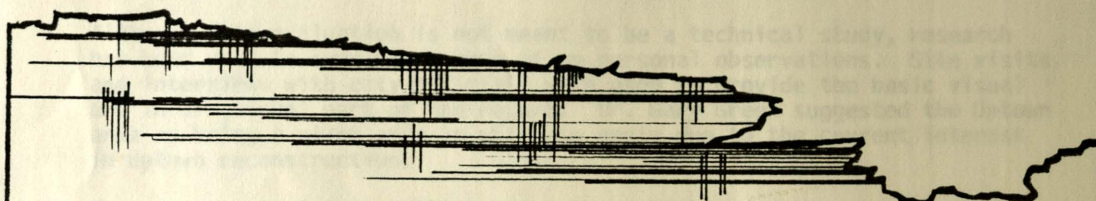


SIXTH AVENUE TO THE RIVER



A VISUAL EVALUATION OF UPTOWN COLUMBUS, GEORGIA

BY: GREGG A. COYLE

Gregg A. Coyle
GREGG A. COYLE
AIA

**HUBERT BOND OWENS
READING ROOM
SCHOOL OF ENVIRONMENTAL DESIGN
UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA**

INTRODUCTION

August 18, 1986

Dr. Joseph Whorton
Director
Institute of Community and Area Development
309 Old College
University of Georgia
Athens, GA 30602

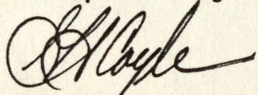
Dear Dr. Whorton:

Pursuant to your request, I submit this visual evaluation of Uptown, Columbus, Georgia.

Although this evaluation is not meant to be a technical study, research has been used to supplement some of my personal observations. Site visits and interviews with city officials were used to provide the basic visual and informational part of the report. Dr. Gary Green suggested the Uptown area as being a pilot area in which to begin due to the current interest in Uptown reconstruction.

There are several interrelated natural and historic features, which may not outlast the proposed reconstruction. Hopefully this evaluation will create an awareness of these visual features which are in my opinion part of the spirit and image of Uptown Columbus.

Respectfully submitted,



Gregg A. Coyle
ASLA

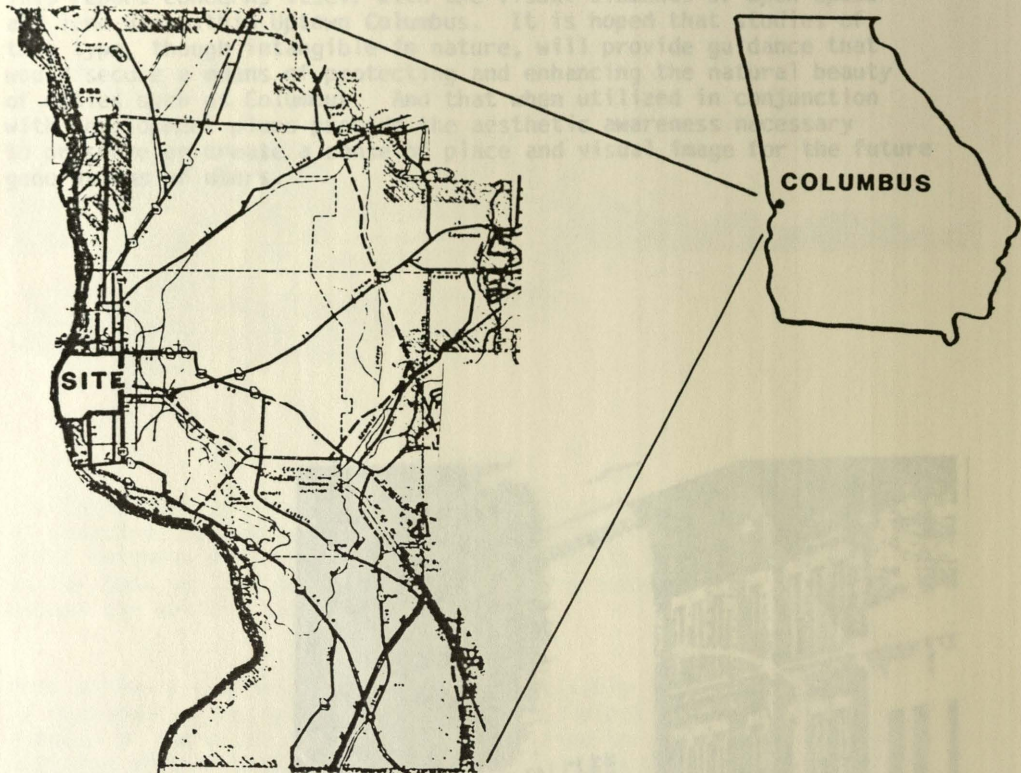
Topography and water, the major elements of nature, have always shaped and located our cities. Columbus was no exception to the rule.

Located at the head of navigation on the Chattahoochee River, the 1200 acre pre-planned, pre-named trading town of Columbus came to be through an act of Georgia legislature in 1827.

Present day Columbus, Georgia's second largest city, now dominates the region. Common to most growing cities, suburban development with relatively inactive and deteriorating central business districts has afflicted Columbus.

INTRODUCTION

The City is actively pursuing the revitalization of the CBD called "downtown" through visible reconstruction guided by programs for development.



Topography and water, the major elements of nature, have always shaped and located our cities. Columbus was no exception to the rule.

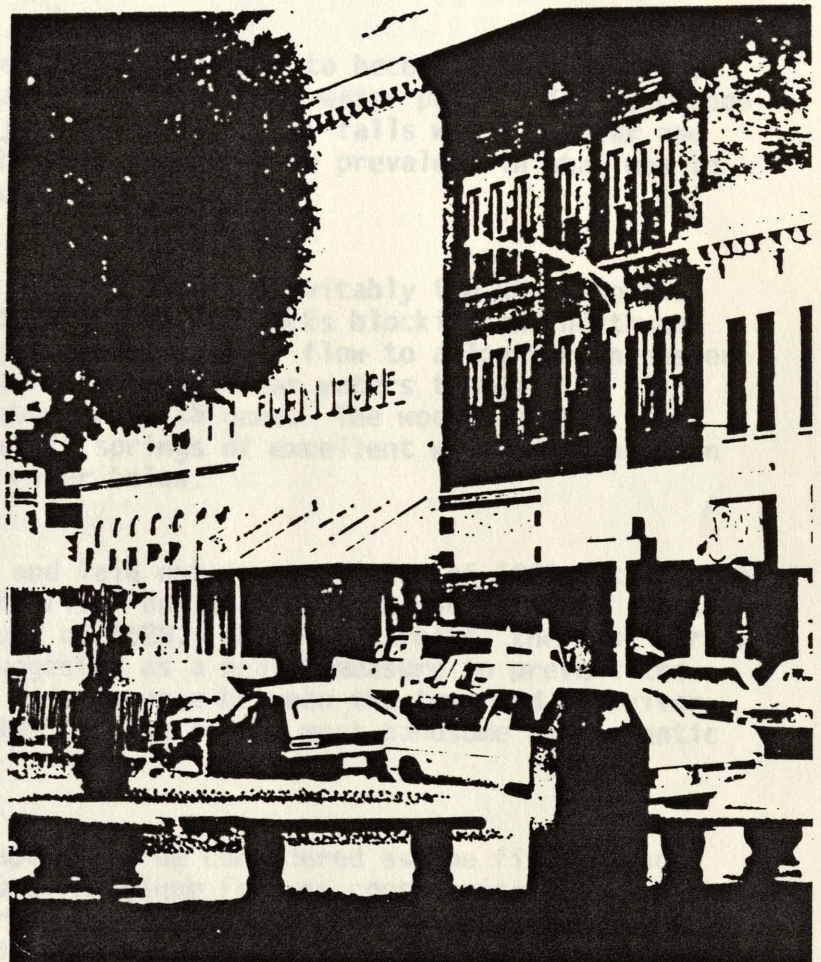
Located at the head of navigation on the Chattahoochee River, the 1200 acre pre-planned, pre-named trading town of Columbus came to be through an act of Georgia legislature in 1827.

Present day Columbus, Georgia's second largest city, now dominates Muscogee County. Common to most growing cities, suburban development with relatively inactive and deteriorating central business districts has afflicted Columbus.

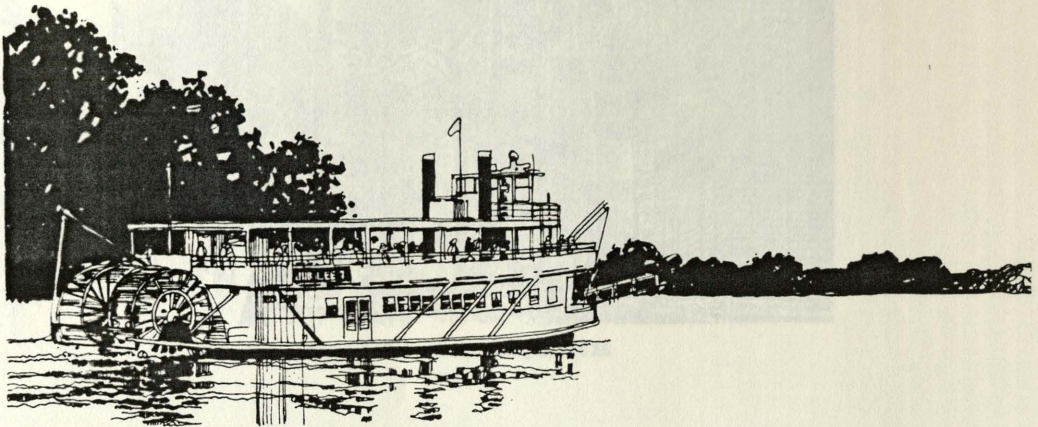
HISTORICAL IMAGERY

The city is actively pursuing the revitalization of the CBD called "Uptown" through visible reconstruction guided by programs for development.

This report concerns itself with the visual elements of open space and land use within Uptown Columbus. It is hoped that studies of this type, though intangible in nature, will provide guidance that would secure a means of protecting and enhancing the natural beauty of cities such as Columbus. And that when utilized in conjunction with development plans provide the aesthetic awareness necessary to preserve or create a sense of place and visual image for the future generations of users.



HISTORICAL IMAGERY



The Chattahoochee River caused Columbus to become a thriving city of industry, cotton factories, mills and water power. The site upon which Columbus rests just below the rocky falls was a popular one as far back as 1679 when the Spanish were prevalent in what was to become the western boundary of Georgia.

When asking Georgians about Columbus inevitably the Chattahoochee is mentioned. The natural falls and rocks blocking the northward passage of commerce, slowed the rivers' flow to allow for an easier crossing at this point. The broad clear waters teemed with fish and the fertile land abounded with game. The wooded bluffs along the river held at least 12 springs of excellent water dashing down the 35 foot drop into river below.

Columbus was surveyed and laid out in the winter of 1828 with 9 streets running parallel to the river and 13 running perpendicular. Lots went up for sale in July of 1828. The wide streets, the most narrow being 99 feet, were suggested as a health measure to prevent the spread of disease. A wide expanse between the town and the river was left open to provide for one of the most handsome and romantic walks in the state.

Thus the river promenade could be considered as the first planned open space for Columbus. A unique feature considering the fact that at that time trees were being felled to create thoroughfares and virgin open land stood but a mere 13 blocks away.



Embryo Town of Columbus, Georgia, 1828

Columbus grew rapidly and the Chattahoochee served the city well transporting cotton southward. By 1832 Columbus boasted a population of 1800 and shipped 16,000 bales of cotton down the river that same year.

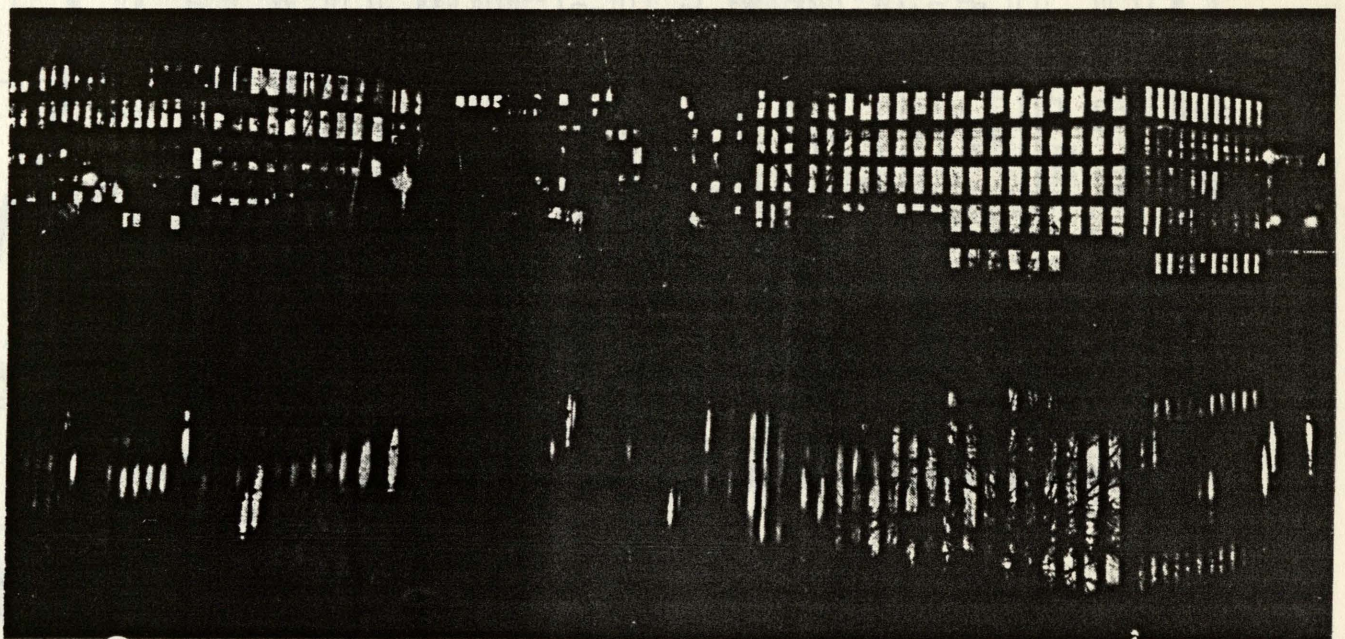


Scene on Broad Street in 1904.



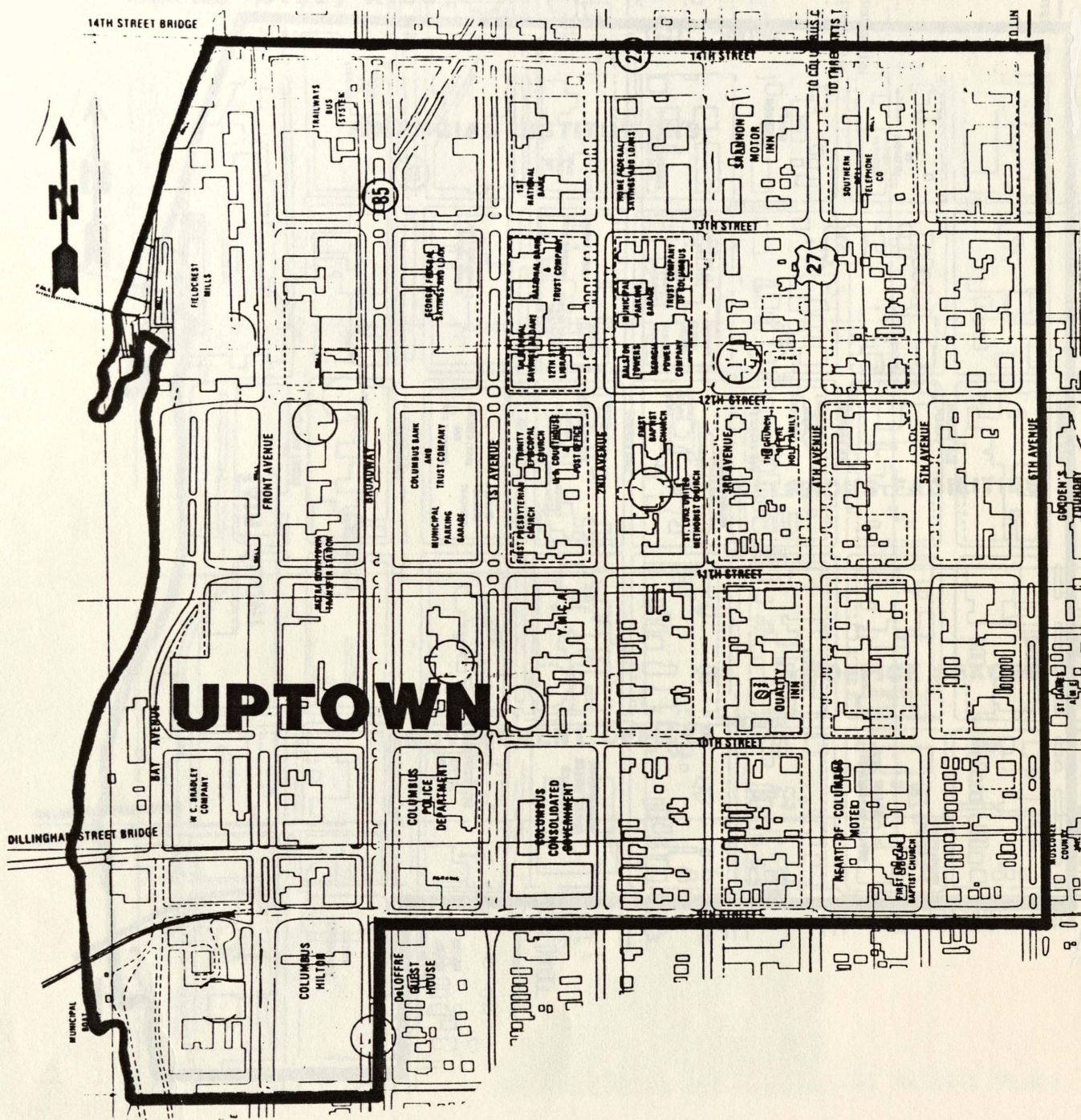
Cotton being loaded on River Steamer at Columbus.

Columbus continued to prosper and grow. Waterfront residential development eventually gave way to the mills as cotton became king and Columbus became the second largest producer of textiles in the United States.

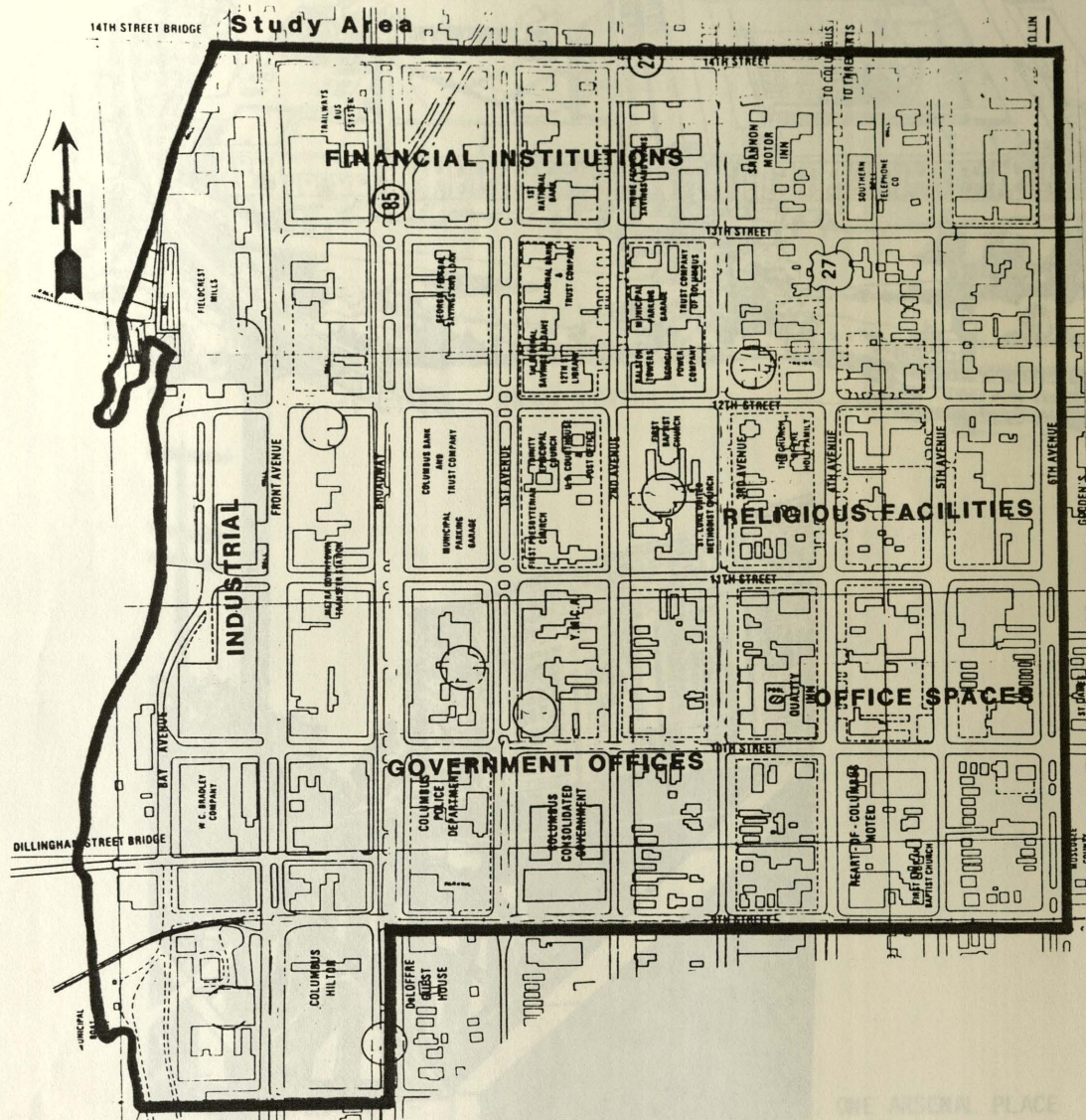


Muscogee Manufacturing Company plant at night, photographed from Alabama side of the Chattahoochee. Lighted mills along the Chattahoochee.

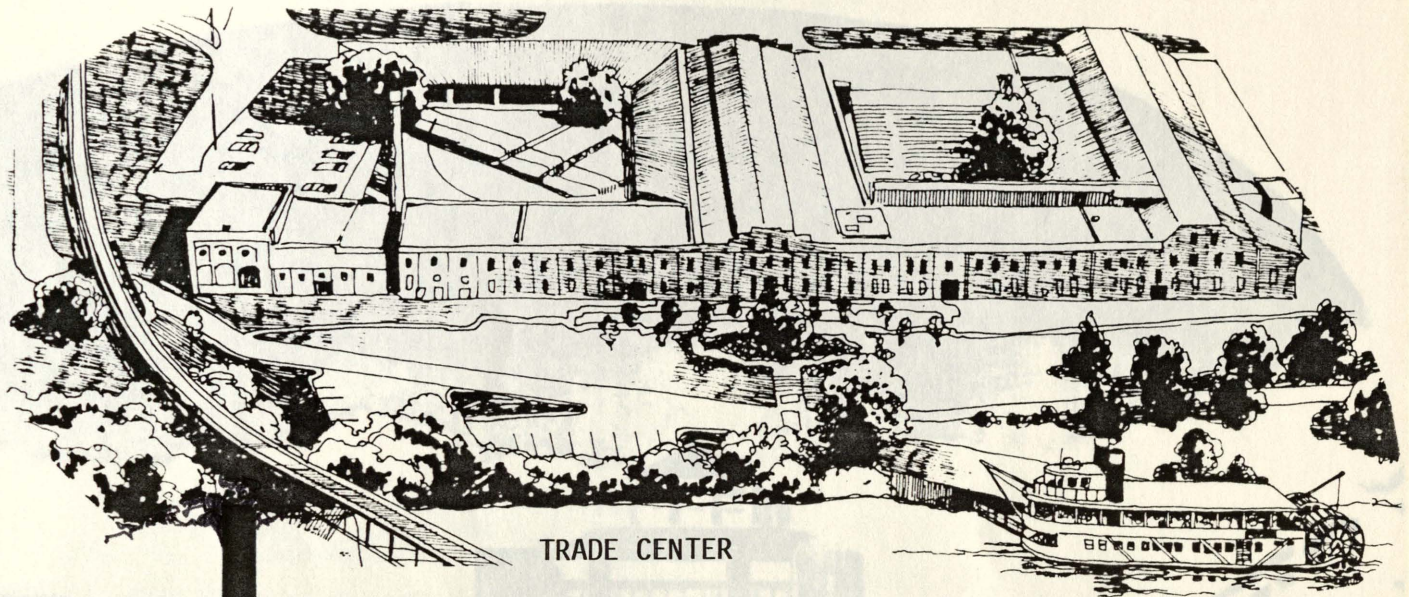
The analysis area of Uptown Columbus includes the industrial riverfront and is bounded by Sixth Avenue to the west, the Chattahoochee to the east, Ninth Street on the south and Fourteenth Street to the north.



14TH STREET BRIDGE



Recent development trends are inclusive of treating the waterfront as an amenity rather than an industrial resource. The Ironworks Convention and Trade Center and the Columbus Hilton are representative of the type of reconstruction Uptown is in need of. Other projects One Arsenal Place, The Rankin', and Carmike Plaza are currently underway.



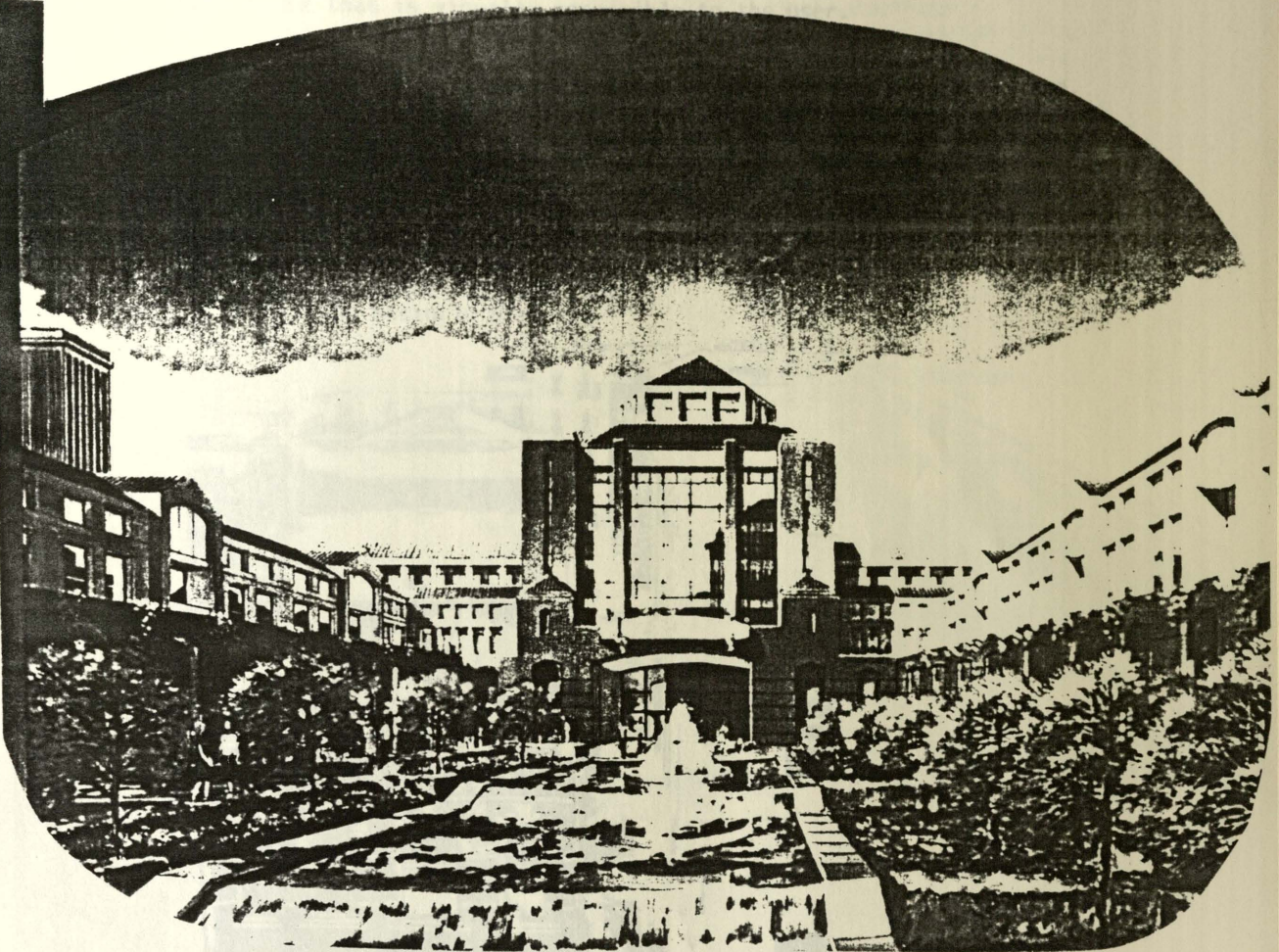
TRADE CENTER



ONE ARSENAL PLACE

SUGGESTIONS

The city of Columbus is totally committed to the reconstruction and revitalization of Uptown. The American City Corporation completed a development plan and program for Uptown in May 1985 that includes 41 projects to be implemented over the next 15 years. The aforementioned 3 projects are inclusive of the reconstruction package. The revitalization of Uptown towards a major activity center for Columbus is inevitable.



Enterprise Square COLUMBUS, GEORGIA

AMERICAN CITY CORPORATION

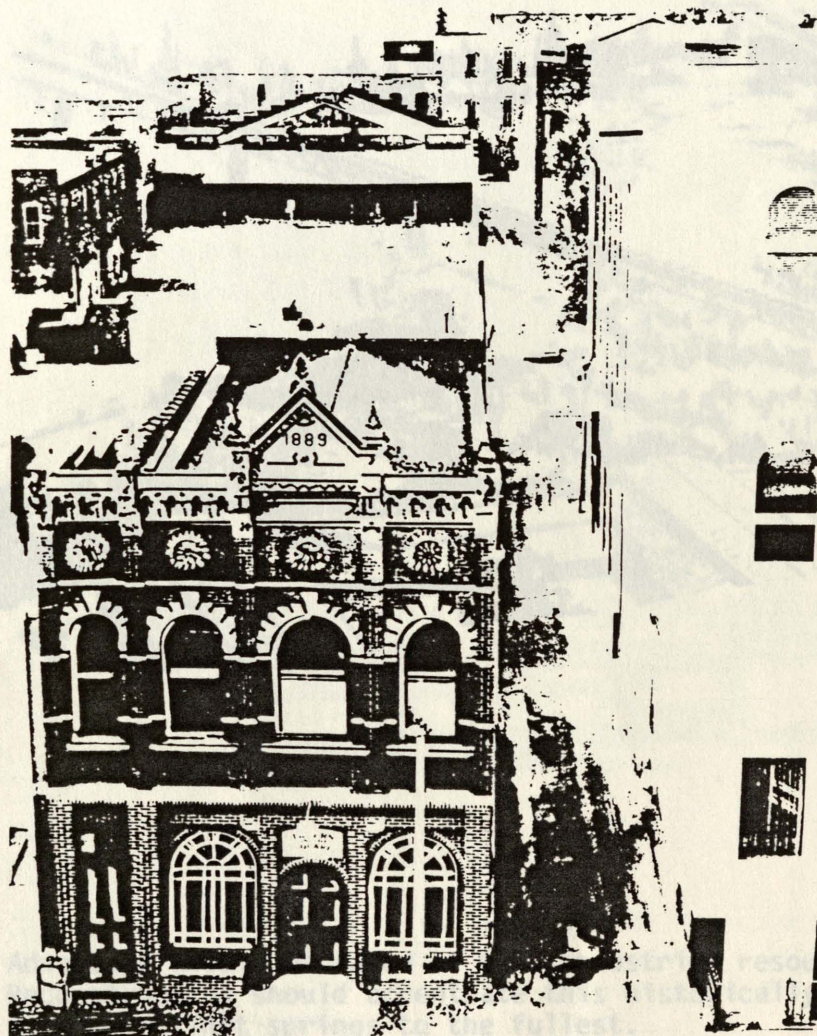
A subsidiary of The McGraw-Hill Companies

VISUAL SUGGESTIONS

Open space as defined by most urban specialists is all land which is not developed. If that is the case then Uptown Columbus has no pure open space that is visually accessible to the user.

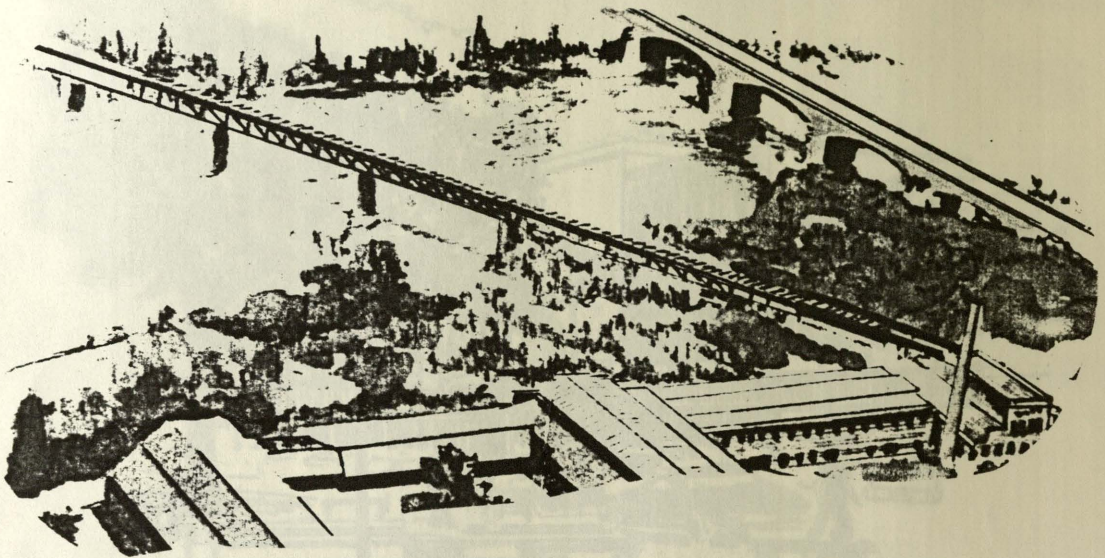
A more suitable open space definition is required to describe Uptown. The open areas are urban and developed comprised of walkways, broad esplanades, small retail plazas, church grounds, private and public courts making up the grounds of government and service oriented institutions. The open space of Uptown could be defined as all land except that under roof and that dominated by vehicular use. The visual open space of Uptown can be categorized as follows:

- a. The Chattahoochee Riverfront
- b. The broad thorough fares
- c. The Historic District



The Chattahoochee and its adjacent bluffs is the greatest natural visual amenity Columbus has to offer its citizens and visitors. However, visually it comes as somewhat of a surprise to the visitor as the river has limited physical and visual accessibility. It is difficult to feel the presence of the waterfront even when walking the river promenade.

The lack of river presence strongly suggests that waterfront developments conceptually include a return to the Chattahoochee or the element of water in general as exemplified by the Iron Works and Trade Center. Provisions for physical and visual contact with the river will only strengthen Uptown's new activity image and serve as an open space link unifying Uptown with the Historic District.



Advantage should be taken of this industrial resource turned amenity. Reconstruction should accentuate this historically planned buffer with its now extinct springs to the fullest.

Visitors entering Uptown from the north and west witness a poor image of area as numerous vacant and deteriorating buildings greet them. There is a lack of quality activity as well as a sense of place. The realization of one being in Uptown Columbus is subtly discovered by the user perhaps hours after arrival. There is no signage as witnessed on the Historic District fringes and not even a clue as to Uptowns' existence along the major thoroughfares leading into the area. An identification package would be desirable and sorely needed if the reconstruction program is to draw users.

The strongest man-made open space feature is Uptowns' wide streets. One cannot help but notice the expanses and feel the openness. The esplanades are wide and contain a variety of landscape elements reflecting the 1800's. The Broadway street beautification program is very successful and gives the linear retail area an image of success and vitality. The esplanades contain mature trees that canopy the stratified landscaping and crosswalks.



The tasteful development of the thoroughfares such as Broadway, Front Avenue and First Avenue is mandatory. These streets will become the physical and visual links of the proposed activity centers of the development program.

The authenticity of Uptown will diminish should any of these corridors become lessened in width. The median development should not bar pedestrian entry and perhaps diagonal crosswalks would increase shopping spontaneity as has been proven in the shopping malls.



Looking down Broadway from Fourteenth Street to Ninth (1949), showing the two-way street and the center parkway. Before the later morning traffic begins to flow.

Street trees lining the walks in conjunction with median planting would only strengthen the linear visual image and provide sanctuary from the sun. Perhaps the return of the awning inserted in the architectural control guidelines should be called upon to extend the retail outlets out of doors. Enhancement of Uptowns precious open space where it is most needed, its walkways and esplanades, can only increase the odds for success in redevelopment.

The residential neighborhood of the Columbus Historic District is an example of a special place that carries an image of visual passive open space and carefully committed hard work. That type of attitude will play an important role in Uptowns program. A sense of entry is created by the signage and esplanade development. This historic resource displays a proud heritage that is capable of reinforcing a new image for Uptown.

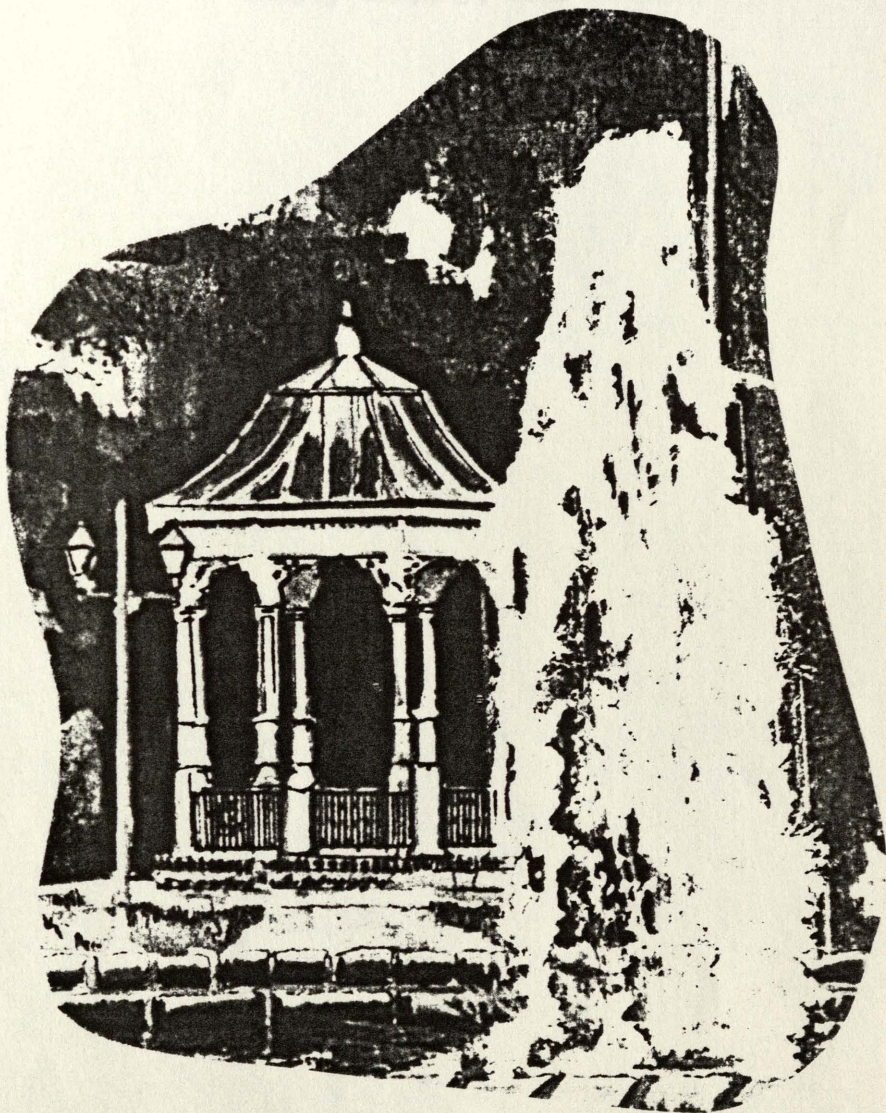


Prepared by Candeb, Reissig and Associates

SUMMARY

Columbus has begun to tackle the difficult task of improving Uptowns' image. Quality development programs are being followed with successful results and nothing but good lies ahead for Uptown. Visual evaluations are like emotions. They are intangible and difficult to place into economic terms. Hopefully evaluations of this type can enhance development programs regardless of the lack of technical content.

Open space is different in Uptown Columbus as well it should be. It should be addressed with visual enhancement in mind keying on historical imagery, the users of today and tomorrow, the river, the thoroughfares, imaginative land uses, and last but not least, just plain feelings.



BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. American City Corporation, "Development Plan and Program Uptown Columbus, Georgia," 1985
2. Bellafiore, Vincent J. "A Recreational Open Space Study for Columbus - Muscogee County, Georgia," 1968
3. Candeub, Fleissig and Associates, Inc., "Riverfront Development Program, Columbus, Georgia," 1983
4. Columbus, Georgia Department of Community Development Planning Division, "Natural Systems of Columbus, Georgia," 1978
5. Worsley, Etta Blanchard, "Columbus on the Chattahoochee," Columbus Office Supply Company, 1951