

C1008

LANESBORO and the ROOT RIVER VALLEY

Ideas for Recreational Development
and Community Design



A publication of the Center for
Urban and Regional Affairs, 311
Walter Library, 117 Pleasant St.
S.E., University of Minnesota,
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55455

This activity is made possible
in part by a grant provided by
the Minnesota State Legisla-
ture and the Congress of the
United States.

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Publication No. CURA 77-2

PREFACE

The University of Minnesota, as a landgrant institution, has three major missions: teaching, research, and service. To a certain extent, these missions are independent. But, to a greater degree, they overlap and complement each other. Many of the programs administered through the University's Center for Urban and Regional Affairs (CURA) help to support all three areas. One such program is the Urban Education Center.

The Urban Education Center involves students of architecture and landscape architecture in service-learning connections with small Minnesota communities. Acting as a broker, the Urban Education Center links communities wishing to assess their future potentials and problems with students wanting the chance to study community design in a "real world" context. Students are supervised closely by faculty members with appropriate skills in community service, community planning, and design. Direct interaction between community residents and the University students occurs at a number of significant points during the course of each project. Thus, students have access to two types of learning (University-based and community-based) while helping the community gain a new outlook on its resources and potentials.

This document offers a summary of the 1975-76 program interaction of the Urban Education Center with the towns of the Root River Valley in southeastern Minnesota. The community explored most intensely was Lanesboro. The design materials presented here are drawn primarily from the work of architecture and landscape architecture students in an advanced design studio with the appropriate designation: THE COLLABORATIVE.

Roger Clemence
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Urban Education Center
April 1977

INTRODUCTION

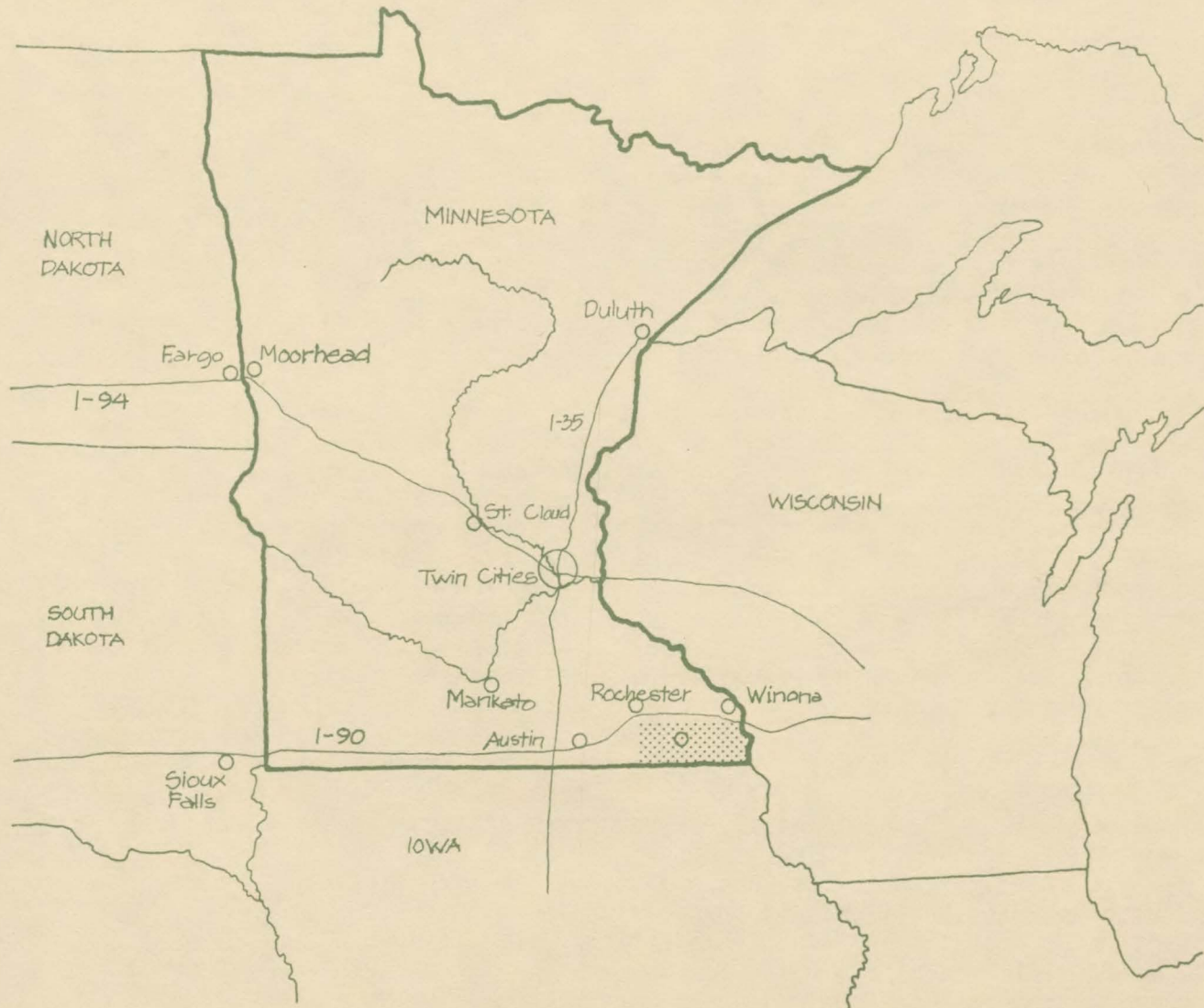
PROJECT REDISCOVERY is the name given to a combined venture of the Urban Education Center of the Center for Urban and Regional Affairs, the School of Architecture and Landscape Architecture, the Agricultural Extension Service, the Minnesota State Arts Board, and selected small towns in Minnesota. The thrust of REDISCOVERY is just what the name implies. It is a program designed to help small towns look at themselves, at their past and their present and, in a spirit of rediscovery, to look at their future with a zeal for making the upcoming decades as positive in quality as the finest periods of their history.

Project Rediscovery, 1975-76, focused on recreation and related resource potentials in the Root River Valley of southeastern Minnesota. Lanesboro, a community located at a point near the middle of the river's length was given special study. Lanesboro was selected for more detailed analysis because it showed those qualities of leadership and community spirit which indicate that it can be counted on to work for its own betterment in the years ahead. At the same time, Lanesboro has natural and human-made resources which can serve as a framework for future planning and design proposals.

This document highlights both the process and the products of many fruitful months of design work and discussion among students, faculty, and residents of Lanesboro and the neighboring Root River communities. The design ideas are particularly important as a backdrop for the dreams of those who care about the future of Lanesboro and the Root River Valley. Some of the concepts may never be achieved; others will require modification to be realizable. But, in the aggregate, these design ideas can be seen as an important catalyst in helping to focus community attention on the potentials of the Root River Valley and on what can be developed in the years ahead.

The report has two sections: regional studies are found in section one (pp 3-15); proposals for Lanesboro make up section two (pp 17-45). The regional studies describe patterns and connections among existing resources. Natural features, history, image, use patterns, and quality of life are first assessed. Then specific design proposals are suggested. Section two contains an inventory of existing conditions in Lanesboro followed by a number of proposals for future development. Students designed proposals for the community as a whole, for critical geographic areas within the community, and for the rehabilitation of several buildings in Lanesboro. The proposals for Lanesboro are more specific than the recommendations for the Root River Valley as a whole because Lanesboro was studied in greater depth over a longer period of time (January to June 1976).

Community commitment to this year of Project Rediscovery was outstanding. Town and county leaders worked closely with students through the official period of the project and even beyond into subsequent months. Public school children and concerned residents were very much involved in suggesting ideas and in reviewing proposals offered by our design students. Lanesboro also contributed dollars to help fund this report. We hope that these pages, coming to the community some ten months after formal completion of the collaboration, will help to reactivate and reinforce local commitments to the future of the area. With the necessary dedication and ideas, the future can be outstanding.



STUDY AREA LOCATION

SECTION 1 • REGIONAL STUDIES

The Root River Valley Study began with a regional inventory, including a schematic design of the region and a brief analysis of its special assets. This beginning was an important first step because it allowed the University students to learn about the resources, attitudes, and limitations of the valley and its communities, and to speculate on the development potentials of the total geographic area and its parts. At the same time, this stage gave area residents a chance to contribute to the project and to learn more about the students' ways of looking at their communities.

INVENTORY

Observations about the Root River Valley were broken into five subheadings: natural features, history, image, use patterns, and quality of life. Students formed teams with each team researching one of these subheadings and then trying to classify their information so it could be used to help plan recreational development.



Natural Features: Landform and related vegetation were the major factors considered in categorizing natural features. Four categories were identified: 1) topland, 2) branch valleys, 3) the Root River Valley, and 4) the Mississippi River Valley. Each type of land area supports certain activities. Vegetation, soils, geology, and hydrology combine to create the existing land character, which, in turn, helps to determine what types of activities can best take place on the land.

History: The two largest ethnic groups to settle in the area were Norwegian and German. Both are known for their independence and loyalty to their local community. In Spring Grove this early spirit is being renewed through the celebration of Syttende Mai.

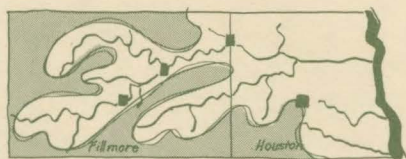
Immigrant groups have made local architectural contributions through the introduction of old world construction details. These details provide a counterpoint to the general character of the wood frame buildings of the Root River Valley, contributing to a fine blend of continuity and change. Old buildings are still heavily used. Within most of the valley communities the commercial cores retain many structures largely unchanged from the early days of settlement. Chatfield, Calendonia, Lanesboro, and Rushford command downtown areas of notable historic interest.

zone 1 topland

- 1 flat land
- 2 farms
- 3 backroad areas
- 4 towns & highways

implications

- best potential to remain as is
- small areas can be developed

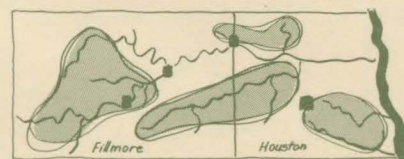


zone 2 branch valleys

- 1 inaccessibility
- 2 topographic obstacles
- 3 slower pace
- 4 intimate scale
- 5 transition
- 6 small villages

implications

- most passive activities
- nature activities
- historical potential
- minor linear activities: trails

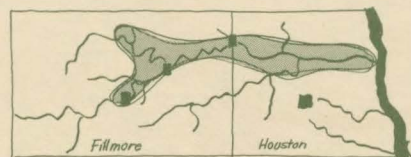


zone 3 root river

- 1 continuity & variety
- 2 communities
- 3 transportation systems

implications

- community activities
- potential river development
- major linear activities
- some passive activities

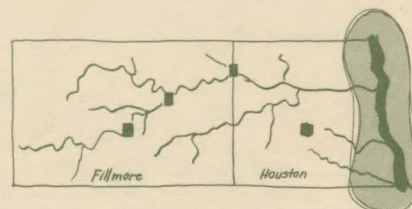


zone 4 mississippi

- 1 a major river valley
- 2 high visual impact
- 3 wide valleys & steep slopes
- 4 major highways
- 5 existing development

implications

- suited for most intense
- recreational activities
- major river activities



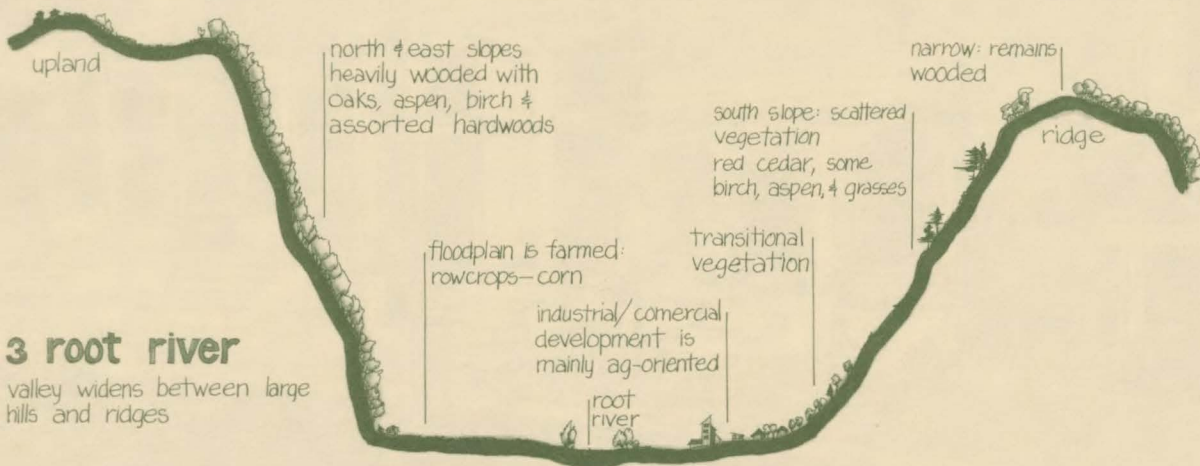
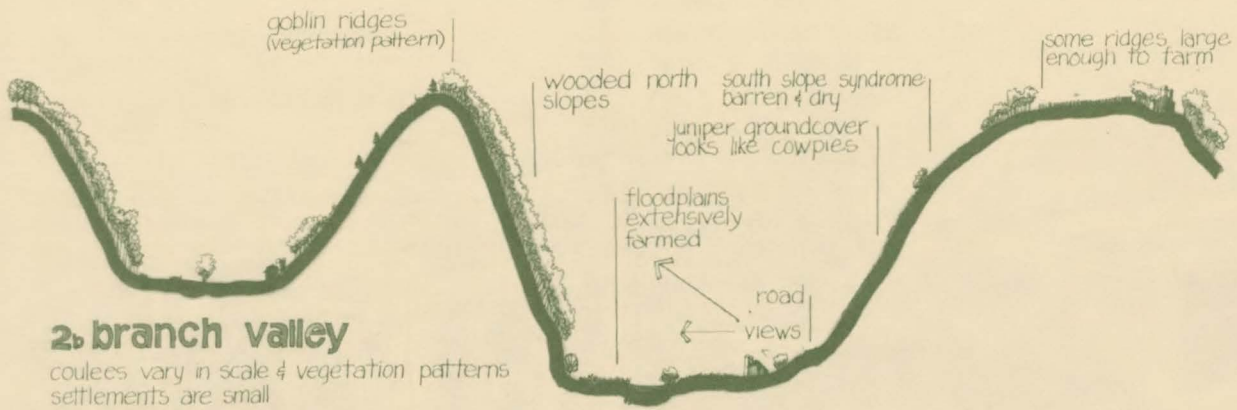
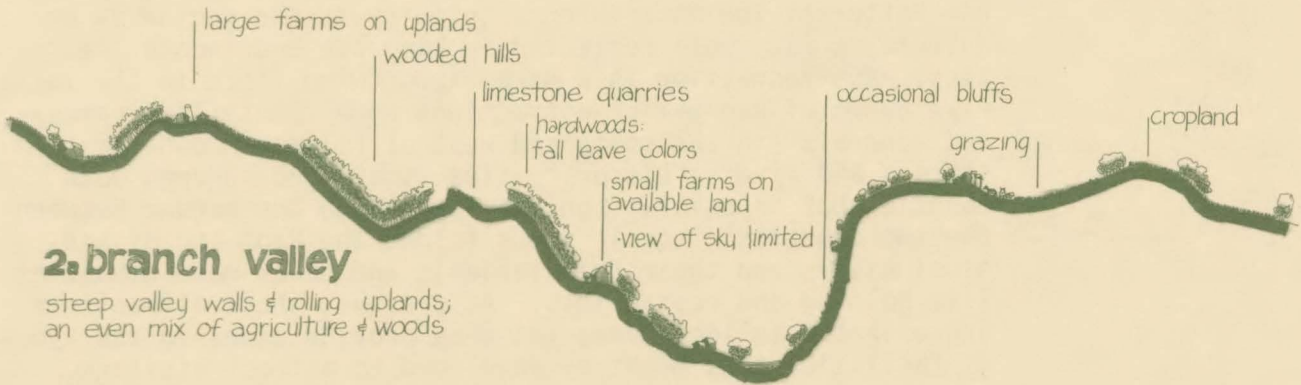
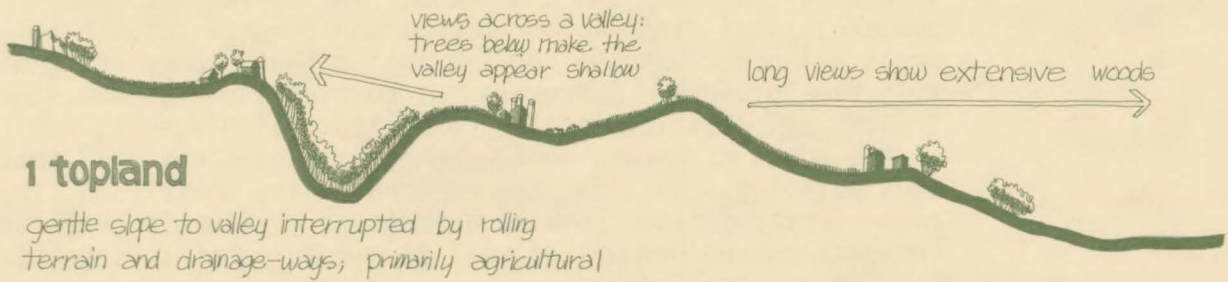
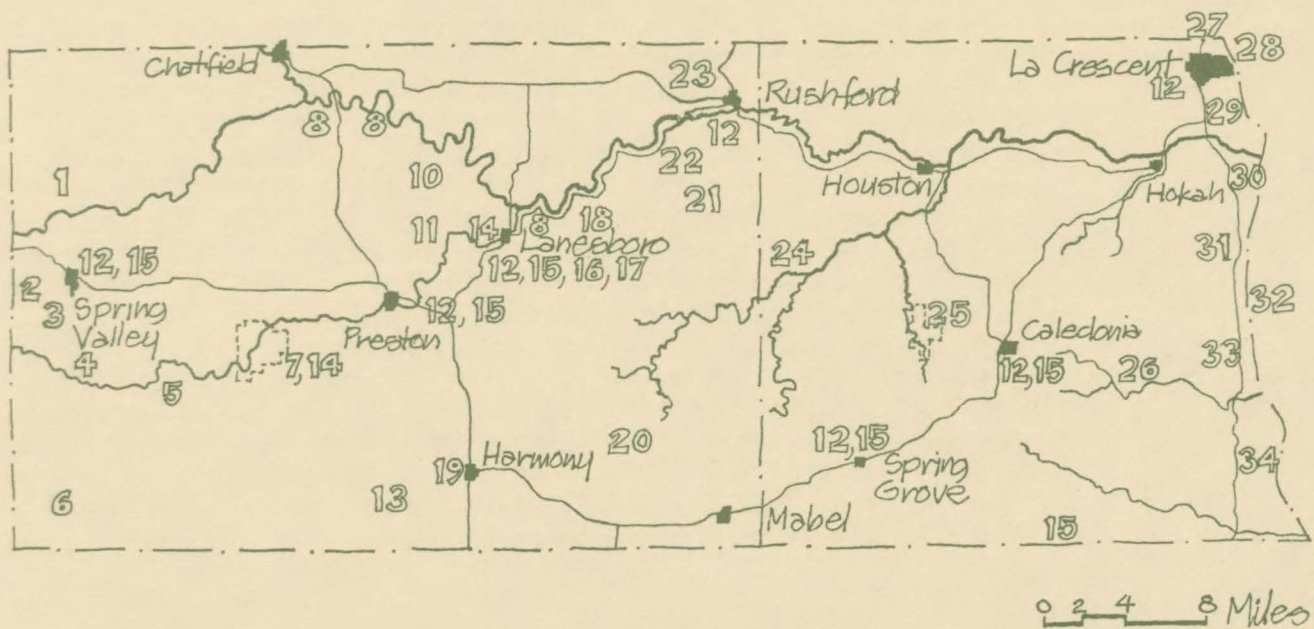


Image: Landform and community size in the valley reinforce a sense of cohesion and closeness. The narrow two-story commercial buildings, older homes, and compact residential areas all contribute to the impression that change has generally been gradual. There are, of course, the aluminum store fronts, new plastic signs, a community action agency, new homes on the edges of towns, mobile homes, and an occasional apartment building. But, for the most part, the underlying structure of many decades remains evident as a valuable base for restoration and renewal as well as a complement to sensitively handled new development.

Use Patterns: The most intense activity in the region is agriculture, a fact well reflected in land use and income statistics. But recreation is a steadily growing force in the valley. Five types of recreation attractions were identified: caves and minerals (in the south and west of Fillmore County); streams and rivers; historic sites (scattered through both counties but especially concentrated along the border between the two counties); scenic views (along the Root and Mississippi Rivers and their tributaries); and human-made amenities like golfing and restaurants. At present, these attractions are oriented to local use; yet they provide clues to the types of facilities that might be developed to attract visitors.

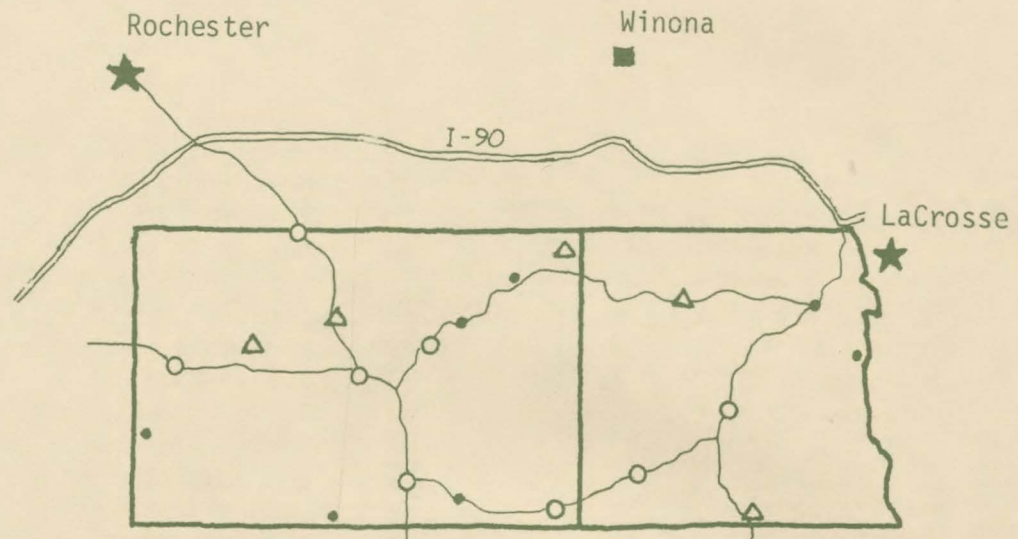




- | | | | |
|----|-----------------------------------|----|------------------------------------------|
| 1 | tunnel mill | 18 | lookout point |
| 2 | spring valley caverns | 19 | harmony historic site |
| 3 | lime kiln | 20 | lenora church |
| 4 | spring valley trout farm | 21 | rock formations |
| 5 | mystery caves | 22 | peterson trout farm |
| 6 | limestone quarries | 23 | ski-indian mounds |
| 7 | forestville state park | 24 | yucatan historic site |
| 8 | canoe launch | 25 | beaver valley state park |
| 9 | dam & power plant | 26 | trout fishing |
| 10 | isenour nature trail | 27 | dresbach tourist information center |
| 11 | pine tree orchard | 28 | federal public boat landing |
| 12 | golf course | 29 | big indian boat line |
| 13 | niagara cave | 30 | lawrence lake marina |
| 14 | lost lake game refuge | 31 | winnebago indian reservation |
| 15 | museum | 32 | sand bar marina |
| 16 | antique stores | 33 | upper mississippi wildlife & fish refuge |
| 17 | fillmore county historical museum | 34 | great river road |

Quality of Life: The student designers were interested in discovering how people in the valley live and what facilities and services are available to lend diversity to their lives. The major determinant of quality seemed to be how far one had to commute to reach work, shopping, and entertainment. Not surprisingly, the students found that the two larger cities of La Crosse and Rochester served as focal points for most of the valley's specialized activities and facilities. At the same time, they found that the small communities farthest from these centers show the greatest diversity in services and commercial facilities among towns of low population. Perhaps there is potential in this fact.

Many residents of the valley, when asked to comment about quality of life, expressed concern over the declining population. Others worried that if the valley were successfully touted as a fine center for recreation it might be overrun with ugly commercial development. Clearly, these are legitimate concerns; but each exposes the need to evaluate development and population in a larger context. Fillmore County has seen population declines and losses in commercial activity, but Houston County population is on the rise, due in large part to commuters living in the La Crescent area. Similarly, although recreation could bring ugly development, it might also bring handsome new facilities. The influx of new users could offset other declines in commerce within the valley. Perhaps the most important message to stress about quality of life is that those who live in the Root River Valley can best determine that quality if they take a firm stand on where and how they wish to see development occur.



	Population > 50	Post office	Bank	High school	Mortuary	Newspaper (daily or weekly)	Medical doctor	New car dealer	Public library	10 million dollars retail sales (1967)	Hospital	Radio station	Airport with hard surface runway	25 million dollars retail sales (1967)	Public higher education	Daily newspaper	Scheduled air passenger service	100 million dollars retail sales (1967)	One billion dollars retail sales (1967)
National service center (★)										All required									
Metropolitan service center (★)						All required													
Regional service center (■)					All required										2 of 3 required				
Community service center (●)				All required						2 of 3 required									
Full convenience center (○)	All required			3 of 4 required															
Partial convenience center (△)	Both required	2 of 3 required																	
Hamlet (•)	Both required																		

DESIGN PROPOSALS

Armed with the data gathered from the regional inventory of the first five weeks, the students were able to prepare a variety of design proposals suggesting development opportunities within the two-county area. Their ideas can be described under three related headings: 1. land classification, suggesting appropriate uses for different lands; 2. traffic control strategies, designed to protect the character of the valley; and 3. sample proposals for recreation development, created within the context of the land classification and traffic concepts.

1. Land Classification

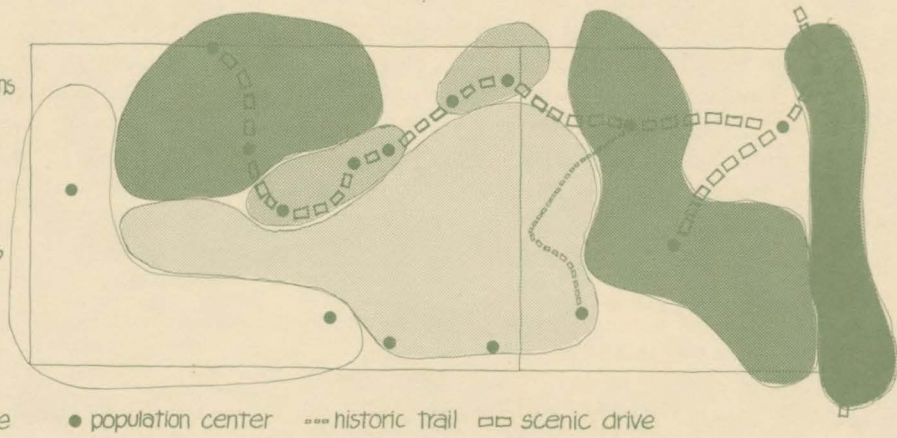
A major consideration was that land be appropriately used. Students were concerned that in some areas specific types of development should follow the unique character suggested by the land. At the same time, they wanted to show valley residents that there were various options which could be considered for many land areas. The students prepared three alternative land classification proposals.

Alternative one recommends five use categories, each including different recreation opportunities: caves and mineral areas involve exploring, mining, and brickmaking activities; historic areas provide museums and historic trails; streams encourage canoeing, fishing, and a basic focus on nature; human input areas, including towns, support golf courses, skiing areas, resorts, and restaurants; and the Mississippi Valley sustains boating, scenic drives, and game reserves.

Alternative two defines four land categories: agricultural, natural, small town, and intense development. Agricultural areas in the uplands of both counties are intensely farmed. This use should continue and be protected from encroachment by competing uses. Natural areas occur mostly in branch valleys, where the land is least developed. If protected, they can remain natural while functioning as part of a constellation of recreational attractions. Small towns are found along the main branches of the Root River in a sequence linked by Highways 16 and 44 suggesting the opportunity for limited expansion to more elaborate facilities. These might include recreation centers with lodging and sports facilities, recreational trails joining communities and facilities, limited residential expansion within towns, and development of new light manufacturing and additional farm service facilities. For the areas of intense development two approaches are considered. One suggests that intense development be limited to areas where large-scale development already exists, such as La Crescent. The other proposes that the entire Mississippi Valley be considered an area with potential for intense recreational development. It is presumed that if this were to happen the current wild state of the Mississippi Valley would be lost, leaving the Root River Valley as the remaining natural area for the region.

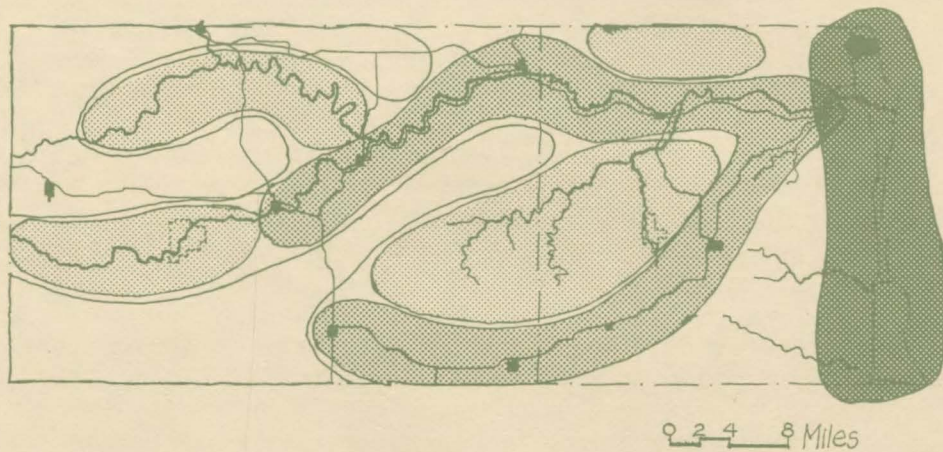
Alternative One

- CAVES & MINERALS
· caves
· mining
· brickmaking
- HISTORIC AREA
· abandoned towns
· museums
· historic trail
- HUMAN INPUT
· towns
· ski hills
· golf courses
· boating
· resorts/motels
· restaurants
- STREAMS & CANOEING
· canoeing
· fishing
· nature trails
- MISSISSIPPI VALLEY
· boating
· scenic drive
· game preserve



Alternative Two

- Agricultural
- Natural Areas
- Small Towns
- Areas of Intense Development



Alternative Three

- Open
- Recreation
- Habitat



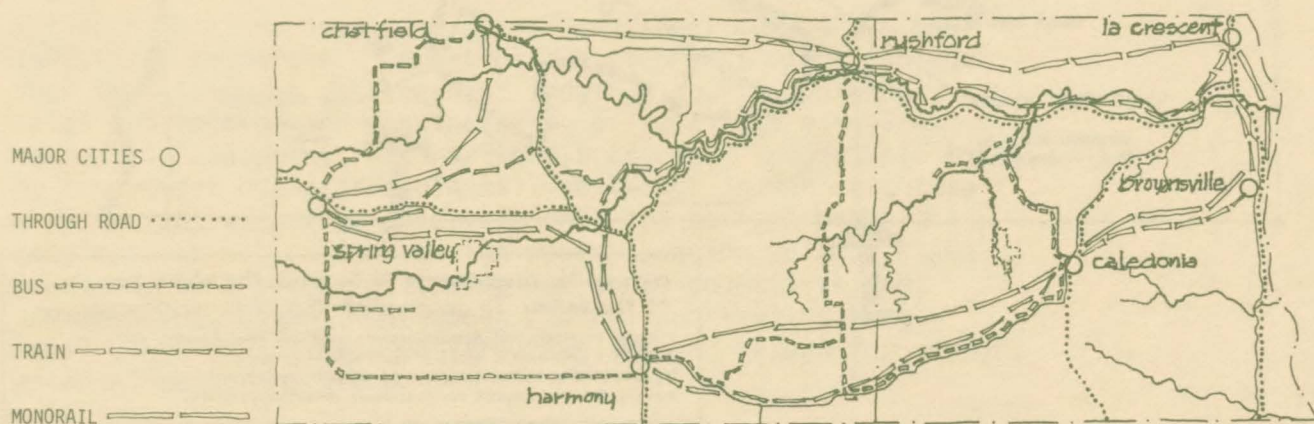
Alternative three describes three categories of land use. Open land would remain primarily agricultural. Recreation land would sustain activities requiring developed facilities such as golf courses, tennis courts, motels, and resorts. The more heavily traveled, scenic areas near existing towns are most suitable for this use. Habitat land would consist of protected natural areas where activities require minimal development. Facilities on this type of land might include trails, campsites, and access to scenic natural features. Headwater streams and side valleys lend themselves to this type of protection.

2. Traffic Control Strategies

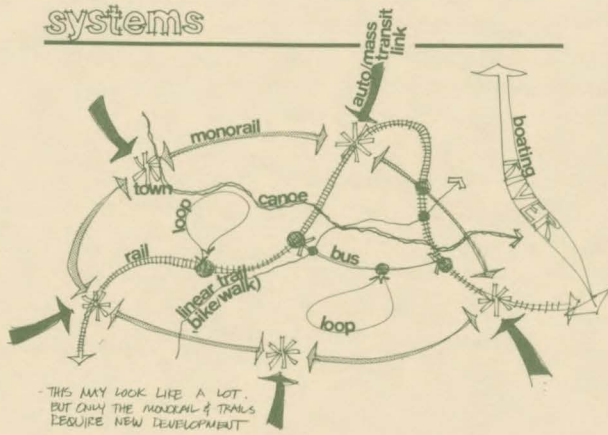
If recreation is successfully developed along the Root River as a new economic stimulus for the valley, it will mean increasing numbers of travelers coming into the area. Students considered how the quiet character of the valley could be retained while sustaining large numbers of visitors. The solution seemed to lie in regulating the additional automobile traffic that could be expected. The students developed three differing strategies for controlling increased traffic. All of the strategies seek to regulate only visitor traffic. Residents would have the same freedom of movement they now enjoy. These strategies are only suggested solutions. No attention was given to how they might be implemented.

The first strategy suggested various ways of transporting people without the use of automobiles. The second strategy proposed that traffic be controlled by creating a hierarchy of movement systems. Low speed travel would occur on trails and paths while high speed travel would be limited to buses, rail, residents' cars, and perhaps a monorail. Trails into the country would be specialized to prevent conflicting uses. Thus, hikers and snowshoers would have a separate trail. Bicyclists and snowmobilers would be separated from horseback riders. Rivers provide their own separation: the Root can only handle canoers and inner tubers; the Mississippi supports motor craft, although canoers can also use it. The third strategy created auto-free zones. Resident cars would be able to enter these zones but visitor cars would not.

Strategy One



systems



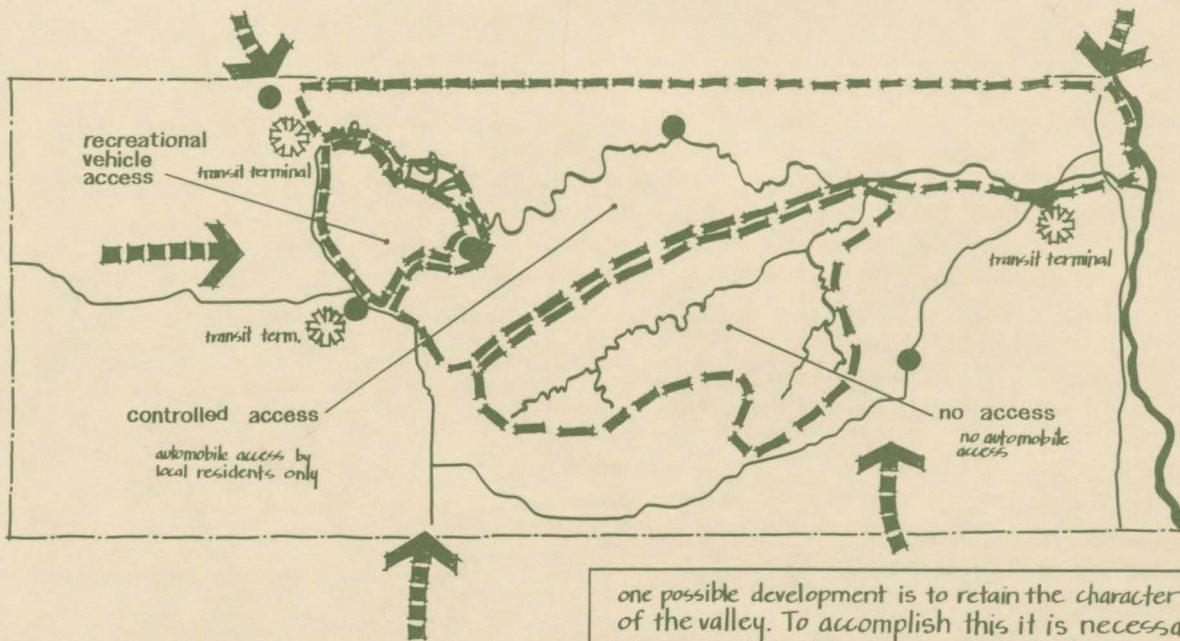
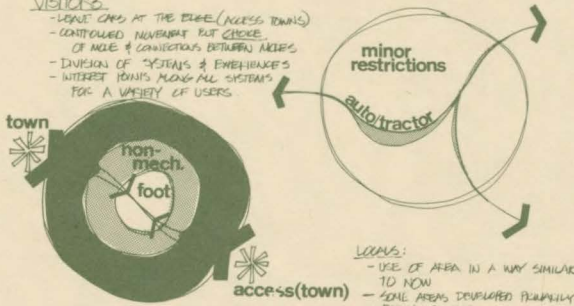
- THIS MAY LOOK LIKE A LOT, BUT ONLY THE MONORAIL & TRAILS REQUIRE NEW DEVELOPMENT



people moving/concept

VISITORS:

- LEAVE CARPS AT THE EDGE (ACCESS TOWNS)
- CONTROLLED INDEPENDENT BUT COORDINATED
- DIVISION OF SYSTEMS & EMPHASES
- INTERRET TOWNS ALONG ALL SYSTEMS FOR A VARIETY OF USERS



one possible development is to retain the character of the valley. To accomplish this it is necessary to:

- keep recreational developments out of the towns
- restrict automobile traffic through the area
- provide alternative means of transportation
- provide low impact recreational developments

3. Sample Proposals for Recreation Development

The students developed ideas for expanding recreational uses of the land in the Root River Valley area. Four broad development ideas were suggested.

The first idea stemmed from seeing farms as an untapped resource. Students suggested that the concept of a VACATION ON A WORKING FARM could be applied in the Root River area. With 50% of Minnesota's population, about 35% of the Upper Midwest's population, and about 58% of the nation's population currently living in urban areas, there is a growing body of people who are unfamiliar with agriculture. Some are interested in vacations in which they pay to accompany archeological expeditions, or polar surveys, or to work on cattle ranches. For many people, a chance to spend several weeks on a working farm helping with chores or with segments of the farm operations which they are capable of doing, might be a welcome change from the usual pattern of life. The Root River area is especially suitable for this type of vacation because it supports such a diversity of farming specialities. One can find cash crops, beef raising, dairy farming, orchards, and truck farms all within a compact area. Small towns nearby could benefit from vacation farms by supplying the necessary goods and services to the farms and their visitors.

A second idea for the valley was to develop OUTDOOR RECREATION AREAS. The two-county area already includes two state parks: Forestville and Beaver Valley. In addition, there are opportunities for golfing, hiking, canoeing and fishing (including the Lanesboro Hatchery) already available. Resources which could be developed include caves, rock formations, and boating along the Mississippi River; inner-tubing along the Root River; hang-gliding; hunting; additional trails for cross-country skiing; and the reestablishment of downhill ski areas.

A third idea for development recognizes the opportunity which exists in the INTERPRETATION OF NATURAL AND HISTORIC ELEMENTS. Expansion of existing county museums and scattered historic sites and the creation of displays connected with outstanding geologic formations would provide additional attractions. Historic districts could be created to protect and reuse old structures which reinforce community character.

A fourth idea proposed developing additional COMMERCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL resources. Compatible developments might include such facilities as restaurants; lodging; sports equipment sales and repair; and manufacturing of specialty hardware, recreation equipment, and hardwood products. One example might be to convert one of the old mill buildings in the area into a restaurant with live entertainment, and perhaps overnight lodgings, as well. Such an inn would function well in close proximity to a system of trails for cross-country skiing, snowmobiling, hiking, horseback riding, and trail biking. Trail users could range out from the inn and return for supper, entertainment, and sleep.

In addition to these broad ideas for recreation development in the valley, the students prepared six more detailed proposals for specific sites. Space does not permit a graphic display of these proposals but brief descriptions follow.

LA CRESCENT was proposed as the site for a year-round convention complex combining conveniently-located recreational opportunities with facilities for conferences and overnight accommodations for visitors. La Crescent was chosen because of its easy access via I-90 or Highway 16. The bluffs and river there would provide a full range of recreational activities.

HOKAH was seen as the gateway to the Root River Valley. If the railroad right-of-way and tracks were used for a recreational rail system, Hokah would become a natural starting point for Root River Valley service. The community, at the mouth of the river, can be easily reached from major highways and the interstate. Overnight visitors, lodged in new facilities, could use the rail system for sightseeing in the valley. A visitor center near the railroad depot might include restaurants, shops, and galleries.

PRESTON was suggested as a site for a major tri-county recreation activity complex. The fairgrounds already contain the beginnings. Facilities could be added to house events like curling, horse shows, hockey, dances, auctions, and flea markets. If a recreational railroad were reconstructed, the center could provide additional activities for visitors already in the area.

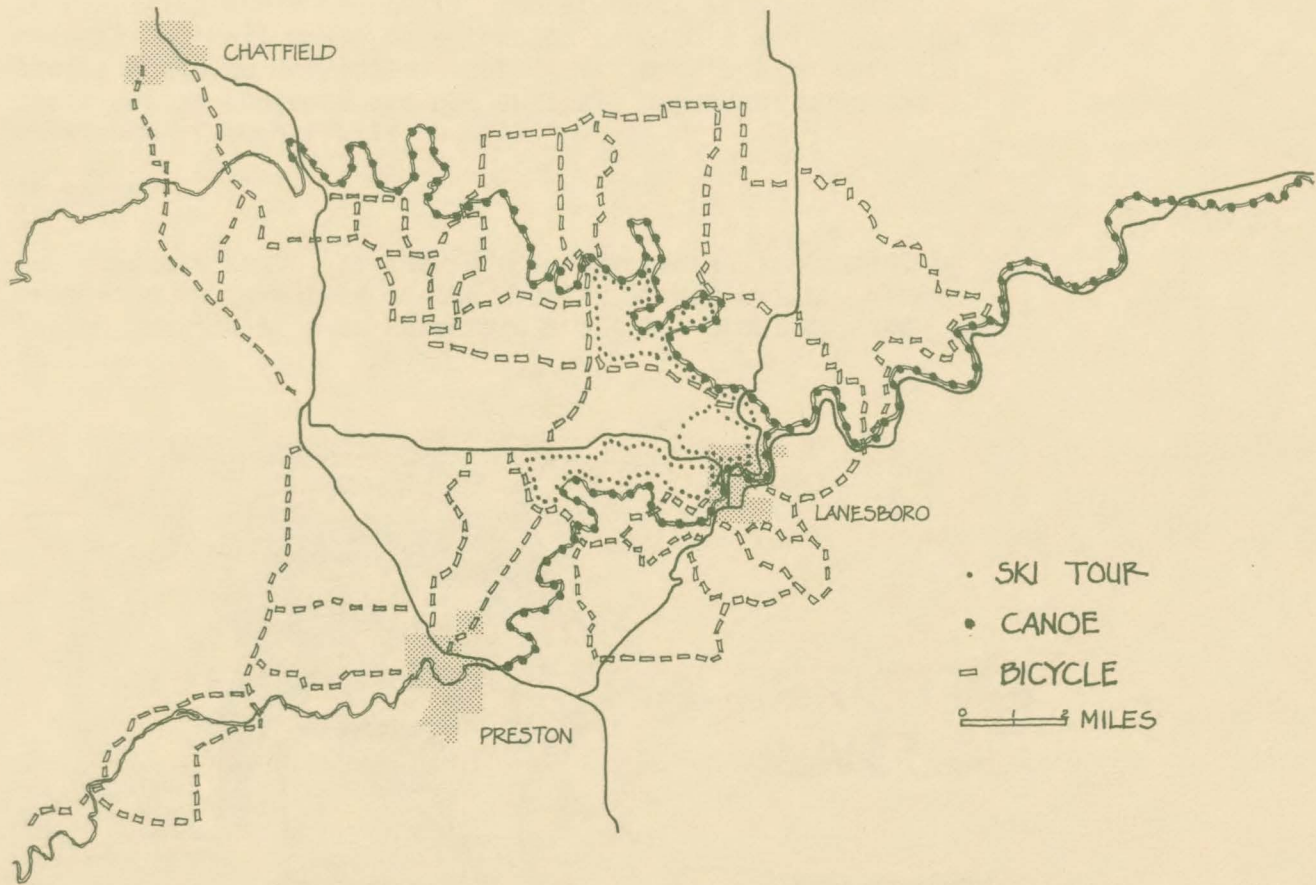
PRESTON was also proposed as the focus of a recreational corridor. The river bottom meandering through Preston is a natural location for recreation trails. Trails located there would not conflict with existing roadways and would be safe for bicyclers, hikers and horseback riders. If the trails lead outside of town, residents would be able to use them almost from their own back doors, through town, and out into the countryside. A trail-user center could be established near downtown or the fairgrounds so as to encourage strangers to use existing commercial facilities as well as the trails.

LANESBORO was considered as the center for a proposed recreational trail system. The north and south branches of the Root River, which meet near Lanesboro, flow through valleys which could contain a variety of regional recreation trails. Preston and Chatfield anchor the upper ends of the valleys while Lanesboro marks the junction. Residents and visitors can canoe along the north branch during favorable seasons. Expansion of over-night camping and lodging facilities together with the creation of trails could attract more visitors.

LANESBORO, itself, was also explored as an area rich in recreation potential. Lanesboro's setting is spectacular and unique. The commercial area has many, potentially-handsome, old buildings, which could be restored to provide new commercial space. As the river flows near the bridge and power plant, it can be

seen from neighboring hillsides. The river bank could be developed into a linear park winding around the community and perhaps joined to Sylvan Park. If the old millpond were restored, there would be good sites for new housing overlooking the pond.

These proposals for specific sites within the two-county area of the Root River Valley concluded the University students' study and service interactions on the regional level.



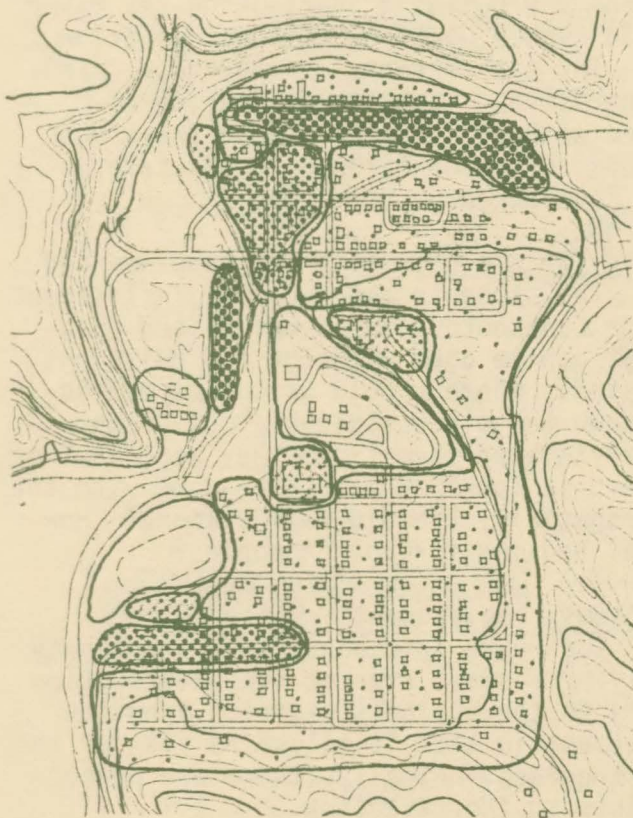
SECTION 2 ° LANESBORO

The proposals for Lanesboro were developed as a natural extension of the regional studies described in Section One and form the heart of this report. The regional studies suggested that a constellation of activities within Fillmore and Houston counties could be developed to attract tourists. Lanesboro has a key location within the region because it is the natural stopping point along the previously proposed recreation trail system.






The goal of the design exercises for Lanesboro was to suggest ways in which the community could develop facilities to attract visitors while retaining its unique character and atmosphere. In preparing their proposals, the students assumed that a recreation trail would pass through Lanesboro and that loop trails would be developed. But it is important to note that their design concepts are not entirely dependent upon the existence of such trails.

INVENTORY

The students began, as they did in the regional studies, by preparing an inventory of the area as it now exists. They looked particularly at Lanesboro's assets, problems, and goals.



EXISTING LANDUSE

-  recreation
-  residential
-  institutional
-  commercial
-  industrial

Community Assets and Problems The students were impressed with the natural beauty of the community as a whole. The Root River, the sheer cliff at the north side of town, and the surrounding hills and bluffs give Lanesboro a dramatic physical setting unique in southeastern Minnesota. The site, itself, is a prime asset for Lanesboro.

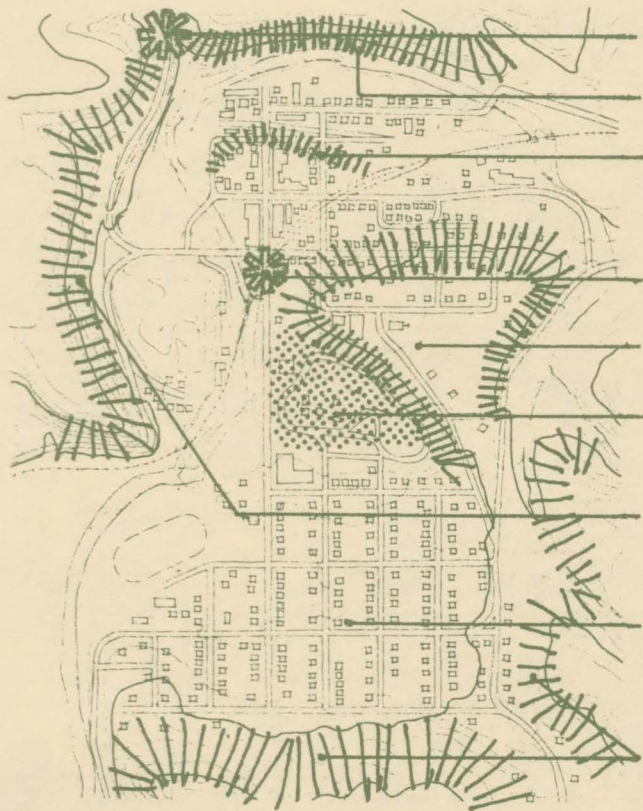
In the past, seasonal flooding of the river has threatened Lanesboro. Now, however, thanks to improved flood control with diking and conservation upstream, the community may again look at the Root River as an asset rather than a liability. The cliff, formed by the river's action, provides a backdrop for the community and an overview for travelers using Highway 8.

The hill in the center of town, crowned by two churches and the elementary school, adds visual interest and a focal point for the whole town. This hill and the hills flanking the town are visible from an overlook along Highway 16, about two miles southwest of Lanesboro. A minor ridge of land running through Lanesboro's business district serves to separate the shopping area from the lowest flood plain. The park provides a beautiful contrast to the institutionally capped hill. The opposite side of this hill could be developed with new housing and small commercial buildings. Across the river, the old millpond, might be restored as a center for swimming and skating.

Downtown Lanesboro presents many opportunities for rehabilitation. Its many handsome old buildings are hidden behind a mixture of signs and storefront styles. These buildings could be restored to their original dignity and character. Some might house facilities for visitors -- specialty shops and perhaps a restaurant in the VFW building overlooking the river. The hillside above Elmwood Avenue would be an ideal location for developing townhouses for either rental or purchase. The industrial area is not intrusive. Light manufacturing activities might be expanded without detracting from the atmosphere of Lanesboro. Manufacturing of hardwood products or woolen products could be considered.

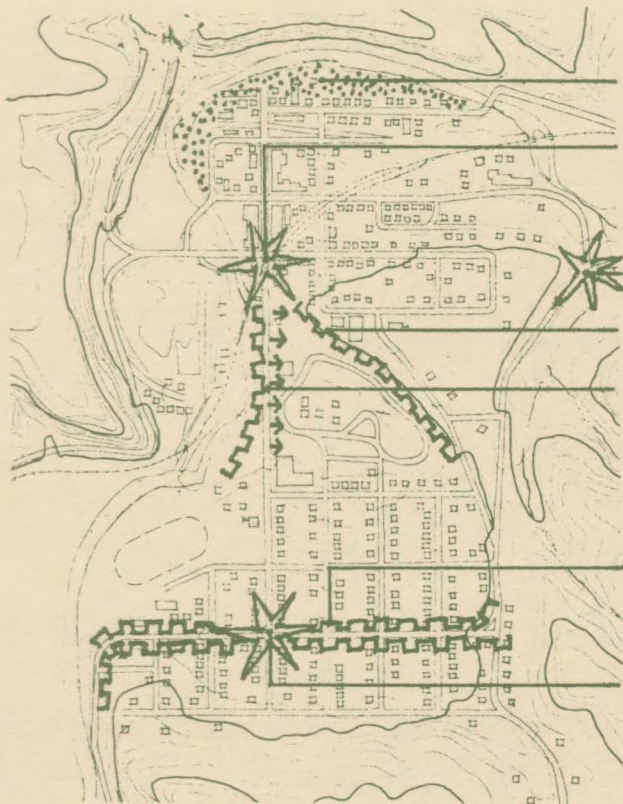
The students' visual survey of the community was supplemented by talks with residents. The students asked particularly about problems residents saw for Lanesboro. Residents raised questions such as these: What can be done with our old buildings downtown? Can they be saved? Where should we locate new industry? Should we tear down the old buildings along "Slant Avenue?" Is there any way to save them since they were part of the first commercial street in town? What can be done with the west side of the river, especially the old ball diamond? How can we provide more rental housing for young couples?

In addition to these problems, the students noticed others experienced by visitors. The route into downtown from Highway 16 is unclear, marked only by a small sign at the intersection of the highway. The entry to the business district from the south is also a disappointment in that it allows no view of the river and is exposed and treeless. Finally, there are no convenient public access points to the riverbank.



- dramatic entry to town
- cliff: impressive backdrop
- minor ridge: transition to riverbank
- dramatic entry to downtown
- hill: focal point
- green space: sheltered area
- bluff: containment leading eye to cliff
- residential area: well-kept homes
- bluffs: containment

COMMUNITY ASSETS



- river hidden - no access
- dramatic entry diminished by weathered buildings south of bridge along river
- east entry is obscure
- barrier to movement
- levee, wide road divide park from river; road infringes on park edge
- highway bisects residential area
- confusing intersection: location of downtown is unclear

COMMUNITY PROBLEMS

Community Goals During their interviews with residents, the students heard general goals expressed. People want to see more employment opportunities. Most seem to feel that the small-town character of Lanesboro should be preserved; but there is also a desire to see the community attract new industry. As the students developed their individual design projects, they tried to incorporate these goals into their projects. Some of the goals that the students chose to follow for the community were these:

-encourage development of recreation as an alternative to more traditional industrial development;

-develop recreation facilities in Lanesboro in a manner that encourages visitors without disrupting the town's character and atmosphere;

-work with area farmers to insure protection of the local agricultural economy;

-collaborate with neighboring communities to promote recreation development based on the area's natural resources; and

-encourage the idea that Fillmore and Houston Counties should support a new recreation industry.

You may wish to add your own goals for Lanesboro in the space below. Goal setting is an important first step for community planning and development.

COMMUNITY DESIGN PROPOSALS

Five design proposals were developed as alternative plans for the community to consider. All are broad in character and intended only to give a general idea of what might be done. Detailed design work would be required before any of these options could become a reality in Lanesboro. But each can be a catalyst for community thinking and planning for the future.

RESPONSE TO LANDFORM

- a. INCREASED ARCHITECTURAL DENSITY - MORE VARIETY OF EXPERIENCE.
- b. HIGHEST DENSITY OCCURS IN THE MOST PHYSICALLY CONFINED AREA.
- c. INTENSIFIED FOCUS ON NATURAL ELEMENTS.
- d. USE OF HILLSIDES FOR EXPANDED GROWTH RATHER THAN HILLTOPS.

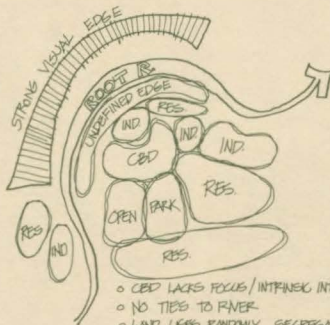


Proposal 1 suggests how the river might be used to attract visitors and thereby increase commercial development in the central business district (CBD). The mill pond and old ballpark are developed as a new recreation area. Highway 16 is realigned to provide a more attractive southern route into the downtown.



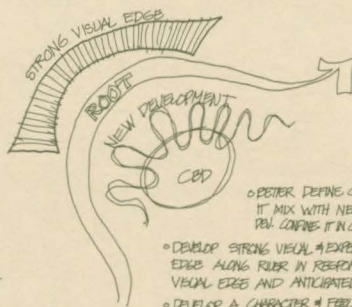
SKETCH 1

A PROBLEMS/IDENTIFICATION



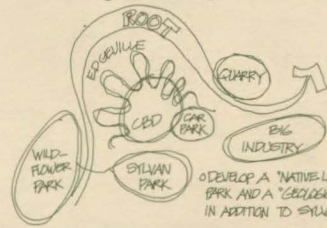
- CBD LACKS FOCUS / INTEREST
- NO TIES TO RIVER
- LAND USES RANDOMLY SEGREGATED
- CONFUSING VEHICULAR PATTERNS
- MINIMAL ADVANTAGE TAKEN OF EXISTING NATURAL RESOURCES

B PRIMARY DEVELOPMENT AREA: CBD & THE RIVER'S EDGE

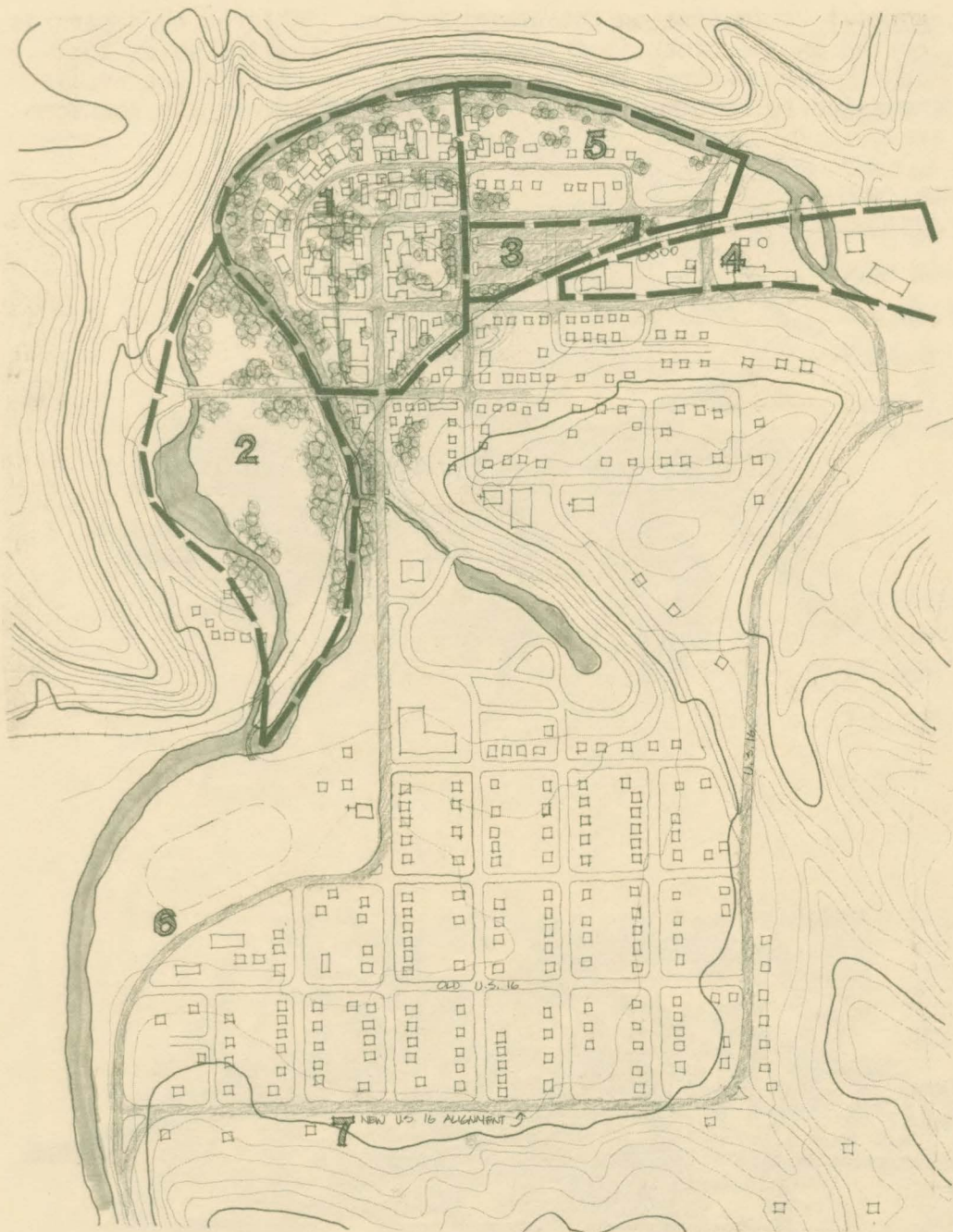


- BETTER DEFINE CBD-LET IT MIX WITH NEW RIVER FOR COMPRESION IN OTHER DIRECTIONS
- DEVELOP STRONG VISUAL EXPERIENTIAL EDGE ALONG RIVER IN RESPONSE TO VISUAL EDGES AND ANTICIPATED NEEDS
- DEVELOP A CHARACTER A FEEL OF COMPRESION & INTIMACY ON RIVER EDGE

C ADDITIONAL DEVELOPMENT: PARKS, PARKING, HEAVY INDUSTRY

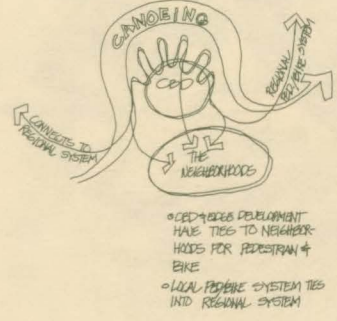


- DEVELOP A "NATIVE LANDSCAPE" PARK AND A "GEOLOGICAL" PARK IN ADDITION TO SILVIAN PARK
- PROVIDE AMPLE PARKING ADJACENT TO CBD
- COMBINE DEPLACED HEAVY INDUSTRY WITH OTHER EXISTING INDUSTRY AT EAST END OF TOWN-ACCES TO BOTH US 16 & 280, AND THE RAILROAD

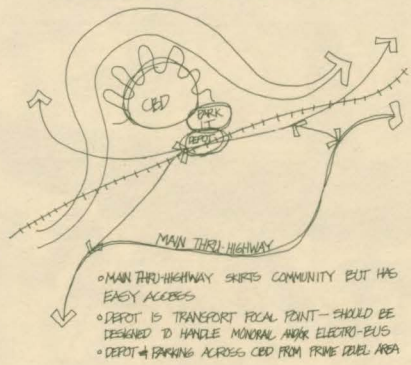


- 1 RIVERFRONT/CBD
- 2 WILDFLOWER PARK
- 3 PARKING/DEPOT
- 4 INDUSTRY
- 5 NORTH RIVERFRONT
- 6 & 7 NEW ROAD ALIGNMENT

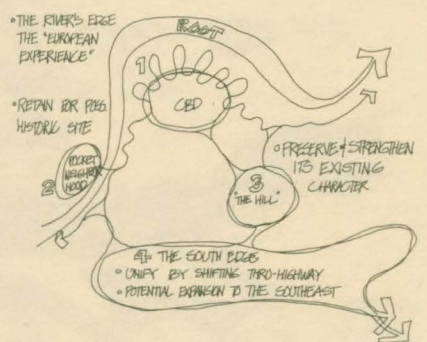
**D PEOPLE MOVEMENT:
NON-MECH. CIRCULATION**



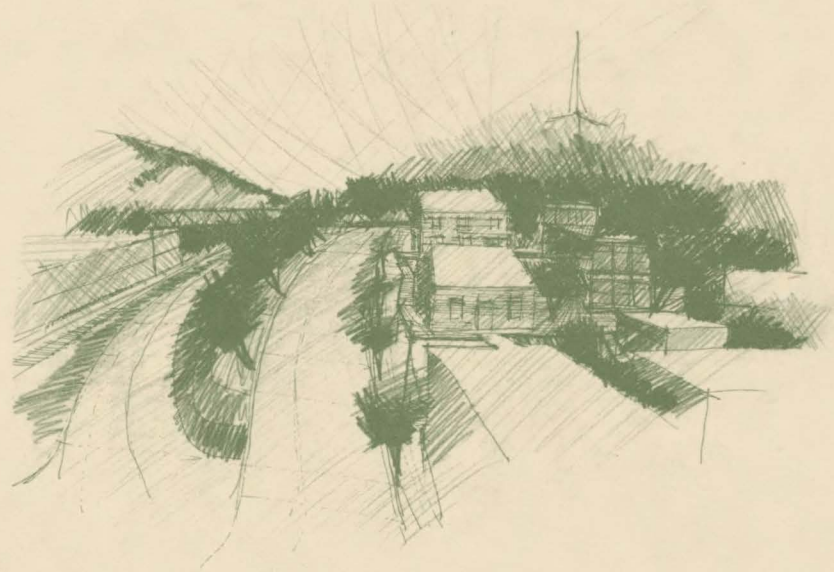
**E PEOPLE MOVEMENT:
VEHICULAR CIRCULATION**

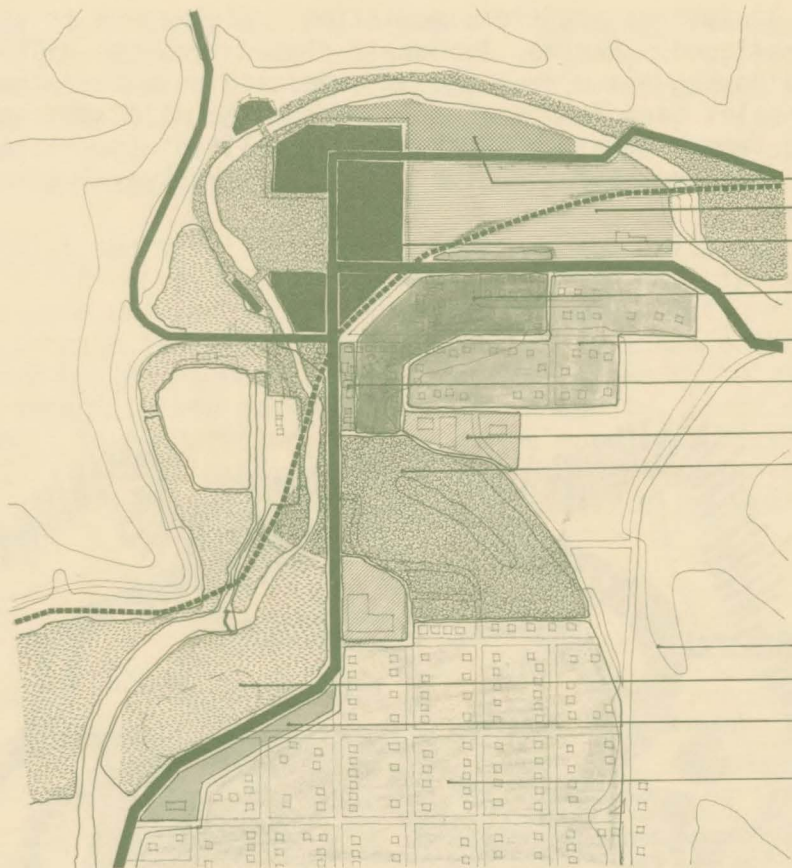


F THE NEIGHBORHOODS



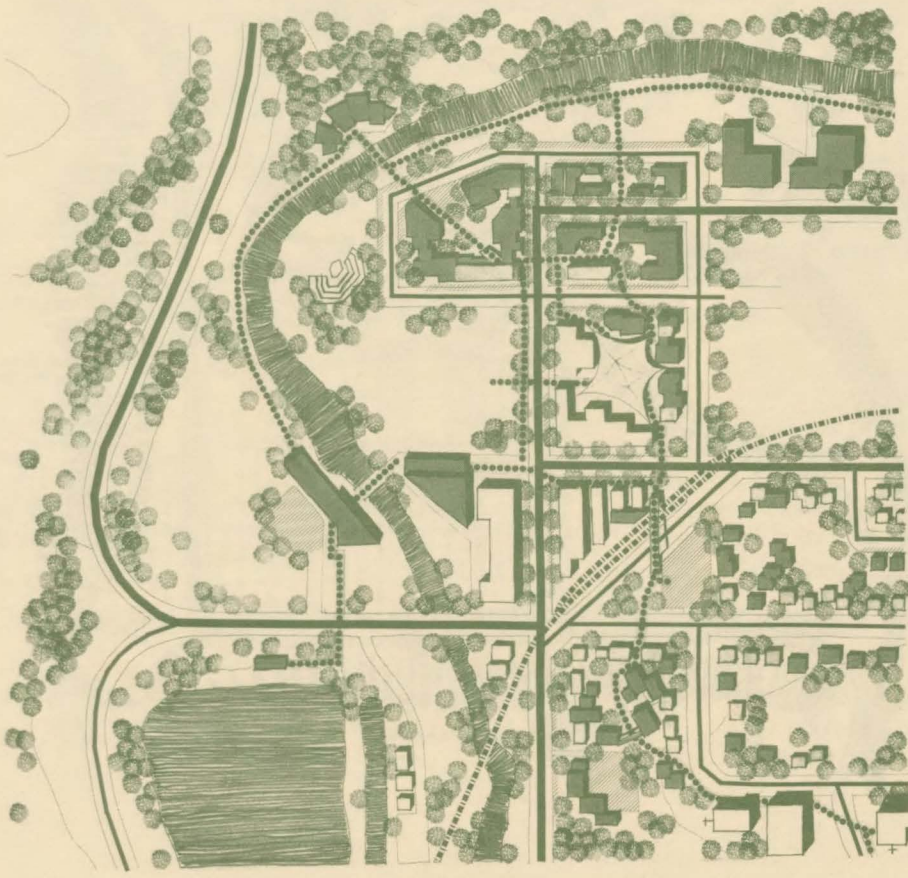
Proposal 2 focuses on the downtown area. A large open park is created on the block just west of the old theatre so as to connect the downtown and the river. A new traffic pattern is suggested to accommodate increased development in the downtown area.





BASIC ASSUMPTION:
 A GREATER EFFICIENCY
 OF LAND USE THROUGH
 INCREASED DENSITY

- COTTAGE INDUSTRY
- HIGH LAND USE INDUSTRY
- COMMERCIAL
- HIGH DENSITY HOUSING
- MEDIUM DENSITY HOUSING
- SUPPORT ACTIVITY
- SOCIAL AND CULTURAL
- OPEN SPACE SYSTEM
- PROPOSED DENSITY HOUSING
- RECREATION
- HIGHWAY SUPPORT
- LOW DENSITY HOUSING



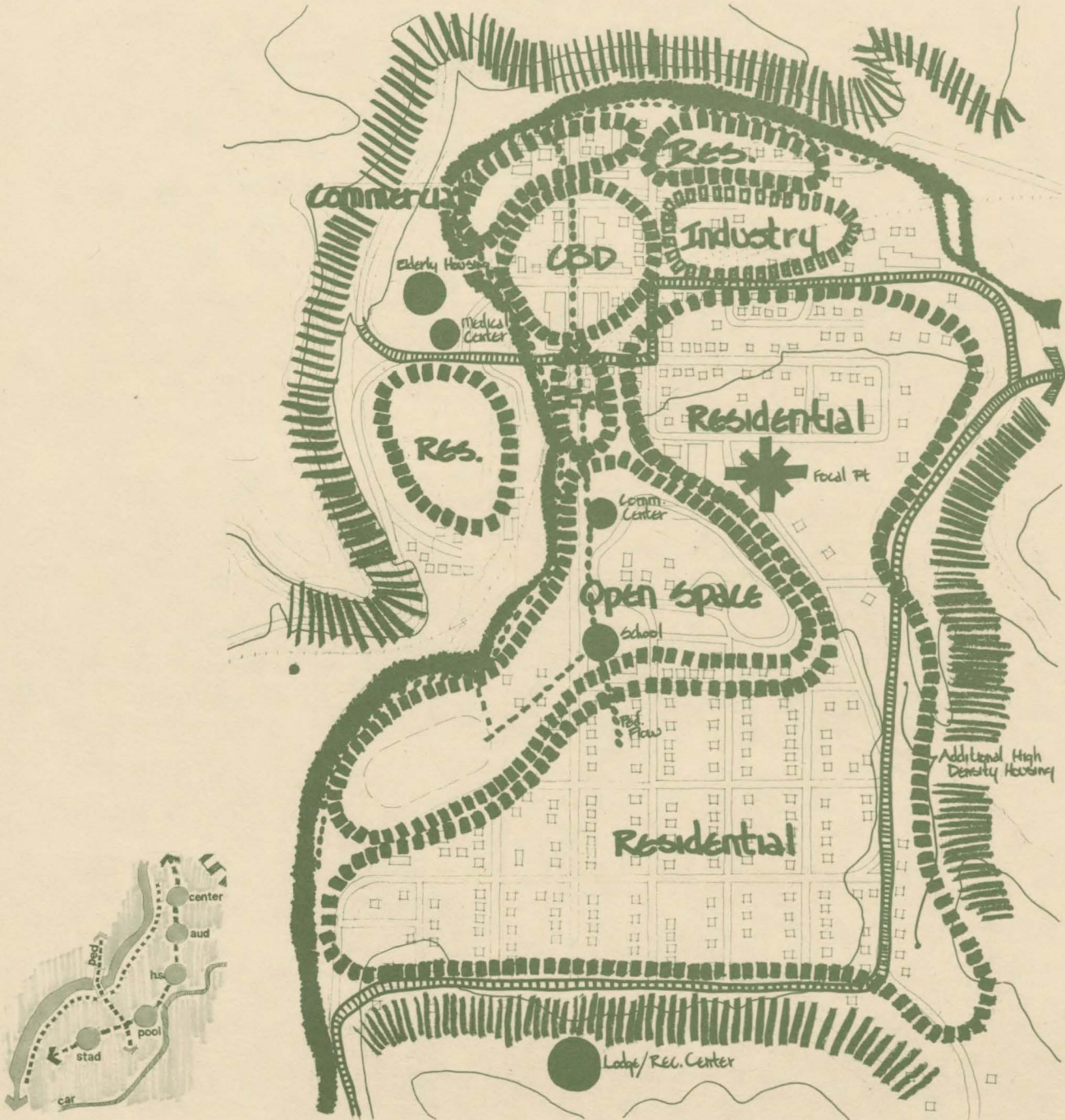
TOWN CONCEPT

INCREASED COMMERCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL
 FOCUS ON RIVER THROUGH CREATION OF A MAJOR
 OPEN PARK AROUND WHICH ACTIVITY OCCURS.
 SECONDARY FOCUS ON INTERIOR COURTS WITHIN
 ACTIVITY CENTERS, THE TOTAL OPEN SPACE
 SYSTEM THEN BECOMES A PEDESTRIAN LINKAGE
 NETWORK.

- FOCUS ON RIVER/BLUFF
- CONTRAST DENSITY/OPEN
- IDENTIFICATION WITH PLACE
- FEEDBACK OF ENERGY WITHIN COMMUNITY

- VEHICULAR FLOW
- ... PEDESTRIAN
- RAILROAD
- ▨ PARKING
- PROPOSED STRUCTURES
- EXISTING STRUCTURES

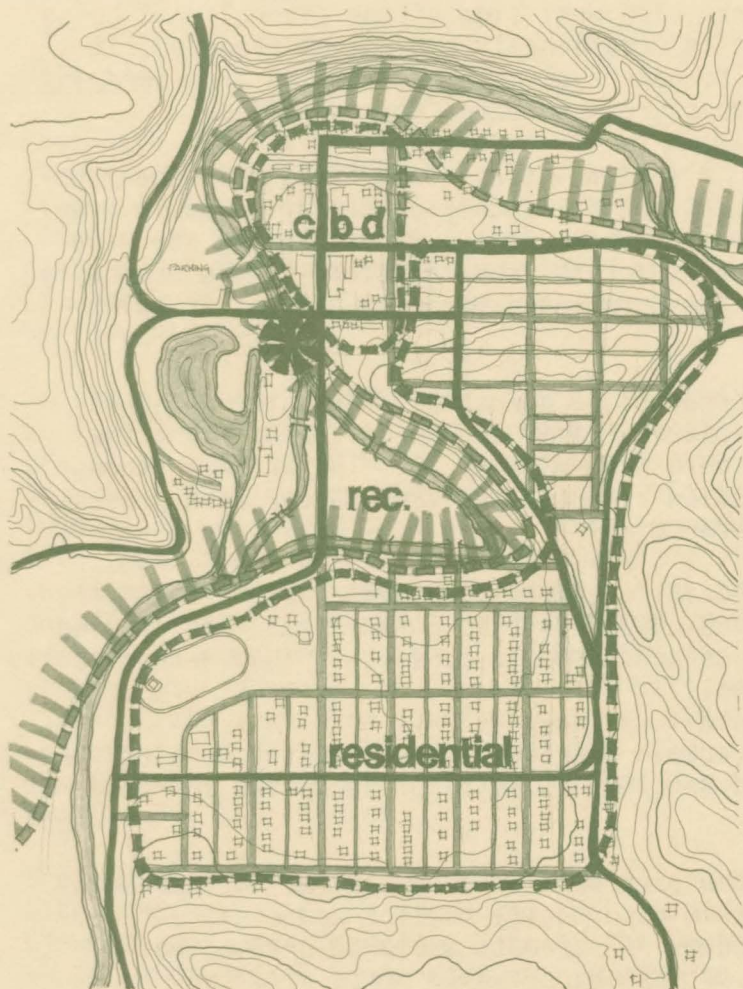
Proposal 3 explores traffic circulation. Highway 16 is partially realigned. Parkway Avenue is closed from the high school to downtown and replaced by a pedestrian path. The road past the sales barn is upgraded to become the major entrance to Lanesboro from Highway 16. Recreation facilities (see detail) might be expanded near the high school when Parkway Avenue is removed.



Proposal 4 opens an old river channel behind Sylvan Park, turning the park into an island. The mill pond is developed as a second park. Existing camping facilities are enlarged and the area near the old VFW building becomes a visitor center, linking the two parks. The location of these linked parks would encourage campers to shop in the downtown area.

Proposal 5 seeks to link the major landscape units of Lanesboro -- the central hill, the riverbank, and the bluffs -- into a more unified whole. The proposal has eight goals: 1) to promote pedestrian circulation, 2) to enhance the sense of entrance into town, 3) to relate the community to the river, 4) to integrate new housing into the community, 5) to retain the small town character, 6) to provide more community service space, 7) to link existing open spaces through pathways, and 8) to preserve the depot for use with a revitalized rail service.

Proposal 4



Proposal 5



- a auto bypass
- b major auto route through city
- c pedestrian greenway
- d central business district
- e gateway
- f industry
- g park
- h site for proposal structure
- i outstanding landform view

DESIGNS FOR CRITICAL AREAS

While the students were working on their designs for Lanesboro as a whole, they identified areas that presented either large problems or great potential for new development. Seven such sectors were identified and two of the seven were selected by the supervising University faculty for further study and more-detailed design proposals. The seven areas are briefly described.

1) The downtown. There are still enough old buildings that could be rehabilitated to sustain the image of an early twentieth century community. Parking is limited as are new building sites and traffic circulation to the highway is obscure.

2) The hillside and entry to downtown. This, the oldest section of town, has many deteriorating structures in need of renovation or removal. Many buildings might be preserved to retain their old appearance. New buildings could be constructed so as to be similar to size, appearance, and materials. The area near the depot is cramped and shoddy-looking.

3) The old ballpark. The west side of the river is not being used. Although it is occasionally subject to flooding, it would be possible to make a pleasant recreation area here and perhaps develop structures protected from flooding.

4) The riverbank. A regional trail from Preston to the junction of the north and south branches of the river would probably be routed along the bank here. By developing the riverbank as a linear park, access from the trail to the community would be eased. Lanesboro would become a natural stopping point.

5) The highway approaches to downtown. A greater sense of arrival and anticipated arrival can be developed along the entrances to Lanesboro from Highway 16. The antique stores give a good impression although the VFW and car wash present a beleaguered appearance.

6) The park and recreation fields. Sylvan Park is set apart from the river which could serve to enhance it. The playing fields near the high school would benefit if they were directly linked to the school.

7) The industrial area. Where will new industry locate? New development should be sited so as to preserve the character of the community.

The hillside and the riverbank were chosen for further study. Each area presents an opportunity to plan new construction. On the hillside, teams of students explored developing new townhouses below the church while preserving the old buildings along Elmwood (Old Slant Avenue) either as residences or as small specialty shops. On the riverbank, students studied the possibilities for building a restaurant and motel.



Hillside

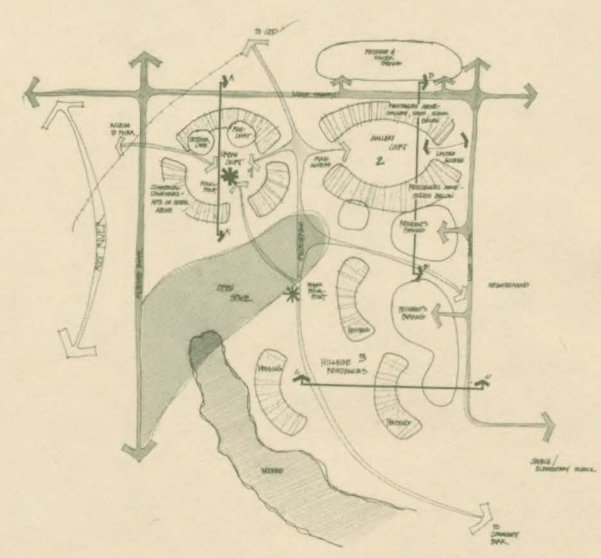
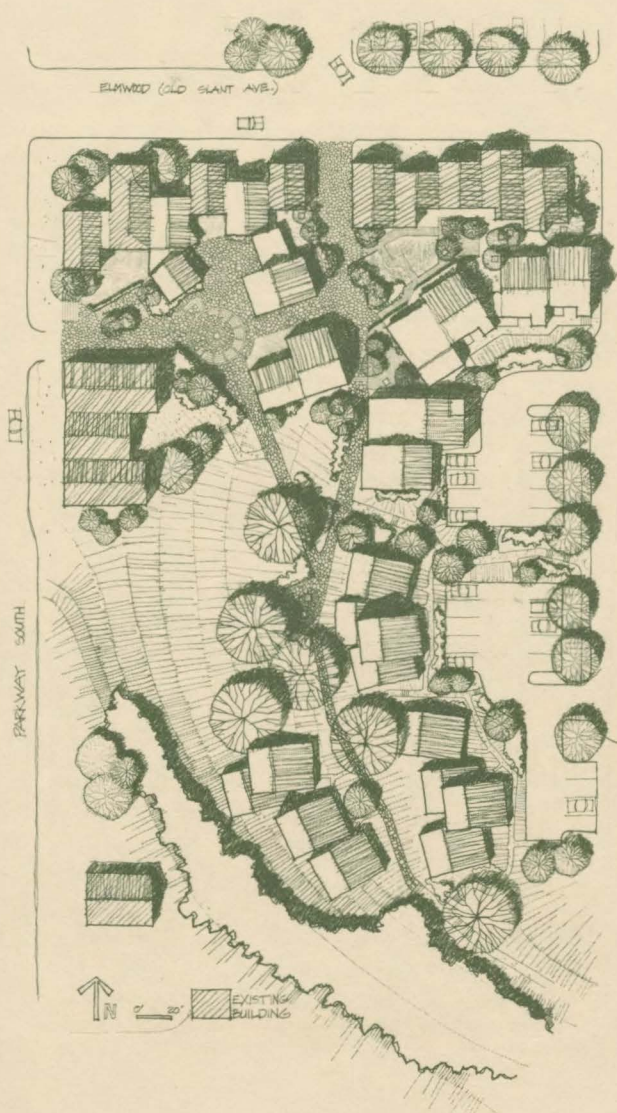
This site abuts a crucial crossroads in Lanesboro. Two major streets, the railroad track, the river, and the southern edge of the business district all join at the intersection of Elmwood and Parkway. This point marks a gateway between the residential sections and the business and industrial sections of Lanesboro. A number of design opportunities are presented by the intersection.

If the railroad is abandoned, its bridge and roadbed provide an easily used crossing for a regional trail along the southern branch of the Root River. Should the business district wish to expand to take advantage of traffic along the trail, buildings along the north base of the hillside could be converted into small shops catering to trail users. If canoe traffic increases along the south branch of the river, the old VFW building and the Midland Service Station could serve canoeists wishing to stop in Lanesboro. Along the hillside, below the church, housing could be set into the hill for residents wishing easy access to downtown, a view overlooking Sylvan Park, and proximity to the churches and the elementary school. New teachers, store clerks, and retired people might find these units appealing.

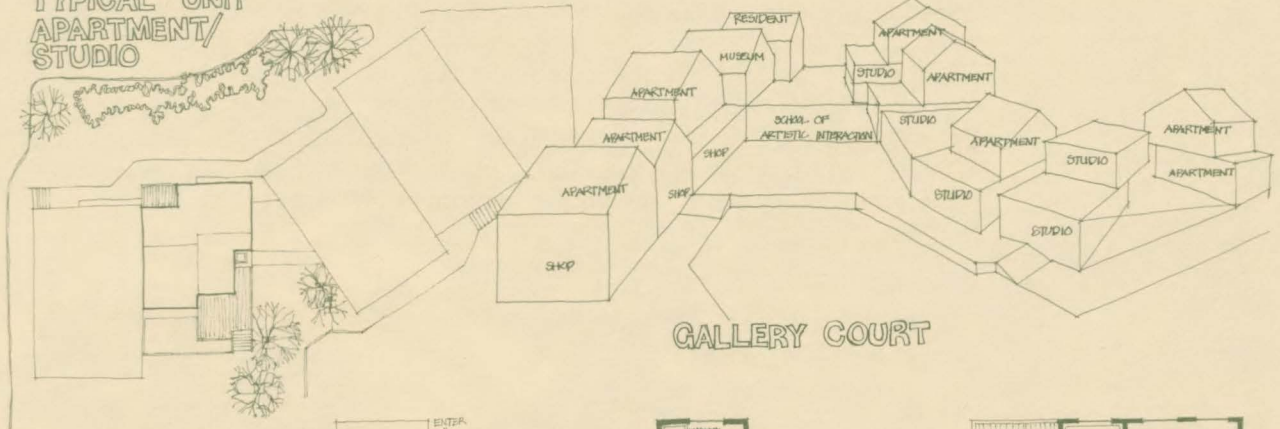
The students designed two variations of new housing for the site. Both variations preserved the existing housing along Elmwood, but one remodelled some of the houses into small shops. Both added townhouses and apartments. There were other differences. Notice the orientation of the housing, in each concept, the preservation of existing housing along Kenilworth, the location of parking areas, and the creation of a "European street" feeling in one of the concepts.

Concept 1: An Artists' Colony. The recommendation called for a series of courts surrounded by shops, studios, a small gallery, townhouses, and apartments. The courts would be linked by pedestrian walkways with extensions to the downtown, to the river near the VFW, to Sylvan Park, and to the churches and school on the hill.

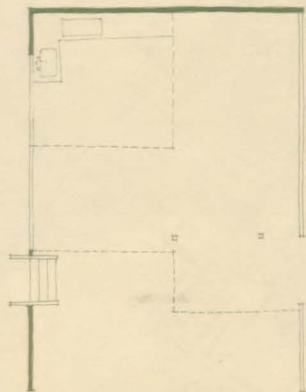
The mixture of artists, shoppers, gallery visitors, and townspeople would generate an exciting attraction in the area. The development would complement the existing antique trade in Lanesboro.



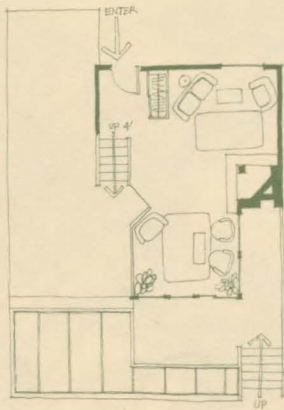
TYPICAL UNIT
APARTMENT/
STUDIO



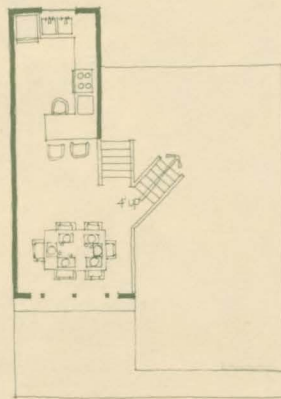
GALLERY COURT



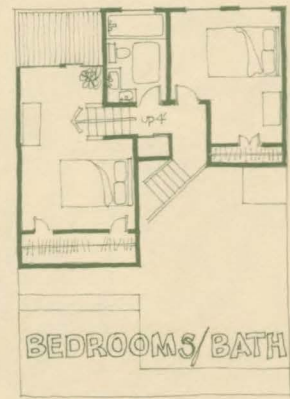
STUDIO LEVEL



LIVING LEVEL

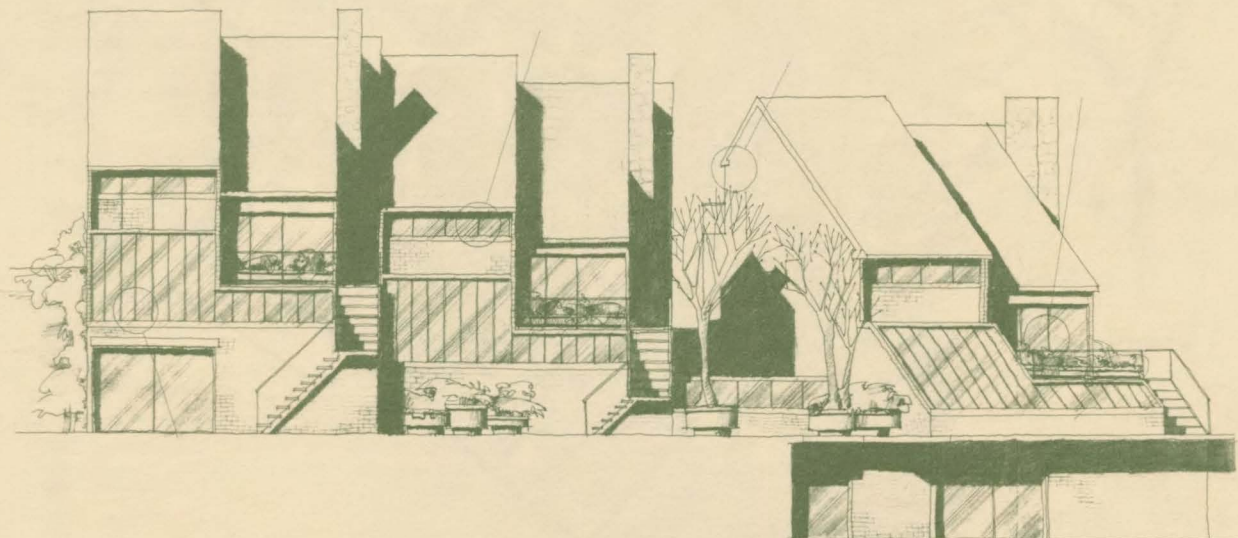


KITCHEN/DINING



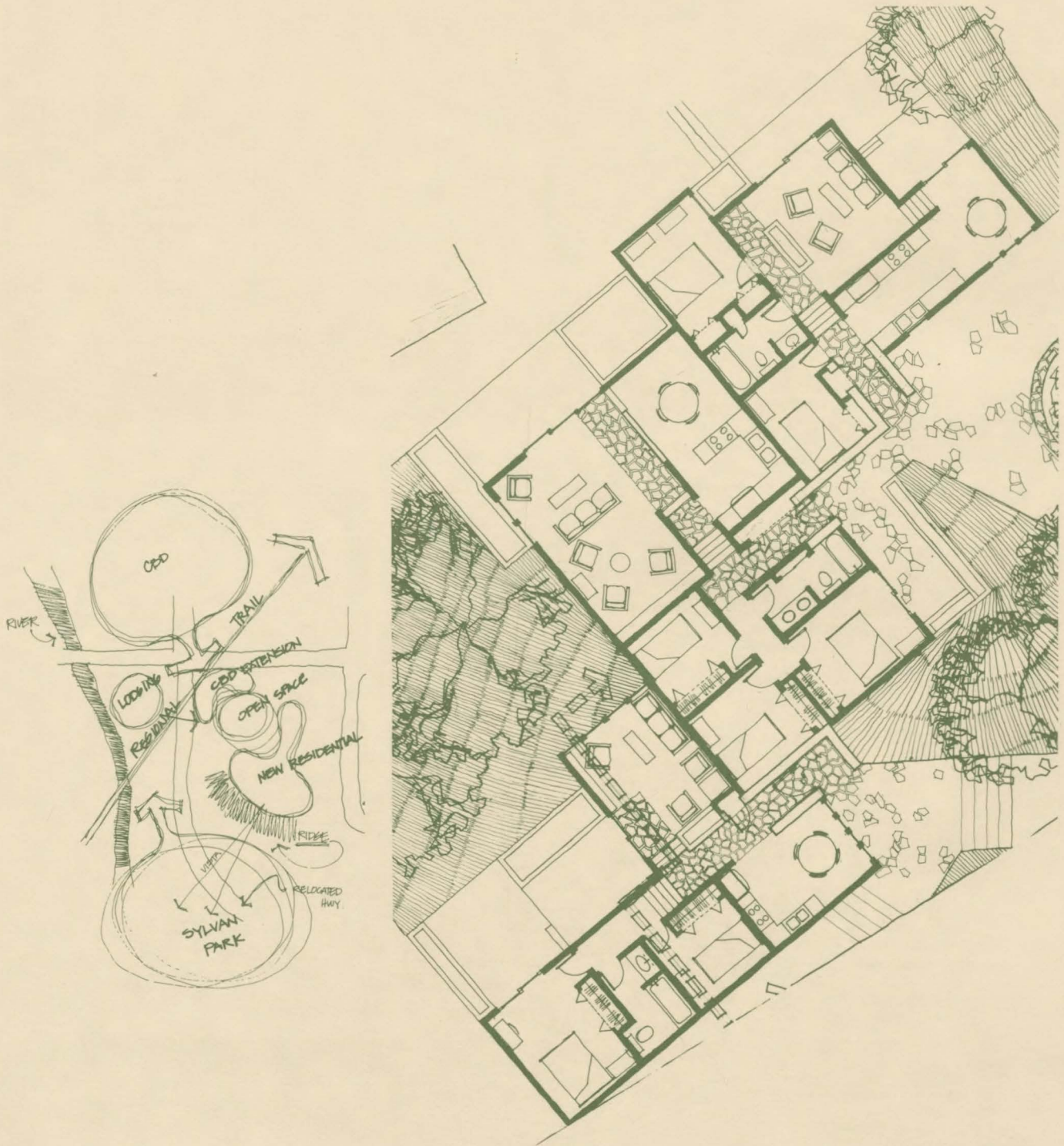
BEDROOMS/BATH

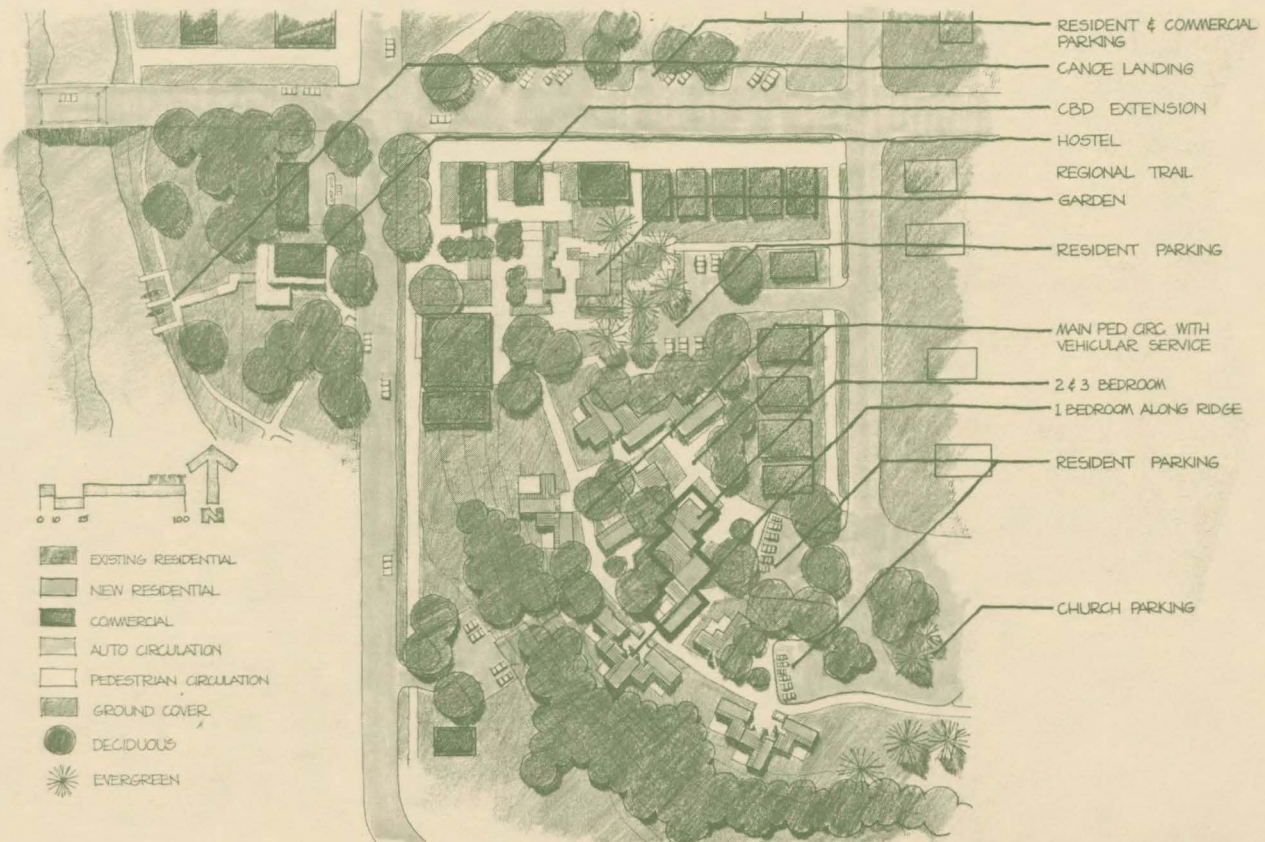
unit plans ↗ ↘



Concept 2: Lanesboro Crossing. The site could be developed as a mixture of four types of activity: lodging for the regional trail, new residential units, businesses to serve trail users, and open gardens for townspeople and visitors to enjoy.

This concept is based on the assumption that a regional trail would pass through Lanesboro using the existing railroad right-of-way and bridge. This route would bring trail users through the heart of town. By providing convenient services and a rest area, visitors would be encouraged to stop.





Riverbank

The view from either bank of the river toward the other is shabby now. Neither bank is maintained. The old ballpark is being used as a dumping site. If precautions against flooding were taken, the ballpark could become an integral part of an expanded recreation area near the commercial downtown. Both a motel and a specialty restaurant have been suggested by residents as facilities needed in Lanesboro.

Students proposed four design variations of a motel and restaurant development for the west side of the river, just north of County Highway 8. Each of the four designs included use of the old bridge as a walkway to the business district. Differences between the proposals were in the orientation of the motel units, and in the inclusion of commercial facilities along with the rest of the development. In two cases, the motel units line the Root River.

Design 1 includes an inn-type motel linked by a pedestrian bridge to the east bank where an extensive commercial development would occur. The commercial development would focus on a plaza on the river bank at the terminus of the footbridge.

Design 2 locates a bar, restaurant, and meeting rooms at the west end of the old bridge. The motel units extend along a path parallel to the river. The development would be located on the highest portion of the site so as to provide flood protection.

Design 3 and Design 4 create a new waterway draining from the millpond. Ponds are formed at several points along the new stream to create areas of interest toward which the motel units would be oriented.

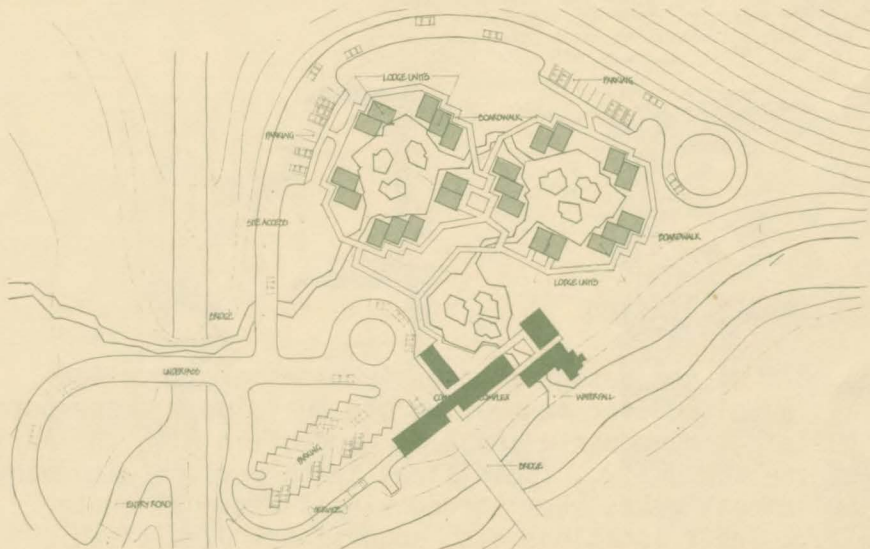
Design One



Design Two

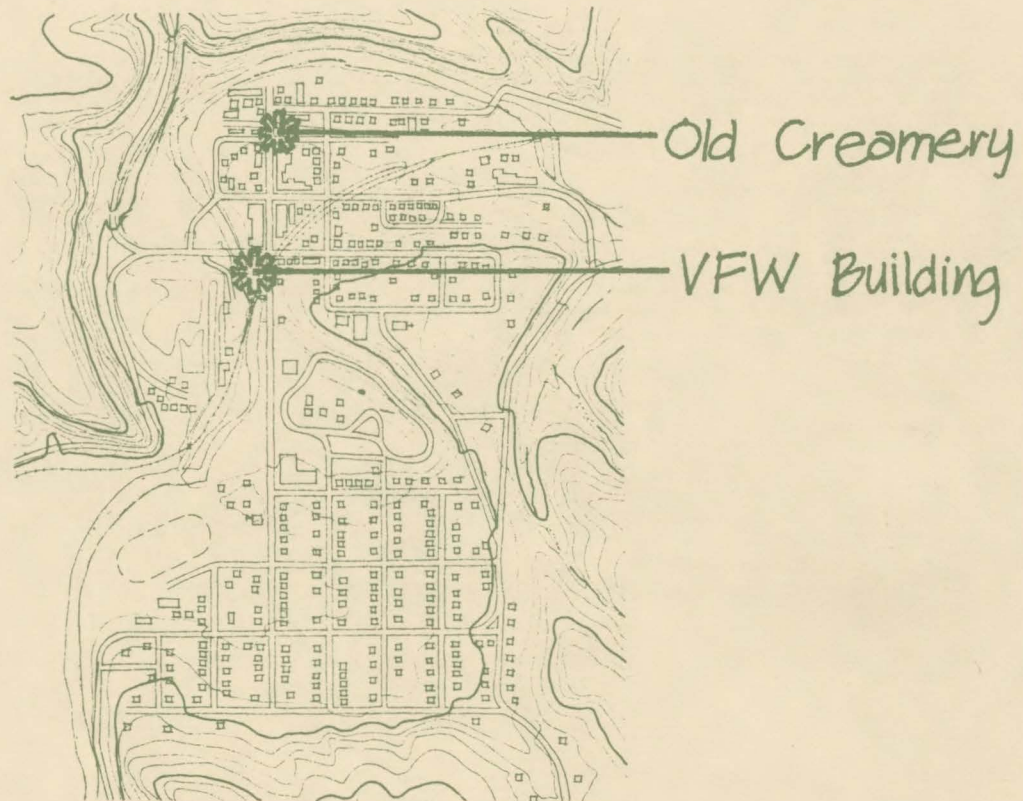


Design Three



Design Four





BUILDING REHABILITATION

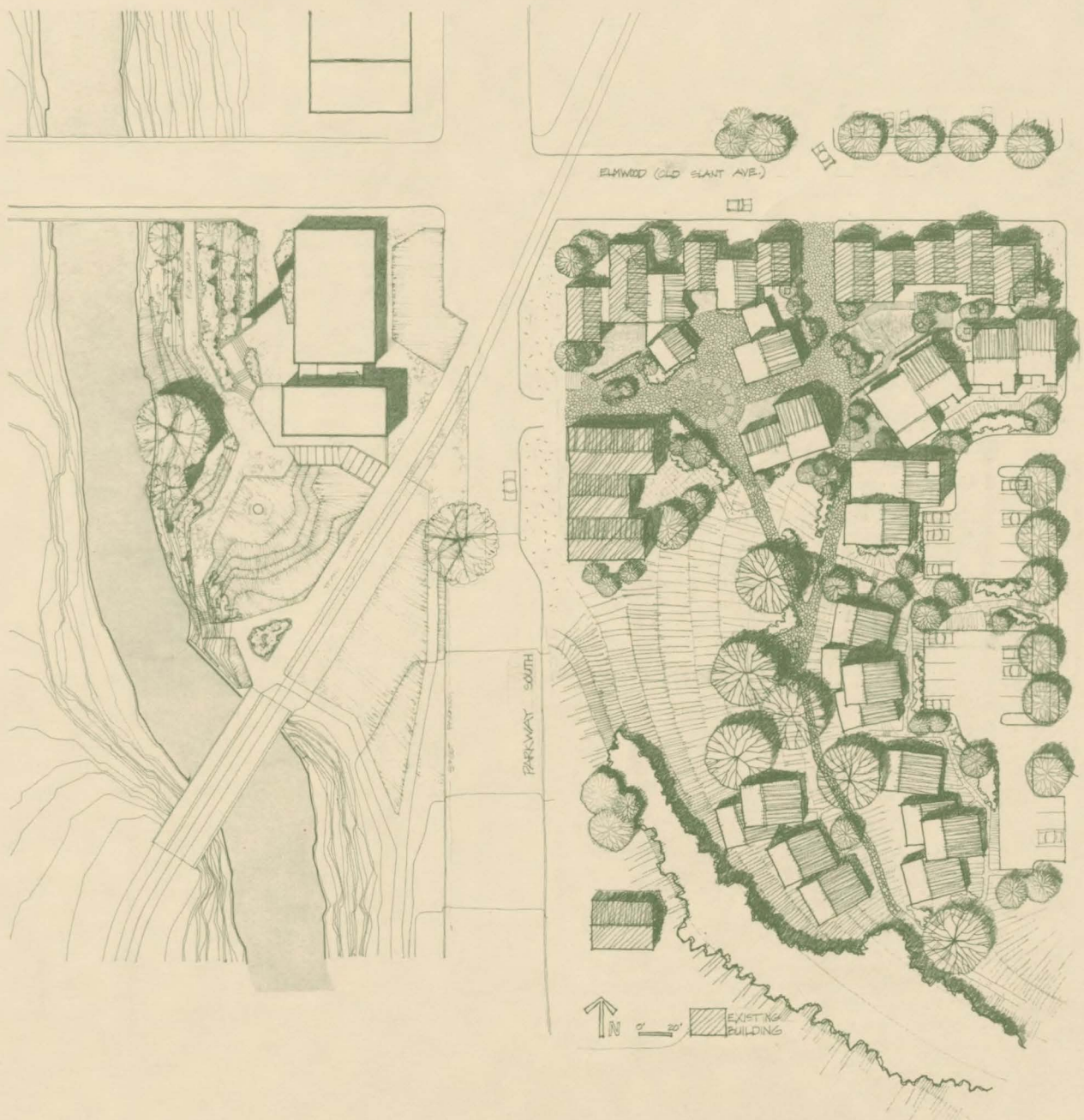
A final part of the design studies in Lanesboro involved proposals developed for renovating old buildings. Lanesboro's older buildings give one a sense of connection with the early years of the community. Their size, in comparison with many other buildings, makes them strong visual elements in the community. Their locations also suggest new uses to which they could be put in a time of expansion.

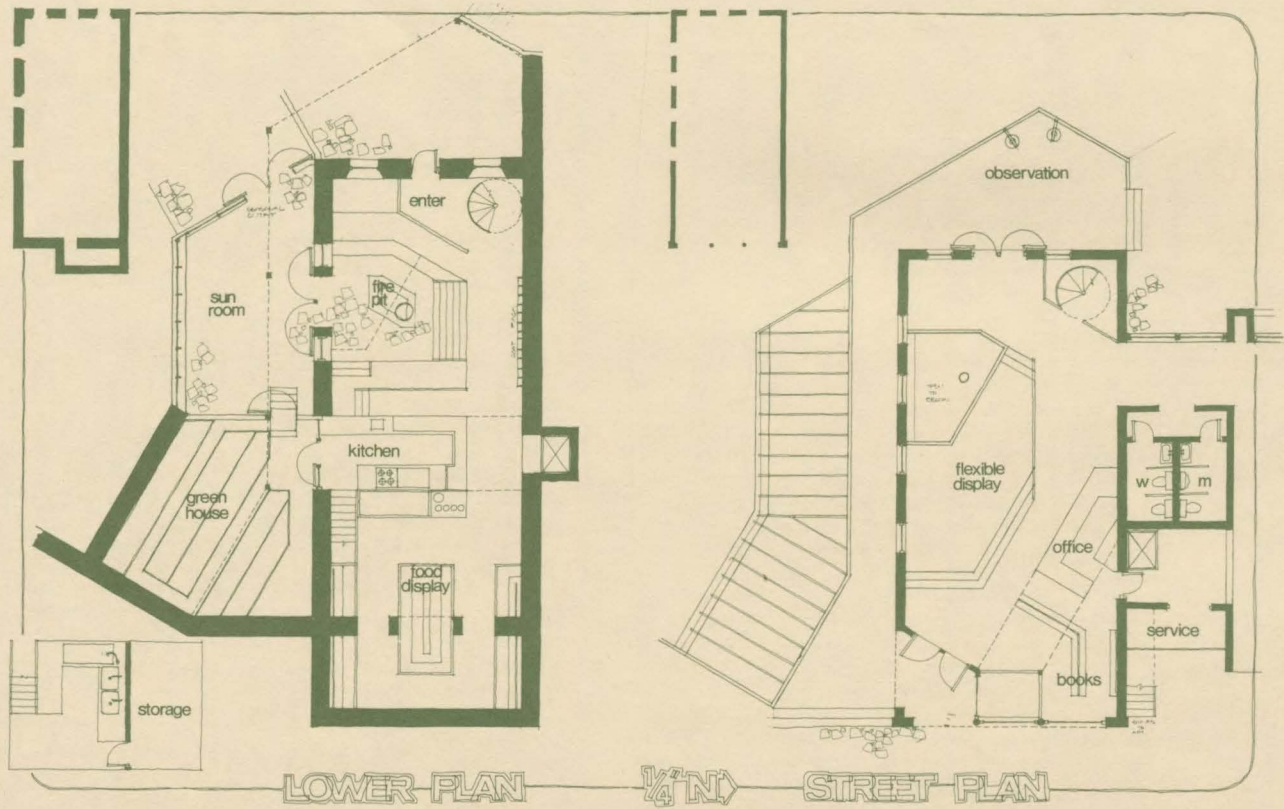
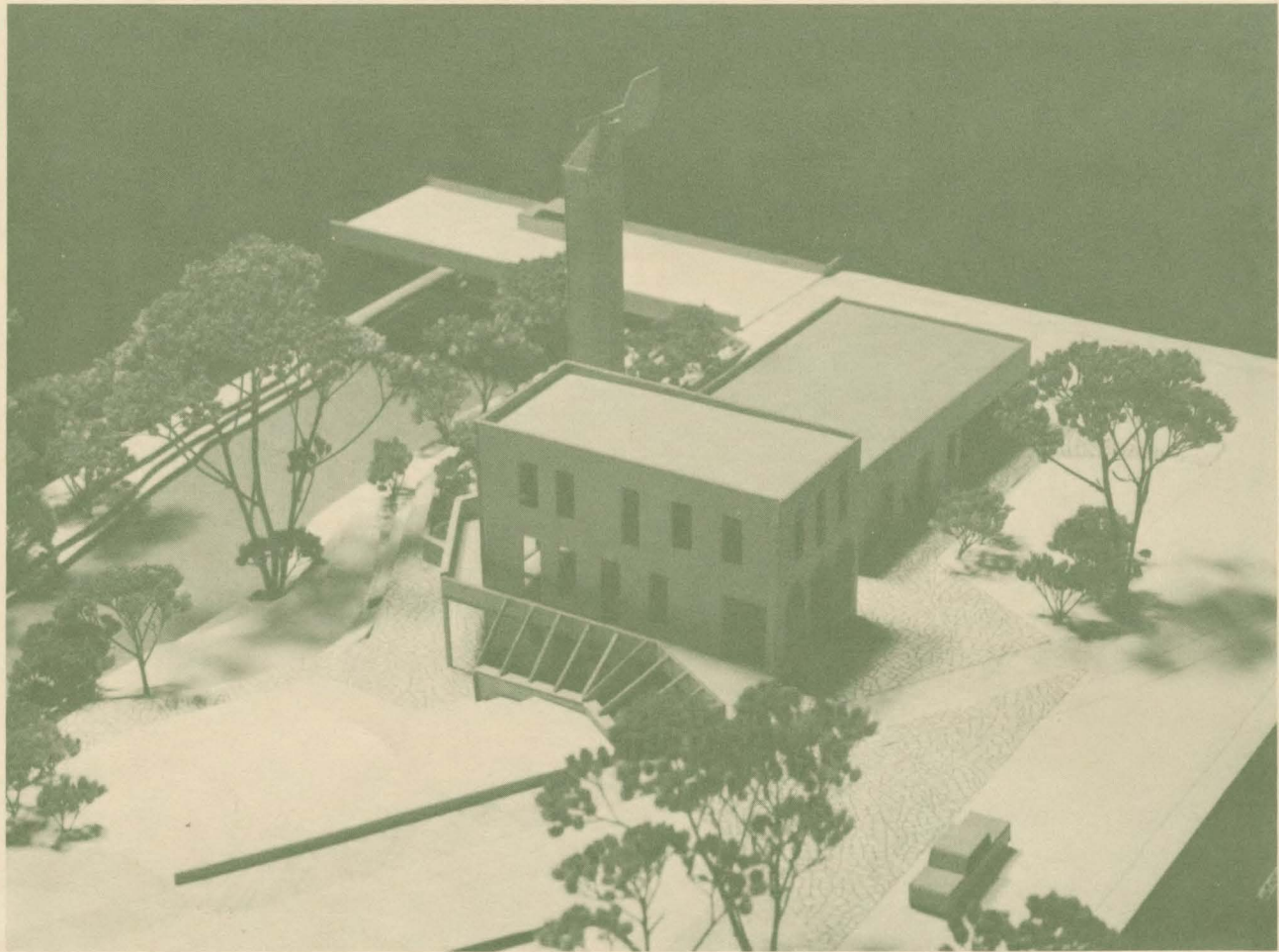
Two buildings in the commercial district were chosen, with the permission of the owners, for study: the VFW Hall and the Old Poultry Building north of the White Front Cafe. Both are masonry and concrete structures of considerable age. Plans were drawn showing how each building could be renovated to house several compatible activities. Solar heating devices were included in the building plans to complement existing heating equipment.

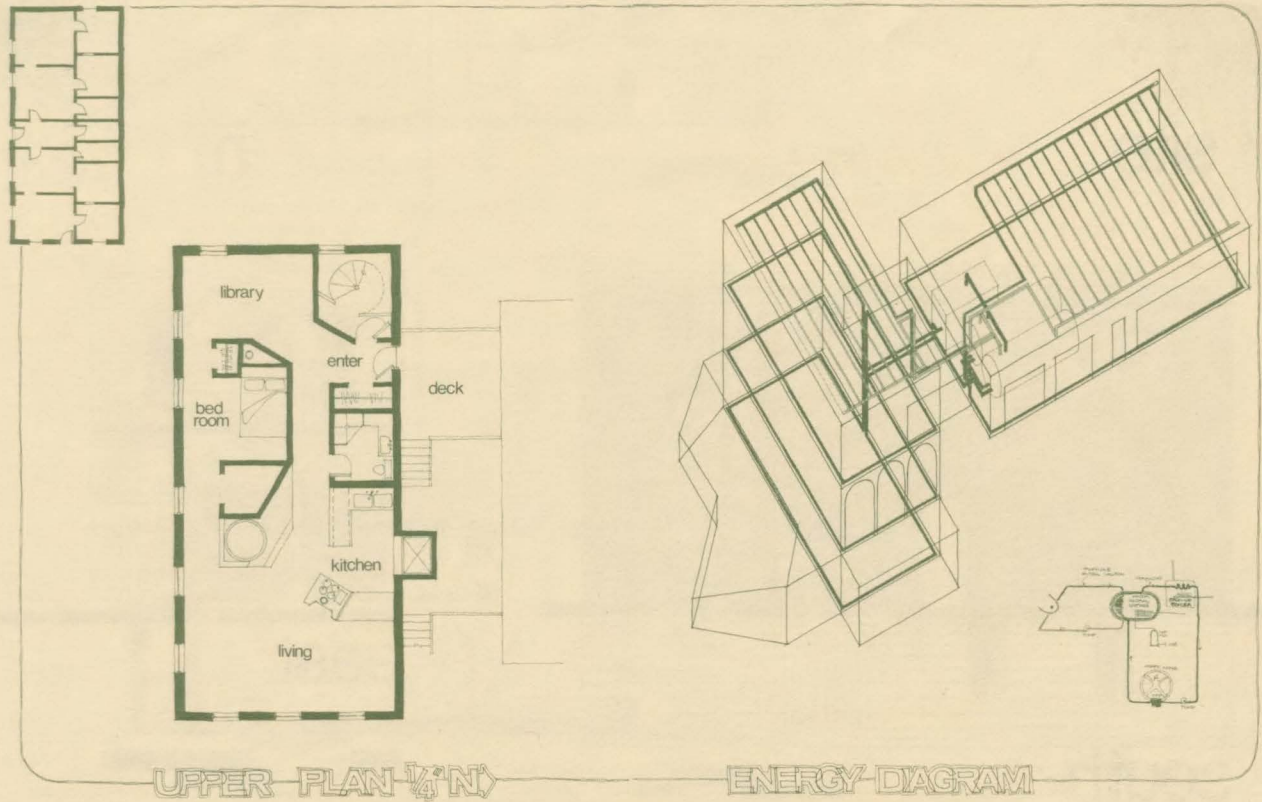
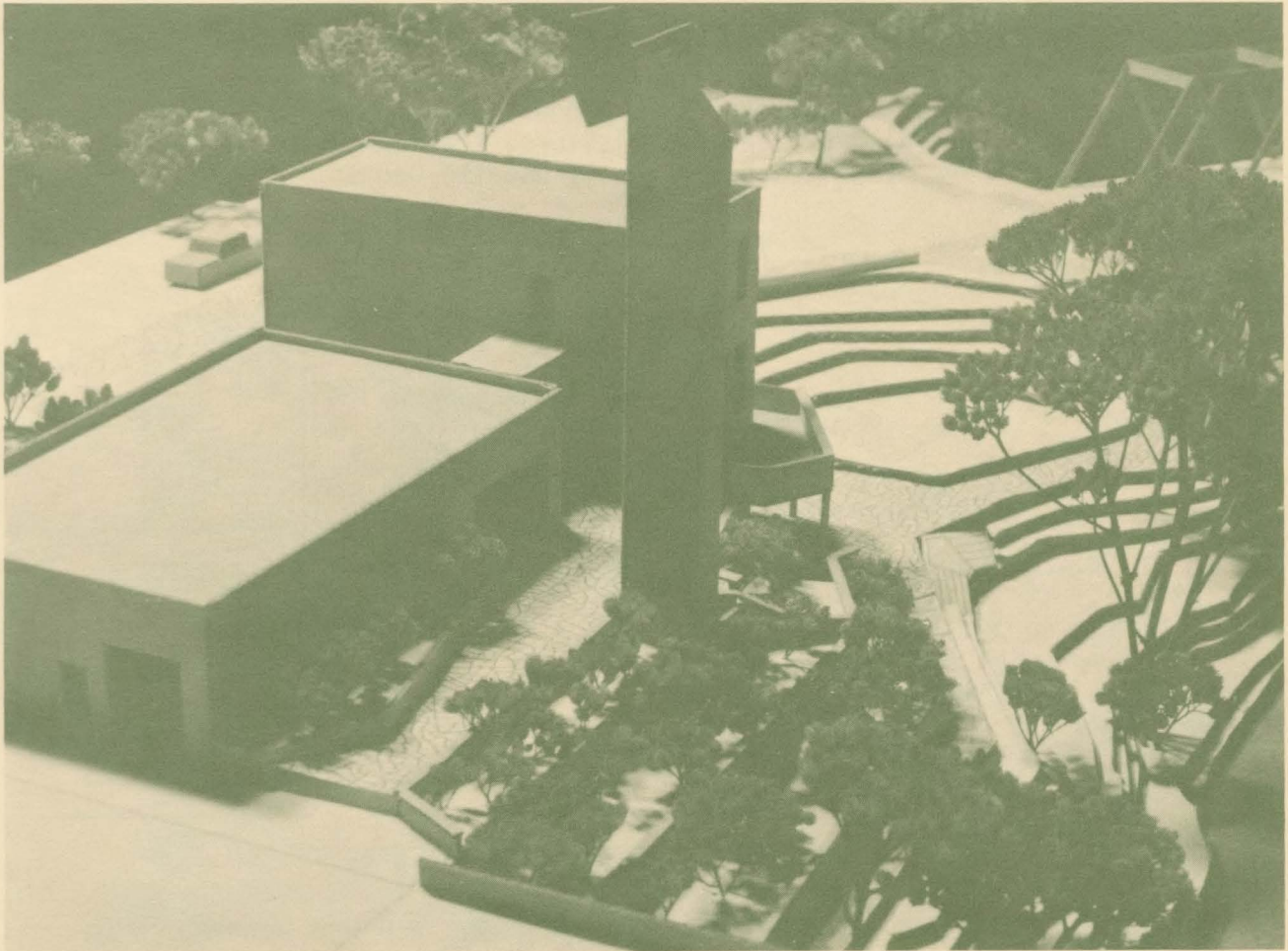
Lanesboro VFW

Students prepared two proposals. Each suggests reuse of the building as a multipurpose facility. The students recognized the crucial location of the building at the entry to the commercial area and along the bank of the river. Both proposals suggest new facilities that would attract more people to the commercial section of town.

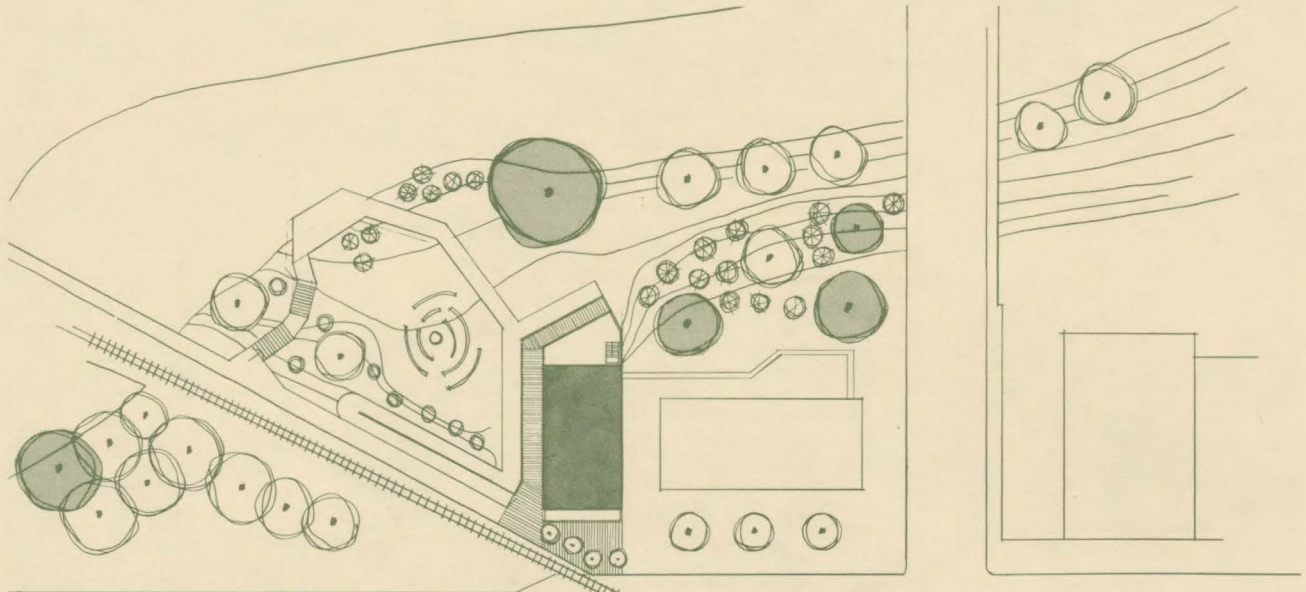
"The Kettle" combines a visitor information center, a small restaurant, and a residential section of apartments. The building's location on the river bank between downtown and Sylvan Park makes such a combination especially appealing for tourists and campers. If the Midland Service Station were also developed as a specialty shop catering to campers and regional trail users, the southwest corner of the crossroads would become a strong entry point to the remaining commercial district.



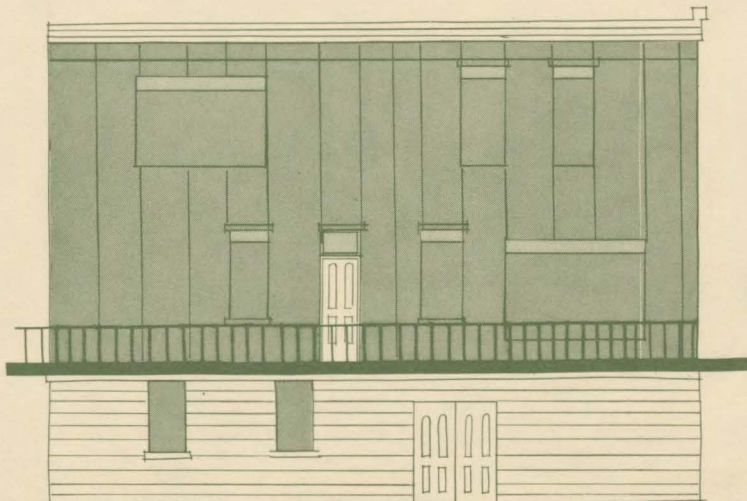




"Community Center" was suggested because the building sits on the boundary between the residential area and the commercial district. It is close to the homes of potential users yet adjacent to the downtown stores. If activities were also created for visitors, then campers using Sylvan Park campsites could easily use the Center.



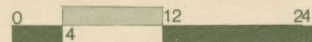
site

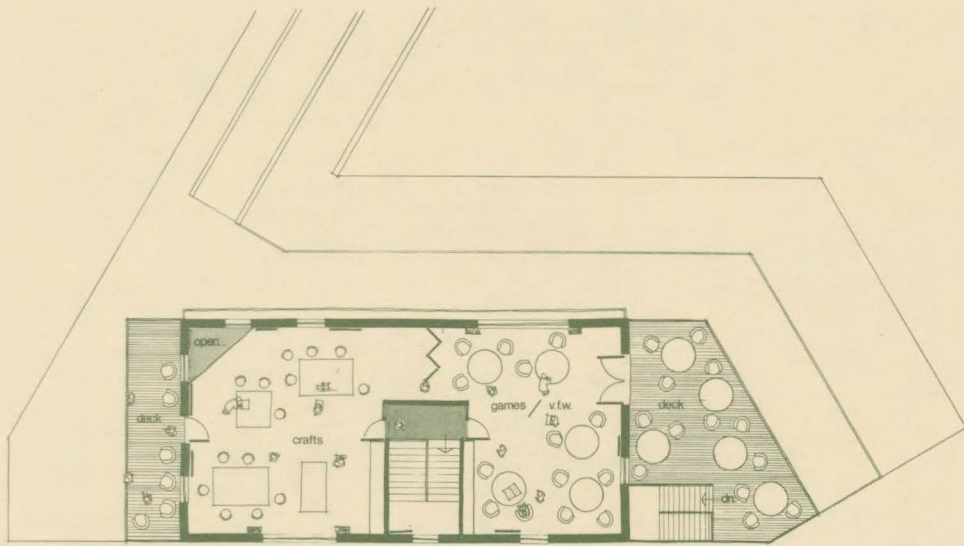


south

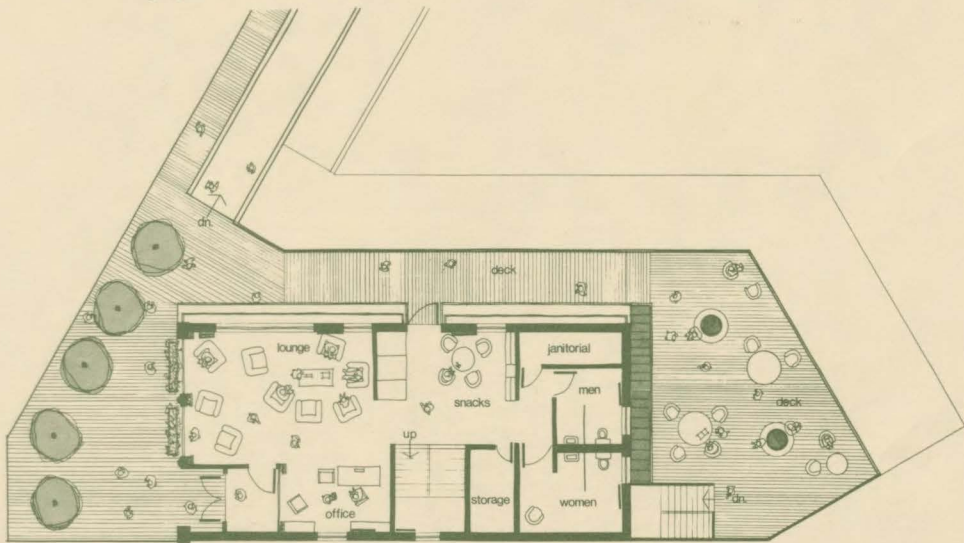
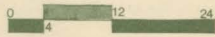


east

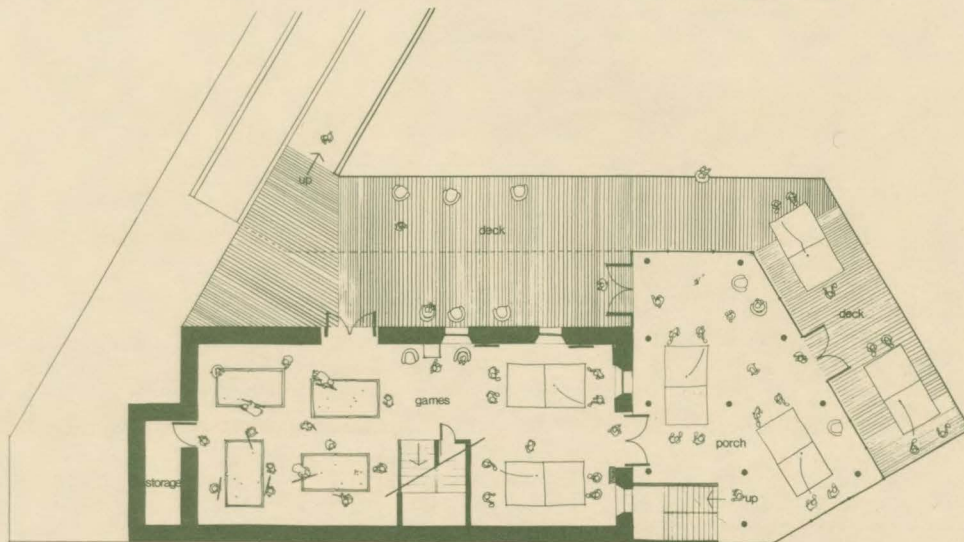
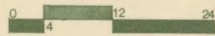




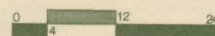
upper



main

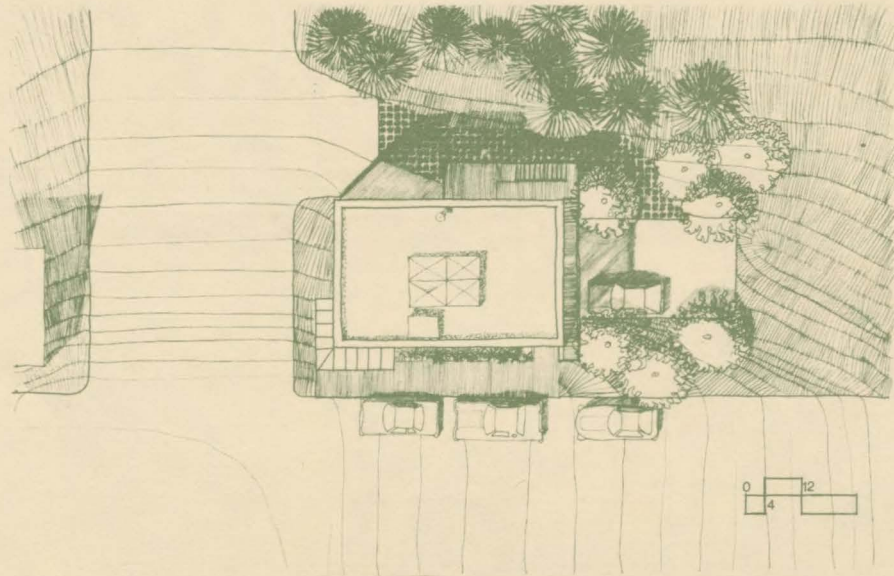


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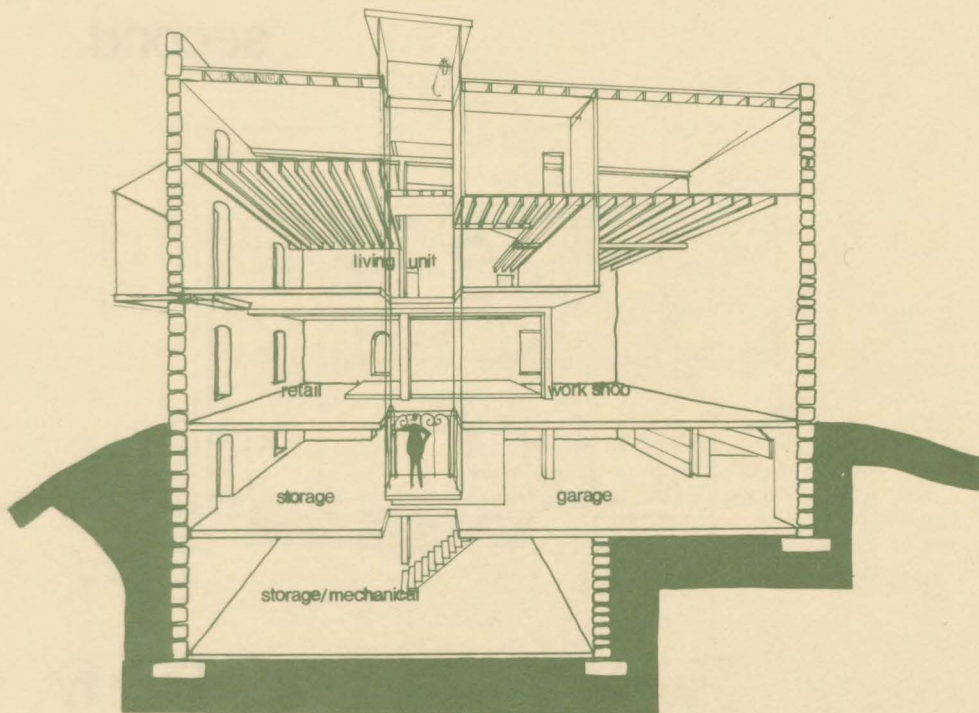
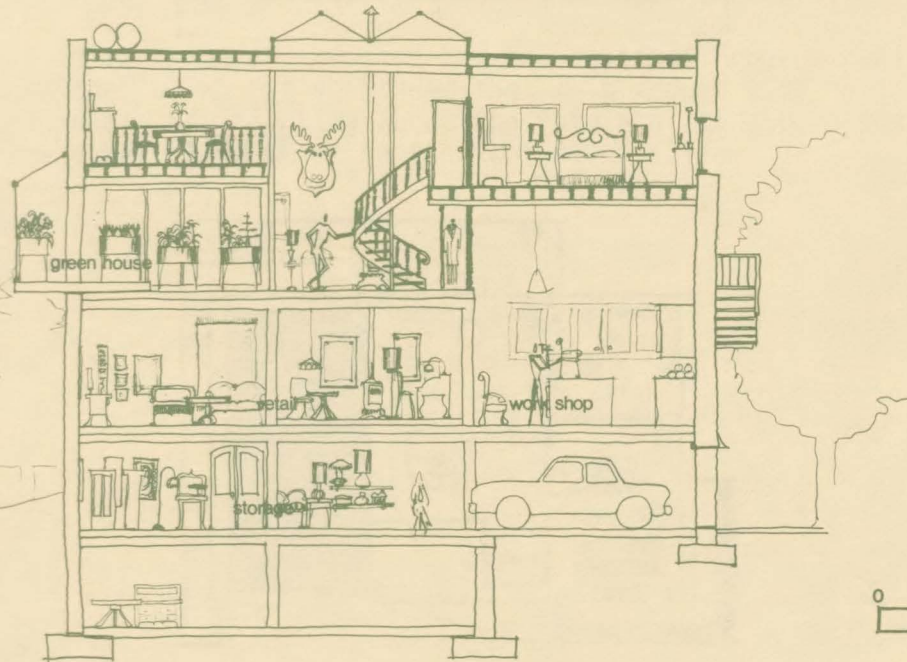


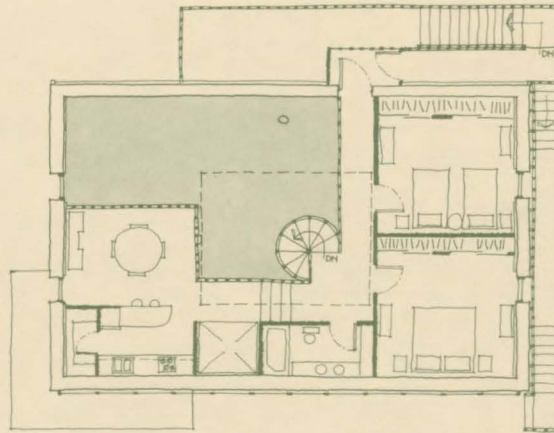
The Old Poultry Building

One proposal was designed for this building, suggesting a new combined use as a shop and shopowner's apartment. Location was again a prime consideration in choosing to study the building. It is near downtown and provides another means of expanding the commercial district while preserving a handsome building. The massive quality of the building makes it a local landmark which anchors and defines the northern edge of downtown.

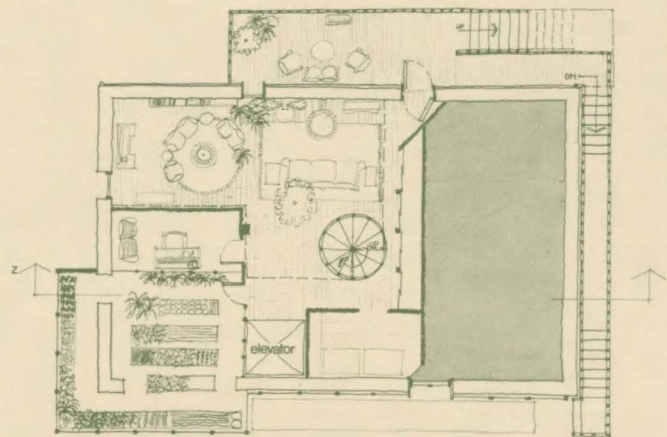


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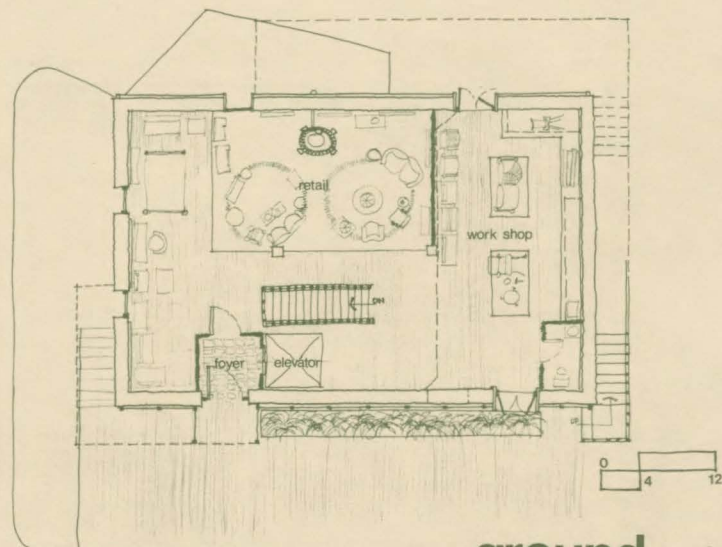




third



second



ground level



CONCLUSION

The ideas contained in this report describe one theme around which new development might grow. Recreational development could be a new focus for economic growth in Lanesboro and in the entire Valley. The decision to pursue these ideas rests with the citizens of Lanesboro. Much more work remains to determine the feasibility of the students' concepts.

It is the hope of the students and staff of Project Rediscovery and the Collaborative Studio that this report will help stimulate new thinking about the future of Lanesboro and the other communities in the Root River Valley.

This list attempts to name all those who contributed in various ways-

Participating Citizens

FILLMORE COUNTY

Chatfield

Willie Eppen
Rex Harwood
George Haven
Margaret and Jim Perkins

Fountain

Herman Freese
Loren Fretland

Lanesboro

Orval Amdahl
Jim Buzza
Don Capron
John F. Clay
Marge Drake
Dallas Garnatz
Leo Hager
Robert Hall
Riley Hoheisel
Avis Jensen
Stan Johnson
Otto Kitzman
Lanesboro City Council
Lanesboro Community Club
Roger and Caroline Micheaux
Ole Mordahl
Paul Nelson
Jim Sheldon
Allan Vogen

Peterson

Curtis Johnson

Preston

Carl Bakalyar
Verdonn Meyer

Rushford

Earl Bunke
Stanley Hoiland
Joe Rislove
Tri-County Electric Cooperative

Spring Valley

Neil Saylor

Whalen

Gene Johnson

Wykoff

Steve Glady

HOUSTON COUNTY

Brownsville

Duane Wohlers

Calendonia

Leon Fisch
Patt Guth
Virgil Johnson
Dr. A. Rolf Jore
Norman Mechtel
Tom Murphy
Steve Schuldt
Darryl Tessmer

Houston

Doris and John
Howard Benson
Mason Witt

Houston County

Historical Society

Spring Grove

Helen Dahle
Donna Otterness

-to the preceding ideas for Lanesboro and the Root River Valley.

Participating Students

Karen Caswell
Bob Close
Gene Dabrowski
Michael Dunn
Robert Espeset
Margaret D. Fleck
Sylvia Frank
Sally Grans
Pat Hagen
Tom Hartley
Mark Hoversten
Nancy Leask
Linda Michie
Paul Olson
Rick Packer
Michael Pederson
David Pinske
Guy Reithmeyer
Rus Rose
Jim Ruckle
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Scott Stanton
George Stevens
Jim Strapko
Steve Thompson
Dick Toft
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