NORTHEAST CENTRAL DURHAM STRATEGIC REVITALIZATION PLAN

NEIGHBORING CONCEPTS
Providing Direction For Vision

MAY 9, 2003

Northeast Central Durham
Strategic Revitalization Plan

Table of Contents

Plan Overview	Page 1
Introduction	Page 7
Community Strengths and Landmarks	Page 10
Obstacles	Page 16
Other Initiatives	Page 20
Eastway / Barnes Avenue Study Area	Page 25
Angier Avenue Study Area	Page 43
South Alston Avenue Study Area	Page 48
Elizabeth Street Study Area	Page 53
Timetable	Page 62
Operational Plan	Page 64
Conclusions	Page 93

Keys to Redevelopment

Northeast Central Durham has great potential, and major obstacles to overcome as well. The Revitalization Plan builds on the strengths that exist in the community and the initiatives already planned or underway, and addresses those obstacles that could hinder its progress. The keys to the revitalization of NECD are:

1) Main & Alston:

Alston Avenue is the major north-south spine in the community, and it connects the future TTA stop with Eastway School and East End Park. At the center is the intersection with Main Street, the primary access to downtown,which with Angier Avenue forms the major east-west route. This area is the commercial heart of the community, and its future is crucial to the transformation of NECD.

2) Angier / Driver Intersection:

Just beyond the bounds of the HOPE VI area, this commercial area has both social and economic implications for Angier Avenue and the areas around it. The future of Angier Avenue and its image as a gateway to NECD are tied to the success of this corner.

3) Scrap Yards:

As the TTA line becomes a major traffic corridor, the area along the track becomes a window to the neighborhood. The scrap yards and other industrial uses are both unsightly and no longer economically reasonable when land within close proximity of transit holds such great development potential.

4) Barnes Avenue:

No other street is so closely tied to the public image of NECD. A successful transformation of this block will be a symbol for other community development efforts for years to come.

5) Canal Street:

Surrounded by areas of great potential, the crime problems on this street are holding back the private sector's efforts and interest. Controlling the public safety issues related to Canal Street and its few problem residents will allow the area to build on the Old North Durham and Central Park energy.

6) Old Five Points:

A gateway to downtown and a historically important site, this area could be a core of neighborhood business for Old North Durham, the "Central Park" neighborhoods, and the "Elizabeth" section of NECD.

7) TTA & HOPE VI:

These twin initiatives each have the power to transform the neighborhood to an unparalleled degree. Together they represent the future of the community.

8) Property Rehab Program:

Many areas in NECD have structures that can be renovated into excellent homes and businesses. The single most important action to help leverage the success of other community initiatives would be to establish a program that encourages and rewards rehabs, while aggressively halting the further deterioration of other properties.

9) Historic Properties:

Cohesive historic districts with recognizable identities have a powerful ability to change the public's perception of a community. Even a single property, restored rather than replaced, can send a message of the history, roots and sense of "place" that lend importance and permanence to a neighborhood.

10) NECD's "Current Assets":

NECD has many strengths - Eastway School, Golden Belt, the Hosiery Mill, SEEDS Community Garden and others - that create the basis to build on.

11) Good design:

All the work done in the community should be held to the highest standards of fine-grained, sensitive and sensible planning and design. The combination of efforts in the community give it a bright future that can command high quality development. There should be no feeling that NECD is fortunate to have any economic activity; being selective will pay great rewards in the long term.

12) People:

NECD has a great resource of concerned and active citizens, many of whom have labored and waited for years for the momentum that is now building. At the same time, community development, even when successful, can be a trying experience. With patience, good judgement and cooperation, the residents of NECD can own and control their future.

Revitalization Strategy

At the core of the revitalization strategy are the strategic projects. They are intended to be realistic endeavors that can be undertaken or championed by the residents, and will create a success that encourages further efforts. They are also planned to be strategically located, to create momentum toward other improvements. The strategy for the revitalization of NECD involves:

1) Barnes Avenue:

The transformation of Barnes Avenue into a community of new homes with a high degree of homeownership.

2) Angier Avenue / Driver Street:

The revitalization of this commercial corner through facade, infrastructure and streetscape improvements.

3) Old Five Points:

The redevelopment of this gateway to downtown into a vital neighborhood commercial core. This effort will involve physical improvements, targeted law enforcement. economic inducement to new business, and planning for future development.

4) Managing the HOPE VI / TTA / Alston Avenue Changes:

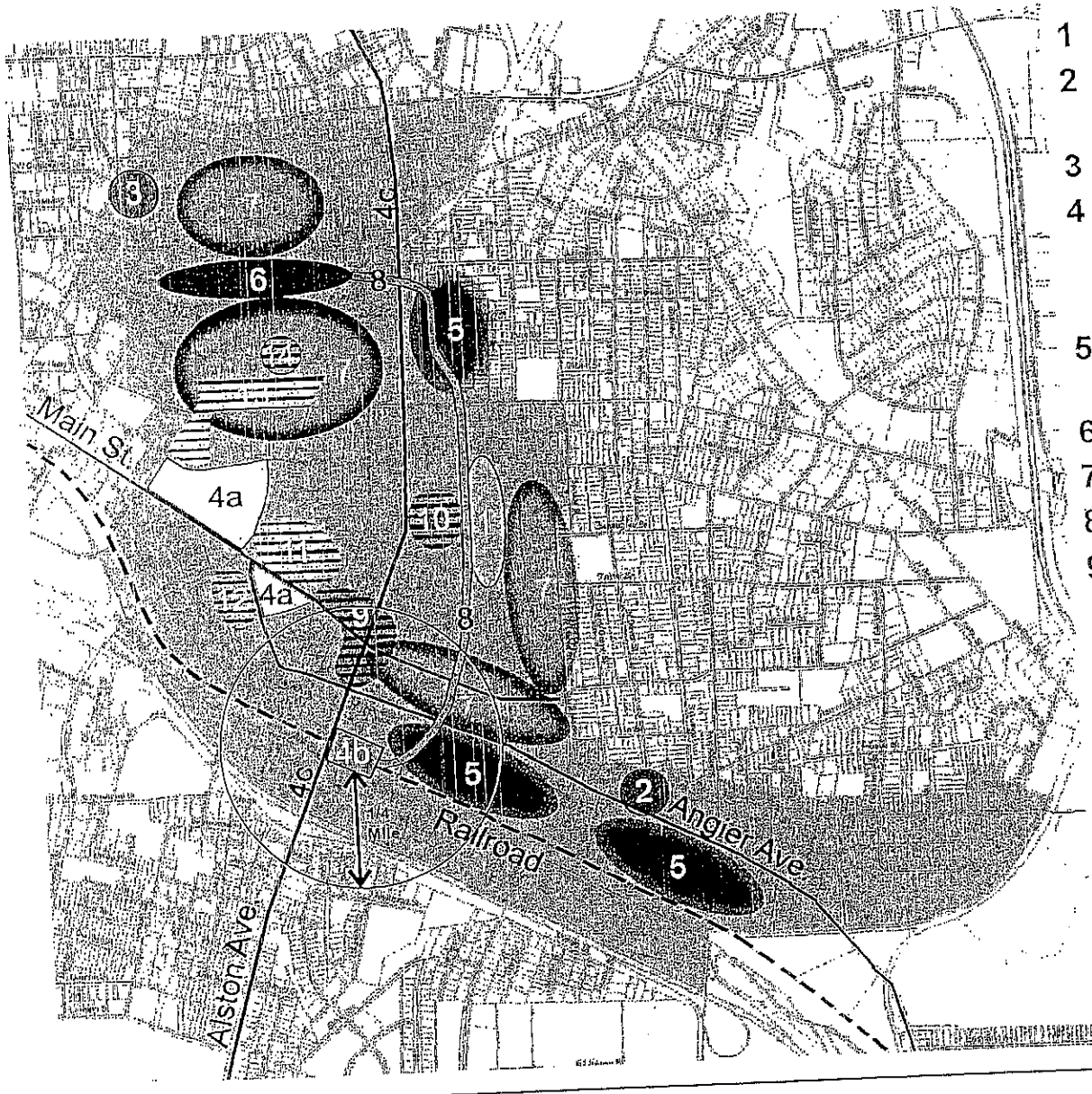
This is a unique situation, in that the area around Edgemont Village / South Alston Avenue will be overwhelmed by redevelopment projects. Rather than encourage the residents to undertake yet another, the Plan recommends a concerted effort by the residents to organize for meaningful dialogue and input and for "ownership" of these projects to the greatest degree possible.

5) Scrap Yards and Industrial Uses:

Assemble and package properties to encourage and influence future development of these areas, particularly along major corridors and at transit nodes.

6) Canal Street:

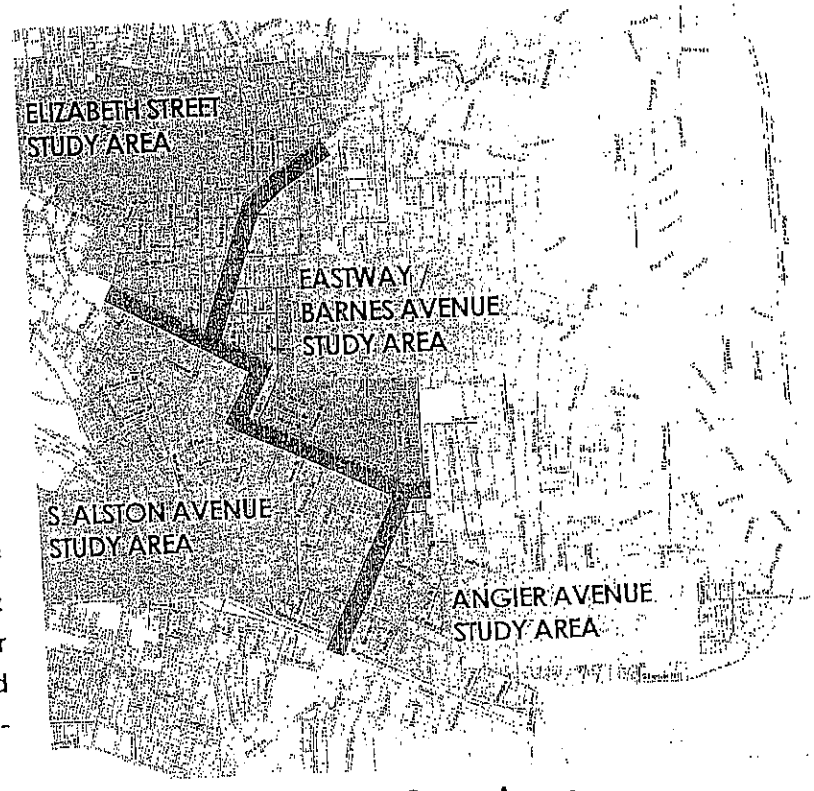
Target the criminal activity on Canal Street through enforcement and selective property acquisitions.



1 Barnes Ave.
2 Angier Ave. & Driver St.
3 Old Five Points
4 A HOPE VI
B TTA Stop
C Alston Ave.
5 Scrap Yards & Industrial Uses
6 Canal St.
7 Housing Rehab
8 Green Space
9 Commercial Core @ Main & Alston
10 Eastway School
11 Golden Belt
12 Hosiery Mill Apts.
13 Holloway Street
14 SEEDS Community Garden

Project Approach

The entire Northeast Central Durham study area encompasses eight neighborhoods: Albright, East End, Edgemont, Hoover Road, Old Five Points, Sherwood Park, Wellons Village, and Y.E. Smith. In all, over 10,000 residents inhabit over 4,000 homes within the study boundaries. Due to the sheer size, it is somewhat difficult to engage residents in detailed discussions of the future of the entire area. Their focus tends to be specific to their neighborhood. Projects located further away do not stir the passionate interest needed to sustain a long community development process.



NECD STUDY AREAS

Therefore, for the purposes of this study, the district was viewed as four smaller study areas. Each area was treated independently, and a series of community meetings was held with residents that focused on the vision for that particular area. Specifically, the goal was to determine and envision an initial development effort that would spur the revitalization of its surroundings. The projects are intended to be strategic, so that they create momentum toward other improvements. They are also realistic, so that they will create a success that encourages further efforts. Each initial project forms the basis for the revitalization of an area. When considered together, they comprise a four-pronged strategy to reinvigorate the community.

A Community-Driven Plan

There is a natural human tendency to resist change. Coupled with our society's history of exploiting certain classes and cultures, it clouds the reaction to any plans for revitalization. In addition, strategies toward neighborhood revitalization typically include as a major goal a mixed-income community, which by definition will include a degree of gentrification. For all these reasons it is vital that revitalization be carefully managed and monitored, and that the residents feel control over the process and their future.

In NECD this need has prompted a great number of public involvement sessions, varying from large public forums to small, living room and front porch meetings. It has also meant a commitment from community leaders to act as study area coordinators, organizing meetings to discuss the plans, projects and visions for each area. This group formed the nucleus of a committee that created the first NECD Community Convention, a chance for the people of the physical and social aspects of this plan, as it moved toward completion. Their input helped create priorities and benchmarks for implementation. The residents have acted as a Board of Directors, advising and guiding the goals and strategies for revitalization. They should continue to act as a sounding board as the projects reach fruition.

Diversity

Ultimately, the new NECD will reflect hard choices about what kind of neighborhood its residents inhabit. The HOPE VI redevelopment efforts, and most contemporary planning studies, have as their goal a mixed income neighborhood that reflects the diversity of the larger community. This reflects the notion that concentrating low income people, which was the practice from the mid 20th century until recently, results in pockets of poverty that tend to breed crime and discourage interaction among all citizens. Neighborhoods prior to that time, especially urban neighborhoods, tended to include a cross-section of the citizenry. The benefits of this

diversity have been well documented and thoroughly discussed.

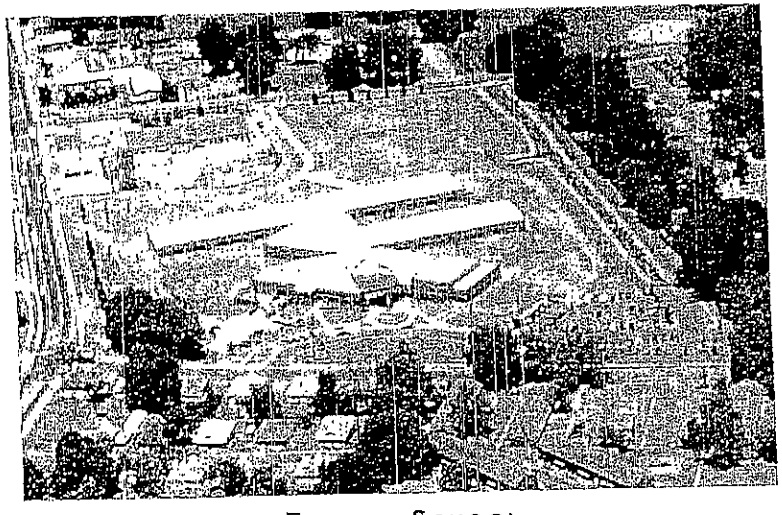
When applied at the level of an individual neighborhood, this approach begs the question: When other residents at various income levels move into the community, is there room for all of the folks who live there now? What happens to them? This dilemma is not easily solved. In the long run, the creation of diverse neighborhoods throughout the city will certainly be a healthy trend. It implies not only adding higher incomes to distressed neighborhoods, but also adding lower incomes in wealthier neighborhoods.

The alternative is that a community like NECD can be a "nicer" version of what is currently there. That is, a uniformly low-income community, but with low crime rates, decent housing and first class infrastructure. Though the choice is a difficult one, current trends suggest that mixed-income neighborhoods have the strongest chance of success, and that their residents benefit from the exposure to people from all walks of life.

After the plan: what's next?

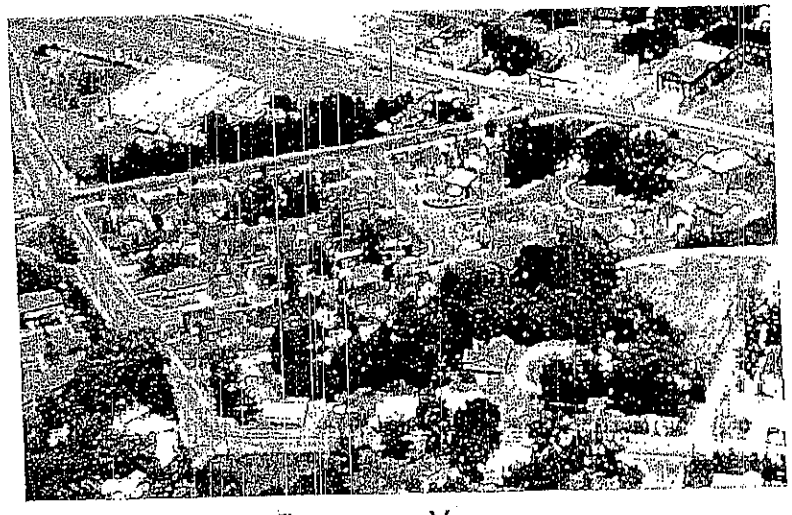
The coming years will be exciting ones in Northeast Central Durham, and will see startling changes to the physical, social and economic fabric of the community. As the initiatives described in this document near completion, the residents will once again be facing the future. Challenges will almost certainly still exist, but it is likely that their decisions will be less about solving problems and more about managing success.

Although the study breaks NECD into smaller sub-areas, certain conditions characterize and affect the district as a whole. First are the areas with a positive image, including neighborhood landmarks and areas with positive potential. These places include:



EASTWAY SCHOOL

Located along busy Alston Avenue, this relatively new school is both a physical and social landmark in the community, and projects a positive image.

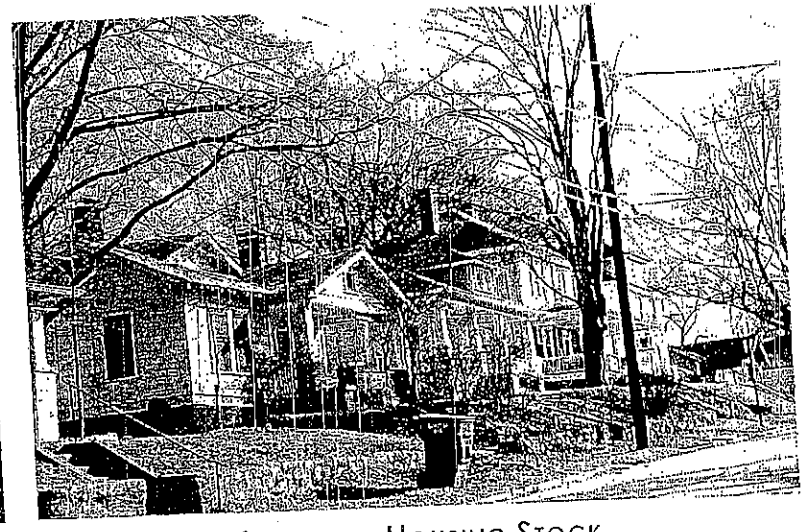


EDGEMONT VILLAGE

An area of City-renovated homes that, despite some history of unsatisfactory workmanship, maintains a sense of identity and value.

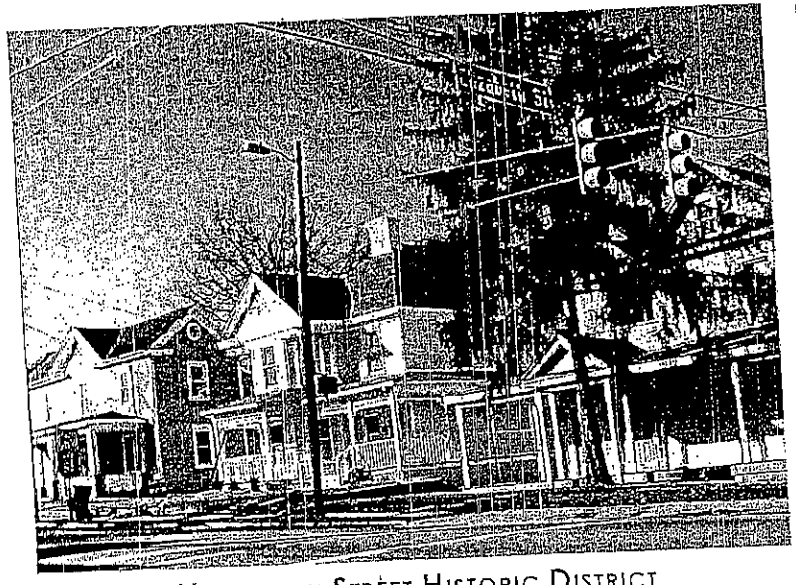
HOUSES NEAR NORTH ELIZABETH STREET

Many of these houses have character and potential worthy of note. North and west of this section are homes being renovated in Old North Durham and the area around Central Park. Much of the Elizabeth Study Area is ripe for similar improvements.



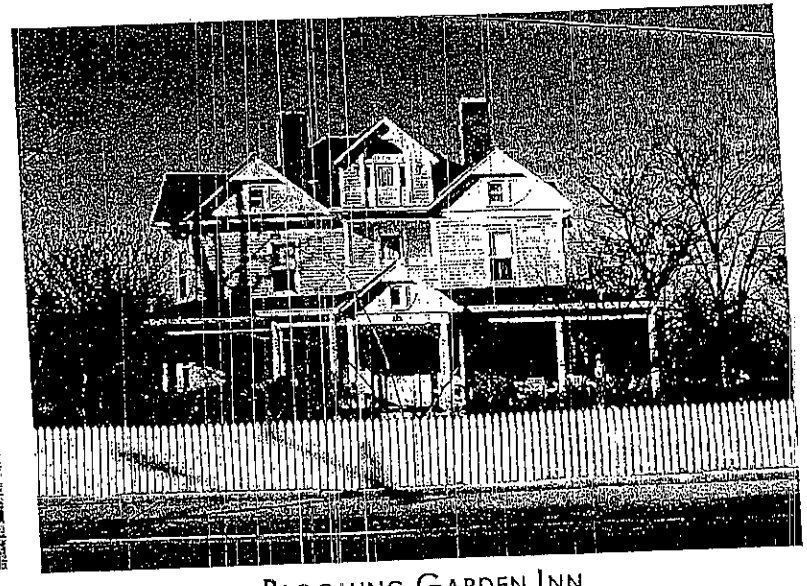
SCATTERED HOUSING STOCK

While nearly all of the housing in NECD is in need of repair, there are many houses that have the potential, if renovated well, to anchor attractive and viable residential areas. These houses can be a key toward changing the perception of NECD's neighborhoods from areas of decline to places with potential.



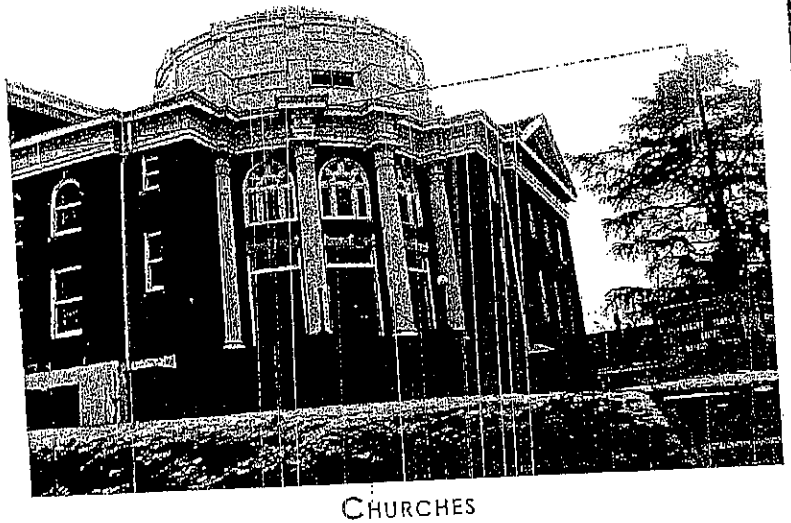
HOLLOWAY STREET HISTORIC DISTRICT

Holloway Street is the center of a small collection of early 20th Century houses that feature great character and potential. Located just west of the center of the neighborhood, this small (3 block) area is a gesture to the rich history of the community, and represents an opportunity for a spark of economic development.

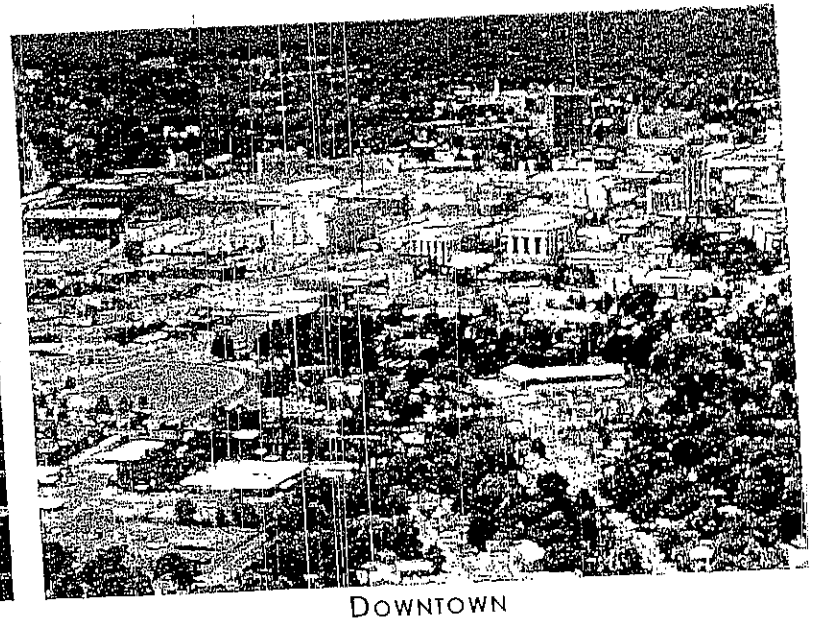


BLOOMING GARDEN INN

Located in the historic district, this Inn is a pioneering example of the potential for commercial development in the district.



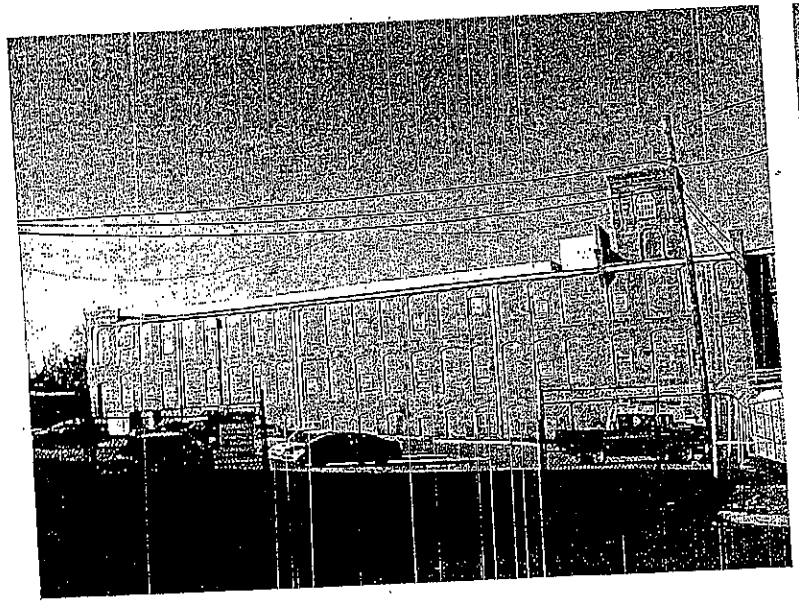
CHURCHES



DOWNTOWN

Another potential asset to the community is the abundance of churches that often distinguish older, downtown neighborhoods from the suburbs. These landmarks can add to both the physical and social fabric. Although they perhaps do not draw so strongly from the neighborhood as they once did, they can nonetheless play an important role in their community.

The proximity to downtown provides a possible generator for development activity, but at the same time seems to engender a certain amount of fear and distrust among the residents. There is a sense of vulnerability to forces of economics beyond their control, that gentrification will swallow up their homes and way of life.

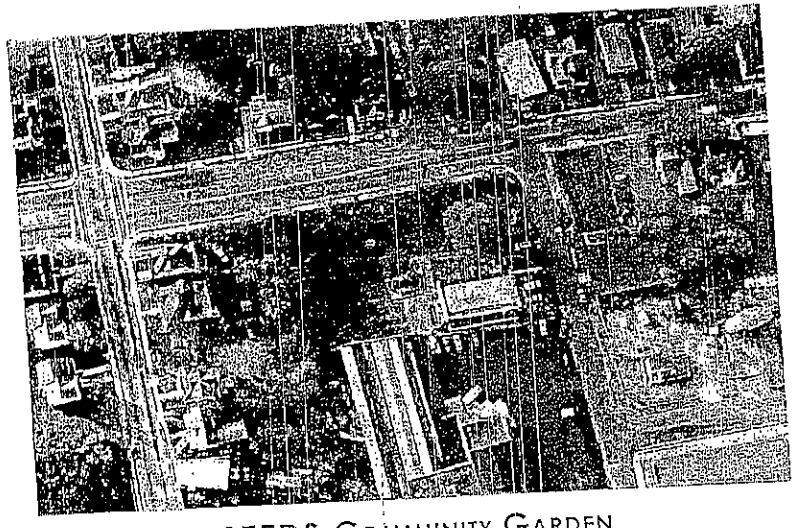


GOLDEN BELT

The anchor of the Golden Belt Historic District, this venerable old mill has value not only as a physical and historic landmark. It also houses various non-profit and government agencies and has potential to be a key element of the HOPE VI development that surrounds it.

DURHAM HOSIERY MILL

Located directly across from Golden Belt, this old mill has been transformed into affordable housing for the elderly. This notable endeavor of the Durham Housing Authority has served a critical need while preserving a significant complex at a major entrance into NECD.



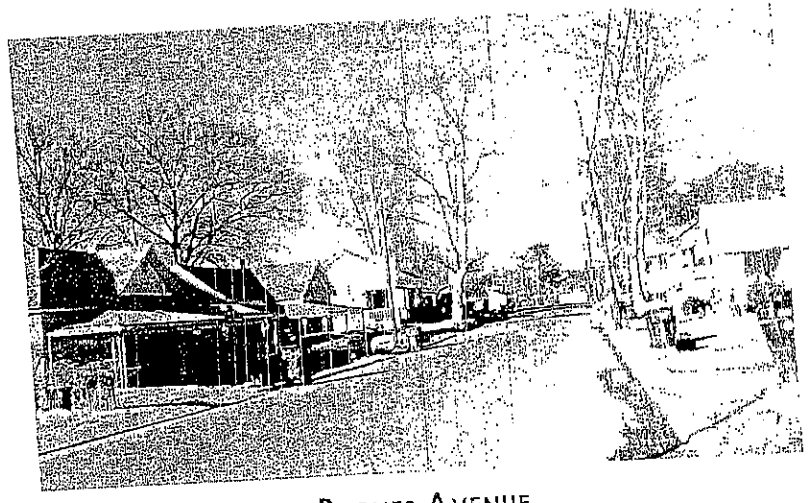
SEEDS COMMUNITY GARDEN

On North Elizabeth Street, this garden represents an opportunity for community interaction and exposure to nature. Endeavors such as these can add immensely to the social life and physical fabric.

Obstacles

Just as certain areas project a positive image and potential, others have a negative image, whether related to crime, traffic or other factors. Sometimes the image might be only perception, based on history or appearances, but whether accurate or not, image and reputation can be stumbling blocks for areas seeking revitalization.

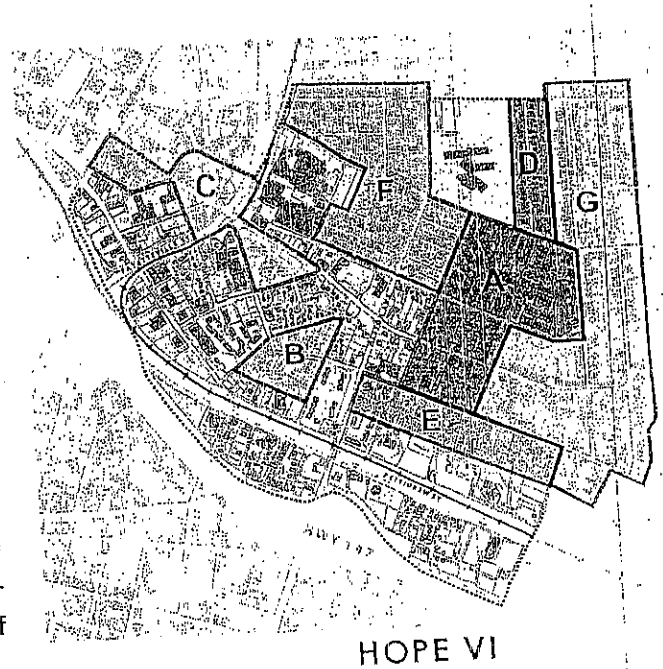
Reading about crime in the newspapers and seeing images of neglect through car windows, outsiders have little reason to believe in a bright future for Northeast Central Durham. This results in a lack of interest and investment into the neighborhood, which eventually brings down rents and encourages criminal activity. Thus a revitalization strategy deals not only with the problems that residents face in their everyday life, but also the image that the community presents to the outside world. Neglect and deterioration will continue to spiral downward if unchecked, but, likewise, improvements can begin to reverse the trend. Revitalization is all about momentum, action and visible results.



Barnes Avenue

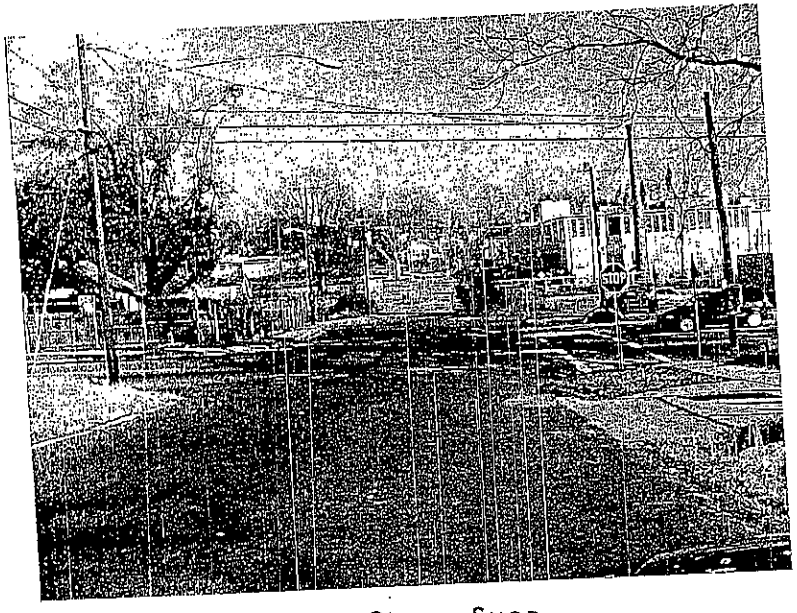
For years this one-block-long street has been symbolic of the troubles in Northeast Central Durham. Riddled with crime and substandard rental housing, and saddled with inadequate infrastructure, it is a case study on neighborhood neglect. It is also an example of both the positive potential of activism and how a bad image can persist in the face of change. Although concentrated efforts by Police have drastically improved the crime statistics in the area, it is still generally considered among the worst problem areas in the city. And continued, relentless lobbying by a few citizens have put it at the top of the City's agenda for change.

The initiatives described in this plan are not the only efforts to revitalize the area, nor are these the only projects soon to be undertaken. A series of major investments will soon reshape Northeast Central Durham, and their impact will undoubtedly determine the success or failure of this district. Continuing vigilance to ensure these projects have the most positive effect, and careful planning to help the positive effects ripple further into the community, will result in a synergy that will transform the community. Some of the major initiatives affecting NECD are:



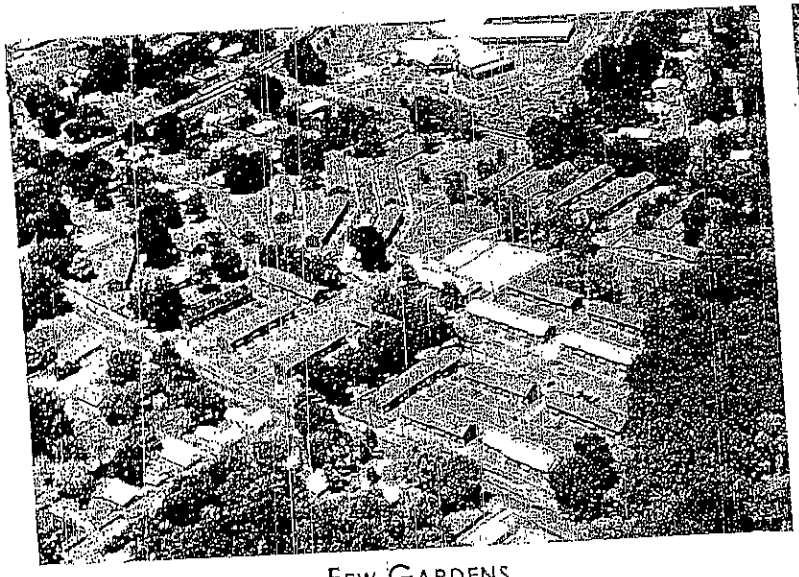
HOPE VI

A huge initiative, and one with relatively quick results, is the Durham Housing Authority's use of Federal funds, leveraged with other investment dollars, to transform the core of NECD into a mixed income community that combines renters and homeowners. This project benefits from a strong, progressive development entity and plan, and seems to be avoiding the governmental delays that have bogged down some other HOPE VI efforts. The ultimate product of this work can be the most striking transformation of a community that Durham has ever seen.



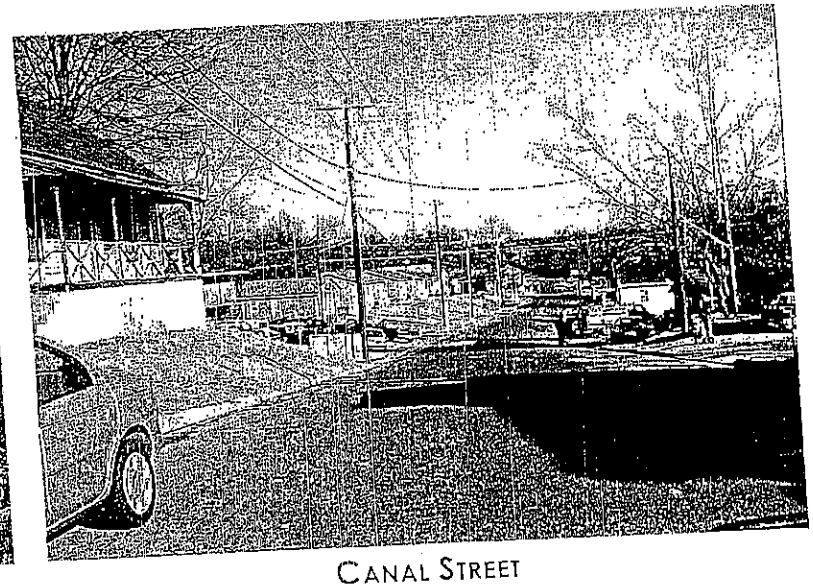
City Signal Shop

The signal shop is indicative of the image presented to passerby along Alston Avenue and other major streets in NECD. It gives the impression of an industrial area, not a neighborhood.



FEW GARDENS

Located at one end of Barnes Avenue, this public housing complex is at the heart of the HOPE VI revitalization project. A typical housing project, it is symptomatic of all the problems typically associated with a lack of income diversity in a neighborhood, and its redevelopment undoubtedly engenders the possibility of a rebirth for all of NECD.



CANAL STREET

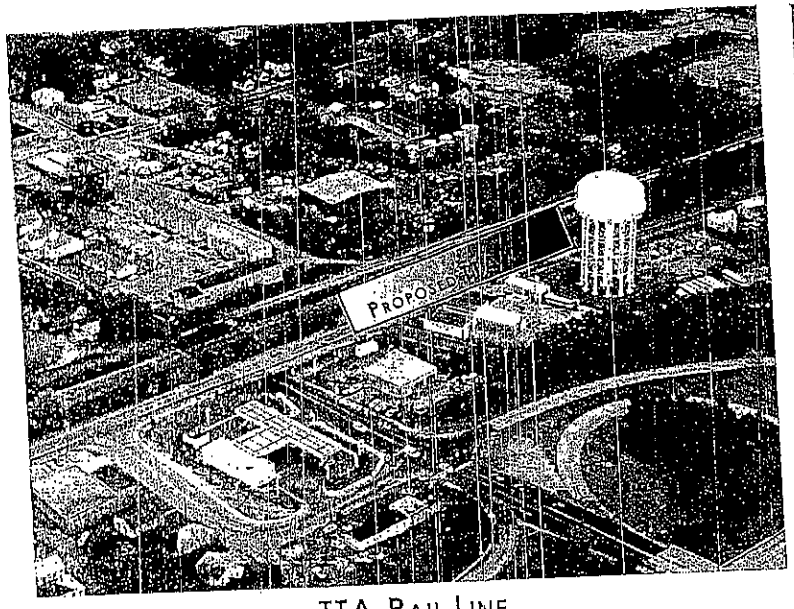
Similar to Barnes Avenue, this street has garnered a reputation for drug-dealing, violence and other crimes. Unlike Barnes, it has not gotten a commitment to significant investment for change. Control of this situation is among the most important issues for revitalization of the northern section of NECD.

Downtown Durham, Inc.

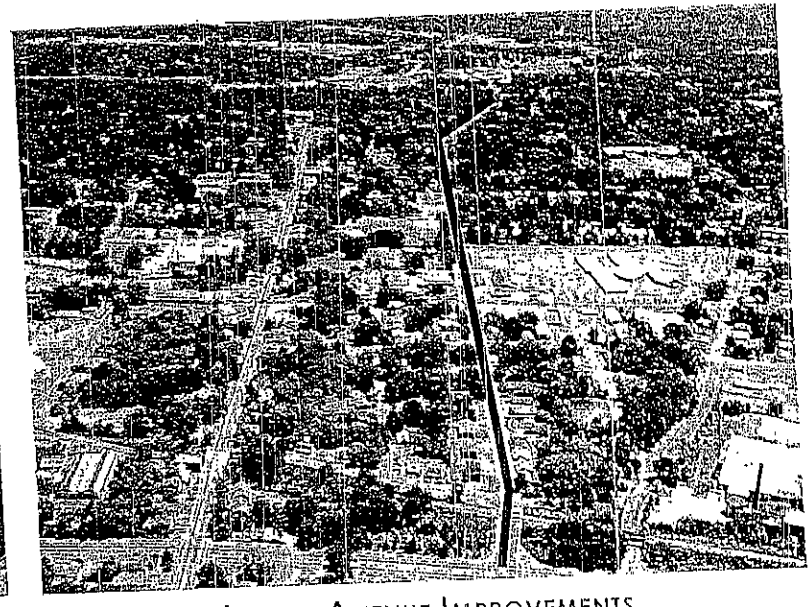
Given the right confluence of efforts, Northeast Central Durham has certain characteristics that one day can allow it stand alone as a successful community. Its potential would be exponentially enhanced, however, by its proximity to a vital and vibrant downtown. Efforts by Downtown Durham, Inc. and others, as well as the City's commitment to their downtown presence, will provide a spark in the market for close-in housing and services. Market demand, in the final analysis, is the most valuable asset in revitalization.

Partners Against Crime

Finally, while not a new initiative, this ten-year community policing effort bears recognition. Over that time it has become not only a conduit between the police and the citizens, but also a de facto neighborhood organization and unifying element. As such, it is a vitally important link in the revitalization process. As a government-sponsored group, however, it also carries the risk of tamping down other, grass-roots efforts.



TTA Rail Line

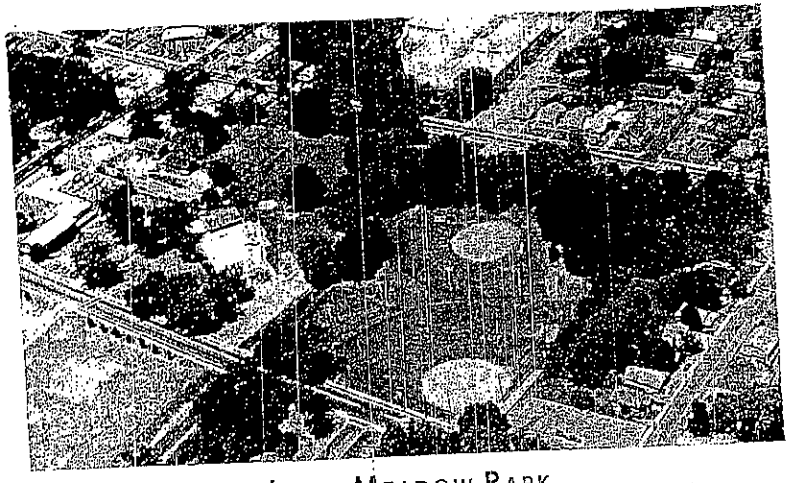


Alston Avenue Improvements

An equally amazing change can result from the introduction of a mass transit rail line. The stop planned at Alston Avenue is a tremendous opportunity to bring fresh interest and investment into the area, particularly the immediate quarter mile around it. From the standpoint of the neighborhood, important aspects of its success will be the extent to which it attracts people into the neighborhood, it acts as a catalyst and draw for a proposed commercial core at Main and Alston, and it involves the residents in its inception. It should feel like a natural outgrowth of the their efforts to improve their neighborhood.

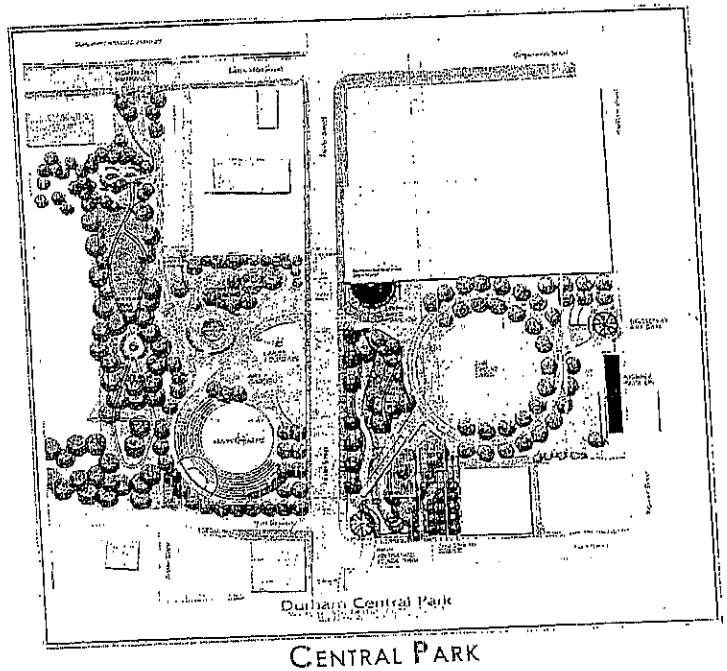
Alston Avenue is a spine that runs north- south through NECD. A state road with traffic implications on a regional basis, it is slated for a major widening project. The portion that extends through NECD is now in the initial planning stages. The form that this widening takes will have major implications for the ultimate character of the neighborhoods. Done sensitively and well, it can be a boulevard that joins the community together. Done poorly, it will slice the community and leave an irreparable scar that will forever split the area into two parts.

On a smaller scale, there are more specifically targeted endeavors that will nonetheless also impact the future of NECD:



LONG MEADOW PARK

Among the assets of the neighborhood is this handsome and actively used park at the northern end of Barnes Avenue. The Durham Parks and Recreation Department plans a $400,000 improvement to this space, scheduled for late 2003- 2004. Plans include a comprehensive renovation of the facilities, plus new dugouts, a press box, and a two-story concession building/restroom facility.



CENTRAL PARK

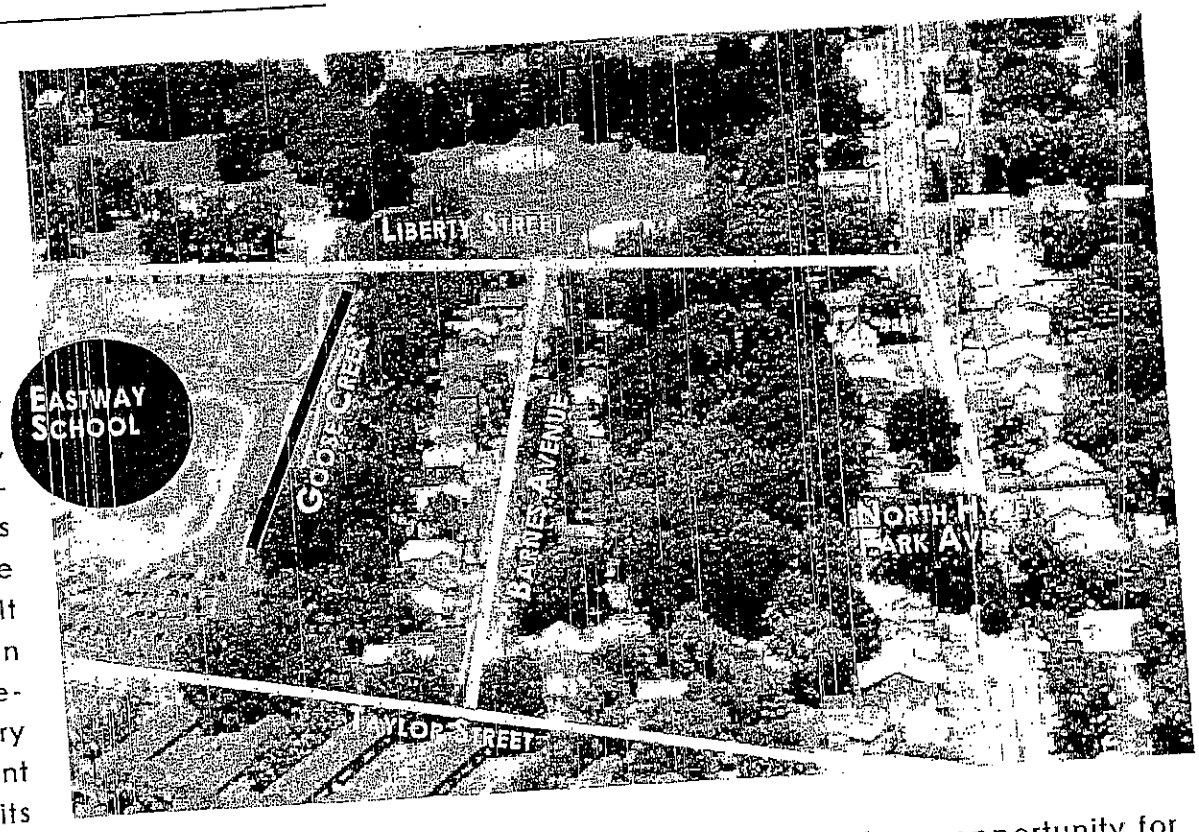
While not within the bounds of the NECD area, Central Park and the efforts to encourage its renaissance have implications for the area, particularly the Elizabeth Street Study Area. Strengthening this park and its surrounding neighborhood will act as a positive force for renewal efforts in the adjacent area.

OLD NORTH DURHAM

Likewise, the Old North Durham neighborhood is undergoing a positive transformation, and it can be a boon to revitalization efforts in the neighborhood to its south. Some spin-off will occur as the area of housing improvements expands. It also serves an a model of the possibilities for houses in the Elizabeth area and as a positive market indicator for potential businesses at Old Five Points.

EAST DURHAM NEIGHBORHOOD PRESERVATION ORG.

The Historic Preservation Society of Durham and Leadership Durham have partnered to seek supporting members for this organization. Its aim will be to work together on a neighborhood level to protect the unique character of the community. They will extend the efforts of the Historic Preservation Society of Durham to ensure that the architecturally and historically significant properties of East Durham are recognized, protected and rehabilitated as this area undergoes revitalization.

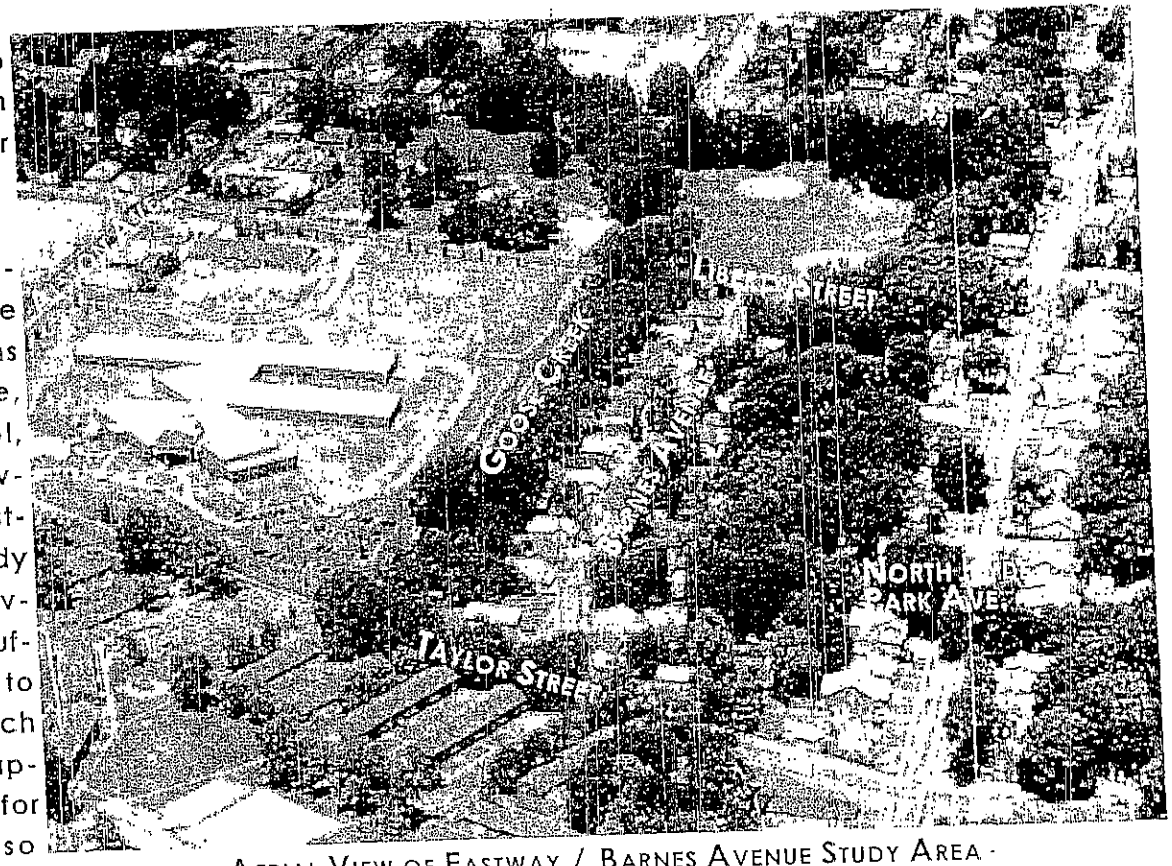


The Eastway / Barnes Avenue Study Area is dominated by two features: Eastway School and the adjacent Barnes Avenue. While Barnes Avenue has garnered an image as a crime-ridden area of gangs and drug dealers, the reality is that concentrated police work has drastically reduced crime on Barnes Avenue. It maintains a downtrodden image, though, and its revitalization is a necessary step toward improvement of this area. Given its strategic location at the northern edge of the HOPE VI Study Area, immediately adjacent to the Few Gardens site, it is also a linchpin in a strategy to leverage those improvements into a transformation of all of Northeast Central Durham.

While Barnes Avenue presents an opportunity for improvement, Eastway School represents a resource to build on. The new facility is a visual and social landmark for the community. Its proximity is a major asset to attracting new

homeowners, as well to keeping current residents in the neighborhood as their circumstances improve.

The other two important aspects of this Study Area are Alston Avenue, which runs near the western edge, next to Eastway School, and North Hyde Park Avenue, which forms the eastern boundary of the Study Area. North Hyde Park Avenue seems to have suffered from its proximity to Barnes Avenue, but much of the housing stock appears to have potential for redevelopment. It also boasts a higher proportion of homeownership than Barnes Avenue.



AERIAL VIEW OF EASTWAY / BARNES AVENUE STUDY AREA

Alston Avenue is a state road that serves as a major north-south artery on a regional scale. As such, it is strongly oriented toward traffic flow, rather than pedestrians. It also features a hodgepodge of commercial uses that serve the neighborhood, as well as passing traffic.

Goose Creek is another important feature in the neighborhood. Fenced in and situated between Barnes Avenue and Eastway School, it acts as a visual and physical barrier betwen the two, and reduces the potential benefits of proximity to the school. Trash, rodents and poor water and visual quality also contribute to its ill effects on the community.

Socially, this Area appears to be the most fractious of any in NECD. While the residents recognize a degree of animosity between ethnic groups, particularly between Hispanics and African-Americans, there is little evidence in community gatherings. Instead, the Area is rife with squabbles and power struggles among community leaders. These disagreements work to the neighborhood's detriment in particular when there is opportunity for improvement. Such problems handcuff the community when they could instead be holding the reins that drive their future.

EXISTING DUPLEXES ON BARNES AVENUE

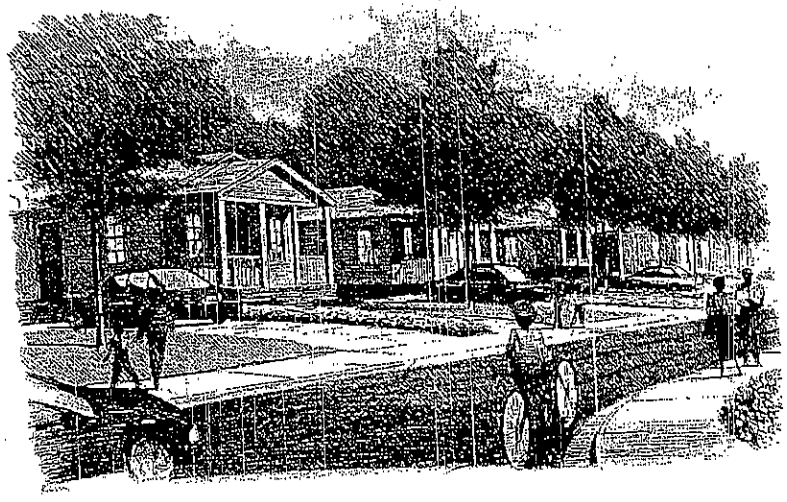
BARNES AVENUE STREETSCAPE

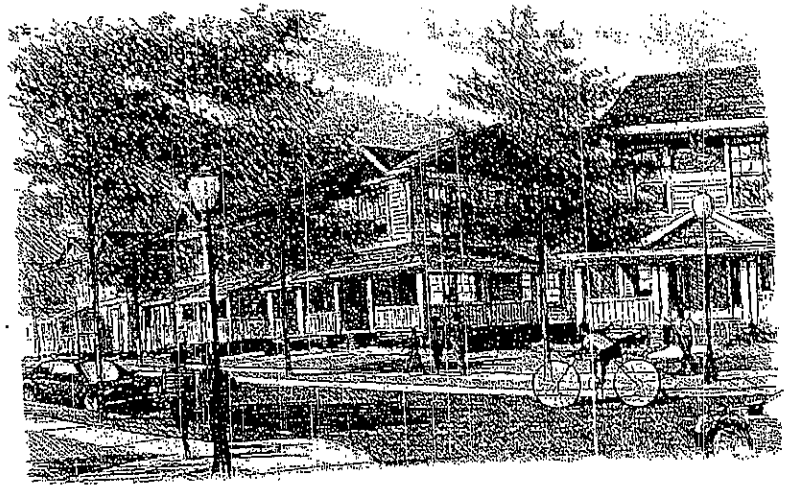
Revitalization Strategy

Barnes Avenue is clearly the pivotal factor in the revitalization of this Study Area. One possibility for addressing this situation is to work around it, to surround it with redevelopment. In this case, however, the problem is not so dire, nor the street so large, that it is too much to undertake. Instead, the strategy is to tackle the problem head-on. A major redevelopment of Barnes Avenue can combine with Eastway School to spark the transformation of the entire area.

The goals of the Physical Redevelopment Plan for Barnes Avenue are to increase homeownership, raise the level of quality of the housing stock, and improve the image of the area. Other aspects of the overall revitalization strategy, such as reducing crime and strengthening the community social fabric, are dealt with in the Operational Plan.

The original concept for Barnes Avenue was somewhat narrow in scope. It involved purchase and improvement of rental housing for resale to homeowners, and construction of new infill hous



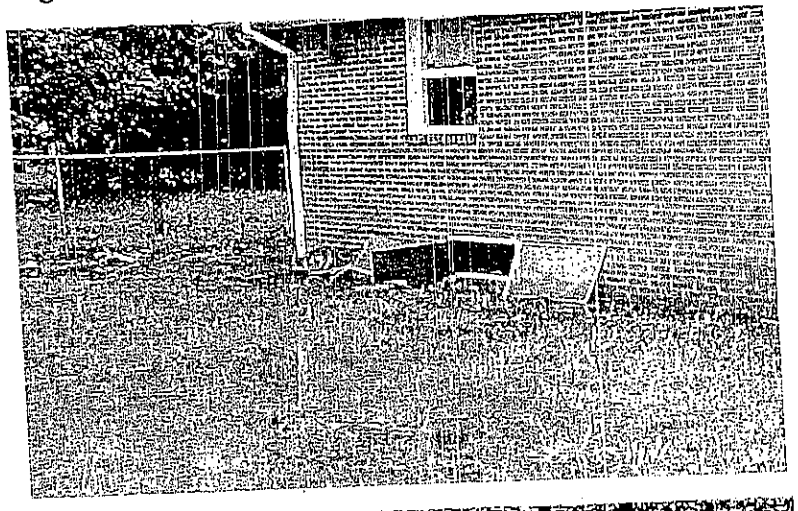


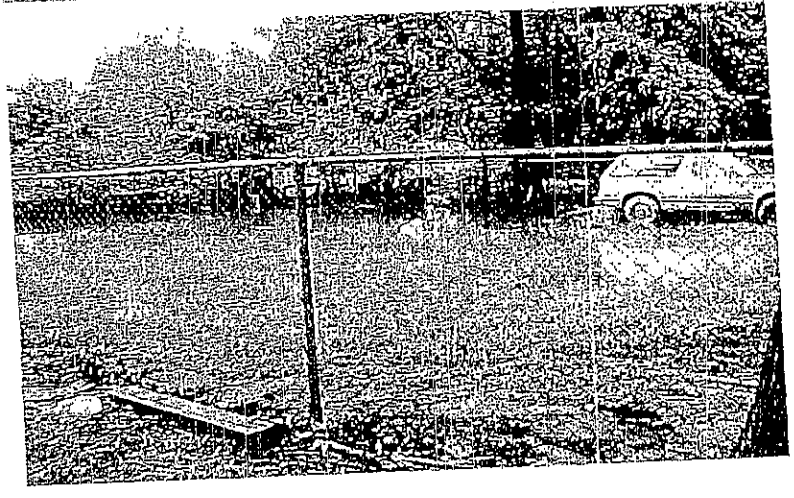
CHARACTER SKETCHES OF ORIGINAL CONCEPT

ing on vacant parcels or where substandard-houses are demolished.

Upon further study, the scope of the plan was broadened. It was learned that some of the existing houses at the northern end of the street, on the Goose Creek side, are subject to flooding. Removing those flood-prone houses would mitigate a potentially hazardous condition, and would allow construction of green space connecting the creek with the street. Coupled with the improvement of the water quality in Goose Creek, this would create a focal point for the transformation of Barnes Avenue.

Finally, the City Council emphasized its commitment to a more extensive transformation of Barnes Avenue. Their vision entails all new housing on Barnes Avenue.



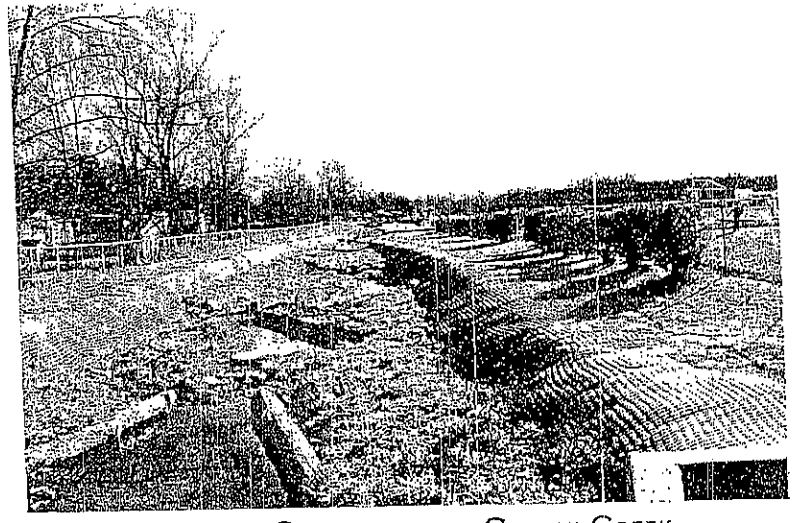


EXISTING HOUSES LOCATED IN THE FLOOD PLAIN

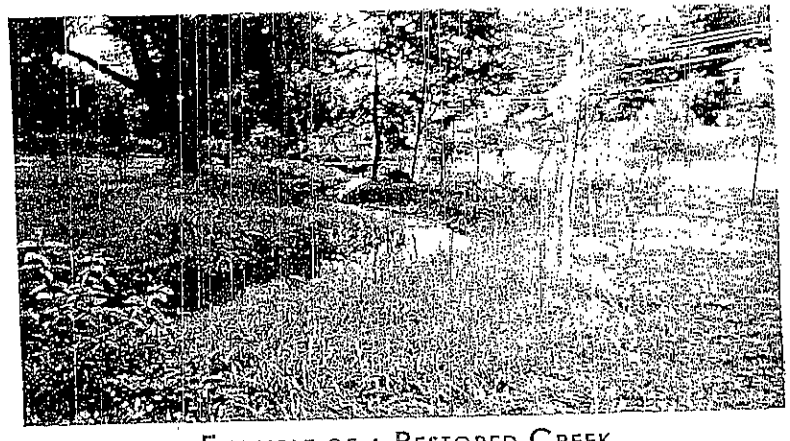
Goose Creek

Goose Creek is currently an eyesore. Enclosed within a chain link fence, it collects trash, harbors rodents, and separates the neighborhood from Eastway School. With low levels of rainfall, it becomes stagnant as well. Its redevelopment into an attractive feature that is an asset to the neighborhood could help initiate and be symbolic of the transformation of the neighborhood.

The City's Public Works Department is developing a strategy to transform the quality of Goose Creek. They have identified a State program that funds stream restoration and which might be applicable here. A similar stream restoration project has been undertaken in the Forest Hills neighborhood in Durham.



EXISTING CONDITIONS AT GOOSE CREEK



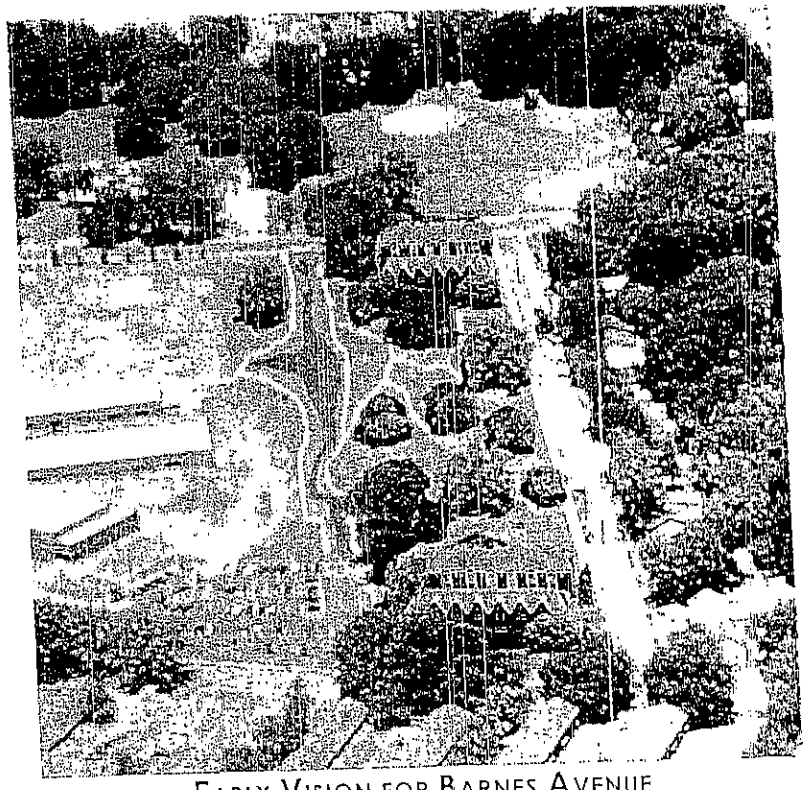
EXAMPLE OF A RESTORED CREEK

Green Space

In an early visioning exercise related to Barnes Avenue, the consensus was that opening up the view to the creek and the school would add security and improve the image of the neighborhood, particularly if Goose Creek could be improved. Likewise, the concept for Barnes Avenue articulated in the HOPE VI plan called for opening up the creek to the "eyes" of the Barnes Avenue residents, although at significant infrastructure cost.

The Plan for Barnes Avenue calls for two types of green space. At the center of the block is a park that connects the street with the creek. This space will allow views to the creek from the street and the houses nearby. The park will thus gain a feeling of security and provide a visible statement of the renewal of the neighborhood.

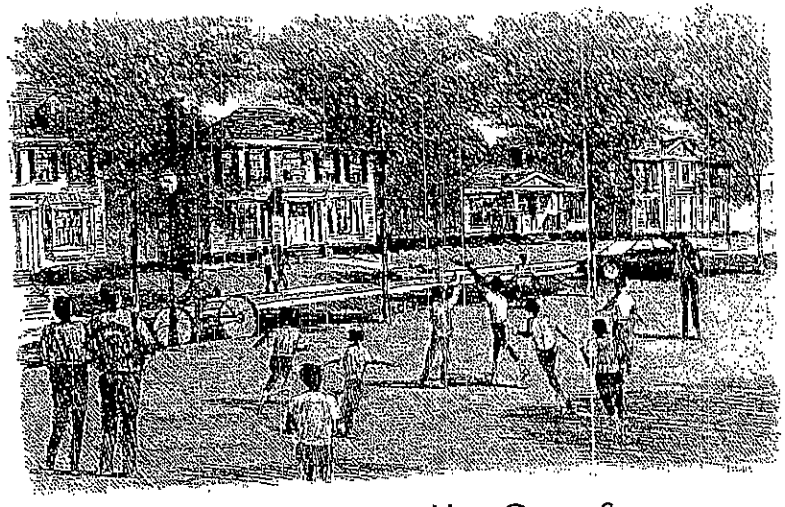
Besides this central green space, the plan also calls for a greenway to run alongside Goose Creek. It will connect Liberty Street and Long Meadow Park at the north with Taylor Street and the new HOPE VI development, and its own park spaces, on the Few Gardens site to the south.



EARLY VISION FOR BARNES AVENUE

The greenway should be designed carefully as an integral part of the overall plan. It would be a popular pedestrian connection and could be very successful, especially given the proximity to the school. It also has the potential to be a crime problem. Because creeks tend to be in the back yards behind houses, greenways built in

their floodways tend to have a location problem. These greenways do not have the benefit of vigilance from houses fronting the open space, which is a basic security need for urban open space. In the Barnes Avenue Plan, the parking for the houses is accessed by a drive that runs next to the greenway, which introduces activity to the area. In addition, there are townhouse-style units at the end of the drive, providing eyes on the greenway. Finally, the Plan proposes that homeowners be allowed to have rooms and even apartments over their garages, again adding surveillance to the greenway.



CHARACTER SKETCH OF NEW GREEN SPACE

The character of both the central green space and the greenway should provide opportunities for strolling, running, and family activity. They should be programmed with input from the community, but it is not likely that play fields will be appropriate. Some small equipment for tots might be helpful, but it should be kept at a minimum. A feature element, such as a water play ("splash park") type fixture would attract and entertain kids of all ages on hot days, without being large enough to draw from outside the neighborhood. The primary focus, however, should be passive activity.

Housing

Density

The impact of clearing away all of the existing houses on the street will be considerable. As an emblem of the transformation of the neighborhood, it will be powerful. At the same time, though, it will result in reduction of the number of houses available, particularly those in an affordable price range.

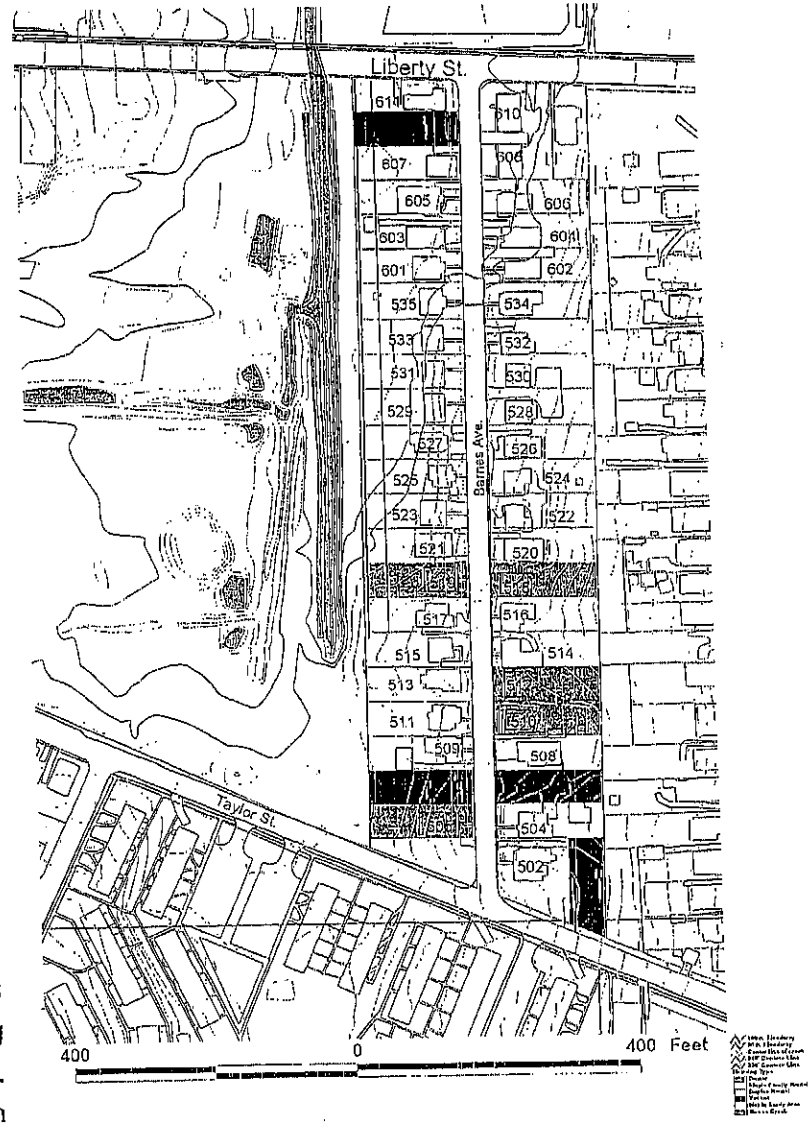
One aspect of housing redevelopment on Barnes Avenue, then, should be the provision of addi-

tional housing, preferably oriented toward affordability while conscious of the need to diversify the income levels and price ranges within the neighborhood. Coordination with the HOPE VI Plan will be crucial to ensure that the new Northeast Central Durham can be a home for all of Durham's citizens. To provide a significant amount of affordable replacement houses suggests a higher level of density than is existing. The form of this higher density could be single family on smaller (40' wide) lots, townhouses or townhouse-style condominiums, and "carriage houses", where units are above garages.

Homeownership

A particularly striking feature of Barnes Avenue is the low rate of home ownership. Only five of the forty residences on the street (12%) are owner-occupied. One goal of the City's Barnes Avenue strategy is to increase home ownership to 80% in the new development.

One of the key aspects to increasing homeownership involves the current residents of Barnes Avenue. The revitalization of this area will bring about major shifts in the typical resident profile. Among those changes will be a reduction in



MAP SHOWING HOUSING OCCUPANCY

rental houses. There are important benefits that can be derived from assisting current residents to make the commitment to homeownership. The City's involvement in programs to assist this transition will be crucial to accomplishing this goal.

TWENTY-FOUR FOOT WIDE HOUSE

Housing Types

There are distinct advantages to providing a variety of housing options in a community. The eventual profile of Barnes Avenue homes should represent a diverse selection of housing types. There is a belief that in Durham buyers are resistant to attached houses. Using that as a guide will result in less variety of housing and less units.

TOWNHOUSES FRONTING ON GREEN SPACE

Increased housing opportunities, both in number and in types of residences, will serve a wider cross section of residents and produce a more lively and diverse mix of people in the community. The characteristics of the new infill housing will heavily impact the final picture of Barnes Avenue. Market research, especially interviews with prospective buyers among current residents, should yield more definitive answers about prod-

Two Bedroom Townhouses

uct type and mix, as well as more specifics about cost, number of bedrooms and other basic criteria.

Forty-foot wide lots will allow single family houses that are 24-28' wide, which can be built one story but which would more typically be two story. Townhouses 16'-18' wide allow for two bedrooms and one parking space or garage. Three bedroom townhouses with two parking spaces or a double garage are generally about 24' wide. The carriage houses and garage apartments allow a further diversity of housing.

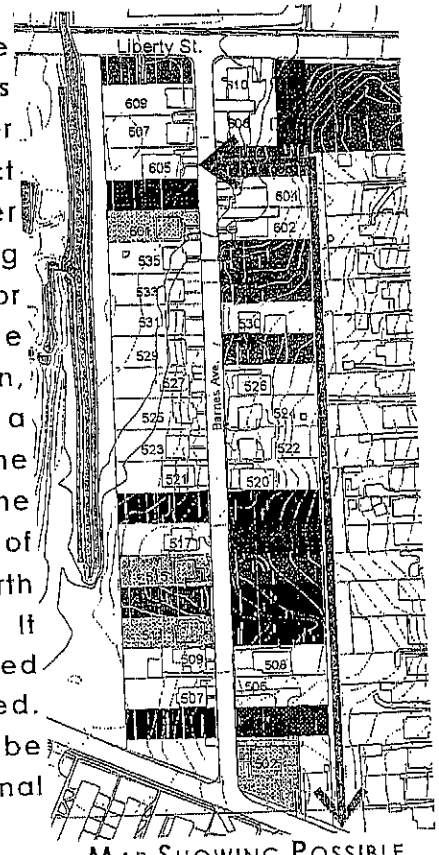
Street / Infrastructure

In urban and near-urban neighborhoods, the street is more than a place to drive. The street takes on roles as a community room and as an extension of the house. The character of the streetscape is therefore crucially important. Simple planning elements, such as street trees in planting strips and sidewalks on both sides of the street, are a necessity. Traffic calming devices are also beneficial. The speed humps already in place are helpful, as is on-street parking. Narrowing the street in places (neck-downs, chicanes) can also help slow cars.

Parking is an issue along Barnes Avenue. An extremely helpful measure is to provide access to the rear of the lots via an alley. This would ease the car congestion along the streets and in the front yards. An important consideration, though, is that the alley not be so deserted as to invite criminal activity. Careful consideration of access points and outlets, as well as locating residential units that can oversee the alley, can go far in helping control these areas.

Finally, there are storm drainage issues related to

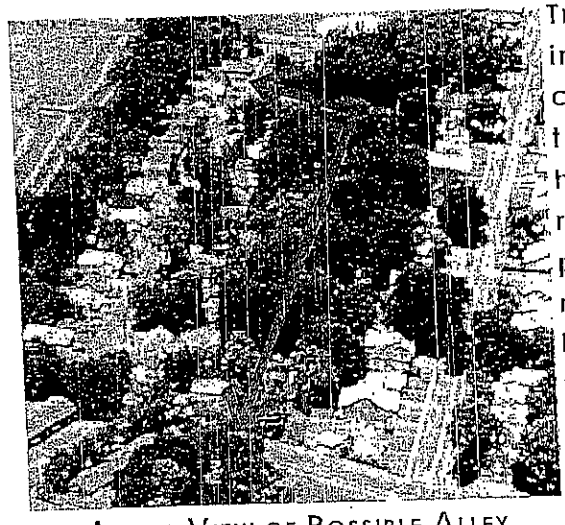
Barnes Avenue. The aforementioned houses in the northwest corner of the block are subject to flooding, whether because of grading and design problems or overflowing of Goose Creek. In addition, there appears to be a drainage swale in the southeast corner of the block that drains part of the area along North Hyde Park Avenue. It needs to be channeled and probably piped. These issues should be addressed in the final design drawings.



MAP SHOWING POSSIBLE ALLEY ACCESS

Design Standards

Creating a safe, pedestrian-friendly, attractive street takes the orchestration of the street, streetscape and house design. Several aspects of successful neighborhood design have been mentioned already. The street must properly balance cars with pedestrians, so that pedestrians have a sense of safety. Controlling car traffic also is beneficial in controlling crime, as is encouraging pedestrian activity and interaction among residents.

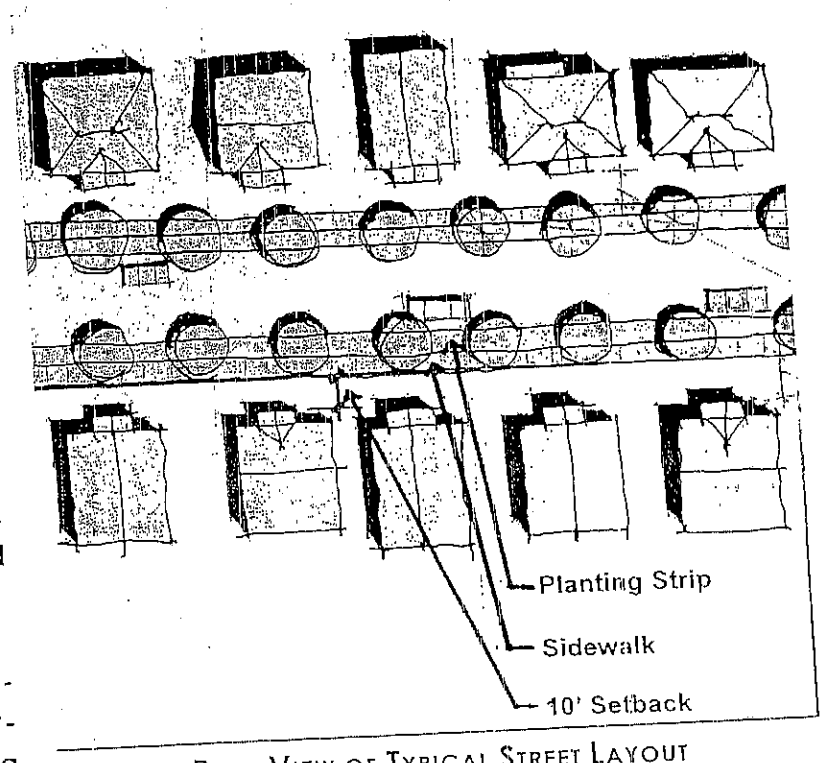


AERIAL VIEW OF POSSIBLE ALLEY

Traffic calming measures can include the speed humps already in place. As mentioned before, the street can also be narrowed down in places to slow traffic and allow the proper streetscape elements. If cars have to occasionally stop to allow each other to pass, that is acceptable, although without driveway openings in the parking lanes, that is more difficult to accomplish. Also, if the narrowed areas switch from side to side (chicanes) on occasion, that too is acceptable. However,

these neck-downs should not be haphazard nor abrupt.

The streetscape design can be consistent with standard practices. Planting strips should be at least six feet wide. Eight feet is preferable, and should be achievable in this instance. Sidewalks can be five feet wide; six is better. Street trees should be provided at approximately thirty-forty foot spacing, depending on the type and ultimate size of the tree. The type of tree should consider the width and length of the planting areas and the location of overhead utility lines, but should in any case be consistently spaced and all of the same species.



PLAN VIEW OF TYPICAL STREET LAYOUT

Strong consideration should be given to the utility lines. Placing the lines underground, or moving them to the rear of the properties, will have a tremendous impact on the quality of the street image. Likewise, pedestrian scale street lights, with underground lines, will soften the street. If luminosity levels are a concern for traffic or security, additional lights, higher up but on the same pole, can be provided. Fixtures should focus light down to light the ground, not the sky. Sufficiently high light levels to help deter crime are important, but if light is not properly directed downward, the community becomes overly bright. Also, the light levels on the ground must be consistent, avoiding glare and hot spots that actually hamper the effectiveness of lighting in deterring crime.

A consistent setback of houses is important to the street image. Setbacks from the sidewalk to the front porch should be about ten feet - close enough to allow and encourage interaction, yet still providing a buffer.

Houses should definitely have front porches. Eight feet deep at a minimum is preferred. Porches should have roofs.

Detailing and character of new houses should be consistent with the older houses in the community. Strict adherence to a particular style is not as important as a design approach that respects the scale and level of detail found elsewhere in the neighborhood. Houses that would be comfortably suited to a suburban street will not fit into the character of this neighborhood.

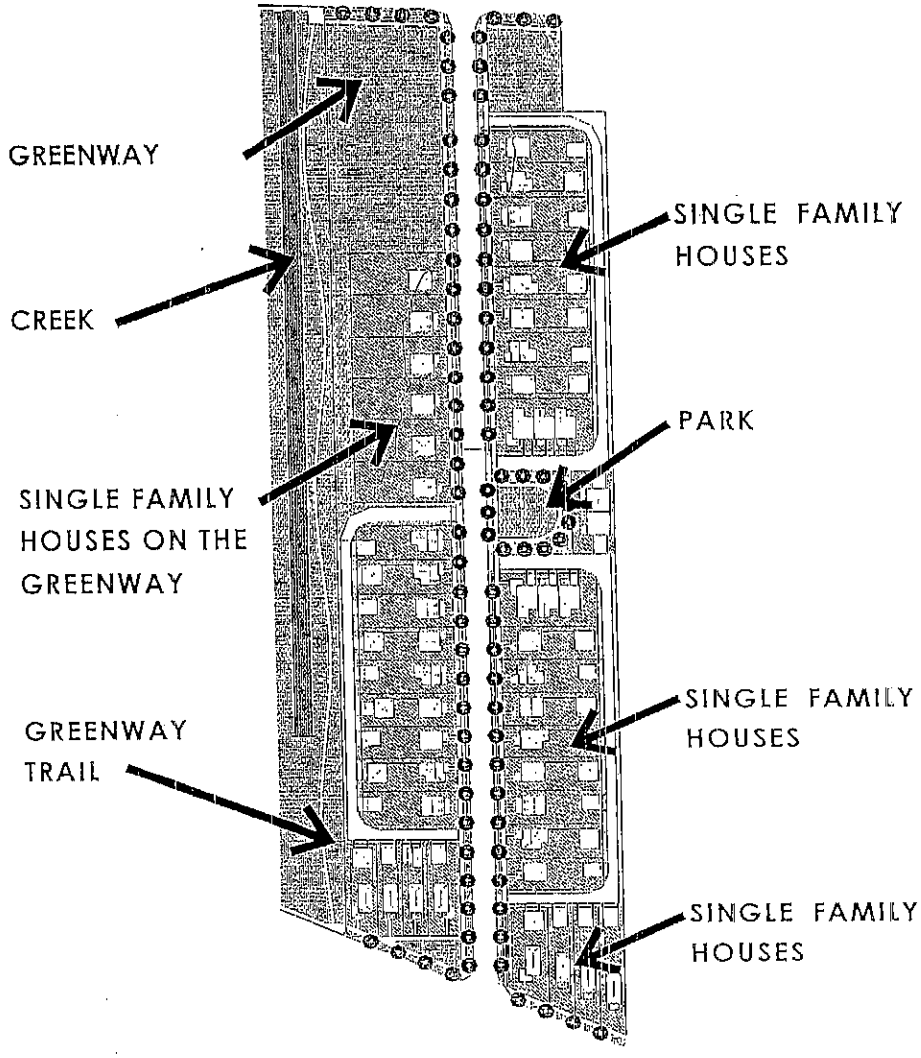
NEIGHBORHOOD WITH 10' SETBACKS

TOWNHOUSE WITH SIDE FACING THE STREET

Development Plan

The development plan for Barnes Avenue includes a mixture of housing types and green spaces. The goals of the plan are to create a beautiful, vibrant, pedestrian-friendly street, to integrate a restored Goose Creek into the neighborhood, to include green space as a focal point, and to allow opportunities for a secure and diverse neighborhhood.

Most of the street will be occupied with single family houses. These are located close (10') to the sidewalk, with generous (8' deep) front porches, to encourage interaction and a sense of community. For both aesthetic and practical reasons, cars are parked behind the houses, so that lots can be 40' wide. This allows slightly higher density, and also strengthens the feeling of a safe, walkable and friendly neighborhood. At the center and at the ends of the block, houses are turned perpendicular to the street, to orient either to the central

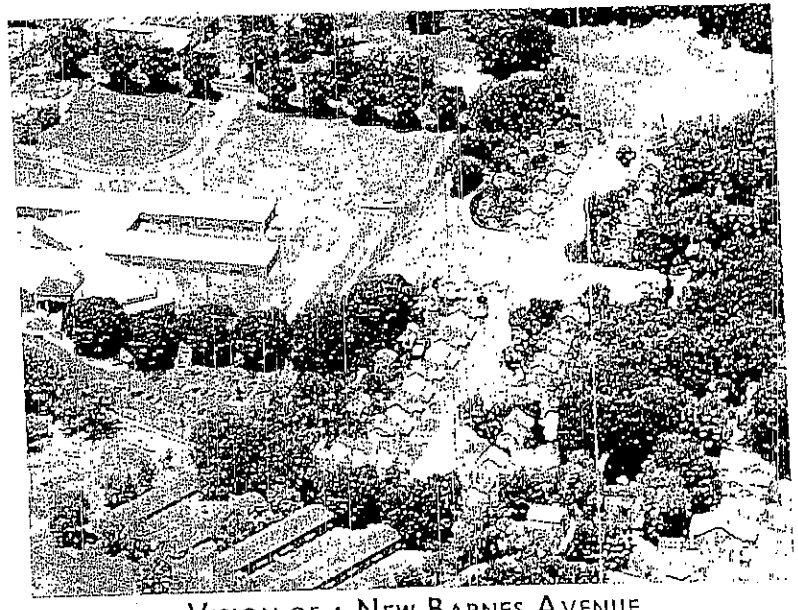


green space or to the street at either end. At the center of the block, the homes are attached, townhouse-style, to increase density and strengthen the focus at the center. Along Liberty and Taylor Streets, the houses can be either attached or detached.

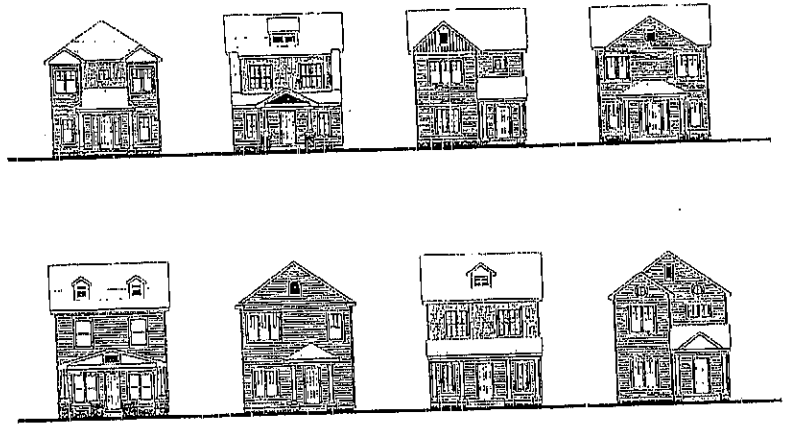
The lots are sufficiently large to accommodate houses up to 28' wide, although 24' is easy to work with and leaves more separation between homes. These houses would be two-story. Parking is at the rear of the lot. The townhomes would be three-story, with parking beneath each unit.

CENTER GREEN SPACE

Green space plays an important role in the new Barnes Avenue community. It includes a central green space fronted by townhomes. There is also a greenway that runs alongside a restored Goose



VISION OF A NEW BARNES AVENUE



24' WIDE HOUSES ON 40' WIDE LOTS

TOWNHOUSES FACING A CENTER GREEN SPACE

Creek, connecting to Long Meadow Park at one end, the central green space, and, to the south, the network of green spaces planned in the HOPE VI development for the Few Gardens site.

Alleyways will run along the backs of the lots, to provide access to rear parking areas and garages. This activity will also add security to the greenway and creek. To help minimize security risks and cut-through traffic, the alleys do not extend all the way to Liberty and Taylor Streets. Instead, they connect back to Barnes Avenue behind the lots fronting the other streets, and at the center green spaces.

The street is another important element in the plan. There is sufficient space for a generous planting strip (8') and sidewalk (6') to buffer the houses and pedestrians from the traffic and add the aesthetic appeal of a tree-lined street. Street lights will be pedestrian-scaled.

Goose Creek plays an important role on Barnes Avenue. Restoration of the creek will turn an eyesore into an amenity, particularly with the greenway running its length. In addition, the potential flood area associated with the creek will greatly influuence the number and location of the houses in final plan layout. In addition, the interaction of the creek, the greenway, and the alleyway will help provide security for the rears of the lots. Locating residential units, whether "carriage houses" or garage apartments, in this area will also be a key element in the surveillance, and therefore safety, of the back areas.

An important consideration in the type of neighborhood that develops on Barnes Avenue will be the decision regarding common versus individual maintenance. Although the majority of the

houses are single family, there can still be a homeowners association that collects dues and is responsible for landscape maintenance and other items. The advantage of this approach is that all of the homeowners are assured that the neighborhood will maintain a consistently attractive appearance. At the same time, this assurance comes with a price. Since mortgage qualification guidelines typically include such fees in their calculations, the dues might exclude certain possible buyers that are on the edge.

The future of Barnes Avenue is bright, despite its past. It will be a warm, friendly, safe and stable environment. Its residents willl be pioneers in the new NECD, and their vision will be richly rewarded.

EXAMPLE OF A CARRIAGE HOUSE

Angier Avenue Study Area

This area represents the blocks to the east of the HOPE VI area, roughly bounded by the Freeway to the south, Ashe Street to the north, Plum Street to the west and Hoover Road to the east. Angier Avenue is its spine, and its character is the overriding image of the area. Dominated by a mixture of run-down houses and underused commercial space, this street presents a vision of neglect to the heavy traffic volume that travels it daily. The street nonetheless also presents an opportunity to greatly enhance the image of the entire community, through its high visibility and the underlying nature of the housing and commercial buildings.

Leaving Angier Avenue, to the north is a primarily residential area with housing of mixed quality. The quality of this neighborhood seems to be highly influenced by the nature of Angier Avenue.

To the south is a narrow strip of land ending at the railroad track that will eventually carry mass transit throughout the region. Currently an amalgamation of junkyards, other industrial uses and inadequate infrastructure, with a variety of other uses scattered about, this area as it stands will give a poor impression of Durham to train riders. It also represents a vastly underutilized resource. The introduction of the TTA stop nearby will provide a potential market opportunity for employment and housing. An important goal of the plan for Angier Avenue is to have the area ready to exploit that opportunity when rail arrives in 2007.

Angier Avenue

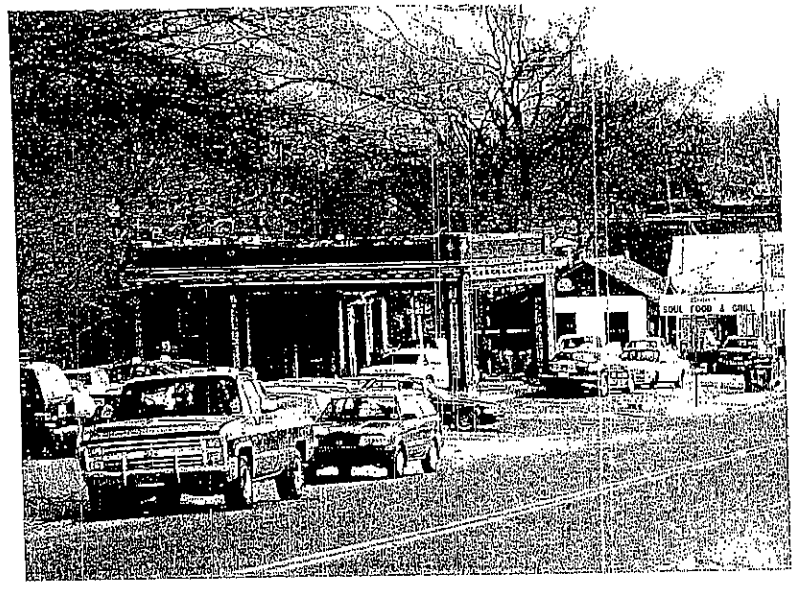
Revitalization Strategy

The basic strategy for the Angier Study Area is to improve conditions along the spine, leverage those improvements to create a stabilizing force for the neighborhood to the north, and prepare the areas to the south for eventual new development. The strategy can be described in three parts:

A) Create an initial project to spark renewed interest in the area, demonstrate a commitment to revitalization, provide immediate economic benefit, and reverse the downward trend.

B) Incorporate an incentive program for owners to improve their properties, accompanied by a strict program of enforcement for code violations, crime and other problems. The program should particularly reward owner-occupants, encourage home ownership, assist tenants, and recognize the inherent struggles associated with maintaining businesses, homes and properties in neglected areas. It should be available to business owners, home owners and landlords, but must draw a clear line between those working toward improvement of the area and those holding it back.

C) Begin a process of cataloging potential sites for transit-oriented development, in particular employment and other economic development. The primary issues will be parcel ownership, environmental concerns, and zoning. Parcel ownership and availability will affect the assemblage of sites large enough for major or coordinated developments. The ultimate goal will be packaging sites for developers.

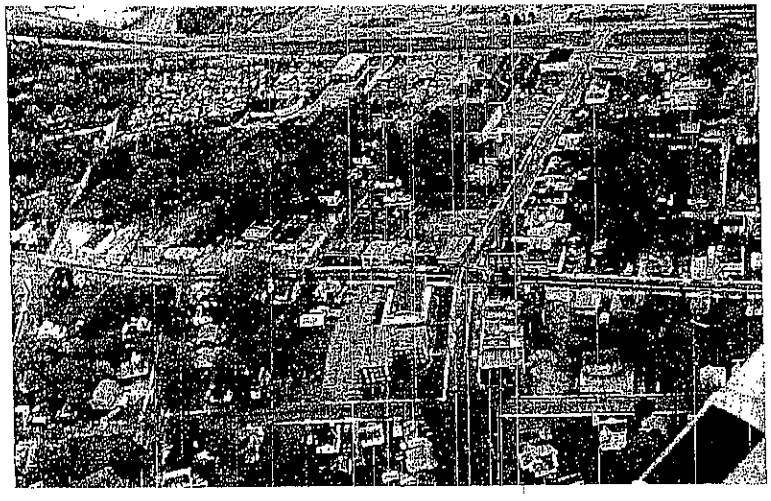


BUILDING ON ANGIER AVENUE

The appeal of a development site includes obvious factors such as access, but also can be influenced by other aspects that are more in the

control of the community and the city. A site that can be easily assembled, has proper zoning, does not face community opposition, has clean or at least documented environmental conditions, and offers other certainties can be attractive as a development package. It is therefore important to foster a coordinated effort between the community and the City, Chamber of Commerce and other economic development entities for the ultimate development of these sites.

The key element in the revitalization strategy is the initial project. It should be achievable and realistic, since success or failure here will color any other initiatives in the area. Its success should also be relatively short term, since the window of opportunity to show improvement will be fairly small. It should be focused, so again there can be a transformation that is clearly visible and relatively quick. It is more important to revitalize a single block than to disperse the improvements through a large area. And it should be strategic, so that it can influence and spread its success into a larger area.

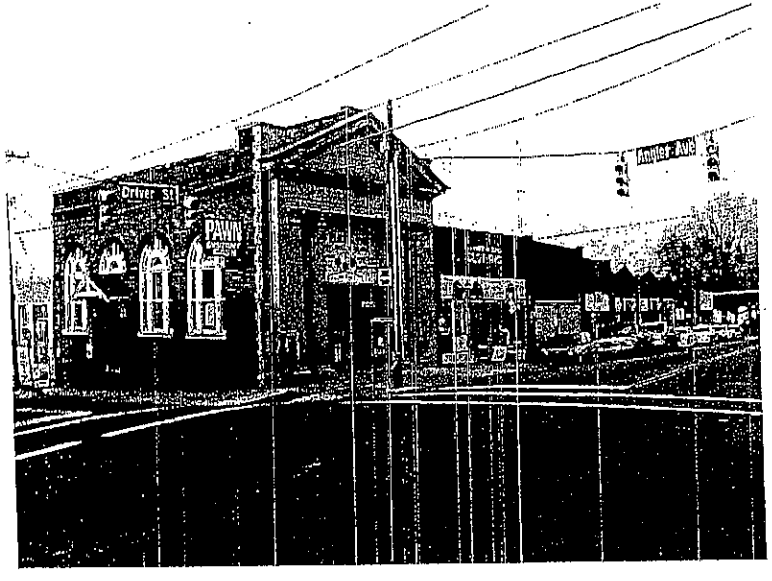


ANGIER AVENUE & DRIVER STREET

In the Angier Avenue Study Area, the community agreed easily on the location of its initial project: the intersection of Angier Avenue with Driver Street, sometimes known as Crabtree Corners. This site makes sense for a number of reasons. It is highly visible, at the intersection of two busy streets. There are existing businesses which can reap the benefits of the revitalization. The physical stock is there, ripe for renovation. It has historically been an important commercial area, so its decline is particularly symbolic of the area's downturn. Likewise, its return to health will be a clear symbol of a bright future.

Considering the existing conditions, programs that encourage improvements in the image of

the corner will be especially helpful. These include infrastructure, such as sidewalk repairs, street trees, relocating or burying power lines, improved lighting for both perceived safety and pedestrian scale, better definition of on-street parking, and neck-downs at the intersection to facilitate pedestrian traffic. The look of the buildings and businesses themselves can be improved through coordinated signage, physical improvements, cleaning buildings and maintenance, and litter control. These can be accomplished through grants, low-interest loans, and façade easements, where the city or other group takes control and responsibility for the front façade of the business.



ANGIER AVENUE & DRIVER STREET

Related to the physical improvements, there should be programs to assist existing and new businesses. These can include simply helping to sponsor a merchants organization, or providing low-interest business loans, instruction on business skills, and coordinated marketing efforts.

Many of the above strategies are relatively inexpensive, and can have a tremendous impact on an area that seems close to viability and which could benefit greatly from some well-targeted assistance. A larger issue arises from considering the basic ingredients for successful commercial development. There is an apparent missing piece, the lack of clearly available, secure, attractive and coordinated parking. The businesses manage to survive with meager on-street parking and pedestrian traffic. To thrive, however, they need more parking. Exploring the area, there seems to be the opportunity for parking in the vacant land behind the buildings. Converting this leftover, underused area into a resource for the businesses will require control of

the property, design and construction of attractive, landscaped, well-lit parking, and a clear connection with the businesses. More detailed study should determine the details to accomplish the above, including the potential and need for: a mid-block connector to the street, retail activity that addresses the parking to heighten security, residential, office or other complimentary uses, and infill construction, which could fill in missing pieces of the streetscape, extend the commercial fabric further, or screen parking lots from the street (some experts feel that even a 30' gap in the streetscape will adversely affect the businesses on either side).

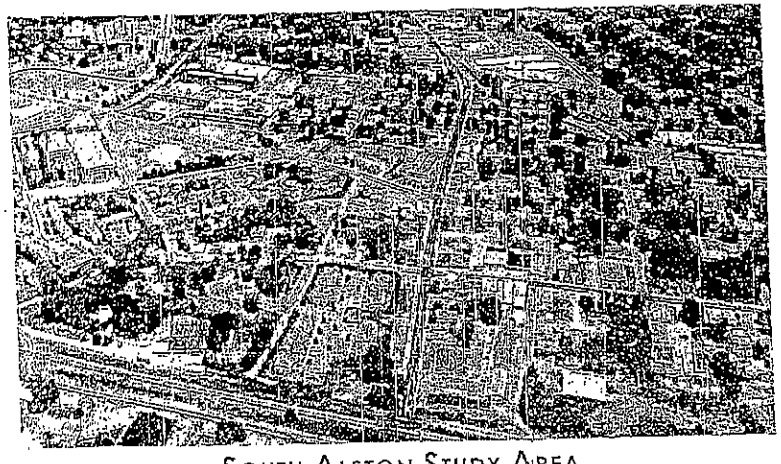
Using commercial development to spur revitalization is not usually recommended at the neighborhood level. Typically this type of business is not easily swayed by economic inducements. Housing and office uses can be attracted by low rent or subsidies, but retail needs customers, even if the rent is low. Therefore, the strategy must include actions to stabilize the surrounding residential areas to strengthen their customer base.

EXISTING CONDITIONS

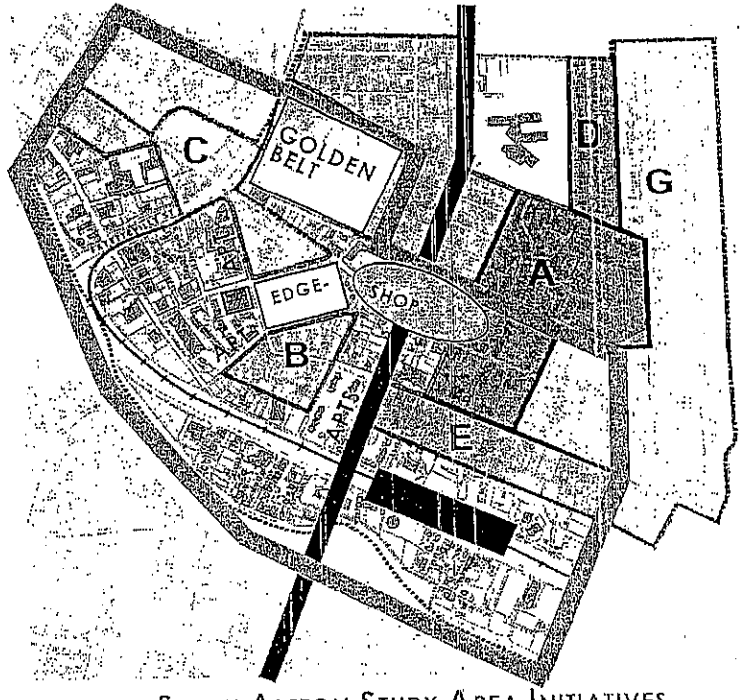
TRANSFORMED IMAGE WITH NEW PARKING

South Alston Avenue Study Area

This area represents the southwest corner of NECD. It is somewhat unique in relation to the other study areas in several respects. First is that the boundaries of the "Partners Against Crime" (PAC) districts separates part of this area (PAC 5) from the remainder of NECD (PAC 1). Second is the preponderance of HOPE VI initiatives that occur in this area. Another important distinction is the future TTA stop that is planned at Alston Avenue. Finally, this area contains the major shopping area for the larger community, both current and planned.



South Alston Study Area



South Alston Study Area Initiatives
(colors & letters indicate HOPE VI focus areas)

The area contains a previous City revitalization effort, Edgemont Village, a well-defined small neighborhood of renovated houses that seems successful relative to the rest of NECD. It also houses multifamily developments that, while hardly models for great design, are nonetheless superior to most in the nearby community. It is also the location of Golden Belt, a center for

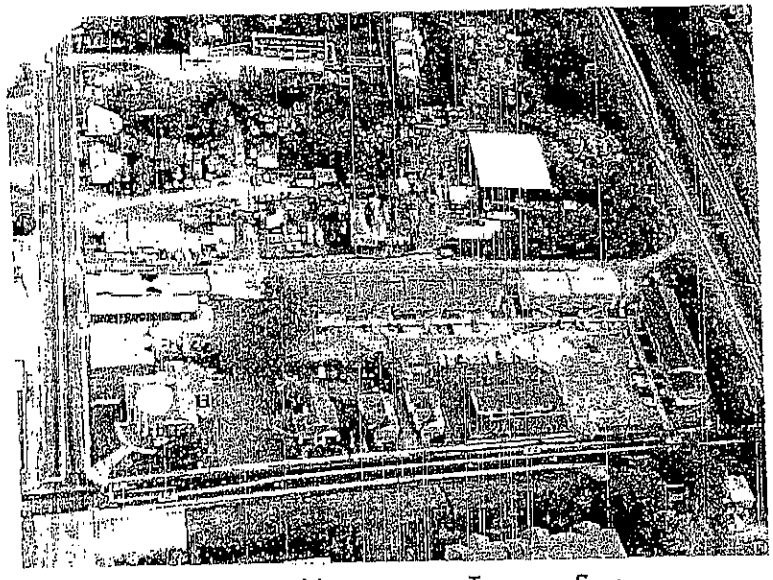
non-profits and community services that has the potential to be an economic generator for the community.

Revitalization Strategy

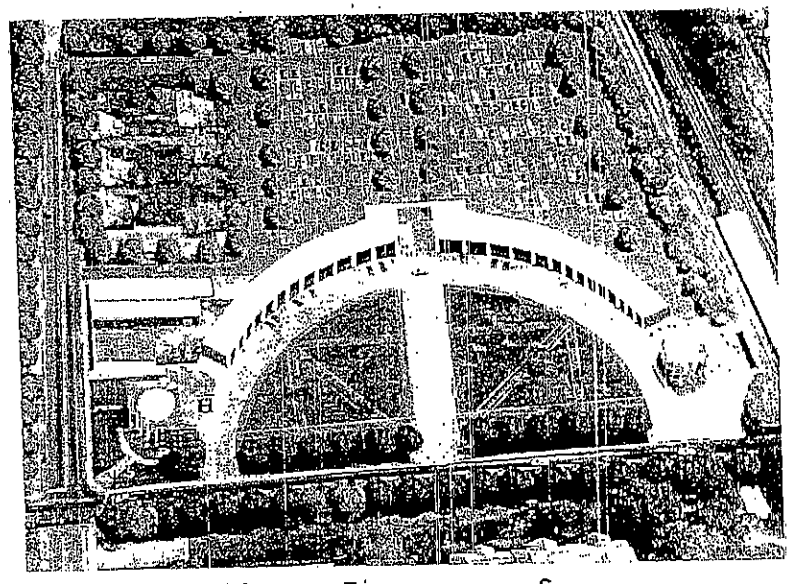
The basic strategy for South Alston involves strengthening the existing fabric, managing the effects of various initiatives in their midst so that the residents benefit, and identifying the initial project that will complement those new developments. One goal of the initial project will be to give the residents control, since so much of the work surrounding them, while solicitous of their input, is out of their hands in implementation.
In visioning sessions with the residents, attention gravitated toward the new TTA stop. Planned to be operational in 2007, its impact will be a huge opportunity, and the residents have expressed a desire to guide its development. Consequently, the initial project that they envisioned tackles the land that is immediately north of the stop and which leads into the neighborhood and its commercial heart. The resulting vision found its soul in memories of the "Green Candle", a one-time community institution. This local restaurant was well-known through the city and region. Its status as a "place to go" galvanized the visioning session with the idea that their development at the TTA stop could be a place to go as well; an attraction to cause people to get off the train and visit the neighborhood. Thus the TTA can be not only a means for the residents to go to other places, but also a source for economic activity to come to the community.

The ultimate scheme incorporated a community gardens and farmers market at its center, surrounded by commercial space with housing above. While not crucial to the success of a development there, these elements represent the concept of an attraction (the farmer's market) with a visual landmark (the green garden, contrasting to the intensity of development around it), combining to support the new "Green Candles" in the community.

This clear vision and the control it represents over the transit-oriented development mark an important first step in the neighborhood's future effort to influence and "own" this opportunity. However, its long time frame means it will fail to be



EXISTING VIEW OF THE TRANSIT SITE



VIEW OF TRANSFORMED SITE

an early effort in the rebirth of the neighborhood, which is an important criterion for the initial, strategic project.

Given the great degree of interest and effort in this part of the community, this plan suggests that the most important use of the residents' energy will be as a strong,articulate voice, to ensure the people's involvement and sense of ownership in these projects. The vision that came from the planning workshops is important not in its specific form, but as a symbol of their goals: a landmark, an attraction for outside economic activity, and most importantly an opportunity for success for the people who live here.

The residents are well on their way toward becoming that strong, articulate voice. Following is a synopsis of their meeting regarding their objectives for the TTA stop and immediate surroundings. With this type of involvement, and a sustained commitment, they can influence all of the elements in their neighborhood.

"THE SOUTH ALSTON PLAN" FOR THE TRIANGLE TRANSIT AUTHORITY'S ALSTON AVE/I-147 TRAIN STOP COMPILED BY MARION J. LAMBERTH

Individual interviews and phone interviews were made with multiple members of the South Alston Study Area task force members regarding the development of the Alston Ave/I-147 transit stop. The result of these interviews rendered the following decisions.

It is the unanimous desire of this task force that a COMMUNITY BASED COMMERCIAL COMPLEX BE CREATED AT THIS SITE! The term community based commercial complex is interpreted by the task force members to mean—a commercial complex designed to accommodate the commercial members of the surrounding community. It should allow for displaced community businesses to have priority over businesses coming from outside of the community. This complex should be designed to accommodate small businesses with provisions for financial incentives to support affordability at the median income of the community. It is requested by task force members that this commercial complex be planned, designed and constructed by local artisans.

It is also the desire of this task force that big conglomerates that specialize in large quantity buying, discount selling, and mass production of food and food services, that would undercut the market of the community based small business person not be allowed to lease or purchase spaces in the community based commercial complex.

We, the South Alston Area Study Plan task force members, respectfully request to be apprised regularly about the progress of this community based commercial complex and to participate fully in the planning process by the formation of a steering committee with the full support of the City.

These are some of the community based businesses that the task force members have identified and expressed interest in pursuing for themselves as well as other businesses being displaced by the NECD revitalization.

Indoor Flea Market-to allow community residents to sell and purchase yard sale, used and flea market items. Also allows for persons with peddler's licenses to sell new items.

Rent-a Bay-to allow community residents to lease hourly a garage bay with hydraulic lift and power to perform minor repairs on personal and family vehicles. This

will help eliminate some of the abandoned vehicles by those who can't afford mechanic shop prices. Tools will not be provided.

Catering Shops-to allow community residents to render catering services by leasing a space with multiple kitchen facilities.

Detail Shops-community residents would like to offer car detailing with customers being able to leave their cars and catching the train to work and back.

Office Space-to provide medical transcription service and medical billing services in an affordable office space.

Multipurpose Room(large)-designed to convert from an auditorium to a dance hall; from a tutoring center to a theater for the performance of plays; and from a workshop to a small convention center.

Linen Shops/Clothing Stores-either individual affordable shops or the leasing of space in the Indoor Flea Market.

E-Commerce Marketing Store(figurines)-to provide an E-Commerce service distribution center owned by a community resident.

Pet Store-provide pets and pet supplies for the community by a community resident.

Flower Shop-provide an affordable shop for a community resident to provide flowers and floral arrangements.

Existing Restaurants, Garages and Shops being displaced by revitalization projects.

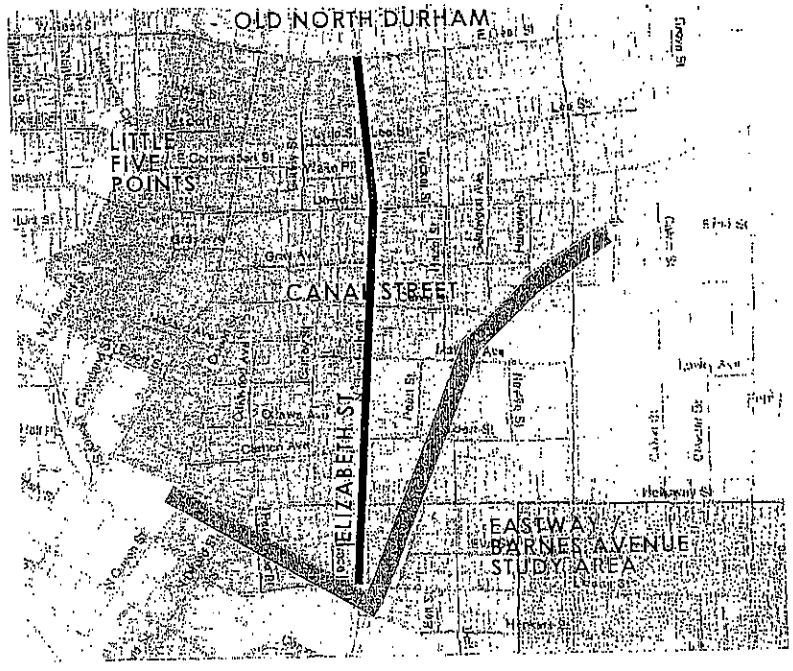
INTERVIEW PARTICIPANT LIST

Fabian Cherry-911 Dale Street
Isaac Melton-916 Dale Street
Deborah Hart-109 S. Elm Street
LaTanya McRae-211 Stokes Street
George and Dorothy Daye-105 S. Elm Street
Gaynelle Cook-301 S. Elm Street, Apt. 5-A
Vonda Watkins-301 S. Elm Street, Apt. 1-A
Marion J. Lamberth-913 Dale Street
David McCowan, 214 Stokes Street

Elizabeth Street Study Area

This area represents that portion of NECD that lies generally north of the HOPE VI study area. It is roughly bounded to the east by the railroad track that parallels Elizabeth Street, and to the west by Mangum Street. At its northern edge it abuts the Old North Durham neighborhood, and it includes at its southern edge the Holloway Street Historic District.

Elizabeth Street runs through the center, but its impact on the area is much different from Angier Avenue and its attendant study area. At its southern end, Elizabeth Street is like a freeway, more of a barrier and with less commercial development than Angier Avenue. As it moves northward, though, it narrows down and becomes more of a neighborhood street through much of this study area. An important consideration in future plans for the area is the ultimate plan for the street, since widening and increased traffic northward will greatly affect the neighborhood.



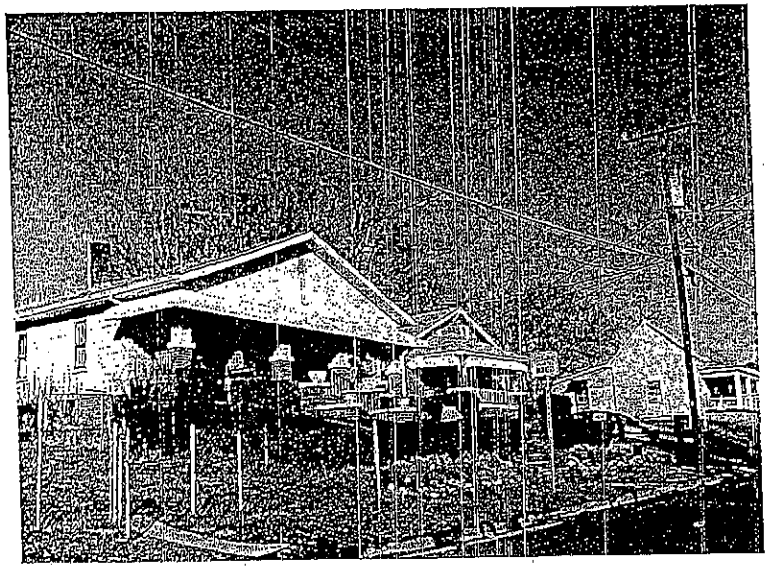
Elizabeth Street Study Area

The character of the area is likewise much less influenced by its central street. In general, this area has an overwhelmingly residential flavor. Nearly as strong is the frequency of older homes that speak to its history among Durham's older neighborhoods.

While the Elizabeth Study Area does not suffer from the impact of declining commercial uses to

the extent of Angier Avenue, it has its own problems. Chief among those is crime, symbolized by and centered on Canal Street, at the eastern edge of the area. Entwined with the crime problem is the neglect and decline of the housing stock, particularly sad in an area of so many older and potentially beautiful homes.

This potential may be among the keys to its revitalization. Of the four study areas, this one appears to have the greatest possibility for significant restoration of its existing housing stock.



House in Elizabeth Street Study Area

The private sector can be a powerful force when economic conditions are favorable, and this possibility exists. The key is to encourage this process, by leveraging public sector investment with private sector enthusiasm, while managing its impact, so that the area does not become gentrified to the extent that the residents do not remain.

Revitalization Strategy

The basic strategy for Elizabeth has two parts. The first is straightforward: remove the roadblocks to the neighborhood achieving its full potential. The second is to ensure that it develops into a vital, safe mixed-income neighborhood that retains its opportunities for affordable housing while allowing an influx of middle income or even upper income residents. These two aspects are at first complimentary, but can easily become opposing sides, and they represent the balancing act necessary for a successful revitalization. When a neighborhood shows potential for the private sector to drive its rebirth, that economic engine can sometimes overcome the fragile balance sought among various levels of housing. It is also highly subject to the whims of the marketplace, and to the self interest of

individuals, and therefore the ride to revitalization can be a bumpy one. It will likely take diligence by the residents and carefully targeted efforts by the city to reach the ultimate goal. But the conditions are there for it to happen.

The strategy involves three basic principles:

A) Focus on crime prevention, police presence and selective property acquisitions to enhance both the perception and reality of safety.

B) Foster programs to improve the physical condition of housing in the area, and in particular that encourage homeownership and rehabilitation efforts by owner occupants. These programs should incorporate assistance to tenants in dealing with unresponsive landlords, strict code enforcement, and also incentives to all owners to improve and maintain their properties.

C) Encourage and identify a strategic initial project.

The key element in the revitalization strategy is the initial project. In this community the residents were overwhelmingly in favor of focusing

House in Elizabeth Street Study Area

on Old Five Points (also called Little Five Points). This formerly viable commercial area has the advantage of being tightly focused and highly visible. Also, like the Angier initial project, it has a history and identity in the community, which will tend to encourage its success and enlarge its importance in the community. It also is located at the edge of other neighborhoods, so that it can catch customers and energy from areas outside NECD and also can act as a meeting place between them. Finally, it has the advantage of the UDI Resource Center, which is be-

coming a center for the community as well as a source of economic improvement.

In other ways, though, it is less desirable as an initial project. Compared to the Angier Avenue and Driver Street intersection, the existing mix of businesses is less rich and less likely to spark customer traffic. Storefront churches generate little weekday traffic, and temporary labor offices typically attract people who will either be gone shortly to a job, or who will tend to have little disposable income and are not likely to shop at new stores.

The location is also less strategic in terms of generating a major change in neighborhood investment. Since it is located at the edge of the NECD community, improvements will be peripheral to the heart of the study area. Nonetheless, the residents are clear that, given its status as a gateway to downtown, its state of deterioration reflects poorly on their city and their neighborhood.

The approach here, therefore, will be more strategic, somewhat longer term, and will depend more heavily on the complimentary efforts

Old Five Points

in the area, in particular public safety.

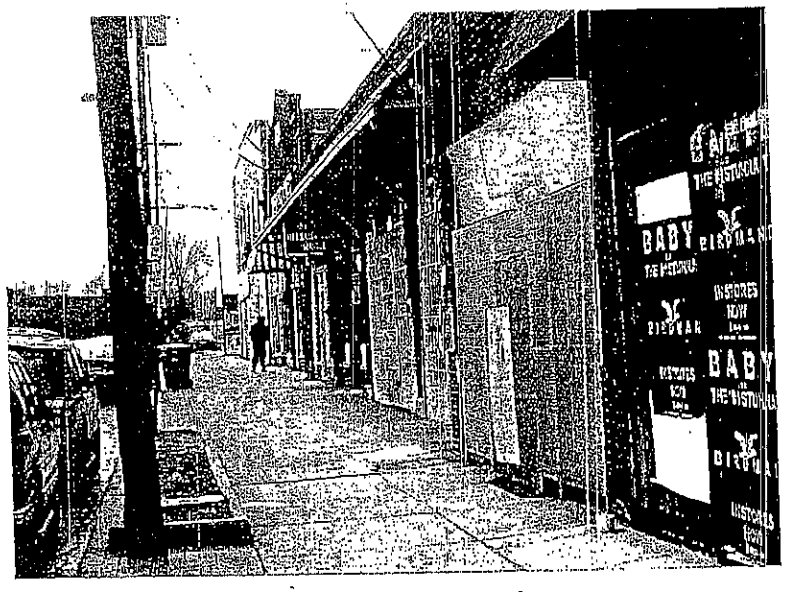
The major impediments to the revitalization of Old Five Points are crime, property ownership, the condition of existing structures, overall image, lack of parking, and weak market demand and demographics.

In the Elizabeth Study Area, the perception of crime problems is pervasive, and is the biggest hurdle to investment. Even with concentrated law enforcement, the perception will linger past

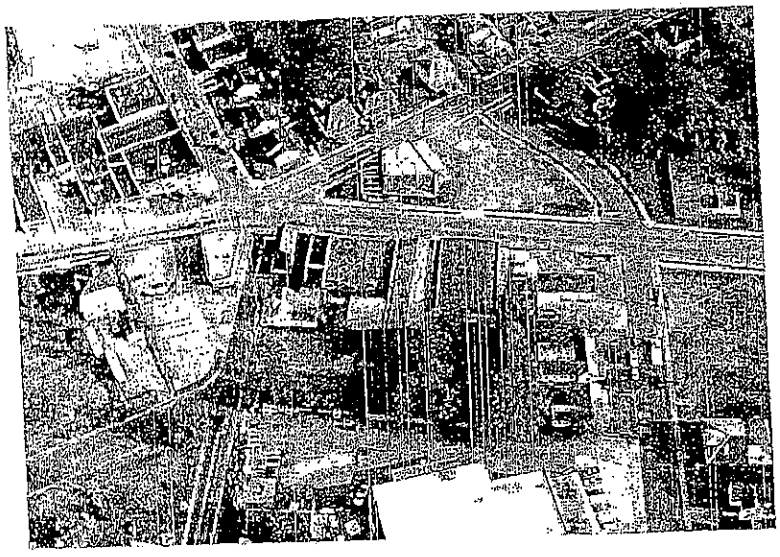
the reality. As part of the revitalization strategy, then, improving the visual image is also an important component. This is true at Old Five Points, and especially on Canal Street. As the crime situation eases on Canal Street, there should also be a program of infrastructure improvements. These improvements should emphasize street trees as part of the "facelift". The goal is to transform the image of Canal Street from a "dangerous Street" to a "green street". The street can benefit from its proximity to East End Park, particularly the fields on the wets side of Alston Avenue, which backs up to Canal Street and is part of the proposed green space network described in this plan.

As the strategic initial project for the Elizabeth Area, the plan for Old Five Points addresses specifically the condition of the buildings, image and lack of parking. In these areas, the proposals for Old Five Points are essentially identical to those for the Angier / Driver intersection.

Programs that encourage improvements in the image of the corner should include infrastructure improvements, such as sidewalk repairs, street trees, relocating or burying power lines, improved lighting for both perceived safety and pedestrian scale, better definition of on-street parking, and neck-downs at the intersection to facilitate pedestrian traffic. The look of the buildings and businesses themselves can be improved through coordinated signage, physical improvements, cleaning buildings and maintenance, and litter control. These can be accomplished through grants, low-interest loans, and façade easements, where the city or other group takes control and responsibility for the front façade of the business.



CURRENT IMAGE OF THE STREET



EXISTING OLD FIVE POINTS

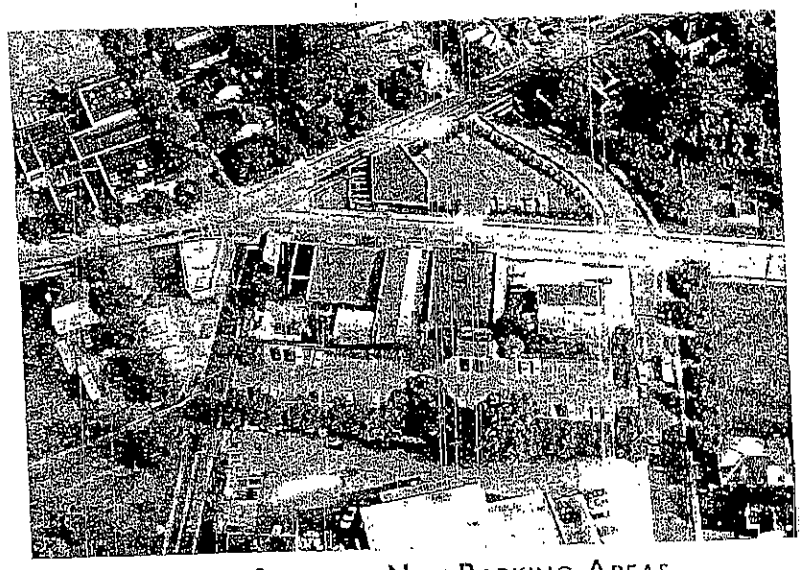


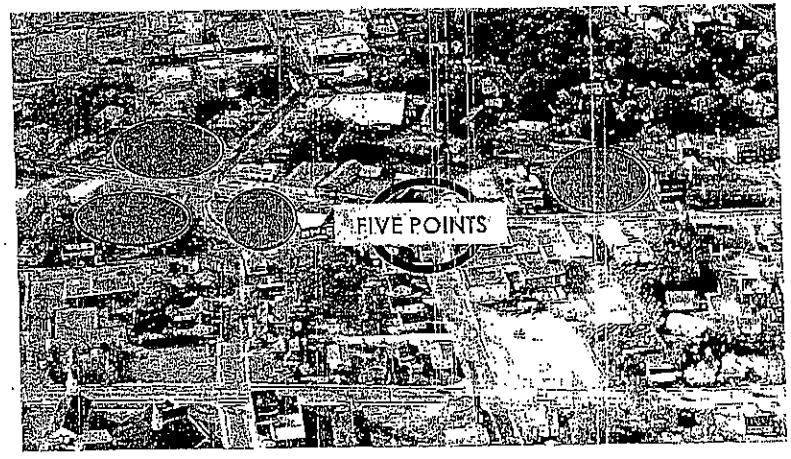
IMAGE SHOWING NEW PARKING AREAS

In addition, the status of the intersection as a gateway to downtown should be noted with a monument or other landmark. This relatively simple gesture will also celebrate its position in the adjacent neighborhoods and its rebirth as a center.

To support the physical improvements, there should be programs to assist existing and new businesses. These can include simply helping to sponsor a merchants organization, or providing low-interest business loans, instruction on business skills, and coordinated marketing efforts. These programs should lean heavily toward businesses that are neighborhood services or otherwise consistent with the ultimate goal for the corner.

The strategy should also address the lack of clearly available, secure, attractive and coordinated parking. This is a major element in the success of retail businesses. There seems to be the opportunity for parking in the vacant land behind the buildings. Converting this leftover, underused area into a resource for the busi-

nesses will require control of the property, design and construction of attractive, landscaped, well-lit parking, and a clear connection with the businesses. More detailed study should determine the details to accomplish the above, including the potential and need for: a mid-block connector to the street, retail activity that addresses the parking to heighten security, residential, office or other complimentary uses, and infill construction, which could fill in missing pieces of the streetscape, extend the commercial fabric further, or screen parking lots from the street.



POTENTIAL DEVELOPMENT SITES NEAR FIVE POINTS

There is also an opportunity here that is not so strong in the Angier area. There are a number of developable tracts in close proximity that could lend important support to the fledgling businesses at the corner. Well-designed and targeted housing, for example, can improve the image of the area, help in providing the "eyes on the street" that heighten security, and widen the customer base for the businesses. Such a project would likely require significant outside (City) assistance, but closer study might reveal some possibilities for a successful companion project to the redevelopment of the commercial area.

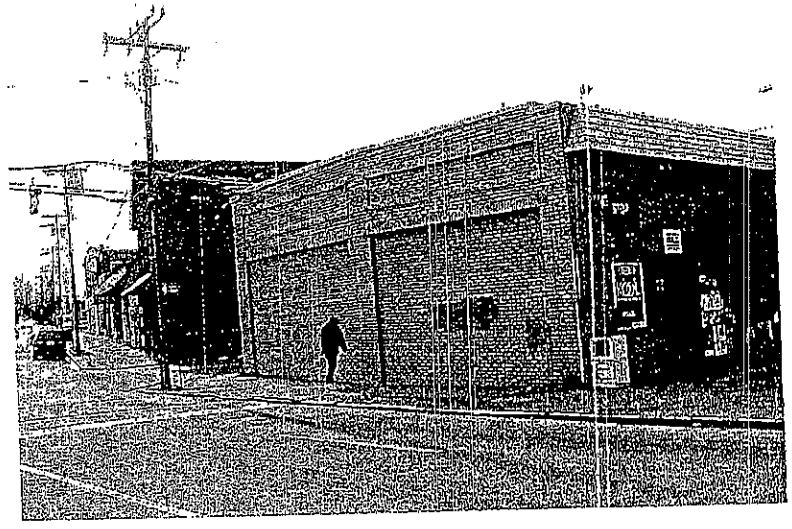
Finally, a potential first step involves a storefront currently owned by the City. Targeting, encouraging and assisting the right business for that space would be an important start to the process. It would ideally be a retail business that would demonstrate the viability of a private venture. So, it should not be a community oriented activity, like a recreation or teen center, or a non-profit or community service group. It should, however, have the potential to become a gathering place of sorts, if not now, perhaps in the future as the area stabilizes. At the same time, because of current conditions, a major advantage would be the ability to have

off-site sales, such as through deliveries, downtown street carts, or specialty sales at festivals, etc. Examples might be a restaurant that delivers (like pizza) or has a cart in busy areas at lunch time, or an art studio or gallery that sells through festivals and the Internet. Filling a need for the residents of surrounding neighborhoods will not only help with potential sales, but also would be an asset to the efforts to strengthen those areas.

Controlling the reality and perception of crime will take the heavy involvement of the police in planning and implementing a coordinated program.

Safety is a vitally important link in this process to encourage the current residents to stay and new residents to move in, but also to assure both that their investments in the neighborhood will be safe and wise. This aspect is absolutely crucial to the success of a strategy that relies on private sector involvement.

Two locations especially important to this part of the strategy are Canal Street, particularly the two blocks west of Elizabeth Street, and Old Five



FIVE POINTS CONVENIENCE STORE

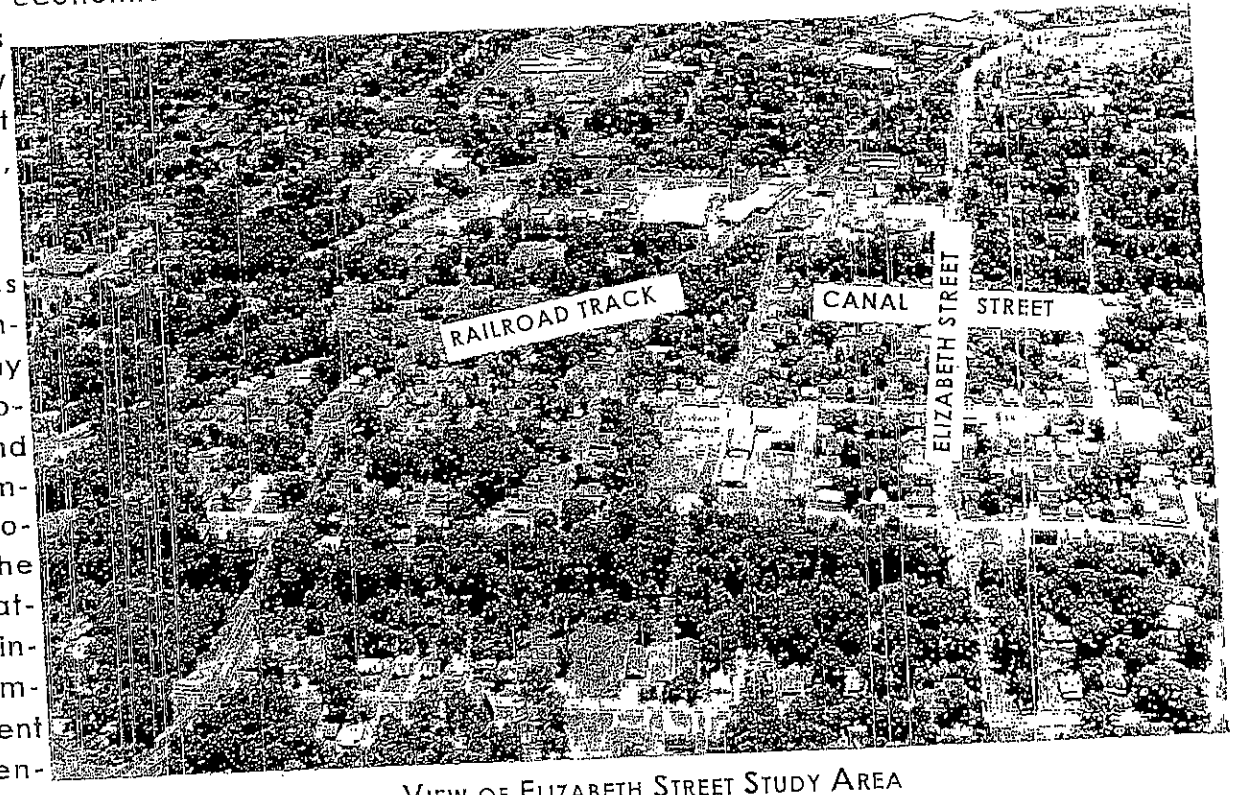
Points, particularly the convenience store at the intersection. These areas appear to be at the heart of much of the crime problems, and this concentration will allow a targeted approach. This plan recommends a coordinated effort that includes Police efforts, code enforcement and City investments in certain targeted parcels to help root out the causes and effects of crime.

Property ownership, and the ability to gain control or at least influence on the properties, may be a difficult and long term situation, and this has

been a problem with previous efforts at this location. Again, targeted city efforts and investment may be needed to overcome this hurdle.

Using commercial development to spur revitalization is not usually recommended at the neighborhood level. Typically, this type of business is not easily swayed by economic inducements. Housing and office uses can be attracted by low rent or subsidies, but retail needs customers, even if the rent is low.

Market characteristics are thus the most important element of any commercial development, and will depend on a combination of improvement in the economic conditions of the existing residents, attracting new, higher income residents, improvements in adjacent neighborhoods, general improvements to the viability and desirability of downtown, and capturing a percentage of the drive-by traffic that travels into downtown daily.



View of Elizabeth Street Study Area

2003

1) Undertake / continue planning for the Barnes Avenue redevelopment, for the Angier / Driver intersection, and for Old Five Points.

2) Continue land acquisition on Barnes Avenue. Barnes Avenue should be ready to begin construction by year's end.

3) Assist in formation of Merchants Association at Angier / Driver.

4) Develop plan for city-owned storefront in Old Five Points.

5) Research ownership and develop acquisition / packaging strategies for properties at Old Five Points, Angier / Driver, Canal Street, near the TTA stop and for the scrap yards along the TTA corridor.

6) Form task forces for TTA and Alston Avenue projects to report back to larger community.

7) Undertake / continue targeted law enforcement efforts on Canal Street and at Old Five Points.

8) Begin development of property rehab strategy / program

2004

1) Begin marketing and construction on Barnes Avenue. Target completion by year's end.

2) Work with Angier / Driver merchants to prioritize physical improvements and implement initial signage, branding and storefront improvements. Begin design of infrastructure improvements.

3) Find tenant for city-owned storefront in Old Five Points.

4) Investigate development opportunities at Old Five Points vacant parcels.

5) Implement initial phases of acquisition and packaging strategies for strategic properties.

6) Continue task force work with HOPE VI, TTA and Alston Avenue Projects. Devise development concept for area around TTA stop.

7) Implement property rehab program.

2005

1) Implement first phase of infrastructure improvements at Angier Avenue / Driver Street.

2) Implement initial signage, branding and facade improvements at Old Five Points. Begin marketing efforts to attract new tenants. Begin design of infrastructure improvements.

3) Package and market development sites at Old Five Points.

4) Actively market scrap yards and other industrial sites for new development, especially near transit stop.

5) Continue strategic acquisitions.

6) Begin planning for improvements to Canal Street infrastructure, emphasizing street trees.

7) Evaluate strategic plan successes and failures and adjust accordingly.

8) Develop vision for green space network through community.

2006

1) Implement first phase of infrastructure improvements at Old Five Points.

2) Begin detail planning for green space connection between Canal Street, East End Park and Long Meadow Park, and extending toward TTA stop.

2007

1) Celebrate opening of TTA transit stop.

2) Begin implementation of green space connection.

3) Continue improvements at Old Five Points and at Angier / Driver intersection.

From June 2003 – June 2004, below are recommendations to implement the Northeast Central Durham (NECD) Revitalization Plan. General recommendations are made for the July 2004 – June 2006 period.

JUNE, 2003

THE NORTHEAST CENTRAL DURHAM (NECD) ACTION TEAM IS CREATED TO OVERSEE THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PLAN. IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT THE TEAM WILL CONSIST OF THE FOLLOWING STAKEHOLDERS AND COMMITTEES.

A) PAC I/NECD
B) NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATIONS
C) CITY OF DURHAM
D) DURHAM HOUSING AUTHORITY
E) DURHAM CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
F) DURHAM PUBLIC SCHOOLS
G) DURHAM POLICE DEPARTMENT
H) DURHAM AFFORDABLE HOUSING COALITION
I) DURHAM COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES
J) DURHAM COUNTY
K) NECD/DURHAM FAITH COMMUNITY
L) NECD BUSINESSES
M) DURHAM TECH COMMUNITY COLLEGE
N) NORTH CAROLINA CENTRAL UNIVERSITY
O) DUKE UNIVERSITY
P) U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT (HUD)
Q) STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
R) HISTORIC PRESERVATION SOCIETY OF DURHAM
S) OTHER COMMUNITY SERVICE AGENCIES

THE NECD ACTION TEAM CAN CONSIST OF THE FOLLOWING COMMITTEES.

A) STUDY AREA MODEL PROJECTS
B) PERSONNEL/ADMINISTRATION, CITY OF DURHAM
C) RESEARCH, MONITORING AND EVALUATION
D) CRIME PREVENTION
E) HOMEOWNERSHIP & HOUSING
F) ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
G) EDUCATION
H) INFRASTRUCTURE
I) LEADERSHIP/ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

JULY-AUGUST, 2003

THE NECD ACTION TEAM WILL GO THROUGH A SERIES OF TEAM DEVELOPMENT AND STRATEGIC PLANNING SESSIONS TO SOLIDIFY TEAM STRUCTURE AND OPERATIONS TO IMPLEMENT THE NECD REVITALIZATION PLAN.. THE NECD ACTION TEAM WILL BE RESPONSIBLE FOR MAKING THE FINAL REVISIONS OF THE NECD PLAN TO:

A) DETERMINE THE FEASIBILITY OF ACTIONS STEPS;

B) DETERMINING THE LEAD STRATEGIC PARTNERS RESPONSIBLE FOR IMPLEMENTING EACH ACTION STEP;

C) RECOMMEND SPECIFIC RESOURCES NEEDED TO IMPLEMENT ACTION STEPS; AND

D) CLARIFY THE TIMETABLE FOR COMPLETION OF EACH ACTION STEP.

SEPTEMBER, 2003

THE NECD ACTION TEAM WILL FINALIZE THE NECD REVITALIZATION PLAN WITH BUDGET RECOMMENDATIONS PRESENTED TO THE NECD LEADERSHIP, PARTNERS, AND PAC I.

OCTOBER, 2003

THE NECD ACTION TEAM SUBMITS THE COMMUNITY-ENDORSED NECD REVITALIZATION PLAN TO THE CITY OF DURHAM STAFF AND TO THE APPROPRIATE DURHAM CITY COUNCIL COMMITTEE FOR REVIEW AND APPROVAL.

OCTOBER-NOVEMBER, 2003

THE NECD ACTION TEAM SECURES LETTERS AND PLEDGES OF COMMITMENT FROM NECD RESIDENTS, NEIGHBORHOOD ORGANIZATIONS, AND PARTNERS TO COMMIT FINANCIAL AND IN-KIND SUPPORT FOR THE NECD REVITALIZATION PLAN. THESE COMMITMENTS WILL SUPPLEMENT THE PROPOSED SEED FUNDING PROVIDED THROUGH THE CITY OF DURHAM AND THE DURHAM HOUSING AUTHORITY.

NOVEMBER, 2003

THE DURHAM CITY COUNCIL COMMITTEE RECOMMENDS REVISED NECD REVITALIZATION PLAN TO THE FULL DURHAM CITY COUNCIL FOR APPROVAL.

NOVEMBER-DECEMBER, 2003

THE NECD ACTION TEAM SECURES STAFF SUPPORT AND OFFICE SPACE FROM THE CITY OF DURHAM. THE NECD STAFF IS IN FULL OPERATIONS BEGINNING JANUARY 2004. THE FOLLOWING POSITIONS ARE RECOMMENDED FOR CONSIDERATION.