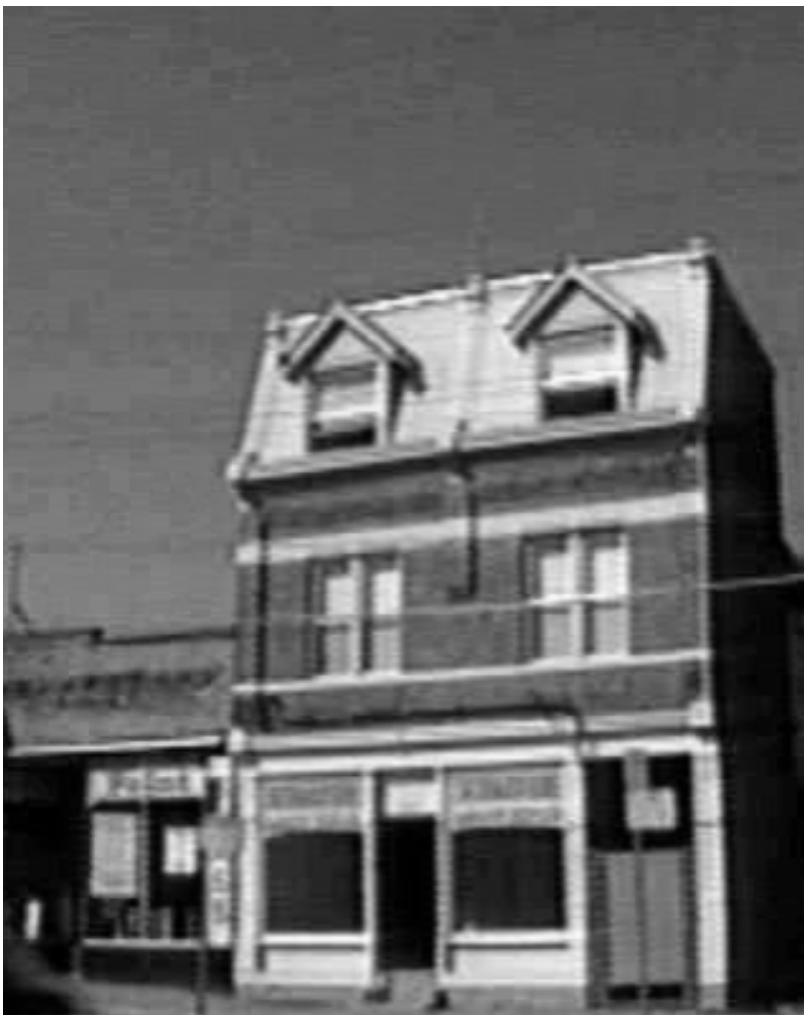


Landmark Designation Request
4030 Glenway Avenue
The Brinker Building



Submitted to: Doug Owen, Urban Conservator
City of Cincinnati Department of Planning & Community Engagement

Prepared and submitted by: 8K Company
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September 5, 2025



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Introduction

At 4030 Glenway Avenue, the Brinker Building is one of few examples of architectural styles dominant in the early 20th-century transitional period that still remain in the Glenway Avenue “East” business district, as defined in the West Price Hill’s 2022 *Belong Be Strong* business district revitalization plan. The Brinker Building was erected in 1910, having seen little alterations in terms of use, footprint, roofline, and interior characteristics. The building is transitional in style, having been built at the tail end of the Victorian era when styles were shifting from heavy ornamentation and detailing to more simplified, pragmatic design. Elements of Second Empire, Italianate, and Queen Anne styles are present on the façade. A typical mixed-use building of the era, the Brinker Building has been home to multiple residents and families as well as numerous small businesses over the past century.

According to CZC 1435-07-01, the Brinker Building (3) *embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction that represents a significant and distinguishable entity*. The request is also consistent with Chapter 1435-03 of the Cincinnati Zoning Code (Historic Conservation), “*to safeguard the heritage of the city by preserving districts and landmarks which reflect elements of its history, architecture and archeology, engineering or culture*”. Preserving the Brinker Building will result in the meticulous preservation of one of very few unmodified 100+ year old structures along this area of Glenway Avenue.

Setting

Located on the north of Glenway Avenue, between Gilsey and Iliff Avenues in West Price Hill, the Brinker Building sits at street level, directly accessible from the sidewalk and road. Today, Glenway Avenue serves as a major thoroughfare for commuters traveling between Cincinnati neighborhoods and beyond, while also acting as a central hub for local commerce and education within the Glenway Avenue East business district. The area is home to a mix of small businesses such as LaRosa’s Pizzeria, Custom Cutts Barbershop, and Brogan-Hesketh Formal Wear, alongside larger institutions like Elder High School, Seton High School, and the Boys and Girls Club. Together, they make Glenway Avenue East a primary center of economic and community activity in West Price Hill.

Architectural Significance

Having been built in 1910, the Brinker Building can be characterized by its transitional architectural style, representing a blend of Second Empire, Queen Anne, Neoclassical Revival, and other styles of the era. The most striking feature is the mansard roof with paired, gabled dormers which were a hallmark of the French Second Empire style. By the time this structure rose, these styles were no longer cutting-edge, but the continued use here speaks to the enduring appeal of its vertical emphasis and distinctive roofline, especially for mixed-use commercial buildings seeking a touch of elegance.

Below the roof, the upper façade borrows from a variety of Victorian era traditions, visible in the tall, narrow windows of the second story and the accompanying use of contrasting stone lintels. The belt course is a feature often found in Second Empire, Italianate, and several other architectural styles of the era. Finally, an influence of Queen Anne style is evident through the corbelled brick cornice and partial pilasters on the second story. These details recall the mid-19th-century urban townhouse aesthetic, though here they are somewhat simplified, a reflection of more cost-conscious early 20th-century building practices.

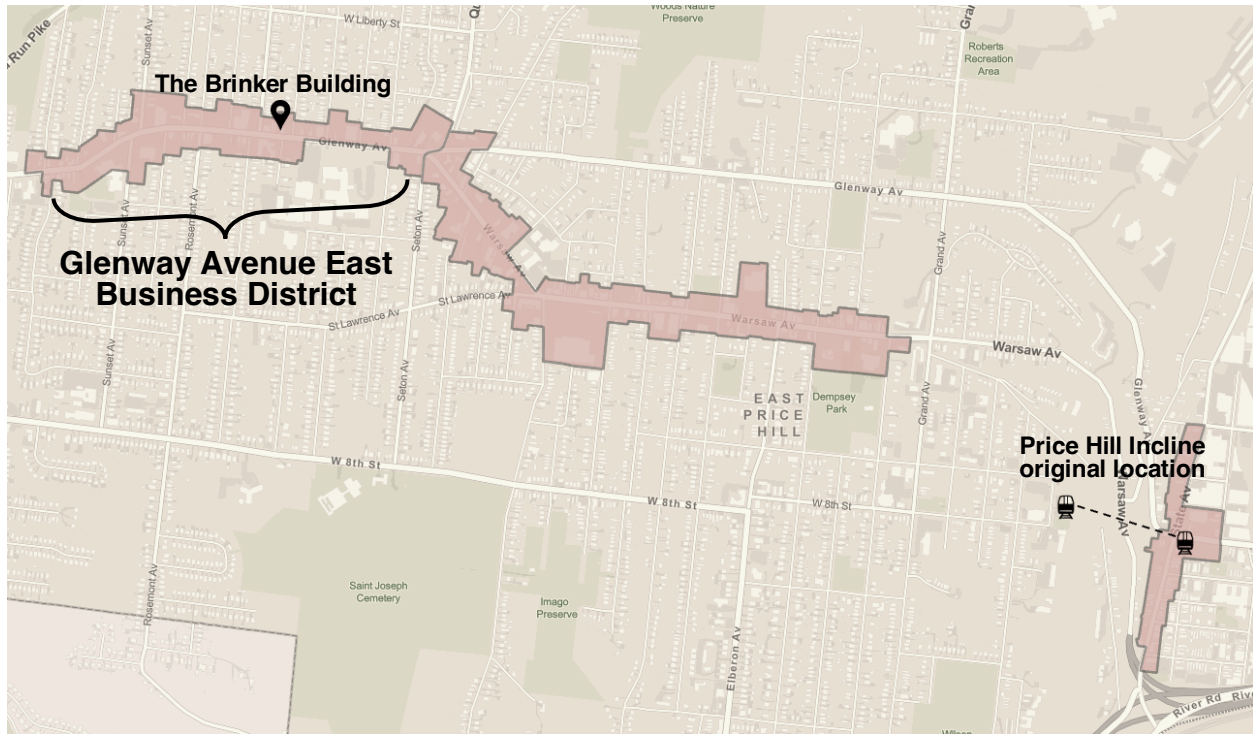
The storefront at street level has been heavily altered, but maintains the basic configuration of recessed entry flanked by display windows, hinting at an early 20th-century commercial style sensibility. The symmetry and flat plane of the façade also echo the pared-down, functional approach of Victorian era influences, though without that style's large expanses of glass.

In the context of Cincinnati's architectural landscape, this building is practically a poster child for local trends of the era. Around 1910, many of the city's smaller-scale commercial and residential structures still leaned heavily on Victorian-era stylistic vocabulary, even as national tastes shifted toward Beaux-Arts formality or Craftsman simplicity. Cincinnati builders often blended Italianate window proportions, robust brickwork, and decorative stone trim with the still-fashionable, but slightly old-fashioned, mansard roofs of Second Empire influence. This created a distinctive hybrid style that defined entire streetscapes, particularly in mixed-use corridors. It can be imagined that Glenway Avenue surrounding the Brinker Building may have once been home to many of these blended-style structures. The building's combination of practicality, ornament, and vertical presence embodies the way Cincinnati adapted older styles to fit modern needs without abandoning its architectural heritage, a practice that is still in place today.

Altogether, the building is a hybrid: a 1910 structure wearing the stylistic clothing of the late Victorian era, with Second Empire grandeur up top, Italianate refinement in the middle, and a pragmatic early 20th-century commercial base. It stands as a reminder that architectural fashion often lingers well past its supposed expiration date, especially in smaller-scale, utilitarian urban buildings.

Historical Significance

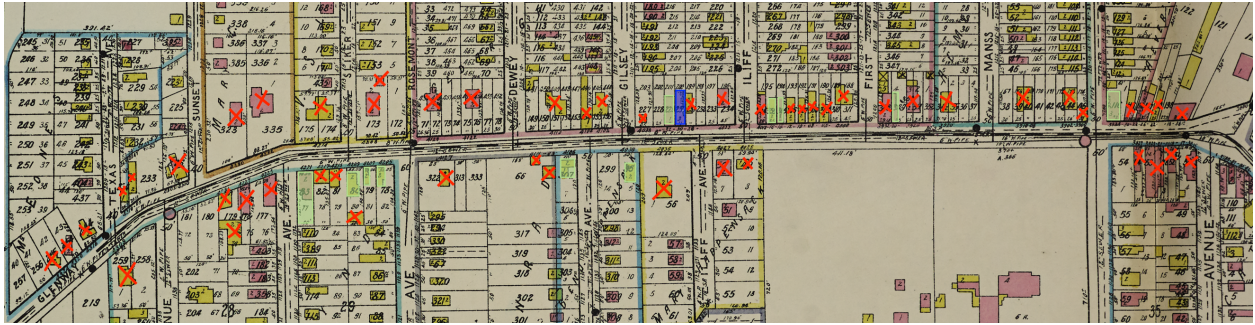
The area we now call Price Hill was settled in the early 19th century as Cincinnatians had a desire to escape pollution, congestion, and noise that defined downtown living at the time. General Rees E. Price purchased and developed large areas of the hill, giving the neighborhood its name. The construction of an incline from downtown to Price Hill catalyzed development in the neighborhood, leading to the migration of thousands of residents. At its base, where 8th Street meets Glenway Ave, commercial activity flourished, establishing Glenway as one of the West Side's primary business corridors.



What is now the Glenway Avenue East Business District was, and still is, a hub for education and faith. In 1854, the Sisters of Charity of Cincinnati founded Mount St. Vincent Academy, a combined day and boarding school for girls, at their initial motherhouse located at Mount Harrison on East Price Hill. Three years later, in 1857, they acquired the expansive Judge Alderson estate in West Price Hill, just across Glenway Avenue from where the Brinker Building now stands. They called this property “Cedar Grove”. By 1858, a new academy building was erected on the property to accommodate growing enrollment. This site not only served as the motherhouse but also became the vibrant center of their educational and spiritual mission; it remained home to Mount St. Vincent Academy until 1927, when Seton High School took its place.

The Brinker Building, constructed in 1910, provides a window into the block’s commercial history. From 1910 to 1915, it housed Franz Brinker Hardware, run by its namesake, a German immigrant who lived and passed away at 4030 Glenway. In 1916–1917, the building was home to Leo Dirr F. Hardware, before the business relocated to 3629 Warsaw by 1923. Later, from 1929 to 1943, Stein’s Cleaners, operated by Robert Stein, occupied the space, reflecting the growing neighborhood service economy. In 1922, Elder High School laid its cornerstone across the street from the Brinker Building. Since then, this block of Glenway has remained a hub for Catholic life on Cincinnati’s West Side, with Glenway Avenue serving as the neighborhood’s main street.

The Glenway Avenue East Business District is approximately 0.5 miles of Glenway Ave. In 1922, it was lined with approximately 65 frame and brick, stone, or concrete buildings, one being the Brinker Building. Of the 65, only 12 still stand as of today’s date. The map below shows just which buildings stand (green) including the Brinker Building (blue). The remaining 53 were demolished at some point in history. Most of the remaining dozen are heavily modified from their original design and/or dilapidated and blighted, as evidenced in Exhibit A.



Storefront activity declined during WWII as the Price Hill Incline was closed, reducing foot traffic along Glenway Avenue. Thereafter, the building may have been home to miscellaneous small businesses. By the 1970s, Tom Carlton Movers was operating there. The most recent use of the building was as apartments and a police substation in 2007. Since then, the building has sat vacant and fallen into deterioration. While structurally sound, the Brinker Building is in urgent need of reinvestment to ensure preservation.

Community Engagement

The Brinker Building is neighbor to two notable anchor institutions: Elder and Seton High Schools – both coming with large communities. In 2018, community members and residents fought proposed demolitions. They were successful: demolition efforts were “paused to honor the neighborhood’s desire to see the buildings saved and reutilized”. In 2019, Price Hill Will acquired the property that the Brinker Building sits on, as well as surrounded parcels, with the intention to redevelop the site in order to benefit the neighborhood and Elder and Seton communities. Now, to achieve this goal, historic designation is sought in order to unlock additional financing opportunities and deliver a product to the community that deserves it.

Landmarking of the Brinker Building is in line with the neighborhood’s community plan *Belong Be Strong* (2022), specifically:

Business Development/Engagement

- Goal 1: Strive to revitalize empty storefronts in each business district.
- Goal 3: Connect and improve each business district through an improved pedestrian experience.

Marketing

- Goal 1: Promote the history and pride of West Price Hill.

Future Land Use goals

- Increasing commercial uses and meaningful development along each of the business districts
- Revitalize empty storefronts in each business districts
- Developing and enhancing the aesthetic and identity of the main transportation corridors

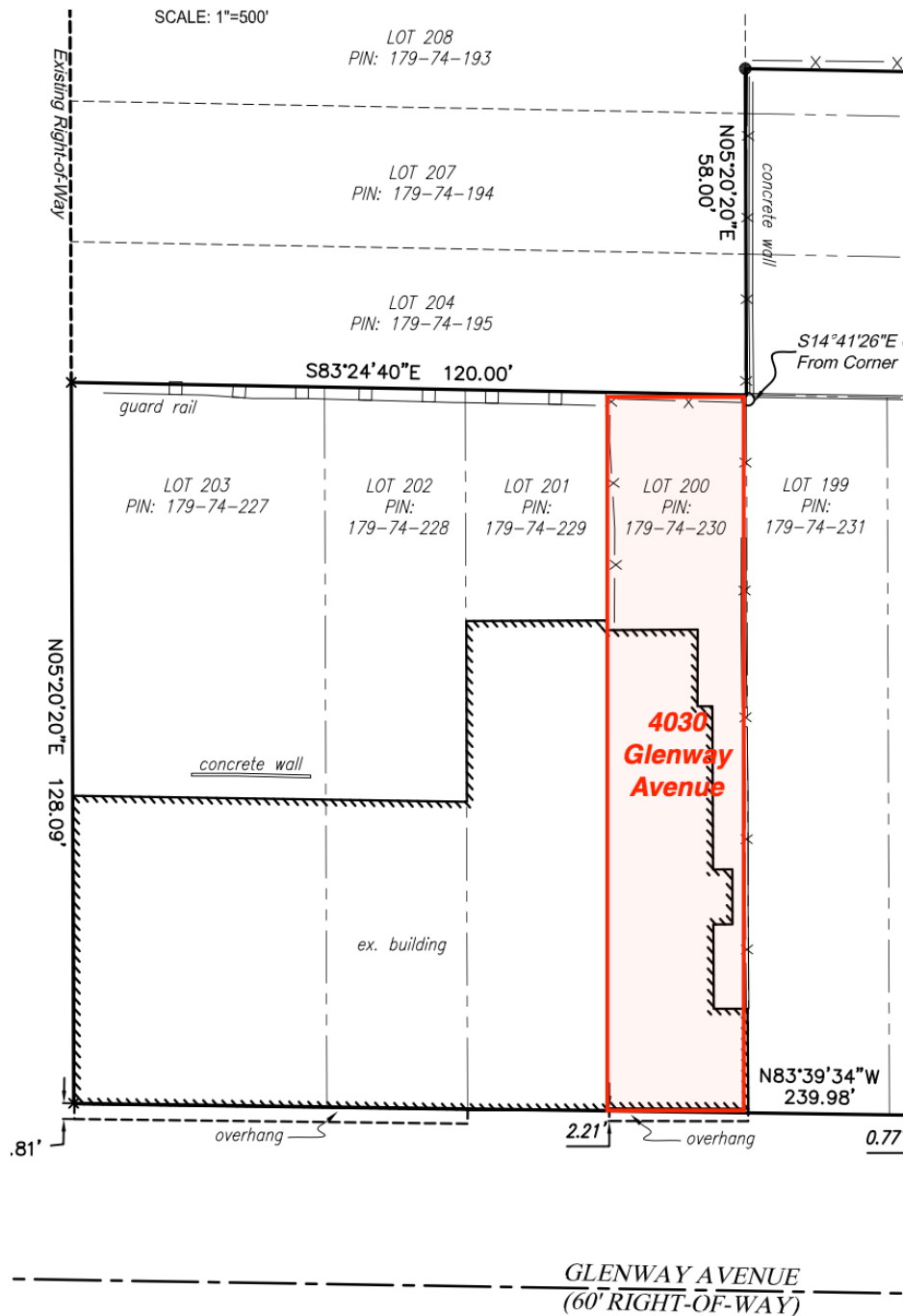
Legal Descriptions

Property Address: 4030 Glenway Avenue, Cincinnati, Ohio 45205

Auditor’s Parcel No.: 179-0074-0230-00

Situate in the City of Cincinnati, Hamilton County, Ohio, being known and designated as Lot No. 200 of the Subdivision of The Cedar Grove Land and Building Association as shown by the plat thereof recorded in Plat Book 4, Page 220 of the records of Hamilton County, Ohio fronting 25 feet on the north side of Glenway Avenue, known, numbered and designated as Municipal Number 4030 Glenway Avenue and extending back 127.57 feet in depth and being the same premises set forth and described in the deed from Benjamin B. Pink to Sarah Bishow recorded February 16, 1924 in Deed Book 1320, Page 522 of the Deed Records of Hamilton County, Ohio, and being the same premises set forth and described in the deed from Sarah Bishow to Rubin Stein and Tillie Stein recorded February 16, 1924 in Deed Book 1325, Page 203 of the Deed Records of Hamilton County, Ohio

Map of Boundary



Justification of boundary

The boundary is based on the legally recorded boundary line for the property. 4030 Glenway occupies a single parcel which has no other structures.

Research methodology

Research was conducted in various methods, utilizing both online and hard copy resources and data. Sources include the Price Hill Historical Society, Cincinnati Hamilton County Public Library, Ohio Historical Newspapers, Digital Library from the Cincinnati & Hamilton County Public Library, Newsdex, and Sanborne Fire Insurance Maps.

References

<https://pricehill.org/Price-Hill-History>

<https://www.cincinnati.com/story/news/2021/08/30/price-hill-fighting-brewery-and-restaurant-near-elder-and-seton/8250676002/>

<https://www.proquest.com/hnpohiocollection1?accountid=39387>

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Incline Business District Master Plan, 2011, Price Hill Will

<https://cincinnati-transit.net/incline-pricehill.html>

<https://www.hmdb.org/m.asp?m=187292>

<https://rebeccawingo.com/courses/phwild/ph-wild/historic-landmarks/price-hill-incline/>

Belong, Be Strong: West Price Hill, 2022, Price Hill Will

Exhibit A

The following buildings appear on the 1922 Sanborn Map in the present day Glenway Avenue East Business District area. The screenshots show their existing state as of 2024 or 2025. This Exhibit is not exhaustive. Building dates are approximate, based on Hamilton County Auditor data.



3834 Glenway Ave – built 1900



4016 Glenway Ave (left) – built 1900 & 4014 Glenway Ave (right) – built 1900



4105 Glenway Ave – built 1900



4205 Glenway Ave – built 1908



4207 Glenway Ave – built 1905



4209 Glenway Ave – built 1903