Context, Continuity & Change

Where the Past Meets the Present
an exploration into reuse of older structures for contemporary urban needs

Fort Wayne
the gateway cross - cultural business education center
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An Architectural Thesis By James P. Stouffer
Arch 404
Summer Semester 1990

Fort Wayne
The Gateway Cross - Cultural Business Education Center
I would like to express my thanks and appreciation to all that made this thesis possible including Jack Wyman, Tony Costello, Madelane Elston, Craig Leonard, David Hermansen, and Andrea Urbas. Also, I would like to thank my parents, friends, and grandparents without whose love and support, these past five years would not have been possible.
Abstract

Today's society is forcing a reevaluation of the role of our urban areas and the design profession is one of many fields which is being called upon to assist in the definition of the future of them. While many communities have been successful in creating unique individual elements within their urban areas, the difficulty has been maintaining the vitality and energy necessary downtown to support them. In addition to this, urban downtowns suffer from a lack of collective vision which can serve as both unifying and promotional impetus for attracting people to live, shop, work, and recreate downtown. We are all aware of the problems that the increased mobility that the automobile has created, parking, traffic, etc.; however, as natural resources become scarce it is clear that the downtown once again holds the potential for future social interaction. A successful downtown or urban area is the result of a collective spirit in which their are many individual contributors. Not only can individual buildings and spaces be created, but entire cities and urban areas as well. It is true that much of what a city has to offer has evolved over time and cannot simply be "placed" into an urban area with hope that it will attach itself and work. Too often in the recent past, cities have looked for the universal solution to their economic woes by taking a concept from a neighboring community, specifically, a hotel-convention center complex, an enclosed urban mall, a closed pedestrian mall, to name only a few. What this practice has failed to recognize and utilize are the unique features that already exist within that community in order that a personal solution be made for that particular community, not an inappropriate, applied solution.

Now that the background has been established it is possible to explore the specific objective of my thesis research which will be a synthesis of many issues from urban design, historic preservation, and creative new design. As was mentioned, cities of all sizes are looking for ways of getting people back downtown to work, shop, live, and recreate and this desire is forcing aggressive strategies to accomplish this goal. I strongly believe that every community should try to promote the unique cultural, design, geographic, and historical aspects which it possesses to address this need to promote the return to the city. What I hope to explore is the relationship between a strong individual project design and the connection or implication it can have on the surrounding urban fabric. As is evident by observing life on the street, a street is a stage on which life takes place, a strong physical manifestation of culture and its influence on built form. Therefore, the role of streetscape in the success of urban areas is critical and also the impact of new design on that streetscape can greatly influence the quality of that urban area. Through the use of a contextual
or historic parameters I feel that it will be possible to explore both the evolution of both urban design as well as the streetscape so vital to the success of an urban area. It is for this reason that I have chosen an urban project that will allow me to explore the relationship between individual project design and surrounding context using a historical structure as a springboard for this exploration.

Objective

The primary objective for the design of my thesis was to initiate and complete a project which not only addresses the problems associated with design and presentation, but the realities of planning, economics, politics, and all the other factors which are a part of the architectural process. This was one of the reasons for taking on a project which incorporates an urban design problem, a preservation issue, and a delicate urban design climate using interaction with an already existing community group. Specifically, I wanted a project which not only involved theory and philosophy, but one which would address real life issues and involve individuals and groups such as existing historic preservation agencies in order to promote two-way communication and interaction. I sought to utilize my many architectural interests from historic preservation and business management to design in the creation of a project that comprehensively addresses the problem of how to make our urban areas more liveable.

The design of this project took place over the course of summer semester and was managed in a cumulative manner, one which allowed for review and input at all critical phases of the project. Specifically, already having done preliminary research and planning prior to beginning design work I was able to utilize the semester for the exploration of design using the information gained through earlier research. It was important that all areas of the project be kept at a similar level so that development follows a consistent path, from the design and presentation to the written component which will serve as a compilation of both design, theory, and research.

Having chosen a project such as the reuse of the Pennsylvania Station in Fort Wayne which is already a reality in that a committee exists to find a solution to the future of this site, I believe that it is important for me to create a hollistic package which this group can use in their actual endeavor. Therefore, the design, use, and research that I accomplished through this thesis will hopefully benefit Arch, the Fort Wayne Historical Organization, in their efforts to find an actual use for this building. This project has been of great personal value because it allowed me to explore an aspect of professional practice which is
often not accomplished in academic endeavors. Most importantly, this project allowed for a level of involvement which required extreme professionalism, in presentation, interaction, analysis, and exploration and for these reasons has served as an excellent synthesis of my five years of study at the College of Architecture and Planning.

The following is a listing of the procedural approach to this problem in terms of breakdown for the semester:

**Interseesion (4 weeks)**
- Site analysis
- Program development
- Material collection
- Committee discussion
- Economics and feasibility

**Summer Semester (10 weeks)**
- Schematic design
- Concept exploration (3 weeks)
- Design review

- Design development
- Written exploration
- Presentation exploration
- Detail development (4 weeks)
- Design review

- Final refinement
- Presentation
- Integration with written (3 weeks)
- Design review
Programme

My proposal for the adaptive - use of the Pennsylvania Station in Fort Wayne is to create an multi-use business cultural center which will not only serve the needs of the the local community, but address Fort Wayne's connection to the ever expanding national and international economic arena. As is evident by the media, the world is fast becoming economically connection especially in light of recent developments in Eastern Europe, the Soviet Union, Western Europe, and finally the Far East, which is really the Near West for the United States. What all of these dynamics suggests is a physical response by communities such as Fort Wayne which has a rich business and industrial heritage become greater receptors for information, ideas, and finally, people from other lands. Therefore, my proposal is for a cultural center which is a synthesis of several different building types, specifically, the convention / exhibit center, the educational facility, the banquetting and entertaining facility, and the cultural heritage museum to name only a few. What I hope to create is a dynamic cultural center which seeks to identify, accentuate, and expose a facet of Fort Wayne's heritage which not only engages the local community but attracts involvement form individuals and groups from across the country and around the world.

Fort Wayne is in an unique location in terms of the possibilities for involvement in the world's expanding boundaries, specifically, with its strong business and industrial base in addition to new investment from all around the world, it is in a position to become a regional hub for global business development. Probably more important than the business aspect of this globalization is the possibility for interaction with and exposure to people of differing cultural backgrounds whether it be Japan or Eastern Europe. It is important that education is fostered in the years to come in order to allow Fort Wayne's business and industrial community to keep in tune with the evolution the world is taking especially in light of recent years with a major rethinking of how business is done and by whom. Will people and cities be left behind that cannot adapt to these changes and more importantly what role will people play in this new reality. By the creation of a business cultural center which allows for education, exhibition, exposure, and interaction with top leaders and participants within the business world, the possibility for Fort Wayne becoming a resource center become clear. As a member of what has been called the "Rust Belt", Fort Wayne is ripe for exploration into this role.

The following is a preliminary program for this business cultural resource center:
Public Area

restaurant and banqueting area
library and archival area
retail (foreign and national goods)
conference / lecture hall
seminar rooms
exhibition / display space

Private Area

cultural development office
education facilities
Design Considerations

The primary concept for my thesis project was to create a cross-cultural business education center which would serve as a new gateway to and for the city of Fort Wayne. Fort Wayne’s heavy industry and multinational corporations are seeing the need for greater communication to and with business and their leaders in all areas of the world, from Western Europe to the Far East, as well as recently, Eastern Europe. Not only are businesses being faced with the notion of greater cooperation and involvement globally, but everyday citizens as well. What I have attempted to create is a facility which will promote this two-way communication for both Fort Wayne’s business and industry as well as its citizens. Therefore, as a built manifestation, this design problem required the addressing of multiple users for multiple activities, which was a strong influencing factor in my choosing this project.

First, the challenge was to try and find a way to best utilize the existing historic station being respectful of its integrity while making a modern statement to the reality of living in today’s communication age. The strongest metaphor for my project that evolved was the fact that this station had once been a vehicle for physical transportation of people and goods between Fort Wayne and destinations all over the country. In its rebirth in my project, the Pennsylvania Station is to be transformed into a medium for transporting ideas and knowledge between Fort Wayne and the world. In cooperation with other established programs like the International Studies one at Indiana-Purdue University at Fort Wayne, as well as the business exchange program in Columbus, Indiana, a local precedence and need for such a center seemed apparent. Another factor is the present reality of foreign companies such as Subaru/Isuzu coming to Indiana to establish joint ventures with businessespeople with varying cultural differences. The United States, known as the “Great Melting Pot” has a tremendous opportunity to break new ground in terms of cultural learning and exchange.

This facility is broken into for major components which are a public or civic gallery space or spaces in the existing historic Penn Station, a banquet facility, a multi-media auditorium/conference hall, and an educational or seminar facility. In the future, this project was design to incorporate on site housing in an international campus environment which will serve as a viable hub for activity on the south edge of the Fort Wayne urban. This hub will allow company such as Lincoln National to utilize the shared facilities that this structure will offer in addition to already existing facilities such as the Grand Wayne Center, and the Fort Wayne Colloquy. This project is not viewed by me as a convention center as such, but rather a complementary facility to those centers that already exist.
The form of the building attempts to relate to the existing building through scale and materials not in a way which mimicks the old, but rather postdates and gives strength to its craftsmanship. The banquet hall and the auditorium were designed as flanking pavillions for this symmetrical structure that would be similar in language; however, be playfully symmetrical, yet asymmetrical. The major connection to the new structure occurs as a backdrop wall which is a metaphorical manifestation of the removed rail line as well as a celebration of the linearity of the railroad experience. It is as if for one brief moment the once flat railroad right-of-way has been lifted and brought to the interior. Just as this original station served as a gateway both to and from Fort Wayne, my design seeks to enhance this experience to not only include the international aspect of this project, but the built reality of this site being a barrier between the south edge of Fort Wayne and the city center. The sweeping curve element was designed to serve two purposes, to visually define space and hold back the connection of the new building to the old, as well as make an embracing gesture to the city which opens up to adjacent property which have yet to be developed. The educational facilities have been placed on and in the former railroad embankment and right-of-way and have been articulated in a modular way so as to speak a language of the trains which once travelled through the site. It is this educational area as well as the planned housing area which will do most to physically bridge this site a create a dialogue between downtown Fort Wayne and its southern edge.
Conclusion

In conclusion, the thesis design of this historic building and its conversion into a cross-cultural center has been a difficult and rewarding one. The issues of urban design, historic preservation, architecture, and planning, to name only a few, which I have attempted to address in this project have helped me to synthesize my personal and design values greatly. As a growth enhancing experience, this project supersedes anything I have done here at Ball State over the past five years as it is a good reflection of the knowledge I have gained while here.

This building type, a close hybrid to both the business conference center and the corporate retreat as well as the convention center, has many complexities do in large part to their multi-faceted programs. As a result, much time is needed for not only design, but research as well due to the fact that there are so many issues to be examined. Probably the most complex of these issues are the mechanical and technical ones dealing with how to make this type of facility both functional and pleasing to the eye as well. When this level of detail is added to the complexity of dealing with a historical property, the problem becomes more intricate.

In retrospect, I am pleased with my solution to my created design challenge and feel that I was able to address the fundamental concerns of this building type. However, if I were to go on in the design I would most certainly spend much more time with plan definition, mechanical and structural details that can and should influence design, as well as materials and connection details. As a word of advice for those pursuing this building type, one must constantly and holistically approach the problem allowing all aspects to be brought up to the same level simultaneously.
Bibliography


Department of Metropolitan Development, City of Indianapolis. *Regional Center: Union Station Development.* 1971.


U. S. Department of Transportation. *Recycling Historic*

**Program**

**EDUCATIONAL AREA**

- Classrooms (10 @ 800 s.f.)
  - 8000 s.f.
- Storage (general)
  - 1500 s.f.
- Computer Lab (2 @ 1200 s.f.)
  - 2400 s.f.
- Staff Offices (10 @ 120 s.f.)
  - 1200 s.f.
- Staff Work Room
  - 1000 s.f.
- Student Commons / Vending
  - 2000 s.f.
- Restrooms (2 @ 500 s.f.)
  - 1000 s.f.

Total: 17100 s.f.

**RESIDENTIAL AREA**

- Apartments (100 @ 500 s.f.)
  - 50,000 s.f.
- Shared Spaces
  - 10,000 s.f.
    - laundry
    - lounge
    - etc.

Total: 60,000 s.f.

**PUBLIC / COMMUNITY AREA**

- Distance Learning Labs (2 @ 1200 s.f.)
  - 2,400 s.f.
- Gallery Space (changing)
  - 3,000 s.f.
- Exhibit Hall (permanent rail history)
  - 1,000 s.f.
- Visitor’s Information Center
  - 1,000 s.f.
  - transportation options
  - culture
  - shopping
  - etc.
- Library / Media
  - 2,500 s.f.
  - support
  - 1,000 s.f.
Auditorium
(seating for 500 x 10 s.f. / person)
5,000 s.f.
- storage / support
2,000 s.f.
Restaurant / Lounge / Cafeteria
8,000 s.f.
- kitchen / storage / receiving
4,000 s.f.
Retail
2,000 s.f.
- educational goods
- foreign goods
- local products
Conference Rooms
(4 @ 250 s.f.)
1,000 s.f.
Commons / Gathering
8,000 s.f.

total 33,500 s.f.

MISCELLANEOUS

Storage
5,000 s.f.
Receiving / Loading
5,000 s.f.
Restrooms (4 @ 500 s.f.)
2,000 s.f.

total 12,000 s.f.

Building Total
62,600 s.f.
Study Models
1 Entry Vestibule
2 Coat Check
3 Gallery Space (Traditional)
4 Exhibit (Permanent)
5 Retail
6 Restaurant / Lounge
7 Restrooms
8 Library / Media

Ground Floor Existing
Fort Wayne
National Business Education Center