RE-USE AND RECYCLE: ENHANCING MUNCIE'S DOWNTOWN

An Honors Thesis (HONRS 499)

By

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Re-use and Recycle: Enhancing Muncie's Downtown

ABSTRACT

Economic decline in the downtown sectors of the typical Midwestern city has run rampant in the past five decades. With the advent of modern commercial corridors, such as IND 332, or McGalliard Rd. in Muncie, businesses have relocated out of downtown districts with the promise of more traffic and increased business. This shift in the population of local and commercial chains has wreaked havoc on many Midwestern downtown districts. Muncie, Indiana, is one such example. In recent decades, as businesses moved out of downtown and property sat vacant, many of Muncie’s historic buildings fell into disrepair. This has led property owners to tear down the structures out of convenience, with little regard to the history of the building or the city. The demolition of these buildings has spawned the decline in Muncie’s downtown density. While many buildings have been torn down, there are still plenty of vacant properties in downtown Muncie waiting, either for the wrecking ball, or for someone to realize their great potential and refurbish them in a way which will once again encourage businesses and residents to return downtown.

The goal of this project is to demonstrate to the public and others that these building are worth saving, and that they can be used, re-used, and recycled to create vibrant and welcoming structures, injecting life and progress to the downtown area. The project focuses on the abandoned Muncie Star Press Building on High Street in Downtown Muncie, and consists of detailed plans, sections, elevations, and construction details, demonstrating the true possibilities these structures hold for refurbishment.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank Mr. Brian Hollars for advising me throughout the semester and pushing me to fully develop my ideas and make this project successful.
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THE SITE

The site is located in downtown Muncie on the corner of High Street between W. Jackson and W. Main St. It is a conglomeration of 5 buildings that until the early 90’s were used as the headquarters of the Muncie Star Press Newspaper. The Original structure, on the Corner of High and Jackson, dates to the early 1900’s. It was originally built as the Moose Lodge. It housed the Muncie Evening Press from the 1920’s to the mid 40’s. In 1948 the Muncie Star Press moved into the building. As the paper grew in size several additions to the building were made and the original brick and limestone façade was covered. After the last addition to the complex was completed, the Star Press occupied the entire block, From W. Jackson to W. Main Street.

The Star Press used this complex until 1998 when they moved into the recently vacant Ball Corporation Headquarters building on Charles Street. The building has stood vacant since that time. It has been the home of numerous vagrants and been vandalized inside and out. Now, the property is owned by the city of Muncie, which for the past several years has been trying to find tenants and developers for the building or site. In December 2007, just after the completion of this project, the city announced that the building would soon be demolished and a parking lot would be installed.
THE SITE: continued

Structurally the building is in very good condition. The original building on the corner of High and Jackson is a load bearing masonry structure. The building on the opposite end of the sight, just off the corner of High and Mains street is a poured concrete structure. This building was once a car dealership, and later served as a parking garage for the Star Press employees. The structures connecting the two and composing the majority of the block were constructed using steel. These buildings are dated somewhere between 1970 and 1990. They are very sturdy buildings as they were designed to handle the weight of the newspapers massive printing presses and the storage of their finished products. It was determined early on in the project that the original structures could support the weight of additional floors above.

PROJECT STRATEGIES:

The finished project retains every existing structure on the site – reusing all of the structural systems of the original block. The original Star Press building and the parking garage on the opposite corner of the property will be restored to their original form, while multiple floors will be built on top of the steel structure of the infill buildings, greatly increasing the square footage of the property.

The property will become a mixed use development with ample retail and office space as well as 20 luxury and studio apartments. Large windows and a 16' floor to floor height (taken from the existing structure) will give the tenants and residents of the property ample natural daylight. The recovered parking garage structure will be utilized by the tenants of the apartments and offices.

Community green space can be found on top of that same structure. The existing reinforced concrete frame is well suited to support this type of application. On the green roof residents can reserve plots to grow vegetables or garden. The green roof collects and filters water from the other roofs of the development providing nourishment for the plants and reducing the amount of water sent down the storm drain.

WHY?

This development will be a standout in Muncie, not for what it does, but for what it saved – some of the original fabric of the once bustling downtown. Through the restoration, addition, and renovation of these structures, downtown Muncie will once again be a destination for community members. It will be a prime example of how to save, restore, and integrate historic buildings into a modern city.

Figure 5: Rendering of Proposed Development from corner of High and Main Street.
Sheet Index

A2  Site and Neighborhood Plan
A3  Basement
A4  1st Floor Plan
A5  2nd Floor Plan
A6  3rd Floor Plan
A7  4th Floor Plan
A8  5th Floor Plan
A9  North Elevation
A10 South Elevation
A11 East Elevation
A12 West Elevation
A13 East - West Building Sec. 1
A14 East - West Building Sec. 2
A15.1 Wall Section 1A
A15.2 Wall Section 1B
A16.1 Wall Section 2A
A16.2 Wall Section 2B
A17 Typical Apt. Plan A and B
A18 Typical Apt. Plan C
A19 Typical Apt. Plan D
A20 Detail Elevation
A21 Canopy Detail
A22 Construction Detail A
A23 Construction Detail B
Retail / Grocery

Chase

Office Lobby

Loading Dock

Storage

Covered Pass-Through

Retail

Chase

Office Lobby

Retail

RR

Muncie Downtown Rev

The Star Press Block: High and M
Retail, Offices and Apartments

Cripe Architects + Engineers

4th Year Capstone Project

Drawn by:

01 Dec 2007

File Name

Revisions
Muncie Downtown Revitalization

The Star Press Block: High and Main
Retail, Offices and Apartments

Chase

Office Space

Restored Brick Facade

A9

A14

A16
2nd Floor Plan

Revitalization
Main Rehab

SCALE: \(\frac{1}{8}\) in. = 1'-0"

Office Space
Attic

Typical Unit C

Typical Unit C

Typical Unit C

Typical Unit C

Muncie Downtown Revitalization
The Star Press Block: High and Main Streets
Retail, Offices and Apartments
Ridge Beam 72'-0"
Fifth Floor 60'-0"
Fourth Floor 48'-0"
Third Floor 32'-0"
Second Floor 16'-0"
Existing Parking Garage

Main Rehab

North Elevation

SCALE: $\frac{1}{4}" = 1'-0$
Restored Star Press Building

Covered Pass-Through

Muncie Downtown Rev
The Star Press Block: High and
Retail, Offices and Apart
Existing Parking Garage
Office Space

4" R/C Slab
2" Metal Decking
Limestone Sill
Fiberglass Sheathing
Insulated Metal Panel System

A. 22

Steel Brace
2"x6" Metal Stud Wall
Molded Polystyrene Trim

Window

Cripe Architects + Engineers
4th Year Capstone Project

Muncie Downtown Rev
The Star Press Block: High and
Retail, Offices and Apart
Retail

Glass Storefront System

Wall Section
SCALE: 1/2" = 1'-0"
02 Typical Plan: Unit B
SCALE: \( \frac{\text{in}}{\text{ft}} = 1' = 0' \)
01 Lower Level

SCALE: ¼" = 1'-0"
02 Upper Level

SCALE: 1" = 1'-0"
Re-use and Recycle

The Muncie Star Press

For decades downtown property owners have torn down old and dispirited buildings with little regard to the history of the building or the city. The demolition of these buildings has contributed to the decline in Muncie's downtown density. This project retains every existing structure on the site – reusing all of the structural systems of the original block. The original Star Press building and the parking garage on the opposite corner of the property will be restored to their original form, while the steel structure of the mid-rise buildings will be built on top of, greatly increasing the square footage of the property.

This mixed-use development will have ample retail and office space as well as 20 luxury and studio apartments. Large windows and a 16’ floor to floor height (taken from the existing structure) will give the tenants and residents of the property lots of natural daylight. The recovered parking garage structure will be utilized by the tenants of the apartment and office spaces.

Community green space can be found on top of that same structure. The existing reinforced concrete frame is well suited to support this type of application. On the green roof residents can reserve plots to grow vegetables or gardens. The green roof collects and filters water from the other roofs of the development providing nourishment for the plants and reducing the amount of water we push down the storm drain.

This development will be a standout in Muncie, not for what it does, but for what it saved – some of the original fabric of the once bustling downtown. It will be a prime example of how to save, restore, and integrate historic buildings into a modern city.
Life and Recycle: Revitalizing Muncie’s Downtown

Presentation Board
Original Size: 36" x 72"
Re-use and Recycle: Enhancing Muncie’s Downtown

Resources:


