

**FROM WASCANA PARK TO THE CITY CENTRE :
THE URBAN LINK**

a proposal for a series of pedestrian corridors which connect an urban parkland to the
central business district in the City of Regina, Saskatchewan.

by

Hin Tat Lam

A Practicum submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Landscape Architecture

Department of Landscape Architecture
University of Manitoba
Winnipeg, Canada

1992



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FROM WASCANA PARK TO THE CITY CENTRE

□ REGINA

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CLINT F. JOURNAL, 1907, ON 11TH STREET, REGINA.

THE URBAN LINK

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THE URBAN LINK

BY

HIN TAT LAM

A practicum submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies of the University of Manitoba in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the degree of

MASTER OF LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE

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ABSTRACT

Streetscapes and urban open spaces are some of the key elements in today's design and planning of the urban environment. These elements can make important contributions to the quality of the built environment and for the enjoyment and preservation of the designed landscape.

This practicum proposes to develop appropriate streetscapes that would connect Wascana Park and the Central Business District of the City of Regina, and at the same time to revitalize and to strengthen the identity of the Transitional Area neighborhood. The goal of this Urban Pedestrian Link is to provide a more balanced man-made and natural environment in an urban setting, hence reviving a design principle put forward in 1914 by Thomas H. Mawson. In order to achieve this goal, a series of transitional focal points are created within the study area to enhance the proposed pedestrian routes through the site. These would enhance the existing focal points (destinations) in both the Wascana Park precinct and the Central Business District. An important outcome of this study is the contemporary reinterpretation of the original Mawson masterplan proposed for the development of the City of Regina in 1914. This is achieved through careful study of the existing urban fabric and land use pattern and correlating the findings to the historic master plan. From this analysis, concepts are generated which are consistent with the basic principles used by Mawson.

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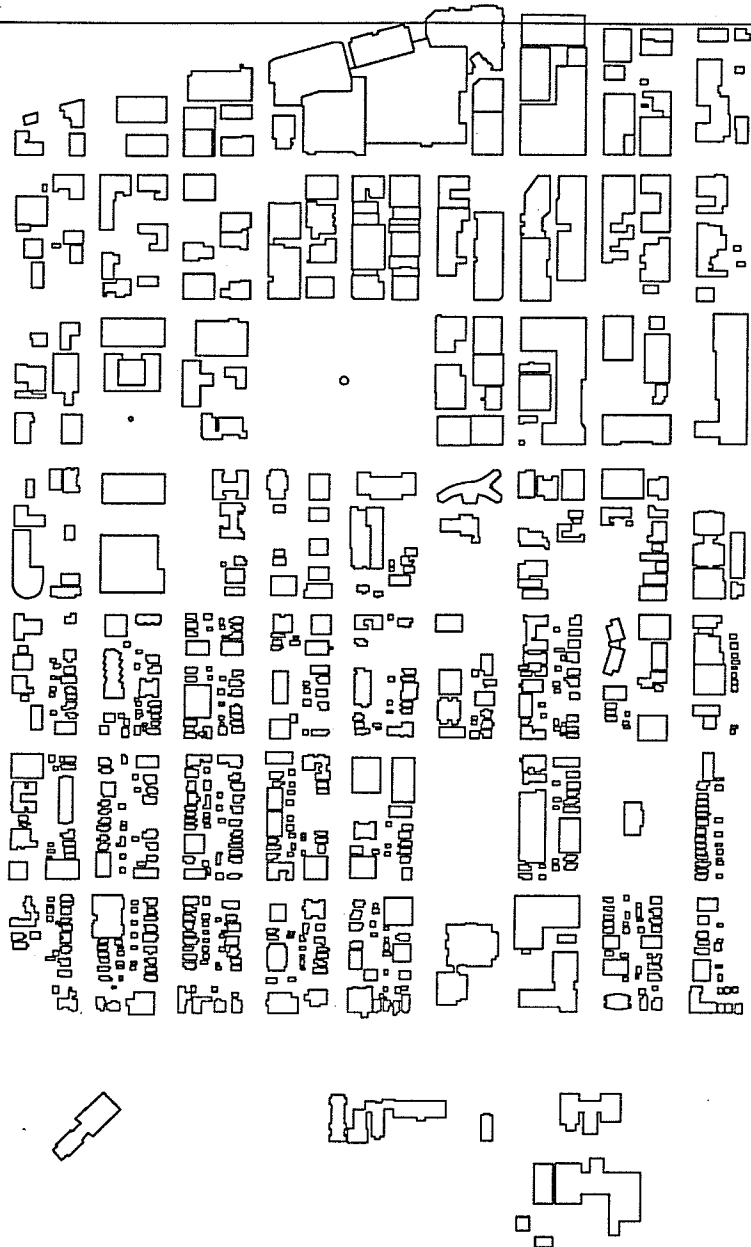
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chapter

1



1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 HISTORY

Regina is the capital city of the prairie province of Saskatchewan. In August 23, 1883, the Canadian Pacific Railway reached the location of Saskatchewan's future capital and was christened "the Queen City of the Plains". At that time, this region was literally a flat, prairie grassland. This condition remained until after the Legislative Building was built in 1909 when Frederick G. Todd, a landscape architect from Montreal, advocated the placement of native sown grass and to "clothe the bare terrain" with irregular planting of trees and shrubs (Fig. 1).

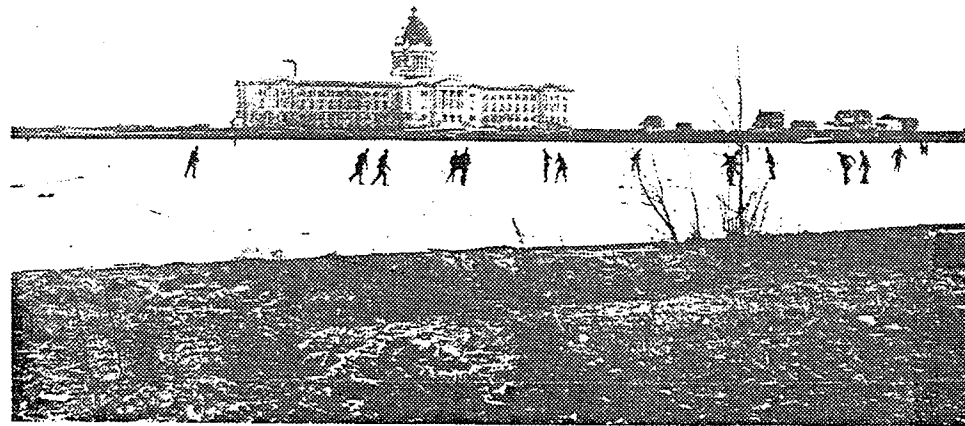


Fig. 1 Wascana Lake and Legislative Building, October 1912. (Photo, courtesy of the Saskatchewan Archives Board)

This was a major undertaking because there were no indigenous trees available in this region at that time. Most of the seedlings were from other prairie regions like Manitoba and North Dakota, and more than 100,000 trees and shrubs were acquired from commercial nurseries as far away as France and Germany. Seeds and plants were solicited from the botanical division of the federal government, from the American Bureau of foreign plant introductions, and from collectors in countries - for example Siberia, Russia, and Korea - known to have severe continental climates.

In 1912, Thomas Mawson was commissioned to layout the grounds of the Legislative Building and the adjacent parkland, now called Wascana Park (Fig. 2), to select a site for a government house and to design the setting, and to device a scheme for the civic improvement of Regina. The Regina commission enabled Mawson to practice two principles that guided much of his work: that gardens should complement the buildings they embellish, and that public gardens and parks should be integrated with their surroundings.

In his report to the Regina city council, Mawson devoted the final, and what he described as "the most important" chapter, to the park system. He described it as a unifying chain designed to convert the city into an artistic whole by binding all parks. He envisaged three connected zones of parkland: a protective belt of woodland around the city; a parkway of woodland and landscaped gardens running the length of Wascana Lake and Creek; and a connecting tissue of small parks and boulevards within the city. Mawson's objective was to convert Regina into a "Garden City" from which the reproach "treelessness" would be removed forever.

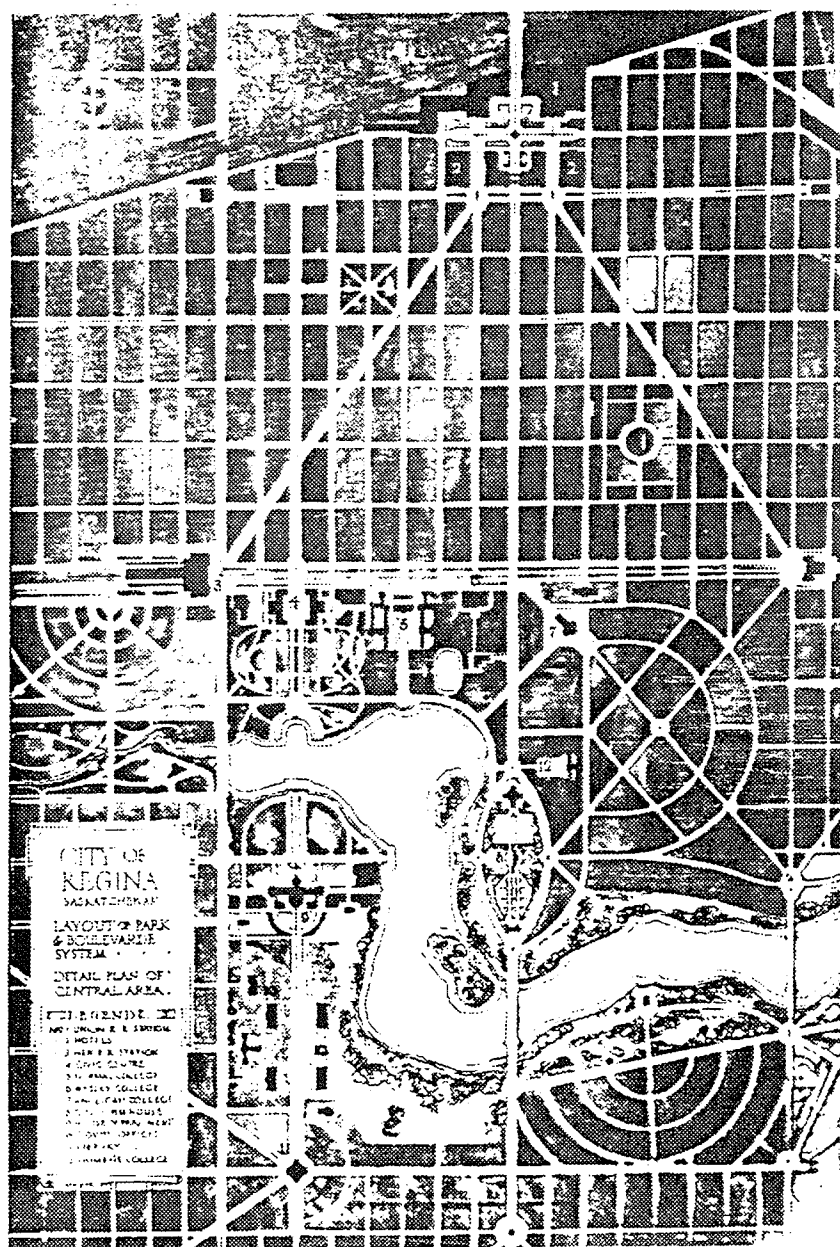


Fig. 2 Regina's city plan, prepared by Thomas H. Mawson, circ 1914.

1.2 THE STUDY AREA

1.2.1 Urban Framework

The study area is bounded by Victoria Avenue on the north, College Avenue on the south, with Broad Street and Albert Street establishing the east and west boundaries. The area is made up of 32 blocks laid out in a typical grid-iron pattern. This study area is known by the City of Regina as the "Transitional Area".

A typical urban block in the "Transitional Area" is 500ft. (152.4m) by 270ft. (82.3m) with a 20ft. (6.1m) lane running through it. The streets which bound this study area have a 100ft. (30.5m) right-of-way, while the interior street rights-of-way are 66ft. (20.1m) wide (measurements take from easement to easement). Most lots face the north-south streets but, at Victoria and College Avenues, the lots are turned to face them. These lots are slightly deeper than the regular lots facing the Streets. (130ft. (39.6m) and 125ft. (38.1m) respectively (Fig. 3).

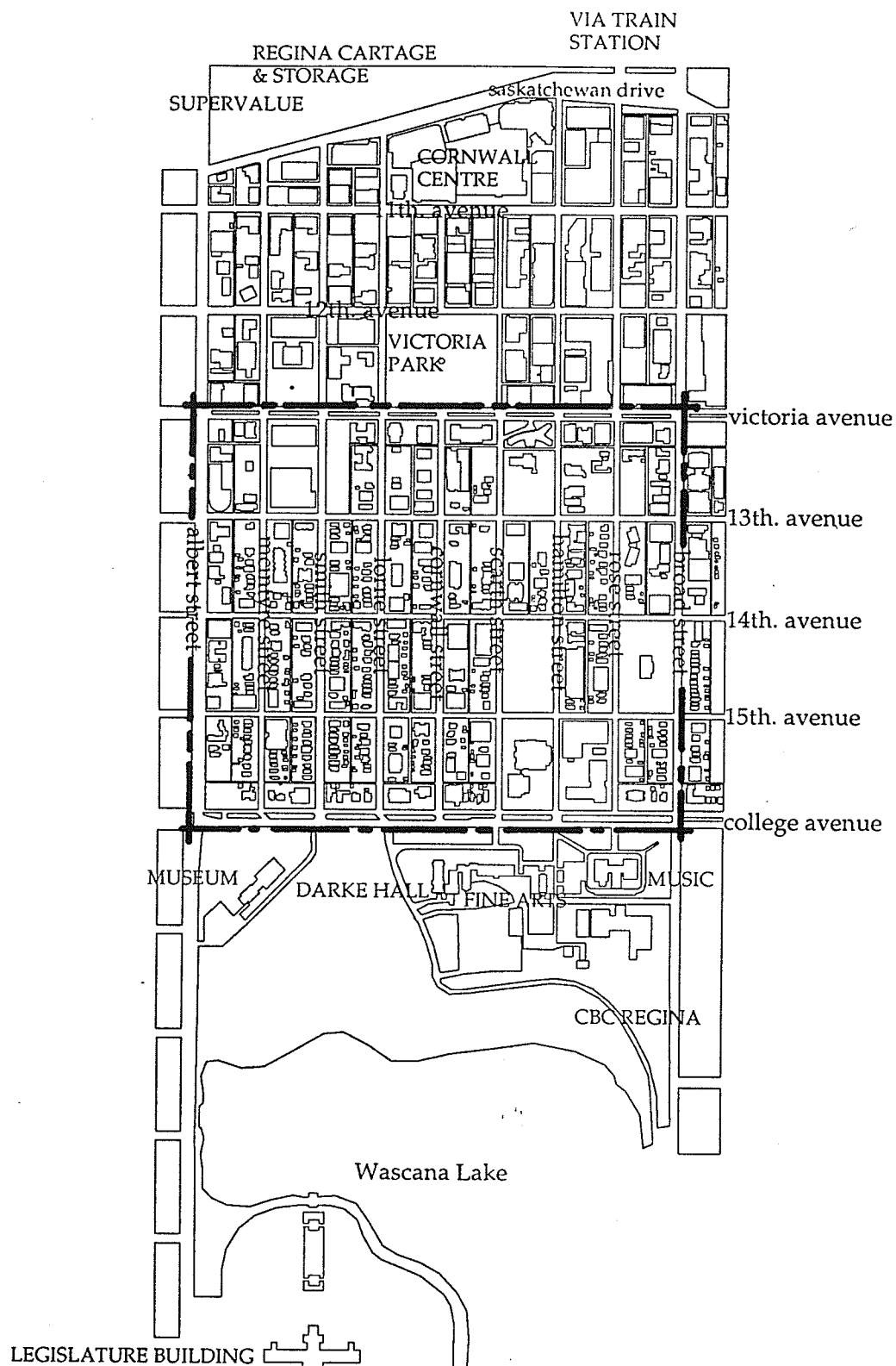


Fig. 3 Plan of existing physical condition of the Transitional Area and the north and south context.

1.2.2 Urban Quality

There are two major north-south vehicular arteries that connect the downtown precinct to Wascana Park; Broad Street on the east, and Albert Street on the west. Between these two arteries is the Transitional Area, part of the original City of Regina which was planned around remains from the original C.P.R. townsite layout in 1882 (Fig. 4). This Transitional Area is a potential heritage district within the city. The Central Business District gradually developed south from the tracks towards Victoria Avenue. The area south of that developed between the turn of the century and immediately following the first World War. It was primarily the upper and middle-income neighborhood. With the completion of the Wascana Bridge and the opening of the Lakeview neighborhood in the boom and growth period prior to the depression in the 30's, there was a shift of upper income homes farther southward, but many of the fine older homes on College Avenue and throughout the area remained.

The Transitional Area was Regina's first upper income residential neighborhood. Some of the houses and apartments which remain from the early era of construction show significant heritage merit (Fig. 5). Such merit is based on a range of criteria which include the architecture of the structure, history of the building, and the persons associated with the building, as well as the contribution to the local environment that the building may have made as one element of a streetscape.

The present landscape conditions indicate that Mawson's principles were implemented in a limited area of the city : the portion south of the Central Business District, focusing on Wascana Centre and the University of Regina proper.

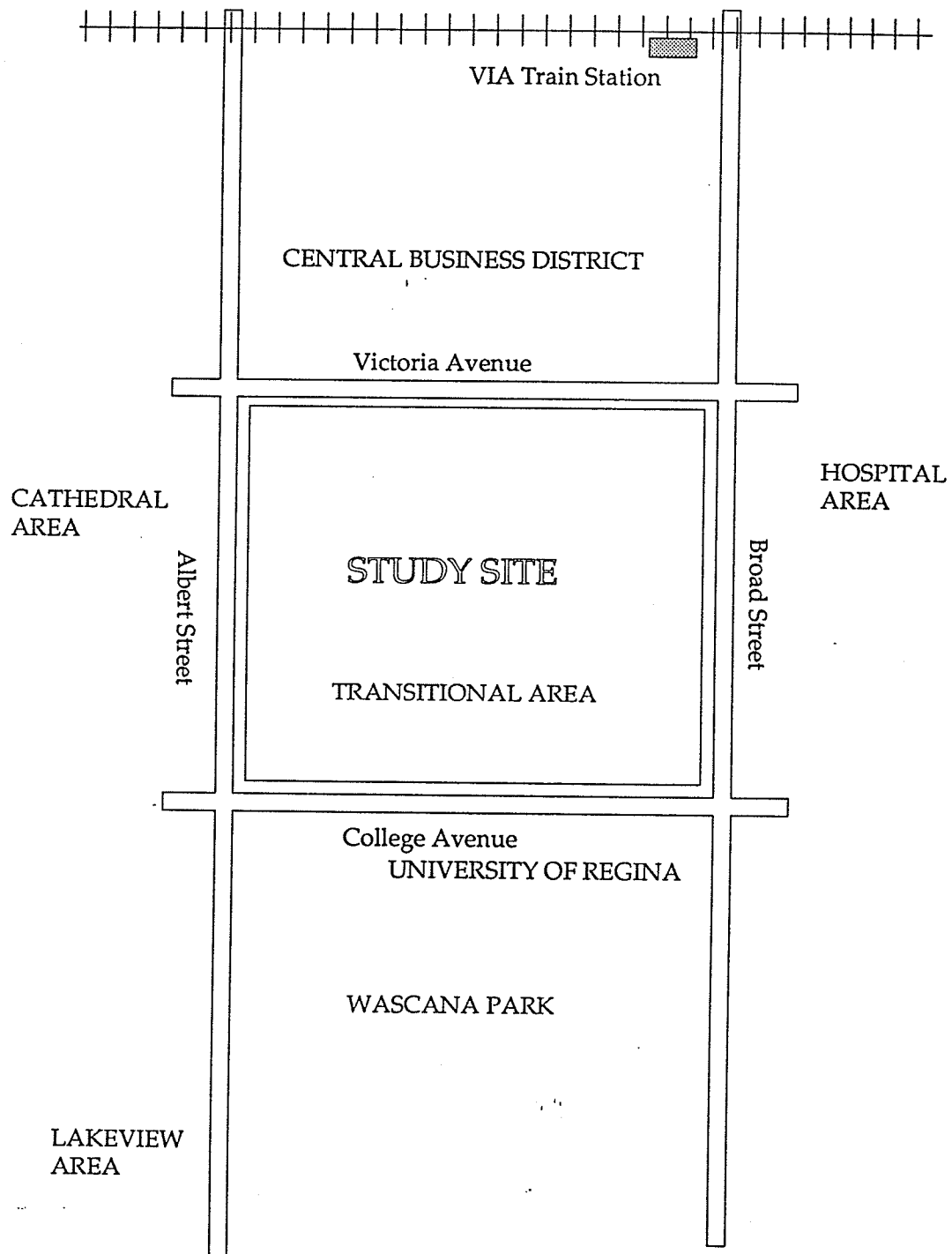
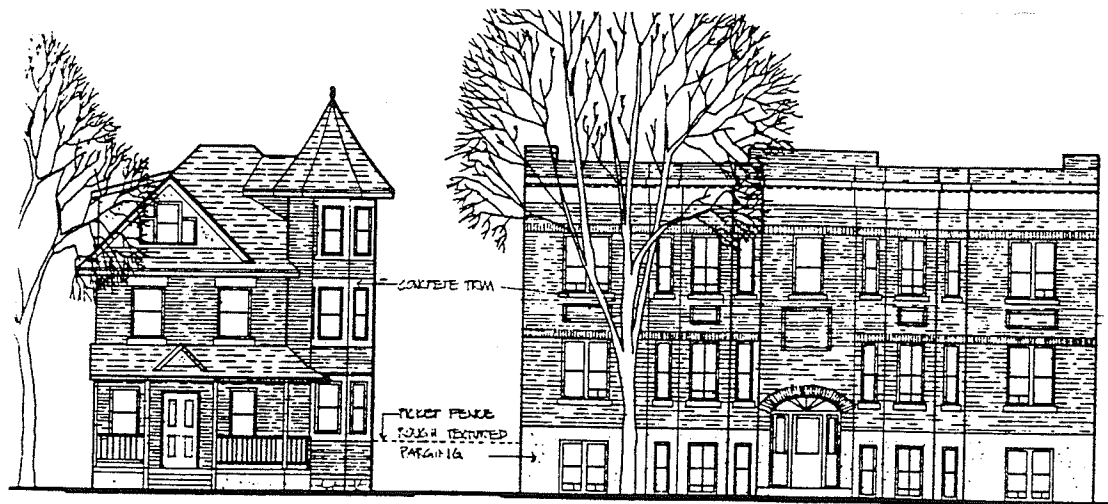


Fig. 4 Location of Study Site.



2205
BELMONT APTS.

2207



2216

2200
ARGYLE COURT

HERITAGE CONSERVATION DISTRICT
FOR: TRANSITIONAL AREA COMMUNITY SOCIETY
AND CITY of REGINA
BY: M.W. LAFOY ARCHITECT



2229
MALBOROUGH APTS.

2235

Fig. 5 Examples of Historic Homes/Buildings.

There are still some existing avenues of trees which were a part of the initial development of the neighborhood in some sections of the Transitional Area, like Cornwall Street and Smith Street. But, at the time of this study, most of this setting has disappeared, due to the deterioration of the older trees and the lack of replacement of newer trees.

To the north of Victoria Avenue, Victoria Park was developed in accord with the Mawson masterplan (Fig. 2). But there is now no strong link between the two existing park systems (Wascana and Victoria Parks) because the connection between them has been weakened by the deterioration of the Transitional Area neighborhood. What was once a wealthy single family neighborhood has been left untended, and is now evolving into a commercial-retail-multi family area due to the expansion of the downtown Central Business District towards the south. This evolution must now be controlled and designed so as to prevent the neighborhood from fragmentation, eventually losing its unique historic identity.

1.3 Problem Statement

The influence of Mawson's philosophy and masterplan is rapidly diminishing. It has been gradually taken over by insensitive urban developments and the encroachment of the "devastating concrete jungle" of urban development, including the ever-present parking lot. The process of removing trees to make room for growth and development and the loss of mature trees through disease may eventually, through neglect, eradicate Mawson's "Garden City" concept. This "depreciation" is presently occurring in the Transitional Area, in the downtown Central Business District area, and in the other neighborhoods outside the jurisdiction of the Wascana Centre Authority

As a result of the above process, the identity of the Transitional Area is slowly being weakened with the loss of the characteristic avenues of trees along each of the streets which was typical of the streetscape style of the period when this neighborhood was conceived.

The goal of this study is to propose a revitalization strategy to improve the quality and image of the Transitional Area so as to contribute to the restoration and enhancement of the vitality of this neighbourhood from its current deteriorating state. This can be achieved through the concepts and guidelines proposed in this study.

1.4 Focus of the Practicum

Numerous documentations and studies have been performed on the Transitional Area of the City of Regina. They all addressed the issues pertaining to the efficiency of use and future revitalization of the area. The important landscape issues discussed included; vehicular circulation, parking, pedestrian circulation, streetscaping, future uses of vacant lots, and revitalization of the existing fabric.

This practicum does not propose planning and zoning changes, nor any large scale alterations to the existing fabric. These planning concepts have already been discussed in the publications listed in the Bibliography.

Specifically, the ideas discussed in these reports focus on the following topics:

1. addressing the need for improvement to Victoria Park
in terms of aesthetics, safety, comfort, and general maintenance and/or replacement of deteriorated plant material.
2. documenting both the existing land use and physiological characteristics of the Transitional Area.
3. the Wascana Park masterplan reports dealt with the planning principles of Thomas Mawson, and reinterpreted them to contemporary standards. This precinct acts as a destination point to the south of the Transitional Area, accommodating the University of Regina campus, the Wascana Centre Authority and the Museum.
4. the Bicycle Transport and Pedestrian Downtown circulation concept study explored the feasibility and general site plan of a series proposed bicycle routes through the City of Regina.

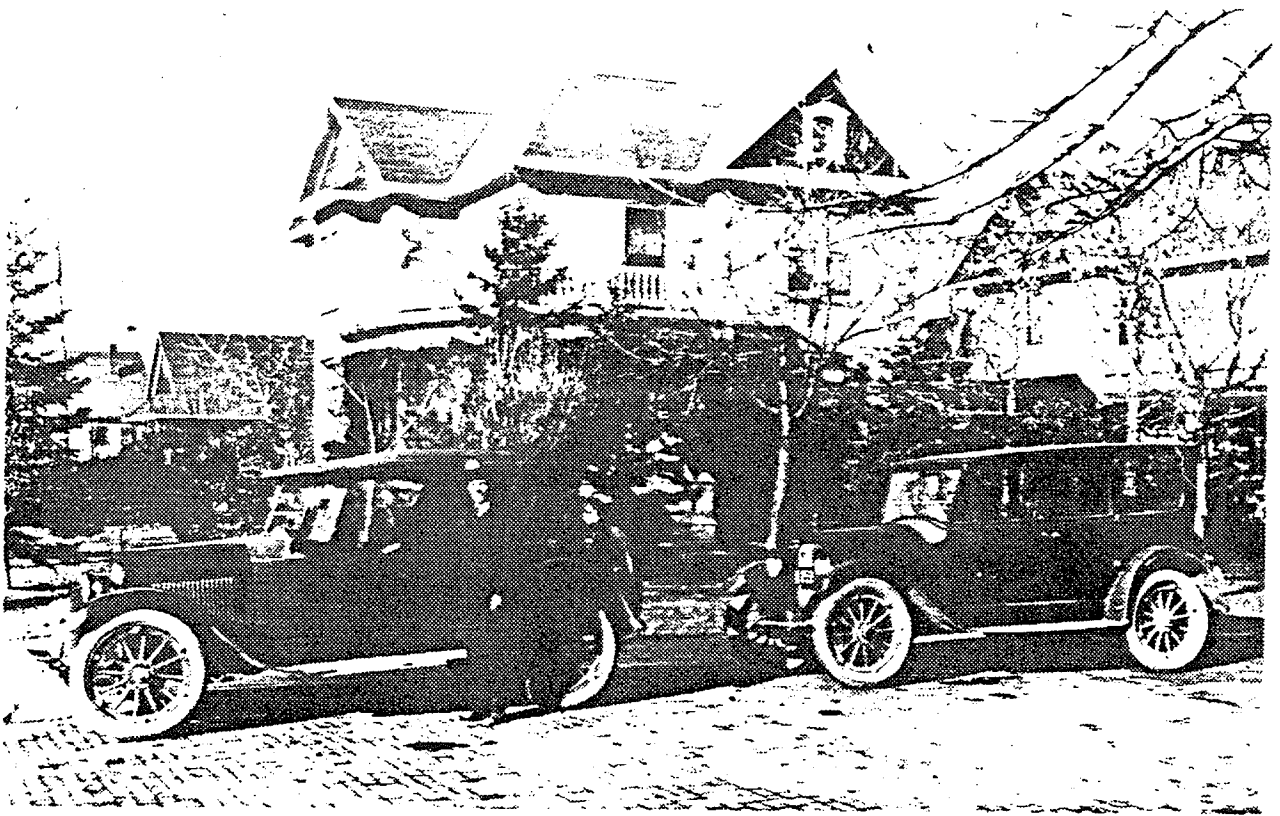
This study addresses the landscape issues and planning concepts discussed in these reports and attempts to give form to them, providing a three dimensional visualization of the underlying ideas. It also acknowledges the heritage value of the existing housing stock and the period landscapes where applicable (Fig. 6). Finally, suggestions are put forward to address the issue of revitalization of the existing housing.

The purpose of this practicum is to strengthen the visual connection between the downtown Central Business District and Wascana Park using a contemporary interpretation of Thomas Mawson's Plan. One of Mawson's ideas dealt with axial connections from one destination or important element to another. He proposed these axes be enhanced with avenues of trees to establish visual and physical connections.

Another strong ideology to be expressed here is the "string of parks" by which Mawson was attempting to weave the natural landscape into the urban fabric. This concept can be achieved through the treatment of streetscapes to connect one parkland to another. It is proposed the connection of the two areas occur in the Transitional Area (Fig. 7).

The objectives of this practicum are to strengthen the identity and to unify the neighborhood. The process is intended to provide an enhanced parklike setting through the Transitional Area neighborhood. The pedestrian routes are established through the analysis of the existing land use patterns and the visual characteristics and composition of the urban fabric, as illustrated in the Appendix. From this analysis, a set of goals and objectives are outlined in Chapter 4, which serve as the basis for the conceptual studies outlined in Chapter 5. The principal focus is to design a series of suitable pedestrian connections between the Central Business District and Wascana Centre

which are appropriate for this urban setting, as established from the site analysis in Chapter 3. It is recognized that these connections must be sensitive to the existing neighborhood, thus ensuring that additional vehicular through traffic is not introduced to the area.



THE W. H. DUNCAN RESIDENCE, 2074 CORNWALL STREET. C. 1927.
(Photo Credit: The Saskatchewan Archives Board)

Fig. 6 Heritage quality of the neighborhood.

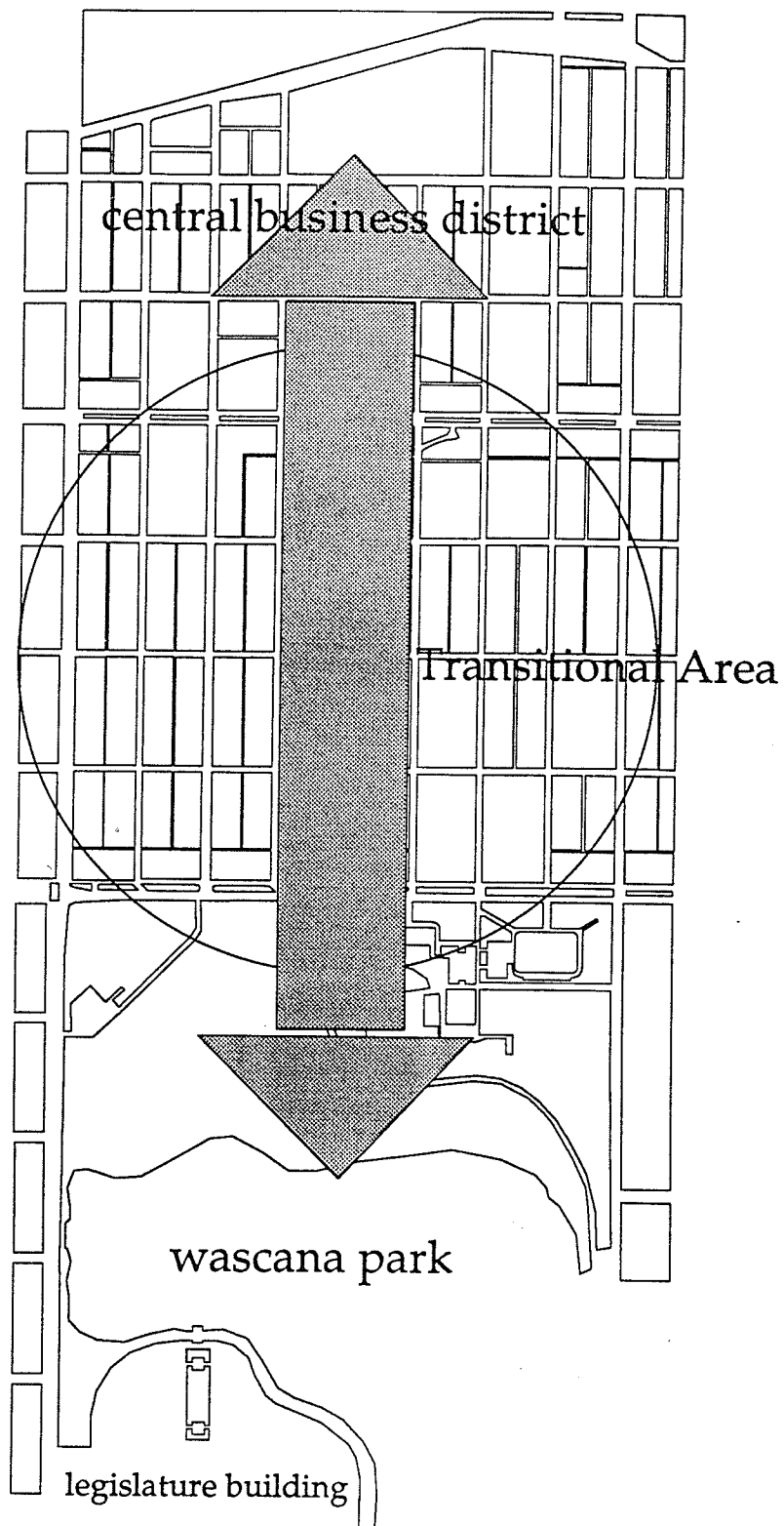
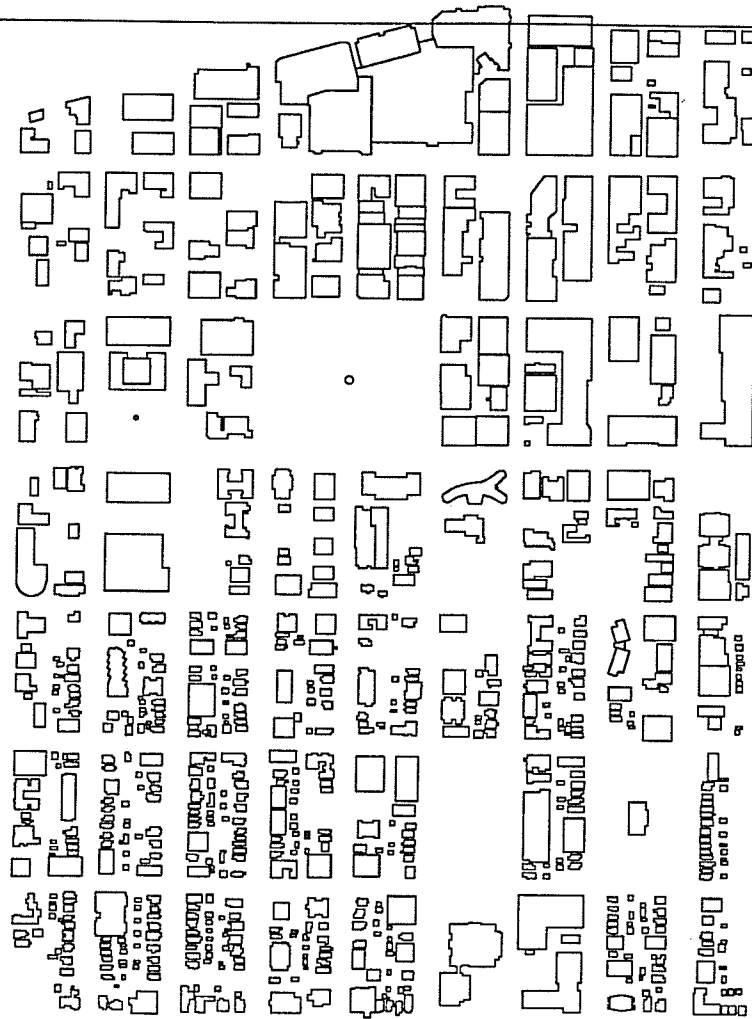


Fig. 7 The potential connection between Wascana Park and the Central Business District.



chapter

2



2.0 METHODOLOGY

INFORMATION GATHERING

The design process was initiated by choosing a topic that allowed a serious investigation into for future applications to the landscape architecture profession.

After travelling through numerous cities in Canada; Toronto, Edmonton, Ottawa, Winnipeg, Windsor, Saskatoon, and Regina, a specific site was chosen which was both familiar and convenient for the designer. This decision was also influenced by the availability of information and professional correspondence.

The next step included information gathering and meetings with the local city planner and architect, followed by the compilation of base reading material about the site and material which dealt with theories of urban design and urban open spaces. The meetings with the architect and planner were to establish a direct tie with the major sources of information, and to become involved with the local designers who were interested in the project. Graphic material pertaining to the site was gathered; including base maps, air photographs and street elevation studies.

SYNTHESIS

This stage of work involved a review of pertinent publications to determine the goals and objectives, purpose, and problems to be addressed, and opportunities and constraints associated with the site; basically a summary of the available compiled information. Work on the site analysis component of the project was then undertaken. The use of the Macintosh computer system was adopted as a tool to encode and analyse the acquired data, to develop the proposal from its conceptual to final design

stage, and to prepare the final copy. The specific programs used for this process were, Thunderscan, MacDraft, Minicad, Spaceedit, and Write Now.

INPUT AND ANALYSIS

The initial step was to encode the base map into the computer system, as the basis for the site analysis; land use patterns, figure-ground study of the urban fabric, hierarchy of the existing street system, vehicular and pedestrian use, and user profile. The growth pattern of the site was also analysed using the map of the genealogical growth of Regina provided by the Planning Department. This analysis also involved overlaying the Mawson plan and the plan of the existing situation, to determine how closely the historical masterplan had been followed.

PROGRAM

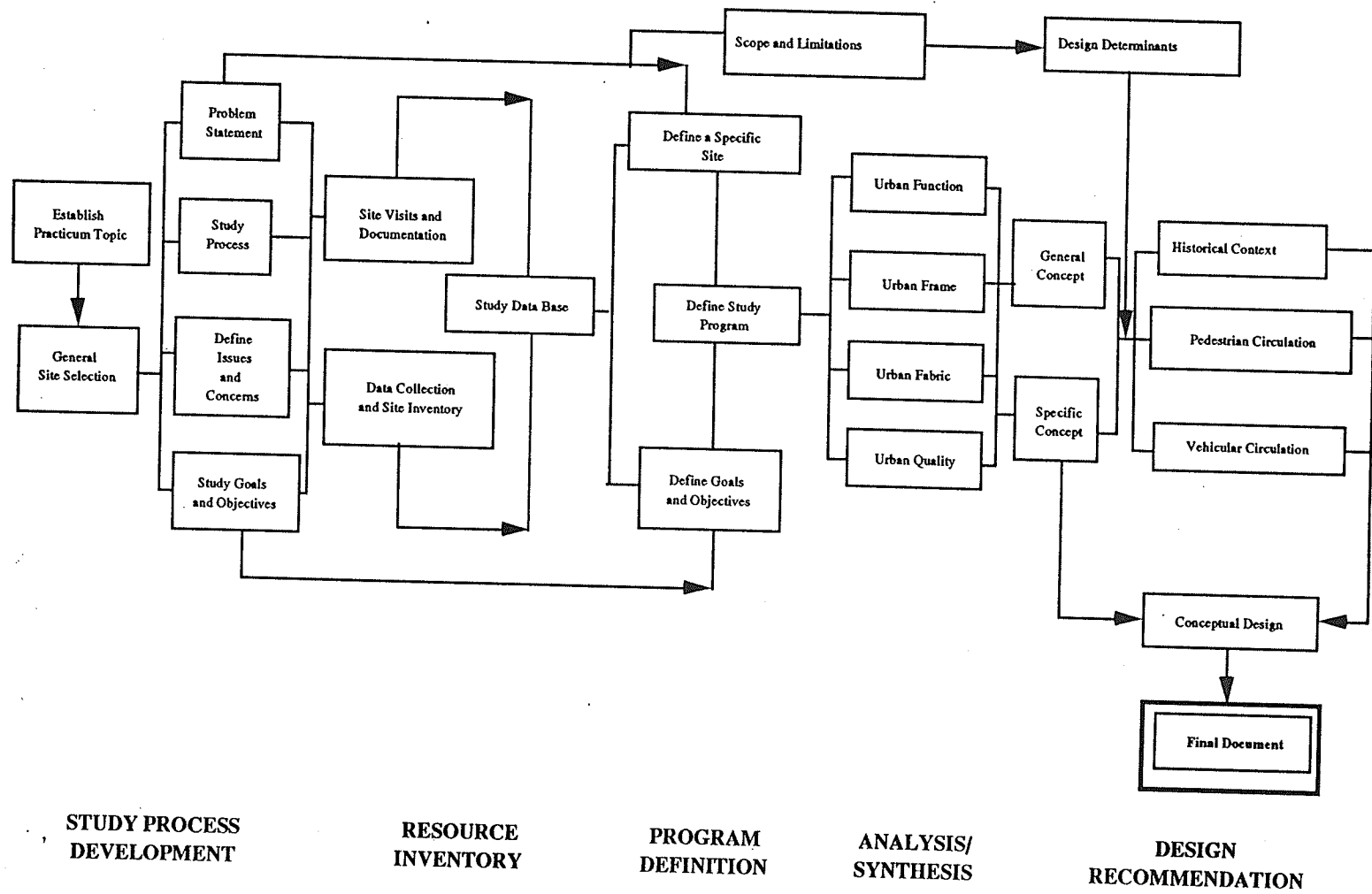
The information gathered was synthesized and a suitable program was then derived for the development and generation of the final design. An appropriate link from downtown to Wascana Park was determined, and the specific boundaries of the area were defined. The relationship of the surrounding context was also examined, in terms of its connections and edges to the study site.

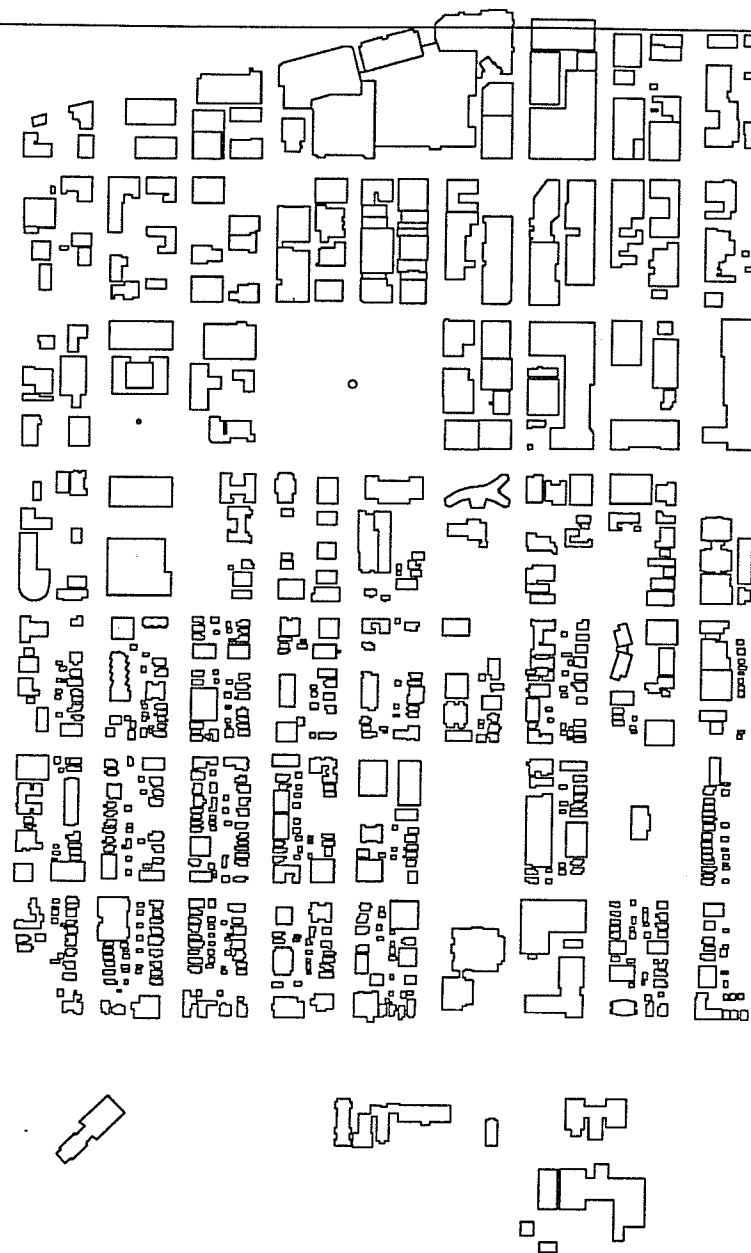
DESIGN

The design stage began with the development of a suitable concept for the site and the pedestrian link(s) to downtown and Wascana Park. This addressed the purpose defined from the synthesized information through urban design and streetscape proposals. The specific steps and processes are outlined in the design methodology chart on the next page (Fig. 8).

Fig. 8 Design Methodology.

DESIGN METHODOLOGY





chapter

3

3.0 SITE ANALYSIS

The site analysis was accomplished through the examination of aerial photographs, topographical surveys, land use plans, and actual field observation (for graphical reference, see Appendix). The figure-ground sheet (Fig. 9) revealed that the fine grained small scale housing stock was slowly being replaced by larger corporate, government, and multi-family apartment buildings, due to the growth of the downtown area towards the south end of the city and the fact that the Transitional Area is located immediately adjacent to the Central Business District. Similarly, the other adjacent neighbourhoods will also eventually be affected by this growth.

Examination of the site indicates that most of the existing single-family house-forms are concentrated towards the south-west portion of the Transitional Area. Other similar house forms are scattered throughout the central and western areas. The northern section of the site is predominantly made up of larger building types, including hotels, apartments, and government offices. Some of the original houses have been converted into commercial-retail facilities. These conversions are found scattered throughout the neighborhood, with the majority concentrated in the south-west portion of the area (Fig. 10).

Figure 10 indicates that there is a considerable amount of land that is used for street level parking, in addition to the parking spaces on both sides of the streets and avenues about the neighborhood.

There is an open space/park located north of the Central Collegiate which is being used as a sports field for baseball and football for the neighborhood.

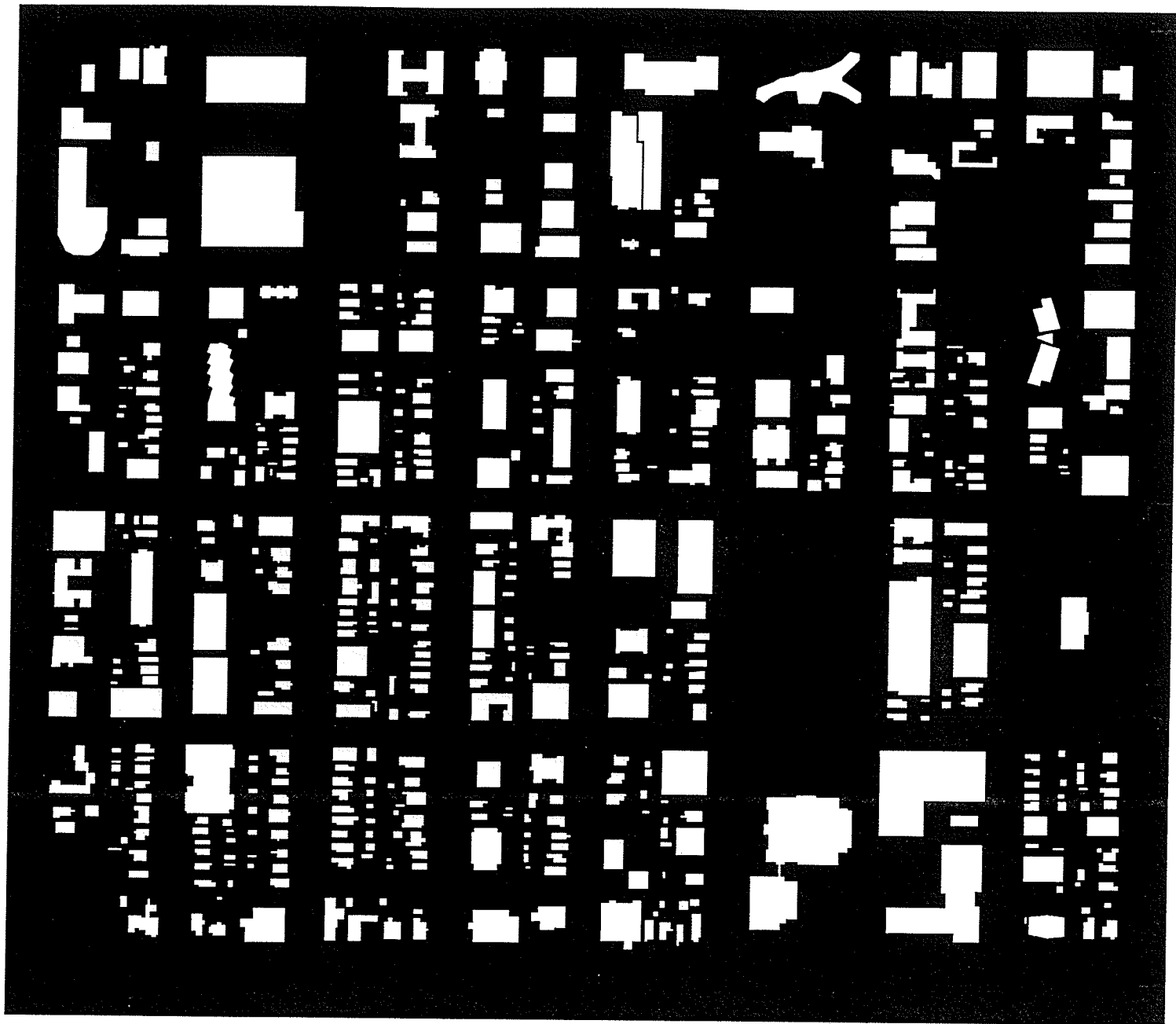
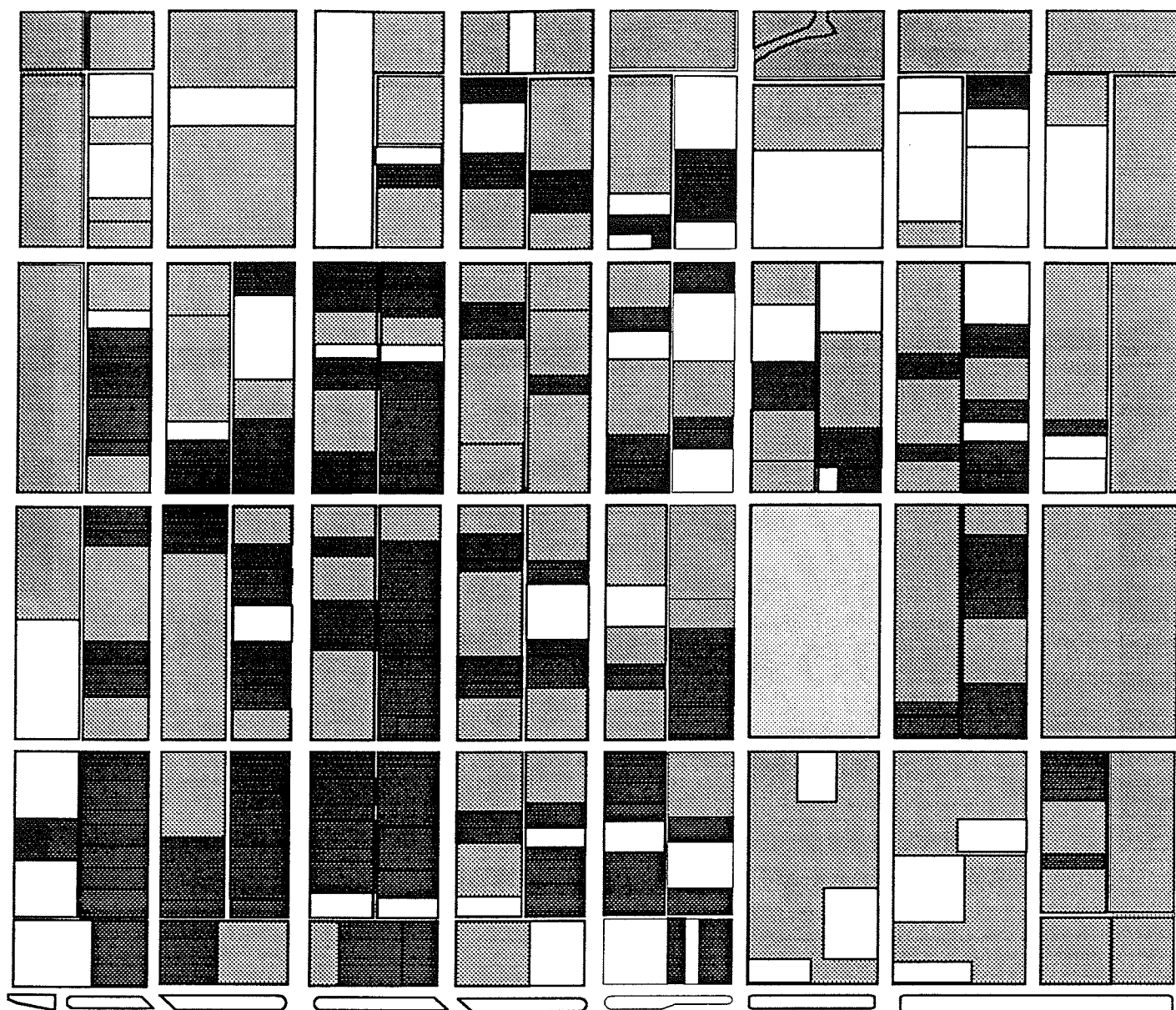


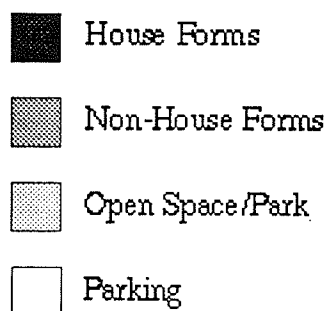
Fig. 9 Figure-Ground Relationship

0 25 50 100M.





LEGEND



0 25 50 100M.



Fig. 10 Physical Land Use Pattern.

During this study, Central Collegiate no longer served as an education centre for the neighborhood, although its grounds were used for active amateur sports. The other education facility, Strathcona School, was also closed and converted into the Bosco Homes for boys. Its grounds are presently fenced to provide a private facility.

Finally, all the streets and avenues within the Transitional Area have one-way vehicular traffic as shown in the Appendix. The two streets and avenues on the periphery of the neighborhood carry two-way traffic, and divert most of the vehicular traffic around the area. Broad and Albert Streets and Victoria and College Avenues are the primary vehicular traffic arteries bounding the neighbourhood. They are also primary collectors serving the study area. The pedestrian circulation conforms primarily to the network of streets and avenues through the area. Since Broad and Albert streets are fairly busy vehicular thoroughfares, the less active streets in the area are more pleasant for pedestrian circulation.

The site context and land use patterns are analysed and graphically documented in the Appendix of this report and provide the basis for the above analysis. Figure 11 documents the physical condition of the existing site; the encroachment of the commercial district, one-way vehicular circulation within the Transitional Area, primary vehicular traffic surrounding the neighborhood, and the area of concentration of the remaining single family housing. This inventory coupled with the field observations, provided the basis for the identification of concerns, opportunities and objectives outlined in Chapter 4.

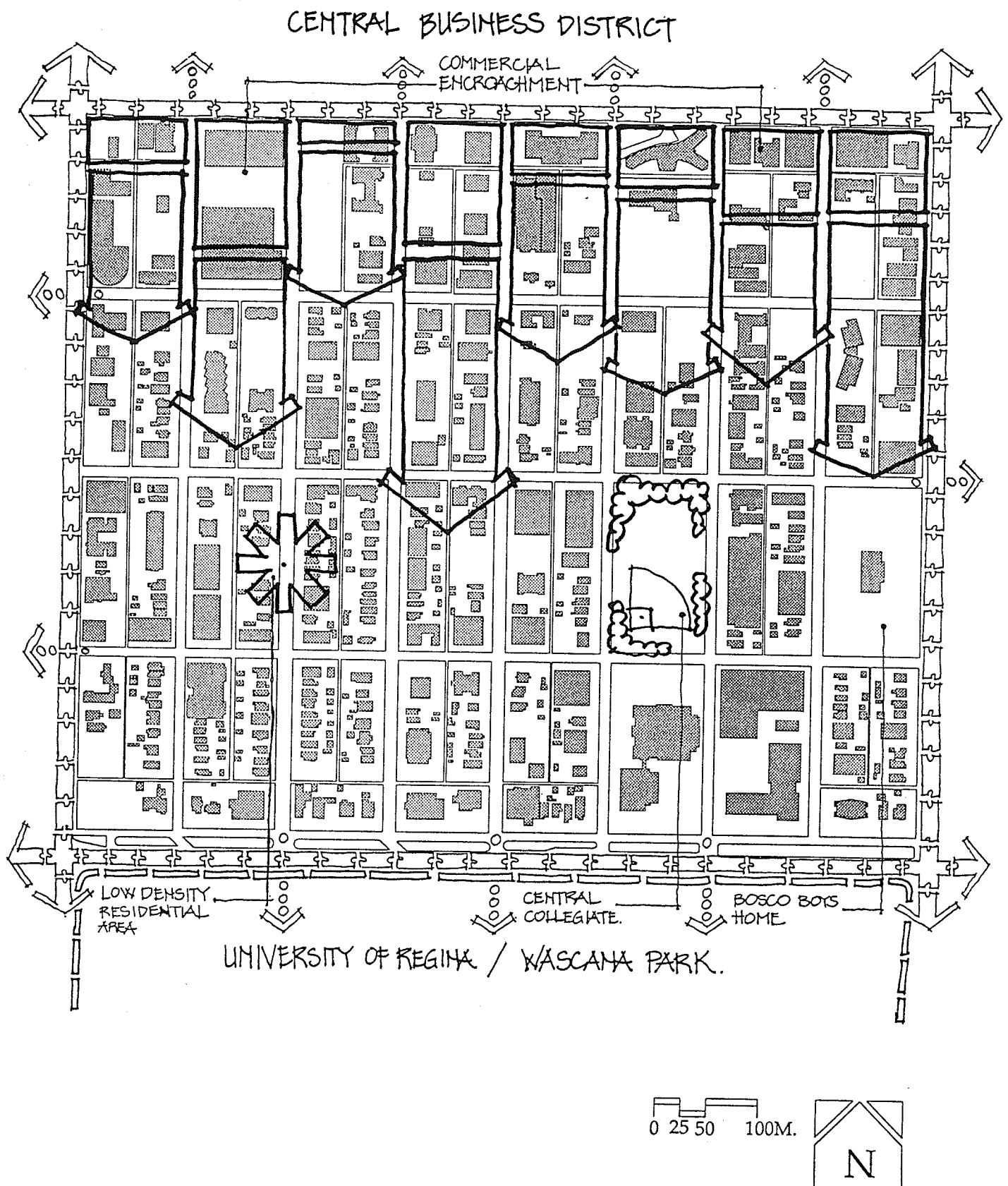
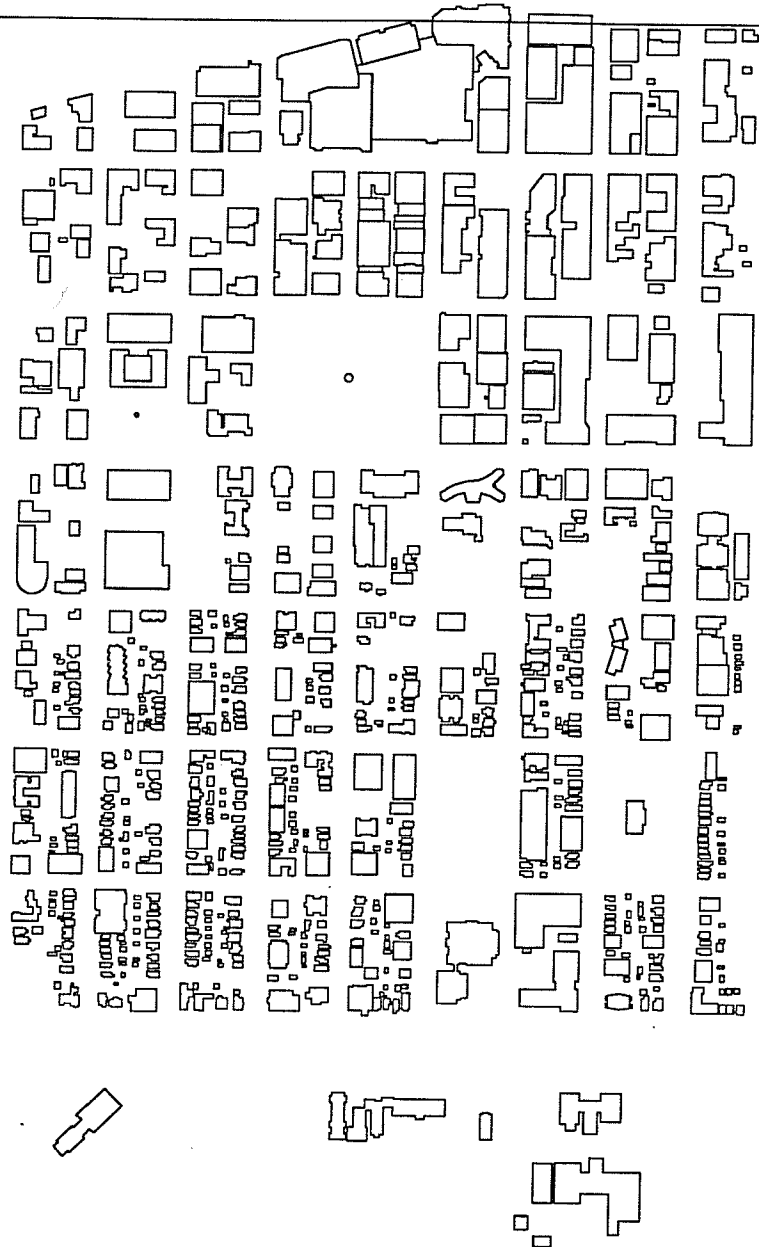
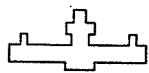


Fig. 11 Physical Site Analysis.



chapter

4



4.0 CONCERNS, OPPORTUNITIES, AND OBJECTIVES

The analytical work undertaken in Chapters 1 and 3, together with the land use pattern information documented in the Appendix, have led to the identification of four general issues: buildings and streetscapes, urban open spaces, circulation and parking, and neighborhood environment. These have been assessed in terms of the concerns and opportunities they present, followed by the articulation of planning and design objectives derived from them; objectives intended to provide direction for the subsequent design concept ideas.

4.1 BUILDING AND STREETSCAPES

The existing streetscapes are characterized by rows of single family residential buildings of traditional typology and materials, on tree-lined streets, with the vistas typically framed by the trees.

In spite of general deterioration over time, the streetscapes in the southwest portion of the Transitional Area are generally of reasonable quality.

Concerns

- 1) deterioration of streetscape continuity as a result of building demolition.
- 2) deterioration of streetscape continuity as a result of infill incompatible with heritage buildings in terms of height, bulk, and form.
- 3) loss of existing street plantings due to insensitive building infilling as well as through age and disease of the trees.

Opportunities

- 1) available vacant sites suitable for the construction of infill buildings appropriate to the adjacent streetscape.
- 2) significant sections of the existing building fabric still consist of traditional single family residential buildings.

Objectives

- 1) provide for the retention, maintenance and/or restoration of buildings in the Transitional Area which, by virtue of their individual architectural and heritage qualities, or by their contribution to the surrounding streetscape reinforce the residential character typified by the original buildings of the Transitional Area.
- 2) facilitate the change in internal use of some traditional residential buildings to commercial or office functions, in order to maintain the external historic character of the Area.
- 3) replace street trees that have been lost to disease and urban development.

4.2 URBAN OPEN SPACE

The urban open space quality of the neighborhood is under developed and under utilized. This may be due to the lack of public ammenities and recreational facilities within the Transitional Area. The closing of some educational facilities may be the cause. The abundance of mature trees is one of the outstanding characteristics of the Area. Unfortunately, some of these have deteriorated or have been removed over the years, through redevelopment of sites and/or disease of the trees.

Concerns

- 1) general impairment of the residential appearance and environment of the Transitional Area.
- 2) intrusion of off-street parking in front yards.
- 3) lack of public amenity and open space appropriate to a residential area.
- 4) underutilization of education and recreation grounds within the Transitional Area, due to the changing use of the educational facilities.

Opportunities

- 1) street trees which, in spite of some deterioration, are an outstanding resource of the area.
- 2) the potential of Central Collegiate and Strathcona School buildings to be converted to mix-use or cultural and community facilities.
- 3) the availability of some parking lots for redevelopment as neighborhood park spaces.

Objectives

- 1) to provide open space within the Transitional Area necessary to allow for a full range of neighborhood-oriented recreational and social activities.
- 2) to encourage the provision of private yards, the character of which should support and enhance the residential use and character of the Area.
- 3) to enhance the unique character of the Transitional Area, including its open space, landscape, and street trees, through the development of landscape proposals which complement an improved pedestrian walkway system through the Area.
- 4) to otherwise unify and strengthen the visual identity of the Transitional Area.

4.3 CIRCULATION AND PARKING

The growth in downtown office and retail space, and conversion of single family housing to retail/office services over the years has created a significant demand for additional parking spaces in the Transitional Area.

In general terms, the high demand for parking in the area has resulted in an increase in surface parking lots.

Concerns

- 1) incompatibility of existing distribution and volume of traffic within the Area.
- 2) traffic noise and congestion.
- 3) inappropriately high levels of on-street and surface lot parking.
- 4) threat to pedestrian safety from vehicular traffic.
- 5) lack of high quality, well-maintained, pedestrian walkways and amenities.

Opportunities

- 1) tree-lined streets of single family residential buildings conducive to a pleasant pedestrian environment.
- 2) creation of distinctive pedestrian linkage between downtown and Wascana Park, which would complement and enhance the Area.
- 3) a well concealed parking facility which would enhance the character of the Area.

Three specific aspects of circulation and parking in the Transitional Area need to be addressed:

- a) the identification of sources and locations of parking demand.
- b) the volume and distribution of vehicular traffic.

- c) the development of pedestrian requirements for sidewalk improvements, including protection from hazardous conditions, eg. icy walkways, vehicular traffic, etc.

Objectives

- 1) to integrate within the pedestrian walkway system of the Area a pedestrian linkage between the downtown central business district and Wascana Centre which will complement and enhance the unique character of the Area, including its streetscapes, and heritage buildings and open spaces.
- 2) to provide an environment in the Transitional Area conducive to safe and pleasant pedestrian circulation by introducing appropriate lighting, vehicular buffer zones and brick paved sidewalks to differentiate the pedestrian zone from the vehicular zone.
- 3) regulate parking in the Area, especially parking related to non-residential uses, in order to reduce areas exclusively dedicated to the vehicle.
- 4) accomodate only that level of vehicular traffic in the Transitional Area which is compatible with residential land use.

4.4 NEIGHBORHOOD PUBLIC AND PRIVATE ENVIRONMENTS

Due to the lack of open space in the Transitional Area, a landscape of high quality is important. The close proximity of a variety of uses and building forms may preclude the provision of typical grassed yard space. Moreover, such a landscape expression may not meet the requirements for open space of various types of households in the Transitional Area.

Concerns

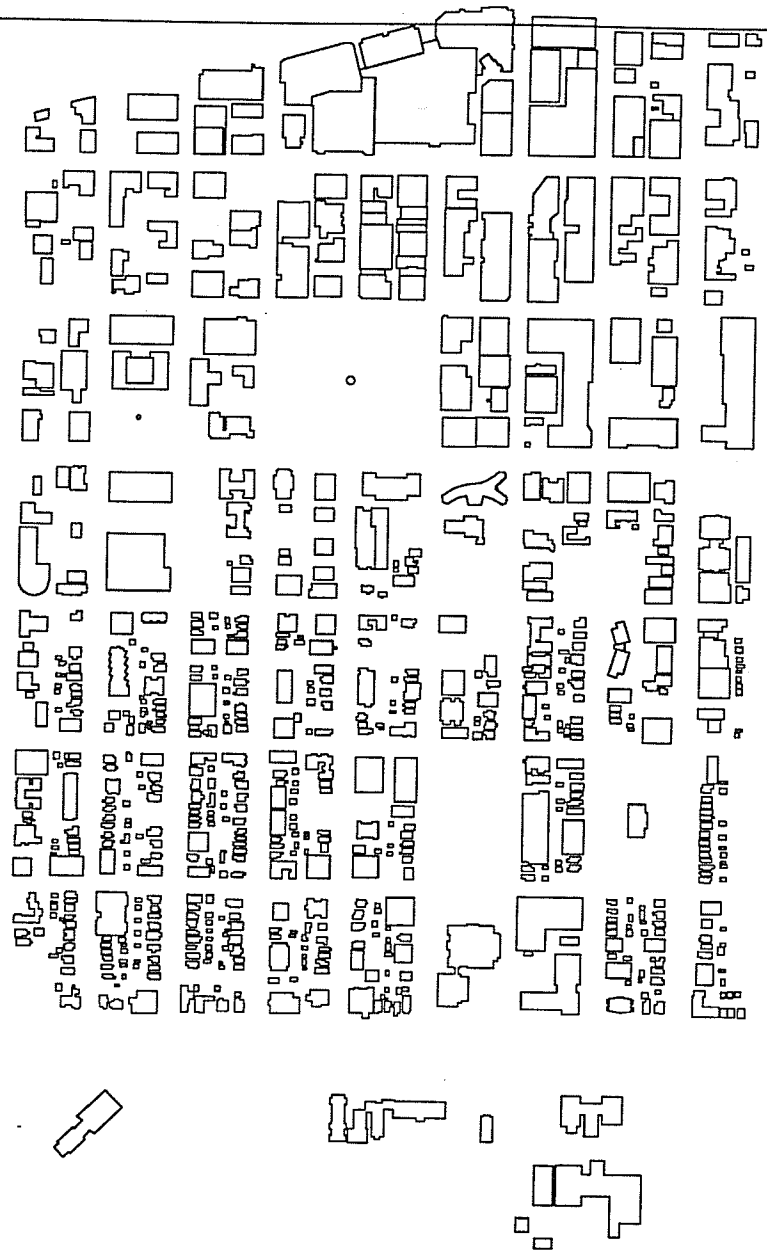
- 1) lack of attention to private yards.
- 2) voids in residential blocks, either neglected or paved for parking.

Opportunities

- 1) appropriately sized front yards for individual landscape development.
- 2) residential infilling of voids in the residential blocks, or development as parkettes.

Objective

- 1) new developments should include open space for private and public enjoyment, thus contributing to the overall streetscape and visual amenity of the Area.



chapter

5



5.0 CONCEPTUAL STUDY

5.1 GENERAL CONCEPT STATEMENT

Several alternative new pedestrian routes which would connect Wascana Park to the City centre were revealed from the land use analysis and other site conditions in the Transitional Area. The alternative chosen for development was seen to be a simple but effective solution which convey effectively the idea of connection between the north-south and east-west neighborhoods.

This design proposal utilizes the concept of neighborhood-to-neighborhood linkage. The Transitional Area neighborhood defined by Victoria and College Avenues, and Albert and Broad Streets, is the area that provides both north-south and east-west linkage.

The Conceptual Masterplan (Fig. 12) shows how the connection is achieved. The building elements surrounding the neighborhood form a "wall" to enclose the Transitional Area, thus defining the neighborhood. It is proposed that the lots that are vacant be planted with bosques of trees to form continuous "walls". These bosques are to consist of a maximum of two rows of trees, with an understorey of shrubs to maintain the consistency of this "wall". This would visually reduce the impact of parking lots or parkettes, and outdoor activity areas which may be related to the functions of the adjacent buildings. The only parts of these "walls" that will not be planted are at existing streets. These streets are subdivided as the perforations in the "walls", the connections to the other neighborhoods in the City. South of this neighborhood is the University of Regina campus and Wascana Park. Along this edge is a strip of lawn area, a buffer zone which acts as a "foyer" to the park from the north.

The neighborhood-to-neighborhood link is further enhanced by incorporating Leon Krier's "Cities within a City" concept. This section of Regina conforms with what Leon Krier describes as a pedestrian oriented city, in which services and work places are easily accessible with the minimal usage of the vehicle. From the existing land use patterns, it is evident that the Transitional Area is composed of a range of services and activities which are essential components of any city; governmental, commercial/retail, offices, residential, recreational, and educational facilities. Most of these services are at the same concentration throughout the Transitional Area and are zoned in one particular area is the case as in any typical North American city. The area of this neighborhood is approximately one kilometer square, which is a reasonably comfortable walking distance, making the Area a potential prototype for the Krier model. This is also ideal for the residents within the Area, as they can walk to their places of work in the neighborhood. The adequacy of the housing stock to accommodate most of the local working residents in the Area must be investigated further, but this is not within the scope of this study.

Outside this neighborhood are axial components which enhance the north-south link; the Legislative axis on Smith Street, terminating at the intersection of Smith and Victoria to the north and opening up in the south to Wascana Park, and the Cenotaph axis on Cornwall Street, with the Cenotaph in Victoria Park in the north and Darke Hall in the University of Regina in the south. These conceptual components will be further elaborated in chapter 5.

There are also three major foci or destination points within the neighborhood, which provide a variety of opportunities for a more interesting pedestrian oriented circulation link through and beyond the Transitional Area. They are the Historic Precinct

(connected directly to the Smith Street axis), the Central Collegiate Precinct (a shaft of green space which connects with Wascana Park), and Strathcona School Precinct (an active green space which opens up to the Area to the east). At the north shore of Wascana Lake, where the Central Collegiate "shaft" intersects with the Smith Street "spread", an amphitheater-marina has been proposed to further enhance the tie of the Transitional Area to Wascana Park. These will be elaborated further in the following section.

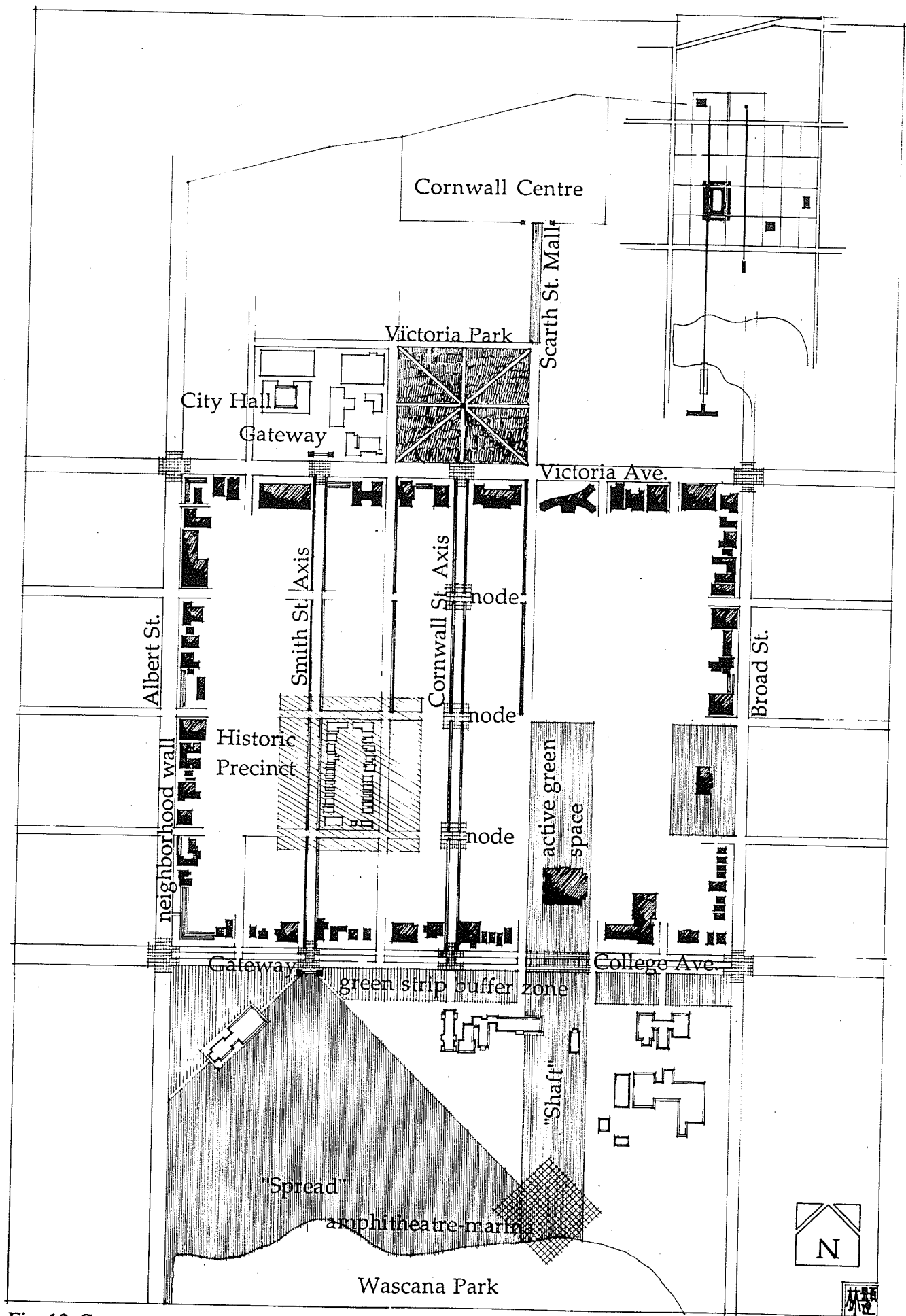


Fig. 12 Conceptual Masterplan.

5.2 DESIGN CONCEPTS

This section outlines the basis for the design choices, and follows with explanations of the design concepts and resulting design solutions for the neighborhood thus providing the general design structure for the Area, including:

1) AxialConnections

Central Axis - Axial connection between Darke Hall of University of Regina/Wascana Centre and the Cenotaph in Victoria Park along Cornwall Street.

Government Axis - Legislative Building axis along Smith Street to the gateway at the intersection of Smith Street and Victoria Avenue.

2) Historic Revitalization

Restoration of the fabric of the proposed **historic block**.

The existing converted blocks of single family housing.

3) Neighborhood Parks

Central Collegiate and grounds.

Conversion of **Strathcona School** grounds to an active play area.

4) The Neighborhood "Wall"

The streetscape encompassing the Transitional Area as an identifiable component, which allows interaction with adjacent neighborhoods.

5.2.1 AXIAL CONNECTIONS

Central Axis (Fig. 13) - design criteria

This choice was made on the basis of the physical axial connection between the Cenotaph in Victoria Park and Darke Hall at the University of Regina campus, as depicted in the existing site plan. These elements provide a strong north-south connection along Cornwall Street through the Transitional Area, thus contributing to the linking of Wascana and Victoria Parks. This provided a conceptual connection for a pedestrian route developed to enhance the already existing concrete sidewalk. This acknowledged the above mentioned elements which originally created this axis. This offers an opportunity to introduce a formal element to this neighborhood, providing a "spine" which can visually and functionally bring the area together.

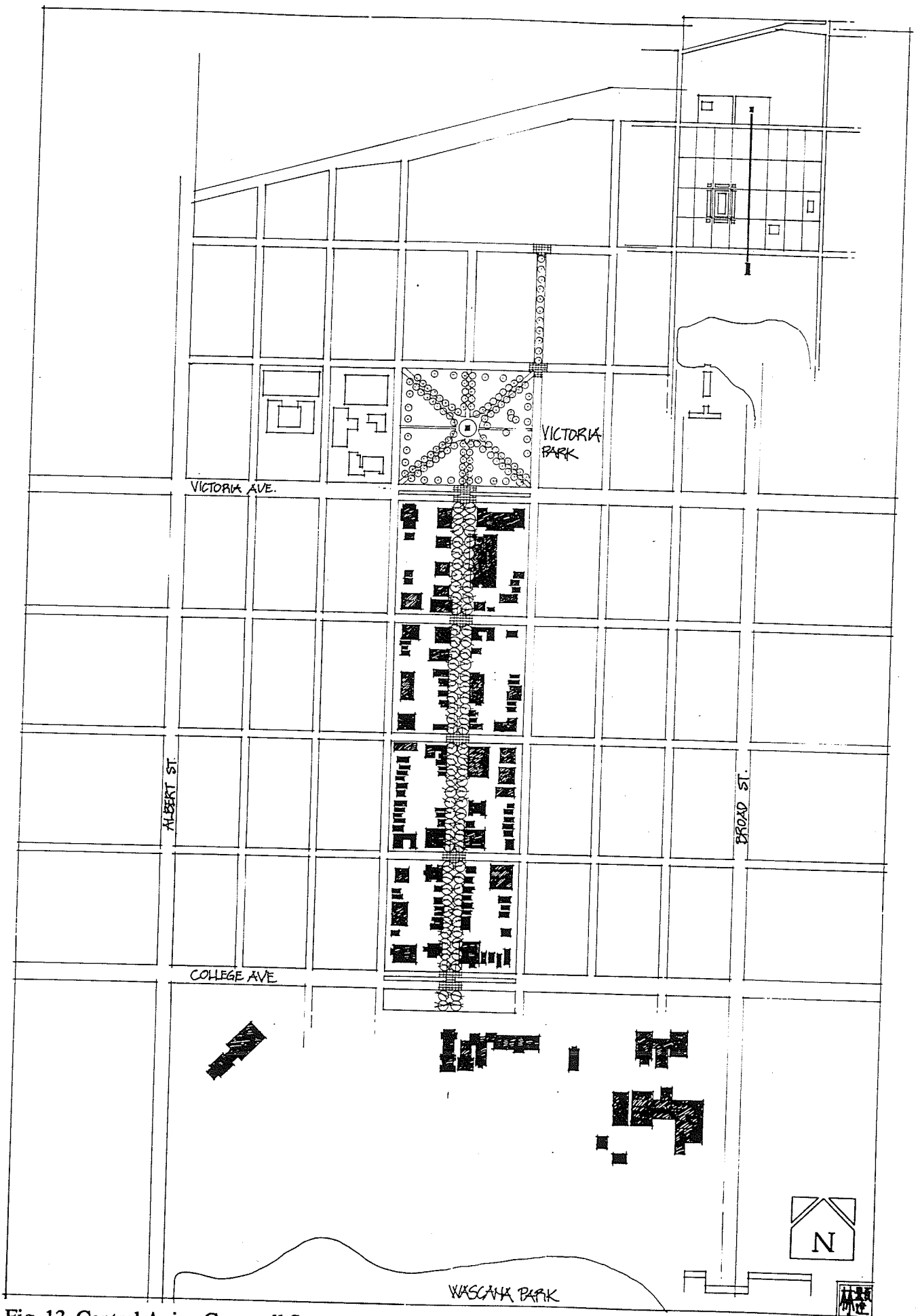


Fig. 13 Central Axis - Cornwall Street.

Cornwall Street (Fig. 14) - concept

This creates an axial connection between Darke Hall in the University of Regina/Wascana Park precinct and the Cenotaph in Victoria Park.

This is an important linking element, as it strengthens the north-south connection; one of the objectives of the study. Unlike its counterparts, Albert and Broad Streets, Cornwall Street terminates at College Avenue to the south and Victoria Avenue to the north. It is proposed that the quality of this street be enhanced to provide a ceremonial identity because of its axial quality. However, it should be pedestrian in character, with the introduction of nodes/parkettes where the streets intersect the avenues, thus encouraging increased pedestrian activity. This begins to develop in consistency with Mawson's concept of a "string of parks", connecting Victoria and Wascana Parks.

The Cenotaph symbolises the **past** and the war for the freedom of Canada, and Darke Hall as part of the University of Regina campus, which symbolizes a progressive education system for the **future**. This axial quality enhances the history that this neighborhood experienced during the city's growth and evolution. This is the main "spine" which ties the three neighborhoods; the City centre, the Transitional Area and Wascana Park.

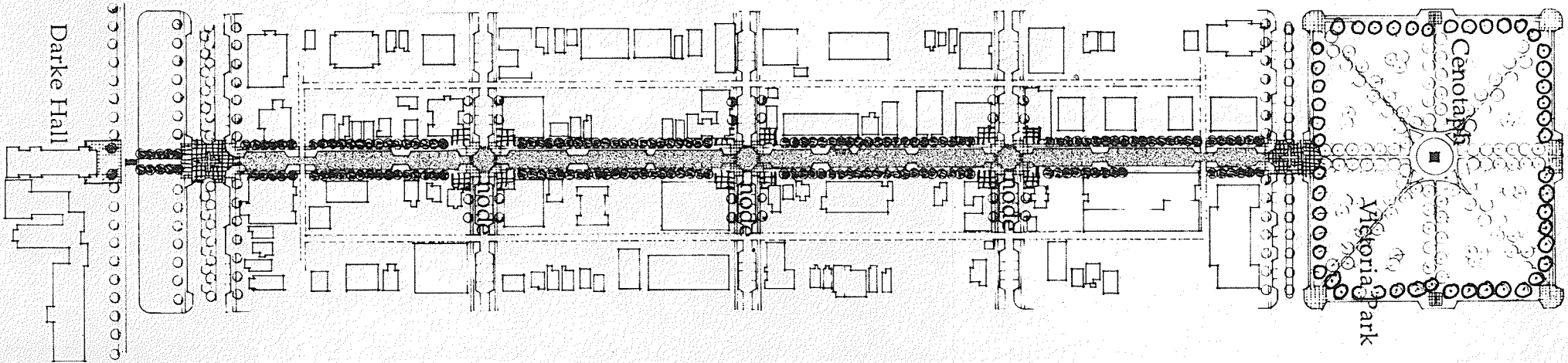
In contrast to its present deteriorated condition, Cornwall Street will be framed by two rows of trees and symmetrically designed to enhance its axial quality. These trees are planted at 20 feet centres so that once mature, they will form a strong canopy framing the axial vista. The dense branching patterns will create a galleria-like canopy over the street in the summer, while still maintaining a strong structural form in the winter. This would seem to emphasize the axis for the vehicle, but if the trees are planted on the

easement between the property limit and the sidewalk, the pedestrians will also be able to perceive this spatial quality.

It is intended that parallel parking on both sides of the street be interrupted with lawn areas, reducing the visual impact of the cars as shown in Figure 14. These lawn areas occur directly opposite each other, thus allowing for safe and convenient mid-block pedestrian crossings. This proposal limits the allowance for transient street parking, hence displacing the over-flow of vehicles to surface parking lots already existing within and outside the neighborhood.

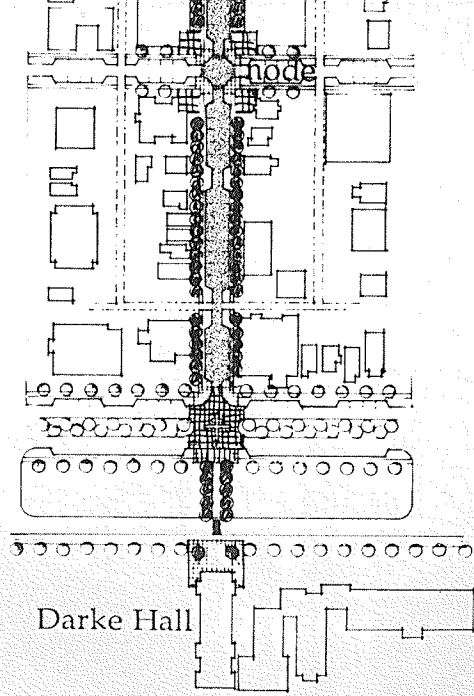
It is proposed that all the intersection points along Cornwall Street with the Avenues be "punctuated" with focal points or activity nodes, in the form of pocket parks. It is envisioned that these areas be converted to sheltered pedestrian stopping/resting areas, and in some instances, as activity generating plazas. These plazas are located adjacent to commercial/retail or office buildings. Commercial buildings will be enhanced with outdoor cafes or markets, and office buildings will have sculpture gardens or fountain plaza and seating. The framework of these nodes has been designed, and the functions to be filled by the existing or programmed activities of the specific areas are addressed in this study. Sketches of this layout is depicted in Figures 26 and 27. The sketches illustrate a lockstone paved area with tree wells and street furniture, such as pole or bollard lighting, benches, and fountains or sculptures, depending on the image each individual block chooses to present. These particular street corners are selected not only as north-south connectors, but also to attract activities east-west along the avenues.

This series of pocket parks helps to connect Wascana and Victoria Parks, realizing Mawson's description of '.... *the park system as a unifying chain designed to convert the city into an artistic whole by binding all parks.* '



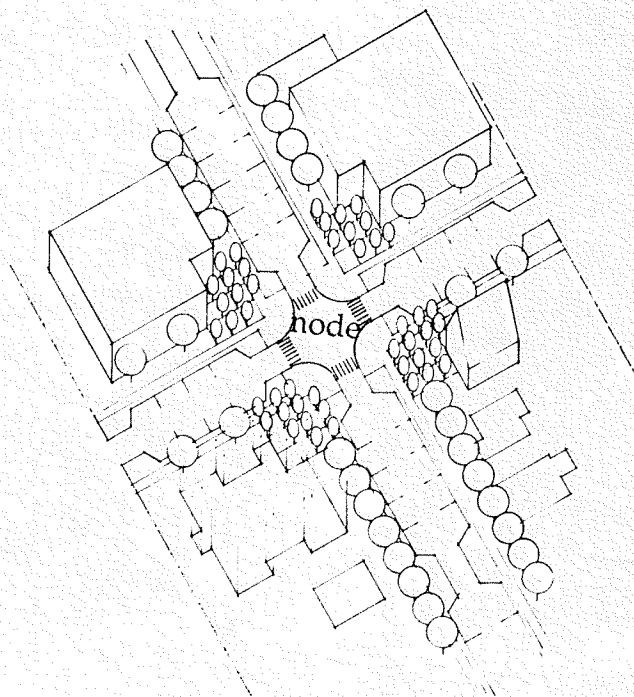
W A S C A N A P A R K





WASCANA PARK

PLAN



AXONOMETRIC

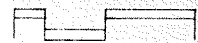


Fig. 14 Cornwall Street Axis - concept

Government Axis (Fig. 15) - design criteria

This axis is a historical reference to the original Mawson plan (Fig. 2), but, the proposal establishes only a portion of the formal axis associated with Mawson's proposal. While there is now no terminus to the north of Smith Street, the relationship of the Legislative Building and Smith Street to City Hall does imply a physical axis. This Legislative Axis recognizes the importance of the provincial seat of government in the capital City of Regina, with the southern axis terminating at the formal entrance of the Legislative Building. This axial quality can be perceived as both symbolic and ceremonial.

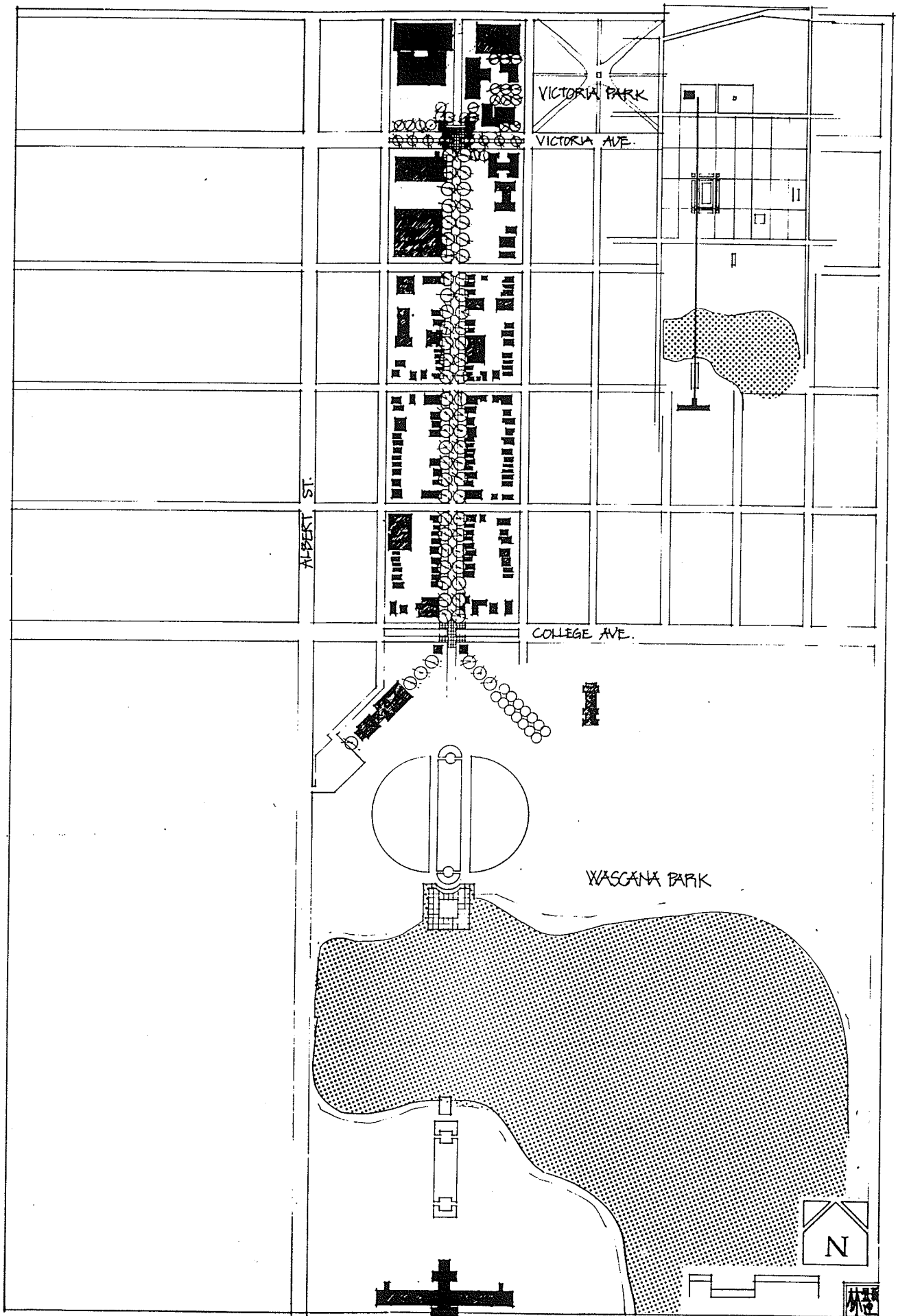


Fig. 15 Government Axis - Smith Street.

Smith Street (Fig. 16) - concept

This concept re-establishes the axial design originally depicted in the Mawson plan (Fig. 2), which shows the Legislative Building terminating the southern axis at what appears to be a railway building terminating the northern axis. Just before the north terminus is the quarter block plan as shown in the Mawson plan.

This quarter block plan is now different in layout. The blocks are amalgamated into two regular city blocks and they hold the; City Hall, the provincial office building, the city library, Knox Church, and the Masonic Temple. The southern terminus remains as it was originally designed, the location of the Legislature Building.

The northern terminus originally planned by Mawson is now the Regina Cartage and Storage building, not a very significant focus. This could in future be replaced by a more prominent focal point or building to mark this terminus. The proposed north terminus is a gateway located at the intersection of Smith Street and Victoria Avenue. This symbolically provides a framework for the north-south connection.

The southern terminus at Smith Street begins with a gateway leading to a circular ceremonial driveway and a marina that is on axis with the existing boat dock across Wascana Lake. This ceremonial driveway is a contemporary reinterpretation of the Mawson proposal for a Civic Centre. The middle strip of this circle should have annual planting beds similar to the formal planting beds in front of the Legislative Building. The "spread" mentioned in the general concept section begins from the gateway, and opens towards the south, leading to the museum and the proposed amphitheater-marina on the north shore of Wascana Lake (Figs. 19 and 20). This element is composed of two formal rows of trees radiating from the intersection of Smith and College Streets to

the south, towards Wascana Lake, thus forming a strong gesture between the City (order) and the park (nature). Schematically, this gesture opens a vista towards the Legislative grounds or, in reverse, concentrates on Smith Street and drawing the parkland into the city.

This proposal also helps to direct activities to and from the Historic precinct discussed later in this chapter, in addition to its use as a thoroughfare. The Smith Street axis is framed by an avenue of trees to enhance the formality of this Government axis. This planting pattern also offers a protective micro environment at the street level, deflecting the harsh winter winds. This is accomplished by planting some medium height (20-25ft.) street trees, such as maples and ashes, at 15 feet centres. This will create a canopy effect above the pedestrian sidewalk area only, and not over the street as is the case on Cornwall Street. The trees selected for this street are chosen for their red autumn colour, should turn red thus distinguishing this axis from other parts of the neighborhood.

Smith Street is a one-way south-bound street, hence there is a strong movement from the commercial area to Wascana Park. Pedestrian movement, however, is bi-directional. Parking occurs on both sides of the street, which is visually broken at regular intervals by shrub and lawn intrusions. This is an attempt to break up the monotonous string of parked cars, hence de-emphasizing the vehicle, as previously described in the Cornwall Street proposal.

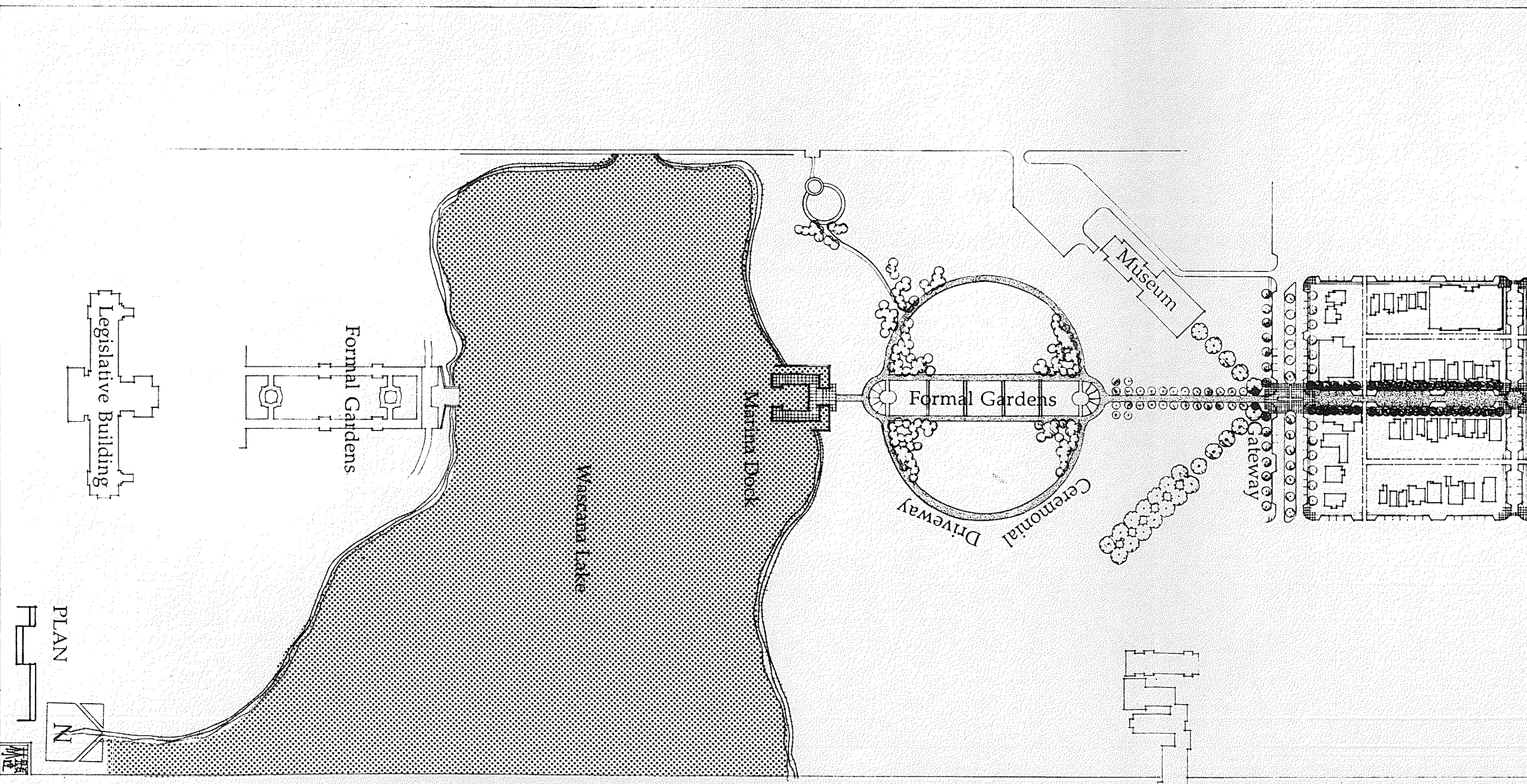
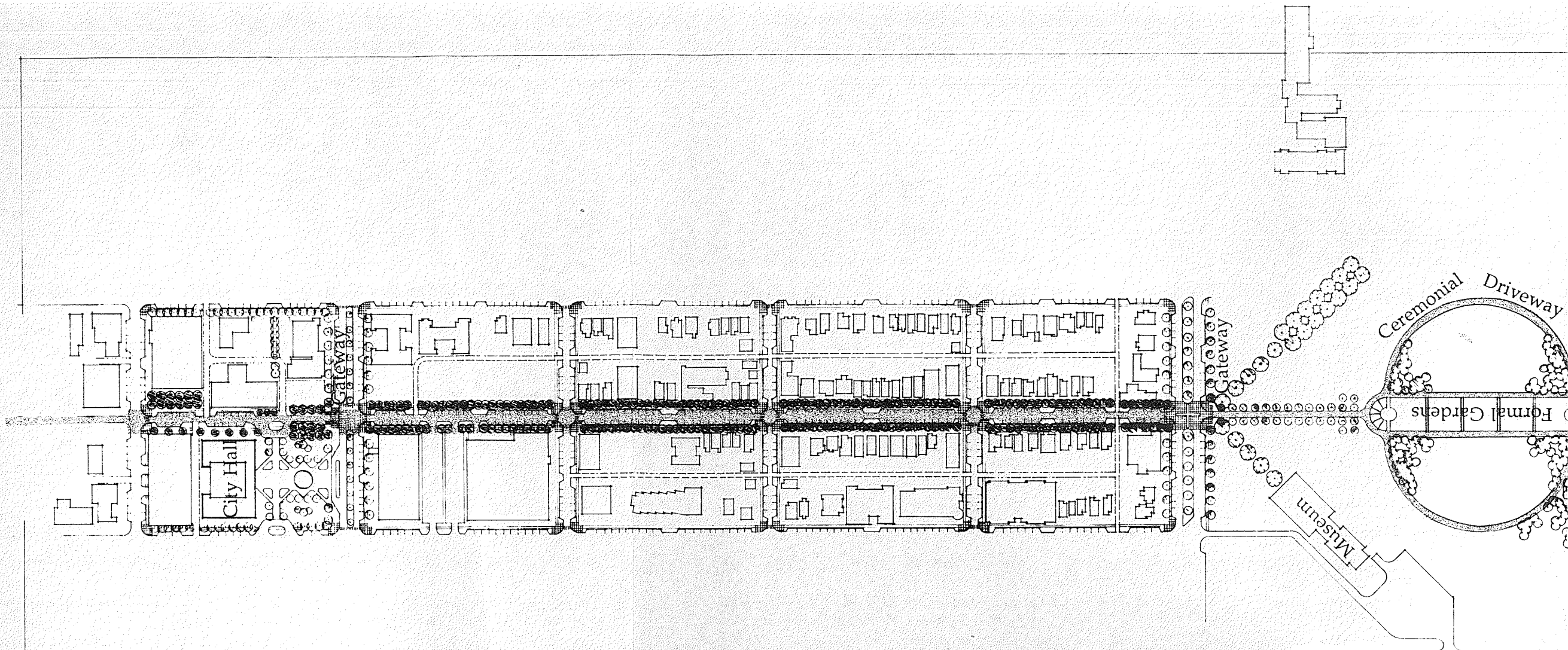


Fig. 16 Smith Street Axis - concept



5.2.2 HISTORIC REVITALIZATION

Historic Block (Fig. 17) - design criteria

The proposal for this area is developed to address the historic quality of the study area. This area was selected on the basis that most of the historic fabric still exists and it has the potential to be revitalized and preserved. This site was defined by analysing the land use patterns (compiled in the appendix section) which indicates the concentration of single family house-forms that are still intact in the Transitional Area.

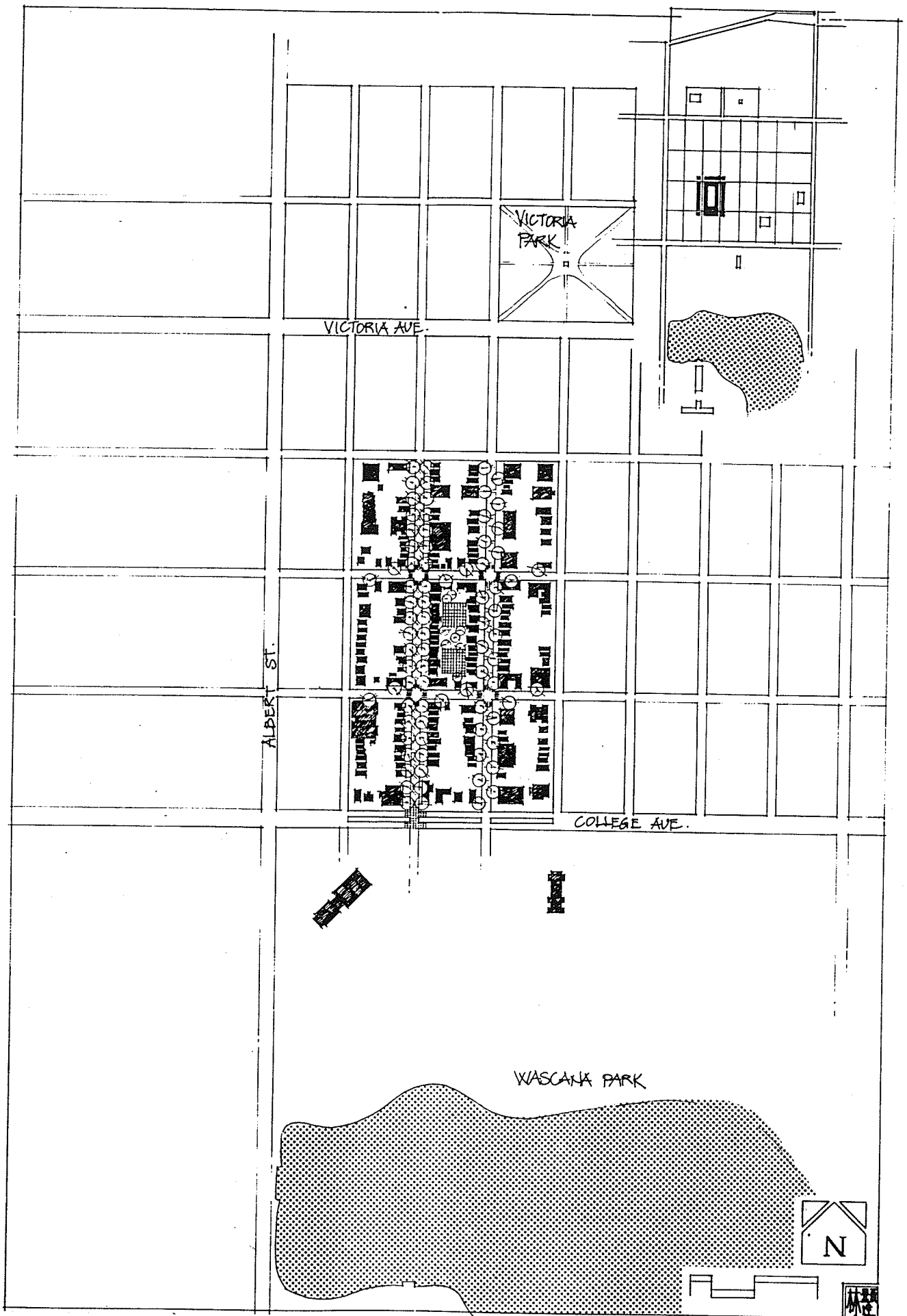


Fig. 17 Historic Block.

2200 Block (Fig. 18) - concept

Since this block contains historically designated houses, it is worthwhile that this block be restored to its historical condition but in a more contemporary sense. Restoring the historical typology of the building, at the same time, perform technical upgrades to facilitate modern functions such as restaurants, offices, and galleries. This restoration shall focus on locating each of these historic houses and researching into their background in terms of notable ownership, period-style, and by virtue of their individual architectural and heritage merit. Not forgetting their contribution to the surrounding streetscape which reinforce the residential character typified by the original buildings of the Transitional Area.

This restoration involves repairing the fabric of the 2200 block between Lorne and Smith, and 14th. and 15th. and bringing it back to period houses with period landscapes. As to the effect on the streetscape, the houses on the opposite sides of the streets should be treated with the utmost importance to create a "complete picture" of this historic neighborhood. The process of repairing shall involve infilling the empty lots with houses that complement the characteristics of the existing fabric to ensure a uniformity in the streetscape is developed. The existing building stocks that were built in a latter period (which do not belong to the required style; eg. apartments and flat roof buildings that do not have this historic quality) shall be replaced or renovated with historical typology to reflect the character of the neighborhood. These replacements shall reflect and complement the historic building types in the area (Fig. 5).

Contemporary means that these houses will not necessarily be residential dwellings but revenue generating elements which may be able to channel funds to maintain and preserve the external historical character of the block. This could be achieved through

neighborhood and government encouragement by use of special benefits and financial assistance. These commercial properties may be professional offices, specialty stores, restaurants, art galleries, and regional museums.

This block is complemented by the existing converted house forms located in the 2300 blocks just south of it. These blocks also possess similar characters and qualities as in this proposed study site.

This proposal is enhanced by the proposed Smith Street axis which provides a formal channel for the flow of people and activities through and into the Transitional Area. This proposed idea shall reflect the historical streetscape with the adaptation of avenues of trees, and treatment of the yard space directly adjacent to the city easement using wrought iron or picket fencing with hedgerows of flowering shrubs. The trees on Smith Street shall be as described previously, but the treatment of the streets parallel to Smith shall have a different planting pattern. The trees shall be planted at 25-30 feet on-centre to create a less enclosed effect as attempted on Smith Street. A different tree species shall also be used to differentiate the streets. While the historical fronts are superficially maintained, the backyards and alleyways could be enriched by developing into a courtyard for programmed activities and parking. Some of these activities may include a cafe, outdoor art space, and gardens, to complement the restaurants, galleries, and offices in the Area. These back areas should also be maintained as service and fire access through the neighborhood. The courtyards could house interpretive plaques to convey the history of the Area.

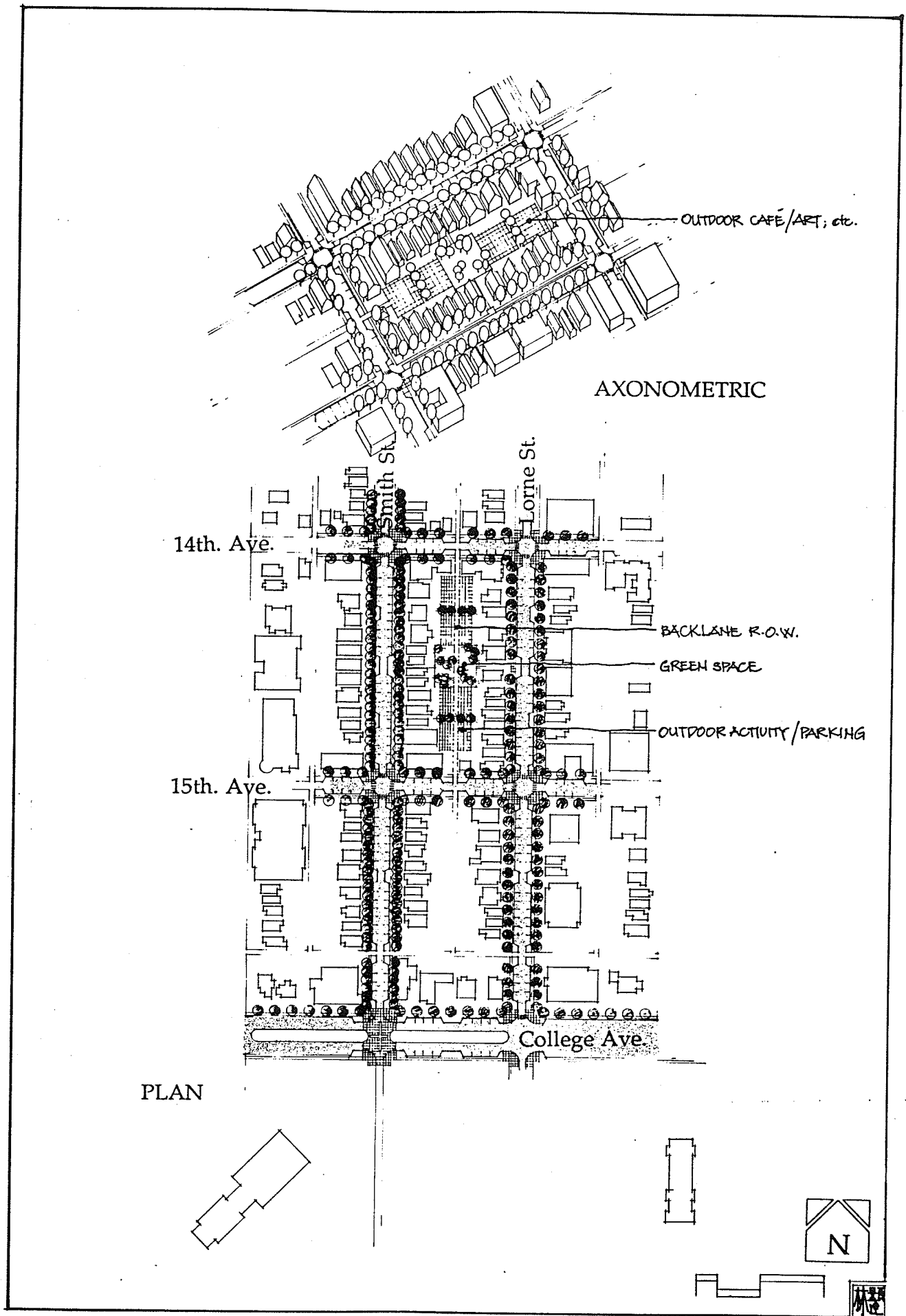


Fig. 18 2200 Block - concept

5.2.3 NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS

Central Collegiate Park (Fig. 19) - design criteria

The Central Collegiate is selected in terms of its historic quality for being one of the original educational facilities in the neighborhood. The two-block area addresses the need for a large neighborhood public open space. There is also potential to convert Central Collegiate into a neighborhood community centre and a mixed use complex.

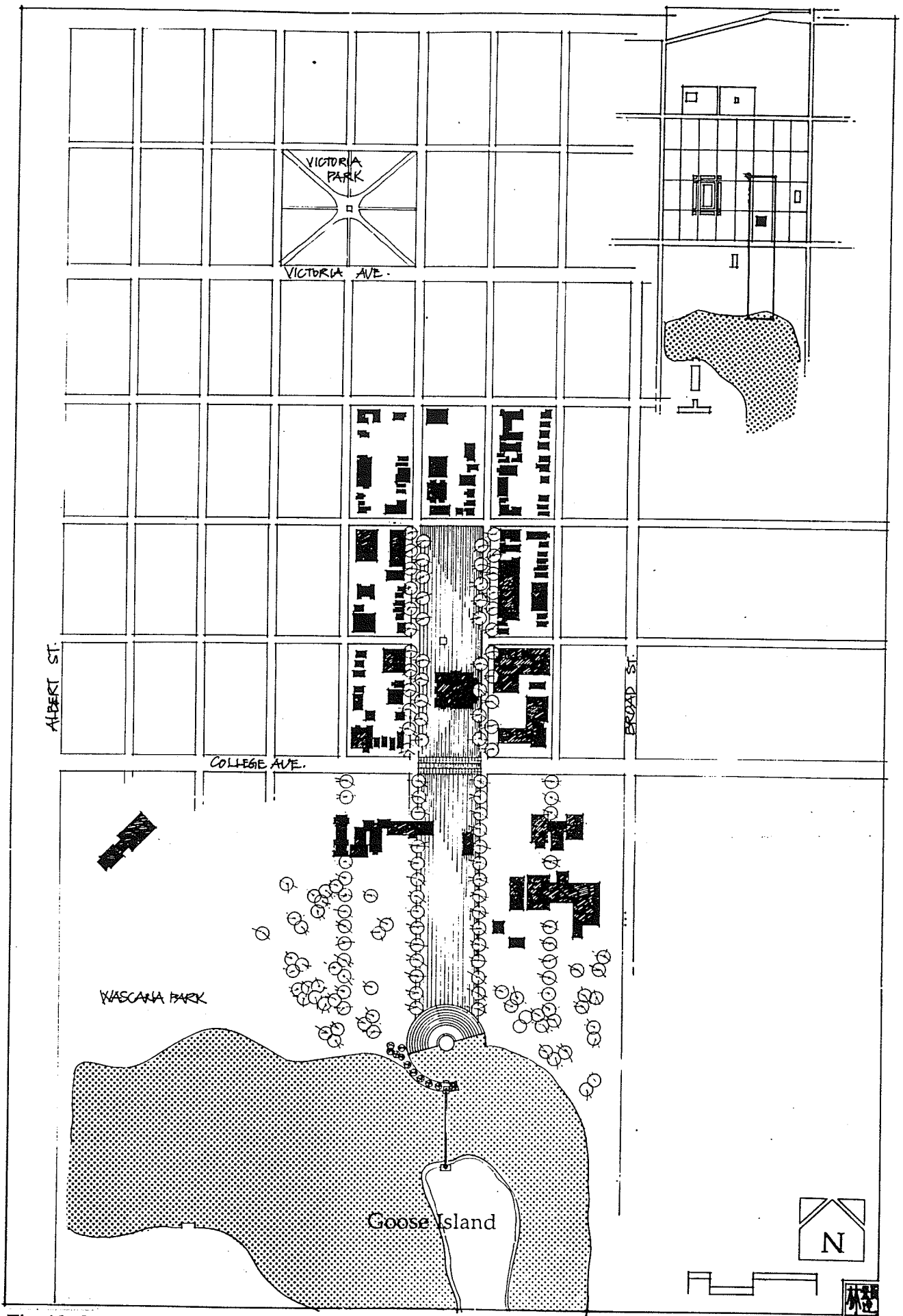


Fig. 19 Central Collegiate Park Concept.

Central Collegiate and Grounds (Fig. 20) - concept

The Central Collegiate building is designated as a priority heritage site by the Heritage Society of Regina. There is a potential for a variety of functions to be programmed for this building. These new functions will retain and preserve this heritage building's external features.

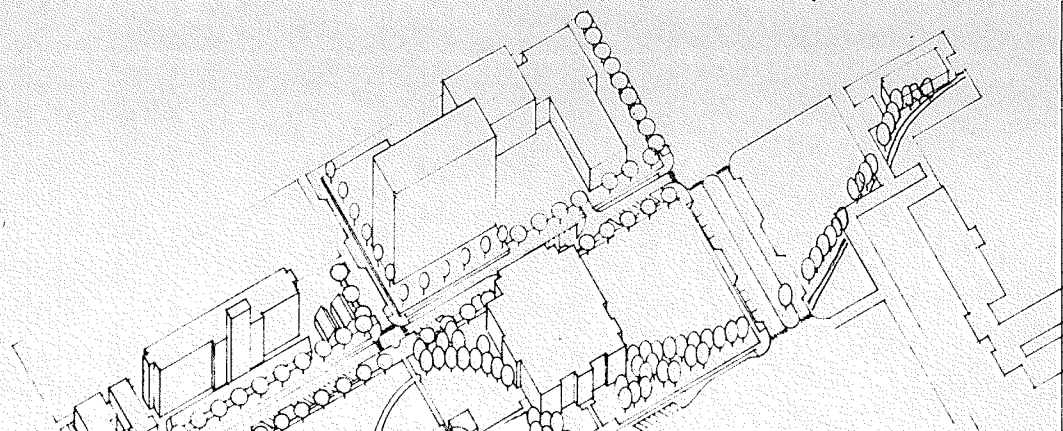
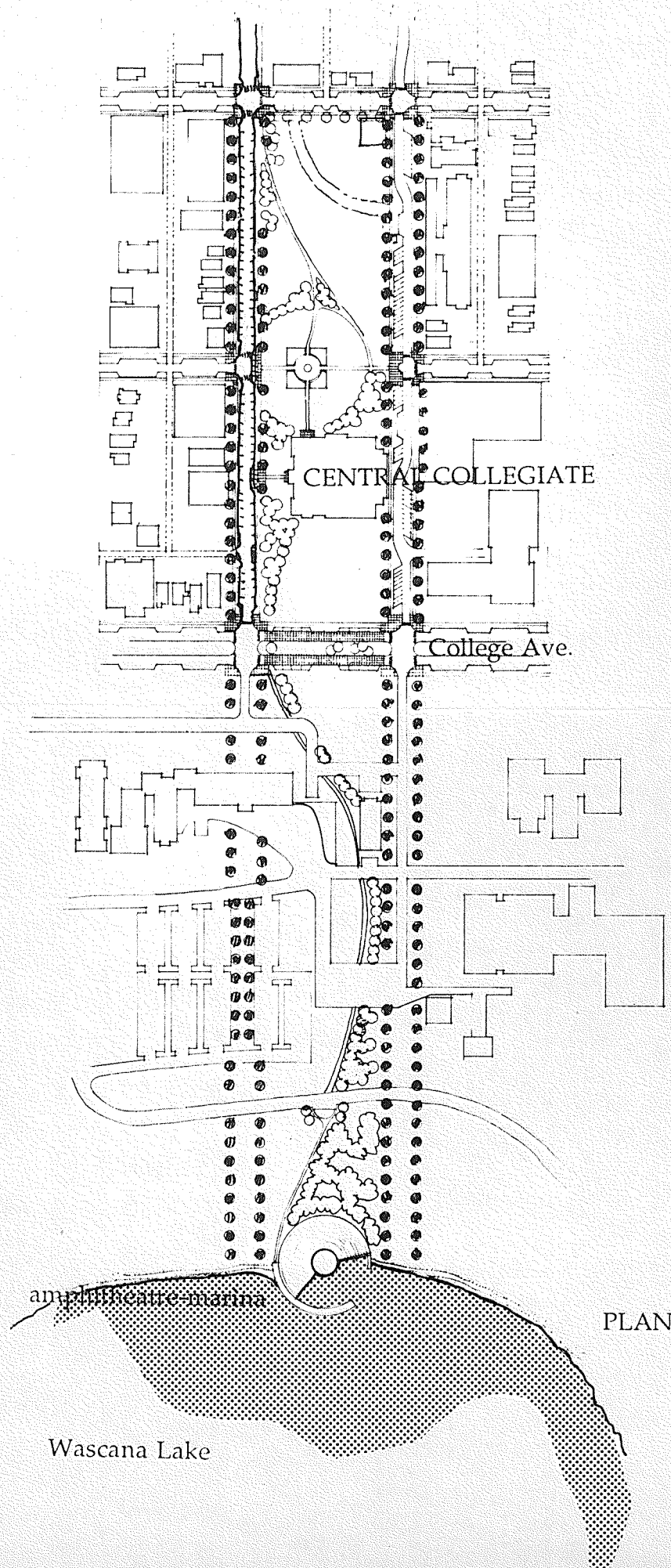
Some of the potential functions include converting part of the interior of Central Collegiate into a historical interpretive facility for this neighborhood (the Transition Area being part of the first 1883 plan of the City of Regina), a community centre, daycare, and possibly a restaurant or even a theatre of the arts to complement the University of Regina's Fine Arts Faculty. For a neighborhood of this unique quality, there is a need for a community facility, a place for the residents to congregate and hold community functions. With some interior renovations, this building will have the capacity to hold a fair size community gathering.

The portion of 15th. Avenue between Scarth and Hamilton streets will be closed off to connect Central Park to the Central Collegiate block to enhance the extension of parkland which extends from Wascana Park into the neighborhood. This park will integrate the Transitional Area with Wascana Park. This site will be the blending of the formal Victorian landscape and the picturesque landscape from Wascana Park. The same plant material as in Wascana Park will be used in this proposed extension to enhance this parkland integration. The portion of College Avenue adjacent to this section could not be closed off due to its function as a primary thoroughfare. Closing it off will involve considerable traffic studies and re-planning. This continuity can easily be achieved with the use of paving material and planting the boulevard with an identifiable tree specie.

As an added contrast to the rigid gridiron layout of the streets, the portions of Scarth and Hamilton street immediately adjacent to the Central Collegiate site is curved to mimic the flow of the Victorian landscape. This attempt is to help slow down vehicular traffic because once developed, this will be a fairly high pedestrian traffic area.

The gridiron layout of the city blocks is carried through into the picturesque landscape of Wascana Park by the use of regimented tree planting. And, from there, the grid blends into the free-flowing parkland of Wascana Park. The impact on the existing condition will be negligible compared to the strength of the resultant statement. This provides a setting for Central Collegiate in a park-like environment and at the same time, providing an urban open space/neighborhood park for the community with amenities like baseball, playground structures, and a picnic area.

The end of this intrusion will be punctuated with an amphitheater-marina on the north shore of Wascana Lake. This will function as an outdoor facility for fine arts and performance art, and will be a complementary structure to the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation Facility and University of Regina Fine Arts Faculty. From here, a foot bridge will connect across the lake onto Goose Island. This proposal strengthens the connection between the structured city grid layout and the natural park environment.



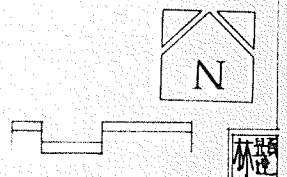
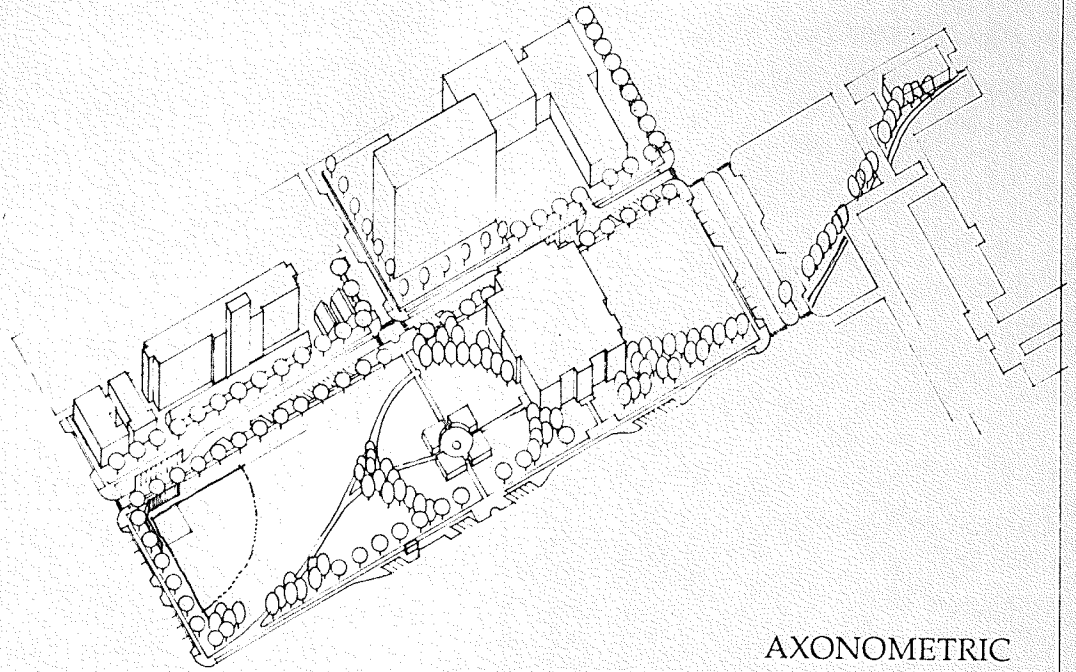
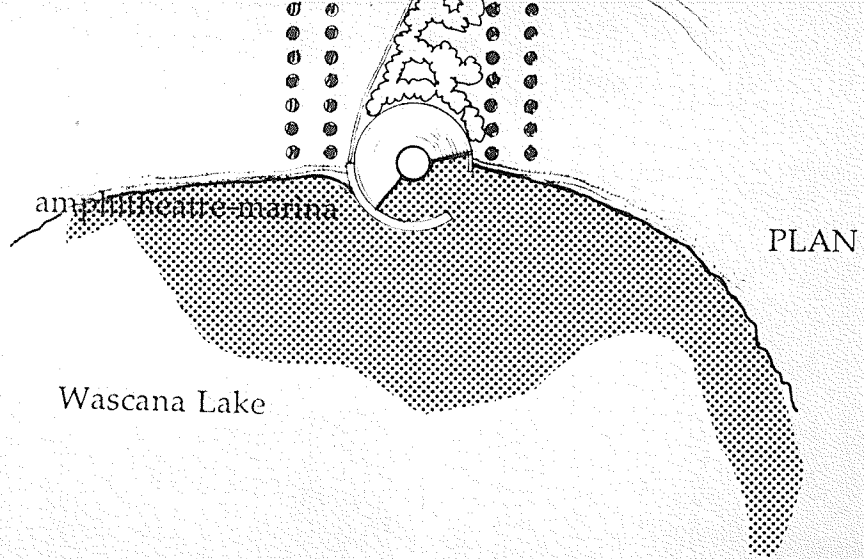


Fig. 20 Central Collegiate and Grounds - concept

Strathcona School Block (Fig. 21) - design criteria

The Strathcona School is also one of the original educational facilities in this neighborhood. Although it is no longer functioning as a school, the building has the potential to be treated for its historic qualities and the grounds developed into an active park area to serve the neighborhood and enhance the Central Collegiate grounds design.

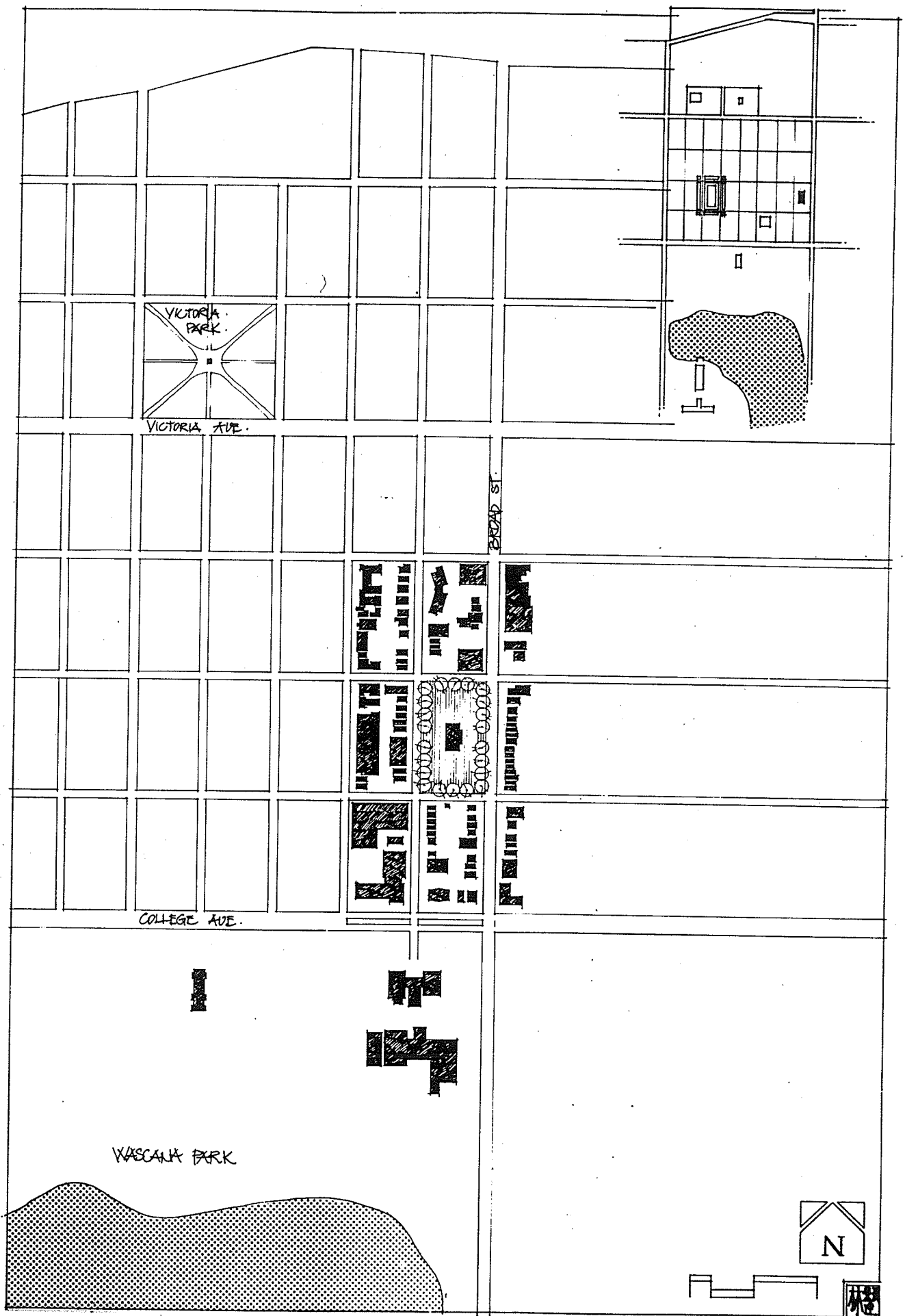


Fig. 21 Strathcona School Block

Strathcona School Grounds (Fig. 22) - concept

The existing building structure is presently being used by the Bosco Boys home. This is the only building in the entire city block area. A proposal for a designed landscape development will be appropriate to convert this block into a focus area which will be identifiable with the character portrayed by the Transitional Area as discussed in previous sections. This idea can be accomplished with the use of landscapes and streetscape methods proposed for the other zones in the Area. However, the outer boundaries along Broad Street will have to blend in to the "wall" concept depicted in the general concept statement. This proposed treatment will provide a standard framework for a more detailed programmed site specific activity which will help open up the Transitional Area to Broad Street and enhance the amenities already available in the neighborhood. This development will function as a gateway into the Transitional Area from the west side of the neighborhood.

The proposed trees will be planted at 25 feet centres around the block to enclose this active area to create an illusion of a park when observed from the adjacent streets. Within this enclosure, pockets of active play areas will be developed.

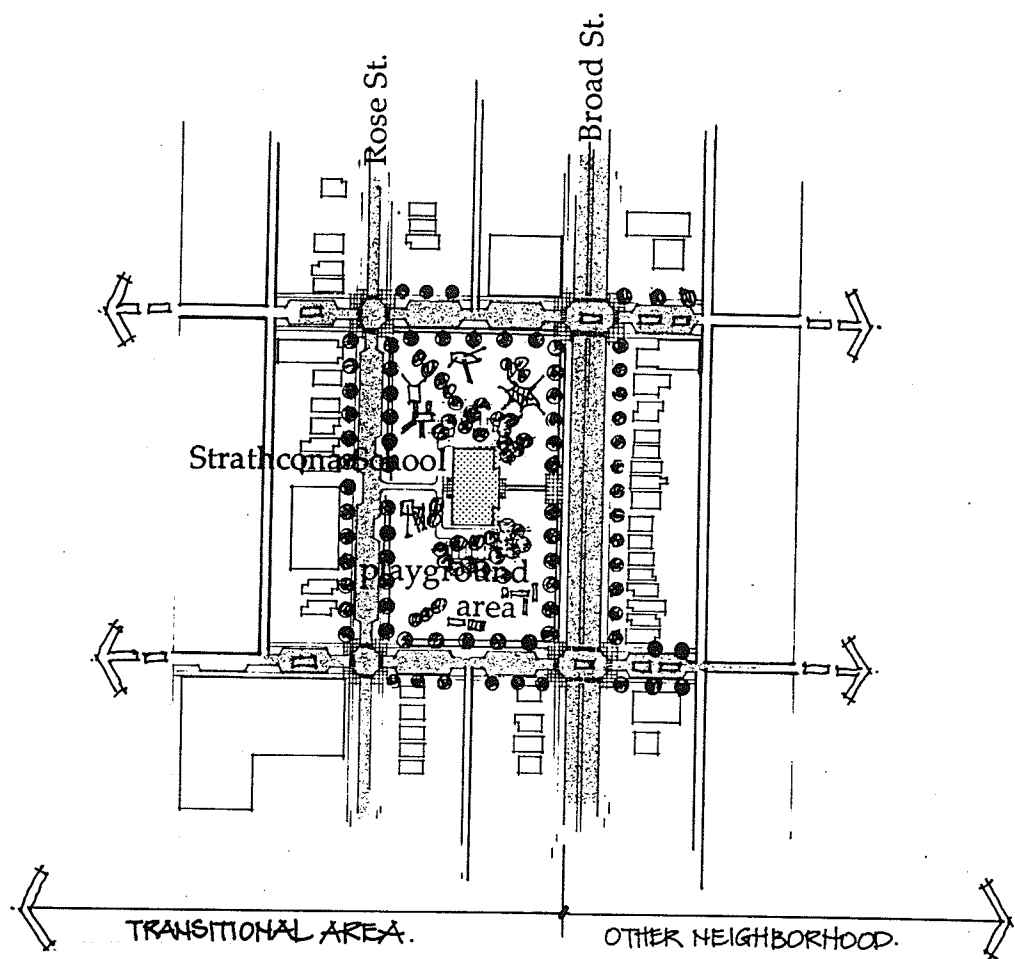


Fig. 22 Strathcona School Grounds - concept

5.3 PEDESTRIAN STREET SYSTEM

This section deals with the typical design elements which are essential for the complete animation of the framework of the Transitional Area and its surrounding edges as described in the concept development section of this proposal.

It is essential that an environmentally protected outdoor pedestrian circulation and activity areas be designed for these proposed routes. This controlled condition can be achieved with the introduction of lockstone paved pedestrian walkways, sheltered rest areas, telephone booths, interpretive plaques, pedestrian scale lighting, and pick-up/drop-off areas for both buses and cars are provided for in this proposed streetscape (Fig. 23). These elements enhance the design concepts and the street planting proposals discussed in section 5.2. An intensified street tree planting as well as private yard landscapes will create a fairly comfortable micro-climate in the pedestrian precinct in the winter as well as in the summer. This treatment will help develop a unique and uniform identity for the Transitional Area.

Figure 23 shows some standard treatments of on-street parallel parking layouts for the study area, indicating some possibilities of pedestrian and vehicular integration and safety. The upper section of the diagram describes a typical bus bay with an enclosed structure located on top of a lockstone paved area. This also provides outdoor sitting areas in the summer. This improved bus-pedestrian environment will help encourage more residents to use the City's public transit and not be dependent on their cars. Deductions from random interviews with the residents of the area indicates that the lack of use of the transit system stems from the infrequency of its services to the lack of bus shelters.

This improvement would alleviate some of the parking problems and also help reduce the number of parking lots in the downtown area.

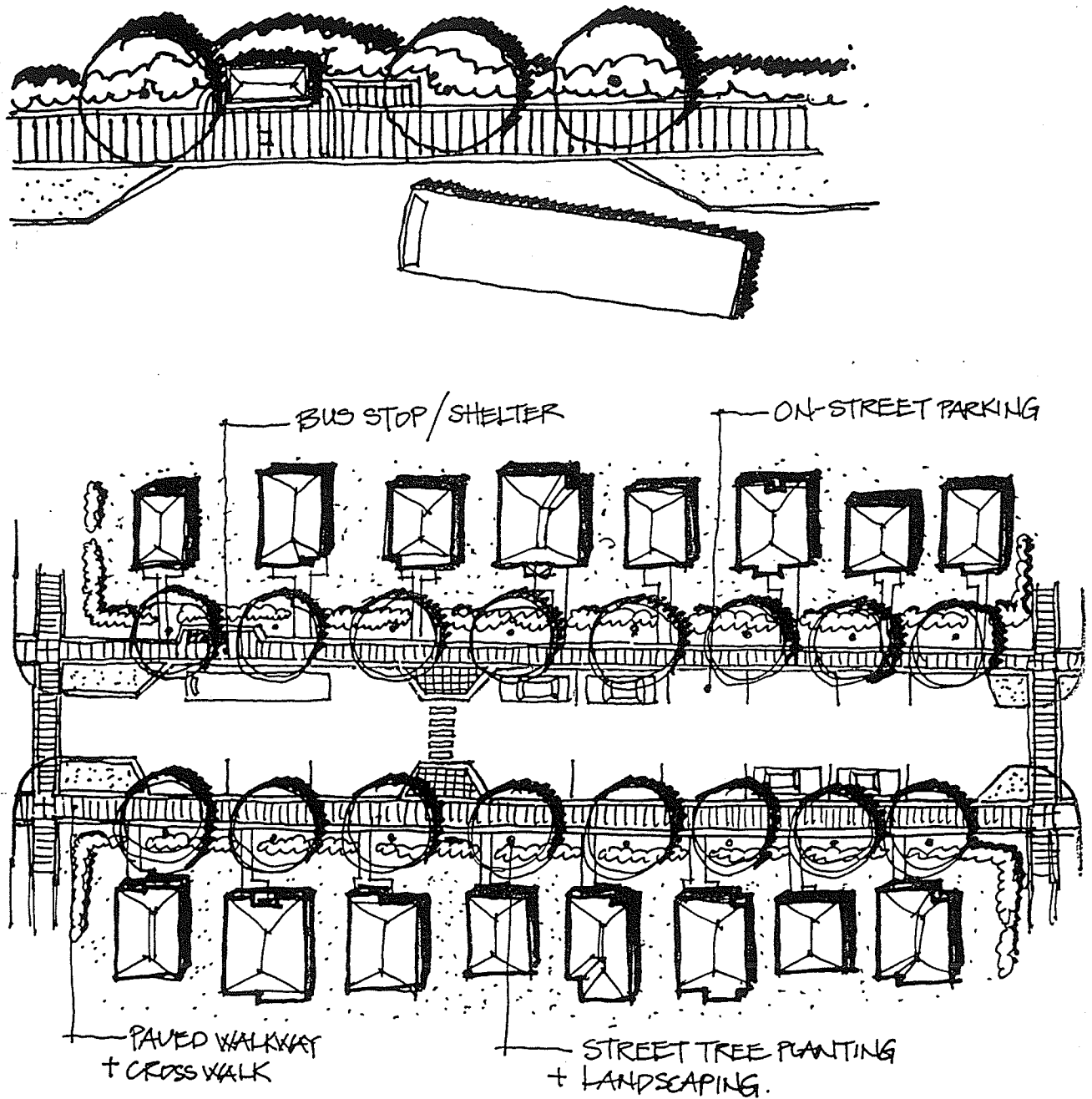


Fig. 23 Bus Stop and shelter, and On-street Parking.

Realistically, there must also be enough parking areas to accommodate the present demand and the influx of activities due to the introduction of additional programming mentioned previously. An extensive traffic study should be carried out independently to determine the feasibility of the parking requirement in the Area. A set of design guidelines should be developed to specify that these parking lots would be sensitive and responsive to the site in terms of control and invisibility of the parked cars so as not to visually impose on the historic character of the Area (Fig. 24). The sketch proposes how the parking lots can be enclosed in a ring of trees with low shrubs to conceal the cars. Maintenance of these lots may be addressed separately in another study.

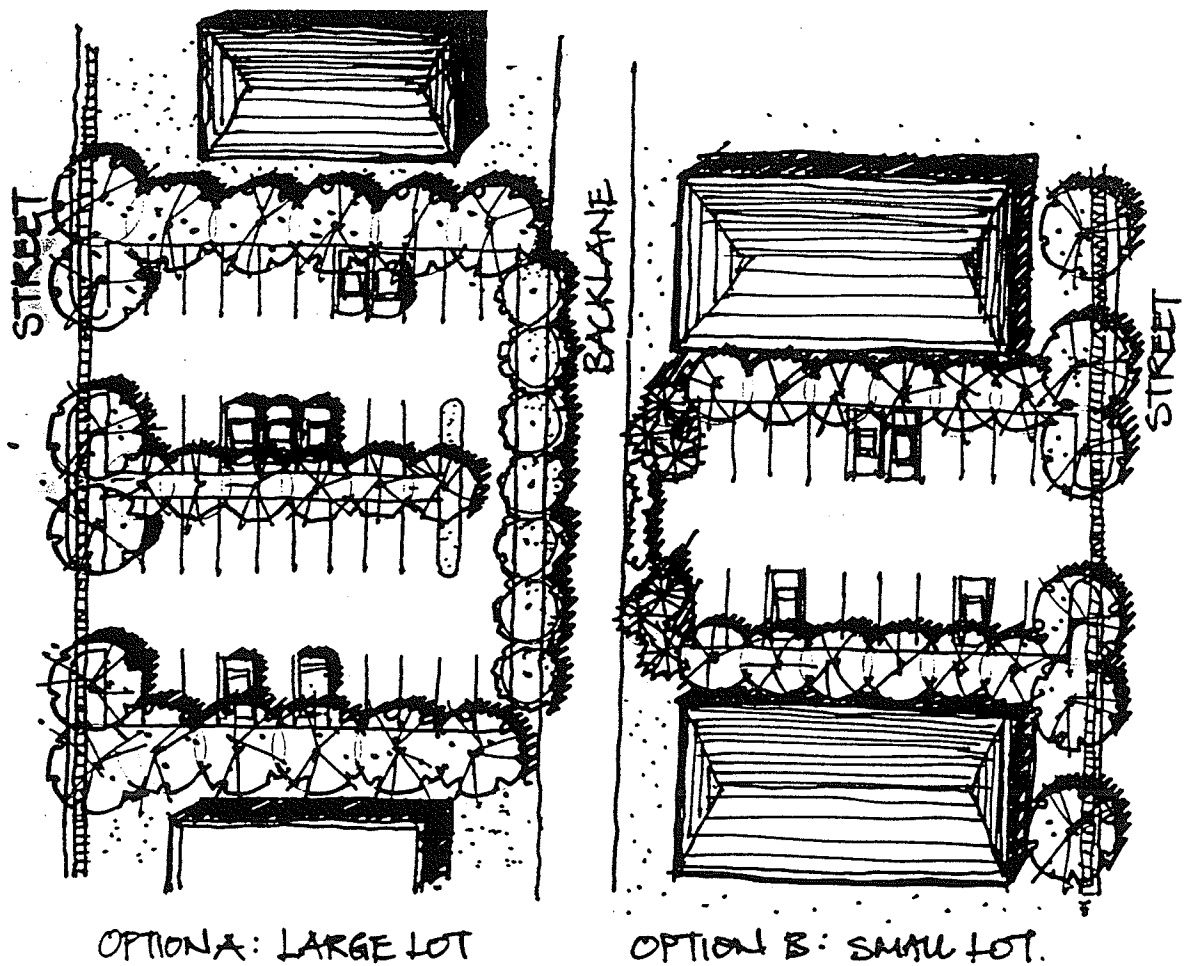


Fig. 24 Alternative Parking Lot Designs.

The pedestrian sidewalk zones will be furnished with benches, garbage receptacles, period street lights, and designed street signage (Fig. 25) that enhances the unique character of the area. All these elements accompanied by lockstone paved sidewalks will provide a very unique pedestrian experience which will strengthen this neighborhood's special identity (Fig. 26). The sketches suggest that the signage and other street furniture will depict a unique character for the Area. These authentic images will be replicated more accurately through indepth literature search and archival documentations. These are only recommendations of historical vernacular forms and styles to bring out the character of the early Regina streetscape.

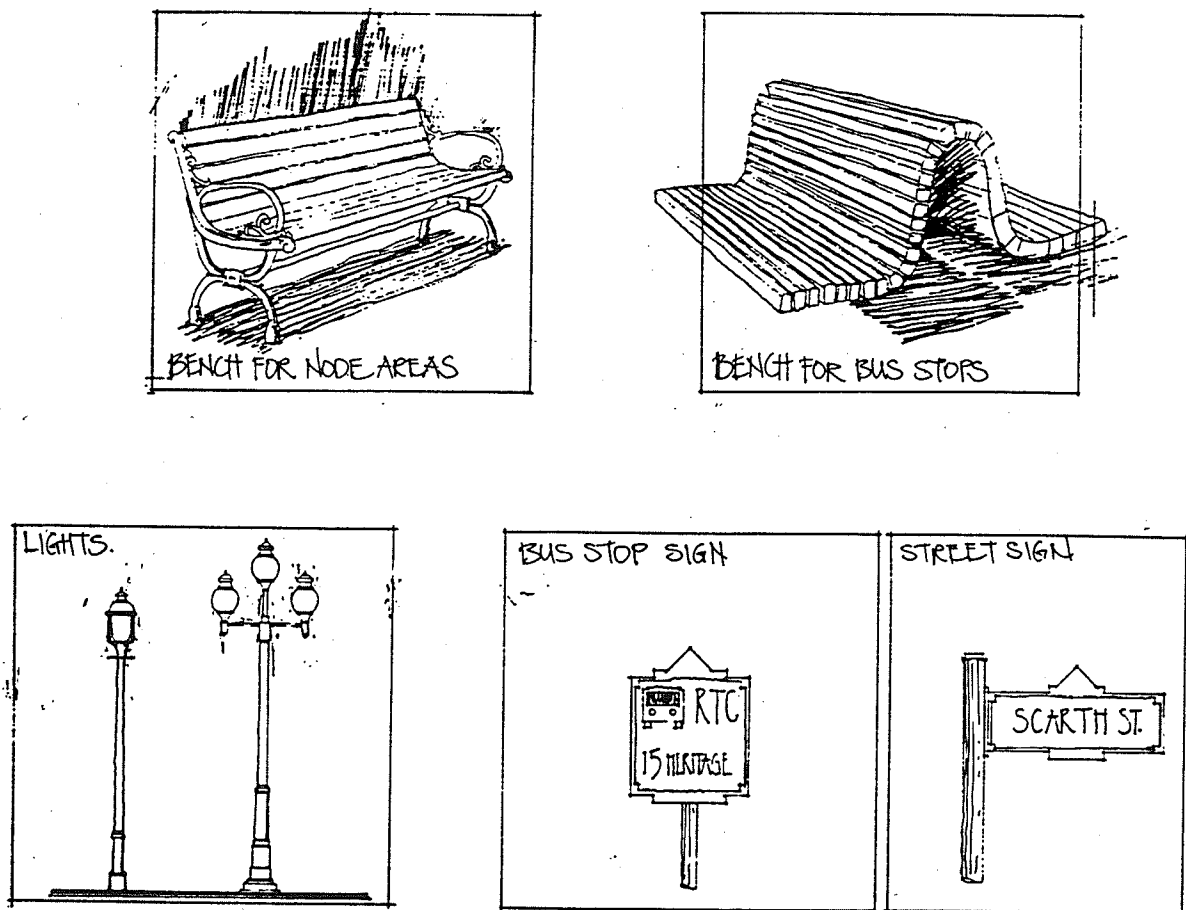


Fig. 25 Signage, lighting, benches.

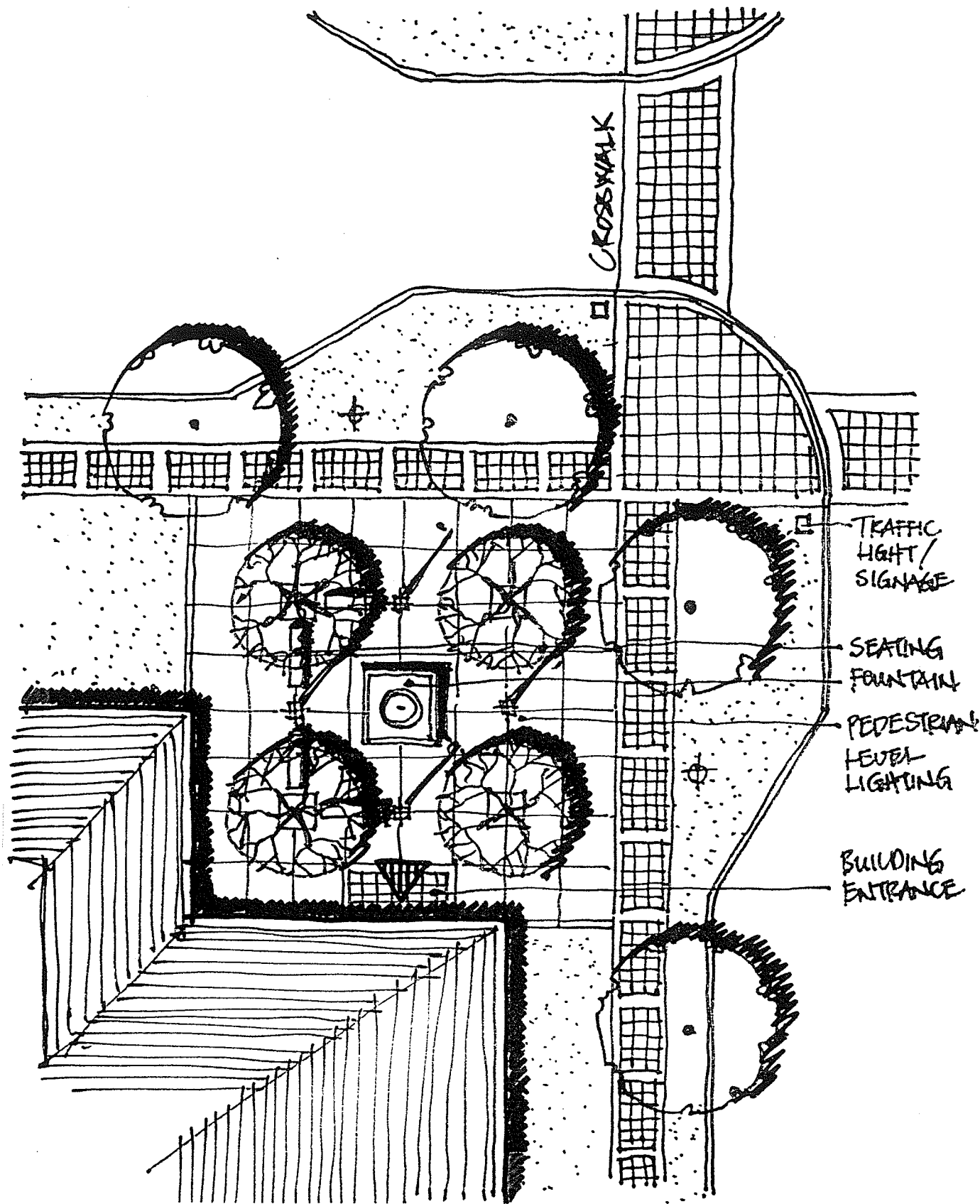


Fig. 26 Sidewalk treatment and Nodes (detail of a Cornwall Street node)

The re-furbished street planting (avenue of trees) not only bring back the character the original neighborhood, it also will provide a more comfortable pedestrian environment (Fig. 27).

This intensified planting will also provide a more continuous park-like environment which will strengthen the connection between Victoria and Wascana Parks. Therefore, this setting will create the impression that one is still in a park setting. This is one of the principles that Thomas Mawson was trying to achieve in his masterplan proposal.

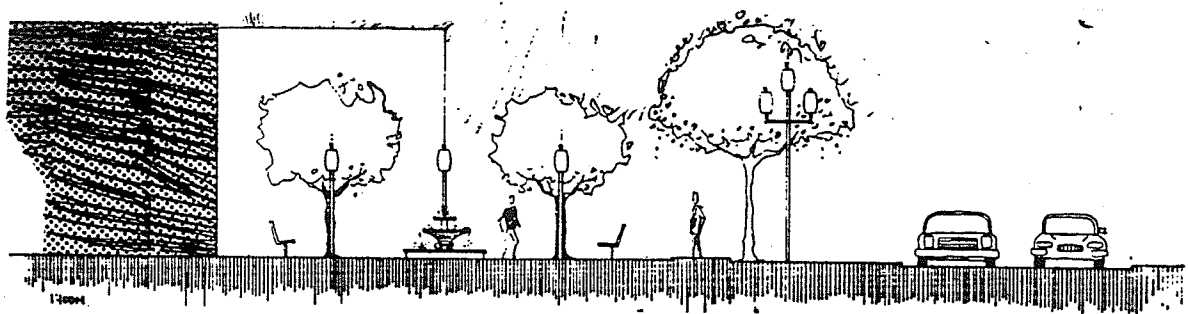


Fig. 27 Cross section showing pedestrian environment at a Cornwall Street node.

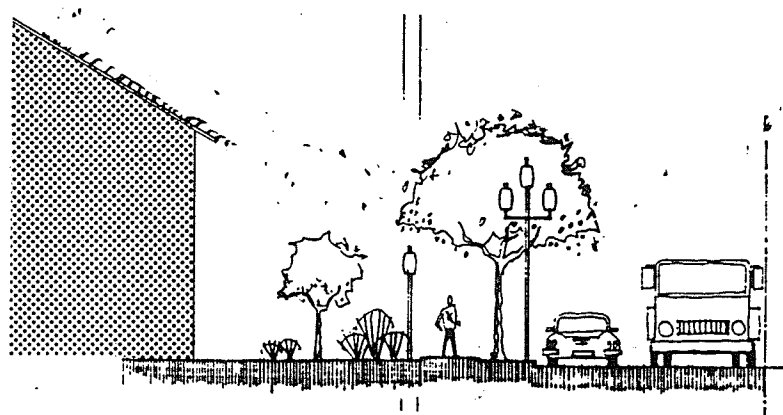
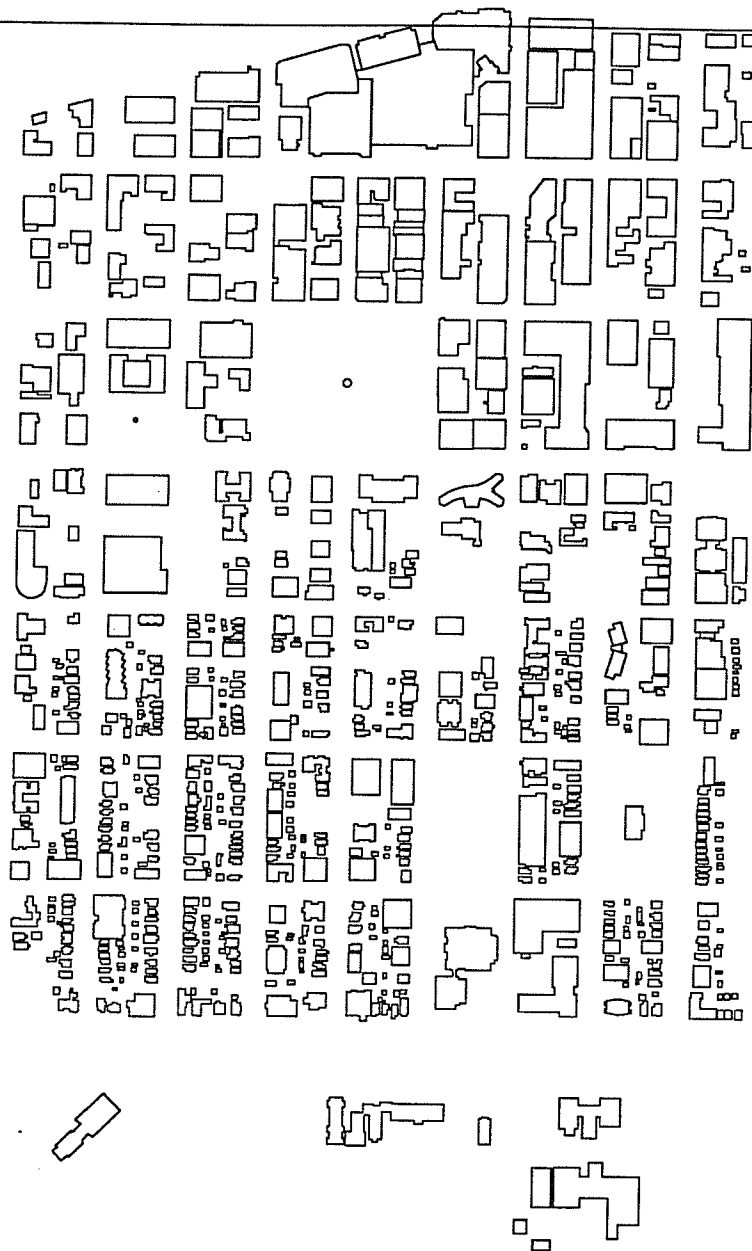


Fig. 28 Cross section of a typical street in the neighborhood showing the pedestrian environment.

5.4 The Transitional Area Border

The facades around the Transitional Area will be designed to provide a continuous "wall" effect, defining the neighborhood from the rest of the City (Fig. 12). Apart from the physical edges of the existing surrounding streets, this "wall" will be reinforced with an identifiable boulevard tree planting, in terms of form, colour and density (eg. Shurbert Chokecherry - red twig and red foliage), to visually distinguish the study area. This technique will be applied to define other components such as the axial connections. At the pedestrian level, sidewalk paving style and colour, custom designed light standards, and signage, will bring out the unique identity of the Transition Area.

The empty lots around the neighborhood will be filled in with buildings which are sensitive and complementary to the existing character, or will be infilled with a bosque of trees to provide a continuous "wall" to the street. The streets and avenues running through the neighborhood will be the connections from the Transitional Area to the rest of the City through the "perforations" in the "wall". The connections being the north-south and east-west cross roads to the adjacent neighborhoods of the City, hence expanding the ordering principle and design guidelines established in the Transitional Area into the other neighborhoods. This attitude will eventually convert the greater portion of the City of Regina into a garden city. This "blue skying" idea can be achieved in part through support from the proper political and financial channels.



chapter

6



6.0 CONCLUSION

The design guidelines proposed in this practicum introduce elements to develop a basic framework to strengthen the existing pedestrian and vehicular circulation network system within the Transitional Area. The axes discussed symbolically and physically emphasize the north-south connections between the Central Business District and Wascana Park. It is intended that all streets and avenues continue to carry the pedestrian and vehicular flow within and through the neighborhood as they presently do. With the adaptation of these design guidelines, a series of unique streetscapes can be developed, streetscapes which create safe and climactically comfortable environments for pedestrians.

It is anticipated that these proposed developments will eventually extend through the entire neighborhood, thus resulting in an improved pedestrian oriented environment for the Transitional Area. The eventual outcome will be an interweaving of the entire community, creating a precinct with its own identity. The key foci established in this neighborhood will be highlighted by the different uses of the design components programmed for this site. These components include a selected list of tree species and the rhythm of the plantings, paving materials and patterns, and the existing urban fabric. The unique identity of the neighborhood will be enhanced by the use of a family of similar elements, including street furniture and brick paved pedestrian walkways.

Finally, the dense planting pattern in the Transitional Area will provide a park-like setting for residents of the neighborhood, while offering a continuous connection between Wascana and Victoria Parks through the neighborhood. As a result, the park-like setting proposed by Thomas Mawson in his masterplan will be achieved through

this design. This satisfies the requirement for a more pedestrian oriented connection between the parkland and the built urban environment, enhancing the unique character of this historic neighborhood.

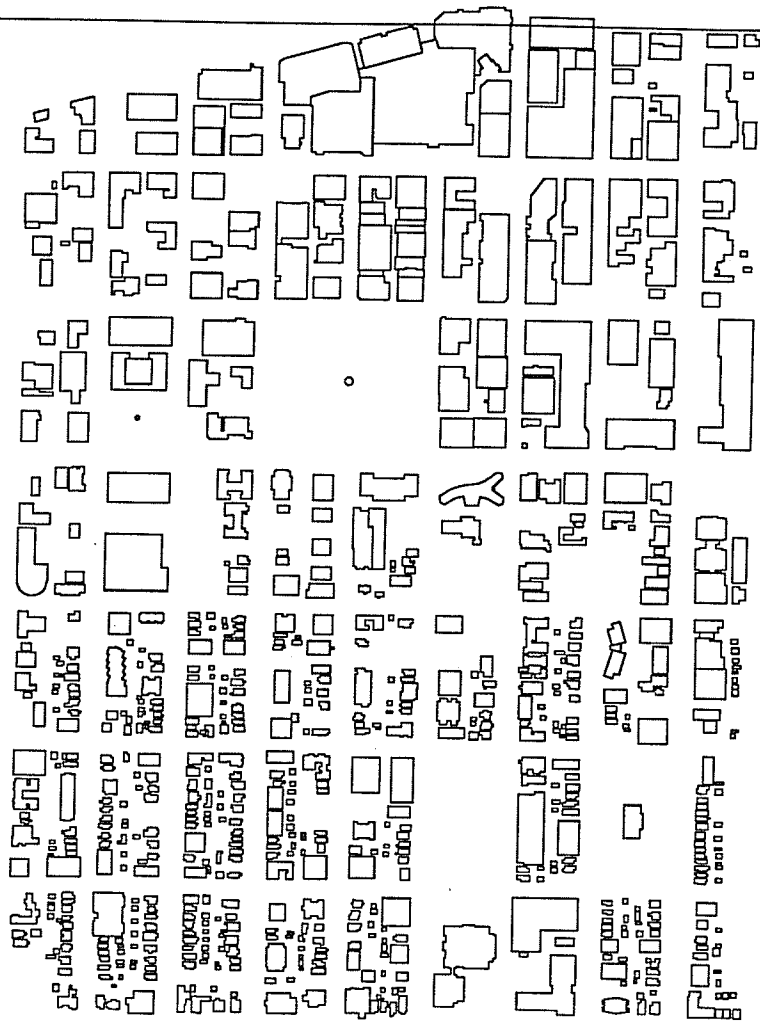
In the process of developing this neighborhood connection, and through it, the revitalization of the Transitional Area, some of the design components from the Mawson plan have been introduced in this proposal. It is a necessity to bring back portions of this historic design and physically implement them as part of the Transitional Area neighborhood in order to maintain a historical connection to the principles in the Mawson masterplan for the City of Regina. This is an important process, both to recognize the history of the area, and as an opportunity to utilize the design principles put forward by one of the great pioneers of the landscape architecture profession.

It has become apparent that a set of urban design guidelines should be developed from this practicum, guidelines which would address the issues discussed and positively direct the future growth of the City. Further evolution and changes within the Transitional Area, as in the City of Regina generally, is a reality. This can, however, be controlled by means of historical preservation measures, sensitive planning policies, and the mandatory environmental assessment of each proposed development.

6.1 FURTHER STUDIES

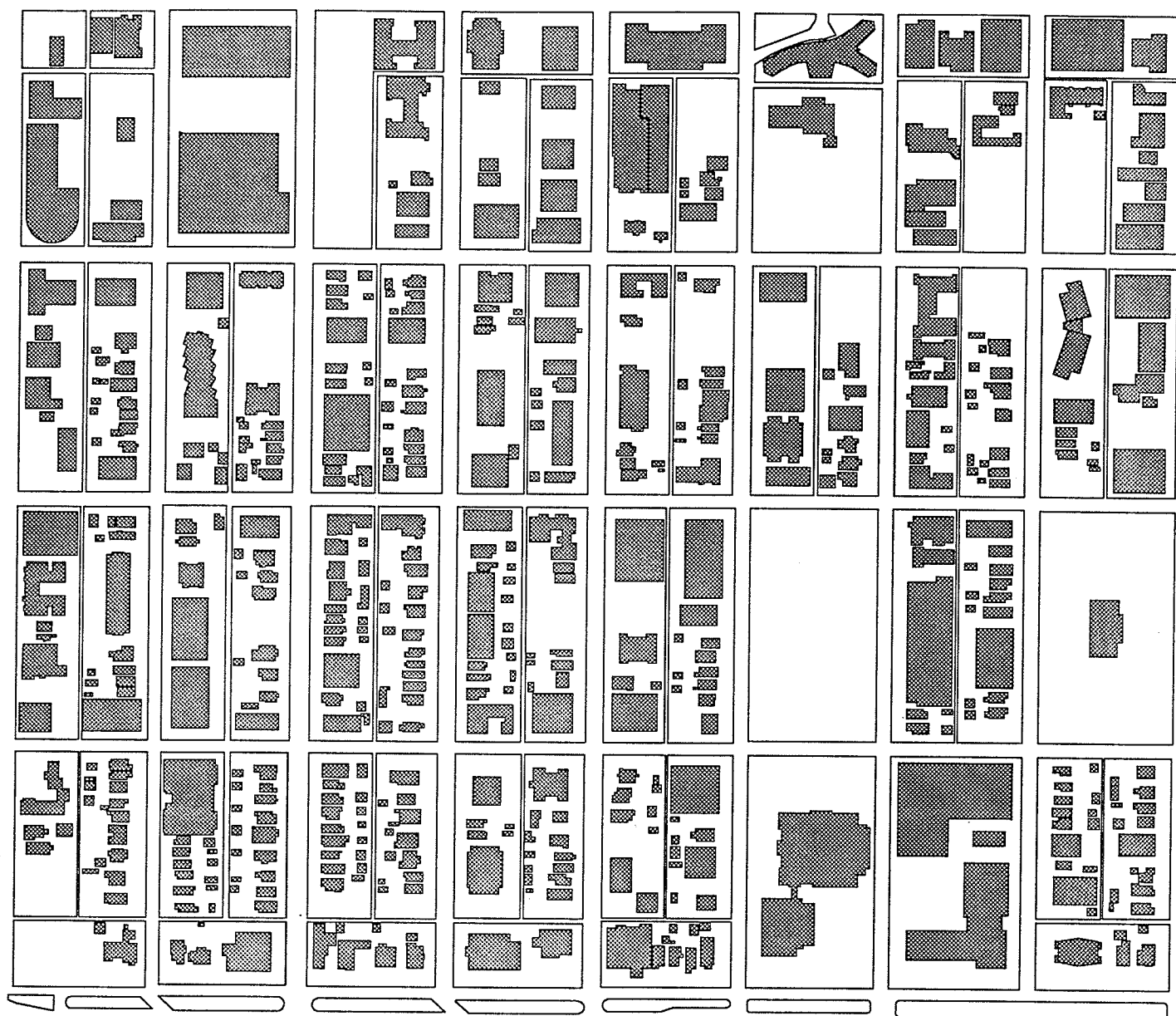
The components of this proposal have the potential to be developed and refined further. Suggested further studies includes; evaluation of the land use economics/marketability of the neighborhood, political implications of change, the realistic co-relation between the proposals and the existing fabric, and the impact of proposed interventions on the visual identities and viability of the Area.

A valuable set of urban design and planning guidelines and policies may also be formulated to assist in the sound development growth of the City which, at the same time, ensuring that growth is responsive to the natural environment and economically viable for the residents and the City.



appendix





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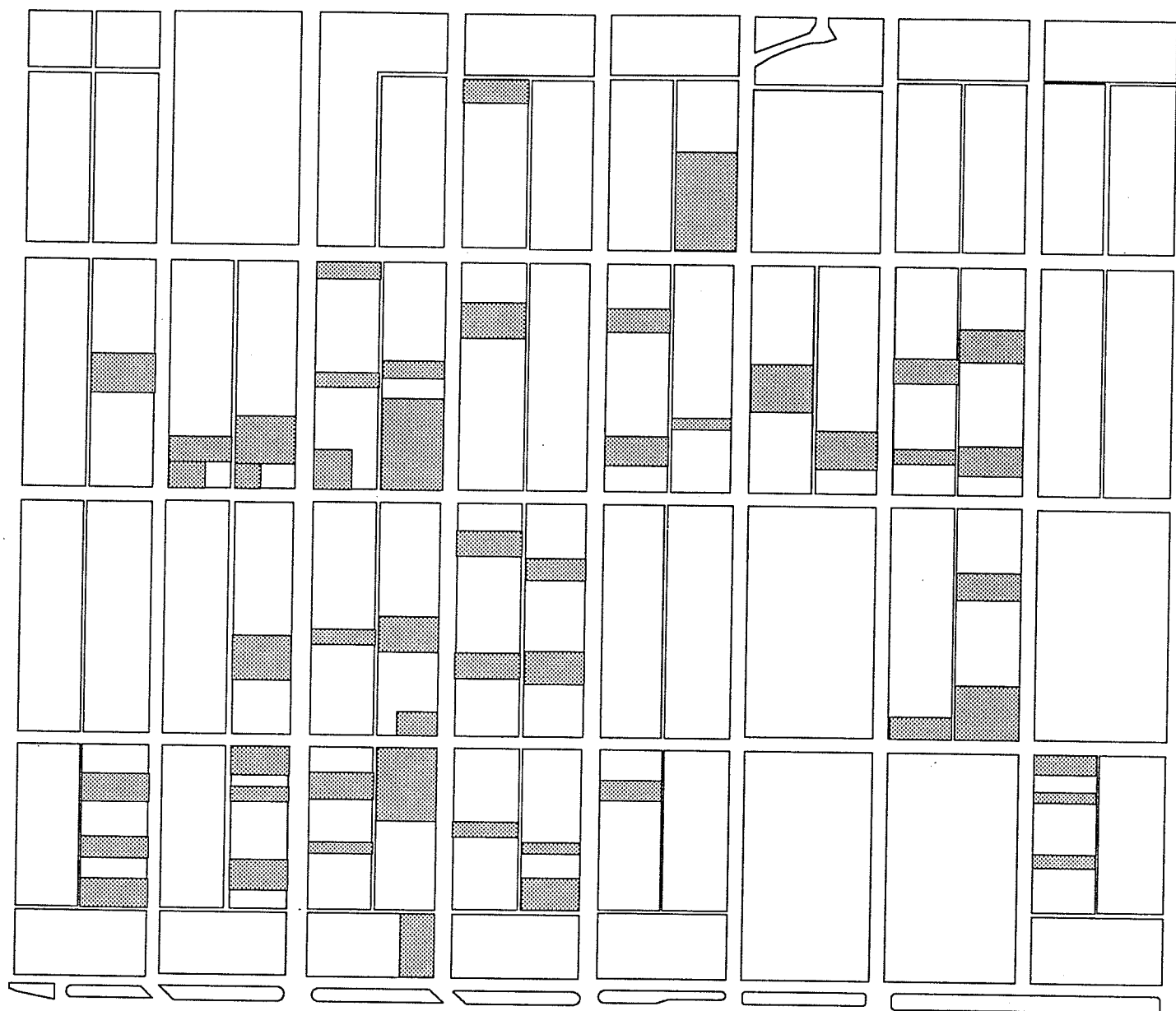
EXISTING BUILDING STOCK



0 25 50 100M.



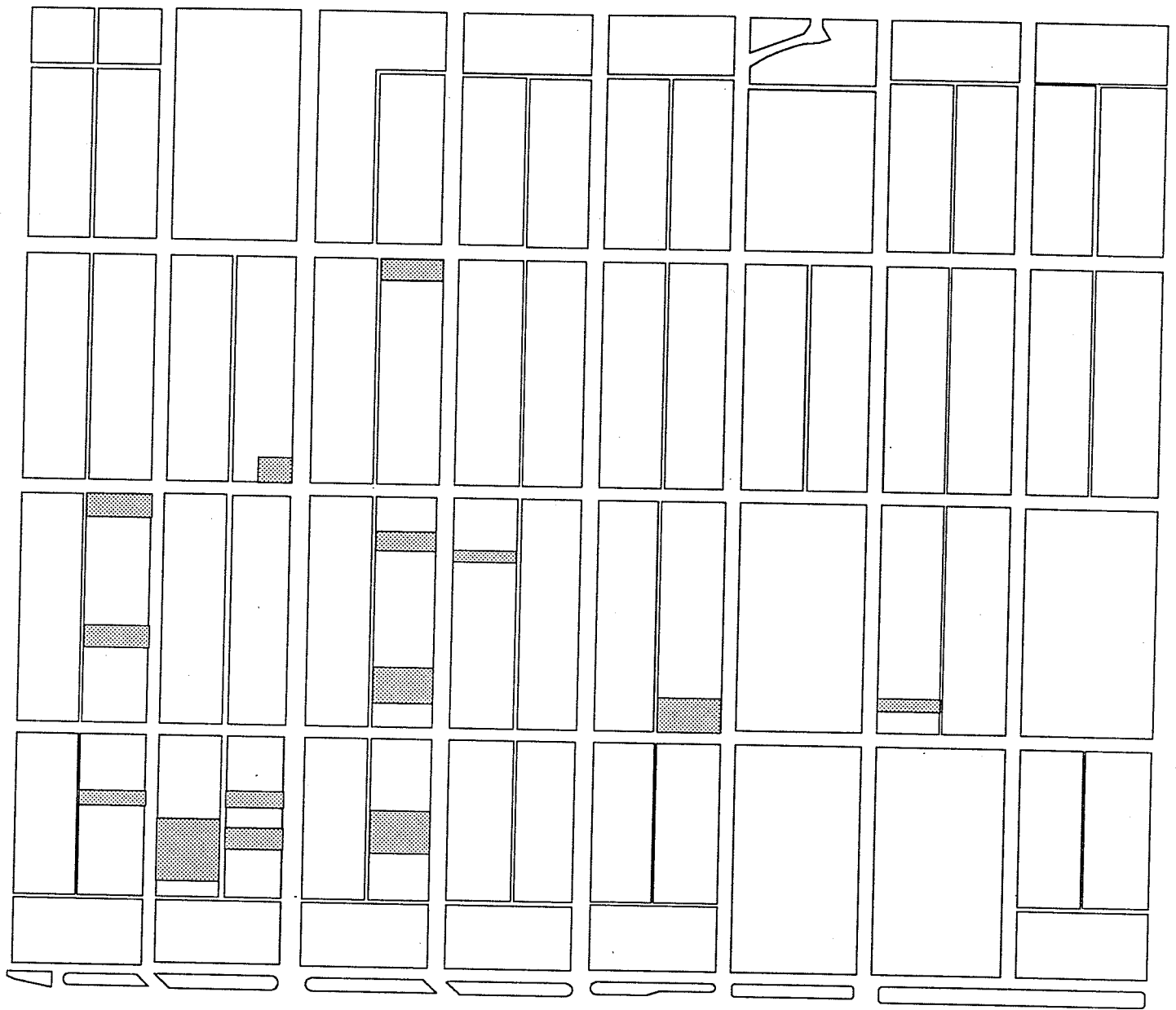
OWNER OCCUPIED (house-form)



0 25 50 100M.

NON-OWNER OCCUPIED (house-form)

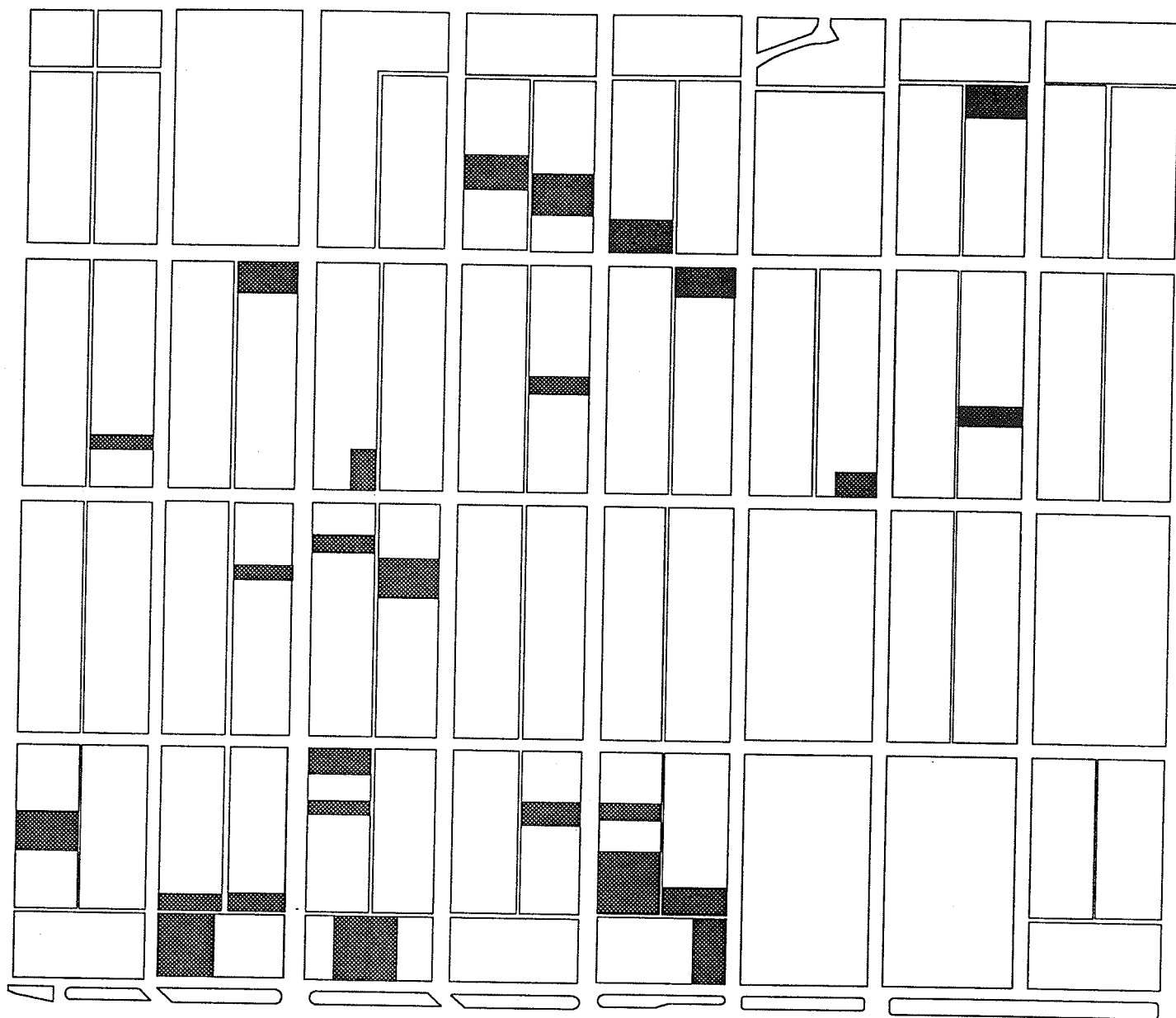




COMMERCIAL/RESIDENTIAL
(house-form)

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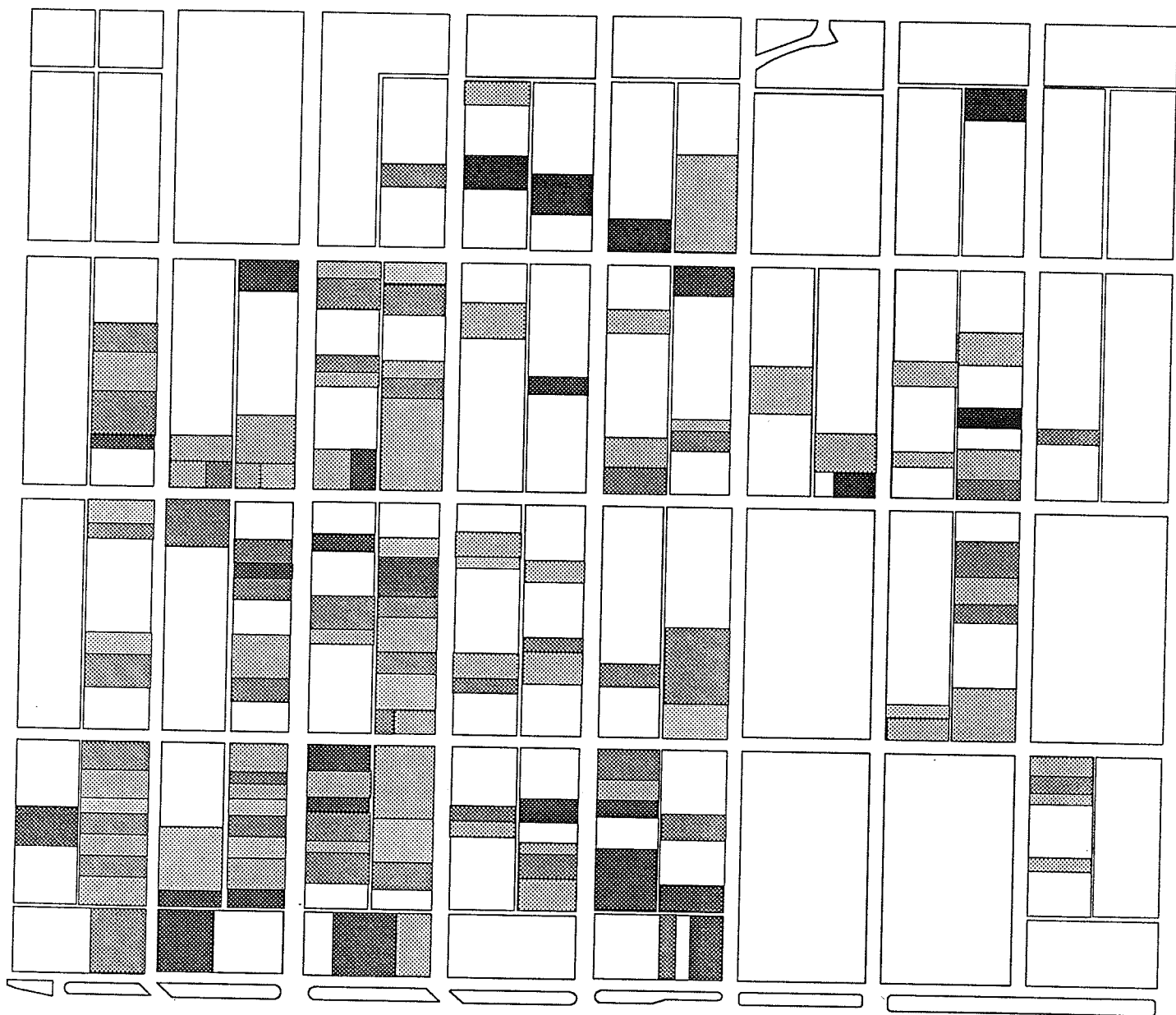




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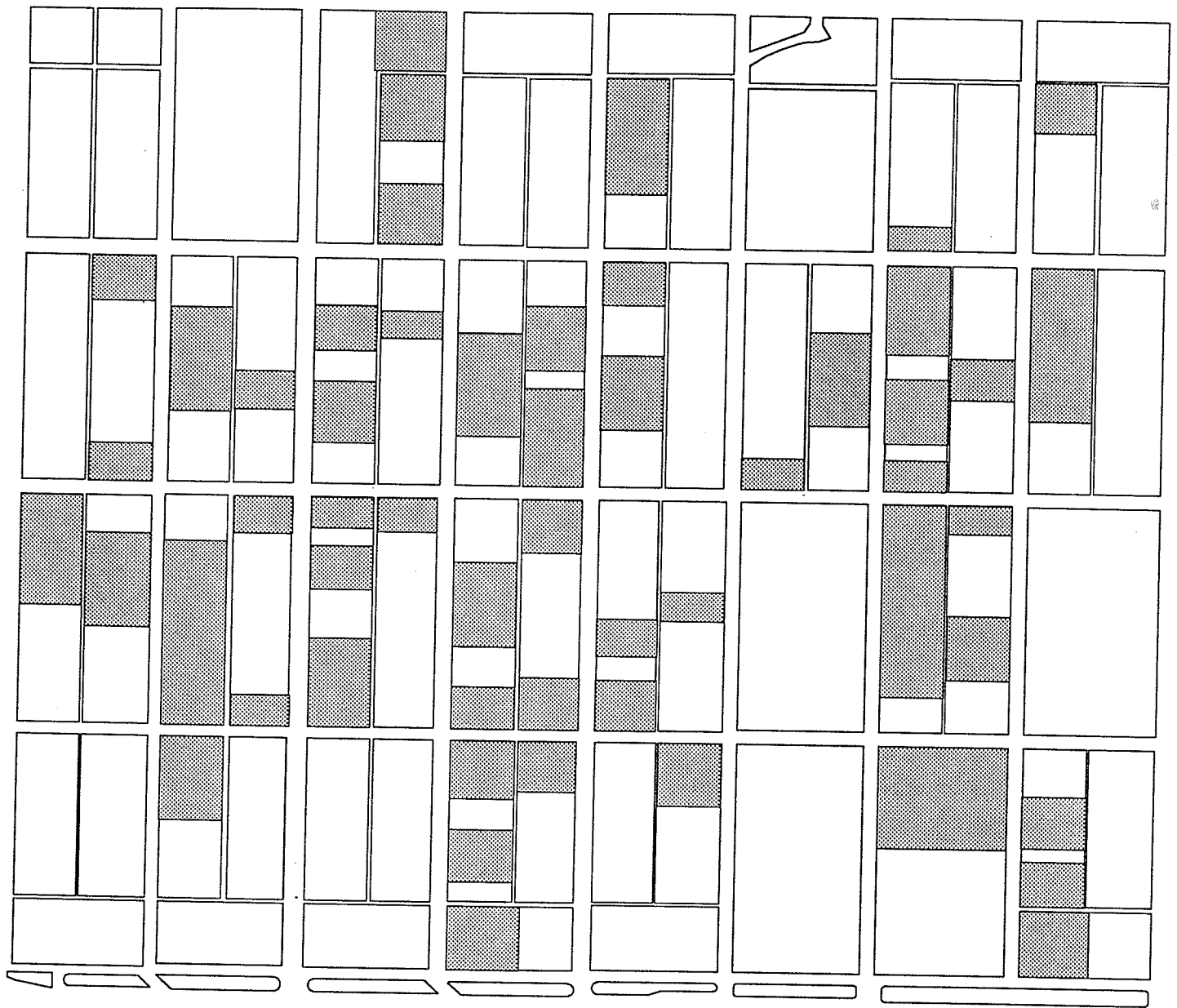
COMMERCIAL (house-form)



HOUSE-FORMS

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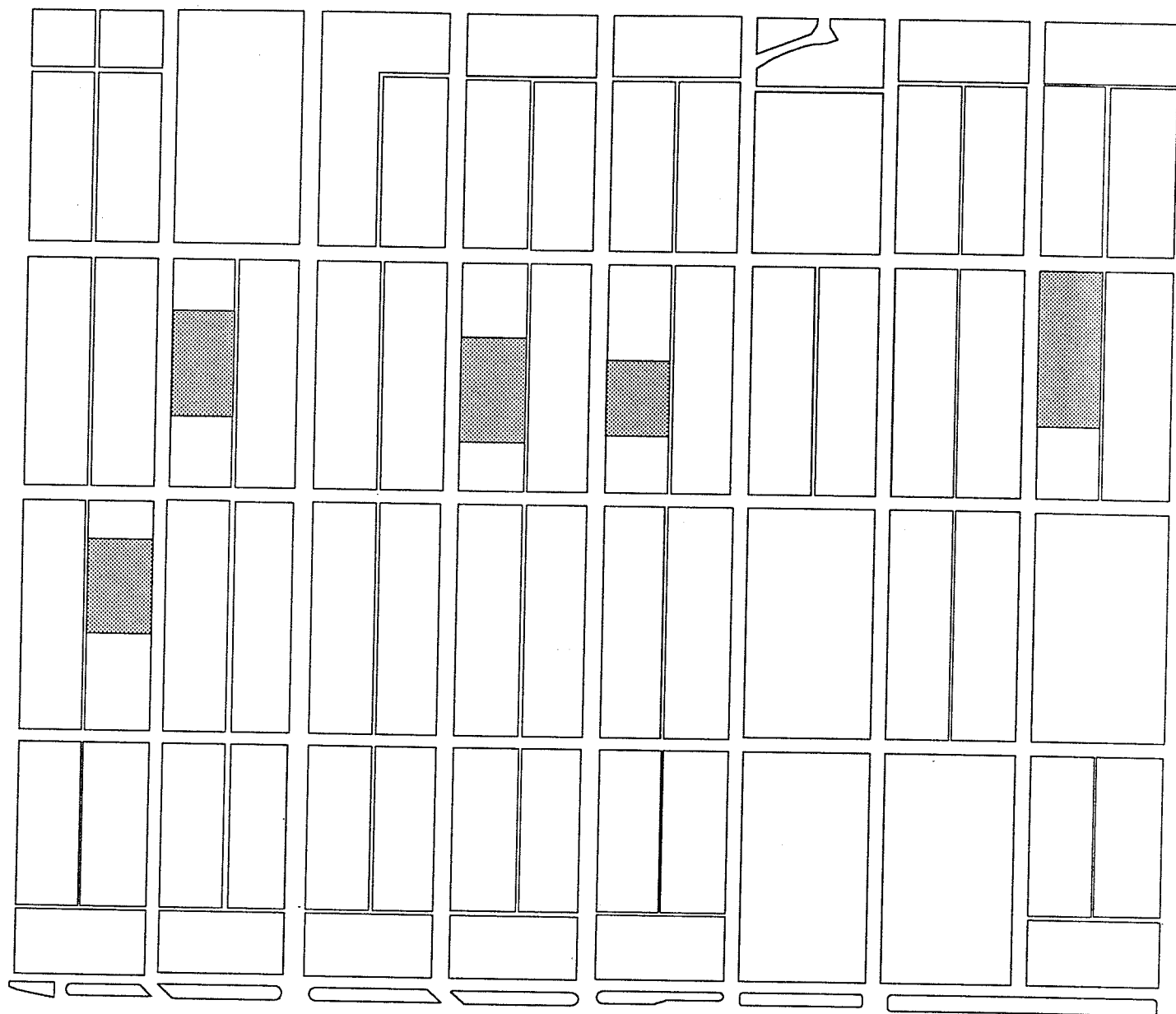




APARTMENTS

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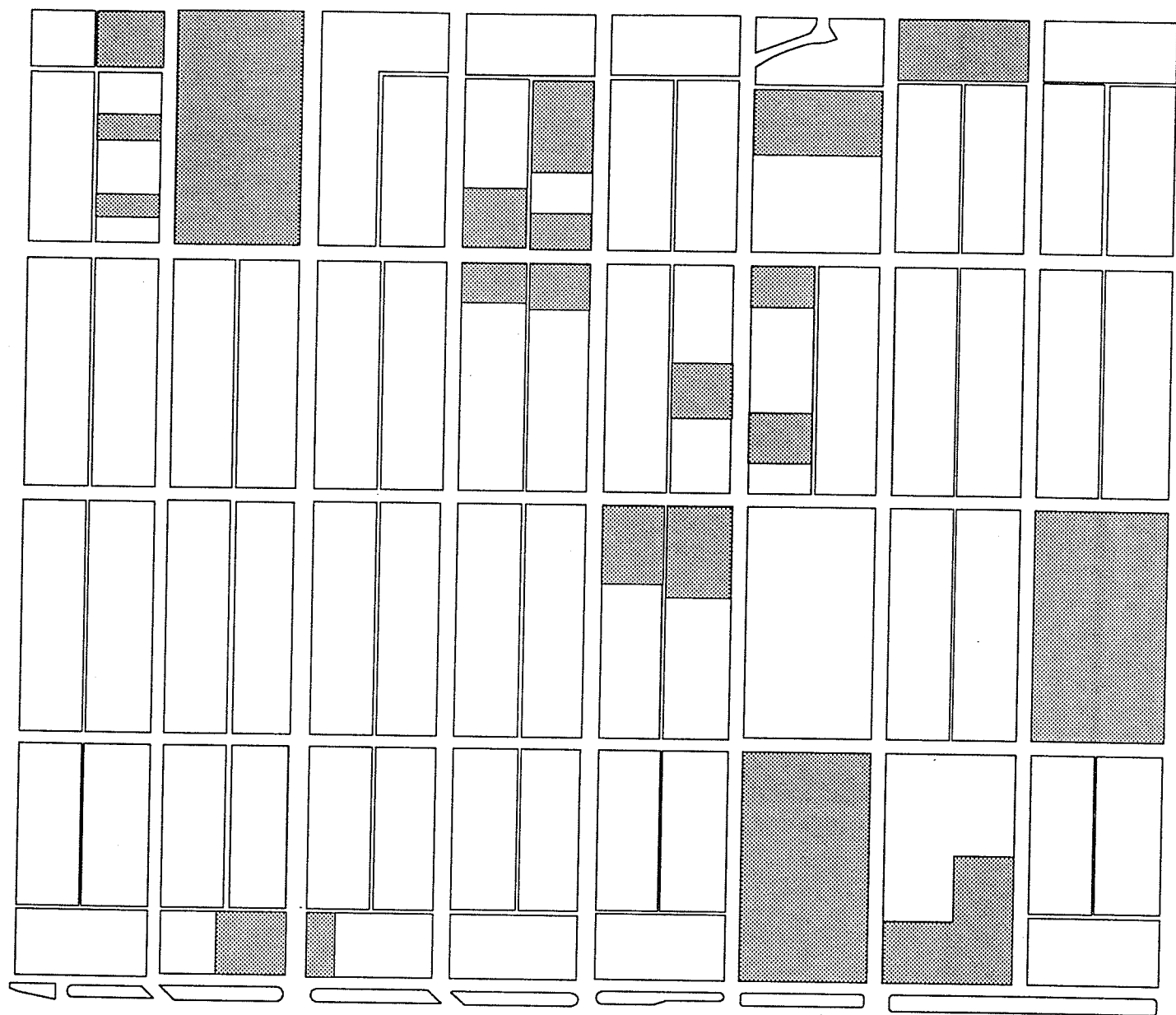




SENIOR APARTMENTS

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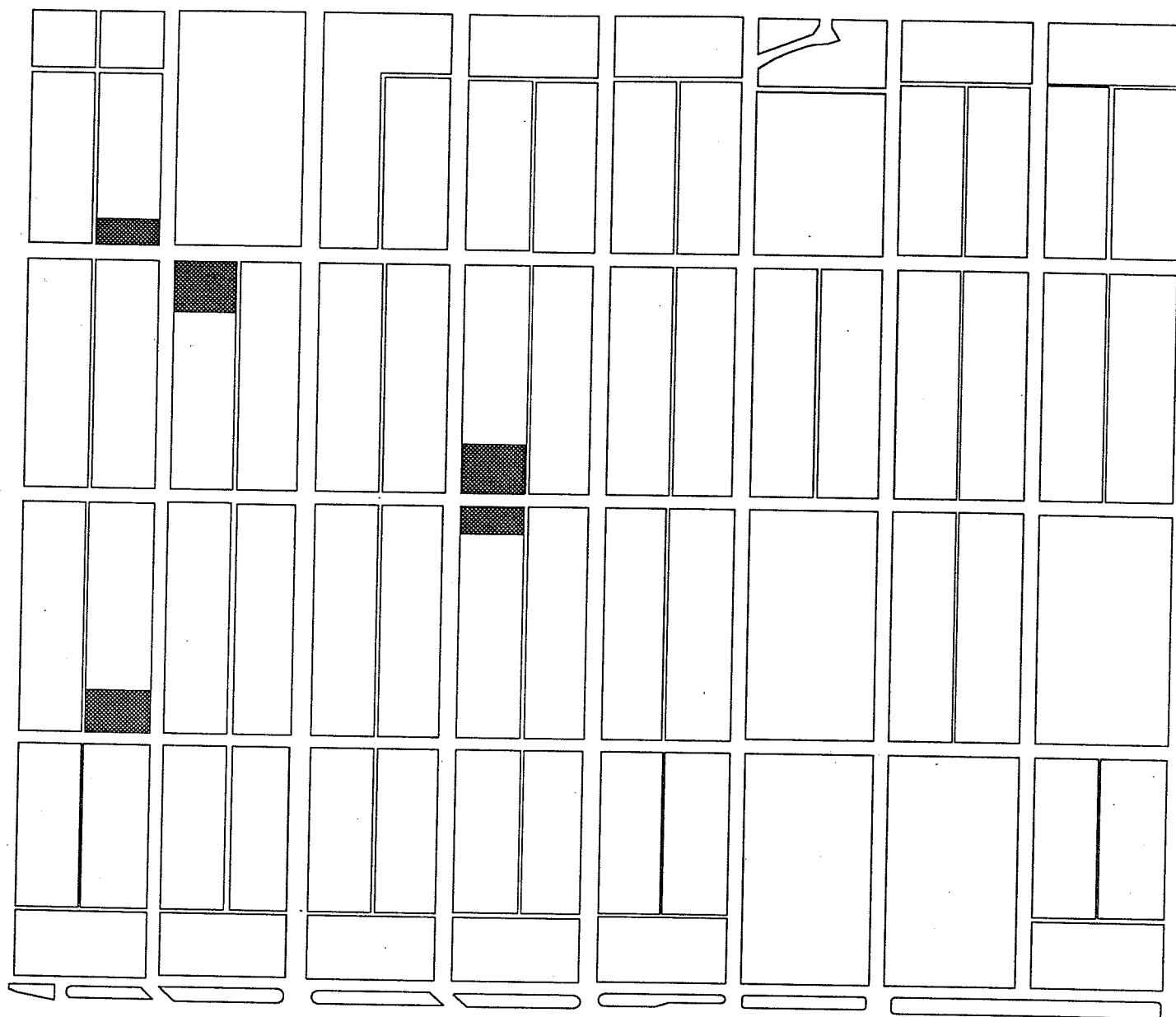




INSTITUTION

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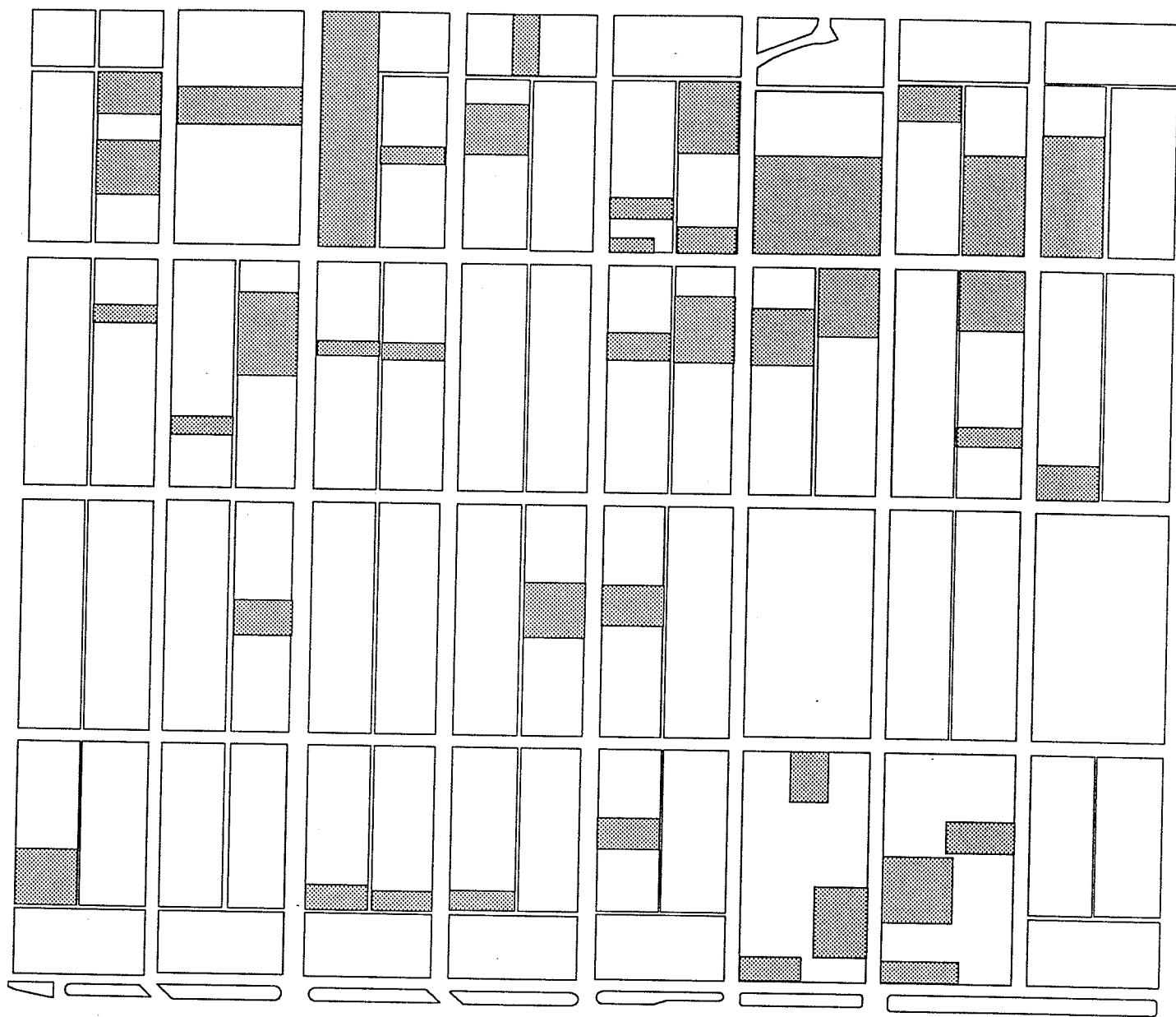




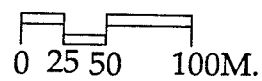
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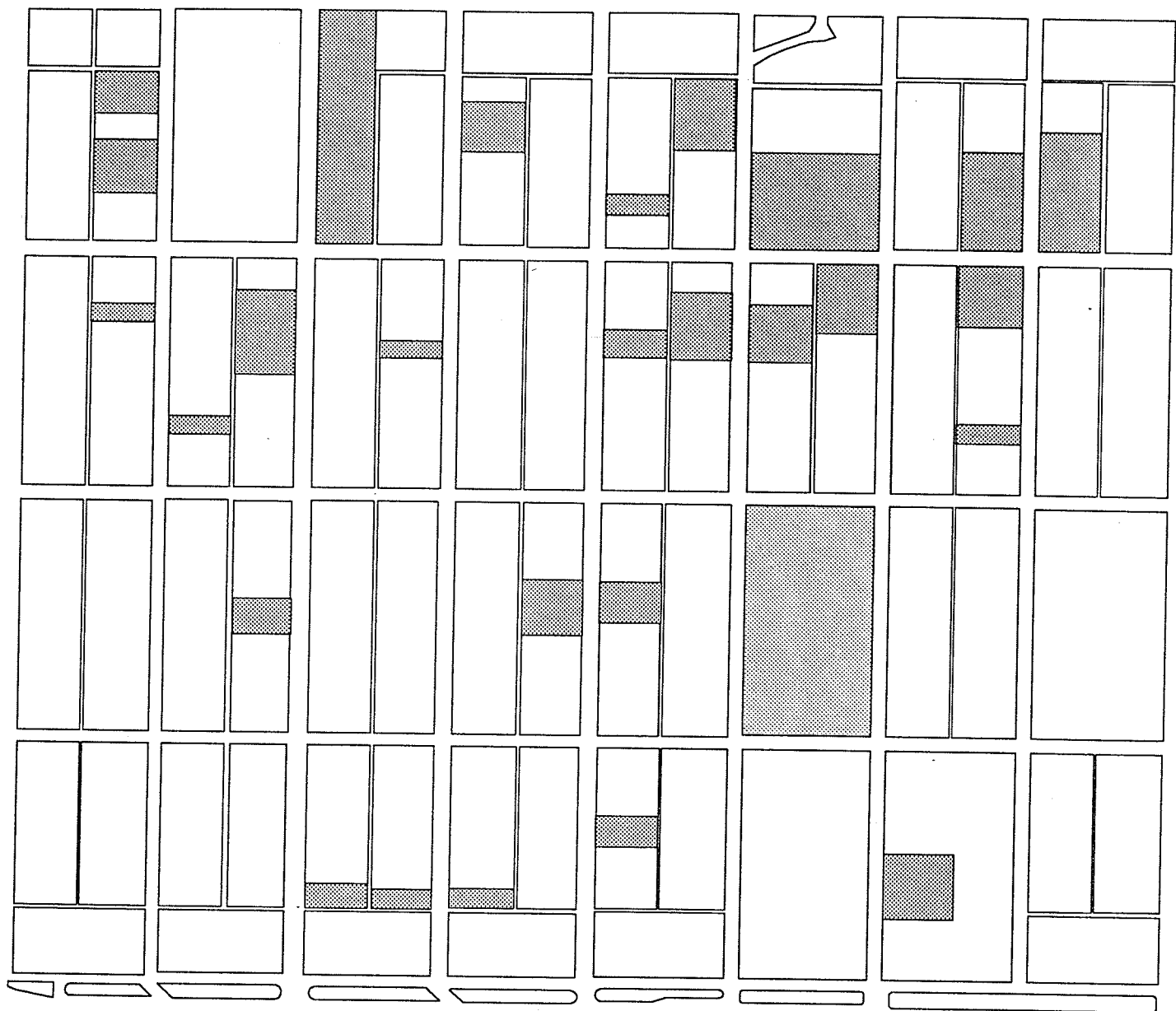
COMMERCIAL (non-house-form)





SURFACE PARKING LOTS

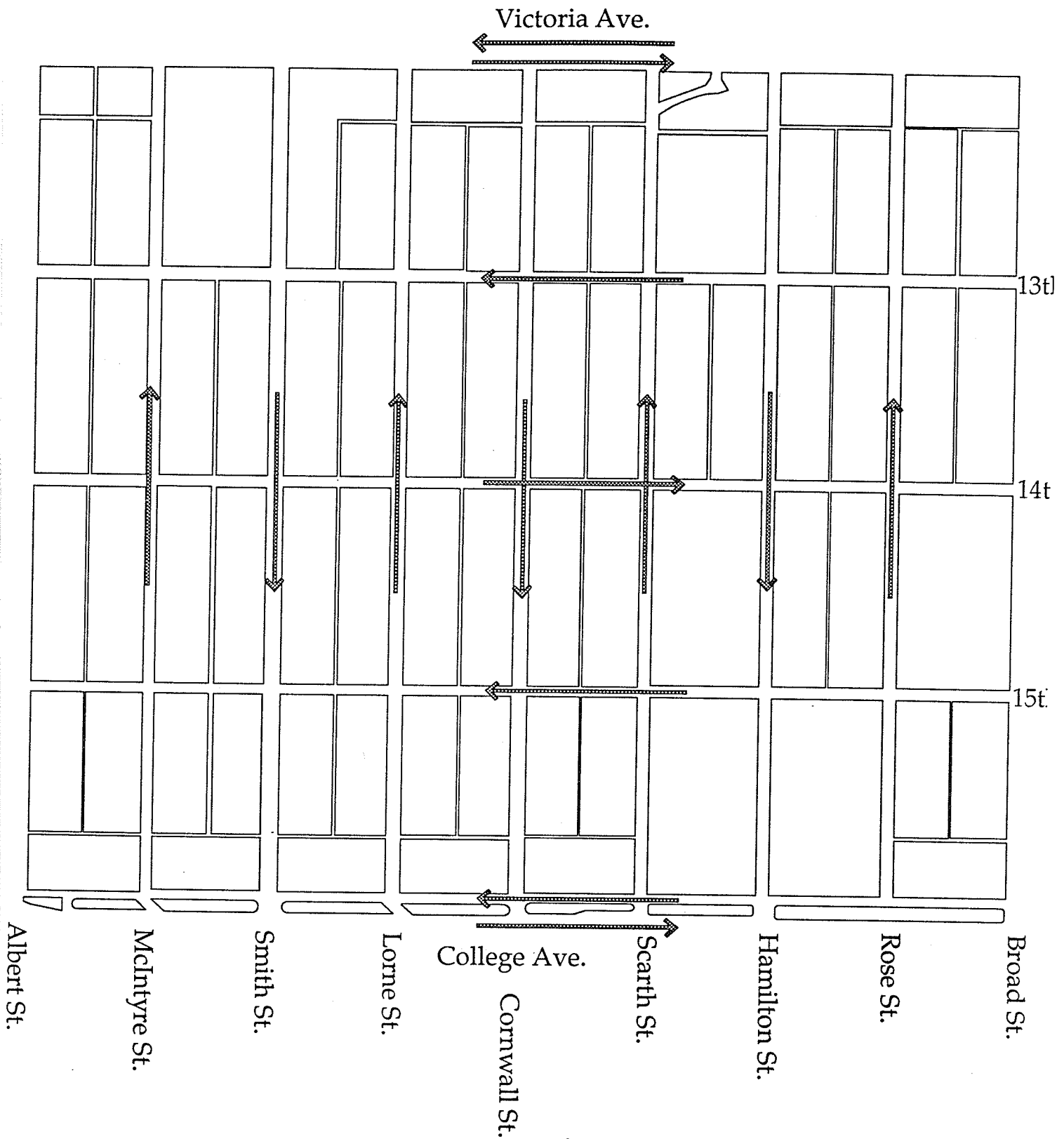




OPEN SPACE/PARKING

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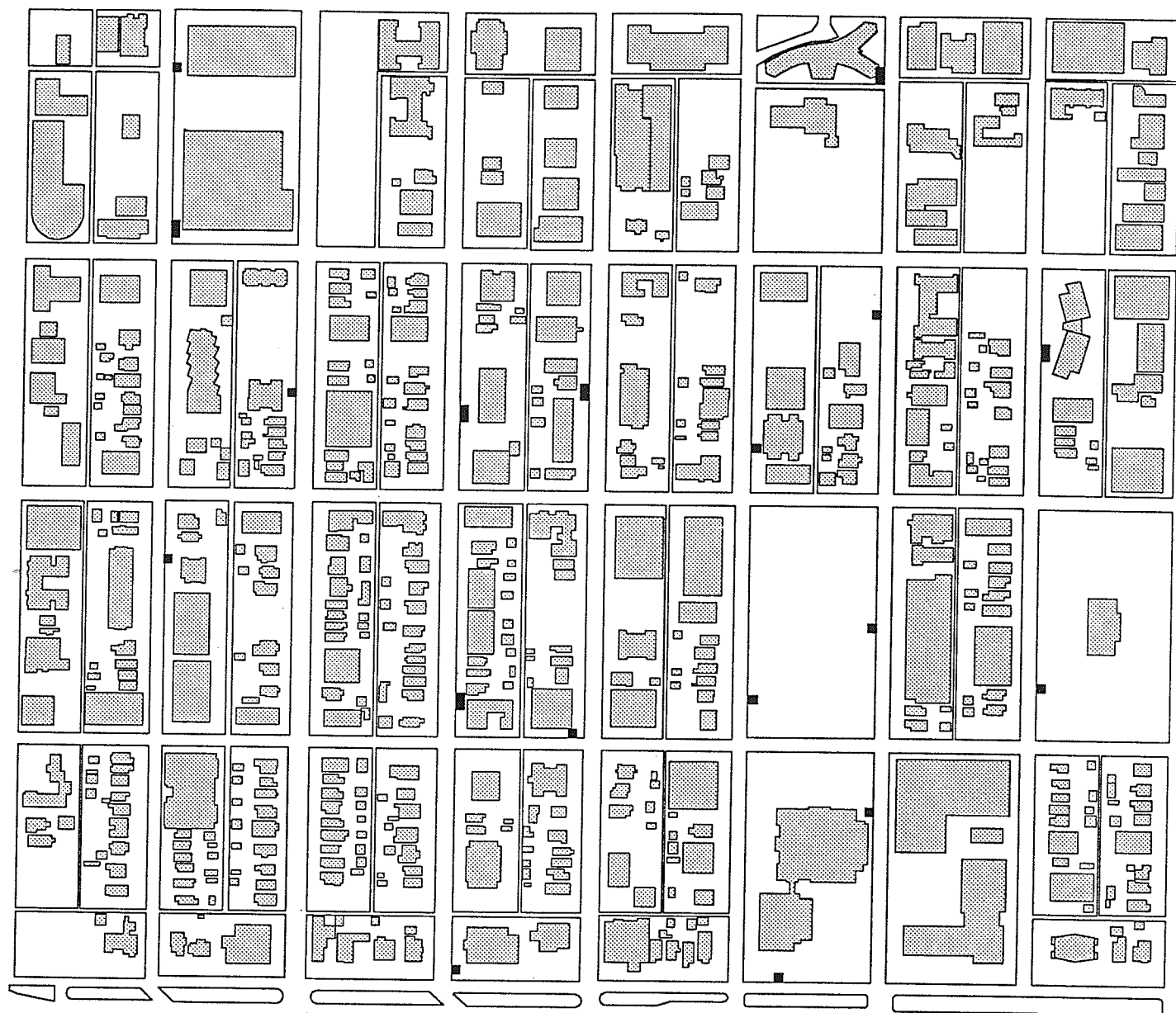




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TRAFFIC DIRECTIONS

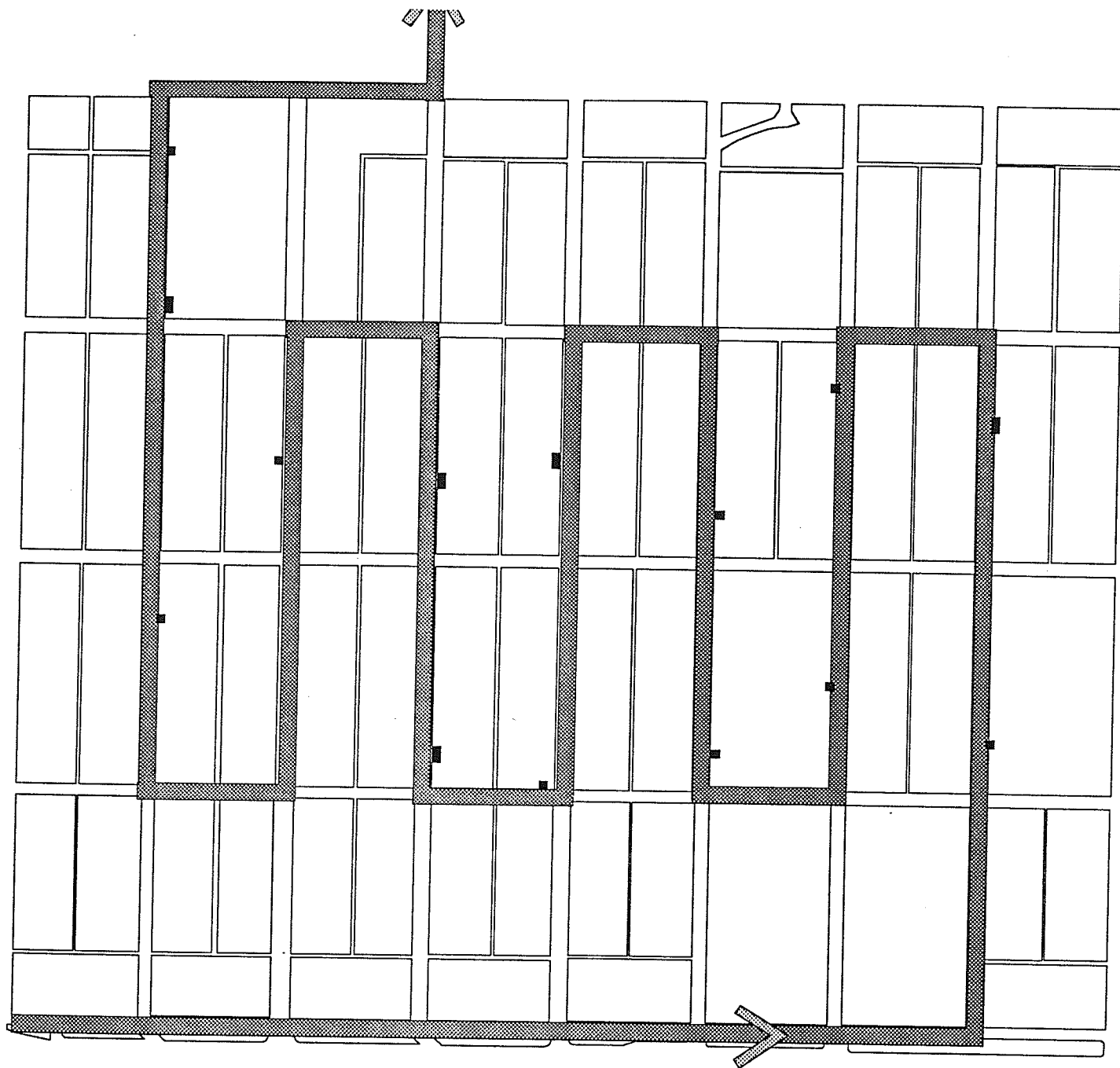


no shelters ■
shelters ■

BUS STOPS

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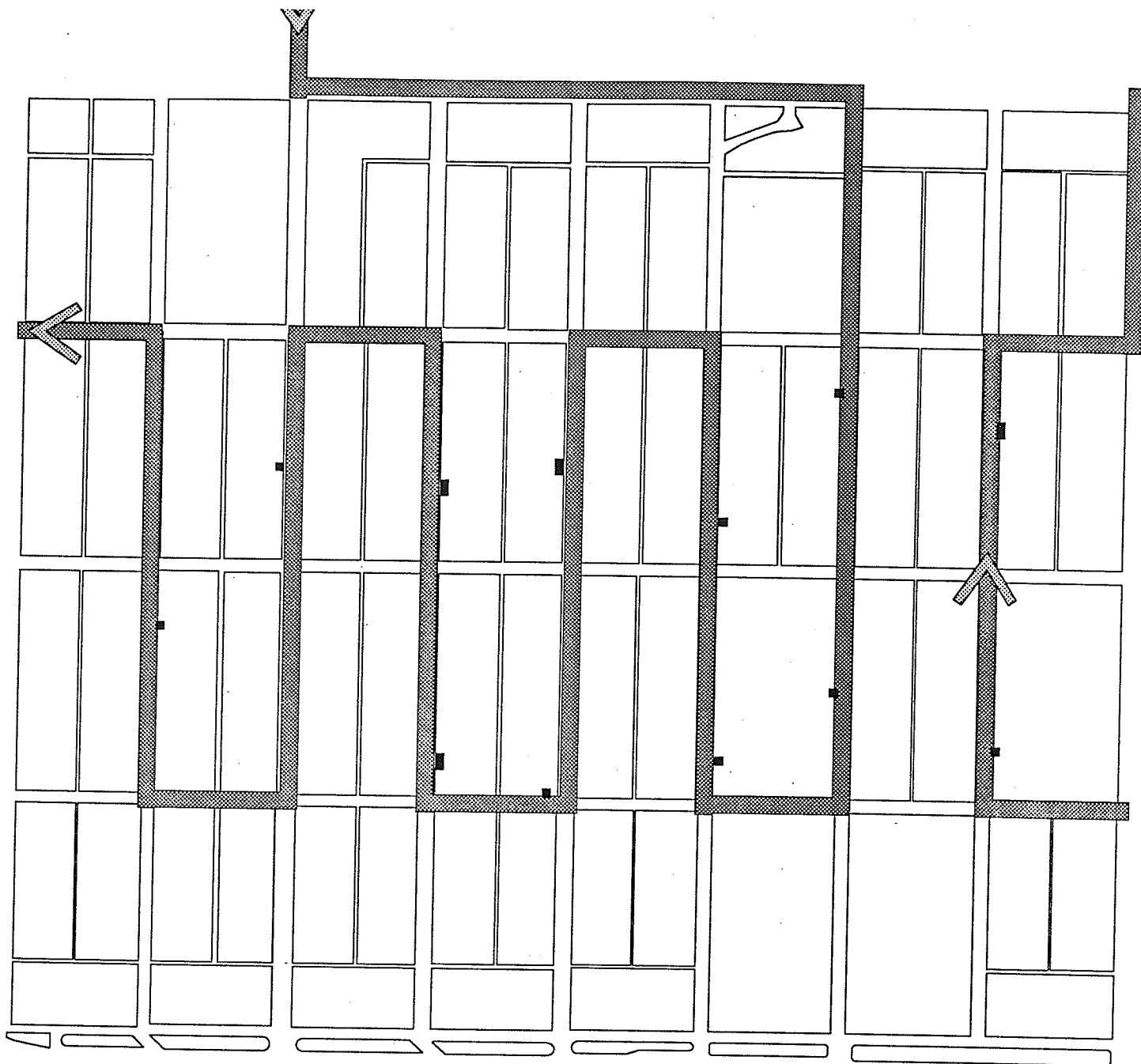




HERITAGE BUS (inbound)

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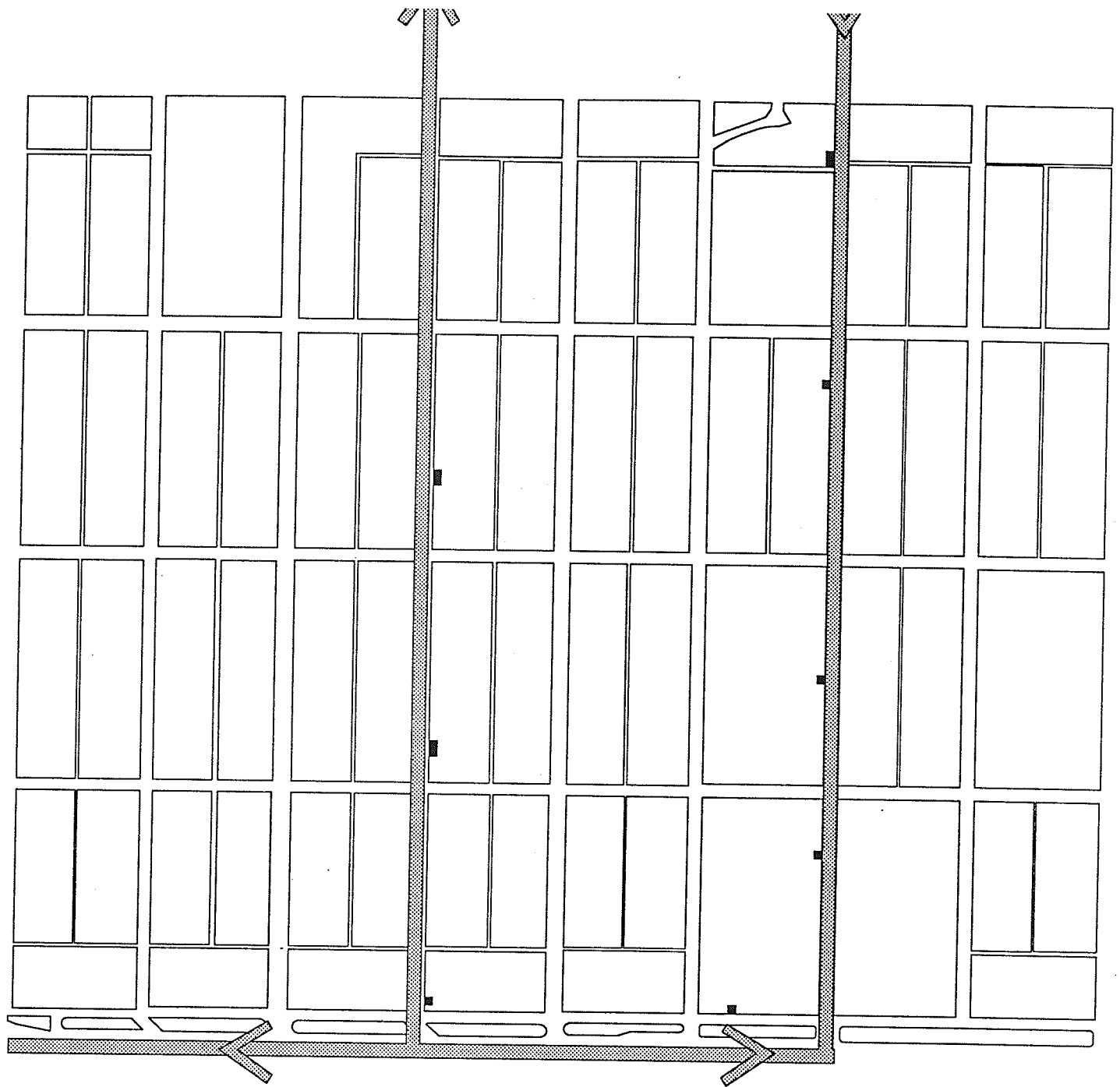




HERITAGE BUS (outbound)

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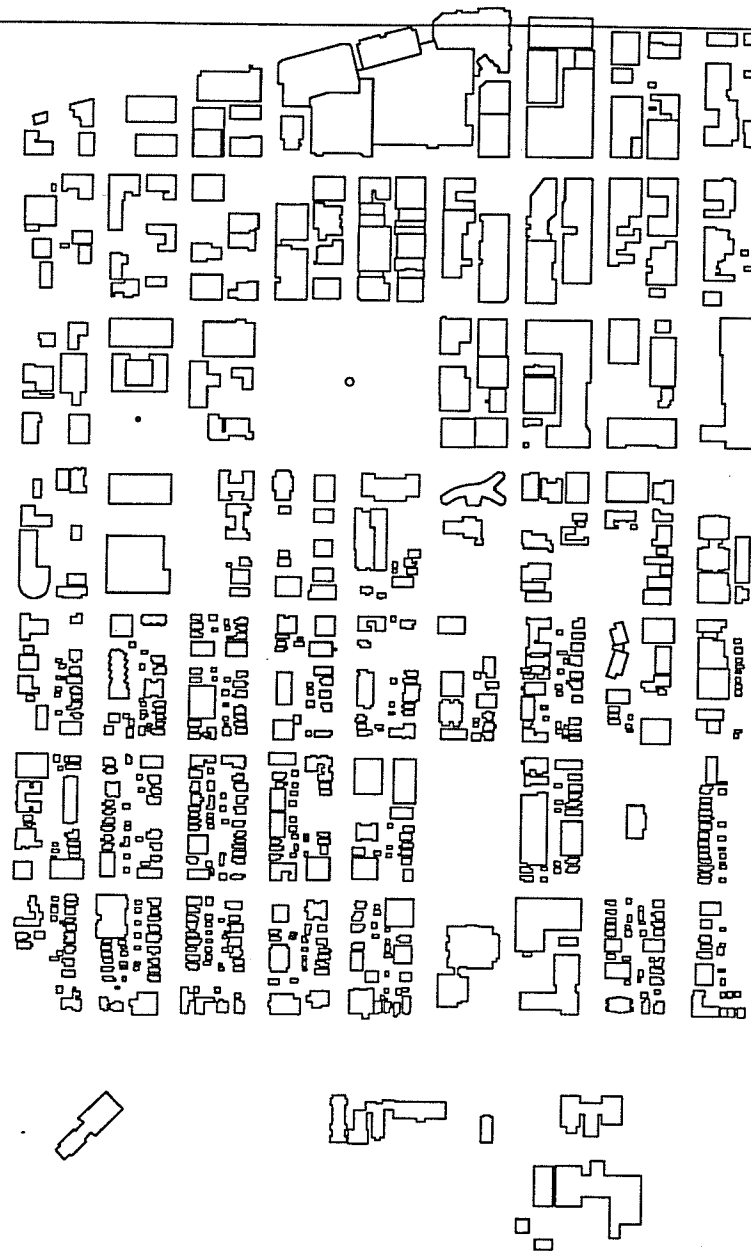




CITY BUS ROUTE #4

0 25 50 100M.





bibliography



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