

center city

VOLUME 1, NUMBER 34

MEMPHIS, TENNESSEE

AUGUST 28, 1974

‘ ‘ Recycling Downtown ’ ’

Architects from five states will meet September 18-20 at Cook Convention Center for the Gulf States Convention of the American Institute of Architects.

“Recycling Downtown” will be the theme of the meeting, expected to draw some 300 architects and their wives. The Tennessee Society of Architects in hosting the Convention, expected to draw AIA members from Arkansas, Mississippi, Alabama and Louisiana, plus other Tennessee cities.

Four seminars, under the theme “Recycling Downtown,” will stress awareness of the role and capabilities of architects in restructuring the environment of the cities of tomorrow.

The seminars are titled: “Downtown Problems and Potential: The Role of the Architect”; “Recycling: The Necessary Elements”; “Design the Downtown”; and “Recycling Downtown: Case Studies.”

Five out-of-town speakers are coming to Memphis to participate in the seminars. They are:

Harold L. Malt, author of Furnishing the City and president of a Washington, D.C. based design and engineering firm;

Archibald Rogers, FAIA, President of the American Institute of Architects;

Jamie Cannon, Executive Vice President of HOK Associates of St. Louis and former Director of Planning for East St. Louis;

Douglas R. Porter, Project Director for Marcou, O’Leary & Associates, planning consultants of Washington, D.C.; and

Lawrence A. Alexander, Director of the Downtown Research and Development Center of New

York and editor of Downtown Idea Exchange.

Memphians participating include William E. Shelton, III, President of the Downtown Council of the Chamber of Commerce; Clay Huddleston, Chief Administrative Officer of the City of Memphis and a management consultant; William S. Pollard, president of his own planning and engineering firm; Frank C. Holloman, Executive Director of Future Memphis, Inc.; and Norman Brewer, Executive Director of the Downtown Council of the Chamber of Commerce.

As a part of the convention theme, AIA members will study and discuss the social and environmental crisis that a lack of planning has produced in the midst of communities that seem to have “just grown,” and more important, how to solve these problems.

According to Gulf States convention chairman Robert Fleming, “Today’s architects realize that an efficient and humane physical environment can come about only if the public demands farsighted and workable design solutions. But first the public, including business, professional and governmental leaders, must understand what the proper ingredients are for a vital urban environment.”

He added: “That’s why guests with a broad range of experience with urban affairs have been invited to participate in our seminars.

“We planned the Gulf States convention to promote a healthy exchange of ideas from several viewpoints so that architects, business and governmental leaders can take positive steps to influence the future quality of life for their fellow citizens,” Mr. Fleming concluded.

Footprints on the Chickasaw Bluff

It would be less than beneficial to this community and to this city, if those structures of character, cultural significance and architectural variety and uniqueness to Memphis history were to be wantonly destroyed or permitted to deteriorate. Efforts have been made and are being made by various groups to salvage and restore those buildings which give Memphis integrity and Memphians a sense of continuity. However, for either financial or legal reasons many of the few important remnants of Memphis history remain in imminent danger of being lost forever. Often, as in the past, these buildings fall due to the willful neglect--and sometimes even the downright stealthy activities--of Memphis City agencies, either because of public ignorance, or, the apathy of Memphians.

We have for years attempted to protect ourselves legislatively from what was to be built, and at that we haven't been very successful; why can't we protect what is to be taken away from our environment. It has been done in other cities, like Seattle; even 12th Century Siena forbade the razing of a structure before the owner proved that he would replace it with something better and more handsomely built.

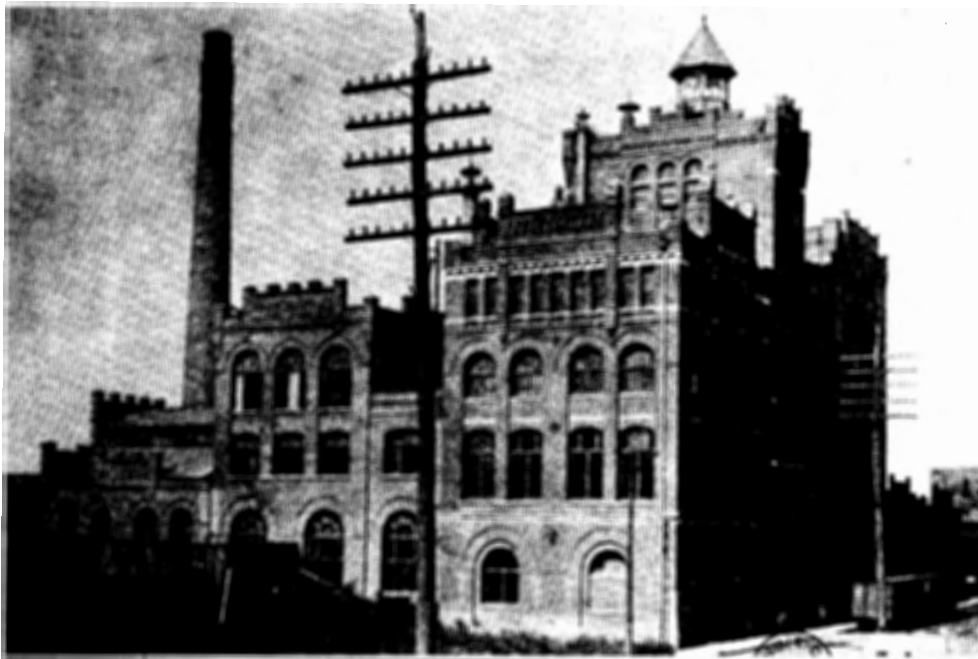
The Federal government has programs to financially assist cities in their preservation efforts, but as yet Memphis City government has been either unable or unwilling to formalize a policy of historic preservation to qualify its buildings for these monies.

If we could but induce the COMMERCIAL APPEAL to reprint its special edition of May 14, 1903, on the progress of Memphis, all of Memphis could attest that the word "progress" as we misuse it today is a dubious description of the present condition of Downtown buildings.

From time to time significant structures and ornaments of the Downtown area will be featured in CENTER CITY to point them out to those who have not the time or inclination to look around for themselves. And an attempt will be made to state briefly, facts about them and the events of interest associated with them.

The Tennessee Brewing Co. plant, pictured here, was praised at the turn of the century as the largest and best equipped brewery in the South, and of handsome architectural design. It still stands today at Butler and Tennessee, where it houses a scrap metal company operated by the buildings owner.

The monolithic structure, built in 1885, at one time issued forth a quarter of a million barrels of beer a year. It may again have alcohol flowing through its halls, as prospects of its being bought and converted into a nightclub have been drifting around the Downtown amongst interested persons for months. At any rate, with its spiral staircases, skylights and thick, solid walls, it is an unusual structure which because of private ingenuity will probably not be lost.



Courtesy of the Memphis Public Library and Information Center

Landmarks, Development Rights Transfer

by Don Donati

The economic prospects, consequently the continued existence, of many Memphis Landmarks are extremely precarious at this time. Within our present legal and economic system landmarks are rarely profitable to their owners. In general, landmarks are small with limited floor space, i.e., limited use. The astute owner will replace the landmark with a high density use which will yield a more profitable return; thus, due to the economic realities many landmarks have been destined for destruction.

The concept of *development rights* offers a system by which landmarks will be preserved and the owners will realize a profit. Under a *development rights* scheme, lots would have a specific use potential and the owner of a landmark would be allowed to transfer any unused developmental potential. For example, the owner of a landmark which has floor space of 50,000 square feet and a potential development use of 200,000 square feet would be allowed to sell the unused potential of 150,000 square feet. The transfer of *development rights* does not create additional use; the transfer merely redistributes the *development rights*.

In order to implement the transfer scheme in Memphis, both a state enabling act and a local referendum would be required. Upon the grant of the needed statutory authorization, implementation would begin with the designation of a transfer district by the City Council. With the designation of a landmark, the owner would be permitted to transfer for a price any unused *development rights* to another lot or to the owner of any lot within the transfer district. Once the transfer is complete, a reduction in the tax assessed value of the landmark would occur. Such a reduction would be commensurate with the portion of *development rights* transferred.

The owner of a landmark who transfers unused *development rights* would be required to convey a restriction to the City. This restriction would forbid demolition or severe alteration of the landmark, and would require proper maintenance. If there exists an obstinate developer who insist on destruction, the City would acquire the landmark by way of eminent domain. The money for acquisition would be supplied by a fund which would include the unused *development rights* of city landmarks. The cost of acquisition could be provided by the sale of some of the city-owned *development rights*.

The *development rights transfer* scheme is a revolutionary concept, which views urban property rights as a public resource to be allocated in the most rational manner. Through this concept, the landmark is assured of continued existence, the owner is assured of an economical return and the City is assured of growth in harmony with its history.

Claude Pearson, Director of General Services Division at City Hall, oversaw the construction and installation of the colorful market facility which was designed by Beverly Cruthirds. Ralph King's Property Maintenance men did the actual construction; but due to delays in receiving the canvas these men had to work extra swiftly to complete the facility for last Friday's Court Square Market. Mr. Pearson was out on North Court with the installation men at 5 a.m. Friday to assure the market's beginning was 10 a.m. as scheduled.

The Memphis Police Department provided day long service to the area making for a trouble-free day.

The market was an amazing show of coordination and determination on the part of both City personnel and interested citizens. Special thanks from Downtowners should go to Martha Weatherford of the Memphis Artists' Craftsmen Association and to Mrs. Leola Hansen, Administrative Assistant to Clay Huddleston.

(continued on the last page)



COURT
SQUARE
MARKET

Congratulations

MARKET

The City Council too did well in appropriating the \$4000 for the market. It is another people activity in the downtown which will surely return manifold the combined efforts that went into its creation.

CENTER CITY hopes that the Court Square Market is here to stay.



THRESHOLDS

Thresholds, a program which teaches decision-making skills primarily to inmates of local penal institutions, is now being implemented within the Memphis correctional milieu. Inmates at the Penal Farm have already begun the counseling sessions, and clients of the Adult and Juvenile Probation Offices will soon take advantage of the program.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR SERVICE:

To replenish the supply of counselors in the Thresholds program, weekend training classes are held three or four times a year to train volunteers. Such a training class was held in June at the First Presbyterian Church, and another is slated for the weekend of September 28 and 29.

INTERESTED?

Contact the Project First Offender Office (phone 526-1259 or write to: Thresholds, 166-A Poplar, Memphis, 38103).

Center City

First Presbyterian Church
166 Poplar Avenue
Memphis, Tennessee 38103

Second-class
postage paid at
Memphis, Tennessee

words
swords

Pause

*Fired from an Indian bow
into the air of the city,
I hover like a hummingbird
above the honeysuckle,
Sucking its sweet produce.*

*And shoot again
in another direction.*

swords
SPJOM

**CENTER CITY IS A COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER,
AS SUCH IT REQUIRES COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION.
PLEASE CONTRIBUTE. WRITE OR
PHONE CENTER CITY AT FIRST PRESBY-
TERIAN CHURCH, c/o the EDITOR.**

CIVIC CENTER COMMUNITY CULINARY CLUB

Serving from 11:30 to 1:00

First Presbyterian Church, 166 Poplar Avenue

Price: \$1.25 per serving, including drink

MENU FOR AUGUST 29-SEPTEMBER 6

THURSDAY, AUGUST 29

Turkey and Dressing, english peas, cranberry sauce and rolls

FRIDAY, AUGUST 30

Meat loaf, potatoes au gratin, lima beans and rolls

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 2

Salmon croquettes, hash browned potatoes, salad and rolls

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 3

Roast Beef, whipped potatoes, english peas and rolls

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 4

Spaghetti, cole slaw and french bread

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 5

Fried Chicken, rice & gravy, squash and rolls

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 6

Ham, potato salad, green beans and rolls