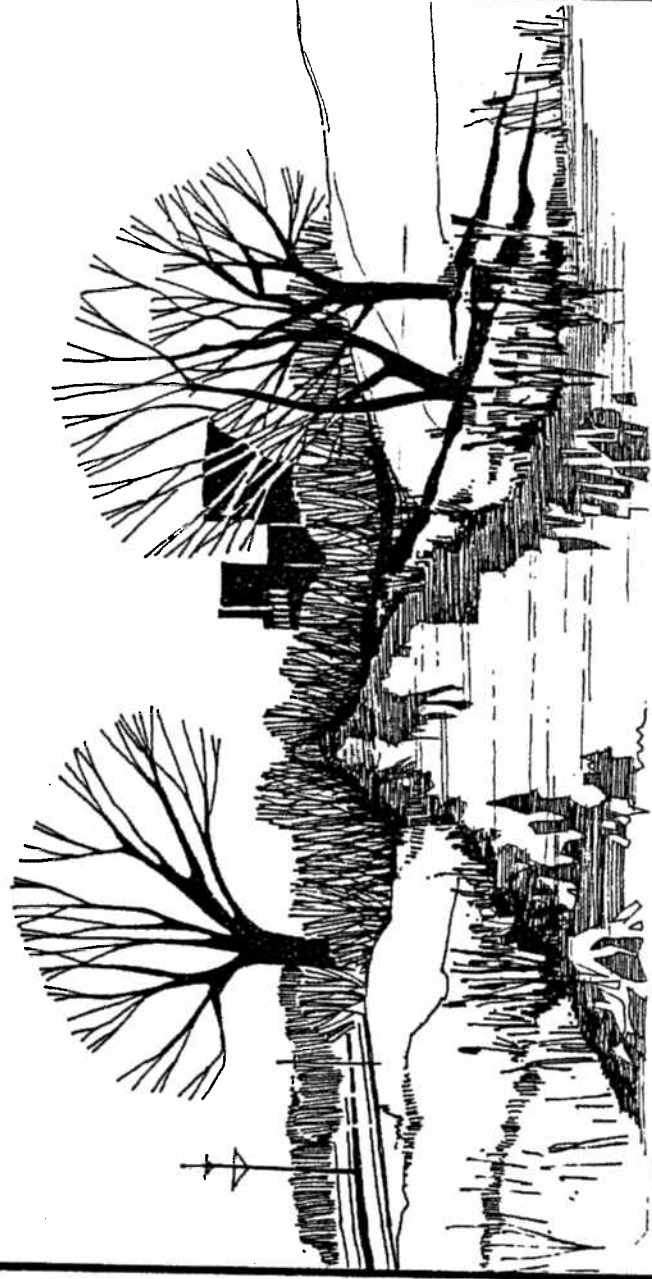


# A Historic District Preservation Plan

Preservation Urban Design Incorporated

120 1/2 West Washington Street  
Ann Arbor, Michigan 48104



# Lockport, Illinois

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September 1977

Revised, February 1978

# Lockport, Illinois

# Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION .....	1
CHARACTER.....	4
1. HISTORY .....	6
2. ARCHITECTURE .....	12
Architectural Zones .....	14
State Street .....	
Commercial District.....	18
Blockscape Analysis.....	27
Blockscape Recommendations .....	41
3. URBAN DESIGN .....	56
Natural Features .....	57
Circulation .....	59
Entry/Exit Areas .....	63
Urban Design Plan.....	65
Signage .....	76
Landscaping .....	80
Lighting .....	83
Maintenance .....	85
RESPONSIBILITY .....	87
FUNDING SOURCES .....	89
ARCHITECTURAL APPENDIX	
Individual Building Recommendations .....	92
Infill Design Guidelines .....	120
Color Guidelines .....	122
Parking Deck Guidelines .....	123
REFERENCE .....	124

# Preface

The National Register of Historic Places is a program of the federal government which recognizes, lists and offers limited protection to significant historic sites. In May 1975, the Register added to its ranks a district in Lockport, Illinois. Just what this district means is something of a question to the people who live and work there.

Financed by the Historic Preservation Council, with the assistance of the city of Lockport, local citizens and businessmen and the National Trust for Historic Preservation, this study attempts to clarify the issue. Its purpose is to identify visual and historical resources within the district and increase local awareness of them. Further, it offers ideas to strengthen the district and encourage its continued vitality.

Lockport's National Register historic district is an area rich in historic and environmental resources. As such, the people there have a responsibility to maintain and make changes appropriate to the district.

A report can offer general guidelines toward a pleasant and cohesive environment. But it remains for local people to apply these guidelines to specific problems. In this lies the opportunity for creative change, change which responds to the surrounding environment as well as the needs of the people.

# **Introduction**

"An area with a concentration of architecturally and historically valuable buildings is not usually insulated from the normal problems of communities; consequently, the treatment of it should include all the regular planning techniques."

- Christopher Tunnard  
and Boris Pushkarev  
Man-Made America, Chaos  
of Control

This preservation plan for Lockport's historic district takes a step toward the total planning process. Rather than isolating the district as a historic place, it emphasizes a living and livable place set in a historic environment.

The isolation of districts is unnatural. This study has been directed toward fitting the district to the needs of today's users, without compromising the rich architectural heritage. Respecting and building with the good elements of the past rather than against them can produce an interesting environment.

Historic downtown Lockport is not meant to be a museum. Rather, it should take a larger, more active part in contemporary living patterns. Along with problems of aesthetic regulations, issues that relate to traffic circulation and parking must be solved to make a more viable city. Historic Lockport must be able to satisfy the everyday requirements of its residents.

Some may question the value of saving old buildings at all. Why go into all this in-

vestigation and preservation planning for historic Lockport?

For some people, the presence of history may be reason enough. The existing built environment is a window to the past. It is tangible proof of our heritage and culture. For personal well-being and cultural stability, it has been suggested that respecting our "cultural roots" is essential.

On a less emotional basis, planning for the continued use of our older structures makes good conservation sense. Reusing older structures helps conserve natural resources. With climbing construction costs, it is rapidly becoming more and more economical to adapt existing buildings for contemporary uses. In terms of saving energy and raw materials, preserving the built environment is a necessary step.

Another major reason for preservation planning is that Lockport is not a static community. It is a growing community. The commercial area, which comprises most of the historic district, must answer the needs of an expanding town.

To understand the extent of projected growth, Northeastern Illinois Planning Commission has prepared forecasts for the growth predicted to occur in northeastern Illinois townships. In terms of employment, 8,897 jobs were available in Lockport in 1970. This figure climbs to 11,900 in 1980, 14,500 in 1990, and 16,800 in the year 2000. Population shows the same marked increase. Lockport township population growth is projected as follows:

1960      1970      1980      1990      2000

26,882    33,354    40,000    48,000    55,300

(Additional figures and forecasts are available from the Suburban Factbook, published by Northeastern Illinois Planning Commission.)

Although forecasts are rarely 100 percent reliable, it is reasonable to assume a steady growth in both employment and population for Lockport. Now is the time to plan for the incorporation of that growth without destroying the historic environment. Existing structures should be recognized as valuable resources in satisfying the housing and commercial needs of an increasing population and work force. Existing open space within the historic district can be used to fill recreational needs.

Thus, the approach to preservation planning taken by this study encompasses the following values:

- Area history is not only a value in itself, but is relevant to contemporary life. Preservation planning attempts to save our cultural heritage and traditions.
- Preservation planning can produce an aesthetically pleasing and well ordered town.
- Preservation planning is energy and resource conscious.
- Preservation planning can economically answer the needs of a growing community.

Three major sections follow this introduction. The first deals with the character of Lockport--its history, architecture and urban design. From an understanding of the basic character, recommendations can be made. These suggestions address individual buildings as well as the whole district.

The next section of the report considers the responsibilities of the citizens of Lockport. Understanding this is essential for the implementation of the recommendations. The final section suggests sources of funding and tax advantages for districts listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Ultimately, the goal of this study is to present an understandable, implementable preservation plan, one which could produce a pleasant and functional environment for the citizens of Lockport.

# Character

With the basic premise of the study in mind --that historic Lockport must work today--the next step is to become familiar with the various conditions affecting the area. It must be noted that local people have a responsibility to make themselves aware of these conditions as well. This study is designed to be merely the first step toward that awareness.

To increase awareness of historic Lockport several questions must be posed. What are the basic visual elements in Lockport? Are these readily perceivable? Which basic visual elements can be considered resources and used to enhance the environment of Lockport? What are the major problems areas within the district and how can these be solved? Which visual elements are historical and how can these be adapted without damaging the original historical feeling? What is so valuable about something "historic" anyway?

To answer these questions, this study attempts to evaluate the character of historic Lockport. A barrage of information goes into understanding the basic character of a town. As every person has a different makeup, based upon experiences and physical attributes, so does a town.

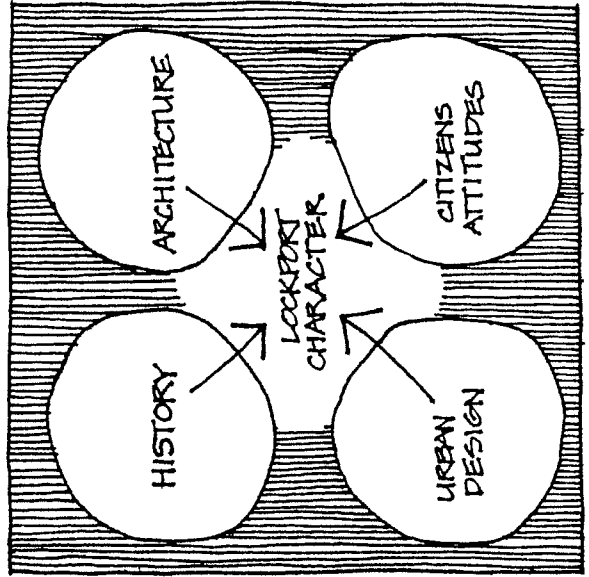
History is an essential ingredient of character, but not history for history's sake. An understanding of the past gives new perspective on existing environments. The crux is how that history relates to what exists in the town today. Activities which took place in events of local, regional and national history had some influence on which buildings

were built and still stand along State Street. Historical happenings touch every brick, stone, or window.

Physical ingredients help to shape the town's character. In Lockport, architecture is most important in developing character. It is the physical representation of history, the reflection of the hopes, aspirations and trials of the town. For this study, the architecture of the town was inspected, photographed, analyzed and put back together again. The age, style, mass, material, color and condition of the architecture was investigated.

Other physical elements relate to the character of the town, those which could be classified under the umbrella term, urban design. The natural slope of the land and the man-made traffic patterns influence character. The style, maintenance, material and placement of lighting, landscaping, and signage help to shape character.

Equally important to character are things not physical or historical. Perhaps the most important determinant of a town's character is the people who use it and how they use it. Shop owners, employees, property owners, visitors, shoppers or residents--each brings with him or her individual attitudes about downtown Lockport. These attitudes are crucial in shaping part of the physical environment in historic Lockport.



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# **I. History**

It is difficult to know a town without an understanding of its origins. History has played a forceful role in shaping the face of downtown Lockport. So much of the character of the town results from its days as canal headquarters. An appreciation of the past is needed to promote thoughtful change within the district.

The first recorded exploration of this region was in 1673, some 50 years after the sailing of the Mayflower and 100 before the Declaration of Independence. But colonial days were long over when, in 1818, Illinois became a

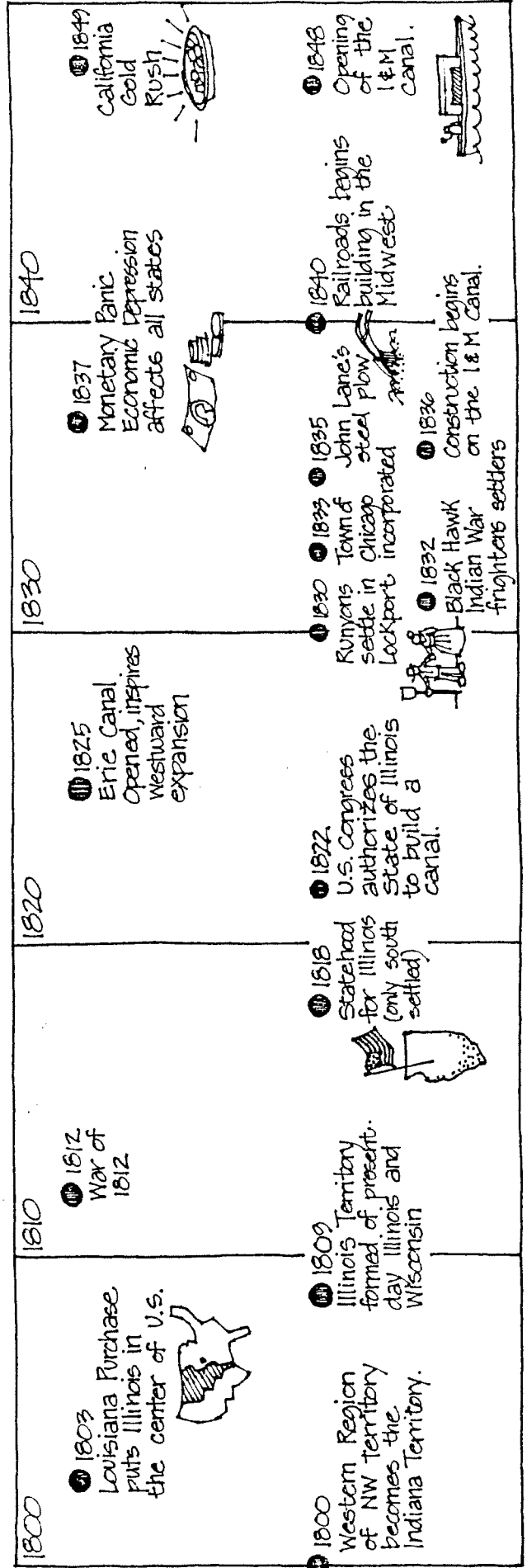
state. At that time, only its southern part was settled.

One of the early endeavors of the young state was to attempt to build a canal connecting Lake Michigan with the Illinois and Mississippi Rivers. Originally envisioned in 1673 by French explorer Louis Joliet, its construction was authorized by the U.S. Congress in 1822.

It was not until the opening of the Erie Canal in 1825 that substantial settlement began to occur in northern Illinois. The

reduction in travel time and shipping costs helped to create a wave of emigration from the east. With the treaty ending the Black Hawk War in 1833, and removal of the Indian threat (whether real or perceived), came further encouragement for growth.

New settlement created a need for improved transportation. "Swamps, bogs and sloughs combined with distance made overland freight-ing impractical and unprofitable. Progress seemed hopeless without a means to market." In turn, the promise of the Illinois and Michigan canal inspired new settlement.



In 1830, the Armstead Runyon family came to Lockport Township, the first permanent settlers. In the same year, Chicago was a small village of about 100 people. Another early settler near Lockport was John Lane. Between 1833 and 1835, Lane developed the first steel plow, a discovery which truly revolutionized prairie farming.

Before construction could begin, a new form of transportation appeared to challenge the canal plan. Debate arose between canal and railroad proponents, culminating in the

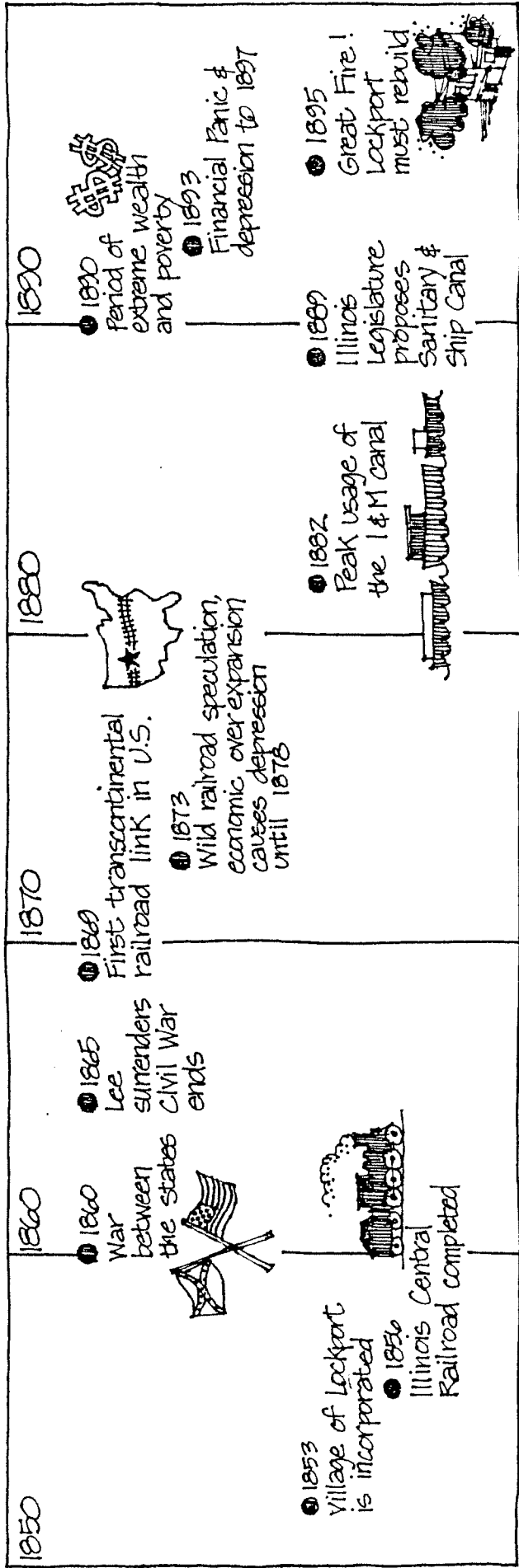
election of 1834. Rail transport was still too new and untried; as a result, the pro-canal candidate was elected governor. Construction began on July 4, 1836 at Bridgeport, Illinois.

Anticipating the growth produced by the canal, Armstead Runyon laid out a town plat in 1836. Then called Runyontown, it is more recently known as North Lockport.

The site of the village proper was platted by canal commissioners to serve as their headquarters. Chosen because of its central

location on the waterway, the first sale of lots took place in 1837. The same year saw construction of the canal office.

Another town plat, West Lockport, was laid out in 1838 at the site of Daggett's Mill. As stores and the post offices relocated from Runyontown and West Lockport, the "became merged in the village proper and the two names were forgotten in the general name of Lockport." 2/



The construction of the canal was beset by engineering and economic obstacles, finally opening in 1848. Its first use was to transport agricultural products to market. "However, agriculture soon gave way to industry in many sections of the county. Factories, mills, grain elevators, quarries, docks and warehouses sprang up all along the canal route. . . . With the canal, commerce boomed, and the area's population increased 10 times within three years." 3/ In 1853, the Village of Lockport was incorporated.

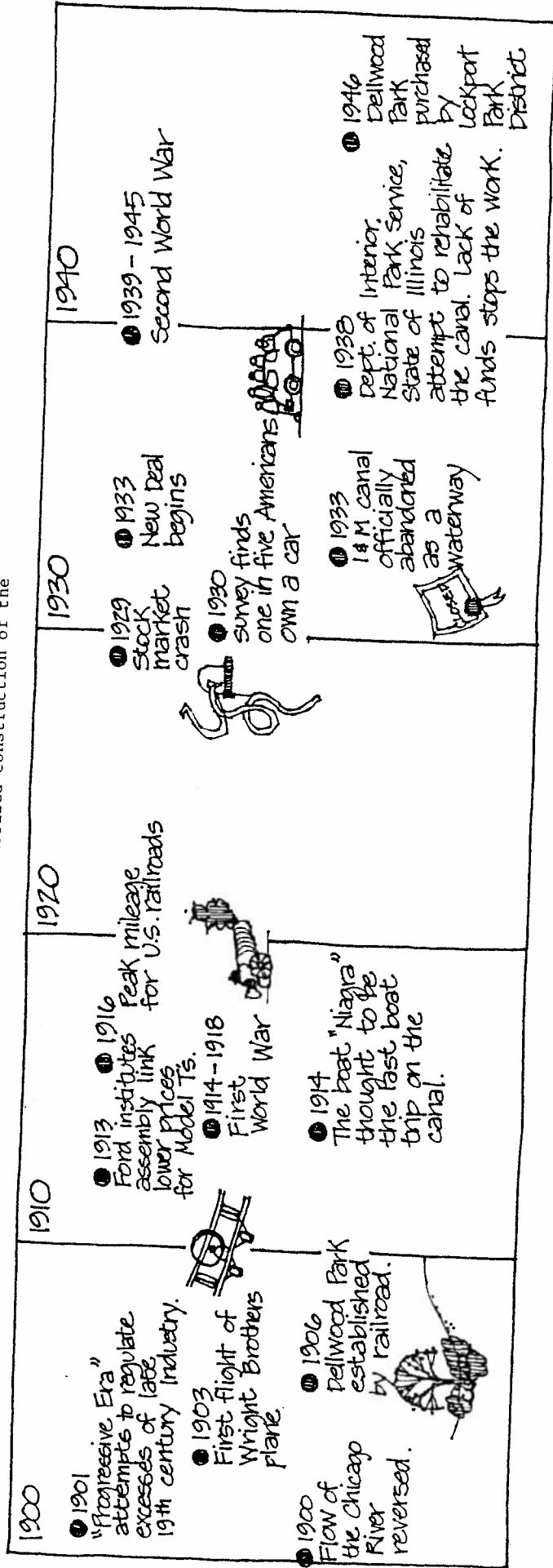
The first railroad was built through Lockport

in 1856. At the start, the canal was able to maintain a hold. Its two best years for tolls were 1865 and '66. Actually, the peak year for tonnage was in 1882, but rates had been reduced to compete with the railroads. After 1882, business declined steadily.

One function of the I&M Canal was to carry sewage away from Chicago and Lake Michigan. "By 1881, the channel had collected so much filth from the city's sewage that it had become putrid and intolerable to everyone within miles of it." 4/ In 1889, the Illinois legislature authorized construction of the

Sanitary and Ship Canal. Built between 1892 and 1900, it likely provided material to rebuild after Lockport's "great fire" of 1895.

"Meanwhile the old canal was allowed to fill up and fall into disrepair until its traffic partially reached the vanishing point." 5/ The last commercial trip on the I&M is thought to have been in 1914, when William Schuler of Lockport piloted the boat "Niagra."



Lockport derives much distinction from its historical association with the I&M Canal. The significance of the canal in the early history of northern Illinois and much of the midwest is clear. That the canal was soon to be eclipsed by the railroads does not diminish its importance.

HISTORY - FOOTNOTES

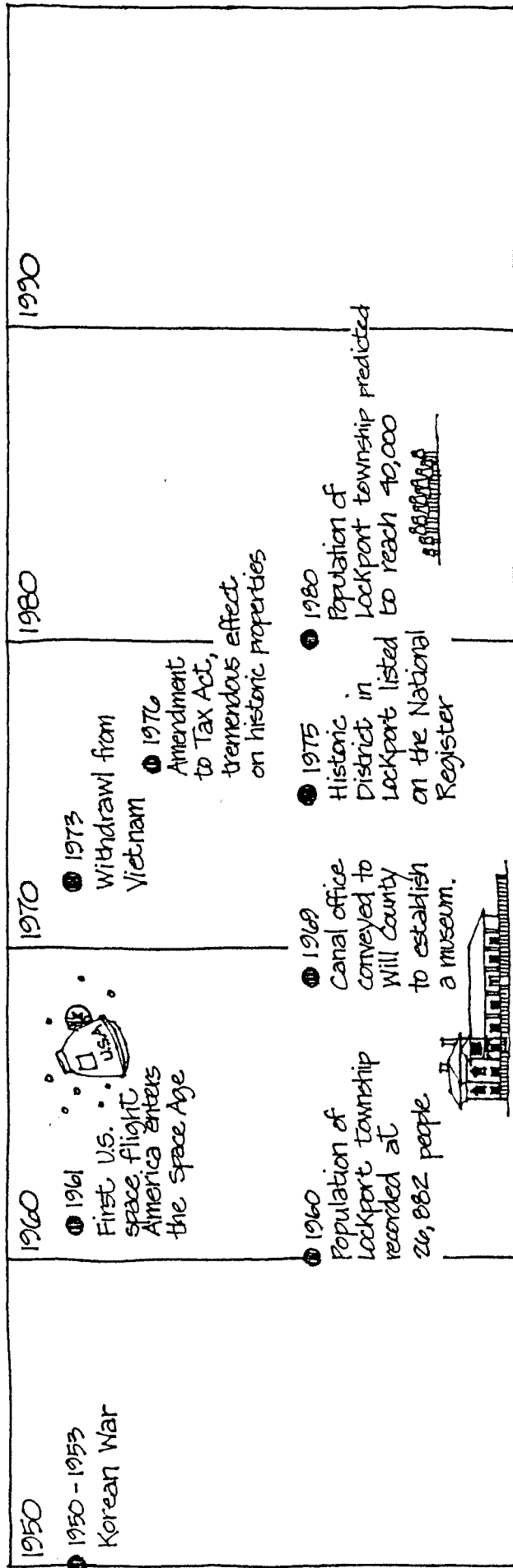
1/ "Will County Historical Society." Supplement to Joliet Herald-News, 13 April 1970, p. 5.

2/ Bernice G. Frazer, "Settlement of Lockport," Lockport, Lockport Woman's Club, 1905; Will County Historical Society, 1972.

3/ "Will County Historical Society." Supplement to Joliet Herald-News, 13 April 1970, p. 15.

4/ Alvin C. Harlow, Old Towpaths. Port Washington, N.Y.: Kennikat Press, Inc., 1926 (1964). p. 287.

5. Ibid., p. 288.



## **2. Architecture**

The architecture of a city is the foundation of its visual character. It is the physical fabric of the city, and it dominates one's perception of any given urban area.

Architecture creates the space which defines what a city is and how it functions. Within its walls, it encloses and conditions space for the great variety of specific functions necessary to our complex urban life. Outside its walls, it defines and embellishes the important public urban spaces, both formal and informal, which are so important to a city's character.

As a collective system of many individual buildings, the city evolves as time passes, responding to the changing culture which inhabits and uses it. Technology develops, attitudes and sensibilities change, the socioeconomic basis of the city is transformed and the architecture absorbs the impact of this evolution. The architecture becomes the physical manifestation of these cultural changes. As such, urban architecture becomes a valuable physical record of cultural evolution; of the history of past generations. It is a tangible direct link to the past, and it touches each of us. As a cultural and visual resource, it is irreplaceable.

Lockport is fortunate to have a downtown which retains a good deal of its historic architectural character. This fact has been nationally recognized as is evidenced by the historic district designation of a large portion of the city's urban core. The preservation of this architectural heritage (and the history it represents) can potentially benefit the Lockport community in numerous ways.

The goal of this study of Lockport's architecture is to look at the urban fabric and analyze its character. This process of analysis will identify those buildings, or qualities of buildings, which are dominant in the visual perception of the historic character which is the foundation of Lockport's "identity." This process will also expose those buildings (or qualities) which detract and/or compete with this character. The study will result in a series of recommendations and strategies intended to reinforce and enhance the visual environment in the historic district.

This study will examine Lockport's architecture on two distinct levels.

First, the historic district will be looked at in totality to discover its inherent organization. The goal is to see what identifiable architectural zones exist within the district, either in terms of function or character and to examine the relationships between them.

Second, portions of the district which appear to warrant a more detailed examination will be analyzed more specifically. The goal of this level of study is to develop realistic and feasible recommendations to guide the redevelopment of these specific areas which insure the preservation of their historic character.

This two level examination of the historic district allows one to focus one's attention more closely on those zones which merit special treatment either because they have special potential or particular problems.

# Architectural Zones

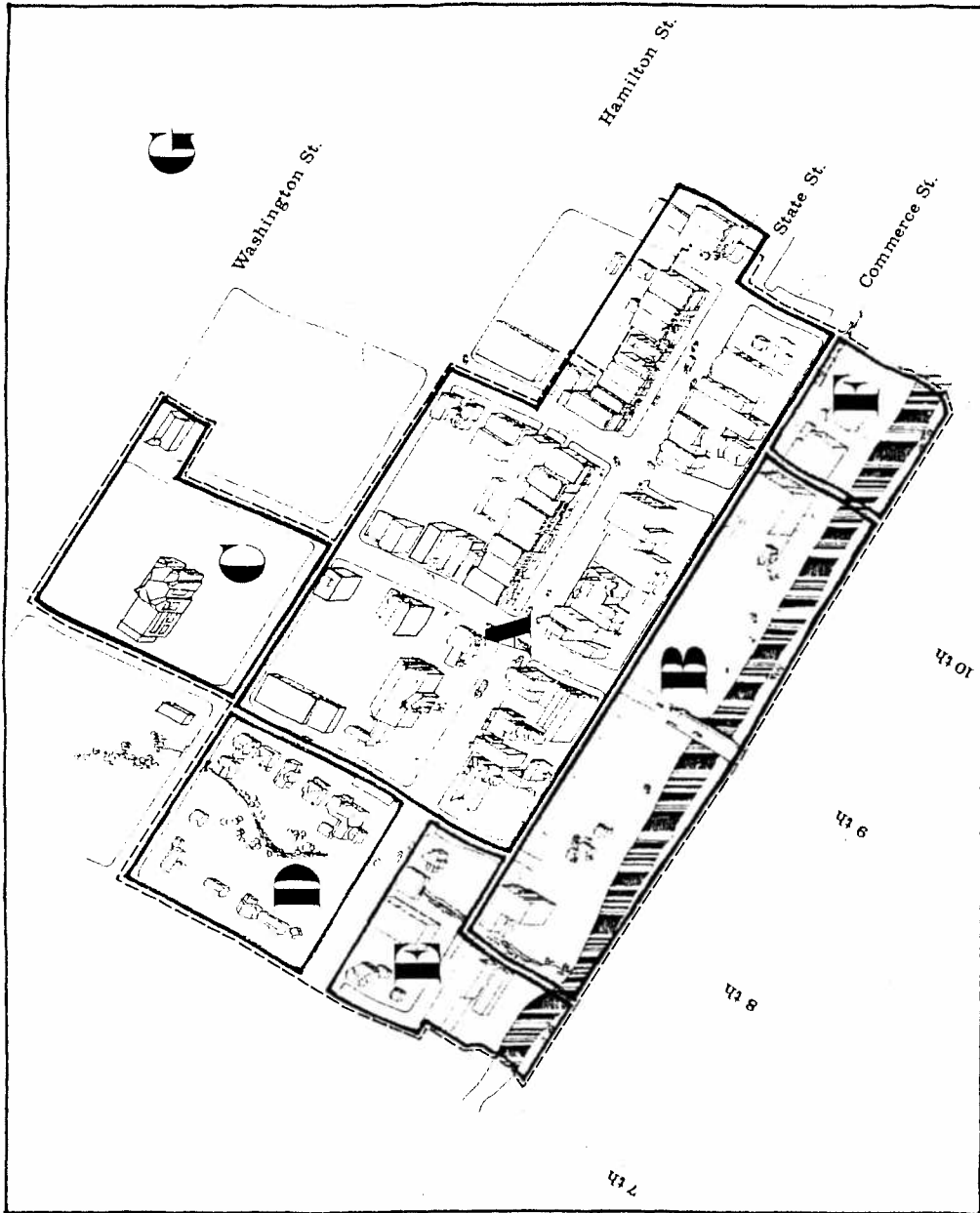
Lockport's historic district can be seen as a collective entity composed of a number of readily identifiable architectural zones, each of which has specific characteristics, potentials and problems. These various zones can be roughly organized into two basic types with respect to their visual character and the role they play defining the historic district. For the purposes of this report they will be called primary and secondary zones.

## THE PRIMARY ZONES (A, B, C)

There are three primary zones within the district. Each of these contributes to a significant degree to the character of downtown Lockport yet each is distinctly different, having its own specific qualities; architectural, environmental and historical. Each represents a different aspect of Lockport and should be considered as such.

The three primary zones which have been identified are: 1. the State Street commercial district ("Main Street"), 2. the Canal Zone (including the canal itself and the open space and warehouses associated with it,) and 3. the abandoned Lockport school building (and the space associated with it).

A.  
The State Street commercial district - this zone, while organized in a linear manner



along State Street, actually encompasses most of Lockport's central business district. It is the historic commercial district which developed during the late nineteenth century along Lockport's "Main Street" and served as the core around which the city's older residential areas were built. Architecturally, this zone is composed primarily of traditional American party wall "streetfront structures". The embellished front facades of these buildings collectively defined the commercial "street space." These front facades will be of primary concern in the more indepth study of this zone later in this report. Also a concern in this zone is the rear facades of these buildings and the interior block open spaces they define. The treatment of these areas will be important in the refinement and reinforcement of the existing district character.

Much of the detailed architectural analysis in this report will be concentrated on the State Street commercial district. There are several reasons for this. It is the most architectural of the zones. It includes many individual buildings and the character of the zone is very dependent on the visual relationships between the facades of these buildings. It is a collective character rather than one dominated by a single structure. The richly coherent visual environment which once existed in Lockport's commercial district resulted from the consistent scale, rhythm and zoning of its historic street front architecture. This balance, this consistency, has been severely disrupted by relatively recent alterations of the historic facades and by the addition of new buildings

which relate in an unsympathetic manner to the existing architecture. The visual relationships which currently exist between the facades which define the primary street spaces in Lockport must be examined to discover ways to reinforce the collective character of its historic building fronts and reestablish the necessary balance between visual variety and order which marks a coherent yet vital commercial environment.

The final, and perhaps most important, reason for the special emphasis in this study on the State Street commercial district is the dominant role it must play in the economic revitalization of downtown Lockport as an active commercial center. An improved environment and a character which compliments this zone's considerable historic resources will have a significant impact on the city's visual identity; its sense of place. This improved "image" of the downtown is the first step toward the attraction of the new businesses and visitors which it requires.

#### B.

The Canal Zone - This zone is comprised of the section of the I&M Canal from Seventh Street to Eleventh Street, the large open space which abuts the canal along most of this section (the historic canal landing zone), and the various historic warehouse buildings which sit adjacent to the canal.

The architectural character of this zone is dominated by the warehouse buildings, and particularly those built of the limestone so common in Lockport. These impressive structures define the historic canal landing on the north and south. On the eastern side,

this space is defined by the side and rear walls of the buildings discussed as part of the State Street commercial district. While primarily utilitarian in nature, these walls are important secondary character elements. Due to the topography, these walls are very visible, hence, they have a significant environmental impact. The extensive use of native limestone masonry in these areas compliments the dominant warehouse buildings.

While the unusual warehouses are an invaluable part of Lockport's architectural and historical heritage, little in the way of architectural analysis or rehabilitation is required on these buildings beyond emphasizing their visual importance to insure their preservation. Thought might also be given to the potential adaptive use of these buildings should the opportunity arise.

The problems involved in this zone are ones of open space utilization and historical interpretation rather than architecture.

#### C.

The Lockport School - A single building dominates this zone, both spatially and in terms of architectural character. It is the abandoned Lockport school building. Set prominently in an open block on the hillside overlooking the rest of the downtown, this building in fact dominates the entire historic district. Currently standing vacant and deteriorating, this building presents an excellent adaptive use opportunity.

The original school building, constructed of native limestone, is one of singular and im-

pressive character. Its architectural integrity has, however, been destroyed by an unfortunate addition on its northern facade. Consideration should be given to the removal of this addition in the future rehabilitation of the structure.

Included in this primary character zone is the small limestone church which stands across Ninth Street from the school building. Due to the similarity of their materials, the church and the school relate well to each other forming a visual unit which spans Ninth Street and defines the entrance or exit to the district at that point.

#### THE SECONDARY ZONES (D, E, F)

The three primary zones just discussed encompass the majority of the historic district. The remainder of the district is made up of what can be called secondary zones. They can be generally described as zones of lesser architectural character. They are located on the periphery of the district boundary and apparently serve as buffer zones for the more intact historic character areas. In other words, they provide some measure of control over any future development directly adjacent to the historic district which may have a negative impact on the character of the primary zones.

D. One secondary zone, by far the largest one, merits special discussion. This is the block of residential structures at the northern most part of the district. Not only does this zone effectively serve as a buffer for

more significant zones, but it also has a certain character of its own which sets it off from the majority of the district. Architecturally, it is of a residential character while most of the district exhibits a predominately commercial character. While none of the individual buildings within this zone are outstanding, together on the well wooded block they form a strong unit. Also of interest within this zone is the creek which cuts through the center of the block, often exposing outcroppings of limestone along its course. It is from this limestone which most of the most impressive buildings in Lockport are built.

Such special features of the environment are truly unrecognized resources in Lockport. Great interpretive potential lies in the city's architectural and cultural relationship to the land on which it sits. If adequately developed, the creek can become an integral part of the Lockport experience and the interpretive story to be told . . . linking the land to the history to the architecture to the people of Lockport.

#### E. and F.

These small buffer zones are located at opposite ends of the historic district and adjacent to the canal. They function to insulate the particularly historic portion of the canal (and associated open space and warehouse buildings - Zone B) from any development which would infringe upon its character.

In addition, these small zones have their own potential contributions to the Lockport ex-

perience in that they encompass portions of the canal which might be included in any future interpretive development of the canal itself (as in the canal walk, etc.)

Zone E extends from the canal to State Street and has the additional buffer function of protecting (in conjunction with Zone D) the northern entry to the State Street commercial district.

It should be noted at this point that there is no comparable buffer zone for the southern end of the State Street district which in fact has a much more distinctive architectural character (worth protecting) than its northern end.

#### ARCHITECTURAL CHARACTER ZONES OUTSIDE THE DISTRICT

#### G.

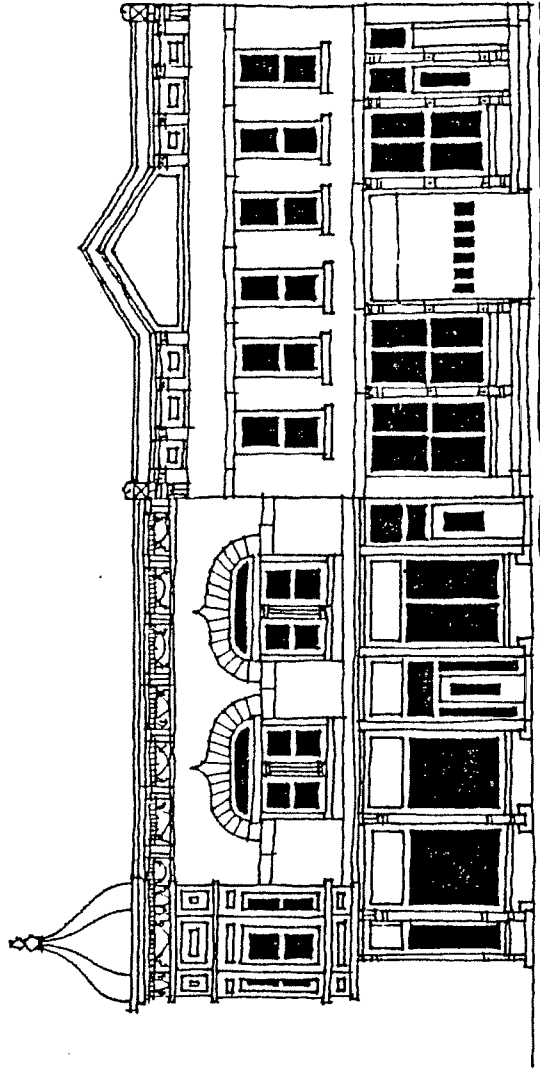
It is a misconception to think that all of Lockport's high quality historic architecture is to be found within the confines of its Historic District. While the examination of areas outside the district boundaries was far from complete in this study, it should be noted that many fine buildings (houses, churches, and native limestone structures in general) exist in areas immediately adjacent to the downtown. These buildings have an impact on the visual and historical character of Lockport as a whole and should be recognized as such.

## SUMMARY - DISTRICT ARCHITECTURAL ANALYSIS

1. Rather than being a district of homogeneous architectural character, Lockport's historic district is composed of a number of zones of very diverse character.
2. Three of these zones contain architecture of high quality which dominates the visual character of the given zone. Each of the zones, or character areas, is well defined as an architectural, functional, spatial and historical entity. At the same time, each character area is an integral part of Lockport; its "sense of place" and its visual identity.
3. The district contains several zones of lesser architectural character which serve to visually buffer the primary character areas. The distribution of this buffer function appears to be inconsistent relative to the character areas which form the core of the district. The State Street commercial district is well protected at its northern end, but not protected at all at its southern end.
4. The occurrence of native limestone masonry (used both formally and informally) is a visual theme which runs throughout the various character areas within the district (and outside the district), giving Lockport the potential for a rich and unified environment.

5. The occurrence of historic architecture in Lockport is not confined to the historic district. There is much of value outside the district which should be recognized as a visual resource.

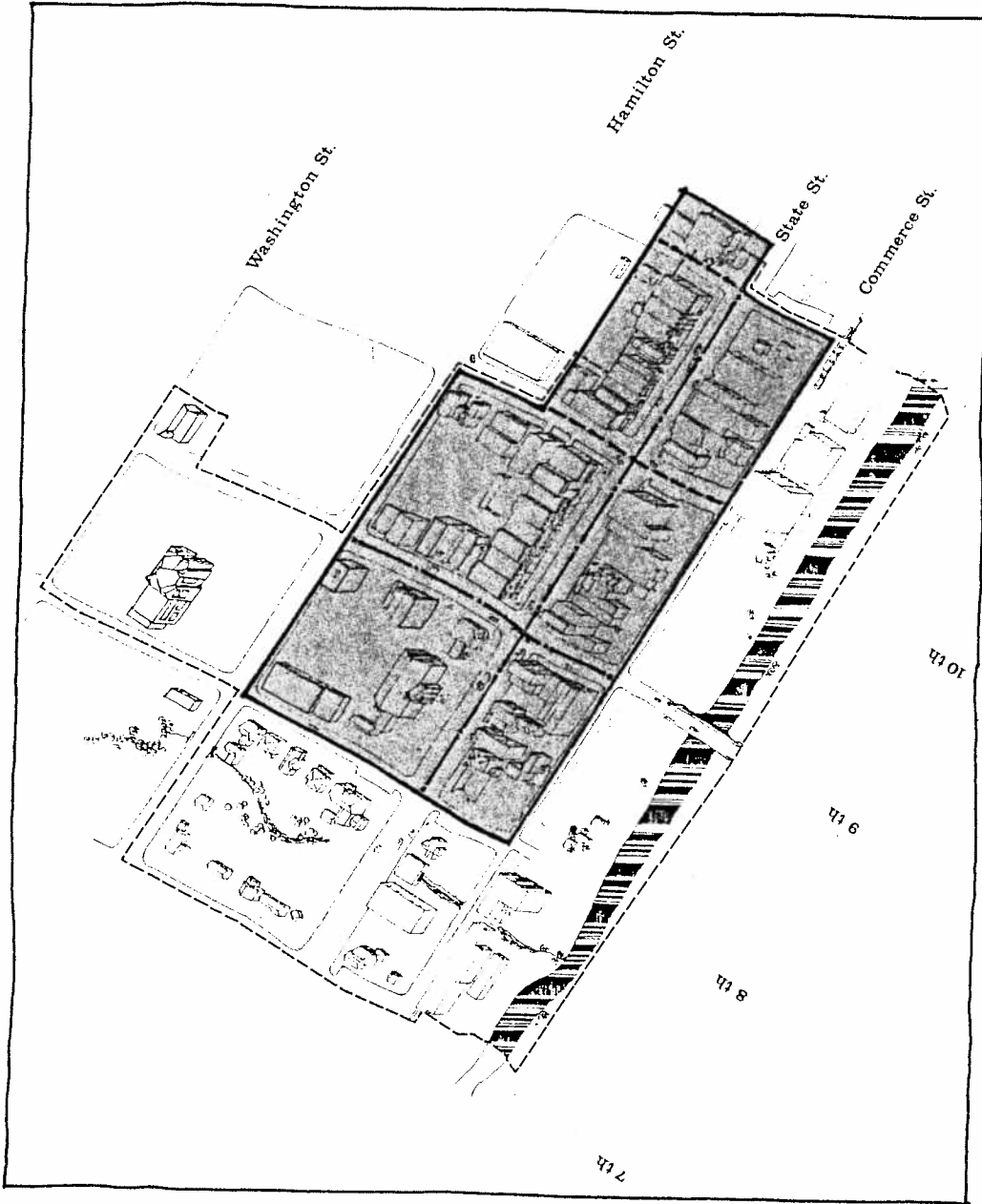
6. There is great potential for environmental, commercial and interpretive redevelopment within the boundaries of Lockport's historic district.



# State Street Commercial District

As was previously indicated in the broad scale look at downtown Lockport, the most important, intriguing and challenging architectural problem in the historic district is the analysis and potential redevelopment of the character zone designated as the State Street commercial district . . . Lockport's "historic Main Street." The complexities of the architecture in this zone and the crucial role it must play in the preservation and revitalization of the downtown environment give good reason to study it as a series of streetscapes and as an assemblage of individual building facades.

Before examining this zone subjectively, in other words, as it exists specifically in Lockport today, there is benefit to be derived from looking, in an objective way, at the architectural and commercial organism known as the "Main Street" which formed the core of countless midwestern cities and towns as they developed in the last half of the nineteenth century. State Street is one of these organisms, unique in some respects, but entirely typical in others. By examining the "Main Street" in a conceptual sense, it is possible to articulate, in a general way, how and why this historical commercial environment worked (and works) both visually and



functionally, how this visual character has been disrupted by more recent alteration, and how its inherent consistency can be restored and reinforced in the process of redevelopment.

#### "MAIN STREET"

To begin at the very beginning, as the commercial "Main Street" was the core of the midwestern town, the concepts of transportation and communication systems were at the core of the "Main Street." Rivers, roads, canals, etc. were those arteries of civilization which gave order to and made usable what would otherwise be untamed wilderness. They were the means by which information, material and people were able to penetrate unsettled land. They were the prerequisite for settlement.

Strategic points along these linear transportation systems (the points at which two roads cross, desirable points along a river, or locks on a canal) were logical nodes at which to settle. In other words, settlements occurred at points where these transportation functions were concentrated. Even in the most primitive of these settlements, an immediate hierarchical zoning was established. The community businesses and commercial functions located close to the transportation/communication node, homesteads and residences located in a zone surrounding this commercial core.

Environmental, cultural, and economical circumstances permitting, an early settlement grew, both in population and commerce, and

expanded physically. It did so following the same pattern of urban zoning; the commercial core surrounded by residential. As an aside, it should be noted that this same basic pattern for the development of an ordered, functional, cohesive urban area continued until the rise of the suburban shopping center in the mid-twentieth century.

As a primitive settlement developed, its growth was quickly ordered by the establishment of a street grid system which divided a given area into a series of rectangular (usually) blocks. These blocks were then further subdivided and sold as plots of land. As a town evolved within this grid, the commercial core of the early settlement usually stretched out in a linear manner along a street which, by nature of its central importance, became the "Main Street."

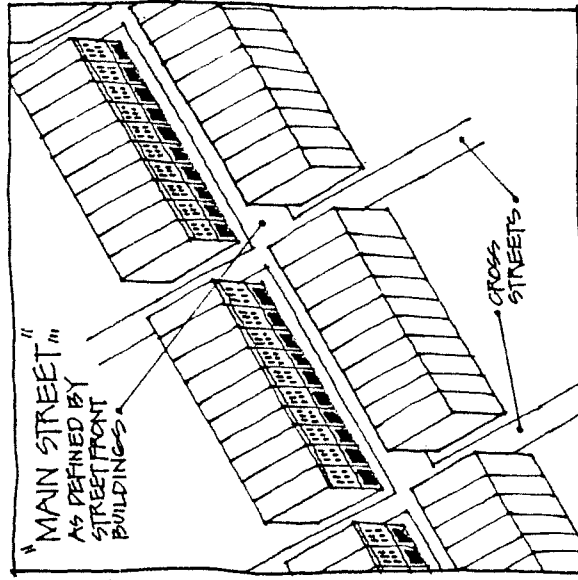
Within a town so developed, the two primary zones, the commercial and the residential took on a different and readily identifiable character . . . a result primarily due to the specific building types culturally employed in each zone.

In the residential zones, the blocks were subdivided into relatively large plots on which were built freestanding homes of whatever specific architectural style was currently in vogue. The streets themselves were often luxuriously lined with shade trees.

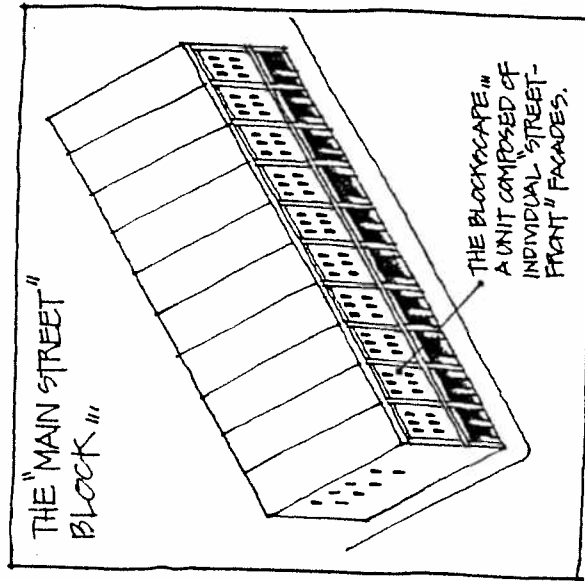
In contrast to this, the blocks within the commercial zone were generally subdivided into long narrow (15' to 25' widths) plots of land which were oriented so that their narrow

side fronted on the primary commercial street . . . the "Main Street." This subdivision of the block resulted in a very efficient use of the commercially valuable land because it allowed a maximum number of businesses (buildings) to front on the commercial street. The typical building type employed in these zones was the traditional American party wall "streetfront building."

This remarkably adaptable and efficient building type consisted (consists) basically of two bearing walls running perpendicular to



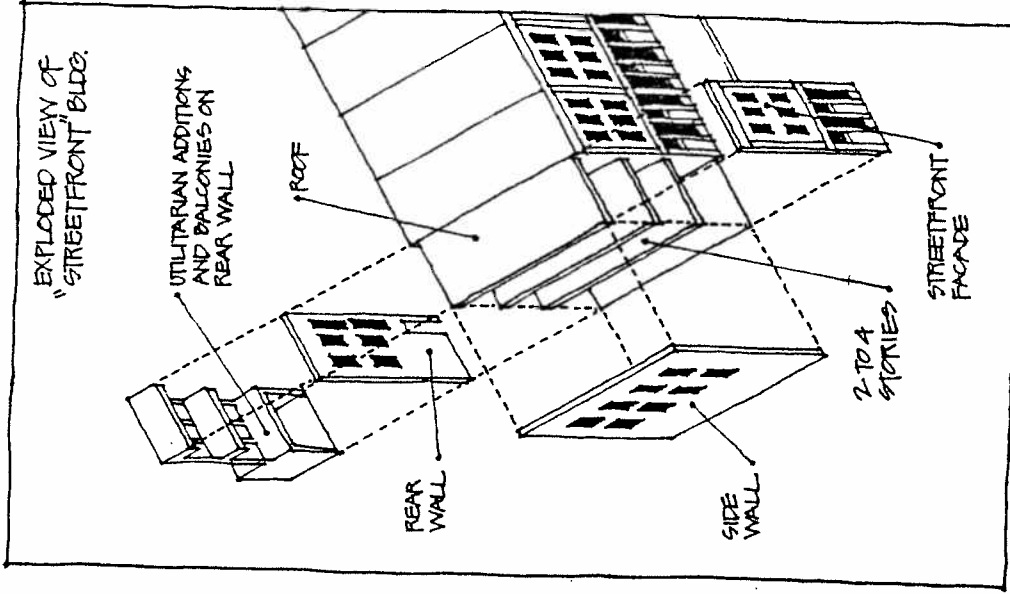
the street which supported the floors of the building, a rear wall, and a decorated front facade which faced the street and addressed the public functions which occurred there. While occasionally built of wood, these buildings were usually built of masonry, either brick or stone. Varying in height from two to four stories, these buildings repetitiously lined the commercial street; the ground floor housing a business (store, or office) and the upper floors filling a variety of functions ranging from storage to residential.



The architectural character of this building type is distinctly consistent. The rear walls and the side walls, where exposed, are utilitarian in character, often regularly punctuated with window openings. In contrast with this utilitarian anonymity of the rear and side walls, the front wall (the street facade) is a highly developed, stylized, boldly and specifically decorated architectural element. The front facade, hence, the street, was the focus of the street front commercial building. The facade was of primary importance.

Much in the same way that the streetfront building was a consistently used, functionally and culturally determined commercial architectural building type, the streetfront facade, as an architectural element generally conformed to a consistent functional and aesthetic zoning.

Seen reduced to its essentials, the facade is composed of two primary zones: the upper facade and the storefront. The upper facade was generally a masonry wall with regularly spaced window openings which, in conjunction with a similar type of building front across the street, defined the "spatial street." This facade zone was usually embellished with some sort of cornice at the top of the wall which served to both physically and aesthetically cap the building front. The degree of decoration on this cornice ranged from very simple to very elaborate, depending primarily on the architectural style prevalent at the time of construction. The upper facade was often further embellished with the decorative treatment of the window openings, especially the window caps or lintels.



Whereas the upper facade (in fact, the front wall in total) defined the "Main Street" space, the storefront as an architectural zone related entirely to the pedestrian and marked the commercially active part of the building - the ground floor. Like the upper facade, the storefront zone was often capped with a decorative cornice which in this instance articulated the top of the pedestrian "street."

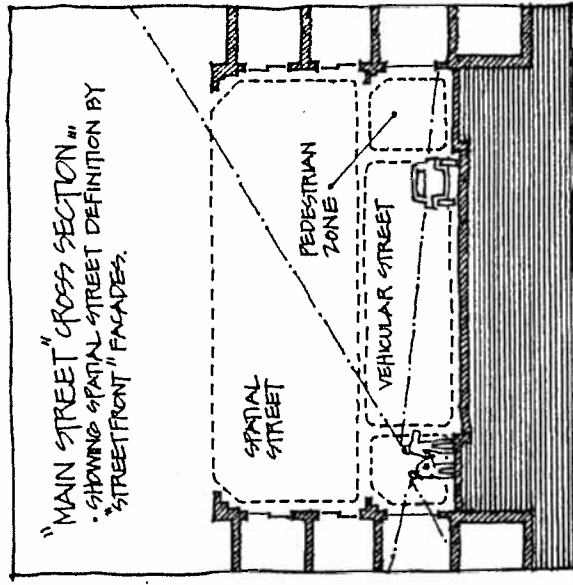
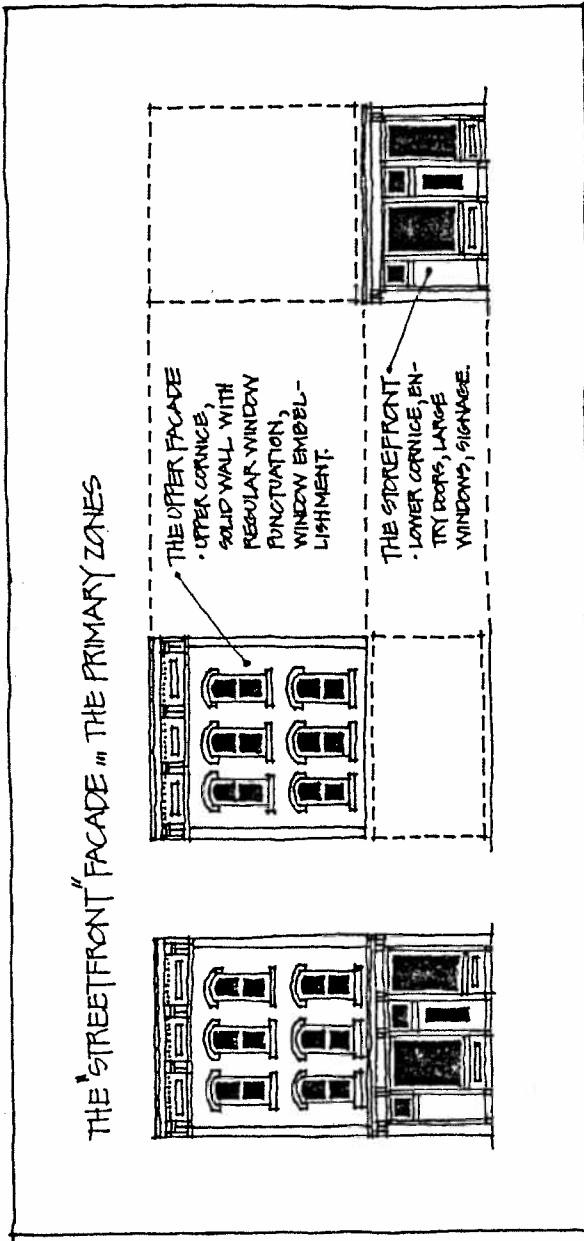
The architectural character of the storefront was markedly different from that of the upper

facade in response to the unique functions it filled. This function was that of commerce, and the storefront was the frame through which the essential business of the city took place. The zone was characterized by openness and transparency. Literally a frame, constructed of vertical and horizontal members, it was filled with large open areas of glass and the door which allowed entry to the building (often both to the ground floor business and the upper floors as well). The frame itself was frequently quite embellished, especially the vertical components which

were often cast iron columns of delicate design.

Another general characteristic of the storefront was its nearly unlimited flexibility. As a simple frame for windows and doors, it could function within an incredible variety of configurations; the entry to the store could be indented to further articulate its importance, the window areas would be broken up into numerous specific compositions, etc.

In addition to its primary functions as out-



lined above, the storefront zone often included such secondary necessities as graphic signage to identify and advertise the specific business it served. Canvas awnings were often used to protect the large window areas from direct sunlight and the sidewalk pedestrian from harsh weather.

Having thus completed this cursory examination of "Main Street: from its early origins down to the specific characteristics of the typical building type generally built in the late 1800s, the street can again be studied

to discover how the environment created by the repetition of these individual buildings functioned as an aggregate whole.

The key to understanding the "Main Street" commercial environment and why it is visually so successful is the recognition that certain constants were inherent in its physical fabric. The first of these is the definition of the "street space." "Main Street" consisted of a space which was lined on both sides with building facades of generally similar height (and/or scale). To the person

using the street, this fact was immediately recognized by its contrast to other more residential zones of the city. The consistently defined street space signaled, and, in fact, became symbolic of, commercial activity.

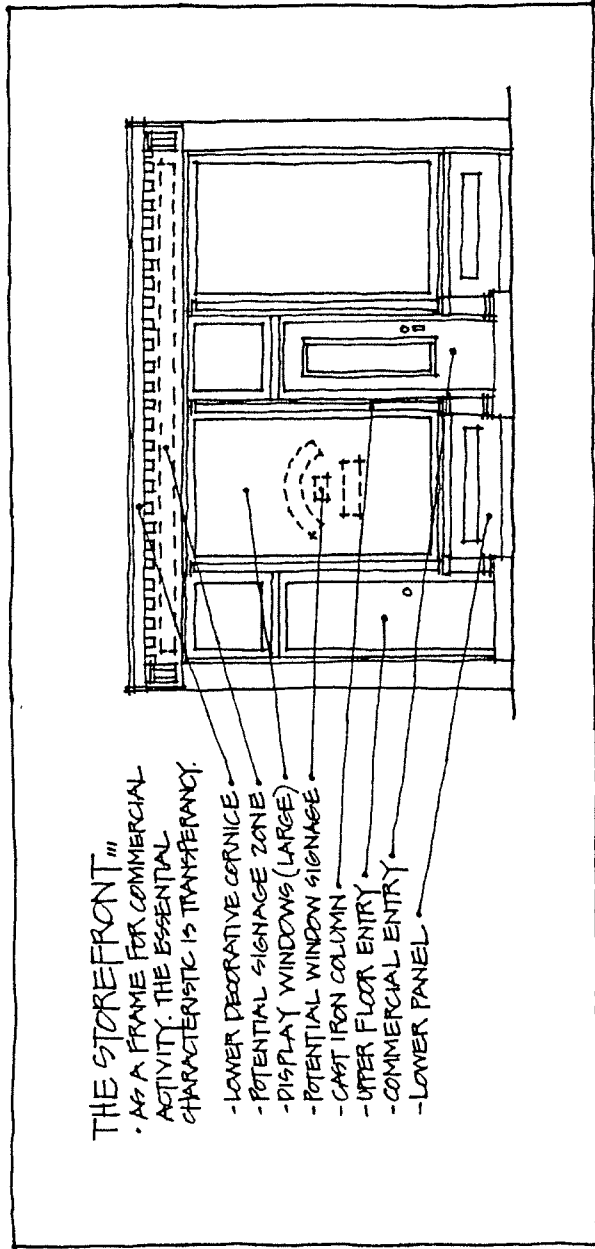
The second of these environmental constants was the repetition and articulation of buildings of similar widths which made up the blocks which lined the street. This imparted a certain regular visual (and structural) rhythm to the street facade.

Thirdly, there was a consistent zoning of each individual streetfront facade into two zones which related to the person using the street; the upper facade which was physically above him and the storefront which related directly to him as a pedestrian (i.e. the pedestrian street was consistently defined).

The fourth constant was the series of rich regularities and rhythms within these two primary streetfront zones: the consistent use of cornices to articulate the primary zones, the regular punctuation of the upper facades with window openings of similar size, and the consistent characteristics of the storefronts which lined the sidewalks (cornices, large windows, entries, signage, awnings, etc.).

The entire commercial environment had a strong visually apparent and structurally inherent order to it which insured a significant degree of unity and visual coherence.

These levels of order are fundamental to the historical character of "Main Street." However, the true success of this commercial en-



vironment is in its balance between its strong underlying order and the delightful Victorian disorder and/or variety which was overlaid upon it. The endless variety of specific storefront configurations which could and did occur has already been mentioned. The same is true for the whole range of building details. Numerous, richly detailed cornices, cast iron columns, bay windows, window hoods, etc. could be obtained prefabricated in large cities such as Chicago, and they were well used to express the individuality of the building owner. Specific window shapes and details vary from building to building. One facade may have been simple in its detailing, the next elaborate. Canvas awnings could be had in numerous colors, designs and sizes.

The late nineteenth century commercial environment struck a delicate balance between visual unity and vitality which grew out of its strong foundation of an underlying order and the endless variety of its detail and decoration.

If one is to preserve the character of a historic "Main Street" while adapting it to function as a contemporary commercial environment in today's socio-economic climate, as is the case with Lockport's State Street, the recognition, appreciation and retention of this balance upon which the historic character depends is essential. The two counter parts of this balance, the order and the vital detail, must be preserved and reinforced.

Before presenting the graphic analysis of the

primary blockscapes in Lockport's State Street commercial district, the reader would, perhaps, be well served by a discussion which, in a general way, outlines the architectural problems which exist in the State Street zone in terms of the two character components just discussed, namely, the levels of order and the vital details.

#### THE LEVELS OF ORDER

Many of the architectural problems which detract from its "Main Street" historical character can be termed disruptions in one or more of the levels of visual order previously discussed. To briefly reiterate the concepts, these levels of order are as follows:

1. Consistent street space definition (building height or scale).
2. Consistent articulation of structural rhythm in the blockscape.
3. Consistent primary facade zoning (upper facade and pedestrian facade).
4. Consistent secondary facade zoning and characteristics (window openings, materials, textures, etc.)

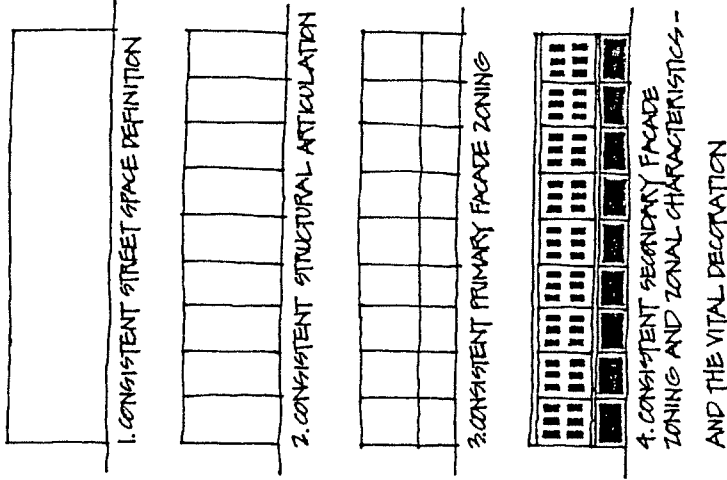
On State Street, the visual ordering of the street space breaks down at one point or another on each of these four levels. In the following text, the various levels of order will be discussed in terms of the ways in which they are disrupted.

#### 1. CONSISTENT STREET SPACE DEFINITION

The spatial definition of the street space in

## BLOCKSCAPE CHARACTER ANALYSIS III

### THE FOUR CONSISTENT LEVELS OF VISUAL ORDER:



the State Street commercial district varies drastically from excellent to poor. In a block by block analysis, as the reader will see, the commercial district exhibits blockscapes which retain their original street wall, uninterrupted by any major recent alterations (the removal of a building or buildings). On the other hand, there are blockscapes in which the sense of a street, in the historic sense, is nonexistent. There are, of course, examples which fall between these two extremes, blockscapes which retain a significant degree of their street wall but also contain specific zones where the wall is interrupted.

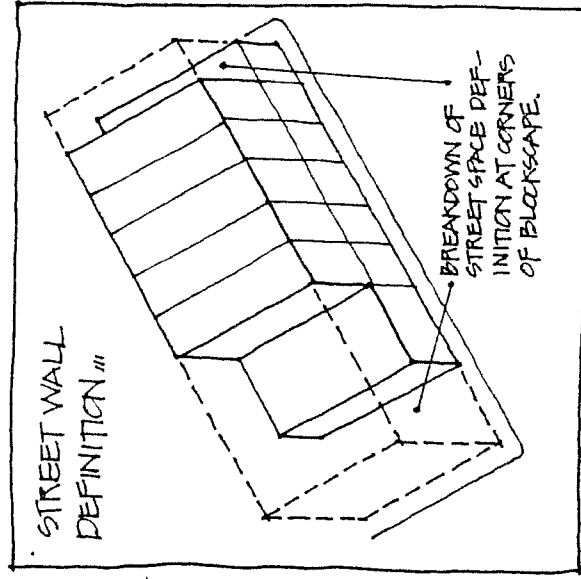
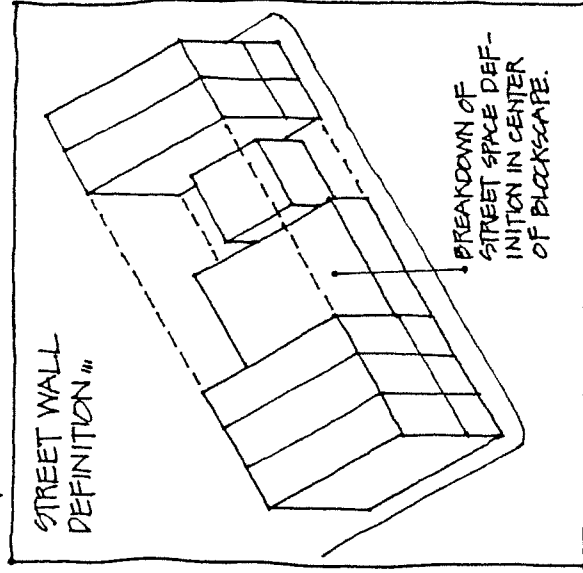
A breakdown of the street on this level has serious consequences on the historic character of the downtown area; it is a disruption which has a relatively high environmental impact. The spatial solutions to problems of this magnitude are of the greatest importance to the reinforcement of the overall historic character which still exists to a substantial degree in the State Street area.

Paramount in importance in the strong definition of street space is the existence of a consistent upper facade zone of relatively uniform height. In all cases where problems of this kind are seen, they are due to the removal of a historic building from the blockscape and its replacement with a more recent building which is either substantially lower than the norm established by the historic buildings or one which is setback from the sidewalk (again disrupting the strong sense of a "street wall.")

Several additional concepts should be mentioned in light of this discussion. First is the difference in importance between the ends of the blockscape, which defines the corners and the interior portion of the blockscape. While the optional situation is, of course, a consistently defined street space throughout the block, in terms of overall impact upon the historic urban character of a downtown area, the strong definition of the corners of a block is of more consequence than the street space within the block. This is due to the fact that the corner is essentially

the hinge between two blockscapes; therefore its impact is doubled.

The other concept is the natural breakdown of urban street space at the periphery of the "downtown." This is a zone of transition between the intensely commercial zone and the either less intense commercial or residential zones which surround it. Rather than detracting from the historic character of an area, this type of spatial breakdown is part of the character.



## 2. CONSISTENT STRUCTURAL RHYTHM

Like the consistent definition of street space, the articulation of the regular structural rhythm on the blockscapes in the State Street zone varies from excellent to poor. And again, the existence of this level of visual order depends on whether or not the original buildings have been demolished and replaced with more recent structures. Where the historic buildings remain, especially on the upper facades, the structural rhythm is generally expressed. The more recent buildings, in general, disrupt the rhythm of the street, being typically more horizontal than the historic buildings.

The articulation of the building rhythm of the historic buildings has been in many cases disrupted by the unsympathetic remodeling of their storefront zones. This tendency has had a negative impact on the character of the street separating the storefront zone too distinctly from the upper facade of a given building, thus destroying the important element of unity within individual facades.

It should be noted at this point that the structural rhythm articulated in many of Lockport's fine historic facades is not based on the single bay width of approximately 20' (as discussed in the earlier prototypical discussion of the American "Main Street") but rather on multiples of this bay width. This no doubt reflects the very late nineteenth century construction date of many of these buildings (during the reconstruction of Lockport after the fire of 1895) when the influence of the new developing styles of commercial architecture had begun to spread.

## 3. CONSISTENT PRIMARY FACADE ZONING

With a few exceptions, the primary zones, the storefront zone and the upper facade, are well defined on the historic facades throughout the State Street commercial district. The recent additions to Lockport's commercial blockscapes either have no upper facade or make no attempt to differentiate visually their ground floor from the upper floors. Hence, it is the recent structures which tend to disrupt this level of visual order.

While the pedestrian facade zone is consistently defined on most of the downtown's street front facades, and while this does, conceptually at least, reinforce the historic character of the State Street zone, much of the environmental benefit to be derived from this strong level of ordering is lost in the lack of subtlety by which it is accomplished.

Again the problem resides in the recent architecturally unsympathetic remodeling of the storefront zone of most of these buildings. As was seen in the discussion of the articulation of the structural rhythm of these facades, the remodeled storefronts visually separate the two primary facade zones too distinctly resulting in a situation where there is no relationship beyond that of juxtaposition between the top and bottom half of an individual building front.

## 4. CONSISTENT SECONDARY FACADE ZONING AND THEIR CHARACTERISTICS

This level of visual order is one of subtle relationships which can essentially "make or

break" the character of a historic commercial area. In Lockport, its implications are of great importance.

In looking at the State Street zone from this point of view, two now familiar conclusions are apparent. The first is that the recently constructed buildings in the zone, have no relationship, subtle or otherwise, to the historic facades which exist there. The second conclusion is that, regarding the historic buildings, the original upper facades succeed grandly in visually relating to one another on this subtle scale while the extensively altered storefront zones of these buildings suffer from a lack of these relationships, both storefront to adjacent storefront and storefront to upper facade.

Lockport's commercial district is notable for its excellent upper facades with many of the upper cornices and much of the original window detailing intact. The rhythm of its window openings is regular yet varied. The consistent use of masonry, both brick and stone, is substantially impressive. By no means is this degree of excellence uniform throughout the district, but it is prevalent enough to influence a person's perception of the area's character.

While there are some notable historic storefront's in the commercial district, the pedestrian zone, in general, is dominated by a profusion of enameled panels, incongruous materials, textures, and colors, excessive and confused signage, and, occasionally, very poor maintenance. All of these qualities either detract or compete with the

dominant historic character exhibited in the upper facades.

There is a very important positive characteristic which, with a few exceptions, unifies the multitude of storefronts into a coherent zone. This is the retention in their designs of large areas of glass. This transparency is a crucial quality to appreciate and preserve in any future redevelopment of the storefront zone. Not only does it conceptually relate to the historic characteristics of the storefront, but it plays an important role in the vitality of the commercial activity of a district. It allows the pedestrian to sense the activity within a store.

#### THE VITAL DECORATION

To reiterate a point made earlier, visual success of the late nineteenth century commercial "Main Street" environment was an expression of the pleasure Victorians took in the exuberant decoration of the street front facade of their buildings. It brought an exciting life and vitality to the environment structured by the levels of order just discussed in depth. This decoration was an essential ingredient in the architectural formula for "Main Street."

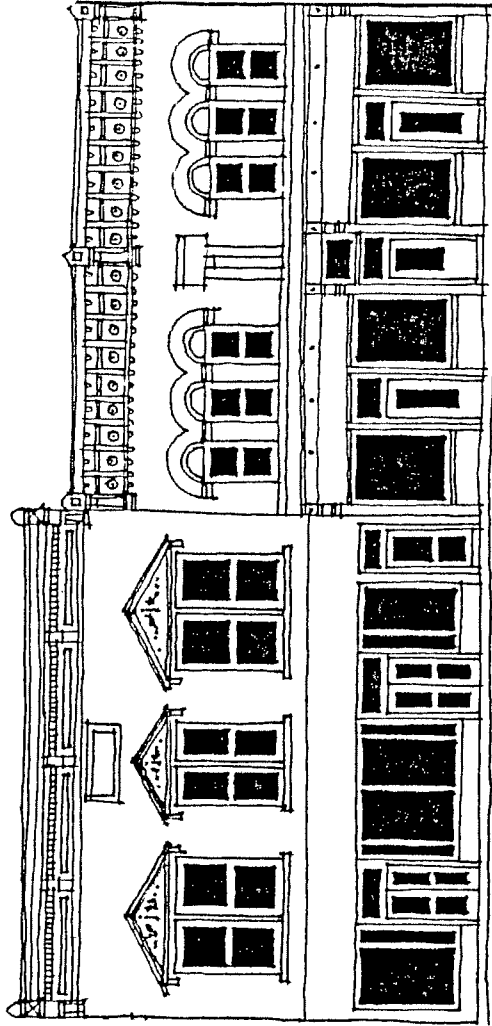
The bold cornices with their substantial brackets and delicate filagree, the window hoods used to embellish and exaggerate the common window opening, and the stately cast iron columns of the store front; all were, and are, a delight to the eye. Today, they are relics of the past; an almost irreplaceable resource.

#### LOCKPORT . . . THE RESOURCE

Lockport is blessed with a substantial amount of its original character . . . both its inherent order and its playful decoration.

Lockport's architectural character is unique, at least unique to the geographical region of which it is a part. The widespread use of native limestone for buildings has a dramatic impact on the visual character of the city. The juxtaposition of delicate Victorian decoration on the bold stone walls

has a special quality of contrast about it . . . a particular character which must be recognized, appreciated, and preserved.

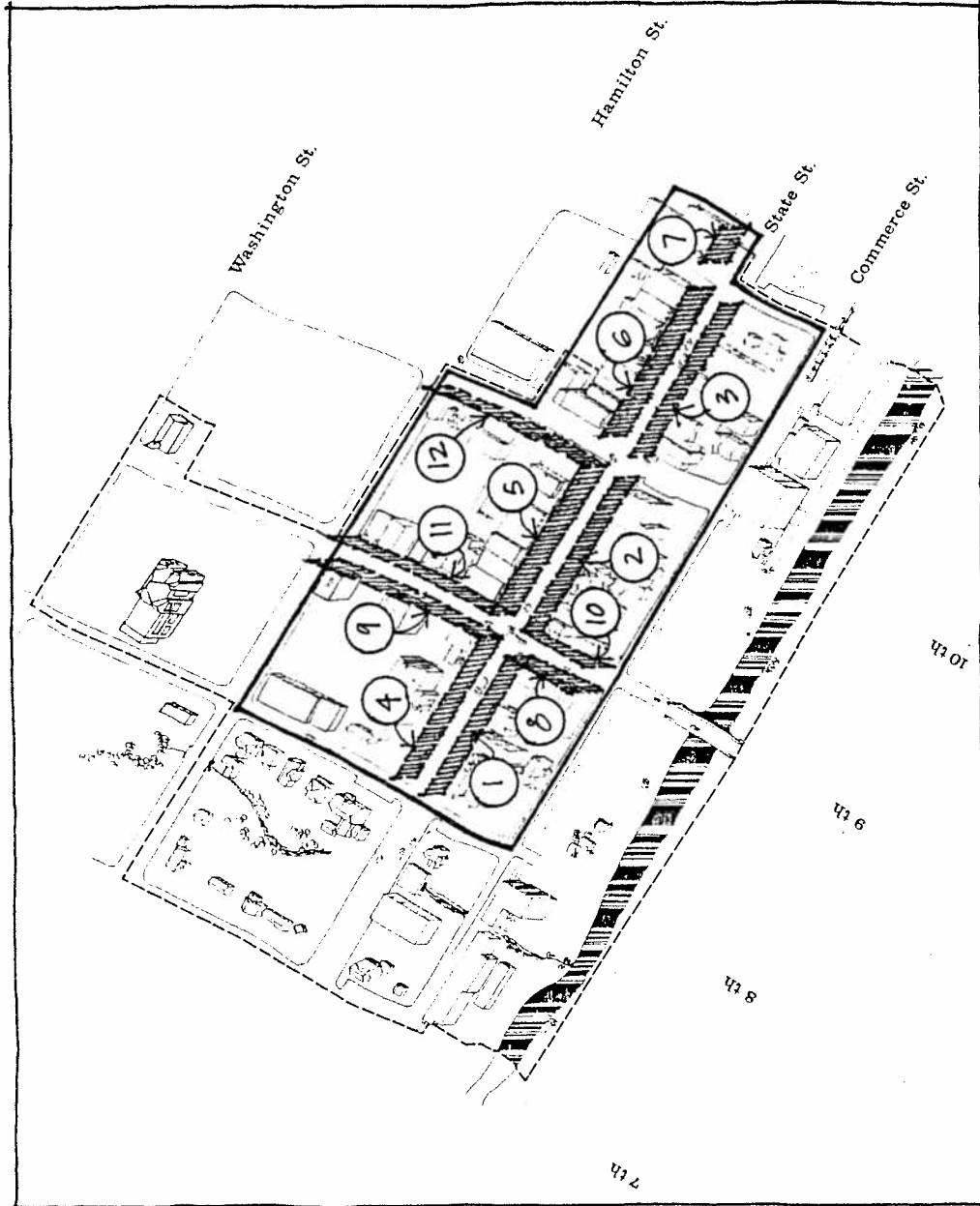


# Blockscapes

## BLOCKSCAPE ANALYSIS

On the following pages, the primary blockscapes in the State Street commercial district are graphically analyzed to illustrate their resources and problem areas relative to the over-all historic "Main Street" character which the district exhibits. The individual blockscapes which have been chosen for specific analysis are indicated in the drawing to the left. They define the street space which makes up the core of Lockport's downtown and functions as the main transportation corridors which pass through the area. These streets are the ones which have the most impact on a person's perception of the historic district's architectural character. The environment created by the street front facades which line these streets are an important part of Lockport's "visual image" and/or "sense of place" as both a historic and commercial urban entity.

The blockscapes which define the secondary streets have not been analyzed individually. This is not meant to diminish their importance to the district architectural character. They are, however, in general less complex as architectural problems being composed to a large degree of the more utilitarian sidewalls of buildings which front on State Street. When resource or problem areas do occur, they are essentially the same as those covered in the primary blockscapes. Many of the comments seen in the following pages apply also to the secondary streets, in



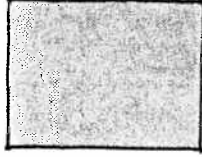
LOCKPORT, ILLINOIS  
 STATE STREET COMMERCIAL DISTRICT  
 BLOCKSCAPE ANALYSIS

concept if not literally.

The process of analysis is based on the previous discussions of the "Main Street" commercial environment and the visual characteristics which made it work; the four levels of order and the zones of vital decoration. The goal of this analysis is to first identify streetfront facades or portions of facades which retain a significant degree of their original character and contribute to the dominant historical character of the State Street zone. The second goal is to identify those facades or portions thereof which disrupt, detract from or compete with the historical character. The building recommendations which follow later in the report will be essentially a response to the results of this analysis.

Beyond its purely analytical function, the blockscape analyses hopefully serve a secondary purpose; one of increasing the reader's awareness of the resourceful nature of much of Lockport's commercial architecture. Since the drawings will plainly indicate facade zones which are of historical and aesthetic value, they can serve as a diagram of "how to look at Lockport's architecture." Using the drawings in this manner, one can learn, through familiarity, to recognize and, most important of all, appreciate the architectural character, the history, and the cultural heritage which is inherent in Lockport's "Main Street."

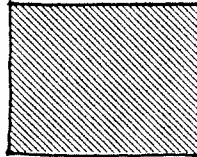
## BLOCKSCAPE ANALYSIS III LEGEND



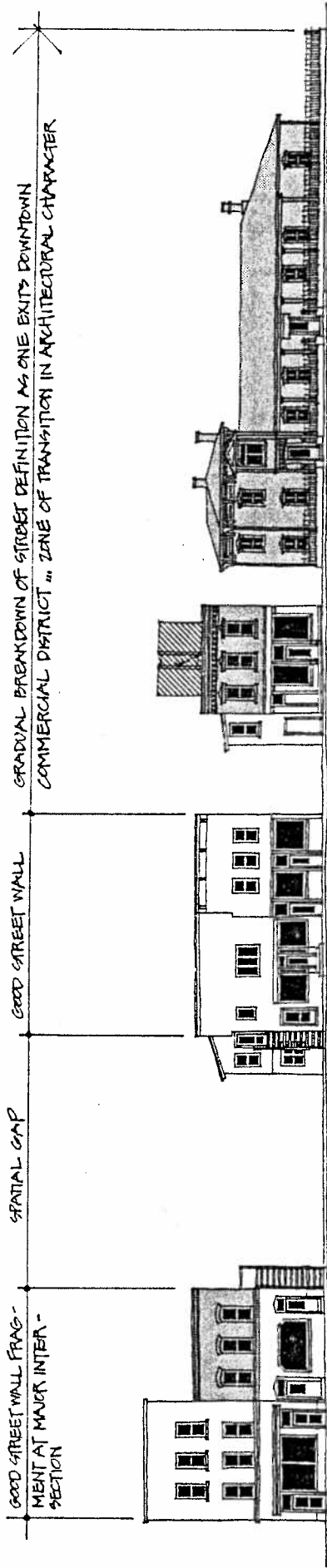
1. DOMINANT CHARACTER ELEMENTS - THOSE FACADES AND/OR FACADE ZONES WHICH ARE THE DOMINANT SOURCES OF LOCKPORT'S HISTORIC ARCHITECTURAL CHARACTER.



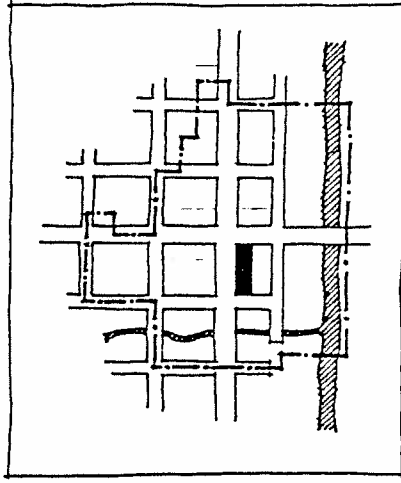
2. SECONDARY AND/OR NEUTRAL CHARACTER ELEMENTS - THOSE FACADES OR FACADE ZONES WHICH ARE SUPPORTIVE OF LOCKPORT'S HISTORIC ARCHITECTURAL CHARACTER.



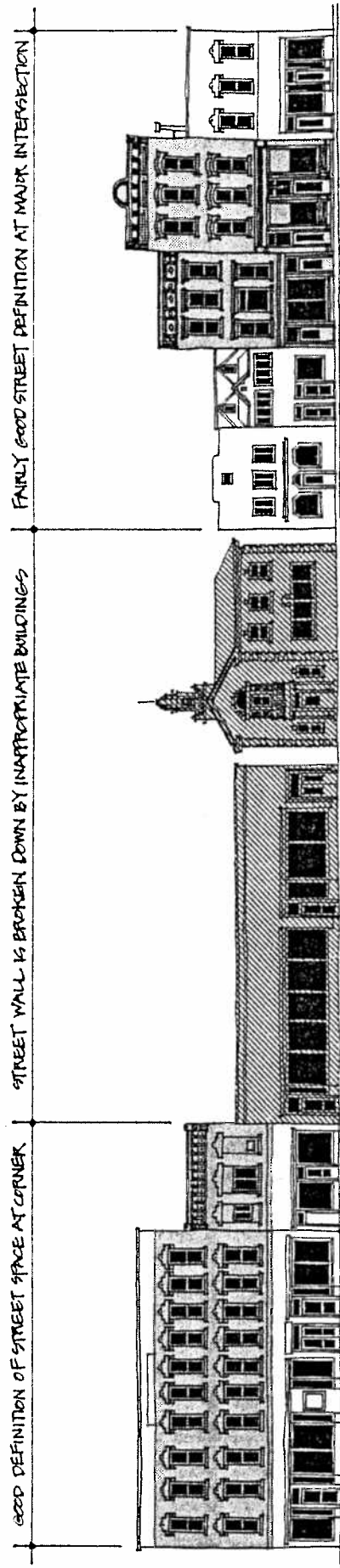
3. CHARACTER DISRUPTIONS - THOSE FACADES OR FACADE ZONES WHICH ARE TOTALLY UNSUPPORTIVE OF LOCKPORT'S HISTORIC ARCHITECTURAL CHARACTER.



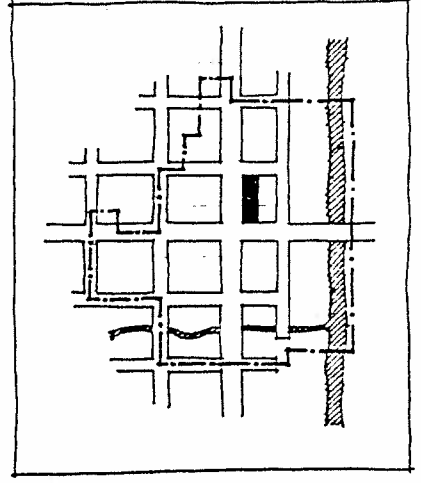
# Analysis I. State Street



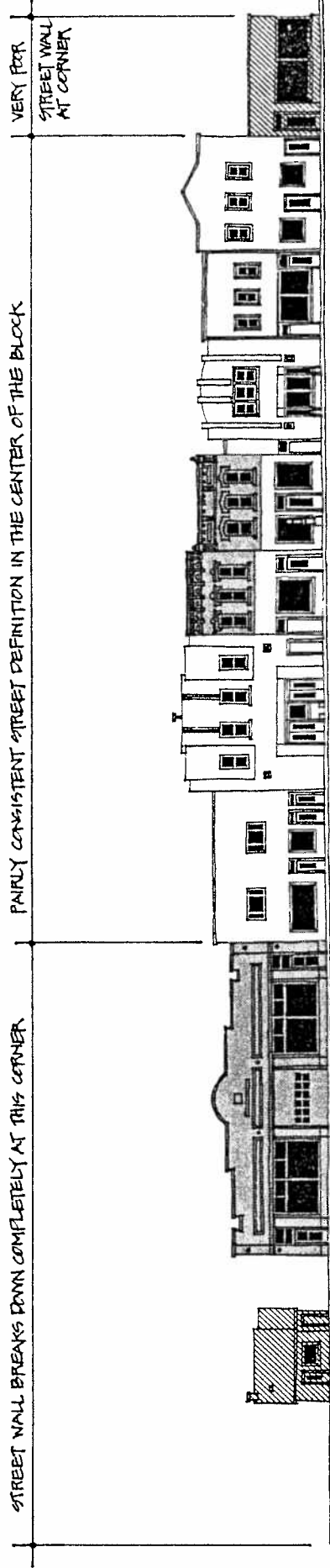
- GENERAL BLOCKSCAPE NOTE:
- SPANNING FROM THE NORTHERN ENTRY TO DOWNTOWN TO ITS PRIMARY INTERSECTION, THIS BLOCKSCAPE IS A VISUALLY IMPORTANT ONE. STATE STREET AT THIS POINT IS ARCHITECTURALLY ONE-SIDED SINCE THE BLOCKSCAPE WHICH OPPOSES THIS ONE IS VERY WEAK (SEE BLOCKSCAPE #4). DUE TO THIS FACT, THE VISUAL IMPACT OF THIS BLOCKSCAPE IS CRUCIAL.
- THE STREET SPACE DEFINITION BY THESE FACADES IS INCONSISTENT IN THAT THE STREET WALL IS BROKEN BY SEVERAL LARGE SPATIAL GAPS. THE STREET IS, HOWEVER, WELL DEFINED AT THE SOUTHERN END OF THE BLOCK WHICH RELATES TO THE MAJOR INTERSECTION.
- ARCHITECTURALLY, THIS BLOCKSCAPE IS GENERALLY SUPPORTIVE OF THE HISTORICAL CHARACTER OF DOWNTOWN. 1901-ATED FACADE ZONES QUALIFY AS DOMINANT CHARACTER ELEMENTS. THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY BUILDING IS NOTABLE AS THE ONLY EXCELLENT EXAMPLE OF A VICTORIAN RESIDENTIAL STYLE WITHIN THE DISTRICT BOUNDARIES.



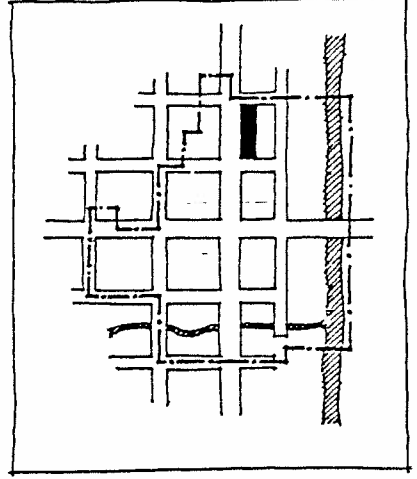
## Analysis 2. State Street



- GENERAL BLOCKSCAPE NOTE:
- THIS BLOCKSCAPE IS MARKED BY INCONSISTENCIES ON ALL LEVELS OF ANALYSIS. THE ENDS OF THE BLOCK (THE CORNERS) ARE STRONG BOTH IN TERMS OF STREET DEFINITION AND ARCHITECTURAL CHARACTER. IN CONTRAST TO THE ENDS, THE CENTRAL PORTION OF THE BLOCK CONTAINS RECENT BUILDINGS WHICH LACK BOTH A STRONG STREET WALL AND ANY CHARACTERISTICS WHICH VISUALLY REINFORCE THE DOMINANT HISTORICAL CHARACTER OF DOWNTOWN. IN ADDITION, THIS BLOCKSCAPE CONTAINS SEVERAL FACADES WHICH FALL UNDER THE CLASSIFICATION OF SECONDARY AND/OR NEUTRAL CHARACTER ELEMENTS.

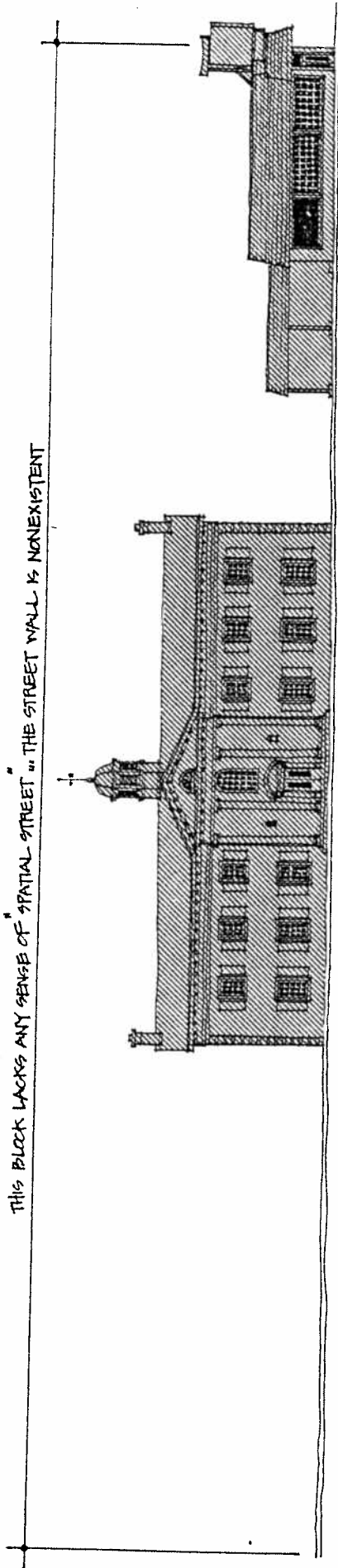


### Analysis 3. State Street

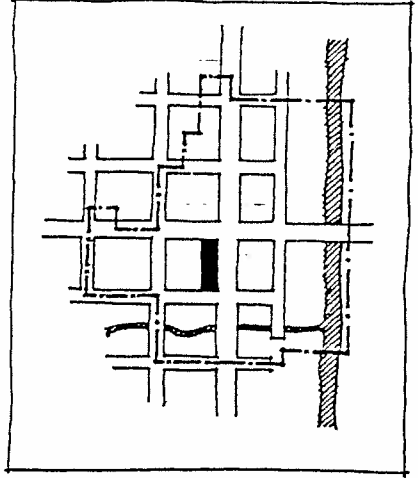


- GENERAL BLOCKSCAPE NOTE:
- WHILE THIS BLOCKSCAPE HAS THE POTENTIAL TO BE GENERALLY SUPPORTIVE OF DOWNTOWN LOCKPORT'S HISTORIC COMMERCIAL CHARACTER, IN ITS PRESENT CONDITION IT HAS A NEGATIVE VISUAL IMPACT. WITH THE EXCEPTION OF SEVERAL ISOLATED DOMINANT CHARACTER ELEMENTS, MOST OF THE INDIVIDUAL FACADES HAVE BEEN CLASSIFIED AS SECONDARY AND/OR NEUTRAL CHARACTER ELEMENTS. THESE ARE, HOWEVER, PLAGUED WITH NUMEROUS DISTRACTING COSMETIC PROBLEMS SUCH AS POOR MAINTENANCE AND INAPPROPRIATE COLOR COMBINATIONS, MATERINGS, TEXTURES, AND SIGNAGE. IF THE PROBLEMS ARE RESOLVED THIS BLOCKSCAPE COULD ASSUME A VALUABLE "BACKGROUND" FUNCTION RELATIVE TO THE MORE DOMINANT BLOCKSCAPES.
- IN TERMS OF STREET SPACE DEFINITION, THE BLOCKSCAPE REMAINS A REASONABLY CONSISTENT STREET WALL IN THE CENTER OF THE BLOCK. IT DOES BREAKDOWN, HOWEVER, AT THE ENDS OF THE BLOCK.

THIS BLOCK LACKS ANY SENSE OF "SPATIAL STREET" "THE STREET WALL IS NONEXISTENT"

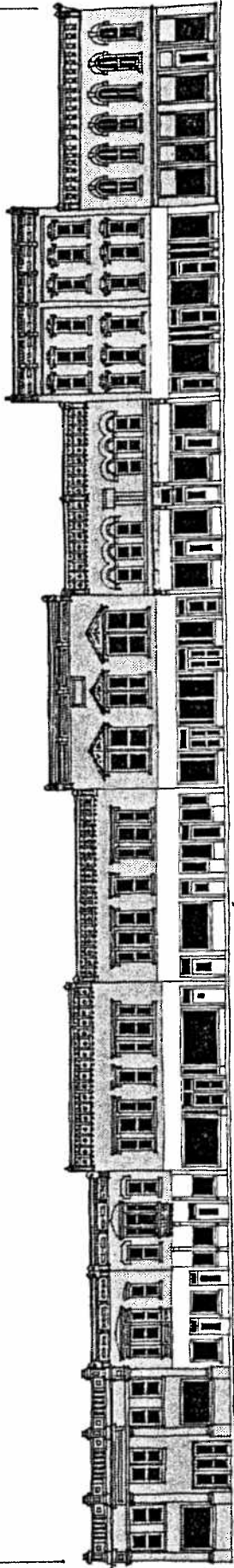


## Analysis 4. State Street

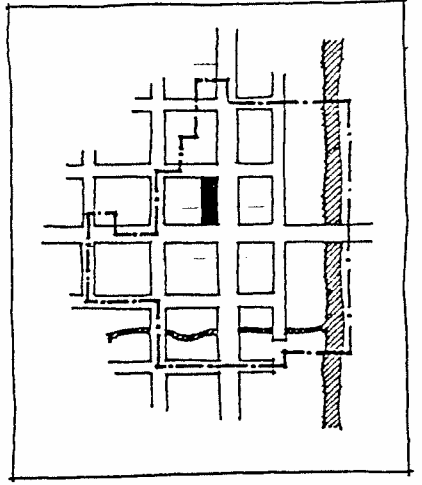


- GENERAL BLOCKSCAPE NOTE:
- THIS BLOCKSCAPE IS TOTALLY UNSUPPORTIVE OF THE HISTORIC CHARACTER OF THE STATE STREET AREA. ITS DETRIMENTAL IMPACT IS AMPLIFIED BY ITS CRUCIAL LOCATION ENCOMPASSING BOTH THE SPATIAL ENTRY TO DOWNTOWN FROM THE NORTH AND THE PRIMARY INTERSECTION OF THE COMMERCIAL DISTRICT.
- THE SENSE OF A STRONG SPATIAL STREET IS NON-EXISTENT, AND THE ARCHITECTURE BEARS NO VISUAL RELATIONSHIP TO THE DOMINANT HISTORICAL CHARACTER OF THE AREA.

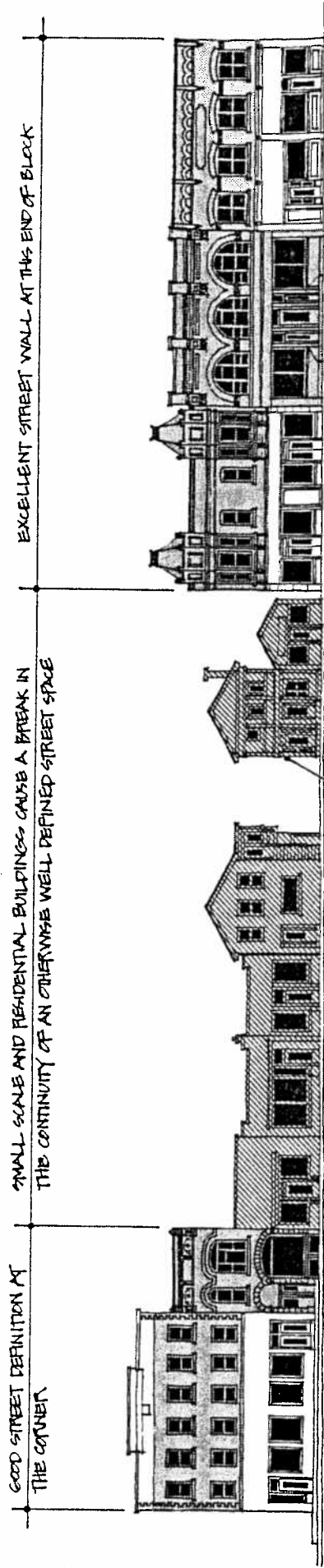
DEFINITION OF STREET SPACE IS CONSISTENTLY EXCELLENT THROUGHOUT THIS BLOCK ON SUPERD STREET WALL



## Analysis 5. State Street

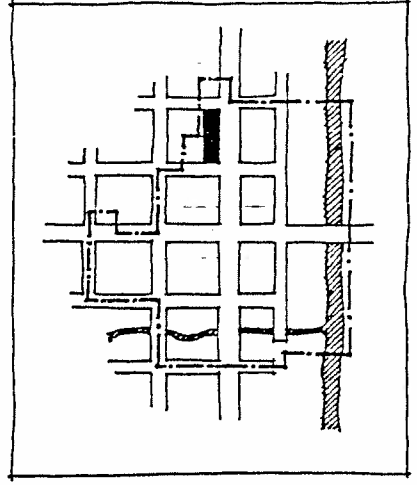


- GENERAL BLOCKSCAPE NOTE.
- THE COMMERCIAL-HISTORICAL CHARACTER OF DOWNTOWN LOCKPORT IS ESTABLISHED BY THIS IMPRESSIVE BLOCKSCAPE. ITS EXCELLENCE IS MARRIED ONLY BY RELATIVELY MINOR VISUAL PROBLEMS ON THE STOREFRONT LEVEL.
- THE SPATIAL STREET IS POWERFULLY DEFINED BY THE SERIES OF ESSENTIALLY UNCHANGED UPPER FACADES COMPLETE ON ALL OF THE FOUR LEVELS OF VISUAL ORDER AND IN THEIR ORIGINAL DECORATIVE DETAILING.
- THIS BLOCKSCAPE REPRESENTS THE FINEST EXAMPLE OF SUSTAINED COLLECTIVE HISTORIC CHARACTER TO BE FOUND WITHIN THE DISTRICT.

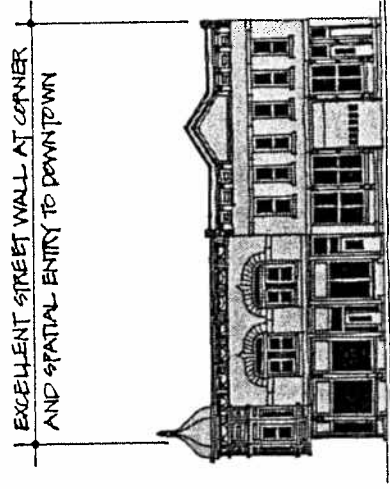


SPECIAL NOTE:  
 WHILE IT IS PART OF A STYLISTIC INTRUSION INTO STATE ST., IT SHOULD BE NOTED THAT THIS GREER RENAISSANCE BUILDING IS HISTORICALLY SOME IMPORTANT. IT IS THE HISTORIC STREETCAR STATION AND THE SITE OF A LINCOLN RALLY IN 1860.

## Analysis G. State Street

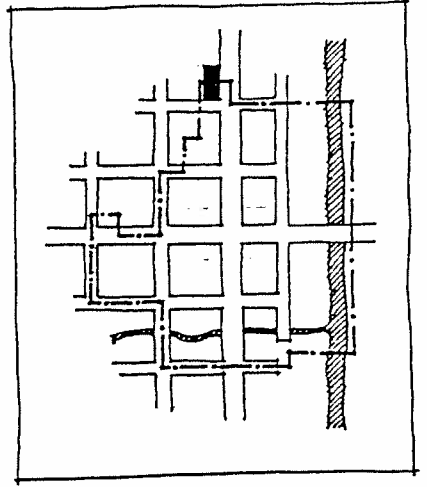


- GENERAL BLOCKSCAPE NOTE:
- THIS BLOCKSCAPE VARIES IN CHARACTER FROM EXCELLENT TO POOR. THE STREET SPACE IT DEFINES IS VERY STRONG AT THE CORNERS BUT BREAKS DOWN EARLY IN THE CENTER OF THE BLOCK.
- THE ARCHITECTURE WITHIN THE BLOCKSCAPE IS DOMINATED BY FACADES AND FACADE ZONES OF EXCELLENT HISTORICAL CHARACTER AT THE ENDS OF THE BLOCK (CORRESPONDING TO THE GOOD STREET DEFINITION). THIS STRONG URBAN CHARACTER IS IN GREAT CONTRAST TO THE BUILDINGS IN THE INTERIOR OF THE BLOCK WHICH ARE VERY WEAK IN SCALE AND OCCASIONALLY RESIDENTIAL IN CHARACTER.

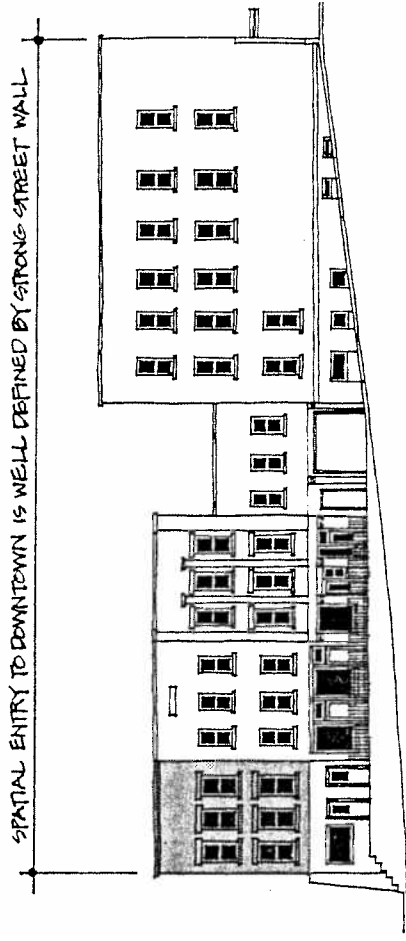


## Analysis

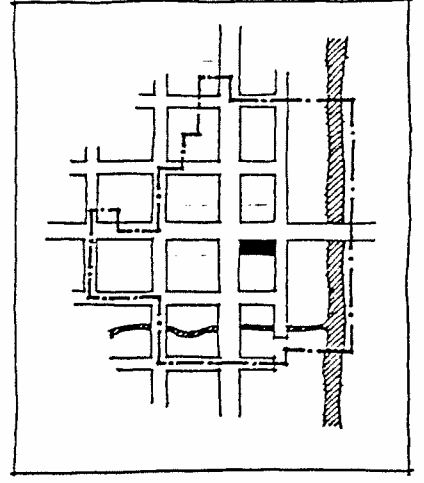
### 7. State Street



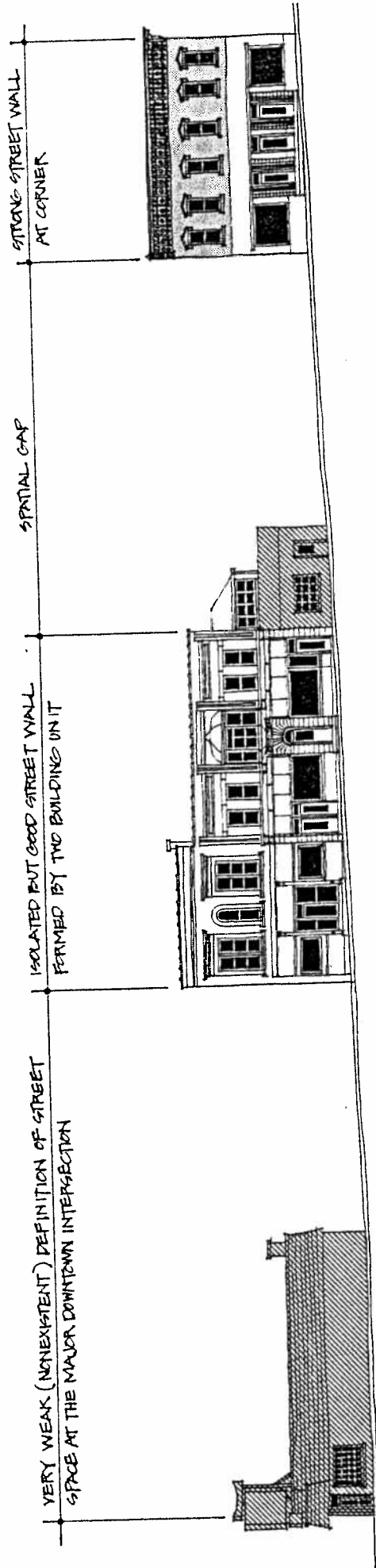
GENERAL BLOCKSCAPE NOTE:  
 THIS PARTIAL BLOCKSCAPE MARKS THE ENTRY TO THE HISTORIC DISTRICT FROM THE SOUTH. ITS TWO BUILDINGS ARE PERHAPS THE FINEST INDIVIDUAL COMMERCIAL BUILDINGS IN LOCKPORT. BUILT OF NATIVE LIMESTONE, THEY ARE EXCELLENTLY PRESERVED WITH BOTH THE UPPER FACADES AND THE STOREFRONTS NEARLY INTACT. THEY FORM A VERY STRONG VISUAL UNIT AND ARE ALMOST SYMBOLIC OF THE ARCHITECTURAL ENTITY WHICH LOCKPORT REPRESENTS.



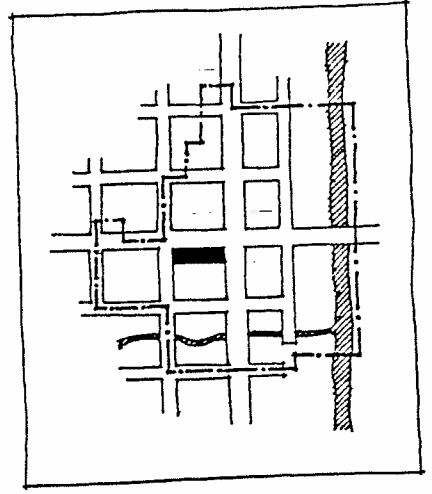
## Analysis B. 9th Street



- GENERAL BLOCKSCAPE NOTE:
- THIS IS AN IMPORTANT BLOCKSCAPE BECAUSE IT IS LOCATED AT THE PRIMARY ENTRY TO DOWNTOWN LOCKPORT AND SPANS TO ITS MAIN INTERSECTION. ITS WELL DEFINED STREET WALL HELPS GIVE THE DISTRICT A STRONG SPATIAL SENSE OF ENTRY. ITS ARCHITECTURAL CHARACTER IS VERY SUPPORTIVE OF THE MORE DOMINANT ARCHITECTURE ALONG STATE STREET.
- OF PARTICULAR NOTE IS THE NATIVE STONE BUILDING AT THE BLOCKSCAPE'S WESTERN END WHICH BECAUSE OF ITS HIGH VISIBILITY (BOTH SIDE AND FRONT WALLS) IS A POWERFUL CHARACTER ELEMENT.

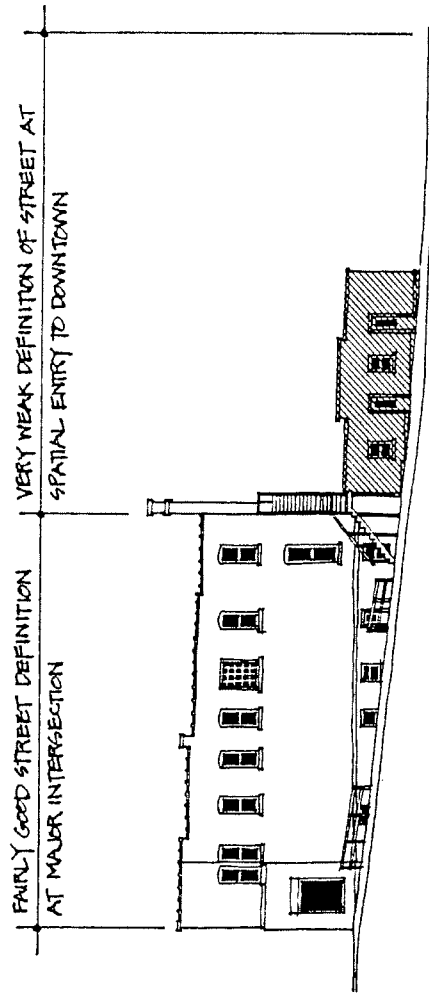


# Analysis 9. 9th Street

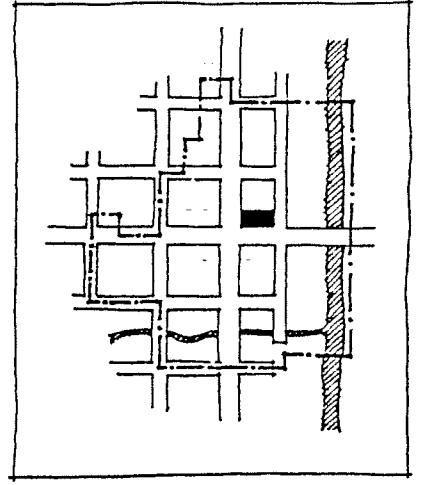


GENERAL BLOCKSCAPE NOTE:  
 THIS BLOCKSCAPE IS VERY INCONSISTENT BOTH SPATIALLY AND ARCHITECTURALLY. THE STREET WALL DEFINITION IS WEAK, DESPITE THE STRENGTH OF SOME OF ITS INDIVIDUAL FACADES, BECAUSE OF THE LARGE SPACES BETWEEN BUILDINGS AND THE INAPPROPRIATELY SCALED BUILDING WHICH SITS AT THE MAIN DOWNTOWN INTERSECTION.  
 ARCHITECTURALLY, THIS BLOCKSCAPE IS DISTINGUISHED BY ONE EXCELLENTLY PRESERVED UPPER FACADE AND TWO BUILDING FRONTS WHICH, WHILE SOMEWHAT ALTERED, RETAIN MUCH OF THEIR ORIGINAL CHARACTER AND DETAILING.

THE STREET WALL DEFINITION IS WEAK, DESPITE THE STRENGTH OF SOME OF ITS INDIVIDUAL FACADES, BECAUSE OF THE LARGE SPACES BETWEEN BUILDINGS AND THE INAPPROPRIATELY SCALED BUILDING WHICH SITS AT THE MAIN DOWNTOWN INTERSECTION.

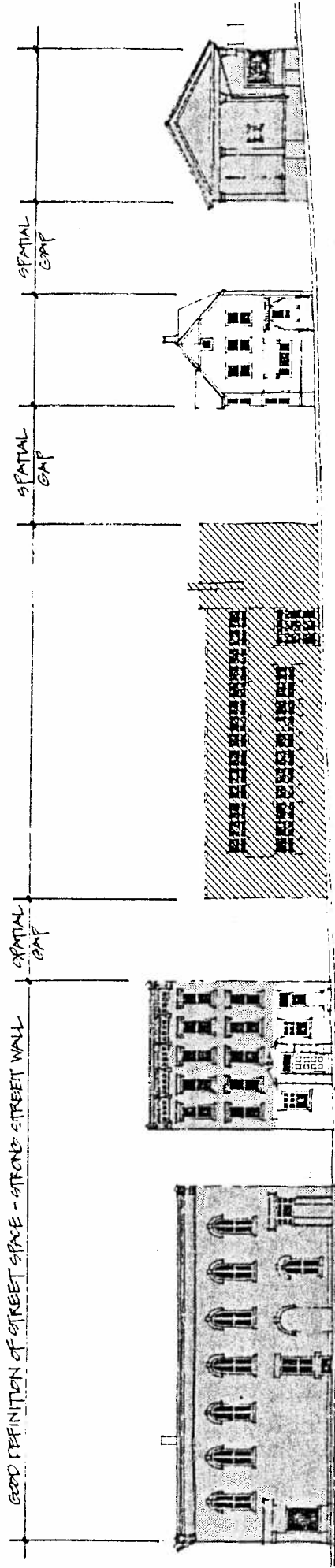


## Analysis 10. 9th Street

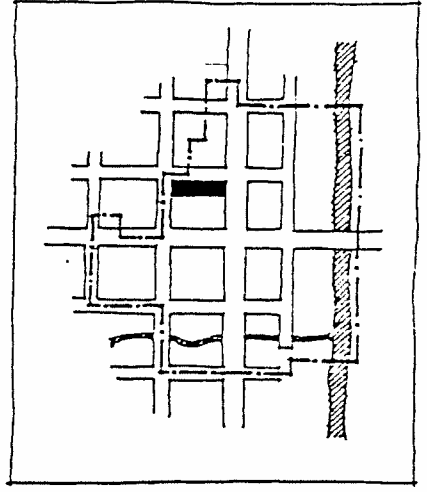


- GENERAL BLOCKSCAPE NOTE:
- THIS BLOCKSCAPE, SITUATED AT THE PRIMARY ENTRY TO DOWNTOWN, IS VERY WEAK; ESPECIALLY WHEN COMPARED TO THE RELATIVELY STRONG BLOCKSCAPE WHICH OPPOSES IT. THE STREETSPACE IS WELL DEFINED AT THE CORNER BY THE SIDEWALL OF A BUILDING ORIENTED TOWARD STATE STREET, BUT IT BREAKS DOWN AS ONE MOVES AWAY FROM THE MAJOR INTERSECTION.
- ARCHITECTURALLY, THE BUILDING SIDEWALL IS MILDLY SUPPORTIVE, IN A UTILITARIAN WAY, OF THE DOWNTOWN'S HISTORIC CHARACTER. THE OTHER FACADE IS VERY WEAK IN SCALE AND WITHOUT MUCH VISUAL CONSEQUENCE. IN GENERAL, VISUAL ATTENTION SHOULD BE DIVERTED FROM THIS BLOCKSCAPE AND FOCUSED ON THE MORE SIGNIFICANT ONE ACROSS THE STREET (SEE BLOCKSCAPE #8)





## Analysis 12. 10th Street



- GENERAL BLOCKSCAPE NOTE: THIS BLOCKSCAPE EXHIBITS AN INCONSISTENT DEFINITION OF STREET SPACE. THE BUILDINGS WHICH COMPOSE IT ARE ISOLATED MASSES WITH LARGE SPACES BETWEEN. LOCATED ON A SIDE STREET, THIS BLOCK REPRESENTS A TRANSITION BETWEEN STATE STREET AND NEARBY RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOODS.
- ARCHITECTURALLY, THIS BLOCKSCAPE IS NOTABLE BECAUSE OF ITS VARIETY. BUILDINGS RANGE FROM VERY HISTORIC IN CHARACTER TO INAPPROPRIATE. OF PARTICULAR NOTE IS THE SMALL GREEK REVIVAL FACADE TO THE FAR RIGHT ON THE BLOCKSCAPE ABOVE. WHILE THIS FACADE HAS SEEN ITS SHARE OF INAPPROPRIATE ALTERATION, IT REMAINS SURPRISINGLY INTACT. IT SHOULD BE PRESERVED !!! EVEN AS AN ISOLATED HISTORIC "RELIC." IT IS VISUALLY AND HISTORICALLY IMPORTANT.

#### BLOCKSCAPE AND FACADE RECOMMENDATIONS

Before dealing with any specific recommendations for architectural changes within the State Street commercial district, it is appropriate to discuss these changes in general terms. The specific recommendations grow out of a conceptual strategy for change which is based on the specific architectural situation in Lockport's business district.

Lockport retains a nationally recognized historic character which is due in large part to its architecture. The architectural character of the district is dominated by two factors. The first is the prevalent use of a local limestone of distinctive color in the historic buildings which runs throughout the various architectural zones of the district (as discussed earlier) and gives the entire area a strong sense of visual unity.

The second dominant factor is a commercial district which, retains much of its original "Main Street" character. This character is retained in various ways and in varying degrees. There are a significant number of commercial buildings which are, in essence, unchanged from their original construction; complete from their storefront to their upper cornices. A more common situation is a street front building which has been altered or "modernized" at the storefront level, leaving the upper facade relatively intact, thus a viable part of the district's collective historic character. Other buildings have been more substantially altered, retaining little of their original character beyond, perhaps, their basic mass. Then there are

the buildings of recent construction which, without exception, detract from the collective character.

In considering the problem of how to recommend realistic positive change in the environment, certain concepts or strategies have been developed to guide and organize potential recommendations. The various individual buildings which make up the commercial district have been classified according to their relationship to the overall historic character of the area. These classifications and their corresponding redevelopment strategies are as follows:

1. Dominant Character Elements - this classification includes all building facades or facade zones, which exhibit considerable degrees of historic character. Also included are any occurrences on a facade of the local limestone which is so important to Lockport's visual unity.

The redevelopment strategy for dominant character elements is, first of all, that they be recognized and protected as such. Changes on these facades (or facade zones) should be restricted to maintenance measures and restoration (restoration being defined as carefully considered changes with the intent of recreating in an authentic and detailed fashion the original appearance of any given character element).

Extreme care must be taken in the addition of such things as signage, awnings, and lighting when they influence, either directly or indirectly, the perception of a dominant

character element.

In the overall redevelopment plan for the commercial district, these elements, as the classification indicates, should be allowed to dominate the visual environment. The preservation goal of redevelopment is to reinforce and emphasize these dominant elements; to willingly accept their dominance of the architectural character of the area, and do whatever is realistically possible and commercially feasible to increase the visual impact they have.

The general goal will be the focus of the redevelopment strategies for all facades or facade zones of lesser classifications. These are discussed below.

2. Secondary and/or Neutral Character Elements - this classification includes all facades or zones which, due to alterations, have lost much of their original character. In massing, scale, material, zoning, rhythm and, in some cases, detail, these buildings are generally supportive of the character established by the dominant elements, but are of much less visual significance. This classification encompasses a large percentage of the built environment in Lockport. Most of the storefronts in the city and many of the upper facades are of this type.

The strategy for their treatment can best be summed up in the concept of a "background architecture." Relative to the dominant character elements, the role of these facades is to be essentially neutral, hence the term "background," thereby emphasizing the archi-

texture of more consequence.

In many cases, this classification of facade, because of its existing condition, detracts significantly from the collective character of the commercial area. Poor maintenance, discordant color combinations, inappropriate signage, materials (shingles and siding), and texture are all common cosmetic but characteristically very detrimental qualities which obscure facades which otherwise would be supportive of the dominant historical character.

The redevelopment strategy for this classification of facade entails cosmetic treatment to neutralize the disruptive qualities which compete in a visual sense with the dominant architecture.

In the following paragraphs, the redevelopment strategy of "background architecture" for this type of facade is discussed as it applies to these various cosmetic character problems.

**Poor maintenance** - The idea that a general level of good maintenance throughout the historic district is crucial to its visual image is stressed in other portions of this report. It will suffice at this point to say that many of the secondary facades in the State Street area do show relatively poor maintenance and a certain lack of attention to detail. This detracts not only from the character of any given facade but also from any facades which make up its visual context including those of primary character significance.

**Color** - The visual dominance of the color of the local limestone so often used in construction in Lockport has been mentioned several times. It is an essential ingredient in the area's unique architectural character, and, as such, it should be emphasized and reinforced in the paint and material colors used elsewhere in the town.

At present, many inappropriate colors are boldly used in the commercial district which compete with both the subtle hues of the stone masonry and the generally natural brick colors of other primary character elements. In the redevelopment of the secondary and/or neutral character elements as background architecture, color will play an important role. It is recommended that a general concept for color relationships, and a specific palette of colors, based on the local limestone, be developed to guide the repainting of the secondary street facades.

**Texture** - the texture of the building material is also a crucial part of visual character. The textures found on the primary character elements varies from the bold stone masonry to the subtler textures of the brick facades and the Victorian detail. Like all other aspects of these facades, their texture and texture relationships should be emphasized and allowed to dominate those of the secondary facades.

As they exist today, the secondary facades contain a wide array of bold and competitive textures. The smoothness of the enamelled panels of the storefronts, the choppiness of inappropriately used stone (and fake stone),

the boldness of various horizontal siding types and shingle patterns, and the verticality of other siding types all combine visually into a confusing and chaotic visual context for Lockport's better architecture. The net effect is very negative.

The recommended solution for this problem is to establish a specific surface treatment (or set of treatments) which could be used in a widespread effort to replace this disconcerting variety of competitive textures, thereby creating a relatively uniform textural background which by nature of its unity would emphasize the special qualities of the primary character elements.

The visual qualities of this "background" texture would be its subtlety, uniformity, and neutrality. Horizontal siding of narrow width and/or plain panels without any texture (in either case, painted appropriate colors) are the recommended choices for this function.

**Signage** - the issue of inappropriate signage will be discussed in greater depth elsewhere in this report. At this point, it will suffice to stress the important effect signage has upon the character of a facade and, collectively, on the blockscape. This applies both to signage design and placement.

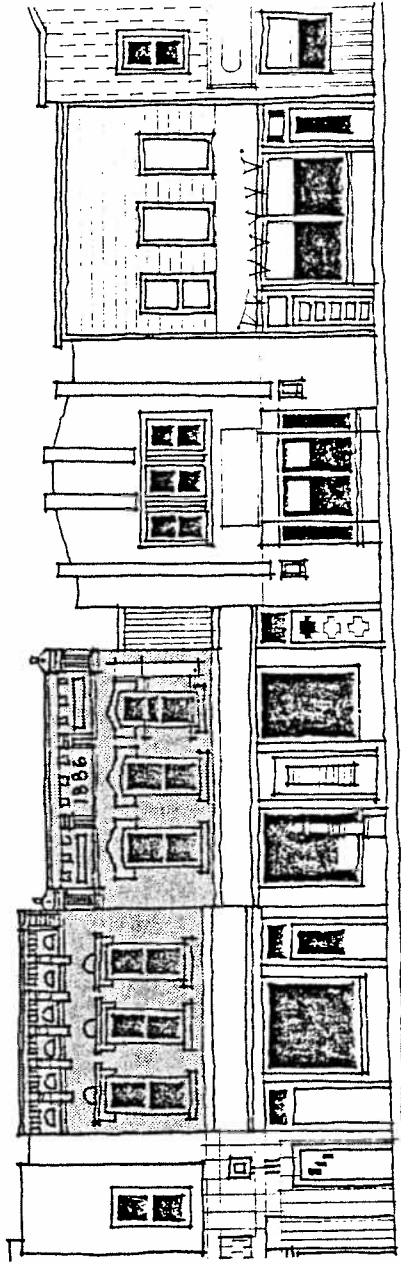
It should be emphatically noted that within facades or facade zones of secondary importance, the vestigial remains of its historical character should be recognized, preserved, and reinforced in its rehabilitation. Frequently, original window detailing, regular window rhythm, portions of original cornice

decoration, or storefront detailing remain on these building fronts. These are valuable historical artifacts and should remain an integral part of its facade in its future treatment.

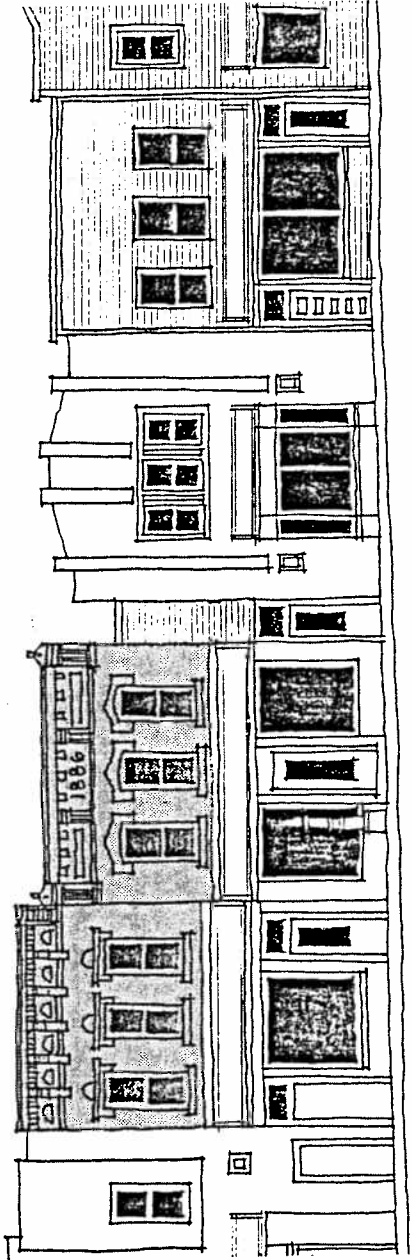
3. Character Disruptions - this classification applies to buildings which completely disrupt the consistent historical character of the State Street commercial district, those which are totally without redeeming environmental value. In most cases, this means buildings of recent construction.

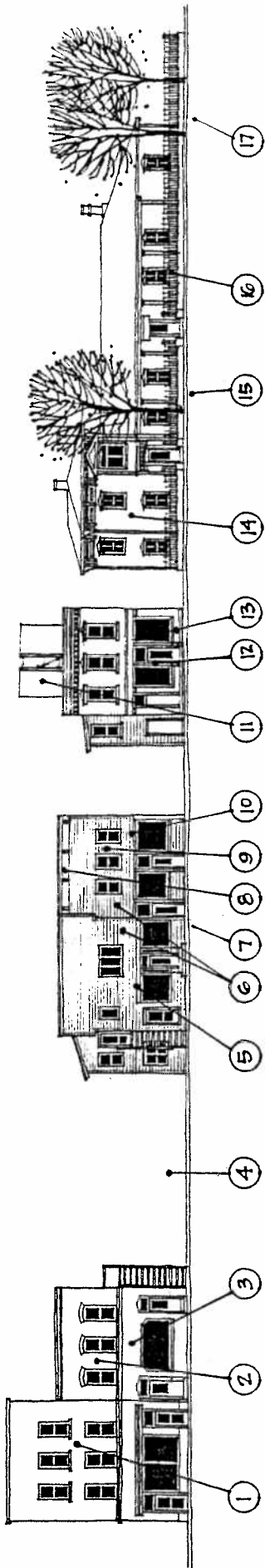
Generally, the most detrimental aspect of these buildings is their failure to make any attempt to define the street space so well defined elsewhere in the area. In addition, other than the common use of natural brick as a building material, there is little relationship on any level of visual order between these character disruptions and the more historic buildings.

The redevelopment strategy for this type of building deals more with landscaping than architecture. While any attempts by building owners to change their buildings to minimize their visual character disruption is encouraged, the primary means for improving these situations is through the planting of trees to, in most cases, redefine the spatial street and minimize the visitors perception of the building in general.

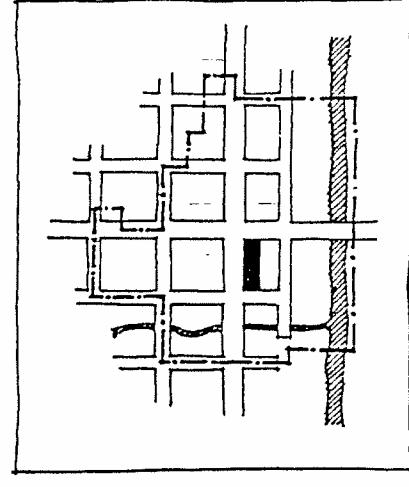


THE TWO PARTIAL BLOCKS SHOWN ABOVE AND BELOW, ILLUSTRATE THE VISUAL NOTION OF "BACKGROUND ARCHITECTURE." NOTE THE UNCONTROLLED AND ERRATIC USE OF TEXTURES ABOVE - NOTE THE VARIETY. COMPARE THIS WITH THE LOWER DRAWING. HERE THE DISCREPANT TEXTURES HAVE BEEN STRIPPED FROM THE FACADES AND REPLACED WITH A MORE NEUTRAL ONE (NARROW HORIZONTAL WOOD SIDING). IN TERMS OF SUBTLE DETAIL, NOTE HOW THE TWO HISTORIC UPPER FACADES ARE VISUALLY EMPHASIZED BY THIS CHANGE. A CERTAIN "BACKGROUND" CONSISTENCY HAS REPLACED VISUAL CHAOS ON THE SECONDARY FACADES.





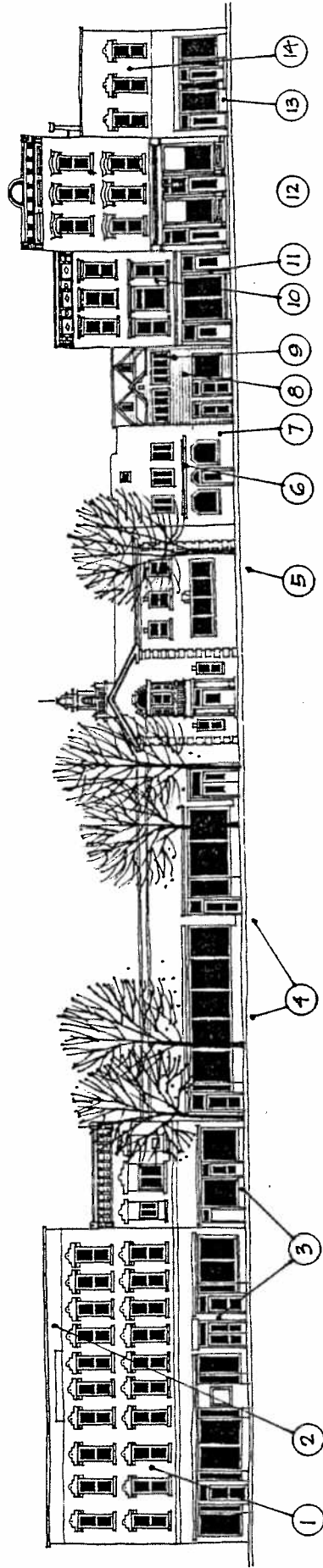
# I. State Street



## Recommendations

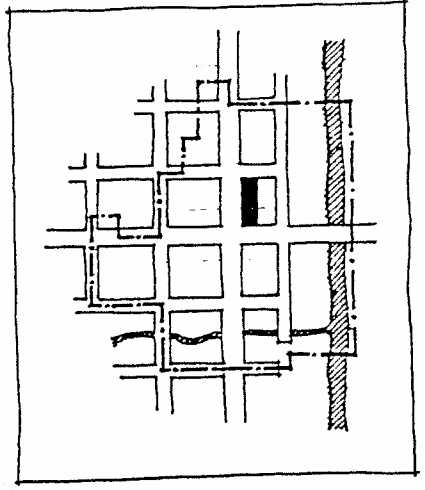
- ① IF STONE EXISTS UNDER STUCCO IT SHOULD BE EXPOSED.
- ② REMOVE PERPENDICULAR HANGING SIGN.
- ③ PAINT STUCCO FRONT TO BE COMPATIBLE WITH NATIVE STONE. \*
- ④ POTENTIAL INFILL SITE. \*
- ⑤ INSTALL NEW CANVAS AWNING.
- ⑥ REPLACE WALL SURFACES WITH NEUTRAL MATERIAL AND COLORS.
- ⑦ RETAIN EXISTING STOREFRONTS.
- ⑧ RETAIN CORNICE.
- ⑨ REMOVE HANGING SIGN.
- ⑩ REMOVE ALUMINUM AWNING REPLACE WITH CANVAS.
- ⑪ REMOVE EXISTING ROOF SIGN.
- ⑫ RETAIN ORIGINAL STOREFRONT ELEMENTS.
- ⑬ REMOVE SIDING.
- ⑭ REPAINT BUILDING AFTER ORIGINAL COLOR IS DETERMINED BY TECHNICAL PAINT ANALYSIS.
- ⑮ ADD TREE TO HELP SEPARATE VICTORIAN PORTION OF BUILDING FROM EARLIER SECTION.
- ⑯ RETAIN IRON FENCE.
- ⑰ TREES ADDED TO HELP VISUAL TRANSITION INTO NEIGHBORHOOD FROM DOWNTOWN.

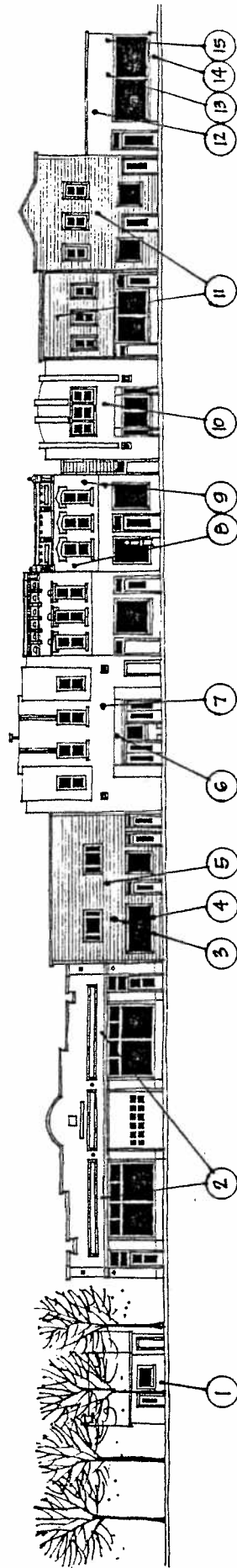
\* PLEASE REFER TO INFILL DESIGN GUIDELINES, FOUND IN THE APPENDIX.



## Recommendations 2. State Street

- ① HANGING SIGN SHOULD BE REMOVED.
- ② CORNICE ZONE SHOULD BE PANTED.
- ③ REMOVE ENAMEL PANELS FROM STOREFRONTS.
- ④ PLANT TREES TO AID INTRUSIVE BUILDING
- ⑤ LANDSCAPING WILL HELP TO INTEGRATE IMPORTANT BUT STYLISH TO INTRUSION.
- ⑥ REPLACE HANGING SIGN AND ADD CANVAS AWNING.
- ⑦ PAINT ENTIRE BUILDING ONE COLOR
- ⑧ REMOVE EXISTING AWNINGS AND REPLACE WITH CANVAS. REMOVE SIGN.
- ⑨ REMOVE IMITATION STONE.
- ⑩ REMOVE HANGING SIGN.
- ⑪ REPLACE AWNING WITH CANVAS EXPRESS ORIGINAL FRONT.
- ⑫ GOOD BUILDING NEEDS ONLY MAINTENANCE.
- ⑬ REMOVE ENAMEL PANEL FRONT.
- ⑭ REMOVE PAINT WITH CHEMICAL CLEANER.

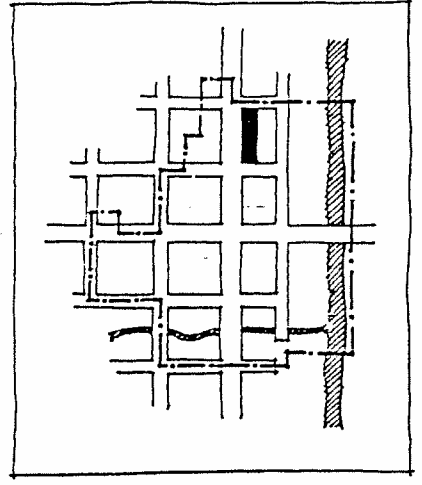


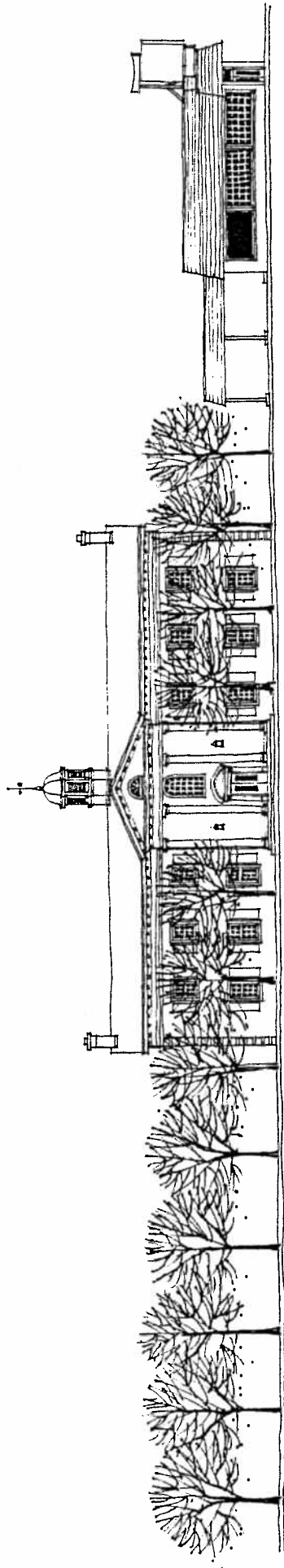


## B. State Street

## Recommendations

- ① ADDING TREES WILL HELP INTE-GRATE SMALL BUILDING
- ② REPLACE AWNINGS
- ③ REMOVE CANOPY
- ④ REDUCE HORIZONTALITY OF WIN-DOW.
- ⑤ REMOVE VERTICAL TEXTURE AND REPLACE WITH "BACKGROUND".
- ⑥ REBUILD TO MORE TRADITIONAL MARQUIS.
- ⑦ PAINT BUILDING SINGLE BACK-GROUND COLOR.
- ⑧ REMOVE PAINT
- ⑨ REMOVE SIGN AND ENAMEL PANEL STOREFRONT.
- ⑩ REPAINT WITH NEUTRAL COLOR
- ⑪ REPLACE EXISTING WALL MATERIAL WITH VERTICAL SIDING IN NEUTRAL COLOR
- ⑫ PAINT NEUTRAL COLOR
- ⑬ REPLACE AWNING WITH CANVAS
- ⑭ REMOVE TILES
- ⑮ REMOVE PERPENDICULAR SIGN

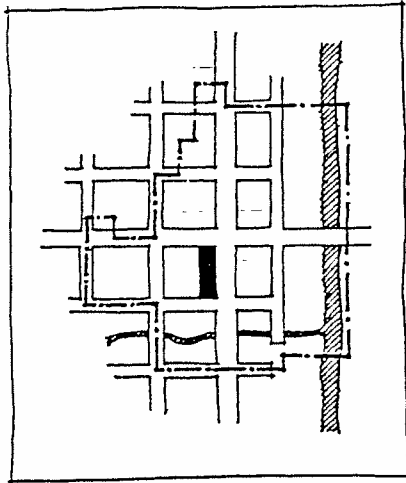




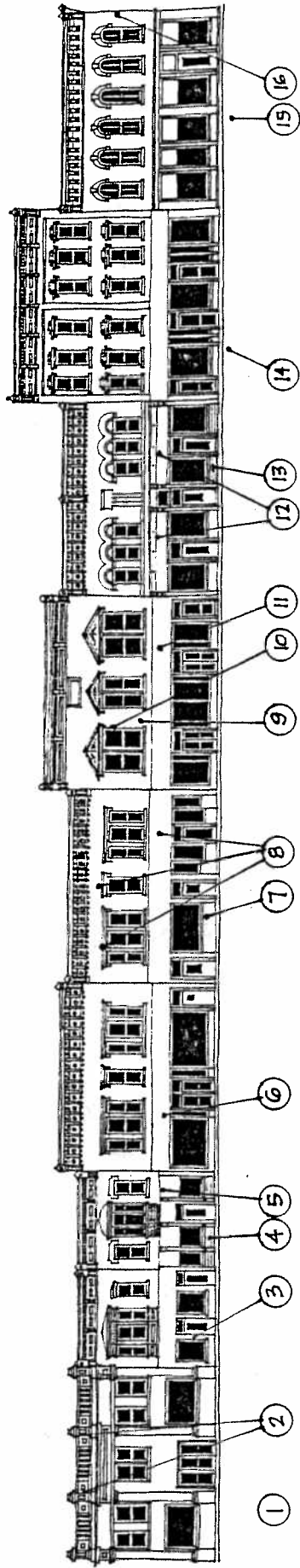
①

②

# Recommendations 4. State Street

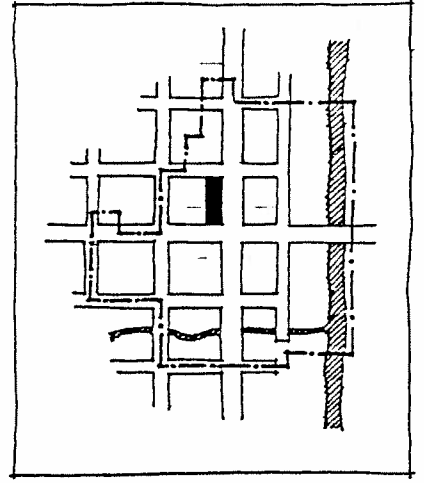


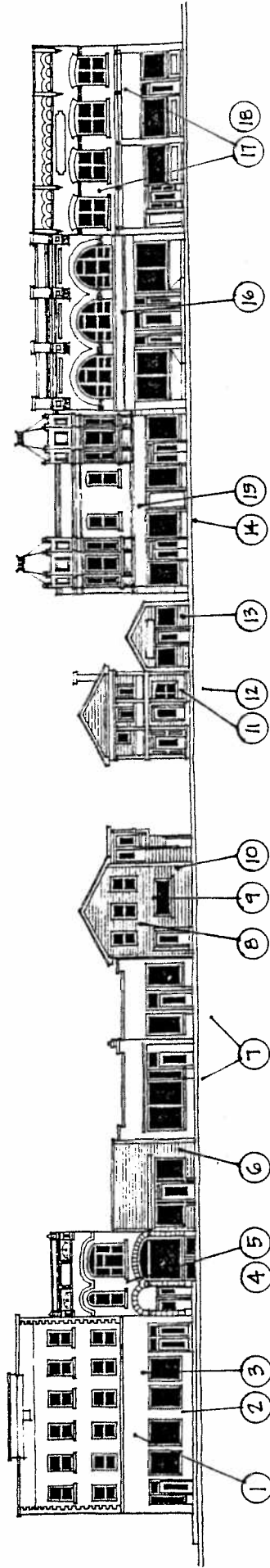
- ① BUILDING STYLE IS OUT OF CHARACTER WITH DISTRICT AND WOULD BEST BE NEUTRALIZED WITH STRONG FORMAL ROW OF MATCHED LITTLE LEAF LINDENS.
- ② WEAKEST BUILDING OF THE INTERSECTION BECAUSE OF SINGLE STORY SIZE. LITTLE CAN BE DONE WITHOUT INCREASING THE MASS OF THE EXISTING STRUCTURE.



## Recommendations 5. State Street

- ① CORNER BUILDING REPRESENTS COMPATIBLE STYLISTIC INTRUSION.
- ② REMOVE LIGHTS FROM BUILDING.
- ③ PANELS SHOULD BE REMOVED TO EXPOSE ORIGINAL FRONT.
- ④ PAINT BRICK PANELS NEUTRAL.
- ⑤ REPLACE CANVAS AWNING.
- ⑥ GOOD BUILDING -- VERTICAL MATERIAL SHOULD BE REPLACED.
- ⑦ INAPPROPRIATE STORE FRONT MATERIALS.
- ⑧ REMOVE ALUMINUM AWNINGS AND REPLACE WITH CANVAS.
- ⑨ REMOVE PANELS AND AWNINGS RESTORE WINDOW TRIM.
- ⑩ REMOVE SIGN.
- ⑪ REDUCE AMOUNT OF GRAPHICS.
- ⑫ REMOVE HANGING SIGNS.
- ⑬ REMOVE OR PAINT PANELS.
- ⑭ GOOD BUILDING.
- ⑮ LANDMARK QUALITY BUILDING AT CORNER.
- ⑯ REMOVE OR RELOCATE SIGN.

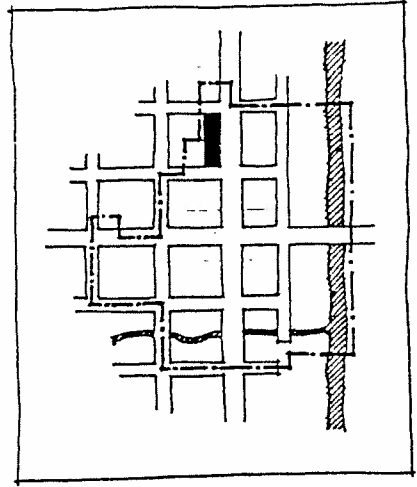


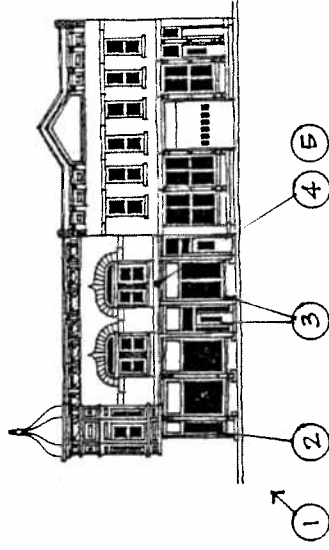


## 6. State Street

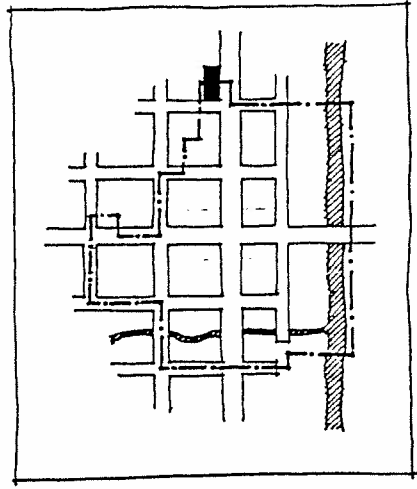
### Recommendations

- ① SIGN IS TOO LARGE FOR BUILDING
- ② REMOVE PANELS AND EXPOSE ORIGINAL FACADE
- ③ REMOVE AWNING AND REPLACE WITH CANVAS
- ④ GOOD LATE VICTORIAN BUILDING
- ⑤ REMOVE OLD SIGN STRUCTURE
- ⑥ REPLACE BUILDING SIDING WITH NARROW HORIZ. MATERIAL
- ⑦ THESE TWO BUILDINGS REQUIRE ATTENTION TO GRAPHICS ONLY
- ⑧ REMOVE HANGING SIGN
- ⑨ REMOVE ALUMINUM AWNING AND REPLACE WITH CANVAS
- ⑩ REPLACE SIDING AS NEEDED WITH NARROW HORIZONTAL SIDING
- ⑪ REPLACE SIDING WITH NARROW HORIZONTAL SIDING
- ⑫ PAINT REVIVAL STYLE BUILDING WHITE
- ⑬ REPLACE SIDING WITH NARROW BEVEL MATERIAL
- ⑭ REDUCE SIZE OF SIGN
- ⑮ REMOVE HANGING SIGN
- ⑯ REDUCE SIZE OF SIGNS
- ⑰ REMOVE SIGNS
- ⑱ REBUILD STORE FRONT.



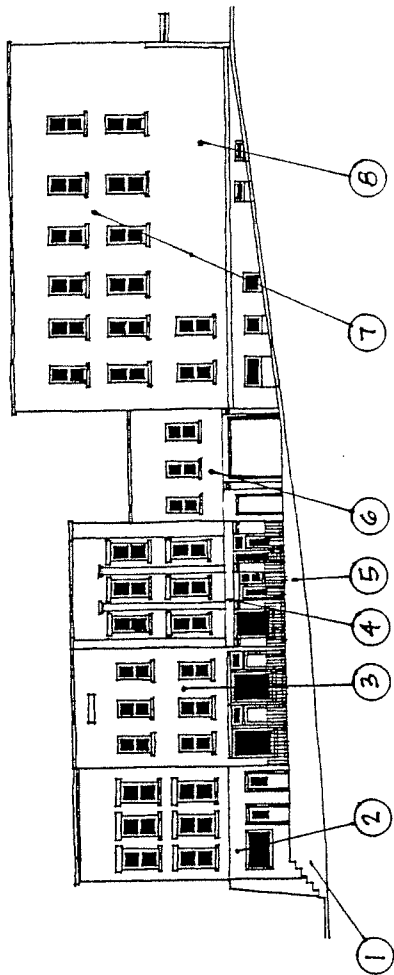


## 7. State Street



## Recommendations

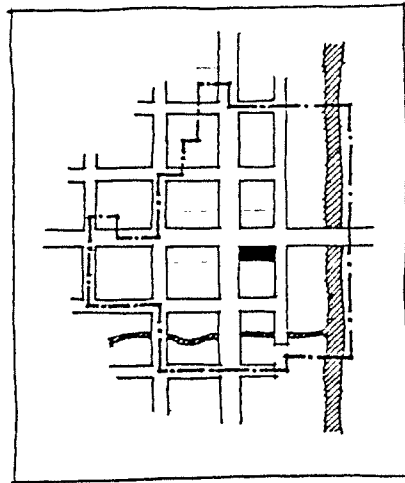
- ① THIS GROUP REPRESENTS TWO OF LOCKPORT'S BEST EXAMPLES OF STYLE AND USE OF MATERIALS WORTH PRESERVING.
- ② RETAIN CORNER ENTRANCE.
- ③ ALTERATIONS TO DOOR AND WINDOWS SHOULD BE RESTORED.
- ④ REPLACE CANVAS AWNING
- ⑤ BUILDINGS NEED GENERAL MAINTENANCE.

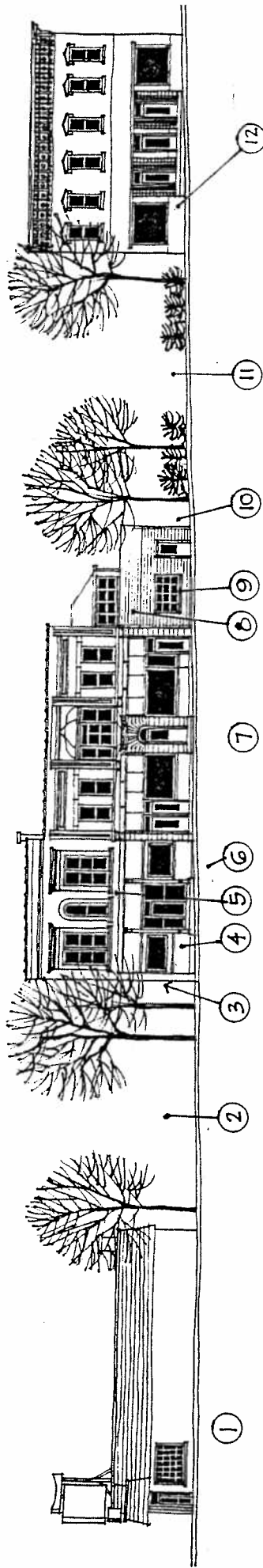


## Recommendations 8. 9th Street

- ① STAIRS, RAILING ETC OFFER GOOD OPPORTUNITY FOR ENHANCING ENTRY ZONE TO DOWNTOWN.
- ② CANVAS AWNING WOULD HELP THIS STOREFRONT.
- ③ REMOVE LARGE HANGING SIGN.
- ④ REPAIR OR REPLACE CANVAS AWNING.
- ⑤ REDESIGN AND CONSOLIDATE GRAPHICS.
- ⑥ MAINTENANCE REQUIRED... PAINT BUILDING A NEUTRAL COLOR.
- ⑦ IF STONE EXISTS UNDER STUCCO IT SHOULD BE EXPOSED.

⑧ AREA FOR CAREFULLY SELECTED URBAN GRAPHICS.

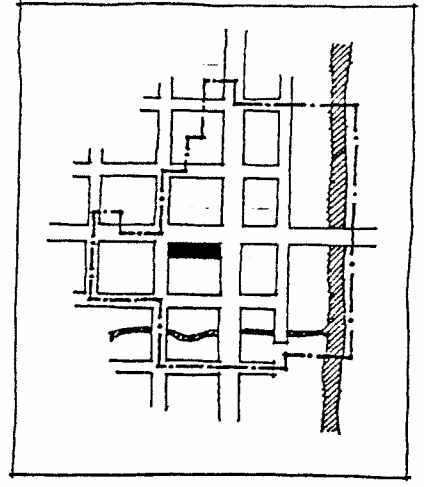


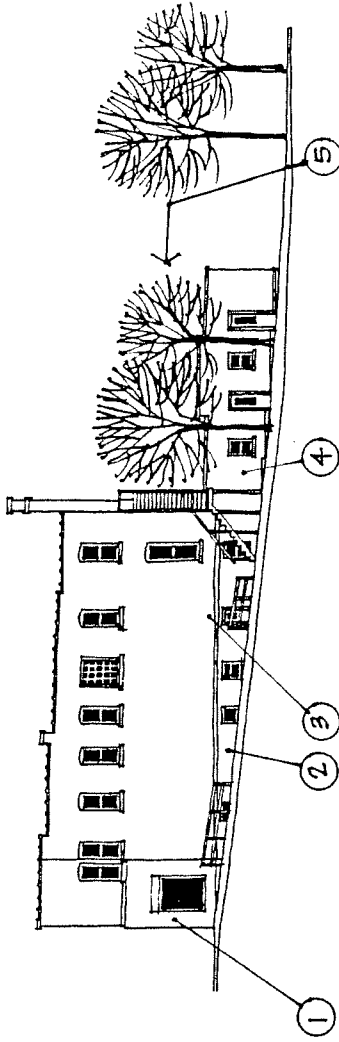


## Recommendations 9. 9th Street

- ① SEE COMMENT # 2. 4. STATE ST.
- ② POTENTIAL INFILL SITE. PLANT TREES AS INTERIM SOLUTION \*
- ③ WALL GRAPHICS NOT SUITABLE FOR CHARACTER OF HISTORIC DISTRICT.
- ④ REPLACE VERTICAL TEXTURE WITH NEUTRAL PANEL
- ⑤ REMOVE HANGING SIGN
- ⑥ BUILDING REQUIRES MAIN-TENANCE.
- ⑦ REMOVE HANGING SIGN FROM BUILDING
- ⑧ COVER BUILDING WITH NEUTRAL HORIZONTAL MATERIAL
- ⑨ REMOVE IMITATION MULLIONS FROM WINDOW
- ⑩ REMOVE STANDING SIGN
- ⑪ POTENTIAL INFILL SITE. PLANT SMALL TREES AND SHRUBS AS INTERIM SOLUTION.\*
- ⑫ ENAMEL PANEL STIFFRONT WOULD LOOK BETTER WITH COMPATIBLE MATERIAL...COST MAY PROHIBIT CHANGE.

\* PLEASE REFER TO INFILL DESIGN GUIDELINES, FOUND IN THE APPENDIX.

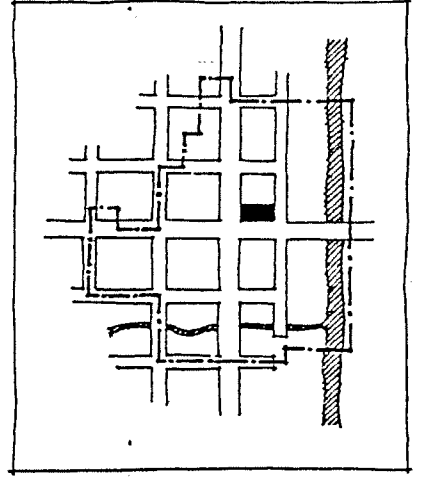


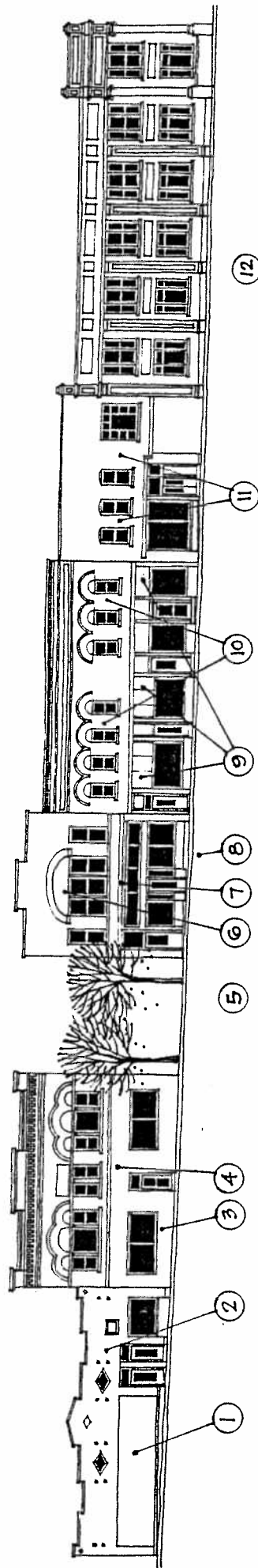


# Recommendations 10. 9th Street

- ① ENAMEL PANEL STOREFRONT IS INAPPROPRIATE AND SHOULD EVENTUALLY BE REMOVED.
- ② IF FOUNDATION IS NATURAL STONE, PAINT SHOULD BE REMOVED
- ③ REMOVE OR IMPROVE DESIGN OF SIGN.
- ④ WEAK BUILDING IN TERMS OF SCALE AND DEFINITION OF THE STREET. ADDING TREES WILL HELP TO REDUCE THE CONTRAST.

- ⑤ REAR FACADES IN THIS ZONE ARE HIGHLY VISIBLE FROM ARRIVAL ZONE TO DOWNTOWN. REAR FACADES REQUIRE A LEVEL OF MAINTENANCE APPROPRIATE TO THEIR VISUAL IMPACT.

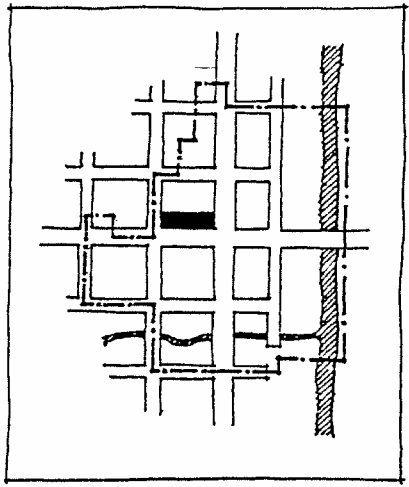




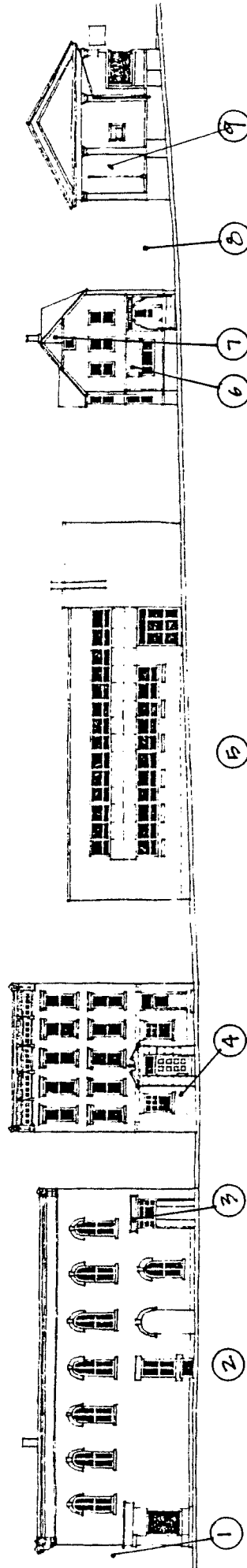
# II. 9th Street

## Recommendations

- ① INAPPROPRIATE ALTERATION SHOULD BE NEUTRALIZED WITH PAINT.
- ② REMOVE HANGING SIGN
- ③ IMITATION STONE IS OUT OF CHARACTER... COST MAY PROHIBIT REMOVAL
- ④ REMOVE HANGING SIGN
- ⑤ POTENTIAL INFILL ZONE.... PLANT TREES AS INTERIM SOLUTION. \*
- ⑥ REMOVE PANEL IF WINDOW EXISTS AND PAINT TRIM AND FRAMES LESS OBTRUSIVE COLOR.
- ⑦ ADD CANVAS AWNING
- ⑧ STOREFRONT REQUIRES MAINTENANCE.
- ⑨ REMOVE OR PAINT PANELS IN NEUTRAL COLOR.
- ⑩ REMOVE SIGNS.
- ⑪ REMOVE SIGNS.
- ⑫ NO CHANGES REQUIRED



\* PLEASE REFER TO INFILL DESIGN GUIDELINES, FOUND IN THE APPENDIX.



## Recommendations 12. 10th Street

- ① REMOVE OR RELOCATE SIGN.
- ② LANDMARK QUALITY BUILDING AT CORNER.
- ③ GOOD GRAPHICS - PROPER SCALE.
- ④ STOREFRONT ZONE HAS BEEN ALTERED BUT IS NOT VISUALLY OBJECTIONABLE.
- ⑤ BUILDING IS OUT OF CHARACTER BUT WELL MAINTAINED.
- ⑥ REMOVE ALUMINUM AWNING.
- ⑦ REMOVE ADDED GABLE CONSTRUCTION.
- ⑧ MAINTENANCE OF ALLEYS, PARKING, AND SERVICE AREAS IS VISUALLY IMPORTANT.
- ⑨ ISOLATED GREEK REVIVAL FACADE SHOULD BE RESTORED. REMOVE AND RELOCATE WIRES, AIR CONDITIONER, GUTTER DOWNSPOUTS, ETC. REPAINT BUILDING.

