

DETROIT R / UDAT

REPORT OF THE REGIONAL /URBAN DESIGN ASSISTANCE TEAM • A SERVICE OF THE AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS

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PREFACE

To help provide direction and encourage the revitalization of America's cities, the American Institute of Architects (AIA) has created a unique community service program called Regional/Urban Design Assistance Teams (R/UDAT). During the past decade, almost 50 cities around the country have benefited from R/UDAT.

For the past five days, Detroit has hosted such a team of urban specialists who were selected for their experience in dealing with problems now being faced by Detroit.

Teams are made up of people who are tops in their fields: urban designers, economists, sociologists, anthropologists, political scientists, and lawyers, as well as architects. They volunteer their time because they believe in the urgent cause of our cities. Their traveling and living expenses are reimbursed. They also agree not to accept commissions resulting from their study.

The team chairman visits the community well in advance of the R/UDAT to meet with its citizens, leaders, planning officials, and the AIA chapter. A packet of maps, statistics and information is prepared,

together with a statement of the problems to be confronted.

The team's visit is about five days, generally an extended weekend, and is coordinated by the local AIA chapter. The team is assisted by students from a school of architecture or planning in the region.

The team meets with interested individuals and organizations and gets acquainted with local conditions at first hand by means of site visits and tours. Then team members closet themselves for intensive sessions, calling on local resource people as needed to define problems, establish strategies and develop courses of action. Finally, the team's recommendations are presented to the community at a public meeting.

TEAM ACTIVITIES & STUDY PURPOSE

The Detroit Regional/Urban Design Assistance Team was charged with the task of exploring the potential for creating viable physical, visual and psychological connections between new development created on the riverfront and the existing fabric of the city. The study has been directed at all the users of the CBD and has as one of its principal goals, the betterment of pedestrian environment in Detroit.

The study was carried out after an intensive interview process lasting two days with public officials, development organizations, planners, architects, graphic designers and others. Additionally, the Team spent time in field observations of the downtown and studying various reports and other documentation made available to it. The remainder of the time was devoted to analysis and the production of this report. The entire process was completed in a five-day period.

As a starting point, Detroit Renaissance and the Downtown Development Association asked the team to consider proposals for creating positive linkages between the Renaissance Center and immediate

environs. As a practical matter, the Team quickly found that linkage solutions to Renaissance Center were dependent upon an understanding of the larger connective issues of the central business district and the newer riverfront developments. Renaissance Center's sheer size and influence on the shape of the future of the CBD made this more comprehensive view necessary. Thus, the Team attempted to identify and describe a large number of CBD-wide and project-related issues which formed the basis of a series of conceptual models. These concepts identified the riverfront and the CBD as a two-pronged focus of the study. Through this process the Team was then able to return its attention to the Renaissance Center and make a series of recommendations and proposals for creating positive connections.

The end result of the study provides a framework for guiding decision-making for future linkage in Detroit's CBD rather than highly specific solutions.

DEFINITION OF ISSUES & OBJECTIVES

ISSUES

The large number of issues that emerged over two days of intensive interviews and observations generally broke down into central business district issues, project-related issues, and issues having to do with communication coordination and symbolism. The following is the Team's rough cut of ordering and synthesizing the concerns, aspirations and expectations that we learned about from those involved in the City's revitalization process.

CBD-WIDE ISSUES

Office and Retail: Major new and planned for commercial development has had both a positive and a negative impact on existing office and retail space in the CBD. On the one hand it has attracted new businesses to the downtown and provided an image of revitalized economic energy. On the other hand it has caused relocation and displacement of some businesses from the older commercial areas, in some cases threatening these areas' continued viability.

Both optimistic and pessimistic forecasts were made with regard to office and retail market absorption



rates for the future. Estimates of the office market capture for downtown varied from 300,000 s.f. to 600,000 s.f. per year. The published projected absorption rate for the metropolitan area is 585,000 s.f. per year against current average annual additions of 233,000 s.f. for the CBD. (These discrepancies are, perhaps, another issue.)

Housing received a good deal of attention during the course of the interviews. Because the downtown has approximately only 5000 dwelling units, much of the concern was directed at the future. (Again, other figures were heard: 1400 registered voters was one figure mentioned; 6,500 d.u. was also put forward.) Almost all participants agreed that the reintroduction of a significant number of new units (5-10,000 d.u.'s) in the CBD, was necessary to continue the revitalization process. There was, however, significant disagreement as to location, type of housing, and income distribution of residents.

.Locational issues involved differences of opinion regarding large-scale riverfront projects, recycled commercial buildings in the older core, and moderate density infill housing in the more sparsely settled areas.

.Type of housing centered on accommodating

various sizes (empty nesters - large families) and necessary amenities -- schools, health and social services not currently available in the downtown area.

.Income distribution estimates of future residents of the downtown ranged from moderate income assisted housing to market rate and luxury development. Almost all participants agreed that given the metropolitan housing picture, deep subsidy housing was inappropriate.

.Induced market stimulation of housing demand at the projected magnitude of 5-10,000 d.u.'s was questioned by several individuals.

Parking was a major concern of almost all participants. Several issues emerged from the discussions:

.There is adequate off-street parking supply in the CBD (55,000 spaces).

.What parking there is, is poorly located and often difficult to use for short-term needs.

.There is inadequate parking at points of major employment and retail population concentrations.

.Rate structures are too high to compete with suburban parking.

.Rate structures are too low to make parking in garages viable.

.The tax structure and land availability have contributed to the overuse of CBD land for surface parking. (Of 1,500 total private parcels in the CBD, 670 are devoted to parking.)

.Pedestrian access to and from parking is often difficult and lacks positive connection to areas of intense use.

.Insensitive design treatment of garage facades has had a deleterious effect on the environmental quality of the street scape.



The Visual Quality of the downtown received some attention during the course of the discussions. The basic issues were:

.The CBD has many examples of fine architecture both new and old.

.Despite this, there is a general lack of visual cohesion.

.Discontinuous development prevails, and major interruptions in the physical fabric make pedestrian movement unattractive.

.Past and planned-for super-block developments have, and will have, long term effects on the historic street pattern and form of the CBD.

.The street edge treatment of both structured and surface parking has for the most part been insensitive.

.Housekeeping on the numerous construction sites leaves a great deal to be desired.

.Tree planting, sidewalks improvement, and projected street mall programs have had a substantial positive effect on the visual environment.

.Insufficient attention has been paid to providing visual access through new and projected river-front development.

Access and movement issues were discussed in detail by many individuals. The principal CBD-wide issues most often addressed were:

- .Pedestrian movement throughout many areas of the CBD is often difficult and unattractive, generating unnecessary short distance auto trips.
- .Direct physical access to the riverfront development is impeded by the width of Jefferson Avenue and improper timing of traffic lights at crosswalks.
- .Continuous walks and bike paths proposed for the riverfront may be obstructed by future developments.
- .Insufficient attention has been given to weather-protected pedestrian pathways.
- .The proposed people mover is an attractive symbol of the city's renaissance.
- .Alignments, station location, and technology pose significant issues in terms of catalyzing development and attracting ridership.
- .The value and function of an inter and intra city bus terminal had both supporters and detractors.



Project Related Issues

Until this point the discussion of issues has ranged through broad set of CBD-wide issues. The Team in their field observations and in the presentations by architects and planners focused in on some of the major development projects and proposals. Here the team sought to get a more complete understanding of the way in which positive connections could be made around, over, and through the bounded areas of existing and proposed developments.

Renaissance Center

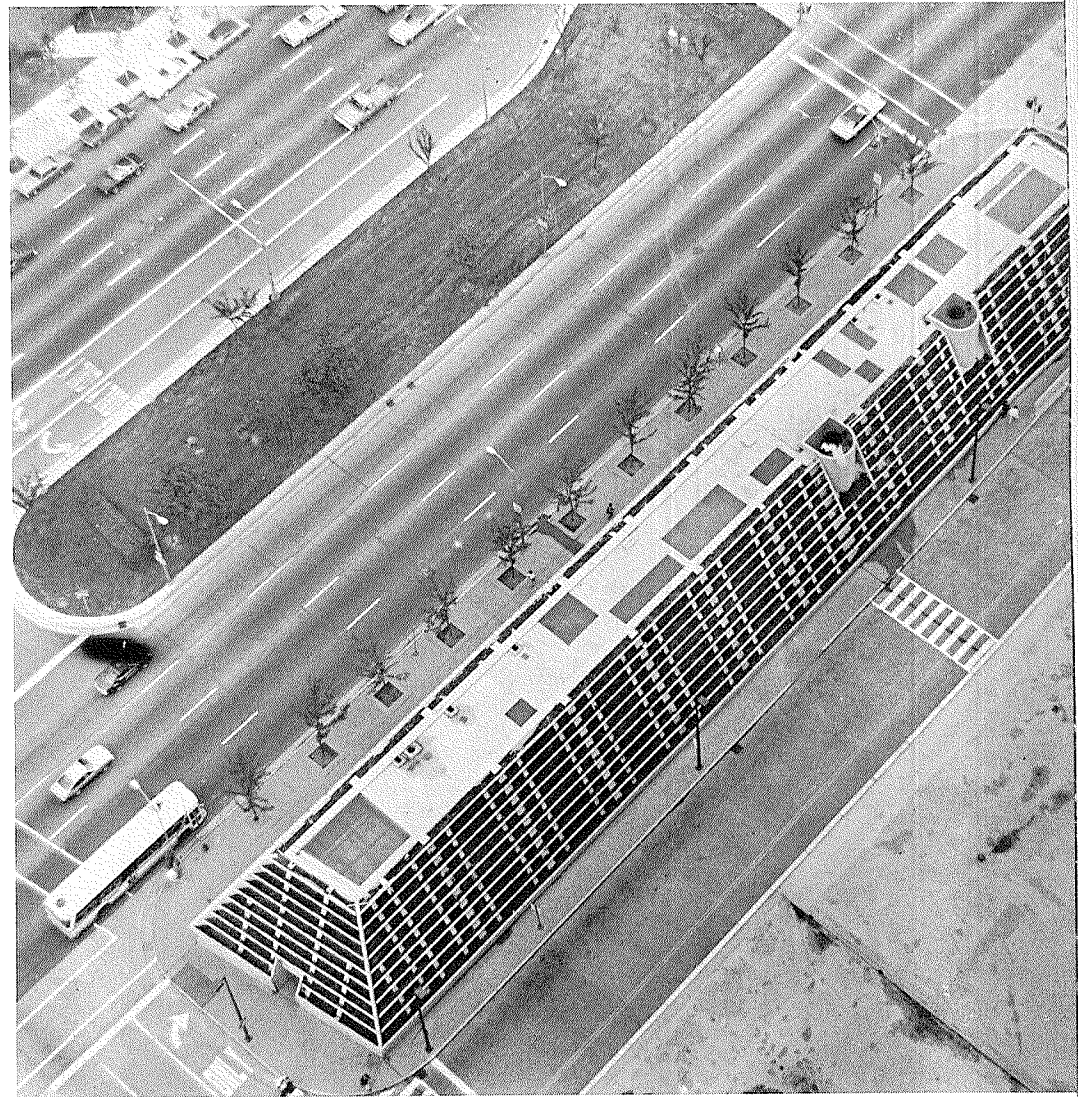
Four issues were raised during the course of discussions of Renaissance Center. These were; (i) the general criticism directed at the berms; (ii) the need for overstreet connections to the riverfront to the west and across Jefferson Avenue; (iii) the question of how additional parking demand could be served and (iv) how waterfront access might be assured on the rivers edge adjacent to the terraced housing yet to be developed. Of these issues only the earth berms already exist as physical elements. Thus any modifications might be quite costly. Therefore further discussion is merited. Criticism has been



leveled at the berms as "fortress like" visual barriers to pedestrian movement and as indicative of a desire to insulate the Center from the rest of the community. While these charges may be overstated they should still be responded to. To be sure, the berms are a visual block to the lower entry facades and at close quarters obscure the direct visual access a pedestrian needs to be appropriately directed to an entry. The surface treatment of the berms in their presently defoliated state also leaves something to be desired, but time and nature should produce the rich greenery intended. In defense of the berms they perform a useful function in providing noise and visual insulation from the hectic activity of Jefferson Avenue and are more appropriate to the slower pace of the ring carriage-way. Berms have been used in a similar fashion by many landscape architects including Frederick Law Olmstead.

Jefferson-Randolph MXD

This proposed mixed-use complex directly across from Renaissance Center incorporates a major bus terminal for 26 inter city lines, a 2000 car garage, 125,000 s.f. of office space, 50,000 s.f. of retail, and 300 apartments. The issues raised with regard to this proposal were as follows: (i) pedestrian access around the building at street level would be interrupted by



over eleven curb cuts to permit car and bus movements. (ii) pedestrian access to the upper levels was not always clear on two faces of the complex; (iii) while a pedestrian bridge is planned across Jefferson Avenue, the opportunity to make a similar connection across Randolph was less defined; (iv) the overall scale of the complex; its height and bulk were also the subject of some discussion; and (v) the non-complementary mix of uses, caused by the inclusion of the bus terminals resulted in a number of questions.

County Courts and Office Complex

This 36 storey building is proposed to be built on the eastern corner of Randolph and Jefferson. Several issues were raised with respect to its design: (i) The building lacks parking and will depend on surrounding parking structures; (ii) Pedestrian access across Randolph Street should be better defined and access to the Cadillac Square on the north-east facades should be studied.

Cadillac Center

Because this proposed complex has been through several schematic phases it was difficult to develop a very precise set of issues. However several comments were made with respect to the latest proposal



containing approximately 600,000 s.f. of new retail space and 3000 parking spaces which proved instructive to the Team in developing proposals. These issues were as follows; (i) the site plan of the Center showed little recognition of the historic street geometry of the downtown and little attempt to deal with empty spaces between the face of the Center and the street, (ii) the relationship to the historic structures on Library Street, (iii) the appropriateness of what is essentially a suburban shopping center model located at one of the most significant intersections of the City and (iv) the relationship to the proposed People Mover.

Tunnel Entry - Parking Structure

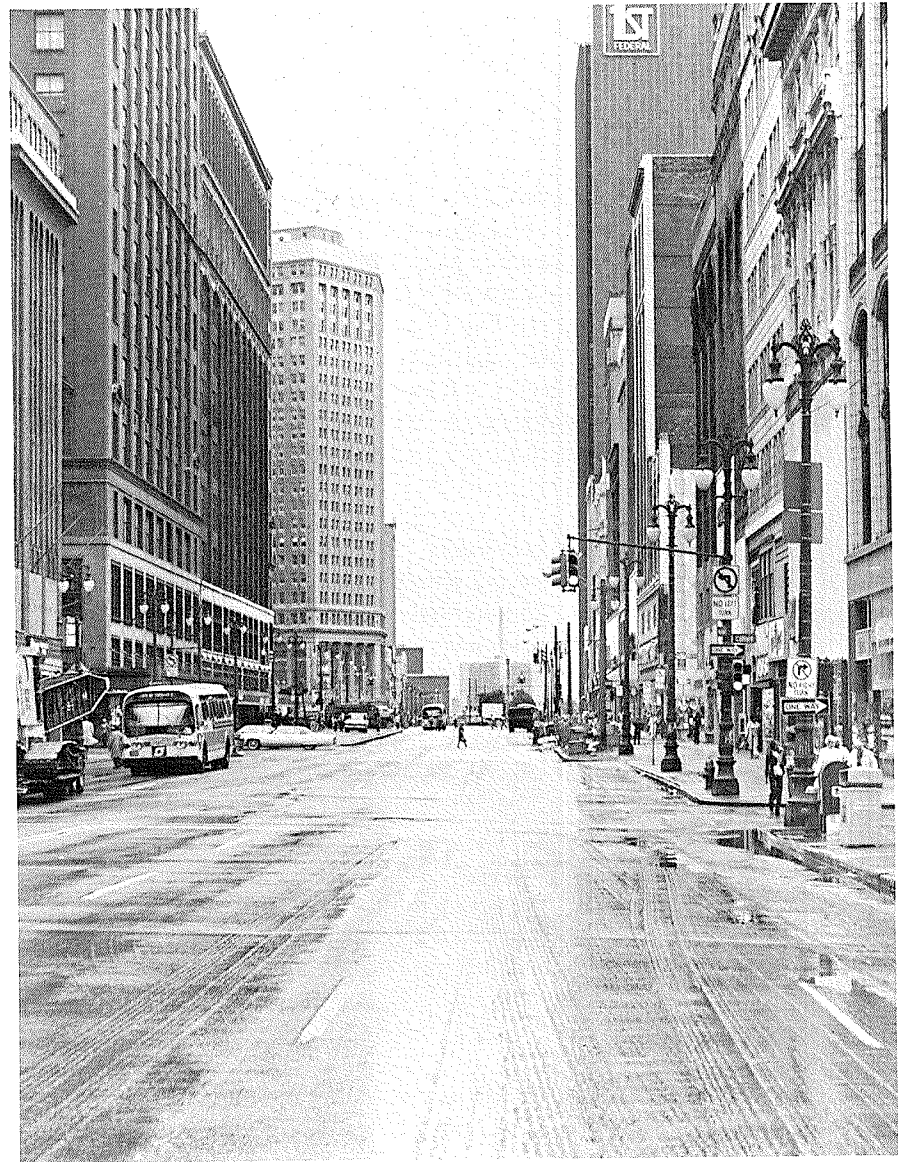
The Canada Tunnel toll plaza entry is currently being renovated and because of its' position on the riverfront and proximity to Renaissance Center and adjacency to a new 600 car garage posed some significant issues. Among the comments received were; (i) the current construction of the toll plaza precludes overhead pedestrian connection to the Philip Hart Plaza as originally contemplated by the Renaissance Center architect; (ii) pedestrian and vehicular conflicts are increasingly dangerous across the tunnel entry area; (iii) the site on the water side of the new garage seems to lack a projected use; (iv) the seven story garage poses a significant visual barrier to the riverfront.



Objectives

Based on the issues uncovered thru interviews, the team developed a series of objectives for its tasks to meet the overall goal of creating viable physical, visual, and psychological links:

- To develop a new set of principles to guide future developments with respect to linkages
- To provide a linkage strategy which can be implemented incrementally, yet ultimately represent a system-wide response to urban growth
- To identify proposals, for early action, intermediate range action and future possibilities and potentials
- To define and meet user needs throughout the community
- To be sensitive to the social, political and economic objectives of the city
- To identify the kinds of institutional change needed to accomplish overall goals
- To make proposals and recommendations which are implementable and within the expected resources of the city to undertake



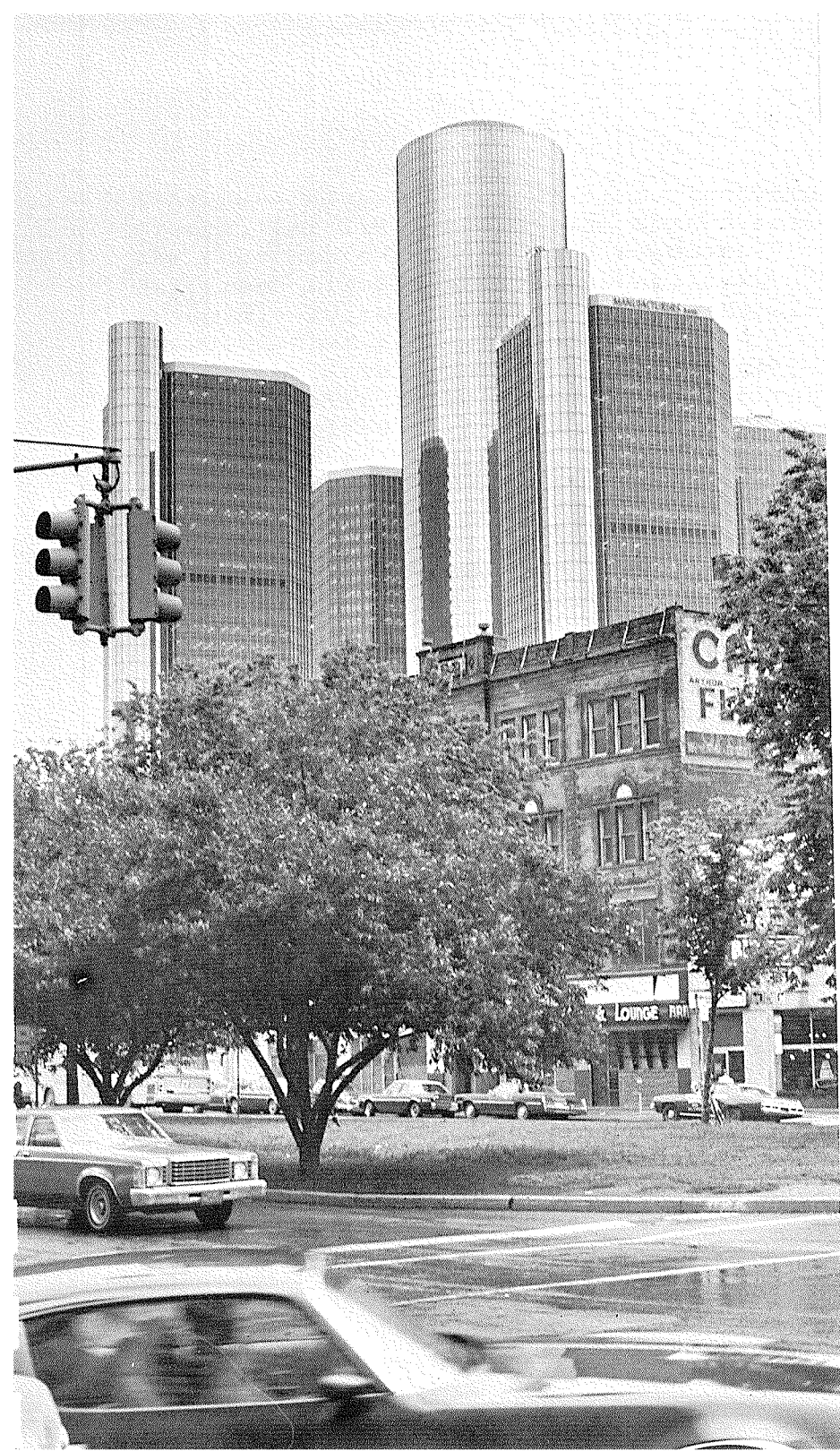
CONCEPTS

DETROIT'S MOMENTUM FOR RENAISSANCE: CHOICES OF SCALE AND DISTRIBUTION OF DEVELOPMENT

The Renaissance Center established for itself an ambitious standard for urban revitalization and it is clearly meeting its objective of being successful economically and as a symbol of urban renaissance. We perceive this is an historic moment, symbolic not only for Detroit's special situation, but for the lessons and leadership Detroit could provide nationally.

In Renaissance Center can be seen an American pattern of development evident in many cities over the past decade: the concentration of several significant and mutually reinforcing uses in a totally planned urban development. Such complexes, called mixed use developments, create their own unique environment. With Renaissance Center's location as a strong anchor for the Eastern portion of the riverfront, the optimism it generates can be a force in bringing about the intended spillover effect at the western end, eventually filling the adjacent riverfront with residential development with the Hart Plaza as its centerpoint.

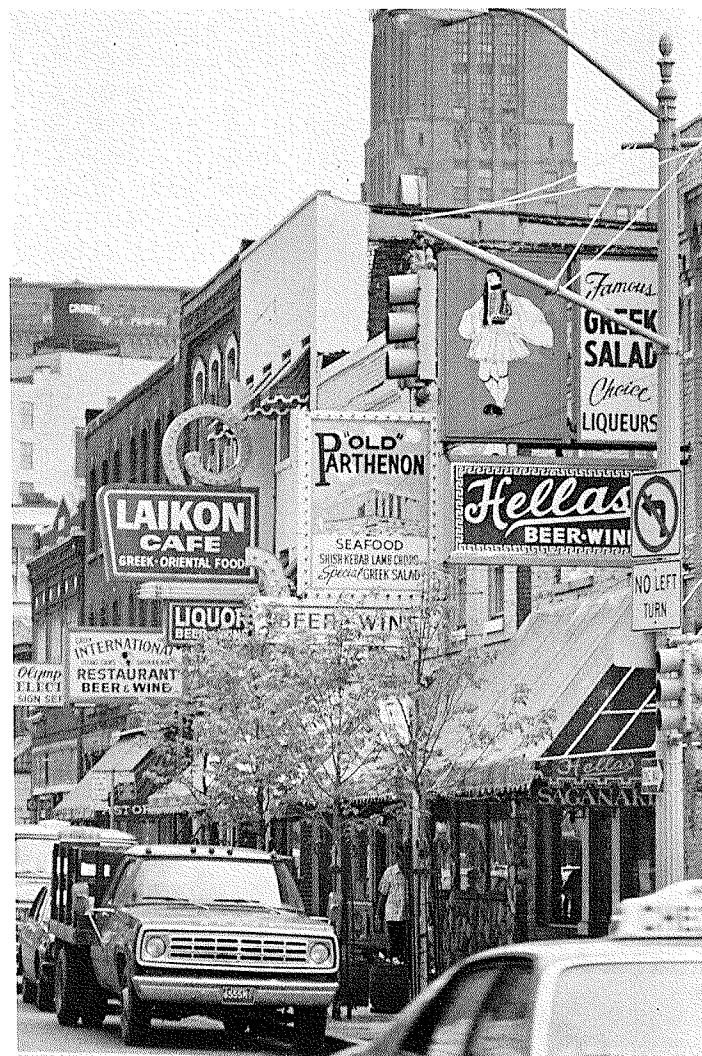
To make each of the riverfront's elements come into being has required an immense concentration of money, energy, and talent. That same momentum is being brought to bear on several principal developments both underway in the CBD and in planning



stages -- Washington Boulevard, Woodward Avenue, Cadillac Square (The Kern Block), the Courthouse complex, the Randolph-Jefferson mixed-use development, for example. To demonstrate that the Renaissance Center project is a sign of a consistent development strategy, timely and impressive follow-through is necessary, but this follow-through should be based on a set of principles quite different from those used thus far in Detroit and elsewhere.

For in and among those grand-scale projects which have required a "critical-mass" to make them viable, there are myriad small in-between places and spaces. These are no less visible in the urban fabric, and no less necessary for delivering on the promises of the Renaissance concept than the large projects, and require a comparable investment of money, energy and talent. We recommend that Detroit continue its dynamic renaissance by applying the same boldness and daring which created Renaissance Center and other large scale projects to fill in gaps in land-use and activity patterns. The city should also consider the option of extensive concentration of adjacent mixed uses. Obviously these are related.

At the same time that large projects go forward, Detroit can also be filling in these smaller-scale pieces of the CBD



puzzle, with as much attention to detail and implementation.

At least one place where this is necessary stands out. The Broadway shopping area of smaller stores does a high volume of business and provides exactly the kind of lively contrast found in all great cities. The City's program of giving planning grants to groups that want to help themselves -- in the way the Broadway Merchants Association has -- is commendable. Policies to encourage a continuation and expansion of smaller CBD manufacturing and retail activities with the increase in jobs and tax base they represent, should be on the City's agenda. So should technical advice and financial assistance to small business people.

Some cities (most recently, Boston, in its Quincy Market) have gone to great lengths to recreate just the sort of urban counterpoint suggested here. In Detroit, meanwhile, Greektown already exerts an influence far beyond its one-block length, and it should be seen as a symbol of the kind of smaller-scale opportunity existing elsewhere. Each such symbol needs to be nurtured and encouraged and not treated as an afterthought.

Much like the 18th Century L'Enfant plan for the Nation's capital, Detroit was planned in a radial pattern of paths connecting nodal places of activity of symbolic or visual

interest. This radial system is overlaid with a square grid of intersecting paths, which contrast to and heighten the importance of the diagonal pattern, establishing a hierarchy of street intersections. These intersections are points at which the most significant commercial, civic, and government activities occurred historically. They continue to represent the best opportunities for displaying vitality and continuity, at both larger and smaller scales.

The principle of concentrating investment vertically in mixed-use structures is but one option: Another that is appropriate to Detroit's land-use fabric is a horizontal deployment of uses in adjacent blocks. This creates the necessary concentration on the ground as well as in the air. This issue is intimately connected with the way the city is organized for development activities.

The public and private sectors' mobilization over the past few years to attack the problem of CBD decay and decline has been admirable. Few cities can boast of having organized such a large number of diverse interest groups around a common goal. Beginning with one of the most advanced charter reforms and the creation of Detroit Renaissance, a large number of private, quasi-public and public organizations have sprung up in response to the Renaissance concept. These, obviously, have been highly effective in achieving

their specific objectives. There are, however, some real drawbacks to continued proliferation of specialized and uncoordinated planning and development entities. Devoting too much energy to project development at the expense of comprehensive planning and overview tends to produce fragmented and inappropriate decisions. It is clear that Detroit may now need a coordinated approach directed from the Mayor's office.

Today Detroit's morale is high. This is probably the City's most powerful development tool. Our concepts and recommendations are based on keeping up that momentum by means of practical and feasible design ideas. These include paying as much attention to the human management of the physical environment as to its design at a human scale.



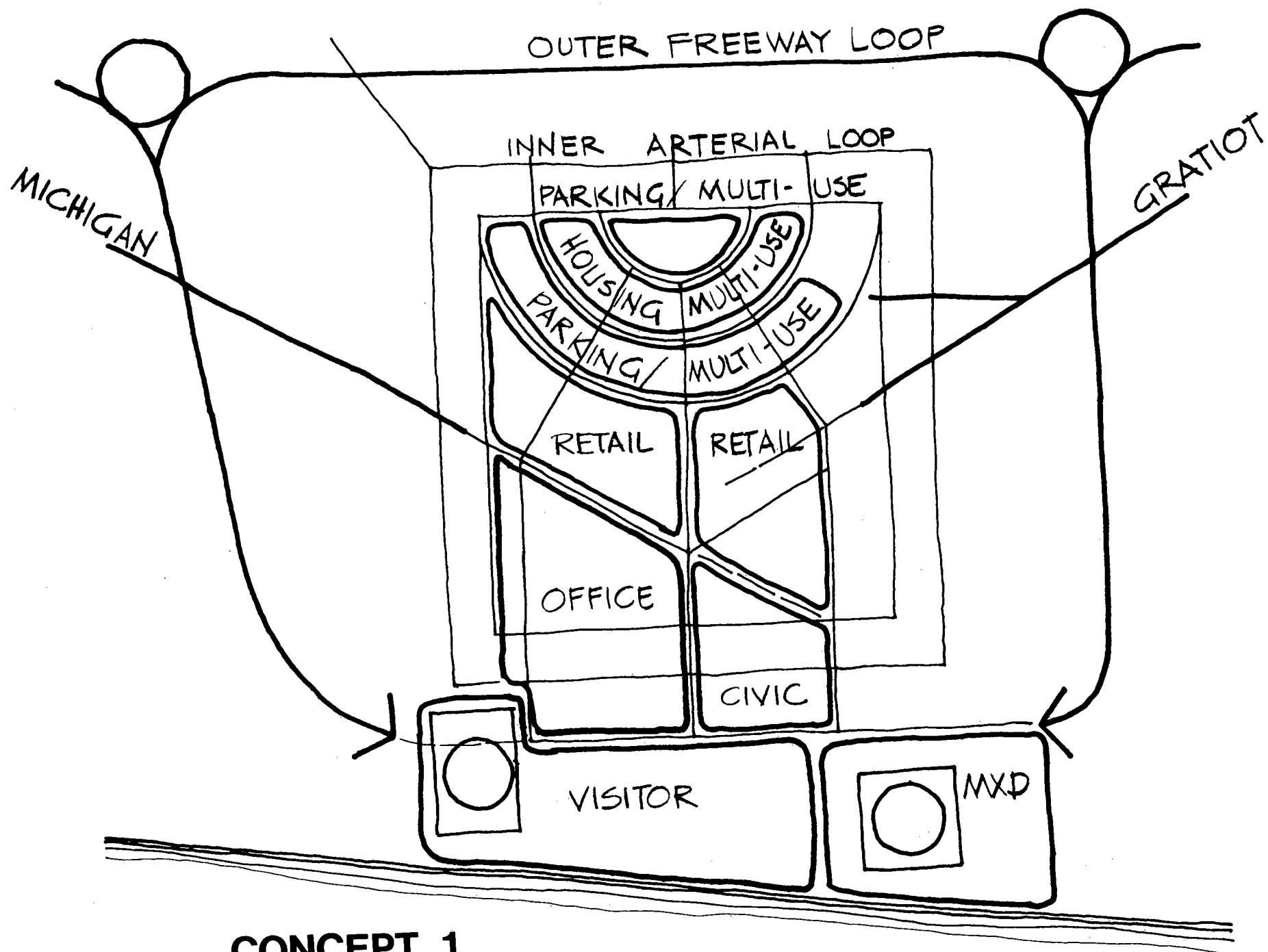
Conceptual Frameworks

In order to make specific, realistic recommendations for linking existing and future projects and the entire CBD, it was necessary for the team to attempt to gain a broad overview of Detroit's physical problems and opportunities. This conceptual overview is shown in a series of diagrams essentially abstractions of the Detroit C.B.D. situation. It enabled the R/UDAT to discuss, analyze, and make recommendations for the core area in the absence of a more systematic planning approach.

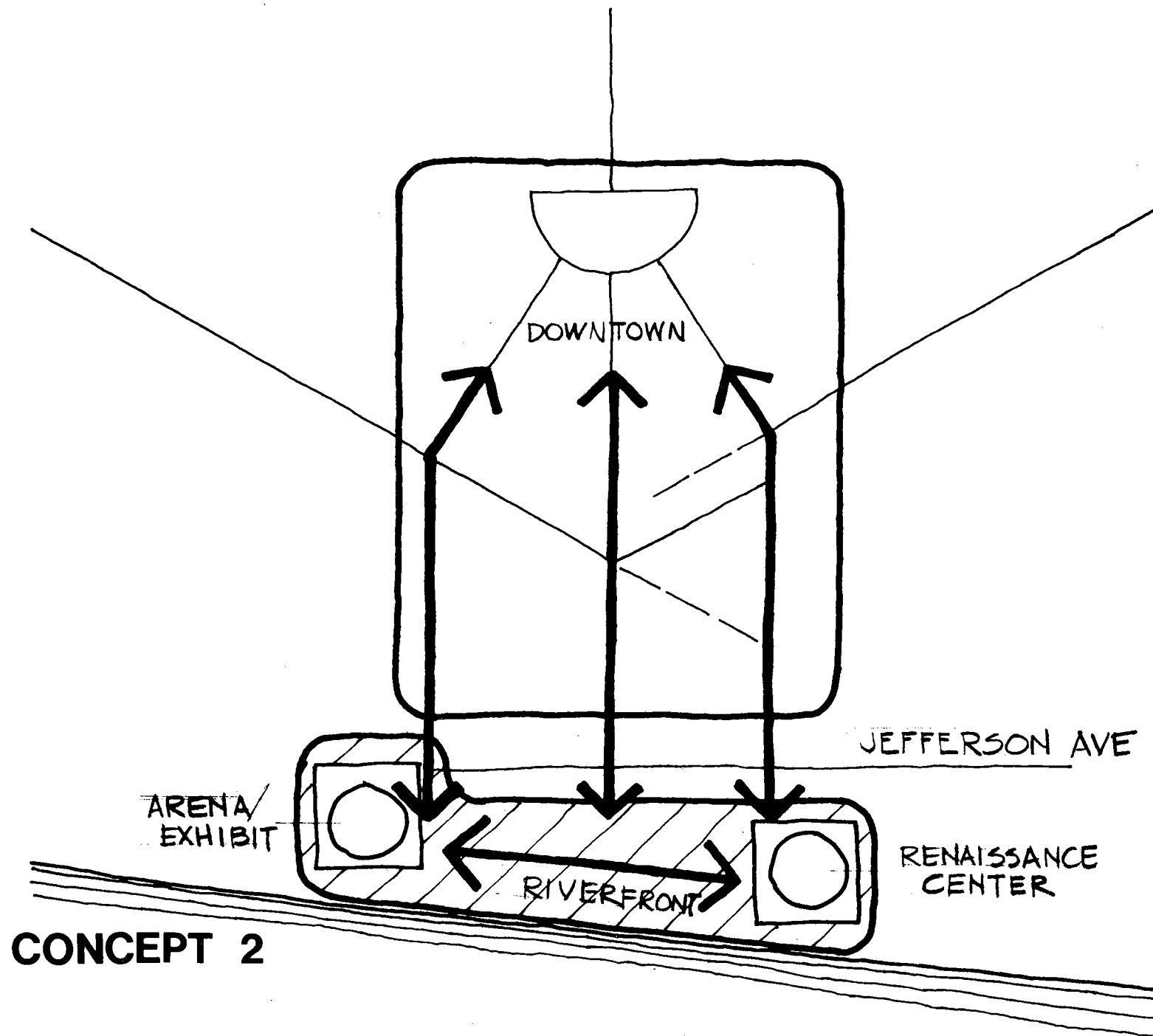
Three conceptual frameworks were developed. The first is a synthesizing of planning and development ideas of the Detroit architects and planners who participated in the interviews. It depicts the major land use routes and elements of the CBD existing and planned.

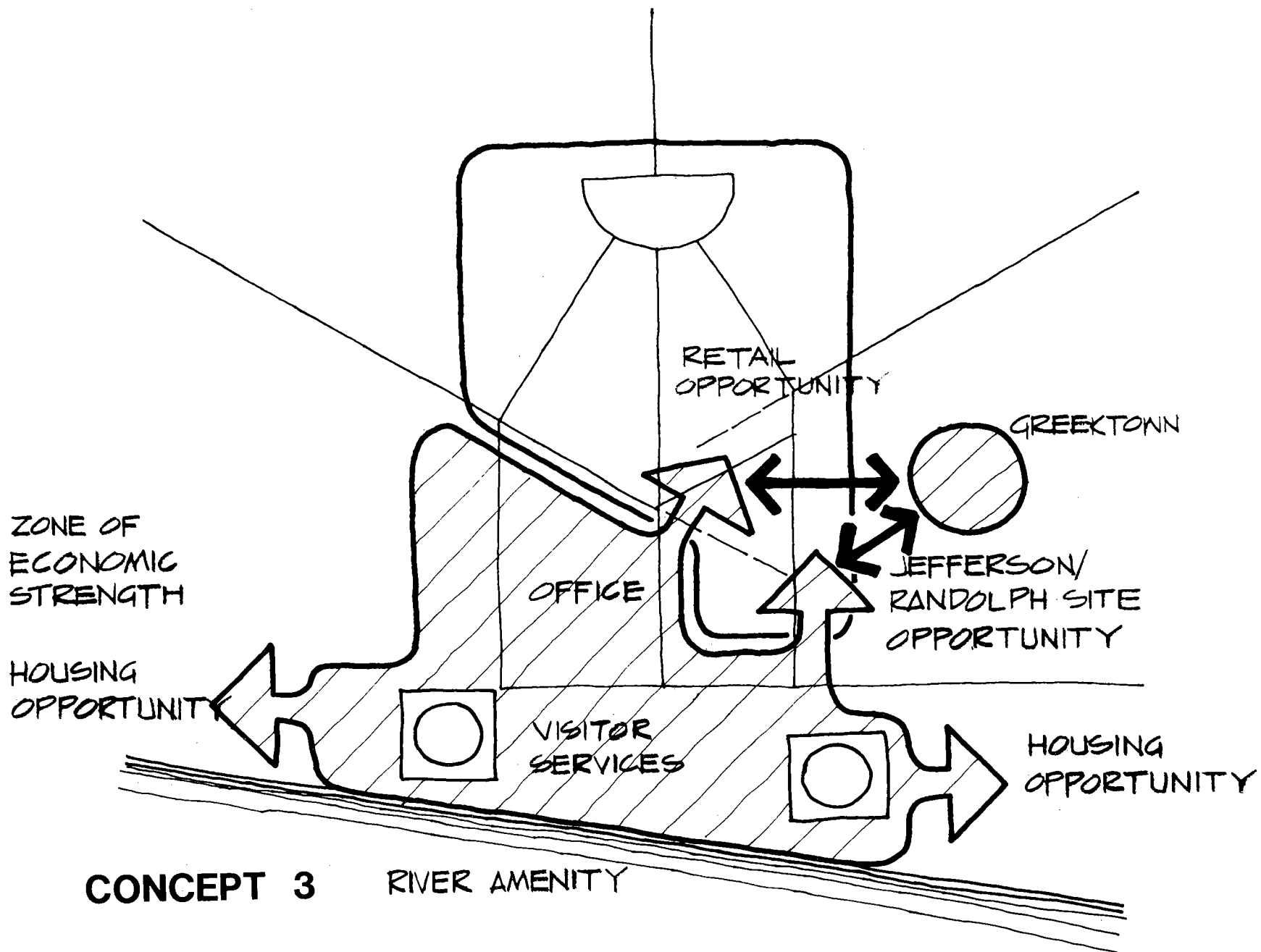
The second, is the R/UDAT's view that the linear linkages along the riverfront together with those into the CBD are primary principles for ordering issues and recommendations. The one cannot be separated from the other and the riverfront exerts influence, serving demand, and creating opportunities, as a unified element, and not through only single component.

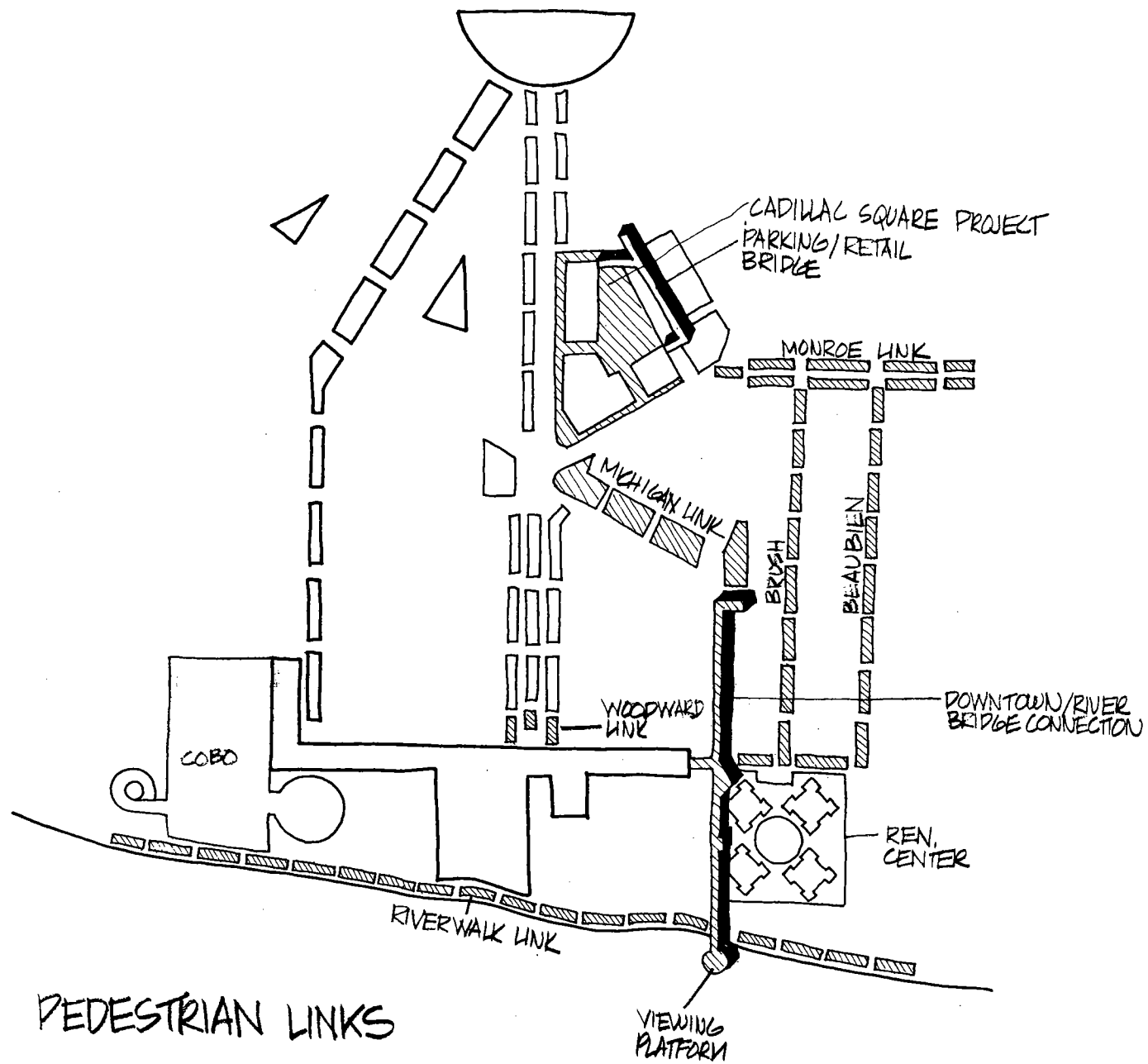
The third conceptual framework separates the CBD into two distinct zones: Those areas which have maintained economic value and growth and those areas which have seen consistent decline over the last several years. It also locates specific centroids of real and potential development activity which serve as catalysts in rejuvenation.



CONCEPT 1







PEDESTRIAN LINKS

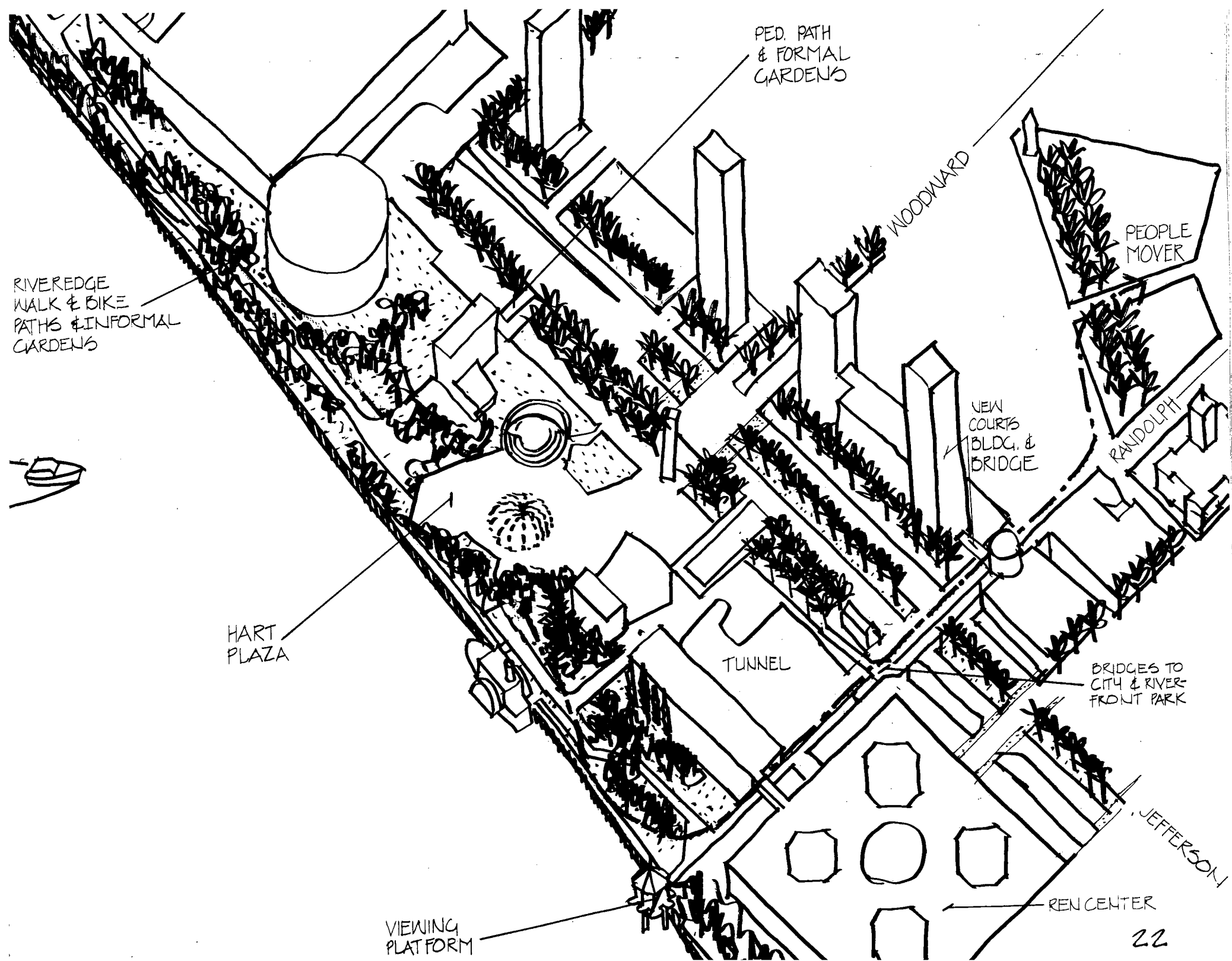
RIVERFRONT

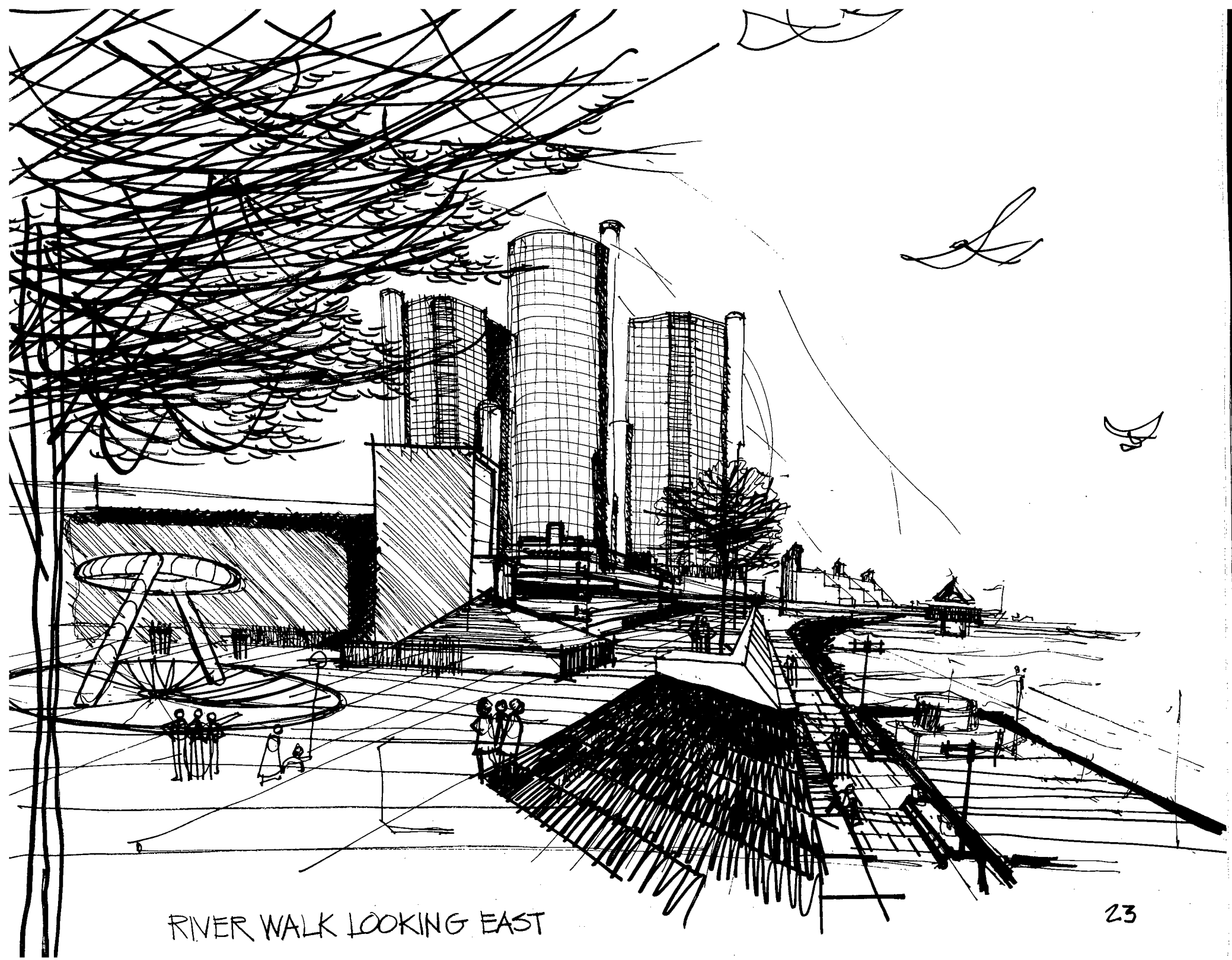
The pedestrian bridge joining Renaissance Center to the proposed Jefferson-Randolph complex would be re-aligned to provide direct access to the riverfront.

The waterfront walkway system would be on two levels: one close to the water's edge, would be a narrow walk and bikeway with occasional wider sitting areas (which could contain small cafes) and docking areas. The other, set back from the edge would be at a higher level and would directly connect the Renaissance Center concourse level with the Hart Plaza. If possible, the people mover could be located between these upper and lower walkways to allow riders a closer experience of the river.

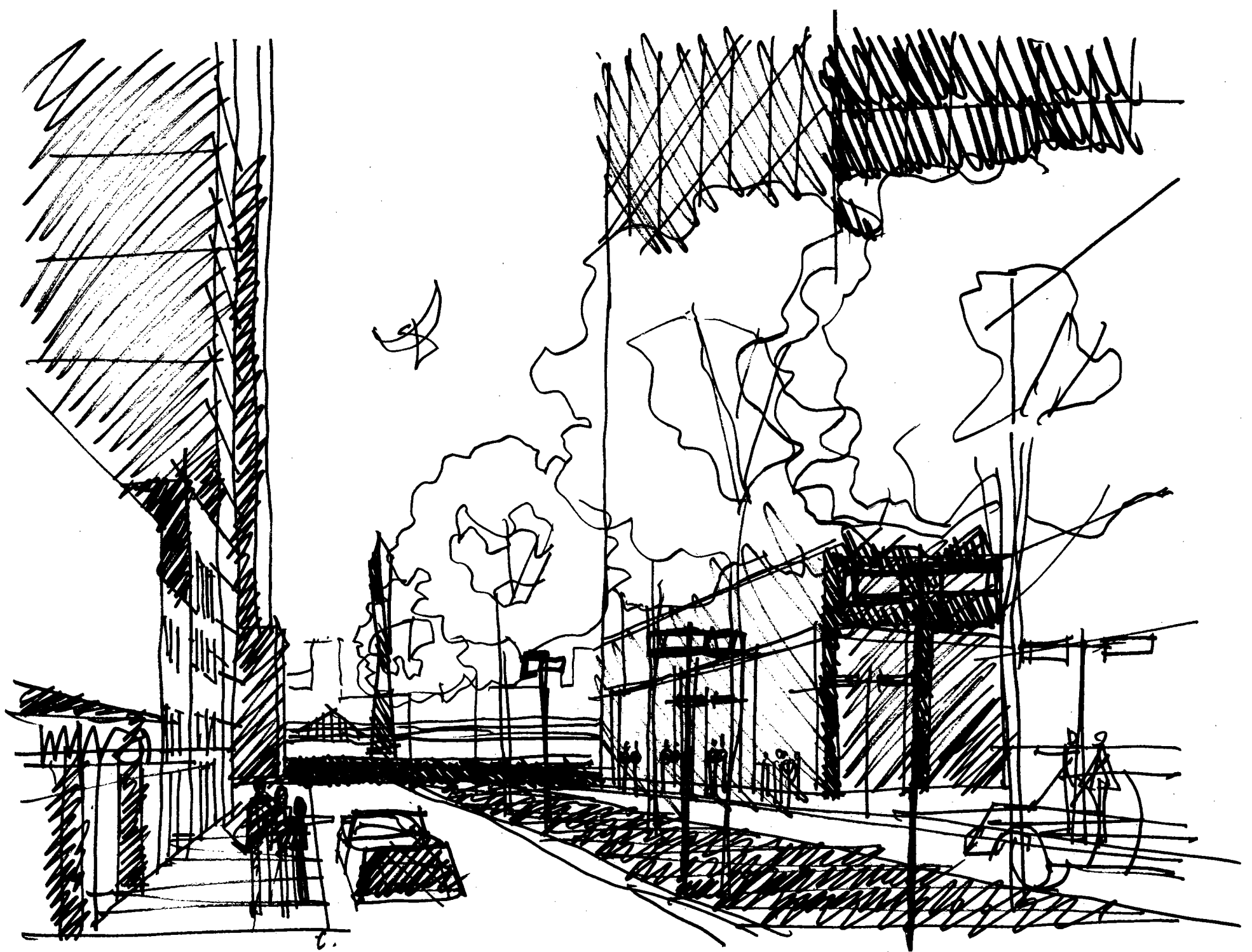
WOODWARD AVENUE

Woodward Avenue is the most significant of the three primary north-south arteries. It announces the CBD at its intersection with Grand Circus Park to the north, intersects the principal radials of Grand and Gratiot/Monroe at Cadillac Square, the historic center of the CBD, and terminates in Jefferson Avenue at the new Riverfront Park. Its prominence demands a direct physical and psychological penetration into the riverfront zone while maintaining visual and ground plane continuity. Due to the volume of traffic in Jefferson, the at-grade crossing demanded by Woodward Avenue requires special attention. Signalization allowing pedestrian crossing without a pause at the median, unlike other less significant Jefferson intersections, seems advisable. Additionally such elements as variation in pavement and crossing zone definition by landscaping and signage would be appropriate. Finally, crossing guards during peak periods of pedestrian movement would improve safety and lend dignity to this historic avenue.





RIVER WALK LOOKING EAST



WOODWARD LOOKING SOUTH

JEFFERSON RANDOLPH

The proposed pedestrian bridge to Jefferson-Randolph would be wide enough to accommodate modest retail spaces on its east side. The west edge would be protected from wind by a plexiglass screen. Beyond the street right of way, the bridge would continue north through the Jefferson-Randolph complex under an enclosed glazed canopy. The canopy would open up to a high dome at the entrance to the proposed county office buildings and the hotel. North of the hotel, the glazed canopy would continue with retail stores on either side, and a station for the people mover one floor above the bridge level.

The Jefferson-Randolph complex would be modified in a number of ways:

- Modestly scaled retail space will be retained along Brush Street on the east side to maintain and strengthen the existing scale of the street.
- Buses will be excluded from the interior of the structure itself and be relocated to a widened Randolph Street, thus freeing the structure for retail space.
- Provision for hotel and residential towers would be made above the bridge deck level.

At the intersection of Randolph and Cadillac, the bridge deck would terminate in a stairway and/or escalator giving access to a new plaza at the old county building.

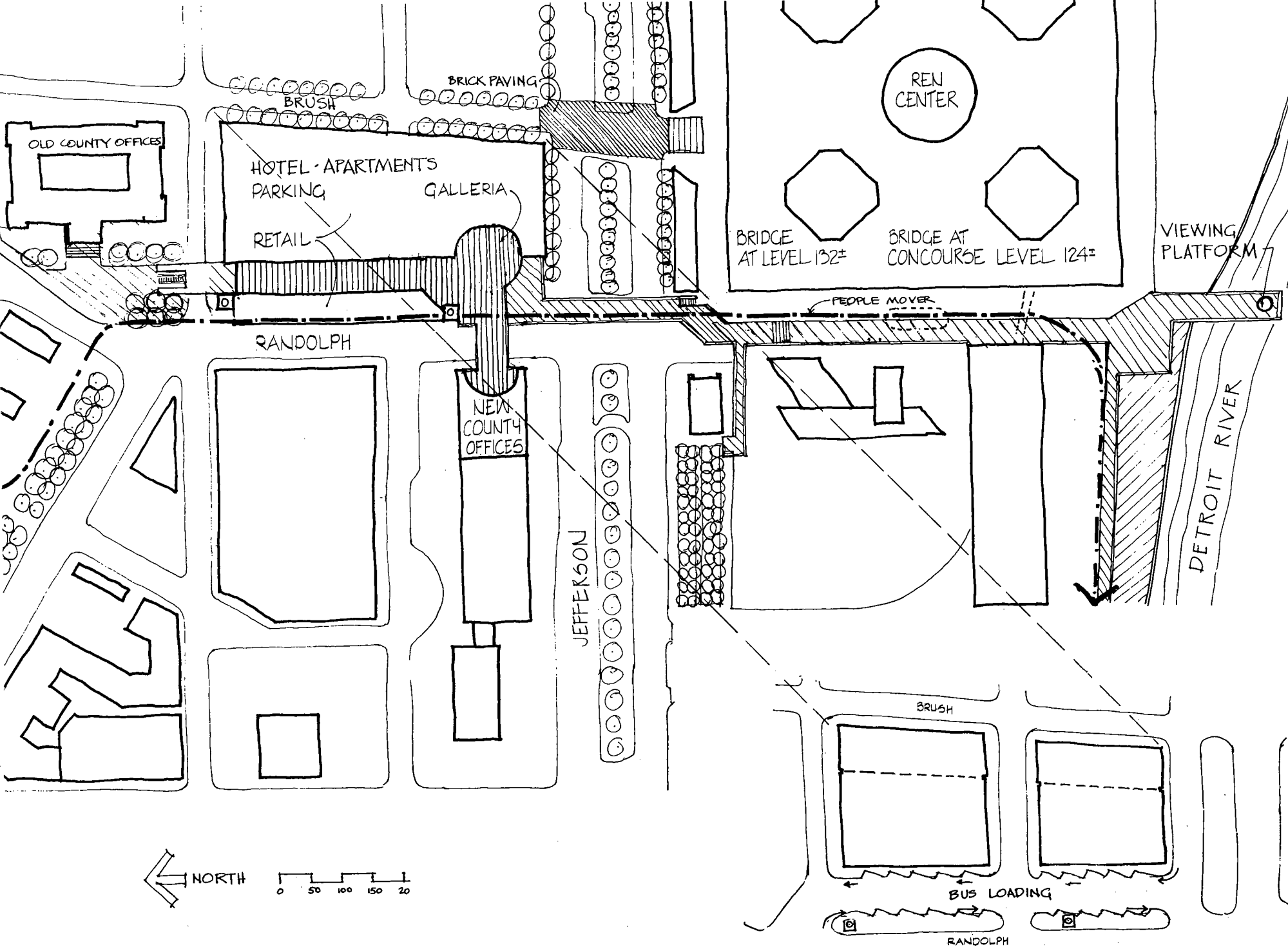
It is proposed that two lanes of auto traffic on Randolph Street be eliminated (to make room for bus lanes), also on Cadillac Square (to provide for a wide landscaped walk on the north side, incorporating the Bagley Fountain). The people mover would turn through Cadillac Square and then onto Bates Street to gain access to the proposed Kern Center.

By contrast with the proposed "skyway" above Randolph Street, it is proposed that Brush Street be developed as the principal pedestrian connection between Renaissance Center and Greektown.

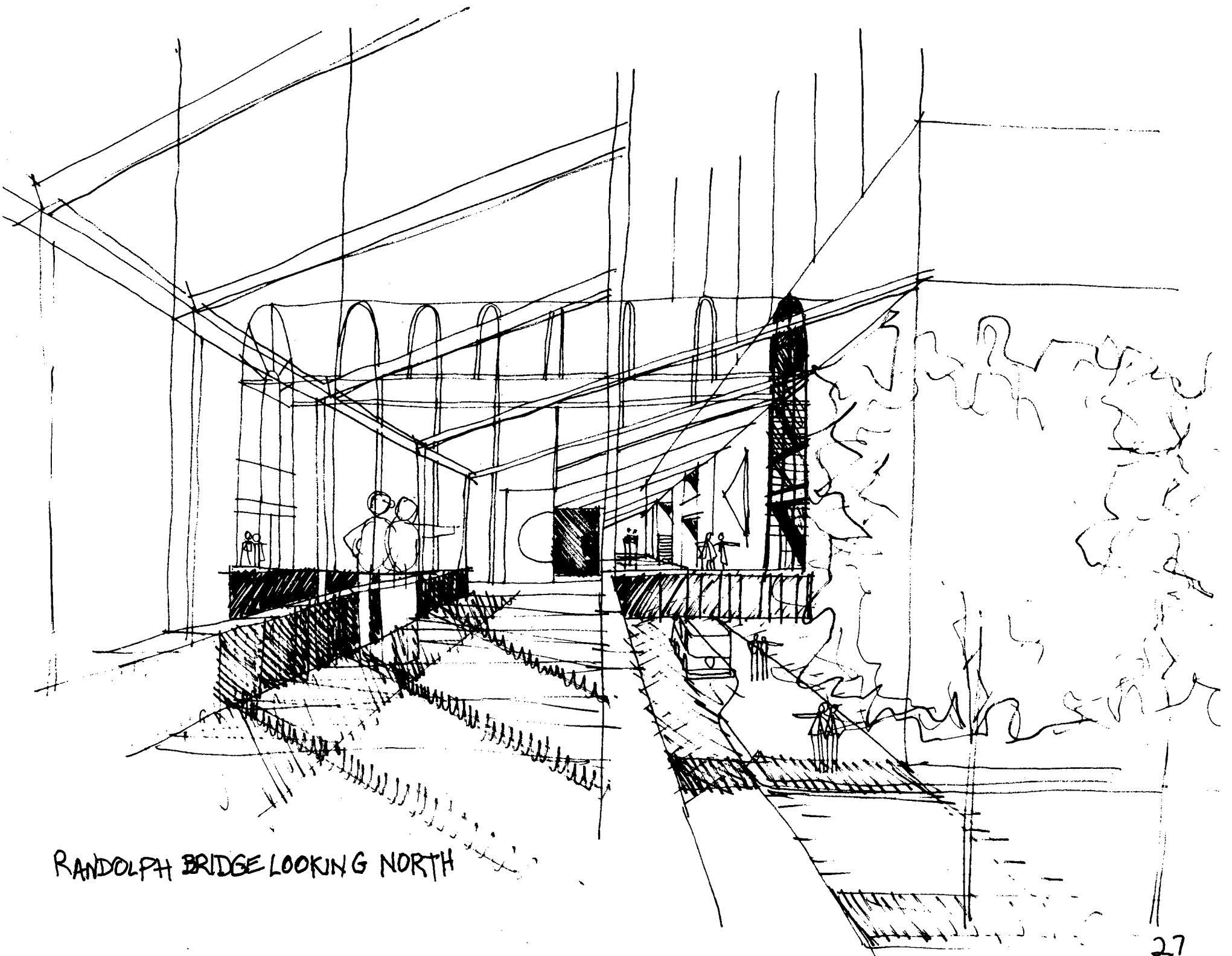
The present scale and character of Brush Street would be preserved and reinforced by:

- Provision for retail space at ground level in the Jefferson-Randolph complex.
- Infill of at-grade parking lots and vacant land with small scale residential and commercial development.
- Rehabilitation of all existing structures.
- Temporary fencing of remaining parking lots (see "Early Action Program").

It is also recommended that sidewalks be paved with brick, that street trees be planted and that lighting be re-examined to create a more intimate scale.



STREET LEVEL PROPOSED JEFFERSON-RANDOLPH COMPLEX



RANDOLPH BRIDGE LOOKING NORTH

Vertical vs. Horizontal Concentrated Uses

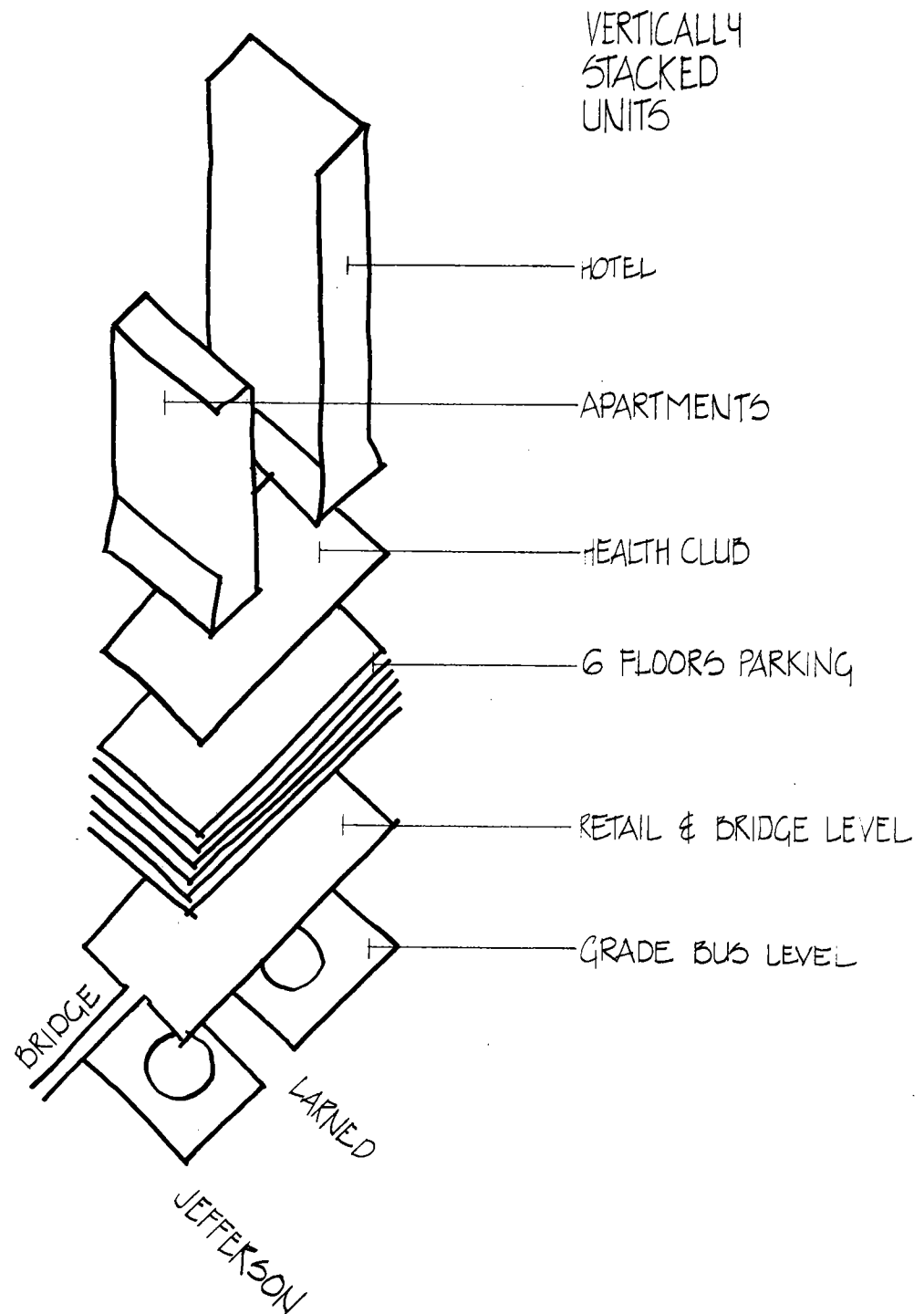
The two illustrations of the Jefferson-Randolph complex show two approaches to the problem of concentrated use:

Vertical stacking illustrates:

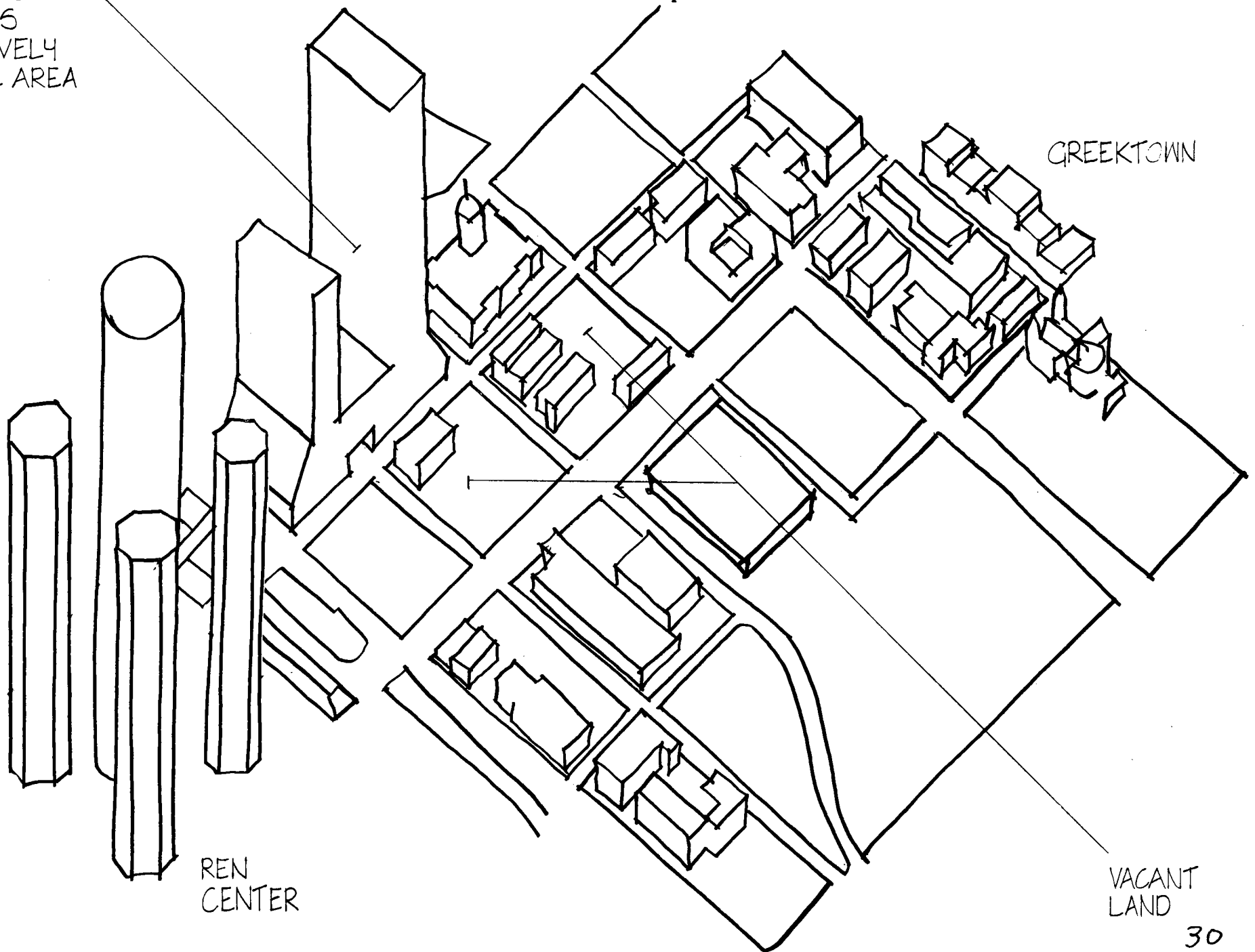
- 1) Issue of interdependency of both function and funding
- 2) Vulnerability of plan
- 3) Use of small land area for immense single investment
- 4) Connections with related uses forced and not organic

Horizontal placement illustrates:

- 1) Organic links to nearby activities
- 2) Opportunity for infill with alternative uses, e.g., housing, small parks
- 3) Flexibility for interim uses and prevention of blight
- 4) Creation of continuities in fabric



STACKED
MIXED USES
COVERS
RELATIVELY
SMALL AREA

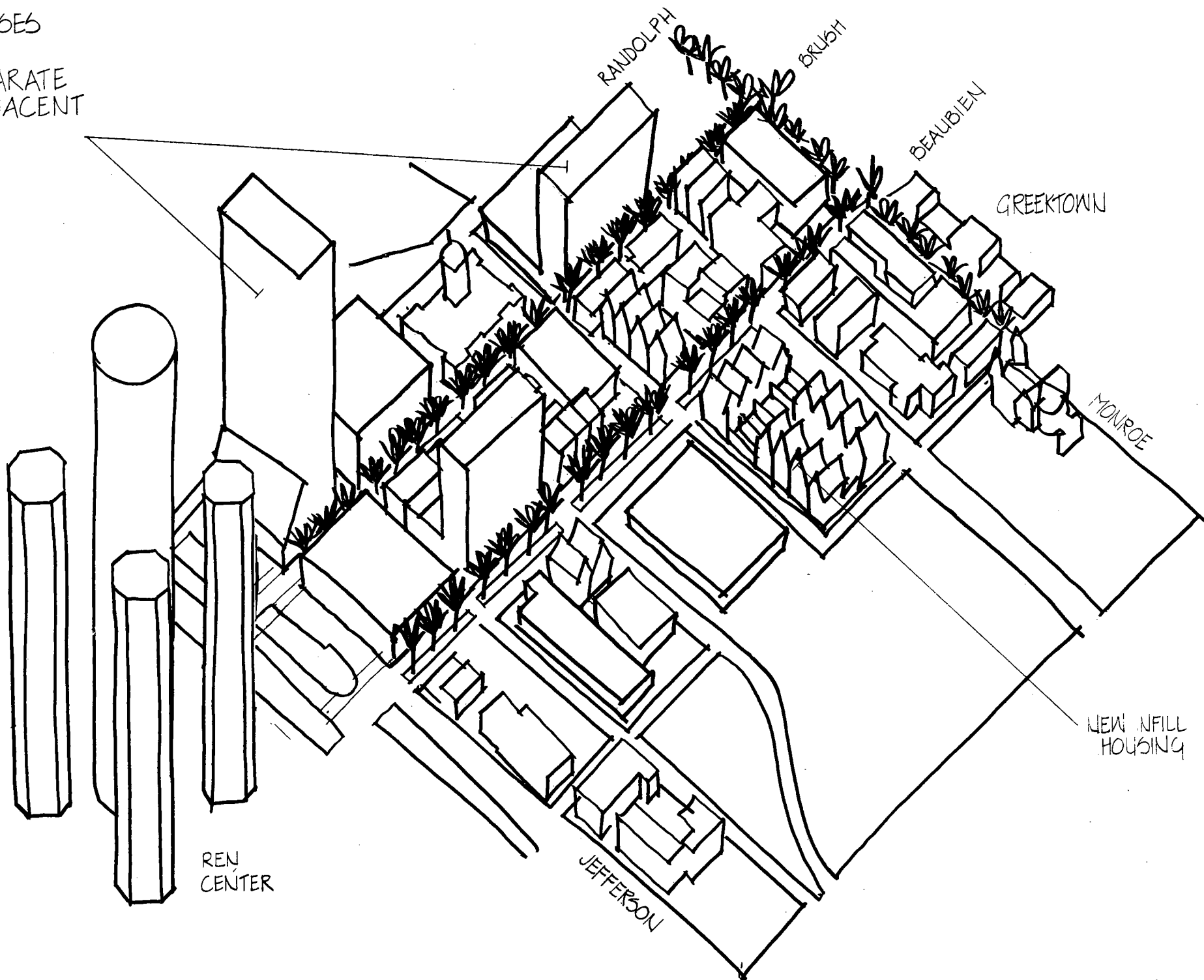


CREEKTOWN

REN
CENTER

VACANT
LAND

MIXED USES
SPREAD
ON SEPARATE
BUT ADJACENT
SITES



CADILLAC CENTER

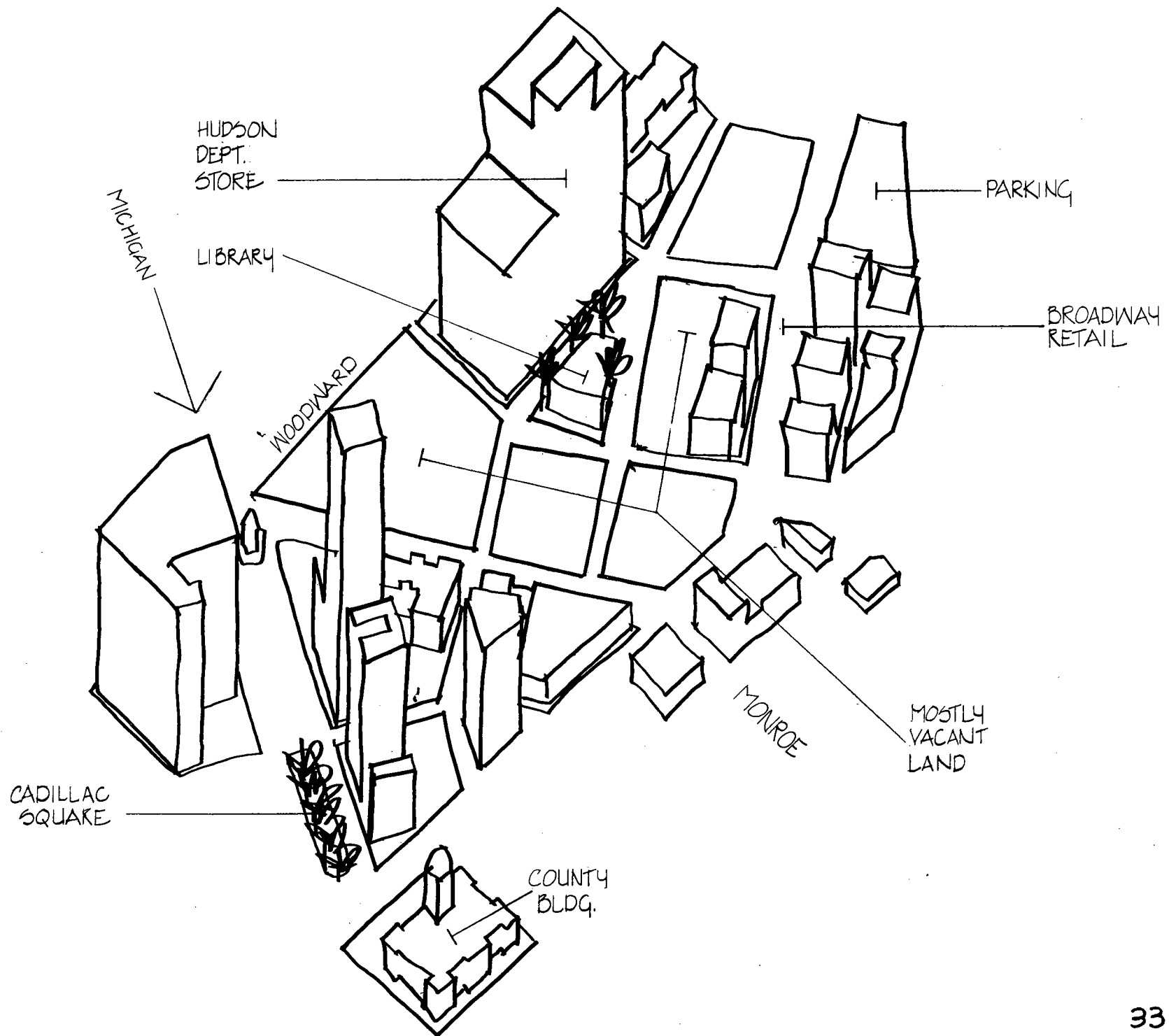
Proposals for the Cadillac Center are based on the following objectives.

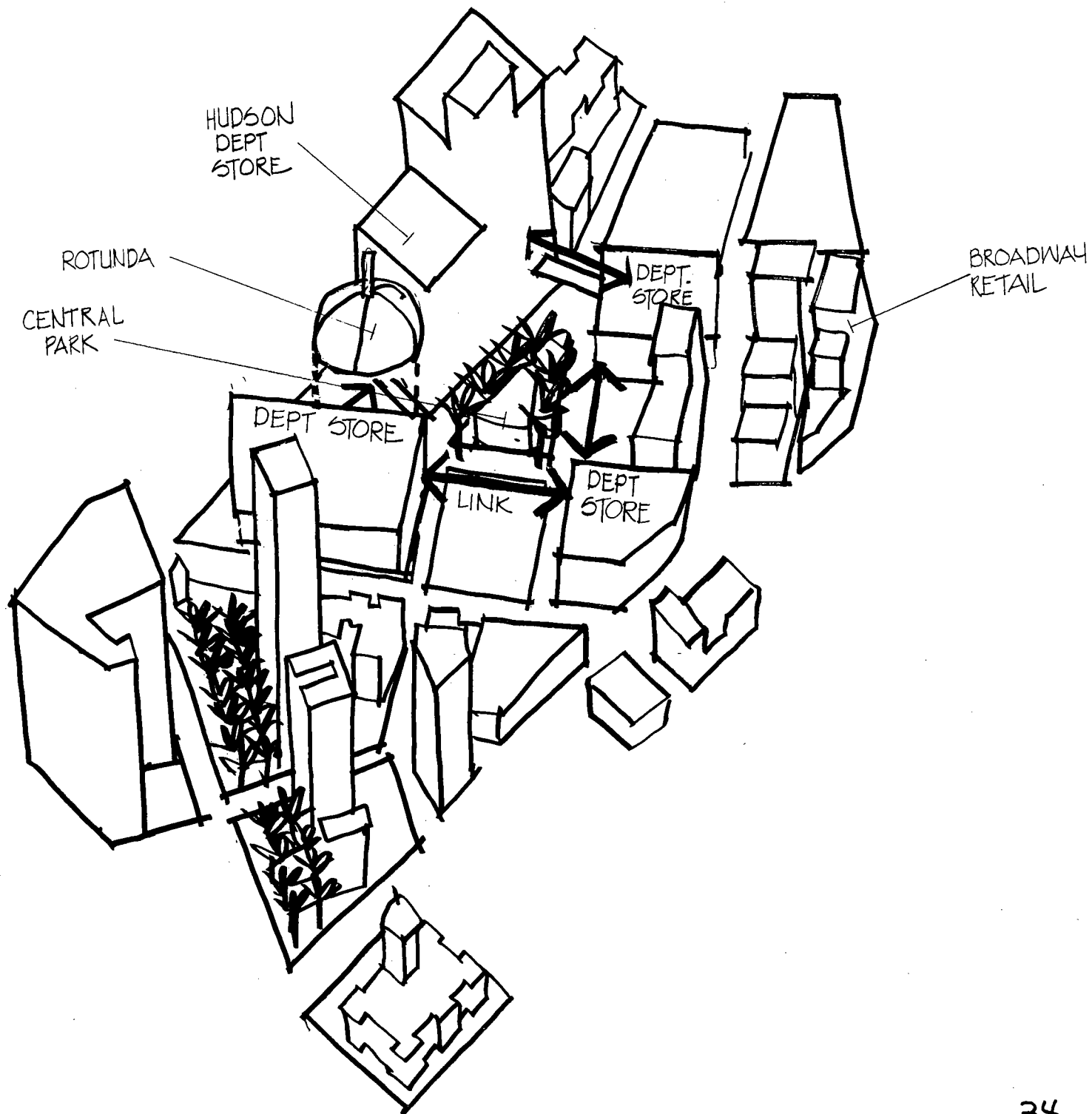
- Respect street pattern of major streets (Gratiot, Monroe and Woodward).
- Retain existing buildings on Monroe Street listed on the National Historic Register.
- Retain existing stores on Broadway as far as possible.
- Follow program proposals for major tenants, and parking requirements already set.

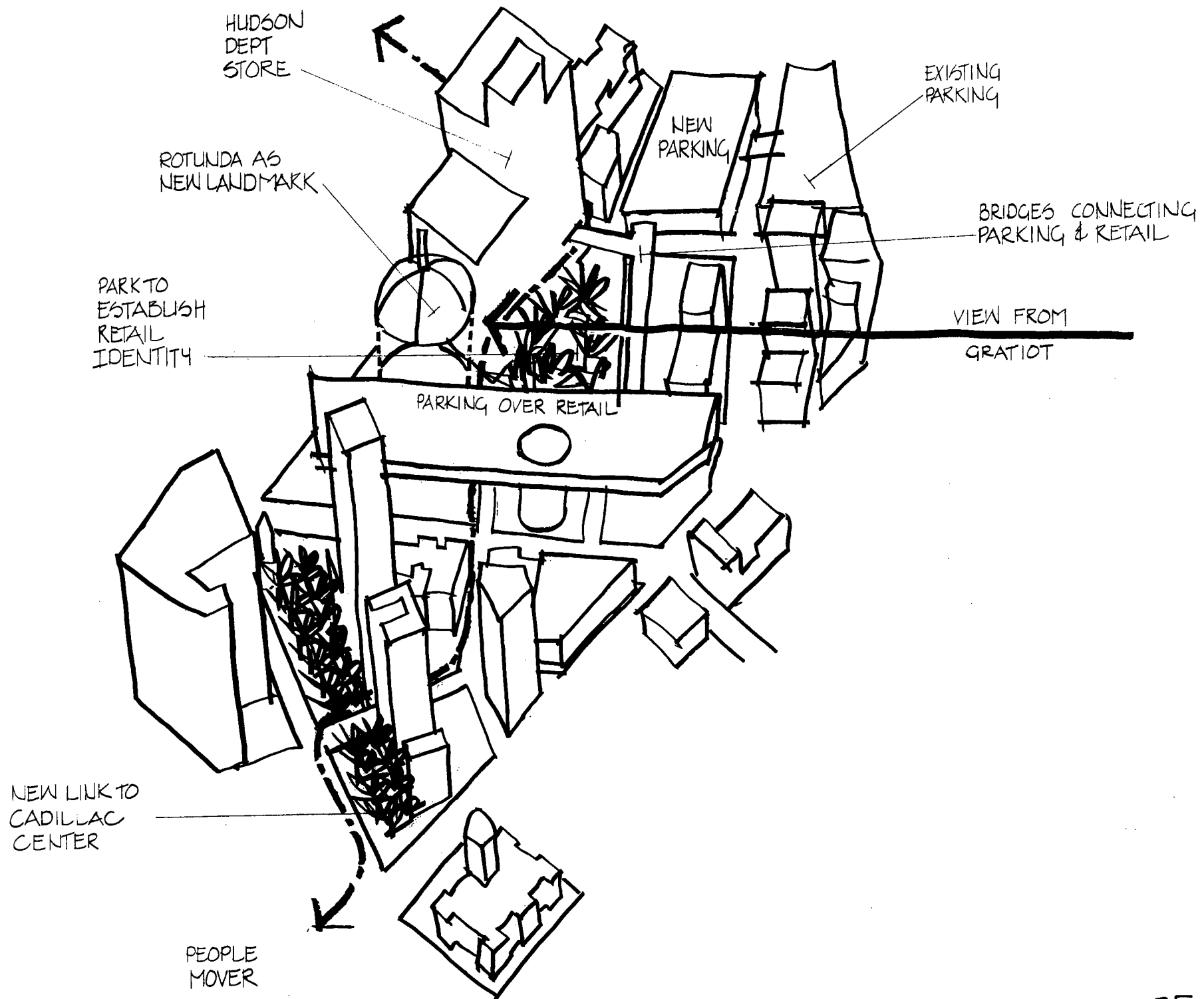
The proposals illustrate a grouping of three department stores (including Hudson's existing store) around the city library. The library would form a landscaped nucleus for the proposed shopping complex which would include smaller retail stores between the department stores. A "galleria" spanning Farmer Street at Monroe would contain the people mover which would continue up Farmer and turn west at Grand River. Parking could be provided in a multi-storey garage between the library and Broadway, and on store roofs. A glazed cupola south of Hudson's, would demark the end of Gratiot Avenue south and would serve as a transition space between the existing and new stores.

The principal connection between the new center and Renaissance Center would be

via the proposed Cadillac Square pedestrian mall, and the Randolph Street skyway.









CADILLAC SQ LOOKING EAST

EARLY ACTION PROPOSALS

1) Access across Jefferson from Renaissance Center at Randolph

It is recommended that until grade-separated access from Renaissance Center to the Jefferson-Randolph complex can be achieved, certain street improvements be initiated to make the crossing easier and less intimidating. These include:

- Extending the walk signal period across Jefferson.
- Providing Crossing Guards.
- Creating new sidewalk and crosswalk treatment to reinforce the visual connection across the street. (See sketch)
- Introducing new traffic signals, lighting, and graphics consistent with the street signage proposals contained in the "Urban Street Furniture Manual."

2) Relationship between Jefferson and Renaissance Center at Brush

The main access point into Renaissance Center through the berms is uninviting and hard to see from a moving vehicle.

It is recommended that this entrance be emphasized, particularly as it will become a more important at-grade entrance once the bridge at Randolph is completed.

Emphasis can be achieved by:

- Construction of an overhead "archway" between the berms, which could project out to the sidewalk.
- New crosswalk and traffic signals, lighting, and graphics as suggested for the Randolph Street crossing.

3) Relationship between Renaissance Center and Jefferson at Beaubien

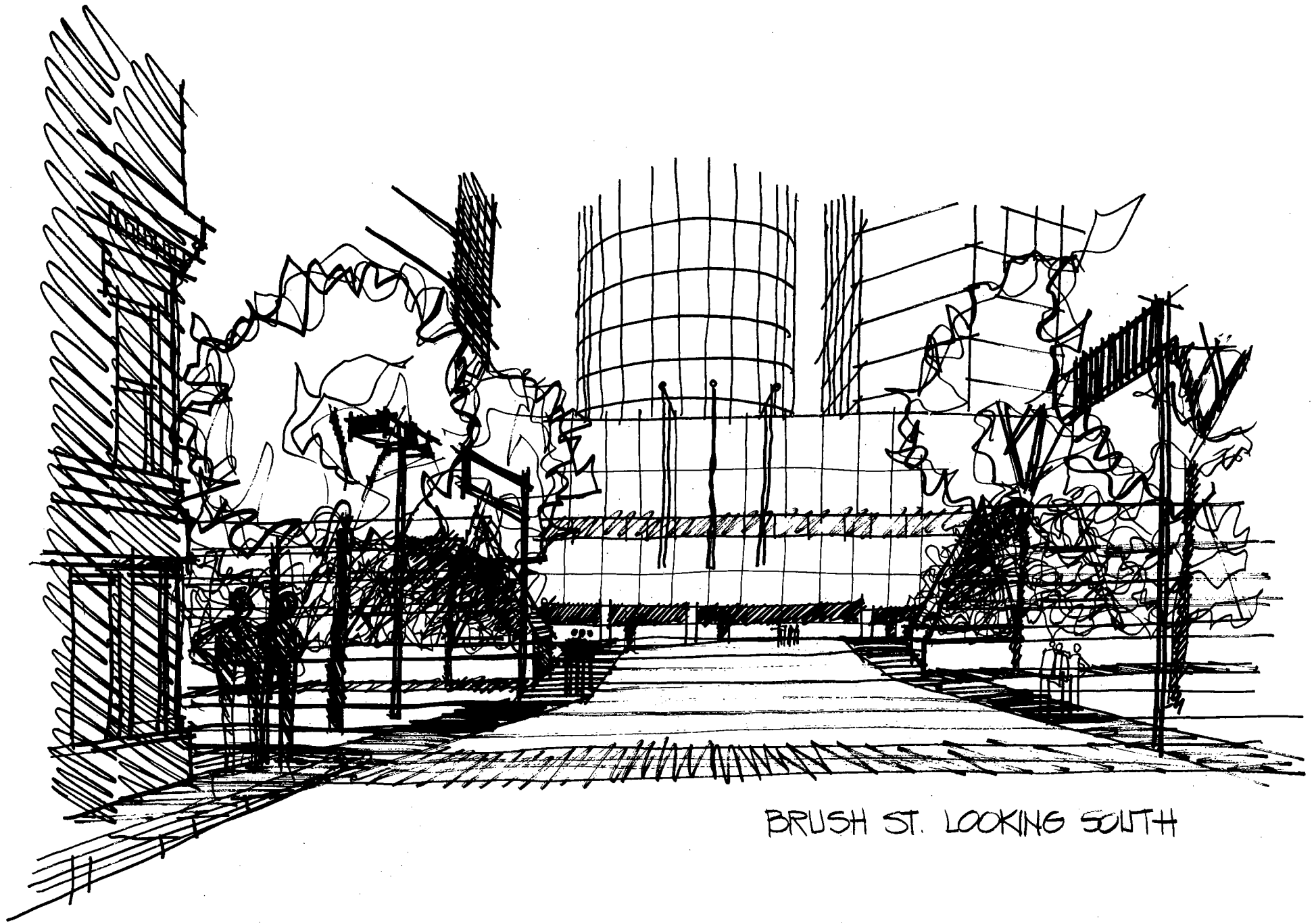
Access to the street is via a narrow ramp which is hard to see from either side.

Minor cosmetic-type improvements of the crosswalk, as described above, will draw attention to the entrance from the street. Additional visual clues could be given by a change in paving on the ramp.

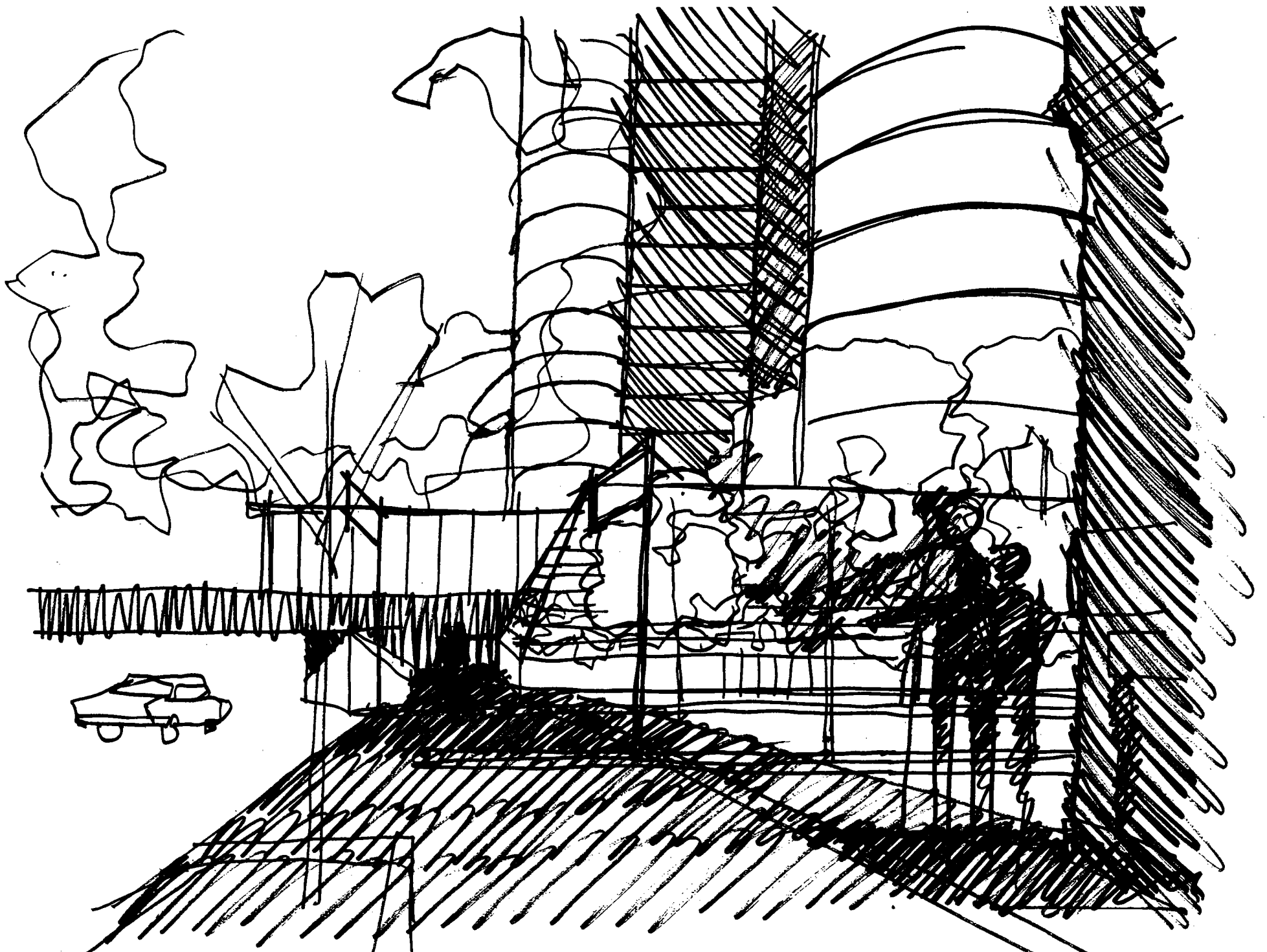
4) Visual Character

The experience of walking from Renaissance Center to other downtown areas -- particularly to the north -- is hardly a pleasure. This is largely due to desolate, vast areas of open parking and a lack of human activity. There is no incentive for being on the street except to get from one place to another.

The perceived scale of streets and of unbuilt "gaps" in the street facade, can



BRUSH ST. LOOKING SOUTH



BEAUBIEN LOOKING SOUTH

be reduced by:

- Construction of opaque or semi-opaque fences or screens around parking areas and other open lots.
- Peripheral tree planting at the fence lines.

Such fences could be required by City ordinance along important pedestrian routes, particularly where the parking lots create breaks in the street facade.

5) Civic Pride

As welcome as the building boom is, it also creates many disruptions, much noise and clutter. People coming downtown every day may become accustomed to some of these inevitable disruptions -- but convention visitors, tourists, and suburbanites can be repelled by them. Repeat convention business is the backbone of that significant activity, and seemingly small discomforts can be magnified when a group comes to choosing its next site. Once the Civic Plaza is drawing people downtown (especially on weekends), the CBD will stand as its own best advertisement. But during these next years of building boom, two issues affecting morale need to be dealt with aggressively: public housekeeping and public information. These homely-seeming matters are important in furthering the turnaround symbolism of the Renaissance concept.

Presently, there is much room for improvement on and around construction sites. In a windy city, construction materials need to be better covered and tied down. Temporary planking and boarding around sites is too often in poor repair. Underfoot, spilled sand and gravel retain rainwater and make for unsure and unpleasant walking. Sidewalks are noticeably in need of repair and cleaning.

6) Public Information

Information about development as it is happening needs to be conveyed clearly and attractively. So does information about street closings and car and bus re-routings. There are many opportunities, such as supergraphics and murals, for livening up blank walls and adding to the diversity of the landscape.

A system of signs is needed to point up the many attractions in the downtown area, inside and outside of the central core, such as the Eastern Market, specialty shopping, as well as Detroit's many cultural institutions. Large-sized maps, kept up-to-date, in the hotels and public spaces, should become commonplace.

Current information could be made available on the impact of new development on jobs for Detroit residents, on the tax base, and on the decisions to go ahead with other projects. It may

take the form, perhaps, of a scoreboard, to symbolize the fact that the Renaissance concept reaches the lives of people in all parts of the city. Maps of the residential locations of downtown employees might help to drive home this fact. They would dramatically document in particular Renaissance Center's importance for Detroit citizens all over the city.

PEOPLE MOVER

One of the principal values of the proposed people mover system is its high visibility as a major capital investment and the potential excitement it can create. It will demonstrate that the revitalization effort is serious, that people with the power to bring it about have confidence that it can be achieved, and that major investments are being made to bring it about. Perhaps equally important, it will offer an experience that will make a visit to the downtown that much more enjoyable and thereby help attract visitors (and perhaps even workers and residents). Not least, it will link the Renaissance Center, the riverfront, and Cobo Hall with the rest of the downtown.

There may, however, be possible hazards in exaggerating its ability to meet a range of transportation needs. Three-car clusters with a capacity of 60 persons, each moving at one-minute headways, will be able to handle only a small portion of the over 500,000 primary trips from parking lots, buses, and regional transit to workplaces during commuter hours. Nor will they be able to handle heavy convention traffic from Cobo Hall during the midday hours. Unless a realistic impression is presented to the public, there may well be disappointment, and the important effect of generating confidence in the revitalization strategy be diluted if not undermined.

As conceived, the people mover will certainly serve most off-peak or secondary

demand and will provide both visual and physical access to hotels, offices and shops, probably enhancing their operations and sales. A subtle but important effect of the system will be to define the area of new development. In this way, its effects will be clearly visible and mutually reinforcing.

The alignment and station locations should be selected with a view toward serving areas with development potential as well as apparent existing demand. Alignment and station locations should be coordinated with land-use policies specifically designed to accommodate and encourage the developments desired. Private development proposals, too, should be coordinated with station area design and public investments to facilitate pedestrian access to the stations and the areas served. An effective overall strategy would be cooperative public-private investment to promote both linkage and development around these stations. The city should also do as much as possible financially to support such efforts.

Since a prime objective of the people mover is to provide an enjoyable ride, a major effort should be made to offer riders the best views available. Horizontal and vertical alignment should be designed to take advantage of views to and from the river as well as the most attractive buildings and parks in the downtown area.

Potential problems leading to user frustration should be anticipated and solutions planned. For example, a one-way system has the advantage of smaller guideway areas and is, therefore, less visually intrusive. It also does not require pedestrian grade separations. The added capacity of a two-way system may be useful in serving the demands, and this may offset the visual disadvantages and higher costs. All these issues are surely being considered in SEMTA's alternative analysis study that is now underway.

Audio and visual announcements that report estimated waiting time at each station may be useful whatever system is adopted.

The following principals are suggested for guiding the selection of the system's alignment and station locations:

1. Anchor the alignment to the river-front thereby connecting the Renaissance Center with Cobo Hall.
2. Align the system to provide riders with the best views of the river and Detroit's most attractive buildings and parks, (eg. Capital Park and the Guardian Building).
3. Select an alignment and station locations that serve the present demand and direct future development to desired locations.
4. The alignment should channel the desired development into an area

with the greatest possible potential. It should be concentrated enough to make it a coherent visual whole.

5. Coordinate the people mover plan with a land-use plan and regulations.
6. Align the system to pass through new CBD shopping centers.
7. The system should complement and supplement existing transit and have the potential for tying into the new system.
8. Link stations to walkways that radiate in toward and out from the CBD and that connect the system to key office buildings and residential complexes.

While we are recommending that second-level pedestrian walkways be provided in some specific locations, we caution against adopting them as a complete system to be superimposed over the existing pedestrian system throughout the downtown. While they have the clear advantage of offering faster street crossings and shelters from severe weather conditions, they also remove a portion of the pedestrians from exposure to ground-level shops and decrease the feeling of intensive activity necessary to promote a psychology of development. Also, by reducing the density of pedestrians during the evening hours, they reduce feelings of security and make supervision of the area more difficult.

IMPLEMENTATION

It is evident that the many conceptual proposals for potential physical connections could not be implemented at one time. These proposals, if accepted, would be implemented gradually as new development opportunities and potentials for modifying existing structures occur. The management of these changes will require deliberate and intensive cooperation between the public and private sector. While much of the burden for the capital costs will rest with the city government, the private sector will also have to make significant contributions.

The economic value of such a set of improvements should not be underestimated. The proposed people mover and light rail transit system is probably the best example of a public improvement which will create increased land values in and around its stations and path. The introduction of mass-transit facilities in urban America has demonstrated this phenomena time and again, as have pedestrian malls and skyway systems. The value thus created should accrue to both the private entrepreneur and the city, and both should participate in its formation.

The public sector's role in providing funds for pedestrian improvements can originate from many sources. The City of Detroit's planning organizations have done particularly well in securing federal and state funds for their projects. In general, several federal agencies have in the past provided capital grants for similar undertakings throughout the United States. These agencies include HUD, EDA, BOR, UMTA and DOE. While these funds should be vigorously sought after, local resources must play an increasingly important role since these projects require more funds than the federal government can be expected to supply.

The recent initiation of a tax increment financing program for Detroit's downtown is one of the more innovative steps in creating local resources for downtown development. The conservative 5 million dollar estimate of the first year's increment could be leveraged into 40 million dollars of borrowed funds for project development. It is the recommendation of the team that a portion of these funds and subsequent tax increments be devoted to providing some of the capital necessary to create linkages. Additionally, this use of local resources should have a salutary effect on Washington by demonstrating a clear willingness to match federal dollars with local resources.

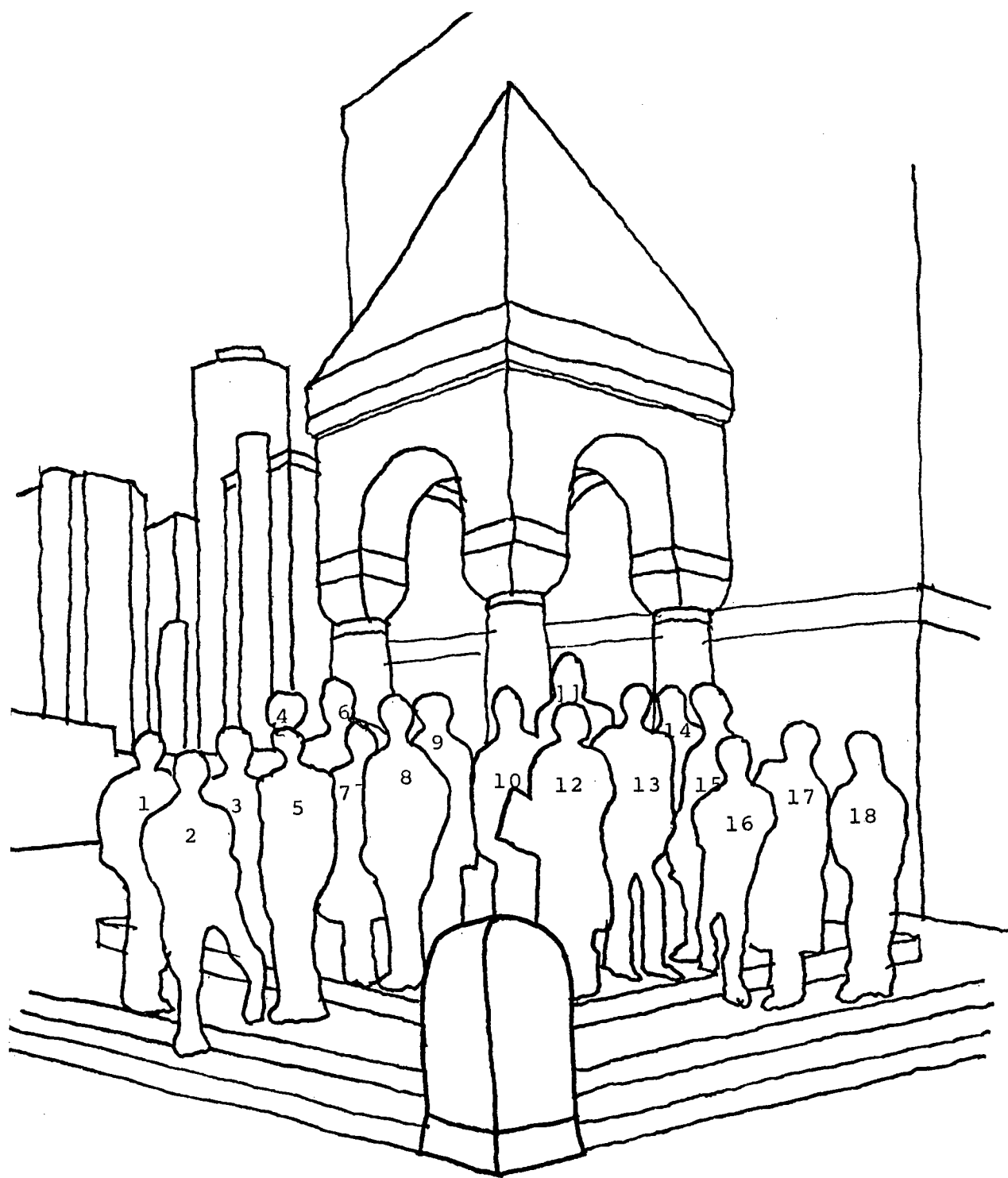
Beyond direct capital funding through tax increment and outside sources, a benefit tax district should be seriously considered to capture the imputed value created by the implementation of these public improvements. An indepth economic analysis would be required to establish the exact dollar benefits of the improvements to the private property owners. There is growing precedent for this approach. Minneapolis, New York City, Trenton, New Jersey among a host of other cities have developed and implemented benefit assessment districts to help defray the capital, operating and maintenance costs of public space improvements.

Another device for financing certain types of private development that is beginning to emerge in some cities is the use of municipal loan programs. In Detroit's case, a city loan program might be developed provides financing to private developers for pedestrian bridges between buildings, through block gallerias, pedestrian decks on private structures, arcades and civic art. The incentive to private developers would be the lowered cost of financing provided through lowered interest on borrowed money. The team was informed that, like several other states, Michigan has constitutional prohibitions to

the state lending credit to private parties, which, of course, applies to Detroit as well. However, a method for overcoming this constraint has been used in similar circumstances elsewhere. In these cases, the city used Community Development Block Grant funds to set up the municipal loan. Of course, no one would suggest the Block Grant funds be used at the cost of providing funds for much needed programs in other areas of the city unless a funding exchange could be effected. In Detroit's case the team recommends that a portion of either the existing tax increment or the proposed benefit assessment be used to replace Block Grant Funds. Since the funds provided through a municipal loan program are recoverable over time, there will be the possibility of creating a revolving fund with no net loss to the city.



R/UDAT DETROIT



1. DAVID DORNBUSCH
2. PHILLIP NICHOLAS
3. MICHAEL JOHN PITTAS
4. NICHOLAS QUENNEL
5. THOMAS VENTULETT
6. JOHN KRIKEN
7. LOIS VOELPEL
8. DOUG MC LEAN
9. CAROLE MATLEN
10. JOHN JURKOWSKI
11. GLENN DE SIMONE
12. CONSTANCE PERIN
13. ALAN VOORHEES
14. DAVID BATTLE
15. JEFF LEVIN
16. BRIAN FORESTA
17. KATY BEEBE
18. ROMEO BETEA

R/UDAT DETROIT

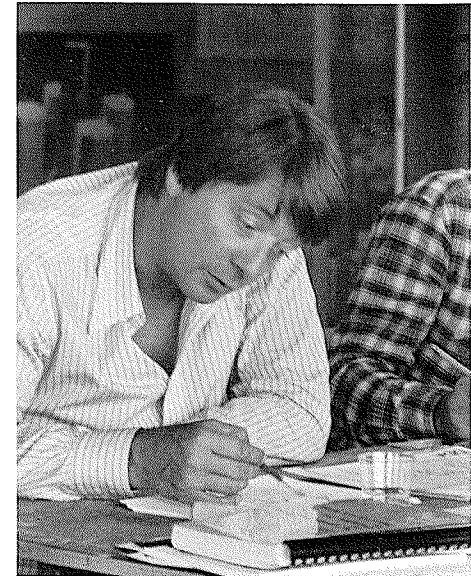
THOMAS W. VENTULETT, FAIA TEAM CHAIRMAN
Director of Design
Thompson Ventulett Stainback & Associates Architects
1200 North Omni International
Atlanta, Georgia 30303

Mr. Ventulett, R/UDAT team leader, is an Architect and Urban Planner whose work includes the design of major mixed use developments such as the OMNI Center Complex in Atlanta, NCNB Plaza in Charlotte, Mercantile Center in St. Louis and Commerce Place in Nashville. Mr. Ventulett has been a lecturer and design critic at Georgia Tech, Clemson University, Auburn University, Southern Tech, and the University of Georgia. Recent articles about his work have appeared in Progressive Architecture, the New York Times, and the AIA Journal. Mr. Ventulett was President of the Atlanta AIA Chapter and presently serves as a member of the National AIA Design Committee.



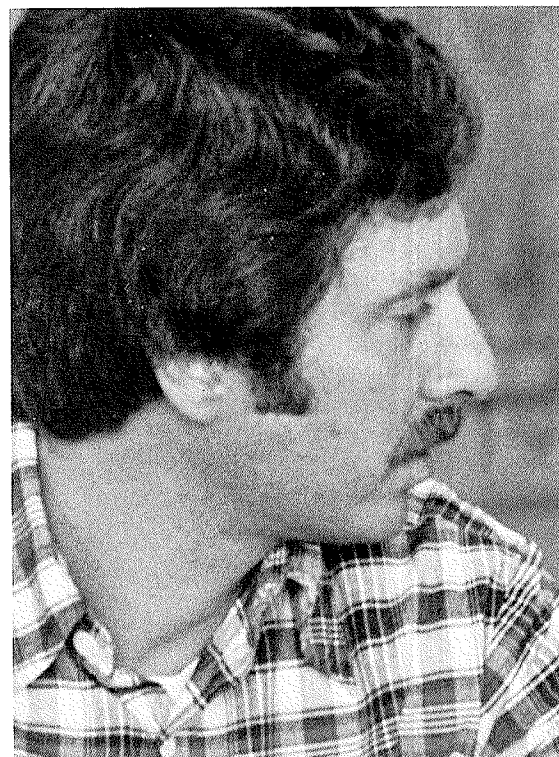
JOHN KRIKEN AIA, AIP
Director of Urban Design and Planning
Skidmore, Owings and Merrill
One Maritime Plaza
San Francisco, California 94111

Mr. Kriken, an Architect and Urban Planner has worked on downtown problems in numerous cities both in the U.S. and overseas. Recently he has directed design studies for River Corridors in San Antonio, for downtown people movers in Dallas and Los Angeles and for pedestrian improvements in San Francisco, Hollywood, and Cleveland. Additionally, Mr. Kriken both writes and teaches in the field of Urban Design.



DAVID M. DORNBUSCH
President, David M. Dornbusch & Company, Inc.
1736 Stockton Street
San Francisco, California

Mr. Dornbusch has performed analyses of the economic, social, environmental, and financial impacts of alternative development policies throughout the United States and overseas. Recent studies include institutional analysis and implementation planning for water supply and wastewater management in the Portland, Oregon metropolitan area, impact of the Bay Area Rapid Transit System on Land Use and Urban Development, impacts of alternatives to the Lake Tahoe Basin management plan, and economic development studies for a number of Indian tribes. His research has focused on improving methods for impact analysis and planning relating to resource use and protection and urban and regional environments. He is a graduate of Cornell University and the Harvard Graduate School of Business Administration.



CONSTANCE PERIN
Radcliffe Institute
3 James Street
Cambridge, Massachusetts, 02138

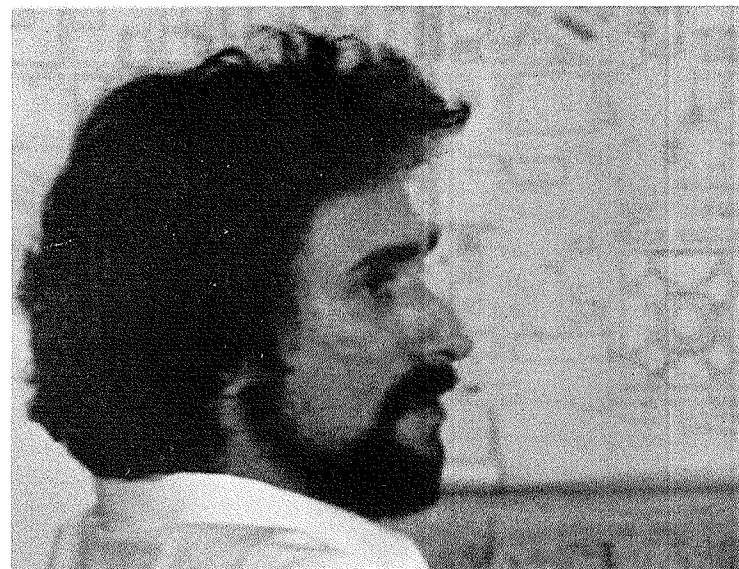
Dr. Perin is an anthropologist and City Planner whose honors include a Fulbright Scholarship at the University of London School of Architecture, a Ford Foundation Fellowship at the University of Chicago Center for Urban Studies, and in 1977-78 a Guggenheim Fellowship. In two books and other publications she has dealt with the relationship of man to the environment, particularly the impact of environmental design on the users of the designed space. Dr. Perin's research and professional experience has included, the National Academy of Sciences Building Research Advisor Board, Resources for the Future, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, and others.



MICHAEL JOHN PITTAS

Director: Urban Design Program
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02138

Mr. Pittas, Urban Planner and Architect, is currently Director of the Urban Design Program at Harvard University and maintains an active consulting practice for both public and private clients. His practice focuses on development implementation, public policy, organization, and regulation and investment feasibility analysis. He is also an associate in Real Property Resources Inc. a real estate investment analysis firm. Mr. Pittas was past Director of Comprehensive Planning for New York City and prior to that served as Director of Planning and Development for Trenton, N. J.



NICHOLAS QUENNELLS ASLA

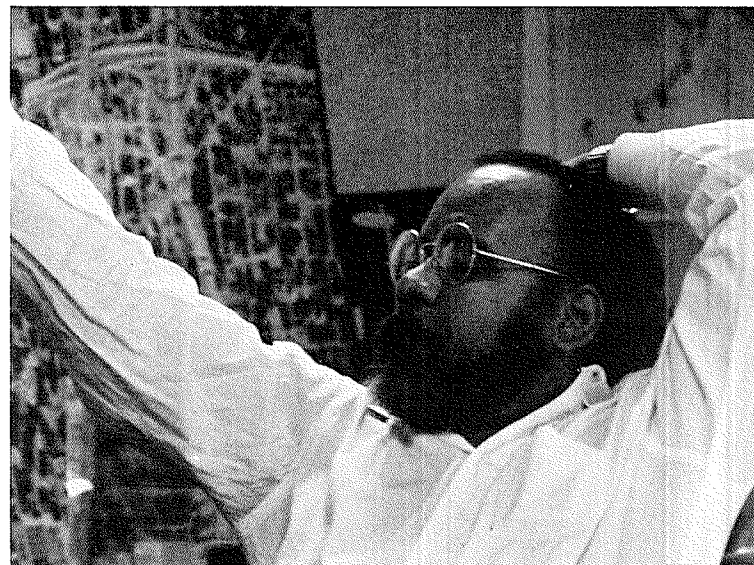
Nicholas Quennell Associates
752 Broadway
New York, New York 10003

Mr. Quennell is an Architect and landscape architect in private practice in New York City since 1968. His experience in both private and public offices has included the Housing Division of the London County Council and the office of Lawrence Halprin and Associates, where he was project architect for Ghirardelli Square as well as landscape designer for the Bay Area Rapid Transit System. Projects undertaken by Nicholas Quennell Associates include the downtown restoration of New Rochelle, New York; Northtown Park and Lighthouse Park, both on Roosevelt Island in New York, and environmental impact statements for Shenandoah New Community in Atlanta and Rancho San Diego New Community. Since, 1973, Mr. Quennell has been on the Urban Landscape Department faculty at City College of New York and he is currently President of the New York Chapter of the American Society of Landscape Architects.



DONALD L. STULL AIA
Stull Associates, Inc.
431 Marlborough Street
Boston, Massachusetts 02115

Mr. Stull's firm first achieved prominence for planning and design of large-scale housing programs under the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. His work includes a commission by the Philadelphia Bicentennial Corporation for the planning and coordination of capital improvements in the region surrounding North Philadelphia Station and the planning and coordination of capital improvements for an 80-acre area within the South End Urban Renewal District in Boston, Massachusetts. Mr. Stull also is a member of the faculty at Harvard Graduate School of Design and has lectured at Yale, M.I.T., Hampton Institute, and Howard University.



ALAN M. VOORHEES
Dean, College of Architecture, Arts and Urban Studies
University of Illinois
P.O. Box 4348
Chicago, Illinois 60680

Mr. Voorhees' area of specialization is transportation research and planning. He has participated in extensive research in urban structure and travel, and the inter-relationships between land use and transportation. He has participated in the development of downtown plans in New York, Chicago, Los Angeles, Toronto, and Fort Worth, Texas. Mr. Voorhees is affiliated with many planning organizations and has held executive positions in the American Institute of Planners, the Transportation Research Board, and the Urban Land Institute.



R/UDAT DETROIT STUDENT ASSISTANTS

LAWRENCE INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

Carole M. Matlen, Coordinator

Ron Rozanski

Jeff Levin

Dave Battle

Lois Voelpel

Brian Foresta

Doug Mc Lean

Glenn De Simone

John Jurkowski



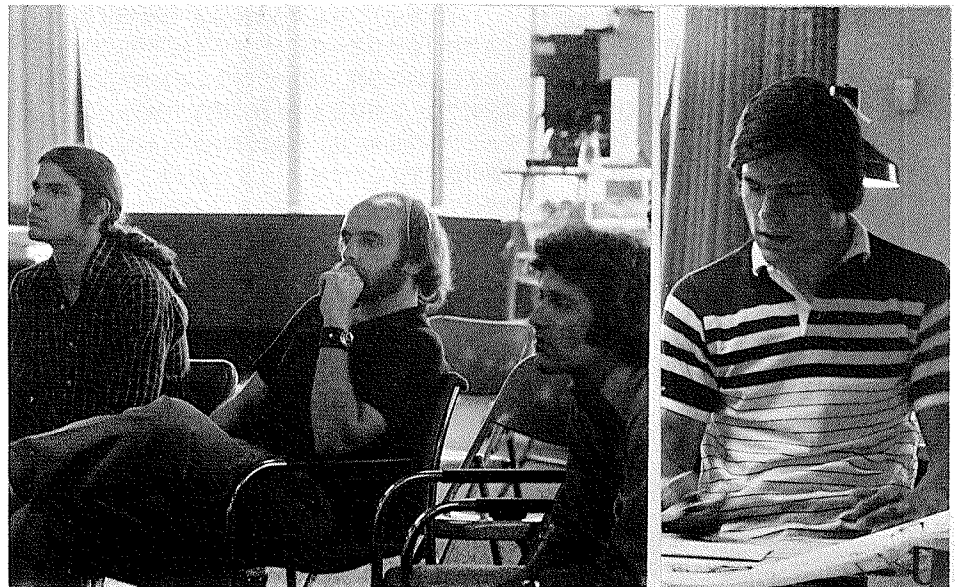
UNIVERSITY OF DETROIT

John Marusich

Dan Sasso

Tim Bercary

Denny Krestel



INTERVIEW PARTICIPANTS

MAYOR COLEMAN YOUNG
ROBERT E. MC CABE
CHARLES B. DAVIS
TOM WALTERS
LESTER JONES
RONALD HEWITT
RON FLIES
ALEX POLLACK
MARY JANE HOCK
PATTI KNOX
CLIFFORD MOAK
JAMES WINEMAN
LARRY SALCI
GEORGE SWEDE
JOHN PORTMAN, FAIA
HAROLD SMITH
ANTHONY DE VITO
MICHAEL MORAN
DAVID MAC DONALD
HAROLD BELLAMY
CARL ALMBLAD
TOM DE LA PLANTE
VINCENT BOYLE
RONALD STEFFENS
DIANE EDGEComb

PAUL THOMPSON
CAROL UPSHAW
JOHN STEVENS
HAROLD VARNER
JIM CHRISTMAN
STEVE ROSS

CITY MAYOR
PRESIDENT, DETROIT RENAISSANCE
ACTING DIRECTOR, DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
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SEMTA DPM DIRECTOR
COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DEPT.
COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DEPT.
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DISTRICT ASSOCIATION (DDA)
DIRECTOR, FINANCE DEPARTMENT (DDA)
DDA
JOHN STEVENS ASSOICATES
SIMS-VARNER ASSOCIATES
JOHNSON, JOHNSON & ROY, INC.
CHAIRMAN, BROADWAY-RANDOLPH MERCHANTS ASSOCIATION

INTERVIEW PARTICIPANTS

GINO ROSSETTI
WILLIAM KESSLER
RAY CONWAY
JOHN HILBERRY
CHRIS WZACNY
JOHN BERRY
COUNCILMAN CLYDE CLEVELAND

ROSSETTI ASSOCIATES ARCHITECTS PLANNER
KESSLER WILLIAM & ASSOCIATES, INC.
ELLIS, NAEYAERT, GENHEIMER ASSOCIATES, INC.
JOHN HILBERRY & ASSOCIATES, INC.
CHRISTOPHER WZACNY & ASSOCIATES
SMITH HINCHMAN & GRYLLS
DETROIT COUNCILMAN

CREDITS

Organizations Providing Financial Support
Downtown Development Authority
Detroit Chapter AIA

Hotel Accommodations
Detroit Plaza Hotel

Office Space
Detroit Renaissance

Materials, Supplies & Equipment
Smith Hinchman & Grylls
Rosetti Associates
Giffels Associates
IBM

Greektown Dinner
Central Business District Association

Editorial Assistance
Andrea O. Dean, Senior Editor,
(articles) AIA Journal

Typists
Beryl Javery, Detroit Renaissance
Harriet Sturkey
Sharron Masterson

A.I.A. R/UDAT Task Force

Philip A. Nicholas
Co-chairman, Detroit Chapter A.I.A.

Katherine F. Beebe
Co-chairman, Detroit Renaissance Inc.

Romeo Betea
Co-chairman, Downtown Development Authority

Fred Bertram
Co-chairman, Detroit Chapter A.I.A.
Urban Design Comm.