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# LAND USE PLAN

## NORTH MAIN STREET/HURON RIVER CORRIDOR

# DEARDORFF DESIGN RESOURCES / inc.

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Planning

Landscape Architecture

June 20, 1988

Mr. Martin Overhiser  
City Planning Director  
City Planning Department  
City of Ann Arbor  
P.O. Box 8647  
Ann Arbor, Michigan 48107

Dear Martin:

We are very pleased to submit this final draft of The Land Use Plan for the North Main Street/Huron River Corridor. We were particularly pleased with the level and magnitude of citizen involvement, and the cooperative and timely inputs of both the North Main Task Force and the various city departments. This has been a challenging study. We are, however, very enthusiastic about the findings and recommendations documented herein.

The North Main Corridor offers some exiting possibilities and this plan offers feasible means to achieve a high quality entrance to the Downtown and river access for all ages and recreational interests. The proposed river park will become the catalyst for a renewed and enriched economic vitality along North Main Street. We have enjoyed working with you and Gerry Clark on this project. Your quickness in providing information was greatly appreciated. We are also thankful for the efforts of Joan Berger in responding to the many public inquiries.

Sincerely,

For the Deardorff Design Resources/inc. Team



Howard L. Deardorff

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**LAND USE PLAN  
North Main Street/Huron River Corridor**

Submitted by:

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June 20, 1988



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### North Main Task Force

Deardorff Design Resources/inc. would like to acknowledge the effort of the members of the North Main Task Force whose ideas and discussion have contributed significantly to this project.

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Robert Boblett  
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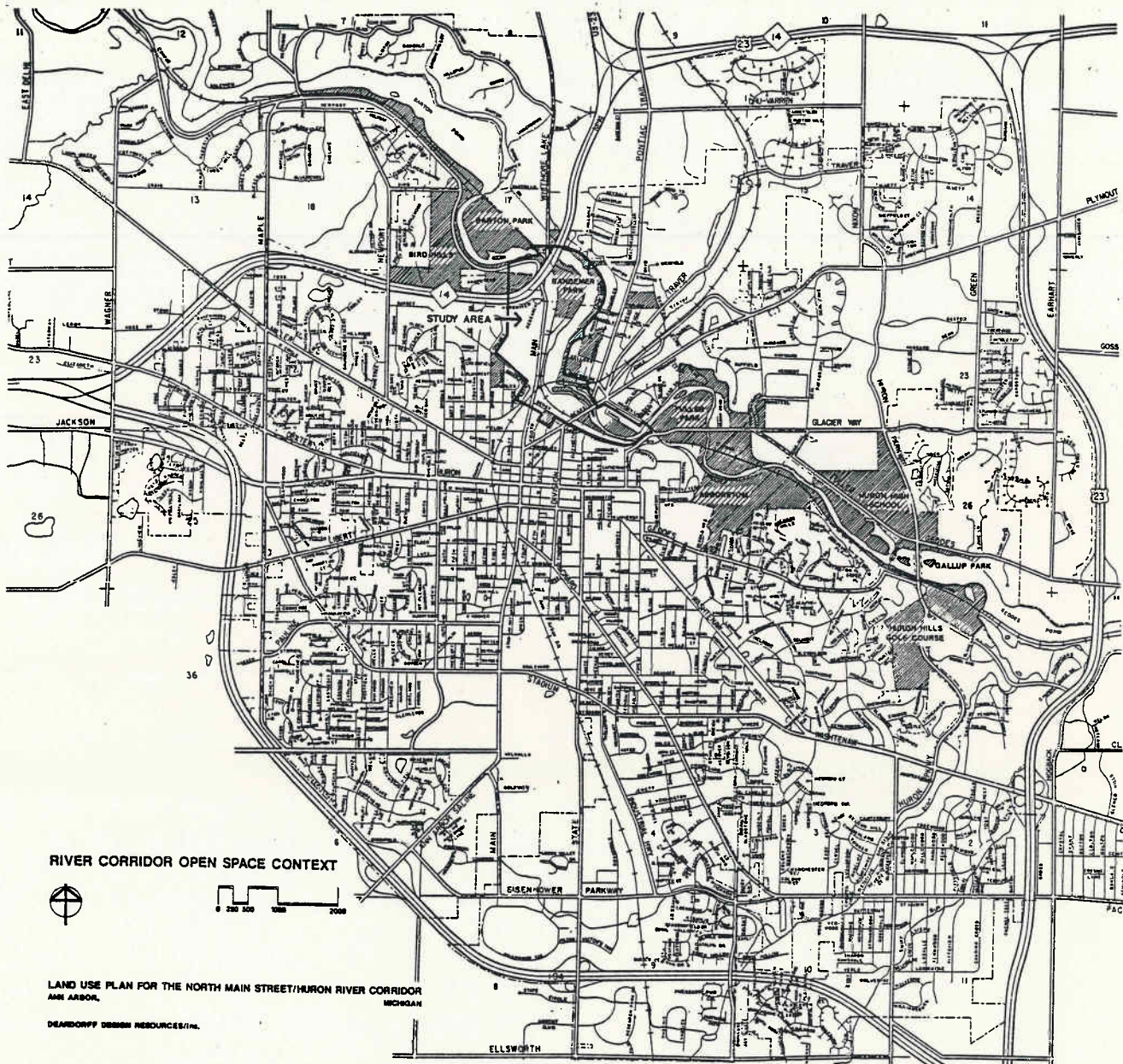
# INTRODUCTION

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## INTRODUCTION

### Background

In the fall of 1986 the Ann Arbor community began the ambitious task of "Futuring". The broad goal was to identify long range planning and development objectives for the community. The organizational vehicle was Ann Arbor Area 2000 (A<sup>3</sup> 2000), the most extensive public involvement effort in the history of the community. The process led to the identification of 25 task force groups, each focusing on specific community objectives. One of these, the A<sup>3</sup> 2000 North Main Street Corridor Task Force, co-convened by Jerry Jernigan and Dan Jacobs, was the initiating catalyst for this study.

On March 16, 1987 the Ann Arbor City Council passed a resolution creating the North Main Task Force which in July of that year

requested proposals from private consultants to prepare a Land Use Plan for the North Main Street/Huron River Corridor. The firm of Deardorff Design Resources/inc. was awarded the contract through City Council Resolution and began work in September of 1987.

### **Study Objectives**

The performance objectives of this planning study were threefold:

- \* to insure timely participation of citizens who own businesses and homes within the study area, and the involvement of the broader community.
- \* to develop a plan that has both short-term and long-term recommendations that enhance and enrich the attractiveness and economic vitality of the area considered.
- \* to create community excitement and enthusiasm regarding the renewal of North Main Street public right-of-way and the potential for access and enjoyment of the Huron River.

These objectives have been carefully woven through the five phases of the study which included:

- Phase 1: Data Collection, Review and Codification**
- Phase 2: Analysis of Corridor Opportunities and Constraints**
- Phase 3: Development of Alternatives**
- Phase 4: Consensus Plan**
- Phase 5: Development of Final Plan**

Each of these work phases involved an emphasis on public participation that incorporated unique and specific methodologies.

### **Public Involvement Opportunities**

The opportunities for public input have been many and varied. The numerous Task Force and Task Force Steering Committee meetings have been open to the public and gave consistently included participation from individuals who are not on the Task Force. In addition, there have been several public meetings, each characterized by extensive opportunity for public comment.

In addition to these important, if relatively traditional, approaches to participation, several other methods for obtaining



public input were also used. Specifically, in Phase 1 both a photo-questionnaire and a series of interviews were used to obtain information from diverse segments of the public. In Phase 3, small groups were convened to discuss alternatives and a feedback format was used to obtain more systematic responses to the proposed alternatives. Each of these approaches is discussed in greater detail in later sections of this report.

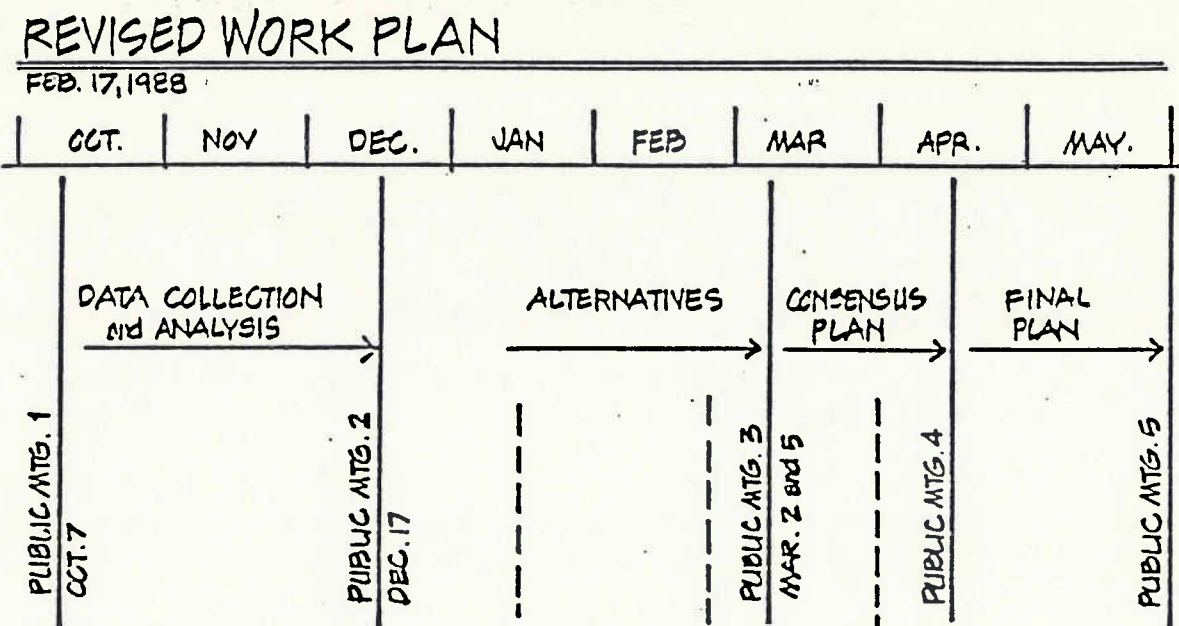
The activities of the Task Force and the public meetings received thorough coverage in the Ann Arbor News and several radio stations. The public thus had ample opportunity to learn about the process and progress of the project. These channels, in addition to meetings held by special interest groups (e.g., Kerrytown..., Ecology Center..., Chamber of Commerce...), led to further, more informal opportunities for public involvement.

### Study Organization

The study is organized in three sections:

1. OPPORTUNITIES and CONSTRAINTS ANALYSIS
2. ALTERNATIVES
3. CONSENSUS PLAN REFINEMENT

The narrative for each section explains in more detail the methodology used and the findings. The following diagram illustrates the chronology of the study. Each phase the work builds on the previous phase.



\* WE ARE HERE



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# 1. THE ANALYSES



## **ANALYSES**

### **Introduction**

The analyses phase of this study consisted of four parallel and concurrent data gathering and analysis functions:

1. The Photo-Questionnaire
2. The Interviews
3. Physical Systems Analysis
4. Economic Opportunities and Constraints Analysis

Each of these analyses is explained in terms of methodology and conclusions. The entire phase is summarized in terms of the major determinants considered in generating land use alternatives.

### **Photo-Questionnaire**

In an effort to obtain input from many more individuals than would normally attend public meetings, data gathering in Phase 1 of the study included the use of a Photo-questionnaire. As its name implies, this is a questionnaire that includes photographs; in this case they included both existing views along the study corridor and, more importantly, views from other places suggesting potential activities and development that could take place here. In addition to photographs, this survey also included other questions to provide input on how the various segments of the public felt about possible future uses of the study area.

### **Samples**

**Random Sample** - The Planning Department drew a sample of 814 households. Each of these was sent a letter inviting participation in the forthcoming survey. Fourteen were not deliverable; 31 declined (some giving reasons, such as will not be in town). Of the remaining 769, 184 returned the postcard indicating willingness to participate -- a response rate of 24% which suggests a level of interest that is not as high as many would have anticipated.

Of the 184 receiving the survey, 128 were returned -- a response rate of 70%

**Designated Groups** - This sample consists of two major groups. The Planning Department provided address labels for the property owners in the Study Area. The remaining individuals were

included by virtue of their relationship to the Study Area -- names provided for either the Ann Arbor North Main Task Force or the Ann Arbor Area 2000 North Main Task Force, members of City Council, owners of businesses. Two of these surveys were returned because the individuals no longer lived in the area. Of the remaining 203, 87 were returned in time to be included in the data analysis (43% response rate), and two more arrived too late for inclusion.

**Employees** - Letters were sent to 49 business establishments in the Study Area asking for information about the number of employees so that we could provide survey forms. Eight letters were returned because the business was no longer at that address. Thirteen responded with the number of employees, amounting to 334 individuals. The requested numbers of surveys were delivered to each of these 13 establishments. Of these, 158 were returned, a response rate of 47% (ranging between 0% and 80%).

**Request Questionnaire** - Through notice in the Ann Arbor News and information provided Ann Arbor North Main Task Force members, the public was invited to call the Planning Office and request a copy of the Questionnaire. 176 requests were received; 133 of these returned the completed questionnaire (76% response rate).

**High School Students** - Contact was made with the Social Science departments at Community, Huron, and Pioneer High Schools and the schools designated appropriate classes for participation. Students completed the surveys during class time and the sample thus includes all students who were present on the given day. A total of 115 students completed the survey (and one teacher who is included in the "Request Questionnaire" group).

The Questionnaire included items asking individuals to indicate whether they were members of the North Main Task Force and/or the Ann Arbor Area 2000 North Main Task Force. A total of 36 individuals indicated membership in at least one of these two Task Forces. It should be noted that we have no way to verify these responses as all questionnaires were anonymous, nor can we say that these individuals are in any sense representative of the Task Force memberships. Since the Task Force is an important element in the public participation process, responses by these individuals were computed and are shown below.

The Questionnaire also asked whether the respondent is a member of the Ann Arbor Area Chamber of Commerce. Each of the first four sample groups listed above included some Chamber members. A total of 34 individuals checked this item. There is no assumption here that these individuals are representative of the



Chamber of Commerce membership. Their ratings are included in these analyses only because the Chamber of Commerce had, on several occasions, requested that their membership be sampled for the study.

### Survey Samples and Public Participation

With surveys the question often is raised about their size and representativeness. Are the 621 respondents included in these analyses representative of Ann Arbor citizens? Are the subgroups representative of employees, of high school students, of property owners, etc.? We think such questions are a case of misplaced social science.

A major purpose of the Photo-questionnaire was to provide the opportunity for participation. The vast majority of the respondents would not have participated in this study were it not for this procedure, although they clearly have an interest in it. What might technically be a "representative" sample, would clearly include a majority of people who do not have a particular interest in the study. They are not included here, nor would they be in any other form of public participation.

The survey results thus constitute input from a sizable number of people whose opinions and concerns are likely to be ignored in the usual public participation procedure. It is all too easy to draw the conclusion that the opinions that are voiced at public meetings are shared by many others. The results based on the survey may thus come as a surprise since they represent voices not usually heard.

### The Photo-Questionnaire

The questionnaire itself can be divided into two major aspects: information that helps identify the respondents (i.e., background) and information that pertains to how people feel about the Study Area. This second aspect included both visual and verbal approaches:

1. **Photographs.** The 40 scenes included in the questionnaire were carefully selected to reflect diverse potential treatments of the area. We intentionally omitted scenes that are so unsightly that everyone would strongly dislike them. Included were various degrees and kinds of development as well as scenes that are largely natural. Respondents were asked to indicate how much they liked each scene, in the context of the Study Area, using a 5-point scale (higher rating = higher preference).

2. **Desirability.** Also included were 23 brief descriptions of potential land uses for the Study Area. Respondents were asked to rate each in terms of its desirability in the Area. Here again, we included items that represent a range of uses, reflecting different kinds of development, and used a 5-point scale (higher rating = higher desirability).
3. **Attitude Statements.** The 17 statements were selected to reflect the diverse viewpoints that have been expressed with respect to the Study Area. Many of them were based on statements made at public meetings or included in minutes of such meetings or in newspaper articles discussing the positions of various interested parties. (Higher rating = higher agreement with item.)

### Procedure for Data Analysis

Examining the responses of 621 individuals to each of 80 items could easily become overwhelming. Our approach to making this mass of material understandable is to use statistical procedures to identify major themes or groupings in the responses made by the study participants. In that way the participants are creating the topics -- not in a direct way, but by the pattern of their responses.

Such a procedure (nonmetric factor analysis) was use for each of the three approaches included in the survey. (These analyses were based on cases with no more than 20% "no responses." A random sample was drawn from the Employee sample to equate its size to the Designated Group. Sample size for these analyses was 507.) The resulting groupings or themes thus reflect the perceptions of the sample taken as a whole. One can disagree with the name given a particular theme, but the set of items or scenes that comprise the groupings is not a matter of argument. As such, finding out what these groupings are is in itself an important aspect of the data analysis.

### Results: Photographs

Using these procedures, the photographs formed three major groupings: (These are shown on attached pages in order on increasing preference by entire sample.)

Nature and wooden walkways:	Scenes	1, 7, 12, 14, 15, 20, 26, 28, 31, 33, 37, 40
Urban development:	Scenes	2, 4, 5, 9, 11, 13, 16, 18, 21, 24, 29, 30, 32, 34, 35, 38, 39



Light industry:

Scenes 8,17,22,25,36

Means and Standard Deviations for Photograph Categories

	Nature & Wooden Walkways		Urban Development		Light Industry	
Random Sample	4.15	.61	2.28	.73	1.76	.74
Designated Gps.	4.11	.74	2.39	.82	1.97	.80
Employees	3.74	.99	2.03	.80	2.29	.99
Request Quest.	4.22	.61	1.84	.64	1.88	.83
High School	3.71	.88	2.77	.78	1.71	.73
Task Force	4.19	.76	2.45	.83	2.08	.86
Chamber of Com.	4.02	.78	2.66	.78	1.84	.60
Total Sample	3.98	.82	2.22	.81	1.93	.86

Results: Desirability

Using the empirical procedures, the Desirability items formed four categories:

How desirable do you consider these possible changes in the Study Area?

PARKS AND RECREATION

- Nature trails
- Picnic facilities
- Walkways along the entire waterfront
- Riverfront urban park
- Bicycle path
- Nature center
- Fishing pier
- Jogging trail

FESTIVAL CENTER

- Band shell/ amphitheater
- Restaurants and cafes
- Boutiques, festival market
- Museum/cultural center
- Fountain in the river
- Conference facility/hotel
- Shopping center/mall

RESIDENTIAL/OFFICE

- Office space
- Condominium
- Rental apartments
- Riverfront development-private

SMALL BUSINESS

- Small businesses
- Light industry

Means and Standard Deviations for Desirability Categories

	Parks & Rec.		Festival Center		Resident /Office		Small Business	
Random Sample	4.07	.79	2.80	.86	2.00	.92	1.98	.94
Designated Gp.	4.13	.83	2.51	.89	2.45	1.25	2.11	1.07
Employees	3.33	1.19	2.15	.99	1.83	.74	3.55	1.32
Request Quest.	4.18	.73	2.33	.94	1.72	.84	2.03	1.05
High School	3.75	.95	3.03	.94	2.21	.93	2.04	1.03
Task Force	4.13	.69	2.64	.80	2.95	1.31	2.87	1.43
Chamber of Com.	3.88	.96	3.00	.76	2.82	1.17	2.56	1.17
Total Sample	3.85	.99	2.54	.98	2.00	.94	2.42	1.28

Results: Attitudes

The four empirically-derived Attitudes categories consisted of the following items:

MONITOR APPEARANCE

- Adequate landscaping or other screening of commercial property should be required
- Review of exterior appearance of new structures proposed for the Study Area should be required

PUBLIC ACCESS

- Use riverfront to create continuous pedestrian and bicycle paths linking the area with existing parks
- Need to improve public access to river and natural areas
- Build boardwalks along the river's edge to provide access while protecting the shoreline
- Access to the river area should be increased by having public transportation (e.g., bus, trolley)

MIXED USE

- Nature and commercial activities can exist side by side if there is careful planning
- Development should be for uses that bring people into this part of the City

PRESERVE PRESENT VALUES

- Property owners should have the right to use their land as they wish
- Need to maintain availability of low rent space for locally-owned firms, e.g., small businesses and light industry
- The area needs some sprucing up, but should be left largely as is
- The best use of the area requires razing the existing buildings and starting over (reverse scale)

Means and Standard Deviations for Attitudes Categories

	Monitor Appearance		Public Access		Mixed Use		Preserve Pres. Values	
Random Sample	4.65	.47	4.08	.68	3.59	.98	2.47	.70
Designated Gp.	4.34	.92	4.07	.81	3.65	.94	2.77	.93
Employees	3.71	1.06	3.34	1.02	3.51	.97	3.86	.85
Request Quest.	4.65	.55	4.02	.76	3.29	.95	2.79	.83
High School	3.58	.89	3.67	.82	3.19	.89	3.02	.73
Task Force	4.28	.86	4.44	.54	3.97	.92	3.02	1.04
Chamber of Com.	4.36	.95	4.27	.82	4.09	.71	2.73	1.12
Total Sample	4.18	.93	3.80	.89	3.44	.96	3.03	.95

Two other attitude items, while not part of categories, are worthy of note:

- Area should be largely natural
- Adding to the City's tax base should be an important consideration in planning for this Area

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Means and Standard Deviations for Two Attitudes Items

	Largely Natural		Add to Tax Base	
Random Sample	4.32	.91	2.80	1.20
Designated Gp.	3.91	1.34	2.84	1.42
Employees	3.79	1.14	2.65	1.35
Request Quest.	4.53	.87	2.31	1.18
High School	3.98	1.10	2.70	1.17
Task Force	3.33	1.42	3.14	1.31
Chamber of Com.	3.59	1.40	3.12	1.15
Total Sample	4.11	1.10	2.65	1.27

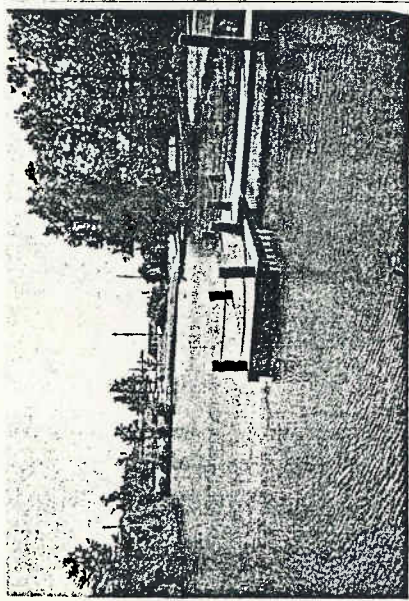
The following illustrate:

1. Figures corresponding to the photograph categories.
2. Figures corresponding to each of the four tables.

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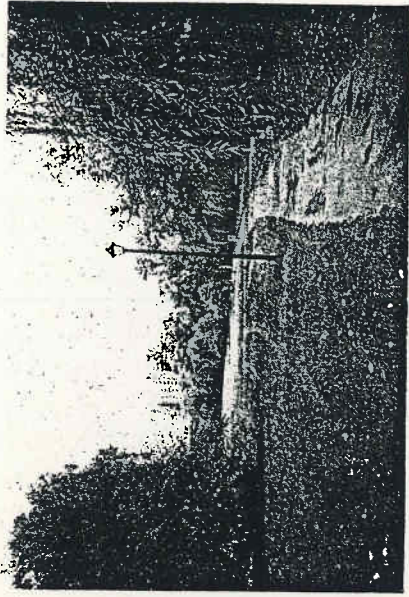
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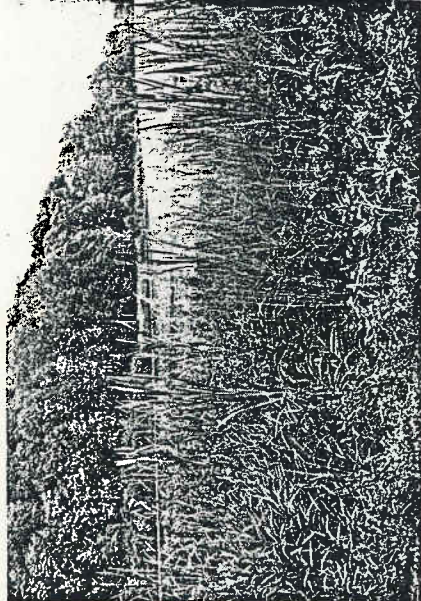
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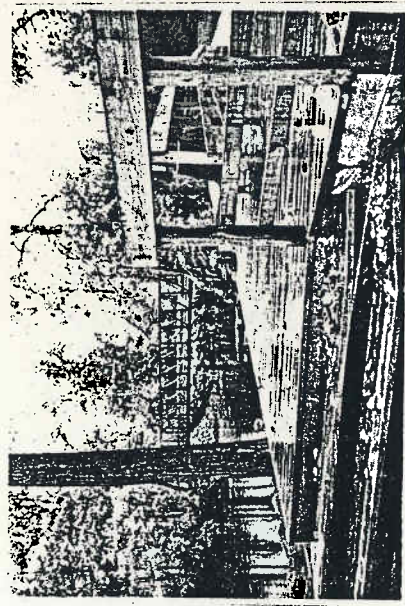
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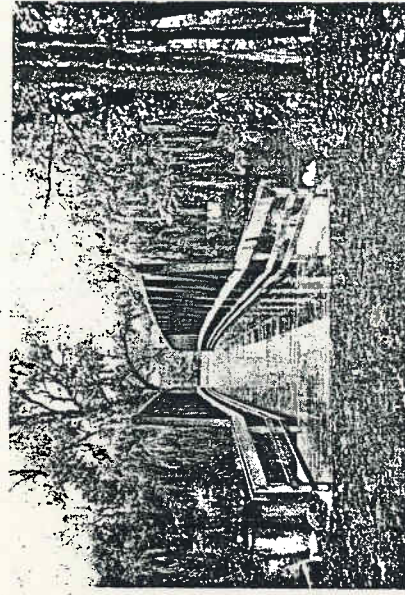
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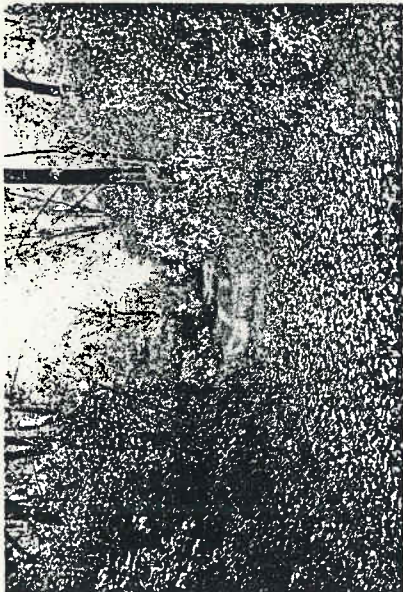
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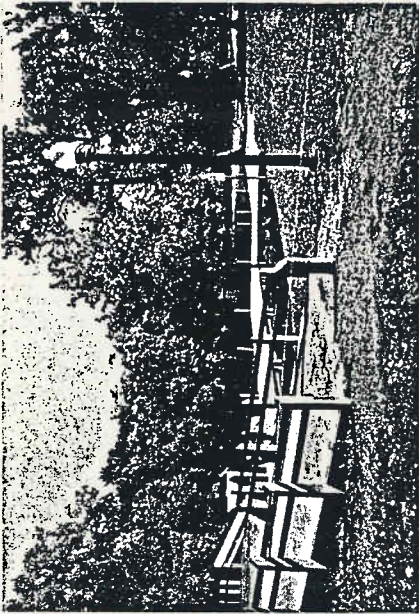


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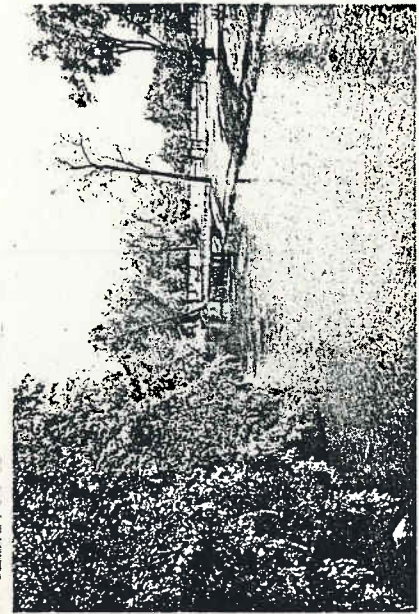
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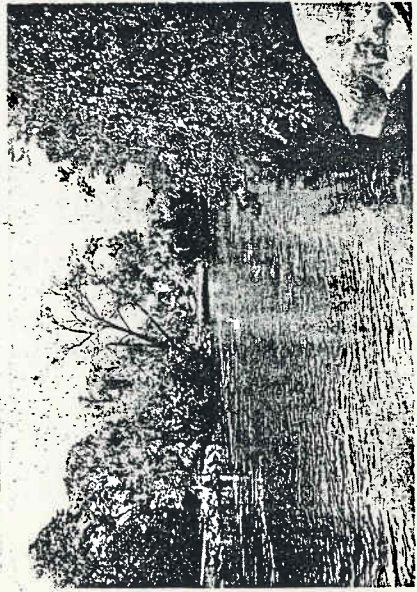
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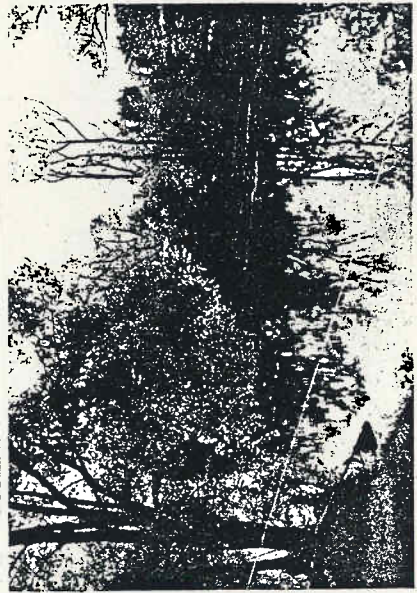
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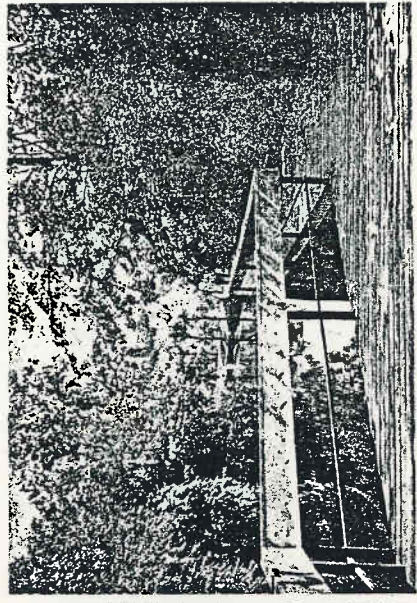
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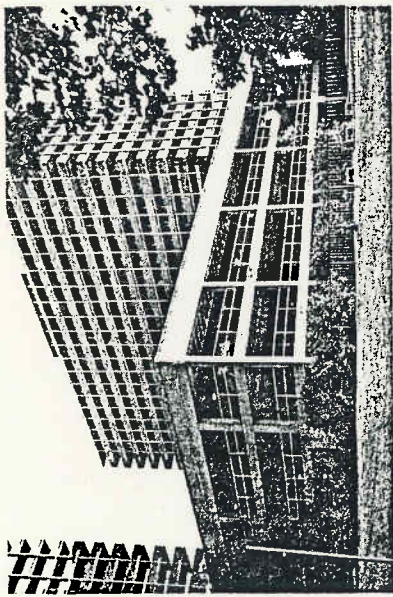
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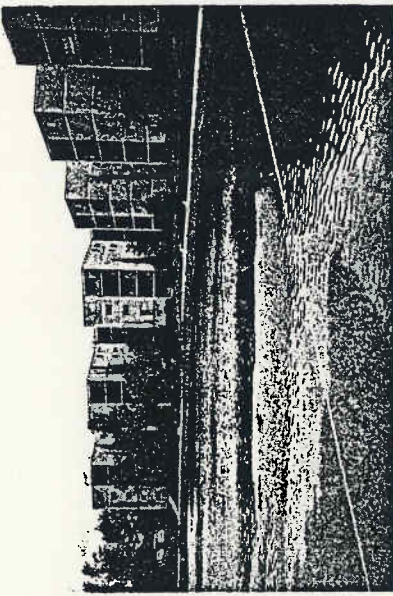
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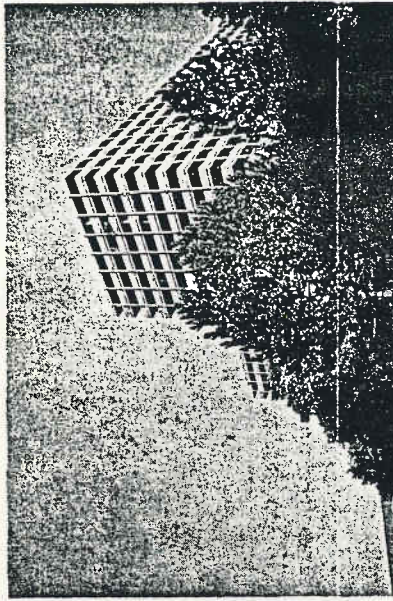
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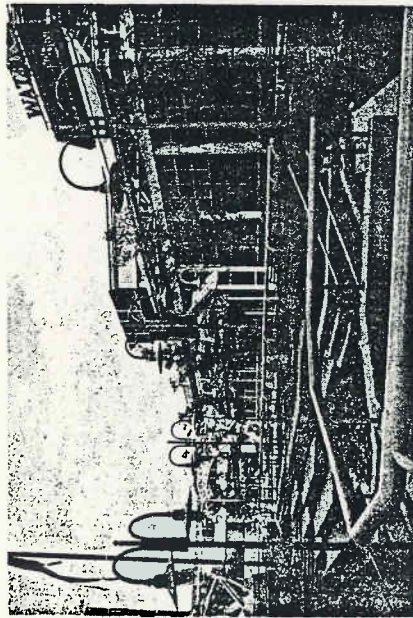
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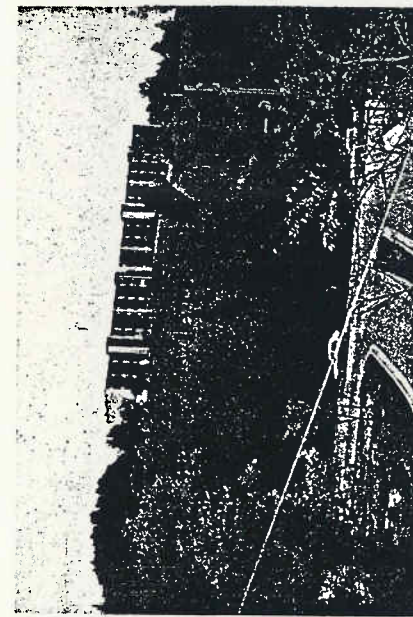
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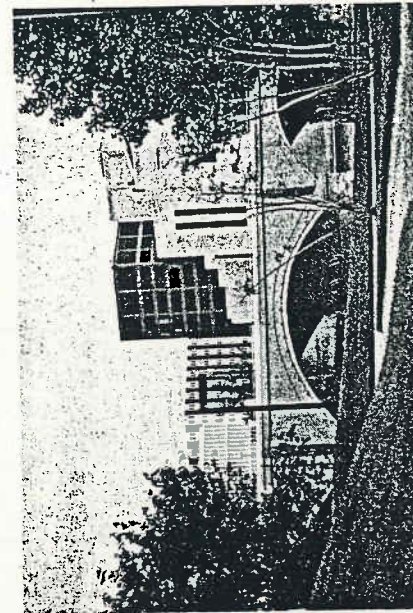
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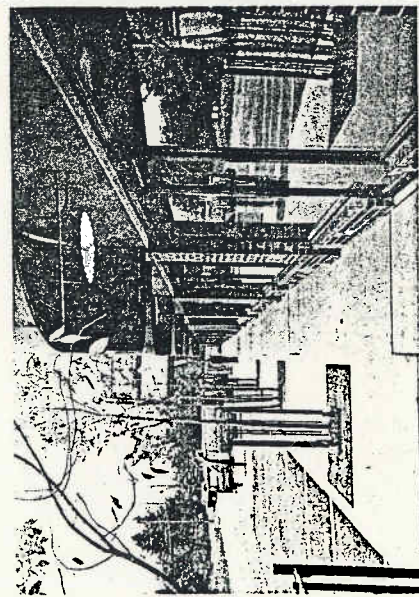
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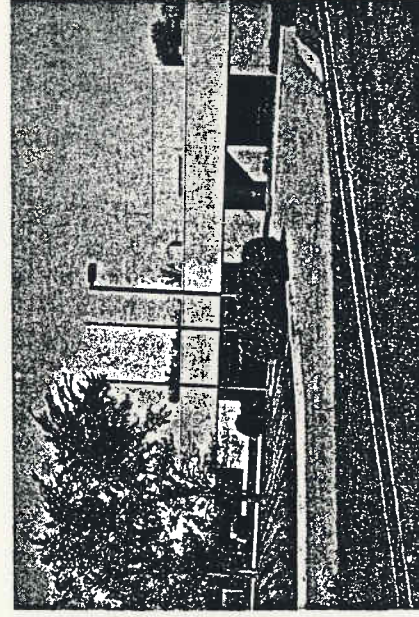
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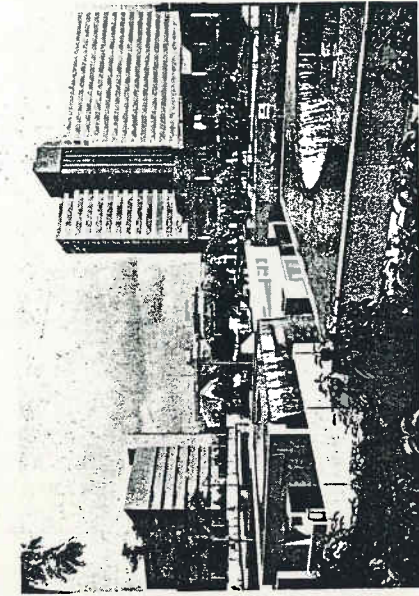
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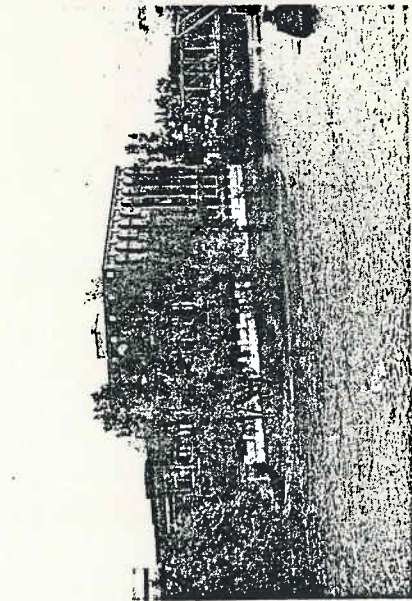


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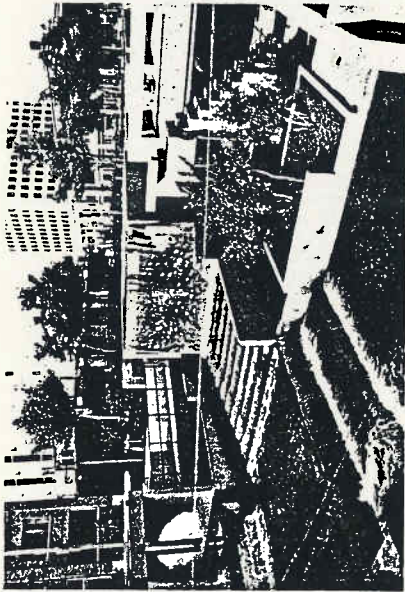


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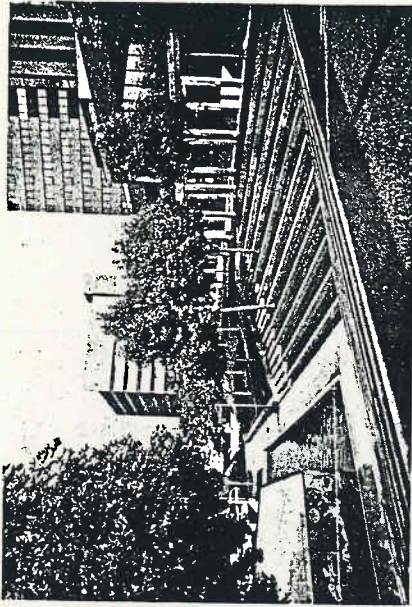
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1 2 3 4 5



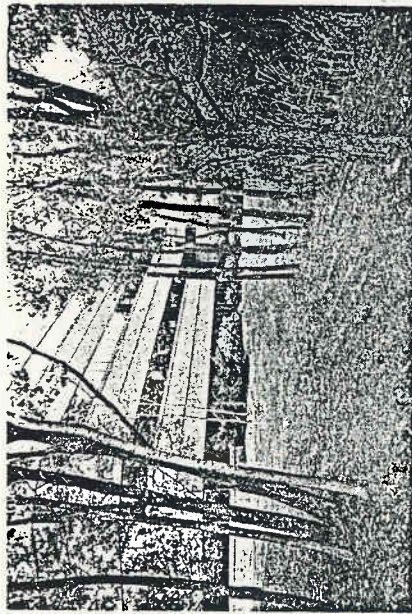
39

1 2 3 4 5



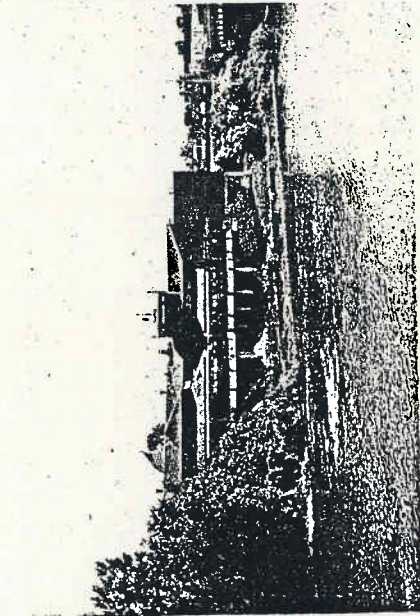
24

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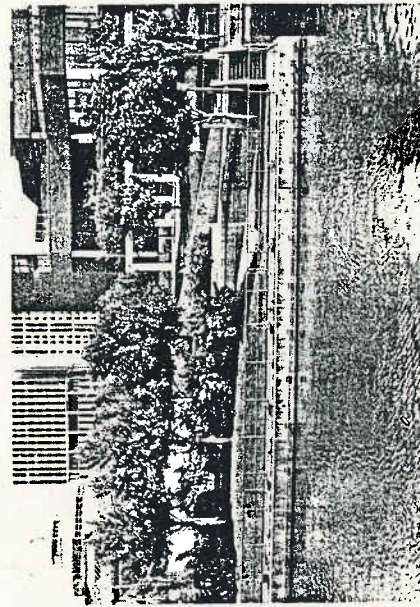
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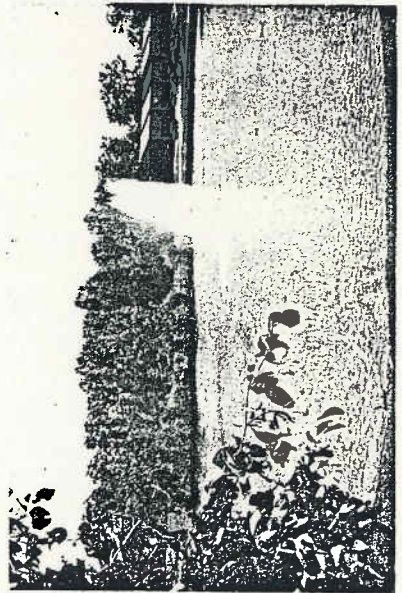
13

1 2 3 4 5



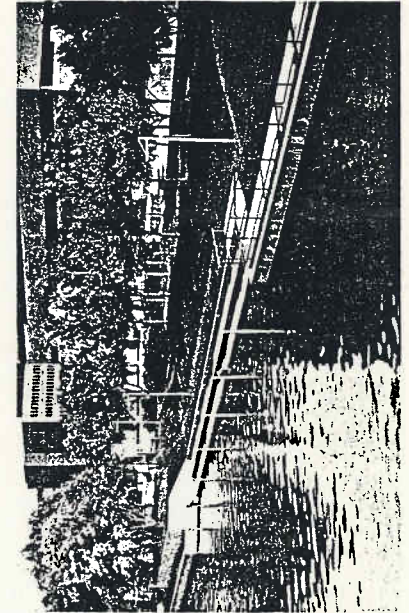
16 16

1 2 3 4 5



29

1 2 3 4 5

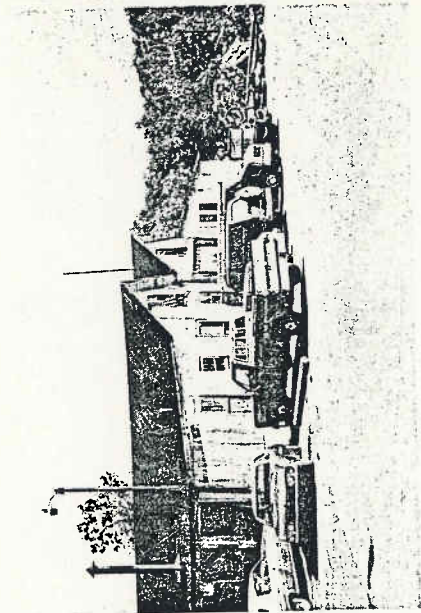


4

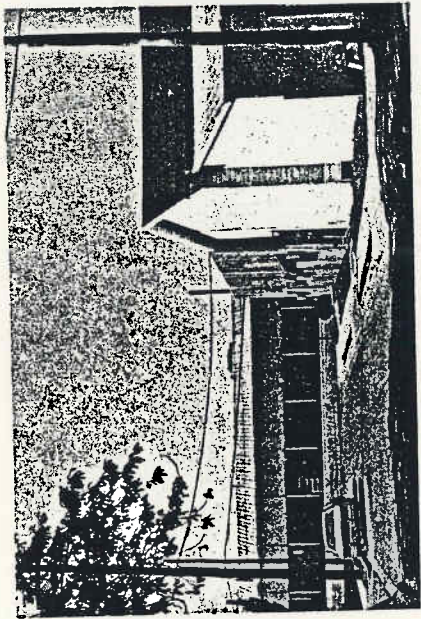
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32



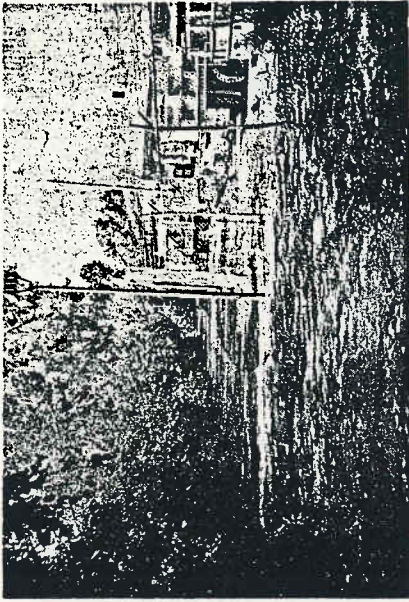


22



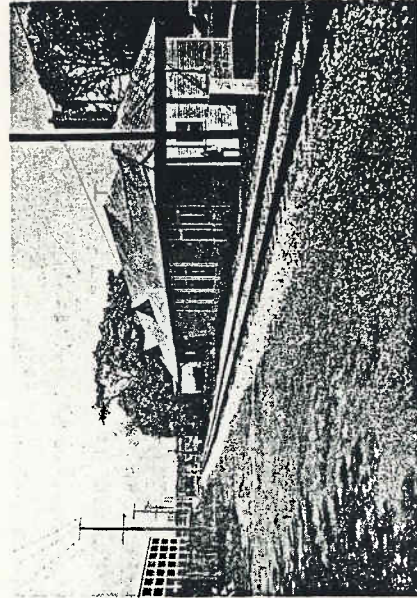
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8



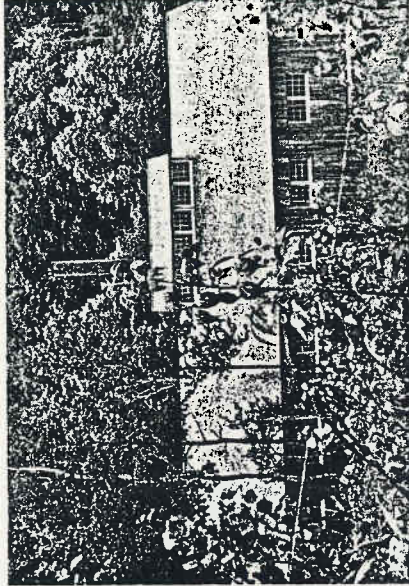
1 2 3 4 5

17



1 2 3 4 5

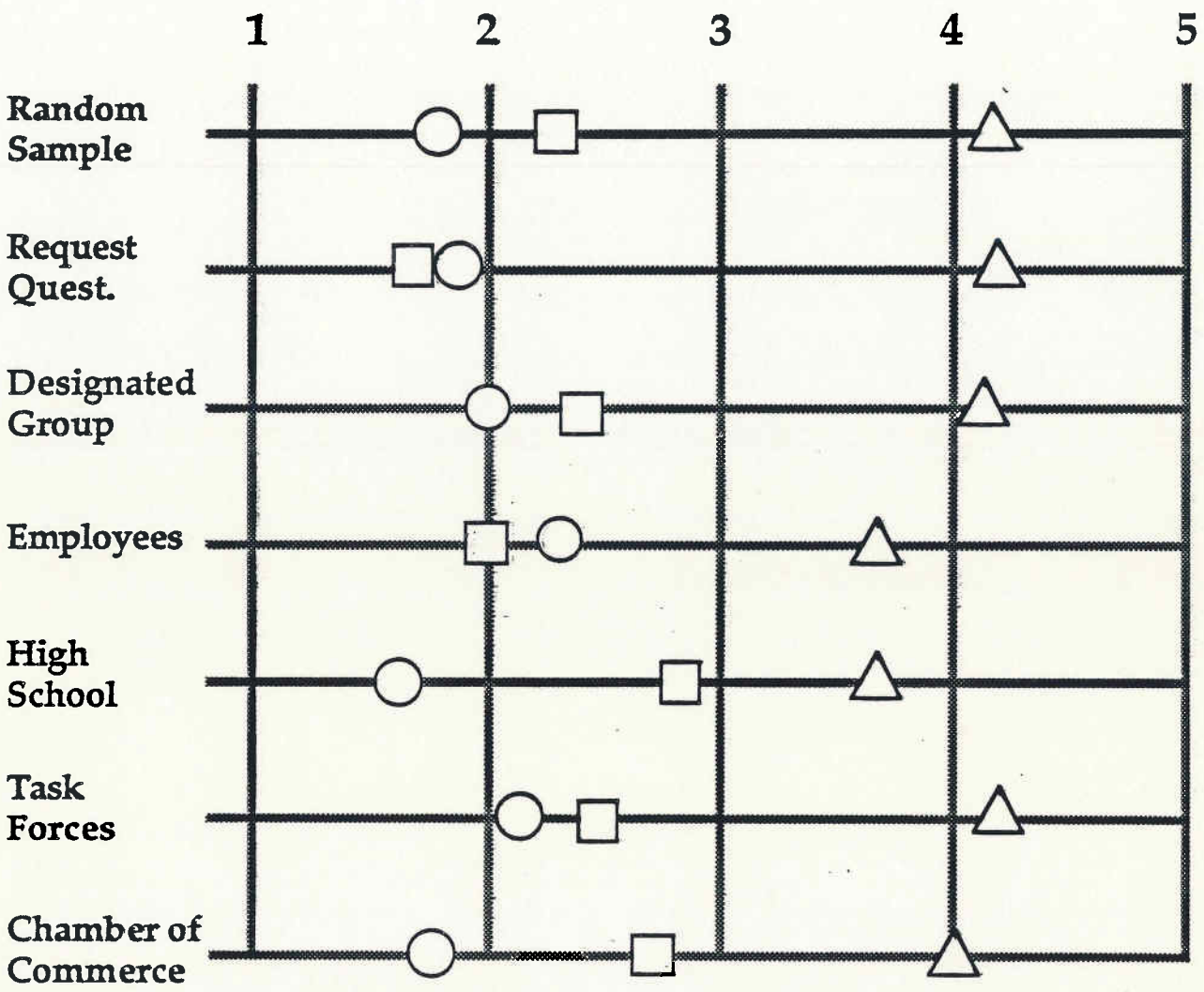
36



1 2 3 4 5

25

# Photographs



△ Nature and wooden walkway

□ Urban development

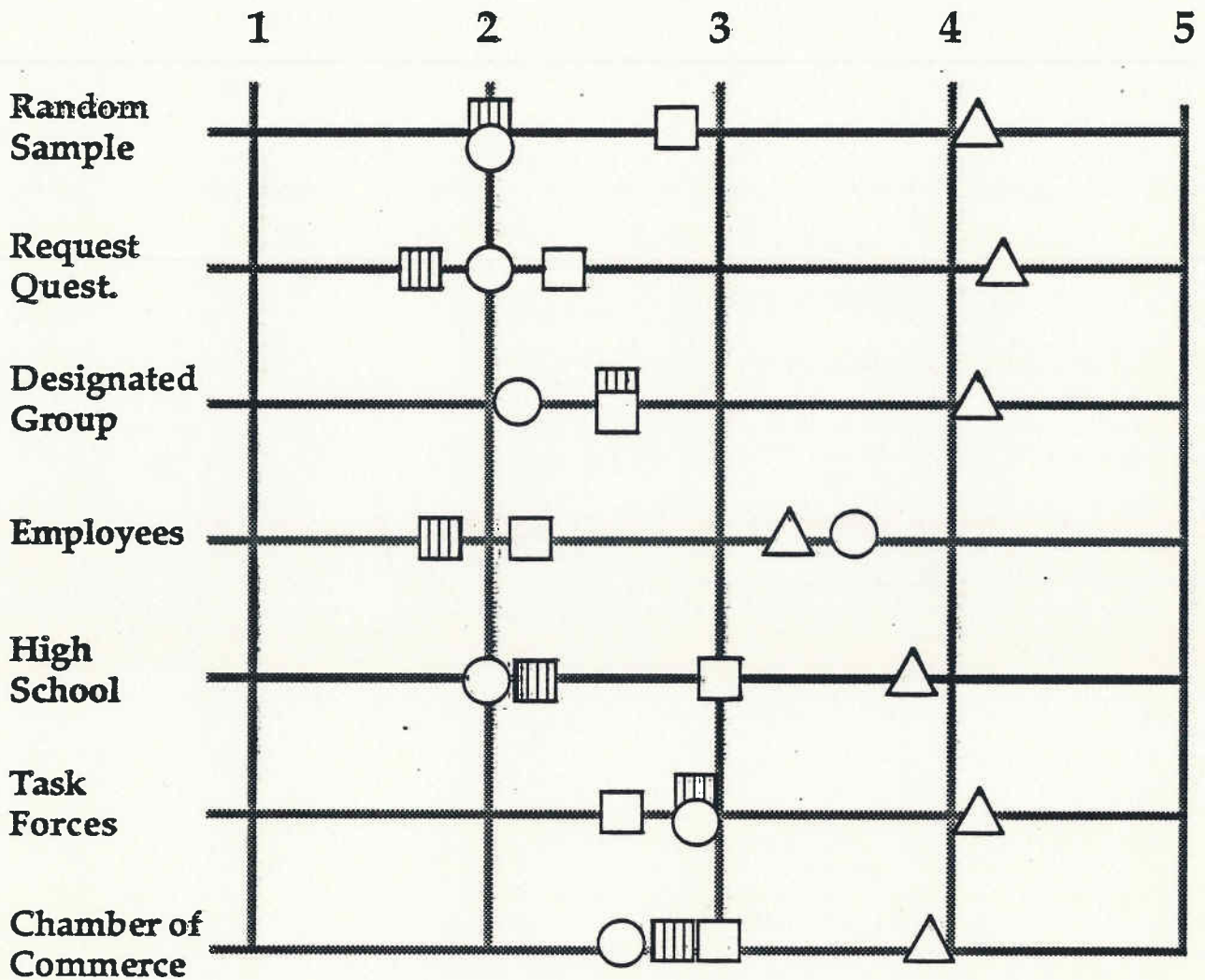
○ Light industry

34

34



# Desirability



△ Parks and Recreation

□ Festival Center

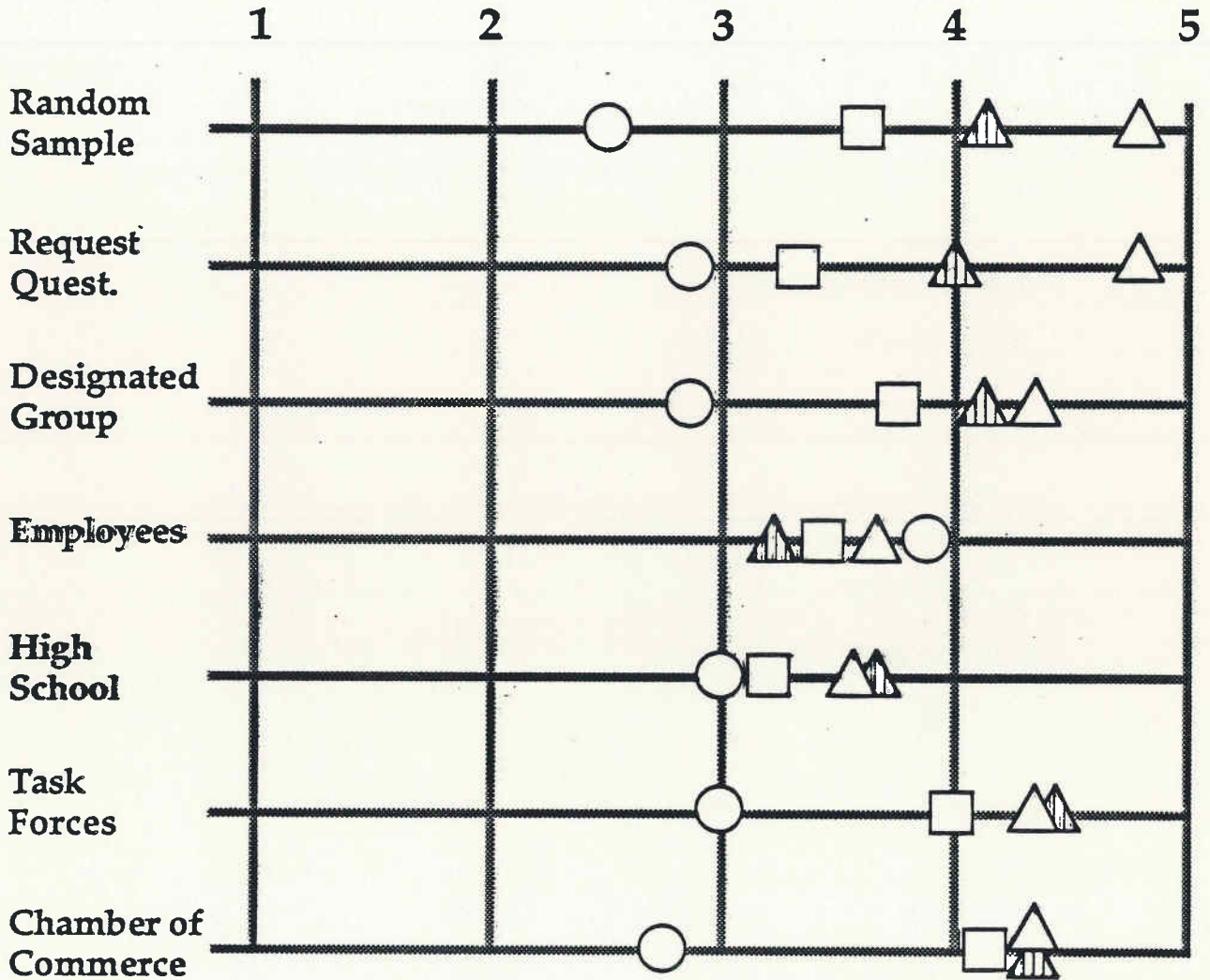
▤ Residential / Office

○ Small Business

33

35

# Attitudes



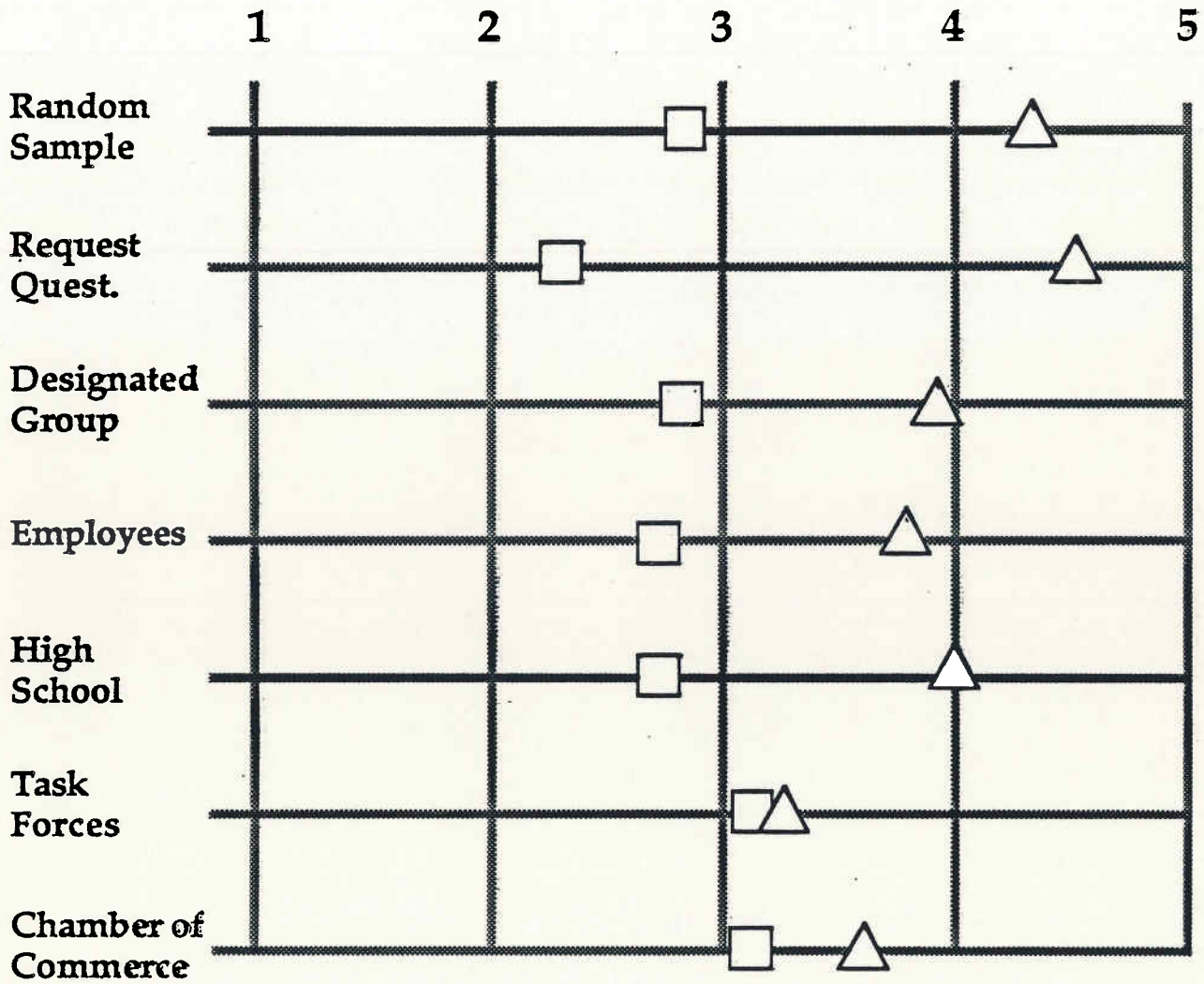
△ Monitor Appearance

▨ Public Access

□ Mixed Use

○ Preserve Present Value

# Natural / Tax Base



△ Largely natural

□ Add to tax base

37

39

## Conclusions

In summary, the careful analysis of the data generated by the Photo-questionnaire led to the following conclusions:

1. There was substantial public input not only from those in and adjacent to the corridor but also from the Ann Arbor broader community as a whole.
2. There were broad areas of agreement in terms of public preferences. The desire was for park and open space with lower scale buildings. There was little support for even moderately scaled urban development.
3. Nature was interpreted very broadly including mowed lawns and paved paths to relatively untouched areas.
4. There was limited support for private development along the river.
5. There was strong support for monitoring the appearance of the corridor.



## **Interviews**

Parallel to the data gathering of the photo-questionnaire, twenty five interviews were staged by the consultant team. Ninety one individuals participated and included a range of interests from developers to neighborhood groups to environmentalists. The purpose of these interviews was to begin to narrow the parameters of planning possibilities, to obtain information about concerns, opportunities and tolerance for various types and densities of development ,and to give people the opportunities to participate before decisions were made.

## **Process**

The interviews were held to longer than one hour and followed a uniform format:

1. A one inch equals 100 foot study model was used to depict the entire corridor. This model had the flexibility of illustrating three levels of development density ranging from all parks and open space to a density of building clusters to 12 story height. Participants were asked to react to the various density levels and their responses were recorded.
2. A proposal to boulevard North Main Street was presented using a one inch equals 10 foot section/elevation. Participants were asked for reactions which were then documented.
3. Participants were asked what kinds of uses and activities they felt should occur in the corridor and their responses were documented.

Minutes of the individual interviews are included in the Appendices section of this report.

## **Interview Conclusions**

The interview process proved to be a rich source of information about the corridor and were very helpful in narrowing the scope of what might be acceptable in terms of alternative land use framework and circulation plans. The following represents a summary of the response trends evident form the interviews.

1. The businesses along North Main Street have parking and access problems. Entrance and egress to various establishments can be dangerous.
2. The cost of relocating the larger businesses along

