EAST CENTRAL NEIGHBORHOOD SERVICES CENTER

A SOCIAL SERVICES CENTER FOR FORT WAYNE, INDIANA

COLLEGE OF ARCHITECTURE & PLANNING
BALL STATE UNIVERSITY      MUNCIE, INDIANA

ROBERT JOHN GLUSENKAMP      MAY, 1983
This brochure was designed to give an overview of the architectural thesis project. It focuses on project choice, description, influences and considerations, and the solution achieved following thirty weeks of research, design, and presentation work.
To my parents, for their love and devotion.

To Linda, for her faith and love.
The neighborhood multi-service center is a facility that incorporates various social agencies under one roof. Its purpose is to give the surrounding community needed services as well as providing a center for gathering, recreation, interaction, entertainment, etc.

The facility is typically maintained and administered by various city and county agencies, frequently aided by a neighborhood task force. The concept is to promote interaction among area residents and with the various administering agencies. This involvement and interaction is needed to promote and strengthen existing social ties within the community.

Community residents benefit by having easily accessible agencies and by social interaction. A primary goal for the center is to strengthen and upgrade the surrounding community.
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INTRODUCTION

This thesis involves the research and design of a neighborhood social services center. The facility will contain services for neighboring residents including: counseling, day care, health, public gathering, and retail. The center is located in the East Central Neighborhood in Fort Wayne, Indiana. This neighborhood was once a very established and thriving community. Recent years have brought poverty, racial disturbances, property deterioration and vacancy to the neighborhood. As a result, the greatest tragedy has been loss of services for the residents, and loss of community identity for the neighborhood.

The purpose for the services center is therefore obvious. By providing a facility that offers the needed services in a manner that can be controlled and maintained by the neighborhood, it is my hope that this notion of community identity can begin to re-instill itself in the neighborhood.
This thesis is the research and development of a neighborhood services center. It is located in the East Central Neighborhood in Fort Wayne, Indiana. The facility will provide social services ranging from retail to medical and legal consultation, to child and elderly day care.

I chose this particular building type to study as my thesis project for a variety of reasons:
- This building type by its very nature is typically institutional in its character and image. It was my intent to create a more design oriented solution to the problem. I felt a stronger emphasis should be given to the user, the site, and the surrounding context of the facility.
- The East Central Neighborhood was once a strong and thriving residential community. Due to the migration to more "suburban" areas the neighborhood has since deteriorated and has lost much of its original zeal and character. The neighborhood is now lacking a sense of community pride. It is my hope that a project such as this would help to reinstate this notion of community pride for the surrounding residents by giving them a facility that would respond to their needs and activities.
- This type of facility is actually composed of many different building types. I felt that studying such a facility would be an interesting and valuable learning experience, concentrating my solution on the development and expression of each individual building type while relating to the other building types to create a cohesive whole.
- The success of such a project is largely determined by its contextual response. It was my intent in choosing a thesis project that would allow me to create an architectural solution that was sensitive to the user, the site, and surrounding context. I do not feel that a successful solution need be an "architectural screamer" that strives to overwhelm.
The East Central Neighborhood (ECN) is an old and established neighborhood. It played a vital role in the history of Fort Wayne as one of the first areas to develop. The neighborhood is adjacent to the CBD and is bounded by the Maumee River to the north, the Norfolk and Western Railroad to the south, Anthony Boulevard to the east, and Lafayette Street to the west.

Throughout the early 1800's the northwestern portion of ECN grew as a residential area. The southern portion of the neighborhood developed into the middle and late 1800's as working men's housing.

The turn of the century brought changes to the ECN. Minority population rapidly increased. By this time the area was clearly a working class residential neighborhood.

Due to the influence of the automobile and economic growth of the downtown area, many of the older, large residences of the neighborhood were converted or replaced by numerous commercial establishments. This restructuring of the ECN was most noticeable during the first decades of this century and held true until World War II. The years following WWII marked dramatic changes in the population characteristics of the ECN. From the late Forties into the Sixties there was a large outward migration of Whites to the suburban areas. During this same time the population of Blacks in the area rose sharply. The late Sixties and early Seventies left the neighborhood comprised primarily of lower income Black families while the more affluent continued their outward migration. The Seventies left the area in a state of vacancy and deterioration. More recently many steps have been taken to upgrade the quality of ECN as a residential community.

Through the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program sponsored by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and administered through the city's Department of Community Development and Planning (CD&P), East Central Neighborhood became one of the city's original strategy areas (NSA). To date, the program has provided funding for a wide range of physical improvements in East Central, such as street lights, curbs, sidewalks and housing rehabilitation. Other residential activities helping to turn the tide in East Central are Lincoln Life's Improved Housing Program, the Summit Street Urban Design Program and East Central Towers.
Population

During the Seventies, East Central Neighborhood's total population decreased from 7,752 in 1970 to 5,316 in 1974. By 1977, East Central Neighborhood's population had fallen to 4,375. More recently there has been an increase, largely due to East Central Towers.

Race

The most significant change in ECN's population has been the large decrease of White residents between 1960 & 1970, a drop from 5,260 to 2,410. During the same time the Black population remained relatively stable, approximately 70% of the total population.

Age

From 1960 to 1970 there was also a decrease in both elderly and school age children. In 1970 there were 768 people age 65 or over, roughly 10% of the total. (There has been a marked increase in the number of elderly since 1979 with the construction of East Central Towers).

The number of residents 18 and under fell from 3,716 in 1960 to 2,855 in 1970. This number has since remained relatively stable.

Income

The average income of an ECN resident increased from $7,824 in 1970 to $11,437 in 1977. The city's average rose from $10,085 to $14,664. The ECN average has remained approximately 22% lower than the city average.

Unemployment

The most recent figures for this category are from 1978 with 8.45% unemployed. Due to the current recession this figure is obviously outdated. The fact remains that high unemployment coupled with a low median income and a high number of welfare recipients, East Central can easily be described as a low-income neighborhood.

Vacant Land

Vacant land entails a total of 64 acres in East Central which represents 12% of the neighborhood's entire land acreage. Much of this vacant land is the result of demolition, an activity that has been carried out in the neighborhood over the past two decades.
### Housing Conditions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Condition</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sound</td>
<td>614</td>
<td>(46.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minor Repair</td>
<td>569</td>
<td>42.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Major Repair</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>9.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critical</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Structural Survey City of Fort Wayne, 1979

### Park Facilities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Park</th>
<th>Acres</th>
<th>Facilities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Berry Street</td>
<td>.30</td>
<td>playground</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brackenridge</td>
<td>.38</td>
<td>basketball court</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EAST CENTRAL</td>
<td>3.70</td>
<td>playground, tennis court, picnic area, ball diamond, basketball court</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hanna Homestead</td>
<td>2.50</td>
<td>playground, shelter, ball diamond, open area, basketball court, picnic area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lafayette</td>
<td>.24</td>
<td>tot lot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>McCulloch Center</td>
<td>.75</td>
<td>picnic area, basketball court, playground, recreation center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Old Fort</td>
<td>.20</td>
<td>historic marker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summit Street</td>
<td>.34</td>
<td>tot lot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>River Edge</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>riverfront</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Occupation
ECN has a total of 634 (39%) unskilled and service operators followed by a significantly large number of retired individuals, 386 (24%). Professional and managerial occupations also numbered relatively high with 205 positions (12.6%). However, this is due largely to Three Rivers Apartments and is not representative of the neighborhood as a whole.

NEIGHBORHOOD STRENGTHS
1. Potential for new land development.
2. Maumee River frontage along northern edge of the neighborhood links ECN to the city's river greenway/recreational corridor.
3. The Summit Street Design Project has established a positive image for a portion of the neighborhood.
4. Housing rehabilitation projects through Neighborhood Care, Inc., and Lincoln Life Improved Housing have upgraded the neighborhood housing stock.
5. East Central Towers/East Central Gardens provides housing for the elderly and an incentive for other property investments.
6. Industrial areas are generally separated from residential areas and have access to rail lines.
7. ECN is located in close proximity to Fort Wayne's downtown.
8. Capital improvements (sidewalks, curbs, street lights, alley and driveway improvements) have upgraded the liveability of the neighborhood.
9. ECNA provides the residents of EC with an effective means of citizen involvement in neighborhood affairs and local government.
10. The neighborhood has a large number of architecturally and historically significant structures.
WEAKNESSES

1. Unused vacant lots are located throughout the neighborhood.
2. Heavy volumes of vehicular traffic along Berry, Wayne, Washington, and Jefferson/Maumee fragment the neighborhood.
3. Housing deterioration.
4. Rental properties are often poorly maintained by landlords.
5. A conventional housing market is almost non-existant in ECN.
6. Many properties are littered with garbage, junk, refuse, and other forms of environmental blight.
7. Property demolitions have adversely affected the residential character of the neighborhood.
8. East Central does not have a shopping facility which provides convenient shopping facilities (grocery store, pharmacy, hardware store, etc.) to local residents.
9. ECN has no public school facility.
10. The neighborhood is plagued by a large amount of criminal activity.
11. The neighborhood is adversely affected by racial and economic segregation.
12. The neighborhood is burdened with a high rate of unemployment and a significantly large number of individuals on public welfare.
13. The number of businesses has continued to decrease in the neighborhood.
14. The perceived image of ECN as a place to live is poor.
15. ECN has a high housing vacancy rate.

* From the East Central Neighborhood Plan
### SQUARE FOOTAGES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Square Feet</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Administration</td>
<td>900 sq. ft.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counseling</td>
<td>1150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Day Care</td>
<td>5400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dental</td>
<td>1350</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kitchen/Storage</td>
<td>1050</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal</td>
<td>1025</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loading</td>
<td>450</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mechanical Room/Storage</td>
<td>5400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical</td>
<td>1100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multipurpose Rooms</td>
<td>2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical Therapy</td>
<td>1350</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail</td>
<td>6000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>26,815</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

+15%  
4,022

**30,837**
BUILDING FUNCTIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BUILDING</th>
<th>FUNCTIONS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Administration</td>
<td>Overseeing the entire facility. Management of rental spaces and multi-purpose rooms. Controls and monitors supplies and finances.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counseling</td>
<td>General counseling concerning stress, unemployment, marital relations, etc. Includes a switchboard to monitor neighboring residents phone calls.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Day Care</td>
<td>Center that provides daytime care for preschool children as well as the elderly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dental</td>
<td>Small clinic to help promote dental care. Services include examinations, treatment and referrals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kitchen</td>
<td>Area to provide hot lunches to the elderly and needy residents from the neighborhood. Also provides meals/banquet services for neighborhood group meetings in the facility.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal</td>
<td>Provides space for legal advice and consultations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loading</td>
<td>Area for receiving office and kitchen supplies for the facility.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multi-Purpose</td>
<td>Space for meetings, conferences, display, eating, neighborhood plays, recitals, movies, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical</td>
<td>Space for examination, consultation, minor treatment, and referrals. Shares waiting room with counseling, legal, dental, and physical therapy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical Therapy</td>
<td>Exercise and treatment area for the neighborhood's elderly and physically impaired.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail</td>
<td>Four 1500 sq. ft. rental areas for neighboring residents to lease. Possible outlet services might include a hardware store, pharmacy, small grocery store, etc.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
PROJECT GOALS

- Provide a facility that will help to re-instill a sense of community pride for the neighborhood.
- Create a "bridge" or "link" that will help to reconnect the neighborhoods into a whole.
- Provide services in a welcoming atmosphere.
  --inviting
  --"non institutional"
- Create a "pedestrian place" in an area oriented for vehicular transportation.
- Create a facility that could be eventually realized by the neighborhood in terms of cost, materials, and construction.
- Respect the scale, materials, and fabric of the community.
Neighborhood Context

The East Central Neighborhood is located adjacent to Fort Wayne's Central Business District. Its boundaries are the Maumee River (N), the Norfolk and Western Railroad (S), Anthony Blvd. (E) and Lafayette St. (W). The environment is that of a lower income, inner city neighborhood. There is a substantial amount of deterioration and vacancy in the area. The neighborhood as of now lacks identity socially and architecturally.

In choosing a site for the facility, I felt the following notions were critical:

- Centrally located within the neighborhood.
- Located near a maximum variety of housing types i.e. single as well as multi-family dwellings.
- Spacious enough to accommodate the building as well as large areas for outdoor spaces, such as a playground or plazas.

As a result I chose the site bordered by Washington St. (N), Jefferson St. (S), Maumee Ave. (E) and Francis St. (W).

The site was the former site of Harmar Public School. This is important because it shows the site is a focus for the community. It is surrounded by single family residences and by government assisted multi-family dwellings.

In analyzing the site there were a number of critical issues to contend with:

A. Accessibility

The site splits Highway 30 with westbound traffic to the north and eastbound traffic to the south. Both of these boulevards are heavily trafficked. As a result, the site is an "island" between the northern and southeran sectors of the neighborhood. There is also no strong pedestrian nodes.
or corridors at the present time.

B. Environment

The physical environment is that of a lower income, inner city neighborhood. The site is surrounded by single and multi-family residences. There is also a senior citizens/handicapped complex immediately to the northeast. Most of these dwellings are well kept in terms of physical appearance. There are a few commercial establishments surrounding the site that include: A barber shop, styling salon, bar, candle factory/outlet, and a used electronic equipment store. There is also a church directly south of the site.

Although the general appearance of the neighborhood is well kept, it is in strong need for a unifying element, an element or space that will serve the people in the neighborhood.

C. Size

The site chosen is approximately 150,000 sq. ft. The facility will cover approximately 30,000 sq. ft., leaving ample room for parking, recreation, plazas, a playground, etc.

D. Regional Nodes

The site is five blocks due east of Fort Wayne's Central Business District.
Throughout the design process I went through a variety of schemes for the facility. Shown on the following pages are a representation of these schemes. I have included my notes listing strengths and weaknesses for each scheme. I included these schemes to allow the reader to more easily follow my thoughts and goals for the facility in the design process.
WEAKNESSES

- weak orientation in regards to service and exterior circulation
- massing is poor
- no "front door"
- relationships of building parts are poor

STRENGTHS

- maximizes street frontage
- begins to establish north-south link
WEAKNESSES

- poor interior-exterior relationship
- "front door" not main focus
- difficult to service
- exterior spaces unprotected

STRENGTHS

- maximizes street and southern exposure
- strong north-south link
WEAKNESSES

- small amount of street frontage
- fragmented exterior spaces
- difficult to service
- leaves path unprotected

STRENGTHS

- strong north-south link
- strong central element - "front door"
WEAKNESSES

.fragmented spaces
.no strong centralizing element

STRENGTHS

.strong north-south link
.maximizes street frontage
.clear zoning
WEAKNESSES

- no strong central space for gathering
- no real hierarchy
- confusing circulation
- fragmented exterior spaces

STRENGTHS

- strong north-south link
- sympathetic to site lines
WEAKNESSES

- Fragmenting reduces hierarchy
- Fights site orientation
- Day care is too isolated
- Little street frontage

STRENGTHS

- Exterior spaces protected by building form
- Strong north-south link
- Maximizes southern exposure
WEAKNESSES

- fragmented exterior spaces
- disrupts visual access, north-south
- form is forced

STRENGTHS

- compact circulation
- interior relationships are strong
- creates "front door"
- interior to exterior circulation is strong
Throughout the design process, I feel there were many issues that helped to influence and mold my project into its "final" stage.

First, the site itself was a major consideration in the design process. Its irregular form and location offered many advantages and disadvantages.

I felt it was very important to create a major pedestrian corridor "connecting" the multi-unit dwellings to the north with the church and single family dwellings to the south. This corridor became a spine for the building from to grow from. I also felt strongly about exploiting the southern edge by incorporating plazas and recreation, which allows more solar access. The site lent itself well to this notion with the southern edge stretching over 700 feet.

At the same time, I began looking at the formal organization of the building parts. The zoning for the facility followed the relationships to the surrounding facility and the axis set by the site. The medical sector of the facility was located to the north for its location to the senior citizens complex and also for easy access to vehicular traffic/parking.

The retail sector was located to the south to balance the form and was also used to draw people into the facility from the plaza and recreational areas of the site.

The public spaces were located in the central area between the medical and retail sectors for a variety of reasons:

1. The meeting spaces are meant to be the heart of the facility. It is an area where all of the people come together for meetings, exhibits, movies, plays, etc.

2. By its central location, it was very accessible to pedestrian traffic, parking, the drop-off area on Maumee Avenue, and for service access from the west.

3. It serves as a reinforcement or extension of the north-south spine.

The day care sector was detached due to greater noise and activity levels. It is easily accessible from the vehicular drop off on Maumee Avenue. The position of the day care building also helped to form a pedestrian gate at the southern edge of the site.

Another consideration in the design was the accessibility for elderly and handicapped people. Due to the large surface area offered by the site,
I felt it was appropriate for all of the public spaces at grade level. Mechanical and storage spaces are located below grade, underneath the meeting and cafeteria spaces.

I feel this scheme for the facility offers many advantages:

1. A clearly defined circulation system
2. Successful zoning of building parts
3. Easy access for pedestrian and vehicular traffic
4. Ample space for outdoor activities
5. A strong relationship to the surrounding context
6. Creation of a "pedestrian place"

PARTI

The parti is based upon reinforcing the link or bridge, between the existing neighborhoods. The circulation and building form is a result of creating a major visual connection and pedestrian 'street' between the multi-unit dwellings to the north with the church and single family residences to the south.

MATERIALS

The materials, as well as scale and form, were of major considerations in response to the surrounding context. Ceramic panels were chosen for their ability to break down scale as well as to maintain some of the character of neighborhood structures. The glazing was designed to promote maximum indoor-outdoor relationships. The 3' pre-cast concrete panels at grade were used to give a uniform line to the building as well as to give the building a base to "sit" on. The metal grills on the west facade are designed to reflect the horizontality of the building. The metal roofing on the gabled circulation paths is "Bermuda" type roofing, again the seam lines
accentuating the horizontality of the project.

STRUCTURE

The structural system is comprised of steel columns and open web joists based on a 30' x 30' grid. A double column exists (see drawing) where the gabled circulation system intersects the flat roof of the building volume. This double column system proved to be very successful in function as well as in formal expression. The columns can be enclosed for mechanical chases, used for display, (see retail plan) and can be used to incorporate signage.

SYSTEMS

Mechanical systems are distributed throughout the facility within chases (provided by the double columns) and ceiling joists in the structural system.

The west facade of the facility uses the intake and exhaust grills to help accentuate the horizontal lines of the facade.
At this point in time, I have no hard and fast rules governing my philosophy of architecture. Throughout my five years I have sought to create solutions that were sensitive to the user, the site, and the surrounding context. I look at each project as a fresh, new problem.

I feel that as I approach entering the profession, I am on the threshold of my education. I now possess the tools to begin learning.
By no means can a single facility correct all the wrongs and injustices in a community. Rather, it is a beginning. A means to raise people's consciousness about their community and for the city as a whole.

This project was a search in giving a stimulating character and image to a building type that is typically institutional by its nature. It was my goal to help upgrade the surrounding neighborhood with such a facility.

I feel confident that the character, image, and scale of this project is appropriate to the site and surrounding context.

I am most satisfied with the building's link to the church and to the senior citizen's complex. I feel the success for this project lies in tying the existing community centers to my proposed project. The proposed center cannot function in a vacuum. It must rely on and help to upgrade established programs and activities in the neighborhood.
Paul Lasseau
-studio critic

Jeff Culp
-mechanical and structural

Jeff Hall
-landscape architecture

Alfredo Missair
-outside critic for guidance in the design process

Fort Wayne Department of Community Development and Planning

My brothers and sisters

Evelyn DeBolt

My classmates

My Lord and Savior

for love and a much needed sense of humor

for the fantastic typing job

for the love and guidance needed to complete this endeavor
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