

People and Downtown Revitalization

Medicine Hat, Alberta

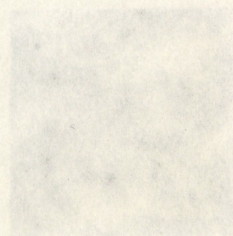


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People and Downtown Revitalization
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June 15/87

THE VIABILITY OF THE CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT
in
MEDICINE HAT, ALBERTA

by
Jeanie May Gartly

Submitted to the School of Architecture as
Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

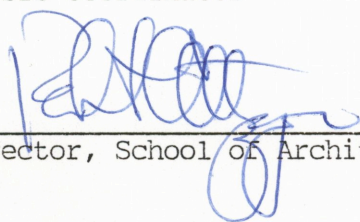
BACHELOR OF ARCHITECTURE

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Dedication

To my family

...for all their love, support, and prayers.

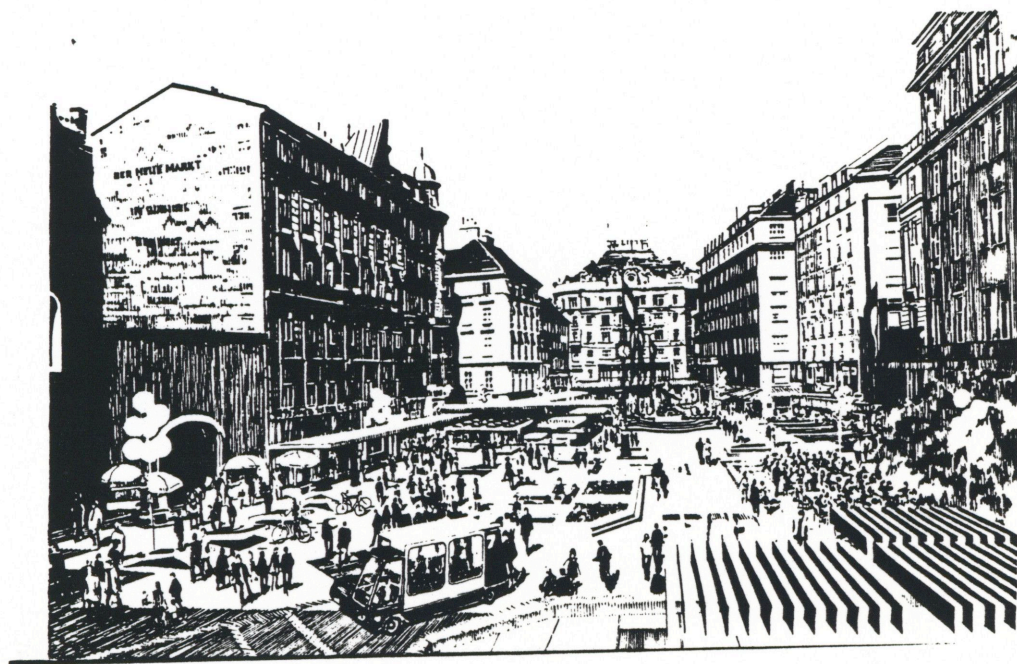
For I know the plans I have for you;
plans to prosper you and not harm you,
plans to give you a future and a hope.

Jeremiah 29:11

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Forward



The concern of the survival of the city is growing rapidly in all parts of the world and has therefore posed many controversial and challenging problems as to the future of the urban city and more specifically the city core. It has evoked such issues as - What is the role of the city core? - Why is it deteriorating? - Can it be helped? - Is urban renewal viable? If so, how does one go about it? - and the list continues causing very different and often emotional responses from the public, the city and federal leaders, the urban planners and architects of today. I believe the city core is vital to not only the survival of the city as a whole but to each individual that strives to anticipate a better future.

"The special attention which is being paid to the core is justified by the preeminence of its role, within the entire urban organism. It represents its heart, its brains and its soul. Every town, every city, every metropolis of the world possesses a core." ¹

Despite the role the city core plays in the city and society as a whole, they are deteriorating and losing their function as the "heart" of the city and therefore raising the issue of urban revitalization. Something needs to be done to avoid this deterioration and give them back the role they once possessed.

Each city's size, history, economic, and social functions vary, therefore urban revitalization as a general guideline may not improve the different concerns of each city's core but a specific understanding of what people need and want in their daily lives, both the physical and sociological aspects, can have a positive outcome.

Much controversy has been evoked over the viability of urban revitalization. Nonetheless, it has received greater recognition and understanding as a positive solution to improving the quality of the city core.

"If cities are to remain viable entities there must be improvements, and urban revitalization is the means for making better communities."²

Success lies in determining the city core as the foundation of the city then striving to improve what exists in the core. A thorough understanding of the city cores past and present functions is a must in order to anticipate what is required to revitalize it as the "heart" of the city.

"It is possible through counting and measuring, to quantify those factors which permit conclusions to be reached concerning economic and functioning characteristics relating to the body of the city."³

Successful attempts at a solution in revitalization have focused on the people as the stronghold.

An understanding of human behavior and attitudes must be established in order to design the physical functions. Because people are the force as to whether a downtown core will deteriorate or survive, the focus must be on their needs and reactions.

"...the city reflects, as in a magnifying mirror, all human qualities, instincts, virtues, and sins, in the most concentrated and easily recognizable and exposed form."⁴

In order to make it economically stable and once again the "heart" of the city, the goal therefore, is to find a solution that will attract the greatest number of people to make the greatest usage of the downtown core.

"An old downtown area can be revitalized. Although some American cities are distressed by the lack of people in downtown streets at all hours, Munich shows us how to make the city attractive to many people and, therefore, busy day and night.

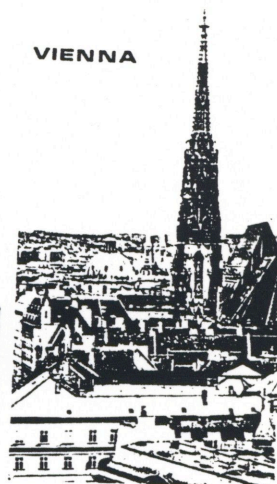
After desire and hope, a master plan is required. With initiative by government and with support from business and citizens generally, talented design professionals can create a comprehensive and comprehensible plan to guide action.

Urban vitality and spirit depend on the presence of many people working and playing. Handsome architecture alone, thoughtful planning alone or sound engineering alone won't create a lively and humanistic city. Munich demonstrates the importance of orchestrating many disciplines to create a better environment."⁵

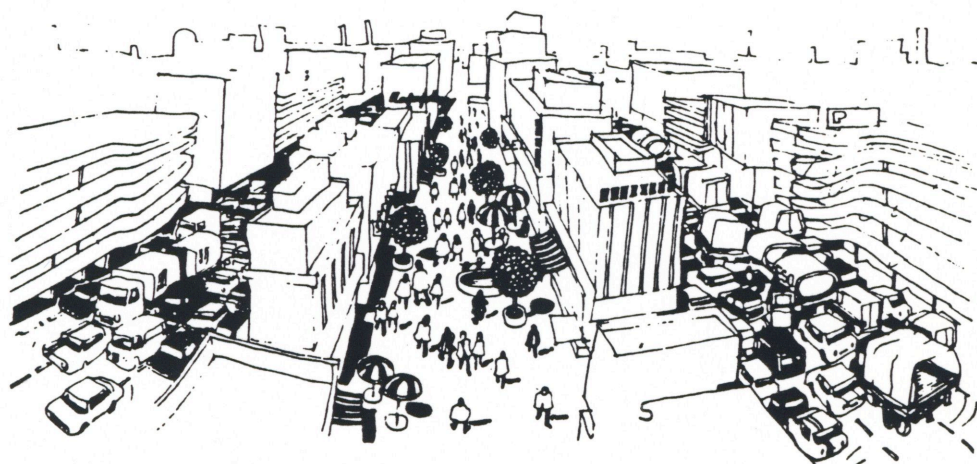
Although urban revitalization is a subject that has been studied in many aspects, both negative and positive it is still viable of consideration in many specific situations. To research it in light of what it can improve or enhance is worthy of both time and effort in a thesis project -- that which maintains and defends a proposition.

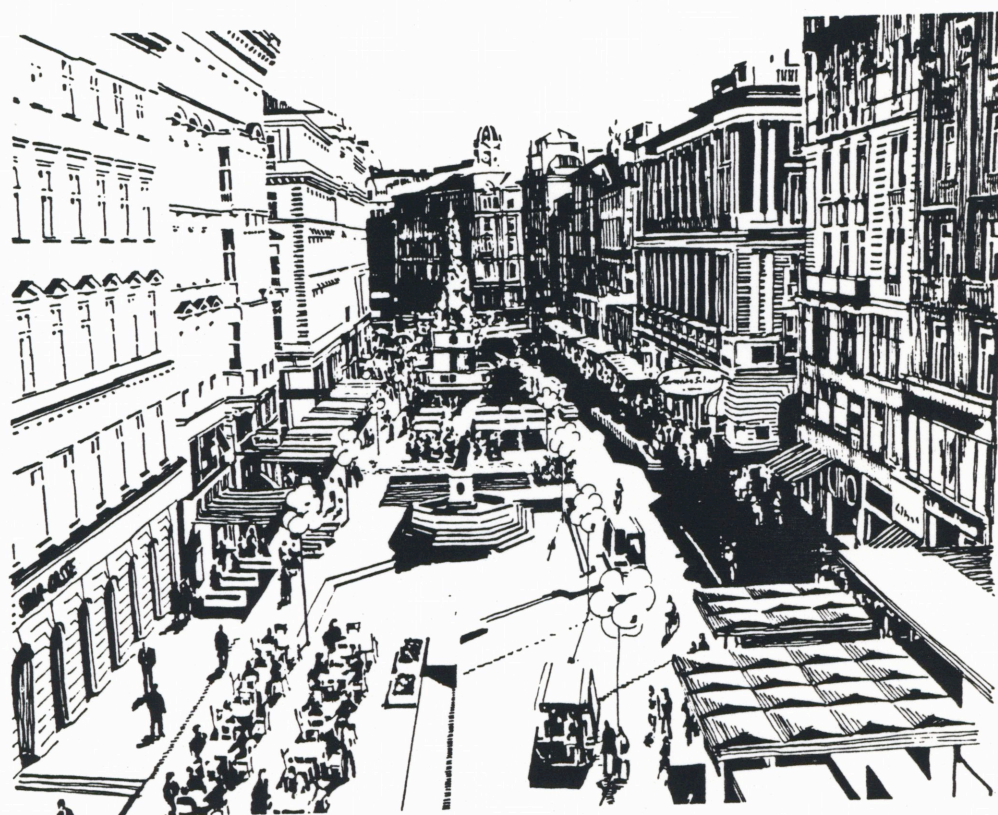


P A R I S



VIENNA





Introduction

Many large cities have pursued urban revitalization with much success as well as disappointment but their ability to survive seems strong as this is where the most organization and leadership is. The smaller cities have been overlooked in many cases despite the fact that they have basically the same fundamental functions that the larger ones do, therefore the same overall problem of a deteriorating city core. For this reason the small city also has potential in urban revitalization.

A desire to study the role of the downtown core and establish it viable for urban revitalization in the small city has lead me to choose Medicine Hat, Alberta (pop. 41,493/84) as a city that has the potential for successful revitalization. Medicine Hat, like many large and small cities, has been affected by

"...suburbanization and the decentralization of urban populations and services, homes, jobs, shopping and cultural activities to fragmented suburban locations ...the result...has been the threatened collapse of many traditional functions of the central city and its heart - the central business district."⁶ (f_{1,2})

By establishing the viability of urban revitalization in the downtown core the next step is to analyze the quality it expresses in its history and present functions and how these things are providing or not providing for the populations needs. Throughout this study my goal was to analyze all the affecting issues that either helped or hindered the downtowns stability - a stability that is centred on drawing the greatest number of people to make the greatest use of the downtown core. Never forgetting that the people are the primary issue in bringing life back to the downtown core.

The question worthy of study is "What are the necessary ingredients to make the city become again the centre in people's lives?"⁷ I believe this question has different answers depending on the different size, history and functions of the specific city. But by striving for a thorough understanding of the individual city, one or many positive solutions can be established. Medicine Hat has the historical, cultural, and social

aspects that people relate to and therefore by thorough study of the affect of these aspects, solutions can be proposed that will successfully bring life back to the downtown.

In my study I tried to establish a list of issues - regional and urban context, pedestrian/vehicular circulation, transit, existing buildings, the visitors role, geographical/natural distinctions, socio-economic and character/historical - to analyze and draw conclusions in order to develop the options available in revitalizing the downtown.

Many problems became apparent in a study that weighed the pros and cons that exist in each issue - problems that had possible solutions by other issues or had been successfully handled in urban revitalization case studies. The two main conclusions I revealed through my research were that no special attention was given to a "pedestrian environment." Although the downtown core has a historical character that the population takes pride in, no sensitive consideration has been taken to enhance the experience this character can provide for the pedestrian as he/she moves through this area. The second conclusion established the issues that the downtown lacked in its ability to portray spirit on a 24-hour basis. When the commercial closed at the end of the day the whole downtown also closed therefore it did not have the ability to continue as a people-oriented city core. The people, being this spirit in the downtown, need to be integrated into the core as well as drawn in on a 24-hour basis. Many options of cultural, recreational, and entertainment complexes have proved viable and successful in this problem. My goal through this research was to draw conclusions on these issues in order to establish the best possible viable solution to what the downtown is lacking in its ability to draw people - the proximity of people to both enhance and stabilize the usage of downtown. The answer is therefore, best quoted,

"It seems the biggest gap is the lack of residential near the centre for all income groups who will become the supporting "back bone" for downtown activity"⁸

The goal now, as an architect, is to research this residential aspect in order to design a residential complex that will prove successful and

therefore hold true its viability.

"We should therefore conclude that a humanly desirable urban organism should be healthy and vigorous of body and mind and should have a soul, and further, that these conditions should be most forcibly expressed within the heart of the city - its core. In the city core the must be presented all the most essential urban qualities and functions, which, through outstanding characteristics and qualities rather than through impressive quantity, express the essence of urbanity. Because the city core can fulfill its task of achieving human communications between a large variety of functions only if it is compact, it is necessary to use the limited space available with wisdom and through selectivity"⁹

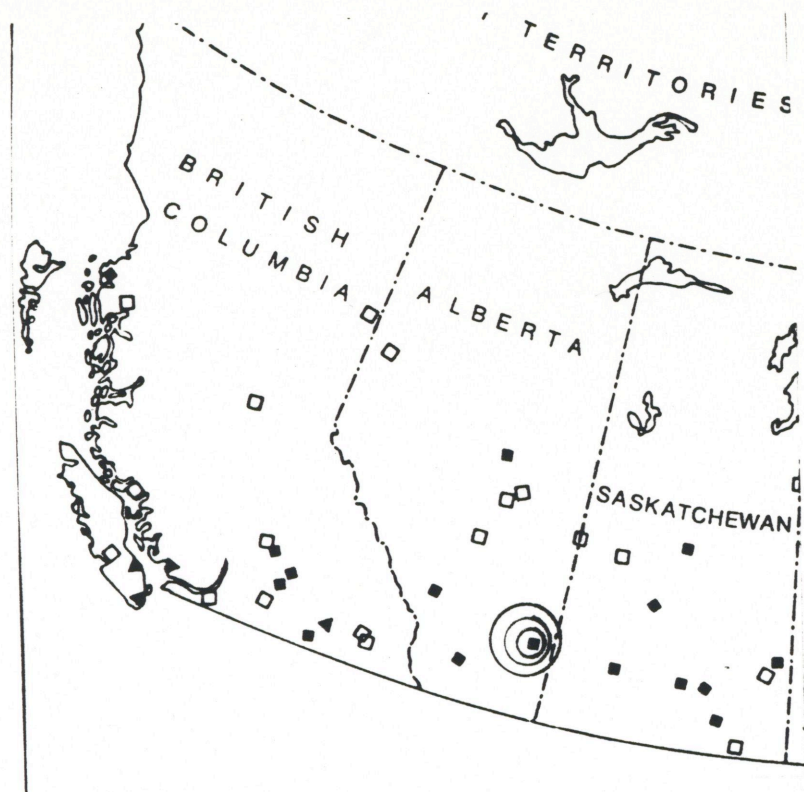


Fig 1

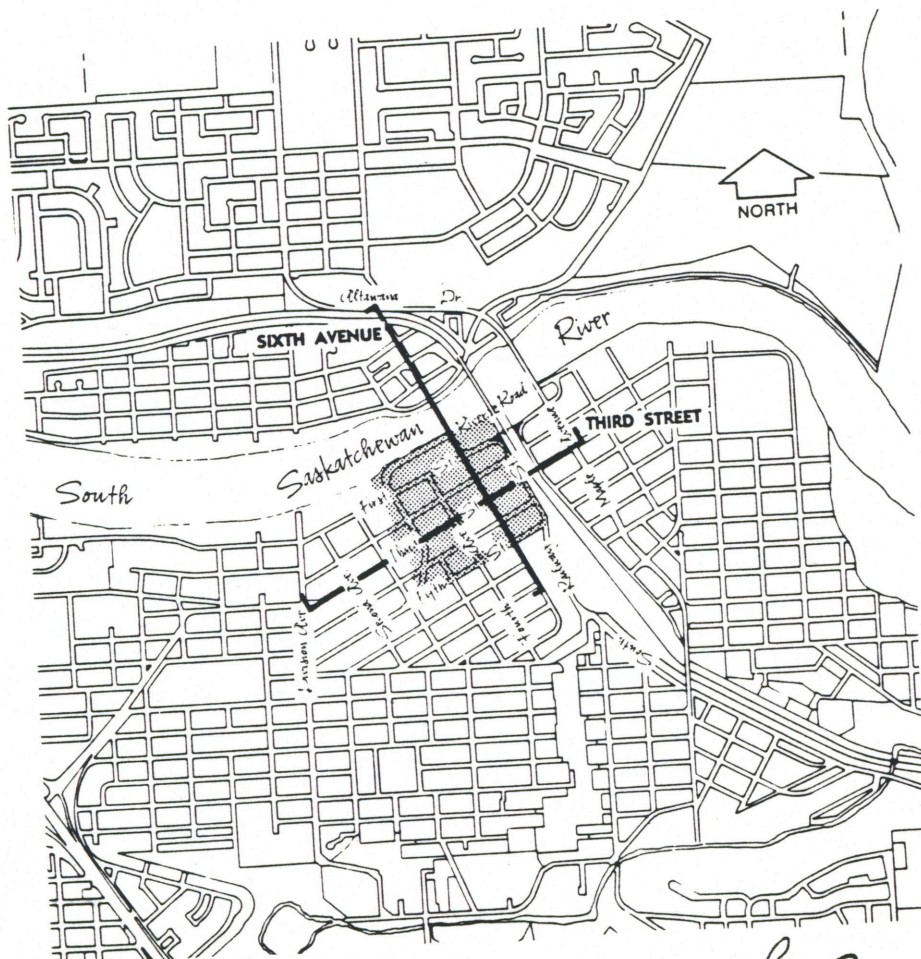


Fig 2

Urban Revitalization Research

Viability of Central Business District

The Central Business District is the original centre of development from which the rest of the city has grown whether directly or indirectly - it provides the city's roots and image. Being the original centre, it holds significance due to its setting, central accessibility and its historical values. The diversity in architecture buildings, activities, and ability to draw extremes of people to the CBD portray a city's image - provide character.

"This undefinable term which in public relations lingo is referred to as the "image" is also the one force which, more than any other, ties together the inhabitants in an emotional attachment or love for their city..we know that there are certain ingredients which seem to be indicative: natural settings within and around the city - rivers, lakes, hills, and the climate and the manner in which all this has been integrated into the urban form, historical heritage as expressed by specific buildings, streets, and squares; outstanding structures utilized for significant functions, and which become landmarks, attaining symbolic value."¹⁰

Central Business Districts include more than retail but also contain most all civic and financial transactions which make it an area of the city that has the highest level of interaction and one-on-one communication. A study of interaction in St. Catherines, Ontario concluded,

"...for government to be efficient and effective, people must meet people on an ever increasing scale. Most satisfactory place for this to happen is in the centre of the city. Such a location benefits the city...the advantage of city...(can) be measured positively through the increased assessment that would be generated by a greater volume of business. Moreover, if cities are to be redeveloped as one of the major expressions of our culture, our society should be endeavoring to promote their improvements in as many ways as possible."¹¹

"...it remains that the CBD is the most complex, intriguing and interesting locality of its city. It is an urban synthesis...the symbolic summation of the whole city... Because we could not create a downtown today...we should realize its unique appeal and not allow it to be made into the image of the simple realms that ring it."¹²

So its variability depends on creating or improving upon this atmosphere in order to draw the greatest number of people in to make the greatest use of the downtown area. Because of the historical and social values that originated in the CBD and play a major role in drawing people in, they will also determine the economic growth of the cities future. One must strive for a quality that will meet the people needs yet still be aware of the fact that change will always occur but can be dealt with if people's attitudes and reactions are considered sensitively in the urban planning and design process.

URBAN CONTEXT

History ¹⁵

Initial human settlement in the region began with the activities of Indian tribes and the first permanent settlements were those of fur trade posts.

Medicine Hat was a railroad town, born in 1883 when the CPR workers arrived and built a wooden trestle bridge across the river and laid out their construction camp. It was the only centre in the region that occurred on water as well as in the usual railway location. The Northwest Mounted Police set up headquarters as it was a tough town. Stores, hotel and a post office were set up along with a lumber yard and coal mine. The wooden CPR bridge was washed out and replaced by a steel structure with a swing section (it was later fixed in position). (f₃) (f_{4,5})

Between 1886-1892 the railwaymen struck gas while boring for water. This historic discovery in 1891, made Medicine Hat and Alberta famous, and prompted Kipling's description of Medicine Hat as "The city with all hell for a basement." Coal was also discovered at this time.

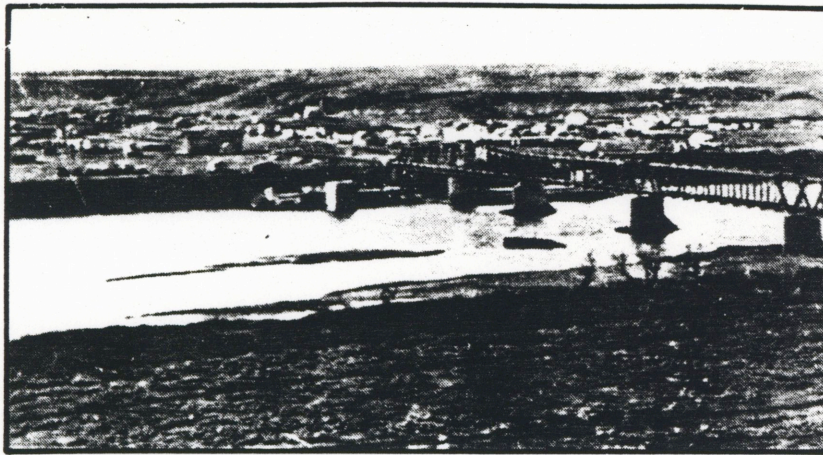
Medicine Hat was incorporated as a town in 1899 when the first town council was developed along with the construction of the courthouse. Record growth occurred from 1904-14 when the population increased to 11,000. Intense settlement occurred due to the railways and development of irrigation after WWI. Many of these settlers were from the USA and later from Europe. (f₆f₇)

The first town hall and fire station were built in 1901 and in 1905, the postal areas. It was incorporated as a city in 1907. A new City Hall and post office were built in 1906-07 and Finlay Bridge officially opened in 1908. All of these built in the present CBD. The Exhibition and Stampede - a celebration of western spirit and tradition - has been held annually since 1947.

Medicine Hat's 'boom years' before World War I is mostly owed to its natural resources that surround the city but also due to its location along the CPR and the agricultural opportunities. This wealth brought the building of many commercial, service, transportation and residential buildings that today are a part of the historic character of the downtown. They are representative of late-Victorian and Edwardian architecture. Some of these bring the Canadian Bank of Commerce (1907), Provincial Courthouse (1919) St. Johns Presbyterian Church (1902) and Hargrave Block (1901).(fg) Many hotels along the CPR railways were also built--Assiniboa Hotel (1901), Corona Hotel (1899), Royal Hotel (1904), and the Cecil Hotel (1912), to continue the support in the downtown. At this time Alberta Clay Products, Ltd. and Medicine Hat Pottery Company (later Medalta Potteries Ltd.) became the best known in the region, again because of the city's abundant natural resources. It was at this time that the city began to grow rapidly in all areas.

The city seemed to stabilize as far as architectural building until around the 1970's. At this time various buildings were designed in different areas. These being the 15-story Alberta Government Telephone Building (1974), the Arena Convention Centre (1969) and the Mayfair Manor residential high rise (1978). Two malls built in 1973 and 1979 on the southern portions of the city seemed to have been a factor in the downtown's stability--the suburban areas continually grew giving the malls economic support.

The 1980's brought about a new attitude of re-evaluating the role of the downtown and in efforts to bring back stability, various projects have taken place. The main one being the building of a \$22 million City Hall with adjoining Law Courts. In 1984, the Historic Walking Tour was put together where the historic buildings of the 1900's were given recognition as the historical foundation of the city. It was in 1986, that the Downtown Business Revitalization Zone (DBRZ) was put in effect to bring life and development back to the downtown core. The goal is to restore the 'heart' of the city by civic development, street improvements and historical character recognition. Hopes are to make the city once again like the 'boom years' of the early 1900's.



Medicine Hat, 1900

fig 3



fig 4

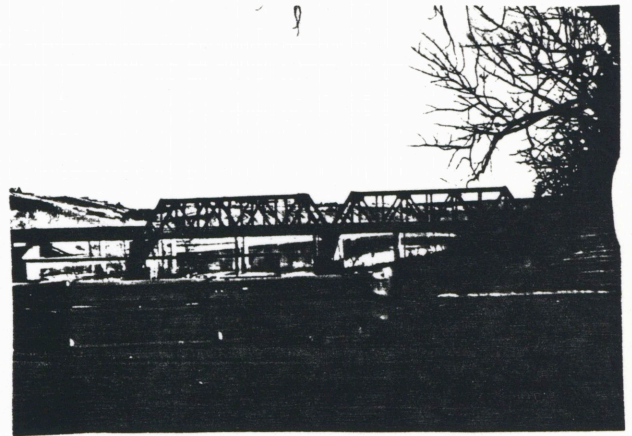
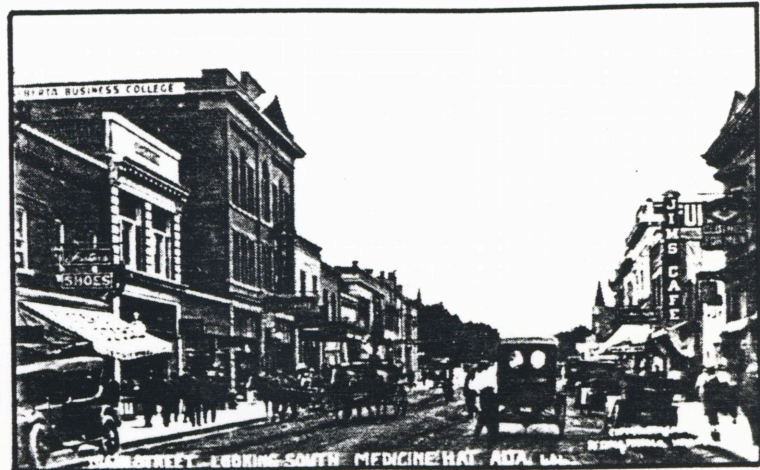


fig 5



Medicine Hat, 1913

fig 6



Porter Block (on left), 1913

fig 7

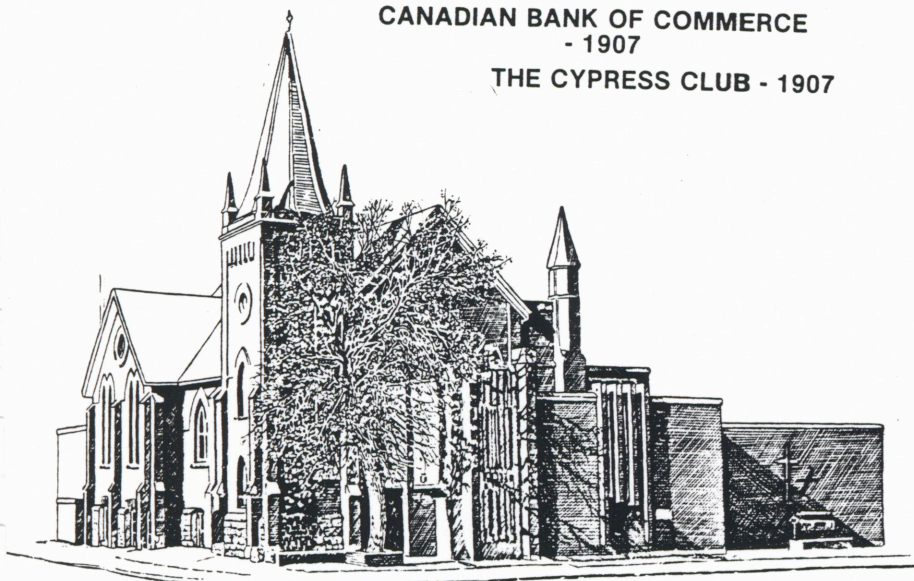
HISTORIC TOUR

downtown Medicine Hat



CANADIAN BANK OF COMMERCE
- 1907

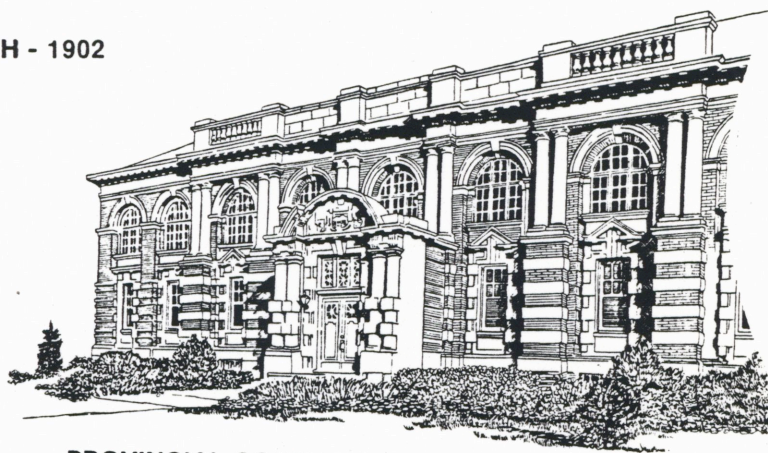
THE CYPRESS CLUB - 1907



ST. JOHN'S PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH - 1902



HARGRAVE BLOCK - 1901 — MERCHANTS BANK - 1898



PROVINCIAL COURT-HOUSE - 1919

fig 8

REGIONAL CONTEXT

Medicine Hat is located in the Southeast region of Alberta. It supports an approximate region of 100 mi. (160 km) in both Alberta and Saskatchewan with its medium to low order goods in both the agriculture and manufacturing industry fields. Due to the large population involved in this agriculture, Medicine hat has grown to be a retirement centre. A region that covers 10,500 sq. miles. It is also a transportation stage area for both goods and tourists due to the TransCanada Highway and railways going through the city.

The regional growth is steady but the total population is increasing at a slower rate than the rest of Alberta or Canada. (f_0)

REGIONAL POPULATION TARGET OBJECTIVES¹³

	1971	1981	1991	2001
1. Canada	21.5	24.0m	27.0m	30.0m
2. Alberta as % of Canada	1.6m 7.4%	1.9m 8.0%	2.3m 8.5%	2.7m 9.0%
3. Region as % of Alberta	51,000 3.1%	62,700 3.3%	80,500 3.5%	100,000 3.7%
4. Medicine Hat as % of the Region	26,500 53.0%	36,000 58.0%	50,000 63.0%	68,000 68.0%

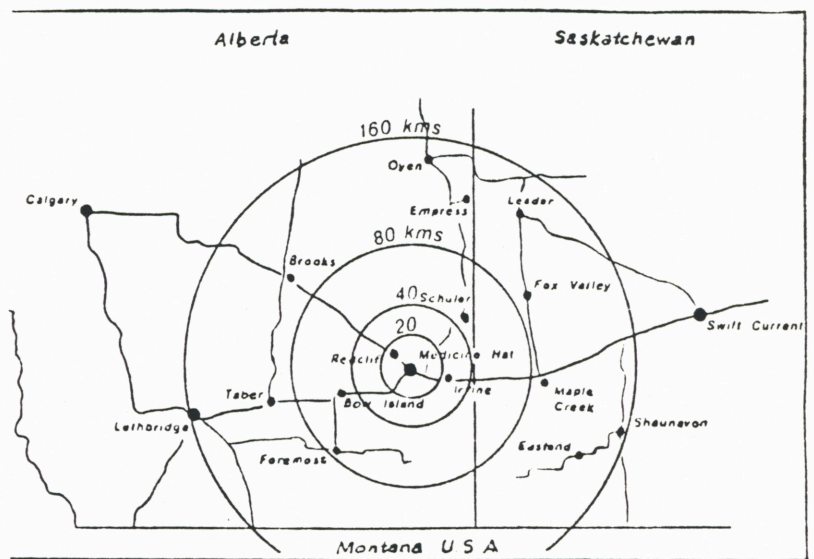
Medicine Hat has a high rate of aging and outmigration yet half the regional population is located here and the degree of urbanization is high.

The economic standing for the Medicine Hat region is very strong in its agro-industrial base. The trade catchment population is a major factor in sustaining the viability of business and commerce in the medium and high order services and functions.

Trade Catchment Area¹⁴

Low Order Functions	Medimum Order Functions	High Order Functions
30,865	45,724	45,922
(increase over 8 years to 1979 at rate of 3.1%)		
39,400	58,470	58,622

The discovery of medium grade crude oil 40 mi. west of Medicine Hat in 1980 has had an effect on the city of service activity, wholesale and retail trade. The economic and social potential of the region is more than adequate to support a growth rate of 2%/annum which is higher than projected for Alberta and Canada.



REGIONAL SETTING

Fig 9

Environment¹⁶

Medicine Hat's topographic setting is varied from its high coulee bluffs to the winding South Saskatchewan River and its valley. The river itself is the most dominant landscape element. Climate is also varied and ranges in extremes from mean winter temperatures of 10 F (-10 C) to summer temperatures of 65 F (21.2 C). Economically, the climate plays a role in that its approximate 2200 hours of sun a year provide the city with the largest growing season in the region. The surrounding flat plains cause almost constant winds of 10 mph from mostly the southwest - these also create chinook winds in the winter. Annual mean precipitation is 14" with a mean annual rainfall equalling 10" and snowfall 40 inches. Prairie thunderstorms are very irregular and unpredictable. All facilities should be designed with anticipation of rapid fluctuations and potential extremes of the climate. This is done by structures being designed to withstand flashflood and not designed in any manner that will increase the probabilities of flash flood damage to other lands or properties.

Demographic and Growth Patterns

The population growth has been irregular from its rapid growth during the construction of the railway in 1883 where it leveled off until the discovery of natural gas in 1891. Another boom took place after WWI when irrigation was introduced. The population increases are dependent on employment in gas or irrigation investments. It is continually growing at a rapid rate.

POPULATION TARGET¹⁷

Year	Population	Annual Increase	
		No.	%
1979/80	37,500	1,172	3.4
1981	38,700	1,200	
1982	40,000	1,300	
1983	41,300	1,300	3.3
1984	42,600	1,300	
1985	44,000	1,400	
1990	51,000	7,000	2.8
2000	65,000	14,000	2.6

The elderly population, 65⁺ being a significant proportion of the cities total, while the 0-19 year olds is decreasing and the working population increasing.¹⁸ Original development took place in the Valley along the South Saskatchewan River and eventually spread over the valley tops to the surrounding prairies. (f₁₂)

Consideration of the radius of users to the downtown and mall region will determine where the focus needs to be placed in improving its economy. The present primary users are the elderly (retired farmers) and high income due to their close vicinity and they are therefore the patronage that invest most in the CBD. The secondary users are outside the close vicinity but invest in the downtown for unique and specialized products and goods that are characteristic of the area. The mall region attracts primarily suburban families due to their close vicinity, the controlled environment and free parking. It therefore attracts a selected population. By providing for the diversity of people not only the immediate radius of users of the CBD will be drawn but all those that appreciate what the downtown represents.

Economic

The city is in a favorable position to expand due to the substantial areas of land available to develop, its ownership of basic utilities (gas and electricity) which provides favorable rates, a good climate for living and a competitive tax structure.¹⁹ This has caused the problem of mall competition as it has developed in land that is expandable--land outside the downtown. However, city-owned land within the downtown is available for development and needs to be used by encouragement of both city and private investment. (f₁₃)

Land usage in downtown cores are somewhat similar in that the most central spots tend to have the highest rent.

"...uses sort themselves out on the basis of need and ability to pay for the most central spot...regional functions of highest threshold are at the core, together with those uses whose sales are critically affected by pedestrian volume."²⁰

In the mall situation rents are dispersed more equally--by square footage. However the rent in the malls versus the downtown are much higher.



Fig 10

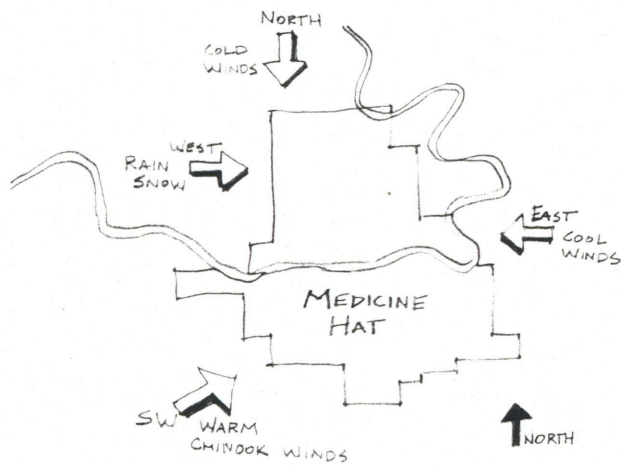


Fig 11

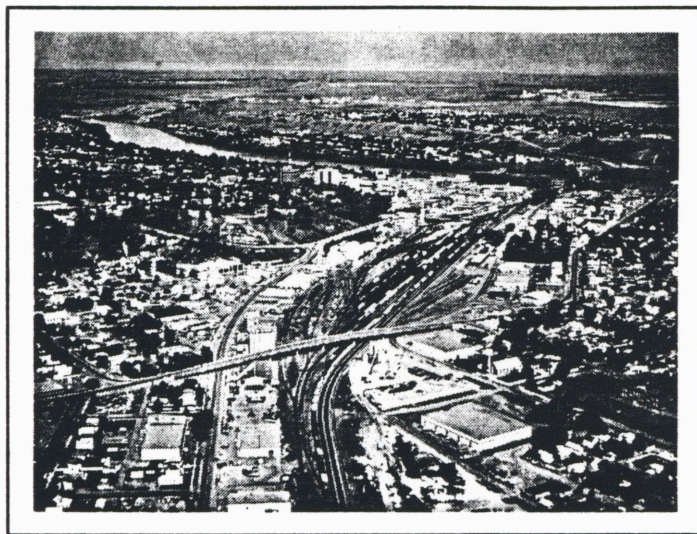


fig 12

CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT

The Medicine Hat Central Business District is defined by River Road on the north, Maple Street on the east, 5th Street on the south and 4th Avenue on the west.^{f14} The major elements are the South Saskatchewan River and the railway. The downtown is orientated on a regular block grid that runs parallel and perpendicular to the South Saskatchewan River. Views are provided towards the river and into surrounding valleys and plains. It is fairly flat with a gentle slope towards the river and a steep drop just before River Road. (^{f15})

DOWNTOWN AREA

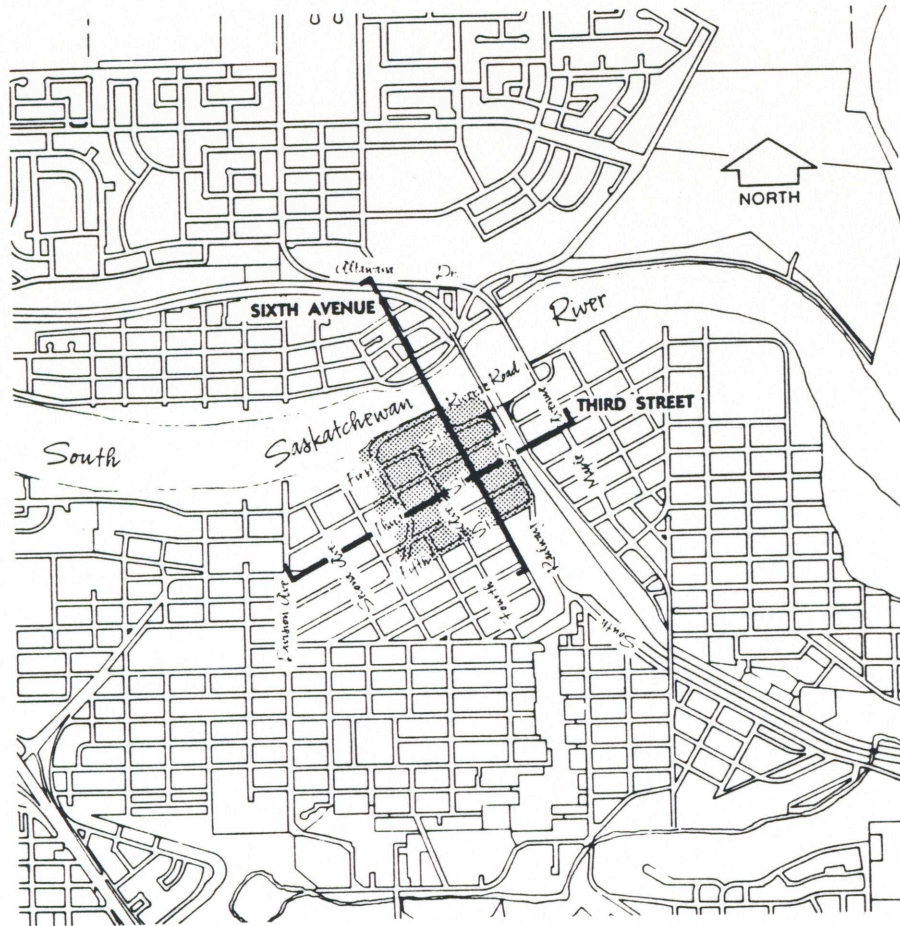
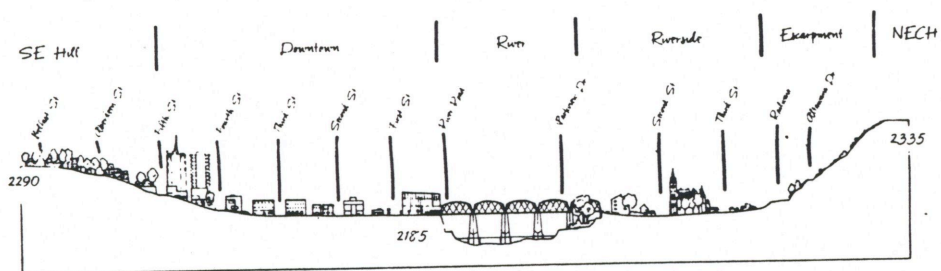


Fig 14

SIXTH AVENUE SECTION LOOKING WEST



THIRD STREET SECTION LOOKING NORTH

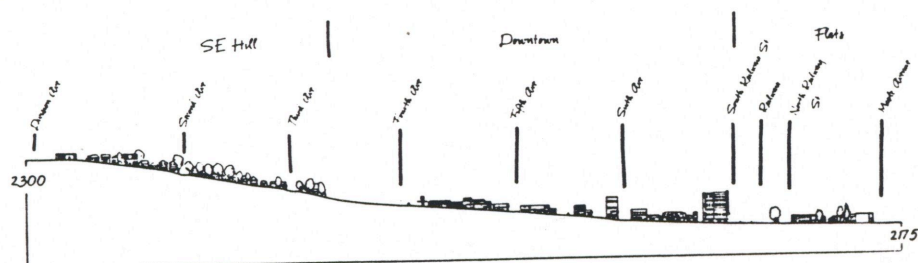


Fig 15

CULTURAL

Pedestrian Circulation

Because the downtown is an area subject to heavy pedestrian use, the pedestrians circulation and reaction to the environment is very important and needs to be consider sensitively. Therefore, the movement and security of people along the streets is of utmost importance. The Medicine Hat downtown core is a concentrated area of approximately three blocks square. Therefore it is convenient and walking is not a major issue for the pedestrian - 59% of the people will walk 2-4 blocks.²¹ In order to give the downtown a 'fighting chance' against decentralization an appealing environment of security, comfort and asthetic views must be provided. "The primary objectives of improved pedestrian circulation are safety, security, convenience and continuity, coherence comfort and asthetics. Fulfilling one of these objectives generally increases the opportunities for meeting or improving others."²² Traffic in today's society is also very directly related to the pedestrian circulation. At the present there is minimal vehicular/ pedestrian separation as traffic is visible on each of the three main streets and curbside parking is seen as a barrier. A streetscape photographic study was done in Seattle to emphasize the role of physical form in the pedestrian experience in relation to curbside parking. "Removal of automobiles from curb parking diminishes the visual distinction and feeling of confusement between sidewalk and street."²³¹⁷ Because the pedestrian circulation lacks visual clarity, the vehicle/pedestrian relationship is seen as a barrier. Therefore, by enhancing the pedestrian circulation this visual interference could be improved as was done in Calgary, Alberta when the Plus 15 Concept was implemented. It is a design term that refers to a measurement of height in feet above street level. It has proven successful as it costs the taxpayer little expense but is directed towards the developer as an incentive - they are able to develope over public property for the benefit of the public and in return they can expand the floor area of their buildings - to design public pedestrian areas. The more they provide the more floor area they receive.²⁴¹⁸ Another barrier is observed in the railways which are seen

as noisy and unappealing. The existing pedestrian underpass is neglected and unsafe therefore, contributing to this negative railway view.

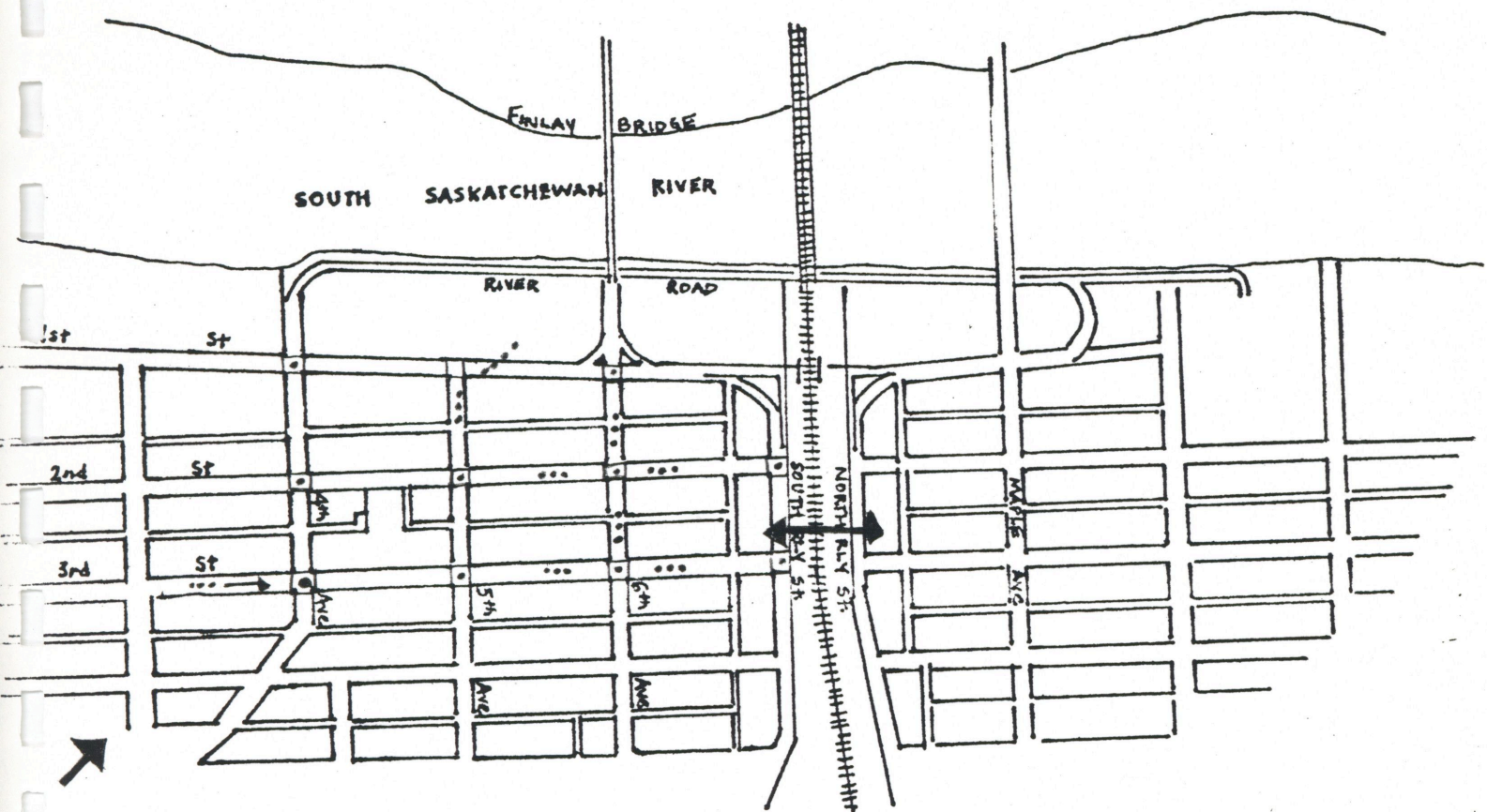
Although the downtown has minimal nodes of activity outside its commercial and civic services, space is available on empty sites to provide and improve aesthetics. Sheltered areas, benches or fountains - pedestrian amenities - tend to make the shopper slow down and wander both on the interior and exterior rather than just using the street as a channel. It was observed again in Seattle's 'Westlake' pedestrian mall that the pedestrian circulation can be changed from the "channel" idea to "pools" that are "...capable of holding (and absorbing) pedestrians according to their degree of attraction and their amenities."²⁵ It is however the designers job to understand the users needs in order to plan these spaces and amenities in hopes of the "pool" effect. In Medicine Hat, this created atmosphere that could take advantage of the natural river views or the historical architecture. The downtown core sits on the banks of the South Saskatchewan River, a natural feature which provides a large amount of visual open space and many interesting vistas.²⁶

Open spaces are vital to enhancing the downtown image. In order for them to be a success a correlation between people flow patterns and actual locations of open spaces is very important. They must be placed in the right places along the pedestrian flow pattern and have the ability to attract and hold pedestrians rather than just channelling them through. Medicine Hat has but two developed open spaces - the Old City Hall site and a memorial site along the river. Although both are pleasurable spaces they lack amenities to attract the pedestrian and are not located where the occupants use was understood. Space is available to develop - that would enhance the pedestrians shopping experience - that could take advantage of views.

"...the willingness of people to walk further cannot be modified to any great extent by form factors alone ...on the other hand, form considerations and perceived attractiveness and enjoyability of a place may well figure significantly in causing people to go to a specific place to meet a specific need, rather than an alternative location for the purpose."²⁷

A sensitive consideration must be taken in placing large open spaces as well as little nooks along the pedestrian pathway - fatigue points, in the shopping sequence or towards a view or architectural design. Some planned spaces appear comfortable, or at least habitable, but are unused as they are not along the pedestrians' path. Success in open spaces is observed in Seattle's Pioneer Square as they are placed in areas of high usage, provisions made for sitting, shelters from sun and rain also next to the public library and therefore used as reading spaces.²⁸ Other large spaces are frequented in spite of having no provision made for relaxation, because they are adjacent to the pedestrian, he will relax by standing on street corners and in "eddies" of space created by an irregularity of building construction or street furniture.²⁹ (f₁₉)

The transition zone from the vehicle to the store has little variety or pleasure, does not consider handicap accessibility or provisions for the winter climate. The lack of desirable, lively appearance both for day shopping and evening activity has a direct effect on the economy of the downtown.



Proposed Line
 → Proposed Line
 □ Proposed Line
 ○ Proposed Line
 ⇕ Proposed Line

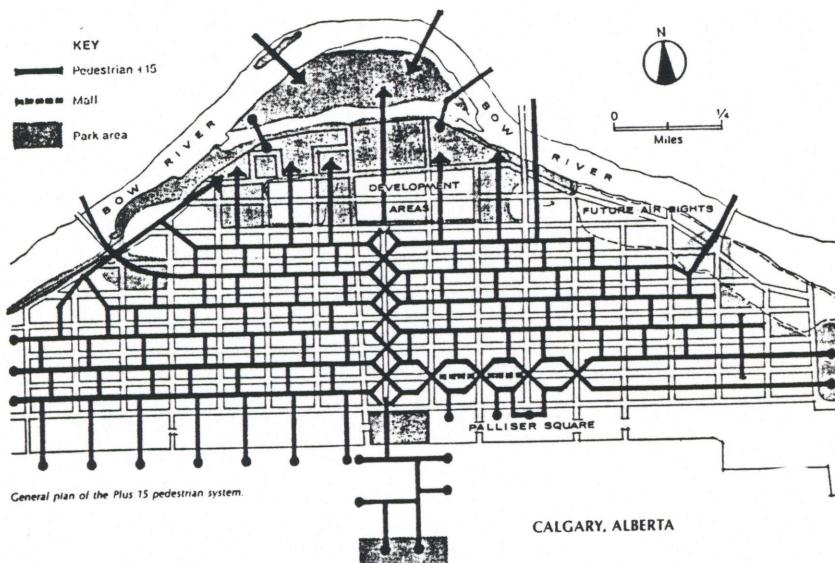
Fig 16



PEDESTRIAN-EYE VIEWS I The visual effect of curb parking (Note feeling of confinement when cars separate pedestrians from street)



Fig 17



A detailed study of Calgary's downtown was made in 1966. The recommendations were approved in principle in the master plan as follows:

1. Create a good pedestrian environment
2. Improve pedestrian and vehicular circulation (including buses)
3. Provide more open space
4. Strengthen Eighth Avenue as a pedestrian shopping street
5. Connect major buildings and places of interest
6. Relieve future traffic pressures by introducing a public railway system (rapid transit)
7. Create good pedestrian access to strategically located parking facilities

It was recognized that a strong downtown for Calgary would be possible only if it continued to be attractive to business interests and was made attractive for shopping and entertainment. Residential sections located downtown would support day/night activities in an area which otherwise has little life after working hours or on Sundays and holidays.

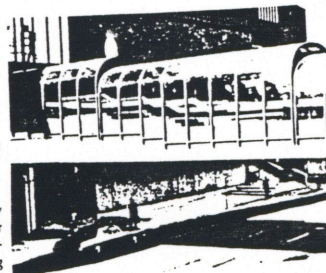
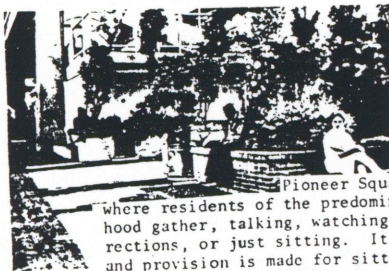
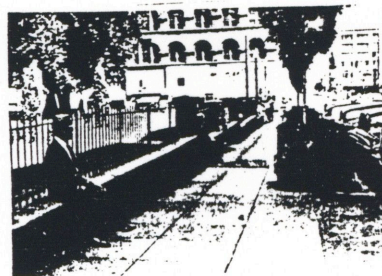
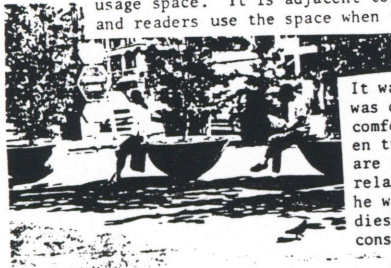


Fig 18



Pioneer Square, where residents of the predominantly low-income neighborhood gather, talking, watching traffic from several directions, or just sitting. It is an area of high usage, and provision is made for sitting and sheltering from sun and rain. The Public Library courtyard is the other high-usage space. It is adjacent to some of the reading rooms and readers use the space when the weather is fine.



It was found that proximity to pedestrian activity areas was of paramount importance. Some planned spaces appear comfortable, or at least habitable, but are off the beaten track and so are virtually unused. Other large spaces are frequented in spite of having no provision made for relaxation, because they are adjacent to the pedestrian, he will relax by standing on street corners and in "eddies" of space created by an irregularity of building construction or street furniture.

Fig 10

Pedestrian Activity (f₂₀)

The ability to draw people to the downtown and therefore increase the economic activity will be largely dependent on the activity it provides and maintenance of its diversity. The "heart" of the downtown is mainly defined by the commercial/retail and personal services. In Medicine Hat, these are the foundation of the core and are therefore centre on 2nd and 3rd Street and offer a one-on-one communication. A variety of small business shops and services are provided that are unique of chain-type stores. The Architectural Institute of America (on the Munich Mall, West Germany) commented,

"The small shops of tradesmen and little eating places don't need to be lost. When a downtown is being revitalized, we sometimes see those small businesses which enliven a business district replaced by chain stores..."³⁰(f₂₁)

They however lack quality and cultural diversity that the surrounding high income and elderly shopper look for. This is especially seen in food shopping as only one store is present. Many small businesses have gone out of business leaving old structures with no functions.

"All over the country there is a rising tide of interest in saving old structures which are no longer suited, or needed for their original uses. Putting new businesses and commercial activities into renovated old buildings has many advantages. It preserves architecturally interesting buildings; it allows developers to utilize sound buildings which have detailing and decoration impossible to reproduce; and it puts modern activity in a building with "character" that is a refreshing change from strictly functional building styles."³¹(f₂₂)

Being the stronghold in the downtown, the business/civic sector is the second major force that draws people to the core. Civic and cultural buildings are warranted for enhanced status that will have a lasting impact on the prosperity and character of the downtown core.³² This business/civic district along the river is not tied visually or physically to the commercial on 2nd or 3rd Street in a clarified circulation. Therefore observations show the foot traffic to be higher within each district than between the two.

Cultural and recreational entertainment provides a strong evening activity to balance the commercial and business day activity.

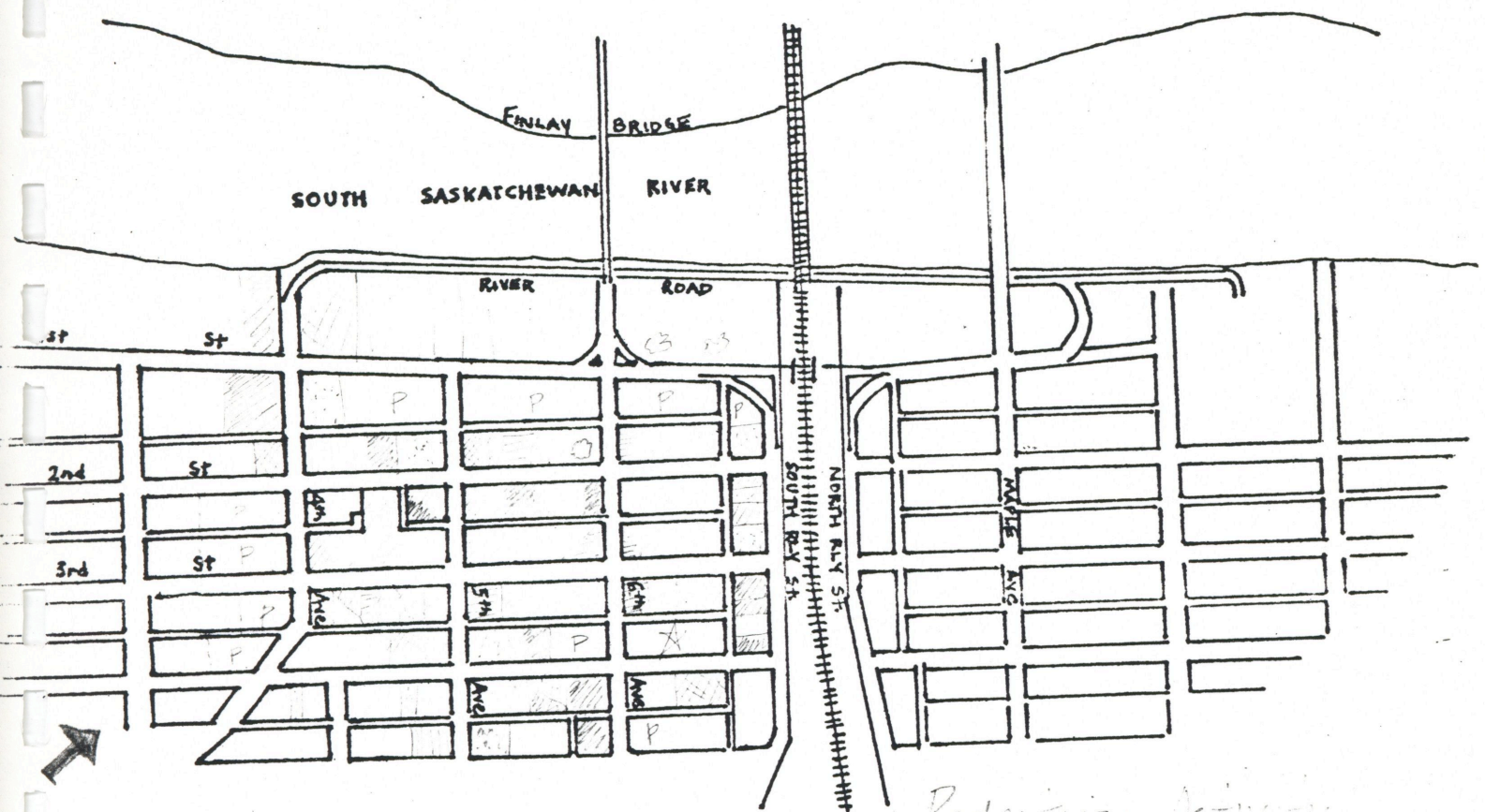
"A balanced inventory of stores, offices, service commercial outlets, amusement facilities, and residential accomodation are needed. When the general commercial component closes for the day that should not mean that all activity stops in the downtown." ³³

"...people need the cultural, recreational and educational facilities which only the city has available. Experience has shown that if exciting programs - art, theatre, sports, etc. - are offered, people from miles away flock to take advantage of them." ³⁴

Medicine Hat's downtown provides this activity in a minimal of two movie theatres, one gym, library and minimal fine dining and lounges. Art exhibits, theatres (plays), meeting halls and a more diversified fine dining/lounge developments could create this lacking balance. The city owns some fairly large tracts of land within or just outside the Downtown which are presently used for parking but could be used for comprehensive redevelopment projects. ³⁵ The recreational activities that take place in the hockey arena, curling rink, ball park and YMCA provide a district within themselves but is located just outside the downtown. No waterfront activity is available to take advantage of the river.

All of these activities are vital in drawing both locals and visitors to the core while creating a 24-hour liveliness.

"The ultimate goal to which nearly every major city aspires is to create an environment conducive to a lively, satisfying day/night variety of "people activities." ³⁶



Pedestrian Activity

/// Retail Commercial

[] Service Commercial

[] Banks

[] Industrial/Office

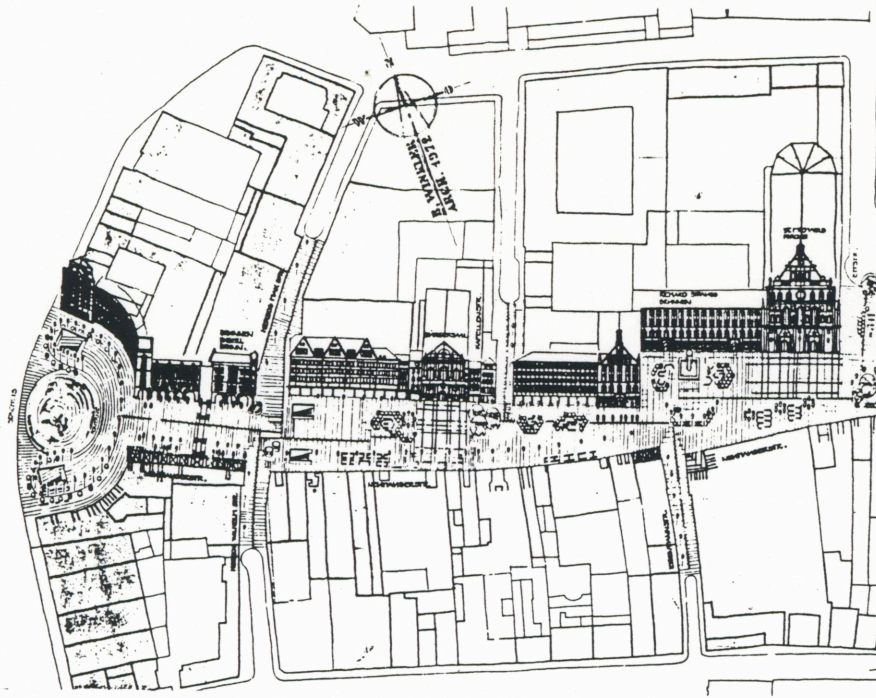
[] Parks

[] Professional Office

[] Court House

[] Govt Bldg

fig 20



An old downtown area can be revitalized. Although some American cities are distressed by the lack of people in downtown streets at all hours, Munich shows us how to make the city attractive to many people and, therefore, busy day and night.

The small shops of tradesmen and little eating places don't need to be lost. When a downtown is being revitalized, we sometimes see those small businesses which enliven a business district replaced by chain stores. . . .

MUNICH MALL
Munich, Germany

Fig 21



Sandy and Babcock Office,
San Francisco, Ca.

All over the country there is a rising tide of interest in saving old structures which are no longer suited, or needed for their original uses. Putting new businesses and commercial activities into renovated old buildings has many advantages. It preserves architecturally interesting buildings; it allows developers to utilize sound buildings which have detailing and decoration impossible to reproduce; and it puts modern activity in a building with "character" that is a refreshing change from strictly functional building styles.

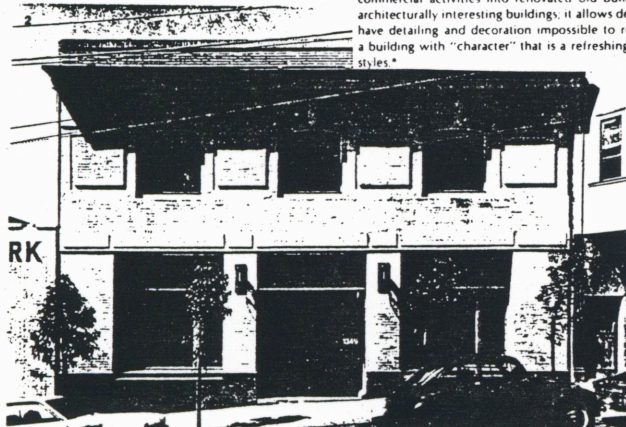


Fig 22

Residential (f₂₃)

Residential development has proven to be a viable link to all urban activity. The downtown is a place that provides for the people - the residential.

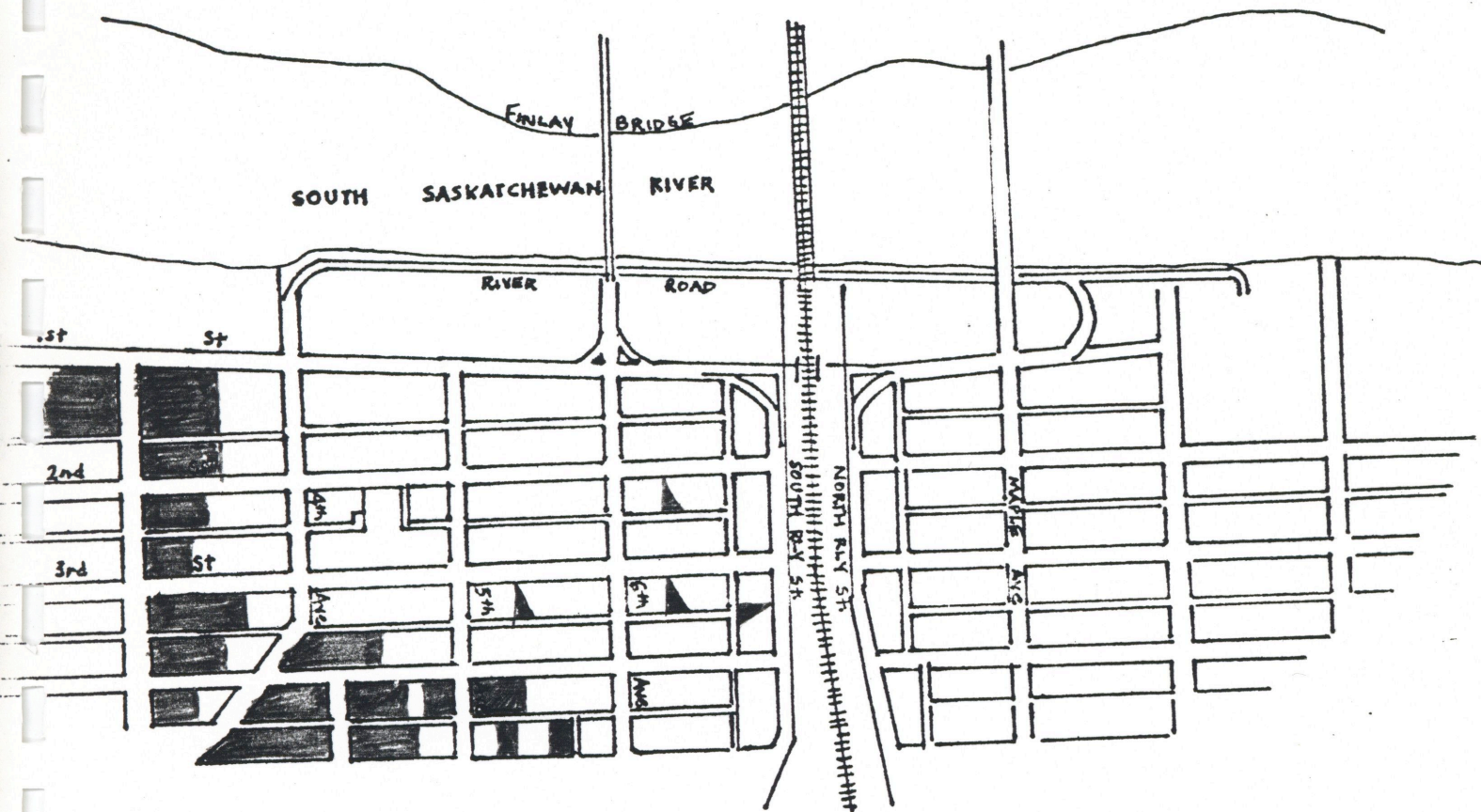
"Amazingly enough, many major American cities have the basic fundamental requirements to make this transaction (making the downtown the centre of people's lives). They have the museums, libraries, theatres, universities, government and financial centres, and other recreational amenities. It seems the biggest gap is the lack of housing near this centre for all income groups who will become the supporting "backbone" for downtown activity."³⁷

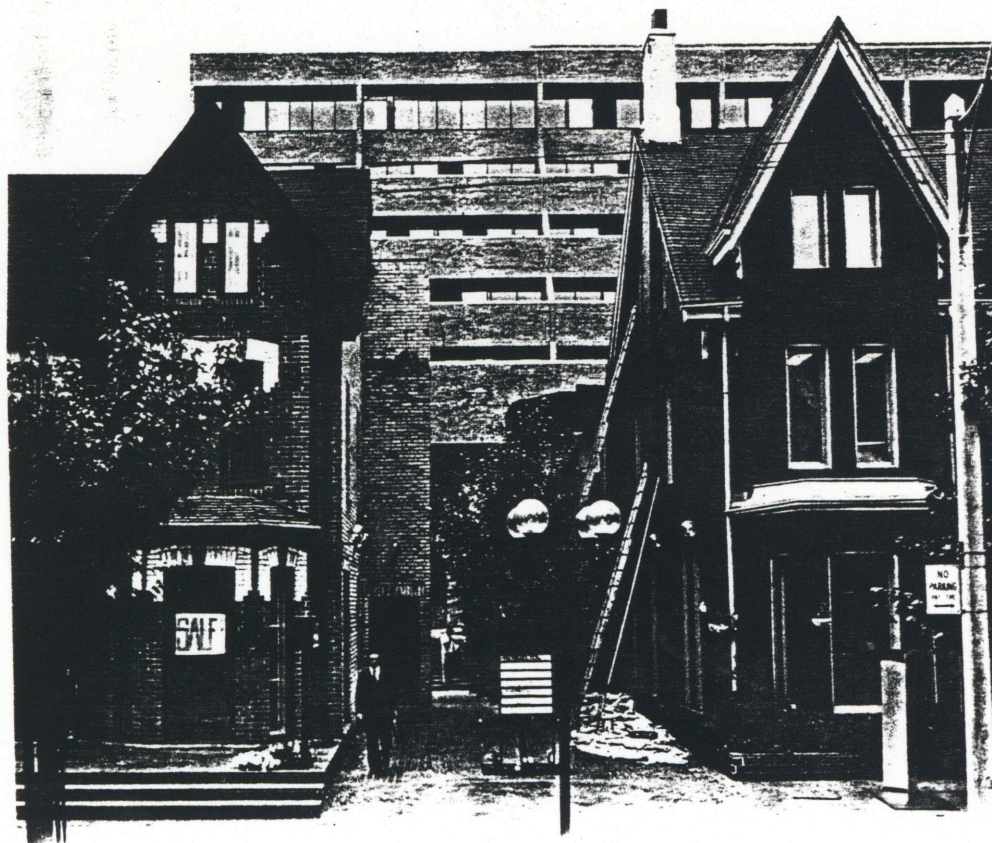
The residential demand exists for a population that likes to be near where they work or has similar interests in city activity - professionals, librarians, students, young couples, and retirees. These people are what make facilities economically viable as well as appreciate living near their work. Although at one time residential did exist in the downtown, it was left to diminish, therefore the present residential in downtown Medicine Hat exists in its surroundings with high income homes on 1st Street and other homes that house the elderly. No residential exists in the core itself therefore leaving no activity of people in the evening.

Residential "...would bring people and people activity to downtown and give to the street the residential flower and night-time activity essential to a vibrant downtown."³⁸ A good example of this is the city of Toronto where the mixture of housing, business and attractive events brings people to the centre city and creates a lively and exciting atmosphere. A well-populated area with a diversity of people can bring a 24-hour liveliness to the core in a secure, relaxed and solidly conducive atmosphere.

Multi-function complexes that incorporate residential have proven very successful. Hazelton Lanes, Toronto is a low-rise, massive development. The mixture of retail uses, mostly expensive and fashionable blend with the Yorkville area. It's success is due to the community residents backing and its pedestrian circulation through the complex. The Brewery, Milwaukee, Wisconsin was a renovation project that converted an old brewery into apartments and shops to bring back a neighborhood feeling to the German community. A neighborhood development project in Old Town Mall and Monument East, Baltimore renovated the existing commercial buildings,

created a pedestrian mall that ended in a 19-story apartment tower mostly for the elderly. The pedestrian mall and apartment building compliment themselves in a way that the residents love.³⁹ The Kensington District in Calgary, Alberta designed an apartment structure with retail below, that continued with the character shops in the district. These examples all saw the need for enhancing a district of their city, and filled this need successfully with residential/commercial developments. (f₂₄)





Visitors Role

Medicine Hats location along the TransCanada Highway has proven to attract a large number of tourists and therefore has the ability to increase the downtown economy. The downtown retail provides variety - that is not seen in the chain stores from mall to mall, city to city - in both the products and visual character. The tourist is able to view the cities character and historical tradition as he travels from store to store or conducts banking transactions that are strong in the downtown core. Although it is not the architects task to promote a cities heritage - in Medicine Hat the railways as the cities origin and historical architecture - they do have the ability to create a particular individuality or character image that would be an attraction to draw visitors to the core.

"The desire for new and interesting "happenings," which the different character of each city can provide, would be an additional attraction for visitors and tourists as well as a source of pride for the local community." ⁴⁰

Support of this concept would be required not only by the designer but by the city, city's businesses and citizen support. Lack of this support eliminated the design of an "international village" in downtown Detroit that many years later is realized to have made Detroit a "tourist mecca" in combination with its excellent convention facilities. Presently the only accommodations in Medicine Hat are run down hotels along the railway that are competing with a new 200 room luxury lodge next to the suburban mall. ^{f25}Space is available to develop such a complex for the tourist and local community downtown. Complexes that combine tourist accommodation with multi-use commercial or entertainment have proven to be very successful throughout many American and Canadian cities. They are able to create an environment that services both visitors and the local population. Examples being: Place Bonaventure, Montreal, Quebec, Greenway Plaza, Houston, Texas, and Sheraton Century Centre in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. (^{f26})



fig 25

VEHICULAR CIRCULATION (f₂₇)

Traffic

Traffic plays a major role in any urban planning process and must therefore be analyzed in order to help decisions of other issues. The two main streets, 2nd and 3rd, are one-way streets which create a loop system through the commercial district while the other streets are two-way traffic. This loop system gives good control of traffic. Once in the core circulation flows easily and is controlled by lighted intersections at seven of the eight intersections. An example of a successful loop system is in Lincoln, Illinois where traffic was circulated on the periphery. Advantages were that through traffic was no longer slowed down or added congestion to the core. It helped define the downtown as the commercial centre because more priority was given to the pedestrian. Traffic control within the CBD is adequate for present needs but must be considered if new developments occur. "...bearing always in mind that buildings generate traffic and that the core must not be choked by traffic from its own buildings."⁴¹

The main entry routes are orientated east and west, making the CBD easily accessible from north bound highway and for the older residential areas. The North and South entry points are not as dominate. From the South is South Railway Street and Macleod Trail and the North is the Old Finlay Bridge. Maple Avenue is a major North/South traffic circulation but it bypasses the downtown core and creates due it access to the malls, therefore posing a problem to the core.

Parking

Parking presently takes place on the downtown streets and into the residential areas. Because the north/south avenues are used for traffic movement most of these are free of parking. Parking is now free for two hours to compete with the malls. Although there are 470 on-street stalls and 2,250 stalls off-street (empty lots), a 1983 estimate showed that the downtown was short approximately 340-410 stalls. As the economy increases so will this need for parking.⁴² A present solution is seen in the new parking structure over the bus terminal. Because parking has not in the past been

a problem, no new parking was designed for the downtowns new developments therefore causing a deficiency. This deficiency is especially evident in short-term parking as much of this is used by downtown employees who need long-term parking that is not available and neither are incentives of possible bus usage. Due to the compactness of the downtown core, distance to parking is not the most important issue. The issue lies in providing parking that is free in order to compete with the malls.

Transit

Public transit is vitally important to intra city movement of people, with increasing importance in the future.⁴³ The transit system in Medicine Hat serves a large number of people due to the high percentage of retired population. Presently the city is about to begin a new Bus Terminal/Market Square Development. The terminal will include a market square that will add life to those waiting and also increase economic activity as there will be commercial possibilities that will draw a large number of farmers to downtown. It will also include a parking structure. Transit convenience needs to be promoted by good schedules and low cost but can be enhanced by wise design, comfortable waiting that will produce a more pleasant shopping experience and also increase the working population's usage. Economic activity was stimulated in Toronto, Ontario as the old business district was given life when the transit system was given the right-of-way. "They can be a dynamic force enhancing the physical and sociological structure of the city"⁴⁴

The railways bring a large percentage of tourists to the vicinity therefore increasing the tourist economy in the downtown area. Because the CPR has no desire to relocate, a connection between the railway station and downtown is essential to enhance the tourist/shopper circulation. The railway station is a historic building and therefore provides an opportunity for new multi-functions in the way of commercial, dining, cultural activity or accommodations,

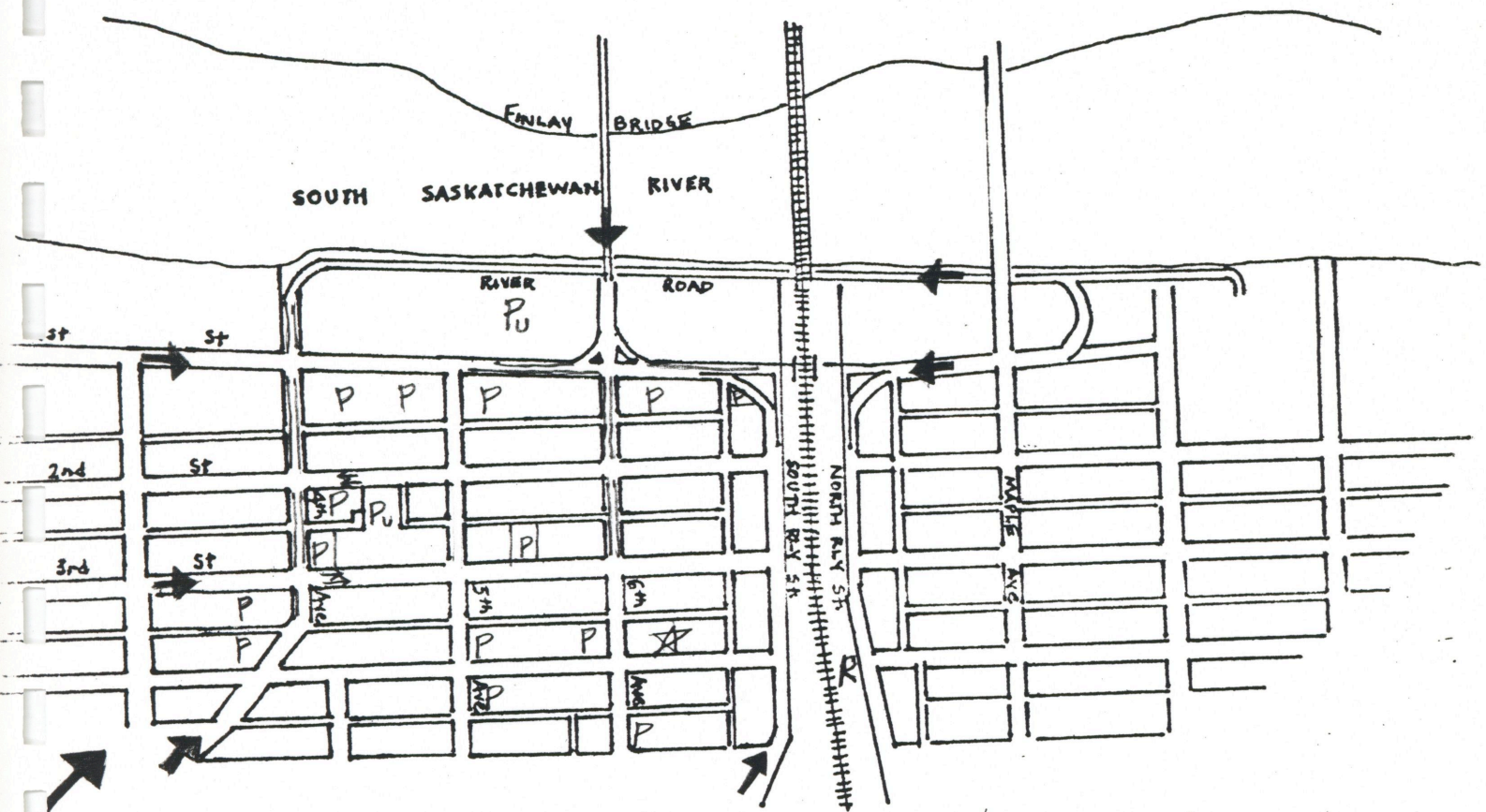
"All across the country, railroad stations are being given new lives. The range of uses is as wide as the imaginations of the people they serve: Mt. Vernon, Ohio, is turning its station into a senior citizens center; Yuma, Arizona, an arts center; Woonsocket, Rhode Island, a commercial project; Montgomery, Alabama, a civic center. Restaurants seem to be popular--the Ann Arbor, Michigan station now houses the

Gandy Dancer; Beverly, Massachusetts, the Depot; and Ithaca, New York, a facility that has additional seating space in several railroad cars. Countless numbers of stations have been turned into shops for books, dresses, gifts, antiques, toys--almost anything. Others have become offices for architects and lawyers, real estate and insurance companies.

The best use would seem to be one where the railroads continue to use a portion of the space and the remainder is converted for other needs. This plan is being followed in a number of conversions--San Diego, New London, Connecticut; Indianapolis, and Little Rock, Arkansas. Amtrak is interested and willing to be a part of these projects and can be counted on by preservationists to help out by renting some space."⁴⁵

"The Train Station's presence should revitalize this whole part of town. In recent years, many of us have been distressed to see the deterioration of this location which, in turn, has pulled down with it the surrounding blocks. The area is so near the State Capitol complex, the downtown area and the major traffic arteries that it is ideal for many uses. We also feel the Train Station complex will encourage the increasing interest of young couples and families to buy older houses convenient to the downtown area so that it can blossom into a once-again prime residential section."⁴⁶ f₂₈

in order to make it economically stable. The railways are also a major force in the city's economy for freight purposes. It serves the many industries in Medicine Hat, as it is the main line for goods transported across the nation as well as being passenger service to points across Canada.



Vehicular Circulation

➔ Major Entry Road

➡ One Way Street

|| No Parking

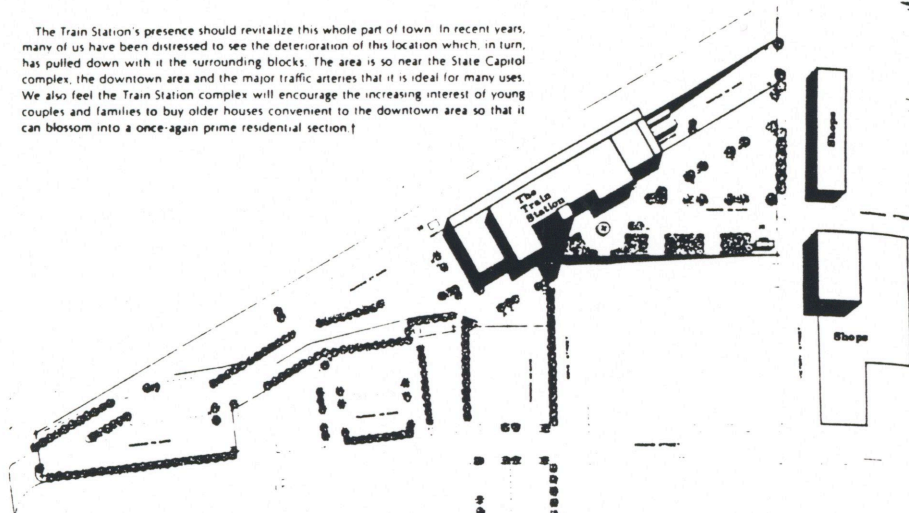
☆ One Way Street

P On Street Parking

P_u Underpass

R Roundabout

The Train Station's presence should revitalize this whole part of town. In recent years, many of us have been distressed to see the deterioration of this location which, in turn, has pulled down with it the surrounding blocks. The area is so near the State Capitol complex, the downtown area and the major traffic arteries that it is ideal for many uses. We also feel the Train Station complex will encourage the increasing interest of young couples and families to buy older houses convenient to the downtown area so that it can blossom into a once-again prime residential section.



Site plan

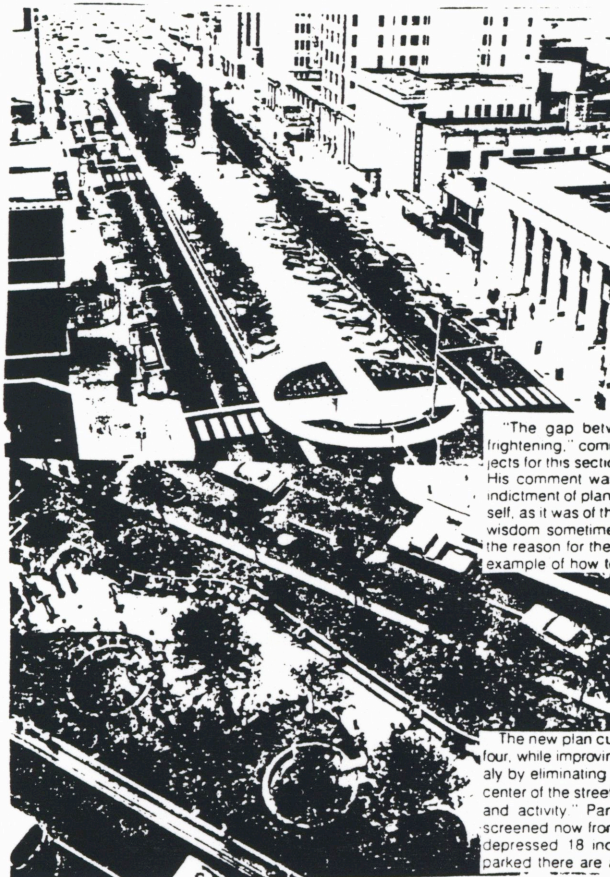


THE TRAIN STATION
Little Rock, Arkansas

fig 28

Geographical

The topography of the downtown is a major identifiable factor. Located along the river in a valley distinguishes it from the new suburbs located on the plains. It offers a diversity in its form and views that are unavailable in the new suburbs. The two major open spaces provide a lot of trees and 'greenery' but this is lacking throughout the rest of the downtown core. The use of landscaping is usually considered mostly for aesthetics but has been established for climatic, solar, precipitation, environmental noise control and architectural uses--a functional and economic benefit. In Ithaca Commons, NY, tree planting was used successfully as a canopies of protection, and sculptural, focal elements. In Mid-America Mall, Memphis, Tennessee, they were used to reinforce an outdoor auditorium space by providing shaded areas, and Fort Street Mall in Honolulu, Hawaii, uses plant materials to define a central circulation and flowers for accents. Graiville Mall in Vancouver B.C. has trees used as the major focus and unifying element to define entrances to streets, give a sense of separation of pedestrian areas from transit ways and to create spaces for special activity.⁴⁷ By incorporating a landscaping scheme the pedestrian environment can be enhanced visually and functionally. (f29)



Broad Street Revitalization,
Augusta, Ga.

"The gap between planning and the real world is frightening," commented one of the jurors selecting projects for this section on the enhancement of urban space. His comment was probably not meant so much as an indictment of planners, since he does planning work himself, as it was of the real world, which comes slowly to the wisdom sometimes put forth by planning. But whatever the reason for the gap, it can be bridged, and a pristine example of how to bridge it took place in Augusta, Ga.

The new plan cut the number of traffic lanes from six to four, while improving the traffic flow. It achieved this anomaly by eliminating two parking lanes and creating, in the center of the street, what the architects call a "zone of life and activity." Part of the activity is diagonal parking, screened now from the street by trees and planters and depressed 18 inches below street level, so that cars parked there are almost invisible from the sidewalk.

fig 29

Socio-Economics

The population growth in the city to the South has an effect on the downtown economy as this rapid growth in suburban residential areas has caused a rapid shift in the new commercial/retail development.⁴⁸ A problem that affects many cities and is the general problem with deteriorating downtown cores. In order to bring the people back to the downtown, one must strive to increase the economy by improving upon what exists and developing new attractions.

At this point, a study of the effects of the suburban mall must be considered. Retail Commercial (an activity where goods are traded for use or consumption without intention of resale) shows the CBD and Dunmore Triangle (two malls and shopping plazas) to share floor space equally at 35%. The CBD however, has a strong hold in business commercial (an activity where trade is done mainly with intangible goods; banking, insurance, professional) in that it covers 48% of the cities total versus the Dunmore Triangle at 17%. Because floor space does not seem to pose a problem in the CBD, but is a factor in mall expansion, it should be analyzed to provide the most desirable usage of it.^{f30} Therefore the small businesses can continue to provide their individuality in the CBD.

"The downtown businesses sell mainly "high order" goods such as jewelry, mens and womens clothing, sporting goods, florists, furs, etc. In general they are independently owned specialty outlets which contrasts sharply with the high volume chain stores typically in malls."⁴⁹

Floor space numbers are not all that important but physical environment, diversity, quality preference, facilities, convenience and access are major drawing factors that the downtown provides and needs and therefore should be evaluated. By emphasizing the character of downtown and lack of diversity and extremes in the malls more people can be drawn back to the CBD as well as incentive for small businesses to stay in the core.

Although the malls provide a controlled environment, free parking and easy accessibility to the traveller, directs their location along the Trans Canada Highway, they leave the individual with nothing to really identify with.

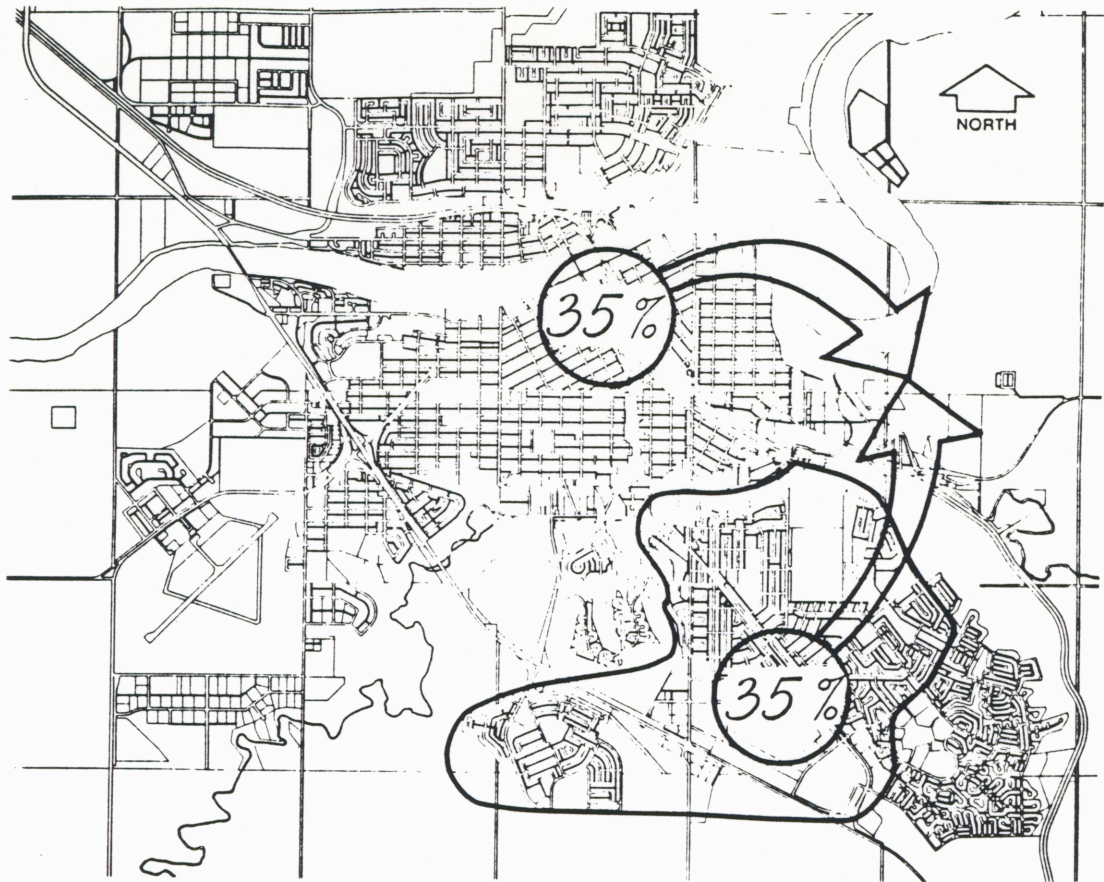
"Middle distances and middle incomes and middle results.
No destination and nothing unexpected around the corner.
Nothing very big and nothing very beautiful. The shopping centres the most pronounced place; you've been there before

and you come back bearing the same brown paper bag,
for you're a customer, average and typical."⁵⁰

It is often a relief to go downtown and experience it as a place of extremes and often lose yourself.

The new Market Square can provide an increase in commercial and therefore be a strong economic factor. It has the ability to draw the large number of rural farmers who invest in individual small business. Market Square, San Antonio, Texas has been economically successful as it as it houses produce and curio stalls that preserve the colorful Spanish marketplace.⁵¹ By offering a genuine balance of offerings and price ranges of small specific shops, the Faneuil Hall Markets in Boston, Massachusetts have generated the flare and atmosphere that draws people to using such commercial. By making good use of the land and creating appropriate activity the economy will be affected for the positive. The city owns a large percentage of the developable land in the CBD and should therefore be encouraged in development and investment as a means of increasing the economy.⁵¹

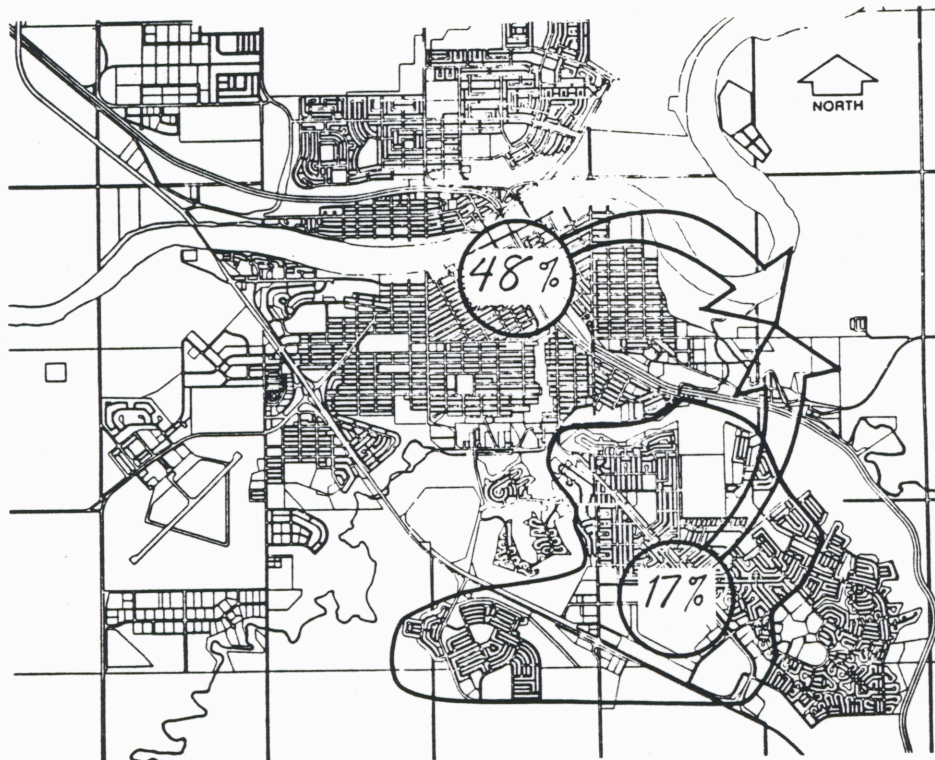
RETAIL COMMERCIAL FLOOR SPACE



Biggest Single Competitor is Dunmore Triangle
With 35% of City Total

BUSINESS COMMERCIAL FLOOR SPACE

fig 30



Biggest Single Competitor is Dunmore Triangle
With 17% of City Total

fig 31

CHARACTER

History

The major attraction to any city is the individual character. This is found in its historical heritage and one should therefore not assume that the old needs to be removed and replaced with new in order to revitalize the Downtown. One often neglects sociological factors of established surrounding neighborhoods in their efforts instead of trying to adopt new uses that will continue to provide a special interest and stimulation.

"Adaptive reuse, as I interpret it, is more than preserving old buildings for the sake of sentiment and history, but it is an attempt to incorporate and blend new buildings with older ones and to modify and use them to serve contemporary needs."⁵² (f₃₂)

The architecture of the downtown core can provide character but a pleasing pedestrian environment will be a strong link in the success of preserving this character as well as enhancing it. By understanding the interaction between man and his environment along with a knowledge of the process of change the downtown core will once again be a strong factor. An environment's importance is determined by human reactions and attitudes towards it. By striving for this, the character will be preserved and be aesthetically pleasing. (f₃₃)

Many buildings in the downtown core exemplify the city's history.

"In the 1880's Medicine Hat's natural gas and local clays were so abundant that the "Gas City" soon became one of the earliest brick manufacturing centres of Western Canada. Most of these buildings (previously discussed) were built of this early brick and in some cases local sandstone was used."⁵³

Buildings like the Chamber of Commerce (1907), Ewart/Duggan Home (1887), Hewitt Wallace House (1910), Hargrove Block (1901) and Courthouse (1919), CPR Railway Station (1905-11), St. John's Presbyterian Church (1902), St. Barnabus Anglican Church (1912), 5th Ave. United Church (1912), have detail and significance that should be preserved and restored to maintain the city's historical character.^{f₃₄} Presently many of these buildings are being reviewed as provincial historic sites like the Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce and Duggan Residence while the Provincial Courthouse has been designated a Provincial Historic Resource and the CPR Railway Station is one of the

finest examples of railroad architecture from the early 1900's.⁵⁴ Variety to this historical sector is seen in the new developments of the City Hall and Law Courts which provides a diversity that is required in downtown architecture.

Aesthetics

Medicine Hat has a lot to offer, in its historical downtown heritage as well as ample opportunities to improve its aesthetic impression. As an urban planner or architect, the ability to improve and enhance has many options and need to be just functional but aesthetically pleasing if one is sensitive to the pedestrian.

"After desire and hope, a master plan is required. With initiative by government and with support from business and citizens generally, talented design professionals can create a comprehensive and comprehensible plan to guide action.

Urban vitality and spirit depend on the presence of many people working and playing. Handsome architecture alone, thoughtful planning alone or sound engineering alone won't create a lively and humanistic city. Munich demonstrates the importance of orchestrating many disciplines to create a better environment.

The old city can be preserved while building the new. Preservation motives include enjoyment of the cultural heritage, historical continuity, architectural richness in form and texture and practical recognition that some older structures can enjoy new functions and new life. Generally, Munich street patterns and blocks were preserved but updated with some streets changed to pedestrian ways. Midblock passages and street arcades were cut into existing blocks. Many fine old structures were preserved and new functions were given to some buildings. Some new buildings were erected."⁵⁵ (f35)

An example of improving aesthetics is colour which can both be pleasing and functional. Abundant use of colour is seen in such cities as Sao Paulo, Brazil and Hong Kong for aesthetic effects. While oil companies are using colour on storage tank and refineries to depict a particular use, it is also available as cautionary signs. In Lima Peru, industries along the highways require design and colour approval to correlate with an attractive landscape. Its use has been very successful in landscaping as well as enhancing building fascades and paving patterns. For example, sidewalks could be improved to enhance the view they provide, if they were ornamented more like in foreign countries. In Rio de Janeiro, centres in Italy and Germany, the sidewalks are constructed with small pebbles or rocks of varying colour and laid out in design patterns.⁵⁶ If a special attention was taken in this area, the aesthetic view of the pedestrians circulation could be improved.

"If colours on buildings are appropriately used, they can provide inspiration, pride, enthusiasm, restfulness, a spirit of satisfaction, loyalty and many other rewarding reactions among citizenry...in the long-run these colours will pay dividends in the form of contributions to a more liveable community."⁵⁷

Aesthetics play a role in any city image and if they are lacking there is opportunity and means for improvement. (f₃₆)

The present street furnishings of signs and lights are unappealing and contribute little to the downtown character. Benches and planters do not exist. The incorporation of gas lighting at pedestrian level will bring back the character that does not exist while ample space is available for benches and other pedestrian-orientated amenities.

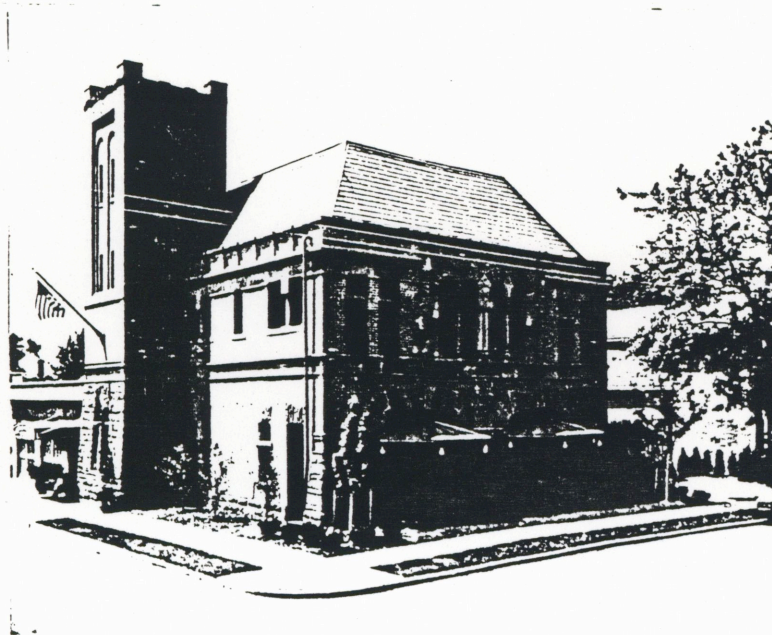
The idea of theme in relation to revitalizing the street is appropriate to retain the historical character.

"Because the community flourished thanks to its gas supply, it has chosen its theme 'Gas City'...reinstate the kind of gas street lighting that existed in Medicine Hat early in the century...brick paving material acknowledging the city's history as a producer of high-quality structural and paving bricks."⁵⁸

However,

"Renovations or additions to existing buildings must reflect this history and some integrity. Within this framework, the addition of awnings, covered arcades, etc. should be encouraged as they provide scale, colour, visual interest and protection to pedestrian domain."⁵⁹

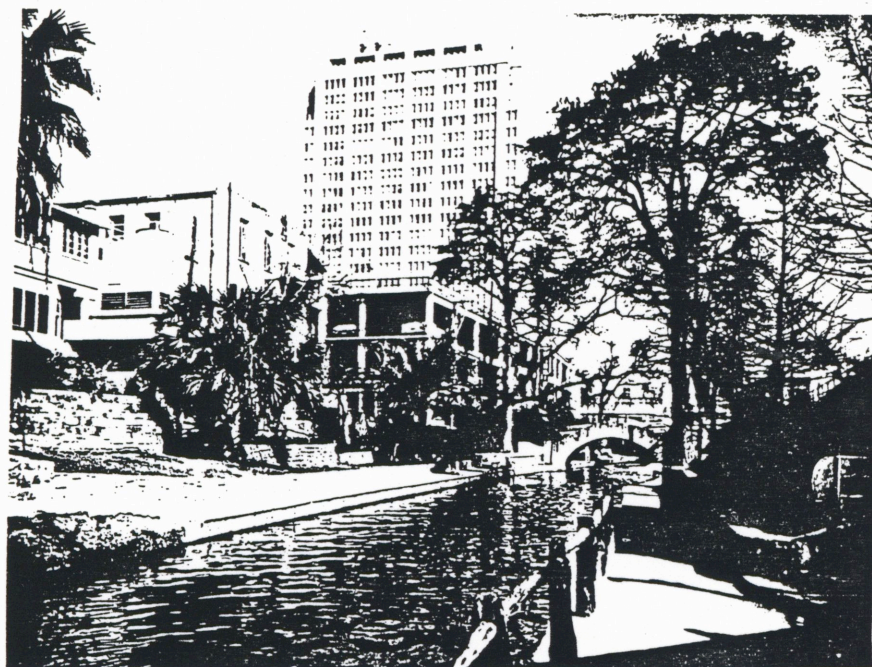
Furnishing improvements have enhanced the environment and therefore increased commercial sales in many pedestrian orientated streets like Captains Walk, New London, Connecticut and Sparks Street, Ottawa, Ontario.



William Scheurer, director of the German Village Society, makes a good case for preservation of this historic area, "Why save an old area of the city? Why not tear down the old and make way for the new? We save it because we love it; because it says, this is our basis; our beginning. It was here on this spot that our forefathers lived, worked and worshipped. We save it because of our need to learn from the past, to remember our ancestors, and to be proud of our heritage."*

GERMAN VILLAGE
Columbus, Ohio

Fig 32



RIVER CORRIDOR
San Antonio, Texas

San Antonio stands out as a prime example of cities that have preserved their heritage by the restoration, renovation, and conversion of historic buildings. One example of reconstruction is Market Square, located about six blocks west of the Alamo Plaza project. It is currently undergoing reconstruction and expansion, including construction of a new \$922,000 parking garage. The complex will continue to house produce and curio stalls, and it will preserve the atmosphere of a colorful municipal marketplace. The marketplace is a tradition in San Antonio, dating back to the first settlers, the Canary Islanders, who came there in 1731. The market moved to its present location from Military Plaza in 1874.

Fig 33



Monarch Theatre, c. 1930s



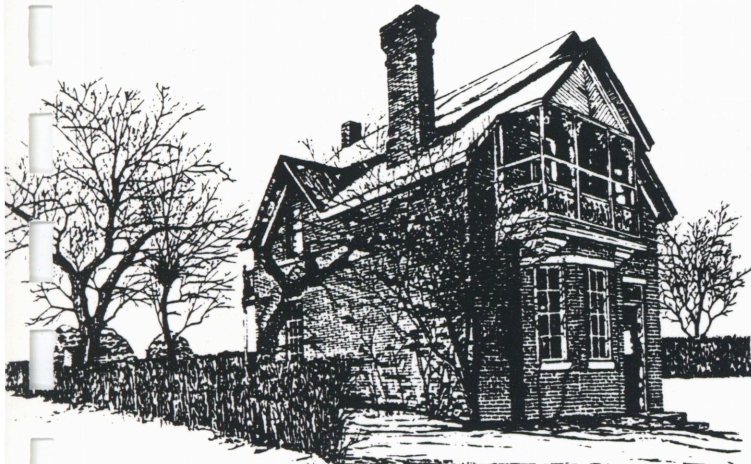
Hull Block, 1984



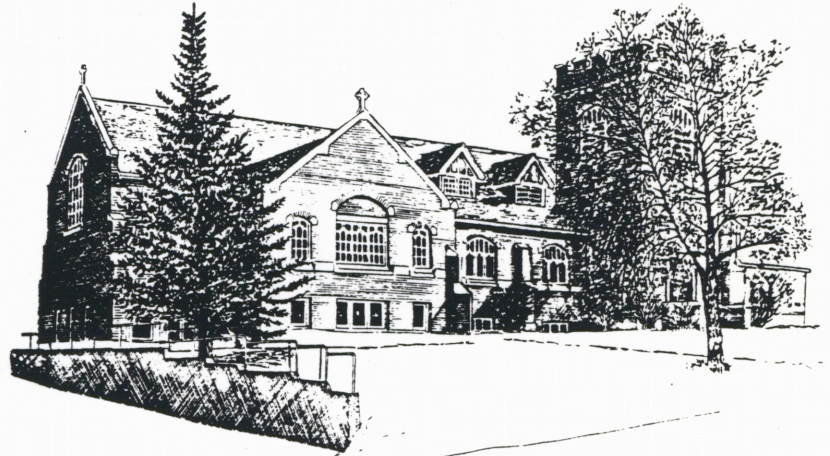
Beveridge Block, 1984



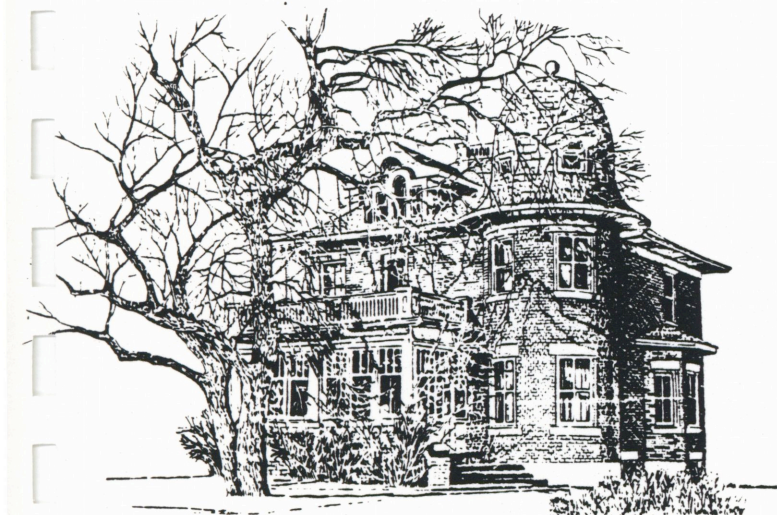
CANADIAN PACIFIC RAILWAY STATION - 1905 - 1911



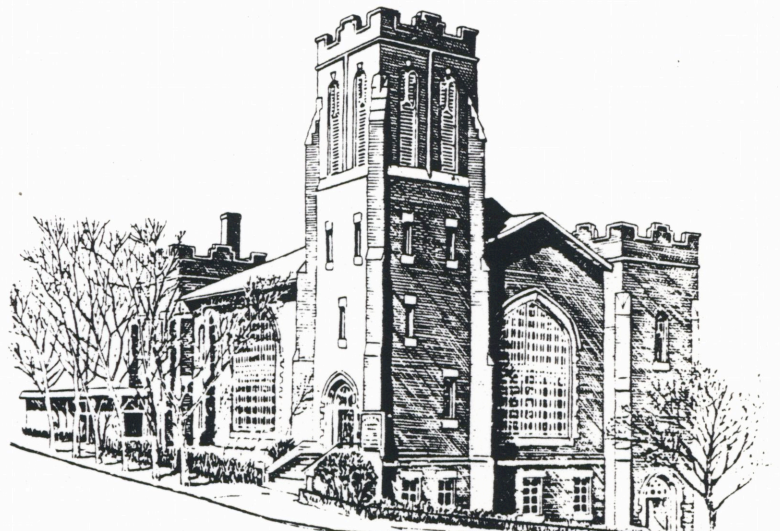
EWART / DUGGAN HOME - 1887



ST. BARNABAS ANGLICAN CHURCH - 1912

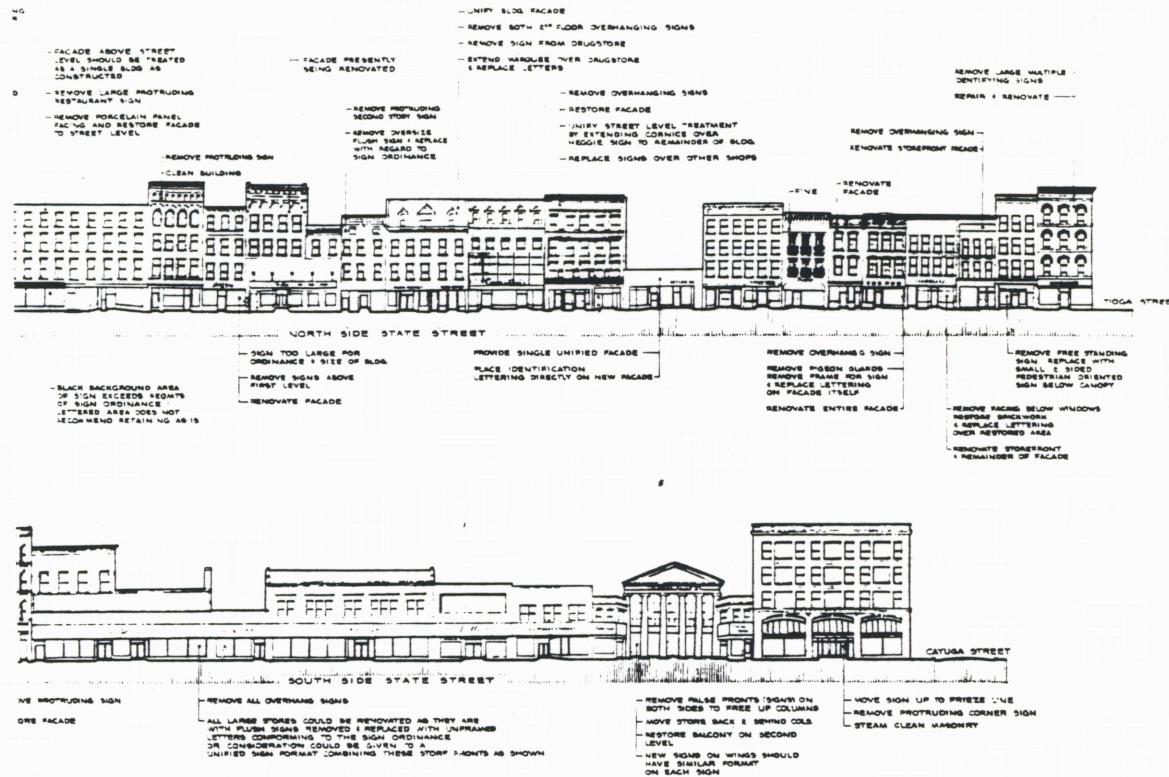


HEWITT / WALLACE HOUSE - 1910

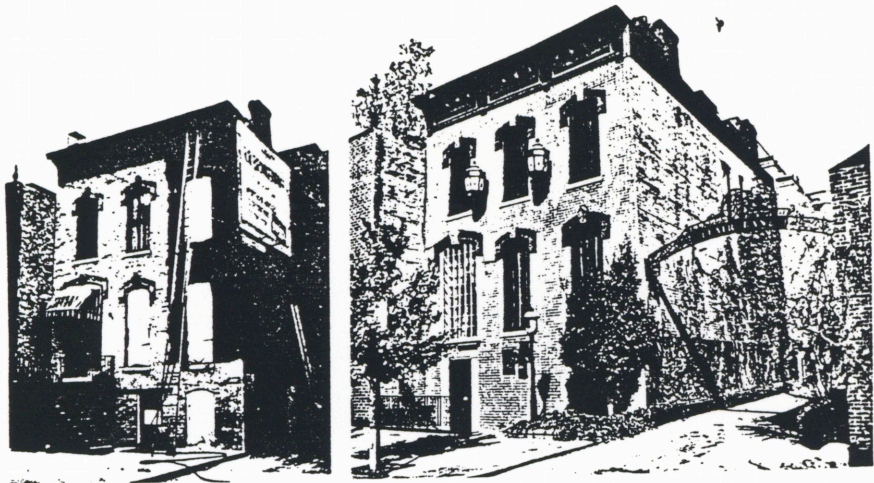


FIFTH AVENUE UNITED CHURCH - 1912

Fig 34



Existing building survey, Ithaca Commons. (Photograph courtesy of Anton J. Egner and Associates.)



The advantages of restoration for the Flair Merchandising Agency have been many. Flair House is a good place for the staff to work, presents an excellent "image" to the client, and affords a good business arrangement for the owner.

Probably the most important advantage has been the stimulation of new interest in this block along Erie Street. Trees have been planted, neighboring building exteriors have been renovated, and the sidewalks are kept clean and free of debris.

FLAIR HOUSE
Chicago, Illinois

fig 35



fig 36

Conclusion

The viability of urban revitalization depends a great deal on the cities as well as the individuals attitude of striving to make better what exists. This ideas can be obtained by retaining and enhancing historical and cultural values. The role of urban revitalization is especially viable in the downtown core of a city-since its survival depends on it-only in a stagnant society is there no need for revitalization.

The downtown core is the origin of where cities began, a place where its historical and cultural values have been retained to the point of creating a city image. The historical tradition gives it a sense of permanence or stability-a heritage-while the cultural values are expressed in its vitality, activity, complexity, diversity, extremes and functions. The downtown has much to offer if one is willing to approach it considering these values. It stands out as an expression of societies common interests by offering extremes in diversity, building and people to both the locals and visitors. It provides character and individuality-something people strive for in themselves and likewise needs to be strived for in the downtown core of the city.

Its potential can be what one is willing to ensure or provide in the area of revitalization. The downtown core of Medicine Hat, Alberta has these historical, cultural and social values that the people relate too and needs to be encouraged in the idea of revitalization. It is therefore worth trying to preserve or improve in hopes of bringing life back to the city core. Although problems will be encountered in looking at various issues that affect this idea, if one is sensitive to the people-their needs and responses-it can be shaped to an environment of great vitality and pride.

"Nothing in the future is perhaps really impossible ...given the resources, the determination, the co-operation and the technology to accomplish it. The most difficult task is picking what will be most desirable in the light of some expected future sequence of events. Judgements must be made continually in the process of planning and replanning again, about the reasonableness of future proposals."⁵⁹

The viability of the downtown core depends on its ability to draw the greatest number of people to make the greatest use of the downtown area. In order to do this a sensitivity must be shown to the peoples needs-the diversity of human needs and their behavior. This relationship must be established before the physical setting can be determined. People are the reason downtowns exist and will continue to survive and therefore any physical design should reflect a genuine attention to the peoples needs based on observations and analysis.

The feasibility of many design decisions depend on the specific population of the city, as well as its growth, in deciding where the emphasize should be place. In Medicine Hat, the majority of the population is 65+, mostly retired. This is because it is a large agriculture region and therefore much of the money invested in the downtown is from the elderly which implies the importance of considering them when designing amenities or new facilities. Other population factors are the increasing working population(professionals) creating a fairly high income population both surrounding the downtown and in various districts throughout the city. The 0-19 year old population is however decreasing due to the lack of opportunities to attract young people, therefore the large population growth is that of the retired. While the population growth to the north of the downtown is static, and declining in the Flats valley region across the railways from the downtown; the growth is mainly in the south portion-a suburban family region.

In order to attract people to the downtown core both cultural,

social, economic, geographic and historical/character issues need to be addressed. The cultural issue is extremely important as it is directed towards the pedestrian. Because the Central Business District is an area directed towards the pedestrian, considerations for their reaction to the environment must be looked at in considering changes or revitalization. The activities provided play a very important role in the overall atmosphere. The downtown is largely commercial. This being the 'heart' of the downtown core-the retail and personal services. The retail includes the opportunity of small business to meet peoples needs. Quality must therefore be retained in providing for the people shops that not only meet the needs of the extremes of people but provide diversity and uniqueness in their character and goods. Other activity lies in the business/civic sector which needs to be closely tied to the commercial as a means to draw more people to the shopping area while providing a diversity in the downtown activities. A possible redesigning of the traffic loop system(one-way streets) to include the civic district, or more pedestrian-orientated circulation has potential in bringing the commercial and civic closer together.

The cultural or recreational activities can provide a balance to the day activities of commercial and business in that they can give the downtown a 24 hour liveliness. They provide opportunities that prevent a darkened evening fascade when the commercial closes. Opportunities that provide both economical and social satisfaction. These activities include entertainment in the way of fine dining, theatres, exhibits, sports events and convention/meeting halls. Activities that not only draw the local population but also visitors. Although the downtown core lacks many of these cultural aspects, they do exist in their minimal; scattered throughout the city. A special attention needs to be taken to include these more in the downtown, whether by giving the old new functions, developing new or tying what exists outside more to the downtown area. An example would be the recreation district which includes the hockey arena, curling rink and baseball stadium. This could be tied to the core more by a more

pleasant pedestrian connection across the railways.

To keep the downtown alive after regular working hours, people can be drawn in by activity as previously mentioned or also integrated through residential development. By developing the residential aspect an increase in liveliness is created as well as economically. The immediate proximity of people will cause them to use the services and facilities provided. Medicine hat has no existing residential right downtown but rather it lies in the surrounding district both in the form of a fifteen story high rise and historical residences that house elderly and high income families. To attract the most people to the downtown, the residential could also be more diversified. One can analyze the trade area by looking at the radius of users to the downtown core and therefore be more able to provide for them. The fact that the surrounding residences are mostly elderly and high income plays a part in determining what needs require improvement or redevelopment to retain the present usage while striving to draw in the populations outside the primary trade area. The elderly are good patronage for the downtown and should therefore be considered in development of any new services or facilities. More services and facilities for the present surrounding population would ensure as well as increase the usage of the downtown and its economics. Residential could be very beneficial if developed by revitalizing structures that are unused (like above commercial stores) or a new development to house a diversity of people from the young, to the working population, families and elderly.

Pedestrian circulation as seen both physically and asthetically must be a priority. Security and ease in moving from store to store are vital attractions for people. The vehicular circulation with the pedestrian tends to cause a problem in providing pedestrian security as well as being visually disrupting. Physically, the traffic and pedestrian separation is very minimal therefore seen as a barrier, leaving the pedestrian with a lost sense of security. Consequently, the pedestrians circulation is disrupted visually by this constant

barrier of traffic circulation, parked cars along the pedestrian pathway and the railways that run alongside the downtown core. The railways are often seen as noisy and unattractive as well as being a physical barrier in pedestrian and vehicular circulation. The impact of colour and appropriate landscaping can be good visual tools in dissolving unappealing views as well as improving others. A redesigned underpass or new overpass with a possible tying to the railway station may also provide the pedestrian with a more positive view of this area.

The downtown core has many existing natural views like the river where waterfront activity could be developed and the historical buildings and detail that provide a strong character view. Advantage of these views can be taken by developing open spaces that are well landscaped and offer activity to draw people to them. Presently, the pedestrian lacks relaxation nodes or activity-an atmosphere- in their transition from the vehicle to the store. This also creates an economic problem as there is little desire for the pedestrian to wander or browse in the downtown area. Sensitive consideration to the pedestrian in placing such spaces is important as so many planned spaces have proved to be useless. This is because the pedestrians movement, fatigue points and needs of shelter are not looked at along with amenities in the way of furnishings for pedestrian comfort.

The role of the visitor is vital in maintaining and improving the character of downtowns. Retail is able to supply variety in that it is not the chain store shopping from city to city and mall to mall. It also provides individuality and uniqueness that is found in the downtown core history. Because the downtown in Medicine Hat(as well as other cities) is the origin of the city-provides character and an image-the historical needs to be preserved due to its significance in portraying city character to the visitor. The tourist will be able to identify with the city by experiencing what the downtown has to offer in its retail, business, historical as well as new developments. Therefore, the cultural and recreational activity needs to be provided to draw the visitor and entertain him/her. Accommodations in the way

of Inns and Lodges are vital to drawing the visitor. Many travellers look for comfortable places to stay that also provide activity in the way of pools and recreational entertainment. The downtown core lacks this--all that exist are run-down hotels along the railways which compete with a new Lodge and various other lodging facilities along the highway. Opportunity to renovate these old hotels is possible as well as designing a new multi-function facility.

Climate plays a major role in considering the pedestrian as well as designing the physical. Medicine Hat has 2200 hours of sun a year that can be taken advantage of in the developing of open spaces and special amenities to create a desirable atmosphere of activity and relaxation. However, winds and extreme changes in climate must be considered in any design process.

As can be evidenced, the revitalization of Medicine Hat's downtown core can provide many options by which a more lively atmosphere is created to bring life back to the downtown--where it originally was and should be again. After thorough research and consideration of the issues that lead to these options, I have concluded the two most important issues would be to create a 'pedestrian environment' that meets the pedestrians needs both physically and visually. This study would look at the pedestrians circulation in order to create an 'environment' that is secure and aesthetically pleasing. The pedestrians movement, physical barriers of traffic and the railways, and how views and designing of open spaces are important in creating a comfortable environment. This would be a means of ensuring the usage of commercial by day for those who already invest in the downtown with hopes of attracting a larger population downtown. The second option would fill the need of the downtown's lack of activity on a 24 hour basis. The downtown is a place that is providing for residential-residential that is minimal in Medicine Hat, therefore causing it to lack the diversity of people and liveliness of life in the evening hours. It is important that this be developed in both unused second-story commercial buildings as well as a multi-use residential/commercial

complex to provide a more vibrant downtown.

In order to facilitate urban revitalization, one must go back to the original goal of attracting people to the downtown. To determine revitalization as viable and then achieve its success are factors that depend on attracting the pedestrian to the downtown core to assure that the greatest number of people make the greatest use of the downtown area. The physical aspects of the design must therefore be influenced by the behavior and attitudes of the pedestrian. By drawing people in for commercial and residential purposes as well as promoting offices, cultural activity and recreational opportunity, the economy of the downtown will prosper. So one can conclude that in order to bring life back to the downtown core and therefore enhance the economy and make it once again the stronghold in the Canadian cities that are concentrating immediate investment in the Central Business District⁵⁰ the pedestrian is the primary issue. By providing the relationship between the behavior of the pedestrian and the physical setting-putting pedestrian first-the idea of urban revitalization can be a success. A lively and characterful atmosphere can be created that leaves the downtown users with a sense of pride in the character as well as the economy of their city.

Proposal

In an effort to revitalize the downtown core in Medicine Hat, a residential/commercial complex has the potential to bring life back to the core. Such a development is important to draw singles, single couples and professionals both closer to their work and the activity of the core--to be a factor in creating what is presently a lack of activity. The surrounding residential is mostly elderly who invest highly in the downtown commercial and should therefore also have the opportunity to live in the immediate proximity. By developing residential in the core, the people will be a part of the downtown life and image on a 24-hour basis. The commercial, both retail and personal services, can enhance the core economically by providing new businesses and shops that are lacking presently. This must provide for both the new population as well as the needs of the population outside the core.

By site analysis, a site can be chosen that will take advantage of its surrounding context in continuing with the downtown character. The development of such a site must enhance the core as a whole while providing a unique character of its own. Different city-owned lands are available for a residential development--each offering unique contextual influences that will create different opportunities in the residential and commercial aspects.

In order to continue with the downtown character and building height of the present commercial, the structure should aim at a low-medium rise. This will therefore take advantage of all opportunities that relate to the street activity that the downtown can provide.

A majority of the buildings downtown are of brick (due to the city's large brick manufacturer) and much of their history lies in this. The option stands that could continue this characteristic material of the city while enhancing it to create a new vitality and unique feature.

The success of this residential/commercial lies in designing a structure(s) that provide the city population with a new sense of activity downtown while continuing the downtown cores historical character that the people have so much pride in.

"But even the most beautiful housing project remains but a segment when it stands in isolation, when it has no 'heart,' no place that serves as a bridge between private life and community life, no place where human contacts between man and man can again be built up. The destruction of human contacts and the present lack of structure of the metropolis are mutually urgent problems...

"If we look at the city as a place in which private life and community life find a meeting place, then the mark of a true city is the balance between You and Me. It is this You and Me relationship that we must build up again today. No machine can replace physical nearness, neither telephone nor radio, home movies or television."⁶²

S. GIEDION

"'Old buildings and agreeable surroundings are a familiar background for people in our towns and cities, a sheet anchor in a rapidly changing world. Conservation should not be seen as a specialized and slightly self-indulgent activity promoted by people frightened by the thought of progress, but rather as an essential tool of development.'

The wise and witty Mr. Wood was stating a theme. It is about maintaining the presence of the past in the present. That involves preserving, restoring, and/or adapting old buildings; designing new ones that respect their elder neighbors and the continuity of history; weaving old and new together in an urban fabric of variety and richness.

These concerns have been steadily growing as objects of architectural attention. A case could be made, in fact, that in recent years they have come to constitute the profession's prime challenge."⁶³

FOOTNOTES

¹Victor Gruen, Centres for Urban Environment. (New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold Company, 1973) p. 158.

²Jewel Bellush and Murray Havsknecht, Urban Renewal: People, Politics and Planning. (New York: Anchor Books, 1967) p. 463.

³Victor Gruen, Centres for Urban Environment. p. 159.

⁴Ibid. p. 158.

⁵Louis G. Redstone. The New Downtowns. (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company 1976) p. 218.

⁶Ibid. p. xi.

⁷Ibid. p. xx.

⁸Ibid. p. xx.

⁹Victor Gruen, Centres for Urban Environment. p. 160.

¹⁰Victor Gruen, Centres for Urban Environment. p. 159.

¹¹John N. Jackson, The Canadian City, (Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson Ltd., 1973) p. 168.

¹²Ibid. p. 171.

¹³Medicine Hat Recreation Master Plan. p. 9.

¹⁴Medicine Hat General Municipal Plan, Background Paper. p. 60.

¹⁵Background: Downtonw Plan Medicine Hat. (Calgary: Stevens Graham MacConnell Milton Partners 1980). 1 1 3.

¹⁶Ibid. p. 1 2 2.

¹⁷Medicine Hat General Municipal Plan, Background Paper. p. 24.

¹⁸Ibid. p. 24 and 25.

¹⁹Medicine Hat Recreation Plan. p. 11.

²⁰John N. Jackson. The Canadian City. p. 161.

²¹Background: Downtown Plan Medicine Hat. p. 2 3.

²²Harvey M. Rubenstein, Central City Malls. (New York: Wiley-Interscience Publishers, 1978) p. 13.

²³David Bonskel et al., People and Downtown (Seattle: College Architecture and Urban Planning--University of Washington 1970). p. 109.

²⁴Louis G. Redstone, The New Downtowns. p. 216.

²⁵David Bonskel et al. People and Downtown. p. 109.

²⁶Medicine Hat General Plan: Background Paper. p. 43.

²⁷David Benskel et al. People and Downtown. p. 135.

²⁸Ibid. p. 96.

²⁹Ibid. p. 96.

³⁰Louis G. Redstone, The New Downtowns. p. 218.

³¹Ibid. p. 306.

³²Background: Downtown Plan Medicine Hat.

³³Downtown Study--City of Med. Hat; Med. Hat Regional Planning Commission. p. 5.

³⁴Louis G. Redstone, The New Downtowns. p. xvi.

³⁵Background: Downtown Plan Medicine Hat.

³⁶Louis G. Redstone, The New Downtowns. p. 19.

³⁷Ibid. p. xx.

³⁸Background: Downtown Plan Medicine Hat--Zone B.

³⁹Edward K. Carpenter, Urban Case Studies, (Washington, D.C.: Preservation Press, 1978) p. 9, 10, 27.

⁴⁰Louis G. Redstone, The New Downtowns. p. xvi.

⁴¹John N. Jackson, The Canadian City. p. 170.

⁴²Downtown Revitalization Proposal. p. 9.

⁴³Medicine Hat Municipal Plan, p. 75.

⁴⁴Louis G. Redstone, The New Downtowns. p. 63.

⁴⁵Ibid. p. 299.

⁴⁶Ibid. p. 306.

- ⁴⁷Harvey M. Rubenstein, Central City Malls. p. 118,134,102,110.
- ⁴⁸Background: Downtown Plan Medicine hat. p. 1 2 5.
- ⁴⁹Downtown Revitalization Proposal. p. 59.
- ⁵⁰Humphrey Carver, Cities in the Suburbs. (Toronto: U. of Toronto Press 1969) p. 18.
- ⁵¹Background: Downtown Plan Medicine Hat. p. 3 4.
- ⁵²Louis G. Redstone. The New Downtowns. p. 299.
- ⁵³Southeast Alberta Travel Association. Walking Historic Tour.
- ⁵⁴Ibid.
- ⁵⁵Eugene Van Cleet, Cities in Action, (Toronto: Pergamon Press 1970) p. 27.
- ⁵⁶Louis G. Redstone. The New Downtowns. p. 218.
- ⁵⁷Ibid. p. 137.
- ⁵⁸Main Street Heritage--Canada Foundation Sept.Oct. 86. p. 4.
- ⁵⁹Background: Downtown Plan Medicine Hat. p. 5 1.
- ⁶⁰David Bonskel et al., People and Downtown. p. 140.
- ⁶¹John N. Jackson. The Canadian City. p. 176.
- ⁶²Charles Goodman, Life For Dead Spaces (New York: Varcourt, Brace & World, Inc. 1963) p. i.
- ⁶³Architecture, November 1986, p. 58.

Site

The proposed site for potential development in the downtown lies along First Street from S. Railway to Fourth Ave. It is directly across from the new City Hall/Courthouse development and is presently used for city parking. The three blocks of 195,000 square feet create a strong edge that has potential to be a stronghold in the survival of the downtown core.

Characteristics of the site are the river front views and a large park. These views incorporate the old Finlay Bridge and railways as well as distant hill views. The views create opportunities in building heights as well as being a determining factor in siteplanning as to what should be located where.

Surrounding existing buildings form a context that has variety and no overall set of rules. The east end is surrounded by two-story older retail shops and newer department stores dominate the west end. Across First Street there is a combination of the old Courthouse and the new City Hall, which line the river front. These varying buildings need to be considered as to their relevance to a new development.

The site is therefore very open and has no real barriers. Consideration must be taken in the maintaining of the Courthouse on the west end of the site.

This three block edge has an unlimited number of opportunities in development and my goal is to propose potential development that will relate to that which exists while creating a place of activity and life that could be the focus to pulling the downtown core together.

Transportation Connections in relation
to servicing downtown both pedestrian
and services

5min

3min

5min

3min

walking distances

Greyhound

Local
Bus
Terminal



Programming

In an effort to determine the location for residential and commercial development, it was important to analyze the projected growth of the existing downtown services and how they related to the whole.

By analyzing the present land use and the directions each will continue to grow, I was able to propose a growth into the three block site that is compatible with the present services.

Residential - main growth of single family housing from the west end with minimal infill on the east end above retail.

Retail Commercial - the old historic buildings that have small commercial buildings are where the large concentration of shoppers are and have the potential to move north onto the site.

Service Commercial - this service such as beauty and repair creates an edge along the railway and could potential accrue around the north east corner.

Government/Civic - expansion space for government can easily extend across First Street onto the middle block of the site.

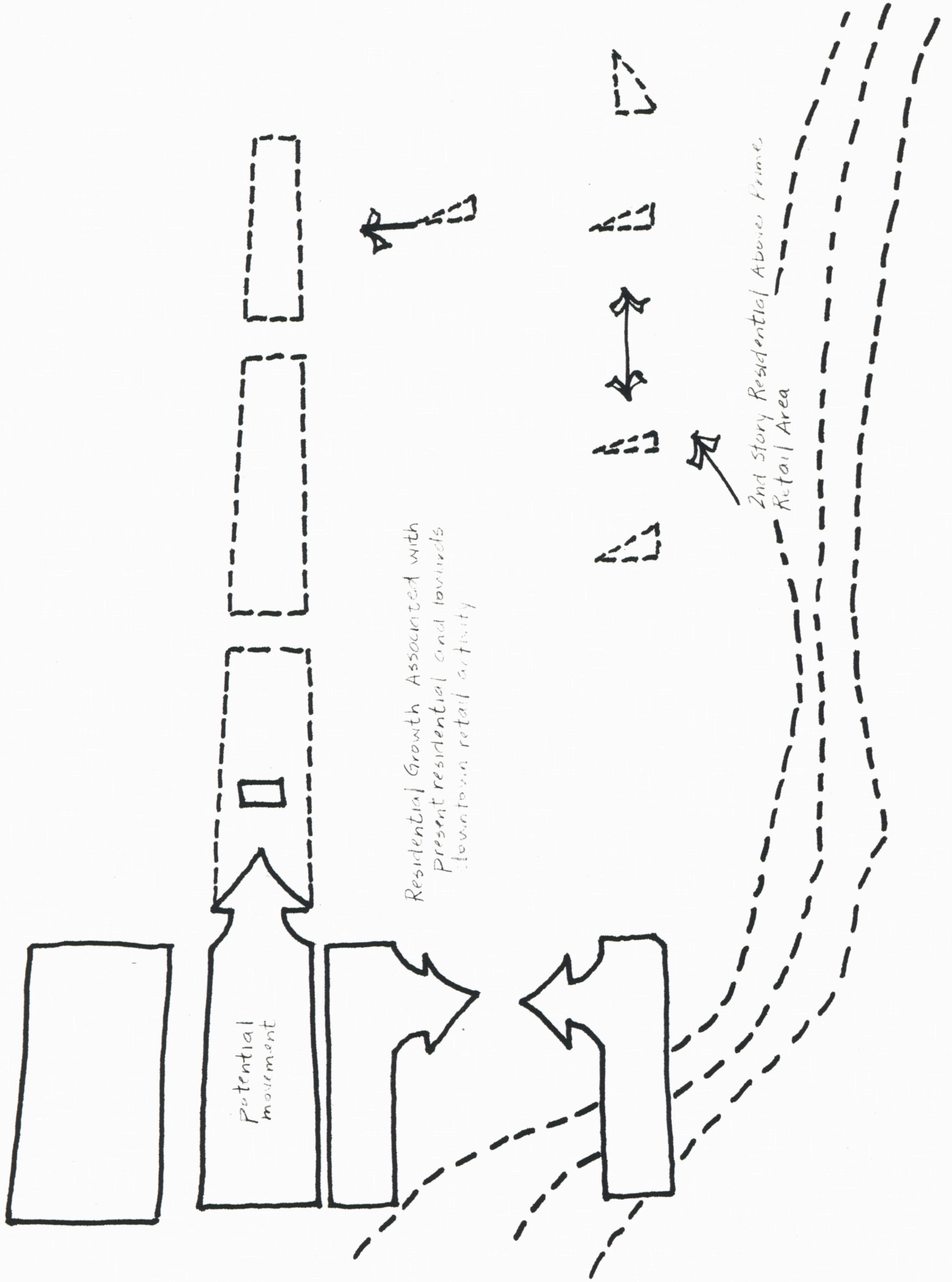
Professional offices - the office space has no set area but tends to be infill throughout the downtown and could continue in that fashion.

(schemes follow)

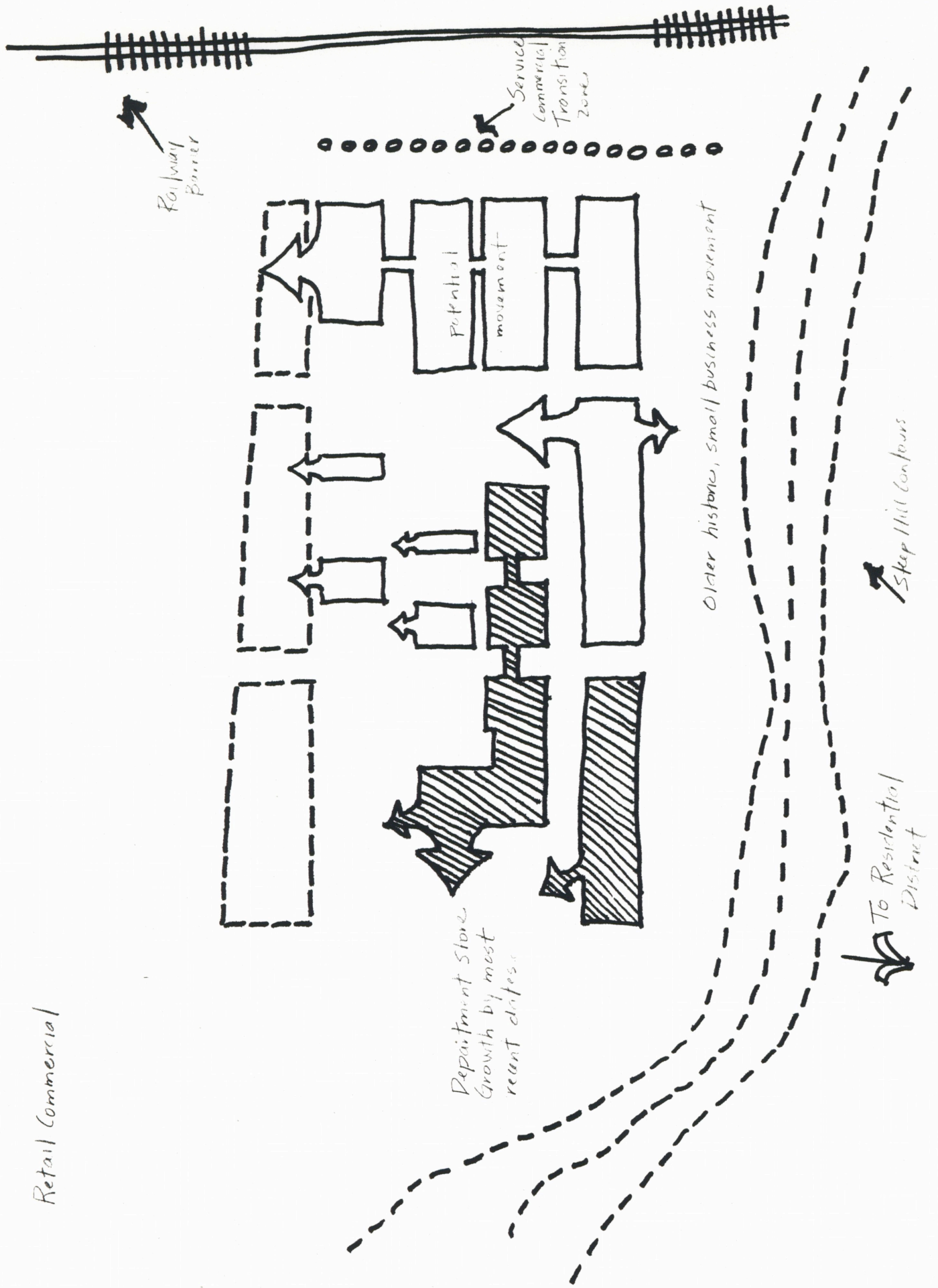
The important relationships characterize a potential three block development of combined mixed uses in all of the above areas. High density residential for the elderly could project into the west block with an opportunity for a cultural centre to correspond with the library across the street. Retail being a very strong factor has the potential to fill the east block and successfully carry the historic character already established. The retail is important enough to carry throughout the entire three block site in a circulation manner. Government expansion and office space can fill the middle block to correlate to that across the street.

Such a proposal can be used to enhance the unique qualities that already exist downtown and therefore draw a larger concentration of people to its usage.

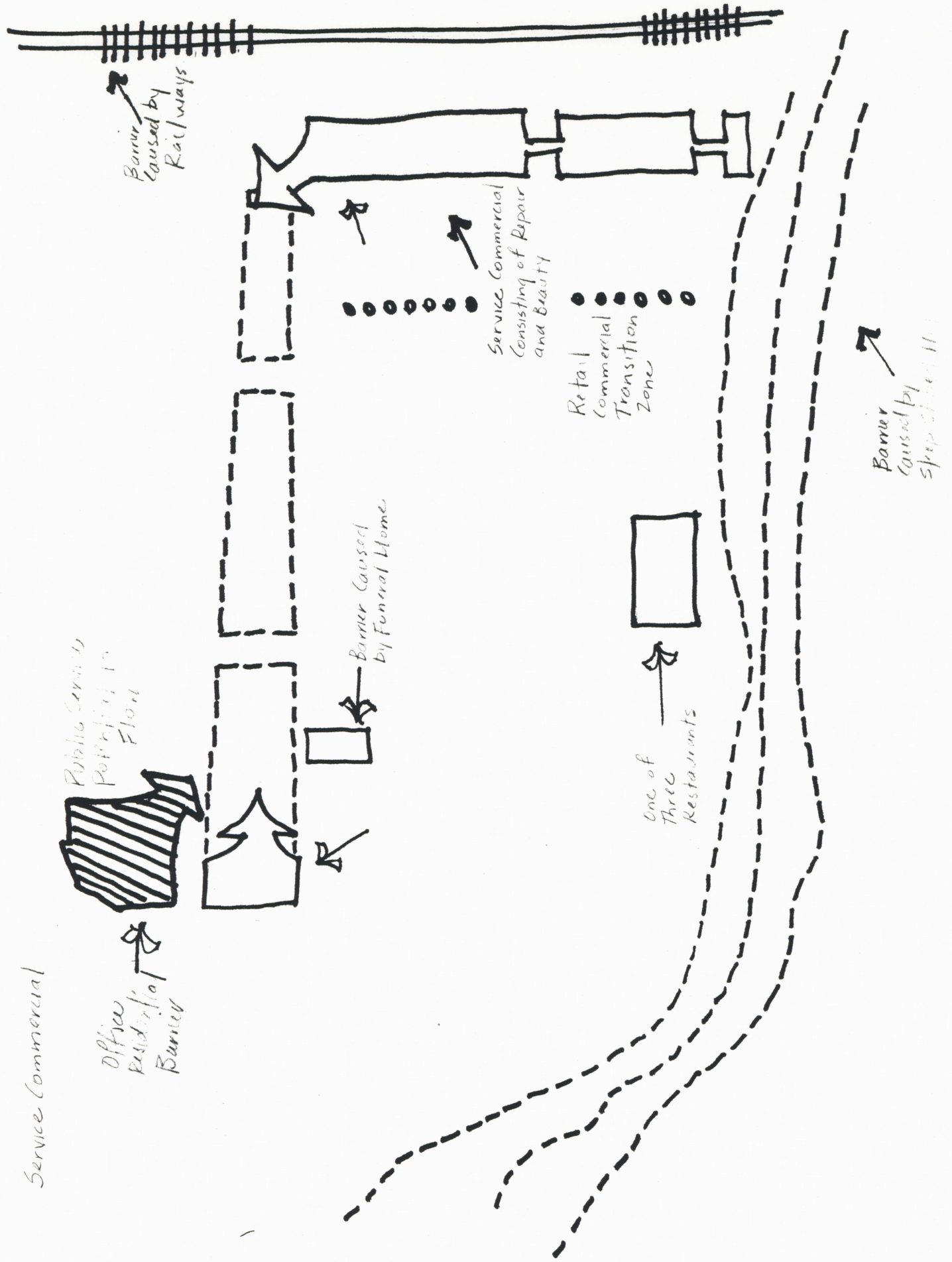
Residential



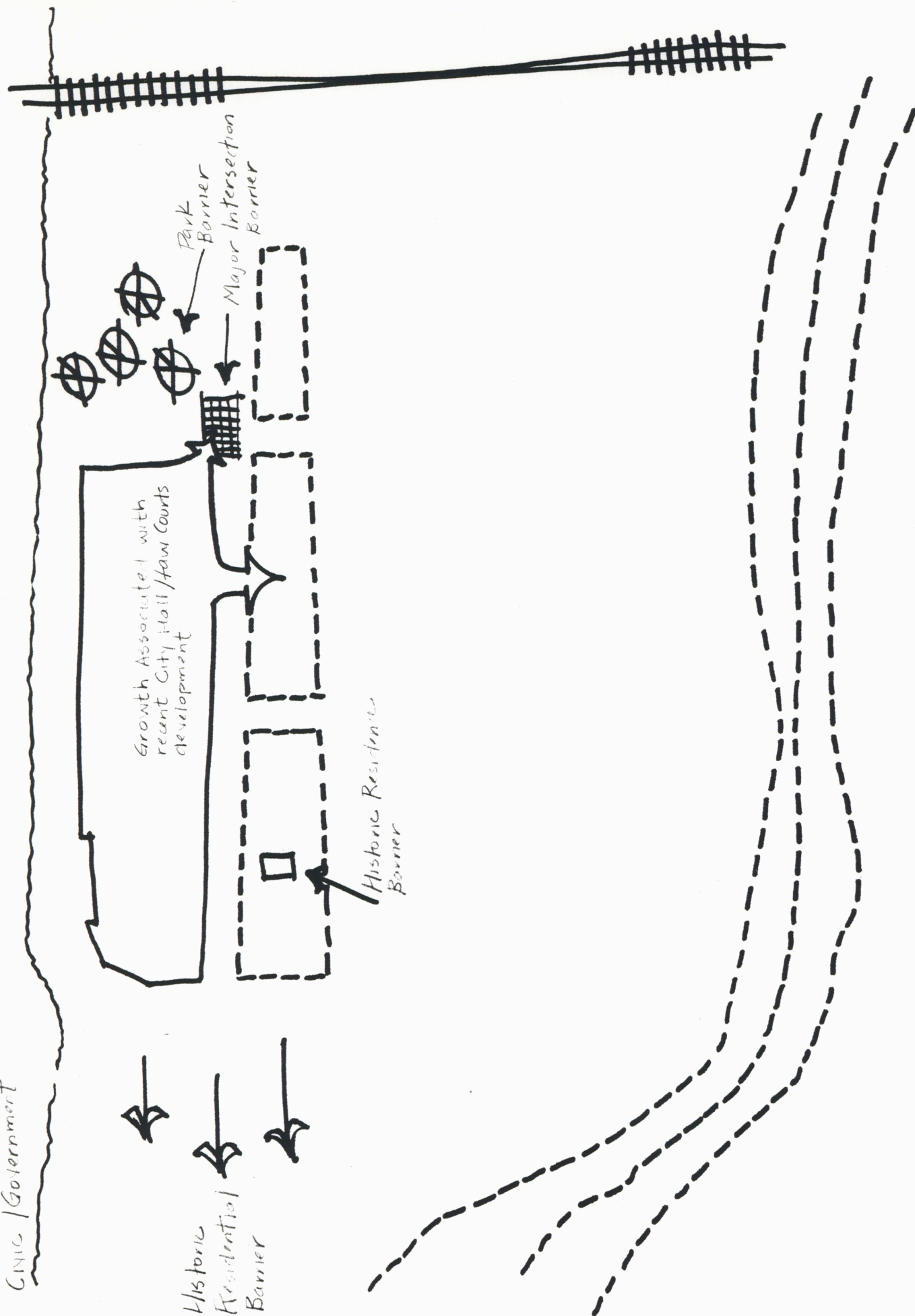
Retail Commercial



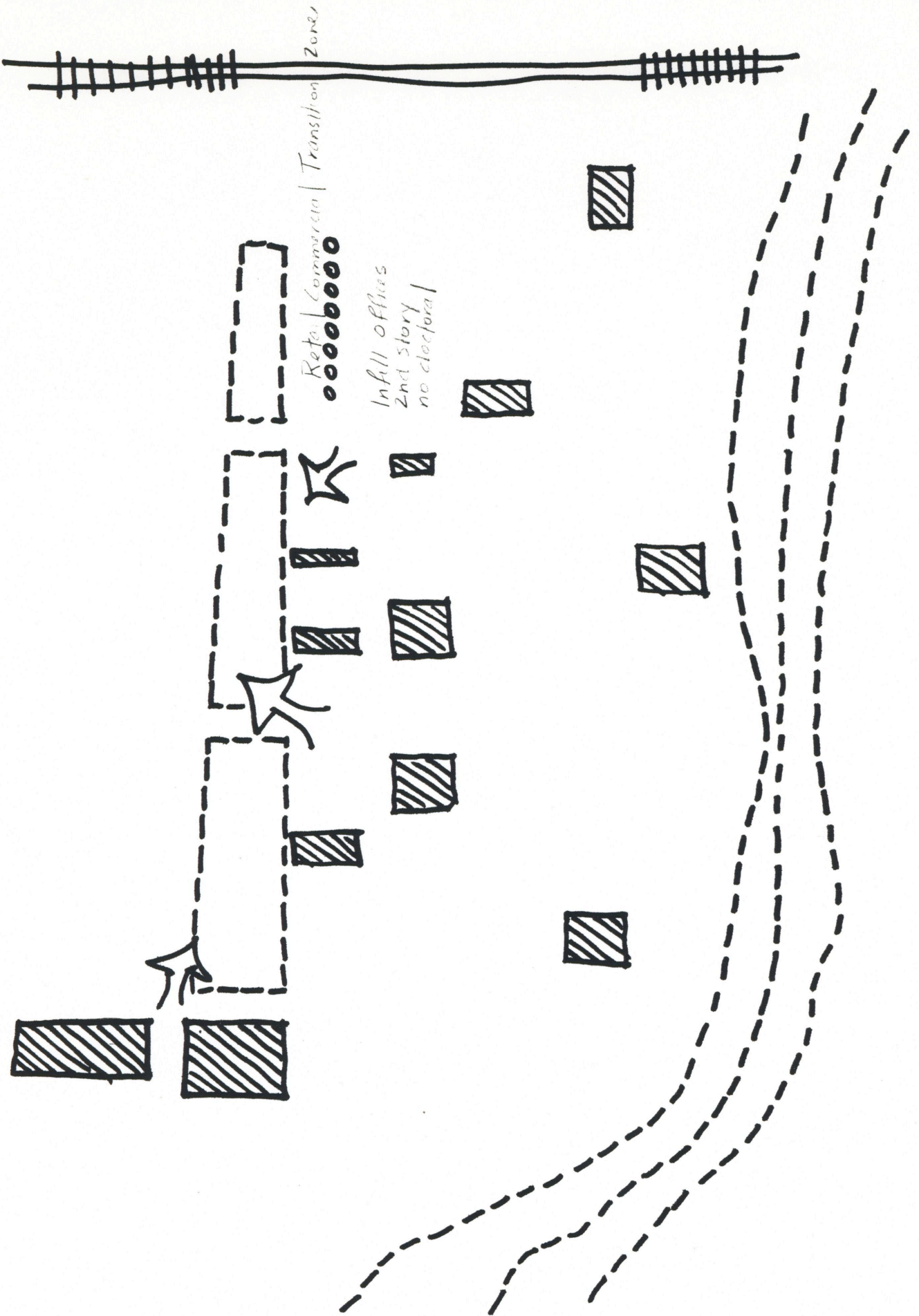
Service Commercial



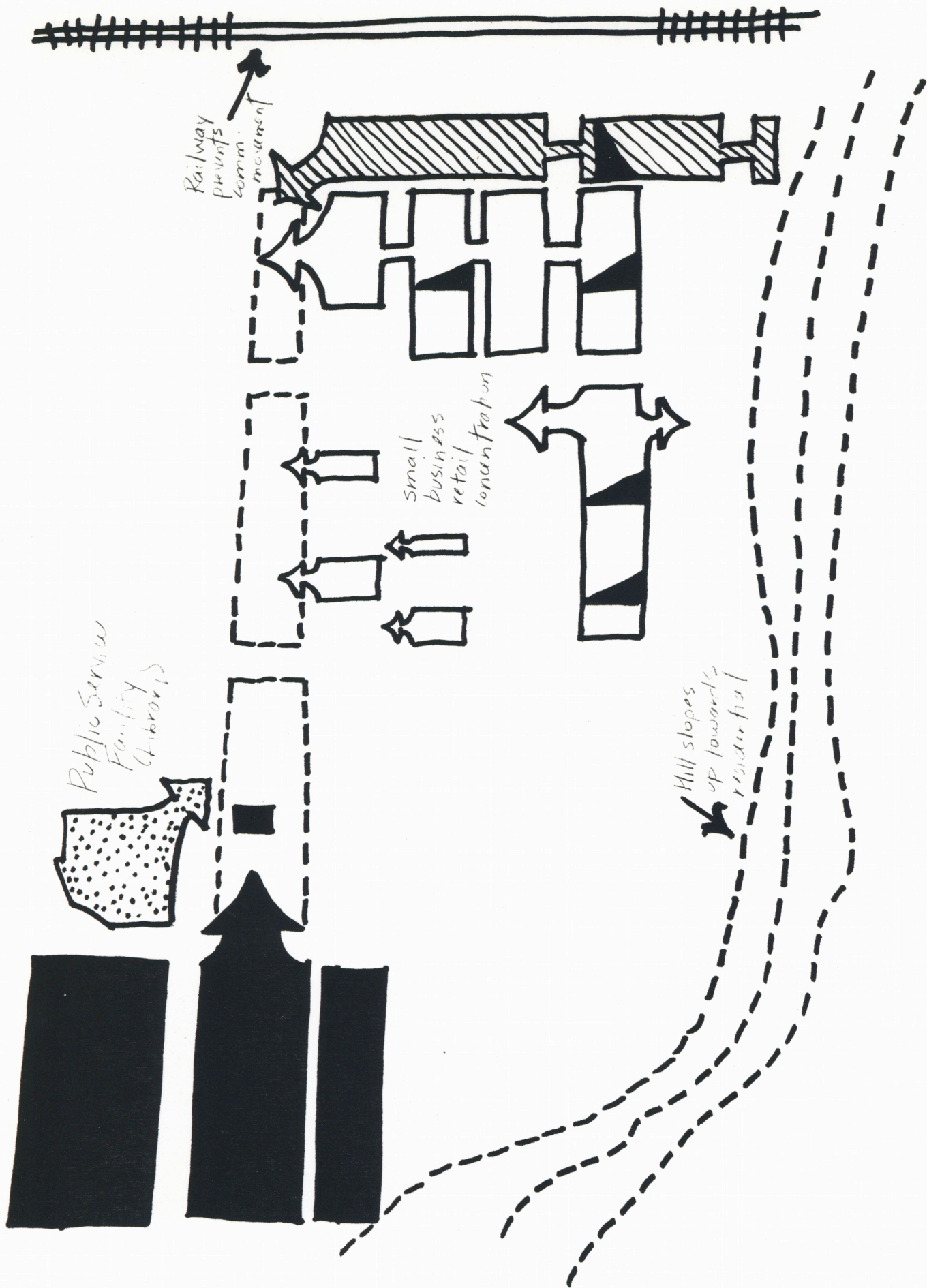
CNIC / Government



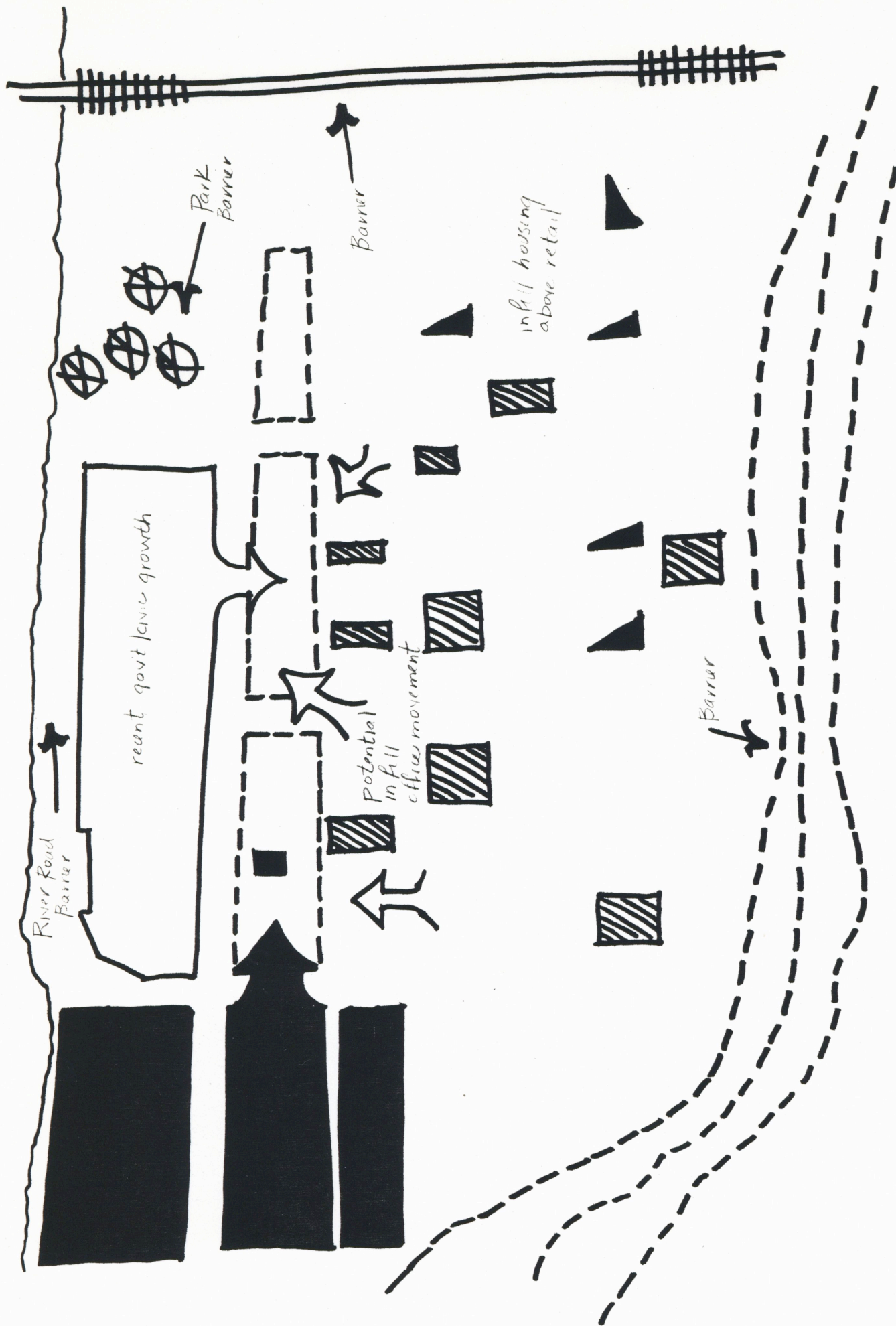
Professional Offices



Residential - Retail Relationship



Residential - Government Offices Relocation map



Detailed Initial Programming of Three Block Site
(approximation)

Residential

- high density (mostly elderly, singles) 137,000 sq. ft.
- medium density, in fill (working professionals,
singles) 40,220 sq. ft.

Retail

- Commercial (dispersed throughout site) 51,000 sq. ft.
- Service (dispersed) 2,000 sq. ft.

Government Expansion 32,000 sq. ft.

Office Space 13,600 sq. ft.

Cultural Centre 13,000 sq. ft.

Circulation in such an urban plan is extremely important in making each individual development viable.

Programming is important in setting a guideline for the potential increase in the areas but is open for reevaluation at this point and has the ability to set such a guideline.

Block/Proposed Development

In an effort to exemplify the potential of such an urban development, I have proposed a design for the northwest block. It would include a medium density residential complex for mostly working professionals and singles along with such services as restaurants, cafes, and small business retail.

Proposed Program (approximation)

Apartments in Tower	12,000 sq. ft.
Infill apts. above retail	28,220 sq. ft.

Retail Commercial	
-Interior	28,200 sq. ft.
-Exterior	2,400 sq. ft.

Service Commercial	
-1 lg. restaurant	800 sq. ft.
-1 kitchen	750 sq. ft.
-1 cafe	700 sq. ft.
-lounge	500 sq. ft.
-conference	1,800 sq. ft.
-dining hall	2,000 sq. ft.

Circulation

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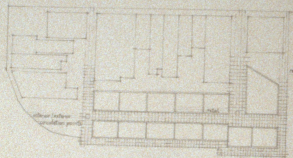
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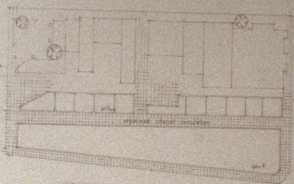
Whyte, William, H. Cluster Development. New York: American Conservation
Press, 1964.

Woods, Shadrach, The Man In The Street. England: Penguin Books, 1975.

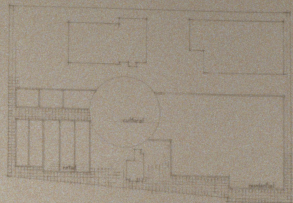
scheme A 1460
reflective of existing bips



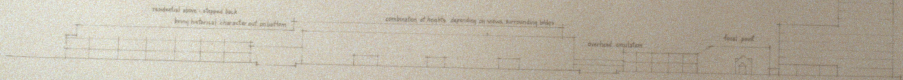
stair case



combination of all these uses
promotes social environment - social mixing of people

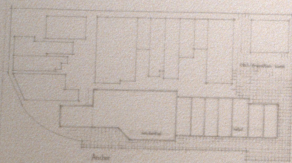


site plan



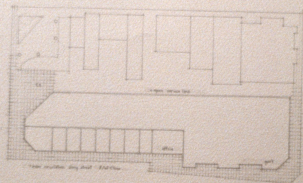
elevation form

scheme B
continuous form

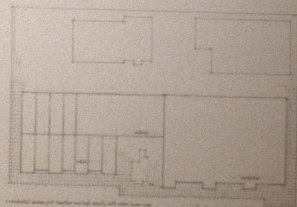


Anchor

structural layout study in plan

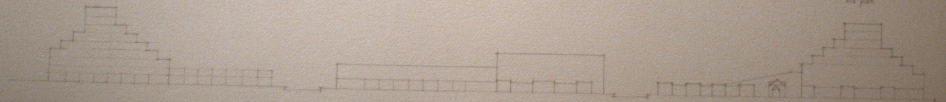


Anchor



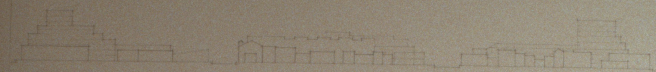
Anchor

site plan

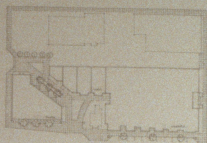
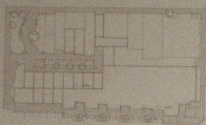
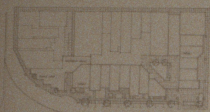


elevation form

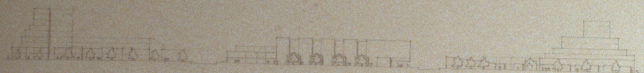
scheme C 1967
anchor-bank form



east elevation

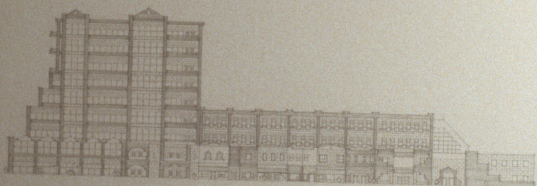


the plan

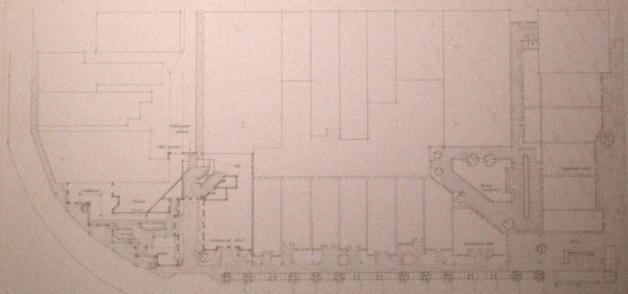
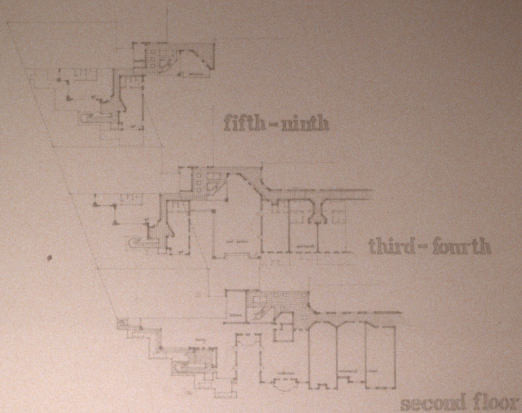


west elevation

the site

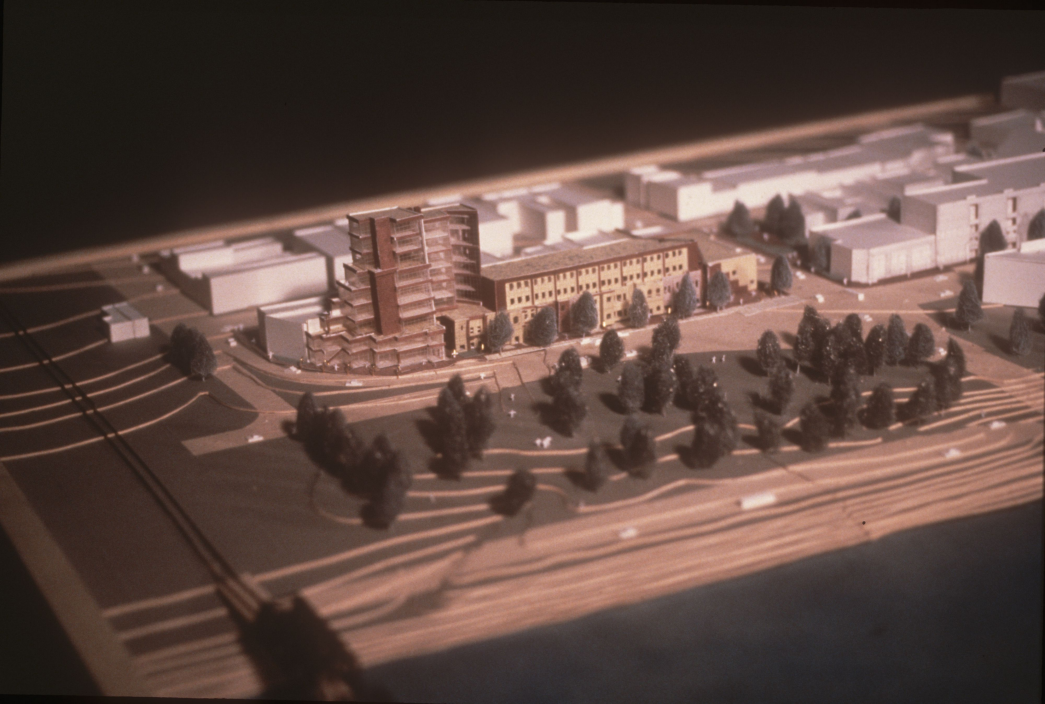


north elevation



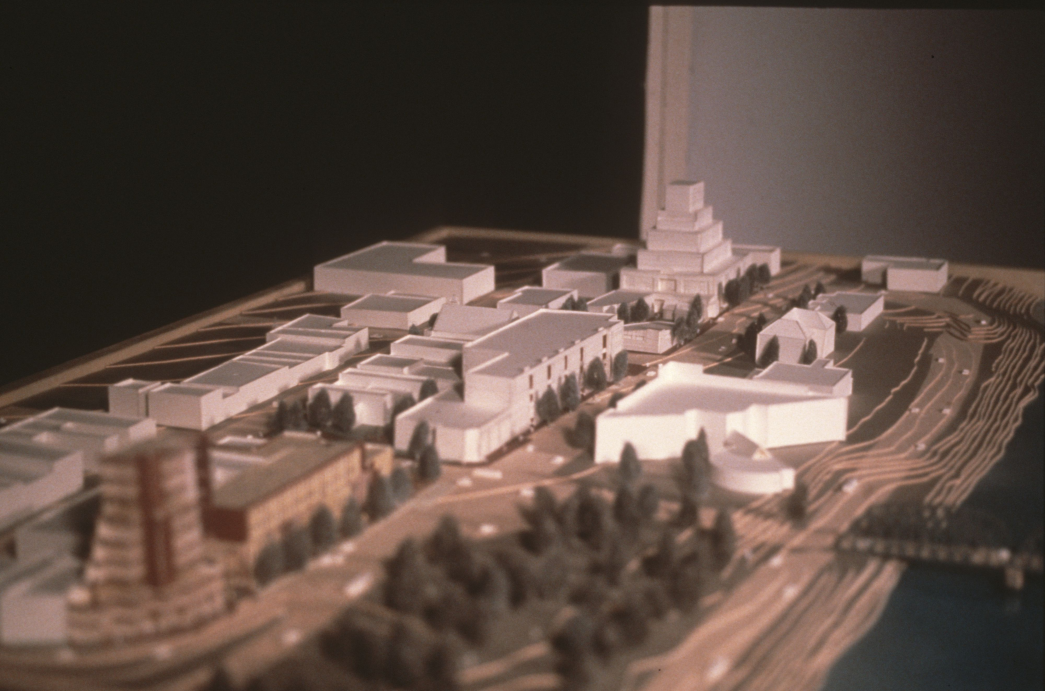
street level plan













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DATE DUE

JUL 30 1996

DEC 10 1996

MAY 03 1997

MAY 03 1997

Demco, Inc. 38-293

