

Steve Litt

reviving the radial street pattern in some form, possibly through rows of lights, as suggested by the rendering posted in the gallery that accompanies this column, is an idea worthy of exploration.

We've got just a little bit of that mojo at Gravity Place, and it's worth exploring how to bring it back, if only for a temporary lighting installation that could test Rothenfeld's idea and show how the radial pattern would look from an airplane at night.

If Rothenfeld succeeds, Cleveland Centre, a fascinating legacy of the city's earliest decades, might just play a role in its future.

maple heights

Bravo!

I encourage those readers who find interest in Dan Rothenfeld's "Cleveland Centre" proposal to access the May 2016 edition of Ohio City/Tremont Observer which features a most thoughtful article, "Cleveland Centre - Cracking the Code", written by the artist about the same project; it shares the greater historical context and keen personal insights that have guided the proposal's development to date and advocate its future success.

There Rothenfeld makes a clear, at times elegant, case for the coherence of "Cleveland's urban vision" to be realized through the revitalization of the city's original center. To Rothenfeld (and arguably designers of successful urban projects) said unity is achieved via personal as well as environmental transformation. That the project has the potential to, for example, "awaken the core" and "re-zip the East/West divide", imply no small effort but, once realized, constitute a gift of enormous value to citizenry and city alike.

Mystical associations, references to public art projects such as Christo's installations, as well as ideas promoting a destination-by-spectacle aside, Rothenfeld's own words invite us to engage and evaluate the proposal on its own merits.

(On a personal note: I'd much appreciate the opportunity, if offered by the artist, to attend a guided, pedestrian <concrete rather than conceptual> experience of the site; can't imagine a more deliciously social way to

invite further interest in and encouragement of this proposal!) Special thanks to Mr. Litt for his introduction to Rothenfeld's "Cleveland Centre" proposal, and to the readership for its equally engaging follow-up commentary.

history muse

Rothenfeld has a terrific idea. He shows how to transform a neglected area into something dynamic and exciting. Although the area is mostly unknown -- people fly over on the bridges -- it has great potential. It's near downtown (walkable to many destinations) and reclaims what was once the city's pivot. Dutch-revival row houses echo the warehouses and town houses of inland waterways. That would bring the density and vibrancy that's needed, bringing life to the area, the parks, and the waterfront.

The lighting project is exciting. When you fly over Cleveland at night, the peninsula is a black blob. With the lighting, the area would shine. This could be a profound urban statement, going well beyond Christo's interesting but temporary installations.

The people who laid out the radius may have been out to make a buck (real estate is the American way), but they also knew what it meant to orient their plan to the sun and the passage of time -- qualities that would have resonated in the 1830s and we would do well to recapture. This might seem mystical to some, but it was also practical then, and eminently possible now. Imagine a Cleveland whose center is rooted in this historical context but also builds on the insight of the founders for development in the 21st century.

I would buy a condo there in a heartbeat. Cool area, and close to everything I'd like to be close to.

krazyk47And I happen to think Dutch rowhouses like you would find in Brugge are perfectly appropriate for housing on an inland waterway. Not everyone likes concrete and glass shoeboxes.

ciceropoloIt would be a cool idea. Probably could be incorporated into the canal basin park design as an interesting mini amusement park / museum center, like a Navy Pier. And a launching point for those on European style travel to NE Ohio. They could then visit Cuyahoga Valley Natl. Park, Stan Hywet Hall, Canton Football HOF, Zoar village in New

Philly and then travel back in say a weekend.

For instance, use that spot as a fascinating way for those taking the Redline Greenway to take a giant slide down to Columbus road or the Metro-park River-gate park area in a creative way. If you were on the redline greenway portion that is on the viaduct and looked down it would be very cool to see the old grid alignment in lights. Sort of a 'follow the yellow brick road to emerald city', instead for CLE it would be follow the lights to former industrial powerhouse of 19th century and have cool museum with interactive type exhibits on everything from coal, mining, steel manufacturing, it would have been a potential interesting site for the old massive Hewlett un-loaders that looked like an industrial dinosaur to be a feature.

cleveland.com Plain Dealer: Letter to the Editor ~ 6/10/16

Steven Litt's commentary (May 30) captures Cleveland's next great development opportunity -- reviving the long neglected Cleveland Centre on Columbus Peninsula. Dan Rothenfeld, Cleveland artist and urban design activist, outlines a visionary scheme that catapults the peninsula to the forefront, creating a nationally recognized symbol of Cleveland. Litt notes in his web posting (May 1) that many ideas have been put forward to resurrect the area, but Rothenfeld's is one of the few that merits serious consideration.

This vision for the future lies in reclaiming an authentic past. The Cleveland Centre sunburst pattern of orderly streets dating from 1833 is the pivot of the peninsula -- and of the city. Development projects underway -- Canal Basin Park, Cleveland Rowing Club's Foundry project, and Metroparks expansion -- are not threatened in Rothenfeld's plan; they are enhanced by the unifying principle his discovery provides.

Litt points to the sizzle the world would sense if the peninsula were brought to life with light. A radiant Cleveland Centre would create a nationally recognizable image -- as iconic as the San Francisco Golden Gate Bridge or St. Louis Arch. [The author is a professor of history at Oberlin College.]

Clayton Koppes,

Cleveland