Conclusion

"We need to go out and inspire people and make it absolutely clear that architects can give you a better life."

-Lars Lerup, speaking at Ball State University, November 2, 1995

My studies are not complete. I have only begun to learn how to design for community. I have already found myself applying the knowledge I have gained from this thesis project in a variety of situations. I now recognize "pseudocommunity," I have an idea of how to guide conversations in a healthier direction. I have discussed community-oriented spaces with a variety of people. I have become more observant of the social systems and environmental influences around me. I have even conducted a workshop (since completing my thesis project) in which I utilized some of the principles I have learned.

I set out to discover ways in which the built environment could encourage interaction. I found answers to that question right under my nose. What I also discovered, however, was the impact that group interaction in the PROCESS of solving a problem can lead to community-building.

In summary, there are a few basic ways in which community and interaction can be encouraged:

- Through the design process
- Grouping of shared resources
- Grouping of spaces that are used on an everyday basis
- Intersection of various uses
- Non-rigid organization - encourage interaction in the use of the space
- Incorporate a variety of uses and users
- Incorporate places to meet and linger

I will continue to apply these, as well as add new "recipes," new "good examples," and new ideas to my repertoire. Perhaps some day soon I will be able to utilize my interest in and experience with "community-building" to help build some communities. Until then, I continue to learn.
Works Cited and Resourced


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*Metropolis*, November, 1996. ("Community" issue)


“Personal Harbor.” Steelcase, Grand Rapids, MI.


Appendix A

Slide Presentation

On the following pages are the images that were used for the majority of my thesis presentation. The printed versions do not do them justice. They were presented as color slides projected on a large screen in AB 101 at Ball State.
A Society of Individuals
Reality Amidst Virtual Reality
Place Amidst Placelessness
Local Village within a Global Village

The question
How can the built environment encourage interpersonal interaction and a sense of community?

Issues to Explore
- What is community?
- How do technology and current trends affect community?
- What works?
- What might work?

Process:
- Reading and Learning about Community
- Observation and Case Studies
- Site Selection
- Interviews & Meeting
- Re-programming
- Design Investigations
- Project Design
- Continuing development of Community-Building skills

- 53 Million home-workers/telecommuters in the U.S.
- Dozens of suburbs looking for new center/urbanization
- Looking for "places where a parade can happen"
- Healing professionals sad at isolation from their own society/patients
- "Virtual reality and cyberspace are inscriptions of a desire whose principal symptom can be seen as the absence of community."
Encouraging interaction:
- Through the design process (using community building group exercises first)
- Shared resources
- Grouping of everyday-use spaces
- Intersection of uses
- Non-rigid organization - encourage interaction in space use
- Variety of uses/users
- Places to linger

Site Selection:
- Large suburb? Downtown revitalization? Satellite town?
- Considered Yorktown and Albany, IN
Thank You!

Jim Segedy and Uwe Koehler, Thesis Critics
Dustin Hunter, Design Consultant
Albany residents Beverly Renner, Steve Hall, Les Turner, Betty Hale, Dallas & Margaret Starbuck.

Soli Deo Gloria
- Psalm 118:37

(And you thought I'd forgotten!)

Congratulations to my studio mates! We didn't "let the bastards grind [us] down."
Appendix B
Thesis Proposal

The original thesis proposal submitted in the Fall semester at the beginning of the whole process of defining just what a "thesis" should be.
How can architecture, design, and the resulting built environment encourage “community” and interpersonal interaction in a society of individuals, reality amidst virtuality, place amidst placelessness, a “local village” amidst the global village? This proposed thesis project will investigate the nature of community in the context of current social and technological trends.

It is my belief that designers can indeed create physical spaces that affect the behavior and interaction of people using the designed spaces. To better learn how to design in such a way, I will spend several weeks researching books and articles relating to this topic, and engage in case studies and exploratory design investigations. Following this time of research and “design play,” I will undertake the schematic design of a specific site and population for a community facility. This facility may or may not manifest itself as a “community center” in the common sense of the term, but will reflect the insight of my research into the nature of encouraging interaction and a sense of community.

It is my hope that the design of the community facility will prove a vehicle for presenting, in example form, the results of my research and investigations as they apply to a specific site and context. That real site will be chosen from one of three contexts: a geographically remote (yet technologically connected) community; a placeless suburb or housing development; or a cohousing location.

Much research and discussion has been undertaken lately on the effects of technology on our societal structure, as well as new and neo-traditional community design approaches. It is my intent to explore these written resources and to continue conversations I have begun with “experts” great and small from across the country, and engage them in an electronic dialogue as I progress.

ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN THESIS COMMITTEE

architectural design studio professor

architectural professor / thesis critic

consultants:
Professor Harry Eggink
On-line consultants/critics to be verified.
Community seems to be emerging as quite a popular topic. It is discussed with regard to digital communities, global villages, new towns, and revival of interest in spirituality. We have discovered that in many cases, we don’t have "community" any more, and we have decided that we need it.

But what is community? What was it? What can it be as we move into a bold new future, unlike anything we have ever seen before?

This proposed thesis project will investigate the nature of community in the context of current social and technological trends, and attempt to answer the question of how architecture, design, and the resulting built environment can encourage "community" and interpersonal interaction. In seeking to answer this question, I will consider our current social context:

- A Society of Individuals
- Need for Reality Amidst Virtuality
- Need for Place Amidst Placelessness,
- Defining the "Local Village" Within the Global Village

Our culture values individual freedom and self-centeredness to a rather dangerous level. Some have even referred to our behavior as "hostile individualism." (Segedy) Our culture not only breeds selfishness, self-centeredness, and greed, but also fear of one another. We have aspired to self-sufficiency with the pioneer spirit of our ancestors, yet forgotten that they often worked together. We have staked out our plots and built our forts. Our populations and places have grown to scales we are unfamiliar with. Now, we are afraid of one another, and we hoard our possessions and pets behind our fences and security systems, leaving only in our private tanks. We turn to our televisions, videos, video games, and interactive multimedia for recreation. In our efforts to fulfill our inborn human nature as social creatures, we long for the community we have lost, turning to the internet to find others like us. This in itself creates a sort of community perhaps, but offers questionable "real" interaction. How can these individuals interact with one another—those that are both similar and different—right around the corner?

Even as we have aspired to media portrayals of who we should be and what possessions we should own, we have seen media portrayals, especially those from the past, which cause us to yearn for a reality that is no longer available to us. We value community, neighborhoods, lemonade stands, swimming holes, and small problems which can be resolved happily in thirty minutes. In contrast, we HAVE dysfunctional communities; families which hardly communicate even with one another; few truly local gathering places; commuter churches; few community play places for all ages; few opportunities to interact with others; a culture which discourages any conflict, argument, or dirt; and a world which makes us afraid to take candy from others for fear of poison, and afraid to give candy away for fear of lawsuits.

In response to this, my current diagnosis of our lost and confused culture (or at least the direction it is heading), I hope to intervene with an understanding of what community is and might be, and how we can begin to create places that encourage or allow for "community."
believe that we are not in quite the dire straits that I have described above, but that people are in fact following their yearning for community and in need of the kind of guidance that design professionals should be able to provide with love and zeal.

My own experiences have prepared me uniquely for this project. I have long been sensitive to issues of human interaction, emotion, and experience, and have observed examples of communities which work and those that do not.

At an early age, my mother pointed out the differences in the "community" where she grew up and the one in which we were living. Both were storybook settings relative to many other locations, but Sackett Street in Lynchburg, Virginia, was a special place where she was growing up, and was still when I visited years later. Parents and their grown children lived across the street, neighbors helped and respected one another, even if they did not agree on everything. They shared resources and swimming pools, and sipped iced tea together. The kids were raised almost communally, with all the neighbors looking out for each other.

I learned first-hand of community by living in an exceptional college dorm, where the ages were much closer, but the friendly neighborhood was the same as Sacket Street. I learned of community by being involved in the broader community of Gethsemane UM Church in Muncie, Indiana. I learned of spaces designed for people and interaction in Germany, Austria, and France.

In contrast, I learned to appreciate those special communities even more when I moved to Columbus, Ohio for my architectural internship. I watched myself, familiar with what community should be like, live seven months without even meeting my neighbors. I have more to learn about community.

This thesis project combines two of my loves, which are often seen as polar opposites: community and meaningful personal interaction, and technology. I hope to find a common ground, where the two are complementary, rather than mutually exclusive.

Community holds a special interest for me. I have a passion for supporting others and interacting with people, and I get excited when I find good examples of community and simple compassion for one another. My personal faith demands active love, and in my personal quest to "make a significant difference," community-building seems a cause worthy of further study.

"Community" in Baltimore, Maryland
PROJECT DESCRIPTION

As the culmination of my research and investigation of community and interaction, I will undertake the schematic design of a “Community Facility,” for a specific location. This facility may or may not manifest itself as a “community center” in the common sense of the term, but will reflect the insight of my research into the nature of encouraging interaction and a sense of community.

The population served by this facility will primarily be those in the immediate vicinity, probably from 1500-5000 persons.

The facility will definitely include a variety of indoor and outdoor public gathering spaces in some form, and will most likely include public meeting areas, recreational and/or cultural facilities, small retail operations, and internet/telecommuting stations.

Potentially, the facility or its master plan might include a post office, a library, grocery, rail station, gas station, or snack bar.

The landscape, and the relationship to the surrounding neighborhood and city will be of critical importance.

Hansaplatz U-Bahn Station in the Hansa Quarter, Berlin. On the left is the edge of the station, which features a grocery, library, theater, pharmacy, bakery, and flower shop, in addition to bus and rail stops.
DESIGN OBJECTIVES: METHODOLOGY AND SCHEDULE

The semester will be organized according to the following broad activities: research, site selection, ideation and exploratory research, design project, and thesis book preparation.

The "ideation and exploratory research" portion of the semester will be dedicated to hands-on research, including case studies, conversations, and design investigations intent upon discovering and analyzing designed responses to the issues raised by the thesis.

The design of the community facility will be an opportunity to manifest and present, in example form, the results of my research and investigations as they apply to a specific site and context. Simply put, the end goal is to design a space which I believe (and that I can convince others to believe) would, if built, encourage interpersonal interaction and relationships, and a conscious sense of "community."

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Thesis Timeline</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>November</strong></td>
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<td>Thesis proposal, organization of resources</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<td>Dec. 21-Jan. 12</td>
<td>Research and reading on aspects of community, human interaction, and actual and predicted effects of technology on human activities.</td>
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<td>Information Summary and Documentation</td>
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<td>Revision of thesis program and thesis project</td>
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<td>Site analysis</td>
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<td>Presentation drawings, modeling, and board production</td>
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<td>Final Thesis Review</td>
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<td>Minor Revisions</td>
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<td>Thesis book assembly and publication</td>
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**CONTEXT: PHYSICAL AND CULTURAL**

It is my belief that context is important to the establishment of a sense of place. For this project, almost any location that exists in contact with current technology and social trends would suffice, so long as its specific attributes were considered upon selection.

However, I will select a specific site in a region with a geographic, cultural, and social context with which I have had personal experience. Hence, I will choose a site in western Virginia, western Pennsylvania, central Ohio, or central Indiana.

I will choose from one of three social contexts, depending on which seems the most appropriate vehicle to test my findings and hypotheses.

1) A small, geographically secluded community with professionals, consultants, and intellectuals who telecommute and the local, more established community.

2) A dysfunctional community, such as a placeless, heterogeneous suburb/housing development, or perhaps on the edge of such a place, where it meets a different neighborhood. (Note: a site in Noblesville, IN, where the city is seeking to infuse its suburbs with “mini-downtowns” and “community greens” is under serious consideration.)

3) A co-housing facility, where families come together in physically close living environments with the intent to provide support, community, and shared resources.

Once the site is established (mid-January), the following contextual elements will be especially considered:

1) Local and regional economy
2) Material local to the region
3) Local design personality/character
4) Local history
5) Local site, weather, geographic, and development conditions
6) Local cultural/recreational interests

Perhaps a remote location where people telecommute...
RESEARCH RESOURCES

The topic of "community," coupled with discussions of how the advent of modern technologies affect our humanity and interactions with one another are both popular topics in many circles and in many variations. Throughout the last year, Metropolis magazine has investigated the effects of technology and the accompanying changes in our humanity, and its November issue focused entirely on the nature of "community" much as this thesis will. The proliferation of "neo-traditional" town-planning strategies and the resulting heated arguments about the validity of this philosophy indicate a sincere interest in the creation of places that better satisfy our desire to live in community and a search for what exactly "community" means.

In this current social context, many more books and articles have been produced, providing me with extensive resources from which to draw. Of further help is the fact that my thesis advisor, James Segedy, is currently writing his own book on topics closely related to my thesis investigations.

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Durning, Alan. Lecture and conversation. Ball State University, __ November 1996
Foreman, Tom. Lecture and Interview. Ball State University, __ October 1996.
Ingraham, Elizabeth Wright. Lecture and conversation. Ball State University, __________ 1996
McQuire, Scott. "The Uncanny Home." Architecture Australia, ?

Potential:

Sucher, David. City Comforts.
Alexander, Christopher. A Pattern Language.
Corbett, Michael and Judy. A Better Place to Live.
Sweet, Leonard L., Faithquakes.
Jacobs, Jane. The Death and Life of Cities
Krier, Leon.
Calthorpe, Peter.

Available from Amazon Books (www.amazon.com):

50 Simple Things You Can Do to Build Community; Paperback
Beyond Charity: The Call to Christian Community Development; John Perkins, John M. Perkins; Paperback
Community Dreams: Ideas for Enriching Neighborhood and Community Life; William R. Berkowitz; Paperback
Creating Community Anywhere: Finding Support and Connection in a Fragmented World; Carolyn R. Shaffer, et al; Paperback
Placemaking: The Art and Practice of Building Communities; Lynda H. Schneekloth, Robert G. Shibley; Hardcover

Resource People:

George Callendine, The Terry Group Consultants.
Greg Eller, SEM Partners, Architects.
Tom Foreman, Chicago Associates;
Alan Durning, Northwest Environment Watch
Jim Segedy
Tony Costello
Mark Darrall

Resource Places:

Ameritech
Christian Community Development Association
CompuServe
Kinkos
New Song Community Learning Center
Northwest Environment Watch

Image Credits:
Page 2 (Bubbles) Business Week, 29 April 1996, cover.
Page 3: New Song organization brochure.
The program written for the fall semester “Programming” class was necessarily generic since a site had not yet been selected. The program defined within these pages, however, influenced my thinking and was truly the beginning of my thesis process, hence it is included here.
Designing for Community
Nowhere North
Community Center
Building Program

The Community Development Authority of Nowhere, Indiana

Programmed by Jeremy C. Fretts
Copyright 1996, Muncie, Indiana.
Contents
Summary
Introduction
  Background
  History
  Scope
Organization
Design Criteria
Space Requirements
Space Relationships
Space Summary
Estimated Cost
Bibliography
The Nowhere North Community Center (NNCC) will be a facility which serves certain basic needs of citizens in its immediate vicinity (approximately 3000 persons). The building design must strive to go beyond simply providing the necessary program spaces, but must also seek to create interior and exterior spaces in which people will be encouraged to linger and interact with one another.

The Center will include a post office, small restaurant, small convenience store, meeting rooms, and community office space. The site will be developed to encourage pedestrian and bicycle circulation, but will allow for limited parking. Adjacent to the building will be a playground and parklet for outdoor gathering and contemplation. The site plan should address the future addition of a small daycare center on site, only loosely connected to the Center.

This facility, upon completion, will serve as a hub for basic services and community gathering for citizens of the developing Norton Quarter, and may serve as a prototype for future Centers in North Nowhere.

Included in the requirements of this program are the design of the Center, development of the site as a public space, and master planning for future additions and future access requirements.
Background

The idea to create the North Nowhere Community Center was born in December of 1995 from the deliberations of the Community Development Authority of North Nowhere. After crafting strict density and zoning regulations for the developing “Norton Quarter” area of the city, it was determined that this newly developing area would be an ideal place to establish the first of a series of new community facilities in North Nowhere.

Don’t Fret Architects was then hired to conduct user studies and produce this building program. A series of community meetings was held where residents and future residents with houses under construction had the opportunity to dream and brainstorm about what the new facility might contain. This program followed directly, after a preliminary approval of the suggested uses by the Community Development Authority (NNCDA).

It was made clear by the NNCDA and the residents that this facility should be far more than country club or banquet room, but it should be a hub of daily activity for nearby residents, encouraging a sense of community and offering a sense of place.

Community Development Authority of North Nowhere
Hon. Bob Collins, Mayor
Saretta Harper, Chair
Bob Jones
Bill Jones
Aubrey Kemp

Charrette Participants
Sue Jones
Brad Niermeyer
Ian Heck
Joyce Heck
Rev. Bill Heck
Dr. Debbie Shannon
Kyle Shannon
Gordon Shannon
Joe Timmons
Ysamu Cho
Mat Batticce
Susan Batticce
Phyllis Shockney
John Shockney
Jordan Drake
Dianne Drake
Sherre Burgess
Bill Burgess
Dr. John Sherck
Dr. Eric Lee
Russell Russell
Bailey Russell
Nicholas “Storm” Russell

Consultants
A.E. “Sonny” Palmer
Dustin Hunter, AIAS
Kevin Russell, AIAS, NOMAS
Dirkpatrick Melon, AIAS, BS

Special thanks to
Don & Judy Fretts
Adobe Software
History
Community centers as a building type are less familiar to Americans than to Europeans. In the United States, some of the best examples of true "community centers" are the student centers at colleges and universities. One might also look to ethnic community centers in cities, and to YMCA's. However, some of the finest examples of community places which are truly centers of daily activity for the entire community are to be found in Europe. Sweden and the Scandinavian countries, in particular, feature excellent community centers with social and recreational components as well as social and medical services and retail space. These examples of the community center as the true center of community life should be considered in the creation of this new prototype for a new, higher density residential area. (Suggested reading materials can be found in the Bibliography.)

Scope
Included in the scope of this project are the design of the Community Center; thorough landscaping of paths, parklet, parking areas, playground and gathering spaces surrounding the building; and masterplanning for the future addition of a daycare center of approximately 4200 s.f.

The architectural team is expected to continue meetings with the residents and NNCDA for input and feedback as the design progresses. Following the design and approval process, the architect will coordinate bidding and selection efforts, and observe the construction. During construction, the Architect will be responsible for arranging periodic “progress tours" for the local residents so that they might feel more intimately involved in the project.
The North Nowhere Community Development Authority, an arm of the North Nowhere City Council, has been given full responsibility for oversight of the development of the prototype Community Center and its funding.

Before final approval of a design, the NNCDA will consult with the citizens which have met for the design charrettes. The final decision will be made by the NNCDA.

Funding will be provided by a grant from the city and from the city development taxes from the area served by this center.
1. First and foremost, the building and exterior spaces should be designed to encourage interaction among its users, and should offer places to pause and enjoy conversation, contemplation, or people-watching.

2. The building should be designed to take advantage of the natural heating/cooling possibilities for its location and siting.

3. Selection of local or regionally produced materials is encouraged. Further, use of natural materials (stone, wood, brick) is required in some amount to maintain a subliminal sense of connection to the environment.

4. It is of crucial importance that the facility relate closely to human scale.

5. An effort should be made to create a strong indoor-outdoor connection.

6. Local architectural precedents should be considered, but as this is a new type of facility and a focal point for the community, a creative interpretation or creation is encouraged.

7. The interior should offer a variety of spaces, including secluded spaces, open spaces, areas of bright daylight, and dimmer areas.

8. Green spaces and plantings should be incorporated inside and outside the facility.

Nowhere North Community Center Building Program
On the following pages are the individual space requirements for each space in the building program.
Users:
General population, with special accommodations for:
- Elderly
- Children five and up
- Small groups of people

Activities:
Internet information access, research, game playing, E-mail, business communications, output.

In short, persons utilizing public computer equipment much as one might operate a home PC, or use beyond the capabilities of a home PC in the areas of research, communication, and output.

Performance:
Must accommodate 20 workstations, 3 printers, and one large format printer.

Equipment:
Workstations for 20 computers and appropriate access for power and data wiring.

Environmental:
Consider excess heat given off by the equipment.
Provide for glare-free natural and artificial lighting.
Some stations should offer a greater degree of privacy and sound isolation.

Design/Aesthetics:
This room should celebrate technology while maintaining a humane atmosphere. More than just a computer lab, this space, too, should enable interaction between the live persons in the room.
Post office contract station (390)
  Post office boxes & Lobby 100
  Service window and office 140
  Sorting and storage 150

Community Computer Resources (1610)
  Computing Center 1460
  Management Office 150

Public Meeting Rooms (3400)
  Large Meeting Room 2500
  Small Preparation/Kitchenette Room 100
  Small Meeting/Gathering Lounge 800

Lobby/Antercom 400

Leasable Restaurant Space (2250)
  Kitchen 400
  Storage 250
  Dining Room 1600

Offices (1150)
  Facility Management 250
  Leasable Legislative/Organizational Offices (2) 2 @ 450=900

Leasable Convenience Store Space 600

Net square footage: 9800

Unassignable square footage: x 35%= 3430

Gross square footage: 13230 s.f.
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Total Construction Cost

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Total Budget* (not including site purchase)

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*estimated cost is in December 1996 dollars.


*Image Credits*: People images are from brochures for the New Song community organizations of Baltimore, MD. Images are used for this educational document without permission (yet.)

Persons and places depicted herein are entirely fictitious, despite the fact that many of their names are recombinations based on names of great people I know at Gethsemane United Methodist Church in Muncie, IN.
Appendix D

Interviews, Notes, Design Played

Included here are an assortment of notes from meetings held throughout the semester and other relevant items that did not fit well elsewhere in the book.
value of a sense of community
Physical structure, opportunities to gather
   "Through," not "to" spaces (my phrase)
Need places for kids of all ages - places from childhood mythology don't exist:
   tree forts, swimming holes, ponds
opportunities for exploration, experience and discovery
   can no longer skin a knee or fall from a tree - watch on TV but can't do
   toys today, even Legos—all the imagining is done for you

work of Michael and Judy Corbett
   Davis Homes in CA.
   Judy - Livable Communities [board?]  
   Michael - designs communities, subdivisions based on neotraditional principles.
   Utilizes public activity spaces which are programmed to be busy places and
   surrounded by things people go to: grocery, etc.
   Requires people to be in the common spaces

What encourages interaction?
   Kind and quality of spaces
   sociology

Awani
   Start with a public gathering space - the equivalent of Frank Lloyd Wright's hearth

Check out Christopher Alexander - some valid ideas
Louisville is rather progressive - not zoned with lines on a map, but using pattern books a la David Lewis
Visit Chatham Village in Pittsburgh by David Lewis/UDA. (Jim has copy of design guidelines)
   (up Mon incline, turn right, past 1st overlook, turn left, go a few blocks.)
   Successful community-building
German Village, Columbus and others - what make them successful? What makes old neighborhoods
work?
   (Answer? - opportunities to share experiences)
New subsidized housing precedents
   - Holman Square, Chicago - garden apartments
   - North Lawndale (brochures in UP office) BSU grad Jeff Kingsbury involved,
     winning awards as sitzen based urban housing

"Hostile individualism" - our culture is becoming moreso

Patterns/patternbook - what needs to be included?
Building or community as foundation of design (?)
Look at new office community spaces (around the coffee pots in new offices)
Gestalt thinking

Case studies - what makes it work and how can that be re-created?
   - materials, colors, ...
Talk to Bruce Meyer re: behavioral psychology

Sites learned from - transfer info to new site
**My Process**
research
organize philosophical approach/direction - criteria what looking for, process.
research
site selection
play and discover - live research
design
why - evaluation - is it doing what I wanted it to?

---

Concepts of community
examples
patterns
project

**More resources**
Vermont town squares as a model
Neotraditional town planning books
Pattern Language
A Better Place to Live (Corbett)
February Meeting Notes

1/27 (Ok, not quite February)

Suburban telecommuting centers mentioned in LA Post
Revisit the idea of neighborhood - Tony Costello and Blaine School dev’p
  ■ country garden (?)
  ■ neighborhood incubator - latchkey, borrow stuff, Ill
daycare
  ■ retail/industrial/cottage industries
Jim designed old school in Birmingham-> daycare for elderly/kids

Combine! - downtown Yorktown/Albany suburbs/neighborhoods
new interpretation of the main street approach - main street principles, reality that main streets are
community centers and don’t serve that need well..

Perhaps include medcenter downtown.

Feb.

Designing for downtown-
  ask styles liked, number of stories, deck . . .
cut out shapes, move around in plan
sketching
visual preference survey a la Nelessen - examples of appropriate design and give choices
Have people draw plans - they like to
Maps and blocks
I’m concerned with . . . good/bad. Your thoughts
Programming - top 10 program ideas (or relationships) each one on a card or page. Give
each person 7 dots to prioritize. This offers a good process and some interaction with
each other.
Introduction to the Project

"How can architecture, design, and the resulting built environment encourage 'community' and interpersonal interaction in a society of individuals, reality amidst virtuality, place amidst placelessness, a 'local village' amidst the global village? This proposed thesis project will investigate the nature of community in the context of current social and technological trends."

-from the thesis proposal

This project, "Designing for Community," is an architectural thesis project to complete the requirements for the Bachelor of Architecture degree. It consists of two parts: a "theoretical" aspect, studying how buildings and public spaces can encourage interaction and "community," and a design project which allows exploration of some of these ideas.

The design project is a community center for Albany, Indiana. Albany was selected because it has aspects of a number of features of interest to one studying communities. First, it is a small town with the personal relationships and "feel" that many persons in modern society are seeking out. Second, it is to a degree, and will continue to be a bedroom community of a larger city: Muncie. Third, as are many other small towns, it is struggling to discover its new identity in a modern mobile culture. Albany is a setting in which I can explore the revitalized downtown as a new social center for persons who commute elsewhere for work.

The goal for the community center is to provide a place for long-time residents and new commuters to come together and experience Albany and each other. It will be a place where residents of all ages "cross paths," where they can meet formally or accidentally, where they can commune with each other. Aside from the community center itself, my design project will also offer suggestions for appropriate development of businesses and public places nearby.

It is hoped that ideas explored in this project will prove relevant to many situations:

- suburban residential areas in need of local relationships and a sense of identity;
- small towns looking for their place amidst the influx of new residents and new ideas;
- towns of all sizes that become collections of home offices and telecommuters.

As humans seek to fulfill their need to engage one another, this project seeks to be relevant to all environments.
What is the finished product?
The project (drawings and models) will be presented to College of Architecture faculty, students, and interested parties the week of April 14. Then, a “thesis book” will be prepared and submitted to the University for inclusion in the University Libraries.

Copies of these presentations will be available to those involved in the project and my process.

Also, I hope that the ideas discussed will be a “product” of their own—hopefully we will all leave the project with new ideas and a better understanding of how communities can be better places, and built “places” can be better communities.

How will you use the information I provide? Why are you holding these interviews?
The purpose of meeting with real people in Albany is to bring some life and reality to my project. I’ve done plenty of imaginary projects in architecture school. As I look toward graduation and the “real world,” I’d like to start practicing the art of working with real people. Your input will be invaluable in offering ideas and background information, and I will have the opportunity to offer new ideas to you and encourage you to think about problems in new ways. It will hopefully be a great experiment and learning experience for all involved.

For your information:
If you’d like to contact me, you can write, call or e-mail me. You may also watch some of my progress as I document it on my World-Wide Web site (the Internet.)

Jeremy Fretts          email:  00jcfretts@bsu.edu
Swinford Hall          web:  http://www.arch.bsu.edu/jfretts/thesis.html
Muncie, IN 47306
(765) 214-9054
(765) 285-2521 (architecture studio)
What is your relationship to Albany? How long have you lived here, etc.
• Moved there (to nearby farm) in 197_. Built house.

Albany history.
• Albany Glass - old timers are very proud of, even though it only existed a few years.
• Many families where multiple generations have lived here
• December Christmas festivals, everyone puts out luminaries and had parade this year.
• Lion Club halloween parade, kids and pets participate.

How would you describe Albany and the people who live in and around it?
• Old timers are VERY proud of Albany and care for each other. Care seems to be a hallmark, though it is always manifested quietly and almost anonymously. Quietly look out for each other.
• Retired men and businessmen 2:00 coffee at “THE restaurant”

Your lifestyle description, including interests, where and how you spend your time.
• Farm Bureau carry-in dinners monthly, held at Lions club building - the only real meeting room in town. (20 people)
• In charge of Library volunteers

What are your favorite places in Albany?
• The library! All-volunteer, so all those volunteering feel a sense of pride and ownership, all contribute in their own ways. Gives people something to do, chance to get out. Trouble paying rent monthly.
• McCords 5&10

What are your least favorite places in Albany?

What are your favorite places? Buildings? (anywhere) Why?
• Log cabin/lodge with great big fieldstone fireplace - feels cozy, implies warmth.
• College Avenue sanctuary on Christmas Eve

What is good in Albany?
• Winter skating in the park
• Feeling of safety, small town values
What is bad?

What is there a need for in Albany?

- This project! A place that is open everyday where people can gather and interact.
- Preserving the old information and developing for the new-good solid advance planning
- A place where people can get information
- A local newspaper
- A place to keep community resources/keep history alive - perhaps including video library of old-timers
- place to hold family reunions
- place to display local history

Where do you most frequently run into people you know?

- at “The” restaurant, probably also at the other local restaurants
- Minar’s IGA

What are Albany’s “community treasures?”

- Library
- Rosemary Hart - community involver - founder of Christmas luminaries and more. Spunky antique dealer.
- Mrs. Murray - 90 yr old who still mows vacant fields, etc.
- Mary Montgomery -
- McCords - can get anything there! Still smells like dusty, nutty wood floors. Sells good candy. Older ladies as clerks.
- VFD/EMT - best emergency service in the state

Tell me about newcomers to town.

- Received well. But left alone until they reach out, generally.
- Hard to make contact when not involved in a local church
- One new couple just moved in B/C wanted small town, safety, good values, good place to raise kids. Husband works in job that requires to travel an area including Indy.
- No racial diversity but no obvious distaste for such
- Some distaste for residents of the trailer court.

To you, what would make the ideal community? What are your goals for Albany?
Packing list:
- Camera
- Videocamera
- Newsprint
- Maps
- Notes
- Pictures?
- Tablet - sign in

7:30 Meet, introductions
   • Who I am, where from, why interested in Albany
   • Introduction to project
     • Community center
     • Plan for future recreational/commercial/residential development in downtown
   • This morning’s process: (from below), and OK to disagree! This is brainstorming!

---

Breakfast & Acquaintance
   • “Tell me about Albany, and about how you are a part of it.”
   • Albany history
   • Who lives in Albany? How are newcomers received?
   • Personal info
   • Community Treasures, Unique to Albany - if could name 1 thing
   • Favorite places in Albany, anywhere

Brainstorming
   • Town master plan - look at the maps - what should be where?
   • Needs
   • Community center uses, functions, users, program
   • Ideal Albany in 10 years?
Designing for Community: Design Play

Info-center interiors

"Info-Bar" terminal stations and circulation desk

Use of drop ceilings to offer scale, define spaces

Work pods for telecommuters/application computer rental
Designing for Community: Design Play

Technology as image

Core + organic perimeter

Computers
Fiber optics
Information
Communications
Designing for Community: Design Play

Human(e) spaces

- Materials texture
- High-quality illumination and daylight
- Low, private spaces
- Grand public spaces
- Niches
- Colors

Interaction

- Welcoming/embracing

Intersection of activities
- coffee, e-mail, circulation desk,
  video totem at crossing of spaces

Info-totem pole 1

Info coffee-table - based on Steelcase power/
communications node - table with connections
Designing for Community:
Preliminary Design
Designing for Community: Design Play

Park-town link/transition

Screens, panels, posters

raised to height of nearby buildings

as part of a procession of verticals?

festive facade-matching study

nature + city = design

add technology
Designing for Community: Design Play

Civic building/urban edge

curved facades that respond to historic context, yet provide new elements

daylighting the old-fashioned way

Traditional public imagery

Simple, public edge. Like people of Albany - simple, traditional on exterior, caring, progressive on interior.

Flexible space, inexpensive construction

Plazas, framed streets, buildings, and plantings
Village as Social Catalyst

Then

1. Public Square:
   (social and commerce)
   out of need
   no transportation

2. Streets
   (framework of the context)
   create a network to
   layout home/business

3. Buildings
   (physical statement of its culture)
   each structure a proud
   lifetime investment

4. Villagers
   (People contribute to the community)
   living character of a lifestyle
   that involves permanence,
   history, and voice.

Now

1. Public Amenity:
   (business and entertainment)
   out of convenience
   accessibility by car

2. Incidental Passages from A to B
   (voids between amenities)
   areas of potential
   unintended interaction

3. Shells for interior activities
   (method of orchestrating needs)
   a necessary and cheap
   requirement to operate

4. Users
   (take from what/where they can)
   exploiter of amenities
   temporarily residing
   leaving little imprint.

Red + Black = Intersections

The human aspect + The technological Aspect = Tele-communications

Socialization + Business = Team Productivity Centers

Private + Public = Confrontation (Interaction)

Tele-commuter's Routine + Facilities Schedule of Activities = Shared Experience
(Spending Time on the Arm)

Playing Children + Parents working = Venue of Activity
(Viewing Children at play)

from Roszkai, Steve
HUMANE MEDIA(N)
Appendix E

Website

It is difficult to capture, in print form, the color and interactivity of a "web site." However, these print versions of my world-wide-web site are included to document my attempt to engage outside professionals in my thesis. Even after inviting several persons specifically to comment, I ceased updating the pages in mid-February due to lack of response from the outside world.
Background:

As an Architecture student at Ball State, I am required to do a thesis project during the Spring 1997 semester. These pages will document my process and progress from start to finish.

Your comments on my project would be most helpful!

The Thesis Question:

How can built forms encourage interpersonal interaction and "community" in a society in which persons are increasingly isolated from one another?

The Project:

To realize the investigation of the thesis in a designed form, I am currently considering two different projects:

1. A 21st century community center designed to encourage interaction among its users
2. A telecommuting center, which could be a community center as well. Of course, Kinko's has already established this building type in a crude form.
DESIGNING FOR COMMUNITY:
ENCOURAGING INTERACTION FOR THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

PROPOSAL CONTENTS: (hypertext links)

Abstract

Topic: Issues and Position

Project Description

Objectives: Schedule and Methodology

Context

Resources

Bibliography

RETURN TO THESIS HOMEPAGE

ABSTRACT

How can architecture, design, and the resulting built environment encourage "community" and interpersonal interaction in a society of individuals, reality amidst virtuality, place amidst placelessness, a "local village"
I have selected a site which will allow me to explore an existing small town which is a satellite to a larger city. Many residents of Albany, Indiana, regularly commute 15 or more miles to Muncie for work, recreation, church, and basic goods and services. This site will allow me to explore the town center as a new suburban hub, and develop a community center which allows the residents of Albany to relate to one another, in their own town.

While I initially was enamored with a series of vacant lots adjacent to the railroad in the center of town (because of the future transit possibilities and the non-cartesian angle), I have selected a site across from the post office and next to a fairly nice park which is poorly connected to the "main street" it adjoins. It is hoped that my community facility can bridge the downtown and the park, and encourage interaction by relating to these existing, utilized amenities.

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<td>I have selected a site which will allow me to explore an existing small town which is a satellite to a larger city. Many residents of Albany, Indiana, regularly commute 15 or more miles to Muncie for work, recreation, church, and basic goods and services. This site will allow me to explore the town center as a new suburban hub, and develop a community center which allows the residents of Albany to relate to one another, in their own town. While I initially was enamored with a series of vacant lots adjacent to the railroad in the center of town (because of the future transit possibilities and the non-cartesian angle), I have selected a site across from the post office and next to a fairly nice park which is poorly connected to the &quot;main street&quot; it adjoins. It is hoped that my community facility can bridge the downtown and the park, and encourage interaction by relating to these existing, utilized amenities.</td>
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thesis index

- Thesis Home
- Thesis Proposal
- Work and ideas to date
- Discussion of the week
- Working Bibliography
- Comments Received
Designing for Community

Discussion of the Week

February 2, 1997
This week
I am:

- Analyzing my selected site near a park in the small town of Albany, Indiana.
- Meeting with residents of Albany, possibly in a group setting which would allow true facilitation of the community-building model I will encourage in my published thesis.

This week's questions:

- What facilities should be included in a "community center" for a rural small town with many residents who commute elsewhere to work?
- What general civic amenities will such a small town need as telecommunications reshapes its future?

Please respond to these questions via e-mail. Thanks for your interest!

Past Questions:

- The heart of the thesis: how might the built environment influence interpersonal interaction and help create a sense of community? Any thoughts? Any suggestions of places to visit or research?
- What type of project is best suited to showcase/explore how the built environment can encourage community?

Please respond to these questions via e-mail. Thanks for your interest!
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<th>PERSONAL</th>
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Last updated February 2, 1997
00jcfretts@bswvcsusu.edu
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<td><strong>From:</strong> Rev. Dr. Thomas Whitehead</td>
<td>Thesis Proposal</td>
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<td>I was quite impressed with what I read. I am fascinated by the philosophical and theological dimensions of your project. Although you don't mention it by name, your thesis suggests ways in which architecture can find structural ways to deal with the fragmentation and splintering effect of our postmodern culture.</td>
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ARCHITECTURE  PERSONAL  FAITH  e-mail

This document is part of an in-progress work.

"Community" image courtesy of New Song Community Church, Baltimore, MD

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