

**A Block in the City:
Strategies for a block development in East Village, Calgary**

by
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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Master of Architecture

at
Dalhousie University
Halifax, Nova Scotia

July 2008



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Your file Votre référence
ISBN: 978-0-494-42603-6
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ISBN: 978-0-494-42603-6

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Calgary
Department: School of Architecture
Degree: Master of Architecture (First Professional)
Convocation: October 2008

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ABSTRACT

East Village is a downtown neighborhood in Calgary, Alberta, that suffered from the Urban Renewal plan of 1960s and underwent a constant decline. Today East Village serves as a parking lot for the government buildings in downtown and remains as a backwater for criminal and marginal activities. Situated close to downtown amenities, it has prized real-estate that remains underutilized. This thesis explores an alternative strategy for block development in East Village, Calgary, which would subsequently be an approach for its further development, enabling it to become a distinct neighborhood with a vibrant street life.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank my family for their constant support and encouragement throughout this journey.

I would like to thank my thesis supervisor, Grant Wanzel and thesis advisor Frank Palermo for their continuous guidance and insight.

Abstract

There exists a profound paradox between intentions and reality in construction carried out in developing countries by local and international aid organizations. Conventional responses may be immediate but ignore local cultural techniques or climatic conditions delivering constructions which are replicable in the short term but create dependence on foreign materials, expertise, and funding.

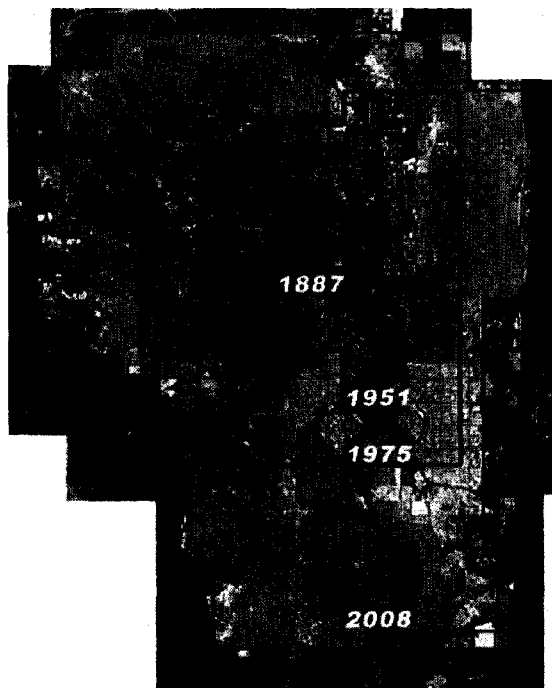
The dual role of the architect as development worker proposed here focuses on education – that of the architect and of the community where he or she works. It will be explored through the design and construction of primary school facilities in Kabala, Sierra Leone, West Africa. Education is central to success in development and thus becomes inherent to every aspect of work. It leads to a thorough study of local culture, climate and built form. It is manifested in an attitude to planning that works with the local environment and builds upon existing amenities. Building details illustrate a clarity of material, form and purpose. Finally education is provided in architectural spaces that allow for alternative, holistic methods of learning to occur.

1. Thesis Question

How can an investigation of a single block development strategy be an approach for further development of East Village and enable it to become a distinct neighborhood with vibrant street life?

2. Introduction

Calgary is nestled in the foothills of Canada's Rocky Mountains. Located in the province of Alberta, Canada, it forms the third largest civic municipality, by population. Calgary's downtown is the geographical and symbolic centre of the city. It is bordered by Canadian Pacific Railways in the south and is cradled by the Bow and Elbow River to the north. Calgary's climate is greatly influenced by the city's elevation and its close proximity to the Rocky Mountains. It has a continental climate with a short summer lasting up to four months and a long winter, which is periodically broken by warm Chinook winds blowing from the Pacific Ocean and resulting in temperature rise of up to 50 degree Celsius in a period of 12 hours.

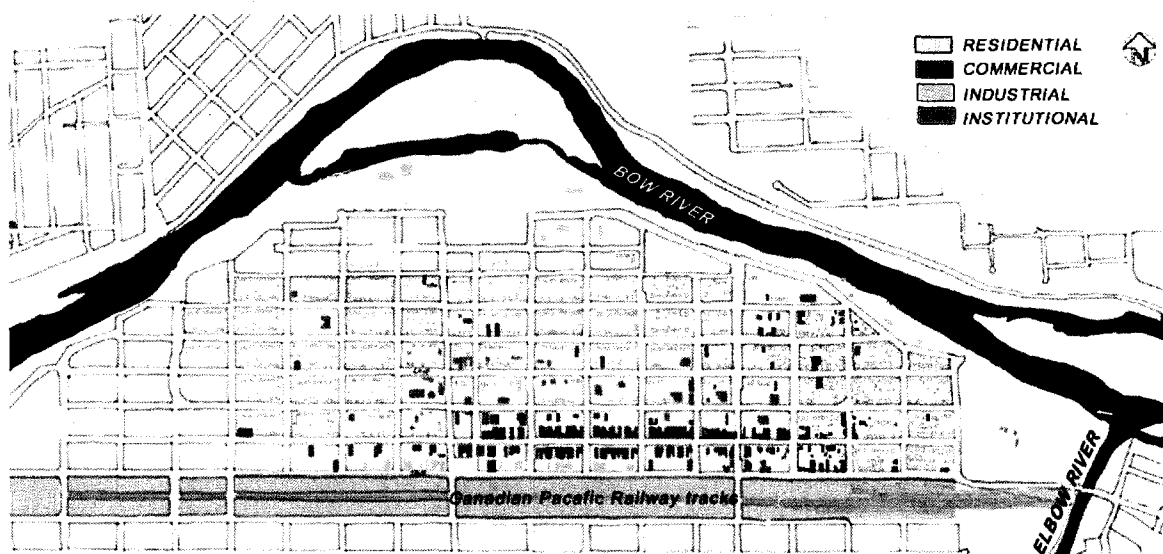


Calgary's growth over time
Base map source: *Wikimapia*

Between the late 1960's and 1980, Calgary faced an economic boom with the commercialization of bitumen extraction from oil-sands. The working population increased as people from across Canada were attracted to Alberta's growing economy. The city's population grew to almost a million as compared to the city's population of 250,000 in 1961. The suburbs spread to almost 500 square

miles making Calgary the city with the third largest land mass in the country. However, despite its increasing population, the residential population of the downtown decreased. The inner city filled with high-rise office towers and became just a place to work with no urban life after office hours.

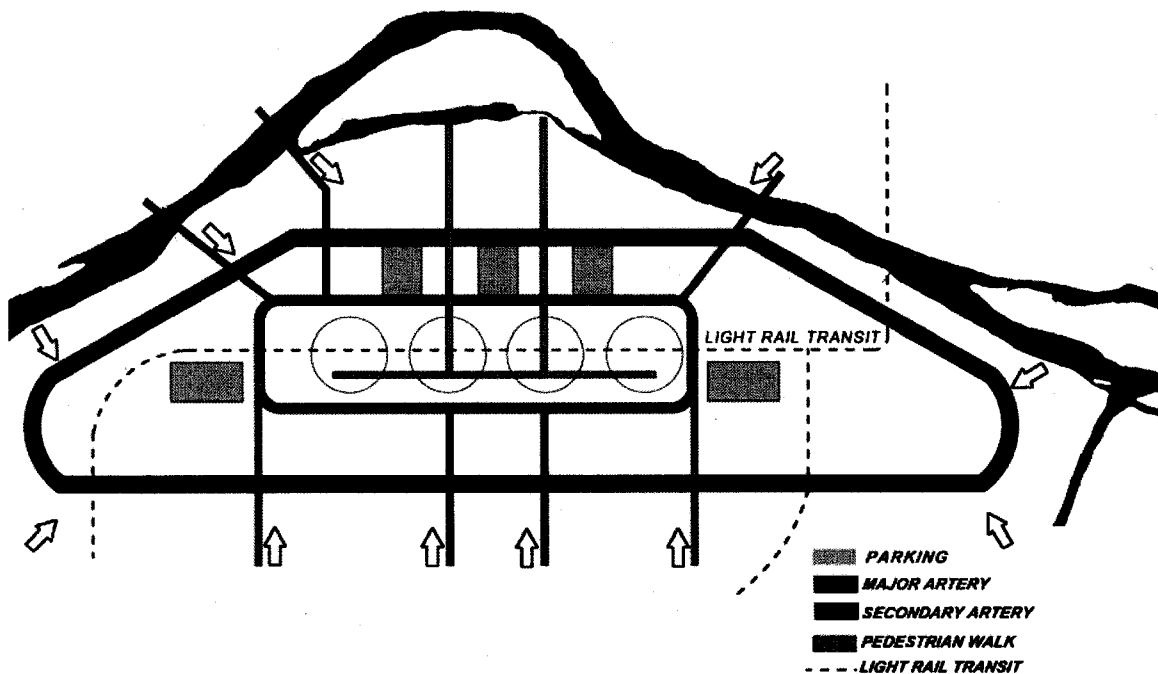
Calgary downtown is like an island, bordered by the Bow and the Elbow River in the north and the Canadian Pacific Railway tracks in the south. Earlier, the Calgary downtown had been the city's center for living, shopping, employment and other social activities.



Calgary downtown map-1911

With the increase of automobile ownership after the Second World War, people preferred to have more living space rather than convenient access to

downtown work and shopping space. Emphasis was on single-family housing and residential suburbs and the impact of the car was seen in the construction of freeways and suburban malls. The city was highly influenced by the North American trend of the 1960s, where the main planning tool was single purpose zoning. During this period, the downtown was completely rebuilt. This idea is clearly demonstrated in the 1966 Urban Renewal Plan.



Conceptual Urban Renewal Plan-1966
 Base map source: 1966 Downtown Master
 Plan, City of Calgary

The plan emphasized modernity and newness along with functional efficiency. The conceptual drawing shows an auto-oriented core surrounded by a ring road. The outer ring became the major east-west freeway. The inner ring formed the one-way circulation corridor to serve the downtown buildings. The periphery of the downtown was to serve as a parking space for the downtown offices.

In this plan, private transportation was emphasized. The strategy was attempting to double the number of cars that could enter the downtown core. Pedestrian circulation was rationalized and organized in a hierarchical and diagrammatic way with a proposal for an 8th Avenue pedestrian mall. Although a Light Rail Transit system was proposed in this plan, the principal emphasis was on the private automobiles. The plan states:

We cannot force people into any action they don't deeply desire. If they don't wish to use public mass transportation they just won't do it.¹

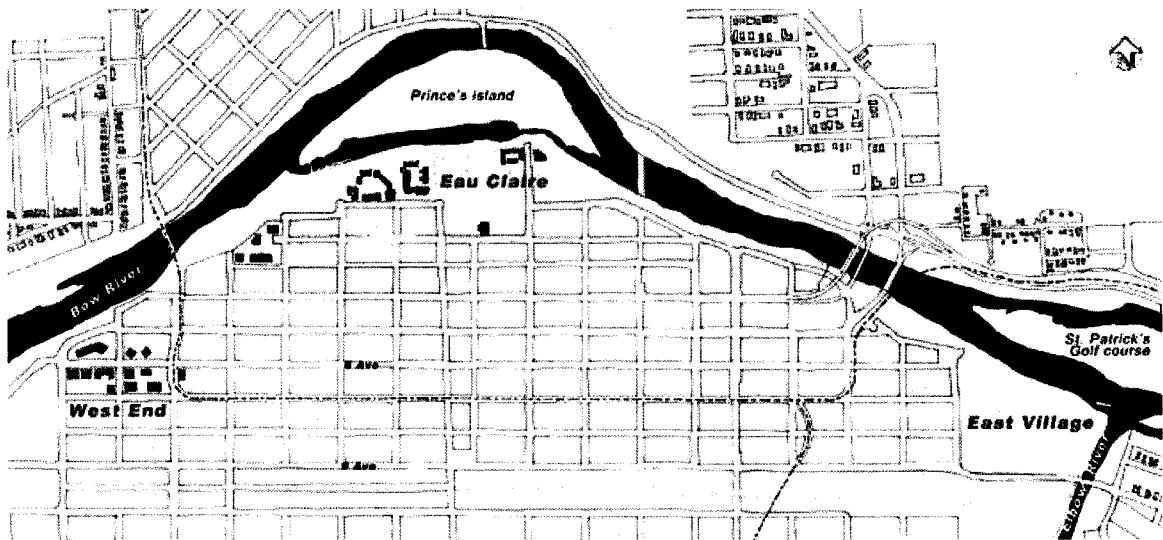
The effects of this plan can still be seen today as despite the City's overall population growth, the downtown has continued to lose services and amenities

¹ City of Calgary Planning Advisory Committee, *The Future of Downtown Calgary* (Calgary: City of Calgary, 1966), 2.

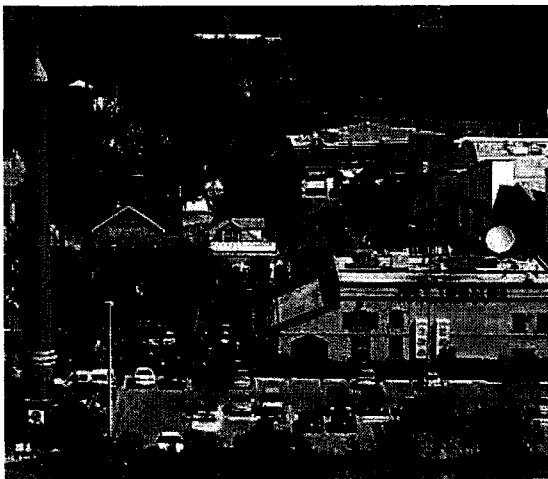
such as schools and libraries through decentralization.

In the past few years new policies intended to improve the quality of the public realm and revive downtown as a social center and not only a work –place have been implemented. Area re-development plans have been proposed to encourage mixed residential, commercial and institutional development. Three sites have been identified as having potential for residential development. They are the West End, Eau Claire and East Village. West End and Eau Claire have undergone gentrification. East Village located on the east side of the downtown, is still waiting re-development. This thesis explores alternative development strategies for East Village that would create a distinct neighborhood with vibrant street life.

As recently developed residential areas, Eau Claire and the West End are downtown Calgary communities that provide an example for conventional development approaches to urban revitalization. They provide useful counterfoils to an alternative residential development.



Downtown residential development



View of Eau Claire development
Source: Wm R. Tyler

Eau Claire located on the north side of the downtown and traditionally a mixed-use residential and industrial area has been re-developed into a high-end residential enclave. It houses 1,717 people with a median household income of 80,000 as compared to the average income of 57,879 of the city.² Hence, this development is catering to a single economic group of higher income households.

Despite new construction, much of the land in this area is still covered with parking. Due to the low-density, the current population in the area cannot support the surrounding business in

² "Community Social Statistics: Eau Claire," The City of Calgary, http://www.calgary.ca/docgallery/bu/cns/community_social_statistics/eau_claire.pdf.

operation. Many of the businesses have suffered and eventually failed.



View of West End development

The West End development is located north of 9th Avenue S and south of the Bow River between 9th Street SW and 14th Street SW. It had a population of 2,681 in 2006 with a median household income of \$47,964³. The area consists of high-density, high-rise housing that attempts to address Calgary's growing need for housing. However, this development has no sense of neighborhood as the area is bisected by high-volume one-way traffic corridors. The buildings have very poor connection to the river and are pedestrian-unfriendly. These high residential towers have a single use programming at their base as a result of which there are few activities at the street level making the street life non-existent. Overall, in this development very little attention has been paid to create a high quality public realm.⁴

The current residential developments in the downtown thus fail to create a distinct neighborhood with a vibrant street life.

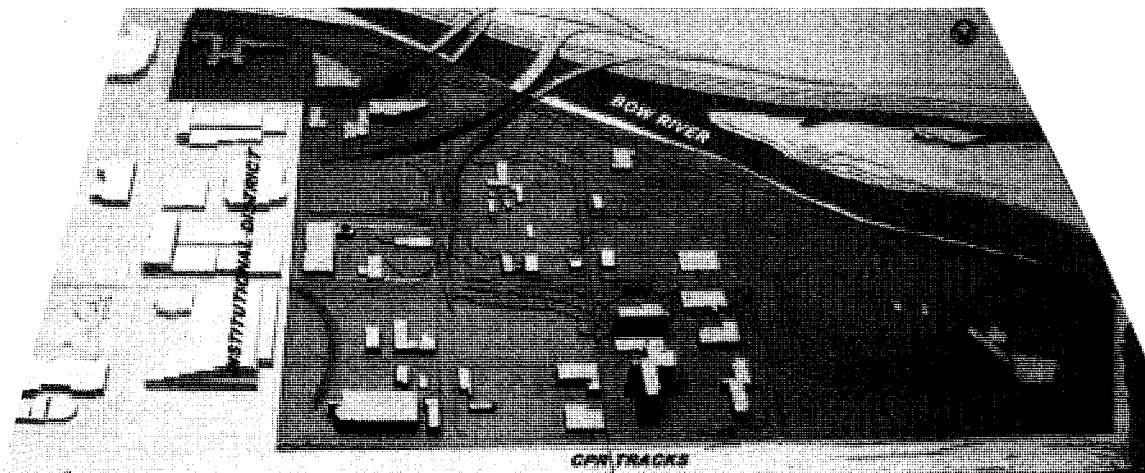
³ "Community Social Statistics: Downtown West End," The City of Calgary, http://www.calgary.ca/docgallery/bu/cns/community_social_statistics/downtown_west_end.pdf.

⁴ Beverly Sandalack and Andrei Nicolai, *The Calgary Project: urban form/ urban life* (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2006), 151.

3. East Village

East Village is located in the east of downtown Calgary. It is plagued with prostitution, drugs, crime, public drunkenness and more. It is home to 2,232 people, of whom 50% are homeless people living in shelters and 40% are seniors living in public housing⁵. It is a place that most Calgarians choose to ignore.

East Village has a very definite physical boundary. It is bordered by the Bow River on the north side and the Elbow River and Fort Calgary on the east side. The southern edge of East Village is marked by the rail tracks of the Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR).



Model showing East Village boundary

⁵ "Community Social Statistics: Downtown East Village," The City of Calgary, http://www.calgary.ca/docgallery/bu/cns/community_social_statistics/downtown_east_village.pdf.

The west side of East Village is marked by the 'wall' of government buildings that form the institutional district. Much of the area lies within the flood plains of the Bow and Elbow Rivers. The area has experienced flooding from winter ice jams in the past and a dyke was constructed in the 1950's to address such flooding. The area covers approximately 46 hectares (113 acres), including 14 hectares of roads and 12 hectares of Fort Calgary.



View of parking lot in East Village

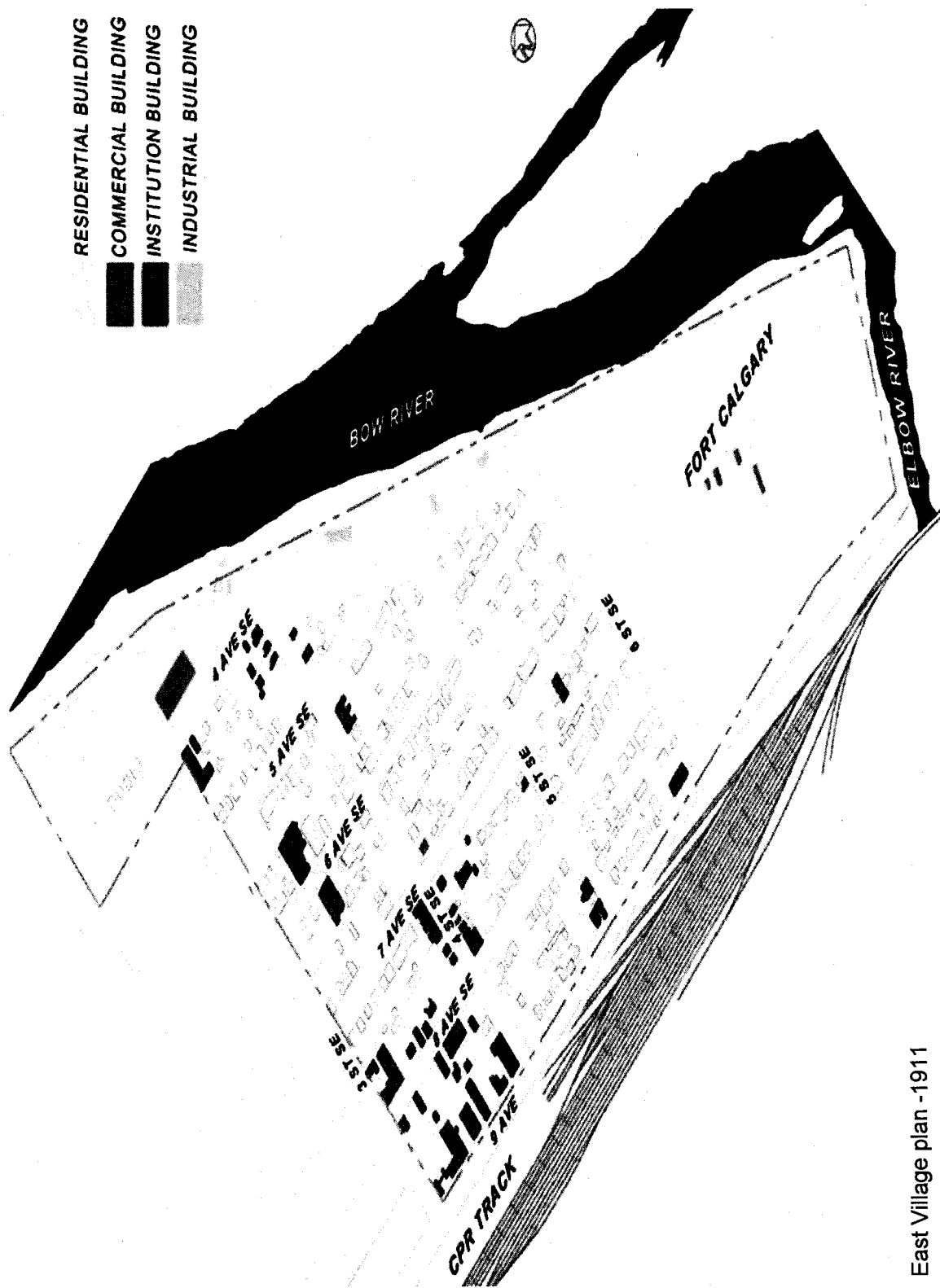
Most of the area serves as a parking lot for the downtown's institutional district and becomes empty after office hours making the area unsafe. Since this area has not been developed for several years, it has been occupied by various social service organizations such as the Calgary drop-in and Rehab and the Center of Hope. Homeless people keep coming to East Village to take advantage of the free facilities provided by these organizations.

Being so close to the downtown, it is prized real-estate that remains underutilized. A study of the history of the neighborhood reveals several reasons for the present state of the community.

The Decline of East Village

The fact that Calgary's downtown has west-to-eastward slope of land, has influenced some of the early Urban Developments. Since water and sewage run downhill, Calgary's development to the east has been less extensive than to the west. East Calgary always had a stigma attached to it because of actual and perceived lower environmental quality and this was reflected in lower property values. Hence, in early days, working class community occupied this part of Calgary. The development was mixed-use where people lived, worked and shopped. The predominant dwelling form was single-family housing. Many houses in the neighborhood offered retail space at the ground level to increase revenue for the building owners. During that period, the city encouraged the development of workers' housing near the industrial area such that the district was composed of interrelated industrial and residential uses.

RESIDENTIAL BUILDING
COMMERCIAL BUILDING
INSTITUTION BUILDING
INDUSTRIAL BUILDING

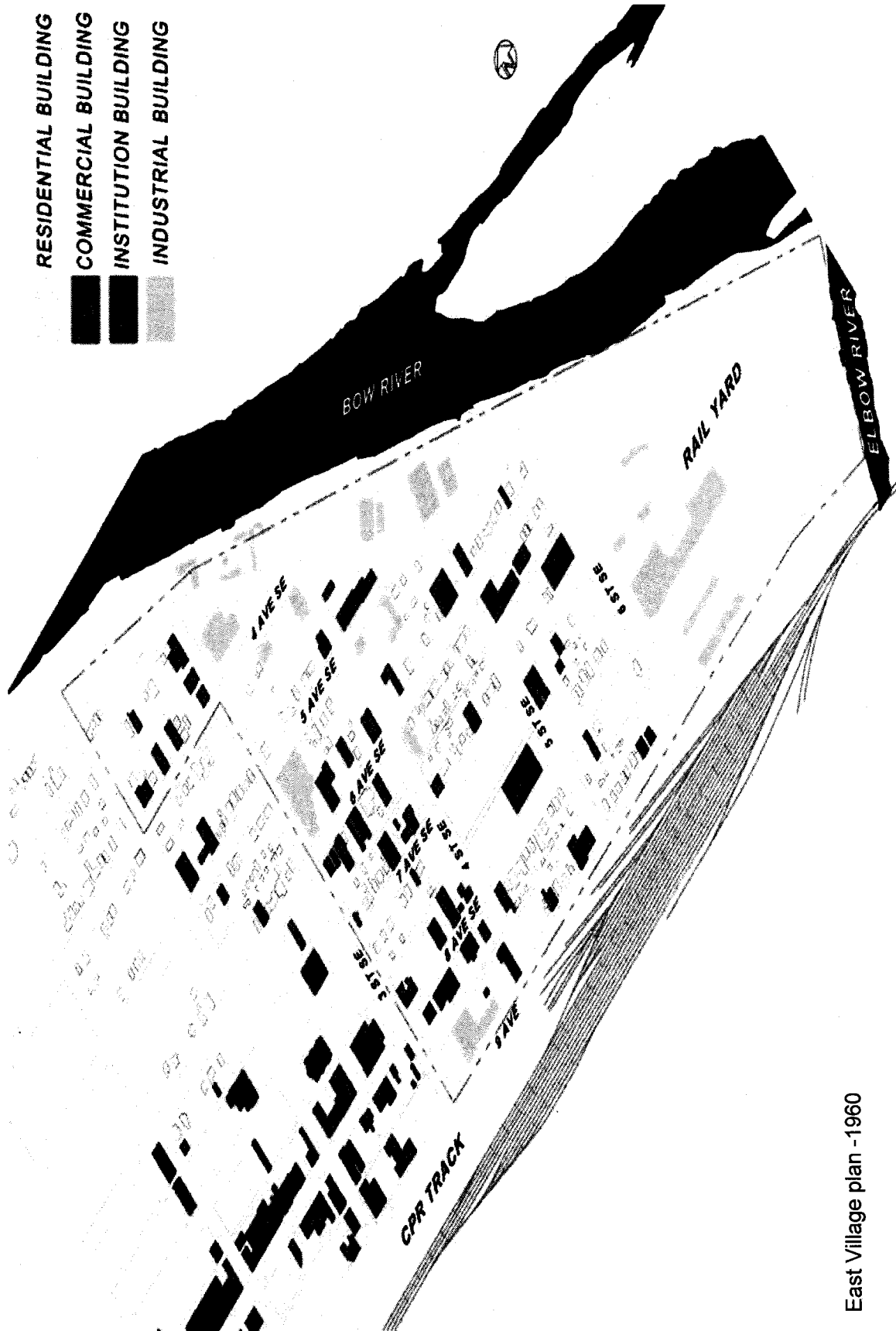


East Village plan -1911

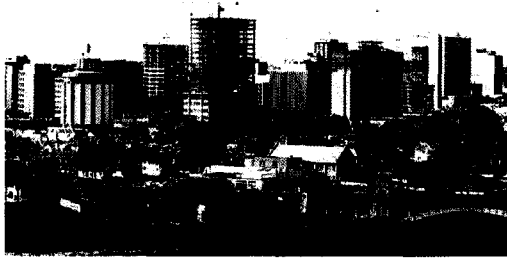
East Village at that time became the fastest growing area in the city because of its proximity to the industrial area and streetcar lines. The river was used for light industries. Stephen Avenue (8th Avenue) was the main commercial strip. Until 1914, Fort Calgary, located in the East part of East Village, functioned as the barracks for the North West Mounted Police.

In 1956, the Fort Calgary Site was converted from a North West Mounted Police barracks to a Canadian Pacific rail yard. This brought industrial building into East Village. Houses were demolished and replaced by manufacturing plants. This resulted in a discontinuous housing pattern and the neighborhood became more fractured in nature.

- RESIDENTIAL BUILDING
- COMMERCIAL BUILDING
- INSTITUTION BUILDING
- INDUSTRIAL BUILDING



East Village plan - 1960



New construction in downtown during urban renewal

Source: Glenbow Archives NA 2399 44

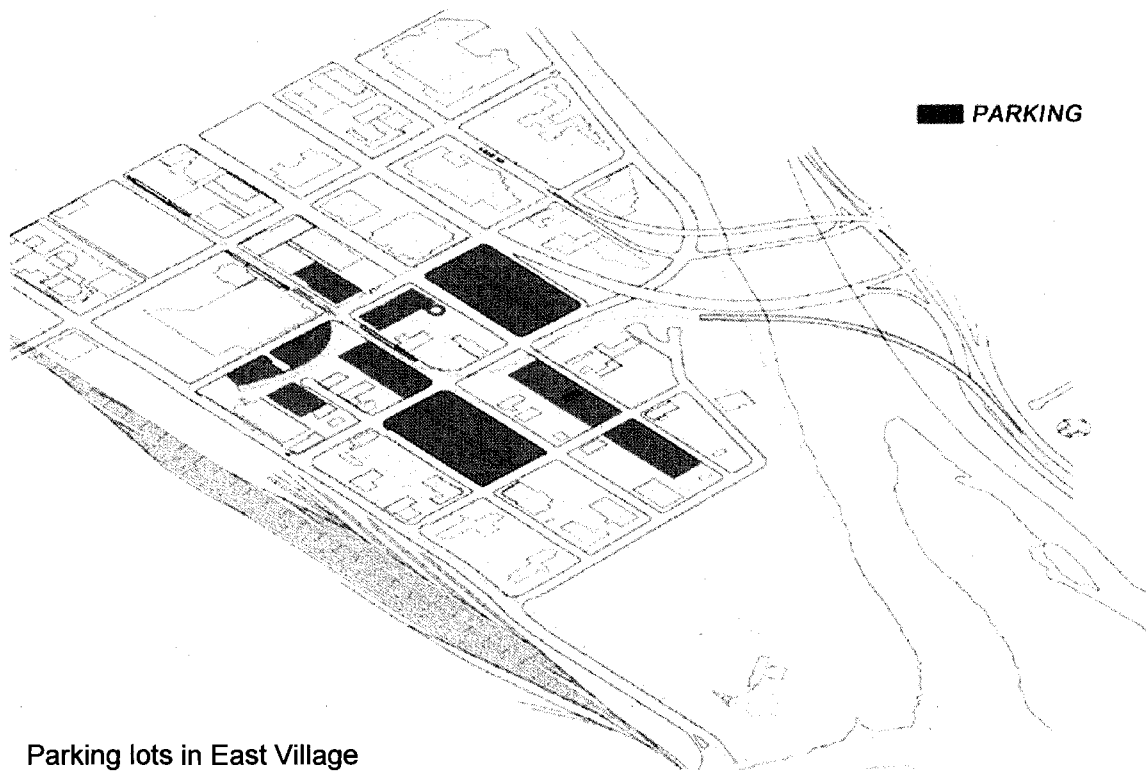
Later, in 1960s when the city was influenced by the North American trend of 'Urban Renewal', most buildings of East Village were torn down and replaced by office towers and residential towers. However, nothing was built as planned and the state of East Village continued to deteriorate. In 1975 the Canadian Pacific Railway decommissioned the rail yard and Fort Calgary was rebuilt. The Urban Renewal plan of 1966 had a major impact on the East Village and its relationship with the rest of the city. As per the plan, the government buildings were built to the west of East Village which had a negative influence on the development of East Village.

Effects of Urban renewal Plan on East Village and its current state

Empty parking lots

Large scale demolitions covering several city blocks have left the East Village a wasteland of vacant lots and extensive surface parking areas. The emptiness and vastness of this area is exaggerated by its proximity to the higher density downtown and the older communities of Bridgeland, Inglewood and Victoria Park that surround East Village. There are very few buildings remaining from the post war period. Simon's Mattress factory by the Bow

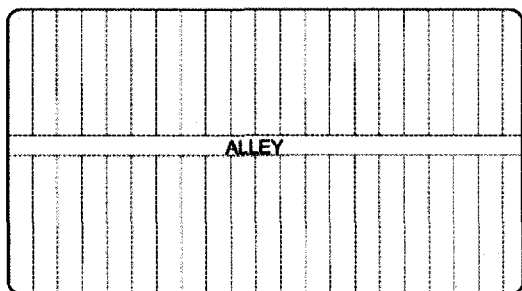
River is a reminder of East Village's industrial roots. The remaining three storey brick buildings along 8th Avenue give a clue to its earlier use as a commercial street.



Parking lots in East Village

Downtown grid

The downtown street grid is an urban system of movement and organization that is understood by most people. This system of back alleys and streets influences the flow of activity. Historically, back alleys ran through the middle of the blocks in an east-west direction as service access. Originally, the city lot had a



Historical downtown grid

twenty-five foot frontage allowing for many commercial developments along the street. This typology resulted in a street façade that composed of various types of buildings with different building material and varied style. The blocks were divided into individual business. This model imposed a continuous streetscape in an east-west direction. The front of each building was meant for more formal and public functions; while the back alley was used for more informal activities, such as garbage collection.

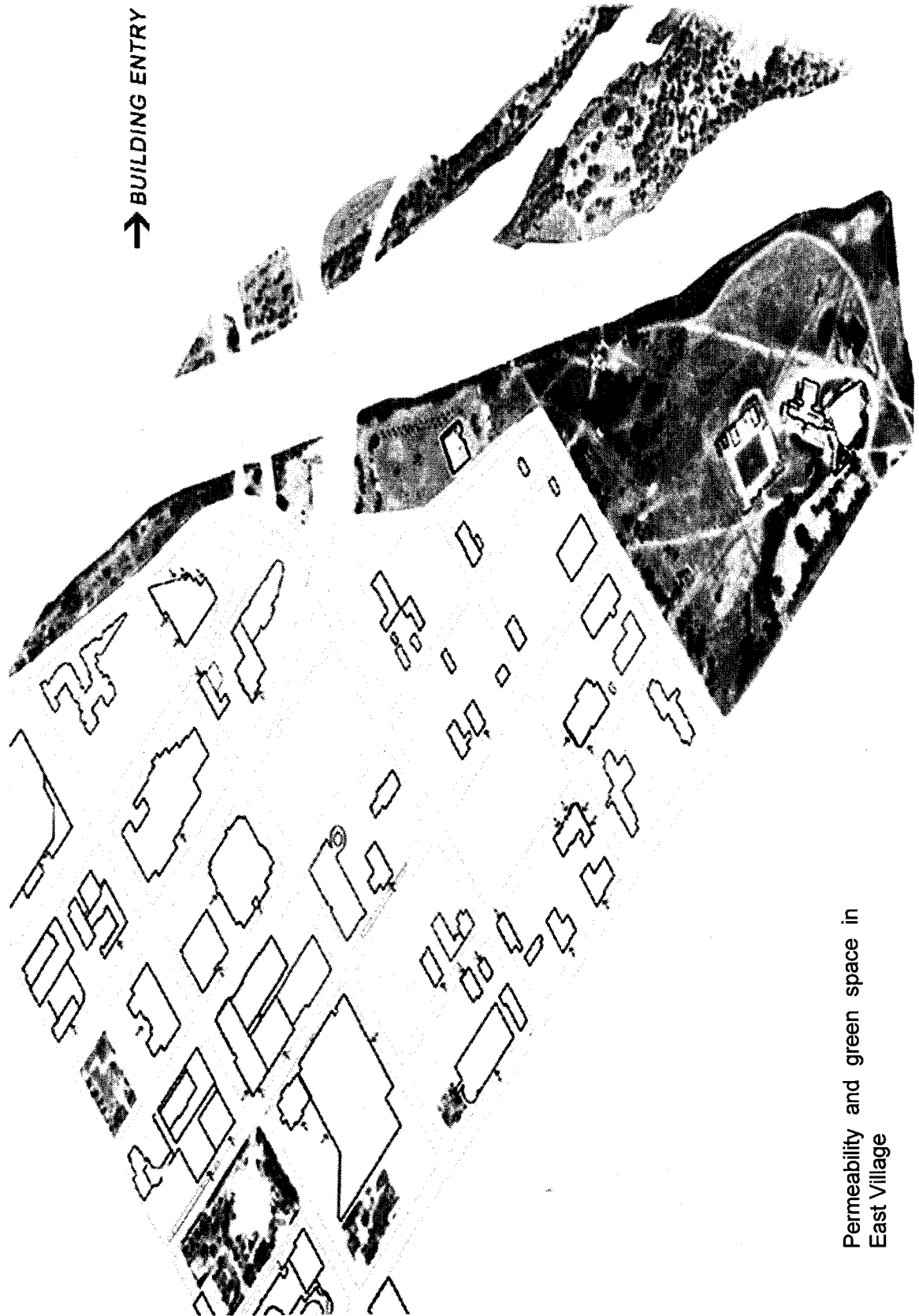
With the implementation of the Urban Renewal Plan in 1960s, the downtown grid pattern changed as the size and shape of land subdivisions became bigger. Super blocks and buildings with bigger 'footprints' emerged as lots were consolidated.

Presently in East Village, many of the back alleys have disappeared as the scale of the buildings have increased. As lots have been consolidated, individual lot prices have increased and the numbers of potential developers and small scale businesses have declined. Service access and alleys are no longer placed behind the buildings. Overall, this mode decreases the diversity of the urban form and the integrity of the streetscape is lost.

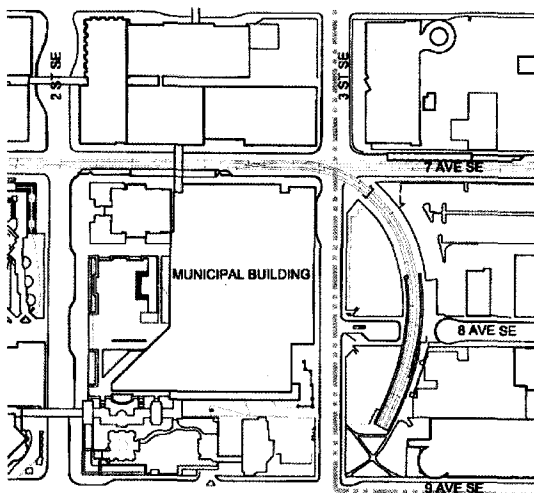


Mega structure and the Institution district

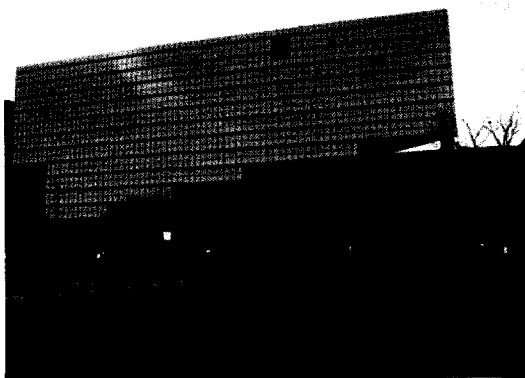
Street closures and lot and block consolidations facilitated the development of large-scale office buildings on the west side of the East Village. These buildings and those that form the 'institutional' district are monolithic, stand-alone buildings. Many occupy one entire city block. Most house a single-occupancy and have very few points of entry, thereby forming a very hard edge at the street level. Continuous walls combined with one-way streets and the prohibition of on-street parking, have resulted in a very poor street quality. By having poor street quality, assets such as the green space of Fort Calgary and River pathway system are seldom used.



Permeability and green space in
East Village



Site plan-municipal building



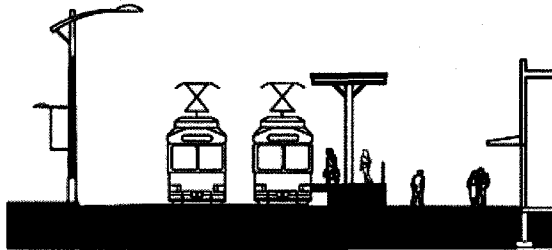
View of municipal building from East-Village

The Municipal Building, which spans between 9th Avenue SE and 7th Avenue SE across 3rd Street, blocks 8th Avenue SE which was the area's natural access route to and from East Village. An attempt was made to reconnect 8th Avenue to East Village with an indoor shopping mall at the ground level of the Municipal Building. However, the idea did not materialize, as only one shop is present on the main level of the Municipal Building.

The west side of the municipal building is stepped to break down its mass and is detailed on a human scale at the grade level. The building descends to four storeys with a stepped plaza, street furniture and landscaping that forms a 'welcome mat' to those who work in or visit the building. On the other hand, the East side of the building presents a continuous 36 meter high 'curtain wall' clad elevation resting on a sandstone base. In this way, the Municipal Building turns its back to East Village and forms a bookend to the downtown. Barry Johns states in his critique, that "the building is seemingly oblivious and with an upturned nose to its surrounds"⁶. To repeat, the Municipal Building cuts off East Village physically from rest of the city.

⁶ Barry Johns, "Calgary City Hall: Bold and Simple," *Canadian Architect* 31, no.2 (February 1986): 22.

Light Rail Transit



Section through LRT platform

Another outcome of the 1966 Urban Renewal plan was the implementation of a Light Rail Transit (LRT) line on Seventh Avenue. 7th Avenue was envisioned as a 'transit mall' for the exclusive use of trains and buses in counterpoint to the established Stephen Avenue pedestrian mall running parallel one block south. The LRT system was built above grade for financial reasons. A series of the raised narrow platforms was designed in an attempt to reduce the impact of the raised structure on the adjacent sidewalk and the businesses fronting the structure. The result was a series of compact but crowded stations that acted as barriers between the shops and the street. These barriers gradually resulted in the decline of both the businesses and the quality of the street itself. The LRT is a huge success at moving commuters in and out of the core, but it has produced a business and pedestrian wasteland. As a result, 7th Avenue is the most used and the most disliked street in the downtown.

At East Village, the LRT track diverges towards north and south Calgary on 4th Street SE. The southbound tracks cut an arc around the Municipal Building and shoot down into an underground tunnel

making a green park at grade level. Where this track cuts through 8th Avenue SE it requires a retaining wall that further disconnects East village physically from the downtown core. The LRT track going northwards passes by 4th street and cuts through two city blocks.

Circulation

Pedestrian movement

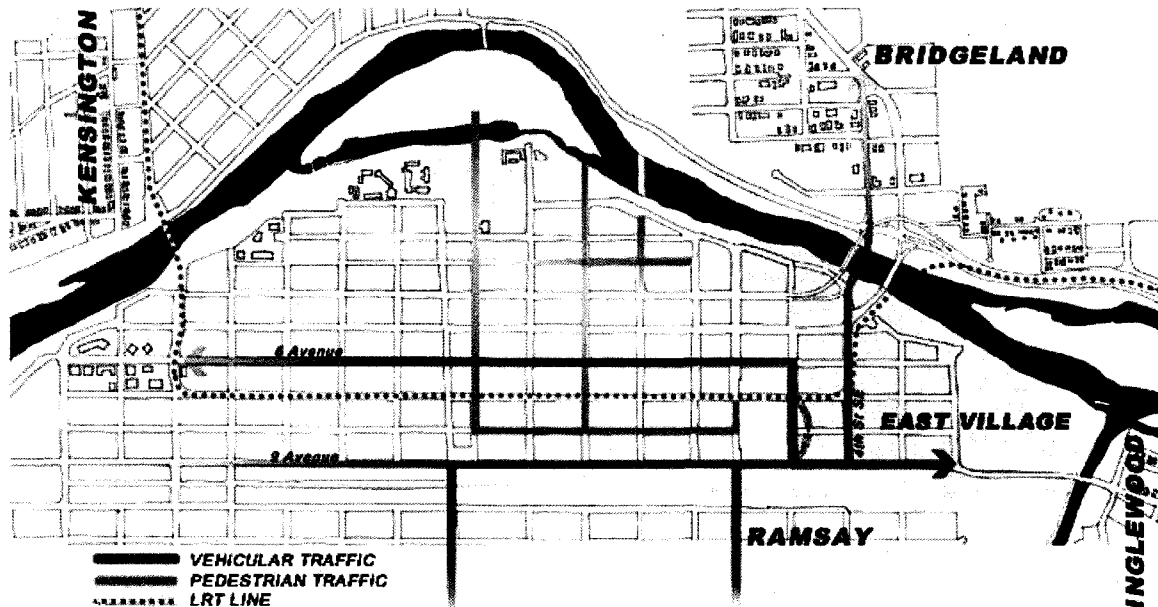
In the Urban Renewal Plan of 1966, Calgary's 'Plus 15' system was introduced. Plus 15 systems refer to a grade separated pedestrian circulation system, approximately 15 feet above the street level. These elevated self-contained passageways create wind turbulence, block the views and cast shadows on the street, thereby, making the street environment even harsher. Pedestrian circulation at the grade is affected by the 'Plus 15' system, as the system does not connect to the ground level effectively. Also, there is not enough downtown population to make both systems workable; hence, businesses along the street level have suffered.

The main pedestrian traffic entering the downtown from East Village is through 9th Avenue SE or 7th Avenue SE with neither

providing a comfortable environment with the noise and speed of the cars on the former and the LRT on the latter. Due to a lack of interesting areas and an uncomfortable walking environment, only a few streets are used in the district.

Historically, 8th Avenue SE used to be the major pedestrian spine for East Village. With the construction of the Municipal Building, 8th Avenue SE was terminated by a cul de sac at its west, thereby, cutting off both vehicular and pedestrian traffic between 4th and 3rd Streets. There is an urgent need for improvements to pedestrian connections throughout the entire district.

Vehicular traffic



Downtown vehicular circulation

East Village is bisected by various transportation corridors. On the north side, the highway overpass cuts out a block of East Village creating discontinuities within the neighborhood. 4th Street SE could be identified as major vehicular thoroughfare as this street serves as a gateway to the downtown for the neighboring residential communities of Inglewood and Ramsay. Other people use 4th Street as a shortcut to access Memorial Drive across the river from 9th Avenue.

Post - war housing

In the 1970's, lower income seniors of Calgary were brought to live in the newly built government subsidized apartment buildings in East Village. These towers exemplify post war housing policies whereby a single, mass housing model was presumed to be appropriate for growing cities. The diverse housing requirements of the general population were normalized and the building elements were standardized. Built high above the street level, these brick clad towers are disconnected and isolated from the street level. Without quick and easy access to the street from the units,

the streets lost their purpose as a public place.



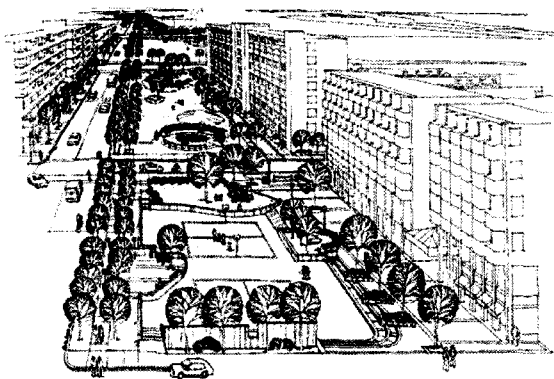
Post-war housing in East Village with fencing along the sidewalk

Taller buildings with smaller footprints allow for big open spaces. However, at the same time, taller buildings obstruct views and cast shadows at the street level. In the case of the East Village, the open spaces between the tall buildings are used either as parking spaces or as private gardens that are fenced at the street edge. These spaces between the buildings form a discontinuous streetscape and create urban voids.

To summarize, the current state of East Village is an amalgamation of various factors that went wrong in the past. Situated in an isolated location in the corner of the downtown, and behind the 'wall' of the institution district, East Village has remained as backwater where the mistakes of Urban Renewal Plan are easily hidden away from the eyes of the people.

Precedents

The St Lawrence Neighborhood developed in 1970s, is a successful example of adaptive reuse of a former industrial lands that was adjacent to the business district of Toronto. The intent was to build a community from the ground up, while providing a combination of affordable housing to attract new residents.



View of Crombie Park, the heart of St. Lawrence neighborhood
 Source: David Gordon

A new set of housing program was created by the Federal government that led to the success of this project. The program encompassed social policy goals for assisting the poor to integrate into society and thereby became tools for dealing with wider urban issues from a social perspective. These programs enabled the creation of co-operative and non-profit housing as a new way of housing the poor and mandated a mix of incomes.

In creating the St Lawrence Neighborhood the objective was to avoid the 'project' mentality of a group of buildings that produced the lower income, public housing ghetto associated with urban renewal. Instead, the housing was to take its cue from the typical Toronto

neighborhood. From this starting point, three principles emerged: public streets should be the basis of the neighborhood, buildings should address the streets, and there should be mix.



Toronto's traditional street system as seen by this street in St Lawrence
 Source: David Gordon

Streets in the St Lawrence Neighborhood were planned to be just as in any other Toronto neighborhood, that is they were to be public, continuous, and extended into and through the neighborhood, integrating it fully with the framework of the surrounding city. Secondly, buildings relate directly to the public streets, with front doors opening onto the streets and lanes being the only place of pedestrian circulation. The final key principle was mandating mix. Development was a mix in housing type, housing tenure, income group, land use, and even developer. The neighborhood was developed with a mix of non-profit, co-operative, and private owners.

The features that led to the success of developments of St Lawrence is, the site plan adopted Toronto's nineteenth century grid street plan, resulting in a community that is integrated with its surroundings. The plan created a sense of continuity in physical form and a sense of belonging for residents. Today, the St. Lawrence neighborhood is referred to as the

community downtown that has always been there.

As a result of the social planning process, social goals were translated into the development of a successful community of mixed incomes, ages, and social classes. St. Lawrence avoided high-rise apartment projects exclusively geared to residents below the poverty line.

The key principles set for the development of St Lawrence, influenced the regulation of the residential development of whole downtown. Its influence extended beyond its own physical limits.

4. Design Strategy

A critical analysis of the history and the current situation of East Village led to the development of a design strategy for East Village. This strategy identifies six design principles that are tested on a single block of East Village. One way of approaching the present problems of East Village as a whole, is to test a protocol for a single block. This would serve as a demonstration for further development of East Village.

The vision is to create a neighborhood that is integrated into the city with a lot of diversity, has a strong pedestrian linkage that creates a vibrant street life, and is deeply rooted to the history of the place. Just like St. Lawrence neighborhood, the intention is to create a place to live, work, shop and play.

The design strategy does not propose something new. Instead, it incorporates traditional best practices for medium-density housing. The strategies reclaim parts of East Village that has long been forgotten.

The elements of Design Strategy are:

- The downtown Grid.
- Adaptive re-use of abandoned buildings.
- Encouraging diversity and mixed-use development.
- Street oriented buildings.
- Building mass.
- Creating a strong pedestrian linkage with a high quality public realm.

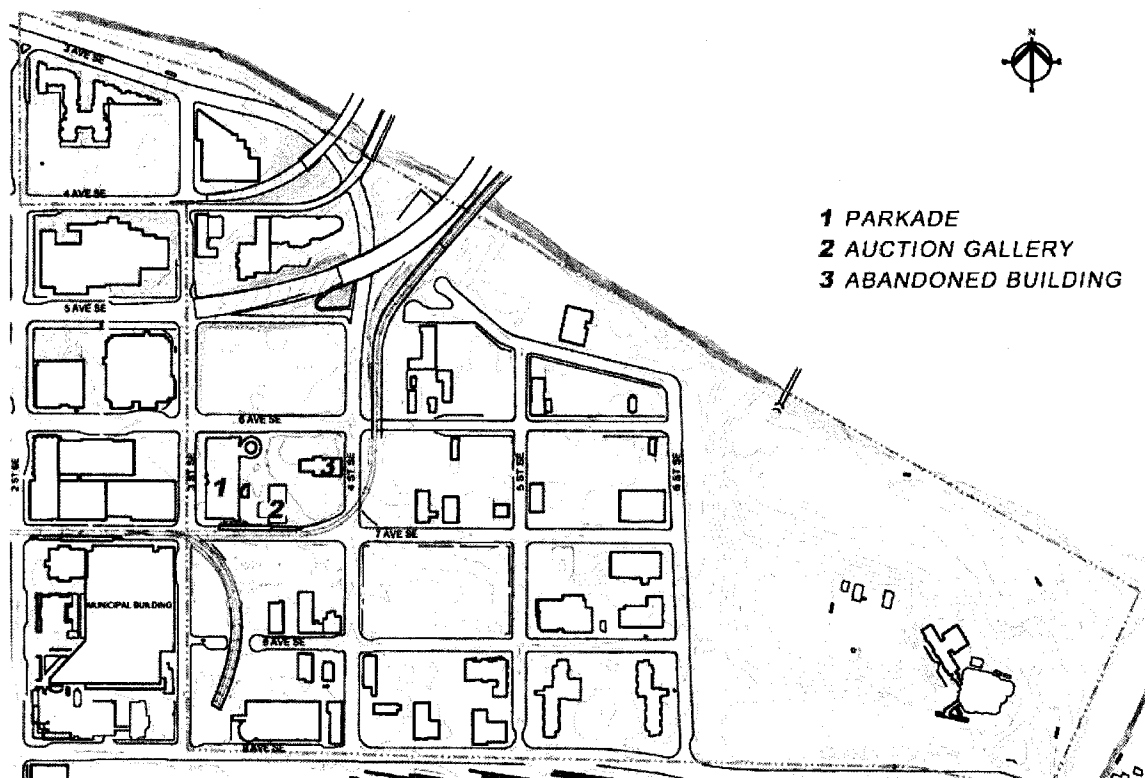
Site

The block selected for testing the design strategy lies between 7th and 6th Avenue SE and between 3rd and 4th Street SE. Situated adjacent to the government district, this City block is a transition space between the downtown office core in the west and residential buildings in the east, making this block more challenging to design. However, the block has an added benefit of being close to Bow Valley College and to Calgary's cultural district.

This block of East Village once had a diverse mix of uses with houses, butcher shops, building supplies, hotel rooms and a church.



Southwest view of the site -1930
Source: *Glenbow Archives NA 2191 2*



East Village plan showing the block selected for testing the design strategy



Southwest view of the site-2008

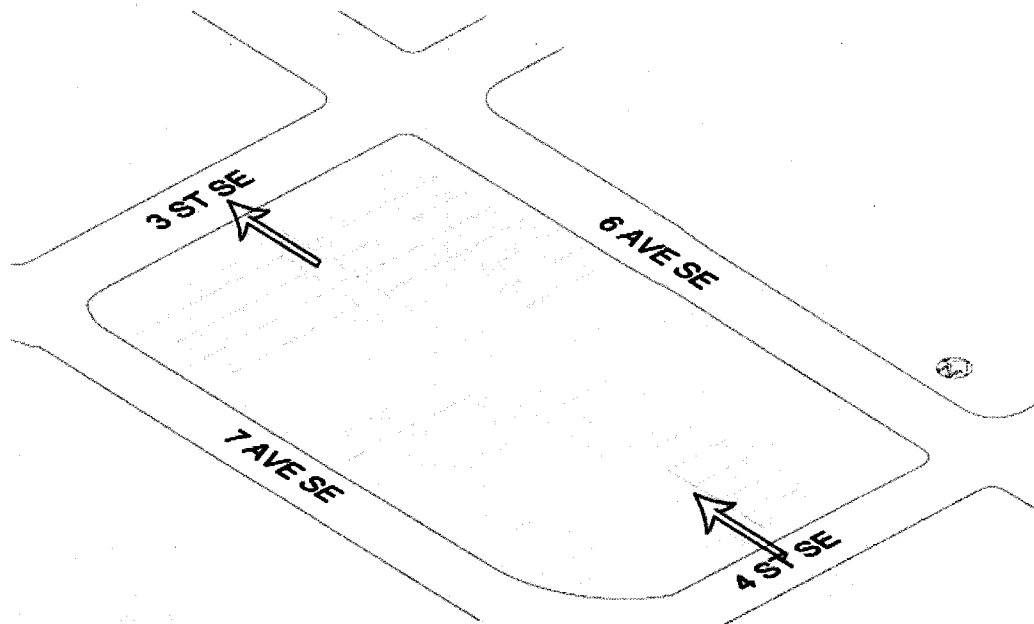
Today, three quarters of this block is occupied by a three-storey parking garage; all the residential buildings have been demolished. There is an abandoned auto-body shop in the northeast corner and to the south of the block is an auction gallery, which was once a butcher's shop. This block also contains the last light rail transit station in the downtown. Several commuters use this station, making this block the most used block in East Village by the downtown commuters.

Strategies for block development

The Downtown Grid

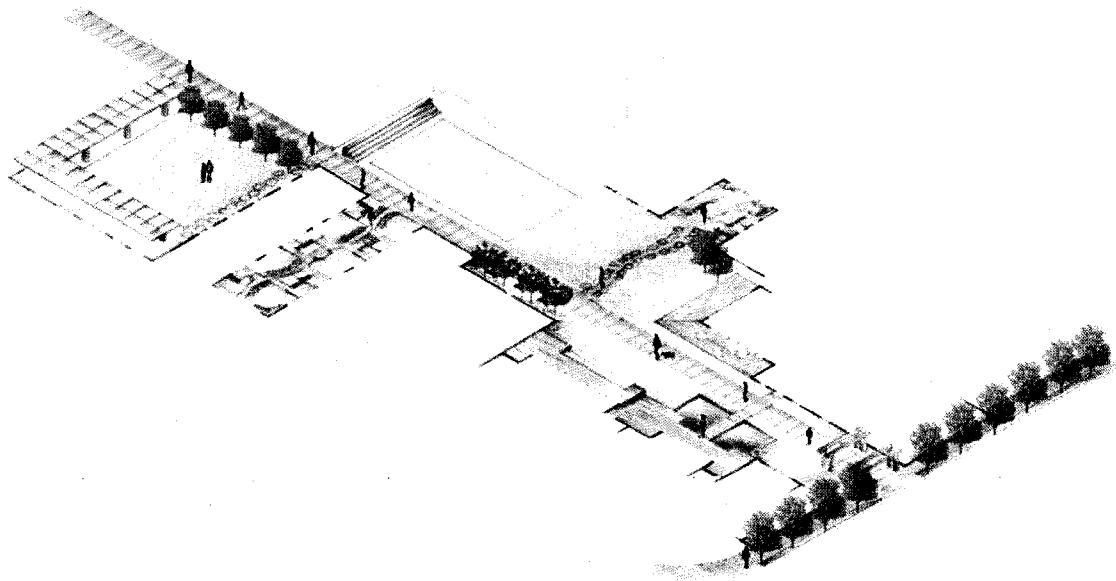
The street grid is an important organization system for East Village and the rest of downtown to the West. Historically, the buildings were built flush to the property line, providing continuous frontage.

In the new proposal, existing downtown grid and the lot sub-division pattern are re-integrated in the block. This allows for buildings with narrow street front and numerous entries that mandate diversity along the street.



The Alley continued through the block

The back alley is incorporated in the proposal. The alley is developed to form a linear-garden in between the buildings. The garden space will not only become a focal point for residential units in block, but it will also attract the downtown workers during the lunch hour and offer a retreat from the hustle and bustle of the city.



The alleyway developed to form linear garden

Currently, the four storey parkade that occupies the corner of 3rd Street SE, blocks the alley-way. Hence, a part of this parkade is taken away to allow the alley to connect 3rd and 4th Street SE.

Adapting older buildings for new use

It is important that the new development preserves these existing buildings on site and adapt some of the older buildings for newer use. Jane Jacobs in her book, 'The Death and Life of Great American Cities', talks about the importance of mixing old and new buildings in a district with varying age and condition. "If a city area only has new buildings, the enterprise that can exist there are automatically limited to those that can support the high costs of new construction."⁷ A mix of old and new buildings in a district offer a greater diversity of use and a diversity of people using them.

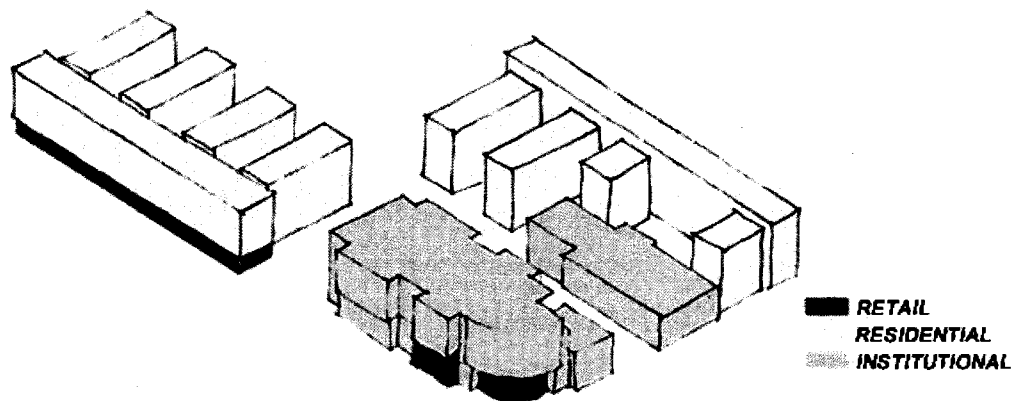
The abandoned industrial building located at the corner of 4th Street SE and 6th Avenue SE is reused to fit the new program.

Mixed- use development

A mix of commercial, residential and institutional development is proposed for the block. The benefits of mixing residential and commercial use is discussed by Jane Joacobs where she

⁷ Jane Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (New York: Random House Inc., 1961), 187.

says that a mix of land uses is what every city and downtown neighborhood needs and what urban living is all about. Creating places for people to live, work and shop within a small geographic area is known to promote diversity and vitality.⁸

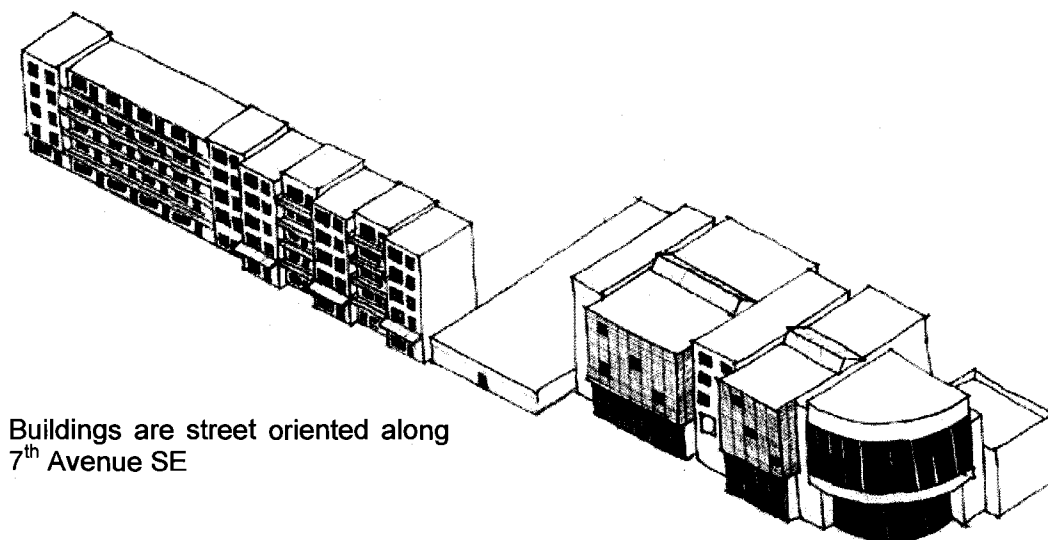


Block with mixed-use development

Street oriented building

Street oriented building is encouraged along 7th Avenue with residential spaces above ground level shops and offices. A consistent at-grade commercial character creates a visually permeable and vibrant street front. In addition, the residential buildings located on the main street would have balconies facing the street, hence ensuring 'eyes on the street'.

⁸ Jane Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (New York: Random House Inc., 1961), 152-155.



Buildings are street oriented along
7th Avenue SE

Building mass

Smaller building mass limited to five storey building height is proposed for the site.

Christopher Alexander, a strong critic of building form, believes high rise building can damage people's mind and feelings and adds:

There is abundant evidence to show that high buildings make people crazy. Therefore, in any urban area, no matter how dense, keep the majority of buildings four stories high or less. It is possible that certain buildings should exceed this limit, but they should never be buildings for human habitation.⁹

Even with a lower building height, a decent density is achieved by building the units adjacent to each other. Indian architect Charles Correa in his book 'The

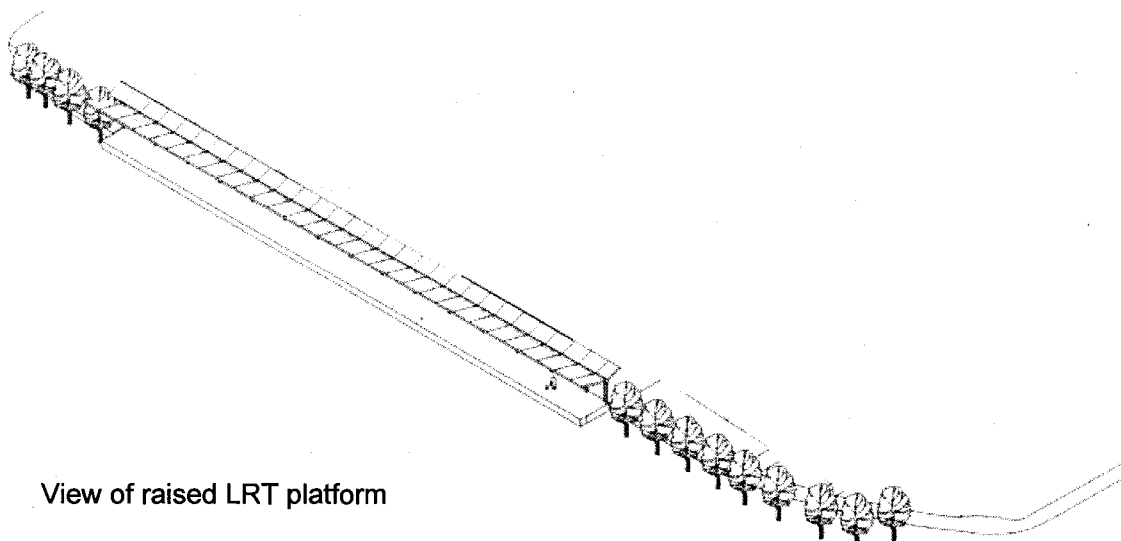
⁹ Christopher Alexander, et al., *A Pattern Language: towns, buildings, construction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977), 115-117.

New Landscape: Urbanization in the Third World,' calculates that low-rise courtyard housing can achieve densities equal to that of high-rise, a range of 100-400 persons per acre.

Buildings with narrow width are proposed for the residential developments as narrower building ensures good light and air penetration into the building.

Light Rail Transit platform improvement

The platform for Light Rail Transit that currently from a barrier along the sidewalk is redesigned such that sidewalk itself ramps-up to become the platforms. This provides an expanded passenger area and removes the barriers to adjacent businesses.

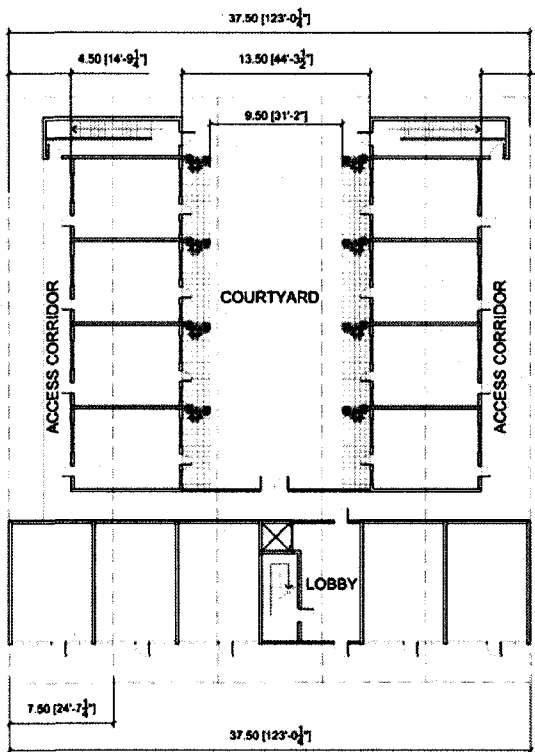


View of raised LRT platform



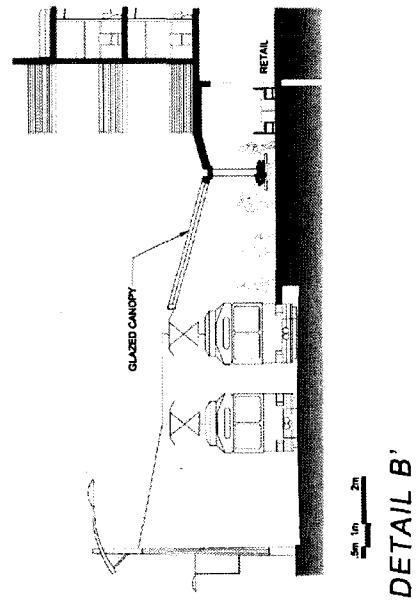
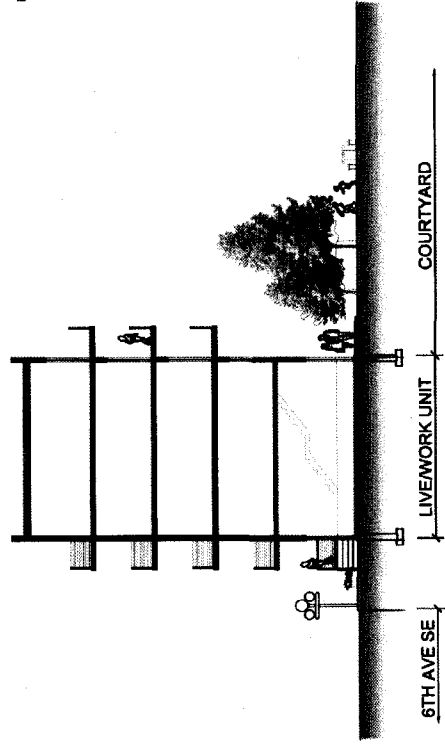
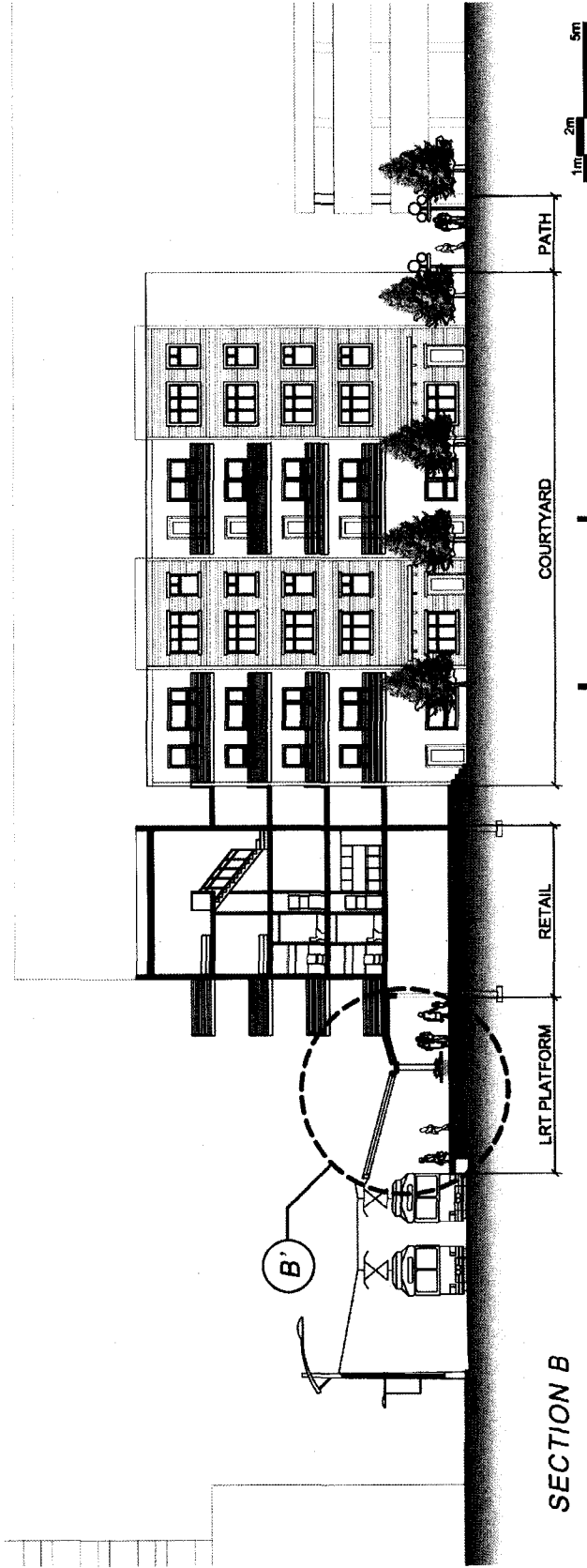
Perspective view of raised LRT platform

Restricting maximum extent of block frontage



Maximum block frontage

East Village needs small-scale development in order to build the area incrementally on a scale appropriate for East Village and its surrounding neighborhood. Hence, it is proposed that the residential development be done in maximum increment of 37.5m or in five-lot width. This dimension also allows for a courtyard space of 10 meters that provides adequate opening to draw light and air into the building. Restricting the maximum extent of block frontage allows for a variety in built form and in building type. Moreover, developments in smaller increments generate potential for more sustainable form of growth while accommodating a greater variety of inhabitants.



Section through the block

The Arts and Skill Center

An institutional building is proposed at the corner of 7th Avenue and 4th Street SE as a test for the viability of block development strategies discussed in the previous section.

As 40% of Calgary's homeless people live in the East Village, the institution building addresses the current issue of homelessness by providing an educational facility that would help the homeless people of East Village to get a job and to become economically independent. Fred Robertson, a 20-year resident of East Village who at one point of time was homeless, talks about the importance of education in the life of homeless people.

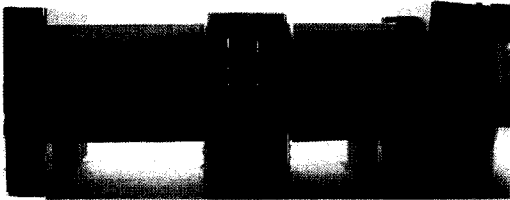
The hostel residents, of whom 50 percent are working poor, probably deserve a shot at a formal education. Lack of education and choice are definite depressive factors in the lives of homeless people. Depression is probably the major factor in the creation of mental health problems and violence among the homeless. Some, in fact, 10 percent do already have university degrees. About 15 percent have had any exposure to post-secondary education. Many of the hostel residents haven't completed high school. I believe that many would take advantage of an educational facility if the opportunities were free or provided at a low cost.¹⁰

¹⁰ Fred Robertson, "Don't forget to ask homeless for their ideas, as well," *Calgary Herald*, September 15, 2005.

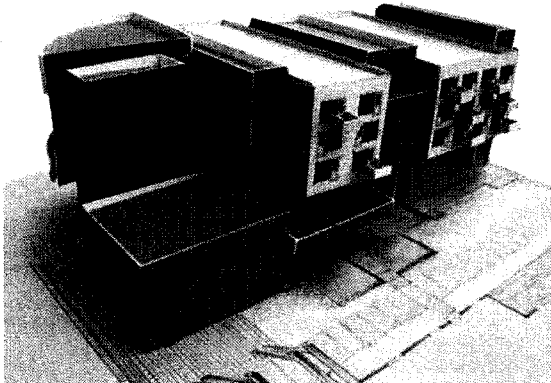
Moreover, it is important to address the issues of homelessness because if nothing is done for them, they would be the first ones to be relocated with the future development of the place. In addition, this program would ensure a mixed-income group that would encourage diversity in the district.

The program of the institution is of an Arts and Skill center that offers training in the areas of construction and art. As the economy of Alberta is expanding, the demand for construction-trade workers to build the supporting infrastructure is continuously growing. There is a labor shortage to meet the demand of a growing economy. The Skill center focuses on providing training facilities in the area of construction, welding, ironwork, carpentry and automotive services. The Arts center has studios for painting, graphic design and sculpture making. The art pieces produced is displayed for public sale. In addition, the program comprises of several versatile spaces, such as meeting rooms and exhibition space that is rented out to the general public to host different events. This system will in turn contribute to sustain the micro-enterprise of the institution.

Since affordable housing is an issue for low-income household, the Arts and Skill center also include affordable living units for the people who are enrolled in the program.



Model View: south facade

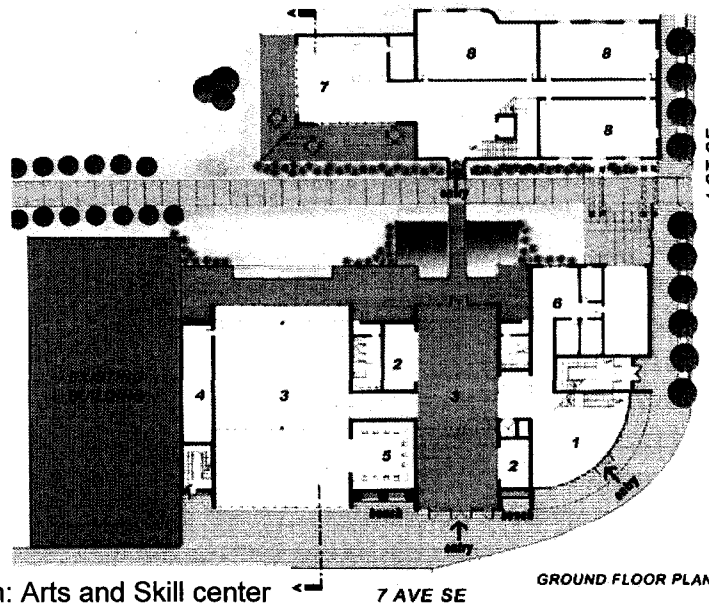
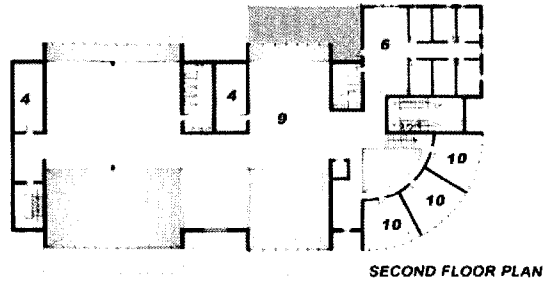
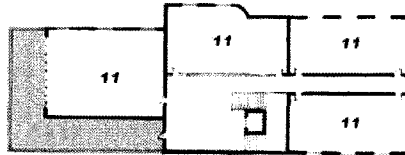
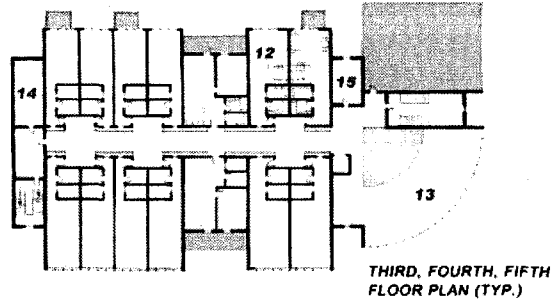


Model View: overlooking balconies on north side

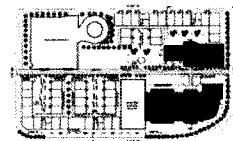
The ground floor of the Arts Center located at the corner of 7th Ave SE and 4th Street SE houses the gallery space, the graphic art room, retail and administrative offices. The façade along 7th Avenue SE is mainly glazed and is periodically broken down by the vertical service core. For the passerby or commuters waiting at the LRT station, the transparent facade allows for a visual connection into the gallery space and to the linear garden beyond. The second floor of this building consists of rentable meeting rooms and studio spaces that overlook the exhibit space below. The third, the fourth and the fifth floor of this building form the student residence and consist mainly of bachelor units and a few single-bedroom units. The north façade of the building has open balconies overlooking the linear garden, whereas the south façade is mainly louvered for protection against sunlight.

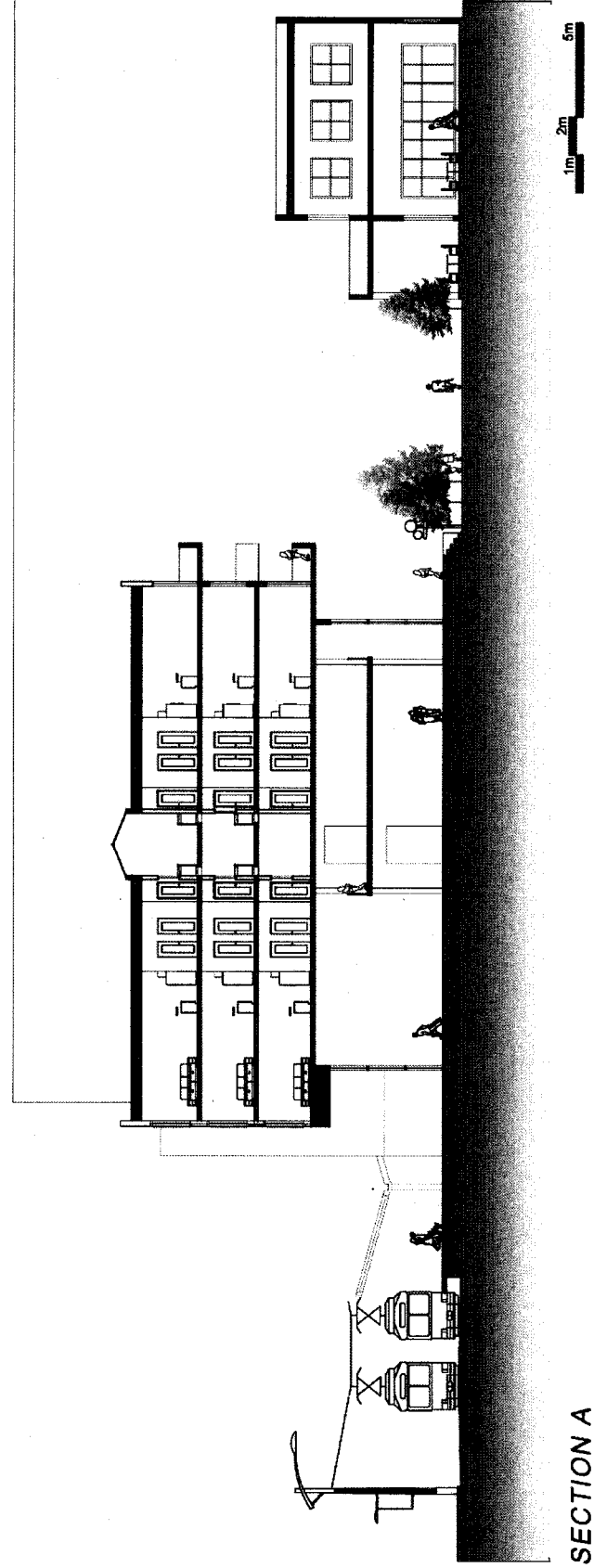
The abandoned industrial building located at the corner of 4th Street SE and 6th Avenue SE is reused to accommodate classrooms and workshop facilities. The

entrance of this building is visually connected from 7th Avenue SE through the walking exhibit space of the Arts Center.

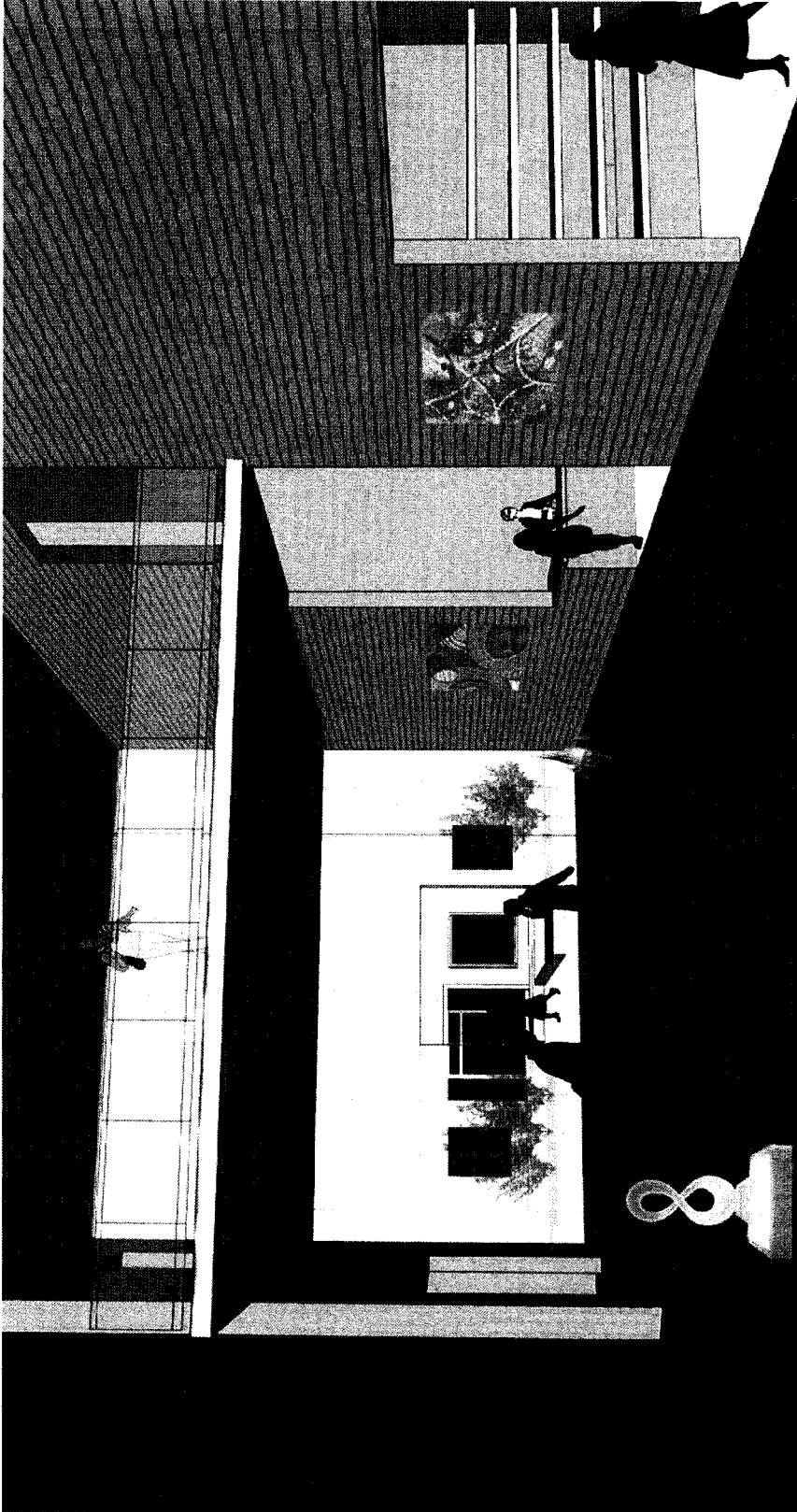


- 1 LOBBY/ RECEPTION
- 2 RETAIL
- 3 EXHIBIT
- 4 STORAGE
- 5 COMPUTER GRAPHICS
- 6 ADMINISTRATION
- 7 CAFE
- 8 WORKSHOPS
- 9 STUDIO
- 10 MEETING ROOM
- 11 CLASSROOMS
- 12 UNITS
- 13 COMMUNAL SPACE
- 14 LAUNDRY ROOM
- 15 SECURITY OFFICE

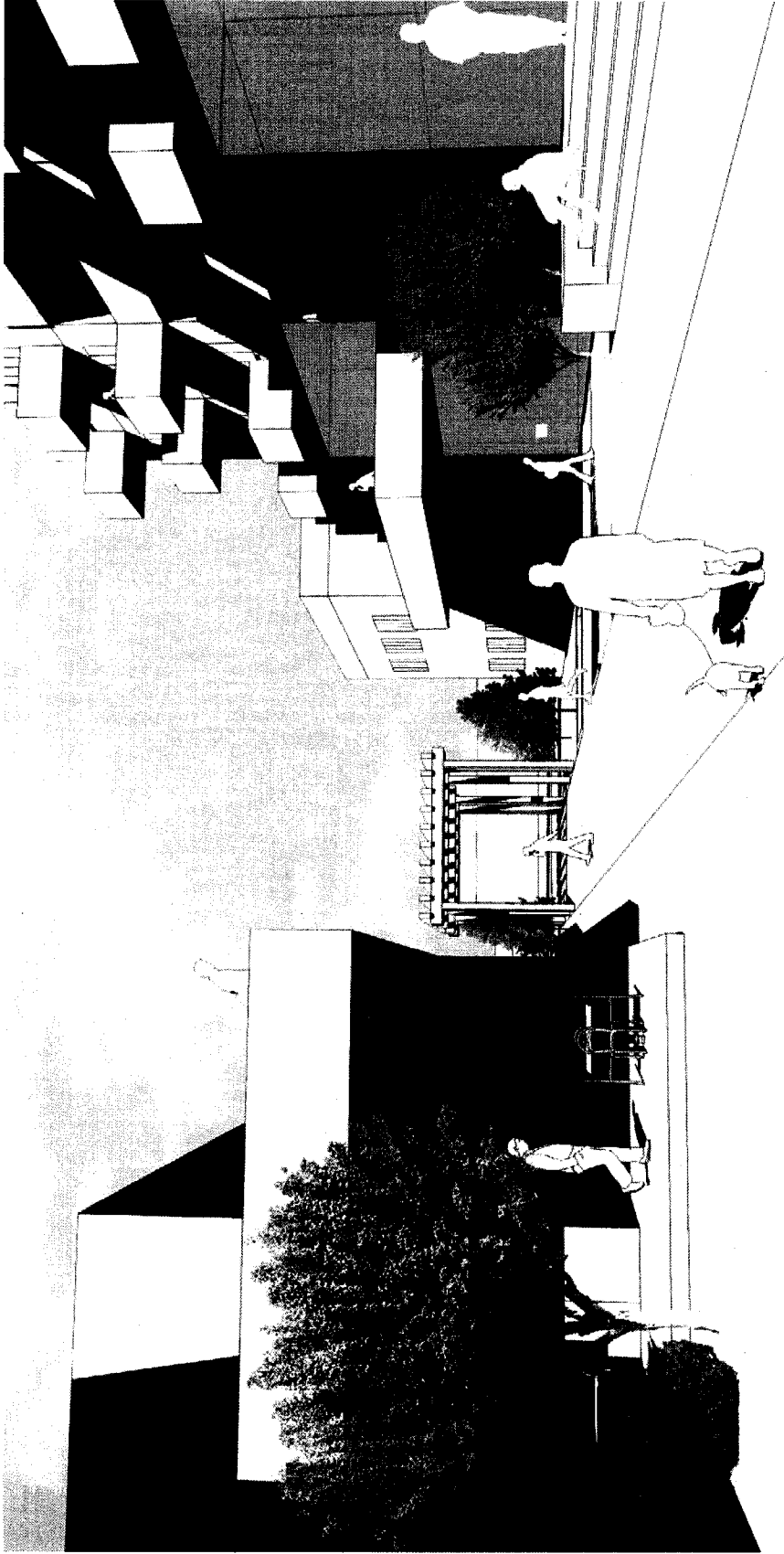




Section through Arts and Skill center



View of the entrance of Skill center through the exhibit space



View through the linear garden looking towards the Arts and Skill center



View looking towards the residential courtyard

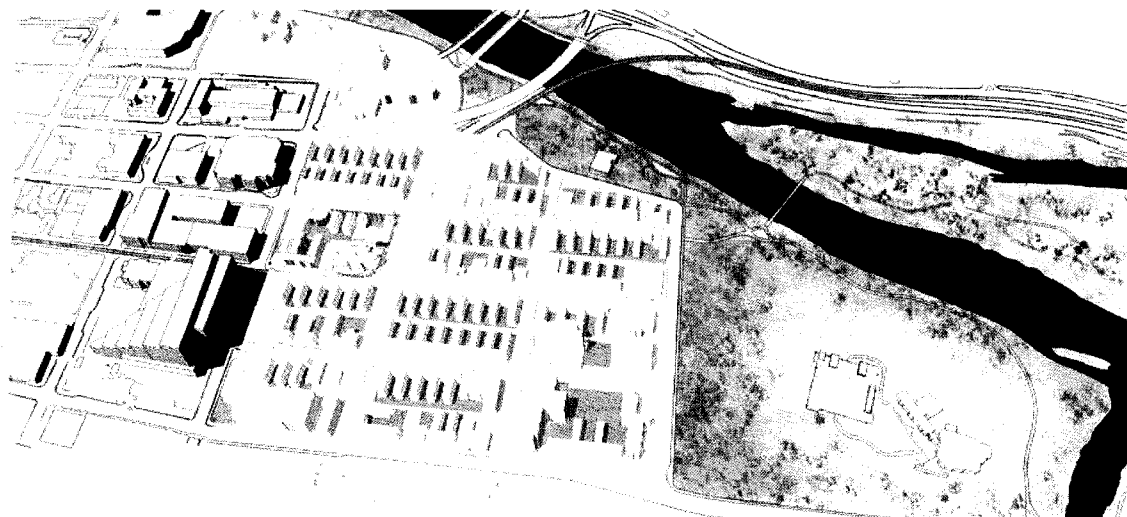
5. Conclusion

East village has a lot of potential of being a 'special place' in the city. Apart from being close to the downtown core, it has unique assets such as the Bow River, Fort Calgary and a golf course, making it a desirable place to live. People working in downtown would be more attracted towards living in this community. However, conventional approach for development in Calgary is on an *ad hoc* basis as the downtown lacks a coherent vision for development and each proposal is evaluated in isolation on its own merit. Because of which most of the buildings are standalone buildings that are not integrated into the city as a whole. For East Village to become a vibrant community, a coherent vision for its development is required.

Proposing strategies for the development of East Village allows for a rational development of the district. The design principle forms a framework for further growth of East Village.

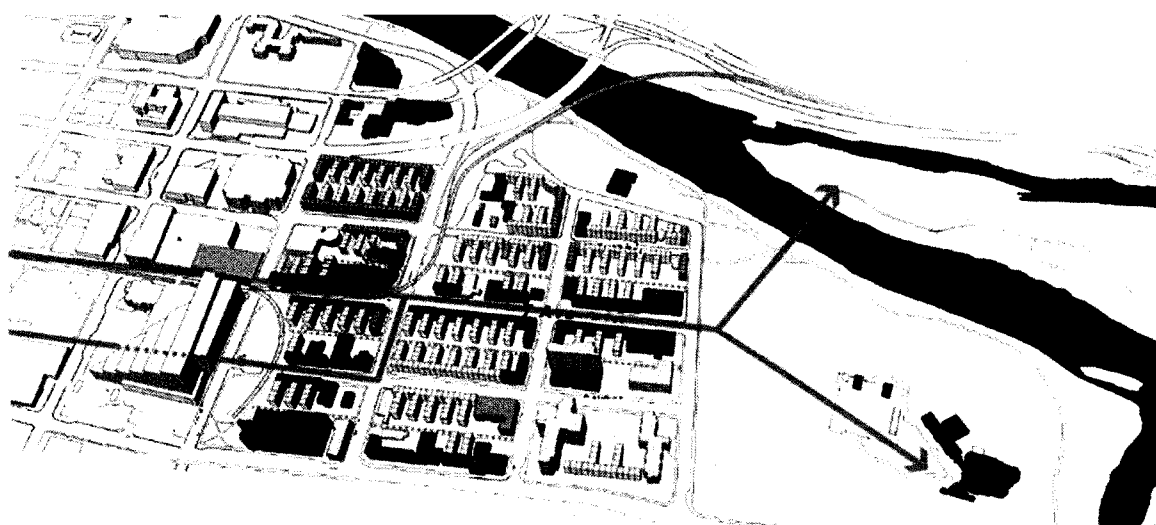
If the strategies were adopted for the development of East Village, the linear garden running through the center of each block would form an interconnected pedestrian network, which is much

required in an automobile driven city such as Calgary.



Interconnect network of linear garden

Having a chain of continuous retail outlets at the ground level along 7th Avenue SE would make 7th Avenue the permeable retail spine connecting the downtown to the historical site of Fort Calgary and St. Patrick's island, thereby forming a sequence of space through the downtown.



Connection through East Village

By adopting traditional downtown grid pattern would enable East Village to form a community that is integrated and interconnected to the urban landscape. To conclude, the strategies proposed give a foundation based on which the community of East Village can grow, foster and become a place to live, work, shop and play, just as it used to be.

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