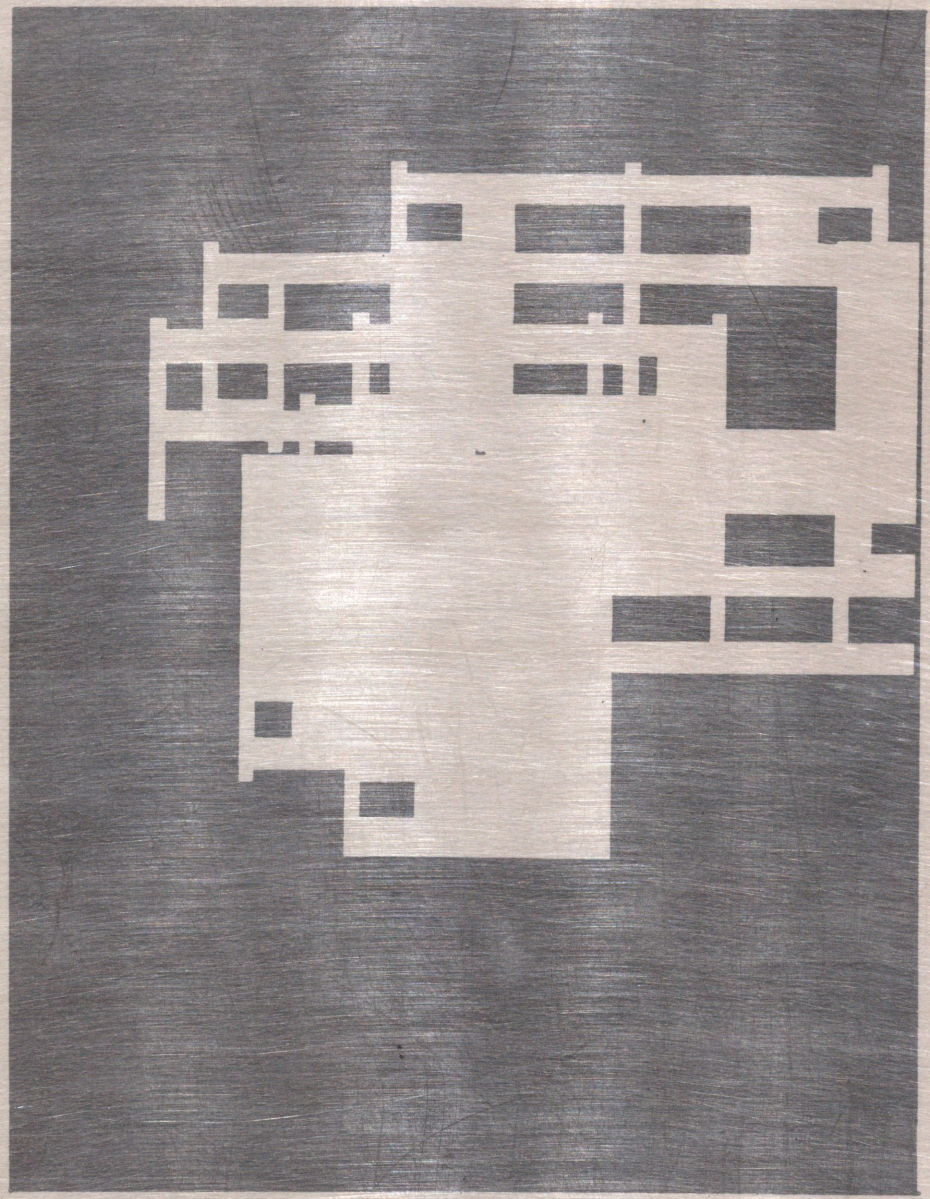

# LIVING IN THE CITY

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# LIVING IN THE CITY

by

MARILYN STANDLEY

An undergraduate thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree

of

BACHELOR OF ARCHITECTURE

Approved by:

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I wish to express my appreciation to the faculty who have shared their knowledge and expertise, to my family and friends who have believed in me, to those who have listened and offered their encouragement and support, and to those who have made me laugh.

TABLE OF CONTENTS


I. INTRODUCTION

II. THESIS STATEMENT

III. PROJECT SCENARIO
The Client
The Users
The Program of Uses
The Setting

IV. URBAN ANALYSIS
An Introduction to the Site
Redevelopment in San Diego
Mapping the Site and its Context
Conclusions

V. CHALLENGES AND GOALS
General Character and Environmental Quality
Organization, Orientation and Focus
Streetscape and Humanscale
Structural Configuration and Spatial Definition
Fitting the Residential into the Urban Context

VI. CONCEPTUAL APPROACHES TO PLANNING

VII. HYPOTHESIS
The Idea of Garden as a "Working" Park
Garden Vocabulary
Positive Aspects of Garden in the Urban Setting

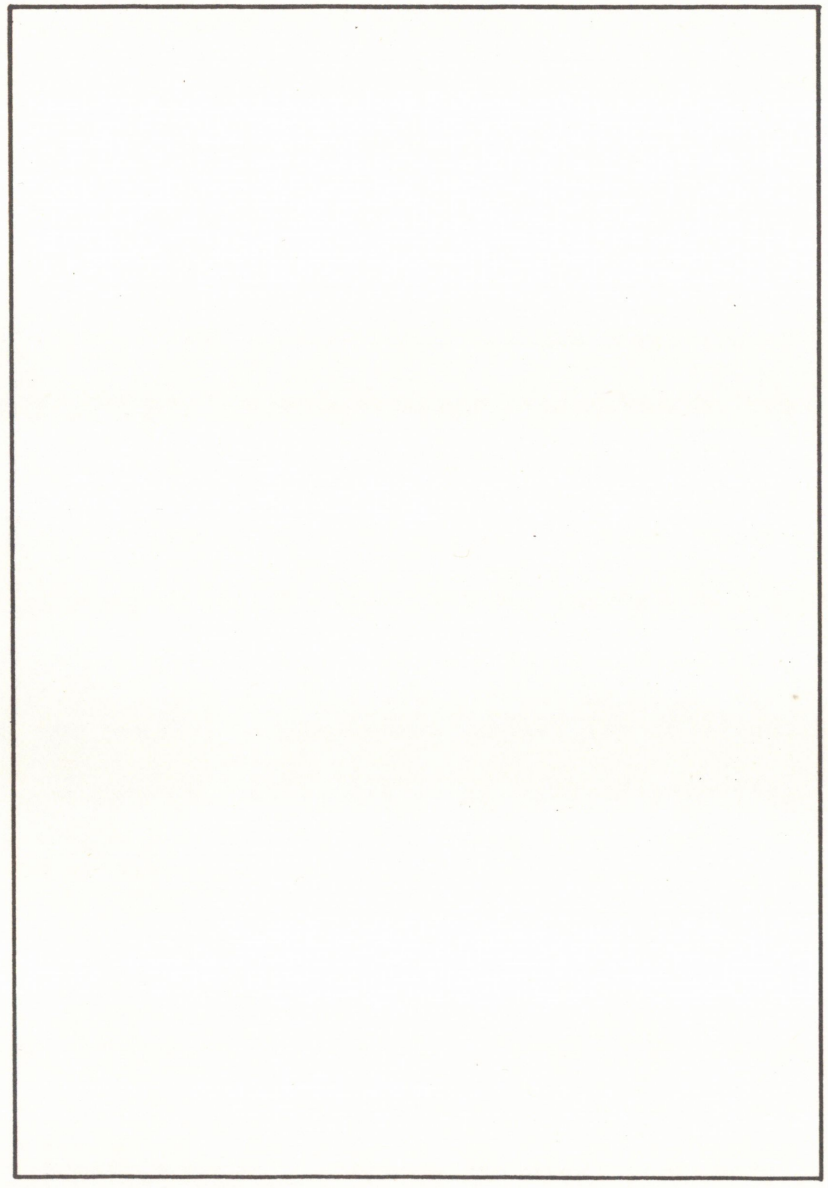
VIII. ALTERNATE SITE SCHEMES

IX. THE SOLUTION

X. BIBLIOGRAPHY

# INTRODUCTION

Whether we perceive it as a form of shelter or as a form of art, architecture plays a major role in shaping our surroundings. An everpresent element in our everyday lives, architecture influences the quality of man's environment and colors the nature of his relationship with it.



**THESIS STATEMENT**

This thesis is an exploration of architecture as it relates to man's feelings about his environment. It is concerned with the human condition and with the process of human habitation. It is concerned with how we live and where we live, and with how we feel about where we live.

The density of the urban context heightens the intensity of man's relationship with his built environment. In contrast, the individual dwelling is the most personal level of human interaction with architectural form and space. Together, these two settings offer a multitude of views into the issues concerning both the quality of man's environment and his feelings about it. For this reason, the project chosen as the subject for this thesis is a residential, mixed-use development in an inner-city setting.

* * * * *

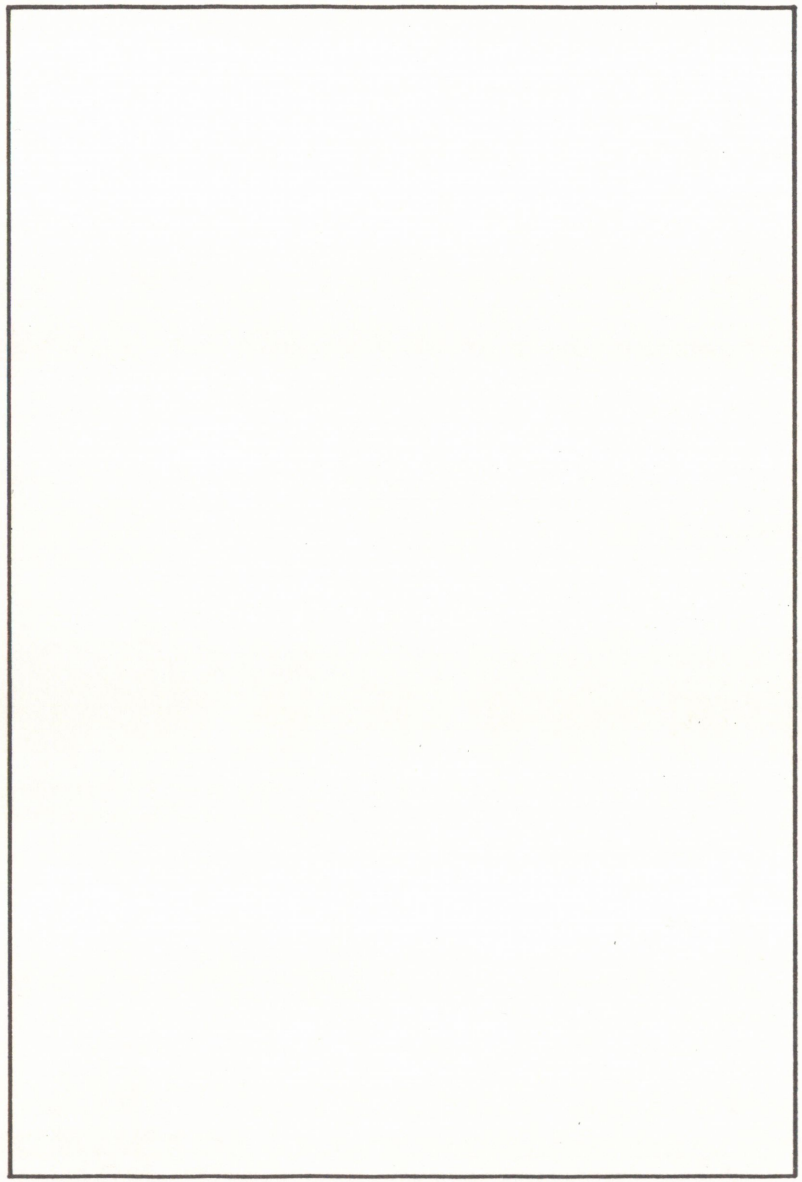
People rarely feel indifferently about cities. The city is either heralded as a haven of cultural activity or attacked as a pit of squalor. People are often drawn to the city for work or social and intellectual stimulation. Yet, when it comes to

choosing a place to live, they tend to seek a more tranquil setting. The individual place of residence is a very personal part of our daily environment. The "American Dream" of a house outside the city is still sought after as the ideal. As the exodus from the urban neighborhoods to suburban housing occurs, the urban core suffers social, economic, and physical decay, and the countryside is consumed by urban sprawl. Those left behind find fewer services and a deterioration of the quality of the urban environment. Those attempting to "escape" find they have brought many of the ills of city living with them. Alienation, anonymity, the stresses of crowding, and the lack of control over one's surroundings are simply transferred in varying degrees to the new place of residence. In addition, there is the inconvenience of physical separation from one's workplace and from the cultural or social interaction provided by the old urban neighborhood. These problems of urban decay and abandonment, and the possible reversibility of this trend by revitalizing urban centers and humanizing the urban living environment, are primary concerns of this thesis.

The reality of building in the urban context is such that

large, open parcels of developable land are not readily available. The practice of demolition and "renewal" is now viewed with suspicion, not only as destructive to the character and social structure of the existing neighborhoods, but also as insensitive to the personal needs of the residents. As an alternative approach, this project looks at revitalization on a smaller scale, more piece-meal basis. This involves fitting the new into the old and may include the renovation and reuse of some existing structures as well as the infill of underused and scattered open lots.

The scope of this project, then, addresses many issues relating to housing and urban residential development, neighborhood revitalization, and the health and livability of our cities. It regards architecture as one vehicle for enhancing the human environment on an individual scale, a neighborhood scale, and on an urban scale, and it looks at the means to redevelopment as well as the end result. It is concerned with the human aspects of the architectural process, and it uses human well-being as the guideline for re-examining our urban environment so as to make cities better places in which to live.



# PROJECT SCENARIO

## THE CLIENT

Working in conjunction with myself as developer of the project, the role of client is filled by the City of San Diego and the Centre City Development Corporation. The Centre City Development Corporation (CCDC) is a public, nonprofit corporation established by the City of San Diego in 1975 to plan, implement and administer redevelopment projects in downtown San Diego. Its offices are located on 121 Broadway, Suite 601, San Diego, California 92101.

## THE USERS

### THE RESIDENTS

Since this project is predominantly residential in nature, the majority of its users will be the residents. Due to the location of the site, the character of its surroundings, and the need for lower and moderate income housing in the downtown area, it is assumed that the residents will be those of very modest economic means. Some form of rental and ownership subsidies will be provided by the city (or county) for approximately 30-50% of the residents. The existing downtown residential population

includes a wide range of ages and backgrounds as well as a great deal of economic, ethnic, social, and occupational diversity. Some "typical" user groups can be identified as follows: the elderly, college students, young semi-professional working couples, middle-aged non-professional working couples and families, working singles, and single parents.

The Elderly

As there is a large population of elderly in the downtown area, many of the residents will be over 60. They may be retired, on social security, or they may be employed full or part-time. They are able to care for themselves and may be fairly active. Although they may have family in the San Diego area, many live alone. Most are long-standing residents of the city and have a small network of friends downtown. The presence of two senior centers in the immediate proximity of the site may contribute to a special interest on their part to live in this area.

The Students

San Diego is host community to several colleges and universities, and student housing is in demand. With San Diego

City College within 6 blocks of the site, living accommodations in this area would be very convenient for City College students in particular. The age of the typical student resident ranges between 18 and 40. Some live alone, although many are married or living with a friend. It is quite possible these students also work, at least on a part-time basis.

Young Semi-professional Working Couples

The age range of this resident group is about 20 to 30. One or both in the couple holds a job in the downtown area. The convenience of walking or riding the bus to work and the proximity of nighttime social activities are important benefits. Their incomes are not large enough to afford more expensive in-town housing.

Middle-aged Non-professional Working Couples

This group is the most apt to have a family. They are attracted to this location because of employment downtown. They may also prefer the convenience of city living, but it is most probable that their low income prevents them living elsewhere.

Working Singles

The urban center is full if single people of all ages struggling to support themselves. Younger, older, never married, or divorced, most of these residents are part of the semi-skilled labor force. They are delivery and security personnel, bank tellers, and office clerks. Living close to their work and close to in-town social opportunities is important to them.

Single Parents

The single parent now comprises a large segment of the population in all cities, and they are prime candidates for residency in this project. Most are women between ages 25 and 45 who have one or two children. Most work full time or work part time while attending classes at City College in order to upgrade their job skills.

THE NON-RESIDENTS

The non-resident user group is comprised of the owners and employees of the commercial and retail establishments both in the proposed development and in the surrounding neighborhood. It also

Includes their customers and other members of the general public who come into the area to use the Post Office or the San Diego Public Library, or who pass through the site on their way to other destinations in town.

## THE PROGRAM OF USES

This project has been described as an urban residential, mixed-use, "infill" development. It is estimated that the program will be about 60-70% residential. Financing for the residences will be subsidized. Ownership loan assistance, rent to own programs, guaranteed rents, and some form of cooperative ownership are all possibilities. The density of the residences will be fairly high, and the massing will be compact. Although there are no height restrictions in the area, in order to fit the scale of existing structures, the height of the new buildings will range between 2-5 stories. Residences may occur both at ground or street level and at higher levels over commercial establishments. With a large number of residents either living alone or with one other person, many of the living spaces will be small, typically one-bedroom and studio type arrangements. A few larger 2 and 3 bedroom places will also be available. Some form of outdoor living space is considered highly desirable.

The non-residential part of the program is made up of uses that either directly or indirectly respond to the needs of the residents. These uses may also serve the immediate neighborhood

and members of the general public. The program will take into account all existing uses and services now provided within the area, and an attempt will be made to work around them. Should displacement be necessary, reintegration of those uses into the project will be considered.

One of the non-residential priorities is a child care center. It will be open both days and evenings. Education is not its primary function. The management will be partly or wholly under the jurisdiction of the residents. Its use, however, will not be restricted to the residents of this development.

Planned commercial and retail establishments include a laundromat with cleaning services, a small grocery store, a pharmacy with newsstand and ice cream counter, a hardware store with repair shop and garden supplies, and several small eating places such as a breakfast bar and coffee shop, a sandwich shop and deli, a restaurant offering lunches and dinners, and possibly a neighborhood pub providing informal evening musical entertainment. Additional non-designated commercial spaces will be available for rent as well.

A community recreation center and a community health center

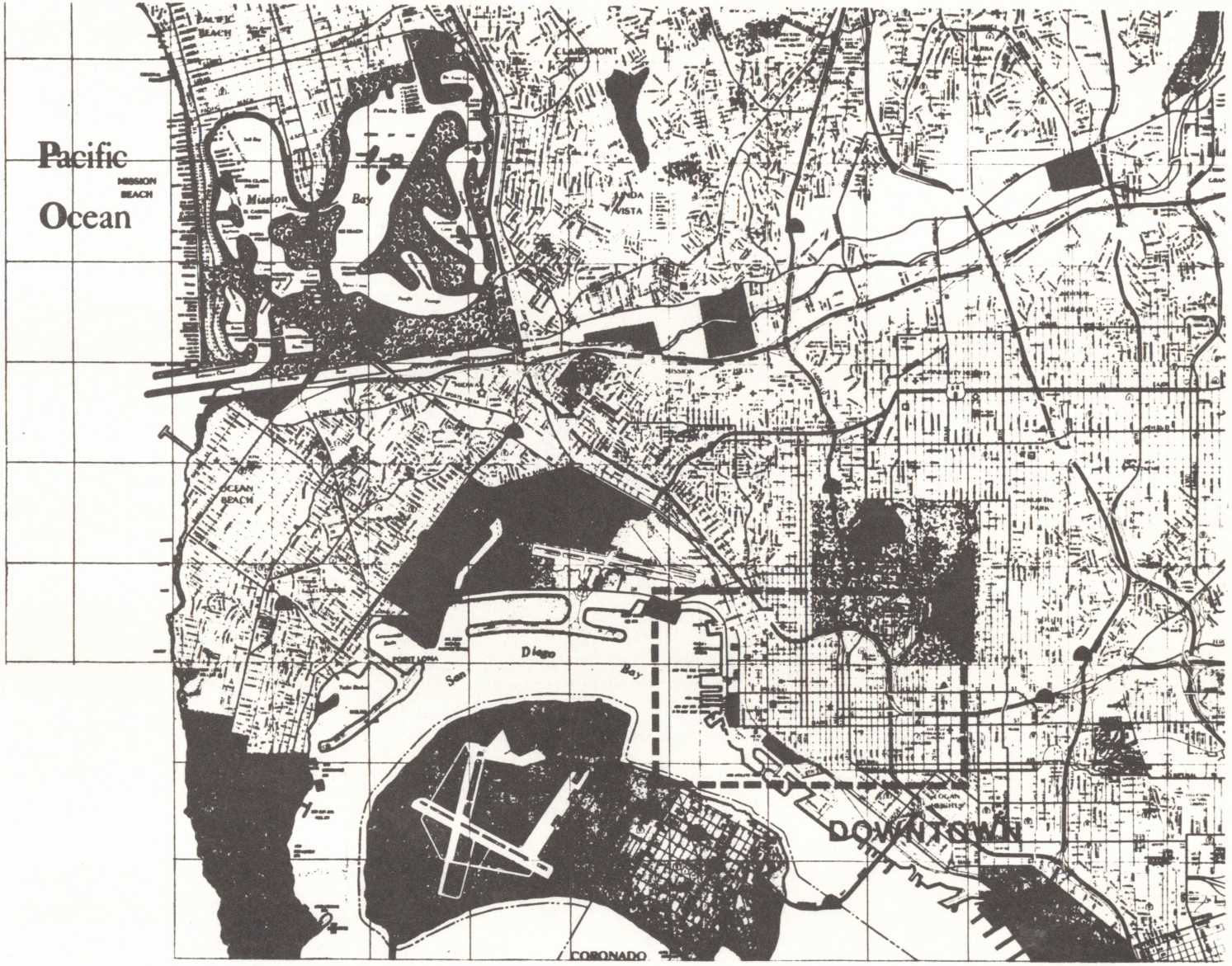
are also included in the program. These facilities may operate separately, although it is likely that some of their functions will be related or will even overlap. The recreation center will offer surpervised and organized games, and recreational activities for people of all ages. Play areas will be provided indoors and outdoors. The health center will have a small part-time rotating professional medical staff. Its main emphasis, however, will be the services provided by its semi-professional health care and health education personnel. These services include counseling, classes in areas such as food and nutrition, sex education, personal health, child care, and aging, and exercise classes including fitness, aerobics, and yoga. It is anticipated that the city, the private sector, the residents, and neighborhood groups will all be involved in various aspects of running and managing these facilities.

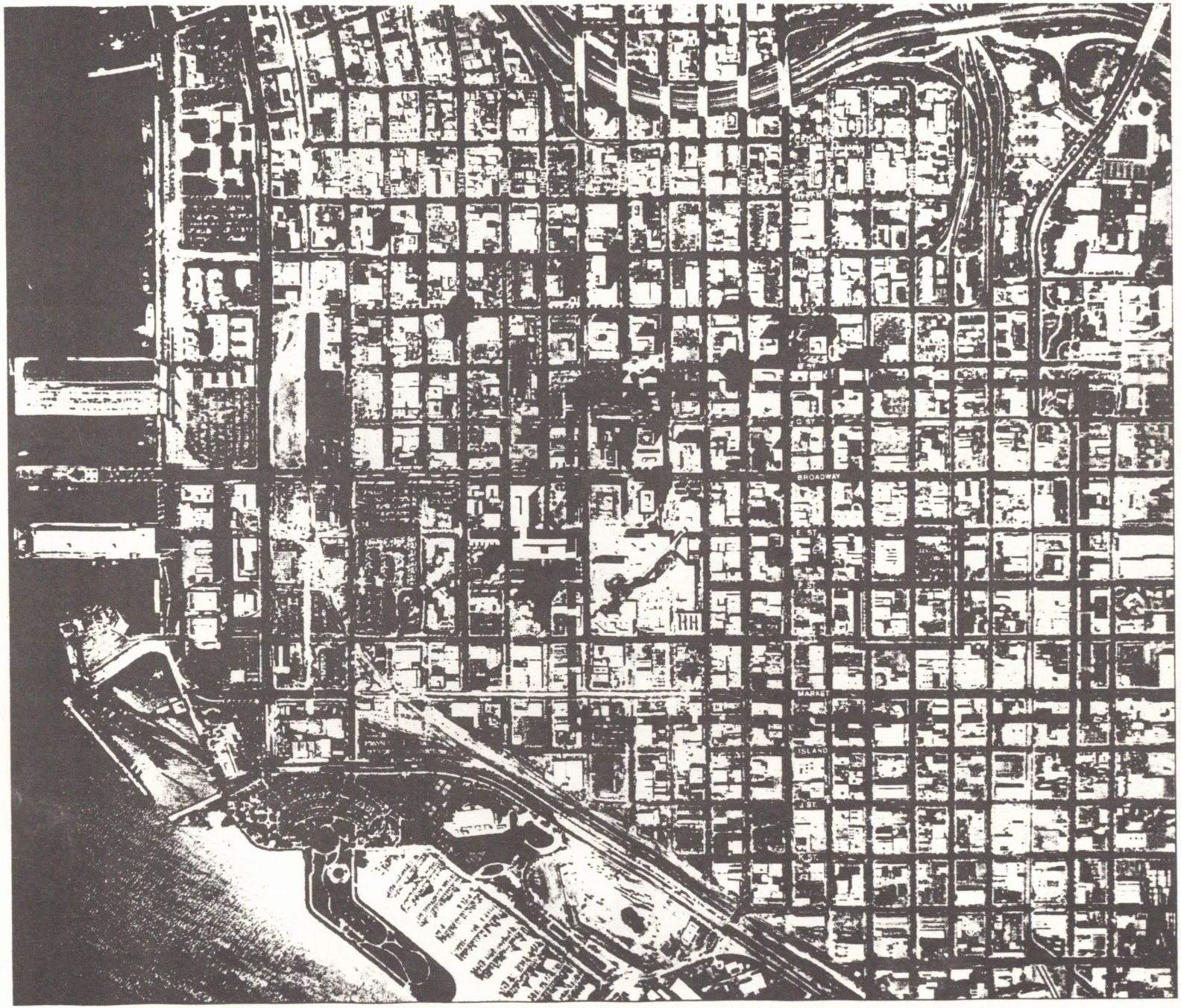
A very important part of the program is the inclusion of some form of green space or park that will serve the residents of the project, the neighborhood, and the surrounding downtown area.

## THE SETTING

The location chosen for this project is San Diego, California. The second largest city in the state, San Diego is situated along the southernmost coast of California, only 17 miles north of Tijuana, Mexico. The site area for the project lies in the heart of San Deigo's downtown. Specifically, the site consists of 3 city blocks located to the southeast of the city's Central Business District and immediately adjacent to the San Diego Public Library and the main branch of the United States Post Office. The northern edge of the site borders E Street, which is one block to the south of Broadway, a major arterial running east and west through the Central Business District. The site is further defined by G Street to the south, by 10th Street to the east, and by 8th Street along the western edge. The site lies 4 blocks to the east of the newly opened Horton Plaza retail shopping center and 3 blocks to the east of San Diego's Gaslamp Quarter, a nationally designated historic district. Six blocks to the northeast of the site, at the southern tip of Balboa Park, are San Diego High School and San Diego City College. An area of light manufacturing and warehousing separates the site from the

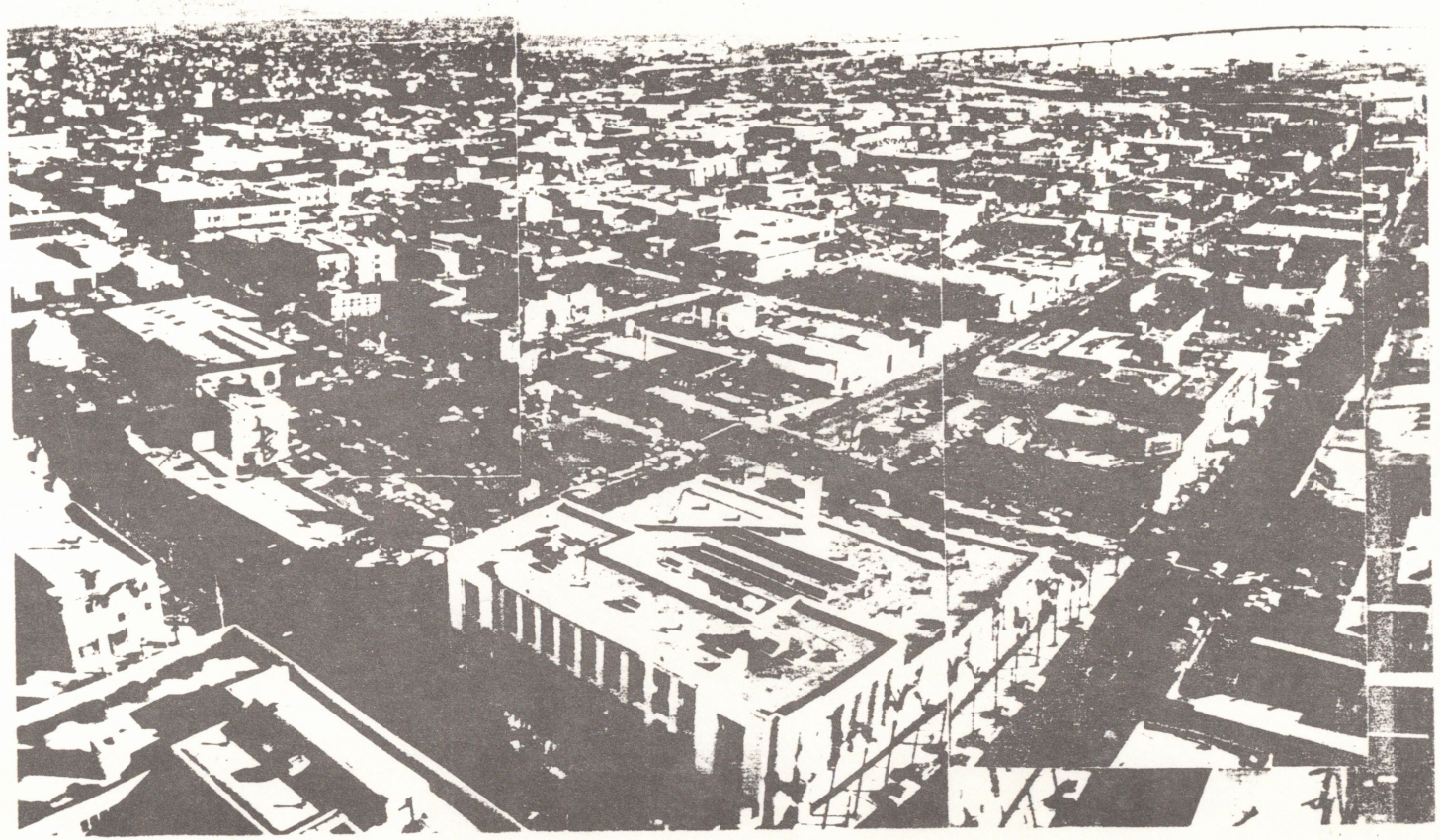
harbor district, some 8 blocks to the south.



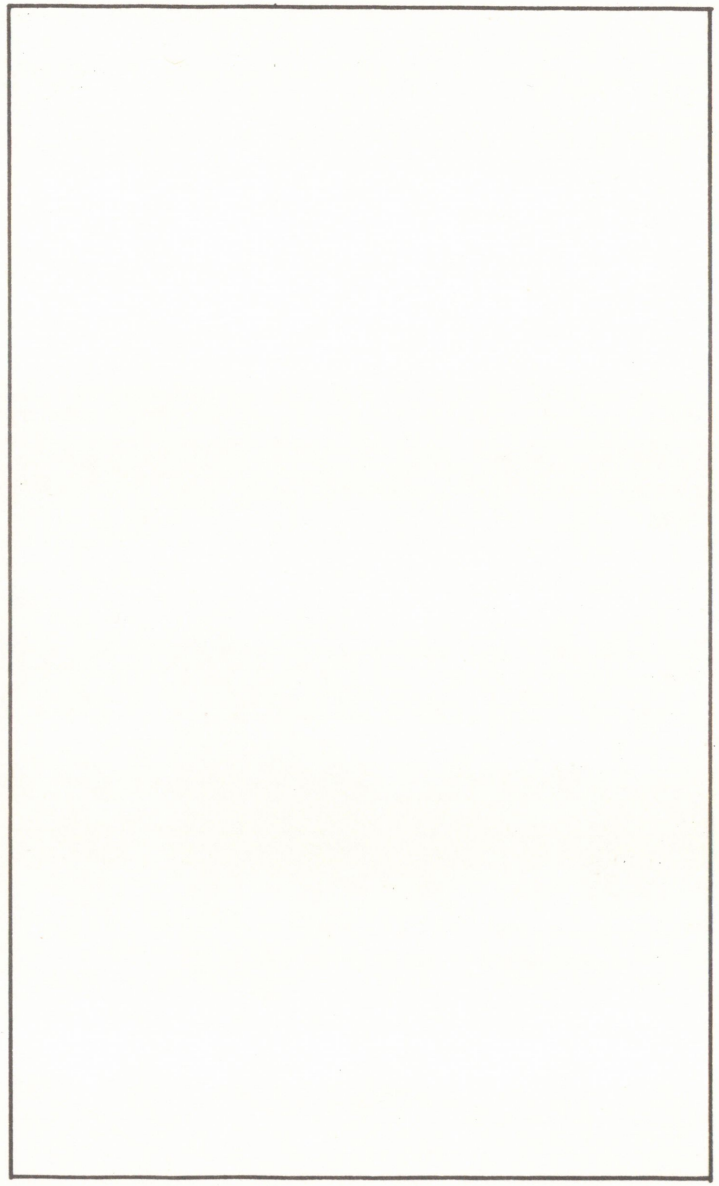



THE DOWNTOWN - THE SITE AREA - THE SITE


BROADWAY
E ST.
F ST.
G ST.
MARKET
THE SITE



VIEW OF THE SITE



# URBAN ANALYSIS

## AN INTRODUCTION TO THE SITE

### THE SAN DIEGO AREA

San Diego's coastal location and warm, sunny climate give the area an almost semi-tropical feel. Along its beaches, the ocean presence and gentle seabreezes moderate the already mild temperatures. Inland, the influence of the desert brings hotter days and cooler nights. Temperatures generally range between 46°-63° F in winter, and between 63°-74° F in the summer, with occasional hot spells of 85°-90° F. Cloudy, rainy days are rare during the summer. Most of the yearly rainfall occurs from November to March. There is no snow. Palm trees, citrus and banana trees, cypress, olive, cactus, and many tropical flowers grow well here. The climate is also friendly to tourists.

### CLIMATE DATA

TEMPERATURES

| | January | August | September |
|---|---|---|---|
| Maximum mean | 63°F | 74°F | |
| Minimum mean | 46°F | 63°F | |
| Maximum extreme | 85°F | 94°F | 110°F |
| Minimum extreme | 25°F | 54°F | |

RELATIVE HUMIDITY

| | | | overall |
|---|---|---|---|
| Average ranges | 66-73% | 73-87% | 52-88% |

WINDS

| | |
|---|---|
| Prevailing direction | NW |
| Summer windshifts | WNW and W |
| Strong winds | SW |
| Average speed | 6 mph year round |
| Maximum speed | 52 mph |
| Faster range | 26-34 mph in winter months |

PRECIPITATION (Rainfall only)

| | |
|---|---|
| Monthly minimum | 0" |
| Monthly maximum | 9.26" |
| Yearly mean | 9.99" |
| Maximum in 24 hours | 3.62" in December |
| Driest months | June - August |
| Wettest months | November - March |

SKY CONDITIONS

| | |
|---|---|
| Percent possible sun | 69% (yearly average) |
| Clear sky conditions | 50% (monthly average) |
| Average amount of fog | 2 days per month |
| Thunderstorms | extremely rare |

THE PEOPLE

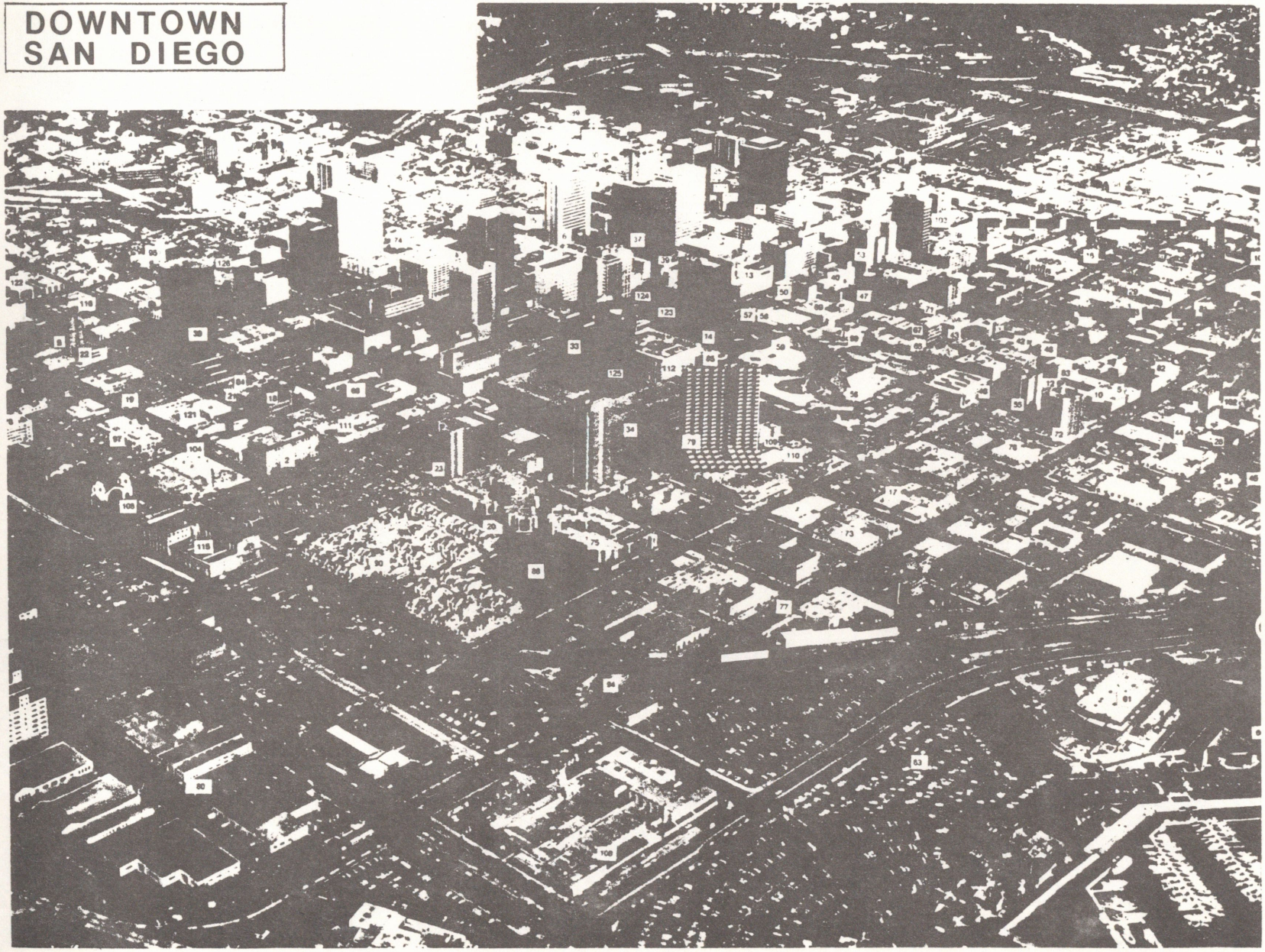
Even San Diegans are lured into a sense of relaxation despite the sometimes hectic pace of city life. They are fun-loving, sociable people who enjoy all types of outdoor activities and social gatherings. Like a lot of other Southern Californians, many of the city's residents have moved to San Diego from other places. The pleasant climate makes the area attractive to

retirees, the colleges and universities make it a popular place for students, and the presence of the Navy accounts for a large number of military personnel. There is also a mixture of racial groups: white, black, oriental, and hispanic. With the border so close by, the influence of Mexico, its people. and their culture, is naturally evident in the San Diego area. San Diegans are characterized by their intellectual, political, racial, social, and economic diversity. Their seeming willingness to tolerate each other's differences adds to the easy-going lifestyle they enjoy.

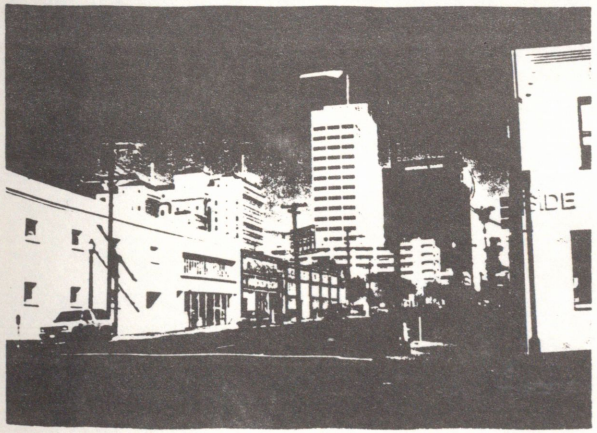
THE CITY

Although downtown San Diego itself is compact, the greater metropolitan areas and adjoining suburban communities are spread out over a large region. In many respects, downtown San Diego is only one of many centers and does not function well as a focal point or hub of activity for the city as a whole. With the projected economic growth and subsequent rapid increases in population, this trend toward physical expansion will most likely continue.

# DOWNTOWN SAN DIEGO



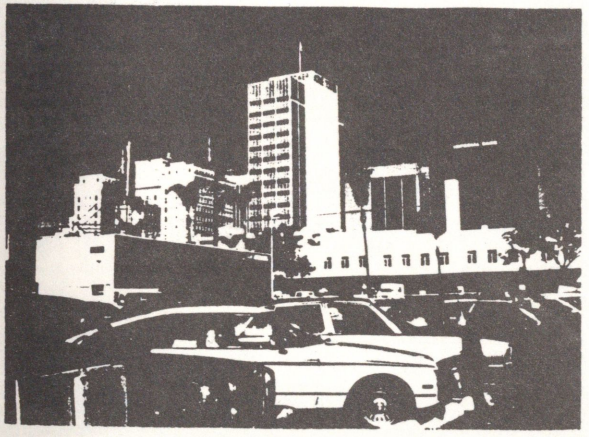


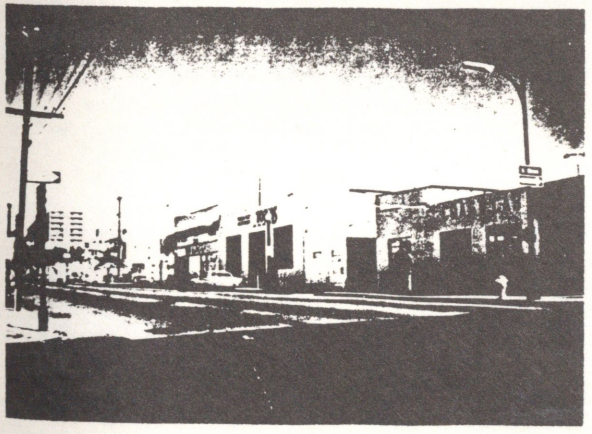



Despite the extensive freeway system and more than adequate public transit service, many people who live and work within 20 minutes of the downtown never go there. While some have no reason or desire to go downtown, others consciously avoid it. People can meet virtually all their needs for goods and services, entertainment, and social activity outside the city center. Even some of the so-called in-town family activity centers, such as Balboa Park, the zoo, and the space museum, are located at the periphery of the downtown area and across the freeway. Although the city is laid out in a logical grid pattern and is easily traversed, it is not a place one would venture into without a particular destination in mind. In contrast to its low-rise, suburban surroundings, the downtown appears dirty and congested. With the exception of some newly restored areas, the streets are either closed in by bland and imposing skyscrapers, or they are cluttered by run-down stores, bars, and warehouses.

Architecturally, the city is characterized by a juxtaposition of extremes. While the variety and contrast is intriguing, it can sometimes be a bit disconcerting. Most of the urban public spaces are hard and cold. They often lack a sense of human scale, and

the softness of greenery is a rare treat. There are very few pleasant places to sit and relax. In addition, the large number of street people makes many non-urbanites nervous. Simply stated, the downtown is not a terribly comfortable place in which to be.

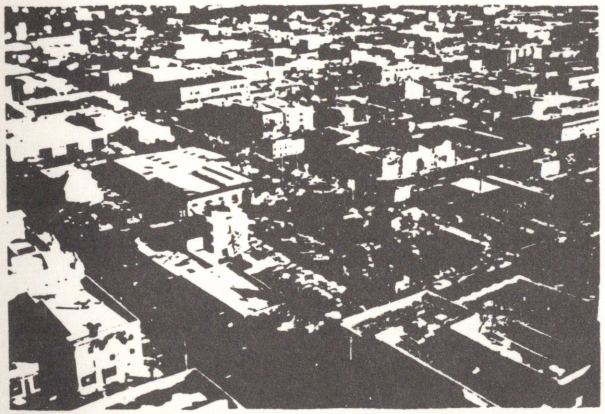




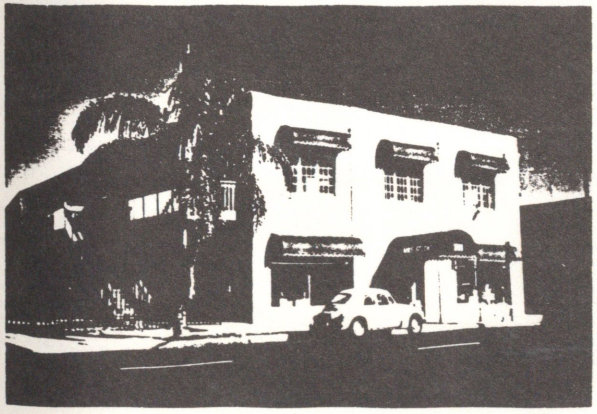
THE SITE

The site area may be referred to as a forgotten part of the city. As the civic and commercial center has shifted to the northwest, this area has fallen out of sight behind the office towers. The site neighborhood has an activity of its own, generated primarily by the library and post office, and also by its residents and some small commercial and light industrial enterprises. It seems low key, however, in comparison to the bustle along Broadway only 1-2 blocks to the north. The area is a popular place among the street people. The crime rate is considered to be fairly high.

Although the site area is comprised of a mixture of functions and building types, the overriding character of place is that of a warehousing district. There are several buildings of architectural distinction in the vicinity, but many of them suffer







from detrioration and neglect, and some are vacant. Most of the remaining buildings can be described as an unorganized collection of non-descript structures. Many of these are also in disrepair. Throughout the site area are numerous vacant paved lots which are used for surface parking. The overall effect is architectural cacaphony, visual clutter, lack of focus, and general harshness in the environmental quality.

This area, like other parts of the city, is beginning to be rediscovered. Current lower property values are prompting a movement of renovation and restoration, and new businesses are moving in. Most common among them are design-oriented offices, art galleries, and studio loft spaces. With the growing enthusiasm throughout the city for reclaiming neglected neighborhoods, this site is in a prime location for revitalization activity.



## REDEVELOPMENT IN SAN DIEGO

The city of San Diego is currently in the midst of an on-going effort to redefine its downtown area as a viable and active urban center. This wave of redevelopment activity is occurring on an individual basis as well as on a city-wide planning level. While the Victorian style buildings in the historic Gaslamp Quarter are being restored one by one by entrepreneurs and business people, individual property owners in the Golden Hills neighborhood on the east side of town are putting sweat equity into their newly acquired older homes.

With a larger view toward redevelopment, the City Planning Office, in conjunction with the Centre City Development Corporation, has major rebuilding projects scheduled for the downtown areas between the Central Buisness District and the waterfront. These plans include residential developments, a docking facility for an ocean cruise ship, a related tourist retail development near the Santa Fe Railraod Depot, and the completion of a major convention center near the marina. C Street is being converted into a mall to serve as a trolley and public transportation corridor, and B Street is to be a major commercial

way. The opening of Horton Plaza Shopping Center in August, 1985, is being hailed as "pivotal" in the renewal of the downtown and is anticipated to create a mushrooming of revitalization activity in its vicinity. In fact the U.S. Grant Hotel immediately across Broadway from Horton Plaza just reopened in December, 1985, after a complete renovation and restoration.

The following articles are included here as an illustration of the scope of San Diego's redevelopment activity, as an indication of the city's enthusiasm for revitalization, and as a reminder of some of the problems and issues associated with it.

Downtown: The Center

# At heart, we may still be a city in search of a center

By Kay Kaiser
Architecture Critic

The Center of the Center.

This phrase comes close to describing something for which our city is searching.

No single word can express it — it's that quality without a name city-builders desperately seek when they look at the anemic interior of their city and see that something is missing.

San Diego architect and visionary, the late Lloyd Ruocco, traveled around the world looking at foreign cities and their fountains, squares and secret narrow alleys leading to *the place*, the heart, the soul of the city. He wanted to bring the secret home to San Diego because he knew we didn't have a "Center of the Center."

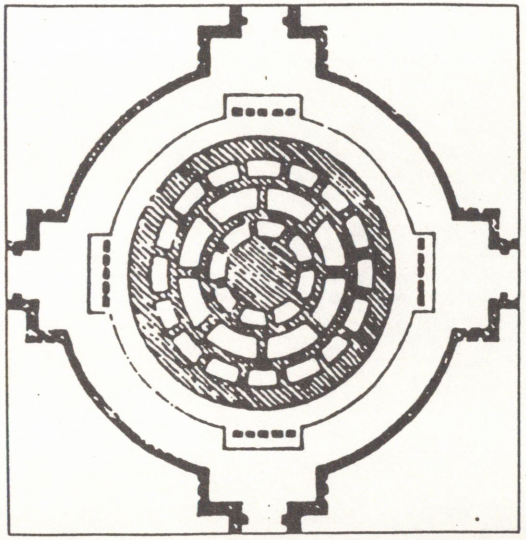
He read about ancient villages with meeting places at mountains with unusual shapes or in a protected valley with a spring and a flat, stage-like table of rocks. They became sacred places. People carved stones to put their mark on the special environment. This was the beginning of cities, public art, and the expression of that nameless quality.

Ruocco and others like him worried about San Diego in the '60s. It was at a turning point then as it is now. He wrote a short essay in 1962 in *Omniart*, an impressive publication of the San Diego Chapter of the American Institute of Architects. Ruocco's words are just as relevant today.

"As the years go by and all the investments are made, and the bright new buildings rise shouldering each other in the sky, how will we all feel about Centre City? Or perhaps it is too much to ask that anybody have any feelings about anything as practical as his city.

"Such a simple and adamantly important requirement as the Center of the Center could easily be overlooked in the scuffle of collaboration, zoning, auto-intoxication, financing, public relations, and the general awkward anticipation of Utopia.

"But a really important question is whether a city exists at all without its most important treasures being at its center. And to be treasures, they must be more than merely practical. They must be surprisingly good and easily lovable."



Where is the center of the center? This Renaissance drawing symbolizes the *San Diego Union's* architecture critic Kay Kaiser's question whether or not the Horton Plaza shopping center *is* the center of Centre City.

What lovable treasures do we have at our center? A bank building on every corner is not lovable to anyone but their boards of directors. Office buildings growing out of the sidewalk unrelieved by doors, windows you can see through or other signs of human habitation, won't warm the hearts of San Diegans. Slabs of concrete, sometimes called "plazas," won't make people rush there even if a sculpture of cavorting porpoises is set in the middle. Our federal courthouse makes a nice background for TV interviewers to question political wizards, but it's not the place you'd like to show to your children.

People have preferred the suburbs because they are prettier and easier to move around in, and there is something to do there. But deep in our minds, we know it isn't healthy for vigorous life-blood to be flowing out to the extremities while the heart of the city slowly turns blue.

It's not that San Diegans lack city pride. Nearly everyone was thrilled by the photography of our town from the Goodyear blimp during the last World Series games. People all over the country saw the blimp rise over the stadium to show the inlets of Mission Bay and the open ocean below a powerful blue sky. Our problems start when the camera moves in closer and shows the details — the man-made environment. Then our pride falters.

A woman visiting from Holland was asked what she thought about downtown San Diego. She said there sure were a lot of banks. Visiting Europeans are very polite, she said no more.

Design-conscious San Diegans — the urbane ones — also look at the city and express the same fear. While most realize the effect of the Horton Plaza shopping center on downtown will be like a crate-full of oranges to a crew of scurvied sailors, they also know that there must be much more in the diet of a healthy downtown.

Horton Plaza is one project hailed by planners and developers as the new center for Centre City. But it will take time to prove itself. In a 1,200-acre area, is Horton Plaza shopping center a powerful enough draw — commercially or emotionally — to be the center?

People need banks to keep their money in and get it out when they need it. They need shopping centers to spend it in. They need offices, government buildings, libraries and places to eat.

But what kind of projects have they been getting?

Is a restaurant enclosed in opaque glass the kind of place you'd want to be in? Would a woman from Holland write back to her relatives about that? Will a new plethora of high-rise office buildings with flat tops make a great picture postcard? Is it right that views to the ocean along major gateway streets are blocked by rows of high-rises because developers were unwilling to give up one square foot to public spaces?

And when the woman from Holland goes on the 16th floor somewhere to the immigration office (assuming she wants to stay here), shouldn't she be able to see the bridge, the Coronado Islands, or the bird's-eye view of Balboa Park rather than the glare off the aluminum window frames of the buiding next door? And, shouldn't she be able to get right to the water's edge without weaving around a wall of big hotels, parking lots, old Navy buildings and a convention center that looks like a stretched-out meat locker?

Anyone can see these mistakes on any street of our beleaguered city. Even after 20 years of study, urban design plans and increased sophistication, San Diego doesn't look remarkably better than it did in 1960. Each year another office building finds its way into downtown. The danger is that the land is running out. Downtown is filling up with architecture we will live with for at least 50 years. What will need to happen before it stops?

It may not stop. Earlier this summer the plan by the Centre City Urban Design Committee was presented at a San Diegans Inc. meeting. The succinct, 12-page plan would solve many of these architectural/planning problems if it's approved by the city council.

The response by this group of big downtown property owners and developers wasn't warm. Many still want to reserve the right to build whatever they want, wherever they want — even if it does the city and its people no good. For all the sophisticated talk, we haven't progressed.

But maybe they will realize that, considering the needs of people and the total effect their building has in the city, less growth doesn't have to mean less money.

A good lesson was found in a 1919 issue of *The San Diego Sun*. George Marston's department store ran an advertisement for ladies' porch dresses. At the top of the ad, on either side of the company name, ran the reminder that the post office and public library were on the fourth floor.

Old George was no fool; he knew that these city services would bring people into the store. Perhaps they would buy a handkerchief after they got their stamps and books. But he was also dedicated to building San Diego into a grand place at a time when it wasn't one of the top 10 tourist spots. The city needed a place to house those community services and he provided it.

We need people like him right now. We need a series of developers willing to join forces and construct greenbelt walkways connecting Balboa Park and downtown. We need open-air restaurants without barricade railings between seatings and walkways. We need people who see our waterfront as the greatest God-given asset we have and who will fight to open it up to the city again. We need only the best architects who think of downtown commissions as plums — things to be won and handled as if they were the most important buildings in town.

We need smaller things too. We need quiet, water-filled sanctuary-style plazas to rest in when the city gets too loud. We need places of grand scale where we can see and meet people different than those living next door in the suburbs. We need sculptures and historical markers that remind us of who we are and where we are.

We need those "life-spring" places which have nothing to do with shopping or banking. We need the kind of place we think about as home when we're halfway around the world. A sidewalk and a building wall doesn't do it.

We need the "Center of the Center." And there are people here who could build it — if enough people asked for it.

# San Diego comes of age — A new downtown is born

## *Two pioneers get the plan in motion*

By Roger Showley
Staff Writer

Alonzo E. Horton and Ernest W. Hahn: Separated by 80 years, they speak across the generations to a city renewed — where the dreams of the past seem finally transformed into the realities of the present.

"I am not surprised at what has happened in San Diego," said Horton, shortly before his death in 1909. "I have seen it all — the tall buildings and great ships at anchor — taller buildings and greater ships than I had ever seen. I dreamed it all."

Hahn, who was born 10 years after Horton's death, declines comparison, but his sentiments are the same:

"Sure, we're pioneers in San Diego, because we saw the potential. But it wasn't like inventing the wheel or Darwin's theory or anything else. We had enough experience to recognize that ingredients were here that were not present in other cities."

Horton was the founder of downtown San Diego. He said Old Town was no place in which to build a city. In 1867, he undertook the task, single-handedly, to move the city's center. His gamble paid off. "Horton's Addition" became a downtown by the bay.

Hahn, in many ways, is downtown's savior. His $140 million Horton Plaza project of shops, restaurants, theaters and department stores, was conceived as the centerpiece, the lynchpin, the new heart of an old center.

Now, the vision of both men is unfolding for 2 million San Diego County residents to experience — the transformation of a town conceived on horseback into a metropolitan center city suitable to Space Age thinking.

To come downtown today is to see a new town, one of 6 million square feet of office space for 60,000 workers; housing for the rich, the retired and the swinging singles; new theaters replacing old; high-rise hotels for coming conventioneers; floating museums and jogging trails where train sheds, freighters and tugboats once parked.

And, yet, the historic downtown still survives along lower Fifth Avenue, where the Gaslamp Quarter's restored structures look better than they did when built a century ago.

The opening of Hahn's Horton Plaza is but the "tip of the iceberg" for what lies ahead, says Gerald M. Trimble, executive vice president of the Centre City Development Corp. (CCDC), the city agency chiefly responsible for guiding today's downtown toward a new day.

Among the new projects approved or under way are:

- The Meridian, the 172-unit, $76.8 million high-rise condominium tower at Front and F streets, which celebrated its grand opening last month and will welcome its first residents next month.
- The San Diego Convention Center at the foot of Fifth Avenue. Site work has begun and construction on the $125 million project is due to begin by year's end for completion in early 1988.
- The U.S. Grant Hotel, the $80 million restoration of the 75-year-old landmark at Third Avenue and Broadway. The opening is scheduled Dec. 1 on the 282-room project with a new parking garage.
- San Diego Police Department Headquarters, a $43 million, 165,000-square-foot project at 14th Street and Broadway. Completion is scheduled in mid-1986. The present headquarters on Market Street will revert to the San Diego Unified Port District for incorporation into an expansion of Seaport Village.
- Omni International Hotel, the $57 million, 452-room hotel just south of the Spreckels Theater Building at First Avenue and E Street. Ground breaking is planned next month for completion in the spring of 1987.
- Three apartment and condominium projects south of the Horton Plaza and Meridian projects, adding 352 units when completed. Construction is due to begin in the next six months.
- Symphony Towers, a twin-tower, $149 million office-hotel complex to be built on both sides and above the renovated Fox Theater. Construction is due to begin after the Fox is reopened in November as Symphony Hall, the new home of the San Diego Symphony.
- Three office towers — the Tower at San Diego located at Columbia and B, Manulife Tower at Second and Ash and the Crocker Bank Building at Eighth and B — which will add about 1.4 million square feet downtown.

"The city is going through some challenges," Trimble said. "We've seen a lot of changes in the last 10 years. Just wait till you see what happens in the next 10 years!"

The greatest challenge, according to redevelopment and business leaders, is to entice San Diegans to try the new downtown, since many of them have rarely, if ever, gone to Centre City in recent years.

Beyond that, there is worry about responding to increasing traffic congestion; meeting the needs of the transients, homeless and street people who make downtown their "home"; enticing more developers to build downtown residences; completing Gaslamp Quarter renovations and filling up the office and retail space; building a San Diego Trolley line at waterside and through Gaslamp as links between the airport and convention center; and imposing greater design controls without discouraging private investment.

Despite this crowded agenda, officials remain optimistic.

As Mayor Hedgecock put it, "San Diego is literally on the eve of revealing to the world a city that has built a whole new downtown.

"It isn't a redevelopment, because the old, small downtown was not really this kind of city, a metropolitan downtown, that is now being built."

• • •

When Joseph Jessop moved from England to San Diego in 1890 and opened his first jewelery store, he located in the heart of the business district, 417 F St., the heart of the old, small downtown.

This week, J. Jessop & Sons (since sold and resold) moves into a new downtown location, in the Horton Plaza project, just a block away from the first site.

"People went to this area in the first place to develop a city," said the founder's son, Joseph E. Jessop Sr., 87. "We've moved five times as the town moved. Now, we're back, 100 yards from where we started."

Jessop is one person who saw downtown decaying and spearheaded the creation of San Diegans Inc. in 1958 to muster corporate and big-property-owner clout to reverse the trend. He expresses satisfaction with the job so far, but he has advice for future civic leaders:

"I think, from here on out, we can be very selective in what we should bring into this area. Developers get a little enthusiastic about getting into an area, developing it and leaving town and, now, we have to live with it the rest of our lives. I think the Planning Department should be very strict and conservative in where we go from here."

One of those civic leaders is Trimble who has been involved in CCDC for the past seven years. And he says the reconstruction job of a new "heart" of the San Diego region has hardly begun.

"We're only half done, maybe not even that much," Trimble said, in building a new residential community of 4,000 dwelling units downtown. "We're just beginning to scratch the surface on Fourth Avenue," where cardrooms, adult bookstores and seedy bars still scare off suburbanite shoppers."

From another standpoint, historic preservation, downtown redevelopment could still bring about the loss some of the few remaining landmarks beyond those already lost.

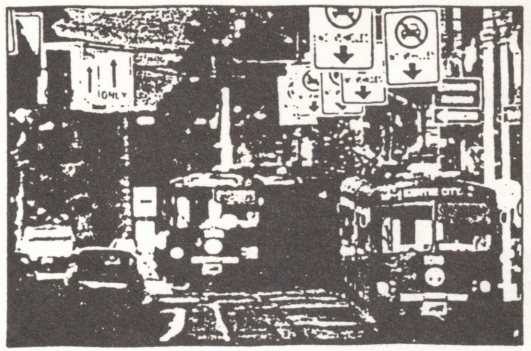
Robert Miles Parker founded the Save Our Heritage Organisation in 1969 to rescue old Victorian mansions, and SOHO has since won and lost some battles. The preservation of the 75-year-old look of Horton Plaza park was a victory, Parker said; the recent approval to gut the 61-year-old polychromed Balboa Theater and turn it into museum and retail space, a defeat.

"I saw a photo of San Diego recently and didn't recognize it," said Parker, now a member of the city's Historical Site Board. "It looked like other cities I've been photos of. That was our great fear in the old days — that we'd be a nonentity city. We've almost become that. There are still a few things left to destroy.



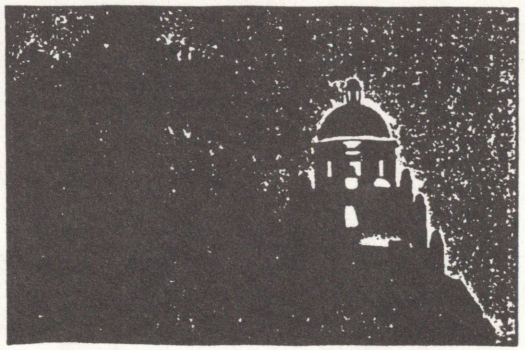
The San Diego Union/Joe Flynn

This recent aerial view of downtown San Diego includes Pantoja Park fronting G Street, flanked on the left by Park Row and, on the right, Marina Park and Meridian condominiums.




The San Diego Union/Charles Starr

The San Diego Trolley's red cars have been a downtown fixture since 1981 on C Street and 12th Avenue.



The San Diego Union/Charles Starr

The Nordstrom tower at Horton Plaza shopping center glows softly at sunset.

# Horton Plaza's promise: a revitalized downtown

By Lori Weisberg
Staff Writer

When the long-awaited Horton Plaza shopping center makes its debut Aug. 9, it will culminate a decade-long effort to bring a major retail investment back to a downtown once dismissed as a decaying wasteland.

While the $140 million center carries with it the promise of a new and revitalized downtown filled with throngs of people day and evening, it also raises questions of whether it can be the catalyst for transforming Centre City into the urban heart of San Diego.

Those questions loom large in the face of the competition posed by the county's 13 regional shopping centers which already provide the kinds of department stores that Horton Plaza will have as its anchor tenants.

Breaking the established shopping patterns of suburban consumers accustomed to driving up and parking at their neighborhood mall will undoubtedly be a major challenge facing the new center.

Lending an air of confidence to the entire project is Horton Plaza's developer, Ernest W. Hahn, Inc., one of the country's premier shopping center developers

It was clearly Hahn's clout and reputation that helped persuade four major department stores to enter a very risky project when they would just as soon have located elsewhere, said Gerald Trimble, executive vice president of the Centre City Development Corp., the public partner in the Horton Plaza project.

Also crucial to the department stores' participation were assurances that a major convention center would be built, downtown housing and waterfront hotels would be developed and the present-day trolley line would be in place.

"I don't know any other developer that could have pulled off what Ernest Hahn did," Trimble said. "The problem we have in this downtown is we're going directly head-on with suburban shopping areas where it's easy to get in and there's free parking. How can we compete with that?

"One way is to build a better mousetrap — more restaurants, more fun, movie theaters, (stage) theaters — everything you can't find in the suburbs to bring people back downtown."

Indeed it is Horton Plaza's uniqueness — both in substance and style — that is viewed as the center's competing edge in a very fickle market.

The 900,000-square-foot complex, compacted into an 11-acre area, will include four department stores — Robinson's, The Broadway, Mervyn's and Nordstrom — 150 specialty shops and restaurants, a nightclub, a seven-screen cinema, two underground stage theaters and a farmer's market.

Located south of Broadway, the project site is generally bounded by First Avenue on the west, Fourth Avenue on the east and G Street on the south.

Less than half of the center's stores will be ready for business on the grand-opening day, although a steady stream of shops will be opening over the next several weeks.

The Broadway's opening is delayed until October, the United Artist movie theaters will be completed by December and the first production at the Lyceum Theaters will not be until January.

Most, if not all, of the center's seven sit-down restaurants will not be ready for opening day, and the Irvine Ranch Farmer's Market on the ground floor of the Nordstrom store may not be open for business until next April.

Later stages of the project include a 450-room Omni International Hotel, which will break ground later this month south of the Spreckels Theater at First Avenue and E Street; conversion of the Balboa Theater on Fourth Avenue into an art museum and retail complex; and 300,000 square feet of office space to be built atop the Horton Plaza parking garage.

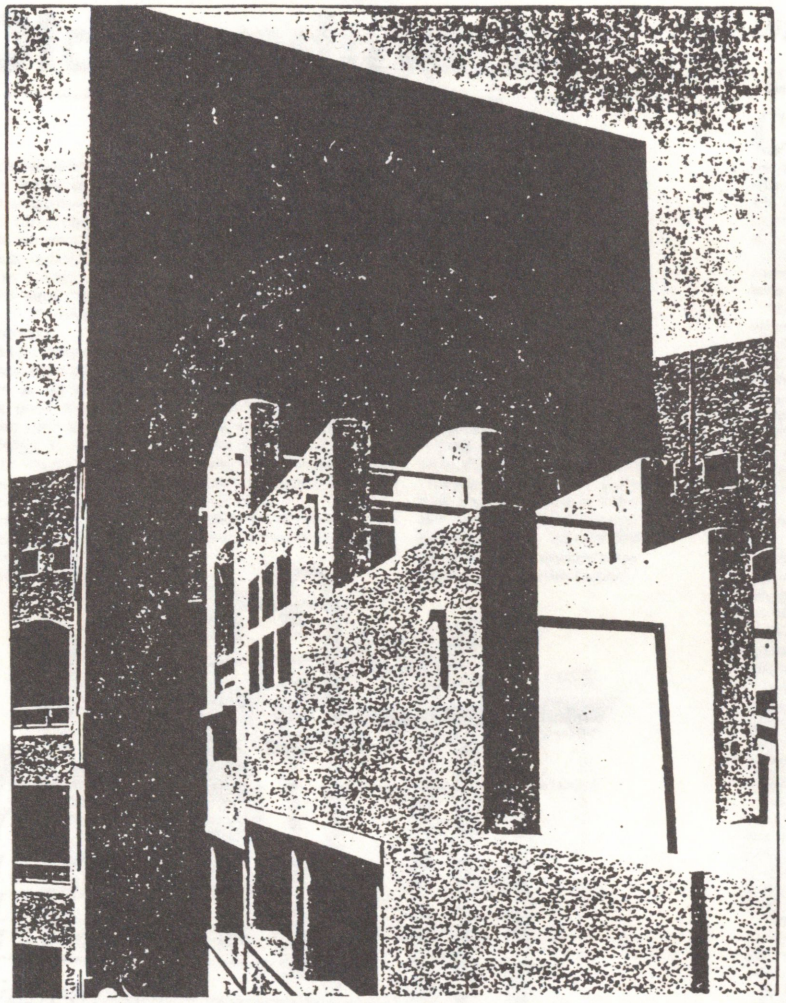
Parking, a major concern for people not used to frequenting the downtown area, will be furnished within a 2,400-space parking garage that will use a validation system.

Shoppers will be permitted to park for free for up to 45 minutes, after which they will need a validation sticker that is good for 1½ hours. All stores will validate parking tickets for purchases exceeding $7. Each person will be permitted up to three hours of validated parking.

Additional retail space is planned in future years for the Fourth Avenue and G Street frontages to mask the gray walls of the parking structures.

In touting Horton Plaza's uniqueness, Hahn officials point to the fact that 40 percent of the committed tenants currently are not found in the San Diego market. One-of-a-kind clothiers, eating places and novelty stores will make Horton Plaza more of a draw than the conventional suburban mall, they argue.

"I don't think you're going to break established shopping habits initially," said project manager Dale Nelson, "but people may find the merchandise so unique that they will make a regular trip."



The 'palazzo building' is one of many post-modern shapes at Horton Plaza.

Gene Kemp, general manager of the Fashion Valley center — which also was developed by Hahn — is not so sure that consumers are ready to make the transition from suburbia to downtown.

"Once you leave the downtown area at night and on weekends, there are so many shopping centers to pass by," he said. "Would you go past Fashion Valley, University Town Centre and Mission Valley to go downtown to shop? I wouldn't and I don't think the public will."

The success of Horton Plaza, which initially is expected to attract 25,000 people a day, will rely on a broad-based population mix, including nearby residents, more distant suburban residents, downtown workers and tourists, according to Scott MacDonald, in charge of marketing research for the Hahn company.

MacDonald found, for instance, that the farther away people lived from downtown, the more concerned they were about the presence of street people.

Hahn's Dale Nelson is convinced that the more people who are walking around the central core of downtown, the less noticeable the transients will be.

"A transient is significant when he's standing alone on a street corner," Nelson said. "They're less significant when they're surrounded by 25, 30 people. I don't see it as a problem out of control."

If nothing else, a good many visitors will be lured to Horton Plaza to see for themselves the center's theatrical-looking design.

Colored in nearly 40 different hues, the three- to five-level center defies being reduced to a single architectural theme. Its design has been described by some as a stage setting, a Disneyland that will attract tourists and shoppers alike.

Designed by architect Jon Jerde, who collaborated on the design of the Los Angeles Summer Olympics, the open-air mall is something of a mini urban district with meandering multilevel streets, balconies and 10 distinct "architectural districts," all reminiscent of a European streetside market environment, said architect Scott Aishton of The Jerde Partnership.

The facades of the Horton Plaza buildings, which have a historic look to them, complement the neighboring Gaslamp Quarter, a 16½-block historic district.

Pushcarts and street entertainers will roam through the center, adding to the festive atmosphere that is meant to be one of Horton Plaza's drawing cards.

"We felt very strongly that San Diego is one of the few environments in terms of light quality where color can be fun," Aishton said. "We wanted to develop a real sense of identity for this project. It isn't something that could be done in New York or Chicago."

So attentive have the architects been to design detail that they have imposed stringent requirements on all tenants in order to ensure that their storefronts do not mimic a standard store design that could be found in other shopping centers.

"The design is a whimsical fantasy, a stage-setting approach to urban development," observed Art Skolnik, executive director of the Gaslamp Quarter.

"It's a spillover from Disneyland as far as what people are willing to tolerate but if that's what it takes to get people downtown, it will serve as a bridge to show them what 'real' old buildings are like."

For years, city officials have been studying just what it takes to bring people downtown. There was a strong desire to not only revitalize the decaying Centre City but also bring major retail back, reversing the trend of the 1960s when retailers abandoned downtowns for the lure of suburbia.

"The city was concerned about the impact Mission Valley would have but at the wrong time — after they already had let Mission Valley happen, which sucked up a lot of retail development," said CCDC's Trimble.

In 1972, the 15-block Horton Plaza Redevelopment Project was created and by the following year, three developers, including Hahn, were competing for the opportunity to develop there.

Ultimately the other two developers dropped out, leaving Hahn in 1974 with an exclusive negotiating agreement with CCDC, the city's redevelopment arm.

Over the subsequent years, the design of the project changed considerably as the number of department stores varied from three to five and the center went from an enclosed "fortress-like" look to an open-air concept. The mall at one time included an ice skating rink and senior citizen tower, but those were later eliminated.

Still, not everyone was satisfied with the development. A group of preservationists calling themselves Theatre Square Associates filed a lawsuit against the city to stop demolition of several historic buildings in the path of Horton Plaza.

The lawsuit was successfully defended, and Hahn offered space in the center to replace the Lyceum Theater, which was razed to make way for a parking structure.

Financially, the project also had its ups and downs, falling prey to the passage of the tax-cutting initiative, Proposition 13, in 1978 and the recession of 1981, which forced the developer and CCDC to revise the project's delicate financing arrangement.

The financial deal, which includes nearly $34 million in public subsidies, required the city to purchase and assemble the project site — at a cost of more than $17 million — and turn around and sell the land to Hahn for $1 million.

The developer, in turn, loaned the city $5 million interest-free to help CCDC complete acquisition of the site and also took over the responsibility of building the parking garage.

# A New Beginning For An Old Landmark

by Joan Conrow

Fred Gibson, a superintendent for Nielsen Construction Company with 32 years of experience under his belt, almost turned around and went home when he reported to the job site at Third and Broadway in July of 1983.

"I'd always worked on new projects in beautiful places like Torrey Pines and Sorrento Hills," he says. "Not this time. My project was next to old Horton Park with all those strange people walking around. When I went through my project from top to bottom I remember thinking, 'Oh no, not this, please.' It was a tacky and old and moldy and smelly building."

But Gibson, who had been assigned to restore the historic U.S. Grant Hotel, soon found that his job was to be full of surprises, not the least of which was a growing love for the old landmark and a newfound interest in San Diego's history.

The first surprise to confront him was a drastic change in the overall amount of work.

"When I came down here, we thought we were going to do a partial restoration and be back in business in 10 months," he says. "Well, that was almost 30 months ago come December."

The construction crews quickly discovered that partial restoration would be nearly impossible once they began stripping the walls and poking in the ceilings. In the seven decades of the hotel's existence, nearly all the wiring and supports had rotted away and a structural overhaul of the entire building was necessary.

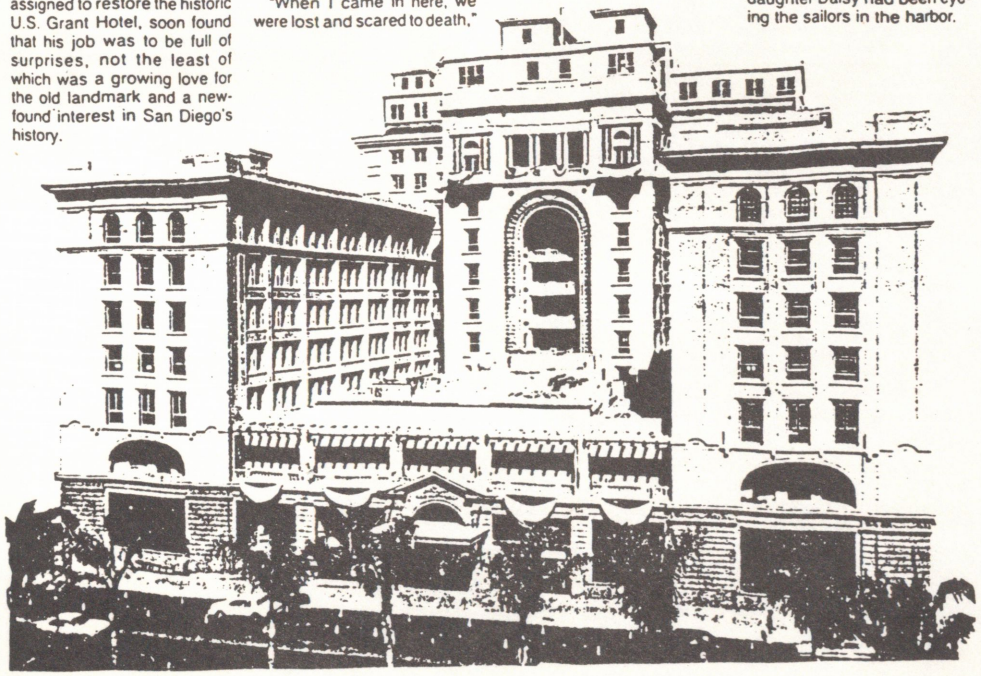
"When I came in here, we were lost and scared to death," says Gibson. "I was looking beyond the architecture to the actual structure and I didn't know what to expect. But we made it through without any accidents, which was near to impossible."

Faced with a tough and dangerous job unlike any he'd ever done before, Gibson says he was comforted when he saw the list of subcontractors assigned to the hotel. "I knew I'd have some good people working for me." And he and his crew plunged in and quickly found that the old building had plenty of stories and even more secrets.

"Probably the most interesting thing to me were the older people who stopped by and said 'Oh, you're not tearing it down, are you? We took our honeymoon here'," Gibson says. "I liked hearing their stories."

"Some of the first things we found were old newspapers, which had been jammed in the walls. They went back to 1907 and some of them were in pretty good shape. It was kind of funny reading that Gene Tunney was about to fight Jack Dempsey."

Crews also found two old post cards, with one-cent stamps affixed, stuck in the mail chute. By some fluke, Mrs. U. L. Kendall of Buechel, Kentucky never learned that daughter Daisy had been eyeing the sailors in the harbor.



# *Rebirthing has not gone unnoticed*

By Roger Showley
Staff Writer

Centre City's rebirth has not gone unnoticed by other cities. In recent months, cities larger and smaller have sent delegations of officials to tour downtown. Developers, architects, financiers and urbanologists have stopped by or read of San Diego's work to date.

Some reactions have been good, others critical. But all have been surprised at what they've seen.

"You're creating a place that makes downtown San Diego unique and different, a place people want to go to," said Ken Devero, president of the International Downtown Executives Association (IDEA) and head of Downtown Ft. Worth (Texas) Inc.

"You've got an awful lot going for you with climate, the water, the whole area of the country you're in. San Diego is a beautiful city right now ... build on what you've got and let the rest of the world know about it."

Added Richard Bradley, IDEA executive director in Washington, "Relatively speaking, it is among the cities across the country which are making progress to mixed-use development — to make downtown other than an office park."

Dick Fleming oversees a similar downtown-oriented group in Denver and has a like reaction to San Diego's changes. He, as well as other city redevelopment experts, heaps particularly high praise on Hahn's center:

"We're all quite envious and we know that the project was the result of a tremendous amount of work by developers, lenders, CCDC, the city ... I'm certainly looking forward to seeing the product in completed form."

"The port needs a total reassessment of its values and priorities before it builds anything else," Burns said.

New Yorker Robert A.M. Stern, one the nation's leading "Post-Modern" architects, participated in the panel of judges on last year's honor awards program for the local chapter of the American Institute of Architects. His critical comments at that time shook the local design community, especially with regard to the look of the "new" downtown.

"I think San Diego has had a wonderful past and not such a wonderful present," Stern said in an interview. "Maybe things have changed. There was sort of a golden age of architecture between the time of the fair (Panama-California Exposition, 1915-16) and the Depression, when a lot of creative talent invented a local style out of the Spanish Colonial past and other parts of the United States and adjusted those things to the water and air.

"I don't think modern architecture has treated San Diego so well. A lot of buildings downtown look like they were designed in other places and just happened to find their way to San Diego. Some of those are really parodies; others seem inappropriate."

Singled out for criticism were: the First National Bank Building (formerly Columbia Centre) because of its reflective glass facade at street-level, lack of building-free vistas to the bay, minimal amount of street landscaping and "copy cat" architecture that seemed borrowed from other cities; and suburban-looking condominium developments in the Marina redevelopment project area.

During his 1983 winning mayoral campaign, mayoral candidate Roger Hedgecock urged San Diegans to strive for "world class" status in their downtown. Today, as mayor, he continues to use the same term but said the design of buildings is only one aspect of making this a "great" city in international terms.

"Office buildings a downtown won't make," Hedgecock said, "as Houston has found out ... What developers are counting on and economic forecasts show is that, as more and more people in and outside of San Diego become aware of downtown as more than just a collection of office buildings but as an exciting cultural, residential and shopping center, this is an ideal place (in which to open new headquarters)."

Walter Smyk, developer of the Meridian luxury high-rise condominium tower, which opened July 27 in the heart of downtown, said that "world class" may be forever beyond San Diego's reach until a major national or international bank opens its headquarters here.

"I'm not sure if it's important to become a world class city," Smyk said.

**Guide to the Historic**

**Gaslamp Quarter**

San Diego's Nationally Registered Historic District

WHERE HISTORY COMES ALIVE . . .

San Diego's Gaslamp Quarter, a sixteen block, 38 acre district located within the heart of downtown, and stretching from Broadway to the waterfront, is an area so significant that it has been designated a National Historic District.

Architecturally, the Quarter is considered to contain some of the very best Victorian-style commercial buildings constructed in San Diego during the 50 years between the Civil War and World War I. It was this area, along Fifth Avenue, that became San Diego's first main street. The City's core began on the bay, where Alonzo Horton first built his wharf in 1869.

Horton can be credited as the founder of the new San Diego. Upon his arrival here, he purchased 960 acres for $265 or 27½ cents an acre, acreage considered at the time to be "in the middle of nowhere." By 1868, 20 buildings had been constructed. Horton gave lots away to anyone who agreed to immediately build on them. As a result, building flourished, and by the 1870's the center of the business district of San Diego was Fifth and Market. During the boom years of the 1880's, downtown central had moved north of Fifth and "F," and by the turn of the century, it had progressed north to Broadway.

As the heart of the business district moved farther north, lower Fifth Avenue fell into disrepute. Offices above the street level were converted into sleeping rooms, as residential hotels or bordellos. By the turn of the century, prostitution was rampant within the 12 square blocks south of Market Street, an area known as the "Stingaree."

Although the Quarter has been known through the years for its nefarious activity, that characteristic is fast disappearing. Taking its place is an appreciation of the grand old buildings, now being restored to their original beauty, and the businesses and cultural activities that provide the Gaslamp Quarter with a new respectability, and growing vitality. Widened brick sidewalks, trees and benches have been added in the Gaslamp Quarter giving it a totally fresh look and authentic Victorian atmosphere.

The Gaslamp Quarter has lived through over a century of changes, however, its present Renaissance is equally as exciting as that of the days of Alonzo Horton. Much remains to be completed in restoring the district to its original state, however, the pace and progress of these activities to date, reinforces the hope that Horton began over 110 years ago.

*BUD FISCHER*

# Gaslamp's One-Man Redevelopment Agency

**by January Riddle**

The historical landmark plaque outside the front door of 614 Fifth Avenue announces that this is the Backesto Building, built in 1884. The building directory just inside announces that suite A is occupied by Fischer Auction Co. But those etched glass transoms over the white double-doors of Suite A didn't come from an auction block. Nor did the sanded, polished hardwood floors inside the suite or the lush plants that masque every corner.

Strangely, the computers perched atop the blond hardwood desks do not seem out of place in this Victorian setting, but rather make a statement about the bridge of two centuries. The man responsible for constructing that bridge strides through the double doors. He is wearing dungarees and a blue work shirt. He is Bud Fischer, a businessman who has tackled five major restoration projects within four years in the Gaslamp Quarter; all while running a full-scale auctioneering business and maintaining an active role in Gaslamp Quarter Associates as well.

With a tanned face glowing against his silver beard and hair, Fischer has the countenance of a man who is more at home outdoors. As he slides into a burgundy-pillowed, stuffed chair and lights a cigarette, he tells why he plays such an intense game of Gaslamp redevelopment. "'Cuz I'm crazy."

Back in '79 most people thought he was crazy, Fischer says, when he announced plans to restore the Backesto Building, the classic revival-style relic, once an exclusive attorney's office building that had fallen down on her luck to become the seedy Saratoga Hotel. Eighteen months later Fischer belied the scoffers when he opened the doors to sixteen tenants and approximately $4.5 million in leases. Bank of America, the largest leaseholder at $1.6 million, had signed a year before the completion of the 1890's interior which reaped enough awards, including a coveted AIA orchid, to silence all snickers. Two months later, in June of '81, the Gaslamp Quarter Association installed Fischer as their president.

When Alonzo Horton bought 960 acres for $265 apiece, back in the 1860's, all the locals thought he had lost his marbles too. Why would he buy all that land in the middle of nowhere they asked.

Fischer knows why. He was a part of the nowheresville of downtown San Diego in the 1960s where he maintained his Fischer Office Interiors at 6th & Market. Inner city ugliness in all its aspects and derelict personalities sent he and a partner to Mission Valley and his first restoration project, the old Radisson Hotel.

"The 6th & Market business was stagnating because of the neighborhood, so a partner and I developed the site in Mission Valley," he recalls. "I thought Mission Valley had potential then."

Fischer turned that potential into shopping centers and office buildings. But twenty years later he returned downtown. "My last new construction was in 1980," he muses now. "I don't have any desire to build those again. They're boring."

He draws upon an anecdotal comparison to illustrate his attitude. "The last shopping center I built, I went maybe once a month to meet with the contractor. It was just boards and walls. Not interesting. But the Granger Building, I bet I'm there three times a day."

That's when he's not checking up on the Fox Building at 6th and Broadway, the former Lion's Clothing Store built in 1928 by William Templeton Johnson in the Mission Revival style. That current restoration project has been estimated to cost four times the structure's original cost, even with the below market interest rehabilitation loans and tax exempt status that is granted by the Government on historical restoration projects.

Also due to his presence the old Salvation Army building at 8th & J now boasts loft space for artists, and an ugly hotel at 7th & Island has had a facelift.

The Backesto, originally built by Dr. John Pierre Backesto, set Fischer and his four partners back $800,000. But it was worth twice that the minute the last transom was set over the polished doors.

You could say that Bud Fischer has a bit of the Midas touch when it comes to opportunity. And Fischer's current favorite, The Granger Building at 5th and Broadway, shows signs of the same fortuitous gild. Built for $125,000 in 1904, the original design of the Granger hasn't changed much over the years.

And with Fischer's plans, it won't undergo one of those ultra-modern metamorphoses, either. "To take a beautiful old building," he begins, "to restore that with the twelve foot ceilings and lots of windows that open . . ." His sentence trails off. "Standard projects are boring. These are fun. You don't know what you're going to find when you tear down a wall. You can't foresee all the problems."

It is not only the continual flexibility and the constant challenge of restoring last century's architecture that keeps Fischer's energy level near maximum. "It answers a need to be creative," he philosophizes. "I want that, to do that. But I'm not an artist."

The eclectic collection of art and artifacts dominating every flat space of his office would seem to contradict that pronouncement.

"My wife Esther does that," he says proudly. "But we aren't art collectors per se. We just buy what we appreciate, some pieces from our travels, some just because we like them."

And that, he says, is why he's developing the Gaslamp. Despite the transient problems. Despite the loss of some upscale tenants in the Backesto and the subsequent video arcade lease that caused some neighborhood dissent. Despite the fact that doing what he does in La Jolla would make him richer quicker.

He shrugs that last fact off. "I'm not in this for the short range profit motive," he says. "I am fortunate to be in a position to be able to do only what I want.

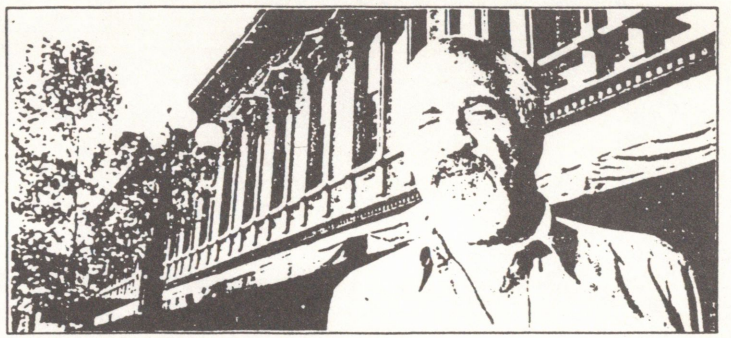
"I have a quirk. I develop for myself, not for resale. I like downtown. There's vitality. You can walk and enjoy it."

It is difficult to imagine Bud Fischer walking. Galloping would seem more appropriate to his admittedly impatient nature.

And in fact, that's just what he wants to be doing five or so years from now. "Raising horses," he says without a moment's hesitation.

His ranch in Olivenhain boasts 65 Arabians today. "It just started as fun, but now it has become a business," he says.

A downtown developer raising Arabian horses? Naw. That's crazy.



*Bud Fischer in front of his Backesto Building renovation.*

# Clanging is sound of coins

By Lori Weisberg
Staff Writer

As downtown continues to grow and redevelop and traffic bottlenecks become more frequent, city officials are acknowledging the need for alternative forms of transportation that will ease congestion within the Centre City.

Expansion of the San Diego Trolley, which currently runs between the Santa Fe Depot and the Mexican border, is expected to help relieve traffic problems and also provide a convenient way of getting to the downtown area.

It is hoped that within a year of the opening of the planned waterfront convention center in late 1987, a trolley loop circulating around the downtown area will be in operation.

A major step toward that objective was taken earlier this year when the Metropolitan Transit Development Board (MTDB) approved a bayside route that would serve the convention center and Seaport Village.

The proposed 1.4-mile line, estimated to cost between $15 million and $20 million, would serve a corridor generally paralleling the shoreline of San Diego Bay.

The line would run from the Santa Fe Depot south along Kettner Boulevard, follow the inland side of the railroad tracks east of Harbor Drive and turn east along L Street, terminating at 12th Avenue.

Because the project does not rely on state or federal funding, it is expected that it could be completed sooner than other trolley lines, possibly sometime in 1988.

MTDB is hoping to persuade the San Diego Unified Port Commission to fund half the costs with the balance to be financed with revenue generated by a one-cent increase in the hotel-motel room tax.

"This line is very important because it provides a very good alternative to the automobile," said Tom Larwin, general manager of MTDB.

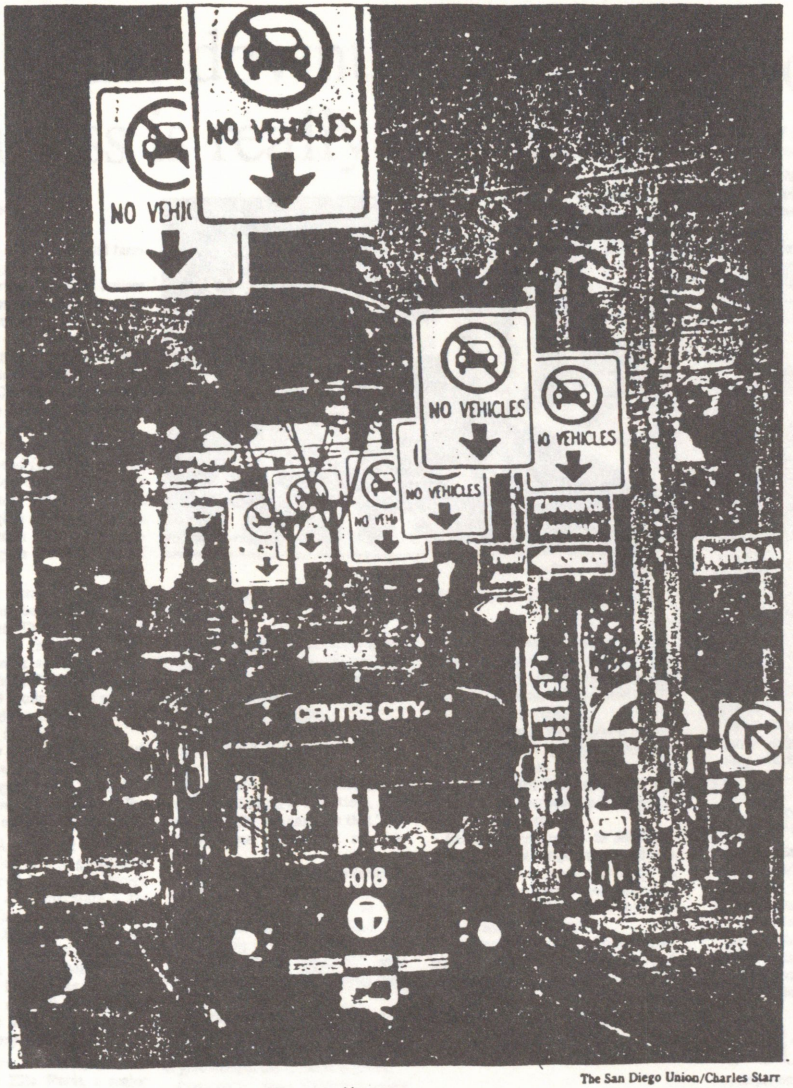
The trolley currently runs through downtown via C Street between Kettner and 12th, following 12th south to Imperial Avenue.

The Gaslamp Quarter, a 16½-block historic district, has its own idea for completing the proposed downtown loop by running a vintage streetcar system down Fifth Avenue.

Gaslamp Quarter officials have been working with MTDB in an effort to coordinate the Fifth Avenue line with the bayside alignment and are optimistic that the line could be running by the time the convention center opens.

The city is currently exploring various funding options, which include using tourist tax money or making the line a city-funded capital improvement project, according to Art Skolnik, executive director of the Gaslamp Quarter.

The Fifth Avenue line is considered a key to drawing people to the historic district.




The San Diego Union/Charles Starr

The San Diego Trolley, opened in 1981, is considered a key solution to growing downtown traffic congestion. Next year, a line will begin service to East County and eventually other lines will go north and to Lindbergh Field.

# Centre City, here we come!

San Diegans are rediscovering Centre City. They're exploring new restaurants, theaters and galleries. They're enjoying walks along the beautiful downtown waterfront. They're marveling at the variety of people and places to see.

And with the opening of the Horton Plaza retail, dining and entertainment center on August 9, San Diegans will have even more reason to come to Centre City. That's because Horton Plaza is a most surprising and exciting place.

Now that there are so many reasons to come to Centre City, it's time to learn how to get there and how to get around.

When most people think of going anywhere, they think of getting there in their own car. That's because most parts of San Diego are so spread out, it really is more convenient.

However, most of everything to see and do in Centre City is within a 10 to 15 block area so once in Centre City a vehicle isn't needed. And the entire question of what to do with a car when once there can be avoided by taking a variety of other means of transportation.

To learn how to travel to and within Centre City, please read on. Also refer to the back page for a map of downtown and a complete listing of public transit alternatives.

San Diego Transit Corporation operates 18 bus routes which travel from various points throughout San Diego directly to Horton Plaza. For $1 or less – each way – someone else can do the driving!

Since 1981, the bright red trolleys have carried passengers between Centre City and the international border in clean, safe comfort. Fares range from 50¢ to $1.50.

There are 18 trolley stations conveniently located along the route. Many of the ones in the South Bay have free adjacent parking lots.

For more information about riding the San Diego Trolley, call 233-3004.

Those who live north of Centre City along the coast, can come downtown on the Amtrak train. There are six trains which travel every day between the Santa Fe Depot station in Centre City and the Del Mar station at Fifteenth and Ocean in Del Mar. The fare is $4.45 each way (still somewhat of a bargain considering the cost of gasoline and parking).

Despite public transit options, most people still want to drive to Centre City. If so, and they're unfamiliar with downtown, they better prepare for some new experiences.

The speed limit is slower, there are traffic signals – and pedestrians with the right of way – at every corner. The streets themselves are often one way or just end at some point.

But driving in Centre City is not a problem if one plans ahead.

First of all, people need to know which exit to take from the three major freeways which go to Centre City. Exits from Interstate 5, Route 94 or 163 are shown on the map.

The map also indicates which streets would be the most direct route to the Horton Plaza parking garages at Fourth and F and at Second and G or other parking garages or lots elsewhere downtown.

Most of the major streets to Horton Plaza from the freeways will be marked with brightly colored banners from August 1 through mid-fall. These will help people find their way whether driving in a car or walking from a bus stop or a nearby parking lot.

Almost all public parking areas and their access points are indicated on the map. These garages and lots represent more than 18,500 offstreet public parking spaces in Centre City.

Prices for these parking spaces range from a low of $1 all day Saturday on some lots to more than $10 on a weekday for garage parking in office buildings. The parking at Horton Plaza will be operated on a validation basis.

With a minimum purchase, the stores in Horton Plaza can give you validation coupons good for up to three hours of free parking. After three hours, a parking rate which varies from 50¢ to $2 an hour, depending on how long you park, goes into effect.

Within and around Centre City, there is a fun way to get from a parked car to Horton Plaza and other points of interest around town. That's the Molly Trolley network of rubber-tire trolleys which make regular runs from Balboa Park, the Gaslamp Quarter, Seaport Village, Harbor Island, Shelter Island and other places. The fare to ride the Molly Trolley is 50¢.

# Up in the downtown lofts, business is really booming

By Peter Rowe
Staff Writer

Of course it's roomy. And functional. And cheap.

But what one first notices about this downtown loft is something even more basic:

The light.

"My office didn't have any windows," said Eileen Boniecka, owner of Persimmon Graphics, citing one of the reasons she left her old quarters on India Street.

Since May, Boniecka has leased a corner of a second-floor loft in what was the Showley Candy Factory, a 61-year-old brick structure at the corner of Eighth and K Streets. There, Persimmon is bathed in sunlight streaming in from a bank of windows.



The San Diego Union/Charles Starr

Eileen Boniecka in her loft in what was the Showley Candy Factory.

The office is a small quadrant of white walls and busy tables, about 300 square feet. There is a 10-foot ceiling above, a hardwood floor below. The rent is equal to that on India Street, where Persimmon occupied maybe 100 square feet less.

But some dimensions can't be measured with a ruler.

"It definitely feels like more with all these windows," said Boniecka.

"I love the light in here," said Boniecka's neighbor, Sibyl Selldorff-Rubottom, owner of Sibyl Designs.

In the SOMA — South of Market Artists — district, an aging industrial triangle bordered by Market Street, Harbor Drive and Interstate 5, the former candy factory is one of only a handful of buildings offering loft office space. The old Salvation Army Building on 8th and J is being remodeled to include loft offices. City planners say there are loft residences at 701 Island and above the Sushi performance gallery, 852 8th Ave.

"I know there are many more in the city," said Ella Paris, a senior planner, "but we don't have any files on them."

For some types of work, lofts are more convenient than conventional steel-and-glass office buildings. Consider the case of Selldorff-Rubottom.

Sibyl Designs was born in the workroom of her Clairemont home. Within a few years, she was shipping quilts, wall hangings, pillows and pillows, there were big boxes in the garage," she recalled. "The neighbors were very nice but when you have big delivery trucks ..."

Selldorff-Rubottom scouted office buildings in Sorrento Valley and Rose Canyon before settling on a sprawling 2,600-square-foot loft in the former candy factory.

That was in March 1984. Business is up for Sibyl Designs and the loft has never looked better.

"If we have several orders at once," said Selldorff-Rubottom, "we don't feel, 'Oh, we can't do that.' We can work on everything simultaneously."

SOMA boasts a few art galleries, a farmer's market, dozens of aging warehouses and proximity to the bay. It is not SoHo — at night, the area is rarely visited.

"I guess it is deserted," said Selldorff-Rubottom. "It's really nice and quiet."

"Working in this building," said Boniecka, "is like being in college again, like being in a big dorm. All of us give each other a lot of support."

Fixtures in New York and other Eastern cities, lofts are rather new here. When the Fire Department discovered last September that the candy factory was full of open, airy offices that had been constructed without building permits, the tenants were evicted.

Altering these old buildings requires extensive studies — and, in many cases, expensive structural repairs — to ensure they meet state earthquake standards.

Under a compromise struck by the City Council this spring, tenants are moving back into the building. The second and third floors now have fire exits and an overhead sprinkler system has been installed.

Rents are in the 30- to 50-cents-per-square-foot range, compared to a downtown office space average of roughly $2.50 a square foot, but rents are expected to climb as the demand for loft space increases.

"As far as a more conventional-type building for business, it was," said Boniecka of her old office. "But I wanted to be in this area, around artists. I thought it would be fun."

# More profits, jobs ahead

By Rod Riggs
Staff Writer

Profits. Downtown redevelopment will inevitably produce them. But no one knows just when.

It seems clear that expansion of the downtown retail center will bring with it more jobs, more money and more demand for services ranging from dry cleaning to dental care, from hair styling to automobile repair.

The Centre City Development Corp., the city's redevelopment agency, has general projections of employment potential of the areas in which it is involved. The Horton Plaza area, for example, is expected to offer more than 3,200 new jobs. The convention center, when it is open and functioning, is expected to have 4,500 new full-time permanent jobs.

In addition, jobs will be created by the hotels, restaurants, tours, bars, theaters, taxicabs, bay cruises, auto rentals and souvenir shops courting the influx of downtown visitors.

In all, some 60,000 new jobs are expected to be created in the central business district at the completion of construction and development now under way. When people begin to fill those jobs, boosters acknowledge, they will expect to find both essential services — transportation and eating facilities — and convenience services — a place to have one's shoes repaired or taxes prepared.

There is still time to prepare. And lenders who fuel the expansion continue to see merit in investment downtown.

A lending officer for a major bank here explains, "as usual, real estate investment is in a cycle. Probably it is just past the peak here, and 'overbuilt' is on the horizon.

"Lenders will tell you the risks are increasing. There's more chance for error, for them and for the developers as well. The bottom line is, will the consumers — the business community — absorb the space being created, and how soon? It's a real challenge to make a good estimate. Twelve months out, there are too many factors over which no one has any control."

***'People make real estate values. More access makes for greater value.'***

**— William C. Nelson, Scripps Bank chairman**

William C. Nelson, developer of the Union Bank building downtown and chairman of La Jolla's Scripps Bank, exudes confidence about downtown. Of the time element, he says, "one of the terrifying things these days is that nothing takes as long as you think it should." He expects downtown to achieve maturity before the turn of the century — in less than 15 years.

For reference: Mission Valley shopping center is nearly 25 years old; Fashion Valley is about 15 years old.

Nelson explains continuing investment in downtown construction: "Institutional lenders work on a longer time frame. They find it profitable to accept the inability to find tenants in order to maintain position in a developing area — of which San Diego is one, along with L.A. and Denver and a lot of other places. They find taking an operating loss for a while is a fair price to pay.

"When things are looking good is when you have dubious projects — built on leased ground, for example — but carefully conceived projects will proceed if they make sense in a market that makes sense" despite high vacancies.

Downtown persists as a center for development and redevelopment, Nelson explains, because it is a transportation hub, with buses and trolley lines and freeways bringing people together there.

"People make real estate values," he says. "More access makes for greater value."

Downtown office space will bring "paper processors" and provide jobs for lots of people who can get to work via public transit.

The mix of elements as represented by Horton Plaza and the business activity which is to fill the now empty offices will draw peripheral commerce, he said. The daytime population of the central business district now is about 75,000 persons, but the area could support 350,000, "and that will create retail opportunity and restaurants and delis, and sell more evening newspapers."

In Nelson's scenario, the presence of large numbers of people downtown during the day will stimulate a boom in entertainment as well, with theater and other activities.

"Everyone would like to see more residential use," Nelson said of downtown. "The problem is that the first two projects (Park Row and Marina Park) are essentially suburban. To work, they must be urban. They have to have a high concentration of people, like the Meridian (a luxury condominium high rise which just opened), but at less cost."

CCDC president Peter Q. Davis, himself a banker, sees downtown de-

See JOBS on Page 13

## Jobs

velopment as a need long unfulfilled. "The 2.5 million square feet developed in the last two and one-half years is as much as in the previous 40 years," he said. "We were falling far behind, by comparison with other cities. We're not a (corporate) headquarters city, so the demand was not perceived."

Davis contends business will create a lot of new jobs, some in lines of work not even contemplated now, but much from data and information processing and much from retail, restaurant and entertainment businesses and related fields.

There now are more than 12,000 hotel and motel rooms available to San Diego visitors, but completion of the Convention Center is expected to increase demand downtown most sharply. Another 2,000 to 3,000 rooms are in various stages of planning from the trial balloon to gathering of financial resources.

Permanent residents downtown, Davis said, "have demanded a lot of CCDC attention. Our perception is that we need about 3,000 residents downtown (to create a cosmopolitan neighborhood atmosphere) and we have about 1,600 now. One thing we can do is convert from 'M' zones (light manufacturing, warehousing) to residential. But downtown is competing with suburban residences, so the projects have to be subsidized" to keep the prices in a competitive range.

Davis admits that much of the attention now given downtown is as the result of vigorous activity surrounding Horton Plaza and the U.S. Grant hotel modifications.

# It took awhile, but the action is moving downtown

By Mark Sauer
Staff Writer

The downtown homesteaders are finally about to have company.

"Horton Plaza and the Meridian are opening and now all those things that brought my wife and I down here nearly three years ago are suddenly real," said Bill Sauls.

An attorney who works and lives downtown, Sauls, 33, is president of the homeowners association at Marina Park. It is one of two condominium projects — the other is Park Row — nestled together between Kettner and State streets at the heart of the revitalized downtown. They are home to adventurous urban pioneers.

"We haven't the least regret about moving downtown, but maybe we got down here just a bit early," said Sauls. "We were attracted by a wish and a promise — Horton Plaza, the Meridian, the convention center and such were just plans and dreams until now.

"It took awhile for people to appreciate why we wanted to live down here," he said. "Now you can go out and touch and feel it and that makes a big difference."

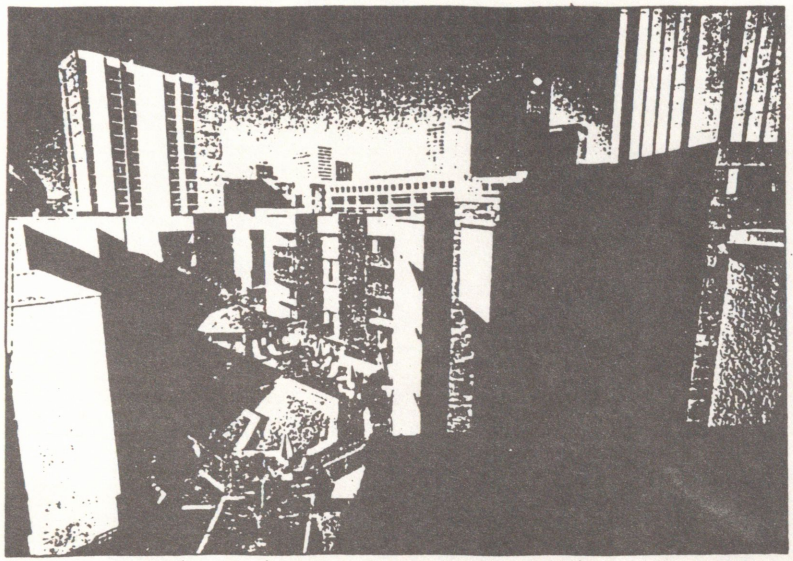
Those who have embraced downtown living represent many walks and a wide range of ages, but they have in common a desire to make a break with traditional neighborhoods and lifestyle for a unique excitement they expect to find in the new downtown.

"We are really looking forward to having all the new activities in the area; we thrive on the excitement," said David White.

The stockbroker and his wife, Carol, have rented a unit at Marina Park since November of 1983. The Whites, who are in their late 20s, both walk to work and spend much of their leisure time downtown.

"There is a lot of camaraderie among the residents here," said White. "We socialize with people who are our age right up to those in their 80s, and everyone gets along fine. Age is not barrier here like it might be in other neighborhoods."

The Whites said that while they thrive on the excitement of the downtown boom, the attendent fallout — noise and interminable traffic tie-ups — has begun taxing their patience.



File Photo

The Marina Park condominium project offers a tuck-away pool area for residents of its 224 units. The high-rise building at left is the Columbia Tower apartment building.

Looming 27 stories and offering panoramic views, the Meridian is touted even before it opens as "one of the great residences of the world."

Occupying a full city block bounded by Front, Union, F and G streets, the Meridian took two years to build, at a cost of $71.1 million.

Fortunately, said David, both he and his wife walk to work most days and can avoid the traffic tangle. "But it's a problem when we go places and when people come to visit," he said. "And the noise from construction is getting very wearisome."

A perennial problem has been where to get groceries since downtown remains bereft of a major market. Residents of Marina Park and Park Row must travel to stores in either Point Loma or the Hillcrest/Mission Hills neighborhood, although most claim not to mind.

The two condo projects, opened in 1982, share a park and for the past two Junes they have staged a field day centering on a volleyball tournament.

"After Park Row beat us last year, we won the trophy back, but the fun thing is the opportunity to meet so many of your neighbors," said Sauls. "It's a different kind of block party and attendance was about 150 this year, compared to just 50 or so last year."

While the Whites' plan is to stay downtown for a few more years before buying a home in a close-in neighborhood like Mission Hills, Sauls and his wife, Sharon Sveningson (a hospital nutritionist who takes the San Diego Trolley daily to her Chula Vista job), are committed to downtown for the duration.

"I just moved my office to a building two blocks from our front door," said Sauls. "It's a 3½-year lease, so we're staying put for the foreseeable future."

About 80 percent of the 222 units at Park Row, which range in price from $89,500 to $191,500, have been sold; of Marina Park's 224 units, priced from $85,000 to $215,000, about 65 percent have been sold.

It is expected to take four years for the 172 units of the nearby, luxury Meridian to sell, but that shouldn't be surprising since the price range is $250,000 to $1.4 million.

"More than 80 percent of our buyers are longtime San Diegans; they typically have owned homes for 15 years or more in areas such as La Jolla, Rancho Santa Fe, Mount Helix, Del Cerro, Point Loma," said Trudy Stambook-Blau, director of marketing for the posh project.

# Downtown San Diego Living Is On The Rise

Now that Horton Plaza is bustling with shoppers, many people wonder what is the next step in downtown redevelopment. They sense a renewed optimism that they thing will keep improvements on course.

But lingering evidence of decades of decline are visible just steps from Horton Plaza. Much coordinated effort is still needed in areas surrounding the center.

One area of concentration is to the south in the Marina Redevelopment Project established in 1976. Its purpose was to "create a new residential community . . . where a full range of activities and uses will take place."

Today, that goal is closer to reality. Six residential projects in the Marina area and nearby Columbia and Horton Plaza areas house people with a variety of backgrounds, interests and incomes.

Together, they represent 1,046 units. Four new projects will add 476 units to the market. Eventually, there will be 3,000 units where San Diegans can live in the city.

The first redevelopment project to welcome residents was Horton House, a senior apartment tower completed in April 1981. It was joined six months later by Lions Community Manor.

"It's compact, lovely, has a balcony with a view of the city. What more could anyone want?" asks Pat Selje, who lives on the 14th floor of Lions Community Manor.

An active senior, she walks three to five miles a day in downtown. Her favorite destination is Seaport Village; another regular stop is a classical record shop on Sixth Avenue.

The first residential condominiums in the Marina Redevelopment Project were Marina Park and Park Row. Each development opened its first phase in summer 1982.

Sales for both were initially slow because of a slump in the San Diego housing market and the delay of other aspects of redevelopment. But with ongoing improvements in the vicinity and a bond sale which lowered mortgage rates to 9⅛ percent, both projects enjoyed an increased sales volume. Almost 75 percent of the combined 446 condos are now sold.

The sales are more than numbers, though. They also mean a growing community of people sold on downtown. Many of the condominium owners walk to work, enjoy cultural activities at night and play in the urban setting on the weekends.

"I have the best of all worlds," says Chuck McDonnell of Park Row. "I'm two blocks from the water, 10 blocks from work and two blocks from the trolley."

The Pacific Bell manager walks to work at the Union Bank Building, rides his bicycle to the Farmers Bazaar and sails his boat from the marina at the Hotel Inter-Continental.

In December 1983, a third senior apartment building was completed. With the opening of Columbia Tower, the stock of low and moderate income units in the redevelopment projects increased to 428.

On the other end of the residential scale is Meridian, a 27-story luxury condominium with 172 units. The project opened last July and residents are just beginning to move in.

"It's going to be an adventure," says arts patron Danah Fayman, who has a home reserved at Meridian. She is eager to move downtown because of the convenience afforded her by proximity to many of the cultural arts she supports.

The cross section of housing in Centre City is already causing the local development community to seek opportunity in Marina. Four new projects by different developers have been announced during the past year.

Market Street Square will have 192 apartments facing Horton Plaza on G Street. Pastel colors reminiscent of the retail center will adorn the facade of the four-story building.

When open in the spring of 1987, the units will be the first rentals available at market rates of $500 to $700. It will also have 40 units for low-income families, another first for Marina. Market Street Square is being developed by Shapell Housing, Inc. and Goldrich Kest and Associates.

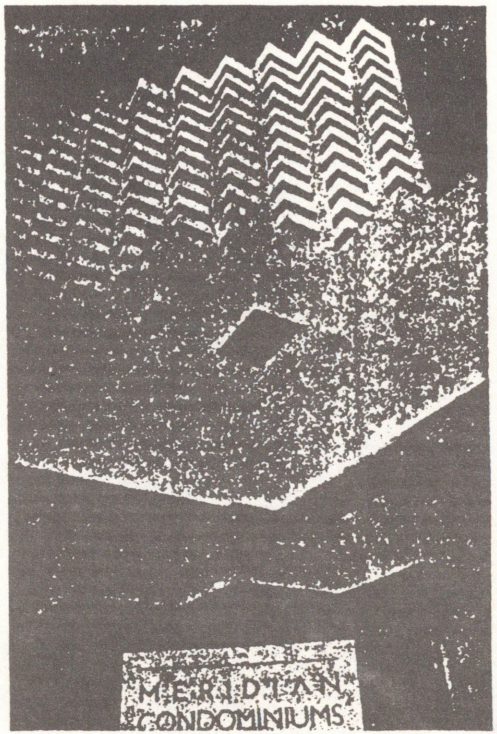
Another new project is Marina Palms, a four-story apartment building planned for the block south of the Meridian. It will be developed by Merie, National and Halenza Partners. The whimsical design by Rob Wellington Quigley will have many native San Diego touches with a distinct urban flair. Its 180 units will also rent at market rates when ready for occupancy in summer of 1987.

A smaller apartment project named Market Street Plaza has been proposed for a portion of the block immediately south of Lions Community Manor. According to Ribant Development Corporation, it will have 24 units renting at market rates by the spring of 1987.

The next new project is important for several reasons. City Plaza will be downtown's first mixed-use project. It will have retail businesses at street level, office spaces on the second through fourth floors and 80 condominiums on the fifth through seventh floors.

By the fall of 1987, City Plaza will market its condos at middle income prices from $110,000 to $175,000.

The project is being developed by SEG-Southwest Estate Group and is designed by The Jerde Partnership, the architect of Horton Plaza.




## San Diegans move downtown to new residential projects

The United States Census Bureau puts the population of downtown at 10,000. However, that number includes residents of census tracts which don't exactly coincide with the boundaries of the 1,200-acre Centre City area.

Downtown residents live in older homes, new condo and apartment projects and converted warehouses.

The largest contingent of new residents lives in redevelopment areas.

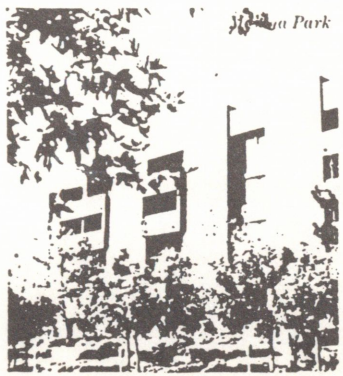
Sales of Marina Park and Park Row condominiums have been steady since the opening of Horton Plaza.

"Business tripled in July and August," reports Bill Shipkosky of the Marina Park sales office. "We sold 24 units those two months."

By mid-October, 151 Marina Park condos were either sold or in escrow; 73 remained on the market for $75,000 to $183,000.

At the same time, 169 Park Row condos were sold or in escrow. Fifty-three units were still for sale for $106,500 to $175,000.

Sales figures haven't been released for the Meridian, but three senior towers are fully occupied and 141 people have asked for more information about the Market Street Square apartments.




## First mixed-use project in Centre City planned

Plans for the $36 million City Plaza residential, commercial and retail mixed-use project – the first of its kind in downtown San Diego – are being discussed by Centre City Development Corporation and SEG Southwest Estate Group, a local development firm.

The seven-story project will feature 80 residential units, 128,000 square feet of office space and 38,500 square feet of retail space. It will be located diagonally across from the Nordstrom department store at Horton Plaza on the block bounded by First Avenue and Market, Front and G Streets.

The Jerde Partnership, architects for Horton Plaza, designed the project.

If negotiations result in a disposition and development agreement this summer, the project would be under construction in spring 1986 and be completed in summer 1987.

"Because of the mixture of uses, the project will have an around-the-clock schedule," according to Reinhold Wessely, SEG chief executive officer. "There will be retail uses on the ground floor, office space on the second through fourth floors and residential condominiums on the fifth through seventh floors."

The condominiums will range in size from approximately 850 to 1,150 square feet and in price from $110,000 to $175,000. All will have either a city or bay view.

SEG is a San Diego-based developer of residential and other projects with offices in Phoenix and Denver. The firm's parent company, SEG Vienna, is the largest residential developer in Vienna, Austria.

The developer is presently near completion on a major mixed-use development in La Jolla, the Prospect Point project located above The Cove.

# Living In The Center City Isn't All It's Cracked Up To, *Yet*

By LIBBY BRYDOLF
*San Diego Daily Transcript Staff Writer*

The Centre City Development Corp. keeps pushing its idea of a residential downtown San Diego and to some extent that idea is catching on. But the pioneering urban dwellers — from the upscale condominium owners to the senior citizens in subsidized housing — all agree that more changes are needed before downtown can build a reputation as a nice place to live.

The urban trailblazers still share their new community with homeless who use the streets, alleys and doorways as their homes. The few sleazy porno shops and urine-smelling doorways leave a powerful impression.

Many, like Jill Dohm, a 45-year-old newcomer from Boulder, Colo. who lives in Cortez Villa at the corner of Eighth Avenue and Beech Street, don't go out alone at night. Some, notably the elderly residents of the six downtown senior housing complexes, don't ever go out after dark. Others take taxis to their favorite night spots or restaurants to avoid the fear and uneasiness of sharing the semi-deserted streets with the homeless or military men who've had a little too much to drink. Downtown's daytime redevelopers, public and private officials, will argue that it's not that bad, that it's the *perception* of bums and drunks that harms downtown. But downtown residents believe the daytimers are wishfulling thinking, that change has not come that fast.

### Daytime Strolling

During the day, downtown is a great place for walking. Workers and residents alike can be seen rambling in all parts of downtown from the Farmer's Bazaar near the foot of the Gaslamp Quarter, to the Embarcadero, small shops along Broadway, and through Balboa Park. The bay breezes make the area quite a bit cooler than the residential areas just miles inland.

A hub of trolley and bus service, it's also a good place for the carless. Senior citizens find buses to supermarkets (of course, they'd love to see a supermarket downtown), shopping centers (now they have Horton Plaza), churches and community centers.

Dohm chose her apartment for its proximity to work — it's a five-minute walk, a big savings for someone without a car. Another plus is the central location, says the newly single Dohm. "For the first time living alone, I think it's important to be close to everything," she said.

The view from the hill's not bad, even from her third floor unit. "If I hang out over my balcony, I can see the Coronado Bridge and the bay, and I do that," she says with a laugh, "but not after two glasses of champagne."

After more than four months in the building, she's used to the surprised and skeptical comments about her neighborhood. "People at work are amazed. Some of them worry about me when I work late," she said. "And the transients do scare you but, I run fast. So instead of wearing my high heels home, I put on my running shoes and run."

### Lingering Military Influence

One senior, a native of Brooklyn who has lived downtown for more than six years, describes his home as a hangout for bums. "You see a few new buildings, but this is basically skid row," he said, declining to reveal his name. "It's not the streetpeople that make the Gaslamp the dirtiest of areas," he said. "It's all the military men who are out all hours of the night. They urinate in all the areas." He argued that more restrooms, not fewer, are needed.

He would rather live in Chula Vista, he said, but hasn't been selected for the senior housing there. Still, he has no complaints about Horton House. "The apartment is excellent, it's just a building that's in the wrong area."

Despite his complaints, the 62-year-old retired machinist enjoys walking around downtown. Each weekday morning, he's out on the street at 4:45 a.m. heading his blue running shoes north on Fifth Avenue the 2½ miles into Hillcrest. He treats himself to a cup of coffe and chats with friends at the Jack-in-the Box there before walking back home, this time along Sixth Avenue.

Rose A. Klasky, an 82-year-old resident of Lions Community Manor at 310 Market St., is a little more upbeat about her predicament. Suffering from a heart ailment, she doesn't get out a lot, but says things are much cleaner than they were when she moved here four years ago.

She, like all the other residents interviewed for the article, is putting a lot of stock in Horton Plaza. For Kasky, it'll be a chance to attend some movies and do a little shopping.

### An Enviable View

Wendell Thompson, a 14th floor resident of Horton House, has a view many Del Mar and Mission Hills residents would envy. The San Diego skyline — from the Coronado Bridge to Encanto — sits at the foot of his 22-foot balcony. The South Bay is visible from his bedroom window.

An avid fisherman, Thompson came downtown to manage an antique store and just stayed on. Seven years of living downtown have brought a lot of changes, most of them good, he said. "Up until this year, it wasn't such a desirable neighborhood," he said. Today, "everything seems to be for the better."

At the other end of town, Tina and George Nasif, owners of a comfortable condominium in the 54-unit Beech Tower, love the downtown area. They too complain about the transients who hang around the El Cortez Hotel and in the Gaslamp, but their home — purchased as an investment two years ago — has given them a chance to rediscover what downtown has to offer.

Before moving to their fourth-floor one-bedroom unit, "we didn't come downtown very often," said George. "But now that we're here ... we love taking a taxi down into town for dinner," said Tina. "It's very cosmopolitan, it's fun."

The spot's a good one for George, who's a retired Marine Corps pilot and enjoys a variety of walks downtown. On weekends, he and his wife dine out, attend the Old Globe and visit the zoo.

### Like The Pioneers

"To some extent we're like pioneers," George and Tina agree. "We knew we were doing it ahead of time," Tina said. "We feel if you can stick it out ... property values will just have to go up." Jerry David Dominelli, of J. David, was another who viewed Beech Tower as a good investment. His ninth floor condominium, the most expensive in the building located at 1514 7th Ave., is up for sale. He currently lives in another downtown high-rise, the Metropolitan Correction Center.

"When you tell people where you live, you get the reaction, 'Can you go out at night?' Tina admitted. "But more you get the reaction, 'Gee, things are happening downtown,' and we play it up. We see it happening. We've never had disparaging things to say about downtown."

Some Saturday mornings they head to a nearby French bakery to pick up cheese Danish and bread. They've even walked down Beech Street to Anthony's for lunch.

After talking up the pleasures of downtown, the Nasifes break the news: They're moving to North City West to be closer to Tina's work at the San Diego Tech Center in North County..Still, they plan to come back for dinner and day trips "now that we know what's here," George said.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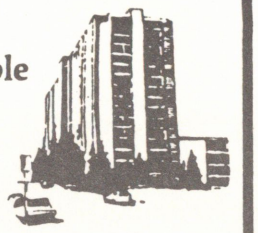

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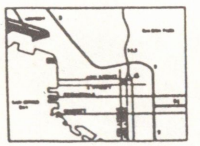

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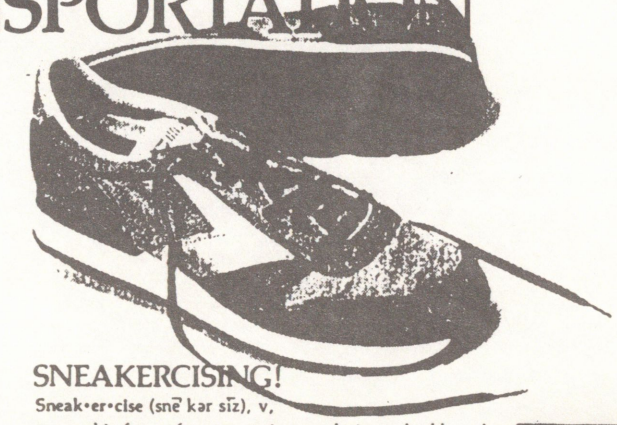

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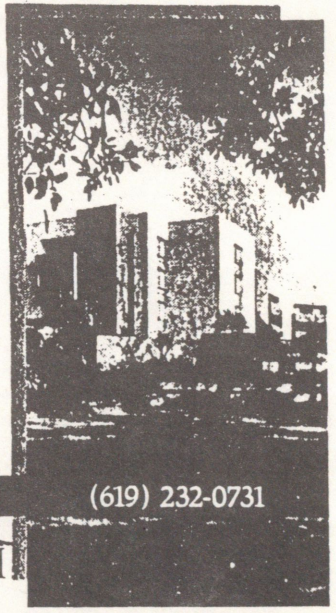

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The San Diego Union/Charles Starr

Chris Wagner with some of the senior citizens he serves.

# The older citizens make way, unfortunately, for the new

By Barbara Moran
Staff Writer

Downtown developers are busily paving the golden way for San Diego's young, upwardly mobile consumers, but the renovation is proving to be at the expense of many of San Diego's older citizens.

"If downtown redevelopment succeeds, it will dramatically increase property values in the surrounding areas," said Chris Wagner, the director of community development for Senior Community Centers of San Diego. "Then what will happen to the remaining residential hotels where the elderly live?"

Wagner, whose program tries to meet housing, health and nutritional needs of San Diego's downtown elderly, has already seen the effects of displacement. "These people are basically being told to get out of town. They lose more than a place to live. They are robbed of their dignity. That can kill their spirit and will to go on."

Since 1978, there has been a move toward rehabilitating the old hotels or tearing them down for redevelopment. Older people, who may have lived in the same hotel for 10 or 15 years since retirement, are being pushed out.

In 1970, the Senior Community Centers of San Diego was founded — with a $15,000 budget and one center — to "facilitate the involvement of older persons in community life." Now, with two expanded centers, the SCC serves about 2,000 hot meals a week to the elderly, provides transportation, social activities, classes and housing assistance, including the Hotel Alert Program. Hotel Alert is an informal network of information supplied by residents, hotel managers, police and community agencies.

Out of a total downtown population of 14,408, an estimated 4,091 of those residents are over 60, according to 1980 Census Bureau figures. Many are retired citizens with adequate finances who live comfortably in private homes, condominiums or apartment complexes.

As a result, "there are a number of elderly who live on the streets," he said. Studies done by the city and Senior Community Centers estimate that as many as 500 people over 60 are homeless in the streets of San Diego at any one time.

"That number will escalate as redevelopment grows and the SROs (single room occupancy hotels) become hot property," he said. "Quite a few of the SROs are up for sale now."

The Regional Task Force on the Homeless, chaired by Mayor Roger Hedgecock and funded with city, county and United Way funds, "has developed some creative ideas to deal with the problems," said Wagner. "The question now is whether or not they can be enacted."

*'Walk into Jack-in-the-Box or McDonald's downtown after 4 p.m. and you'll see the elderly dining on 45-cent hamburgers. . . . They aren't eating there because they love hamburgers. It is all they can afford.'*

— Frank Landerville

Frank Landerville is project director for the task force. "Walk into Jack-in-the-Box or McDonald's downtown after 4 p.m. and you'll see the elderly dining on 45-cent hamburgers," he said. "It is their hot meal for the day. They aren't eating there because they love hamburgers. It is all they can afford.

"If standard rules of real estate — the highest and best use — prevail, these are the people who are going to lose everything, the people who are surviving on a month-to-month basis. Any drastic change — in health, in housing — just wipes them out. I don't know what alternative they have.

"If there is no intervention," Landerville said, "it is inevitable that we will lose most of our SROs in the near future. Even a parking lot will prove more profitable than trying to maintain an old hotel for people who are just getting by."

Some of the recommendations of the task force include:

- Directing the city Planning Department to review and revise its housing needs analysis to include SROs. The Centre City Community Plan does not presently address goals and objectives for preserving SRO housing downtown.
- Develop a working program to handle preservation of SROs and location of alternatives (mobile home parks, redesigned commercial structures, boarding houses, etc.)
- Develop low-interest, deferred payment loan programs for SRO rehabilitation.
- Explore all state and federal programs available for use with SROs and encourage development of new SROs.
- Consider adoption of a housing preservation ordinance similar to one in Seattle that prohibits the conversion or demolition of any SRO without replacement if the annual loss of SRO units is 5 percent or more in a year.

Through the work of the task force churches, businesses and local community agencies are being encouraged to get even more involved in helping the displaced elderly and others.

In the long run, said Wagner, it makes more sense for taxpayers to help the elderly remain self-sufficient than to displace them so they wind up relying on public assistance.

"Twenty to 40 years ago when these people retired, their pensions probably seemed adequate," he said. "Who could have predicted what the future would hold?" Where in California, Wagner asked, can they find a room to rent for under $200, when most live on $500 or less a month?

"It's self-defeating to redevelop an area and just expect elderly displaced people on limited incomes to go away. They cannot just go away."

# Housing In & Near The Downtown Community

## CONDOMINIUMS

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## APARTMENTS

**CABRILLO SQUARE**, a complex of 292 apartments, ranging from studio to two bedroom. Amenities include 24-hour switchboard, heated pool, health clubs and saunas. The complex also has tennis courts, beauty and barber shops, grocer store and underground parking.
1399 9th Avenue at A

**CORTEZ VILLA**, an apartment building housing 56 units with one, two and three bedrooms. Pool, jacuzzi, men's and women's gym, two saunas and two steam baths are available.
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**GOLDEN PARK**, 66 units, just completed. One and two bedroom apartments, from 570 sq. ft. to 840 sq. ft. with off-street parking. Security gates, five minutes from downtown's financial district in historic Golden Hill.
2745 B Street.

**MARKET STREET SQUARE**, Centre City's first market-rate rental complex will feature 192 apartments, ranging in size from studio to two bedroom. 40 of the units will house low-income families. The ground level will have commercial stores and underground parking will be available. Construction will begin November 1985 and be completed in November 1986.
2nd and Market

**PARK PLACE**, overlooking Balboa Park, this apartment complex consists of 32 two bedroom, two bath units with decks or patios. The security building includes a jacuzzi and sprinkled garage.
1640 10th Avenue at Cedar

## SENIOR RESIDENCES

**CATHEDRAL PLAZA**, designated for seniors and disabled persons, the complex features 223 studio and one bedroom apartments, three recreation rooms and underground parking.
1551 3rd Avenue between Beech and Cedar

**COLUMBIA TOWER***, this senior tower with bright orange balconies has 150 efficiency and one bedroom units, including ones for the handicapped. A patio recreation area and parking facilities are also featured.
904 State Street at E

**LIONS COMMUNITY MANOR***, adjacent to Horton House, the complex features 120 one bedroom apartments (13 designated for the handicapped), a library and recreation room, as well as an adjacent community center.
310 Market Street at 3rd

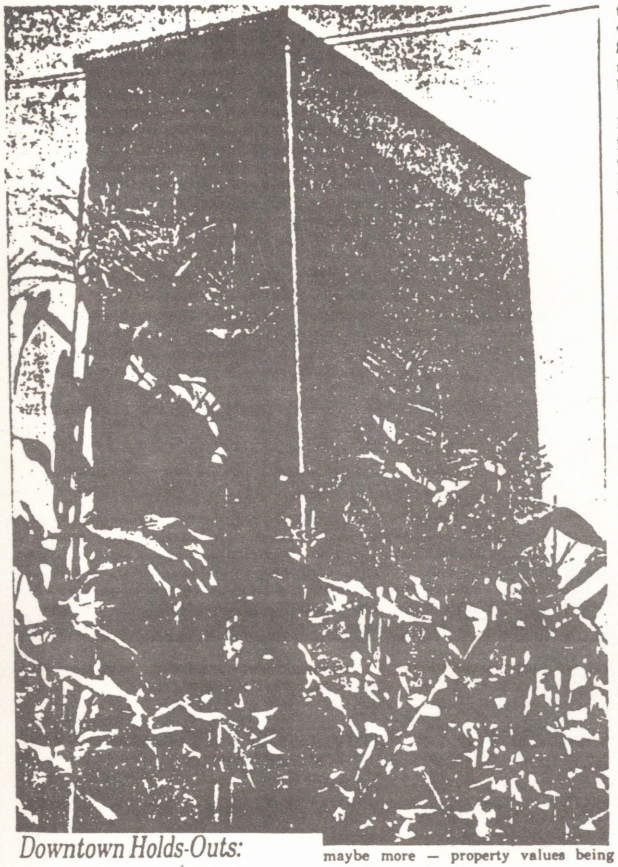
**LUTHER TOWER**, the tower has 202 studio and one bedroom apartments and a library, community room and limited parking.
1455 2nd Avenue at Beech

**SAN DIEGO SQUARE**, an attractive 156-unit, one bedroom apartment complex, including 16 designed for the handicapped. Adjacent is a senior center with recreational facilities, library, pool, jacuzzi and medical and legal offices.
1055 9th Avenue at Broadway.

**HORTON HOUSE***, just south of the Horton Plaza center, this 14-story buidling consists of 151 efficiency and one bedroom apartments, with some specially equipped for the handicapped.

## LIVE/WORK QUARTERS

**ARTIST RESOURCE CENTER**, information about live/work environments for artists in downtown San Diego is available from the Artist Resource Center.



## *Downtown Holds-Outs: The Wilcoxsons Make Life Expensive For The Ledfords*

By PAULINE REPARD
*San Diego Daily Transcript Staff Writer*

Five children grew up here, among the corn and geraniums, the papaya and carrots.

It was a nice neighborhood back in the late '60s — lots of families, corner markets, a dress shop, other small businesses.

Today, the homes have given way to asphalt, striped for parking stalls in all the lots on the block but one, at 1534 Front St.

That's where Luis and Dolores Rubio have rented their little home for about 15 years and raised a family. And they hope to stay for a while longer — as long as their landlords continue to reap rewards in sentiment rather than dollars.

Walter and Virginia Wilcoxson, who own the 5,000-square-foot home site, could sell the place possibly for $325,000, maybe more — property values being what they are downtown.

Land in the immediate area is selling in the range of $65 to $100 per square foot. The Front Street house is no cream puff, but land slated for a skyscraper can fetch considerably more than a typical single family home.

There are a few other similar "hold-outs" around downtown. A.W. Coggeshall has bits of properety throughout the inner city and is often spoken of as a hard bargainer. Bank of America waited for years to assemble the block where its new tower stands because the owner of a single parcel held out so long.

The house at 1534 Front St. is now among the most obvious hold-outs.

The Rubios don't have to worry about losing their house right away. The Wilcoxsons aren't ready to sell, despite offers from Ledford Enterprises, which has surrounded the old house with parking lots bounded by Front, Beech and Cedar streets and First Avenue.

"The family is a little sentimental about the property we own — I guess that's the reason nothing's been done with it," explained Theresa Wilcoxson-Stowers, daughter of the owners and manager of the property as a real estate broker.

"The property has been in the family longer than I have," the 28-year-old quipped. "I think my parents bought it in 1950 or '54. I don't think they built the house. From the architecture, I'd say it's older. The people who live there have been there a long time. They love it — it's been their home. We're sentimental there, too. As long as everybody's happy, we're in no hurry to sell.

"But I don't want to stand in the way of progress. I'm not certain the highest, best use of the property is a parking lot, or a parking structure. I would leave it to the experts to say what is. I would hope something more substantial would go in there.

"When someone has the opportunity to develop an entire city block, it's worth waiting to do it as a whole, not piecemeal. The assembled piece is worth more than the parts separately."

• • •

Luis Rubio, an unemployed baker, clearly enjoys making things grow. The small stone porch leading to the front door is covered in ferns, geraniums and other potted plants. Across the front yard, raised several feet above sidewalk level, are young plants of tomatoes, green beans, chilies, green peppers and garlic.

Down the side of the yard run rows of corn. Succulents and cactus also dot the landscape. Rubio is especially proud, though, of his papaya plants. He said many people stop to ask him what they are, or are surprised he can grow them in San Diego's non-tropical climate. A garden in the heart of downtown is a surprise, too.

About 10 years ago, he said, the parking lots started going in. The houses, the motel, the shops gave way to asphalt or taller buildings.

"There was no problem raising children here. When they were little, there were nice, beautiful houses and to the east, big pine trees. There were nice neighbors. Most of them owned their own land," Rubio commented.

"The newest parking lot went in not long ago. The parking lot owner has tried to buy this lot, but the landlady wouldn't sell. She said she wouldn't as long as this place was kept clean and nice."

• • •

Wilcoxson-Stowers stated that she's let it be known that the Front Street lot is for sale at the right price. She said it's been discussed with the family which owns the rest of the block — and a lot more city acreage — Dr. R. Merl Ledford Jr. and his sisters, Lucille Green and Anne Evans.

"They have made offers to buy the property, but they haven't really been accepted. I feel it's probably time to go ahead with it if they're interested, and an acceptable offer is made," Wilcoxson-Stowers said. But, she added, the last offer made to her parents wasn't enough.

For Green and her family partners, getting a hold of the 5,000-square-foot lot hasn't been a top priority, but she said they would like to buy it if a reasonable price is quoted.

"I admire the corn crop once a year — it's amazing to see that garden in the middle of all that carbon monoxide," Green mused. "We've been negotiating for the lot over the years, but nothing very serious. They're asking price just doesn't jibe with ours. But it poses no design problem for whatever development we may want."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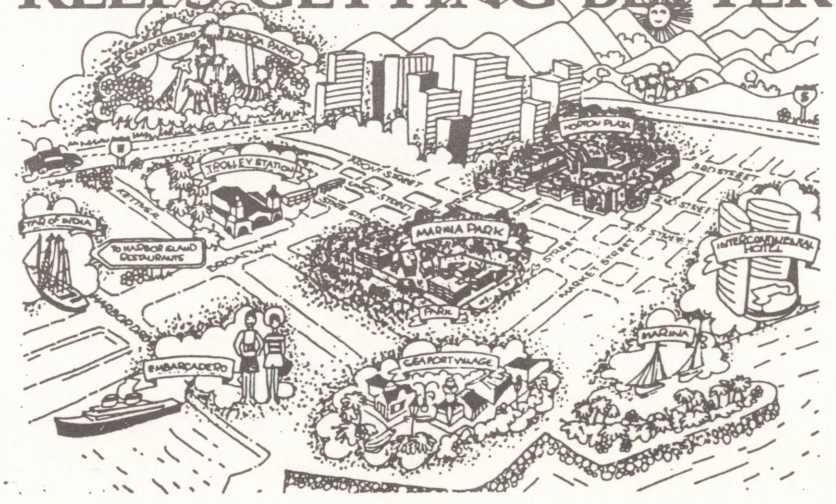


Downtown: Street People

# After the hoopla, what happens to the street people?

By Carol Olten
Staff Writer

It's the same old story. Or is it? The street people haven't changed that much but the streets have. Instead of old buildings and sleazy corner hangouts, there are new ones with fresh paint, sleek urban towers and wise statements of postmodern architecture.

The street people don't fit with them, so the street people dilute. Spread out. Find the other streets, the other parks. A few make greater shifts to other cities, to outlying communities. A few try to stay in the same streets with the new buildings. But they begin to know, to feel, it is no longer their place.

Seemingly, this is the scenario being played out in downtown San Diego as 2,000 transients are forced to deal with a city finally in motion as the Horton Plaza retail center opens and luxury high rises, such as the Meridian, replace yesterday's tacky urban sprawl. Or, is it only the downtown developers' wish-list scenario? Are the street people really moving on? Or, will the next few weeks find them trying to stumble into Nordstrom and camping around Horton's eye-catching public art? Downtown's safety inputs — the police patrols, the extra security systems, the social service agencies — are givens. But the street people are non-givens. They are nebulous, the unpredictable quantity. A man in a torn shirt who is drunk at noon and does not walk straight does not know where he will go tomorrow. Where is his future?

Jim Brown, director of security for the new Horton shopping center, looks down from an arcade of the new mall onto the old plaza where the street people once held court with the pigeons. They are gone now. The plaza is almost cleaned up in the last phases of restructuring and looks slick as a whistle. But Brown wonders if the street people will stay away or will he and his 40-member force have to spend their days and nights encouraging drunks and two-bit panhandlers to move off the malls.



The San Diego Union/Charles Starr

A transient walks in downtown San Diego carrying his belongings in shopping bags.

"I don't think so," says Brown. "These people wandering around are looking for places to sleep and something to eat and not for the things we have in the center. I think they will find other places."

But the places that transients rely upon, such as the City Rescue Mission, have their own set of problems as the population shift continues. The problems don't have easy solutions. Meanwhile, concern mounts over where the transients will move to.

Although some movement has occurred outside Horton to perimeter public places such as Pantoja Park by the Marina, observers note that the greatest shift in street population so far has been to the east of downtown in the vicinity of 11th and J streets. This is where the new City Rescue Mission is going up and hopes to open in September. Other service agencies, such as the Transient Center at 723 12th St. either already are located here or anticipate opening operations in the area in the future — such as the St. Vincent de Paul Center which expects to have new facilities ready in about a year and a half at 15th Street and Imperial Avenue.

"We believe the transient population in the future will generally be there instead of old downtown," says Frank Landerville, project director for the city's task force for the homeless. "One of the ideas in encouraging the agencies to locate in this area is that they will be able to afford the space and real estate.

"Basically, the homeless downtown are just in need of a place to go. If enough day centers can be provided offering services and something attractive to do, these people wouldn't be very inclined to drop in at Nordstrom. But if enough regular people come to visit Horton, there probably won't be many transients because they won't feel very comfortable with the new folks."

Claude Gray, executive director of the central division of the San Diego Police Department, says he thinks police protection already is very adequate in the Horton area. The department has no plan to increase patrols there with the opening of the downtown center.

"If anything," Gray explains, "the police department will have a reduced work load because the new clientele the center will draw to the

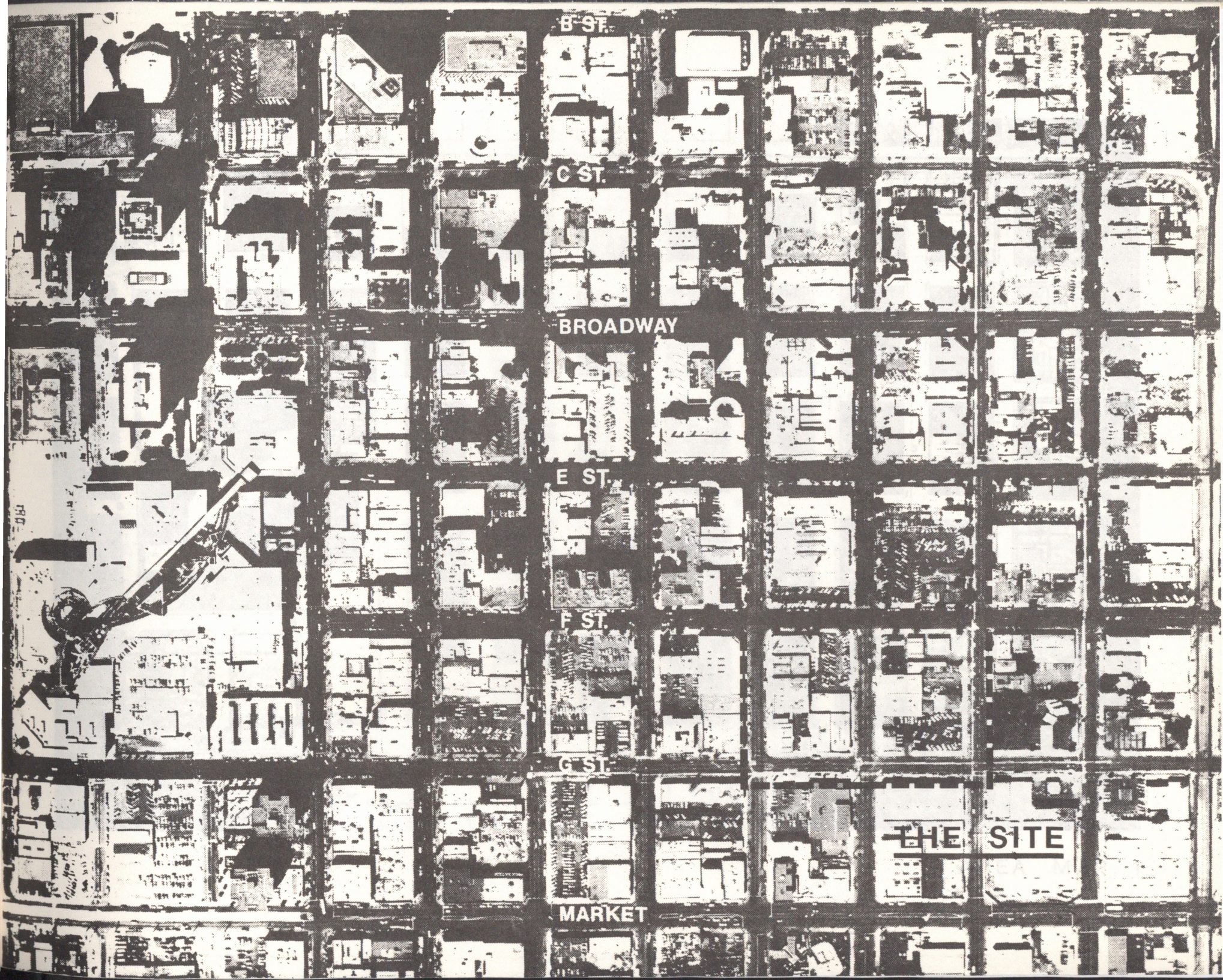
See STREET on Page 30

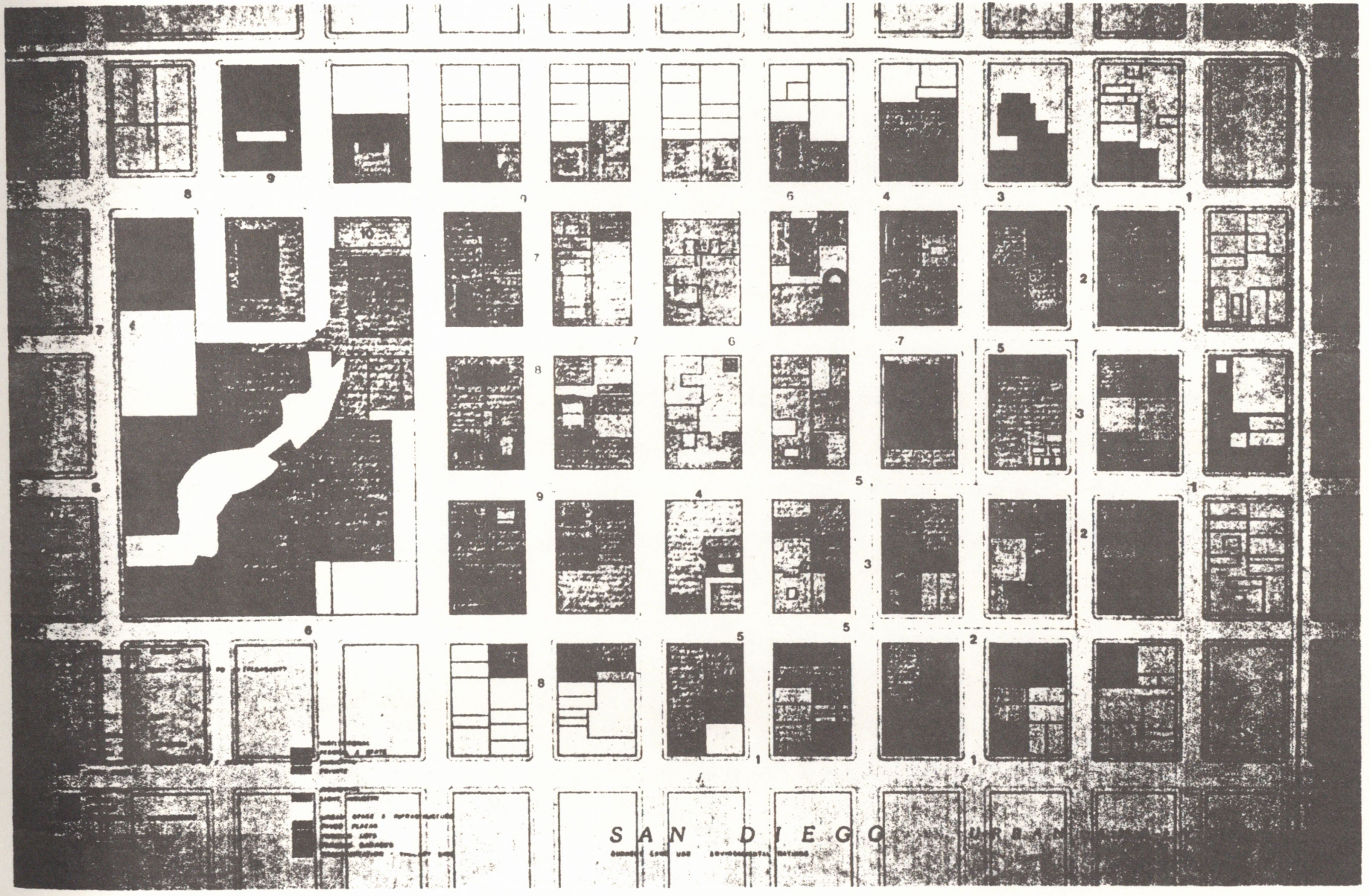
## MAPPING THE SITE AND ITS CONTEXT

In order to assess the existing conditions of the site and its surroundings and to examine the fit of the site into its urban context, an analytical mapping series proved a useful tool.

### AREA MAP 1: CURRENT LAND USE AND ENVIRONMENTAL RATINGS

The current land use map reveals a concentration of office and retail activity along Broadway. Of note is the large area indicating the new Horton Plaza Shopping Center. There are also several large general office towers. The commercial density continues into the Gaslamp Quarter along 5th Street but is broken by the introduction of apartment buildings and by the presence of residential apartments above smaller retail and office establishments. Moving into the site area and beyond, there is a noticeable transition to a mixture of uses including private and civic institutions, scattered residential groupings, wholesaling, warehousing, and light industry. There are 3 large parking structures: one associated with Horton Plaza, one for the general public, and one for office tower employees. Surface parking lots are prevalent throughout the site area. The only public open

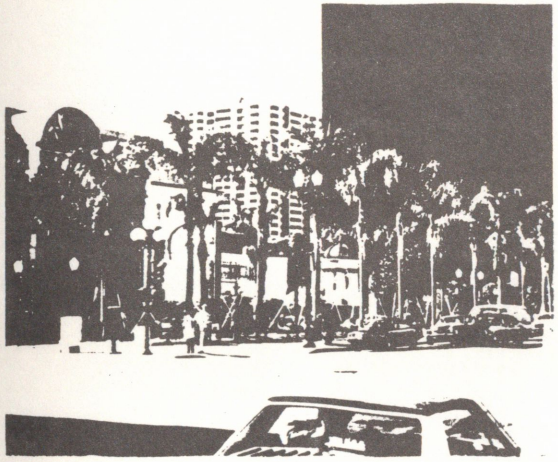

B ST.
C ST.
BROADWAY
E ST.
F ST.
G ST.
THE SITE
MARKET




AREA MAP 1

spaces are the area in front of the entrance to Horton Plaza and the small stretch of lawn in front of the post office.

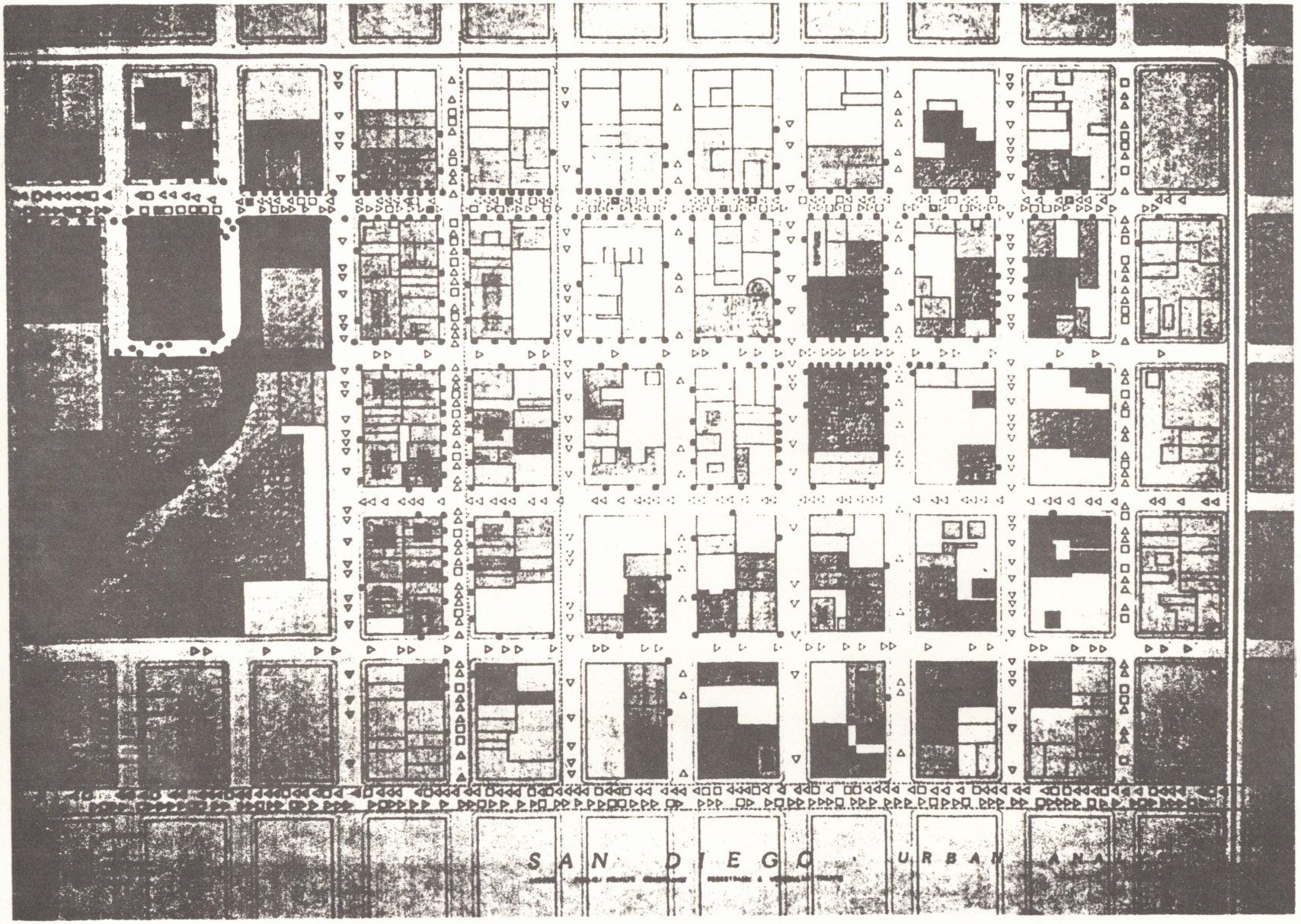
The environmental ratings are based on both objective and subjective criteria. Areas are rated on a scale of 1 to 10: 1 being a harsh or uncomfortable environment, 10 representing an area that is attractive and pleasantly stimulating. Factors considered in the evaluation of various areas include the physical condition of buildings and surroundings, the presence of buildings of architectural interest, the character of an area, the sense of place, the sense of order or disorder, the presence or absence of people, the presence or absence of greenery or other softening elements, the sense of human scale, and the degree of well-being one might experience in the area. Application of these ratings reveals the most pleasant places to be the public open space at the entrance to Horton Plaza, its immediate surroundings on Broadway, and the heart of the Gaslamp Quarter along 5th Street. Environmental quality steadily deteriorates as one travels either from Horton Plaza along Broadway to the east, or from Broadway through the site area and beyond to the south. The presence of the post office as an architectural focal point and of scattered



restored or renovated buildings of architectural interest within or near the site accounts for some of the higher ratings in this otherwise disordered and fairly harsh area.

AREA MAP 2: PEDESTRIAN AND VEHICULAR TRAFFIC PATTERNS AND PUBLIC CONSTRAINT

Mapping public accessibility and constraint requires a systematic means for evaluating different areas and their functions. Four categories of accessibility are used here: public, semi-public, semi-private, and private. Areas designated as public are those accessible to anyone. These include public parks and plazas, public or civic buildings, and of course, sidewalks and streets. Semi-public areas are those that are open to the public but are associated with some sort of purpose. Such places may include pay to enter entertainments, museums, or retail establishments where one is free to browse as long as one's behavior meets certain standards. In the semi-private category are offices, hotels, and parking garages. These are places one would not wander into. One's presence is always associated with a specific purpose, and accessibility is more restricted. Private areas are those that are "off-limits" to the general public.




AREA MAP 2

Private residences, certain institutions, private clubs, industrial settings, and storage warehouse facilities fall into this category.

Most of the downtown area in the vicinity of the site is designated as semi-public and semi-private. With the exception of the library and post office, the site itself and its immediate surroundings are generally more private. The presence of residential, industrial, and warehousing uses is largely responsible for the decline of accessibility in the site area. The most publicly accessible places are the post office and library and the open space in front of Horton Plaza.

For the most part, the traffic patterns in the area correspond to the pattern of accessibility. The heaviest pedestrian traffic is concentrated around Horton Plaza, down Broadway, along 5th Street into the Gaslamp Quarter, and in front of the post office. Pedestrian traffic thins out as one enters the site area and continues past it to the south and east. The site area is also characterized by a decrease in the number of shoppers and business people and an increase in the presence of street people. Similarly, although vehicular traffic is very

heavy around the periphery of the site area, it drops off within the site and its immediate neighborhood. Broadway and Market Streets are major 2-way arterials and are the most congested. E, F and G Streets accommodate 3 lanes of traffic and run one-way in alternating east or west directions. Of the three, F Street is the busiest, as it crosses the freeway to the east and connects the Golden Hills area to the downtown. All of the streets running north and south are also 3 lanes with alternating one-way traffic. The most heavily travelled are 5th, 10th, and 11th Streets. Within the site area there is curbside parking along all streets, and there are traffic lights at every intersection.

Public transportation in the area is good. There is a trolley line that begins at the Santa Fe Railroad Depot at the western edge of town, runs along C Street and 12th Street, and continues south to San Ysidro and Tijuana. There are several bus routes that connect points within the city and also extend out into the suburban districts. The bus routes affecting the site area are Broadway and Market Streets, 5th Street, and 11th Street. Bicycles are a popular form of transportation in San Diego. To accommodate them, bike-buses and street-side traffic lanes are

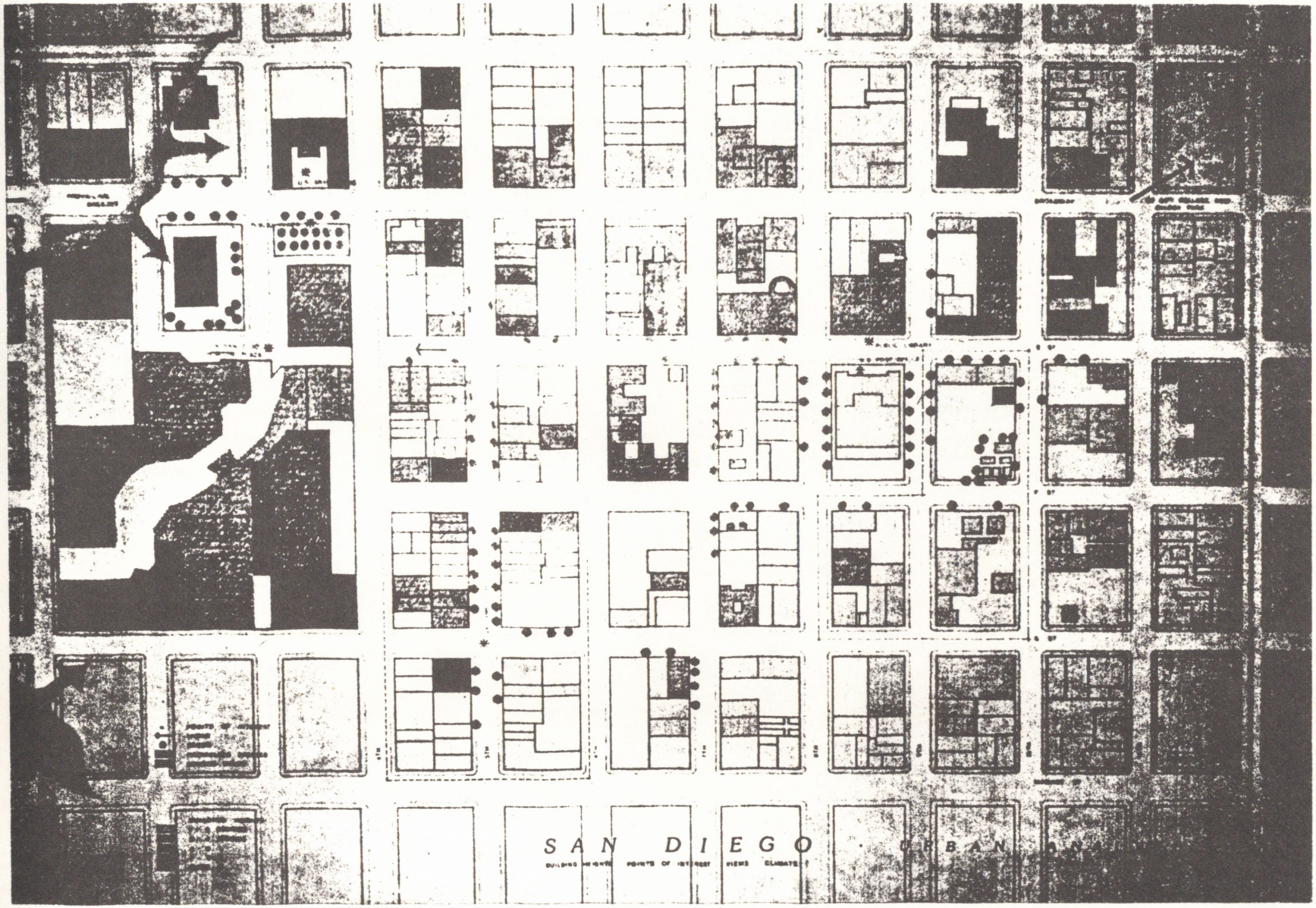
both available.

AREA MAP 3: BUILDING HEIGHTS, FOCAL POINTS, VIEWS, AND CLIMATIC INFLUENCES

A survey of building heights shows that most existing structures range between 3 and 7 stories. Heights and density are the most consistent in the Gaslamp Quarter. Along Broadway, there are several office towers that are so characteristic of urban centers. Some are as many as 20 stories tall. In dramatic contrast, the site area is scattered with mostly 1-3 story structures.

There are a few points of interest worthy of mention. Some of them act as visual focal points and/or character generators for an area. Others are centers of activity. They are the U.S. Grant Hotel, Horton Plaza, the public space in front of Horton Plaza, the historic Gaslamp Quarter, the San Diego Public Library, and the U.S. Post Office. Although it is not on the map, San Diego City College is close enough to the site area to be considered an important influence as well.

Climatic variation within this urban context is slight as is the impact of any particular view. The possible benefit of




AREA MAP 3



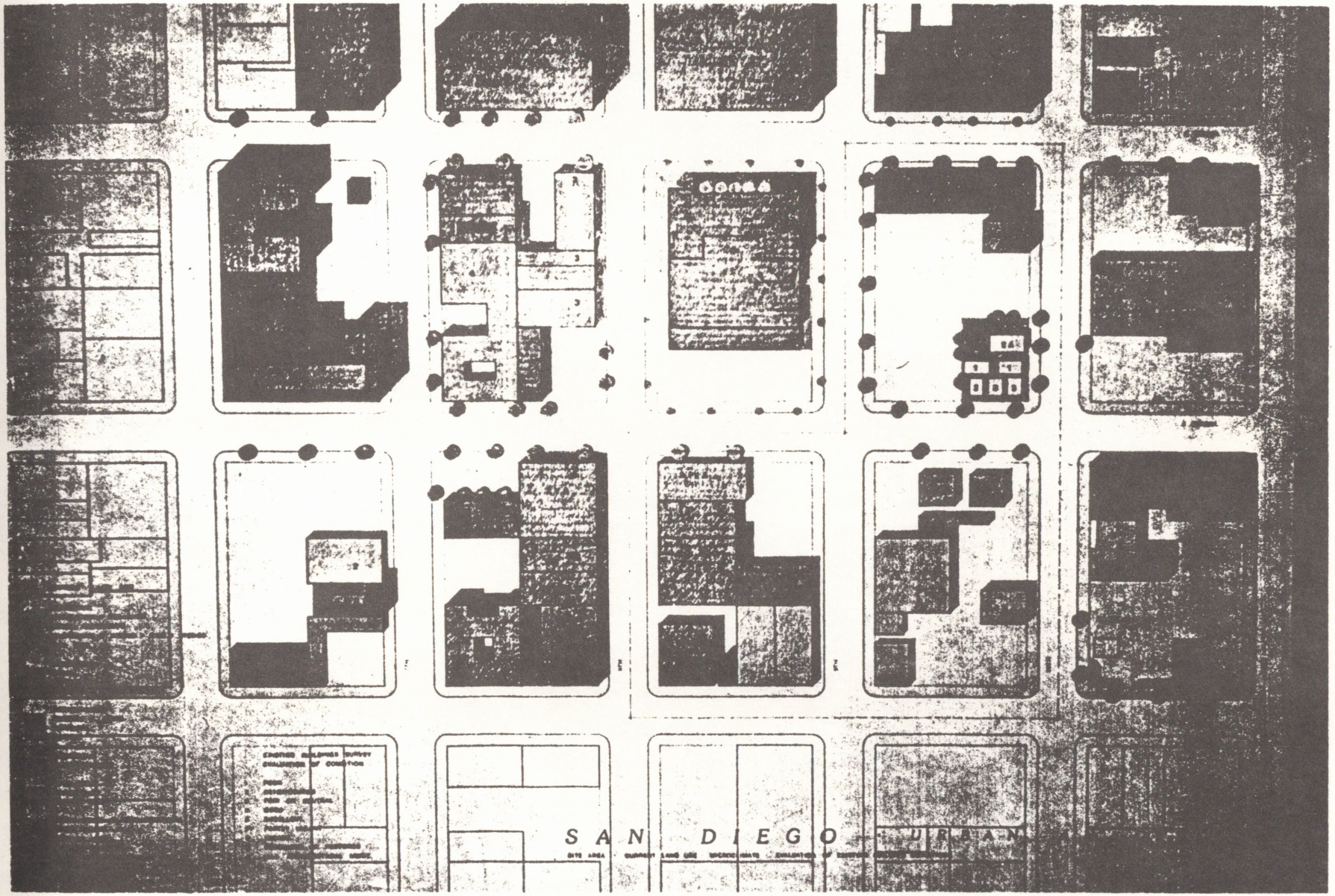
off-shore breezes is diminished by the abundance of concrete and asphalt. For the most part, vegetation is sparse, and trees do not offer much in the way of shade. Although the bay is only 8-10 blocks away, the flat terrain and the density of the built landscape permit only limited views of the water. Views into or out of the site are important primarily as one relates visually to taller buildings as points of orientation. A view corridor between the post office and Horton Plaza along E Street does serve as an obvious visual link between the two areas. The view from Broadway into the site area may also be worthy of consideration.

SITE MAP: CURRENT USES AND EXISTING BUILDING CONDITIONS

A closer look at the site and its immediate context gives a more detailed picture of the existing conditions. The site area is immediately south of the CBD and is zoned M-1, light manufacturing. As previously mentioned, current usage includes institutional, residential, commercial, warehousing, and light industrial activities. Two important civic institutions, the U.S. Post Office and the San Diego Public Library, face each other across E Street. Other institutional uses are the senior center on 8th Street and the Salvation Army offices on 7th Street.



Residential use consists of single-family houses, houses converted to apartments, 2-4 story apartment buildings, and low income apartment hotels. Most office space is newly occupied by galleries and lofts, design-oriented firms, and art studios. There are also law offices, a travel agency, and 2 motor banks. The retail establishments in the area include a bookshop, a florist, a bakery, a jeweler, an antique dealer, a gas station, a few small eating places, and a bar. Typical wholesale, light industrial and warehousing uses include restaurant supply, truck maintenance, a cab company, commercial printing, and car rental

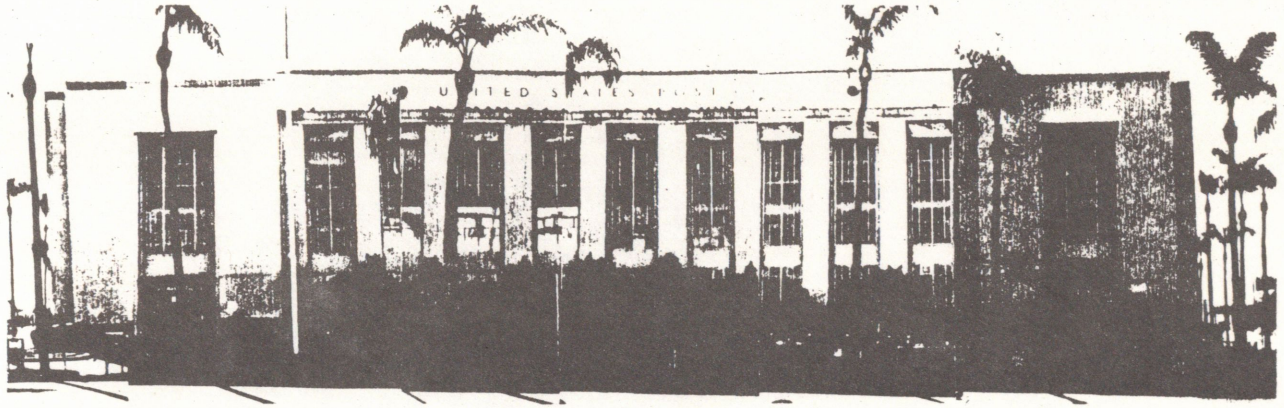



SITE MAP

storage.

The physical condition and visual quality of the area vary from block to block. Most of the buildings are architecturally neutral at best, and neglect and deterioration are common. Many structures are either totally or partly vacant. In contrast, the Art Deco style post office building is an architectural gem. Other exceptions include some of the newly renovated or restored buildings. Characterized by stylistic simplicity, several of these are well-proportioned and nicely detailed. The buildings, predominantly masonry, are too low to offer much shade. The lack of vegetation and the preponderance of open paved lots exaggerates the heat and glare of the afternoon sun.





## CONCLUSIONS

The completed analysis of the site and its urban context brings to view a number of considerations regarding the proposed site development. As is often the case, existing site conditions both pose limitations and offer opportunities.

The wide variety of current uses provides to the city resident a multitude of goods, services, and activities. At the same time, such a mixture exposes the resident to some potentially negative environmental influences. Light manufacturing and warehousing, for example, are often considered to be unfit company for areas of public or residential use. Within reason, however, the mixture of uses is an advantage. Access to a variety of goods and services brings the benefit of convenience and generates pedestrian activity. An active and varied environment can be one of the delights of city living. The site development will aim to preserve and add to the variety of uses.

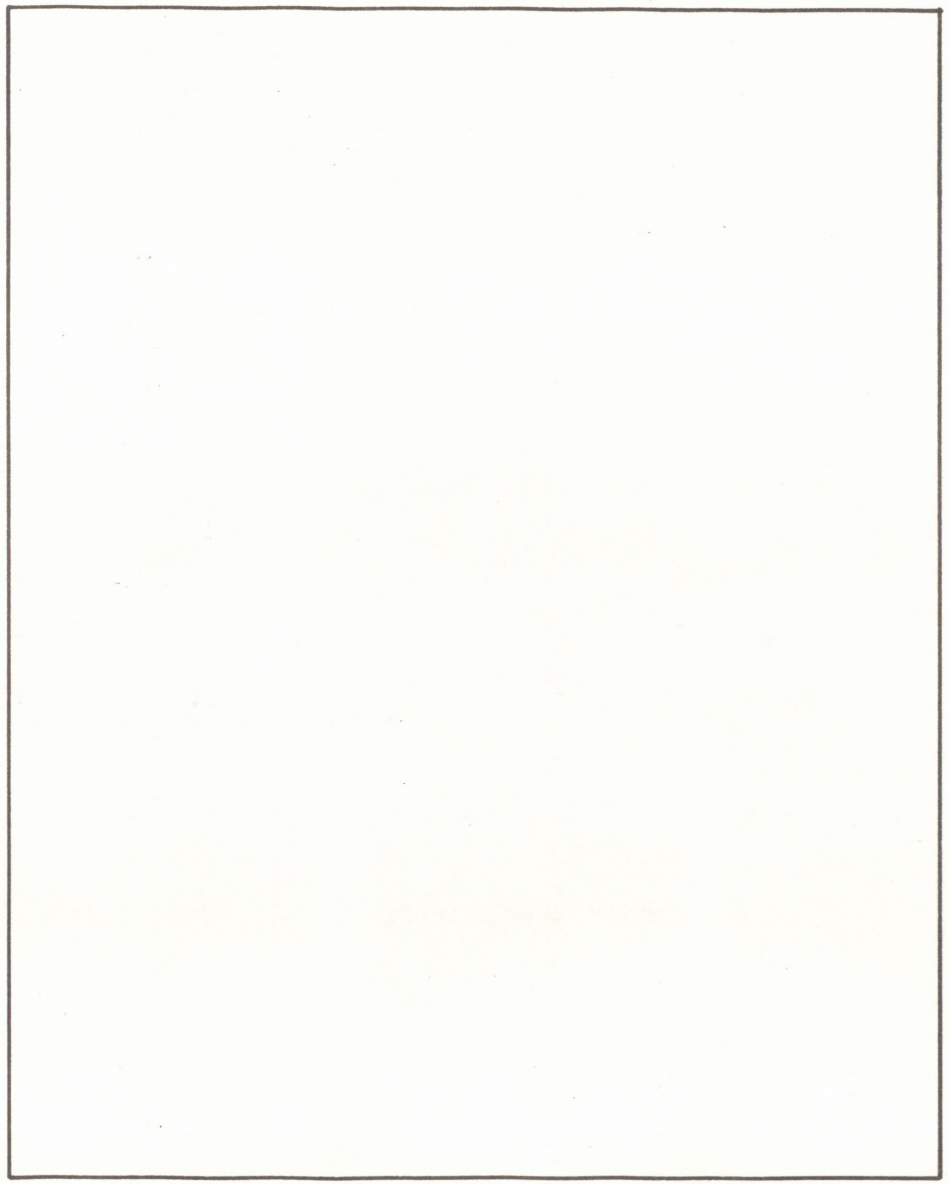
The mapping studies reveal the central location of the site. It is within close reach of many points of interest. While the site is somewhat off the beaten track and not subject to the intense traffic of downtown, it is within walking distance to

public transportation, and a wide variety of activities are easily accessible to the pedestrian. This makes the site a good place for residential development.

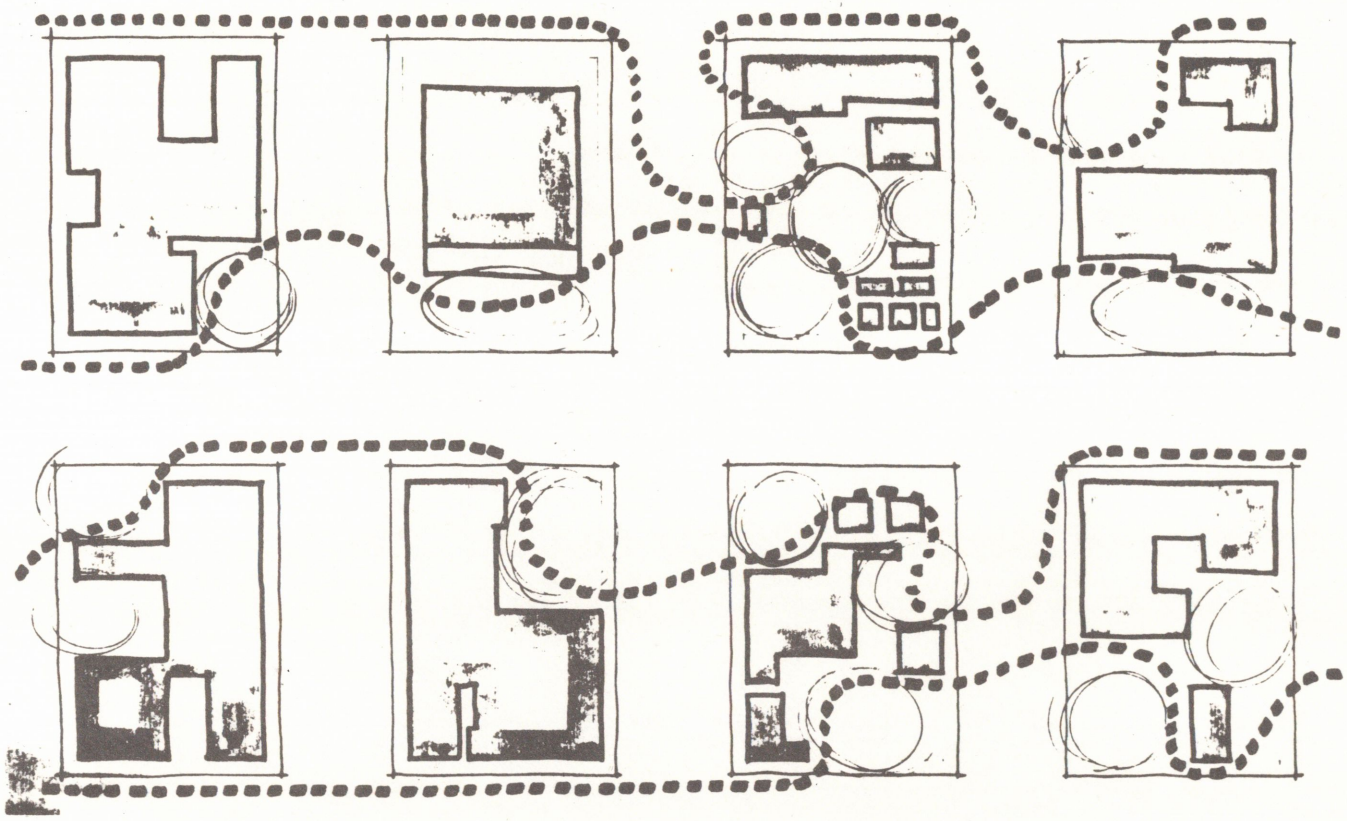
The need for public open space in the city, coupled with the presence of civic buildings near the site, provides an opportunity to develop the site into an area of public focus. The post office and library already generate a certain amount of public activity. The addition of designated public space would bring more people into the area and connect it more successfully to the downtown center. This would benefit the site area and its residents by making the site a more viable part of the downtown, and it would benefit the downtown by enhancing the cohesiveness of the city and extending the realm of the general public. The manner in which the public space is developed can also influence the character of the site and its surroundings.

The site lacks a sense of order and spatial definition. Open spaces are haphazard and unconnected, and the streetscape is consequently weak. The extreme inconsistency of the formal and architectural vocabulary adds to the feeling of disorder. The condition of the built structures ranges from derelict to

excellent. New renovation, reuse, and restoration projects provide examples of the potential that some of the vacant, run-down buildings may have to offer. Infill development and revitalization pose the problem of what to save and what to discard. There is always the possibility of destroying whatever character a neighborhood may have rather than attempting to identify and enhance it. In this case, the "down to earth" atmosphere of the site context may provide an interesting contrast to the slick styling of Horton Plaza or the chic quality of the Victorian Gaslamp Quarter.



# CHALLENGES & GOALS



EXISTING BUILDING CONFIGURATION LEAVES STREET EDGES ILL-DEFINED, SCATTERED OPEN LOTS LEAVE HOLES IN STREETSCAPE

LACK OF SPATIAL FOCUS, LACK OF ORDER OR SPATIAL DEFINITION

LACK OF FOCUS TO ACTIVITY IN NEIGHBORHOOD

LACK OF DEFINABLE CHARACTER IN AREA, LACK OF A SENSE OF PLACE WITHIN CITY FABRIC

GENERAL DETERIORATION OF BUILT STRUCTURES & OF OVERALL ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

GENERAL HARSHNESS OF ENVIRONMENT, OVERABUNDANCE OF PAVEMENT, LACK OF HUMAN ORIENTATION

## GENERAL CHARACATER AND ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

The site is a fairly harsh and inhospitable area. Many of the buildings are in deteriorated condition, and the surroundings are generally run-down. Very few existing structures have much architectural merit. Renovation of those that do is evident yet still sporadic. An overabundance of pavement, combined with the lack of effective vegetation, accentuates the glare and the heat and adds to the overall feeling of discomfort. Warehousing and light industrial uses give the area an unpretentious, "working" character.

The goal of the proposed development is to improve the physical condition of the site by renovating existing older structures, by adding new construction, and by using architectural elements and landscaping to soften and humanize the site area. The "down-to-earth" atmosphere of the site will be recognized and used as the starting point in developing the general character of the project.

## ORGANIZATION, ORIENTATION, AND FOCUS

The site lacks a sense of order and organization. The arrangement of buildings and the integration of uses seem haphazard. The post office and library, significant buildings housing important public uses, are almost lost in the shuffle and do not stand out as focal points as might ordinarily be expected. There are few cues for orienting oneself within the area. One is predominantly dependent upon the tall buildings in the nearby Central Business District to gain a sense of position and direction.

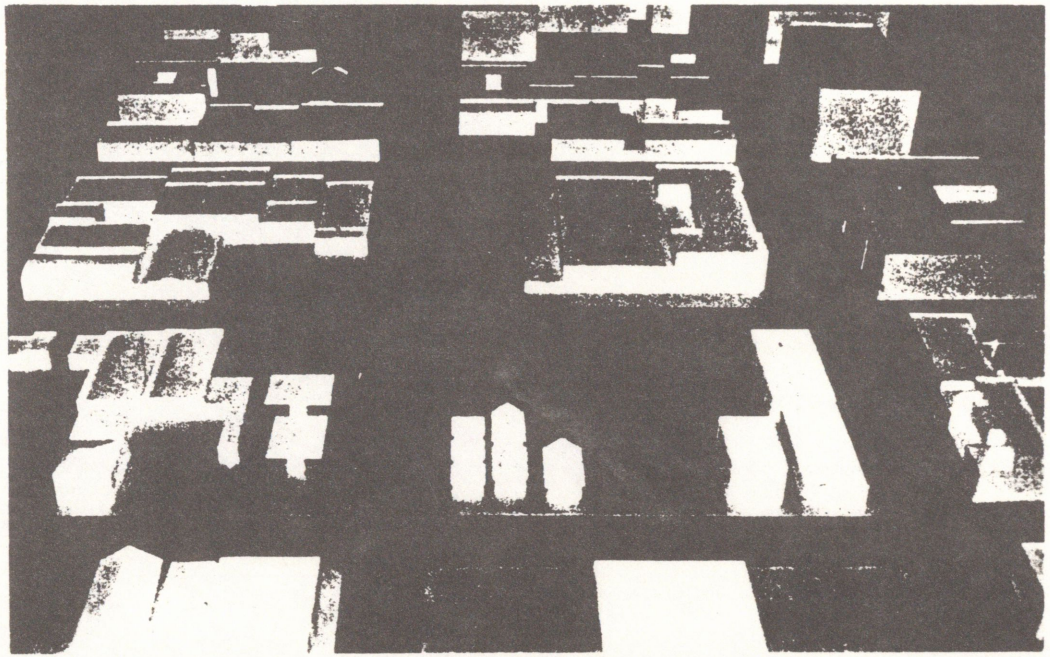
The aim of the new construction is to reorganize the site area so as to give it a sense of order and a sense of place. Although the general mixture of uses will be maintained, some of the current uses may need to be either moved or removed in order to provide a more coherent organization. New buildings will be sited so as to establish a sense of continuity within the existing diversity. The project will attempt to highlight the post office as a point of focus and make the site area function as a more viable part of the downtown.

## STREETSCAPE AND HUMANSCALE

In constrast to the delightful density and visual intracacy of an active city district, the streetscape within the site area suffers from visual confusion. It is characterized by an unlikely juxtaposition of building types and sizes. In addition, warehouses occupy whole segments of blocks with their blank walls, run-down buildings stare vacantly out at the passers-by, and numerous surface parking lots leave holes in the street wall. The resulting sense of discontinuity and lack of human scale foster a feeling of discomfort.

The goal of this project is to mend the gaps in the streetscape by increasing the density of the site and by reshaping and redefining the street wall. To improve the sense of human scale, large segments of blank wall will be either eliminated or treated so as to increase visual interest, run-down or vacant buildings will be either torn down and replaced or renovated and reused, and extreme diversity will be tempered by the introduction of elements of architectural and structural continuity. Landscaping will also play an active part in both defining the

streetscape and in contributing to the sense of human scale and human comfort.



## STRUCTURAL CONFIGURATION AND SPATIAL DEFINITION

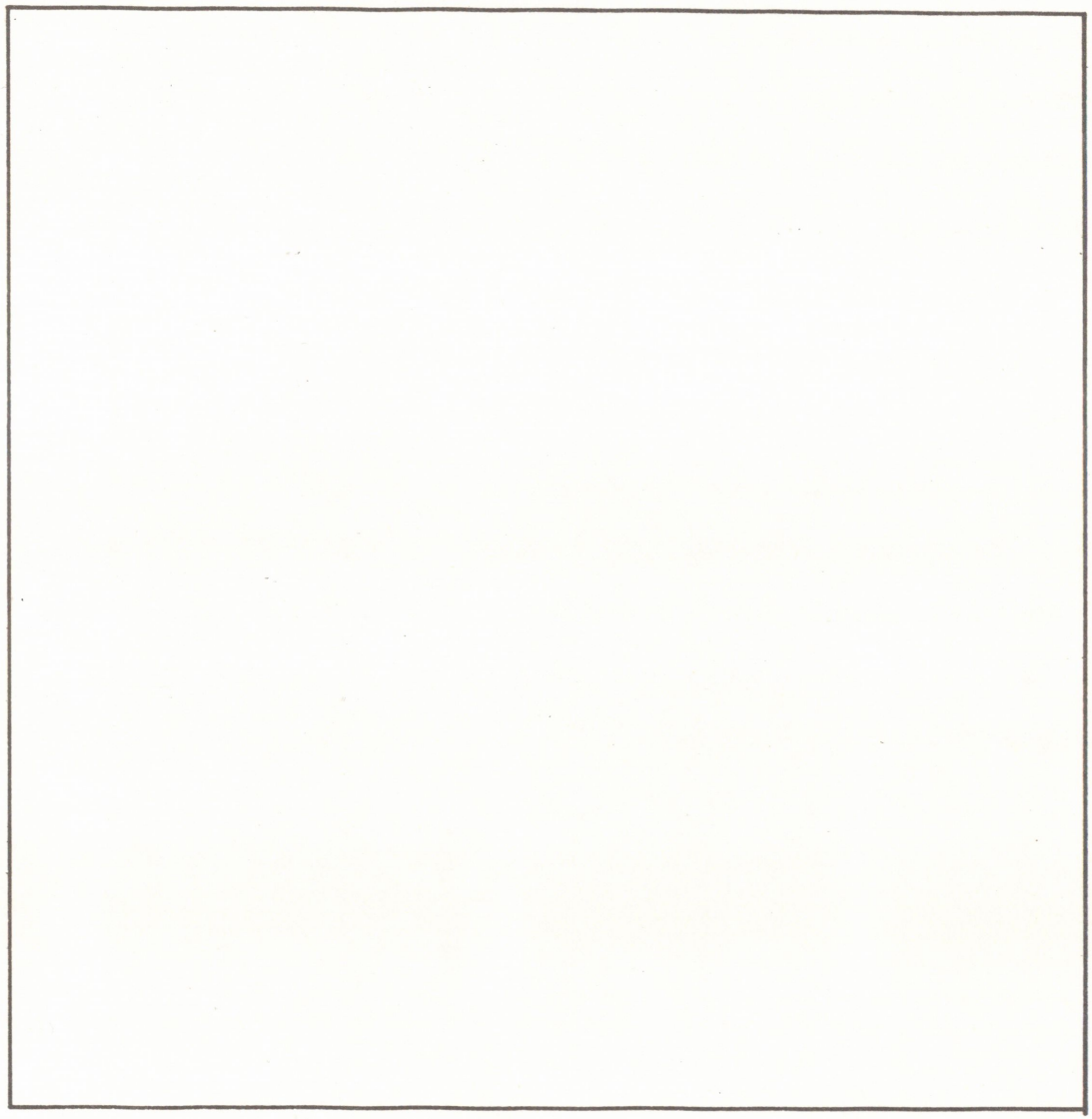
Structural configuration and the quality of exterior space are directly related. The size, shape, and relative placement of buildings mold and define the spaces around them. All too often, buildings are treated as independent entities, and exterior space is simply what is left over. The haphazard configuration of buildings in the site area is clearly responsible for the site's lack of spatial definition.

This development will be based on the idea that architectural space is at least as important as architectural form. Not all architecture can claim a place in the foreground. Urban design in particular is most successful when some buildings are used to highlight others or when buildings are viewed together as the enclosure of a pleasant space. Urban spaces may even be thought of as outdoor rooms. The aim of this project, then, is to manipulate the relationship of individual architectural pieces to form an ordered structural configuration, that will in turn shape and define effective outdoor spaces.

## FITTING THE RESIDENTIAL INTO THE URBAN FABRIC

The types of residences currently existing on and around the site are various. They include 1 story bungalows, 2 story duplexes, 3 story apartment hotels, 2-4 story apartment buildings, and apartments over stores or offices. The location of these living accommodations is equally various. Some are sandwiched between buildings of other uses, and some stand alone in parking lots. The pattern of their placement is random. At present, their very existence seems tentative, and their fit within the urban context is somewhat questionable.

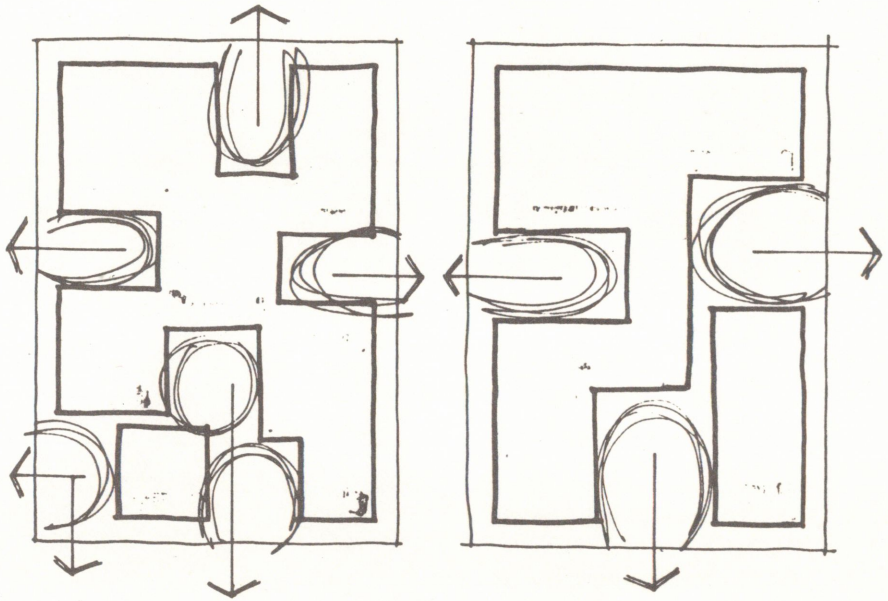
The site's proximity to the Central Business District, its current mixture of uses, and the presence of public institutions, would make the development of the site as a residential enclave (a dubious concept in any situation), seem particularly inappropriate. The goal of the revitalization and redevelopment of the site is to establish a combination of residential and other uses that will not only strengthen and stabilize the residential base in this part of the downtown, but, rather than isolate residential use, will also serve to blend it into its urban context.



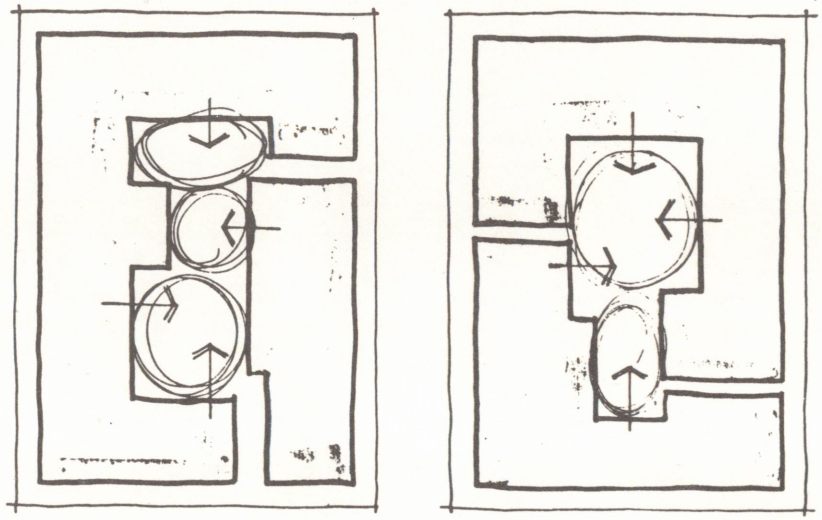
# CONCEPTUAL APPROACHES TO PLANNING

Preliminary planning strategy requires a systematic means of testing different site planning concepts so as to best achieve the desired project goals. Establishing an appropriate relationship of solid and void is a critical step in determining the degree of success of the final design. Not only does this relationship affect the various aspects of the site's physical development, but the resulting structural configuration, massing, spatial quality. organization, orientation, focus, streetscape, edge, and contextural fit have psychological implications as well. Of particular importance in an urban residential, mixed use project is the degree of public orientation and interaction desired as balanced with a sense of privacy and separation that living spaces normally require. As illustrated below, different approaches imply very different results.

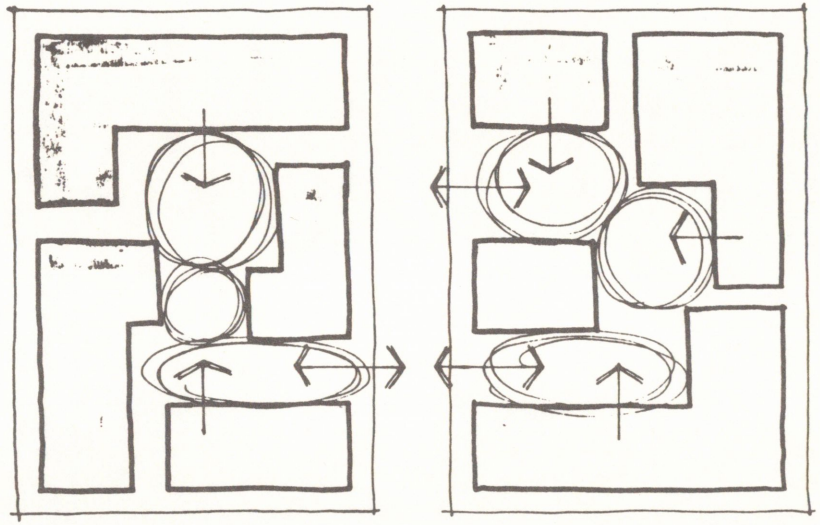
1. OUTWARD FOCUS
"POCKET PARKS"
STREET EDGES DEFINED
VERY LITTLE POSSIBILITY FOR PASSAGE THRU BLOCK
SPACES MAY ADDRESS EACH OTHER ACROSS STREET
SPACES ACCESSIBLE TO PUBLIC



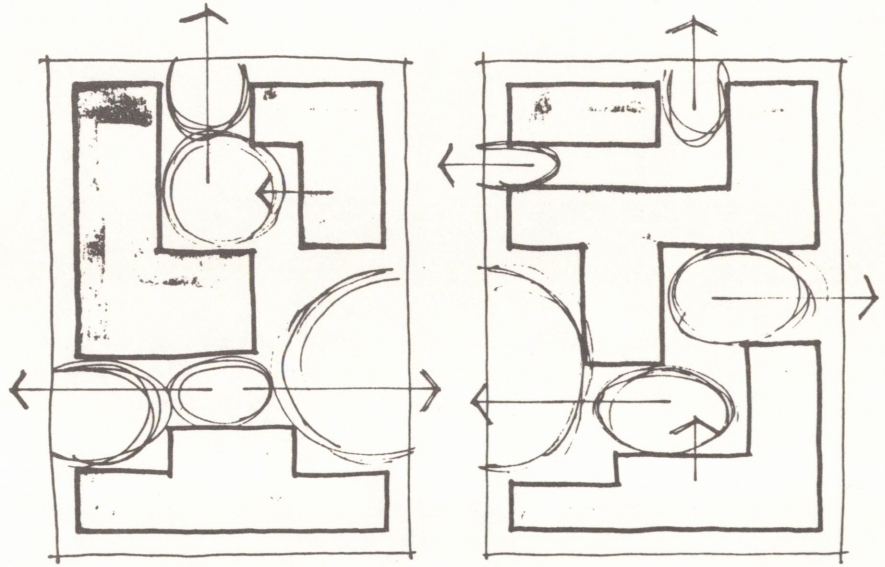
2. INWARD FOCUS
INNER COURTYARD
STREET EDGES CLEARLY DEFINED
PASSAGE THRU BLOCK IS POSSIBLE BUT NOT ENCOURAGED
SPACES ARE PRIVATE
SPACES NOT VERY ACCESSIBLE TO PUBLIC



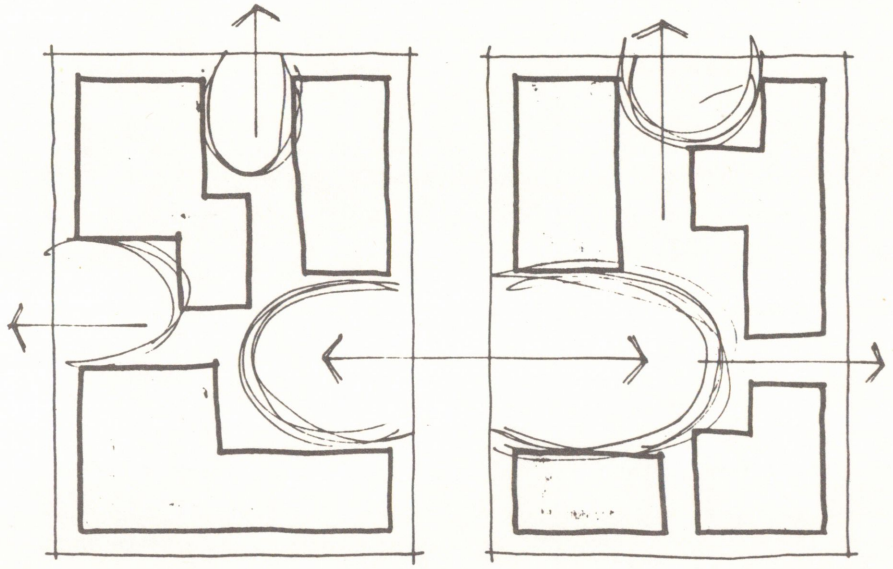
3. INWARD FOCUS WITH OPENINGS
INNER COURTYARDS MORE OPEN TO PUBLIC YET MAINTAIN DEGREE OF PRIVACY
STREET EDGES DEFINED
PASSAGE THRU BLOCK IS SLIGHTLY ENCOURAGED



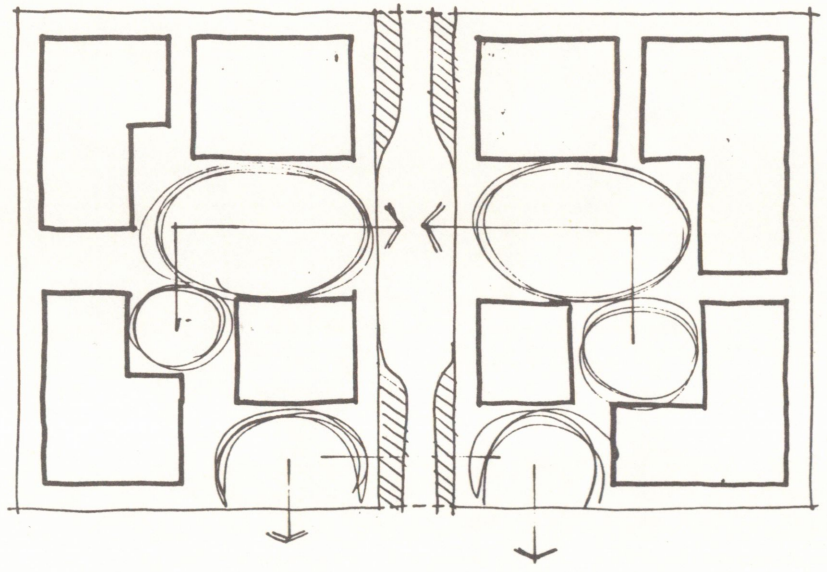
4. BALANCED INWARD-OUTWARD FOCUS
STREET EDGES MORE LOOSELY DEFINED
SPACES ARE EQUALLY PUBLIC & PRIVATE
CLEAR PASSAGE THRU BLOCK
SPACES MAY ADDRESS EACH OTHER ACROSS STREET



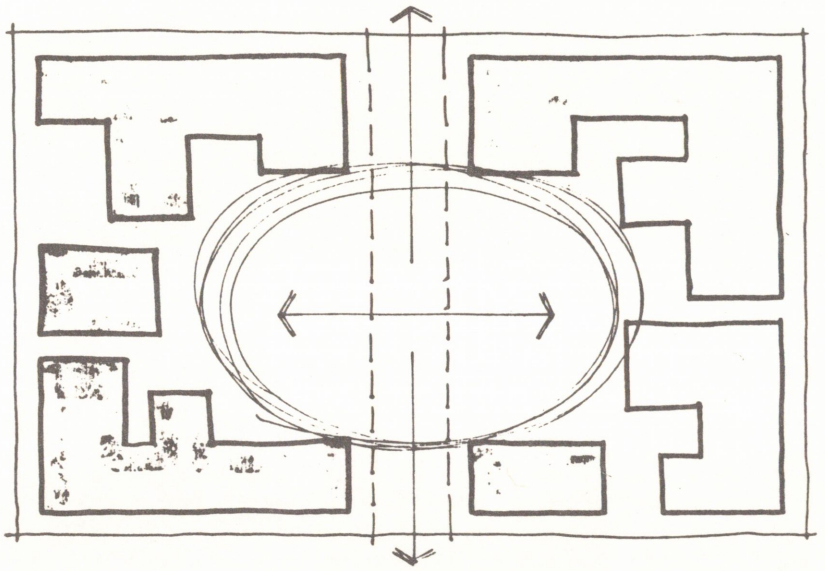
5. BALANCED INWARD - OUTWARD FOCUS
CLEAR SPATIAL RELATION- SHIP ACROSS STREET TO CREATE COMMON SPACE
CLEAR PASSAGE THRU BLOCK
MAX. PUBLIC ACCESSIBILITY



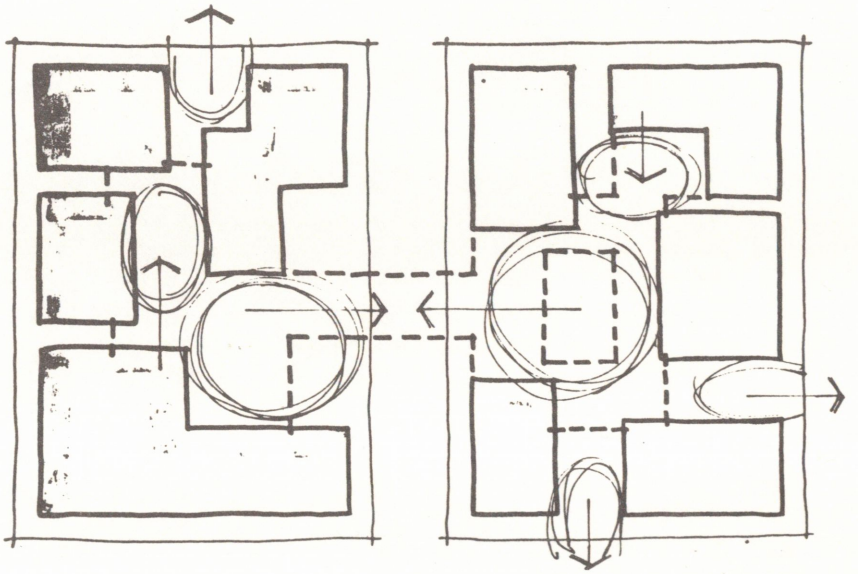
6. INWARD FOCUS
STREET PARTIALLY CLOSED- TRAFFIC RESTRICTED
COMMON SPACE ACROSS STREET BECOMES INTERIOR COURT

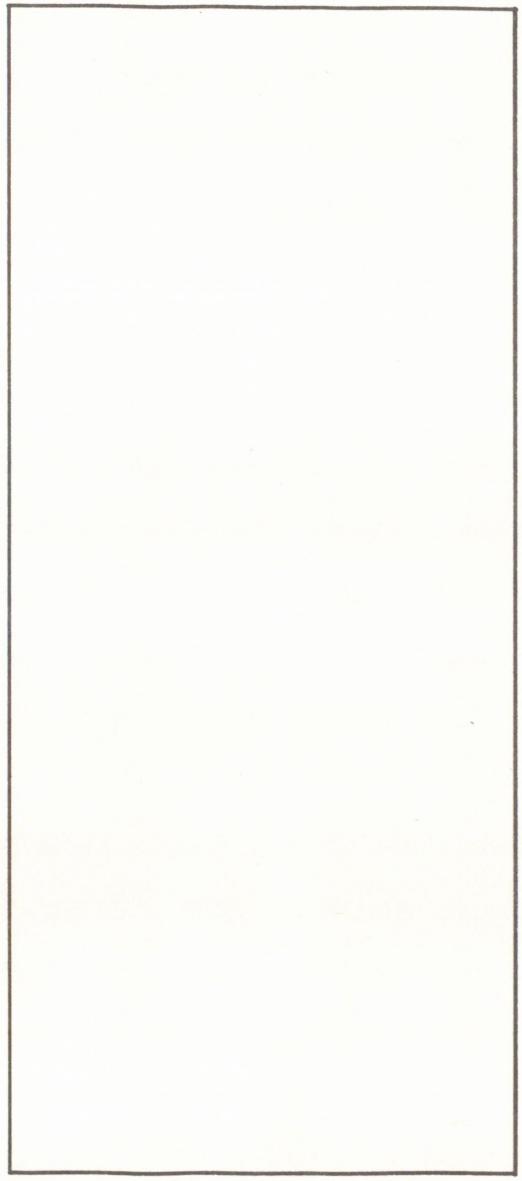


7. SUPERBLOCK
   MALLING OR TOTALLY CLOSING
   STREET TO JOIN 2
   BLOCKS
   LARGE INSIDE SPACE
   PUBLIC PASSAGE THRU FOR
   PEDESTRIANS



8. BRIDGE OVER STREET
   2ND LEVEL COMMON
   SPACE BECOMES
   PRIVATE
   STREET LEVEL SPACES
   MORE PUBLIC





HYPOTHESIS

## THE IDEA OF GARDEN AS A WORKING PARK

Urban projects invariably seem to look toward the inclusion of public greenspace as a key element in creating a central focus for a new development or in revitalizing a troubled urban district. Too often, the park is viewed as a panacea for the congestion or decline of an urban area. As can be witnessed by the underuse and even vandalism that is characteristic of many urban parks, simply providing greenspace amid the buildings does not guarantee the project's or the park's automatic success. Not only must the site be analyzed to determine the potential activity and public use during different times of day, but also the type of greenspace provided must be designed to fit its context in order to benefit its users.

Because the warm San Diego climate is conducive to year round use of outdoor space, and because pleasant outdoor space is currently lacking in the downtown area, the development of greenspace on the proposed site seems appropriate. The viability of a greenspace on this particular site is reinforced by the site's location as well as by the nature of the proposed project. The mixture of residential, commercial, and community uses in the

immediate vicinity of existing public buildings and downtown office and retail density suggests that a public greenspace would succeed both as a visual focal point and as an active people place.

Given the "working" character of the site and its surroundings, the generic patch of green lawn typical of many parks would neither fit the context of the area nor inspire active participation. It would not interact effectively with the architecture or distinguish the character of the site in any special way. The benefits of such a greenspace to its users would be minimal.

It became necessary, therefore, to seek a more appropriate, more specialized form of greenspace, one what would make visual, contextural, and social sense, one that would bring particular enjoyment to its users, and one that would give the site a unique character and perhaps even attract a number of downtown pedestrians. With this in mind, the idea of creating a garden in the city is especially appealing. Garden as park not only conjures up many pleasant images, garden as park also implies participation and activity. A garden is not an empty, idle park.

A garden is an active "working" park.

## GARDEN VOCABULARY

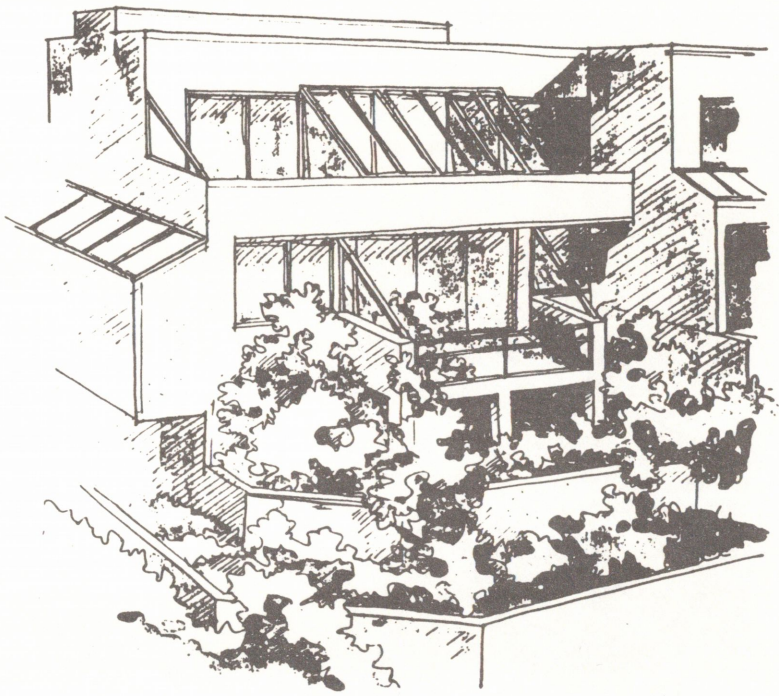
Gardens come in many shapes and sizes. Large or small, flat or three dimensional, horizontal or vertical, on the ground or in the air, gardens can take on many forms. No two gardens are quite the same. A garden is any place where things grow and change at the nurturing hand of the gardener.

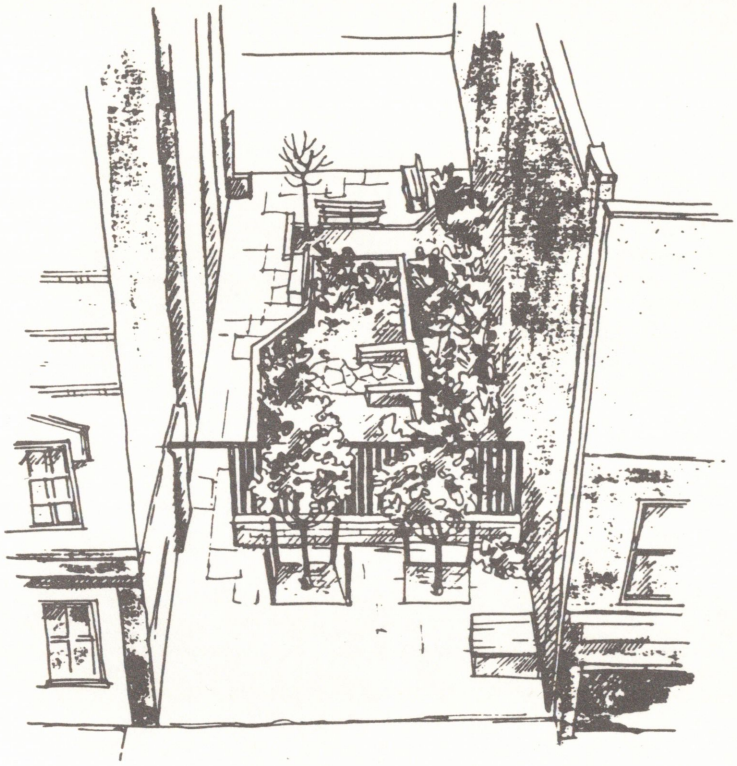
Perhaps because one does not expect to find them there, urban gardens are especially intriguing. There is something unique about seeing plants grow and flourish in the density of the urban environment. A lot can be done in a small, compact area. A small space does not necessarily mean a small idea. The following is a vocabulary of garden ideas. While those that imply smaller size may seem the most likely, all of them could be adapted to the urban context.

wildlife sanctuaries
orchards
groves of tree
rows of trees
potted trees and shrubs
hanging baskets
greenhouses
potted plants & flowers

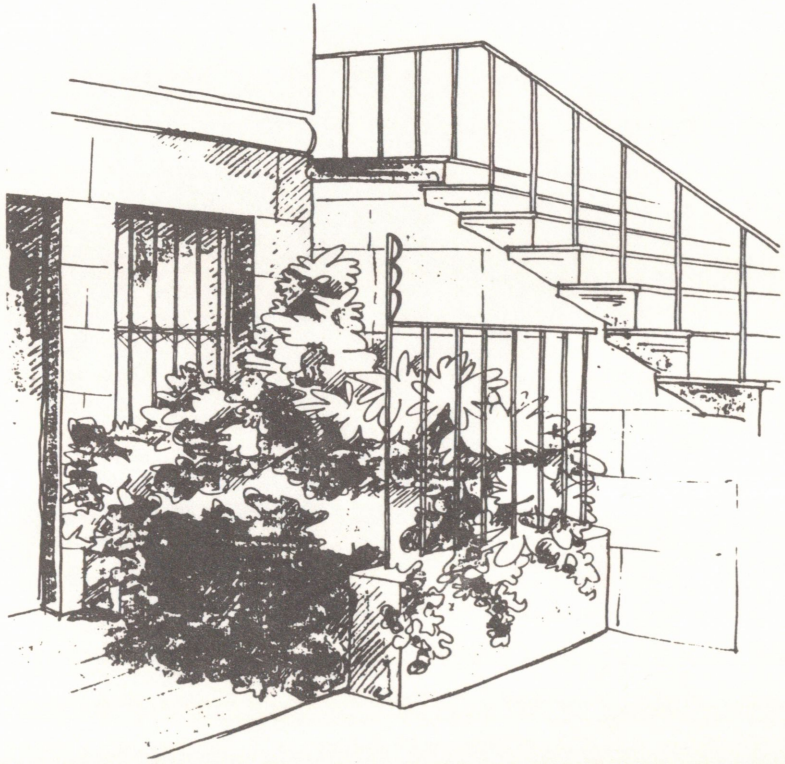
balconies
roof top gardens
terraces
courtyards
flower beds
trellises
window boxes
vegetable gardens

playgrounds
sod roofs
decks
patios
planters
hedges
vines
markets

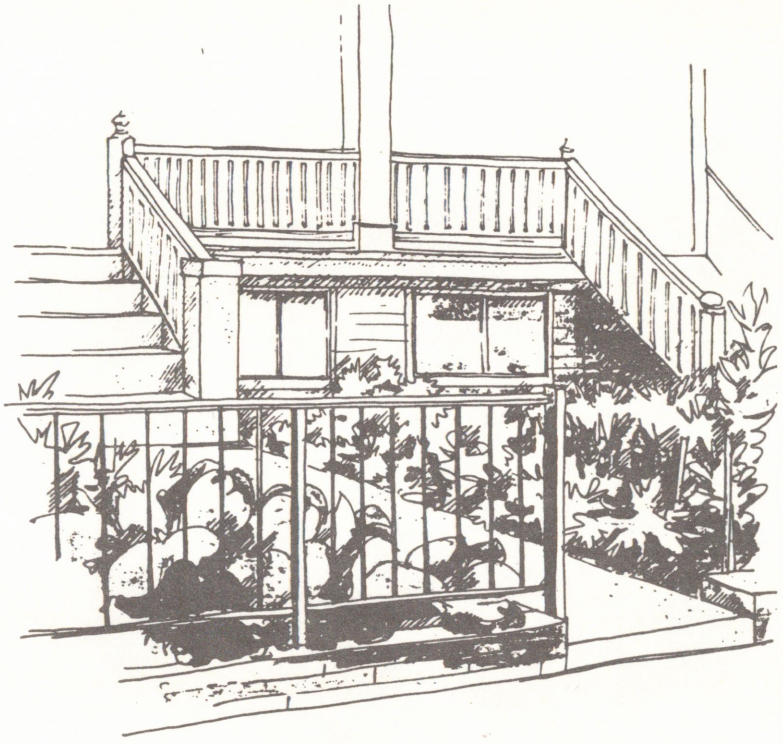


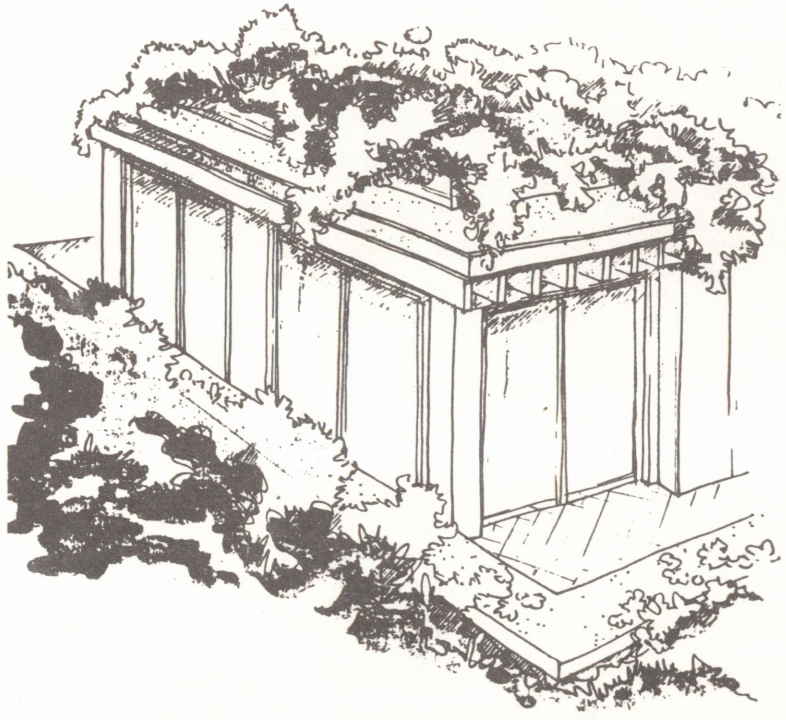


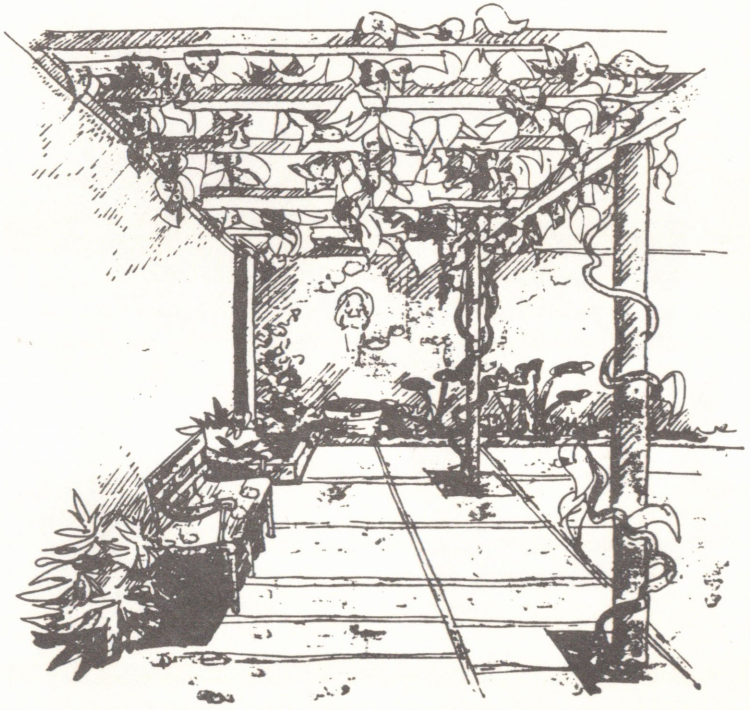




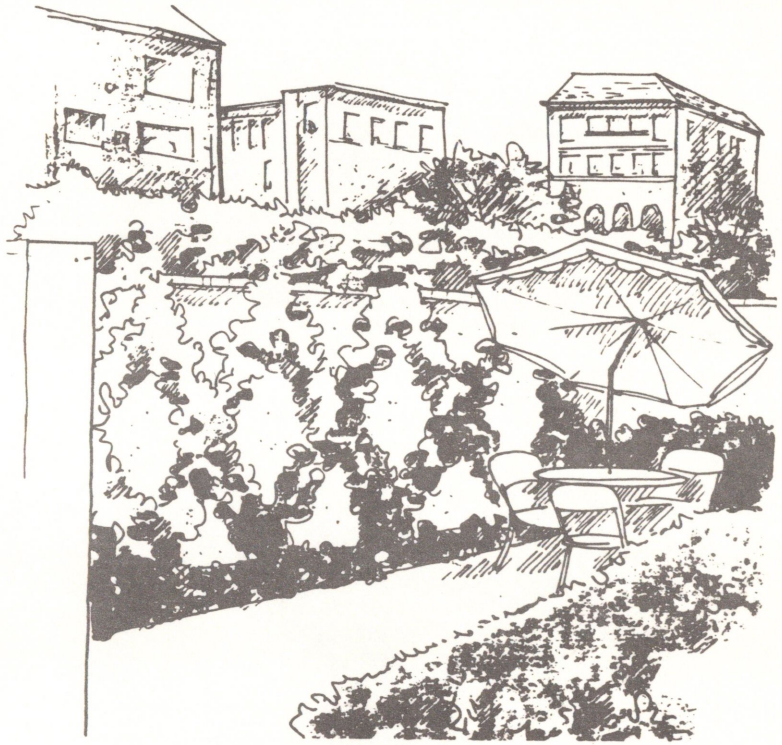


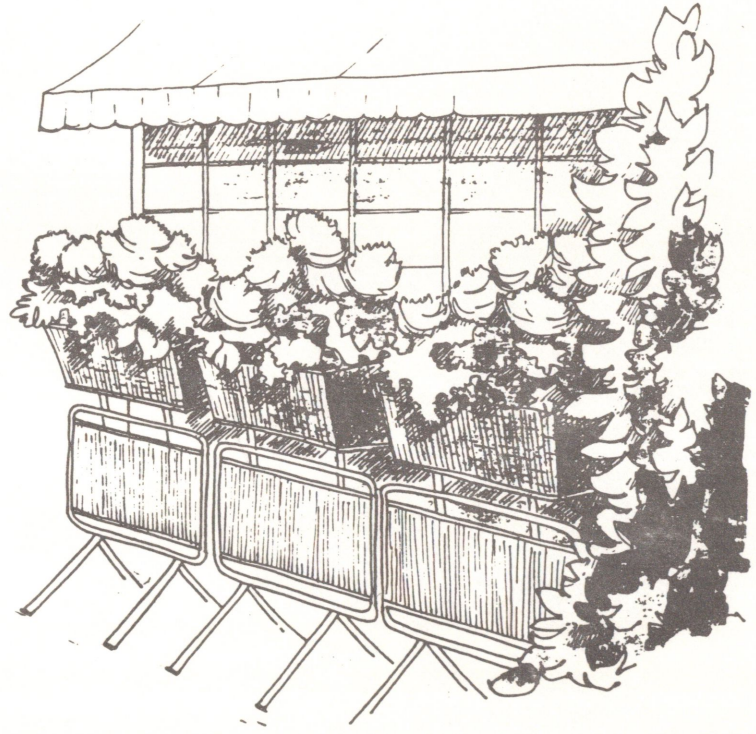


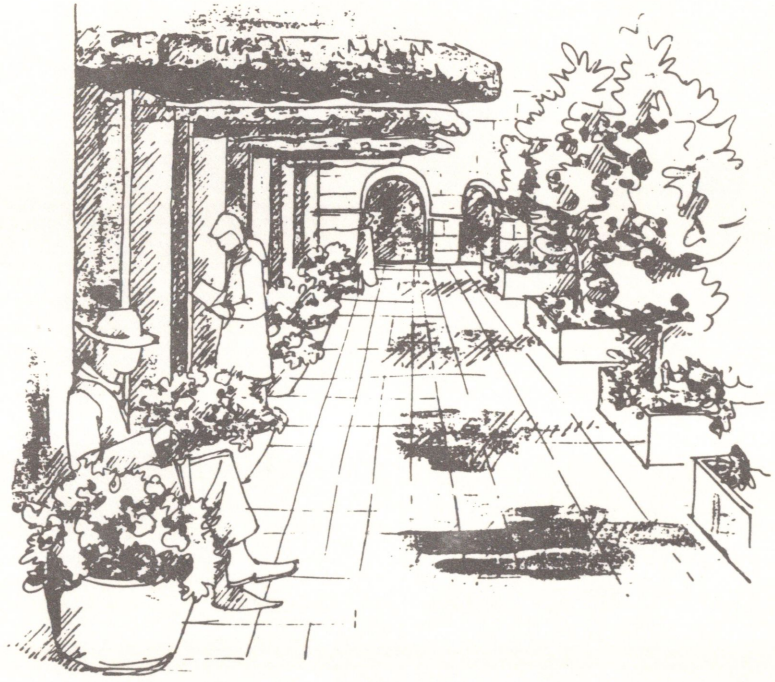




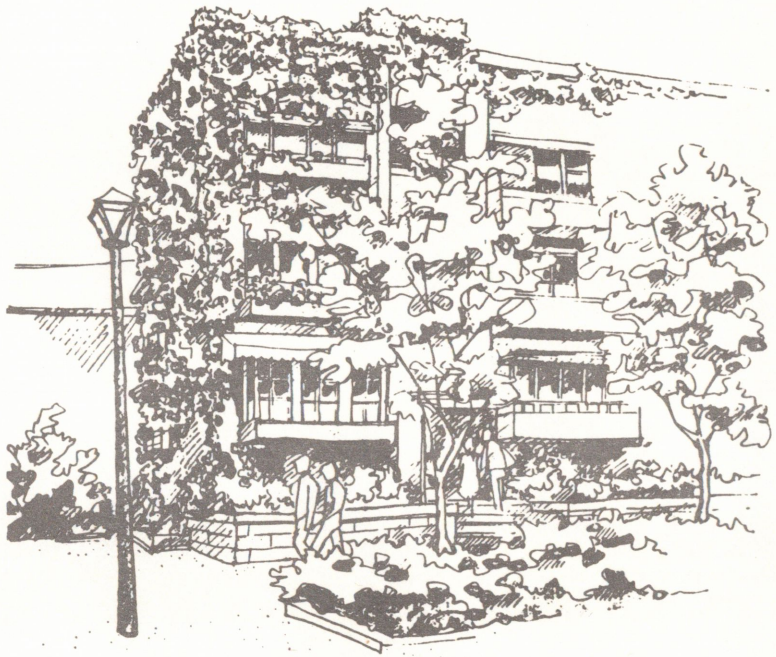


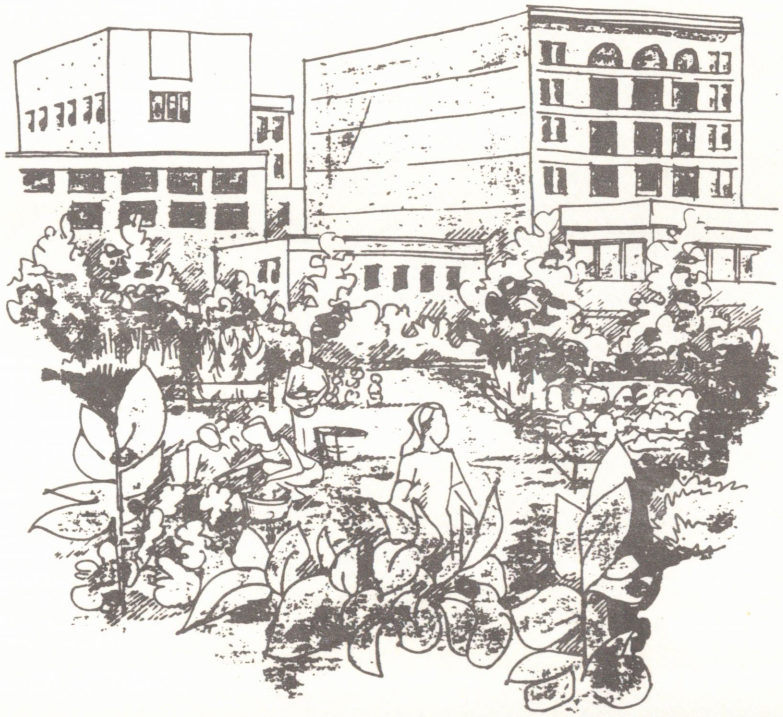


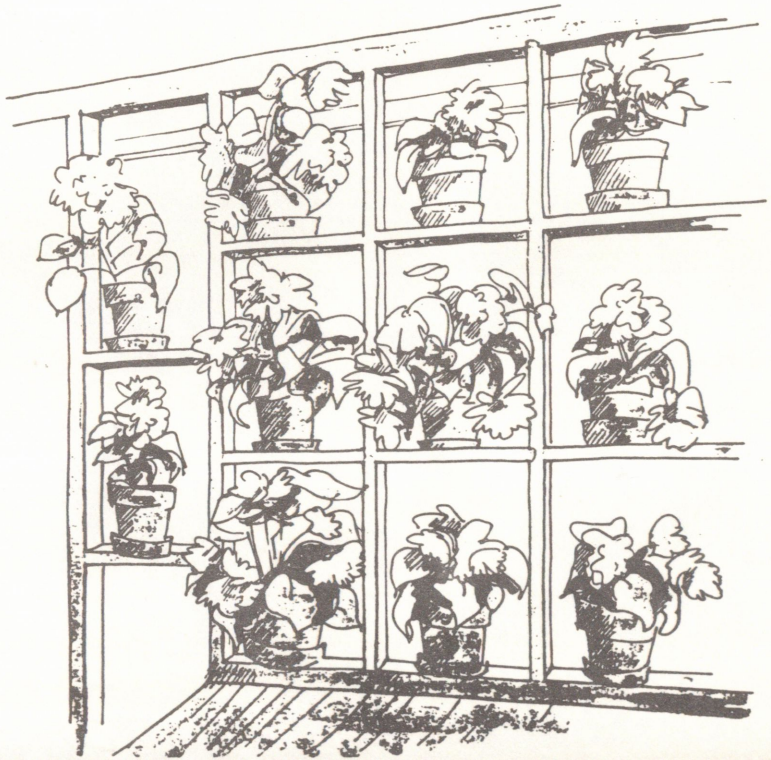


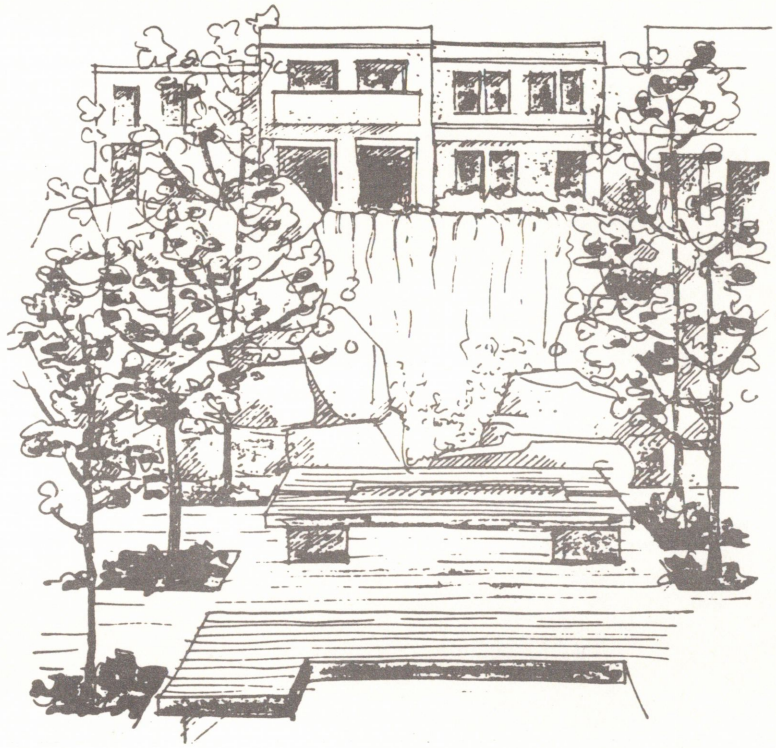




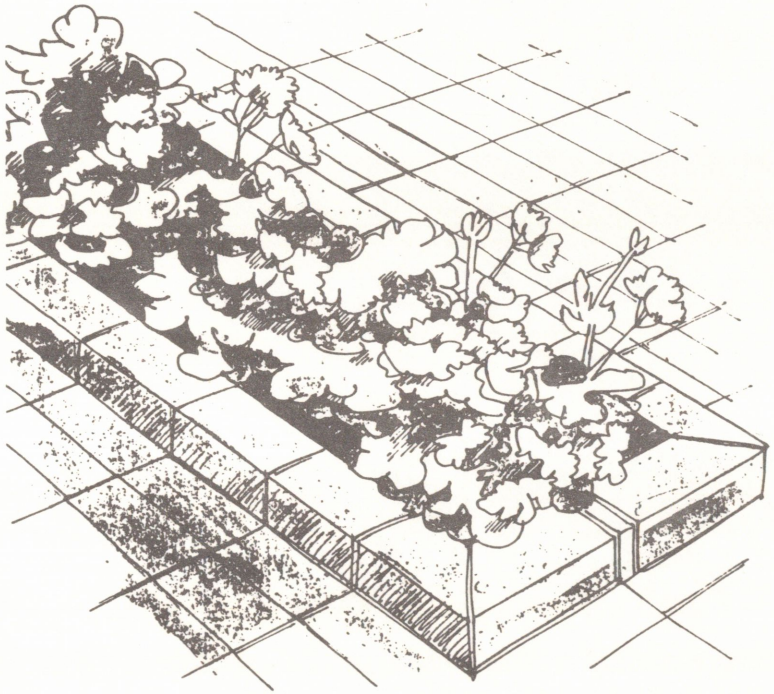


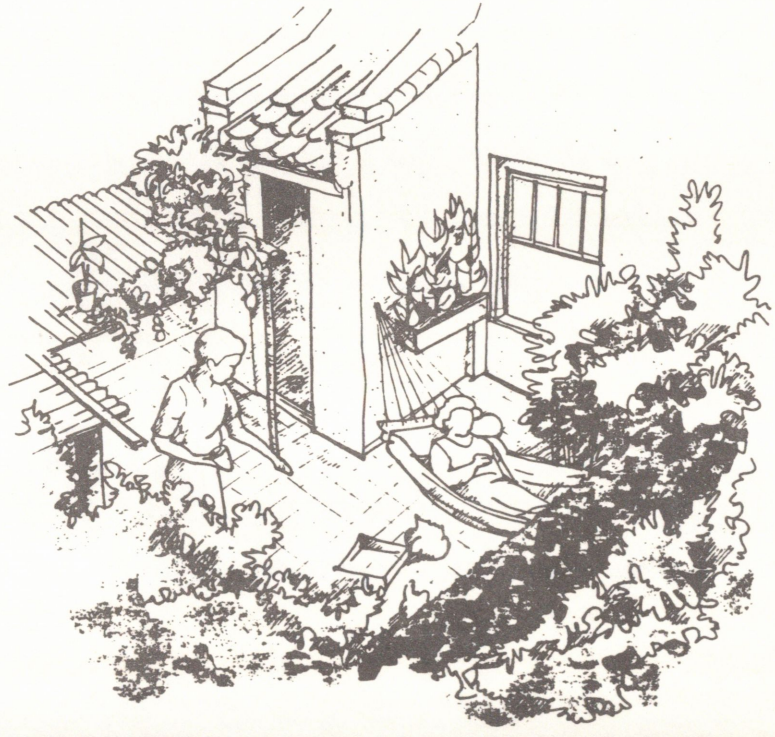












## POSITIVE ASPECTS OF GARDENS IN THE URBAN SETTING

Gardens provide many benefits wherever they grow. Because they bring to the city elements that are often otherwise missing, gardens can contribute dramatically to the quality of the urban environment and the quality of urban life.

### GARDENS AS A VISUAL FOCUS

The contrast of gardens against the urban scene creates a natural visual focal point. As such, gardens act as a source of orientation and a source of visual and spatial organization. As a source of character, gardens give an area an identity of its own within the larger urban context and thereby establish a strong sense of place. In this project, the concept of garden as a working park is well-suited to the site. It gives the site an identity that is compatible with its existing character and offers an interesting alternative to the character of other areas in the downtown.

### GARDENS AS AN ACTIVITY FOCUS

A garden is not a passive park. Not only do gardens grow and change over time, but also their care requires considerable active

human participation. Gardens therefore generate human activity. Since people are naturally curious, especially when it comes to watching other people, this activity will draw attention to itself and may in turn generate even more activity.

## GARDENS AS AN OASIS

Gardens provide visual relief, physical relief, and psychological relief from the uncompromising hardness of the urban environment and the unrelenting stresses of urban life. In addition to dramatically affecting the urban microclimate, gardens bring a quality of gentleness that softens and humanizes the city. For passers-by, they provide a place to stop and daydream, to sit and relax, and to watch others. For the residents and other participants, they provide a place to escape from the everyday routine of the office, a place to work, and a place to create something with their own hands and imaginations.

## GARDENS AS A VEHICLE FOR SOCIAL INTERACTION

Because gardens are places where people enjoy working together as much as they enjoy watching each other work, gardens foster a non-threatening kind of social contact. As a natural

topic of conversation among the residents, the neighbors, and the public onlookers, gardens provide an effective vehicle for people to converse with and to meet other people. Not only can the gardens act as a common bond among residents and between residents and non resident participants, they can also enhance the interrelationship between the private world of the residents and the public realm of the downtown.

## GARDENS AS A WAY FOR RESIDENTS TO BELONG

As the possibility for individuals to build and/or own their own homes declines, the opportunity for man to express himself in the process of dwelling also decreases. Speculative housing, mass housing, and dense urban housing are often justifiably criticized for their faceless anonymity. No matter how carefully housing design may strive to suit the aesthetic and functional needs of the users, the repetitious and impersonal quality of many housing projects can leave the residents feeling apathetic or even negatively about the place they call "home".

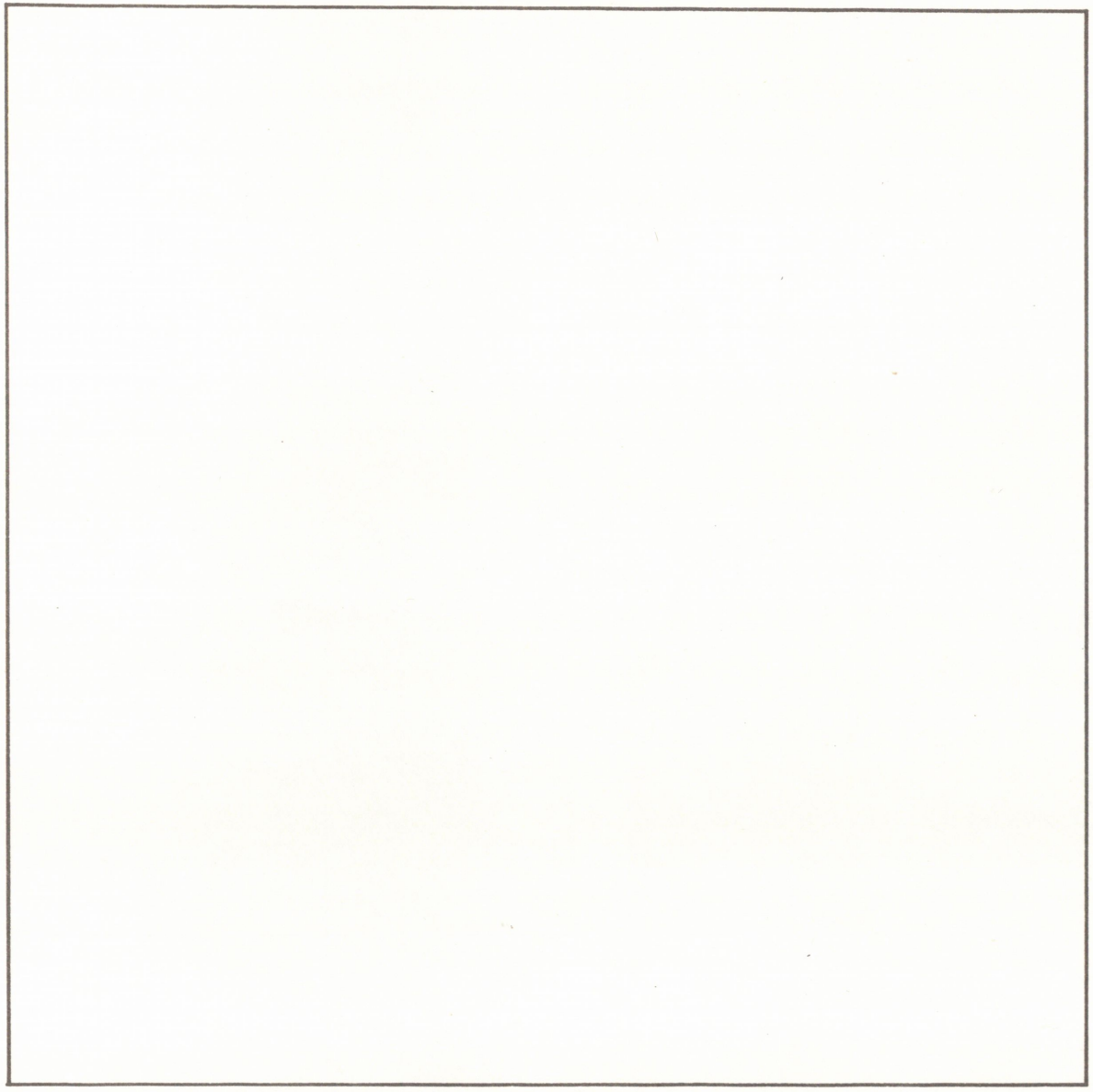
The process of dwelling implies on-going participation in the building of the residence and in its evolution over time. This

process is normally restricted to the owner of the property. In fact, unless housing is developed with specific social intent, most residential developments discourage or forbid resident alteration of or participation in the built environment. Gardens, while they do not directly change the built structure of the dwelling per se, can dramatically affect the architectural character of the residence. In this way, gardens give the resident an opportunity to "belong". The resident may or may not own the property legally, but he can "own" it through his participation in its development and evolution over time.

GARDENS AS A MEANS OF SELF-SUPPORT

In most instances urban gardens are grown for pleasure. However, it is possible to grow enough vegetables and fruits in a small space to supplement grocery store purchases. With special provision for growing spaces in and around the dwellings and community facilities, enough food could be grown, in fact, to not only feed one's own family but also to sell to the general public. The site area could quite naturally develop as the location of a regularly scheduled neighborhood farmers' market. The gardens,

then, could benefit the residents and other participants in a very real way by lowering their grocery bills or even supplementing their incomes.

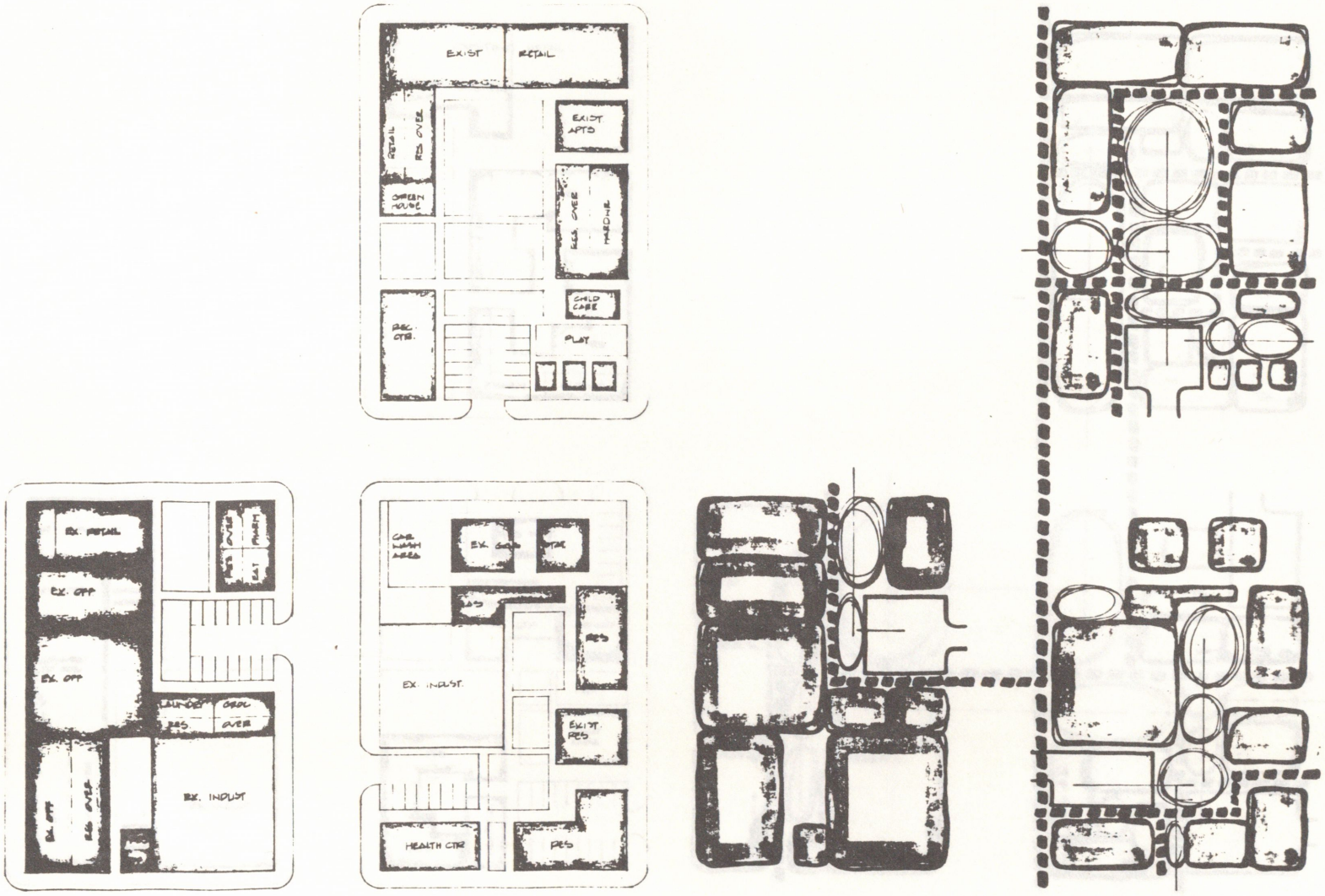


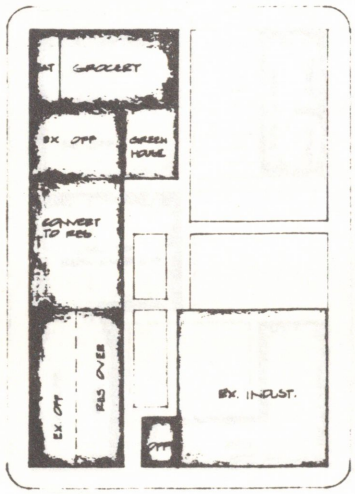
# ALTERNATE SITE SCHEMES

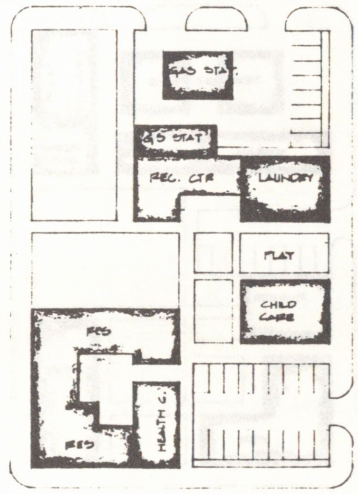
Developing an effective master plan for the 3 block site involves the consideration of the degree to which the existing site is to be altered, the manner in which it is to be altered, and the qualitative impact any proposed changes may have on the site, its residents and its surroundings. Several different site schemes are outlined here in order to determine and evaluate the possible alternatives to site development. These alternatives address the following issues:

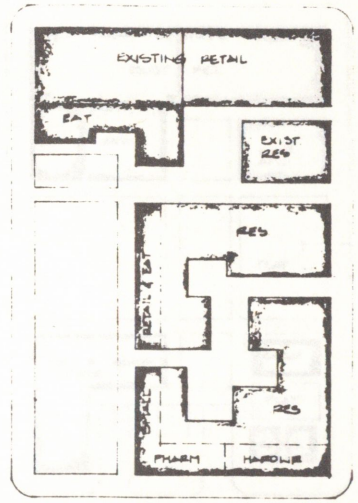
- -the acceptance, removal, or renovation and reuse of existing structures
- -the acceptance, removal, or reincorporation of existing uses
- -the integration of new structures and new uses with the old
- -the structural reconfiguration of the site within the neighborhood context
- -the spatial redefinition of the site within the neighborhood context
- -the functional relationships of uses on the site and within the neighborhood context
- -the restructuring of city streets and the accommodation of the car
- -the outward or inward focus of the project and the interrelationship of public and private space

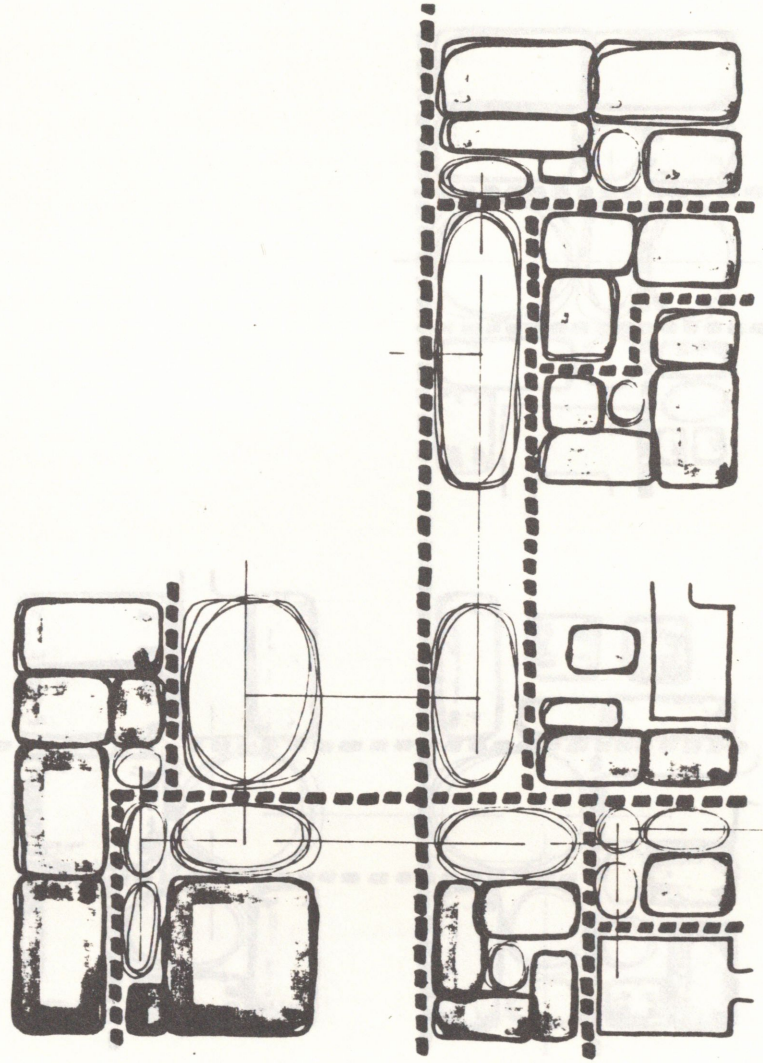
Included below are 7 different site schemes. Each consists of 2 parts: a) the scheme, and b) the conceptual diagrammatic interpretation of the scheme. They are presented in progressive order from the scheme which is least disruptive of the existing site to that which proposes the most dramatic changes.

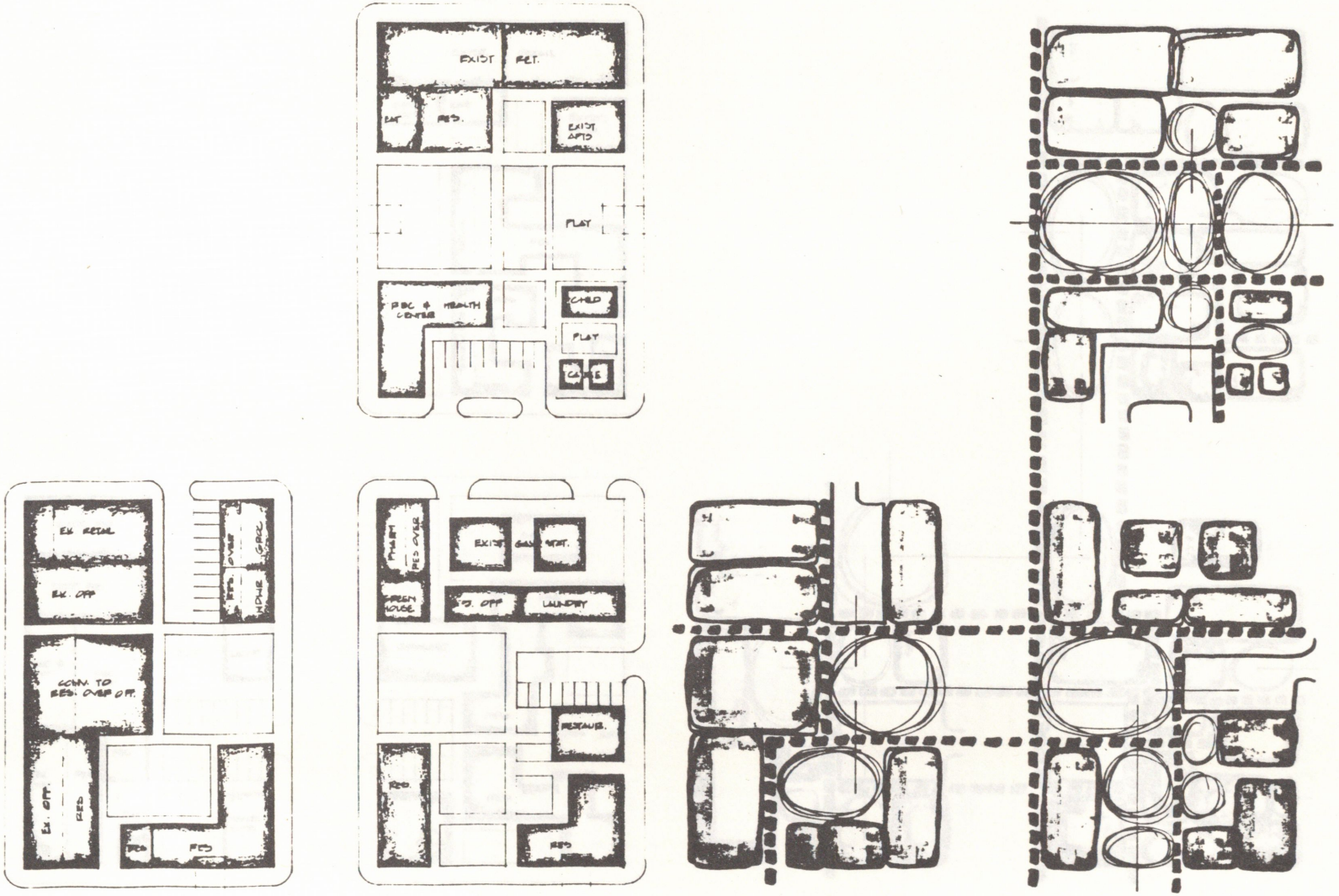

EXIST
RETAIL
EXIST APTS
RES OVER
MASONIC
CHILD CARE
PLAY
REC CTR.
EX. RETAIL
EX. OFF
EX. OFF
EX. INDUST
EX. INDUST.
EXIST RES
HEALTH CTR
RES

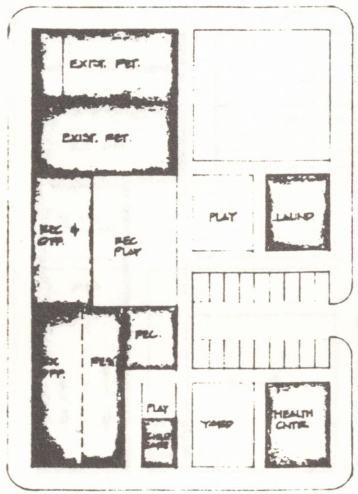

GROCERY
EX OFF
GREEN HOUSE
CONVERT TO RES
EX OFF
RES OVER
EX. INDUST.

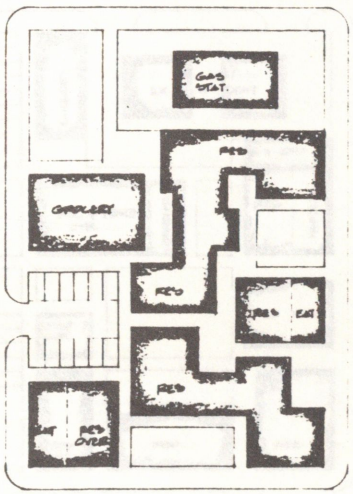

GAS STAT
GAS STAT
REC. CTR
LAUNDRY
PLAY
CHILD CARE
RES
RES
HEALTH

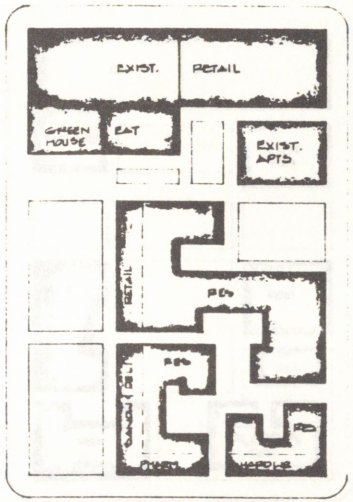

EXISTING RETAIL
EAT
EXIST RES
RES
RETAIL / EAT
RES
PHARM
HARDWR

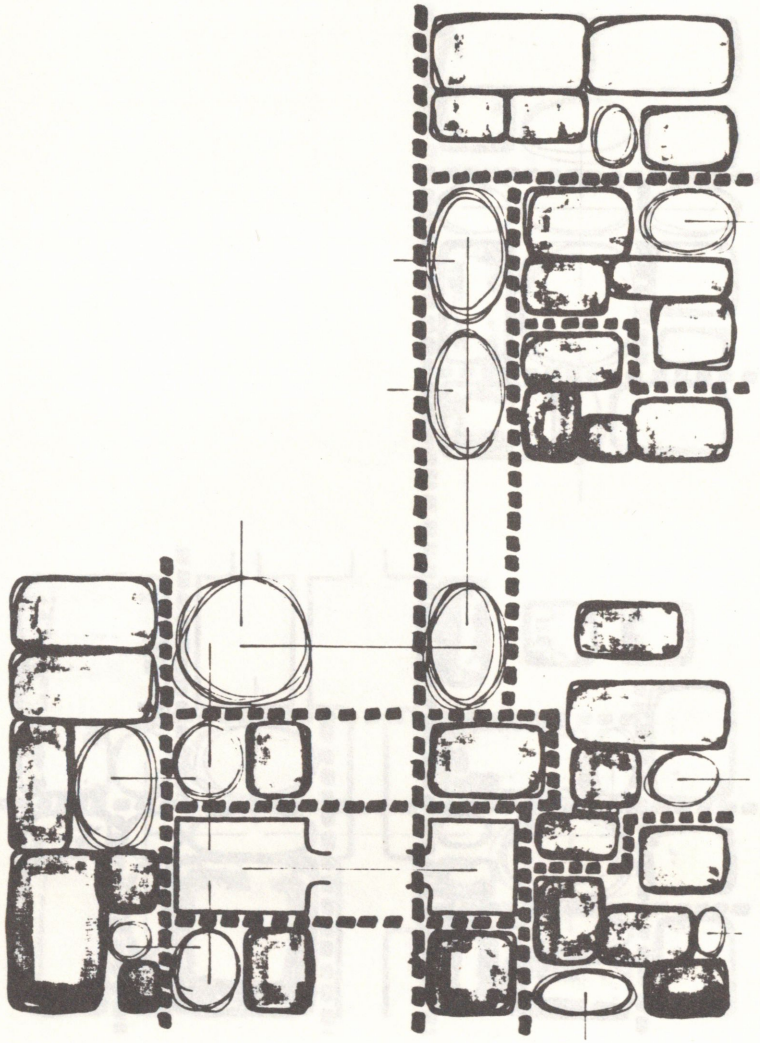


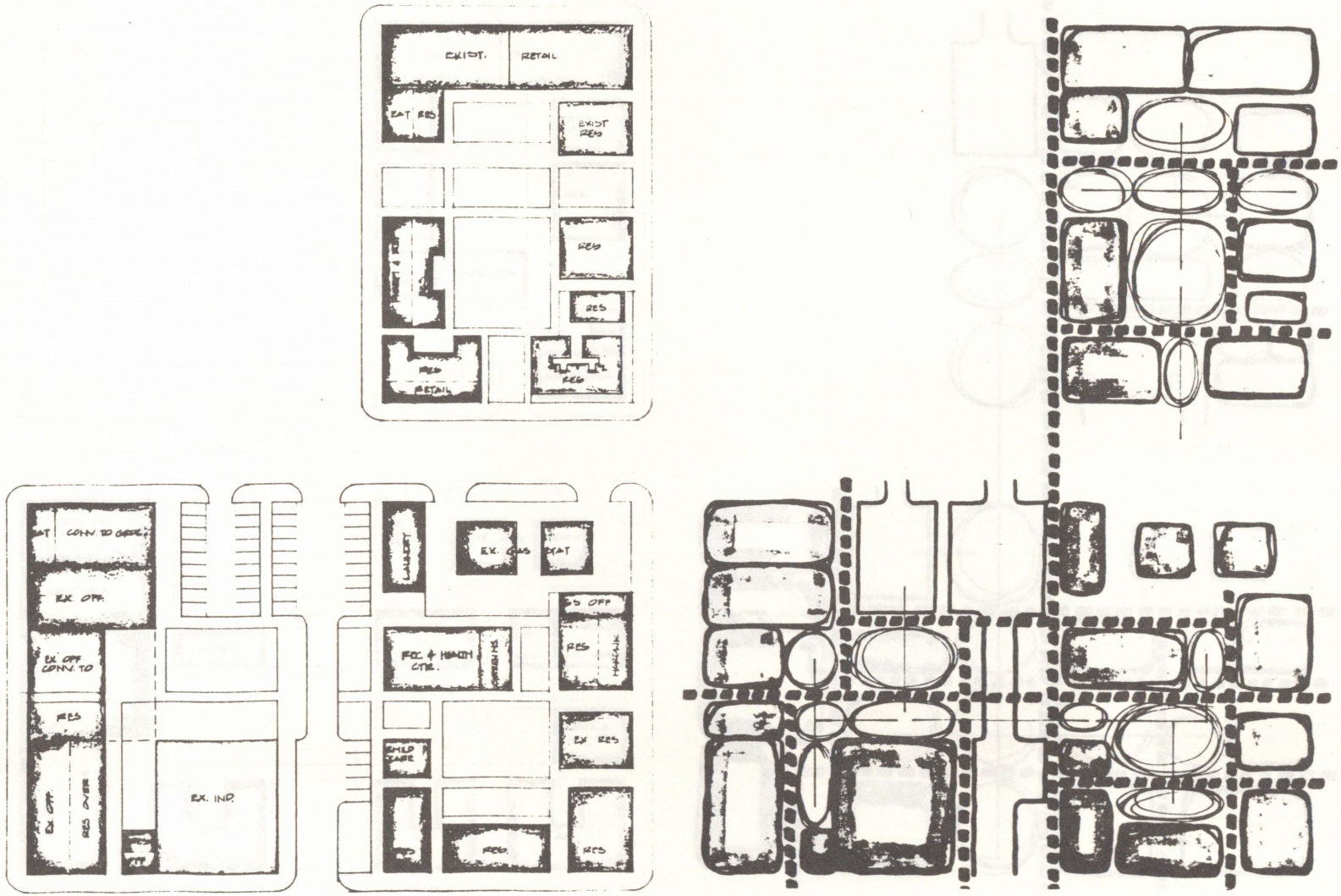

EXIST
PET.
EXIST APTS
PLAY
PUBLIC HEALTH CENTER
CHILD
PLAY
EX. RETAIL
EX. OFF
COMM. TO RES. OVER OFF.
EX. OFF.
RES.
RES.
RES.
RES. OVER
GREEN HOUSE
EXIST
EX. OFF
LAUNDRY
RETAILS
RES

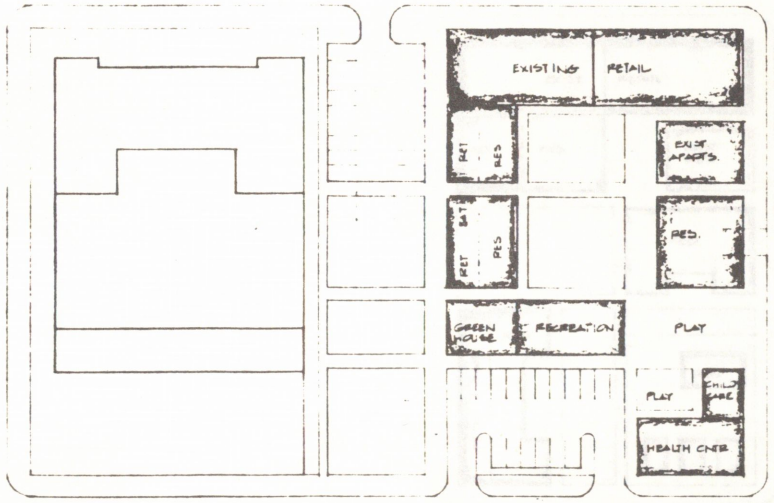

EXIST. PET.
EXIST. PET.
REC. GYM
REC. PLAY
PLAY
LAUND
REC.
PLAY
YARD
HEALTH CNTR.

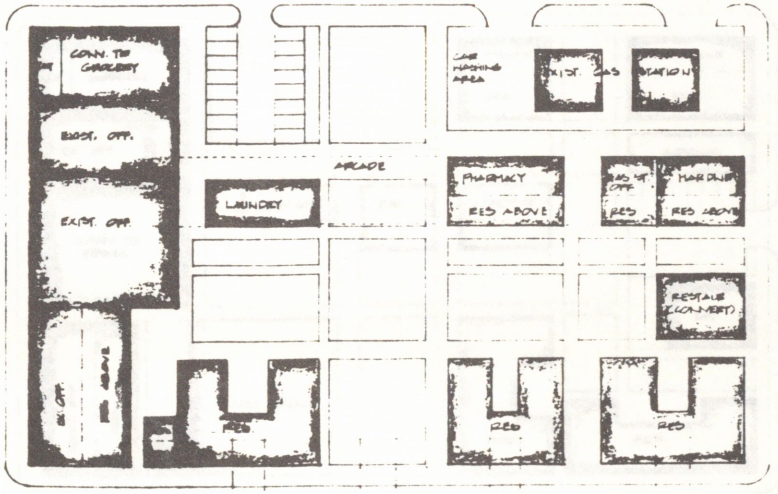

GAS STAT.
GARAGE
REC OVER

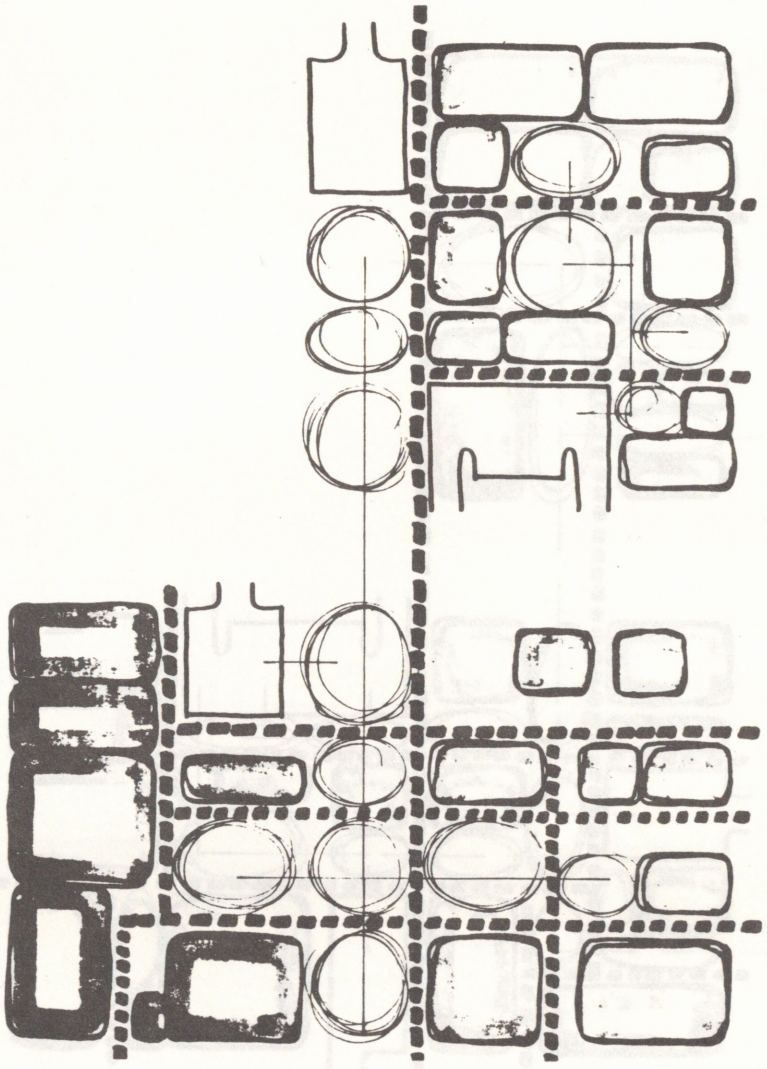

EXIST.
RETAIL
GREEN HOUSE
EAT
EXIST. APTS
RETAIL
REC

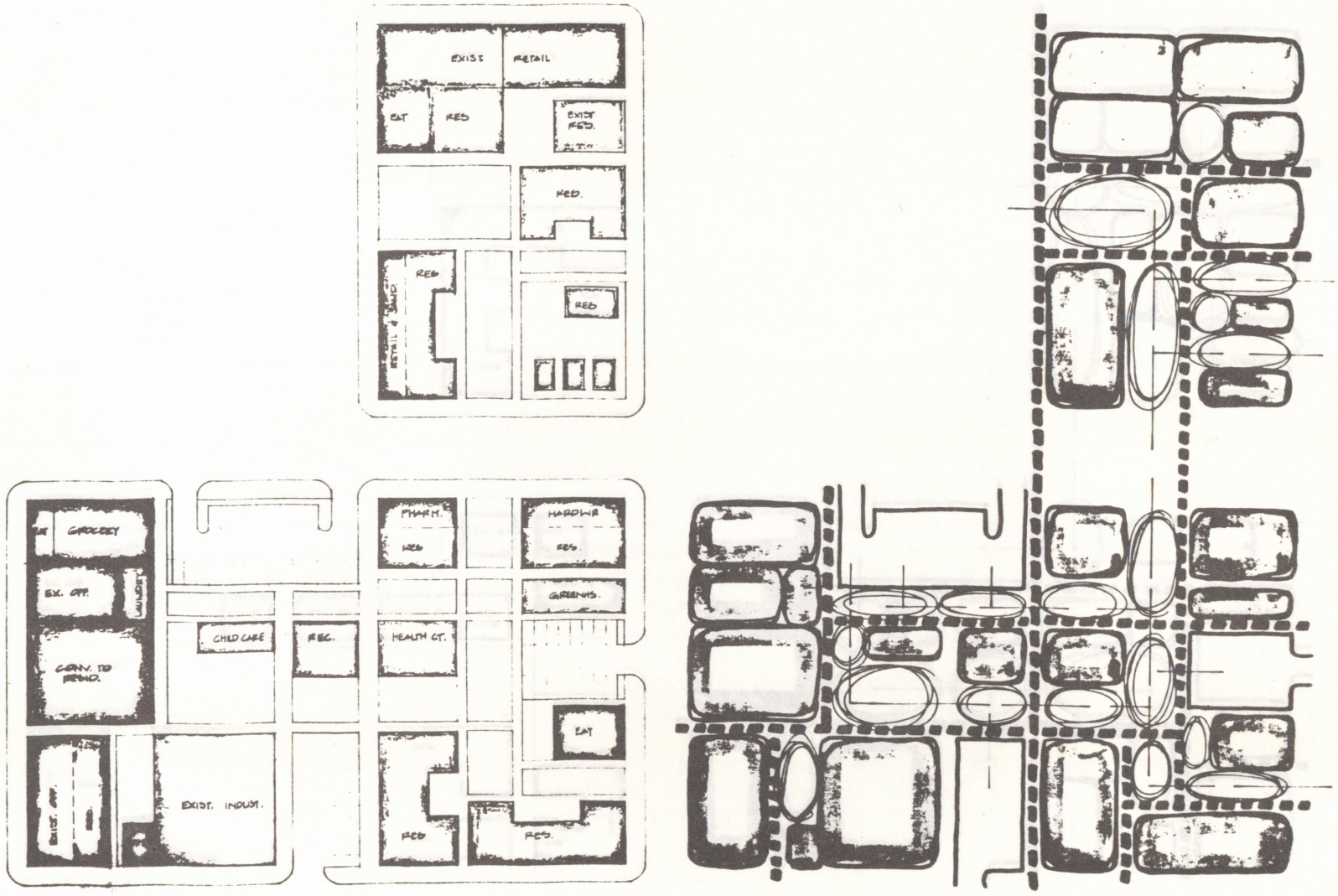



EXIST.
RETAIL
EAT
RES
EXIST RES
RES
RES
RES
RETAIL
RES
EAT
CONV TO OFFICE
EX. OFF.
EX. OFF CONV. TO
RES
EX. OFF
RES OVER
EX. IND.
EX. GAS
EAT
EX. OFF
FOOD & HEALTH CTR.
RES
EX. RES
CHILD CARE
RES
RES


EXISTING
RETAIL
EXIST APARTS.
RES.
GREEN HOUSE
RECREATION
PLAY
PLAY
HEALTH CNTR


CONN. TO GARDEN
EXIST. OFF.
ARCADE
LAUNDRY
PHARMACY
RES ABOVE
RESTAUR (CONVERT)
RES
RES




EXIST
RETAIL
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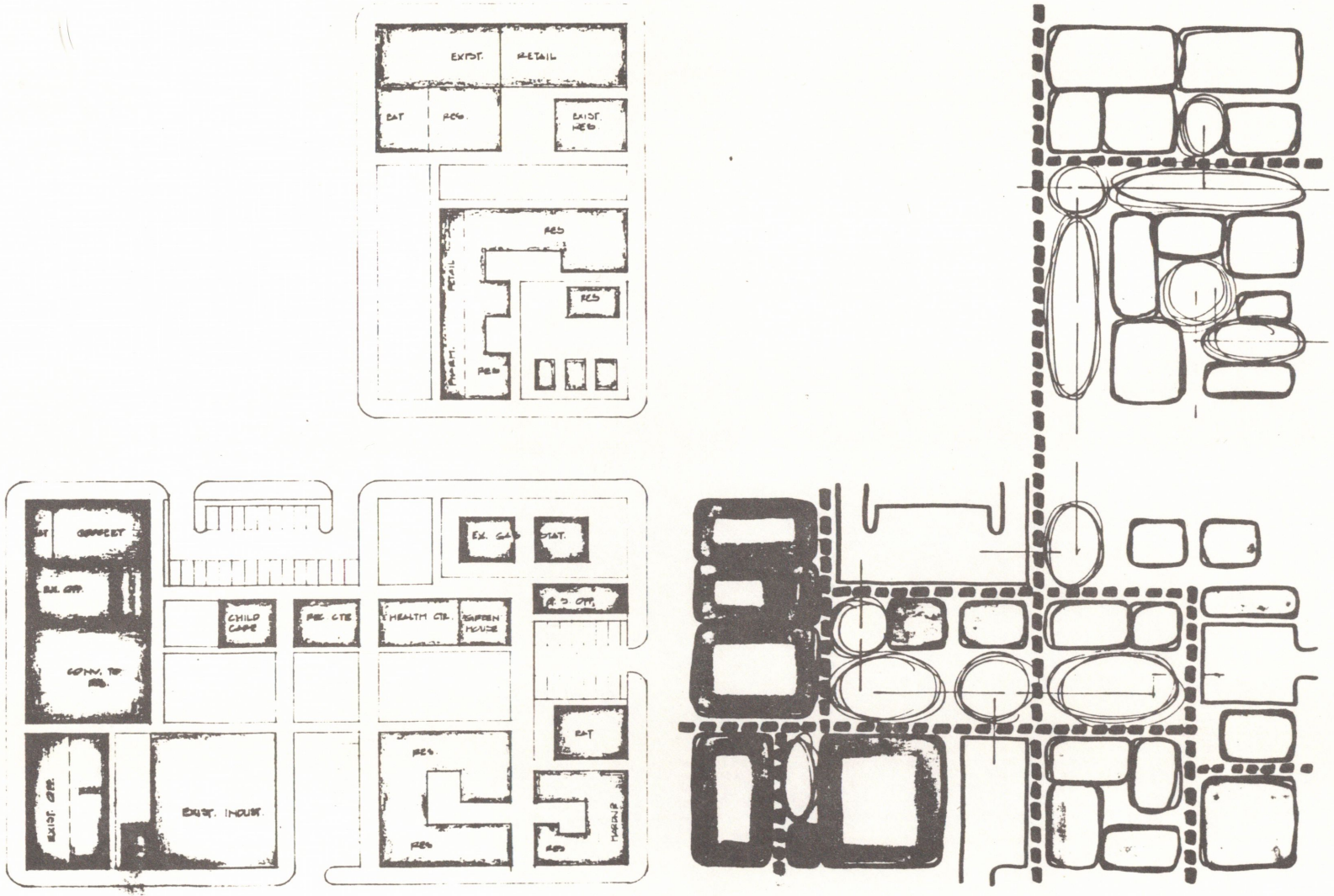
RES
EXIST RES.
RES.
RES
RETAIL & SIMILAR
RES
RES
GROCERY
EX. OFF.
CONV. TO RESID.
CHILD CARE
REC.
PHARM.
RES
HEALTH CT.
HARDWR
RES.
GREENHS.
EAT
EXIST. APT.
EXIST. INDUST.
RES
RES.


EXIST.
RETAIL
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RES.
EXIST. RES.
RES
RETAIL
RES
RES
EXIST. OFF.
CHILD CARE
PRE. CTR
HEALTH CTR.
GARDEN HOUSE
EX. GAS
STAT.
EXIST. INDUST.
EAT
RES
RES
MARINA

Evaluation of the various site schemes reveals some approaches to be preferable to others. The following conclusions regarding the site's development will serve as guidelines for the final site design.

-Existing structures will be saved where possible in order to retain a degree of familiarity and to minimize the displacement of existing uses.

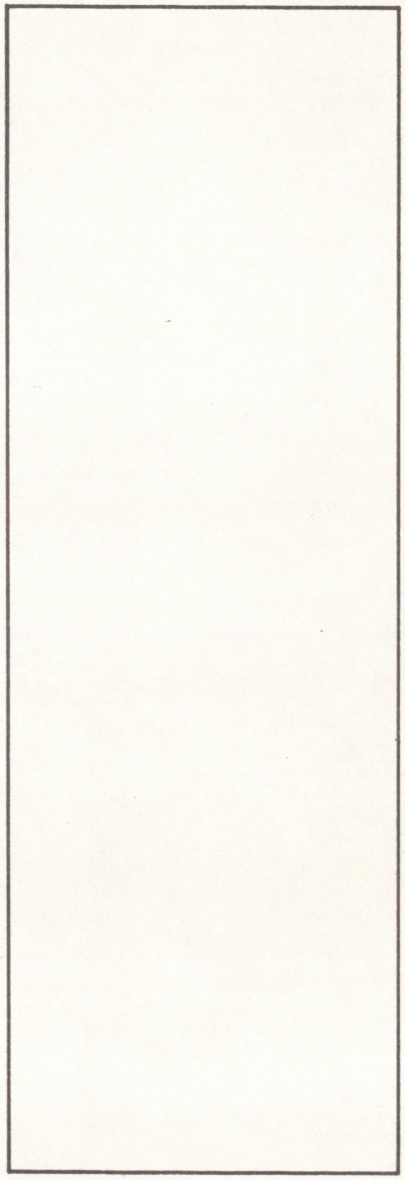
-Uses whose functions overlap or are closely related, such as the community facilities, will be grouped together in a central location. Residential uses will be integrated with commercial.

-Public open spaces and garden areas will be grouped at the common corners of the 3 block site so as to establish a strong character of place and to serve as an area of transition between the public realm of the downtown, including adjacent civic buildings, and the more private areas of residential use.

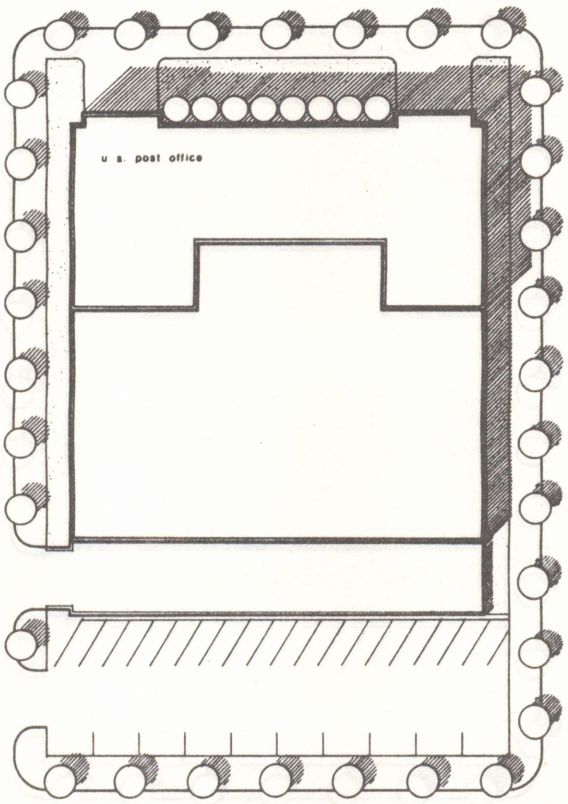
-Site edges will be clearly defined, particularly at the outside corners of the 3 block area.

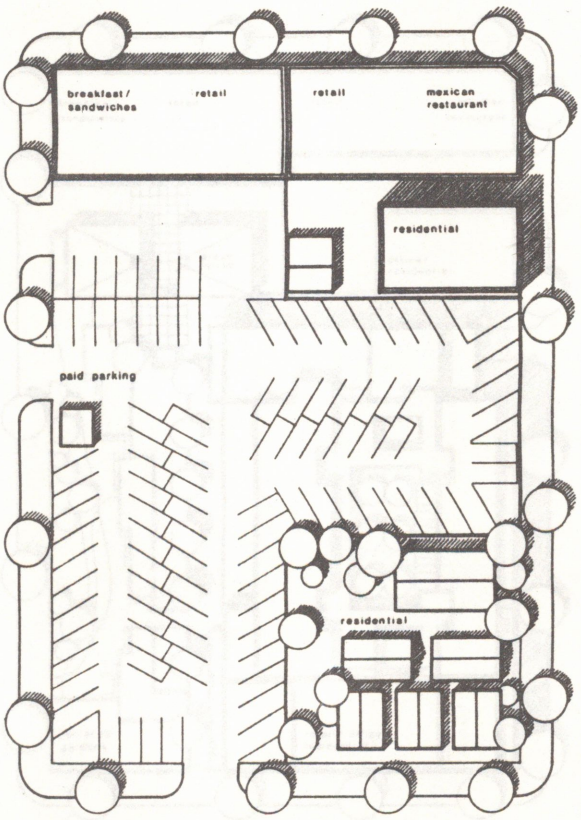
-Existing traffic patterns will not be interrupted. Alterations to city streets between blocks, if any, will be restricted to the narrowing of 9th Street by one lane of traffic.

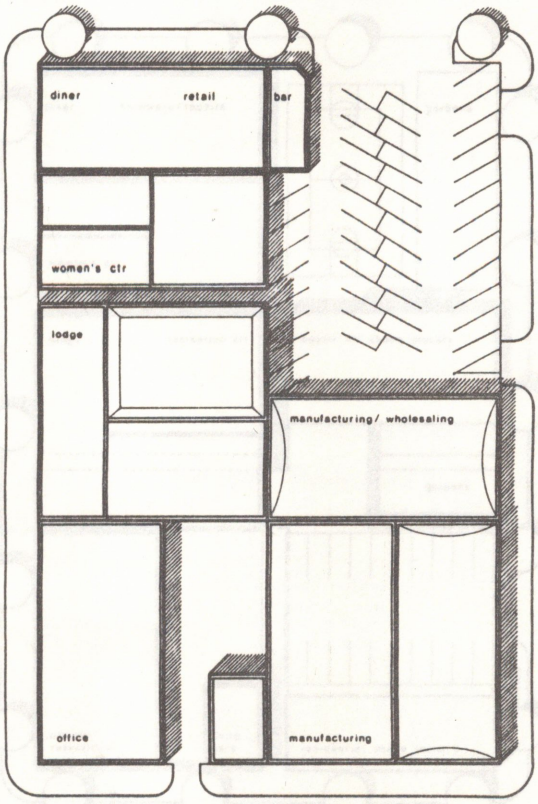
-Outward focus will be stressed over inward focus. The project will strive to interact with the existing neighborhood rather than to retreat into isolation.

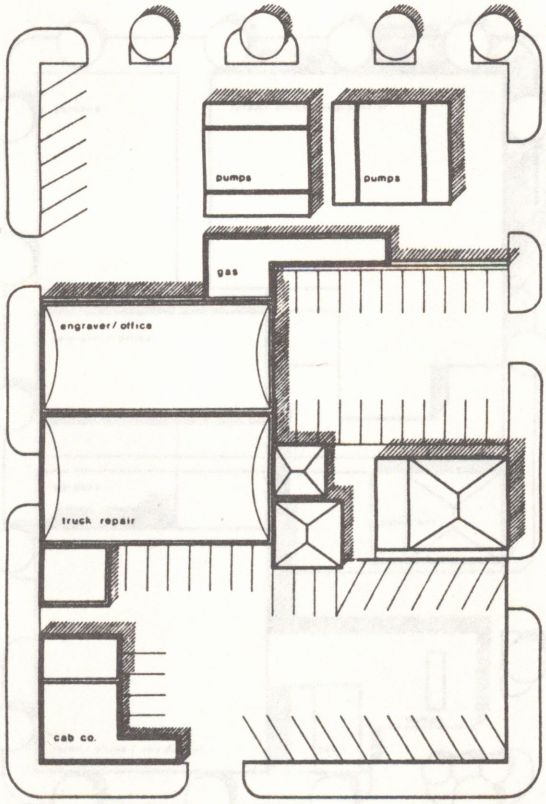


SOLUTION



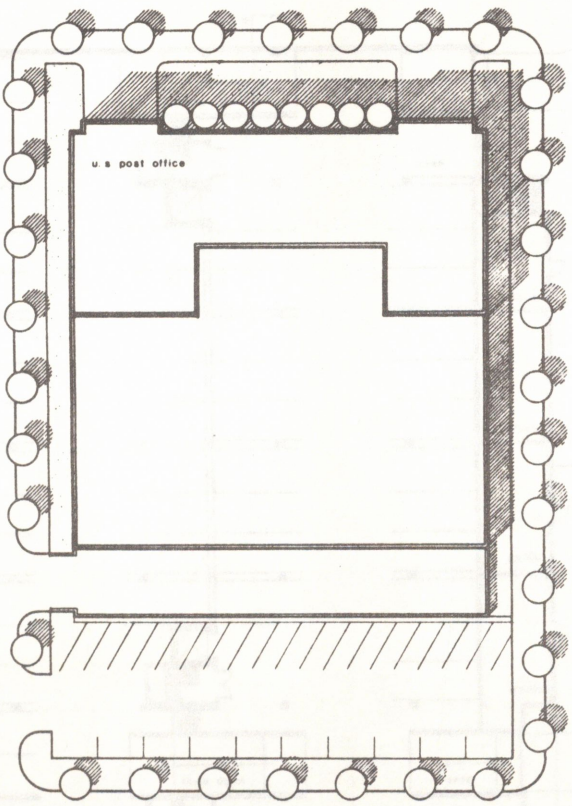



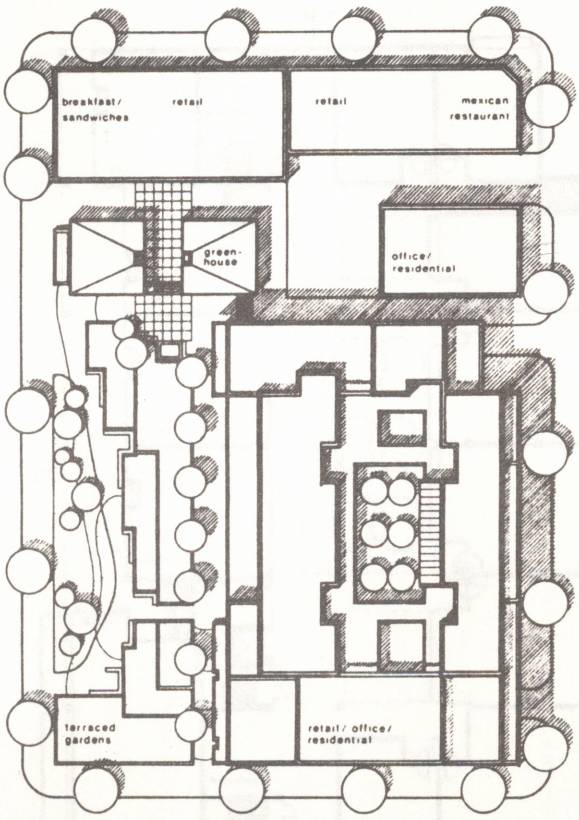



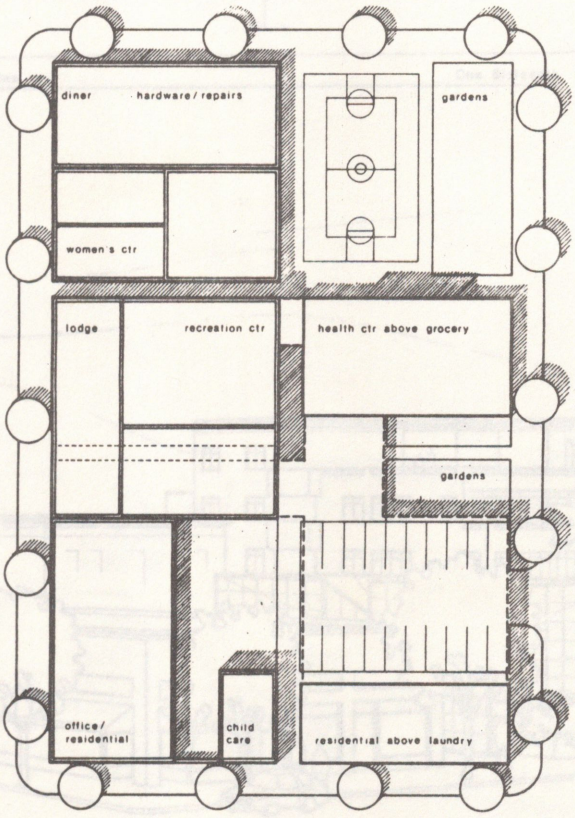



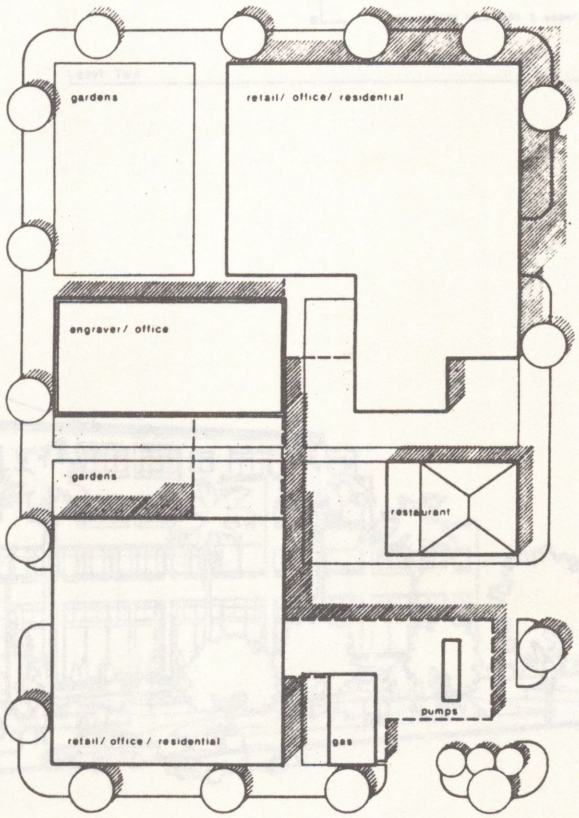

Existing Site

na One Thirtieth

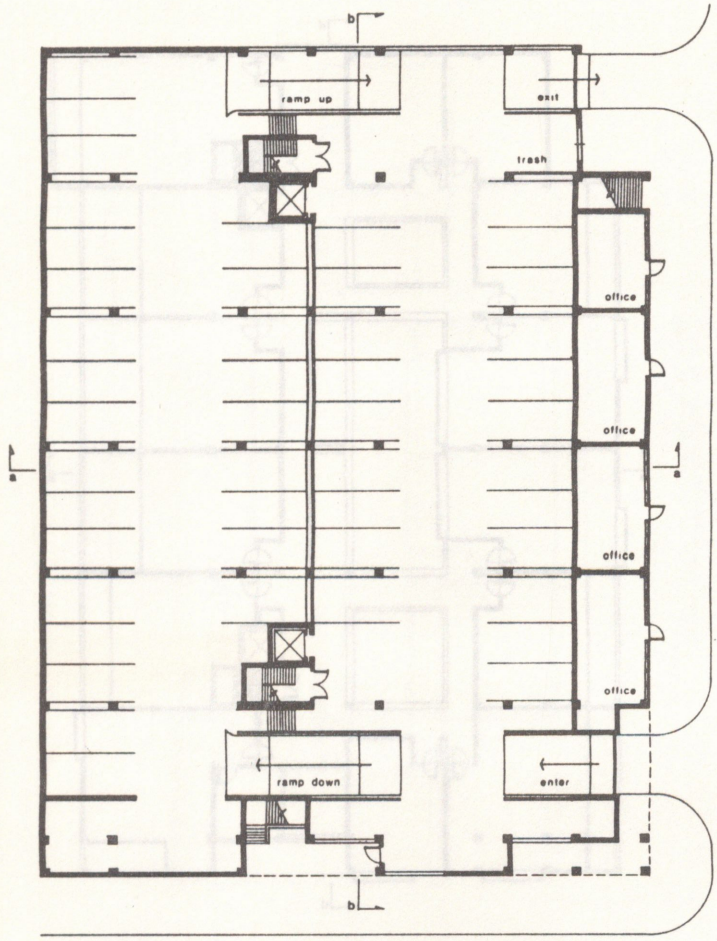


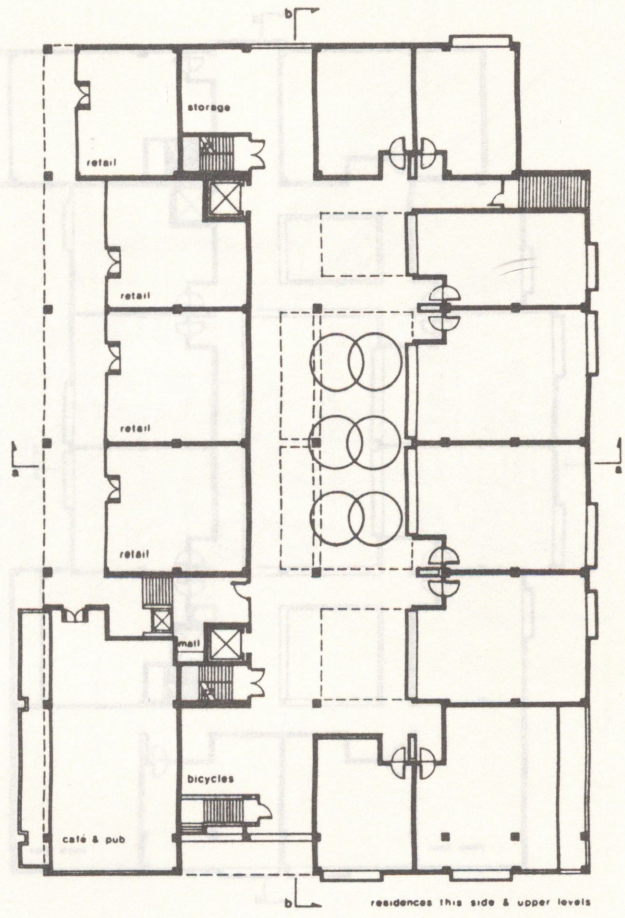




Proposed Site




Level One

One Sixteenth

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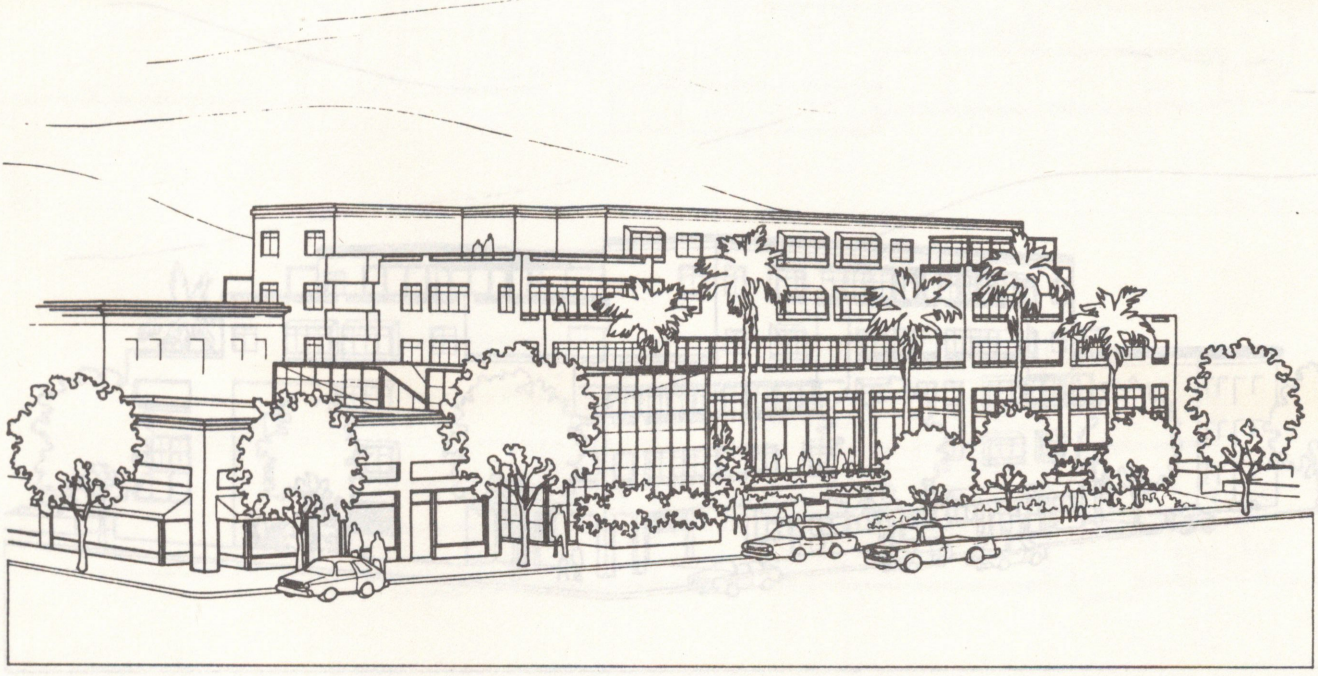

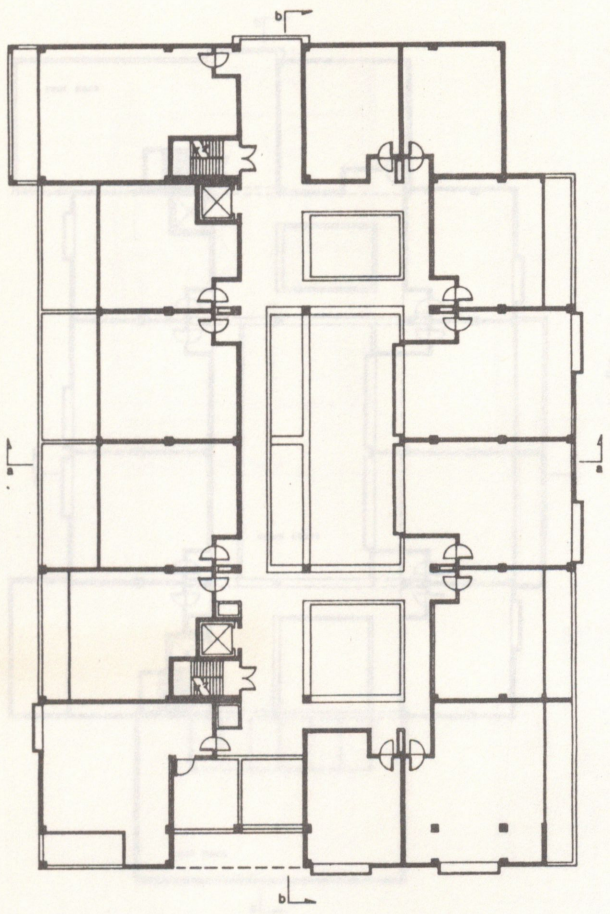

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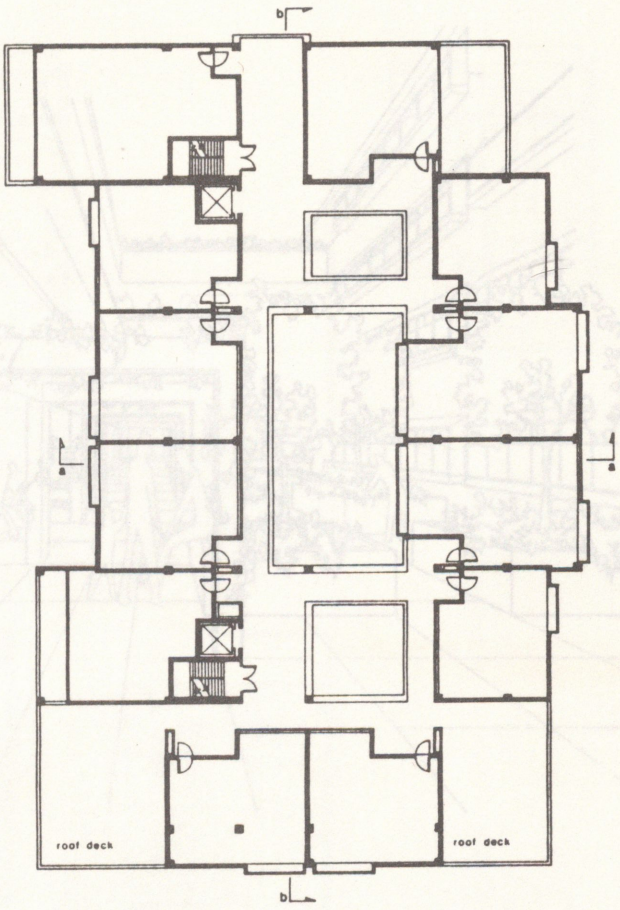


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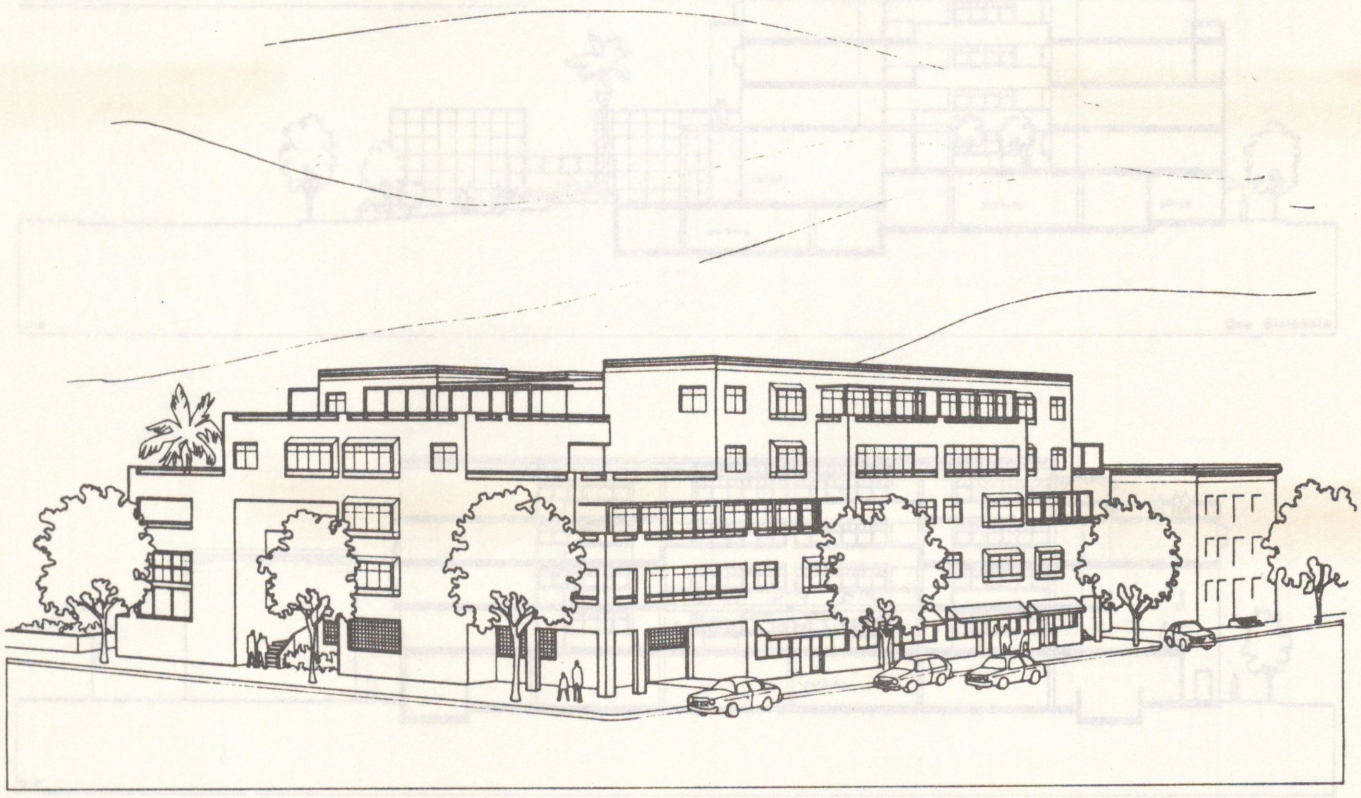

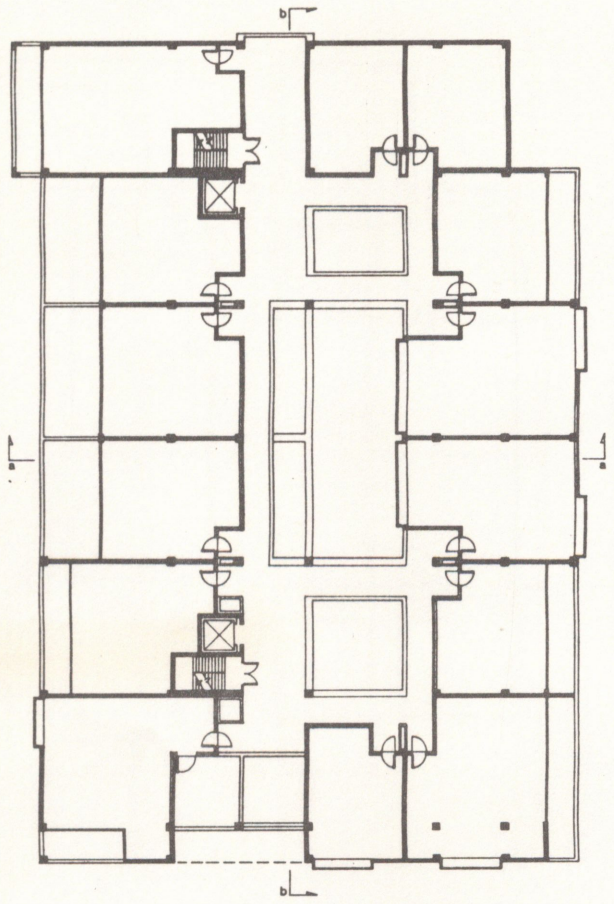

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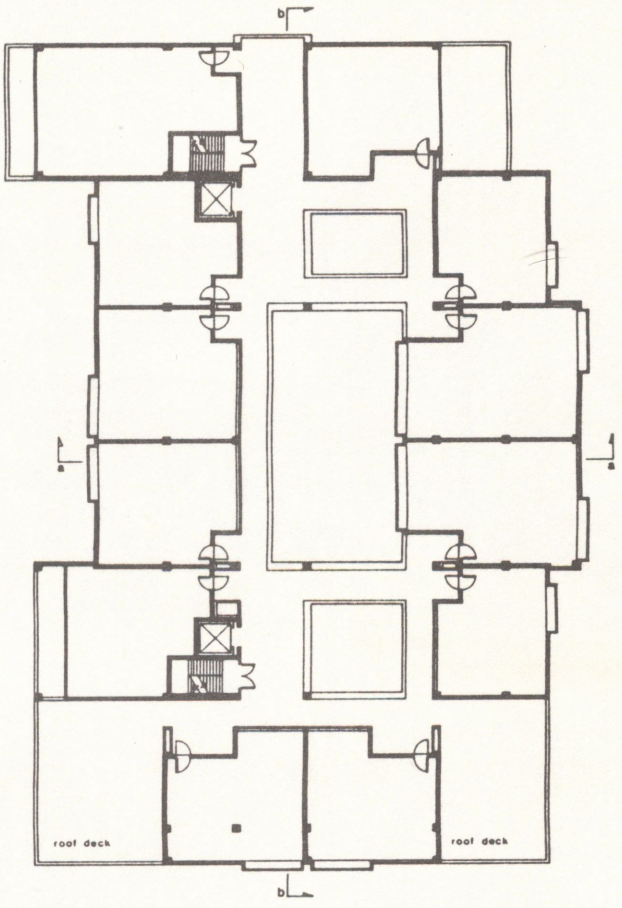


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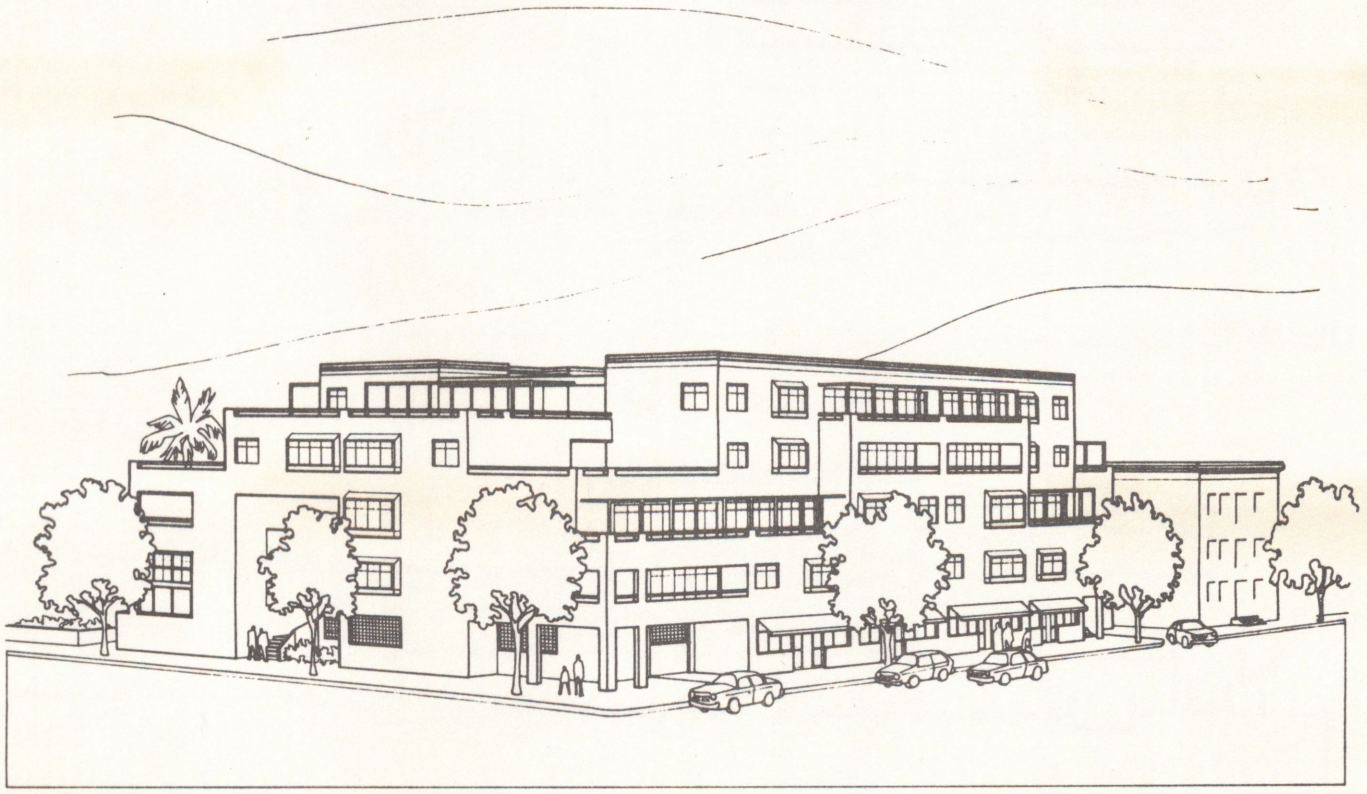

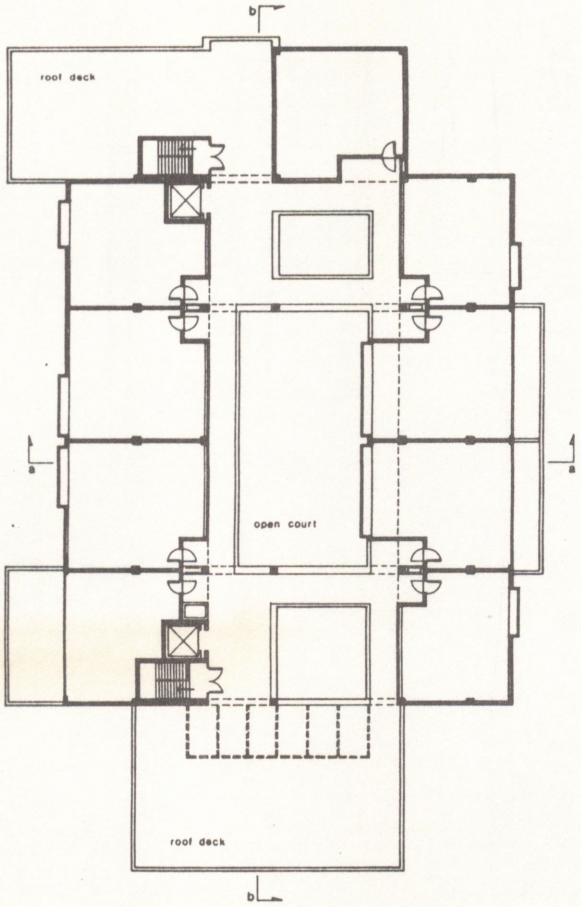


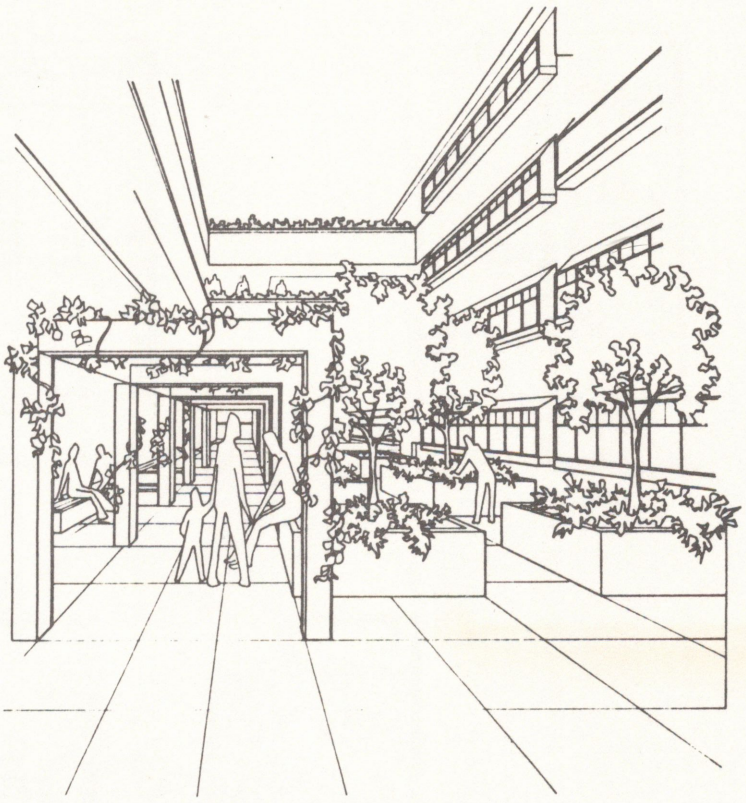

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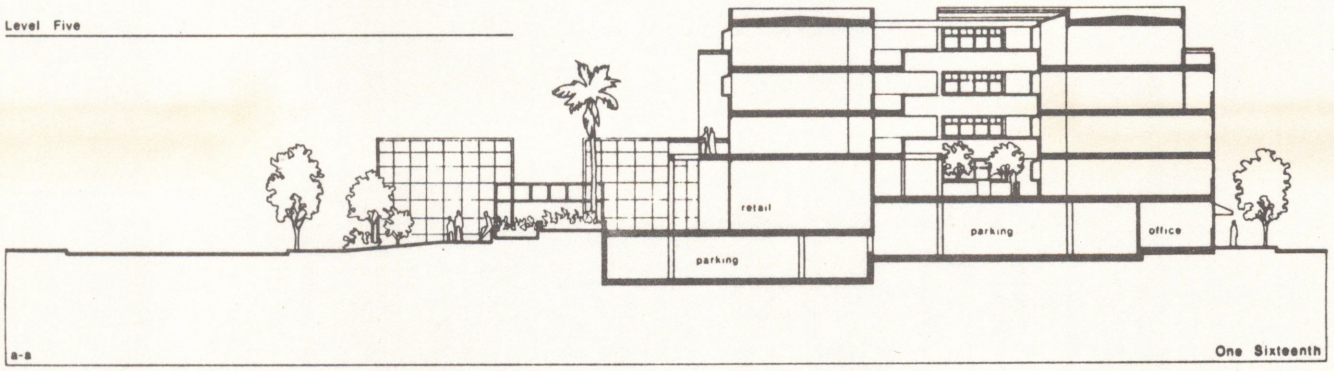
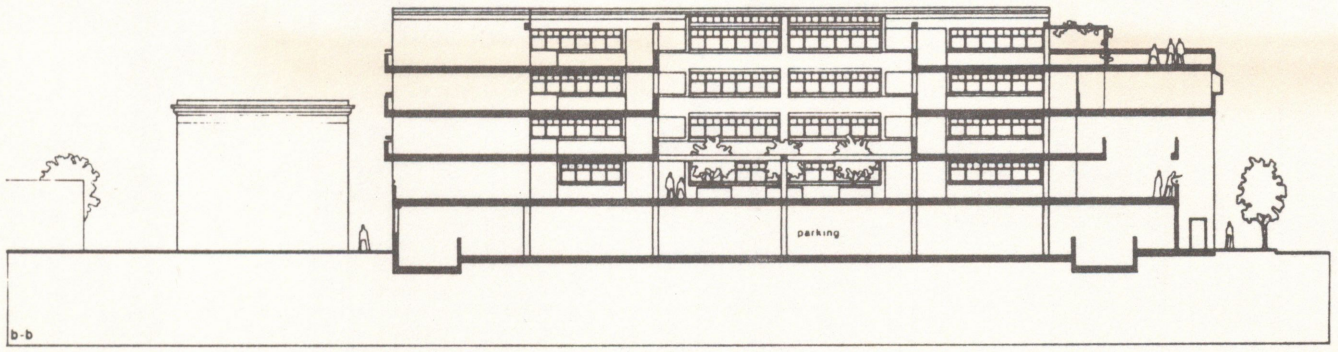
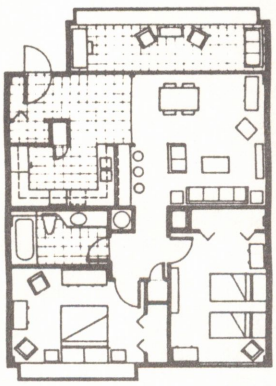
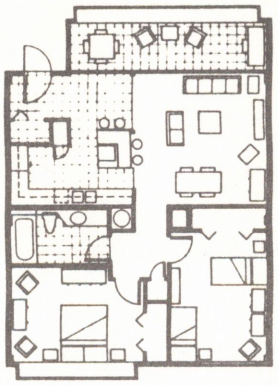



One Sixteenth





Two Bedroom Residence



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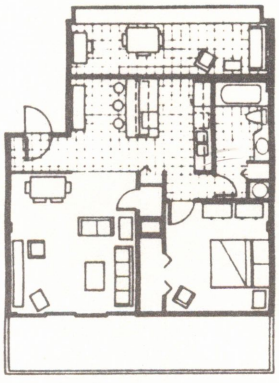
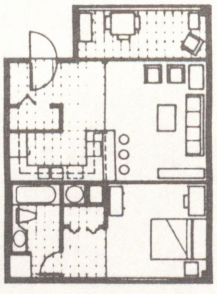
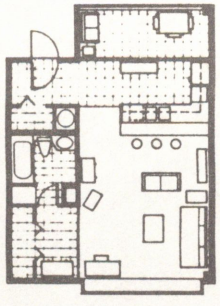
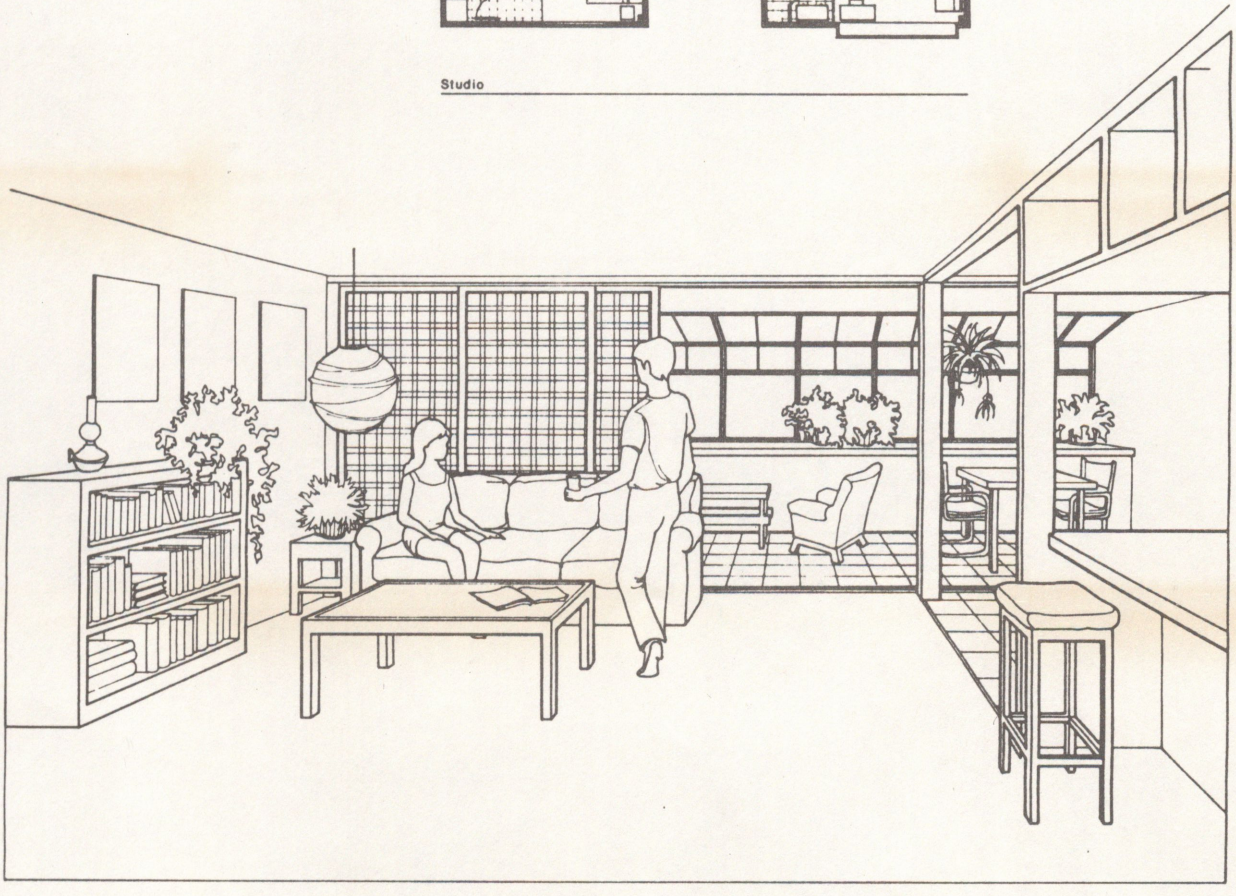


One Bedroom





Studio



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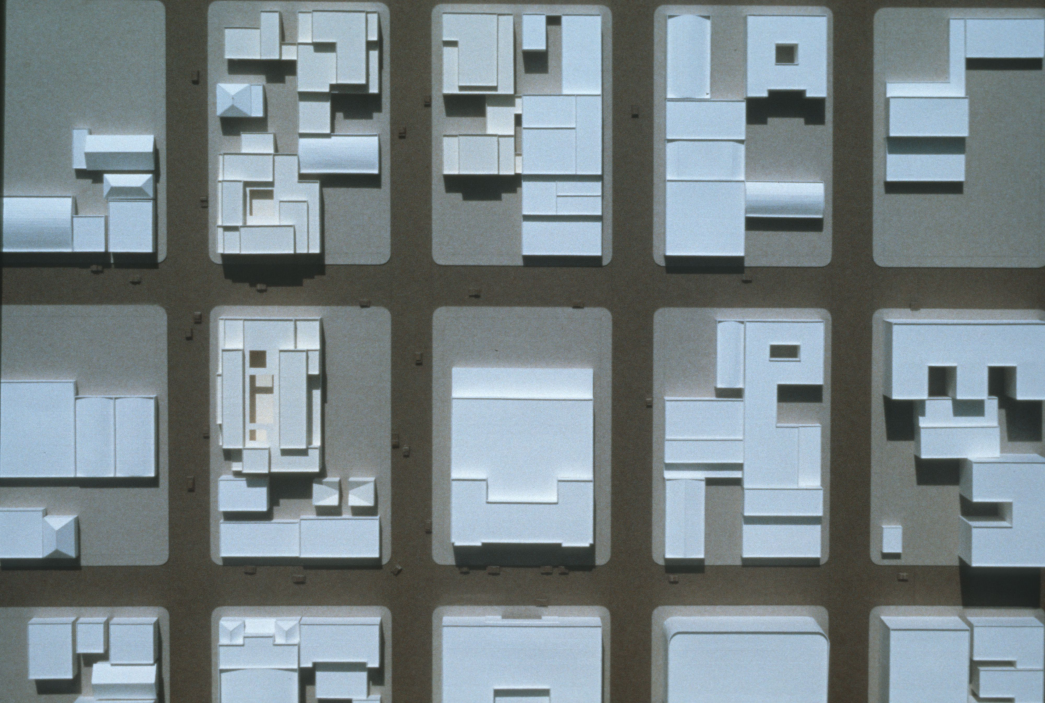















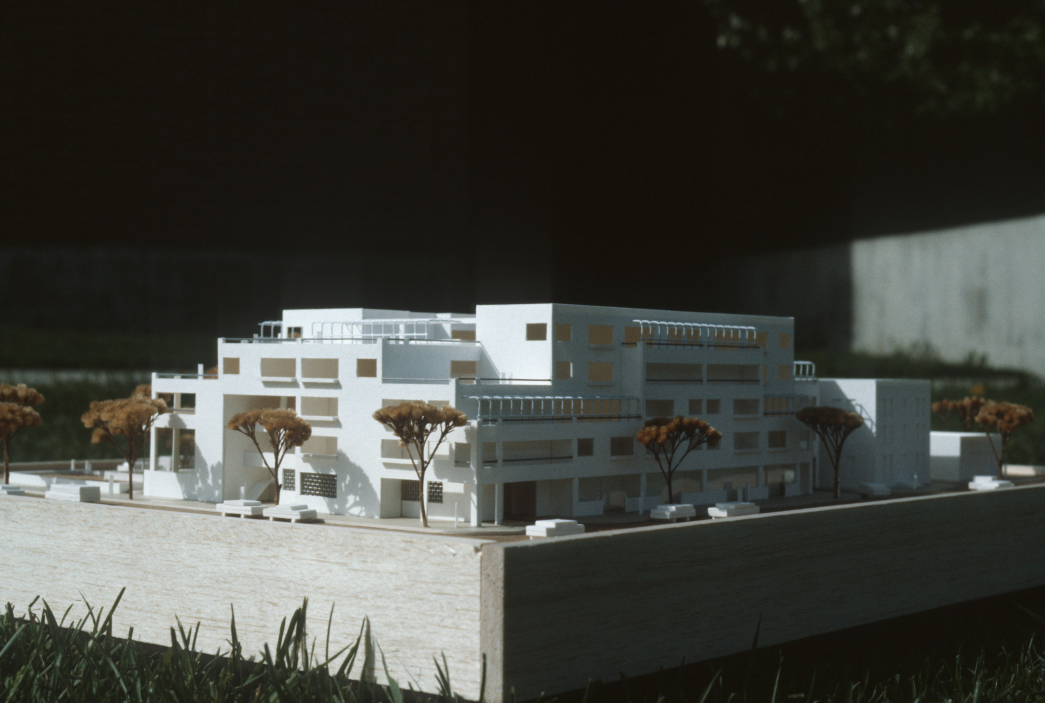





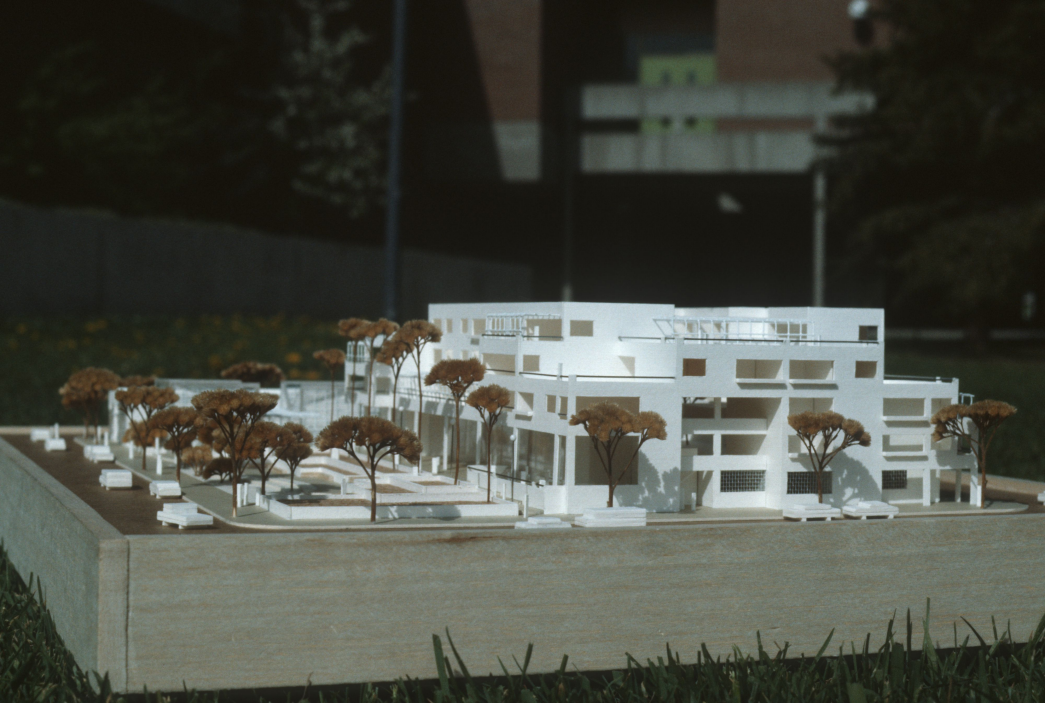







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