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The primary goal of this project was to explore the complexities of inserting a major building within the existing urban fabric of a major public space. A vacant lot on Monument Circle in Indianapolis provided a site with as many constraints as anyone would wish to deal with in a thesis project. Besides having a strong existing building fabric, the Circle is an important public space supporting many activities year round. Some constraints are: the shape of the site, which has a minimum of exposed, or street sides; a legislated height limit; and unknown development on the surrounding sites.

A NEW CITY TO REPLACE THE OLD
Besides the physical factors, the aspect of downtown development is not to be overlooked. Recent projects such as the Hoosier Dome, the AUL Tower, 2 West Washington, and proposals such as White River Park, the Union Station remodel, a downtown shopping mall and an NFL team for the stadium, show hope for a renewed downtown but add to the complexity of designing for this site.

With these constraints in mind, it was decided to investigate possible uses for the site. After consulting the Department of Metropolitan Development's Plan for the City Through the Year 2000 and Hamer, Silar, George's Economic Forecast for Indianapolis, the need for hotel rooms in the capital city became apparent. The challenge then became to integrate the functions of a hotel in the context of what is, in terms of image, probably the most important site in Indianapolis. The goals were to create a design that would enhance the physical context of the Circle and provide a unique hotel experience.
The Hamer, Silar, George report gave shape to the type of hotel. As stated in the report, the need for hotel rooms will become acute by the year 1990 if the stadium gains an NFL franchise, and if the White River Park becomes a reality. The short term need being somewhat less. Currently, the report states, rooms at the upper end of the price range have a higher occupancy rate. This would indicate a need for more rooms in the upper price range. This set the program as an exercise in providing a unique hotel experience in all aspects and integrating it into the site while suggesting possible uses for the surrounding sites.

The program became somewhat ambiguous as the functional requirements ruled the shape of the hotel interior. Roughly the aim was to provide an upper level hotel for the traveling businessperson. Recent trends in business have given us a different type of traveler. This person will be staying at a hotel for several days, conducting business in his room, and need more support from staff and services. This business man does not have the same needs of the Holiday Inn traveller. Therefore support is designed in for private conference rooms, special dining and most importantly, a room that responds to contemporary business needs including a total ambiance that means successful business. This is interpreted as slightly conservative yet up-to-date.
The site is definitely part of the image of success. Overlooking the Monument, it is directly opposite the Columbia Club, a club/hotel that is similar in program but not line (read not keeping up with the times). This new hotel must present a face that says up-to-date successful, yet in keeping with the enclosure that makes the circle such a successful space. It should be memorable, respectful of its neighbors yet separate. With these thoughts in mind, the project was begun.

First Columbia Club, the former home of William H. Morrison (Bass Photo)

Columbia Club Formally Enters Its New Home

Columbia Club dedication on New Year's Eve 1900. Photo-caricature pictures of distinguished guests
Victory Arch. South entrance of Circle. Built to welcome home returning soldiers of World War I. Girls scattering flowers: Anna Marie Gall, Mary Freda Brown, Mary Catherine Coulter, Mary Hogan, Ethel Brill, Clarisse Wells, Caroline Coffin, Margaret Cathedral, Philomena Haney, Catherine Tannor, Josephine Herrn, Mrs. John Jamison, Mrs. Nible Dean, Mrs. Charles Schae. (Boss Photo)

Birds-eye view of Monument Circle (Indiana Historical Society Library)
As we cross Market Street to the southeast corner, we are on the site of the Circle Tower Building. The first payment of $10 on this lot (number 11, square 56) was made by William New in 1827. William Hurt had made a payment on this lot in 1821, then apparently forfeited it. William Lingenfelter bought New out and made the final payment to the agent of state in 1831. The total cost was about $100. Lingenfelter kept a boarding house here as early as 1815 and the family held the property until 1873 according to deeds, though the City Directory still lists them at that address in 1880.
Site Analysis

A NEW HOTEL ON THE CIRCLE
Top Class Facility
Well Designed
Gourmet Restaurant
Cocktail Lounge / Entertainment
Worthy of the Most Valuable Piece of Real Estate in Indy

A Total, Sophisticated Hotel Experience
Fig. 12

SKY EXPOSURE PLANE TWO

200'

Allowable Envelope

150'

108'

Retail Mall

SKY EXPOSURE

Monument Circle

Washington St.

Court St.

A NEW HOTEL
ON THE CIRCLE

Site Analysis

Establish the Applicable S.P.

Establish the Lot Frontage Plane

Compute the "Used" Portion of the L.F.P.

"Used"  "Not Used"

"Used"  "Not Used"

Sky Exposure Plane Provisions

Air rights

Site

ALLOWABLE VARIANT
A NEW HOTEL ON THE CIRCLE
"there is more than one way to get from point A to point B"
Sure in some way material/color?

then add

club
entry
entry

palm court becomes piece??

private
rooms

west
public
The pieces are part of basic plane.

Then add...

and...

Some in some way material/color?

Then add

cd
ent
ent...
View into/out of
Sitting/Observing
Active/Observing
Sitting/Walking

Qualities
Sitting in
Sun/Space
Groups/Individual
Watching/Being

Performances
Individual/Groups
Sound/Be Yarn

Choose
1. Interact
2. Pass By

Activity
1. Performance
2. Planned/Unplanned

View to Monument
View to Trees
View to People
columns?

the pieces are part of back plane

then add...

and...
ENTOURAGE
1. VIP ROOMS
2. RETAIL AREAS
3. CONFERENCE CENTER
4. OUTDOOR AREAS

RETAIL

USE SAME PUBLIC SPACE PATTERN

ROOSEVELT PUB/G KENNOVATION

STRUCTURAL SYSTEM TO SUPPORT FACADE

OUTDOOR AREAS

THIRD FLOOR PLAN
The solution took shape during the course of the project through a slightly circuitous route but returned in the end as what I feel is a sympathetic and exciting addition to the Circle.

The Hotel is a vertical and horizontally layered space with public and semi-public spaces arranged at the ground floor and facing the circle, giving way as you move up and back to more private spaces. Different devices such as steps or stairs and walls penetrated with varying degrees of open and closedness are used to reinforce this space modulation.

When you enter the Hotel you have a choice at the foyer of three directions all visible through glass but up three steps. The public spaces, the retail and bar are the most open with the hotel being directly on axis ahead and through the most impressive of the choices. The bar and the retail open out on the circle to share their activities with it.

Entering into the hotel the impression is that you have entered into a courtyard as the atrium is surrounded with walls that suggest the building facade, the outside on the inside, emulating the Palace Hotel of San Francisco (now demolished) yet it is an interior courtyard. The window openings in these walls while suggesting the exterior also provide a feeling of privacy for guests while walking along the corridors.

In this courtyard you have the choice of three directions: straight ahead takes you to the front desk where you can register; to the right the Palm Court dining area to enjoy a casual meal while enjoying the courtyard or you can go to the left and reverse to ascend to the next level where a more intimate restaurant is located along with two conference rooms. The third level is slightly more private having the conference center and two private rooms facing the circle. Because of it's privacy it is reached by a grand stair, you take yourself there rather than having the building reach out and take you. Of course all these floors can be reached by elevator for easy handicapped access.

Above are the guest rooms and they are only reached by the elevator. The guest rooms were designed for a travelling business person and as such have things such as wardrobes for clothes one large bed that can be folded into a wall unit a seating area arranged so that business can be conducted if necessary in the room and a desk work area that would be
equipped with a comfortable chair and a computer terminal that can be made to hook to a company mainframe. This room size can also accommodate the traditional two double bed arrangement but it is doubtful if such an arrangement would be necessary. The rooms facing the circle are slightly larger than the other rooms and can justify this because they would be more expensive because of their location. At each end a guest room with a separate bedroom is provided for the guests that would want this feature.

Other amenities provided within this program include a conference center that could utilize the host of ever-changing electronic hook-ups with other centers to provide contemporary communications that is as advanced as the room equipment. Locating a health club on the roof of the retail and parking structure will provide the hotel guests with an opportunity to exercise while staying there. Tying this in with a proposed addition to the Roosevelt Building would give the club more members to draw support from and provide an additional perk to tenants of that expansion.

To the south of this project is the proposed retail mall. Early in the design process a connecting link was envisioned but as the hotel evolved into a quieter type of functioning space it was decided that only a minor connection to the mall would be established. This is at the second floor level and is designed to connect into the city's second level walkway connector. By doing this the necessary separation of functions can occur while still allowing access to the city through the walkway.
Realization of this project is the conclusion of twelve years of study, struggle, apathy, changes of direction in my life and finally completing the program I started in 1971. I feel comfortable with the concepts explored in this exercise. In my opinion the hotel would be a good neighbor on the Circle and would be a positive addition to downtown Indianapolis. In conclusion I would like to add: "it's been real Jack, thanks for your help."