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:

Robert Utzingr, Thesis Advisor

Robert Meeker, Thesis Coordinator

Robert Utzingr, Director

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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.
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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.
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.
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 of 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.
THF 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 supervised 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 Diego'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.
VIEW OF THE SITE
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

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RELATIVE HUMIDITY

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

Prevailing direction
Summer windshifts
Strong winds
Average speed
Maximum speed
Faster range

NW
WNW and W
SW
6 mph year round
52 mph
26-34 mph in winter months

PRECIPITATION (Rainfall only)

Monthly minimum
Monthly maximum
Yearly mean
Maximum in 24 hours
Driest months
Wettest months

0"
9.26"
9.99"
3.62" in December
June - August
November - March

SKY CONDITIONS

Percent possible sun
Clear sky conditions
Average amount of fog
Thunderstorms

69% (yearly average)
50% (monthly average)
2 days per month
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.
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 deterioration 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 Business 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 Railroad 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
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.
At heart, we may still be a city in search of a center

By Kay Kaiser
Architectural Critic

The Center of the City.

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 rarely stop searching for. They look at the anemic interior of our city and see that something is missing: the soul of the city, 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 wondered like him—wondered about San Diego in the 1960s. It was at a turning point then as it is now. He wrote a short essay in 1962 in Omnitract, 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 city feels."

"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."

The simple 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 surprising and easily livable.

What lovely treasures do we have at our center? A bank building on every corner is not lovely to anyone but their boards of directors. Office buildings growing out of the sidewalk, unrelinied by doors, windows can see through or other signs of human habitation, won't warm the hearts of San Diegans. Slabs of concrete, sometimes called 'plaza,' won't make people rush there even if it is a sculpture of carving purposes is set in the middle. Our federal court with 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, the city's problems have a lot of 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 ask.

But what kind of projects have they been getting? Is a restaurant enclosed in glass the kind of place you 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 good, picture postcard? Is it right that views to the ocean along major gateway streets are blocked by rows of high-rise buildings 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 building next door? And, shouldn't she be able to get right to the water's edge without wandering around a wall of high 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 happen to the space before it stops? It may not stop. Earlier this summer, the plan for the Centre City Urban Design Committee was presented at a San Diego Union 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's 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, the city's 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 tourist spots. The city needed a place to house those community services and be provided.

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 harried railings between seatings and walkways. We need people who see our waterfront as the greatest God-
San Diego comes of age — A new downtown is born

Two pioneers get the plan in motion

By Roger Shewley
South Side

A

lonzo 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. We are 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 have 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 just riding the wave of the Darwin's theory or anything else. We had enough experience to recognize that magic doesn't happen in San Diego. We are not present in other cities."

Horton was the founder of downtown San Diego. He said Old Town was so place in which to build a city. In 1857, 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 center piece, the jigsaw, the 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 downtown residences; floating or under way are:

• Omni International Hotel, the $57 million, 622-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, $16 million office-bank 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 Col Wyoming, B, Manilfa 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," Trumble 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 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 offices 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 Hodgescock put it, "San Diego is literally on the eve of redeveloping the whole city, not just a small downtown."

"It isn't a redevelopment, because the city has already redeveloped this area — the heart of the San Diego region has hardly begun.

"We're only half done, maybe not even that much," Trumble said, "in building a new residential community of 1,000 dwelling units downtown."

"We're just beginning to scratch the surface on Fourth Avenue," where cardrooms, adult bookstores and seedy bars still scare off suburban shoppers.

From another standpoint, historic preservation, downtown redevelopment could still bring about the loss of 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 SDHIO has since won and lost some battles. The preservation of the 75-year-old Balboa Park was a victory, Parker said, but the recent approval to gut the 107-year-old First Fleet Inn for luxury cable television, dinosaurs and filling up the office and retail space is a defeat.

Robert Miles Parker, now a member of the city's Planning Department, should be very enthusiastic about getting into an area, developing it and leaving towns and, now, we have to live with the rest of our lives. I think the Planning Department should be very selective in what we should move on from here.

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/Joe Flynn

The Nordstrom tower at Horton Plaza shopping center stands tall and proud at the foot of Fifth Avenue. Site work has begun and construction on the $225 million project is due to begin by year's end for completion in early 1987.

The San Diego Convention Center, the $80 million restoration of the 75-year-old landmark at Third Avenue and Broadway. The opening is scheduled for mid-1986. The present headquarters of the San Diego Unified Port District will revert to the San Diego Police Department.

The U.S. Grant Hotel, the $80 million, 452-unit hotel just south of the Horton Plaza and Meridian projects, adding 725 million project is due to begin after the Fox is reopened in November as Symphony Hall, the new home of the San Diego Symphony.

The San Diego Union/Charles Starr

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The San Diego Union/Charles Starr

The San Diego Trolley's red trams have been a downtown fixture since 1981 on C Street and 12th Avenue. They did when built a century ago.

"San Diego comes of age — A new downtown is born"
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.

Hahn's $180 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.

These 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, Turner Corp., which may find the market the country's premier shopping center developers

It is nearly 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 store 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?"

"The key is to build a better mousetrap — more restaurants, more fun, movie theaters, (stage) theater — 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 — 130 specialty shops and restaurants, a nightclub, a movie 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 opening day is delayed until October, the United Artists 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 Farmers 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 136-room Omni Hotel, which will break ground late this month south of the Spreckels Theater, First Avenue and G 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 be 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 four 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 connect 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 marketplace more fun, more interesting and more exciting."

Gene Kemp, general manager of the Fashion Valley center — which was also 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 or 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."

The success of Horton Plaza, with its ups and downs, falls on such factors as the presence of nearby residents and the departure from suburbia to downtown.

"If nothing else, a good many visitors will be lured downtown, you can see for yourselves 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 Olympic Games, the open-air mall is something of a mini urban park with meandering multi-level streets, balconies and 10 distinct "architectural districts," all reminiscent of shopping centers in the central business district.

"The facades of the Horton Plaza buildings, which have a historic look to them, will not be found in other shopping centers," said Hahn's Dale Nelson is convinced.

"It's a spillover from Disneyland for people in the downtown core of the central city ... but people may find the market more fun, movie theaters, (stage) theater — everything you can't find in the suburbs to bring people back downtown."

"I don't know any other developer that could have pulled off what Ernest Hahn did," Trimble said. "The key is to build a better mousetrap — more restaurants, more fun, movie theaters, (stage) theater — everything you can't find in the suburbs to bring people back downtown."

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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.

"It's a spillover from Disneyland for 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 about the presence of street people."

Hahn's Dale Nelson is convinced that the downtown area is walking around the central core of downtown, the less noticeable the transients will have as its anchor tenants.

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

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For years, city officials have been studying just what it takes to bring people downtown. They have a strong desire to not only revitalize the decaying Centre City but also bring major retail investment.
A New Beginning
For An Old Landmark

by Joan Conrow

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 heating systems were gone. "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 surprises 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.

Added Richard Bradley, IDEA executive director in Washington, "Admittedly 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 oversaw 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'd like to see San Diego's work to date."

Walter Smyk, developer of the Meidian 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. "I'm not sure if it's important to become a world class city," Smyk said. "I don't think modern architecture has treated San Diego 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 "the best" 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 in 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)."

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Guide to the Historic

San Diego's Nationally Registered Historic District

WHERE

HISTORY

ALIVE...

San Diego's Gaslamp Quarter, a modern block, 38 acres located within the heart of downtown, stretching from Broadway to the waterfront, is an area so unique it can't be 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 the 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 "the middle of nowhere." By 1888, 20 buildings had been constructed. Horton later gave 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, had progressed north to Broadway.

As the heart of the business district moved farther north, the local thought he had lost the businesses and cultural activities that provided the Gaslamp Quarter with a new respectability and growing 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 Pierce Backesto, set Fischer and his four partners back $860,000. 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 opportunities. And Fischer's current favorite, The Granger Building at 5th and Broadway, shows signs of the same fortuitous gold. Built for $125,000 in 1904, another desert of the Backesto 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 explains, "is the only way to be in a position to do something nice."

So, a partner to Mission Valley, the 6th & Market business was stagnating because of the transient problems. Fischer has tackled five major restoration projects within four years in the Gaslamp Quarter;

The eclectic collection of art and artifacts dominating every shop that with the twelve toot 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 keep 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."

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.

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.

But those etched glass transoms over the white double-doors of Suite A didn't come from an auction block. They're both original, says. Two months later, in 1904, the original design of the Granger Building, I bet I'm the man who is more at home outdoors. As he slides in to a burgundy-pilowed, 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 reappraised 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.

The Gaslamp Quarter has lived through over a century of ups and downs.

Fischer because of his Backesto Building renovation.

Gaslamp's One-Man Redevelopment Agency

by January Riddle

my last new construction was a 40,000 square foot office building, set Fischer and his four partners back $860,000. But it was worth twice that the minute the last transom was set over the polished doors.

Although the Quarter has been known through the years as being a part of the nowheresville of San Diego, now the Gaslamp Quarter with a new respectability and growing leasehold potential then. "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'll be 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
Clanging is sound of coins

By Lori Weisberg
Suef T
A 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 reduce 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 bay-side route that would serve the convention center and Seaport Village.

The proposed 1.4-mile line, estimated to cost between $15 million and $30 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 1 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.

The idea for completing the proposed Centre City Railway was first expressed in 1979, when the San Diego Trolley Corporation filed an application with the Federal Railroad Administration for funding.

However, a few years ago, when the project was being considered, Center City and La Jolla residents opposed the idea, saying it was too short.

The expansion of the trolley system is expected to make a significant difference in reducing downtown traffic congestion and ease the traffic problem around the convention center.

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.

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 1,500 street 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 50c 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 30c.
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 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.

"The light," said her neighbor, Sibyl Selldorff-Rubottom, owner of Sibyl Designs.

In the SOMA — South of Market Artists — district, an aging industrial triangle bordered by Market Street, Rohnert Drive and Interstate 5, the former candy factory is one of only a handful of buildings offering loft office space.

The old Salvation Army Garage," she recalled. "The neighborhood around it was more or less abandoned. "We were falling far behind, by comparison with other cities. We're not a (corporate) headquarters city, so the demand was never perceived."

"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.

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

Selldorff-Rubottom scouted office buildings in Sorrento Valley and Rose Canyon before settling on a sprawling, 2,000-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 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."
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 downtown 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'd moved 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 downtown," 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 increased traffic and unendurable traffic noise from construction are getting very wearisome.

"And the noise from construction is 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 condominium projects, opened in 1982, share a park and for the past two Junes they have staged a field day centering on a volleyball tournament.

"It's a different kind of block party and attendance was about 150 this year, compared to just 50 or so last year," said Sauls. "It's a 3½-year lease, so we're staying put for the foreseeable future."

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-Blais, director of marketing for the post project.

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, P and G streets, the Meridian took two years to build, at a cost of $71.1 million.
Downtown San Diego Living Is On The Rise

Now that Horton Plaza is bustling with shoppers, many people wonder what is the next move in downtown redevelopment. They sense a renewed optimism where San Diegans can live in the city.

San Diegans move downtown to new residential projects

The Geological 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 Center City area.

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

The largest contingent of new residents live in the Marina and Park Row areas, which have been steadily increasing since the opening of Horton Plaza.

Business tripled in July and August, reports Bill Shipinsky of the Marina Park and Park Row condominiums.

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, offices on the second through fourth floors and 80 condominiums on the fifth through seventh floors.

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

First mixed-use project in Centre City planned

Plans for the $300 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 have 80 residential units, 129,000 square feet of office space and 86,500 square feet of retail space. It will be located diagonally across from the Nordstrom department store at Horton Plaza. It is being developed by First Avenue and Market, Front and G Streets.

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

If negotiations result in a sale and development agreement this summer, the project would be under construction in spring 1987 and completed in summer 1988.

"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 price from approximately $60,000 to $139,000 each and have their own bay views.

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 at The Cove.
Living In The Center City
Isn't All It's Cracked Up To, Yet

By UBBYBRYDOLF
San Diego Reader Press 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 home. The few seedy 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-dark. Others take taxis to their favorite night spots or restaurants to avoid the

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, across the streets along Broadway, and through Balboa Park. The bay breeze makes 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 people who need to get around the city. Public and private officials, will argue that it's not that bad, that it's the perception of home that drunks that harms downtown. But downtown residents believe the daytimers are wishfully thinking, that change has not come that fast.

Fingerering 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 an island," he said, declining to reveal his name. "It's a street that people 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 11/4 miles into Hillcrest. He treats himself to a cup of coffee and chats with friends at the Jack-in-the-Box there before walking back home, this time along Sixth Avenue.

Rose A. Klaszy, an 86-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 this article, is putting a lot of stock in Horton Plaza. For Klaszy, it'll be a chance to attend some movies and do a little shopping.

An Enviable View
Wendell Thompson, a 17th-floor resident of Horton House, has a view many downtown San Diegans would envy. The San Diego skyline — from the Coronado Bridge to Encantada — sits at the foot of his 22-foot balcony. The South Bay is visible from his bedroom window.

An avid Angeleno, 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 Nasifi, 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 rediscove 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 Pioneer
"To some extent we're like pioneers," George and Tina agree. "We knew we were doing it ahead of time," Tina said. "We feel we 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 get 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 and bread. They've even walked downtown from Beech Street to Anthony's on Saturday nights. After picking up the pleasures of downtown, the Nasifies 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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The older citizens make way, unfortunately, for the new

By Barbara Moros
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 oldest 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. If downtown redevelopment succeeds, it will dramatically increase property values in the surrounding area," said Wagner.

"It's self-defeating to redevelop an expensive neighborhood without these people. If anyone living downtown was able to find a place to live, they would be happy," Wagner said. "But they can't. They are being told to get out of town. And they have nowhere to go."

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 2,900 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 14,908, 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 Homelessness, chaired by Mayor Roger Hedgecock and funded with city and county and United Way funds, has developed some creative ideas to deal with the problem," said Wagner.

"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

"The question now is whether or not they can be enacted," Wagner said.

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 all they can afford. They aren't eating there because they love hamburgers."
that's the reason nothing's been done with it," explained Theresa Slowers, daughter of the owner 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 '51. 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, 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 landlord wouldn't sell. She said she wouldn't as long as this place was kept clean and nice."

Slowers stated that she's let the 5,000-square-foot lot 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."

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

By PAULINE REBARD
San Diego Daily Transcript Staff Writer

Five children grew up here, among the corn and geraniums, the papayas 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 $85 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, chairman of the board of the American Institute of Architects, has tried for years to assemble the block where his 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
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 seedy 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 Morton'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 45-member force have to spend their days and nights encouraging drunks and two-bit panhandlers to move off the 'mills.'

"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 Paninoja 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
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
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
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.
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.
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 CHARACTER 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 contrast to the delightful density and visual intricacy 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 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 contextual 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
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 that would make visual, contextual, 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.

Gardens come in many shapes and sizes. Large or small, flat or sloped, 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 direction of the gardener.

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.

- Balconies
- Rooftop gardens
- Stacks
- Courtyards
- Flower beds
- Front walks
- Window boxes
- Vegetable gardens
- Markets
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  balconies  playgrounds
orchards  roof top gardens  sod roofs
groves of tree  terraces  decks
rows of trees  courtyards  patios
potted trees and shrubs  flower beds  planters
hanging baskets  trellises  hedges
greenhouses  window boxes  vines
potted plants & flowers  vegetable gardens  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 inter-relationship 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.
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.
**BOOKS**


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