

ABSTRACT

Title of Thesis: DOES CULTURE AFFECT FORM: CREATING
ARCHITECTURE AND COMMUNITY FROM CULTURE

Lihia Melissa Gill, Master of Architecture, 2004

Thesis directed by: Associate Dean, John Maudlin-Jeronimo

School of Architecture

America's diverse cultures influence how space is used and designed. Suburban American planning fails to address Latino needs for social as well as private spatial patterns.

This project poses the question: How do cultural influences affect form? Can they be applied at both the urban and building scale?

This project seeks to design a cohesive center for Langley Park by addressing the urban needs, as well as spatial patterns influenced by and reflective of the Latino culture. Using historical and contemporary precedents to create an image-able center, a new Community Center will be the anchor piece for the proposed square. The need for urban "Placitas"

(plazas) for cultural amenities such as street vending and socialization is also documented.

This project defines the influence of cultural values on architectural and urban form and discusses how these forms create a sense of community.

DOES CULTURE AFFECT FORM:
CREATING ARCHITECTURE AND COMMUNITY FROM CULTURE

By:

Lihia Melissa Gill

Thesis submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School of the
University of Maryland, College Park in partial fulfillment
Of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Architecture
2004

Advisory Committee:

Chair: John Maudlin-Jeronimo
Committee: Ronnit Eisenbach
Committee: Gary Bowden

“Architecture cannot save the world, but it may serve as a good example.”

- Alvar Aalto

Dedication:

For the one who always believed that I could be whatever I wanted, that I should never
give up, and told me always to believe in myself. Thank you, Mom.

Acknowledgements

To all those who stayed up with me through the nights helping to prepare this presentation. I couldn' have done it without you all and your moral support: Noah, Nigel, Joice, Liz, Quoc, Jill.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Figures	iii
Chapter 1: Site Description.....	3
Site Description	
Existing Site Conditions	
Site Location	
Site	
Site Photographs	
Site History	
Site Selection	
Chapter 2: Site Planning.....	16
Site Planning	
Proposals for a Master Plan	
Chapter 3 Site Survey.....	23
Site Survey	
Site Analysis Diagrams	
Chapter 4: Precedent.....	31
Private/ Public / Exterior Spaces through housing types	
Community Center Precedents	
Chapter 5: Program.....	43
Design Objectives	
Design Concerns	
Program Tabulation	
Program Description	

Chapter 6: Theory.....	55
Cultural Significance in Everyday Architecture	
Community Expression in Urban Environments	
Chapter 7: Design Approach.....	59
Schematic Design	
Master Plan Development	
Community Center Partis	
Chapter 8 Conclusion.....	67
Master Plan	
Plan Blow ups	
Building	
Final Thoughts	
Bibliography	88

List of Figures

Chapter 1

- 1.1 State Map: Maryland
- 1.2 State Map: Maryland with site Location
- 1.3 Prince Georges County Map with Site
- 1.4 Langley Park Area
- 1.5 Primary Site Area
- 1.6 Master Planning Site Area
- 1.7 North South Section through Primary Site
- 1.8 East West Section through Primary Site
- 1.9 North South Section through Merrimac Dr
- 1.10 East West Section through New Hampshire Ave.
- 1.11 Primary Site with existing Boys and Girls Club
- 1.12 Corner of 15th St. and Merrimac Dr Street Vendors on each corner
- 1.13 Existing Boys and Girls Club with path leading to apartment complex beyond
- 1.14 Back of Boys and Girls club with apartments behind.
- 1.15 Community center opposite Boys and Girls Club
- 1.16 Community Center administrative wing Merrimac Dr. In Foreground
- 1.17 Langley Park Elem. Adjacent to Community Center
- 1.18 Path extending to Boys and Girls Club extending beyond to Community center

Chapter 2

2.1 Transit Oriented Design Studies New Hampshire Ave., Riggs Rd and Chevy Chase Lake.

2.2 Focus Area: Ariel of New Hampshire Ave and University Blvd. intersection.

2.3 Urban Diagrams of the Area (Upper Left to right) Figure Ground Existing: Street Network: Walkability: Land Use : Building Face: Barriers to Neighborhoods

2.4 Precedent Overlays on Site

2.5 Scheme A Proposed Master Plan:

2.6 Scheme A Proposed Regional Master Plan

2.7 Scheme B Proposed Master Plan

2.8 Scheme B Proposed Master Regional Plan

Chapter 3

3.1 Figure ground of the Langley Park area.

3.2 Space Negative Drawing

3.3 Land Use Diagram

3.4 Existing street network of the area

3.5 Site Walkability

3.6 Natural System Diagram

3.7 Topography Diagram:

3.8 Area for Master Planning consideration

Chapter 4

- 4.1 Hunts Points Center, The Bronx New York
- 4.2 Hunts Point Plan and Diagram
- 4.3 Heritage Park Community Center: Chula Vista
- 4. 4 Heritage Park Community Center Site Plan
- 4.5 Floor plan
- 4.6 A view from the Meeting hall in the hallway connector.
- 4.7 A view from in the hall way connector
- 4.8 Essex Learning Center, Essex, England
- 4.9 Floor Plan
- 4. 10 Site Diagram
- 4.11 Plan Diagram
- 4.12 Korttelin Kohtauspaikka
- 4.13 View from courtyard to the building and breezeway.
- 4.14 Site Plan: Scale 1:2000
- 4.15 First floor plan and section
- 4.16 Views
- 4.17 Naraya Community Center and Elementary School
- 4.18 Section of the building
- 4.19 Site Plan: Scale 1:2,000
- 4.20 First Floor Plan: Scale 1:1500
- 4.21 Use diagrams
- 4.22 Blow-Up of the elementary school wing

Chapter 7

7.1 New proposed street system.

7.2 Master plan Scheme 1

7.3 Master Plan Scheme 2

7.4 Master Plan Scheme 3

7.5 Community Center Parti 1

7.6 Community Center Parti 2

7.7 Community Center Parti 3

Chapter 8

8.1 Proposed Langley Park Master as conceived of by the Urban Design Studio

8.2 Final Proposed Master Plan. The final compilation of master plans into one.

8.3 Langley Circle: Metro Transit Node

8.4 Riggs Metro Plaza: Metro Transit node and Bus Depot

8.5 Master Plan site model at 1:200 scale

8.6 Plaza plan blow up showing the hardscape plaza

8.7 Plaza model ; McCormick-Goodhart Mansion at center

8.8. Plaza model looking from the East.

8.9 Ground Level Floor Plan

8.10 Lower Level Plan

8.11 The Upper Level Plan

8.12 Main Façade: South Elevation

8.13 The West façade

- 8.14 The North façade
- 8.15 The interior of the courtyard
- 8.16 Wall Section and Bay elevation.
- 8.17 Building model in the plaza.
- 8.18 Entrance Piece off the plaza.
- 8.19 Building as seen from the west with murals.

Introduction

“In the most fundamental sense, the Latinos are struggling to reconfigure the “cold” frozen geometries of the old spatial order to accommodate a “hotter”, more exuberant urbanism” (Davis 65). America has always been considered a melting pot of cultures, but more and more we are realizing that our individual cultures are what makes us unique and our country great.

It is the social aspects that acknowledge the human condition and our different cultures that seem to be missing in a lot of architecture that gets built today. In fact, the process has become reversed. More attention is paid to the economy and efficiency of building envelop than designing architecture for specific people.

The footholds of our society tend to rest on the civic and public buildings that bring our communities together. In particular, community recreation centers have the potential to bring a wide cross-section of people from a variety of communities together. These centers can easily become the heart and image of a community.

Housing is also something that is essential to a vital community. This is also something that is directly influenced by culture. The perception of space and what makes a good space vary from person to person and culture to culture. One of the problems is that housing in the United States is homogenized to essentially three types; garden style apartments, town homes, and single family homes. While these three exist in their respective forms in other cultures the degree of sameness is not as high. The quality of the home is not based on the color of the vinyl siding or the square footage; rather on the quality and character of the interior spaces.

This proposal seeks to combine the aspects from American and Latin culture, to form a better urban master plan for Langley Park and its growth. It also aims to provide an imageable center through a community recreation center and civic complex. Combined these two will promote a better aesthetic for the community and a sense of pride that will cause more people to invest in Langley Park and its the richness of culture, music, and food that right now has no outlet other than the street.

CHAPTER 1: Site Description

Existing Site Conditions

The chosen site is located in Prince Georges County, Maryland, in the area known as Langley Park. The major intersections that define this area are New Hampshire Ave. and University Blvd. 193 to the north. To the south, Riggs Rd. and University Blvd. 193. It is located in a predominantly Latino area that falls under Maryland's international corridor.

Currently the site houses a variety of functions, an elementary school, an existing community center, boarded up Boys and Girls club, and a series of athletic fields. The building type surrounding the site is predominantly residential fabric in the form of garden style apartments, single family homes, and part of a large natural green system that makes one edge of the site.

Pedestrian sidewalks and roads bisect the site but the gap is made larger by the topographical changes. The intersection adjacent to the site is that of Merrimack Dr. and 15th street. Merrimack Dr. being a main artery to New Hampshire Ave. also has several bus stops along it in an effort to link it to the greater mass transit of the area.

To the south is the location of a large garden style apartment community. At its center is a historic mansion that is currently boarded up. Following Merrimack drive to New Hampshire Ave. there are more apartment buildings amid the throngs of street vendors. The intersection with New Hampshire Ave. is primarily a residential one, but just two blocks away in either direction you find large strip malls where the local residents, for lack of a better place, congregate in parking lots.

To the north, east and west the site is surrounded by single family homes that weave their way around the stream bed area. Most of the housing in the area is inhabited by Latinos but there is also a greater mix of ethnicities and cultures.

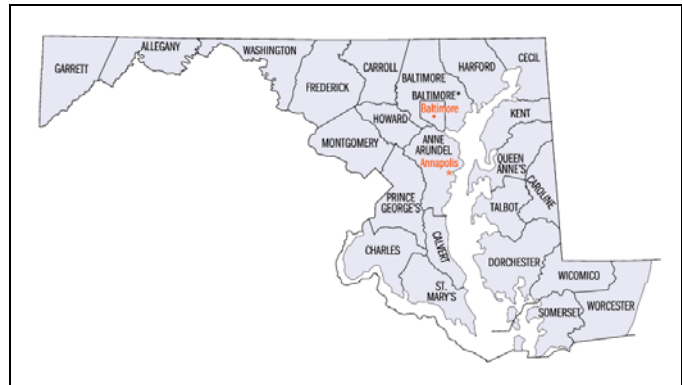
The housing stock in the area is one of apartment buildings and single family homes. Most of these buildings because of the cultural difference in the idea of family are often overcrowded. Apartments that should be for 3 people now hold 7. Most of the housing including the single family residences are overcrowded as well. In the end this provides Langley Park with an amazing diversity of people and culture.

The area around 15th and Merrimack is often frequented by a variety of people. One of the big draws is that on either side of the boarded up Boys and Girls club are two fields that people of all ages play soccer (football) on. The existing community center which is drastically too small for the population that frequents it is a valuable resource in the community. Next door is Langley Park Elementary School, so parents, children and teachers often mill about in the shared parking lots between the community center and the school. The fields behind the school sit on the top of the hill that on side leads to the stream valley and the dense woods that wind their way down the hill.

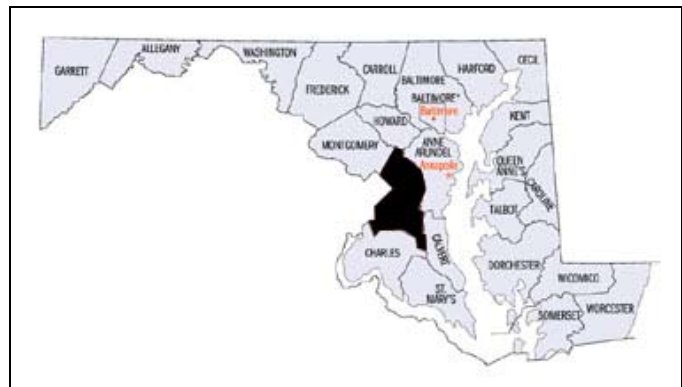
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Site Location

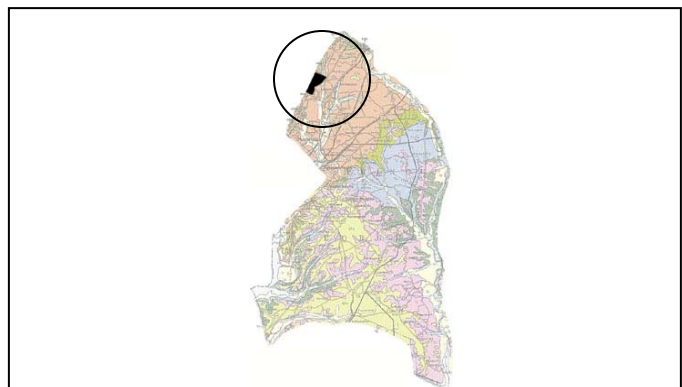
1.1 State Map: Maryland

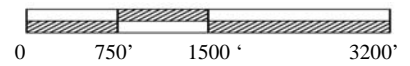
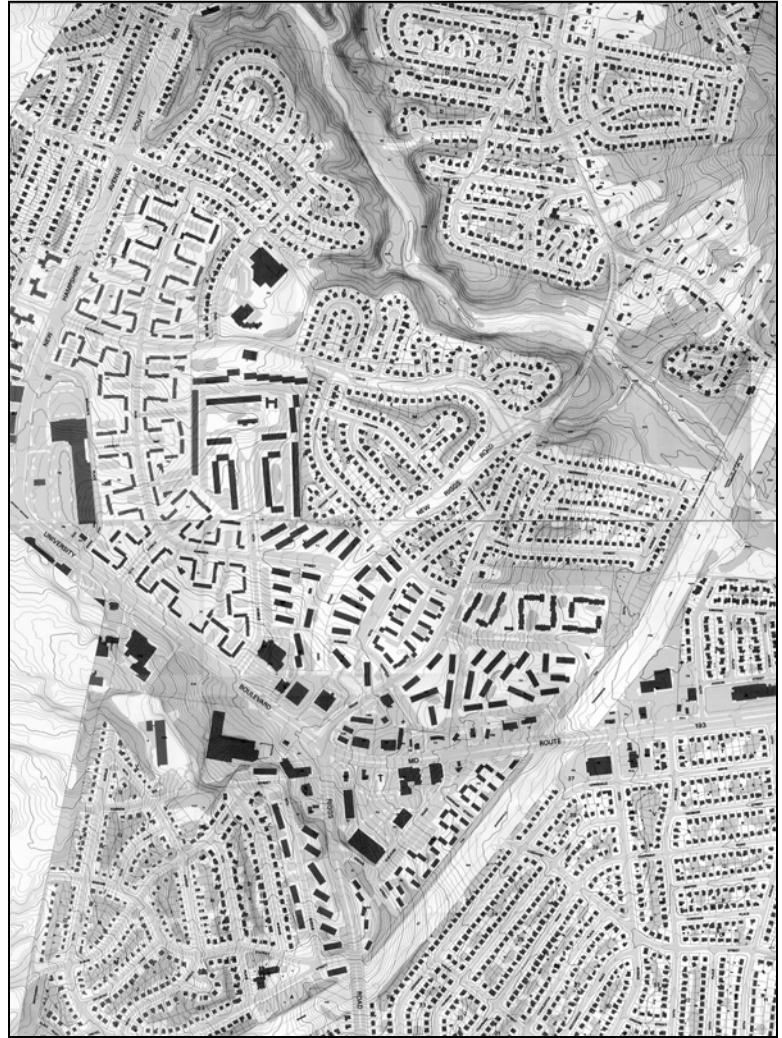


1.2 State Map: Maryland with site Location



1.3 Prince Georges County Map with Site





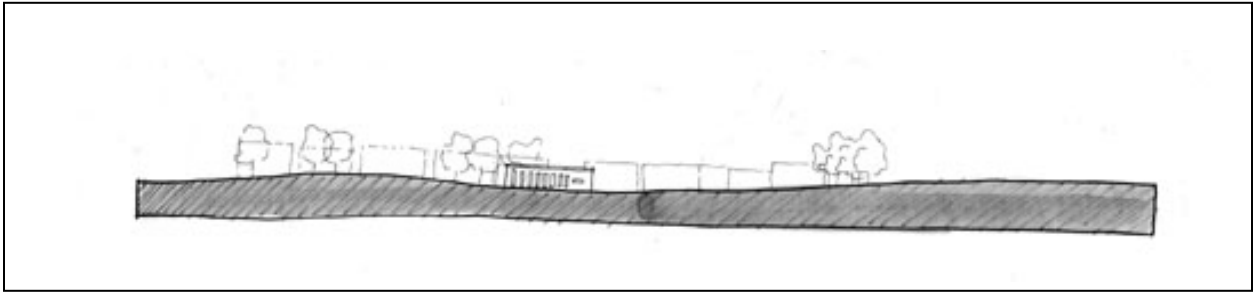
1.4 Langley Park Area: GIS Map
Scale 1"=1500'

1.5 Primary Site Area
Area between New Hampshire Ave.
And Riggs Road.
Scale 1"=800'

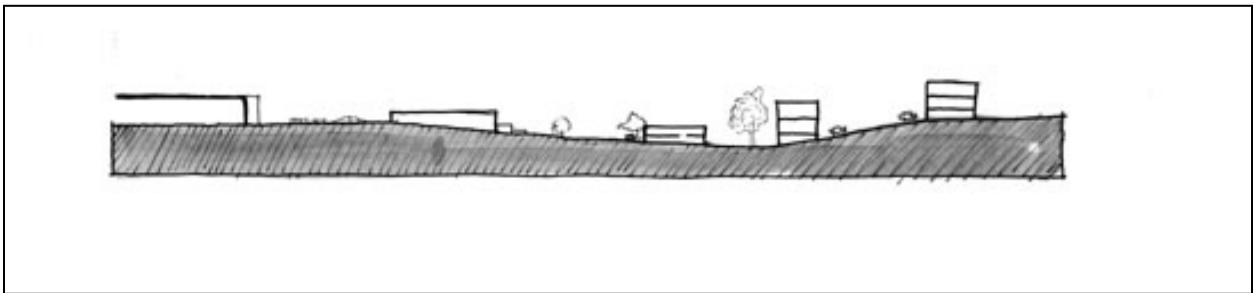


1.6 Master Planning Site Area
Scale: 1"=1500'

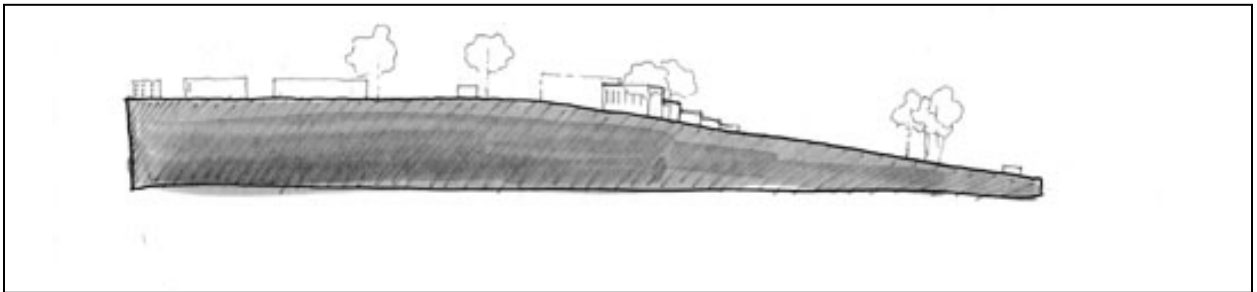




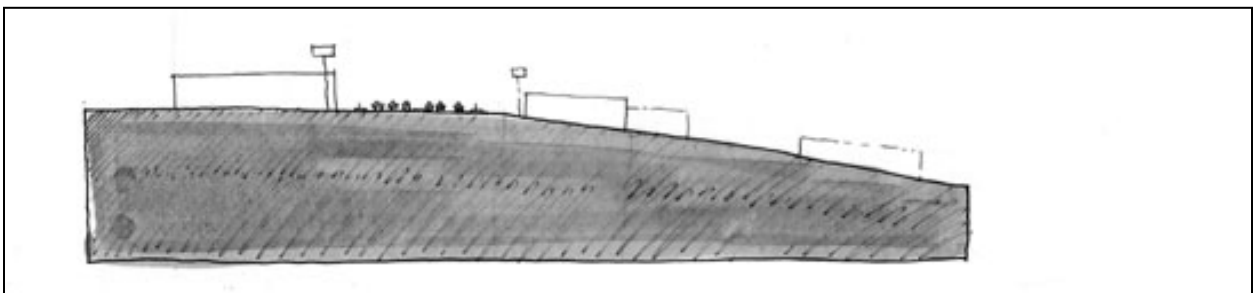
1.7 Scale 1:100 North South Section through Primary Site



1.8 Scale 1:100 East West Section through Primary Site



1.9 Scale 1:100 North South Section through Merrimac Dr.



1.10 Scale 1:100 East West Section through New Hampshire Ave.

Site Photographs



1.11 Primary Site with existing Boys and Girls Club



1.12 Corner of 15th St. and Merrimack Dr
Street Vendors on each corner



1.13 Existing Boys and Girls Club with
path leading to apartment complex
beyond

1.14 Back of Boys and Girls club with apartments behind.



1.15 Community center opposite Boys and Girls Club



1.16 Community Center administrative wing
Merrimcack Dr. In
Foreground



1.17 Langley Park Elem.
Adjacent to Community
Center



1.18 Path extending to Boys and Girls Club
extending beyond to Community center



Site History

Present day Langley Park is located on what was once part of the McCormick-Goodhart Family estate. The name Langley Park came from an existing property in England. The McCormick-Goodhart estate was assembled by buying land from other Prince Georges families such as Riggs, Magruder, and Jackson. At its height the estate was about 566 acres (Langley Park Project Research Team. col. 13)

The McCormick-Goocharts commissioned George Oakly Totten Jr. to build the mansion on the property. The original property included a lake, stables, polo grounds and a carriage house (Langley Park Project Research Team. col. 13) . The mansion still stands but it is in total disrepair.

It was after World War II when the property owners sold most of the estate to private and religious organizations. They donated Adelphi Mill and Millers Cottage, as well as 34 acres to the Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission (Langley Park Project Research Team. col. 13-14).

Since shortly after the Second World War Langley Park was a suburb of Washington DC. Mostly young white families moving out of the city sought to acquire housing in this area. Its roots began as a starter community for whites and through today it still retains a “starter” or “transient” community status (Langley Park Project Research Team. col. 18). Through the 70’s a lot of the housing was left to deteriorate and because of this there was a large influx of African Americans into the area. In the 1980’s when civil war broke out in many of the Latin American countries there was an enormous influx of Latin American people into Langley Park. In fact it was sometimes called a colony of El Salvador (Langley Park Project Research Team. col. 13-14).

People living in Langley Park at the time had fled from their countries in search of economic opportunities as well and better quality of life for them and their children.

With them they bring a strong sense of family both nuclear and extended.

Today there is an overwhelming majority of Latin American people, who are trying to make their way in the world through hard work and perseverance. Langley Park is in fact a step up for most people who arrive there, be it from another country or from another housing project. There are a variety of resources that are available for people who are trying to better themselves. For example, The Spanish Speaking Community of Maryland provides job placement services, and county training centers. Others associations like Casa de Maryland also is a resource to help people locate work, and vocational training centers (Langley Park Project Research Team. col. 114).

However Langley Park does not have a sense of community. There are people who commit crimes and sell drugs. The playgrounds are empty but the parking lots of shopping centers are full. For its residents Langley Park is a place, not a home. The housing is old, overcrowded and unkempt. Maintenance, if any occurs only too keeps the buildings rentable. Other landlords take advantage of the language barrier and put unlawful clauses in resident's leases. For example, landlords often charge them hundreds of dollars a day in late fees. While a good portion of the housing isn't in good shape the attitude of the staff who runs them can help to overcome difficulties. Some staffers even try to organize recreational activities to keep younger residents away from drugs and crime (Langley Park Project Research Team. col. 98).

The potential to make this area a center for this community is a very real possibility based on the uses that currently occur in the area

Site Selection

The reason this site was chosen is for the unique opportunity to design something that is culturally specific, opportunities for master planning, and most of all to bring a cohesive center to the area.

The large immigrant population also has a set of needs that is currently not being met effectively. The opportunity to reopen/rebuild not just a recreational facility, or a community center, but to also integrate an educational component to better serve the community is an interesting project. The need for better quality housing in the area is also a priority, given that the status quo is not meeting the communities needs. In order to adequately create better quality housing the meaning of housing has to be reexamined based on a specific culture.

The site, while a few blocks away from New Hampshire Avenue, has access to metro bus stops which run all along Merrimack Drive. New Hampshire Avenue also has a wide range of city as well as county-wide bus stops along it. For example, the University of Maryland shuttle, Montgomery County's Ride On shuttles all stop within a 10 min walk of the site. This is important, because most residents don't own cars.

From an urban planning standpoint the mixture of the land uses within a 5 block span is very disjointed. Most residents in the area walk, but lack of sidewalks and crosswalks make daily trips hazardous. Another planning issue is the idea of place making. Currently there are no defined spaces, everything is built ad hoc and independently of each other rather than having a dialogue about the space being created.

Chapter 2: Site Planning

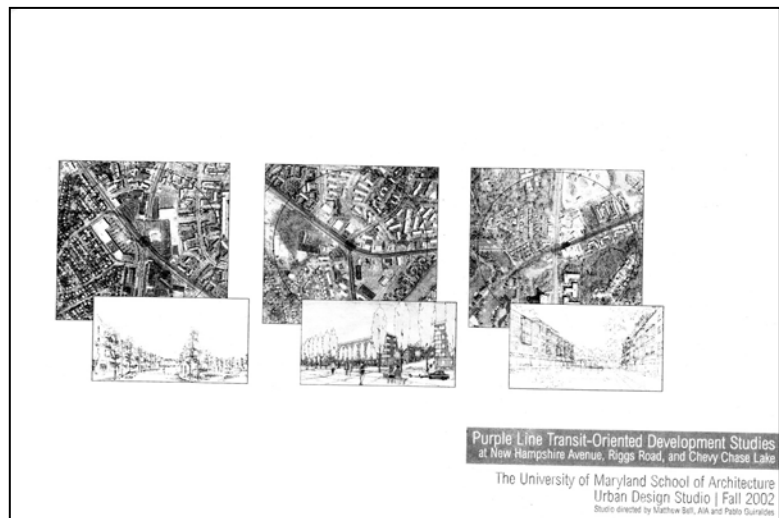
Prior Site Studies

During the spring semester of 1995 the Planning studio at the University of Maryland did a study that revolved around the Langley Park area. The terminus of the semester was a publication entitled “Langley Park A Preliminary Needs Assessment”. While this did not propose a solution for the needs discussed the book does clearly delineate the negative aspects of the area, as well the good things it has to build on. The book covers needs from Family life to Transportation and possible directions to take towards creating a sense of community.

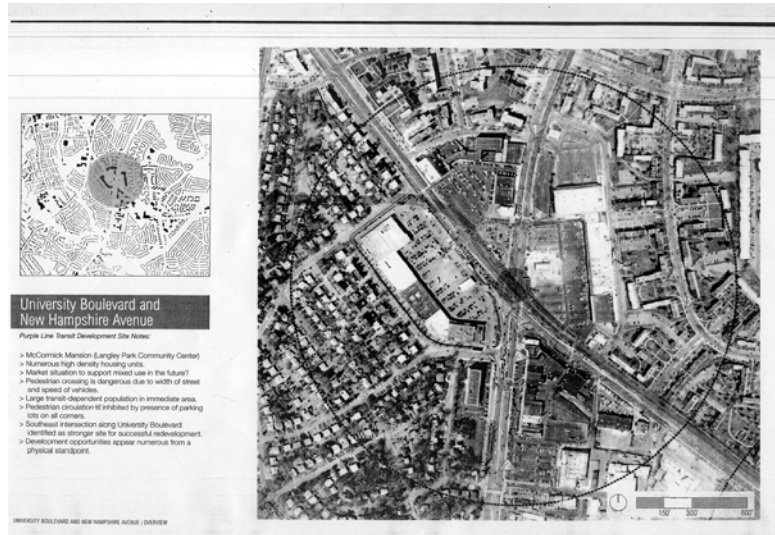
Another study while not focused on the Langley park area also from the planning department is a working paper on Maryland’s International Corridor. It focuses on the two-mile long mixed use corridor that runs along University Blvd. east of Riggs Road to just west of Piney Branch Road. This stretch at the time of the study (1996) had over 100,000 residents approximately 40% foreign born. This section was also home to a variety of international business run by local residents. Most of these cater to products or services to foreign-born residents.

Part of the study was to discuss the possibility of locating a center along the corridor that would help unite not only the area, but a whole group of people. The proposed site, the intersection of New Hampshire Ave. and University Blvd. The cross roads that mark you are in Langley park.

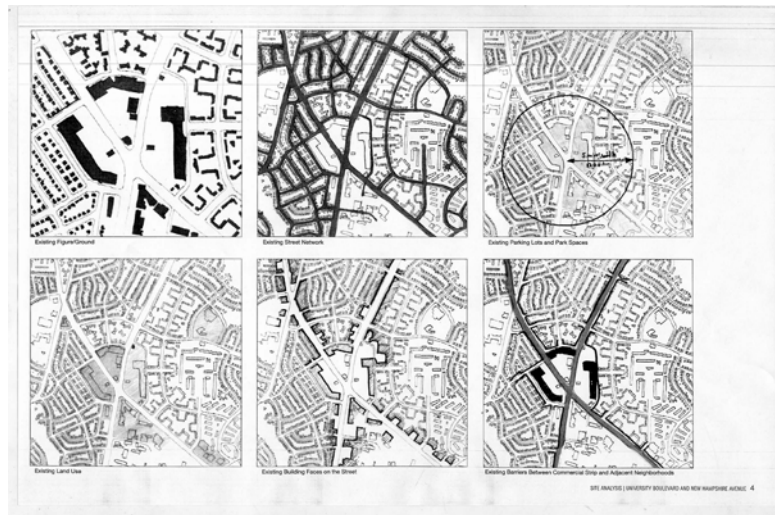
Matthew Bell's 700 studio in the fall of 2003 did an in depth master plan for the intersection of New Hampshire Avenue and University Blvd. They intersect in Langley Park and are known as the Takoma Park-Langley Park crossroads. These proposals take a look at how a proposed metro rail could be integrated into the site. Part of the study was to also find a more resolved solution to the intersection of New Hampshire Ave and University Blvd. Most schemes don't take into account the McCormick-Goodhart Mansion at the top of the hill, but do incorporate a new street grid into the existing fabric. While these studies did not directly address the site, some of the larger issues of street widths and major intersections and pedestrian movement were used.



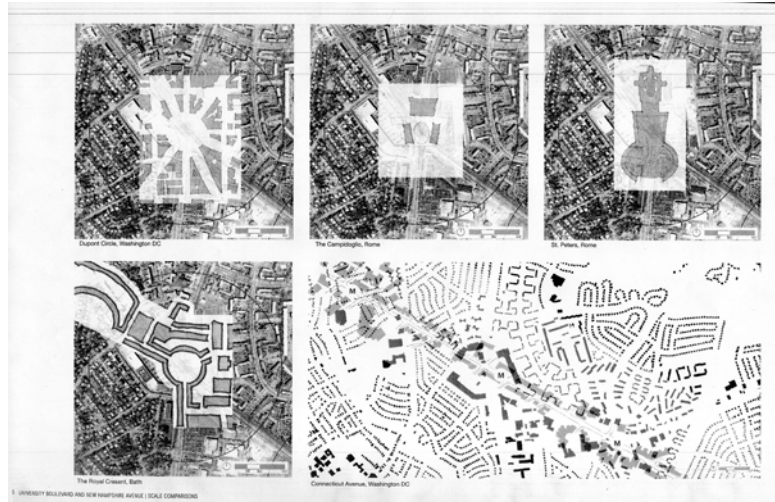
2.1 Transit Oriented Design Studies New Hampshire Ave., Riggs Rd and Chevy Chase Lake.



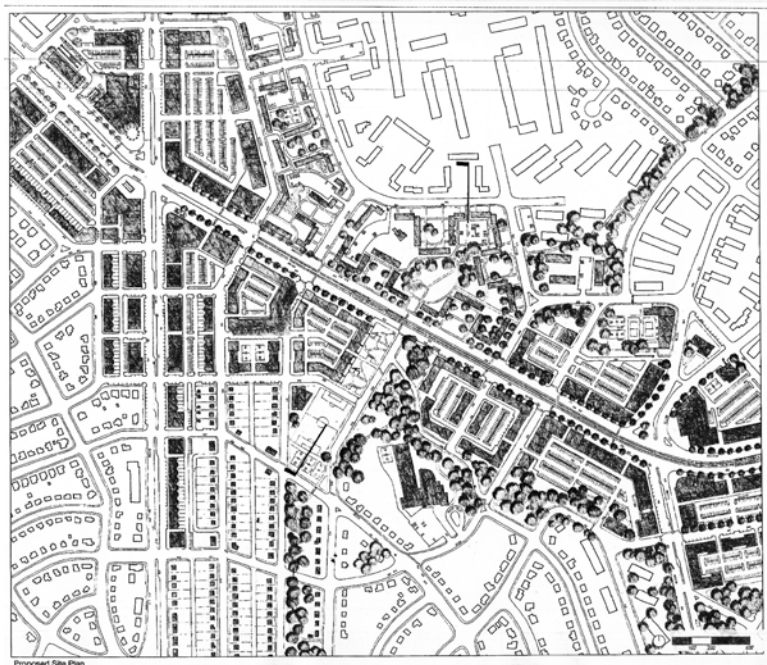
2.2 Focus Area: Ariel of New Hampshire Ave and University Blvd. intersection.



2.3 Urban Diagrams of the Area (Upper Left to right) Figure Ground Existing: Street Network: Walkability: Land Use : Building Face: Barriers to Neighborhoods



2.4 Precedent Overlays on Site



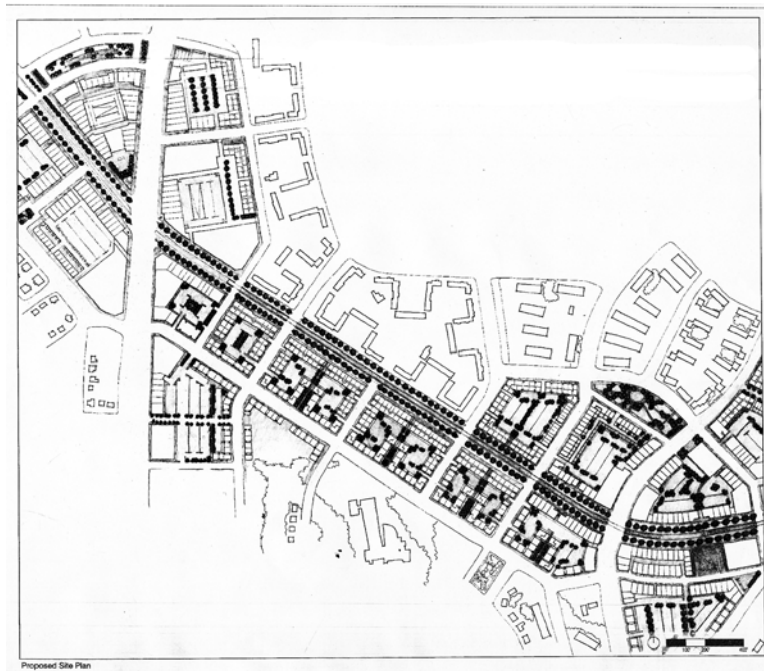
2.5 Scheme A Proposed Master Plan:

Above ground transit line runs through University Blvd. High density Housing is added along N.H. Ave. and University Blvd. By adding Greenscape University Blvd begins to read as a Blvd and not as a collection of strip malls.



2.6 Scheme A Proposed Regional Master Plan

Zooming out the development of University Blvd. Extends back to the University of Maryland.



2.7 Scheme B Proposed Master Plan

Scheme B also proposes a partially above ground transit line on University Blvd. that dips down just before New Hampshire Ave. Higher density is placed along University Blvd. keeping some of the existing apartment complex fabric.



2.8 Scheme B Proposed Regional Plan

Here also Scheme B proposed that development continues to the University of Maryland but keep more of the existing fabric along the way.

Chapter 3 Site Survey

Site Analysis Diagrams

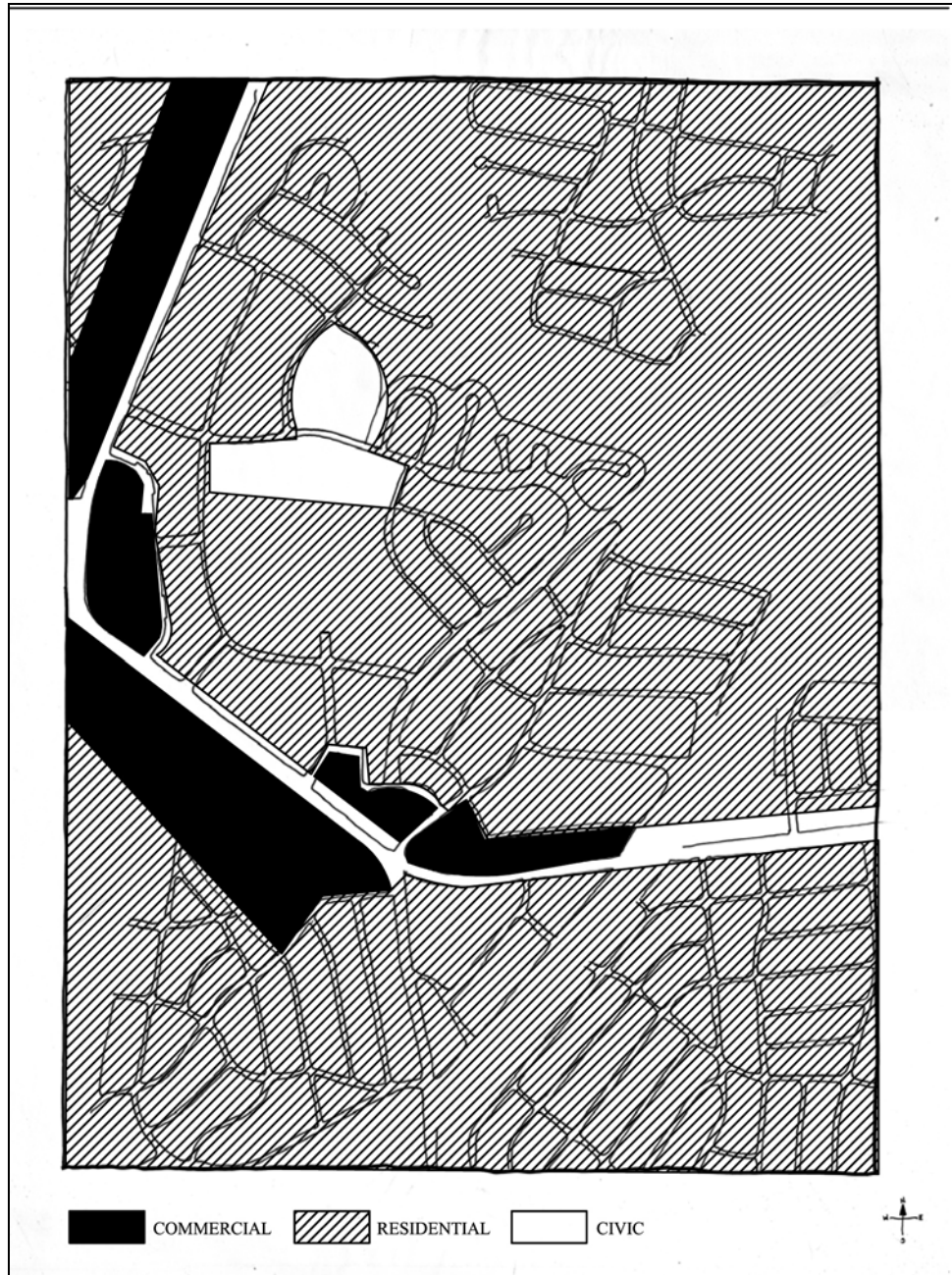
Note: All Site Analysis Diagrams are at 1:400 unless otherwise noted.



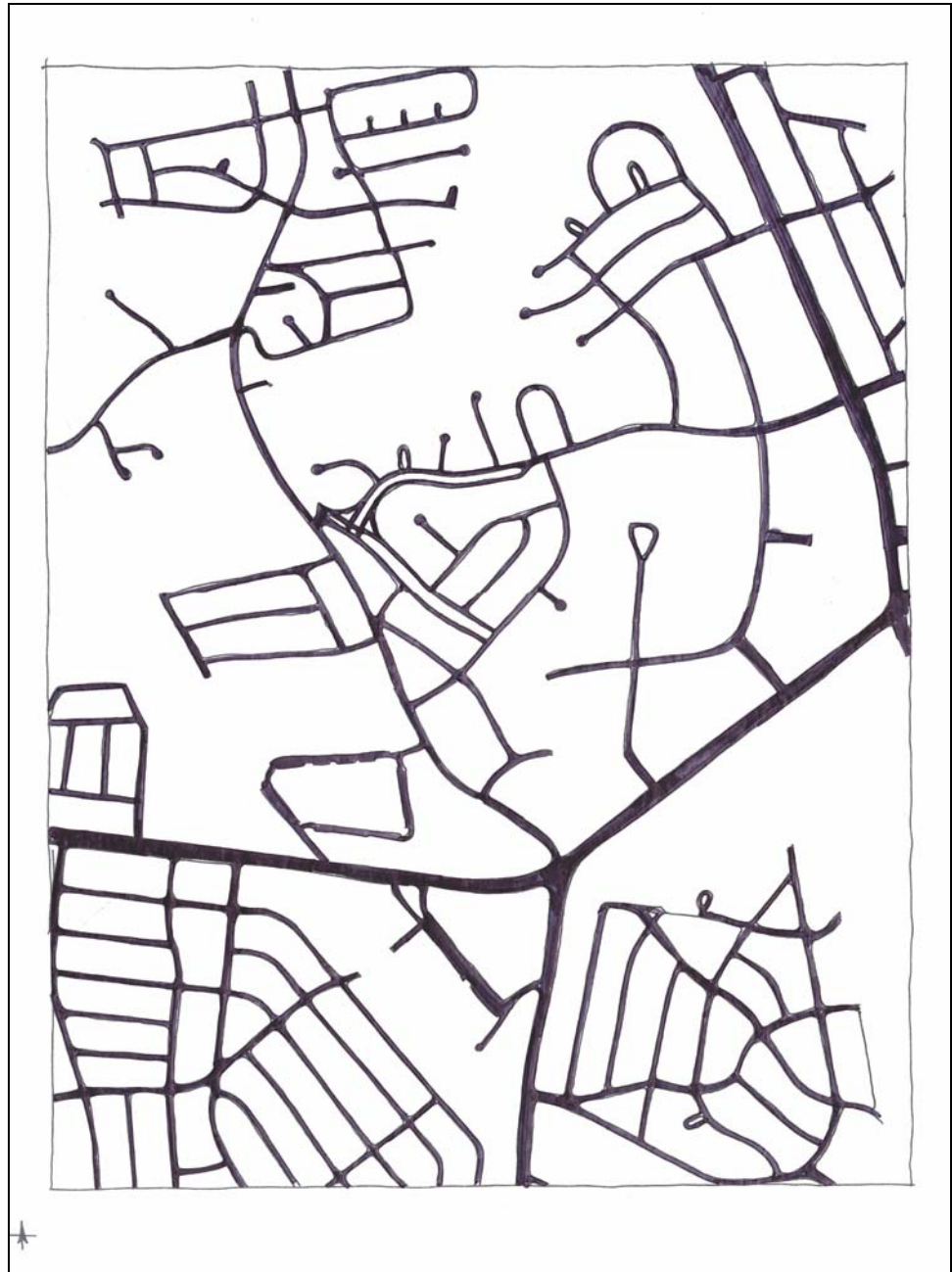
3.1 Figure ground of the Langley Park area. Scale 1:400 The figure ground shows the ad hoc development of the area and the broad range of building types within a smaller area.



3.2 Space Negative Drawing: Scale 1:400



3.3 Land Use Diagram: Scale 1:400



3.4 Existing street network of the area: Scale 1:400. Its apparent that the residential fabric is very discontinuous and has very little through streets.



3.5 Site Walkability. Scale 1:400. The primary site location is the upper most circle. The other circles each showing the bounds of a 10 min walk shows the path most residents would take to the Main shopping plaza and the University Blvd. and New Hampshire Ave. intersection



3.6 Natural System Diagram: Scale 1:400. The large stream valley behind the site, which is dotted in creates a natural boundary to one edge of the site but also bisects it from the housing development beyond.



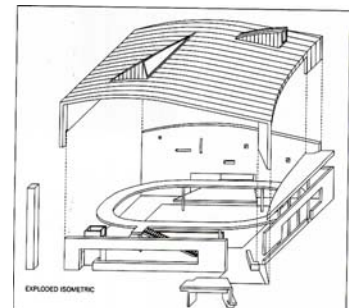
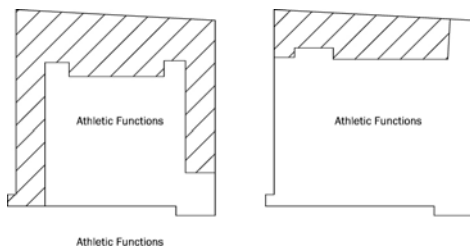
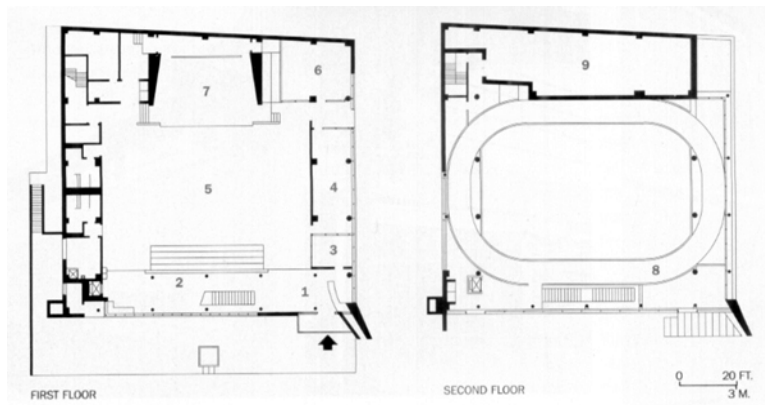
3.7 Topography Diagram: Scale 1:400. White areas denote high points. On either side of the stream valley the topography rises, but the upper Northwest corner the topography exceeds 200 ft in contrast with the southwest corner where the topography goes below 100 ft.

Chapter 4: Precedents

Community Center Precedents



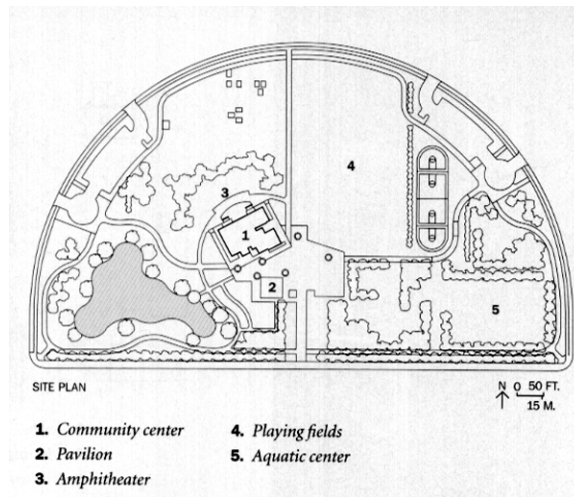
4.1 Hunts Points Center, The Bronx New York. Located in predominantly Hispanic area the Hunts Point center makes great use of a tight space as well as providing exterior playfields in a very urban area.



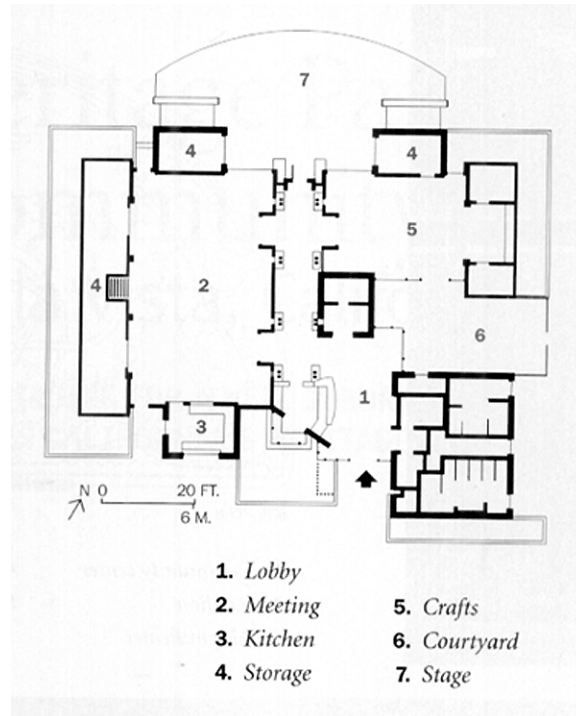
4.2 Hunts Point Plan and Diagram: At the first floor level more public functions as well as administrative functions take place, while on the second floor the track and a few additional multimedia spaces are located.



4.3 Heritage Park Community Center: Chula Vista, CA. Built out of local materials and in the style of most of the homes in the area The center becomes and almost park like atmosphere. The play fields and aquatics center are lined by landscape and the public is always welcome to come in and enjoy the grounds.



4. 4 Heritage Park Community Center Site Plan. The ground look more like a garden environment instead of a community center.



4.5 Floor plan: All of the administrative functions are towards the entrance of the building and the larger spaces take advantage of the exterior walls by being heavily glazed above a certain point. A simple hallway connects all the spaces. The building keeps its footprint small by delegating other functions to exterior grounds.



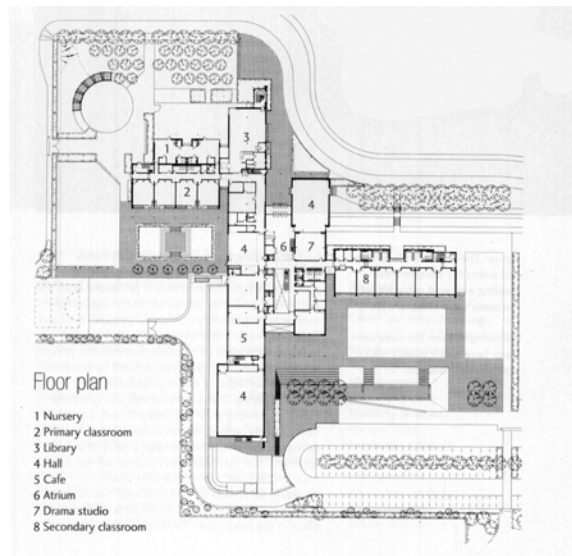
4.6 A view from the Meeting hall in the hallway connector.



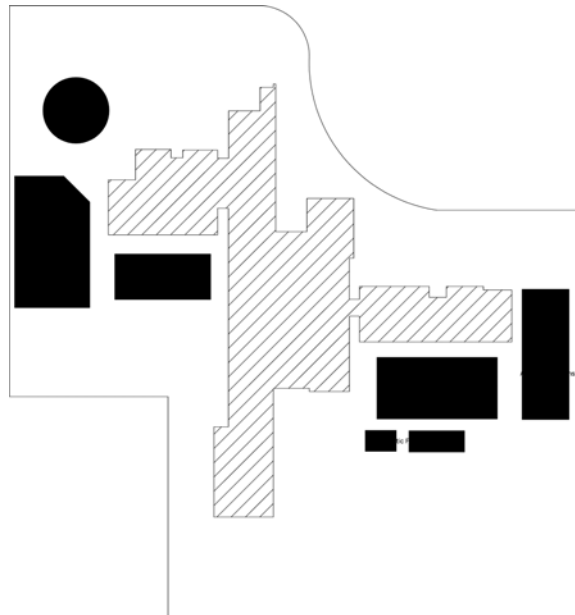
4.7 A view from in the hall way connector



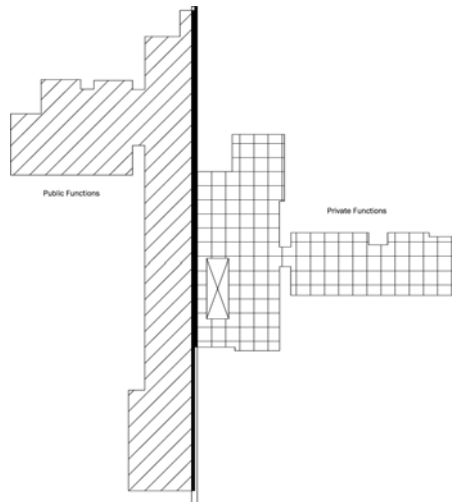
4.8 Essex Learning Center, Essex, England: A long bar type building with wings the Learning Center at Essex combines a school and community center into one. The wall seen in plan is really the divider between the two functions. However its true purpose is circulation and division of play fields.



4.9 Floor Plan :Seen here in the plan the wall divides the public community center functions from the more private school activities and their respective play fields.



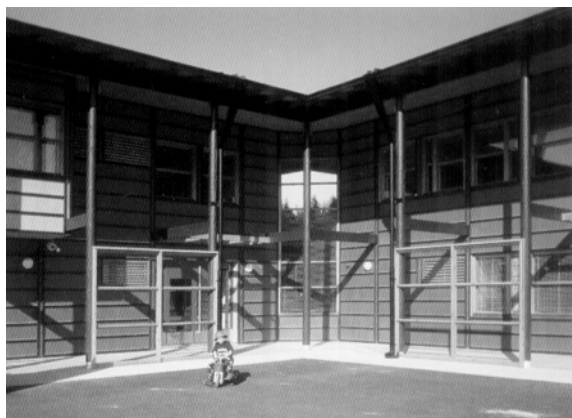
4. 10 Site Diagram: Black areas are play fields and hatched area is the building footprint.



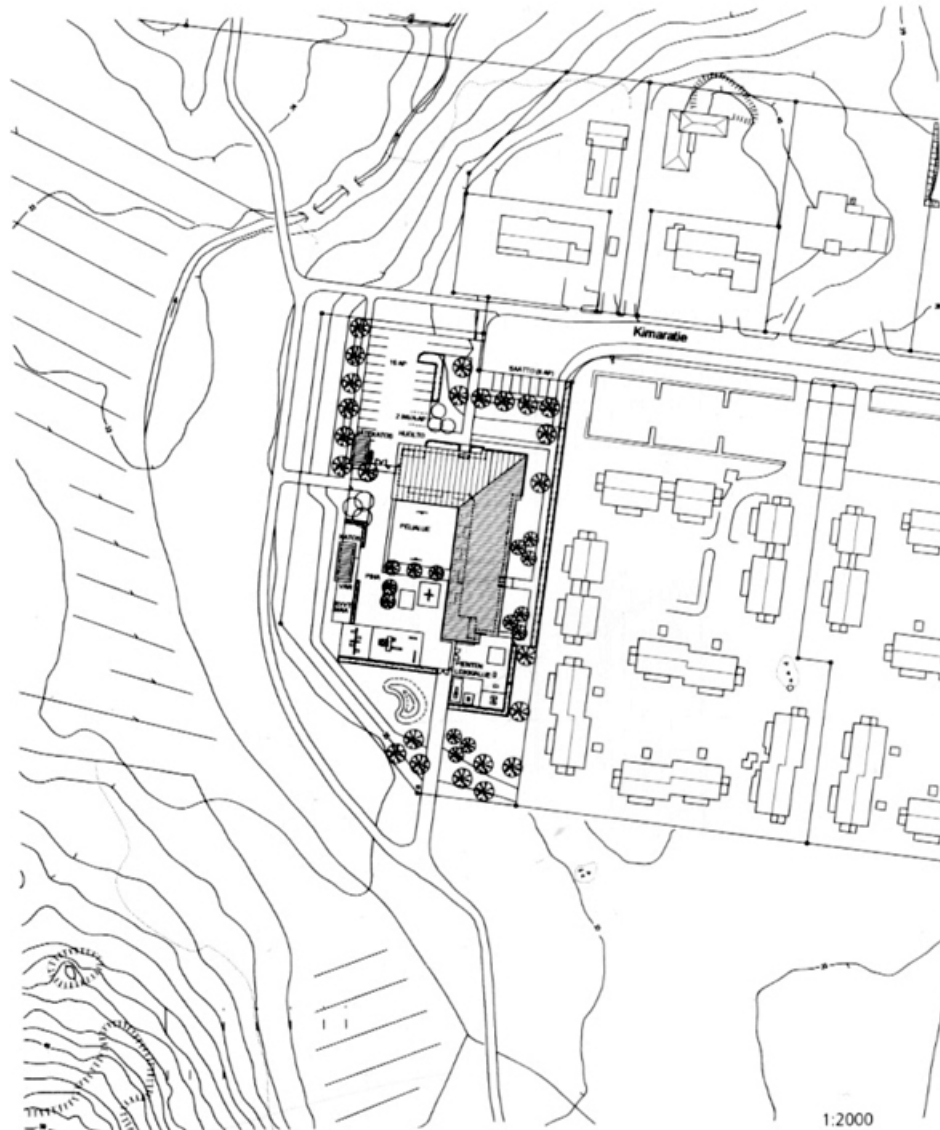
4.11 Plan Diagram: Wall separates the community center functions from the more private school functions by means of circulation.



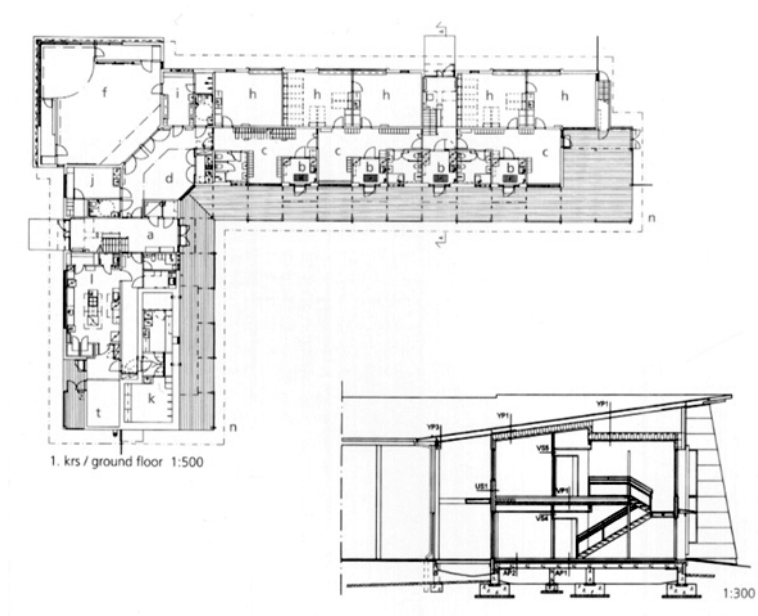
4.12 Korttelin Kohtauspaikka: Housing four separate daycare and preschool groups this center the wide eaves provide protection as you travel from one area of the building to the other. The building is an L-shape which provides for a semi-enclosed playfields for the children.



4.13 View from courtyard to the building and breezeway.



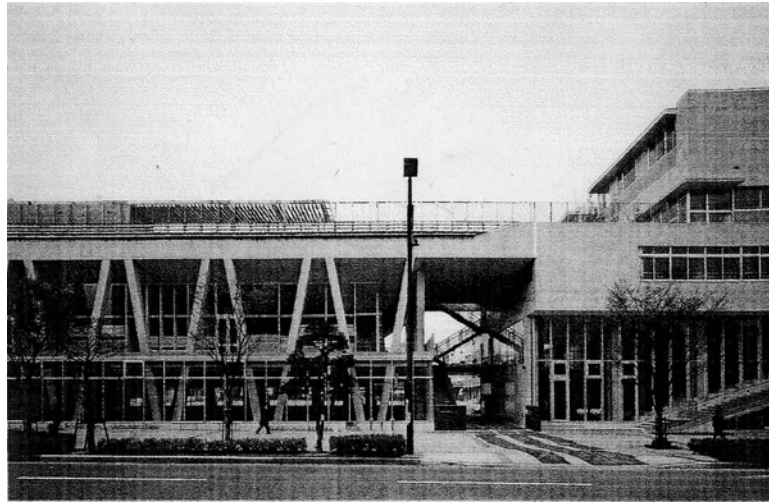
4.14 Site Plan: Scale 1:2000. To the north is the entrance and parking fields and to the rear are the play fields and outbuildings. To the west is a mid rise residential community which the center services.



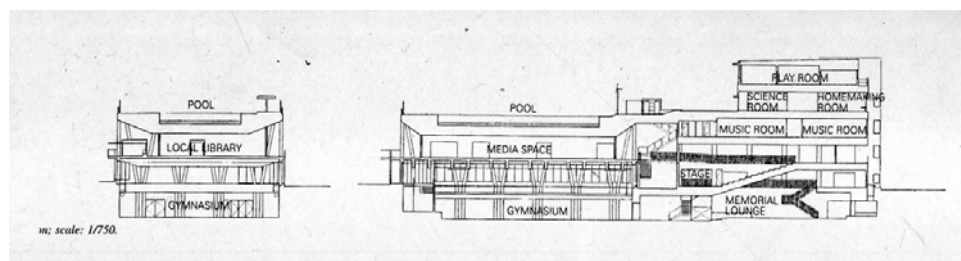
4.15 First floor plan and section. The breezeway connects most of the classrooms and the large multipurpose room is the set piece that faces the street



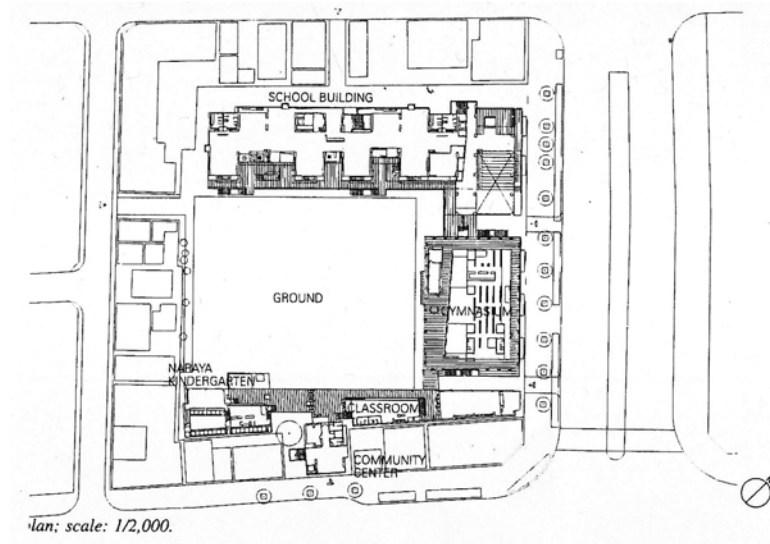
4.16 Views in and around the center. Left to right. View towards multipurpose room, Exterior wall north face. View from North looking south.



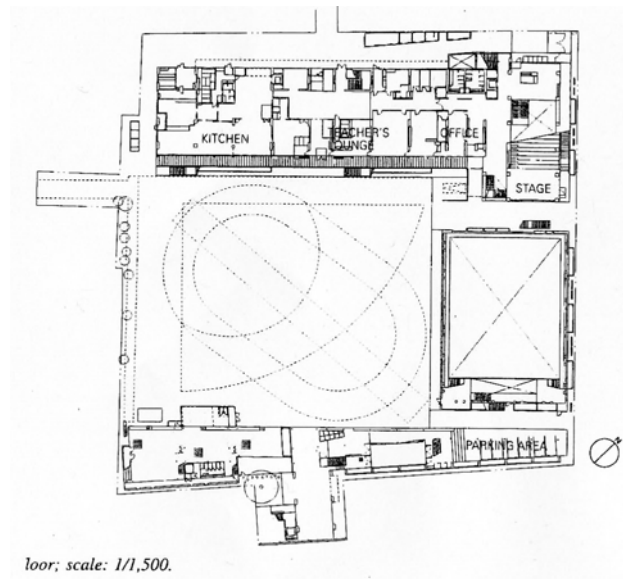
4.17 Naraya Community Center and Elementary School, Japan. Located in a residential area the Naraya Community Center is truly the heart of this community. The center integrates an elementary school on one side and on the opposite side there is a community center. They finally join together in the center by the shared multimedia facility.



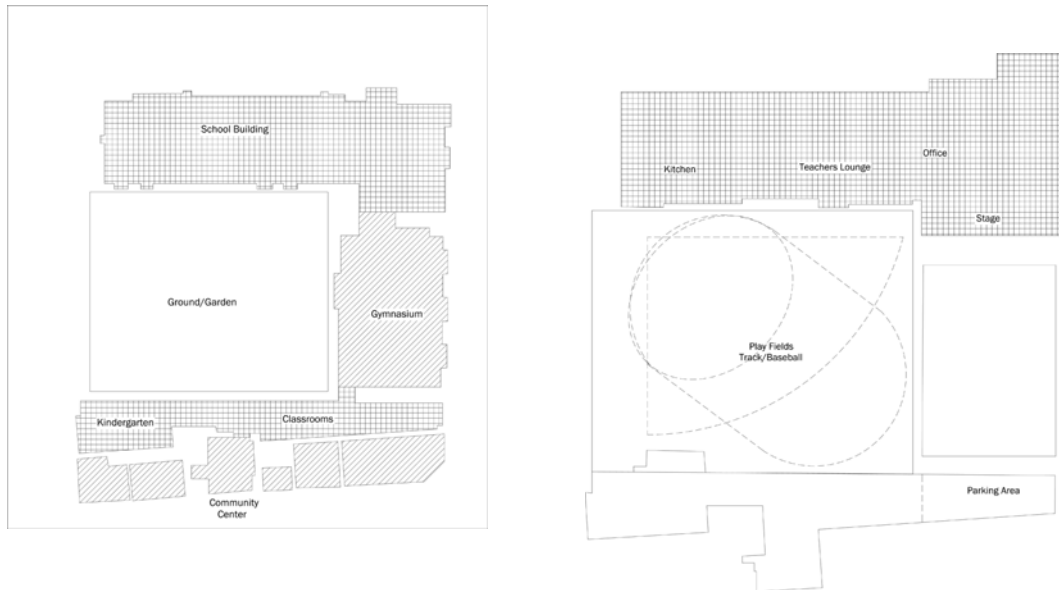
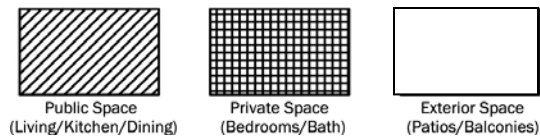
4.18 Section the building is 5 stories high and the courtyard created in the middle can be looked out upon by everyone in the building. Because space is tight every space is used, including using the roof for a pool. There is a lot of creative distribution of programs so that the building has a life at all hours.



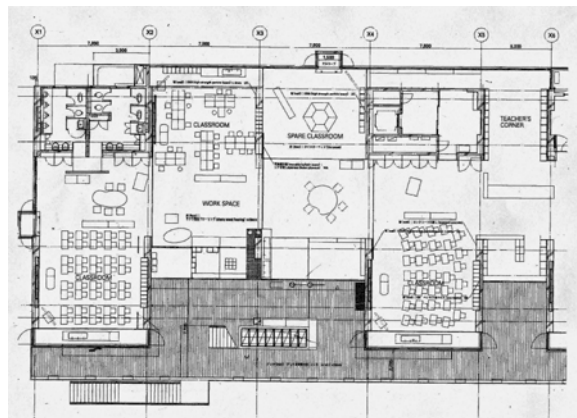
4.19 Site Plan: Scale 1:2,000 to the NE the main body of the school building lies to the SW the community Center and in the center portion are the shared facilities such as play fields and Gym.



4.20 First Floor Plan: Scale 1:1500. Interior layout of buildings and play fields.



4.21 Use diagrams: The interior spaces are separated but also knit together by the exterior space and community spaces in the center.



4.22 Blow-Up of the elementary school wing: Mostly an open plan school that allows for flexibility of building and classroom experience.

Chapter 5: Program

Design Objectives

One of the primary focuses of this design project is to create space that becomes the heart of the community. The other focus is through this community center and the activities that it will house to find a way to not only create a center for Langley Park but, to also provide people a reason to invest in their community.

By providing not just an after school club, but a diversity of uses, this facility would be an amenity for all of the community. I would expect the center to provide adult education, English as a second language classes, daycare, counseling, health and social services, job placement as well as a plethora of after school and recreational activities for children of all ages in Langley Park.

Some of the primary objectives of this design are to provide a center for this community that becomes part of the larger master plan for the area. The plan should be rooted in the basic needs of the residents, historical, contemporary, as well culturally significant precedents. Other objectives that need to be met in some way would be the creation of a pedestrian friendly environment throughout the area, and connectivity on both a pedestrian and automotive scale. Opportunities for home ownership must also be increased so that there is a revitalization of the community. In addition, social spaces in and around the neighborhood need to be created where street vendors can have an organized selling place and the community can have a place to express their identity.

Design Concerns

Some of the concerns for the design of the community center are the context of buildings around it. Most are garden style apartment buildings from the late 50's to early 70's. Finding a medium between the apartment vocabulary, a contemporary style and a cultural influence is a large part of the design problem. Some of the other issues associated with the site are topographical. The existing McCormick-Goodhart mansion had a lake on the site that currently results in a gradual drop of 20 feet. Also across the street are the existing elementary school and community center, both however are poorly located on the site. The decision to keep them or to relocate their program must be decided. Currently the community center and school are isolated by Merrimack Dr. which is a street with a fair amount of traffic on it, so pedestrian accessibility and safety is also a concern.

As far as concerns for the proposed new structure the security of the building and its users is one that should be addressed especially if the building has nonstandard operating hours. The accessibility for neighboring communities and its connection the larger master plan via pedestrian and automotive connections. The scale and character of a potentially large structure besides smaller apartments and houses and how that gets resolved needs to be looked at. As well as some of the issues that occur with a larger building such as service and entry.

Community Center Facility – Approximate Sq. Ft. Total: 40,000

Lobby : 3,500 sq.ft.

Lobby/ Reception Desk

Lounge

Concession

Membership/ Information Desk

W.C

Administrative: 3000 sq.ft.

Reception Desk/ Waiting area

Copy/Mail/Fax Area

Directors Office

Secretarial Bay

Assistant Director's Office

Conference Room

Coatroom

W.C.

Athletic Activities: 27,000 sq. ft.

Equipment Issue Desk

25m Pool

Gymnasium

Gymnasium Storage

Exercise/Weight Room

Men's Locker/ Shower Room

Women's Locker/Shower Room

Equipment Storage

General Social Activities: 2,600 sq. ft.

Multipurpose room

Class/ Club Rooms

Meeting Room

W.C.

Community Support Programs: 3,200 sq. ft.

Preschool Care

Preschool Play Area

Day Care Office

Health Center

Counseling Center

Social Services Office

W.C

Service: TBD

Janitor's Closet

HVAC

Delivery/Trash Room

Program Description:

Lobby/Reception Desk:

Space just inside the entrance, and will serve as the main public entrance in order to control who belongs on the premises. The general public must visit this area first in order to inquire about membership and community programs that are taking place.

Lounge:

An informal gathering space, used for meeting people, or relaxing after exercising. A good connection to the Lobby, W.C., Membership area and Administrative area is required.

Membership/Information Desk:

A place where visitors can sign up for membership as well as find a list of current programs and activities offered. This should also have a correlation to other lobby elements but the general public should not have access to this area.

W.C.

Should be located near the lounge but should not have direct view from the lobby. There should be one for each sex.

Reception Desk/ Waiting Area:

Reception's primary duty involves answering the phone and making appointment for staff members. It may be an open area that has clear visual access to the rest of the administrative areas. This area should also offer seating for people waiting for appointments as well as having a good relationship to the Copy/Mail/Fax room.

Copy, Mail, Fax Room:

A space designated for the copy machines, fax machines, as well as a central place where staff can collect mail.

Directors Office:

Office for the chief administrator of the Center. This person will be responsible for the operations of the center. Should be a large enough of where meetings can be held, as well not directly of the path of main circulation.

Secretarial Bay:

Should have direct access to the Copy, Mail, and Fax room as well as to all of the staff offices. Maybe an open area or a room.

Assistant Directors Office:

Office for the administrator of daily affairs and functions of the center. This office should be more accessible than the Directors with more access directly to the administrative personnel.

Conference Room:

The conference room should be large enough to accommodate staff as well as formal meetings. This should be one of the most important rooms in the building, since this is where donors and prospective employees will be brought to. Should have a relationship to the director's office.

Coatroom:

The coatroom is intended to serve the guests to the administrative area.

W.C.

They are to serve the administrative areas and their guests. There is one W.C. for each sex.

Athletic Activities

Equipment Issue Desk:

The area is to supply the necessary equipment for the different athletic activities. Items such as basketball, soccer balls, weight lifting accessories, etc. Members are not allowed direct access to this space, rather there will be an employee responsible for the check-in and check-out. This space should only be accessible through a back or side door. A central location that would service all the athletic function of the building is ideal.

Gymnasium:

The gymnasium is intended to serve a variety of activities including basketball, volleyball, and other forms of sports activities. It will be large enough to accommodate community functions such as dances, receptions. Should have natural light via some type of clearstory. Audience seating should be in the form of bleachers and chairs on either side. Should have some proximity to the locker area and storage room.

Gymnasium Storage:

This room stores all the equipment for all the uses of the gymnasium. It is to house all the large equipment that cannot be stored at the equipment desk. Should have direct access to the gymnasium, and should be able to be accessed by staff members only.

Weight Room(s):

This area is for free weights as well as machines. There should plenty of circulation as well as an area for stretching and warm up exercises.

Staff Office/ Changing Room:

An office area for all people working at the gymnasium. It should also include a small conference area as well a bathroom and changing room.

Women's Locker/ Shower Room:

Locker area should be a storage space for gym users to store their belongings while they work out. At least 3 shower stalls should be provided complete with changing area for users as well. Area should be close to the main gym facilities.

Men's Locker/Shower Area:

Locker area should be a storage space for gym users to store their belongings while they work out. At least 3 shower stalls should be provided complete with changing area for users as well. Area should be close to the main gym facilities.

Equipment Storage:

Room intended to stores all the miscellaneous items for the gym.

General Social Activities**Subtotal: 2,600 sq.ft.****Multipurpose Room:**

This is the room that should accommodate dances, receptions and other community functions. This room should have a relationship to the other community function rooms. But since it is a large room it should also have some proximity to the entrance.

Class/Club Rooms:

There will be at least three classrooms for night classes as well as club meeting rooms for a variety of activities after school. The rooms should include desks and couches and arm chairs for a variety of seating arrangements. Also whiteboards for teaching purposes. Natural light should be provided though windows.

Meeting Room:

This should be a large room that will be capable of holding neighborhood meetings. It should also have a large conference table that can be moved in and out depending on how the space dictates. A projection screen as well as whiteboards should be provided for presentations.

W.C.

W.C. to serve this general area of the building. Provide one for males, and one for females, minimum.

Community Support Programs**Subtotal : 3,200 sq. ft.****Preschool Care:**

Room intended for care so that low income parents can have the opportunity to seek jobs/job training. Also to be used by people who need child care while they are taking night classes in the building. Should be large enough for 30-40 preschoolers and should have direct access to the play areas. This room should have its own W.C. Facility to serve kids and caregivers.

Preschool Play Area:

Should be adjacent to the Preschool area and should provide a safe indoor play area for the children . Should have high ceilings, lots of light and enough space to for indoor play equipment. Should have some method for dividing the space from the care area. Having some sort of courtyard or link to the outdoors is recommended.

Daycare Office

Small office where parents can sign their children up for play groups as well as for day care.

Health Center:

The health center is to provide minor medical care for the community recreation facilities as well as for the community. Should have enough space for equipment to care for minor injuries. The health care facilities can be responsible for running programs that teach the community about health care, as well as run cpr and other courses for the community.

Counseling Center:

The counseling center is to provide aid to individuals of the community, assisting with finding job placement, courses in English, and domestic issues. This space should have a series of cubicles that allow for acoustical privacy as well have an enclosed office.

Social Services Office

The social services office would be a small office where a few social workers could take on local cases as well as work with people to get back on their feet.

Service Requirements

Should be a small loading dock near the lower level for pool and gymnasium servicing.

Janitors Closet:

Closet Area(s) in the building where maintenance supplies can be stored. They should have a relationship to the WC areas in the facility.

Delivery/Trash Room:

Adjacent spaces in which deliveries to the building can be made, as well as facility recycling can be housed with appropriate trash removal spaces on the exterior.

Chapter 6: Theory

The absence of community expression in urban environments is problem that plagues most of our urban environments. The homogenization of the housing types and materials has been done to raise the market value of homes, but with that comes the lack of expression that makes our cities great (Harris and Berke 92).

It is the difference in our cultural beliefs that influences how we perceive and use our space. In particular the Latin community which is the predominant group in Langley Park has a different idea of family and place than the “typical American”. For the Latin community a family is made up of extended family, friends and teachers. It is for this reason in particular that the typical housing stock in the states does not meet their needs. But more importantly these people are changing their environment one brick at a time in order to meet their needs. Because this world of “everyday Architecture” is all they know, by making small changes to their environment it becomes a direct criticism of mass housing (Harris and Berke 85). In fact it brings up the idea of what dwelling means. If dwelling means to actively create ones environment then these people are part of an amazing condition that doesn’t occur in other suburbs.

A good example of how cultural beliefs can directly influence the environment we can take a look at southern California. A growing number of architects in the region are looking south of the border for ways to revitalize their urban environments. The typical Latin building model is paradoxical at best. Inside, outside, garden, buildings, public and private are all issues that are open to interpretation in a Latin building. This is essence of why there is more life on Latin streets; everything is part of the public domain.

While America is in the midst of finding a way to revitalize the city the Hispanic population is leaps and bounds ahead. As a whole across the nation they have become the

largest self build construction force, buying dilapidated properties restoring them to their original glory, transforming vacant lots into urban gardens. Take for example the rebirth of East Harlem's vacant lots as gardens and restaurants, the community mural of East L.A. Other examples include Huntington Park in Los Angeles that was restored to its art-deco glory and quickly has become the center for Mexican immigrant life in Los Angeles County (Davis 65).

Both socially and urbanistically the plaza and Mercado are the two things that every Latin person can identify with. These have often been the basis for Spanish town planning since the city eventually grows up around them. While it can be said that the past is what moves us forward, it is obvious that Latin town planning will never really be mainstream in the United States it does however bring the issue of critical regionalism to the table. Frampton discusses critical regionalism while looking at veteran Mexican architect Luis Barragan homes built outside of Mexico City. Both the plan and style harkens back to the old Spanish pueblo that was dependant on the earth for its survival. Obviously the home was built of concrete and steel; but, it was his concern for the homogenization of the modern world that led him to a vocabulary that would evoke a memory of identity and culture (Frampton 121).

Those forms that we can associate with and encounter everyday hold the most meaning to people especially if it evokes a sense of place that they are familiar with. The "built environment ought to be the 'vehicle and expression of our human life'" (Harris and Berke 99). In fact, "architecture is a representation by the designer of the values of a larger group or of qualities inherent in the building itself. Rather it means architecture is a

vehicle through which each individual could act to articulate his or her own values and attitudes” (Harris and Berke 99).

While the people of Langley Park aren’t aware of critical regionalism or notions of everyday architecture they are none the less living it out. Through the transformation of their homes, the simple way they use streets as plazas they are not recreating a sense of place, but rather adapting it to their new environment so that it makes sense.

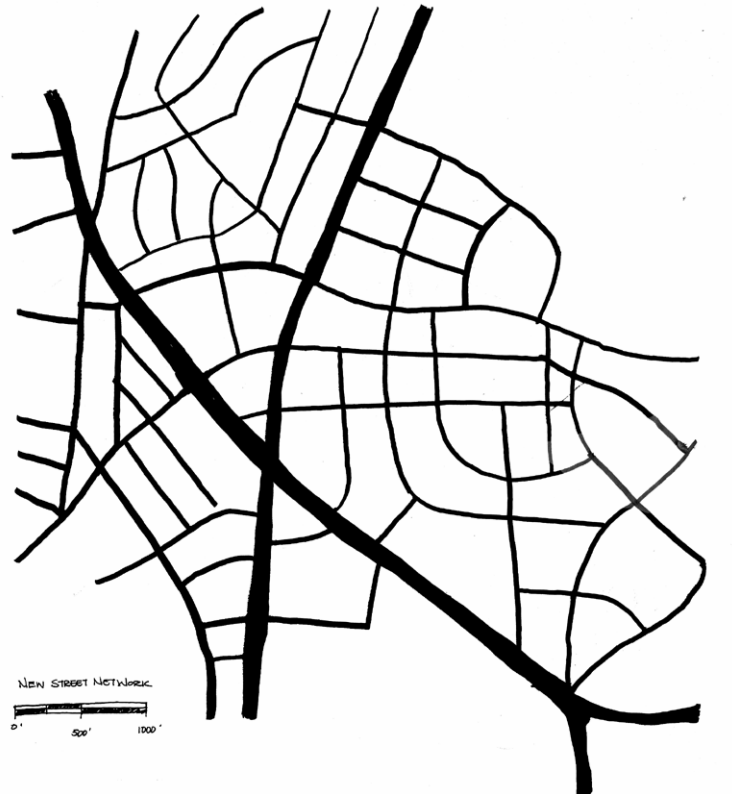
Chapter 7: Design Approach

The implications of the theories and precedents put forth here direct the project in such a way that not only addresses culture as part of a typology but also an architecture that is not beyond the comprehension of the people it is built for.

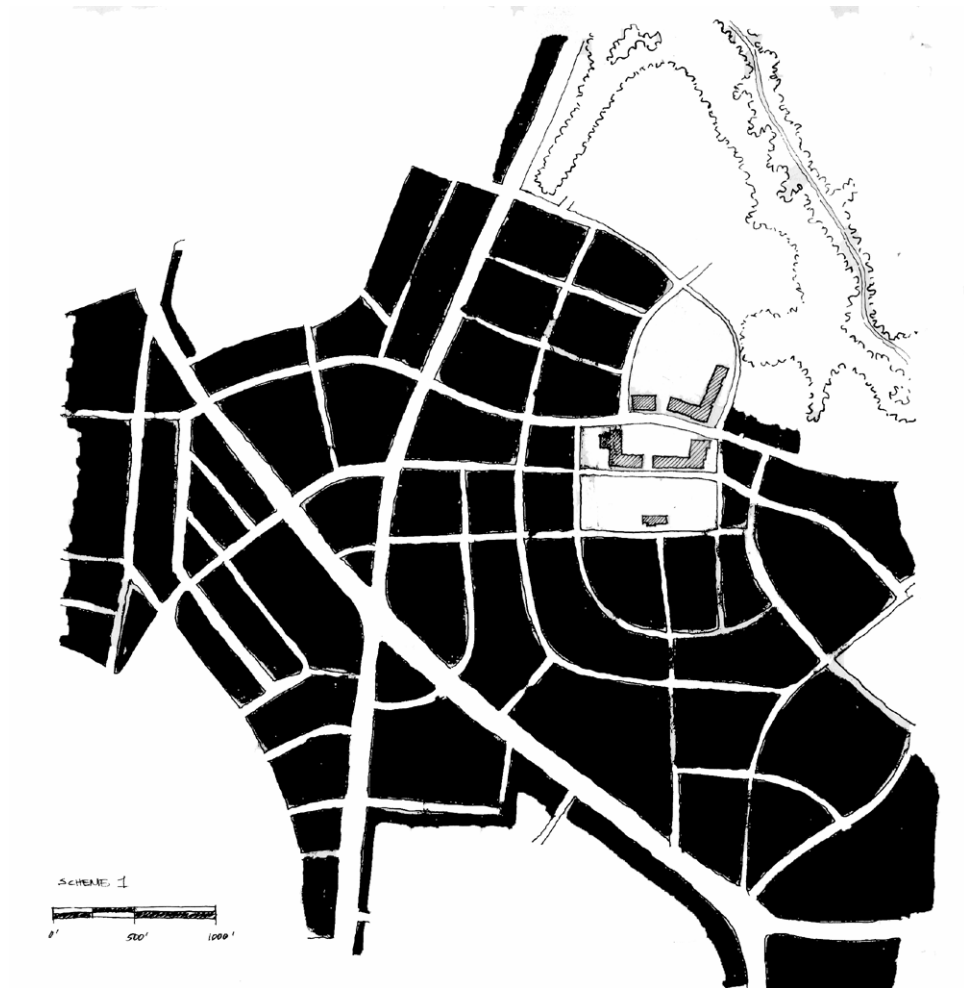
By taking the principles embedded in the Latin culture the spatial planning principles will come through in the master plan as well as the buildings that are designed.

Master Planning Studies:

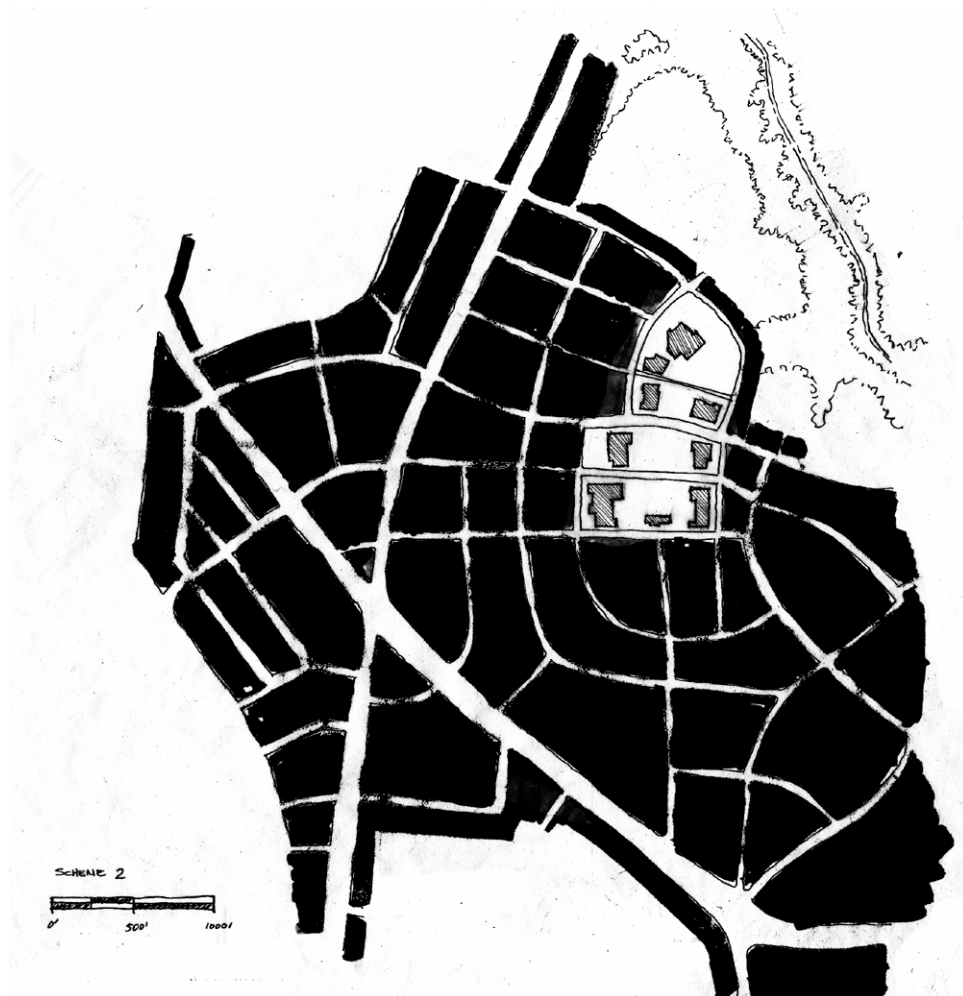
Each of the Master planning studies puts for a different parti idea and from each of those a parti for the community center is formed.



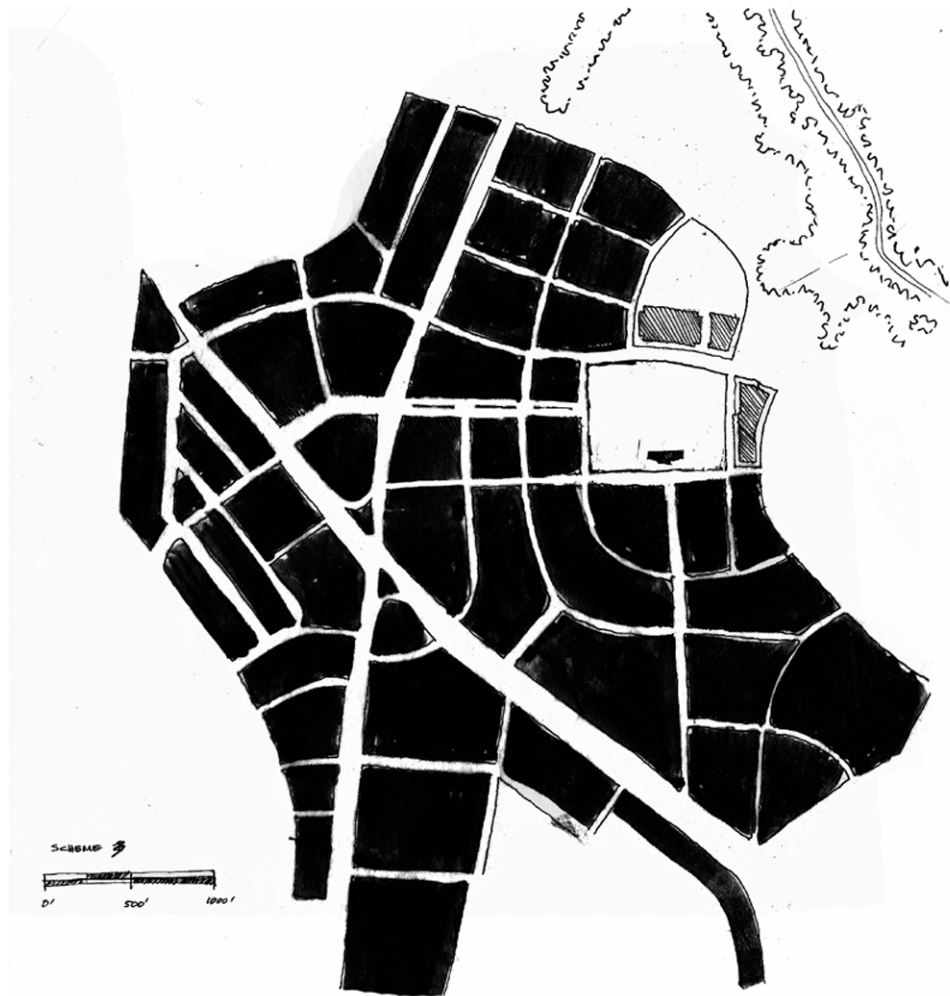
7.1 New proposed street system. All master plans incorporate this street grid. The new streets increase the connectivity of the area rather than each trip having to be made by driving out to University Blvd. or New Hampshire Ave.



7.2 The master plan parti scheme shown brings the natural system from the river up into the school site. The two school buildings also make the street edge to one side while allowing the other to remain an open square/play field in front of the community center and library.



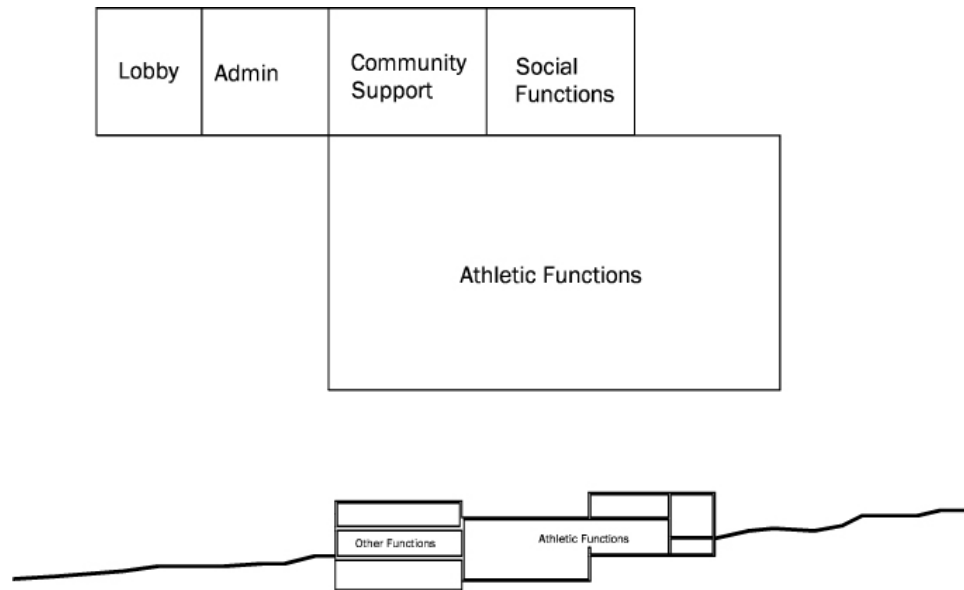
7.3 This scheme suggests a large system that would wind its way through the whole civic complex proposed back to the old McCormick Mansion which would be reopened in every scheme to serve as a community gathering space. This scheme also proposes to keep the existing school location and adding smaller pavilions around it.



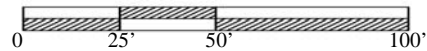
7.4 In this scheme Merrimack Dr. which is the main road through the site remains but more traffic is routed through an expanded new road, Langley Way. This will lead you from New Hampshire or University Blvd. to the new civic square. The school get relocated to have a face o the square as well as the community center takes on the head of the main axis. A new library is added as well next to the school that would also front the square. By placing public functions all along the square it will activate the space during more hours of the day and hopefully night.

Community Center Partis:

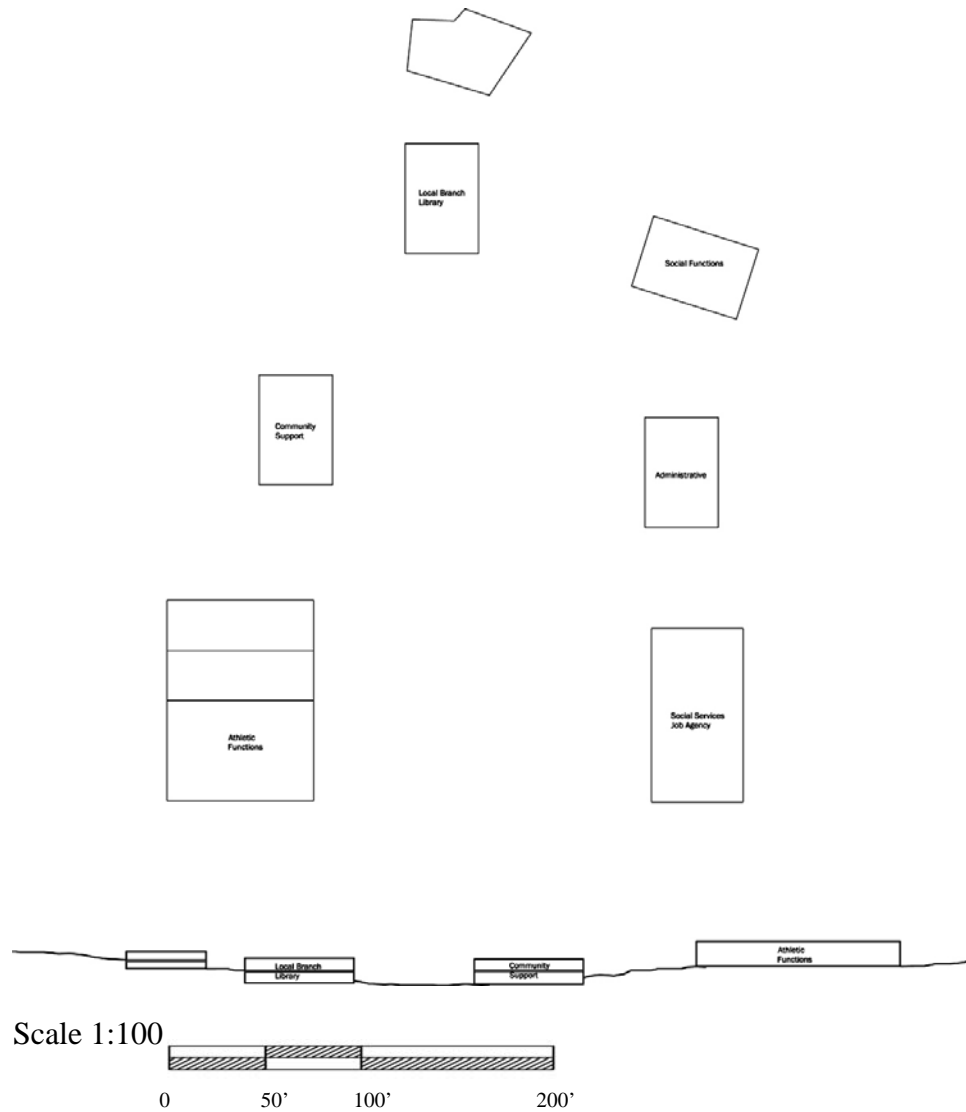
All of the footprints shown below are take directly from the master plan, the planning principles are based off several precedents discussed earlier.



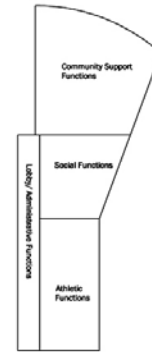
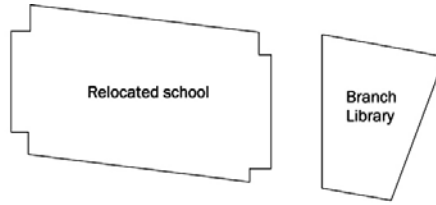
Scale 1:50



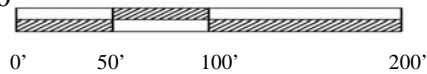
7.5 Based on Master Plan 1: By being able to take two simple bar buildings and using program to navigate the topography the building can climb the hillside as well as create a variety of spaces on different levels for the community.



7.6 Pavilion Parti: In this one the Green system is allowed to slide through the space created between the buildings. The program is dispersed in pavilions that are around the site. This enables there to be more activation of the open spaces. Smaller buildings are able to negotiate the slope more easily as well as breaking down the program in to more intimate spaces. The group forms a complex as opposed to a single building which fits nicely with the scale of the buildings around it.



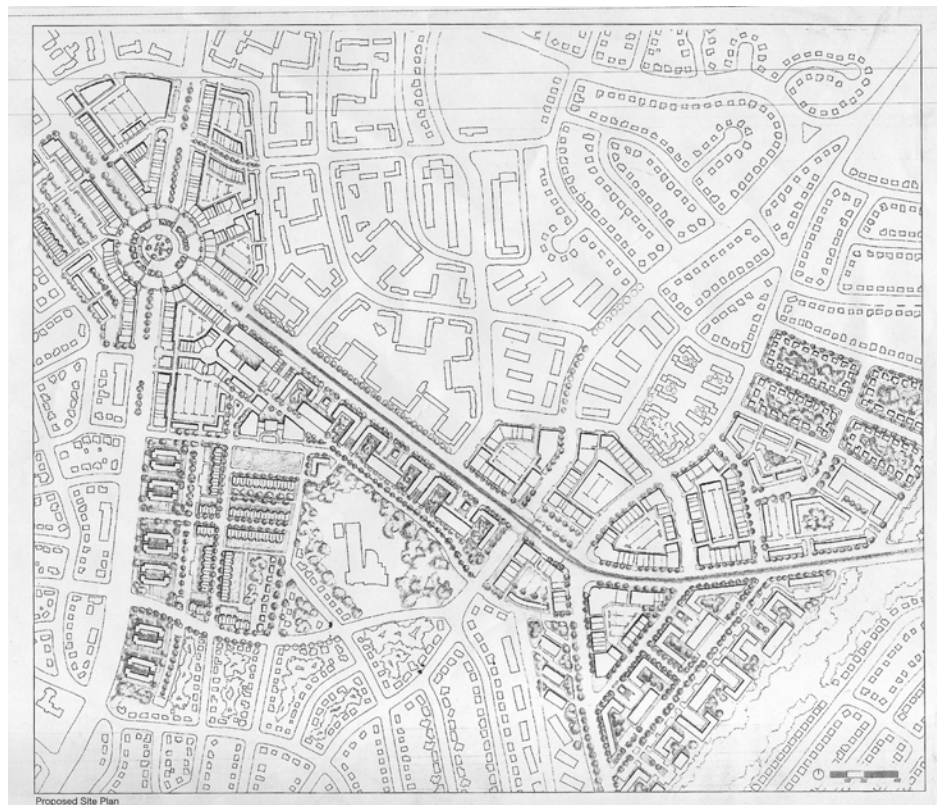
Scale 1:100



7.7 This parti is based on master plan scheme 3. Here the building takes on a much longer footprint that deals with the site in section. This scheme front loads the administrative uses on the square and allows for the rest of the building to be open to the public. The community support spaces being the farthest north with access to the road and across from the school this makes it easily accessible to the community. The athletic spaces which are taller and can be terraced more easily because of the grade change are located in the southern portion of the building. The more social and class room oriented spaces are in the center of the building where there is more activity.

Chapter 8 : Conclusion

After completing the research that began this project I found that I had failed to take into account a major component of the strategy for master planning. At first I had focused on the interior of Langley Park and had not made the leap into broader ideas that would eventually direct the way the master plan would go. Through the course of precedent analysis and further site studies the opportunity presented itself to build upon another body of work done in previous semesters. In taking a look at Arch 700's master plan for the University blvd. and New Hampshire Ave. intersection a lot of the moves that brought in mixed use development and mass transit seemed to make sense. So as a unique proposal within the school I adopted parts of the proposed master plan and further developed it.



8.1 Proposed Langley Park Master as conceived of by the Urban Design Studio.

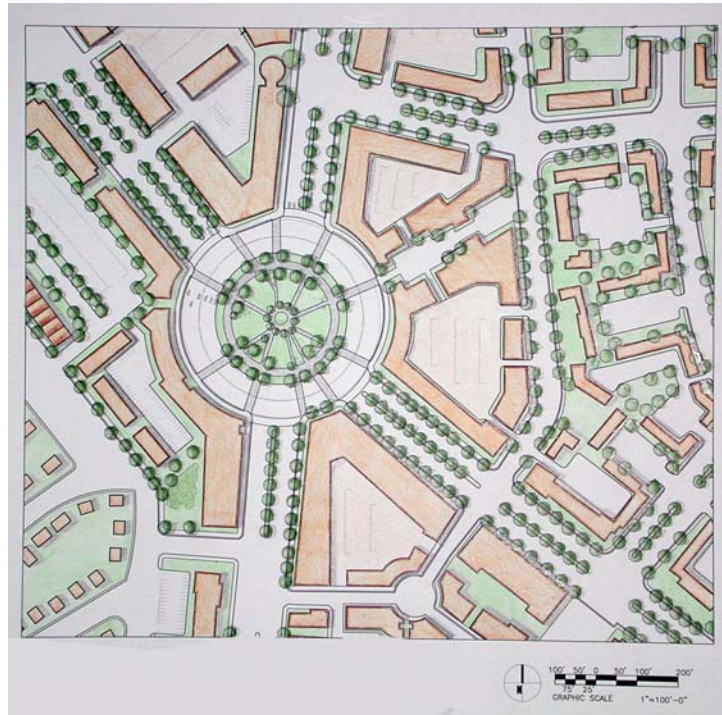
In taking a broader look at the area there were a variety of interventions that could take place because of the increase of scale. For example most of the opportunities to increase connectivity depended on all the secondary and tertiary streets tying back to University Blvd and New Hampshire Ave. Other aspects of the master plan got larger such as; bringing in mass transit stations and the opportunities that those provided to reflect the street vending culture that takes place so actively in this community. Also with such a large area to work with not every thru way had to become a street. Some streets had the opportunity to operate as pedestrian interior streets that worked within the existing framework. Some of the other issues that could be highlighted in the existing fabric was the lack of opportunity for home ownership. Most of the 170 acre area is filled with garden apartments or single family homes. Since the idea of creating a neighborhood center on the interior was going to be explored then case for home ownership ought to be looked at.

In the end all of these factors led to a master plan that adapts to American planning ideals as well keeping some of the flavor of Latin American town planning.



8.2 Final Proposed Master Plan. The final compilation of master plans into one.

Mass Transit Nodes:



8.3 Langley Circle: Metro Transit Node

Langley Circle proposes big box retail with a Metro Core underground. Plazas and market places for local vending are proposed as purely pedestrian streets. The large scale traffic circle allows for the intersection of New Hampshire and University Blvd. to effectively resolve themselves around a community green that is modeled after Dupont Circle. Because of the increased activity being brought to the area center block parking structures are also being designed around the metro stops. The existing streets have little or no foliage so in order to make them more pedestrian friendly a planting program is being proposed, to turn the existing into a tree lined boulevard.

Another area that was proposed as a major transit node was the intersection of Riggs Rd. and University Blvd.



8.4 Riggs Metro Plaza: Metro Transit node and Bus Depot

The Riggs Metro plaza was oriented more for mass transit needs and a commercial core versus its circle counter part which would become local retail and destination shopping. The cultural aspect of the plan begins to show up in the hardscaped plaza at the center of the space. The plaza was conceived to be filled with commuter activity in the morning and vending during the night and evening hours. Surrounding this plaza are also larger footprint buildings with center block garages to accommodate the metro and future commercial needs.



8.5 Master Plan site model at 1:200 scale

Neighborhood Center:

The proposed master plan did differentiate between transit centers and neighborhood centers. The transit nodes were thought of as generators and commercial centers for the surrounding neighborhoods while the interior center is really the heart of the community housing the community center, branch library, health, and social services as well as local retail and street vending. The proposed plaza would contain mixed use buildings, a hardscaped plaza for vending as well as a green that becomes part of the landscape of the historic mansion. It truly begins to meld the uniqueness of each culture and combine them into one form.

The plaza begins to transform Langley Park from a place on a map to a community that invests in its resources. Part of the problem is that Langley Park is a transient community and there are few opportunities that allow people to call Langley Park home.

The plaza plan proposes a variety of uses that make a deliberate attempt to remove themselves from the retail and commercial centers spawned by the metro corridor; instead they are smaller scale and can be part of the starter business community. For example a variety of food markets, car repair, and seamstress shops should operate on the lower level of all the buildings in the plaza. In order to negotiate the topography and make connections with the northwest branch of the Anacostia river the community center playfields were located along Merrimack Dr. which corresponded to the school playfields which made a natural transition to the river walk. Walkways and places where people could watch the ongoing games were incorporated into the landscape



8.6 Plaza plan blow up showing the hardscape plaza as well as some of the surrounding building types that exist around it.



8.7 Plaza model ; McCormick-Goodhart Mansion at center Community Center to the upper right.



8.8. Plaza model looking from the East.

Community Center:

What began as collection of possible uses that would surround the plaza became the idea for a building. In removing the existing community center and incorporating the functions of what was once a Boys and Girls club, the idea for this community center was conceived. Most of the programs deals directly with recreational activities designed to bring the neighborhood youth into a safe environment and keep them off the streets. Other programmatic elements deal with the social concerns that an immigrant population has to deal with. For example, health and social services would have offices located in the building as well a daycare for adult education courses which would focus on English classes and job training skills. Most of the area people are hard working and simply do not have access to the resources that can help them gain a leg up in this community.

While the building doesn't and could never solve all the social ills of an immigrant community, its placement on the plaza and incorporating recreational activities that people of all ages and ethnicities can enjoy it does being to talk about Langley park as a community rather than a place on the map.



8.9 Ground Level Floor Plan: Main entry floor the recreational functions are in the left wing. The health center has a private entrance to offers extended community hours. Day care facility with the built in courtyard for play space.



8.11 The Upper Level Plan: consists of classrooms for adult education and facilities management such as the administrative offices for the center. Also incorporated would be the club rooms for youth activities.

Elevations:

While the culture and forms of a Latin American architecture have a lot to do with the climatic conditions that they occur in the repetition of mass, wall, and color are correlated with the vibrant culture of these people. While the east coast especially along the mid-Atlantic region has a strong tradition of building in brick the McCormick-Goodhart mansion is really no exception. Its brick elevation and classical portico make an interesting set of rules for those who come behind to follow. In the end by choosing to build out of brick and in a classical proportion which mimics the mansion at a larger scale using the brick in way that is more reminiscent of concrete, introducing color in the walls and murals along the building it starts to respond to a culture that isn't associated with a classical style but a culture whose color and exuberance are what make a place their own.



8.12 Main Façade: South Elevation Facing the plaza and relating to the historic mansion.

Some similar tactics are employed to make entry and define a rhythm on the façade.



8.13 The West façade which works its way down the hill incorporates murals where windows at normal height are not allowed, like places like the gymnasium. As the building steps down the hill another row of windows that the passersby can look into the pool can be seen



8.14 The North façade with its courtyards provide from added natural light on the interior of the building as well recreational space for the day care and a small outdoor patio for personnel to be able to dine and have outdoor receptions.



8.15 The interior of the courtyard has niches and terraces that define zone along the interior of the building but that also begin to express themselves on the exterior.

As the construction of such a large structure with such a large portion underground, the constructability of the building became an issue and the wall section was the element that really forced the issue of how this building could actually be created.



8.16 Wall Section and Bay elevation.



8.17 Building model in the plaza.



8.18 Entrance Piece off the plaza.



8.19 Building as seen from the west with murals.

In the end some of the criticisms pertained mostly to the elevational quality of the building and how it read so massively against the mansion. But if the building remained true to the architecture of wall and mass that is so obviously expressed in the work of Legorratea and Barragan then the elevation was a success. The issues of contextualism and the scale of the building can always be questioned, there is always however, more than one way to solve any given problem. As for the building it did culture affect form? On a minor scale and part of a building typology that exists in many countries perhaps it did. On the subject of the master plan I think that a variety of non-western spaces did appear and to a much larger success. The creation of a place and community were really what this thesis sought to explore. Ultimately there is no such thing as an ethnic architecture because we all products of a history that is interwoven. Particularly in the United States which is a melting pot of people and cultures, so for a place to only express the identity

of one culture seems like a missed opportunity. So to answer the question of this thesis does culture affect form? The answer lies not so much in what building or place is constructed out of, or what it looks like, but it has a stronger relationship to what goes on in the space and whether the space is flexible enough to adapt to the needs of different people at different times. So in the end culture does affect form.

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