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A report on an Arts Administration internship with Spirit Square Center for the Arts, Charlotte, NC, Spring 1992 : an internship paper

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A REPORT ON AN
ARTS ADMINISTRATION INTERNSHIP WITH
SPIRIT SQUARE CENTER FOR THE ARTS
CHARLOTTE, NC
SPRING 1992

AN INTERNSHIP PAPER
PRESENTED TO
THE FACULTY OF THE GRADUATE SCHOOL
OF THE UNIVERSITY OF NEW ORLEANS

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE
MASTER OF ARTS IN ARTS ADMINISTRATION

BY
KAREN L. THOMPSON
AUGUST, 1992

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CHAPTER 1.
SPIRIT SQUARE CENTER FOR THE ARTS

HISTORY

Spirit Square Center for the Arts is the region's largest multidisciplinary arts institution offering programs in the performing arts, visual arts and arts education. Serving a region of 1.4 million, Spirit Square houses three performance spaces, six galleries and ten studios. It is also the home for Opera Carolina, Charlotte Repertory Theatre, Charlotte Choral Society and The Oratorio Singers.

In 1975, the Mecklenburg County Commissioners purchased the abandoned First Baptist Church for development as a cultural arts center. This complex of four buildings was turned over to the United Arts Council, now called the Arts and Science Council, to be developed.

A private, non-profit corporation was formed to develop and administer the new organization, and in the fall of 1976, the first phase of Spirit Square was opened. With little renovation, one of the four buildings was converted into studios and classrooms, a small theater, gallery, restaurant and offices for arts organizations. Programming of the spaces was mostly educational in nature and was done by other organizations and teachers who rented the space.

In 1980, the sanctuary was renovated and transformed into a fully-equipped 800-seat theater. This renovation was funded by a \$2.5 million City bond issue and \$800,000 in private funds. A new lobby was also constructed on adjacent property. The County relinquished 50 percent ownership in the property to the City and agreed to pay net operating costs not covered by operating revenues.

Spirit Square began to exercise more control over the education program, and the Center began its own visual arts program. The opening of the theater changed Spirit Square's primary role from that of a renting facility to a professional level presenting organization.

Spirit Square's second major renovation came in 1983 and greatly boosted the visual arts program. A 2,900 square-foot contemporary arts gallery was created with \$1 million in private funds. The focus of the gallery's programming has continued to be contemporary art of national and international significance.

In May 1988, the most comprehensive renovation of Spirit Square began. With funding totaling \$6.5 million from a combination of public and private monies, all parts of the facility's five buildings were joined into one cohesive complex. This most recent renovation was completed in 1990.

MISSION AND PURPOSE

The Center's mission statement is as follows:

Spirit Square Center for the Arts believes that the arts are a true measure and record of a civilized society and a catalyst for the enrichment, growth and pleasure of the citizens of that society.

Its purpose is:

to create opportunities for the discovery, development and celebration of creative ability from whatever sources it may emerge or in whatever artistic form it may take. And by these opportunities to restore the arts, and the role of the artist, to a central and relevant position in the community.

The Board, in 1991, set as its goals:

1. To present performing and visual arts experiences of national and international stature to the community;
2. To identify and showcase talent indigenous to Charlotte, Mecklenburg County and the Central Piedmont region;
3. To develop and provide, for adults and children, a variety of learning encounters in the arts that enhance professional growth or personal pleasure -- at Spirit Square, in the schools, and elsewhere;
4. To develop bridges between the arts and other areas of community interest -- religion, labor, business, government, ethnic traditions, folk customs, minorities, the international community and social service;
5. To maximize the use of the Spirit Square complex as a venue for a broad range of civic, social, educational, professional and charitable events.
6. To conduct the business of the agency in a fiscally sound and prudent manner and to ensure its solvency in the future through the development of a Spirit Square Endowment.¹

¹Spirit Square Employee Handbook, A-3.

MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE

Board

Spirit Square is governed by a Board of twenty-six members. A member serves for a three-year term and may serve two consecutive terms. Twelve members of the Board are appointed by Spirit Square, six by the Board of County Commissioners of Mecklenburg County, four by the City Council of Charlotte and two by the mayor of Charlotte. The Presidents of the Center's two volunteer organizations also serve as Board members.

The Board of Directors is divided into committees as recommended by Thomas Wolf in Managing a Nonprofit Organization. Spirit Square's Board of Directors includes the following:

1. The Executive Committee
2. The Development Committee
3. Advocacy and Outreach Committee
4. Artistic Advisory Committee
5. Board Resources Committee
6. Education Committee
7. Facilities Committee
8. Finance Committee
9. Human Resources Committee
10. Long-Range Planning Committee
11. Multicultural Development Committee

Each committee's function is explained in Appendix 1.

As Wolf recommends, part of sound management practice entails giving each Board member a Board manual so that he will fully understand the organization and the role of the

Board.² It is hoped that an informed Board member will be a productive Board member.

Spirit Square's manual contains the responsibilities of the Board, Spirit Square's bylaws, the history of the organization, and financial statements. It also contains a list of committees with appropriate functions and members. All Board members are given a calendar listing the year's meetings so that they can plan ahead.

Board members are given a list of member responsibilities upon becoming a Board member. One responsibility is to financially contribute to the organization to the best of one's ability. All other responsibilities are listed in Appendix 1.

President and C.E.O.

Dr. Joseph Golden serves as the President and C.E.O. of Spirit Square and as such oversees all programs and operations of the organization.

Staff

Daily operations employ thirty-nine full-time and twelve part-time employees. Spirit Square is currently re-evaluating job descriptions and the organizational structure.

²Thomas Wolf, Managing a NonProfit Organization (New York: Prentice Hall Press, 1990), 48+.

However, the most recent organizational structure is as follows:

1. Vice President for Administration and Finance oversees personnel, administration support, box office operations, accounting and finance, and retail operations.
2. Vice President for Facility Management has as his responsibility event/space coordination, house management, concessions, ushers, maintenance and housekeeping.
3. Vice President for Arts and Education is responsible for all performing arts, visual arts and arts education programs.
4. Director of Community Resource Development is responsible for community outreach and audience development programming.
5. Director of Development oversees all development and fundraising activities, including the coordination of the two volunteer organizations.
6. Director of Marketing and Public Relations is responsible for all marketing and public relations activities including the publication of newsletters, class brochures, the Spirit Square magazine and programs.

The most recently printed organizational chart is enclosed as Appendix 2.

MANAGEMENT STYLE

Racial Diversity

The Center continues to incorporate racial diversity into the organization. Presently, fifteen percent of the Board of Directors are people of color. Twenty-one percent of the full-time staff are people of color. The program itself has even a greater representation of artists of color as performers, exhibitors, students, teachers and patrons.

A Multicultural Committee works constantly to ensure representation of all cultural groups in personnel and programs. New outreach programming with organizations representing such populations as Latin-Americans, Arabs and Germans will strengthen Spirit Square's commitment to Charlotte's multicultural community.

Programming

The performing arts department presents approximately 40 performances throughout the nine-month season. The majority of the season is composed of musical performances that include jazz, folk, pop, vintage, and some classical groups. Theatre is usually presented five or six times. Dance

performances may encompass three presentations, and shows for children involve approximately six shows.

This past season showcased approximately 30 exhibitions by visual artists in the Spirit Square galleries. Some of those included in the season were sculpture, drawings, photographs, fiber art, a competition of local high school students, an exhibition of work by employees of local companies, and a video installation.

The upcoming exhibition season promises a celebration of mountain culture with a quilt display, photographs of mountain farms by Robert Amberg, and an exhibition of mountain instruments. Also in the upcoming season will be a exhibition of art work by German artists from Cologne.

Spirit Square continues to have an active educational program, offering approximately 35 classes for toddlers, children and adults in printmaking, pottery, basketry, weaving, theatre, music, dance, drawing and painting each semester. Two summer art camps are also offered for students in grades 1-6.

Other special workshops are offered throughout the year for adults and students. These might include a week-long intensive workshop for high school students that concentrates on printmaking, a month-long dance workshop for students, or a day-long event by a visiting artist.

Although Danny Newman, in his book Subscribe Now!, maintains that season subscriptions are the best way to sell a season of performances, Spirit Square is not convinced that subscriptions are the most effective way to build audiences. Administration does not seem to have a favorable attitude toward subscriptions or advance ticketing privileges for members and therefore seasonal promotions and marketing strategies change almost yearly. This certainly causes confusion among members and ticket buyers as they are never sure of the "rules."

It is my belief that season subscriptions build a loyal audience base. By not offering subscriptions, an organization misses the opportunity for guaranteed revenue on a performance that may, as a single performance, be a low seller. Subscriptions, unlike single tickets, ensure a way to build audiences and guarantee revenue.

This past season, tickets were sold on a single basis only, with discounts given to groups, members, senior citizens, students, and to those who formed their own series of five or more shows. The upcoming season will offer series tickets for theatre, dance and children's performances only, with tickets for all music performances being sold on a single-ticket basis. The upcoming season will allow members advance purchasing privileges. It is my opinion that Spirit Square, by selling a series of performances, will see an

increase in the number of tickets purchased for such performances.

Leadership/Staff Relations

Staff members strongly question the Board's commitment to the organization. Board members, despite the dictum to attend four events per year, seem to be infrequent guests to performances and events. At a recent successful "gallery crawl" evening where attendance to an exhibition was phenomenal, and a musical performance was scheduled in one of the theaters, the Chairman of the Board was overheard wondering why all the people were there.

Presently there is a 73 percent turnover rate among staff having been with Spirit Square for four years or less. Almost 100 percent of the staff are members of Spirit Square, and the staff members generally "like" one another, but morale is low. A lackadaisical attitude and one of disinterest is showing up throughout the organization. People feel overburdened with work and think that administration is indifferent to their needs.

Staff members have not received a pay raise in two years. This year pay raises have been promised and a type of merit evaluation is about to be implemented. However, no formal goals and objectives were established with each staff member that would allow for objective evaluation, and some

staff are naturally concerned with this situation. Stress levels are high as job security is a factor for some.

One Vice-President feels that there are three leadership qualities that are necessary to survive in the 90's and that Spirit Square needs to improve in the three areas of flexibility, creativity and decisiveness. The Center and all its staff must be open-minded enough to encourage the maximizing of talents in responding to the problems at hand. Leaders must have the ability to continually generate new ideas and practices which respond quickly and effectively to rapidly changing environments and conditions. The institution must also work to clearly communicate decisions to staff and the community which promote the long-term stated goals and objectives of the institution.³

Future Trends

Spirit Square is on the verge of having to rethink its entire mission and goals. With the opening of the North Carolina Blumenthal Performing Arts Center just two blocks away from Spirit Square, many are wondering what will happen to Spirit Square.

The Performing Arts Center opening in the fall of 1992 is a \$40 million "grand" complex. It is built on the concept

³Joe Jefcoat, "APAP Leadership Institute Application," June 1992.

of a traditional opera house complete with box seats and offers state of the art facilities and outstanding acoustics. The Performing Arts Center, with three performance spaces that include a 2,100-seat Belk Theater and a 440-seat Booth Playhouse, will become uptown's premiere performance space.

Many of the city's arts organizations such as Opera Carolina, the Charlotte Symphony Orchestra, and Charlotte Repertory Theatre will use the Performing Arts Center as their performance space. Charlotte Repertory Theatre is the biggest tenant of Spirit Square's three theaters. In 1992-92, the Theatre used Spirit Square's theaters approximately 120 times. When the new PAC opens, Charlotte Repertory Theatre will only use Spirit Square's theaters 18 times before moving its season to the Performing Arts Center.⁴

Competition for the performing arts audience is stiff. The city of Charlotte has two other major presenting halls, not including the new PAC. In order for Spirit Square to survive, new strategies for programming and operations must be developed.

It has become a Spirit Square mandate that the performing arts, visual arts, and education departments work together on projects so that the arts experience becomes a "total" experience and one that is able to reach many more

⁴Tony Brown, "Competition may push Spirit Square into a new niche," The Charlotte Observer, 26 April 1992 , p. 3 (F).

people. Generally, these projects start with a single performance or exhibition and develop into a celebration of a specific culture. The events require more work and coordination among all departments, from the marketing department to the maintenance staff, and ultimately that may mean fewer events.

Spirit Square tried out the "culture festival" approach with Sommerfest '92, a celebration of the German-speaking community that combined food, entertainment and education into one evening. The evening was a tremendous success in that the German population in Charlotte and surrounding area became involved in Spirit Square. New audiences were attracted to and interacted with Spirit Square, Charlotte learned a little more about the German culture and revenue in excess of \$7500 was raised.

The upcoming "Mountain Celebration" started out as a exhibition of Robert Amberg's photographs of mountain farms but has evolved into a true celebration of the Appalachian culture. The festival will include a performance by legendary Doc Watson and a performance by the Southern Musical Roots Tour. It will include an exhibition of quilts by Ora Watson, a tobacco curing demonstration, demonstrations and exhibitions of mountain instruments such as the dulcimer, an exhibition of farming implements and workshops for people to learn about these native mountain arts. People who may come

specifically to hear Doc Watson will be exposed to the exhibitions, and in this way it becomes a more diverse experience.

With programs like Sommerfest and the Mountain Culture Festival, Spirit Square can capitalize on the rise of cultural awareness that seems to be spreading throughout our society. Leslie Paliyenko, Director of Community Resources Development, sees this type of programming as "cultural immersion...learning our cultural differences and appreciating them."⁵

Following his involvement with Sommerfest, Bob Fridl, Quality Imports president, is now trying to start a two-state coalition to make his fellow Austrians more active participants in community life. Paliyenko hopes Spirit Square can continue to generate that type of interaction and believes that if it can, it will give "Spirit Square a chance to make a lasting contribution to the community."⁶

Another change in Spirit Square's programming and operations may come with the opening of a downtown arts magnet school. With plans for such a school in formulation, some see creative educational programming as crucial to the Center's survival. The plans call for an old department store

⁵Dean Smith, "Festival Spirit," The Charlotte Observer, 31, May 1992, 1(F).

⁶Ibid., 5(F).

one-half of a block away from Spirit Square to be turned into an arts and banking high school with a tentative opening date of January 1994. If that opening date becomes a reality, Spirit Square would host the arts classes for the fall 1993 semester.

Dr. Golden, president of Spirit Square, was quoted in The Charlotte Observer as saying, in reference to his plans for preserving Spirit Square, that education "is the glue that holds it all together."⁷ His plan includes Spirit Square becoming the practice lab for students of the magnet school, and possibly applying the arts to early childhood development, which could lead Spirit Square to becoming a preschool for the arts. Michael Marsicano, president of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Arts & Science Council was quoted in the same article as saying, "If Joe's on the track of Spirit Square emerging as an educational and community center for the arts, he's on the right track."⁸ (For related articles on future trends in Charlotte, see Appendix 7 and Appendix 8.)

⁷Brown, "Competition may push Spirit Square into a new niche," 3(F).

⁸Ibid.

PERSONNEL POLICY

Spirit Square maintains an Employee Handbook which all regular employees receive. As Thomas Wolf recommends in his book, Managing a Nonprofit Organization, this manual covers such topics as types of employment, working hours and conditions, benefits, and general procedures and policies.⁹

Spirit Square offers medical, dental and life insurance coverage to all full-time regular employees. The employee's spouse and dependents may also be covered by the policy. Other benefits include two weeks of paid vacation and a retirement plan.

FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

Financial highlights show that in 1991 total expenses were approximately \$2.72 million and income was \$2.77 million. Personnel expenses totaled approximately \$1.67 million or 61 percent of the total expenses. Earned income comprised 32 percent of the total income. Contributed income made up the majority of the total income with the largest contributor being Mecklenburg County at \$1.27 million. (See Appendix 3 for financial highlights.)

⁹Thomas Wolf, Managing A Nonprofit Organization (New York: Prentice Hall Press, 1990), 99.

For the 1991-92 season, the North Carolina Arts Council awarded Spirit Square grant funds in the excess of \$28,000. From the National Endowment for the Arts, the Center received \$13,000. Spirit Square received more than \$5,300 from the Southern Arts Federation.

Next year Spirit Square will receive less money from the City. This year the Arts & Science Council awarded Spirit Square \$355,000. For the 1992-93 fiscal year, Spirit Square requested \$410,000, an amount they felt was realistic based upon the Arts & Science Council's increased annual fund drive. The Arts & Science Council awarded Spirit Square \$345,000 for the 1992-93 fiscal year based on various reasons. One comment the Arts & Science Council offered was that the panel members reviewing the grant application felt Spirit Square was over-staffed. For a complete summary of panel comments, see Appendix 4.

The following comments listed below give a general summary of the panel's comments as distributed by the Arts & Science Council:

1. The panel commends the Board for its willingness to face the challenges that the opening of the PAC will bring.
2. The panel believes that Spirit Square must rethink its mission and establish program priorities. A reorganization of staff may be required.

3. The panel strongly encourages Spirit Square to make arts education its priority program.
4. The panel is concerned about Spirit Square's financial status and feels that Spirit Square needs to develop a more realistic long-range fiscal plan.¹⁰

¹⁰ "Multidisciplinary Panel," May 1992.

CHAPTER 2.

INTERNSHIP RESPONSIBILITIES AND TASKS

BASIC RESPONSIBILITIES

As an intern, I worked with Leslie Paliyenko, Director of Community Resource Development. This department was created five months before my internship began with its purpose being to "scuff up the floors." Programming to increase community outreach and audience development was its primary objective.

As the only support staff the director had to carry out her objectives, I was given a wide variety of responsibilities and tasks as projects deemed necessary. Such tasks involved writing correspondence, bulk mailings of flyers, the coordination of invitation lists and the subsequent mailings as well as report documentation. Hospitality duties, the processing of check requisitions and purchase orders and the ordering of supplies were all necessary for the success of a project. I was also given the authority to work closely with the Education department assisting with administrative and clerical tasks as programs required.

ALLEN D. CARTER COMMUNITY MURAL PROJECT

The major component of my internship experience was the position as Site Coordinator of the Allen Carter Mural Project. As Site Coordinator, I served as the critical link between Spirit Square and the community sites involved in the project.

Five recreational centers were chosen to participate in the mural project, each site representing a geographically different area of Charlotte. Individual centers were chosen according to staff support of the project and for the anticipated participants the project would serve.

Each community site was assigned a professional community artist that had completed a teacher workshop conducted by Allen Carter and Spirit Square. Populations served by the project included homeless children at Hawthorne Recreational Center, senior citizens at Albemarle Rd. Recreational Center, and predominately young black teens at the Naomi Drenan Recreational Center. A seemingly equal balance of white and black 8-15 year old students participated at the Tuckaseegee Recreational Center and at the Ada Jenkins Community Center in Davidson, Mecklenburg County.

I was responsible for delivering all supplies needed for the three-week mural project to each site and providing

the community artists with additional supplies as needed. Furthermore, I followed the progress of each site, visiting at least every other day, keeping the artist and participants appraised of approaching deadlines. I kept a file of photo releases that each participant was required to sign and alerted the sites of possible media and video coverage.

If necessary, I contacted the community center's director on behalf of the artist to address any problems or concerns. I notified the center directors of the participants' reception and provided the caterer with an attendance estimate.

At the conclusion of the project, I gathered all remaining supplies and photographed the completed murals. Evaluations with the recreational center directors and with Spirit Square staff members were completed.

SENIOR SUNDAYS

During my internship period, I worked with a new program titled "Senior Sundays," a series of monthly sessions where senior citizens had the opportunity to experience varying arts experiences, from throwing a pot on a wheel to printmaking. By participating in such "workshops" as learning what it takes to curate an exhibition to learning about musical theatre in America, senior citizens were able

to experience a variety of educational yet enjoyable arts experiences.

As this was a new program, I continually updated and maintained a mailing list of all senior citizens that had participated in a session and compiled a list of community centers and churches with large active groups of senior citizens for future mailings. I was responsible for mailing publicity flyers on upcoming senior programs and for assisting on the day of the event as needed.

CLEO PARKER ROBINSON DANCE ENSEMBLE

Another project I assisted with was the week-long residency of the Cleo Parker Robinson Dance Ensemble. During the ensemble's residency, approximately 3,000 school students experienced the Ensemble at Spirit Square, with additional students at other schools experiencing some aspect of the Ensemble whether it was a few dancers leading an exercise or the drummer engaging the students in a rhythmic exercise. Approximately 35 students had the wonderful opportunity to work with Cleo and some of her dancers during their visit on a piece that the students and Ensemble subsequently performed.

For the Cleo Parker Robinson project, I gathered statistics on participating students, accompanied the drummer

to schools for assemblies, and coordinated the mailing of invitations to the post-performance reception. I also assisted with the coordination of the student dance troupe during the week and on the night of the performance.

GO FORWARD RETREAT

A staff retreat, entitled a "Go Forward" meeting allowed me to participate in the process of evaluating an organization and in determining what achievements should be realized as well as what the staff members see as the organization's strengths and weaknesses. After the retreat, I was given the responsibility of documenting the "Go Forward" meeting so that the outcome of the day would be recorded and could be used for future planning and implementation of programs and objectives.

The report is attached as Appendix 5. It addresses interesting ways to increase board commitment and leadership, how to increase financial autonomy and stability, and ways to increase public access to the facility and programs.

Many staff members felt the day's activities were a necessary and an important part of planning. Some, however, were not optimistic that their ideas would play a role in any future planning.

Following the retreat, the format of full staff meetings was immediately changed to reflect the groups' ideas. Other suggestions, especially those addressing the area of public access, were already being implemented. It is hoped that other ideas from the retreat will be considered in future planning.

MULTICULTURAL ACTIVITIES

As part of Spirit Square's increasing effort to reach groups of diverse cultural backgrounds, a Multicultural Committee was formed. The committee, chaired by Ms. Paliyenko and a Board member, meets with leaders of organized groups representing different cultures in order to find new ways Spirit Square can interact with the groups. I was responsible for researching and updating lists of ethnic organizations in Charlotte. As part of Sommerfest '92, a festival of the German-speaking community, I compiled a mailing list of over 600 names, creating a databank for all Sommerfest publicity and for future Spirit Square events.

CHAPTER 3.

A MANAGEMENT CHALLENGE:

THE ALLEN D. CARTER COMMUNITY MURAL PROJECT

PROJECT SUMMARYIntroduction

Spirit Square Center for the Arts requested a grant of \$7,500 from the Arts and Science Council in support of educational programs surrounding the exhibition of "Big Al" Carter: Paintings, Drawings and Murals scheduled for January 1992. Projected expenses of the project equaled \$40,000. The requested amount was granted.

Allen Carter is a nationally recognized African-American painter who works with themes of "everyday people," often in vibrant primary-color palette. Educational and outreach programming included a three-week Knight Gallery residency by Carter, an in-service training workshop for teachers and community artists, and the creation of a series of neighborhood billboards which were used to publicize Carter's exhibition and residency. Students participated in the creative process from idea conception through installation.

The murals will be produced in three different environments. Teachers, after attending the training workshop

will implement murals in the schools. Five community centers will produce murals with the help of area artists. A mural will also be produced in the Knight Gallery by "Big Al" and 15 at-risk students from a Charlotte "last chance" high school and subsequently permanently installed on a visible exterior wall of Spirit Square.

The Artist

Allen "Big Al" Carter is a 44-year old African-American Virginia-based artist and teacher who has emerged in the past ten years as a significant painter and muralist. Carter's work follows in the tradition of Diego Rivera and Romare Bearden and is especially accessible to the public eye. His artistry is strong and his method of creation does not hide the process.

Although some of his works are small-scale pencil drawings, many are quite large and use mixed media and ornamentation. Arts Critic Michael Welzenbach wrote in The Washington Post last year that

one of Carter's strongest attributes is his sheer gift for painting and drawing. He's one of our great experimenters, willing to throw sensitive, Raphael-like drawings, cutout cartoon animals, and Day-Glo paint into one otherwise carefully balanced composition.¹¹ Carter is a master of faces and expressions.

Allen Carter has received much praise and recognition in his

¹¹ ASC Grant Application, Allen "Big Al" Carter, 1991.

solo and group exhibitions. He is an exceptional role model who demonstrates skill in encouraging young people to recognize their own artistic expression and is particularly gifted in interacting with children who have had limited exposure to the arts and with those who are "at risk" adolescents.¹²

MANAGEMENT CHALLENGE:

COMMUNICATION

The Allen Carter Mural Project was the first project of its scope for Spirit Square. It directly involved all departments and was truly a test of organizational communication. Looking at the entire project, the project was a great success. Press coverage of the project was favorable and continuous, hundreds of children were able to experience "Big Al" through the community murals, and Spirit Square now has a large exterior mural titled "Rich Man Feeding Poor Man" through the work of 15 "at-risk" adolescents.

However, communications were at times misinterpreted and tested the staff's abilities. It is a credit to the staff that the entire project was judged tremendously successful.

In first contacting Allen Carter before his arrival at Spirit Square, one person had sole contact with the artist.

¹²ASC Grant Application, Allen "Big Al" Carter, 1991.

This proved problematic, as those who were actually coordinating Carter's activities and the surrounding outreach programs never had the chance to verify his expectations. Miscommunication resulted in Carter's expecting artistically talented "at-risk" adolescents for the Knight Gallery mural.

Most of the students who participated had never painted before and did not understand directions that Carter issued. Therefore, Carter had to adjust his methods of teaching, and became frustrated from the confusion. Though praised as a "motivator," Carter at times had trouble relating to the students. By the end of the experience however, students and Carter were more at ease with each other and were pleased with the outcome of their mural.

Education staff believed Carter would use the students' ideas and thoughts for the mural composition. However, Carter generally works so that the composition is his idea and the students simply "fill in" his work. Only artistically talented students are given the freedom to experiment with their own ideas. This particular working situation was not what the Education department was expecting, because they felt the creative process was a most important part of the project. A lesson in communication was definitely learned, but for the duration of the project the staff had to adjust to his practice.

The same situation in which student ideas were not used as the basis for the mural became a problem at one of the recreation center sites. The center director was concerned with the attitude of the chosen community artist who made all artistic decisions and left students with very little input. The center director had been told that the students would be involved in the entire process, including the creative beginning. The artist, however, had never been explicitly told of all the project's objectives which included the students being involved from the very first with their own ideas for mural composition.

Spirit Square staff had to rectify the miscommunication by discussing the problem with the artist. By that time, however, the staff of the recreation center had formed an unfavorable opinion of the project. Many students dropped out of the project when they had nothing to contribute, and the artist himself began to show disinterest. Proper communication among all involved parties could have prevented this situation.

Throughout this project, my challenge was to be able to listen to both sides of any situation and decipher what the real problem appeared to be. I was in close contact with Allen Carter, driving him to all sites for a visit, and spent most of the travel time listening to his concerns and frustrations. Being an intern, I had no real authority to

change a situation, but did have the responsibility to effectively communicate his needs to those in charge of the project.

At recreation centers, where I was a representative of Spirit Square, I did have the responsibility to try and rectify any miscommunication. An example of this challenge appeared at Carter's first visit to a site. The site was just beginning to think of composition ideas and felt it was behind schedule. Carter assumed he was to offer the community artist suggestions on mural composition and insulted the artist when she misinterpreted his remarks. Carter did not fully understand that the community murals were left to the judgement of the artist and participants and made the site artist feel that her ideas were inappropriate.

To help ease the tension, I first spoke with Carter and made it clear that the artist and participants were responsible for their mural and his role was that of the supporter. He was to encourage the participants' efforts, without stifling their creative ideas.

My next goal was to address the artist's concerns and assure her that Spirit Square supported her ideas, believed the group was capable of producing an excellent mural reflecting the creativity of the participants, and apologize for any comments that may have seemed insulting. Upon returning to Spirit Square, I explained the incident to the

education staff and they spoke again with Carter and the artist to make sure all misunderstandings had been remedied. The artist invited Carter for a return visit and Carter did so, with more positive results.

After the first site visit, it became a habit, while en route to a site, to brief Carter on the artist and participants. I explained what they were accomplishing and reiterated that his role was to support and encourage the students in their endeavors, assuring him that the participants were eager to meet "Big Al." All other visits ran smoothly.

Communication problems presented themselves at all levels during this project. From staff miscommunication to artist/staff miscommunication and student/artist miscommunication, all people involved learned the value of properly expressing one's thoughts and expectations.

In an after-project evaluation by Spirit Square staff, communication was the most frequently mentioned problem of the experience. All staff recognized that their ability to respond spontaneously to problems at-hand was the key to any successful project.

CHAPTER 4.

PROPOSED CHANGE

Proper, inclusive and continuous communication is a powerful tool in the success of an organization. Effective communication allows everyone to function better. People can fulfill their responsibilities when they are equipped with all the necessary facts. Without communication, staff are left to their own, often erroneous, conclusions.

My recommendations for better communication on a Spirit Square project are:

1. A detailed plan of action that lists tasks, staff responsible and a deadline for completion of tasks.
2. A Project Team: a core of staff members dedicated to a particular project, its planning, implementation, and evaluation.
3. A Project Manager: a single person who keeps the project as his priority and ensures that all staff complete their specific responsibilities as outlined.
4. The artist should have an opportunity to talk and/or meet with any staff member that will have direct responsibility for any phase of the project. In this way, miscommunication by a

"middleman" can be avoided.

5. All departments must be kept informed of any and all changes that conversations with proposed artist(s) generate.
6. Frequent efficient meetings of those involved in a project are necessary to clarify staff and artist(s) expectations.
7. A final project meeting should clearly cover all areas of the project.
8. The artist(s) should have in writing, prior to the beginning of the project, a concise but thorough explanation of Spirit Square's project goals and expectations, how these goals will be implemented, and should notify the Center that he is in accordance with all proposed activities.
9. A short orientation, by the project manager, upon the artist's arrival to Spirit Square presents another opportunity to clarify all activities and responsibilities and can prevent many miscommunications.

Effective communication is not an easy task. The time it takes to communicate effectively however, can save the many hours necessary to appease frustrated or adamant artists, undo the affects of negative public relations, and

return a project to its goals and objectives.

CHAPTER 5.
EFFECTS OF INTERN ON ORGANIZATION

SHORT-TERM EFFECTS

The term of my internship fell at an opportune time for Spirit Square. The magnitude and scope of the Allen Carter Mural Project used all available full-time staff capable of dedicating three weeks to the project. The position of Site Coordinator was a full-time position that involved traveling to the sites daily as well as following through with any necessary problems or requests. Had I not been able to handle the responsibility of the position, Spirit Square would have been forced to hire an additional person for this project.

My internship tenure also afforded the director of Community Resource Development staff support. With my help in handling many of the daily administrative tasks, the director was free to pursue and plan future projects. Without such help, she does not have the opportunity for future projects but remains caught in the "administration trap."

As many of the projects during my internship also heavily involved educational components, the Education Department came to rely on me as a capable additional staff member. At a time when the department was minus a staff member due to maternity leave, I assisted as necessary.

LONG TERM EFFECTS

Following my time as an intern, the director of Community Resource Development had no money available to hire temporary help but the Vice President for Arts and Education offered to hire me on a full-time temporary basis. In this capacity, I continue to provide much needed support. My present responsibilities include research, bookkeeping, correspondence, grant reporting, and any other tasks that may arise. Originally hired for a month, the term expanded to almost three months and now looks promising for an additional two months.

Although no monies were approved for additional permanent hiring, staff continues to find my assistance necessary and to look for additional capacities in which to hire me on a long-term basis.

APPENDIX 1.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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BOARD RESPONSIBILITIES**THE FOLLOWING ARE THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF SPIRIT SQUARE CENTER FOR THE ARTS:**

1. Establish the general policies that govern the operation of the organization.
2. Develop a long-range plan for the organization, which includes:
 - a. a clear and current statement of mission, and
 - b. a regular opportunity to monitor the organization's progress in relationship to the plan.
3. Select and hire the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the organization. Encourage and support that individual. Evaluate the performance of the CEO on a regular basis and, when appropriate, replace that individual.
4. Serve as legal custodian for all tangible assets.
5. Accept full responsibility for the finances of the organization, including:
 - a. monitoring the annual operating budget
 - b. handling the endowments and investments
 - c. raising necessary gift income
 - d. establishing policy regarding charges or payments (i.e. admission fees, dues, tuition, etc.)
 - e. determining other sources of income
6. Ensure that the organization achieves its stated objectives.
7. Provide for the continuous self-evaluation and renewal of the Board itself.

DIRECTOR RESPONSIBILITIES

THE FOLLOWING ARE THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF EACH MEMBER OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF SPIRIT SQUARE CENTER FOR THE ARTS:

1. To understand the mission and to be strongly committed to the implementation of the mission and goals of the organization.
2. To work to secure understanding and acceptance of the organization.
3. To be knowledgeable about the organization's operation, services, strengths and weaknesses.
4. To respect the work and authority of the Board.
5. To be objective in evaluating the personnel, programs, and policies of the organization.
6. To respect and defend the integrity of the organization from groups or individuals, either within or outside the organization, who attempt to compromise the values, ideals, goals, policies, or prerogatives of the organization.
7. To budget time and plan ahead in order to attend the meetings of the Board and of the committees to which one is appointed.
8. To accept and discharge specific responsibilities, either on committees or within the general framework of the Board.
9. To contribute financially to the best of one's ability.
10. To provide input to the organization.
11. To be an effective communication link between the organization and the constituents which it serves.
12. To recommend others who can serve on the Board and contribute to the organization.
13. To suggest names of prospective donors and to solicit gift income.

14. To be constantly alert for opportunities to further the mission and goals of the organization.
15. To candidly acknowledge one's inability to serve effectively because of personal or professional conflicts and surrender the seat to a person who can.
16. To support the activities of the organization by one's attendance and/or participating in the programs.

**TEN THINGS THAT YOU AS A DIRECTOR CAN DO
TO HELP SPIRIT SQUARE**

1. **Attendance:**
Plan your schedule so that you can attend all Board Meetings.
2. **Expertise:**
Be active on all least one Committee of the Board and contribute your expertise.
3. **Financial:**
Fulfill your Directorship obligation to Spirit Square with your participation in the annual Fund Drive and by attaining your financial objective.
4. **Support:**
Attend at least four performances each year and invite two potential donors or subscribers to attend each performance with you.
5. **Political:**
Lobby the County Commissioners and City Councilmen on behalf of Spirit Square.
6. **Knowledge:**
Increase your knowledge of the operations of Spirit Square and be well informed of current activities. Know the key staff members.
7. **Memberships:**
Obtain ten new members for Spirit Square for 1992.
8. **Employment:**
Distribute promotional literature at your work place. Encourage attendance at Spirit Square programs and participation in educational programs by those with whom you work and/or are associated.
9. **Promote:**
Promote Spirit Square Center for the Arts in the community. Arrange a function to introduce the new President to those in your neighborhood.
10. **Opportunity:**
Create and/or be alert to opportunities that could enhance the mission and goals of Spirit Square.

SPIRIT SQUARE CENTER FOR THE ARTS

FUNCTIONS OF THE COMMITTEES
OF
THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS
1991-92

- 1) THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE:
The Executive Committee is responsible for the facilities and for general supervision of the administration; for the management of the committees of the Board; and for conducting the day-to-day activities in absence of meetings of the full Board.
- 2) THE DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE:
The Development Committee is responsible for determining fund raising policies and procedures, cultivating gift prospects, identifying sources of support, government and institutional grants, individual foundations, and corporate appeals. It is responsible for conducting the annual membership and fund drive.
- 3) ADVOCACY AND OUTREACH COMMITTEE:
The advocacy and Outreach Committee is responsible for establishing and maintaining good working relationships with local, state and national governmental agencies, the Arts and Science Council, the Performing Arts Center and other arts organizations. It is responsible for lobbying the City Council and County Commissioners and the Arts and Science Council.
- 4) ARTISTIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE:
The Artistic Advisory Committee is responsible for evaluating all existing programs of Spirit Square; for defining the community to be served; assessing the needs and interests of the Community; for developing programs to meet the needs of the community; for establishing policy and direction for the implementation of artistic programs. The Committee is responsible for communications and cooperative efforts between the Center and other art organizations.
- 5) BOARD RESOURCES COMMITTEE:
The Board Resources Committee is responsible for the identification, selection, recruitment, orientation, and education of Board members; self-evaluation of the Board, separating persons from the Board; recognizing Board service; and recommending to the Chairman of the Board nominees to present to the Board. The Committee is responsible for conducting the Annual Membership and Fund Drive with the Board of Directors.

6) EDUCATION COMMITTEE:

Review and recommend those policies, strategies and programs that maximize the educational/learning resources of Spirit Square; that develop productive collaborations with other educational institutions - public and private - in the greater Charlotte area; and that reach the widest spectrum of the public - child and adult.

7) FACILITIES COMMITTEE:

The Facilities Committee is responsible for the real property (buildings and grounds) and the personal property of Spirit Square; for security; for plant operations and maintenance; for establishing policy and procedures for use and rental of space and equipment; for planning and evaluation of facility needs; and for construction and improvements.

8) FINANCE COMMITTEE:

The Finance Committee is responsible for development, evaluation, and monitoring of all budgets both operating and capital; for establishing accounting and administration policies and procedures; cost controls; audit; investments; insurance; for long-range financial planning and for ensuring adequate and efficient administration.

9) HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE:

The Human Resources Committee is responsible for personnel, policies and procedures; for ensuring equitable compensation for all employees; for evaluating employee benefits; for evaluating the costs of personnel and related benefits.

10) LONG-RANGE PLANNING COMMITTEE:

The Long-Range Planning Committee is responsible for the development of a long-range plan for Spirit Square; for the annual evaluation of that plan; for reporting to the Board its evaluation and for submitting to the Board its recommendations for modification of the plan. The Committee is responsible for seeking the recommendation of the President, all Board Committees, and staff deputy directors.

11) MULTICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE:

Responsible for exploring and implementing strategies to increase the interaction between Charlotte's growing multicultural community and the resources and programs of Spirit Square. In addition to Board and Guest members, four staff persons - representing Administration, Visual Arts, Education and Community Resources - shall also serve on the committee.

SPIRIT SQUARE CENTER FOR THE ARTSEXECUTIVE COMMITTEE STRUCTURE1991-92MEMBERSHIP:

- 1) Chairman
- 2) Chairman Elect
(First Vice Chairman)
- 3) Immediate Past Chairman
(Second Vice Chairman)
- 4) Vice Chairman
of Facilities and Long-Range Planning
- 5) Vice Chairman of Advocacy and Outreach
- 6) Vice Chairman, Board of Advisors
- 7) Secretary
- 8) Treasurer

EX OFFICIO:

- 1) President
- 2) Administrative
Assistant to
President
- 3) Vice President
of Admin.

Each member of the Executive Committee will be responsible for coordinating the activities of the following committees of the Board:

CHAIRMAN:

- 1) The Executive Committee
- 2) Human Resources Committee

CHAIRMAN ELECT: (First Vice Chairman)

- 1) Development Committee

IMMEDIATE PAST CHAIRMAN (Second Vice Chairman)

- 1) Board Resources Committee

VICE CHAIRMAN:

- 1) Advocacy and Outreach Committee
- 2) Artistic Advisory Committee
- 3) Education Committee

VICE CHAIRMAN:

- 1) Facilities Committee
- 2) Long-Range Planning Committee

VICE CHAIRMAN:

- 1) Board of Advisors

SECRETARY:

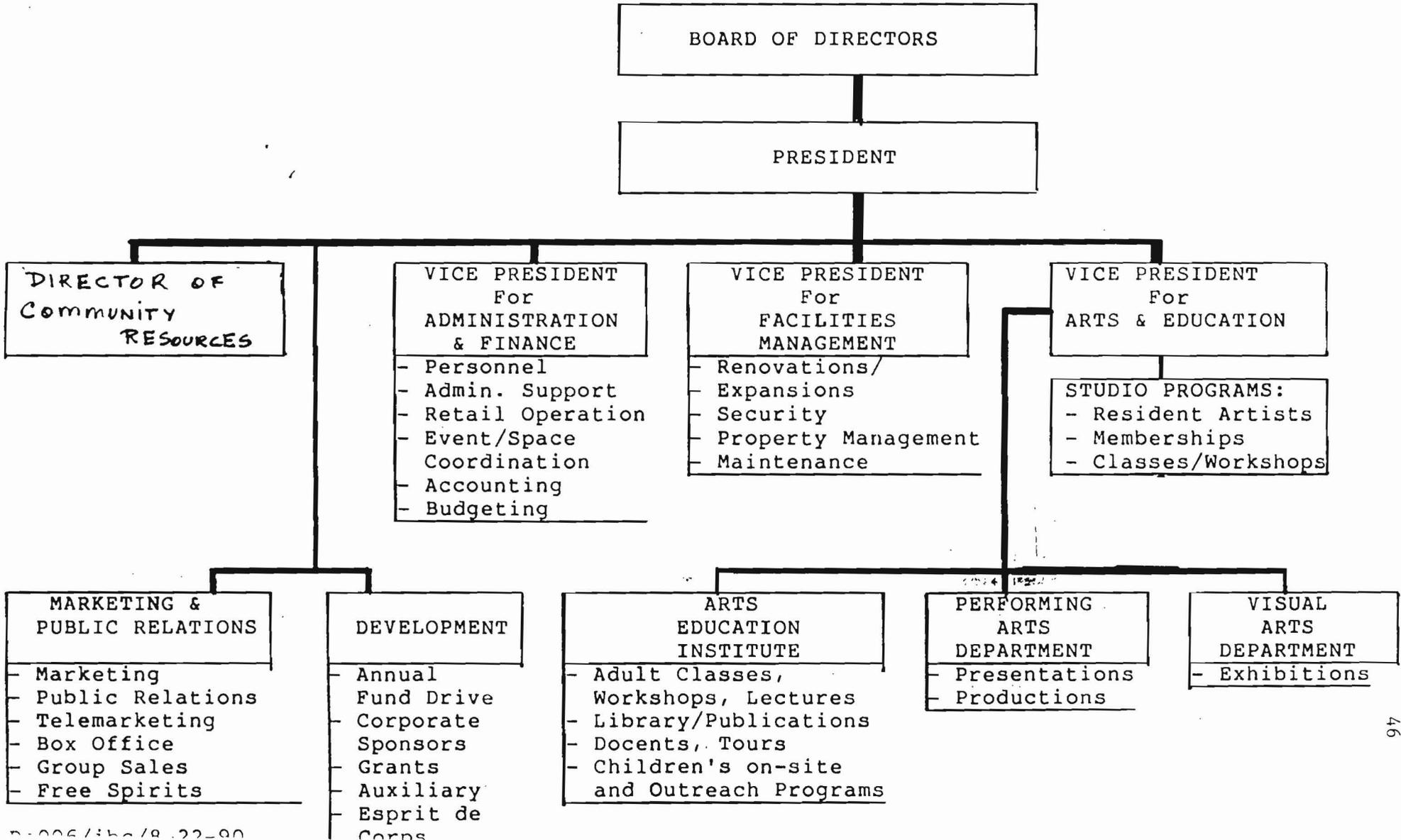
1. Communications Committee

TREASURER:

1. Finance Committee

APPENDIX 2.
ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE CHART

**SPIRIT SQUARE CENTER FOR THE ARTS, INC.
ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE**



APPENDIX 3.
FINANCIAL STATEMENT

AFFILIATE: SPIRIT SQUARE CENTER FOR THE ARTS

DATE: 2/19/92

	Actual FY90	Actual FY91	Budget FY92	BUDGET FY93	% =	Projec FY94
INCOME:						
BOG Award	270,000	293,000	355,000	410,000	15+	425
ASC Other						
Earned	1,066,462	888,606	770,975	810,880	5+	897
Contributed	261,333	315,420	187,625	228,500	22+	275
Government	1,068,363	1,268,818	1,383,025	1,509,900	9+	1,432
TOTAL INCOME	2,666,158	2,765,844	2,696,625	2,959,280	10+	3,029
EXPENSES						
Personnel						
Administrative/BO	253,794	309,034	302,135	347,655	13+	360
Maintenance/House	177,944	198,334	218,790	231,805	6+	245
Program (permanent)/shop/Cn	273,451	302,795	391,045	417,800	6.8+	462
Contracted Fees	684,235	599,215	377,783	354,705	6.1+	371
PR Development	260,209	264,443	155,800	181,980	16.2+	193
Fringe Benefits	127,207	193,176	176,365	250,050	41.8+	260
Other Personnel Expenses	25,479	10,082	1,900	1,900	-	2
TOTAL PERSONNEL	1,802,319	1,677,055	1,623,820	1,785,895	10	1,693
PROGRAM COSTS						
Production/Technical	42,243	48,181	18,800	13,750	27-	15.
Exhibition	21,865	56,591	74,195	62,755	15-	66.
Education/Workshops	19,018	45,035	18,280	18,665	2+	20.
Production Supplies	5,252	5,594	6,185	6,045	2-	6.
Royalties	9,738	7,747	9,330	8,650	7.3-	9.
Other Production Costs/shop/Cn	14,384	25,789	28,925	60,205	108+	45.
TOTAL PROGRAM	112,501	189,037	155,715	170,090	9.2+	162.
FACILITY COSTS						
Space Rental	37,978	21,205	21,900	23,900	9.1+	26.
Utilities	108,136	109,535	142,800	147,600	3.4+	156.
Telephone	25,934	28,397	25,800	25,300	2-	25.
Insurance	39,399	48,864	30,000	33,000	10+	36.
Maintenance	59,070	91,304	96,020	98,270	2.3+	103.
Security	62,951	61,315	62,500	65,000	4+	68.
Landscaping/Grounds						
Other Misc. Facility Costs	53,902	18,965	29,430	80,130	172.3+	76.
TOTAL FACILITY	387,370	379,591	408,450	473,200	15.9+	492.
OTHER ADMIN. COSTS						
Advertising/Promotions	168,130	193,956	117,745	108,335	8+	130.
Printing/Postage/Copying	40,645	104,752	185,280	185,000	.2-	200.
Bookkeeping/Auditing	12,800	23,500	15,500	17,000	9.7+	18.
Conferences/Conventions	19,147	17,113	12,795	11,355	11.3+	12.
Dues/Publications	7,521	8,062	4,695	4,695	-	5.
Office Supplies	14,135	14,256	14,700	14,700	-	15.
Local Travel	386	3,685	3,110	1,660	47-	3.
OTHER ADMIN. EXPENSES	57,364	106,495	149,880	187,350	25+	98.
TOTAL ADMIN. EXPENSES	320,128	471,819	503,705	530,095	5.2+	482.
TOTAL EXPENSES	2,622,318	2,717,532	2,691,690	2,959,280	9.9+	3,029.5
NET INCOME / EXPENSE	43,840	48,312	4,935			
BEGINNING RESERVES	102,723	190,694	239,005			

APPENDIX 4.

ARTS AND SCIENCE COUNCIL MULTIDISCIPLINARY PANEL
SUMMARY OF PANEL COMMENTS

MAY, 1992

MULTIDISCIPLINARY PANEL

Summary of Panel Comments
FY92-93 Basic Operating Grant Request
May, 1992

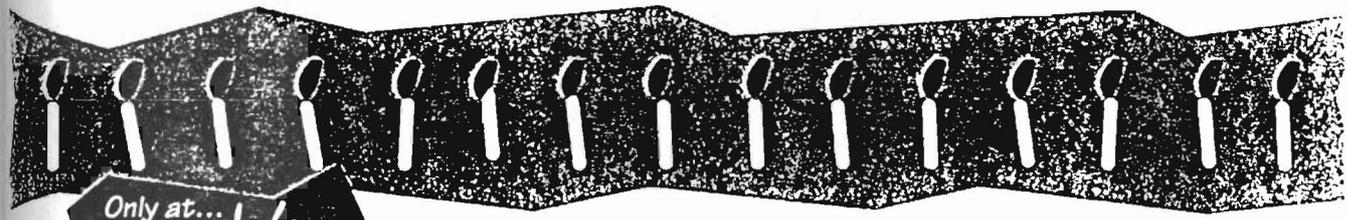
SPIRIT SQUARE

- * The panel recognizes that dealing with major challenges with PAC's opening, Spirit Square's Board is to be commended for their willingness to grapple with these new challenges. The panel is hopeful that program revisions, etc. will strengthen this organization.
- * The panel concurred with Spirit Square's leadership that the organization must rethink its mission and establish program priorities consistent with its mission. The panel also believes that a reorganization of staff or new deployment of staff may be required to address any restated mission.
- * The panel strongly encourages Spirit Square to strengthen its arts education thrust as its priority program. Given the planning currently underway, the panel believes this can have a major, positive impact on the future growth and development of this organization.
- * The panel is concerned about the financial status of Spirit Square. Significant increases in the controllable administrative costs indicate this organization is managing its fiscal affairs not as responsibly as the current economic times would mandate.
- * The panel felt that the organization needs to develop a long-range fiscal plan which speaks to a more realistic projected income and expenses sufficient to support its program of priorities.

APPENDIX 5.

"GO FORWARD REPORT"

Report of the Staff Retreat
March 13, 1992



Spirit Square
Center for The Arts
North College Street
Raleigh, NC 28202

Phone: 704-372-9664
Fax: 704-377-9508

listing
for years
listed
arrangements,
and
action

TO: SSCA Staff
FROM: Leslie Paliyenko *LP*
RE: "Go Forward" report
Date: March 18, 1992

Well, here it is..... Thanks to Karen Thompson, all the discussions, ideas, strategies, observations etc. generated at last Friday's session have been documented.

First, please look it over. Add any comments, observations, additions, deletions that you feel are necessary to validate our process.

Second, prioritize our stated "achievements", listing them sequentially to be implemented over the next 10 year period. Begin with your first choice as "No. 1 - 1992" etc.

PLEASE RETURN TO ME BY MONDAY, MARCH 23RD.!

Thanks very much for your participation last Friday - once this document is prioritized, we can begin the strategic planning.

GO FORWARD RETREAT
 March 13, 1992
 Dr. R. Oakley Winters, Facilitator

Thirty-five staff members attended the "Go Forward" retreat on March 13th at the Radisson Plaza Hotel. Dr. R. Oakley Winters, Director of Continuing Education and Extension at UNCC was the facilitator for the day's activities. The staff members were divided into five groups and presented with the following situation:

It is early autumn in the year 2001. Looking back over the twenty-five year history of Spirit Square, two distinct eras seem to emerge. The era of childhood and adolescence extended from 1976 through 1990 and was marked by spurts of growth and a continuous struggle for identity. From 1991 until now, you've matured into adulthood during a period of scarce resources and a rising public indifference to public expenditures for the arts. Despite the hardships and heartbreaks of the past decade, Spirit Square has made a significant impact upon the quality of life in Charlotte and the extended region.

1. What achievements during these past ten years make you most proud and why?
2. What is Spirit Square's special niche within the arts scene of 2001?

The following list was compiled by Dr. Winters and represents common themes found among the groups' answers:

- Ten-Year Achievements: (* For individual group responses, see additional document.)
- Increase public access to facility and programs/services
 - Increase linkages with other arts and educational agencies
 - Establish Spirit Square as an incubator for emerging artists, training arts managers and arts educators, and for showcasing art forms
 - Increase financial autonomy and stability
 - Increase board leadership
 - Establish clearly defined role or niche in the regional arts scene

Niche:

Spirit Square's special role within the arts scene of 2001 is that of arts educator, from the development of the audience and their view of the arts to the continued education of the artist.

Dr. Winters then suggested an "audit" of Spirit Square by examining Spirit Square's special strengths and confessed weaknesses. The following lists, in random order, were generated from the discussion.

Strengths:

- A competent staff in one location
- Facilities
- Program diversity
- Responsiveness and adaptability of the programs and staff
- Location in the uptown area
- Location in Charlotte, with regard to its economy and population as compared to other cities in the region
- Community support
- Professional reputation within the area and out of state

Weaknesses:

- Financial limitations
- Shifting foci, sometimes resulting in promises being unkept
- Staff turnover
- Poor communications among staff and within departments
- Understaffed
- Poor pay
- Lack of modern communications technology
- Board commitment
- Staff structure
- Marketing resources
- Facility (still some limitations)
- Customer-service, from the phone system to the parking lot policies

Dr. Winters asked what opportunities exist that Spirit Square can take advantage of and the following opportunities were mentioned:

Opportunities:

- Economic strength of the region
- Numerous day-time neighbors
- Region's growth and diversity of population
- Good relationships with schools and art groups
- Good relationships with corporate and business partners
- Transitory school leadership
- The lack of arts programs in schools, including institutions of higher learning
- Growing public awareness of the arts
- The potential linking of the arts to mental health and wellness/therapy programs

After discussing opportunities, staff members were asked to identify potential threats to Spirit Square.

Threats

- Competition from other entertainment resources and educational resources
- Changing private habits
- Censorship and political "know-nothingism"
- Recession
- Decreasing private and governmental money
- Perception of uptown as alien and dangerous
- Loss of autonomy with regard to the relationship between the Arts & Science Council and Spirit Square
- Perception of Spirit Square as somehow being elite and aloof
- Anti-intellectualism
- Declining public interest in the arts
- Limited definitions of what "Art" is

After identifying strengths and weaknesses, as well as opportunities and threats that face Spirit Square, the groups were asked to brainstorm for ways that they individually or collectively as Spirit Square staff could begin to realize the "ten-year achievements" compiled by Dr. Winters. Groups could address one or more of the achievements, as well as add achievements they felt were missing from Dr. Winter's list. The groups responded as follows:

Ways to Realize Achievements:

Group #1: The Trendsetters

1. Linkages with Arts Organizations
 - Reinstate the "Getting Smart" program
 - Expand the Suitcase Tours to include private schools
 - Traveling exhibitions
2. Incubator
 - Continue growth of internship programs
 - Create public forums for "Hot" art issues
 - Continue Knight G. Artist residencies
 - Expand studio residencies
3. Financial Autonomy
 - Create more income producing events and programs (i.e. Arts Camps, dances, fairs)
 - Expand retail activities (concessions, gift shop, art sales)
 - Encourage more facility rentals
4. Board Leadership
 - Recruit more "artists" on board (many grant dollars are only available to organizations with artists on their boards)
 - Create board liaisons with every department
5. Niche
 - "Charlotte's only home for all the arts"
 - Use the "7-11" approach; we're open and active at least 11 hours a day, seven days a week

Group #2: The Motivators

1. Public Access
 - Standardize operating hours
 - All staff should accept responsibility for customer service
 - Put "Today at Spirit Square" on VCR monitor and have it linked in to our new computer system
2. Financial Autonomy
 - Establish programming priorities with available resources to maximize cost savings
 - Develop a plan for building endowment funds
3. Board Leadership
 - Develop a profile of existing board members
 - Develop an ideal board member and composition profile to help the nominating committee with its tasks
 - Establish a system or structure for staff input into board member selections
 - Create a more meaningful board orientation, for example, a "Buddy" system

Group #3: The Strategists

1. Public Access
 - see the animation report for physical facility improvements that are being implemented
 - Educate the staff because everyone is a Spirit Square spokesperson at work and in the community
 - Target marketing in conjunction with specific program underwriting for those lower income individuals
2. Incubator
 - Increase residencies to foster new interest
 - Take full advantage of existing educational opportunities related to performances and exhibitions

Group #3 felt that staff restructuring was one important component left off of Dr. Winter's compiled list.

Group #4: The Innovators

1. Public Access
 - Earlier hours for the gift shop and galleries
 - Improve the phone system and procedures (possibly with the addition of departmental phone numbers)
 - Unlock the Tryon Street entrance
 - Put Spirit Square's name on the building
 - Job orientation and training for all staff
 - Staff should promote events by attending events and bringing guests
 - Recruit and train a committed corp of volunteers
 - Provide tours/lectures on the exhibitions and facility either spontaneously as the need arises or on an hourly basis
 - Bring Spirit Square performances to the public to promote upcoming events (i.e. Cleo Parker Robinson to the First Union Atrium)

- Create "Brown Bag" or noon-time performances accessible for the daytime business population
 - Each staff member could donate two hours per month to marketing activities (posting flyers, mailings, etc.)
 - Staff members can distribute brochures and show the Spirit Square video to organizations or clubs that they belong to
2. Board Leadership
- Orientation and training sessions for all members to cover their responsibilities, Spirit Square programs, activities, etc.
 - Members should make a commitment to attend a number of Spirit Square events
 - Understand board members' profiles and what interests them in the arts

Group #5: The Risk Takers

1. Public Access
- Improve knowledge of ethnic communities and develop tactics appropriate to reaching each community with program information
2. Linkage with Arts Organizations
- Extend already developed temporary links into permanent links
 - Create extensive linkages between Spirit Square assets and community assets
 - Actively recruit art forms to meet multicultural mandate
3. Board Leadership
- Introduce board to experts and models of exemplary board practice
 - Position board members for success by placing them in situations where they can function with a positive impact within our organization
 - Assign board members to specific departments or events so that they develop an understanding of the day to day operations of Spirit Square
 - Increase staff interaction with the Board, for example a "Meet the Board and Staff" reception
 - Develop an introduction program for new Board members
 - Develop a board questionnaire to identify their interests
 - Board member sponsorship of events
4. Communication
- Improve staff meeting format by adding "focus time" to meetings for departmental reporting
 - Increase productiveness of staff meeting time with smaller, breakout groups to focus on issues
 - Long-range planning for multicultural and interdisciplinary events
 - Solicitation of ideas from staff members (perhaps a suggestion box)
 - More teamwork, removal of territorial thinking

INDIVIDUAL GROUP RESPONSES
Ten-year achievements and niche

Group #1 : The Trendsetters

Achievements

1. Spirit Square's Gallery Crawl becomes the hub of the weekly arts scene
2. Artists of international acclaim trace their beginnings to experiences at Spirit Square
3. The demand for cutting edge works has forced our "pop" season to our fourth venue now known as Spirit on the Square, formerly the Performing Arts Center.
4. Recognized nationally as a leader in arts education
5. Spirit Square auxiliary groups have become the motivating force in the community for arts advocacy.
6. Community support is to such a level that Spirit Square programming is not limited by available resources
7. Daily arts section in the newspaper due to leadership by Spirit Square. Spirit Square has become the Charlotte Hornets of the Arts to the community.

Niche

Spirit Square is warm and friendly - a regional place to find the unusual, unexpected, funky home for the arts and a catalyst for artistic debate. It includes a restaurant and coffeehouse.

Group #2 : The Motivators

Achievements

1. More multicultural and interdisciplinary special events (i.e. Al Carter, Cleo Parker Robinson, Linda Kroff)
2. Strong relationship with school system with Spirit Square as the magnet school supplement/resource. Every Student visits Spirit Square every year as part of the school curriculum. (They therefore grow up to become Spirit Square patrons.)
3. Expanded hours to 7 days a week. Spirit Square has become the primary choice for activities. The staff has grown and restructured with a large volunteer corps.
4. Arts incubator/trendsetter - New works involving the community and not just feeding the community
5. Expanded outreach including traveling arts exhibitions and educational teams for public school art outreach

Niche

Spirit Square activities involve arts education as one of the key components to its programming and content.

Group #3: The Strategists

Achievements

1. Still open, sufficiently staffed and equipped
2. Recognized as a statewide arts education resource, including our own library
3. Established on-going series of residencies, workshops, and showcases to develop regional and national artists
4. Attracted a visionary and committed board
5. Acquired and integrated Jonathan's Restaurant
6. Relocated the gift shop to become the Tryon Street entrance
7. On-going program of activities with schools in Charlotte-Mecklenburg region
8. Developed programs responsive to broad base and diverse constituents
9. Expanded educational opportunities associated with performances and exhibitions
10. Facilitated development of new works
11. Established intern and apprenticeship programs
12. Funded endowment and stabilized system of on-going support

Niche

The only regional institution combining performing, visual and arts education through development and utilization of regional, national and international talent.

Group #4: The Innovators

Achievements

1. Spirit Square is alive with people more of the time, both day and night partly because of our restaurant, child care facility for program participants, free public performances and the addition of music in public places.
2. Expanded programming in outreach, availability and level of activity
3. Increased impact on and place in the community
4. Community awareness has significantly expanded. People know where Spirit Square is and what programs it offers.
5. Financial stability

Niche

Spirit Square is the place for all ages to come and experience the arts. It's a place where people can be expressive and creative in a relaxed atmosphere and where enjoyment and excellence are the standards.

Group #5: The Risk Takers

Achievements

1. Three major multicultural, interdisciplinary festivals a year
2. Education:
 - pivotal point in magnet school system
 - accredited internship program
 - training ground for artisans of all kinds
 - established summer environment for two month program for teachers
 - community outreach programs like Suitcase and musicians tours have made Spirit Square known throughout the Southeast
3. Physical:
 - Spirit Square has established a user friendly ArtsBank with the Library that is the envy of other arts organizations
 - Spirit Square is known as a regional arts resource
4. Marketing and Promotion:
 - high visibility and broad support
 - completely integrated, state of the art computer system
5. Staff and Board:
 - culturally diverse reflecting multiculturalism of our focus
 - staff size has doubled
6. Organized first bi-annual international symposium on creative expression
7. Programming:
 - specifically multicultural to match our focus and interdisciplinary whenever possible
 - recognized as a leader in creating interdisciplinary multicultural programming
8. Gift Shop:
 - prime multicultural gift shop reflecting Spirit Square's programming and multicultural influences

Niche

Spirit Square Center for the Arts is the leader and prime exponent of multiculturalism on all levels including education, visual and performing arts, and community outreach.

APPENDIX 6.

ALLEN D. CARTER

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Profile

'big al' carter

an artist who tears down barriers by putting up walls

By Jeanette Leardi

Forty-four-year-old African-American artist Allen D. Carter is a study in paradox. For one thing, his large, imposing physical build and gregarious, homey voice belie the rarefied image many people have of a successful contemporary artist. Rarefied he's not. He's matter-of-fact, down-to-earth, and direct. Very direct. "Call me Big Al," he'll tell you immediately upon introduction. "Everybody does, and that's the way I like it."

He's direct about other things, too. Such as the way he works: spontaneously, yet with a discerning, disciplined eye—another paradox.

But there's nothing pretentious or self-conscious about the way Big Al creates art. That's not what he's about, nor where he came from. As a kid growing up in the slums of Arlington, Virginia, his early artistic urges were discouraged by his parents and others. "I had my hands slapped by my folks many times for drawing, and my teachers thought I was crazy or bad, you know, always carving up desks. I'd sit in the alley by my house and if a paper bag came blowing by, I'd pick it up and draw on it. I never had real artists' materials or been to a museum until I was in high school, even though I lived only three miles from Washington, D.C., where all those great museums were."

To Big Al's high school teachers go the credit for encouraging him to pursue his dream. He later enrolled at the Columbus (Ohio) College of Art and Design, and, with no scholarship ("It was too late to apply"), supported himself doing odd jobs, including ditch digging, to stay in school.



With the help of inspiring teachers, he learned a great deal about art history and technique, and even managed to shock his teachers along the way with his no-holds-barred approach to art.

"One day I found some old Day-Glo paints in a trash can," he recalls, "My professor said, 'Throw those out. You can't use them in real painting. They won't work.' I said, 'Yeah, they will,' and he said, 'If you can make them work, you can do anything.' So I took him up on it. And I did it!"

Even today, everything ranging from linoleum, asphalt shingles, tires, roofing paint, and even dirt, to watercolors, oils, pastels, and ink serve as his artists' materials. His only criterion is that it "work" in whatever context he uses it: painting, sculpture, collage, assemblage, printmaking, or anything else.

"I've done it all," he says ingenuously. "Sometimes it don't work and I'll throw it out or take it apart and use it again in some other piece. But most of the time I succeed. The most important thing is that I never let it stop me. I just for it!"

"Go for it" is a favorite phrase of his, and with good reason. His strong, intuitive instincts and highly developed sense of technique give Big Al the freedom to experiment and stretch the ways in which art can inspire thought and feeling. That experimentation may result in a series of cartoon-like panels on a very serious theme, or a realistic sketch depicting a dream, or a bright, colorful collage revealing the pain of sadness.

The contrasts and contradictions are deliberate. The overwhelming message conveyed by his flexible, varied approach is that the elitist notions of art are barriers to be torn down so that people can know and appreciate the relevance of the creative impulse that's in us all.

So committed is he to tearing down those barriers that his activities include, among other things, collaborating with urban youths in various cities to create public murals with positive themes: peace, literacy, drug education, community spirit.

"I was taught that if you have a talent if you know how to do something, you should pass it on to others," he explains. "Art is a universal language. I want these kids to get enjoyment and refreshment

form art and to connect with it and with each other. I teach them how to work together; I give them a chance to put their hands on something and see that they can make a difference, no matter what they decide to do in life."

Already Big Al has produced over 30 murals with kids in Washington, D.C.; Kansas City; Raleigh; Roanoke; and Winston-Salem, and in January he'll come to Charlotte to work with 7th-12th graders in Spirit Square's Knight Gallery to create a mural that will be permanently installed on the outside of the Spirit Square facility. "I'm very excited about it," he says. "I just love getting out there and being with the kids."

The folks at Spirit Square are excited, too. For Big Al's two-week visit will also include a workshop for Charlotte-Mecklenburg public school art teachers to teach them mural techniques, which they can then use in their schools. Attending the workshop, too, will be five selected local artists, who will later work with

community groups to create murals at up to five Mecklenburg sites.

"Having Al Carter here will be an exciting time for Spirit Square because of the interdisciplinary nature of the event," says Susan Hewitt, director of marketing and public relations. "The visual arts and education departments are working together in a significant way to benefit the whole community. It's a niche that Spirit Square wants to fill in a consistently greater way in the future."

Concurrent to Big Al's visit at the arts center will be a large exhibition of his own works, so that the kids, workshop attendees, and the rest of the public can have the opportunity to appreciate him for the professional artist that he is.

Spirit Square Education Coordinator April Carder sums it up: "It's a collaboration with the goal of bridging the gap between an exhibiting artist and the public through several venues: direct

participation with the artist, dialogue and involvement with people who have worked with the artist, gallery visits to see the work in process, and finally, viewing of a collection of some of the artist's work. We hope all of this in some way will positively affect our community's appreciation for contemporary art."

Big Al puts it another way: "One thing I try to get people to do is slow down for one second and look around them. There's art everywhere: in the designs for cars, for buildings, for shoes." That's the reason for the murals: to jolt people into a recognition of their connection to art and its importance in their lives. In short, to tear down barriers—by putting up walls.

A paradox? Not to Big Al.

Jeanette Leardi is a Charlotte writer and editor of educational materials for children and adults. She is also the copy editor of Sesame Street Magazine and Parents' Guide.

'big al' on tour

The following list outlines educational projects that will coincide with Big Al's residency at Spirit Square. He'll participate in each activity listed below.

Mural Project: Thursday, January 23, 1992 - Tuesday, February 4th

Big Al will work with students from University Park School on a large scale mural in the Knight Gallery using some imagery designed by the students. Students will then paint the mural under the supervision of Big Al.

Teacher Workshop: Thursday, January 16 - Saturday, January 19

Teachers from Mecklenburg and surrounding counties, along with local artists, will participate in a 10-hour workshop designed around Mr. Carter's involvement with the Spirit Square mural. Participants will meet on Thursday, January 16 from 7:00 - 9:00 p.m., Friday, January 17th from 3:00 - 5:00 p.m., and Saturday, January 18th from 9:00 a.m. until 3:00 p.m. Spirit Square staff will provide an introduction to the creation of murals on the 16th and a hands-on class exploring design ideas on the 17th. Mr. Carter will work with the teachers on Saturday the 18th while they create murals in Spirit Square stairwells.

Community Site Visits: In conjunction with the Spirit Square mural, several community sites have been targeted for additional mural projects. The sites will be facilitated by local artists who have participated in the teacher workshops. Each site group will design and complete a mural for the community facility or for billboard display.

Gallery Talk: Friday, February 7 at 7:15 pm
Mr. Carter will lead a short discussion of his art work in the Education Studio at Spirit Square the evening his exhibit opens.

Community Contacts: Big Al will attend and/or participate in the following activities:

- **Friday, January 31 Informal reception for mural participants
- **Sunday, February 2 Award ceremony for Martin Luther King Poster Competition
- **Wednesday, February 5 ... Panel discussion on community murals at the Afro American Center
- **Thursday, February 6 Exhibit preview for Spirit Square patrons, donors and local dignitaries
- **Friday, February 7 Gallery Crawl - formal opening of the exhibition "Big Al Carter: Paintings, Drawings and Mural" in Knight Gallery

THE new SPIRIT

SPIRIT SQUARE CENTER FOR THE ARTS

**January's Jumping
at Spirit Square!**

"Ties That Bind"

Dickson Gallery
Through January 18

"Ties That Bind" includes intaglio, mixed media and text by Terry Shupbach-Gordon and mixed media sculpture by Rebecca Hutchinson.

"Art In The Environment"

Skyway Gallery
Through January 18

The exhibit features hand-painted black and white photographs by Patrick Keough of Morehead City, North Carolina.

"Paperscape"

Atrium and Loch Walker Gallery
Through January 18

"Paperscape" features kinetic sculpture by Charlotte-based artist Susan Perry. Perry is an instructor at Queens College and Central Piedmont Community College.

The Nashville Bluegrass Band and the Fairfield Four

Friday, January 10
NCNB Performance Place
8:00 pm

Two of America's premier vocal groups, The Nashville Bluegrass Band and The Fairfield Four, team up for a night of spirited gospel music and songs rooted in tradition.

The "Big Al" Carter Experience Rolls Into Spirit Square January 17th

"Big Al" Carter hits Spirit Square January 17th to begin a three-week residency, which will include production of a mural with junior high and high school students from University Park in the Knight Gallery, teachers workshops, and several mural projects within the Charlotte community, culminating in an exhibit of his work at Spirit Square.

The overwhelming message of Carter's work is that the elitist notions of art are barriers to be torn down so that people can know and appreciate the relevance of the creative impulse that's in us all. One way he does this is by collaborating with urban youths in various cities to create public murals with positive themes: peace, literacy, drug education, and community spirit.

"I was taught that if you have a talent, if you know how to do something, you should pass it on to others," he explains. "Art is a universal language. I want these kids to get enjoyment and refreshment from art and to connect with it and with each other. I teach

them how to work together; I give them a chance to put their hands on something and see that they can make a difference, no matter what they decide to do in life."

As a kid growing up in the slums of Arlington, Virginia, Carter's early artistic urges were discouraged by his parents and others. His high

Kansas City; Raleigh; Roanoke; and Winston-Salem, and in Charlotte he'll work with 7th-12th graders in Spirit Square's Knight Gallery to create a mural that will be permanently installed on the outside of the Spirit Square facility. "I'm very excited about it," he says. "I just love getting out there and being with the kids."

Big Al's three-week visit will also include a workshop for Charlotte-Mecklenburg public school art teachers to teach them mural techniques, which they can then use in their schools. Attending the workshop, too, will be several local artists, who



"Big Al" Carter takes over Spirit Square's Knight Gallery in January.

school teachers encouraged him to pursue his dream, however, and he later enrolled at the Columbus (Ohio) College of Art and Design. With the help of inspiring teachers, he learned a great deal about art history and technique, and even managed to shock his teachers along the way with his no-holds-barred approach to art.

Already Big Al has produced over 30 murals with kids in Washington, D.C.;

will later work with community groups to create murals at up to five Mecklenburg sites.

Concurrent to Big Al's visit at the arts center will be a large exhibition of his own works, so that the kids, workshop attendees, and the rest of the public can have the opportunity to appreciate him for the professional artist that he is. The exhibit opens January 31 and runs through March 22 in the Knight Gallery.

Vol. 2 No. 5 January 1992



Detail of
Blue Tone, 1991
mixed media on wood
55" x 95"

To read more about
contemporary African
American artists:

Berry, Mary Frances and
John Blassingame. *Long
Memory: The Black Experi-
ence in America*. New
York: Oxford University
Press, 1982.

Bontemps, Arna Alexander
and Jacqueline Fonvielle
Bontemps. *Forever Free:
Art by African American
Women 1862-1980*. Alexan-
dria, Virginia: Stephenson,
Inc., 1980.

Hammond, Leslie King.
*Ritual and Myth: A Survey
of African American Art*.
New York: The Studio
Museum in Harlem, 1982.

Hammond, Leslie King.
*Harlem Renaissance/Art
of Black America*. New York:
Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1987.

Rozelle, V. Robert, Alvia
Wardlaw and Maureen A.
McKenna, ed. *Black Art/
Ancestral Legacy: The
African Impulse in African-
American Art*. Dallas, The
Dallas Museum of Art,
1989.

Spirit Square is supported by the
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Drive and the Grassroots Arts Pro-
gram of the North Carolina Arts
Council, a state agency.

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Washburn Graphics, Inc.

Design courtesy of hixson design

Paintings

A L L E N D

Drawings

C A R T E R

Mural

S P I R I T

Feb 7-

S Q U A R E

Mar 21

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ARTS/TRAVEL

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Absorbing influences from the street and the museum, Big Al Carter uses vivid imagery and luscious brushstrokes in "Blue Tone."

GREAT, BIG AL!

He isn't just
a visiting artist,
he's a
one-man event

By RICHARD MASCHAL
Visual Arts Writer

Look at the detailed schedule Spirit Square has put together for Big Al Carter and you'd think the president was coming to town. Friday: The Fredericksburg, Va., artist arrives. Saturday: participates in a workshop for teachers. Thursday: begins mural-painting session with students. On the schedule goes for three weeks, leading up to a climax on Feb. 7 with the opening of an exhibition of his paintings, drawings and the unveiling of the mural at the uptown art center's Knight Gallery.

The entry for the next day reads: "Big Al Carter leaves Charlotte." Surely a parting fanfare will sound.

Spirit Square's desire to get Big Al around and squeeze every ounce it can from his considerable talent and presence is understandable. For an urban arts center seeking a wider audience and ways to plug into the community, the 44-year-old



"Mr. Don in the Room" will be one of 38 works shown at Spirit Square.

artist is a perfect fit.

During his three weeks, he'll do just about everything except play center for the Hornets: help a group of schoolchildren create a mural that will be permanently displayed at Spirit Square, work with teachers on community mural techniques and participate in a panel discussion in addition to opening his show.

His splashy artwork should draw an audience. Moreover, Carter is an African-American artist who celebrates that tradition. He comes at a time when arts groups increasingly raise the banner of "multiculturalism," removing the blinders that limit culture to a white, European product.

"Spirit Square needs a program that draws the public, contributes something to the understanding of art and culture and also makes a direct contribution to the community," said Ken Bloom, curator of exhibitions. "This is just the thing."

But the first thing that attracted Bloom to Big Al was his art.

He saw it in the spring of 1990 in Winston-Salem when the Southeastern Center for Contemporary Art showed "Next Generation: Southern Black Aesthetic," an exhibit featuring young African-

Please see Big Al/next page

- Interested in seeing Big Al's work? Spirit Square intends to keep him busy. Here's where you can catch up with him. **Next page**
- In these economic times, putting together Al Carter's work in Charlotte called for some financial magic. Here's how Spirit Square did it. **Next page**

Saturday

February 1, 1992 •

Mural Magician



T. ORTEGA GAINES/Staff

Big Al Carter came from Fredericksburg, Va., to Charlotte's Spirit Square to help a group of University Park School students paint a billboard-size mural. Big Al brings his trademark energy, easy way of working with kids and

all-purpose greeting to everyone he meets: "Same old Big Al." The mural, "Man Feeding Poor Man," will be unveiled Thursday, and an exhibition of his paintings opens Friday at the uptown art center. **Story, Living/page 7C**

'Same old Big Al' spreads his energy at Spirit Square

By RICHARD MASCHAL
Visual Arts Writer

S

Spirit Square's Knight Gallery, usually as white-walled and formal as some tuxedoed gent, is wearing its work clothes. Sheets of plastic cover the floor. A jumble of paint buckets, stir sticks and brushes creates a sticky obstacle course.

"Where's our music?" someone yells. Someone else punches up rapster Candy Man on the boom box and hip-hop rap fills the air.

A huge, billboard-size white panel tilts against a wall. On a scaffold next to it a half dozen University Park students, wearing plastic garbage bags as improvised artist smocks, paint carefully.

Prowling nearby — his gait rolling, his eyes sharp — is Allen "Big Al" Carter, the maestro of this rocking symphony. The Fredericksburg, Va., artist, wearing a blue work shirt and pants under a paint-stained apron, calls out instructions and encour-

agement while working on a wad of chewing gum.

"Right there, right there, I want that right there."

"Is that a clean brush? Yeah? Yeah!"

"Take that same tonality and run it right down."

"Hey, young lady, you've got a good hand."

"Big Al, talk to me," hollers one of the kids.

"Yo!" snaps Big Al.

No doubt about it: The energy level jacked up several levels when Big Al arrived at the uptown Charlotte arts center. Likely it will get higher yet through Friday when, as part of the monthly uptown gallery crawl, Big Al does another of his expressive paintings on a Knight Gallery wall.

That same night, an exhibition of his work, "Big Al Carter: Prints, Drawings and Mural," opens at the Knight Gallery. And the mural he's done with the University

Please see Artist/next page



T. ORTEGA GAINES/Staff

Big Al Carter instructs a University Park student while working on a billboard-size mural at Spirit Square.

Artist

'Same old Big Al' spreads his energy

From preceding page

Park School students will be on Spirit Square's 7th Street wall for all to see.

That's not all. Five murals are under way at community centers across the county, involving area artists and a diverse bunch including a senior citizens group and an interracial group of teenagers. Big Al has dipped into those, too.

"Same old Big Al," Big Al likes to say when he meets people. That's saying a lot.

The 44-year-old artist is an exponent of the community mural movement, an American phenomenon where artists and sometimes ordinary citizens create art and put it in public places such as walls and billboards.

Before coming to Charlotte, Big Al did such works in Washington, Winston-Salem and Raleigh.

The Spirit Square mural is typical of his expressive figurative style and social concerns. Called "Man Feeding Poor Man," it shows one man extending a bowl of food to another, while still another bows in prayer.

Big Al outlined the figures in his trademark heavy black lines. The students, who have never done an art project like this, fill in the areas with patches of color under his direction.

In the process, they learn about how colors go together, how to make a smooth line, how to suggest shadow on a flat surface — even the right way to climb on and off a scaffold.

Where to catch Big Al

While in Charlotte, Big Al Carter will participate in several free, public events. On Wednesday, he'll participate in a panel discussion on "Public Murals Through Community Involvement" at the Afro-American Cultural Center, 401 N. Myers St. (near 7th and McDowell streets), at 7:30 p.m. The program also features James Biggers, Deborah Eagle, Ruth Ava Lyons and Tommie Robinson. On Friday, he will attend an

opening reception for an exhibition of his work at Spirit Square's Knight Gallery and will paint another work in the gallery during the 6-8 p.m. gallery crawl. The exhibition of Carter's paintings, drawings and mural will be at the Knight Gallery in Spirit Square, 345 N. College St., through March 21. Hours are noon-6 p.m. Tuesday-Saturday. Details: 372-9664, 9 a.m.-5 p.m. weekdays.

— Richard Maschal

A born teacher, Big Al — 6 foot 3 and 310 pounds — loves working with kids.

"I want these kids to get enjoyment and refreshment from art and to connect with it and with each other," he says. "I teach them how to work together. I give them a chance to put their hands on something and see that they can make a difference, no matter what they decide to do in life."

He is no pushover. "If they mess up, they're out of here," he says. "I want kids that will work." Clearly, he knows how to get the best out of them.

"He's pretty cool," says a 14-year-old in a yellow sweatshirt. "He jokes around with us a lot, but we still get our work done."

For Big Al, teaching is passing on what he was given. "I love my teachers," he says. "Without them I wouldn't be here."

He grew up in Washington, drawing constantly. When he got to the Columbus School of Art and Design in Columbus, Ohio, and couldn't afford materials, he

painted on a tray — even tore up a chair to make art, much to the distress of his landlord.

One of the paintings in the Knight Gallery show has in it shingles and roofing glue. When Big Al is working, he'll use whatever is at hand.

That's the other thing about him. He's always making art. He carries a sketchbook and works on it while eating. He's spent every free moment in Spirit Square's print studio pulling lithographs. "I'll wear (the place) out," he vows.

He can't help himself. For Big Al, making art is like breathing: something he does to live.

"The more you do it, the better you get," says Big Al. "I'm still learning by doing. I'll never stop."

Coming Sunday:

- Big Al Carter visits children in Davidson. In Mecklenburg Neighbors, in home-delivered copies of *The Observer* in Mecklenburg County.

'Big Al' helps students create mural in Davidson

By PAT BORDEN GUBBINS
Staff Writer

Community artists, kids should finish work this week

Tuesday afternoon at the Davidson Community Center was dedicated to Big Al, the artist-in-residence at Spirit Square.

Waiting for him were three completed panels for an outdoor mural, part of a community art project sponsored by Spirit Square. Also waiting were about 45 students from Davidson Elementary School. They are creating the mural under the guidance of Jerry Lee Kirk, the artist assigned by Spirit Square to work on the project on a day-to-day basis.

The smell of paint hung in the air of the gym, which buzzed with excited voices as the students taking part in the program waited for Big Al to arrive.

Along the gym wall, they'd hung a long, colorful banner, saying "WELCOME, BIG AL!"

Allen "Big Al" Carter was scheduled to arrive at 3 p.m. He didn't make it until 4:10 p.m., but the wait did not diminish his reception.

"He's a great big guy, full of energy," said Kirk. "Kids love him."

Big Al wore blue work pants, a splotch of yellow paint at the bottom of one leg. He had altered

Can Be — An Artist."

The students held up signs to greet the massive 44-year-old artist with the deep, infectious chuckle. One sign, made by fifth-grade Davidson Elementary student Beth Gardner, was an over-sized greeting card.

On the outside, it said, "I couldn't find a card . . ."

On the inside, it continued, ". . . big enough to suit you. So I made one. Welcome, Big Al!"

Sheena Goldstein, who is "almost 8," and her 10-year-old sister, Rachel, both wore pint-size painter's caps. Asked how they liked the project, they chorused, "It's been fun."

Big Al's job, during his three weeks as artist-in-residence at Spirit Square, includes working with young people in urban centers to create public murals with positive themes — peace, literacy, drug education and community spirit.

Davidson is one of five locations in the county where Carter is working with community artists and school children to create the

murals. Davidson is the only one of Mecklenburg's six small towns involved in the project and the only location producing an outdoor mural.

The students have been working for several weeks from 3 to 5 p.m. each afternoon on the project. They began by painting their pictures on sheets of paper. Next, Kirk used an overhead projector to help them transfer their images to the large wooden panels.

Other community murals are being created at Albemarle Road Recreation Center, Hawthorne Recreation Center, Naomi Drenan Recreation Center and Tuckaseegee Recreation Center, all in Charlotte.

"We felt like Davidson was picked because of the (community center) location, where children could leave their drawings for a duration of three weeks, and our being able to pull together the volunteers," said Karen Leonard, director of the Davidson Park and Recreation Department.

Work on the Davidson mural began the week of Jan. 13. The

work should be finished this week, she said. The mural will then go on display at Davidson College, Town Hall and at The Pines retirement center.

The project has become a popular topic around town, she said. Inspired by an afternoon of Carter's teaching, the students are expressing how they view society, Leonard said.

Three of four door-sized panels

are finished, and the images begin with dinosaurs and — so far — end with Davidson football players.

Cory Coombs, 13, said he thinks the mural represents "the evolution of man."

Of Big Al's work, he said, "He really likes weird stuff. He likes to go wild with his painting."

— Mecklenburg Neighbors intern
Stephanie Glaser contributed to this article.



APPENDIX 7.

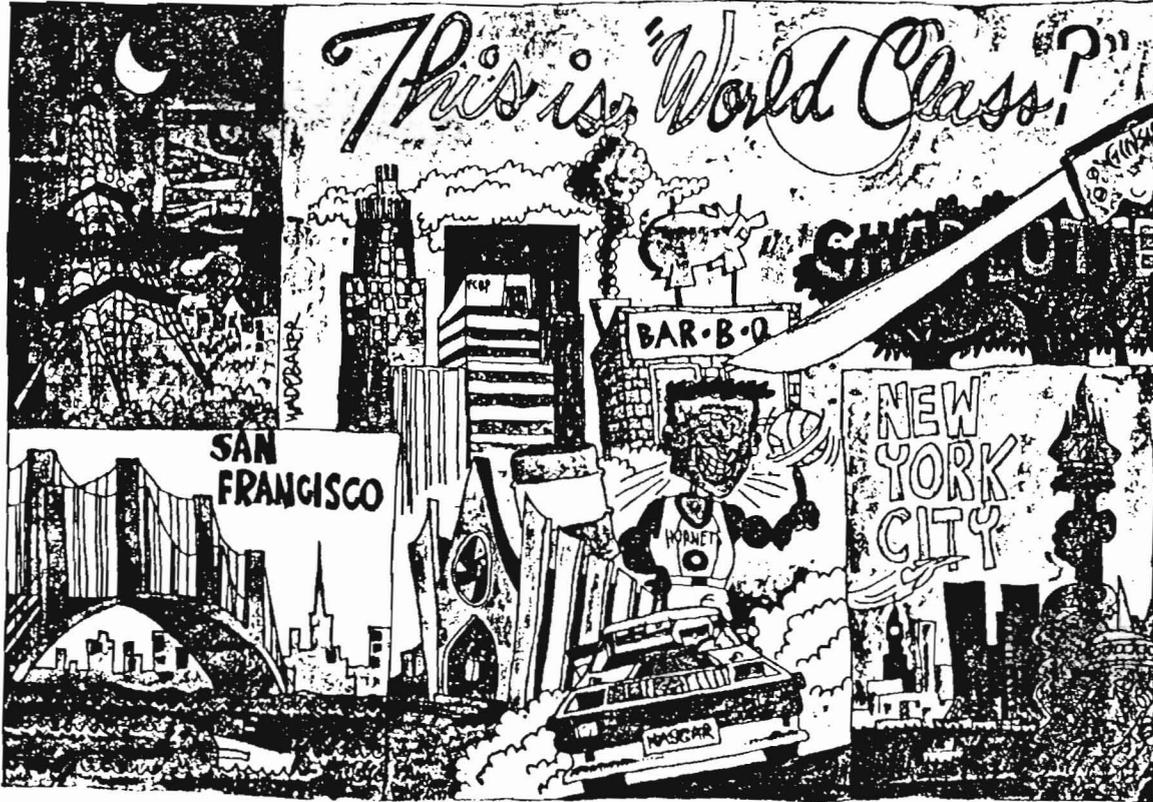
NEWSPAPER STORY: CHARLOTTE AS WORLD CLASS CITY

THE L·E·A·D·E·R

June 19, 1992

Charlotte's Weekly Magazine Of Insight and Fine Living

Price 50¢



THE ATTACK OF THE KILLER CLICHÉ

By Tucker Mitchell

You remember it, the dreaded Ginsu knife of fact, fiction and late-night TV. It chops, it lops, it slices, it dices. It makes wonderful Julienne Fries, just like those now appearing on your screen. No, wait! That's the Veg-O-Matic. But anyway, you remember: finely crafted cutting instruments from Japan (so they

*Is Charlotte as good as London? An Audi?
A Ginsu knife? Just what does the
'W.C.' phrase mean?*

said) that cut cucumbers as though they were radishes and can even slice through this metal can (don't try this with your ordinary knives at home!).

Well, the revolutionary tele-marketed cutlery of the late 1970s is back, and it's better than ever. How much better you ask? Well, so much better that Ginsu

knives are no longer just amazing (as in "The Amazing Ginsu Knife") they are now... "World-Class Ginsu knives."

This is quite a feat, for it puts the Ginsu in the same league with several airlines, a hotel chain, at least one luxury car... and, uh, Charlotte.

You may have missed the official pronouncement — in fact, there was none — but the Queen City is now a world-

Continued On Page 10

NEW MOTHERS AGAINST DRUNK DRIVING CHAPTER TARGETS COURT MONITORING, PAGE 4

All this talk of a world-class Charlotte is grating on many ears

Continued From Page 1

class city, or, more correctly perhaps, an aspiring world-class city. This is suggested fairly often by elected officials debating issues and facets of local society and is reported regularly by media covering the same ("...and so, while it's a little damp

• COVER •

outside now, some real world-class weather is on the way, Bob?").

Nothing wrong with that except, perhaps, that the term, as currently bandied about, is just a little — how shall we say this — vague. And as such, it tends to be a little overdone. Since the term mysteriously came into vogue here several years ago (neither the Chamber of Commerce nor the Convention and Visitors Bureau nor

anyone else will take credit for it), it has developed into a broad adjective describing the lofty goals of almost any entity. We have world-class schools, banks, businesses, cars, buildings and leadership. And when we go home at night there are world-class neighborhoods, entertainment, athletics, orchestras and arts centers.

All of this is packed into "the world-class city," which, when repeated several hundred times, can grate on our world-class ears. And apparently it has. Several letters-to-the-editor authors and at least one talk-show caller have complained in recent weeks about the proliferation of the "w.c." phrase. And, a *Leader* poll of randomly selected city leaders from various disciplines turned up overwhelming support for the notion that world-class is one horse that's being ridden too much.

NationsBank President and CEO Hugh

McColl says, "We overuse the term 'world-class' to the point that it lacks clarity or meaning as a standard for our city."

Adds Dr. John Murphy, the superintendent of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools: "The term is in danger of overuse because in so many cases it has had no definition."

The problem with "world-class," as city leaders see it, is that it is undefined, and it is the sort of term best applied from without, as opposed to within.

Dr. Billy Wireman, Queens College's president, says, "Praise from others — either publications or individuals — has a more authentic ring than self-congratulations."

Or, as Dr. Joe Golden of Spirit Square puts it: "When civic leaders from Kobe, Bern, Caracas or Vladivostok start arriving to learn 'how you did it,' we can start running up the flag."

So far, the visiting delegations arriving at Charlotte/Douglas International Airport ("a world-class airport") have been few and far between — unlike local references to world-class. But the phrase, and some questions arising from it, are very much with us.

For instance, just what in the world does it mean?

The Random House unabridged dictionary defines world-class as "ranking among the world's best." That's a definition embraced by several city leaders polled, including Dr. Wireman who says he prefers the word "preeminence" because it is less confusing.

There's a world of truth in that. Few would argue with someone wishing Charlotte to be among the world's best cities or

Continued On Facing Page

World-Class Thoughts



"The phrase 'world class' was used frequently when I first arrived in Charlotte and is used frequently by political leaders across this nation when they talk about the future of public education in America. Unfortunately, the term has been used without any definition of what 'world class' truly means."

— Dr. John Murphy,
Superintendent,
Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools

"World class" is reserved for anyone or anything that is among the world's best in any particular category."

— Richard Vinroot,
Mayor of Charlotte



"We need to focus, I suspect, on identifying 'Charlotte class' — i.e. maximizing the resources, talent and potential of this community, and then let others pin the 'world-class' label on us."

— Dr. Joe Golden,
Executive Director, Spirit Square

"Instead of aspiring to be 'world class,' I'd rather that we simply aim to be the best, to be better than our competition."

— Hugh McColl,
President and Chief Executive
Officer, NationsBank



"The term begins to ring hollow unless we can become 'world class' in a way that will bring economic growth to the entire business community and improve the quality of life for people with diverse lifestyles at all socio-economic levels."

— Ed Crutchfield,
Chairman and Chief Executive Officer,
First Union Corp.

"Let's not let 'world class' become one of those buzz phrases like 'political correctness' and 'multiculturalism' which trivializes an important concept."

— Dr. Billy Wireman,
President, Queens College

Would you put Charlotte in a class with the world's great cities?

Continued From Facing Page

to be a good city or even a great city. But that's not what people around here say. They say "we want to be world-class."

It's trendy, and it has a nice ring to it, but when you throw words like "world" and "class" about, the meaning becomes more than just "good," or "nice." There is a tendency to start thinking about Europe and an urge develops to re-route the Catawba through Uptown and perhaps throw up a few castles along the way.

Says Mr. McColl, "We need better roads. But we don't need 'world-class' roads, which, to me, represents the autobahn in Germany."

Indeed, the thought of Charlotte drivers whizzing along the new outer belt at 200 kilometers an hour is more than just a little scary. And if you think our road network is crazy now, just imagine what someone from the Rome DOT could do with a few strategically placed palazzos and traffic circles. The street names would change every 200 feet, and the traffic jams would truly be, well, world-class.

"World-classing" it (oh no! it's transformed itself into a verb!) produces some interesting visions in other areas as well. Here are some possibilities:

Sports

We've already got the Hornets and the Final Four, and surely an NFL team is just around the corner. But true world-class cities aren't measured by college games or how many American professional franchises they collect. Instead, they host events of a grander, more old-world nature. Mayor Richard Vinroot, who by the way says he "generally thinks of 'world-class' with regard to the athletes who reach a certain level of success," is on the right track with his initiative to bring an Olympic event to Charlotte in 1996. Better would be to steal the whole thing away from Atlanta, but barring that, Charlotte could investigate obtaining an English soccer franchise ("Today's game: Tottenham at Charlotte"), elevating the U.S. Clay Courts Championship to a Grand Slam event, or perhaps holding a Grand Prix.

Just the thought of Formula One racers barreling down College Street then turning right for a dash past Earle Village ("Chris, four more Porsches have just entered the race!") makes the heart beat faster.

The Arts — Although current regulations call for up to 1 percent of the total expenditure on any public building to be spent on public art, even in a jail, Charlotte's commitment in this area probably isn't world-class enough. Even with the new Blumenthal Center, the city is short on Grand Opera Halls, and there is a decided lack of internationally known touring troupes as well.

Also, our art galleries are pathetic. Work on a "Louvre-class" (better than

"world-class" because it is more specific) facility should begin immediately. The burned-out Presbyterian church on Tryon Street, with its world-class stonework,

"world-class" business location.

If Duke Power would allow the course of the Catawba to be changed and our ever-effective legislative delegation could

you're going to have rail in a world-class city then make sure it's world-class rail. Nothing short of France's Tres Grand Vitesse, ultra-high-speed line would do.

Commuters could do the Rock Hill-Uptown run in 5 minutes. Then they could take a bus back to work from Davidson. Sorry. At 200 mph that's about as soon as they could get it stopped. But if we're going to be world-class, everyone is going to have to sacrifice a little.

Education

To Dr. Murphy's credit, he has actually wrestled with the problem of "world-class" nomenclature that was thrust upon him when he arrived in Charlotte and has attempted to define what it might mean in public schooling. His "world-class" panel didn't include international education luminaries, but it was pretty representative of what the United States has to offer.

"I felt that it was important for us to bring definition to that term if we indeed wanted our schools to compete with those worldwide systems that are turning out the most advanced graduates," says Dr. Murphy.

Whether Charlotte will cotton to European-style trade schools and longer school days and years remains to be seen, but in one area at least world-class has some meaning.

In the world of higher education, Charlotte is advancing but there is a ways to go. A merger of Queens College and the University of North Carolina at Charlotte — doubtless a thorny problem — would be a possible step towards w.c. stature. Call the whole thing Queens but designate the Myers Park campus as the "Olde College." It would be a great marketing tool and would lend the whole endeavor a world-class air.

All this should not be construed as an all-out (world-class?) attack on local world-classers. As Duke Power CEO Bill Lee says, "World class" reminds us that our competition is global.

Adds Dr. Golden, "World class is) a stimulator... a noble goal."

And, all the hype and clichés aside, there is every reason to believe Charlotte can cut it in the world-class world. That's because, as Dr. Wireman notes, "All the elements are here: Business leadership and acumen, social conscience, strength of churches; a certain graciousness of cultural heritage; an increasingly diverse population; a spirit of generosity and volunteerism; a growing international character; and, of course, geography and location — all combined with a determination to be a special community with soul which cares about all of its citizens."

What's more, Charlotte is already recognized as a world-class center in at least one regard. On some of the advertisement for the all-new, "World-Class Gimsu" the address for mail-in orders is a post office box in Charlotte.

Well, where did you think it would be? Gastonia?



offers an excellent exterior facade but the old convention center would be more spacious. Of course, architecturally, it lacks a certain something, being done as it is in the neo-post-modernistic Egyptian style, complete with geodesic pyramids on top. Renovation, perhaps using a small nuclear device, would probably be necessary.

Crime

Charlotte police and other law enforcement agencies report that Jamaicans, Colombians, Puerto Ricans, Nigerians and Ethiopians are all involved in various aspects of drug-trafficking in the city. If we could just get some Europeans (maybe from Sicily) and some Asians involved, local crime would be very international, which is certainly a step in the direction of world-class. Perhaps some tax incentives could help lure them here.

On the law enforcement side, a simple step would be to switch the current police sirens for the bi-tonal European style that you always hear in movies: ee-ohhh, ee-ohh. Well, something like that. An Interpol branch would be a nice addition, too.

Business and Industry

Charlotte can be proud of its international standing as a financial center but something must be done to shore up our industrial base if we're going to be a

get a 200-mile channel dug to the coast, a lively port area could be created just west of downtown. Sea transport could mesh with the area's established trucking industry to form a world-class transportation megacentre. The port would lure other heavy industry here. Perhaps an oil refinery could be built in the Tyvola Road area.

Then, in 50 or 75 years, when it fell into disrepair, the city could rebuild it as a quaint shopping and entertainment area. They could call it CityPort or PortFair, or something. Probably wouldn't cost taxpayers more than a couple hundred billion by then.

Residential Real Estate

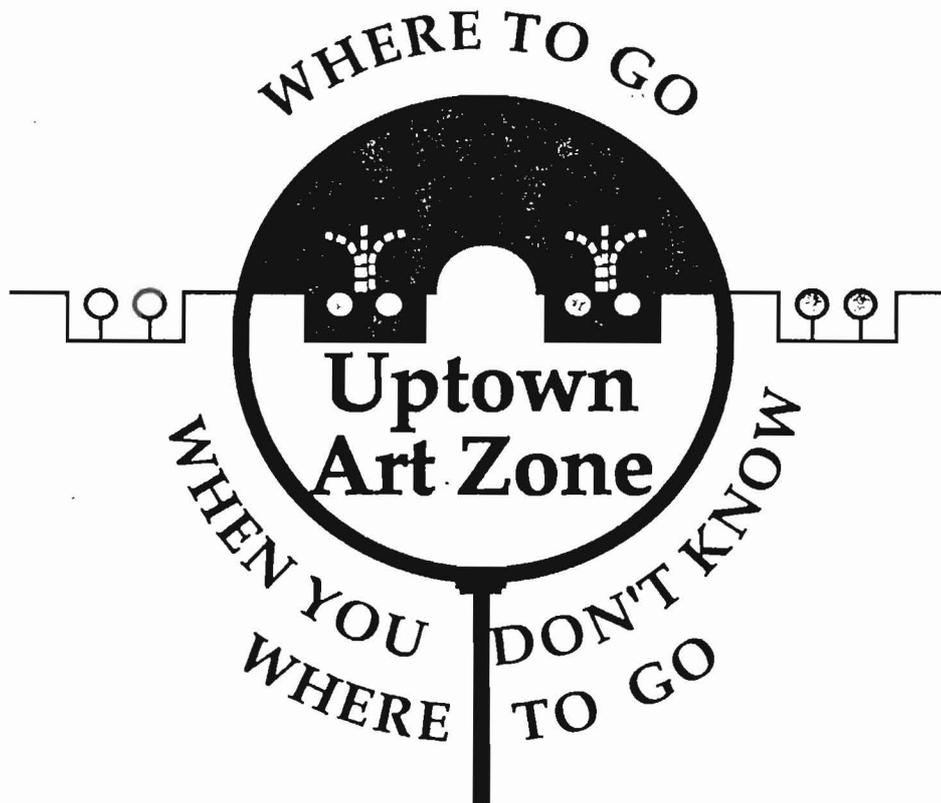
Morrocroft was a noble attempt, but there really isn't enough "baronial-class" housing in the area. Entirely too much land has been taken up in an attempt to give the middle class a taste of "estate-class" living. Future planning decisions should be made with an eye toward providing them with adequate, high-rise space near Uptown while providing more room for squiring in the hinterlands.

Such a plan would have the additional benefit of reducing congestion on the autobahns. The Uptown apartment dwellers could walk where they needed to go or perhaps ride a bicycle, which could lend Charlotte sort of a Hong Kong effect. Very international. Or we could do that train thing everyone talks about. But if

APPENDIX 8.

A PROPOSAL FOR UPTOWN CHARLOTTE
as Reported in Spirit Square Magazine

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With the opening of the new Performing Arts Center and the new Convention Center, Uptown Charlotte will have its best (and perhaps last) chance to create a truly world-class center—a vital urban core which attracts visitors not only because of its financial muscle, tall buildings and easy accessibility, but even more for its gracious public environment and its active and attractive civic institutions.

A Proposal for Uptown Charlotte by Ernest Hutton, City Planner and Urban Designer

The greater Charlotte-Mecklenberg region has no lack of places to go or events to attend. Sports buffs can find a coliseum or stadium containing almost any event imaginable, from a college basketball tournament to a monster truck big-wheel demolition derby. With the new Carowinds and Blockbuster megapavilions, tens of thousands of entertainment-hungry fans can deafen themselves with decibels and blind themselves with lasers-- or even settle back for a laid-back evening of folk music on the lawn. Those in search of more pastoral pleasures can bike, hike or canoe to their heart's content in nearby state, county and city parks, rivers, and lakes. Aesthetic experiences, from Egyptian jewelry exhibits to toga parties, can be found in locations ranging from the Mint Museum to various area colleges or universities. And as we know, the Uptown area boasts the most art, exhibit, and theatrical events in the entire area.

But where is Charlotte's civic heart, its central urban "gathering place," that attracts spontaneous activity and repeat visits-- the sort of place to go when you don't know where to go, to find something interesting to do when you don't know what to do?

Ernie Hutton, trained as an architect and planner, is a principal of Buckhurst Fish Hutton Katz Inc. He has coordinated downtown plans, arts/commercial mixed-use developments or cultural district strategies in cities such as Pittsburgh, New York, Knoxville and Kansas City; in 1986, he prepared for the Charlotte Uptown Development Corporation proposals for office, performing arts, hotel and convention center development. This article describes conclusions of his current Charlotte Cultural District study, prepared in conjunction with Spirit Square, the Arts and Science Council, and a variety of enthusiastic Uptown public, private, and civic participants.

One of Charlotte's biggest current problems is that it has no such common and informal district, no such low-rise, people-filled, active and attractive section of the city like Washington's Georgetown, Austin's Sixth Street, and London's Chelsea, or like Greenwich Village, Country Club Plaza in Kansas City, and Copley Square in Boston.

What Charlotte needs is a central part of town that's

unpredictably predictable, a place where even if you don't know what's happening there, you know that something of interest will always be afoot—whether it's a Saturday morning farmer and flea market, a Thursday evening gala of gallery openings, or a Saturday night on the town with a choice of ethnic restaurants, classical concerts, theater and comedy clubs, or blues bars and jazz cellars.

Art at the Region's Heart

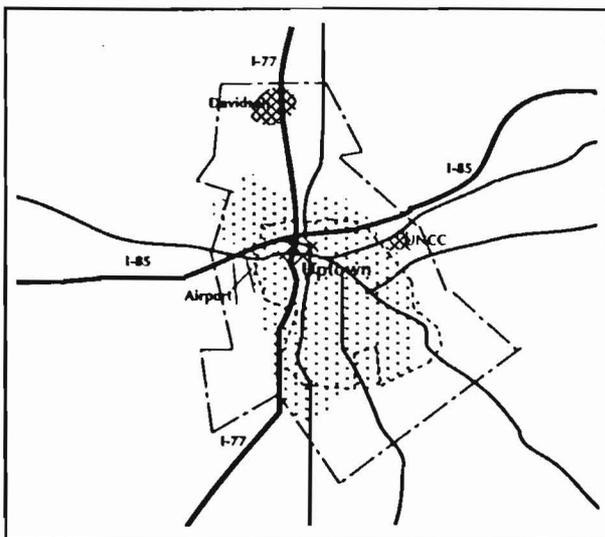
It just so happens that the center of the region—the Uptown business core, the central focus for financial ventures, office services, professional interaction—is also the emerging focus of arts, culture, and entertainment for the entire Charlotte-Mecklenburg County environs. And with the new convention center and stadium projects, along with associated hotels and other support facilities, Uptown will become a new Southeast magnet for conference and tourism activity.

And the heart of this Uptown core is an area that can become more than a nine-to-five office center, a dramatic contrast to adjacent urban high rise canyons or surrounding suburban shopping centers—Charlotte's emerging cultural focus, the Uptown Art Zone.

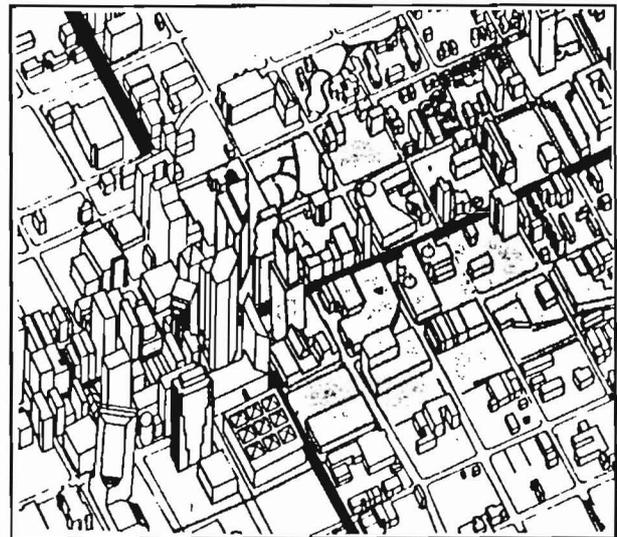
This area, spanning an approximately four block by six block area north of Trade Street and centered on

Tryon, is currently a loose collection of low-rise theaters, museums, art galleries, offices, shops, and warehouses. The Art Zone is already the home of the Spirit Square theater/art complex, Discovery Place with its new Omnimax Theater, the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Library, a variety of art galleries and shops, restaurants and night spots, and soon the North Carolina Blumenthal Center for the Performing Arts.

However, this evolving district can become much more than just individual institutions. It can be the Charlotte region's daytime and nighttime activity center—a place where residents and visitors to Charlotte can not only attend specific activities like a symphony concert or an afternoon at the science center, but can also simply "hang out"—people watching, window shopping, buying the new Lounge Lizards CD, dropping into Jonathan's for a glass of stout, getting a bite to eat at City Fair, stopping off at the new Queen City Cabaret for a late night blues fix.



Charlotte's Uptown area is at the center of a prosperous and expanding region.



The Art Zone area centers on Tryon Street north of the Uptown business center.

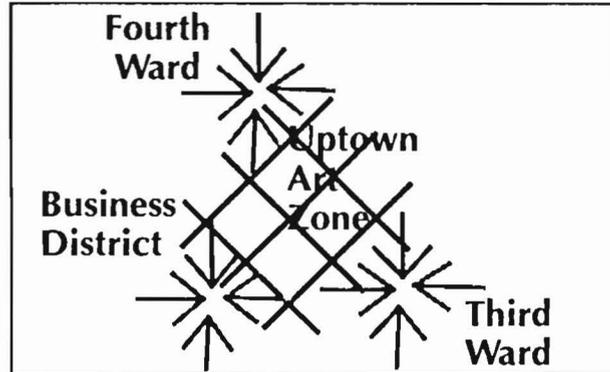
Why Can't Uptown Be More Than Just a Big Urban Canyon?



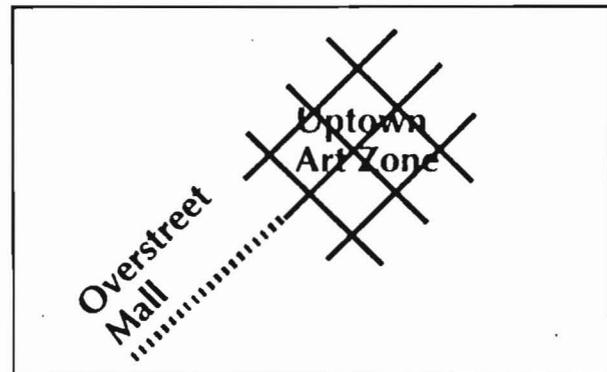
Although Uptown has attractive modern office buildings, it is in danger of becoming a sterile '9 to 5' environment

Uptown Charlotte consists primarily of the central business district and its surrounding Third and Fourth Ward neighborhoods. Each of these areas shares one overriding characteristic: while each is a specific subarea with its own personality, each is a very internalized sector of the city. The Third and Fourth Wards, for instance, are active residential areas characterized by low-rise housing and strong social networks. But each neighborhood is inward-looking—deliberately planned and arranged so as to focus on its own open space amenities and reinforce its individual personality.

In a similar fashion, Uptown's business district, the center of the regional core, in spite of its landscaped streets and public amenities, is in danger of becoming an urban canyon of high-rise towers and faceless



The Art Zone's surrounding subcenters are all inward-looking areas



The Art Zone can be a pedestrian-oriented anchor to the business district's second-level Overstreet Mall.

parking garages. Like the residential neighborhoods to the north, it too is internally-oriented—in this case, to interior features such as the second-level Overstreet Mall, which actually extracts pedestrian and commercial liveliness from the street and increases the sense of inward-facing development.

Uptown Charlotte—and the region as a whole—need a magnet of activity such as the low-rise, people-oriented urban district vision described on previous pages. The Art Zone area north of Trade Street, located midway between the three neighborhood and business district subareas, has the raw material—cultural events, attractive streets, easy accessibility, available streetfront space—to provide such vitality. All it needs is attention, investment, and action.

What Makes a Vital Urban District?

From the casual bohemianism of downtown San Francisco and the honky tonk funkiness of New Orleans' French Quarter, to Parisian people-watching from leafy Left Bank boulevard cafes, the active pedestrian areas which characterize the popular precincts of great cities share some common characteristics.

An Attractive Public Realm

The first characteristic is that the outdoor domain of these districts is a pleasant place to be.

The district is an urban area, defined by its buildings. If it is a successful area, filled with people, one reason is because the buildings themselves have been designed with people in mind:

- they are low in height, allowing light and air to reach sidewalks and plazas.
- the facades have a human scale, with carefully-defined ground floors and people-sized doors and windows;
- signage and graphics are lively and colorful, and shop windows are filled with interesting displays;
- the shape and form of the buildings define the public realm—the streets and plazas—creating a framework of containment and order.

The public open spaces defined by the buildings and shopfronts are pleasant and comfortable, attracting conversation and contemplation.

Landscaping is an important feature:

- Street trees soften the edge of the sidewalk, adding shade and filtering the atmosphere with color, motion, and light;
- Parks, plazas, and outdoor seating areas are the rule, not the exception, filled with greenery, fountains, places to sit;



- Street furniture—kiosks, pedestrian lights, even trash cans—are well designed and carefully located.

Finally, the district's streets are designed as a pedestrian-biased domain:

- The car is a controlled interloper into this zone, moving slowly through intersections, giving priority to strollers;
- Parking is easy to find and convenient to use, identified by a clear and attractive signage system, but once the car is dumped, there is no need to drive until it's time to leave;
- Transit—especially trolleys or buses—carries visitors and residents quickly and easily throughout the district, reducing auto traffic and air pollution.

Arts as a Magnet

Cultural facilities are often used as a catalyst for attracting people and activity to a district:

- Performance spaces—theaters and concert halls—provide the venue for a wide variety of events: Broadway dramas, musicals and lectures; 'big-ticket' serious music events ranging from symphony concerts to operas and ballet and dance, from classical composers to 20th century experimentalists; and popular concerts featuring crooners, cowboys, comedians, or your worst heavy metal nightmare.
- Museums, galleries, and exhibit spaces attract art aficionados, culture mavens, and science and technology buffs.
- And outdoor event spaces—plazas and streets—provide the framework for spontaneous happenings from lunchtime concerts to sidewalk arts and crafts shows to festivals and parades.



Commercial Beneficiaries

The economic spinoff from such activity, if properly organized, can benefit the private sector merchants whose retail and commercial establishments form the backbone of the district:

- Shops, restaurants and night spots can both take advantage of increased activity as well as generate activity of their own— an upward dynamic which once set in motion can be mutually beneficial to everyone in the district.
- Offices and services can also benefit from district success: increasing real estate values can attract increasingly higher quality firms that can help support upper level space.

Activity Generators

Finally, other activity generators can help enliven the district:

- Residential development is the best way to add people to the district on a 24-hour a day basis, increasing activity, safety, and the market for food shops, laundries, and other support services.
- Hotels, especially with the draw of arts facilities and night life, also add people and spending power.
- And students— from elementary schoolchildren on tour at a museum to a magnet high school or professional school for the arts— increase activity and build audiences and patrons for years to come.



Charlotte's Uptown Area: The Logical Focus

The new Art Zone area— the approximately six by four block precinct centered on the Tryon corridor north of Trade Street—already has in place many of the prerequisites for such an urban district:

- It has a casual, low-density feeling, is organized along the well-landscaped Tryon Street spine, is flanked to the west by large green areas of Settlers' Cemetery and the adjacent churchyard, and is punctuated by attractive urban spaces, from the complex of plazas at Trade and Tryon, to the new fountain adjacent to the library, to the outdoor sitting area adjacent to City Fair.
- It contains most of Charlotte's popular cultural facilities— from Spirit Square, Discovery Place, and the central Library to the new Center for the Performing Arts, as well as a variety of commercial and not-for profit galleries and the nearby Afro-American Center. In addition to the potential upgrading of the current city visitors' center (operated as part of the Charlotte Convention and Visitor Bureau), new institutions being discussed include a facility for urban historical exhibits and research, the "Museum of the New South", and the potential for expanding the interaction of schools with district institutions.
- It features a number of popular restaurants, shops, and night spots, including Jonathan's, the Thistle, the City Fair complex, and the soon-to-come retail stores and eating spots at the new NCNB Center Founders' Hall.
- The Trade/Tryon area is the focus for two major national hotels— Marriott and Radisson— as well as the popular executive rooms at the Dunhill; new nearby office complexes and residential development add potential for retail activity. The market for new residential units will be based on a demand driven by attractive and innovative new housing types, developed as part of an expanded arts district.

In short, Uptown Charlotte is poised for its next evolutionary stage— humanizing and refining the business district's urban bulk with an active and attractive adjacent cultural zone— featuring expanded entertainment, gallery, and museum facilities, open space, mid-rise apartments, schools, shops, restaurants, clubs, and lots of people having lots of fun— Charlotte's Uptown "Art Zone".

Setting the District in Motion: Image, Identity and Activity

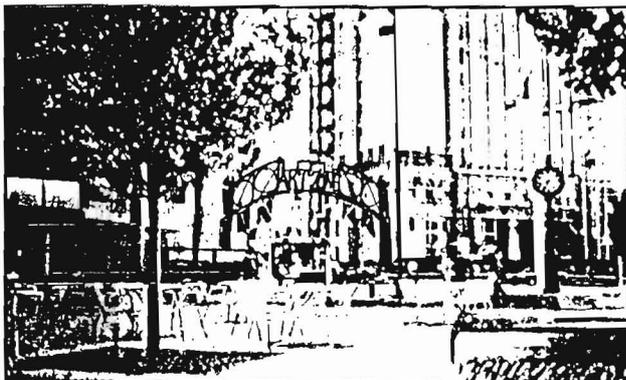
In the short term, a variety of already-committed projects and plans for potential future facilities and activities are now underway. The emerging Art Zone needs to build on this momentum in order to set the district on the right path for continuing future growth.

Trees, Banners, and Lights

The attractive existing Tryon Street **landscaping, paving, and street furniture** should be extended throughout the Art Zone, creating a humanizing environmental counterpoint to the acres of urban-renewal-created parking lots that surround the Uptown core.

But green needn't be the only color evident in the district— after all, this is an Art Zone, and the spectrum of the painter's palette is almost unlimited. The area can be enlivened on a year-round basis by a system of constantly changing, varicolored **banners, posters, and signs** that can emphasize district gateways, identify district streets and landmarks and announce arts events, festivals, and activities.

Although these visual improvements are key to the daytime environment, what about after dark? As things now stand, when night comes, there are few people out and about on the street— not the image of vitality to which the district aspires. With the multitude of cultural institutions and the quality and consistent scale of the buildings in the area, a **lighting and signage program** that adds a festive air to the district and markets existing events with color and verve can give the Art Zone a vivid nighttime identity that can be even more important than its daytime image. Building facades and tree branches can be outlined with tiny bulbs— why not leave the popular Christmas lights up year-round? Neon, animated video panels and illuminated signs with public service or even commercial messages can enliven buildings in the Art Zone's Tryon Street spine with light and color.



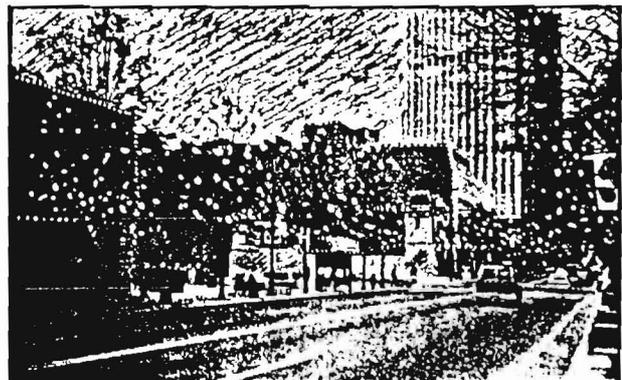
The Trade/Tryon central 'Square' can be the major Uptown entry to the Art Zone, featuring gateway signage and a ticket booth for district and regional events

Events, Entertainment, and Enterprise: Off-Street and On

Of course, activity also equals security. In addition to the lively appearance provided by lights and signs, as well as by obvious means such as an **increased police presence** (on bicycles or horses? why not?), the best way to improve the feeling of safety on the streets of the district is by packing the area with people enjoying the cultural and entertainment events that give the Art Zone its name.

With the opening of the two-theater Blumenthal Center, cultural institutions in the Art Zone area can expect up to 1.5 million visits per year, and if the proposed new Convention Center and Uptown hotel visitation is added in, this number can increase to over 2.5 million per year. Although these numbers obviously incorporate large surges and ebbs of activity, this annual figure translates into an average of over 6,000 daily visits. Considering as well the daily Uptown office population of 40,000, it is important to **attract this large and critical market** to other district activities, services, or business ventures.

One of the ways to attract this market is through an **increased number of public outdoor events** in the district. Popular celebratory activities such as First Night, the various after-work gallery and restaurant 'crawls', or the periodic Farmers' Market are all successful models. What is needed to establish the Art Zone as a major regional magnet is to *expand and institutionalize* these events into a regular schedule of activities. Every Saturday should be a street market of some sort in the district: a permanent flea market/



Lights on building cornices and adjacent street trees can give the Art Zone a magical nighttime "Christmas feeling" the whole year through

book fair, for instance, which in season becomes a regular open-air farmers' market as well. Or SpringFest could evolve into a regional celebration of each new season.

Space is needed for these events: in the short term, selected streets, blocked off on an organized as-needed basis, but in the longer term, these informal event spaces should be supplemented by a **large, centrally located outdoor plaza area**, as might be created in conjunction with surrounding real estate development, at a block such as the northwest corner of Tryon and Seventh Street.

And other attractions and activity can follow:

- **New civic institutions:** for instance, the potential for a new historical museum could be associated with a "Discover Charlotte!" center for tourists and residents alike, with information and audio-visual shows focusing simultaneously on Charlotte's past (its heritage as interpreted in the adjacent museum); its present (where to go and what to do in the region, from Art Zone activities to outlying attractions such as the Mint Museum, the Coliseum, colleges and universities, recreation opportunities); and its future (what's to come in Charlotte, a focus for economic development promotion and civic marketing).
- **Additional entertainment facilities:** an uptown multi-screen cinema complex; an outdoor kid's playland, with a carousel, putt-putt golf, and cotton candy; or even an 'urban farm,' featuring garden demonstrations, landscaping advice, a petting zoo for the kids;
- **New restaurants, night spots, and food/gift shops:** ranging from innovative ethnic food emporiums to the potential for a large franchise-supported eating and drinking establishment such as Bennigan's (which could be an economically-viable catalyst for other night spots, meeting places, and music clubs);
- **Other arts-oriented shops, galleries and office development:** in available space in existing buildings, possibly including a "Carolina Crafts Center", a regionally-focused artists' studio/sales space similar to Alexandria's "Torpedo Factory".



A new public plaza at a location such as Seventh and Tryon could provide a setting for public events and markets and an attractive central green for the Art Zone

Getting There and Getting Around: Parking and Transit

Even though compared to most cities Charlotte has a very accessible core, many people perceive Uptown as a place with inconvenient circulation. The ability to easily drive in and park, especially for arts events or shopping, is key. Luckily the Art Zone has a variety of existing parking facilities (as at CityFair, the Apparel Mart, Independence Center, and the Dunhill) and surface lots, all readily available but with greatly expanded capacity in the evenings and on weekends when adjacent office usage is at an ebb. And new structures (such as at the Blumenthal Center or Discovery Place) are under construction or planned. **New parking structures should be added** as needed, along the rail corridor running through the district.

The city's recent and welcome policy of making free street parking available at off-peak times increases not only the actual number of spaces but more importantly the perception of activity and availability. Equally important to this perception, however, should be graphically attractive and prominent new directional signs, pointing district visitors to adjacent lots or structures. The extension of the city's free street parking policy to **free or reduced-rate off-peak parking** at other public (or even commercial) lots and garages can also benefit the Art Zone's appeal.

Parking policies, however, only deal with the status quo of transportation and circulation. Establishing an **attractive low or free-fare shuttle transit system** (buses or especially the potential for light rail vehicles)—located within Uptown and focusing on the cultural district—could establish an innovative approach to future circulation within the central area. The availability of historic trolley cars and the potential for nearby rail or street rights of way could result in a convenient and fun way to move around the Art Zone and link the district's hotels, restaurants, and arts facilities to the new convention center or stadium.



Renovation of a centrally-located building such as the old Ivey's store can make possible a new downtown restaurant as well as space for a "Discover Charlotte!" center

A Long-Term Vision: Charlotte's "Fountain District"

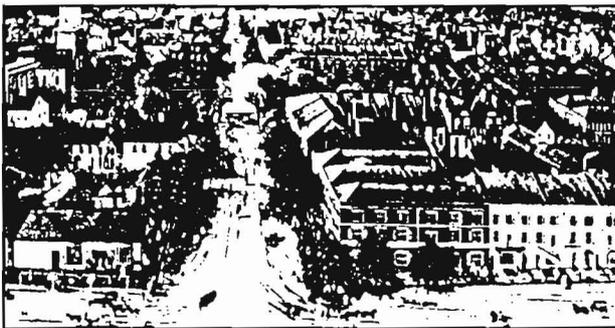
Based on the projected short-term success of the Art Zone, longer-term plans must also be considered for its logical expansion to the north. Described below is some of that potential. In fact, depending on the pace of events, some of these possible future scenarios may evolve more quickly than we now imagine; the initial planning necessary to make them happen will need to be established sooner rather than later.

An Open Space Framework for Future Growth

One appealing option is to increase both the area's environmental amenity and its potential for adding to Uptown's activity and vitality through an expanded residential base, structured around an extensive framework of public and private parks, much like London's Georgian squares or Savannah's historic central area.

This network would consist of a series of corner parks and plazas, surrounded by mid-rise (3 to 6-story) apartment structures, with each heavily landscaped open space featuring as a focus a fountain or water feature. This approach is recommended for a variety of reasons:

- the "fountain" motif has been initiated in the Uptown area with some success: it is environmentally pleasant and visually appealing;
- the placement of the open space on the corners provides an attractive sequence of visual experiences for both auto visitors and pedestrian passers-by;
- even if private park spaces are part of a residential complex and fenced in for security and personal use, they will still be visually part of the public realm of the district, much as the private front lawns and attractive trees and plantings contribute to the pleasure of walking through New Orleans' Garden District or driving along Charlotte's Queens Road.



New People Uses in the District: Residential and Retail

There is a further reason for the open space network: the parks will provide both an attractive amenity and a distinctive marketing theme important to the establishment of a new residential area, compounding the existing advantage of an Uptown location immediately adjacent to the heart of the Art Zone.

The architectural design of the housing should complement the quality of the open space and consider the area's location as an extension of the central area: it should be classically urban in concept, similar to a Washington DC or London neighborhood, featuring mid-rise units with traditional materials and a carefully-detailed base, middle and top. Height of various units may vary, but it should be recognized, taking into consideration both building cost and the desire to provide quality amenities, that a basic density level somewhat higher than the adjacent Third and Fourth Wards is both economically necessary and physically desirable.

Such housing will also provide the 'critical mass' for the sorts of food shops, laundries, and other support services necessary for establishing a working residential neighborhood. A sizable 24-hour population will also provide increased street safety as well as a larger adjacent market for nearby cultural and educational institutions.



Early plans for Savannah and Charleston emphasized a gracious urban linkage between lushly-landscaped, well-defined open space and adjacent appropriately-scaled residential buildings.

New Activity Generators: Education, More Entertainment, and Even More Arts Activity

But residential development is not the only long-term potential for the expanded Art Zone district. New generators of activity and energy can help create and expand the market for the other residential and retail uses described above.

One such activity generator is the potential for expanded educational facilities and programs, taking advantage of the many cultural and science resources in the district. Institutions such as Discovery Place and Spirit Square are now important parts of the curriculum of many area schools. The next logical step is to actually establish full-time educational facilities in the Art Zone itself.

These facilities could take a variety of forms:

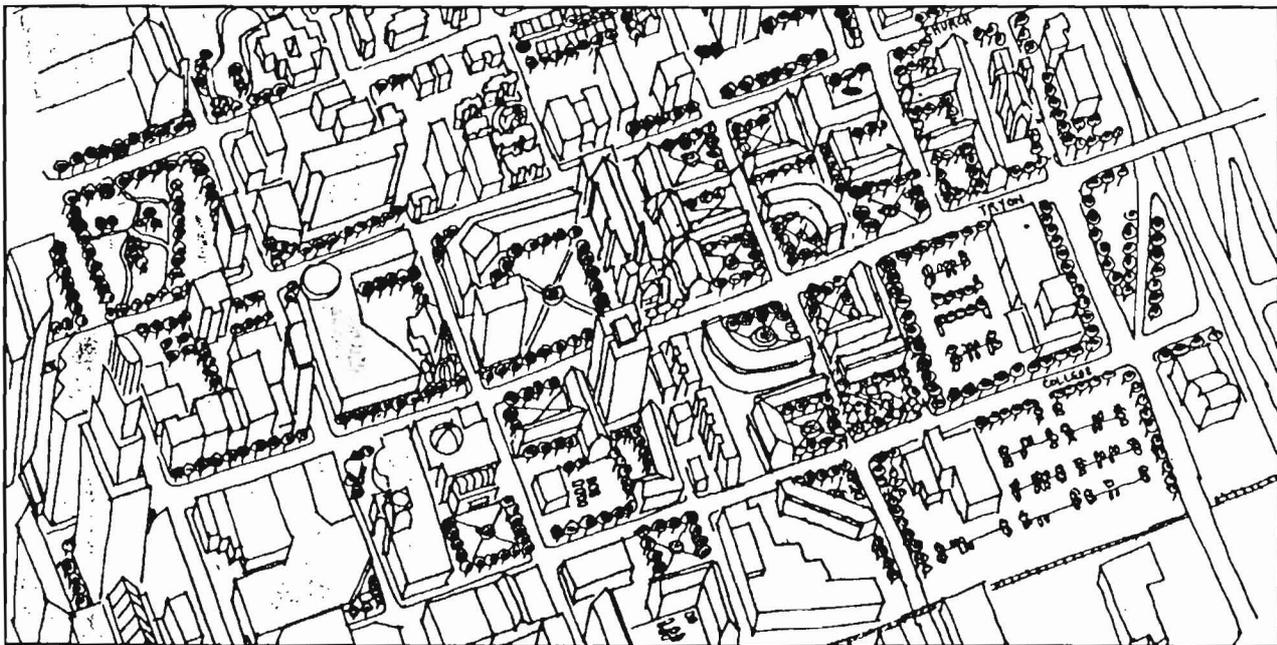
- One is a variation on the model of Winston-Salem's North Carolina School for the Arts, a state-supported boarding institution for leading talents gleaned from throughout North Carolina. In Charlotte, this approach could still include the boarding of students in a centralized facility, but could be expanded to include more than just visual and performing arts, with similar governmental support.
- Another approach is for a "magnet school" approach, a day school drawing talented students from various schools throughout the region, similar to successful efforts in Pittsburgh or elsewhere. The

form of this approach could be a "school without walls", with a home base in a central location, but using a variety of available spaces in institutions or buildings throughout the Art Zone as centers for student activity.

- Higher education should be further incorporated into the district, from Central Piedmont Community College to UNCC to Winthrop College or Johnson C. Smith University, each of which could expand arts-oriented or adult education activities in this central regional location.
- There is also the potential for an innovative approach which links the local school system with other resources beyond just Art Zone institutions: the possibility of partnership programs with the local community college, the opportunity of connections with corporations and Uptown businesses as a means of adding private sector expertise to public schools.

Finally, it is anticipated that based on the success of current entertainment and arts events, audiences will continue to grow, commercial entertainment venues will thrive and multiply, private donors will continue to show their support to cultural programs, and public bodies will expand their contributions as a response to the demonstrated positive impact of the arts on the economic development potential of the city and region.

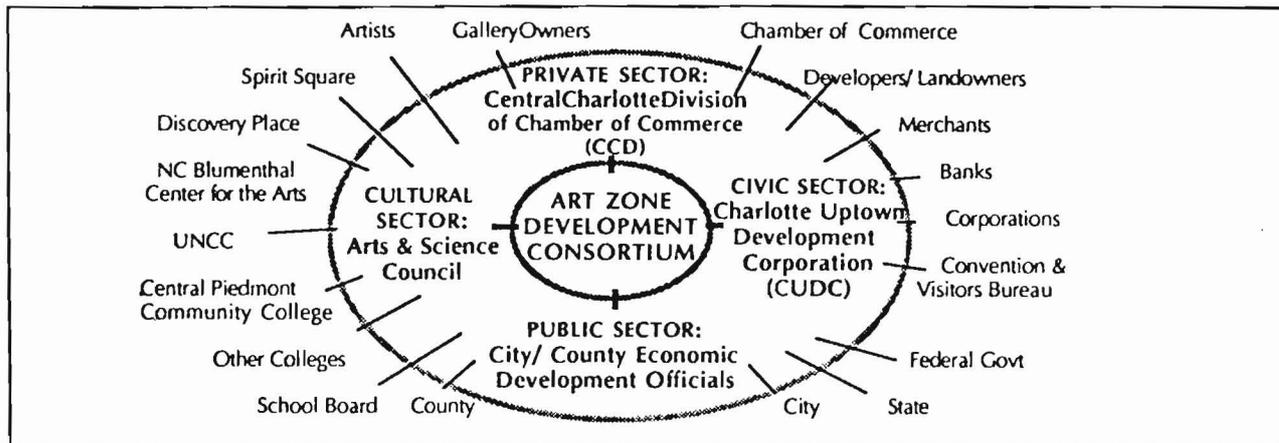
Success breeds success, and the more people who are living, eating, shopping, and working in the Art Zone and in Uptown, the bigger audiences and greater economic support for more and more cultural activities and events.



A long-term plan for the cultural district area can include small corner or interior plazas and parks featuring fountains and landscaping, surrounded by medium-rise urban residential buildings

Making It Happen: Engaging Participants and Establishing Momentum

*In order to get underway on these proposals, it is important that project participants define an effective and efficient organizational approach. The intent should be to avoid creating yet another institution or agency, but rather to establish an 'umbrella committee' that can oversee the coordinated efforts of a variety of public, private, and civic actors, each contributing their own expertise. However, it is important that this organization become a formal operating group in order to focus activity and effort: the **Art Zone Development Consortium**. The chart below identifies the variety of potential participants in creation and maintenance of the Art Zone.*



This organization should be established as a public-private partnership under the joint aegis of the City Economic Development Department, the Charlotte Uptown Development Corporation, the Central Charlotte Division of the Chamber of Commerce, and the Arts and Science Council.

The development of the district will require a number of planning, design, funding, and administrative tasks. Once the district is underway, these can include:

- Organization and promotion of events— both special occasions and regular occurrences;
- Marketing of the district, through media, posters, newsletters, or other approaches;
- Development of special programs— such as helping arrange or administer parking subsidies or arts event/restaurant tie-ins;
- District development— helping market and fill vacant real estate with desired tenants or owners;
- Physical maintenance, supplementing (or replacing through a private contract) city efforts at street/ sidewalk/ open space cleaning and minor repairs.

In order to set in motion the district's continuing development, an ongoing process can be established which includes contributions from all sectors of the consortium:

- the public sector— the city, county, and state, can contribute planning and administrative funds, infrastructure improvements, development guidelines and incentives to ensure the quality of future development, and programmatic participation from groups such as public educational authorities;
- the civic sector— cultural institutions, downtown and regional business groups, foundations and individual

volunteers— can also contribute planning and administrative funds and start-up capital as well as programmatic assistance from the various Art Zone constituents;

- and the private sector— corporations, real estate owners and developers, district merchants, regional economic development promoters— can respond to the public and civic energy and support with development initiatives for renovation, new construction, and participation in continuing district programs, promotions, and services.

Just Do It

This is a 'modest proposal' for a very realizable vision for the future of Uptown Charlotte. The pieces are all in place, and the time is ripe: the new Discovery Place Omnimax Theater is now blasting viewers into cyberspace, the new North Carolina Blumenthal Center for the Performing Arts will soon open its curtains with a huge gala, Uptown banks and businesses are roaring out of the recession, and with the new Convention Center and potential stadium, the Charlotte-Mecklenburg region stands poised to become one of the major visitor and tourism centers of the Southeast.

All it will take is to channel some of that energy into the one area that can serve as the physical and activity focus for the region, the Uptown Art Zone, and follow through with programs promotion and persistence. Then everyone will know where to go and what to do.

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VITA

Karen Thompson entered the Arts Administration program at the University of New Orleans in the fall of 1990 and worked as a Graduate Assistant in the Department of Music. Ms. Thompson received a Bachelor of Arts degree in 1990 from Converse College, Spartanburg, South Carolina. She graduated magna cum laude, double majoring in music (piano performance) and business administration.

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Major Field: Arts Administration

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July 9, 1992
