

**Report of the Regional/Urban Design Assistance Team  
of the American Institute of Architects**

**Waterbury, Conn.**

**October 4, 1993**



# S E C T I O N 1 INTRODUCTION

## Waterbury

# R/UDAT

Report of the  
Regional/Urban  
Design  
Assistance Team  
of the American  
Institute of  
Architects

Waterbury, Conn.

October 4, 1993

Over the past 21 years, the American Institute of Architects, through its Urban Planning and Design Committee, has offered to communities the services of a Regional/Urban Design Assistance Team, or R/UDAT.

Waterbury has met all the requirements for such a visit. Our team study, reported here, is a reflection of whole-hearted community support, and the team wishes to express our warm appreciation and best of luck to all the Greater Waterbury citizens who made our visit so

rewarding.

R/UDAT team members, who perform their services voluntarily, have been appointed by the AIA's Urban Design and Planning Committee's R/UDAT Steering Group. As with the other 128 teams who have served communities over the past 20 years, each team member agrees not to receive any commission for work based upon the team's recommendations. The AIA has always held this requirement intact so

that fully objective findings and recommendations can be assured.

In preliminary visits, the Waterbury R/UDAT team confirmed the steering committee's request to concentrate on the central business district, surrounding neighborhoods and the integration of the proposed new mall into the downtown.

These concerns seemed to be the ones best addressed by a team of city planners and architects. Many other ideas, goals and challenges were recently identified through the Community Vision for Waterbury study and town meetings, and are being implemented by separate task forces of local volunteers.

Section 2 of this report, Background, outlines Waterbury's history as an innovative industrial city that today has lost its founding industries, but not its spirit.

Section 3, Visions and Reflections, explores Waterbury's image of itself and perceptions of others. It reflects the past and the future.

The R/UDAT team reviews essential building blocks of governance and community interaction in Section 4, Building Community. Ways to improve participation and communication both within the community and region are also explored.

Section 5, Connections, reviews the physical and social connections for the community to function effectively. The intensity of community involvement throughout the R/UDAT process have shown the residents' desire to make and improve the connections within the community.

A Greater Downtown, Section 6, includes the concept that downtown Waterbury needs to be expanded to include the area from Hamilton Park along East Main and West Main to the railroad bridge, from North Square on the north to Market Square on the south. The critical nature of the integration of the adjacent neighborhoods into this commercial core is also reviewed.

Section 7, Moving Forward, lays out short, medium and long-term actions and strategies.

October 4, 1993

To All Who Live and Work in Waterbury:

You have entrusted us with your opinions, confidences and hopes; your trepidations and enthusiasms. We have witnessed your love for your city. We worked with 240 of you who spent thousands of hours in Community Visions. This past week, you came by the hundreds to commit yourself to the R/UDAT process. You have awed and inspired us.

The R/UDAT team of nationally recognized professionals — architects, planners, economists, and urban design experts — have gathered here from five states to help us focus upon concrete and achievable endeavors. Assisted by eight dedicated young interns and students, future architects, landscape architects and urban planners, the team has labored almost round the clock on our behalf. Its members have read the Community Vision report and absorbed volumes of background material provided for them. They listened to hundreds of us, evaluated our resources, and are deeply indebted for their selfless gift of time and talent.

The R/UDAT effort has been supported by numerous individuals, businesses and institutions. We are grateful for the support of the mayor, who made available city files, records and past studies, and staff. We thank the Greater Waterbury Chamber of Commerce, City of Waterbury mayor and staff, the Naugatuck Valley Development Corp., the Waterbury Region Convention and Visitors Bureau, the Waterbury Foundation, the Downtown Coalition of Businesses, the Waterbury Republican-American, the Financial Institutions Contributions Committee, and the many other contributors of financial and in-kind support throughout the community who are listed in the report.

Of special note is the substantial commitment to the R/UDAT effort made by the Waterbury Republican-American, who provided computer support and assumed responsibility for the publication and distribution of the report.

The comments expressed by hundreds of individuals at the public forum conveyed frustrations, but also pride in and love of our city. Now there is a plan of action. Just as our children expressed their hopes in their "Box Cities", we can participate in building the city of our hopes.

Today is the commencement, not the culmination, of the R/UDAT effort. R/UDAT is a plan for beginning. Its purpose is to energize us, unify us, focus our attention and to mobilize us to action.

We urge every citizen of Waterbury and surrounding towns to read this report carefully. Let each one of us consider what our part might be in re-establishing Waterbury once again as a glorious cultural and economic center at the crossroads of Connecticut.

Jeffrey Cugno

Lydia Straus-Edwards

Co-Chairmen  
R/UDAT Steering Committee



# S E C T I O N 2

# BACKGROUND

Waterbury is best known as the Brass City.

More than we would like to admit, this nostalgic nickname is still a useful definition of the city and a good starting place in understanding this complex community.

Waterbury came by its brassy title honestly. During the city's heyday, the largest brass manufacturing plants in the world were here. Waterbury, it was said, was the city that "had something on everyone."

And that seemed literally true. Americans kept time by the famous Waterbury watch, the timepiece that "made the dollar famous." They folded those dollars into Waterbury-made brass clips and held their houses together with hardware fashioned in the city's throbbing forges.

Soldiers on both sides of the Civil War secured their uniforms with Waterbury buttons and shot at each other using shell casings made in the city.

The community's origins are any-

thing but distinguished. The first European settlers arrived on the inhospitable slopes of the Naugatuck River in 1674. They came from distant Farmington, today a 20-minute ride on the expressway but then a rugged woodland away.

They estimated their new home was capable of providing for 30 families at most but didn't stay long enough to test that theory; fear of Indians drove them back home after a year or two.

When they returned in 1677, the white settlers made peace with the natives long enough to purchase a huge swath of land for 38 English pounds. The new territory ranged from southernmost Naugatuck to northernmost Thomaston and covered 128 square miles.

Much of it was poorly suited to farming, and by 1780, an aide to the Marquis de Lafayette summed up the century-old community this way: "The village is frightful and without resources."

By the turn of that century, however, Waterbury's potential as a manufacturing site and a distribution center was beginning to be realized.

For half a century, Waterburians had been making buttons locally, and in 1802, ambitious manufacturers began turning them out in brass. The partnership then would eventually become the Scovill Manufacturing conglomerate.

Just a few years later, clock-making took hold locally. In 1810, three men began manufacturing clocks on Waterbury's Great Brook; the concern would become the Waterbury Clock Co. and, much later, Timex.

By the Civil War, Waterbury was already establishing a worldwide reputation as a producer of first quality goods.

"It was literally true and had been for years," historian William J. Pape wrote of Waterbury near the turn of the century, "that it was almost impossible to make anything from an umbrella to a pair of shoes or a suit of clothes, from a small electric motor to a locomotive or a battleship, from a trunk or handbag to a great office building or hotel without creating a demand for something made of brass or copper and sending to Waterbury for it."

The list of products manufactured here seems nearly endless.

A partial inventory, created in 1897, reveals something of its remarkable diversity. The city was already famous as a maker of clocks and watches; buckles and garters; ivory, cloth, and brass buttons; plus nails, eyelets, safety

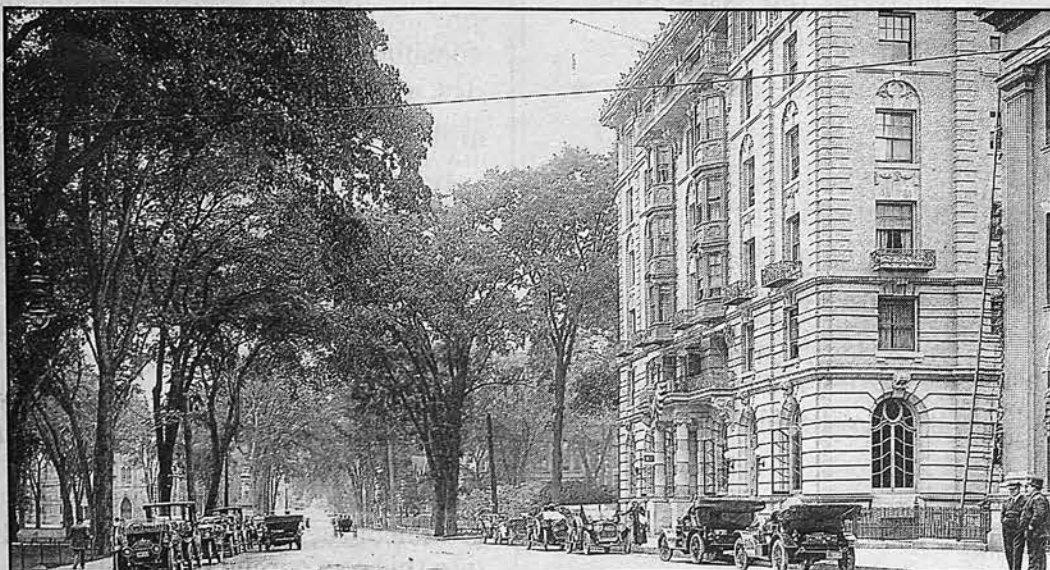
**Waterbury**

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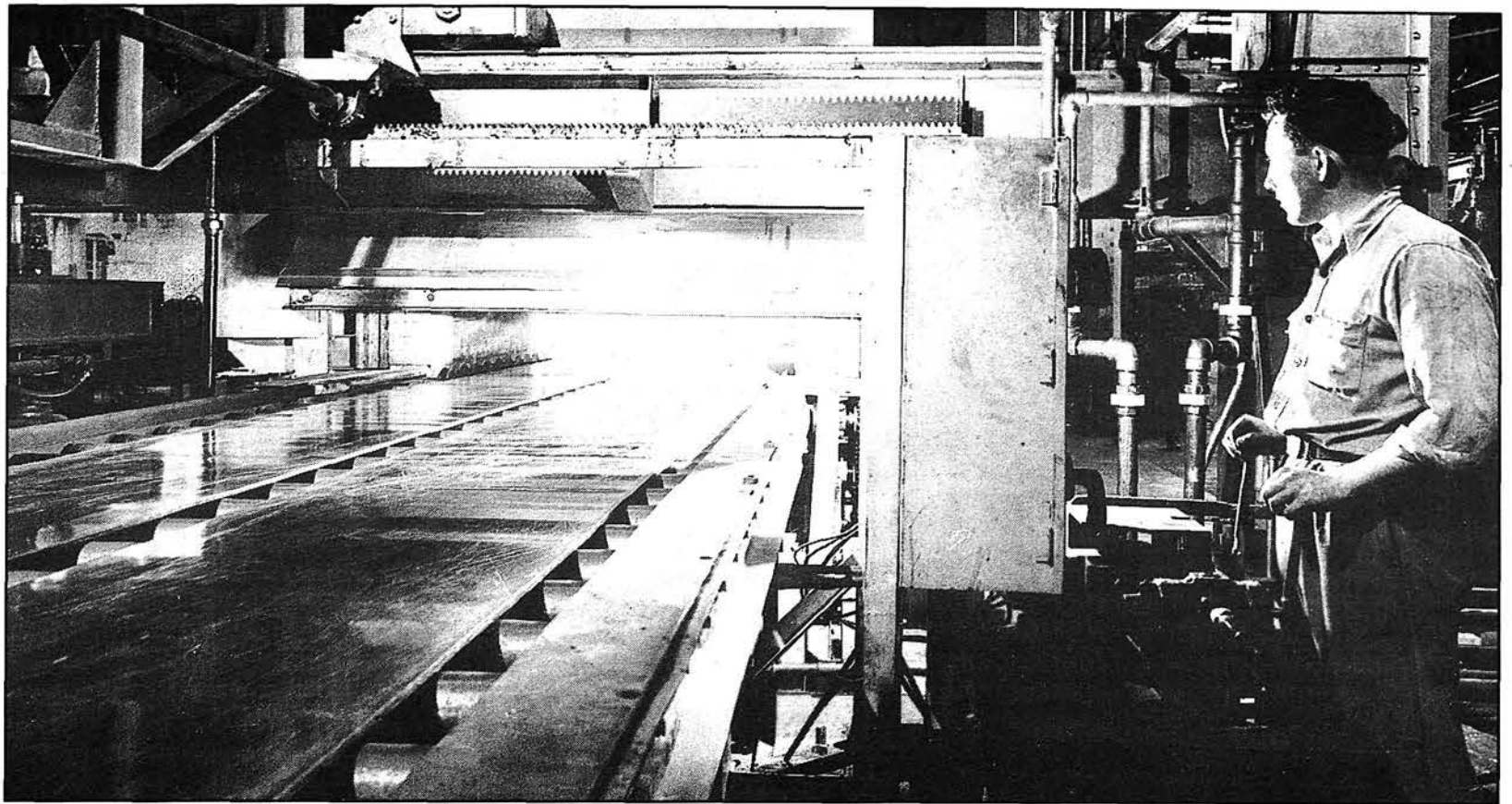
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*Republican-American archive photo*

*Looking west along West Main Street near the Elton, circa 1932.*





A worker in a rolling mill at the Scovill brass plant, circa 1949.

Republican-American archive photo



“  
**If you turn  
your back to  
the history,  
you turn your  
back on why  
the city  
exists — it's  
an insult.**

”  
Salvatore Albini

pins, hinges, paper boxes, chains, boilers, plumber's fittings, screws and rivets, steel traps and cow bells, toilet articles, and heavy machinery. The sun never set on Waterbury's empire of brass, and it looked in those heady days as if it never would.

But it did.

Waterbury's glory days came during war time as the city geared up to respond to apparently ceaseless needs. After World War II, the economy started to change, however, and folks in the Brass City didn't seem prepared to understand or take advantage of the change.

Slowly, inevitably, heavy industry got lighter. Heavily unionized manufacturing fled to the Orient and to America's Deep South. Factories that had been the envy of the world for their productivity and product lines began to look like industrial slums, and one by one the lights began to go out in the city's enormous mills.

In reality it took two decades, but in what seemed like overnight the world turned upside down: the Rust Belt acquired a tarnished

brass buckle.

Although the successes and excesses of the 80s seemed capable of changing that image, Waterbury continues, in many people's minds, to be thought of as a "gritty city" that claims the dubious distinction of being "a perennial bottom-dweller" on Money Magazine's list of the 300 most livable communities in America.

Nevertheless, the faded Industrial Revolution left its legacy. Waterbury's thriving mills attracted immigrants by the thousands, and today the city is home to a remarkable mix of cultures.

As a consequence, Waterbury is punctuated by steeples that energize the skyline and define the community as a city of churches and surrounding neighborhoods. The same Waterbury that supports eight parochial elementary schools and two Catholic high schools also hosts three synagogues and two mosques. Diversity — sometimes grudging — has long characterized the city.

In addition to its largely European stock, the city is today home to just over 14,000 African-

Americans and about 14,600 Hispanics. Each group represents about 13 percent of the total population. The median age is just over 33; there are 25,600 residents under 18, and 18,000 over 65.

When scouts arrived in Waterbury several years ago to prepare filming MGM's "Stanley and Iris," they admitted they were attracted to the city because they wanted the gritty, sooty, somewhat disheveled look of an old mill town.

They found everything they were looking for: gaping, empty factories, scarred housing, sleazy gin mills, a city well past its prime.

But they were also surprised to find things they never expected: an accessible, even elegant, downtown, handsome public buildings, gracious old boulevards and genteel mansions.

And they found hopeful, helpful, energetic people struggling to make this small-town city their home, bringing to it their strength and their energy and their needs.

They found Waterbury.



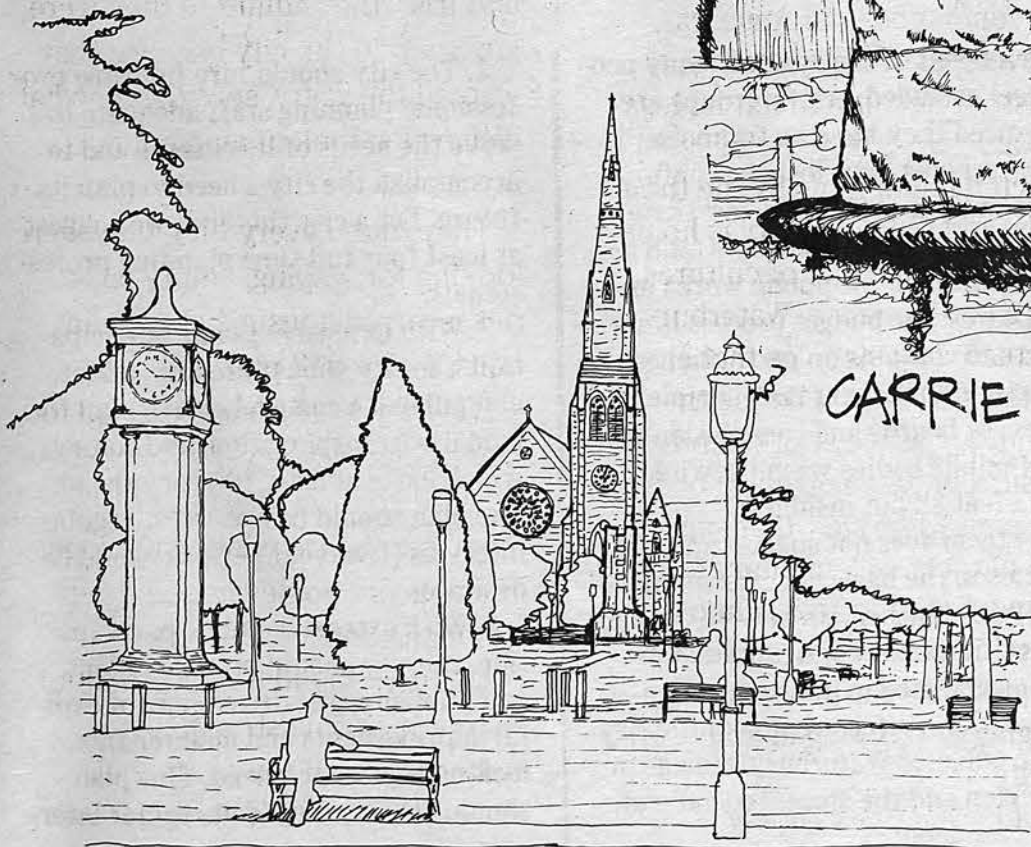
# VISIONS AND REFLECTIONS

Connecticut's Mark Twain once remarked on seeing his obituary mistakenly printed in a newspaper, "The report of my death has been greatly exaggerated."

R/UDAT's discovery of Waterbury was much the same. Before we came here, and even after we arrived, we heard repeatedly that Waterbury was not a desirable place to live. The dismal observations were not supported by the reality. R/UDAT found Waterbury to be a community of dignity, character and charm. The team believes the vitality and ingenuity of Waterbury's people, the strength of their faiths, the beauty of the city's architecture, the richness of its history make Waterbury a great place to work, live and raise a family.



CARRIE WELTON'S HORSE, KNIGHT



ST. JOHN'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

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**It's very important that a city turn to its spiritual roots.**

”

Father Joseph Looney

Few places in the world provide Waterbury's rich cultural diversity in a community of this size. The opportunity for a cosmopolitan experience in a home town setting combines the advantages of large and small cities without major congestion or isolation. Waterbury is ideally situated at the crossroads of highways linking major population centers.



# S E C T I O N 4

# BUILDING COMMUNITY

## Waterbury

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In the early 1880s, a group of citizens with no labor force, no transportation system, no copper or zinc (all essential ingredients for a healthy brass industry) decided to pursue their vision in spite of these obstacles. Thanks to their industry, audacity and persistence, Waterbury became the brass capital of the world.

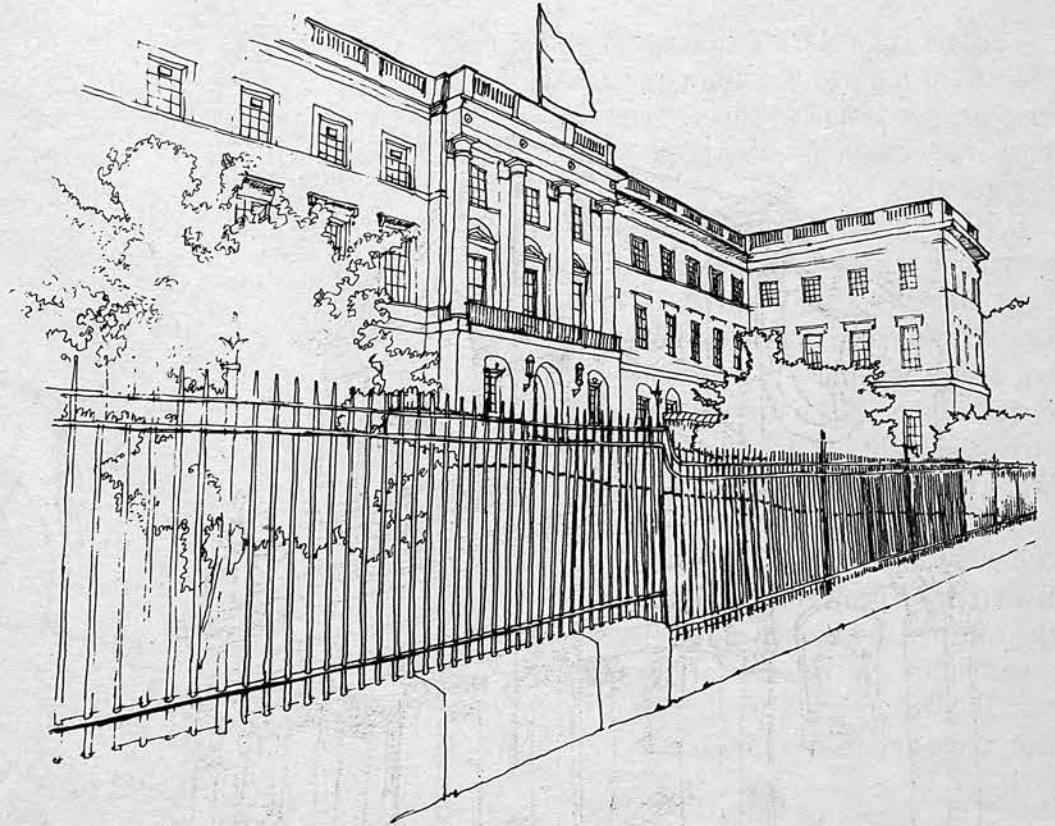
More recently, Waterbury demonstrated this same spirit when it took a dilapidated mill site, laced with hazardous material, and secured a qualified mall developer and \$50 million in state and federal funds for site preparation.

Unfortunately, the negative image, the tarnished reputation, has become accepted wisdom. Never mind reality — people act on what they believe. And the current belief is a big problem, so big, in fact, that it consumes this portion of the R/UDAT report.

What can be done?

Some things are apparent. For instance, cosmetic touches can enhance the downtown area. Simple cleanup and a program of increased maintenance will not only help instill pride, they will also entice more shoppers and diners to the area. Both should be implemented as soon as possible. Another element is promotion. We understand both the city and the Chamber of Commerce have programs in place. Both groups should pursue those efforts aggressively.

Other actions are more subtle, involving the very process of governance. The team has been impressed with the sincerity and capacity of Waterbury's political and social leaders. They appear insightful and genuinely concerned with the community's general welfare. But they find themselves in a system we feel discourages the kinds of changes articulated and anticipated by the community.



CITY HALL

As a result of the system, many people feel excluded; ethnic groups are convinced they have no franchise; public schools have lost the confidence of their constituencies; there is no current plan for the city's land use, no current plan for public works expenditures; the budget process is archaic and contains no performance criteria or goals; there is a complex system of boards and commission and quasi-public bodies which bewilder and defeat all but insiders.

The team does not suggest specific changes to the basic governmental structures. Rather, we believe changes to specific parts of the process must be accomplished to improve the appearance and effectiveness of the city and to enhance Waterbury's image in the region and the state. To that end, we recommend:

1. The city should hire full-time professional planning staff adequate to serve the needs of its citizens and to accomplish the city's need to plan its future. For a city this size, we suggest at least four full-time planning professionals.

2. With extensive public participation, the city should prepare, adopt, and publish a comprehensive plan for land use, transportation, and zoning which looks at least 10 years ahead. The plan should be revised at regular intervals (five-year periods would be desirable).

3. With extensive public participation, the city should prepare, adopt, and publish a prioritized plan of capital improvements and maintenance looking five years ahead. This plan should also be revised at regular intervals.

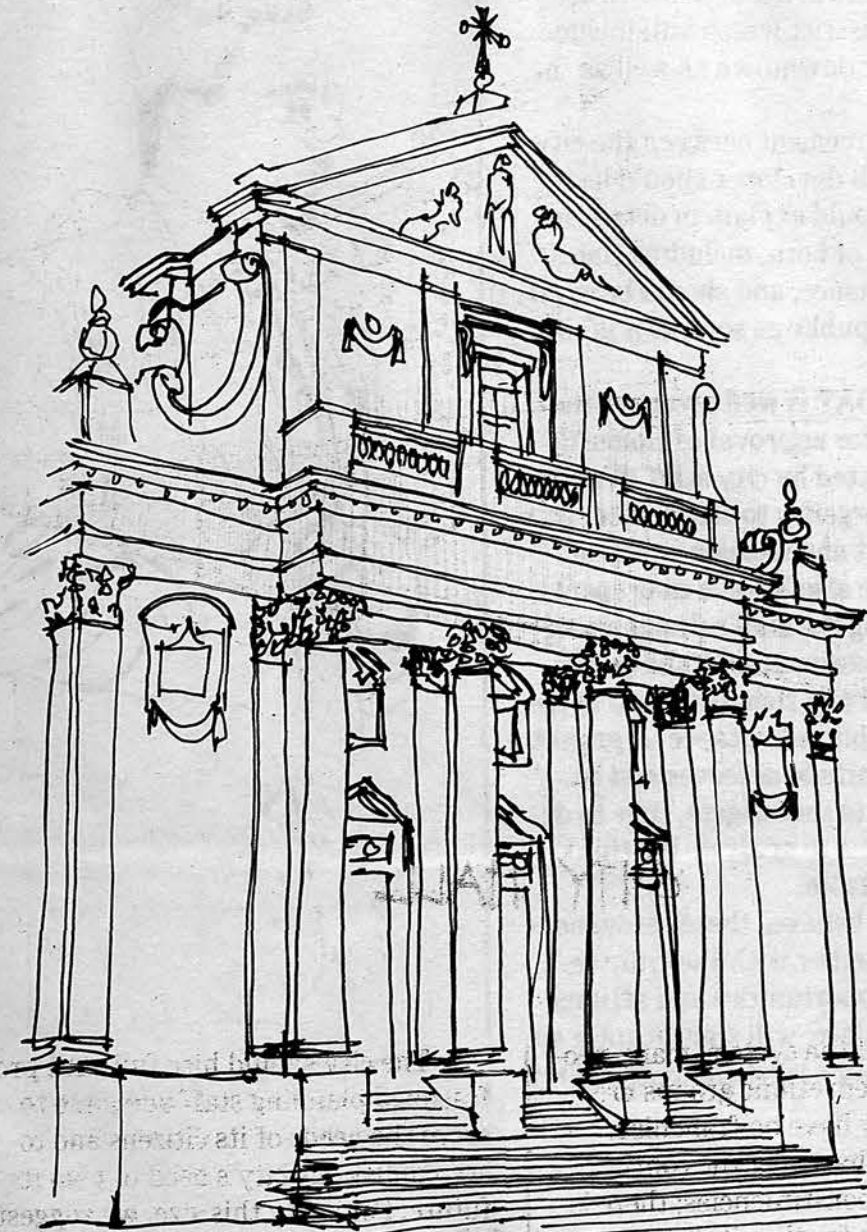


# BUDGET

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THE CHURCH OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

4. With extensive public participation, the city should reduce the number of boards and commissions that oversee the city's business.

5. With the help of a certified public accounting firm with experience in public finance, the city should change its budgeting system from a line-item budget to a multi-year, performance-based budget with performance goals and measuring techniques.

6. With extensive public participation, the city should empower a committee to review the city's charter and investigate, through a performance audit if possible, how basic changes in the charter might improve services and public participation in government.

We believe these basic changes will substantially improve continuity of plan and purpose expected by businesses and citizens. They will also promote predictability at a fundamental level, regardless what party or person is in office. We believe these changes will not interfere in the legitimate rough and tumble of political change and public demands. We are convinced these changes will substantially enhance the esteem in which the public, business, and surrounding governments hold Waterbury.

We encourage any change which makes government more inclusive. The city's goal should be to include the public at every step to investigate, study, create, and implement the city's vision of its future. A professional planning staff is a very important part of the process. We do not advocate turning the city's future over to paid professionals. Far from it; the people and their elected representatives must firmly retain discretionary control. But paid professional staff should bring stability, continuity, and, therefore, predictability to business, industry and homeowners. And, ideally, staff, equipped with an up-to-date plan, would provide a congenial, easy-to-approach access for the public.

Two special situations concern us. First, there were many comments about the school system. Most were generic and appear in every school system in the country. The team saw three areas particular to Waterbury:



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**There's  
another side  
to this other  
than  
buildings and  
things.**

”  
William Harris



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1. The city must make deliberate and conscientious efforts to include parents and children in all phases of decision making — shared decisions should be the watch words.

2. The city must make an intensive, immediate effort to recruit and employ ethnic teachers, principals and administrators. (Without these steps, the city runs the serious risk of losing completely the support of the community it is supposed to serve.)

3. The city should encourage cooperation between existing institutions of higher learning, and foster opportunities for these institutions to use existing vacant downtown buildings.

Second, the proposed mall presents opportunities which have not yet been explored (or revealed); the mall deserves the city's best efforts and the citizens' earnest support. Because the mall project presents such a profound opportunity for success or failure of Waterbury's central business district, the R/UDAT recommends:

1. The city should employ a well-known professional planner or urban designer to advise city staff and the public regarding modern mall design and the successful relationship of mall construction and operation to the existing downtown before the city approves any plans. The professional's activities should be guided by a scope of work (which could be requested as part of the professional's proposal for services).

2. The mall developer (Homart) and the city should hold at least three well-advertised public meetings for public discussion regarding Homart's proposed plans before the city approves any plans. The developer should present plans; citizens and civic groups should have an opportunity to raise issues and suggest solutions. Interaction between Homart, its architect, the city, and the public should continue throughout the design and approval process.

3. The developer should be required to participate in a maintenance assessment district which will include the historic downtown as well as the mall.

4. The agreement between the city and the mall developer should be in writing, should explain in detail the obligations of both, including times for performance, and should be available to the public as soon as it is completed.

The R/UDAT is well aware of the short time for approval of Homart's plans projected by city staff. We share a sense of urgency to secure Homart's commitment and to begin construction. But we also believe time spent now refining the mall's design using expert professional help and public opinion will pay rich dividends in design and public acceptance. A project of this magnitude deserves and requires time to investigate, time to design, and time to analyze. We think time is available.

The team believes these recommendations, together with the truly remarkable opportunities and actions already in place, will significantly enhance the city's local and regional reputation.



“  
If we don't  
get input  
from  
everyone in  
the  
community  
we're going  
to fail.  
”

Rick Walters



# S E C T I O N 5 CONNECTIONS

For many generations, Downtown Waterbury was the shops, banks, offices, theaters, restaurants, government offices and transportation terminals surrounded by the brass mills and workers' neighborhoods.

This historic downtown was compact and filled with intense activity from the busy rail station on the west, around the historic Green, to the East Main Street entrance to the Scovill mill.

Today, much of the bustle is history with the closing of the mills and much of the downtown commercial and office activity dispersed to the suburbs. The intown neighborhoods have also seen dramatic changes over the past few decades.

New and diverse groups have continued the tradition of change from Yankee to Irish, Jewish to Italian, French Canadian to Hispanic and so on throughout the inner city neighborhoods.

Today's downtown serves a very different constituency from that at the height of the industrial era. And with that change comes a new agenda to meet the center city needs of the end of the century and into the future.

Although the daily population downtown has radically declined, there remains an amazing collection of beautiful, solid buildings from proud public structures to elaborate commercial buildings. This architectural legacy forms a very positive foundation for the new and expanded downtown.

The once-compact downtown is about to undergo a radical transformation with the introduction of a major regional shopping mall on the old Scovill site. Suddenly, the almost circular old center will be counterbalanced by the new mall somewhat removed to the east.

Without sensitive and timely action to bring the old and new downtowns into balance to function as a whole, the old downtown and its adjacent neighborhoods could be drained of the remaining life and subjected to ever-increasing deterioration.

The urgency of this vital issue, how to make a greater whole from the various parts of downtown, is the primary focus of the R/UDAT effort.

The connection between the old and new downtowns, that area along East Main Street stretching for 1,500 feet or four city blocks, must undergo significant improvement to become the glue that bonds the major anchors of the new linear downtown together.

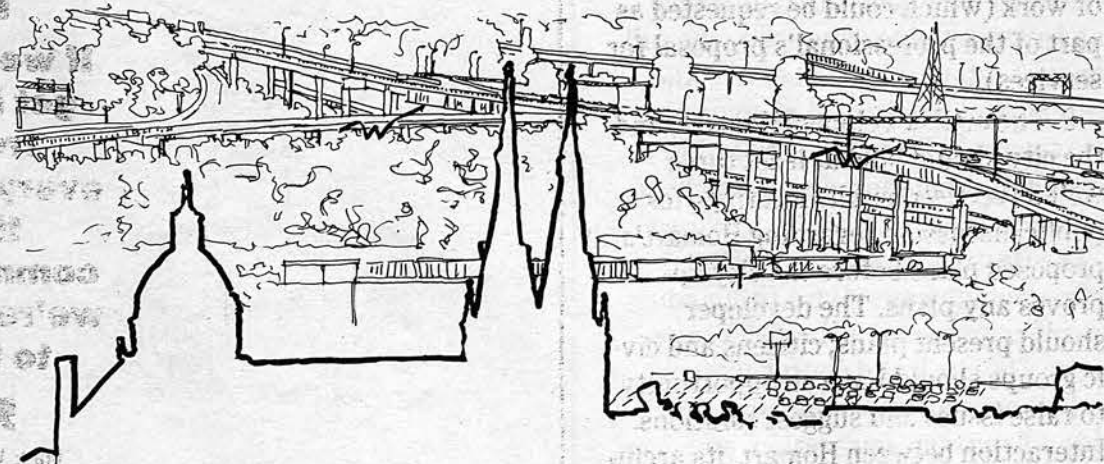
Waterbury, adjacent to the crossroads of two major highways — Interstate 84 and Route 8 — is one of the most accessible cities in New England. This advantage came at a great cost to the city in the form of disruption to

the historic street patterns, blockage of visual connections between neighborhoods and the old city center, noise and air pollution, and structures that overpower the natural amenities of the Mad and Naugatuck riverways.

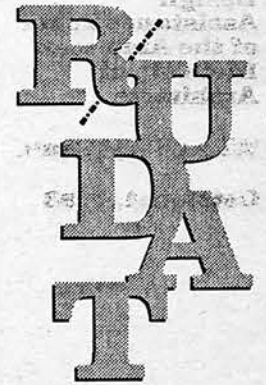
However, the R/UDAT accepts the highways and planned ramp improvements as a given and makes every attempt to reap the positive benefits from the existing highway system for the future of downtown Waterbury.

For the residents of Greater Waterbury, the highways offer quick and direct access to the downtown, bypassing the stop-and-go traffic of local streets.

For the more occasional traveler passing through the area, views of the city center landmarks from the highways are fleeting but can entice them to make a decision to exit the expressway and participate in the downtown activities.



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# R U R A L D E S I G N A S S I S T A N C E T E A M O F T H E A M E R I C A N I N S T I T U T E O F A R C H I T E C T S

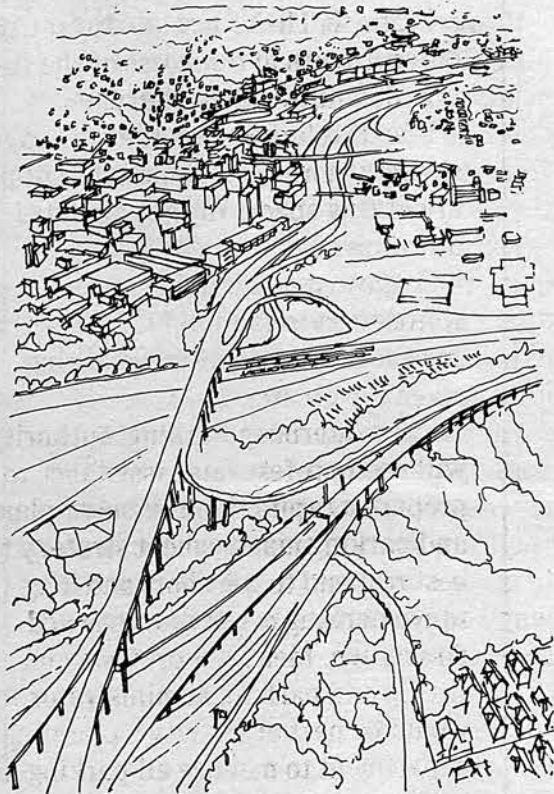
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It was the confluence of the major north-south and east-west highways that attracted the developer, Homart, to propose a major regional retail mall on the abandoned Scovill site just east of the historic downtown, where over 300,000 potential shoppers are within a short drive.

This turn of events can reverse the accelerating trend of people from Greater Waterbury avoiding the downtown area. Through careful planning and implementation of attractive, convenient downtown transit, auto and pedestrian connections throughout the expanded city center, the mall can be the catalyst to bring new life to the downtown.



A whole new generation of people can be attracted to experience the full range of retail, cultural, service and recreational facilities in an expanded, reinvigorated Downtown Waterbury stretching from the railroad tracks to Hamilton Park.

The fleeting views of Waterbury from the highways give a first and lasting impression of the city's character. The clock and church towers and other landmark structures provide a handsome impression, and lighting them at night as suggested by the recently completed Visions study is a fine idea. Unfortunately the positive image of Waterbury provided by its historic skyline and neighborhoods

on the hills is marred by the proliferation of ugly billboards competing for attention, abandoned old mills, "catch all" irregular lots left over from the highway construction and neglected waterways.

The city must take a thorough inventory of the "first impression" elements, good and bad, and work toward accentuating the positive by eliminating the negative.

## Access from the neighborhoods

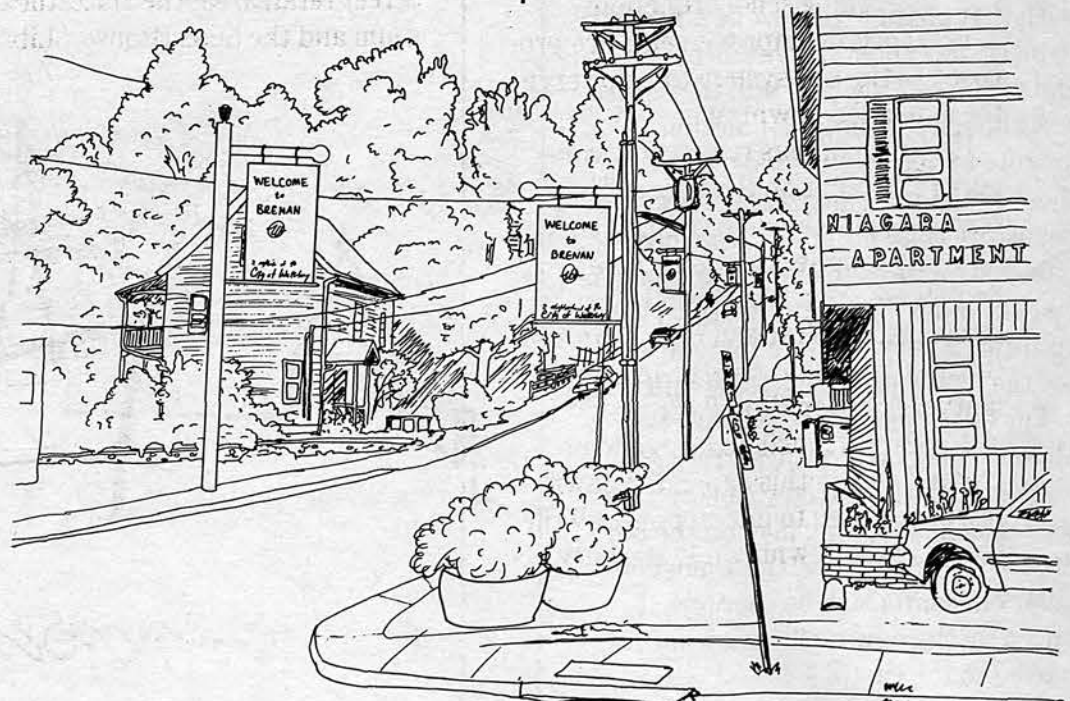
The primary connector streets between the downtown and the major neighborhoods are North, East, South and West Main streets; Baldwin, Bank and Willow streets. South and West Main must pass beneath the elevated highways, which are visual and physical barriers between the neighborhoods and downtown.

Special street design features along the transition areas of these entranceways, from simple banners on the utility poles to more ornate architectural "gateways" would help to give identity and pride in both directions: as entrances into the downtown and portals back into the neighborhoods. Longer-range plans could include special plantings, street lamps, sidewalk paving and benches that are in character with the specific neighborhoods.

South and West Main streets and other passages under the highways could become a celebration of the entrances through well-designed treatment to the underpass structures, special lighting and landscaping. Safe, attractive pedestrian and bicycle routes should also be developed through these barriers.

For generations, Waterburians proudly sited their beautiful public buildings and churches to be seen down the main streets and from the neighboring hillsides. Unfortunately, this tradition has not always been respected and many of the vistas which help give orientation as well as a positive image for the city have been blocked by new buildings and highways.

Proposed construction should be carefully reviewed in the context of the overall downtown and adjusted to complement the historic pattern which helps to guide the motorist and pedestrian to and within the downtown.

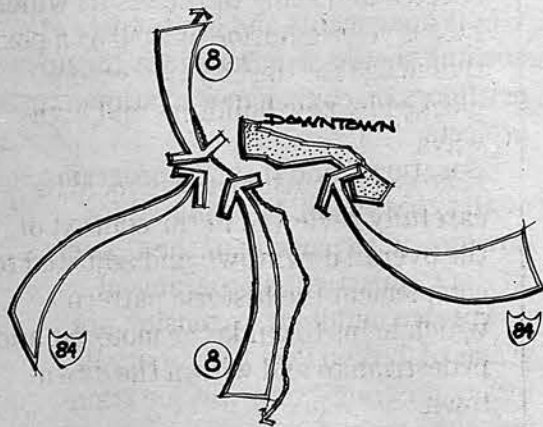




**Public transportation**

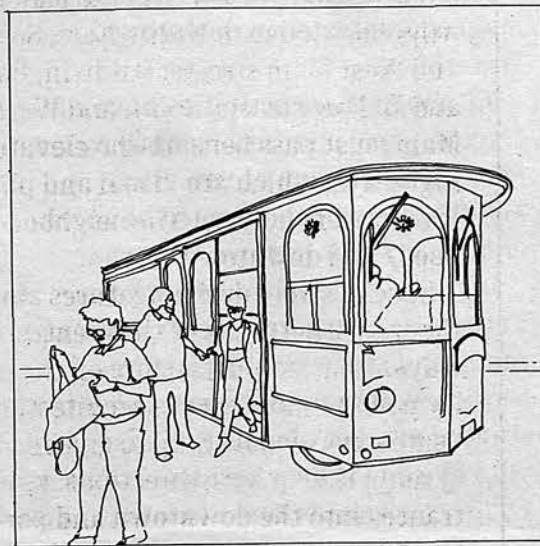
Public transit in Waterbury consists of a 20-route bus system that centers on the Green in downtown. The present equipment is old and in need of replacement.

While the routes and schedule serve the community needs fairly well during the day, there is a need to extend service into the evening hours and to develop some flexibility in the system



Providing a two-way loop connecting all of the major origin and destination points in the expanded downtown, including the parking garages, creates an extremely convenient connector system with very short headways. This would tie together the downtown and encourage multi-purpose trips to the center rather than one-stop, in-and-out visits.

In addition to the loop bus, special vehicles such as the rubber-tire trolley could be used during peak down-



**Parking**

When downtown activity is in decline, parking or the lack thereof is usually selected as the reason. Waterbury has more than 4,800 existing parking spaces serving the present downtown. Of those, 3,850 are in ramp garages scattered strategically throughout the center.

Studies in the mid-1980s indicated parking demand at or exceeding the practical capacity at peak hours. More recently, there has been an overall decline in parking demand. In summary, the downtown parking situation has not been the primary cause for a decline in economic activity in the downtown; however, well-located, sufficient parking will be critical to the anticipated growth and success of the future downtown Waterbury.

The development on the old Scovill site will more than double the supply of parking spaces in the expanded downtown.

Suggested downtown loop bus and shuttle services should help to allow some of the new mall site parking serve the greater downtown.

The Waterbury Parking Authority will need professional assistance to prepare a capital improvement plan and parking management strategy to best respond to the short and long-range parking needs of a renewed downtown. Ideally, a professional traffic and parking administrator would be part of the city's planning department to manage all parking and traffic movement issues, public and private, in the city center.

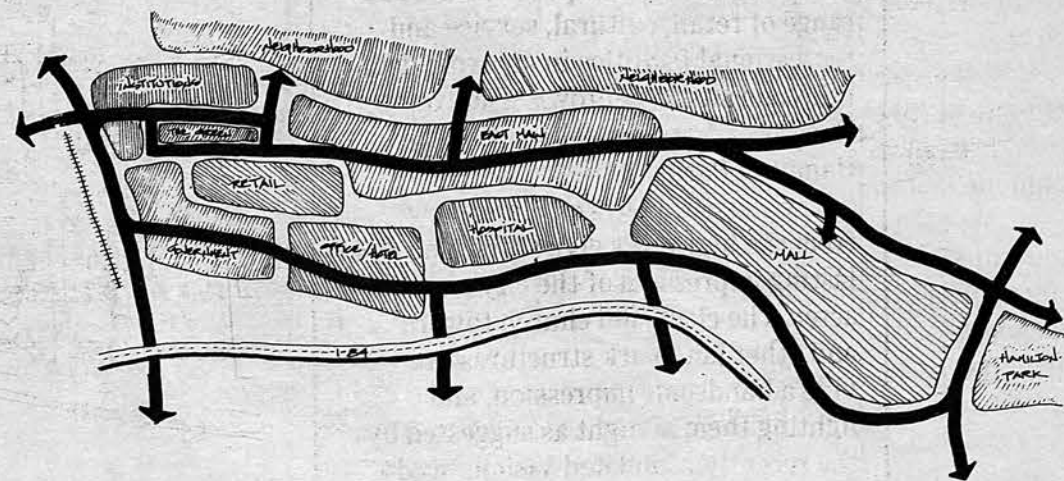
to provide transportation for special events such as regional concerts and festivals, and neighborhood programs such as evening school functions.

Two specific improvements are proposed to the bus system to help serve the expanded downtown:

1. The radial bus routes now converge at a point on the Green. This transfer area should be expanded to a two-way loop serving the whole downtown from Willow and Meadow streets along West and East Main and Grand and Union streets through the new mall to Hamilton Park.

2. A Free Transit Zone should be created within this expanded downtown loop area to interconnect all the old and new downtown Waterbury activities.

town use times to provide fine-tuned door-to-door connections between facilities such as the Mall and Bank Street retail area, the Mattatuck Museum and the Silas Bronson Library.



PROPOSED BUS ROUTE SCHEMATIC



# A GREATER

## Waterbury

# R/UR D/DA T

Report of the  
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Architects

Waterbury, Conn.

October 4, 1993

### The tradition

Waterbury's traditional downtown has many strengths.

It is the most accessible location in the region. It has authentic character which cannot be duplicated in new developments. It is a genuinely historic place where generations of Waterburians have lived, worked, raised their families.

Downtown Waterbury's rich architectural heritage cannot be matched in the region. The handsome facades on Bank Street, the soaring church spires, the elegant government buildings on Grand Street, the Elton Hotel, the tower at the former railroad station, and many other historic structures constitute a significant resource for downtown Waterbury.

### The future

Downtown Waterbury will continue to be anchored by government offices and the courts along Grand Street. Legal and other services will locate nearby. Financial institutions, related professions and financial services will remain concentrated in downtown Waterbury.

Although these activities have contracted, some institutions have recently expanded in downtown. Banking and finance will continue to be another anchor for downtown Waterbury.

In the traditional downtown near The Green, two hotels, several restaurants, and numerous retail stores serve downtown employees, the substantial number of elderly citizens who live downtown, residents of nearby neighborhoods, and visitors.

New uses are needed to fill the vacant space in Waterbury's existing downtown, especially on the upper levels.

Loft apartments and other types of housing should be pursued for the upper floors through demonstration projects.

Educational and training programs of all types should be explored for downtown. Expansion of the University of Connecticut's programs in downtown buildings, extension programs of Teikyo Post University, literacy programs, tutoring, job training, and other educational programs could be located in downtown buildings. The students and trainees would patronize downtown businesses and add vitality to downtown. Convenient access by public transportation and private automobile makes downtown an ideal location for training and education programs. Public health services and treatment centers are also well-suited to Waterbury's downtown locations.

Interior designers, architects, landscape architects and other design professionals are good candidates for upper floors of historic buildings. Photographers, graphic artists, public relations firms and other creative enterprises might be attracted to downtown buildings on Bank, Grand and the Main streets. Stores marketing crafts and other special items could complement retail stores in the traditional downtown. The result could be an appealing mix of shops in downtown Waterbury.



DOWNTOWN FABRIC



# DOWNTOWN

## Downtown living

Some young couples, single people and couples whose children are grown are potential customers for loft apartments in and around downtown Waterbury. There are many buildings with vacant space above the first floor. It may be possible to convert this surplus space to loft apartments. Other cities with no experience with downtown living have found that there is a surprisingly large niche market for it.

Other potential tenants include artists, architects, graphic designers, writers, public relations specialists, as well as other professionals and business people who enjoy the arts and an urban environment. These people are prepared to pay rents at and above the average rents for contemporary apartments. Experience in other cities shows some people will pay 25 percent more for loft apartments than for conventional apartments. They find a special appeal in living in a different type of housing in the heart of the city.

There will be problems to overcome, such as availability of financing, flexibility of codes, and parking, but other cities have overcome these problems.

The benefits of loft apartments would include:

- Vitality and activity after business hours and on weekends.
- Increased support for stores, services and activities in downtown.
- An enhanced sense of activity and safety for the many elderly people who live in downtown.

A demonstration project could test the feasibility of developing loft apartments in Waterbury's historic downtown.

## Learning and having fun

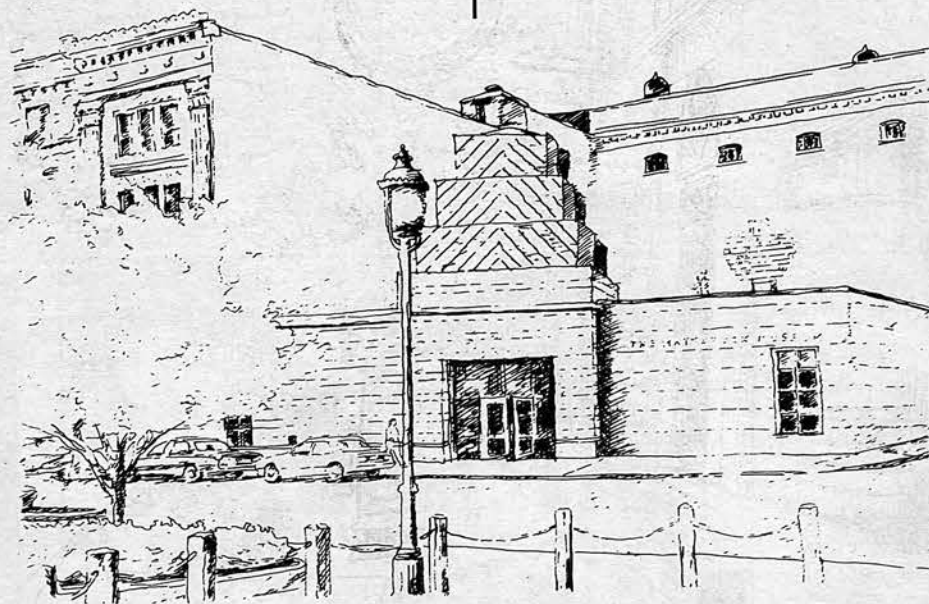
Waterbury's educational and cultural life is an especially important key to its future. In a city with wonderful ethnic diversity and history, there is an opportunity to "make the whole greater than the sum of its parts."

Downtown Waterbury is the confluence of its neighborhoods, not just a self-standing, independent area. Together with enhancing its downtown commercial life through the new retail mall, a downtown educational/cultural district can provide activities for all.

East Main Street in the area of the Palace Theater is an ideal location for this cultural and educational district.

The R/UDAT team applauds the previous studies and attempts to renovate the Palace, and urges the renovation and re-opening of the Palace Theater as a high priority. However, we think that a more comprehensive project should be the ultimate goal.

Re-opening the Palace can be the first step of a multi-phased process to establish a civic/cultural/educational center for downtown Waterbury. Ideally, this project will proceed in tandem with the new mall development, and the two projects can be completed at about the same time.



MATTATUCK MUSEUM

## Waterbury



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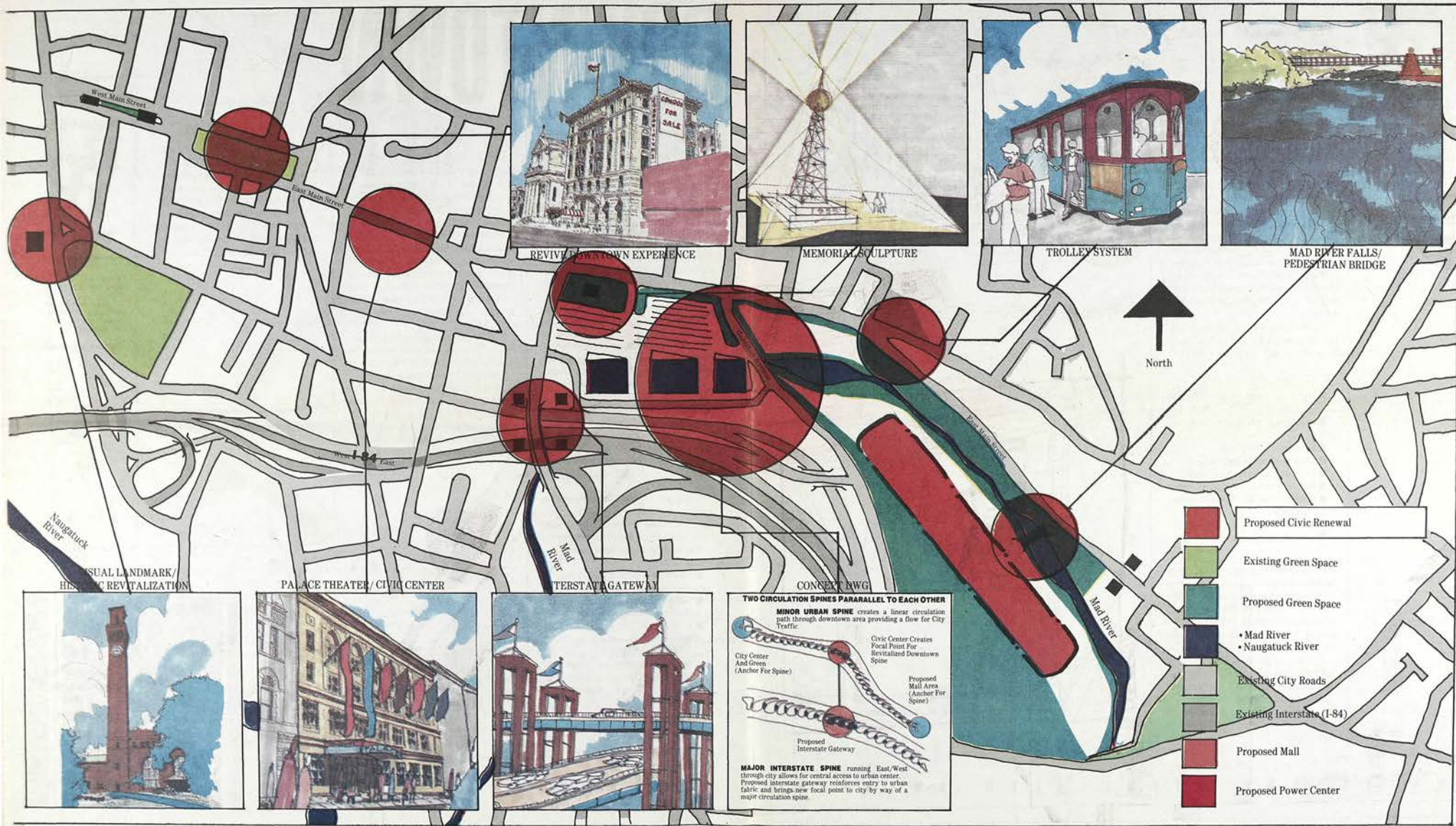
October 4, 1993



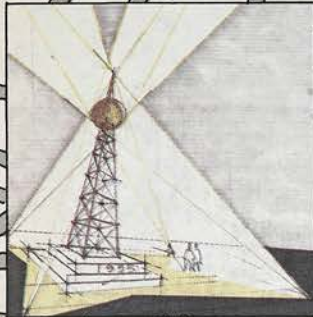
“  
Educate the  
adults as well  
as the  
children.

”  
Bill Pizzutto





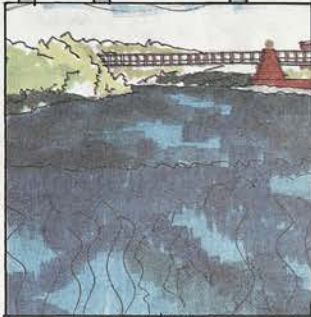
REVIVIFY DOWNTOWN EXPERIENCE



MEMORIAL SCULPTURE



TROLLEY SYSTEM

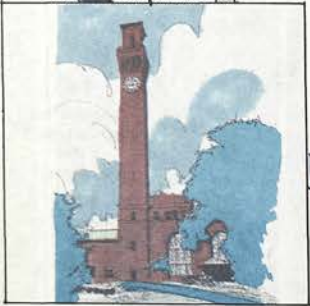


MAD RIVER FALLS/ PEDESTRIAN BRIDGE



North

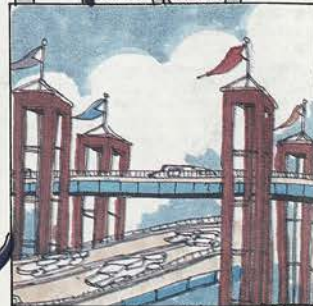
- Proposed Civic Renewal
- Existing Green Space
- Proposed Green Space
- Mad River
- Naugatuck River
- Existing City Roads
- Existing Interstate (I-84)
- Proposed Mall
- Proposed Power Center



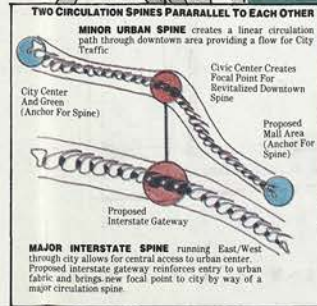
VISUAL LANDMARK/ HISTORIC REVITALIZATION



PALACE THEATER/ CIVIC CENTER



INTERSTATE GATEWAY



CONNECT HWY



## The Palace Civic Center

A concentration of activities along East Main Street should be part of the overall strategy to energize downtown and extend it to the east to the mall. This has been the historic pattern of downtown development, but now special intervention with public and private funds is necessary to further this type of development downtown.

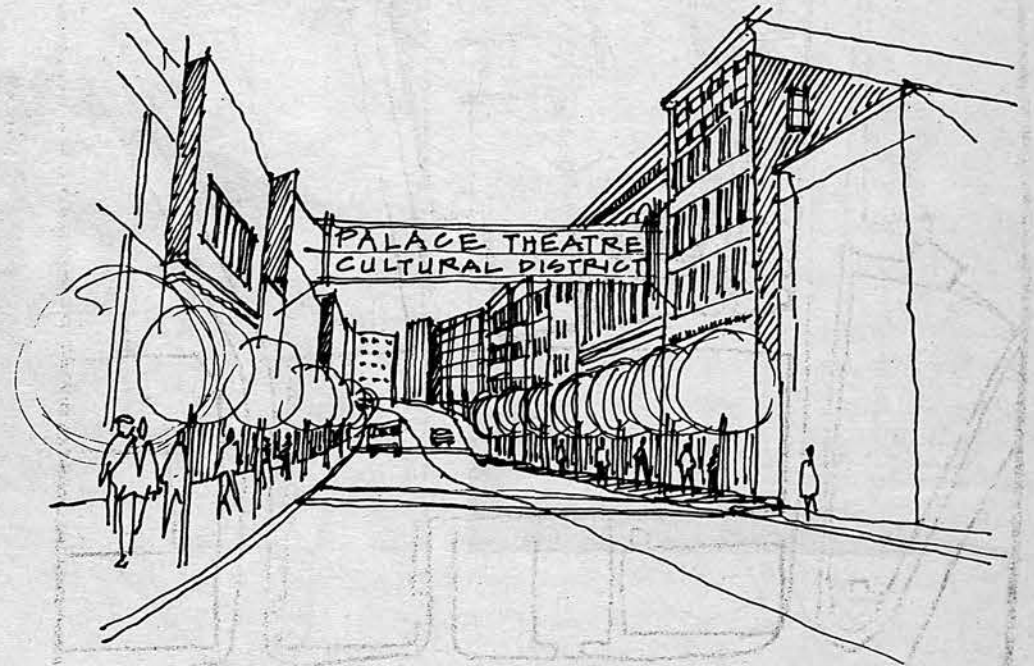
Using the Palace Theater as an anchor, a multi-purpose complex can be created to satisfy diverse but mutually supporting uses. These uses would include, for instance, musical and theater arts, corporate meetings, continuing education, after-school programs, senior citizen activities, exhibitions and small trade shows, temporary art shows, community meetings and many more — the hallmark is program diversity.

The complex would have the following components, each of which would be multi-purpose in its own right:

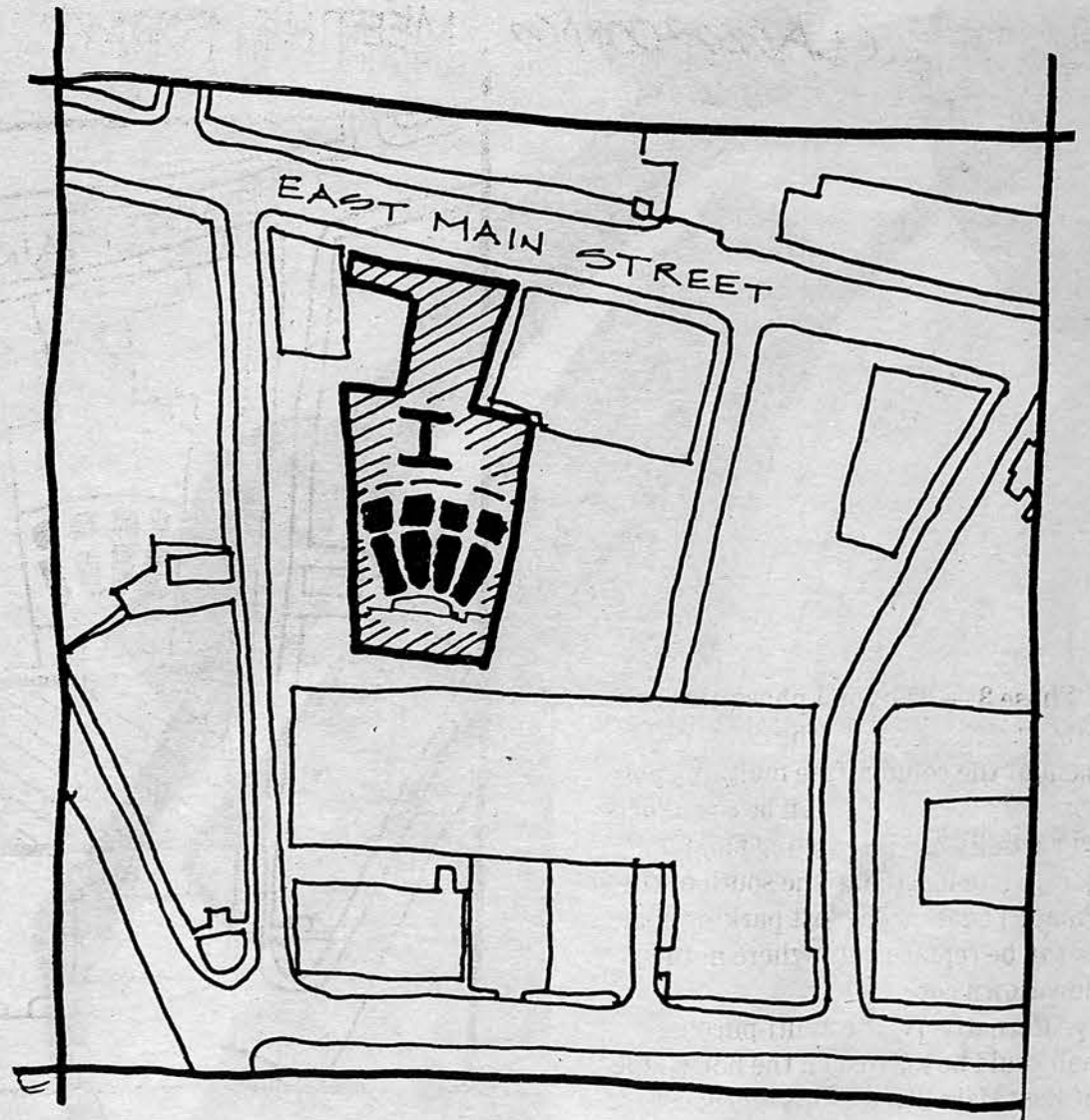
- Performing arts theater (The Palace), renovated.
- Lobby, renovated and new expansion.
- Rehearsal rooms, new.
- Theater support spaces, new.
- Theater stagehouse, expanded.
- Meeting rooms/classrooms, new.
- Exhibition space, multi-purpose, flat floor, new.
- Administration, new.
- Catering kitchen, new.

Initially, the emphasis should be on stabilizing the structure and ensuring its protection from vandalism and the elements. To develop this cultural/educational/convention center, a phased plan of construction can be undertaken, as follows:

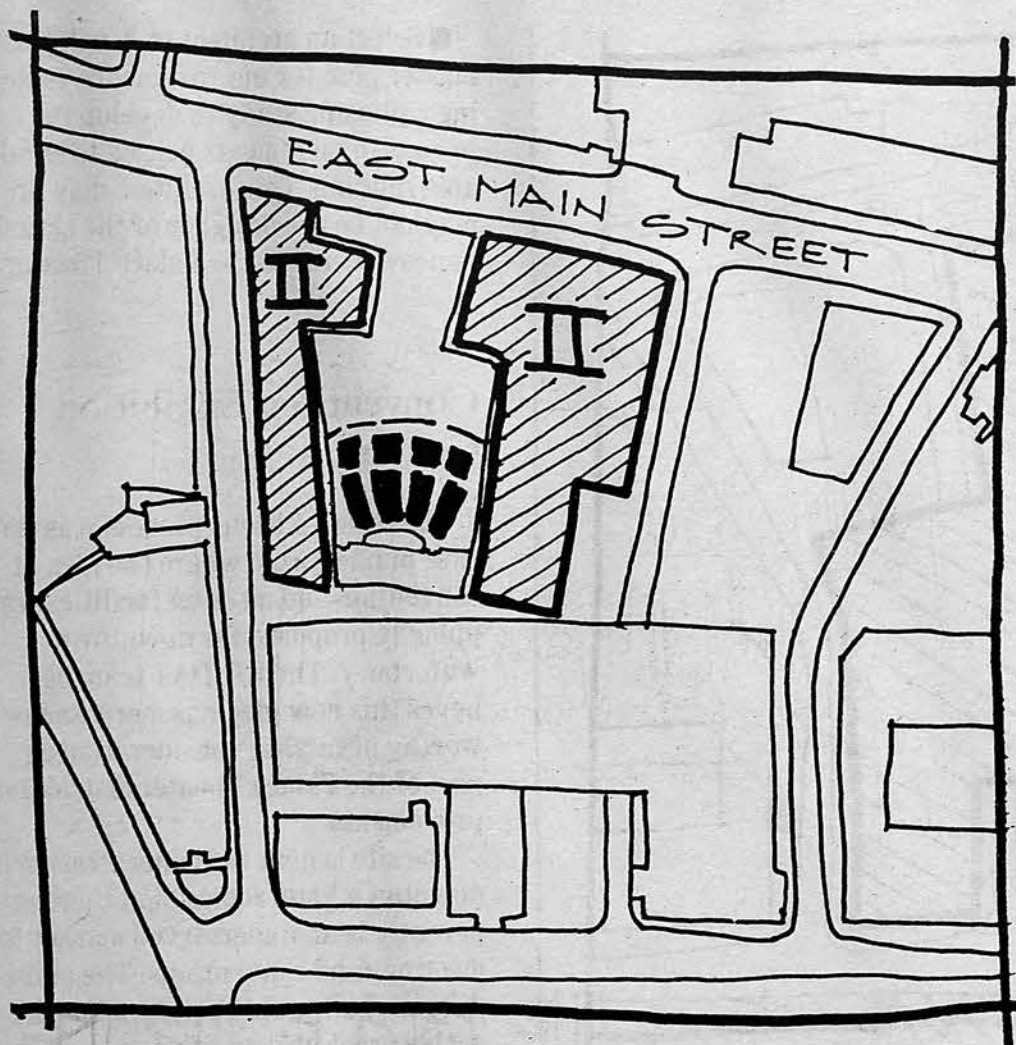
Phase 1 — The Palace Theater will be renovated and reopened using its existing basic spaces. This should be undertaken as soon as possible to begin revenue generation and to provide the basis of support for additional improvements.



PHASE ONE - THE PALACE THEATRE







Phase 2 — Development will continue to the east where the new Palace Theater support spaces will be constructed, along with new meeting rooms and class rooms. This multi-level development will occur along East Main Street, with the ground floor eventually serving as the lobby for the new meeting rooms and exhibition hall.

Additional improvements to the Palace Theater, including an expanded stagehouse and ancillary support spaces on the Brook Street side of the building will continue during this phase.

Waterbury

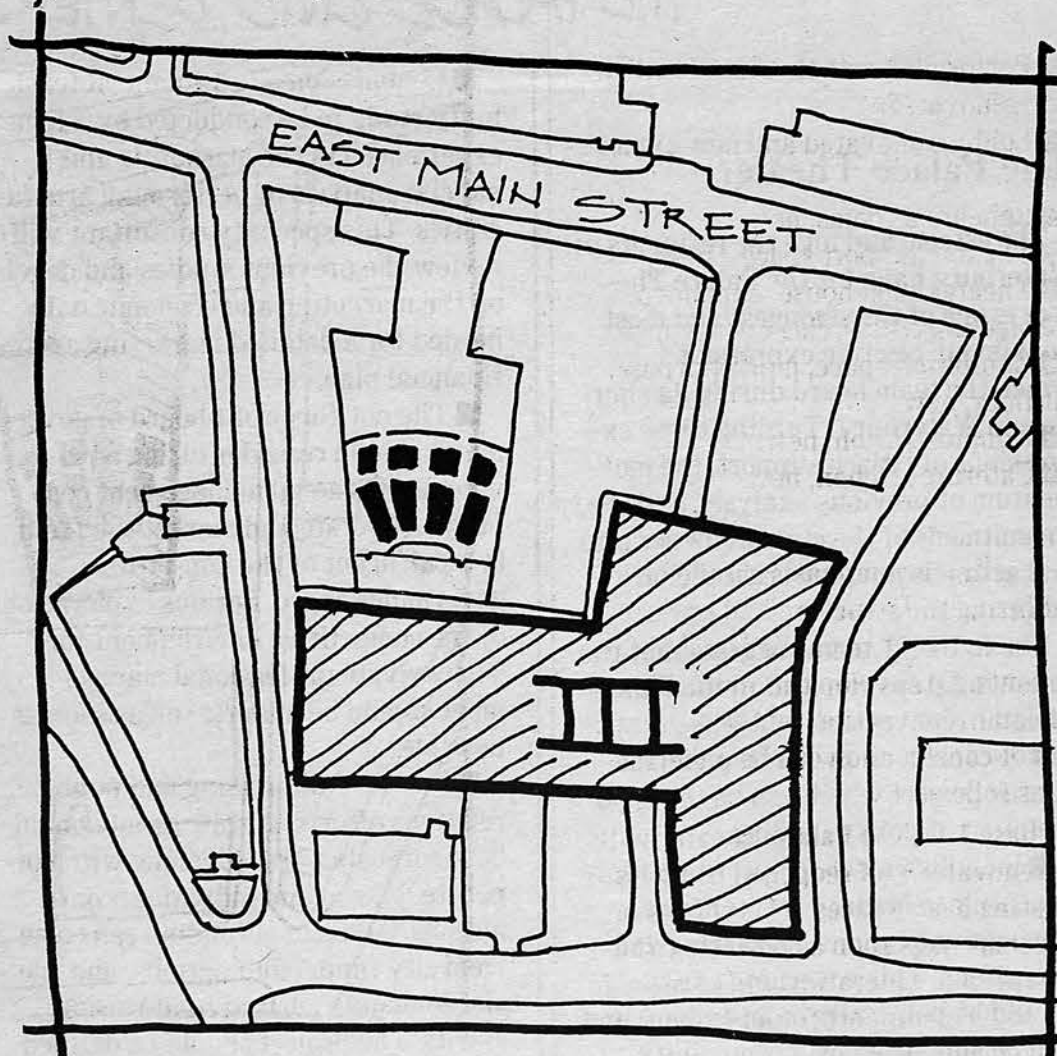
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PHASE TWO - PALACE THEATRE, SUPPORT &  
CLASSROOMS, MEETING ROOMS



PHASE THREE - MULTI-PURPOSE HALL

Phase 3 — The final phase of the project will consist of the development of the column-free multi-purpose space. This civic hall can be constructed partially on the existing municipal garage site located to the south of the Palace Theater. The lost parking spaces can be replaced elsewhere in the downtown core.

Alternatively, the multi-purpose hall could be located on the north side of East Main Street. This and other exhibition hall alternatives will require further professional study.



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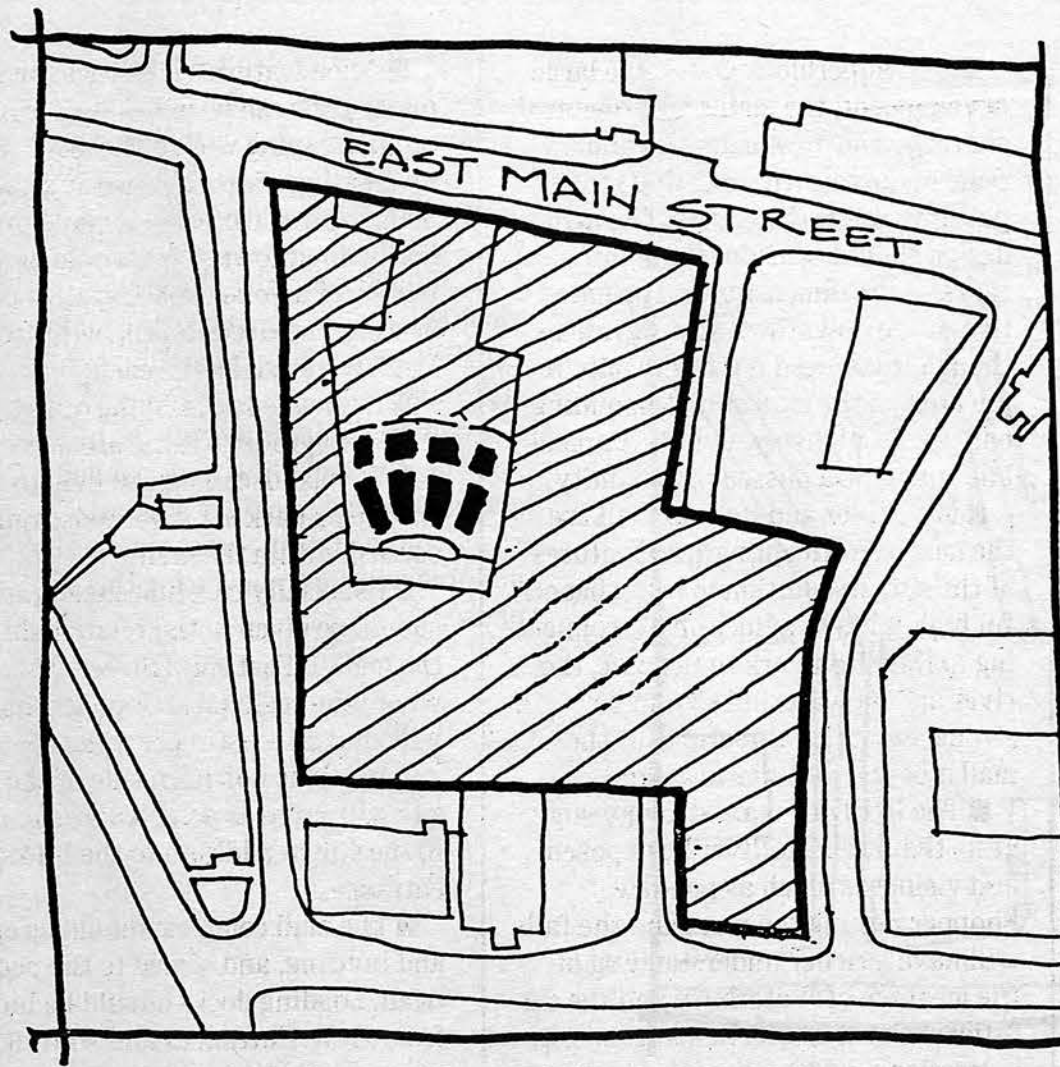


“

**We have two ears and one mouth. It's better to listen.**

”

Ric Speck



## THE COMPLETE PROJECT - THE PALACE CIVIC CENTER

### The Palace Theater

The esteem and love the residents of Waterbury have for the Palace Theater is one of the strongest and most unanimous positive expressions which the team heard during its short time in Waterbury. Turning these expressions of citizen support, the momentum of previous analysis, and the commitment of the current owner into real action is now the critical challenge.

The R/UDAT team suggests that the following steps can lead to the Palace Theater renovation:

- Establish an ownership vehicle for the project which can be the legal recipient of public funding.
- Establish a not-for-profit governing entity to manage theater fund-raising, renovations, marketing and operations. This governing entity should be politically independent, and will be supported by a community-based advisory group.

■ Commission a full financial feasibility study to be conducted by a firm experienced in the marketing and financial analysis of performing arts facilities. This specialty consultant will review the previous studies and develop the marketing and economic data needed for a detailed marketing and financial plan.

■ The not-for-profit board of governance should consider hiring a private, professional management company to operate and market the facility as an agent of the non-profit governance board. Serious exploration of the competitive environment for such private professional management should be undertaken as soon as possible.

■ Initiate fund-raising and public relations efforts. A state grant should be vigorously pursued, along with corporate, patron and individual contributions. Additional funding can come from city funds, foundations, and special community-based fund-raising events. The project should be defined as a statewide and regional effort, not just limited to Waterbury.

■ Select an architect to develop a master plan for improvements, including a phasing study to develop the project in increments geared to available funding. This architect may or may not be the designer of the actual improvements to the Palace Theater.

### Convention/Exhibition Center

The recent Visions process was the first public forum where the idea of convention and meeting facilities was publicly proposed for downtown Waterbury. The R/UDAT team believes this new idea has merit and is worthy of further consideration as part of the Palace Theater district improvements.

The site is near the concentration of downtown hotel rooms, and there apparently is an underserved market for meetings and conventions. The multi-purpose hall could be programmed with a great variety of uses, including exhibits, trade shows, community events, spectator events which can utilize the flat floor configuration, and banquets.

While first priority for leasing the space should be for activities that create the greatest economic impact, broad community use will be a key feature of the multi-purpose hall's mission. Under a professional management and marketing structure the programming potential for such a multi-purpose space will be able to serve an incredibly broad range of constituencies.

Implementation of the convention/meeting portion of the multi-purpose project should proceed as a fully public effort. A marketing and financial feasibility study should be commissioned to determine market, building program and financial analysis. In addition, design feasibility studies should be conducted in conjunction with the Palace Theater master planning to develop options and solutions for unifying the complex.

Funding for this portion of the project should be public, most likely consisting of city and state funds since the direct economic benefits will be realized mostly through tax receipts from hotel, restaurant and parking use.



## Brass Works Mall

The new retail mall proposed to be built by the Homart Development Corp. on the site of Waterbury's famous Scovill Brass Works represents a superb opportunity to provide economic development and accessible shopping for Waterbury's residents and to expand and enhance Waterbury's downtown core.

This project is a special and historic opportunity to re-establish Waterbury's pre-eminence, to enhance its identity as seen by outsiders, and to make living in the city more convenient and enjoyable.

With thoughtful architectural and landscape design, creative marketing and appropriate connections to the existing downtown core to the west, the new mall will improve both the function and the image of the entire Waterbury community. This project is a major step towards creating a *Greater Downtown Waterbury*.

The mall must solve more than the shopping needs of the region, and every feature of its development must stress *connection* — connections in the physical, social, historic and human sense.

It is not enough simply to reuse the brassworks site and to forget its original function. The mall should not cut the connections to Waterbury's past, its downtown and its people.

If the site's urbanistic potential, historical significance and natural beauty are sensitively treated, Brass Works Mall can be an award-winning project of national significance.

Developed as a mundane, too predictable suburban-type mall it will not realize its full potential as a catalyst for Waterbury's rebirth and indeed may contribute to the decline of downtown Waterbury.

The soundness of the decision to locate this major project along the Mad River and within view of the I-84 highway is validated by the fact that so many positive opportunities exist for the mall's design. The R/UDAT team reviewed the developer's proposed site plan and early concept sketches, and feels that the work begun gives promise of blossoming into some of the following ideas:

■ As a superblock and single large development, the mall's architectural character must consider the human scale of downtown's existing street patterns and architecture. The mall's design should consider the significance of the dimension and orientation of the downtown street grid, although these need not be literally replicated on the mall site. Responding only to the highway and the automobile would be a missed opportunity.

■ Mad River and its waterfall are the most significant natural features of the site. In addition to being beautiful highlights of a linear park connecting to Hamilton Park to the east, the river and its waterfall should be strong and integral features of the mall, not just peripheral assets.

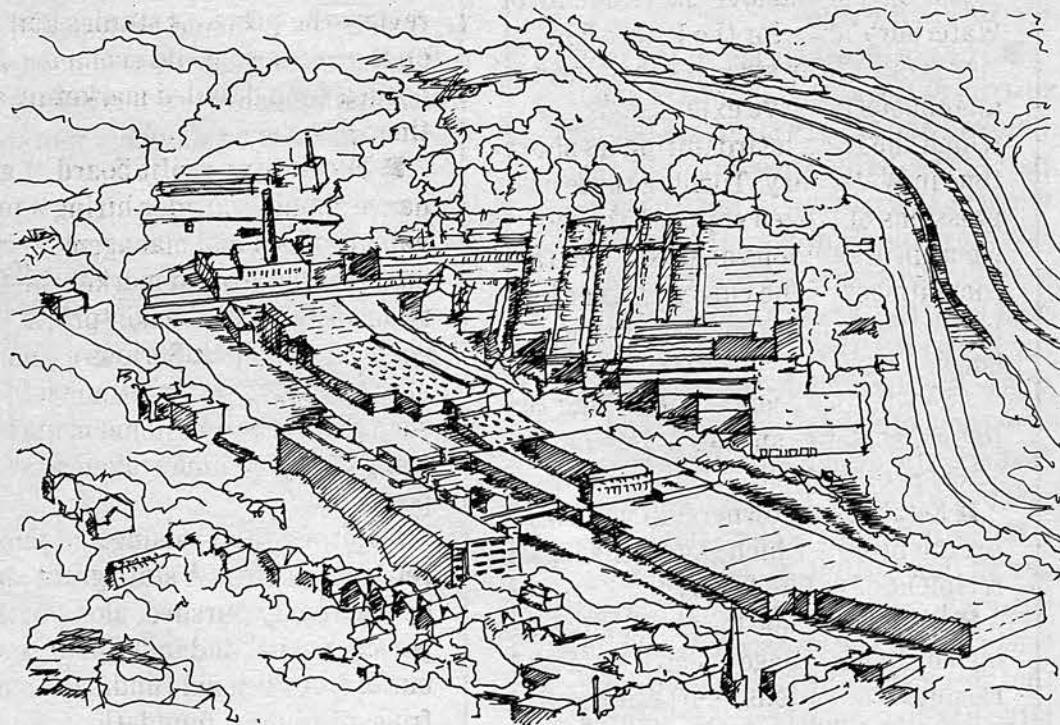
■ The R/UDAT team strongly suggests that the Mad River be exposed and visible as much as possible. Shoppers seeing the river and the falls will have a richer understanding of the meaning of Waterbury and the significance of this site. In addition, consideration might be given to incorporating a river-related water feature within the mall itself. In such a way the mall will be memorable as a special and unique place, and through this differentiation from other malls, a distinct competitive advantage for Waterbury's mall can be achieved.

■ Some features of the east/west linear park can be developed as interior landscaping within the mall, thereby creating a strong sense of a continuous band of parkland throughout the entire downtown. This would give the feeling of an open space system connecting The Green on the west to Hamilton Park on the east.

■ Intensive landscaping of the mall's on-grade parking areas is critical. This landscaping can help to unify the linear park and the landscaping carried within the mall.

■ Especially careful consideration should be given to the relationship of the mall to East Main Street. This is where the regional shopping center will abut an existing residential community. This northern side of the mall site will serve as a vehicular entrance to the site in addition to the I-84 side entrance.

■ The mall complex should be open and inviting, and scaled to the pedestrian. Loading docks should be hidden from view. Entrances and waiting areas should be carefully located to best serve public transit access.



BRASS WORKS MALL SITE

## Waterbury

# R/UDAT

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October 4, 1993



“  
There was no  
reason to be  
out of work.

”  
Bob Stuck



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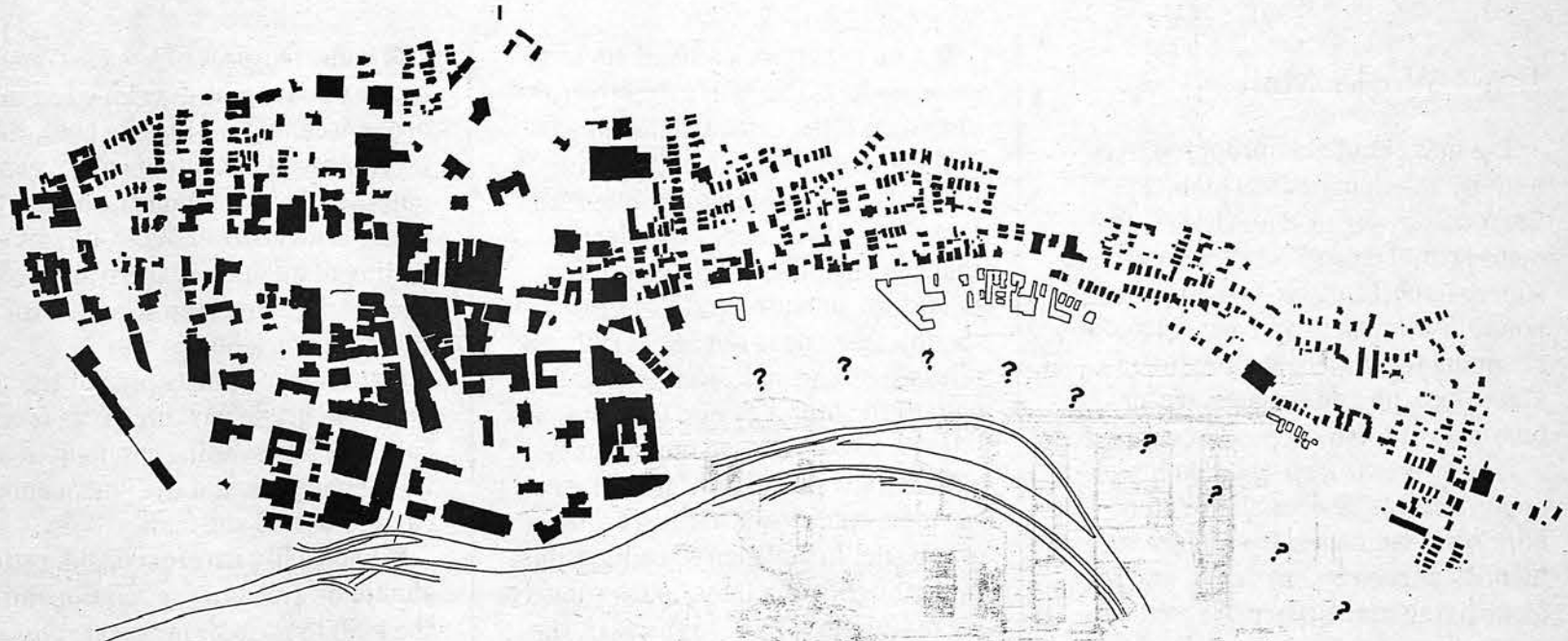
Waterbury, Conn.

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“  
If you turn  
your back to  
the history,  
you turn your  
back on why  
the city  
exists — it's  
an insult.  
”

Salvatore Albini



■ The 90-degree bend in I-84 as it passes the mall site is fortuitous. Vertical accents can be developed on axis with the highway's alignment to provide an advertisement of the mall's presence from the perspective of the passing motorist. Clock towers, a vertical accent using brass, or other device symbolizing Waterbury — not just advertising the mall — can enhance the sense of this as a place and special destination.

■ The mall's location between the I-84 highway and East Main Street requires special consideration to balance the highway's vehicular approaches with the fact that the mall is an extension of downtown where pedestrian and slower automobile traffic are the rule.

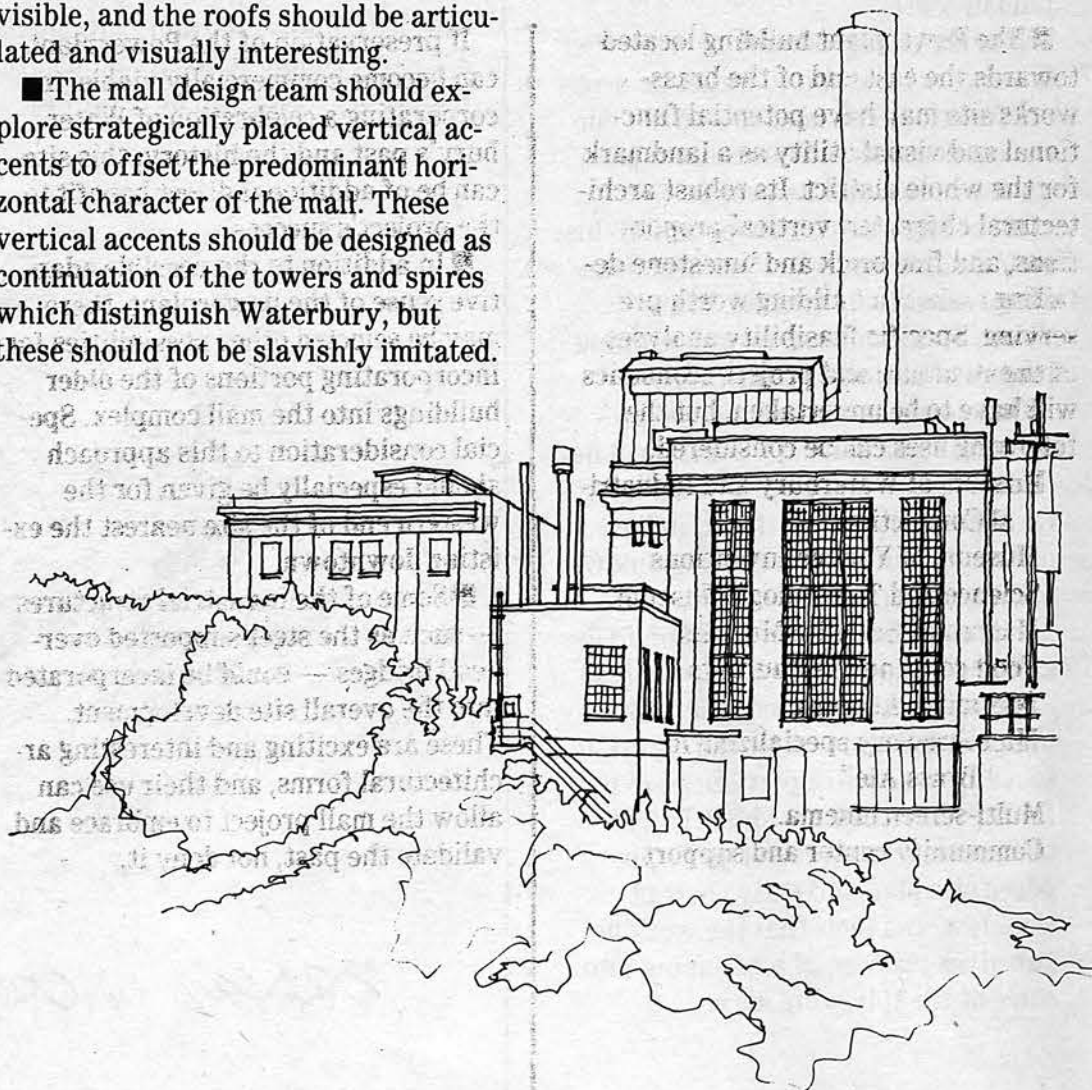
■ The northeast corner of the mall district at the East Main Street and Baldwin and Cherry streets is not now part of the defined property; the Connecticut Department of Health occupies this land. However, this corner is very visible as one approaches the mall from the western end of downtown. The R/UDAT team suggests that this corner be included as part of the new commercial development, and that specific design guidelines be developed for its treatment.

■ The developer's plans have suggested that the initial mall development will not extend to the full western extent of the brass works site, and that this end of the site be used for large box-like commercial structures for home supply or other businesses.

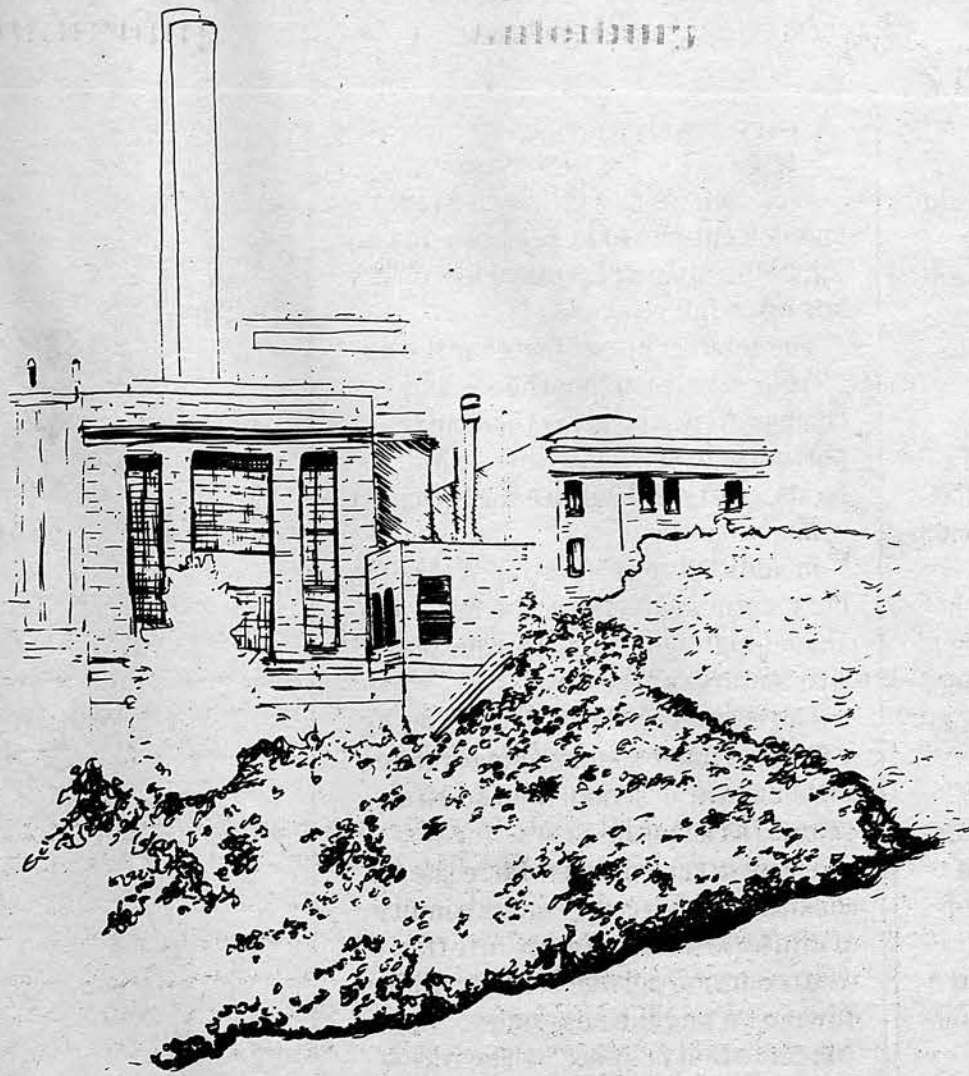
■ The R/UDAT team believes that this "gateway" should instead be developed as a special welcoming feature that is scaled to reinforce the commercial character and continuity of downtown, and to make an effective transition between the existing downtown and the new mall.

■ Since I-84 is located above the roof levels of the new mall, the building tops will be easily seen by motorists on the highway. Air-handlers and mechanical equipment should not be visible, and the roofs should be articulated and visually interesting.

■ The mall design team should explore strategically placed vertical accents to offset the predominant horizontal character of the mall. These vertical accents should be designed as continuation of the towers and spires which distinguish Waterbury, but these should not be slavishly imitated.







## THE POWER PLANT - ADAPTIVE RE-USE?

■ The Powerplant building located towards the east end of the brass-works site may have potential functional and visual utility as a landmark for the whole district. Its robust architectural character, vertical proportions, and fine brick and limestone detailing make it a building worth preserving. Specific feasibility analyses of the structure and project economics will have to be undertaken, but the following uses can be considered:

- Museum of Waterbury and Industrial Connecticut
- Museum of Yankee Inventions
- Science and Technology Museum
- Mattatuck Satellite Museum
- Food court and restaurants
- Specialty shopping
- Microbrewery specializing in "Brass Ale"
- Multi-screen cinema.
- Community center and support

If preservation of the Powerplant can become commercially viable, incorporating a celebration of Waterbury's past and the history, this site can be of additional direct benefit to the project's success.

■ In addition to the possible adaptive reuse of the powerplant, there may be selected other possibilities for incorporating portions of the older buildings into the mall complex. Special consideration to this approach should especially be given for the western end of the site nearest the existing downtown.

■ Some of the industrial structures — such as the steel-supported overhead bridges — could be incorporated into the overall site development. These are exciting and interesting architectural forms, and their use can allow the mall project to embrace and validate the past, not deny it.

■ The name of the mall — for instance, "Brass Works Mall" — can be made of elegant, large brass letters located on the Powerplant's tall black smokestacks. Brass can be used creatively throughout the interior of the mall as a significant architectural material for railings, light standards, signs, etc. This must be done in a manner which is sophisticated, not cute.

■ Planning for the mall should include a strategy for its possible expansion. If the project succeeds, there may be pressures for additional development in several years, both on and off of the brass works site. Anticipating the growth options now can help to avoid problems in the future.

Waterbury

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“  
I want to  
spend my  
dollars in  
Waterbury.  
”

Cerise Johnson



# R U R A L U R B A N D A T A

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## Special Services District

The entire downtown, which would include the new mall and the traditional downtown, could be designated a Special Services District. This provides for assessment of all properties in the district to address common needs.

For instance, there is a need for favorable publicity, promotion and marketing for Waterbury's overall downtown area. Brochures, advertising, and public relations services could be funded through the Special Services District. Festivals, parades and other special events are also a part of a comprehensive marketing program for downtown.

It would also be advantageous to develop an overall plan for the type of stores and businesses to be recruited for the entire downtown. Shopping center consultants have learned how to position various types of stores and businesses to maximize the sales of the businesses. Such specialists could be retained to identify the best combination of stores and businesses for the mall and the traditional downtown. Specific companies as well as types of businesses could be targeted for areas within downtown Waterbury.

A portion of the funds raised could also be used to supplement the level of sanitation and maintenance in the overall downtown area. A clean and well-maintained downtown is important to all businesses and property owners.

The funds would be strictly earmarked for use within the downtown under the direction of property owners and business people. The city would commit to maintain current levels of maintenance through a detailed legal agreement. State law requires a vote by majority of the property owners vote to establish a Special Services District.

## A city festival

Waterbury's rich ethnic heritage should continue to be celebrated in an annual festival in Library Park on a spring or fall weekend.

The festival brings together the numerous ethnic neighborhoods and communities, and gives them an opportunity to showcase their ethnic foods, crafts and culture for the entire community.

In addition to celebrating Waterbury's ethnic diversity, the festival should highlight the numerous positive features of the city.

The costs could be largely offset by corporate and business sponsorships, although the city may need to offer grants in the initial years.

The festival would bring people to downtown where they would become reacquainted with the historic core of Waterbury. The event would enhance pride of Waterburians and promote the community's image in the region.



“  
**The issues  
will not be  
solved until  
the city has a  
vibrant  
planning  
office that is  
looking to the  
future.**  
”

Frank Gagliardo



# S E C T I O N 7 ACTION AGENDA

## Moving Forward

There are four central themes of this R/UDAT report:

- Waterbury must develop an **IMAGE** more in keeping with the generally positive reality.
- Social and physical **CONNECTIONS** must be developed and reinforced.
- There must be more citizen **PARTICIPATION** in government and city life.

## ECONOMIC HEALTH

is vitally dependent upon image, connections and participation.

The summary recommendations that follow build upon the work of the community's visioning effort. The R/UDAT team urges immediate implementation.

I. Adopt positive and realistic attitudes about Waterbury.

II. Improve interaction between the city and its citizens.

Enlarge professional planning staff. Bring the comprehensive plan up to date. Adopt a capital improvement and maintenance plan. Develop a multi-year performance budget. Review the city charter. Reduce the number of boards and commissions.

III. Improve interaction between schools and citizens.

Foster shared decisions. Employ ethnic school staff. Foster cooperation among institutions of higher learning.

IV. Direct economic development.

Employ design professionals to analyze mall. Create maintenance and special services districts. Write an agreement between Homart and the city.

V. Create a Greater Downtown.

Establish clear connection between the Green, new mall, and Hamilton Park. Refurbish the Palace. Create a multi-purpose cultural-educational complex. Insure sensitive architectural character of mall. Establish continuity between mall and downtown. Preserve and celebrate Mad River. Encourage ethnic cultural events.

VI. Create connections.

Provide free transit from mall to downtown. Extend bus service hours. Design entrances to neighborhoods and downtown.

Waterbury

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“

The pace of  
change is  
glacial.

”

Renee Beaulieu

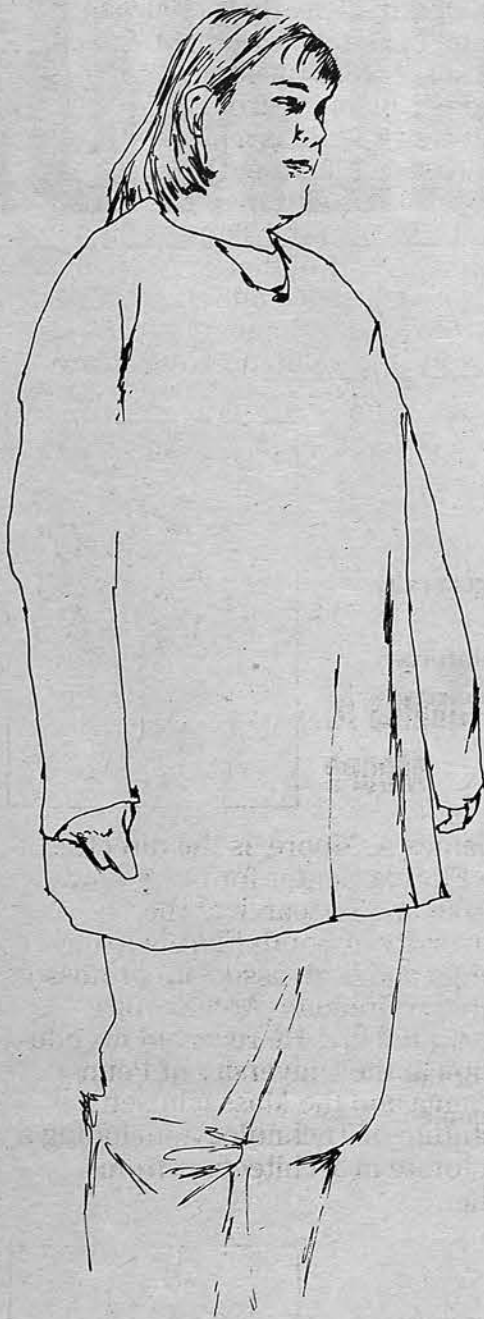


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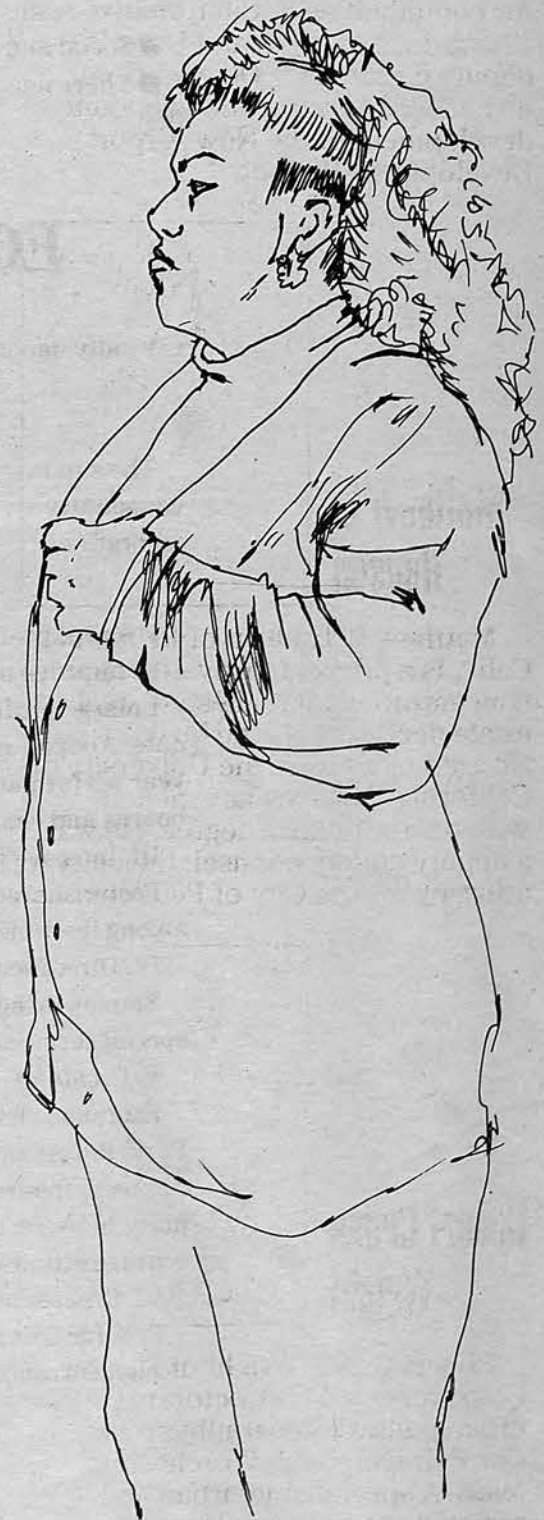
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“  
In a survey at  
school, only  
three out of  
25 said they  
wanted to  
stay in  
Waterbury  
after they  
grew up.

”  
Margaret Avitabile

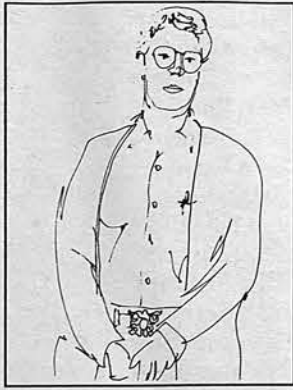


“  
My concern is  
someplace  
for the kids.  
They don't  
have the  
money for  
that, but if  
they do  
something  
wrong, they  
have the jails  
to put them  
in.

”  
Leticia Gonzalez



**Frank B. Gray**



Frank B. Gray, R/UDAT team leader, is director for the Department of Economic Development, Lakewood, Colo. He has prepared fiscal and physical urban management and redevelopment strategies for communities in California, Colorado, Nebraska and Utah. As deputy director for Denver, Colo., he headed planning and economic development of the New Airport Development Project.

**Matthew L. Hudson**



Matthew L. Hudson of Petaluma, Calif., is a lawyer in private practice concentrating on real estate, real estate development and business law. He graduated from the University of California Berkeley Law School with doctor of laws degree. He was a deputy county counsel, then city attorney for the City of Petaluma.

**Robert Crunn Wright**



Robert Crunn Wright of Denver, Colo., received his doctorate in urban political geography from Clark University in Worcester, Mass. A specialist in urban and regional governmental issues, he is

professor and program director for the Urban Studies Program, Department of Political Science for Metropolitan State College of Denver.

**Michael A. Calvert**



Michael A. Calvert of Birmingham, Ala., is executive director of Operation New Birmingham, which is responsible for planning and development in the City Center under contract with the city. He received his master's degree in city planning from Ohio State University. He has worked for the cities of Berkeley, Calif. and Baltimore, Md., on revitalization projects.

**David W. Knapp**



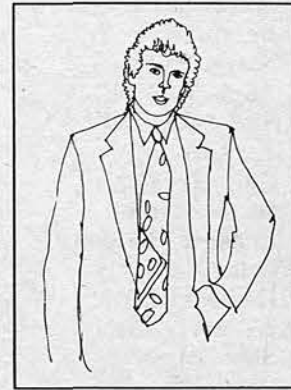
David W. Knapp is a candidate for the master of public administration degree at San Diego State University. He holds a master of science degree in education from the University of Southern California, and a master of science degree in systems management from the University of Southern California. He is town manager for Los Gatos, Calif., and was formerly city manager of Boulder, Colo.

**Richard A. Beatty**



Richard A. Beatty is an urban planning and development consultant. He holds a master of arts in land use planning from Tufts University. He was a partner in Henderson Planning/Design Group in Boston, chief transportation planner for the Central Transportation Planning Staff of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, and director of downtown development for the Boston Redevelopment Authority.

**James A. Moore**



James A. Moore is the director of the Florida Center for Community Design and Research at the University of South Florida in Tampa and is an associate professor with the Graduate Architecture Program there. He received his education at the University of Pennsylvania and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, including a doctorate in architecture from Penn.

**Donald I. Grinberg**



Donald I. Grinberg, AIA, an architect and urban planner with a Harvard master's degree, is director of the national Convention Center Design Group for HNTB Corp. in Boston. His projects include the new Rhode Island Convention Center in Providence, expansion of the Worcester Centrum arena in Worcester, Mass., and numerous other public assembly projects around the country.

**Waterbury**



**Report of the Regional/Urban Design Assistance Team of the American Institute of Architects**

**Waterbury, Conn.**

**October 4, 1993**



**Waterbury**



**Report of the  
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Architects**

**Waterbury, Conn.**

**October 4, 1993**

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Every effort has been made to include everyone who has generously contributed their time, talent, and resources to support the R/UDAT Process. Please forgive us if we have inadvertently omitted your name in the rush of producing this report.

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Abbott Terrace  
Albert Brothers  
AIA Connecticut  
Bacco's Restaurant  
Bob's Deli  
Capital Airlines  
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Westside Middle School  
Stephen C. Whitaker, AIA  
Dana Wislocki  
Scott Zeiglar

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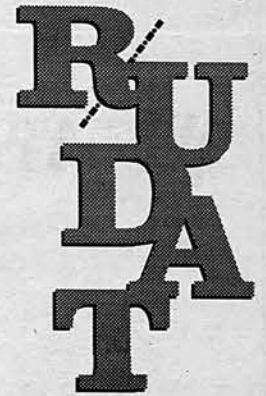
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Waterbury



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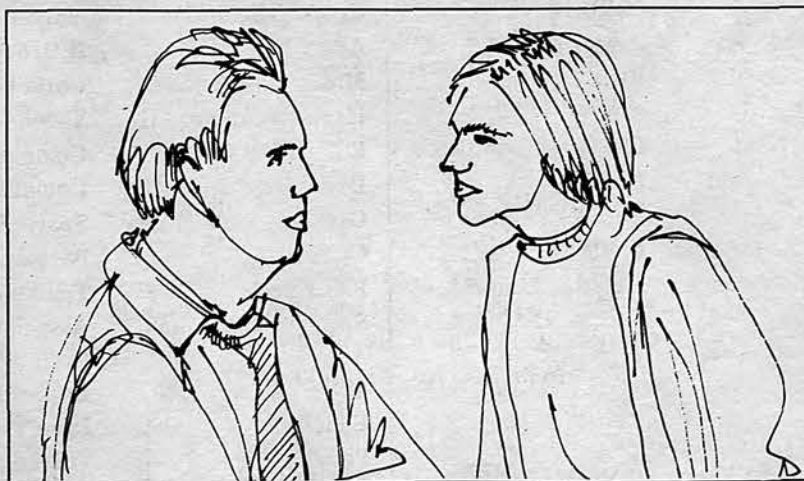
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**Heather Greenaway**, Intern Landscape Architect, Killingworth.  
**Brenen Guyol**, Providence, R.I.  
**Thaddeus Stewart**, Waterbury.  
**Heather Van Deusen**, Watertown.  
**Scott Solfrian**, Woodbury.  
**Mark E. Zannoni**, New York, N.Y.  
**Hector A. Oliva**, Intern Leader, Strauss-Edwards Associates, Woodbury

Below: Thaddeus Stewart, left, and Christopher P. Baxer.  
 Lower right: Sean S. Donadio, left, and Scott Solfrian.

Right: Mark E. Zannoni and Heather Van Deusen.

Below: Heather Greenaway and Brenen Guyol

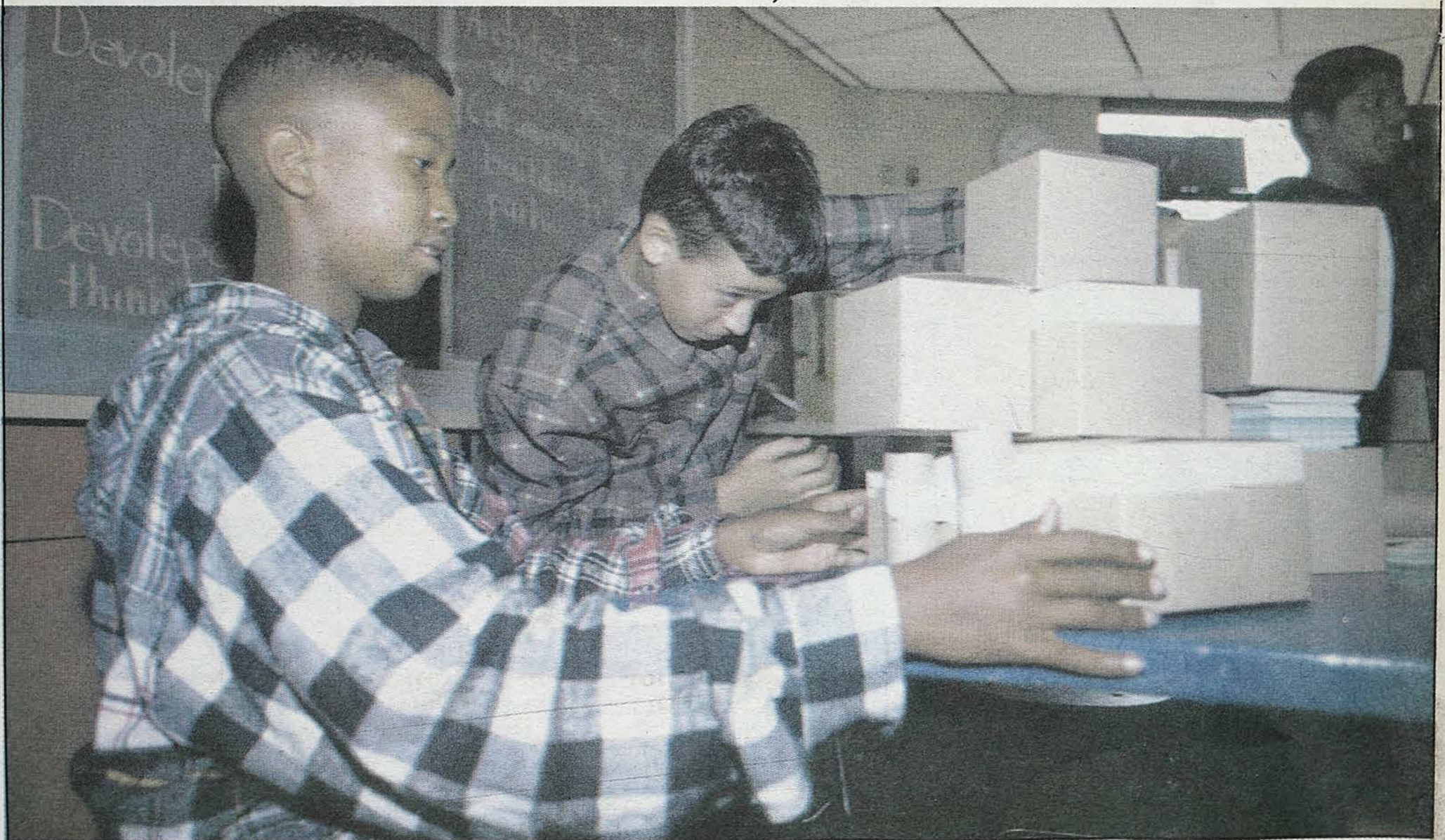




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**But,**



**The Future Belongs To The Children**