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Dedication: Among all the people that I can dedicate this book to, there is one to whom I am most grateful, that person is no other than my mother Theodora Dinacos Spetsaris, to whom without second thought I dedicate this book to.
ABSTRACT
The following project involves the design of a series of row houses at Broce street in the town of Blacksburg. The proposed scheme can be described as a line of units that are parallel to the street. Though the project deals with issues that are related to housing at the scale of the unit as well as at the scale of the collective whole, the underlying concern is the issue of habitation in architecture. With this project I will propose architecture that encourages the individual to participate in the making of the living environment, and at the same time address habitation in terms of structure and meaning.
CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

The first chapter of the book is the part that consists of introductory material. It includes the following: one, information about the town of Blacksburg; two, a description and analysis of the specific area were the proposed row of units will be located. In addition, with chapter A it is intended to build a "base" upon which the proposed site intervention that the project has to offer can be justified.
ABOUT THE TOWN OF BLACKSBURG

Information

The town of Blacksburg is located at the foot of the Appalachian mountains in the southwest corner of Virginia. It is a university town with a total population of 35,000 people (two thirds of who are students). (note 1) With the Virginia Tech campus just one block from downtown, student life is an intricate part of life in Blacksburg. Activities of the university elevate the quality of life in the town by adding to it a cosmopolitan touch. Blacksburg is no more the small agrarian town of the south. With a constantly growing population the town is starting to develop similar morphological as well as cultural characteristics of a small city.

A brief analysis of the town

Unlike other towns in the region Blacksburg is a constantly changing town. In the history of the town, most changes occurred after the 1960’s when the number of students attending the university doubled. (note 2) As a consequence of the population increase, the town grew significantly. The changes...
new housing and commerce, were not possible within the structure of the town at the time. The absence of adequate planning created a town with an inconsistent character and a town that is struggling to maintain the identity of a small town while still growing.

Evident of the changes that have taken place in Blacksburg is the above photograph of Main St. Two buildings that represent two different times in the history of the town. On one side the old brick building that confronts the street with a three story facade, and on the other, contemporary steel and glass office building.

Though Blacksburg went through a period in which it appeared as if it was losing the downtown to the decentralized zones of commerce that were growing at the outskirts of the town, that did not happen. Such direction would have given the town a formation unrelated to its past; and more importantly, it would negate the typology of a town in which the downtown is hierarchically the most important public room. Presently the pattern of decentralization seems that it has reversed course and downtown Blacksburg has regained strength and vitality.

The above diagram emphasizes the number of housing projects in Blacksburg and their relationship to the various parts of the town. Their location indicates a peripheral arrangement around the Virginia Tech campus and the downtown area.

At Broce, the open field across from Stonegate presents an opportunity to make an intervention with great contributions to the street. Located on a busy traffic route, and being across from a housing project, the only viable solution for the empty field would be to propose development that would favor urbanization, and encourages urban life that improves the quality of the street.