



The Capitol Area  
**FRAMEWORK MASTER PLAN**  
**Update 1998**



Capitol Zoning District Commission  
Little Rock, Arkansas

*September 24, 1998*  
*Amended March 25, 1999*



# THE CAPITOL AREA Framework Master Plan Update 1998



prepared for the  
Capitol Zoning District Commission  
by:

## JAMESON Architects P.A.

Suite 205  
2701 Kavanaugh Boulevard  
Little Rock, Arkansas 72205  
(501) 666-6600  
[jap@mci2000.com](mailto:jap@mci2000.com)

## Winter & Company

The Village Center  
775 Poplar Avenue  
Boulder, Colorado 80304  
(303) 440-8445  
[winterco@concentric.net](mailto:winterco@concentric.net)

---

The Capitol Zoning District Commission operates with a series of documents that establish its powers and responsibilities, define its operating procedures and provide land use policies and development standards.

### **ORDINANCE/REGULATORY**

These documents provide the basic regulations for CZDC operations.

**CZDC Ordinance**

- Enabling powers
- Commission organization

**CZDC Administrative Procedures**

*Provides administrative procedures, including:*

- Hearing requirements
- Conducting meetings
- Application requirements
- Height review

---

### **OVERALL STANDARDS**

These documents provide design standards and zoning regulations that apply to both the Mansion and Capitol Areas.

**City of Little Rock Site Development Guide**

*Provides prescriptive standards for:*

- Access & parking layout
- Landscaping
- Excavation & drainage

**General Standards**

*Provides prescriptive standards for:*

- Zoning chart
- Use groups
- Parking
- Signs

**Rehabilitation Standards**

*Addresses treatment of historic properties*

---

### **NEIGHBORHOOD PLANS**

These documents provide development policies for individual areas in the Capitol Zoning District Commission's jurisdiction.

### **NEIGHBORHOOD DESIGN STANDARDS**

These documents provide performance based design standards for individual areas in the Capitol Zoning District Commission's jurisdiction.

**Capitol Area Framework Plan**

*Includes:*

- Land use policies
- Urban design goals

**Mansion Area Framework Plan**

*Includes:*

- Land use policies
- Urban design goals

**Capitol Area Design Standards**

*Includes standards for:*

- New construction
- Site plans

**Mansion Area Design Standards**

*Includes standards for:*

- New construction
- Site plans

---

# ***CREDITS***

## **CAPITOL ZONING DISTRICT COMMISSION**

### **State of Arkansas**

Mike Huckabee, Governor  
Win Rockefeller, Lieutenant Governor  
Sharon Priest, Secretary of State

### **Commissioners**

Patricia Hayes, Chair  
(Governor's Designee)

Tony Bozynski, Vice Chair  
(LR Department of Planning and Development)

Solomon Bradford  
(Commissioner-At-Large)

Michael Mason, Treasurer  
(Mansion Area Representative)

Carl Miller, Jr.  
(Secretary of State's Designee)

Gail Moore  
(Commissioner-At-Large)

Thomas Moore  
(Commissioner-At-Large)

Addie Mae Morris  
(Commissioner-At-Large)

Tom Wilkes  
(Capitol Area Representative)

Frances Ross  
Ron Woods  
(Term Expired 5-1-98)

### **Legal Council**

Warren Readnour, Office of Attorney General

### **Governor's Liaison**

John Wyrill, Asst. Legal Advisor to the Governor

### **Office Address**

Capitol Zoning District  
410 Battery Street  
Little Rock, Arkansas 72201

---

### **Capitol Area Advisory Committee**

John Bailey  
Dr. Richard Beck  
Bill Bridges  
Davies Campbell, Vice Chair  
Norman Canterbury  
Barbara Carpenter, Chair  
Bob Callans  
Wayne Cooper  
Lawrence Fisher  
George Jernigan  
Jane Krutz  
Montine McNulty  
Ronya O'Neal  
Craig Rains  
Jim Pearsall  
Kenny Scott  
Johnny Taylor  
Danny Zinck

### **Mansion Area Advisory Committee**

Terry Burruss, Chair, Executive Committee  
Leon Adams  
Roberta Allen  
Tuney Bailey  
Bob Blair  
B.J. Bowen  
Eric Buchanan  
Bill Calvert  
Rosetta Chapman  
Dan Cook  
Beth Cooper  
Helene Elbein  
Richie Feuers  
Steven Gates  
Heather Hendrix  
Janetta Kearney  
Robin Loucks  
Susan Maddox, Executive Committee  
Laura Marratt  
Carl Menyhart  
Scott Mosley  
Fred Oswald, Executive Committee  
Neil Pumpford  
Raymond Rodgers  
Donna Skulman  
Smokey Vaught  
Paul Wallace  
Jim Wierdsma, Executive Committee  
Carol Williams  
Karol Zoeller, Executive Committee

### **Design Review Committee**

John Jarrard, AIA, Chair  
Tony Bozynski  
Tom Fennell, AIA  
Missy McSwain  
Carl Menyhart, AIA  
Jim Pearsall, AIA

### **Ordinance Committee**

B.J. Bowen  
Dan Cook, Chair  
Carl Menyhart, AIA  
Cheryl Griffith Nichols  
Frances Ross  
Kenny Scott  
Joe Stanley, AIA  
Tom Wilkes

### **Staff**

Martha Ann Norton, Director  
Catherine Barrier, Deputy Director for Planning & Preservation  
Donna Hubert, Management Project Analyst I

### **CONSULTANTS**

#### **JAMESON Architects, P.A.**

Tommy Jameson, AIA  
Toni Fiduccia

#### **Winter & Company**

Noré V. Winter  
Ray Kramer  
Nancy Blackwood  
Julie Husband  
Brian W. Koenig  
Betsy Shears  
Jonathan Modell

#### **J. Ronald Newman, APA**

#### **Cheryl Griffith Nichols**

#### **W. Christopher Barrier**

### **PHOTOGRAPHS**

Historic photographs courtesy of the Quapaw Quarter Association. Historic postcards courtesy of Ray Hanley. Contemporary photographs are by Jameson Architects. All other images are from the Winter & Company graphics library.

This publication has been financed in part with funds from the Arkansas Historic Preservation Program, an agency of the Department of Arkansas Heritage. However, the contents and opinions do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the Department of Arkansas Heritage, nor does the mention of trade names or commercial products constitute endorsement or recommendation by the Department of the Interior or the Arkansas Historic Preservation Program.

---

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>INTRODUCTION</b> .....	1
The Planning Process .....	2
<b>HISTORIC OVERVIEW</b> .....	3
<b>SUMMARY OF POLICIES AND RECOMMENDATIONS</b> .....	6
Land Use Goals .....	7
Urban Design Goals .....	8
Land Use .....	9
Topography .....	12
Figure Ground .....	12
Building Height and View .....	13
Historic Resources .....	14
<b>ZONING DISTRICTS</b> .....	15
The Capitol Campus Complex .....	15
"A1"- The Capitol Avenue Corridor .....	16
"A2"- The South of Capitol Neighborhood .....	17
"B"- The Northeast Neighborhood .....	18
"C"- The Union Station Neighborhood .....	19
"D"- The Industrial Neighborhood .....	20
<b>STREETScape DESIGN</b> .....	21
Streetscape Hierarchy .....	21
Gateways & Plazas .....	22
Public Spaces .....	27
Circulation Patterns .....	33
Circulation and Access .....	34
Transit .....	35
Parking .....	35
<b>APPENDIX A: Capitol Area Maps</b>	
C-1 Zoning Categories and Area Boundaries	
C-2 Framework Master Plan	
C-3 Topography	
C-4 Figure Ground and Views	
C-4 Auto/ Transit/ Pedestrian Circulation Analysis	

## APPENDIX B: Capitol Area Zones



# INTRODUCTION

This *Capitol Area Framework Master Plan* defines urban design policies for the Capitol Area and establishes a framework for implementing specific design improvements that will establish a distinct identity for this vital Little Rock neighborhood. The plan seeks to foster appropriate design choices that will be compatible with the Arkansas State Capitol and also promotes sound development strategies for reinvestment and enhancement of the Capitol Area. These recommendations accommodate current uses as well as changing land use patterns.



*Several blocks of Little Rock's historic housing stock exist within the Capitol Area boundaries.*

The plan defines the basic land use policies for the Capitol Area, including building setbacks, development density and parking ratios. Permitted land uses are also established. In addition, the plan recommends an approach to public sector improvements that would establish a sense of identity for the area which also helps to link it with downtown Little Rock. These focus on design concepts that build upon landscape designs established in downtown Little Rock and on the capitol grounds. Implementing these streetscape proposals will involve cooperation with the City of Little Rock.

The plan also establishes the rationale for design standards that are presented in two separate documents, *Rehabilitation Standards for Historic Properties* and *Design Standards for the Capitol Area*, which focus on appropriate design approaches for improvements to be made within private property lines.

While the Capitol Area has accommodated a variety of users, and in particular ones associated with state government, it has yet to develop its own distinct niche in the overall urban fabric of the capital city. It needs to do so, both because it would benefit the city itself and also because it would benefit the state at large.

The Capitol Area offers the potential to become a vibrant neighborhood with a diversity of activities that appeal to a broad spectrum of people. Fundamentally, it should provide an attractive foreground for the capitol building itself and it should support the revitalization of the city core.

At the same time, it should enhance the area as a place for state government, both symbolically and functionally. As the “front door” to the state, the appearance and function of this area plays an important role in Arkansas’ ability to promote itself as a place where the quality of life is excellent and cultural and business opportunities abound. Even a representative of a corporation considering locating in an outlying part of the state will, in part, form their opinion upon their impression of the city in the foreground of the capitol dome. Therefore, this plan seeks to establish a vision that will help citizens of Arkansas realize the full potential of the dramatic design statement that was made decades ago with the construction of the capitol building.

## The Planning Process

In 1979, shortly after establishing the Capitol Zoning District Commission (CZDC), the State of Arkansas set a master plan in place to preserve the remaining historic character of the neighborhoods around the State Capitol and to maintain the capitol dome as a dominant feature in the city. The Capitol Area, triangular in shape, was defined as those blocks generally bounded by Cross Street on the east, I-630 on the south, the west end of the Capitol campus and the Missouri Pacific RR on the north.

The initial master plan recommended a mix of uses that would support the functions of state government, including offices, service businesses and housing. It defined a system of regulating building heights that would maintain the Capitol as the prominent structure and also established a hierarchy of sidewalk designs that reflected varying intensities of pedestrian use that were anticipated. A series of corner plazas also were described from which views of the Capitol dome would be prominent.

During the next twenty years, relatively little new development occurred, however. In fact, some businesses moved from the area and a few buildings were demolished. A handful of new buildings did in fact appear and these generally are dedicated to office functions, with little street level activity to encourage pedestrian circulation.

While no radical changes occurred during this time, by 1997, it became apparent that the master plan needed reworking. Revitalization efforts in downtown Little Rock, along the river and at Union Station all suggested opportunities for the Capitol Area to play a more important role in the city's urban framework. Increasing needs to house state government workers have also heightened discussions about policies for locating workers near the Capitol grounds, in the Capitol Area and in the downtown at large. This document reflects that effort.

### Community Workshops

In order to develop the framework master plan, the CZDC sponsored a series of workshops in the spring and summer of 1998, which included property owners, local Realtors, architects, elected officials, trade asso-

ciation representatives, city staff and state agencies, to discuss the future character of the Capitol Area. The insights provided by the participants assisted a team of consultants and CZDC staff in focusing on key issues facing the area. This helped to develop appropriate policy and design recommendations and provide a framework for future development. Key discussion points were:

### CHARACTER DEFINING FEATURES

Assets:

- The Capitol grounds
- Trade associations
- Small scale office buildings
- Arkansas River

Liabilities:

- Surface parking lots
- Vacant lots
- Buildings that ignore the street

### KEY ISSUES

- How to establish height limits on new construction
- Development incentives have not stimulated new building.
- A lack of density/critical mass of building diminishes character.
- A lack of residential uses limits use to working hours.
- A lack of "neighborhood services" discourages residential use.
- A lack of street life discourages mixed use.
- Parking is exposed to the street.
- Fear of losing a parking space at lunch reduces use of the area.
- Big MAC II - The potential to build on the west may diminish potential on the east
- Cooperation between city and state agencies is needed to realize improvements in the area.
- The number of state employees is an unrealized opportunity.
- Short lunch breaks limit state employee use of the area.

The Capitol Area Master Plan includes consideration of these comments generated in the community workshops. In addition, other planning documents, including current city plans and study concepts have been considered.

# HISTORIC OVERVIEW

Today's Capitol Area bears little resemblance to the neighborhood it originally was, an area of small frame dwellings surrounding the State Penitentiary and Little Rock's Union Depot. During much of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the penitentiary stood on the site now occupied by the State Capitol. About three blocks to the north, Union Depot was a key factor in the neighborhood's development during the latter part of the century.

The presence of the State Penitentiary may not have encouraged development on the western edge of Little Rock, but the depot—and the jobs it represented—did. Although the scale of development remained modest, during the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, scores of houses were built on the streets in the vicinity of the depot—which became known as Union Depot when the Cairo and Fulton merged with two other railroads



*The Neighborhood around the Union Station included a mix of building types.*

When the State Penitentiary was completed in 1841, its location was described as “about a mile and a quarter west of Little Rock.” Over the course of the next thirty years, Little Rock gradually grew westward so that by the early 1870s a handful of houses stood near the penitentiary. Perhaps because living in the vicinity of a prison was not considered especially desirable, these early residences were simple frame structures.

With construction in 1873 of the Baring Cross Bridge, which was the first railroad bridge across the Arkansas River at Little Rock, the Cairo and Fulton Railroad erected a passenger depot and an office building just north of the State Penitentiary. The Cairo and Fulton Depot stood on the west side of Victory Street between Markham and Garland (formerly Water) Streets, close to the site of the existing Train Station.

in 1874 to form the St. Louis, Iron Mountain and Southern Railway and then began sharing the depot with the Memphis and Little Rock Railroad.

Many of the houses that were built became the homes of railroad employees. City directories from the late 1800s and early 1900s list engineers, foremen, conductors and other workers for the St. Louis, Iron Mountain and Southern living near the depot and the penitentiary. Businesses that catered to railroad employees and travelers, especially hotels and boarding houses, also located on streets in the area. It is said that the neighborhood surrounding Union Depot was known as the “Railroad Call District” because the railroad company would send messengers to call employees living in the area to work.

Not only railroad employees lived in the neighborhood around the penitentiary and depot, however. By 1893, the area was served by two streetcar lines that ran west from Main to Victory Street, one on Markham and the other on Capitol Avenue (formerly Fifth Street). Easily accessible, the neighborhood housed a variety of mainly working-class people: craftsmen, laborers, teamsters. In the early years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, about 300 dwellings—most of them small frame houses—stood within what now are the boundaries of the Capitol Area.

An important change in the neighborhood became imminent in the late 1890s, when the Arkansas General Assembly voted to construct a new capitol building on the site of the State Penitentiary. The cornerstone of the Arkansas State Capitol—designed originally by George R. Mann and completed by Cass Gilbert—was laid in 1899, but myriad problems beset the building’s construction, delaying its completion until 1915. Despite the fact that a capitol building would seem to be a more prestigious neighbor than a prison, neither the Capitol’s presence nor the penitentiary’s absence seemed to have significantly altered the course of the neighborhood’s development in the short-run. For many years after the Capitol’s completion, the neighborhood remained a modest railroad-oriented area.



*An important change in the neighborhood became imminent in the late 1890s, when the Arkansas General Assembly voted to construct a new capitol building on the site of the State Penitentiary.*

While the State Capitol was under construction, the old wood-frame Union Depot was replaced by a larger masonry building that was constructed a short distance south and west of its predecessor. Designed by Theodore C. Link of St. Louis, the new “Union Station” was completed in the fall of 1909 after three years of construction. Unfortunately, disaster struck on April 7, 1920, when the station was gutted by fire. Rebuilding took about a year, and the existing station opened during the summer of 1921. By that time, mergers had turned the old St. Louis, Iron Mountain and Southern Railway into the Missouri Pacific, and the station eventually became known as “MoPac Station.”

Through World War II, the station bustled, and the surrounding neighborhood generally remained stable, though houses occasionally gave way to apartment buildings, filling stations or other commercial development. After World War II, the story changed dramatically. The neighborhood was adversely affected by the nationwide decline in railroad transportation, which slowly shut down MoPac Station, and by local factors such as new housing developments that drew residents away from older parts of the city. Deterioration set in, and the neighborhood’s fate was sealed in the 1950s when the City of Little Rock rezoned much of the area for commercial use.

Over the course of the next two decades, the old residential neighborhood that had grown up around the State Penitentiary and Union Depot disappeared almost completely. In its place developed an area of offices, small businesses, state government-related facilities—and parking lots. Soon after the Capitol Zoning District Commission was created in 1975, a report noted that “much of the land [in the Capitol Area] is now empty or is simply used for parking.”

Since the Commission began its work, new development in the Capitol Area has come closer than before to respecting the scale and dignity of the State Capitol. However, the demands of an ever-growing state government, coupled with those of the many entities that need to be near the seat of government, present an ongoing challenge for the Capitol Zoning District Commission as it works to preserve the prominence of the State Capitol and ensure that the surrounding environment is compatible with the Capitol's significance.

The area around the Arkansas State Capitol is in a period of transition. It originally developed as a residential neighborhood where single family structures were typical in most blocks. These residential buildings faced the street, where front porches established a human scale and added interest for passersby. Front lawns were defined by fences and shrubbery that also made walking a comfortable experience.

Although this residential character was the primary feature of the neighborhood, certain "subareas" also existed with different characteristics. For example, in the blocks around the train depot, a mix of uses emerged, including boarding houses and hotels. Historic photographs indicate that this area was lively with people coming and going throughout the day.

The area around the State Penitentiary also had its own distinct character. The penitentiary was constructed on a hilltop at what was then the western edge of the core city. Larger housing blocks mixed with other institutional buildings on the penitentiary grounds and a scattering of single family structures added to the scene.

The area's most distinctive focal point was created, however, with the construction of the State Capitol at the old penitentiary site. Designed in a neoclassical style and capped with a towering dome, the building itself is a dramatic monumental structure and is set in a parklike environment, providing a unique identity to the neighborhood. It was sited on an axis that reflected a shift in the orientation of the streets at this location in the city.

Over the years, additional state office buildings were added to the west of the Capitol itself, creating a campus of an institutional character. Initially, these were organized around a circular drive with landscaping in the center. In time, substantial portions of the area to the west were paved for parking lots.

As train travel declined, so did the area around the depot. Several original buildings were demolished while others deteriorated. The depot stood virtually isolated from the city core and the capitol itself, although it remained a prominent visual landmark.

In the mid-twentieth century, the neighborhood east of the Capitol also changed substantially. Houses were demolished in many blocks to make room for a variety of commercial buildings. Others were simply allowed to decay to the point that restoration was not feasible. A few apartment buildings also were constructed, in part to house legislators. Some of these structures were quite substantial in size. The result, as seen today, is an eclectic mix of older single family houses, small commercial buildings and larger offices.

In recent years, the trend to build office buildings has continued, although at a relatively slow pace, whereas no new housing has appeared for some time. In a few locations, however, reminders of the earlier residential neighborhood survive. Sometimes, a row of houses remains intact, providing a sense of the earlier character. In other cases, individual houses stand isolated in parking lots or they are framed by newer commercial buildings.

The most striking feature from this transitional period of development is the creation of many large surface parking lots. This has led to a series of freestanding, independent buildings in an open sea of asphalt, intimidating to the pedestrian, having no strong sense of visual continuity with the street or with other buildings in the neighborhood.

Overall, a relatively low density of building exists, in relation to the significant amount of development potentially available, based on existing zoning. This low density impedes the ability of the area to be perceived as a distinct place.

# SUMMARY OF POLICIES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

---

The Capitol Area lies in a strategic location. It forms the western boundary of downtown Little Rock while also creating the foreground for the Capitol building itself. Symbolically, this area should be the “front door” to the state, with Capitol Avenue serving as a key ceremonial corridor. It should be the area that residents from all over Arkansas feel is the place to bring family, friends and visitors because it represents their common interests and highlights the importance of the state house.

However, Capitol Avenue has not developed to its potential. Construction has proceeded slowly and at a relatively low density. As a result, the street scene is fragmented and is unwelcoming to pedestrians. A more continuous line of occupied buildings and active open spaces is needed to animate the area.

In terms of the uses, a lack of focus also exists. Land uses should reinforce the emerging trend as a place for organizations that seek to conduct business with state government.

Uses also should reinforce development objectives for the core of Little Rock. As the immediate downtown area revitalizes as a commercial center, the lands around its periphery, including those of the Capitol Area, are becoming increasingly important as locations for uses that will help to energize the core. In that regard, service businesses, dining and entertainment, and especially housing and accommodations, are uses that should be encouraged.

Housing opportunities should particularly be considered. Mixed use projects that incorporate commercial uses with residences could be successful here and would greatly extend the hours of activity that will help to animate the street.

In general, a moderate density of development should be promoted throughout the Capitol Area, a density that will be compatible with historic resources and also reinforces a pedestrian-oriented scale. Buildings averaging three stories in height are therefore envisioned,

with some variety in scale in different sectors of the neighborhood.

The protection of important views also remains an important land use consideration. Established policies have consistently stated that development in this area should defer to the Capitol building, in particular in the way in which they protect views to state house dome. To some extent, this means that development should remain at a moderate scale.

A key factor in the development of the Capitol Area will be how the State decides to meet its needs for office space in the future. The best way to encourage private investment here will be to demonstrate a public commitment by locating state offices in the Capitol Area. This may occur in a variety of ways, but what is important is that the gesture be made.

A particularly important site lies at the northeast corner of Woodlane and Capitol Avenue. Positioned at the foot of the Capitol building, its potential development is a keystone in setting the character for future building. If this site is developed with an adequate critical mass and designed in a compatible manner, it could establish a direction for the Capitol Area.

A variety of elements can add accent to the setting and help to length various uses into an overall urban framework. These include improvements to the streetscape, construction of special plazas and gateways and enhancements to circulation systems. Many of these activities extend beyond the Capitol Zoning District Commissions immediate jurisdiction and require cooperation among other state agencies as well as the City of Little Rock. It is important that the Commission work proactively to facilitate such improvements.

With this vision in mind for the Capitol Area, a series of goals for land use and for urban design are established to guide development. These are presented in the next section.

## Land Use Goals

The Commission holds these basic land use goals for the Capitol Area:

### **1. To activate the area with a mix of uses**

The Capitol Area should accommodate a variety of users: This should include legislators, trade associations and service businesses. In addition, tourists and local residents should be recognized as important user groups. Promoting a mix of uses will support a lively neighborhood in use twenty-four hours a day. While the predominant use will continue to be offices, other commercial uses including dining and retail are encouraged. In addition, an important goal is to promote new residential uses that will combine with the other activities to animate the neighborhood.

### **2. To promote the development of more institutional and professional office uses**

Locating state offices within the area should be a high priority. In addition, facilitating the development of offices for organizations that conduct business with legislators should be encouraged, as well as expanding business opportunities for professionals that provide support services to these uses.

### **3. To promote the development of housing that is compatible with the scale of the neighborhood**

Construction of moderate density housing should be encouraged. This includes patio homes, townhomes and low-rise apartments. Densities should vary to be compatible with the context of the specific character area. Combining housing with other uses should be a priority.

### **4. To provide reliable public transportation to serve the area**

Transit service should be enhanced to facilitate circulation within the area and to link it to adjacent parts of the city. Locating development along major transit corridors should be encouraged in order to promote the use of public transit.



*The Capitol Zoning District Commission wishes to promote the development of housing that is compatible with the existing scale and character of the neighborhood.*

## Urban Design Goals

The Commission also holds these basic urban design goals for the Capitol Area:

### **5. To establish a distinct identity for the neighborhood**

The Capitol Area should be perceived as a special place that has a distinct physical character. This should include a sense that the area is a lively, attractive place to live, recreate and conduct business. Promoting the use of a consistent streetscape palette will help achieve this goal.

### **6. To provide an attractive foreground for the Capitol**

Development should convey a positive image as the setting of the capitol building. Building and site designs should establish a sense of continuity while also accommodating variety in stylistic treatments. Design guidelines should promote this concept.

### **7. To define and enhance views to the Capitol**

This means that key view corridors to the Capitol building should be identified and preserved. Where feasible, the sequential experience of moving through space and perceiving views as they unfold should be planned. For example, in some cases, views should be framed with the thoughtful placement and massing of buildings. In other cases, views should remain open and broad. Installing utility lines underground should be a priority to enhance views as well.

### **8. To enhance the character of individual neighborhoods within the Capitol Area**

The tradition of having neighborhoods with distinct identities should be continued. For example, where historic residential buildings survive in sets, that character should be preserved. Similarly, the distinct character of the neighborhood around the depot should continue to be reinforced. The State Capitol and its campus is the most significant public space in the state, serving as the symbol of the state government to all residents of Arkansas. For this reason, Capitol Avenue should develop with a ceremonial approach to the Capitol as its defining feature.

### **9. To enhance the pedestrian experience throughout**

Streets should once again be places that are active with pedestrians, where walking is a pleasant experience. The automobile should appear subordinate to other uses and therefore parking and circulation requirements should be accommodated in a manner that supports the desired uses for the neighborhood. Increasing landscape treatment along sidewalks, creating plazas and installing public art are actions that should be promoted.

### **10. To establish a sense of visual continuity within individual neighborhoods**

Landscaping should help establish a sense of visual continuity. It should include places for outdoor activities, including plazas and courtyards, as well as visual accents that give identity to individual blocks. This should incorporate public art and other unique urban design features. Key intersections and gateways are opportunities to install landscape designs that will contribute to this sense of continuity. These intersections are also appropriate locations for the installation of commemorative monuments.



*View down Victory Street from Capitol Avenue*

## Land Use

Within the immediate Capitol Campus and interface areas, it is likely that development will continue to respond to state government services needs. The provision of facilities and capital improvements within the Capitol Area will continue under the direction of the Capitol Zoning District Commission (CZDC), including the adopted recommendations within this plan.

The emerging land use and development pattern of areas immediately adjacent to the Capitol, however, will continue to respond to broader market trends and not necessarily guarantee such a predictable outcome of events. Portions of the area reflect an earlier period of development, some predating the building of the Capitol itself. Much of the area includes smaller lots and parcels for residential development. A transitional character with larger commercial buildings mixed with small residential buildings has resulted in much of this area. Along Capitol Avenue, the intended commercial land use pattern has never fully emerged as the density remains low. Large surface parking areas imply that market demand in this area has not been realized as of yet.

The area should develop as a “mixed use village,” in which a combination of professional offices, public and private institutions, service business and dining join with residential uses to form an active neighborhood. A framework of trails, walkways, plazas and open spaces should help to link the neighborhood and to provide accent to its character.

This development should occur in a manner that reinforces the vision for the different character areas defining in the zoning districts. For example, in Zoning District B, the historic residential character is to be respected, even as new development is encouraged. By doing so, the neighborhood at large will develop with a series of subareas that each hold distinct identity while also working together in a broader urban design framework as an important part of the city.

It is particularly important to note that this development will also enrich the Capitol Complex itself. It will provide a context that is inviting for employees and elected officials and that enhances they quality of the business day for them.

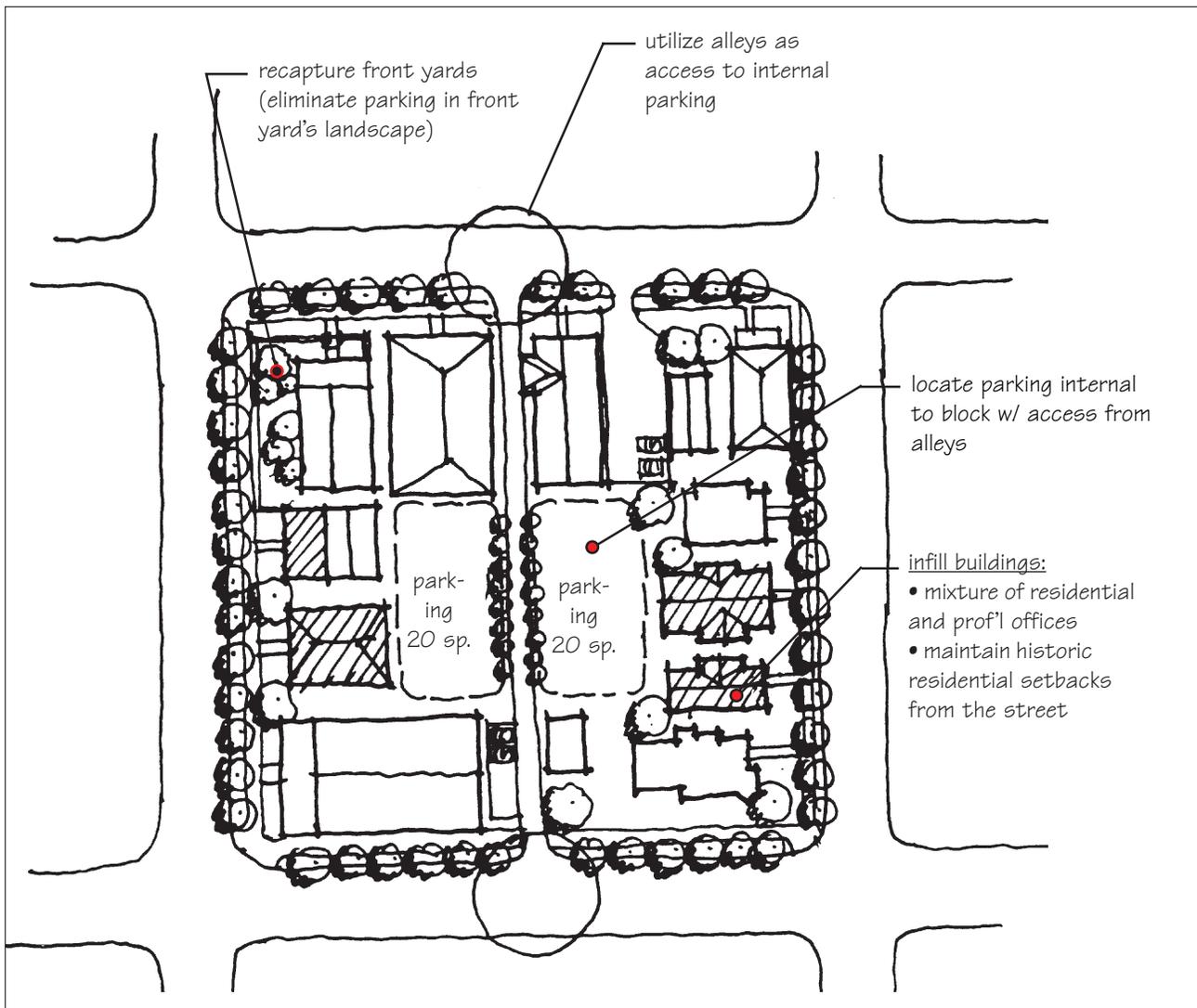
### **Recommendations:**

Promote development to reinforce the proposed character areas.

Enforce Design Standards that will maintain and enhance the character of the area.

Continue cooperative efforts between the State, City, private owners and developers to encourage a comprehensive mixture of land uses in an effective an efficient manner.

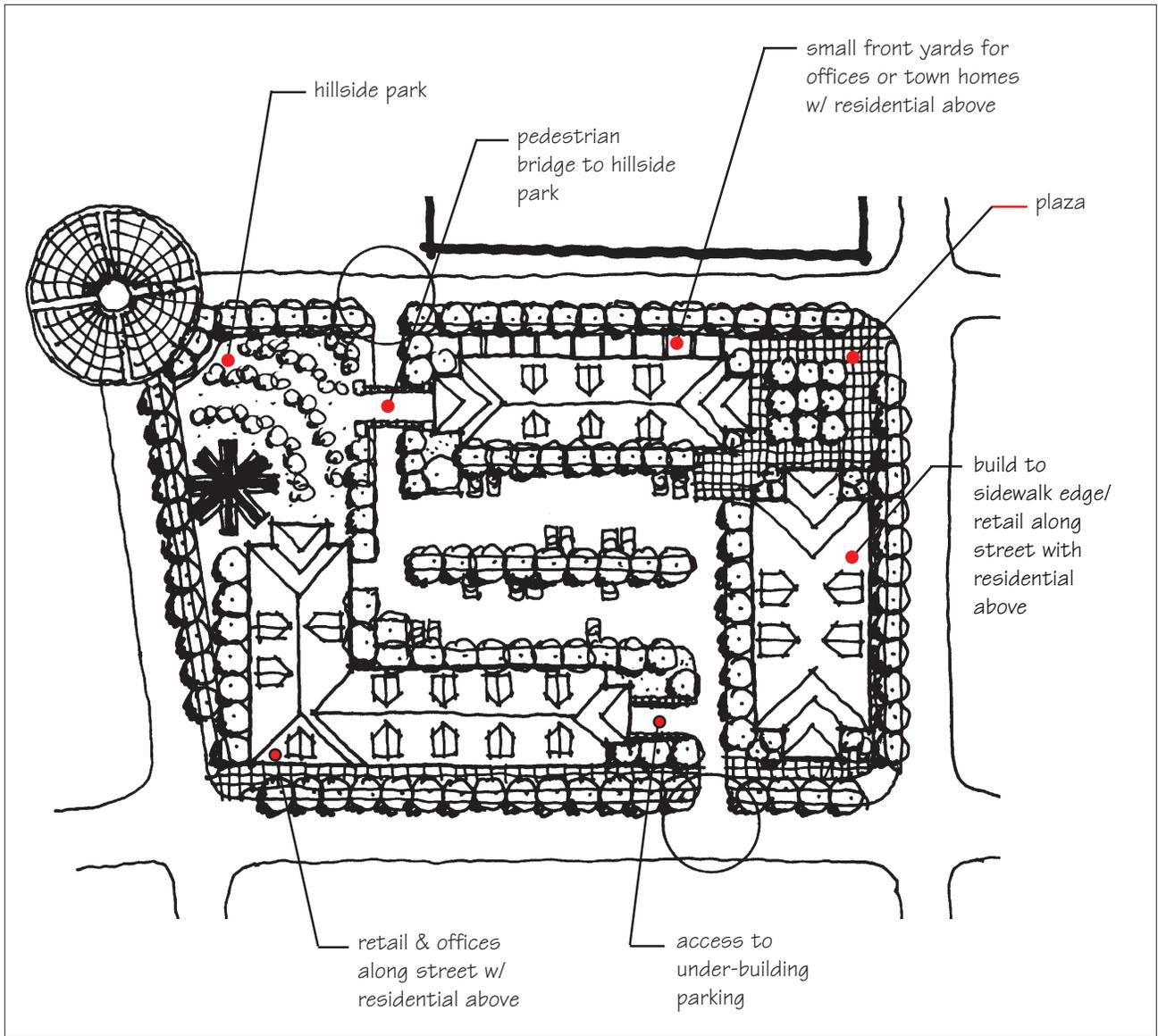
Encourage the location of state offices in the area.



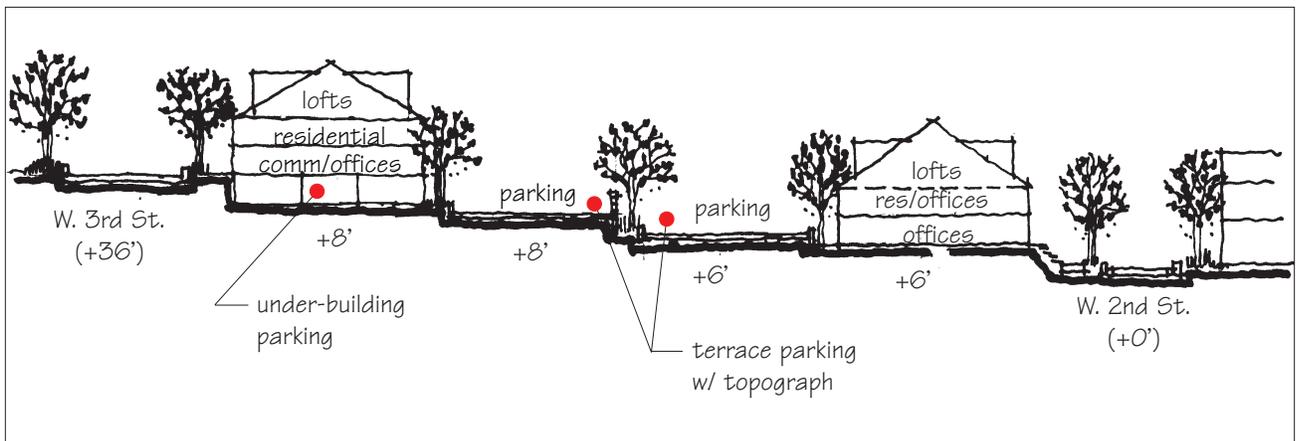
*Low density, mixed use development scenario plan, which includes the adaptive use of historic structures, a mixture of residential and office uses, parking internal to the block and similar historic residential setbacks.*

A variety of mixed use scenarios should be encouraged in the Capitol Area. These sketches illustrate compatible development that includes residential apartments and townhouses, combined with commercial functions. In general, commercial uses are located on ground levels and at corners. Parking is located to the interior.

In the sketch above, infill development combines with existing historic houses to create a relatively low density of development that is compatible with its context. To the right, a higher density is achieved. On sloping lots, uses can be stacked or terraced, providing multiple points of access.



Mixed use redevelopment (with residential, commercial and office uses) plan.



Mixed use redevelopment (with residential, commercial and office uses) section.

## Topography

Appendix Map C-3 illustrates the topography of the area. The hilly terrain that dominates the Capitol Area contributes to its distinct character and also offers opportunities for creative development. The most prominent prospect is, of course, the Capitol itself. The height of its topography contributes to the monumental scale of the building and provides views from the capitol to a variety of landmarks, including the river, downtown and Union Station.

Aside from Capitol Hill itself, the land is highest in the southeastern corner, along the edge of I-630 highway eastward into the downtown. This provides easy views from the heart of the commercial district to the capitol, as well as from the freeway. The land then rolls gently through the central portion of the area, along Capitol Avenue and 4th Street. It falls to the north into the bottom lands along the railroad. Buildings that are located in these lower areas tend to appear relatively low in scale, with respect to the Capitol, and they are less likely to impede views of the Capitol dome.

Because the topography influences view opportunities where the land is relatively flat, views across the area to the Capitol may be affected. In contrast, where the land drops substantially below the base of the Capitol, it is possible to construct buildings that are taller than three stories and still maintain views.

For this reason, it is important to take topography into consideration when designing a building in the area.

### **Recommendation:**

Appropriate building heights should be determined, in part, by the topography of the site. The design standards should reflect this consideration.

## Figure Ground Patterns and Views

The footprints of buildings that exist in the area, as of July 1998, are shown on Appendix Map C-4. Each of the buildings is shaded, while surface features, such as parking lots and street curbs, are shown in outline. The map demonstrates the relatively low density of development, in terms of the amount of land area that is occupied with buildings. Many buildings stand isolated, surrounded with streets and parking. This, to some extent, translates into the character of the street experience for pedestrians, in which large expanses of unattractive pavement discourage walking and thereby limit business opportunities.

The figure-ground analysis also suggests the locations of those areas that retain some of their historic residential character. For example, a block of buildings along Pulaski Street, between 3rd and 4th Streets reflects the scale of early houses that were once more extensive in their reach.

This map documents key view corridors as well, both to and from the Capitol. Key views to the Capitol lie along Capitol Avenue, from the downtown and from Cantrell Road. Views of the Capitol from Interstate I-630 are also noteworthy.



*View looking west from downtown along Capitol Avenue.*

Three types of view experiences should be considered:

**Open View Planes**

In many cases, views are broad, extending in an arc of many degrees. These usually occur at higher elevations and may be experienced by pedestrians and motorists as they move through space. The views to the Capitol from Cantrell Road are examples. Where view planes are to be maintained, building heights generally should remain low.

**View Corridors**

In other situations, a distinct view may be framed by other objects, especially buildings. Rather than being broad in scope, the view is focused. These vistas can be experienced moving in space as one proceeds forward along a corridor. Framing a view with buildings can help convey a sense of scale and the result can be dramatic. The view corridor along Capitol Avenue to the state house is an excellent example.

**Vista Point**

Finally, some view experiences occur from a fixed station point, such as a plaza. These may provide views to an individual object, or to a panorama. The view from the main entry to the Capitol building is an example of this type.

**Recommendations:**

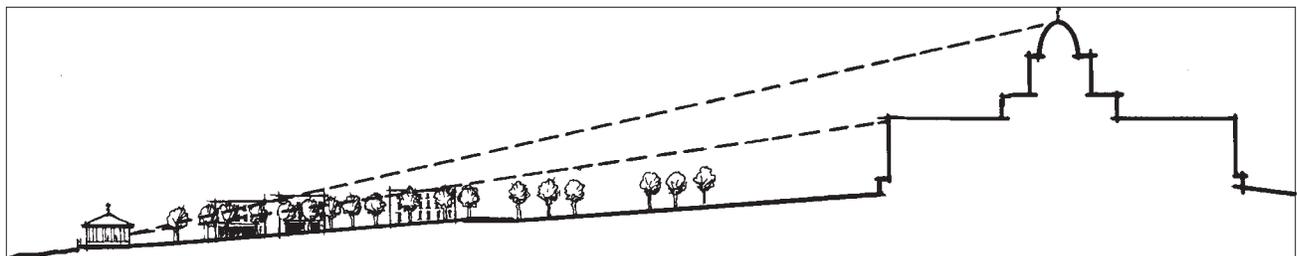
View experiences should be planned as a part of each development in the Capitol Area.

A mix of view experiences should be provided throughout the Capitol Area.

# Building Height and View Considerations

A special goal within the Capitol Area is to maintain and enhance views to the Capitol dome. In general, building scale should remain relatively low in order to assure that these are maintained. However, occasions do exist where taller buildings could be constructed and views still be maintained. These should be considered on a case by case basis through a special height review process.

Criteria for additional height are included in the Capitol Area Design Standards. In general, consideration should be given to the type of view that is to be established or maintained. In addition, the character of the height of the building as it would be perceived on downhill sides, where dimensions would appear to be taller, should be considered.



*A special goal within the Capitol Area is to maintain and enhance views to the Capitol dome.*

## Historic Resources

The Capitol building stands as the most noteworthy historic landmark in the area. Union Station is also an important edifice as is the old station hotel. Preservation of these landmarks should remain a high priority. Furthermore, development around these resources should occur in a manner that is compatible with them.

In addition, a scattering of vintage residential structures survives. In some cases, these stand in groups where they establish a modest historical context, whereas in others these resources stand as individual properties that suggest the early character of the area. These historic resources enrich the area and contribute to its distinct character. Preservation of these properties is, therefore, a priority. Demolition of these structures should be avoided whenever feasible and their reuse should be encouraged. New development near

these resources should also occur in a manner that will be compatible with them.

**Recommendations:**

Design standards should encourage new development that will respect historic resources that are nearby.

Developments that include preservation of historic buildings should be encouraged.

Views to historic resources should be maintained.

A survey of historic resources should be maintained as an information base. This data should be considered when determining the historic significance of a property.



*An early photograph from the Capitol, looking east toward downtown Little Rock illustrated the residential character that this street once had. The few surviving houses from this period are important historic resources that form a link to this part of the city's past.*

# ZONING DISTRICTS

A series of neighborhoods exist in the Capitol Area, which should serve as a foundation for establishing identity and a sense of place. Therefore, assets and opportunities of each of these neighborhoods should be considered in monitoring development. These areas are slightly varied. Some have distinct features which are well established, while others are in transition, still developing their identities.

An important issue is how to protect or enhance those existing "character areas" which could promote a broader mix of uses before they in turn are lost and how to shape new emerging areas to support the goals of the master plan. The Capitol Area has six distinctive character areas (See Appendix Map C-1, Zoning Districts):

## The Capitol Campus Complex

This area includes the State Capitol and the campus of open spaces and government buildings immediately adjacent to it. As well as being the focal point of the area, it defines the western edge. Within this area, large institutional buildings are sited on individual, free-standing parcels. Parking is located in a network of surface lots that serve several buildings nearby. Architecturally, building styles are eclectic, although a general palette of grey stone and concrete provide a certain sense of visual continuity.

### Recommendations:

A special master plan exists for the Capitol grounds. It recommends improving landscape features that would enhance pedestrian connections to the east. Development abutting the capitol grounds should incorporate landscape design elements from this plan when feasible.

In addition, high priority should be given to locating new state offices in the Capitol Area.



*The Capitol Avenue Corridor*

## "A1"- The Capitol Avenue Corridor

The Capitol Avenue should be the State's principal ceremonial street, dominated by the terminus at the State Capitol. This spine links the State Capitol with downtown Little Rock. The corridor includes those parcels lying one block north and south of Capitol Avenue.

This area has, more recently, been seen as an infill area for governmental offices, commercial uses, professional offices and support businesses for the area. When compared to the South of Capitol Neighborhood, however, this area has a character of buildings that front onto streets more similar to a boulevard.

To date, the area has not realized its potential. Many buildings remain isolated and fail to contribute to a sense of being a major public corridor. To some extent, it appears as a low density office park without a distinct image.

### Recommendations:

This area should develop as a professional office center with supporting commercial uses that create a spine linking the Capitol Area to Downtown. A mix of governmental and private professional offices should be the prominent use with service businesses, dining and retail uses supplementing.

Defining views to and from the Capitol should be a primary consideration in development patterns. Buildings should be strategically located at the edge of the street to frame views and to provide an attractive pedestrian zone.

Medium scale office buildings with ground floor storefront activities should define the street edge and all parking should be located to the rear.

Views should open up at street intersections and a major public plaza should be established at the terminus with Woodlane.

Sidewalks should be at a scale that promotes pedestrian use. They should be enhanced with trees and a coordinated set of street furniture. The design palette established by the City of Little Rock for Capitol Avenue should be used.



A1- The Capitol Avenue Corridor Character Area

## "A2"- The South of Capitol Neighborhood

This area is a concentration of governmental offices, commercial uses, including professional offices and support businesses to the south of Capitol Avenue, and the Capitol Complex area. It is bounded by 6th Street, Cross, I-630, Marshall, 7th Street and Woodlane. This neighborhood serves as the primary entry into the Capitol Area from the south. Because it is in the foreground of the Capitol as seen from the highway, protecting views is a primary consideration.

### Recommendations:

This neighborhood should continue to develop as a concentration of governmental offices and commercial uses, including professional offices and support businesses. It should be at a density that is slightly lower than that along Capitol Avenue itself.

Medium-scale office structures should be the predominant building type.

Defining street edges with buildings and creating attractive sidewalks should be priorities here as well.

Defining views from major roadways, including Interstate 630, to the Capitol dome should be special considerations here and pedestrian connections to Capitol Avenue and to the State Capitol should be enhanced. Landscaping of parking lots will be particularly important for this reason.



A2- The "South of Capitol" Neighborhood Character Area

## "B"- The Northeast Neighborhood

This area is roughly bounded by Victory Street on the west, Garland on the north, Cross Street on the east and West 4th Street on the south. It retains the greatest number of historic residential buildings which still reflect the early development pattern of the Capitol Area. Gable roofs, small rectangular building forms, front lawns and site retaining walls are among the special features that contribute to the scale of this neighborhood.

### Recommendations:

A mix of residential and small professional office uses should be encouraged that would be compatible with the traditional character. The remaining historical residential buildings should be retained and new construction in this area should be designed to be compatible with this established context.

Mixed use developments that include residential uses are encouraged in this neighborhood and building forms that relate to traditional residential types should be used. Variety in building setbacks is appropriate in this area, but should reflect the traditional front yard dimensions and be landscaped.

Parking should be located to the side of a building or in the rear and screened from view.



*The Northeast Neighborhood Character Area.*



*Historic houses contribute to the character of the Northeast Neighborhood.*

## "C"- The Union Station Neighborhood

This area, sometimes designated as “Northgate,” includes buildings and lands around the historic Union Station. It is generally bounded by 3rd Street, the Missouri Pacific RR, Cross, Garland and Victory Streets.

### Recommendations:

The Union Station neighborhood should develop with a mix of uses that supports the adaptive reuse of the station itself. Given its proximity to the Capitol, Downtown and other convenient traffic routes and trails corridors, a mix of residential, office, dining and retail should be encouraged. The area should “anchor” specialty and retail uses emerging along Markham Street.

A variety of building types and setbacks is appropriate with medium density residential uses on the 2nd and 3rd floors above.

A focus should be placed upon creating a “pedestrian friendly” environment that invites “exploration” of the neighborhood and makes for connections to trail systems, such as the Arkansas River Trail.



*The Union Station neighborhood should develop with a mix of uses that supports the adaptive reuse of the station itself.*



*C- The Union Station Character Area*

## "D"- The Industrial Neighborhood

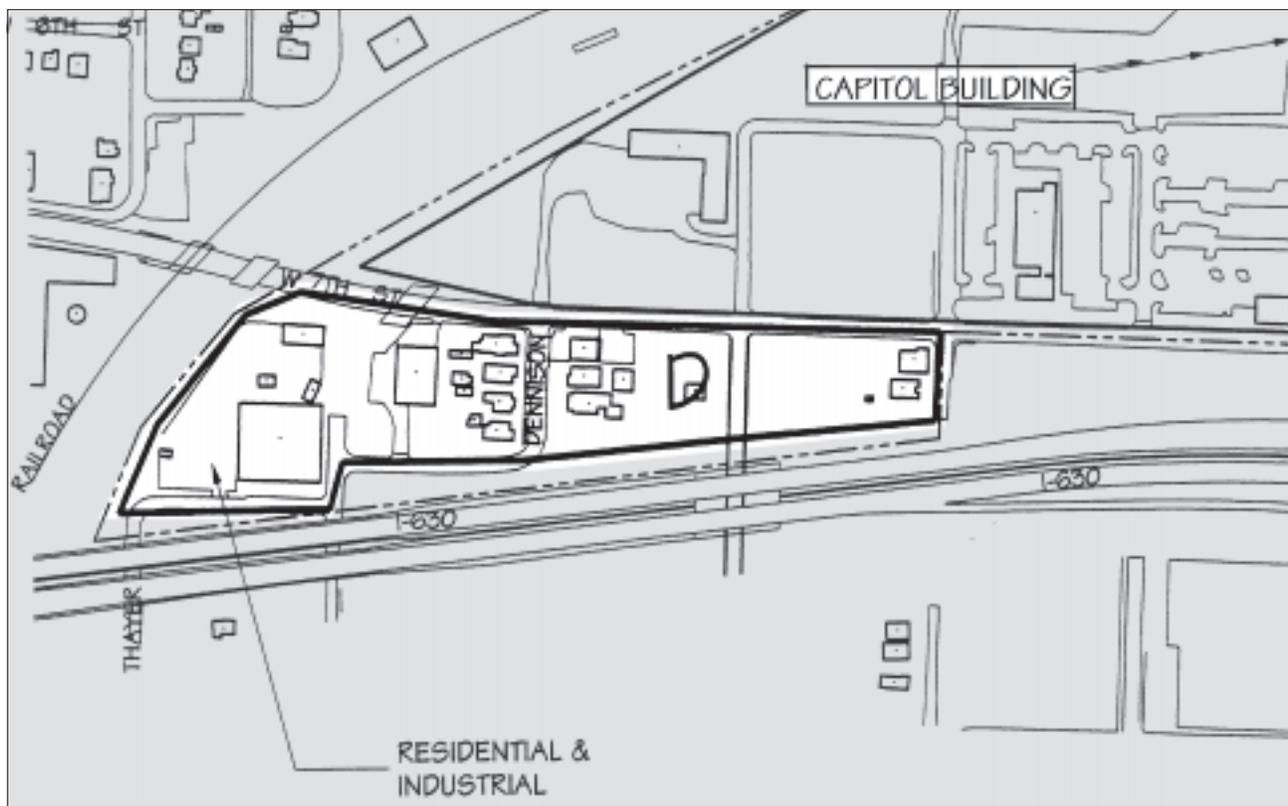
This small neighborhood is located at the southwest corner of the Capitol Area and contains a mixture of small single family residences and state maintenance shops. It lies below the Interstate at the lower end of the Capitol campus. Motorists approaching downtown from the west look across these lands to the Capitol dome. It is zoned for industrial uses, in part because it is relatively remote and access is limited. While it is not a key area in terms of planning for the character of the foreground of the Capitol, it is important that its development within this area be managed such that it does not impede views to the Capitol.

**Recommendations:**

Maintain the low scale of development in the area. Protect views of the Capitol by keeping building heights relatively low.



*The Capitol Hill industrial area*

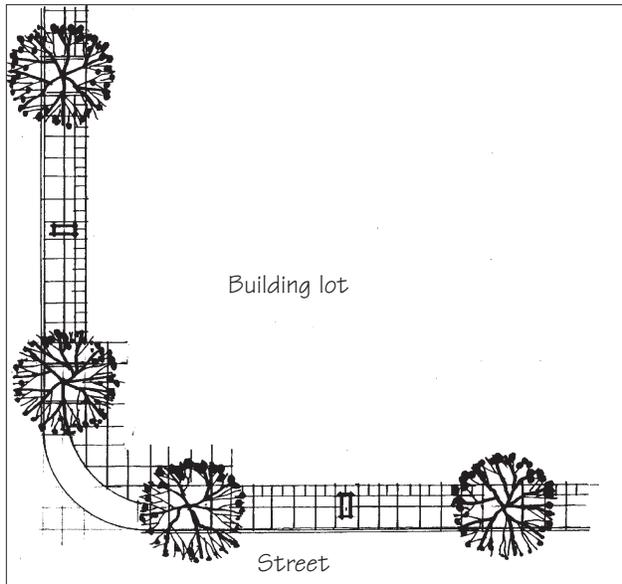


*D- The Industrial Neighborhood Character Area*

# STREETSCAPE DESIGN

A key component of the Framework Master Plan is the development of a comprehensive design image for the Capitol area that will help establish a sense of identity. Streetscape design includes the introduction of street trees, furniture such as benches and waste receptacles and construction of planting areas, all coordinated to establish a distinct identity for the area. The city's streetscape palette used on eastern portions of Capitol Avenue are positive precedents that should be continued.

Elements to be considered include: A consistent public landscape palette, distinctive gateway designs, consistent architectural design and special public improvements. The Capitol Area's streetscape design should serve to reflect the differing characteristics of each neighborhood in the area, while also establishing a sense of visual continuity throughout.



*A prototype for streetscape improvements.*

Decorative street furniture elements, including ornamental lights and street trees, should be installed to match designs adopted by the City of Little Rock for east Capitol Avenue. In addition, decorative scoring patterns for concrete sidewalks should be considered for the blocks that are closest to the Capitol.



*Defining the street edge and enhancing the pedestrian environment are goals for the area.*

## Streetscape Hierarchy

The character of the design of streets in the Capitol Area should be considered as a system. In time, streets should develop to reflect the character described:

### **High Density Commercial Corridor (Capitol Avenue and Victory Street)**

Streets designated in this category are those in which commercial buildings are to be the dominant use. Building fronts should generally be located at the inside edge of the sidewalk and urban streetscape elements such as street trees, decorative street lights, benches and planters incorporated. Victory Street should become the primary north-south pedestrian connection through the area and therefore it is appropriate that pedestrian gathering spaces be developed along with these urban streetscape elements.

### **Medium Density Mixed Use Corridor**

These streets will be lined with a mix of commercial and residential uses at a moderately high density. Defining the street edge with buildings is also a goal in these areas, although some variety in setbacks may occur where residential uses are at street level. The majority of buildings within a block should be built with their fronts at the inside sidewalk edge. Incorporate urban streetscape elements. The majority of east-west streets in the Capitol Area fall into this category.

### ***Low Density Mixed Use Corridor***

This street category applies to those streets within the Northeast Neighborhood that are residential in character. Development and redevelopment along these streets should reflect such a residential character and be set back from the street according to the historic pattern, with landscaped front yards.

### **Capitol Complex Campus Edge**

Those streets immediately adjacent to the Capitol Campus are critical to the overall image of the Capitol. The landscape palette of the capitol grounds should be extended across the street to the east to strengthen this image. Buildings along this edge should generally be set back from the street to provide a “green” transition to the more intensely developed areas adjacent to the Capitol Campus.

## **Gateways & Plazas**

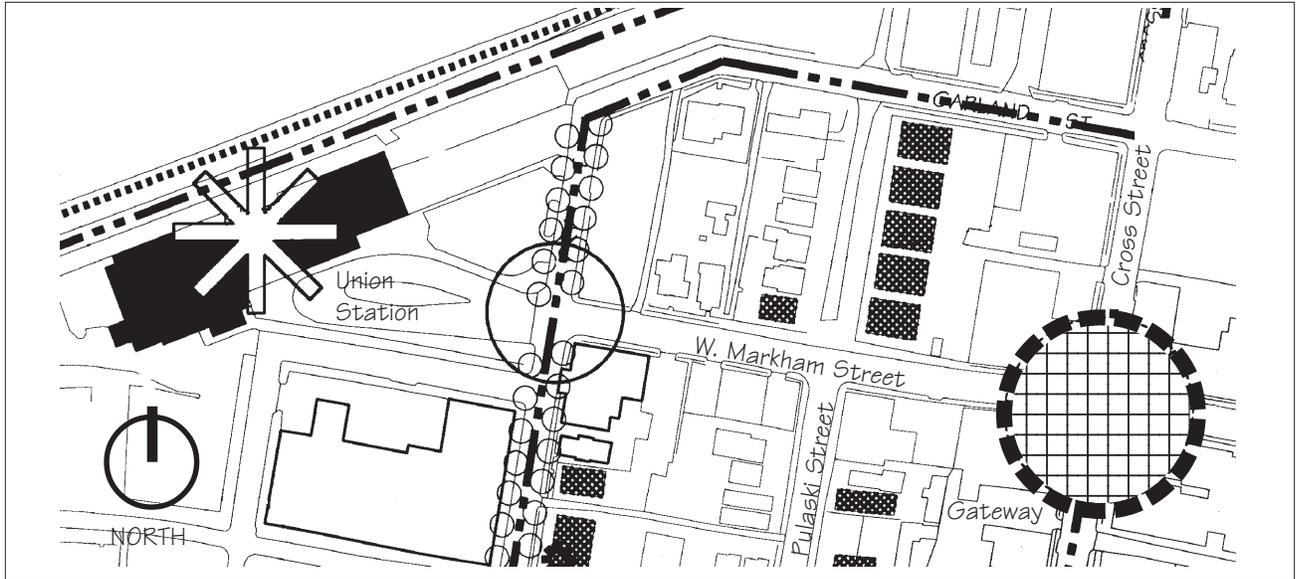
Another key component of the Framework Master Plan is the creation of and enhancement of gateways into the Capitol Area that notify motorists, bicyclists and pedestrians that they are entering a special district. Because there are a limited number of entries into the area from both the west and south, these gateways become even more important. Gateways into the Capitol Area are located at Woodlane Street and west 7th Street, the 3rd Street bridge across the Missouri Pacific Railroad and Cross Street at Capitol, West 3rd Street and West Markham.

### **Recommendations:**

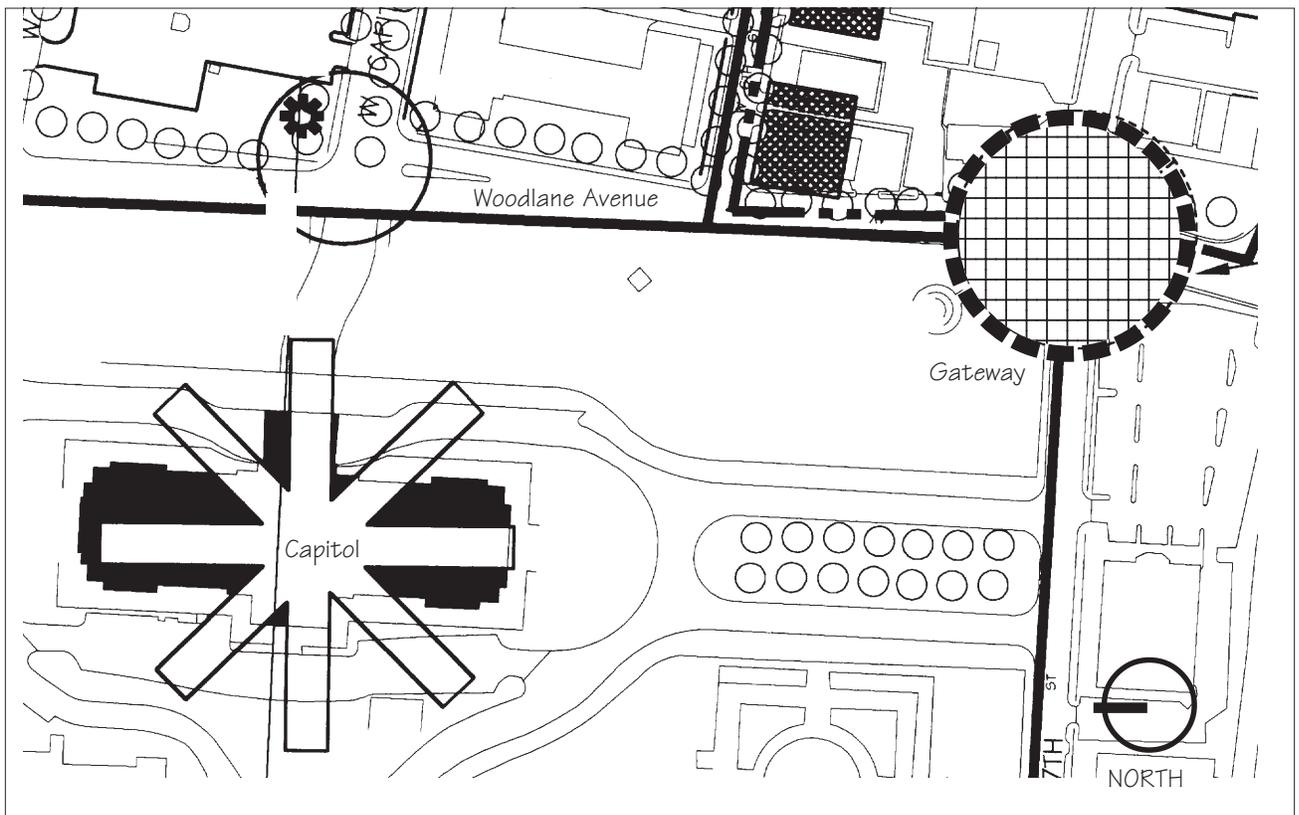
Gateways into the Capital Area should be designed with motorists, bicyclists and pedestrians in mind. A consistent landscape palette should be applied to each of these locations to establish a sense of continuity. At the same time, a unique element should appear at each major gateway to distinguish it from the others. Installing custom-designed artworks at each location is one means of accomplishing this objective.

Some elements should be large enough in scale to be perceived at a distance by drivers, such as flowering ornamental trees or public art.

Information signs should be provided that can be read by and are easily identifiable to a motorist or bicyclist that is slowed or stopped at an intersection.

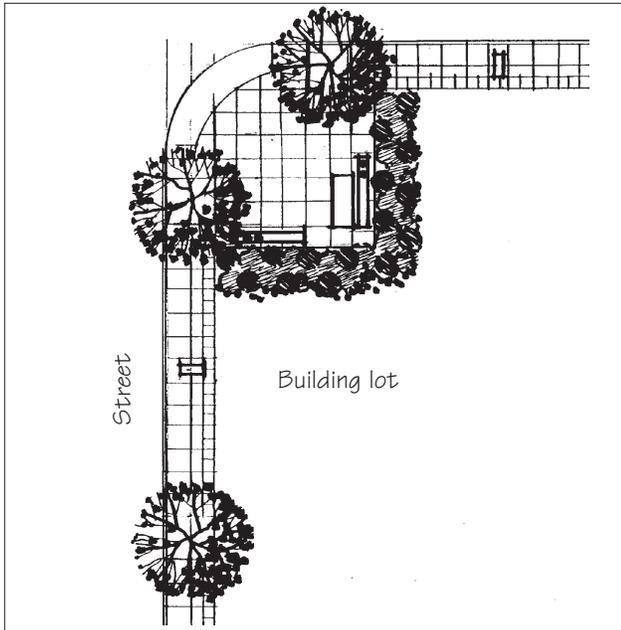


West Markham Gateway.



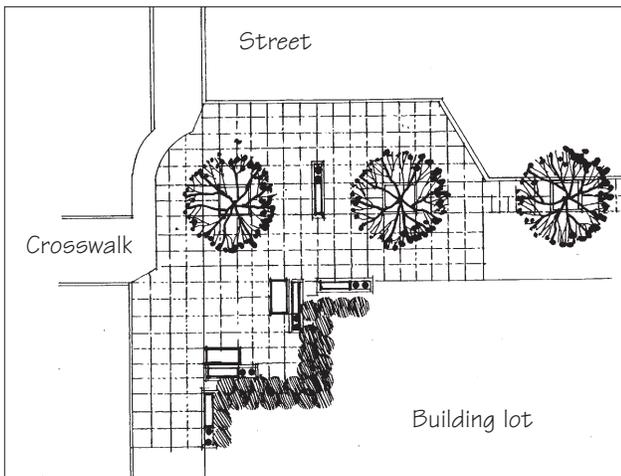
Woodlane Avenue Gateway.

Fine-grain detail should be introduced for viewing by pedestrians and by motorists in stopped cars. Examples include; low shrubs, ground covers and perennial and annual flower beds.



Prototype for a corner plaza

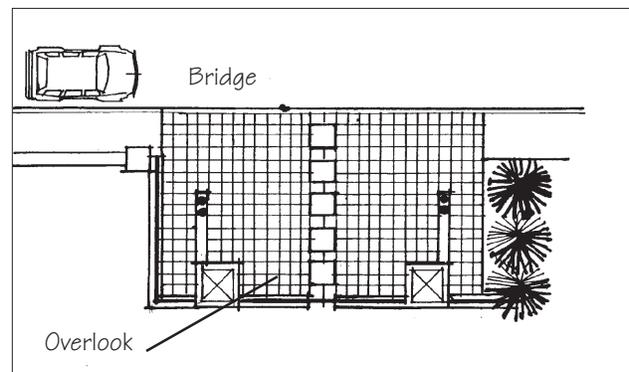
Small plazas should be created on corners of lots that lie at key intersections and gateways as identified on the Capitol Area Framework Plan (map C-2). At key intersections, these plazas should incorporate a combination of the street furniture elements. The inside edges of the plazas should be defined with building walls or with landscaping.



Prototype for a corner plaza

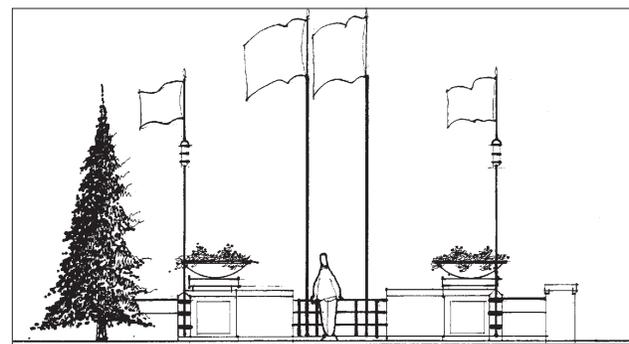
At major gateways and key intersections along Victory, larger plazas should be established at corner lots. Decorative paving should extend across the area and, where feasible, the sidewalk should be expanded to reduce pedestrian crossing distances. Street furniture should be clustered in groupings to increase visual impact. These plazas provide special opportunities for information boards, memorials and public art. The inside edges of these plazas should be defined with building walls or landscaping.

### The Gateway Concept at Third Street Bridge: Plan U

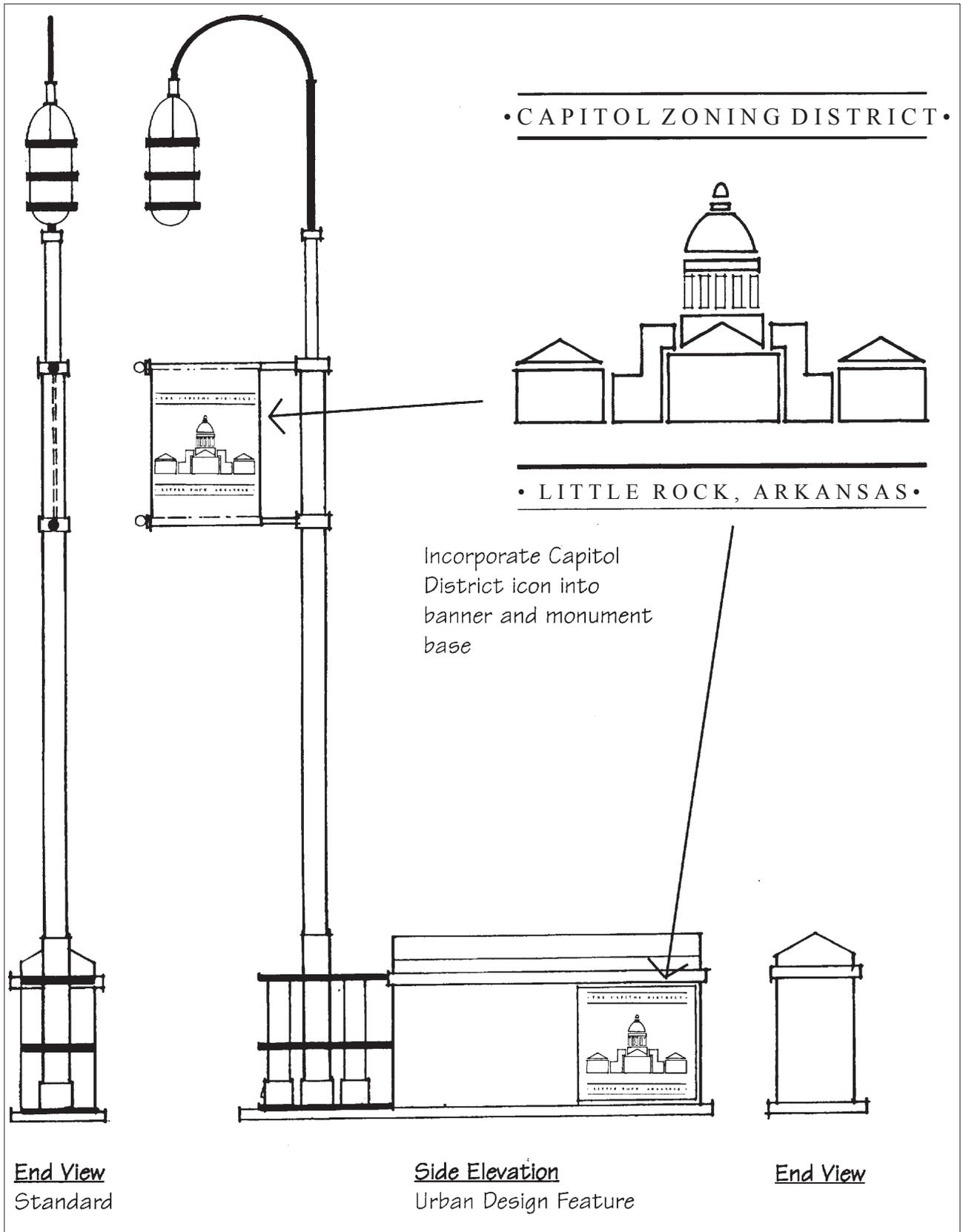


A special gateway opportunity exists at the Third Street “Bridge”. Because the road is elevated at this point, motorists and pedestrians have a particularly dramatic view of the Capitol building. In this concept, an overlook area is created by extending the walkway. Street furniture elements, including benches, lights and planters, would be included.

### Gateway Overlook at Third Street Bridge: Elevation View



Gateway elements combined in this conceptual sketch at the Third Street Bridge include monumental planters, lighting and flagpoles.



Streetscape design includes the introduction of street trees, furniture such as benches and waste receptacles and construction of planting areas, all coordinated to establish a distinct identity for the area.



*Street furniture installed along eastern portions of Capitol Avenue serve as a model for improvements that should occur in the Capitol Area. The basic design elements established here should be continued.*

# Public Spaces

One of the key elements in the definition of character areas is quality and organization of parks and open space. Similar to the discussion of the Character Areas is the need to define the contribution of these public features to an area.

The area immediately around the Capitol and to the south and west has a character similar to many other state capitol areas. With the Capitol as the landmark or anchor structure, other significant public buildings are placed upon this established green. This “campus” character, provides a series of parks and open spaces with less formal connections between the buildings.

The areas east of the Capitol and south of Capitol Avenue reflect a lower to medium density urban grid character. To the north and northeast, more traditional blocks with buildings facing directly onto streets is an extension of a grid which extends into the downtown area. With the exception of the Capitol campus, there is no public open space within the Capitol Area neighborhood.

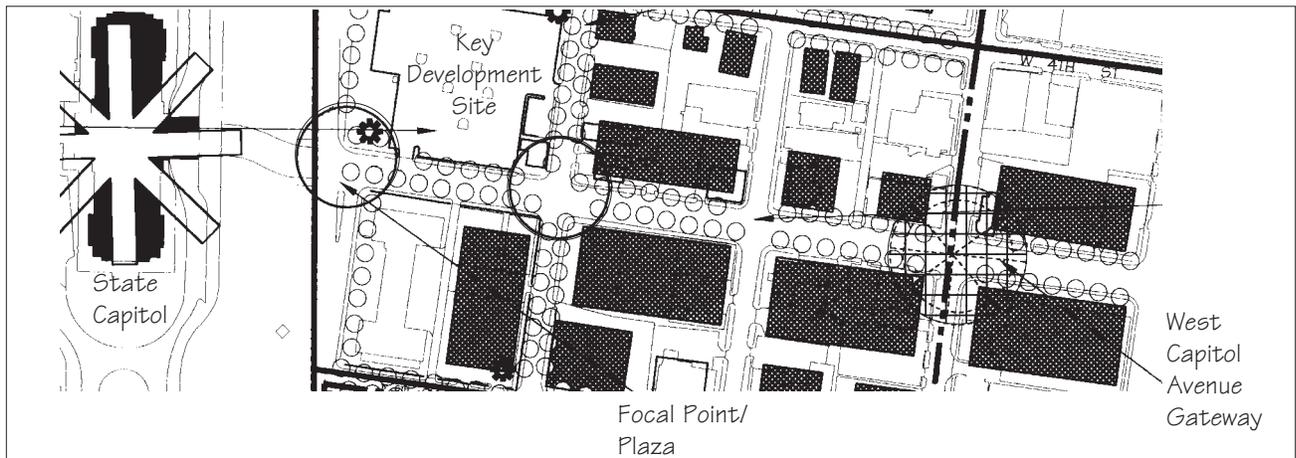
**Recommendations:**

Create new public gathering spaces within the Capitol Area neighborhood. Opportunities for pedestrian plazas exist within the Key Development Site at Woodlane and Capitol and at intersections along Victory Street (See Appendix Map C-2, Framework Master Plan)

Create new parks, especially in the Union Station neighborhood where more intensive mixture of uses is encouraged. Take advantage of the topography in developing parks to provide a variety of experiences. **Establish strong landscaped edges adjacent to the campus area as well as with the transitional areas to the south, west and north.**

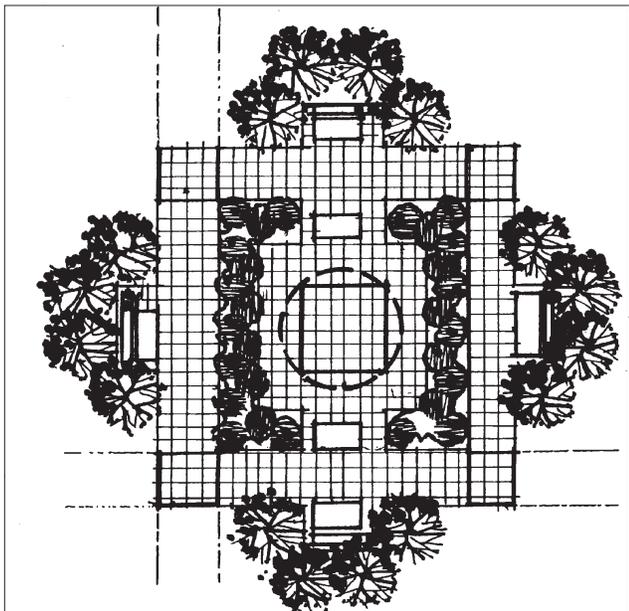
Extend parks and open space opportunities to the northwest, towards emerging trails along the existing railroad corridors and the Arkansas River.

Create civic use opportunities for the Capitol Area. These parks will be vital to attract residents into the neighborhood.



*Create new public gathering spaces within the Capitol Area neighborhood. Opportunities for pedestrian plazas exist within the Key Development Site at Woodlane and Capitol and at intersections along Victory Street.*

## Memorial Plazas

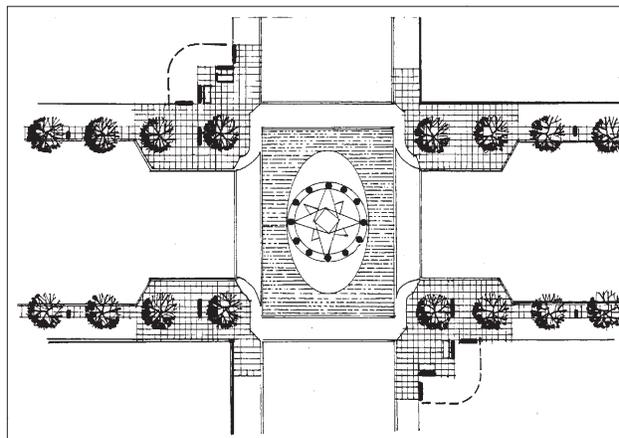


*Prototype Plaza Design For a Memorial Installation.*

Throughout the Capitol Area, many opportunities exist to install memorials. These may take the forms of commemorative plaques, monuments and works of art. Where feasible, these should be installed in small plazas that can be created as parts of individual site landscape designs. In this concept, standard street furniture elements, including lights and benches, frame a focal point which is the site for the installation of a memorial. Low scale plantings frame the site.

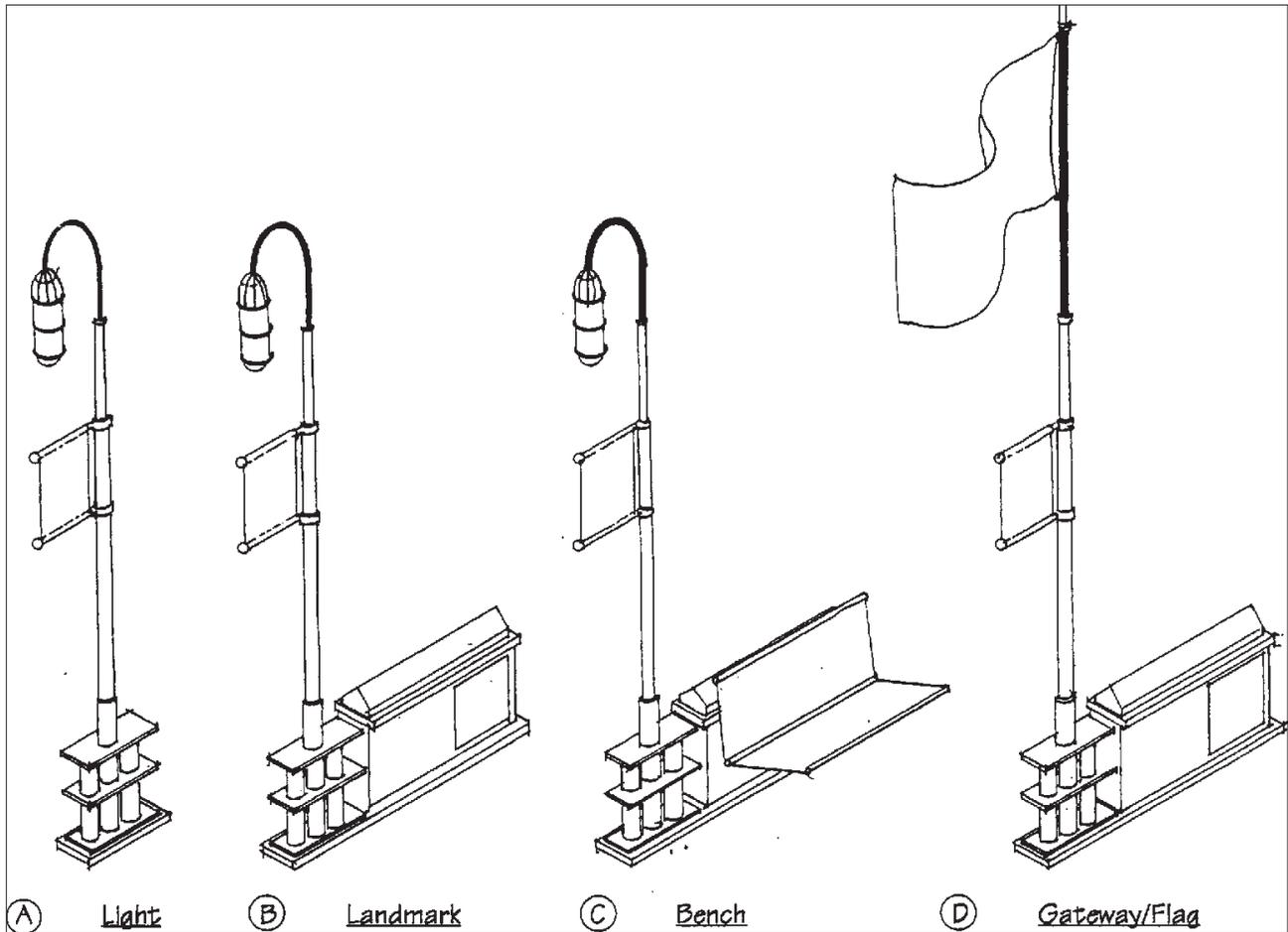
## Decorative Intersections

Decorative paving designs should be installed at the centers of the roadway intersections along Capitol Avenue. These designs should reinforce design themes established on the Capitol grounds. This concept interprets the design for a tiered fountain, adopted for installation at the entrance to the Capitol itself.



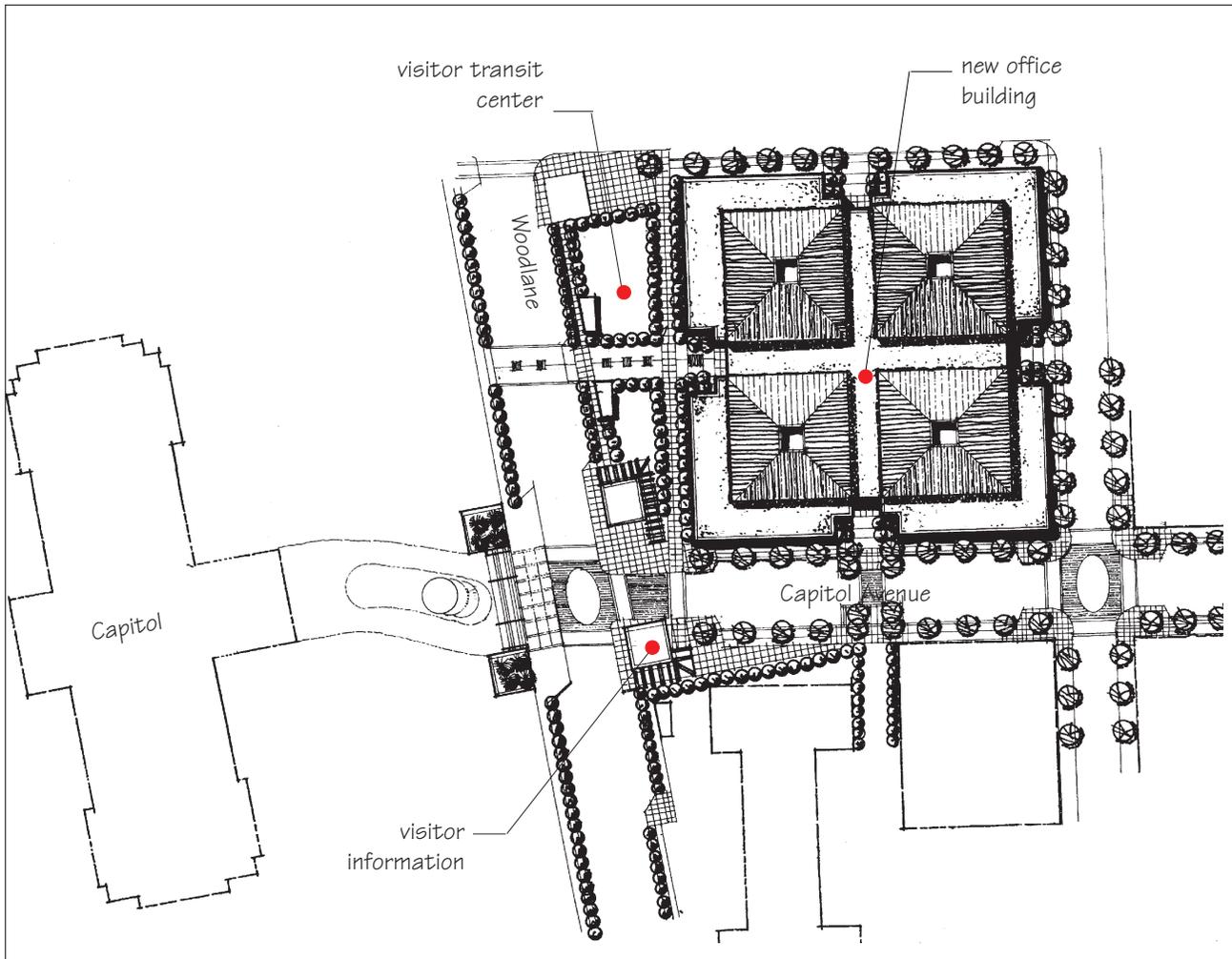
*A Prototype for Decorative Street Designs at Key Intersections*

## A Kit of Parts for Streetscape Furniture



The City of Little Rock has adopted a design vocabulary of streetscape furniture for Capitol Avenue. This includes decorative streetlights, paving, benches and waste receptacles. That vocabulary should be extended into the Capitol Zoning District Area. In general, these streetscape elements should be installed in a manner similar to that used along the eastern portions of Capitol Avenue. However, it is important that these furnishings be organized into groupings, when feasible, that will help to establish a “critical mass” of street furniture elements, to maximize their visual impacts. This is particularly important to do in the

blocks closest to the Capitol building. These sketches illustrate a framework structure that could be used to help organize these and additional street furnishings in a manner that will maximize their impacts: (A) A street light is combined with a foundation structure that provides a significant mass. Banners are also used to add accents. (B) A low scale monument sign or landmark identifier is added to provide interpretive information and guidance. (C) A bench is added to the armature. (D) Large flags are mounted on poles in a similar armature arrangement to be installed a key intersections and gateways.

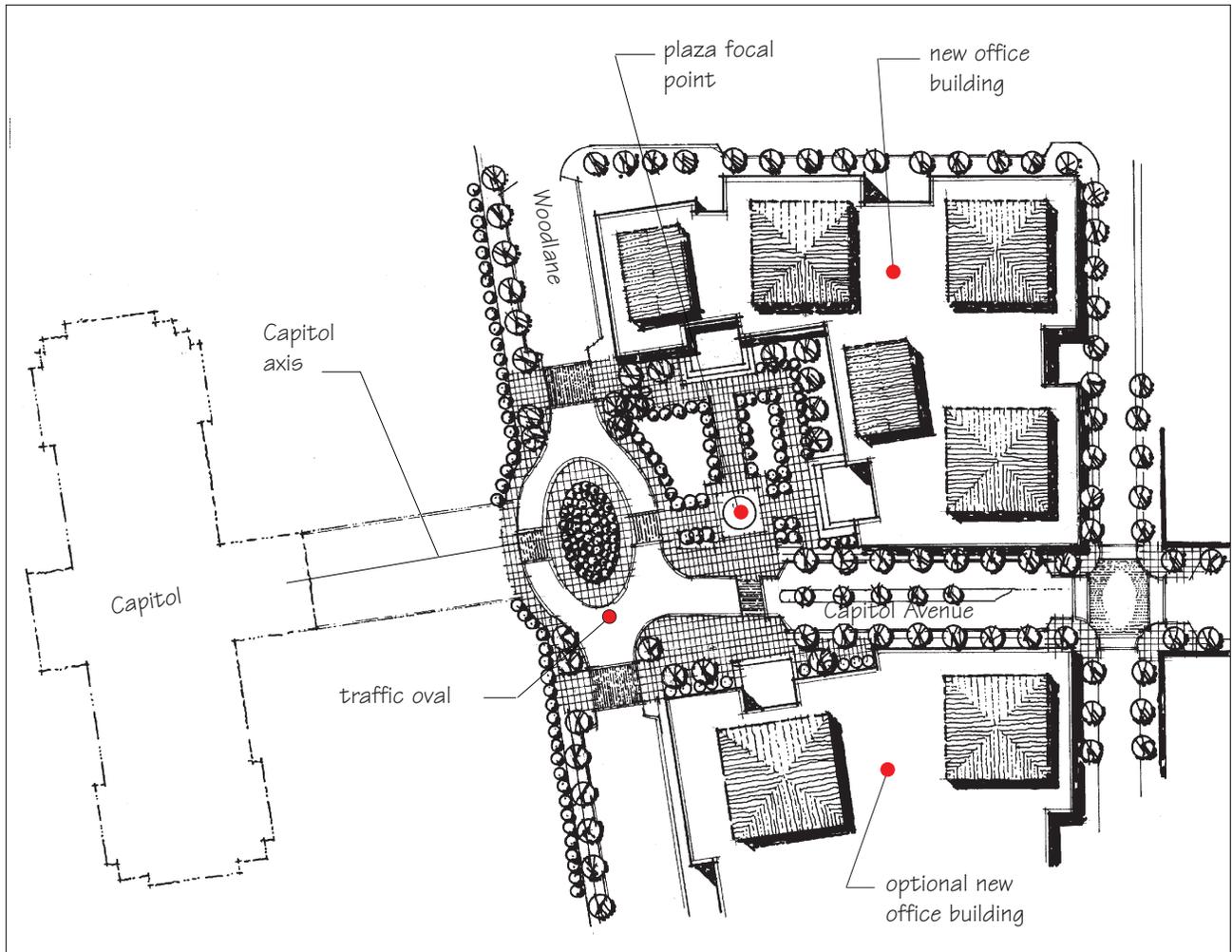


### Scheme A - Linear Plaza

In this approach to plaza designs at the intersection of Woodlane and Capitol Avenue, a “conservative” scheme is used. A plaza would be installed at the northeast and southeast corners which would reflect the axis of the Capitol building. A smaller building, perhaps a transit facility, would be located along Woodlane. Two smaller structures with visitor information services would be installed at the southeast corners. These would reflect the monumental planter designs proposed for the base of the steps of the Capitol grounds themselves. This would visually link the plaza to the Capitol grounds.



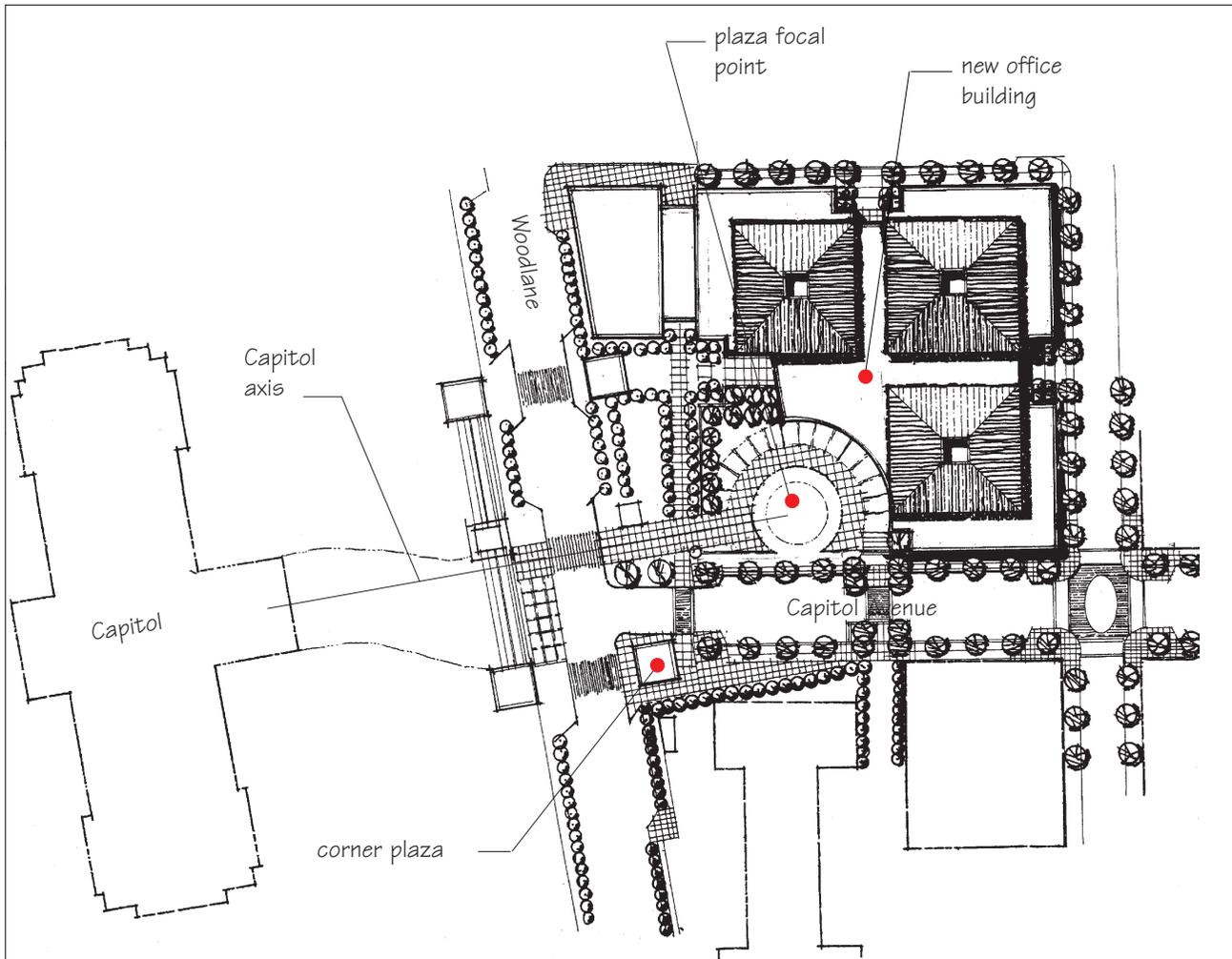
*The photo above shows parking patterns at the Capitol Building.*



**Scheme B - Corner Plaza**

In this conceptual sketch, the transition between the downtown street grid and the orientation of the Capitol building is accommodated, primarily, in a corner plaza designed for the northeast corner of the intersection of Woodlane and Capitol Avenue. A key feature is a traffic oval which causes automobiles to circulate around a central landscape element that would be positioned on axis with the Capitol building. This,

visually, shifts the focus of the intersection for the “askewed” angle of the streets themselves. The central axis of the Capitol entrance would extend east across Woodlane to a focal point at the center of the plaza, on the northeast corner. An office building would occupy the remainder of the site. The facades of the south and west elevations would be angled to reflect the two differing street grids.



### Scheme C - Ceremonial Plaza

In this concept, plazas on the east side of Woodlane are aligned to reflect the orientation of the front of the Capitol building. A focal point is created, in the plaza, on the north edge of Capitol Avenue that aligns with the central axis of the Capitol building. Ceremonial steps

on the western edge of Woodlane would establish a transition for crosswalks that would connect to the east side of the street. An office building with parking structure included would occupy the bulk of the site at the northeast corner of Capitol and Woodlane.

## Circulation Patterns

Appendix Map C-5 combines circulation patterns for automobiles, pedestrians and public transit vehicles. Key pedestrian routes lie along Third Street, Seventh Street, Capitol Avenue and Victory Street, as well as Woodlane. A portion of 4th Street just north of the Capitol is also a key pedestrian connection between the capitol campus and the commercial blocks of the Capitol Area, however it is active with automobile traffic and crossing points are difficult for pedestrians. Numerous curb cuts for on-site parking lots also discourage pedestrian activity.

Portions of a recreational trail exist along the rail road edge and other planning efforts suggest the potential to extend this system. This may provide connections to other nearby amenities for pedestrians and bicyclists.

In terms of automobile circulation, vehicles travel relatively unimpeded throughout the area, although awkward intersections at Union Station and just north of the Capitol do limit movement to some extent. All streets provide two-way travel, except that 4th and 6th Streets serve as a one-way couplet.

A major entry point into the area is at the intersection of Interstate I-630 and Woodlane. From this point, state employees turn west into the Capitol campus. Others filter through various streets to a variety of destinations in the neighborhood. Another key entry point is at the intersection of Cross and Cantrell Road. Yet another entry point that is increasing in importance is the intersection of Markham and Cross. These provide opportunities to establish an identity for the area through streetscape design improvements.

Third Street serves as a major route linking the Hillcrest Neighborhood to the west with downtown Little Rock. It therefore offers opportunities for uses that would benefit from such an exposure.

A string of key intersections lies along Victory Street. These are symbolic entry points into the core of the area and serves as key decision-making places, where motorists must make turning movement decisions. These also provide opportunities for special streetscape design treatments.

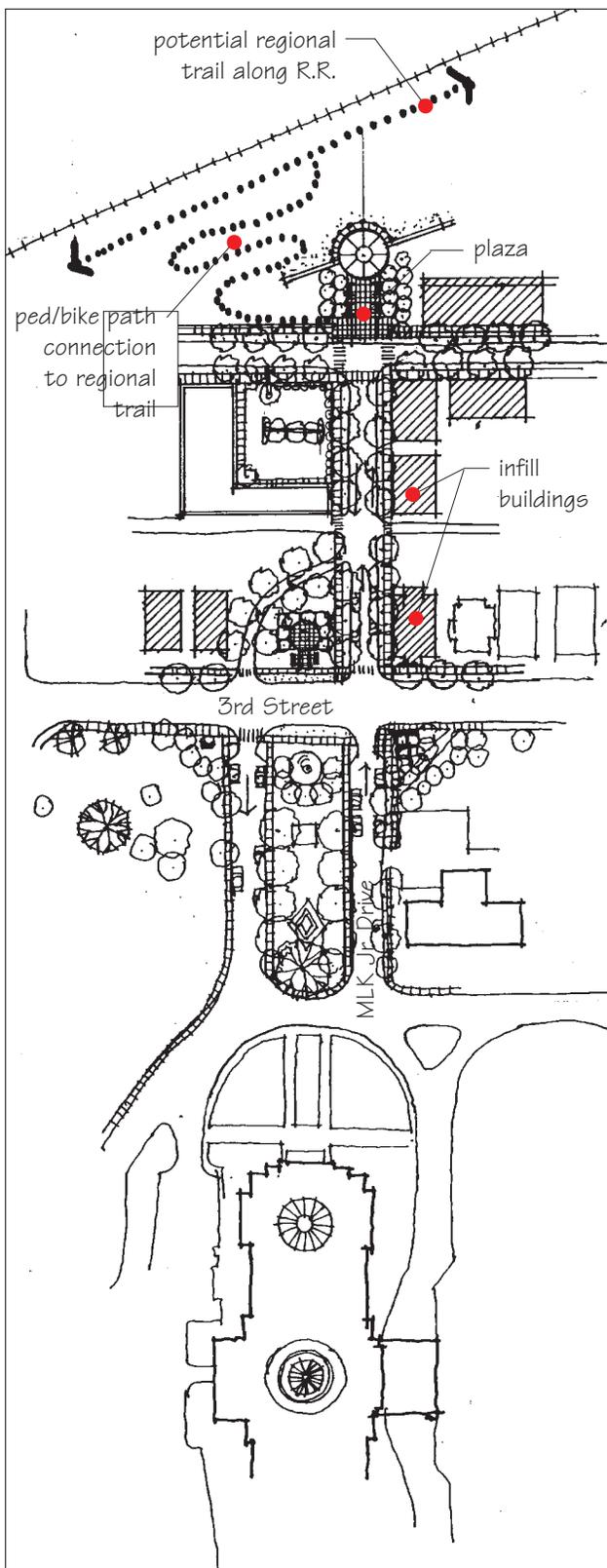
### Recommendations:

Automobile circulation patterns should be managed such that convenient access into the area is maintained while respecting goals for enhancing pedestrian movement opportunities.

Key intersections should be designed to assist motorists in making turning movement decisions and to highlight entry points.



*Because of its location along the I-630 corridor and along the Missouri Pacific Railroad, the Capitol Area has few vehicle, pedestrian, transit and bicycle connections with areas of the city to the north, south and west.*



Potential Martin Luther King Jr. Drive improvements include establishing an overlook at the north end of the street, connections to existing trail system and memorial opportunities.

## Circulation and Access

Because of its location along the I-630 corridor and the Missouri Pacific Railroad, the Capitol Area has few vehicle, pedestrian, transit and bicycle connections with areas of the city to the north, south and west. There are some significant traffic circulation problems that will require attention. The transition from 4th Street/Woodlane/High Street is awkward and intimidating to the pedestrian. State employees often take the “back door” route to and from work on 2nd Street (under 3rd Street) along the railroad tracks, north on Victory and east on Markham. The intersection of Markham and Victory is awkward with access to the Union Station parking lot and the parallel street directly south of it.

### Recommendations:

Endorse a pedestrian friendly environment within the area.

Establish strong pedestrian and bicycle connections into and through the area.

Develop an overall transportation master plan to resolve transportation conflicts.

### Martin Luther King Jr. Drive Improvements

Opportunities exist to establish a special scenic overlook and trailhead at the northern end of Martin Luther King Jr. Drive. A plaza could be constructed here that would provide new opportunities overlooking the lands beyond the Missouri Pacific railroad line, as well as a dramatic view southward along MLK Jr. Drive to the front of the Capitol building. Views of the Union Station area would also be available here. Special streetscape improvements should be considered along MLK Jr. Drive to encourage walking from the Capitol complex down to the Union Station area and to this viewpoint. Therefore, streetscape improvements along this route should be a high priority. In addition, the intersection of MLK Jr. Drive with Third Street should be emphasized as a special intersection. Opportunities to extend the boulevard image that exists south of Third Street should be explored so that this same image could be extended to the north. The plaza should include connections to the potential regional trail along the Missouri Pacific railroad line and it is an ideal site for a memorial or public art installation.

## Transit

There are limited transit opportunities in the Capitol Area. The existing predominance of parking lots is indicative of a heavy dependence on the automobile. The CATA does run three routes through the Capitol Area, but utilization rates are low.

### **Recommendations:**

Reestablish the circulator bus route between the Capitol and downtown.

Evaluate the potential for additional transit routes to serve the Capitol Area.

## Parking

The State employee base within the Capitol Area requires a sizable parking reservoir and visual impacts of parking within this area are significant. As an example, buildings have been removed for surface lots and automobiles can be observed parked in front yard setbacks. The introduction of diagonal parking in the front yard of the Capitol Building along Woodlane is another indication of the severity of the problem. Given the impacts of parking within this area, it is important to develop a strategy for both easy access and predictable parking opportunities.

### **Recommendations:**

Create a partnership between the City and the State that is dedicated to implementing a parking plan that recognizes the need to appropriately accommodate parking and that places parking convenient to other modal provisions (i.e. near transit stops, trail connections, etc.).

Identify potential locations for structured parking.  
Adopt design guidelines which minimize the visual impacts of parking.

Locate surface lots behind buildings.