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**PLANNING DESIGN CHANGE:
FOCUS ON OTTAWA, ILLINOIS**

by

Donna Jean Carney

Thesis submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School of the New Jersey Institute
of Technology in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Architecture.

1988

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and the Impact of Development

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ABSTRACT

Title of Thesis: "Planning Design Change: Focus on Ottawa, Illinois"
Donna Carney, Master of Architecture, 1988
Thesis Directed by: Professor David L. Hawk

The subject of the study is development change as it impacts the identity of small cities. Can small city development problems be analyzed as smaller versions of big city problems, thereby requiring smaller versions of big city design and planning solutions, or do they require responses different than reduced scale of form and land use?

The specific problem context is Ottawa, Illinois, a city in which past developments and plans for future change are representative of a large class of small cities in the U.S. Many towns of this size are caught in the dilemma of decline through not changing, or growing in a way that removes the qualities that made the small town environment attractive in the first place. Ottawa has a rich physical and cultural context and history, including having been the location of the Lincoln - Douglas debates.

Historical contextual analysis is seen as an important means to establish the qualities of the existing setting, and as a basis to derive rules for managing change. Visual image and historic identity help guide the setting of these rules. The framework this proves may be applicable to many other small cities and their development problems. The characteristics of the existing and proposed Ottawa are illustrated in drawings and photographs. Alternatives for development are presented via three scenarios for development of a specific site adjacent to the downtown. The goal of the thesis is to arrive at a structure for evolutionary, adaptive change.

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CHAPTER I. STUDY

Problem Statement

The subject of this study is an examination of the changing identity of a small city and the impact of development on it.

Small cities may be defined in terms of their population- one accepted population limit is 50,000. A definition of more importance to this proposal, is the view that small cities are places small enough so that all citizens can actively participate in and shape major decisions affecting local quality of life. Though this may be true in theory for all sizes of cities, in small cities such decisions do in fact affect EVERYONE in the community. In large cities, changes affecting one neighborhood may or may not be of any concern to another neighborhood.

Because of the interconnected nature of all change in the community, the larger issue of accommodating this change is a concern challenging many small cities in America. Change itself, is simply described as a difference over time. It is inevitable, and sometimes unobservable. The term "development", for the purposes of this proposal, refers to the type of change that is planned with identifiable aims.

Development usually represents some type of increased growth- with aims of improvement, whether it be new buildings, roads, or bridges. To promote "development" then, is usually viewed as a favorable action. As development creates certain benefits, it must also result in certain losses.

The character of small cities is affected by this double-edged nature of increased growth. People moving into smaller communities are attracted by the "small-town lifestyle". Traditional small-town values such as the use of existing assets, incremental change, self-help, and long-term cooperation and commitment to care for and manage the community. The relationship to the natural environment and the aim to keep this relationship is much closer than in large cities. Small cities seeking growth promote

these same advantages and qualities of life as a magnet for new development. The resultant growth may be self-destructive. Negative aspects of urban and suburban life may subtract from the positive qualities which originally attracted growth.

Specific Problem Context of Ottawa, Illinois

Ottawa, Illinois is a small midwestern city with a population of just under 20,000 located 80 miles southwest of Chicago on Interstate 80. Its setting in the Illinois Valley at the confluence of the Illinois and Fox Rivers provides a distinct image for the city. A promotional brochure describes the city: "The 150-year old city of Ottawa, looks to the future while maintaining a reverence for its past." Some "quality of life" factors listed in the brochure include "Rich Historical Background", "Beautiful Residential Areas", "Superior Shopping" and "Active Community". [photo I][map I&11]

Unlike many rural cities dependent on one industry, which have lost or are losing their economic base, Ottawa has followed a national trend in switching from an industrial base to a service and information-based economy. Its survival has been based on its ability to adapt- providing a wide variety of services and diversified light industry. The city's role as LaSalle County seat has also proved to be a stabilizing force and contributed to its identity as the heart of the county.

Development which has already occurred in the city and plans for future development are representative of issues Ottawa has in common with many other small cities struggling with problems of either decline or growth. The present development climate in Ottawa, which will be discussed in the next chapter, provides a real-life opportunity to study potential consequences of such development.

Ottawa is in the process of re-shaping its image to promote tourism. In addition to its proximity to five state parks and the potential for diverse water recreation, Ottawa is also a part of the Illinois & Michigan Canal National Heritage Corridor- viewed as "certain

to become a popular scenic attraction". At this fragile point of planning future development, it is important to demonstrate that it is possible for a small city to promote change to adapt to changing economic conditions, without losing sight of its heritage and its identity.

Study Goals

Framework for planning designed change

The conclusion will provide an exemplary framework for planning designed change within the context of small cities. The goal will not be to design a single solution, but to propose a way of finding solutions.

A key component to this methodology will be the identification of the qualities that allow the city to attract new residents and businesses and are perceived as desirable by the community. Such a list will only be complete when it includes qualities which can only be defined by the community itself since it has the most at stake. Only the residents understand special associational meanings that may be referred to as the collective memory of place. Once these qualities are identified, the danger of destroying these assets can be minimized. Planned change can provide for their preservation.

Role of Design

"Architecture is a direct and uncompromising confrontation with reality, therefore its ability to change is one of its essential characteristics...The incorporation of the nature of the place and the spatial interaction with the pre-existent conditions are at the same time both the content and the theme of architecture." ¹

The role of design is significant in determining "appropriate development". If it is assumed that a building must be integrated into its specific context, it becomes necessary to explore the existing building forms and patterns of the place to discover

definable patterns of building form and spatial typologies. "Integrated" can be interpreted many ways- to suit the purposes of the speaker. Another term with similar meaning might be "compatibility". Design standards often call for new construction to be "compatible" with the existing streetscape. Chapter IV will attempt to identify the characteristics contributing to a perceived quality of compatibility.

The BIG IDEA in design is to maintain a coherence of place- to provide continuity through forms, materials and patterns. The new piece must contribute to the overall desired image. Adaptive continuous planning will prove that design can be adaptive to change, and respond to fluxes in time. The more growth is anticipated over time, the more carefully the project needs to be articulated- meaning it would be designed differently.

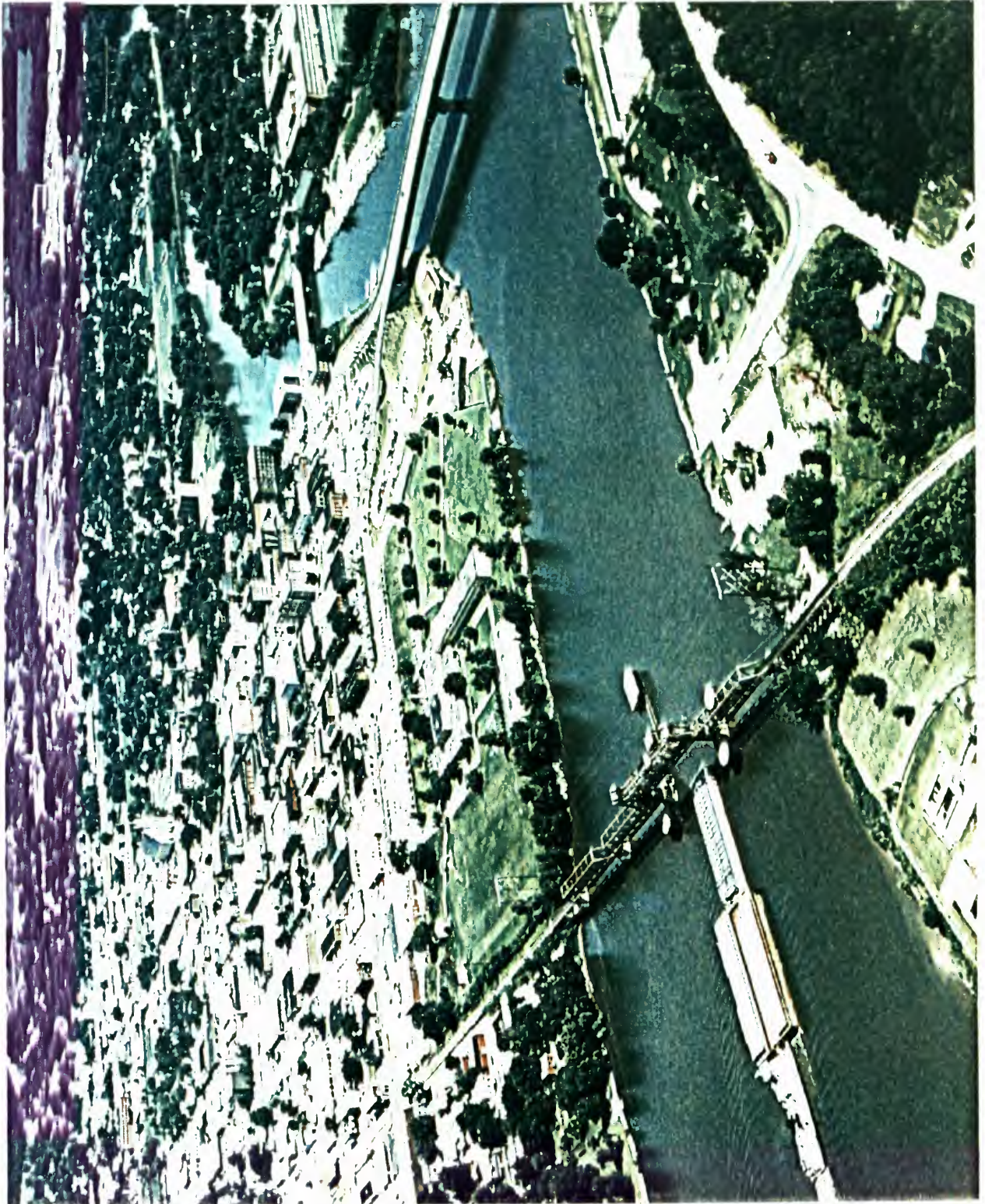
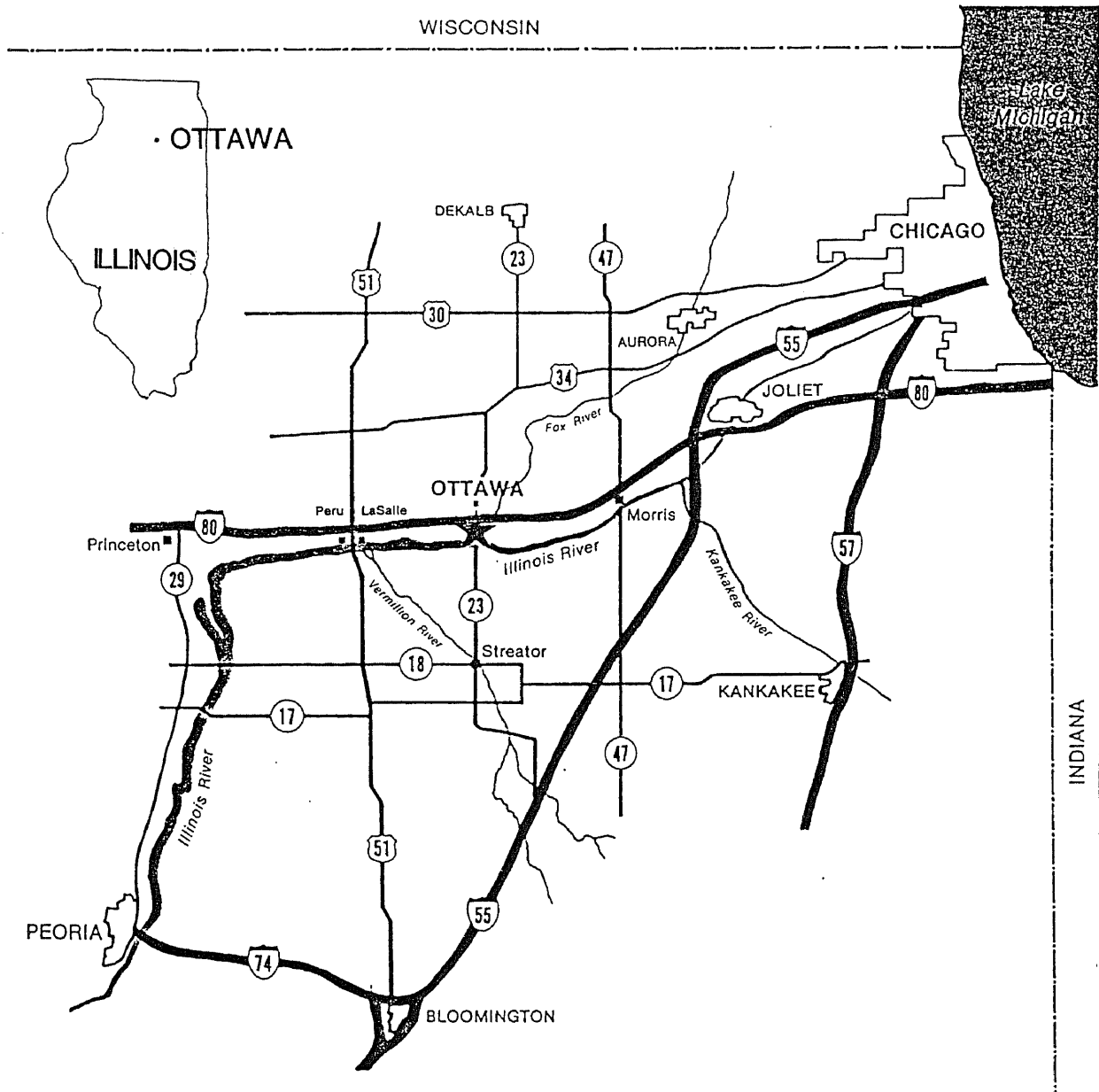
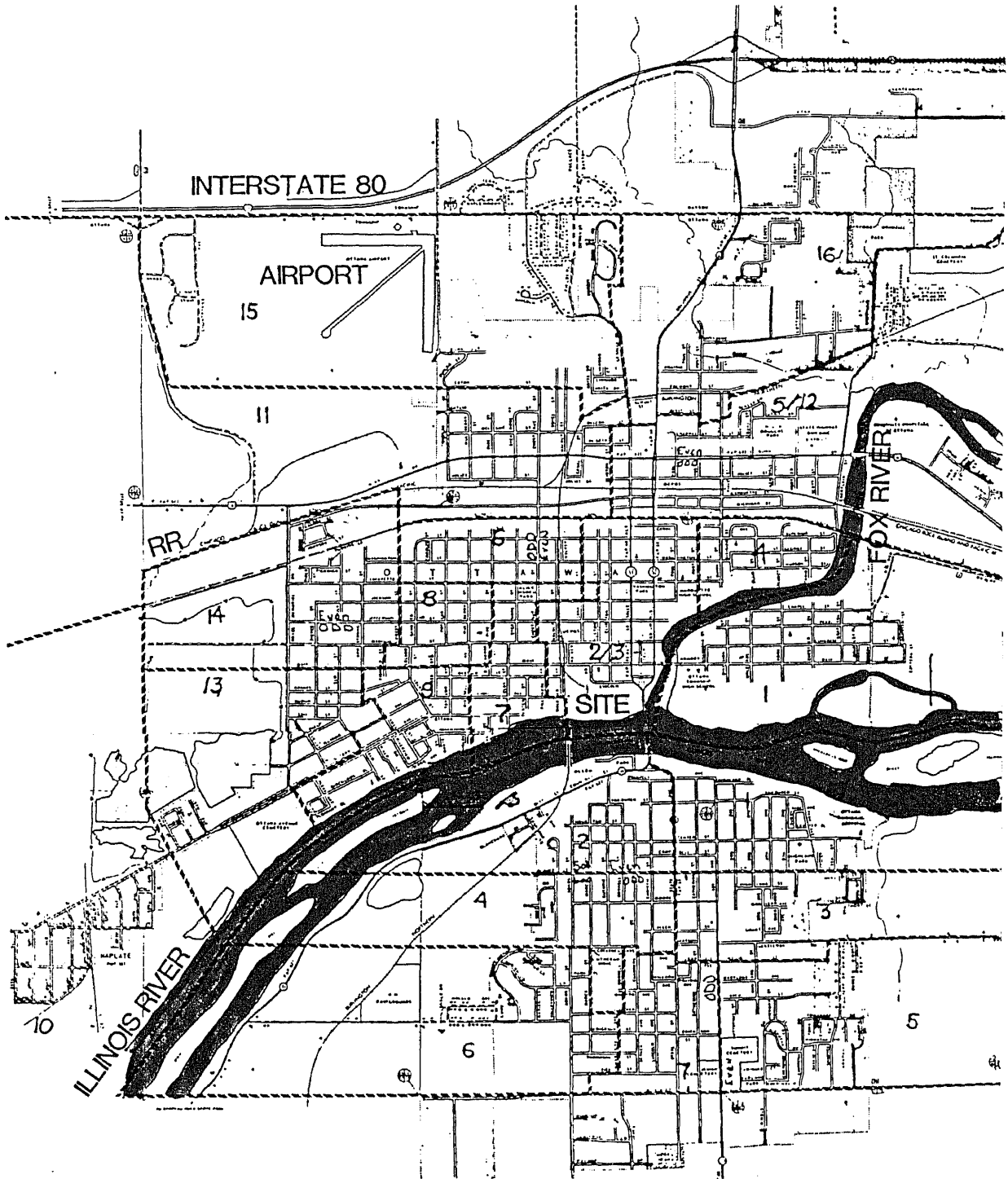


photo I Aerial view of city and site



map I Location of Ottawa in Illinois (Ottawa, Illinois- Industrial sand capital of the World)



map II General Highway Map-City of Ottawa, LaSalle County, Il. (Dept. of Transportation, rev. 1982)

CHAPTER II. PROBLEM OF DEVELOPMENT

Perceived Goals and Consequences of Development

Scale of Development

The significance of planned change has much to do with its scale, or the extent of development within its larger context- the size of the city or neighborhood. Determining a maximum percentage of city size that new development may not exceed may be one way to limit significant change. It may be considered that any development exceeding this limit ceases to be beneficial- ie. too much significant change becomes disruptive and erosive. An example of this is the construction of a major highway through an existing residential neighborhood.

It may be misleading to allow scale or size of development only to be the measure of significant change. A far more important measure (though sometimes difficult to determine) is what the consequences of such change are. Whether the consequences are negative or positive depend on the values held by the groups of people affected by this change.

For example, instead of construction of a new highway through a neighborhood, an existing brick-paved street has been paved with asphalt- an apparently much smaller scaled project. Highway planners, the paving contractor (and some residents) may view this as a great improvement. However, most residents living along this street may feel this change has **significant** negative consequences. Cars and trucks now can travel by at much greater speed-and noise. But more importantly, their street has lost its special character and now looks like all other asphalt-paved streets. The material of brick paving was a significant remnant of the city's history.

Much of the development activity is being carried out under the term "redevelopment". This implies replacement and/or destruction of some existing uses or buildings. This strategy places a high value on maximizing visible "impact" and provides

the illusion, because of its scale, that it must represent "progress" and this must be good. An example of redevelopment is the destruction of structures on four city blocks for the construction of a single-use building such as a shopping center. The redevelopment itself may or may not yield negative consequences. The important difference is HOW the project is carried out- the significance of what was replaced, the involvement of neighboring businesses and residents, the design and appearance of the new development.

Describing the most negative type of development or redevelopment as "K-Martization" is useful because of the immediate image it brings to mind. That image is of large fields of parking in front of a huge anonymous envelope building. Values it suggests include short-term benefit, cheap materials and disposability. This type of development has obvious benefits for its promoters and developers but is significantly negative when placed in the context of downtown because of its disruptive influence on existing patterns.

The commercial development encouraged by availability of large land parcels and proximity to new residential subdivision has had a decentralizing affect on many cities. The fragmentation brought about primarily by the dominance of the automobile is widespread in American cities. The anonymity of "the strip" and convenience of vast parking lots has brought about the destruction of traditional urban patterns of corridor street and pedestrian.

"Progressive planning abandoned the "corridor street" as a physical element and organising principle of the city and instead regarded functions as housed in discrete pavilions set in open space. This figure-ground reversal of pattern of solid and void in the traditional city denies the possibility of public circulation space as a contained form alongside the buildings it serves- adapted in North American shopping centers."²

The accepted values for this development includes "convenience" (by the users), proximity to major transportation routes (by the promoters), and keeping up with

"progress" (by the city government). Little value was placed in the process on land conservation, economy of means and maintaining a traditional relationship with nature.

Allied to the idea of the consequences as a measure of significant change has to do with the added dimension of time as a factor. When considering a "master plan" for development in the city, it must ask itself how much change the city can absorb (over how long) without suffering a loss in integrity.

Big City vs. Small City Strategies

The goals of development in both big cities and small cities are similar. The difference is the relationship of the development within the differently scaled contexts. Problems arise when small cities attempt to model new development on similar projects existing in large cities.

The National Association of Towns and Townships attempts to address design of new development in its booklet- "Hiring Outside Help": "If preliminary designs indicate that a project will be too expensive to build or to maintain, community leaders may consider a scaled-down version or staged development of the original plan." The danger of this advice lies in the interpretation of "scaled-down version" for a small city in comparison to a large city. The small city is NOT a big city in miniature and solutions found in big cities can NOT merely be shrunk in size to fit smaller cities. The small city has an identity inherently different from a big city. The characteristics and qualities of this difference will be addressed in Chapter III of this study.

The image of "**downtown**" is a key element in the city's identity, making the city unique and yet part of a nation and continent. In the context of a small city, it is appropriate to use "downtown" to describe that area associated in both residents and visitors' minds as the traditional "center" of the city- the place to find the city hall and post office and go shopping. More than the services located there, downtown provides the

strongest sense of identity- uniqueness- for the city. Its image is a means of distinguishing itself from all other cities. "Downtown" has associational meaning far beyond a physical place with identifiable boundaries. It is also the embodiment of the city's history and heritage, the marking of events and record of changes.

"**Central business district**" is associated with larger cities, but is a more economically-oriented functional description. It may be useful for statistical means, but is not appropriate for the purposes of this study.

Downtown revitalization is a technique of development used by both large cities and small cities. It can be defined as a combined process that builds on the idea of the downtown's image-not just the physical appearance, but how people feel about the place and how they can work together to improve and maintain it. Building facade improvement is a key element in revitalization of downtowns. The maintenance of attractive welcoming storefronts is an important strategy for keeping the downtown exciting, vibrant and diverse- building upon the qualities already there. Business is now returning to the city core because of the density and quality of the existing infrastructure, not found in outlying areas.

Downtown revitalization initially became a popular strategy to combat the decay at the core of the city caused by the outward movement of businesses and shopping to the fringes of the city. One variation of this strategy is worth noting because of its proliferation and varying degrees of success in both large and small cities. The downtown pedestrian mall attempted to imitate the shopping centers at the city's fringes. The elimination of traffic through the commercial center of the city inevitably caused further decay, **unless** substantial improvements were made to building images and marketing and promotion were coordinated cooperatively by the businesses involved.

Negative consequences were great in both large and small cities, but were especially devastating to small cities where getting people downtown and activities downtown are dependent on traffic and the relationship of a pedestrian/traffic mix. The realization was made too late that survival requires activity, which in turn depends on traffic. [photo II]

Other attempts by downtowns to take on the identity of shopping centers by using a theme of some type of physical "unification" also failed if not accompanied by a corresponding "unified front" by businesses in merchandizing and promotion. Examples of such superficial attempts include arcades and street canopies to provide uniform signage, but which also unfortunately conceal the storefronts from the street.

Spring Valley, New York, constructed their two-block long wooden arcade on Main Street in 1976 as the centerpiece of a revitalization effort aimed at winning back customers lost to modern shopping centers built along the highways outside the village. When it was torn down in 1983, the city admitted it had been a mistake- making a narrow street look narrower, and making it impossible to read store signs from the street. The arcade itself had been vandalized, battered by motorists backing into parking spaces and partially dismantled to allow shoppers a better view of stores! The arcade not only lost favor with Main Street merchants for obvious reasons, but resulted in rising maintenance, lighting and insurance costs to the city.

Spring Valley learned a hard lesson- one experienced by many other cities expecting the quick-fix solution for all of its problems downtown. At the same time that Spring Valley was planning demolition of the ill-fated arcade, it was beginning to plan rehabilitation by building on whatever architectural qualities its business district possessed. Building on existing (though sometimes hidden) assets maintains the diversity and variety in downtown which are its key assets.

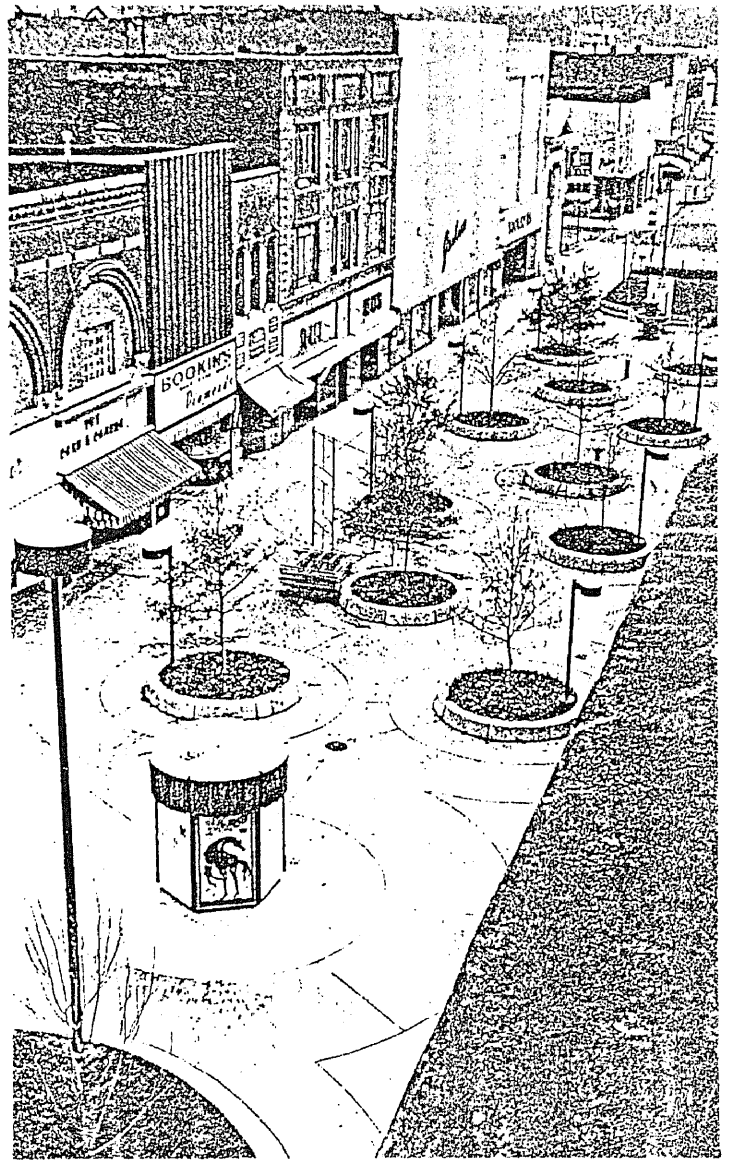
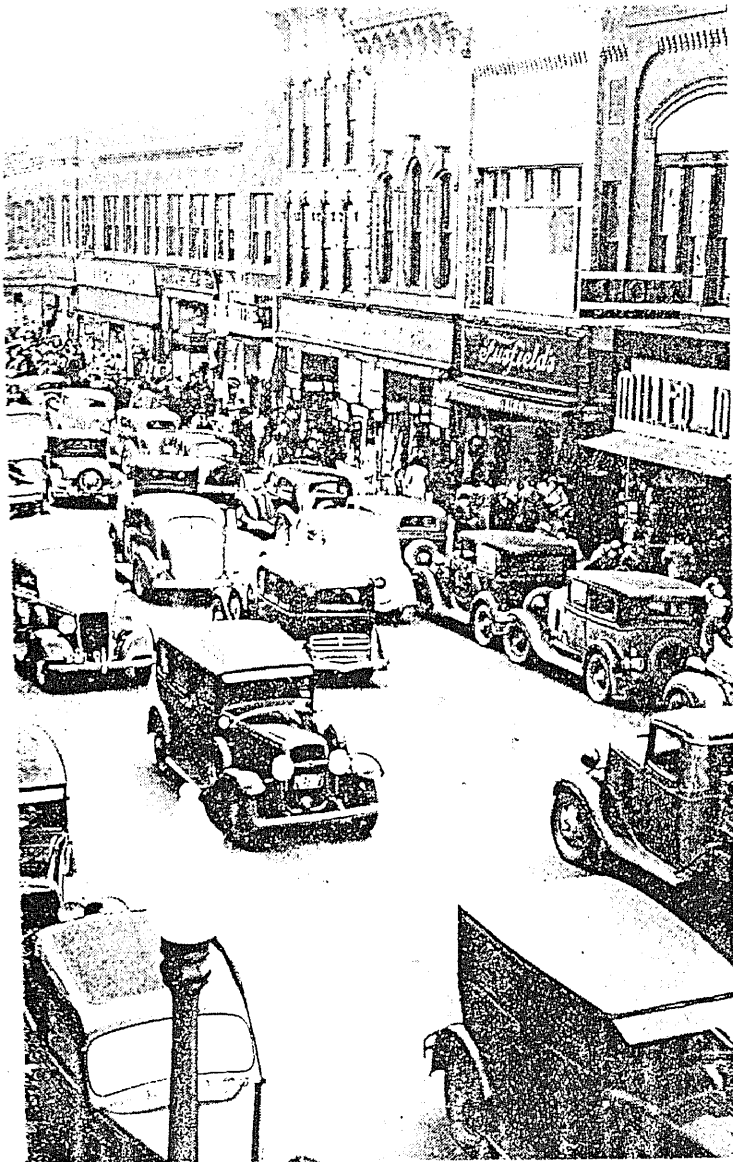


photo II E. Main Street, Ottumwa, Iowa. 1937 and 1978. (cover of Downtown Improvement Manual for Iowa Cities. July 1978.)

Evolutionary Change

Evolutionary change implies a smaller scale, incremental approach to planned change- an approach which makes "integration" of change possible. This type of change where many participants are encouraged enables a community to feel that they are in control of the city's destiny, and can instill a community sense of renewal and self-confidence. Apart from scale, evolutionary change incorporates aspects of the existing context, adapting them to suit new conditions.

Contrast this with massive large-scale projects which can be devastating to the scale and quality of life of the city. When projects are built on the edges of downtown, rather than filling it up more tightly, this growth can overwhelm very different kinds of neighborhoods, changing their character forever. In Boston's Fan Pier project, development of 30 acres of vacant land at the city's waterfront is being planned as an expansion of downtown, permitting growth without trampling existing communities in the process. For the project to work, it must look like an actual city, created over time, not like a make-believe place thrust up in an instant by a real-estate developer.³

The discipline of preservation is important in this context, as it implies an attitude about managing change in the built environment. The incremental process is an intrinsic aspect of this attitude. Respect for alterations occurring over time is a basic component in the methodology of adapting buildings to suit new uses or changing ideas of image.

"Cities, like men, are embodiments of the past and mirages of unfulfilled dreams. They thrive on economy and waste, on exploitation and charity, on the initiative of the ego and solidarity of the group. They stagnate and ultimately die under imposed standardization, homogenized equality, and a minimum denominator of man-made environment. Most decisive of all, cities, like mankind, renew themselves unit by unit in a slow, time-bound metabolic process". -Sybil Moholy-Nagy⁴

Development Issues in Ottawa

Development at city fringes

The problems of fragmentation and fringe development previously discussed are present in Ottawa and typical of many small cities. In Ottawa, commercial firms have been moving out from the downtown since the 1920's - creating different types of business landscapes. The first shopping strip was carved out of a residential area along the old east-west Route 6, directly north of downtown. The second strip is located further north adjacent to Interstate Route 80 and a shopping center is located at the southern end of the city. The scattered development afforded by increased mobility has encouraged the view that commercial development does not NEED to be downtown, but can locate anywhere with a good road and available parking. This type of development is based on the belief that people will be less inclined to travel inwards- to the city center- if similar services are more closely available.

Image of Downtown

While development at the fringes usually occurs at the expense of the downtown, this consequence has been much less extensive in Ottawa than in other small cities. The survival of Ottawa's downtown is an important indicator of the positive qualities and characteristics of a city's identity, which occur no where else in the city. It is immediately apparent to the visitor that this core embodies the city's heritage and spirit of place.

The cohesive identity of downtown Ottawa has evolved over time into a richly diverse collection of over 100 commercial and public buildings. It is the diversity of building age and stylistic characteristics which convey a unique feeling of time and place. Indicators of confidence in the downtown include the small number of vacant storefronts, continuous building frontage along the primary streets and some building improvements. The recent construction of an office building near the Fox River bridge- the Fox River

Center-also signals confidence in the future for the downtown.

The downtown also has its share of problems. Building deterioration has occurred as a consequence of "deferred maintenance". The negative effects of this neglect have multiplied over time. The building facades have also suffered from disfiguring alterations which detract from the original architectural qualities. One example of this type of negative alteration is the addition of an anonymous "blank face" of aluminum siding, masking the original building materials, windows and cornice.

Uninformed renovation efforts may also be harmful, if executed badly. An example may be poorly-executed brick repointing. Though the intention is good- to preserve the original wall material- if badly done, the repointing can have an adverse affect on the building's appearance and may even be the cause of more rapid deterioration in the wall due to noncompatibility of the mortar with the older brick.

An issue which should be of particular concern to the businesses in downtown is the demolition of buildings for parking lots. As stated previously, one of the key factors in creating the unique identity of the downtown is the character of the streetscape. Many of the buildings downtown are irreplaceable assets in defining the character of this place. It is not the premise of this study that ALL buildings should be preserved- but that each be considered as to the significance of its contribution in shaping the downtown's identity.

Disturbing proposals for building demolition were presented in a 1977 report- Central District Urban Design Plan by Brown/Heldt. Half of the buildings in the block along Court Street, east of the courthouse were to be torn down to allow for a parking lot. This particular group of buildings is extremely important in the city's history as is the character of enclosure formed at this corner where Court St. ends in Madison. This collection of buildings in this particular space must be considered equally important to the city's identity as the courthouse square.

Plans for Downtown Revitalization and New Development

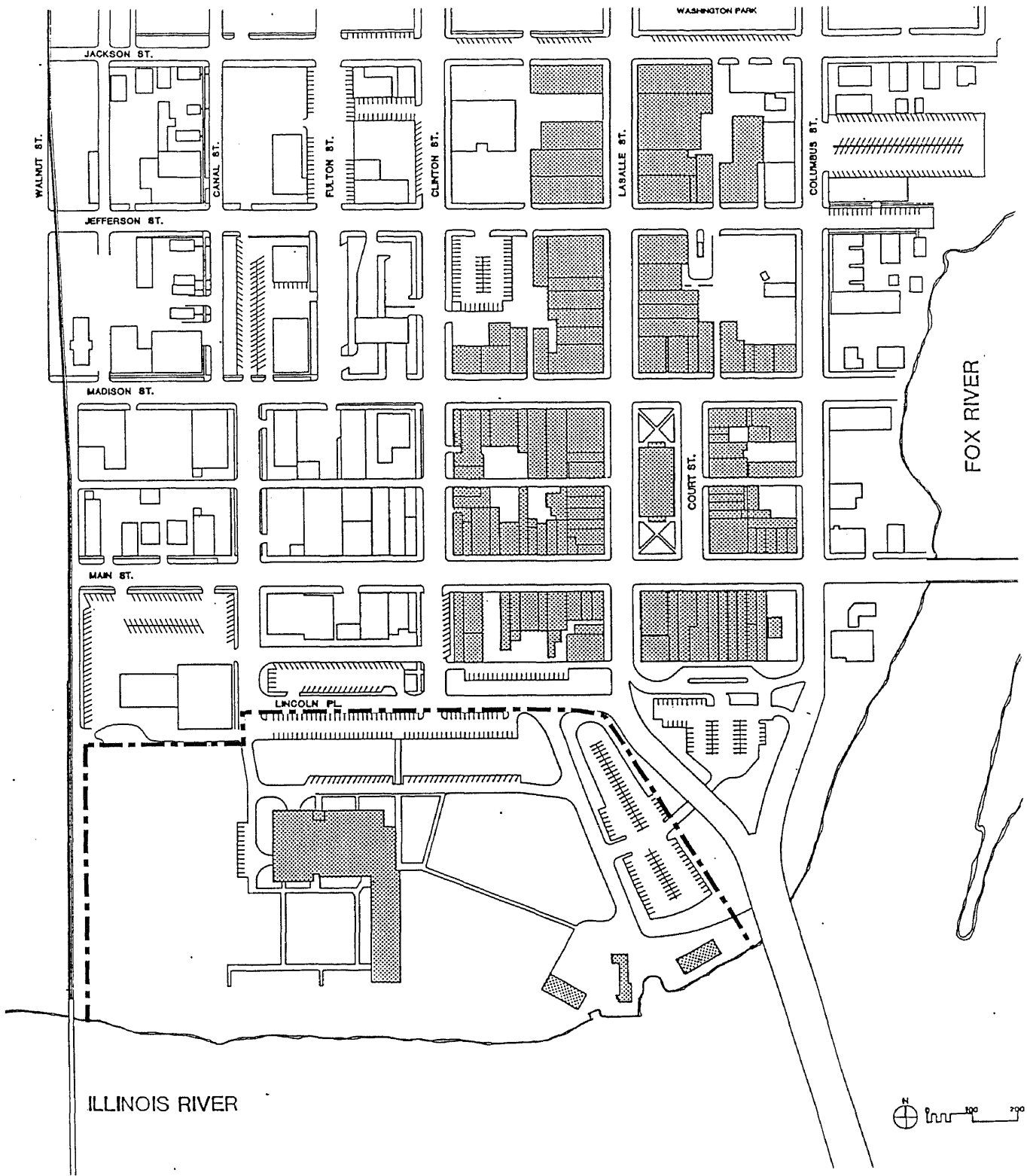
Current plans for development in Ottawa focus on the "revitalization" of the downtown area and the development of a hotel/conference center on a contiguous riverfront site. [map III][fig I] The commercial core is concentrated along LaSalle, the primary south-bound street connecting north and south Ottawa and east-west streets of Madison and Main. The cohesive character created by this density of continuous storefronts quickly falls apart as one moves west of Clinton, north of Jackson and along north-bound Columbus Street.

The site tentatively planned for the location of a new conference center and retail mix is bounded by Lincoln Place to the north, the Illinois River to the south, freight railroad tracks to the west and the embankment of the approach to the Illinois River bridge on the east. The 15-acre site is presently oriented to two types of use. An existing grade school building, constructed in 1951, occupies approximately 3 acres and most of the vacant area around the school is presently used as playground, ball field and tennis courts. The three small buildings along the river bank serve water recreational uses- the western one-story brick building occupied by the Ottawa Rescue Squad.

The proposal for the site's development makes re-use of the existing school a priority. The mix of proposed hotel/conference center, retail shopping and recreational uses is viewed by the Chamber of Commerce, who is the impetus behind the plan, as having the potential to "enhance downtown revitalization and redevelopment". The site does possess strong potential for strengthening the city's identity by planning for growth from "inside-out" instead of at the fringes.

[This study will not question the validity of this proposal. It will make use of this situation to examine the basis for designed alternatives within the general outlined proposal.]

The financial assumptions of the new development include a \$3 million grant toward construction of the conference center portion by the state Civic Center Authority, tax increment financing districting and the creation of a downtown revolving loan



map III Base map of downtown and site area. Boundaries of proposed development area.

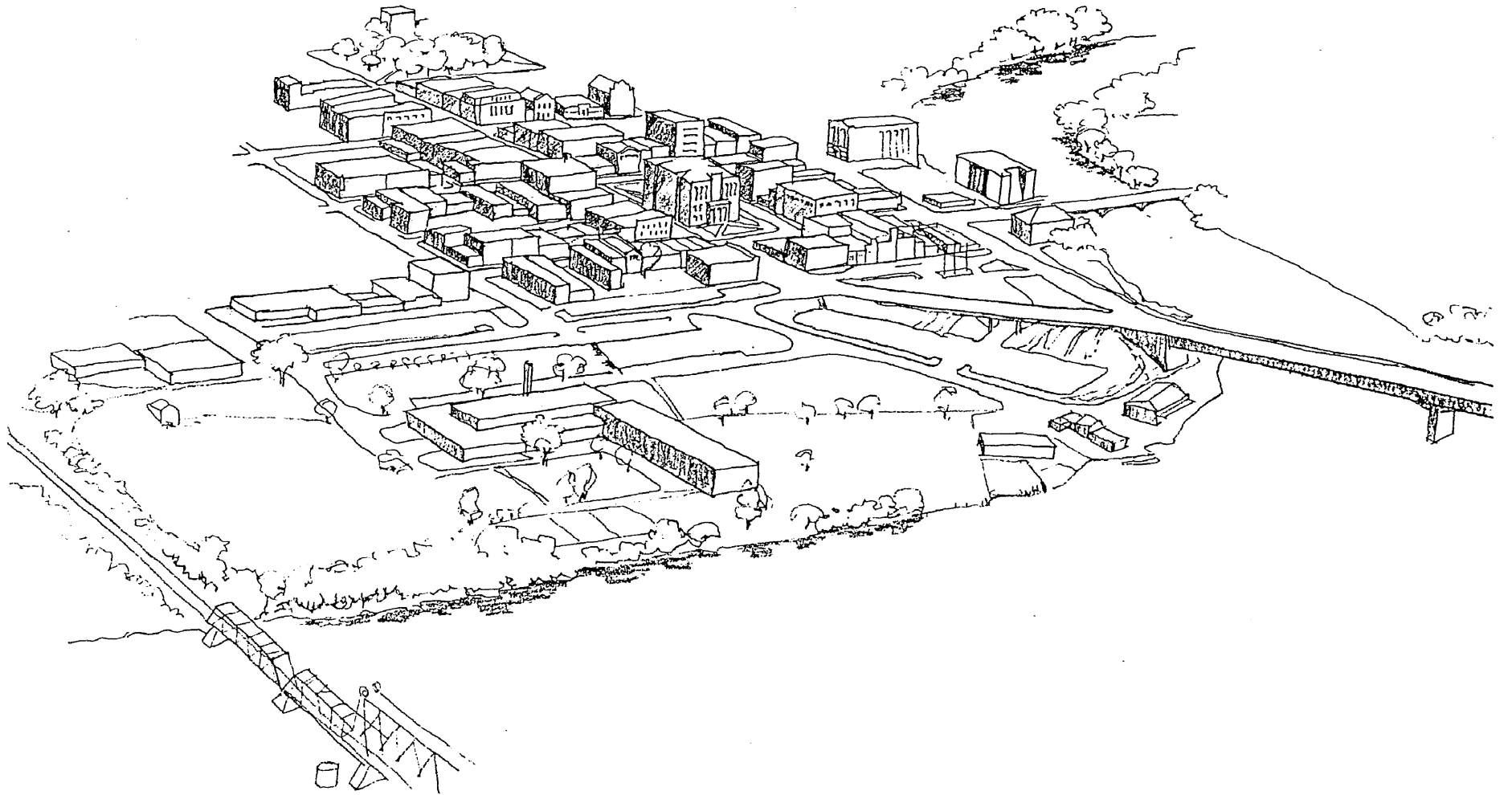


fig I Sketch of downtown and site, view northeast.

program. In return for a \$1 per year lease from the Authority, the developer will be required to contribute \$2 million toward the revolving loan fund, which would be used for rebates on construction loans to individual building owners.

The Stakeholders

Stakeholder theory points out that there are a larger set of interests involved in and concerned with development than those formally empowered to carry it out, or stop it. These are known as those having a "stake" in the situation. This was articulated by Perlmutter and Trist in 1966 in Towards a Social Architecture. In order to identify the assumptions and expectations at work, it is first necessary to identify the divergent stakeholders and the values each group represents. In the process of deciding what is important- the shape and extent of the development- the value systems of each participating group show through.

1. The Chamber of Commerce and the City Council are the promoters and the visionaries in this situation. They recognize the importance of adapting to changing economic winds in promoting the city's assets for tourism and new businesses. Their insistence on the developer providing seed money for the downtown revolving loan program demonstrates a recognition of the value of the downtown in the economic future of the city.

Their expectations are presumably that the success of the riverfront development will have a stimulating affect on the downtown and elevate its status as a city. The Chamber of Commerce's preference for the term "Central Business District" may reflect a desire to project a more urban image for the city.

Expectations and values of this group may also be revealed by the results of a study- Market Study and Prospective Financial Analyses for a Proposed 100-Room Hotel

and Conference Center in Ottawa, Illinois by Laventhol & Horwath in April 1987. Not surprisingly, this study concludes that the riverfront site adjacent to the downtown is the most desirable of five potential area sites for the proposed use. Criteria for site selection included "visibility", "accessibility", "atmosphere/environment" and "ability to stimulate the downtown economy". Of particular interest is the site's potential to provide a "resort-type atmosphere" and to have the "greatest positive impact on downtown revitalization effort". "Atmosphere" may be the quality most difficult to describe but it is critical to do so, in order that this asset is not lost in the process of planning development.

The consultants, in a disclaimer for their prospective financial analyses for the proposed hotel & conference center, admit the effect of the unknown factor of time-
.."some assumptions inevitably will not materialize and unanticipated events and circumstances may occur".... Projections can only be guesses and any plans must allow for changes. The best plans are designed to easily accommodate adaptation.

2. The Developer usually attempts to cut out as much information as possible. His aim is to build cheaply, and as quickly as possible. Anything else is complicated.

3. Merchants and Building Owners in the downtown area may hold a variety of attitudes toward old building improvements and new development but they all share an interest in improving the economic condition of downtown Ottawa, although the perception may be that they are, as a group, resistant to change and apprehensive about proposals for improvement. The businesses and merchants require motivation to improve and organization themselves or revitalization will not occur. A positive image of downtown will bolster confidence in it.

4. Existing Site Users include the grade school, Rescue Squad and waterfront recreation. According to the Chamber of Commerce, the school board is willing to relocate to a site more ideally suited to young children- away from the riverfront and into a more residential neighborhood. The possible relocation of the Rescue Squad building has not been addressed, but this study will assume it will remain in its present location. The other two water recreation oriented buildings may be improved to accommodate the projected increase in these activities.

5. Residents of the Community express fears that new development may destroy certain desirable characteristics of the city. The image of a "big city" type of development such as a hotel and conference center may be associated with the problems of a big city such as increased traffic, congestion and noise and increased taxes. The issue of moving the grade school is a very emotional one.

Development Scenarios

In determining the appropriate response to this particular set of circumstances, it may be helpful to outline conceptual scenarios. [fig II]

Scenario #1: In this scenario, the site proposed for development is viewed as the new "wealthy neighbor". The downtown is the poor cousin and will hopefully achieve some success through association. Conceptually, the site is an independent entity and therefore anything can happen. The developer is very happy because messy complicating factors such as "compatibility" with surrounding context don't affect him.

It may indeed be tempting when development is contemplated for a site that is equal to or larger than the existing downtown, such as this one, to consider it an opportunity for a grand-scale gesture to be the showcase of the city. [fig III] The result

may be highly visible, but provide short-term success. The hope is that the new development will not only supplement this base but surpass it. This represents a giant risk. The success or failure of such a large-scale project, with its quality of inflexibility for change, becomes critical. If it fails, the city has failed and the result is a waste of a valuable land asset, requiring the expenditure of additional energies and resources to set it right, by destruction and/or replacement. If it succeeds, the likelihood is great that the qualities that made the city's potential for development so attractive in the first place, are destroyed.

Scenario #2: In this scenario, the stakeholders who fear any change to the status quo, can breathe a sigh of relief. No new planned change occurs on the site. Unfortunately, because there are no financial incentives for building improvements in the downtown area, deterioration continues and confidence in the economic stability of the downtown continues to slide. Other impacts of not planning for change can only be conjecture, as the town down the river celebrates another year of prosperity.

Scenario #3: In this scenario, the existing downtown and the new development are linked- the new development is even viewed as an extension of the older city. It seems as if it has always been there. Each supports the other and both contribute to renewed confidence in the city as a whole. Fears about the negative aspects of such development have been erased and everyone concerned has experienced benefits.

The critical importance of the design of planned change has been made obvious. A major consideration in this development was its relationship to the downtown and the significance of articulated design considerations. This scenario demands an understanding of the setting and allows for adaptation and growth.

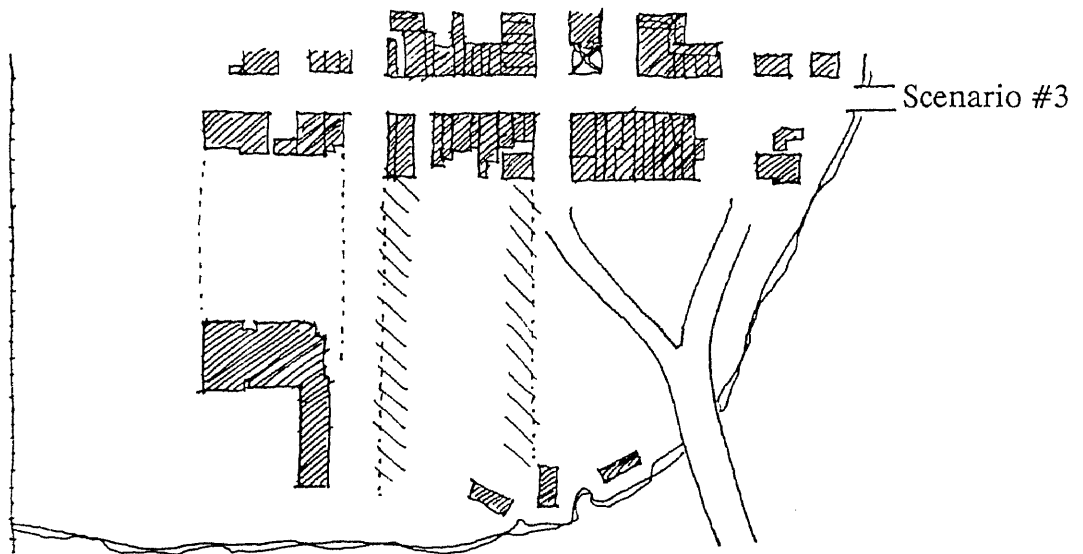
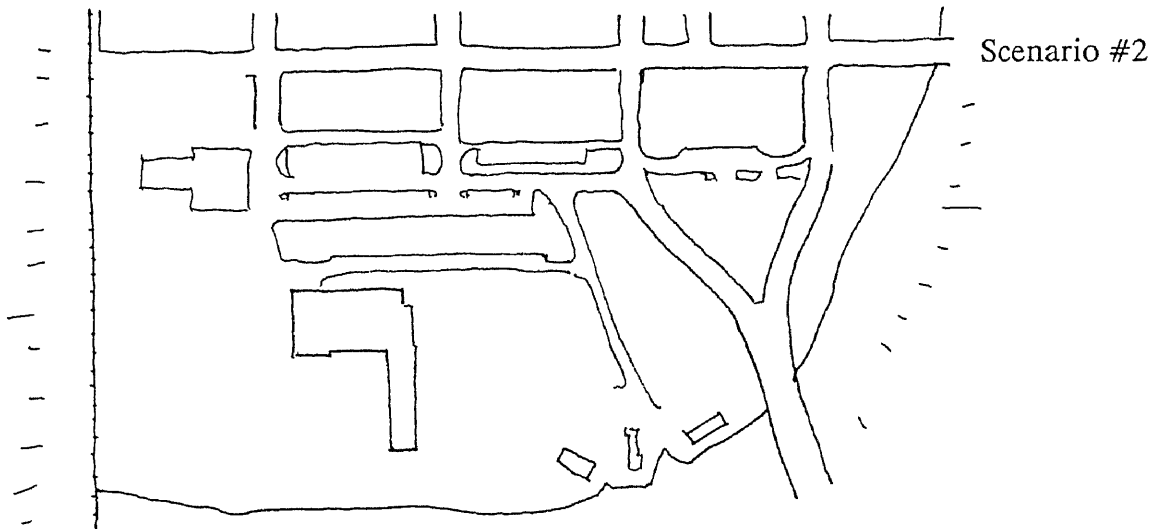
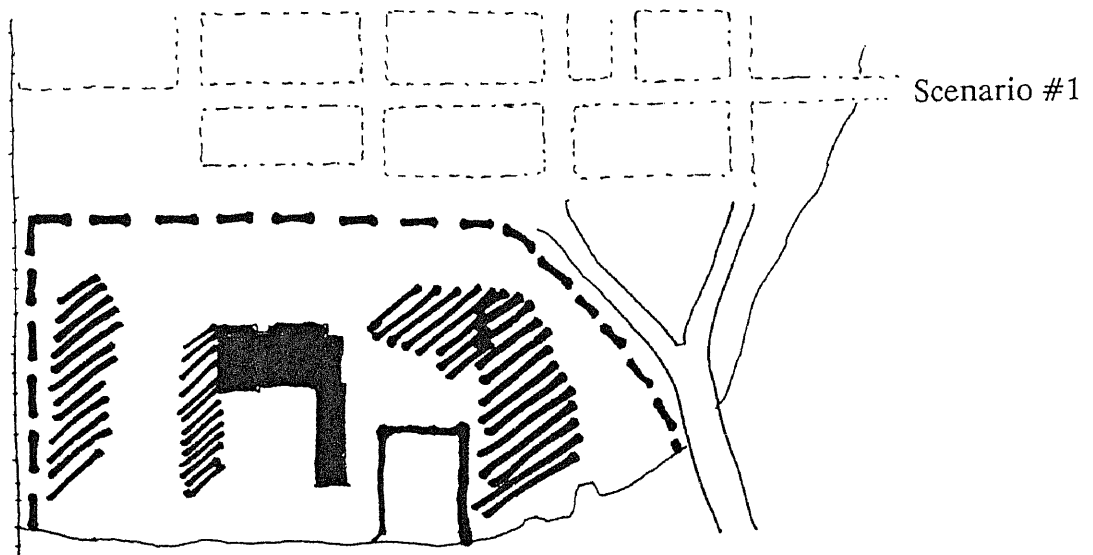


fig II Development scenarios.



fig III Comparative size of site to downtown core.

CHAPTER III. MEANS TO RESPOND TO THE PROBLEM

Importance of Historical Context as Part of a Response

The first step in any planned development with the goal of evolutionary growth is to attempt to understand the historical context that has established the existing setting. Historical context refers to the changes over time which have formed the spaces and structure of the city and the factors in influencing these changes. Successful integration of the new requires an understanding of the site's historical and social heritage- the tradition of the area and associational meanings passed on and given value over time.

The value the community places on its own history can be measured not only by the abundant historical and heritage references in city promotional literature, but in how it has demonstrated the value of its physical fragments- through simple building maintenance or the preservation of significant markers in the city's history.

The city's sense of identity goes beyond a structural analysis of historical evolution, but is an interpretation of a whole assembly of descriptive factors and the elusive quality referred to as memory of place. Historical changes will reveal how closely a small city's fortunes are linked with the larger environment- of the state, the country and the world.

Approaches to the problem of development in a small city may either ignore, reject or embrace its heritage. If there is a sense that the development does not attempt to address the historical context of the place- there may be uneasiness or strong resistance by the community. The ancestry of the place must be present as a stakeholder. Traditions do matter as a source of stability and identity.

Changing Identity of Ottawa

The nature and effects of changes occurring through Ottawa's history will be considered within the following themes: Natural Setting; Transportation- Water & Bridges, Railroads, Streets & Highways; Industry & Commerce; and Buildings, Monuments & Historic Sites. Each of these themes provide sources of visual images which are significant pieces of Ottawa's historical identity.

Natural Setting:

Ottawa's setting in the Illinois Valley at the confluence of the Illinois and Fox Rivers has provided an unchanging source of strong identity for the city- "Where Two Rivers Meet". The location of Ottawa beside the rivers and within a river valley surmounted by bluffs has been essential to defining its character and causing observers in 1939 to call it the most beautiful city along the Illinois River.⁵

In addition to the recreational activities afforded by the rivers there are now five state parks within 20 miles- totaling 2,000 wooded acres and ten city parks.

Ottawa has creatively adapted to changes in its natural environment, as in the following example. In past years, the canal widened out west of Ottawa, providing a fishing area. For years a bed of lotus filled several acres of it- one of perhaps three such beds of flowers in the country- attracting sightseers from great distances. When coal strip-mining began west of Ottawa, contaminated run-off water emptying into the canal killed all lotus plants and was considered a great loss to the community.⁶ The strip mining site has been transformed by the earth mounds called Effigy Tumuli, by artist Michael Heizer. The mile and a half long work is located on a 200 acre plateau adjoining Buffalo Rock State Park, overlooking the Illinois river and is the largest in the world.

Transportation

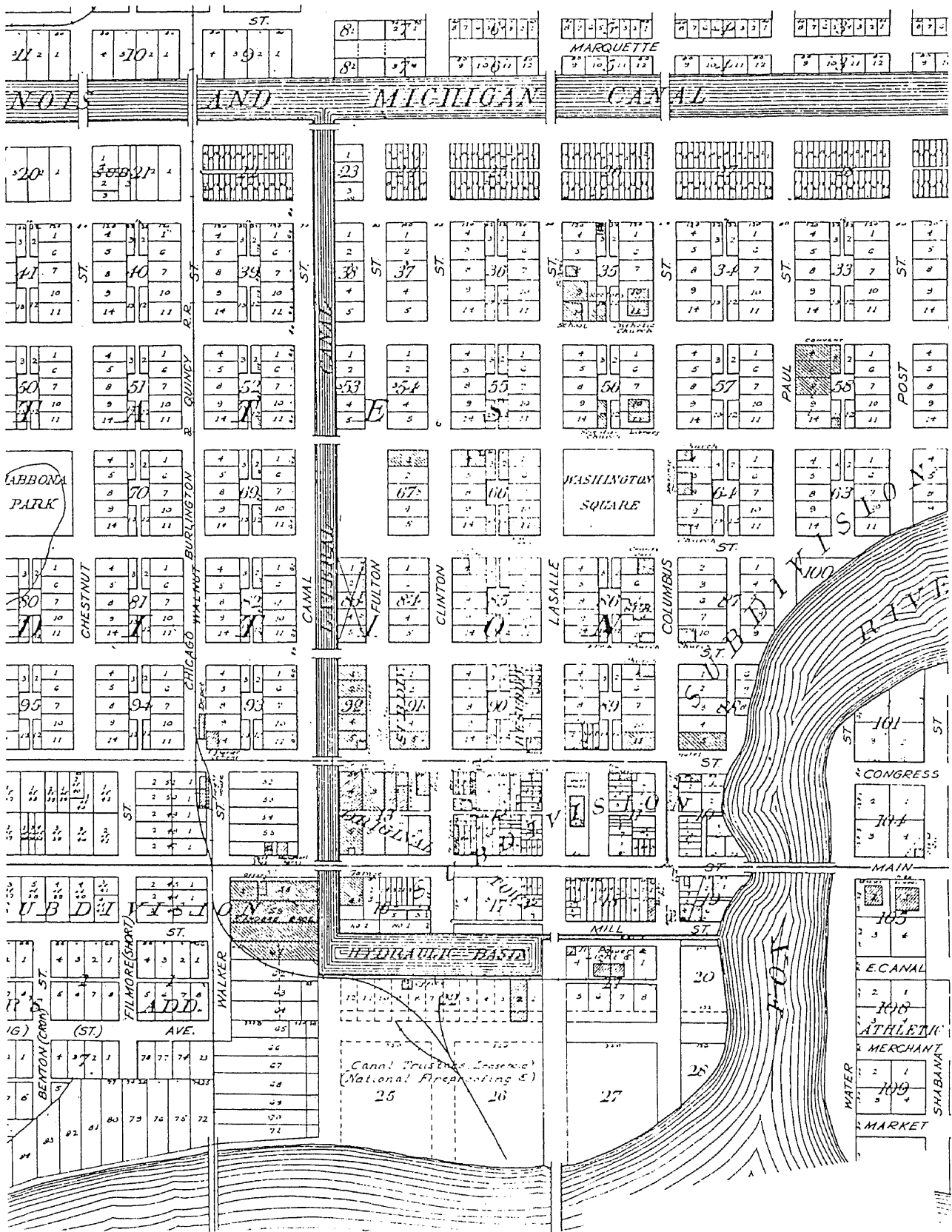
Water and Bridges:

Ottawa was the proposed site of the Illinois & Michigan Canal's western terminus-connecting the Great Lakes with the Mississippi Valley. It was begun in 1836 and finished in 1848- to overcome the difficulty and expense of land transport of grain and other commodities. The lateral canal, an important part of the canal system, serviced elevators, starch mills and other businesses, and formed Ottawa's early canal-based economy. An aqueduct, still surviving, carried the waters of I & M Canal over Fox River waters.

The canal was abandoned in the depression trauma of the 1930's after sliding into decline as early as the 1870's, as the railroad provided faster and usually cheaper means of transport. The importance of the canal in city's formation and heritage has been recently rediscovered. The recent establishment of the Illinois & Michigan Canal National Heritage Corridor across Illinois has caused the canal route to be actively promoted.

The river as a means of transportation has been developed into the Illinois Deep Waterway System, providing direct access to national and foreign markets with local barge service.

The role of bridges has accompanied changes in water transportation and service. Bridges have always been dominant visual elements in the landscape of the town- vital early symbols in the settlement of the city of growth, industry and continuing prosperity. The first bridges in Ottawa were linked to the development of the canal, the lateral branch extending south toward the Illinois River and the hydraulic basin. [map IV] The canal itself was transformed into a bridge in the form of the aqueduct crossing the Fox River. At every cross street to the lateral branch of the canal was a bridge connecting the western side of the city to the commercial center of the city.



map IV Detail of 1929 Section Map (Brock & Co.)

The succession of bridges built over the Illinois River reveal changes in economy and technology. Connecting central Ottawa with south Ottawa- with its bluffs facing the river and downtown- the succession of Illinois River bridges presented strong images of "progress". Safety and accommodation of increases in vehicle size, interurban trains, and barge height motivated the succession of the first four bridges. Changes were viewed as necessary and positive during a time when the economy depended upon the growth of industry and resulting changes in transportation. These bridges were anchored to the river through their construction of native limestone piers and rose symbolically with steel spans.[photo III]

The fourth bridge, named the Hilliard Bridge, broke with the orthogonal grid of the city established from its founding, by angling upstream from the north-south LaSalle street axis. [map V] The replacement of this bridge with the present concrete bridge in 1982, was probably again viewed as necessary and progressive. However, there were qualities of the old steel bridge which cause its loss to be lamented.

"Gone is the bridge which offered a beautiful view of the river, the joy of seeing the boat under your feet. Gone is the beauty of that mass of steel and the grace it held as it crossed our Illinois River." 7

A visually powerful was image lost- with its symbolic importance as a river-crossing marker. A message was also sent out by this type of planned change that the city places a higher value on an image of "progress" than maintaining, whatever the means, its historical identity.

Railroads:

First railroad to reach Ottawa was the Rock Island line in 1853. The new transportation made the world significantly smaller- New York was now only about a two day ride from Ottawa. Thirty years after the arrival of first railroad, the first electric street

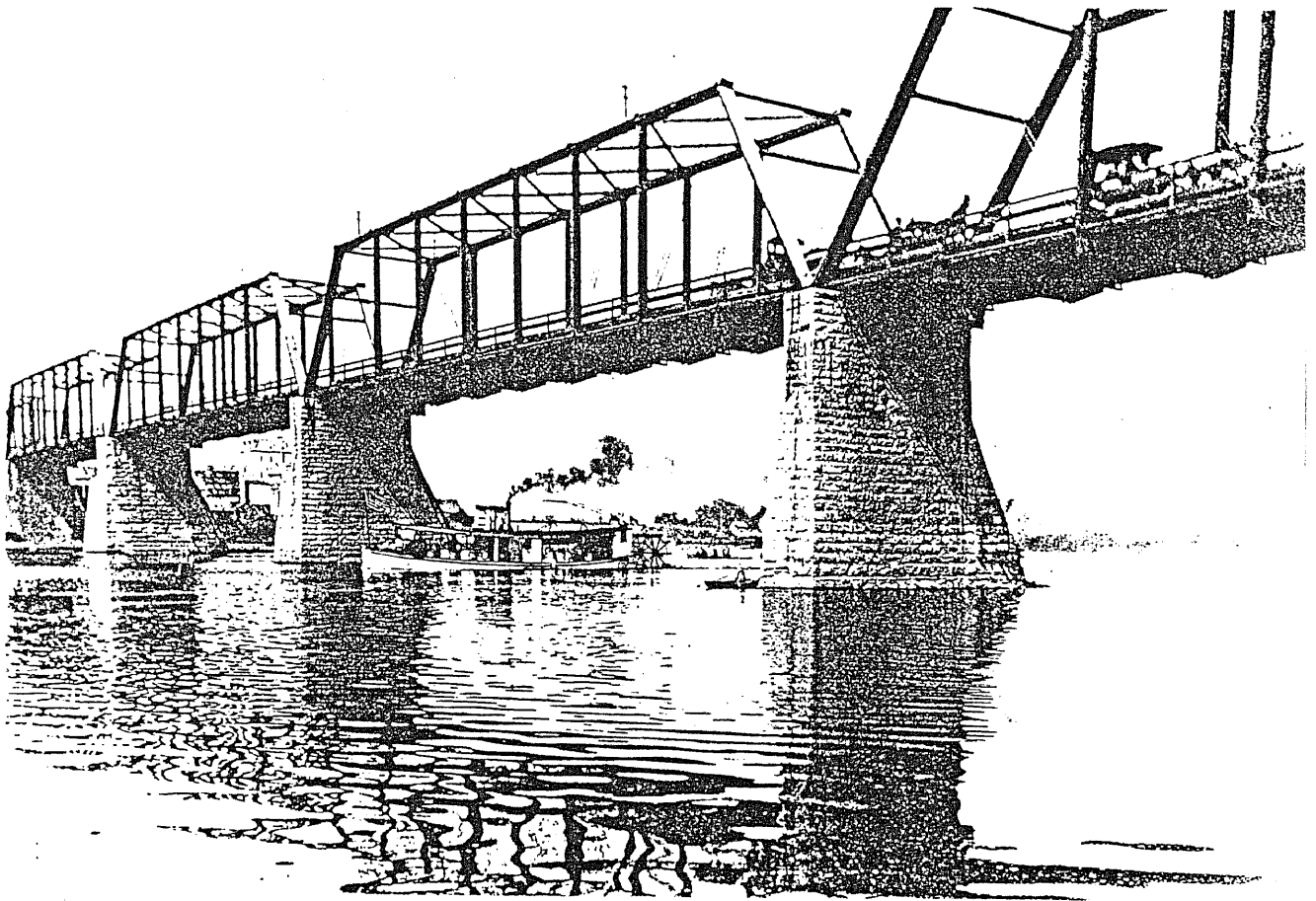
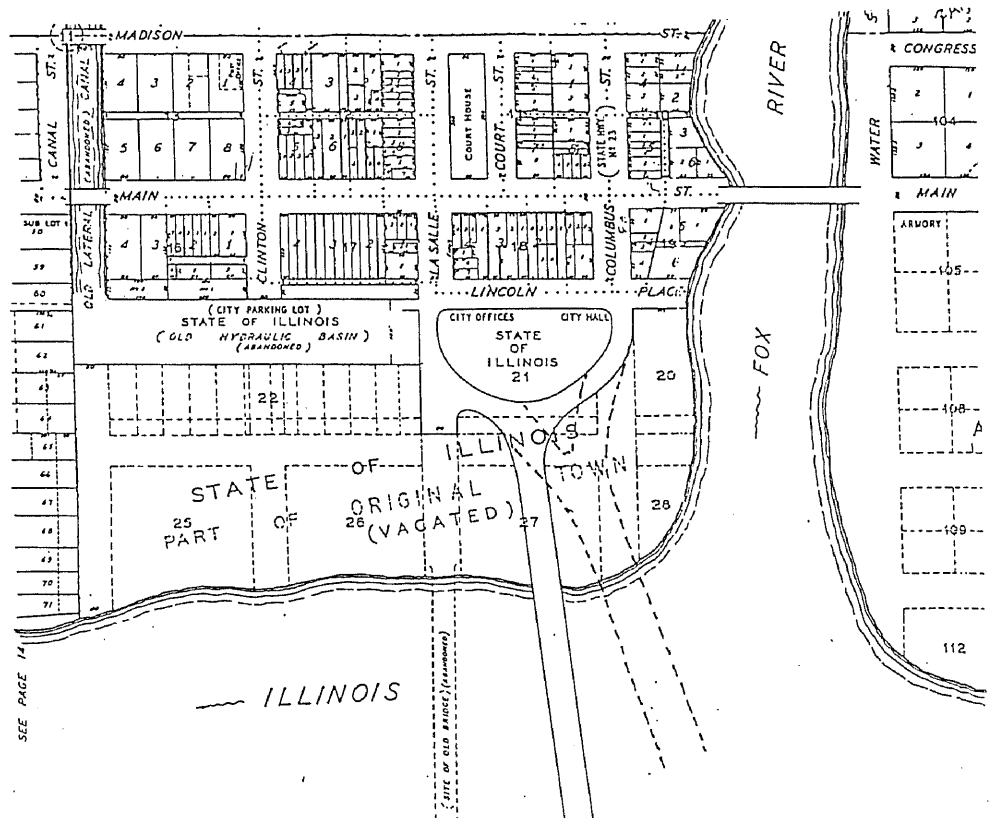


photo III Second bridge over Illinois River- 1910. (Ottawa Sesquicentennial Calendar, 1837-1937)



map V Central Ottawa- Block/Lot Divisions (1955).
Location of Hilliard Bridge (replaced in 1982)

railway system in the state of Illinois began operation in 1889. Ottawa earned an identity as a pioneer city in this field of transportation.[photo IV] By 1902 city streetcars enabled public transportation throughout most of the downtown with a line extending out to the newly developed Chautauqua Park. In 1910, south Ottawa was linked by a track on the new Illinois River bridge.

In the 1930's, the interurban lines, suffering from over-extension of service and auto popularity, were removed and sold for scrap. Right-of-way reverted to natural state and became walking paths in some areas.

Street and Highways:

The first street was paved with brick in September of 1891 at the corner of Jackson and LaSalle Streets.[photo V] The next roads to be paved were the main routes of the street cars and the main streets leading from the canal to the courthouse. The entire city was paved by the 1920's. The main ingredients- brick and sand were locally available products. Many streets today are still brick, having escaped the asphaltting of the 1950's and 1960's.

Nationwide, the number of registered automobiles nationwide leaped from 8,000 in 1900 to 8 million in 1920. As in other small cities, the demands of the auto and the new network of highways profoundly affected the course of development in Ottawa. The scale of the city was changed as growth was dispersed at the edges and away from the center. Interstate 80 at the north edge of the city placed Ottawa along a major artery of the nation. Its proximity to Chicago 80 miles away now became a part of its identity.

Industry & Commerce:

Ottawa has historically adapted its economy with changes in transportation, resources and the national economy. The location of the canal along two major



photo IV LaSalle Street, 1900 celebration. (Calendar, 1837-1937) Interurban line visible at street center.

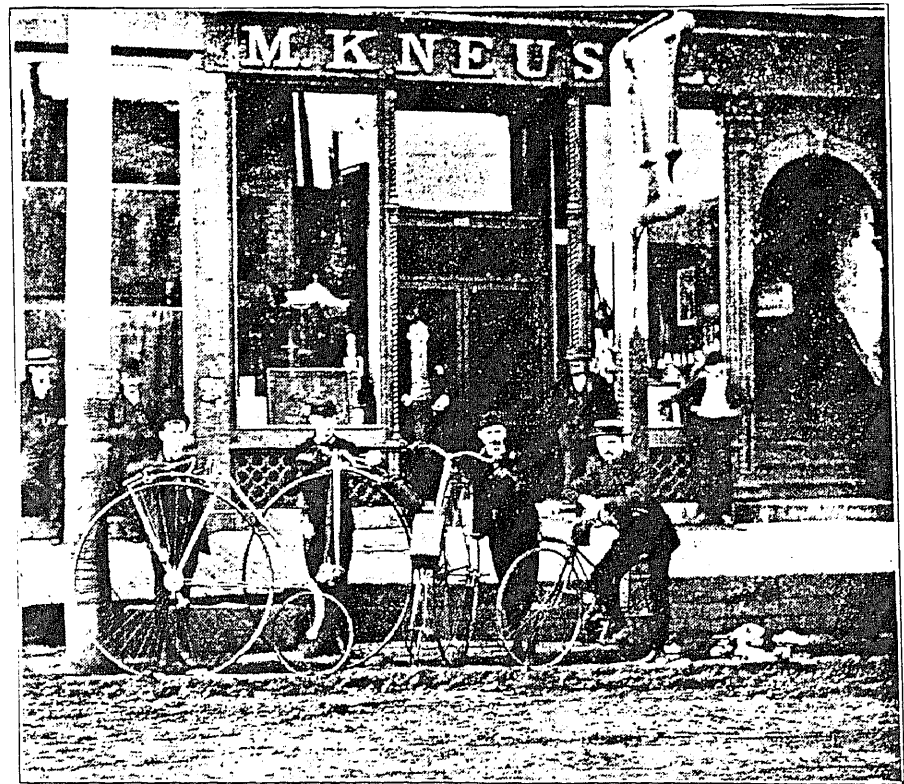


photo V "Evolution in Bicycles". Front of Kneussl's Drugstore (214 W. Main) prior to road brick paving begun in 1891. (Ottawa-Old and New- 1823-1914)

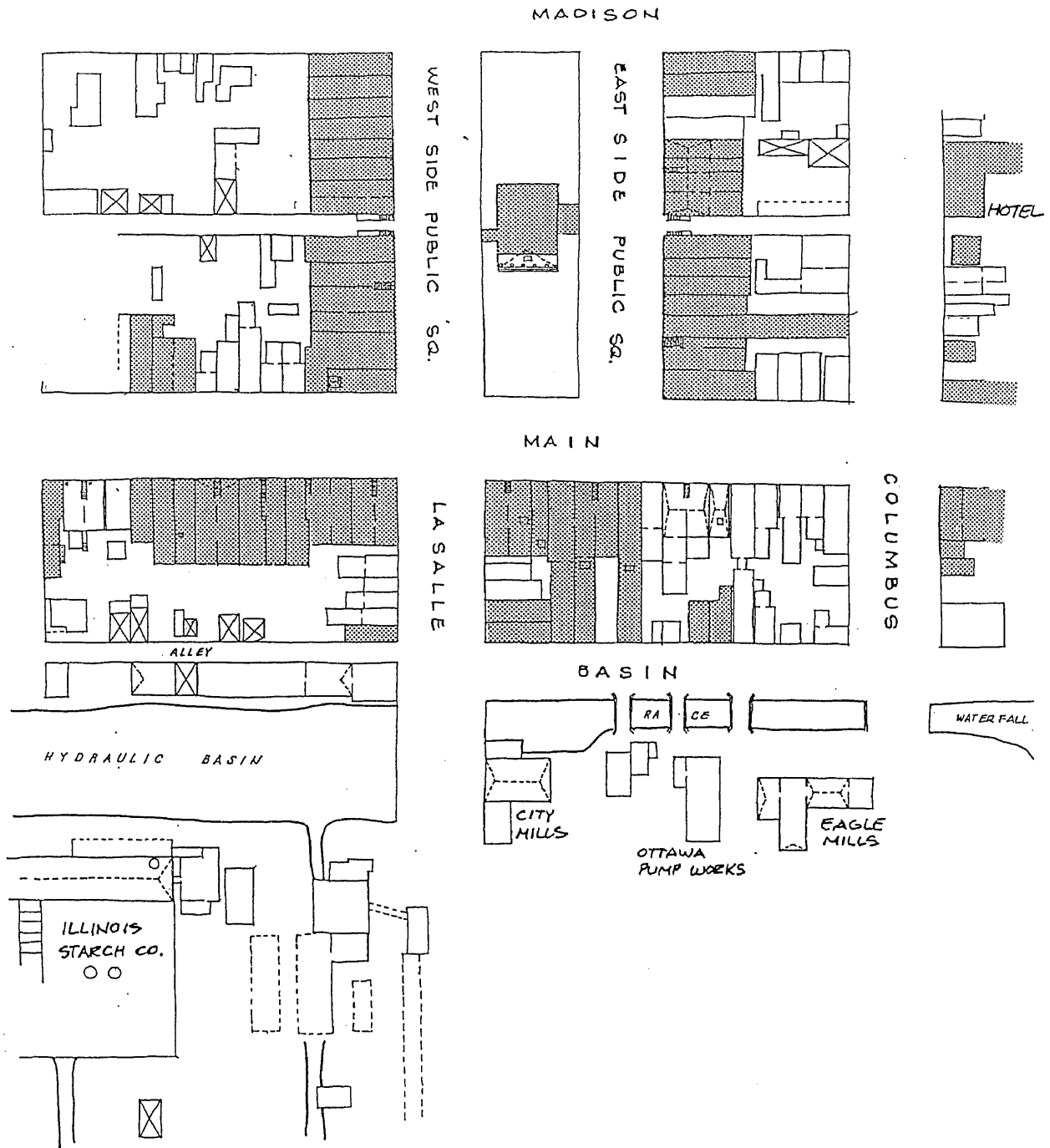
waterways created an ideal location for manufacturing and trade in the city's early years. Businesses located along the Hydraulic Basin in 1875 included the City mills, Strawn & Powell Planing Mill, Eagle Mills, Ottawa Pump Works, Illinois Starch Co., and Sanders Bros. Manuf. Co.(lumber)-one of the largest manufacturers at the turn of the century. Maps VI and VII illustrate changes in industry and building along the basin and in the downtown from 1875 to 1907.

Local natural resources of fine silica sand and a variety of clays led to early industrial success for such manufacturers as U.S. Silica Co., William & Hess Terra Cotta Works, Pioneer Fireproof Construction Co., Ottawa Fire Clay & Brick Co. The mining of coal beds brought in some of the railroad lines and other commerce flourished with the laying of the railroads and resulting expanded markets.

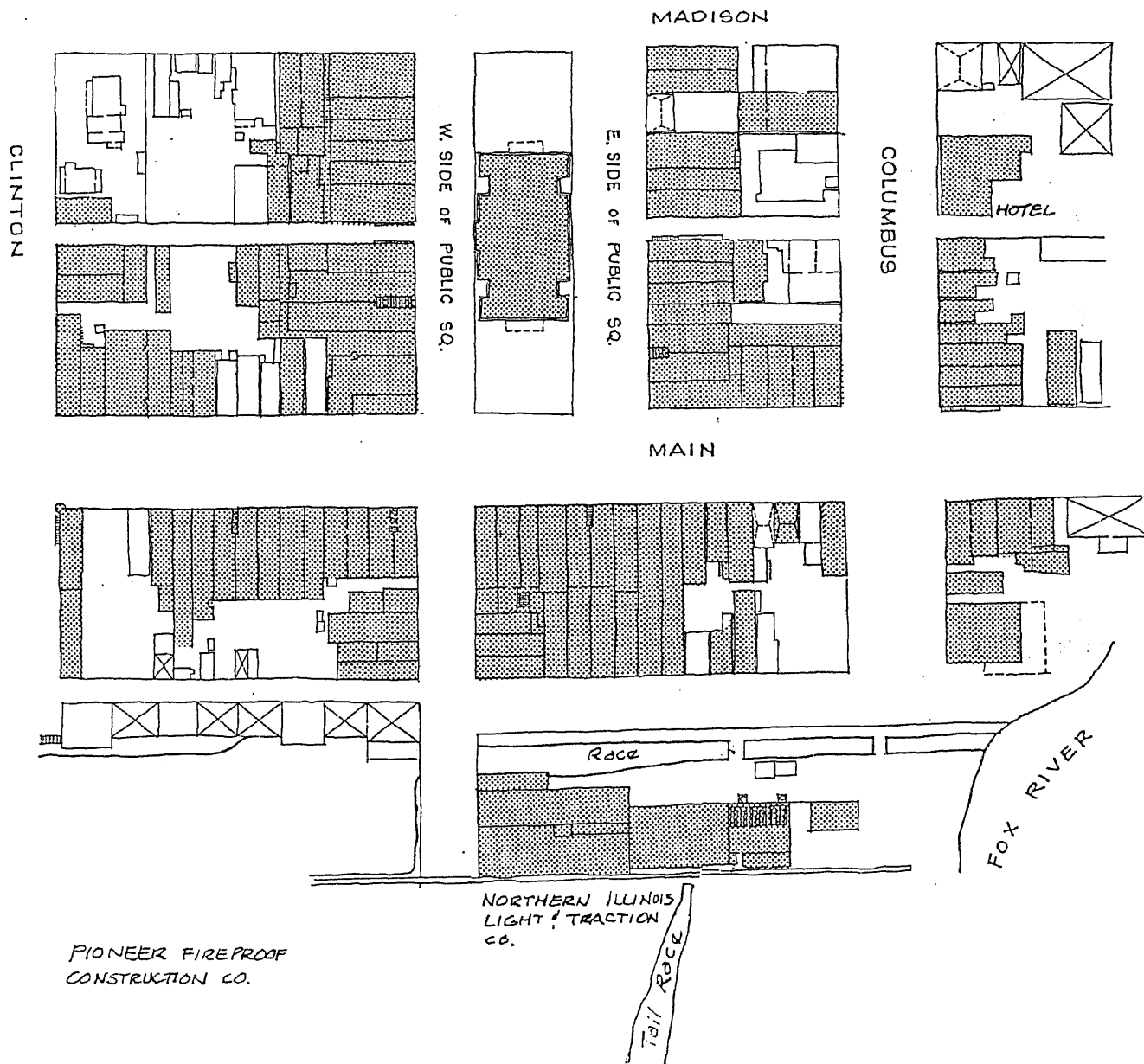
Pioneer Fireproof Construction Company, organized in 1885, was located on the proposed site for development before the school was built in 1951. [map VIII] Its products of hollow building blocks, sidewalk tile, and fire-proofing system were distributed nationally and were found in two-thirds of the larger buildings in Chicago in 1915- indispensable for the new steel skeleton tall office buildings. The clay beds, located east of the city, were connected to the factory by their own electric railway- which also transported the products to barges on the Illinois River.¹ [fig IV & V]

In 1900, Ottawa's 29 individual firms produced a variety of products in addition to mining and processing minerals, such as Seiberling Plate Glass Works, Ottawa Silver Co., Peltier Glass Co., E. de la Chapelle Co. (lamp chimneys) and S.G. Gay Co. (carriages).

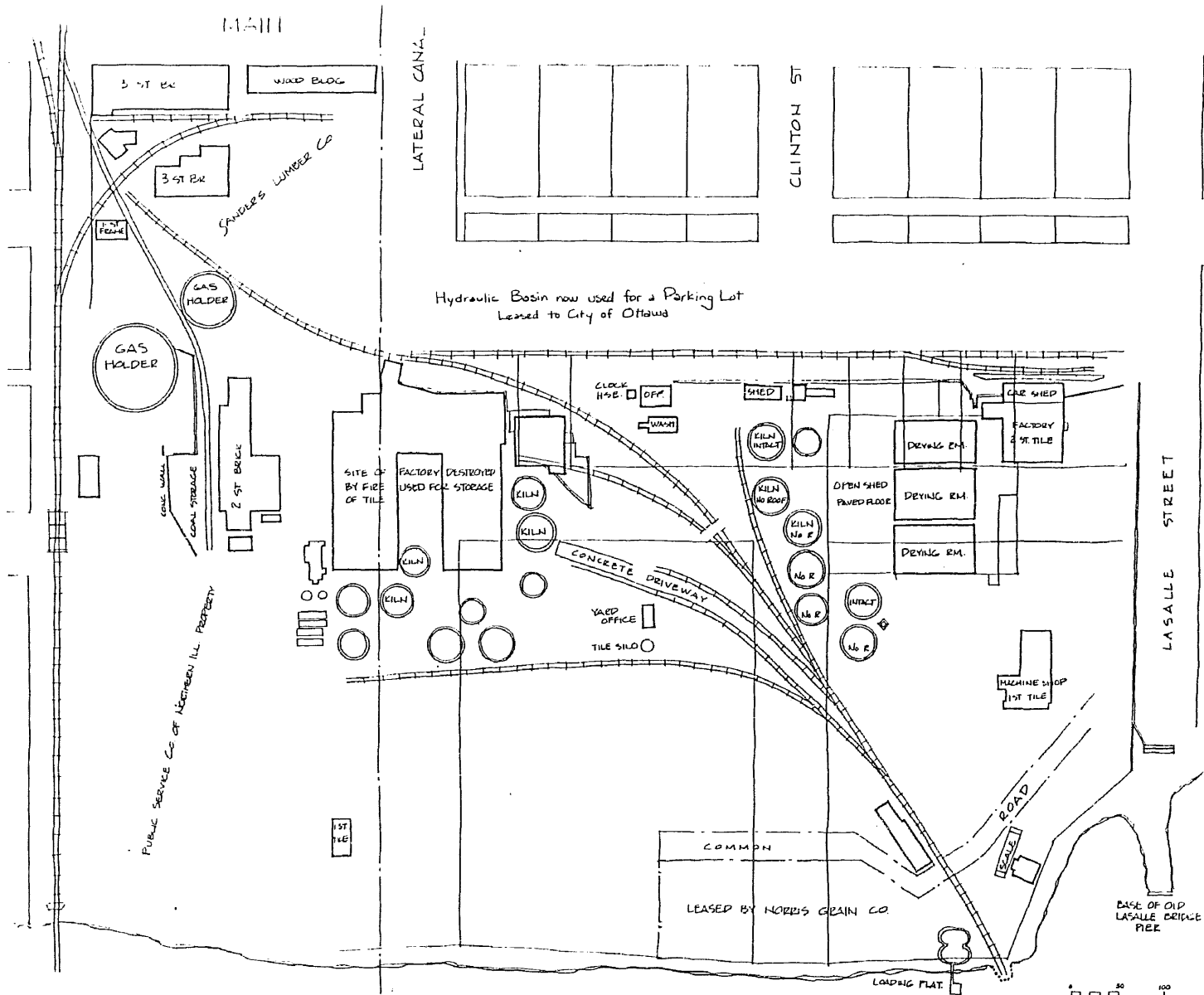
The Ottawa Development Association was responsible for attracting new firms to Ottawa, such as Ottawa Silica. "The Magnet City" was an Ottawa trademark. A notable development plan by the Association involved the securing of a plate glass company (became Seiberling Plate Glass Works). It called for 44 acres of land to be set aside, divided into blocks, lots, streets and alleys and sold for stock. A balance of 500 acres



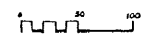
map VII Tracing from 1875 Sanborn map. Shaded areas represent masonry buildings.



map VI Tracing from 1907 Sanborn map. Shaded areas represent masonry buildings.



map VIII Plat of Survey 1940. Site of Pioneer Fireproof Construction Co. (on proposed development site)



PLAT OF SURVEY
 STATE OF ILL.
 DEPT. OF PUBLIC WORKS
 DIVISION OF WATERWAYS
 1940

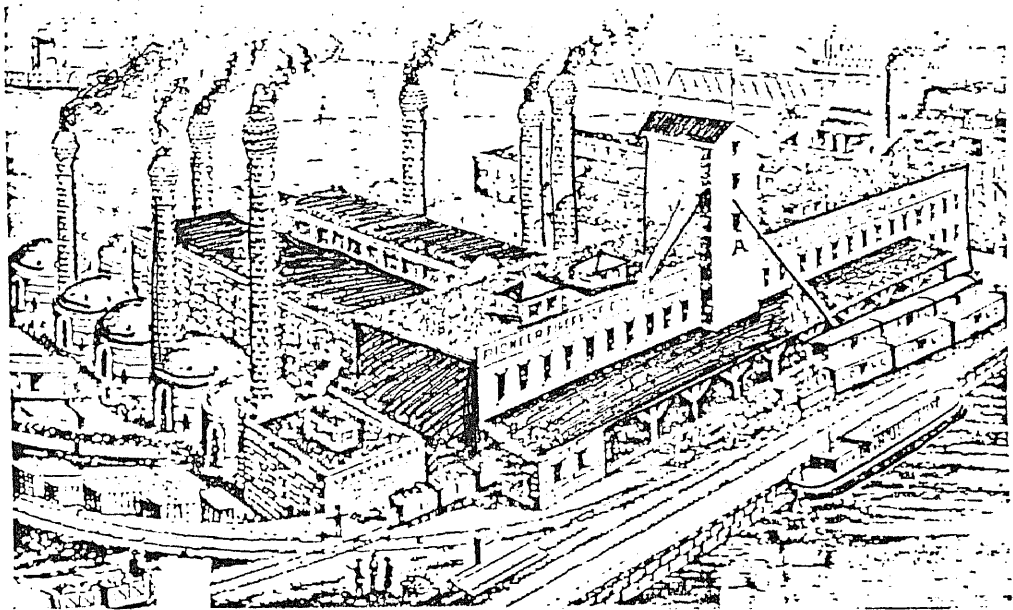


fig IV "Factory A"- Pioneer Fireproof Construction Co.
(Nattinger's Souvenir of Ottawa in 1900)

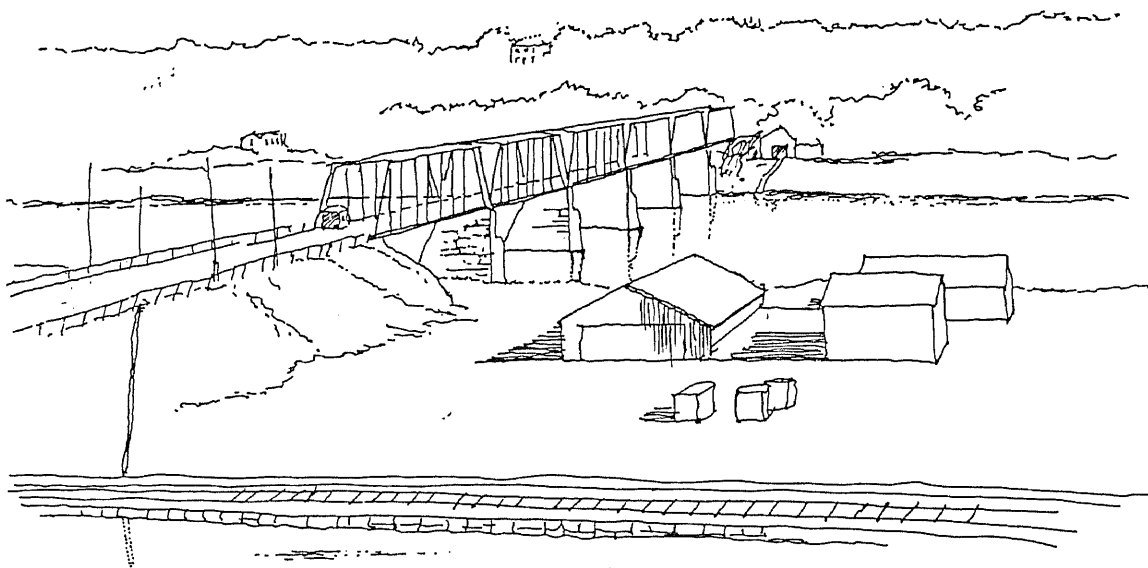


fig V Sketch from photograph-"South Bluff from Kneussl Building".
(Art Work of Ottawa & Vicinity, 1893)

west of the city were to be used as sites for factories and development purposes. The plan was adopted and all land subscribed, in a series of historic mass meetings influenced by "feverish exhortations upon the gospels of Ottawa".¹²

Local ownership and the number of manufacturing firms declined as the twentieth century progressed. Manufacturing became specialized in the area of mineral processing. Ottawa is today referred to as the "Industrial Sand Capital of the World".

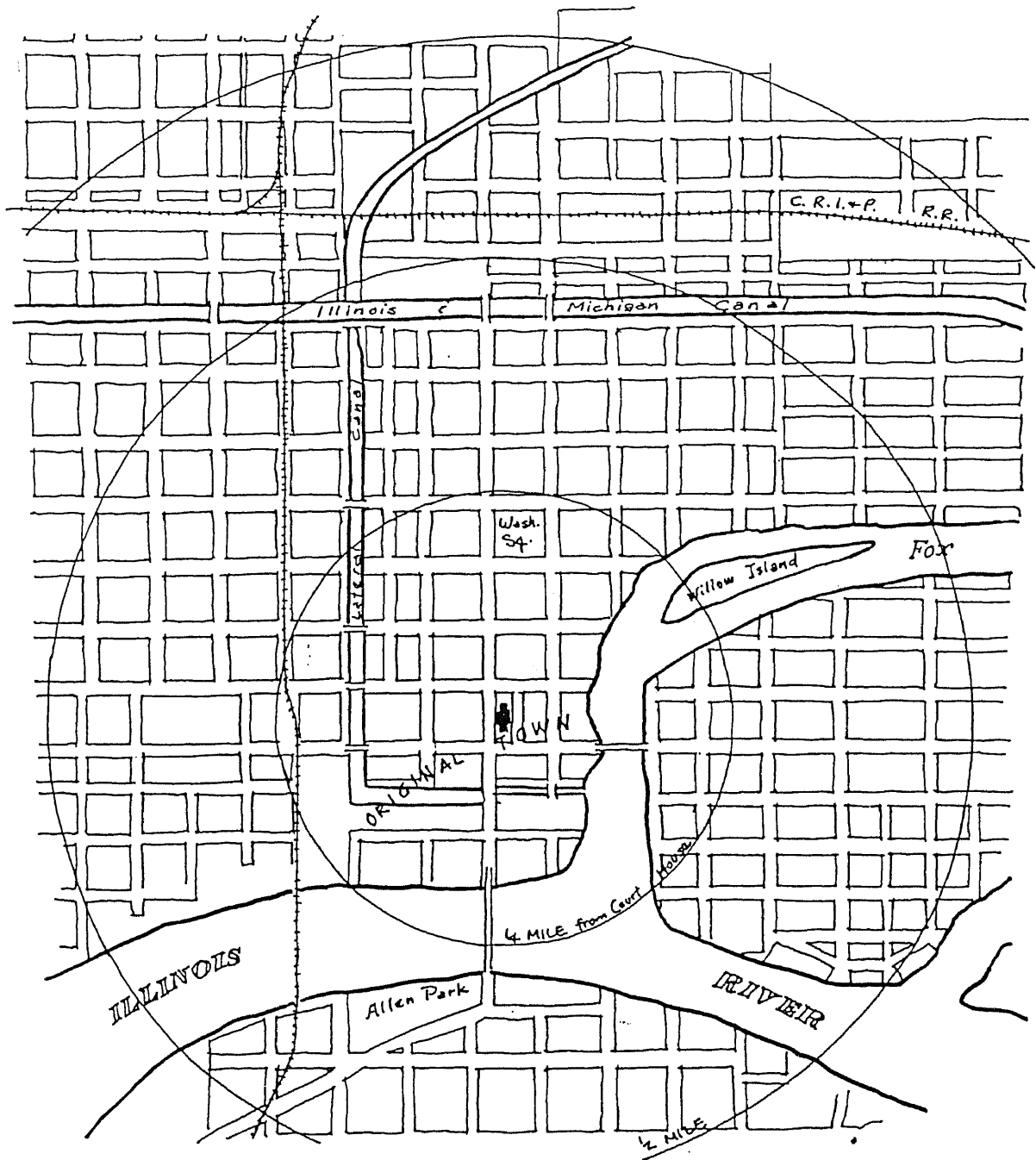
Changes in Ottawa's industry after 1950 were caused by advances in the trucking industry and air transportation- virtually wiping out the once extensive railroad network. The losses suffered in railroad freight were counterbalanced with the road link to Interstate 80, and businesses began to move toward fringe locations.

Ottawa has adapted to the national shift in economy away from manufacturing to information-based services. The character of the manufacturing economy changed nationwide, as it became less dependent on the proximity to raw materials. Ottawa now has national and international markets and its ability to attract new industry is unabated. In 1986, a Mitsubishi fan belt manufacturing plant located in Ottawa as a result of such promotion efforts by the Chamber of Commerce & Industry.

Buildings, Monuments & Sites:

These physical elements provide tangible links to the city's historical identity and mark significant moments in time. Their presence tell the story of Ottawa's development and may evoke special personal memories.

The courthouse is a significant visual symbol of Ottawa's status as the seat of LaSalle county. Its early designation provided stability and allowed the city to expand. Most early business was centered around the courthouse in the first half of the century. [map IX] This importance is demonstrated in this map from 1891 which shows the courthouse as the compass center for the measure of distance in the city. It was also a



map IX Detail of 1891 Section Map. 1/4 mile concentric circles around the courthouse.

traditional meeting place, where people came to do business and exchange information. Affluent 19th century Ottawans built their houses in a ring around the courthouse, and near Washington Park, conveniently close to work.

The present courthouse, built of native Joliet limestone, is the fourth structure on the site and was dedicated in 1884. [photo VI & VII][fig VI] Although its image has suffered due to adverse window alterations, the courthouse remains a strong historical presence in the city and this importance is not likely to be diminished.

Washington Park Historic District is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The block-square park was created by the Canal Commissioners in 1831 and is second only to the courthouse square as the city's symbolic and ceremonial center. The Lincoln-Douglas Boulder marks the site of the first of the Lincoln-Douglas debates, held on August 21, 1858. Of three memorials in the park- the most notable was dedicated in 1974 for the memory of veterans of WWI, WWII, Korea and Vietnam-1917-1973. Three vertical slabs listing names of veterans are set at angles on a square marble foundation. Among other historic sites in the District, are the Reddick Mansion and the Illinois Appellate Court. The Reddick Mansion is an historic pre-Civil War Italianate residence said to have been a link to the underground railroad.[photo VIII] The Appellate Court building was constructed in 1857-1860 with addition of wings in 1877. It now serves 32 counties as the Court for the Third District.

Special city memorials include the Ottawa Avenue Memorial Arch, built in 1918 to commemorate Ottawa's early pioneers and a memorial statue to W.D.Boyce, native Ottawan and founder of the American Boy Scouts.

The Illinois & Michigan Canal, though dry now, is being recognized for its role in the development of northern Illinois. The canal and the Fox River Aqueduct are strong historical images which will hopefully be promoted as Ottawa's member identity of the Illinois & Michigan Canal National Heritage Corridor is promoted. [photo IX]

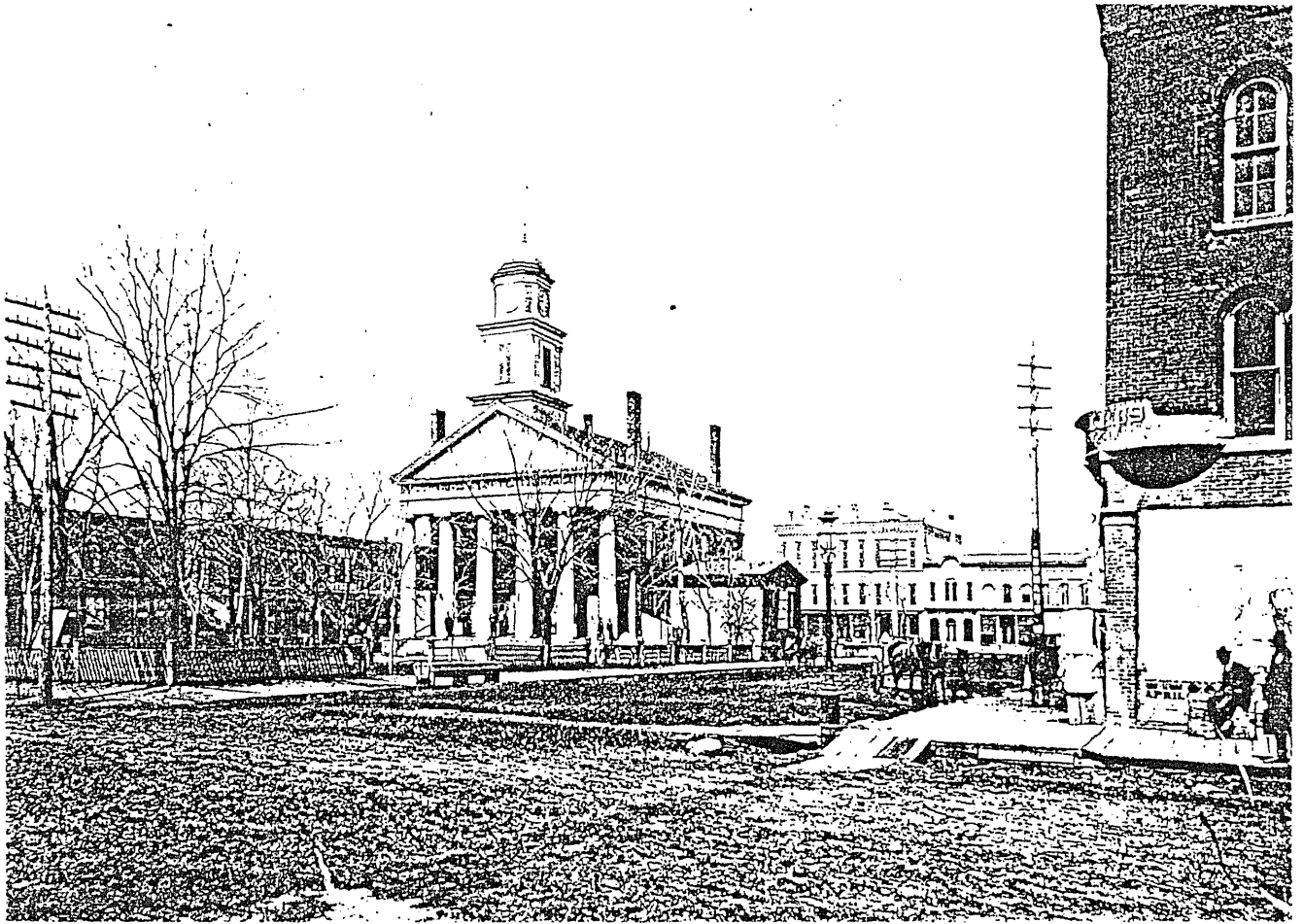


photo VI Ottawa's Third Court House, 1865-1883. Court Street looking north.
(Calendar, 1837-1987)

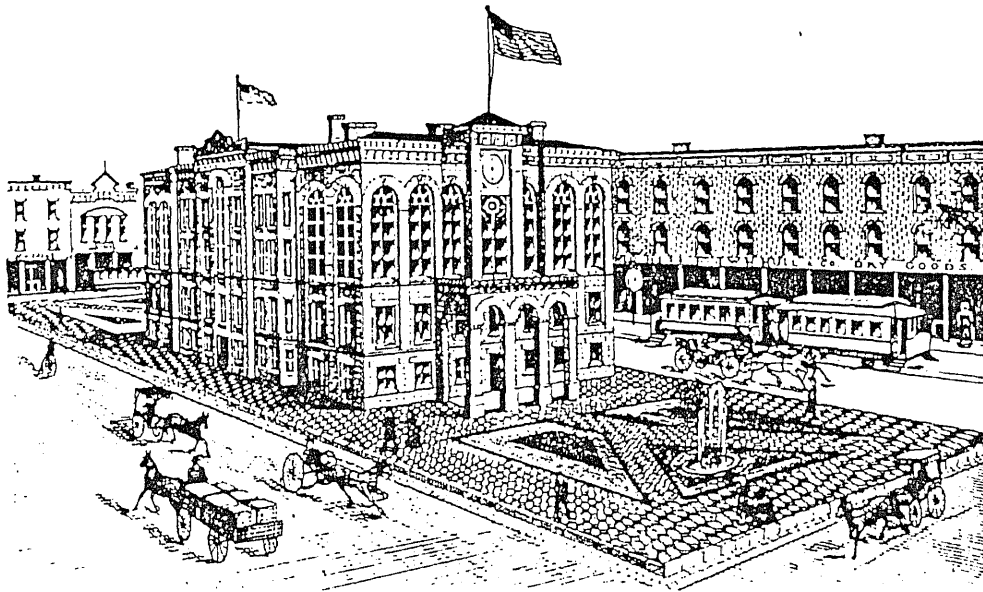


fig VI Early sketch of LaSalle County Courthouse. (Focus on the Past- A LaSalle Co. Sesquicentennial Collection, p. 9)

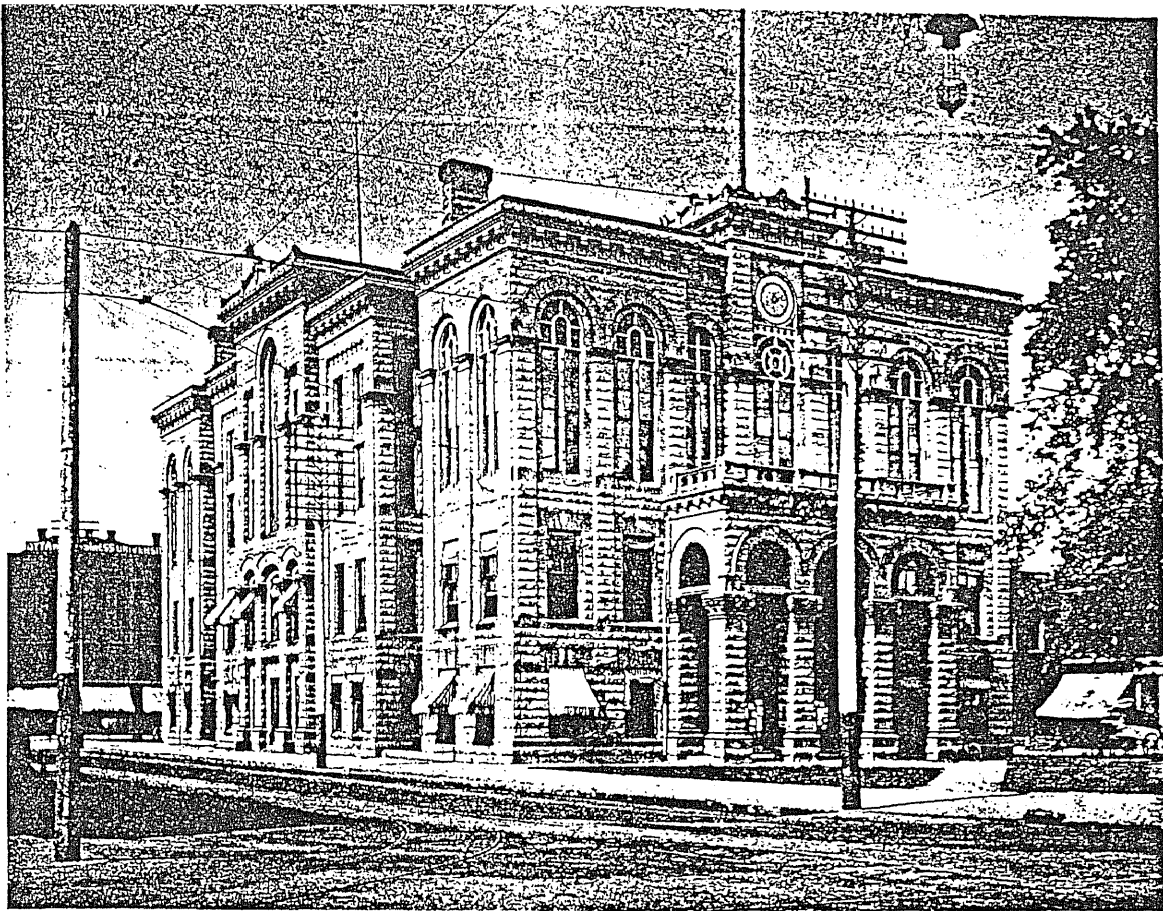


photo VII LaSalle County Court House. (Art Work of Ottawa & Vicinity, 1893)

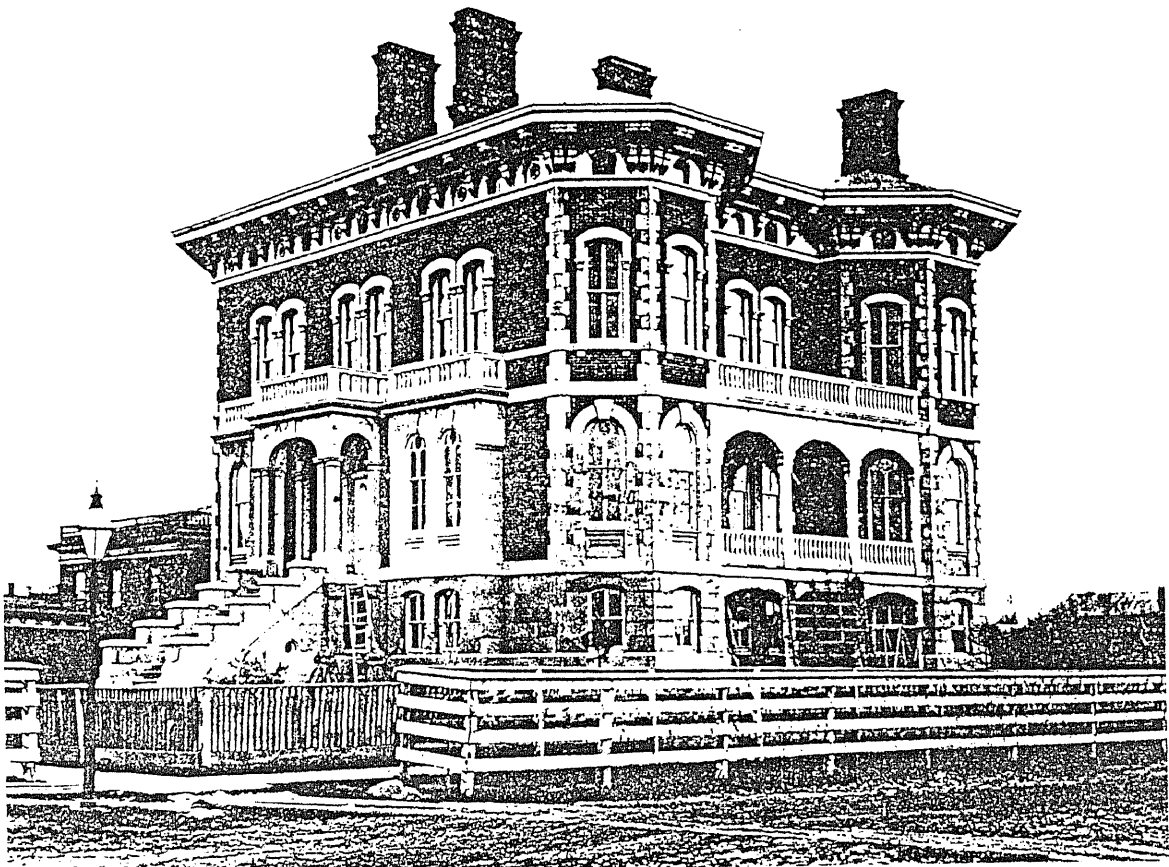


photo VIII Reddick Mansion, Columbus & Lafayette streets, 1886. (Calendar, 1837-1987)



fig VII Court Street. View southeast from corner of LaSalle & Madison.



photo IX Illinois and Michigan Canal Historic Site marker.

The remarkable diversity and density of buildings in the downtown make it, as a collection, a significant city image and source of historical identity.[fig VII] The diversity of building forms is represented by historical periods of building construction. The following page illustrates one example of building evolution on one site. Approximately 23 buildings have survived from the pre-1875 period of construction. The facade characteristics which distinguish these brick buildings have been obscured in some cases by later alterations. The only remaining frame building in downtown, at 624 Court Street, dates from this period.

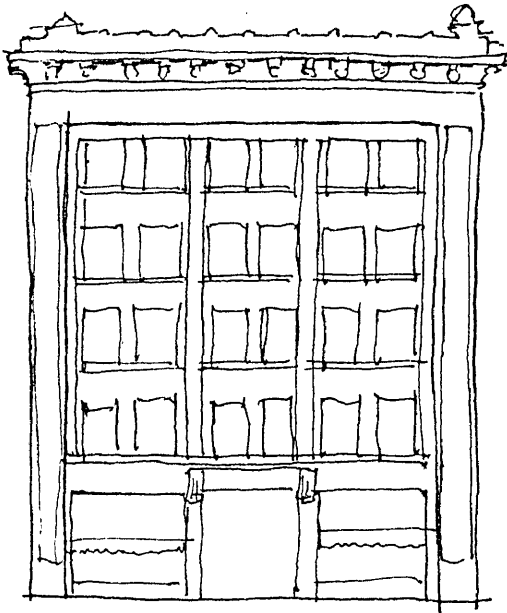
Appearing in the following chapter, are approximately 70 building elevations-drawn as streetscapes along LaSalle, Main, Madison, Jefferson, Court and Lincoln Place. Where known, building construction dates are indicated and alterations noted.

Example of historical changes in building form.
112-114 Madison Street



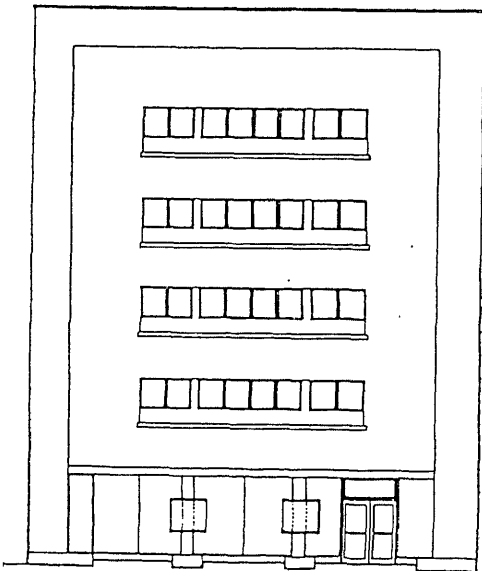
Pre-1875

Typical of early frame buildings:
2-story
shallow plan
gable roof
small multi-paned wood windows



1902- Moloney Building

Example of early 20th century office building :
expressed structural bay system
brick facade
strong division of base (storefront),
middle (office floors), and top (cornice)



1940's alteration

Typical of facade alterations of
the 1940's-1960's which "simplified"
existing facades by removing ornament
or refacing in stucco, or metal panels

CHAPTER IV. POSSIBILITIES FOR OTTAWA

Characteristics Contributing to Existing Identity and Their Use in Defining Design Objectives

The following characteristics, as found in downtown Ottawa, are integral to the city's identity- its history, its present place in time and the image it envisions for the future. The design objectives derived from these selected characteristics apply specifically to the proposed new development but suggest a framework for formulating design objectives in any small city.

The general underlying goal is for evolutionary adaptive designed change. The site-specific goal is the identification of factors contributing to a beneficial relationship between the downtown and the riverfront development.

Elevation drawings of approximately 70 core downtown buildings will be used to analyze some of the following characteristics. They represent the buildings only as two-dimensional planar surfaces and do not distinguish other important information such as color, materials, depths, and state of repair or deterioration. Patterns of rhythm in proportions, openings, alignment, etc., are made more obvious by the abstraction inherent in this type of representation. [fig XV, XVI, XVII, XVIII]

1. Structure of the Grid/Pattern of Streets, Pedestrian Paths and Parking

The city is structured by a consistent orthogonal grid with a strong north-south axial street orientation. Pedestrian paths border each traffic street in the downtown. Parking is provided along the edges of each street and in lots behind the core buildings. The grid is broken by the new Illinois river bridge approach- which shifts at the south end of LaSalle Street to a southeastern diagonal.[fig VIII & map X]

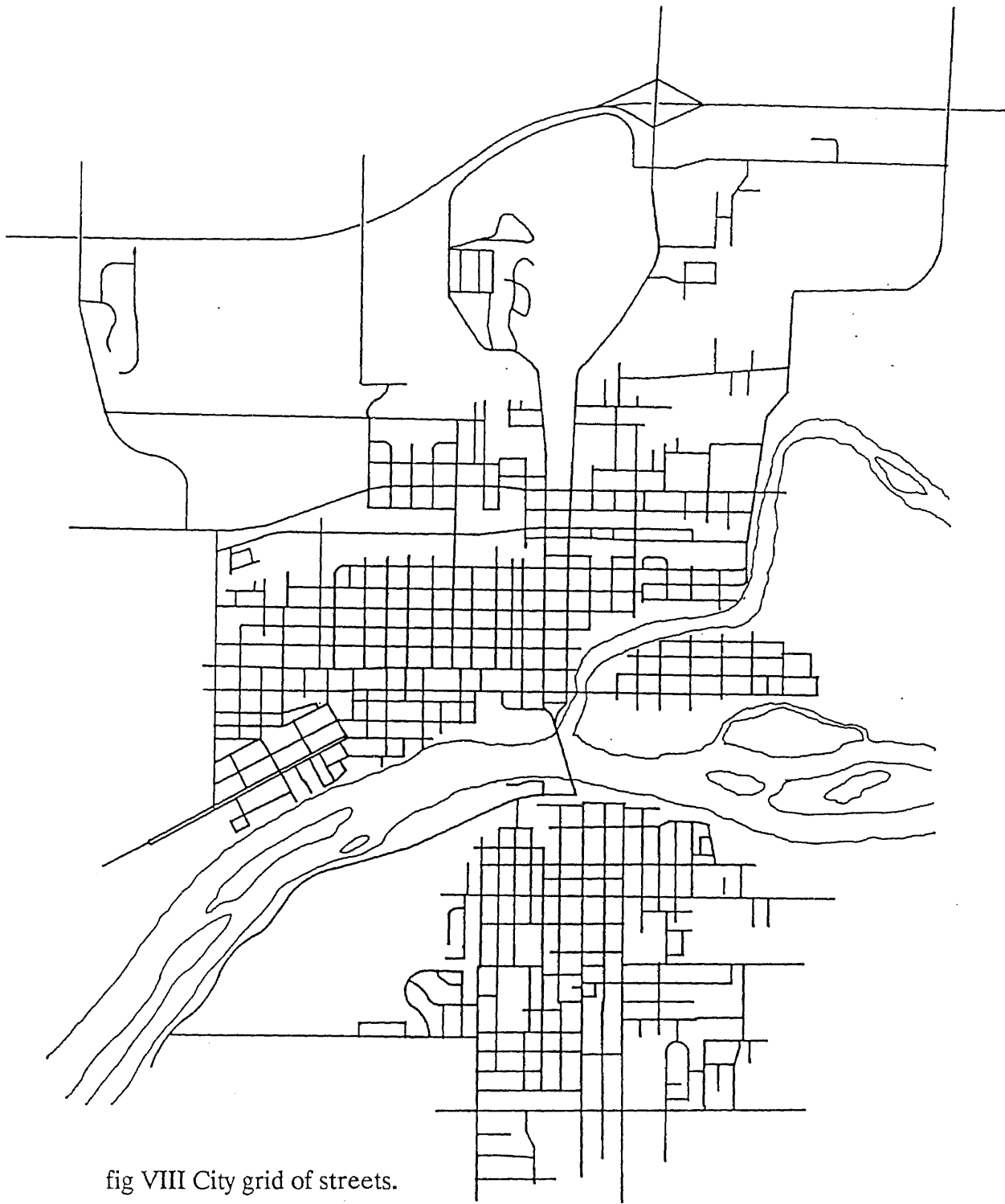
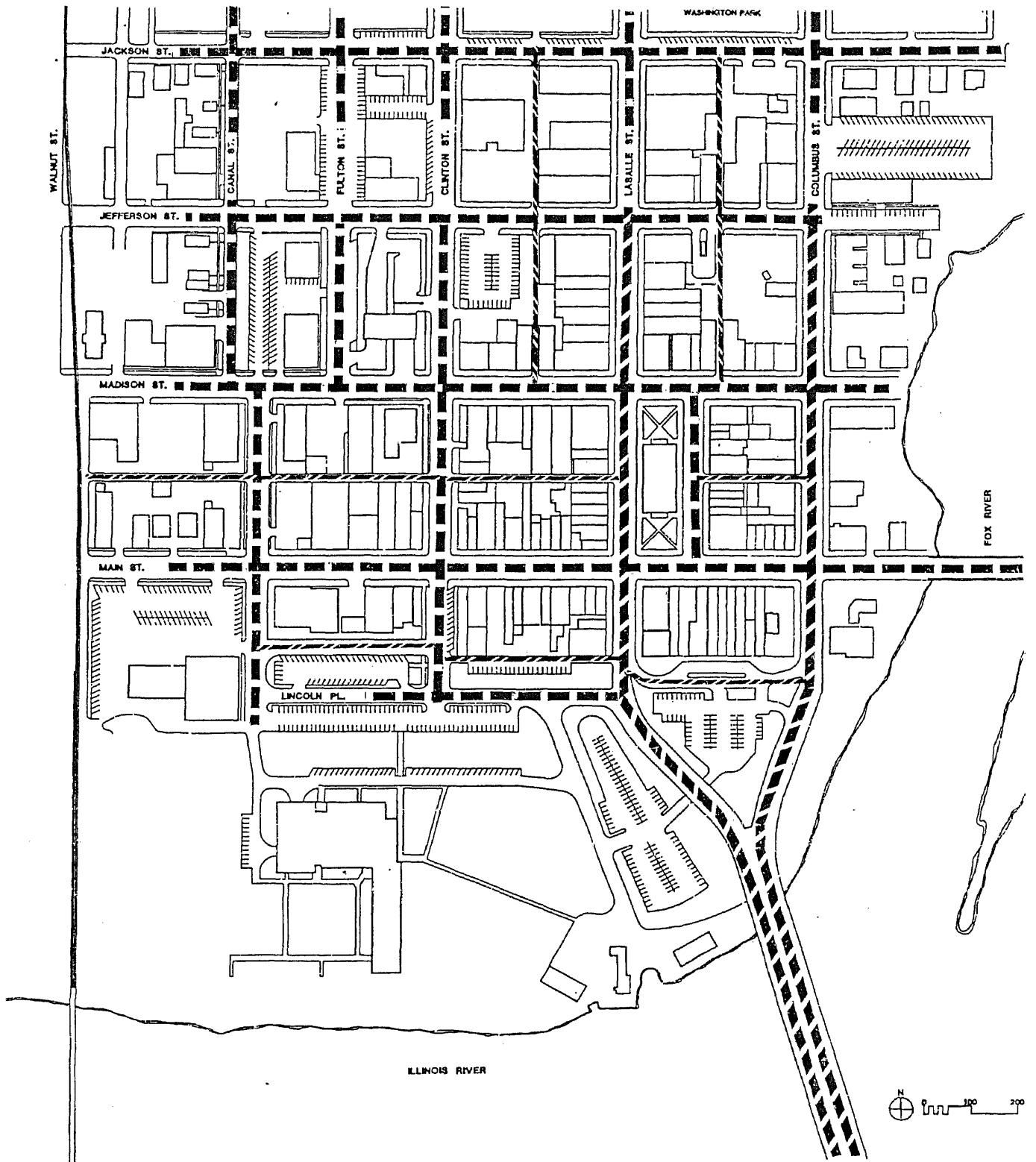


fig VIII City grid of streets.



map X Base map of downtown. Street pattern.

Objectives:

- To recognize the unique form of the site in the city context. Adapt the grid to the needs of the site. Reduce the emphasis on the diagonal caused by the bridge skew.
- To provide a clear direct route to building entrances and through the site. New roads and paths will maintain city grid directions.
- To continue the pattern of pedestrian ways alongside traffic routes.
- To provide clear access to all areas of the site.
- To provide open areas for pedestrian access only - closed to traffic.
- To provide a variety of path experiences and opportunities for choosing alternate paths.
- To continue the pattern of parking along streets and provide larger areas of site parking at limited locations for each site use: conference center parking, riverfront/boater parking, shops and retail parking.

2. Structure of the Block/Building Siting

The pattern of block circulation is one of primary entrance and circulation at the perimeter and alley/serviceways through the block for rear building entry-concealed from the street. Building front and rear differentiations are very clear. Front facades make use of symmetry and ornament. Alley sides of buildings are asymmetrical and utilitarian with qualities of irregularity and surprise.

The breakdown of the traditional pattern of buildings filling the fronts of the lot to maintain a continuous street frontage is responsible for a loss of cohesiveness and weakened image. Where this pattern survives, the identity of downtown is clear and reassuring. The character of the downtown falls apart when the pattern is broken- where commercial buildings are set back from the street line with a zone of parking separating the building from the street, or by vacant lots. The relationship between building entrance and pedestrian is changed.

Lot size was determined as that size most manageable for retail operations. Street frontage width varies- contributing to diversity on the streetscape. Width of lot street frontage is usually less than half its depth to the center of the block. (Exceptions- where lots have been combined for construction of one larger building to replace several smaller ones)

Objectives:

- To continue the block/lot pattern, but adapt its size and alley/street relationship to fit the new site. Real or apparent building width at street edge (storefront entity) not to exceed building depth.
- To site buildings as a group so as to maintain same general relationship as those in existing city block pattern.
- To locate buildings to minimize physical separation of site from downtown area- caused by bridge approach skew and elevation drop at northern edge of site.
- To locate new buildings to clearly relate to entrance of converted school building and to create clear orientation to riverfront.

3. Density (F.A.R.)/Massing

The existing downtown is notably urban in its compactness- with a virtually continuous commercial frontage along LaSalle Steet from Jackson to Main Street and along Main and Madison between Columbus and Clinton streets. Corner buildings which have historically grounded the block have been replaced at numerous street intersections by one-story buildings. Density is greatest at the street edges and less at block centers. [fig IX]

Objectives:

- To concentrate density similar to the maximum density found in the downtown on a portion of the site (vs. spread out over site).

La Salle St., north, Madison St., east, Ottawa, Ill.

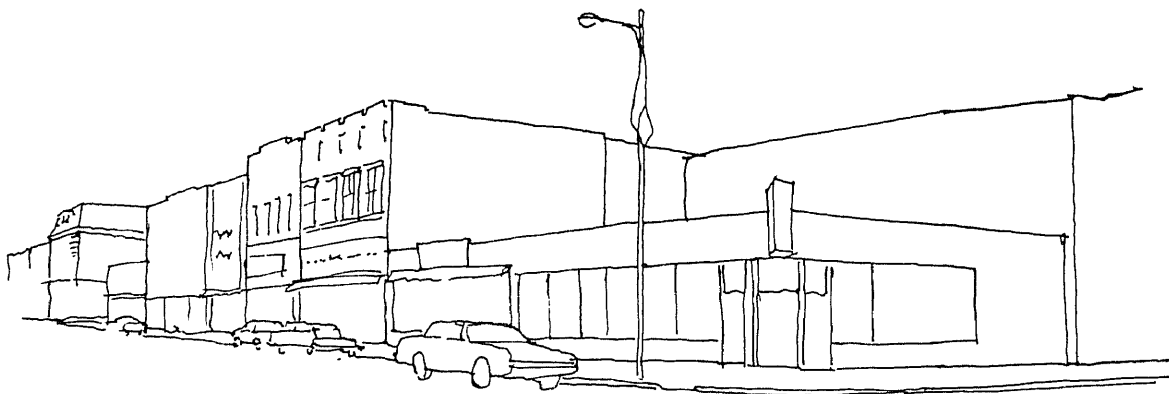
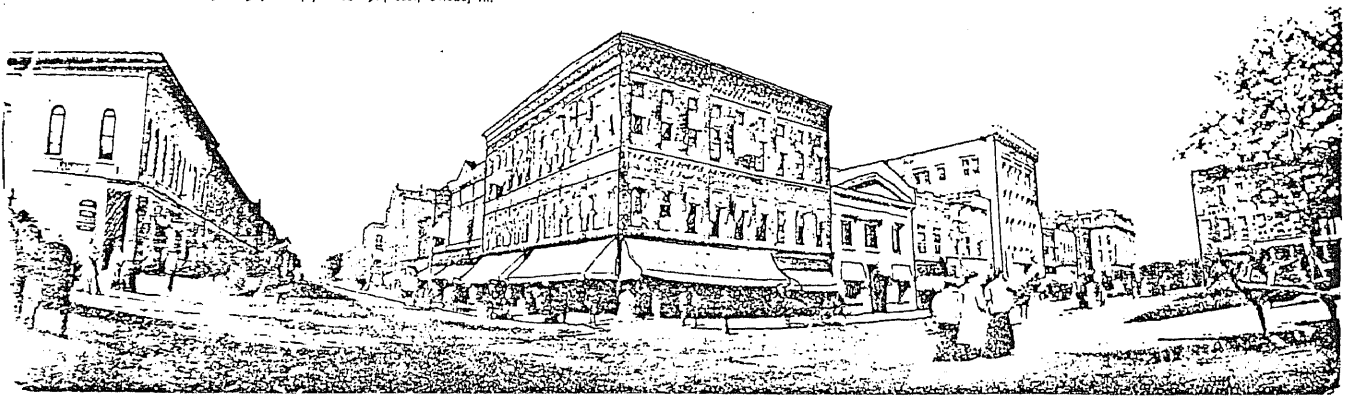


fig IX View northeast from corner of LaSalle & Madison. ca. 1900 and today. The importance of density at the block corner is demonstrated. Replacement by one-story brick buildings occur on several block corners.

-To re-establish historical pattern of placement of highest building densities at corners of blocks.

-To maintain diversity in distribution of mass as exhibited in the best relationships of downtown commercial buildings.

-To avoid a "monolithic" appearance of new buildings. Larger continuous buildings to have the appearance of being composed of smaller proportioned buildings- quality of "divisability".

(See "Structure of the Block")

4. Building Height

Building heights vary from one-story to five-stories in the downtown center, with the majority of buildings at two and three stories. The five-storied Moloney Building and Central Life Buildings are exceeded by the courthouse.

Objectives:

-To maintain a variety in building height- with no new building less than two stories and no greater than five. (Exceptions may be any existing buildings or portions of buildings on the site.)

5. Materials

The most commonly used building material is brick. Brick became an important historical marker of the change in building forms, from the small gable-roofed frame buildings of the earliest period in Ottawa history to the production of brick at the turn of the century and the greater permanance given to buildings constructed of brick. Stone ornament was used historically to award special significance to buildings such as banks, the courthouse, city hall. The diversity of materials and their shapes as used for

ornamental purposes- wood cornices, cast iron storefront columns, terra cotta cornice and window trim, stone lintels and sills, help differentiate historical periods of building construction. [fig X]

Use of material is also related to function- the most costly materials and ornament being restricted to the building facade; simpler material expression such as common brick, used for the service-oriented sides and backs of buildings.

Objectives:

- To use masonry units for exterior surfaces. Materials to be expressed as in local traditional building construction- ie. visible window lintels and sills. To express structural piers at storefronts as piers of brick, stone, or metal.
- To restrict masonry colors to those already existing in the downtown.
- To make use of a variety of materials to differentiate street from pedestrian path and variety of paths, depending on related use.

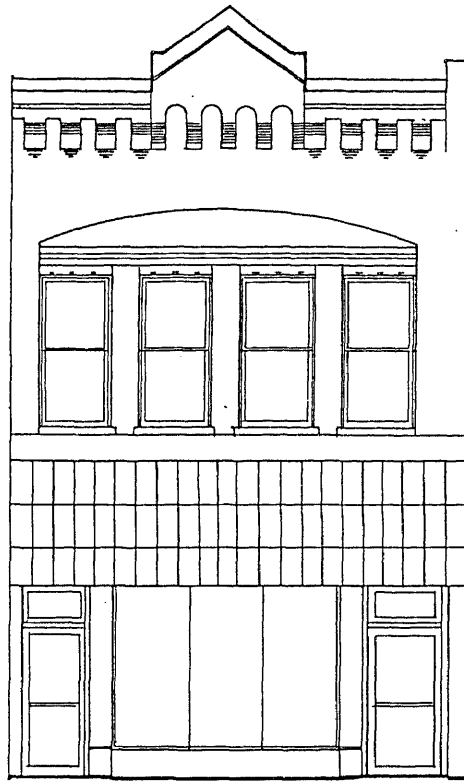
6. Public Open Spaces

The sudden opening of the streetscape building wall into green "squares" at both ends of the courthouse block at the heart of downtown forms an important landmark, related to the traditional town square- a public ceremonial space enclosed by public buildings. Other important outdoor spaces include the canal path, Washington Square Park, riverfront at the eastern edge of the site and Allen Park on the southern bank of the Illinois River, across from the site. [fig XI]

Objectives:

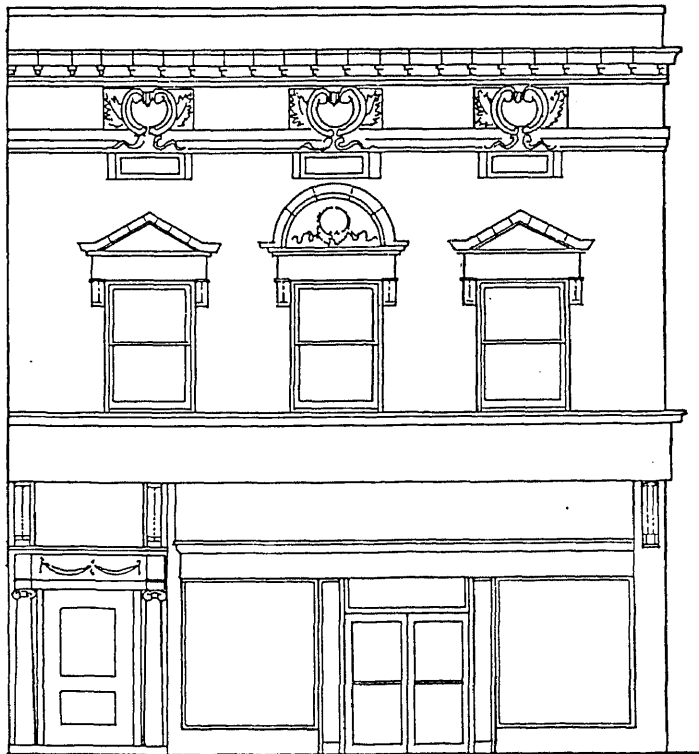
- To carefully structure a variety of outdoor spaces, as the site is now all open space and involves the restructuring of open space.
- To provide an outdoor "room" defined by and enclosed by buildings- idea of courtyard or plaza.

Materials



- brick pedimented parapet
- brick cornice corbeling
- recessed segmental arch
- wood lintels
- stone sills
- aluminum storefront

125 W. Main Street c. 1880



- stone coping
- stone cornice with modillions and dentil course
- cartouche panels
- date plate

- stone doorway surround-
- Ionic columns, frieze with swags
- scroll brackets
- wood and glass door

116-118 W. Madison Street 1902

fig X Variety of Facade Materials

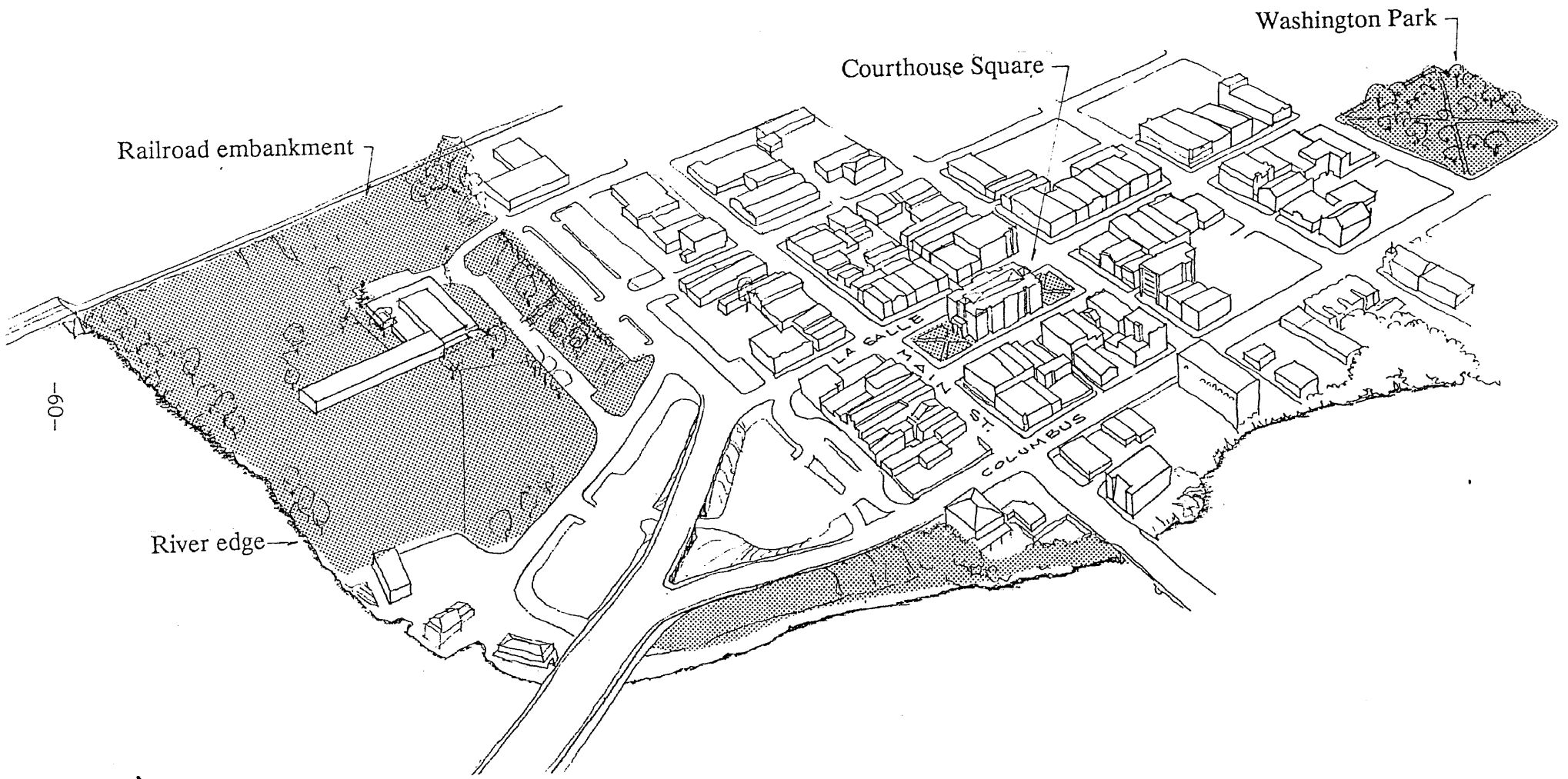


fig XI "Green Spaces" in the downtown and site. View northwest.

- To dedicate areas of public open space along river edge- not to be built on.
- To maintain and enhance access to riverfront as a public amenity- plaza, marina, river walk.

7. Entrances and Enclosures

Squares and streets take their form from the buildings that surround. The three-dimensional shape of the enclosure is defined by such characteristics as variety in building heights, fencing, street widths, continuity of building frontage at the sidewalk, vista, view closure and materials- texture and colors. [fig XII]

Pedestrian building entrances are formed by the depth of the entry- if recessed, overheight shelter- canopy, slope of paving to door and transparency of materials- allowing view into store.

Objectives:

- To include in plan the possibility to provide element of surprise- in turning a corner and finding unexpected open space- sheltered by buildings or natural edges. Not all revealed at once.
- To design entrance points to new development as a whole to be on the same street level as the downtown, to link and reduce the visual separation of the site.
- To provide a vertical marker of entrance to site. (Lower elevation of site now causes it to disappear from view from Main Street.)

8. Building Symbolism

The use of symbolism to express the significance or function of the building has changed. The monumental presence of the county courthouse clearly expresses its importance in the city in contrast to the new LaSalle County Governmental Complex at the edge of the city on Etna Road which expresses nothing more than an office building.



fig XII View north at LaSalle & Main and view North at Court Street.
Effect of street width and visual terminus on enclosure qualities.

The Times building on Madison Street of 1939-40, is a rare example of Art Moderne in Ottawa. Its use for a newspaper office symbolically tied the organization to the progressivism of that time, and is one of very few buildings constructed during the years 1925-1955. [fig XIII]

The Gayety Theater on LaSalle, c. 1910, is an excellent symbol of early twentieth century theater building. [fig XIV]

Objective:

- To express building function through the use of traditional building typology.
- To use symbolic markers or gateways to mark entry points of the site.

9. Building Elevation Characteristics

a. Alignment of contiguous buildings:

Storefront cornice heights maintain a relatively continuous line along the streetscape. Horizontal alignment of certain elements such as general cornice line identify buildings constructed during the same period.

Objectives:

- To maintain a continuous storefront line along commercial frontage and adjust to changes in site contour.

b. Proportion of facade elements:

This proportion is defined by the differentiation and visual weight given to traditional base, middle and top of the building. Storefronts comprise the base in the commercial building typology. Early 20th century designs emphasized the distinction of the storefront with heavier and more ornate storefront cornices- providing depth to the facade. Upper stories (middle) are capped by various weights of cornice treatments- brick corbeling, stepped parapet or horizontal cornice of metal, wood or terra cotta. These traditional relationships have been disrupted in some cases by the facade refacing of metal panels which creates blank-faced buildings.

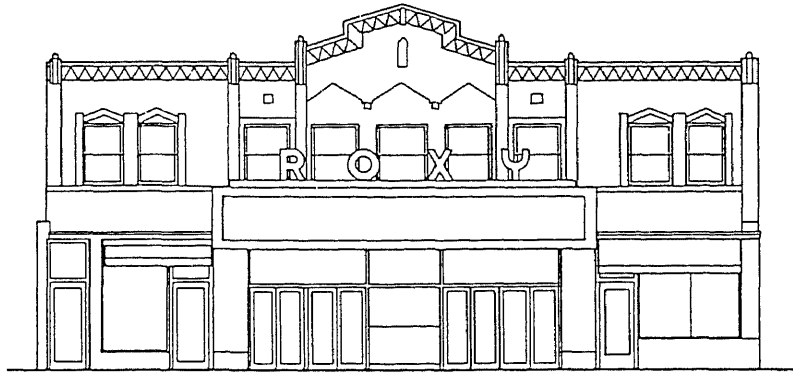


fig XIV Gayety Theater, 825 LaSalle Street, constructed ca. 1910.

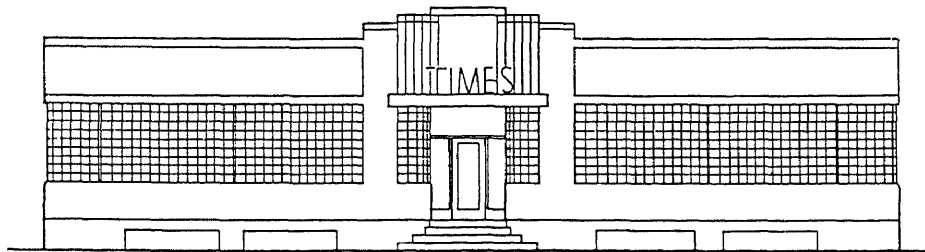


fig XIII Times Building, 110 Madison Street, constructed 1939-1940.

Most buildings in the downtown emphasize verticality through a proportion of height exceeding the building width. Horizontal one-story buildings, with widths at least twice as great as the height greatly weaken the overall character.

Objective:

- To maintain traditional relationship of building base, middle and top. General proportion may vary.
- To maintain vertical emphasis of individual storefronts through the proportion of building width to height.

c. Expression of structural bays/solid to void:

The expression of structural bays and piers creates a variety of rhythms of solid and void on building facades.

Objectives:

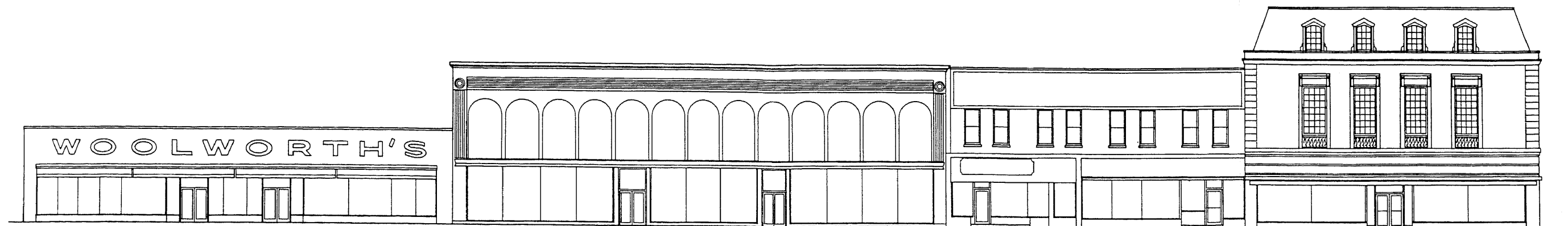
- To identify commonly used bay and use in new structural system.
- To maintain approximate proportion of solid to void in window articulation. Doors and windows must be predominantly vertical in proportion.
- To continue the traditional scale of the facade through articulation of the facade - no blank-faced walls.

d. Expression of corner:

The importance of the corner is revealed by the failure of later building- low massing, non-celebratory. Existing designs for special corner treatments include a 45 degree angle for storefront entry, corner building turrets, special materials used at the corner.

Objectives:

- To differentiate corners with special treatment through form, materials, orientation, etc.
- To restore the traditional importance of the corner.



LaSalle Street east - Jackson to Jefferson



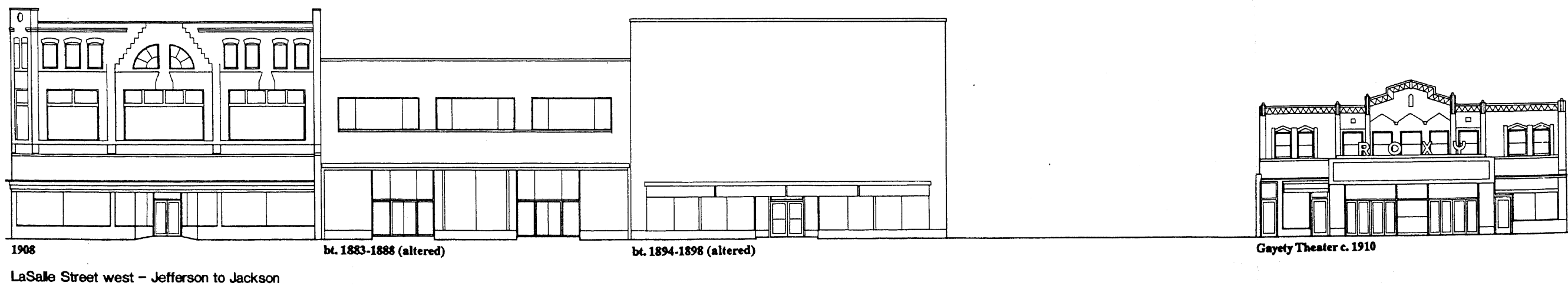
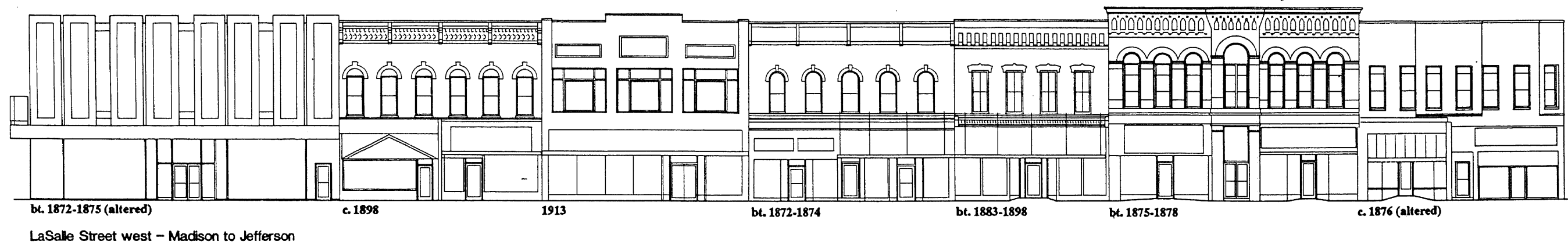
1939-40

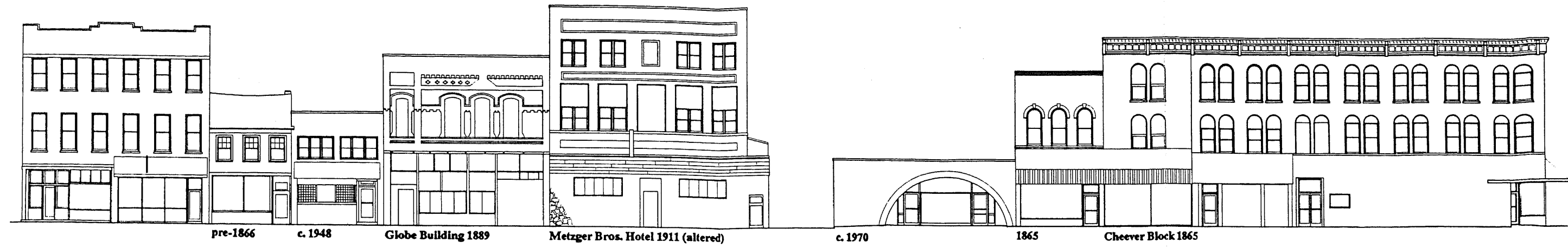
Jefferson Street north - LaSalle to Columbus



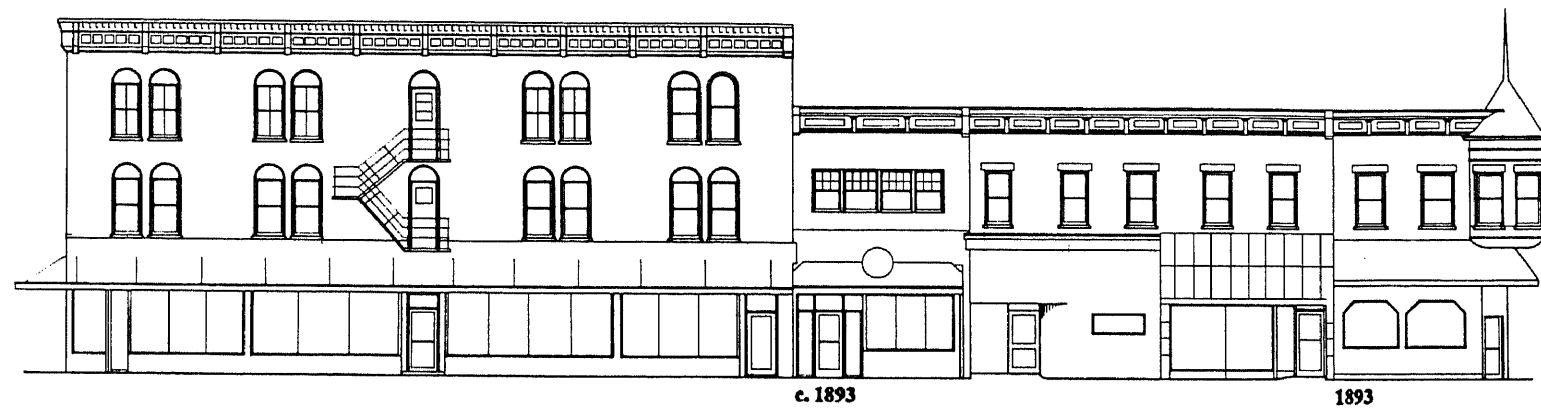
bt. 1875-1883 (altered) (part of Opera House Block) pre-1875 (refaced c. 1940) bt. 1875-1883 (altered) c. 1965

LaSalle Street east - Jefferson to Madison

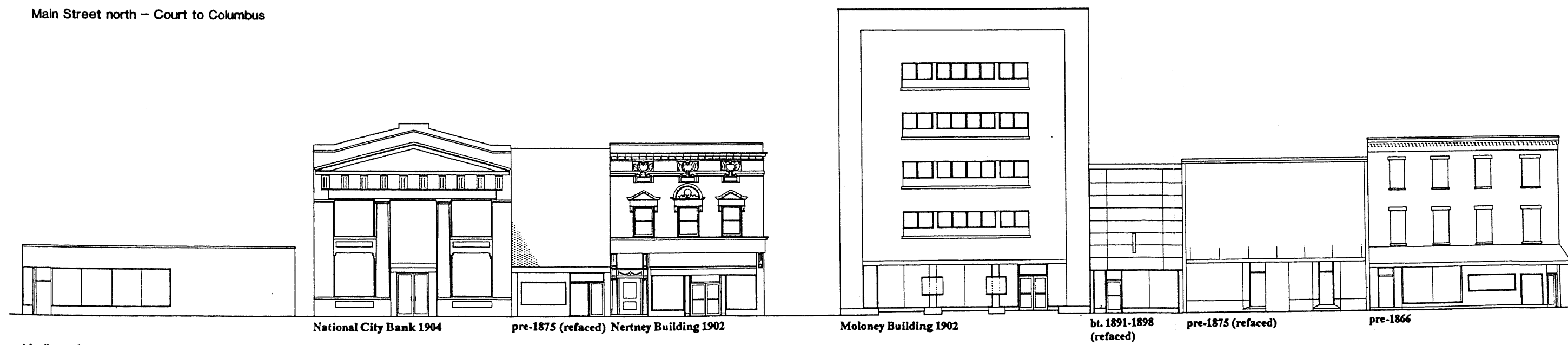




Court Street east – Madison to Main



Main Street north – Court to Columbus



Madison Street north – LaSalle to Columbus



c. 1860

Lincoln Place north – LaSalle to Columbus



1940

c. 1909

c. 1920

c. 1880

bt. 1898-1905

c. 1902

bt. 1851-1857
(refaced c. 1910)

c. 1910

Lynch Building c. 1880

1962-64

Main Street south – Columbus to LaSalle



1913

c. 1908

c. 1869

pre-1875 (refaced)

pre-1875

Kneussl Building late 1860's

c. 1868

pre-1875

c. 1902

Main Street south – LaSalle to Clinton

12. Uses and Activities

Activities downtown include shopping, banking, eating, public business, leisure- movies, health activities, educational classes, meeting places.

Objectives:

- To provide for mixed uses within the development area to contribute to a lively and harmonious downtown environment- shops, restaurants, dwellings and office uses.
- To plan economic additions through effective programming of uses in the adaptive reuse of the existing school building.
- To design activities to reinforce what is unique, interesting and attractive about this place and not one of a chain.
- To design for flexibility and "divisibility" with the development to best accommodate small business operations and changes. To preserve the individual shop owner's place in the economy.
- To aim for clarity and simplicity in the plan, allowing for maximum flexibility and adaptation to changes in use over time.

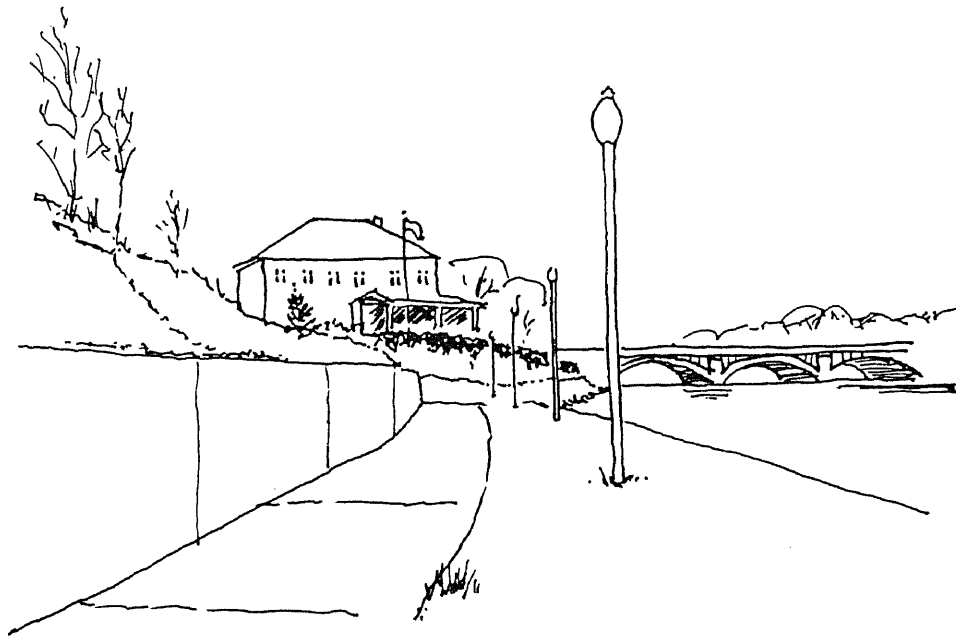


fig XIX Fox River walk

Development Responses

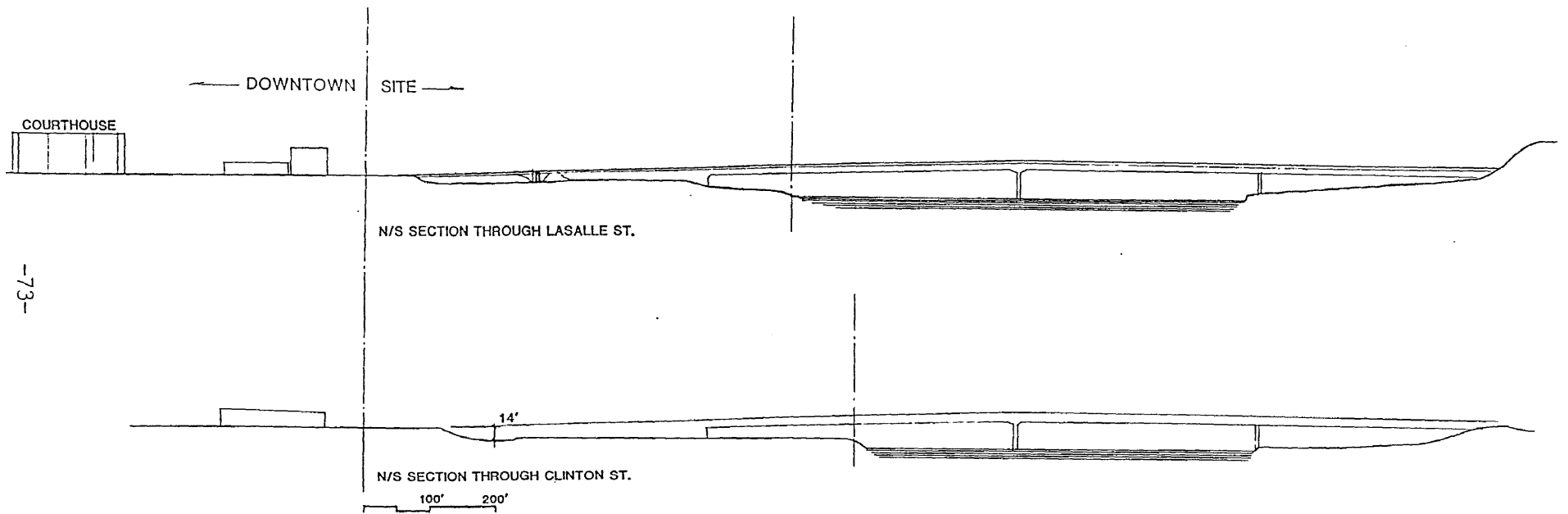
The following schemes represent distinctive alternatives for development. The appropriateness of each will be evaluated by a general discussion of each scheme's potentially positive and negative features.

Further development of any scheme would be necessary to effectively judge its true "appropriateness". For example, the design objectives dealing with elevational qualities and uses of material are critical to the overall character of the development. These qualities can only be evaluated through the use of detailed elevation drawings and sketches showing the dimensional characteristics of the design.

Caution must be exercised in interpreting the design objectives previously discussed. Design guidelines derived from historical models, such as those in the downtown, may be easily misused. The aim is NOT to clone old buildings, but to adapt the ideas used in formulating historical images to fit new conditions and new times.

Inappropriate: Straw Man or Distinct Possibility?

The most obvious type of inappropriate development on this site would be the placement of a monolithic block modeled on the "K-Martization" image discussed in Chapter II. A variation of this "shopping center" concept is represented in **scheme #1**. [fig XXI] It places the entrance to the conference center/hotel at the riverfront edge of the site. It does appear to unify the site by linking the retail and hotel activities with a continuous "arm". The position of the northern edge of the building aligns with Lincoln Place and the block edges in an attempt to link itself with the downtown. It also attempts to treat the river as a "street" by the positioning of buildings on the site along the water edge.



-73-

fig XX North-south cross section through site at LaSalle Street from Main Street to the south bluffs

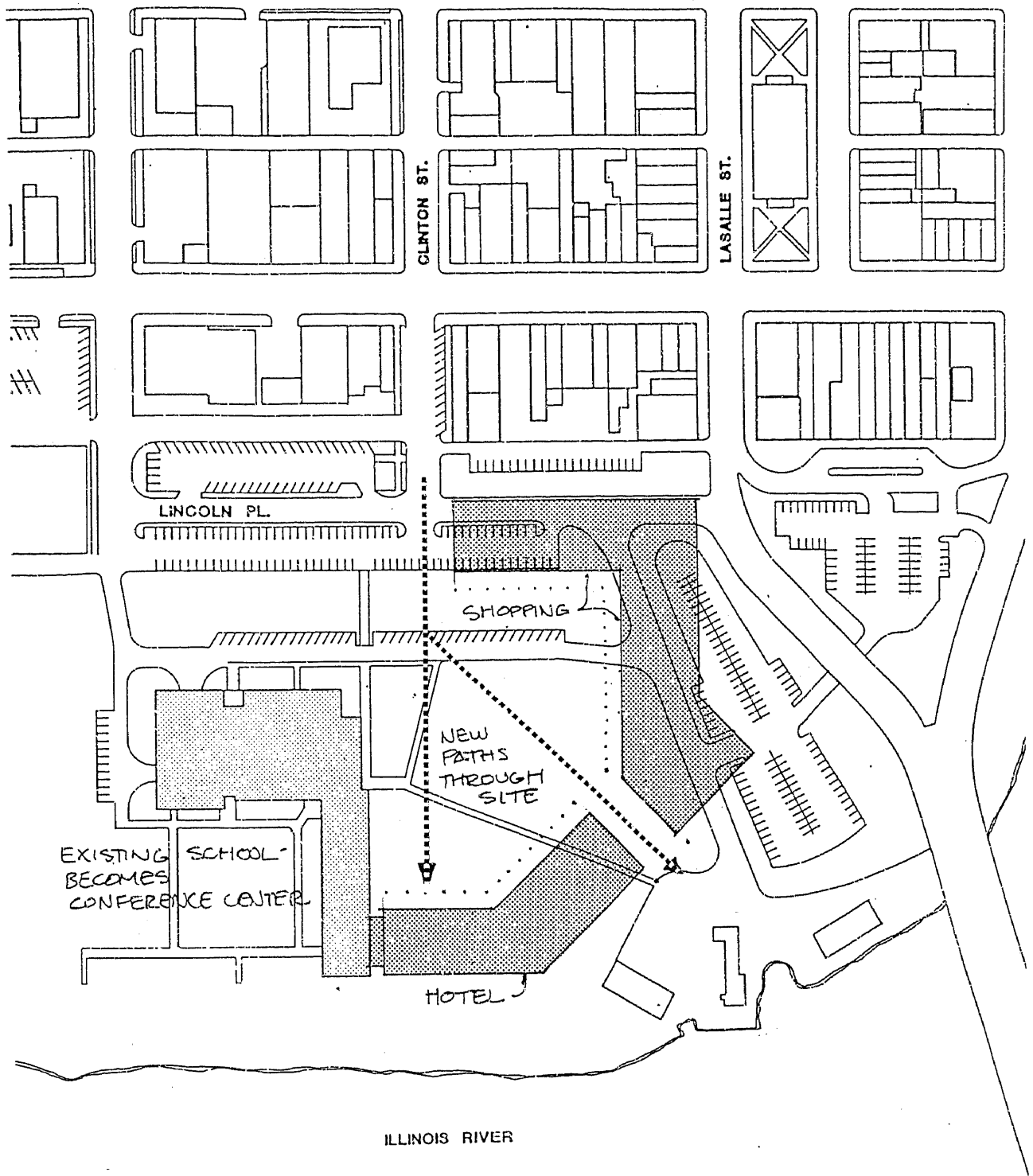
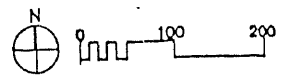


fig XXI Site scheme #1- Inappropriate response



The most negative aspect of this scheme is the "barrier" it forms to riverfront access. Its focus is internal and cut off from the biggest asset of the site. There are also awkward leftover spaces around the bridge and existing waterfront buildings, which appear to be forgotten. Traffic access through the site is not clear and the possibility is great that the central open area would become nothing more than a parking lot.

Scheme #2 [fig XXII] also builds over the block-long section of Lincoln Place, but has been replaced here with an indoor pedestrian "street" with internal store entrances on either side. Again, the existing road near the bridge approach, which slopes down into the site, has been blocked. There is an intent to align this side of the development with the city block facing Main Street and to complete the "back half" of this block. The U-shaped plan of the new building attempts to emulate the block structure, forming an outdoor (or covered) plaza. The pedestrian plaza is on the same level as the downtown with access down to the riverfront along the diagonal wing or tower stairs. The primary entrance to the site is again created by extending Clinton Street but the traffic and parking areas are much more clearly defined and restricted than in scheme #1. The existing parking area north of the school, (downtown elevation), has been extended over the slope with some excavated parking at the level of the school entrance.

The diagonal wing disrupts the cohesiveness of the block structure, creating leftover outdoor space in front and along the school with no clear identity for use. Further weakening the functional aspects of the scheme is the location of the hotel/conference center entrance at the northwest corner of the school. There is no sense of ARRIVAL or focus on the site.

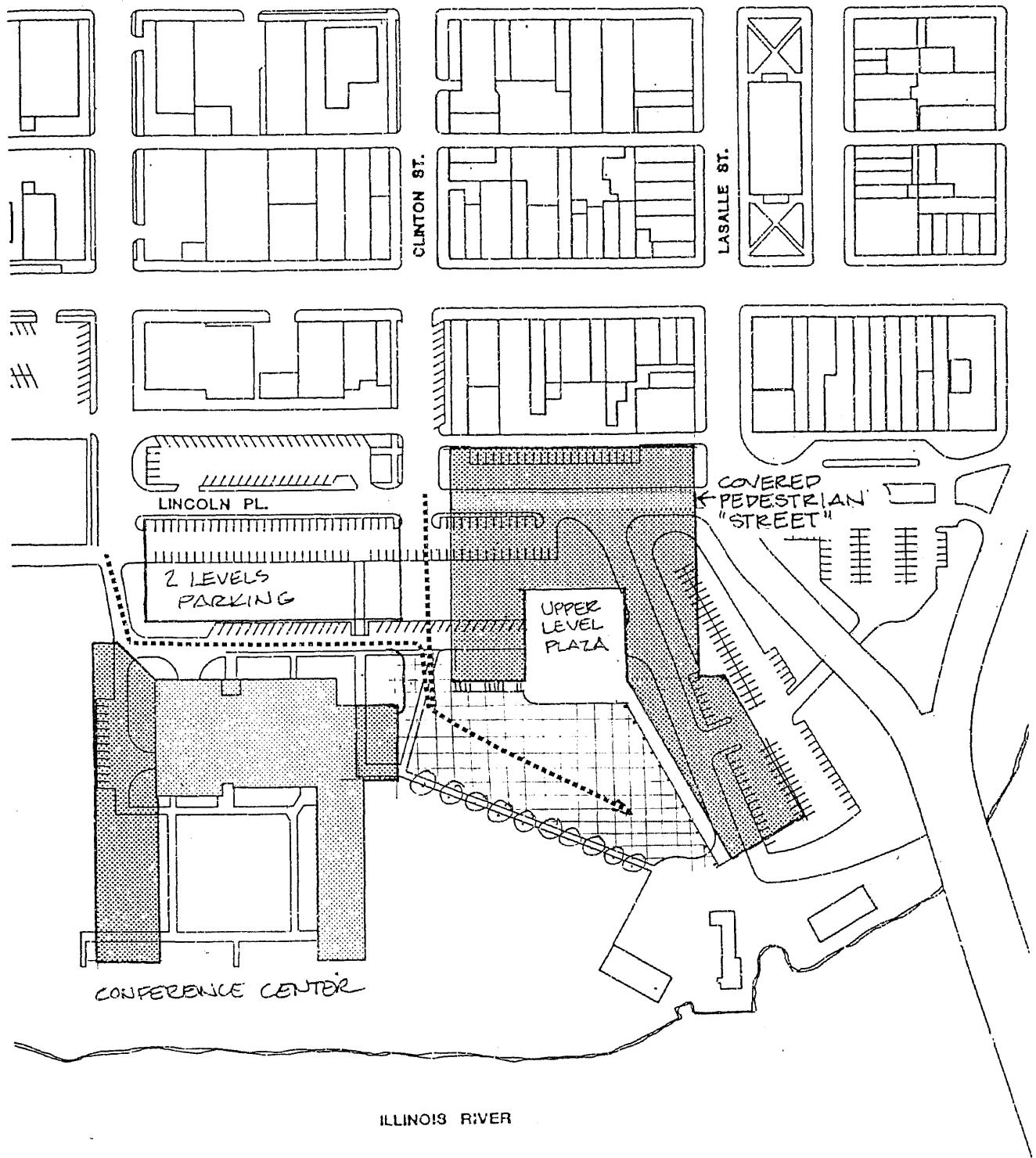
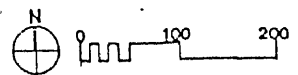


fig XXII Site scheme #2- Inappropriate response



Alternative #1

This plan [fig XXIII] attempts to enhance the site's potential for water-oriented recreation and activities by introducing the element of an inland marina. Existing street patterns have been preserved and Clinton Street extended into the site- terminating at a riverfront restaurant. The existing street immediately north of the school passes under the atrium building above. Pedestrians may enter the main building at the north edge and descend to the site level through an atrium space which focuses on the view toward the marina and river. Pedestrian experiences are enhanced through a variety of path materials and levels on the site.

Alternative #2

This plan maintains all existing streets with the addition of the Clinton Street extension, as in Alternative #1. The structure of the city block has been adapted to suit this site. The western edge aligns with Clinton Street and the eastern side extends to the existing diagonal road. The existing school street takes on the character of "alley" between the new "block" of buildings. A row of smaller buildings opposite the school wing could be adapted to several uses and serves as a buffer between the hotel and the marina.

The small waterfront buildings are treated as a group and this area has special paving materials and plantings to identify it. The central building improves an existing boat launch area to accommodate the planned activity of paddleboat rides.

Possibilities for phasing

One option for phasing development is by function - such as Phase I Conference Center, Phase II Commercial/Retail, Phase III Riverfront/Marina and Phase IV Residential. Such a plan denies the diversity that is one of the chief objectives for the site, linking it to the downtown and enhancing and increasing the level of activity on the site.

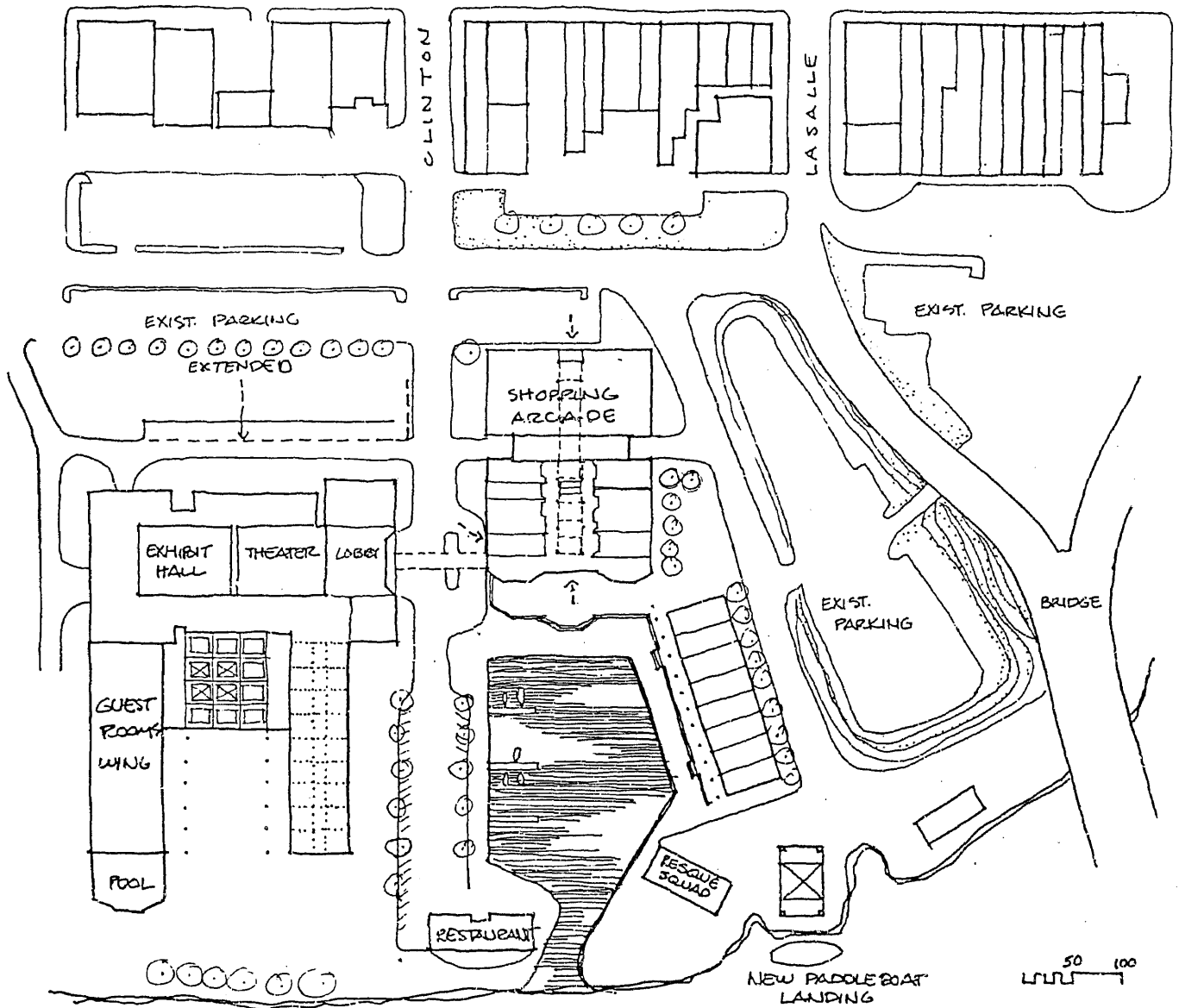


fig XXIII Development Response- Alternative #1

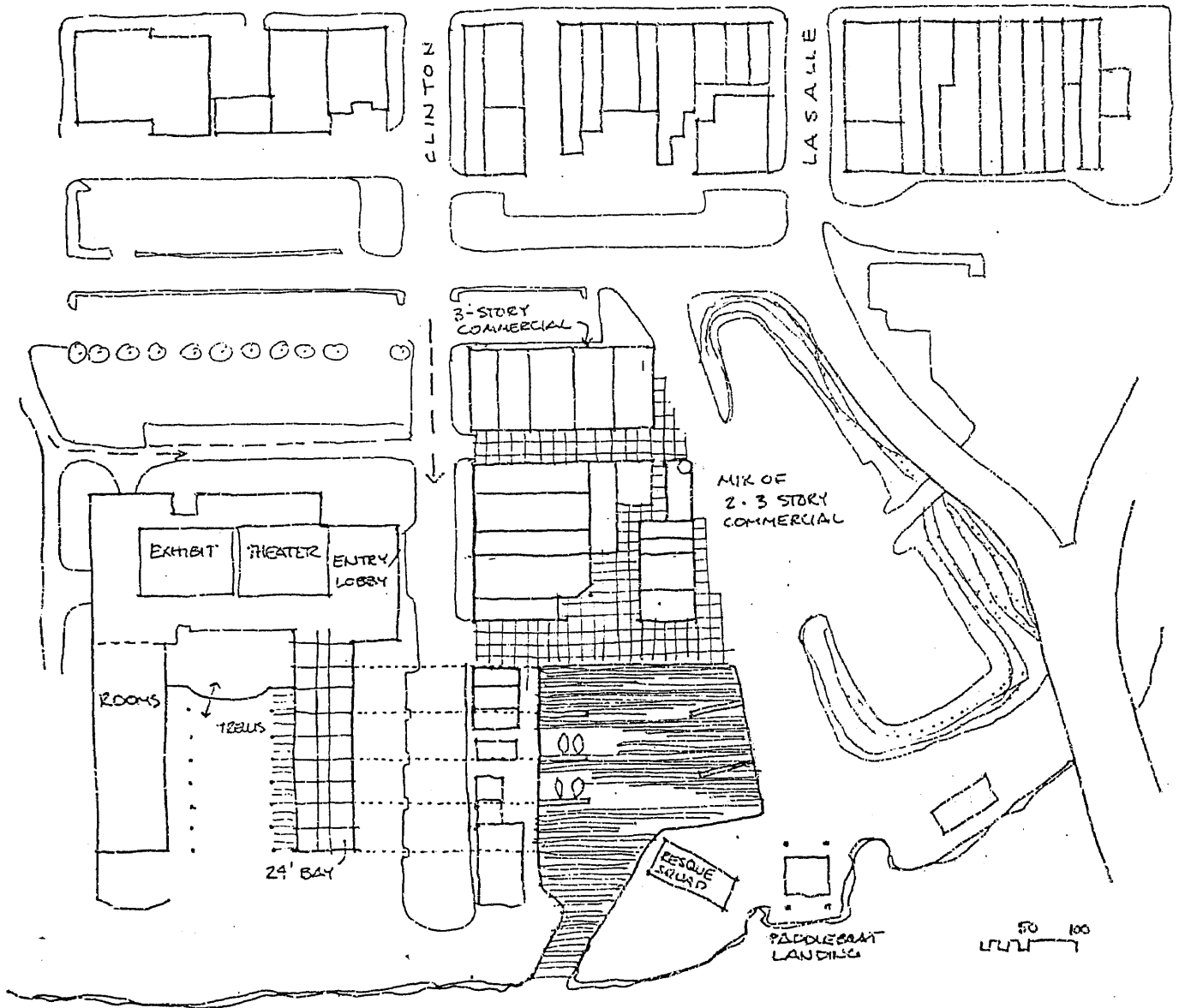


fig XXIV Development Response- Alternative #2

The two alternatives allow for possibilities of phased development within each use. Each was planned to accommodate changes, and increases or decreases in growth. In either scheme, the marina, though certain to prove an asset to the development, could be a later development without detracting from the overall scheme. The second scheme does allow for greater flexibility in the retail/office portion because it expresses a composition of many smaller individual buildings, instead of one larger building containing many separate stores or offices.

Residential development has been proposed for the portion of the site located between the school and the railroad embankment. This development would make use of the same design objectives formulated for the rest of the site. The site would best accommodate a two or three-story townhouse identity with a central open courtyard facing the river.

School Reuse

The existing school could easily be adapted to meet the program for a conference center/hotel with the addition of a two-story wing for guest rooms (supplementing the existing classroom wing), enlarged theater lobby and building entrance. Interior alterations would be needed to upgrade finishes and create guest rooms, meeting rooms and other public areas. The 6,200 gross sf gymnasium and the 6,000 gross sf theater provide built-in assets for exhibition/flex space and assembly functions. Support service spaces such as kitchen, cafeteria, maintenance and storage could be maintained.

The new entry and lobby addition, enlarging the existing lobby area on the east side of the building provides an opportunity for a marker on the site, as it addresses the commercial uses to the east. The enclosure space created by the additional "matching" wing opposite the classroom wing creates possibilities for a transition of outdoor and indoor spaces. Building corridors or meeting rooms facing the river could open out to

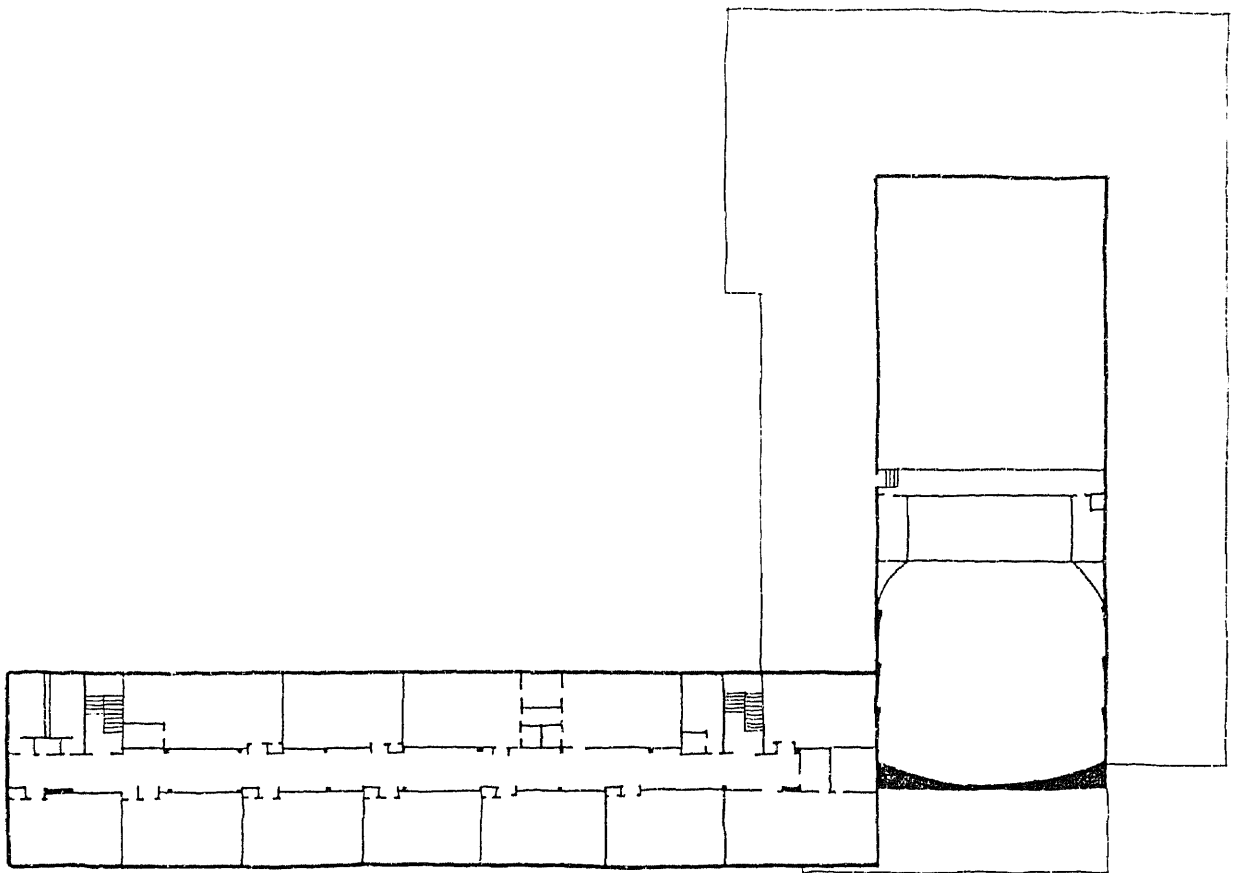
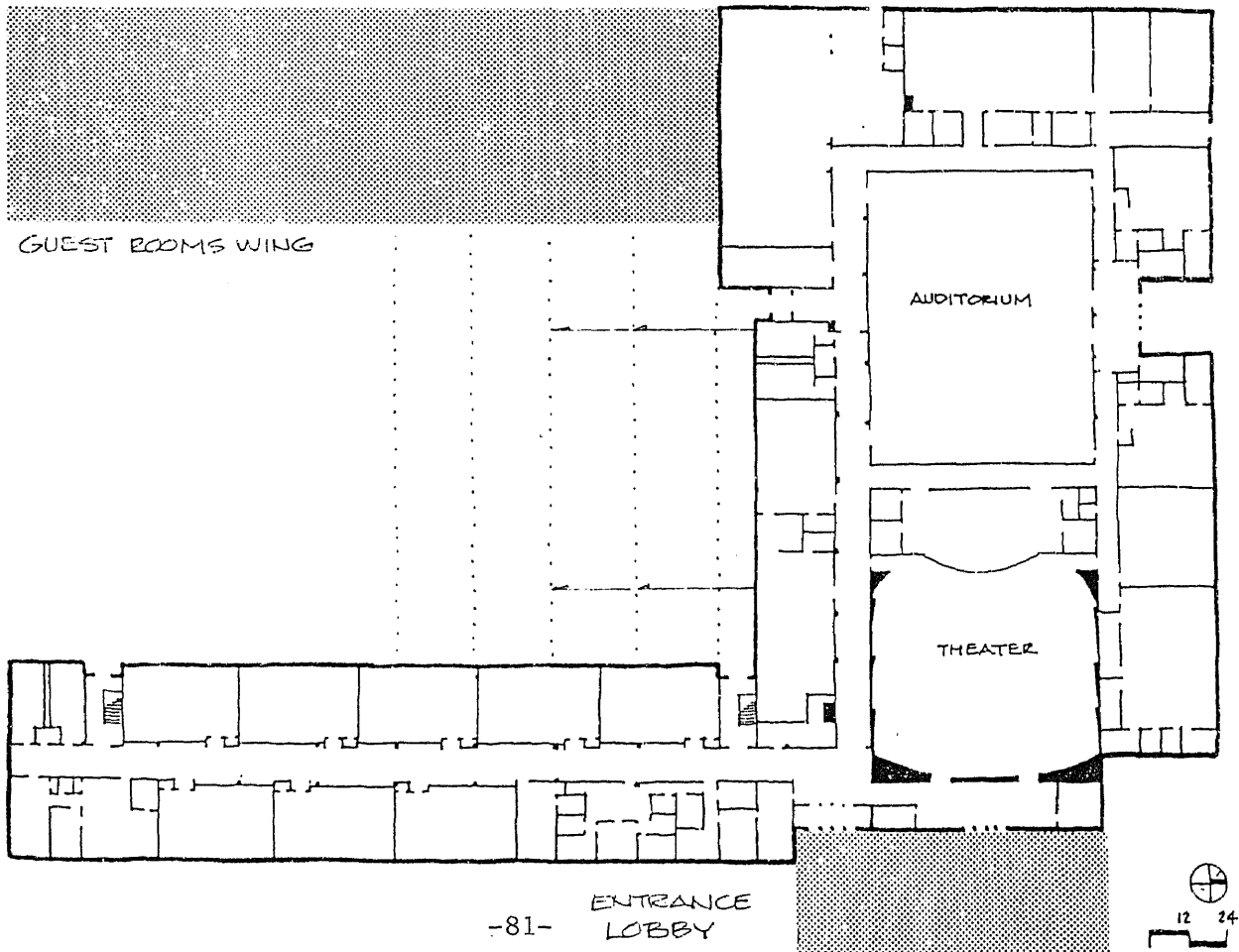


fig XVII Existing first and second floor plans of Central School building and potential for new programmed use



an outdoor courtyard with a trellised walk leading to the riverfront. This area also provides for incremental expansion from the existing building outwards toward the river, with successive additions tied to the existing regularly-spaced 24-foot structural bay system.

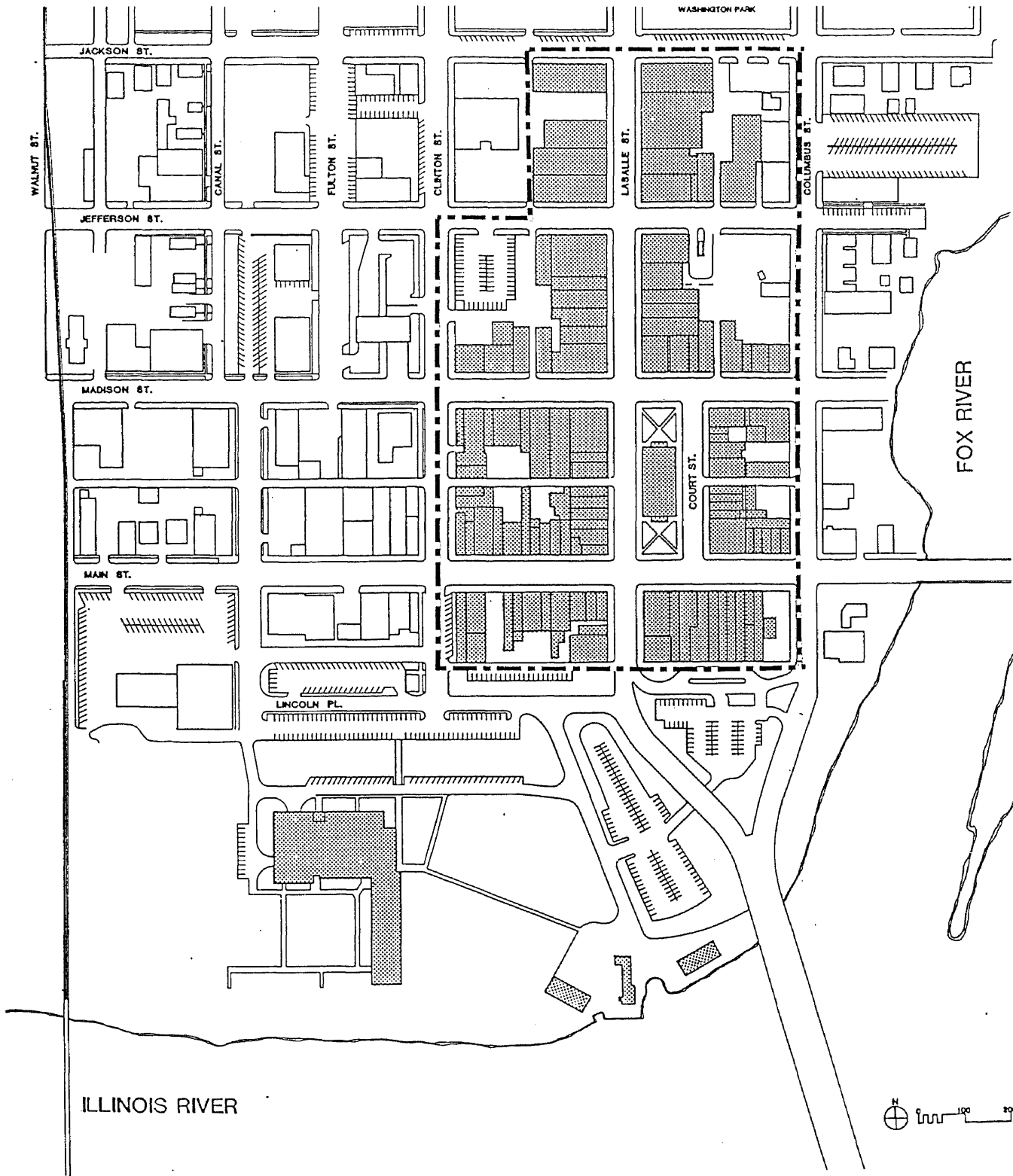
Outline for Downtown Action

Shopping patterns are beginning to shift from the auto-oriented fringes to city central areas as retailers and other businesses recognize the importance of the existing infrastructure of streets, utilities and services in the city's downtown. Consumers have also begun to recognize that the services available at the fringes are NOT similar to those downtown. A growing awareness of the special character of the downtown is responsible for the desire to support the city's special image and local small businesses.

It is not within the scope of this study to outline specific improvements for this area, other than to advise an individual building approach, prescribing treatment suitable to the illness. It is not possible to compare or indiscriminately apply solutions from any other place. A successful approach should respect significant changes over time and individual building integrity. The Secretary of the Interior's "Standards for Rehabilitation" will be helpful as general guidelines in this approach. One strategy to avoid is the "grand theme" such as a "Victorian motif". Revitalization aimed at "taking the area back" to a frozen moment in history fails to recognize that the diversity of building "styles" over many historical periods are part of its special character.

A first step in plans for revitalization will be to identify the areas of highest priority. These areas create the strongest image as a collective identity for the downtown. An survey of the buildings in the district is the next step. Elevation drawings such as those exhibited in figures XV, XVI, XVII and XVIII in the previous chapter are extremely helpful

as a base for planning improvements. The survey will identify the condition of existing building materials and make note of special features to be repaired or maintained. Plans for future infill of vacant lots which now interrupt the streetscape, can make use of the site objectives outlined in Chapter IV.



map XI Downtown Priority Area

CHAPTER V. CONCLUSIONS

Framework for Planning Designed Change

The development responses explored in the previous chapter illustrate how the emphasis on certain sets of considerations profoundly affects the particular design scheme.

Interpretation of design parameters

It may be helpful during the process of deciding on the criteria that the development or project must meet, to also decide what the results shall NOT be like. The following list of parameters are exemplary and illustrate a general framework for setting limits or constraints. Any such list must be general enough to allow several alternatives for design direction. It must also be general in nature to adapt to each particular set of circumstances.

Design parameters should be used NOT to limit variety, but only as a way to set maximum limits on such specific characteristics such as height, massing and overall appearance of scale.

The physical constraints of existing buildings or other features on the site can provide built-in "limitations" which can be helpful. Their reuse or reconfiguration may provide a natural means of achieving "evolutionary" adaptive change by making the best use of existing assets.

Design Parameters

Density(F.A.R.): No greater than any other site of similar size in the city.

Massing: No independent building that is larger than any other structure in the downtown area.

Height: No taller than any other structure in the city except for Statement Buildings.*

Materials: No major use of materials on a facade that are not found in the downtown. No shiny or reflective materials to be used on exteriors of building. No all-glass facades for street sides of buildings.

Parking: No parking area to be larger in area than any existing parking lot in the downtown area.

Roadways: No disturbance of existing primary traffic routes (i.e. bridge approach) and no appreciable alterations of other traffic routes. No roadway to be elevated above existing ground contours. No street width to exceed width of any existing city streets.

Buildings Siting: No continuous building frontage along the river edge.

***Statement Buildings:** Enclosed buildings or open structures with limited footprint area for use as a visual marker or gateway to a site. An identifiable vertical landmark - i.e. a tower.

Learning From Ottawa

All the participants in planning change in a small city recognize that the consequences of such action must be considered. The success of any scheme will depend upon how well these consequences are considered. If the designed change is based upon an understanding of the changing identity of the city and builds upon its existing assets, unforeseen consequences based on changing assumptions can more easily be accommodated. The design must flex to test planning assumptions and ideas over time. It must provide for change- to adapt to changing conditions.

Evolutionary change will be the result.

An summary outline of action for designers, developers & government officials follows:

- Recognize that each site presents a unique set of circumstances and a unique opportunity for designing planned change.
- Identify the assets of the site and its relationship and value to the rest of the city.

- Identify the **potential** assets the site or buildings possess.
- Identify those features and characteristics, contributing to the city's identity, which must be preserved.
- Design a plan for the enhancement of all of these characteristics and assets.
- Articulate the design to easily adapt to changes which will occur over time.

FOOTNOTES

- ¹ Ungers, U.M., "The Janus Face of Architecture", (A.D. 56-6, 1986), p. 11.
- ² Maitland, Barry, Shopping Malls: Planning & Design, (N.Y.: Nichols Publ. co., 1985), p.7.
- ³ "Boston's Chance for its Own Battery Park City", (N.Y. Times, 28 June 1987) sec. H p. 25.
- ⁴ Costello, Anthony, "Taking the Basic Steps to Facilitate Downtown Revitalization", (Small Town, May-June 1987), p. 17.
- ⁵ Focus On Ottawa- A Historical & Geographical Survey of Ottawa, Illinois in the 20th Century, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), p. 104.
- ⁶ Report of the Historical Data Committee of the Show Division of Ottawa Sesquicentennial, (Ottawa, Il. 1987), (not numbered)
- ⁷ Ibid.
- ⁸ Focus on Ottawa- A Historical & Geographical Survey of Ottawa, Illinois in the 20th Century, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), p. 50-51.
- ⁹ Ibid.
- ¹⁰ Liebs, Chester, Main Street to Miracle Mile- American Roadside Architecture, (Boston: Little Brown & Co., 1985), p. 17.
- ¹¹ Nattinger's Souvenir of Ottawa, Illinois in 1900- Complete Review, (June 1900), (not numbered).
- ¹² Ottawa- Old and New- A Complete History of Ottawa 1823-1914, (Ottawa: The Republican Times, 1912-1914), p. 149.

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Note: Updated base map of downtown and site constructed from parts of the following maps:

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Roof Plan: 1/32" = 1'-0"

Floor Plans: 1/16" = 1'-0" and 1/8" = 1'-0"

Elevations: 1/8" = 1'-0"

Bldg. Sect. through theater: 1/4" = 1'-0"

Wall Sections: 1/2" = 1'-0"

Window Details: 3" = 1'-0"

ORGANIZATIONS:

National Association of Towns & Townships, 1522 K Street, N.W. Suite 730, Washington, D.C.

National League of Cities

Urban Land Institute, 1090 Vermont Ave., N.W. Washington, D.C.

Downtown Research & Development Center, 1133 Broadway, Suite 1407 N.Y., N.Y.

Center for Small Town Research & Design, Mississippi State University.

National Development Council, Washington, D.C.

National Trust for Historic Preservation, National Main Street Center, Washington, D.C.

Illinois Department of Conservation/Division of Historic Sites, 614 State Office Building, Springfield, Il.

LaSalle County Historical Society, Utica, Il.