

The White River Cultural Arts Park

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Abstract. The opportunity exists in Indianapolis to bring together a variety of opportunities in the arts and present them to the people of the city. A cultural arts park would bring a variety of experiences together to expose a wider variety of people to the arts. The opportunity exists to expose people to facets of the arts which they may not be familiar with or which they do not currently have the chance to experience. There need not be a limit to the variety of artistic expressions. This will be a place for everything from dance and opera, to graffiti and rock concerts. There will be something for all walks of life.

The cultural arts park will be developed as part of the White River State Park just a few blocks west of Monument Circle and the entertainment district of Indianapolis. Once established with an identity of its own, this site should benefit from the dense urban population and the high level of vehicular and pedestrian traffic in the area. The large crowds associated with an urban center like downtown Indianapolis provide the excitement and spontaneity that would enhance the character of this project.

Patrons of the park will not be limited to the role of spectator. Participation in the arts will be strongly encouraged. The scope of programming will range from professional performances and exhibits to school groups and local amateurs. Classes and workshops will be one way of opening people up to new experiences and exposing hidden interests and talents.

The arts provide an opportunity to break down social barriers. Each work of art or performance is open for personal interpretation. It is what people want it to be. By providing a place for performance, creation, and the evolution of ideas and expressions, a diverse group of people can be brought together for a common purpose while doing their own thing. In this setting, the arts break down barriers which exist in other aspects of their lives.

Introduction. Indianapolis is a city that has much to offer its residents in a broad spectrum of activities. The cultural arts is one of those areas with many opportunities. Programs and facilities exist on all levels, from local artists and performers, to the most prominent national figures, and from small neighborhood facilities, to the massive expanses of Deer Creek Music Center and the Hoosier Dome. These opportunities, although they exist, are scattered randomly across the city and are not always accessible to all people. The opportunity exists to expose to the arts those people who have not had the chance to experience them, and to cultivate the interest of those people who have experienced them, but lack the opportunities to participate. The creation of a cultural arts park within the regional center of Indianapolis addresses this problem and the goals which are needed to accomplish it.

Background. In looking at Indianapolis, we are presented with a whole host of cultural and artistic exhibits, performances, and experiences. They do not, however, answer all of the needs of all of the people. The opportunities exist, but often the cost or social stigma of these events holds back many people who would enjoy participating. The arts should be open to anyone, but are often seen as a pastime of the middle and upper social and economic classes. Even if they could afford the price of admission, people from the lower economic neighborhoods often would feel as if they did not belong at the same performances as some of the wealthier people in attendance. Concerning his own projects, arts planning consultant Ralph Burgard stated, "Our idea was to break down these barriers, the feeling that one goes to an arts event as one goes to church, lowering one's voice in reverence. We wanted the arts to be right smack in the middle of the action" (Clack 13).

By placing the performances in the park, many of these unnecessary social barriers are avoided. A public park belongs to the people. They are often more inviting than the huge urban structures that generally house the arts. "Too many of the nation's gleaming new 'culture boxes,' as

architecture critic Robert Campbell has termed them, sit in splendid isolation, ignoring their surroundings and ignored by the people for whom they were created" (Green 6). The softer textures of nature have the ability to take the edge off the stuffy formalism that often accompanies the arts. In an article on the reemergence of amphitheaters, New York architect Peter George states, "They won't go to the theater downtown, but give them a picnic and a blanket and they'll go to an amphitheater" (Quinn 18). The economy of a move from inside to out does not adversely affect the quality or integrity of the performance. "Simple solutions, allowing actors and spectators to exercise their imagination freely, often are more conducive to outstanding performances than over-designed or costly buildings" (Taylor 21).

Beyond social barriers, the economic reasons for not attending a performance or exhibit are also sharply decreased. The \$30 million cost of a single enclosed structure is not reflected in the price of admission. For a major facility the "Cost per amphitheater seat averages \$1,250; for arenas, \$10,000. And, of course, lawn seating costs virtually nothing" (Quinn 18).

Goals. There are a number of goals which this project intends to address.

1. To create a park for Indianapolis and the State of Indiana that would facilitate and integrate a number of facets of the arts into one cohesive cultural arts center. The park will be the frame which will display the various disciplines: ". . . itself as an urban stage, a full-scale backdrop to the cultural, social, and commercial scene that will animate the area" (Gass 53). The work of Paul Friedberg is one of the influences behind the direction of this project. Such a park would provide places for people, both grand and intimate, with structured programming and casual spontaneous use, all brought together into a cohesive whole. It will include fine arts displays such as painting, sculpture, and environmental art exhibits; a wide variety of music ranging from the local residents and school groups to professional concert tour stops and symphonies; and an equal sampling of theater, ranging

from local amateurs, school groups, and workshops, to professional productions. "Culture, defined broadly enough to embrace hot-pretzel street vendors on one extreme and symphony performers on the other, translates into a higher quality of life, which attracts dollars in the form of more tourism and shopping downtown, and - because people like to live and work in a nice place - more corporations, industry, and jobs city-wide" (Green 9).

2. To develop a concept that will facilitate exposure a wide variety of people of all ages, economic, and social backgrounds to the arts. The park should offer experiences that can be shared by all types of people. It is the chance to bring diverse groups of people together for a common interest, breaking down barriers that exist in other aspects of life.

3. To give the people of Indiana the opportunity to display their art, perform their music, and to act or be involved in a variety of performances. A variety of workshops in art, music, and drama would offer the chance for many people to participate in something which is new to them.

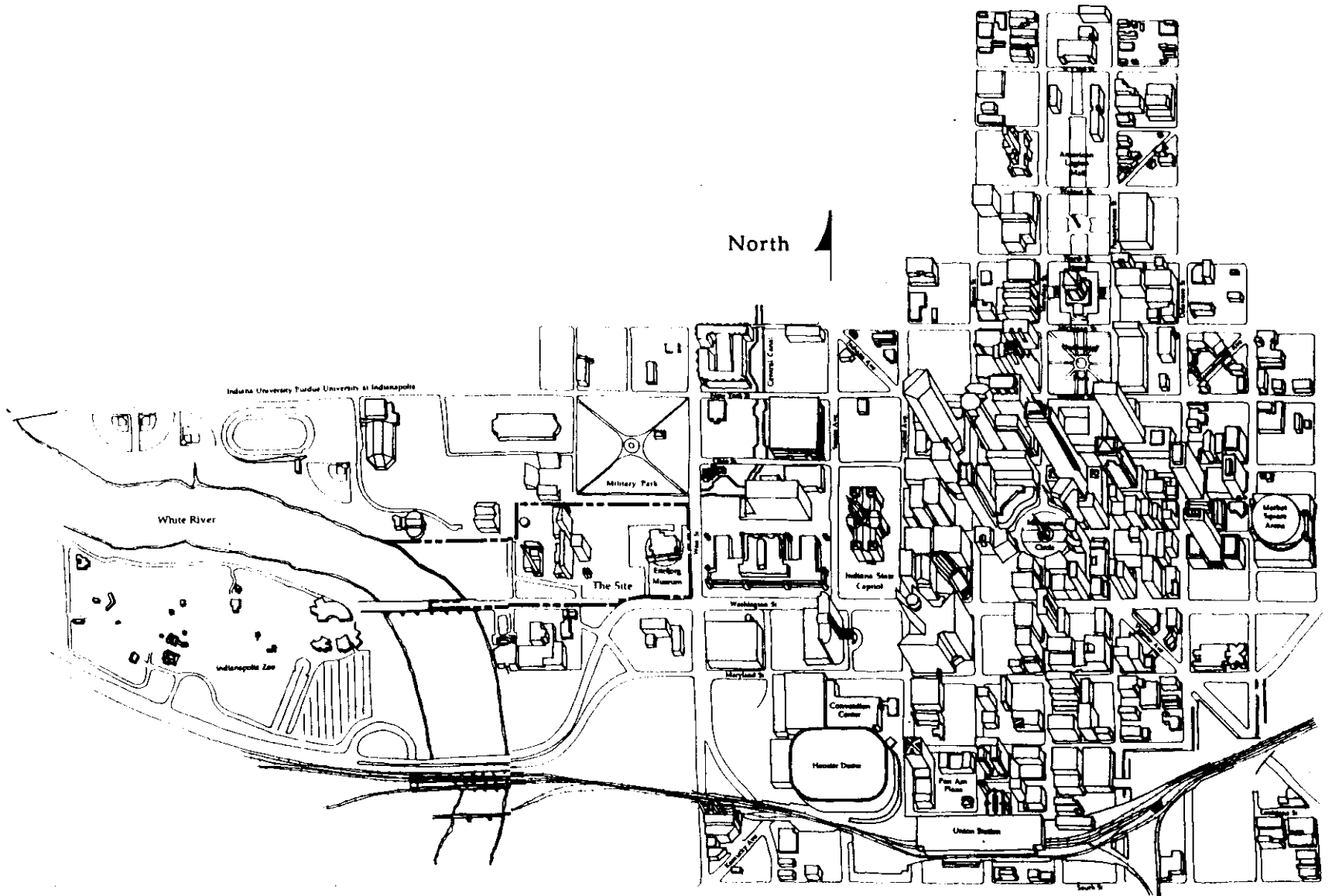
4. To design a project that successfully integrates the different art forms into the landscape of the site and the urban fabric of Indianapolis. Using the dramatic qualities of the landscape to evoke emotions and ideas, the context for the events will be itself, an artistic expression. This is similar to St. Louis' revitalized entertainment district which "draws on the rich and fertile Shakespearian metaphor that the street is the stage upon which we play out our public lives. . . . it seems fitting that a performing arts district should build on this tradition, continuing this fascinating dialogue between the real city and the imagery - between life and art" (Gass 53). The park will not, however, become an island of nature amidst the city context. It will be an extension of the city; an integral component of Indianapolis.

The Site. For this project to be a success, the choice of the site is extremely important. To achieve the excitement and spontaneity which is intended in the conceptualizing of this project, the park must be more than an end or destination, but also, an important pedestrian way with a constant flow of people. This constant flow of people is the element which is conducive to spontaneous performances. The attitudes and purposes for people being in the area are also important. Business people on their way to and from work are less likely to stop and watch as those people who are out for leisure in the first place and expecting to enjoy themselves.

The chosen site for the cultural arts park is an undeveloped centrally located 25 acre parcel of the 250 acre White River State Park. The park, established in 1979, is located on the White River one block west of the Indiana State Capital. A park commission was created which put forth the following objectives for development of the park:

- attract new business and industry to the State
- stimulate new employment
- generate public and private investment opportunities
- expand tourism and convention opportunities
- meet the future recreational needs of the State
- generate sufficient income to maintain and operate the public portions of the Park
- highlight Indiana's world accomplishments in health, athletics, agriculture and nature
- upgrade the image of Indiana

White River State Park Development Commission
Since 1979, many large projects have been completed at the state park including the new Indianapolis Zoo, the river promenade presenting Indiana's limestone history, The National Institute for Fitness and Sport, The Eiteljorg Museum of American Indian and Western Art. Development of the park is continuing with proposals for Indiana Landing, a family entertainment and state history component of the park.



Site Location Map

Indianapolis, Indiana

Site Analysis. This location is in close proximity to the social and geographic center of Indianapolis. It is within five blocks of the Monument Circle, Union Station, and the Hoosier Dome, yet it is just outside of the urban core. Being located just outside the urban core should not pose a problem regarding the lack of spontaneous or leisure time use since the park currently has a number of facilities and activities on the site.

Adjacent Amenities. The Eiteljorg Museum lies to the east, the current terminus of the Central Canal to the northeast, Military Park to the north, the amateur sports facilities and the IUPUI campus to the northwest, the White River to the west, the Indianapolis zoo and river promenade beyond the river, and the White River State Park Visitors Center to the south. Also adjacent to the site are some light industrial buildings and a hotel. The Acme-Evans Mill is currently at the center of the site but is scheduled to be relocated in 1993. The limestone block river promenade, the southwest architecture of the Eiteljorg, the industrial facade of the Beverege Paper Mill, and the late nineteenth century pump house which is currently used as the visitors center, all have a very strong visual identity of their own.

Surrounding Districts. Significant districts surrounding the White River State Park are the IUPUI campus to the north and northwest, residential to the west, heavy industrial to the south, the state governmental center and the central business district to the east, and the canal district to the northeast. A family entertainment center is currently being planned for the state park property directly adjacent to the south.

Pedestrian Circulation. Pedestrians from the Circle, canal development, and capitol complex will access the site from the northeast corner. Access from Union Station and the Hoosier Dome is in the south east corner. Pedestrians from the IUPUI campus will enter the park from the north and northwest. The only

pedestrian access from the west is the four lane bridge from the zoo.

Vehicular Circulation. West Street (three lanes each way) is the major north/south road accessing the park, running along the east edge of the site. Washington Street is the major east/west road accessing the site from the east. Washington Street has been rerouted to the south to make way for the White River State Park. The abandoned sections of the street have become the entrance to the park and the four lane pedestrian bridge over the White River. A few smaller streets provide varied access spots along the northwest edge of the site from IUPUI.

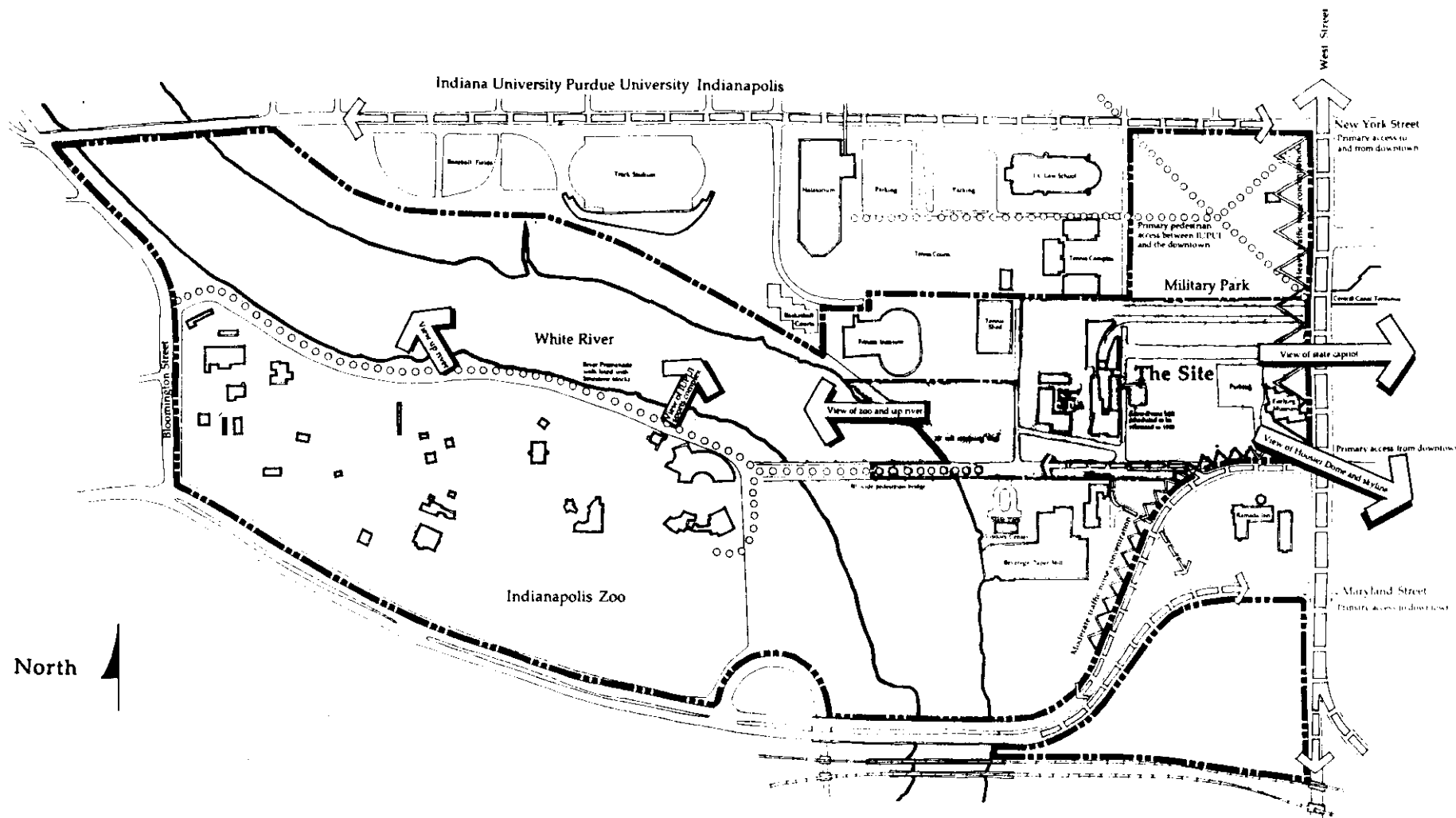
Noise. After the removal of the mill, the only significant noise problems will be that of the traffic on West and Washington Streets.

Views into the Site. Prominent views into the site are from Military Park, West Street, Washington Street, the old Washington Street bridge, the river promenade across the river, and a narrow viewshed from the State Capital.

Views out of the Site. Prominent views out of the site are east and southeast of the Indianapolis skyline, westward up the river, and north of the Eiteljorg looking east to the State Capital.

Wind. The west and south sides of the site are predominantly open. The buildings of IUPUI to the north offer some periodic resistance to the wind. The built up core of Indianapolis to the east offers a more substantial barrier.

Parking. 144 parking spaces are located on the east side of the site for the Eiteljorg Museum. Six acres of parking are located to the south of the zoo. Parking for about 12 cars is available at the visitors center, and various lots and garages are located on the IUPUI campus.



Site Analysis

Program Requirements. The Arts Terrace, the Amphitheater, and the Gallery are the three primary components of the arts park.

The Arts Terrace. The central gathering space will be the hub of activity in the park. It is a place for people to meet, relax, eat lunch, and enjoy some entertainment. This space serves to orient and guide people throughout the park as well as being an enjoyable experience in itself.

- A restaurant (2500 sf.) will be serving lunch and dinner to park patrons and residents and workers of Indianapolis. Indoor/outdoor dining will be provided.
- The arts terrace will have access to parking and the visitors center and each component of the White State Park including the Eiteljorg, the zoo, and the riverwalk, etc.
- Views into the space from the city and views outward of the skyline will be emphasized.
- A flexible stage for lunch and dinner time entertainment, suitable for musicians, comedians, etc. will be oriented towards the restaurant and outdoor dining.

The Amphitheater. The amphitheater in this park will be a facility which supports a wide range of programs. These will include symphony performances, traveling and professional theatrical concerts and theatrical performances, college and community performances, and screenings of current and classic films.

- 700 fixed seats will fan out from the stage.
- An additional 400+ free grass seats will wrap around the fixed seats.
- The amphitheater and seating will be totally accessible to handicap.
- The stage will be a 45' x 25' covered proscenium with a 50+ foot fly area.
- The stage area will have the ability to be closed off at night and in the off season to protect the facilities from weather, vandalism, etc.

- A large retractable movie screen will cover the proscenium opening for the showing of classic and popular movies.

- Backstage areas will contain dressing rooms, storage spaces, and service entrances.

- The amphitheater will have lighting structures for night performances.

- The entrances will have gates for access control for ticketed events

- The amphitheater will have service access to the stage and seating areas.

- Restrooms will be in the near vicinity.

Theater and art structure. A 1 or 2 story, 15,000 sf. structure will contain the facilities needed in producing a performance and the opportunities for year-round workshops and programs involving music, theater, dance, and the fine arts.

- The complex will include a 45' stage with 200 seats for theater, music, and dance workshops, demonstrations, and small performances - 4000 sf.

- It will also contain an art studio for workshops, classes, and demonstrations. It will provide work space for Indianapolis artists to work. - 4000 sf.

- A scene shop will be used for education as well as construction for current shows. - 3000 sf.

- A costume shop will be used to create and store costumes for various performances. - 1000 sf.

- Dressing rooms, storage etc. will also be included. - 1500 sf.

- Offices for administration, tickets, etc. - 750 sf.

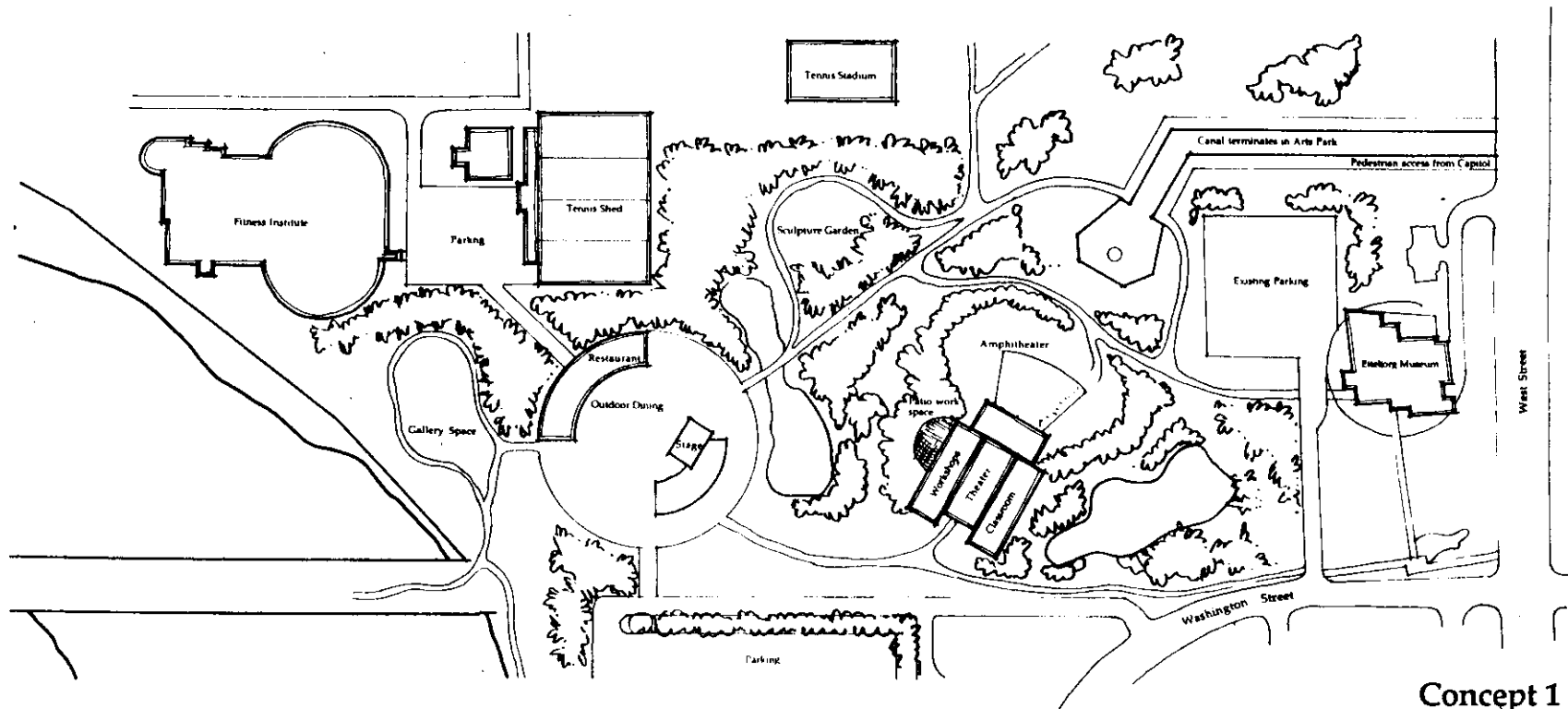
The Gallery. The gallery will be an outdoor exhibition space to be utilized in good weather. The displays will be changed often, highlighting a variety of artists and mediums including local and regional artists. The space will be easily adaptable for changing exhibits.

- The gallery will have adaptable structures which can change to suit the current exhibit. The support structure will be an aesthetically pleasing experience in itself when exhibits are gone for the night.

- The exhibit spaces will be accessible to all people.
- Lighting will be included for exhibits after dark.
- There will be a secure storage area for exhibits and works of art after closing.
- There will be bench seating throughout the exhibit.

Preliminary Design Concepts. The concepts for this project address the stated goals of creating a cultural arts park, and in addition, attempts to create a focus for the varied components of the White River State Park. The state park has many opportunities and activities currently in existence but each acts as a separate entity and not as one unified park.

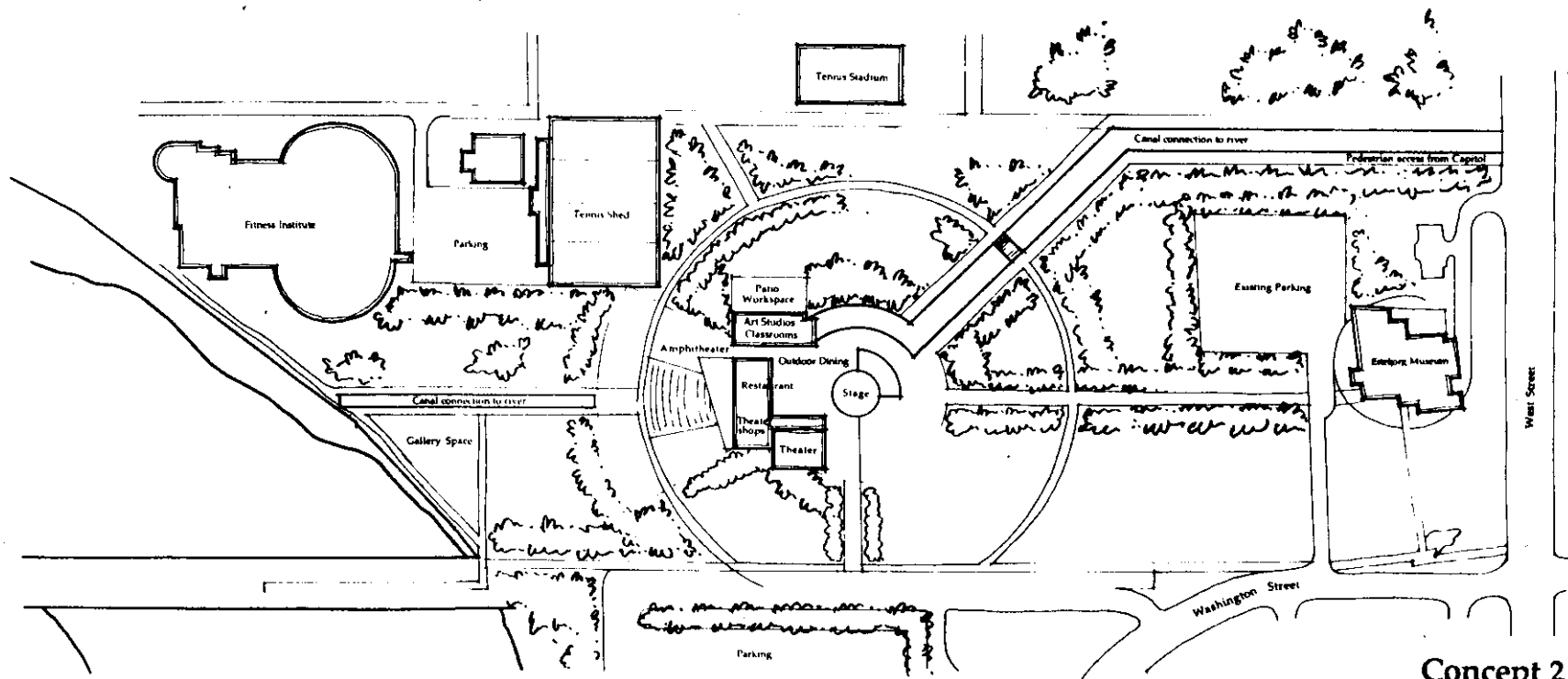
Concept 1. The first concept sets the required facilities into a flowing, informal park. The Arts Terrace has a restaurant and a large outdoor patio dining area. The terrace also includes a stage for noon and dinner time entertainment and display space for exhibits. The arts terrace has a view of toward the river and the series of gallery spaces which run along it. The arts terrace is balanced by a complex made up of the art studios, classrooms, amphitheater, enclosed theater, and workshops. These facilities are all connected, along with the other amenities, like the Eiteljorg and a sculpture garden by a series of flowing paths. The Central Canal is continued under West Street to terminate in the Arts Park creating a strong pedestrian way to the site from the canal district and the Capitol Complex.



Concept 1

Concept 2. The second concept focuses more strongly on the creation of a focal point and central gathering space for the White River State Park. This plan also relates more strongly to its urban setting. In this scheme the existing Indiana Power and Light structure with its monumental smokestack will be utilized to house many of the facilities. The Arts terrace will be located to the east of this building offering outdoor dining and entertainment. The building itself will house the restaurant, the theater, scene shops, art studios and classrooms. The amphitheater will extend from the west side of this building. Once again The Gallery will run along the edge of the river, this time with a more formal structure to it. The access within the site and to and from it from the surrounding city follows a strong geometry playing off of the Arts

Terrace. In this concept the canal is brought beneath West Street into the interior of the site and then linked with the river visually through a series of water elements.

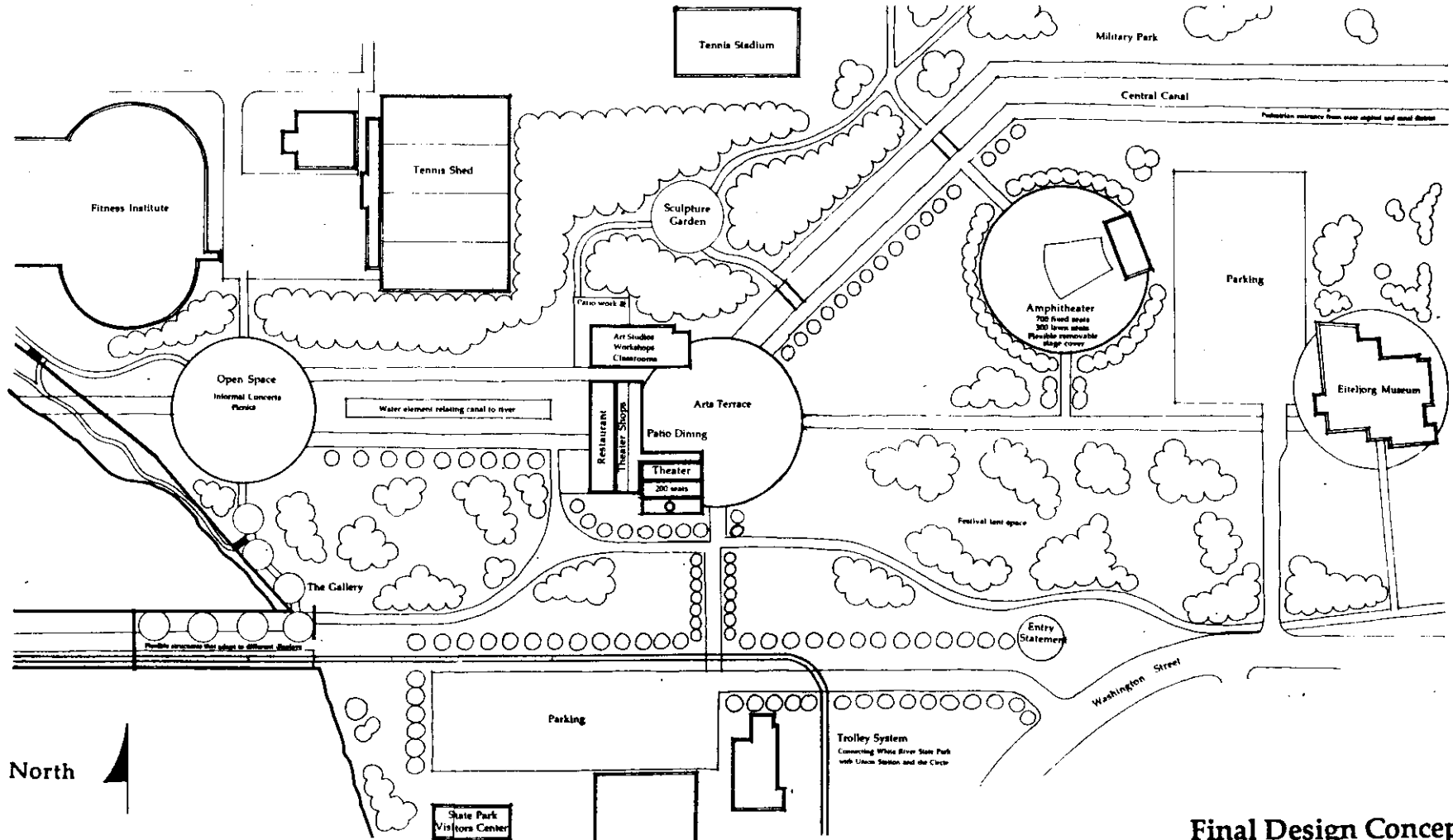


Concept 2

Final Design Concept. The final design concept is a refinement and a synthesis of the original two concepts. The Arts Terrace becomes the focal point and gathering space for the White River State Park as well as the Cultural Arts Park. The Indiana Power and Light building is utilized to house the restaurant, art studios, classrooms, theater and workshops. The arts terrace extends from this building to the east providing outdoor dining, exhibit spaces, and stage space for both planned and spontaneous performances. The Central

Canal enters this space approximately twelve feet lower than the grade level allowing for multiple level changes in the otherwise nearly flat site.

The Gallery space runs along the river and out onto the old Washington Street bridge in an attempt to begin to link the many elements of the State Park together. The Gallery will contain flexible structures that allow a variety of exhibits to be viewed throughout the year.



Final Design Concept

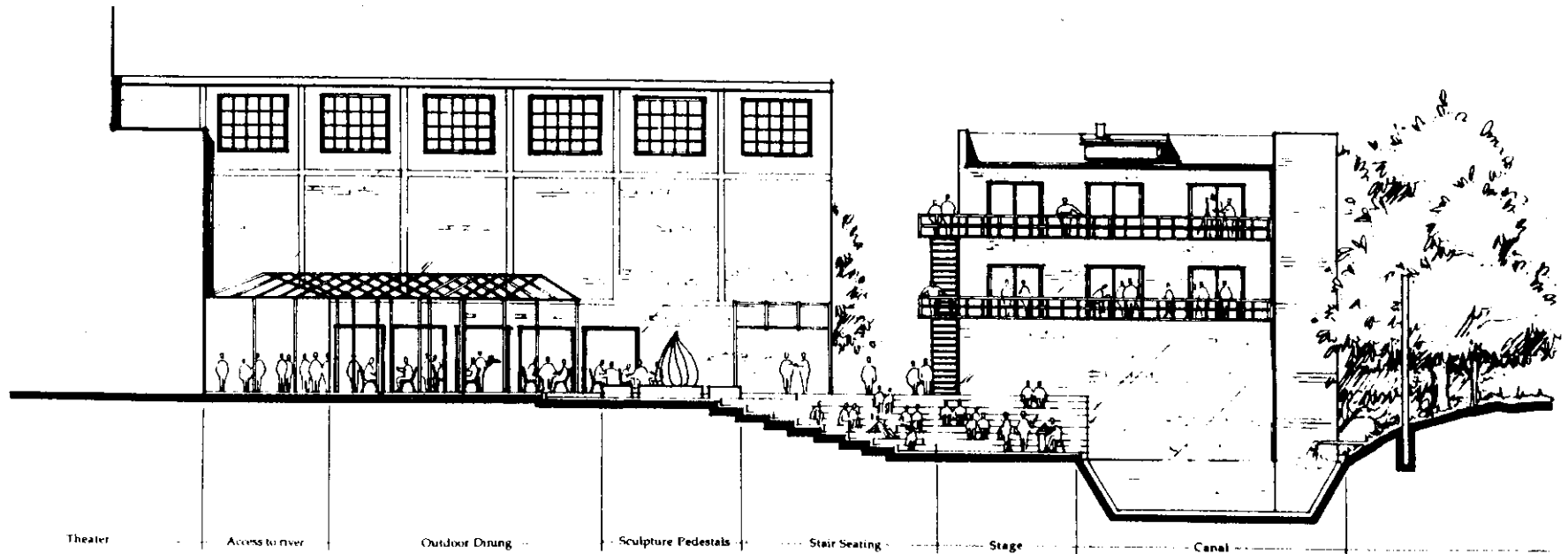
The Eiteljorg Museum becomes the element which anchors the park along West Street.

The Amphitheater is located toward the northern edge of the site between the Arts Terrace and the Eiteljorg Museum. The Amphitheater will be developed through the manipulation of the land and vegetation. In addition to berming and vegetation, the building which encloses the stage will have its back to West Street to additionally buffer the traffic noise.

A sculpture garden will be located north of the Arts Terrace in a less formal setting.

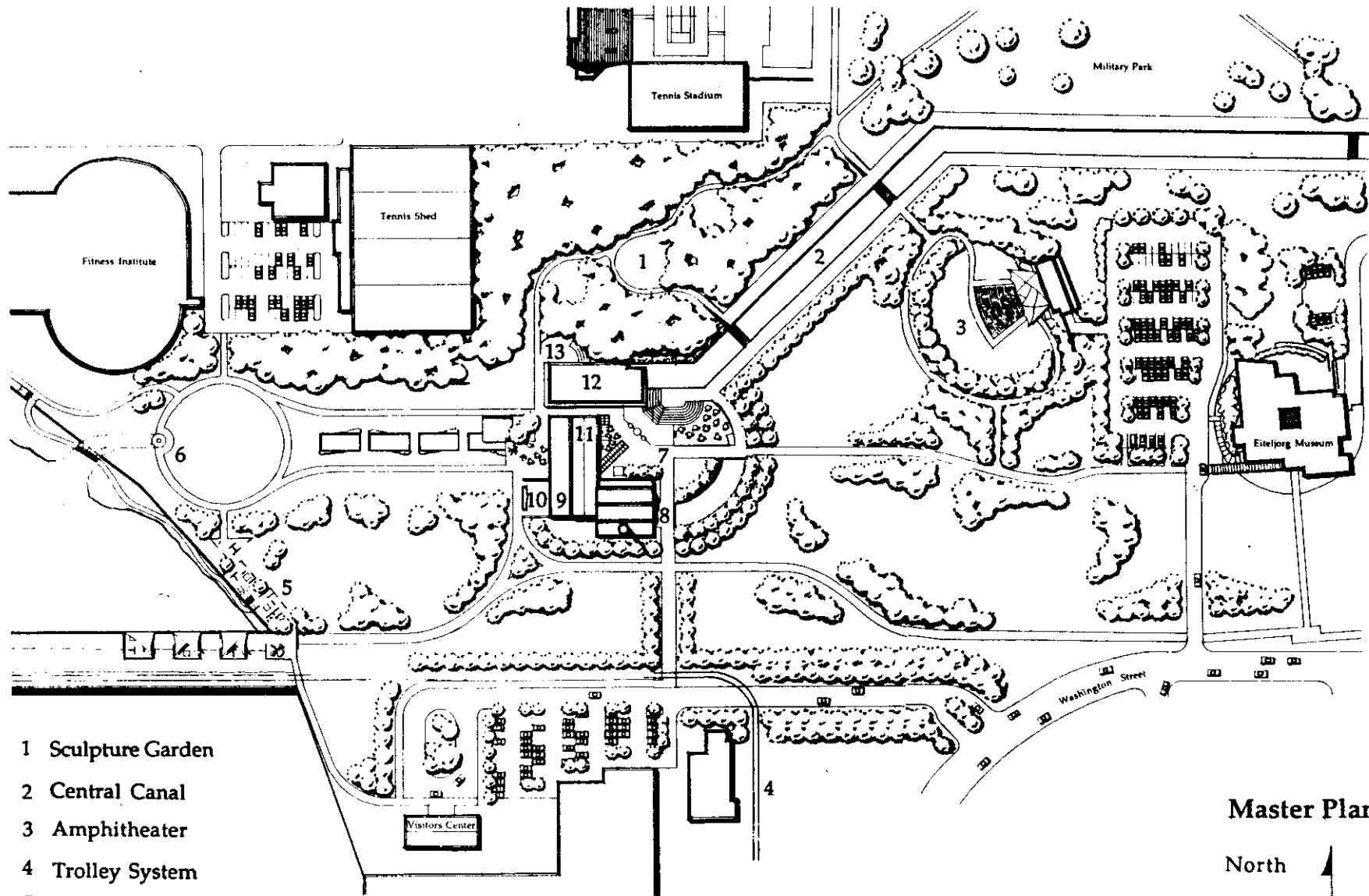
In order to promote the access between the Arts Park, the White River State Park, and the social and entertainment district which lies between Monument Circle, Union Station, and the Hoosier Dome, a loop trolley system has been established. This accessibility would promote a higher usage of the park by the large number of people who normally are limited to the Meridian Street corridor for a variety of entertainment.

The Master Plan. The Arts Terrace is the central focal point and gathering space for the Arts Park and the White River State Park. The Central Canal enters the Arts Terrace from the northeast, twelve feet below grade level. A multi-purpose stage lies at the terminus of the canal with stair seating sloping up to ground level. Outdoor dining tables also overlook the stage. The old Indiana Power and Light buildings partially enclose the west side of the terrace. The restaurant is in the portion of the building directly west of the terrace. Sliding glass doors allow the patrons to spill out onto the terrace in nice weather. The southern portion of the building contains a 200 seat theater for workshops, classes, and small performances. Dressing rooms, and costume and scene shops are also located in this area. An outdoor work space for large projects extends out to the west from the shop areas. The building to the north is the fine arts building. Classrooms and workshops are located on the ground floor with an outdoor classroom and workspace to the north of the building. The upper floors of this building will be studios for



Arts Terrace

North-South Section



- 1 Sculpture Garden
- 2 Central Canal
- 3 Amphitheater
- 4 Trolley System
- 5 Gallery
- 6 Fountain
- 7 Arts Terrace
- 8 Theater
- 9 Theater Shops
- 10 Outdoor Shop Workspace
- 11 Restaurant
- 12 Art Building
- 13 Outdoor Classroom

Master Plan

North

local artists. This will give the artists a place to work in an atmosphere that includes other artists and give them some exposure to the people of Indianapolis.

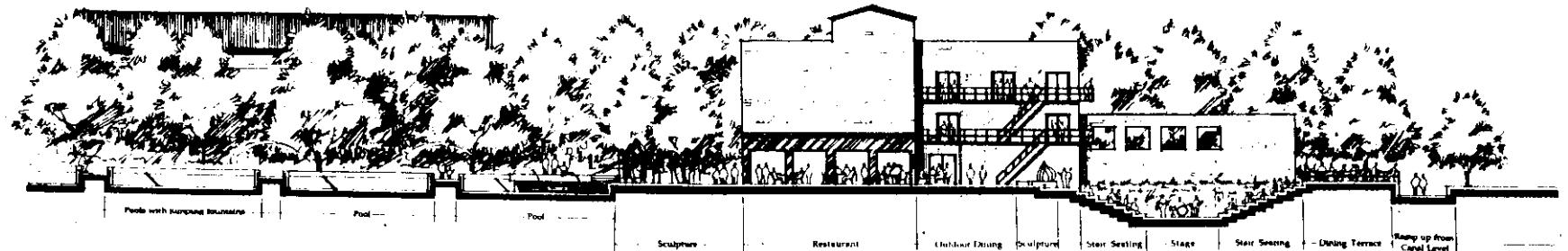
The Arts Terrace extends west of the IPL buildings. Access from the main terrace is along the arts building and through the restaurant. The dining from the restaurant also spills out to the west with its view of the Gallery and the White River. A series of rectangular pools continue the visual connection of the canal to the river. Jets of water leaping from one pool to the next add movement to this otherwise formal walk. At the end of the walk is a large circular open grassy space for impromptu concerts, and unscheduled activities. A large fountain, in line with the rectangular pools, flows west down the flood wall and out into the White River.

The Gallery runs along the top of the flood wall from the fountain south and then out onto the old Washington Street bridge. The Gallery is a series of outdoor rooms contained by limestone blocks and steel pipes. These structures have the ability to adapt to a variety of exhibits and displays. They also can be covered with tent-like awnings for some limited protection from the sun and inclement weather. The Gallery acts as a window to the White River, drawing peoples attention and then providing a view. As has happened with so many rivers, Indianapolis has turned its

back on the river and for some time has not really acknowledged its importance to the city. The river promenade, opened in 1988, was the first project directed back toward the river. The Gallery on the east side of the river continues this precedent for orienting toward the river instead of away from it.

North of the Arts Terrace in a densely wooded portion of the site the paths meander among the trees through a secluded sculpture garden. Paths through the sculpture garden link it to Military Park, the canal, and the fine arts patio .

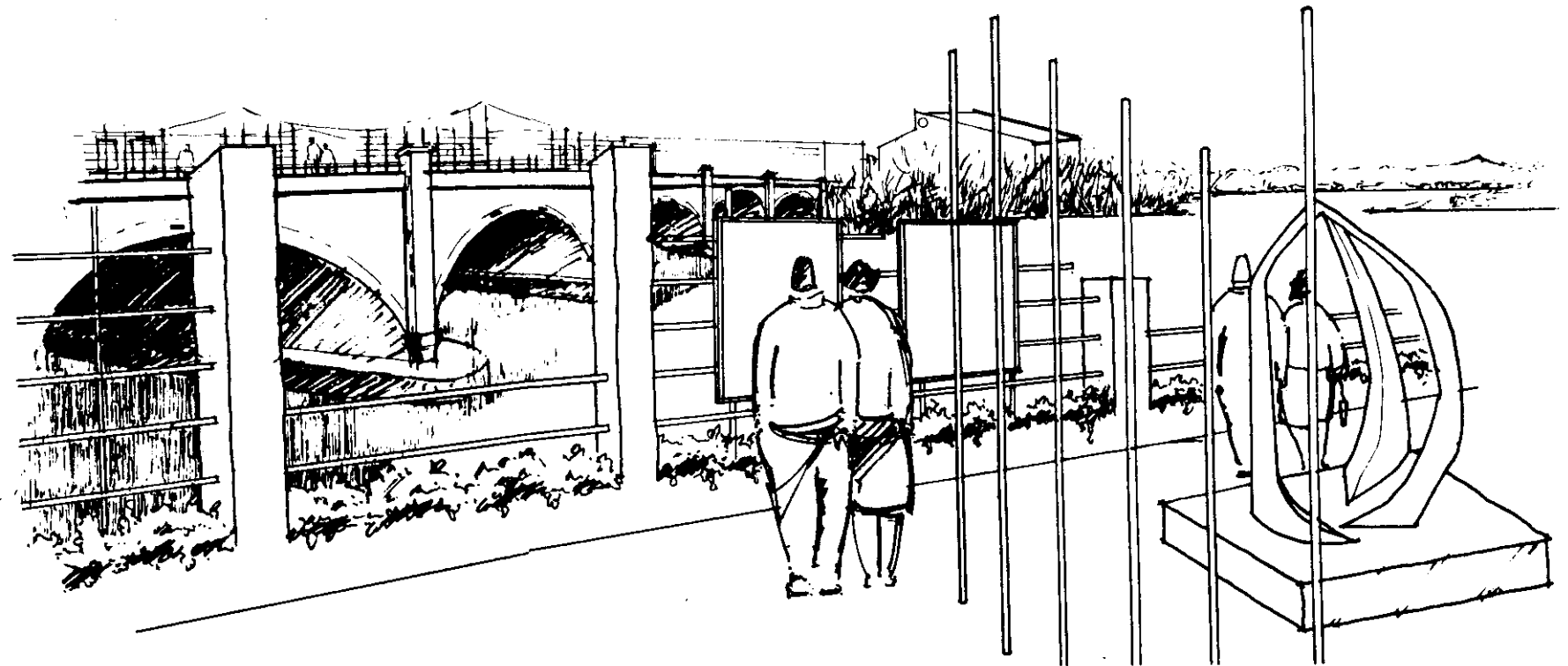
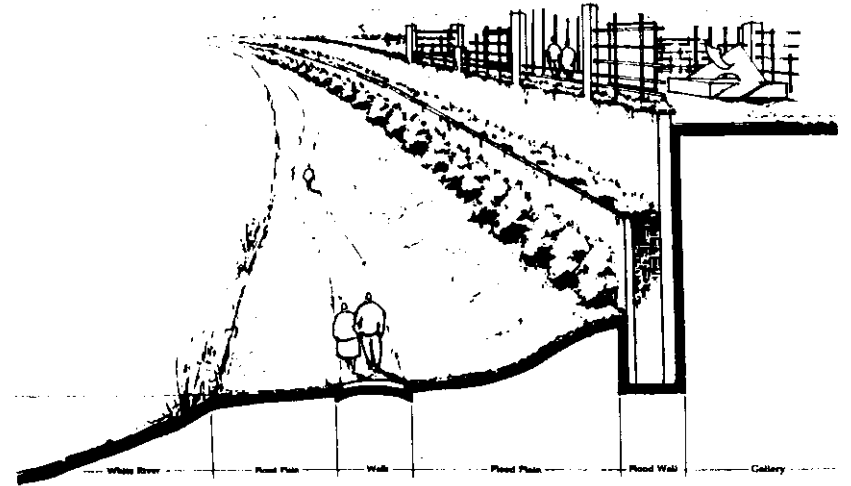
The Central Canal, a sign of the industrial age of Indianapolis, is seeing new life. The defunct and all but forgotten canal has in the past few years become the focus of multi-million dollar residential developments. Plans continue to expand the canals use to the north, but for the time being the terminus to the south lies under West Street. This concept will continue the canal to the west and then southwest to meet up with the Arts Terrace. The walk along the canal will provide access to the park to countless numbers of people living and working along the northern canal. The access under West Street also provides safe passage to the many state workers from the state capitol and capitol complex.



Arts Terrace

East- West Section

Relationship of Gallery to the River



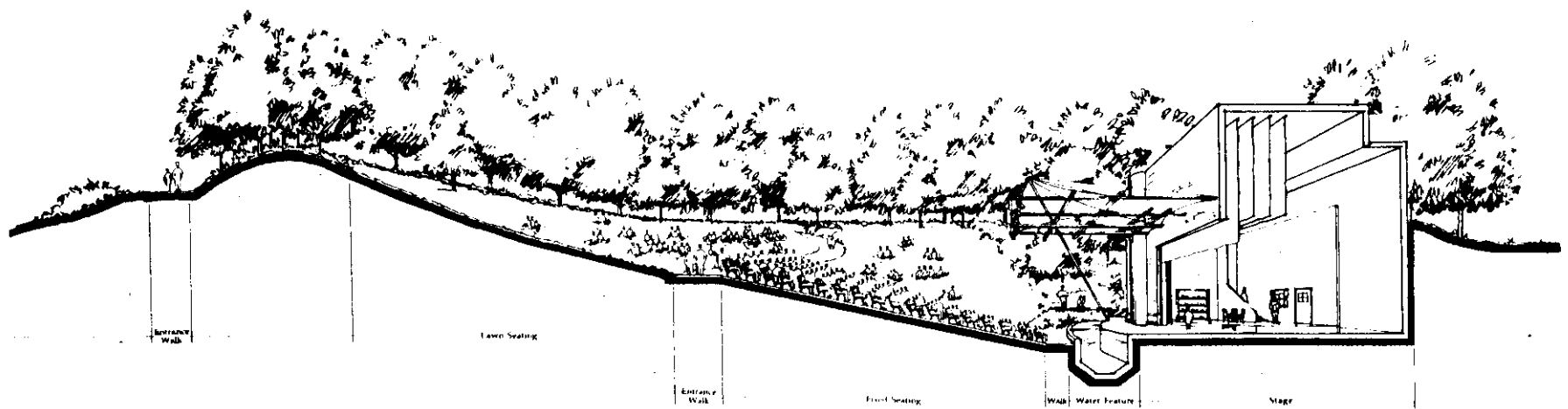
Gallery Views

South of the canal and between the Arts Terrace and the Eiteljorg Museum lies the Amphitheater. The bowl shaped seating area accommodates 700 fixed seats and another 400+ grass seats. A brick structure in the industrial style of the old IPL building houses the stage, dressing rooms, and storage areas. A removable tent-like structure extends over the stage to protect the stage and equipment from the weather. This massive brick structure, the topography of the amphitheater, and the vegetation around the perimeter work together to buffer out the traffic noise. The landforms which make up the amphitheater and the experience leading up to it give it a definitive character of its own. The structure itself is in line with the Indiana State Capitol and terminates the view formed by the surrounding capitol complex.

The large undeveloped space south of the Amphitheater is flexible for arts festivals or large sculpture exhibits. This space will remain flexible to be used as a transition as the portions of the White River State Park south of the site are developed into the proposed family entertainment center.

The trolley system which links the site with Union Station enters the site from the south next to the old Beverage Paper Mill and then heads west along the southern border of the site across the old Washington Street bridge to the Indianapolis Zoo. Periodic stops at the major facilities will make the experience that much more accessible. The trolley will be an important element connecting these two large entertainment districts.

Conclusions. The White River Arts Park will be a part of the continuing development and pursuit of the goals of the White River State Park. This project will increase the cultural and recreational opportunities of the state, expand the state park's tourism potential, and upgrade the image of Indianapolis and the state of Indiana. In addition, this project will help to unify the separate components of the White River State Park and pull it all together in to one unified experience. Most importantly, the Arts Park would give opportunities to all people of Indianapolis to view, participate, and to experience the arts in ways which they could not before.



Amphitheater

Section

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