Massachusetts Avenue Arts District Promenade of Indianapolis, Indiana
An Exploration into Urban Renewal: Revitalization of Urban Remnant Spaces as a Medium for People Places

Comprehensive Design Project
Michelle A. Fraze
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LA 404

by
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A b s t r a c t S t a t e m e n t

A backdrop to the everyday drama of life, urban settings suffer from the complex interweavings of remnant spaces. Defined as areas which are void of function, these “lost” spaces penetrate the cityscape as desecrated wastelands. Characterized and defined by the architecture that abuts them, urban remnant spaces provide an opportunity for innovative design within the city walls. There is a need, therefore, for society to return to its deteriorating urban centers and implement remnant spaces as nodes of creative design. The result, therefore, would benefit the survival of the city as a whole and revive attraction within its boundaries.

The Massachusetts Avenue Arts District, located between East Street and College Avenue, is a component of the Chatham-Arch Historic District. Established in the middle 1850's, Massachusetts Avenue is known as the commercial and retail core of the historic district. Increases in population and changing trends have caused an influx of rental units within the area and, in turn, have negatively impacted the site. Recent renovations and the acknowledgement of the corridor as the Massachusetts Avenue Arts District suggest the possibility of future investments in the area.

It was the intent of this project to explore the growing identity within the Massachusetts Avenue Arts District and, in essence, accelerate the forecasted process of improvement. Centering primarily around improvements to the street, the goal was to create a dialogue between public and artist within the city of Indianapolis. Furthermore, in an attempt to enhance the relationship between interior and exterior environments, the project extended its boundaries into definable remnant spaces and established areas conducive to social activities. It is the hope that the creation of the Massachusetts Avenue Arts District Promenade will serve as a model study applicable to similar areas within the urban environment.
Section I
Imagine a large group of people venturing off into the countryside to enjoy an afternoon of relaxation. They search for the perfect place and finally choose a beautiful wooded site covered with dense carpets of soft grass and fern nestled close to a babbling brook. Lawn chairs, coolers, grills, cans of soft drinks, bottles of beer, paper plates, napkins, and plastic silverware are immediately arranged to create a tiny world of bliss. As the time comes to set down to dinner, quarrels break out concerning who would dine with whom and the small population eventually breaks off into small bitter groups in a vile attempt to alleviate the tension. The leader of the group stands up and looks about the area before him. Immediately he begins to apologize for his mistake, he was overcome with joy when the group had first discovered the area because he thought its beauty to be immeasurable, but now, as his eyes wander about the area, all he sees is a dirty, chaotic mess. His solution to this problem? The group packs up to search for another site comparable, or better, somewhere else (Gruen, 73-74). A remnant space is born.

I find it amazing that in a society which has stressed so heavily the importance of recycling and the fragileness of the environment that such places as remnant spaces exist. The concept of recycling should not just be applied to material elements but to spaces as well. It is obvious that spaces have been treated in the same manner as material items... they have been and, at present, are being "thrown away". This has been especially noticeable in urban settings. A drive through any city would reveal this abandonment of space and the lack of attention paid to it. Why has this been allowed? There are an endless array of opportunities for urban spaces. Not only is their location in the heart of the city considered ideal, but their character is of special interest as well. Often, they exist as subspaces within larger spaces which, therefore, constrain them to a small, human scale. Commonly, they are enclosed landscapes defined by the spatial structure of the cityscape and characterized by the architecture adjacent to them. They become a series of peninsulas jutting out into the urban environment void of function which serve to enhance the deteriorating image of the city.

Urban areas are, undoubtedly, automobile-oriented and exhibit a weak relationship with the pedestrian. Where does the pedestrian fit in? Where, if any, are the people places in urban spaces? Unfortunately, many pedestrian-oriented places do not exist, as of yet, in urban areas. This lack of pedestrian scale environments sparked an interest to focus upon the improvement of urban space and, with the inevitable existence of remnant spaces, provided an opportunity which could be formulated into a pedestrian system linking designed remnant spaces together in an urban greenway corridor. An overall outcome would be the creation of an attraction within the city and a revitalization of life to urbanized areas.
Problem Definition

The concept of flight and blight appears to be a common trend of present day society. We seem to have this unquestionable freedom of choice and confidence in unlimited resources, therefore, we move about wherever we desire whenever we deem it necessary. This is a phenomenon especially apparent in urban areas. The massive sprawl associated with urbanization, coupled with the dependence upon automobiles as the primary means of transportation, encourages an accepted philosophy emphasizing the flight and blight theory hypothesized by Victor Gruen. As Gruen states, “flight causes blight, and blight in turn causes new flight” (76). Abandonment has commonly been practiced and has been the major factor contributing to the creation of remnant spaces... the blight left after flight. Remnant spaces have developed over time through the growth and changed experienced by the city. Defined by the architecture abutting them and characterized by the dependence upon the automobile, these areas exhibit a lack of positive function, or suffer from an overall loss of purpose. This is indicative of the need to reassess people places in the urban spaces of Indianapolis and, instead of “throwing away”, retrofit those identified as remnant spaces to complement their respective environments.

The Problem

Society exhibits an unquestionable freedom in relation to the availability of land within the urban environment. Abandonment has caused the desecration of several areas and it has become apparent that few vacant spaces exist. Viable areas, therefore, must be found within the remnants of the city.
Section II
"Natural" Cities

"A City of a kind has been made... the tidy townships, the suburbs that climb hill-slopes towards the sun, and the honeycomb of factory and office building where each man has his appointed job under the eye of the clock - these are the works of the City, finite, exact, and reasonable, designed for the fulfillment of limited aims. But alongside the human City, indifferent or even hostile, remains the Wilderness, whose time is still that of the sixth day of creation and whose works belong to the power that created her.... The City is never truly self-sufficient for it possesses only the power to use and organize a world which it has not created" (Nature..., James Baxter, Manning, 3). As Owen Manning suggests, people choose to live in the city regardless of its exclusion of nature. He also comments, in regards to designing for nature, that society needs to implement a "ready acceptance for change as a part of the designed environment" (9). In conclusion, he expresses the need to allow more naturalness to penetrate within the boundaries of the built environment (14).

"...Nature is thought of as an externality, set apart from human affairs, which can only be studied in non-urban settings" (Hough, 41). Michael Hough stresses the need to understand the interdependence of life systems and the obligation to take a holistic approach to design (41). Unfortunately, however, there is a lack of concern for the environment in which most people live and the "circle of life" has not become a major consideration as of yet (41). Hough suggests that parks should be productive as well as recreational and that recent studies have shown that community gardens or urban farms create a sense of pride and cohesion within neighborhoods (43). These concepts, if implemented on a larger scale, could greatly enhance the sociability of spaces within urban settings.

People Places

According to Clare Cooper Marcus, the function of buildings attract people to their adjacent spaces. As a people generator, the buildings, therefore, influence the overall appearance of the spaces and dictate their functions (9). Cooper Marcus defines a plaza as a place in its own right and not a space for transportation. Mostly hardscape with small definitions of plants, plazas should encourage impromptu encounters with students, works of art, street entertainers, etc. (143). The most successful spaces are those which create a sense of belonging and serve as a home base to certain populations (144). Cooper Marcus explores a study developed by William H. Whyte which indicates a 30% increase in urban plaza use between 1972 and 1973. The following year expressed an additional 20% increase in use (9). Increases in psychological
reactions can be documented as well... there are more public displays of affection, more smiling and gossiping, and more street entertainment (9-10). Another study conducted in Copenhagen explores the number of people using pedestrian space. As the total area of viable pedestrian space tripled between 1968 and 1986, the number of people using the space complemented this shift without the aid of a substantial population increase (10).

Alicia Rodriguez explores Dudley Town Common, an open space within the community of Roxbury, Massachusetts, as a model case for successfully creating places from urban remnants (49). Surrounded by eight nationalities, the site for Dudley Town Common (figure 3-5) was viable historically and culturally. A community driven project, the landscape architects designed two parks which celebrated the theme of cultural diversity. One park was erected from a derelict lot and the other from a parking lot (50). Dudley Town Common has served as a source of town revitalization and stands as a symbol of neighborhood unity (53).

As David Sucher reflects, cities are intended to bring people together (25). “The possibility of an accidental meeting is what makes the city a fertile place” (25). This can be accomplished through a variety of means such as seating, food, drink, artwork as a conversation piece, and diverse forms of entertainment (25-30). Artwork has found its place within urban settings and, oftentimes, “contributes to the process of place-making” (157).

Places can be works of art that link us to our vital past history, according to Mike Lipske (8). Art expresses community ideals and aspirations and can be implemented through sculpture, gardens, open space, old and new buildings, and decorative arts (8). People are unhappy with the “feel” of cities and, as Lipske hypothesizes, this is due to the shortage of built beauty (13). Grady Clay emphasizes the importance of “sense of place”, or genius loci. Lipske complements by suggesting function as a creator of “place.” (16). In conclusion, places as art can enhance the built environment and encourage further improvements within the urban infrastructure (21).

Cities

Lawrence Halprin comments that the city is a rhythmic structure defined by its choreography (9). Small spaces, such as remnant places, are incidents within the heart of the city and provide a myriad of opportunities for urban areas. Potentially, they could provide a focus for urban neighborhoods by establishing quality and character to the region (27). A garden between walls becomes a microcosm which, in essence, exists as a private world (37). “A series of interrelations between man-made and natural forms seen at close range and intimately experienced... a complete universe in microcosm (37). These are the concepts which need to be implemented to beautify and enhance the urban experience.

Victor Gruen claims that architecture is primarily concerned with shaping the man-
made or built environment (156). The natural environment is often neglected and, in many cases, is not a consideration in the design phase. The blight discussed in the introduction is borne from economic, racial, and social prejudices and serves as an obstacle for creative urban designs.

According to Grady Clay, the architect is able to express the spirit of place within the realm of design (57-58). Buildings make the genius loci, or spirit of place, concrete. Clay emphasizes that it is important for individuals to have a sense of belonging to a place and that "sense of place" is a sociological invention based upon social interactions (62).

De-architecture, as formulated by James Wines, is a theory which questions the nature and practice of architecture in cityscapes (116). While exploring the outscaled congestion which has presently infected urban areas, it involves perceptions of buildings and their potential effects upon the environment. "Art, not design, is the supreme mission of a building" (119). Architecture shelters the human drama of everyday life and expresses the complexities of life, therefore, it should communicate those basic concepts which comprise life in the city (120).

Cliff Moughtin stresses that architecture dictates the character of spaces and that cities are representative of a dynamic of cultural change (13). Two architectural theories define the nature of cities. The first describes the city as an open landscape with buildings introduced as three-dimensional sculptures. The buildings are the positive solid and space serves as the general background. The second concept explains public space as a sculpture from original material. Space is considered to be the three-dimensional positive with the two-dimensional buildings acting as its frame (63).

Urban Remnant Spaces

Kate Drueke defines lost space, known also as urban remnants, as an area which is not being used to its fullest potential (1). Examples include the edges of freeways, surface parking lots, industrial zones, alleys, vacant lots, and abandoned waterfronts (Trancile, 3). Lost space has developed over time through the growth and change of the city (Drueke, 11). Several factors such as architecture, the automobile, abandonment, privatization, and urban renewal contribute to its existence (11-14). A concept which is important to stress is that lost space found within the urban environment exists as a viable opportunity for a Landscape Architect to implement innovative designs (14).

Alleys, which serve as prime examples of remnant spaces, have been influential on the history of urban centers as Grady Clay explores. Commonly serving as homes to individuals displaced by society, they are placed on the downward level of the social ladder (Alleys, 7). "The American residential alley has been the academic, geographic, and social outcast of the built
environment for at least a half-century" (7). Alleys serve a viable purpose of access to the rear of building and, at present, reinforce the structure of cities as places of abandonment (11). Although alleys have often been thought of as places of outcast, they offer many opportunities because of their public nature (14).

figure 7 — "patio & alley beside the Metro"
"Landscape design can and should be responsible toward a community and the environment. In a meaningful, albeit fragmentary, way it can help to create an environment that is healthy and functional within a larger framework of natural systems, and it can help us to understand our environment through the use of traditional artistic strategies that have to do with meaning and expression. Landscape architecture is not, however, the activity that will save the planet or society from ourselves" (Olin, 65).

It is the intent of this project to reclaim the sense of identity which our society has erased within its urban environments. It is to stand as a reminder to society that we must look back on our past in order to create a more positive future.
Section III
Known as the Massachusetts Avenue Arts District, the site selected for the comprehensive design project is located within the heart of downtown Indianapolis slightly northeast of the capitol. Bordered on the north and south by St. Clair and North Street, and the west and east by East Street and College Avenue, the site centers around the diagonal created by Massachusetts Avenue (figure 9). It encompasses an entire city block and is a component of the Chatham-Arch Historic District. The site occupies the 600 and 700 block of Massachusetts Avenue and is punctuated north to south by Park Avenue and Walnut Street east to west. The diagonal corridor serves as home to eclectic art galleries, a handful of architectural firms, a variety of dinner theaters, a few creative gift stores, and a small coffee house.

After undergoing much renovation and development in recent years, the architecture creates the character of the area and the resultant remnant spaces. As stated earlier, the area is known as an arts district and, therefore, already has an established identity within the downtown area. Most of the buildings which inhabit the site are, at maximum, three to four levels high. Primarily constructed of brick, the building facades are punctuated by detailed arching windows and, a few, are decorated by simplistic awnings. The sidewalk passage is separated from the street by fairly mature trees and highlighted by ornamental lighting features. Parking is available on the street, aligned perpendicular to the sidewalk, and in small lots adjacent to the street.

Although the setting in which the remnant spaces exist is interesting enough in itself, the surrounding context enhances the character of the area. Dominated to the southwest by a myriad of skyscrapers, the Murat Shrine and the Athenaeum are identifiable in the foreground. The northeastern viewshed, however, is dominated by the Interstates of 70 and 465. Enveloped entirely by the Chatham-Arch Historic District and located near historic Lockerbie Square, the site offers many opportunities for creative design.
Section IV
Programmatic Requirements

Project Goals
Several goals were established to define the general parameters of the comprehensive design project:

1. Increase the vitality of the city by reversing the existing imagery presently associated with urban spaces and create a positive one.
   A. Bridge the gap between cultures and decrease social segregation through the creation of diverse areas conducive to economic prosperity and growth.
   B. Incorporate sculptural interventions to increase the understanding and appreciation of cultural diversity.
   C. Create an attraction on a daily and year round basis.

2. Enhance the "sense of identity" within urban areas by creating functional entities of remnant spaces as a means of attraction to the city.
   A. Distract the presence of illegal activities through the creation of areas designated for a specific function and user group.

3. Increase the amount of open space to balance with the built environment and serve as a means of escape within urban boundaries.
   A. Emphasize prominent cultures and traditions through the incorporation of plazas, courtyards, and "pocket" parks.
   B. Unify remnant spaces as an urban greenway system.

4. Enhance remnant spaces as viable ingredients and integral components of the cityscape.
   A. Employ the awkward boundaries and characteristics of remnant spaces as opportunities rather than constraints.
   B. Implement innovative designs as models for other remnant spaces

5. Create functions and destination places which fuse with their site.
   A. Relate to the historical and cultural past through the design of the remnant spaces.

*figure 10 - "existing pedestrian corridor"
Site Issues
The following issues were addressed within the realm of the comprehensive design project:
1. Insufficient concern for the deteriorating image of downtown Indianapolis.
2. Lack of an attraction to the various components of the downtown Indianapolis “experience”.
3. Deficiency of pedestrian scale environments which balance with the needs of the automobile within the downtown area.
4. Lack of innovative design collaboration between architect, landscape architect, and artist within the downtown.
5. Lack of correlation to the social and cultural foundations of the city of Indianapolis.
6. Lack of a connection between the interior and exterior environments along Massachusetts Avenue.

Client
The client identified for the comprehensive design project consisted of the Massachusetts Avenue Business Association, the Riley Area Revitalization Program, and the Chatham-Arch Historic District. Identified as secondary clients, the citizens of Marion County were considered during the design process as well.
Client Goals
Several goals were established by the participating clients and were as follows:
1. Create an area executed primarily for the benefit of the pedestrian.
   A. Incorporate wide sidewalks.
2. Increase the dialogue between the public and artist in the city of Indianapolis.
   A. Incorporate interactive sculptural elements.
   B. Allow for both permanent and temporary displays of artwork by local artists.
3. Enhance the “sense of identity” along the corridor of Massachusetts Avenue.
   A. Create connections to the past heritage of the area through sculptural elements.
   B. Embody the spirit of the area by allowing for sociable space within the outdoor environment.
4. Increase the relation between interior and exterior environments along Massachusetts Avenue.
   A. Incorporate artwork found within gallery spaces into “pocket” plaza areas.
   B. Allow for courtyard and “pocket” plaza areas to be used for dining and socializing.
5. Establish a network of social experiences which punctuate the corridor along Massachusetts Avenue.
   A. Transform areas previously used as alleys into “pocket” plazas.
**Proposed Features**

**Promenade Development**

The promenade was to inhabit the entire corridor along Massachusetts Avenue and be the medium for installation festivals sponsored by the art galleries located nearby.

1. Incorporate walkways which have an 8 foot minimum width.
   A. Involve a variety of paving patterns, bollards, and lighting features to delineate functions and spaces along the promenade.
   B. Construct paved surfaces out of variously colored materials such as brick, granite, and concrete.
   C. Include benches and lighting features reminiscent of the vital heritage along Massachusetts Avenue.

2. Allow for Massachusetts Avenue to host special events which extend the promenade area to a maximum width of 28 feet and remove on-street parking.
   A. Incorporate an access route at a minimum width of 24 feet along the corridor.
"Pocket" Parks
The "pocket" parks were to inhabit those areas defined as remnant spaces and serve as an extension of the architecture along Massachusetts Avenue.

1. Incorporate a network of "pocket" parks along Massachusetts Avenue which are behind the scenes and punctuate the linear plaza at various intervals.
   A. Each "pocket" park is to inhabit a space no larger than 1,500 square feet.
      1. Include hardscape areas through a variety of paving patterns individual to the area along Massachusetts Avenue.
         a. Construct paved surfaces out of variously colored materials such as brick, granite, and concrete.
   2. Include softscape areas through a variety of shade and ornamental trees, medium growth shrubbery, perennials and groundcovers, and turf areas.
   3. Include benches and lighting features reminiscent of the vital heritage of Massachusetts Avenue.
   4. Include permanent interactive sculptural elements to inhabit the most visually dominant of the "pocket" parks.
      A. Involve an interplay of water and light in the sculptural features.
      B. Construct sculptural elements from materials found within the existing architecture along with natural elements such as stone and earth and modern materials such as glass and various metals.

Existing Structures
The existing structures and businesses were to remain in their present location and to continue rendering the same services.

1. Retrofit existing buildings to complement the linear plaza concept.
   A. Penetrate the plaza area with dining and socializing courtyards of no larger than 100 square feet.
   B. Renovate all abandoned facilities to complement the function of the existing businesses along Massachusetts Avenue.
   C. Incorporate apartment-style lofts on the upper two or three levels of the businesses along the corridor of Massachusetts Avenue.
Circulation & Parking
The existing circulation pattern was to be delineated more effectively.
1. Maintain the existing on street parking system.
   A. Adapt parking orientation for convenience during busy periods.
2. Incorporate fountain islands at either end of Massachusetts Avenue as a means to slow traffic and identify the corridor as a unique ingredient of the Indianapolis experience.
3. Maintain portions of off-street parking areas.
   A. Transform approximately 25-30\% of the parking areas into "pocket" plazas.

Theme
Massachusetts Avenue is known for its devotion to the visual and performance arts. It was the intent of this project to expand upon this already established theme and extend it into the promenade and open space areas.

1. Incorporate the present theme within the landscape surrounding Massachusetts Avenue.
   A. Allow for temporary and permanent exhibits of artwork within the "pocket" parks and along the plaza corridor.
   B. Allow for spontaneous entertainment and plan for a variety of sponsored performances within the "pocket" parks and along the plaza corridor.
2. Incorporate the theme as a means of creating a holistic entity along the corridor of Massachusetts Avenue.
3. Incorporate elements which create an area conducive to evening and seasonal celebrations.
   A. Include benches and lighting features reminiscent of the vital heritage of Massachusetts Avenue.
Assumptions
The following assumptions were accepted to act as a guide throughout the duration of the comprehensive design project:

1. It is not the responsibility of the designer to solve the universal problem as indicated in the problem definition.
2. Adequate budget requirements are obtainable and are able to cover the costs which the project ensues.
3. The surrounding population residing in the Chatham-Arch Historic District is agreeable to any changes indicated on the final master plan and involved whenever feasible in final design decision-making.
4. Remnant spaces are identifiable and able to be utilized in any manner deemed necessary by the designer to fulfill the goals of the project.
5. It is not the responsibility of the designer to solve the problems of spatial structure within cityscapes.
6. Designs focusing upon social and cultural issues are to express positive characteristics of diversity and not racist or sexist attitudes.
7. Remnant spaces chosen for the area of study are to be readily available throughout the duration of the project.
8. The proposed development of the Indianapolis Metropolitan Professional Firefighter’s Union is to be complete at the onset of the comprehensive design project.

Users
The users identified for the area along Massachusetts Avenue primarily consisted of the contextual residents within the Chatham-Arch Historic District, Lockerbie Square, and surrounding apartment towers, the lunch hour clientele, theater patrons, local artists and performers, and evening socialites. Patrons of other events and festivals hosted in Indianapolis, visitors to the city, and the citizens of Marion County were identified as a secondary user group.
Section V
Design Procedure

Site Location

The Massachusetts Avenue Arts District is located in the state of Indiana within the capitol of Indianapolis. Found within Center Township of Marion County, Massachusetts Avenue is a viable ingredient of the Chatham-Arch Historic District (figure 9). At a more site specific level, Massachusetts Avenue serves as the primary retail center for the district and is, therefore, identified as the core commercial zone. The commercial zone presently occupies those areas adjacent to the corridor of Massachusetts Avenue and those of prime visual dominance.

Historical Character

The area now known as Chatham-Arch dates back to the founding of the city of Indianapolis (Preservation Plan, 9). Four square miles of federal land was donated by the United States government in 1820-21 for the development of the new capital of Indiana, transferred from Corydon. Known as "The Donation," surveyors and planners Alexander Ralston and Elias Pym Fordham laid out the “Mile Square" which soon became known as the city of Indianapolis (figure 10). The city was laid out according to a rectilinear grid based upon 90 foot wide streets and focused upon a circular meeting area. Four diagonals, each ending a block short of the Circle, were added to complete the design (Geib, 14). The “Mile Square” was then enclosed by North, South, East, and West streets. Massachusetts Avenue, one of the original diagonals from the 1821 plat and the designated area of study, is located just northeast of the “Mile Square" west of East Street and south of North Street. Divided into four-acre “outlots," the remaining parcels of land were sold for the purpose of farming.

The first plat outside of the “Mile Square" and the beginning of the Chatham-Arch area, was filed by John Wood, Sr. in 1834. “Wood's Subdivision," which extended from New Jersey Street on the west to College Avenue on the east and north of North Street, was intended for future residential development (Preservation Plan, 9). The Internal Improvements Act was passed in January of 1836 and advocated the construction of an extensive canal system which would connect Indianapolis to surrounding areas (figure 20). It is assumed that Wood filed his plat in anticipation of this “canal boom". The state of Indiana fell into bankruptcy in 1839-40 and the completion of the canal system was terminated. “Wood's Subdivision" continued as farmland for another decade.
figure 10 ~ "1821 plat for the city of Indianapolis"

figure 20 ~ "1856 map of Indianapolis canals & railroads"
Although John Wood did not contribute residential development to the area, he did associate the "Chatham" title to the area. The origin of the word is uncertain but it is known in England as the name of a city. Chatham Square was officially titled by John Wood as well but did not undergo any formal design until the 1900's.

The completion of the Madison and Indianapolis Railroad spurred further development in the Chatham-Arch area in 1847 (figure 21). The boom of the railroads began in earnest in 1849 as William Young and Oliver Smith, president of the Indianapolis and Bellefontaine Railroad Company, purchased land with the intention of erecting a passenger and freight depot (Preservation Plan, 11). Extending east and west from present College to Park Avenues, the plat identified a centralized, five acre depot grounds. Constructed in 1851, the "brick depot and shops" were soon transplanted to the Union Passenger Depot. Sold to Joseph Farnsworth, the old depot land operated as a "rail car factory" between 1853 and 1859. Used as an army stable by the United States government during the Civil War and eventually destroyed by fire in 1865, the old depot grounds were replatted as a residential subdivision by H. R. Allen in 1871. Although the earliest homes were erected in "Wood's Subdivision", the narrow lots specified in "Young's Subdivision" remained during this period of turmoil and attracted the development of cottage homes in the 1860's and 1870's (Preservation Plan, 12). Young contributed to the name of Chatham-Arch as well by identifying one of the thoroughfares as Arch Street (Preservation Plan, 11).

Massachusetts Avenue developed in 1831 and served as an attraction to settlers before the Civil War (Preservation Plan, 12). Its history of commercial/retail services came into existence in 1855 when Henry Berettsmann constructed a small grocery store. Since Massachusetts Avenue was the most direct access to the downtown by those living in the northeast portion of "The Donation", a streetcar line was important to aid in the growth of commerce (Preservation Plan, 20). Mule cars were first employed in 1871 and underwent "electrification" in 1890 (figure 22). The electric streetcar disappeared at the advent of the automobile in 1953.

The outbreak of the Civil War in 1861 created an increase in population, commerce, and industry to Indianapolis. Workers' cottages filled the narrow lots in Young's Subdivision and Massachusetts Avenue became the location for neighborhood retail manufacturers (figure 29). Merchants occupied the street level of the buildings and the upper levels were designated as living quarters for the business people or sleeping rooms for boarders (Preservation Plan, 15). The McBride Block, now known as Chatham Place, was erected in 1875 and overlooks the area previously identified as Chatham Square.

The boom incurred after the Civil War lasted approximately ten years and the economy once again began to fail. The discovery of natural gas in 1886, however, stimulated a rebirth in
the economy. Once again manufacturing and commercial enterprises increased in Indianapolis as the population skyrocketed. This brought about a period of change for the Chatham-Arch area. Many dwellings were transformed into rental units and the development of apartments and flats encompassed the area (Preservation Plan, 18). The 1890’s sparked a transformation for Massachusetts Avenue as well as it finally merged into an “urban wall” of commercial and retail establishments.

In the 1900’s, civic improvements became important elements contributing to the sense of pride shared by the citizens of Indianapolis (Preservation Plan, 21). The Chatham-Arch area enjoyed such an improvement in the Nathan Morris Memorial Fountain. Erected in the memory of an Indianapolis attorney who was tragically killed in a 1903 fire, the fountain served to refresh both pedestrians and horses. Damage inflicted due to the advent of the automobile resulted in the removal of the fountain by the City of Indianapolis in the mid-1950’s.

Since 1920, the Chatham-Arch area has experienced severe decline. The construction of the Indiana National Bank Tower closed the southern portion of Massachusetts Avenue opening onto Ohio Street and, in a sense, disconnected it from the downtown area (Indianapolis Architecture, 37). The trend toward rental properties and the industrialization experienced to the south by the Real Silk Hosiery Mills complex contributes to this deterioration process. Demolished and dilapidated housing units, abandoned buildings, and vacant parking lots plagued the site. Massachusetts Avenue began to show improvement, however, in the 1980’s (Carter, 13). Gallery owners were attracted to the area because of the low rent. The presence of the galleries has helped to revitalize the area and, in turn, the restaurants have adapted to serve the clientele attracted to the area. Historic buildings have undergone handsome rehabilitation efforts and several upper story living quarters are being renovated for future occupation. The city of Indianapolis, in recognition of the improvements, designated the area along Massachusetts Avenue from New York Street to College Avenue as the Massachusetts Avenue Arts District. Although improvements have yet to be made, Massachusetts Avenue possesses a unique identity as the city’s arts district.
Site Description

Massachusetts Avenue arose as a commercial and retail corridor in the 1860's and, since, has experienced a period of decline. The city of Indianapolis identified the area along Massachusetts Avenue from New York Street to College Avenue as the Massachusetts Avenue Arts District in the 1980's. Now known for its atmosphere of entertainment, many of the businesses along the corridor focus upon visual and performance arts. Although several buildings are vacant, rehabilitation efforts have helped revitalize and, once again, attract businesses to the area. At present, the area thrives upon its authentic and ethnic restaurants, design firms, dinner theatres, and art galleries.

Parking bays line the corridor as arching building facades and windows address the street. Many of the buildings along the avenue are historic in nature, such as the “Argyle” and McBride Block (Chatham Place) to name a few (figures 8 & 13). New structures, such as the Dean Johnson Gallery and Three S Reproductions, relate the historic character relative to the site through their architectural design. A recent development, erected in 1996, is devoted to the Fallen Firefighter’s Memorial and renovation of the Indianapolis Metropolitan Professional Firefighter’s Union (figure 18). Visually prominent upon the site are the converted buildings of the Real Silk Hosiery Mills complex and belltower of the First United Brethren Church (figures 14 & 15).
Site Analysis

The following diagrams represent an analytical study completed for the corridor of Massachusetts Avenue (figures 27-33). Each diagram explored an individual which required understanding prior the beginning of the design process. The studies included are figure/ground, vehicular patterns, pedestrian patterns, exterior views, hardscape areas, architectural character, and open/green space potential. These studies helped to identify the remnant spaces upon site and, in turn, dictated the unique design opportunities found within each.

figure 28: "worker's cottages in residential Chatham-Arch"
This study explores the relationship between building and ground plane. As the graphic represents, most of the space on the site is occupied by building mass with few areas of open space. Also noticeable are the various abandoned facilities sparsely located around the site.

"figure/ground study"
The graphic analysis portrays the vehicular circulation patterns currently present on site. The most prominent mass of traffic flows along College Avenue and East Street. Massachusetts Avenue is used primarily as a collector street with a relatively low volume of traffic. Other streets, which are primarily residential, serve to focus attention to the Chatham Square area.

Scale 1" = 150'

Figure 28 ~ "vehicular patterns"
Pedestrian Patterns

The high volume pedestrian flow is found along the commercial and retail area of Massachusetts Avenue. The medium flow areas, which are found along the residential streets, are commonly utilized as gateways to the commercial corridor of Massachusetts Avenue. Again, as shown in the vehicular pattern diagram, attention is focused upon the Chatham Square area.

figure 20 ~ "pedestrian patterns"
The view analysis documents four areas of interest within the Massachusetts Avenue corridor. Two major views are located off-site and consist of the downtown Indianapolis view to the southwest and the negative view of Interstate 65 & 70 located northeast. As for on-site views, the remnants of the Real Silk Hosiery Plant and First United Brethren Church add to the character of the area.

**Scale 1" = 150'**

*figure 30 - "exterior views study"*
Hardscape Areas

- pedestrian circulation areas
- vehicular circulation areas & parking nodes
- building or open space areas

This study depicts the high percentage of paved area found upon the site within the boundaries of the Chatham-Arch Historic District commercial zone. Most of the areas that are paved are devoted to the vehicle, either as nodes of circulation or parking areas.

*figure 31 - "hardscape area study"*
The assessments in this study are based upon the relationship each structure portrays in comparison to the architectural heritage of the area. The buildings that are denoted with high relativity are those which are historic in nature and exhibit influences from post-Civil war and early-20th-century architecture. Arched windows, detailed cornice features, and decorative entrances are the features commonly found on these structures. The buildings with medium relativity are those that have recently been constructed and low relativity structures have little or no bearing upon the historic significance of the area.

Scale 1" = 150'

Figure 32 - "Architectural character study"
Open/Green Space Potential

This study documents those areas which are suitable for the development of open or green space. At present, the areas indicated exist as either large nodes of parking or as abandoned fields of grass strewn with litter and debris.

figure 33 - "open/green space potential study"

massachusetts avenue arts district promenade of indianapo, indiana
Conceptual Design

Prior to the development of the master plan, three conceptual designs were explored. They suggested various methods to solve the design issues at hand and, eventually, formulated into a final master plan.

Green Corridor

The "green corridor" concept focused upon delineating tree islands in the middle of Massachusetts Avenue as an aid to safe vehicular circulation (figure 34). Areas were denoted along the corridor where potential development of green or open space could occur. This particular concept assumed a minimalistic approach by employing the potential open spaces as areas for park development. This development was to consist of naturalized plantings, large expanses of turf where possible, ornamental lighting, and decorative bench features. It was the intent that these areas would serve as an escape from the city and encourage passive entertainment experiences. The parking bays presently existing along the corridor were to remain and additional parking was incorporated behind the structural features. The abandoned facilities were to comply to an adaptive reuse program and were intended to house businesses commonly encountered in small town commercial areas.
Concept #1
"Green Corridor"

The "green corridor" concept focuses upon delineating tree islands along Massachusetts Avenue. Areas of potential green/open space development are sited along the corridor and are to consist of naturalistic plantings. The abandoned facilities are to comply to an adaptive reuse program and are intended to house businesses commonly encountered in small town commercial areas.

Adaptive Reuse Program
1. Office space
2. Office space
3. Community center
4. Branch bank
5. Laundromat
6. Office space
7. Pharmacy
8. Office space

Scale 1" = 150'

Figure 34 - "concept #1... green corridor"
Historic Rehabilitation

Complementing the ideas proposed in the 1982 Preservation Plan, the “historic rehabilitation” concept concentrated upon recreating the urban wall which Massachusetts Avenue was once composed of (figures 35 & 38). Centered around an adaptive reuse program, abandoned facilities were rehabilitated in the hopes of attracting businesses to the area. Infill was suggested for those areas where historic structures had been demolished and was intended to attract complementary businesses as well. As in the “green corridor” concept, the potential businesses were to comply with a small town neighborhood commercial district. For example, a small bookstore, ice cream parlor, and branch bank would service the community and the visiting public. The parking bays along the street were to remain and additional parking was located behind buildings wherever possible. As for open space and plaza development, the focal plaza was located on the historic site of Chatham Square. It was intended that this park develop as a reintroduction of the plaza which once existed in the 1900’s. This included, therefore, an adapted version of the Nathan Morris Memorial Fountain and ornamental plantings (figures 36 & 37). Massachusetts Avenue itself was adorned with a row of trees to designate the appropriate areas for both pedestrian and vehicle. The few spots available for green space development were to primarily consist of naturalized plantings and follow the guidelines outlined in the 1982 Preservation Plan.
Concept #2
Historic Rehabilitation

- green/open space
- adaptive reuse facilities
- pedestrian corridor
- vegetation buffer
- plaza development
- parking

Complementary to the 1982 Preservation Plan, the "historic rehabilitation" concept concentrates upon reusing the urban wall along Massachusetts Avenue.

Adaptive Reuse Program

1. apartment/loft
2. bookstore
3. grocer
4. community center
5. government facilities
6. bank
7. government facilities
8. dry-cleaner
9. restaurant
10. pharmacy
11. restaurant
12. dessert shop
13. ice cream parlor

Scale 1" = 150'

Figure 38: "concept #2... historic rehabilitation"

Massachusetts Avenue Arts District Promenade of Indianapolis, Indiana
Artistic Disorder

The "artistic disorder" concept was an attempt to comply with the suggestions proposed in the 1982 Preservation Plan, but offer a modern interpretation of those principles (figure 30). The Preservation Plan suggested the re-creation of an urban wall along Massachusetts Avenue and, according to the theme established in this concept, was accomplished by incorporating faux arching building facades to delineate public areas. Since Massachusetts Avenue is know for its unique visual and performance arts, these facades complement the theme of the area and appear as a stage set design. Park and plaza development was to occur in these "rooms". On the pedestrian level, a park or plaza would be evident behind the facades. The vehicular perspective, however, would re-create the urban wall along the corridor of Massachusetts Avenue. The focal plaza was to remain on the historic Chatham Square site and consist of a modern interpretation of the Nathan Morris Memorial Fountain. Dining courtyards, biergartens, and naturalized parks were necessary features for the atmosphere of entertainment to thrive and were integral components of the concept. Gateway development was anticipated at the junction of East Street and College Avenue and would serve as a welcome to the Arts District. Parking bays were to remain on the street and additional parking was provided behind the structural features. Ornamental lighting, decorative benches, and creative paving patterns were integrated to establish the area as a unique ingredient of the downtown experience and incorporate it as a destination site within Indianapolis.
Concept #3
Artistic Disorder

- green / open space
- adaptive reuse facilities
- promenade
- pedestrian corridor
- vegetation, buffer
- plaza development
- gateway development
- parking

The "artistic disorder" concept is an attempt to comply with the 1982 Preservation Plan, but offers a modern interpretation of these principles. It suggests the recreation of the urban wall through the implementation of ending features to delimit public space.

Adaptive Reuse Program
1. nightclub
2. art studio
3. auditorium
4. branch bank
5. storage space
6. restaurant
7. pharmacy
8. ice cream parlor

Scale 1" = 150'

Figure 30 - "concept #3... artistic disorder"
Section VI
Master Plan Development

"Major open spaces in American cities lie in their streets. If you can reclaim the street as a real space, in one act you have had more to say about the nature of community than anything else you could do" (Powell, 41).

The development of the master plan centered around a more detailed exploration of the artistic disorder concept. The area has been designated as the Massachusetts Avenue Arts District and should exhibit those characteristics conducive to an environment of art. Historic rehabilitation does not allow for experimentation within the outdoor environment. The resultant master plan is an attempt to bridge the gap between history and art by employing the corridor of Massachusetts Avenue as the design media (figure 40).

figure 40 — "master plan for Massachusetts Avenue Arts District Promenade"

massachusetts avenue arts district promenade of indianapolis, indiana
The Promenade

Promenade Zones

The development of the promenade arose as a primary feature during design development because it was to unite the entire corridor of Massachusetts Avenue into a cohesively designed whole. Orientation of parking was changed from the existing perpendicular to a simple parallel system. In addition, extra parking units were incorporated behind and between various businesses on site. With this in mind, zones were established along the promenade to designate spaces for the pedestrian as well as the vehicle (Figure 41). An 80 foot right-of-way existed from building facade to building facade. A 24 foot mixed use/vehicular and special access zone was designated in the middle of the corridor with 9 foot parking areas paralleling each side. Adjacent to the parking areas a 19 foot promenade existed that utilized the remaining space next to the building facade. In the event of a special festival or fair, the promenade zone would consume the parking area and become a 28 foot pedestrian area. Opportunities for temporary closure of the street were provided for as well and would, therefore, implement the entire 80 foot right-of-way as the promenade zone.

Promenade Zones

80' Right-Of-Way

28'
Special Event Promenade

19'
Promenade

9'
Parking

24'
Mixed Use Zone

9'
Vehicular & Special Access

28'
Special Event Promenade

19'
Promenade

massachusetts avenue arts district promenade of indianapolis, indiana
Figure 42 — "Section before promenade installation"

Figure 43 — "Section after promenade installation"
Gateways

Located along both East Street and College Avenue, parking island gateways were designed to define the promenade area and aid in slowing vehicular traffic upon entrance to the Arts District Promenade. The gateways were located in the middle of the corridor and included spontaneously activated fountain sprays hidden amidst a sea of ornamental plantings (figures 44 & 47). Signage, complete with a glowing neon element identifying the area as the Massachusetts Avenue Arts District Promenade, was also included in both entrance gateways. As a consistent vertical element, ornamental trees were gracefully implemented to form a delicate archway into the Arts District Promenade and repeat the theme of arches found along the Massachusetts Avenue corridor.

figure 4.1 ~ "northeast gateway fountain element"
figure 45 ~ "section before gateway implementation"

figure 40 ~ "section after gateway implementation"
Dining Plazas & Vending Opportunities

Located adjacent to the gateway development and along the "front porches" of local restaurants, dining plazas were designed to encourage sociability with the outdoor environment (figure 47). In appreciation of the eclectic diversity already present upon site, tables of various materials, sizes, and shapes were implemented beneath the canopy of ornamental trees along with movable chairs of all varieties. The tables themselves were designed components of individual tree fences and allowed for expansion during special festivals and fairs. In other words, each tree was designed to house its own dining unit and provided its own opportunities for dining and socializing. As for vending possibilities, an area designated for such a purpose was located at the southwest end of the promenade adjacent to a gateway dining plaza and within the "pocket" plazas as well.

Sittable Space

Delineated by a row of ornamental pear tree, various opportunities for sitting and other passive activities were incorporated along the corridor (figure 44). Most of the promenade was composed of this feature and it allowed for consumers to socialize, window shop, or gain information about any possible art festivals as they relax. As in the dining plazas, eclectic benches were incorporated to enhance the diversity of the area. Decorative planters were implemented to serve as containers for trees as well as yet another opportunity for seating and socializing activities.

figure 47 ~ "southwest gateway fountain element"
Paving Enhancements & Lighting Features

Details found in paving and lighting features added to create a harmonious unification along the Massachusetts Avenue Arts District Promenade. Fountain lights, which were composed of a frosted glass cylinder containing spontaneous fountain sprays atop a granite column, defined the middle of the Massachusetts Avenue corridor (figure 48). Located in the midst of vehicular circulation, the fountain lights contained a lighting band which continues up and down both sides of the granite column and extends onto the ground plane as well. This, therefore, created a glowing ribbon of light along Massachusetts Avenue and, in essence, enhanced the visual and performance arts of the area. The paving detail was, therefore, incorporated around each of the fountain lights (figure 51). A charcoal gray europaver radiated from the bottom of each element and was defined on its furthest boundary by opaque glass tiles which became the ribbon of light. The vehicular portion of the pavement consisted of ottawa creek II landmark pavers with vehicular "tracks" embedded along the route out of heritage buff landmark pavers. A curb was not designed into the promenade area, therefore, the pedestrian right-of-way was defined by a fiberoptic band of light and bollard elements complementary in design to the fountain light structure (figure 49). In an attempt to relate to the historic preservation plan, historic banner lights were incorporated to enhance the areas designated primarily for the pedestrian. Composed of wrought iron post and an opaque gas light cover, the historic lights were to consist of wrought iron arms that would advertise special events or display seasonal banners (figure 50).
Fountain Clock

Located in approximately the middle of the site and just outside of Chatham Plaza, the fountain clock occupied a space which was visually dominant along the corridor of Massachusetts Avenue. The clock element was similar in design to the fountain light and incorporated a fiberoptic band of light around the time display for illumination during evening hours (figure 52).
Section VII
Pocket Plaza Development

The development of the "pocket" plazas incorporated those areas previously identified as remnant spaces into innovatively designed courtyards which punctuate the corridor of the Massachusetts Avenue Arts District Promenade. Several areas were identified as remnant spaces and three were explored in further detail. In an attempt to comply with the standards set forth in the preservation plan, most of the remnant spaces were defined by faux arching facades which portrayed the illusion of a building. Actual plaza and park development was to occur behind these facades and was to, in essence, create a series of outdoor rooms. The following plazas and parks discussed below were the products of further exploration into the design opportunities of remnant spaces.
Chatham Plaza

Chatham Plaza was perhaps the most important and certainly the most visual of the "pocket" parks considered for development. Located directly along Massachusetts Avenue, Chatham Plaza served as a reinterpretation of the historic Chatham Square (figure 53). The most important feature being the reinterpretation of the Nathan Morris Memorial Fountain (figure 54). As the historical overview in Section V provided, the fountain served to refresh both pedestrians and horses. Mules and horses have since been replaced by the advent of the automobile and the design of the fountain was indicative of the change of times. Composed of a opaque glass panels along its backside, the fountain focused upon a granite column which displayed a wall of water and spontaneously activated sprays of water. An information panel was also located along the backside of the fountain and displayed events and activities to take place in the art galleries, dinner theatres, or along the Arts District Promenade itself. Following the diagonal created by Massachusetts Avenue and extending from Chatham Place to the fountain, spontaneously activated fountain sprays emitted from the ground plane and created an area of recreation for children in the hot summer months.

The design of Chatham Plaza was made possible by a reorientation of the street and an effective delineation of spaces. The area outside of Chatham Plaza was extended further into the street and dictated the diagonal created by Massachusetts Avenue. The large expanse of unused sidewalk adjacent to the Dean Johnson Gallery was transformed into partial sidewalk with the rest becoming a secondary vehicular corridor providing access into the residential area. Parking islands complete with ornamental trees to enhance the area were incorporated to delineate the right-of-ways more effectively and to make the intersection of Walnut Street, Park Avenue, and Massachusetts Avenue a safer thoroughfare.

Although the design for Chatham Plaza centered primarily around the reinterpretation of the Nathan Morris Memorial Fountain, other elements were incorporated as well. Ornamental trees suggested the presence of spring with vibrant flowers as well as offered shade and protection during the hot months of the summer. Along with the ornamental trees, dining furniture and decorative benches were implemented to encourage opportunities for relaxation, entertainment, and sociability. Chatham Plaza, being the focal element along the corridor of Massachusetts Avenue, was to serve as the staging area for special festivals and was, therefore, to become the most well-known and used space of the Massachusetts Avenue Arts District Promenade.
figure 54 - "creation of Chatham Plaza"
Poet's Corner

Located in the remnant space between Betty Boop Tavern and Theatre on the Square, Poet's Corner was designed as a small entertainment plaza (figure 55). As the preservation plan states, there was a desire to re-create the "urban wall" effect once found along Massachusetts Avenue. In an attempt to comply with this wish, a faux facade of arches was implemented to define the entrance to the plaza. Seen from the vehicular perspective, the facades were to appear as buildings. The pedestrian, however, was to experience glimpses into an outdoor room through arching "windows" (figure 57). The walls along Poet's Corner were adorned with arching "window" murals intended to exhibit the work of local artists (figure 50). The back of the plaza was consumed by an informal stage area which was designed to offer various opportunities for poetry readings, interpretive performances, and small side-shows. The stage itself was defined by a skeleton of granite columns which, in turn, were employed to delineate the walls of the space as well. Dining furniture was included as well and intended to encourage sociability and relaxation before or after performances at Theatre on the Square.
figure 56 ~ "elevation of stage in Poet's Corner"

figure 57 ~ "elevation of Poet's Corner"
Promenade Park

Promenade Park, an example of another designed remnant space defined by faux arching facades, was located across the street from the Fallen Firefighter's Memorial. Straying from the strict rectilinear grid system found along Massachusetts Avenue, Promenade Park offered an escape into the "natural" (figure 58). Composed of organic forms, the main purpose of the park was to invite the patrons of the Massachusetts Avenue Arts District Promenade into a place of relaxation, solace, and tranquility. Turf areas were implemented for active recreation activities while a meandering gravel path passed through areas designated for passive recreation use. An informal social patio created a center for the space and allowed for card games as well as chess and checkers. Promenade Park's naturalistic escape from the city, in turn, served as a silent reverence to those firefighter's commemorated in the Fallen Firefighter's Memorial across the street.

figure 58 - "social patio of Promenade Park"
Section VIII
Concern

Preaching the importance and necessity of recycling, society has failed to incorporate these values into the drama of life. The concept of "throwing away" has become an accepted solution and, therefore, encourages a philosophy which will, ultimately, commence in the desecration of both the natural and urban environments.

Primarily oriented around the automobile, urban areas exhibit a weak relationship to the pedestrian. Open spaces amidst the composition of the city demand a re-assessment of the pedestrian as a vital ingredient of the infrastructure. Oftentimes, the areas available for pedestrian scale development have suffered abandonment because of the lack or loss of function. These areas, therefore, dissolve into remnant spaces and degenerate the sacred environment in which they subsist.

The endeavors in creating the Massachusetts Avenue Arts District Promenade sought to solve many of these issues that are pressing to society today. Remnant spaces were identified along the Massachusetts Avenue corridor, including Massachusetts Avenue itself, and were, therefore, explored in further detail. Each design, unique from the next, became a different solution to this problem of remnant space within the urban environment. Why not contribute these spaces to the pedestrian? The primary goal in the conception of the Massachusetts Avenue Arts District Promenade was to create an area executed primarily for the benefit of the pedestrian within the urban environment. Abandoned spaces are potential sources for the creation of substantial pedestrian scale microcosms within urban settings. Completely designed in accordance to such spaces, the Massachusetts Avenue Arts District Promenade shall serve as an example of a successfully designed pedestrian environment utilizing spaces leftover by the greed of society.

Although some of the proposals indicated in the design were impractical and unable to be completed at this time, the design was done in the hopes that society would take a step back and observe the many ways in which it is damaging our precious environment. Perhaps, our society can once again stress the importance of the pedestrian and design for people rather than our modern day conveniences. It is until that point in time that the design proposals will remain an illusion. Until then, the design will remain in the eyes of the designer.
Section IX
# Appendix A - List of Figures

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Appendix B: Bibliography

Texts


*Periodicals*


*Thesis & Pamphlets*

