

5-1981

An Urban Design Project for Asheville, North Carolina

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ASHEVILLE

north carolina

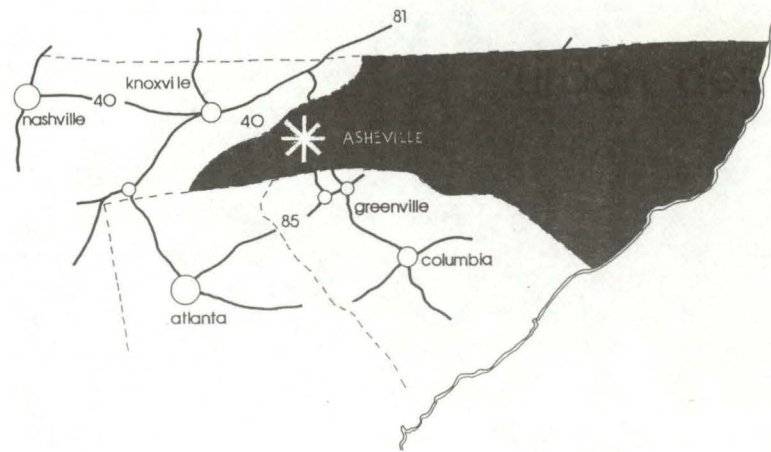
urban design project

PROBLEM

placement of structures into the central business district, with a concentration on the shopping district

SUBMITTED BY

WILLIAM R. ZIMINSKI



LOCATOR

AN URBAN DESIGN PROJECT for
ASHEVILLE, North Carolina

A terminal project submitted to the faculty of the
College of Architecture, Clemson University, in
partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree
Master of Architecture.

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Statement of Problem

The decline of the downtown in urban centers can most often be attributed to the movement of the population to the suburbs. With this population movement the cohabitable economics followed in their path. Therefore we see our typical American suburban housing tracts, accompanying suburban malls and a spread of low rise commercial structures, all placed upon their own parcel of land. The major attributor to this movement is generally considered to be an increase in population, the economics of building on open land, and the luxury this country had of that open land.

This movement has had a drastic effect upon the once vibrant downtown. As the suburb and all it's "new frontier" ambiance came more and more into reality the existing downtown fabric began to fray. Downtowns such as Philadelphia, Washington D.C., Baltimore, Boston, and other cities can all attest to this suburban flight. The downtowns in part or whole became **nothing** more than a used studio set echoing the sounds of the by-pass ring road.

Asheville fits right into this senario. Having had at one time an active and healthy downtown it is now faced with a central core that is merely composed of empty and decaying structures

The trend towards suburbia today may have run it's course, or at least changed it's direction. The single family home dies hard, but that house on it's own piece of land may be a thing of the past. The suburban landscape is becoming full especially within specific areas of large metropolitan centers, and the price for our illusions are quickly becoming out of the financial realm of the average home buyer. Interestingly today we see "townhouses" in clusters either in a remote location or on the edge of an "old" town. It seems that the economics of our times have tarnished the "frontier" and we may become town folk again.

Asheville in this respect is not different. Eventually Asheville may see an even quicker rediscovery of it's downtown than many other areas within the south-east or throughout the country. I say this for many reasons but one major reason is the physical boundries that encompass the Asheville area. In all directions the suburban sprawl is met by mountains, thus stopping the cheap and easily buildable land. This though may be a two edged sword, for Asheville will not be able to attract large manufacturing companies which require large land tracts. Asheville then will have to either spend large amounts of money to buy the land for such businesses or approach other areas for it's tax base. Yet for

Asheville the downtown core is still the center of the city; It is still the city, and county seat of government, with the traditional city hall, courthouse, and fire and police station. It also is the banking center and to some extent a commercial office location for the northwestern part of the state.

The downtown may have more to offer than suburbia as time goes on, especially if looked at from the point of view of economics, transportation, energy, etc..

Asheville's existing downtown as I stated all-ready has some factors in it's favor other than it's physical inventory of existing functions. Yet as one looks upon the area, some parts are "urban" but much of the fabric is sparse and spread apart, and in this respect not much more than a poorly planned suburban intersection, or a downtown blighted by modern architectures version of urban renewal and planning. Therefore the major approach that is required for Asheville is for cohension of the existing urban fabric and the introduction of new structure and functions into the downtown.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank my committee Chairman Professor Roth, major advisor Professor Caban, and committee members, Professor Kishimoto and Professor Lee.

Goals

A downtown such as Asheville's should not be a waste land, nor a parcel of land that looks as if someone had dropped a jigsaw puzzle upon it either. To battle this decline, many of the city councils around the country (as Asheville's have) have taken a stand to bring new life back into the downtown. The means in which Asheville's city councilmen have chosen is similar to that of others, that is the placement of a "downtown" mall which is hoped will be a major generator of new life. This could be a very limited approach, commercial shopping will help a downtown or any area for that matter but the argument could be also made for office commercial, specialized institutional such as hospitals and universities. Yet, Asheville is a somewhat typical small city, it doesn't have the draw that larger and more well known cities have, but it does offer other diversified fields of existing business which can and should be drawn upon, such as it's recreational, banking, hospitals etc.. It is my opinion that any downtown can not be specialized to any great degree. A downtown that is just a mall?, an office complex?, physically yes it could be, and examples are all around us in various forms. Marxist in theory, socialism in practice, we could have the gates of part of our city

locked up at night as everyone goes to the housing district, then reverse the sequence in the morning, actually not too far from the truth.

It is my intent here to take an inclusive avenue of approach to the downtown problems. To start there shall not be a singular means of revitalizing the downtown but a mixture of events happening, so as to bring a new vitality to the downtown and, in this respect, having those aspects that a suburban environment does not have or can never attain. As the city has received a proposal for a major mall in the downtown this will be the impetus for my design development but not limited to this totally.

As part of this goal the new downtown urban context must be more than it was before. It must offer the **user** an identity not only to the downtown but to the city as a whole. In this sense the downtown is or should be analogous to a megastructure, a self contained living, work, play environment, of which "work" is the most important generator, since it consumes the majority of our waking lives, and also generates our livelihood and revenues of our cities. From this comes the offices, small business, and as the city council has found specifically for this area, the large retail commercial center, which will generate direct tax dollars to the community. Of those work gen-

erators the large retail commercial activities have the greatest impact upon the downtown: one because of it's great space requirements and two, the amount of people traffic it will take to make the venture economical.

From an architectural standpoint, therefore the retail stores will have a major impact upon the existing landscape. It is my goal to intergrate this retail into the plan, and create major urban spaces. These new spaces will fill the need for major locators in the urban framework both in plan and also in elevation. Therefore the design interface issues will revolve around this retail function but will also include other issues of the urban context.

BACKGROUND

historic development

ASHEVILLE - HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

1790-1880

The first white settlers arrived in Asheville in 1790. Between that time and 1880 the first plan of the town was developed. As Asheville grew it became a major distribution point for mail going west, the county seat and a major recreation area for the people from the low country. Asheville was connected by the Buncombe turnpike, the rail road, and a bridge across the French Broad river to the outside world.

1880-1890 The Cox era

1890-1910 The Vanderbilt era

1910-1930 The Grove era

The time from 1880 to 1930 Asheville underwent the most dramatic building period it has seen to date

Under Mr. Cox two major hotels were built in Asheville. The city itself laid electric lines and a street car system was installed. During this era many of Asheville's finer homes were built.

The Vanderbilt era involved two major undertakings by Vanderbilt family

The first, the constructing of the Vanderbilt "get away" otherwise known as Biltmore Mansion, in the now famous climate of Asheville. The second, Biltmore village which was constructed primarily as a place to house the workers while building the mansion. This village is still today a fixture upon the Asheville landscape. Also during this era the first cityhall was built and the Vance monument erected in what was then and is now the center of town.

During the Grove era Asheville again saw major changes to it's urban fabric. It was at this time that the town square was again enlarged, and a new cityhall was added. The Grove Arcade, Battery Park hotel, and Grove Park Inn were all built during this era under the direction of Mr. Grove. The Grove Arcade and the Battery Park hotel were specifically placed in the downtown to enhance it's fabric. It's interesting that the Grove Arcade was designed specifically as a shopping center and office complex, the latter however was never built.

1929-1950

Asheville to this time relied heavily upon it's tourist trade for it's economic base. Asheville was devastated by the depression of the 1930's and no major changes occurred in the built fabric for twenty years.

1970-1980

By this time a stabilized population and economy had resulted from the diversity of businesses in the area, ranging from tourists to industry.

It was in this time period also that an Asheville downtown revitalization commission was created to bring the bicentennial efforts to revitalize the downtown. The creation of this commission was the first step that led to many physical improvements in the downtown area. In the mid-seventies a new civic center, regional library, and a six story parking garage were built in the downtown.

The Grove Era of the 1980's

The present era in Asheville's history shall be quite similar to that of the Grove era of the 1920's. The impact of the new shopping center, hotels and offices will present permanent fixtures upon the landscape as had the structures built during the Grove era. If they build upon and use those structures of the existing urban context they will be building Asheville for the future and completing the past at the same time. This is an era that sees a "grass roots" operation in the downtown, revitalizing a depressed area thru vitality of economics and preservation of existing structures. Hopefully this will be an era that sees an integration of new structures into an existing fabric.

market indicators

ECONOMIC/MARKET INDICATORS

Economics

The major economic problem of the downtown is traceable to the suburban developments of the surrounding areas. These developments have displaced the traditional central business district. At the same time entrepreneurs and costumers were discouraged from using the downtown by it's lack of parking, because of traffic problems and the increasing presence of older, and un-sightly and vacant structures.

Buncombe county and Asheville's economic prospects for the present and for the future are based upon three major activities: manufacturing, urban services, and tourism. All of which, at this time seem to be doing well. The short comings as stated before is the lack of large land tracts availble for manufacturing plants and to some extent the skilled labor to go along with the manufacturing. This would then leave Asheville basically with urban services and tourism. Included within these services Asheville provides medical, legal, educational, finance, government and other services not only to itself but to the surrounding counties.

The outlook for Asheville and it's surrounding areas is promising. There should be an expansion of some manufacturing, but no new is forseen. There is a projected population rise which will increase the need for urban services such as medical, professional, wholesale, etc.. Asheville's popular recreation areas, climate and centrality in the southeast will see an increase in the overall numbers of people seeking those services plus retirees and seasonal residents seeking housing and other essential needs.

Employment Growth 1985

	<u>1978</u>	<u>1980</u>	<u>1985</u>
Buncombe county	76,600	79,900	85,550
Madison county	3,940	4,080	4,665
Total	80,540	84,070	88,215

Population Trends

	<u>1977</u>	<u>1980</u>	<u>1985</u>
Buncombe county	158,000	164,000	171,900
Land-of sky	89,000	93,700	100,000
western N.C.	215,000	225,750	240,400
total	462,000	483,450	512,300

Market Analysis

As stated before Asheville has and will have two major activities for economic growth. These are urban services and tourism, which break down into:

1. a visitors market consisting of tourist/travel and hotels;
2. office structures;
3. retail shopping;
4. housing.

I. Visitors Market

Asheville is located geographically as the hub for the western part of North Carolina. In all directions there are tourist/recreational activities. Asheville's surrounding area presently benefit from this traffic but the downtown is overlooked as a central dispersion point. As expected with tourist/travel trade it is extremely seasonal. A major thrust is required to bring the tourist to the downtown and lengthen the seasonal trade. What is proposed is an additional attraction to retain visitors in the area. A new hotel with on-site meeting rooms, possibly in close proximity to the civic center could serve this market and serve also as a high quality convention center complex. Other activities such as ice skating, theater, etc., might also enhance this market.

2. Office Structures

Even though Asheville has a very pleasing climate and generally a good location in the southeast, it is not foreseen that national nor regional corporate headquarters will be locating in this city as compared for example to Atlanta or Dallas. It maybe assumed however that Asheville could receive a few regional offices.

The office space condition presently consists of one new office structure, the remainder is a mixture of low rise renovations. It is predicted that new office space will be required in the next five to ten years at approx. 30,000 sq. ft./yr. on a speculative basis. Presently the National Climate Center occupies the Grove arcade structure, and they recently have made requests for a new structure through the G.S.A.. Similarly the Greater Western Carolina Corp. is presently considering a new structure at a new location.

3. Retail Shopping

The retail shopping market characteristics for downtown Asheville is similar to a suburban mall but also includes and is not limited to the following:

1. downtown offices and service workers
2. tourists and visitors
3. upper income
4. bargain shopper
5. discerning shopper looking for speciality items

Asheville has lost to the suburban malls the large retail "magnets" which generate the customers for the smaller shops. The major reasons for this has been a parking situation and road system which can not handle the flow and were poorly placed.

It is foreseen that Asheville by the mid 1980's will economically be able to develop one more suburban type mall with two or possibly three major department stores. Should this mall be located in the suburbs, the downtown will have little hope of any retail vitality.

The projected shoppers goods expenditures for Buncombe county for 1985 is 178,-
260,000 and for the total area will be more than \$280,000,000 by the same year.

From a marketing analysis of this and other information the Asheville area
should be able to support a shopping mall with at least two major department
stores, a flea market, and a seasonal farmers market. These do not include the
"piggie backed" small retail shops which follow the major retail establishments.

4. Housing

As seen in other areas of this country and other nation there is a renewed interest in close-in living conditions, reversing the suburban trend. The factors are generally considered to to:

1. a changing age structure and life style of this country. There is an increase in the older population and an increase in childless, or fewer children in the younger populations.
2. the energy crisis which has made people more sensitive to length of travel to work, and towards more fuel effecient housing.
3. high cost of new housing (in all area, land, construction cost, upkeep etc.) and the economic benifits of renovation.

The housing market for downtown Asheville at this time is extremely difficult to predict. If all other aspects of the downtown are realized there will be a consistantly high demand for downtown housing. This housing demand will generally fall into these catagories:

1. the elderly/retired
2. young professionals

3. low income

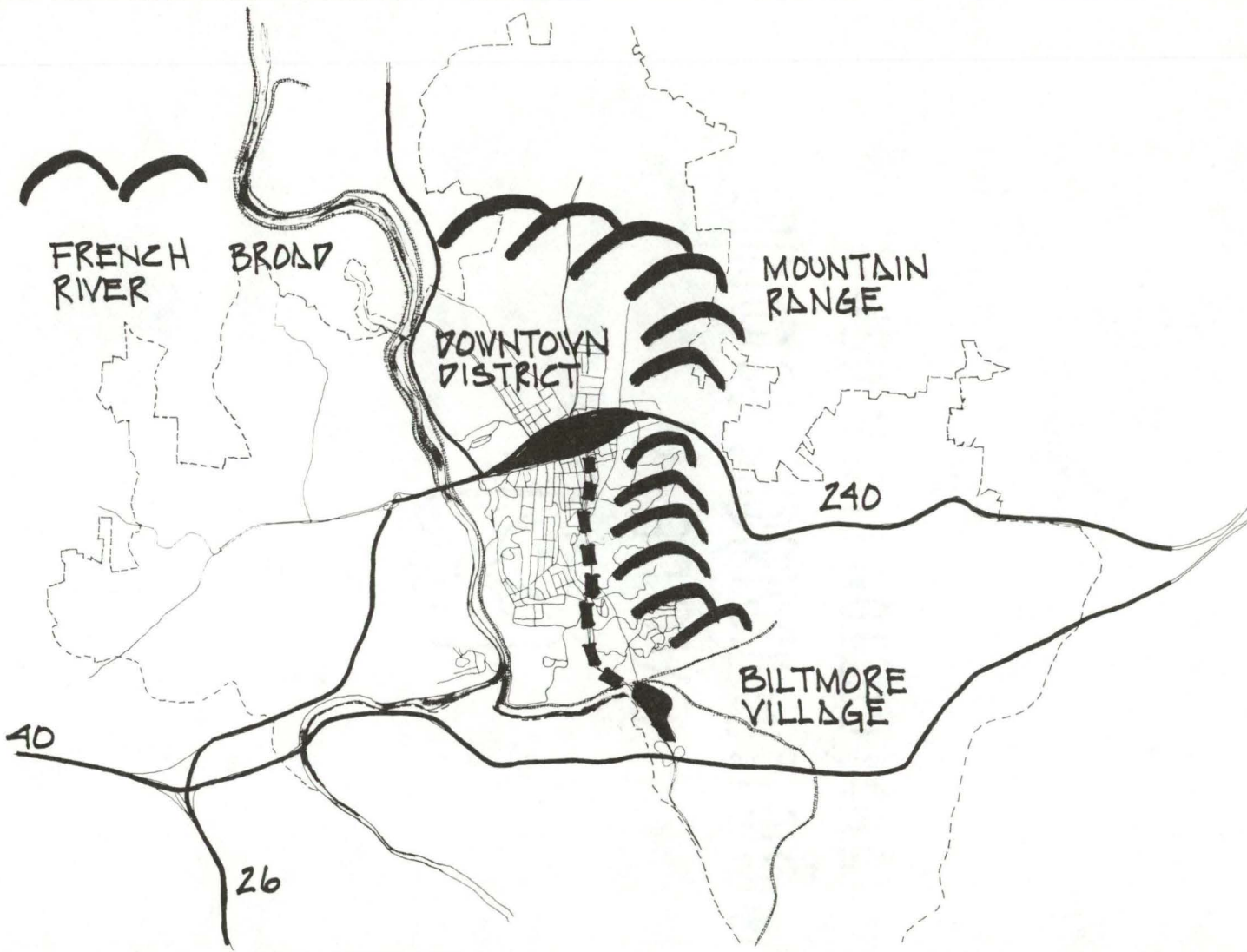
4. luxury \$100,000 plus bracket.

physical analysis

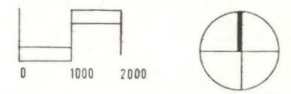
City Context

The city of Asheville is framed by a boundry of mountains to the north and east, and the French Broad River to the west. The city has developed into two major urban districts. The southern district, Biltmore Village and the northern downtown district. It is this downtown district that is the heart of Asheville, it contains the cityhall, county court and the fire and police station.

Only one major road, route 25, connects these two districts. The road is not well defined, crosses over rail road tracks in two locations and is undersized.



CITY CONTEXT

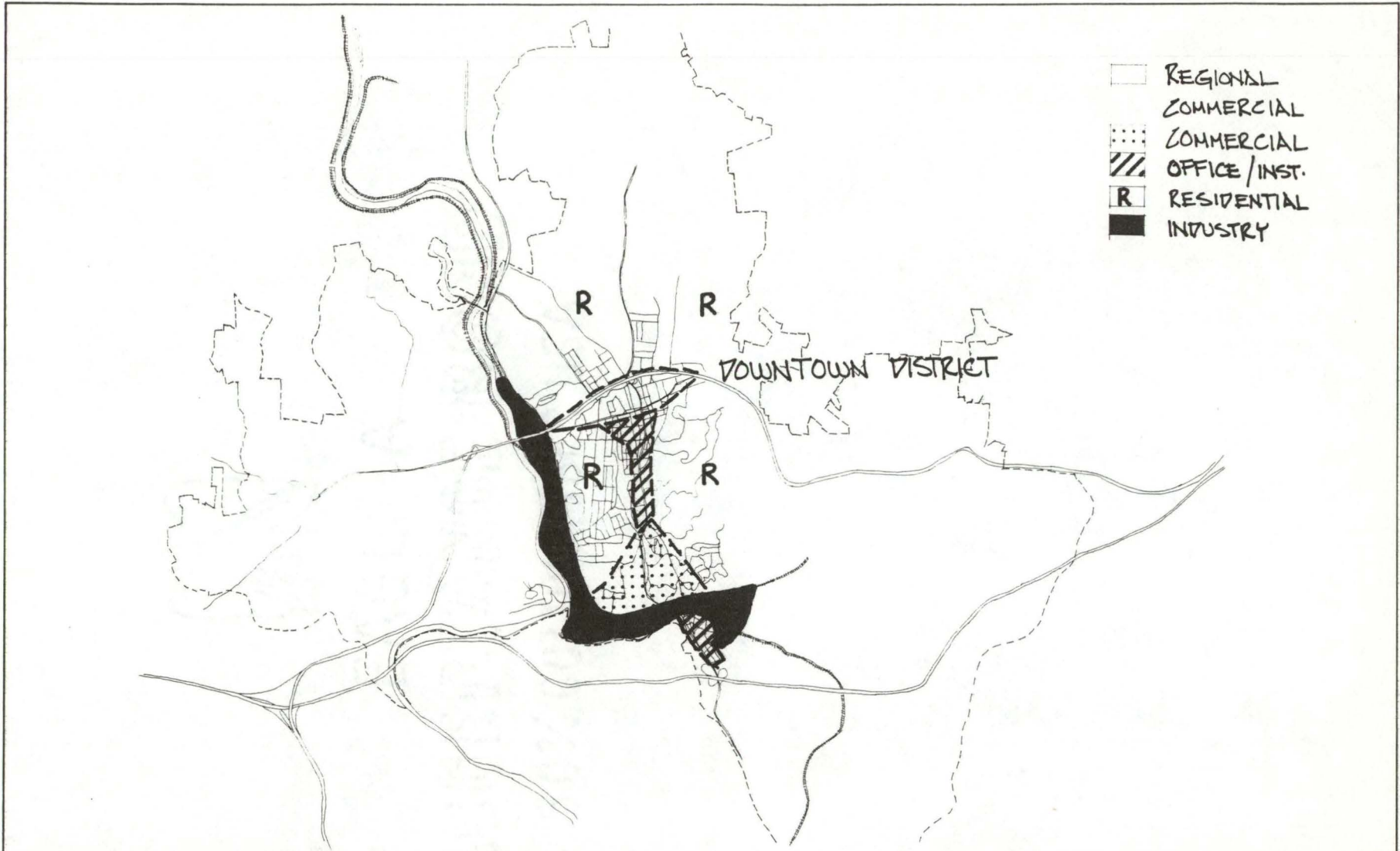







City Zoning

From a zoning context the city is broken into five major areas. Typically from a historical standpoint those areas adjacent to the river are mostly industrial. The areas between the two major nodes are commercial with office space and institutions, this is where the large medical facilities are located and the associated businesses.

The Biltmore Village area is mainly zoned commercial. Many of the original structures have been renovated, with new infill also occurring. This is Asheville's manoral village, and has a distinctive architectural quality. This is also where the rail road station is located.

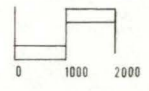
The other major node in the city is the downtown district. This area is the central business district of the city, and is zoned regional commercial. The remainder of the areas are zoned residential.



-  REGIONAL COMMERCIAL
-  COMMERCIAL
-  OFFICE/INST.
-  RESIDENTIAL
-  INDUSTRY

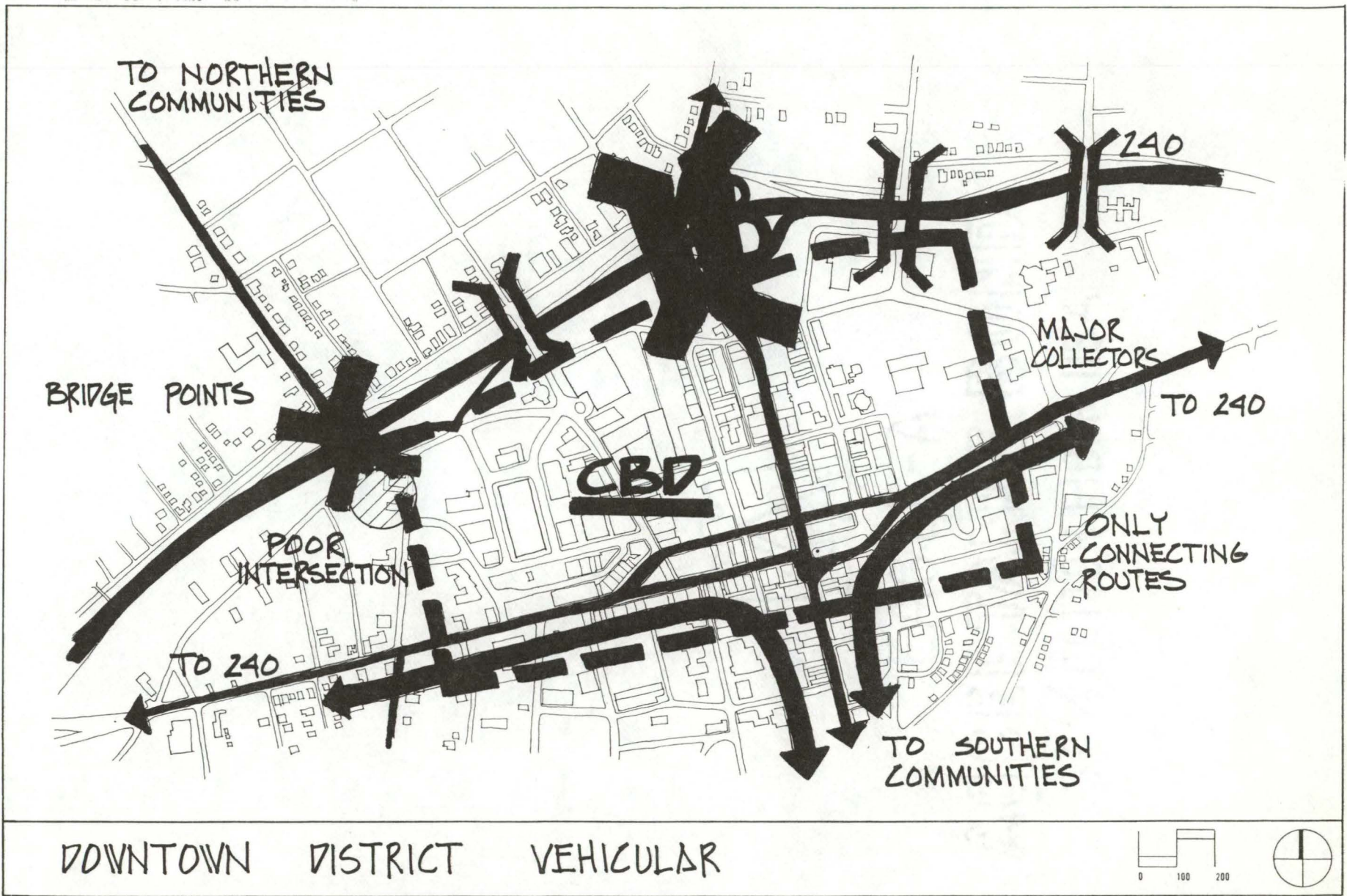
DOWNTOWN DISTRICT

CITY ZONING



Downtown District Vehicular

The problem of vehicular traffic between the urban nodes is also seen within the downtown district. The downtown district is bound to the north by route 240 which effectively cuts off the northern communities from the downtown. Within the downtown major traffic flow is limited to one road running north and south and one road east and west. The problem occurs from the lack of secondary routes along these paths. These are the only major thru roads and all of the traffic must pass along them.



TO NORTHERN
COMMUNITIES

240

BRIDGE POINTS

MAJOR
COLLECTORS

TO 240

CBD

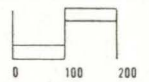
POOR
INTERSECTION

ONLY
CONNECTING
ROUTES

TO 240

TO SOUTHERN
COMMUNITIES

DOWNTOWN DISTRICT VEHICULAR

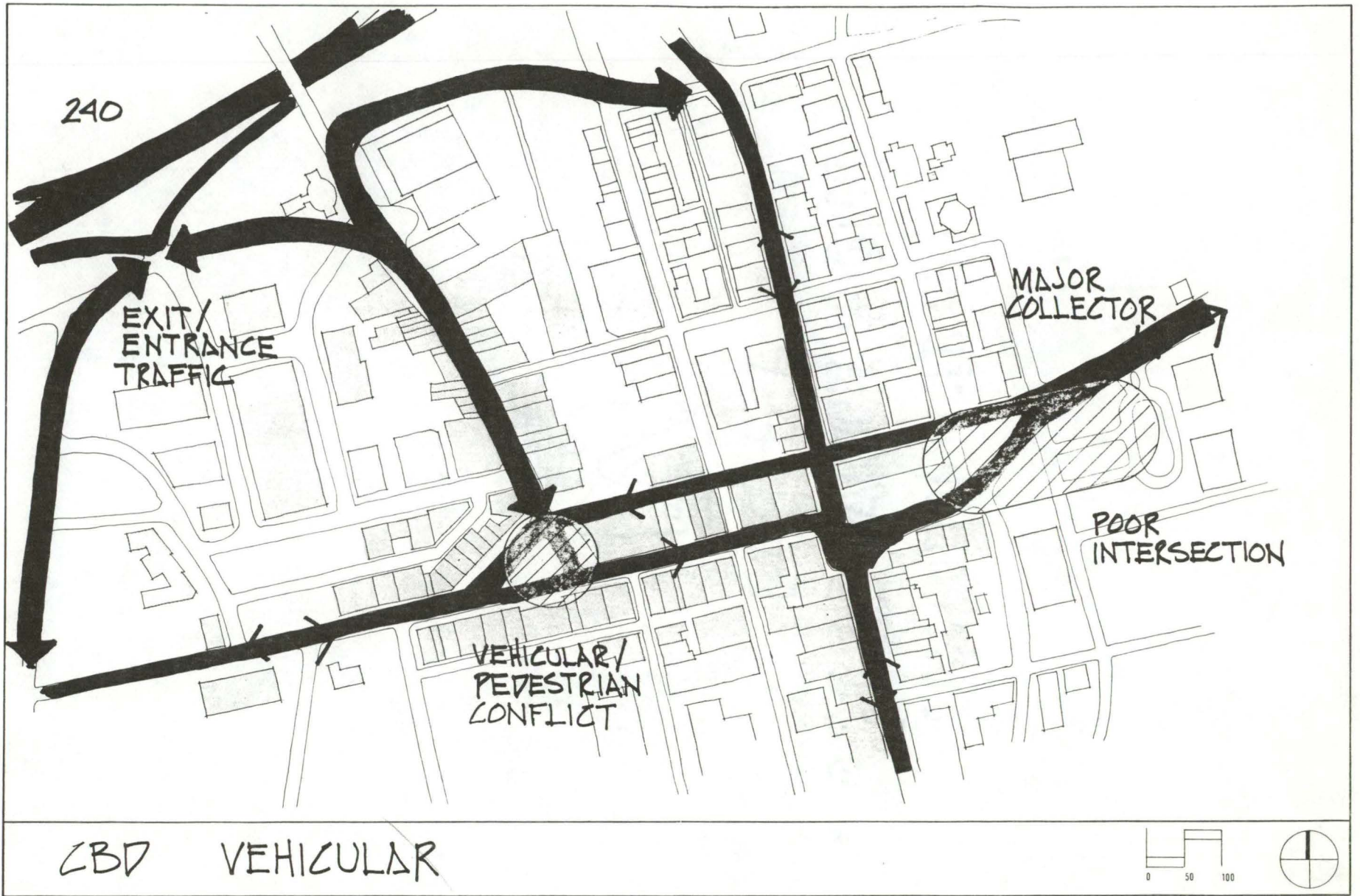


C.B.D. Vehicular

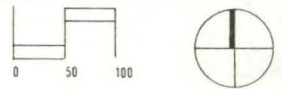
Within the C.B.D. the singular route problem still occurs. The problems of traffic flow and convenience are even further degraded by other problems.

The major traffic problems occur because of route 240. The entrance-exit traffic for this road is brought into the downtown at points which brings a large portion of the traffic into conflict with pedestrians. This is exemplified in one intersection, which takes this traffic plus all of the east west traffic, and also is used as a major bus center.

The other major intersection problem occurs in front of the city hall and court house. This intersection has seven roads converging on one area. This alone is a problem but the array of roads used for cross traffic even further aggravates the problem

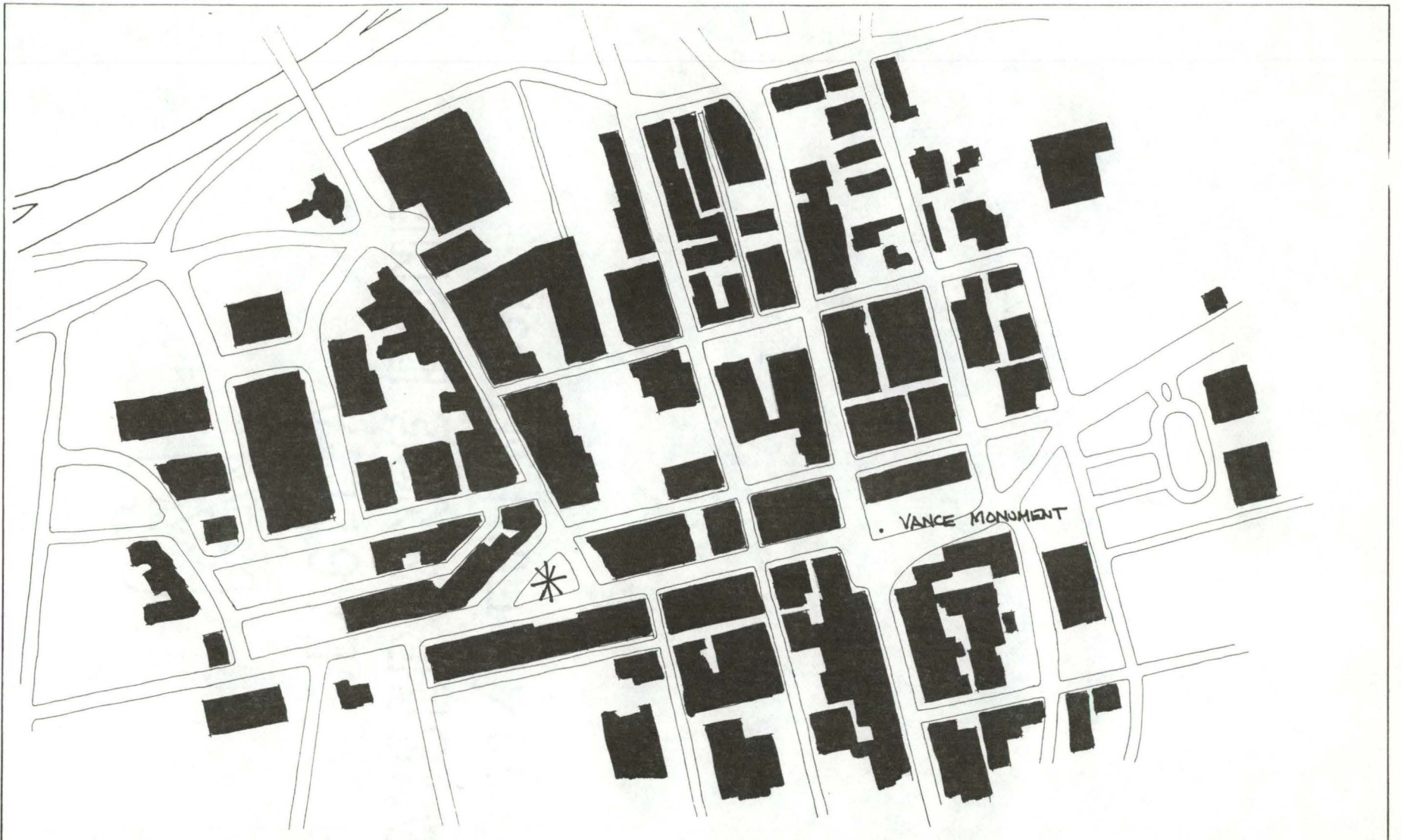


CBD VEHICULAR

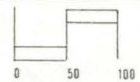


C.B.D. Context

From this figure study it can be seen that the downtown of Asheville has no well defined urban spaces. The only area with any enclosure is Prichard Park (*) which unfortunately is difficult to enjoy because of the traffic problem in this area. Similaly the Vance Monument area is well defined towards the west end, but because of the heavy traffic it is not enjoyable. Within the same area as you move east the space becomes totally undefined except for the cityhall and county court structures.



CBD CONTEXT



Land Use Districts

The C.B.D. can be broken into various general land use districts. These are basic groupings of uses within the downtown.

The first district called Federal, includes the post office, news paper, power co., telephone co., and the national climate center.

The civic district consists of the civic center, library, and a major parking garage.

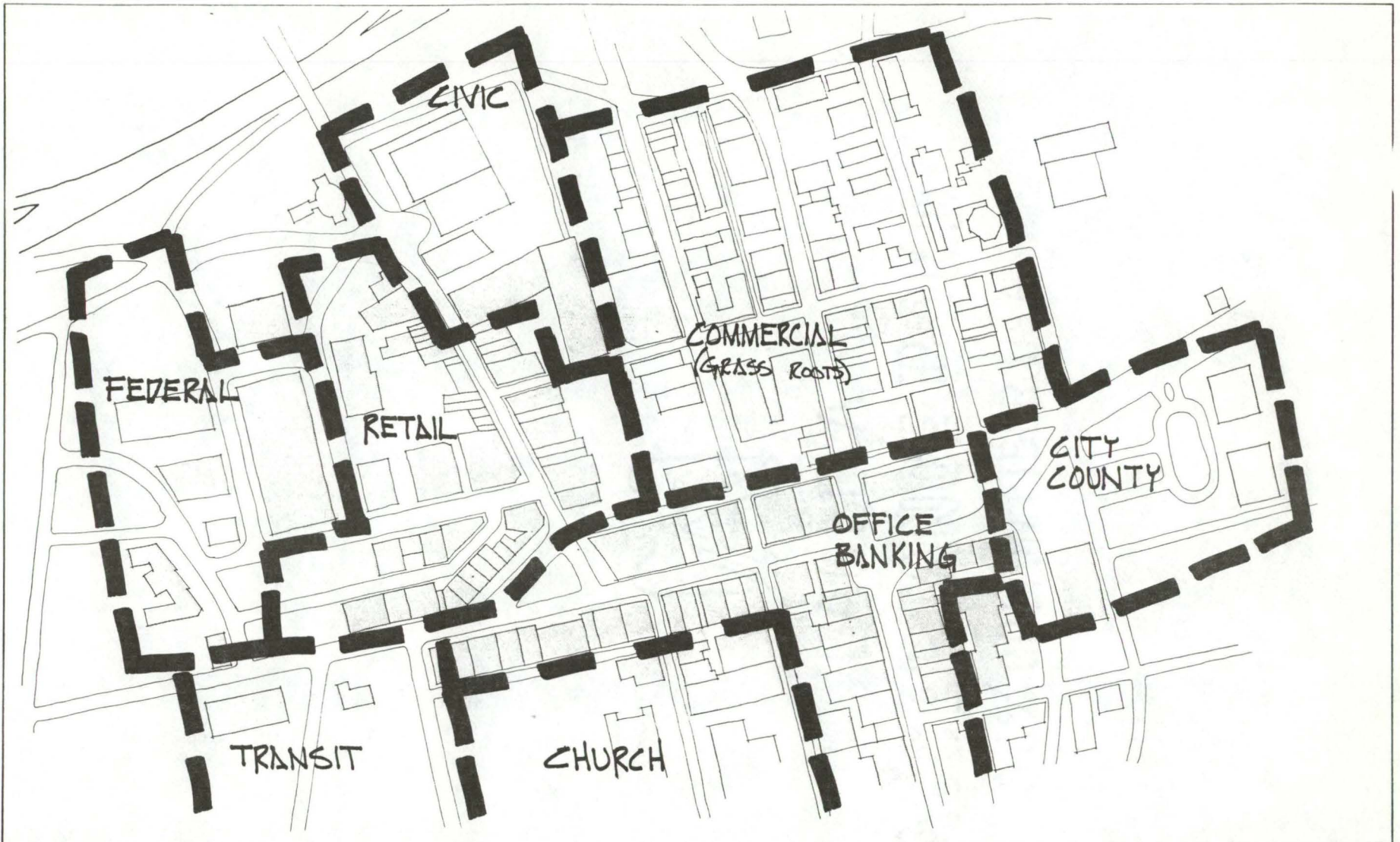
The office and banking district contains all of the major banking and office facilities.

The church district similarly consists of churches.

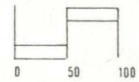
The city/county district contains the city building , county court and the fire and police.

The commercial district is where in the last few years a "grass roots" group has started renovating many of the structures. It is this very district that is in danger of being (literally) demolished for the construction of a retail mall.

The last district labeled retail is where most of the regional retail activities take place. A Penny's, Money Tree, Meyers Arnold, Woolworth and Lerner shop are all located in this area.



LAND USE DISTRICTS

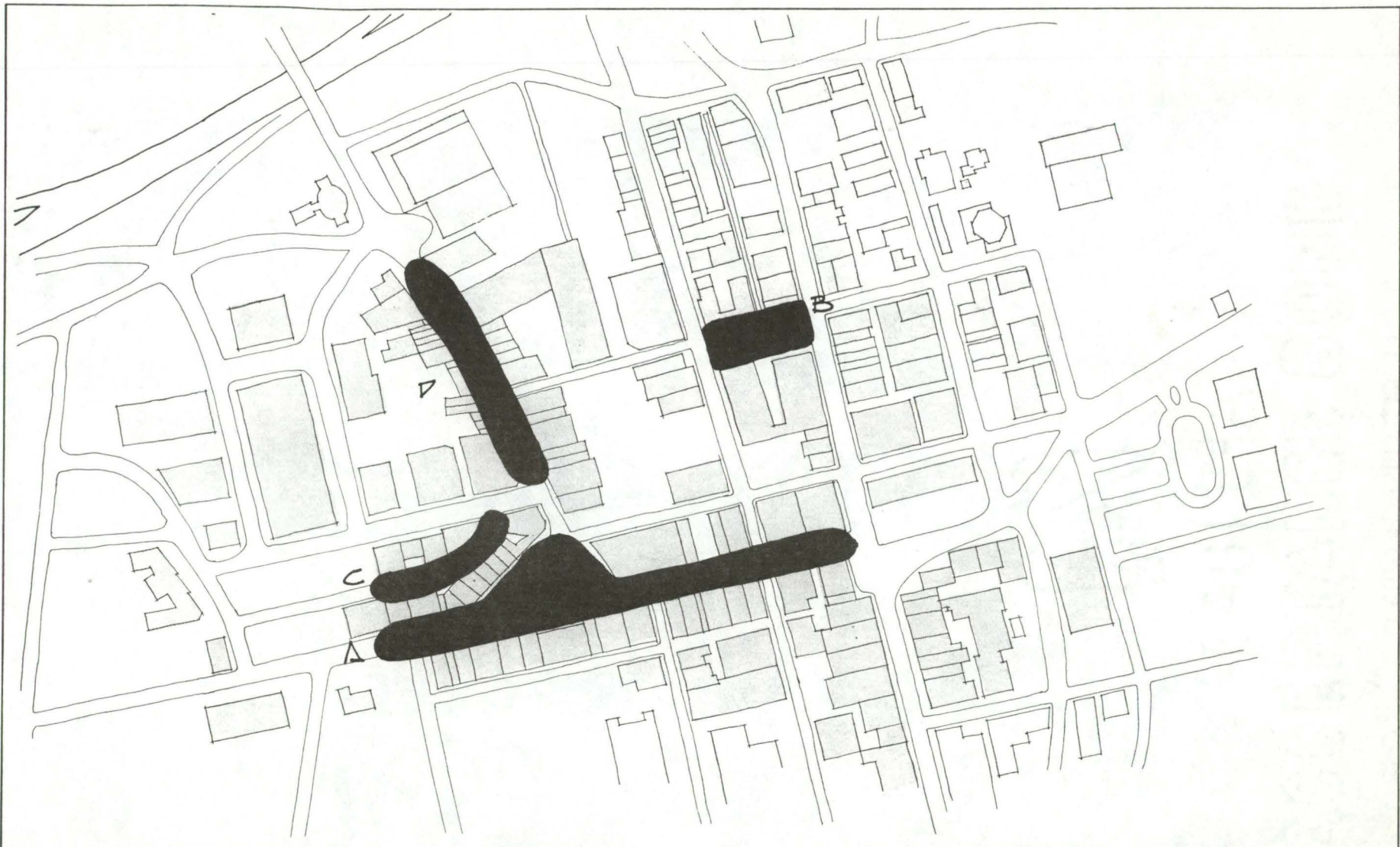


C.B.D. Pedestrian Nodes

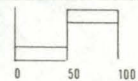
The major pedestrian node areas within the C.B.D. are condensed into four areas. Section A is located along one of the major roads, the pedestrian activity in this area is mostly related to banking, busing and some local retail shopping.

In Section B the pedestrian activity is associated with the new "grass roots" retail and commercial activities.

Section C and D relate to the major regional retail and local shopping within the C.B.D.



CBD PEDESTRIAN NODES



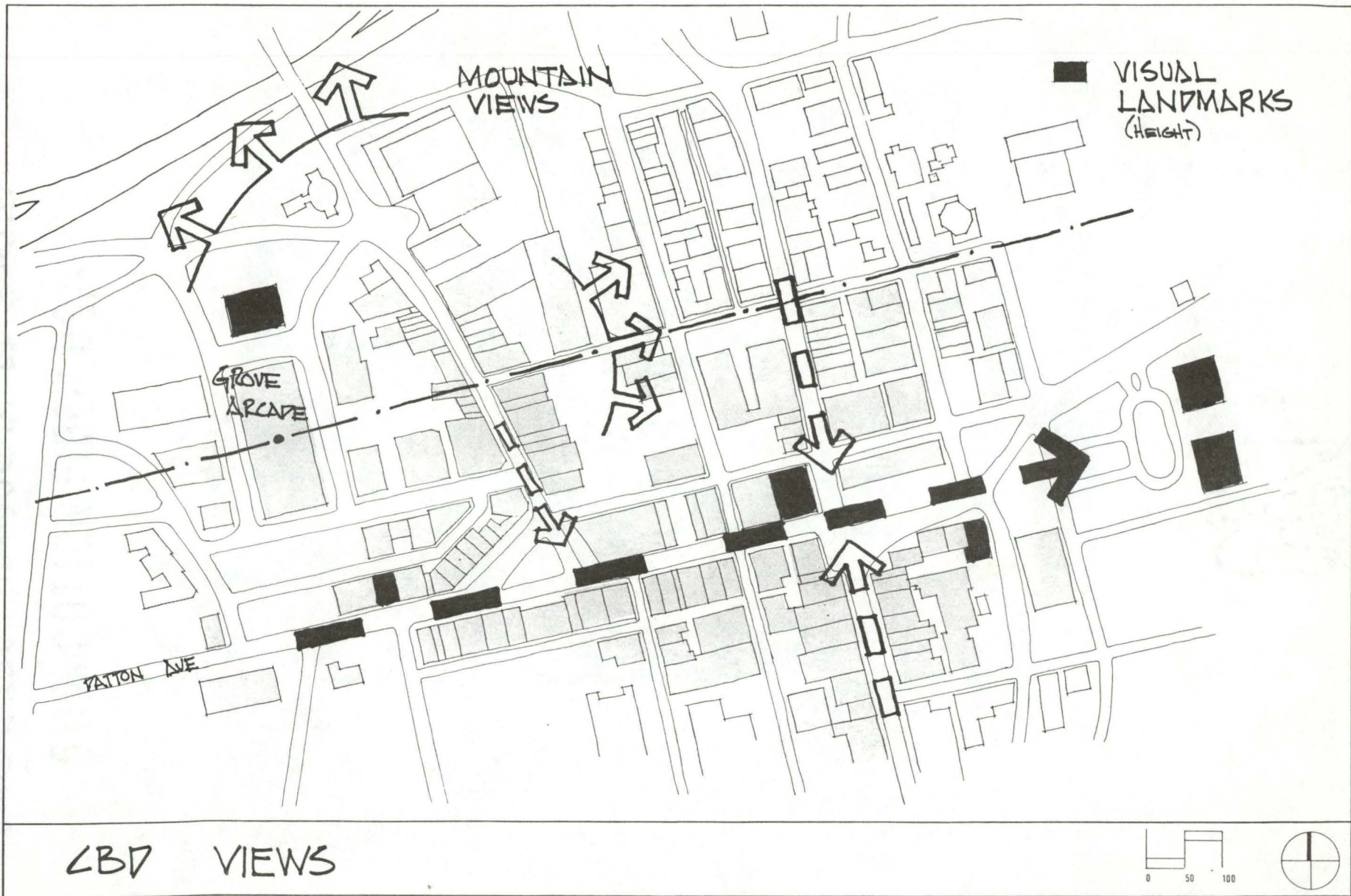
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Views

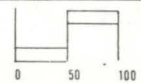
The C.B.D. has various view and actual and implied axes. These views and axes are related most directly to existing structures along Patton ave. This avenue is the strongest in axis and view as it terminates at the city and county buildings. Conversely on major axis () that runs throughout the whole city parallel to Patton ave., and through the Grove Arcade building is totally ignored in the present layout.

The other major axis and view occurs toward Prichard Park up to St. Lawrence church.

As the city is contained within a mountain range many panoramic views are available, but the most notable are shown.

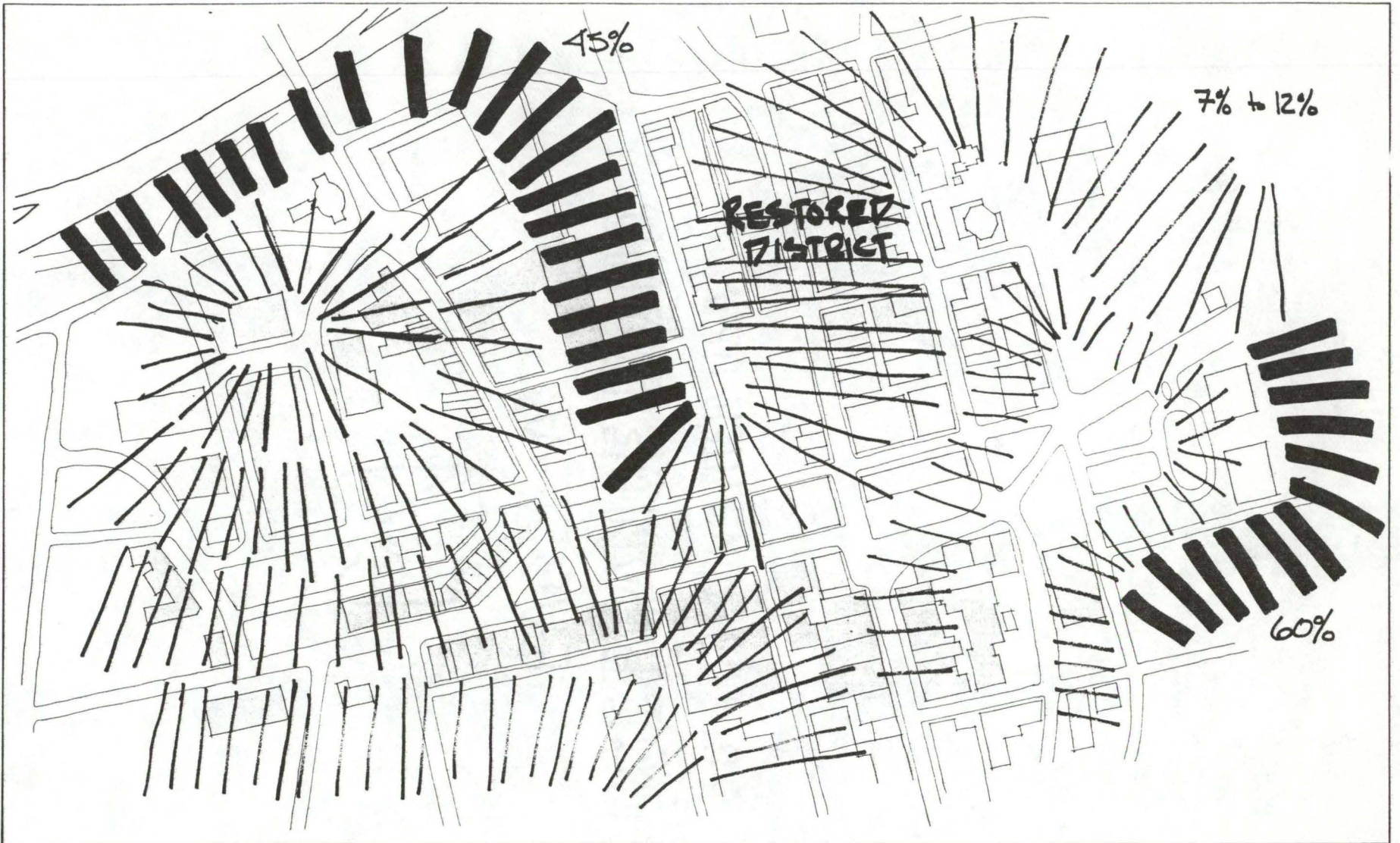


CBD VIEWS

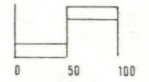


C.B.D. Topo

As Asheville is located in a valley of the Blue Ridge mountains, much of its land topography matches this condition. Most of the downtown is within a 7% to 12% range with two areas above a 45% slope. Only in one of these areas does this cause any problem. The first area behind the city and county buildings has a 60% slope. This causes no problem since the area is not developed with any structures, but unfortunately most of the slope has been cut away for a road. The area that is drastically effected is between the restored "grass roots" district and the existing regional retail area. It presents a massive obstacle which effectively separates these two areas.

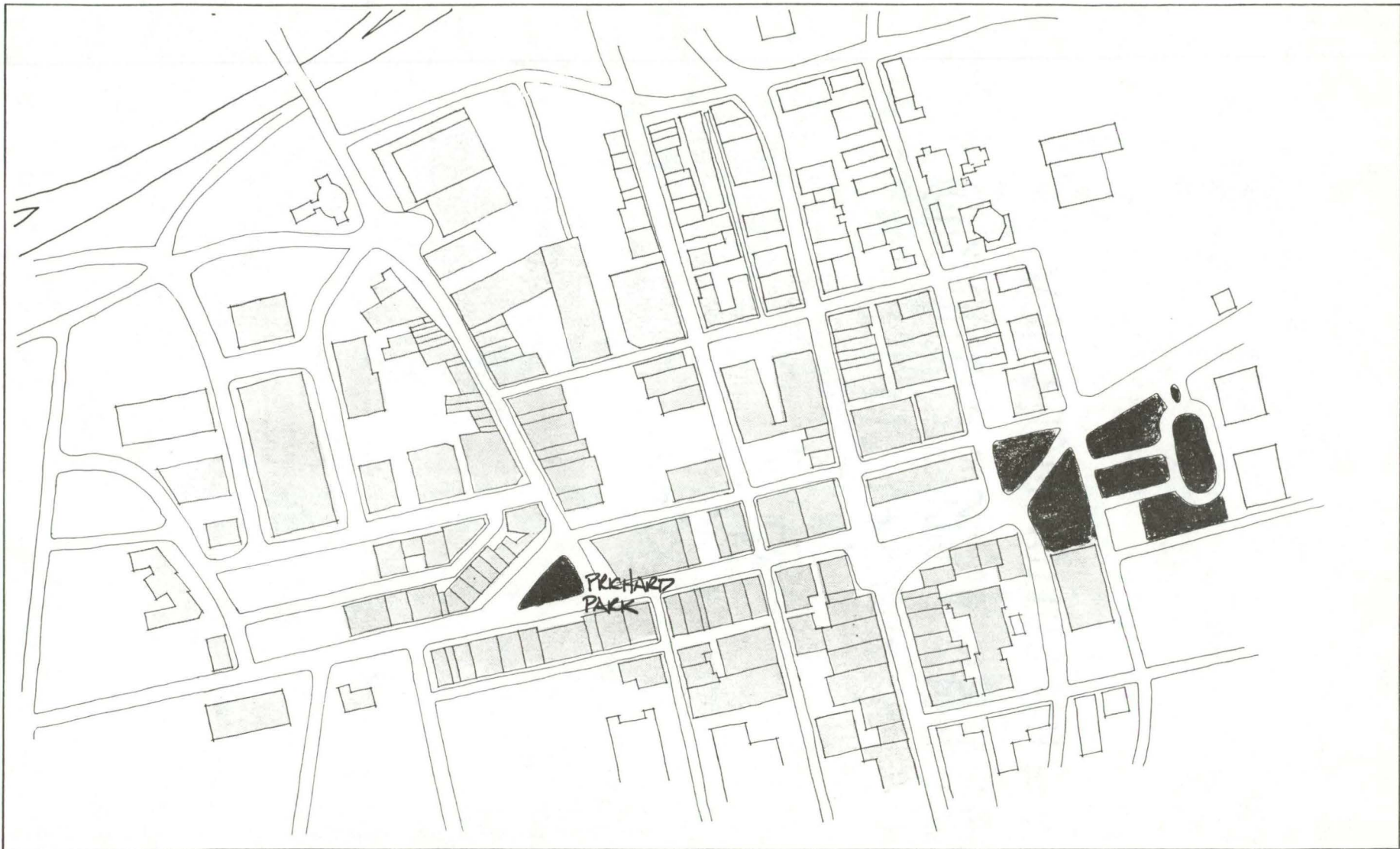


CBD TOPO

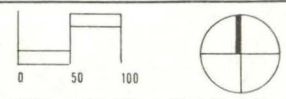


Green Space

Within the C.B.D. green space is limited to two locations, one in front of the city and county buildings and the other in Prichard park. As can be seen, green space is totally lacking in the downtown. This is especially a poor condition considering Asheville's location in the Blueridge mountains.



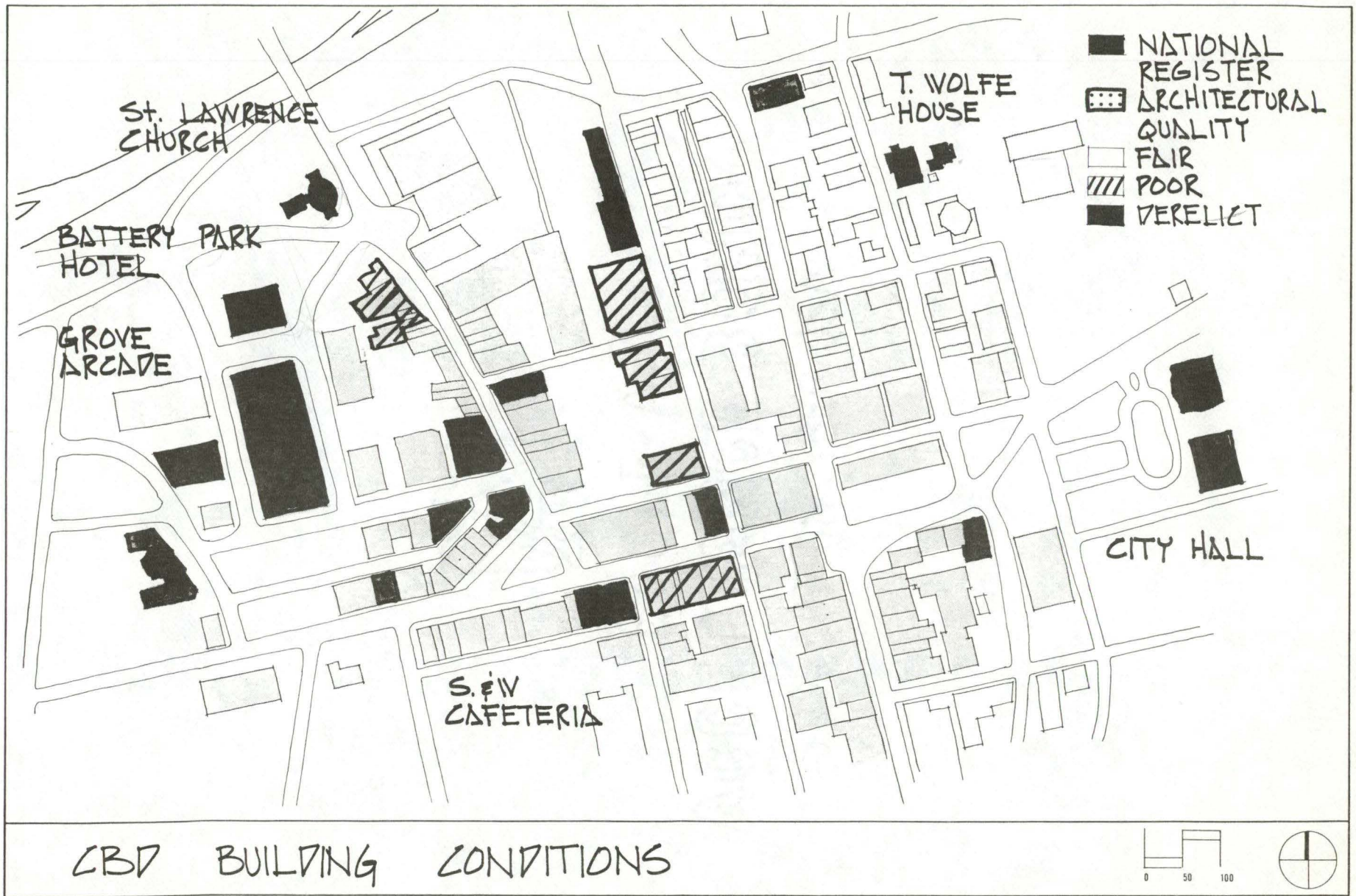
CBD GREEN SPACE



C.B.D. Building Conditions

Asheville has many fine structures within it's downtown and conversely many unsightly and derelict buildings. As can be seen from the drawing most of the structures are in fair condition, with the next majority having some architectural qualities. Asheville's finest quality structures are on the national register and are all in very good condition.

Those structure in poor or derlict dondition should be removed as renovation would be extremely expensive, thus allowing the posibility of new infill.

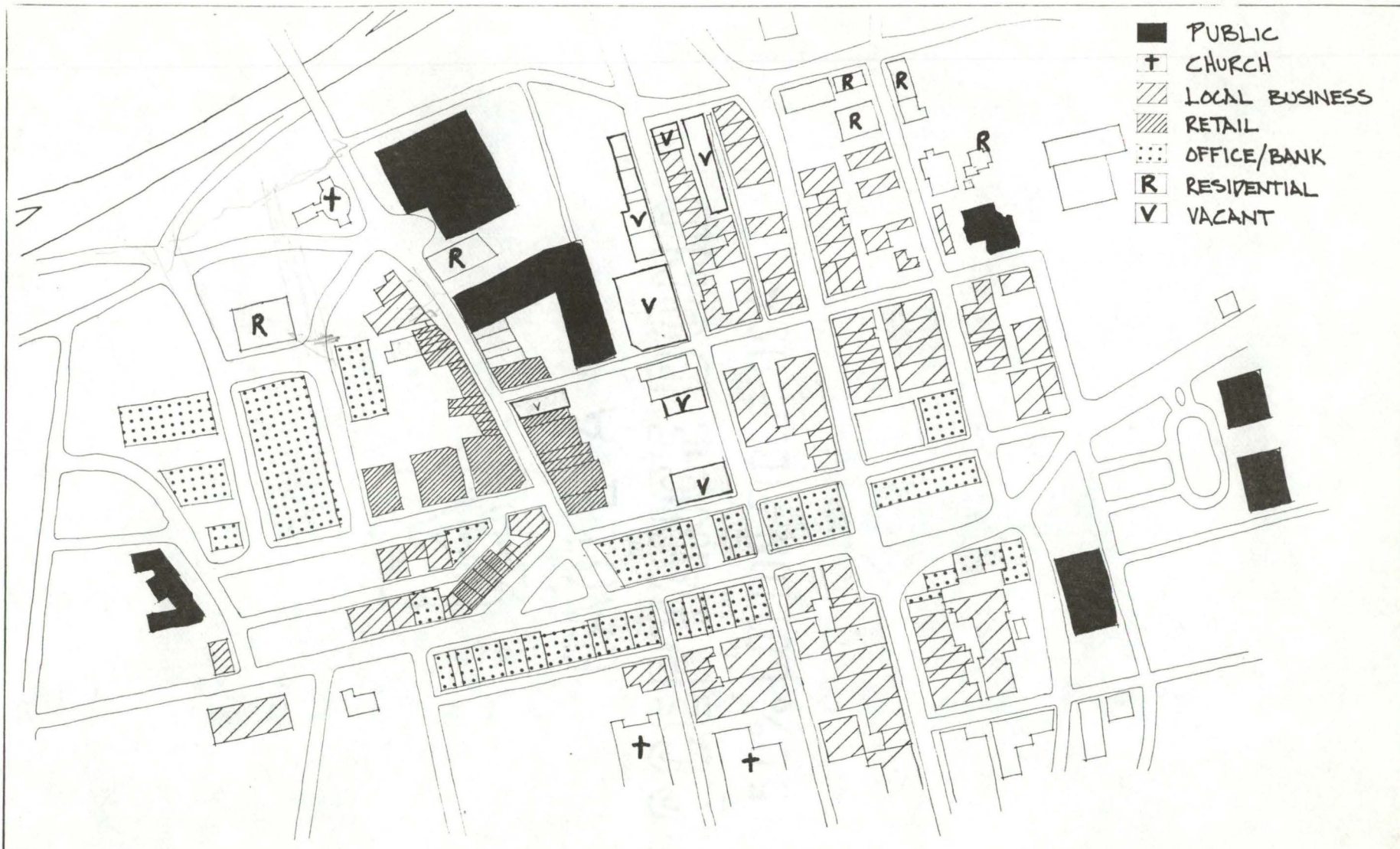


CBD BUILDING CONDITIONS

C.B.D. Land Use

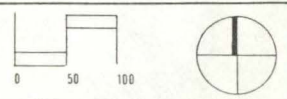
Land use within the downtown is mixed to an extent, yet the major lacking ingredient is housing. Of the housing listed, all are used for retirement purposes. This lack of housing alone is a major factor in the condition of the of the downtown. To reduce the deterioration of the downtown, housing must be introduced.

One of the major factors influencing the site of this project is the grouping of regional retail around the Grove Arcade as can be seen on the drawing.



- PUBLIC
- ⊕ CHURCH
- ▨ LOCAL BUSINESS
- ▩ RETAIL
- ⋯ OFFICE/BANK
- R RESIDENTIAL
- V VACANT

CBD LAND USE



DESIGN PARAMETERS

program

Program

From the market analysis Asheville will have two major groups of activities for economic growth for the next ten years.

Those as stated in the market analysis are urban services and tourism.

These consist of

1. tourist/convention hotel
2. office structures
3. retail shopping
4. housing

In addition to the market analysis the city of Asheville has included three proposals.

1. a new office structure
2. transit center
3. museum

Programs

1. Tourist/Convention Hotel

300 rooms with meeting halls

The major function of this hotel is to increase the use of the civic center for convention purposes, and for this reason must be located close to the civic center. This facility is also foreseen to be used for tourism and recreational type trade. This will bring the conventioneer and tourist to the downtown, where they may enjoy both the urbanism of the downtown as well as the mountains.

2. Office Structures

30,000 sq.ft./yr.

As Asheville has only one new office structure, new office space is required. This is on a speculative basis and does not include specific corporate office structures.

National Climate Center

The National Climate Center is presently located in the Grove Arcade. This building was built in 1930 and designed as a retail arcade. For reasons of inefficiency the Climate center is petitioning thru the G.S.A. for a new structure.

City Office Space

60,000 sq.ft.

Asheville, as in many other cities, has found it's staff and office requirements increasing. Presently Asheville is renting space throughout the city. It is their desire to consoladate these offices into one structure. As these offices relate most directly to the cityhall a site close to it is desired.

3. Housing

It is forseen that the downtown Asheville area will be desirable for housing as more offices and downtown jobs move into that area. The projected housing demand is broken into four basic groups.

a. the elderly/retired, which represents the only type in the down-

- b. the young professional
- c. low income
- d. luxury

4. Transit Center
(pre-sited)

Asheville has decided to improve it's mass transit system by building a new transit center. This new facility will function from major city to city, from the airport and train station and also function as a main center for local buses. This facility has been pre-sited along Patton ave. next to the existing facilities. It is also foreseen that a major parking garage should be provided next to the facility for the commuter.

5. Museum
medium size

The city presently does not have a separate museum structure. Any museum activity must take place on the lower floor of the civic center. It is the city's

desire to build a new museum in the downtown.

6. Retail

2 to 3 major stores in the 70,000sq.ft. to 100,000sq.ft. range

This aspect of the marketing study will be the major emphases of the design since it represents the largest impact upon the downtown.

The city to date has received one proposal for a mall in the downtown. This proposal unfortunately would require the complete demolition of four square blocks in the "grass roots" section of the town. Not only would this proposal destroy one of the only areas in the downtown with an urban fabric but would also displace many small businesses. The leveling of this area would also destroy a prime location for some downtown housing.

As the marketing study has noted this maybe the last large retail operation Asheville may economically hope for in the foreseeable future. If it is located outside the downtown it is unlikely that the downtown retail will ever survive, and those located in the downtown now will likely leave or fold.

Vender-Farmers Market/Flea Market

As part of the retail capability of the Asheville area a small farmers market and flea market activities, as separate functions or in combination, is economically feasible. As these retail activities maybe seasonal and requirements may change, a base number of only 10,000 sq.ft. was given

building type

Building Type

Though the marketing study calls for various forms of building types this project limits itself to the shopping district. A brief study of the other building types was required for their placement.

Shopping District

Today we are presented with various types of shopping concepts. There is the arcade, shopping street, permanent mall, full mall, and plaza. The full mall is the most popular today and it is this type of arrangement that the downtown shopping district must compete with.

The suburban type mall presents many possible problems to the community in which they are located. First the megastructure is not always permanent. Many landscapes are dotted with failed or failing attempts. The re-use of these structures are difficult if not impossible. The second major problem with a suburban mall is the large land area that is required. Even a small 500,000 s-ft. mall requires approximately 30 acres.

These two factors would be devastating to Asheville. Asheville needs what

open land is available for industry not malls, and the downtown could not stand a megastructure.

In addition to these problems the mall does present various positive options for the shop owners and the shoppers themselves.

The typical mall of today is built around 2 to 3 major magnet stores, with secondary stores between them. This works very well as the large stores pull the customers in while the smaller shops act as conduits, between them. This all works for the shopper. Of major importance is the ability of the shopper to compare items and at the same time due to the number of stores buy a variety of goods.

The marketability of malls is enhanced by their location. Though many differ in general locations a few factors are constant. The major factor is being close to the population served, or at least in a central location, and the need for easy transportation access to the site.

The major issues then for a mall either in a suburban setting or an urban setting is; It must have major magnets, secondary stores, the proper amount of land, and easy access to and from the shopping center.

The functional considerations for a mall are broken into the following areas: accessibility, pedestrian oriented, marketing.

Accessibility

1. The shopper is of primary consideration. The following issues must be checked:

- a. auto to mall
 - b. bus to mall
 - c. store to store
2. loading and unloading
3. accessibility of emergency vehicles
4. utility accessibility

Pedestrian Oriented

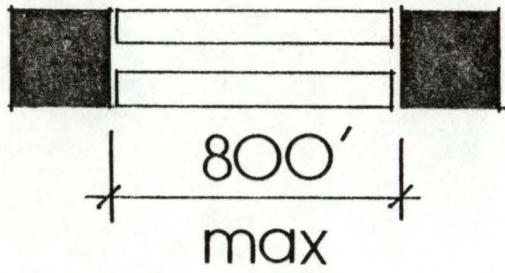
- 1. freedom of movement
- 2. freedom from overt traffic hazards
- 3. comfort (rest)

Marketing

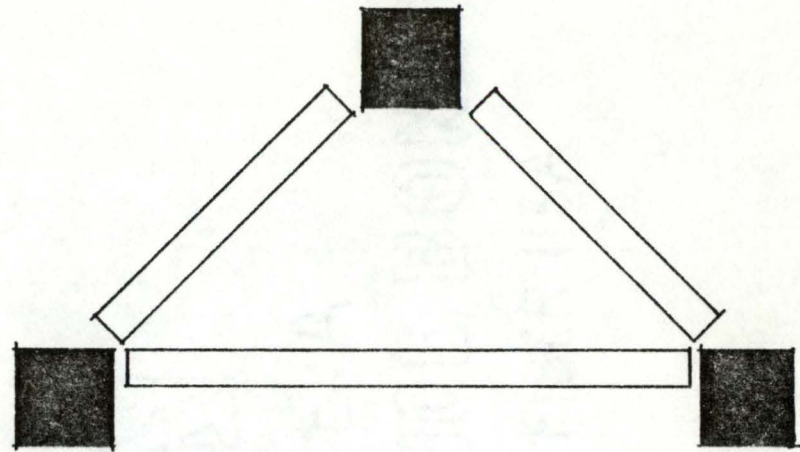
From a marketing standpoint pedestrians must be encouraged to:

1. flow the full length of the retail area (no dead ends)
2. comparison shopping between large magnets and smaller shops.
3. sitting areas and diversity of activities to keep the shoppers in the area.

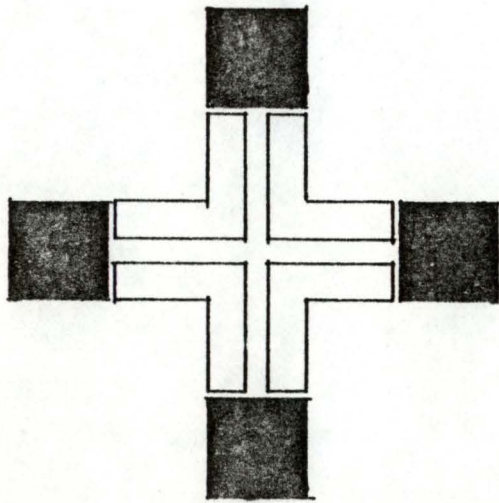
The three basic arrangements of shopping centers are shown on the following page; 2 major magnets, 3 major magnets and 4 major magnets.



2 MAGNETS



3 MAGNETS



4 MAGNETS

approach / issues

Urban Design Approach

As this project's major emphasis is the placement of the shopping district and other structures into the downtown it was my intent to first view the city on the large scale, finding all pertinent relationships and then place functions as required.

First the general methods that cities have grown was studied. From an architectural and urban design standpoint the following considerations were studied:

1. The Greek, growth by accretion; In this method the Greeks used the angular space between the buildings (usually as angles of the structures) as a means to first tie those structures together and allow for further growth of the urban area by those relationships of angles.

2. The next major growth pattern was the use of the Roman grid. This type of growth closely tied structures together by major axes of one building becoming the emphasis for the design of the next. Later in this period a combination of the Greek and Roman method was developed. This is shown in Hadrian's Villa, where the axis, space and mass are used to form the growth of the composition. In this sense the Roman form of growth was by compression. The individual buildings grew by their connected axes thus they give an appearance

of a megastructure as viewed from a city wide perspective.

3. Baroque Rome on the other hand represents the opposite of the compressed system. This was a period of pointal or tension growth. As can be seen in the work of Sixtus V special elements were placed throughout the city with "tension" axes (fields) created between them.

4. Simular to tension growth is growth by extension. In this concept a tension line is extended beyond the immediate field of influence thus establishing a strong ordering principle to adjacent areas. This is most often seen in French design

Principles and Issues

This leads to the following urban design principles, and issues, which were utilized in this design

Principles

First the city should be treated as a collective client, dealing first with the existing conditions and the planned skeletive outlines of posible growth patterns. In this manner we are concerned with the present conditions, planned design, and future infill.

Issues

The city as part of the analytical process maybe broken into activity areas, the urban space, and the inter-connection of these spaces. Specifically for this project the purpose is to:

1. make the city comprehensible
2. relate the city to the natural
3. weave the new into the existing fabric
4. complement the monumental
5. create focal sites
6. diversify environments

The sub-issues of this problem are concerned with the speed of the pedestrian, the scale that they are confronted with, the circulation patterns, and finally the urban space. this space alone is broken into these major issues:

1. speed
2. scale
3. circulation
4. connection
5. enclosure

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SOLUTION

evaluation /objectives

Evaluation

As can be seen from Asheville's existing conditions the downtown is lacking
In many urban design elements. The most obvious are:

- no well defined urban nodes
- a fabric that is sparse and spread apart
- no edge definition
- lack of green space
- older structures, inefficiently utilized
- parts of the city are incomprehensible
- no used focal (tension) sights
- vehical/pedestrian conflicts
- no diversified environments
- poor connection and cohesion of the city as a whole
- no pedestrian districts.

Many of these problems result from the downtown problems with traffic flow

and parking. Much of the fabric that is sparse and is spread apart is due to the on grade parking and road systems. Concurrently many of the road signs and signals are scattered and disordered, thus do not effectively convey information, and add to the confusion.

Major Objectives of the City and Downtown

The goals for Asheville as a city, can also be applied to the downtown district. The weaknesses and needs of the city and the downtown are outlined in the existing conditions section and the evaluation section. The major objectives are outlined below:

1. clarify and improve the vehicular movement systems
2. provide adequate and convenient parking
3. provide for compatible pedestrian and vehicular movements
4. generate both daytime and night-time activities
5. increase diversity of activities
6. provide visual contrast to hard building edges and vehicular paths
7. simplify and clarify information signs and signal systems.

City C.B.D. Shopping District

From the evaluation and research of Asheville's existing conditions and the objectives of the city it has been determined that the downtown fabric can not withstand the impact of a large megastructure-type shopping development.

It is also determined that the best overall development for Asheville's downtown is to intergrate a new shopping district and other activities into the existing fabric. In additon there should be an interlacing of new urban nodes, greenspaces, etc., into this fabric.

Of major importance to the developement of the downtown is the site of the new shopping sistrict. It has been determined that the best location to intergrate the new retail is in combination with the existing retail and utilization of the Grove Arcade structure as a focal element in the plan.

The Grove Arcade was built in 1930 as a retail arcade but is presently occupied by the National Climate Center..As this group desires a new structure the arcade will make an excellent major magnet.

In addition to the existing retail activities and structures in this area, the site is located close to the loop road, route 240 to the north, and the proposed transit center whcih, will be located across the street on Patton ave.

This will give good access by automobile and mass transit to the shopping district.

To add to the activities surrounding the shopping district there is the civic center, library, St. Lawrence Church and some retirement housing. To fulfill one of the requirements for the new hotel it also will be located in this area. This will then create a very active node within the city.

Vehicular Circulation and Parking

As noted on the downtown district proposal and shopping district concept drawing a new service road, and retail loop road is intergrated into the district. This system will effectivily control and orient the traffic in this area. The service road will connect throughout the city along route 240 and also directly connect to the shoppers loop road. This will alleviate all of the traffic flow problems off of and on to route 240 while at the same time create an effective shoppers vehicular path.

From the shopping loop road, which maybe entered at any of a number of points, the driver may choose any of the four major parking areas. These park-

ing areas were placed and sized depending upon their relationships to the facilities being served.

A, "cruising street" was also intergrated into this area for the purpose of emergency vehicles, utility access, drop-off and pick-up, and to increase the night-time acivity in the district.

development

Townscape

Successful downtown shopping areas must be pleasant and attractive. The city's appearance, as created by the store fronts and "street" accessories significantly add to the city's image and marketability.

This section deals with these elements and their effect on the town. The following are the proposals for the shopping district area: They correspond to the proposed drawings.

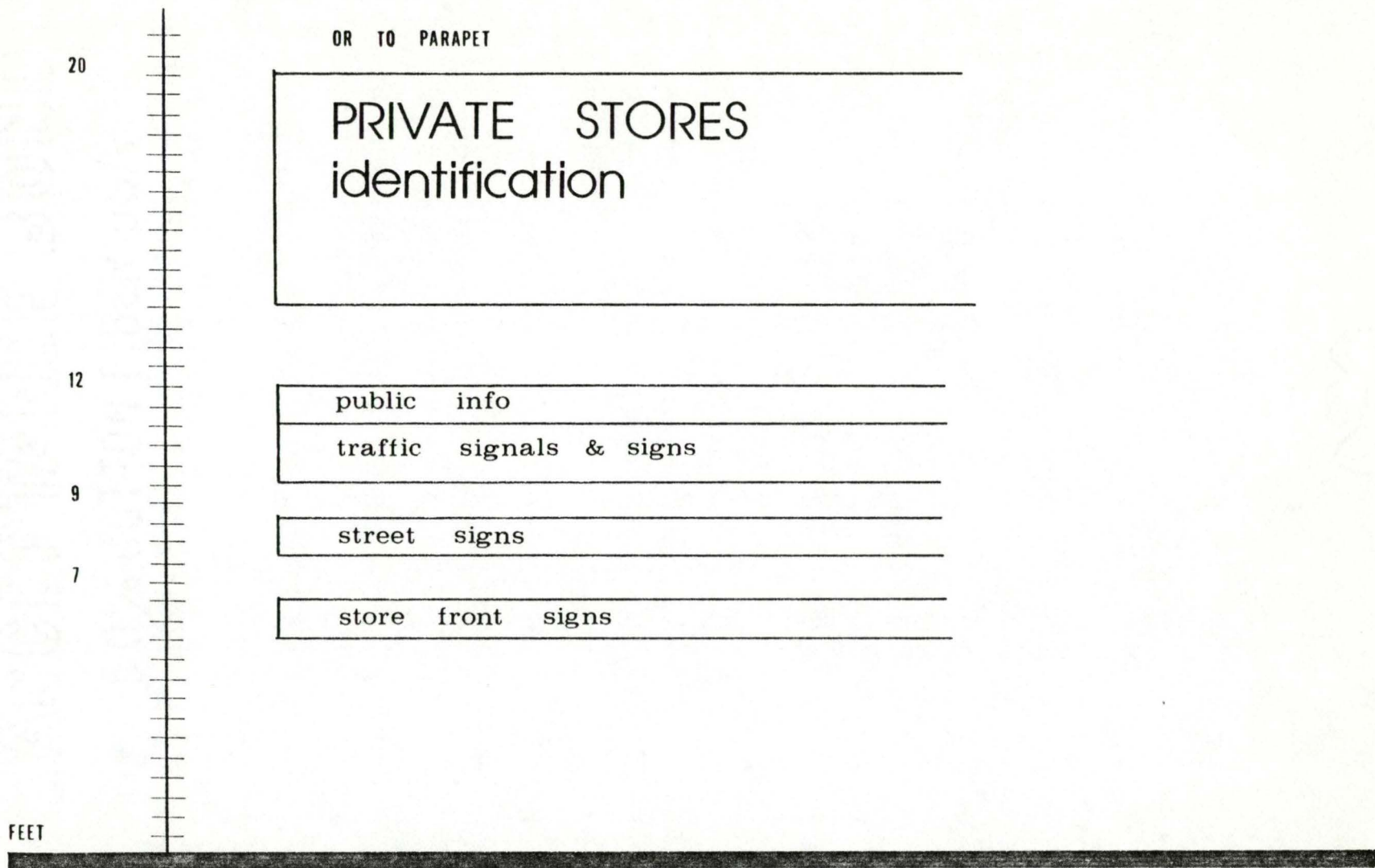
Storefronts

The city should adopt a system of horizontal zones for specific types of information signage. This would not only apply to storefront signs but also to general directional signage. This would help reduce the visual confusion usually associated with urban areas. To increase the pleasure of the shoppers even further, storefronts should be canopied to provide protection from the elements.

General Development

To further reduce the general visual and planar confusion, all power lines should be placed underground, and all traffic and street signs should be mounted at corners on single poles. The streets or developed mall streets should be planted with trees to help in alleviating the harsh building and street edges. Also street benches must be provided for the pleasure of the shoppers.

Textured paving materials will be utilized throughout the shopping district providing a dry, non-slip surface. These patterns as shown on the plaza drawing are generated from the Grove Arcade's architectural grid and use of its gray stone material. At the same time the paving is used as an unification element, it is also used in the definition of spaces, and as indicators of pedestrian movement areas. The pedestrian movement system and definition of space system correspond, hence they are of the same material. For this area a brick will be weaved into a 5'X5' grid. This material and grid will be extended to raised pedestrian cross walks, which will alert the drivers of the pedestrians while giving the pedestrians a flat transition plane.



sign limites

Envelope Criteria

Within the shopping district the present structures are either 2 to 3 stories in height. 5 buildings in the area rise higher, they are: the Battery Park Hotel, 13 stories; a retirement center, 9 stories; an office/retail structure, 9 stories; the proposed new hotel, 13 stories; and the proposed office tower on top of the Grove Arcade, 13 stories total.

The criteria for the envelope design must project for the possible infill in height. This increase in floor space most directly affects the parking situation and surrounding road systems. In connection a strong relationship also occurs between the height of these structures and those of the surrounding areas.

The building heights will relate to three adjacent areas.

The area to the east is the "grass roots" restored district. This area consists of a variation of 2 to 4 story structures, but as the new garden/parking area is located between the districts the new building heights will have no great effect upon this area.

The area to the west is relatively underdeveloped except for the post office

which is 3 stories; the Power co., 1 story; the Asheville news paper, 4 stories; and the Telephone co, at 5 stories. Because of the wide variations in height this area will have little effect upon the shopping district envelope criteria.

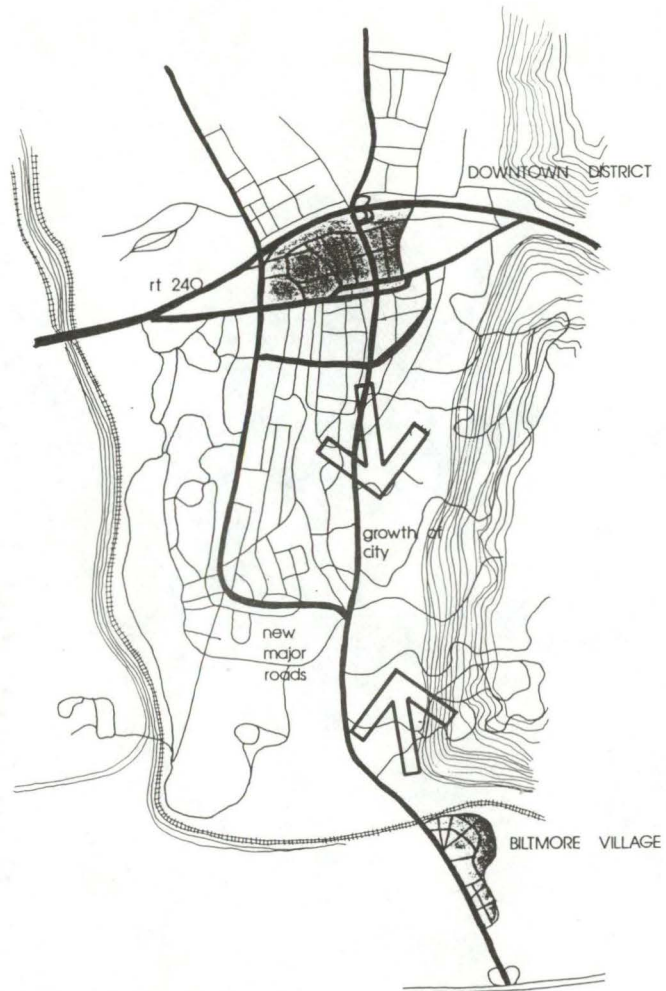
The area to the south to Patton ave. is the most complex and also will have the greatest impact. Most of the structures in this section are 2 stories in height with the exception of the "Flat Iron Building" which is 8 stories and a historic office structure along Patton ave. which is 7 stories. This section is a major transition space between the transit center and the shopping district. The section itself contains many retail stores and a new retail street which is considered an extension of the shopping district. For this reason the two areas must relate well to each other.

Proposal

The shopping district will be zoned for 3 stories except for those buildings stated earlier which rise higher. In this manner the shopping district will relate well to all of the retained surrounding areas and keep the development of this district within the original guide lines of a shopping district.

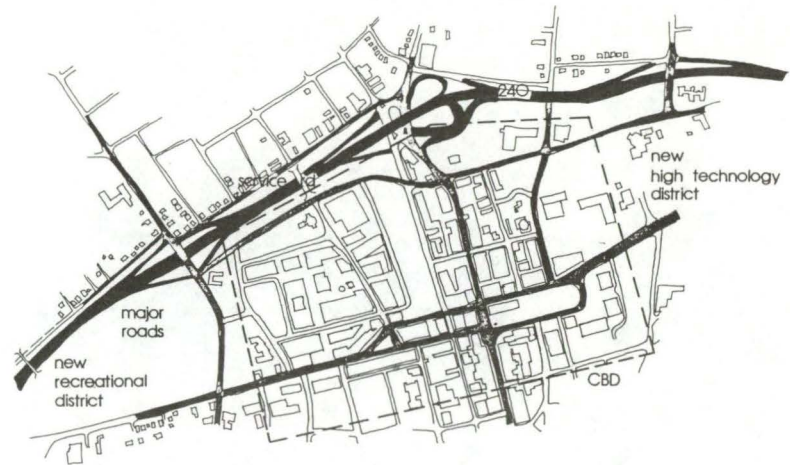
Those structures which rise higher will work well to define the shopping district within itself and to the city context as a whole. With a 3 story maximum the impact of the extra parking and vehicular traffic can be easily handled by the proposed parking, and as the new transit center and major commuting parking garage will be across the street, parking and access to the site should be no problem.

drawings



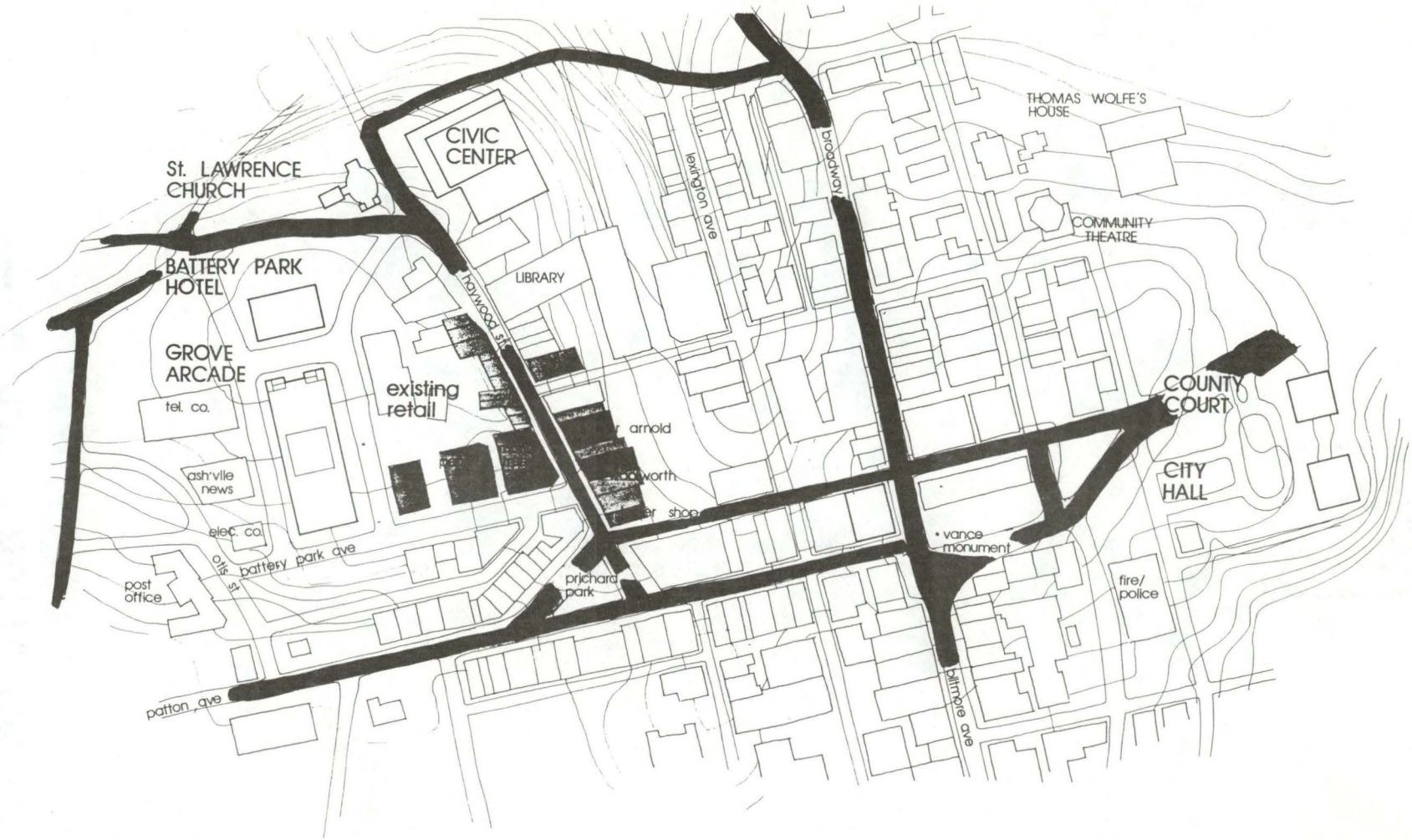
CITY major direction of growth and proposed major roads

GROWTH OF CITY

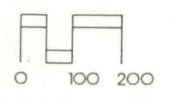


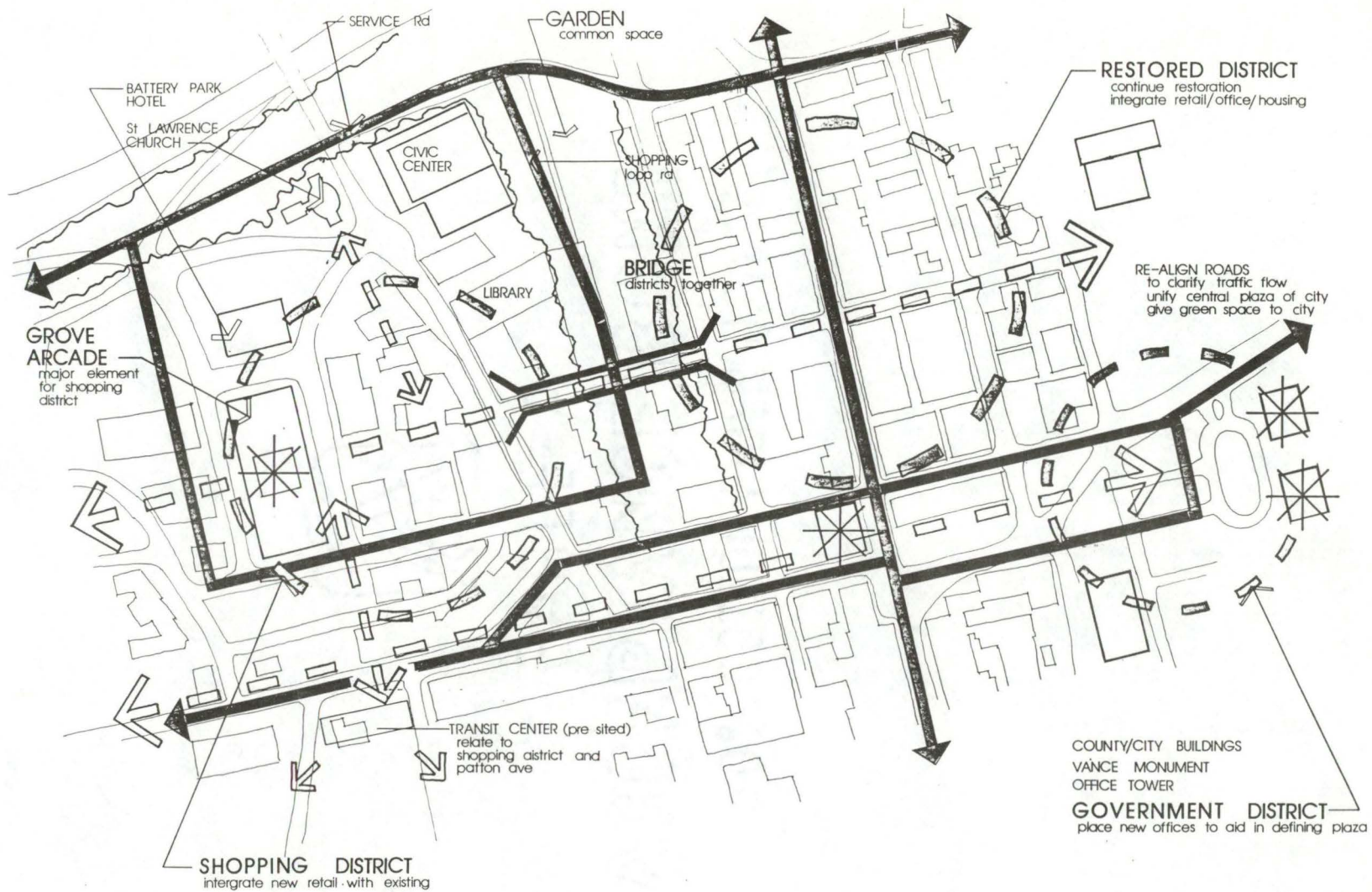
DOWNTOWN DISTRICT PROPOSAL





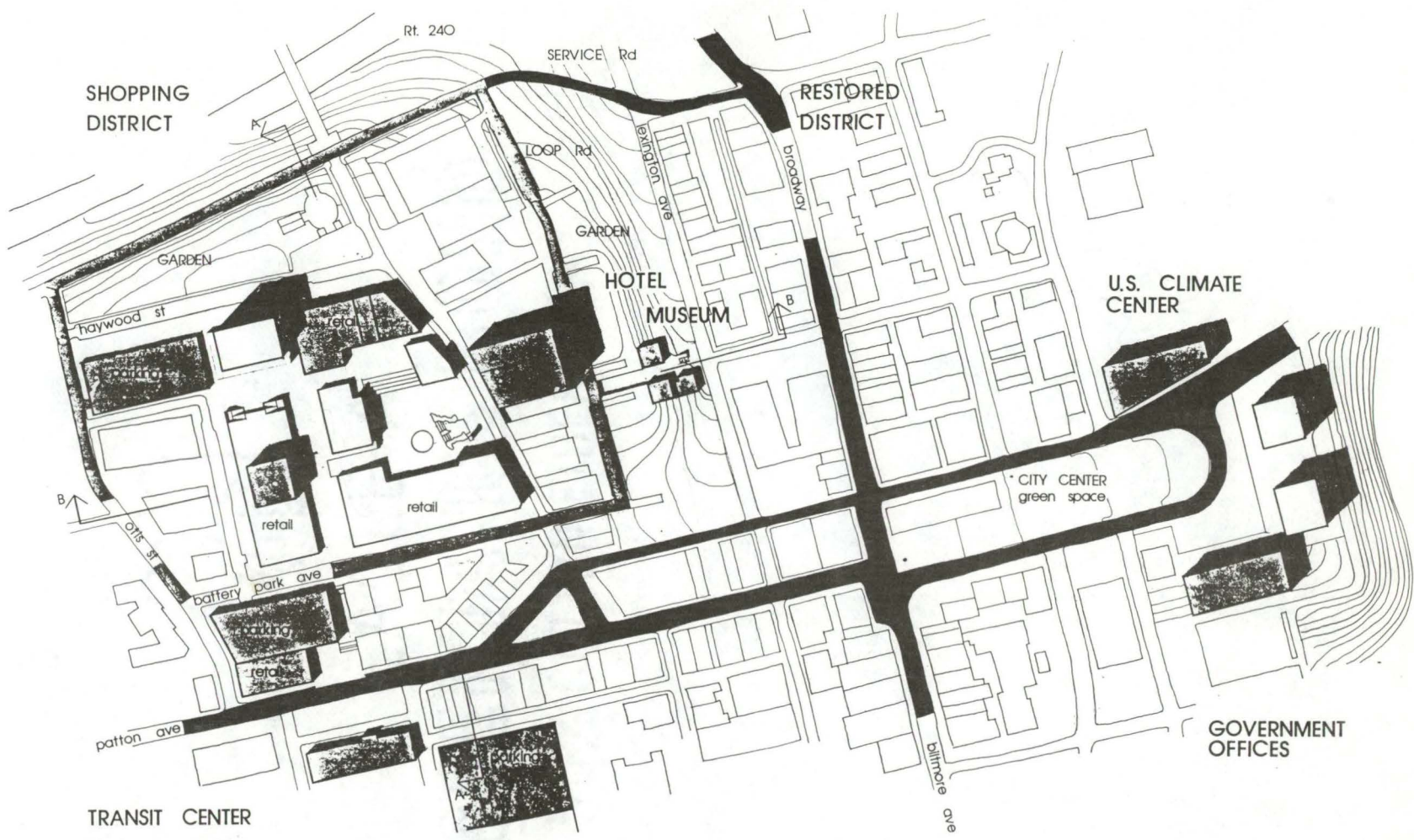
EXISTING CBD



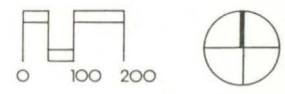


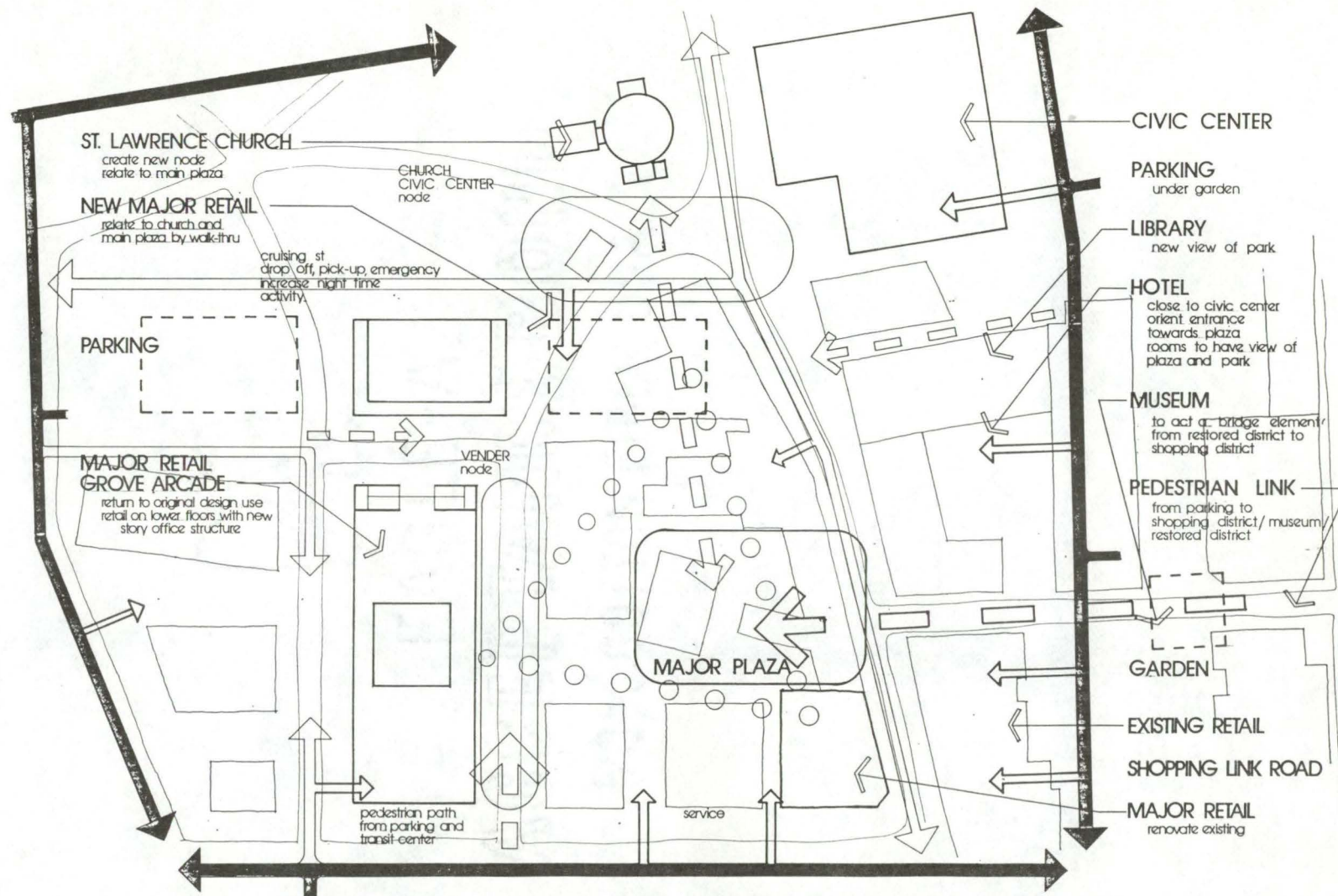
CBD CONCEPT





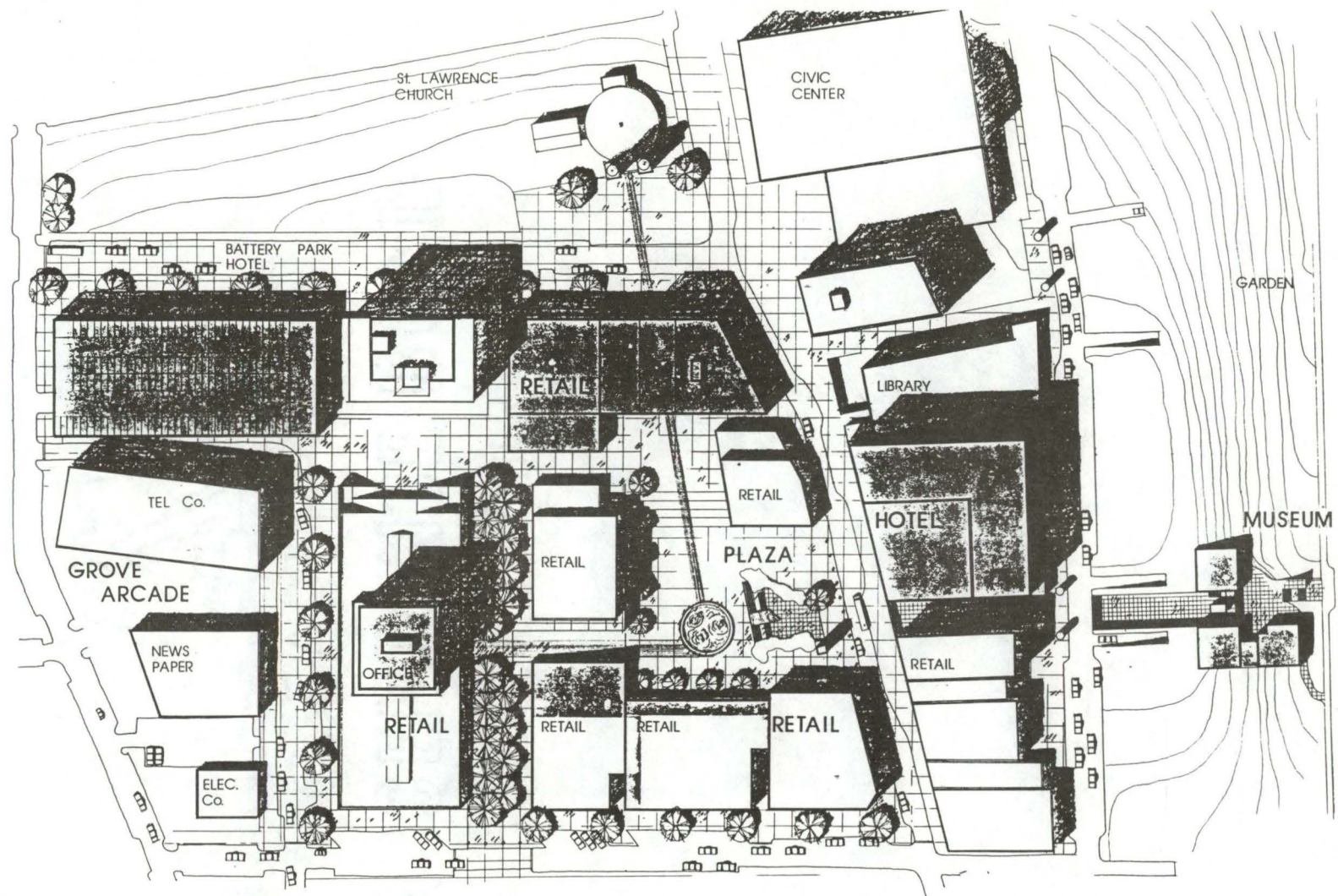
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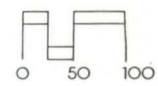


SHOPPING DISTRICT CONCEPT





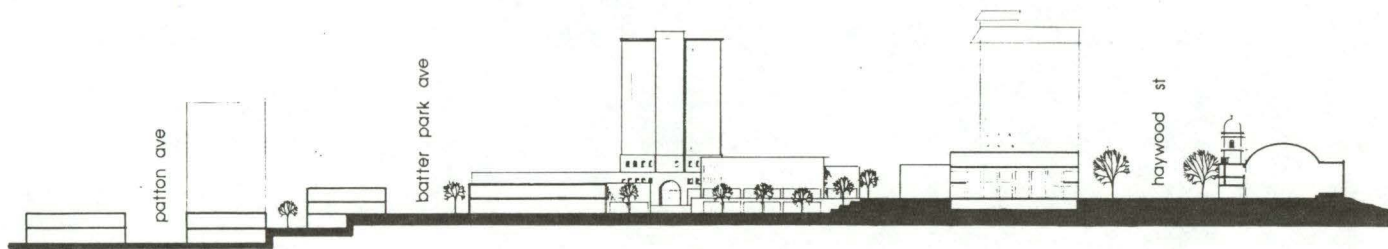
SHOPPING DISTRICT



TRANSIT CENTER

PLAZA

St LAWRENCE CHURCH



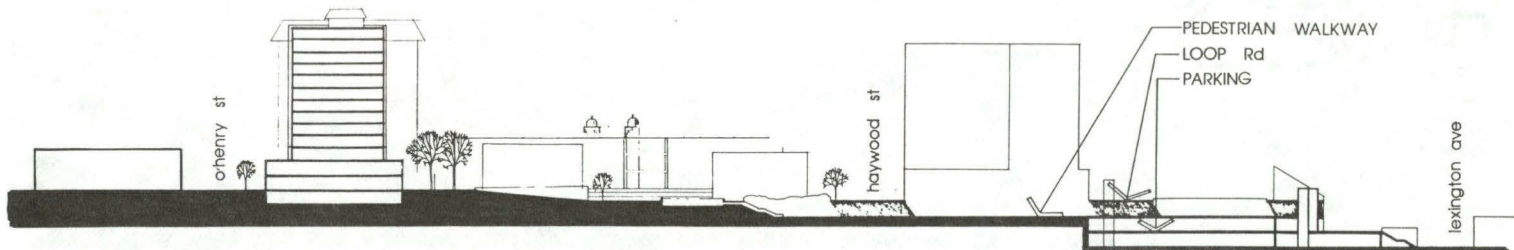
A-A

GROVE ARCADE

PLAZA

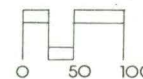
HOTEL

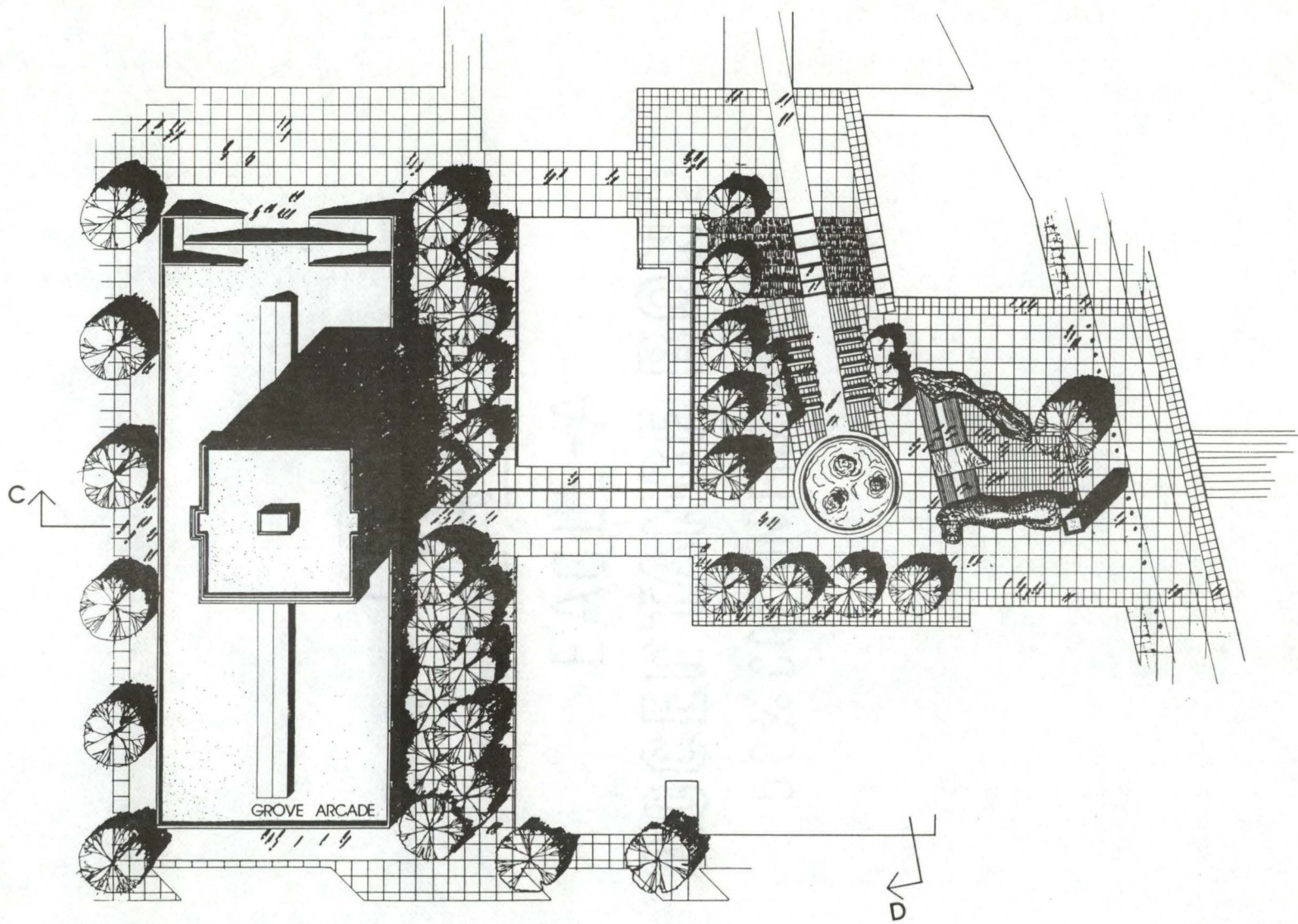
MUSEUM



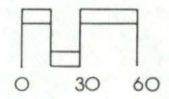
B-B

SECTIONS





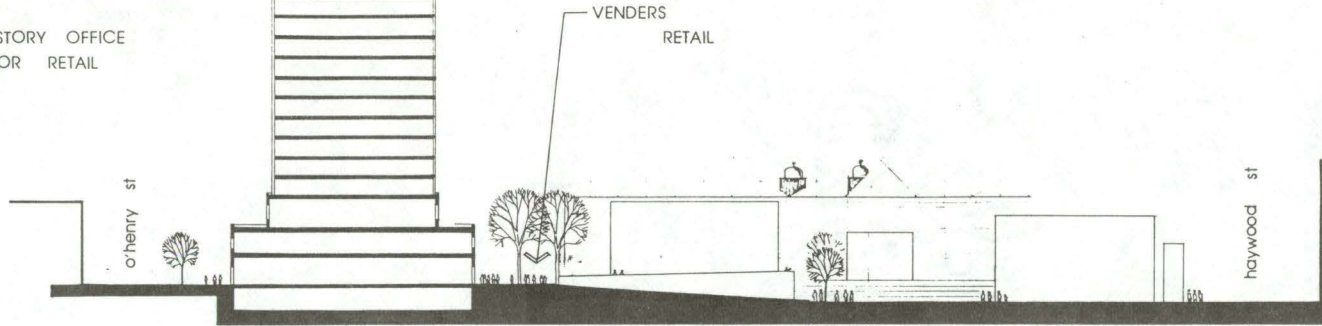
PLAZA



GROVE ARCADE

NEW
10 STORY OFFICE
MAJOR RETAIL

PLAZA



C - C

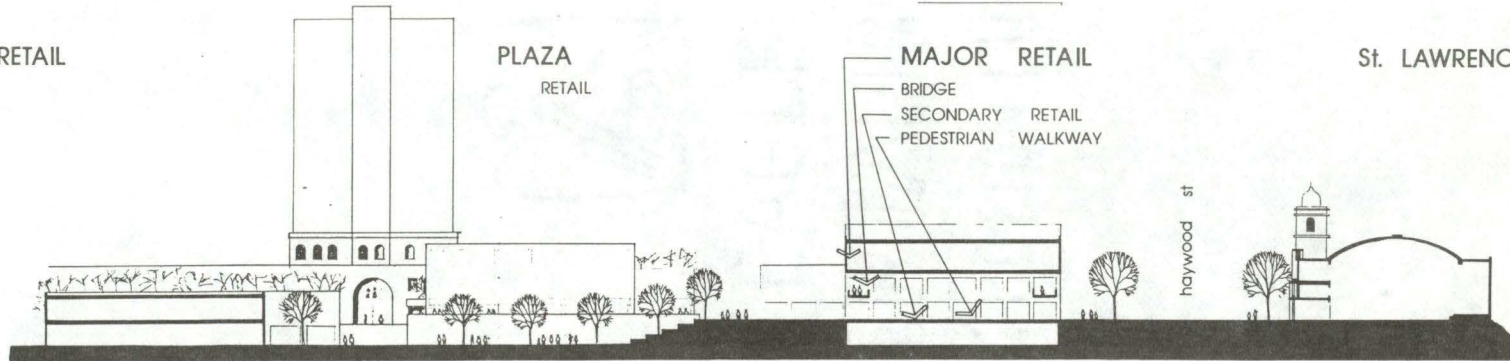
RETAIL

PLAZA
RETAIL

MAJOR RETAIL

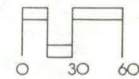
St. LAWRENCE

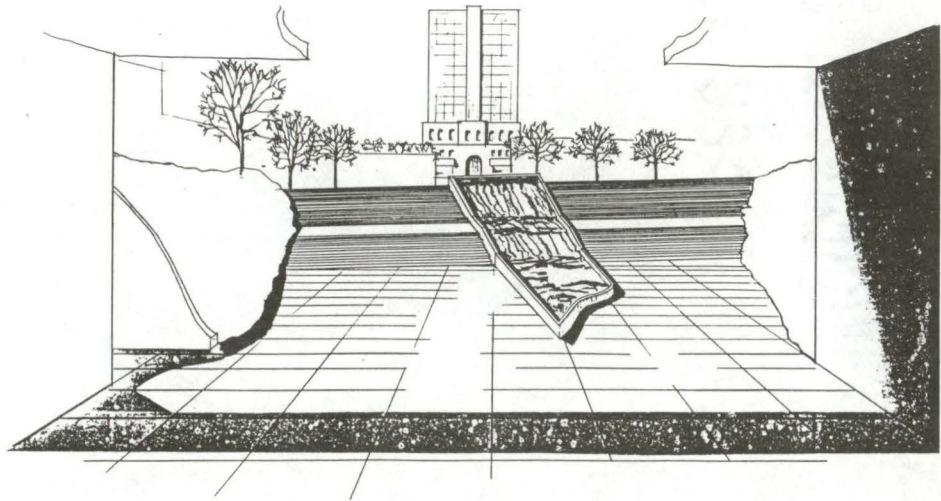
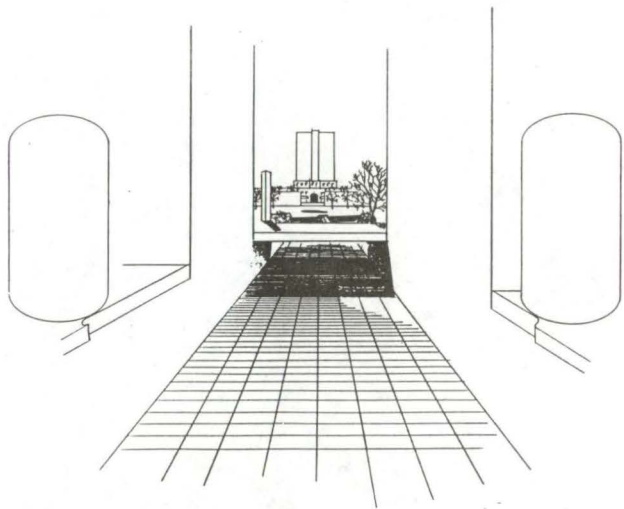
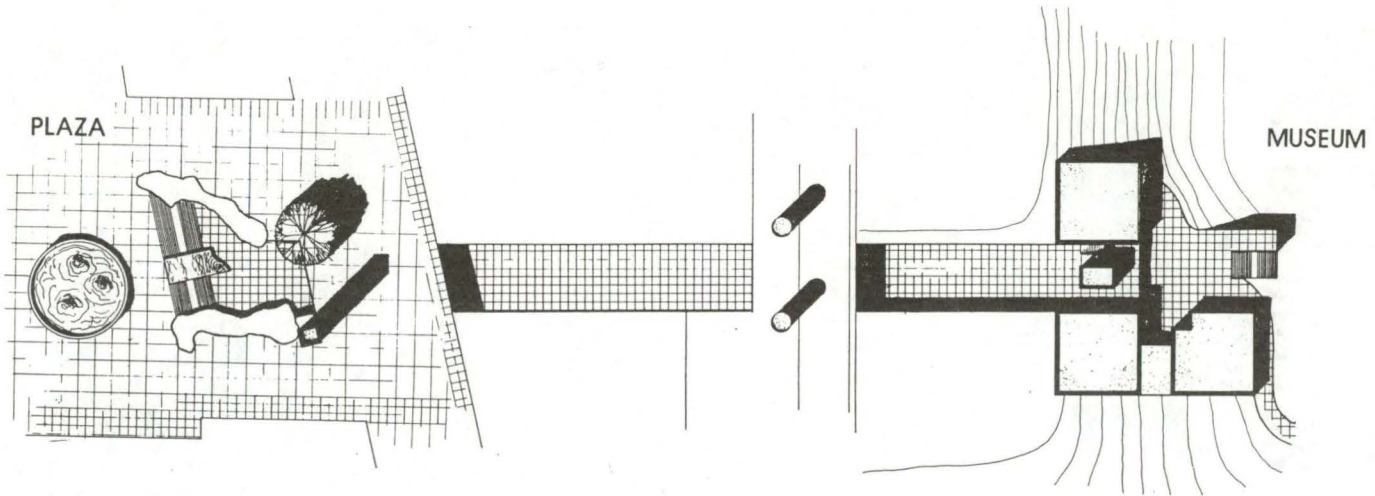
BRIDGE
SECONDARY RETAIL
PEDESTRIAN WALKWAY



D - D

SECTIONS

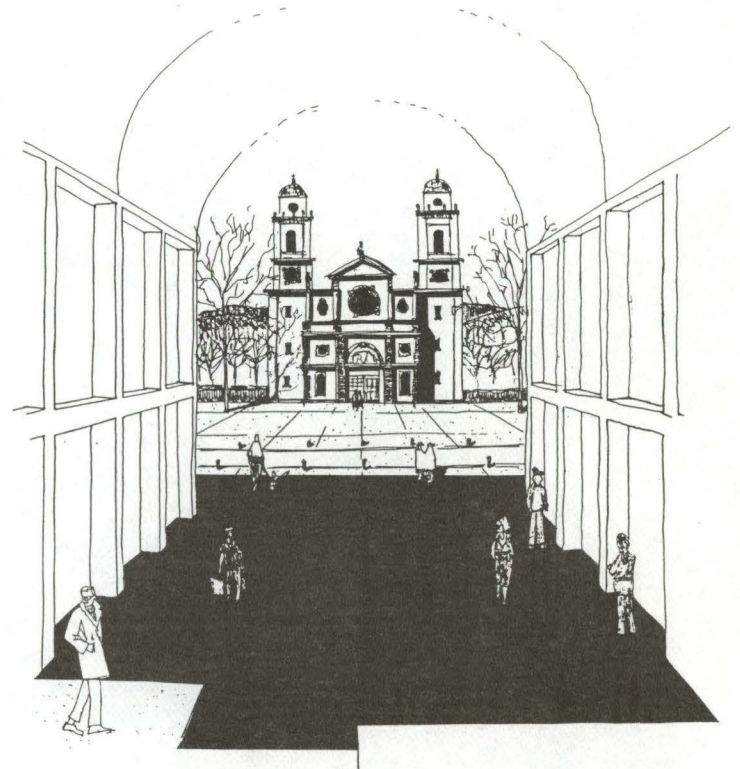




TRANSITION



VENDER'S SPACE



St. LAWRENCE CHURCH

VIEWS

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FOR BELLON LHM 254
 WOODBURN MICH 48096
 EVERT

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