

## ABSTRACT

Title of Thesis:       SANDTOWN: REBUILDING A COMMUNITY

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Inner-city neighborhoods have suffered years of neglect and have fallen into utter disrepair. Scenes of crime, poverty, and substandard housing are a way of life. Education and social services are under-supported and overwhelmed. For such communities, urban revitalization is hard to envision for even the most optimistic visionary. The social and economic issues involved in rebuilding such neighborhoods are complex. For decades government programs have attempted to end poverty and stabilize inner-city communities. While many architects and planners envision a flight back to the cities, few realize the serious challenges that await them. In order to bring urban vitality to fruition, a firm commitment must be

made to ameliorate the social and economic ills that characterize many distressed American cities. This is the hardest challenge facing practitioners.

This thesis explores the community development efforts taking place in Sandtown, a neighborhood located in West Baltimore. The thesis entails the creation of a neighborhood community plan phased a over series of incremental time periods that addresses the following: *existing conditions, specific areas of revitalization, defensible open/public space, new residential construction, economic development, regional connection, and historic preservation.*

The thesis focuses on economic development through the design of a Center for Entrepreneurship that would provide educational programs, research and analysis programs, and “living classroom” component related to developing community retail.

SANDTOWN: REBUILDING A COMMUNITY

By

Colin David Tarbert

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**Figure 1: One of many abandoned cornerstores in Sandtown, Baltimore. (Source: author's photography)**

## INTRODUCTION AND INTENTION

*"I think the future of architecture does not lie so much in continuing to fill up the landscape as in bringing back life and order to our cities and towns."*

- Gottfried Boehm, 1987 Pritzker Winner

Over the past decade, architects and planners have taken an active role in attempting to revitalize cities that once were vibrant urban centers. However, one task remains to be understood: rebuilding inner-city communities. As an architecture student I understand that building a community takes more than bricks and mortar. The foundation of a community is its people. In order to build a sustainable community, architects and planners must understand the social, economic, and physical characteristics of a place.

In order to gain a better understanding of the inner-city life, I joined the efforts of Habitat for Humanity taking place in the inner-city neighborhood of Sandtown in West Baltimore, Maryland. Over the past year, I have help to rehabilitate rowhouses, all the while gaining a deeper understanding of inner-city life and the challenges facing such communities. This experience has shaped the foundation and direction of this thesis.

Since 1986, New Song Urban Ministries, local faith-based organization, has been developing of a 12 block area in north-central Sandtown. The organization has been

effective in creating tangible change in the following areas: housing, education, healthcare, and job placement. One of the more difficult challenges facing the organization is economic development. Specifically, the organization is seeking to integrate community retail into the neighborhood. This thesis focuses on strategies aimed at developing local retail to serve Sandtown residents, which at one time it did. Laverne Stokes, a life-long resident of Sandtown recounts:

“Growing up in Sandtown...it’s a predominately black community and growing up there it was a community that had everything right at its fingertips. As I look back as a child, we never left our community to go shopping; well today that story is very different. Even though at one point we had supermarkets within Sandtown, right now there are no supermarkets within Sandtown. It’s right on the boundaries about five minutes away, but we don’t have that privilege anymore. Growing up there we had about 8 or 9 movie theaters, today there is none. There was a lot of factory work in Sandtown, we had a lot of dairies and bakeries, just a variety of businesses there. After the 60’s a lot of businesses left the inner city and never rebuilt. And so basically all of our shopping was done outside of the community so that there were no dollars actually turning around again.”<sup>1</sup>

This thesis may raise more questions than it answers. Rebuilding distressed communities is a complex issue. Admittedly, this thesis is limited in scope. There is not a single solution to successfully rebuilding inner-cities and eliminating poverty. The strategies and methods put forth in thesis only provide a glimpse into one community’s effort to rebuild. The solutions suggested in this thesis may not be applicable to every inner-city community. However, it is likely that architects will become more involved in solving the issues raised in this thesis. In this regard, the intention of this thesis is to

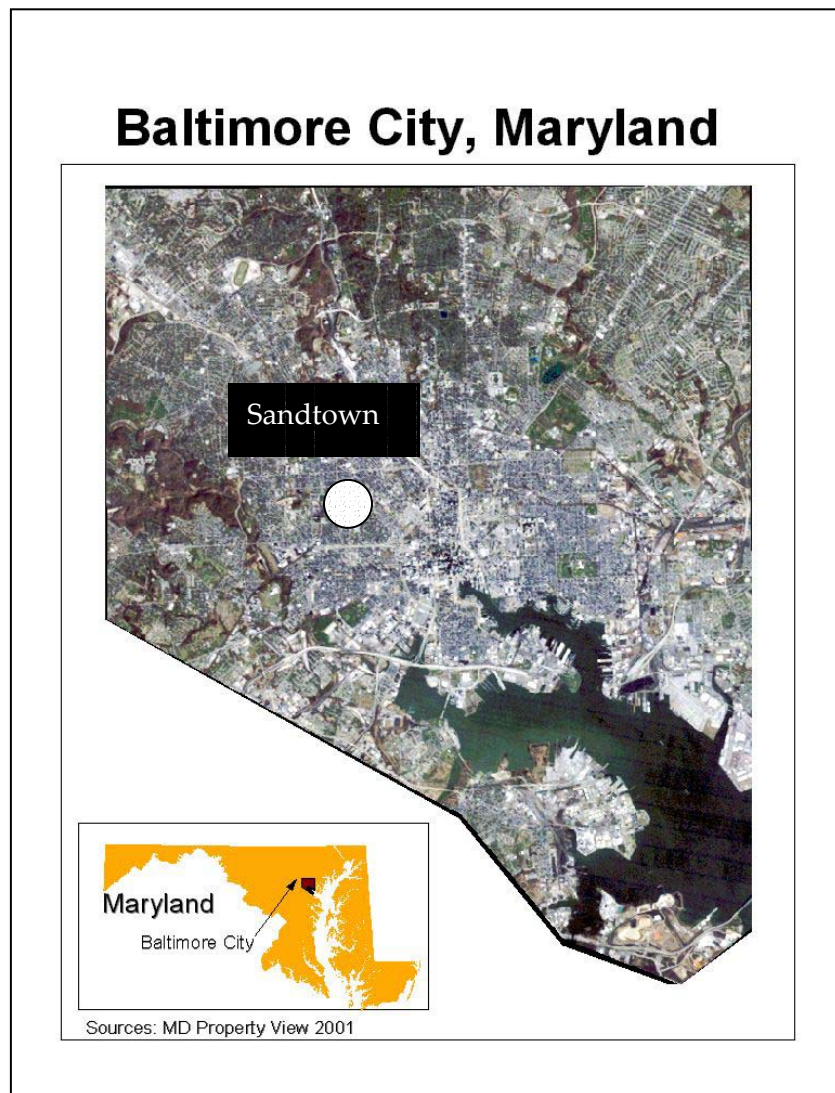
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<sup>1</sup> Stokes, Al and LaVerne Stokes. *On Sandtown Habitat for Humanity*. Notes from the Project on Lived Theology, University of Virginia, Conference - Charlottesville, Virginia - December 15-17, 2000. page2. <<http://livedtheology.org/meetings/community1.htm>>



raise awareness of architectural and planning issues facing inner-city communities and to provide an initial investigation that is likely to be continued by community planners and architects in the future.

**Regional & Site Location:**



**Figure 2: Site Location within Regional Context (Source MD Property View 2001)**



**Figure 3: Abandoned house on Fulton Ave in Sandtown, Baltimore. (Source: author's photography)**

## ABANDONMENT OF THE AMERICAN DREAM

*"The crisis of place in America is illustrated most vividly by the condition of our cities. Their squalor and impoverishment is the worst symptom of this crisis. Historically, cities contain the essence of a civilization. They are marketplaces for ideas and cultural values as well as material goods. They are the repositories of cultural memory. The city above all, is the public realm monumentalized."*

-James Kunstler, *The Geography of Nowhere*

### Decline of the Dream

An essential component of the now almost clichéd "American Dream" is one's ability to own his or her home in a safe neighborhood. Such a dream can only be realized in an America that values private ownership, civic infrastructure, and strong community identity. At one time our nation's cities fostered such values. But after the horrors of two World Wars, Americans began to re-conceptualize, or perhaps more aptly, misconceptualize the American Dream. With this altered vision, came suburbia. As the suburbs devoured pastoral farmland in the name of a false vision of the American Dream, our cities quickly faded into mere nostalgic memories of a time forgone.

The suburban flight of the past half century has caused unforeseen physical, social, and economic consequences. In addition to environmental detriment, suburban development has also formed racial and class barriers, while simultaneously prompting

disinvestment in urban communities. Rebuilding America's declining cities is a necessary step toward reversing the serious problems incited by suburban sprawl. While many middle class families succeed in attaining the American Dream of homeownership in the suburbs, many less fortunate families living in urban communities are being left behind. Although urban "revitalization" projects have steadily grown in the past few years, little progress has been made in addressing the more critical and difficult issues facing cities.

Since the 1950s inner-city neighborhoods have suffered neglect and have fallen into utter disrepair. Scenes of crime, poverty, and substandard housing are a way of life. Education and social services are under-supported and overwhelmed. For such communities, urban revitalization is hard to envision for even the most optimistic visionary. The social and economic issues involved in rebuilding such neighborhoods are complex. For decades government programs have attempted to end poverty and stabilize inner-city communities. While architects and planners may envision a flight back to the cities, few realize the serious challenges that await them. In order to bring urban vitality to fruition, a firm commitment must be made to ameliorate the social ills that characterize many distressed American cities. This is the hardest challenge facing practitioners.

### **Solving Urban Plight: Trial and Error**

Since the tenement crisis of the industrial revolution, the concern over urban plight has seen its fair share of controversy and debate. Initial efforts to improve the condition of inner-cities began with egalitarian ideals of helping the "deserving poor"

with the development of settlement houses like Jane Addams' Hull House in Chicago founded in 1889<sup>2</sup>. As the nation grew, so did the problem of poor neighborhoods and substandard housing. The early political efforts to reform housing laws and improve urban conditions began between 1914 and 1937 and were lead by women advocates such as Catherine Bauer and Edith Wood.<sup>3</sup> The 1937 Wagner-Steagall Act provided for the first permanent public housing program subsidized by the federal government.<sup>4</sup> Although economic conditions of the Great Depression created the impetus for its passage, there was a strong political grassroots effort behind its passage.<sup>5</sup> Other reformers including, Clarence Stein and Henry Wright, joined Bauer and Wood in promoting better housing conditions and communities centered on family life. Through their persistence, housing became a national issue.<sup>6</sup>

Housing reform policy during the years 1949-1973 did little to incorporate many of original ideas of public housing as the emphasis focused on fiscal conservatism and efficiency.<sup>7</sup> While such reformers envisioned quaint, livable, and socially integrated communities, years of political battles and private persuasion yielded public housing projects like Pruitt Igo and Taylor Homes, which although only a small part of the public housing program, were by the public viewed as the epitome of public housing.<sup>8</sup> Even before urban renewal, public housing was never favored on the national agenda; after

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<sup>2</sup> Hoffman, Alexander. 2003. House by House, Block by Block: The Rebirth of America's Urban Neighborhoods. Oxford University Press. Pgs 3-5.

<sup>3</sup> Birch, Eugenie. Women-Made America: The Case of Early Public Housing Policy. AIP Journal. April 1978. pgs. 130.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid. pg.130.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid. pg. 130.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid pg. 131.

<sup>7</sup> Biles, Roger. "Public Housing and the Postwar Urban Renaissance, 1949-1973," From Tenement to Taylor Homes. University Park: PA, 2000. 143-162.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid pg 152.

urban renewal public housing suffered the stigmatization of being a failure. Since the 1970s, new efforts have emerged including community development corporations and the Community Reinvestment Act (strengthened under the Clinton Administration).

### **Rebuilding Communities**

Despite these efforts, American inner-city communities are still in a state of crisis. Public programs have made little headway in these communities. Private investment has been negligible. Over the past decade, inner-city residents have realized that the fate of their neighborhoods rests in their hands. The growth of community development corporations (CDCs), faith-based community development organizations, and public-private partnership has begun to shape the manner in which inner-city revitalization is taking place.

While previous attempts at urban renewal, which often cleared large areas of city blocks for large-scale projects, today's redevelopment are more incremental and locally integrated. This shift requires new skills and processes for implementing positive change in inner-city communities. Just as individual buildings make up the fabric of a city block, neighborhoods are the building blocks of cities. However, unlike buildings, neighborhoods are more than simply bricks and mortar. The foundation of a community is its people. Rebuilding a community, requires architects and planners must to have a deep understanding the social, economic, and physical characteristics of a particular community.

## Inner-City, Charm City

Baltimore, located centrally on the east coast, began as agricultural and mining based town.<sup>9</sup> Located on the Chesapeake watershed, the city rapidly became an important shipbuilding, trading, and manufacturing port city during the 1800s.<sup>10</sup> Incorporated in 1796, Baltimore grew from a small town of 200 homes into the country's 3<sup>rd</sup> largest city by 1860<sup>11</sup>. In addition to manufacturing, cannery factories, trade, and shipbuilding, haberdashery quickly became Baltimore's specialty.<sup>12</sup> With cheap immigrant labor and an entrepreneurial enthusiasm, clothing factories cranked out volumes of hats, umbrellas, and other men's clothing to export all over the country.<sup>13</sup> After WWII, globalization caused a decline in manufacturing industries resulting in a population shift from the city to suburbia. While Baltimore struggled to retain its manufacturing economy, the trend slowly took a toll the city's economic base as manufacturing jobs continued to be lost to foreign labor markets. In addition to job loss increasing racial tensions culminated in the race riots of 1967. Baltimore's fate was sealed. Today, Baltimore suffers many of the same problems of other post-industrial cities.

Poverty is rampant with nearly 1 out of every 5 people living below the poverty line. The per capita income for the city is \$16,978; 22.9% of the population and 18.8% of families are below the poverty line. Out of the total people living in poverty, 30.6% are

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<sup>9</sup> Belfoure, Charles and Mary Ellen Hayward. The Baltimore Rowhouse. Princeton Architectural Press: July 1999

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Nagarajan, Ramesh. Remembering Baltimore's Industries. <<http://www.neh.gov/news/humanities/2002-09/remembering.htm>>

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

under the age of 18 and 18.0% are 65 or older.<sup>14</sup> Once vibrant neighborhoods now stand as vacant fields of abandon rowhouses illustrating the economic turmoil of past fifty years. As result, healthcare concerns have reached new heights in past decade with a record number of low weight births, high infant mortality rates, drug abuse, and one of the county's worse AIDS epidemics. Baltimore has the third highest incident AIDS case report rate of any major metropolitan area during 2001.<sup>15</sup>

Public education is by no means up to par. One third of city residents over the age of 25 have less education than a high school diploma.<sup>16</sup> Teachers are overburden and funding is lacking. Despite recent improvements in test scores and literacy, the City school system still has not met the state standards in either reading or mathematics.<sup>17</sup>

For those who are familiar with Baltimore's inner-city neighborhoods, they know life is hard. High levels of drugs, violence, crime, and other social ills abound in inner-city communities. Still there remains in residents the fervor to make their communities into safe, viable, and livable neighborhood. Sandtown residents are no different. Many are lifelong residents of the community and have observed its decline from a neighborhood they once loved to a neighborhood they now fear. But, with a new vision and help from community and city leaders, they have slowly started rebuilding the "dream" for themselves and their neighborhoods.

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<sup>14</sup> Nationmaster.com. Encyclopedia: Baltimore <<http://www.nationmaster.com/encyclopedia/Baltimore>>

<sup>15</sup> Maryland AIDS Administration. 2003. Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DHMH). <<http://www.dhmh.state.md.us/AIDS/epictr.htm>>

<sup>16</sup> U.S. Census Bureau. United States Department of Commerce. DP-2. Profile of Selected Social Characteristics: 2000 <<http://www.census.gov/>>

<sup>17</sup> Maryland State Department of Education. 2003. Maryland School Assessment (MSA): Baltimore City. <<http://www.msp.msde.state.md.us>>



## SANDTOWN: THE HALCYON DAYS

*"Sandtown still has a rich sense of community. People live in close proximity to each other; they know each other, care about each other, and watch out for each other. They share each other triumphs, and at the same time, each other's pain, strength and burdens."*

-Allan Tibbels, Sandtown Habitat for Humanity

**Figure 4: Fulton Avenue, the main boulevard running through Sandtown-Winchester Neighborhood, circa 1885. (Source: Cities in Transition by Mark Miller,)**

### A Proud History

The Sandtown-Winchester neighborhood is home to over 10,000 residents that share in the community's rich history encompassing nearly 200 years. Sandtown-Winchester proudly served as the center of African-American culture in Baltimore from the 1930s through the 1950s.<sup>18</sup> During its heyday nearly 50,000 residents called Sandtown home. Fredrick Douglass High School, the centerpiece of the community, retained a faculty comprised of affluent African Americans that successfully prepared graduates to attend Ivy League Universities and private African American colleges.<sup>19</sup> Among the most prominent graduates is Thurgood Marshall, the first African American appointed to the U. S. Supreme Court.<sup>20</sup> During its halcyon days the neighborhood also played host to some of the greatest jazz legends of the era, including Sandtown natives

<sup>18</sup> Free, Karen. 2000. Sandtown: A Community in Transformation. In *Habitat World*, June/July edition. Americus, GA: Habitat for Humanity International.

<sup>19</sup> Ryon, Roderick N. West Baltimore Neighborhoods: Sketches of Their History, 1840-1960. Roderick Ryon, Baltimore: 1993. page 128.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid. page 130.



Cab Calloway and Billie Holiday.<sup>21</sup> Unfortunately, Sandtown-Winchester's days of glory are now long faded.

Today, Sandtown-Winchester is a much different story. Until the late 1950s, segregation practices caused African Americans to live in certain Baltimore neighborhoods, which forced lower, middle, and upper class African Americans to live together. As the Civil Rights Movement gained momentum, segregation laws were repealed allowing Black families to leave inner-city communities for the promise of a better suburban lifestyle. Just as the majority of White middle class families left the city for the suburbs and jobs (and many in fear of the increasing racial tensions), African American middle class families followed suit into White neighborhoods located on city fringes.<sup>22</sup> The result of the middle class migration was a dramatic socio-economic change resulting in the concentration of low-income families in communities that each faced an unavoidable decline. With the deterioration of economic systems, the loss of a sound tax base, and overall abandonment, Sandtown-Winchester rapidly declined into impoverished wasteland<sup>23</sup>. Sandtown-Winchester is now home to the all-too-familiar urban plights that characterize many distressed American cities. Statistics concerning crime, poverty, education, and abandoning housing rank among the worse in the

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<sup>21</sup> Free, Karen. 2000. Sandtown: A Community in Transformation. In *Habitat World*, June/July edition. Americus, GA: Habitat for Humanity International.

<sup>22</sup> Orser, Edward W. Baltimore Book: New Views of Local History. Chapter 10. Ed. Elizabeth Fee, Linda Zeidman, Linda Shopes. Temple University Press: 1991. page 221

<sup>23</sup> Ibid. pg. 224.

country. In 1990, the neighborhood was described by a local pastor as having Third World conditions with crime rampant and vacant housing at its peak.<sup>24</sup>

In that same year, a commitment was forged between the City of Baltimore and the Enterprise Foundation to develop a comprehensive plan to engage residents in transforming Sandtown-Winchester into the safe and viable community it once was.<sup>25</sup> While change is slow and it is ultimately too soon to make any definitive conclusions, the transformation of the Sandtown-Winchester neighborhood seems to be making progress. Many residents, volunteers, and advocacy organizations, including Habitat for Humanity, have joined the effort. Since its beginning, the initiative has produced over 300 new homes, reduced unemployment by 29 percent, and effectively diminished crime by 31 percent<sup>26</sup>.

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<sup>24</sup> Goetz, Edward G. 1997. Sandtown-Winchester, Baltimore: Housing as Community Development. In *Affordable Housing and Urban Development in the United States*, ed. Willem van Vliet, 187-209. Urban Affairs Annual Reviews 46. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. Pg. 131.

<sup>25</sup> Brown, Prudence, Benjamin Butler, and Ralph Hamilton. 2001. The Sandtown-Winchester Neighborhood Transformation Initiative: Lessons Learned About Community Building & Implementation. Baltimore, MD: Annie E. Casey Foundation and the Enterprise Foundation, Inc.

<sup>26</sup> The Enterprise Foundation Inc. Hope From Homes Newsletter – Spring 1999: *Keeping the Dream Alive in Baltimore*.



**Figure 5: New Song Learning Center, Presstman Street.**  
(Source: author's photography)

## A NEW SONG IN SANDTOWN

*"It was an investment of not only money, but individual energy...I mean the fact that people were going to live there and stay there, and invest their time and effort was a major sign of hope and uplift for the people in Sandtown."*

- Kurt Schmoke, Former Mayor of Baltimore

### A New Song, a New Beginning

The community rebuilding efforts of Sandtown have been widely publicized due to the level of funding as well as the prominence of the projects leaders, including the late Jim Rouse, founder of the Enterprise Foundation, and the former Mayor of Baltimore, Kurt Schmoke. But, several years before Sandtown became a familiar name, grassroots efforts were developing. A brief history of one local faith-based organization follows:

In 1986, Allan Tibbels, along with his wife Susan, their two young daughters, and Mark Gornik, a seminary graduate friend, deliberately relocate from the suburbs to Sandtown<sup>27</sup>. At the time, Sandtown had reached an all-time low. Allan says they chose the neighborhood because of its central location among the most impoverished

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<sup>27</sup> Free, Karen. 2000. Sandtown: A Community in Transformation. In *Habitat World*, June/July edition. Americus, GA: Habitat for Humanity International.

Baltimore communities. From the beginning, their intention was to provide a holistic community development effort that would break down barriers across geography, race, class, and culture and rebuild the Sandtown community.

Prior to his decision to move to Sandtown, Allan, an avid basketball player, suffered a serious injury while attempting a lay-up<sup>28</sup>. The injury left Allan unable to walk and confined to a wheelchair for life. The experience also gave him considerable time to think. It was during his recovering that he decided to found New Song Urban Ministries. With the involvement and support of his family and close friend, they decided to live out the principles set forth by John Perkins. The Perkins model of church-based, Christian community development is comprised of three R's: relocation (living among the poor); reconciliation; and redistribution (providing skills, education, and resources for community empowerment).

The Tibbels and Gornik first asked community residents if it was acceptable for to move into the neighborhood. They were welcomed and received encouragement from community leaders. For two years, the founders of New Song worked to establish a deep understanding of the neighborhood through building relationships with residents. Some residents were suspicious of white people moving into the neighborhood and some even rumored that they were undercover police<sup>29</sup>.

After first establishing the New Song Church in 1988, Tibbels and Gornik decided to establish Sandtown Habitat in 1989. From living in the neighborhood and

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<sup>28</sup> Ritzel, Rebecca. 2000. A Different Kind of Career. In *World Magazine*. World Wide Web page <[www.worldji.com/studentarticles.asp?news\\_id=39](http://www.worldji.com/studentarticles.asp?news_id=39)> (accessed March 30, 2003)

<sup>29</sup> Free, Karen. 2000. Sandtown: A Community in Transformation. In *Habitat World*, June/July edition. Americus, GA: Habitat for Humanity International.

discussing the most exigent community issues with residents, it was clear that reducing the number of abandoned houses was the first priority. When they began, there were over 600 vacant rowhouses in Sandtown. Within their 12 block focus area there were over 300 vacant units, many of which were used by drug addicts and squatters.

With the help of thousands of volunteers and 20 full-time staff members, Sandtown Habitat has completed 180 houses with 25 under construction. They hope to complete the remaining 150 vacant houses in their focus area over the next few years.

In 1991, New Song established the a community learning center, which in 1997 as a result of New Schools Initiative became a public school serving grades K-8<sup>th</sup>. The new \$5 million facility also houses preschool programs, after school programs, and provides education for parents.

The New Song Family Health Services, also established in 1991 in partnership with Mercy Medical Center, provides complete primary care for infants, children, and adults. With extensive volunteer service, the program also provides outreach programs, immunization drives, and medical training for residents seeking employment in the profession.

Eden Jobs was established in 1994 as a resource for job training and placement for unemployed residents. According to the organization, the program has made over 600 job placements and hopes to continue to provide 100 placements yearly.

In 1995, in partnership with the Peabody Conservatory and the Maryland State Art Council, the New Song Arts program was created. The program develops and shares community talent by providing music instruction and organizing community

performances. The program has yielded a highly-praised CD and has given Sandtown children the opportunity to travel the nation to perform their music.

Lastly, in 1996, Newborn Holistic Ministries was established to address additional unmet needs of the community. The programs include, Martha's Place, transitional housing for women fighting drug addiction, and the Baltimore Servant Leadership School that provides workshops to train individuals to become community leaders.

The efforts of New Song have been effective in making positive change in several different aspects of the community including housing, education, social and health services, and employment. In order to continue their success in transforming the neighborhood, a community plan that will set the framework for improvement over the next thirty years is needed. Not only will this plan specify problematic areas, more importantly, it will create a vision for what this community can be in the future.



Figure 6: Habitat for Humanity quilt.  
(Source: [www.commonthreadsohio.org/SmallGroups/Default.htm](http://www.commonthreadsohio.org/SmallGroups/Default.htm))

## QUILTMaking: PATCHWORK URBANISM

*We are a patchwork quilt  
Many colors, from many shores  
We keep our own ways,  
But together we make so much more.*

- David Heitler-Klevans

### Metaphor and Methodology

Although America has been decribed as a melting pot, it has also (and perhaps more accurately) been compared to a quilt; each patch representing a culture, significant in itself and vital to its contribution of the whole artwork. The quilting process is threefold. The first step, patchwork, invovles the creation of patches, each being sown out of scrap pieces of fabric into a signular unit. The second process, appliqué, entails the composition of the patches and pinning the pieces to the background fabric. Finally, the quilting process stitches the pieces into a single piece of artwork.

Quilts are an important art form in American history. As quilting historian Laurel Horton states, "Just as our national motto, *E pluribus unum*, "One, from many," encompasses the collective history of individuals from many backgrounds, American quilts have many stories to tell."<sup>30</sup> Some historians argue that quilts may have even

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<sup>30</sup> Horton, Laurel. 1999. Speaking of Quilts: Voices from the Late Twentieth Century. <<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/qlthtml/qltov.html>> (accessed December 2003)

provided an Underground Quilt Code that provided signals to slaves escaping on the Underground Railroad<sup>31</sup>.

The quilting process provides an appropriate metaphor for this thesis's urban design approach and methodology. Urban design is a complex process based on existing conditions that influence conceptions and solutions. The urban design problem put forth in thesis deals with the analysis of existing conditions in the Sandtown community to inform a series of design decisions aimed at unifying disparate urban fabric into a cohesive neighborhood. Sandtown is a series of urban patchwork uncompleted and incoherent. The methodology of urban design for this problem is analogues to quilting: First, based on visual and experiential documentation, urban patches, both good and bad, are to be identified. Second, each patch is created as a significant piece expressive of its individual character and function. Finally, the pieces are stitched together to create a single, holistic, and coherent sense of place.

### **Implications for Implementation**

Designing based on the quilt paradigm allows for incremental change consistent with the type of community development taking place in Sandtown. It must be understood that community development takes time. It has been nearly 16 years since the founders of New Song began their efforts in Sandtown. While there has been a dramatic difference in the community, to the first-time visitor change is hard to see. Reversing years of disinvestment, racial discrimination, and physical decay takes time.

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<sup>31</sup> Dobard, Raymond G. and Jacqueline L. Tobin. 1999. Hidden in Plain View: A Secret Story of Quilts and the Underground Railroad.



Those who expect things to change over night are unrealistic. While it may be decades before a total transformation takes place in a community like Sandtown, setting realistic goals over time can bring change to fruition.

For architects and community planners, this incremental process means developing a masterplan that is comprehensive in its vision and flexible over time. Identifying priority areas for redevelopment, while also exploiting such areas' potential impact on contiguous areas is an important step in creating a masterplan. The Sandtown community presents its own difficulties. The high rate of crime, physical conditions, and lack of economic viability of Sandtown makes community development efforts an extremely arduous and long process.

To date, there is not a masterplan for the 12 block area this thesis investigates. Having a vision is important to any long-term development project. More importantly, the ability to divide a long-term project into feasible phases, each to be implemented over a reasonable time period, makes such a process practical from both a financial and human resource perspective. This thesis seeks to identify and create urban patches and develop a plan to integrate and "stitch" these patches over a 30 year time period into cohesive neighborhood.



Figure 7: Gilmor Street, showing Gilmor Homes Public housing projects. (Source: author's photography)

## EXISTING URBAN CONDITIONS

*"Reality is merely an illusion, albeit a very persistent one."*

- Albert Einstein

### The Good, the Bad, and the In-between

To understand the disparate urbanism of Sandtown, it takes walking the streets and experiencing "the good, the bad, and the in-between" patches of urbanism. A brief explanation of each category follows:

The Good: This category consists of places with what would be considered "good" urbanism – places that feel comfortable, safe, and pleasant to occupy. Figures 8-20 illustrate the good urbanism existing in Sandtown. These examples serve as existing prototypes for the redevelopment other parts of the community.

The Bad: This category consists of places that exhibit characteristics of "bad" urbanism – areas that lack spatial quality, comfort, and pleasure. Figures 21-31 illustrate examples of bad urbanism that disjoint the Sandtown community.

The In-Between: This category is less definitive, but describes areas that either transition between the good and bad, or areas that need a modest intervention to become quality urban spaces (Figures 31-34).

## The Good Urbanism

### 1. Presstman Street

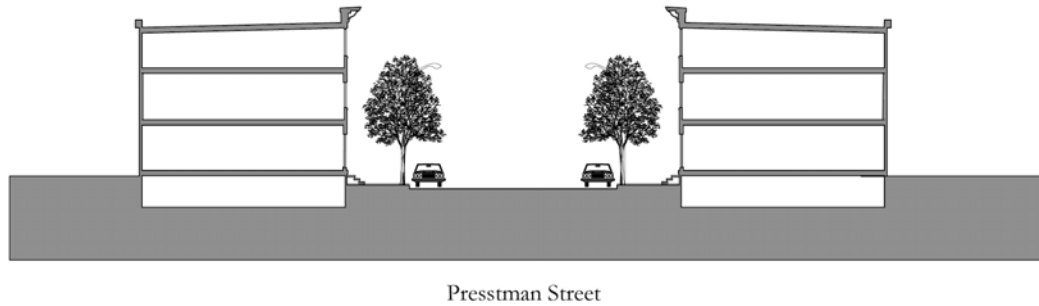


Figure 8: Section through Presstman Street east of Gilmor Street. (Source: author's drawing)



Figure 9: Three story rowhouses on Presstman Street. (Source: author's photography)



Figure 10: Front stoops along the tree-lined street. (Source: author's photography)

This portion of Presstman Street is a good example of Baltimore rowhouse architecture and neighborhood character. The proportion of street width to building height creates a discrete sense of space appropriate for an urban residential fabric.

## 2. Gilmor Street



Figure 11: Section through Gilmor Street north of Presstman Street. (Source: author's drawing)



Figure 12: Residential character of Gilmor Street. <sup>nd exam</sup>  
(Source: author's photography)

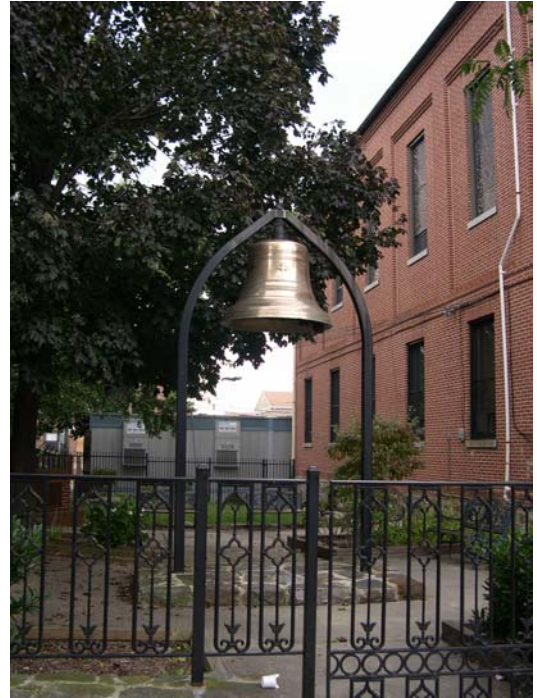


Figure 13: Church courtyard located on Gilmor Street. (Source: author's photography)

residential street. Residents often enjoy socializing on their front stoop, shaded by the street trees. This street provides the intimate character necessary for community interaction. A church is also located on the street, which provides community activity on this quaint street.

### 3. Calhoun Street



Figure 14: The recently renovation housing and streetscape on Calhoun Street. (Source: author's photography)



Figure 15: Calhoun Street, renovated by the Urban Design Associates. (Source: author's photography)

Calhoun Street also is a good example of a two-story rowhouse residential that has recently undergone a street revitalization partly designed the Urban Design Associates. The street is also designated as a homeownership zone.

### 4. Leslie Street



Figure 16: Leslie Street looking north. (Source: author's photography)



Figure 17: Leslie Street newly constructed rowhomes. (Source: author's photography)



Leslie Street is a street of 28 newly construction rowhomes designed by architect Mary MacDonald. The rowhouse design is based on the typical Baltimore rowhouse, but designed with current market needs in mind. These homes were built by the Sandtown Habitat for Humanity in partnership with Baltimore City. The City provided the infrastructure costs that included removing existing vacant houses and providing a new street and sewer system.

## 5. Aspects of Good Urbanism and Community



Figure 18: Habitat for Humanity volunteers and the future homeowner take a quick break before continuing to rehab one of the many vacant rowhomes in Sandtown. (Source: author's photography)



Figure 19: The famous Mr. Benny's snowball stand is place of gathering for the community. (Source: author's photography)



Figure 20: A well maintain private garden adds residential delight to this urban community. (Source: author's photography)

## The Bad Urbanism

The examples of bad urbanism contribute to neighborhood's lack of coherence and sense of place.

### 1. Presstman Street



Figure 12: Section through Presstman Street, west of Gilmor Street. (Source: author's drawing)



Figure 22: This portion of Presstman Street's severity is due to the lack of greenscape and street width. (Source: author's photography)



Figure 23: The orientation of Gilmor Homes does little to activate the street. (Source: author's photography)

The lower portion of Presstman Street between Gilmor Street and Fulton Ave. lacks the residential character previously illustrated. The causes of this condition are the lack of street trees, street width, and general deterioration of the buildings. This condition could easily be remedied through landscaping, paving differentiation, and the rehabilitation of existing structures.

## 2. Mount Street

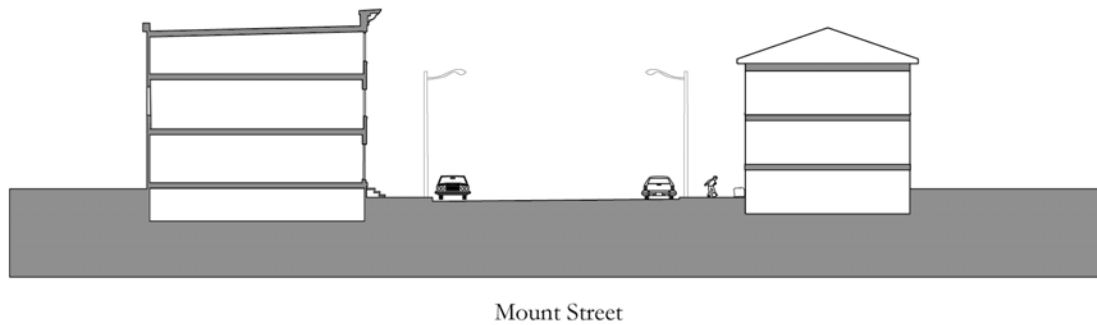


Figure 24: Section through Mount Street. (Source: author's drawing)



Figure 25: Looking north on Mount Street. (Source: author's photography)



Figure 13: Looking south on Mount Street. (Source: author's photography)





**Figure 27: Mount Street looking north past Presstman Street. (Source: author's photography)**

Mount Street lacks spatial coherence. One of the major problems with Mount Street is the relationship between the street and Gilmor Homes. The Gilmor Homes backs the street causing a lack of street activity. The street only has only side with fronts causing an awkward and unsettling urban condition. Vacant lots also contribute to the street's lack of spatial definition.

### 3. Gilmor Street



Figure 14: Looking north on Gilmor Street from Gilmor Elementary School. (Source: author's photography)



Figure 15: The width of the street contributes to the lack of spatial definition. (Source: author's photography)

This portion of Gilmor Street exhibits few characteristics of the typical Baltimore residential fabric. The orientation of Gilmor homes does not address the street and contributes to the lack of urban and spatial quality.

### 4. Other examples of bad urbanism.



Figure 17: New housing developed during the Nehemiah Project looks suburban and does not respond to the historical character of the community. (Source: author's photography)



Figure 16: A front stoop reads "Keep Off" addressing the problem of loitering. (Source: author's photography)

## The In-Between Urbanism

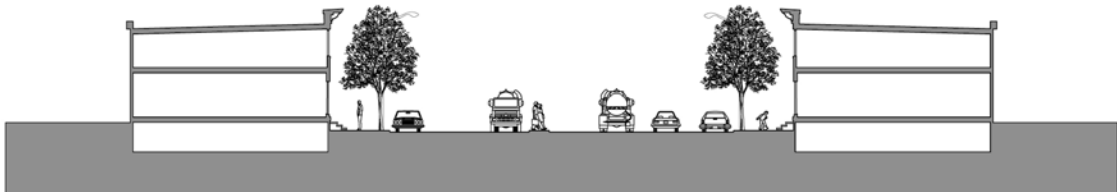


Figure32: Section through Fulton Avenue. (Source: author's drawing)

Fulton Avenue is located on the western edge of the site and is a main thoroughfare through the community. The street is about 100 feet wide, carries 5 lanes of traffic (2 south, 3 north), and has parallel parking on both sides. Restoring the median that once existed could add a grand boulevard character to the street.



Figure33: Fulton Avenue looking north. (Source: author's photography)



**Figure 34: Sidewalk condition along Fulton Ave. (Source: author's photography)**



**Figure 35: Lack of spatial definition on Fulton Avenue. (Source: author's photography)**





## SANDTOWN: URBAN ANALYSIS

*"Get the habit of analysis- analysis will in time enable synthesis to become your habit of mind."*

- Frank Lloyd Wright

Figure 36: Baltimore Reverse Figure Ground (Source: author's drawing)

## Diagrams

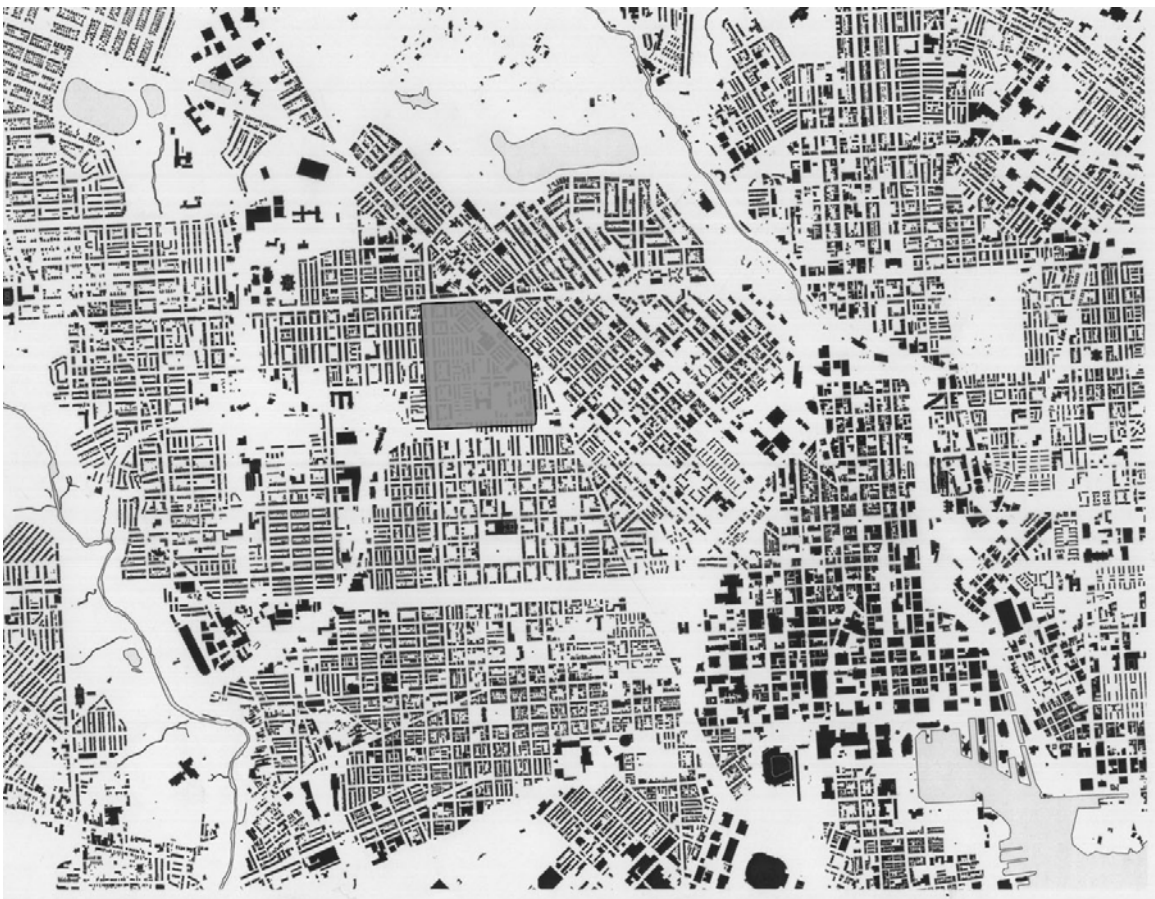


Figure 37: Figure-Ground showing the location of the site within Baltimore. (Source: author's drawing)

As illustrated in the figure-ground, the Sandtown community is predominantly distinguished by a rowhouse typology. Other prominent building types include three blocks of public housing and several school buildings.



Figure 38: Existing Figure Ground (Source: author's drawing)

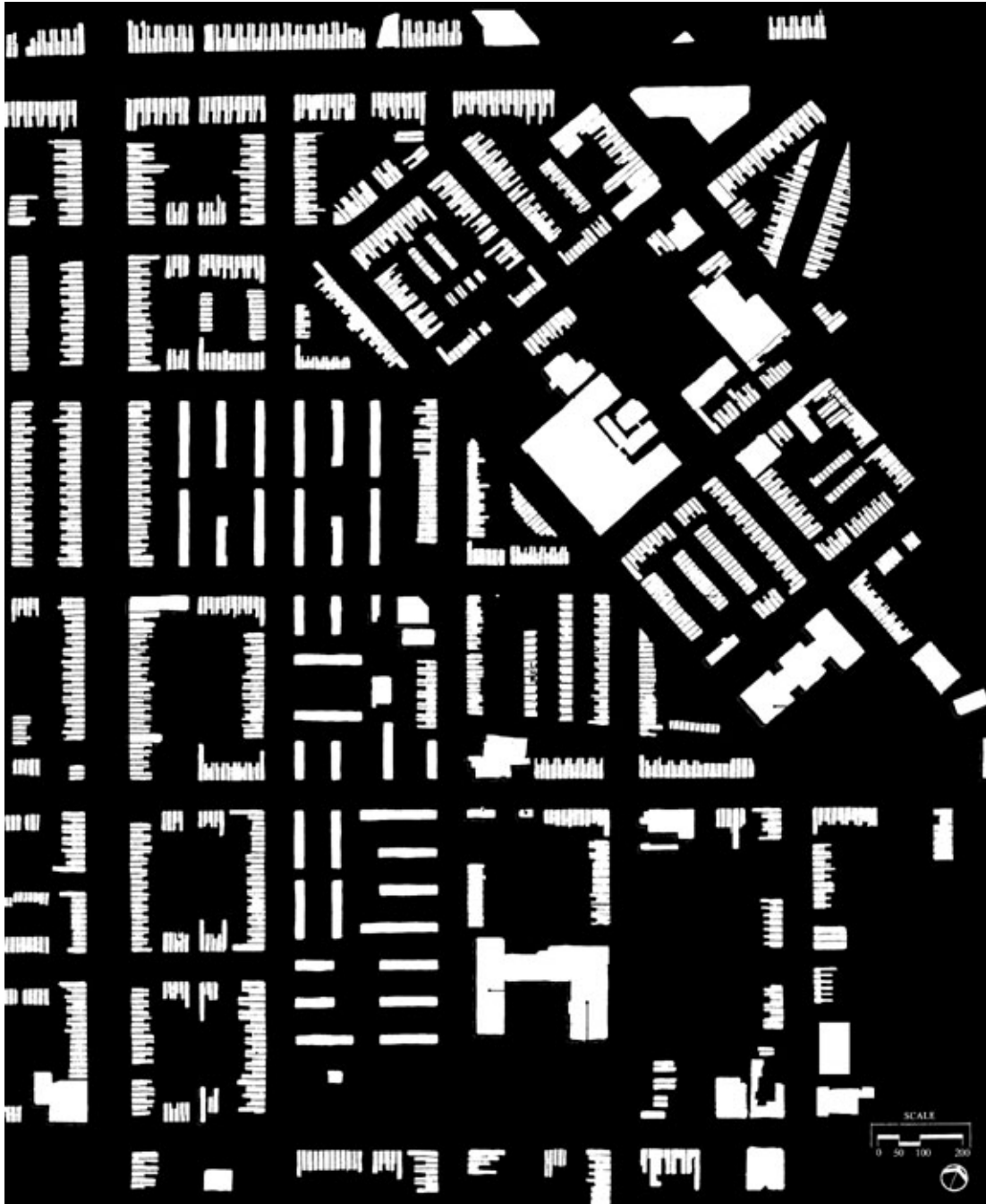
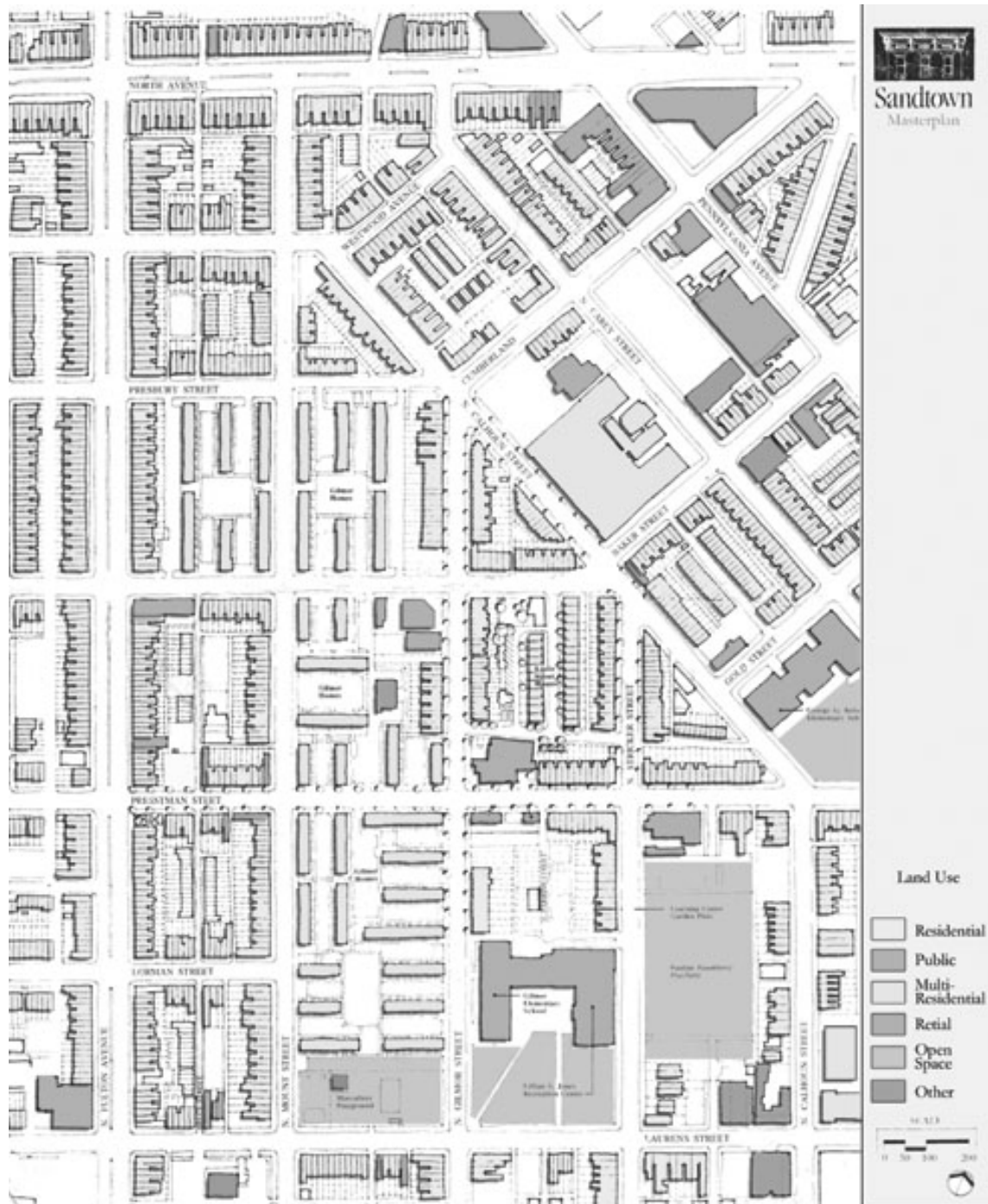


Figure 39: Existing Figure Ground Reversal (Source: author's drawing)



Most of the community's open space is located in the southeast portion of the neighborhood. Of the four open spaces, three are dedicated to providing recreation for elementary school. One is mainly used by the residents of the Gilmor Homes public



housing complex. There is a need for a community space centrally located in the neighborhood.



Figure 41: Open Spaces (Source: author's drawing)

The majority of the building fabric consists of both two and three story rowhouses. This fabric creates a neighborhood characterized by density, a pedestrian-scale, and urban living.



Figure 42: Rowhouse fabric (Source: author's drawing)

The remainder residential fabric consists mainly of Gilmor Homes, a public housing complex. There are also several buildings which have been converted in senior-living apartment buildings.



Figure 43: Other residential (Source: author's drawing)

There are a number of public buildings located throughout the community.

These buildings include churches, schools, and social services centers.



Figure 44: Public Buildings (Source: author's drawing)

The closest retail center is located at the intersection of North Avenue and Pennsylvania Avenue. This area is historically recognized as a vibrant retail area. While the retail is concentrated in this area, virtually no neighborhood retail exists within the community to serve residents' daily needs.



Figure 45: Retail locations (Source: author's drawings)

For most urban communities, mass transit is a vital component to maintaining a healthy neighborhood. Sandtown is served by both bus service and metro service. While this is a positive aspect, residents comment that it can take between 1-2 hours to catch local bus services. In most cases, residents choose to drive or walk longer distances.



Figure 46: Mass transit diagram illustrating the 5 and 10 minute walk from the North Ave. metro station. (Source: author's drawing)



Figure 47: Schematic Masterplan Design. (Source author's drawing)

## THE COMMUNITY PLAN

*"Make no small plans; they have no magic to stir men's blood"*

- Daniel H. Burnham

### Design and Implementation

In order to define the problem that this community plan seeks to solve the following explanation of the goal, strategy, and design principles follows:

#### Developing a Community Plan

**Goal:** To re-establish the Sandtown community as a healthy, safe, and viable urban community that contributes to and benefits from the greater community.

**Strategy:** To create a community plan, which includes a series of interventions, varied in scope, that build upon current community development practices, encourage both private and public investments, and support economic development.

### Principles:

1. Create identifiable public spaces.
2. Introduce incrementally phased improvements that enhanced existing urban conditions.
3. Utilize neighborhood landmarks to link important community spaces.
4. Build upon the community's historic character and cultural significance.
5. Increase transit service, access, and ridership.
6. Create a variety of housing types to meet market demands.
7. Increase homeownership opportunities.
8. Develop new and enhance existing open/green spaces
9. Create a mix-use and walkable community.
10. Redevelop public housing as mixed-income, mixed-residential, and an integrated part of the community.

In order to meet these objectives, six interventions were developed. In keeping with the “patchwork” urbanism approach, these inventions will be referred to as patches. The patches were developed from urban analysis that suggested the most critical areas for redevelopment.

Patchwork 1 consists of continuing community development efforts to rehabilitate vacant rowhouses and infilling vacant lots with new residential/community buildings.

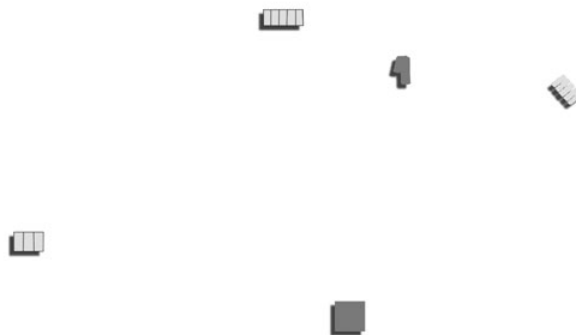


Figure 48: Patchwork 1 - infill development and rehabilitation of vacant structures. (Source: author's drawing)



Patchwork 2 consists of the restoration of former Fredrick Douglass High School. The building is currently being transformed into apartments by a private developer. The building was auctioned by the City in the July of 2003. This plan proposes returning the building to its former use of a high school and community learning center.

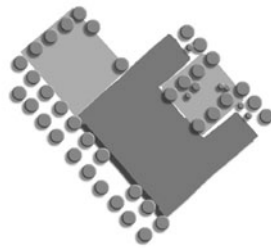


Figure 49: Patchwork 2 - the restoration of Fredrick Douglass High School. (Source: author's drawing)

Patchwork 3 consists of the redevelopment of Presstman Street into a main community street with neighborhood amenities that include a public space, neighborhood retail, renovated and new residential units, improved mass transit service, and educational facilities. This patchwork will be the focus of the block intervention further explored in this thesis.

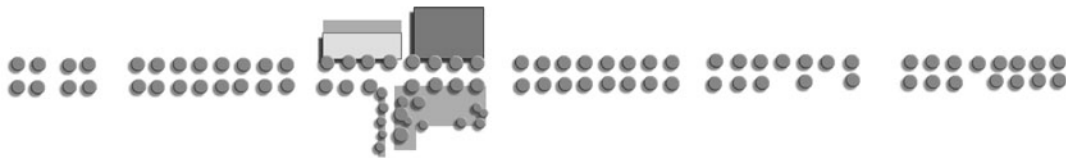


Figure 50: Patchwork 3 - The redevelopment of Presstman Street. (Source: author's drawing)

Patchwork 4 consists of the redevelopment of Fulton Avenue into a tree-lined boulevard with a green median. This intervention would serve as a gateway into the community and transform a high volume thoroughfare into a public amenity.

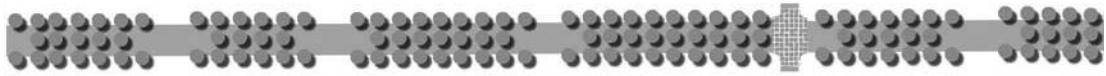


Figure 51: Patchwork 4 - The redevelopment of Fulton Avenue into grand boulevard. (Source: author's drawing)

Patchwork 5 consists of redeveloping the southern portion of Gilmor Homes from a public housing project into a mixed-residential, mixed-income, and integrated part of the community. Renovations of the existing buildings will include the addition of front porches and the creation of streets, which will clarify public and private spaces.

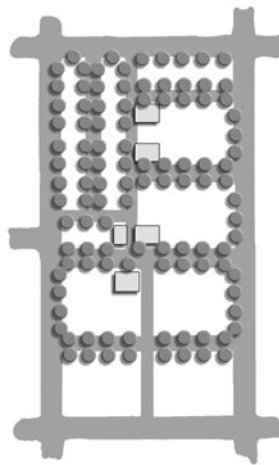


Figure 52: Patchwork 5 - Showing new streets and new residential buildings. (Source: author's drawing)

Patchwork 6 is the redevelopment of the northern portion of Gilmor Homes using similar principles and strategies as Patchwork 5.

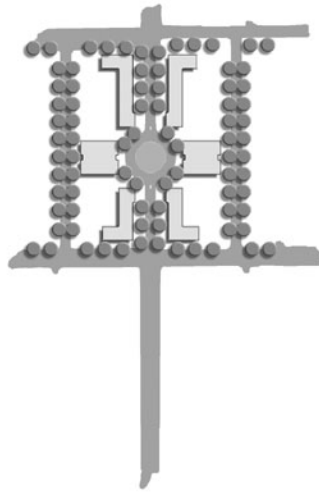


Figure 53: Patchwork 6 - Showing the addition of new housing and streets. (Source: author's drawing)

The implementation of the patchwork is divided into three phases which would most likely occur over several decades, for example a 5, 10, and 20 year plan. While each patch is autonomous, the assemblage of the patches will yield a cohesive community plan. Each of the three phases consists of two patches. For this thesis, the phases are incremental based on capital cost and the scope of each patch. In reality, these phases could be rearranged or consist of different patch combinations without effecting the end result.

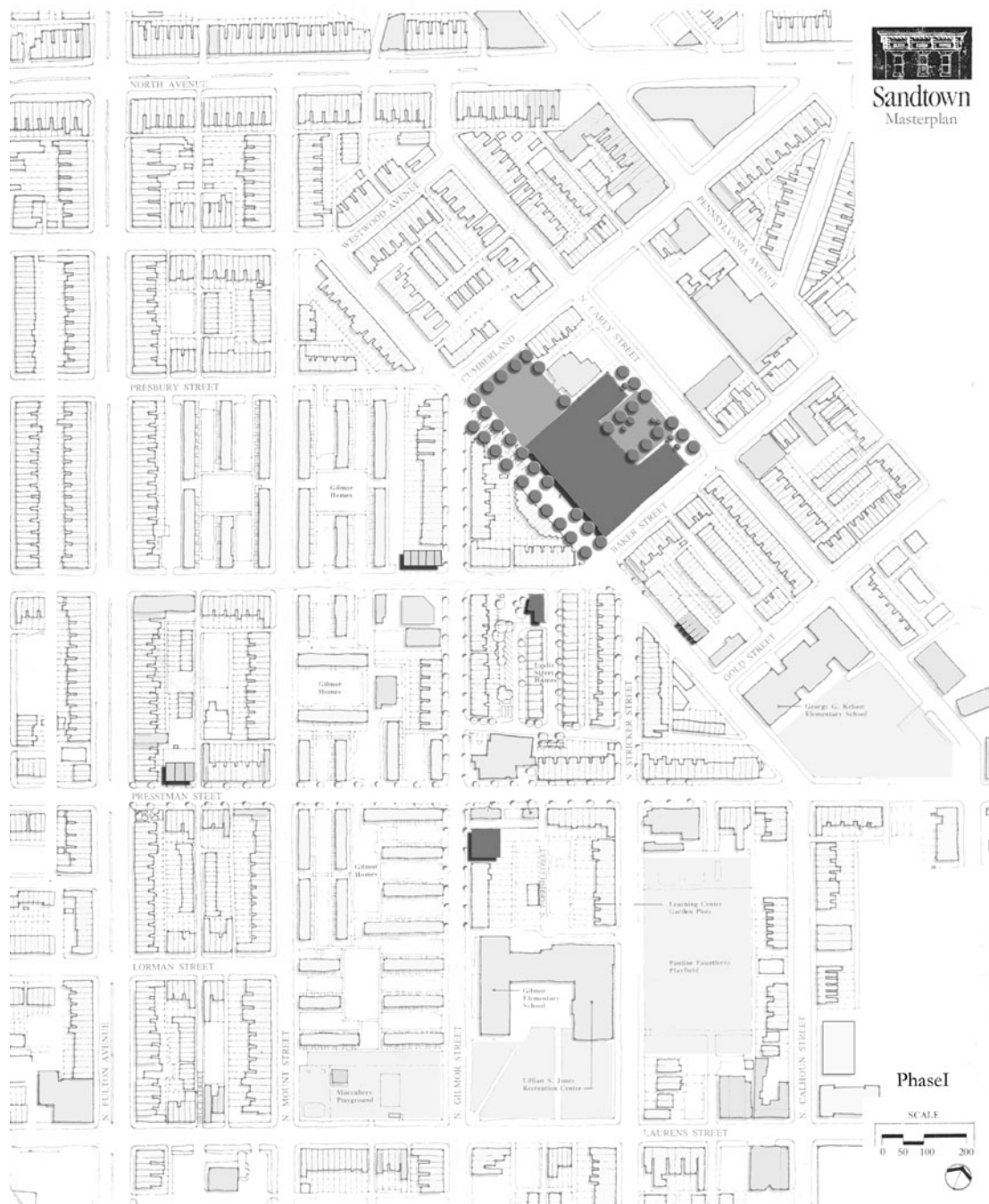


Figure 54: Phase I consist of Patches 1 & 2, infill development and the renovation of Fredrick Douglass H.S. (Source: author's drawing)

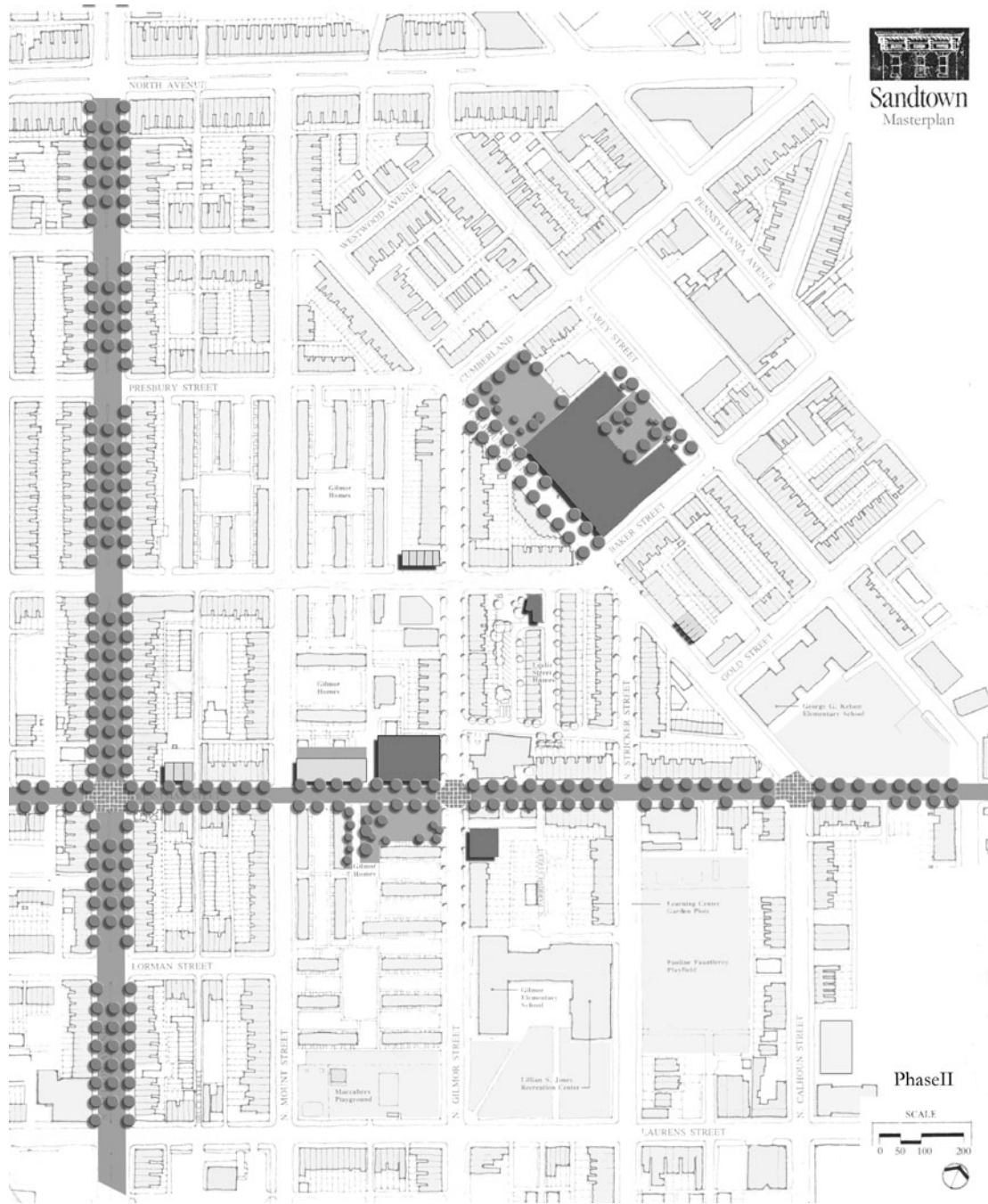


Figure 55: Phase II, showing the redevelopment of Presstman Street and Fulton Avenue. (Source: author's drawing)

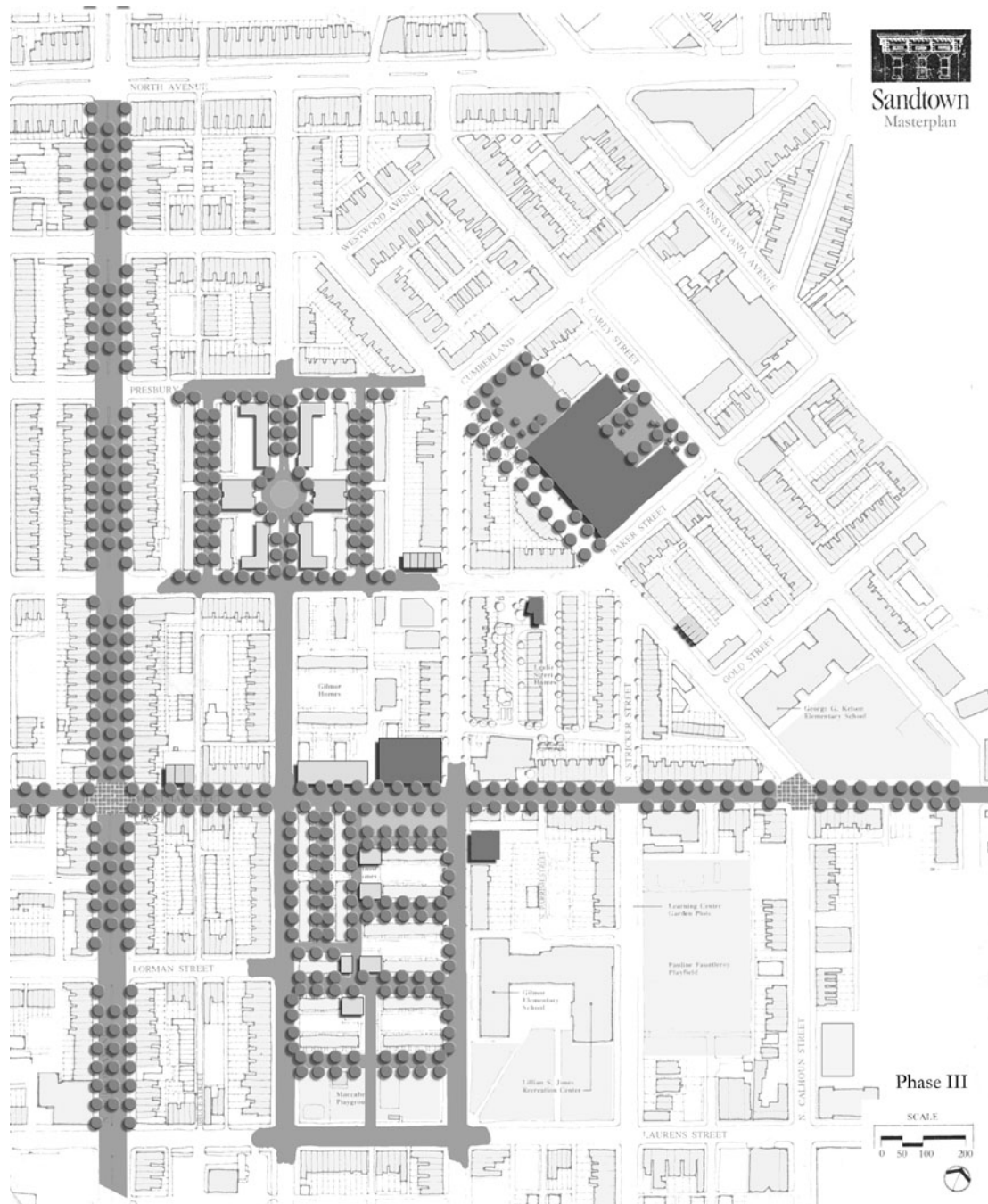


Figure 56: Phase III, showing Patches 5 & 6, the redevelopment of Gilmore Homes. (Source: author's drawing)

## Precedents for Public Housing Renovation

### Schematic Design for Patches 5 & 6

The Diggs Town Public housing project located in Norfolk, Virginia was successful transformed by the Urban Design Associates from a typical 1950's housing project plagued by crime and deterioration into a symbol of pride for the community.<sup>32</sup>



Figure57: Diggs Town before. (Source: The Urban Design Associates website <http://www.urbandesignassociates.com>)



Figure 58: Diggs Town after. (Source: The Urban Design Associates website <http://www.urbandesignassociates.com>)

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<sup>32</sup> The Urban Design Associates website <<http://www.urbandesignassociates.com/index.html>>

The redevelopment of Gilmor Homes poses several design challenges. The effort was made to renovate the existing buildings, while also creating new residential types to create a more contextual residential character.



**Figure 59: Existing Gilmor Homes Courtyard.**  
(Source: author's photography)



**Figure 60: Proposed design.** (Source: author's drawing)

As seen in the existing photographs (Figures 59, 61), shared courtyards and entries are underutilized and detract from the quality of space. As illustrated in the proposed schematic designs (Figures 60, 52), the creation of streets and front porches creates a clear distinction between public and private realms.



**Figure 61: Existing condition of Gilmor Homes.** (Source: author's photograph)



**Figure 62: Proposed design.** (Source: author's drawing)



Figure 63 and 64 demonstrate the connection between Gilmor Homes and the community by creating porosity through the existing super-block.

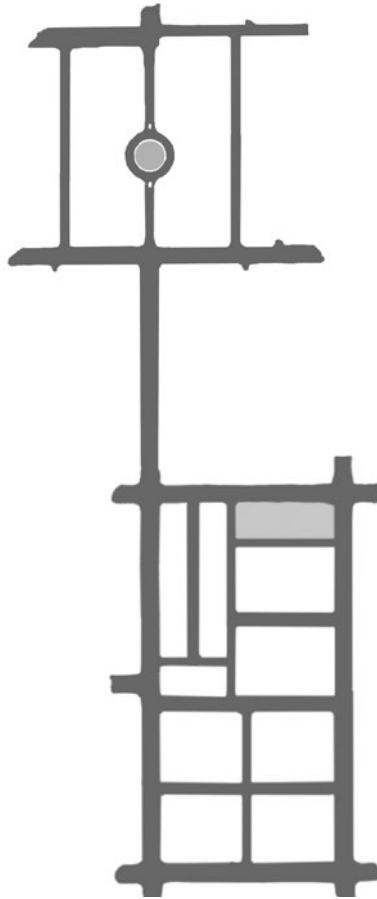


Figure 63: Proposed street network. (Source: author's drawing)

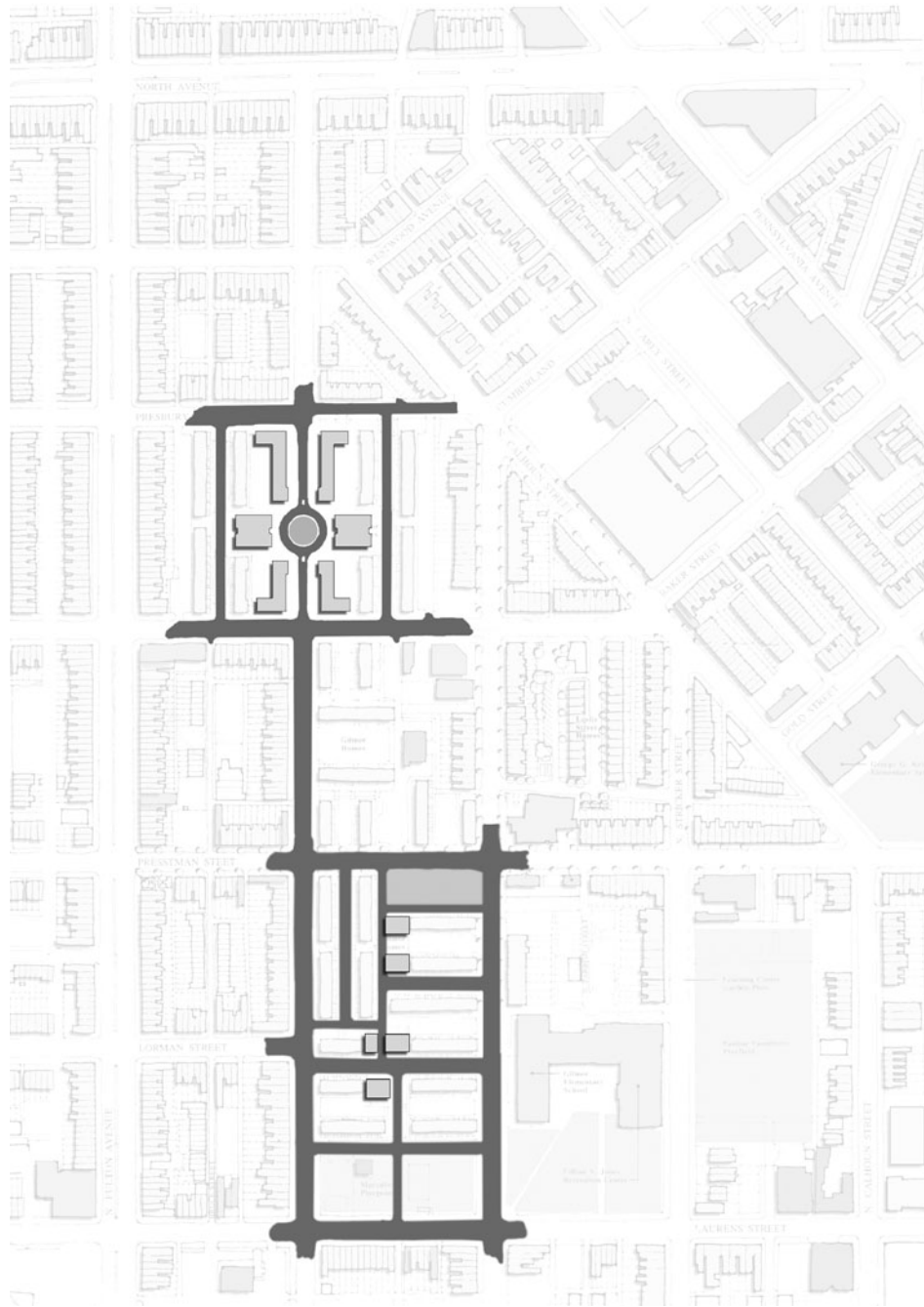


Figure 64: Diagram showing proposed new resident units in Gilmor Homes. (Source: author's drawing)

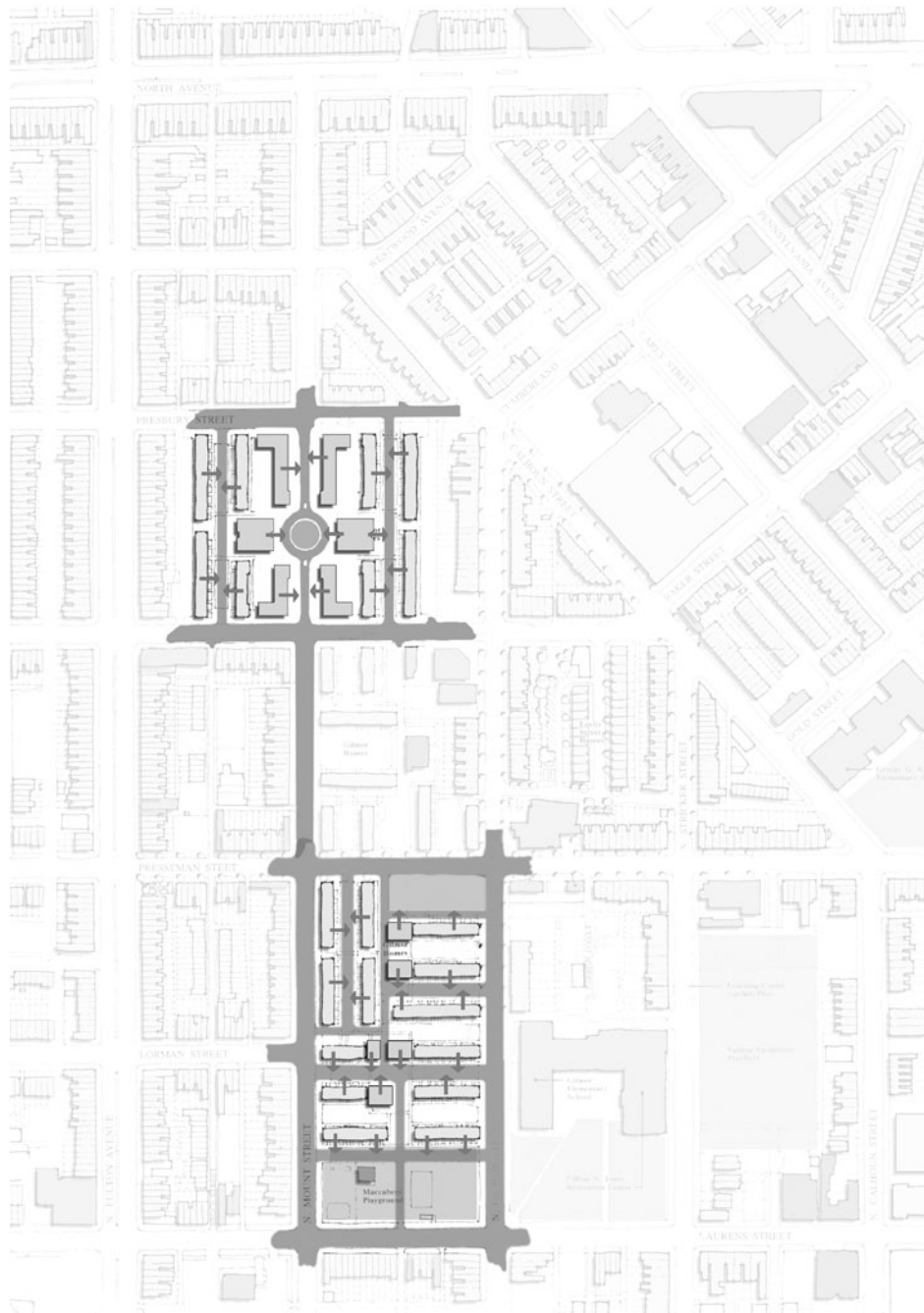


Figure 65: Diagram showing building front relationship to proposed streets. (Source: author's drawing)

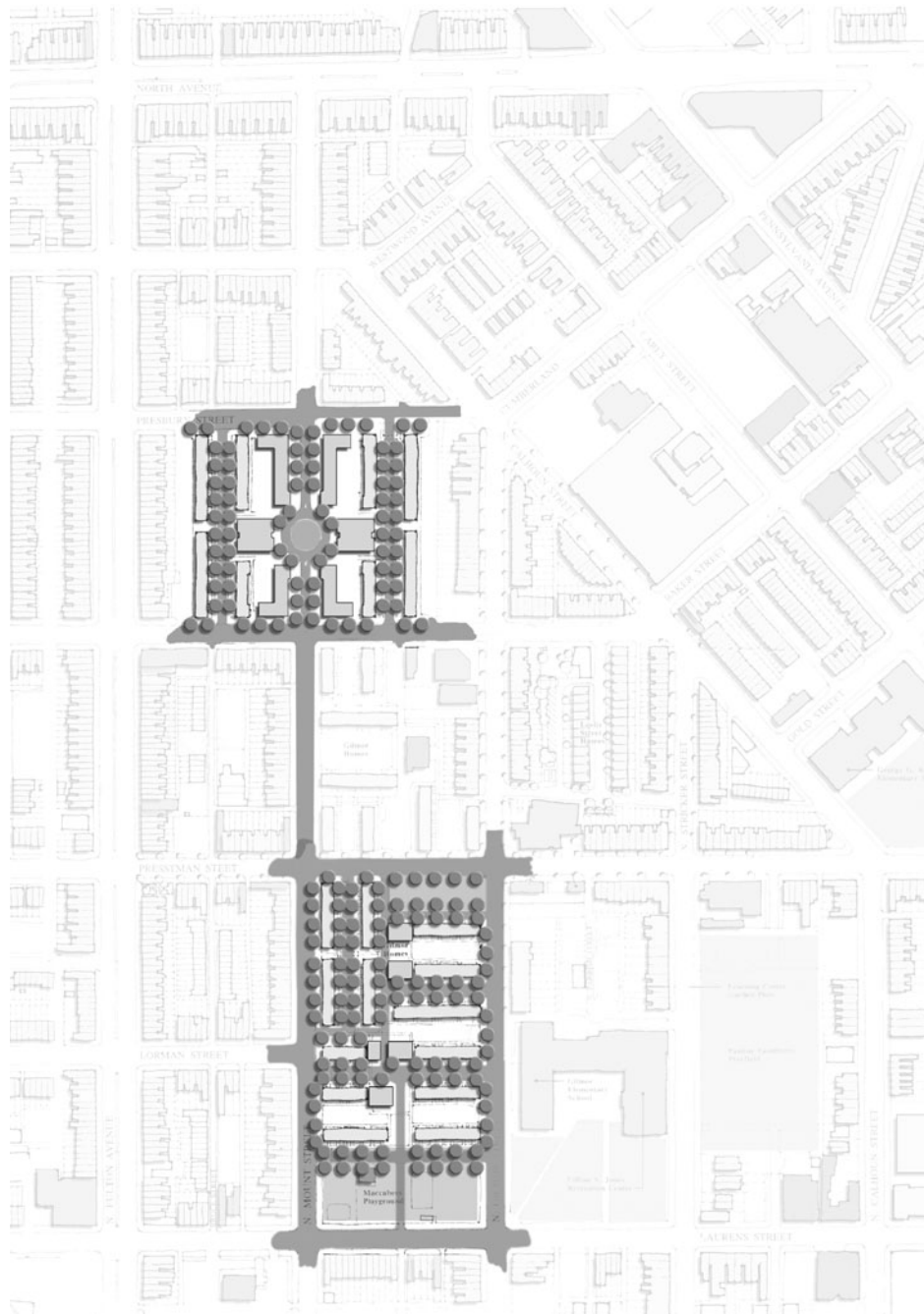
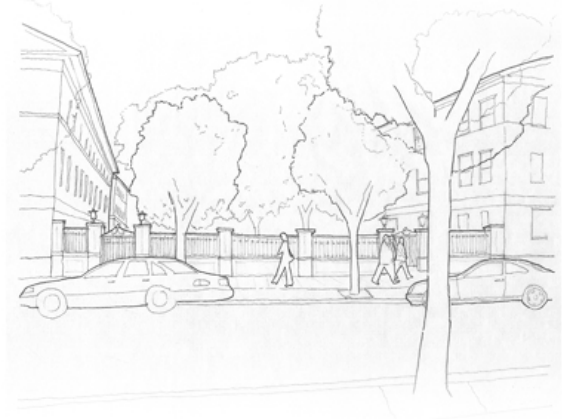


Figure 66: Proposed redevelopment plan for Gilmor Homes. (Source: author's drawing)

Existing and Proposed Sketches shown in the Community Plan:



**Figure 67:** The addition of garden walls creates privacy for residents and a well-defined street edge. (Source: author's drawing)



**Figure 68:** The corner of Presstman Street and Mount Street showing the redevelopment of corner stores and Gilmor Homes. (Source: author's drawing)



**Figure 69:** The addition street trees, street names, benches, and well-defined edges would create a pleasant community character. (Source: author's drawing)

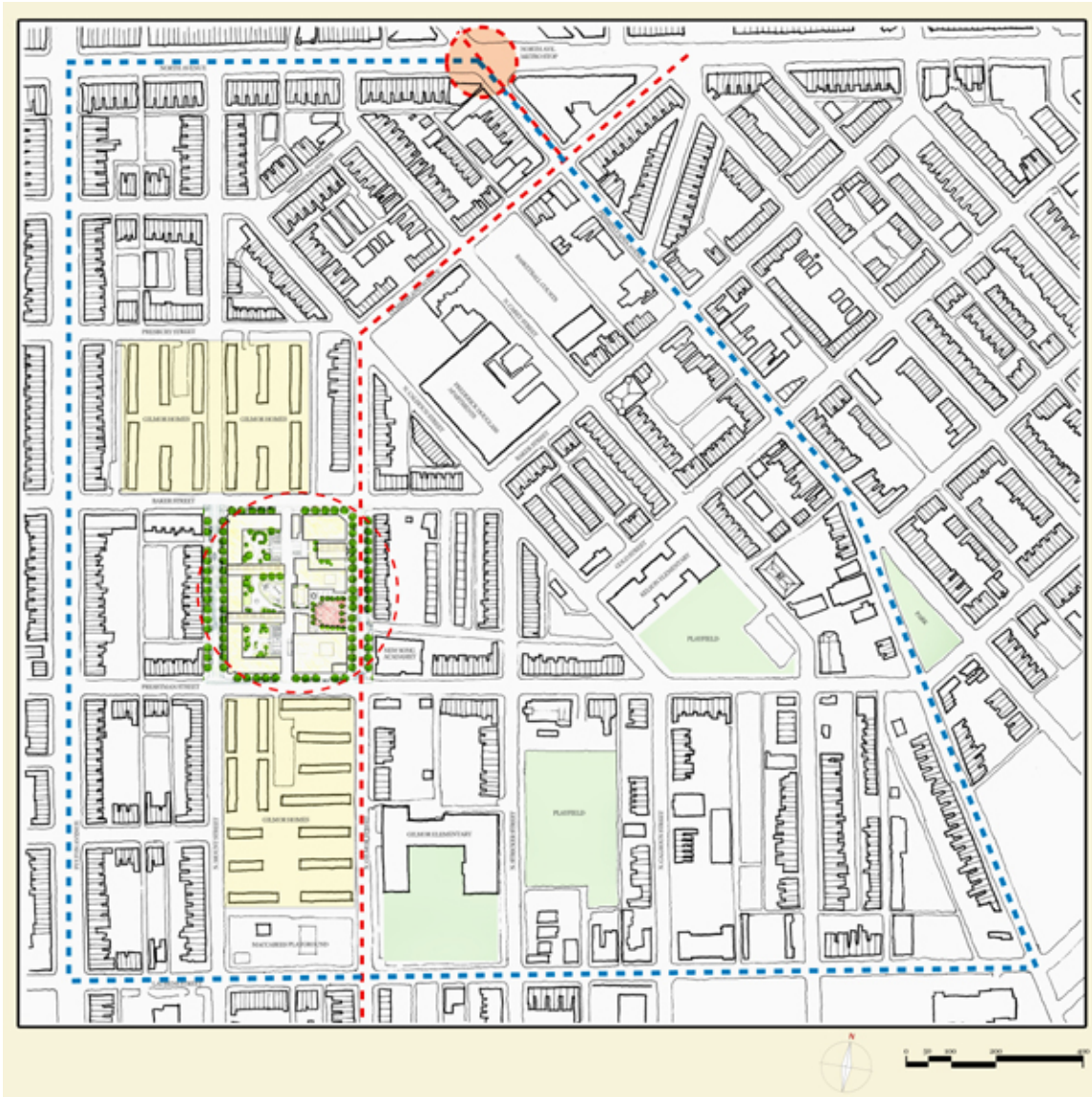


Figure 70: Final Community Plan – emphasis shifted from Presstman Street to Gilmor Street in order to provide more transit connectivity as well as organize the public space using the landmark of the smokestack.



**Figure 71: View of Presstman Street approaching. (Source: author's photography)**

## THE PROJECT

*"If you don't like the way the world is, you change it. You have an obligation to change it. You just do it one step at a time."*

-- Marian Wright Edelman

## Rebuilding a Neighborhood

After further urban analysis, it became apparent to move the activity center and major redevelopment projects from Presstman Street to Gilmor Street. This move allows for the most connectivity to the existing bus transit as well as a connection to the metro stop on North Ave (Figure 71 and 72). The main design component of the thesis involves the design of an activity center located along Gilmor Street. The block intervention is part of the redevelopment of Gilmor Street into a community street. The site is currently occupied by several residential buildings that are part of the Gilmor Homes public housing project. These buildings will be razed in order to provide a site for the new building(s). Other buildings including a block of rowhouses, a church, and a recently constructed senior community center will remain as part of the intervention. A description of the goal, strategy, and principles follows:

## **Making a Block Intervention**

**Intention:** To create an identifiable neighborhood center.

**Strategy:** To transform one block at the center of the community into a mix-used activity center. The neighborhood center would contain residential, retail, and an educational facility as part of a program for entrepreneurship and business management.

### **Principles:**

1. Design an imageable urban civic space as a neighborhood center.
2. Include a variety of building types and uses to create activity.
3. Develop building types, urban space, and building programs that encourage economic development.
4. Develop building types, urban space, and building programs that leverage private investment with community investment.
5. Develop building types, urban space, and building programs that attract outside resources and users in order to create connections to the greater community.
6. Create a clear distinction between the private and public spaces.
7. Build on the narrative of Sandtown's history and cultural significance.
8. Provide and support mass transit use and connectivity.



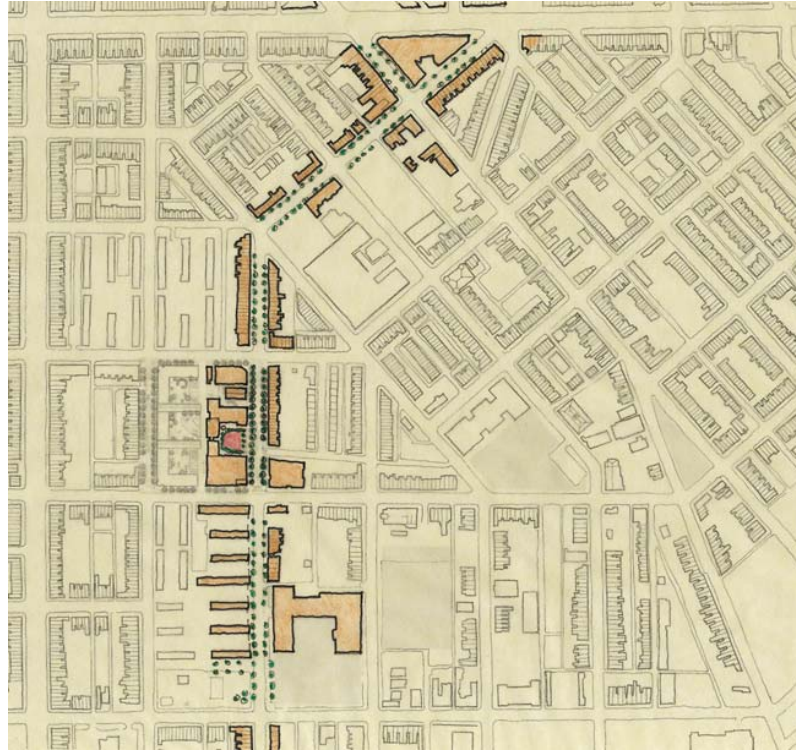


Figure 72: Urban Diagram showing the part of redeveloping Gilmore Street into a community street with a variety of amenities.

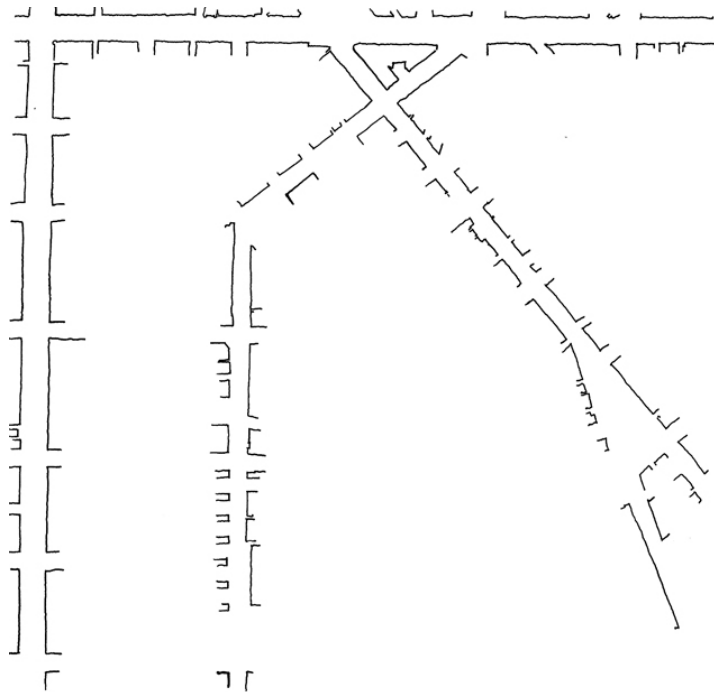


Figure 73: Urban Diagram showing the street hierarchy of arterials and Gilmore Street as the main community street.

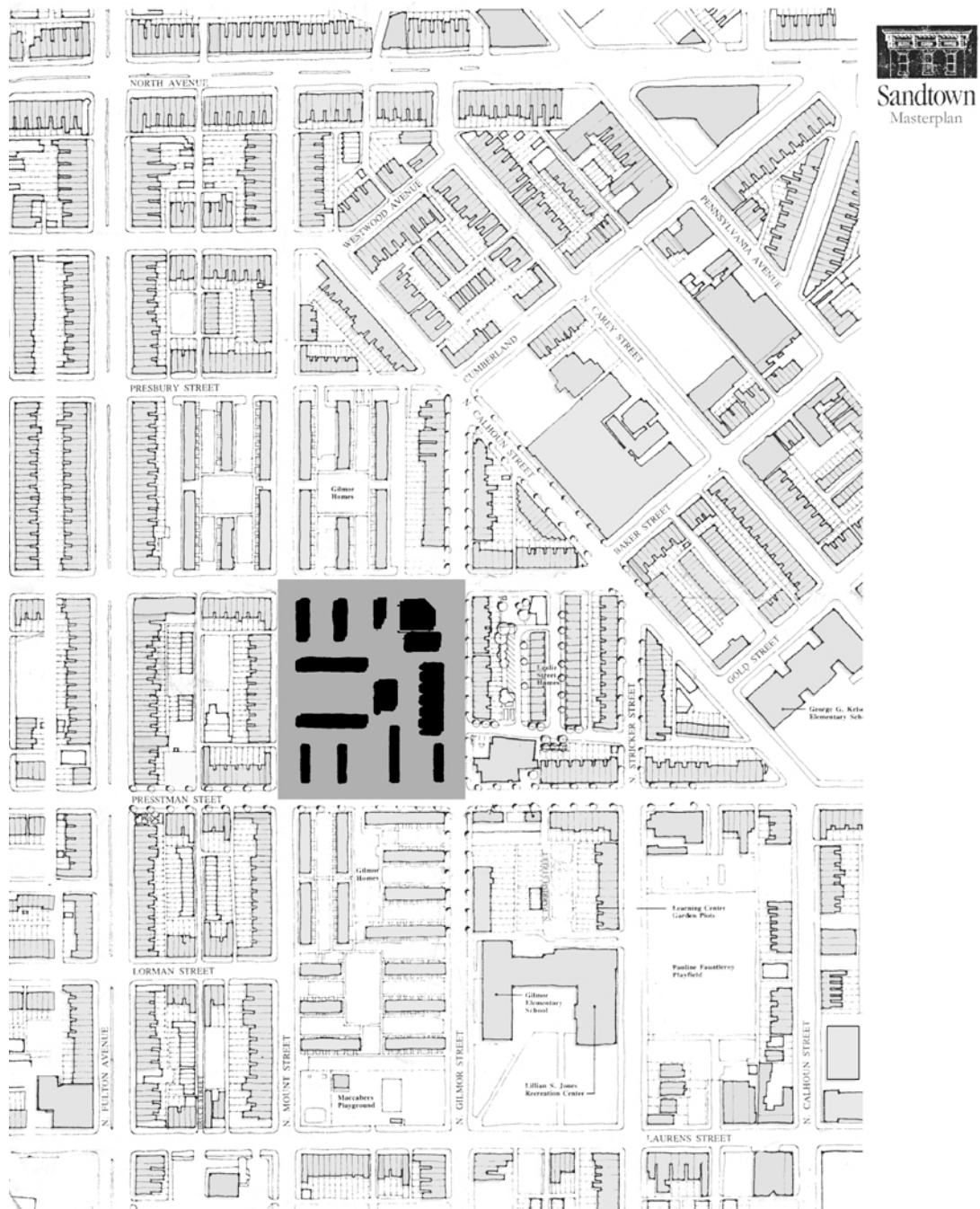


Figure 74: Block location (Source: author's drawing)

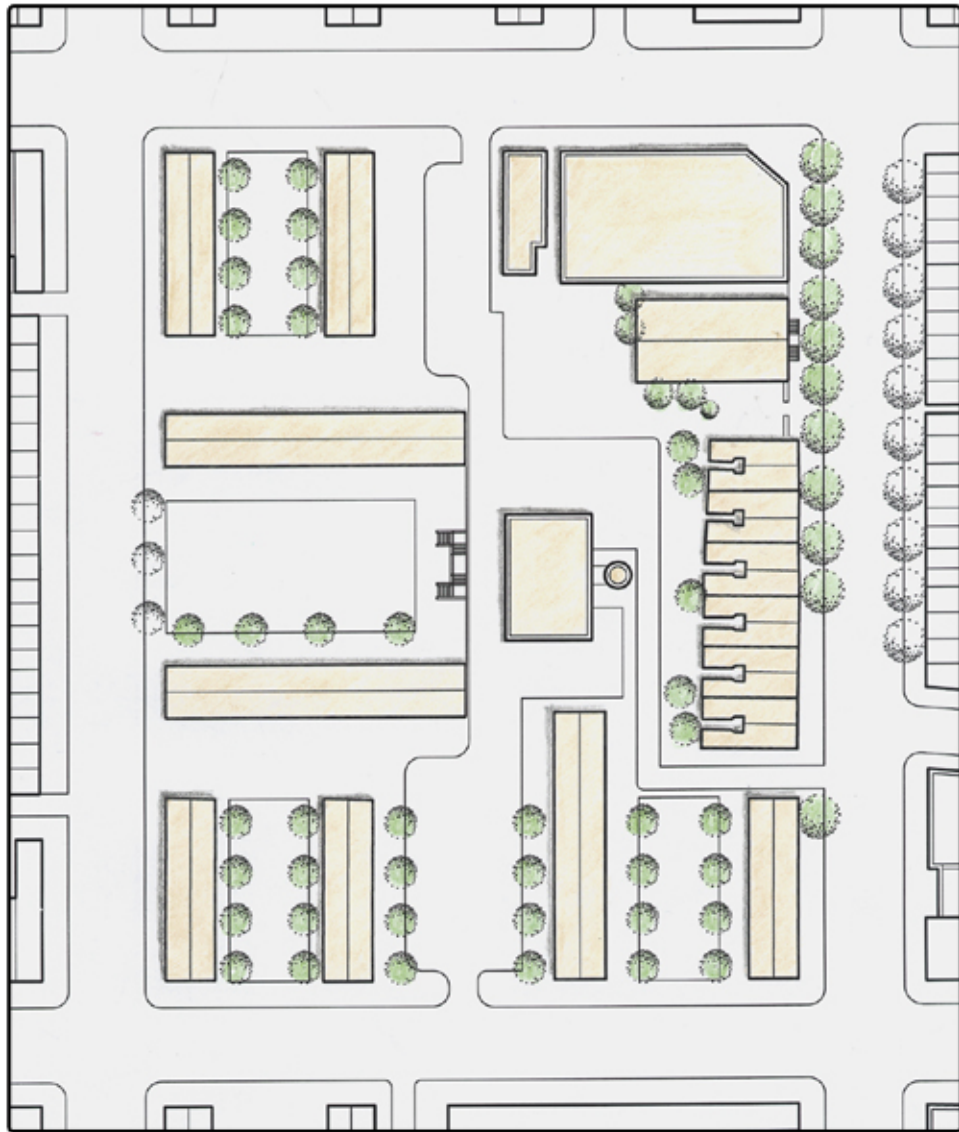


Figure 75: Existing Block Configuration. (Source: author's drawing)



Figure 76: Elevation of Pressman Street showing site and adjacent blocks. (Source: author's photomontage)

## Program Analysis

Block Net SF = 167,700 SF

Existing Block Program (approximate)

1. Rowhouse residential: 10,200 SF (12 rowhomes @ 850 SF each excluding yards)
2. Public Housing: 79,750 SF (6 three-story and 2 four –story barrack-style housing)
3. Church: 3,500 SF (Historic Catholic church with adjacent courtyard)
4. Community Center: 12,000SF (two-story senior center)
5. Maintenance Facility: 3,000 SF (service for public housing)

Soft/Hard Analysis:

Hard: church, community center, smokestack facility

Soft: Gilmor Homes Public Housing, rowhouses

Programming proposed for activity center:

1. Educational component focused on entrepreneurship and business management. (20,000 SF)
2. Mom and Pop retail (15,000 SF)
3. Community Grocery Store (10,000 SF)
4. Public Space
5. New Residential Units, both rental and ownership

Possible Building Types\*:

1. Institutional (Educational/Work Skills Facility)
2. Medium-size Retail (15,000-30,000 SF Footprint)
3. Live/Work Unit
4. Storefront Shop
5. Rowhouse
6. Apartment Building
7. Multi-Family

\*Building types can be combined to create additional mix-used types.

## Specific Programs

### A Center for Entrepreneurship, Education, & Exploration

One of architectural projects of this thesis will be an institutional building that provides entrepreneurial/business resources to the community and also functions as a component of a higher education. Conceived of as a learning resource component of a major university, the center would function as living classroom for students, residents, and professionals. The center's purpose would include bringing together a diverse group of individuals interested in solving urban blight through scholarship that focuses on entrepreneurship, economic development, and wealth creation. The center would operate as a full-time non-profit research and resource center. In addition, the building would provide spaces for educational programs offered to both university students and local residents. The center and its program would be modeled after the non-profit organization, The Initiative for a Competitive Inner City (ICIC).

"ICIC is a national, not-for-profit organization founded in 1994 by Harvard Business School Professor Michael E. Porter. ICIC's mission is to spark new thinking about the business potential of inner cities, thereby creating jobs and wealth for inner-city residents. ICIC believes that a sustainable inner city economic base will depend on private, for-profit business development and investments based on economic self-interest and genuine competitive advantage. ICIC leverages private-sector resources through a new concept of corporate philanthropy that emphasizes business-to-business relationships."<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> The Initiative for a Competitive Inner City (ICIC). <<http://www.icic.org/about/about.asp>> (accessed December 2003)

Learning Center Program Space	Square Footage
<i>Institutional Program</i>	
Main Meeting/Lecture Space	5000 SF
Lobby	500 SF
Classroom (3)	900 SF (3)
Conference Room	800 SF
Library	1500 SF
Computer Resource Center	2000 SF
<i>Administration</i>	
Director's Office	150 SF
Assistant Director's Office	150 SF
Office	150 SF
Secretarial/Administration	400 SF
Office Supply/Printing Room	150 SF
Waiting Area	150 SF
<i>Building Functions</i>	
Bathrooms (4)	325 SF
Mechanical	1200 SF
Storage	600 SF
Audio/Video Room	500 SF
	Total Net SF: 16,650
	Gross SF: 21,645

## Retail Program

A grocery store is an important amenity for an urban community. A grocery store is often the anchor of community retail that represents stability and viability. Such a store is not only an amenity, but for elderly and those without cars is a necessity. While there are retailers in the community that operate small cornerstores, most offer fringe goods at higher prices than would be expected. This situation forces many residents to shop outside of the community, even as far as the suburbs.

In some communities, grocery stores have provided more than traditional services. The People's Grocery in West Oakland, California is an innovative program that combines urban agriculture with entrepreneurship and job training. The organization's mission is *"is to provide affordable organic food, jobs and job training, community economic development, urban gardens, and social and environmental justice education to the West Oakland community."*<sup>34</sup> The organization makes use of the many vacant lots in the community to grow organic foods which are then sold to residents at affordable prices. The program focuses on urban agriculture, health education, business education, and youth education. Such a program could be potentially successful in Sandtown.

#### Examples of Grocery Store Square Footage for Urban Whole Foods Store:

Store Location	Size (SF)
Rockville, MD	26,429
Bethesda, MD	13,754
Falls Church	14,240
Charlottesville, VA	27,842
North Wales, PA	20,580
Wayne, PA	28,132
Annapolis, MD	25,132
Springfield, VA	24,000
Evanston, IL	25,409
Elston, IL	22,400
Greenwich, CT	13,894
Wynnewood, PA	14,000
Montclair, NJ	16,968
Gaithersburg, MD	24,313
Reston, VA	25,000
Washington, D.C. (Tenley)	28,000
Manhasset, New York	24,000
Baltimore, MD	24,500

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<sup>34</sup> The People's Grocery Website: <<http://www.peoplesgrocery.org/>>



Table 1: Source: Whole Foods Market Website: <<http://www.wholefoods.com/index.html>>

### Grocery Store Program

Entry	400 SF
Product Display (non-refrigerated)	5000 SF
Product Display (refrigerated)	2000 SF
Product Storage (non-refrigerated)	2500 SF
Product Storage (refrigerated)	1500 SF
Fresh Produce Display	1000 SF
Checkout Lanes	1000 SF
Deli	1000 SF
Bakery	1300 SF
Office	300 SF
Workroom	500 SF
Restrooms	150 SF (2)
Mechanical	1000 SF
Circulation	
Total:	14,050 SF

### Other Types of Potential Retail/Business

1. Thrift Store (clothing, furniture, housewares)
2. Lead Paint removal
3. Dentist/Doctor Office
4. Barbershop/Beauty Saloon
5. Contracting and Construction
6. Restaurant/Carryout
7. Small Business Services
8. Artist Studio

## Schematic Block Design:

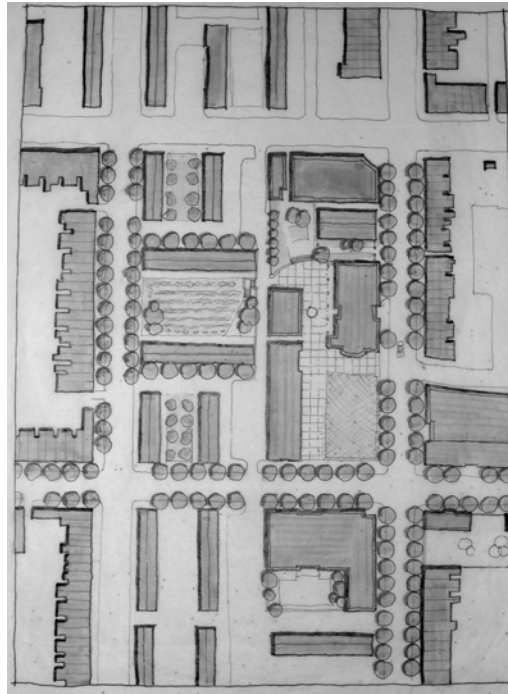


Figure 77: Parti 1 – public square located on the corner with a market facility on the west edge and the education center located on the north side. (Source: author's drawing)

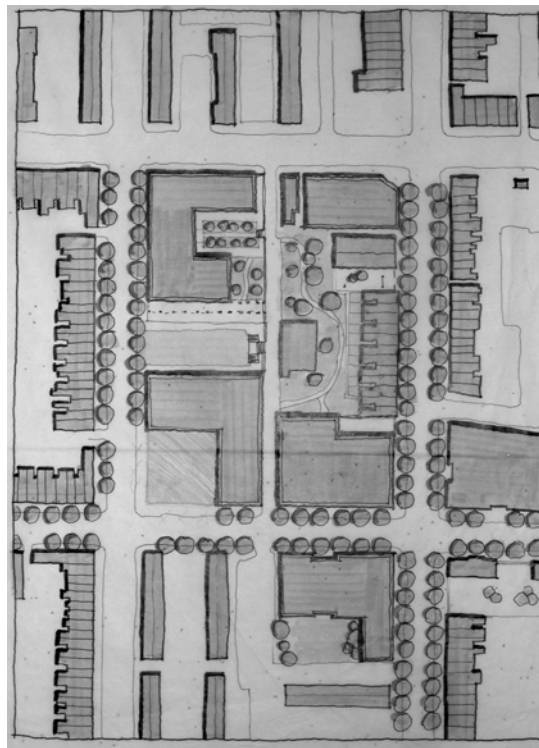


Figure 78: Parti 2 - public square located on corner of Presstman and Mount and encompassed by retail. The education center is located on Gilmor and Presstman. Additional buildings include a childcare center and apartment building. (Source: author's drawing)

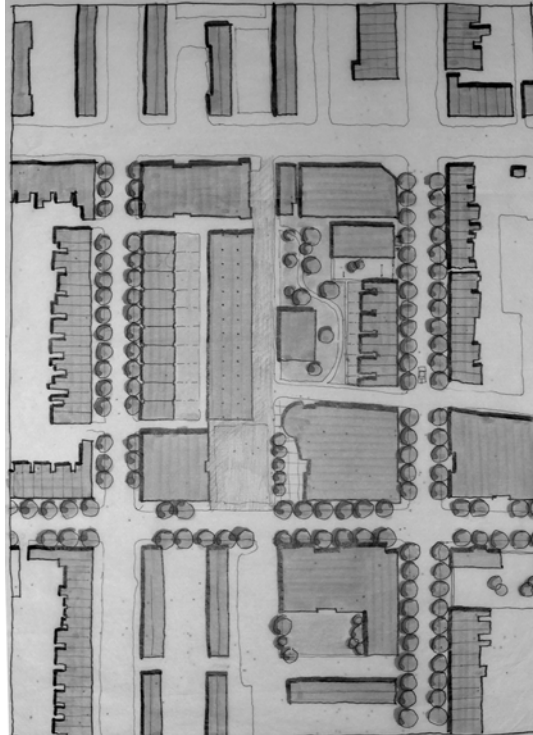


Figure 79: Parti 3 - aimed to create muse along the alley with a market building located in the center of the block. Additional building including the education center, apartment building, retail store, and rowhouses are also developed. (Source: author's drawing)

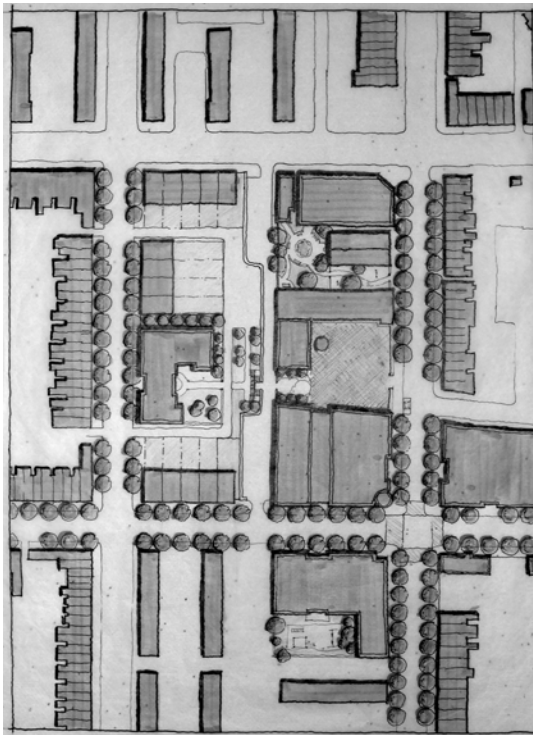


Figure 80: Parti 4 – focused on creating a public space in front of the smokestack with the education center located on the corner of Prestman and Gilmor Streets. (Source: author's drawing)



**Figure 81: Aerial Perspective of Final Design.** (Source: author's drawing)

## THE CONCLUSION

*"People do not like to think. If one thinks, one must reach conclusions. Conclusions are not always pleasant."*

-- Helen Keller

## The Final Design: Decisions and Questions

The idea of incremental development fostered the creation of the activity center could be phased over a period of time. Thus, three phases were created in order to transform the block. Phase one consisted of developing the center for entrepreneurship, which also contained a community grocery on the ground floor. Phase two consisted of the creation of a neighborhood center that incorporated the landmark of the smokestack as well as ancillary development containing office space for local businesses owners and community retail on the ground floor around the square. Phase three redeveloped the public housing from barrack style housing into courtyard housing. This method of design is consistent with the resources and development practices of current community development.

Perhaps, the struggle of this thesis was in defining a project that best represented the main intention of this thesis. Many aspects of this thesis – rebuilding inner-cities – has less to do with the specifics of architecture and more to do with the physical, social, and economic implications of community development. Understanding a community's

needs as well as understanding how a community works, places pressures on a design project. In the opinion of the author, these pressures do not limit the project architecturally, but rather, makes the project a realistic and meaningful intervention.

Rebuilding inner-cities is a complex and difficult issue. This thesis investigated how to approach design with a set of complex issues that included development practices, stakeholders' concerns, and urban design implications. The purpose of this thesis was not to find a solution, but rather to explore ideas and raise a series of questions. However, this thesis does point out the need for synergy among professionals, community leaders, and residents. Architects, planners, activists, residents, and others involved in such projects have different concerns and motivations. Balancing these concerns is the only means to achieve a successful project. A beautiful urban plan that is never implemented benefits no one. Instead, all stakeholders must work to empathize with one another's viewpoint and create a set of priorities and goals everyone can work toward.

This thesis provided an academic venue to investigate the implications of design and community development. I hope to continue this investigation through a Baltimore Mayoral Fellowship during the summer of 2004. Overcoming the physical, social, and economic conditions that impede our nation's cities growth will take time. However, taking steps to rebuild our cities and implement smarter develop is a necessary action to create better places in which to live, work, and play.

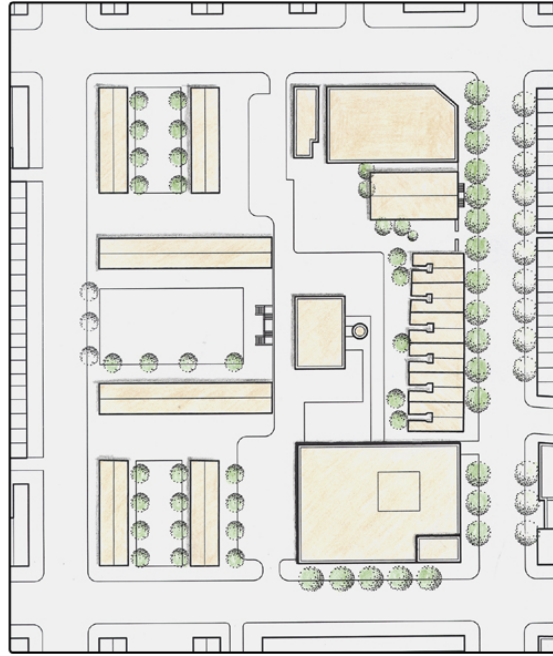


Figure 82: Phase One (Source: author's drawing)

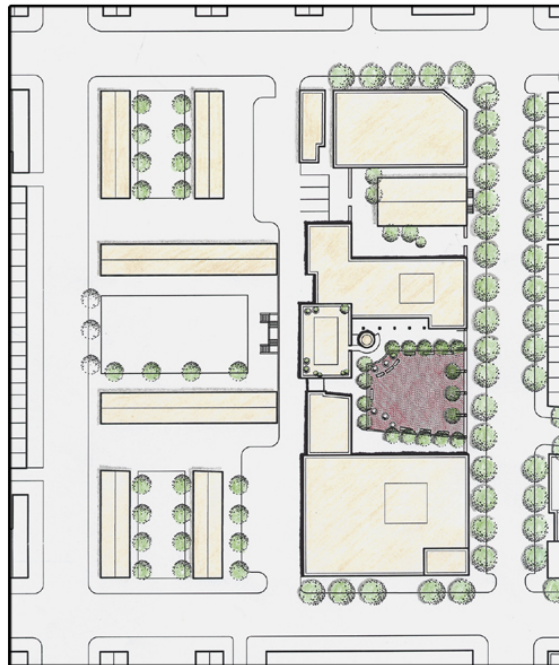


Figure 83: Phase Two (Source: author's drawing)

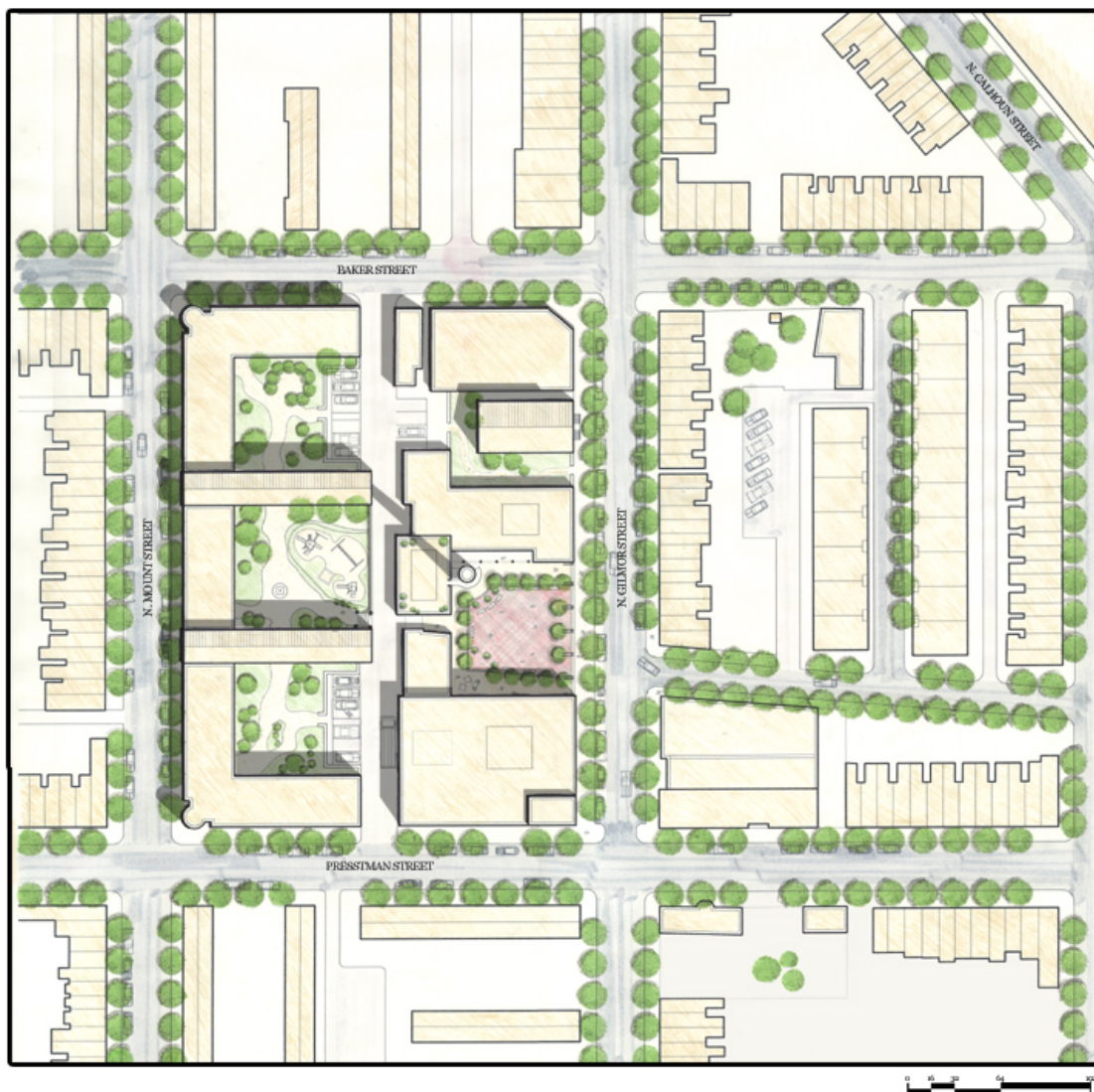


Figure 84: Phase Three - complete transformation of the block in context. (Source: author's drawing)



## The Project – Final Design

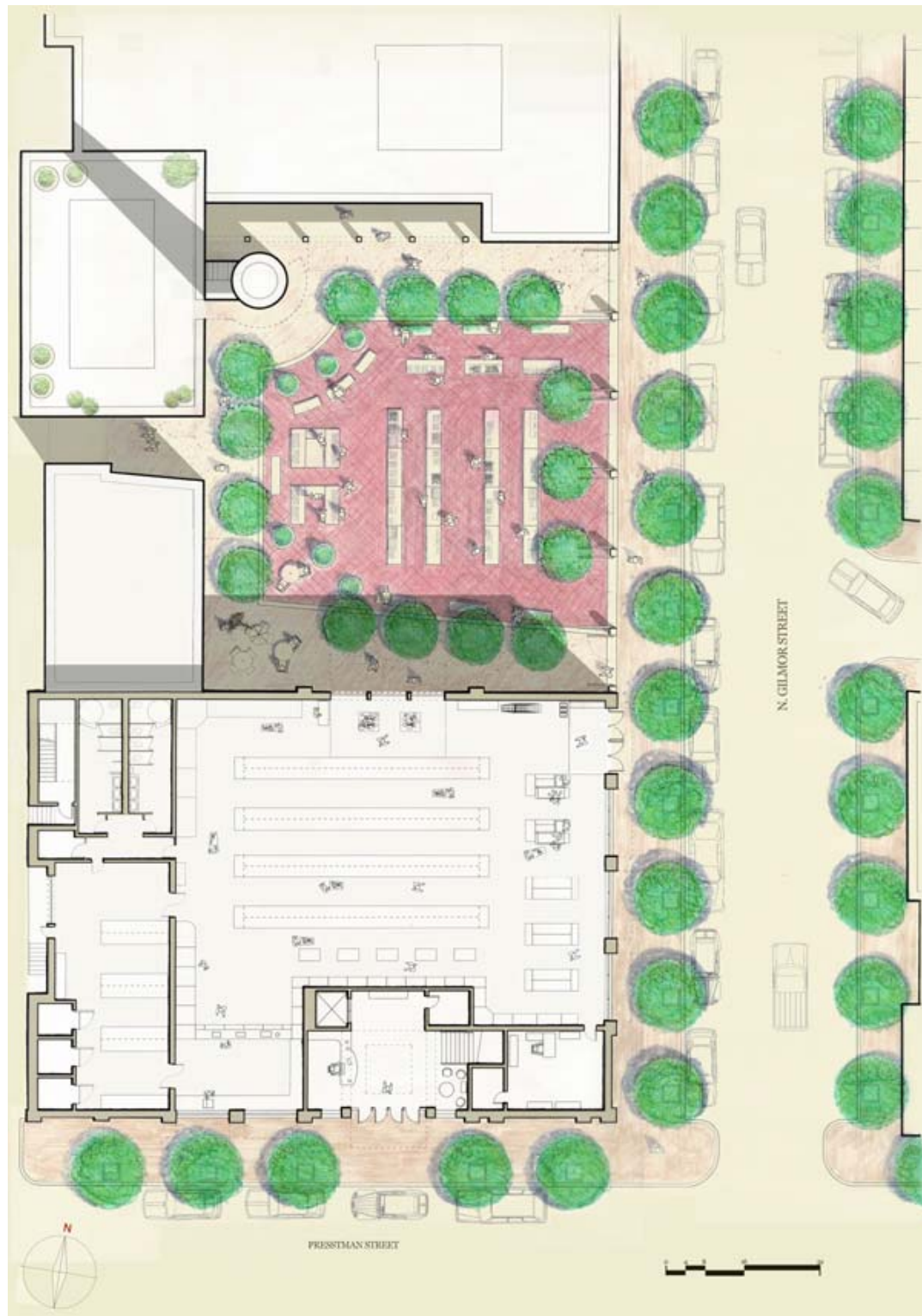


Figure 85: Final Design - Ground Floor Plan containing the community grocery, Center for Entrepreneurship entry, and market square. (Source: author's drawing)



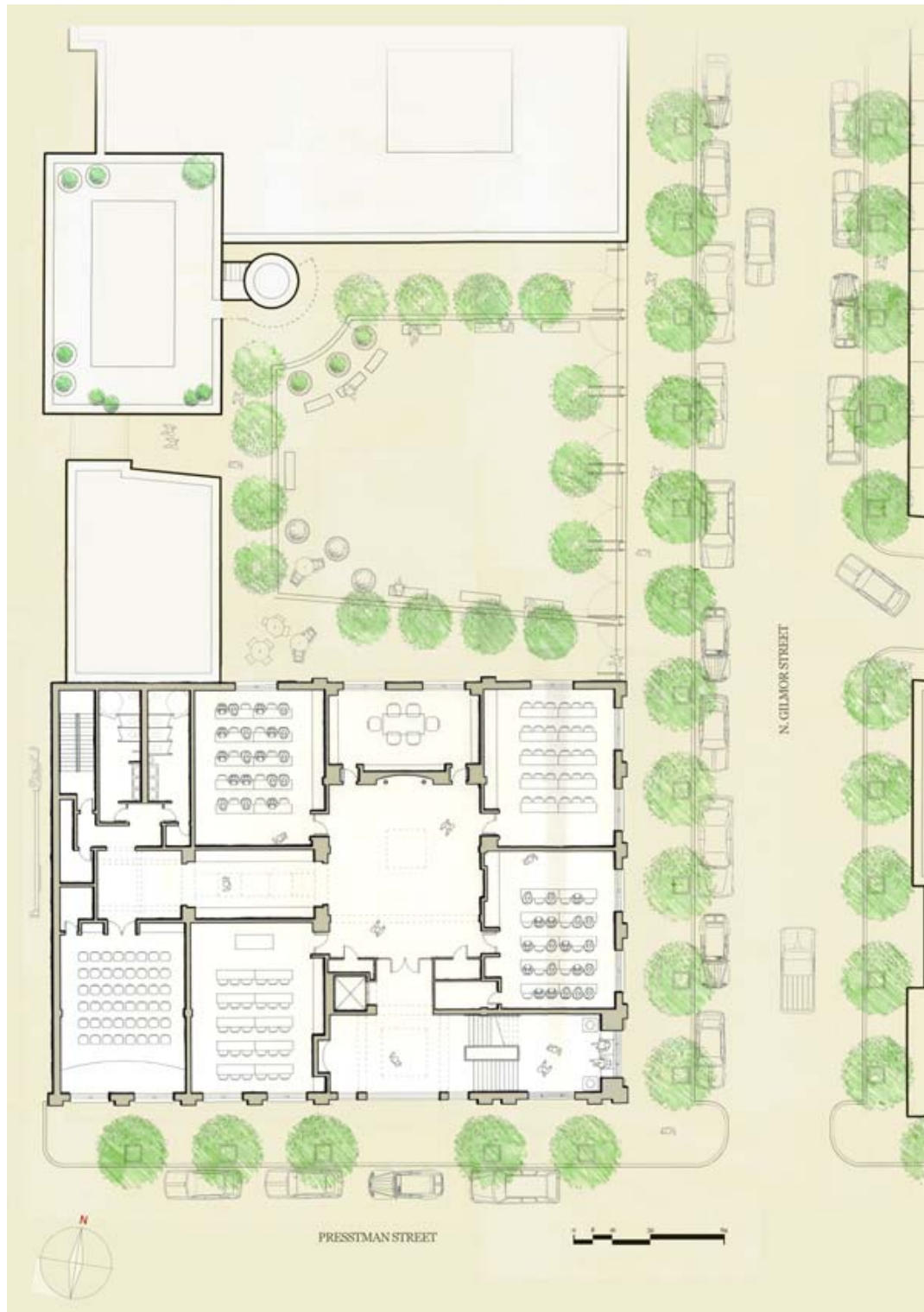


Figure 86: Final Design - Floor Plan 2 containing classrooms and conference spaces for the Center of Entrepreneurship. (Source: author's drawing)

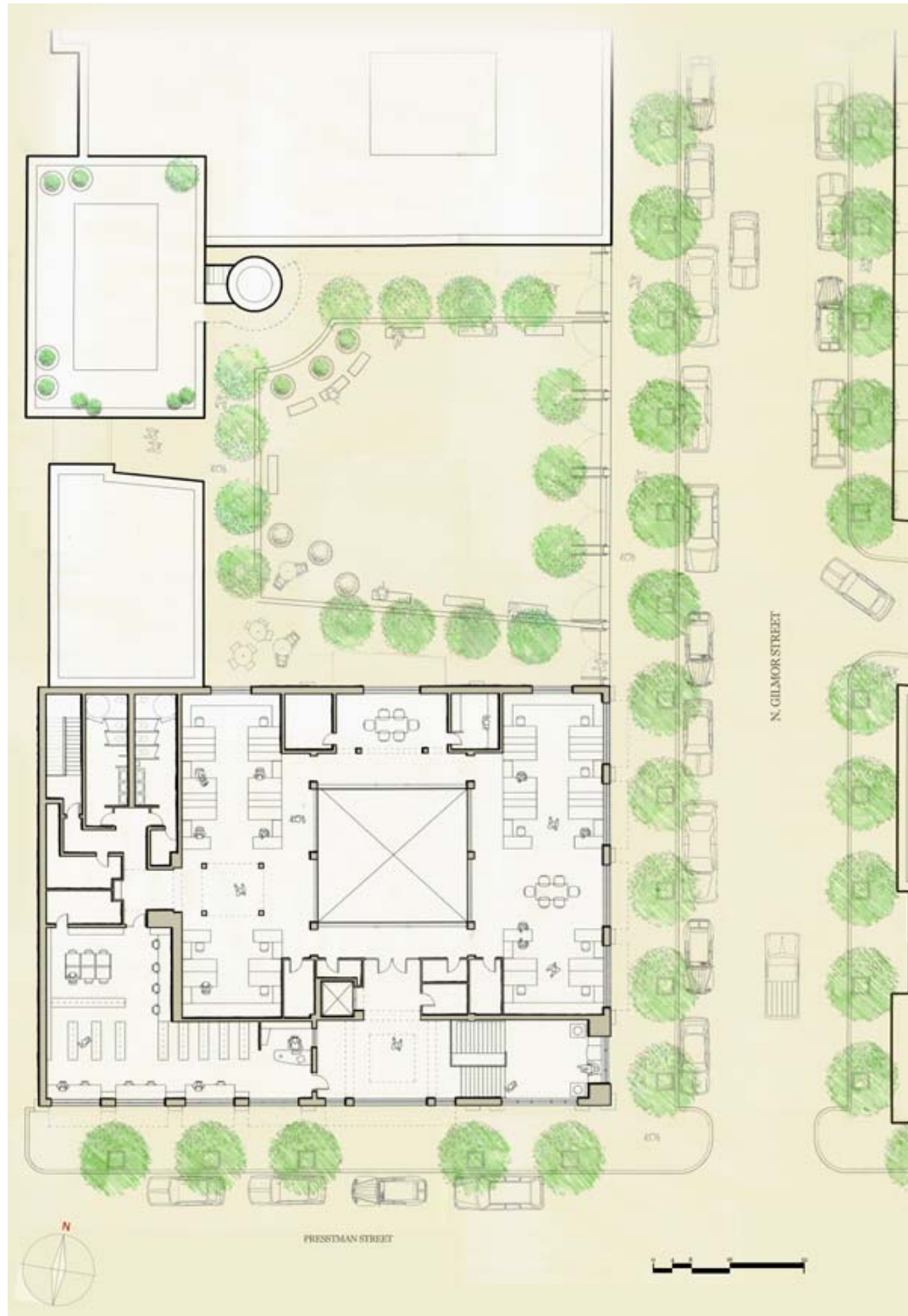


Figure 87: Final Design - Third floor plan containing office space and library for the Center of Entrepreneurship. (Source: author's drawing)

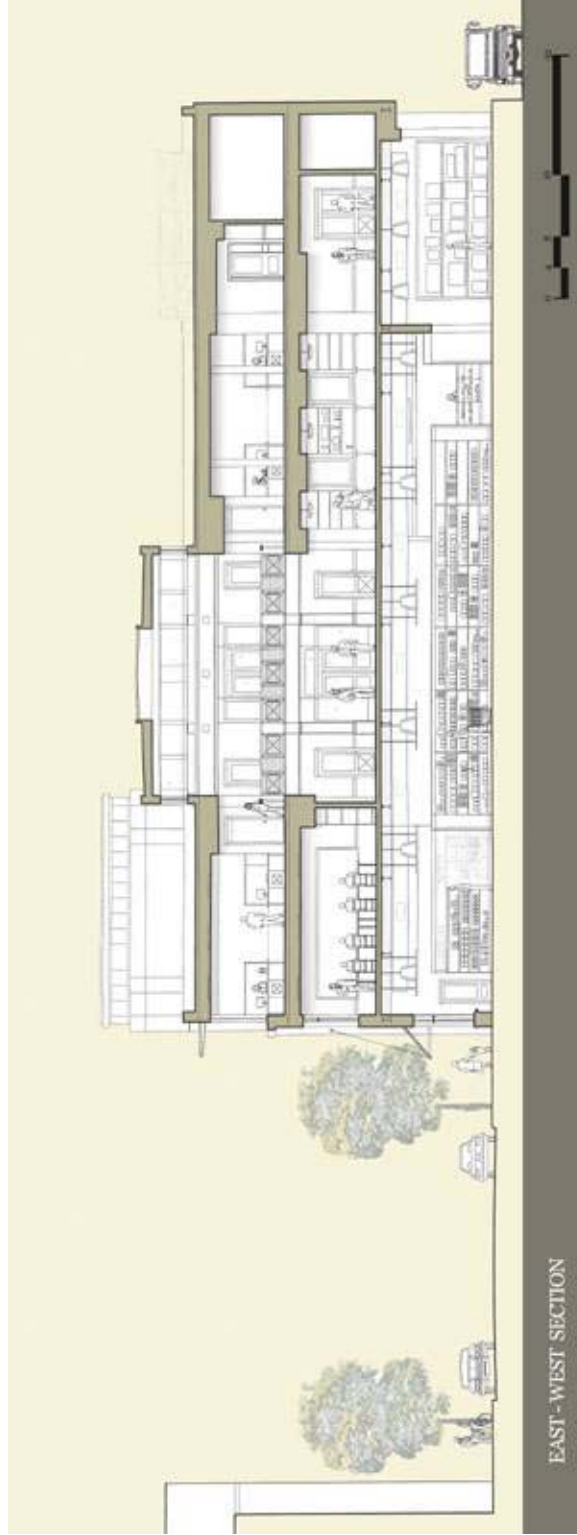


Figure 88: East - West Section (Source: author's drawing)

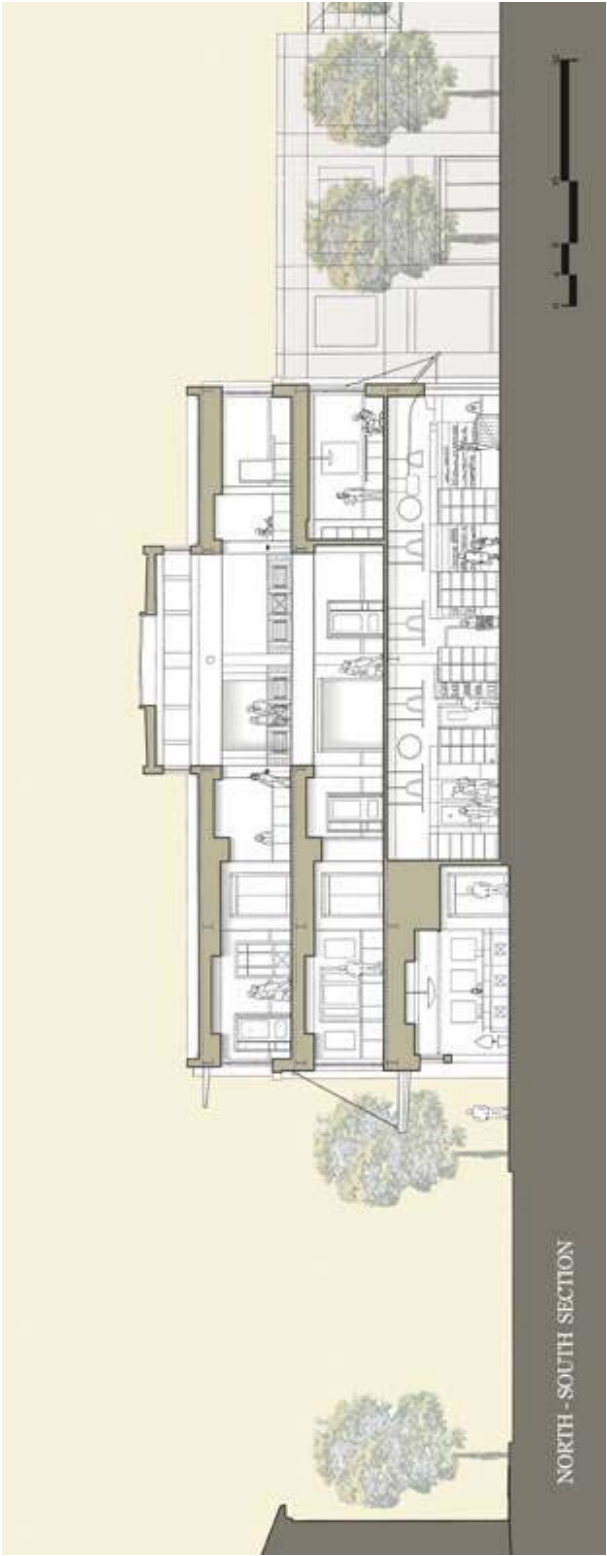


Figure 89: North - South Section (Source: author's drawing)



Figure 90: East – West Site Section (Source: author's drawing)



Figure 91: Gilmor Street Elevation in Context (Source: author's drawing)





Figure 92: Gilmore Street Elevation (Source: author's drawing)



Figure 93: Presstman Street Elevation (Source: author's drawing)



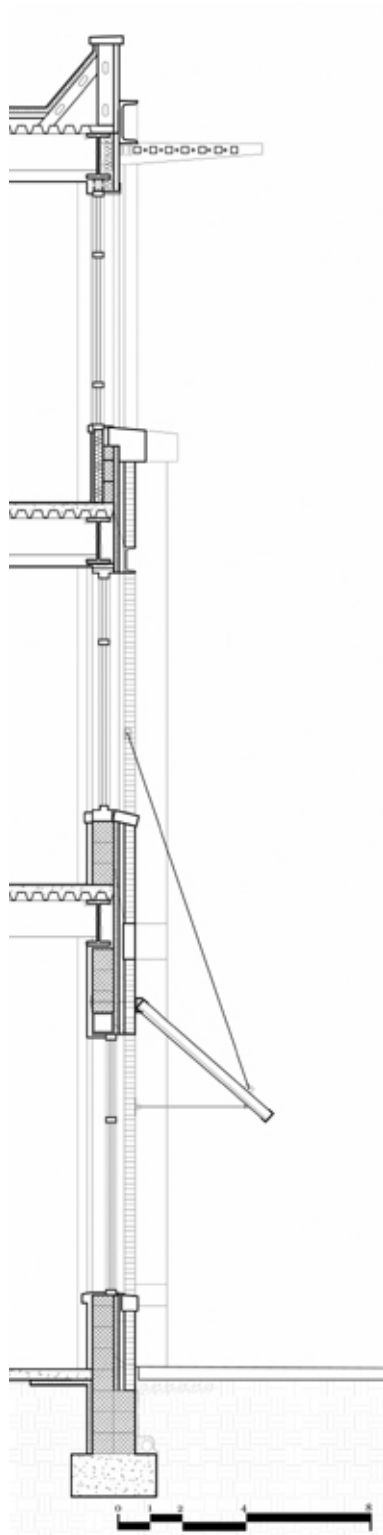


Figure 94: Wall Section showing typical wall assemblage. (Source: author's drawing)



: Existing Site condition at the corner of Prestman and Gilmor. (Source: author's photography)



Figure 96: Proposed Final Design at the corner of Prestman and Gilmor. (Source: author's drawing)





Figure 97: Perspective of the market square. (Source: author's drawing)



Figure 98: Interior view of the Center's atrium space. (Source: author's drawing)





Figure 99: Aerial Perspective. (Source: author's rendering)

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