

# G·R·E·E·N·S·B·O·R·O



Circus Elephants parade down mainstreet. (Greensboro, 1930)



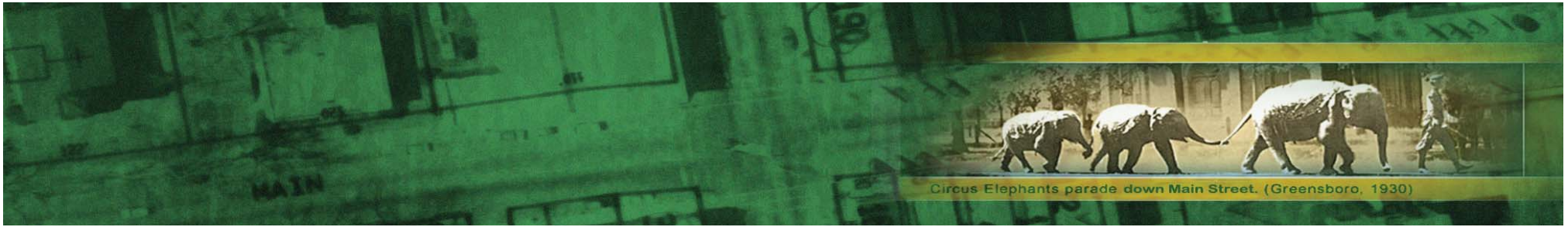
The circus returns. (Greensboro, November 4 - 6, 2005)

## DESIGN CHARRETTE REPORT

a circus comes to town.









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# Introduction

Circus Elephants parade down Main Street. (Greensboro, 1930)

This is the 39th Charrette that the Center for Community Design, Planning, and Preservation has conducted in Georgia!

Greensboro marks a different approach to the work preceding this event. Our work is usually directed at communities who have experienced serious decline, or issues of difficulty - such as water quality, affordable housing or brownfield redevelopment. The work we are privileged to do for Greensboro follows an era of great success. This means that the current downtown development process based on wise growth and protecting community character is working.

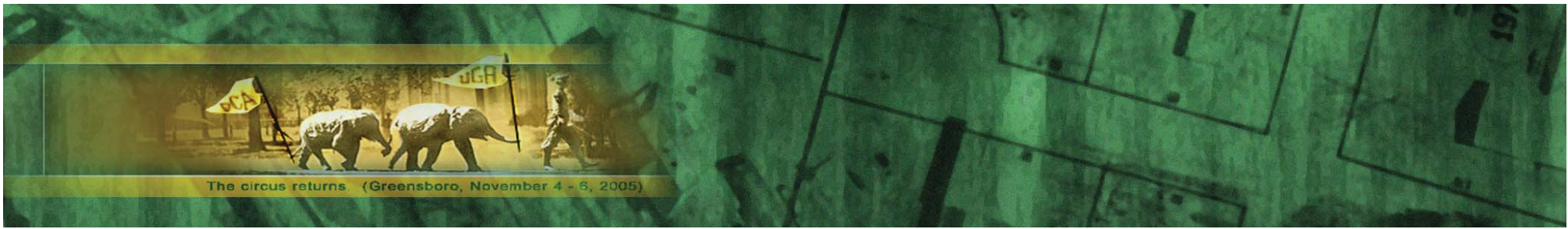
The Better Hometown Program has brought great benefits to Greensboro and has now launched the city, the Chamber of Commerce, and the Downtown Development Authority on a positive path. Our hope is that these design solutions presented here will contribute to the progress. Keep up the good work.



Pratt Cassity - Director  
Center for Community Design, Planning, and  
Preservation  
University of Georgia

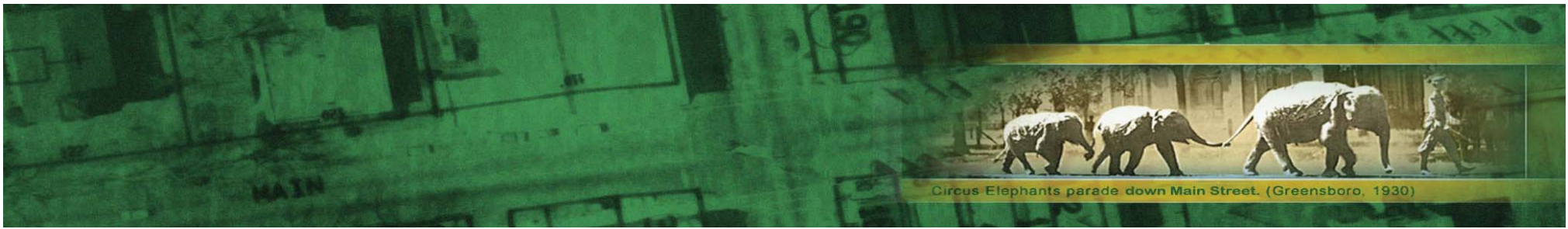






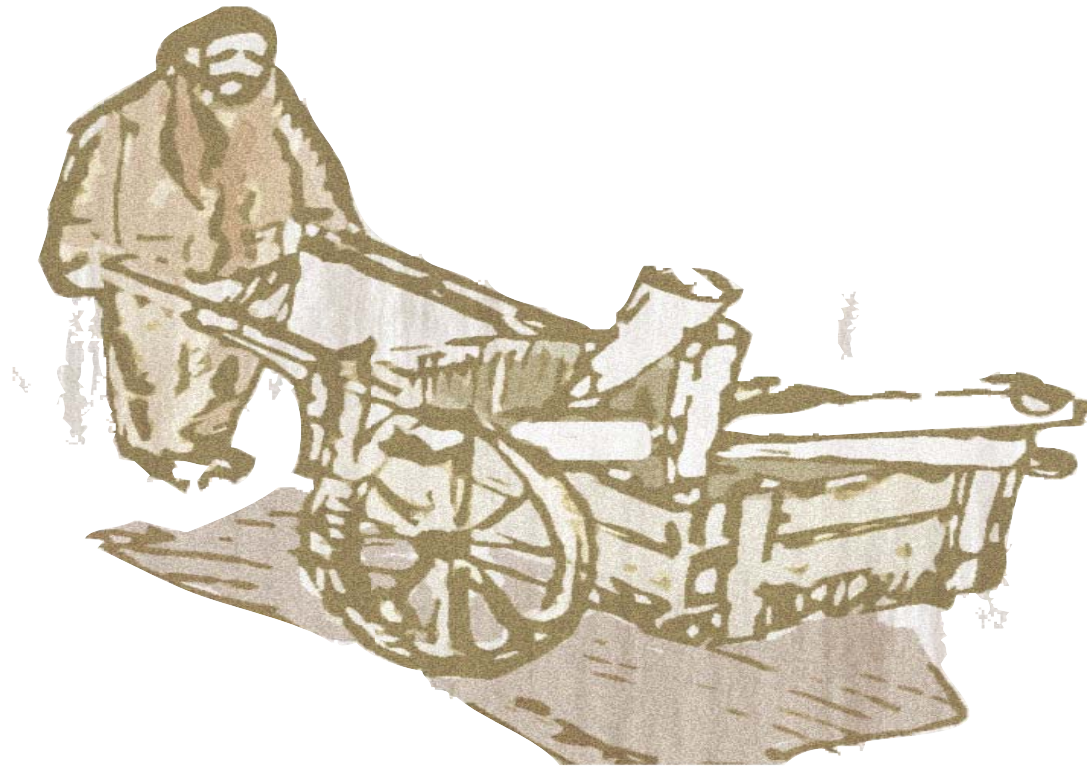
A circus has come to town. We came with excited minds and fresh eyes, hopeful that our imaginations could be let loose on the design challenges of Greensboro. We worked for only a few short days before we presented our ideas. Though we performed no fancy magic tricks ~ and left the elephants and lions at home, we do hope you still enjoyed the show. If any of these suggestions provoke action towards a better Greensboro downtown district, then this charrette has been a success.

The suggestions you will find in this report, suggestions that developed through the charrette process, are just that ...suggestions. We are but outsiders looking in. Carefully consider our ideas and temper them with local input. There are issues that we could not address and areas where our expertise is limited, but we gave it our best shot and have developed an impressive array of improvement ideas for making Greensboro the best place it can be. Now its up to you to make the magic happen.



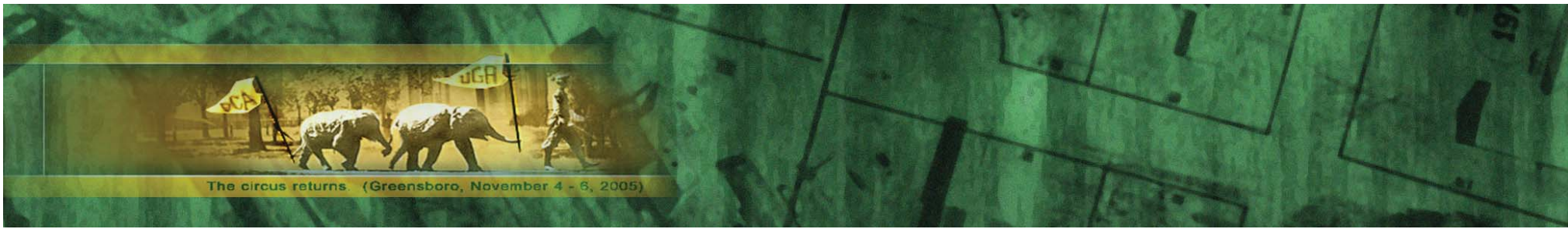
## What is a charrette?

Charrette is a French word that translates as “little cart.” At the leading architecture school of the 19th century, the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in Paris, students would be assigned a tough design problem to work out under pressure of time. They would continue sketching as fast as they could, even as the little carts (charrettes) carried their drawing boards away to be judged and graded. Today, “charrette” has come to describe the rapid, intensive, and creative work session, usually lasting a week or more, in which a design team focuses on a particular design problem and arrives at a collaborative solution. Charrettes are product-oriented. The public charrette is fast becoming a preferred way to face the planning challenges confronting American cities.



*Charrettes for New Urbanism, Victor Dover*





*dca*

The Georgia Department of Community Affairs



The University of Georgia

University of Georgia - Department of Community  
Affairs Charrette Team  
November 4-6, 2005

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## Identifying Design Focus

Circus Elephants parade down Main Street. (Greensboro, 1930)

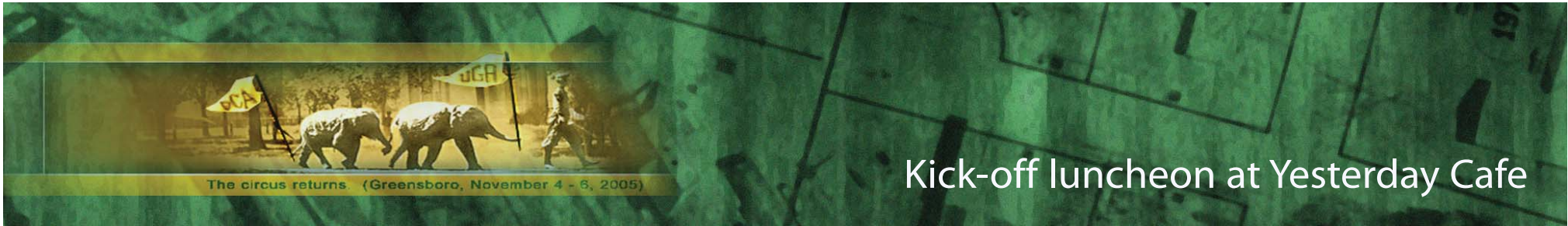
The identifying of the design focus for the charrette was very much a community endeavor. First, the Better Hometown Program of Greensboro, led by Manager Cynthia Smith, assembled a comprehensive list of community concerns and design problems for the charrette team to tackle while in town. At the lively and well-attended kick-off luncheon held at the beautifully rehabilitated Yesterday Cafe, over 50 citizens helped prioritize the list. Community attendees were encouraged to select and submit which issues they deemed most significant. As the 'votes' were tallied, the highest scoring concerns were grouped into seven broad categories.

While not all problems could be addressed in the short weekend, charrette efforts were focused on those areas which the community felt were most important.



Bickers Goodwin Building, November 2005





# Kick-off luncheon at Yesterday Cafe



Bickers Goodwin Building, May 1941



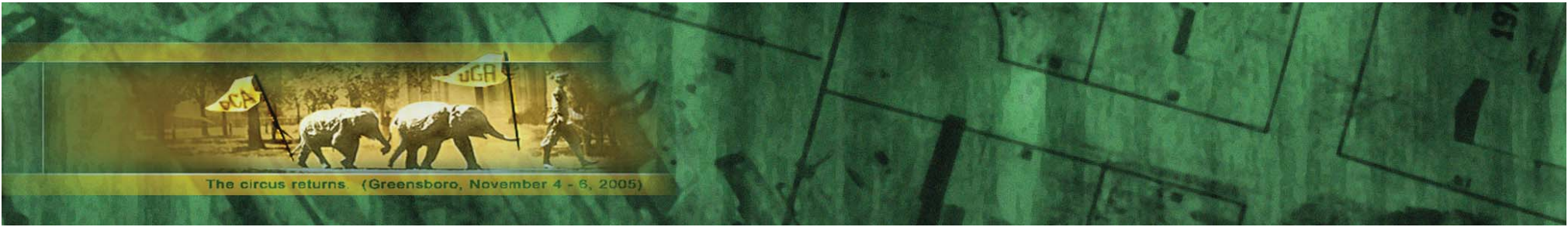
# Design Issue List

This list of concerns for downtown was constructed from local citizen input. The participating citizens were later asked to vote for the concerns they deemed most important. This chart shows the number of votes for each specific design issue. As votes were tabulated, the charrette team was able to prioritize issues and focus on the most important ones.

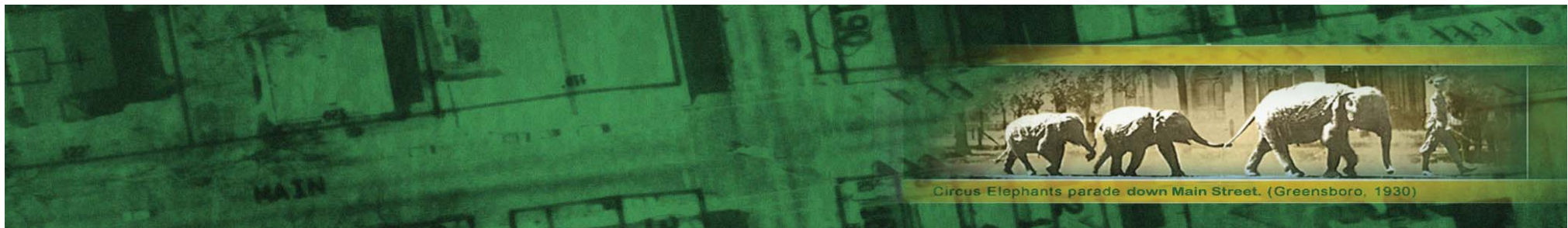
Circus Elephants parade down Main Street. (Greensboro, 1930)

Votes	Design Issue
14	Old Ford Dealership needs design for best use for the future of city.
14	How do we link the downtown, streetscape-wise, to the Old Depot/ Old Mill rehabilitation project?
13	Caldwell Laundry site needs infill suggestions and design.
13	Should the city work toward closing Court Street and making it green space with benches and fountains?
13	How do we connect the Mill Area to the downtown with sidewalks and how do we get contractors to want to come rehab the Historic Mill District, getting the homes into individual ownership rather than rental?
11	If the gymnasium is turned into a cultural center, how can the handicap access be relocated to enhance the look of the building rather than fight it?
10	Parking areas with easy access for shoppers and areas for employees are needed.
10	Should the city work toward closing Green Street from N. Main to N. East Street and make it green space connecting the cultural center gazebo area visually and usability for events?
9	A streetscape for Greensboro Tire area with landscape and lighting should be designed, yet still keeps it accessible for business.
9	How and where can we put street trees back in place to actually accomplish the canopy look that DOT supports?



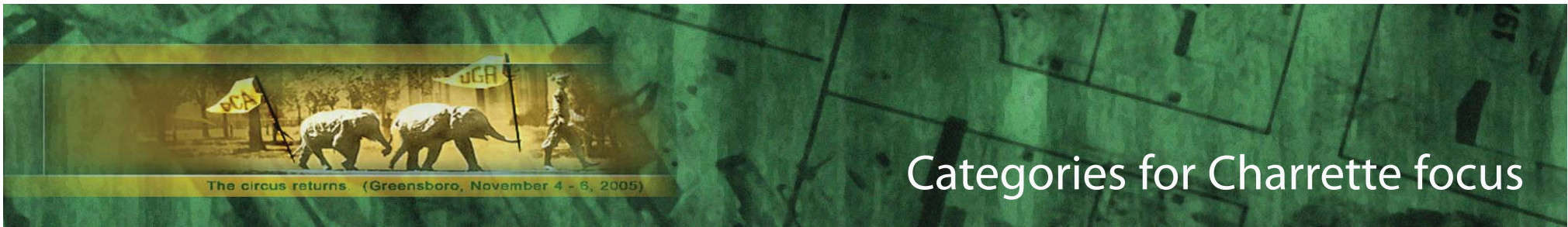


Votes	Design Issue
9	Does the city need to reconsider the application for rezoning to allow a crematory in the local commercial historic district?
8	How do we connect downtown to the railroad community and the Calvin Baber Museum, the Greene County Museum, the LL Wyatt Jail and the Old Jail with walking trails and bike trails? Should we consider wrapping them back through the cemetery and around to the new Mill Complex and Old Depot.
7	If the city moves into the post office, what do you suggest be done with that property for best use in the future? Park? Outdoor concert area?
6	What suggestions are there for Bill Corry (Bill's Dollar Store & offices included) infill?
6	What is the best reuse of the post office?
5	The city needs more retail space and a place for business offices to get them out of the historic storefronts but to keep them in the downtown area with easy parking accessibility.
5	How can we make the Greene County Museum fit into the downtown and be more inviting?
5	Is there a place for a downtown park?
5	Can traffic be routed one-way through North Main Street and the sidewalks widened to make the downtown area friendlier to pedestrian traffic?
5	How can the downtown make its alleyways beautiful?

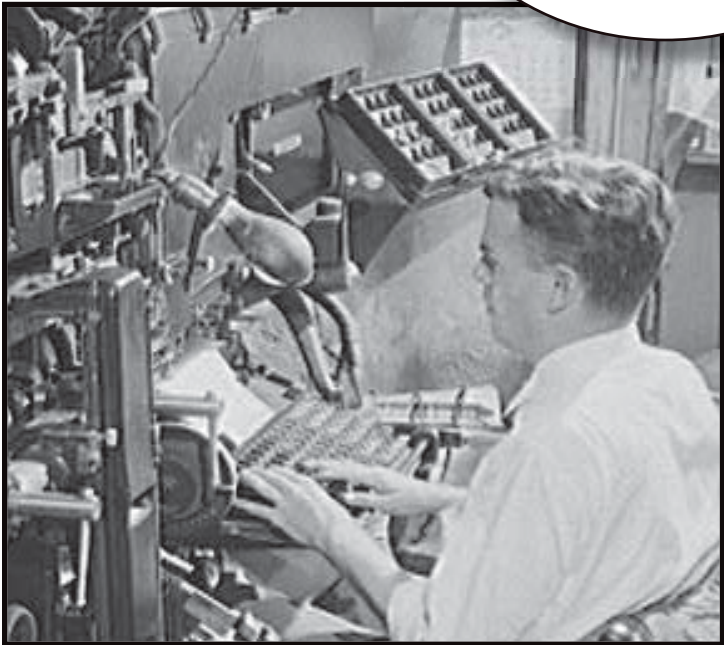


Votes	Design Issue
4	Should the street between Hardees and Caldwell Laundry be closed because of the sharp incline and used as part of the project?
4	What should be done with the 9-1-1 building?
4	We need a public restroom location.
4	How can we put electricity to the trees on South Main Street and East and West Broad Street?
4	The medical building on South Main is up for sale and we would like suggestions on how its façade can be made friendly and more useable. Do we suggest the building be added onto and brought up to the sidewalk?
4	How can Hwy. 278/15 coming into Greensboro from Union Point and Siloam be made more pedestrian friendly?
2	Is that building a good place for the Chamber of Commerce, BHT, Tourism and Economic Development to relocate? We need suggestions for best reuse of the Chamber building?
2	Is there a perfect place for an interactive fountain?
1	Will the "Love Springs" area on Greene Street make a good botanical garden and how do we get a plan for that?





The design solutions presented in this report reflect the issues considered most important (those with at least 5 votes or more). For the charrette, these issues were then grouped into 7 broad categories:



- #1 The old Ford dealership and former Caldwell Laundry properties
- #2 The depot, mill, and mill village
- #3 Broad Street issues
- #4 The Post Office and related properties
- #5 Parks and outdoor events
- #6 Cultural center/old gym
- #7 Museums

# Considering Land Use

Circus Elephants parade down Main Street. (Greensboro, 1930)

Before diving into each of the focus categories, a more general study of downtown Greensboro is helpful. Here, we arbitrarily divided the city into the South End (encompassing the area of downtown south of the courthouse) and the North End (north of the Courthouse to the depot and mill).

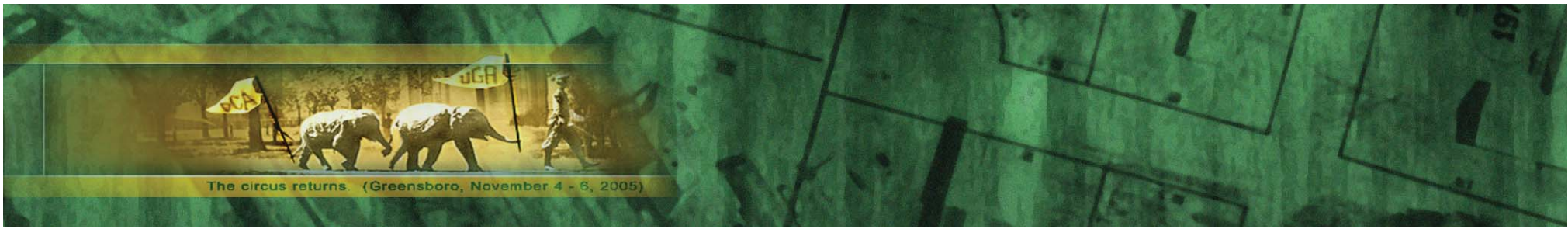
So that unique districts may be identified and future growth organized in a coherent way, we suggest a future land use plan for both the North and South Ends of downtown. Although land use plans are typically used to lay the foundation for enforceable zoning ordinances, strict zoning is not necessarily what is needed for all towns. Because of the many pros and cons of rigid zoning, it rests as an issue for the community to carefully decide. With that being said, land use plans are useful to help understand unique areas within a town and can be a guide and indicator for future growth.

In the proposed land use plans here, we have designated properties into 5 general land use categories:

- Commercial
- Residential
- Greenspace
- Mixed use
- Civic/  
government







## GREENSBORO PROPOSED LAND USE PLAN

### South End Land Use Plan

While this plan largely reflects the current uses of downtown Greensboro, there are two main suggestions for future land use. First, the old Caldwell Laundry site with the south side of E. Broad block between S. East Street and S. Walnut Street is proposed mixed use. The other difference is the addition of greenspace behind old Caldwell Laundry as a buffer between residential areas.

### North End Land Use Plan

This side of downtown would keep all existing commercial use as such, but add public greenspace around mill and depot areas. The depot is proposed commercial but could possibly become multi-use. The mill has great mixed use potential, with future housing augmented with office, entertainment, dining, etc. The mill could be an added attraction to the downtown area.

# Infill/Ford Dealership/ Caldwell Laundry

Circus Elephants parade down Main Street. (Greensboro, 1930)

## East Broad Infill

Located within the downtown historic district, beside the 911 Emergency Dispatch Building on East Broad Street is an empty lot that has potential as urban infill. Urban infill is smart growth. This type of new development does not require the level of added and often significant investment in infrastructure costs to the community that accompany typical sprawling developments. This new infill adds office space or retail to this East Broad area.

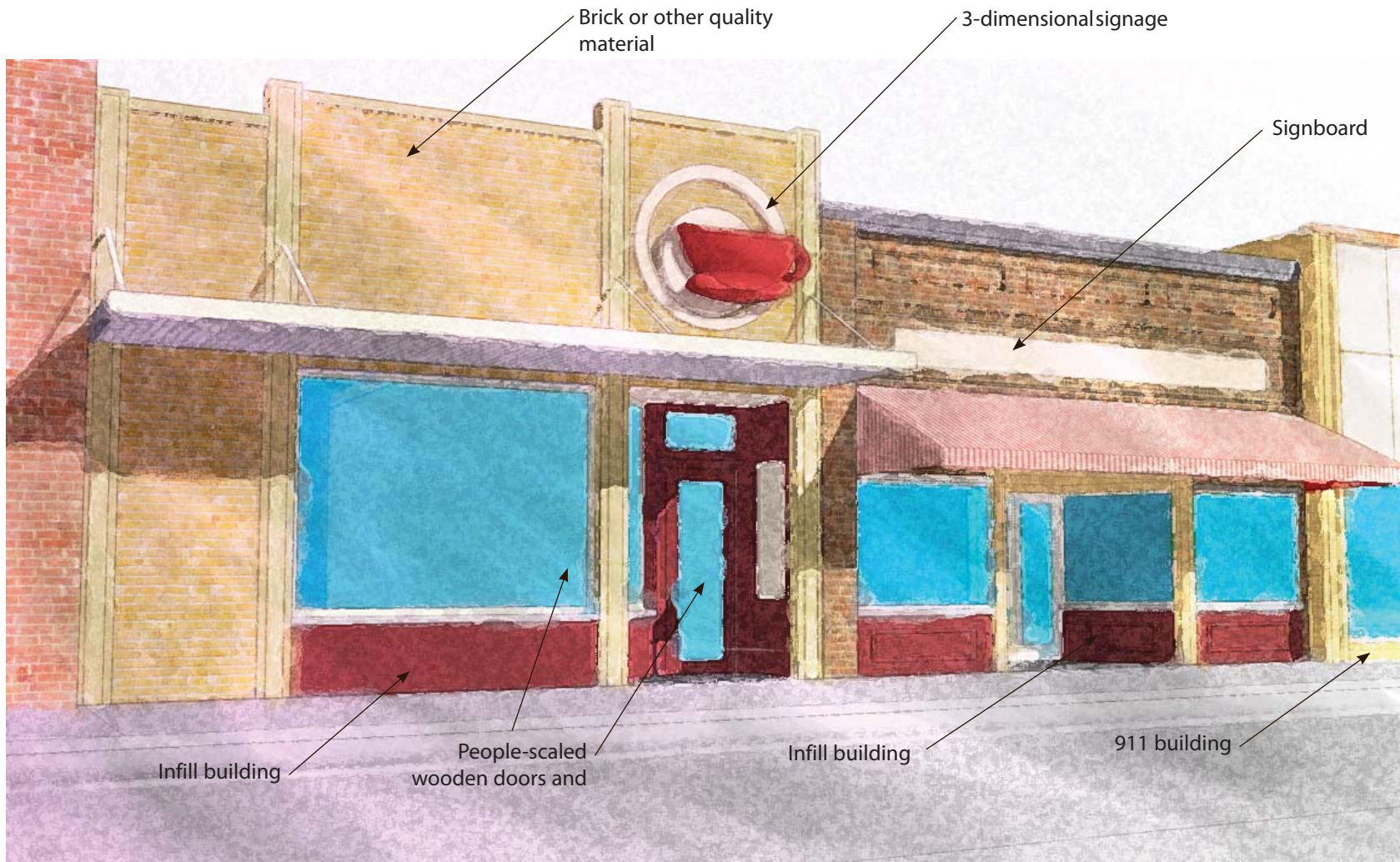
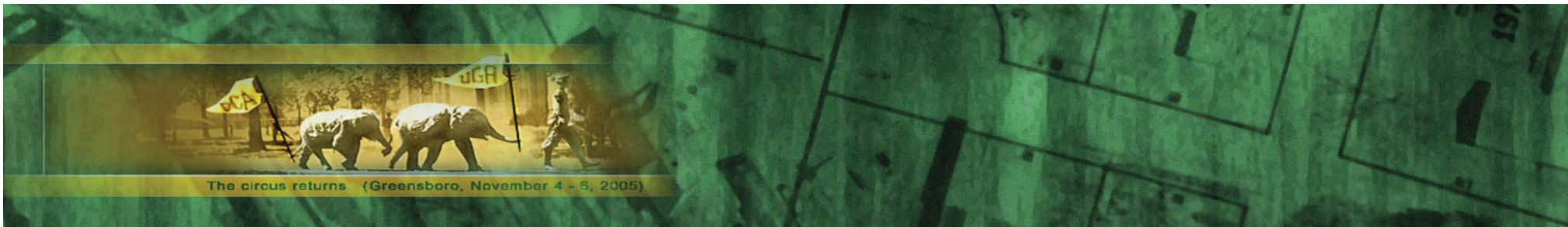
The concept here proposes two 1-story infill buildings, both about 20 feet wide. Because this infill connects all facades of the block into one whole, the style of the buildings is significant. We do not suggest an overly futuristic or modern style for the buildings, as this would not fit within the context of the historic downtown area. However, neither do we suggest a fake historical style. We recommend using modern building techniques in a style fitting for the block. Signage, windows, lighting, and doors should also be appropriate because these make up the "face" of the building.



Parking Lot and 911 Building  
East Broad Street

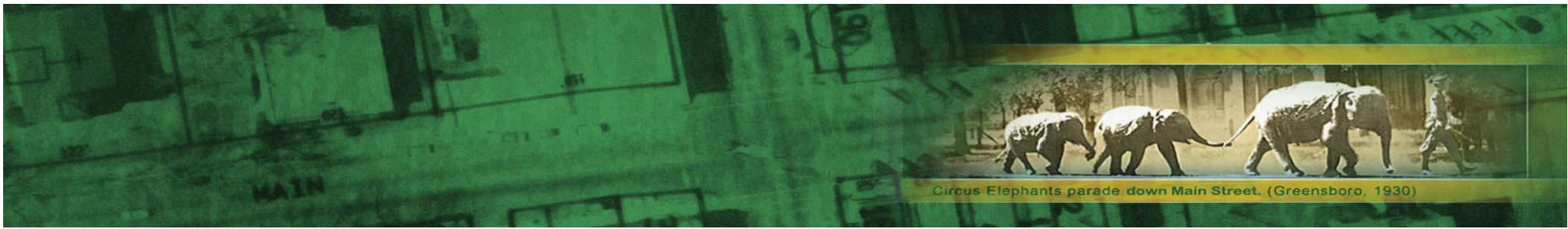






Concept for Infill Perspective





## Old Ford Dealership

The Ford dealership property on East Broad Street is not the proud and handsome property it once was. The physical condition is better than its visual appearance. This makes it a prime candidate for rehabilitation. The incompatible false front facade should be removed and the original configuration re-established. The open construction of the garage area and the front display rooms, as well as the open space outside, provide a unique opportunity to recreate a functioning and inviting enterprise.

The charrette team envisions a farmers' market, consignment crafts center, garden supply store or other such business. (Here we show a pharmacy) The space can be multi-functional as well: providing a farmers' market function during part of the year or week and then serving as a community event site or artists market during other times. Creatively using the space for different functions can avoid down times and "empty building syndrome."

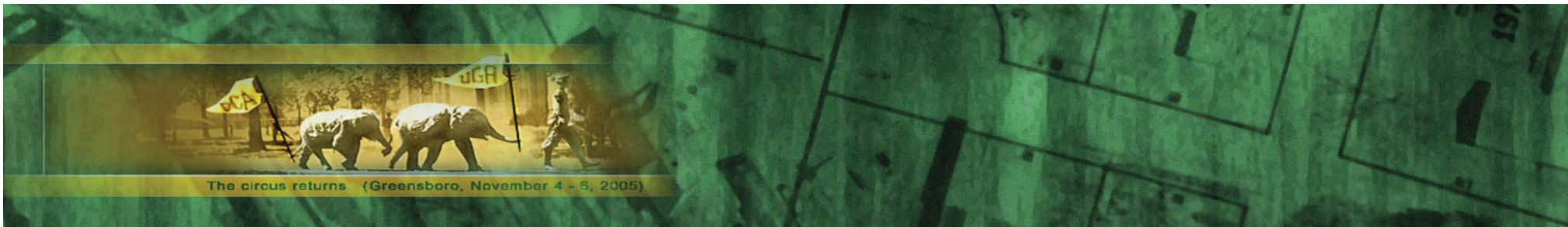


Old Ford Dealership  
Before



Ford Renovation Concept:  
Old Ford Dealership  
After





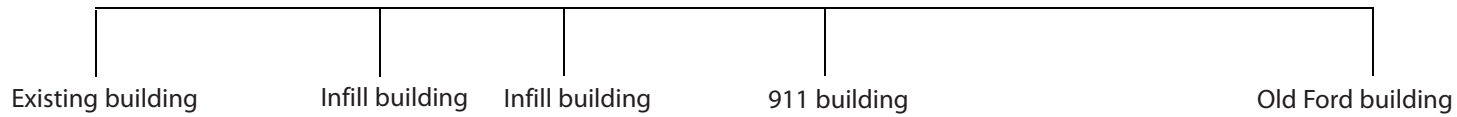
The circus returns (Greensboro, November 4 - 6, 2005)



Ford Renovation Concept:  
East Side Section

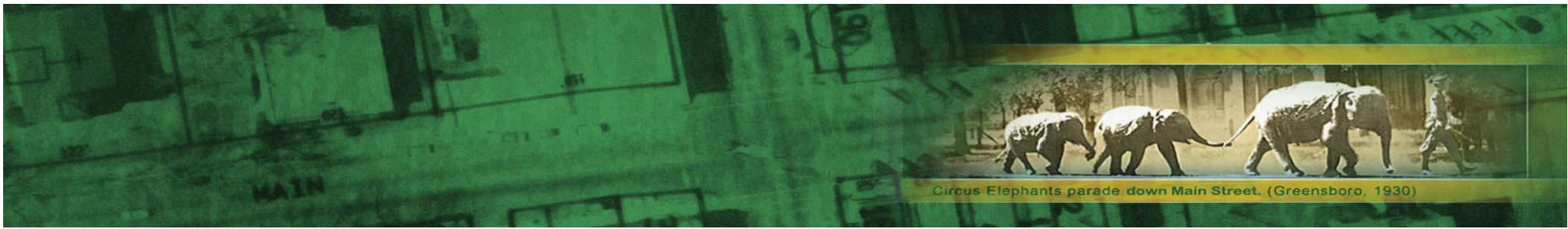


Ford Renovation Concept:  
East Side Streetscape



Section: Block including existing business, new infill buildings, and proposed Ford Dealership concept  
North Side of East Broad Street





Circus Elephants parade down Main Street. (Greensboro, 1930)

## Old Caldwell Laundry Site

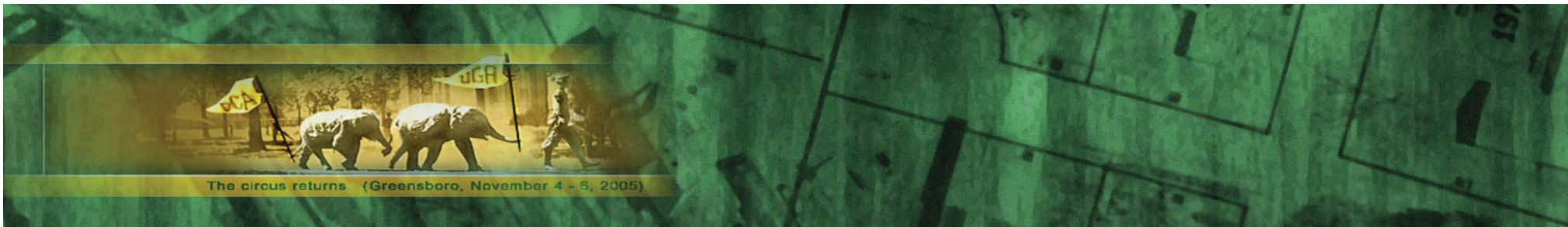
(Corner of S. East Street and E. Broad Street)

The location of the former Caldwell Laundry is a perfect place for a new multi-use facility. The new structure might include (but is not limited to) the following: professional office space, a music venue, a meeting space, gallery space, a coffee shop and/or an outdoor performance venue (which could be located in the rear utilizing the grade change). Of course, the soil contamination issue must be solved before work begins.

The long section-drawing (top of this and the previous page) is a concept which shows the transition from residential to greenspace park area to proposed multi-use building down the hill to Broad Street.



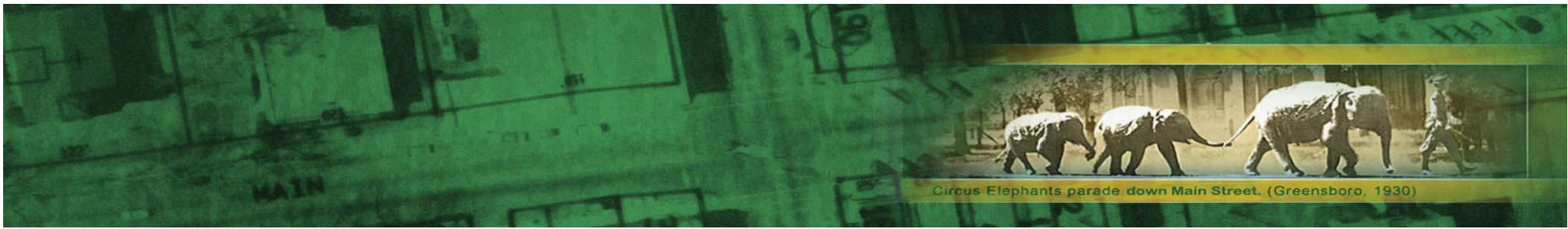




Examples of appropriate new infill construction in a downtown area. The proposed infill for the old Caldwell Laundry site should reflect a similar sensitivity.







Circus Elephants parade down Main Street. (Greensboro, 1930)

# Hardee's

Fast food franchise designs usually do not contribute to downtown character. However, in many places local governments have found success in having creative infill solutions delivered from corporate franchises that fit within the design parameters of their town. The Greensboro Hardee's has not done that. It detracts from local character and does not adhere to existing development patterns. In the short term, landscaped areas should be maintained and enhanced to improve the appearance. However, plans should be developed for the replacement of this incompatible building type when Hardees is no longer operating. Our team is recommending a mixed-use office building for this site.



Existing Hardee's Site



# DEPOT/ MILL/ MILL VILLAGE

The circus returns (Greensboro, November 4 - 6, 2005)

Passenger depot



## The North End

This area, previously designated as the North End contains both the old depot and the old mill. Considering together the plans for renovation of the mill, the historic significance of the depot, and their proximity to Main Street, this area could become an enormous asset for Greensboro's downtown. With downtown shops within walking distance,

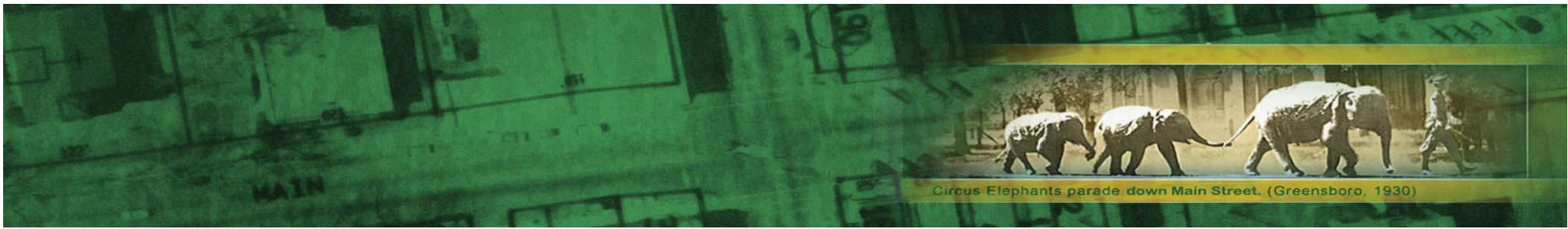
mill condos could bring more patronage of businesses and life to downtown. The mill and depot could even become attractions themselves. The following suggestions mainly deal with potential uses for the area, beautifying this area's connection to downtown, and inviting more pedestrian activity.



Mill







Circus Elephants parade down Main Street. (Greensboro, 1930)

## Proposed Infill

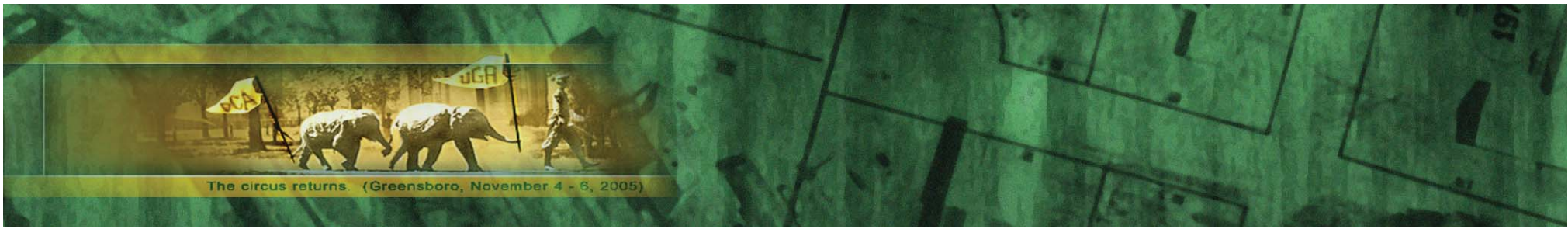
The area between downtown and the mill is ripe for redevelopment. Few historic buildings exist here and new structures can be designed to fit. New urban infill on the corner of West Street and Greene Street is suggested to enhance the mill connection to downtown. This infill could have more fitting architecture and be suitable for commercial spaces or residential town homes. The train depot should be renovated and beautified with a landscaped plaza area. A small city park with an overlook to the depot could be located behind City Hall.

To further beautify this connection, we recommend street trees along North Street, West Street, and Greene Street.



Future Infill Concept

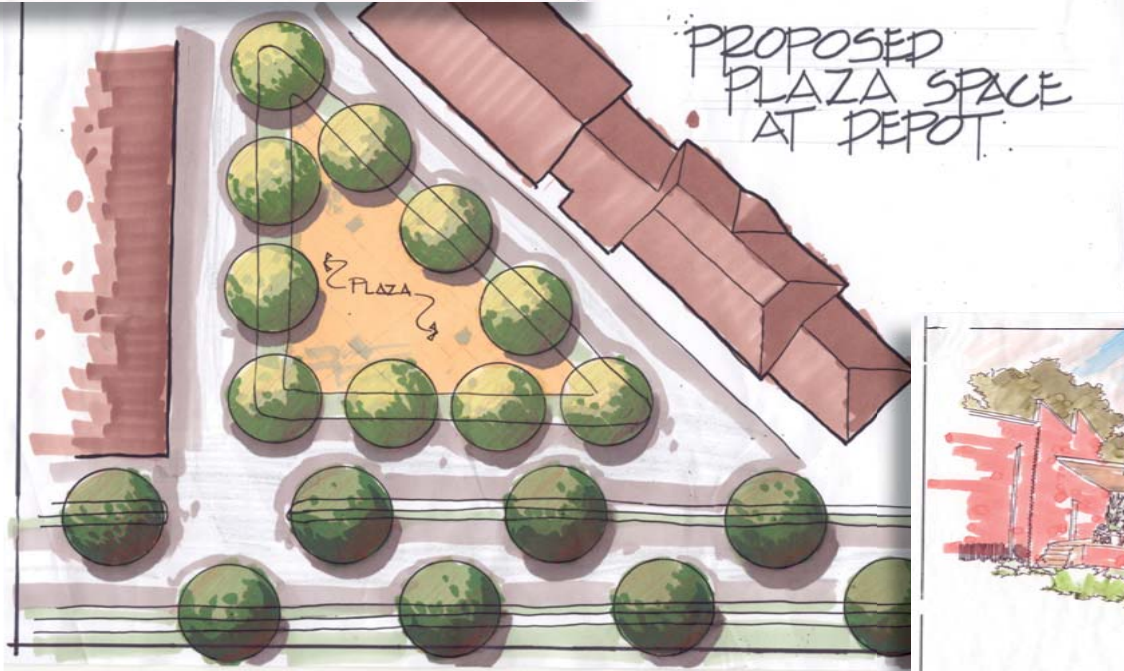




The circus returns (Greensboro, November 4 - 6, 2005)



RESTORED TRAIN DEPOT



PROPOSED PLAZA SPACE AT DEPOT



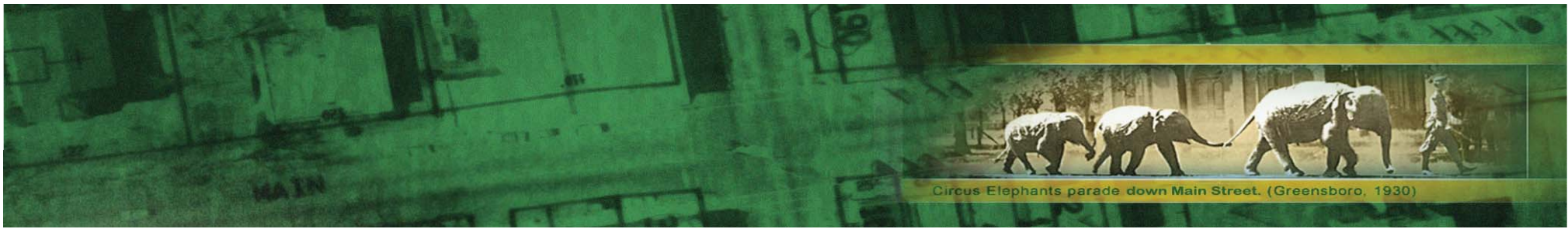
TRAINYARD STAGE PERSPECTIVE

## The Depot

The old railroad depot (just a block from main street) should continue to serve the public as commercial space. The current function of the Feed and Seed store is an appropriate use in the short term; as replacement needs arise it should be rehabilitated as a commercial facility with restaurants, shops, or offices for the nearby loft residences provided in the old mill.

The nearby warehouse with its open space can easily serve as an art gallery or artist studio space. Behind the freight depot is suggested a "Train Yard Stage" for live performances.

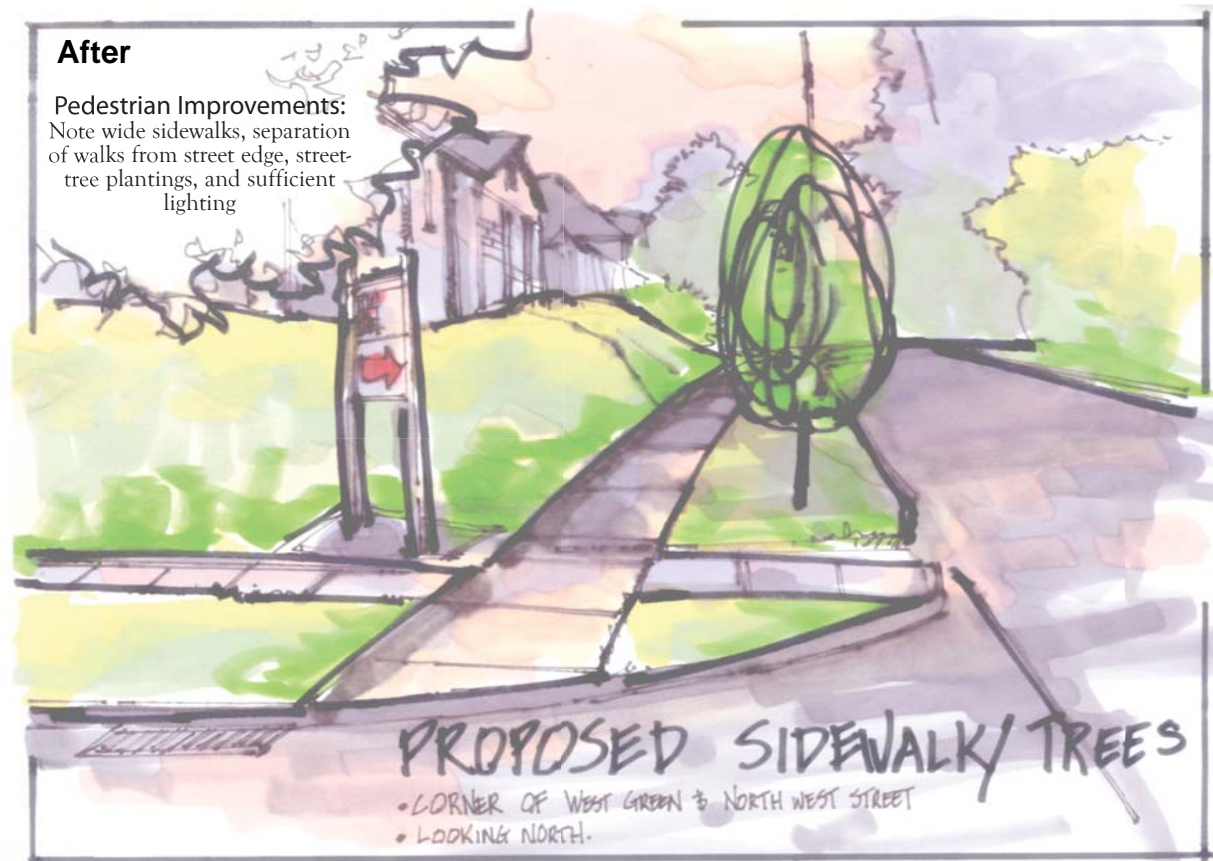




## Mill Connection

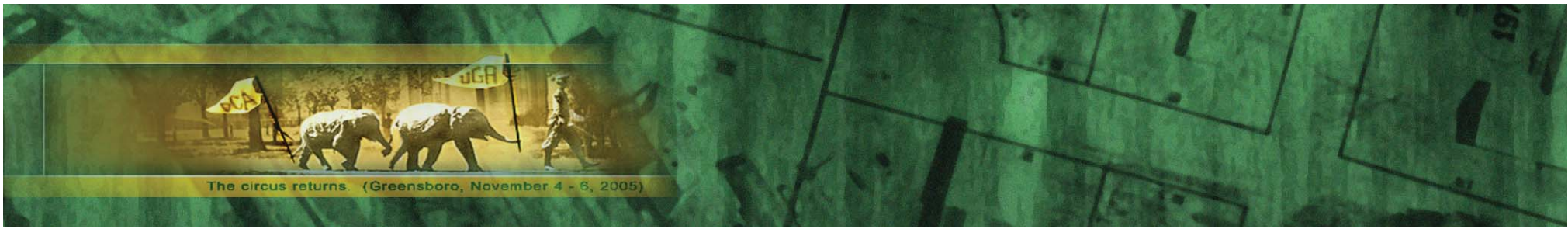
### Improvements for Pedestrians

For downtown to benefit most from future residential use of the mill area, pedestrian needs between the mill and downtown should be considered. The new renovations of mill and depot should make pedestrian use a priority. For example, if a security fence is placed around the entire mill property without pedestrian exit gates, residents will probably not bother to walk, but likely leave the premises by vehicle. Also, to invite more pedestrian activity, the sidewalks should be wide, safe and attractive.



Proposed Sidewalk Addition





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Before

Underpass  
Green Street



After

Beautification Concept of Green Street Underpass

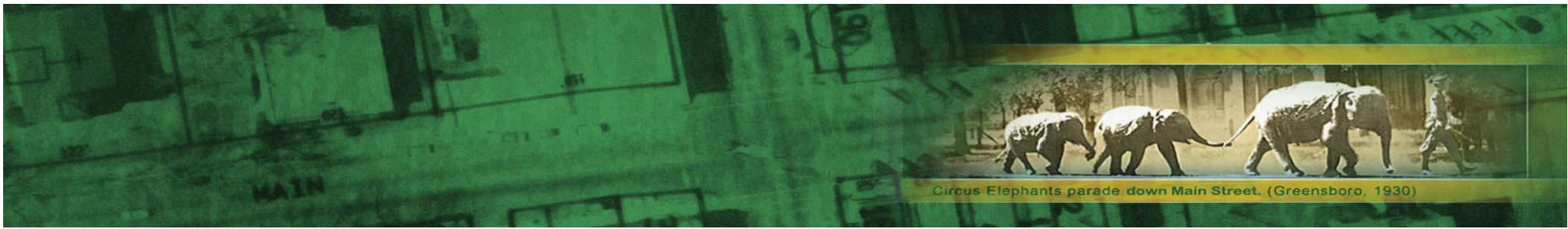
## Underpass on Green Street

The railroad corridor is currently a difficult obstacle for pedestrians. The underpass provides the most reasonable solution for access to downtown. The condition of the underpass can be improved with lighting and tasteful artwork. Sidewalks higher than those currently in place should be constructed with railings to give safer access to downtown for the new residential developments at the mill and for current mill village residents.

## Sidewalk Enhancement

The pedestrian access from the mill area to downtown along West Street and Green Street should be enhanced with sidewalks and street trees. Closer to Main Street on Greene Street, there are existing street trees. This pattern should be carried on along the whole block on both sides of the street.





Circus Elephants parade down Main Street. (Greensboro, 1930)

## Parking Along Connection

Some citizens of Greensboro have asked for more parking close to downtown. Within the Mill connection corridor on Greene Street, there is an opportunity in front of Mr. C's.

The area in front of the Mr. C's and Radio Shack building is currently used as casual parking though there is no parking lot. The drawing here shows a sensitive alternative, which allows paved parking yet keeps green islands for street trees. Small shrubs and flowers possibly could be planted within these green islands as well.

As far as the building itself is concerned, it might be a promising area for future infill or general visual improvements because of its location along the mill connection corridor.



Mr. C's / Radio Shack  
Current Parking Situation

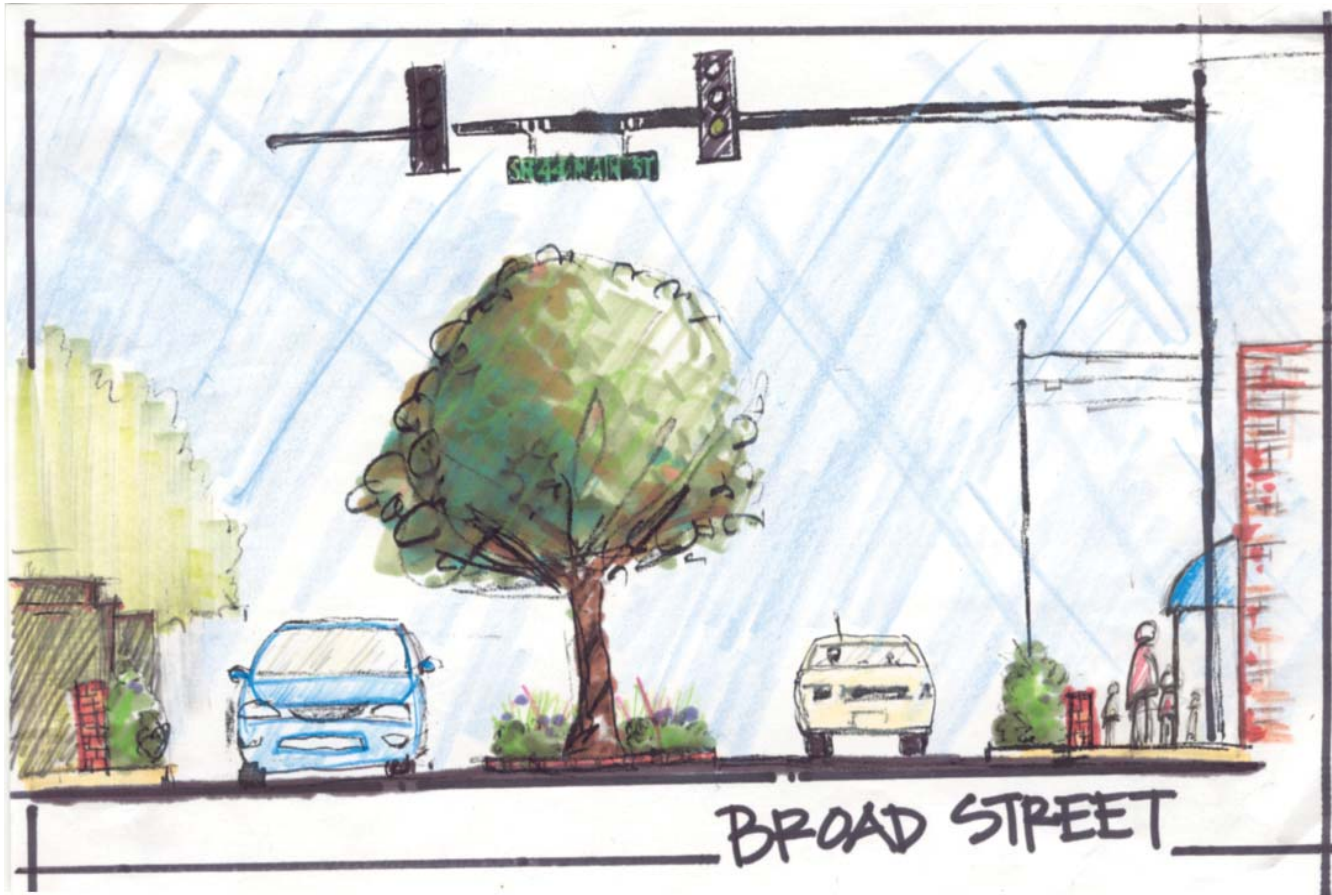


Mr. C's and Radio Shack  
Parking Lot Opportunity  
Proposed Concept



# BROAD STREET ISSUES

The circus returns (Greensboro, November 4 - 6, 2005)



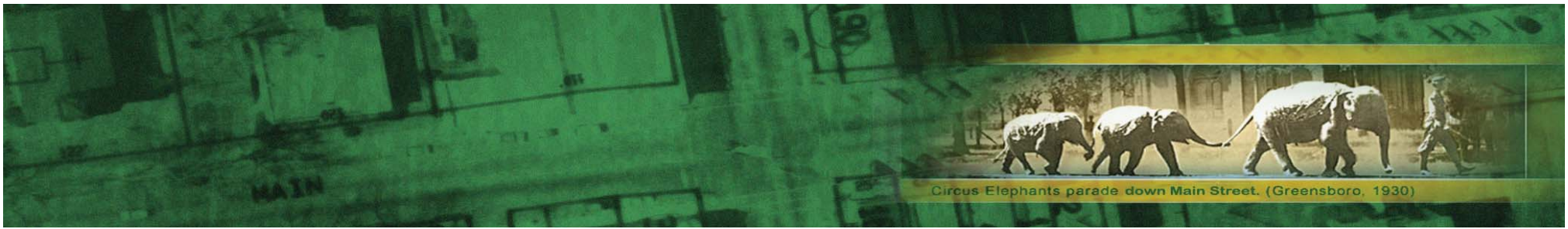
Median Planting Concept for Broad St.

## Plantings Along Broad Improvements for Pedestrians

Like the connection between downtown and the mill, Broad Street can also be improved with new plantings. Negotiations with the Department of Transportation should begin immediately to develop an acceptable alternative to the "no-tree" policy that was expressed in the past. The removal of state highway designation (when the truck route by-pass is constructed) may aid in this enhancement.

Solutions may include either planting on each side of the road or through effective inclusion of planted medians. Additionally, differentiated crosswalk surfaces and parking re-engineering should help "calm" traffic. Other traffic calming devices can be promoted by installing curb extensions which narrow streets and reduce the distance of pedestrian crossings.





## East End of Broad

### Visual Improvement

The entrance to the city on the East End of Broad (where Highway 15 veers towards Sparta) is visually blighted and could make a negative first impression to visitors entering or leaving Greensboro's downtown through this corridor. Defined entrances with attractive plantings and appropriate signage could help break up the large expanses of asphalt.

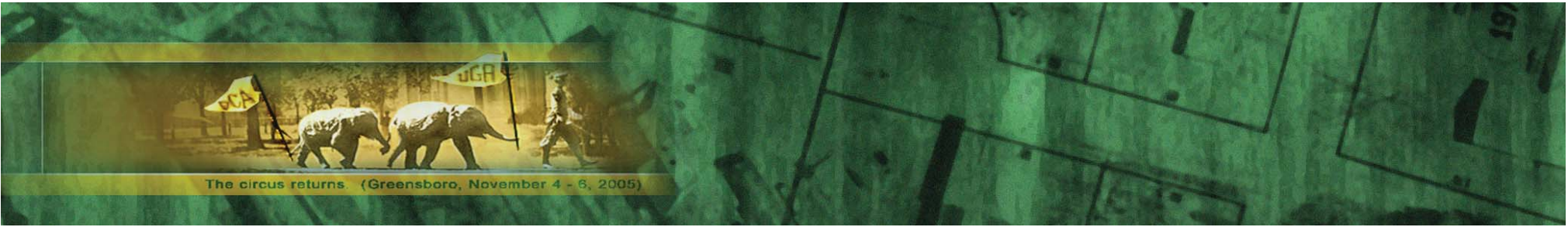
As one enters Greensboro through the west end on Broad, one feels more of a sense of history and deep rooted culture. A visitor should have this same impression when entering or exiting the historic district of Greensboro through the East End. Site improvements in this area are necessary to frame the travelers' experience and create fond memories of Greensboro.

## Traffic Island Redesign: Planting Recommendations

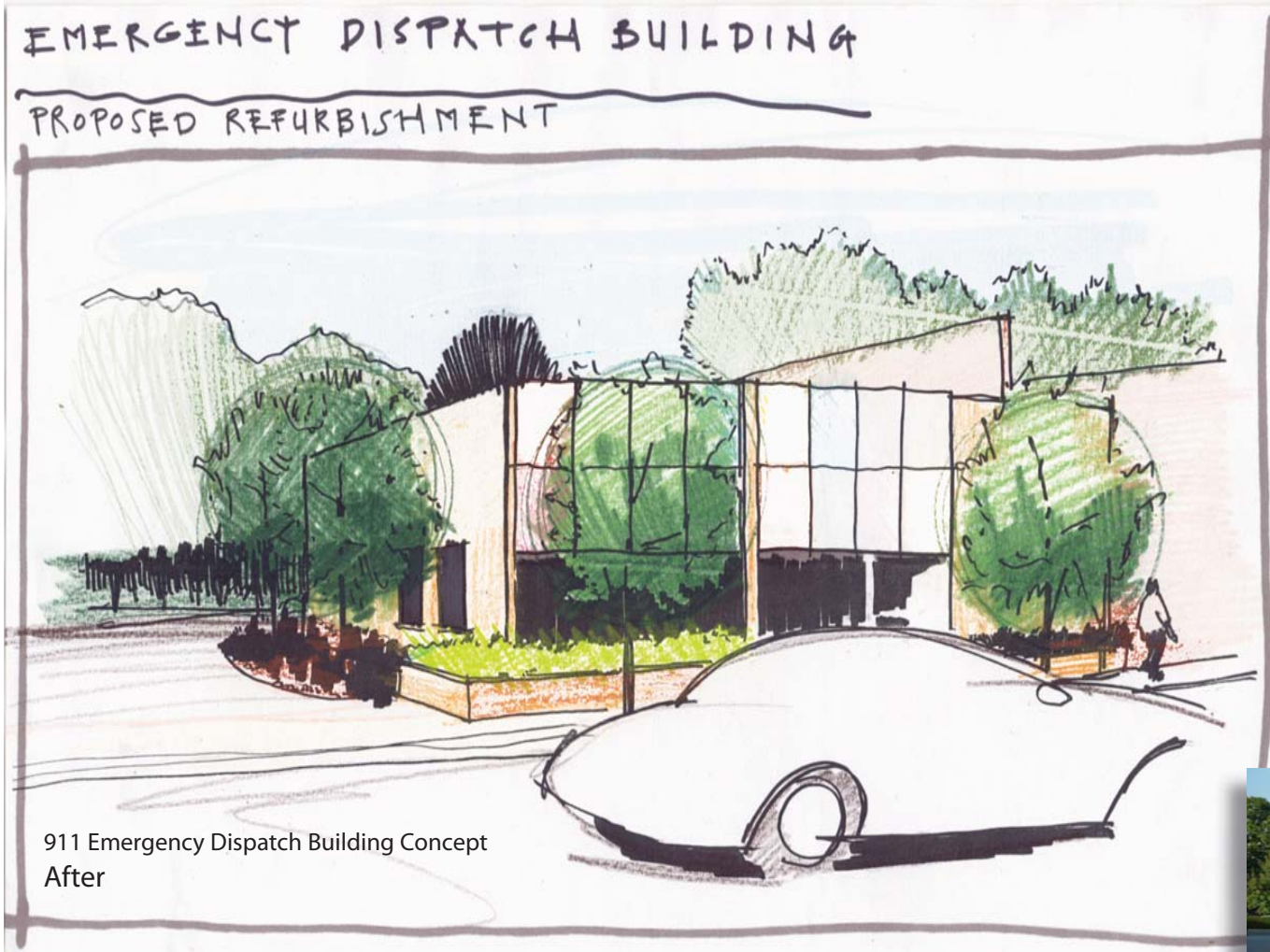
**Planting Schedule**

<p><b>Deciduous Tree</b>  <b>Three Trees of the Same Species:</b>  <i>Acer rubrum</i>  <i>Acer pseudoplatanus</i>  <i>Acer campestre</i>  <i>Amelanchier x grandiflora</i>  <i>Quercus rubra</i></p>	<p><b>Flowering Shrub:</b>  <i>Hypericum prolificum</i></p> <p><b>Ornamental Grasses:</b>  <i>Acorus calamus 'Variegatus'</i>  <i>Liriope muscari</i>  <i>Liriope spicata</i></p>	<p><b>Flowering Perennial:</b>  <i>Liatris spicata 'Kobold'</i></p>
<p><b>Green Foliage Shrub:</b>  <i>Buxus sempervirens</i>  <i>Ilex vomitoria</i>  <i>Loropetalum chinense</i></p>	<p><b>Groundcover:</b>  <i>Chrysogonum virginianum</i></p>	





The circus returns. (Greensboro, November 4 - 6, 2005)



911 Emergency Dispatch Building Concept  
After

## 911 Emergency Dispatch Building

On the north side of Broad, located just east of Main Street close to the old Ford building, stands the old 911 Emergency Dispatch Building. This building also should be rehabilitated sensitively so as to relate to its location within the historic district.

The BP gas station located close to the east end of Broad Street is not an attractive addition to this historic district corridor. We recommend that the station be renovated to enhance rather than detract from the character of Greensboro's downtown district.





# POST OFFICE / RELATED PROPERTIES

Elephants parade down Main Street. (Greensboro, 1930)

## Post Office

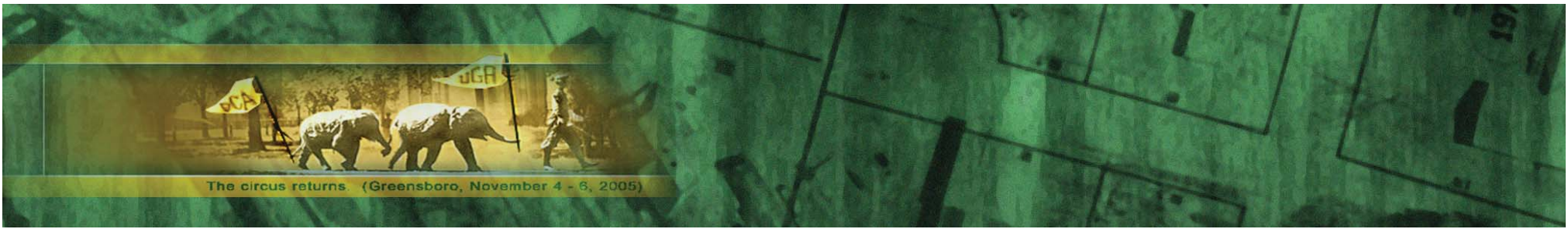
### Preservation and Proposed Use

The Post Office building is one of the best examples of the 1930's Works Progress Administration construction and includes very significant murals. Therefore, it must remain as an important community symbol with community-wide access. The municipal functions of the city can be housed here upon relocation.

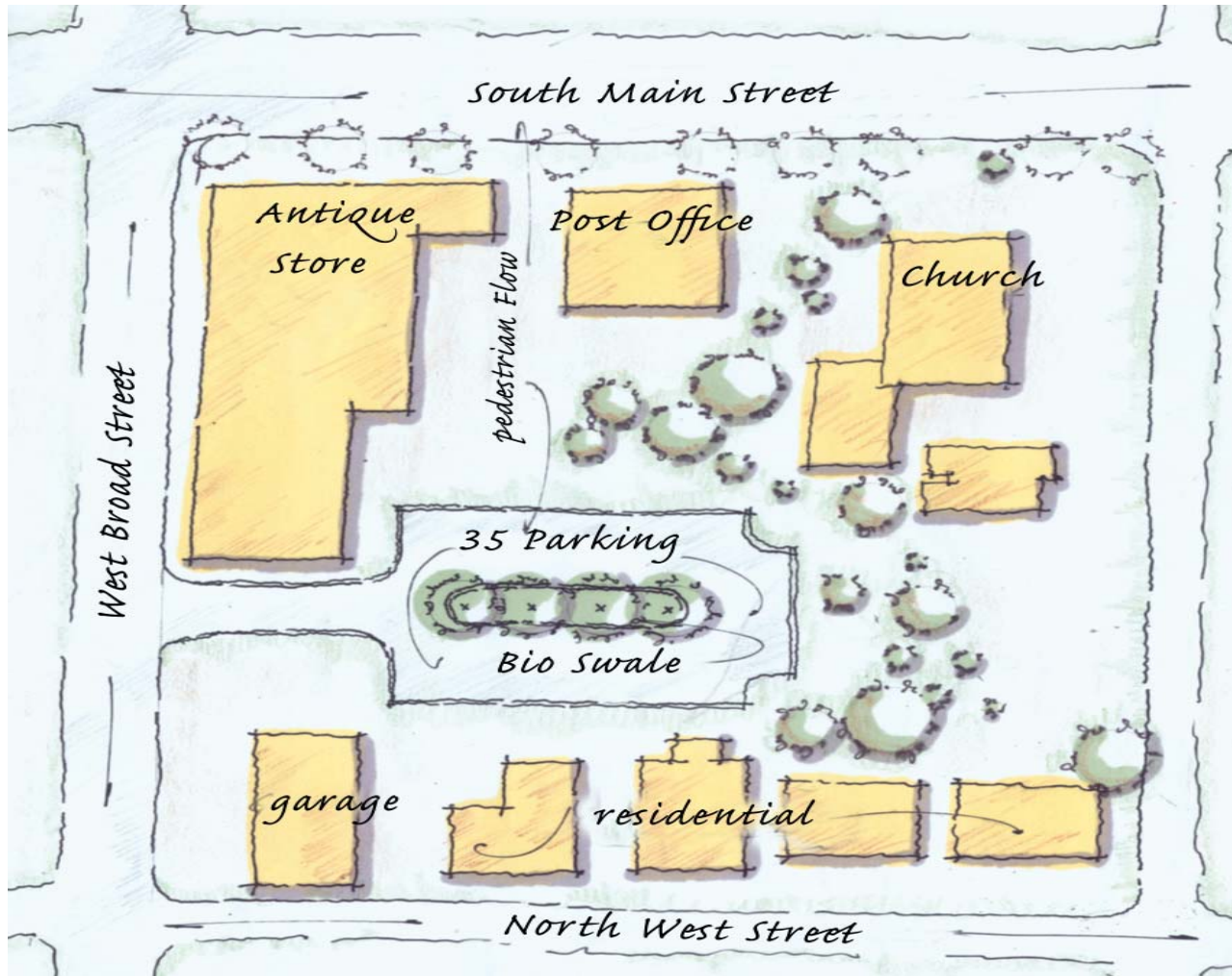


Post Office  
S. Main Street





The circus returns. (Greensboro, November 4 - 6, 2005)



Garden Parking Lot Concept  
Features 35 spaces & Bio Swale

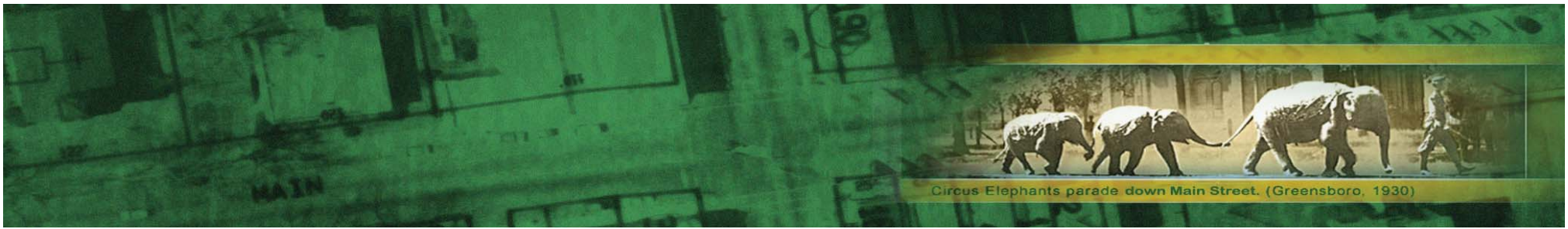
## Parking Lot Concept

The large open space behind the post office and the 'Big Store' block is an ideal location for an attractive multi-functional parking area (a garden parking lot). The new lot could serve downtown businesses and would alleviate the need for construction of surface parking lots in less desirable locations.

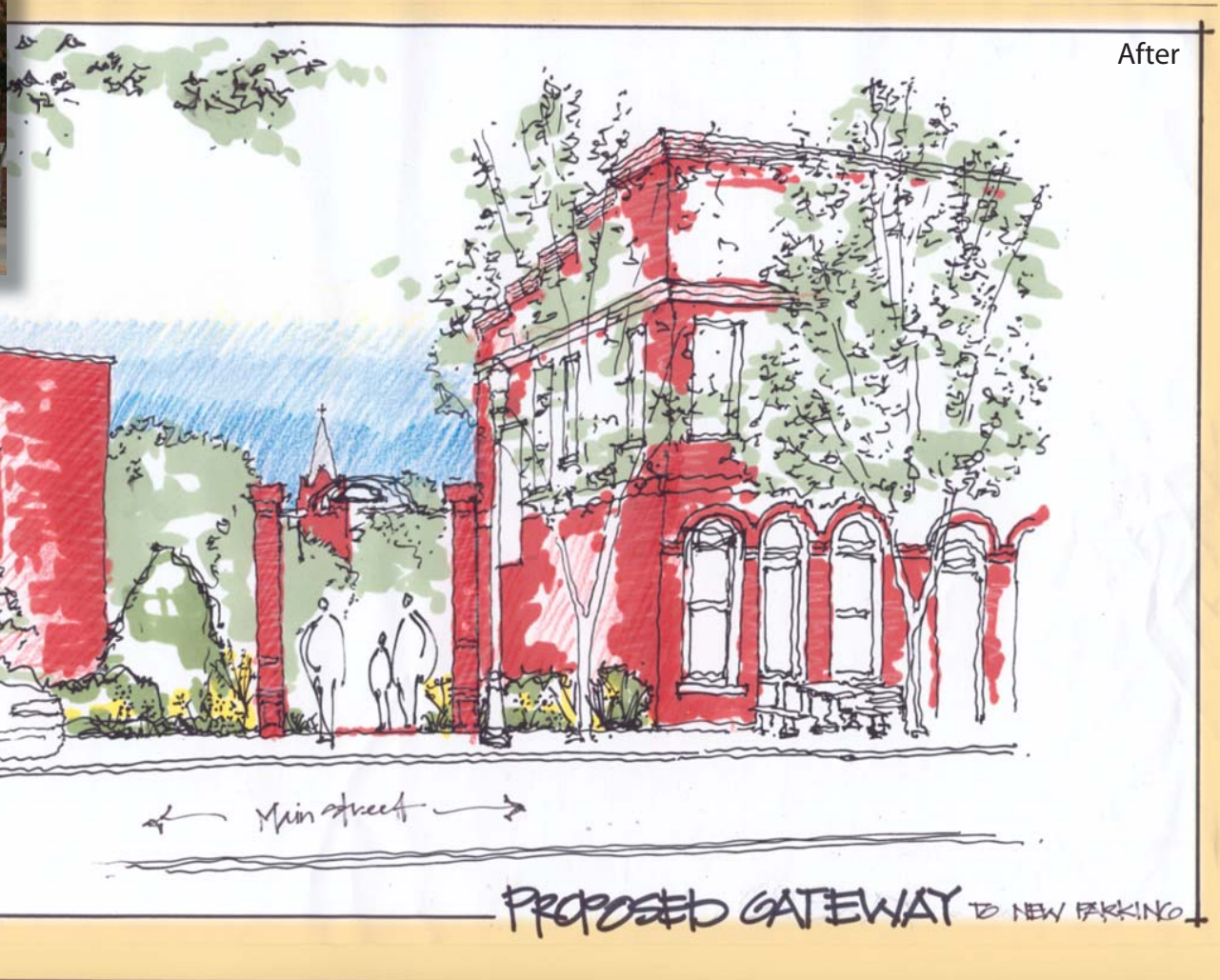
## Features

This concept features 35 parking spaces in an eco-friendly lot, where all storm water is directed to the center bio-swale where suitable plantings help absorb water and beautify the area. A pedestrian corridor leads directly to South Main Street, between the Antique Store and the Post Office, while vehicles enter off of West Broad Street. This concept hides parking, yet is in close proximity to downtown businesses.





Before  
Post Office



Proposed Pedestrian Gateway  
From proposed parking  
to Main Street



# PARKS AND OUTDOOR EVENTS

The circus returns. (Greensboro, November 4 - 6, 2005)

## Parks

Park space and open green areas are difficult to site in downtown Greensboro. We do, however, suggest two areas for open recreational or green areas. First, we suggest the lot behind City Hall, and second, we recommend the location of the current Bill's Dollar Store.

### Area behind City Hall

The existing lot behind City hall is very beautiful. Until City Hall is relocated to the Old Post Office, the site can serve as open space, a temporary park or a playground. Once the municipal functions relocate, this site would be a candidate for redevelopment as mixed use urban infill that is compatible with the character of downtown Greensboro or a location for a large, well designed, beautiful city park along the Main Street corridor.



Proposed Park Area  
Behind City Hall