

REVITALIZATION OF STILLWATER SANTA FE
RAILROAD DEPOT

By

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PREFACE

Historic preservation and older structure rehabilitation are becoming important issues that many cities are facing today. The possibilities for reuse of older structures challenge the imagination and creative talents of city planners as well as private investors. The goal of this study is to develop a plan for a rehabilitative use of the Stillwater Santa Fe Depot that would serve the cultural, historic, and educational needs in the neighborhood and city.

A great many thanks go to a number of people who helped make this project possible. First of all to Christine Salmon, Professor of HDCR, who is committee chairperson, adviser, and instructor--without her continual push and never ending support and encouragement, I could not have made it through my years at OSU. This past year was an added time of support and I sincerely thank this dear lady.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Society is becoming more conscious of the waste of resources. This is true in areas of energy and human resources, as well as historic resources. Waste, in most areas, is now being researched for best possible forms of conservation. This applies to the built environment as well as natural resources. American cities are conducting research and applying the findings in order to conserve our heritage for present and future enjoyment and benefit. Since the Bicentennial celebration of 1976 in the United States there has developed an awareness of the importance of preserving the past. This applies to historic buildings as well as artifacts. American cities are now making a sincere effort to preserve physical reminders of their heritage.

In this attempt to preserve the architectural heritage of cities, planning and evaluation that simply preserves a building or keeps it in its current condition is not enough. The present and future use of any building must be viable. Renovating a building to its original condition and use is, at times, a fruitless attempt to recapture the past when there is no longer a demand for the original use of the building. A possible solution may be to renovate the building for another or adapted use. New demand for service from these structures may be created through adaptive reuse or "retrofit."

Cities are now looking into plans to conserve their architecturally significant buildings. Washington, D.C. renovated the 1908 Roman Beaux Arts Union Station into a combination visitors' center and rail station. Congressional action approved the conversion of this proud structure into two uses that are in demand today. Information to visitors and the handling of ticket sales, baggage handling, and other rail purposes are now centralized in this massive building. These compatible uses meet the demands for the Washington area today (Dixon, 1977).

Baltimore's concern for its city's heritage led to a complete inner space rearrangement of the 1875 City Hall. The Municipal Center of Baltimore is the setting for this building in which the floor space was doubled through new space saving design. The city of Baltimore is trying honestly to turn the tide around to the center city through revitalization projects (Dixon, 1977).

Like other communities seeking to retain their heritage, Stillwater is presently involved in efforts to incorporate the city's past with its present and future. Stillwater has some successful renovation projects already in use. The Parks and Recreation Department has offices in a structure that was once a single family dwelling adjacent to the Municipal Building. Renovations have also been completed on the Municipal Building to enable the structure to meet Stillwater's needs today. Stillwater selected several structures to research for possible nomination to the National Trust Register of Historic Preservation. Several structures, public and private, were chosen for nomination.

One of the structures nominated and accepted for the National Trust Register is the Stillwater Santa Fe Depot (Figure 1). Railroads and the Santa Fe Depot have played a major role in Stillwater's development. The city as well as the University grew as a result of services provided by the railroad. Freight and passenger travel were both provided for by the depot facilities.

At present, only a fraction of the depot is used. The 1900 structure (see Figure 2) is presently used only partially for freight storage. The 1915 structure (see Figure 3) ticket area (see Figures 3 and 4) is presently used as offices for the freight area. The present use occupies only a fraction of the total space of the station and therefore a more useful function for the depot is an option the city has discussed as the depot appears obtainable.

The Stillwater Santa Fe Depot remains in its original design. The outside is in good repair with the exception of minor brick and cement work needed in the outdoor seating area (see Figures 6 and 7). The interior has all original fixtures with the interior waiting area benches as the only major missing items. The 1900 structure, made of wood, is in need of some repair to the walls and supports. Because of the present condition of the depot, it is important to preserve the station now and find a new suitable use for it in order that it may blend in the plans being made for the area and be kept in its original design.

An adaptive reuse or best use for an older structure such as the depot involves many factors. The present condition and size of the structure influence any decision made for future use. The best use

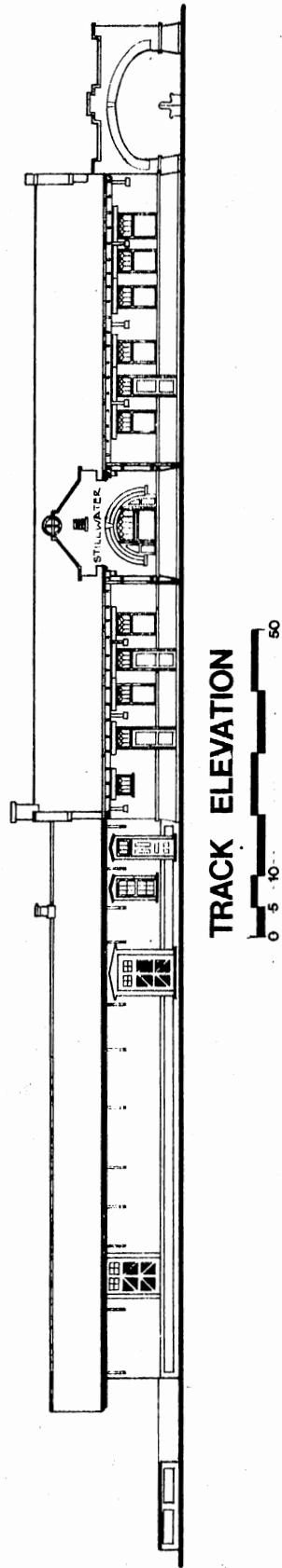
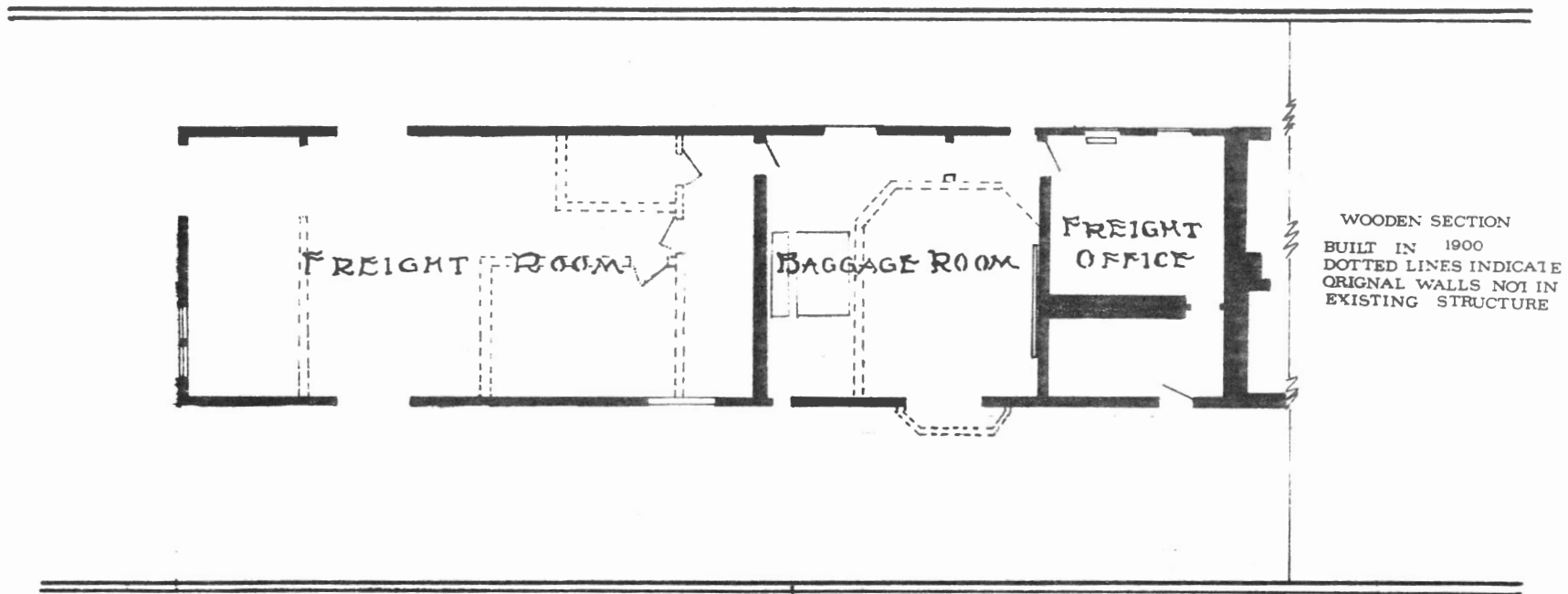
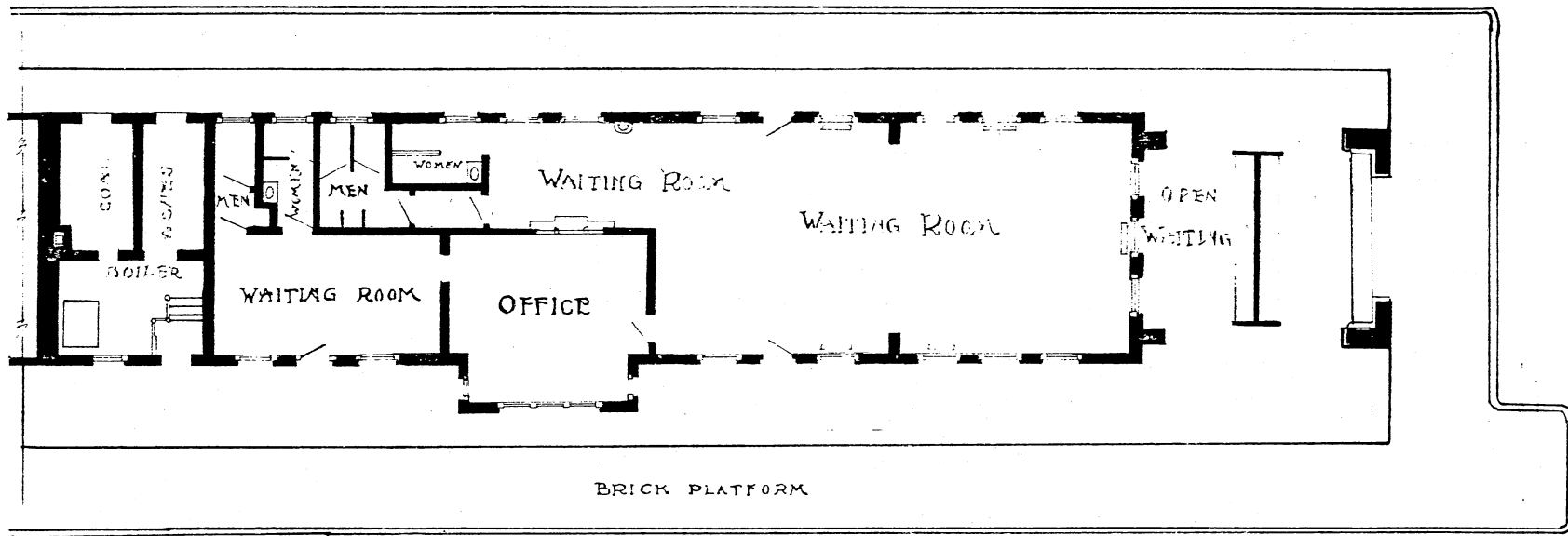


Figure 1. Stillwater Santa Fe Depot--1915-1979



1915
 PLANS OF DEPOT
 AT STILLWATER OKLA
 SCALE - - = 10"

Figure 2. Floor Plan--1900 to Present



PLANS OF DEPOT
 AT STILLWATER, OKLA
 SCALE - =10"

Figure 3. Floor Plan--1915 to Present



Figure 4. Interior of Santa Fe Depot--1979

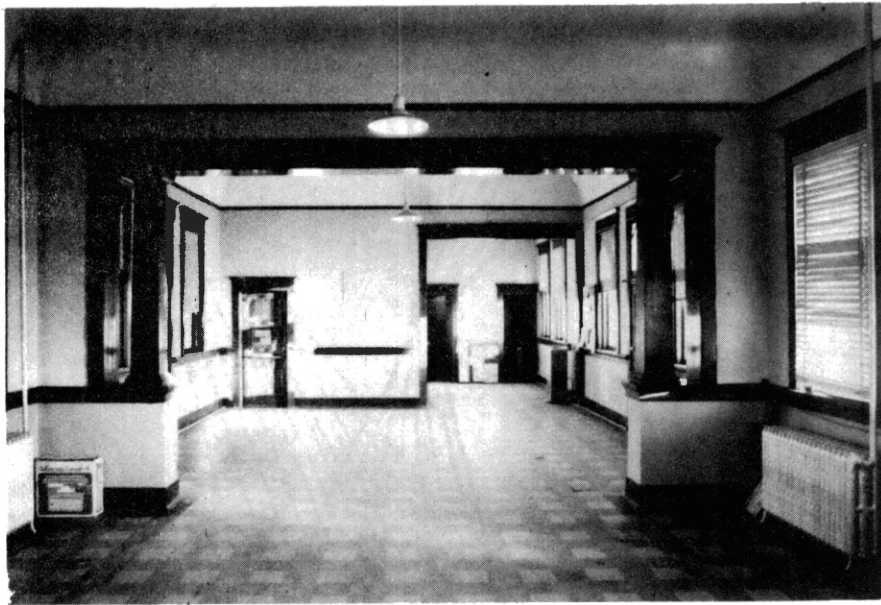


Figure 5. Interior of Santa Fe Depot--1979

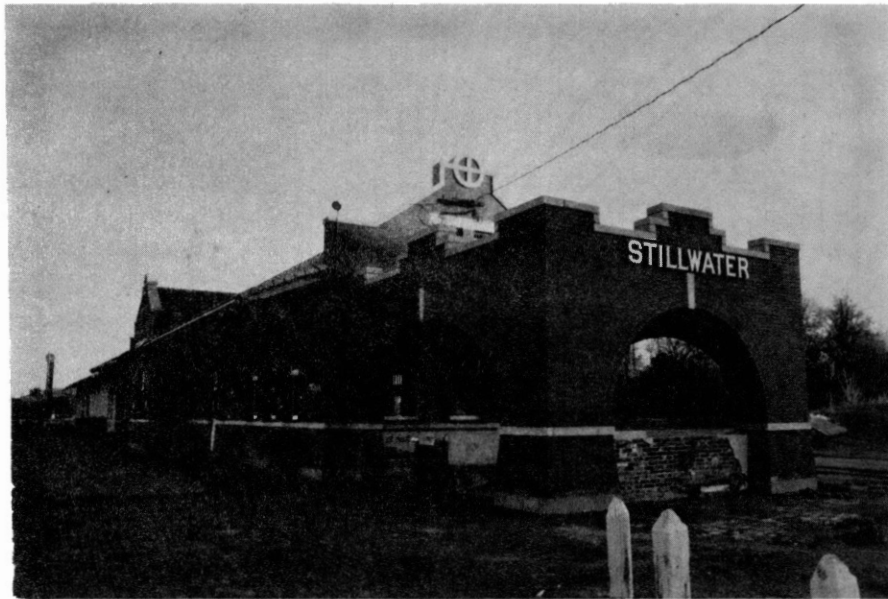


Figure 6. Exterior of Santa Fe Depot--1979



Figure 7. Exterior of Santa Fe Depot--1979

for a structure utilizes the facilities available for a function most compatible with the physical structure and most needed by the community. Therefore, a structure suited to a restaurant and club may be successfully reused only if there is sufficient demand for that service and the adaption is done in a tasteful manner. An adaptive reuse for a public structure may be successful if it is easily accessible and has proper support facilities to accommodate the public demand. Good planning is essential to any adaptive reuse, whether it be private or public.

Railroad stations are a unique American resource that should continue to serve public and private uses even though their original purpose may not be in demand presently. The "Frontier" in America is thought of as the era of the western cowboy; however, railroads truly conquered the continent, transforming America from an agricultural to an industrial nation. The first railroad station was built in Mt. Clare, Baltimore, in 1830. It is estimated that 40,000 stations were built in the following 120 years but only 20,000 of these are still standing today (Recycling Historic Railroad Stations: A Citizen's Manual, 1978).

It is said that "Railroads built America while America built the railroads." Recycling Historic Railroad Stations: A Citizen's Manual (1978) advocates that stations are a priceless heritage and typically American (see Figure 8). It is necessary now to preserve one of our most accepted symbols of our nation. Railroad stations developed into a new architectural form. There was nothing to pattern them from so the style evolved to meet the needs and conditions of the



Figure 8. Early 1900's Photograph, Santa Fe Depot

location. Many stations were constructed from "standard" plans established by the railroad companies. These plans were drawn in a central office and sent to a specific location. There, each station was built as a variation, a reflection of the community in which it was built, and making each station an "original" for that town.

Cities and citizen groups in those cities are now working in an effort to save these historic stations. This combined effort has enabled stations of all types and sizes to become, once again, an important part of the community.

An example of commercial reuse of a railroad depot can be found in Lincoln, Nebraska. The City National Bank was in need of a branch bank in 1968. The depot was within the one-half mile regulation for a bank branch and had been abandoned two years earlier. The station was purchased, exterior sand blasted, and interior restored. Many of the original fixtures are still used by the bank as well as small businesses that lease the extra space not used by the Citibank Depot Drive-Up. Reuse of this railroad station is a fine example of a successful rehabilitation project.

The community of Oberlin, Ohio, converted their cheerful depot into a Head Start school. The Nordson Foundation purchased the space and was immediately besieged by potential users. The Foundation now leases the property which has been replanned to accommodate such needs as classrooms, offices, bathrooms, and a modern kitchen. In 1969 the school opened and soon after a caboose was moved into the school's playground. The Nordson Foundation was so pleased with the results that they are converting another depot in Amhurst, Ohio, into a cultural center.

Savanna, Georgia, converted their large Central of Georgia Station into the Chamber of Commerce Tourist Information Center. This 1874 structure was built at the gateway of the city and immediately brings to the awareness of visitors the city's priority to historic preservation. Services provided by the structure include city information, exhibit area and lounge for tourists, and headquarters for the Chamber of Commerce, as well as a small theater for audio-visual presentations to tourists. Rehabilitation of this structure served as a seed project for the entire area.

Another example of a structure providing multiple public uses is the Union Depot in Duluth, Minnesota. The historic structure was converted and a new structure linked to it that now comprises the St. Louis County Heritage and Arts Center. The highlight of the exhibits is the antique collection of rolling stock in the old train shed which is considered one of the finest train collections in the country. Community and county support was excellent and the city's cooperation enabled the station to be included in its downtown revitalization plan. The use of the depot by historic and performing arts groups has provided the city and region with a unique and new cultural facility which serves the city as well as visitors from across the state.

In Recycling Historic Railroad Stations: A Citizen's Manual (1978) and Reusing Railroad Stations (1974), two excellent resources on station rehabilitation, several examples of reuse are given. Some of these are civic and cultural facilities because they are in tune with the railroad station's structure, which utilizes waiting areas for exhibit and public and office space.

For the purpose of this study, an historical building with rehabilitation potential for meeting some of today's needs was sought. The Santa Fe Railroad Depot in Stillwater satisfied this need. This structure is in good repair and the city has the opportunity to obtain use of the structure in the near future. Studies on rehabilitation projects for railroad stations and other structures were reviewed and it became apparent that Stillwater's depot has great potential for use by the community. The neighborhood in which the railroad depot is located has been selected for a Community Development Block Grant. The purpose of these grants is to alleviate physical and economic distress through stimulation of community revitalization. This program has two purposes: for financial settlement or completion of model cities program; and/or grant and aid to cities under 50,000 population through this special program. Under this plan, the federal government, through cities' nominations, is making an effort to help upgrade selected neighborhoods. Plans are being made for sanitary sewer and water lines, street paving and a sidewalk program, public improvements for central business districts, and housing assistance programs.

In an effort to upgrade services to meet current needs of the Stillwater community, a plan for the central business district was initiated in 1973 by the Stillwater Urban Renewal Authority. The plan represents a cooperative blend of new structures and services as well as the updating of older structures that comprise the downtown shopping service area of Stillwater.

The proposal helps give an alternative shopping center plan to the Main Street merchants. Through this plan, now partially

implemented, Main Street would be shut off to through traffic from Sixth Street to Tenth Street, to allow for pedestrian or mall areas along four blocks of Main Street. The majority of this core area would consist of shops that are similar in function. Commercial services such as air conditioning, television repair, and automotive services would be located near this central shopping district. Traffic would be routed around the central business district on a loop system of two-way streets. Parking would consist of the use of existing lots for the public and new parking facilities of one and possibly two levels in the core area and adjacent blocks.

The new central business district core plan lies just northwest of the Stillwater Depot, thus influencing the depot's future use. Another influence is the planned expansion of facilities east of the County Courthouse for public and community facilities. This will form another link to the central business district through a super block extension along Eighth Street.

These plans indicate some interest for this part of the city on the part of the planning officials, City Commission, and citizens. Perhaps most important is the cooperation beginning to show within the community of merchants and investors and the clients they serve.

These plans, though not completed at this time, indicate an emphasis on this area of downtown Stillwater through several agencies. It is within the context of furthering the city plans for expanding economic growth and development as well as historic preservation and rehabilitation, and provision of community services that this study is being developed. The Santa Fe Station building at 400 E. 10th

Street, Stillwater, Oklahoma, as a part of this community's developments, is the subject of this study.

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to develop a plan which can be used by cities to determine the best suited reuse for public structures that are in need of and suitable for, rehabilitation and/or adaptive use.

Objectives of the Study

The specific objectives of the study were:

1. To identify a building suitable for adaptive use.
2. To research planning underway in the area of the selected structure relating to rehabilitation of the surrounding neighborhood.
3. To develop several alternative plans for the selected structure.
4. To suggest which would be the best use of the structure itself to meet the needs of neighborhood and city residents.
5. To develop plans for the rehabilitation of the chosen building.

Limitations

This study is limited to historical preservation and adaptive reuse of one structure. The planning for the area around the structure is already underway, thus influencing/limiting the use of this structure.

Suggestions for use of this structure were limited to public, noncommercial uses only. Although interest had been shown on the part of individuals for the use of this structure for private commercial uses, the researcher chose to limit the study to uses that were in conjunction with services the city helps provide for the public.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Studies on community redevelopment have increased in the past few years as interest in this area has grown. Several levels of involvement have been studied, from the private investor to the development corporation to the city planning officials. Each level plays an important role in any successful community redevelopment effort. The emphasis of this study is the city involvement in redevelopment, relating to adaptive reuse of an historic building and its relationship to the surrounding neighborhood.

As cities search for more space, many alternatives are considered, including expanding outward, clearing old existing structures, and reusing existing structures. The reuse of existing structures remains a powerful means of reclaiming the economic value of existing buildings expressing social and aesthetic values in the process (Dixon, 1977).

What started out originally as an awareness of and an effort to preserve the nation's heritage is now a viable planning tool. The national trend toward conservation is the setting in which adaptive reuse operates. Andy L. Harney (1974) suggests several factors that influence the motivation of rehabilitation of structures. The energy crisis raises awareness in many areas regarding programs to save energy as well as materials. Also, the trend toward environmental

consciousness raises an awareness of the need for recycling all available materials and retaining human scale. Cost factor is another positive force with new construction being more expensive while reinvesting in older structures can reduce costs between \$3 and \$4 per square foot.

Familiarity is another positive aspect of adaptive use. People are more favorable and positive toward familiar structures which represent unity and stability. Revitalizing older buildings extends the life of the building as well as the neighborhood as a whole (Harney, 1974).

Walter Kidney (1976, p. 30), author of Working Places, states that the suburbs are no longer what they were intended to be; often being chaotic and tedious. D. H. Webster (1958) adds that America's idea of wealth is undergoing major psychological change from the attitude that anything old should be scrapped to an appreciation of the past and its heritage.

Present status of the structure influences the purpose in that private and public structures have different things to offer. The needs of the surrounding area, as well as the city as a whole, must be considered when deciding the status of any older structure. Rehabilitation of buildings by communities may be for a variety of uses and service to various groups. Public and semipublic buildings may serve uses including government, education, culture, health, religion, charity, and social activities. These buildings can be divided into two basic categories: those that are centrally located and serve the entire community and those of neighborhood type that serve sections of the city (Kidney, 1976).

In any type of rehabilitation project a feasibility study must be made. Reusing Railroad Stations, Book II (National Endowment of the Arts, 1974) suggests a study measuring the likelihood of success of a project by comparing costs and means of financing the proposed project's conversion, estimated profit (if private use), and risk factors. Financing for annual costs such as utilities and maintenance and upkeep are also considerations when estimating long range costs. Three major financial sources to consider are private investment, city, and federal government funds. An investigation should be conducted determining who can best be served by the structure. If the use is for the community, the research should be run by public service organizations that could use the structure and space. William Pena et al. (1977), in Problem Seeking, suggests that the purpose of the building may be influenced by the public to be served, whether it be the immediate community or the entire city. The activity demand is measured against the physical resources of the building. The relationship of this building to the surrounding area is also analyzed. This indicates the present status as well as future uses and how the use of the building fit in the city's comprehensive plan (Pena et al., 1977).

The quality of condition of the structure to be converted greatly influences the use. Factors such as the structural system in general, as well as utilities, mechanical system, arrangement of columns, permanent partitions, stairs, and building height can place major limitations on potential use (Kidney, 1976).

Pena et al. (1977) further suggests the importance of timing in any project. He states time in three areas of past, present, and

future. Charles Parrot (1976), in an article for Interiors, states that the "past is the yardstick for the future" (p. 7). His emphasis is on preservation and renovation of good period architecture in preserving our heritage. The Department of the Interior, on the Historic Register Information Form, offers grants to historically significant buildings and records them on the National Registrar.

The criteria for historically significant buildings are:

1. Associated with events or persons that made contributions significant to broad patterns of our history.
2. Distinctive characteristics or construction methods or work of master or possessing high artistic value.
3. May yield information important in history or prehistory.

The future use and historic preservation of the building is the goal of any adaptive use project. John Dixon (1977), in an editorial for Progressive Architecture, speaks for not attempting to "reconstruct the original designer's intent" but to "develop respectful adaptations" based on our appreciation of the past" (p. 7). Dixon's rule for adaptation is a simple one: "Never do anything that cannot be undone" (p. 7).

For the future, restoration of a building is simply not enough. Success in the future depends on a reuse that is economically and socially viable and respects the scale and character of the surroundings (Wright, 1976).

The A.I.A. (American Institute of Architects) publishes a handbook entitled Check List for Cities (1977) that suggests that in order for a revitalization process to be successful and of good quality there must be a blend of new and old areas in the community. The task

today is to blend the older structures that met more simple needs, with new designs that meet more complex needs of today. An appreciation of both design and a respect for the needs is required.

Judith Getlels (1976) states that it is not possible to renovate one building. Revitalization is a process that may begin with one structure and evolve into a major neighborhood campaign. To foster the spread of revitalization, the American Association of School Administrators has suggested that communities develop a "public building bank" at such time as a community element can no longer use a building efficiently, it would be released to the building bank as a reserve for the purpose judged to be most appropriate. This concept would help cut down duplication, waste, and misuse of buildings while returning these buildings to truly "public" buildings and help guarantee the maximum use of all facilities.

In order to decrease misuse of facilities, many renovation plans consider mixed use or the combining of several public and private tenants. This program encourages continued occupancy of worthwhile public and private buildings as well.

William Mashuda, in his June, 1977 article for the Journal of Housing, indicated that involvement with the neighborhood leaders and planning councils is an excellent means of obtaining support for any renovation program. Neighborhood planning groups can help with input and involvement when considering solutions. Their contributions can be beneficial from the preliminary study, where immediate needs and concerns can be voiced, to the analysis and recommendation.

Ultimately, conservation or destruction is based on public understanding and consent. Carl Chancellor, in his June, 1976 article for

the Journal of Housing, indicates that citizen participation or involvement in an historically significant area can help toward determination of use as well as acceptance of the final decision by others in the surrounding community.

In the A.I.A.'s Check List for Cities (1977), several recommendations are made about recycling buildings.

1. Make feasibility studies to determine if continued use is a possibility through renovation.
2. Research and develop information on renovation techniques, costs, examples of recycled buildings, firms experienced in renovating. This information can be available to the public as well as private investors.
3. Work with building departments for information on problems in renovating old buildings. Work toward flexible provisions in building codes for recycling.
4. Incorporate the reuse of good public buildings in the comprehensive plan.
5. Analyze location and function. Consider decentralizing government offices and relocation of buildings.
6. Centralize information on public buildings, such as available space for federal, state, county, and city agencies. When one tenant leaves, all levels should be notified.
7. Integrate school district planning with planning facilities.
8. Establish policy that supports multiple uses of government buildings in public and private sectors.
9. Support state and local legislative programs such as new zoning, historic district, and landmark preservation ordinances.

These suggestions help lead the way for an overall system that is conducive to historic preservation efforts.

CHAPTER III

STILLWATER DEPOT IN TRANSITION

The history of the Stillwater Santa Fe Depot is an important part of the history of Stillwater. B. B. Chapman, in The Founding of Stillwater (1948), tells how railroads were constructed in the Oklahoma Territory as the result of a July, 1866 act of Congress giving authority to the Atlantic and Pacific Railroad Company to build in Oklahoma land. Part of the track followed the south bank of the Cimarron River 12 miles south of Stillwater. In 1885, as a result of repeated raids on Indian lands by prospective settlers, congress removed the Indian title to Oklahoma lands. However, settlement of lands around Stillwater was planned in violation of a proclamation warning against such settlement. President Arthur did approve an act of congress granting the Southern Kansas Railway Company the right to construct a railroad through Oklahoma lands with provisions for payment to Indian tribe land holders.

Repeated opposition to rulings from the President by Stillwater founders helped lead to the agreement to force payment for lands to Indian tribes in Oklahoma and the opening of Oklahoma territory for the land run. In 1900, the Eastern Oklahoma Railway Company (a subsidiary of Santa Fe) built 40.4 miles of track from Ripley, curving through Stillwater, to Esau Junction. This connected Stillwater with other parts of the state by rail and helped to establish travel and trade routes that led to the growth of Stillwater and the Oklahoma A & M College.

Two months after the railroad reached Stillwater, the first excursion train left with 350 students, faculty, and friends for Guthrie. The trip took three and a half hours to make and was considered a luxury. The train also led to better schedules for the A & M football teams. Train service made it easier to travel to play opposing teams and for those teams to travel to Stillwater.

To help meet the need for freight as well as a waiting area for passengers, the 1900 wooden Santa Fe Depot was constructed (see Figure 2). The 1900 structure served as the meeting place for travel and freight until 1915 when the brick structure was built to help accommodate ticket sales and passenger waiting (see Figure 3). The combination of the two structures served the needs of the A & M College and Stillwater during the time when the railroad was the fastest and best form of transportation.

In 1979 the Stillwater Santa Fe Depot is used for a freight office for merchandise shipped by rail. The ticket office in the 1915 structure is used for office work required by the Santa Fe Railroad, while the storage of freight is in the 1900 wooden section. Rail traffic continues to use the tracks at the depot but fewer trains are scheduled to pick up and deliver goods. There is no passenger service today. This contrasts with earlier days when trains in and out of Stillwater were the major form of transportation.

R. E. Cunningham (1969) writes about the history of Stillwater and its transportation that was so vital to the growth. Stillwater was somewhat isolated from other parts of the state until the railroad came through. With this new form of transportation came a new social

meeting place--the depot. Some Stillwater residents still recall large groups of people meeting the train to see "who came to town." During the war years, the depot served as the departure and arrival post for young men in the armed services (see Figure 9).

As Stillwater grew so did the need for transportation and with growing popularity of the automobile road travel became more popular. Through the years passenger travel slowed. Shipments of freight by rail continued to be important after passenger travel ceased.

The historic significance of the Santa Fe Depot is a part of the lives of long time residents in the Stillwater area (Figure 10). The structure represents a developmental stage of Stillwater that few other buildings possess. Therefore, the significance of the heritage of Stillwater to the city today and in the future can be enhanced and used through the appropriate and adaptive reuse of the depot. The depot has already been nominated and accepted on the National Register of Historic Places.

The growth of Stillwater as a city has been a process that formally began on June 11, 1889, when lots were drawn for Stillwater. Each participant in the drawing was entitled to one business and two residential lots when they paid their \$6.00 drawing fee. Each drawing was recorded for public record. From this, Stillwater grew with no organized pattern until May 20, 1927, when the first Stillwater City Planning Commission was created. Seven members were chosen as a body to study the needs of the community. From that beginning planning for Stillwater has evolved to deal with change.

Stillwater's philosophy of planning supports the neighborhood unit concept in that areas are broken down into units or areas of



Figure 9. Stillwater Santa Fe Depot--1918

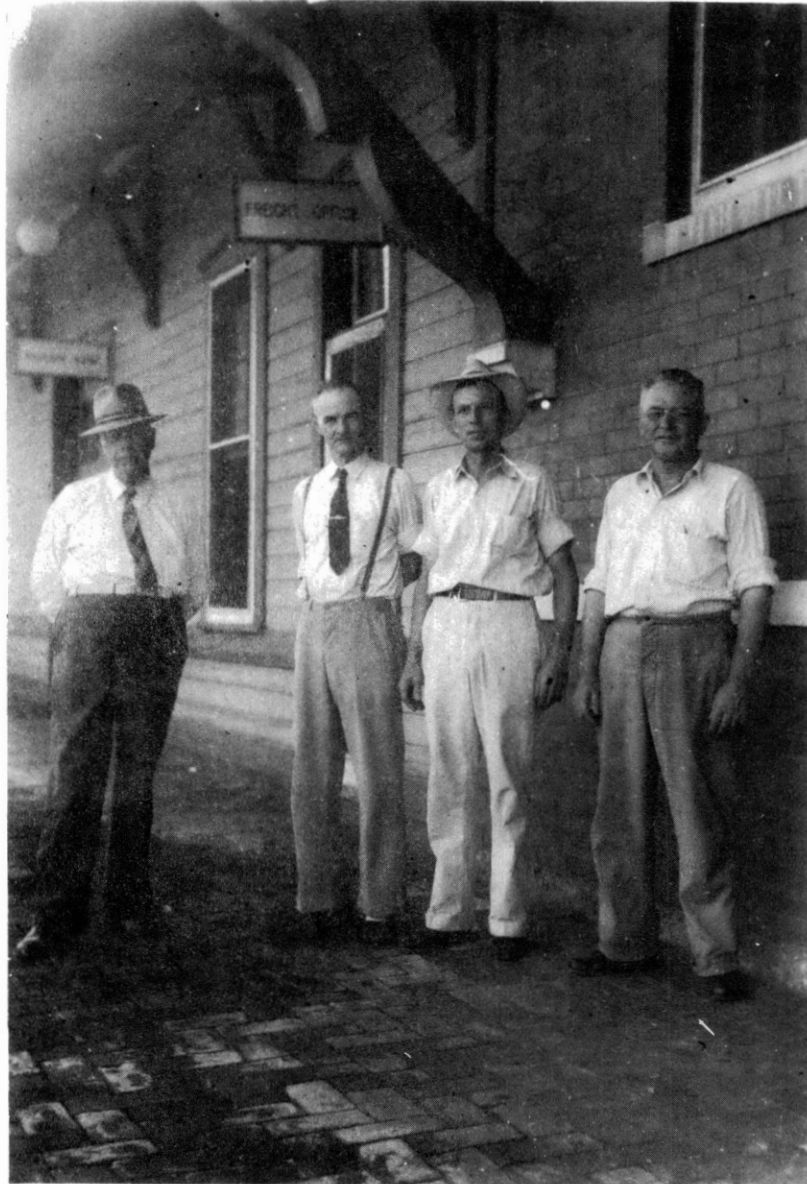


Figure 10. Stillwater Santa Fe Station Force--1940

2,000 to 8,000 persons. A neighborhood generally comprises a maximum area of one square mile, 350-630 acres of which is occupied by single family dwellings (Stillwater Comprehensive Plan, 1977) (Figure 11).

Stillwater Neighborhood #4 was chosen for review in relation to uses for the Santa Fe Railroad Depot, located in the neighborhood. Statistical information for the neighborhood was obtained from data published by the city of Stillwater, 1970 Census of Housing, and Stillwater's Comprehensive Plan, 1977.

Neighborhood #4 is located in the southeast quadrant and is adjacent to the largest commercially zoned shopping area in Stillwater. This central business district is 235 acres of commercial development, 854 acres of residential, and 485 acres of zoned flood plain (Figure 12).

The Central Business District is within two blocks of the Depot. Advanced plans for this area and the super block extending from the Central Business District mall and the area east of Lewis Street are important in planning for the reuse of the Santa Fe Railroad Depot.

The main transportation artery in the area of the Depot is Perkins Road. The city plans to expand and further improve Perkins Road to facilitate movement north and south through Stillwater. Improvements to Ninth Street have already been started, linking Perkins to Main Street on a through street, providing a smoother traffic flow near the Depot.

The Comprehensive Plan calls for expansion of public facilities in the Neighborhood #4 area. On the lot at the corner of Eighth and

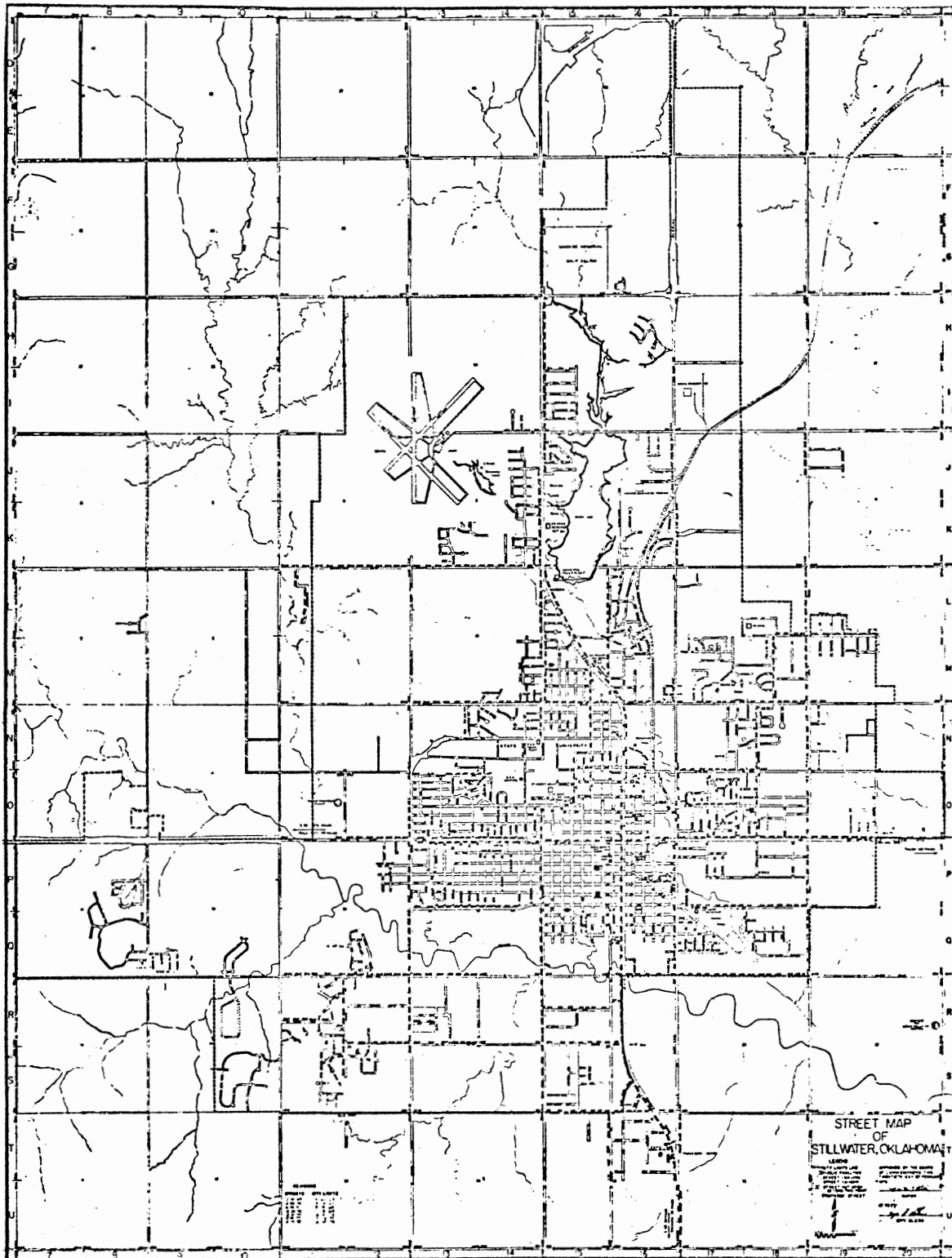












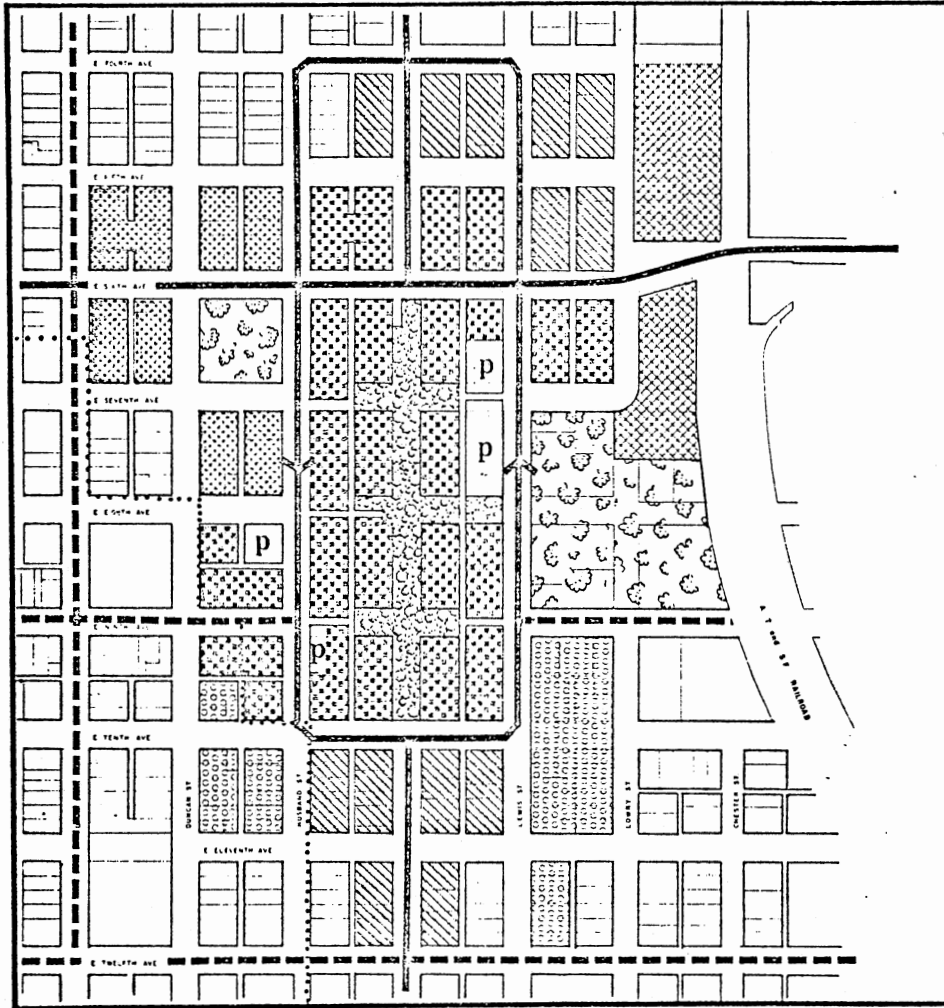


Figure 11. General Map of Stillwater

LEGEND

- | | | | |
|---|---------------------------------|---|--------------------------|
|  | Low Density Residential |  | Public and Institutional |
|  | Multiple-Family Residential |  | Pedestrian Mall |
|  | Residential Commercial | p | Public Parking |
|  | Central Business District Comm. |  | Primary Arterial |
|  | General Commercial |  | Secondary Arterial |
|  | Light Industrial |  | Collector Street |
| | |  | Southern Woods Boundary |



LAND USE PLAN

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Figure 12. Stillwater Central Business District Plans

Lowery Streets is the City Hall, a new Post Office is planned for Ninth and Lowery Streets, and a public housing project for the elderly is tentatively planned to run from Seventh Street to Ninth Street, just east of Lowery Street. All of these plans indicate a growing interest in this part of Stillwater which may influence the rehabilitation of the Depot and the success of the new use when renovation is complete.

Area Information

Factors under consideration when working with rehabilitation of the Santa Fe Railroad Depot are varied in scope. Information on the age and income of residents in Neighborhood #4 is a determinant for the interest and needs of the people in the area. Transportation and the accessibility to the area may help shape the population that the structure may serve and how they will get to and from the building. Zoning regulations govern the types of structures permitted in the future development. Present land use helps determine what use would be compatible with elements already in the neighborhood. Comprehensive plans for this area indicate possible future land use for this part of the city and give some information on all the above mentioned areas (Figure 13).

When researching possible reuses for structures, several factors about the area should be considered and weighed as to the strength of their influence on any rehabilitative use selected.

One major indicator was the age and income of the residents in the area immediately around the Depot. Although there is a light

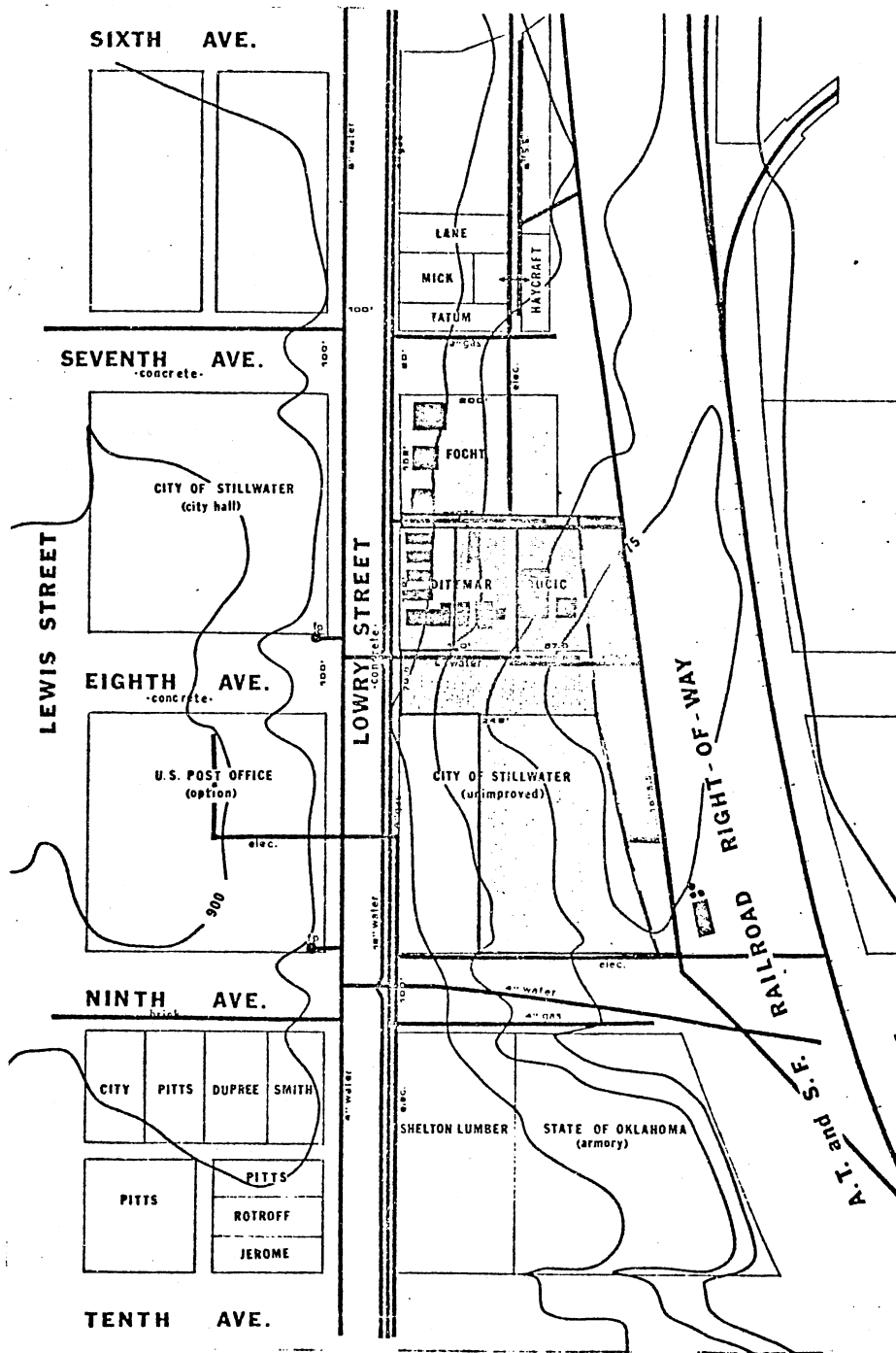


Figure 13. Plans for Area Around Depot

industrial area immediately around the Depot, there is a residential area nearby and the income and age factors were researched here. Residents of this area are generally family-oriented with a concentration of older persons. There is a much higher concentration of older persons than in other parts of Stillwater, partly due to the developmental pattern of the city and the age of this neighborhood.

The residents of the area are largely of lower socioeconomic status, and are the second largest total number of persons on financial assistance in Stillwater. Sixty-six of a possible 116 persons receive old age assistance payments, and 28 of the 116 receive aid to dependent children.

In an attempt to help alleviate some of the housing shortages and upgrade conditions for some Stillwater residents, a public housing project for the elderly is under consideration for the area just northwest of the Railroad Depot. This is an attempt to improve housing conditions for families who may now be forced to live in sub-standard, overcrowded conditions and inflated housing markets and rent in the Stillwater area.

A final local consideration is public facilities already in the area. The school facility in the area is Lincoln Elementary School, an example of adaptive reuse. The 22 classrooms were converted into office and work space which is presently utilized for offices for public agencies and city departments, while the playground area is now used as a parking area for Stillwater's school buses.

Couch Park is the recreational facility in the area. Facilities in the park include three baseball fields, one football stadium, comfort stations, a flower garden, picnic area, play equipment, and

picnic shelters. Indoor facilities include Multigraphis and the Senior Citizen Center. These facilities provide public classes for all ages as well as assisting in the programming for senior citizens of Stillwater.

City Wide Information

The city as a whole was considered in obtaining information that would effect the use of the Railroad Depot. The present facilities available and those in demand were explored in an effort to meet some of the overall needs of citizens in other areas of Stillwater that could use the facilities.

Stillwater's public facilities are of two types: university and city. The university facilities are on the Oklahoma State University campus and serve the university students, staff, faculty, and other employees in university related events. University recreational space includes varsity as well as general facilities for the non-varsity interests. Classrooms and public meeting facilities are also meeting the needs of the university community through classrooms across the campus. Large assembly rooms are housed in the Student Union, Seratean Center, and Gallagher Hall. Smaller meeting space is found in the Student Union and may be reserved by groups in connection with the university and conventions meeting in Stillwater and on campus.

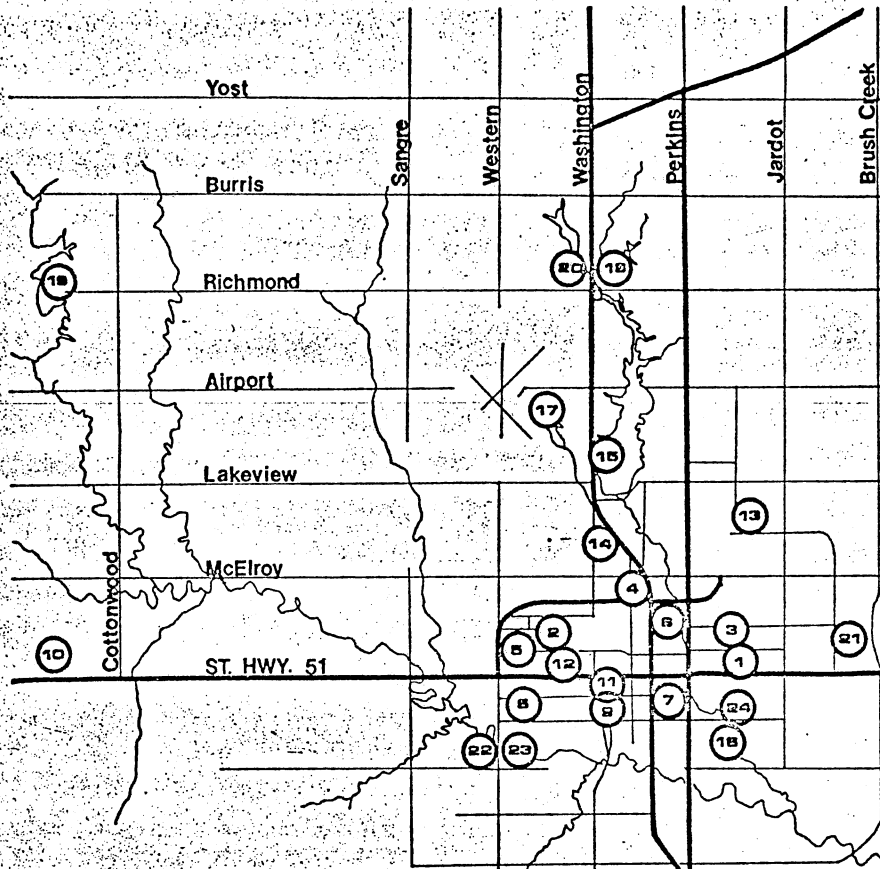
City or neighborhood public meeting and classroom facilities are limited. The Stillwater Municipal Library has a meeting room for civic groups. Two banks have civic meeting space that may be reserved by groups. Stillwater churches have assembly as well as

education space for congregational use and related projects. The YMCA has recreational space available to groups and member use.

Nonuniversity cultural facilities are limited also. Seratean Center serves the campus for assembly space for performances of the arts. Gardiner Hall has a gallery for display of art forms of students and traveling displays of art brought to campus through the Art Department. The Wrestling Hall of Fame holds historic athletic displays. Nonuniversity display space for heritage artifacts is small private collections in some commercial businesses and the Sheerar Cultural and Heritage Center which contains display space for Oklahoma and Stillwater historic nature items.

Library facilities on campus include several specialized departmental collections as well as the main library, Edmond Lowe Library. The Stillwater Municipal Library, located at Sixth and Duck Streets, has approximately 40,200 volumes. These works range from standard, classical, and contemporary works. Special collections include the Oklahoma Room with a collection of books, pictures, pottery, and other objects of Oklahoma lore and is maintained by the Altrusa Club. An auditorium in the library has seating for approximately 150 persons. This facility is available to civic, educational, and other public interest groups.

Stillwater maintains several types of recreational facilities within the 18 parks of the Parks and Recreation Department. Facilities vary from baseball diamonds to picnic areas. The Green Belt development of flood plain areas has been incorporated into plans to make the best use of land available. Most recreational facilities are outdoor activity centered (see Figure 14).



PARKS AND RECREATION

- | | |
|---|-----------------------------------|
| 1. Arrington Park | 13. Skyline Park |
| 2. Arrowhead Park | 14. Will Rogers Park |
| 3. Berry Park | 15. Boomer Park |
| 4. Little Boomer Park | 16. Couch Park |
| 5. Ingham Park | 17. Sanborn Lake Park |
| 6. Myers Park | 18. Lakeside Memorial Golf Course |
| 7. Ninth Main Plaza | 19. Lake McMurtry |
| 8. Recreation Park | 20. Whittenburg Park (Proposed) |
| 9. Southern Woods Park | 21. Proposed Park Site |
| 10. Stillwater Parks and Recreation Motorcycle Park | 22. Babcock Park |
| 11. Sunset Park | 23. Western Park |
| 12. Tower Park | 24. Couch Park Extension |

Figure 14. Stillwater Parks and Recreation Facilities

CHAPTER IV

RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

Present economic trends emphasize the need to make optimum use of resources. Older structures of historic significance are now being re-used and made a vital part of the many communities. With this in mind, a new use for the Stillwater Santa Fe Depot was sought.

The purpose of this study was to identify an historic building having potential for adaptive reuse and evaluate alterations to identify the best use. The Santa Fe Railroad Depot was selected for study in this context. The history of the structure and its part in Stillwater's development was researched. The present condition of the structure was analyzed and characteristics of the neighborhood were studied, as well as the need for public space that could be provided for in the building.

Input was sought from several agencies: Stillwater Community Development, Parks and Recreation Department, Interior Design Department of Oklahoma State University, Chamber of Commerce, and Historical Preservation Officers. Suggestions from each department were taken into consideration in the final plan for the recommendation for the reuse of the structure.

Recommendations

Through analysis of information of facilities open to the public it was determined that a versatile, multiple use structure was needed

by the neighborhood as well as the city. Priority needs were for public meeting space, a display area for Stillwater's historical artifacts, classrooms for nonuniversity classes, and information offices (Figure 15). A display/meeting room was needed also to provide an area for traveling shows as well as local artists to display or share in performance of their talents (Figure 16).

Information on residents in the area as well as projections for this part of the city were found to support the need for this type of public facility. The city's plans for the Central Business District and small cities program indicate an interest on the part of the city officials as well as citizens, in the area of the Depot.

Conclusions

The structure's historic significance and location would make the reuse of the Sange Fe Depot the nucleus for an area where Stillwater's history can be preserved. The downtown expansion and transportation improvements reinforce this recommendation for an information center for the city concerning activities and services.

Civic meeting space and traveling displays can be combined with a multiple programming space in the original section of the structure. This area could be reserved by groups in the community for year round use. The small kitchen area could provide minor food services for the programmed activities. Classroom space could help meet expansion needs for community education services. Office space in the facility would help coordinate activities, reserve spaces, and serve as an information center. Sectioning or zoning within the building contributes to multiple uses and conservation of energy costs.

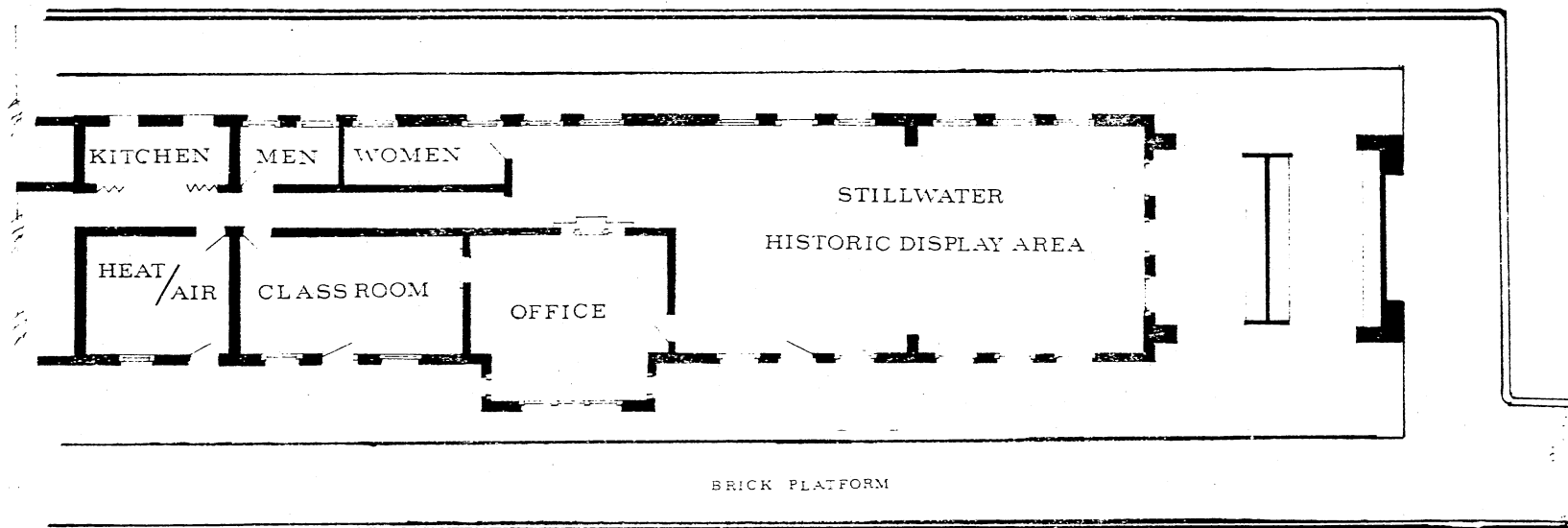


Figure 15. Proposed Plan for 1915 Structure

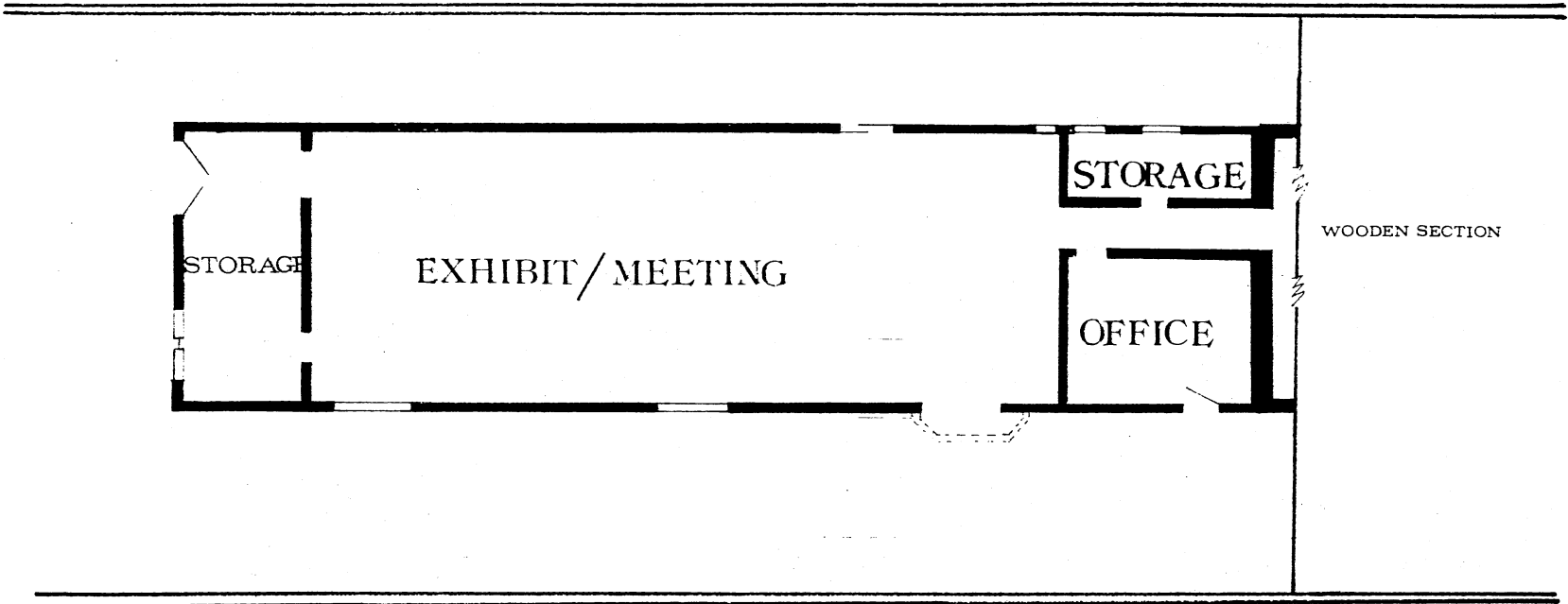


Figure 16. Proposed Plan for 1900 Structure

If these recommendations are accepted, this facility would be of great worth to the residents of the area as well as the city as a whole. This multiple activity facility could help maximize use of community spaces. A viable recommendation to the city of Stillwater is the reuse of the Santa Fe Railroad Depot.

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