

# NEWPORT, NH Design Charrette



**NEWPORT  
EAGLE BLOCK**

JULY 9-10, 1999

**PLAN NH**

The Foundation for Shaping the Built Environment

## CREDITS

**Sincere thanks go out to those individuals who donated their professional and personal time to the charrette:**

Andrea Ansevin-Allen  
USDA Rural Dev  
Walpole, NH 03608

Kyle Barker  
8 Kearsarge St  
Concord, NH 03301

Richard Berry  
36 Church St, Apt 2  
Bristol, RI 02809

E. Thor Carlson  
87 Sunapee St  
Newport, NH 03773

Graham Clegg  
75 Sextons Hollow Rd  
Canton, CT 06019

Nancy Dutton, Dir.  
Division of Historical  
Resources  
19 Pillsbury St  
Concord, NH 03301

Greg Franklin  
115 Etna Rd, Suite E  
Lebanon, NH 03766-1467

Arnold Graton, Jr.  
PO Box 45  
Ashland, NH 03217

Jeffrey Harris  
National Trust for  
Historic Preservation  
7 Faneuil Hall Mktplace  
Boston, MA 02109

Paul Hemmerich  
PH Design  
12 Mooar Hill Rd  
Hollis, NH 03049

Robert Hogan  
112 Union St  
Providence, RI 02903

Karen Hughes  
218 Norton St  
Riverside, RI 02915

Stephen Kanavich  
Gilbane Construction  
1 Trafalgar Square  
Nashua, NH 03063

Ryan Keiper  
43 Lower Sargent Rd  
Washington, MA 01223

Randy Knowles  
T.F. Moran  
48 Constitution Drive  
Bedford, NH 03110

Robert Leumas Ward  
PO Box 404  
Sunapee, NH 03782

Howard Mansfield  
PO Box 127  
Hancock, NH 03449

Frederick Matuszewski  
603 Beech St  
Manchester, NH 03104

Ken McWilliams  
Upper Valley Lake  
Sunapee RPC  
77 Bank St  
Lebanon, NH 03766

Caleb Messier  
218 Norton St  
Riverside, RI 02915

Barry Montgomery  
PO Box 1093  
Newport, NH 03773

Bill Norton, President  
Norton Asset  
Management  
327 Commercial St  
Manchester, NH 03101

Fred Richards  
Focus Real Estate  
Advisors  
21 Manchester St  
Merrimack, NH 03054

Mark Tedeschi  
PO Box 163  
Elkins, NH 03233

Dave Umling  
Upper Valley Lake  
Sunapee RPC  
77 Bank St  
Lebanon, NH 03766-1704

Claire Wilkins  
PO Box 176  
Gilmanton, NH 03237

Jim Garvin  
Arch. Historian  
Division of Historical  
Resources  
19 Pillsbury St  
Concord, NH 03301

Barbara Macaulay  
112 Union St.  
Providence, RI 02903

Jennifer Goodman  
NH Preservation Alliance  
PO Box 268, 264 Main St  
Concord, NH 03301

Jeffrey Taylor  
Director  
Office of State Planning  
2 ½ Beacon St.  
Concord, NH 03301

Laura Pfister  
Office of State Planning  
2 ½ Beacon St.  
Concord, NH 03301

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Andy Andrews  
Polly Andrews  
Ella Casey  
Sharon Christie  
Jerry Coogan  
Janet DeRose  
Coua Early  
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Margot Estabrook  
Kathy Hubert  
David Jescavage  
Bill Johnson  
Jim Lantz  
Betty Maiola  
Erna McCormick

Roger Nelson  
Dan O'Neill  
Harold Perkins  
Mary Lou Reed  
Beverly Rodeschin  
Brad Sears  
Rick Thomas  
Eleanor Thompson  
Lou Thompson  
Andrea Thorpe  
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...and to any others who attended and helped with the charrette, but whose names we may have missed,

**Thank You!**

# Newport, New Hampshire Design Charrette

July 9-10, 1999



*Sponsored by:  
PLAN NH,  
Residents of Newport, and  
the Economic Corporation  
of Newport*



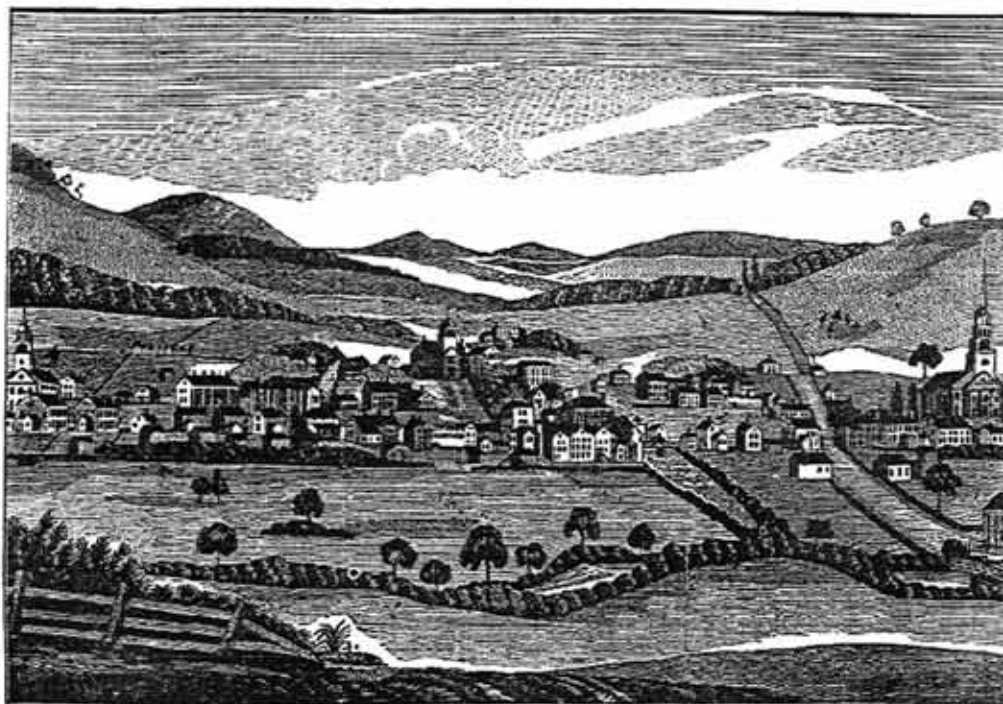
## Restoring The Eagle Block, Restoring Newport

By Howard Mansfield\*

*[Editor's Note: Our design teams include many disciplines as we move from town to town. This is the first occasion when we have been accompanied by a professional writer]*

A small community near me is an invisible community. The town has some handsome Greek Revival houses, but no one looks at them. Other towns are ballerinas, dancers before the mirror. They live for attention. But working towns, mill towns, are often invisible to themselves.

The buildings we demolish are invisible. They have fallen from notice, from upkeep, and when we tear them down, we are just completing the act of neglect and removal. Old buildings are demolished first in the imagination. People stop seeing them.



View of Newport in 1834, from a drawing by Henry E. Baldwin

The first act of restoration is seeing. One day a group of us took a walking tour of Newport's architecture. People drove by and stared at us. You don't see walking tours in most ordinary, working day towns. The idea that their community is worthy of close attention would be strikingly odd to many people. They might go to San Francisco or New York and walk about gawking, but who looks at their own block with the eyes of a visitor.

The charrette's plans and proposals are about seeing a future that includes The Eagle Block. One way to transform a town like Newport is to look at it. A group staring at a building lifts that building up from invisibility. Others might look again where they haven't looked in decades and an ordinary house or storefront may be unveiled for them.



View of The Eagle Today

Restoration is, in part, about looking anew, refreshing our sight, seeing the neglected close at hand. Sometimes we have to physically unearth old buildings, remove the tar on skylights, the dropped ceilings hiding the mosaics, the metal siding and plastic office partitions. The building comes back to life. Who knew? people say of the new-old building. Tear it down – did we say that? We can't live without it. It's the community's emblem, the pride of place, used for weddings, parties, the place we show visitors first. When a building is restored to a community, it's like the restoration of vision.

The Newport charrette has started the first restoration – getting people to look at The Eagle Block. All the plans make The Eagle visible once more.

*\*Howard Mansfield writes extensively on the value of community, especially in New Hampshire. He is the author of In the Memory House on that topic.*



## Plan NH Visits The Eagle Block

July 9-10, 1999

### Who is *Plan NH*?

*Plan NH* is a professional association for those working in the *built environment*. It includes architects, planners, engineers, bankers, contractors, historic preservationists, and others who concern themselves with buildings and communities. It was established to create a forum for bringing together these different professional groups, and as a catalyst for spurring interest in community development. Part of *Plan NH*'s mission is to make a positive contribution to New Hampshire communities. One way in which *Plan* is doing this is through the offer of free design assistance to communities with demonstrated needs on a regular basis.

### So What is a *Design Charrette*, anyway?

Simply stated, a design charrette is a brainstorming session where lots of ideas are brought forth by both professional designers and local citizens, in an attempt to resolve a problem of local interest. Because of the compressed time frame, the conclusions reached are usually conceptual. They discuss how different plan elements should relate to each other, as opposed to the details of how a particular building would actually be constructed.

At their best, charrettes blend the broad experience of design professionals with local citizens' detailed knowledge of their community to produce a plan of action to deal with a particular issue of concern to that community. The charrette provides an overall framework within which final solutions can be developed. It sets a tone and gives a direction for future decisions to be measured against.

### Why did the Plan NH charrette come to Newport and The Eagle Block?

That is a unique story. In general, each year Plan NH invites communities to enter proposals into a competition for a weekend of donated design services to be used in solving a problem of local interest. Plan NH looks for projects that are important to the host community, projects that present an interesting design problem, and projects which seem to have a high probability of actually being implemented. A community that is organized and has done some early work on a project scores well. A proposal from a community that has not really thought out its needs or how it would implement the recommendations from the charrette does not fair as well.

As with most good rules, there have to be exceptions. Such is Newport's case. At a meeting in Newport in April of this year, a meeting involving representatives of the Town of Newport, the Economic Corporation of Newport (ECON), local residents, state officials, and other interested parties, there was considerable concern about the future of The Eagle Block. At that time, it was still privately owned, and scheduled for demolition. While those present recognized the acuteness of the problem, there was no clear vision of what could be done with the building, even if it could be saved.

It happened that there were some members of Plan NH at the meeting. The Eagle Block clearly met all of Plan NH's selection criteria, it just had not been submitted for consideration in the selection process. To move the process forward, those Plan NH members agreed to take on The Eagle as an additional charrette for the current year. The rule was validated by the exception! So, on to Newport and on to The Eagle!

### Why is The Eagle Block So Important? Why Does it Attract Such Interest?

Legitimate questions. Why does it attract such attention? Why does it stir passions in some, and seem like a moonbeam project to others?

- For some, it is the history of the building, and the architecture of the very structure itself. For the 1820s, it was a very modern and advanced design, especially for this part of New Hampshire. Today it is the last remnant of that period's architecture in Northern New England. The Eagle Block is our connection to an important period of Newport's history.
- For others, it is a keystone project in stimulating the economy of downtown Newport. The Eagle might be viewed as downtown Newport in miniature. It has had a glorious past. It has suffered of late. With an infusion of new energy, it could have a bright future. The Eagle is where activity to re-fill once active, now vacant, stores can begin.
- And for still others, the citizens of Newport, it is an important place where activities that people want in their downtown can occur, a stage where the future can begin to unfold.

With these points in mind, let's start with the history of the building....

## The History of The Eagle

by James Garvin; Architectural Historian, State of New Hampshire

The Eagle Block is the last surviving example in New Hampshire of the large, urban brick hotel of the early turnpike era. Built in 1825 as The Eagle Hotel, the structure is representative of the transition from the eighteenth-century tavern, with its domestic scale and features, to the nineteenth-century hotel. The building is significant for both its design and its craftsmanship.

One impetus for the development of the nineteenth-century hotel was the introduction of the turnpike, a toll road that was built, owned and operated by a private corporation. In Newport, two turnpikes converged north of the village, channeling traffic from Vermont and the upper Connecticut River Valley through the main street of the village. In 1829, the *New-Hampshire Spectator*, published in Newport, noted that "daily lines of stages pass through this village in almost every direction." An increase in travel required a new level of accommodation for travelers.

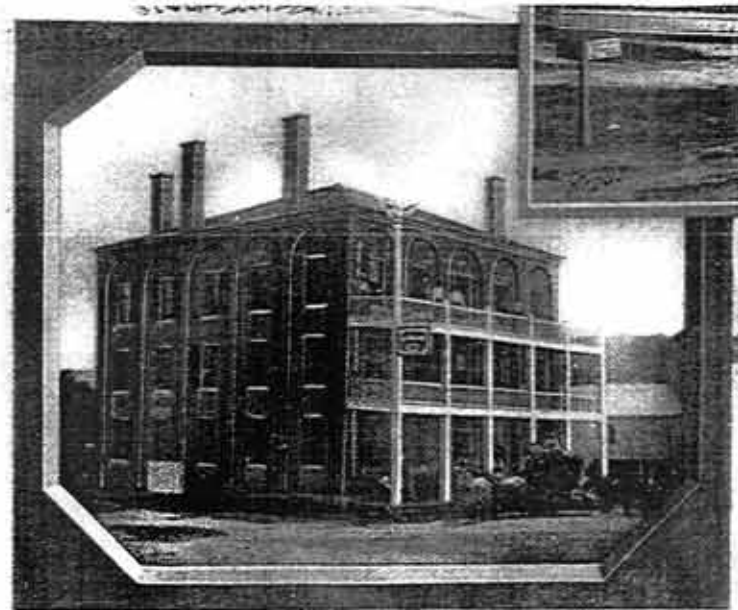
Sullivan County was created under an act of July 5, 1827. Newport was designated the county seat. From that time forward, Newport's status as a shire town reinforced the need for good lodgings. The Eagle Hotel filled that need. The Old Sullivan County Courthouse and The Eagle Hotel, both built at the same time, mark Newport's transition from an ordinary country town into a regional center of outstanding importance.

Many Newport buildings of this era are attributed to two local brick masons, John Silver and John Silver, Jr. Using distinctive bricks made in and around Newport, the Silvers appear to have developed a local school of masonry that placed unusual emphasis on the arch. The brick arcades on the sides of The Eagle Block that face Main and Central Streets represent a new expression in brick architecture in this area in the 1820s. This treatment was reserved for buildings which were public in nature.

The Eagle Block is significant as an example of skillful and imaginative brickwork from an era when brick construction was in its pioneering phase in most of New Hampshire. Nowhere else in the state do we find standing examples of brick buildings from this period which display such a combination of distinctive local materials, complex structural elements, and sophisticated decorative features.

The Eagle continued in business as a hotel under several landlords until 1856, when it was converted to retail use by Samuel H. Edes, Sr. Throughout the remainder of the nineteenth century and well into the twentieth, The Eagle Block, as it was then called, continued to house several businesses. As their activities demanded it, the Edes family modified the building to accommodate new uses. The most dramatic of these changes occurred in 1928, when the family removed most of the internal partitions from the second and third floors.

The Eagle Block was hard used during the remainder of the twentieth century. It suffered from several fires, from the Hurricane of 1938, from frequent remodeling under a series of owners, and from a general lack of investment and care. On July 25, 1993, the rear portion of the building was damaged by arson. Despite its neglected condition, The Eagle Block remains one of the most significant and dramatic buildings of its era in New Hampshire.



Historic Photo of The Eagle with 3 Stories of Porches

## The Process

Community members and about a three dozen professionals met at Newport's Opera House for two days in July to talk about the existing Eagle Block and to examine possibilities for its reuse and redevelopment. Design team members included planners, engineers, landscape architects, structural engineers, historic preservation professionals, artists, historians, community development professionals, and real estate developers.

The professional expertise of this group was extensive, but did lack one crucial piece of information that only the Town of Newport could provide. Local residents are the town experts and the charrette couldn't possibly be as effective without their input and knowledge. With that in mind, the design team and residents joined forces and the town experts talked with the design experts about their community: The Town of Newport.

On Friday morning, Patryc Wiggins and Kathy Hubert talked to the group about the revitalization efforts at The Eagle and the history and purpose of the Economic Corporation of Newport (ECON). ECON is the current owner of The Eagle and has been working hard to promote the redevelopment of both the building and downtown Newport. This has included hosting the New England Artists Congress, a cultural/community development conference in 1997, and several other major projects.

ECON led the group on a walking tour in and around The Eagle Block, with a rich historical and architectural lesson from Jim Garvin, the State Architectural Historian. At two public sessions on Friday afternoon and evening, Newport residents demonstrated that their community has an abundance of character and that the town has many cultural, recreational and historic resources to expand upon and enrich. As the day progressed it became very clear that Newport residents have a lot of pride in their community and are concerned about securing a positive future for The Eagle Block and for their entire downtown area.



Dr. James Garvin, NH's State Architectural Historian, leads a field tour of The Eagle Block.



## What We Heard/What We Saw

Newport is a community that has largely been bypassed by the recent economic growth enjoyed in many other areas of New England. The town has seen its economic vitality deteriorate as many of its businesses have either left or moved towards the outskirts of town. Community members understand that their downtown needs to be re-energized.

Many town members look at The Eagle Block as a symbol for all of Newport. The Eagle is a unique historic building which has become tired and underutilized in the past few decades. While The Eagle needs attention, it should also garner a lot of local pride. Without a great deal of local effort, The Eagle might have already become a memory. Local effort has been the impetus behind getting discussions about redevelopment on track. The town knows that revitalizing The Eagle is not just about sprucing up a single block of a downtown area. Rather it represents one of many steps that Newport must take to rejuvenate its entire downtown.

An important theme that was woven throughout the discussions at the charrette was the importance of building upon the qualities and resources already found within Newport. The key to revitalizing Newport will not be found only in courting outside economic development into town. Solutions to Newport's economic shortfalls must also be derived from the inside. Newport has a wealth of heritage and working traditions that make this community unique and interesting. Building upon local strengths will provide the most enduring foundation for future economic development and will help serve as a foundation for local pride and community identity.

The Eagle Block is the hub of the wheel for re-development of Newport's downtown. The goals of Newport mirror the goals for The Eagle Block. The town realizes that successful economic development must start with giving people a reason to come to downtown Newport.



Pictured Above and on Right; Scenes from Public Meeting to Identify Town Goals and Needs.

Currently there are only a few shops, and a noticeable lack of both public meeting places and restaurants. The town needs a welcome mat for visitors and a gathering place for locals and visitors alike. With this thought in mind, town members suggested the following types of activities or development as keys to revitalizing downtown:

- **Cultural Activities**, including museums to highlight the prehistory, manufacturing history, and the cultural, recreational, and environmental assets of the area; and space to promote local crafts, individual artisans, and the community arts movement in Newport.
- **Restaurants** are sorely lacking in Newport, and the downtown would benefit greatly by supporting the development of a restaurant or café.
- **Community Center** to give residents a common meeting place and space for a youth or recreation center.
- **Specialty Retail** to tap small niche markets. Many of the larger chains will out compete traditional retail stores. Examples cited were a bookstore, music store, stationary store, etc.
- **Incubator Space** for small start-up enterprises.
- **Public Institutions**, like a welcome center or space for non-profit/public institutions.

These initiatives must be pieces of a larger plan. For example, a restaurant or café will only be economically viable with other downtown initiatives underway. Without other attractions or draws to the downtown area, a restaurant would be hard pressed to make a go of it alone.

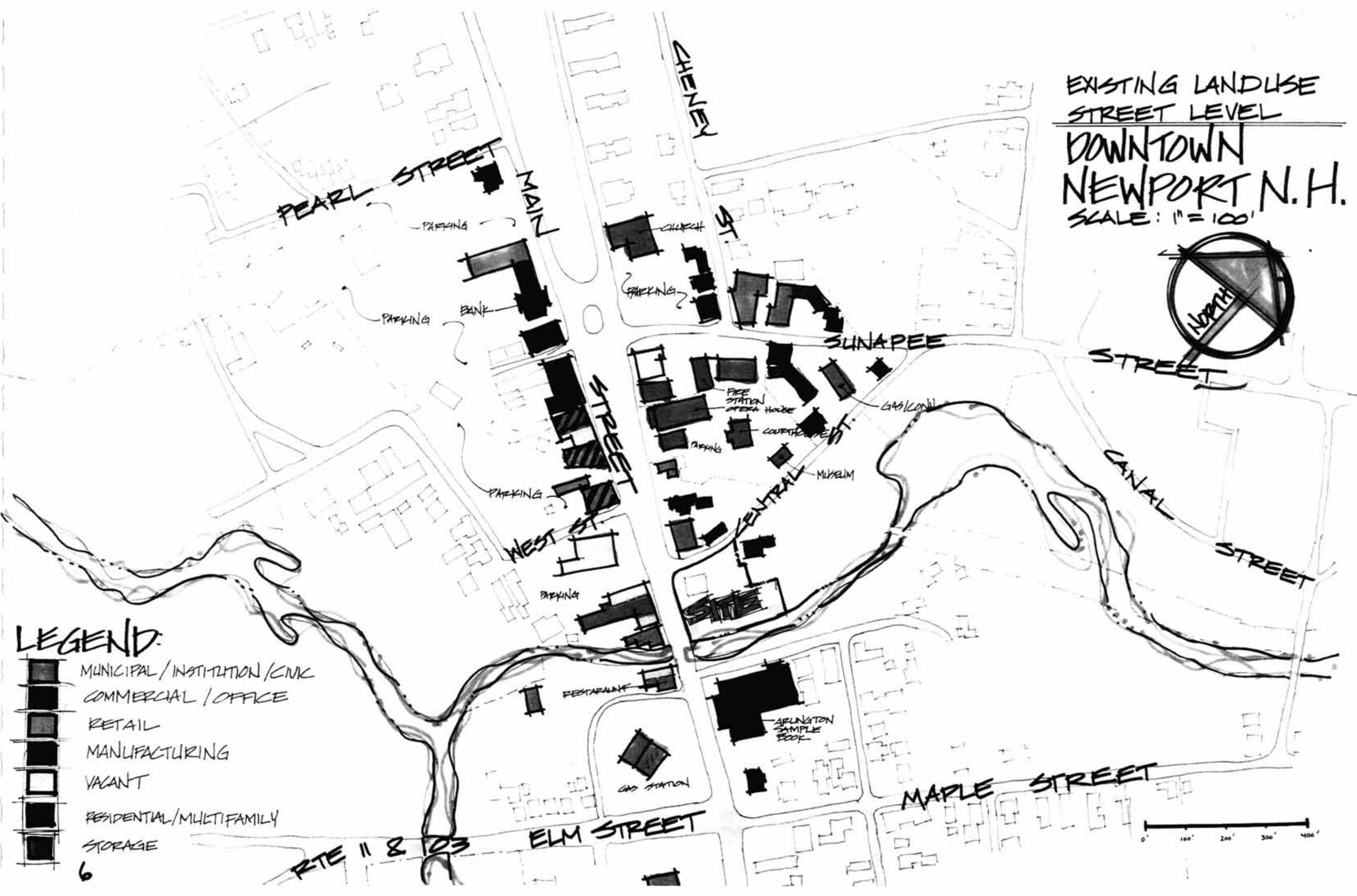


EXISTING LANDUSE  
STREET LEVEL  
**DOWNTOWN  
NEWPORT N.H.**  
SCALE: 1" = 100'



**LEGEND:**

- MUNICIPAL/INSTITUTION/CNLC
  - COMMERCIAL/OFFICE
  - RETAIL
  - MANUFACTURING
  - VACANT
  - RESIDENTIAL/MULTIFAMILY
  - STORAGE
- 6





## Newport Conditions

Newport is at the right stage, and in a good position, to approach revitalization. The town has a tight downtown area and has seen no significant modernization take place in the recent past. The original details of the storefronts are still there, not buried behind aluminum and plastic panels from the 1950s and 1960s. Newport's natural resources and recreational assets, along with its unique manufacturing heritage and abundance of cultural and historical resources, are significant and provide a good place to start the discussion about re-development.

Newport is the county seat for Sullivan County and most of its municipal services and offices are downtown. The Sugar River runs through the heart of the town. The downtown is close to biking, hiking, skiing and other resources. The post office, historical society, and many churches are all centrally located, and the river and exceptional town green add a great deal of character and visual appeal. Recent lighting and landscaping improvements, and a community mural added to Main Street have made the town look even better. The town should also think of the scale of their downtown buildings and the availability of free parking as important assets.

With this said, Newport should approach its redevelopment by building upon all of the good things that already exist. Newport needs a critical mass of attractions and services downtown to realistically support and maintain a consistent flow of visitors and store patrons. Newport's current population tops out at around 6,300 people. Attracting people from neighboring towns and from other areas of the state and region will be an important component of maintaining the downtown in the long term.



View of The Eagle Block Looking from the South on Main Street

One of the current problems is the already substantial vacancy rate in downtown. Newport has approximately 180,000 square feet of available building "stock", which includes office, retail and apartment space. Approximately 36,000 square feet or 20% of this space is currently vacant. The land use map on the opposite page shows that there are 4 vacant buildings almost directly across from The Eagle Block on Main Street. Two others are located a block up on Main Street near the Opera House. This vacancy rate detracts from the downtown and presents a barrier to redevelopment initiatives.



Historic View of Opera House Block in the Downtown Center

The largest employers in Newport are Ruger Firearms, Dorr Woolen Co. and the Arlington American Sample Co. Approximately 60% of Newport residents worked in their community as of 1990, as compared with 30% of Sunapee's residents, and 18% of Newbury's residents. Newport should look to capitalize on the fact that many of its residents both live and work in their community by improving the livability of its downtown.



View of The Eagle Block Looking from the North on Main Street



NEWPORT STREETScape



SCALE: 1" = 50'

LINK TO  
EXIST. FIELD

SUNAPEE RD

STREET

MILL POND

PARK

SITE

MAIN ST.

PROPOSED  
COVERED  
BRIDGE

PROPOSED  
PEDESTRIAN  
VEHICULAR  
BRIDGE

NATURAL  
TRAIL

EXISTING  
BRIDGE

PEDESTRIAN  
ACCESS  
TRAIL SYSTEM  
VEHICULAR  
ACCESS

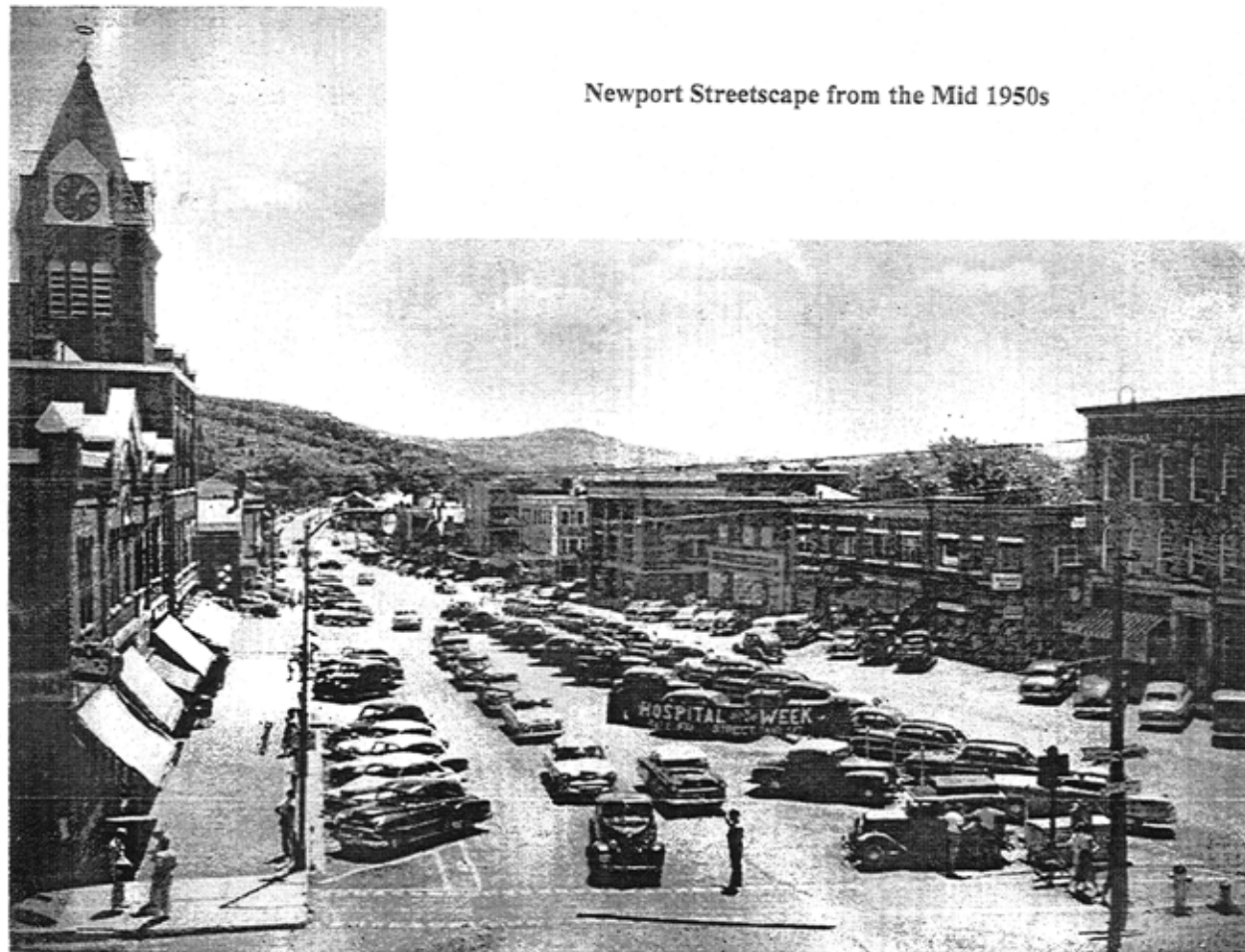


## Streetscape

Routes 10 and 103/11 converge in Newport and serve as a major transportation corridor in the area. This has resulted in a great deal of commercial traffic passing through downtown. This relatively heavy truck traffic creates problems with noise pollution and detracts from the feeling of an inviting central retail area. When evaluating ideas for future redevelopment, it is crucial for Newport to understand the scope of these traffic and noise issues and to develop strategies to minimize or mitigate these problems.

A quick look at the traffic counts in this area shows that Main Street (north of Elm Street) has seen a consistent increase in average daily traffic since the early 1990s. In 1992, the annual average daily traffic was about 14,000 vehicles. This increased to 15,000 in 1995 and 16,000 in 1998. Sunapee Street, east of the square had an average daily traffic count of 9100 in 1996. Clearly, Main Street and surrounding downtown streets are exceptionally busy.

There are no obvious or immediate solutions to the thru-traffic problem. Short term fixes might include planting trees or other buffers to create a noise barrier, or possibly creating pleasant background noise with new waterfalls or fountains. In the long term, the town should consciously strive to encourage development that does not add to the thru-traffic problem and to look for alternative trucking routes. The town needs economic development, but it does not need development that makes traffic and circulation problems even worse.



Newport Streetscape from the Mid 1950s

MAIN STREET, NEWPORT

L. R. Whitney Photo

The quantity of parking available in Newport's downtown area, as mentioned, is a community asset and one which many towns and cities would envy. While parking is widely available, it still could be better organized to meet the needs of a downtown user. The streetscape could be improved to enhance pedestrian links between parking areas and retail areas. Pedestrian trails bridging residential areas with downtown would provide town members with a pleasant alternative to driving downtown.

Safely linking the downtown area with public areas would also encourage people to take walks through town. This might lead to chance encounters with neighbors and friends and would help redefine downtown Newport as a central gathering place for the community. The Eagle Block could serve as an excellent site for a park, possibly with gardens, sculptures, benches and public meeting spaces along the Sugar River.



Streetscapes



Maintaining a constant rhythm and scale to buildings is also an important goal. Newport's downtown has a nice consistent look and the town has done well to maintain many of the central buildings. The Eagle Block represents an important focal point for maintaining this scale.

THE EAGLE - A VIEW TO THE FUTURE





## Design Principles for Downtown Newport

The downtown area is the central core of Newport. This area speaks to the history of Newport and represents its value system. Design work and downtown revitalization efforts should be completed with the following principles in mind.

- **Counteract forces that are drawing activity out of downtown.** Every move out of downtown will diminish the likelihood of it regaining a central presence in Newport. The vacancy rate downtown is a concern, but there are ways to overcome and minimize this problem. Newport has a lot going for it when one looks at the village green, the public buildings, and institutions that make up the current fabric of the downtown.
- **Draw activities into the Village that make economic sense.** Downtown will never look, or be, as it was before. The national economy has changed dramatically and things that were economically feasible 30 or 40 years ago may not be so today. Downtown Newport is, however, in a good position to move forward. The heart of town can be a small scale commercial, professional, institutional, and residential center. Focus on developing niche markets and specialty retail. Many of the pieces are already in place.
- **Vehicles and pedestrians need to co-exist downtown.** It isn't hard to see that Newport is a part of an automobile-based society. In fact you do not have to look any farther than Main Street to see this. While thru-traffic will not disappear in downtown Newport, that does not mean that pedestrian use should not be encouraged and enhanced. The scale of truck traffic downtown is a concern, and one that needs attention. In the long term, a bypass route for trucking may become a viable solution to alleviate some of the problems faced today. In the mean time, short term strategies (e.g. buffering) should be pursued to lessen the impacts of thru-trucking.
- **Vacant space, both land and buildings, works against the downtown's role as a core.** A downtown is defined as the business center or commercial center of town. Any vacant buildings or land in this central core detracts from its ability to serve as a hub. A downtown needs to provide a variety of services to stay viable and Newport needs to find new activity for buildings and land that are, or are about to be, vacant.

The physical development of Newport, as in many towns, was based on a set of goals and circumstances from a different era. The downtown was originally laid out for horses, people and wagons. Now the downtown is dominated by automobiles and trucks. Fitting a development pattern based on a different time and place into one with today's current demands can be challenging. Newport needs some planning to make sure that the town has safe sidewalks, convenient parking and an attractive streetscape. These features will improve the compatibility of pedestrians and vehicles and will help market this area as a destination.

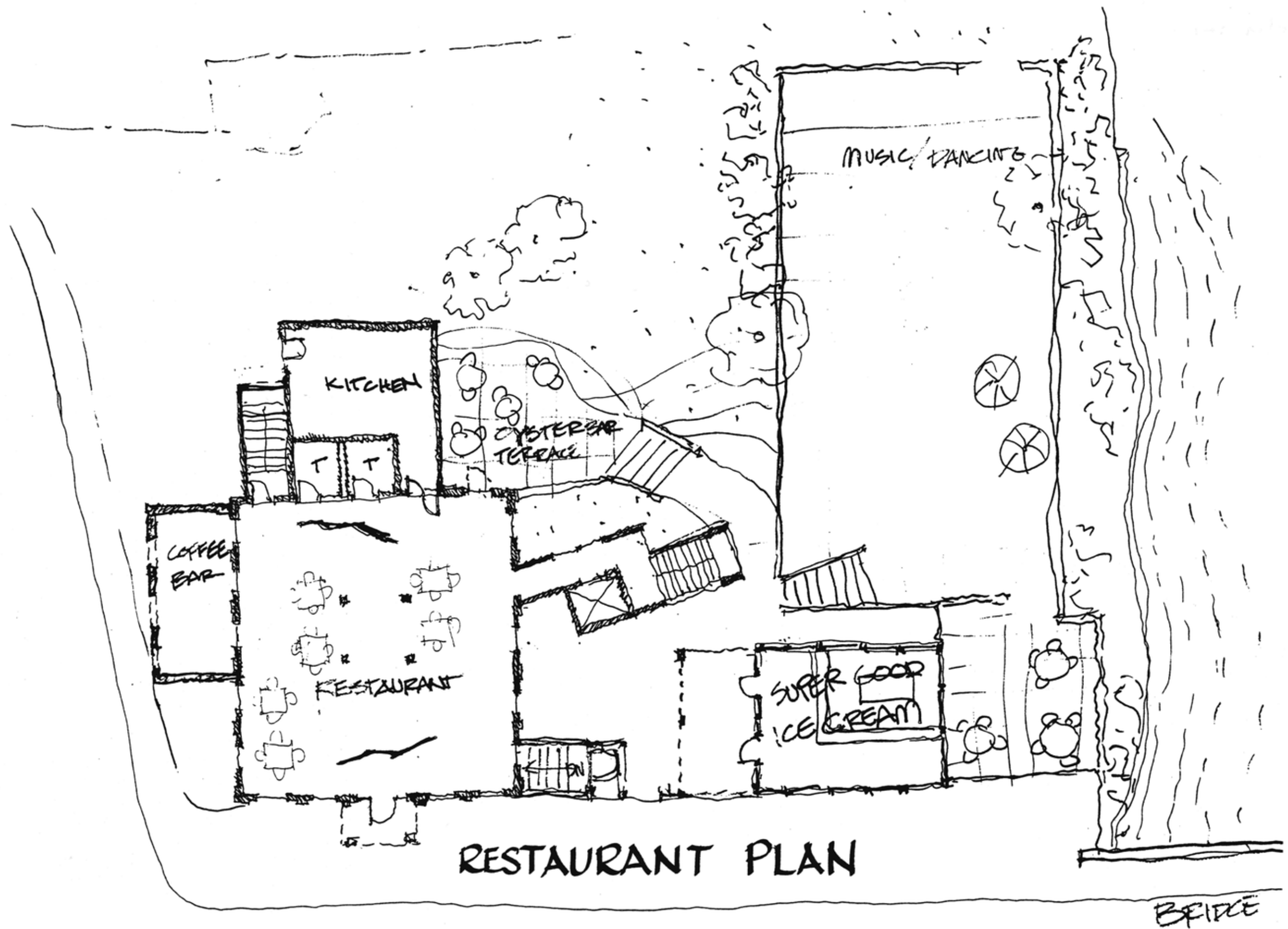
Zoning regulations in town should reflect these principles and facilitate development that maintains consistent scale and rhythm of buildings. The town should look at its zoning regulations in the downtown area to make sure that its building setbacks are consistent with goals for maintaining a downtown streetscape. Newport should also consider developing an overlay district to protect important cultural and historic features of downtown. A "civic, cultural and historic" overlay district could help promote revitalization efforts and focus economic development efforts on the arts and historic or cultural features.

Keep in mind that individual efforts will have more impact if they contribute to a consistent whole or a unified vision. Consider combining 3 or 4 demand elements to achieve a critical mass. Ideas for recreation development might want to focus on bike tours, hiking, canoeing or kayaking down the Sugar River. Crafts and arts initiatives might want to focus on antiques, New Hampshire crafts (for artisans not in the League of NH Craftsmen), or photographers. The music and performing arts tradition is exceptionally strong in Newport. The Opera House offers an excellent opportunity to build upon this tradition. Historic and cultural development might want to look at machine tool industry, firearms, textiles or timber. Newport has an interesting story to tell about its industrial heritage and should not be shy about sharing it.

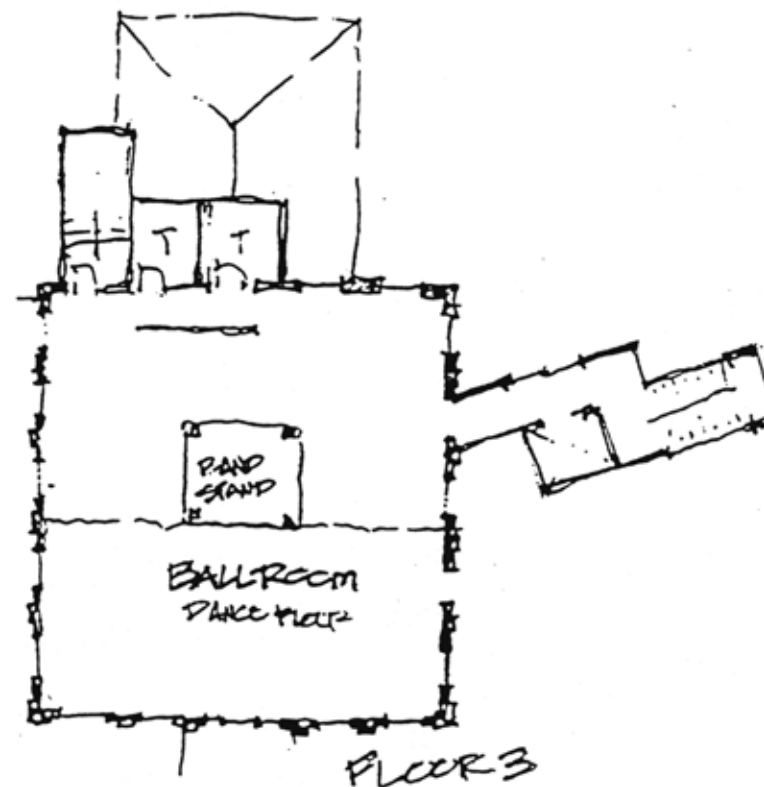
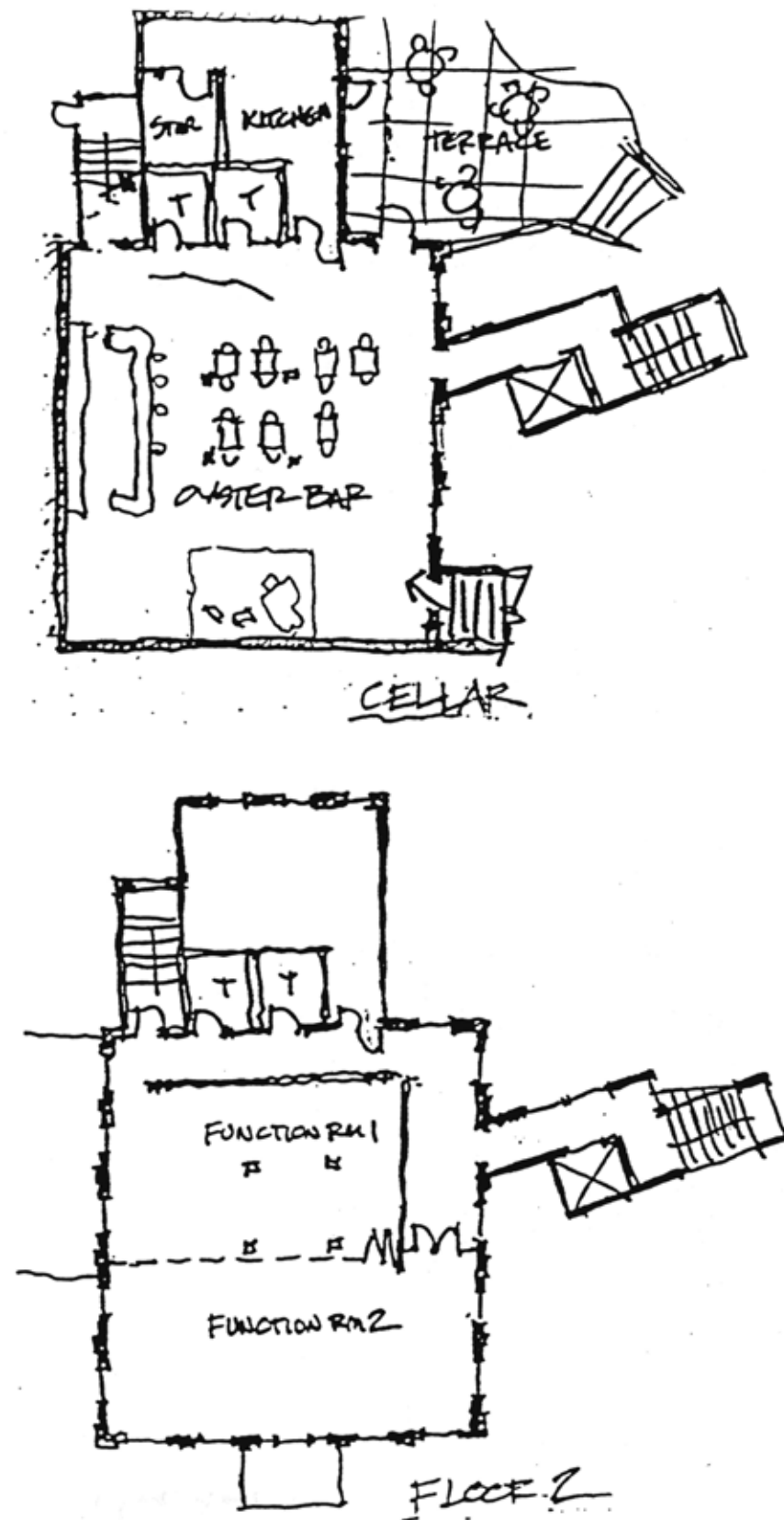


The Eagle Block would also serve the town well as the center point for promoting the entire Sugar River Valley. Newport needs to market its well-defined self-identity. Promotional efforts should focus both on day-trippers from New Hampshire and on out-of-state visitors who are just passing by. It is important to provide reasons for people to stop and get out of their cars. Cultural and historic attractions, paired with services and recreational opportunities, would go a long ways towards meeting this goal. The recently established Sargent Museum of Archeology and Anthropology in downtown Newport is one specific resource to build upon in the near future.

The following pages apply these basic design principles to a variety of re-development schemes for The Eagle. They should be viewed as examples, not as directives. They point the way to options, not necessarily towards the final project. They should be viewed as illustrative and used to stimulate thinking about The Eagle.







## Proposal 1: Restaurant/Café

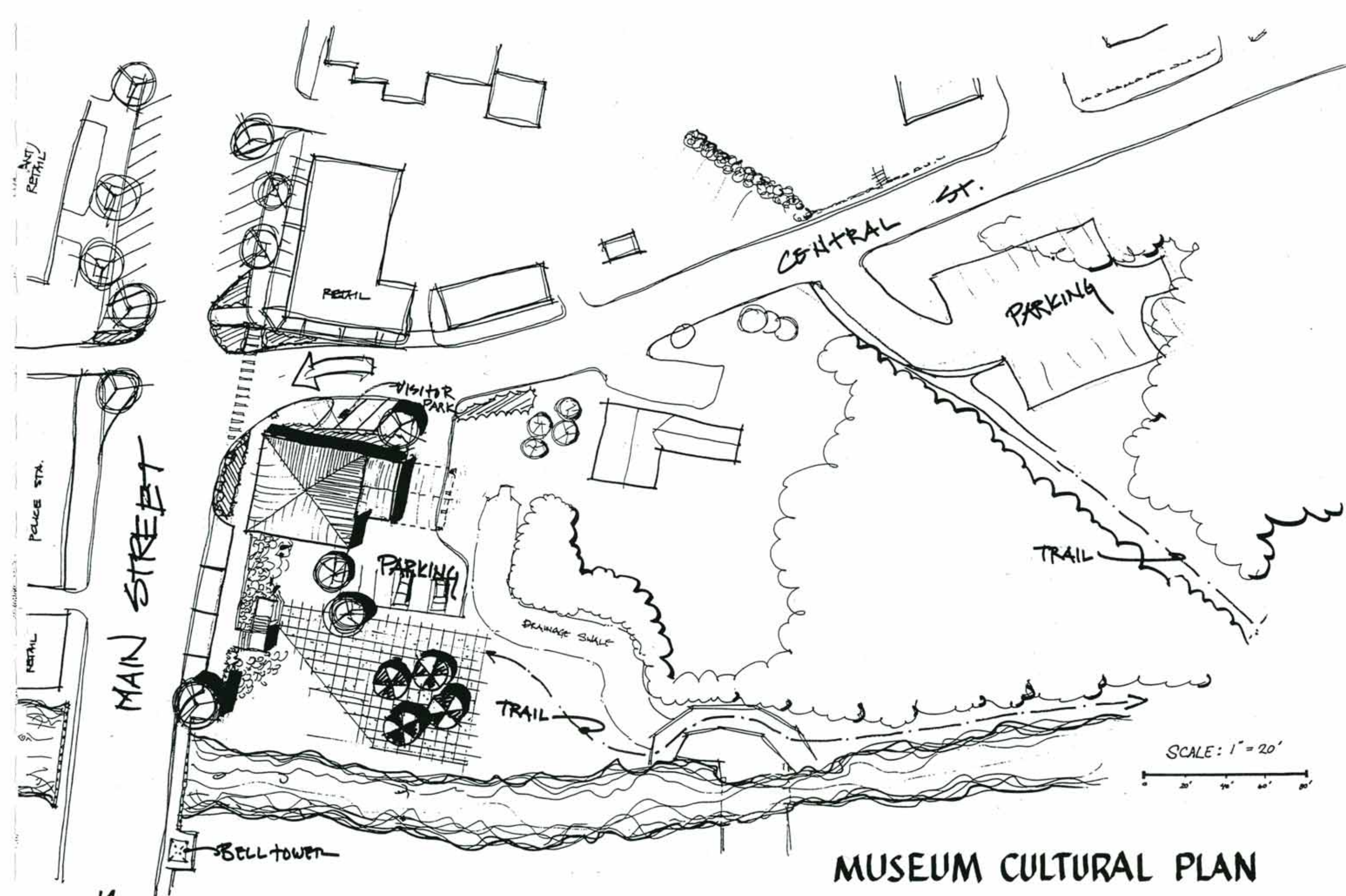
All three plans discussed in this report reflect similar goals. The idea is to welcome people to town and to provide information about what the Newport area has to offer. These concepts are woven through all three of the plans, but each has a different emphasis.

Proposal 1 builds upon themes that came up throughout the weekend: Newport needs a restaurant or café downtown and people need a place to meet and socialize. While a restaurant is a valid idea, it must be done in conjunction with other people generators if it is to have any chance of success. Nothing exists in a vacuum and a restaurant's success would most likely need to be tied to an increase in activity at the Opera House at the very least. People need to be given a reason to be downtown in the first place for a service-related business, like a restaurant, to survive.

The conceptual floor plans and site plan for Proposal 1 show ideas for each floor and for the entire property. The basement or ground floor would have a bar with live music. A terrace behind The Eagle would be used as outside seating for the bar. The main floor would provide more formal dining. The plan also calls for coffee bar off to the side of the restaurant on the main floor.

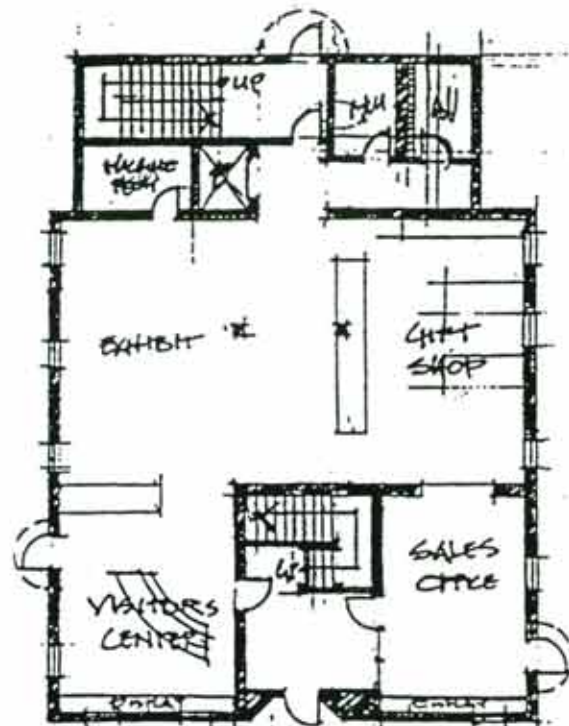
The grounds would be redeveloped to provide outside public meeting space with plans for an ice cream shop and areas designated for music and dancing. The two upper levels would have function rooms and a dance floor. This plan would also call for slight extensions of the utilities and kitchen facilities in a new addition off of the back.

This proposal would generate tax revenue for the town, while still maintaining some of the features of a public resource. The open grounds near the river, slated here for outdoor music and dancing, would serve as a good space for people to meet in the warmer months. The function halls on the second floor and the large ballroom on the third floor could also be used as meeting spaces. The restaurant, pub and ice cream parlor are key places for people to gather, to stay a while, and to enjoy the area.

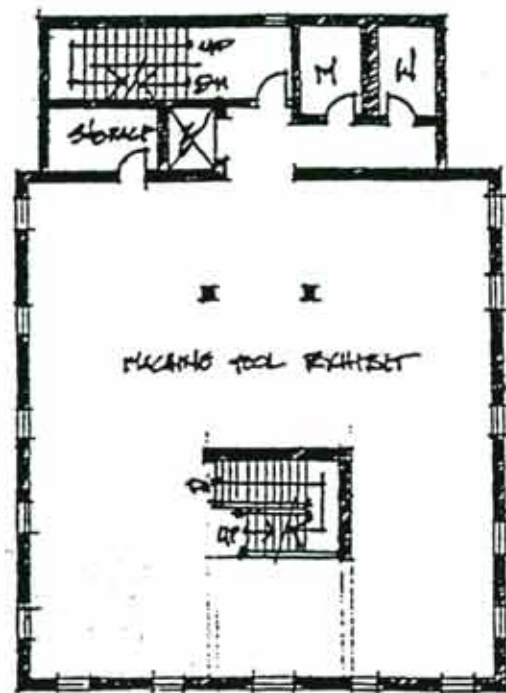


MUSEUM CULTURAL PLAN

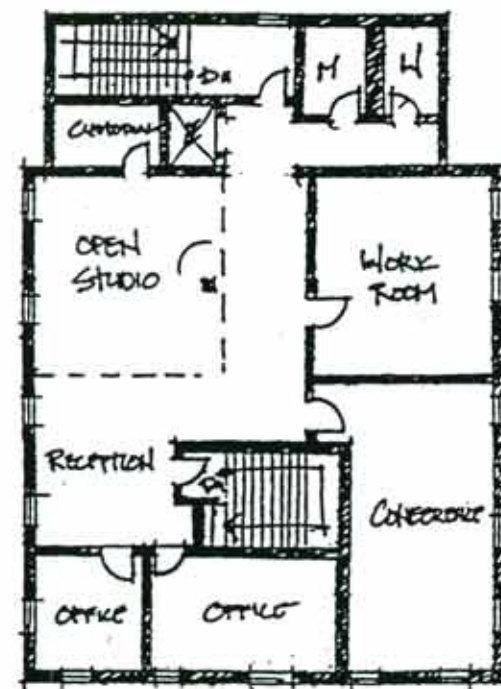




1<sup>ST</sup> FLOOR



2<sup>ND</sup> FLOOR



3<sup>RD</sup> FLOOR

## Proposal 2: Museum & Cultural Center

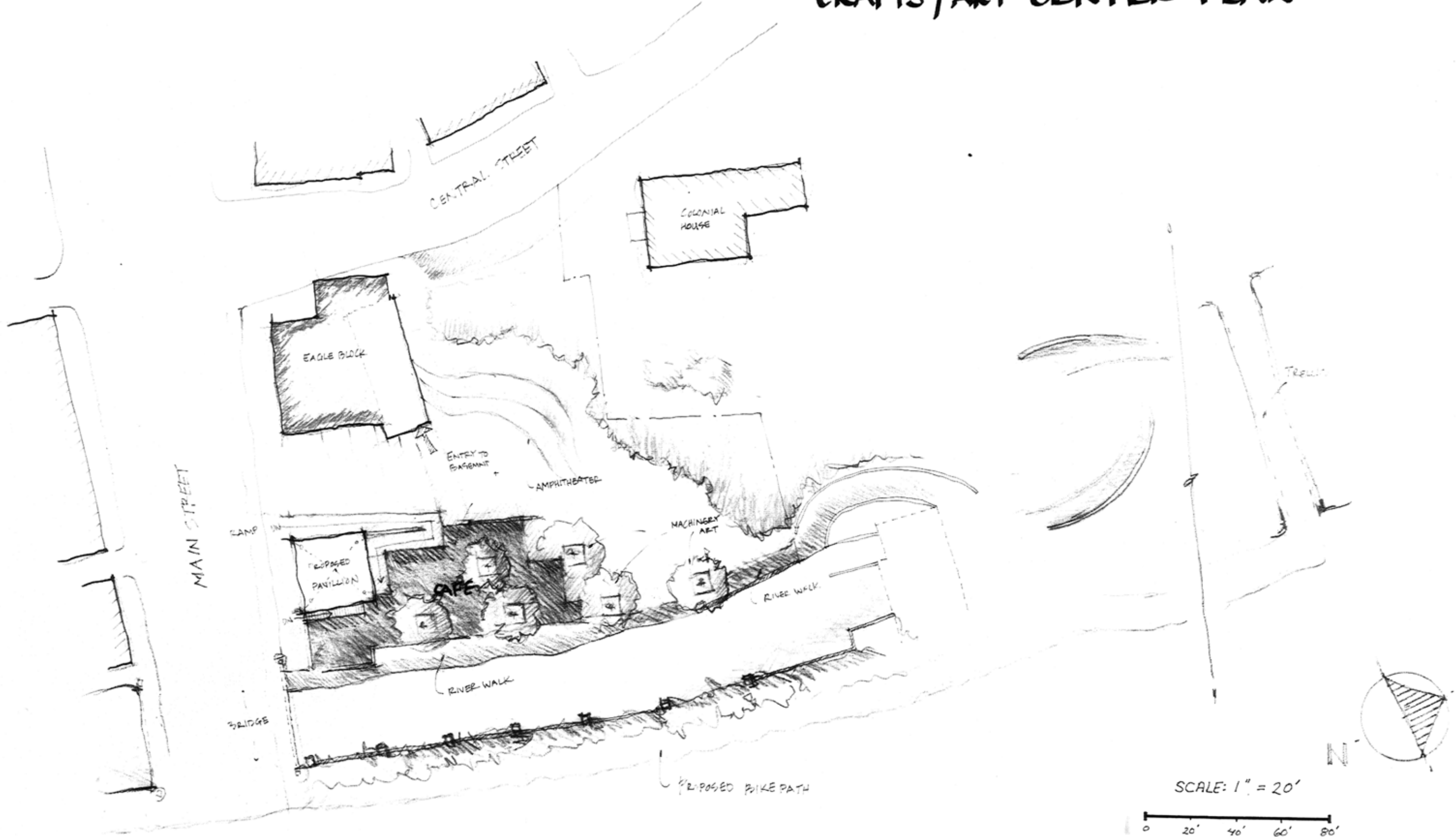
Plan 2 calls for the development of a museum on The Eagle Block site. This plan can be considered a cultural plan in that it provides a place for people to gather together, provides food services, and celebrates the community itself.

The cultural center plan builds off of the substantial manufacturing and precision machining history in Newport. The floor plans on the left hand side of the page show how the first floor could house a small visitor center, gift shop and exhibit space. The second floor could be used as a machine tool exhibit area. The third floor could be divided into a handful of separate work or conference room areas, including a studio, work room, conference room and a couple of offices. This gift shop and office space could be a tax revenue generator for the project.

The site plan on the opposite page shows that the land surrounding The Eagle could be revamped as well. A walking trail could weave through The Eagle Block property and an outside terrace would be used as a public meeting space. There could also be some public parking added along the Central Street side of The Eagle and behind the building. Public parking convenient to buildings is important as it reinforces its public identity.

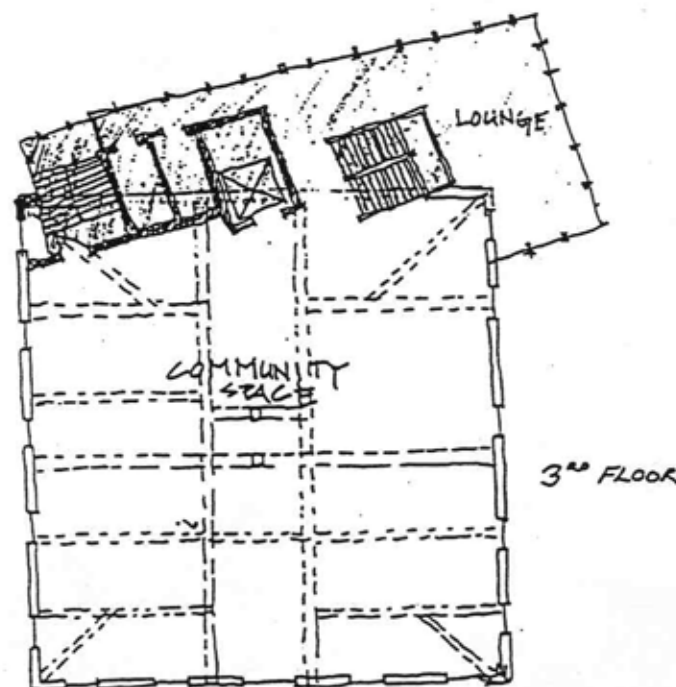
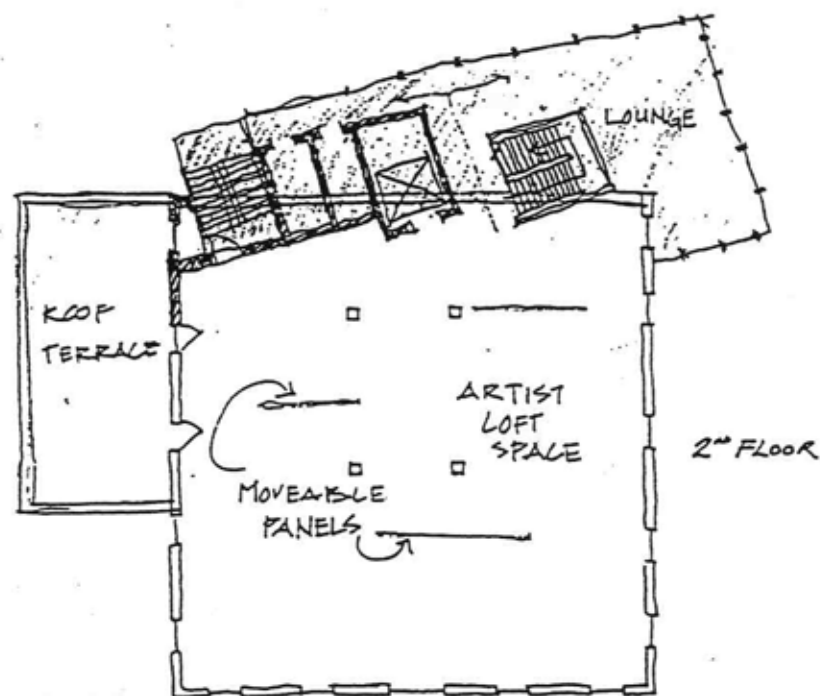
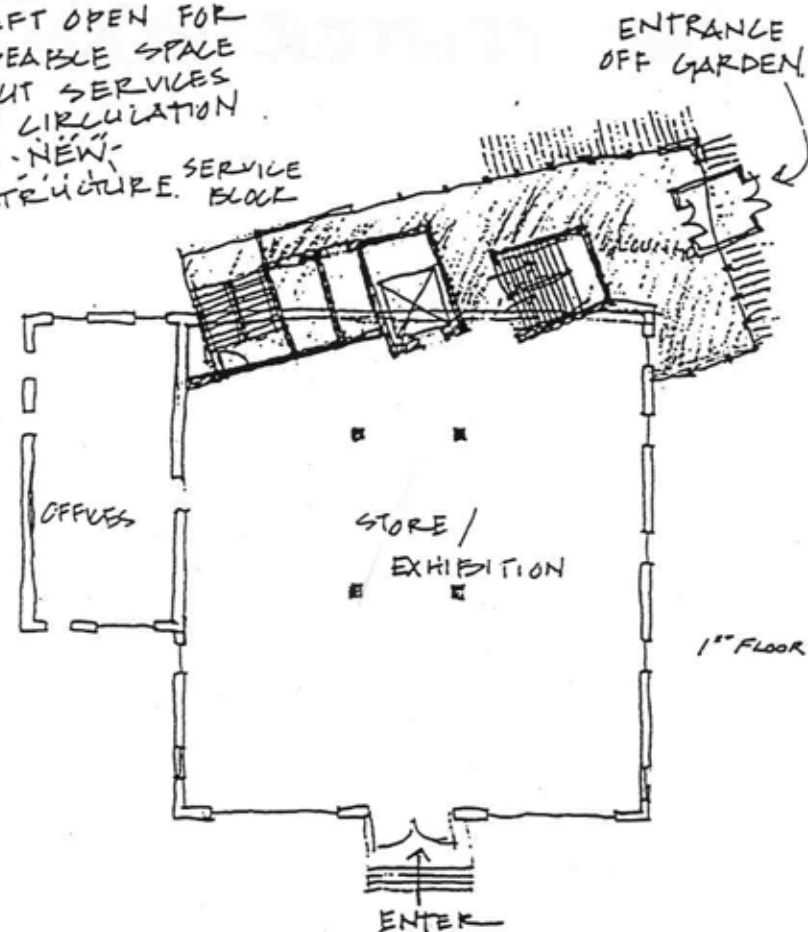
The types of building and site improvements presented here would likely require some public financing. However, keep in mind that The Eagle Block property serves as a perfect gateway into town and its location along the Sugar River provides the perfect setting for many types of public meeting spaces.

# CRAFTS/ART CENTER PLAN





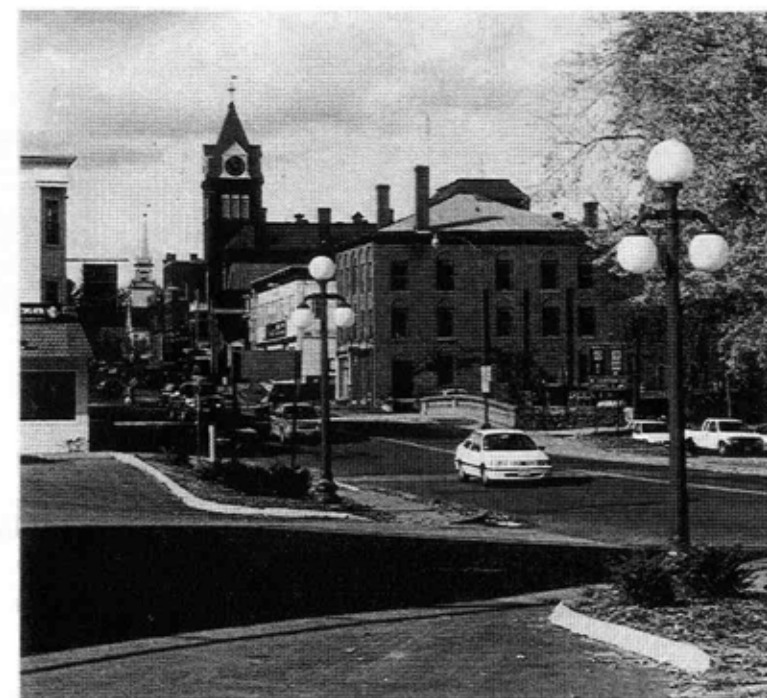
FL AREA CAN BE LEFT OPEN FOR USEABLE SPACE  
 • PUT SERVICES & CIRCULATION IN NEW STRUCTURE BLOCK

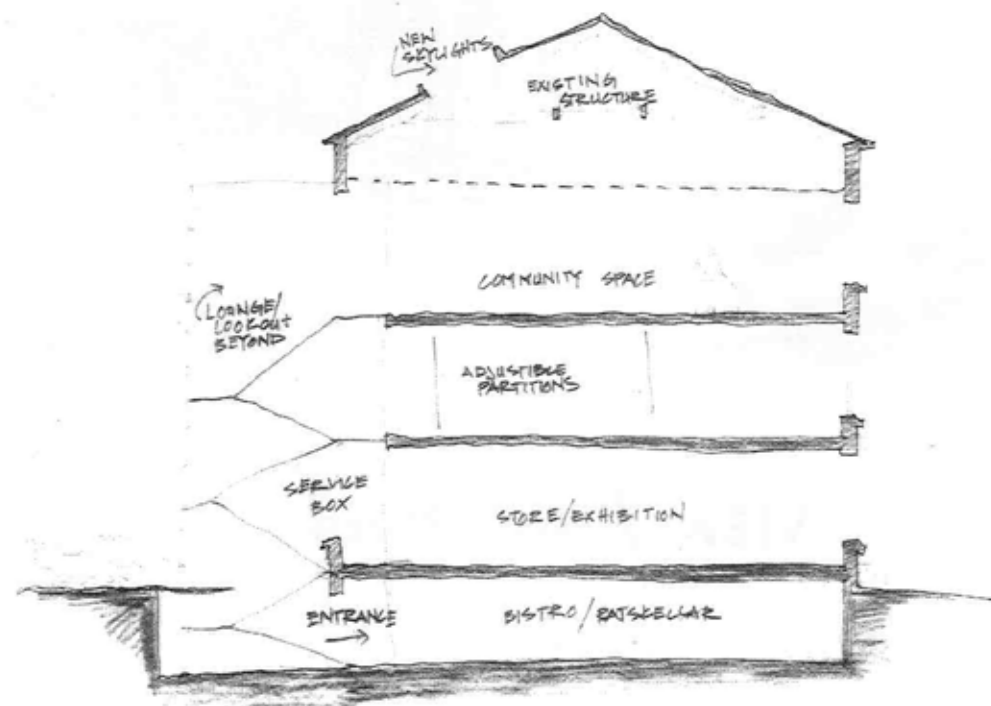


## Proposal 3: Crafts/Art Center

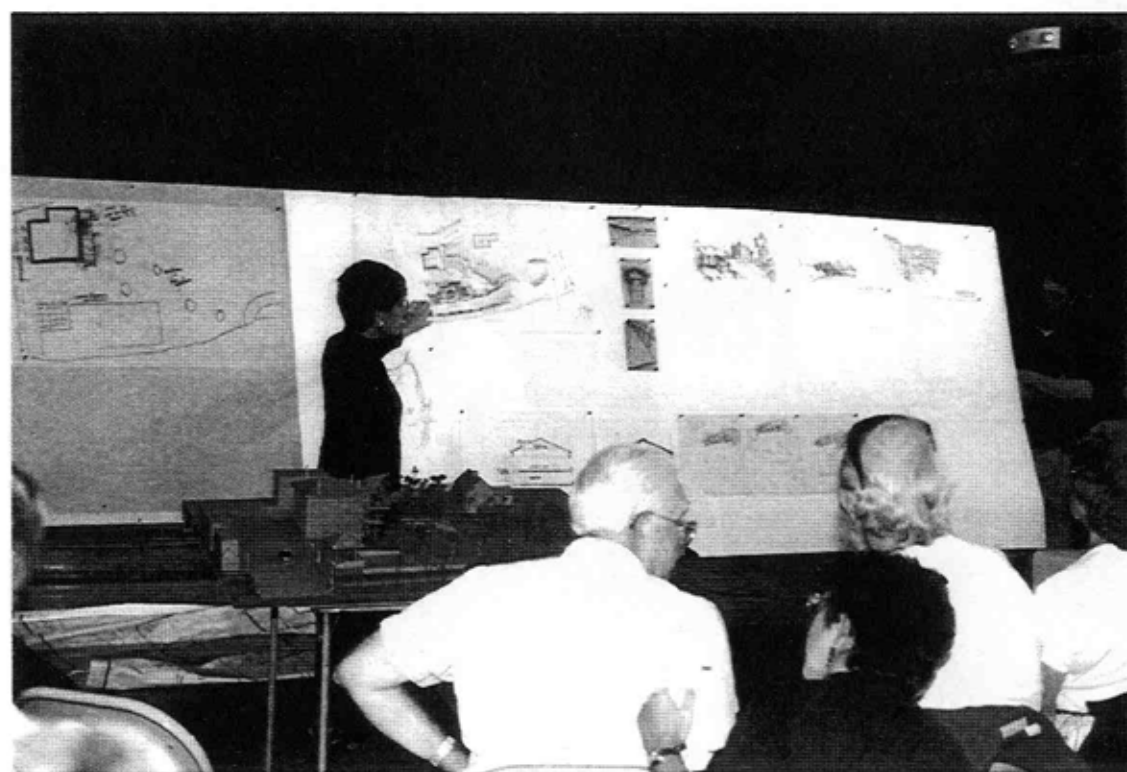
Proposal 3 also calls for the development of a cultural center, but focuses more directly on showcasing local and regional arts. The League of New Hampshire Craftsmen only represents a small fraction of the state's top artisans. There are a host of others who produce high end products, but who do not have an outlet for their wares. The Eagle could fill this niche by providing space for a local or regional artisans cooperative. This consortium could be marketed to visitors looking to take in, and understand more about, the history and culture of the area.

This proposal is similar to proposal 2 in that it still maintains designated space for meeting rooms, and still serves as a welcome center to celebrate Newport. The floor plans show that the ground floor would house a bistro or pub and could be accessed from the "new" garden entrance. The main floor would be used for store space and for exhibit space. An addition onto the back of the building would provide entrance off of the garden and would provide space for stairs, a small lounge area, and an elevator. The second floor would provide artist loft space and areas designated for moveable panels. A glass enclosed terrace would also be accessed from this floor. The third floor would be used as community space.





CROSS SECTION - FRONT TO BACK

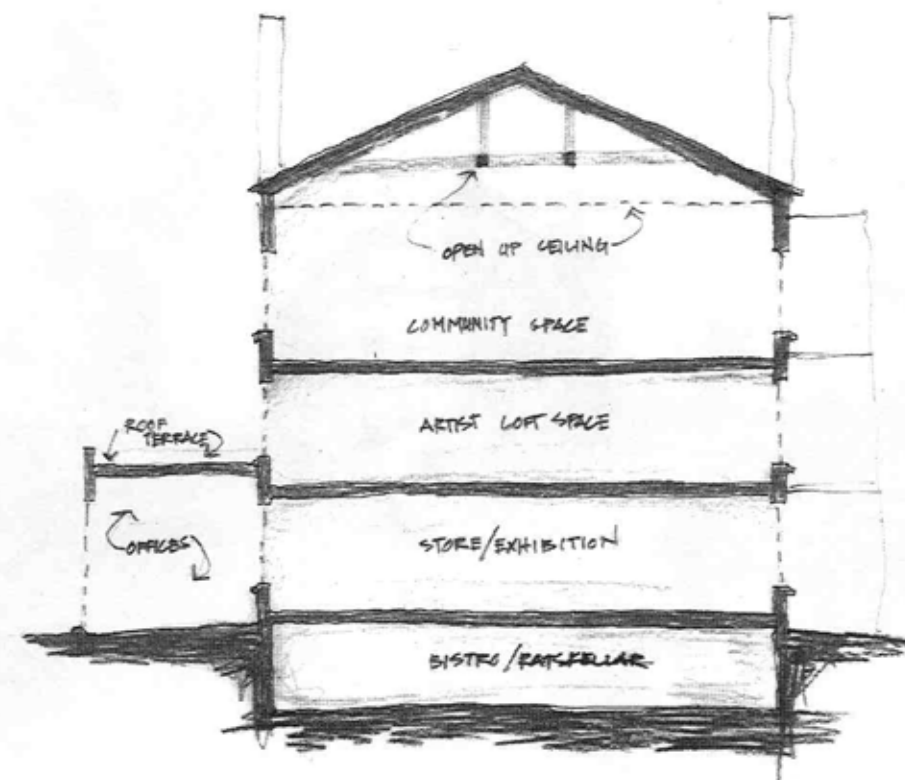


This proposal also has the most detailed plans for the property surrounding The Eagle building itself. The site plan on the opposite page shows that the land beyond The Eagle, would be developed into a natural amphitheater to make use of the existing contours on the property.

Behind the amphitheater and towards the river, machinery art would be placed throughout a sculpture garden to enhance the grounds. A café and a pavilion would be located adjacent to the river and up towards Main Street, providing a resting place and meeting place for residents and visitors alike. A riverwalk would also be developed to skirt the edges of the Sugar River, providing pedestrians with access from areas upstream to Main Street.

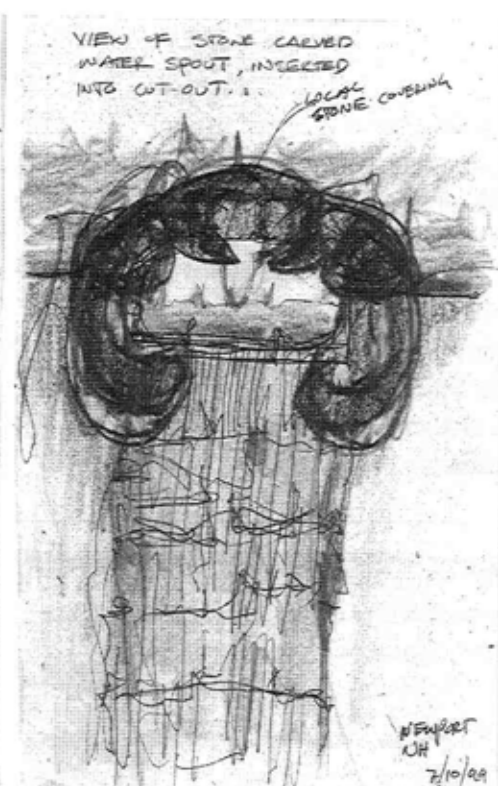
The following page provides a detailed look at the sculpture garden and waterfall plans. The truck noise passing The Eagle Block into downtown is clearly a problem. One short term fix might be to counteract this distracting noise with more pleasant background noise. Waterfalls would be created by inserting stone carvings into cutouts along the river banks and diverting some of the water flowing downstream.

This proposal would mix both public community space and private income generating space. The crafts store, restaurant and pub would all contribute to the tax rolls. The 3<sup>rd</sup> floor community area, amphitheater, outside gardens, trail and waterfalls would all be treated as public areas. The main floor would provide display space for artists to bring in more of a public gallery feel to the site.

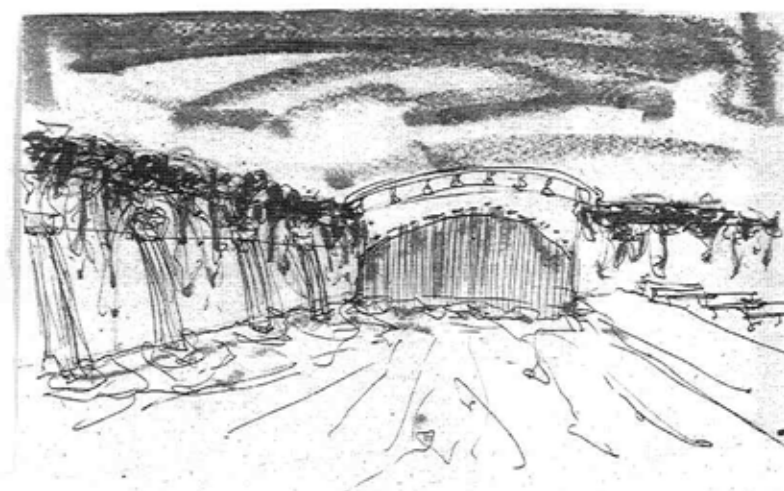


CROSS SECTION - SIDE TO SIDE

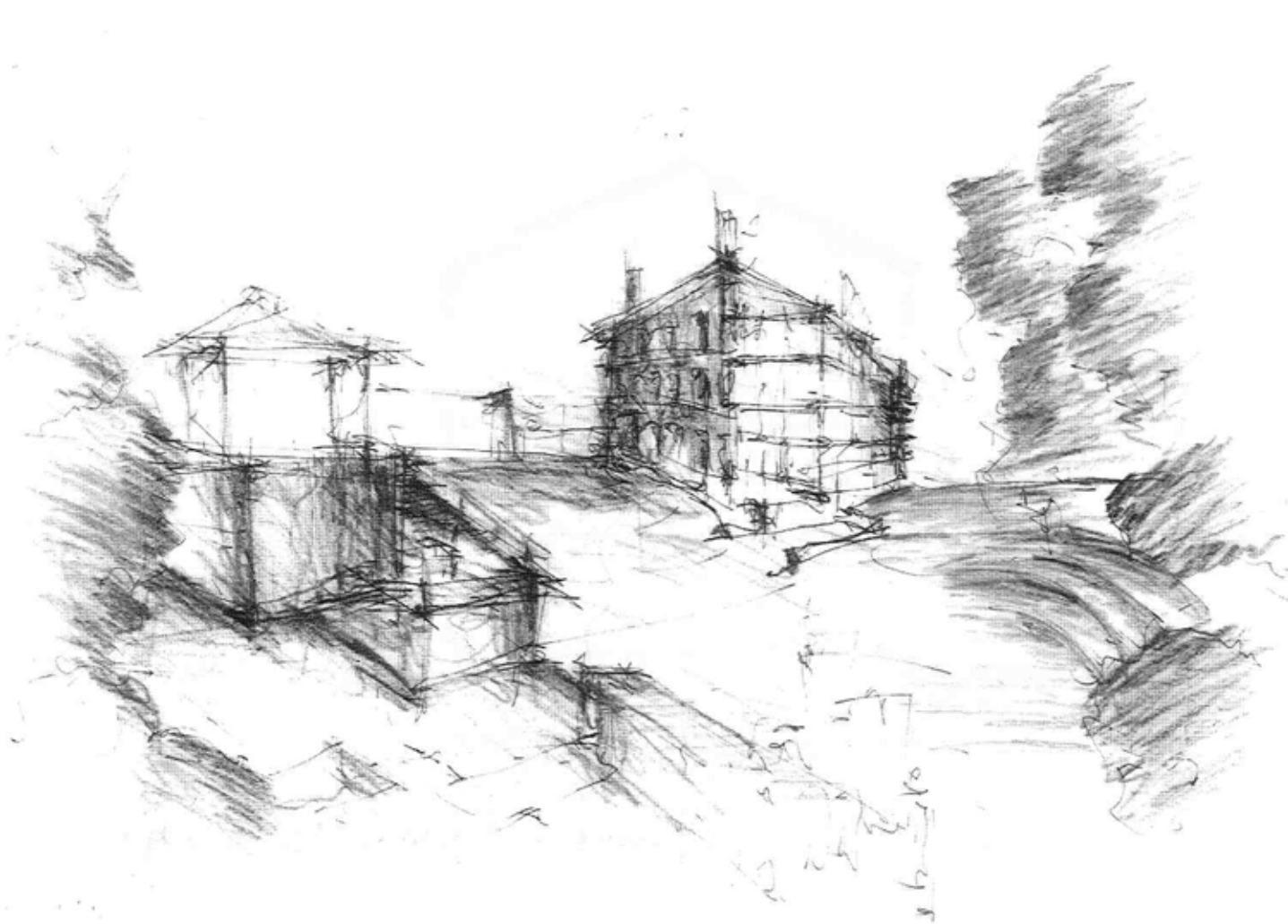




VIEW ALONG RIVER  
"TOWARDS BRIDGE"



## DETAILS OF SCULPTURE GARDEN



## Recommendations and Resources

The Town of Newport and its citizens know better than anyone what will work and what will not work in their community. PlanNH hopes that this Charrette has sprouted a few new thoughts and clarified alternatives. The town is in a great position to get started and is lucky to have strong leadership and enthusiastic community members on board. ECON is to be congratulated for acquiring The Eagle Block and preventing its demolition.

It is important to keep in mind that the three options discussed here are only possibilities. It is more important to understand the basic design principles behind any redevelopment the town pursues than to implement exact details of the sketches provided. Clearly Newport wants to re-energize the downtown area. Citizens want the downtown to be a central meeting place. They want to spruce up the look of downtown. They want the downtown to contribute more to the local economy. The Eagle Block can act as a focal point for these larger town-wide goals.

As with most towns, Newport has a limited tax base, and is looking for creative ways to pay for these improvements. As Newport decides how to move forward, it might be helpful to restate some of the principles that have guided the design team.

***With only limited funds available, it is crucial to invest them where you'll get the biggest return on your investment.***

Simple improvements are sometimes overlooked but can have lasting impacts on a community. Gateway improvements such as plantings, gardens and signs can make a big difference. Think of investing in places that represent the core of Newport. As you cross the river into downtown, you'll pass The Eagle and the entrance to downtown. The Eagle is a perfect location for a public meeting space or a welcoming center into town. The more attractive The Eagle looks to people as they drive by, the more likely they will be to stop and investigate it.

***Respect the existing structure and integrity of Main Street and the downtown.***

Newport has a lot of public services located in its downtown area. Make sure that they stay there. Look at town zoning to make sure that new structures are designed with an eye towards the scale and location of existing structures. Make sure that building setbacks are consistent. Two story buildings close to the sidewalk reinforce the existing pattern of downtown development. Single story buildings set back on a property with parking in front do not.

***Make The Eagle an anchor of downtown.***

The stronger the connection between The Eagle and the rest of downtown, the closer it will appear to be in the heart of downtown. Tie in The Eagle Block with landscaping, street lighting, and pedestrian amenities. Improvements can be made in stages. Even a small improvement will show the whole community that there is a plan for The Eagle and there is a serious commitment to make these improvements happen.

***Respect the qualities of the built environment already there.***

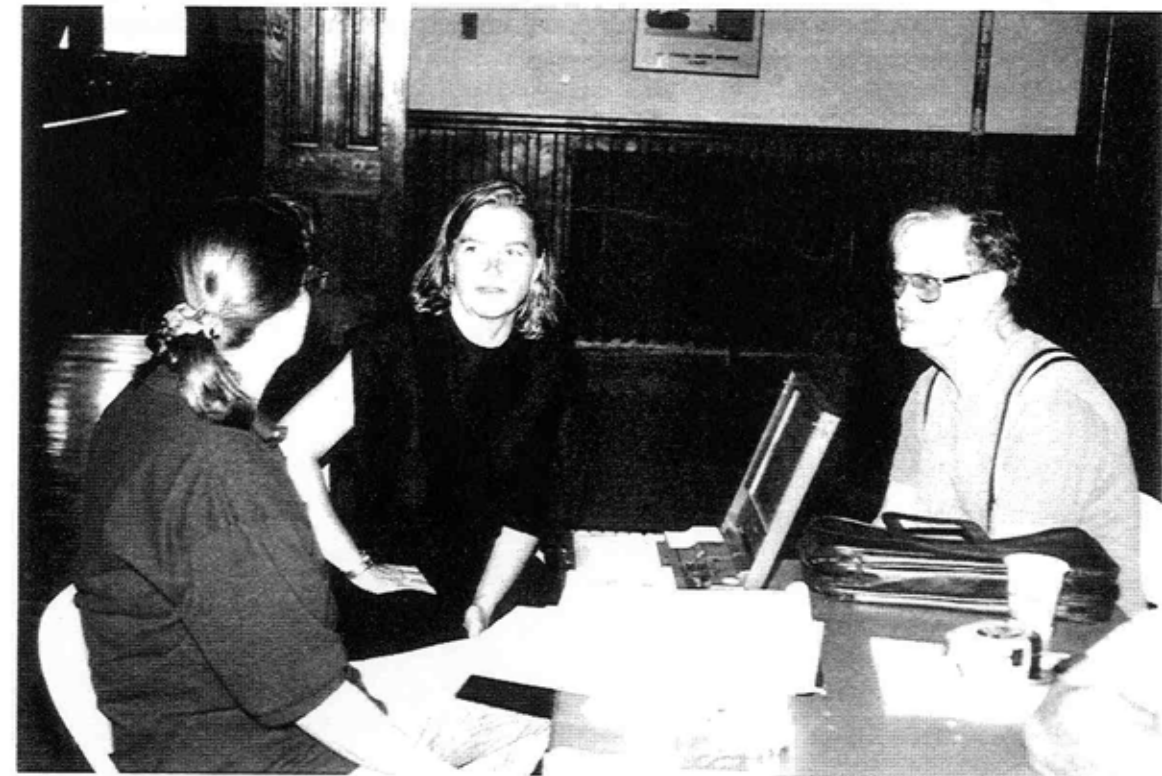
Reinforce the character already present in downtown Newport. Building setbacks, building height and massing should reflect other downtown development. Keep the character of The Eagle in tact. Imagine the downtown area as a house and The Eagle Block as an empty room. The Eagle and its surrounding property needs remodeling to make it consistent with the look of the rest of the "house".

***Satisfy the needs of the community and attract outsiders into downtown Newport.***

It would be nice if Newport could find a specific feature or attraction to get people to stop in downtown. Sometimes a unique feature or event can do the trick, sometimes it is simply providing an attractive downtown. The in-town citizens also need reasons to go downtown instead of heading to the retail strips to do their shopping.

***Get Started!***

There is a lot to do and there is no time like the present to get going! Small improvements, even getting the plywood off the doors and windows and cleaning up the site a bit, will get the ball rolling. Decide what is key and start to work on it. Community members told the design team that a primary goal was to revitalize downtown and bring in reasons for people to stop and stay awhile. If this is the desired end, focus efforts on ways of getting there.





## Cost Estimates and Plans

The cost estimates to the right show general renovation costs for each of the three options. This budget was submitted as a conceptual budget summary for reconstruction and renovation. The budget is based on a new interior structural frame and wood trussed roof system. There was also discussion of retaining and improving the existing wood frame. The costs of the two approaches are likely similar.

The \$1.4 million figure is a general estimate for getting The Eagle Block shaped up for re-use. The purpose of the numbers is to give an estimate of the magnitude of implementing any of these three options. It is important not to become overwhelmed by the scale of estimated costs. Not all of the expense needs to fall on the shoulders of ECON. Even those aspects which will remain in public ownership may be done, in whole or part, with grants and low interest loans. A list of governmental and foundation institutions are listed on the next page. Volunteer labor has reduced the cost of several projects in Newport, including the Corbin Bridge and The Opera House.

The important thing is to establish a vision and prepare a solid plan. A lot of effort has been expended by ECON and others just to keep The Eagle from demolition. This same energy should be focused on making The Eagle a true community resource. No one expects the entire Eagle property to be redeveloped all at once. However, it is crucial to develop and hold a vision and get moving on a few of its component parts. This provides a framework for getting started and provides ECON with a game plan so that individual investments may be coordinated with one another and progress can be measured and assessed.

***Good Luck!!!***

***Thanks for Having Us!!!***

***The PlanNH Design Team***

## EAGLE BLOCK DESIGN CHARRETTE CONCEPTUAL ESTIMATES

7500 Sq. Feet of Major Renovations And 900 Sq. Feet For a New North Addition  
8400 Gross Sq. Feet

BUDGET DESCRIPTION	COST
Project Requirements	\$9,000
Demolition, Sitework, Paving, Landscaping	\$104,750
Cast In Place Concrete	\$32,023
Masonry Systems and Masonry Restoration	\$191,450
Structural Steel, Seismic Upgrades, Miscellaneous Metals	\$145,213
Rough and Finish Carpentry	\$66,760
Thermal and Moisture Protection, Roofing	\$15,740
Doors, Windows and Hardware	\$73,000
Finishes	\$63,760
Specialties	\$12,000
3-Stop Elevator	\$55,000
Wet & Dry Fire Sprinkler Systems	\$17,500
Plumbing, Heating, Ventilation Systems	\$64,800
Electrical Systems	\$65,000
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>\$916,231</b>
Design/Construction Contingency	\$107,134
General Conditions & Requirements	\$112,000
Construction Managers Fee	\$103,229
Architect/Engineering Design Fees	\$155,000
Building Permits	Not Included
Payment & Performance Bond	Not Included
<b>TOTAL PROJECT CONSTRUCTION COST</b>	<b>\$1,393,594</b>

## Contacts and Resources

Bill Konrad  
Rural Development Administration  
Concord, NH  
223-6045

Rita Potter  
Economic Development Administration  
Concord, NH  
225-1624

David Umling  
Upper Valley Lake Sunapee RPC  
Lebanon, NH  
448-1680

Gerald Coogan  
Sullivan County Economic Development Council  
Claremont, NH  
543-1298

George Zoukee, Executive Director  
Municipal Bond Bank  
Concord, NH  
271-2595

Christopher Miller  
NH Housing Finance Authority  
Bedford, NH  
472-8623

Pat Herlihy  
Community Development Block Grant Program  
Office of State Planning  
Concord, NH  
271-2155

Rob Nichols  
Community Development Finance Authority  
Concord, NH  
226-2170

Jeffrey Harris  
National Trust for Historic Preservation  
Boston, MA  
617-523-0885

The Rural Development Administration is a good source of grants and low interest loans for rural communities

The Economic Development Administration may be able to help with funds for projects that will create jobs.

The regional planning commission is a good source for technical assistance on planning and zoning issues. They may be able to assist with grant preparation.

The regional development council has low interest loans funds, and can help with the preparation of applications for economic development projects.

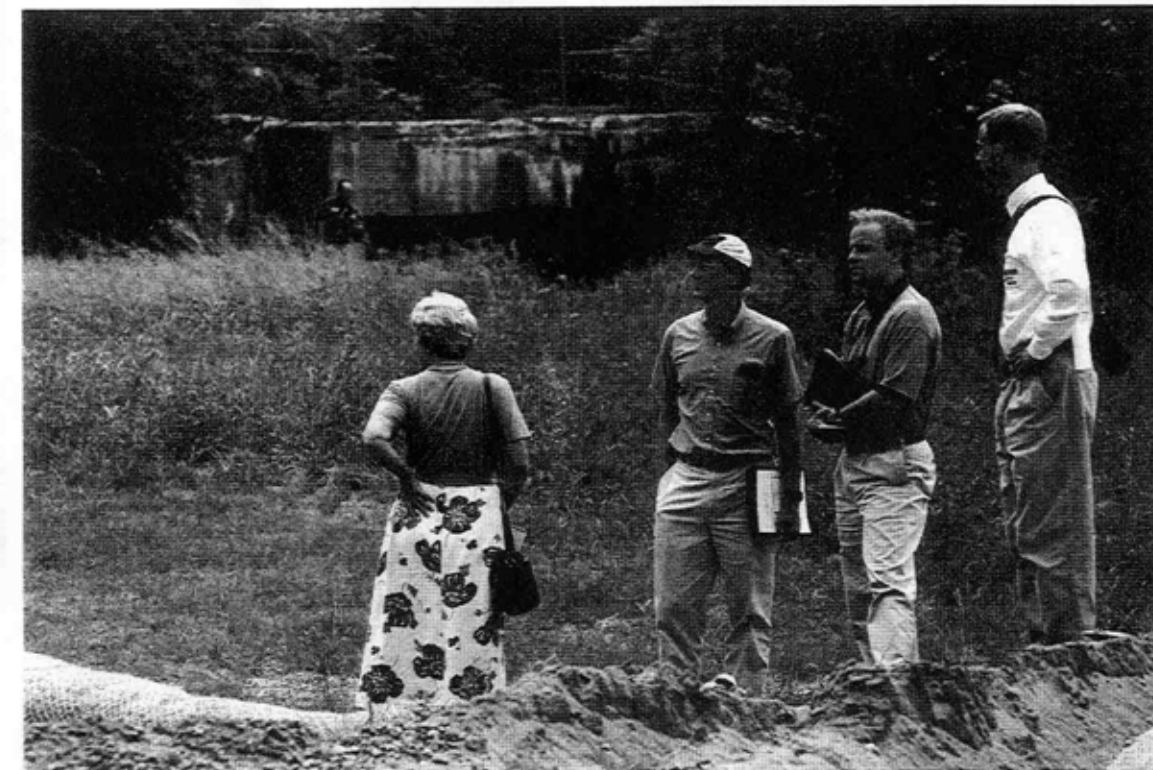
The Municipal Bond Bank packages small town bond issues into aggregate proposals to secure lower interest rates

The Housing Finance Authority is the source for both planning and development funds for projects that create housing for low income groups and the elderly.

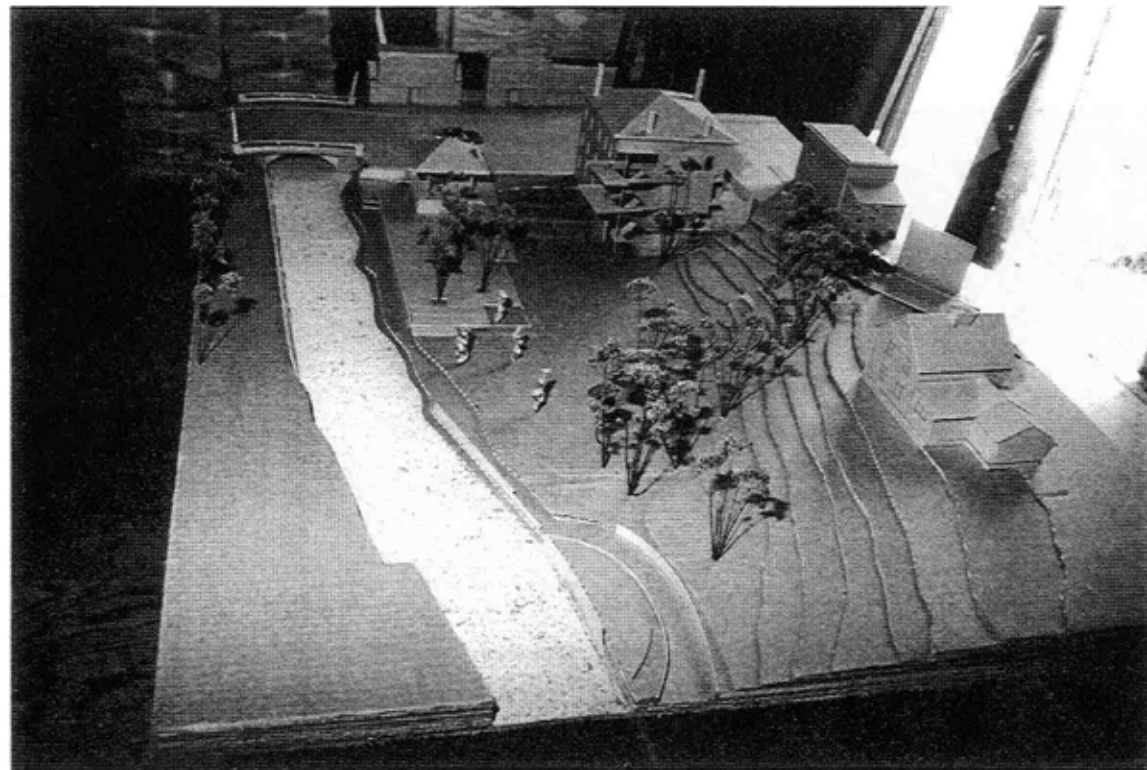
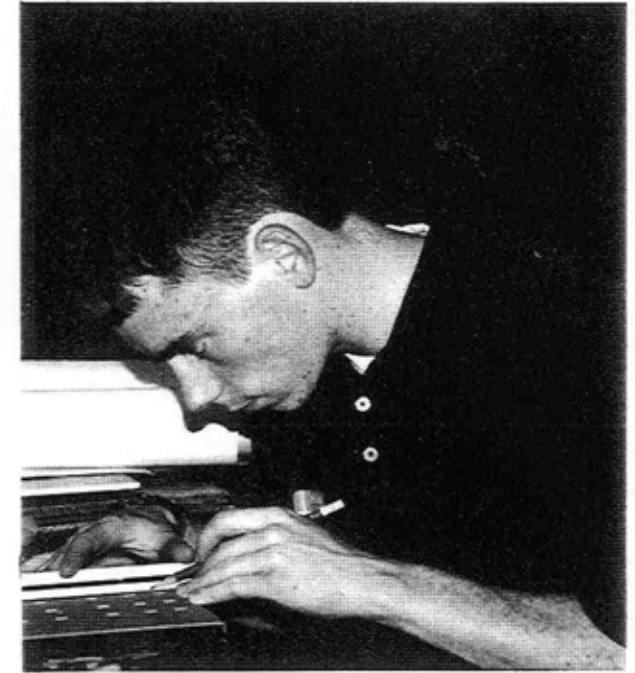
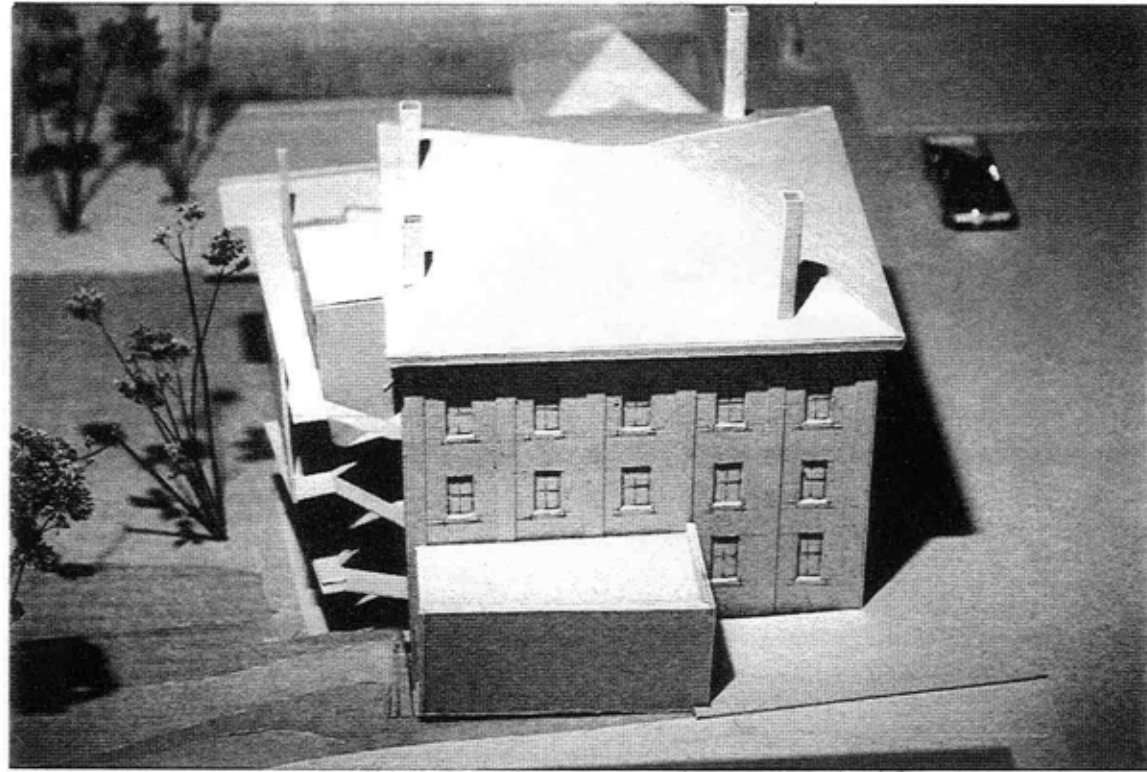
The Office of State Planning distributes funding for projects which can demonstrate an ability to meet the needs of low and moderate income individuals.

The Authority provides financial and technical assistance to community development corporations, worker cooperatives, and certain municipal entities.

The National Trust provides advice, models, seed money and gap financing; advocates vigorously for historic preservation; and initiates special programs to address key preservation issues.







And thanks to the students at  
Roger Williams University ...  
Great model, guys !!