LIVING IN THE CITY:
HOUSING IN WASHINGTON, D.C.

by

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(ABSTRACT)

This project is an attempt to reconstruct a residential neighborhood in the old downtown Washington, D.C. The design tries to transform a deteriorated old commercial block to a lively residential neighborhood by introducing attractive urban characters to the area while maintaining the existing context.
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INTRODUCTION

The decline of the old downtown Washington, D.C., once a flourishing urban center, began with suburbanization and further accelerated by the development of the new urban center along Connecticut Avenue and K Street. This area has a strong urban character, however it has long been underutilized. This project is a proposal for the revitalization of this area by creating a lively residential neighborhood where people work, play and live.

Three urban problems were explored in this project. The first is an attempt to open up the internal public space of the block, which would function as an intermediate link between the scale of the individual dwelling and the neighborhood. It recognizes two kinds of space: the space they enclose and the outside city space. The second problem concerns the relation between the urban context and the arrangement of the mixed uses of the new building. Various functions such as offices, shops, art galleries, restaurants and community art centers will enhance the urban quality of this area and add attractive characters to the residential neighborhood. The last problem is the preservation and adaptive re-use of the old buildings in order to retain the traditional urban character of the old downtown.
The site is in the heart of Washington's historic commercial district. It is also at the center of the area designated for residential development by the Pennsylvania Avenue Development Corporation. This block is located north of Pennsylvania Avenue, bounded by E and D Streets on the north and south, and by 7th and 8th Streets on the east and west. The Washington Metrorail and Metrobus system provides excellent public transportation to this block.

This block is presently occupied by the Lansburgh's Department Store buildings and a number of smaller buildings. The Lansburgh's complex is composed of several architectural units. The most distinctive of these is the six-story turn of the century building on the southeastern corner of 8th and E Streets, with an ornamental terra-cotta facade and decorative cornice. Next to it on E Street is the Busch Building, the oldest building of the group, which has a Romanesque brick facade dating from about 1890. Another major building in the Lansburgh's complex fronts on 7th Street. This building's limestone facade is one of the few examples of the "modern" style in the development area. Next to the Lansburgh's building at the corner of 7th and E Streets is a two-story Kresge store with unusual terra-cotta ornament.

The southern portion of the block is occupied by a number of buildings all dating from the turn of the century. The most architecturally interesting are the three-story building with a terra-cotta facade at 406 7th Street, the six-story brick building with semicircular arches at 7th and D Streets, and the similar five-story structure at 8th and D Streets. Adjacent to this building is a two-story brick building on 8th Street.
To the north, across E Street, stands the Tariff Commission Building. To the south is the Market Square area where a new mixed-use building complex and the Market Square Park are currently under construction. To the east on 7th Street is the Gallery Row area, densely built with moderate-sized commercial structures, many dating from before the turn of the century, with the largest concentration of art galleries, studios, and related cultural establishments. 8th Street contains several low-scale buildings, and this block would also be developed for a mixed use of residential, office and retail.

Today, the buildings in this area are occupied by a variety of offices, retail outlets, community-related art organizations and commercial galleries; however, the majority of them are either vacant or underutilized. For the most part, this area's variety of architectural styles and massings presents a diverse but fairly well-integrated streetscape.
TOP LEVEL
12. Apartment
14. Community Art Center, Studio
15. Skylight
16. Roof Garden
17. Winter Garden
18. Restaurant
19. Health Club
The vita has been removed from the scanned document