business, travel or the transport of goods.

During that same time period, Hopkins and the Cuyahoga County Airport in Richmond Heights also saw significant declines. According to ATADS, Hopkins had 331,899 operations in 2000 and 122,392 in 2017 – **down 63%**! The Cuyahoga County Airport dropped from 65,177 to 20,106 in that same period – **down 69%**. To put it another way, the three airports in Cuyahoga County had 497,397 takeoffs and landings in 2000 and 181,069 in 2017 – **down 64%**!

That means 361,328 fewer planes landed in this area last year than in 2000, so the old argument that Burke is needed as a "reliever" airport for Hopkins for when it gets too busy — a guffaw-inducing excuse Frank Jackson trotted out time and time again — is simply a foolishly incorrect interpretation of the numbers.

One more number has changed as well. The location of Burke Lakefront Airport in downtown Cleveland might have had some time advantages in 1970 when the city population was 750,000 - double what it is now. Less population means less traffic, and the downtown airport has less advantages on the time scale than it once had. On any given day, BLA resembles a ghost town.



Above: Hopkins Ranks Last per J. D. Power

Money for infrastructure improvements to finally render the lakefront accessible is now intended to be provided by the Shore-to-Shore Tax Increment Financing District which will allocate a portion of new property tax revenue generated by property value **increases**. The improvements have not been defined.

And the cratering of the values of our downtown commercial real estate buildings this year means that **it will be a very long time before values rebound to even the recent past's property values and resulting tax income levels**, let alone increases.

Real estate investors are shedding downtown Cleveland office properties like the plague and taking deep losses in the process to rid themselves of underperforming downtown Cleveland assets. They clearly see the downtown office market getting much worse before it even stabilizes.

In late June, Moody's released a report predicting that 25% of the nation's downtown office market will be vacant by 2026, reducing property values by \$250 billion in what Moody's characterizes as "property value destruction."

The McKinsey Global Institute predicts an \$800 billion - \$1.3 trillion decline during that period. A poll by Jones Lang LaSalle Inc. finds that 85% of organizations in North America have implemented hybrid work and occupancy across the US is "stuck" at 50% of pre-pandemic levels.

Bibb secured a study on BLA's operations. In the past, the city has tended to pay for studies on Burke that have unrealistically predicted future growth to justify keeping Burke open. In 1999, such a study predicted that Burke would have 132,000 flights by 2017. Again, BLA had 38,571 in 2017 – **71% less** than the study's prediction.

Another study in 2007 said Burke would have 90,000 flights by 2016, even though the numbers had fallen between 2000 and 2006. Both studies suggested the city would need more hangers and new runways to keep up with the big growth, and that closing Burke would mean the region would

lose \$81 million in economic impact because of the closure. History has made evident the utter nonsense of those previous studies.

Last year, those four local airports combined for 287,000 flights, **a drop of more than 50 percent from 2000**. In other words, we have serious extra airport capacity in the region. So why are our leaders pushing for the airlines to pay for another terminal at Hopkins? We already have the D Concourse gathering dust, which has been totally vacant since Continental left in 1986.

So closing Burke would have no effect on our overall airplane service infrastructure system. And let's not forget that it costs the city \$2M - \$3M per year to keep BLA open, which compares to the falsely alleged \$81 million economic impact BLS supposedly delivers.

The late longtime Cleveland State University urban planning professor Norm Krumholz saw the BLA site as a good location for development and agreed before his passing in 2019 that it is right time for an economic analysis.

Former Cleveland and Ohio State University professor Ned Hill sees things the same way. "We might find out there are problems with building on some part of the 450 acres, and no problems on other parts," he said. "We might find out that there are some national real estate developers who think this is a great investment. And we might find out there is little market for a mixed-use development in Cleveland right now, and that a big park is all it could be. But we don't know what the answers to all those questions are until we look at them in a smart and open-minded way."

Remember also, Cleveland officials said Burke was going to draw extra flights into Cleveland during the Republican National Convention, the World Series, and the three NBA Finals. But the numbers prove the opposite: **The flights into Burke were fewer during those specials events than they were in the same months preceding those events.**

Public Square & Sherwin-Williams HQ

Ms. Hampshire's article states that the Sherwin-Williams HQ will provide a "landmark transformation" to Public Square.

Not a chance.

The tower's design is a huge disappointment to the architectural integrity of Public Square, which features strong stone buildings with some measure of architectural delineation and detail. Steven Litt has called S-W's HQ "**bland and impersonal**," noting that their failure to refine the design indicated that S-W "**remains committed to the worst aspects of the design...**"

Editorial: The REAL Reimagining of Downtown Cleveland, cont'd

S-W used the cheapest exterior material possible – glass, and has pulled the tower back from the square with an awkward too-small two-story tongue sticking out to the square which visitors cannot even use to access the building.

This is a spectacularly unfriendly design, which fails any compatibility test for the architectural context of Public Square. When architect Gyo Obata and SOHIO pulled their granite tower back from Public Square (to get the north elevation to align with the Mall centerline and fountain = commendable urban design), at least they put a five-story mixed-use skylight-capped atrium as a grand entry vestibule to the tower to respect Public Square and the Soldiers and Sailors Monument just out their front door that provides a grand welcome set piece for visitors and staff.

And when the city's Downtown Design Review Committee (DDRC) objected to aspects of the S-W project's design, Frank Jackson's Planning Commission ran and hid in the bathtub so S-W could ignore the DDRC and build their weak and flawed preliminary design in a feat of civic arrogance and indifference.

The S-W project does not achieve anything that can be characterized as a 'landmark,' let alone something that is transformational. It simply fills Public Square's last missing tooth, and it does so without grace, compatibility or quality.

Ms. Hampshire quotes DCI President and CEO Deemer who says that downtown "will get a huge jolt of energy later this year when more than 4,000 employees move into Downtown."

As embarrassing as it is, **someone needs to tell our DCI top executive that S-W's employees are already in and working downtown and are just moving their offices two blocks north.**

How is it possible that he did not know that and could make such a foolish and incorrect statement?

Job Growth:

The RD team did not present what data could have possibly compelled them to make their absurdly false claim of a "15.3% increase in private sector jobs in the city center" in the last 10 years.

The five million square feet of vacated office buildings translates to 15,000 - 17,000 jobs **lost** during that period. With a previous pre-pandemic accounting of downtown employment at 90,000 jobs, that is a 19% job loss, with essentially all of it in the private sector. A 15.3% gain would mean that downtown added 13,770 new jobs, **which is an assertion simply not supported by the facts.**

Cleveland Releases Burke Airport Closure Studies

The studies show declining traffic and other uses for the Lake Erie property.



Cleveland's City Council will receive new studies examining the potential impacts of the closure of Burke Lakefront Airport. © ORALISTAR, CC BY-SA 4.0, via Wikimedia Commons

By CURT EPSTEIN - Senior Editor
September 16, 2024

Cleveland, Ohio is continuing its investigation into the possible closing of Burke
Above: Cleveland Releases BLA Study on Closure
Below: NEOH Job Losses Continue

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Below: Public Square Ongoing Fixes to Original Design

Cleveland Public Square's continuing transformation

By Ken Prendergast / March 25, 2024



Concrete "jersey" barriers were removed from Downtown Cleveland's Public Square today in a ceremonial start to the construction of the Superior Crossing Project to improve pedestrian safety on Cleveland's central commons (Michael Collier). CLICK IMAGES TO ENLARGE THEM.

Superior Crossing kicked off; jersey barriers kicked out

Construction started today on the Group Plan Commission's Superior Crossing Project with a ceremonial farewell to the unpopular and infamous concrete barriers

That is a 34% gap between the jobs that disappeared that created the many empty multi-tenant office buildings that have become building standard apartments and an alleged 15.3% gain asserted by the RD team. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, Cleveland added only 1700 jobs **in the last four years.**

The 2018 Forbes' Best Cities for Jobs listing ranked Cleveland 71st out of America's 71 most populous cities, with declining population, poor education and transit spending as contributing factors. Pittsburgh was #13. The Economic Innovation Group, a bipartisan public policy organization based in Washington, D.C. recently called Cleveland **the most distressed large city in the nation. In April, Business Insider ranked our metropolitan economy last out of 40 major markets.**

In December 2024, the Milken Institute's study of the 200 largest metropolitan areas in the country in addressing economic growth in their Best Performing Cities analysis found Cleveland ranked in 185th place. And the Greater Cleveland Partnership's response is an "All In Plan" to promote job growth. Hold your breath.

As *Crain's* Jay Miller noted in his June 2018 article, those who see the region as underperforming began pointing to a few basic yardsticks, including the poverty rate and the lack of population growth. But most focused on the slow job growth that is underperforming the very modest goals set back in 2014.

There are no new metrics that indicate we are making **any** real progress with job growth or our cheerleaders would be blasting it at full volume. We are clearly desperate for good news, and our leaders are apparently willing to resort to making it up.

The area of Downtown Cleveland east of Ontario Street experienced a **decrease of 9,000 jobs alone from 2005-2019** according to the Ohio Department of Jobs and Family Services.

While DCI has publicly claimed that Cleveland has 60% of its pre-pandemic downtown workers back, more reputable sources put that so-called 'recovery' at 36% - 42%.

A study by the School of Cities in a collaboration with the Institute of Governmental Studies at the University of California, Berkeley and the University of Toronto put Cleveland at 61st of 62 metro areas, 36% recovered compared to pre-pandemic foot traffic. Columbus was 93% recovered. An October 2023 update of the study found that Cleveland jumped to 31st of the 66 cities analyzed.

The School of Cities study points out that nationally, "the urban core is no longer a bustling

Continued next page

Editorial: The REAL Reimagining of Downtown Cleveland, cont'd

center of activity." That is painfully true of Cleveland. Downtown is no longer the business epicenter of the region.

With five million square feet of its CBD lost to apartment conversions, approximately 20% of its downtown worker population no longer is employed downtown. In January 2023, the *Scene* reported that **only 60% of downtown's offices are occupied, and that is not every day**. The RD team is apparently unaware that Cleveland is *still* 15,700 jobs **behind** February 2020 levels.

A *Crain's* February 2024 article characterized Cleveland's job growth as "**stagnant**" – and that was based on metrics from the Greater Cleveland Partnership – hardly a bastion of objectivity and solid facts for many years now. Columbus last year added only 5,200 jobs, which for them was a disappointment as it was a decrease over prior years attributable to their shortage of available housing. Again, **Cleveland added only 1,700 jobs over the last four years - 12% of Columbus' gain.**

"Downtown is for Everyone"

Yet another slogan.

Unfortunately, like its predecessors, it is offered by NGO talking heads and not given life organically. As Prof. Mark Souther observed, **none of these slogans in the past have done anything other than enable their authors to delude themselves into believing that they help with the city's health, self-image or redevelopment.**

Mayor Bibb made a major narrative out of his experience as a youth that downtown and the lakefront were for rich white people. To a great extent, not even rich white people could get to the lakefront downtown then or now. Bibb is correct in noting that the lakefront and riverfront have not been for everyone. And they should be.

But Downtown is **not** for everyone. And for all of its 'vision' and aspirations, the efforts of RD's team will not really change that in a significant or compelling way if they do not pursue a more dogmatic path to define improvements, engage and empower a capable critical thinking team of local design and planning professionals to achieve design excellence and put together with an RD team to develop a funding strategy that will actually work.

So far, there is not even any lip service that justifies hope that this is likely.

For the father who wants to bring his children to a Guardians game, he needs to be prepared to shell out an average of \$46 per ticket and pay \$20 - \$70 to park near the stadium. That's over \$200 for a family of four. Not everyone can afford that just to get in, let alone feed the family.

The average ticket to a Browns game is currently

\$247.

To see the Columbus Clippers, tickets average \$15 and one can park immediately next to the stadium for \$4 - that totals \$64 for the four of us to get in. Comparative food and beverage costs are equally extreme and variant. My recent \$12 hamburger at Progressive Field was served to me on a bun with obvious green mold on it.

The RD notion that safety in downtown is assured by the Downtown Cleveland Inc.'s Ambassadors is simply laughable. Yellow and blue jumpsuits with garbage cans on wheels and watering cans have done and will do nothing for safety. Yet the RD team's solution to Cleveland horrific crime context – the sixth worst city in the US – is to add 20 more Ambassadors, which naturally would have been irrelevant in July 2023's shooting of nine people on West Ninth Street and 2024's shootings in March and May which left one dead and four injured.

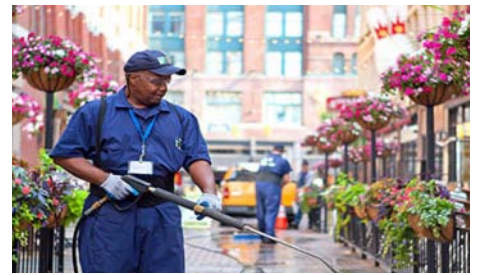
The RD plan seems to have no serious answer regarding downtown safety. Bibb has recently proposed a Raising Investment in Safety for Everyone (RISE) initiative – more jargon? - to add lighting, green space, seating, play space and public art to address safety – because these betterments will supposedly 'draw business, generate traffic and contribute excitement to downtown,' and therefore improve safety. But **every** research initiative on safety has concluded – **every** time – that safety has nothing to do with the number of police or such external measures. **Safety is attained and crime is reduced with education and jobs.**

The Bedrock-Cleveland Cavaliers-Cleveland Clinic Peak Performance Training Center planned for the riverfront is most assuredly not for everyone. The facility's design turns its back on downtown, has no parking for visitors and actually makes the planned riverwalk a black hole with the indoor parking for wealthy Cavs players as the facade fronting on the riverwalk. So the complex's most unfriendly occupancy is located at the pedestrian riverwalk where we should be encouraging our people – "everyone" – to experience. That is simply poor design.

While the developers claim credit for including a ramp to launch kayaks from, there is no place for kayakers to change clothes, store belongings in a locker or even utilize a public rest room.

There is no indoor or outdoor refreshment element for the public to encourage anyone – everyone? - to descend or ascend the steep grade drop on the rebuild of Eagle Road.

This part of downtown and this project is only for rich athletes and Cleveland Clinic patients who have appointments. The entire facility and the public space it abuts is very far from "for everyone." The notion that this project delivers



Above: Downtown Cleveland Ambassadors
Below: Bedrock-Cleveland Clinic Riverfront Performance Center
Row Three: Bedrock's Broken Casino Promises-2012
Row Four: Cleveland Council \$1 Billion Bedrock Subsidy
Row Five: Federal Reserve Bank Article on Cleveland's Job Disconnect



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CLEVELAND NEWS

Gilbert Says Phase Two of Casino Will Happen
By Vince Grigore on Mon, May 14, 2023 at 1:59 pm

[Cleveland-casino.org](#)

Tonight, in a very important moment for the city of Cleveland as the downtown renaissance continues to remake and recharge the area, Mayor Hannon will play a musical concert at the House of Blues.

And the Horseshoe casino will open. You might have heard.

What most haven't heard about is what was to be the "real" casino until Dan Gilbert and company targeted the Highbes space for a more immediate, smaller launch. Remember the gleaming palace that would be built opposite the Q? Though folks have long whispered that Phase II, as it was called, would never be built once the Highbes steel was laid and rumormongers the public with helix and whistles and buffets. It's

TRENDING

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By Mark Opes

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CLEVELAND NEWS

City Council Approves Special TIF District For Bedrock Riverfront Project, Promising Up to \$1 Billion in Subsidies
Dan Gilbert's \$3-billion development project includes a new Cavs training facility, offices, parks and thousands of apartments
By Frank Corrao on Thu, Aug 8, 2024 at 8:23 am

TRENDING

The Foundry Concert Club and the Winchester Music Tavern To Begin Co-Managing Mercury Music Lounge
By Jeff Menard Nov 18, 2024

Ohio Attorney General Dave Yost Defends Conspiracy Chorus About Haitians in Springfield
By Marty Schallman, The Ohio Capital Journal Nov 18, 2024

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Missed Connections in Cleveland: The Disconnect Between Job Access and Employment
April 12, 2024

Introduction

The job access site refers to the shape of jobs in a region that can be reached within a typical commute distance or time, and access sites in Northeast Ohio have declined substantially since 2000 as employment opportunities and the population have grown further out from downtown and beyond. 2020 Census, Housing and Employment, 2016, 1990, 1980, 1970, 1960, 1950, 1940, 1930, 1920, 1910, 1900, 1890, 1880, 1870, 1860, 1850, 1840, 1830, 1820, 1810, 1800, 1790, 1780, 1770, 1760, 1750, 1740, 1730, 1720, 1710, 1700, 1690, 1680, 1670, 1660, 1650, 1640, 1630, 1620, 1610, 1600, 1590, 1580, 1570, 1560, 1550, 1540, 1530, 1520, 1510, 1500, 1490, 1480, 1470, 1460, 1450, 1440, 1430, 1420, 1410, 1400, 1390, 1380, 1370, 1360, 1350, 1340, 1330, 1320, 1310, 1300, 1290, 1280, 1270, 1260, 1250, 1240, 1230, 1220, 1210, 1200, 1190, 1180, 1170, 1160, 1150, 1140, 1130, 1120, 1110, 1100, 1090, 1080, 1070, 1060, 1050, 1040, 1030, 1020, 1010, 1000, 990, 980, 970, 960, 950, 940, 930, 920, 910, 900, 890, 880, 870, 860, 850, 840, 830, 820, 810, 800, 790, 780, 770, 760, 750, 740, 730, 720, 710, 700, 690, 680, 670, 660, 650, 640, 630, 620, 610, 600, 590, 580, 570, 560, 550, 540, 530, 520, 510, 500, 490, 480, 470, 460, 450, 440, 430, 420, 410, 400, 390, 380, 370, 360, 350, 340, 330, 320, 310, 300, 290, 280, 270, 260, 250, 240, 230, 220, 210, 200, 190, 180, 170, 160, 150, 140, 130, 120, 110, 100, 90, 80, 70, 60, 50, 40, 30, 20, 10, 0

Editorial: The REAL Reimagining of Downtown Cleveland, cont'd

what Dan Gilbert claims is a first step in creating a “growth-oriented neighborhood” is simply hubris.

And lest we forget Bedrock’s dismal track record of keeping their promises, one simply has to recall their promise that locating the casino in the Higbee building twelve years ago was just temporary while he built the new one on the river. Strike One.

And remember when Bedrock announced the riverfront project in August 2023, their first phase was going to include 35 acres, 3.5 million square feet of several residential towers, and 1.4 million square feet of mixed-use facilities that would include retail, hospitality, office, entertainment, community and commercial uses? And the scope has now been reduced from 35 to 12 acres. Strike Two.

Eight months later, the project’s first phase then was at least supposed to include a high-rise hotel and residential buildings that could include condos. And even that is now nowhere to be found, and we are down to 12 acres. Strike Three.

Retail

Downtown Cleveland Inc. provided a so-called ‘study’ of downtown retail in late 2023 that purported to be a roadmap to recovery to increase and diversify downtown retail for residents and visitors.

However, the so-called study was a disgrace, full of disinformation, irresponsible exaggerations and attempted conclusions drawn out of thin air with no regard to the actual number and demographic of downtown residents. **DCI and their consultant Streetsense failed to address the hallmarks of any responsible retail study to determine needs and the ability of a given area’s users to support retail activity.** When you fail to start with those facts, any attempt at conclusions is specious and irrelevant.

The DCI/ Streetsense ‘study’ alleged that the high vacancies in downtown retail were *singularly* attributable to the pandemic and hybrid work taking hold, which has reduced the number of downtown workers by half. Changes in how America shops, the low average household disposable income of downtown residents, and the devastating impact of the Healthline project on downtown retail were all overlooked by DCI.

DCI even failed to vet the outrageous and grossly overstated numbers in the Streetsense document that would have taken less than 30 minutes by anyone with a computer and Internet access. Professionally, this effort from one of the community’s most legible NGO’s failed to deliver the ‘comprehensive’ analysis it purports to contain and should signal a need for their board



Above: Rock-N-Roll Hall of Fame Expansion
Below: Chicago Riverwalk; Sasaki



to make major changes.

Safety vs. Crime:

Cleveland has the sixth worst crime in the US. In Mayor Bibb’s 2024 State of the City speech, he mentioned that the city’s homicide rate went down in 2023 - he neglected to mention they went down by three - from 168 to 165. This is hardly worth bragging about.

He did not mention what he is doing about his police union’s **intentional** violation of the US Justice Department’s Consent Decree with the city due to their **refusal** to comply with US Justice Department’s demands for cultural retraining and putting in place new community policing procedures. Instead, Bibb boasted that he had ‘negotiated’ a 25% increase in pay for our police.

The Reimagining Downtown team has as their only solution to downtown safety the hiring of 20 more Ambassadors – the people with the yellow or blue jumpsuits and garbage cans on wheels.

Since **every study ever conducted anywhere has concluded that adding more safety forces has no positive effect on safety or crime**, what are 20 more non-safety people with no authority or equipment going to accomplish? Nothing.

But in the June 3, 2024 issue of *Crain’s*, Mayor Bibb announced a new “multi-pronged approach to keeping the city safe this summer.” Bibb has promised a “true all-of-government approach to addressing violent crime in the city of Cleveland.”

Bibb, deputy police chief and the interim public safety director talked about more CPD staffing,

partnerships with local, state and federal law enforcement and using new data-driven technologies to address crime prevention this summer.

Bibb says turning to “teammates and community leaders” will take “the heavy lift of dealing with the traditional uptick in summer crime” off of the police. This involves clergy and “violence interrupters” walking beats with the police. ‘Violence interrupter’ was not defined.

This will supposedly enable CPD officers to be able to work with other city departments to “fast-track the building and housing department to enforce code violations, contact the Department of Aging to help seniors in needs, and reach out to public works to address illegal dumping sites.” Are these *really* causes of violent crime? Of course not. Bibb says that this will find out what is driving crime.

Bibb said the CPD will focus on “hotspot” areas of high rates of homicides, robberies and assaults. Have they not been doing this ordinarily?!

And CPD will finally roll out dash cams in every district – only two so far - and track gun purchases from the Crime Gun Intelligence Center, which was launched by ATF *nine years ago*. Better late than never.

Why are these initiatives only in play for the summer? Bibb and CPD need to openly address and assure CPD’s compliance with the USJD Consent Decree’s requirements.

“Accelerated Effort?”

The RD team claims that they are delivering an accelerated effort to bring their ‘vision’ to reality. Not so. **If they are serious**, they should immediately organize and convene a series of urban design charrettes and bring together a team of top tier local design professionals to get serious about the various elements of a more responsible ‘vision’ so that specific improvements can be defined, conceptual costs determined, and priorities and funding established.

If the RD team is truly committed to an accelerated effort, they will **immediately** request that the FAA de-commission Burke Lakefront Airport. It is long past the point when any debate is necessary or appropriate. That land is simply too prominent and important to be consumed with a large facility that has no genuine use or benefit to the city and its citizens. **After all, our so-called leaders were already willing to give it up to Amazon for their HQ2 initiative in 2019.**

Chicago expanded its shoreline between 1920

Continued next page

Editorial: Reimagining

and 1940. They built their fine riverwalk between 2001 and 2005. Given that Bibb is determined to not commercialize the lakefront, Chicago serves as an excellent example of an outstanding lakefront that has avoided such commercialization. And Chicago in 1986 did not succumb to Mayor Washington's push to build a new Soldier Field stadium on their lakefront. Cleveland failed that litmus test. Twice. Even Columbus has an excellent riverwalk. Scioto Mile Park opened to rave reviews in 2011.

Design Excellence:

If the RD team is seriously committed to reimagining downtown Cleveland, they need to immediately up the city's game on design excellence.

They need to reverse the community's trend line on design quality and project management that has been a downward trajectory for decades. This means looking in earnest at the design talent here and applying **meritocracy** as the criteria for selecting design professionals for all downtown projects instead of race or sex or political party which has failed to maintain - let alone elevate - our urban form and design quality.

That also means putting an end to the trend of hiring out-of-town architects for projects here and getting substandard results because our projects are too small to receive the top talent from those firms. Look at Case Western Reserve, CSU and Oberlin College for dozens of examples of this.

In 2006, former *Plain Dealer* art and architecture critic Steven Litt penned an article entitled "Design Excellence a Necessity," with a subtitle, **"If Cleveland raised standards, city's image will improve."** Litt added that **any transformation "can't occur without a strong performance from architects, engineers and planners, and from the clients, patrons and elected officials who hire them."**

"The problem is that Cleveland's slide in vitality, population and status since WWII has been accompanied by an equally long slide in design standards and achievement." He is correct. It is well past the time we should be continuing to shoot ourselves in our own foot with our own gun.

Quote:

"The sun never knew how great it was until it hit the side of a building"

**Lou Kahn
1901 - 1974**

Critique: Cleveland's Design Review Board Failures

Northeast Ohio's communities are populated with dozens of Architectural and Design Review Boards that are charged to safeguard a standard of design excellence in our communities.

It is not working effectively.

Part of the problem is that these boards are often populated with young and mid-career professionals who are not advanced in their own understanding of and commitment to design excellence. Additionally, many boards have political appointments (campaign contributors, ministers, attorneys, etc.) who do not belong on a board evaluating design quality simply because they are unqualified in a different degree.

Additionally, no training is provided to ARB/ DRB members to help them understand the process by which and/or the issues associated with evaluating projects presented for design review. And in many instances, the majority of projects presented are minor in scope and quality because they are small additions, signage, window changes or similarly less significant matters of design.

Also, in NEOH, all DRBs and ARBs are "advisory" to their respective planning commissions, so they have no real teeth. Their recommendations are routinely ignored by those commissions whose members are appointed by mayors who themselves have no understanding of the skills sets required to effectively perform their duties AND oversee design excellence.

As a result, many parties presenting projects know from experience that **they do not really have to listen to the DRB's to get their projects approved and permitted.** In the last 20 years scores of poorly designed and unattractive multi-family projects have been deposited throughout NEOH, many of them in historic neighborhoods where ARBs have attempted to bargain for better outcomes without success.

So with a majority of projects of minor scope and quality and with no enforceability of any recommendations offered, it is difficult recruit qualified professionals with an understanding of and commitment to design excellence to serve on ARB's and DRBs.

Cleveland Planning Commission: "In order to protect property values and enhance the character and visual image of Cleveland's neighborhoods and downtown, certain proposals for construction, exterior alterations, building demolitions and signs in the City of Cleveland must undergo a process known as 'design review'." So the various neighborhoods - designated Design Review Districts - of the city have Design Review Committees (DRC's). From Cleveland Chapter 341.01:

Design Review requirements and districts are

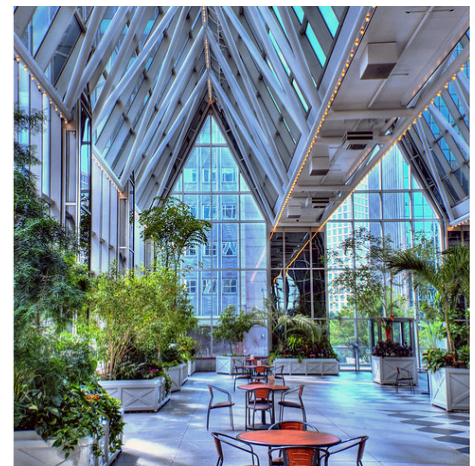


Above: Sherwin-Williams HQ Ignored ARB Recommendations
Below: S-W Ignores ARB, Cleveland Planning Commission Approves Substandard Design
Middle: PPG Place's Wintergarden; Pittsburgh; Philip Johnson
Bottom: Architectural Critique of S-W Design Headline

City leaders raise concerns over pavilion building, skywalk in Sherwin-Williams' HQ proposal



Click here for stories we've followed through on and to submit your ideas.



Letter of Complaint to Architects of Sherwin Williams Headquarters in Cleveland



Jeff Barge
Chief Success Officer at Cleveland-based Lucky Star Communications
Published Jun 7, 2022

+ Follow

Critique: Cleveland's Design Review Board Failures, cont'd

established to ensure appropriate design of buildings and properties in furtherance of the following objectives:

- (a) to protect property values and to preserve and enhance the character of existing neighborhoods and development,
- (b) to promote economic activity and increase municipal revenues,
- (c) to enhance the visual image of Cleveland and its neighborhoods and downtown,
- (d) to preserve the community's architectural assets, and
- (e) to protect the environment and facilitate healthy living.

Unfortunately, the actions of the DRC's are toothless and are **advisory** to the Planning Commission who retains authority over 'design.' And unfortunately, of the seven members of Cleveland's Planning Commission, the Mayor appoints six, and one is a member of City Council. Consequently, the members of the Planning Commission are not necessarily the most qualified individuals to serve in the capacity required.

The judgments of the DRC are advisory and meaningless unless ratified by the politically appointed Landmarks Commission. As a result, reasoned and appropriate objections from the DRC are routinely ignored because the Landmarks Commission fails to concur and withhold approval until poorly designed projects are approved.

It would be incorrect to believe that design review is a subjective matter of the stylistic preferences of those sitting on the DRB's. It is not the responsibility of DRB's to dictate style or a design vocabulary. DRBs and ARBs should employ the objective standards and guidelines of the US Department of the Interior for addressing compatibility, materiality, fenestration/ windows, massing and basic composition in addition to vehicular and pedestrian movement.

Four current and recent projects illustrate the magnitude and causes of the problems. The Sherwin-Williams HQ, the City Club Apartments, Bridgeworks and the John Carroll University Gateway North projects are four painfully obvious design failures that evidence this.

Sherwin-Williams HQ

The **Sherwin Williams HQ** is two full qualitative and compositional steps below its Public Square neighbors in massing, detail (none) and materiality. **It is remarkably unwelcoming.**

Try and get inside. S-W's new HQ is a D+ disappointment at Cleveland's most important destination – Public Square. The unbuilt A+ Ameritrust Tower designed by Kohn Pederson Fox for Dick Jacobs on that site in 1991 that



Top: Unbuilt Ameritrust Tower by Kohn Pederson Fox
Below: BP America/ 250 Public Square Tower with its 5-story Entry Atrium; HOK
Bottom: Sherwin-Williams HQ; Pickard-Chilton Architects



we never got painfully illustrates the degree of disappointment in S-W's lack of awareness and commitment to design excellence on the city's most important stage.

KPF's work of architecture had an elegantly designed and articulated mass and envelope at the ground, middle and top with a curving glass façade element above its granite base that represented the sail of a boat on Lake Erie.

S-W's tower of glass - the cheapest of all exterior materials - has no detail or relevant/ compelling design characteristics as Philip Johnson's glass PPG Place does in Pittsburgh with its articulated plan and elegant Wintergarden entry jewel that is an uplifting grand entrance vestibule from Fourth Avenue and also hosts many community events. Even Harry Cobb's elegant Hancock Tower in Boston demonstrates how a simple glass shaft can be elegantly clad and detailed. Not here.

S-W's tower is just a cereal box of a tower with a groove down the center and the same cliché angle at its top that the downtown Hilton hotel delivers. Ho Hum. It is a third rate building designed for a third rate city.

The S-W tower is also set back from the square with an awkward two-story tongue sticking out - to receive pedestrians? Even the city's weak Downtown Design Review Committee told S-W its design and scale needed to be improved, but S-W showed us all the finger and built it as originally submitted. Cleveland deserved more and did not get it.

The adverse impact on our design culture is that even when a body assembled and charged to try and defend our design culture objects to a mediocre design, and it is allowed it to proceed, it drags the design quality bar ever lower by failing the community's aspirations and intentions.

The RD team's vision and aspirations will amount to nothing if these challenges are not met effectively.

City Club Apartments:

The design of the City Club apartment building was unfortunately approved in August 2020. As a tall building on Euclid Avenue next to the Citizens Building, separated only by a narrow alley, the apartment building shouts and pokes its presence in an over-aggressive and garish manner. Saturated graphics on the façade appear to be enormous graffiti with no reference or justification. Projecting pointed windows and tiny balconies further clutter the primary façade.

The architects have attempted to assert that the modest curvilinear entry canopy at the street recalls the Hippodrome canopy, but in both form and scale, the claim is baseless.

And then there is the roof. A Chandigarh-like curvilinear sail is plopped atop the building, but oriented on the east-west axis, with an awkward

Continued next page

Critique: Cleveland's Design Review Board Failures, cont'd

appendage tacked on to the sail - far different than the original renderings, fighting for release on the west. The built version is far more crude and different than the renderings presented to the DRC for approval.

This is a garish undisciplined design that fails to fit its context and is unattractive.

This composition is lacking in architectural integrity. And yet, the Downtown DRC approved it, albeit with confessed reservations. Architect Jack Bialosky predicted the architects would regret it in 20 years. The discomfort will not require such a wait. It is doubtful that the authors have or will develop an understanding of and commitment to design excellence to muster regret at the poor product. Then why did Bialosky vote to approve it?

"The design is exuberant and iconic," said design-review committee member Bialosky. "But it is a fashion statement in some ways. I look forward to a conversation about it (the design) in 20 years."

The building is anything but iconic, which means "widely known and acknowledged for distinctive excellence" according to the Merriam-Webster dictionary. City Club Apartments is not worthy of veneration.

Something that is iconic is characteristic of an icon — an image, emblem, idol, or hero. Audrey Hepburn was widely admired for her iconic style, her great fashion taste. Iconic often describes something or someone that is considered symbolic of something else, like spirituality, virtue, or evil and corruption.

The iconic Statue of Liberty is a symbol of freedom. Michelangelo's iconic statue of David represents anatomical perfection. In the Christianity, the Virgin Mary is an iconic symbol. City Club Apartments is not.

Bridgeworks

Bridgeworks has gone through a myriad of design changes on the public stage and many more back stage. *NEOTrans* characterized the latest wave of changes as "cosmetic," though the massing appears to be altered as well. The building's program removes the previous hotel - but it is still seven stories tall, totaling 294,636 square feet with 219 workforce-rate apartments and 199 parking spaces.

What is different this time around are the exterior materials and colors. These revisions were made in response to some of the design review input from the city's neighborhood committee including the Sept. 19 session with the Ohio City Design Review Committee.

The Ohio City Design Guidelines for new construction state "New construction should



Above City Club Apartments

respond to the existing built environment." It cannot be reasonably asserted that the current Bridgeworks design is a response to St. Malachi next door in any positive way. The Guidelines suggest "finding design clues in nearby structures." Unfortunately, the Geis team has grafted arched windows from the bridge and subway below to the facades in a random manner that simply creates visual discord.

"Height, shape, massing and orientation of new buildings should be compatible with existing adjacent or nearby buildings." The St. Malachi church is not tiny, but it is overwhelmed by the original and the revised seven-story Bridgeworks design. The south elevation will be highly legible to all parties travelling the Detroit-Superior bridge has been an appropriate subject of focus between Geis and the DRB - **because it is so unattractive.** The DRB's earnest efforts have not improved the design.

This input from the DRB and the architects' inadequate ability to comprehend and refine a bad design illustrates too painfully what happens when a client without an understanding of and commitment to design excellence retains an architect without an understanding of and no ability to deliver work of design excellence and a DRB that - in trying to help a terrible project get a bit better - cannot together contribute in a way that produces a result north of disastrous.

But not all suggestions were included in the designs submitted to the Landmarks Commission. Votes and recommendations by the Ohio City DRB committee are advisory and therefore non-binding. That is the problem. The



Above: Bridgeworks south elevation with multiple materials, multiple window shapes, cornice forms at different heights have caused the Ohio City DRB to coach Geis and GLSD to a design that is less unattractive - without success.

Below: Bridgeworks December 2023 Revisions



Below: Bridgeworks September 2024 Design



Below: Bridgeworks Original Design; MASS/ LDA Architects, 2022



Below: St. Malachi Church



Critique: Cleveland's Design Review Board Failures, cont'd

age-old joke is a camel is a horse designed by a committee.

The Bridgeworks façade that attracted most of the discussion was the southerly one, along the Detroit-Superior Bridge. Both the Landmarks Commission in July and the Ohio City committee in September asked the development team's designer, GLSD Architects LLC, to break up the long, massive building with different colors, materials and forms.

Ohio City Design Review favored the use of darker materials on the south side of the building. Arch design elements were added to the building that took their cues from the multiple arch features on the Detroit-Superior Bridge, below the street deck and to a lesser extent below the streetcar subway deck. Brick walls and window muntins - a grid of bars within the glass - were used to evoke the region's industrial heritage. So the cooks have prepared a pastiche of elements and different fenestration forms that are cousins that do not play well together.

Different variations of Bridgeworks' proposed southern façade along the Detroit-Superior Bridge have appeared. Each was in response to additional feedback from city design-review boards. Committee members asked why, on the southern façade, the brick on the lower-middle section wasn't brought up higher on the building to match the cornices of the building's east and west bookends.

"The definition of a cornice is that it's at the top of the building," said committee member Margaret Lann, director of preservation services and publications at the Cleveland Restoration Society. "If you're going to have a cornice it should be placed at the top." She is correct.

"This section always needs to be better defined or broken up," said GLSD Architect Jen Diasio. "We felt that repeating the same element, the same height and the same materials just looked like A then B then A then B. This kind of logic brought a new feel to things." That kind of logic does not necessarily produce good design.

"It appears that if you have a cornice line above the arches in the middle and if you raise that up to the same height as the bookends, I think that would improve the design," said committee member, Alex Frondorf, an attorney at Littler Mendelson. Even the attorney was trying to help the Geis architects with their composition.

The design indicates that the Ohio City Historic District Guidelines for design have not been referenced, let alone followed. The City's Design Review Checklist is simply a list of submission materials, rather than a summary of issues and features to be addressed and judged in reference to standards and guidelines for good design, such a "Guide to the Evaluation of Architectural

Design" which is provided as a resource on the website of the Cleveland Architecture Foundation.

The result is that Bridgeworks may well be the ugliest building proposed in Cleveland in the last 50 years - since the original CSU Law School in 1977 by Van Auken, Bridges, Pimm and Poggianti. In the years since, CSU has tried repeatedly to paste on architectural lipstick to make that building and the campus more human along Euclid Avenue.

Bridgeworks' massing is awkward. Its window designs are inconsistent and unattractive. The building's materiality is a pastiche of tones that are not at all compatible with its context.

John Carroll University Gateway North:

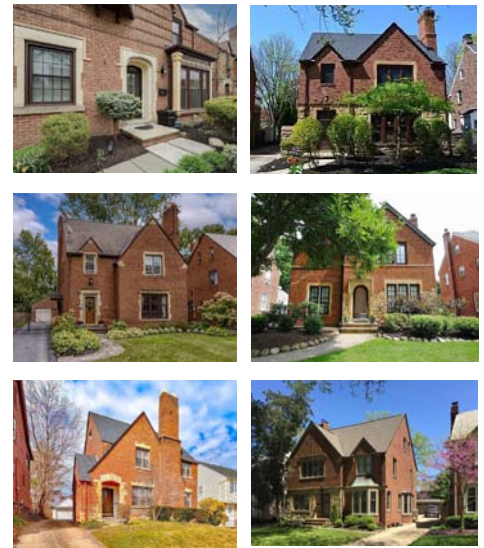
One of the most irresponsible and disrespectful designs to emerge in this community in the last 30 years is Vocon's design for the northwest gateway to John Carroll's campus off of Fairmount Circle.

It is challenging to imagine that a firm who boasts 100+ local employees could not find one capable of designing something compatible with the prevalent vocabulary of both John Carroll University and University Heights. But **their design** - and its revised version after criticism from our foundation was put forth - **fails completely to present ANY compatibility with the existing vernacular of the community.**

Not only was John Carroll asleep at the wheel in failing to conduct itself as a savvy owner with any interest or ability to require something from its architect and developer that respected its Collegiate Gothic campus, but the University Heights Architectural Review Board approved Vocon's design despite its numerous glaring shortcomings. University Heights is a community with a coherent vocabulary of brick and stone houses built mostly between WWI and WWII. John Carroll University is a campus with a coherent brick and stone buildings in the Collegiate Gothic style.

The Collegiate Gothic style of Gothic Revival evolved from the "old Kenyon" buildings added to the Kenyon College campus in Gambier, OH in 1829. It spread to Yale University, Boston College, Duke and Princeton in the early 1900's due to its sense of permanence and substance and its respect for antiquity as a fitting image for academic and religious institutions.

The identifiable features of the Collegiate Gothic style are brick and/or stone



Above: Typical University Heights Homes of Brick & Stone

construction, Gothic arch window and door openings, bas relief decorative panes or plaques and porticos or recessed porch entryways. Buildings in University Heights are generally two stories in height, rendered in brick with stone trim at openings. Windows are narrow vertical openings, clustered in pairs or groups of three. Steeply sloped roofs are generally slate.

In our letter of concern to the UH ARB, developer and JCU's President, we were clear that we were not advocating any attempt at imitating any traditional style. Instead, we pointed out that **Vocon's design failed the definition of compatibility for new construction in historic districts as defined for decades by the guidelines of the U.S. Department of the Interior.**

As a gateway site to John Carroll University, the site demands a work of architecture that is compatible with University Heights and JCU. In keeping with the objectivity of the USDOL guidelines, we objected to the project's painfully clear failures:

Materiality: Cement fiber panels have a history of failing when wet. While UH is a community of brick and stone homes, the Gateway design incorporates only limited areas of brick and is mostly off-white cement fiber, a material which appears nowhere in UH or at JCU.

The multi-family apartments around Fairmount Circle and the housing extending north of Fairmount Circle - and most all of UH - are almost entirely brick. JCU's Dolan Science Center ahead of the Gateway is entirely brick with stone trim at its openings. The Vocon project's design uses only a small amount of brick at the Fairmount Circle intersection as a token offering.

Continued next page

Critique: Cleveland's Design Review Board Failures

Architectural Features/ Fenestration: In UH, openings for doors and windows typically have stone architectural headers and sills spanning the openings. The Gateway project has no headers over its brick openings which is inappropriate. This is a significant failure of the project's design in presenting a design that is incompatible with the community's design elements. This omission makes the project look cheap and incomplete.

UH's vernacular homes feature vertical windows that this design does also. However, the design proposed reflects an over-abundance of single narrow windows which are only rarely paired while the UH vernacular has its narrow windows often paired or combined with three windows grouped together.

An effort should have been made to pair windows in the dormitory rooms to create openings in scale with those in the community's vernacular instead of the vertical industrial punch-card appearance which is not compatible with UH's character. The openings on the east and west elevations could and should benefit with no cost impact by pairing the units with adjacent dorm rooms to align with the city's vernacular. **As approved, it looks like a prison.**

These shortcomings were easy to see and easy to remedy. But the UH ARB approved the design despite CAF's presence and restated objections to the lack of compatibility with the design.

This Gateway project will be the architectural low point for John Carroll University - founded in 1886, who has previously developed a campus with above-average architectural integrity - until now. In a letter to University Heights Mayor Michael Brennan, CAF suggested he make changes to UH's ARB to put more experienced and discerning individuals in positions of responsibility.

These shortcomings were easy to see and easy to remedy. But the UH ARB approved the design despite CAF's presence and restated objections to the lack of compatibility with the design.

Brennan announced in January that he is not running for reelection and has stated he will do nothing to upgrade the city's ARB.

Other Pending and Recent Disappointments:

The Bedrock/ Cleveland Cavaliers/ Cleveland Clinic Riverfront Interdisciplinary Training Center's design puts the parking garage on the riverwalk with zero public amenities in the form of a refreshment center, rest rooms or lockers for



Above: John Carroll University Administration Building
Below: John Carroll University Dolan Science Center



Above: JCU Gateway's West Elevation, Vocon
Below: JCU Gateway's View From Fairmount Circle, Vocon



kayakers.

This private facility takes up a big chunk of the downtown riverfront and does not make access to or from the river pleasant or safe with its continuous Eagle Ave. slope. It is not even ADA compliant. The curving facades in the renderings will apparently not be curved at all, but will be built using cheaper flat tangents to save money. The Planning Commission approved it anyway.

The Cavaliers had income of \$348 million last season with a profit of \$78 million.

The Cleveland Clinic took in \$64.3 Billion last year with a net income of \$14.5 Billion. NEOTrans estimates the cost of the facility to be \$75 million.

Dan Gilbert's net worth is estimated at \$7-

\$8 Billion. The DDRC objected to the tangents and the misrepresentation of the curves on the renderings.

Can these organizations who are all obviously flush with cash not respect Cleveland enough to do this properly per their own design?

The **Hilton Downtown Cleveland Hotel's** arbitrary and silly shifts in the glass planes are the result of the architect's inability to integrate legitimate design character into the basic composition – and a city's ability to demand something more developed.

The Public Square Renovation gave us precast concrete benches, not granite. Their steel clips rusted the first month. The team failed to integrate a stage or any setting for public speaking or entertainment and have instead deposited a temporary element to at least recognize their oversight.

The failure of the team to coordinate with RTA the bus stops for the 1000 busses that go through Public Square each day that needed to be integrated resulted in Superior Ave. surviving as it has which is a painful display of our lack of leadership, cogent planning and project management. **And the \$25 million project that we were promised was to be built with only private funds wasn't, and cost \$50 million.**

The people we entrusted this project to actually published the design without even talking to the transit authority, forgetting about the 50+ transit stops at Public Square. The original 'vision' we were promised was a great urban green space for a variety of events and activities.

And again, the idea 'sold' is not delivered. There is no huge unified green space, so Superior Ave. was retained to cut through to provide needed bus passage and stops and the 'temporary' precast concrete barriers – finally removed eight years later – and ramped curbs permanently compromise and tarnish the design. And the temporary stage added after the fact?

The Medical Mart/ Convention Center debacle left us with a convention center that is the same size as the one we tore down - and we lost 500 garage spaces in the process. And to justify the project at the outset, we were told we *had* to have a much bigger convention center to be competitive in the event market. Again, the idea sold is not delivered - not even close!

Taxpayers never approved the project's funding which was handled by the three county commissioners. Taxpayers then replaced them with a council and county administrator instead.

It left us with an albatross of a Medical Mart that was never vetted by a team we paid millions, and a design that had no utility or survivability.

Critique: Cleveland's Design Review Board Failures

That team botched the budget, eliminated the renovation of Public Auditorium and its connection to the convention center, reduced the convention center size and increased the promised not-to-exceed budget by 20% which translated into a 40% budget overrun, and left us with a facility that by their own definition is not competitive. **40%!**

As it exists today after \$850 million, our convention center's size and competitiveness is still half to one-fourth that of our neighbors who all have adequate/ generous connected parking.

- a. Indianapolis = 937,000 sf; 9,400 pkg. spaces
- b. Columbus = 1,800,000 sf; 4,700 pkg. spaces
- c. Cincinnati = 750,000 sf; 5,000 pkg. spaces
- d. Pittsburgh = 1,500,000 sf; 700 parking spaces
- e. Cleveland = 410,000 sf; 0 parking spaces

Rock-n-Roll Hall of Fame Expansion: This design from the team of PAU and Cooper Robertson is 1) Totally out of scale with Pei's original building design; 2) Fails the compatibility test for materiality by failing to match or even compliment Pei's original white panels and 3) Unforgivably moves the entry away from the axis of the procession from its original location centered on the plaza off to the west to the addition. It appears that no one involved brought any appropriate measure of respect for Pei's building - imperfect that it may be - to come up with a sympathetic and compatible response for \$136 million.

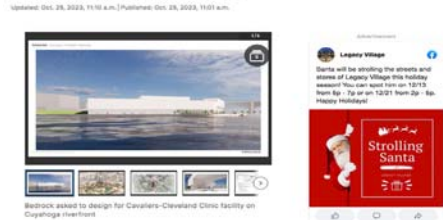
Cuyahoga County's decision to move the **County's Detention Center** to Garfield Heights is yet another glaring example of the stupidity of our elected officials. County Administrator Chris Ronayne's idea to move the county's jail facilities to Garfield Heights adds a senseless burden of inconvenience and added expense for the next 50 years to an already over-taxed community.

A majority of people who most often need to utilize these facilities are the lower tier socio-economic citizens of the county, many of who rely on public transportation. Consequently, if the needs of the county's citizens – let alone the community's Police and prosecutorial staff – matter at all, this facility needs to be located very near Public Square, the site of the city's only real multi-modal transit center. There is ample space behind Terminal Tower for such a facility and Bedrock is begging for potential occupancies.

The additional traffic would bolster downtown retail which is what Tower City was designed and built for and enhance use of the proposed riverfront development. And the Federal Courthouse is already there at Huron and Superior.

Ronayne's idea indicates that as the county's chief administrator, he is incapable of dogmatically approaching such a significant site selection

Cleveland Planning Commission wants Bedrock, Cavs, Clinic to up their game on design of riverfront practice facility



Above: Planing Commission wanted Riverfront Facility Design Improved. It was not.
Second: Public Square Precast Barriers finally removed
Third: Medical Mart/ Global Center for Health Innovation/
Convention Center Conference Annex
Fourth: Rock Hall Expansion



process with the kind of responsible dogma the decision deserves - despite his education, thus further eroding the design consciousness of the region. **Over the next 50 years, this mistaken move will add over one billion additional dollars to the burden of citizens just to manage the time, effort and expense of moving people back and forth to a downtown justice center.** Ronayne belongs in the Hall of Shame.

Empower Design Review Boards:

From the Cleveland Planning Commission's website: "In order to protect property values and enhance the character and visual image of Cleveland's neighborhoods and downtown, certain proposals for construction, exterior alterations, building demolitions and signs in the City of Cleveland must undergo a process known as 'design review'... A design review advisory committee, made up of design professionals and representatives of the local community, has been established for each of the seven regions. These committees review the design of development proposals and make recommendations for approval or disapproval to the City Planning Commission, which takes final action on approval or disapproval of the design."

Cleveland's Downtown Design Review Advisory Committee was originally called the Fine Arts Advisory Committee and was established in the 1970's to oversee design quality on important projects. Design Advisory Review Committees (DRAC) are *advisory only* to the Landmarks Commission. That has been a problem because the LC is a political entity that has been vulnerable in the past to political interference and mismanagement.

If RC is serious, this needs to change. **Now.**

Only qualified individuals should be appointed to the city's Design Review Committees, Board of Zoning Appeals and Landmarks Commission. And the city's DRAC's need to be more than an advisory function that have been routinely ignored. The point of establishing the DRAC's was to protect and improve the community's vernacular and design culture. When you allow people and developers to ignore their input, you are causing and enabling the decline in the design quality in our community. Steven Litt has been clear and critical about it all.

If the RD team is truly serious about improving downtown, the Downtown DRAC needs to have its input **enforceable** so that the Landmarks Commission cannot knee-cap them as they have done time again, delivering mediocre results.

In the latest assault on design excellence, Cleveland councilman Kerry McCormack has proposed legislation to eliminate the vetting of candidates for the Landmarks Commission by the three architectural/ preservation organizations as identified in Ordinance No. 161 passed in 1976, and instead allow himself to appoint representatives. It has worked for 48 years so far. No City Council representative has the background and expertise to identify and vet capable candidates for the Landmarks Commission. This attempted power grab must be voted down along with McCormack.

SPOTLIGHT: St. Michael the Archangel R. C. Church

St. Michael the Archangel Roman Catholic Church at the southwest corner of Scranton Road and Clark Avenue was established to minister to the needs of German Catholics in Cleveland in 1892. A High Victorian Gothic Church, it was the largest and most costly church in Cleveland when completed for \$148,000.

In 1887, Pastor Father Koudelka held a design competition with Bishop Gilmour selecting the winning design from Adolph Druiding of Chicago in 1888, who was paid \$1,395 for his design and drawings.

In 1930, a major renovation took place under the direction of Professor Conrad Schmidt. That work included repainting the interior, redecorating the ceiling, installing a new pipe organ, constructing a new High Altar and replacing “many hundreds of eclectic lights and the decorative gas lamps.” The new Altar was the work of Professor John Winterick and was inspired by the High Altar at the Church of St. Francis in Borgo, Italy. The original effigy of St. Boniface from the High Altar was relocated to the church’s bell tower.

The congregation changed Druiding’s design from brick to stone at the onset and the exterior is clad of random rock-faced rubble buff Berea sandstone. Industrial pollution has rendered the stone black over the course of the last 133 years. The main entry on Scranton features three grand arched doorways between its towers which are separated by coupled columns which support steep triangular pediments, the tympani of which are emphasized with rough rock facing. Between the tympani on carved pedestals are statues of archangels Raphael and Gabriel.

The church’s taller steeple rises to a height of 232 feet. A recent effort to clean the copper cross at its top found the cross riddled with bullet holes. Rather than a sign of a neighborhood transition, an investigation revealed that a former priest disliked pigeons and often sought to dispatch them with a shotgun. The shorter tower contains the church’s bells which weigh four tons.

The sanctuary is paved with white marble and encaustic tiles. A Tennessee marble wainscot to four feet supports a two-foot high frieze of dragon heads which change to passion flowers in the church, symbolizing the power of God to defeat Satan. From the marbleized columns spring multiple arches forming panels decorated in relief surfaces. The vestibule, nave and side aisles are groin vaulted with myriad ribs. The nave columns (colonettes) are thin and clustered, with naturalistic flower-like capitals at their tops. The sanctuary ceiling is groined with arches down to columns supported by plaster corbels.

The interior is painted in light tones with deep rose background hues that transition to light brown, yellow and pale blue. The church has an impressive array of 50 statues, many of which

were imported from Europe, with male statuary on one side of the church and female statuary on the other.

The church is now lit with lanterns suspended from the arches separating the nave and aisles. The church now serves a predominantly Hispanic congregation on the near-West side. The congregation’s size at St. Michael Archangel reached its peak in the late 1950s although, by that time, only 25 percent of parishioners were of German descent. Hispanic congregants soon dominated and the first Spanish mass was said in 1971. The congregation now is mostly Latin American, with masses spoken in English and Spanish. The church was the tallest building in Cleveland until the Keith Building was completed in Playhouse Square in 1922. It remains the tallest church in Cleveland.

The church constructed a substantial school to the south on Scranton in 1907, which served the congregation until 2003. Designed by Emil Uhlrich, the building is executed in the same Berea sandstone as the church.

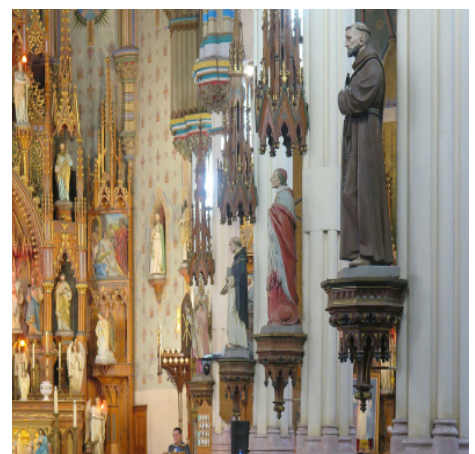
In 2004, the Catholic Diocese of Cleveland consolidated the schools on to a single site in Slavic Village and sold the property and the building which then housed non-profit offices and a Hispanic Senior Center. In 2018, the school was put up for auction and the new owners have begun renovations to convert the building to apartments.



Above: St. Michael the Archangel Scranton Rd. Elevation
Below: St. Michael the Archangel Sanctuary
Bottom: St. Michael the Archangel Sanctuary Statuary



Above: St. Michael the Archangel Roman Catholic Church; Alfred Druiding; 1892
Below: St. Michael the Archangel School; Emil Uhlrich; 1907



EDITORIAL: CLOSE BURKE LAKEFRONT AIRPORT - NOW!

Cleveland chamber chief calls for 'urgent' closure of Burke Lakefront Airport

Updated: Sep. 22, 2024, 1:06 a.m. | Published: Sep. 21, 2024, 9:30 a.m.



Baiju Shah, president and CEO of the Greater Cleveland Partnership, said closing Burke Lakefront Airport and opening it to the public will help attract new people to the region. John Piana, cleveland.com

Above: GCP CEO Calls for Urgent Closing of BLA



Above: Burke Lakefront Airport from the West



Above: Hopkins Ranks Last in J. D. Power Study

Though a late arrival on Christmas morning, Mayor Bibb now has another child who is wondering if there is anything left under the tree.

At last, the studies are in. It's not as if we needed them to conclude that BLA is a loser and there are only major revenue-generating and enormous cultural benefits to be had by closing it and redeveloping those 450 lakefront acres. But the studies at least make it less political and are a factual basis to at last move forward.

Perhaps because it is so obvious, **Greater Cleveland Partnership President/ CEO Baiju Shah a week after the study results were released in September urged the city to move to close Burke "with urgency."** Shah said improved access to the lakefront is far more important than the modest economic impact that the airport generates.

The city's future, he said, is tied to making it an attractive, engaging place to live. "When you create public access to the waterfront, it becomes a magnet for development," he said. "It becomes a magnet for talent attraction and retention in our region. It's a catalyst, as we've seen on the near West Side. That's why it's so important."

The Competitive Context for BLA:

The availability of BLA could and should also require a do-over of the Bibb + James Corner Field

Below: Burke Lakefront Airport Aerial



Operations excuse for a Lakefront Master Plan that has wasted over a year to **only address the puny-but-important 12 acres north of the lakefront stadium.** Cuyahoga County has 30 miles of Lake Erie shoreline, yet our "Lakefront Master Plan" concerns itself **only with the 1200 feet of the shoreline north of lakefront stadium.** That is not a lakefront master plan – it is a morning sketch problem for sophomore design students.

The City's commitment to Bedrock's Riverfront project also warrants a reset. Cleveland's size, stagnant population, rapidly eroding commercial real estate base and invisible job growth translates into a severely limited ability to absorb any more office, retail, multi-family and/or entertainment space – particularly on a 50-foot drop to a brown river that is not visually or physically accessible to the CBD. Bedrock's riverfront initiative will not – even if crafted beautifully (which is uncertain since no design of consequence has been released) – be successful for decades with its excessive ambitions for spaces far in excess of the city's needs and ability to populate.

The Haslams want to chip in only a third of the cost of the domed stadium sports neighborhood they want in Brookpark that will make downtown's food and beverage network - which would not be characterized as robust to begin with - even weaker.

And with other far more important needs, Bibb and Ronayne have wisely told the Haslams that they are on their own in Brookpark. But Bibb has thrown them a too-generous lifeline to improve the lakefront stadium which also needs to be rethought. The Haslams' desires for that work scope are excessive and foolish and do not deserve to be funded by anyone other than the two of them if it is that important to them. Digging out underneath the stadium on the east and south sides – the primary access points for the fans! – for more space for deliveries and trash trucks and putting a glass exterior on the north and south sides will do nothing to elevate the fan experience and meaning.

The 450-acre BLA site represents the opportu-

nity to repay a debt to Clevelanders that has been outstanding for over 100 years – to provide access to the lakefront adjacent to the CBD with retail, entertainment and housing alternatives that can be easily accessed and will clearly be superior in quality and quantity to the Riverfront – 35 acres – and stadium lakefront - 12 acres - sites.

The FAA has noted that Cleveland has not yet submitted a request to close BLA: "The FAA's policy is to strengthen the national airports system," the agency said in a statement. "Should the city wish to pursue closure, they will have to submit a formal proposal justifying their request and demonstrating how the closure will benefit civil aviation. A significant review and analysis of all aspects of the airport's current and potential future use is taken into consideration, including all Federal obligations of the airport." Given the huge erosion of flights for all our area's airports since 2010, that should pose no difficulty.

Bonnie Teeuwen, Cleveland's chief operating officer, says that it will take time to close Burke: "If you say 10 years, I probably wouldn't disagree with that because there is a lot of work that needs to be done," she said. GCP's Shah says Cleveland does not have ten years. The region's most pressing problem is jobs and attracting and retaining talent for economic growth.

Continued next page

Below: Burke Lakefront Airport is primarily vacant.



EDITORIAL: CLOSE BURKE LAKEFRONT AIRPORT - NOW!

NEWS

Long-awaited Burke Lakefront Airport studies show closure is 'possible' and 'economically advantageous,' Bibb says

Updated: Sep. 16, 2024, 1:16 p.m. | Published: Sep. 16, 2024, 12:48 p.m.



Burke Lakefront Airport John Perna, cleveland.com

Above: BLA Closure Headline

Get started. Now!

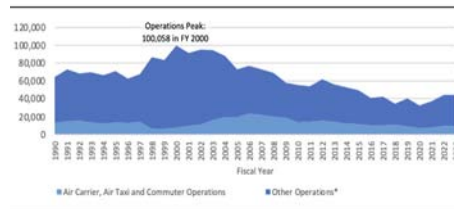
At present, the city cannot pull off one of the sites, let alone all three. The City needs to give priority to one. And it should not be Bedrock's.

And now that BLA is in play, the joke of a 'lakefront master plan' for the pitifully small land area at the stadium needs to be rethought with the idea of tying them together experientially. Plus for BLA, it may simply be a matter of setting the table for private development who will not have such large, greedy hands out for public subsidies like Bedrock and the Haslams.

One tool that is particularly useful to set the table for BLA's redevelopment is TIF financing. Since the value of those 450 acres today is modest due to BLA's meager revenue production, its redevelopment would mean a sizable increase in the property value, the increase of which is what makes TIF financing a game worth playing.

Mayor Bibb released the Burke Lakefront reports on September 16, 2024, a year after they were promised. The reports state the obvious – that **closing Burke Lakefront Airport and redeveloping it into housing, retail and parks would be an major economic win for Cleveland and the region** – and that like any redevelopment, it would require an upfront investment – albeit a rather small one – and could encounter time delays and bureaucratic red tape.

Below: Burke Lakefront Airport Aerial



Above Burke Lakefront Airport Flight Operations Graph

That investment which the study characterized as "large" but in actual fact pales in comparison to the potential redevelopment costs and the enormous sums of taxpayer money pissed away on excessive renovations of sports facilities, and giveaways to the Cuyahoga Riverfront project which is spectacularly short on any details and ANY commitments from developer Bedrock.

The studies identify the costs and benefits of closing Burke, and how Cleveland might go about it – but they do not take a position on whether the airport should close.

"These studies are crucial in helping us understand the feasibility and potential benefits of transforming Burke Lakefront Airport into a space that better serves our community," said Cleveland Mayor Justin Bibb in his release. "The findings have reinforced my long-held belief that closing Burke is both possible and economically advantageous for Cleveland."

In its release, the city says that while "studies provide valuable insights, the decision to close Burke has not yet been made." "In addition to engaging with stakeholders, there is a formal application process with the FAA that has not begun. The city will continue to work closely with the FAA and other partners to carefully evaluate the findings and explore a responsible path forward," the release added.

All told, the studies conclude that **closing Burke and building mixed-use development in its place would be the most economically productive option for Cleveland and Cuyahoga County.** And

Below: Burke Lakefront Airport's proximity to Central Business District



CRAIN'S CLEVELAND BUSINESS
A CRAIN FAMILY BRAND
NEWS COMMENTARY REAL ESTATE SPECIAL FEATURES AWARDS DATA & LISTS LA

Bibb signals possible closure of Burke Lakefront Airport, citing new studies

KIM PALMER



Above: Bibb Signals Possible Closure of BLA Headline

that is even without taking a 'highest-and-best-use' assessment of the airport's actual redevelopment potential.

Much of the airport's current token flight-related business could easily relocate to other nearby airports, the studies found.

The studies identify the alternative processes required to close Burke. To close the airport in the next decade, Cleveland must repay \$10 million to state and federal government to obtain approval from the FAA or Congress, which can be difficult. But with the enormous falloff in flight operations at Burke in the last 20 years, the only real question on closing the facility is the time it takes the FAA to acknowledge the facts.

The study that identified the steps and costs to close BLA was provided by CHA Consulting of Albany, NY. There are three options with different issues and time restrictions.

Option 1: Long-term Scenario:

Federal and state grants that Burke has received over the years carry time restrictions that stand in the way of a speedy closure. Federal grant-related obligations expire in 2036, and state-related obligations expire in 2039. If Cleveland were to close Burke before then, it would have to repay the federal and state governments \$9.4 million. Peanuts.

Below: Cleveland Lakefront; 2024. Note the miniscule frontage in front of the Stadium the City is calling our Lakefront Master Plan.



EDITORIAL: CLOSE BURKE LAKEFRONT AIRPORT - NOW!



Above: Geis Co. BLA Development Proposal, 2021

To avoid this payment, Cleveland could simply wait out its grant obligations. In that scenario, neither the FAA nor Congress would have to approve the closure. The challenge with this route is that Cleveland would have to sustain airport operations from its own budget, without federal assistance, between now and 2036. It has previously been reported that keeping BLA open costs the city \$900k - \$2 million annually. Therefore, paying \$9.4 million to close BLA may be the least expensive path, depending on how long it takes the FAA to rule on the request.

Option 2: Shorter-term Solution:

The FAA has the power to waive Cleveland's grant-related restrictions through 2036, which would allow for a quicker closure. Cleveland would still have to repay the \$9.4 million in outstanding grants.

FAA approval isn't guaranteed. The agency evaluates such requests on a case-by-case basis, and it has complete discretion on the outcome. To have a shot at approval, Cleveland would have to prove that the Burke closure would result in a "net benefit to aviation." In this scenario, it is possible that airport operators and others would likely sue the city, which would cost money and possibly lead to other delays.

However, the dramatic decline in flight traffic at BLA is so significant – **down from 100,321 takeoffs and landings in 2000 to 38,517 in 2017 – a drop of 62%! –** that it is impossible for the FAA to ignore that BLA's original intention – relieving flight congestion at Hopkins Airport – vanished a long time ago as **Hopkins' traffic also has fallen itself from 331,899 flights in 2000 to 122,392 in 2017 – a drop of 62%! A**

nd Burke's numbers are even worse when you realize that **one third of Burke's takeoffs and landings have been attributable to flight schools at Burke which have no relevance to travel or commerce.** So Burke's effective takeoffs and landings are only 25,000 annually - 75% less than 2000.

The net benefit to aviation is that the relocated flight operations to Hopkins and the Cuyahoga County Airport places those activities at facilities with far more capacity than currently utilized and the revenue from the transferred operations makes those facilities more economically viable.

3. Congress Solution:

Congress could pass a law that would shut down Burke and provide an end-run around the FAA approval process. While this "may seem like the quickest route," the study warns that an act of Congress would require much lobbying, and additional time and work to secure passage. In all three scenarios, Cleveland could be sued by airport users or others, leading to delays and higher costs to the city, the study found. But that sword has two edges.

Advantages and Disadvantages to Closing:

According to CHA Consulting, there are both advantages and disadvantages to closing Burke Lakefront Airport.

Advantages:

- + BLA loses \$900k annually. Operations at Hopkins obligate that legal entity to fund BLA's losses. So closing BLA saves the Hopkins budget and the city \$900k per year. Over 10 years, that represents \$9 million of the \$9.4M the city needs to repay.

- + Redevelopment opportunities are huge with regard to the Quality of Life for citizens and visitors, as well as the community's Economic Benefit from such development.

- + Clevelanders finally get decent access to their lakefront.

- + BLA's presence has restricted the development in its vicinity by the height restrictions that have been required for takeoffs and landings. Browns' owners the Haslams have to push their proposed Brookpark stadium eight stories below grade to comply with the same restrictions at Hopkins.

Disadvantages:

- If closed in the next decade or so – before federal and state grant restrictions lift in 2036 and 2039 – the city would have to repay \$9.4 million. It would not be able to accept new grants in the meantime, meaning Cleveland would have to sustain Burke operations without federal assistance for several years. This repayment amount is insignificant in the context of the potential of the site's redevelopment.

- BLA's closure displaces aeronautical businesses, TV helicopters, organ transplant services,



Above: Haslams' overscaled Lakefront Development proposal, 2021

Cleveland Clinic and UH emergency helicopters, which could all be relocated to Cuyahoga County Airport.

- Signature Aviation's lease would need to be bought out. Signature recently made \$16.5 million in improvements.

- Demolition costs for the airport are estimated at \$15.3 million. For the scale of the potential redevelopment of the 440 acres, this amount is normal Site Preparation.

- Redevelopment costs of the BLA site's new foundations may be above average since BLA was constructed on fill material. \$20k worth of soil borings would tell the story on the degree to which this is an issue that even warrants discussion.

CHA Consulting predicted that tenants and stakeholders could present legal challenges to closure. Given the dismal performance of BLA, it may be equally justified to state that the City is likely to face legal challenges from residents if they do **not** act responsibly to close the airport and free up 250 acres of prime lakefront land for development that has been under-utilized for decades.

Economic effects on Cleveland, Cuyahoga County:

The analysis of the economic impact of closing BLS by Econsult Solutions of Philadelphia found only a "relatively low true loss of economic activity" for Cleveland and Cuyahoga County. This low impact is due to the fact that Burke's flight-related operations - minor private passenger service, medical transport, and flight training - could be easily transferred to Cleveland Hopkins International Airport or the Cuyahoga County Airport.

The other 40% of Burke's current business is non-airport related, such as renting office space at BLA, which could easily relocate nearby, and therefore would not represent an economic loss to the region.

Continued next page

EDITORIAL: CLOSE BURKE LAKEFRONT AIRPORT - NOW!

Econsult asserts that BLA currently generates about \$77 million in “direct economic activity.” If BLA closed, \$67 million of that could remain in Cuyahoga County, and \$45 million could remain in Cleveland. With a closure, it’s estimated that only \$9.6 million would leave the county.

The most significant “loss” would be the Cleveland National Air Show, which the study described as one of the major “true economic loss” associated with Burke’s closure at one-third of the dollar value. The air show would cease operations at Burke and could not “transfer to any [other] airport in the county in its current form,” the study states.

Economic Impacts of Developing Burke:

Econsult’s study considered only four economic scenarios for Burke, and **none of them looked at utilizing the 440 acres of BLA in a ‘highest and best use’ model.** As a result, the projected economic benefits all fall far below what can actually be anticipated if the airport is developed to its full potential.

Econsult’s Option 1: “Keeping it as-is:”

Not relevant.

Econsult’s Option 2: “Retaining flight operations, but adding a 100-room hotel on the southwest corner:”

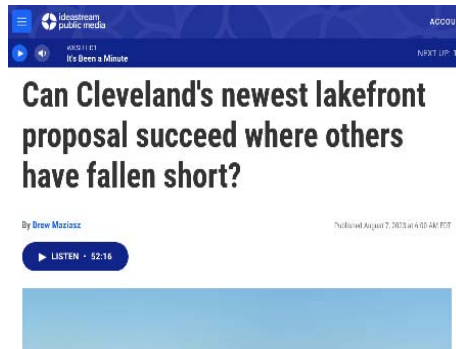
This option was not worth modeling. An airport turning only 25,000 takeoffs and landings a year clearly does not represent a site with demand for a hotel and a 100-room hotel is not typically considered an economically viable size.

Hotel occupancy in downtown Cleveland is at 57% or below, which is barely adequate for survival, which is typically considered 67% as the baseline for survival. The Fidelity Hotel, a 97-room conversion in the Historic Baker Building to a Fidelity Hotel on East 6th Street is coming now on line. There is no demand for a hotel at the BLA location.

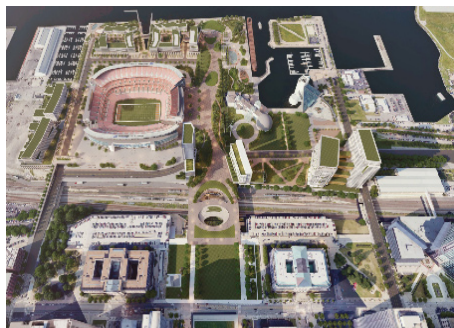
Econsult’s Option 3: “Closing it altogether, and using it as 170 acres of park space, which would include playing fields, tennis courts, waterfront activities, and an indoor athletic complex:”

Park space is not the ‘highest and best use’ of lakefront property – particularly when it directly abuts the central business district. With the City already calling its tiny ‘Lakefront Master Plan’ for the 12 acres north of the Lakefront Stadium and having it conceived as passive recreation/ park space, adding another 250 acres of park space at the CBD’s lakefront exposure is simply stupid.

This option should not have been considered.



Above: Lakefront Plan Headline
Below: Haslam's 2021 Stadium Lakefront 'Master Plan'



Econsult Option 4: “Closing it altogether to construct a mixed-use development in its place. This would include 1,200 housing units, 100,000 square feet of retail space, a 100-room hotel, and 170 acres of greenspace:”

Does downtown need another hotel? Perhaps the lakefront location alone will give it appeal with a mixed-use development of adequate scale to support, but another hotel will likely draw occupancy from the remaining CBD hotels.

Given the appeal of the location, why not live/work occupancies? Why not 2000 units?

Given the decrease in multi-family occupancy in the CBD, it will take years for demand to require such density, but the location is vastly preferable to the proposed multi-family development in Bedrock’s Riverfront development, which also lacks specifics of any kind, let alone a schedule.

Summary:

The most economically productive use of Burke’s land, as contemplated by the study, would be to close the airport and use the land for mixed-use development. That scenario which was modeled in the study entailed a very modest scope of re-development which would generate \$92 million in economic impact per year, which includes current Burke business that could relocate elsewhere in Cleveland and Cuyahoga County, the study found.

A more assertive and typical ‘highest-and-best-use’ development could easily double the estimated economic impact.

Keeping part of Burke open to flights, while adding a hotel, would generate the second-highest economic impact considered by the study. That would yield \$83 million annually, but the city would still have to pay to operate the airport, which it does today at an annual cost of \$1.2 million.

Leaving the airport as-is would continue to generate about \$77 million a year, the study found. The study’s math is seriously flawed if it is alleging that a virtually vacant small airport’s economic benefit is only \$15 million annually less than a mixed-use development on 250 acres.

And the least economically productive scenario would be turning the land into park space, which would total about \$48 million.

That figure includes \$45 million in current business at Burke that’s expected to relocate elsewhere in Cleveland or Cuyahoga County. **Therefore, this ‘economic benefit’ is simply the retention of existing business activity attained by its relocation.**

These economic impact figures only reflect annual economic output, and do not include the upfront costs of remediation, redevelopment or regulatory compliance.

NOW CLEVELAND HAS A BIG PROBLEM: Challenge for Bibb:

Bibb has already given the store away to Bedrock with two TIFs for a riverfront project that has zero demand, is not yet actually defined, does not even have a developed architectural model, does not have a specific updated site plan, and involves no commitments from Bedrock whatsoever for its scope or implementation. Already the City and State are spending millions of taxpayer dollars to improve Bedrock’s riverfront site.

But the lakefront at Burke is far more valuable and important to citizens than the riverfront, which is a dirty brown river. What arrows does Cleveland have left in its quiver to prioritize the lakefront instead of the riverfront?

CLEVELAND CHURCH TRANSITIONS IN 2024



Above: First Church of Christ Science Post Card, George Hammond, 1904

Mature communities occasionally lose a church to fire or storm. But 2024 was been extreme. And two of Cleveland's landmark churches have recently been put up for sale.

First Church of Christ Scientist/ Lane Metropolitan CME Church:

The First Church of Christ Science was completed in 1904 at East 46th St. and Prospect Ave. Architect George Hammond designed the stone jewel. The current owner is listed as the Lane Metropolitan CME Church. The listed sale prices are \$300k or \$525k, depending on the listing source.

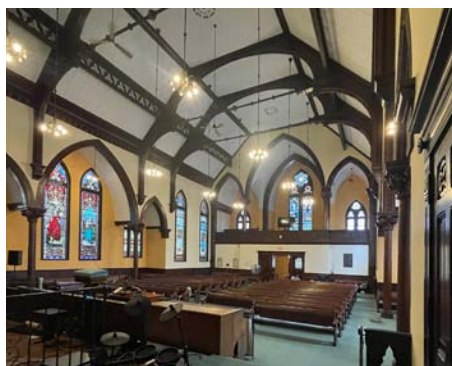
Franklin Circle Christian Church:

A fixture in Ohio City as both a religious and social justice institution since 1915, the Franklin Circle Christian Church is listed as for sale without a stated asking price. For many years, the church has been the regular site of community meetings and events.

Miles Pentecostal Determine Church:

The original 1832 church was moved to East 92nd Street and Walker Avenue in 1872 to make room for a larger church building. A new building for Miles Park United Methodist Church was constructed between 1872 and 1883 in the Gothic Revival architectural style. In 1882, a labor strike changed the neighborhood significantly as Polish and Slovak strikebreakers displaced the original Irish and Welsh inhabitants.

Below: Miles Pentecostal Determine Church after Fire



Above: Franklin Circle Community Church

The Union-Miles Park neighborhood began to decline in the 1960's due to broader shifts in urban development and economic challenges. The Miles Park Methodist Church congregation disbanded in 1978, and the church building was sold to the African-American congregation of Allen Chapel-Missionary Baptist Church in 1979. Later, the church was sold to the Pentecostal Determine Church of God congregation. In 2020, the church's roof failed, causing the congregation to relocate.

On March 28, 2024, fire destroyed the former church which had been condemned. The church was destroyed and the city demolished what was left for safety reasons. City records do not record the identity of the architect.

St. Theodosius Russian Orthodox Cathedral:

On May 28, 2024, the landmark Saint Theodosius Russian Orthodox Cathedral in Tremont caught fire. According to Cleveland firefighters, the cause of the fire was ruled accidental and was caused by roofers who were welding copper. The Chief of the 4th Battalion has estimated the damage at \$1 million. The fire broke out around 3:30 PM EST and fire crews fought to put out the fire in an effort to save the temple.

Priest Jan Cizmar and other local clergy, faithful, and neighbors began removing and preserving holy items from the Cathedral. The resulting instability of the large central dome prompted the



Above: St. Theodosius Russian Orthodox Cathedral before fire

removal of the form and a temporary closure to keep out the elements.

Just two days after the fire was discovered, the main dome began to tilt towards the west, dropping six inches in one day. The west and south sides of the square box beneath the dome were heavily damaged by the fire. It was impossible to level and repair the dome's square base in place because the dome was approximately 90,000 pounds and 60 feet tall from top to bottom - the main church building is only 36 feet tall.

As a result, the difficult decision was made to dismantle the dome. The city ordered the evacuation of the surrounding buildings because the dome was in immediate danger of collapsing. This was a long and tedious process, and engineers had to prepare structural plans for carefully dismantling the box, as it was part of the roof structure. The church has been cleaned of debris, and a massive shoring wall was built to support the roof.

A temporary roof was constructed atop the shoring due to the compromised original roof structure that could not support additional loads. The ceiling on the west (man) side was demolished due to charred wood members that required replacement. The extent of water damage is severe and the ceiling and frescos may have to be removed and replaced.

Continued next page

Below: St. Theodosius Russian Orthodox Cathedral on fire



CLEVELAND CHURCH TRANSITIONS IN 2024



Above: St. Theodosius Russian Orthodox Cathedral Interior before

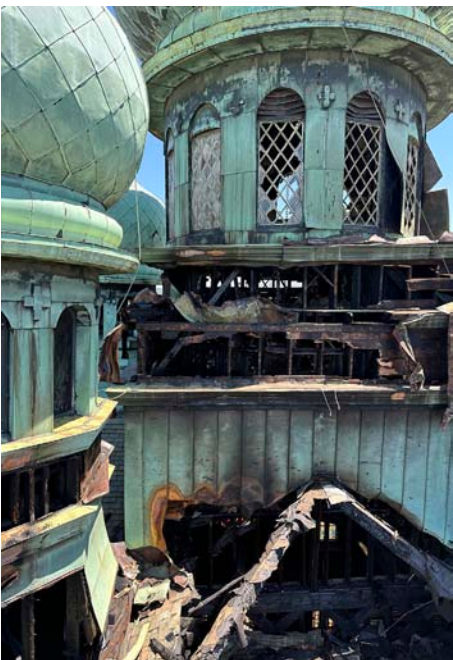
The west slate roof requires replacement. The north side of the interior is not damaged as severely as the south side which is heavily damaged. The church believes that the majority of the south roof will have to be removed and replaced.

The north gable's ridge beam, joists and sheathing will require replacement. The structural integrity of north and south roofs were questionable to assessment and renovation team, so both sections were shored.

Two of the intermediate-sized Evangelist domes are planned to be renovated or replaced. It may be more cost-effective to replace them than retain and restore them.

Fine art experts and members will conduct a moisture survey to determine how much water remains behind the plaster and how it can be dried and cleaned of soot. Engineers have finalized the structural design. The next step will be to

Below: St. Theodosius Russian Orthodox Dome damage



replace or reinforce the fire-damaged main roof structure, followed by the rebuilding and repair of slate roofs, the main box, and the domes.

Simultaneously, various companies are working to restore heavily damaged chandeliers made from original Bohemian glass and repair the stained-glass windows.

St. Theodosius was founded in 1896 by Russian immigrants and built between 1911-1912 to the design of architect Frederick C. Baird, which he modeled after the Church of Our Saviour Jesus Christ in Moscow. It is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

St. Theodosius drew national attention when a wedding scene was shot in the cathedral for the 1978 blockbuster film, "The Deer Hunter," starring Academy Award winners Robert De Niro and Meryl Streep.

The 13 copper domes represent the 12 disciples and Jesus Christ. The church was renovated in the 1950s and again with a \$500k investment in 1999. It is not known if the insurance of the church will be adequate to fund the necessary repairs, but it is anticipated that the church will be restored.

The church has retained Bostwick Architects to guide the restoration and Osborne Engineering to perform the required structural engineering.

Evergreen Studios, the renowned restoration firm, has been brought on board to conduct an assessment of the plaster and frescos. Their report is due the end of February 2025.

Fairmount Temple:

On April 13, the Fairmount Temple's sanctuary suffered an electrical fire. Portions of the complex were cleaned and returned to use. The Mandel Sanctuary was not. The server technology assets and Cantor Music Library were also lost. While the temple originally conveyed to members, "We are definitely restoring Fairmount Temple's facility!," on March 7, they then announced the merger of Anshe Chesed Fairmount Temple and The Temple-Tifereth Israel.

The two prominent Reform congregations, each with histories dating back to the mid-1800s, created a new unified Reform congregation, Congregation Mishkan Or, which translates to 'dwelling place of light.' The vote to unify was the culmination of an 18-month exploration process, initiated and guided by lay leaders from both temples. The congregations, which include approximately 2,000 families combined, officially united on July 1.

In June, the City of Beachwood entered into an agreement with Anshe Chesed Fairmount Temple to buy the temple's 17-acre property at 23737



Above: Fairmount Temple on Fire.

Fairmount Boulevard for \$8 million.

In November, Beachwood announced that based on a citizen survey, the Fairmount Temple buildings will be demolished and the site dedicated to recreational/ park use.

In December, Beachwood announced that based on a survey of citizens, the site will instead be redeveloped as senior housing.

St. Mark Presbyterian Church:

After years of vacancy and neglect, the 1912 Gothic Revival St. Mark's on East Boulevard appears to be making a comeback. Hosting three different congregations in its previous life, a \$9 million renovation is planned by its owners who plan to use it for its offices, community events and meeting spaces.

Vacant for the last ten years, a \$2 million historic tax credit from the Ohio Department of Development was part of a \$68 million award as part Ohio's Historic Preservation Tax Credit Program that was announced for the project in October.

Below: St. Mark's Presbyterian Church; East Blvd., Cleveland

