

THE HERITAGE SQUARE PLANNING PROJECT: AN EXPLORATION  
OF THE PHYSICAL IMPLICATIONS OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT  
POLICIES WITHIN A MEDIUM SIZED URBAN COMMUNITY

by

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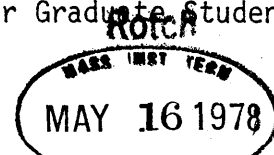
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# Abstract

THE HERITAGE SQUARE PLANNING PROJECT: AN EXPLORATION OF THE PHYSICAL IMPLICATIONS OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT POLICIES WITHIN A MEDIUM SIZED URBAN COMMUNITY

L. Duane Jackson


Submitted to the Department of Architecture on February 14, 1978 in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Architecture.

The Heritage Square Planning Project was an attempt to reverse the spirally decay, both physically and economically, of the Central City neighborhood of New Orleans, Louisiana. Its principal components, the development of a light industrial park, a convenience goods center and two hundred and fifty units of new and rehabilitated housing, reflected the first effort initiated by local residents, to alter the quality of life within their neighborhood. Impetus for redevelopment had been inspired by western expansion of the central business district and residential reinvestment along the areas southern border. However the principal reason for this effort was that it attempted to enfranchise a community which had largely been ignored by both the public and private sectors.

Development of the project was to occur over a five to fifteen year period. It would consist of constructing each of the three investment projects and distributing benefits both economic and social throughout the community. Prior to this however a framework for development would have to be established. It would consist of economic development goals for the area and an identification of the means of accomplishment.

Consumer demand and proximity to commercial development within the central business district led to the identification of the convenience goods center as the initial project for construction. Its development would satisfy local needs for quality consumer services and through it the Heritage Square Planning Project would be established as a viable community based development alternative.

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**to deborah**

# Acknowledgements

In any personal endeavor there are those individuals whose contributions go unnoticed. It is ultimately these individuals whose passive or active contributions convert a dream or idea into reality. For me understanding architecture and its ability to alter the quality of life for the poor (or that sector of our society which has no choice in its state of existence), was such a dream.

My experience as a planner for the Heritage Square Planning Project demonstrated to me: that there are people within this society for whom few architects, of reasonable sensitivity serves; that economic and financial factors determine the course of life of a community and that we as professionals dance to the "beat of the drummer".

Through this thesis I have attempted to respond to personal questions which are both physical and economic in nature. Yet I am not sure that an answer exist. To those individuals who helped me pursue the quest, I am humbly grateful.

To Kevin Lynch for inspiring me to pursue Architecture.  
To Chester Sprague for his guidance and friendship.  
To Leon Groisser for his moral and psychological support during some hard times.  
To Tunney Lee for being the right kind of advisor at the right time.  
To Maurice Smith for helping me understand the relationship of elements regardless of size.  
To the people of Central City.  
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To Yvonne Gittens for patience during the thirteenth hour of typing and editing.  
To my Mother and Father.  
To my Wife and son, Debby and Dana, for love, understanding, patience, support and kindness.  
And finally to my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ who has given me inspiration and sensitivity to appreciate the needs of human existence.

# **Introduction**

The Heritage Square Project was an attempt to devise an intervention strategy capable of reversing the economic and physical deterioration of the Central City neighborhood of New Orleans, Louisiana. The project, which lasted fifteen (15) months, consisted of nine months of research investigating both the social and economic determinants of development (within Central City) and six (6) months of project planning and report writing. Based upon its findings an institutional framework was established and a development plan was recommended to the Economic Development Administration of the Department of Commerce. It included two basic elements. First Central City, under the auspices of the Heritage Square Planning Project, was to establish a community development corporation capable of initiating development activities within its borders. Second, based upon market research provided by the Heritage Square Planning Project, this instrument was to initiate a local development program consistent with research findings and reflecting the needs of the area residents.

Three projects were recommended. They consisted of a light industrial park, a commercial/cultural and entertainment district and two hundred and fifty (250) units of rehabilitated housing. Cumulatively they reflected the basic objectives of the grant which were to upgrade employment, commerce, housing and investment opportunities within Central City. In addition

however, they reflected an attempt to devise a systematic method of inner city community development which involved cluster and joint development strategies and which reflected an attempt to establish a process capable of replication within similiar environments.

The project area consisted of 733 acres of land of which approximately 125 were designated for the development site. Proximity to the central business district and relationships to both municipal and regional transportation networks established it as a reasonable area for investment and reinforced its likelihood for success. Project location, in fact, was the principal advantage of the Heritage Square Planning Project. Situated adjacent to the western boundary of the central business district and bound by Melpomene Street, South Claiborne Avenue, the Pontchartrain Expressway and St. Charles Avenue, Central City has the distinct advantage of not only capturing investments created by the expansion of the central core but also the opportunity of establishing itself as an independent commercial center. Its other assets include: proximity to the newly constructed Louisiana Superdome, accessibility to commerce along Canal Street and a positive physical relationship with two growth sectors: the Poydras Corridor development (principally service oriented industry) and the Loyola Avenue public service and commercial corridor. Recent proposals to construct a parallel span across the Mississippi River and to upgrade the Union Passenger Terminal to a regional transit facility have placed Central City in the distinct position of benefitting from not only municipal but regional growth trends. These factors compounded by real estate speculation and a general interest in the economic potential of the area have given Central City a tremendous potential for growth and development.

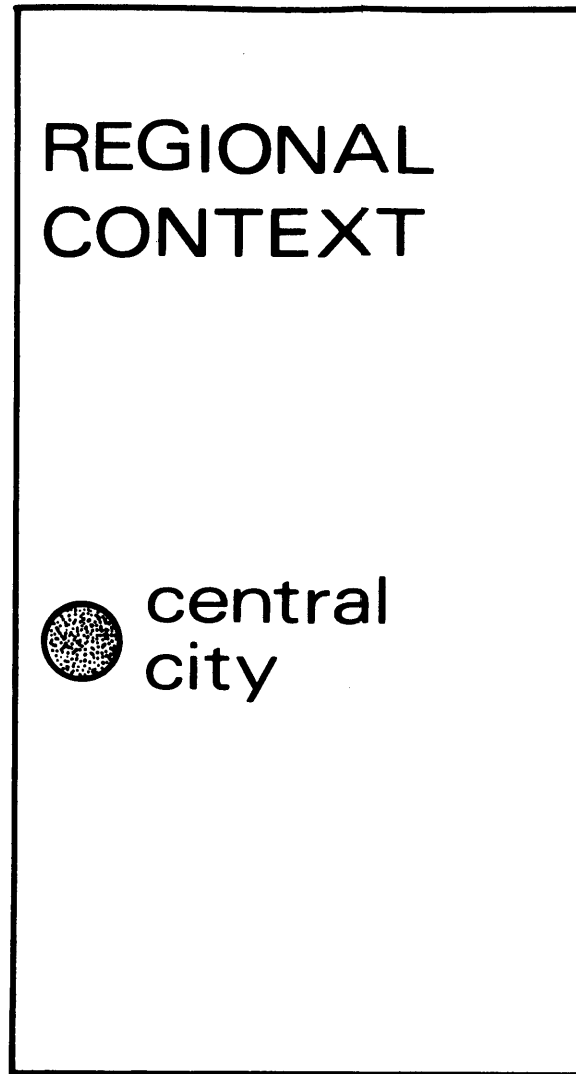
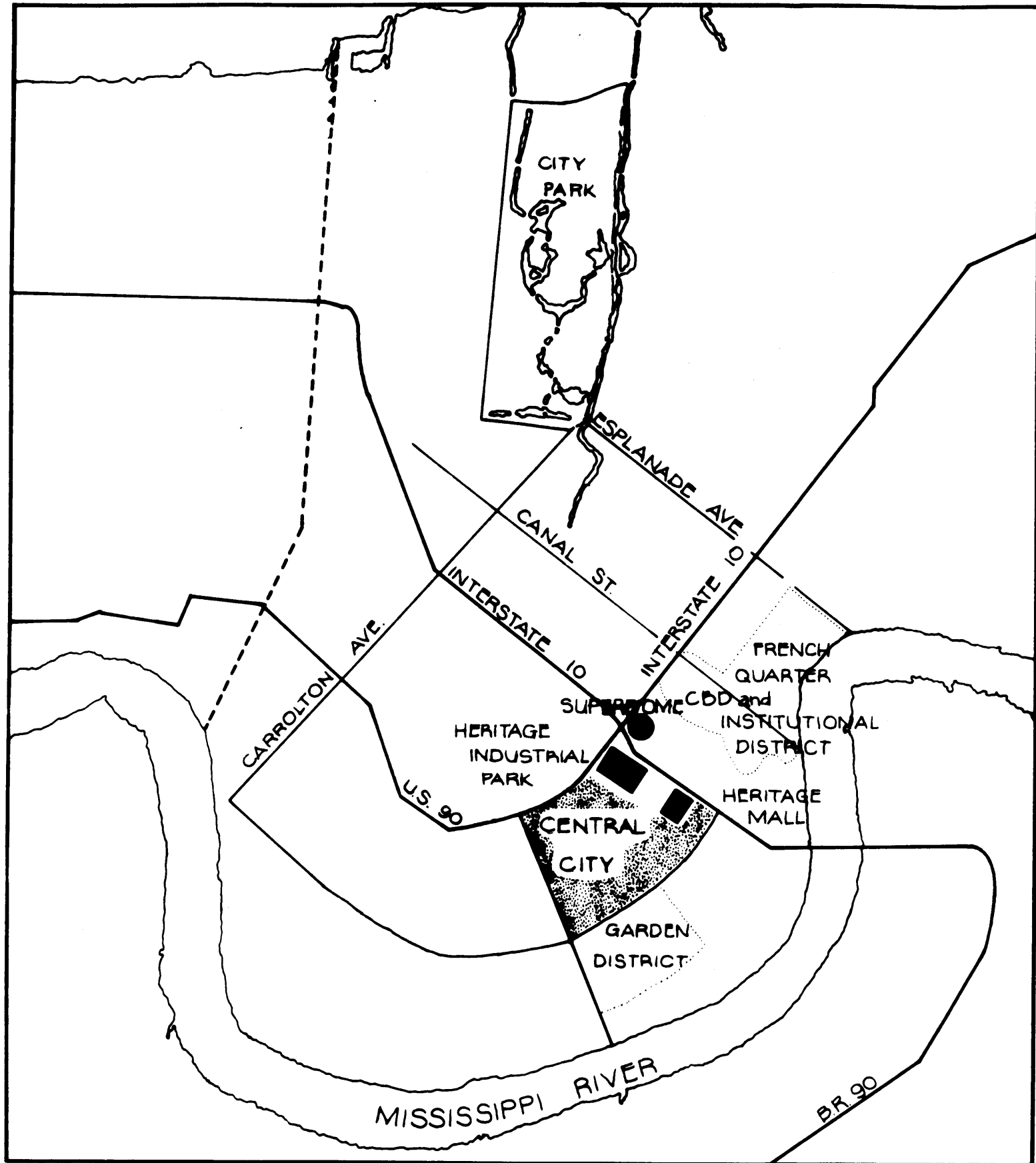
Within the context of this thesis, I shall review the economic and physical development issues confronting Central City. Based upon this I shall attempt to formulate a means by which Central City can not only experience profit oriented community development but also develop a physical framework which will provide community oriented benefits to the local residents.

# Chapter 1

# process & objectives

Central City is a community of approximately 35,000 residents, located on 733 acres of land on the northwest border of the New Orleans central business district (CBD). It is bound by four major arteries; the Pontchartrain Expressway, St. Charles Avenue, Louisiana Avenue and South Claiborne Avenue and comprises one of the largest residential communities in the uptown area.<sup>1</sup> Central City is primarily composed of low income residents of which approximately ninety percent (90%) are black. It is a community rampant with underdeveloped human and capital resources, yet possessing the same potential for change that has marked the revitalization of such famous areas as the Vieux Carre and Garden District. During the last decade Central City has experienced considerable decay and deterioration. It has lost over thirty percent (30%) of its resident population and a major percentage of its job producing industries and retail establishments. Its present conditions, characterized by abandoned housing, vacant lots and boarded storefronts, reflect not only the problems faced by local residents but also the implications of limited capital investments by both the public and private sectors.

In spite of its decline, some efforts have been made to restore the area. In recent years Central City has received a variety of grants under federal and municipal programs and has pursued both social and economic



development as a means of strengthening its environ. Beginning in 1965 it was a designee under the Office of Economic Opportunity's Community Action Program (OEO/CAP). Since then it has received funding under the Demonstration Cities Program (Model Cities): Urban Renewal and the Neighborhood Development Program (NDP). Cumulatively these efforts have represented a significant investment in the areas revitalization. Despite this however, they have not been enough. Continued disinvestment and decay has resulted in Central City's decline and now massive expenditures are needed to salvage it.

Recognizing this, the Urban League of Greater New Orleans in conjunction with the City of New Orleans attempted to intervene in this process by formulating a strategy capable of significantly impacting this (eg. physically and economically) community. They began by seeking federal assistance through the Economic Development Administration of the Department of Commerce. Their objective was to formulate a locally responsive development program which would reflect community needs and contain economic stimulants necessary to encourage reinvestment. The principal components would include developing employment and investment opportunities; quality consumer oriented retail services and adequate housing alternatives. The program would be administered by a local staff under the aegis of the Urban League and would be monitored by the Mayor's Office. In July, 1975 the grant for technical assistance was approved and the Heritage Square Planning Project was created.

Devising a "workable" comprehensive planning program was a considerable proposition. Execution would require an articulate statement of goals and objectives. To facilitate this the Urban League established

the following as goals for the project:

- a. To create 2000 full and part-time jobs over the next five years.
- b. To provide equity investment opportunities for Central City residents.
- c. To create an institutionally based economic development capability within Central City.

Stated as such these goals did not provide the finite, product orientation that the Economic Development Administration sought. Moreover, they did not reflect the policy orientation needed by the planners to optimally perform their duties. Conversations with the Urban League and the Mayor's Office resulted in the establishment of process goals which served as the foundation of the project. These were:

- a. To establish an accurate data base for use as a primary instrument in local planning decisions and policy formulation and for assessing local impact of various transfer income programs;
- b. To establish guidelines for a systematic economic development program, utilizing scattered, clustered and joint development models (as investments as well as physical design) and reflecting local needs for service and capital;
- c. To establish a development process which would create a stream of employment opportunities wages and profits.

These goals were eventually translated into three investment projects and an accompanying institution to monitor them. Specifically these were:

- a. To develop a labor intensive, low skilled, light industrial park, composed of manufacturers for which local or regional markets could be found and which employed 2000 local residents;

- b. To develop a commercial/cultural/entertainment strip within Central City reflecting local consumer retail needs and oriented towards fulfilling a void in local "Black" entertainment;
- c. To develop 200-250 units of new and rehabilitated housing capable of being owned by residents earning between \$6000-\$8000 annually.

Finally, the planning project was to establish a local institution owned by local residents and operated by trained technicians. Projects would be developed and owned by the institution and dividends would be dispersed among local residents (owners). Community interest would be served through participation in decision-making and policy formulation, and representation would be secured through membership on the Board of Directors. Identified as the Heritage Square Development Corporation, the institution would be a local community development corporation (CDC).

Cumulatively these projects were envisioned as the catalyst needed by Central City to: 1) inspire reinvestment in the area by local property owners and 2) induce more localized spending by area residents. Implicit within these goals were two assumptions which guided planning and policy making activities. First, that the key to revitalization is the creation of jobs and income. This can provide the impetus for and means of upgrading both the physical and economic environment. Secondly, that income leakages from the area should be captured by providing service establishments to meet the needs of the residents. This can then be channeled through reinvestment to provide additional jobs for residents.<sup>2</sup>

Controversial as they were, these assumptions were the basis for pursuing the product oriented process. Consultants were engaged to perform feasibility studies in their respective areas and their findings served

as the foundations for the redevelopment plan. Recommendations were evaluated for their individual and collective impact on:

- a. stimulating economic growth
- b. generating employment opportunities
- c. providing needed goods and services
- d. maximizing the use of limited capital resources

and projects were given a priority listing reflecting their ability to satisfy these criteria. Based on this present and future planners would be able to organize development projects in a sequence to reflect both community desires and economic realities.

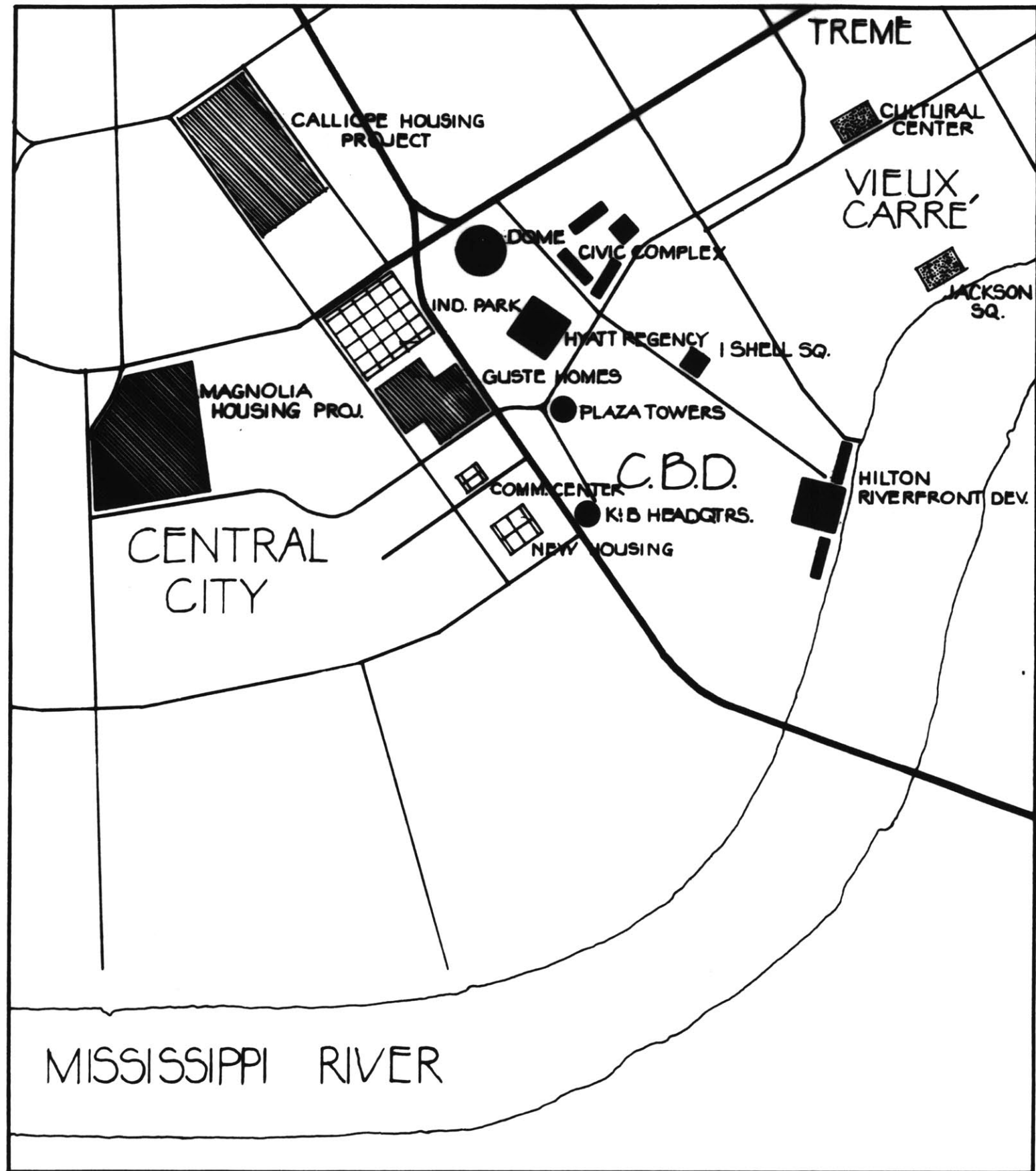
The final report submitted to the EDA lacked project oriented specificity. Neither time nor manpower was sufficient to fulfill this obligation.<sup>3</sup> More importantly however, staff felt that it was irresponsible to outline a site specific development program which would not be executed for a minimum of four years. Instead an institutional framework was recommended incorporating organizational activities and delineating staff responsibilities. Ideally this would serve as the basis for daily operations and would be followed by the staff of the newly created CDC. It would reflect political and economic changes which had occurred during the period after the project's termination and would be more attuned to local needs and desires. Overall, the program would cost an estimated \$16.0 million dollars phased over three years and required a minimum of \$9.0 million dollars in state or federal subsidy. The program would require at least 18 months to operationalize the first phase of development and three years before each component was in place. Project development, resource allocation and management operations would be exclusively handled by the

CDC, and benefits would be accrued by the area residents.

The report's focus on organizational development issues, though necessary, left an assortment of physical planning issues to be explored. The site upon which the projects were to be built was relatively compact, and despite its zoning had been used almost exclusively for residential purposes. It was located adjacent to the central business district, and was centrally located within the regional transportation network (see Map on page 18 ). It contained a housing project with one of the highest densities among developments within the public housing system, and reflected one of the most disjointed arrangements of land uses in the entire project area. Ultimately the goal would not only be to develop three independent projects conforming to financial and social constraints, but to develop a fluid living environment, capable of accomodating disparate and sometimes conflicting land uses.

Success would be achieved only if project objectives could be organized in an effective manner satisfying both social and economic development goals. The process would include an inventory of present land-uses and the establishment of performance criteria for local design oriented decision making. It would be finalized by the organization of the site to support housing, commerce, industry and recreation. Actual design would be monitored by the CDC staff with participation from the community and phased over a 10-15 year period. Municipal and federal grants would be used where appropriate to finance development activities and could be used as an effectice mechanism to monitor stages of growth.

Within the context of this thesis I shall review and discuss the major planning and design issues affecting the development of this project.



### MUNICIPAL CONTEXT

-  proposed projects
-  public housing
-  cbd developmtns
-  public parks

### HSPP



NEW ORLEANS, LA.

## FOOTNOTES

1. New Orleans has historically been divided into two major areas, uptown and downtown as defined by Canal Street. Communities falling to the west of Canal Street are considered uptown, while communities in the east are considered downtown.
  
2. The first condition assumes that industry can be persuaded to locate within blighted communities and subsequently catalyze neighborhood development. Others contend that upgrading the local environment is a prerequisite to industrial relocation and should be initiated first. Neither alternative considers the history of industrial location decisions over the last decade nor do they reflect empirical data on the subject. Considerations of exorbitant land cost, problems of land assembly negative tax implications, and the necessity of multi-level facilities seems to have been omitted. Finally the enormous cost of wage subsidies (to the federal government) in facilitating this project render it as an impossibility.  
  
The second assumption reflects a "boot strap" theory of development. It is based on the idea that indigent communities possess the resources necessary to alter their economic (and ostensibly their physical) environment. It further assumes that it is the inefficient use of these resources which have resulted in the absence of local services. It concludes that by providing services (eg. import substitution), consumer spending patterns will be changed (eg. result in local spending) and opportunities for recapture of revenues will be created.
  
3. Project planners had little opportunity to formulate the planning and design methodology. Program assumptions and products were written into the grant application and served as the principle basis for research. As a result, fundamental issues such as land, assembly, demolition and relocation cost, principle issues in project development were left unresolved. Omission of these considerations in the proposal and the inability of the project staff to reach some conclusive statement on them, resulted in a laissez-faire approach by both the city and private sector.

# **Chapter 2**

# **cbd growth and local influences**

New Orleans lies midway between two major southern growth centers, Atlanta, Georgia and Houston, Texas. It is a major part of the Gulf of Mexico and serves as a financial and tourism center for the Gulf South region.

Located approximately 110 miles north of the Gulf of Mexico, it is bound by two bodies of water, Lake Pontchartrain to the north and the Mississippi River to the south. It comprises 197.1 square miles of land and lies approximately 10 feet below sea level. Called the Crescent City, a name reflecting its shape formed by a bend in the Mississippi River, New Orleans is a nucleus of social and cultural vitality which reflects an interesting juxtaposition between nineteenth century old and twentieth century new.

As a major city within the "Sunbelt", New Orleans has recently experienced a tremendous rise in construction and development activities. Largely restricted to the central business district, it has consisted of new office buildings, hotels, retail stores and civic and cultural facilities. It has gradually over taken areas previously reserved for warehousing and is now threatening to replace certain manufacturing and industrial uses along the river. Cumulatively however, the effect has been positive. It has resulted in a more diverse central core and a more lucrative environment for business.

In spite of these activities, New Orleans remains one of the poorest cities within this nation. Of its 500,000 residents eligible to work, approximately 12% are unemployed.<sup>1</sup> National surveys indicate that New Orleans possesses one of the poorest standards of living, the highest illiteracy rate and the lowest per capita incomes among the nations fifty (50) largest cities. Recent developments within the local and national economy have not benefited New Orleans, and its plight threatens to worsen if change is not forthcoming. Contract losses to competing ports in Gulfport, Mississippi and Houston, Texas, for example, have demonstrated that New Orleans is losing its competitive grip on the port industry. Energy conservation threatens to decrease tourist trade (as family mobility, at least by automobile becomes limited), and over saturation of the tourist market threatens to further reduce the viability of New Orleans' third most important industry.

Intervention strategies, though limited, have centered on strengthening and diversifying the local economy. Among the most substantive proposals has been a port modernization program and an attempt to institutionally monitor tourist and industrial development.<sup>2</sup> In addition, public forums on economic development have been sponsored by the city and considerable research has been undertaken to identify manufacturing interests willing to relocate within New Orleans. Despite this however, the city continues to lose its manufacturing base, and with it, local employment opportunities.

Most efforts to diversify the local activities have been publicly inspired, Private interest however, have concentrated on restructuring the composition of the central business district. They have de-emphasized industrial relocation and have promoted commercial retail and office development.

Evidence of this may be observed in the tremendous surge of new construction within the New Orleans CBD as well as the identifiable expansion of retail and service facilities within the central core. In addition it can be observed by the entry of nationally based chains into the New Orleans retail market and the relocation of industrial headquarters to the area.

Development activity within the CBD has not been without reason.

Demand for retail and commercial space has been rising for almost a decade and is expected to continue for the next two decades.<sup>3</sup> Over four (4.0) million square feet of commercial space has been constructed since 1970 and approximately 2.3 million are expected to be constructed before 1985.<sup>4</sup> Financial institutions traditionally known for their conservative lending practices have been extremely receptive as indicated in their liberalized policies of financing riskier projects. Cumulatively these activities have had a significant effect on the geography of the central business district; with the most demonstrative being the expansion of the perceived boundary of the CBD from Poydras Street to Howard Avenue.

This surge of development has precipitated a rash of new pressures on local neighborhoods. Areas such as Faubourg Marigny, Tremé, the Irish Channel and the Lower Garden District, located to the east and west of the central business district and once bastions of urban poor, have experienced considerable change as demand for conveniently located residential accommodations has intensified. This trend has been compounded by the emergence of a young, middle income, professional class which is unwilling to commute from outlying regions, and who are seeking moderately priced, convenient

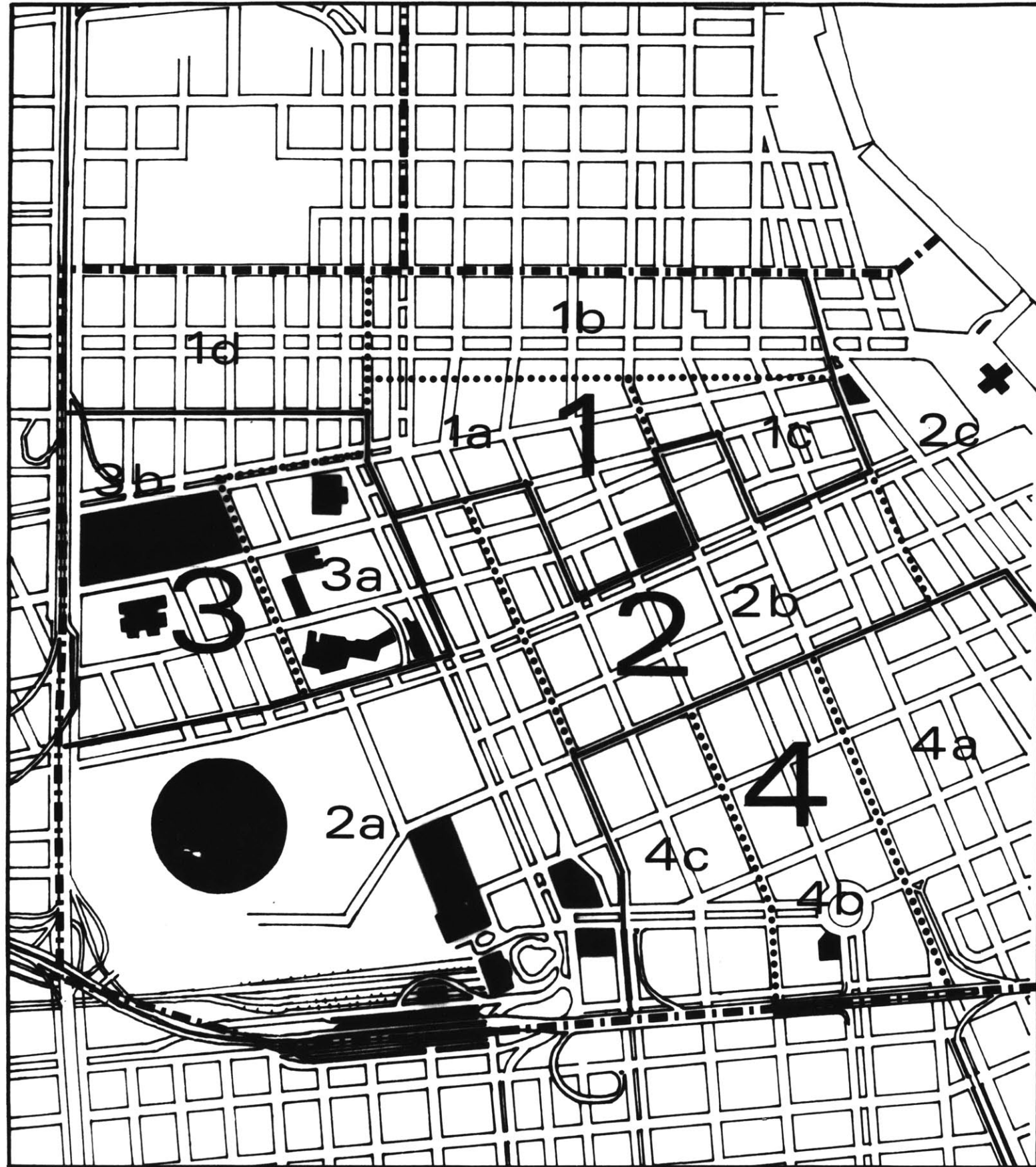
and accessible housing. The city, aware of these trends, has attempted to reinforce them by investing in physical improvements, such as parks and playgrounds, and enhancing the natural beauty of these neighborhoods through administering low interest loans for rehabilitation and grants for facade treatments. Preceded, in many cases, by major improvements in public services and infrastructure, these efforts have had a tremendous affect on stabilizing population flow and initiating new development.

To understand the influence of these activities on revitalizing Central City I have reviewed the development patterns within the CBD. Through this I hope to establish an analytical framework for understanding both the significance of the Heritage Square Planning Project and its implications for the development program within the area.

## **cbd growth**

The central business district is generally defined by Rue Iberville, the Mississippi River, the Pontchartrain Expressway and Interstate 10 (see map). Within it are four areas which reflect individual uses, activities and development patterns. These are:

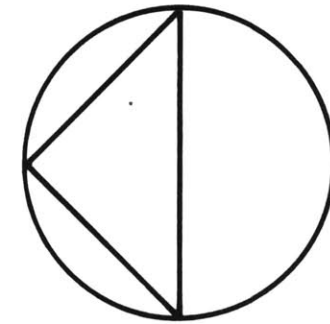
- I. The CBD Core
- II. The Poydras/Riverfront Corridor



## CBD ACTIVITY CENTERS

- 1** CBD CORE  
 a. office core  
 b. retail center  
 c. cbd historic area  
 d. n. canal st. retail area
- 2** POYDRS/RIVERFRONT CORR.  
 a. superdome  
 b. mid-poydras corridor  
 c. poydras-riverfront
- 3** HEAL & CIVIC COMP.  
 a. civic complex  
 b. heal complex
- 4** WHSING/UNDEV. ZNE.  
 a. warehousing district  
 b. st. charles ave. corr.  
 c. rampart-carondolet

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III. The HEAL and Government Complex

IV. The Warehousing and Interim Development Zone

Cumulatively they represent the retail, financial, institutional and civic districts, and reflect the most intensive land-use within the entire city. For the purpose of investigation, these areas have been sub-divided to reflect their specific uses, and to more adequately demonstrate their influence on local activities. These areas are as follows:

- I. The CBD Core
  - a. Concentrated Office Core
  - b. Retail Center
  - c. CBD Historic Area
  - d. North Canal Street Retail Area<sup>5</sup>
- II. Poydras/Riverfront Corridor
  - a. Superdome and Adjacent Area
  - b. Mid-Poydras Corridor
  - c. Poydras/Riverfront Area
- III. HEAL and Government Complex
  - a. Civic Complex
  - b. Health and Allied Service Complex
- IV. Warehousing and Interim Development Zone
  - a. Warehousing District
  - b. St. Charles Avenue Corridor
  - c. Rampart/Carondelet Corridor
  - d. Riverfront Extension of Poydras Street

These areas represent both the primary subsectors within these centers as well as the catalyzing forces influencing development within adjacent communities. Measured by both private and public investment, their influence as development centers has been considerable. Yet to fully understand their implications it is important that they be reviewed individually. The following is a descriptive summary of the areas and the type of activities which are found within them.

## **the cbd core**

This area, accomodating over 63% of the labor force, has traditionally served as the administrative and employment center for the city and as the primary shopping and retail district for the region. It is composed of four distinct sub-areas which extend from Rue Iberville to Poydras Street and North Claiborne Avenue to Tchoupitoulas Street and represents the central area historically associated with CBD activities. Within it are found the highest concentrations of retail and commercial facilities, historic streets and buildings and some of the oldest functional land uses within the area.

For the last decade, growth within this area has been relatively stable. However recent shifts in corporate headquarters from major urban centers in the northeast to cities along the sunbelt has resulted in a proliferation of construction within the area. Development activities primarily restricted to the Poydras Corridor and the Riverfront area have had a significant impact on the central business district. The Central Core, particularly hard hit, has experienced a variety of consequences among which are: increased vehicular congestion, parking overloads and localized conflicts in pedestrian circulation. In addition increased speculation for commercial and retail development has resulted in both the demolition of numerous historically significant structures and the intensification of high density construction within the core.

# **poydras/riverfront corridor**

The area located south of the Superdome and west of the office core, and extending along Poydras Street to the river, has been called the development frontier of New Orleans. Characteristically considered the major link between the southern and northern poles of the central business district (identified by the Mississippi River and Superdome respectively), this area (and the development activities occurring within it) will be the principal determinant of future land uses in the area now vacant between Poydras Street and Howard Avenue and will have the most significant influence on development patterns within Central City.

The Poydras Corridor, as it is referred to, is composed of three sub-areas:

- a. Poydras Riverfront
- b. Mid-Poydras Corridor
- c. Rampart/Loyola Corridor

Over 50% of its land is presently in streets or without structure and over 4.5 million square feet of new retail and commercial space are either being developed or are firmly committed. Four projects have been constructed in the past decade and have established this sector as the primary growth area of the CBD. These are:

- a. Hilton Hotel and Riverfront Complex
- b. One Shell Square
- c. Louisiana Superdome
- d. Hyatt Regency Hotel

Cumulatively they represent over 2 million square feet of commercial and retail space, but more importantly, they characterize the shift in develop-

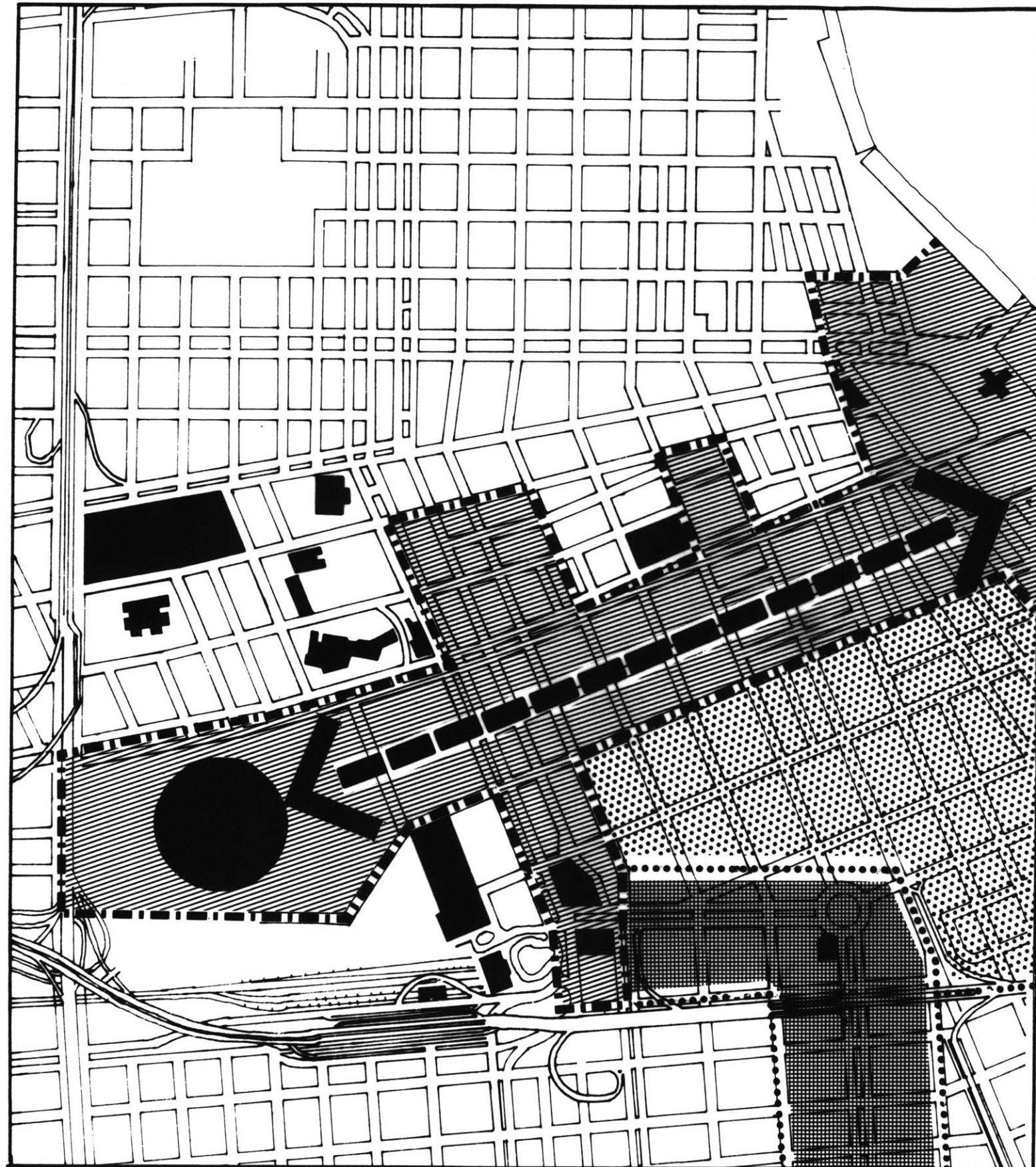
ment activities to the Poydras Street area.

Development within the Poydras Corridor is analogous to classical shopping mall planning. The Superdome/Hyatt Complex and the Hilton/Riverfront Development serve as retail activity anchors while the Poydras Corridor serves as a linear spine. Market support is provided through three principal sources:




- a. consumers found within the office corridor
- b. commercial office space, hotels and residential facilities located at the poles
- c. regional shoppers within the metropolitan area

Finally, additional support is provided by the tourist industry.

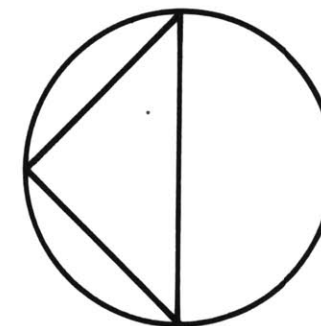
One of the most significant aspects of growth within this area is its potential influence on investment considerations within Central City. Although speculation is somewhat premature, it has already catalyzed new investments both along Howard Avenue and within the underdeveloped zone between Poydras Street and Howard Avenue. Implications for Central City however, are more evident by observing the patterns of growth within sub-area 2-a. Within this area linear development along Poydras Street is intersected by a similar pattern of growth along Loyola Avenue. Beginning at the Civic Complex it encompasses the Superdome and Hyatt Regency Complex and extends along Loyola Avenue to Howard Avenue. There it is terminated. Two office buildings the Plaza Towers and the Mutual Life Insurance building serve as the natural pole for east/west expansion and establish a nucleus of concentrated office activities in the northwest sector of the CBD. Local development along Howard Avenue reinforces this trend and services it through a variety of supportive enterprises. This factor is considered extremely important for Central City's future in light of Howard Avenue



# IMPACT ANALYSIS OF CBD EXPANSION

- 
 primary impact zone  
 poydras corridor
- 
 secondary impact zone  
 st. charles ave. corridor
- 
 tertiary impact zone  
 warehousing district

## HSPP



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and because of its significance as the western boundary of the central business district.

## **heal & government complex**

The area west of Canal Street and bound by the Interstate 10 Highway, Poydras Street and Loyola Avenue has been designated Sub-Area III. It includes the civic complex, composed of City Hall, Municipal Court and other related facilities, and the HEAL Complex which comprises the largest aggregation of medical facilities within the city. Principally a service and employment center, the area is scheduled to increase significantly over the next 20 years. Employment opportunities are expected to increase by almost 33% (from 13,600 in 1974 to 18,000 by 2000) and major construction projects, such as the Tulane University Medical School and In-patient Facility, are expected to significantly increase density within the area.

These activities are not expected to impact Central City directly. However, there are a number of factors which cumulatively will have an indirect affect upon it. Among these are:

- a. Increased competition for centrally located housing
- b. Increased employment opportunities for unskilled and semi-skilled workers
- c. Potential of creating support industries to service the medical complex

## **warehousing & undeveloped zone**

This area, located between Girod Street and the Pontchartrain Expressway, is largely composed of light manufacturers, warehouses and undeveloped land. It is presently located in a speculative land market and has been proposed as a location for middle and upper income housing. There are a number of office buildings within the area which are primarily located along Howard Avenue and aggregated at the intersection of Howard and Loyola Avenues and around Lee Circle. Their presence is particularly significant because they mark the absolute western of office development within the CBD. Despite their presence however, planners and developers do not feel that office development will dominate land uses. Instead they perceive it as a residential link between the predominantly office uses within the Poydras Corridor and the residential uses within the Lower Garden District, Irish Channel and Central City.

## **cbd expansion local influence**

As previously mentioned New Orleans is presently undergoing a shift in the distribution of retail and commercial uses within its central core. In response there has been a significant growth in interest among communities

which surround it. On the eastern boundary areas such as the Vieux Carre, Faubourg Marigny and Treme, have experienced a surge in residential rehabilitation and neighborhood restoration. In areas to the west, where neither development policy nor activities have been as pronounced, new areas of potential growth have been identified. In the Irish Channel and Lower Garden District, for example, this has resulted in the emergence of a new frontier of residential rehabilitation. In less prominent communities such as Central City and Broadmoor, it has resulted in a timid but enthusiastic redevelopment effort.

Complementing these activities has been the emergence of new commercial spines throughout the communities surrounding the core. In the Vieux Carre and the Irish Channel, Rue Royal and Magazine Street respectively, have become linear (commercial) strips specializing in retail uses such as antique shops, boutiques and restaurants. In Treme, the central artery Ramparts Street, has emerged as a dining and entertainment strip complementing the recently developed New Orleans Cultural Center and the Louis Armstrong Memorial Park. Finally in Central City, South Claiborne Avenue, the retail spine serving the uptown community, is gaining a new birth as a black entertainment center.

Cumulatively these activities are having a tremendous impact on local development patterns. In some communities they are reinforcing existing patterns and trends, while in others they are introducing new ones. In areas such as Treme, Faubourg Marigny and the Lower Garden District they have resulted in massive rehabilitation and redevelopment efforts. While in communities such as Central City, they have resulted in greater stability and more localized development. Regardless of where or how development has

occurred however, neighborhoods are increasingly being influenced by development patterns within the CBD.

Interestingly, these patterns have not always been welcomed. Communities undergoing change have in some cases been quite resentful. Local residents, whom in many cases are poor, have been angered by it and have coalesced to form groups to oppose it. Their concern has been the unknown implications of redevelopment. Advocates feel that urban growth and reinvestment are the only means of upgrading local standards. They cite neighborhood revitalization and historical preservation as objectives, and use them as a rationale for improving housing public services and infrastructure. Conversely, opponents feel that while such investments will upgrade the local environment, it will also result in their eventual removal. Their inability to compete for housing and absorb the rise in cost associated with such developments are cited as the basis for this resentment. Their fear, however, is not unwarranted. Prevailing market forces within the local environment and precedents established within other communities have established a trend within Central New Orleans which local residents are becoming increasingly aware of.

The evolution of development within these communities has not been without cause. In many areas it has resulted from interest demonstrated by both the public and private sectors, and in some cases from joint ventures. In the Vieux Carre for example, development has resulted from privately initiated activities reinforced by public investments. The renovations of the Jackson Square and the French Market, and the construction of the Moon Walk are typical examples of how the city has complemented retail development with capital expenditures. Another example is the creation of

the Vieux Carre Commission, a local autonomous agency charged with the responsibility of establishing policy and monitoring development activities within the area. It is composed of a small professional staff, financed by the city, which monitors and evaluates all proposals for development and determines their conformity with local goals and policies. It contributes to both the economic and aesthetic qualities of the environment through a variety of measures among which are the:

- a. regulation of vehicular traffic during peak pedestrian hours
- b. monitoring of street signs and billboards for aesthetic conformity
- c. insurance of conformity with local architectural standards
- d. control of retail and commercial development within its boundaries

Development within the Vieux Carre however, has been and continues to be a logical extension of overall development within the core. It is the oldest community within New Orleans, it serves as the eastern boundary of the CBD, and it is the focus of regional and national tourist activities. Its emergence as a prime residential neighborhood over the last decade, while significant, is not surprising. It contains one of the richest mixtures of residential architecture within the city and possesses many of the amenities of inner city living (without the negative factors associated with it). Of greater significance however, has been its influence on private and public investments within two bordering communities; Faubourg Marigny and Tremé. Located to the east and north of the Vieux Carre respectively, these communities have recently emerged as highly desirable residential locations. In many ways they are similar to their elder neighbor. They are residential in quality, of medium density and offer the same access to commerce and

entertainment as the Vieux Carre without the liability of being a tourist attraction.

Much of the development within Marigny has resulted from private initiative. Its location on the eastern edge of the Vieux Carre, the redevelopment of Esplanade Avenue and the overflow of commercial activities into Marigny have been the primary contributors. Interestingly, the city has played a major role in sustaining the momentum. Through public investments in infrastructure and major capital improvement programs the city has increased the affect of development by spreading it throughout the area. The result has been the creation of a stronger residential community serving the central business district and reinforcement of commercial and residential development within the Vieux Carre.

Faubourg Tremé, on the other hand, has evolved as a result of two major capital improvements; the construction of the New Orleans Cultural Center and the development of the Louis Armstrong Memorial Park. In many ways however, it has also responded to the proliferation of residential and commercial development within Faubourg Marigny and the Vieux Carre. Bound by the Interstate-10 and North Claiborne in the north and North Ramparts Street in the south, Tremé is unquestionably the last frontier of residential rehabilitation within the eastern half of the central core. It is similiar in quality to its southern neighbors and provide the same access to goods and services as both Marigny and the Vieux Carre.

Tremé's recent surge of development activities is unquestionably a result of the two public projects and development within Marigny and the Vieux Carre. However, there have been other contributing factors. A recent proposal (which has been funded) to convert land under the I-10 expressway

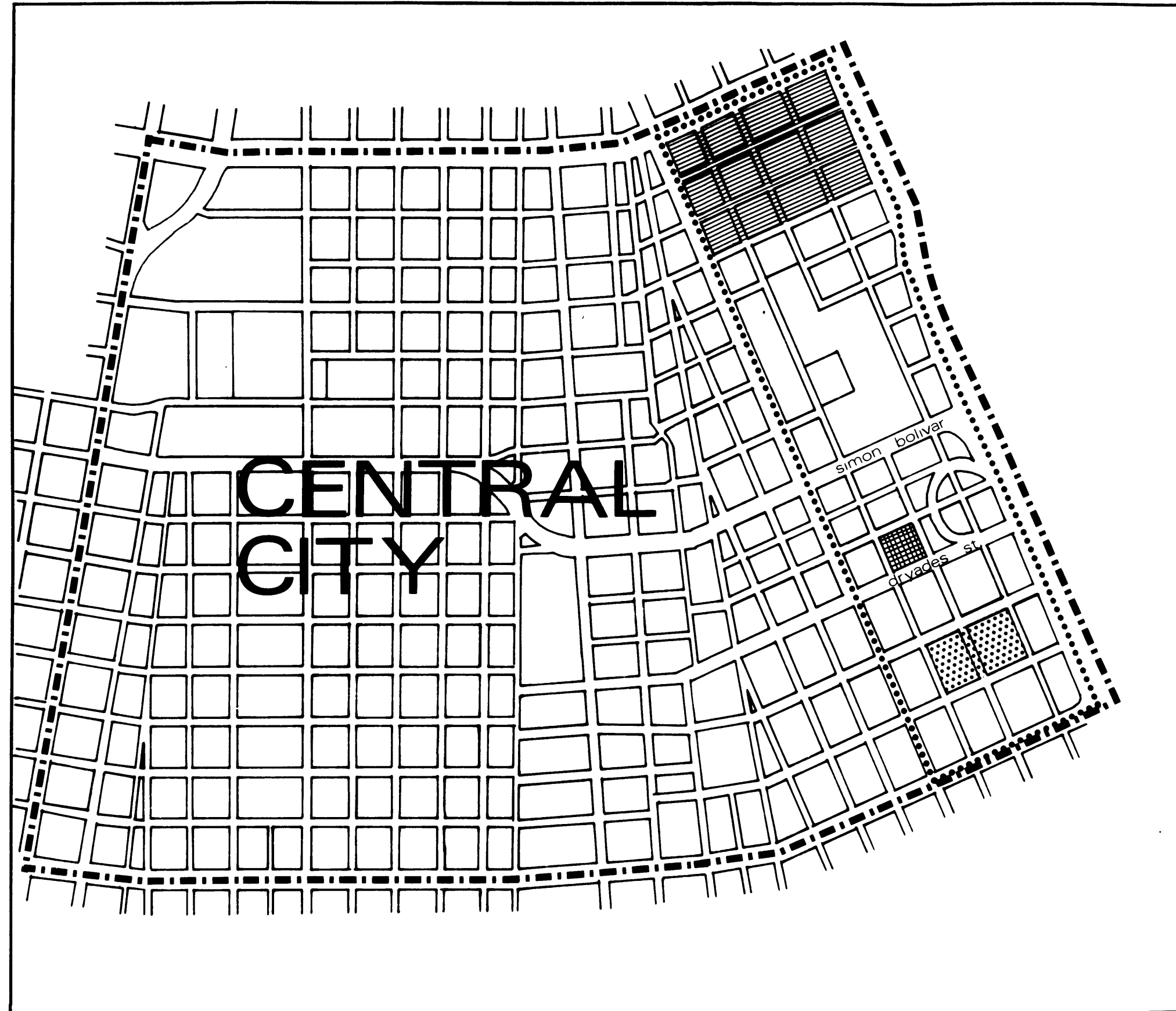
for active and passive recreation, the development of the medical complex in the northeast sector of the CBD and reinforcement of commercial and retail activities throughout the area have cumulatively increased demand for reasonably priced, accessible housing. In affect, these activities have contributed to development by strengthening the existing fabric, increasing opportunities for commercial and residential investments, and by broadening the influence of development patterns within older communities.

In the western half of the city investment patterns have been quite different. Change has been more recent and redevelopment substantially slower. Economic development policy, which was geared towards inspiring commercial and residential investments within the east, has been primarily limited to local community development projects in the west. Recently however these trends have been reversed. Locally inspired, and initiated in response to the strength of growing investments within the Poydras Corridor, communities to the west of the central business district have begun to experience a recent surge of new development. In certain areas such as the Irish Channel and the Lower Garden District these patterns have already begun to influence development. Residential rehabilitation has taken a significant leap, commercial investments have grown and infrastructure development has been considerable. Areas such as Coliseum Square, Race Street and Jackson Avenue have emerged as examples of successful preservation efforts and their influence on restoration and rehabilitation activities has begun to spread throughout the uptown region.



In other areas however, the impact has not been as obvious. Here redevelopment has been more sporadic and calculated. It has tended to emerge on the periphery of established residential districts and along the corridors of

strong commercial strips. In some cases it has been welcomed by local residents, while in others it has been met with considerable resistance. For residents of these communities the implications have been obvious, local redevelopment will result in their removal. In response they have attempted to formulate alternative programs. Central City is one such community and the Heritage Square Planning Project is their alternative. In Section Two this area shall be reviewed and their responses explored.

By concentrating on the site bounded by the Pontchartrain Expressway, St. Charles Avenue, Melpomene Street and South Claiborne Avenue, hereafter referred to as the development site (see page 39 ), I shall articulate the project goals as they affect the local physical and economic environment. I shall discuss a number of the major obstacles confronting this project and its completion and finally, through the use of illustrative site plans, I shall attempt to show the relationship between project development (specifically of the Convenience Goods Complex) and the satisfaction of community economic development goals. Discussions of municipal growth patterns shall be used as a means of understanding economic activities within the city and local analysis shall be used as means of understanding its implications. I shall attempt to construct a pattern of development within the city focusing upon its impact on development within the project area. Local analogues shall be used to support my hypothesis and support data will be provided where necessary. Ultimately my objective is to demonstrate the relationship between economic development policy within medium sized urban communities and their implications on the organization of large scale elements satisfying social and economic objectives.



# CENTRAL CITY CONTEXT

-  project area
-  developmt site
-  housing
-  commerce
-  industry

# HSPP



NEW ORLEANS, LA.

## FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup> James R. Bobo, The New Orleans Economy: Pro Bono Publico Research Study No. 19, Division of Business Administration. University of New Orleans, August, 1975, p. 52.

<sup>2</sup> Tourist and industrial development are presently monitored and controlled by the Vieux Carre Commission and the New Orleans Industrial Development Board.

<sup>3</sup> Wallace, McHarg, Roberts and Todd, Central Area New Orleans Growth Management Program/Technical Report, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, April 1974, p. 18.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid. p. 20-25.

<sup>5</sup> North Canal retail area is distinguished from the commercial core retail. Although it is an extension of commerce along canal street, it is primarily associated with N. Claiborne Avenue and strip development retail uses.

# **Chapter 3**

# setting the local context

As in eastern communities, commercial expansion within the CBD catalyzed demand for and investments in cheap, accessible housing in the western half of the central core. Areas such as the Lower Garden District and Irish Channel were the first communities to be affected. These communities, chosen for their abundance of architecturally significant structures and because they posed the least resistance to gentrification<sup>1</sup>, were inundated with young, predominantly white professionals employed within the CBD, who were incapable of competing for real property within such established areas as Audoubon and the Garden District. Instead they purchased Victorian mansions, Greek Revival duplexes and Creole cottages (within these areas) and either restored them to their original stature or rehabilitated them to reflect a more contemporary life style.

Local efforts to support and reinforce this trend were plentiful. Publicly initiated and sponsored by the local redevelopment authority, the Central Improvement Agency (CIA), they consisted of financial stimulants for local investments and federally sponsored grants for infrastructure development. Through major investments in street improvement and beautification and by strategically locating construction projects to refurbish parks, playgrounds and neighborhood facilities, the

CIA demonstrated that not only did it support these efforts but that it would reinforce them when and where possible. Finally, through the efforts of a handful of local residents, the lower Garden District became a registered National Historical Preservation District. This was considered a formidable step in revitalization, as it made the area eligible for a variety of funding from federal agencies and contributed to its desirability as a residential neighborhood.

By 1973 local rehabilitation dominated the residential markets in the Lower Garden District and Irish Channel. Supportive retail and specialized commercial uses were emerging along major arteries and a discernible distinction in characteristics was apparent. Among the new crop were novelty shops, restaurants, boutiques, and antique shops. Their presence, while welcomed, gave evidence to the fact that these communities had undergone change. In total, their social, economic and to some extent racial composition had been altered and the urbane characteristics which had distinguished them as ghettos were no longer prevalent.

In Central City the community bordering the Garden District to the north and the CBD to the west, the situation was similar. It possessed the architectural and locational advantages of these communities, but more importantly it contained a readily available housing stock suitable for investment and rehabilitation. Unfortunately what Central City possessed in physical attributes, it lacked in social amenities.<sup>2</sup> It was also 90% Black, possessed one of the highest rates of crime and had suffered from massive disinvestment and deterioration over the last decade. Redevelopment efforts which did exist had been marginal, and were primarily inspired by opportunities to capitalize on the availability of federal monies.

Private investment had been virtually non-existent and efforts to encourage it had met with dismal failure.

Interestingly, by late 1974, development opportunities within Central City had begun to emerge. Principally located along the St. Charles Avenue/Carondelet Street Corridor, and spreading north along Baronne and Brainiard Streets, intersecting Jackson Avenue and encompassing parts of Dryades Street, they consisted of small residential clusters dispersed along these spines and composed of choice examples of historically significant architecture. The new residents, resembling the pioneers of the Lower Garden District, and Irish Channel were vastly different from the local inhabitants. They were better educated, more affluent and possessed the security of stable, highly rewarding employment. In addition they possessed the ability to choose among local housing alternatives and were capable of capitalizing on opportunities when available.

Local residents cognizant of these activities, were sceptical of their futures. They were aware of conversion activities within neighboring communities and were now faced with the reality that their community might be next. Cumulatively the:

- a. centralized location of Central City in relation to CBD expansion,
- and
- b. exhaustion of local supplies of low cost standard housing suitable for rehabilitation within adjacent communities.

were contributing to the genetrification of Central City and now local residents were encumbered with the responsibility of developing an alternative strategy.

In an effort to neutralize this trend and to establish a viable alternative for local black residents the Heritage Square Planning Project (HSPP)

was introduced. Sponsored by the Urban League of Greater New Orleans and Funded by the City of New Orleans and the Economic Development Administration of the Department of Commerce, its objectives were to devise an institutionally based economic development strategy capable of providing employment commercial, and residential opportunities for area residents and to encourage minority entrepreneurial and cultural development within the area. To accomplish this, three projects would be initiated. First, a light industrial park would be developed to employ 2000 local residents in unskilled and semi-skilled jobs. It would be located within the project area and would be easily accessible to local residents. Second, an entertainment, commercial and cultural complex would be developed to serve both the local population of Central City and the larger Black community within New Orleans. Located along Dryades Street, the principal commercial strip within the uptown Black community, it would serve the area by providing commercial space for minority entrepreneurs, a theatre, concert hall and museum. It would serve as a center for Black oriented entertainment, and symbolically demonstrate both the economic capabilities and cultural achievements of Black Americans. Finally the project would include the construction of 200-300 units of new and rehabilitated, low and moderate income housing. Developed for local residents with annual incomes of between \$6000 and \$8000 and designed to conform to existing density patterns, it would be located adjacent to the commercial/cultural complex and would be connected to it through a network of pedestrian paths.

Development of the Heritage Square Project was not inconceivable. Numerous studies of the area had been made and similar proposals recommended. Unfortunately local entrepreneurs sceptical of the area had avoided invest-

ing because of its reputation as a high risk environment. To eradicate this, the CIA initiated a number of local development strategies to catalyze investment in existing retail establishments and encourage development of new ones. Substantively the programs consisted of the administration of direct loans and grants for interior renovations and facade treatments and the development of a variety of street improvement programs to improve vehicular and pedestrian traffic. The Dryades Street Improvement and Beautification Program, one of the first, consisted of upgrading and resurfacing the existing street, planting vegetation and installing street furniture. In addition similar projects were initiated along adjacent streets within the area to improve circulation.

Unfortunately these efforts did not result in massive commercial investments. Local entrepreneurs unable to project on the areas future maintained a conservative (investment) posture. It did however contribute to future efforts. As a result of these and similar programs within the area Central City's accessibility increased significantly and the incentive to redevelop it became more pronounced.

To more effectively understand development trends within the area and to establish the framework for further investigation I have included a basic review of land uses and development patterns within Central City.

## **land uses**

Central City is primarily a residential community. As indicated in Table I, Existing Land-uses Within Central City, housing comprises approximately 284

TABLE I

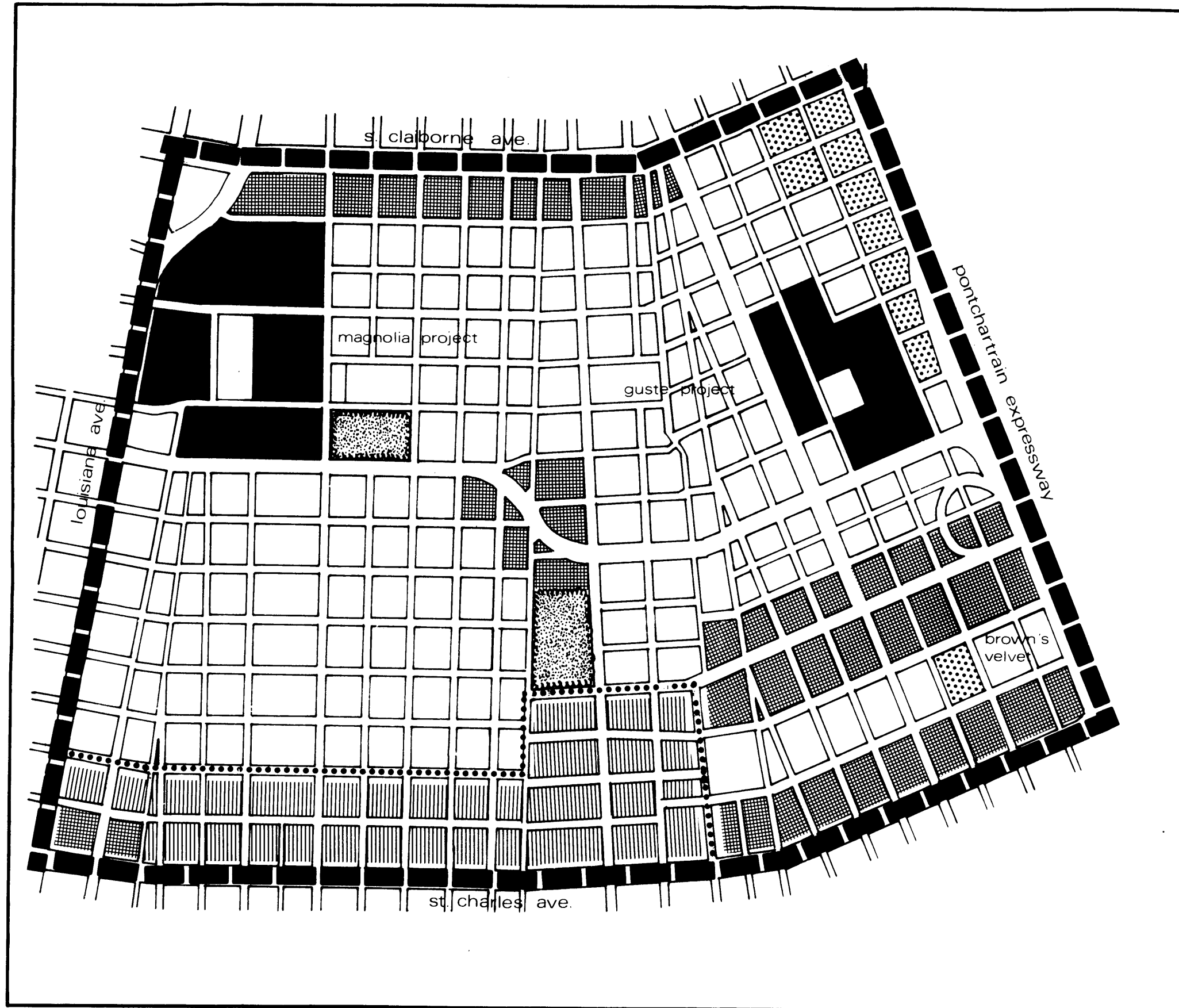
EXISTING LAND-USES WITHIN CENTRAL CITY

<u>LAND-USE CATEGORY</u>	<u>TOTAL NO. ACRES</u>	<u>PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL LAND AREA</u>
RESIDENTIAL	<u>283.5</u>	<u>38.6</u>
Single Family	40.1	5.4
Multi-Family	243.4	33.2
MANUFACTURING	3.	.4
TRANSPORTATION, COMMUNICATION & PUBLIC UTILITIES	11.2	1.5
STREETS	239.3	32.6
COMMERCE	18.3	2.4
SERVICE	47.4	6.4
CULTURAL & RECREATION	15.3	2.0
VACANT	115.3	15.0
EXTRACTIVE	<u>.4</u>	<u>.5</u>
TOTAL LAND AREA	733.7	98.5

acres or 38% of the available land area. It is composed of a mixture of Victorian, Creole, Italianate and Greek Revival architecture and is dominated by multi-family dwelling units of which a majority are two family shot-guns. Located on the eastern and western boundaries of the area are two major housing projects which have and continue to significantly influence planning and development policy within the area. The Guste Holmes Elderly and Low Income Project in the east (993 dwelling units) and the Magnolia Low Income Project in the west (1,403 d.u.), comprise almost twenty percent (20%) of the available housing units within Central City and reflect the highest residential densities within the area.

Commercial uses comprise 18 acres of land and represent 2.5% of the total land-use. As indicated in the Significant Planning Variables map on page 49, commercial activities are well distributed throughout the area and major aggregates occur along three east/west arteries; St. Charles Avenue, Dryades Street and South Claiborne Avenue. Of these two, Dryades Street and South Claiborne Avenue, have traditionally served as retail centers for the uptown black community. The other, St. Charles Avenue, serves the Lower Garden District, Garden District and Audubon communities, and is oriented towards a more affluent clientele. Finally the intersection of Simon Bolivar and Jackson Avenue serves as a nucleus of convenience goods and services within Central City. However it has virtually no significance in the larger retail market.

Industrial manufacturing constitutes the smallest category within the area. Approximately 3 acres or .4% of land are designated for such uses. Brown's Velvet, a local dairy processing factory located on Erato Street between



### SIGNIFICANT PLANNING VARIABLES

- public housing
- ▨ gentrified housing
- open space
- industry
- commerce

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Baronne and Carondelet Streets, is one of the most significant manufacturing concerns within the area. The others, located in the northeast corner, are of minor significance and tend to contribute to the general blight of the area.

Service facilities are a significant category occupying forty seven (47) acres or 6.5% of all land area. Among the most significant uses are the Flint Goodridge Hospital and the St. Joseph's Cemetery. Recently there has been a tremendous rise in construction of local facilities. Since 1970 three major community service projects have been initiated, the Central City Neighborhood Health Center, Central City Multi-Service Center and most recently the addition of approximately 3,000 square feet of office space for community agencies. In addition there are four elementary schools and one junior high school servicing this community. They are the Lafon, William J. Guste, McDonough #36, and 338 elementary schools, and the Carter J. Woodson Junior High School.

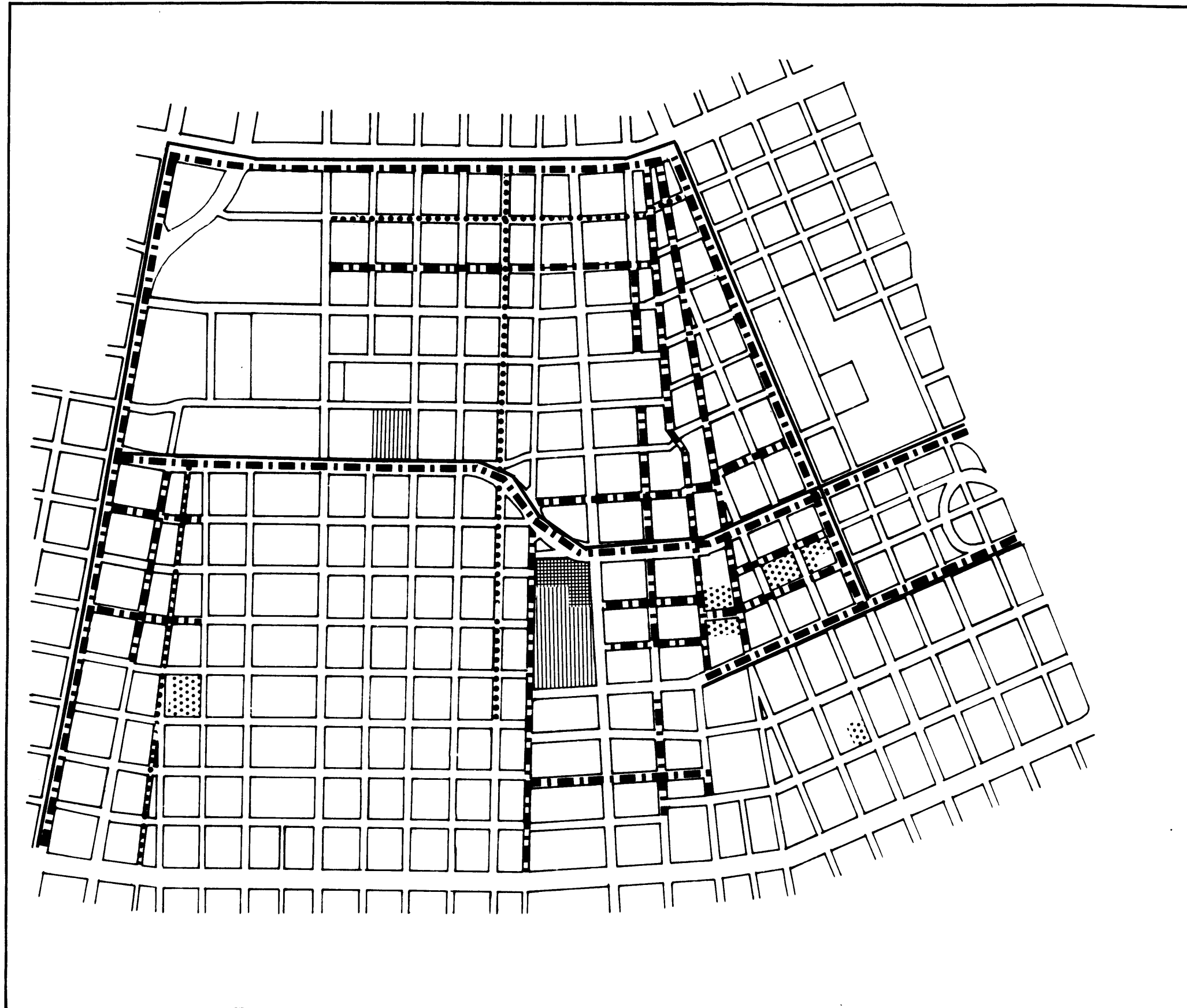
Cultural and recreational facilities represent 15.3 acres or 2% of the land area. Exact distribution of land within this category is unclear. However there appears to be a major deficiency in the availability of open space for community recreation. There are presently two multi-purpose recreational playgrounds within the area. They are the Cabbage Alley Playground on Jackson Avenue and the Shakespeare Playground on La Salle Avenue.

There is an abundance of vacant land within the area. In fact approximately 115 acres or 15% of the land area is presently unused. This is a particularly important factor within the reuse/redevelopment strategy because of its implications on construction activities (eg. there is no

need for social disruption, relocation or demolition). Finally the remaining area is used for streets, transportation, communications and public utilities. Cumulatively these uses comprise 250 acres or approximately 33% of the land area. A number of major arteries have been improved through a variety of street improvements and beautification programs. The most significant are: Dryades Street, South Claiborne Avenue, Louisiana Avenue, Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard (Melpomene Street), and Simon Bolivar and La Salle Avenues. (See general development map on page 52 .)

## **building conditions**

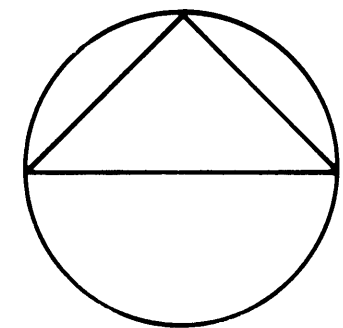
The overall conditions of buildings within Central City are extremely poor. Based upon data gathered from Carter and Burgess, Inc., a New Orleans based engineering and planning firm, approximately 57% of all facilities are classified as substandard or beyond rehabilitation. See Table II for the delineation of structural conditions by land use type. Buildings in habitable condition comprised 37% of all buildings, while only 5% were found to be standard. Residential and commercial structures constituted the largest category of substandard structures with 52% and 65% respectively categorized as such.



# GENERAL DEVELOPM'T MAP

-  completed street improvement
-  proposed street improvement
-  street beautification
-  community facility
-  scatter-site housing
-  open space

# HSPP



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TABLE II

CENTRAL CITY EXISTING STRUCTURAL CONDITIONS  
BY MAJOR LAND-USE CATEGORIES<sup>1</sup>

<u>USE CATEGORY</u>	<u>TOTAL NUMBER STRUCTURES</u>	<u>STANDARD NUMBER</u>	<u>PERCENT OF TOTAL</u>	<u>REHABITABLE NUMBER</u>	<u>PERCENT OF TOTAL</u>	<u>STANDARD NUMBER</u>	<u>PERCENT OF TOTAL</u>
RESIDENTIAL	2,711	108	4.0%	1,080	39.8%	1,523	52.2%
COMMERCIAL	554	50	9.0%	144	26.0%	360	65.0%
INSTITUTIONAL	83	23	27.7%	39	47.0%	21	25.3%
EDUCATIONAL	34	25	73.5%	3	8.8%	6	17.7%
COMMUNITY FACILITIES	5	2	40.0%	2	40.0%	1	20.0%
INDUSTRIAL	11	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	11	100.0%
TOTAL NUMBER	3,398	308		1,268		1,922	
PERCENT	100%		6.0%		37.3%		56.6%

<sup>1</sup>Adapted from Carter and Burgess and excludes land bounded by St. Charles Avenue, Melpomene Street, South Claiborne Avenue and the Pontchartrain Expressway.

## **public improvements**

A variety of public improvements have been made within Central City. Some have been achieved through the use of federal programs while others have resulted from investments made by the City of New Orleans. The following is a summary, by category of recent and proposed developments within the area.

### STREETS

Local conditions and general access throughout the area has been significantly improved through a variety of street improvement and beautification programs. Of particular significance are the Freedom Square and Martin Luther King Walk of the Melpomene Street Beautification Project (funded through Model Cities); the Dryades Street Beautification and Redevelopment Project (EDA); and the Simon Bolivar/La Salle, Louisiana and South Claiborne Avenues Street Improvement and Beautification Projects. These efforts have improved both vehicular and pedestrian traffic along these corridors and have contributed to local investment within them.

Street improvements along minor arteries have also been substantial. Streets presently completed or under construction have included Felicity, St. Andrew, Josephine, Phillips and Clara. While streets which have been proposed for improvements are First, Willow and Harmony. A complete list and diagram of their locations are included on the following pages.

TABLE III

## STREET IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM COMPLETED OR UNDER CONSTRUCTION, 1974-1978

STREET	BOUNDED BY	LENGTH	COST	10% ENGINEER 10% CONTINGENCY	YEAR	AGENCY
St. Andrew	Carondolet/Brainard	N/A	\$ 40,000		1974	CIA
St. Andrew	Dryades/S. Claiborne					
St. Andrew	Danneel/Simon Bolivar				1974	
Brainard	Phillip/St. Andrew					
S. Claiborne	Louisiana/Melpomene					
Clara	Washington/Josephine					
Danneel	Jackson/St. Andrew	700'	59,500		1975	NODS
Felicity	Dryades/S. Claiborne					
First	St. Andrew/Willow	4750'	403,750		1977	NODS
Fourth	Carondolet/Baronne					
Fourth	Robertson/Clara	600'	51,000		1975	NODS
Fourth	Dryades/La Salle	2400'	204,000		1975	NODS
Harmony	St. Charles/La Salle	2700'	229,500		1974	NODS
Josephine	Carondolet/Dryades					

## STREET IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM COMPLETED OR UNDER CONSTRUCTION, 1974-1978 (Continued)

STREET	BOUNDED BY	LENGTH	COST	10% ENGINEER 10% CONTINGENCY	YEAR	AGENCY
Josephine	Rampart/Freret					
Josephine	Robertson/Clara					
La Salle	Louisiana/Jackson					
Liberty	Louisiana/Seventh	2300'	195,500		1975	NODS
Liberty	Seventh/Phillip					
Liberty	Phillip/Melpomene <sup>a</sup>				1974	
Louisiana	St. Charles/Claiborne					
Loyola	Washington/Phillip	1300'	110,500		1977	
Melpomene	Dryades/S. Claiborne					
Phillip	Carondolet/Simon Bolivar					
Rampart	Jackson/St. Andrew					
Rampart	St. Andrew/Melpomene					
Robertson	Washington/Melpomene	2350'	199,750		1974	NODS
S. Saratoga	Washington/Phillip	1300'	110,500		1976	NODS
S. Saratoga	Felicity/Melpomene <sup>a</sup>				1974	

STREET IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM COMPLETED OR UNDER CONSTRUCTION, 1974-1978 (Continued)

STREET	BOUNDED BY	LENGTH	COST	10% ENGINEER 10% CONTINGENCY	YEAR	AGENCY
S. Saratoga	Louisiana/Seventh					
Seventh	Carondelet/La Salle					
Simon Bolivar	Jackson/Pontchartrain Expressway					
Sixth	Carondelet/La Salle	2150'	182,750		1976	NODS
Toledano	St. Charles/Danneel	1000'	85,000		1976	NODS
Toledano	Dannell/La Salle					
Willow	Washington/Melpomene	2700'	229,500		1974	

<sup>a</sup>no other information available

Cumulatively between 1974 and 1978 more than two million dollars were scheduled to be invested in street improvements and infrastructure development. This is considered a significant component within the Heritage Square Development Project, as basic infrastructure requirements must be met if reinvestment is to occur.

#### RECREATIONAL FACILITIES

Until recently, there has been an absence of multi-purpose recreational facilities within the area. This was considered a major deficiency, as a significant percentage of the local population were youths under the age of 18. Attempts to ratify this, however, have been made over the last four years. Primarily consisting of upgrading local neighborhood facilities, the city made a significant contribution by investing \$1.4 million dollars in two neighborhood playgrounds. Included in the investment were an olympic size swimming pool, basketball courts, a football and softball field, and passive and infant play areas. A complete listing of these investments is included in Chart IV on page 59 .

#### RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

Residential accomodations are a major concern of both area residents and municipal authorities. However proposed development have tended to support a higher density of residential land-use patterns. Within Central City this ranges from 25-44 d.u.s per acre for small multi-plex structures to 54-109 d.u.s per acre for multi-family structures of five or more units.

There are three major housing development scheduled within the Central City community which will cumulatively produce approximately 150 units.

TABLE IV  
RECREATIONAL FACILITIES IMPROVEMENTS, 1970-1976

NAME OF FACILITY/ IMPROVEMENT	ESTIMATED COST	SOURCE OF FUNDS	COMPLETION DATE	DEVELOPMENT AGENT	STATUS
Shakespeare Park Swimming Pool Renovation	\$ 400,000	50% Community Development 50% Municipal Bonds	Fall 1978	NORD	In progress
Van McMurray Park (formerly Cabbage Alley)	\$1,000,000	50% HUD 50% Model Cities	July 1975	NORD	Completed

Chart V on page 60 indicates all projects within the area and their approximate cost figures. Unfortunately, many of these developments are being confronted with resistance. Two of the proposed projects were temporarily halted to await City Planning Commission (CPC) approval. It is obvious that the present need for housing coupled with existing structural conditions necessitates a high degree of development within the area.

#### COMMUNITY SERVICE FACILITIES

Approximately \$407,000 has been invested in community service facilities within the past four years. This has complemented the existing institutions which include the Central City Neighborhood Health Center (CCHNC), the Central City Multi-Service Center (CCMSC) and the Central City Economic Opportunity Corporation (CCEOC). The CCMSC provides office space for a variety of service agencies within the area while the CCHNC is one of two neighborhood health centers serving Central City and its environ. In June 1976 a new 2800 square foot community facility was dedicated to the area.

TABLE V  
HOUSING DEVELOPMENT IN CENTRAL CITY, 1970-1976

PROJECT NAME OR TYPE	ADDRESS	DATE ACQUIRED Acquired from	ESTIMATED COST OF CONSTRUCTION	SOURCE OF FUNDS	NUMBER OF DWELLING UNITS	DEVEL- OPMENT AGENT	STATUS
Scattersite	2118 Danneel 2120 Danneel 2122 Danneel	4-14-70 M&S Investments	\$23,000 per/unit	HUD	3 d.u.	HANO	C
Scattersite	1423 Terpischore 1425 Terpischore 1427 Terpischore 1429 Terpischore	4-14-70 M&S Investments	\$23,000 per/unit	HUD	4 d.u.	HANO	C
Scattersite	1000 Melpomene	11-2-70 Edmond Vale & Associates	\$23,000 per/unit	HUD	21 d.u.	HANO	C
Scattersite	1223 St. Mary	4-6-71 M&S Investments	\$23,000 per/unit	HUD	8 d.u.	HANO	C
Scattersite	3318 Danneel	6-28-71 Frederick Construction	\$23,000 per/unit	HUD	4 d.u.	HANO	C
Scattersite	2830 Dryades 2832 Dryades	4-26-72 Tropical Inc.	\$23,000 per/unit	HUD	12 d.u.	HANO	C
Satchmo Plaza	Ramparts/ Saratoga	10-76	\$805,000	HUD	35 d.u.	CCHDC	P
TOTALS			\$1,196,000		52 d.u.		
TOTALS			805,000		35 d.u.		

## FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup>Gentrification refers to a process in which communities experience improvement in the quality of their existing housing stock, infrastructure and community facilities brought about through the actions of a more affluent in-migrating group rather than from the efforts of incumbent residents.

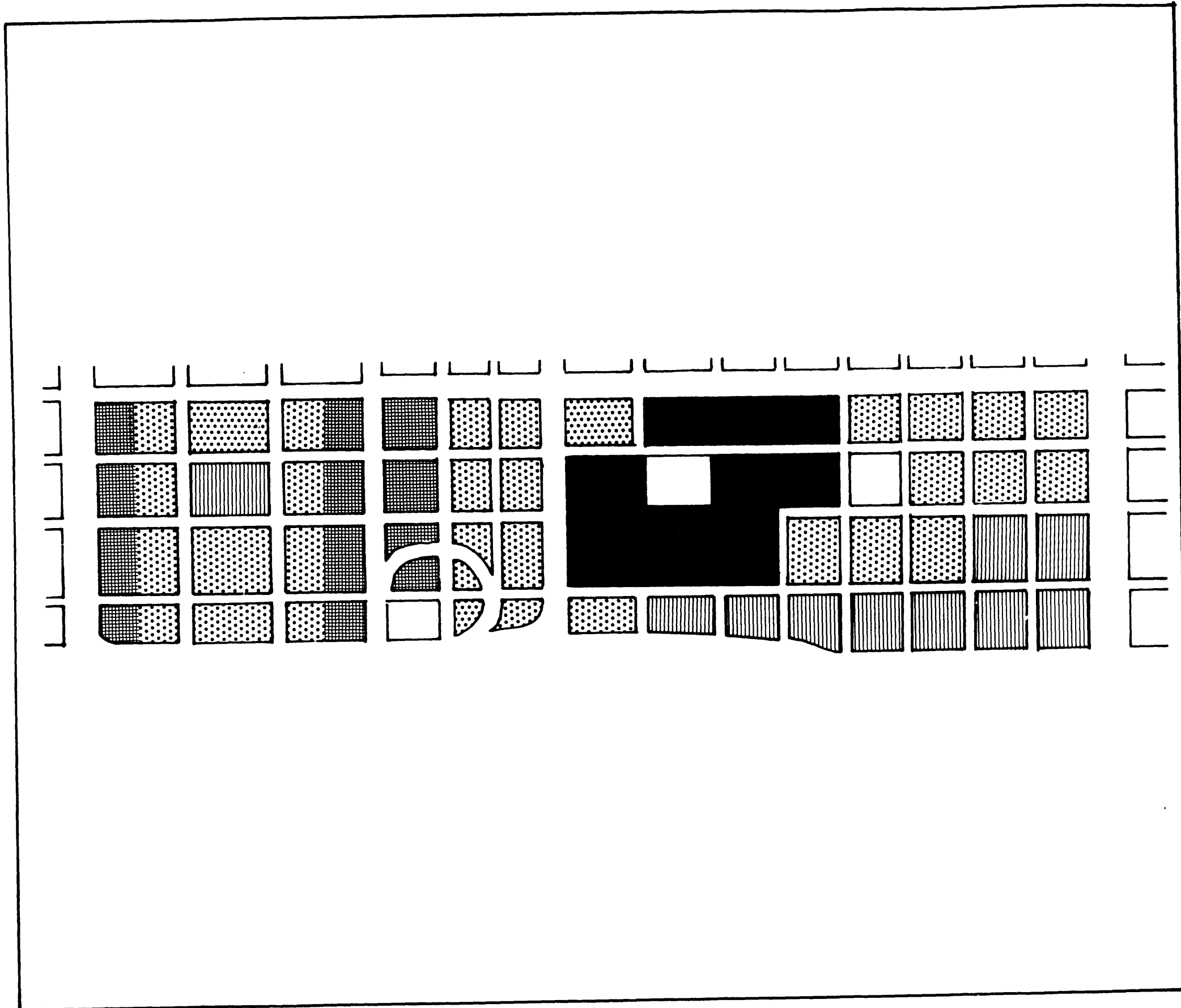
<sup>2</sup>This is not to infer a causal relationship between significant numbers of Blacks and the presence of high rates of crime. Instead, it is a statement of fact that these conditions existed, and had a negative impact on real estate values (and desirability) in the area.

# Chapter 4






# central city development site

Development of the Heritage Square Planning Project was to occur over a 7-15 year period. Architects, planners and economic development analyst felt that this was the minimum time needed to mobilize resources, assemble land and generate interest among financiers, developers and tenants. Site selection would be contingent upon the availability of vacant land and its ability to support housing, commerce, and industry. In addition it would require proximity to local development activities and possess the capacity to catalyze new investments within the development site and its surrounding area.

The site chosen for development consisted of 132 acres of land and was located at the eastern boundary of the project area. Bound by the Pontchartrain Expressway, St. Charles Avenue, Melpomene Street and South Claiborne Avenue, it lay at the intersection of two major highways (Interstate 10 and the Pontchartrain Expressway) and was intricately woven into the local street network. It was approximately 1 mile long and a quarter of a mile wide, and supported three distinct land-uses; industry, commerce and housing.



**GENERALIZED LAND - USES**

-  industry
-  commerce
-  institutional
-  residential
-  high density residential

**HSPP**



NEW ORLEANS, LA.

Three east/west arteries serviced it from the central business district; South Claiborne Avenue, Simon Bolivar Avenue and St. Charles Avenue; and a fourth Dryades Street, provided direct access to its commercial district (it did not however provide access through the project area). Its relationship to development activities within the larger context was ideal. It abutted both commercial and residential expansion within the CBD and Lower Garden District, respectively, and provided direct access to highways servicing the Gulf South region. There was considerable vacant land within the site capable of supporting new construction and residential displacement and relocation was virtually non-existent.

Within the area however were three factors which had traditionally inhibited investment and served as obstacles to development. Their presence had previously obscured local perceptions and had cumulatively contributed to the areas blight. These factors, the Pontchartrain Expressway, the Guste Homes Project and the Brown's Velvet Diary Factory are discussed in the section below.

## **pontchartrain expressway**

The Pontchartrain Expressway, the most prominent of these factors is a thirty foot, six lane, elevated expressway which spans the entire length of the site. It is the major link between the northern and southern banks of the Mississippi River and serves as one of the major links in the regional highway system. Physically it is the most significant barrier between Central City and the central business district and has historically repre-

sented the line separating the commercial investment area from the uptown Black community. Efforts to alter its affects have included public works projects and low interest commercial investment loans, however none have adequately circumvented the blighting effects it has had on the community. Characteristically the Pontchartrain Expressway is both an aesthetic and psychological barrier to development. Its massive and impenetrable qualities are superceded only by the disparity in investment opportunities it has created between Central City and the central business district. Commercial development, for example, is presently bound in the west by Howard Avenue. Along it are found a substantial number of office buildings and a variety of smaller retail establishments. Their presence has anchored Howard Avenue as a potential site for future expansion, but more importantly, it has demonstrated that commercial projects can be developed within the western half of the CBD and supported by a market willing to locate within them.

Alternatively within Central City the situation has been quite different. There have been virtually no significant development activities within the last decade and those which have been initiated have tended to reinforce the existing framework. Land uses which are vehicular oriented, have been dominated by light industrial and manufacturing plants, warehousing, off street parking (especially under the expressway) and auto repair and equipment shops and have contributed to local disinvestment, deterioration and abandonment. Their continued presence has prohibited the entry of new investors and has inhibited social, economic and physical change within the environment. While alteration is a necessity, it will require substantive policy changes (eg. land use, zoning, etc.) as well as a large infusion of

public and private capital.

## **guste homes**

The second major factor influencing development within this area is the presence of the Guste Homes Elderly and Low Income Project. Located at the corner of Simon Bolivar and Clio Street and bordered by Robertson and Melpomene Streets, it represents one of the largest and most densely populated residential areas within the city. The Guste, as it is locally referred to, encompasses 17 acres of land and consists of 1403 dwelling units. Residents are composed of elderly singles and couples, male and female headed households and female headed households with dependent children. There is an ancillary health facility located within the complex and local visits are made by a cadre of visiting nurses based in the Central City Neighborhood Health Center.

The project is bound by three major arteries, Earhart Boulevard, Simon Bolivar and Melpomene Street. Their presence, coupled with the projects uncharacteristic scale and density has served to set it apart (at least perceptively) from the larger Central City community. This unwarranted alienation has resulted in further stigmatizing its residents and has contributed to its social and physical decay. Intensive use (by residents) has accelerated deterioration, both internally and externally, and lack of public intervention has intensified its impact. Rehabilitation has been minimal. Two public improvement projects, the Melpomene Street and Simon Bolivar Street Improvement and Beautification Programs have improved pedestrian and vehicular access, but has had virtually no impact on the quality of life

within the project. A proposal was made to renovate the existing units and facade. However without complementary social development and job training programs it was considered futile. It is apparent that without considerable rehabilitation, both socially and physically, the Guste Homes will not only contribute blight and decay within the area but will also thwart economic development efforts within the immediate environment.

## **brown's velvet**

The final obstacle confronting this area is the presence of the Brown's Velvet Dairy Products manufacturing plant. Located on Thalia Street between Baronne and Carondelet Streets, it is one of the most significant industrial uses in the area, employing 300 workers of which 60% reside locally. It services three states in the Gulf South region; Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama, and is unquestionably one of the most significant forces within the local economy. Despite its assets, however Brown's Velvet has had the overall impact of increasing deterioration and decay within the area.

Located within a medium density residential neighborhood and surrounded by deteriorated but historically significant housing, Brown's Velvet has fostered blight through a variety of means. Increased vehicular traffic, noise and air pollution, plus infrastructure corrosion resulting from intensive use, are typical of the problems besetting this community. More importantly however, Brown's Velvet has overtly contributed to the decay of this community by purchasing and maintaining deteriorated properties within the immediate area.

It is clear that the areas L-1 (light industrial) zoning has had virtually no impact on industrial development. Escalating land and assembly cost, plus the burdensome responsibility of demolition and relocation has all but eliminated this area from the market. An increasing awareness of the areas historical value is also having implications on the types of land uses which will eventually locate there. Yet before substantive change can be initiated within the area, a reasonable alternative must be suggested for either relocating the existing plant or (better) integrating it within the existing fabric.

## **cumulative impact**

Cumulatively these factors have had a disastrous affect on planning and development within Central City. Their incompatibility with local land-use patterns, scale, density and intensity of use has accelerated decay and has created an ambiguous physical environment. Inefficient and ineffective planning has resulted in a disjointed distribution of activities within the area, and has perpetuated conflicts between local land uses.

The Heritage Square Planning Project, in an effort to satisfy social and economic illls, attempted to coordinate activities based upon existing land uses and develop a strategy incorporating both the internal and external pressures presently affecting this community. The plan would center upon maximizing benefits from CBD expansion, exploiting opportunities for commercial investment within Central City (especially along Dryades Street) and actively participating in the residential development process presently undertaking the area through gentrification. The process could be initiated

through the development of a convenience goods center and office complex within the McDonough 38 Elementary School, and be sustained through scatter site investments along the Dryades Street Corridor. The presence of such facilities would establish "turf" for local entrepreneurs and secondly provide a focus for future development. Within the final chapter I would like to explore this strategy through physical development.

# Chapter 5

# heritage square parcel development

It is important to recognize the fact that revitalization within Central City will be largely dependent upon both the intensity of development and level of success of commercial expansion within the CBD. Based upon this it will be imperative for Central City to possess the ability to:

- a. siphon complimentary commercial investments within its boundaries
- b. establish itself as an independent area, offering retail and commercial alternatives distinct from other areas of the CBD.

To accomplish this, the area would be required to develop a unique marketing strategy capable of attracting both local consumers and regional tourists, yet simultaneously be responsive to local demand for quality goods and services. The concept of developing a multi-use commercial center emphasizing the contributions of Black Americans is not only the type of strategy needed but the type that has the highest potential of success. Moreover this concept augmented by its more comprehensive objectives of creating both housing and employment opportunities for local residents makes it even more desirable as an example of racial integrity and pride.

Limited time and resources prohibited the development of a cogent project development strategy. Thus the remainder of this chapter will graphically demonstrate how Central City might initiate its overall development program through the construction of a commercial facility on Dryades Street.

## **appropriateness of dryades street**

Draydes Street is typical of most urban linear retail strips which have not adjusted to society's increased dependency on the automobile and the growth of operating efficiencies within the areas of marketing and merchandising. It has no effective off-street parking, no nucleus or concentration of activity and lacks the variety of consumer goods characteristic of strips its size. Its discontinuous framework has contributed to its abandonment and underutilization and has resulted in a high rate of crime and subsequently disinvestment. Cumulatively these factors have contributed to the degeneration and decay of Dryades Street as a primary shopping district and has fostered the development of "mom and pop" type variety stores which provide inferior services at exorbitant prices.

Interestingly, Dryades Street possesses a potential for redevelopment which is uncharacteristic for strips of its size and condition. It is effectively located at a major connection within the local transportation network and lies adjacent to the central business district and Lower Garden District. It is well serviced by the public transportation system and street system and lies at the base of a major interchange within the regional transportation network.<sup>1</sup>

## site composition

The site is composed of six blocks between Dryades, Thalia, Sartoga Streets and the Pontchartrain Expressway, and is presently characterized by deteriorated residential and commercial structures and numerous abandoned buildings and vacant lots. These conditions have been aggravated by the general quality of investments over the last decades and by the presence of the on-ramp to the Pontchartrain Expressway. Despite this, however, redevelopment potential is significant. Vacant lots provide excellent opportunities for vest pocket developments and the relatively sound building stock provides ample potential for rehabilitation. Located on the development site are four elements which are critical to the proposed scheme. These are:

- a. McDonough 38 Elementary School
- b. Abandoned synagogue on S. Ramparts Street
- c. On-ramp to the Pontchartrain Expressway
- d. St. John the Baptiste Roman Catholic Church

Cumulatively these elements represent both assets and liabilities inherent within the project and will serve as the principal elements within the design.

## **mc donough 38**

McDonough 38 is an underutilized elementary facility presently owned by the New Orleans School Board. Located on a site comprising 1.4 acres of land, it is a structure capable of rehabilitation. It is conveniently located for CBD and neighborhood activities and satisfies the necessary locational criteria for the shopping center.

## **church**

Located at the foot of Dryades Street St. John the Baptiste is an architecturally significant building registered as a national landmark. Its parishioners are primarily white but it has begun to witness a change in composition over the last few years.

## **on ramp**

Considered a major obstruction in the linear development along Dryades Street. However its problems are not to be considered insurmountable. It is principally used during the evening rush hours between 4-7 p.m. and is largely unused during the remainder of the day

## **synagogue**

This facility, formerly a synagogue, is presently abandoned and in a state of disrepair. Located directly behind the McDonough 38 School, it is an excellent site for an ancillary community facility.

# convenience goods center development program

Development of the Heritage Square Convenience Goods Center is envisioned as the first step in the comprehensive program of Central City's revitalization. It is an attempt to satisfy certain deficiencies within the local retail market and establish a center of activity along Dryades. It would provide quality services, create a positive image and satisfy a need for a locally initiated community development project. It would be accomplished through the development of three independent projects.

- a. the convenience goods center
- b. a pedestrian mall
- c. a passive urban park/plaza

## THE CONVENIENCE GOODS CENTER DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM/SHOPPING AND OFFICE COMPLEX

<u>STORE TYPE</u>	<u>PREFERRED TENANT</u>	<u>STORE SIZE SQ. FT.</u>
Supermarket	Winn Dixie	15,000
Drug	Katz & Bestoff	7,000
Restaurant	McDonalds	4,000
Bakery	Minority Operator	2,000
Clothing	Minority Operator	2,000
	TOTAL RETAIL	30,000
Office		<u>8,000</u>
	NET LEASABLE	38,000
Common Area		<u>3,000</u>
	TOTAL SQ. FT.	41,000
Parking	42 Spaces @ 400 sq. ft. per space	16,800
School Site		62,500

The Convenience Goods Center is to be located on the site presently occupied by the McDonough 38 Elementary School. It is bounded by Dryades, Thalia, South Ramparts and Erato Street; and comprises 1.4 acres of land. Located between the Pontchartrain Expressway and Melpomene St. on the Lake Side of Dryades Street it is planned to be a nucleus of development which will catalyze new development within the corridor.

The project will consist of a 15,000 square foot addition to the original structure and the rehabilitation of the first two levels of the school for retail services. It will include a parking lot located along South Ramparts Street with a 42 car capacity and a service area in the rear of the supermarket. Finally it shall include a pedestrian walkway along Erato Street oriented towards the shopping activities within the center and containing supportive open space for eating and socializing.

Distribution of retailers within the facility will be an important consideration in the projects design. Service characterized by intense activity will be located on the Thalia Street side while more passive oriented services will be located on the Erato Street side. This conforms with the site goals of strengthening circulation along Erato/Dryades where activities are brisk and alternatively promoting a loose, more passive environment where activities are slower. Circulation along Thalia, both pedestrian and vehicular, shall be reinforced to maximize efficiency. However, along Erato, activities shall be more varied, oriented towards pedestrian circulation and reflecting more diverse use alternatives for consumers. Land along Erato Street, for example, could be developed into an outdoor dining space associated with the fast foods restaurant, or could be oriented towards retailing along Erato and the South Ramparts Street Pedestrian and Shoppers

Mall. See site analysis on the following page.

## **promenade**

Associated with the Convenience Goods Center and reinforcing the idea of planned (comprehensive) development, will be the construction of a pedestrian and shoppers promenade along South Ramparts Street between Erato and Clio Streets. The promenade will be the first step in developing a coordinated retail center with the Dryades Street area and will reinforce the idea of developing a nucleus of activity within the site. Located along the promenade will be specialty shops (North) oriented towards local and regional markets and public spaces (southside) for exhibitions of art and community notices. Commercial facilities will extend from one side of the on-ramp to the other and will terminate in a newly constructed urban park. The promenade will be one link in a system of pedestrian walkways which ideally will be coordinated throughout the site and will reflect local conditions and uses. Both will terminate at a principal activity center which will serve as the localized areas of focus.

## **urban park**

The Urban Park is designed to be a passive recreational facility oriented towards activities along Dryades Street and reinforcing the goal of developing a central focus of activity. It is to be located at the intersection between Clio and South Ramparts Streets on the land presently enclosed by

the on ramp of the Pontchartrain Expressway, and is envisioned as an alternative to the formal (passive) sites within the CBD such as Jackson Square in the Vieux Carre or, the Louis Armstrong Memorial Park in Treme. Although it cannot be considered a neighborhood playground it will reflect a combination of elements which satisfies the need for neighborhood open space within the context of a larger (commercial) environment. The park, containing passive sitting areas, infant play area and small public space for community related activities, will complement local entrepreneurial development and add to the development of an independent character for Dryades Street. The park is envisioned as a place for a variety of uses among which are a:

- a. resting area for local shoppers
- b. space for community based performances
- c. space for outdoor dining

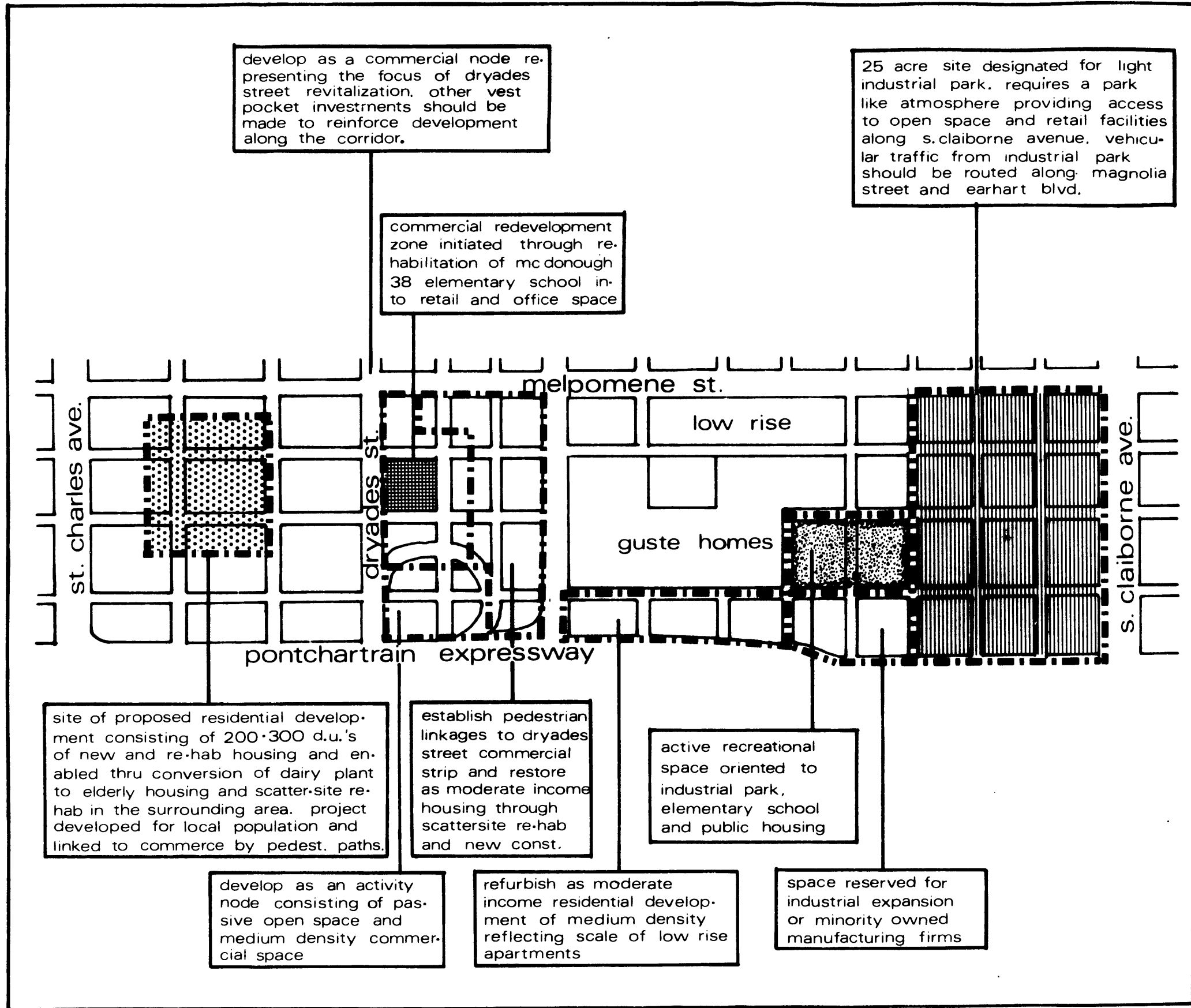
## **design objectives**

To maximize the influence of central business district expansion on Central City, it is imperative that a link be developed between commercial activities along Howard Avenue and those along the under utilized framework of Dryades Street. To accomplish this it is recommended that Central City exploit its unique character (architecturally) by:

- a. developing a pedestrian oriented link between Howard Avenue and Central City along Dryades Street
- b. restoring local store fronts to reflect their architectural significance
- c. refurbishing the McDonough 38 Elementary School as a convenience goods center and office building

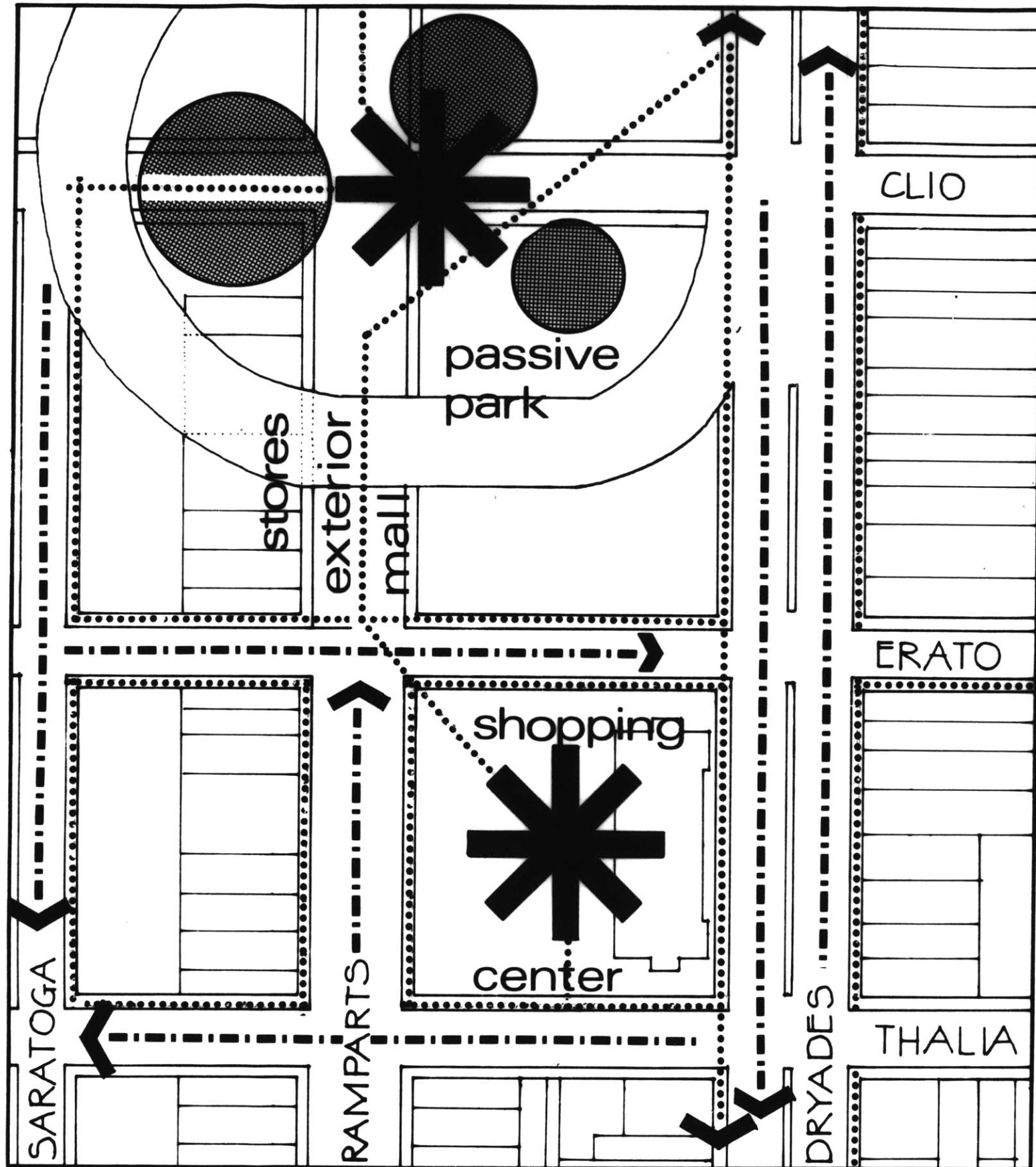
- d. improving streets, parking and signing along the Dryades Street corridor and its periphery
- e. developing a urban passive park at the base of Dryades Street
- f. devising a historical/cultural promenade linking important locations on and off Dryades Street

Primary activities should focus upon strengthening east/west pedestrian circulation along Dryades Street and developing a north/south pedestrian axis along Erato Street (see Concept Diagrams and General Site Objectives). Each route should be accentuated with a systematic distribution of major and minor activity nodes and scattersite off-street parking should be dispersed along the Dryades Street Corridor. In addition vest pocket developments consisting of public facilities, commercial establishments or special uses of cultural significance should be established within the site for use by both local residents and the public at large.



# GENERAL SITE OBJECTIVES





## SITE ANALYSIS

circulation patterns

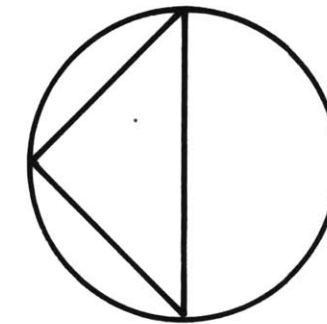
⊠ vehicular

⊙ pedestrian

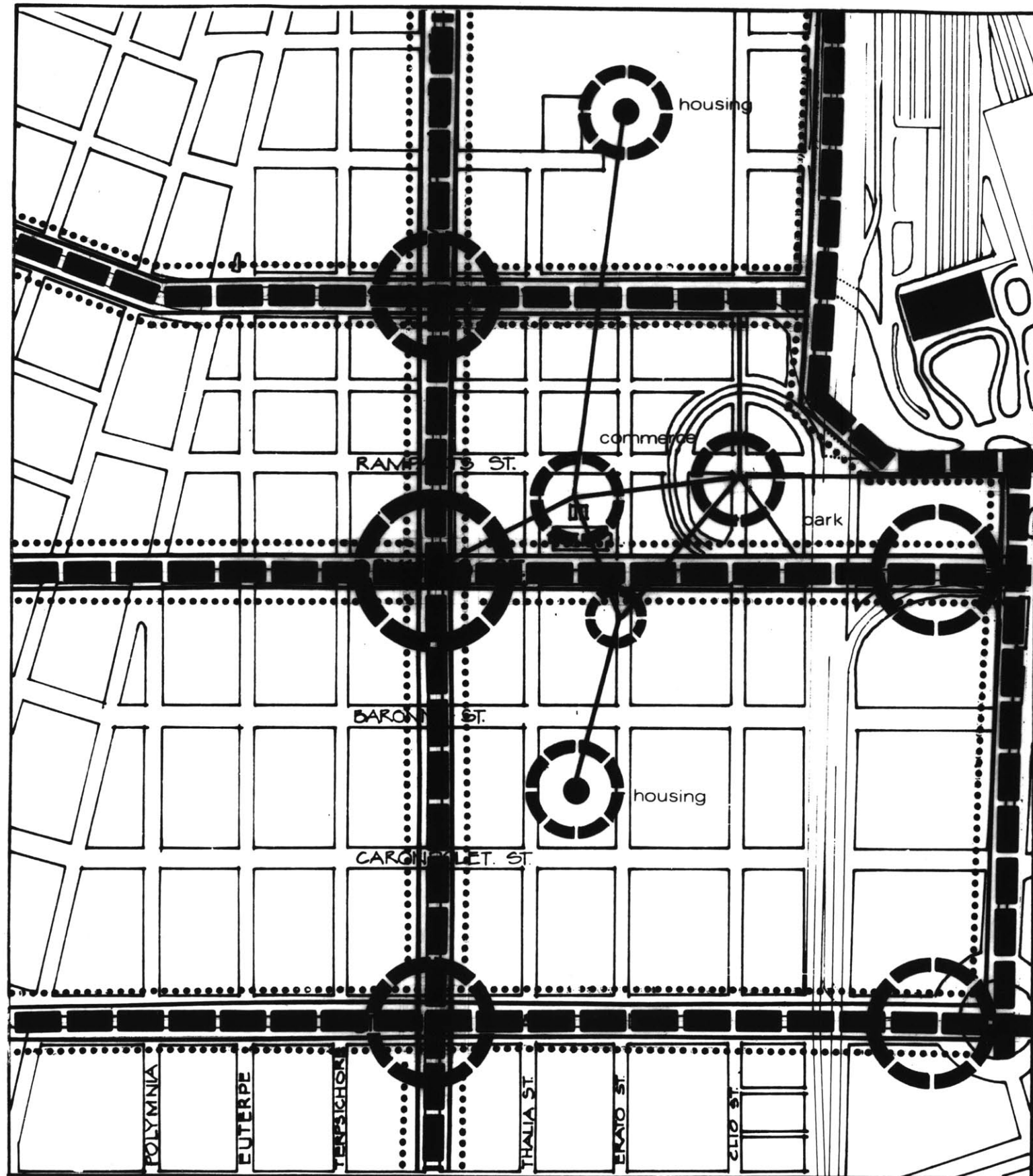
● activity centers

◐ activity uses

## HSPP



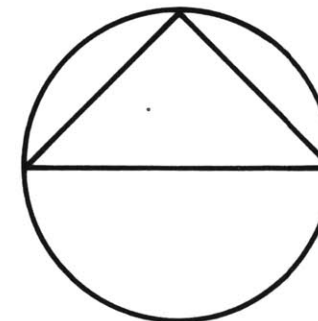
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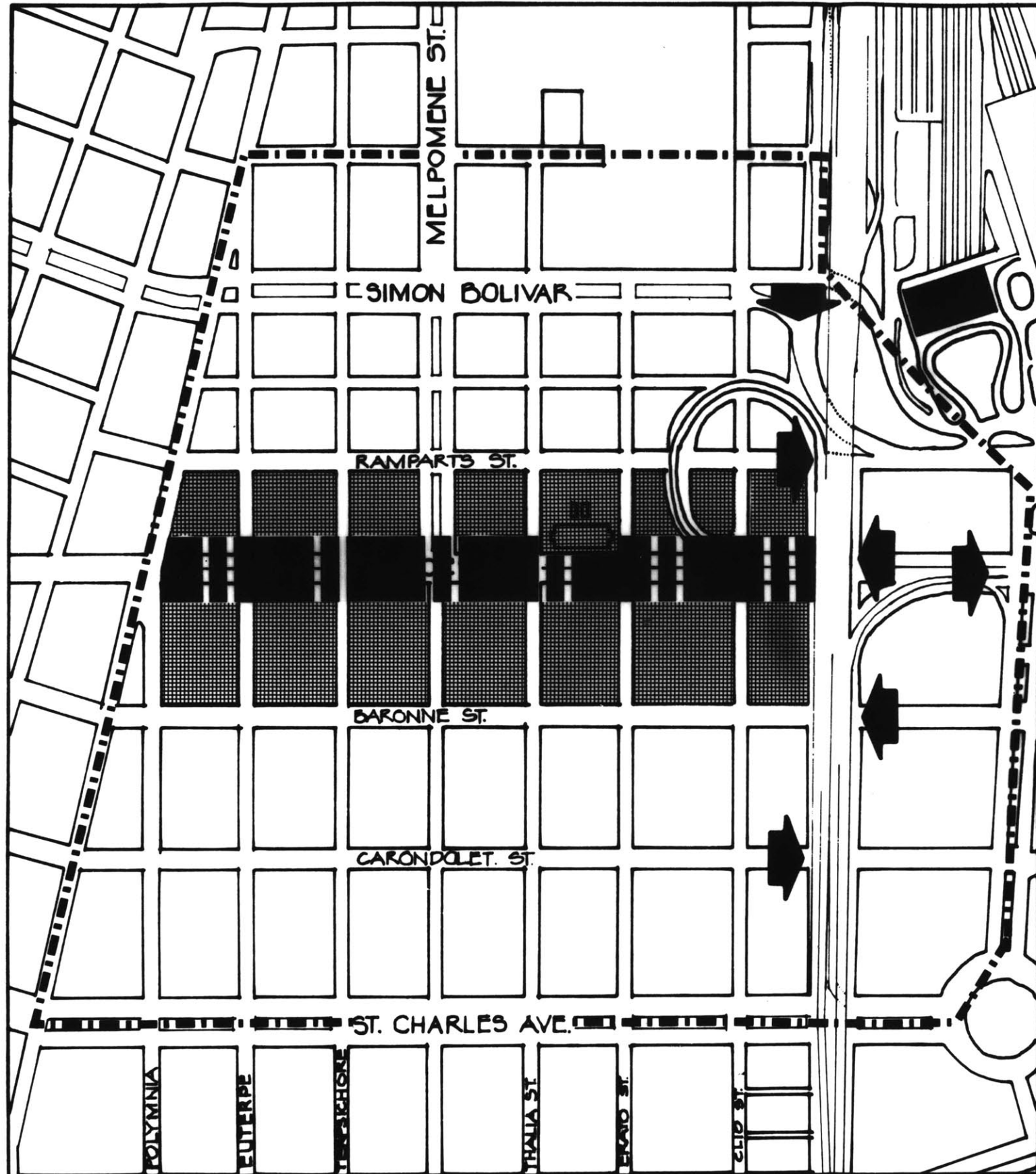
## CONCEPT DIAGRAM

-  pedestrian circulation
-  vehicular circulation
-  street furnishings
-  activity node

## HSPP



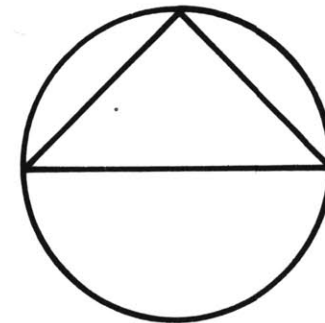
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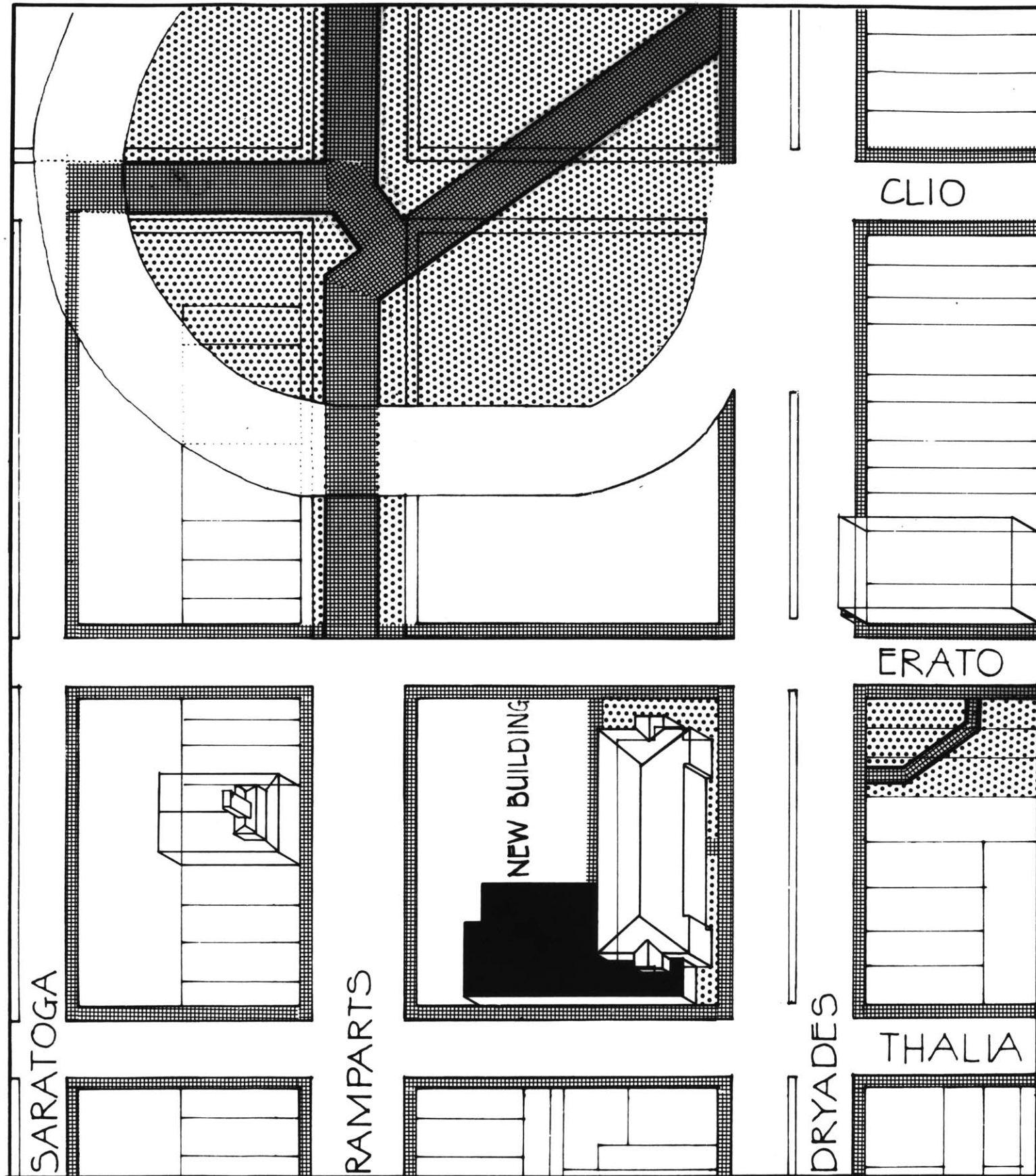
## IMPACT ANALYSIS

-  impacted area
-  local commerce
-  reinforced corridor
-  local access



## HSPP



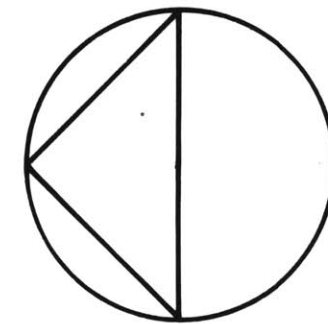
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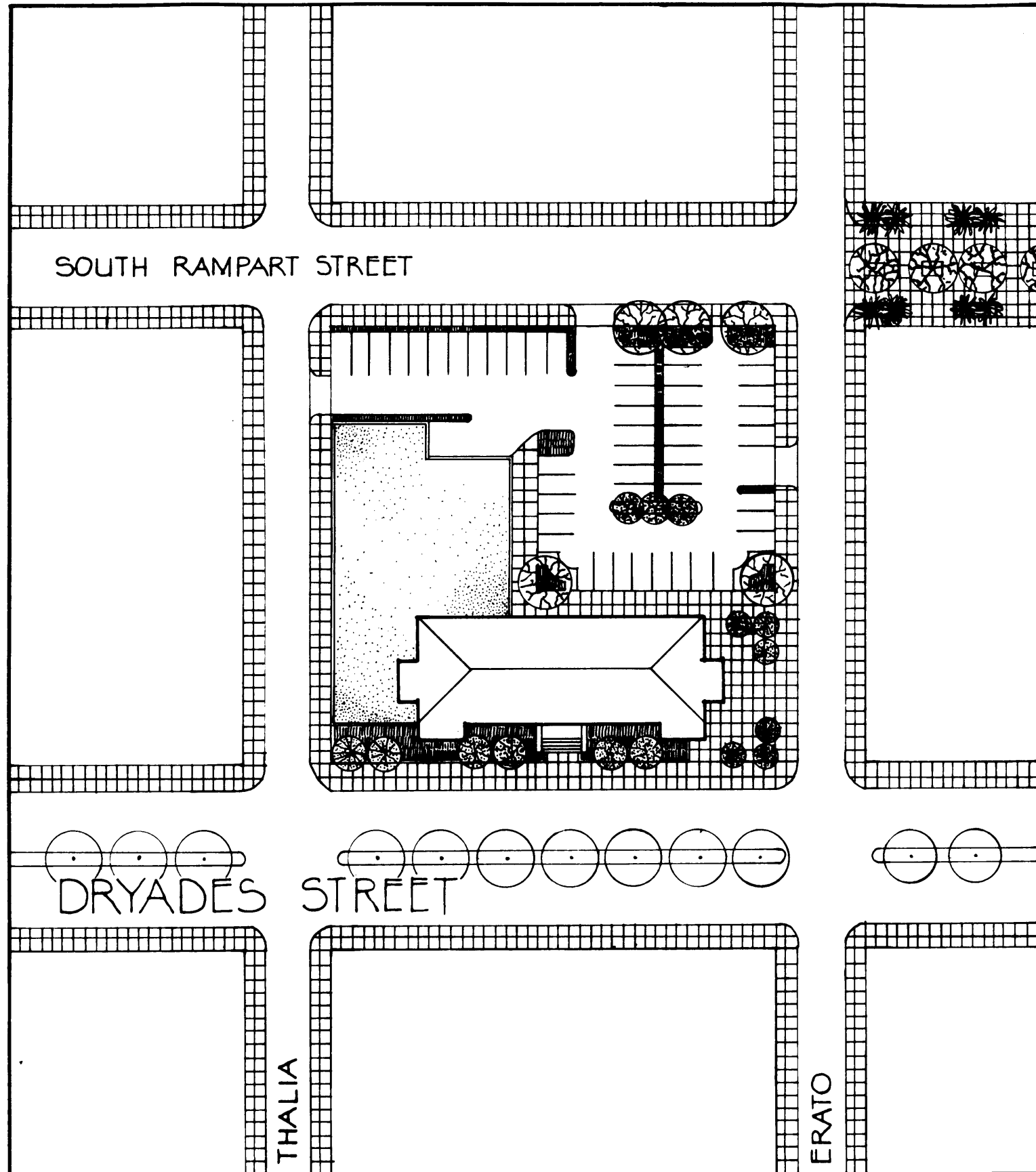
# SITE ORGANIZAT'N

-  open space
-  pedestrian circulation

# HSPP

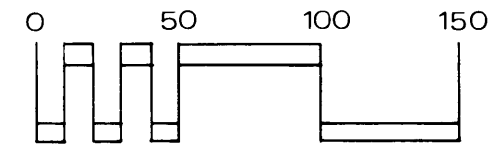


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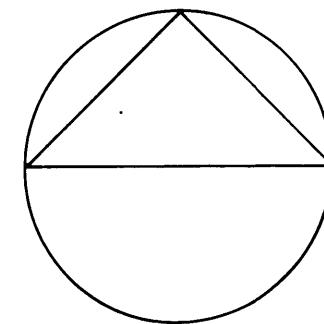


# SITE DEVELOPM'T

commercial facility



# HSPP



NEW ORLEANS, LA.

## FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup> Good access to the expressway system adds greatly to the potential market area of a center on Dryades Street. Since most shopping trips are made at non-peak hours, existing and prospective peak hour congestion should not be a major problem in pedestrian circulation. Finally Dryades Street's location within the regional transportation network and its vehicular capacity makes it better located for regional retailing than Canal Street. Although Dryades Street is easily accessible within the regional transportation network, does not imply that I advocate developing a regionally oriented center. Instead, I am attempting to identify attributes which may be eventually exploited to satisfy economically based goals of community development (eg. diversity products and goods to reflect a larger market). Initially however, my objective is to advocate developing a locally oriented Convenience Goods Center, located on Dryades Street, which will impact the Central City community.

# **Conclusion**

Development of the Heritage Square Planning Project will clearly be the most significant investment made within Central City in over a decade. Yet efforts must be made to coordinate local development with the gradual encroachment of commercial expansion within the central business district and residential reinvestment occurring along the southern border. Efforts must be made to retain the local resident population through subsidized rental units and single family home ownership, and it will be the responsibility of the Heritage Square Development Corporation to facilitate this.

Community development, especially in the area of housing commerce and industry must (at least in the short run) be oriented to local consumer (eg. resident population) needs. Yet within this orientation (eg. emphasis for development) a favorable investment climate must be created. To this end, scatter-site commercial development must be pursued by the C.D.C. and new investment opportunities must be created within the area.

It is clear that Central City can absorb these recommendations. Investment proposals as defined by the project (and explored within this thesis) are consistent with present land-use patterns. Ultimately however, it will not be the Heritage Square Development Corporation or its planning process which will result in successful redevelopment. Instead it will be the

ability of the public sector to subsidize development activities and their ability to work collectively with private sector investors.

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