Small Town Character
A Vision for Fortville, Indiana

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LA 404 Comprehensive Project
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Bibliography
Abstract

Contemporary issues distract residents and community leaders from appreciating the unique social and physical characteristics of their established community. Strong historical backgrounds provide a rich, identifiable character that allows a small town to change and meet the needs of a diverse population. A community's mindset, however, is that new structures, new forms, and new patterns of development are always better than historical structures, forms, and patterns. Without help, these communities lack the ability to move from a neglected historical town towards a viable future community. Fortville, Indiana, provides a perfect test case to address these issues. On a generic level, economics, social values, and political interests will be evaluated according to their relationship with the marketing and use of resources that are available within and outside the town of Fortville. Physical organization and aesthetic quality of the town core became the focus of the study.

Fortville is a small town of 2800 residents in east-central Indiana. The landscape architect was best suited to help the small town incorporate its explicit, historical town character and physical organization.
The character of a place, whether it be a street, park, or town, must be understood before any positive and influential design solutions can be attempted. Character is a descriptor often used, but one that is difficult to define. It is visual, but can't necessarily be drawn. It can be a conglomerate of emotions developed by memories of specific sites and places. These feelings create a portion of what the design professional calls “Character”. Webster’s Dictionary defines “character” as “the aggregate of properties and qualities that distinguishes one person or thing form another.” The question then becomes, what are those qualities that distinguish one small town from another?

A town can be broken into four basic components: a person or community as a whole, a space, the forms which define a space, and the time frame in which the space evolved. Together, these components form town character (figure 1.1). Each component can work independently of another. However, the character of a specific place is difficult to measure because of its complexity. For instance, if a plaza has the same number of people, and its spacial qualities are the same as last visited, but it is morning rather than evening, the place will have a slightly different character. The same can be said about any small town. If people’s attitudes and feelings are not the same as they once where, then the character of the town will change, slightly or drastically.

If towns are in a progressive state of change, how, then, can we maintain the character without “freezing the town in time”? Change is inevitable. Certain goals, guidelines, criteria, and a future vision became necessary to maintain the basic character of a place during its various cycles of change. The focus of this paper was, first, to analyze and define the character of the town, and second, to create a vision which responded to and respected the identified character of Fortville.
Figure 1.1 Character of a Place
Why are people building new towns when there are thousands of small towns across the country left to deteriorate? It evokes a powerful image that the small town of yesterday, with so much history and character, is being engulfed by suburban sprawl in the name of economic recovery. Is it also not strange that in an age of recycling and reuse, many Americans only see aluminum cans, paper, and plastic containers? Let us begin to look at the big picture. Town buildings can be converted to other uses, empty lots to leisure or recreation facilities, and the special places in each town can be preserved for their unique qualities. The market for recycled towns is here today! Many small towns offer ideas of small versus large, are physically convenient, and possess a regional identity that has developed since the first settlements.

Each town is different. Why? What makes each town valuable? Town character is an attribute by which a person responds mentally, physically, and emotionally to a given place. History is a process which develops and gives meaning to a place. Why do many towns choose to cover their visual history and identifiable character?

Finally, an important question to any designer is why do master plans tend only to mask, not solve, a town’s underlying problems? Any designer, even though experienced and knowledgeable on the subject, lacks the important memories and attachment of a life-long resident. Residents must be proud of their community, not because of a master plan, but from the time, investment, and implementation of the master plan.
The site selected for this research study was the town of Fortville, Indiana (figure 3.1). It is located in Hancock County approximately thirty miles north-east of downtown Indianapolis. Fortville sits on the axes of state roads 13, 67, and 234. These roads lead to the surrounding towns of Greenfield, Pendleton, and Noblesville, respectively.

![Regional Map of Fortville](image1)

**Figure 3.1: Regional Map of Fortville**

After analyzing and recommending a regional master plan, the thrust of the project will focus on Fortville’s town center located along Main Street from SR 67 north to Church Street (figure 3.2). Here the town’s character has been revealed through outdoor spaces, building additions, and areas created for daily, weekly, and seasonal events and festivals.

![Map of Fortville's Main Street](image2)

**Figure 3.2: Site Location along Main Street**
The site was chosen for many reasons. Raised in the town, I realize many of the problems change has brought over the past twenty years. Second, I chose Fortville because of its regional attributes. It is close to the larger cities of Anderson, Noblesville, and Indianapolis, while smaller communities of Fishers, Lapel, McCordsville, and Greenfield provide important regional connections both physically and economically. At the same time, Fortville is isolated enough to separate itself from the surrounding communities. The town core has prominent historical characteristics often shaped by a still used railroad corridor.

Fortville, however, has no outstanding physical landscapes such as a river, lake, or major topographical change within the town limits. Its landscape represents the town character by accenting the idiosyncrasies which make it small.
Historical Overview

Long before the discovery of America, the idea of community and "small town" shaped the global community of today. We, as Americans, consider small towns to be trite or even obsolete in the search of greater truths. The Greeks, however, found small communities full of philosophy, commerce, and drama (Williams 7). Plato and Aristotle both believed that communities should be a small place. Small towns can again become a place in which the discovery of greater truths can occur.

In America, during the 18th century, small towns spread across the landscape for both isolation and regional convenience. Towns were placed on the average of a day's round-trip from a county seat. This round-trip distance of approximately twenty miles included a farmer's travel to and from the county seat (Smith 188). Paved highways and automobiles began to destroy this organizational logic and identity by allowing the farmer, and consumer, to travel longer distances for lower prices (Smith 90). Thus the town citizen became dependent on goods within a larger regional context. Even today, in Kosciusko County, Indiana, a woman drives twenty miles (a forty mile round-trip) to shop at the Warsaw Walmart because "price and selection make her long commute worthwhile" (Rawn 59).

Small Town Character

It is inevitable that change will stop! Minute by minute history reshapes our communities. The history of a small town should be harnessed, not hindered. Clara Miller, in her article, Local History as a Guide to Planning, states that, "...local history is the small town's memory...for use in making plans, in solving problems, or in manifesting 'character'.” Manteo, North Carolina, is an excellent example of how Randy Hester examines town character by the identification of sacred spaces. Manteo needed economic revitalization. The development of a proposed waterfront park would attract tourists to the small town.
Through further analysis, this idea would only destroy the residents' daily use patterns as well as the town's character (Hester, Landscapes of ...15).

A town's character may also be conveyed through its architectural forms. A graphic interpretation (Figure 4.1) in the January 1979 edition of *Small Town* shows many changes that can occur to a building's facade through time. Small town character, therefore, must be analyzed in terms of the emotional feelings it cultivates and the physical forms which represent character.

![Image of buildings]

Figure 4.1: Change from 1979 January edition of *Small Town*.

**Physical Organization**

Events and history are not the only things that shape small towns. Physical organization of a town's elements is a major component in social and economic town development (Miller 4). The way in which buildings are placed, roads laid, and trees planted impact how a resident uses a small town space (Craycroft 99). Randy Hester has analyzed, in detail, many spaces in Manteo. Mr. Hester did studies of both teenagers on the docks and interaction at the post office as seen in figures 4.2 and 4.3.
Figure 4.2 Change from 1979 edition of Small Town

Figure 4.3 Diagram from 1990 Jan / Feb edition of Small Town
These detailed thumbnail sketches of activity show how the organization of building and open space shape residents' activities. These patterns were later used as design criteria for the town master plan (Hester, Landstyles...83).

Old versus New

It has taken decades for a small towns to develop their character and physical organization. Over the years developers and designers have tried to build ideal communities, many of which are based on small towns. Neo-traditional towns, such as Kentlands, and, most recently, Laguna West, California, have modeled many of the design characteristics after historical small towns. Along the Connecticut River Valley in Massachusetts, rapid, unplanned growth has produced a pattern of subdivisions and multi-unit dwellings unrelated to surrounding resources and landscapes. “This expansion now threatens to overwhelm the sense of place and visual qualities that have evolved for over 300 years.” These small towns that dot the landscape are ill-equipped to deal with rapid, unplanned growth which rakes the town of its character (Yaro 7). Residents of small towns need not choose between old and new, but can combine them into a progressive modification of old in which a person “...can leave a personal mark alongside the marks of history” (Lynch 39).
Summary of Review

Small towns continue to remain the dominant form of American communities (Williams 8). Even though each is small in terms of population, they dominate state roads and highways across the nation. When planning and designing for future changes, the designer must take into consideration the differences between the urban metropolis and a small town, which is easily disrupted by rapid change. Each is different. Within the urban framework, much of the interaction between people is impersonal, formal, and task-oriented. The small town, however, is based on daily cooperation, intimacy, and contact (Zupf 5). As the small town, therefore, is different from the city, so each small town is different from another. Each community must demonstrate the character which separates it from the next.
chapter 5
Problem Statement

Contemporary issues distract residents and community leaders from appreciating the unique social and physical characteristics of their established community. Strong historical backgrounds provide a rich, identifiable character that allows a small town to change and meet the needs of a diverse population. A community's mindset, however, is that new structures, new forms, and new patterns of development are always better than historical structures, forms, and patterns. Without help, these communities lack the ability to move from a neglected historical town towards a viable future community. Economics, social values, political interests, and physical organization are many of the problems which need to be addressed.

The landscape architect is best suited to help the small town incorporate its explicit, historical town character and physical organization into a flexible master plan. A common vision will be the guideline by which other problems can be addressed and measured, therefore, providing the necessary foundation for a high quality of life.
Goals

* The character of the town including the evidence of historically and aesthetically physical forms, patterns, and structures will be maintained so that the town becomes an identifiable place while still allowing change to occur in the community.

* The project will be a catalyst for renewing community involvement for the maintenance and oversight of the town's future character.

* Fortville will understand, through an inventory and analysis of the area, the available goods, services, and resources special to the area. These products will be marketed to residents and visitors in a way which responds to the character and identifies Fortville as a place.

* The master plan will add to the quality of life by providing spaces characteristic of the town, therefore, promoting social interaction among users.

Assumptions

* Residents lack the ability to appreciate, understand, or apply attributes of their social and physical heritage to issues of contemporary development and growth.

* Few residents and community leaders are knowledgeable of the town as a regional resource.

* Few residents realize the importance of involvement in determining physical and aesthetic changes within their community.

* The small town has special goods and resources to strengthen its economy, which can be made available to surrounding communities.

* The residents desire to have a high level of sociability.
• General upgrades to building and surrounding property have been made or are in the process of completion. These include, but are not limited to, the following:
  - painting
  - window replacement
  - trash pick-up
  - facade renovation

• Residents of small towns recognize the need for positive changes in their community.

• Residents are willing to participate in the process of bettering their community.

• Residents and community leaders are open to new uses involving historical structures and patterns which will maintain the town’s character.

Criteria

The criteria in this project were a set of principles and guidelines used first, in the collection of data and, second, in the analysis and design recommendations for the master plan. These criteria were based on personal principles that I, as a past resident and current student brought to the project. Site-specific principles including regional location, character, and history were seen as important issues which needed to be considered in order for the vision to be viable. Scientific principles of climate, shadows, view sheds, and vegetation were used to determine limitations or opportunities which could occur within the site boundaries. Finally, user groups, specific uses, and a diversity of activities were seen as important aspects for continued use of Fortville’s town core. Collectively, these items can be summarized by the following statements.

1. The overriding character of the downtown district was identified, by evaluating each area by its form, spatial qualities, people’s influence, and the time of use and development.
2. Spaces have been identified and designed, not as visually striking, but as important in the daily activities and social interaction of the town residents.

3. The historical process of development, including stories, events, and people, are an integral component in the design.
Fortville, Indiana, in Hancock County, was used as a representation of similar small towns throughout the Midwestern United States. It is a town with a population of approximately 2800 residents. It has not been annexed into a larger surrounding community and, therefore, has its own local government. Fortville was established in the mid 1800's and has had almost one hundred-fifty years to develop a character and aesthetic which aid in producing a community with potential for a high quality of life.

This study focused on unveiling the character of the small town by looking at the buildings and adjacent spaces. Data collected included information on the economic stability of the small town. The evaluation was based on the goods, services, and resources the small town can potentially offer to both the town's residents as well as individuals in surrounding communities. For citizens in Fortville to appreciate the town's character, they needed to be involved in the process of determining spaces and activities that were important to the town of Fortville. In order to determine their needs, a survey was given to both the residents and the merchants of Fortville. This survey was then used as criteria for the design of Fortville's town center.

**Merchant Survey**

This survey was taken to determine the needs and desires of the town merchants of Fortville, Indiana. A portion of this survey included open-ended questions to invite opinions or attitudes of the merchants in relationship to the town of Fortville. The following are results and interpretations of the survey.
Question #1  Briefly, what goods or services do you offer your customers?

A variety of shops and services are offered in the town center including resale children's clothing, flower shops, a wedding candle shop, legal services, antique shop, sportscards, an aircraft hardware store, a soda fountain, a women's clothing store, and a sports apparel and screen printing shop. Some of the merchants who were not surveyed included men's and women's hair styling salons, a tanning salon, Bureau of Motor Vehicles, doctors office, a laundry mat, and the town post office.

These amenities offer shoppers places to frequent in the town core, but very few include staple goods including groceries or medication. In order to revitalize the town center these “necessity” items must also find their way into the downtown fabric alongside specialty shops.

Question #2  Please explain, in 10 words or less, what feelings Fortville evokes.

The most common answers to this question included such modifiers as down-home, friendly, small town, declining, close-knit, high morals, trust, and kindness. The most interesting answer was that Fortville was “a view of the world on a small scale”. These words and phrases begin to describe the character that one may encounter if he/she were to visit the town of Fortville.

Transforming these feelings into design criteria on an individual basis was next to impossible. It is assumed, however, that the character of the town should remain the same small, close-knit community with little interruption by grandiose design elements that are out of scale with the town.

Question #3  Approximately how long has this business been located in downtown Fortville?

The following statistics were taken from the merchants surveyed along Fortville's Main Street:

* 27% of the businesses have been there over 10 years
* 36% have been there 5-9 years
* 37% have been there less than 5 years

The results of this question show that a large majority of the downtown is in transition. An interesting note was that Williams clothing store has been located in the town for over 93 years.

Question #4  What percentage of customers do you recognize as regular shoppers?

* 0% were shopping downtown less than 25% of the time
* 11% shopped at the store 25-50% of the time
* 45% shopped at the store 50-75% of the time
* 44% shopped at the store over 75% of the time
Question #5  Of that percentage, what percentage would you assume to be residents of Fortville?

* 30% of the merchants thought that less than 50% were residents
* 70% believed that over 50% of their shoppers were residents of Fortville.

It can be presumed from the results of questions 4 and 5 that a majority of loyal shoppers reside in Fortville. The challenge is not to draw more shoppers from the town, but from individuals passing through the town.

Question #6  What exceptional feature do you relate to the outside of your building or outdoor property?

A variety of answers were given, but the most common included signs, awnings, picture windows, or no exceptional features. Other exceptional features included parking, the road (SR 13), and that their building was on the corner.

It is troublesome to see that so few merchants recognize the historic beauty of their buildings. Many of those surveyed occupied buildings constructed early 1900's. The signs, picture windows, and awnings that the merchants mentioned were new additions to the building which is seldom relates to the character of the building.

Question #7  What additions could be made to your building or property that would be helpful in attracting more business?

Common answers were awnings, parking, and general "cleaning up". Color, trees, benches, flower boxes, signs, handicap ramps, and adequate lighting were also mentioned as additions that would help in attracting more business.

These are all simple additions in which the merchants, the town or both can work towards providing these amenities. The addition of single elements which relate to the town's character help residents appreciate the town's significant amenities.

Question #8  If more space were provided for outdoor business use and public activity, would it benefit you business?

* 30% said yes
* 70% said no

From the percentage of merchants who answered "no" to this question, it was assumed that people are unable to see the importance of transition between outdoor gather and social spaces and the indoor display of merchandise. Although some services such as the Bureau of Motor Vehicles or attorneys do not need as much outdoor space, many other could benefit by doubling their outdoor social areas.
Question #9  If given the opportunity to move your business into a newer building (at the same price) in a location other than downtown, would you move?

* 36% said yes they would move
* 64% said no

Merchants who said they would move spoke specifically about the belief that more traffic and location would increase their sales potential. Merchants not willing to move showed concern that they were an important component in the revitalization of the town core.

Question #10  What image comes to mind at the mention of Fortville?

This question was similar to question 2, but asked for more specific, concrete images that merchants related to the town of Fortville. Similar answers of friendly, trust, and home-town occurred in this question. Concrete examples of images were the gazebo in Landmark Park and the pink elephant along SR 67. Few merchants also imagined that the town was an “organism” by saying that “today...backwards and slowing moving , but soon it will be engulfed by growth” or that the town was “getting ready to be swallowed or hopefully to rise back up!”

The final answers show that the town is in a critical stage of transition for either better or worse.

Question #11  Would you be interested in participating in a design-oriented workshop devoted to analyzing and creating new activities and features in Fortville’s downtown?

This question was asked to determine whether or not merchants were interested in helping to design their downtown. Answers included the following:

* 70% said yes
* 20% said no
* 10% said maybe

It was concluded that merchants are interested in working together to bring a vision to the town. This would start a revitalization of the social atmosphere in Fortville.
The town of Fortville lacks amenities which would begin to add to the character and flavor already present in the town. The first step is to establish an overriding vision/concept, enabling the town to work toward a same end result, not different ones. The second step is to identify different types of spaces as important additions to the town. These were additions the landscape architect, through a thorough inventory and analysis, felt were necessary in order for Fortville to become a thriving community based on both its traditional and current-day character. A final step is to identify specific and detailed additions to buildings, vacant lots, and the streetscape in order that the downtown may become a cohesive unit, not a group of single businesses.

Client Needs

By talking with Mr. Gene Behler, Fortville’s Town Manager, I was able to discuss the future direction of the town. Many uncertainties came to the surface during our conversation as to the direction and potential progress of the town. The following list of goals and client needs were identified in order for the town to carry out their vision.

Town Goals

* Fortville will be the cleanest city in Indiana.

* Fortville will encourage a diversity of economic development throughout the town, but more importantly in the town center.

* Fortville will encourage activities for all ages.
Goals of Client

* Fortville would become a city of parks and walks.

* The town will be visually unified.

* There will be a connection from the town center to proposed residential, industrial, and institutional developments by setting aside a portion of each development for public use.

* The master plan will evolve through a community vision.

* Daily, weekly, and monthly activities will be considered as important activities in the town core.

* Unique dining experiences will be located in Fortville's town core.

* New street lights will be installed in the town center to accent its character.

User Needs

User needs were linked with the client's needs, but tend to be more place-specific in character and organization. This information was collected through a series of detailed analysis studies. Citizens and visitors often have a connection with specific spaces or amenities. Specific amenities were located within the town of Fortville while at the same time maintaining the current character and small town atmosphere that the town extends to its users.
Site inventory of the town of Fortville has included both the town center and its regional context which is beneficial to connect Fortville with other surrounding communities. Both inventories will provide information as to resources available to Fortville. These resources were then be analyzed according to the criteria mentioned in Chapter 5.

**Regional Inventory**

The regional inventory began by identifying Fortville’s location in relationship to other towns or cities as seen in figure 8.1. Fortville is located in the northwest corner of Hancock County. Greenfield, Oaklandon, Fishers, and the outskirts of Indianapolis are all within ten miles of Fortville. Points of interest within the vicinity include Geist Reservoir and Marina, Indiana Gun Club, and two public golf courses, Arrowhead and Mud Creek. Mt. Vernon school system serves Fortville, as well as other portions of Vernon Township. Significant waterways include Fall Creek to the north and Flatfork Creek, which boards the town on the southwest side. Adjacent land has scenic qualities including rolling topography, dense woodland, and open fields for crops or grazing.
REGIONAL CONNECTION

Figure 8.1 Regional Inventory
**Town Core Inventory**

An inventory of Fortville's town core from S.R. 67 north to Church Street was recorded in anticipation of uncovering significant or potential areas worthy of further detailed analysis. A broad overview of the sites can be found in figure 8.2. The following list includes current or potential uses for those areas.

**INVENTORY**

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<td>SECONDARY ENTRY</td>
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<td>C</td>
<td>THE POINT</td>
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<td>D</td>
<td>BANK PARKING</td>
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<td>E</td>
<td>BANK ENTRY</td>
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<td>F</td>
<td>ENTRY INTO TOWN CORE</td>
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<td>G</td>
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<td>H</td>
<td>VFW / AMERICAN LEGION ENTRIES</td>
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Regional Analysis

The land to the north of Fortville, even though part of Madison County, holds great recreation potential. The land in consideration begins at the American Legion Park located along S.R. 13. Further north is Gravel Lawn Cemetery, a final resting place for many of Fortville’s citizens. These properties are bordered by Lick Creek which flows into Fall Creek to the west. Scenic qualities, streams, wildlife habitats, and rolling topography, are reasons to set this area aside for a potential “cultural greenway”. This potential trail system would continue to the west of Fortville (figure 9.1). When Fall Creek meets Flatfork Creek, the trail corridor would meet Memorial Park at the western edge of town, connecting Fortville with its regional attributes.

Land used for crops and grazing is periodically being threatened by a constant influx of development. This agricultural land is important historically and economically, as it helps to establish the character of the town. Three areas of development are presently placing identity pressure on the town of Fortville. A question was asked as to how, if ever, will these subdivisions connect with the character of the town in terms of street layout and building to open space ratio?

Town Core Analysis Overview

An analysis of spaces not dealt in the final design will be covered in the following section. These spaces were analyzed according to the criteria of form, space, people, and time. These spaces hold potential for enhancement, but were not as important as the five areas selected for design.
Figure 9.1 Regional Analysis
This space is located in the alley to the west of Main Street and to the south of the railroad tracks. The area tends to be dark and secluded even though it is used heavily (figure 9.2).

**VFW / American Legion Alley Entry**

- **people**: older, remembrance, somber, honor, strong-willed, proud
- **form**: asymmetrical, large to small vertical change, functional
- **space**: notch, uninviting, irregular
- **time**: past

**Mill Street & Noel Avenue**

This area is a morning hot spot. Citizens come to eat breakfast and chat about the latest news. The entry into the Mill Street Cafe is located on the northeast side of the building. This entry, as well as other service areas, could be enhanced from an alley image to a main entry (figure 9.3).

- **people**: gathering and sharing morning news
- **form**: three-sided, open with medium heights, little physical detail
- **space**: enclosed, focuses attention
- **time**: morning and noon uses

**Community Shopper Block**

This entire section of buildings, from the railroad north to Staat Street, is comprised of quality buildings which have simple details reminiscent of the past. The areas joining the buildings, because of their interior functions, hold little opportunity for outdoor enhancement. The building support primarily, small offices and shops (figure 9.4).
Figure 9.2: Analysis of VFW / American Legion Entry

- Williams/Open Lot/Veterans
- Possible relocation or destruction of businesses
- Open space is currently used for parking (day-long or short term)
- This space is often a "backdoor" entry for residents of the community because of easier circulation from sidewalk to and from
- Entry court for veterans' facilities

Buildings have good architectural quality and appear to be in sound condition. Historically, retail has prospered the most, but growth has slowed due to the lack of time. From an architectural perspective, it has been a commercial restaurant that continues to thrive.

- Building at entrance
- Walk third party
- View down alley to space
- Restaurant that continues
- Hardware
people variety, middle-aged and older
form tall to short, in and out, canopies, building details
space heavily used, linear, open to wall
time no-vacancy, first area of development

Landmark to Core

This area weaves through vacant buildings and alleys from Landmark Park to the town center at the intersection of the railroad and Main Street. In an attempt to connect the park with the center of town, this analysis looks for opportunities and constraints (figure 9.5).

people moving, young, adventurous
form variety, functional uses
space in-out, open-close
time agricultural time period, past school children grow, age, and leave
COMM. SHOPPER BLOCK.

- Parking area for apartment residents.

- Rear entry space for merchants.
  - Very bland/blak.
  - How deep this tie into alley and co-op vacant land.
  - Rear entry space.

- Very good block of buildings and services including:
  - Clothing (specialty)
  - Camera shop
  - Bureau of motor vehicles
  - Senior citizens building
  - Law offices

- Aesthetic quality: some overhead walk's & canopy defining space.

- Community shopper: exceptional.

- Cohesive streetscape:
  - Historically, a variety of uses

Interesting entry into the camera shop... ascent and use that as advantage

Wide & deep entry of the sidewalk... provides diversity.
ARK TOWN CENTER

VIA CARPET/FLEX

tells story of schoolyard
across it

Grain Elevator

Carpet & Tile Store.
- needs some parking
  but what is all used for?
- during festivals
  used for show cars.

Landmark to Town Core Analysis

Funeral
other residents
E. alley syndrome.

Ends onto Main

what is connection
with train at this point

passage chances
Regional Concept

Fortville has culturally rich regional goods and resources which can be offered to the citizens of Fortville, as well as visitors to the area. As noted earlier, conditions support an open space loop has been developed around the town of Fortville for purposes of recreation, wildlife habitat, scenic beauty, and preservation of the agricultural hearth (figure 10.1). This “cultural greenway,” then, was incorporated into and through the town core, starting with Memorial and Landmark Parks.

Town Core Concepts

As the “cultural greenway” progresses through the town core, three conceptual studies were analyzed as to how it may present itself as seen in the following concepts:

Concept Number One - “Pockets of Green”

The idea of the first concept was to focus on certain areas within the town core and enhance their image with pockets of activity and vegetation. These areas would be softscapes of grass, shrubs, and trees to comforting users by tying together the town and its regional amenities (figure 10.2).

Concept Number Two - “Flood with Vegetation”

The second idea was to flood Main Street with vegetation, allowing the core to become an area for people to walk, ride bicycles, and socialize without interruption from the auto. (figure 10.3). Historically the core was open with little to no street vegetation. Implementing a planting plan of this magnitude would take away from the character of Fortville.
Figure 10.1 Regional Concept
CONCEPTS

Figure 10.3 Concept Two - "Flood with Vegetation"
Concept Number Three - "Hardscape Design"

Since Fortville's Main Street was primarily open with few obstructions between street and building, the third concept was to implement only hardscape elements. These would include paving patterns, walls, and other vertical elements in the landscape (figure 10.4).

Ideas one and three were combined into a theme that, eventually, drove many of the design decisions. This decision was made in order to keep the historical character of an open town, while still implementing the idea of bringing the "cultural greenway" into the downtown. Five points were chosen along Main Street based on the analysis and opportunities for outdoor spaces. Within these points would be a mixture of hard and softscape elements, while the remainder of the town will remain open.
Figure 10.4 Concept Three - "Hardscape Design"

Town core will become a hardscape urban center focusing on paving patterns and structural additions to create space.

- Allow viewers to see sky
- Do not screen
  1. Sparse green bank
  2. Remove utility (relocate here)
  3. Activity shade
  4. Direct vision dense planting
  5. Maintain parking space
Regional Program

The following must occur on a regional "broad-brush" level in order for Fortville to be identified within a larger context.

* specific points along a proposed trail system have been chosen as potential amenities within a regional recreation system

* a type of trail system (walking or biking) will be laid out to connect these points

* Memorial Park and Landmark Park will be trail heads

* Memorial Park and Landmark Park will be connected visually and physically through Fortville's town core

Regional Master Plan

The master plan below shows the area which was considered for a "cultural greenway" starting and ending within the town (figure 11.1). As development occurs, land should be set aside in order to link the development with the idea of a cultural greenway, even though it may not physically connect. Separate housing or industrial developments should be required to connect to the framework already present in the town. This would include street layout, lot size, and open space to building ratio. These simple, but often ignored, connections will help maintain the already present town character.

An agricultural buffer zone was established for two reasons. First, development continues to sprawl across the countryside. These developments need to refocus and reconnect with the town. Second, farming practices were an important component in the lives and development of Fortville citizens. This heritage needs to be preserved in order to continue the character of Fortville's surrounding landscape.
A RECREATIONAL AND GREENWAY RAIL SYSTEM WILL BE CREATED IN ORDER TO LINK FORTVILLE WITH THE SURROUNDING TOWNS AND RECREATIONAL POTENTIALS SUCH AS CLEO CREEK, GEIST RESERVOIR, AND OTHER SCENIC AREAS.

THIS CORRIDOR WILL MOVE THROUGH THE TOWN CORE CONNECTING MEMORIAL AND LANDMARK PARKS WHILE CORPORATING AND IDENTIFYING THE TOWN AS A "CITY OF PARKS".

Figure 11.1 Regional Master Plan
At the intersection of Main Street and SR 67 lies an island defined by three streets. Currently, an auto parts store faces SR 67, greeting each person as they enter the town from the south. This space, here-on called "The Point", held a great opportunity for a pleasing entry statement. The area is seldom used, except for the yearly Christmas celebration.

**Analysis**

The area can be divided into two parts as seen in figures 12.1 and 12.2. In the first, views into the town are an important consideration because SR 67 carries the majority of traffic through Fortville. These views into the town core present an opportunity to inform the visitor about the character and opportunities within the town of Fortville. The second section considered is the north end of "The Point" as a transition into the town core. As a gathering place for seasonal celebrations, this portion of the site can be enhanced to promote a festive and social atmosphere, whether it be a Saturday morning farmer's market or Christmas caroling.

- **people**: hurry by, anticipation of what lies ahead, watching, teenagers
- **form**: odd shape, three-sided, flat
- **space**: open, deserted, lonely
- **time**: used as a theater in early years, maximum change of hands
**THE POINT... VIEW & CHARACTER**

- Main Buildings Viewed from intersection should maintain high character quality and begin to draw people into community "what's down there"

- The Point meant to occasionally used for "need or need"

- Christmas Festival of Trees: whole space is entry for Forkville; what do people see as they enter from south?

- This space needs to become an entry for the downtown business district

- History - theater

* Figure 12.1 Views into Town Core
**Figure 12.2 Plaza Area**

**Housing & Tire Center**

- Vacant lot... building
  - historic
  - vacant since 1986
  - next to vacant building
  - possibility for small park or garden square which creates outdoor urban dining experience
  - concentration on church
t  - could become common green space

- Residential
  - easy location
  - entry of town
  - caught up in the middle of activity

- can area become commercial or activity
  - current usage
  - potential for commercial or activity

- New apartment housing needed focusing on point of entry

**Figure 1.2 Good Gear Tire Store**

- Plenty of constant activity
- Good facades for usage by:
  - triangular space "useless" except for storage & parking
  - upgrade building facade

Area needs to become center of activity and a draw to passers-by:
  - find vendors
  - vendors

- good corner
- accessible
- into retail
- market

- could become
  - "green" space

- historic
- always been housing or hotel
  - next door to market

- Residential
  - easy location
  - entry of town
  - caught up in the middle of activity

- can area become commercial or activity
  - current usage
  - potential for commercial or activity

- New apartment housing needed focusing on point of entry
Program

This vacant lot on the southern portion of Main Street has been chosen for conversion to a multi-use celebration space to be used for weekly, monthly, or seasonal festivals and activities. This site will accommodate the following uses and amenities:

- places to sit
- area for live Christmas tree
- stage area facing the downtown
- screening noise from SR 67
- pull off areas for parking or "cruising"
- transition and inclusion of current context

Site Design

The frequent passer-by is always greeted at the stoplight by a grove of trees planted in a way which focuses his attention towards the town core. This area, instead of a vacant lot, displays a visually pleasing image of what Fortville has to provide as a "town of parks".

Towards the middle of "The Point," a living Christmas tree becomes the focal element, simple, yet, making an important statement of the townspeople's values and beliefs. The surrounding plaza will be used as a staging area for festivals, an area for a weekly farmers market, or a place for young people to meet with friends (figure 12.3).
During the late 1980's, a building fell to the ground and opened many eyes to the idea that buildings and other structures are not a permanent feature in the town. Nothing has been built on this lot since that time. The adjoining building to the south is also vacant. This area's location and early history as a stable and blacksmith shop held great potential for the incorporation of a family owned restaurant that relates to the influence agricultural has had on the town's growth and development.

Analysis

This space provides a necessary void in the urban fabric. A stopping point was incorporated along the walk to sit or talk with a friend. This long narrow lot needed to have elements, such as vegetation, seating, and walls, incorporated to enclose the area and create a social space, allowing it to become a more private pocket park (figure 12.4).

people cutting through, walking
form long and narrow, tall to short, details above doors and windows
space long and narrow, focuses attention
time one time stable and blacksmith's shop, service area for farmers

Program

A vacant building and lot was chosen as the location of an authentic restaurant which incorporates the spirit and regional identity of Fortville as a once important agricultural community. This site has included the following features:
- an entry from Main Street
- an outdoor dining terrace for 15-25 people
Figure 12.4 Vacant Lot Analysis

Commercial Building
- 20th Century Functional
- Previous Usage: Fire Department
- Livery
- Current Usage: N/A
- Lot in Median
- Very Little Other
- Infill

Vacant Lot Building
- Collected in late 1980s
- 30' x 40' wide
- Next to vacant building
- Possibility for small park or garden space which could
  contribute to outdoor urban dining experience

Housing & Fire Center

- Good coverage
- Street level and landmark
- Could thrive with retail
  for market
- lighting
- vegetation
- physical boundaries from the street
- walkway through site for adjoining residential
- areas to sit

**Site Design**

A pocket park and outdoor dining area are reminiscent pieces of the surrounding farm communities. To keep with this tradition, the restaurant will specialize in food and dishes prepared according to local recipes and tradition.

Images of the park are characteristic of a country lane and concrete fence posts found bordering many of the fields of Fortville. A mural on the wall will give local students an opportunity to interpret Fortville’s past and make their addition to history (figure 12.5)
part three
Rail and Main: A Story of the Train

The intersection of the railroad and Main Street is an important component in the formation of Fortville's history. Much of the area's history has been removed from Mill Street north to the railroad, where a section of buildings once stood. The large lawn and post office building does not relate with the character of the town core. This open lawn provided opportunities to incorporate visual elements in the landscape which could be interpreted as a story of the train and its impact.

Analysis

This area has been a social space since the incorporation of the United States Post Office. The atmosphere is one of consistent life and activity (figure 12.6). The train still passes through town at least three to four times a day. This can cause aggravation to automobilists, but, also could be celebrated as an amenity that has helped to form the town as it is today.

| people     | meeting, “hi”, friendly, impatient at train, are used by most (young and old), children excited |
| form       | institutional, functional |
| space      | open, changing drastically over time (dense...open) |
| time       | non-scheduled trains; once variety and trade stores, but now a mono-use; train affects site differently over time |
For crossing & postal.

- train frequency
- clear open space along activity
- space for views from either side of road
- bring special attention to space
- green/park
- parking

- a variety of necessities
- what is/are relationship

- new post office
- took the place of a great block of buildings
- parking & green space
- does not fit into street scale & site
- appears to be suburban setting
Program

Included at this intersection is the “front yard” of the post office and a parking lot to the west of Main Street. This space is both a transition point from alleys to Main Street and a revelry of the train and its impact on the town of Fortville. Included in this space is the following:

- special paving patterns
- visual and written story of the train’s historical impact on Fortville
- remnants of the pre-post office block
- areas to sit
- transition from parking lot to town core

Site Design

The train and tracks have become an important part of Fortville’s town history. Through time, the train has supplied both goods and transportation to the townspeople, while at the same time taking lives in misfortunate accidents.

This area tells a story through ripples and story columns (figure 12.7). These images leave a lasting impression of the impact the train has had on the lives of the townspeople. This space also provides areas to sit in the shade, talk with a friend while outside the post office, or watch people pass on the street.
Figure 12.7 Rail and Main
Since the 1940's the location of Pheobe's Corner has been a five and dime store with a soda fountain as an attraction to young and old people in the town of Fortville. During summer months and after school in the Spring and Fall, children of all ages migrate to this area to socialize with friends. This location, then, provided a great opportunity to have an extended social area from the inside to the outside of the building.

Analysis

The entire sidewalk area from Staat Street south to Pheobe's Corner held potential for the creation of outdoor spaces because of each building's occupancy (figure 12.8). The corner store is currently a florist's shop. What better way to promote the town as "park-like" than with planter boxes outside the storefront, indicating goods available on the inside! Next door, to the south, is a church, where many people gather weekly for worship. A significant entry statement should be incorporated at this point. Finally, Pheobe's Corner should expand towards, or into, the street to provide optimal space for social activities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>people</th>
<th>young, active, excited, talkative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>form</td>
<td>tall, linear with little opportunity to relax, little overhead definition, detailed work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>space</td>
<td>little definition, narrow, walking through not &quot;in&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>time</td>
<td>developed from 1914 to current as commercial, activity area through time, afternoon to evening use</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
RAILROAD - STAAT WEG
INCLUDING FUNERAL HOME

Entire block is in good condition.
- Flower shop
- Ice cream parlor
- Churches
- Service business

Former site of opera house & Masonic lodge burnt in 1914-1920

Tracks now unused for any type of traffic.

High quality funeral home w/ outdoor service, parking, brick walt, high surrounding.

Figure 12.8 Phoebe's Corner Analysis

Floor plan
Program

A small space will be designed as a transition from street to building use on the southwest corner of Main and Staat Streets. Currently, the uses include a floral shop, a church, and an ice cream/soda store. All of these uses have presented optimal opportunity for the creation of outdoor gathering and social spaces. Included along this section of Main Street are the following:

- ample room between building entrance and street to accommodate 25 plus people, while still allowing pedestrian circulation from north to south
- shade
- tables
- soft-scape

Site Design

The extension of the building's function is made for everyone, but, primarily, for the customers of Pheobe's Corner. This space, created by the recovery of two parking spaces, has been geared towards the younger teenagers and children who frequent the store (figure 12.9). The area provides benches and tables to gather, while shade and color has been implemented through umbrellas, trees, and groundcovers.

The large ice cream cone is important to the owners of the store in order to publicize their products. The sign has been upgraded and moved closer to the street. This outdoor space will provide a place for the children to socialize during afternoons and summer breaks.

Further to the north, a canopy has been installed at the church entrance. This canopy corresponds to the character on the building's details. Planter boxes and beds are implemented outside the florist shop to create a garden and floral atmosphere.
Figure 12.9 Phoebe's Corner
The intersection of Main and Church Streets was a great opportunity to create a transition between Memorial Park and Landmark Park, as well as a northern entry into the town core. This area should respond, also, to the character of both the downtown and the parks, to the east and west, through materials and signs.

### Analysis

To the west is Memorial Park and to the east is Landmark Park. This intersection was used to bring the concept of a “cultural greenway” into the town core (figure 12.10). This can be accomplished because of a wide Main Street with medians between the sidewalks and the street. Consideration was given as to the experience of those who entered the town core from the north as to what they would see in terms of signs, vegetation, or buildings.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>people</th>
<th>protective residents, young and middle-aged, crossing paths, proud of children’s recreational participation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>form</td>
<td>spread out, but focused south; repetition of like structures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>space</td>
<td>narrow to wide experience, points converging</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>time</td>
<td>constant growth and change</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Program

The intersection of Main Street and Church Street was chosen as the entry to both parks, as well as, the northern entry into the town core. Simple connections will be established in the following ways:

- vegetation
- special attention to paving
- walks
- signs
Site Design

As a person travels south along main street, ornamental and deciduous trees begin to thicken until one encounters an intersection laid with a simple brick pattern surrounded by four very similar entry columns (figure 12.11). Two columns, which direct the user to either Landmark or Memorial Park, are constructed of limestone and wood, keeping with the character of the town. The other two columns are limestone and brick.

This intersection has become an extension of Memorial and Landmark Parks. Signs, both on the vertical and horizontal planes, point the user in the direction of either park. As the person continues south, the trees and vegetation diminish and a sweeping view of Fortville’s town core emerges.
Figure 12.11 North Entry
The purpose and character of this plan is to be interpreted as an open atmosphere cultural park which is a central and major stopping point along the larger "cultural greenway" (figure 13.1). Fortville's Main Street was not flooded with street trees and other vegetation, but was left open with only pockets set aside to sit, eat, relax, and have fun. These enhancements have been made, but only according to Fortville's small town character and scale. This was accomplished according to the materials and forms used, the spaces created, and the historical significance of each site. The people who will use each space separately and the town core as a whole will have a heightened quality of life without the sacrifice everyday patterns.
PURPOSE AND CHARACTER OF PLAN:

THE TOWN CORE MASTER PLAN SHOULD BE SEEN AS AN OPEN ATMOSPHERE TOWN PARK WHICH IS A CENTRAL STOPPING POINT ALONG THE LARGER RECREATIONAL CORRIDORS. THIS MASTER PLAN HAS NOT BEEN FLOODLED WITH TREES AND OTHER VEGETATION. INSTEAD, MAIN STREET IS LEFT OPEN WITH POCKETS SET ASIDE TO SIT, EAT, RELAX, AND HAVE FUN. THESE ENHANCEMENTS HAVE BEEN MADE, BUT ONLY ACCORDING TO SMALL TOWN CHARACTER AND SCALE.

Figure 13.1 Town Master Plan
As the project, itself, has drawn to a close, the realization of only a
starting point is closer than imagined. Through the research and design
phases of this project, the goals have been accomplished with sufficient
detail by identifying Fortville’s character and implementing design
solutions which satisfy that character. The landscape architect’s role,
however, only begins at this point. The designer must continue his or her
involvement through public awareness, implementation and
administration of the work completed. Only then, can the design be
carried towards the greatest good for both the landscape architect and
the citizens of Fortville.
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Books


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**Drawings**