

A few elderly people live in town today who can remember a time before any bridges spanned the river. As children, they crossed the river on stepping stones. The first bridge to cross the Iroquois was greeted with a celebration. Over the years however the river begins to tell a very different story, it is no longer a source of fish or game and no longer a source of needed power or fresh water. The rapids become long forgotten and low lands are drained for more farm land.

Soon the city begins to grow into the thousands and the river becomes an open sewer. By the 1930's the river is no longer officially a river. The State now owns it's right of way and as an official watershed it is renamed a ditch. It is not until the later 1960's that laws are passed requiring sewage treatment. The original bridge is replaced by a state highway bridge in the 1950's. The city is no longer under the direct influence of the people who live there, but becomes a part of the larger entity of bureaucratic state and

federal spending largess. At the same time the city's orderly infrastructure begins to fragment.

The following drawings are a direct result of this simplified story of the city of Rensselaer. A selection of drawing are presented in this work to help show the proccess of redesign and at least some of the results. The drawings are not used to describe in detail every aspect of the future city but rather to explore opportunities. This is the fundamental value of visionary architecture. Drawing is a tool for seeing possible futures. The work begins by establishing connections that are powerful, direct, and meaningful in our lives. The County Courthouse to the increasingly used train tracks, passing many of the cities oldest buildings and institutions is one possible connection. The Courthouse to the seemingly distant public school campus on the eastern edge of town is another possible connection. A tangent path

is established using the river as a tie between a string of parks, most of which are already in place.

Next Architectural opportunities are sought along the path. In order to receive attention, land or buildings are used, abandoned, or landscaped according to their ability to reinforce or strength the civic importance of the path. The Paths are worked till they have a clear beginning and ends that are natural attractors for people and their activities, the Courthouse, the swimming pool, the schools the shopping centers, and so on. The path must rise as quickly as possible to a symbolic image in the minds of the citizens, like the aisle of a church or holiday parades. The best place to start is within the history of the the city's growth. The object of all development in the city is to re-establish the value of land in the center of the city and outward from there.

Finally the effort is centered around the careful picturing of the city as it would look if a plan were developed along the lines established early in the project. A line is struck between not forcing a stylistic impression of the city and the careful suggestion of the density, scale and functions that would be appropriate for future growth along the paths. It is not the intent of the visionary plan to dictate the future. The city may not grow or flourish in the future and no amount of visionary planning will predict or create future activities. But with out a dream for the future opportunities will be lost and growth will be dictated by profit motives and government rules and regulations stipulated by the general rules of spending and not the spirit oor will of the community.

The drawings are noted briefly to give orientation, however, an intimate knowledge of the city is not provided.

Visionary planning should be the result of familiarity with the location in question and is for the use of people who are initiated into the environment being planned. No other circumstance makes rational sense. An effort to publish a volume that makes the reader intimate with the surroundings would be of little use. Some value can surely be gleaned from this drawings, even if you are not familiar with the city of Rensselaer, as Rensselaer has many of the attributes common to many midwestern prairie cities.

Much of the rest of the program for this design project is elaborately discussed in the opening chapters of this work, and are responses to situations imagined that will arise and are recorded as the design moves out of the present and into the future. It is fundamentally true that most of the writing is a plea for action. It may be that one of the main reasons for producing a visionary plan is to counterpoint the plea for action with a goal oriented plan that reflects a

desire for cultured improvements to the city as well as the day to day management of utilities, issues of life safety, budget, and separation of functions. Planning can allow for both architectural utility and function as well as expression of social value and culture. Some people of Rensselaer may take strong objection to this plan for the future, as not representative of their needs or desires. That is to be hoped for. Reaction in any form represents a reasoned point of view and can be included in public debate during which we learn more of our community, and refine and/or expand the planning goals.

This section of the work will look at the flow of drawings to cast some light of the thought and insights that shaped the visionary future redevelopment of the city of Rensselaer.

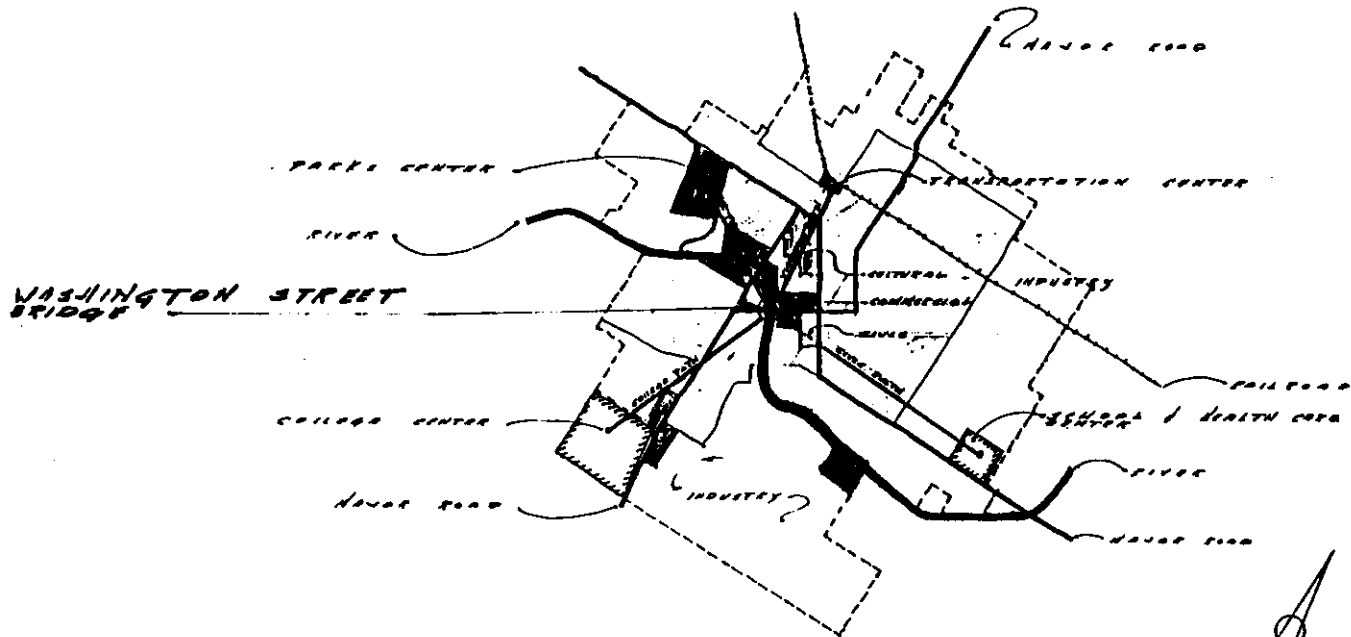
Much of the early work as can be imagined was research and information gathering. This material was gathered and digested and then organized into conceptual maps. These were simple drawings whose sole purpose was to condense the complexity of a city to an essential form. Important broad categories of form and function begin to show themselves through these drawings.

With this in mind, the next seven drawings are presented in their original form. From these drawings you will be able to see a connection later with the finished drawings. From these early conceptual drawings the finished works grow as in layers. From the start to the end we are looking for and then reinforcing the important paths of the city of Rensselaer.



Early sketch of road looking to the city

# RENSELAER



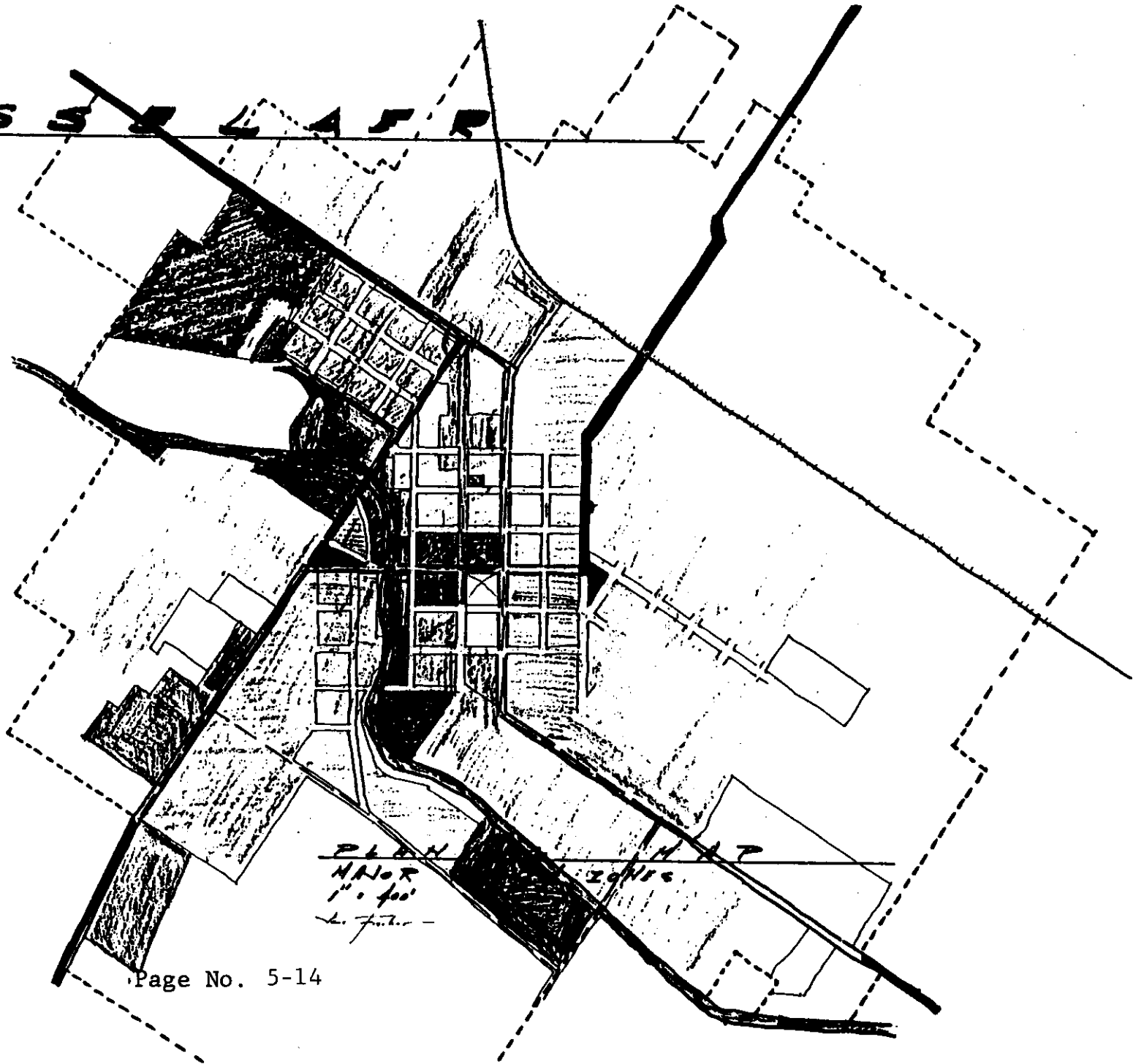
## CONCEPTUAL MAP

MAJOR PATH & ZONES

1" = 1000'

LOW FUTURE

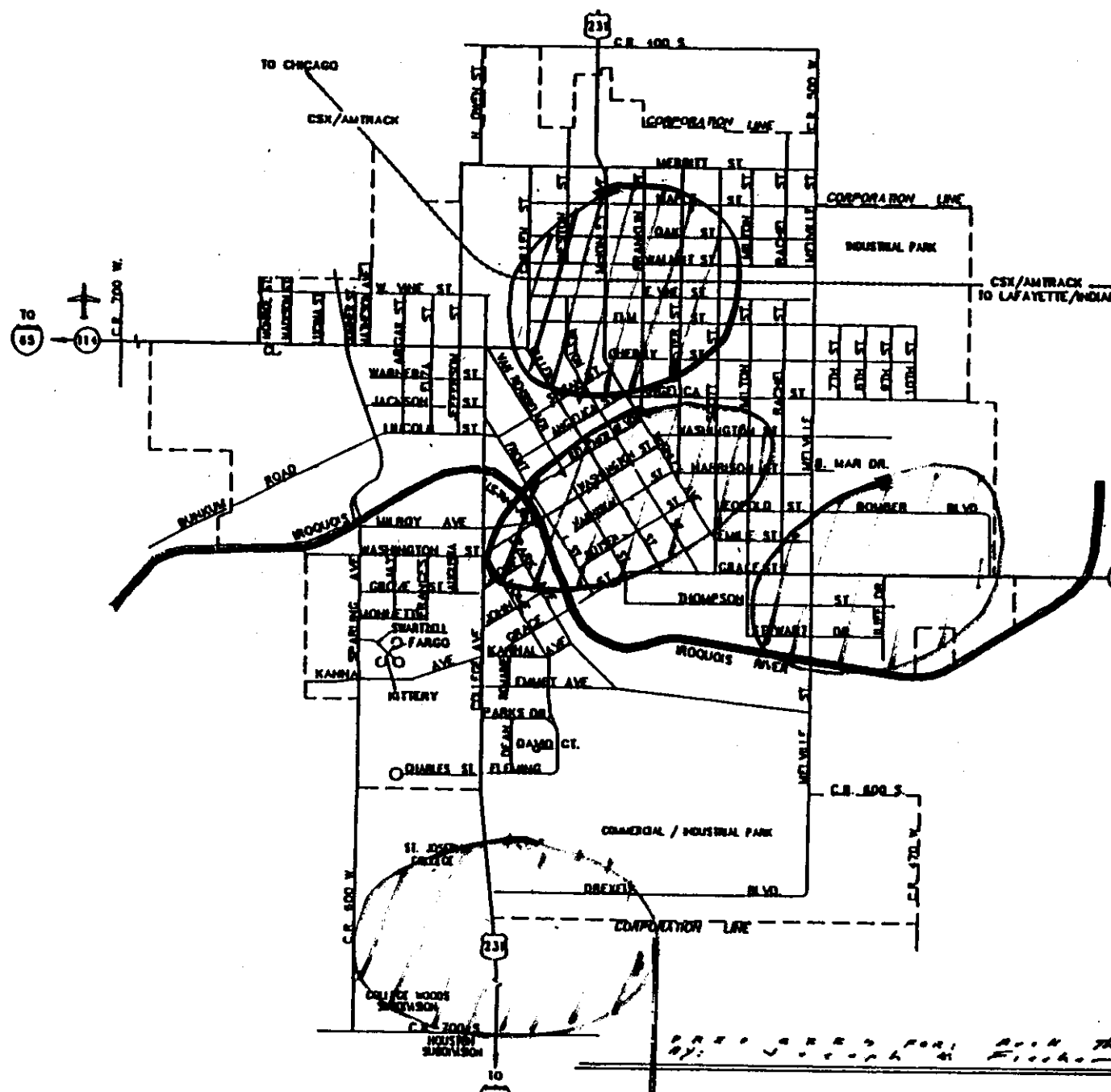
RENSSELAER



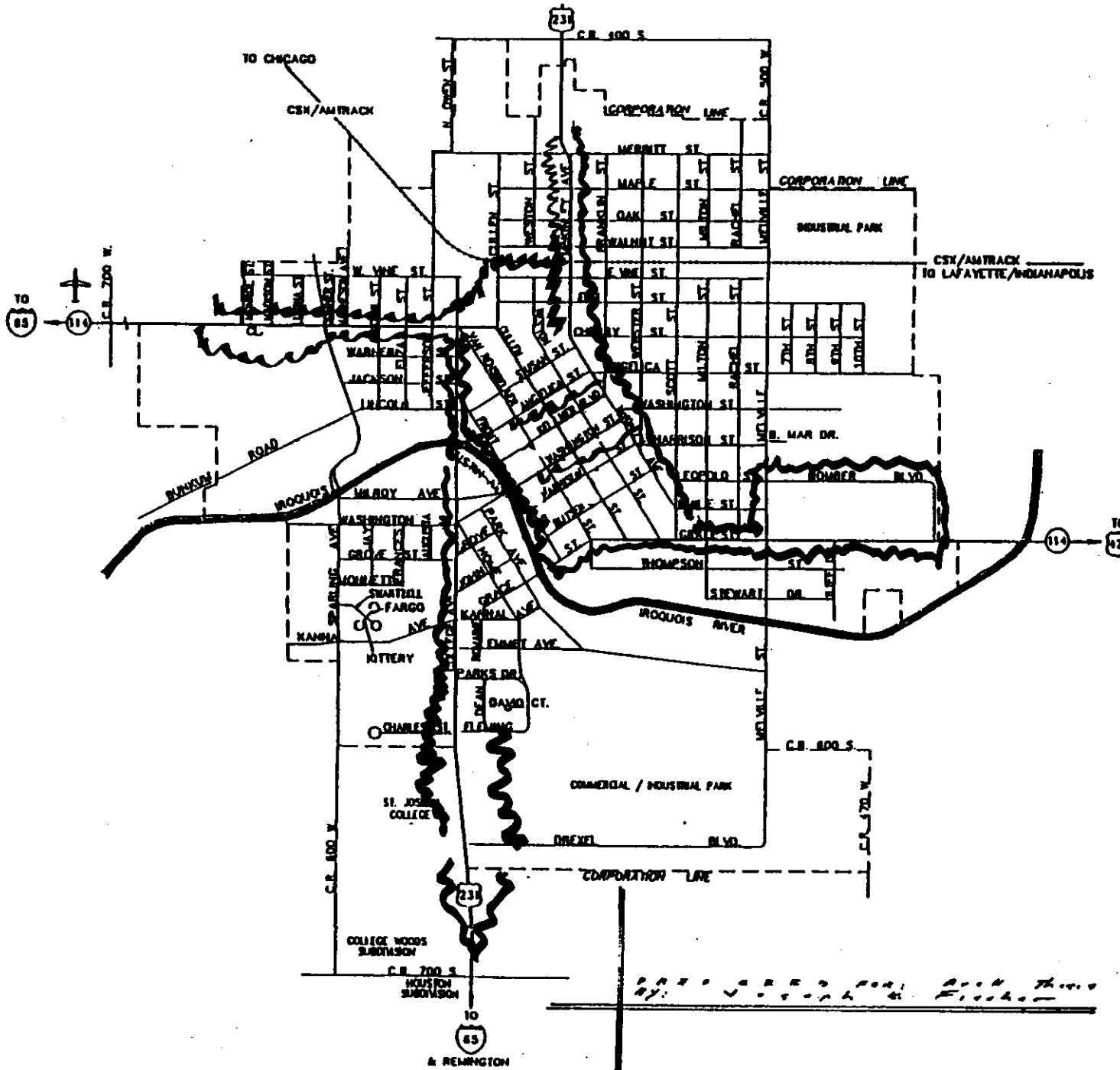
PLAN MAJOR  
1" = 40'  
ZONES

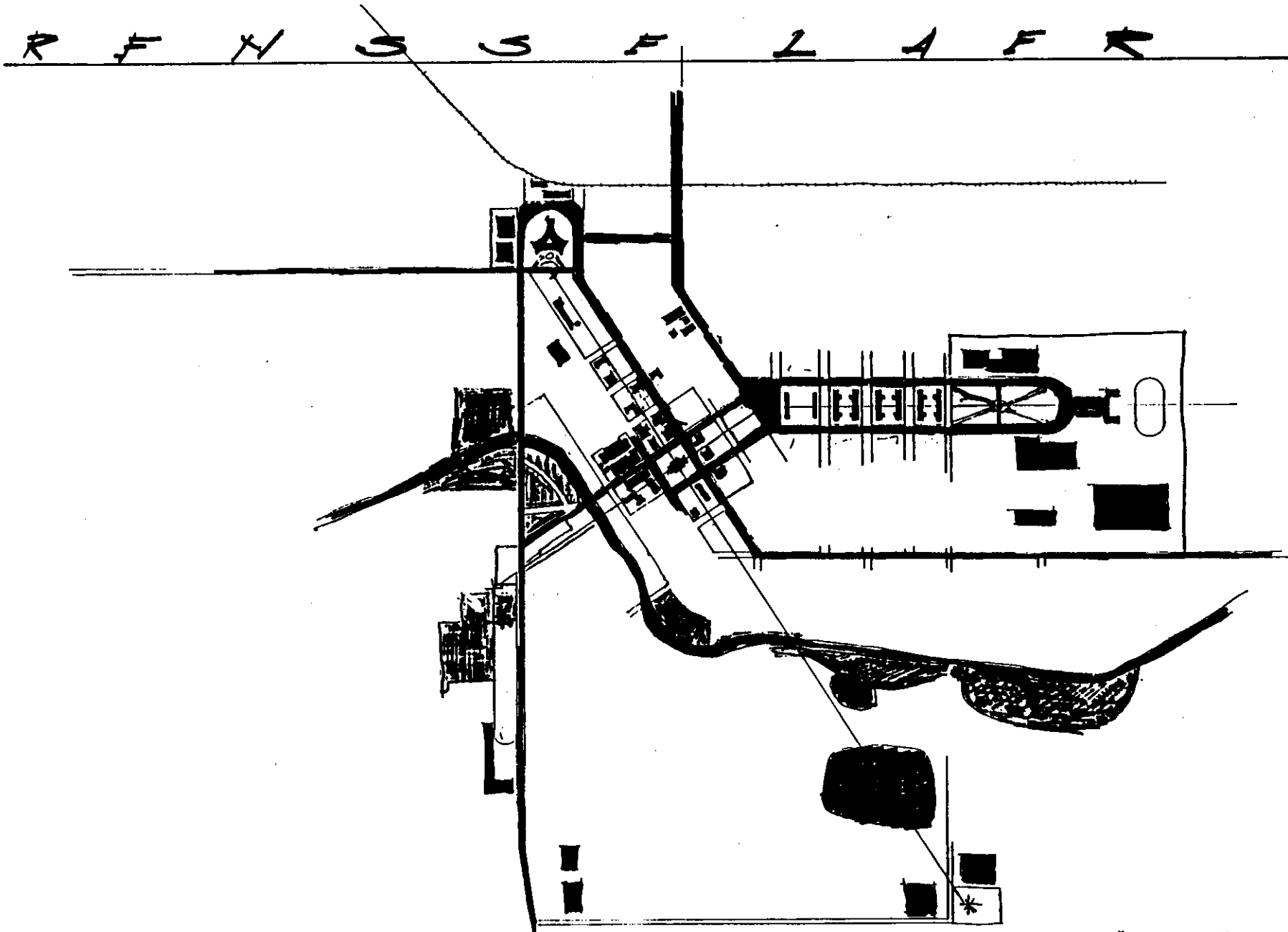
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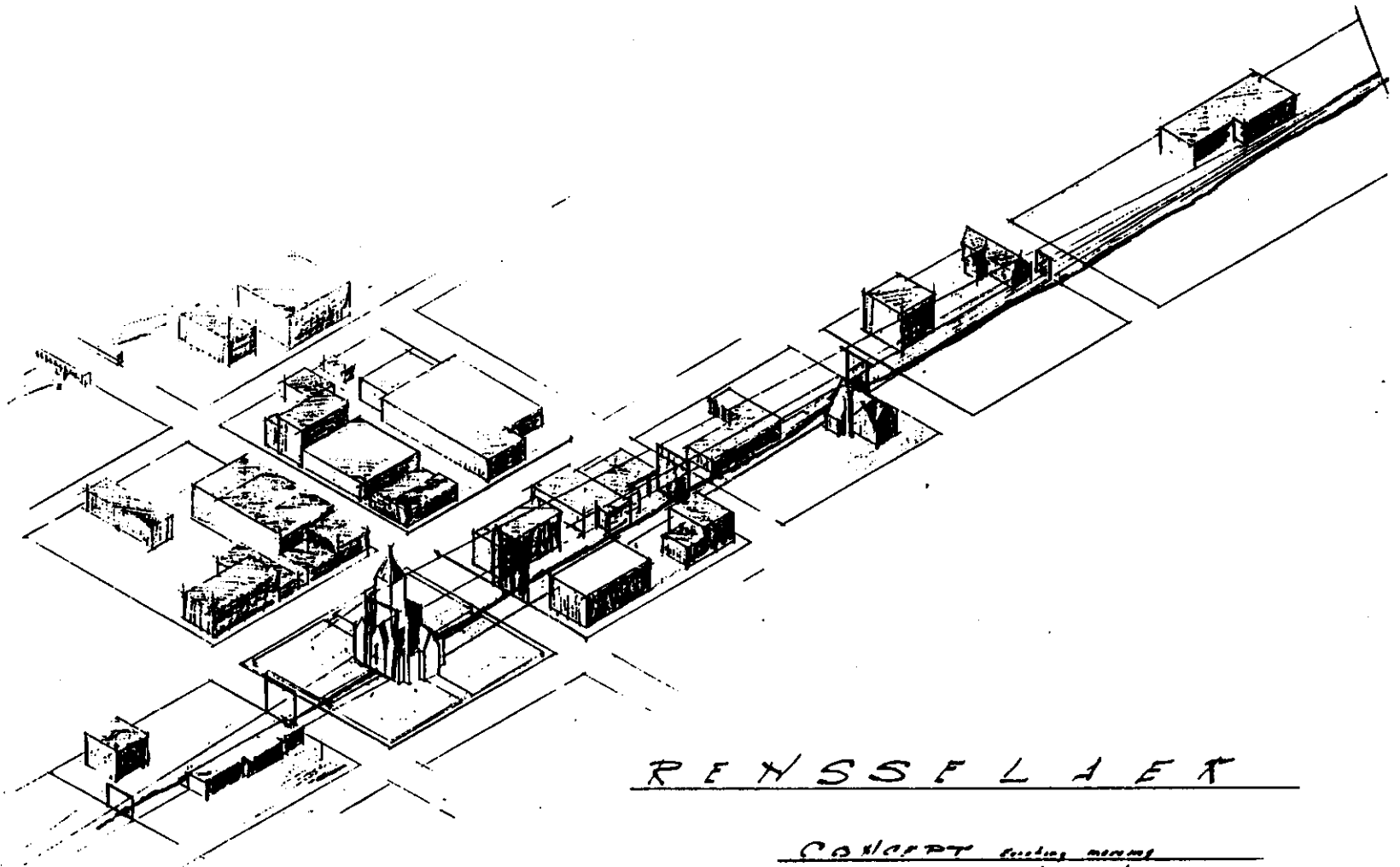
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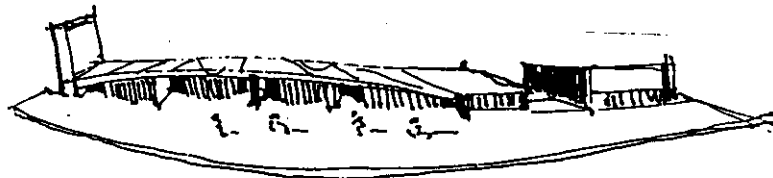
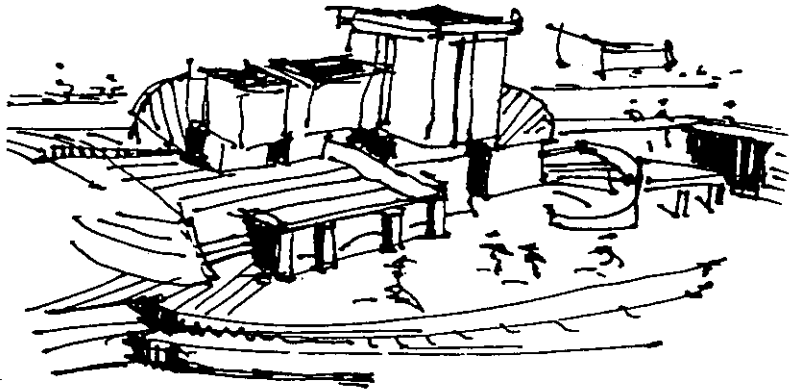


RENSSELAER

CONCEPT STUDY DRAWING  
NOV 22 1991 J. Fischer

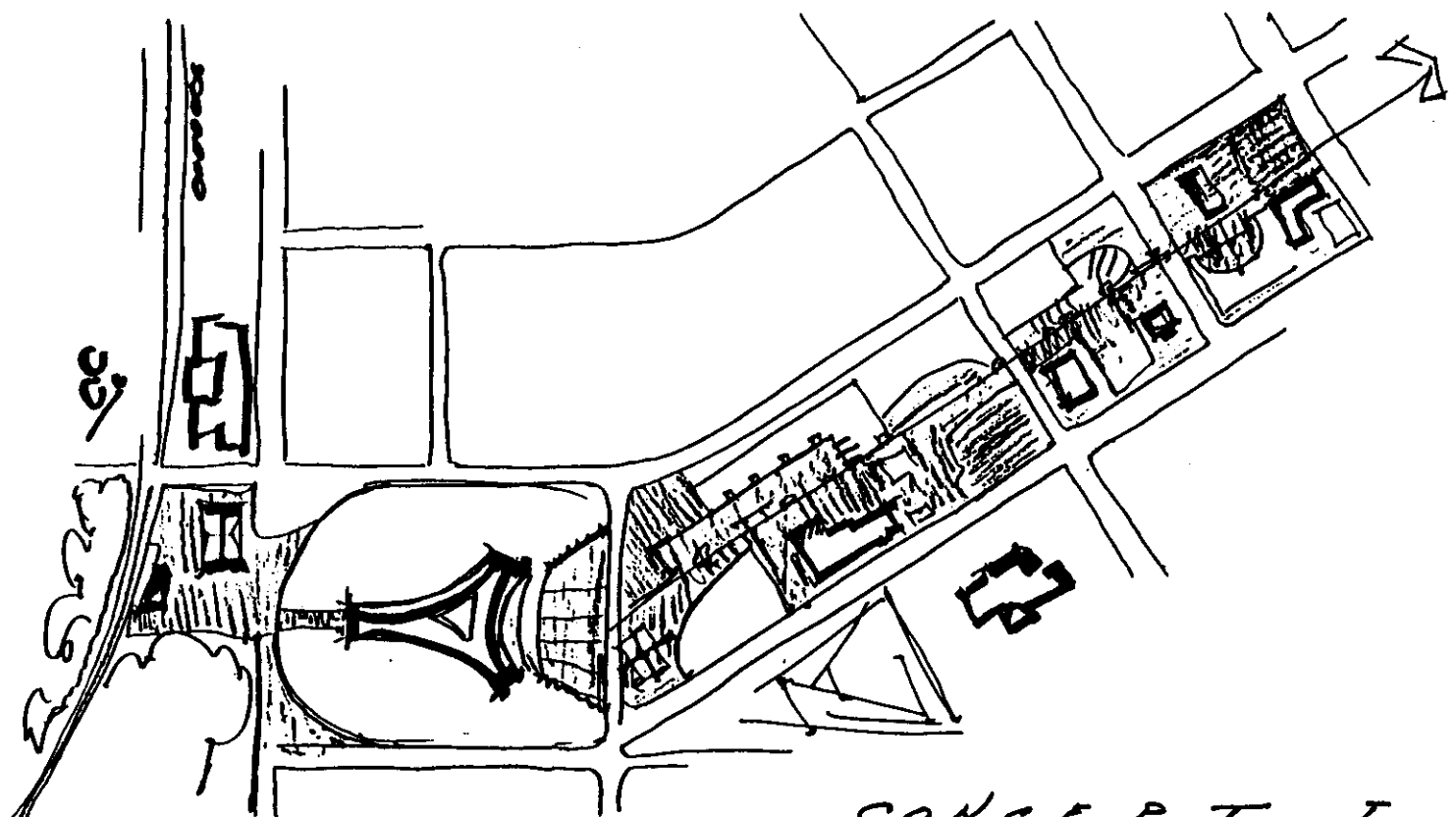
The next group of drawing are presented as the second layer both sketches and plans are developed in greater detail and the the physical paths are clearly defined. The city begins to reshape itself and a new order or orientation begins to suggest further refinements.

The next five plans begin to flesh out the scheme and the city is devided into rational and meaningful relationships.



Early Sketches of important buildings and properties, little more than gestures.

R F N S S F L A E T

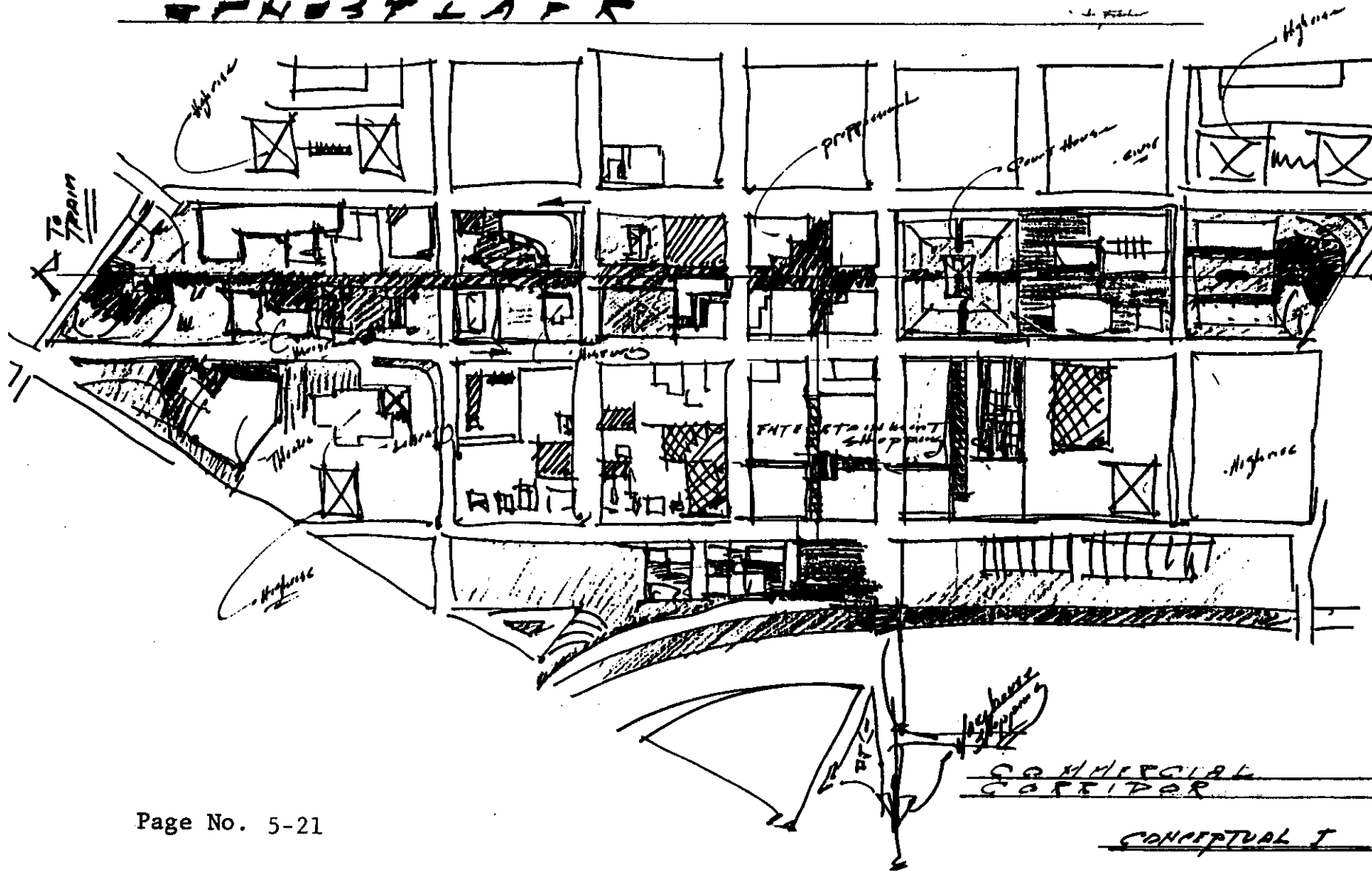


VISITORS/PARKING/ MARKET

CONCEPT I  
8/20/16 27/10/16

WINDSPLAT

J. Keller

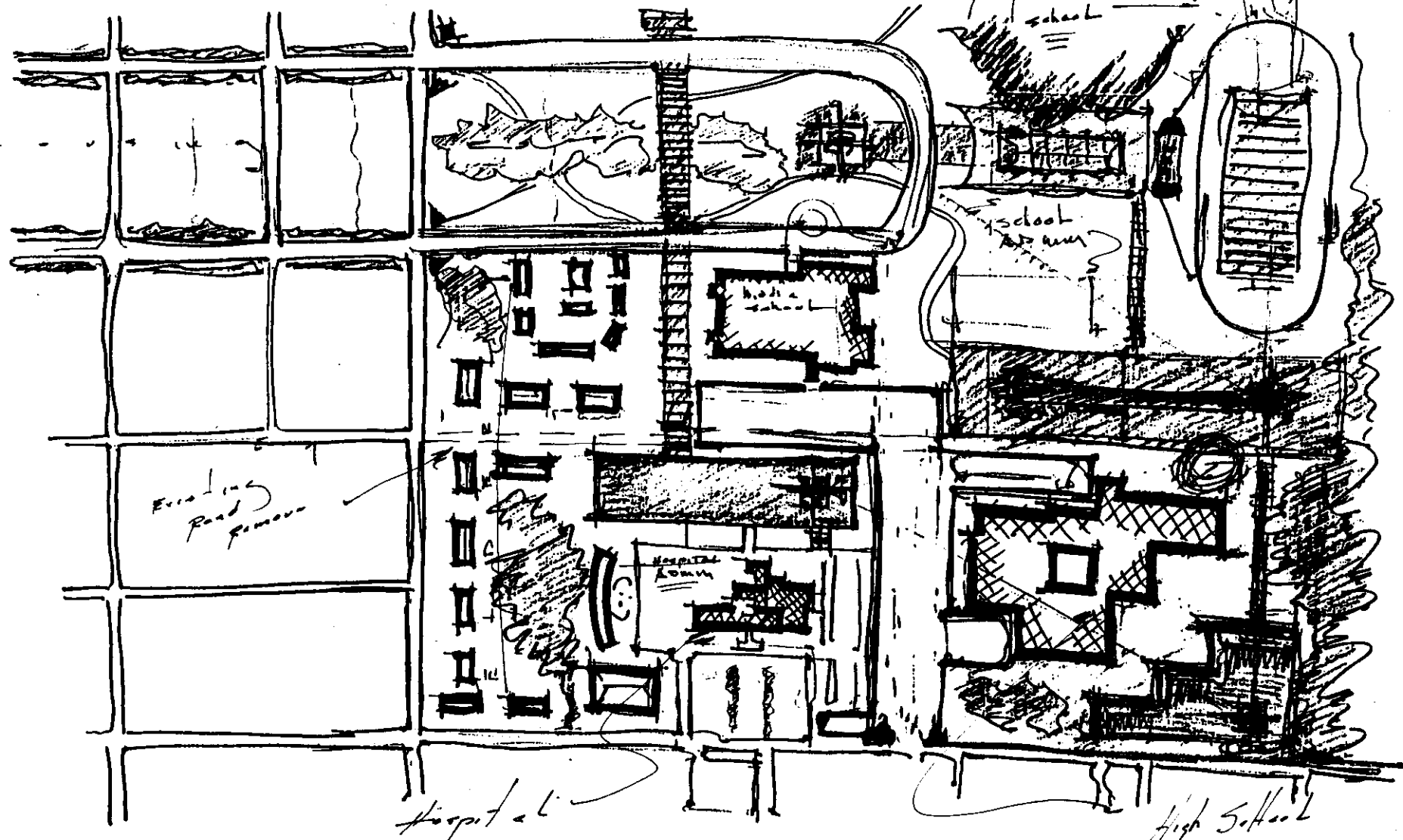


COMMERCIAL CORRIDOR

CONCEPTUAL I

Flourishing School

Vertical school  
Football field

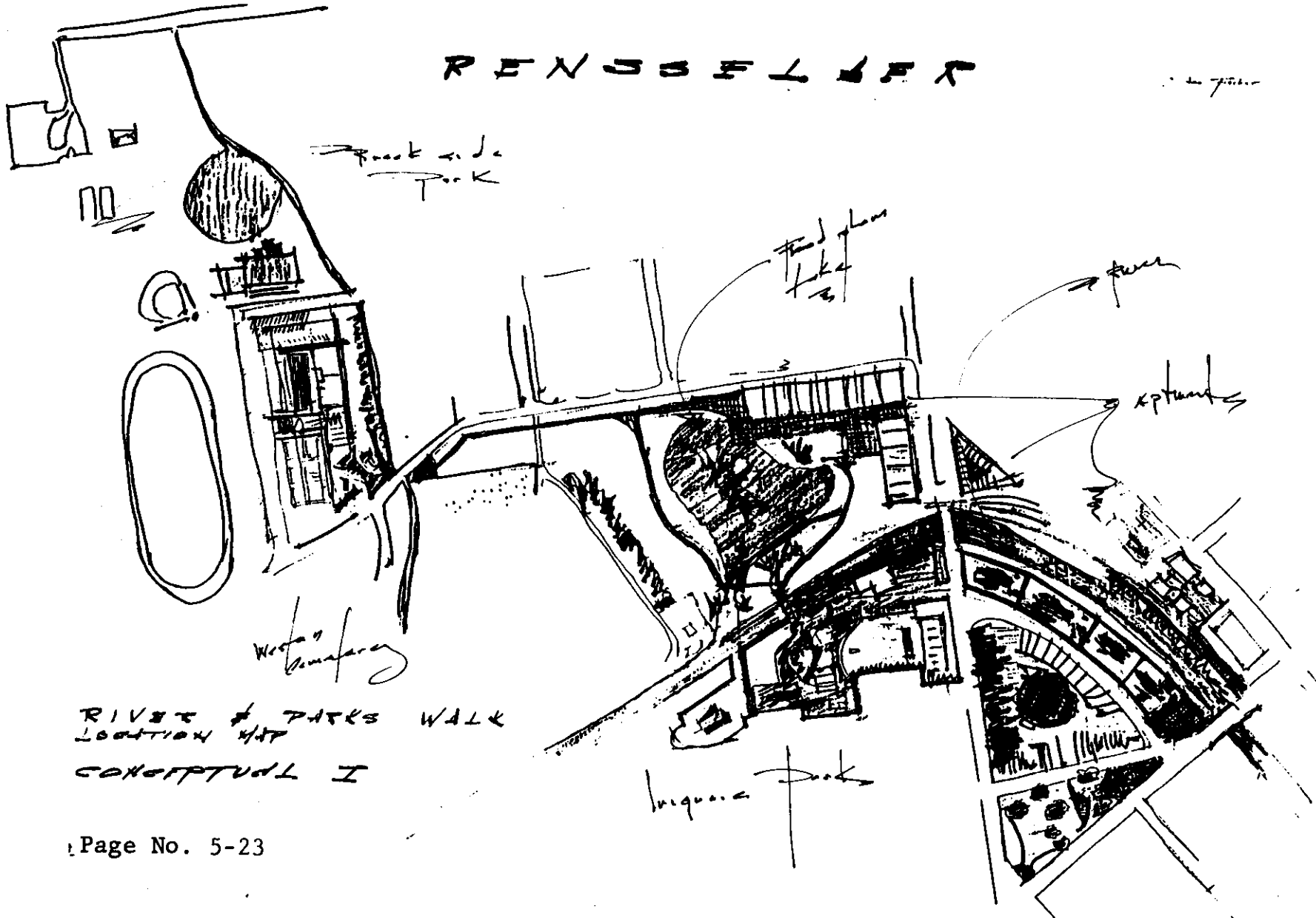


R E N S S E L D E R

THE PUBLIC CAMPUS

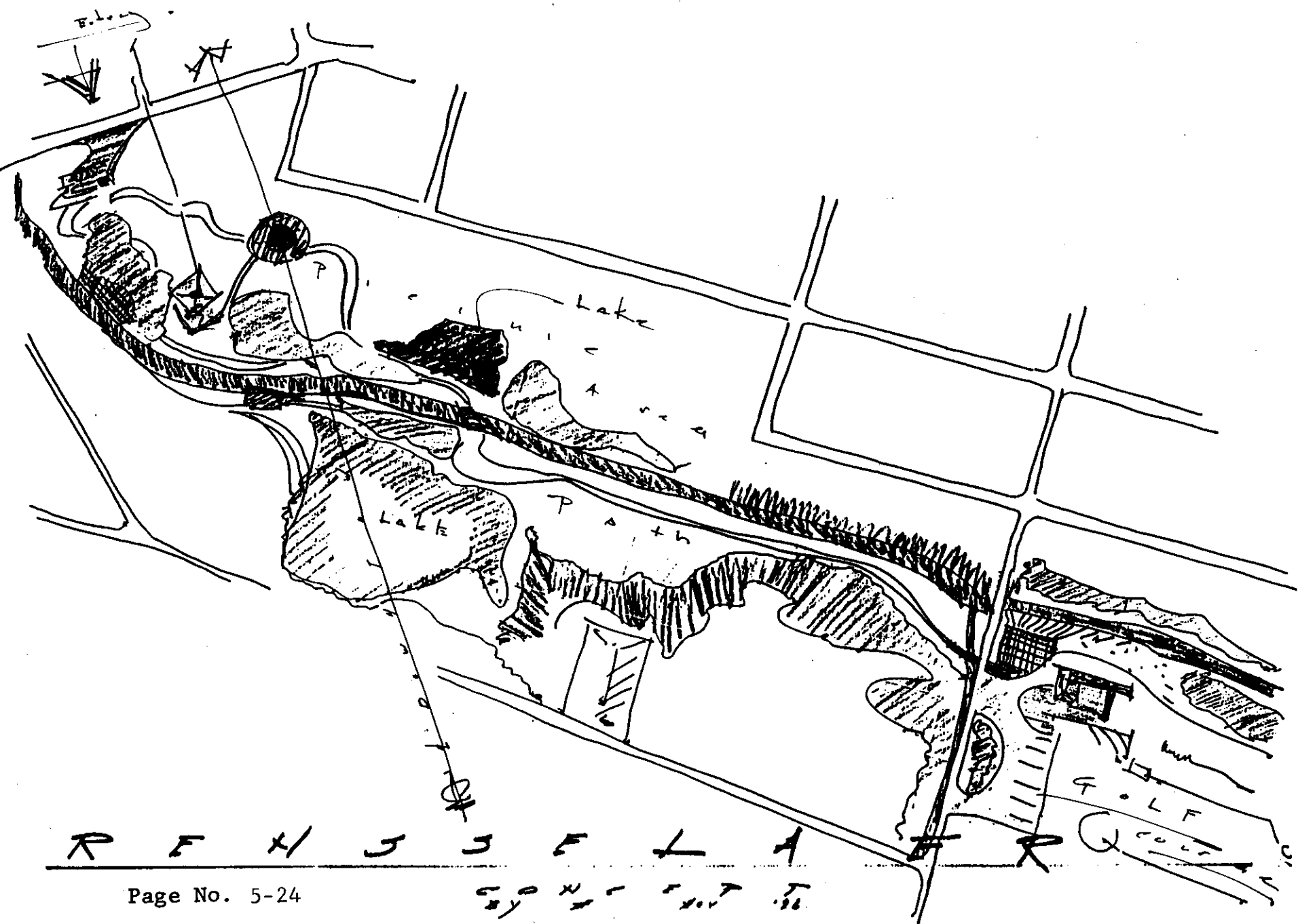
CONCEPT  
NOV 1967

# RENOSSER



RIVER & PARKS WALK  
LOCATION MAP

CONCEPTUAL I



50 40 30 20 10

From this point all thought and drawings began to focus on the path. Views were established and sketches made based on the importance to the path. The path begins to swell and spill out of the narrow confines of previous drawings and path can begin to be seen as an interconnection over time of potentially powerful and meaningful districts in the city.

The River is seen now as a series of parks anchored at either end by fitness pass times. The middle is tangent point to the center of the city, and supports park like cultural centers, zoos, band shells, terraced paths, ect.. The center of the city is a focal point, reestablishing the County Courthouse as the visual center of the city with paths moving north to the train station and south to the city government center. The educational campus is given more distinct borders and connected to the heart of the city. At last opportunities begin to abound for new and meaningful relationships to grow.

These paths and relationships are inherent in the last drawings presented here. A series of drawings allowing a glimpse into the future against which current planning decisions can be made. This is the objective of these final drawings. Visionary architectural planning of the city as a tool to be used in the rational planning of American cities over a large span of time.

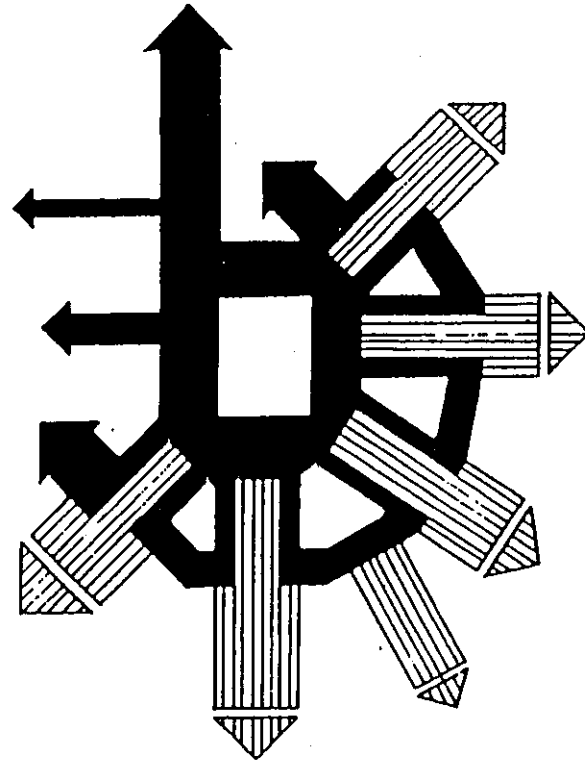
# PATHS AS A POSITIVE FORCE

## IN ARCHITECTURAL CITY PLANNING

SELECTED PLANS AND DRAWINGS

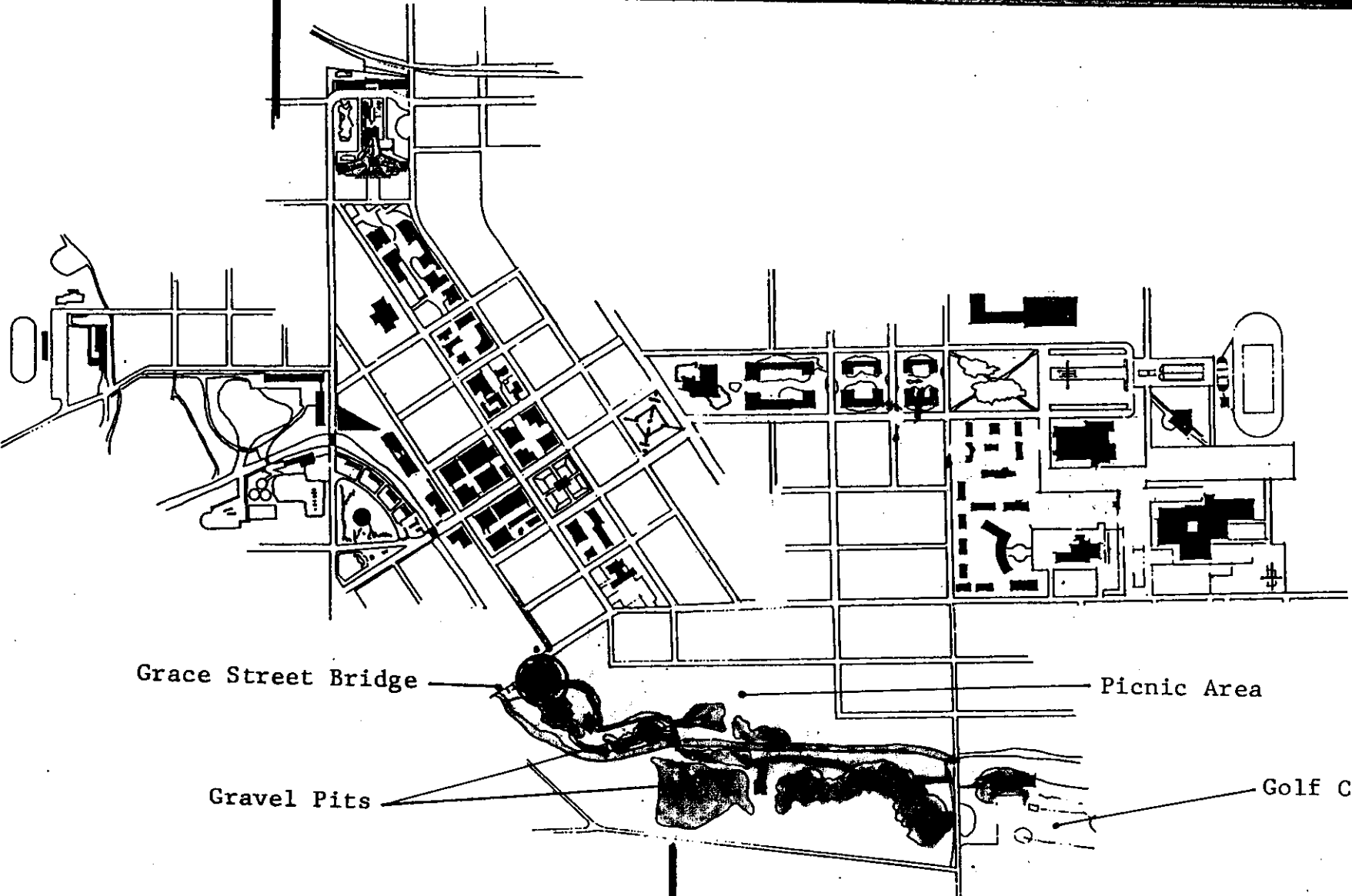
MAY 1997

This then begins the drawings that could be called the third layer. Creating a broader and more detailed suggestion of the future organization of Rensselaer along paths. Paths used to give the city an easily understood form and a series of urban spaces to treat as features around which community effort can be concentrated.



BY JOSEPH K. FISCHER

R E N S S E L A E R  
R E D E V E L O P M E N T



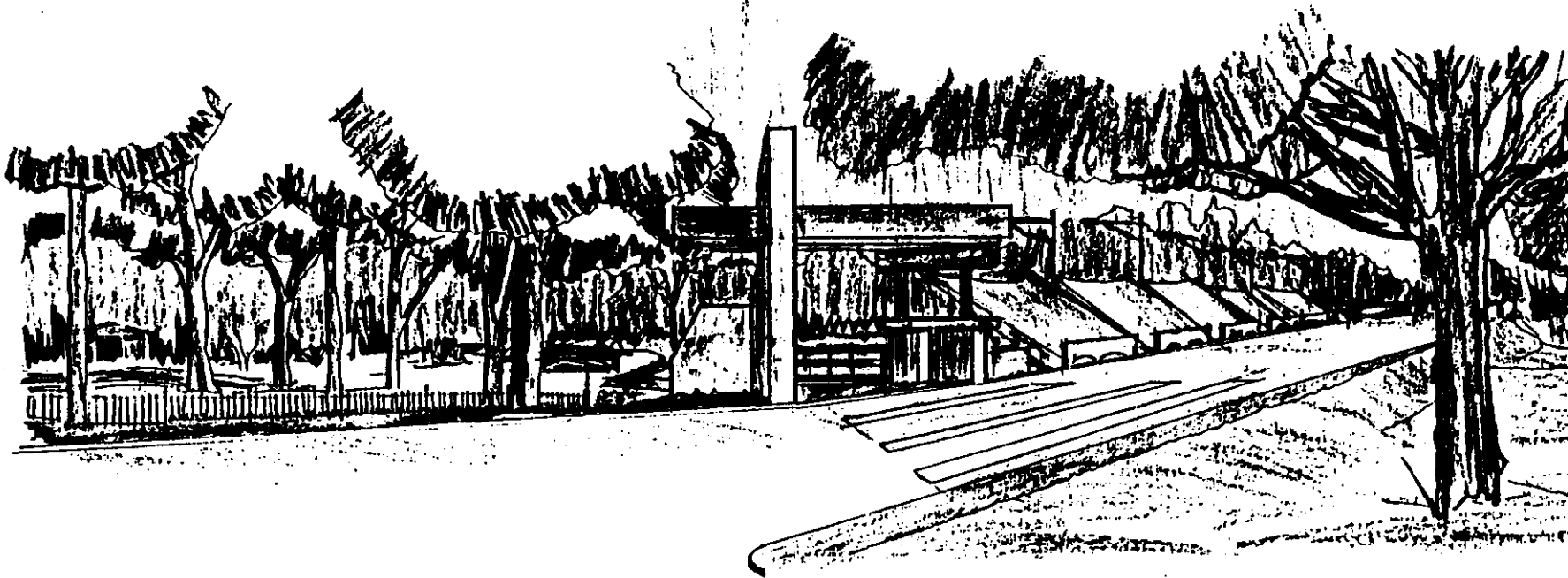
Grace Street Bridge

Picnic Area

Gravel Pits

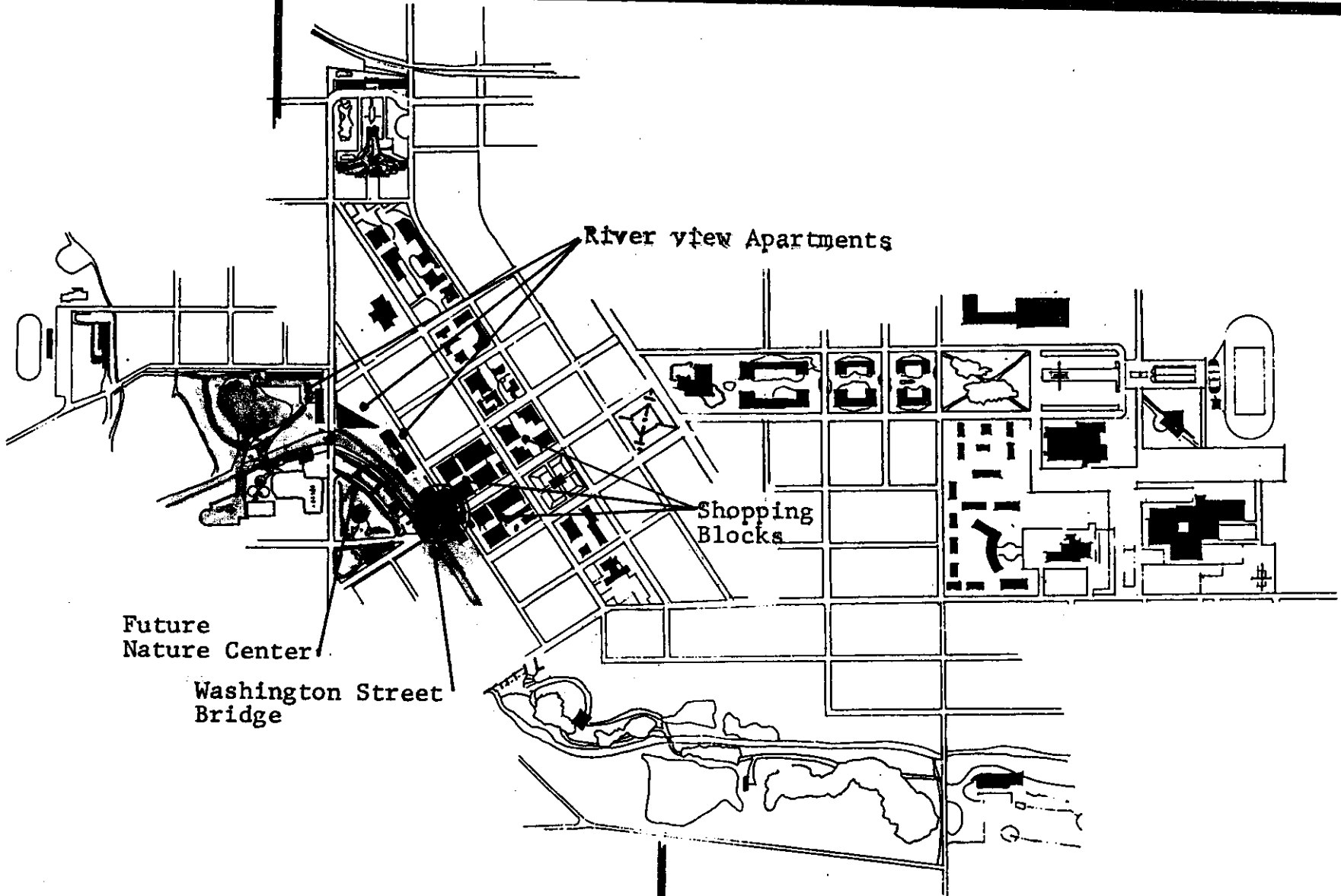
Golf Course

R E N S S E L A E R  
R E D E V E L O P M E N T

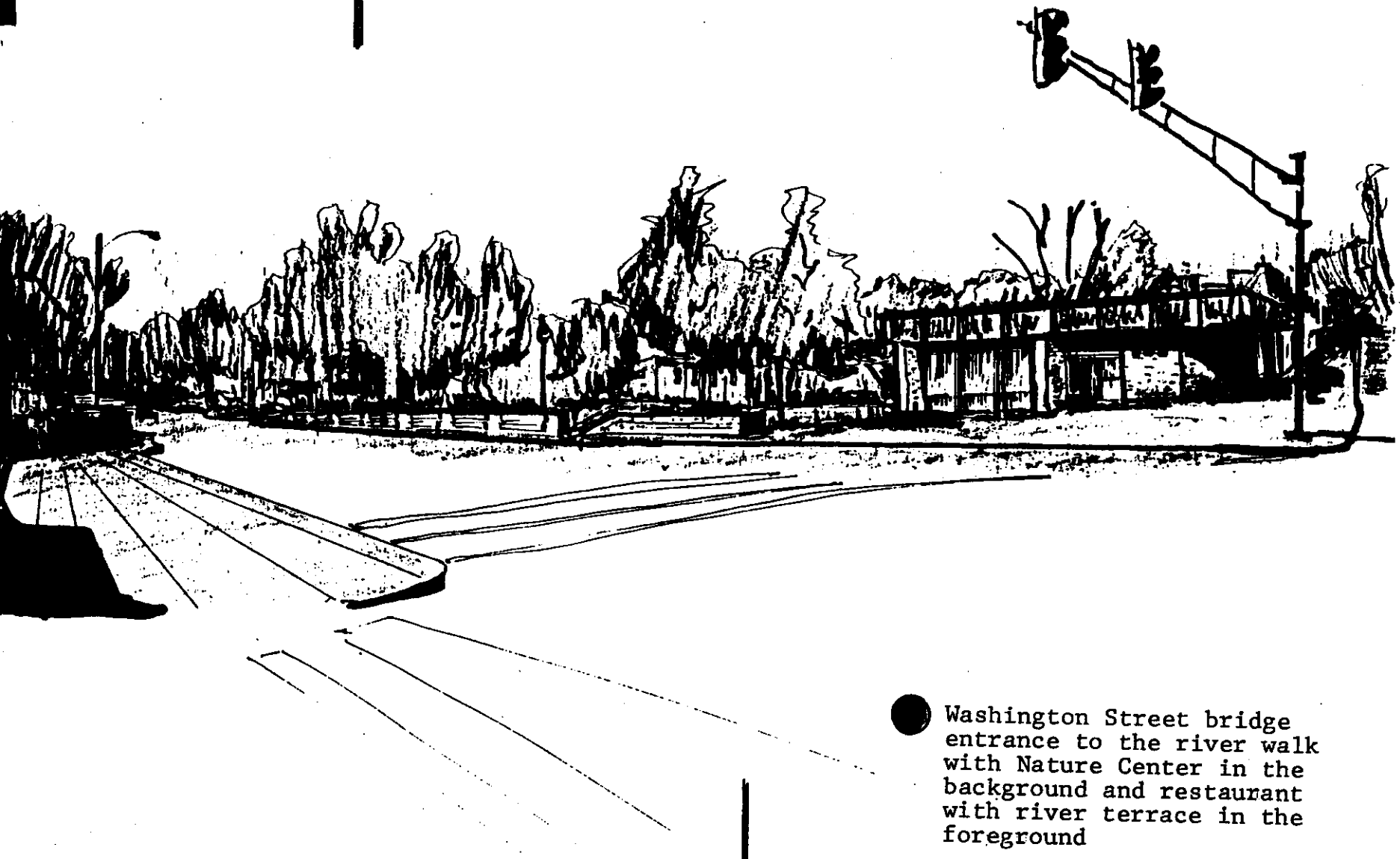


● Street entrance to Xavier Park showing the picnic grounds beyond, and summer concession stands to the right.

R E N S S E L A E R  
R E D E V E L O P M E N T

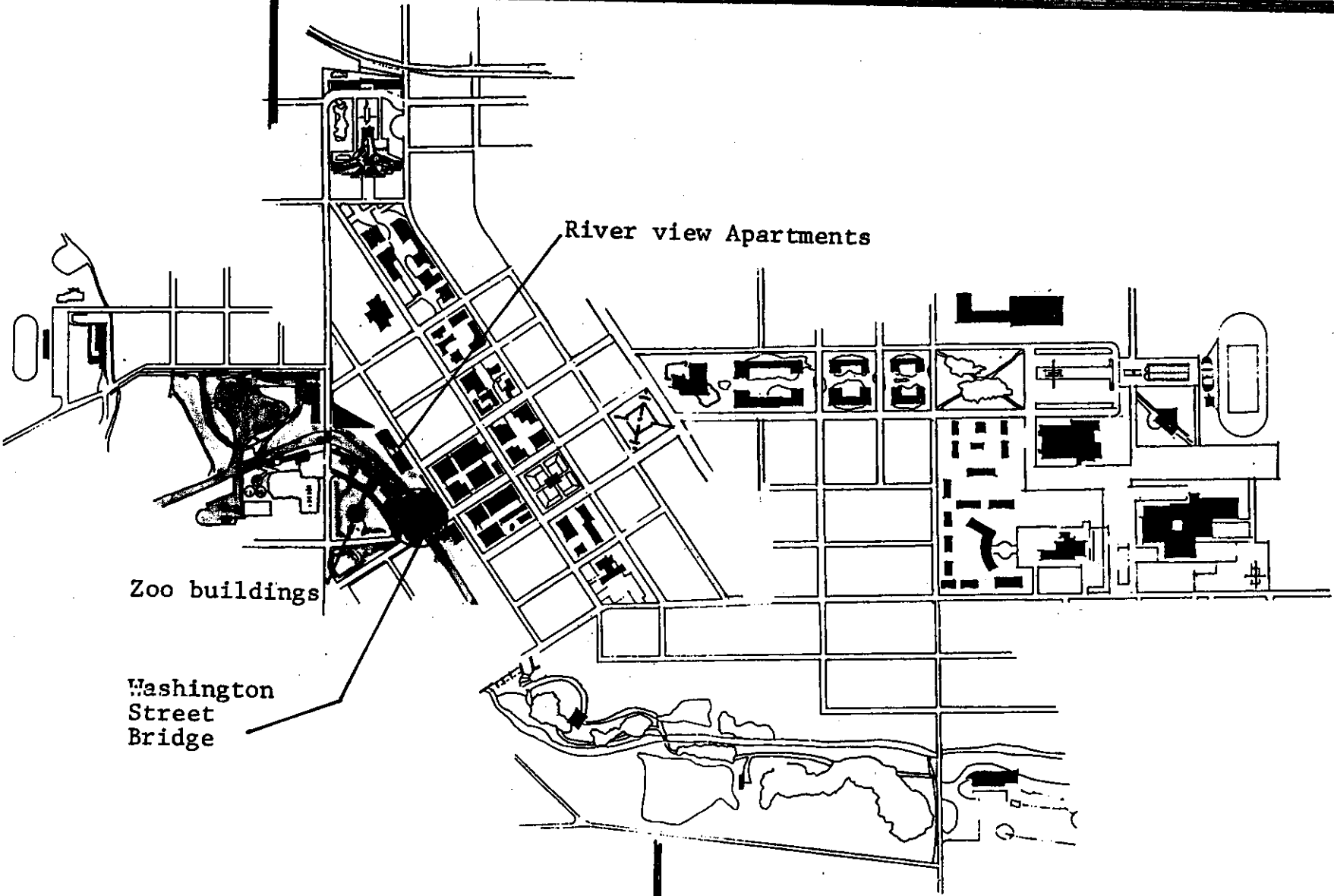


R E N S S E L A E R  
R E D E V E L O P M E N T



● Washington Street bridge entrance to the river walk with Nature Center in the background and restaurant with river terrace in the foreground

R E N S S E L A E R  
R E D E V E L O P M E N T



River view Apartments

Zoo buildings

Washington Street Bridge

Upper section of the river walk and park.

R E N S S E L A E R  
R E D E V E L O P M E N T



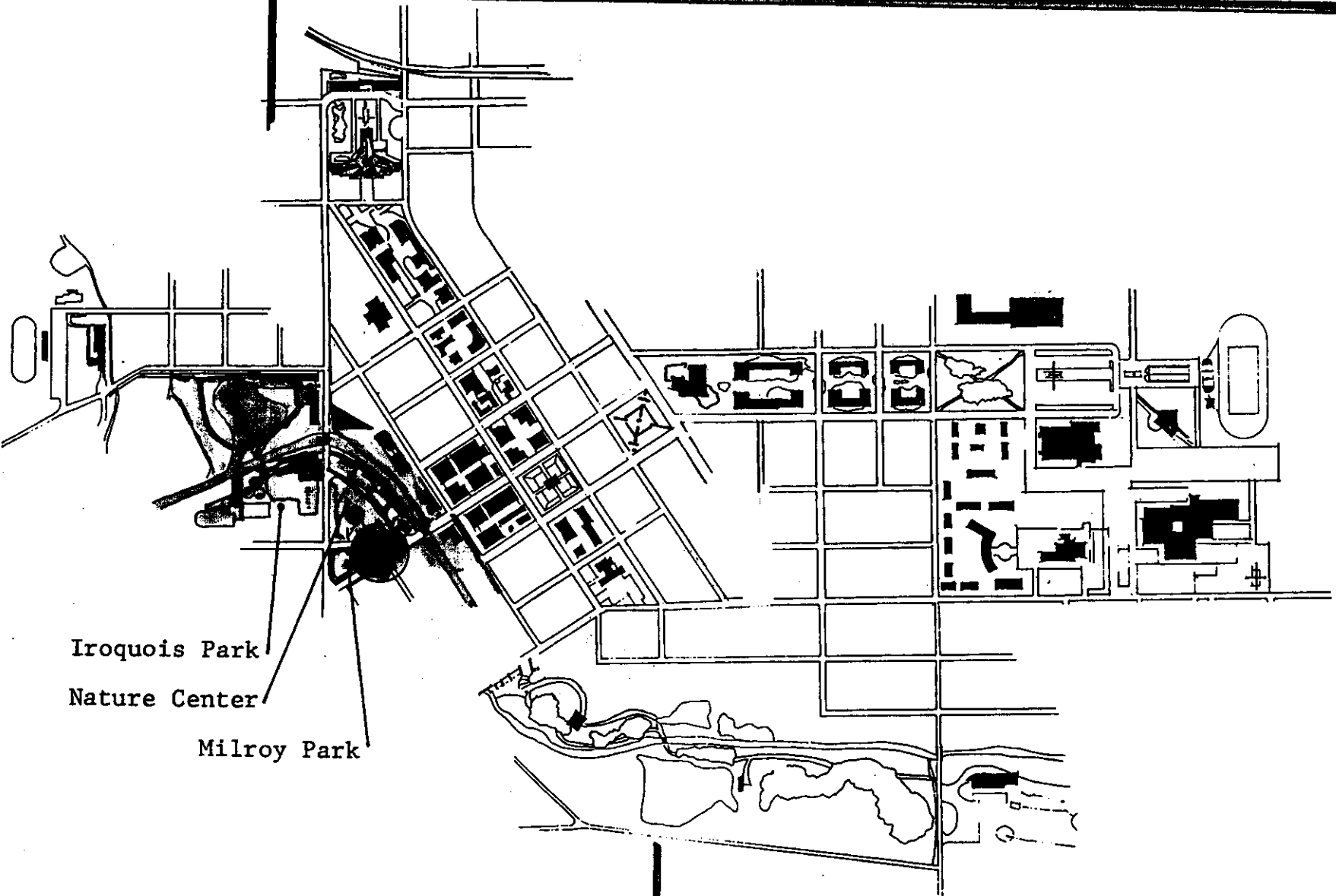
● Future view of the river walk  
Zoo buildings shown to the  
left and commercial and apartments  
shown to the right.

● 1860's river view of the mill  
now gone.

PREPARED FOR: ARCHITECTURAL THESIS. A. SEAGER. PROF.  
BY: JOSEPH K. FISCHER, MAY 1997

Note: See cover page for Part I

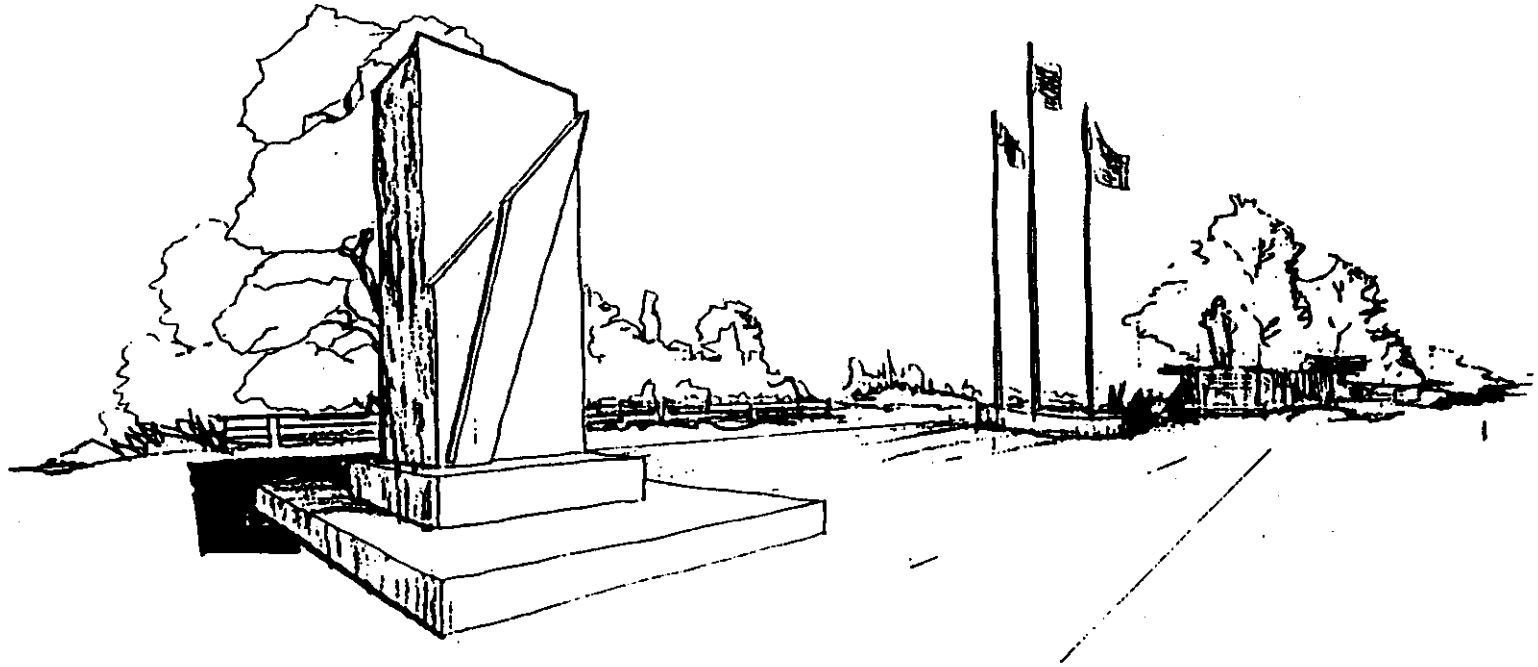
R E N S S E L A E R  
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Iroquois Park  
Nature Center  
Milroy Park

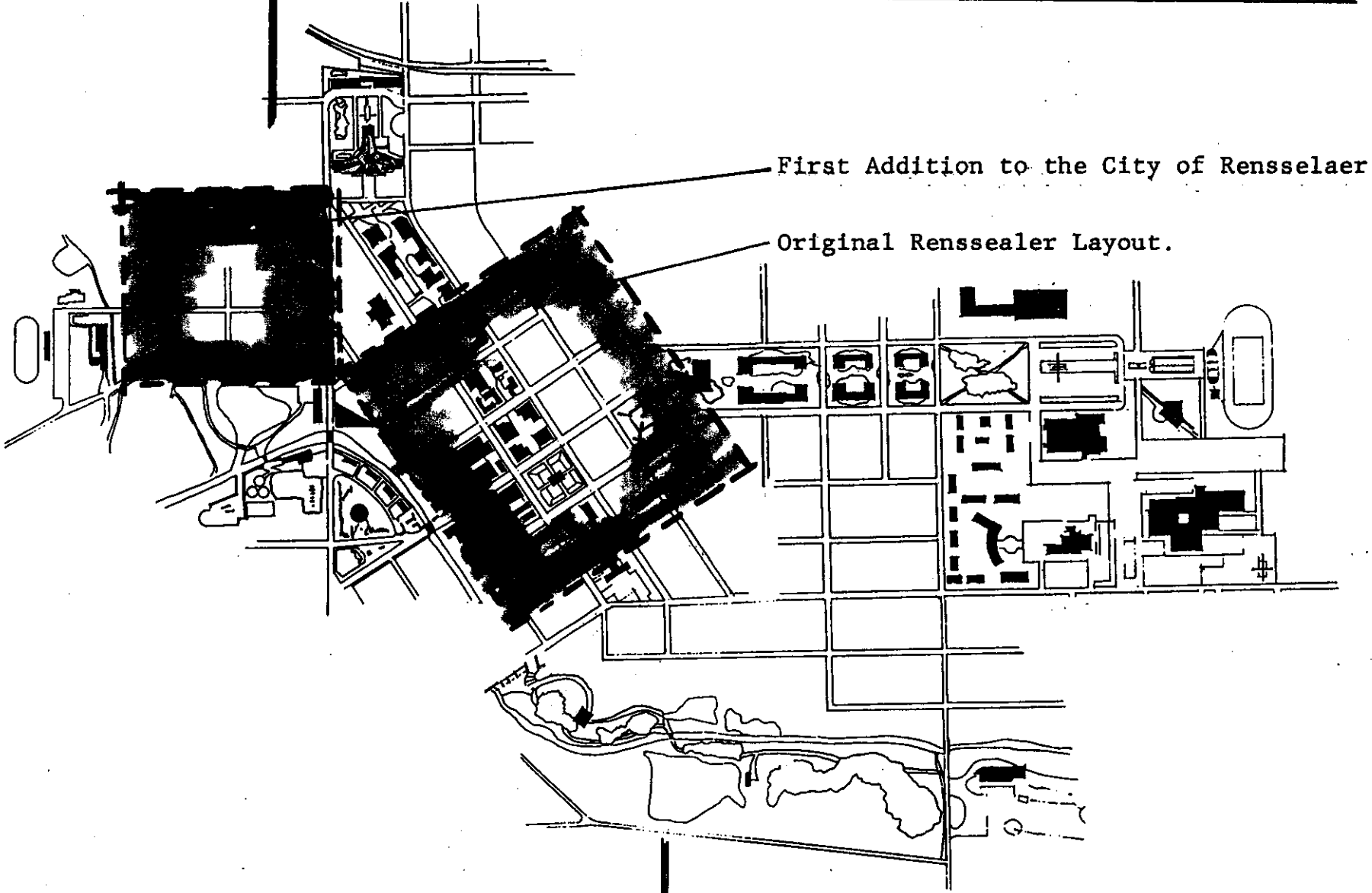
Milroy Park.

R E N S S E L A E R  
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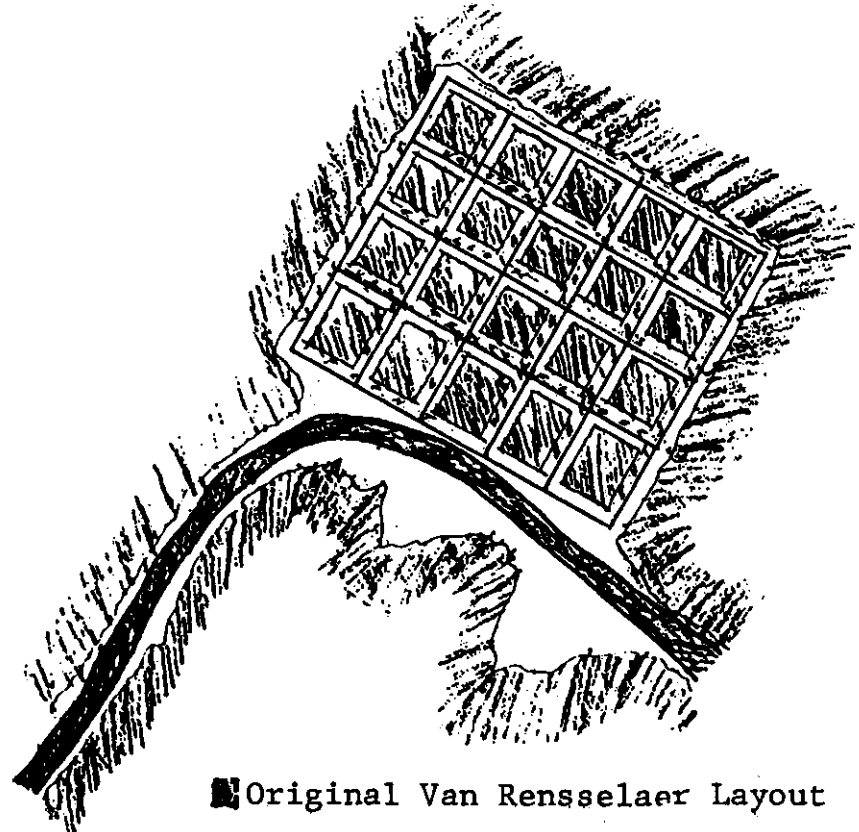


Milroy Park view of the Founders Plaza with monument in the foreground existing Milroy Statue beyond in front of the city band shell.

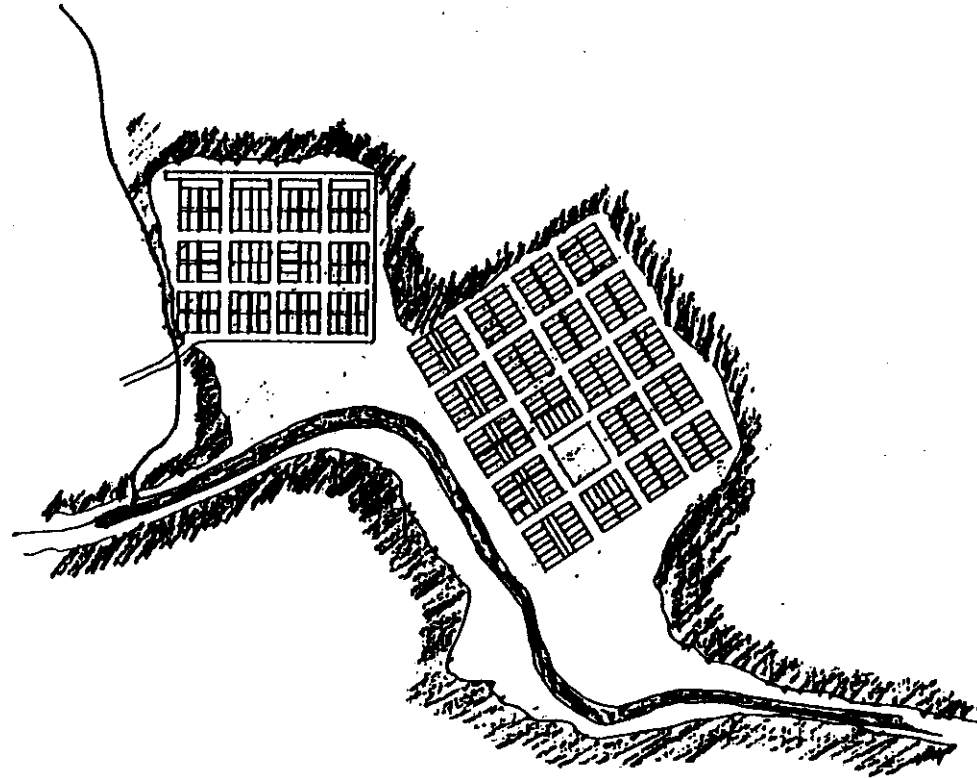
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■ Original Van Rensselaer Layout

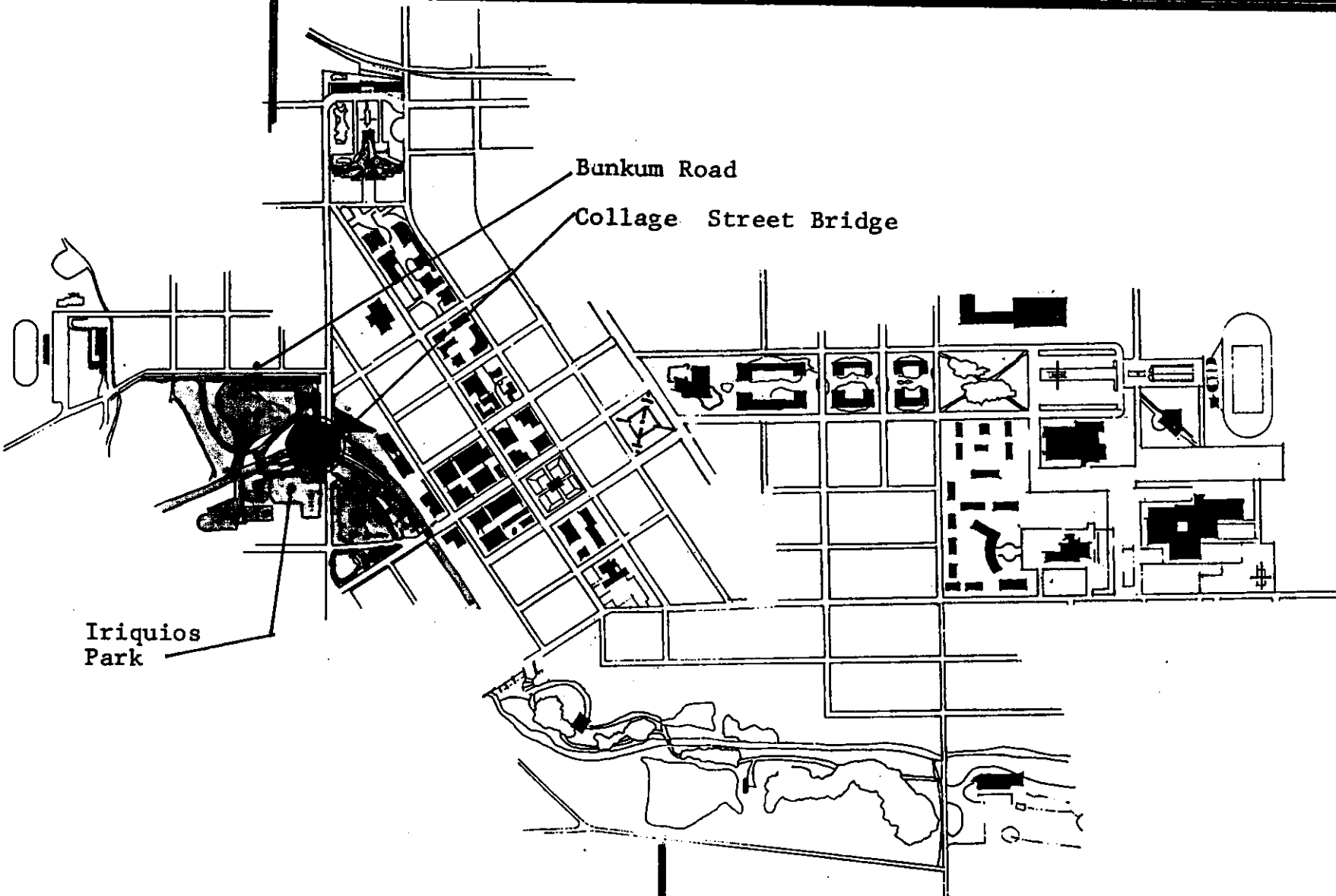


■ Original Van Rensselaer Layout and competing Newton's Addition.

PREPARED FOR: ARCHITECTURAL THESIS. A. SEAGER PROF.  
BY: JOSEPH K. FISCHER, MAY 1997

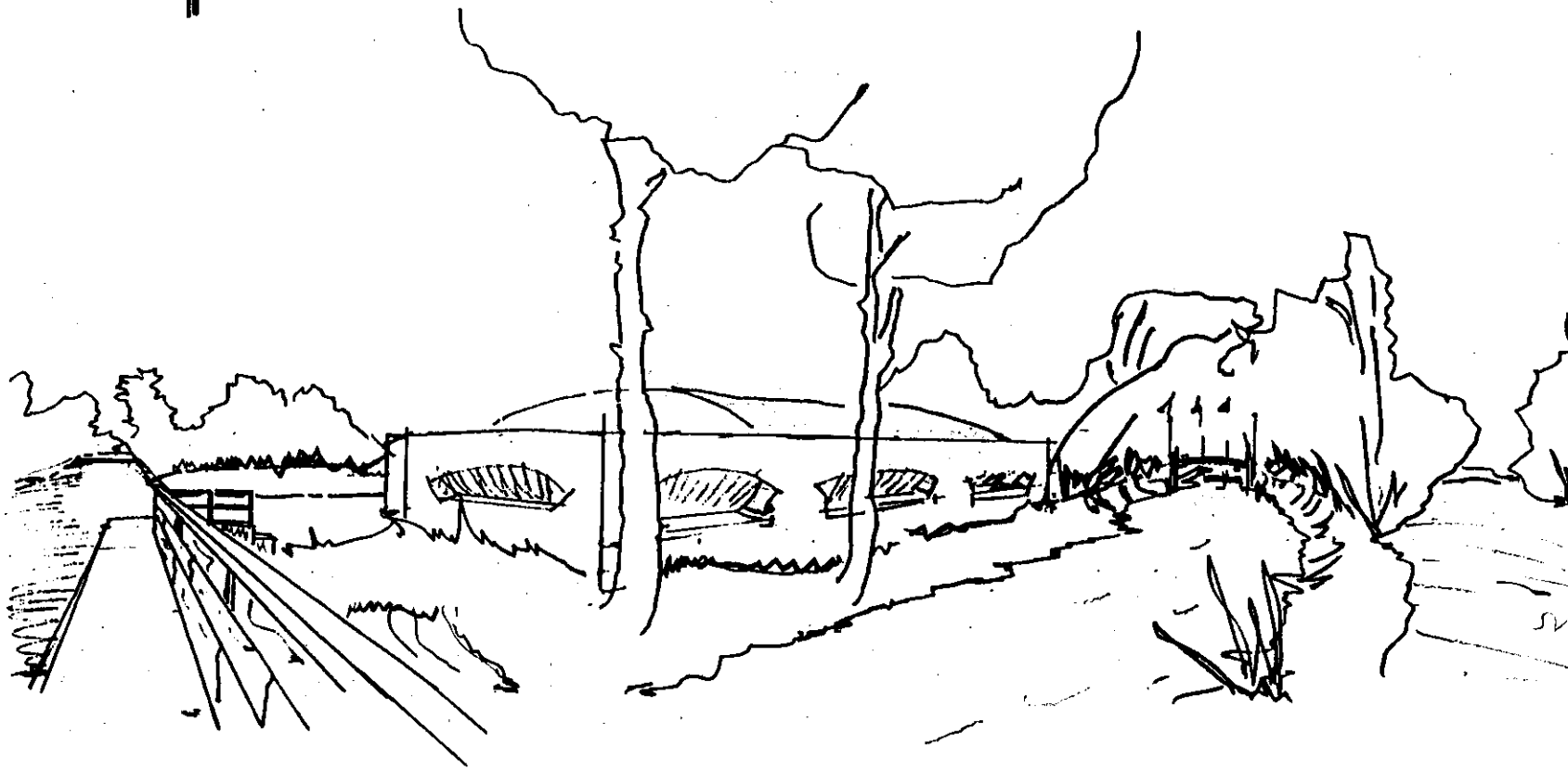
City's Early Growth.

R E N S S E L A E R  
R E D E V E L O P M E N T



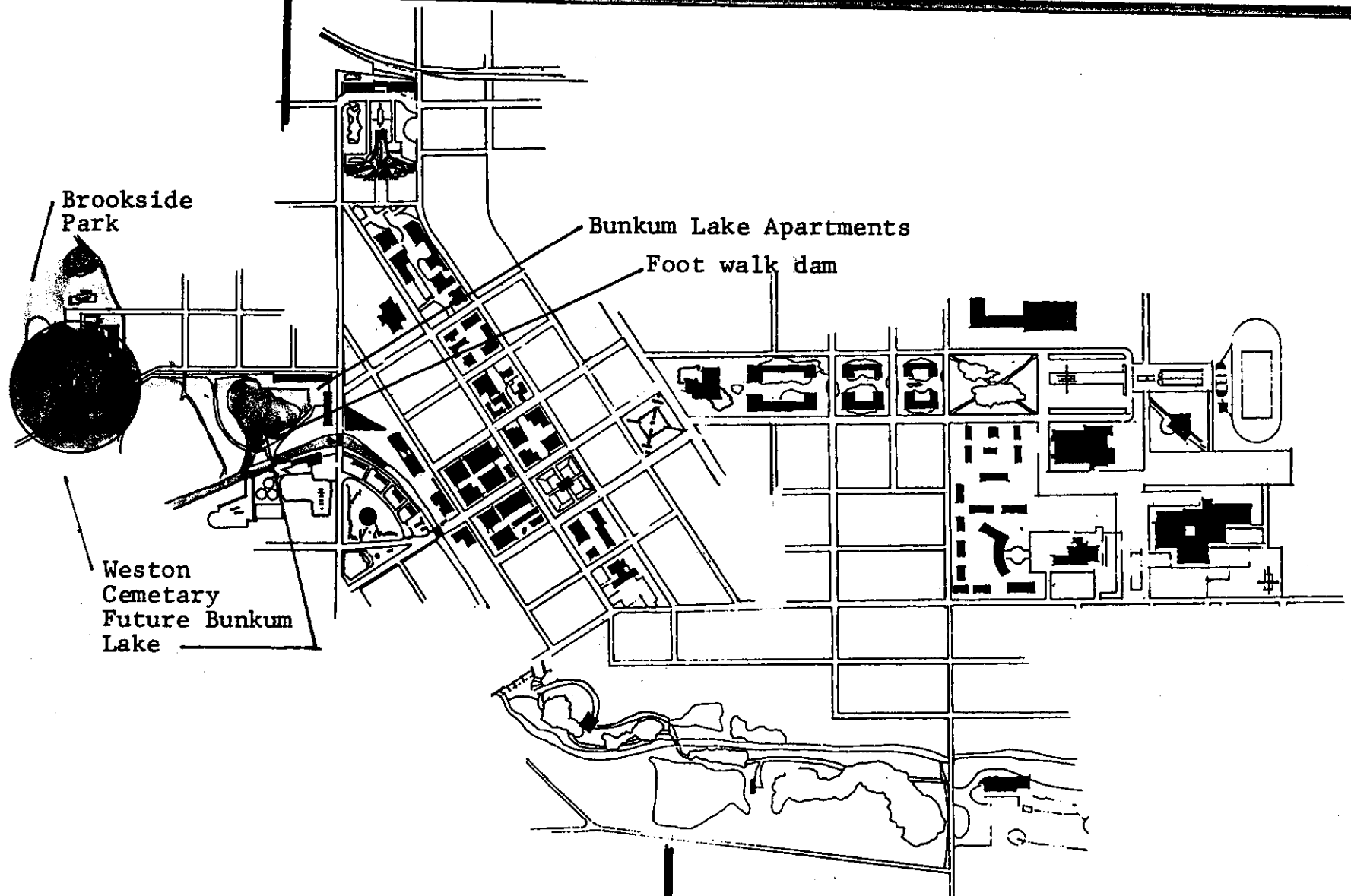
Upper section of the river walk and park.

R E N S S E L A E R  
R E D E V E L O P M E N T



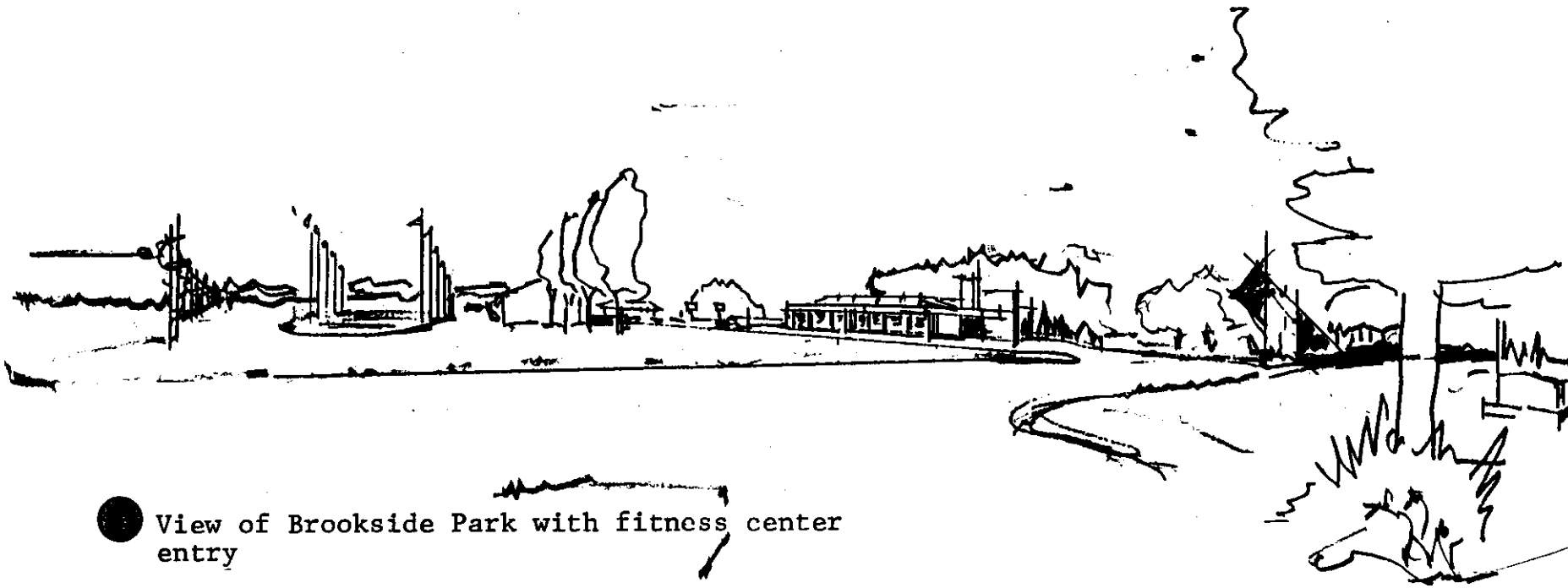
View from the Collage Street Bridge to Iriquios Park  
Last of the Nature Center Zoo Buildings is in the  
foreground with river foot bridge  
shown down the river.

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R E D E V E L O P M E N T

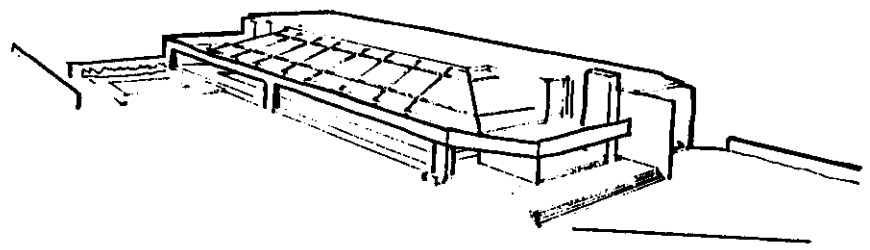


Upper section of the river walk and park.

R E N S S E L A E R  
R E D E V E L O P M E N T

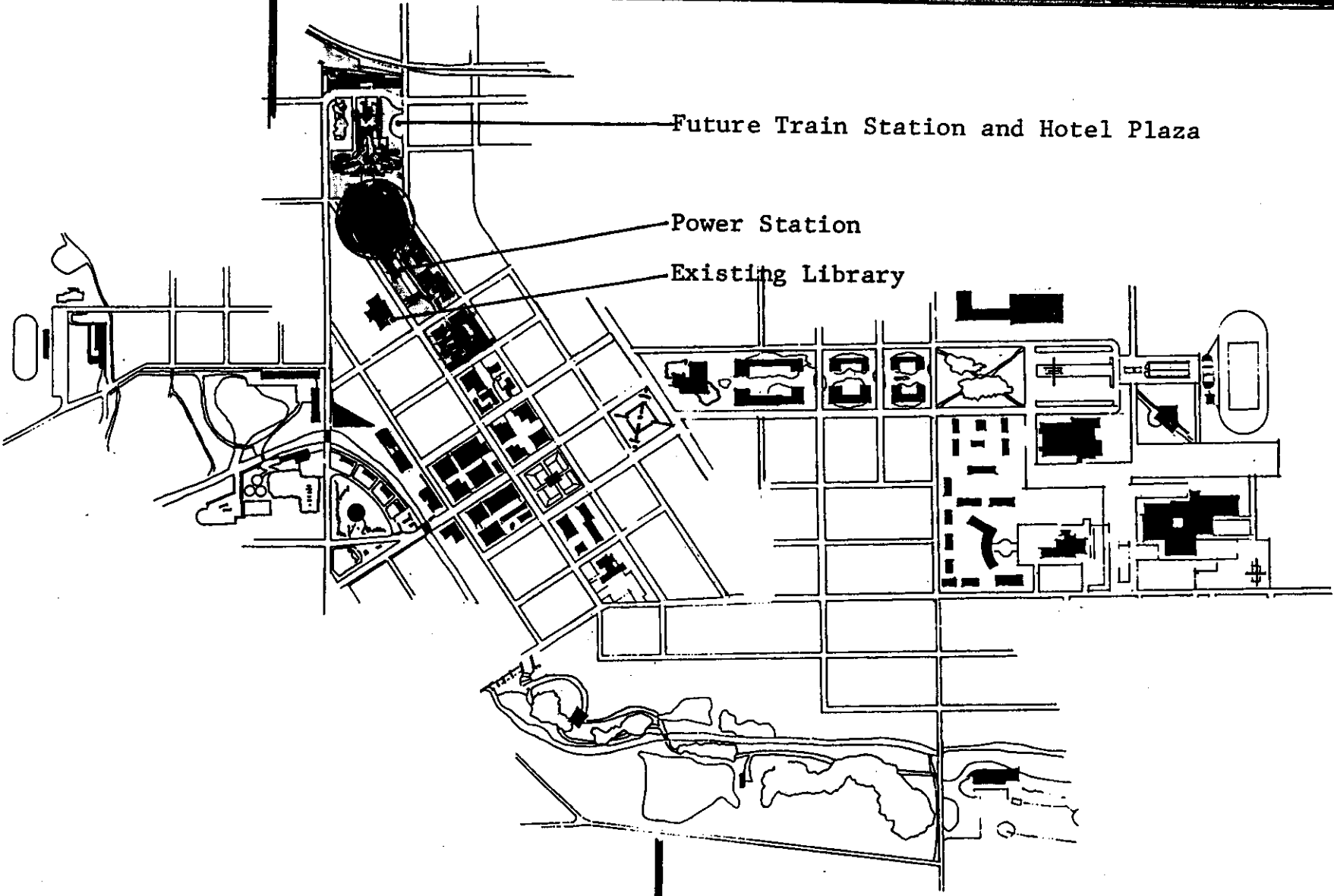


● View of Brookside Park with fitness center entry

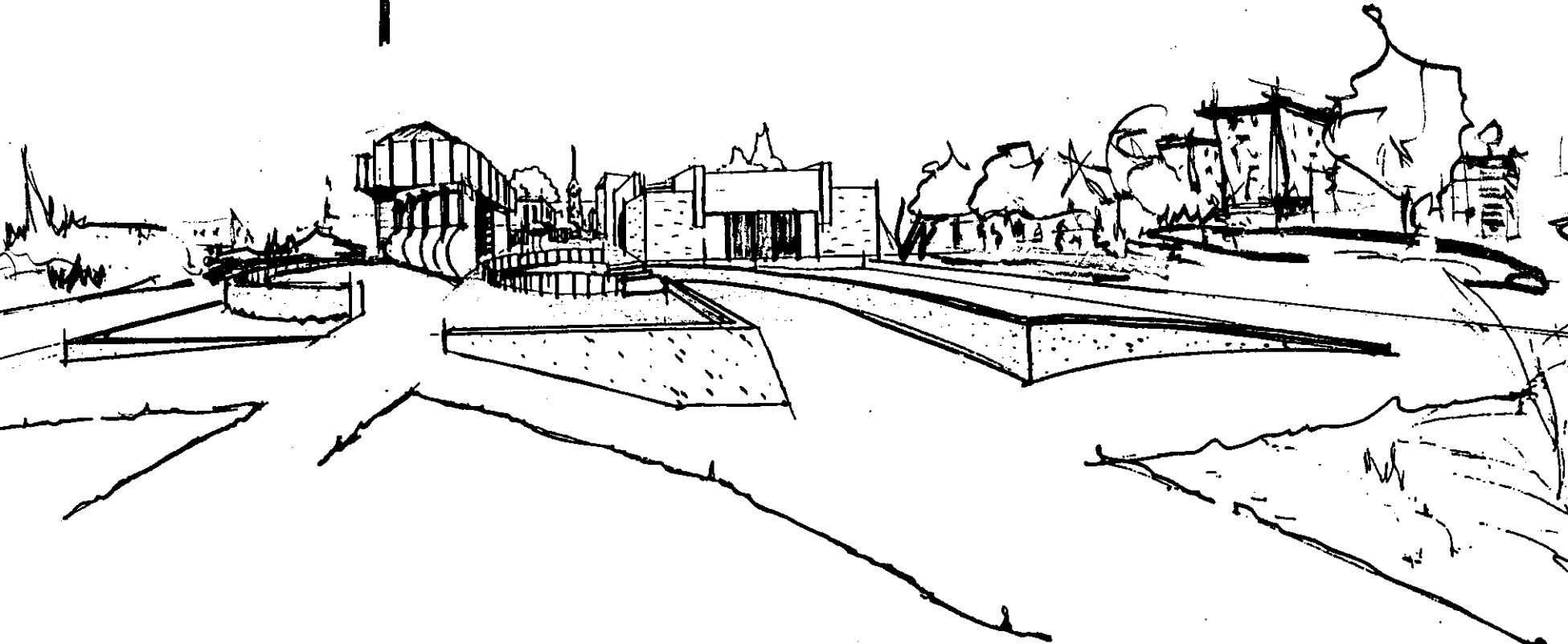


Future Entrance Gate and Fitness Center

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R E D E V E L O P M E N T

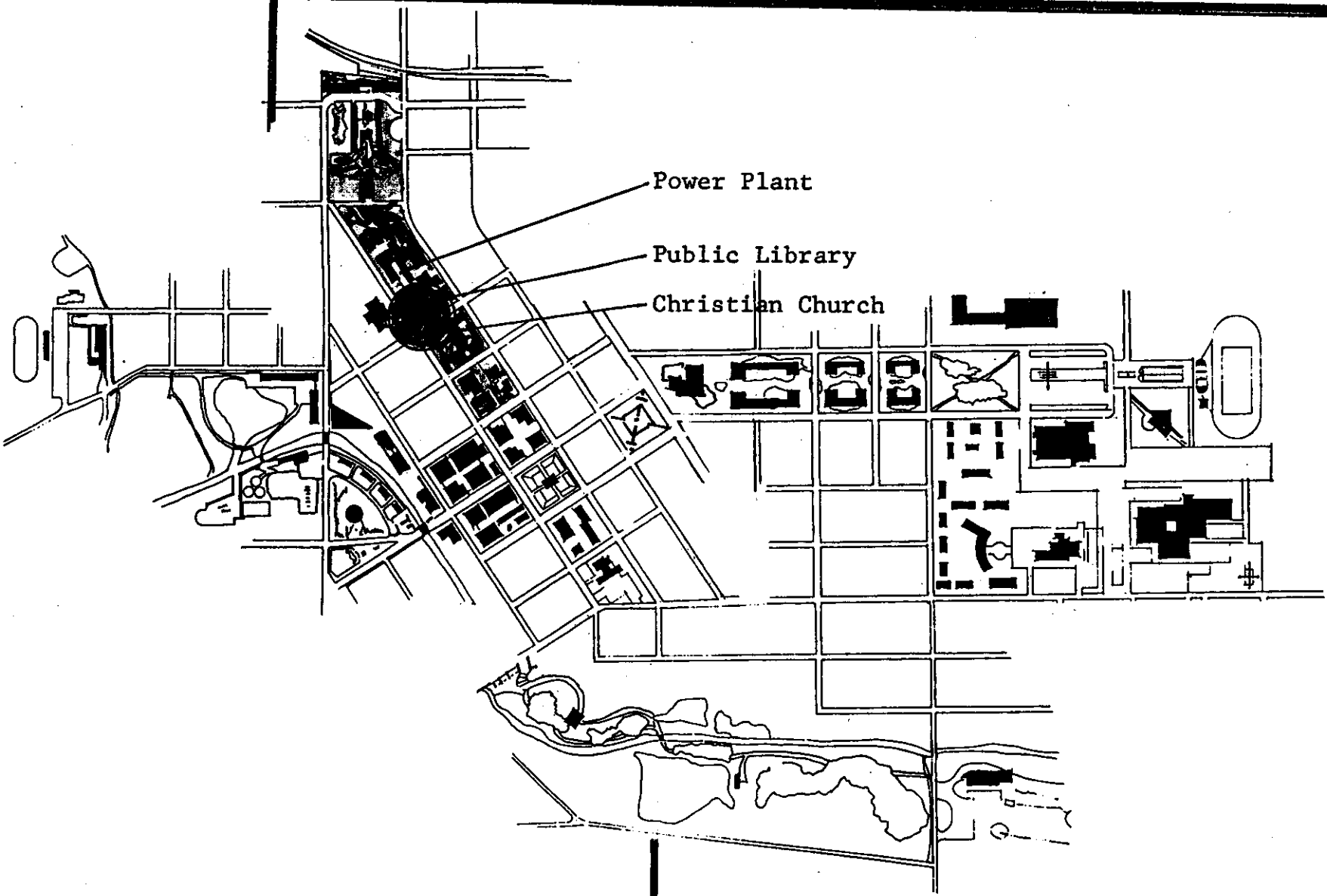


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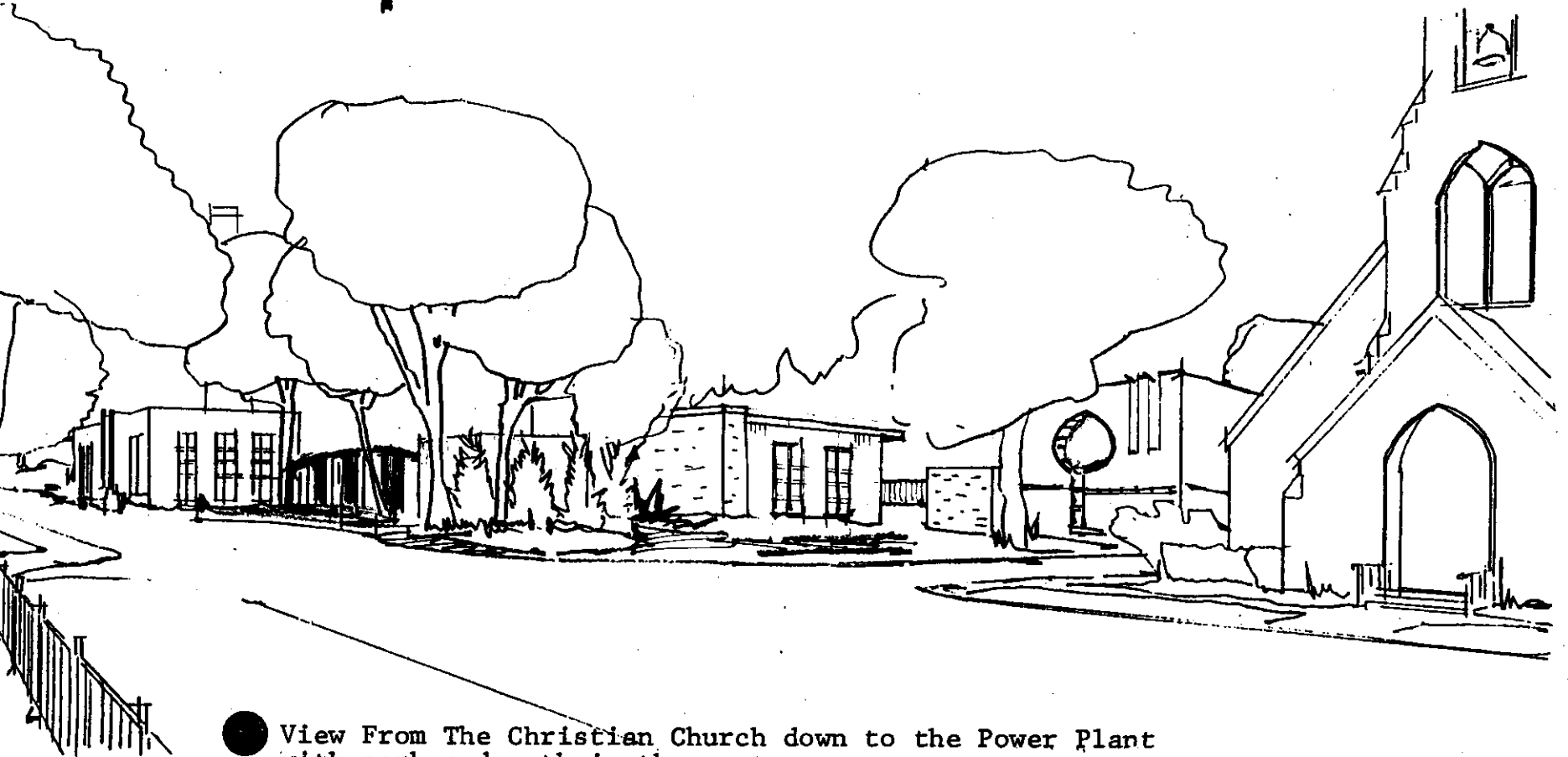


● View from the hotel down the walk to the Courthouse Square. Buildings in the foreground are cultural, theaters galleries, ect.

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R E D E V E L O P M E N T

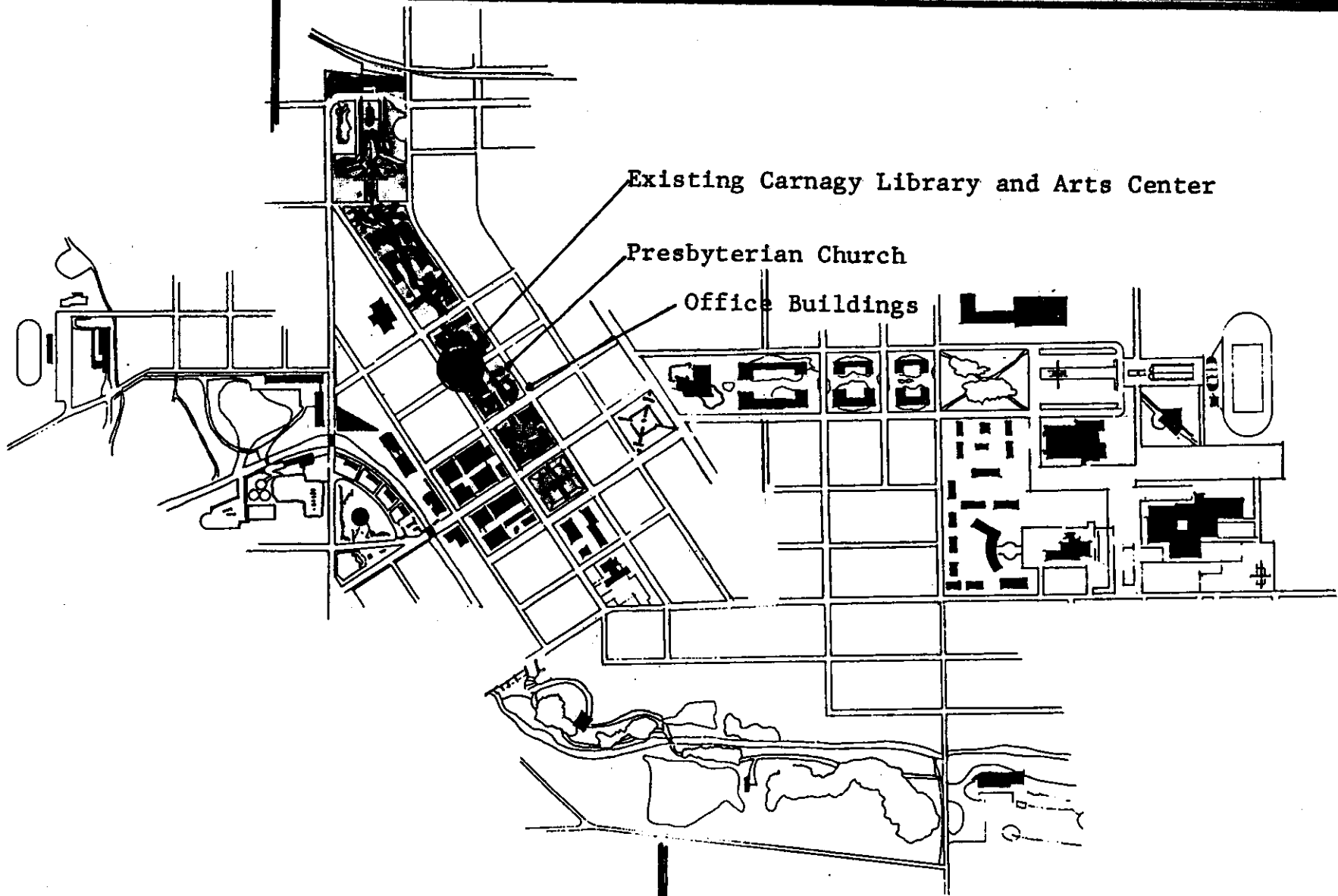


R E N S S E L A E R  
R E D E V E L O P M E N T



● View From The Christian Church down to the Power Plant with park and path in the center.

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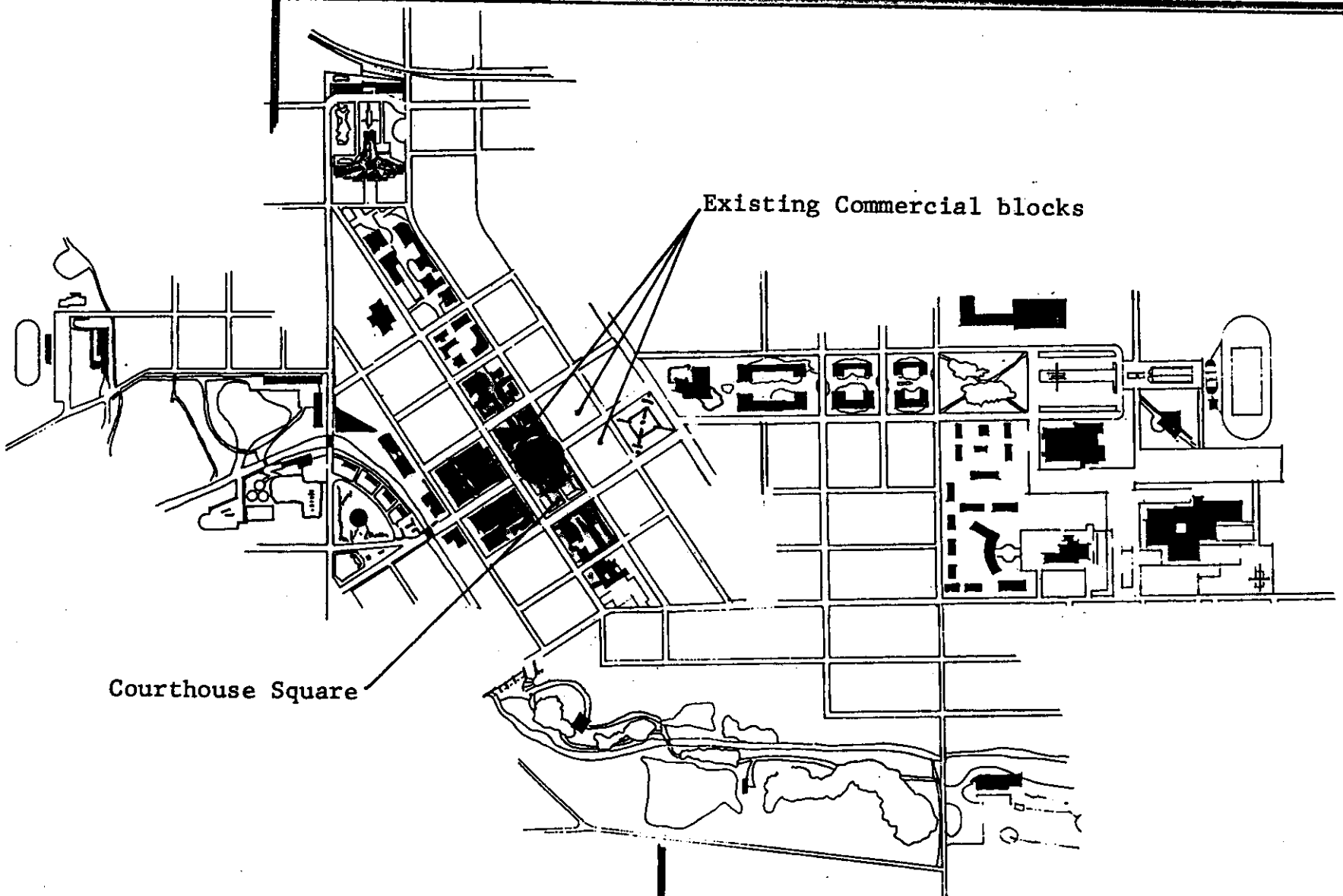


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● View to the Canagy Library with path behind.

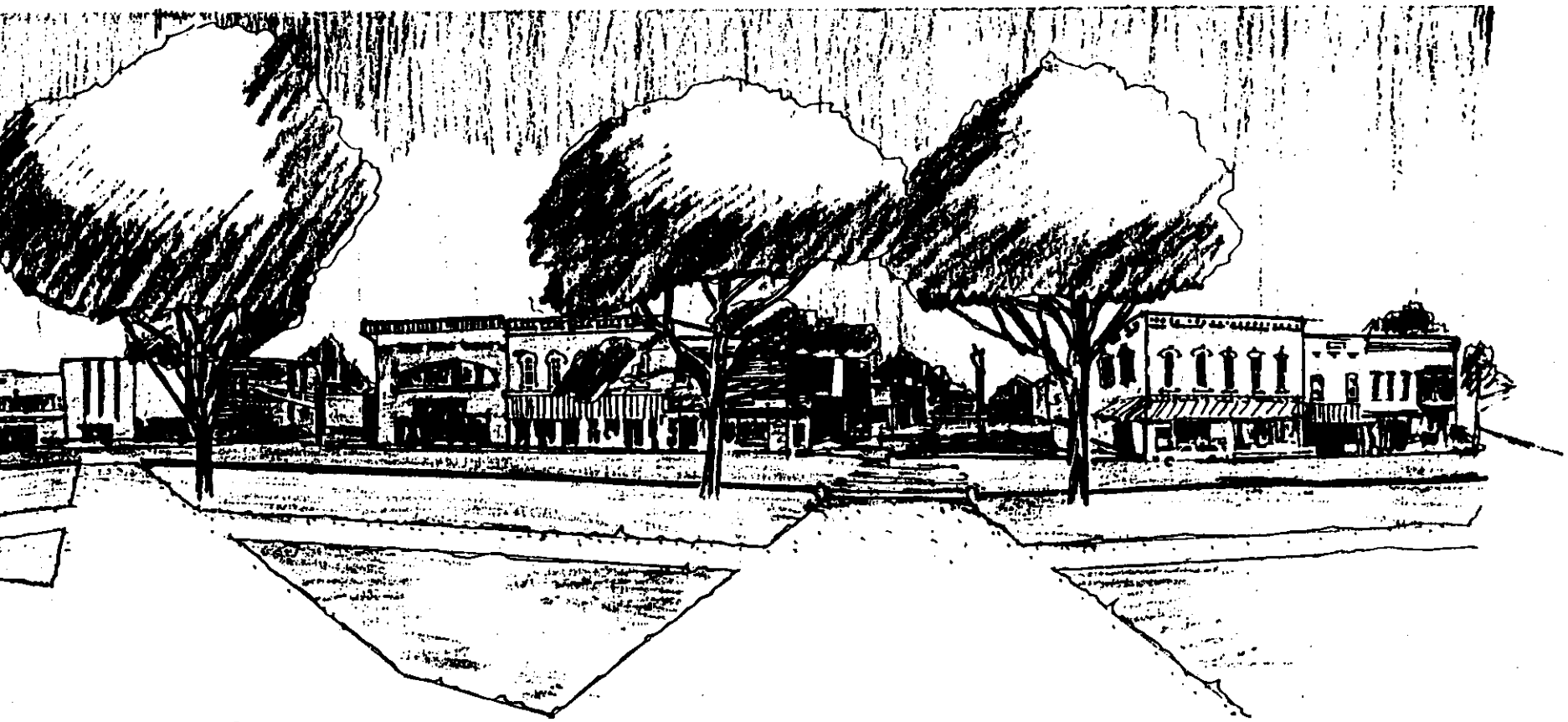
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PREPARED FOR: ARCHITECTURAL THESIS. A. SEAGER PROF.  
BY: JOSEPH K. FISCHER, MAY 1997

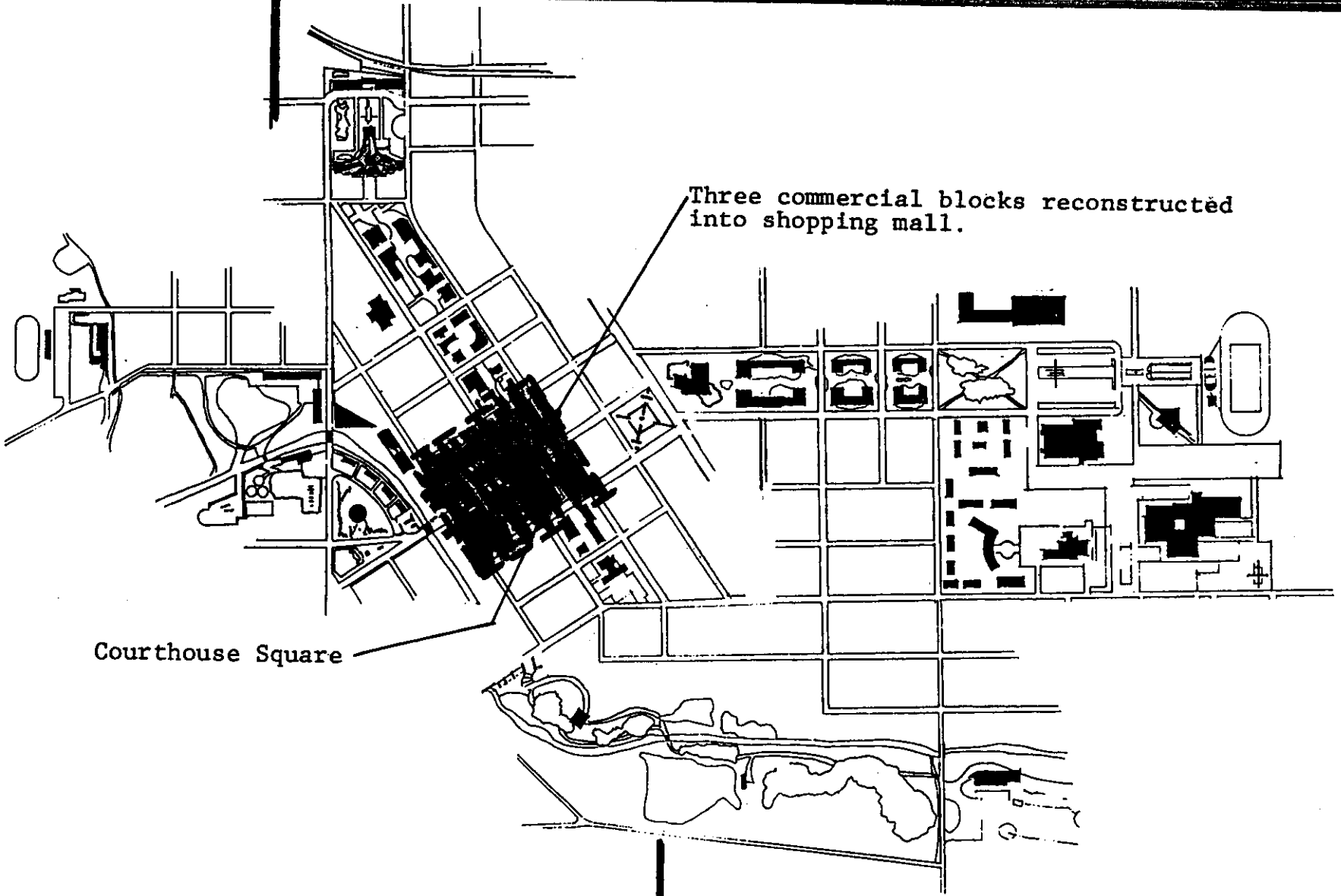
Center of The City.

R E N S S E L A E R  
R E D E V E L O P M E N T



● View from the Courthouse to the plaza and fountain at the next intersection, in the old commercial district.

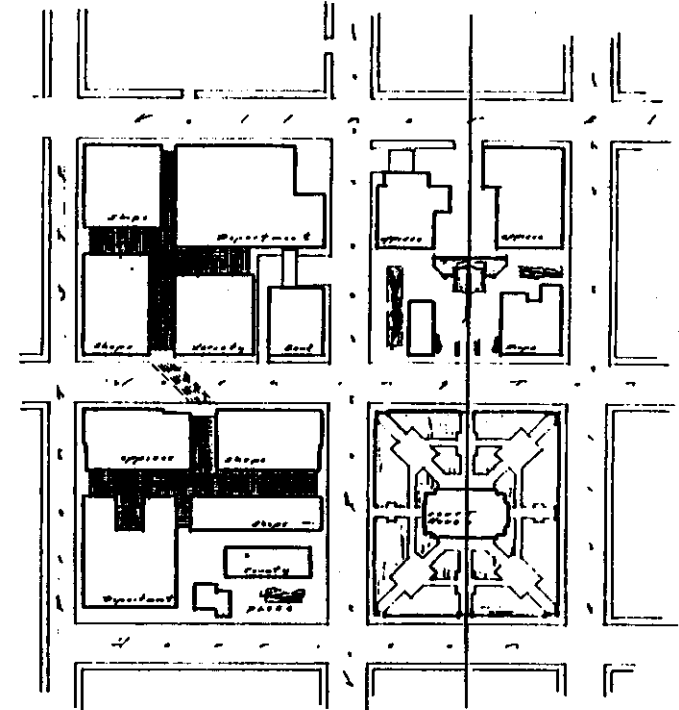
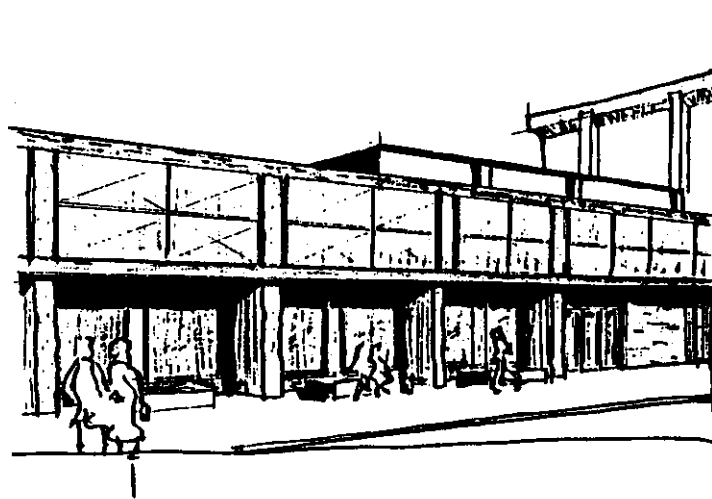
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Three commercial blocks reconstructed into shopping mall.

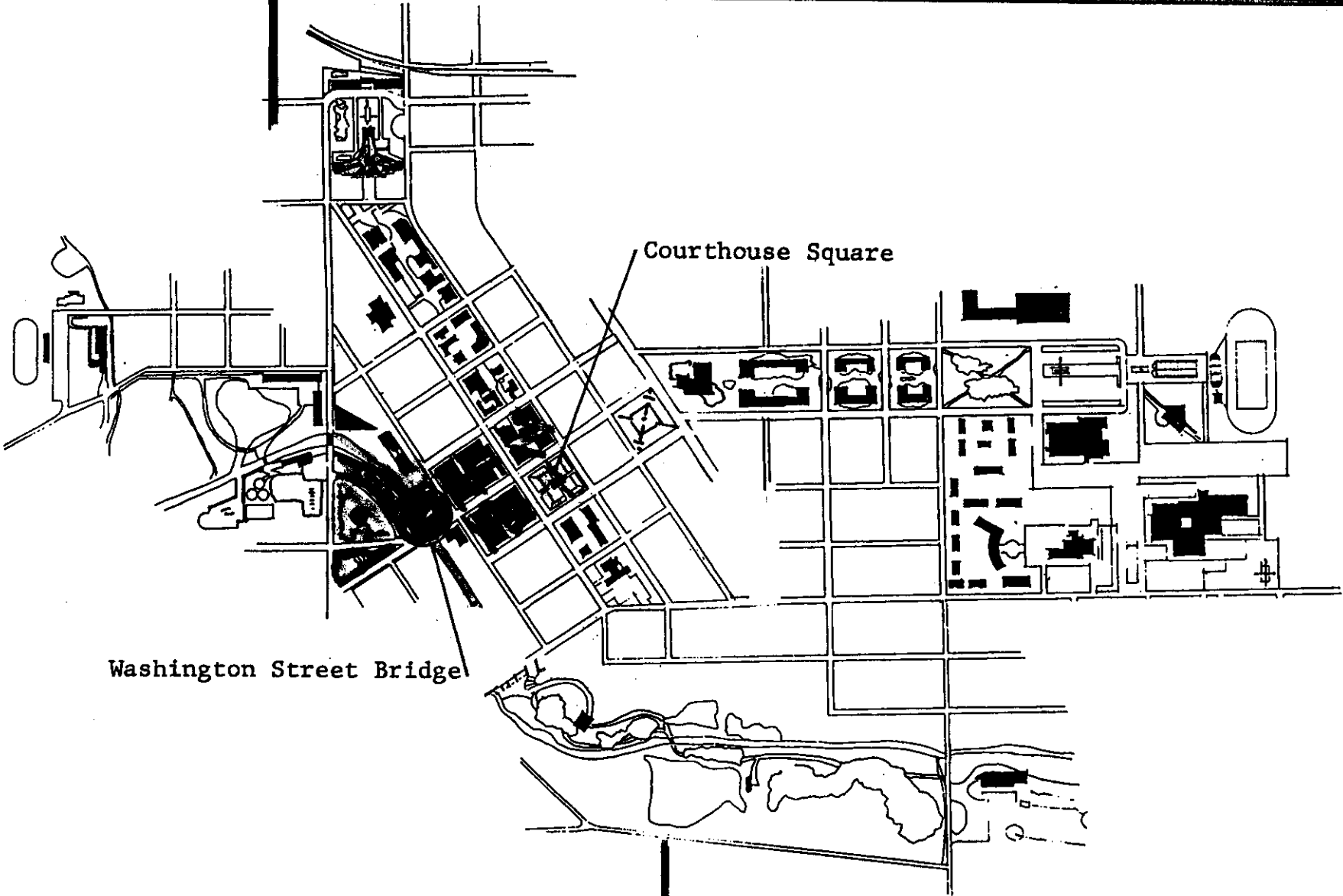
Courthouse Square

R E N S S E L A E R  
R E D E V E L O P M E N T



Commercial shopping center located in the old commercial district.

R E N S S E L A E R  
R E D E V E L O P M E N T

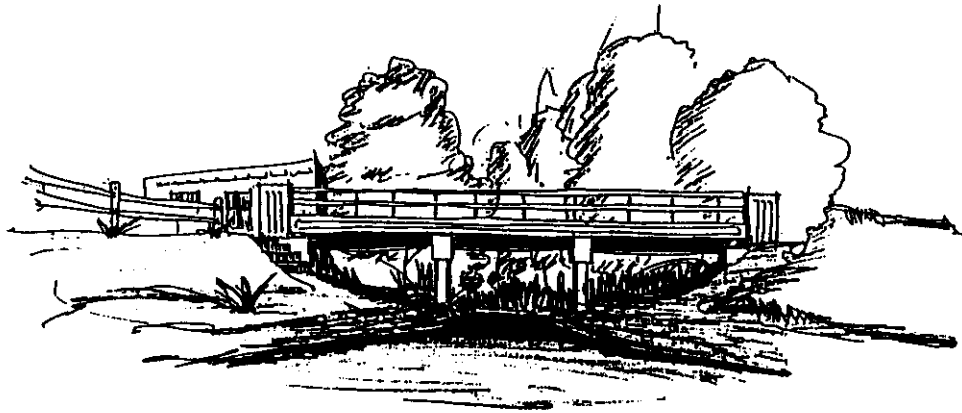
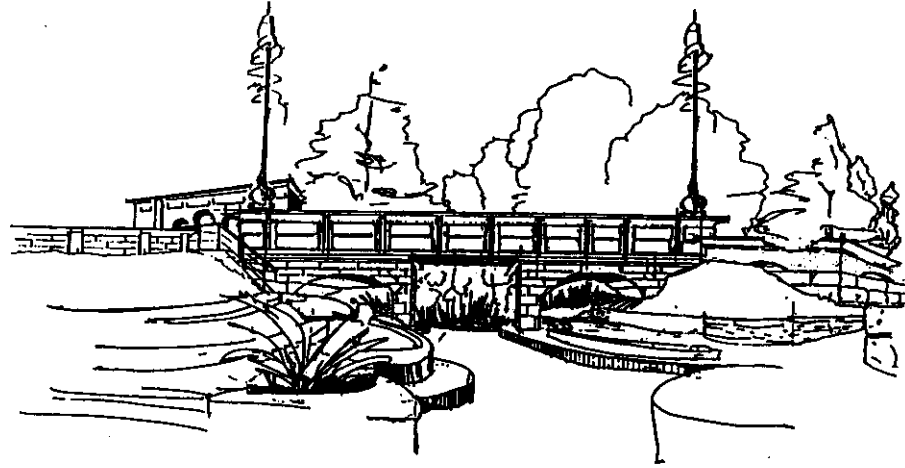


Washington Street Bridge

Courthouse Square

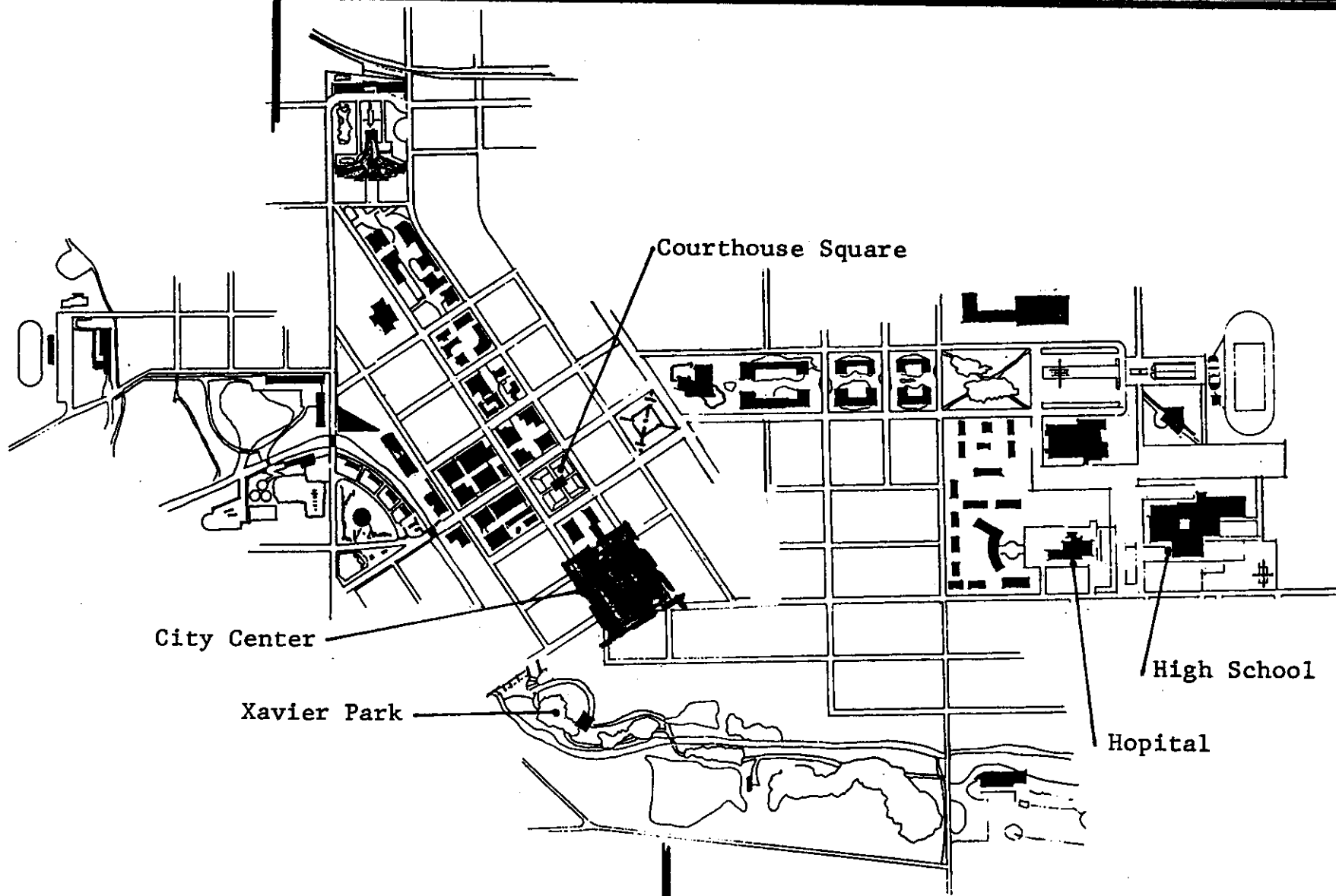
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● Future Washington Street Bridge At the river walk

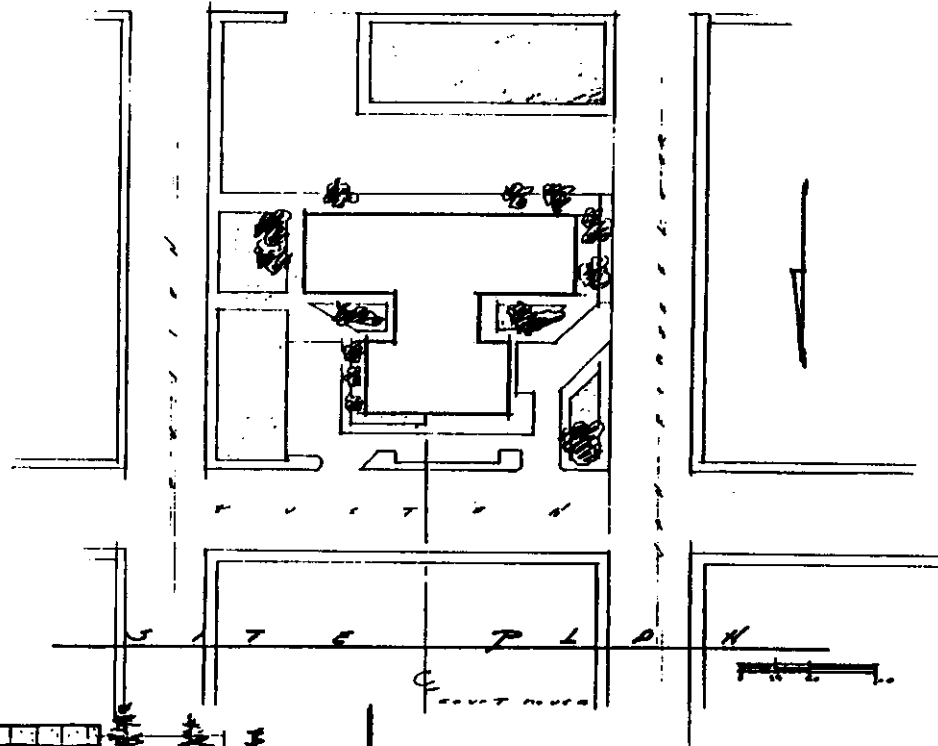
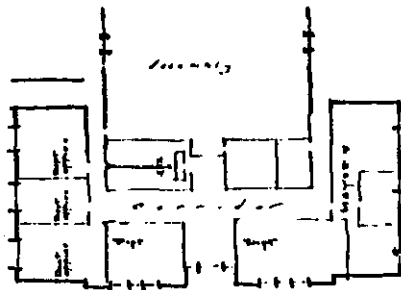
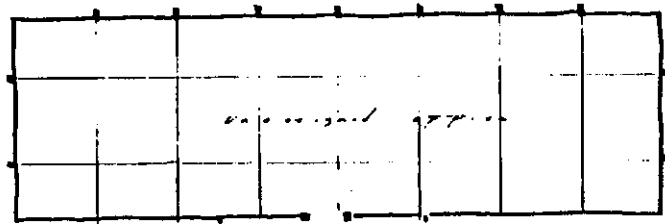


● Current View of the Washington Street Bridge

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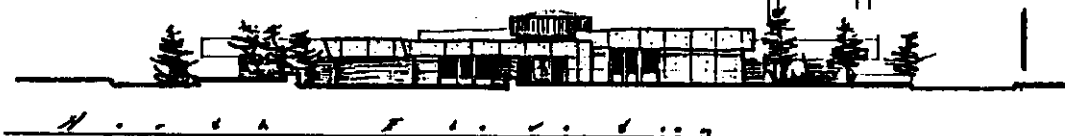


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SECTION PLD H

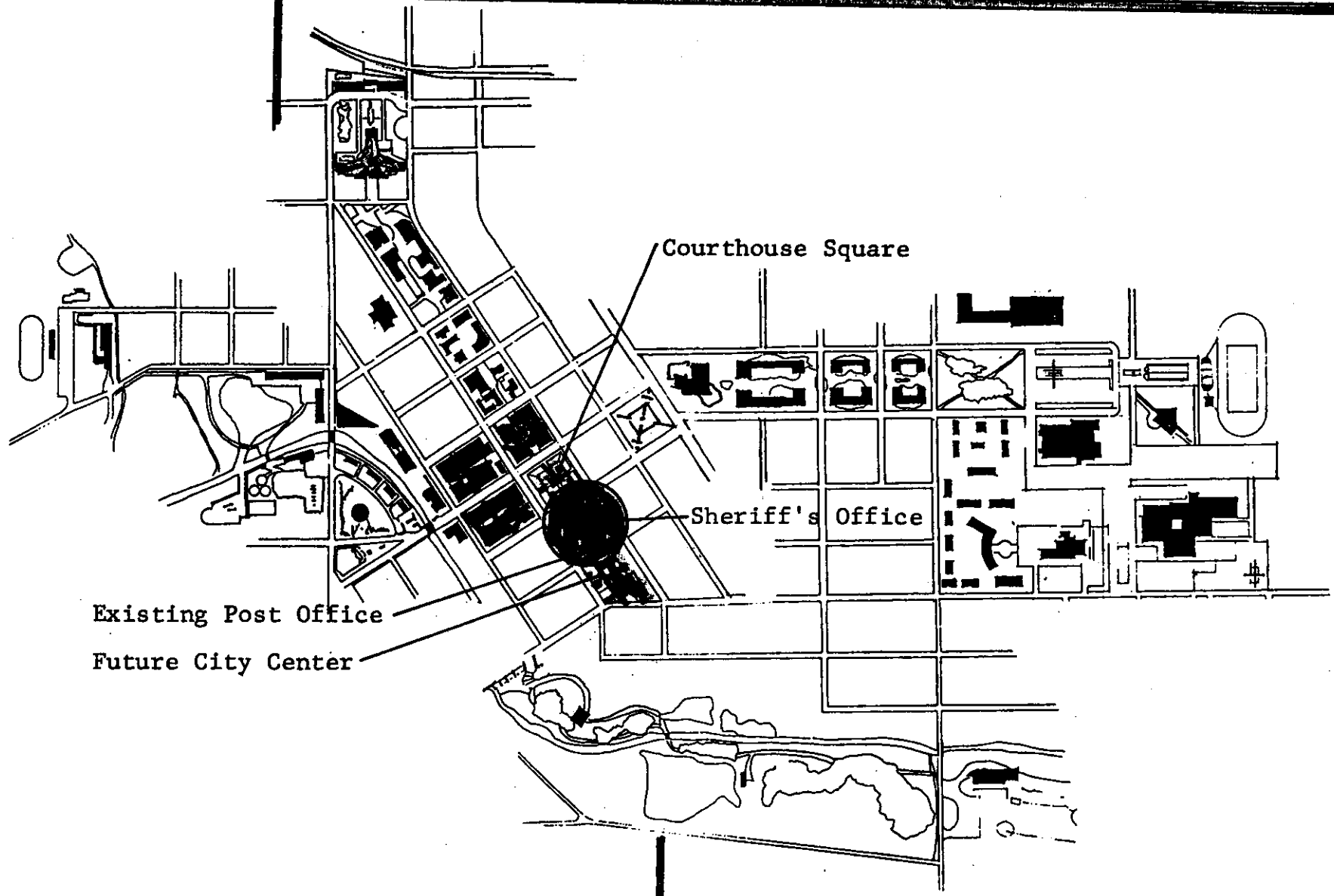
SECTION PLD H



Future City Center

PREPARED FOR: ARCHITECTURAL THESIS. A. SEAGER. PROPOSED BY: JOSEPH K. FISCHER, MAY 1997

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R E D E V E L O P M E N T

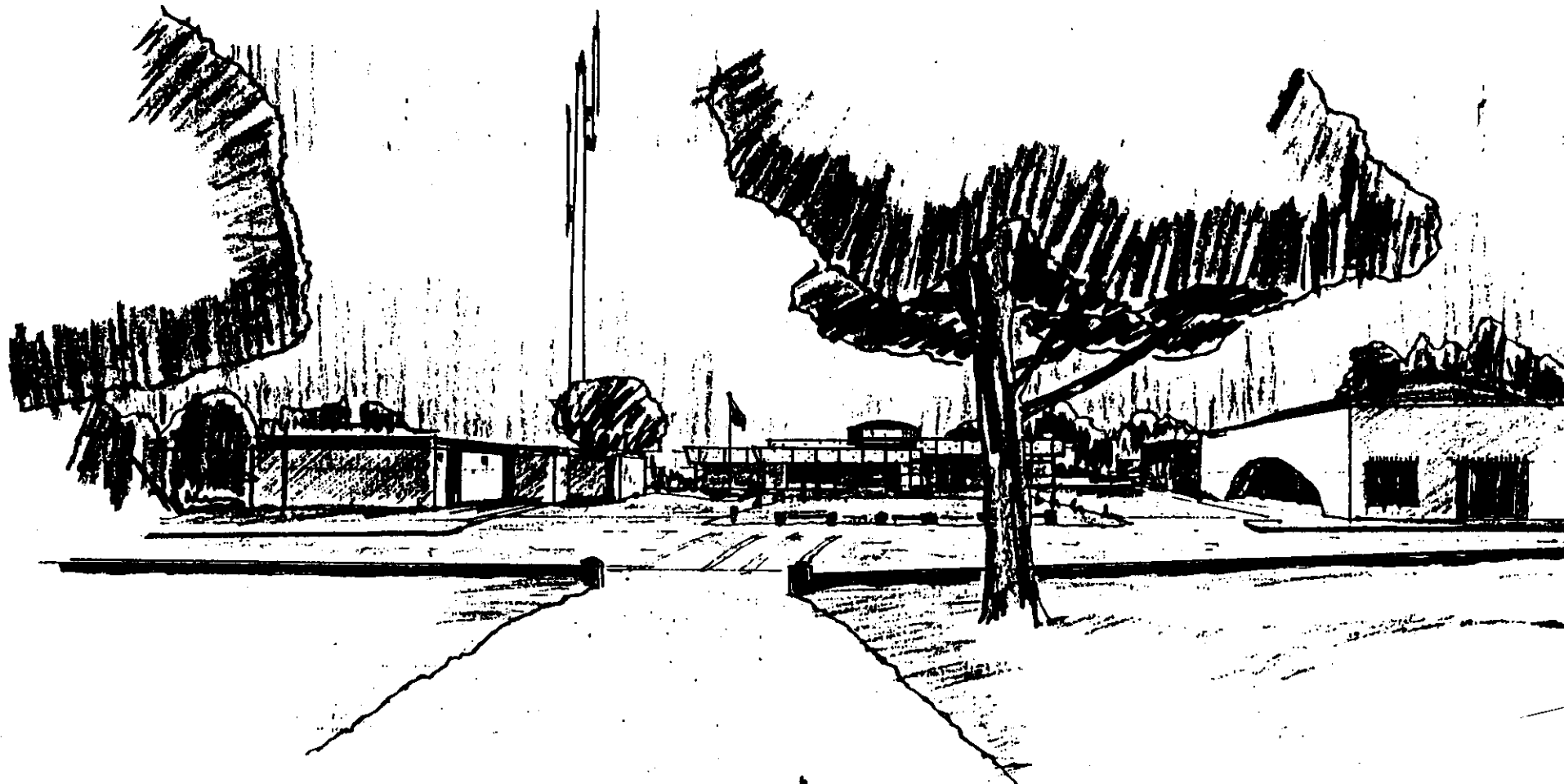


Existing Post Office  
Future City Center

PREPARED FOR: ARCHITECTURAL THESIS. A. SEAGER PROF.  
BY: JOSEPH K. FISCHER, MAY 1997

Lower Commercial Blocks.

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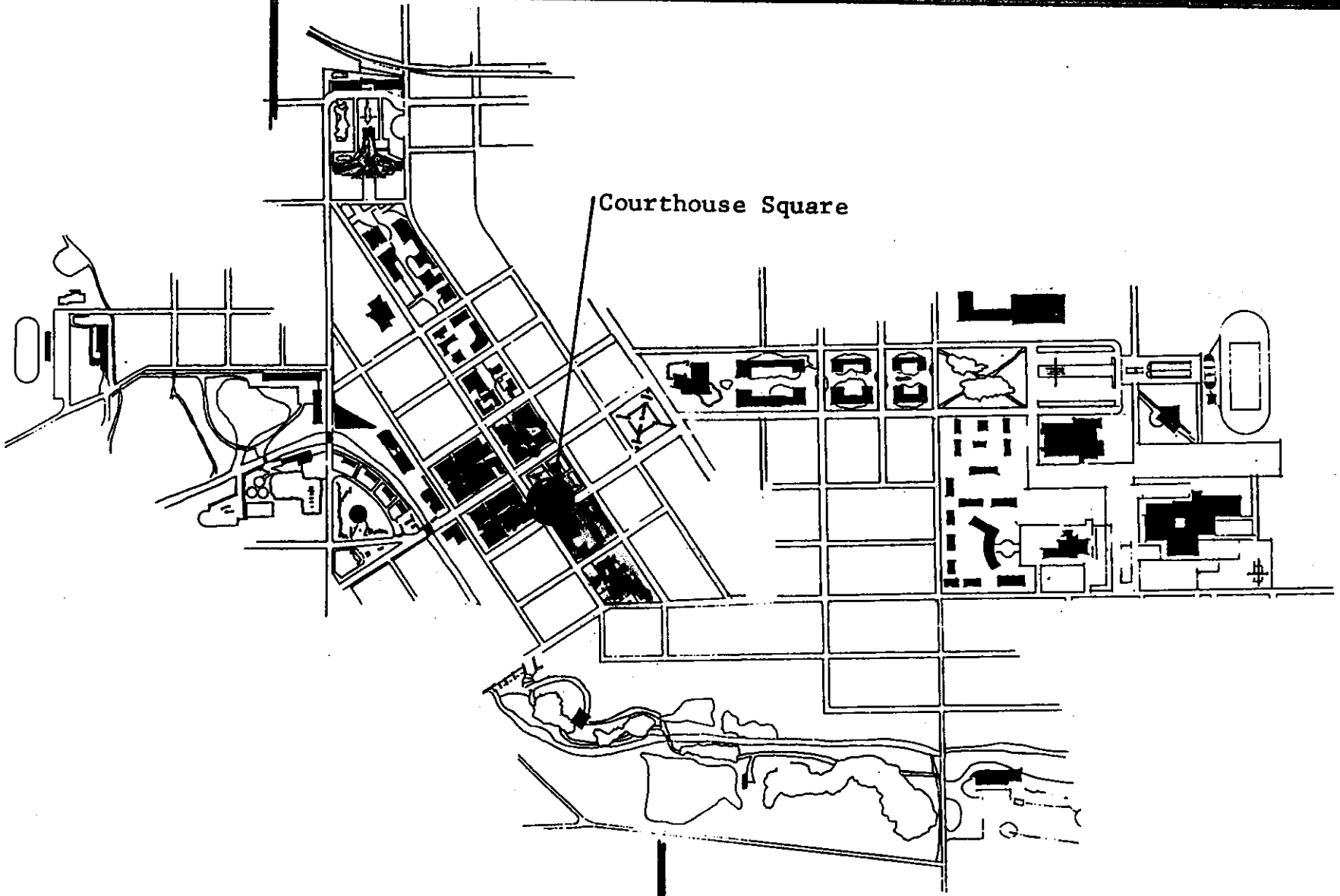


● Future Government plaza as seen from the Courthouse with the Sheriff's Office on the City Center in the middle and Parks department on the right.

PREPARED FOR: ARCHITECTURAL THESIS. A. SEAGER PROJ.  
BY: JOSEPH K. FISCHER, MAY 1997

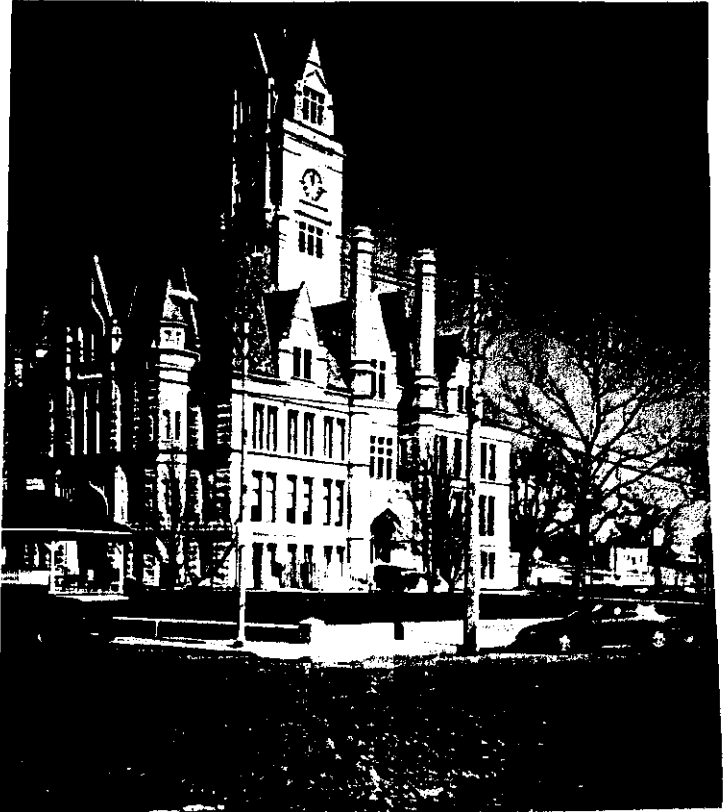
Note: See cover sheet Part III.

R E N S S E L A E R  
R E D E V E L O P M E N T

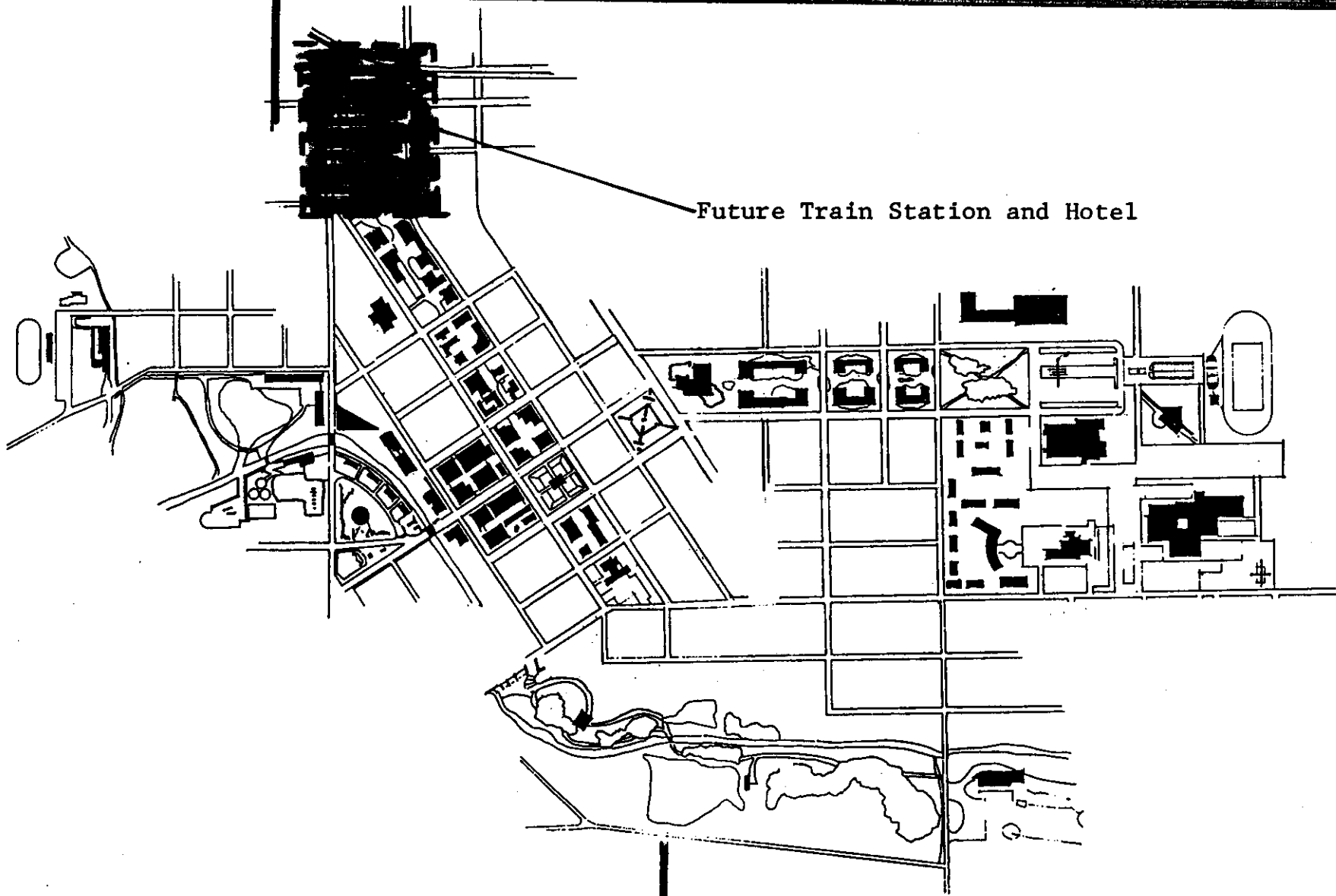


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● Rensselaer  
County  
Courthouse

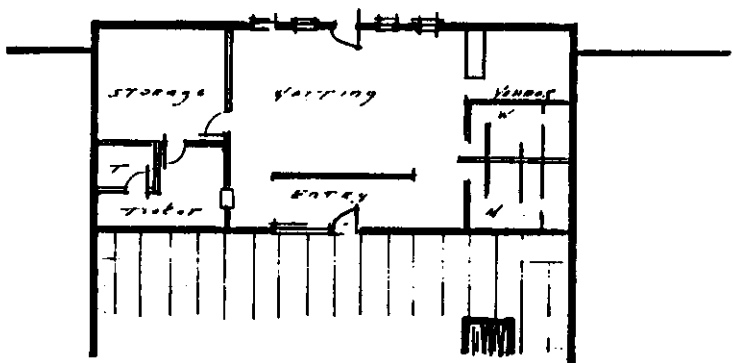


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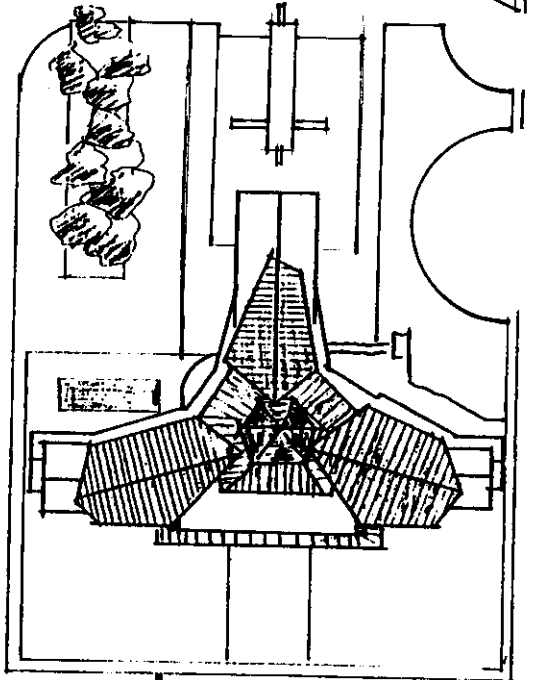
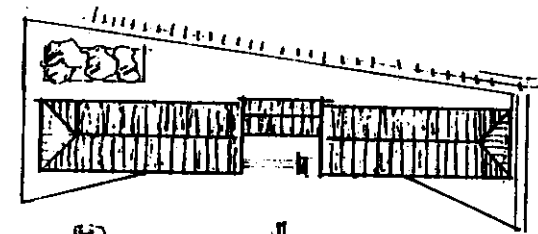
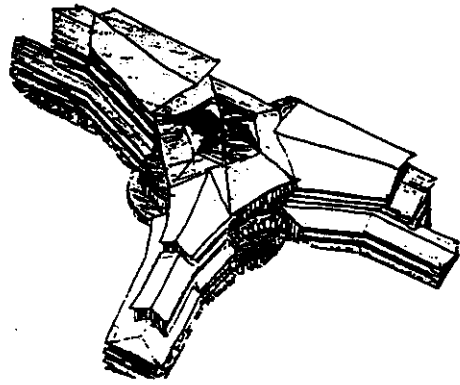


Future Train Station and Hotel

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Floor Plan



Site Plan

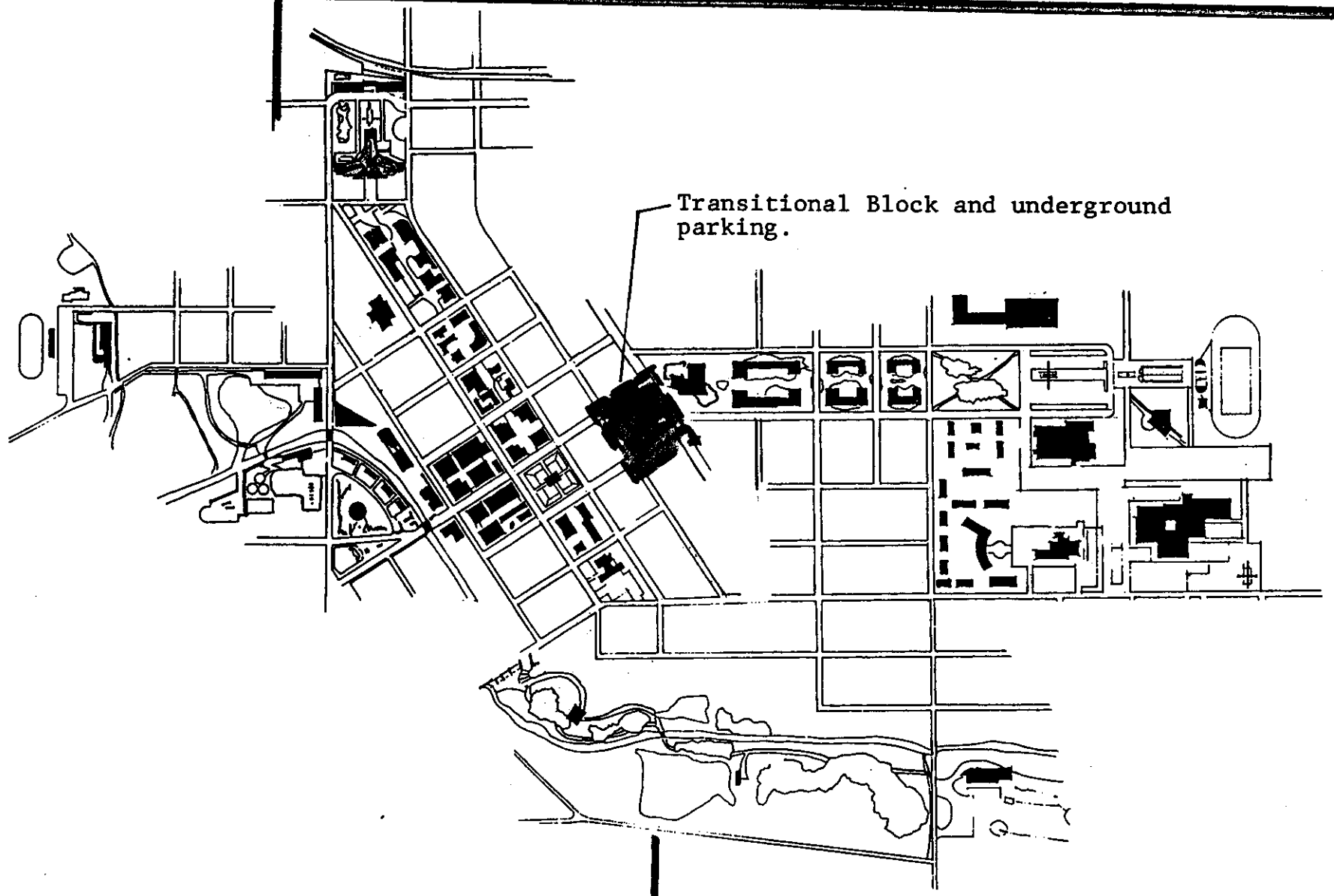


North Elevation

PREPARED FOR: ARCHITECTURAL THESIS. A. SEAGER. PROF.  
BY: JOSEPH K. FISCHER, MAY 1997

Transportation Center.  
Train Depot and future luxury hotel

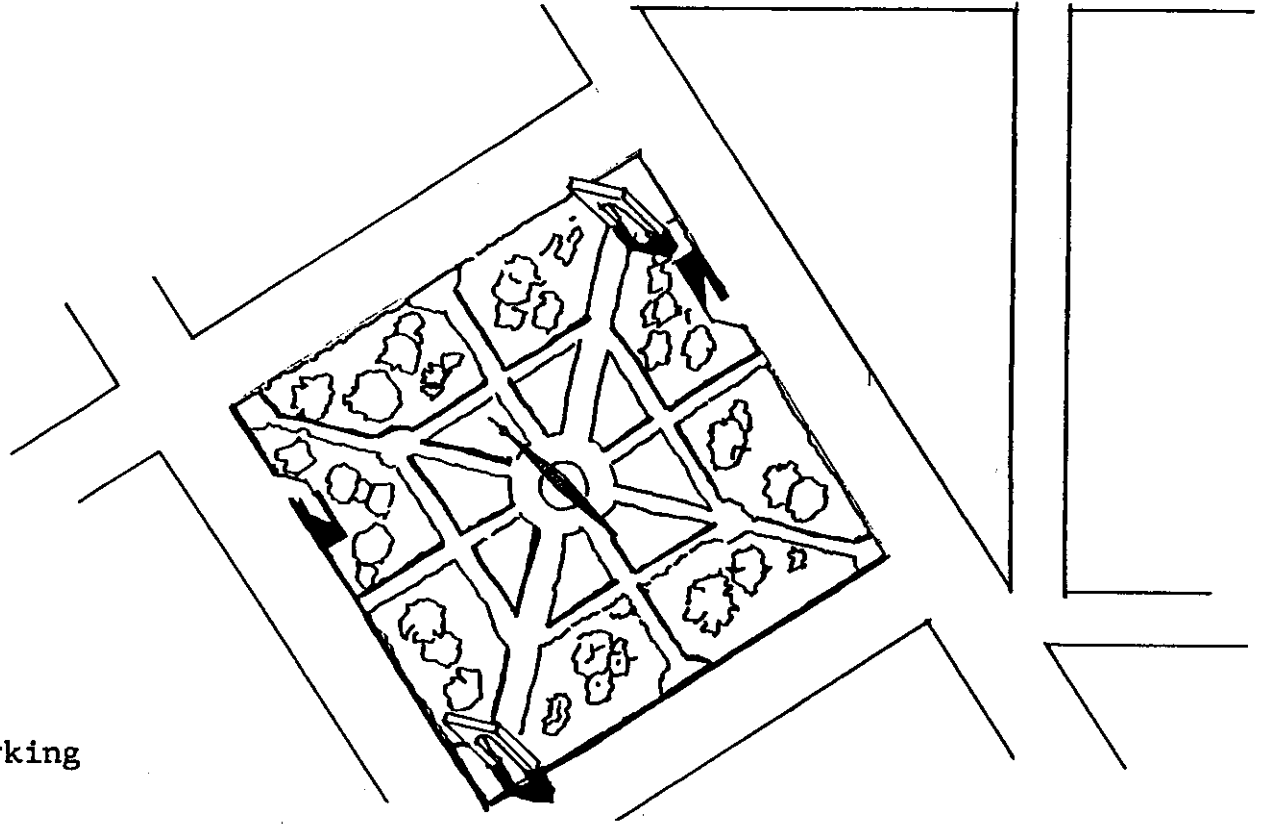
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Transitional Block and underground parking.

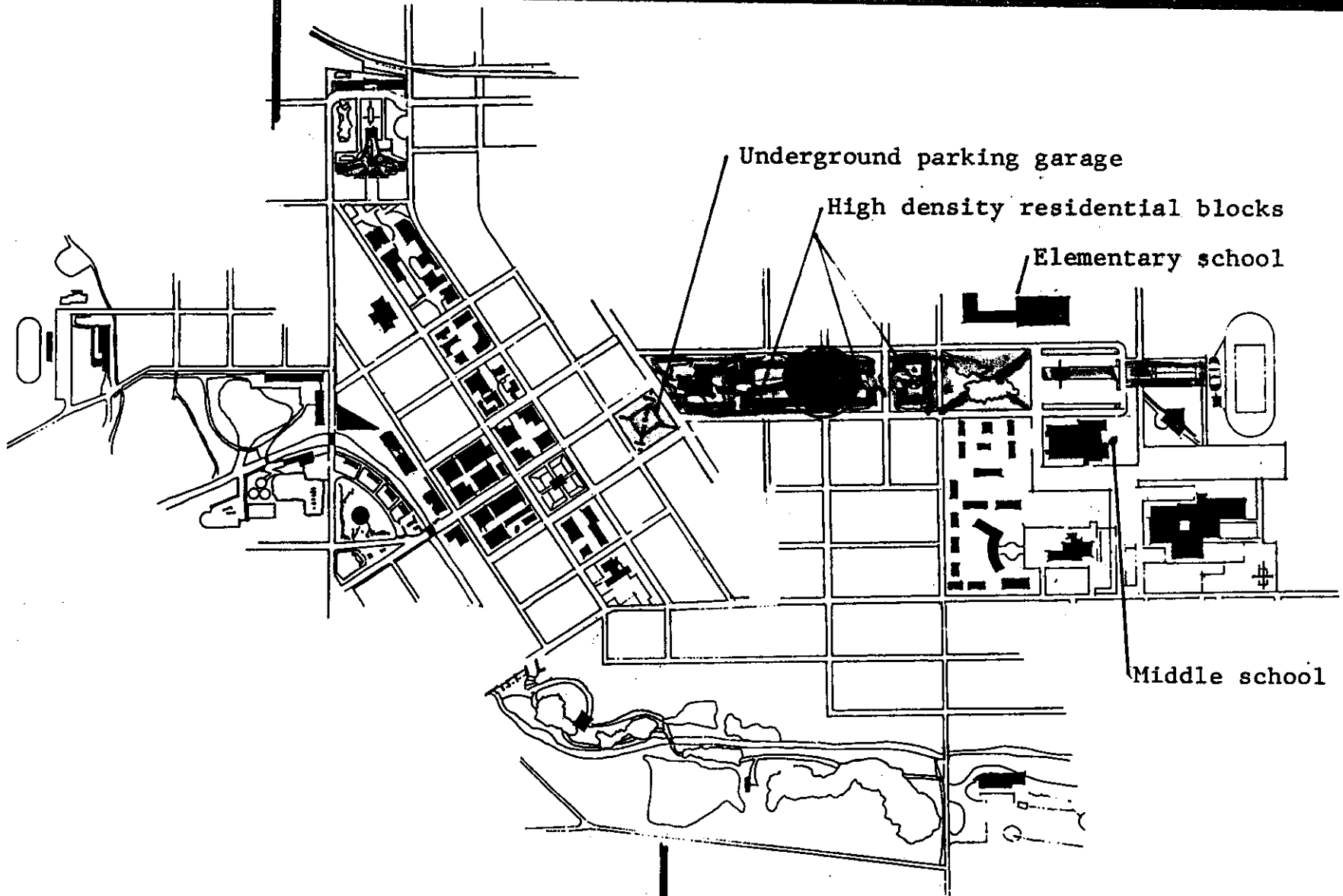
Path to the public school campus.

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● Underground parking  
for city and  
higher density  
residential

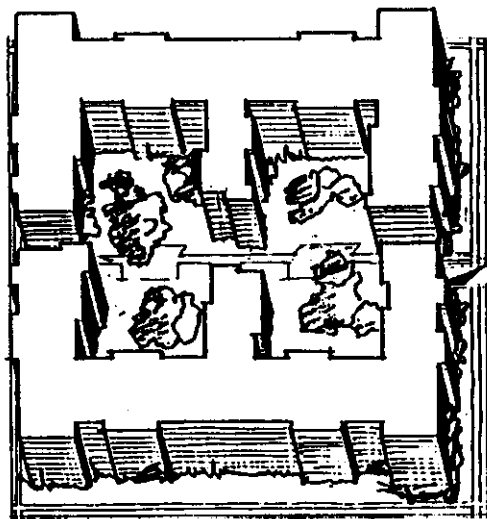
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R E D E V E L O P M E N T



● View between Apartment buildings looking toward the city center

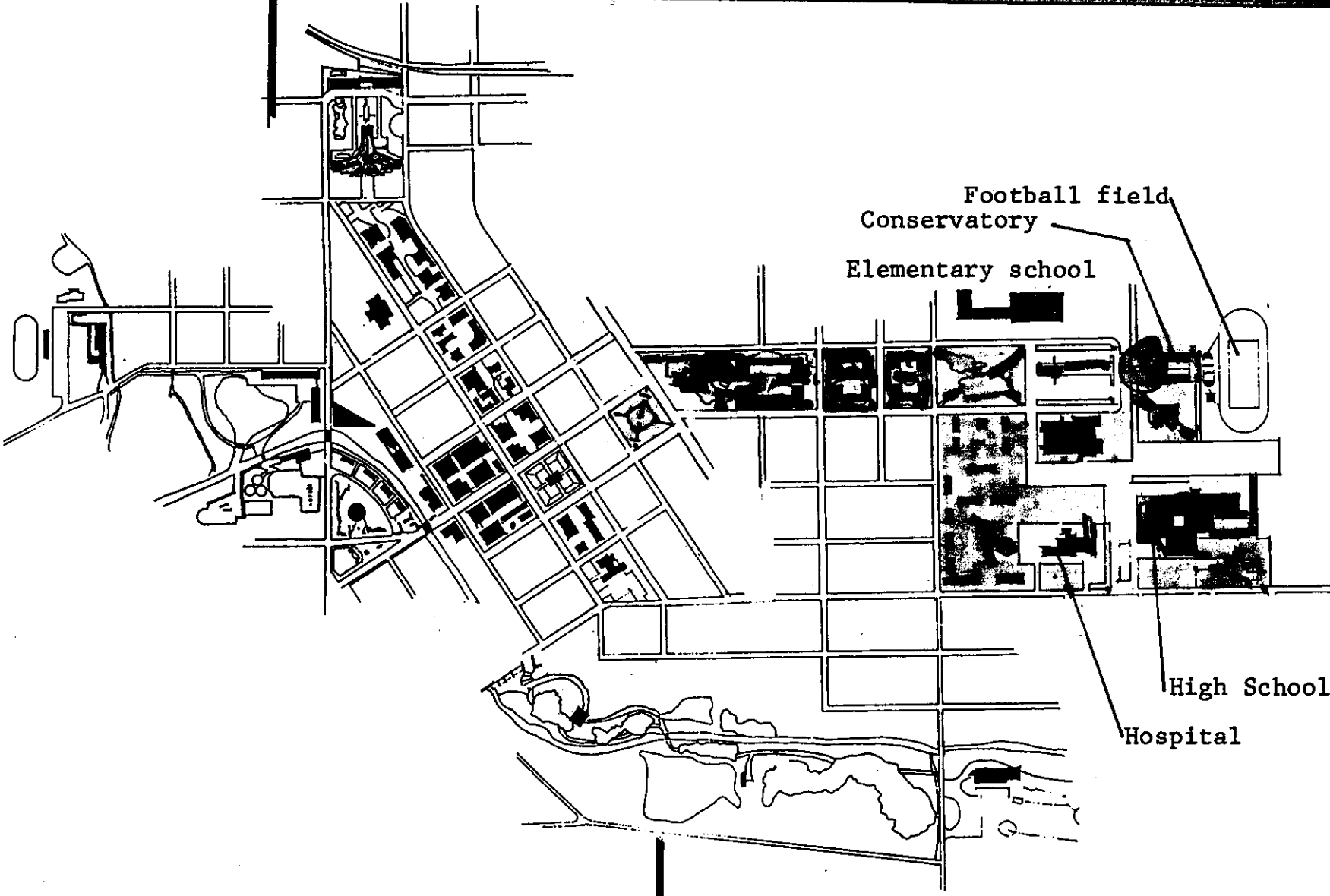


High density housing block  
for future urban dwelling

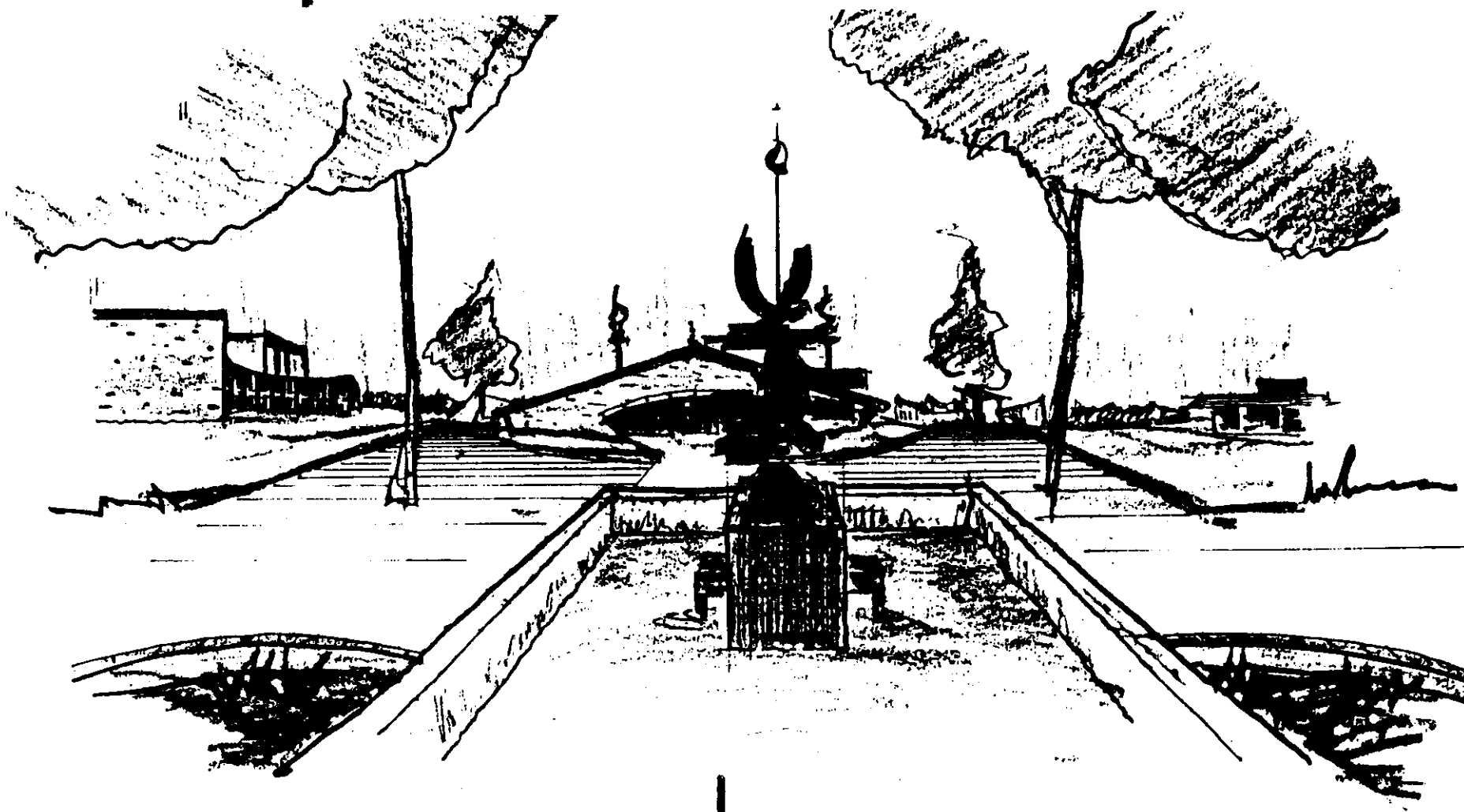
PREPARED FOR: ARCHITECTURAL THESIS. A. SEAGER. PROJ.  
BY: JOSEPH K. FISCHER, MAY 1997

7 x 7 1 5 3 4 6 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32 33 34 35 36 37 38 39 40 41 42 43 44 45 46 47 48 49 50 51 52 53 54 55 56 57 58 59 60 61 62 63 64 65 66 67 68 69 70 71 72 73 74 75 76 77 78 79 80 81 82 83 84 85 86 87 88 89 90 91 92 93 94 95 96 97 98 99 100

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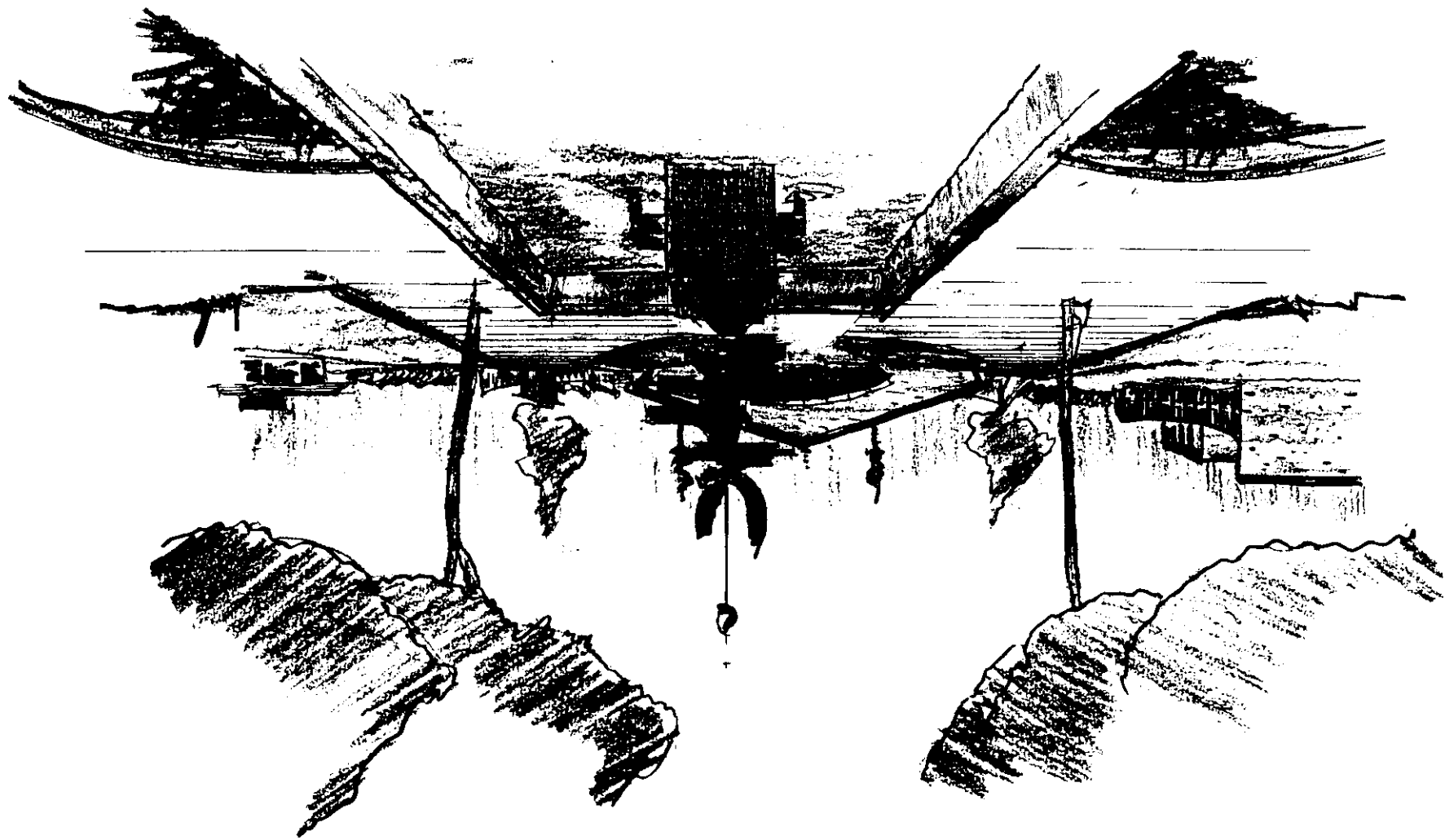


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Public school campus seen from the fountain looking to the greenhouse and football field beyond

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BY: JOSEPH K. FISCHER, MAY 1997



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