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COMMUNITY & IDENTITY
An Art Center for Whitefish, Montana
by
BRET ALLAN DRAGER

A professional paper submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

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To my wife, friends and family.
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This project is an exploration into community and identity, within the community I grew up in. The project manifests itself in the form of a community art center located in Whitefish, Montana. This is a very beautiful and unspoiled part of the world and it had a most profound influence on my life. The wonder and richness of life in a small town can be a rewarding experience from which to base future travels and experiences.

Whitefish is a city of approximately 7,000 people located about 13 miles north of Kalispell in Northwestern Montana. Today Whitefish is a fast growing community that relies on the tourist recreation trade as its main industry. The influx of tourists and part and full time residents has brought many changes to this once sleepy railroad community. All year long there is a steady flow of foreigners taking in the recreational opportunities the area has to offer. Constant grumblings are heard from the townspeople to the effect that they can't believe what's happening to their town. No longer can you walk down the street and recognize everyone who passes.

The tourist trade brings prosperity to Whitefish and at the same time brings anger from the established residents. A loss of community cohesion has been brought about by the many changes. Subdivisions push the city limits farther out each year, decentralizing the community. Everyone who comes to town wants their own little piece of paradise by the lake.

The loss of community feeling runs deep today, but Whitefish has always prided itself in being self-sufficient. If a community facility was needed, it was provided without outside help. Public institutions are a necessary part of small town life and the citizens have always recognized this.

Art centers are becoming a reality in many small towns across Montana as well as in the larger cities. The precedent for an art center in a city the size of Whitefish has been set by such communities as Livingston, Lewistown, Libby, Sidney, Chester and Red Lodge. The larger communities of Kalispell, Miles City, Great Falls, Billings, Missoula, Butte and Anaconda also have community art centers. The potential population from which an art center in Whitefish would be able to draw from is about 10-12,000 which is similar to Libby, Lewistown or Livingston, but will also include the addition of several thousand tourists throughout the year.

I chose to explore the design of an art center because it is an institution which is in its infancy today, much like the community library was around the turn of the century, and has the potential to be
just as important an institution in all towns as the library is today. The art center can be an important source of community pride and cohesiveness. A place where the arts can be promoted and appreciated by all.
"... Here it sits, a seemingly ordinary small town admittedly sited in a pleasant locality with a nice mountain lake at its doorstep but otherwise undistinguished. ... most of the people would rather live here than anywhere else in the world."

-- Dick Adams
Editor, Whitefish Pilot
from "Stump Town to Ski Town"
White settlers arrived at Whitefish Lake in 1890, about 40 years later than most of Montana. Indian bands frequently came through the area before this time but did not stay long periods of time. The early settlers recognized the possibilities for the area as a tourist mecca from the beginning. This proved to be an accurate premonition of things to come.

The Flathead valley was often called in early promotional advances "A Second Red River Valley", referring to the Red River in Texas which has an abundance of water, vegetation and fertile farm land. The valley is protected from the cold north winds by the Whitefish Range of the Rocky Mountains. The mountains that ring the valley trap warm clouds from the Pacific coast which drop precipitation. In the Flathead Valley one is struck by the dense forests of Pine, Fir, Tamarac, and Cedar interspersed with many acres of fertile farmland. The Flathead Valley is the only portion of Montana with a limitless water supply, provided by countless lakes, rivers and streams. Flathead Lake is the largest freshwater lake west of the Mississippi River at 35 miles long and 15 miles wide at its widest point.

The first settlement in the Whitefish area occurred at the south end of Whitefish Lake on both sides of the mouth of the Whitefish River. This community was called Ramsey, or sometimes Whitefish Lake settlement. Due to poor access to the area, growth of businesses was slow but soon all of the typical amenities of a small Western town would be set up. The first signs of community were seen in the form of hotels, a grocery store and post office, a saloon and pool hall and a few homes. These were all located close around the mouth of the river on the shores of the lake for easy access to the source of what drew them there.

In 1901 the Great Northern Railroad decided to change its main route from Kalispell to an easier route that went through the Whitefish area. The creation of a division point to be located next to the lake meant instant growth and prosperity to the tiny community. The railroad located its operation about three-fourths of a mile from the existing settlement which prompted the enterprising members of the town to move closer to the railroad's operation to take advantage of the increased traffic.

The new townsite prospered and was officially incorporated in 1903 as the city of Whitefish. The town of Ramsey continued to function at the mouth of the lake for a few years until pressure from competition at the new townsite forced businesses to move or close down. So for a while there were two towns at Whitefish divided by the mainline of the railroad and its huge operation. The only access was across the several lines of track. The existing viaduct was built in the 1930's, but until that time many public utilities had to be duplicated. Schools, churches,
stores (grocery) and fire protection had to be set up on both sides of the tracks. These all disappeared on the north side in the 50's and 60's and are beginning to reappear today as most of the growth is occurring there. The north side has always been the less developed part of town and has maintained a separate identity, aggrevated by the split caused by the railroad. Even today residents refer to the area north of the tracks as "Lakeside" though the idea of a separate town was more a physical one than real or even implied by the residents.

The Great Northern Railroad quickly became the reason for the town's existence and by 1910, 1,500 people called Whitefish home. By 1920, 3,000 people lived inside the city limits. Most families were tied to the railroad but some were actively involved in logging, commercial enterprises or in the tourist business. The population was to hover around 3,000 until the 1970's when growth accelerated as people discovered the recreational attributes of the town.

The railroad, now called Burlington Northern, plays a reduced and rapidly declining role in Whitefish today. The Burlington Northern is eliminating Whitefish as a division point and will use the town for changing crews and as an Amtrak stop only. The dismantling of an industry that created a town could be devastating, as we are seeing today in Anaconda with the Anaconda Smelter closing down. The town is destitute with all of its major work force out of work. This trickles down to the basic shopkeepers who now find no customers for their products. The town of Whitefish finds itself in a much better position than Anaconda because the railroad has been playing a much less significant role with the rapid growth of the tourist industry. Families that have been directly tied to the railroad will leave to find other work but they will be replaced as quickly as they leave by the new tourist oriented workforce. The changes will mean the community is not as diversified as it has been and more at the whim of the tourist industry.

The tourist industry got its base with the creation of Big Mountain Ski Resort, which began in the 1930's as a community project. Today the Big Mountain is the largest ski resort in Montana. The ski runs overlook the town and dominate the Whitefish skyline as a constant reminder of its growing dependence on Big Mountain. Whitefish stages a Winter Carnival, now in its twenty-second year, that has grown to some national prominance and draws 20-30,000 people into the community during its run. The winter brings all the trappings of a true ski town to Whitefish.

The summer recreation opportunities revolve around Whitefish Lake with boating, swimming and fishing. Two regattas are held each summer and attract national competition. Other recreation facilities include a 27-hole golf course and public tennis courts.

In the 1950's the community dreamed of getting a Frank Lloyd Wright designed building. In 1959 that dream was realized with the completion of a medical clinic designed by Frank Lloyd Wright. The building was to become a bank in 1964 and now stands empty, as the bank has moved to new quarters. The move was prompted by the enormous task of trying to design an addition to the original building that would overpower it and do it an injustice.
It appears Whitefish will survive the pullout of the railroad and the expansion of the tourist trades to prosper as one of Montana's more important destinations. A 1972 population study has predicted a population of 23,950 by 1997 with only 30% being year round residents. More current studies, which I have seen but don't have access to, have given very similar predictions. So it is apparent that much growth will continue in the future. It is hard to say if the increased growth will have a good effect on the fabric of the town, but there is still something cantankerously independent about Whitefish people that will hold the community together.1
The site which I have chosen for my project is located on Whitefish Lake at the mouth of the Whitefish River. The site and the areas around it have a decidedly residential makeup today, but this was not always so. This area began as the first townsite of Whitefish as explained in the previous section. All the trappings of the community were located here, with both businesses and residences located along the shores of the lake and river.

The only public access to the lake occurs adjacent to the site at the City Beach Park. This park is a 1,000 ft. long strip of land that has a beach, boat ramp, docks, swimming, diving and picnicking. The rest of the lake has long been divided into single-family lots with no opportunity for public use.

Many changes have come to this area of town over the years. When the commercial enterprises moved to the new townsite, in the early 1900's, a logging company moved in. They built a dam across the mouth of the river to regulate the lake level and raised it by eight feet. This dam was blown up by angry townspeople when the logging operation moved out of town. There was a bridge across the mouth for a short time also. This connected Woodland Avenue with the other side. There is no information as to its demise.

The first signs of the recreation industry occurred in 1906 in the form of a sight-seeing boat that operated from City Beach Park. This boat called the "Butte", took groups on a tour of the lake which stopped at the north end of the lake at Point of Pines Pavilion and culminated back at City Beach Park. This was to last only a few years, when private recreation pursuits took over.

The City Beach Park was set up in the early 1900's by purchasing some prime lakefront property from several early residents. At the time it was set up the town was concentrated south of the railroad and the north side was on the fringe of the community. The possibility of this area being a central community focus has grown with the extension of the city limits. The city beach is now located more centrally within the town. It could be speculated, quite accurately from the history of the early growth, that if the railroad had not come through the Whitefish area, the city beach area would have been the commercial core of the town and residences would have been located farther away from the lake. The net effect would be greater access physically and visually for the public than can be seen today. Major public buildings would have been located here such as the city hall, library, etc., along with the commercial operations.
If the town had had more foresight early in its history this area would have taken on decidedly different characteristics than it has today. The location of my project has many historical precedents for locating here but the task would have been easier if a coherent plan had been thought about in the early years.
"Eventually, all things merge into one and a river runs through it. The river was cut by the world's great flood and runs over the rocks from the basement of time. On some of the rocks are timeless raindrops. Under the rocks are the words and some of the words are theirs. I am haunted by waters."

-- Norman Maclean
A River Runs Through It
In my examination of the community of Whitefish I have uncovered several problems that should be explored to be able to grasp the effect the establishment of an art center can have on a community fabric and how it may be able to contribute to the betterment of the environment.

The problems that must be addressed as I see them are: Inadequate public access to the lake; a loss of community cohesiveness due to population growth; community awareness of the arts; and the identity of public buildings within a community. This project will explore solutions to these problems and attempt to contribute to the betterment of community pride and cohesiveness. To accomplish these objectives we must first recognize that a strong public role in and commitment to the arts and amenities through planning is essential. Without the public's input in defining the programs, the whole act of participating in the arts is frustrated.

The city of San Antonio completed its ambitious urban renewal project that centered around beautifying the river that runs through town. Any discussion of San Antonio's urban character has to begin with its river. It is literally the stage for the city's cultural, commercial and civic life. It is a gallery, a place for art and a place for performance. Whitefish could be in a similar position to ensure that the greatest public amenity, the lake, can be accessible to all people and contribute to the health and development of the community.
The City Beach Park has long been the only public access to Whitefish Lake. Anyone who doesn't own their own 75 ft. piece of lake frontage has to rely on the park for lake recreation. The facilities that are provided are good for the purpose they serve, such as swimming and boating, but the area has much more potential for serving a larger portion of the public than is now included. This investigation is for the creation of an Art Center in Whitefish, but the broader outlook should be to create a coherent plan for the cultural and educational growth of the community.

I propose that the city acquire some properties adjacent to the existing City Beach to be set aside for public use or public institutions. These areas are shown on a map on page 27 and are only for the purpose of examining a coherent plan for the city. The City Beach is the present focal point for all public recreation and is the logical spot for creation of a broader community focus. Public amenities would be diversified to allow more people to experience the lake. As indicated previously, the City Beach area has had a more public nature with the town centered here, but now is essentially residential. It is my contention that it should return to the public realm to allow people to enjoy the lake on more diverse levels than is now allowed.

The purpose of this project is not to dwell upon this overview, but to set a stage from which the creation of an art center at this site can have an important contribution to the community. The creation of parks for community activities has become one of the major focus' of community development today. In effect this plan would extend the community park into a community center with an identity from which the public can revolve around. The art center would be an impetus for the establishment of a few cultural and recreational facilities which can be identified even now. The community theatre is in need of a permanent home and could be located in such a community center. Presently a community pool is in the planning stages, a historical center could house Whitefish history and if space for a new library is needed, it would be built here. All of these facilities have an important community function and can also serve to enliven the tourist industry.
COMMUNITY COHESION

The influx of new residents and the explosion of the tourist trade has had the effect of decentralizing the once tight community of Whitefish. The creation of a center of community activities should have the effect of recapturing some of the lost community feeling by providing a focus for cultural, educational and recreational activities. A reaffirmation of the pride and cohesiveness of the community should be the overall effect.

The people of Whitefish have historically been very egocentric in their appraisal of the community's ability to provide public facilities. In the early 1900's the public's eye was on the need for a city library during the era of free public library buildings donated by Andrew Carnegie. Thirteen examples of Carnegie's benefaction can be found in Montana, including Bozeman, Kalispell (the Kalispell Carnegie Library is now the Hockaday Art Center), and Livingston. Whitefish citizens wouldn't accept Andrew Carnegie's donation. A 1905 Whitefish Pilot article reported, "Because of its pride, Whitefish has not asked Carnegie to give it a library building." In 1908, the Pilot reported in an article titled "Why Not Have a Library?", that "1. the Townsite Company will donate a lot; 2. Carnegie funds are available; and 3. just a little action is needed." The town was still not willing to ask for Carnegie funds when they could provide the library for themselves. In 1916 citizens voted to fund the Whitefish Public Library without outside help. It may appear that to turn down a donation such as Carnegie was making available is foolish, but the town was establishing a precedent for the town to follow in the future. It provided a focus for community cohesiveness by proving it can be accomplished without help outside the community.

The planning and implementation of an art center could focus community energies once again and bring about some of the old cohesiveness. The long range effect could be a stronger community with many more public amenities for the community to have pride in.
ART AWARENESS

Flathead County funds the Hockaday Center for the Arts, located in Kalispell, which provides a wide range of community arts programs in all creative fields. As I indicated before, Whitefish citizens have always functioned in a very egocentric basis. If a service can't be provided by the town, but is offered in another town, it is usually ignored. Logically the programs offered by the Hockaday are put on in their facility or in other facilities in Kalispell and this causes a problem logistically for residents in Whitefish, Columbia Falls and other towns in the county. The Hockaday claims to be a county art center, but falls down in being able to adequately reach residents outside of Kalispell, though the effort is made.

Having grown up in Whitefish and having been involved in the arts most of my life there, I was never exposed to anything the Hockaday had to offer. As far as I was concerned the Hockaday was only an art gallery and not the educational institution it tries to be. I entered several art contests in high school and even managed to win one, but none of those had any relation to the Hockaday. The programs are not far reaching enough if the Hockaday can't reach young people interested in the arts. I was lucky that certain Whitefish clubs were interested and provided the vehicle for some community awareness of the arts.

Concern for the arts should reach out into all fields of creative endeavor such as dance, theatre, and the arts and crafts field. For the purpose of this project, only the arts and crafts will be concentrated on. It would be the area that will influence the most people to participate. The long range focus should be the implementation of a facility for dance and community theatre, but these will not be included in this program.

The town has had some fledgling art centers spring up in the past, only to be short lived. During the 1930's and 40's, the Works Progress Administration funded the teaching of arts and crafts in Whitefish. The WPA sponsored Community Arts Program did much to help foster the growth of art education in many communities. The funds just ran out too soon for the art center to become a major part of the community identity. It could be speculated that if the community had developed its own art programs at that time without WPA funds, there may be a strong program surviving today, much like the Whitefish Public Library.

Whitefish has had a rich heritage of artists living and working in the area. The creation of an art center in Whitefish will allow those artists to promote awareness of the arts and to promote their own work.

Prevailing attitudes toward the arts are complex and often contradictory. Although the arts are becoming increasingly popular, participation
in the arts as general experience, for most people, is still relatively infrequent. Yet, one rarely finds a community which doesn't have an art group or an art class."
The art center I am proposing will function as a public building, publicly funded and open to general public. Historically there is an identifiable image that a public building displays and this image is perceived differently than a residence or store is perceived. An investigation of what makes a person identify with a building as public will be an important aspect to consider when trying to design a new public building. Traditionally classical design probably wouldn't work well today, especially in a modern small town, but an abstraction of the essential elements could identify the building as public.

The Hockaday Center for the Arts in Kalispell, as previously noted, has been established in a renovated Carnegie Library. Ms. Magee Ferguson, Director of the Center, indicated that the Montana Arts Council has found that a significant number of Carnegie Libraries across the country have been renovated into art centers. A plan for an art center in Bozeman's Carnegie Library was briefly entertained until the city decided to put offices in it. Just how many Carnegie Libraries have been turned into art centers is not available but the number is significant enough to warrant some examination of reasons why a library that has outgrown its usefulness could be the perfect stage for the creation of an art center. Also it may be important to determine why the Carnegie Library was a focal point of the community and what aspects will help a new art center function in the same way.

The art center today is enjoying its infancy much like the library was experiencing in the early 1900's when it became the center of public pride as a new important civic institution. Andrew Carnegie was the impetus for much of that early growth with his donations of library buildings to towns large and small all around the country. The buildings numbered 2,509 and cost Carnegie $56 million to construct. Carnegie felt "the best gift which could be given to a community is a free library." Many of these libraries have outgrown their buildings and have been abandoned for new facilities. This is occurring at a time when art centers are just becoming a new feature in many of the communities that also have Carnegie libraries.

The layout of the small Carnegie libraries, by necessity, had a vestibule and entry hall that entered on a large, rectangular, high ceilinged, open room which housed the book stacks and reading room. Most Carnegie libraries are very similar in this respect as Carnegie demanded control over how the library was designed. This large room suits itself quite well for use as a gallery space by offering much wall space on the perimeter with windows located high enough to clear the original book shelves.
The common interior layout combined with exteriors of simple dignified design and construction was emphasized, effectively eliminating ponderous, ornate exteriors. Carnegie made no demands on the exterior other than to not overdo it and sacrifice interior space. Architectsural design features were to follow accepted practices of the region the building was located in, but the materials were to be of brick or stone. By Carnegie's decree, "no building was to be of wood frame."

When examining the Carnegie libraries in Kalispell or Bozeman, some images begin to be identified: Initially these images can be seen as symmetry, simple massing, compact plan, dignified, massive, strong-solid; overall an image of permanence is projected. All of the buildings use some simplified classical elements, such as a grand entrance, pediment, moldings, and columns. These elements help the small, tightly designed buildings to exude the essence of importance but accessibility. The building is immediately identified as an important cog in the community.

I feel the simplified abstraction of classical elements that most Carnegie architects used seems to come very close to the essence of H.H. Richardson's abstractions of the Romanesque design language. He designed many small buildings, including libraries, that exuded many of the images discussed above; such as simple massing, solid-strong, dignified, with a compact plan. He took it a little farther than the Carnegie library designs by not having the contraints of symmetry that Carnegie imposed on his libraries. Architects of the Carnegie libraries were faced with the problem of designing an important public identity for the library on a very tight budget that averaged $10-15,000. This led to a minimum of ornament and new interpretations of classical design detailing to project the identity of the public building.

The investigation of why Carnegie libraries fit so well into the image of a public building helps to identify some important elements that will bring a new public institution, such as an art center, into the public focus. Just as the new libraries of the early 1900's needed to be identified as an important, permanent public institution during its formative years, so does the art center which is in its infancy today.
"A Program is a philosophy. It is a strong declaration of creative intent, its strength resulting from an amalgam of ideas, people, spaces and activities."

-- Joseph Golden
Olympus on Main Street
The Hockaday Center for the Arts in Kalispell is the role model I have chosen to help develop a program for the art center in Whitefish. The Hockaday will not be ignored as if it wasn't existing, which will influence the size and scope of the programs offered in Whitefish. The Hockaday curates many shows of national and regional importance throughout the year. The sponsorship of theatre and music series is also an important aspect of their program. The art center in Whitefish will focus on the arts and crafts, or visual arts, aspects as its initial plan, with the music and theatre programs left loosely on the fringe for future consideration.

The program will include many of the programs the Hockaday has included but modified to fit into the smaller community of Whitefish. With this in mind, the program will include gallery space, studio space, lecture room, and associated administrative space.

Gallery space should include galleries for both permanent collections and traveling or local shows. The support spaces for the galleries should include a shipping-receiving preparation area with storage. The character of the space should be well lit, both natural and artificial, with ample display space that doesn't try to overpower the art. An outside gallery should be included for shows such as Art in the Park, which could be put on quite successfully on site adjacent to the city beach. Visual promotion of artistic trends is featured.

Studio space provides the other spectrum of the facility's use. The program should include educational space for painting-drawing and ceramic-sculpture. This space will help promote the arts through hands-on experience. The character of the space should be very active with ample north light and utilitarian surfaces that don't sacrifice comfort. An artist in residency will give residents invaluable experience in how an artist actually works. The resident artist should be a rotating position that will bring in varied forms of art. During the artist's stay emphasis could be placed on his particular field of study for educational courses.

A presentation-lecture room can provide a facility to promote skills that artists who sell their work need to survive in the business world. Seminars could be held in record-keeping, tax obligations, marketing, dealing with galleries, and insurance needs. This facility would also function as a slide-lecture room for the regular educational program.

Administration should be filled with a full-time administrative head and an assistant. Offices for each with lounge and conference support should be provided with an information-sales desk located in the lobby.
A program devised from this investigation of the Hockaday follows with an elaboration on the required spaces necessary to provide a quality facility.
PROGRAM

GALLERY

1. Permanent collection -- 1,000 sq. ft.
2. Major exhibition -- 1,000 sq. ft.
3. Exterior exhibition -- as needed
4. Storage room -- 200-300 sq. ft.
5. Preparation/receiving -- 600 sq. ft.
6. Comments a. mechanical ventilation
   b. natural filtered light -- galleries
   c. track lighting
   d. incandescent lighting

STUDIO

1. Ceramic/sculpture -- 1,000 sq. ft.
2. Painting/drawing -- 1,000 sq. ft.
3. Darkroom -- 150 sq. ft.
4. Storage room -- 100 sq. ft.
5. Jury room -- 100 sq. ft.
6. Comments a. mechanical ventilation
   b. natural light
   c. incandescent light
   d. storage cabinets
   e. servicable flooring

ADMINISTRATIVE

1. Director's office -- 150 sq. ft.
2. Assistant Director's office -- 150 sq. ft.
3. Mechanical/janitorial -- 300 sq. ft.
4. Toilet rooms -- 200 sq. ft.
5. Comments a. natural light
   b. incandescent light

SOCIAL

1. Community presentation room -- 800 sq. ft.
2. Entry hall/information desk -- 1,000 sq. ft.
3. Pavillion -- as needed
4. Kitchenette -- 100 sq. ft.
5. Comments a. natural light
   b. incandescent light
   c. fireplace in entry hall with seating
   d. public amenities
   e. plants to liven space
"Art, all art the characteristic that it unites people. Every art causes those whom the artist's feeling is transmitted, to unite in soul with the artist and also with all who receive the same impression."

-- Leo Tolstoy
Generally I feel my particular design process is one of an intuitive nature as opposed to functional. As an intuitive designer, I usually begin with the rough planning criteria, then define the nature, feel and identity of the spaces required within the project. With this in mind I begin conceiving the actual physical ramifications of the design.

By the time I have analyzed the program, the design has already begun to take shape in my mind as to the functional arrangements, overall image and identity. The functional details come from the actual preparation of the design. The spaces then fall into their proper place as adjacencies are recognized. The spaces are not set concretely before design and are allowed to grow through the creative process, leaving the formative stages less cluttered. The process, though not foolproof, is one that works ideally for me.

The analysis that follows includes the necessary examination of site conditions, to find out how the facility will fit in with the site. The next step is to define the elements from which the building design will be derived. In essence a stage will be set that will define the identity of the building. The process assures the building will have a character that can be identified with its function. The pitfall of the kind of design where mechanical and functional process is divorced from character, is to create in the end buildings that all look alike: hospitals that look like factories, churches that look like hospitals, etc.
The local materials are wood, stone, brick and metal. The materials I feel are appropriate for this project are determined from the surrounding site features and town vernacular.

As Whitefish is in the center of the timber industry, the logical choice of material is wood as a veneer and as a structural material. The major portion of buildings in Whitefish employ wood in some form, mostly in housing. The businesses downtown have been changing their exteriors into the local "ski town wood style", from the previous "ski" town Swiss chalet style. I don't know which style can be considered less desirable but both employ wood as an exterior siding. Wood is in the majority of vernacular styles so it should be considered for this project.

Stone is another material that should be used for this project. This is derived from the adjacent City Beach Park where two stone retaining walls sculpt the land into more usable slopes. The opportunity to bring a consistancy to my site as a continuation of the City Beach public space is afforded by the inclusion of stone into the building and landscape.

Brick is used in many stores downtown and in the Central school, but for the most part it is not a major material in Whitefish. Though it is a very practical material for creating a public building, other materials should be examined first. Brick could be useful in flooring materials.

Metals may be appropriate in the structural sense, but will make perfect sense as an ornamental material. There are many examples of metal used for gates, railings and fences. As a material often used by craftsmen, it can be an appropriate material to use in this project.

The combinations of these materials into a harmonious whole will be the responsibility of the designer.
Whitefish's climate is typical of Montana's overall climatic characteristics. Ordinarily, the town experiences the following ranges of temperature and precipitation.

- **Average annual precipitation** -- 12.32 inches per year
- **Average annual snowfall** -- 50.00 inches per year
- **Average maximum temperature** -- 52.60 degrees F.
- **Average minimum temperature** -- 30.00 degrees F.
- **Average growing season** -- 120 days
- **Average humidity** -- 73%

The wind generally flows out of the northwest and comes directly down the lake increasing the wind chill factor at certain times of the years. In the winter, storms generally back up from the east. But normally wind is not a big factor in Whitefish due to the protection of the mountains the town is nestled against.

**Average wind speed** -- 7 miles per hour

Whitefish is at the 48° North Latitude which produces solar angles of:

- **azm. June 21** -- 128°  
  **alt. at noon** -- 65°
- **azm. March 21** -- 90°  
  **alt. at noon** -- 42°
- **azm. Sept. 21** -- 90°  
  **alt. at noon** -- 42°
- **azm. Dec. 21** -- 52°  
  **alt. at noon** -- 18°

**Degree days** -- 85.55

It needs to be noted here that the site is heavily wooded, which will prevent optimum use of the sun for heating. The trees are pretty evenly divided between cottonwood and birch with a few pine distributed throughout, but the large number of trees to the south will tend to cut off the low angle sun in the winter. Summer sun will be quite effectively shaded by these same trees. As more facilities are added around the site, the number of trees will likely decline and allow more sun into the site. Therefore proper orientation to the sun should be considered, but it won't become a major concern in the design other than the logical and necessary aspects of solar design and light.

The uses of the light available at the site are defined below with aesthetic considerations.

**North** -- cold, view of sunless sky, view of lake and mountains, precious, even light, ideal for exhibits and studios.
East -- cool, morning warm-up, warms away the night, brings new optimism of the day, view of City Beach.

South -- warmth, light useful for heating in winter, overhangs needed for shading, not good light for lighting exhibits unless filtered.

West -- hot, debilitating afternoon rays, produces evening sunsets, view of river, lake and mountain.

The optimum orientation coming from this analysis of light is in the south-easterly direction. This produces a morning warm-up, day heat, and cuts out afternoon hot rays. The north light is still available for studios and galleries.
The proposed site is located on the shores of Whitefish Lake at the mouth of the Whitefish River. This site is generally known as Orchard Point. A map showing its location is on page 23.

The elevation of the lake is at 2,995 feet above sea level and the level of the lake generally fluctuates by 4 or 5 feet in the spring. The highest point on the site is at 18 feet above lake level. The slope of the ground plane is generally an easy slope with a drop off near the lake shore.

All utilities are available at the site with water, electricity, gas and sewer all directly on the site in the street right-of-way. Electricity is currently above ground and should be considered to be buried in the future and for this project.

The east side of the site is heavily wooded with pine, cottonwood and birch trees with heavy undergrowth. The west side of the site is more sparsely wooded with pine, cottonwood and birch trees and grass lawns associated with the existing houses. The shoreline is devoid of trees or bushes with a sandy beach of varying width that is dotted with many large boulders.

The adjacent environment is dominated by the City Beach Park directly east of the site. Its major elements include a change house, a restroom building, two picnic pavillions and a sandy beach. The site is also dominated by two massive stone retaining walls that run the length of the site and help sculpt the land into more usable areas for the beach and picnic areas. A snack bar is located in the parking lot directly south of the beach and is open during the summer only.

Whitefish's building codes are those prescribed in the United Building Code. The zoning for my site is Resort Residential. A special use permit allows some public buildings after a review of the facility. Ideally a re-zoning should occur to make the general master proposal work.

The following graphic information, pages 23 thru 30, examines existing conditions and data in the town. The data begins at the city level, examines the "lakeside" area, and concludes with the actual site conditions. This allows a layering of information which coincides with the development of the project as a whole.
ORGANIZATIONAL ELEMENTS

The following graphic information, pages 32 thru 34, attempts to set forth the basic organizational principles that will influence the development of the architectural spaces. These principle elements have been derived from my feelings associated with the existing site configuration and elements existing adjacent to the site.

The common axial characteristics of all of the drawings is related specifically to the configuration of the site, flow of the land and the solar axis. The existence of the two long stone retaining walls in the adjacent City Beach Park have also greatly influenced the decision to base all spatial organizations on a long axial plan. A short explanation is included with each organizational principle shown.
LINEAR ORGANIZATION
Site defined - length of site, lake shore
Adjacent retaining walls
Responsive to solar axis
Allows growth
Frontal - responds to street

THE WALL
Organizational element
Forms linear axis
Defines circulation - along wall, thru wall
can separate the unrelated functions

ORGANIZATIONAL ELEMENTS
**ORGANIZATIONAL ELEMENTS**

**COLUMNS**
- Forming Linear Wall
- Relate to Organizing Wall
- Structural Organizer
- Define Circulation

**Walls, Columns, Rooms**
- Elements Form Spatial Definitions
- Rooms Within Rooms
- Inward Focusing, But Open
Niches
To create areas for light or display.
To define rooms.
To allow relief of blank walls.

Circulation, Separation
Wall defines circulation - along or thru
Wall defines separation of functions.
CHARACTER - IDENTITY

What makes two or more buildings of the same function or purpose appear to be what they are? If a building type emerges from the sea of average architecture and asserts itself with a strong personality, we say that it has character. This quality can be most difficult to define and can be seen as twofold.

The definition of character could be the group character of a building type: such a building could not be tagged as anything else but a school, a hospital, or a church. But at times a thing built asserts itself above any limitation of a group building type. Not only does it fulfill its program completely and carry throughout its design unity and material, but it hugs to the site like a live animal and gives the impression that it has been there since the beginning of time.

The accompanying illustrations on pages 36 thru 37 tries to graphically identify the first of the above premises. The drawings start with a blank wall -- superimposing building elements that identify a group of buildings' character. The outcome is as I see it, an affirmation that the group character of public buildings that have a civic function tend to have classical element as their main identifiable features. The drawings are specific in drawing out their elements from small western town design. Towns in other regions or parts of the world may have altered perceptions of the identities of these same building types, but the public buildings would carry very much the same elements as are shown.

The illustrations on pages 38 thru 40 attempt to define the second premise above. It is a conceptualization of a site derived growth of the building type. An exploration into what features can help the building appear that it has been there "since the beginning of time".

The character of this project would ideally be able to identify the art center in as strong a visual image as the elements of a church. These elements of a church have been around for many centuries with those elements being refined constantly. The art center is in its beginning stages and probably doesn't have those strong refined elements that will set it off by itself. This character can be illustrated with the example of the public library; it can be defined quite readily as a public building but it doesn't have the strong identifiable image, at least on the exterior, that a church has. In all the art center will have strong elements that are unique to its function. My first goal is to see that it has an identifiable image of a public building. The second goal will be to see that the building is a part of its site.
The wall defined by site
Entrance facade defined by only an opening
A faceless element

Elements imposed on the wall begin to form an
Identifiable image
A traditional image
A church from a small Western town
Elements imposed on the wall form another identifiable image
A traditional image
A store in a small western town

Elements imposed on the wall form another identifiable image
A typical image
A civic - public building in a small western town
THE WALL

A wall - made of stone
- Defined by the site features
- Providing a basis for generation of form
- Site integration

ENTRY

Wall opens to reveal entry
- To define the separation of two realms
- To frame and announce what is beyond
- To define a boundary
ENTRY ELEMENTS
ELEMENTS: IDENTIFIABLE PUBLIC ELEMENTS
- ACKNOWLEDGE END OF EXTERIOR ENTRY SEQUENCE
- ACKNOWLEDGE BEGINNING OF INTERIOR ENTRY SEQUENCE
- DEFINE FRONT

CIRCULATION ELEMENTS
ELEMENTS: COLUMNIC PROGRESS TO ENTRY
- LIGHTING DEFINES PATH
- WALL STEPS UP TO ACKNOWLEDGE ARRIVAL AT FACILITY
- GATEWAY IMPedes ENTRY
ROOF
- ROOFS - DEFINE SEPARATION OF FUNCTIONAL
  INTERFACE BETWEEN BUILDING AND CLIMATE

P AV I L I O N
- SITEBOUNDARY
- ANNOUNCES FACILITY
- STAGE FOR FACILITY - PUBLIC INTERFACE
- PUBLIC AMENITY IN PARK
1. Schafer, Betty and Mable Engelter, *Stump Town to Ski Town, the story of Whitefish, Montana*, The Whitefish Library Association, Inc., Whitefish, Montana, 1973, note: all historical data within this section has been taken from this one source and is footnoted under this one reference for clarity.

2. Ibid.


12. Ibid.


15. Personal interview with Magee Ferguson, Director of the Hockaday Center for the Arts, Kalispell, MT, March 20, 1982.


Ferguson, Magee, personal interview, Director of the Hockaday Center for the Arts, Kalispell, MT, March 20, 1982.


