Over the course of many years, we have gradually been losing the fabric of Over-the-Rhine to demolition.
The Fabric of Over-the-Rhine in 1930

Legend
- Purple: Building
- Red: Major Street

Data Source:
Cincinnati Area GIS
Lost Historic Fabric Since 1930

Legend
- Purple: Demolished Building
- Yellow: Major Street

Data Source:
Cincinnati Area GIS
Sanborn® Fire Insurance Co.
Razed Historic Buildings
in OTR, Just Between 2001-2006
Threats

Why is this happening?

- Negligent owners
- Lack of city resources to force these owners to repair their buildings
- When buildings reach the point of “imminent danger” to the public, they are torn down as an “emergency” demolition
- Some nonprofit owners actively seek – and receive – permission to tear down their historic buildings
Threats

212 & 214 Liberty

1918 Race
Threats

1914 Vine

118 Findlay
Threats

1601-1616 Pleasant

1833 Vine
Threats

Faith Fellowship Ministries

This Washington D.C. based church purchased 11 historic properties in 2005, including the 1866 Baptisten Kirche (German Baptist Church.) All properties were inhabited. None of them are being adequately maintained, and almost all of them have been ordered vacated during their less than 4 years of ownership. VBML licenses have not been acquired, and two of their properties are two of the worst drug dealing corners in OTR. The church has no apparent history, experience, or qualifications to manage or redevelop real estate.
Threats

Faith Fellowship Ministries

- 1610 Walnut. Historic Baptist Kirche church, inadequately maintained.
- 107 Corwine. Attached to church.
- 1613 Walnut. Ordered vacated.
- 1614 Walnut. Ordered vacated.
- 1618 Walnut. Ordered vacated.
- 100 E. McMicken. Inhabited.

- 18-22 Findlay. Vacant
- 118 Findlay. Vacant
- 1624 Pleasant. Inhabited. Tenants have reported lack of heat and water.
- 1635 Race. Recently vacated.
Threats

Cincinnati Public Schools

Threatened, but saved after a very long, hard fight
Threats

Cincinnati Public Schools
Threats

The Tipping Point

- 1930: 3,157 total buildings.
- 2006: 1,560 buildings (49% of total lost.)
- 2006: Added to the National Trust’s List of the “11 Most Endangered Historic Places.”
- 2009: 15 buildings demolished just since the “Most Endangered” designation.
The Tipping Point

- That places us at just a couple more demolitions before we exceed 50% destruction of Over-the-Rhine’s historic building stock.
- 72 buildings are currently condemned in OTR.
- Another 238 have been ordered vacated.
OTR: Solutions
Solutions

We already have sufficient legal remedies to address the threats to Over-the-Rhine

Section 1435-25 and 1451-11 of the CMC requires owners to provide reasonable care, maintenance and upkeep appropriate for the preservation of historic buildings.

Section 1451-13 empowers the Solicitor to bring civil and criminal suits against owners who violate this provision and further states that “[t]he City Solicitor has the duty to bring actions to enforce this section.”
In addition to civil remedies, an owner who fails to maintain or causes the demolition of a historic property “is guilty of a misdemeanor of the first degree. Each and every day that a person continues to violate the provisions of this chapter after having once been notified of the violation constitutes a separate offense.”

R.C. 2929.24 and 2929.28, penalty for a first degree misdemeanor: Up to 180 days jail time and $1,000 fine for each offense.

We simply are not enforcing our own laws
Solutions

Charleston vs. OTR revisited

- Our historic district and architecture is on par with theirs
- We have an interesting history
- We have exceptional restaurants
- We have an incredible theater and arts scene
- The city is served by one of the nation’s largest airports and two of its most traveled interstates
It’s about CHOICES
Solutions

They have chosen this
Solutions

We have chosen this
Solutions

How can you help?

- Invest in Over-the-Rhine
- Express your opinion to Council members
- Write to the Enquirer
- Attend Historic Conservation Board meetings
- Spread the word about OTR!!
Thank You