

THE MCGUIRE BUILDING REHABILITATION,

by

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	ii
LIST OF FIGURES	iv
INTRODUCTION.	1
CHANGE.	3
Continuity	
Conservation	
Environmental Economy	
THE AMERICAN DOWNTOWN	8
The Traffic Problem	
Competition of Suburban Centers	
Kalamazoo, Michigan	
ROANOKE, VIRGINIA	11
History	
The Roanoke Market Area	
THESIS PROPOSAL	18
Program	
Presentation	
CONCLUSION.	33
FOOTNOTES	34
BIBLIOGRAPHY.	35
VITA.	37
ABSTRACT	

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure		Page
1.	The Location of Roanoke Within the State of Virginia	12
2.	The Location of the Market Area in Roanoke	14
3.	The Proposed Pedestrian Streets	21

INTRODUCTION

The basic premise of this thesis is that in order to deal effectively with change, a middleground must be found that allows change to occur but not at excessive rates that obliterate the past. It is important to find the middleground that allows a transition from past to present to future to occur smoothly. In this way the past is not forfeited to make room for the future. A link is established; the transitional middleground serves as a connector from the past to the present.

The middleground as it applies to the built environment can be paralleled to conservation. In its broadest definition conservation is a thoughtful, conscious effort at guarding or protecting the environment. Within the broad context of conservation are the areas: restoration, reconstruction, and rehabilitation. Restoration deals with accurately (in terms of history) recreating buildings and their environments to their original state. Reconstruction deals with recreating buildings and their environments to give an image of their original state; historical accuracy is not the major issue. Rehabilitation deals with adapting old buildings to suit new uses.

Conservation can allow gradual change. The past need not be obliterated nor the present passed over. Restoration and reconstruction make references to the past but we must beware, if these two

areas of conservation are the only areas utilized, we may find ourselves slipping into the past and thus preventing change from occurring. Through rehabilitation references are made to the past but also to the present and future in terms of present and anticipated needs and uses. This area of conservation, rehabilitation, permits gradual transition which is the middleground.

The specific concern of this thesis is the rehabilitation of a building within the Market Area of Roanoke, Virginia. The McGuire Building has been chosen for rehabilitation to act as a catalyst to positively influence growth within the Market Area.

Within the past thirty years the Market Area of Roanoke has been in a state of decline. The decline is manifested by both the diminishing size and importance of the Market Area. The rehabilitation of the McGuire Building is a proposed solution to halt the decline and begin a new period of growth. In this way the Market Area will be given the opportunity to undergo change and to be refitted to accommodate new activities. The proposed rehabilitation will serve as the first link to connect the Market Area as it was to the Market Area of the future.

CHANGE

We are facing a period ahead when the very essence of our lives together will rest on how we deal with change in a positive creative way. That is why we need new ways of looking at change: neither as good or bad, not judged as to whether to allow or not allow, but ecologically, which means existentially. Change is going to Be. Now how do we work with it?¹

The problem: how do we work with change? There is a dichotomy: we either focus our attention on newness, growth, and deliberate change or on the other extreme, stasis: perpetual constancy. From the latter attitude derives the concept that change is always for the worse. Both of these extreme points of view ignore the concept of continuity. Continuity implies an uninterrupted connection or succession. The concept of continuity as it applies to change provides a middleground between extremes. Obsession with newness implies discrete changes, always starting anew, from point zero; stasis implies stagnation. The middleground, continuity, implies cohesion and coherence. If change is approached as being a continuous process, then this process helps to form a link with both the past and the future; things do change but not abruptly.

Adaptation suggests continuity. The process of adaptation is one through which things are made suitable or made to fit; things are brought into harmony with a particular environment. This is the middleground mentioned earlier. The old is made to fit. It is not destroyed; it is not frozen in a state of stagnation. The old enters into a continuous process that links past to present to future.

The concept of continuity can be applied to the built environment through the technique of conservation. If conservation is considered an adaptive process, then the process which brings harmony to the built environment is used to protect the environment. The extreme is not desired; the built environment is protected to avoid ruination but not so well guarded that its growth is suppressed. Conservation is a means of linking the past with the future. And this is a part of the middleground: change to accommodate new needs and new uses not change to start anew, not stasis. Through conservation the built environment becomes a continually changing organism. The major issue becomes protecting the built environment from destruction or stagnation.

One example of a continually changing environmental organism is the city. The city expands and contracts in three dimensions. But the continuity of its expansion and contraction can be disrupted by repeatedly fragmenting or freezing its growth. Its growth should be continuous so that the past is not forgotten nor is the present neglected. Therefore, we must apply a continuous process, conservation, to its growth. Conservation addresses the question of urban ecology: how can well-worn, indigenous elements continue to enrich the life of a city? Through conservation the elements, be they social or historical landmarks, are used as the links in the continuous chain from past to present to future. The elements are not used as discrete units set apart from other elements in time (a pickling process), nor

are they obliterated to make room for new growth. Instead the elements become a part of the city's new growth.

The elements serve as an expression of the community's value system. By the presence of vintage, well-maintained landmarks, be they parks, buildings or streets, in active use observers become aware of the community's choice to retain a link with both the past and the future. The presence of the elements symbolizes the community's attitude towards age in general.

By forestalling the untimely death to these environmental artifacts and rejecting the mindless tendency towards accelerated obsolescence, the community affirms its reverence for age, and, ultimately, humanity as well.²

The distribution of landmarks, their patterns and settings denote the passage of time and space, thus involving the observer in this experience. If the observer can be involved in this experience, in the passage of time and space, ultimately, values of time and space will be established that will serve to give a sense of orientation to our society. This orientation will be one in which we are effectively working with change.

By conserving a city we are also conserving a cultural heritage. The conservation of social and historical landmarks provides us with a feeling of continuity without roots. We need not insist on historically accurate restorations, nor do we need to level or obliterate landmarks to provide this continuity. The conservation of landmarks gives to the community a feeling of variety and distinctiveness. Old buildings themselves may have details and volumes no new

construction can duplicate. These old buildings offer the opportunity to make fresh and inventive use of images from the past. Rather than razing soundly constructed, usable buildings to make room for new construction, parking lots, and vacant lots, they should be adapted to accommodate the needs of the community. The time has come to seek alternatives to waste and destruction. We must be both energy conscious and frugal with our resources. Both energy and resources are precious commodities that we cannot afford to squander. By destroying buildings that have outgrown their present functions we are wasting valuable resources in terms of labor and building materials. Rather than investing in new energy and resources, we must learn to take full advantage of every resource we have. We must turn to what already exists; call attention to the rehabilitation of older buildings.

Instead of treating rehabilitation and redevelopment as mutually exclusive alternatives, they should be integrated and allowed to work together. Again, soundly constructed, usable buildings can be adapted to accommodate new functions and buildings beyond a state of economical repair can be razed to allow for redevelopment. New buildings can be put into the shells of old buildings to create a dynamic juxtaposition of old and new. Often when the old and new uses are most disparate, the juxtaposition between past and present offers many surprises. The "well-worn indigenous elements" will be given a chance to contribute to the city.

First we must establish what landmarks to save, and having made the decision, we must decide how to save the landmark. Where

landmarks are of varied social, historical, or architectural worth and contribute to the distinctiveness of a community, beauty and character may be achieved by retaining the group as a whole. Possibly, the area can be denoted as an historic district or community center. In such areas each building's assets, architectural quality or style, age, state of repair, social or historical association, must be judged against the contribution they make to the collective environment. If the whole is greater than the sum of the parts, such inter-related buildings should be saved. The decision to save a landmark, a building, a group of buildings, or a neighborhood is a means of extending the lives of both buildings and neighborhoods; one more link in the continuous chain. Not frozen in time, not destroyed.

THE AMERICAN DOWNTOWN

A major problem of the urban environment is decay. Presently many downtown areas of American cities are decaying. The average American downtown appears to be an unplanned collection of shops and stores, theatres and amusements, office buildings, and hotels. Whether or not the downtown centers were planned is not the issue. The issue is that they are not appropriate for today's uses and as a result, many downtown centers are dying. Poor traffic conditions account, in part, for the blight and obsolescence within urban downtowns and decentralization of our cities. Therefore, downtown loses business to suburban centers that can accommodate traffic.

Take a field; a large field, somewhere near a town or city suburb. Pave it over and mark out spaces for a thousand cars. Leave a reasonably sized hole in the center. Fill this with a windowless mass of low-rise concrete. For taste's sake add some facing bricks and a few trees. And there you have one approach to designing the American shopping center, the big store.³

This is what American downtown areas are competing with. In the suburban shopping center both parking and vehicular traffic are planned and evidently satisfy the consumers' needs. If parking and good traffic flow are viewed as a minimum condition, the amenities of suburban shopping centers must be examined to see if comparable amenities may be offered downtown. Possibly the principal attraction of the suburban centers is the mall, the pedestrian street. The

equivalent can be provided downtown. Although this is not an easy task, what must be done to provide a pedestrian street is to redesign traffic flow, pedestrian and vehicular. The goal in redesigning traffic flow is to avoid vehicular and pedestrian conflict and to provide easy access to downtown centers. Vehicular traffic, pedestrian traffic, and other businesses should be integrated so that they do not conflict. If integration is achieved, the surrounding community will have a definite, well-organized center for activity. Well-planned centers are the best insurance against blight and decay. Most important, a humane environment, one in which people are not lost in the confusion of vehicular traffic or completely overpowered by their surroundings, must be created for business, shopping, working, and entertainment. Again, by adapting downtowns to accommodate present and anticipated future needs, conservation is being applied which is one more link in the continuous chain.

In the 1950's the city of Kalamazoo, Michigan was faced with the problem of the American downtown; Main Street could not accommodate vehicular traffic, therefore the downtown merchants suffered a loss of business. A Peripheral auto loop was proposed and all the streets contained within the loop were converted to a pedestrian mall. The traffic flow was redesigned to make access to the pedestrian mall easier. Now within a five minute walk of the area are a library and an historical museum, a new art center, two new office buildings, and renovated office buildings.

The survival of downtown is dependent upon its access requirements, its physical configuration and amenities. To ensure economic viability, a new twenty-four hour life style must be created. The new downtown centers need to see a wider use as complete market places. If already existing facilities are retained and a full mix of local services added, hopefully, downtown centers will be created that will spark the rejuvenation throughout a larger surrounding area. If successful, downtown centers will provide employment and increase the tax base, thus proving that money can still be made in downtown areas.

ROANOKE, VIRGINIA

The city of Roanoke, Virginia is the dominant urban center for a large, fertile agricultural region in southwestern Virginia. The city of Roanoke is located between the Appalachian Plateau and the Blue Ridge Mountains, 175 miles west of Richmond, the state capital. Roanoke is approximately 100 miles north of the Piedmont Crescent of North Carolina and 80 miles east of the coal fields of West Virginia. (See Figure 1)

For over 85 years Roanoke has served as the major crossroads for traffic moving through the Shenandoah Valley and for travel between the Tidewater and the Midwest. The natural passageway through the mountains to the midwest was instrumental in establishing the Norfolk and Western Railway's path from the ports of Norfolk and Newport News to the coal fields of West Virginia and beyond to the cities of Cincinnati and Columbus, Ohio.⁴

Big Lick, Roanoke's first name, had a population of less than one thousand during the 1870's. By 1884, when the City of Roanoke was chartered, it had a population of more than five thousand.⁵

Roanoke's original dependency was on its iron foundries and railroads. Eventually a diversified economy developed based on manufacturing, trade, transportation, and service operations. Since World War II electronics and plastics industries have developed. There have also been increases in metal fabrication and food processing. The established manufacturers of textiles, furniture, and apparel are in

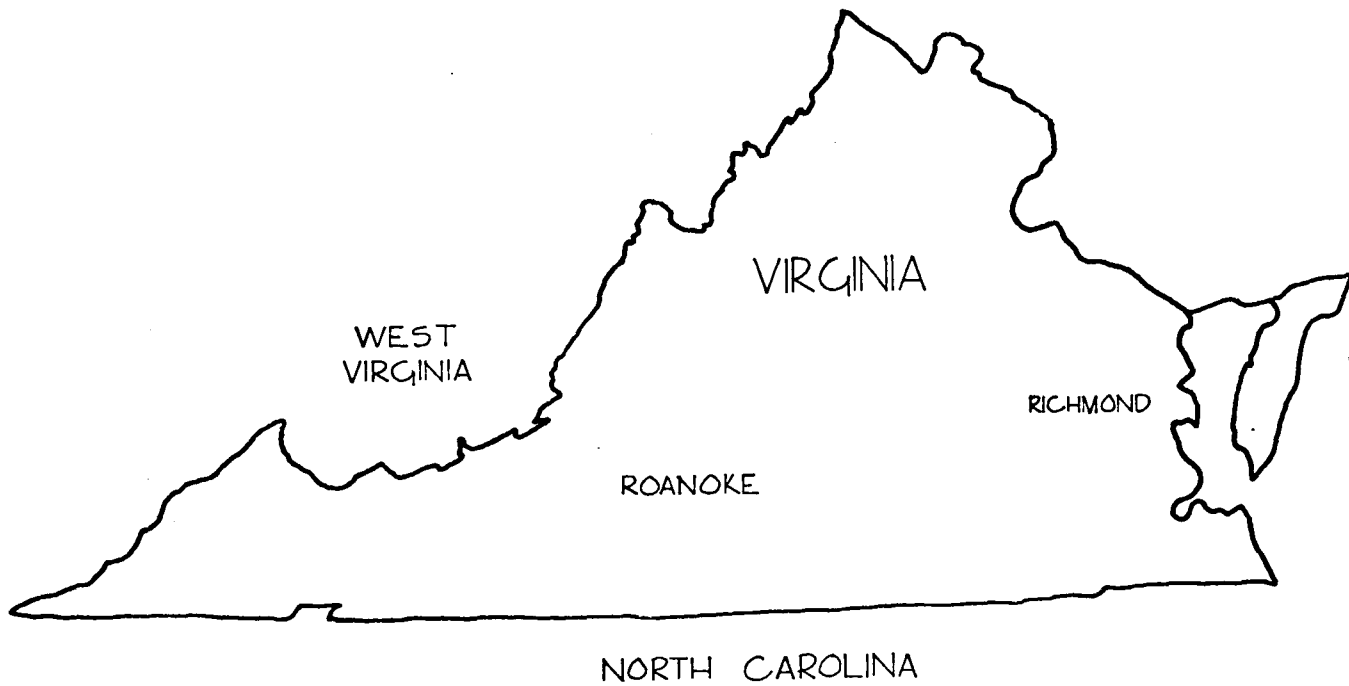


Fig. 1. The location of Roanoke within the state of Virginia.

existence today. Roanoke's present service area of retail trade and other economic activities includes sixteen counties in Virginia.⁶

The Roanoke Market was established in 1874. It took approximately ten years to establish this city serving facility. By the 1880's the growth of Roanoke and its prosperity established the need for a permanent market building. The city's original charter formally authorized the establishment of a municipally operated city market. A bond issue was passed which funded the erection of the Market Building. The site acquired was near the present downtown. By 1886 the building was completed and dedicated. After the turn of the century the Market Building was felt by many to be inadequate. In 1920 the original structure was judged completely inadequate so it was razed in 1921 and replaced by the present building in 1922.⁷ (See Figure 2)

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries squares developed in front of the Market Building that were used for produce marketing. Within the same period grocery stores and other allied businesses grew around the market.⁸ The basic function of the Market became the distribution of food. This function has changed little in ninety years.

The farmers' curb market, small produce, and other food product dealers formed and unified the Market Area. The Market Area's present physical form is dominated by two and three story buildings which were constructed during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. A few one story buildings exist, and one five story building, the McGuire Building, exists, which is prominently located near the heart of activity,



Fig. 2. The location of the Market Area in Roanoke.

facing the City Market Building.⁹ Since 1920 the physical appearance of the Market Area has changed little.

Due to the success of the original Market Area, other markets were attempted throughout the city. The first competitor, which was also a municipally operated facility, was the Randolph Street Market. It was initiated in 1905 but failed by 1907.¹⁰ In 1927 the third municipally financed market, the West End Market, was initiated but it, too, failed. The failure of the West End Market was probably due to the established habit of buying food at the original market. In 1932 the first privately funded produce outlet, the Arcade Market, was built. It was in operation throughout World War II, but declining business after the war forced the Arcade Market to close.

The two decades preceding World War II were the most active decades in the Market's history. During this period the market was dominated by wholesale trade.¹¹ As a result of the heavy trade, a plan for expansion and improvement was proposed in 1941. By 1945 the crowded conditions, which were intolerable in the 1930's, and trends towards decentralization caused a general market decline.¹² In 1967 there was a major refurbishing of the Market Area. Trees were planted in the square, overhead canopies were installed, a fountain was constructed, and the sidewalks and streets were repaved.

Today the Market Area stretches out along First Street, the streets flanking the City Market Building, and the square on Campbell Avenue in front of the City Market Building. This small area is a marked change from the central business district of Roanoke which is only one

block away. The central business district is populated with modern department stores, specialty shops, large office buildings, and banks. These two districts, themselves, provide a juxtaposition of old and new.

The Market Area is active with farmers, grocery men, buyers for hotels and restaurants, and individuals doing their daily marketing. The Market is utilized a great part of the year with peak activity in the late summer and early fall. During the winter months more than fifty per cent of the curb space is occupied. Even during the peak season sufficient space can be found along the streets for unloading.

The Market is in operation six days a week with the day usually beginning at seven, although a majority of farmers arrive earlier to get an advantageous curb location. Many large growers arrive early to sell to retail merchants, itinerant truckers, wholesale dealers, and others buying in bulk quantity.

Throughout the Market's history it has been a complete center for the distribution of food. The range of food commodities has been expanded further with the establishment of supermarkets within or adjacent to the Market Area. In addition to the food distribution business are farm and garden supply outlets and stores selling working apparel supplying a varied mix of functions. Within the area one can also find pawn shops, small restaurants, low cost hotels, second hand stores, and adult book stores. Although the contribution of the latter category to the quality of the area is questionable, these activities are generally accepted as another facet of the Market's character.

One of the assets of the Market is its varied building facades and forms which add to its interest. Both the arrangement and the appearance of the Market's dissimilar buildings reflect the differing functions contained within them. The variety of structures act as an appropriate backdrop for the lively activities taking place within the Market's open space.

Another asset of the Market is the strength of the farmer's curb market. Since the general market decline in 1945, the size of the farmer's curb market has been dwindling. As a result many shops have been partially or totally abandoned but the tradition of the farmer's curb market has managed to survive despite its decaying surroundings. Unfortunately the state of repair or disrepair of the Market Area masks both its social and historical significance. It is questionable how long the farmer's curb market will be able to survive. By allowing the surroundings of the curb market to deteriorate, the curb market may be forced to follow. The longer repair of any kind to the area is delayed, the more likely that the buildings within the Market Area will first be abandoned and then destroyed to make room for new construction, parking lots, and vacant lots. The farmer's curb market will no longer have an area in which to do business.

THESIS PROPOSAL

The strength of this commercial enterprise, the farmer's curb market, should be exploited. This commercial enterprise can be expanded by bringing in attractive, new businesses. The available space within the buildings of the Market Area can be used to revitalize it. A new or renewed focal point will be created for the city.

The farmer's curb market possesses the quality of continuity. It has been in use continually since it was initiated. In this case the "well-worn indigenous element" is the Roanoke Market Area. Both its social and historical significance should be conserved. This is a case in which the whole is greater than the sum of the parts. The collective environment, the Market Area, is of the greatest value. The conservation of the individual building is not the issue. The issue is conservation of the area and with it the unique quality of the farmer's curb market.

To do this, this thesis proposes the rehabilitation of the McGuire Building into a retail center to act as a catalyst to revive the Market Area. If more entrepreneurs and consumers can be brought into the area, the Market will again become a center for social and commercial activity. The McGuire Building itself will be made into a social and commercial entity; a place to shop as well as a place to sit, talk, and visit.

Presently the McGuire Building houses on the first floor farmers' produce stalls, a furniture store, and small restaurants (it is the home

of the famous Roanoke Weiner Stand--a tradition in Roanoke) with the remaining four floors serving as a furniture warehouse. In order to assure the success of the proposed retail center, the length of the business day must be increased. By retaining but updating the produce stalls and restaurants, creating a crafts bazaar, a shopping mall, a restaurant and a discotheque, and office space, the length of the business day will be increased. The farmer's curb market will start the day at seven a.m. and continue until mid-afternoon. The offices, crafts bazaar, and shops will open later in the morning and close early in the evening. The restaurant can begin its day by serving lunch and, later, dinner. The discotheque can open past the dinner hour and remain open until two a.m. Therefore the length of the day has been increased from a day beginning at seven a.m. and ending at six p.m. to a day beginning at seven a.m. and ending at two a.m.

The benefits of this to-be-revitalized commercial area are many. The social benefit is the one most desired. New life will be added to a dying area. The area along with its unique character will be conserved. It will not be restored to its original state (this may cause a repetition of its decline), nor will it be obliterated to make room for new growth. The resources of the area will be used to sustain it. By creating a larger, more expansive commercial enterprise, economic interests will be brought into the area by means of consumers and entrepreneurs. The commercial center will provide an outlet for consumers to spend their money and will create commercial space for entrepreneurs to sell their wares. Through added consumerism the Market Area will be

revived. Revitalization through rehabilitation is a means by which the Market Area need not die.

In trying to save the Market Area the problems that must be addressed are: (1) how to bring money into the area, (2) how to bring more people into the area, and (3) how to accommodate pedestrian and vehicular traffic. The rehabilitation project addresses the first two problems. What must be done also is to resolve the pedestrian and vehicular traffic conflict. By rerouting vehicular traffic, First Street and the two streets flanking the City Market Building can be made pedestrian although the farmers' trucks will be allowed to penetrate. To establish the continuity of these newly created pedestrian blocks, a second story access over Campbell Avenue is proposed. (See Figure 3)

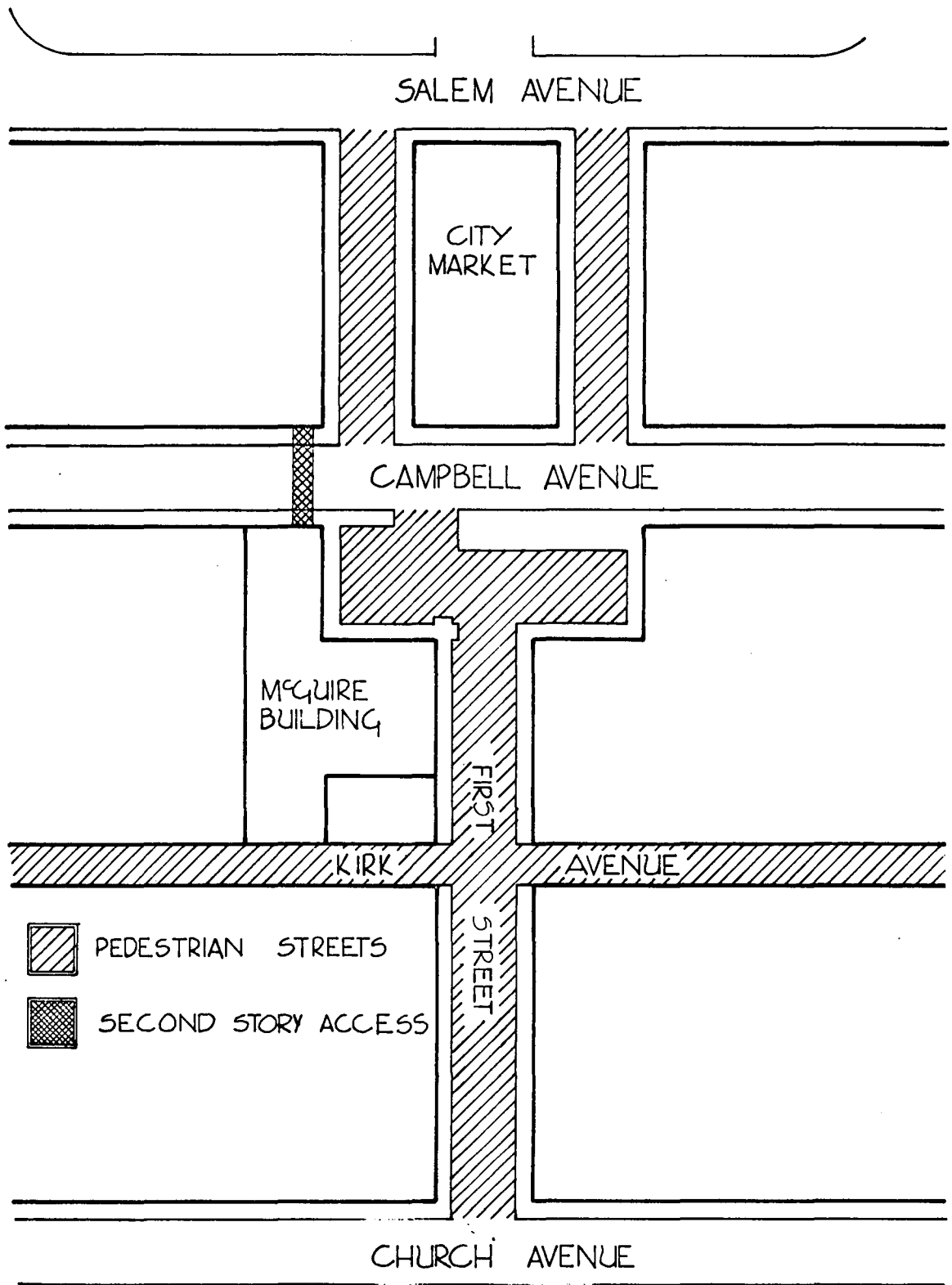
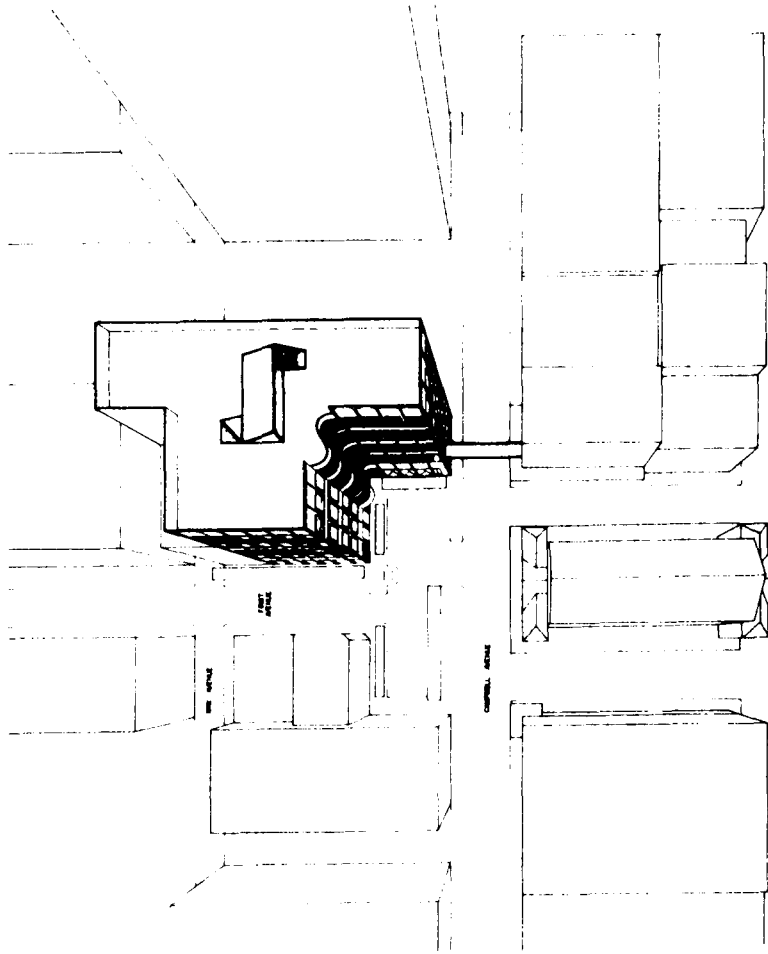


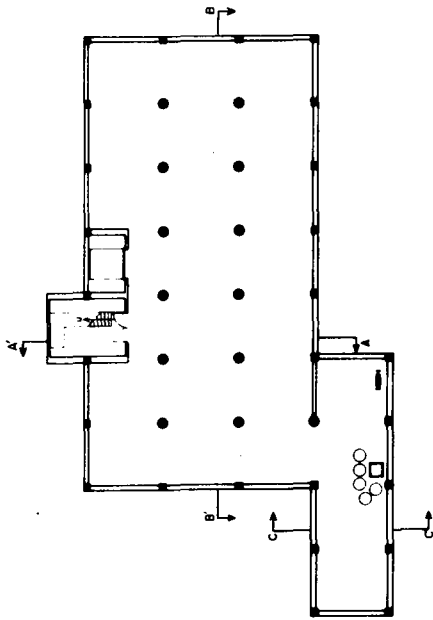
Fig. 3. The proposed pedestrian streets.



MCQUEE BUILDING REHABILITATION

PERSPECTIVE SITE PLAN

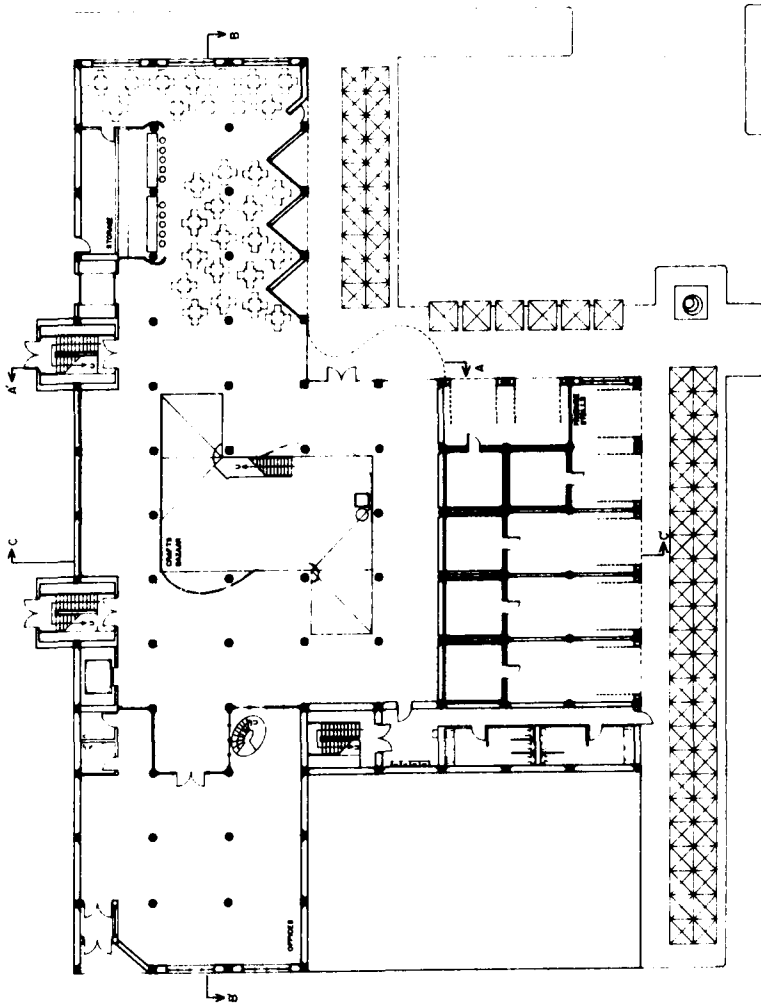
1/4"



IMPROVE BUILDING REHABILITATION

BASEMENT PLAN

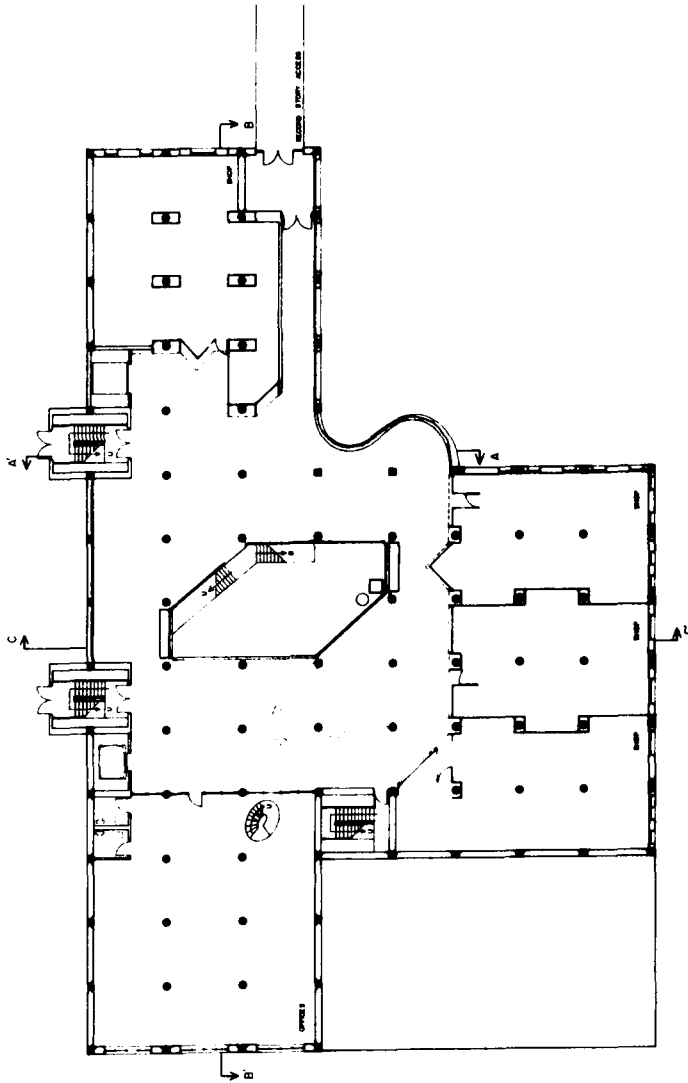




MCQUIRE BUILDING REHABILITATION

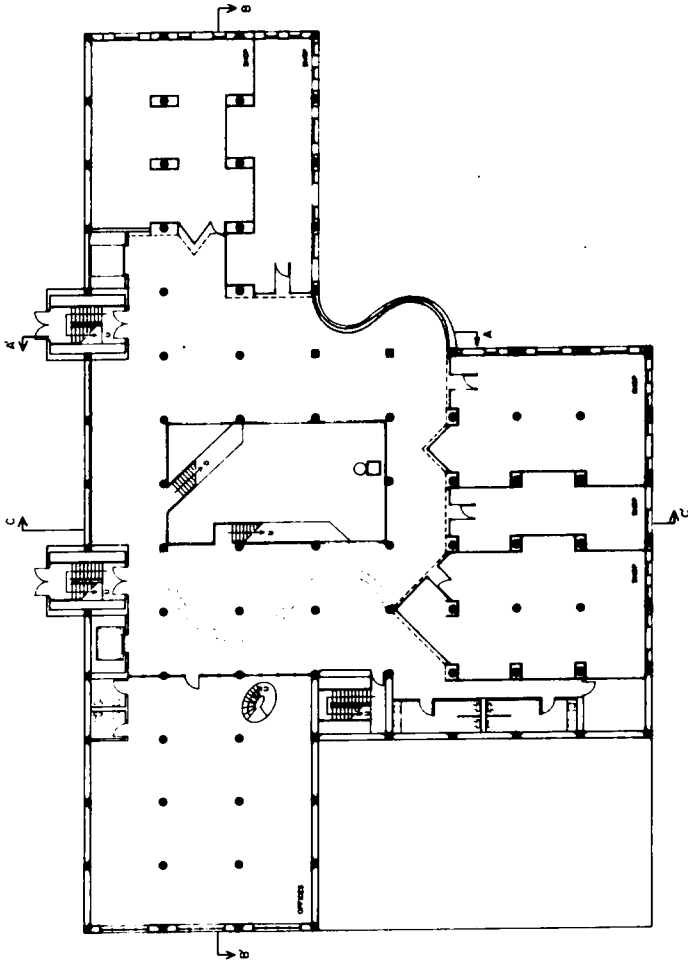
FIRST FLOOR PLAN



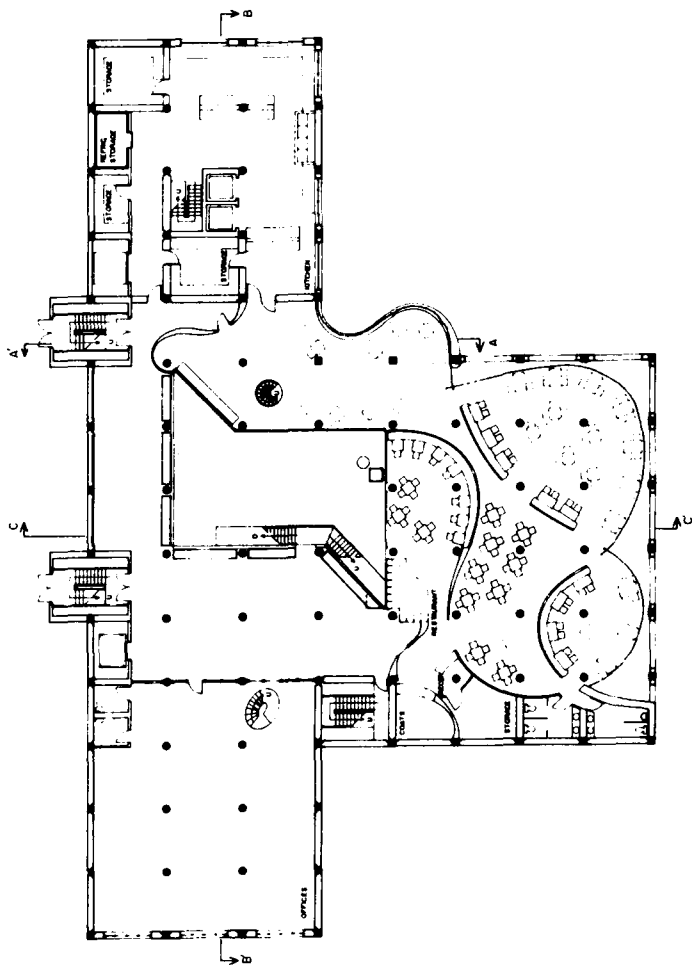


McGUIRE BUILDING REHABILITATION SECOND FLOOR PLAN

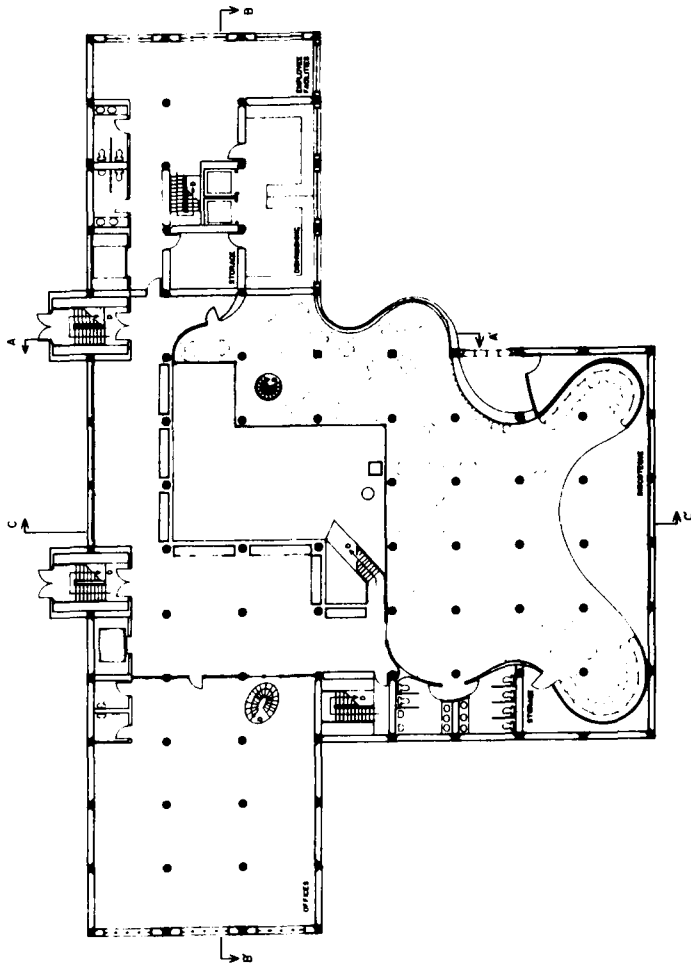
SCALE 1/8" = 1'-0" N



MACQUIRE BUILDING, REHABILITATION
THIRD FLOOR PLAN
SCALE 1/8" = 1'-0"



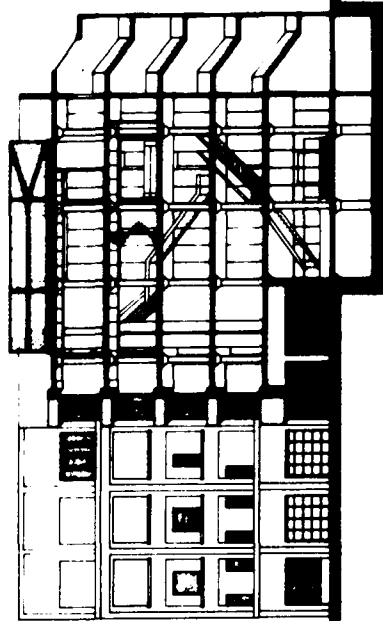
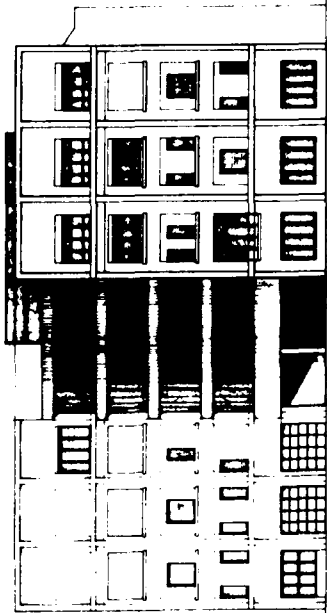
MCQUIRE BUILDING REHABILITATION FOURTH FLOOR PLAN SCALE 1/8" = 1'-0" N



MCQUIRE BUILDING REHABILITATION

FIFTH FLOOR PLAN

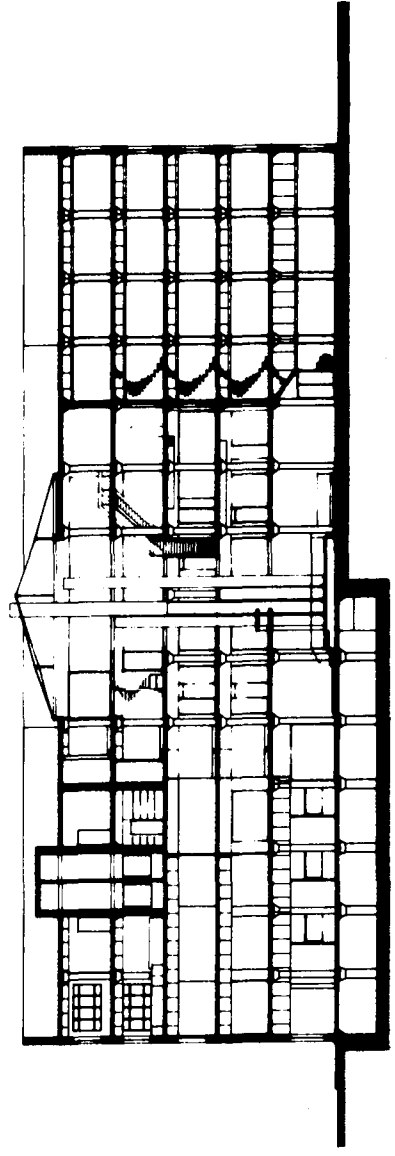
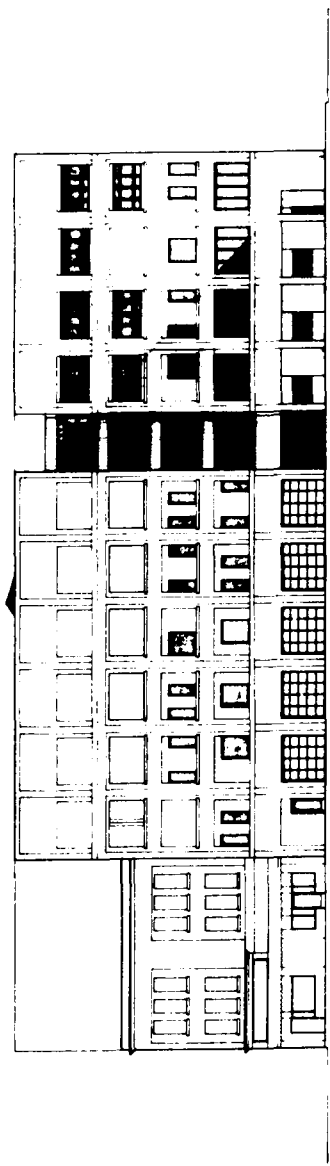




MCQUIRE BUILDING RENOVATION

NORTH ELEVATION / SECTION AA'

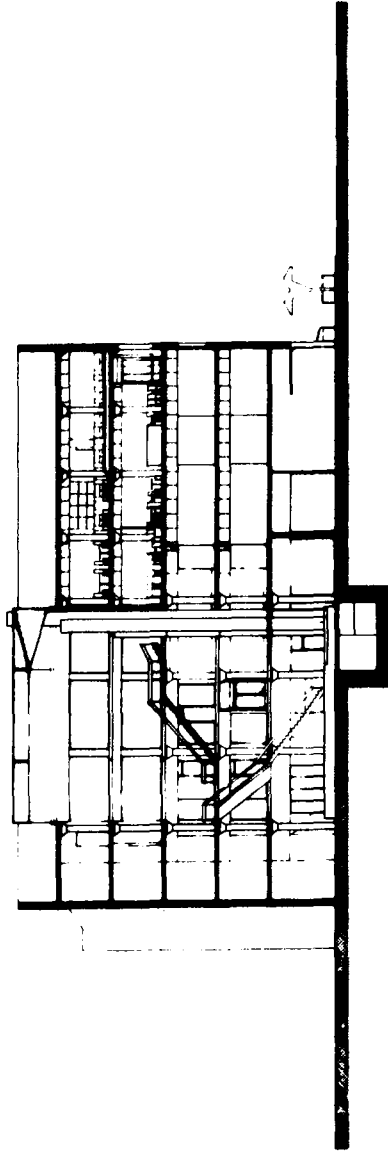
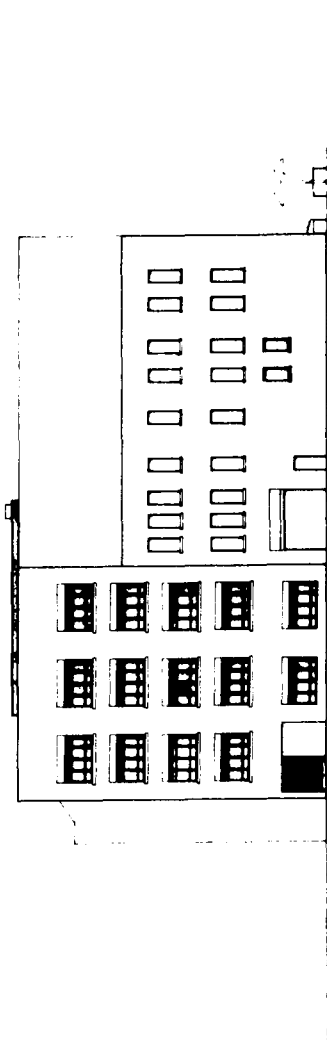
SCALE 1/8" = 1'-0"



MCQUIRE BUILDING, REHABILITATION

EAST ELEVATION / SECTION BB

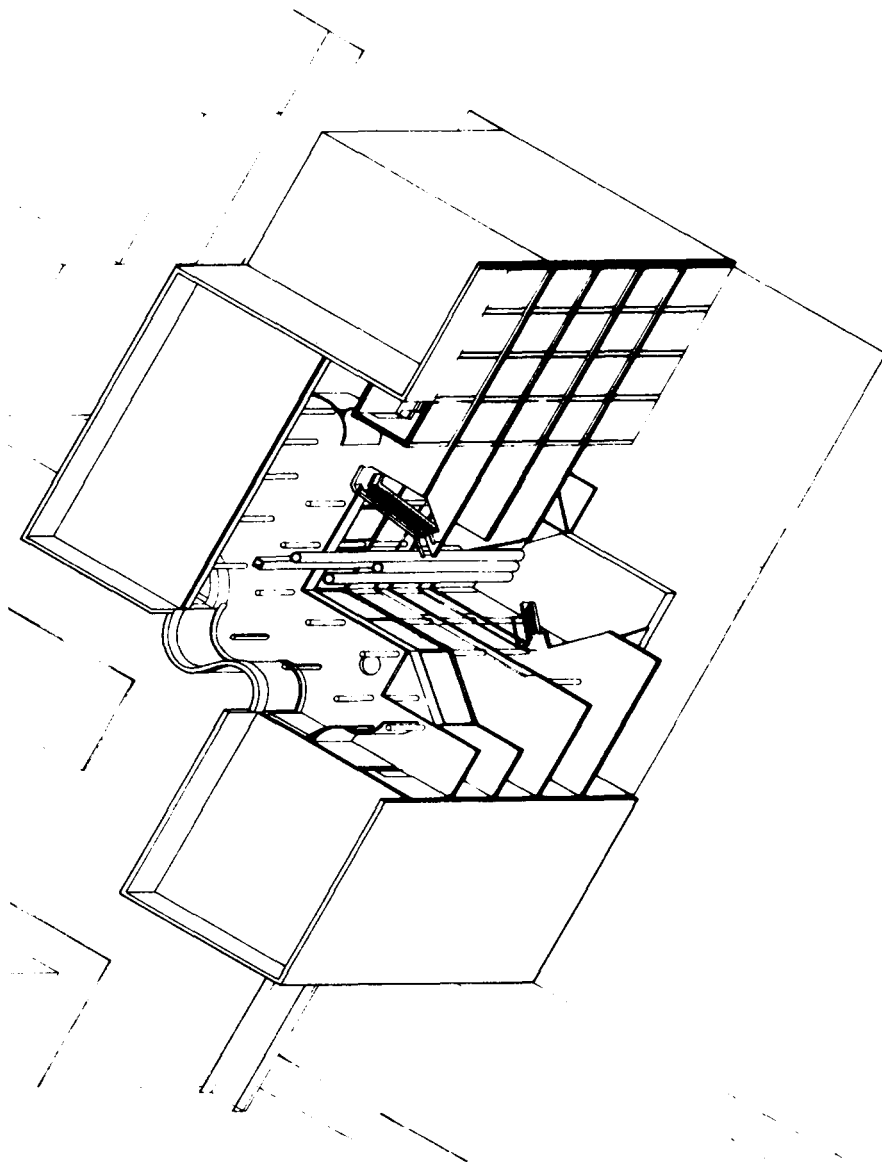
SCALE 1/8" = 1'-0"



MCQUIRE BUILDING REHABILITATION

SOUTH ELEVATION / SECTION CC'

SCALE 1/8" = 1'-0"



INTERIOR AXONOMETRIC

MCQUIRE BUILDING REHABILITATION

CONCLUSION

Realizing that the Market's inability to adapt to accommodate consumer traffic contributed in part to the Market's decline, a scheme for adapting the Market Area to accommodate present and anticipated uses has been proposed. Through the rehabilitation of the McGuire Building, the social landmark, the Roanoke Market Area, will be strengthened and given a more definite physical form. The Market Area will no longer be dissected by vehicular traffic. Instead the flow of pedestrian traffic will serve as a connector to unify the Market Area. The substitution of pedestrian linkages for vehicular partitions will also strengthen the feeling of containment within the Market Area.

The social landmark will be intensified further by the addition of new activities. Both groups, consumers and entrepreneurs will be expanded thus bringing in a more diversified group of people. The importance of this group of people and the individual emphasize a shift in hierarchy. The need for unobstructed pedestrian flow is realized as being essential and that vehicular and pedestrian traffic must be coordinated to avoid conflict.

The Market Area of Roanoke will finally be given an alternative to obsolescence.

FOOTNOTES

¹Lawrence Halprin, RSVP Cycles: Creative Processes in the Human Environment (New York: George Braziller, Inc., 1969), p. 197.

²John J. Costonis, Space Adrift: Saving Urban Landmarks Through the Chicago Plan (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1974), p. 143.

³"Hard Sell," Building Design, October 18, 1974, p. 18.

⁴John J. Morse, The City Market (Roanoke: The Department of City Planning, 1965), p. 26.

⁵Ibid., p. 31.

⁶Ibid., p. 26.

⁷Ibid., p. 31.

⁸Ibid., p. 32.

⁹Ibid., p. 37.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 32.

¹¹Ibid., p. 35.

¹²Ibid., p. 36.

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THE MCGUIRE BUILDING REHABILITATION

by

Elaine Christine Pavia

(ABSTRACT)

The topic of this thesis is the rehabilitation of the McGuire Building in the Market Area of Roanoke, Virginia. The McGuire Building was chosen for rehabilitation to serve as a catalyst to positively influence growth within the Market Area.

Presently the Market Area of Roanoke is a small decaying area housing a farmer's curb market and the City Market Building. It is felt that both the farmer's curb market and the City Market Building possess a unique character. Unfortunately, as the Market Area decays, the size and importance of the farmer's curb market and the City Market Building dwindles. The design proposed in this thesis is a response to the need for the conservation of the Market Area of Roanoke and its unique character.