

Shelburne Falls Townscape Plan

March 20, 1989

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Town of Shelburne, Massachusetts

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Dodson Associates would like to express particular appreciation to the two Shared Administrative Assistants for the Towns of Buckland and Shelburne with whom we have worked, Susan Wright and Denise Bouthiller, for their help in getting everything going and then in holding it together.

In completing this study, we have made reference to a number of previous reports, including the 1980 Shelburne Falls Community Improvement Plan prepared as a final masters degree project by Sarah H. Pollak under the supervision of Professor Joseph S.R. Volpe of the Department of Landscape Architecture and Regional Planning at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst. This report describes Shelburne Falls' unique natural context and historic development and lists the opportunities and problems that faced the village in 1980 -- many of which continue to do so in 1989. In addition, many of the design proposals illustrated in the 1980 report continue to be worthy of implementation by Buckland and Shelburne -- most notably the proposal for a pedestrian connection between the end of Deerfield Avenue and the Upper Bridge Street commercial corridor.

Another resource to help understand the history and development of the Falls is Shelburne Falls Observed, a visual study of the area collected by a group of Hampshire College students under the supervision of Professor Norton Juster.

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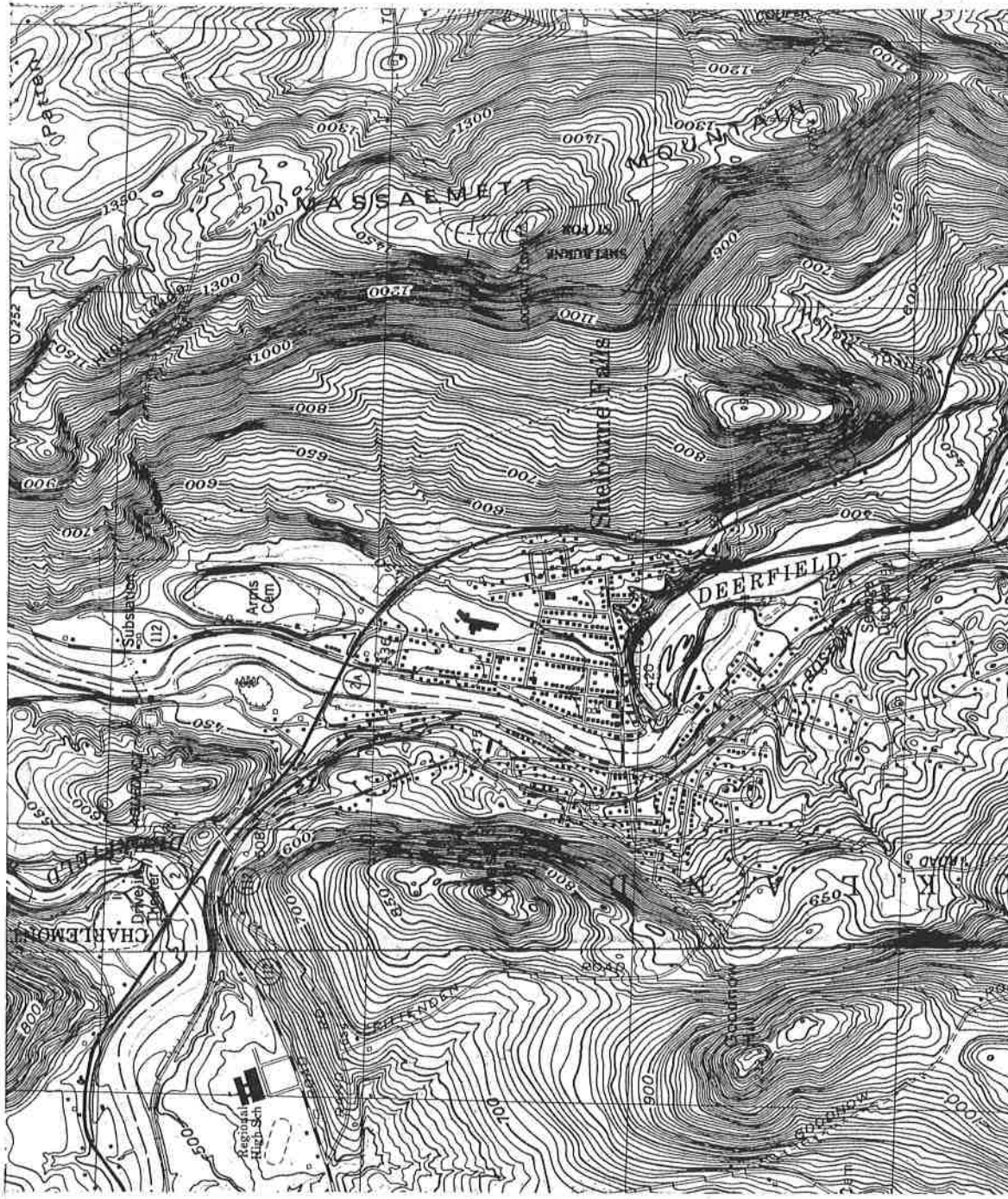


Figure 1. Shelburne Falls Topographic Map

Introduction

Most people want to blend prosperity with the preservation of Shelburne Falls' historic character, sense of community and natural beauty. This cannot be achieved by standing still. The first victims of inaction would be the businesses that are such an important part of the Falls. The essential service and supply businesses: the clothing, grocery, pharmacy, hardware and other stores are the most vulnerable to competition from the malls.

If these businesses were to disappear, the Falls would lose much of its vitality, sense of community and traditional role as a local social and business center. To compete, the Falls' core businesses must provide ample parking and relatively easy vehicular access. To successfully compete, the businesses must also understand that the village's existing historic character and quality of life is their greatest business asset. This character must be preserved as the town grows because it is what makes Shelburne Falls a unique place to live in, to visit, or to shop in.

Dodson Associates and their architectural and traffic consultants have developed some suggestions for integrating growth with preservation in a way that will allow Shelburne Falls to expand in the future without losing what makes it so special today.

This report is divided into three sections. The first section includes a one page summary of the Townscape Plan recommendations. The second consists of short term recommendations that Buckland and Shelburne should implement immediately in order to strengthen and preserve the character and vitality of Shelburne Falls. Short paragraphs in italics precede each recommendation and summarize the issues and appropriate actions for the towns to take. Finally, there is a section of recommendations that residents and officials of the two towns should start discussing and planning towards, but whose implementation will necessarily be a long term process.

Summary of Recommendations

Buckland and Shelburne should strengthen the continued commercial and social vitality of Shelburne Falls by providing ample parking and easy vehicular access at the commercial core without destroying its unique character. The towns should immediately implement a system for *managing* the on-street parking spaces they already have and should make improvements to maximize the efficient use of potential on-street parking areas that are currently unused or poorly laid out.

After on-street parking in the village has been developed to the fullest, the two towns should investigate a limited and carefully planned expansion of existing off-street parking lots as outlined in section 8 of this report. All parking spaces should be zoned so that the spaces most conveniently located for quick access to the core businesses are reserved for short term parkers while those spaces at the periphery are designated for long term parking.

In order to avoid congestion specific changes to the circulation pattern of the village should be made as detailed in section 3. Improvements to the pedestrian circulation pattern should be made by developing *clearly marked and differentiated* loop routes connecting the remote commercial areas and village attractions with the center of the village. The Town Shed on upper Bridge Street should be renovated as a new Village Information Center and linked to upper Deerfield Avenue by a new pedestrian path, possibly a garden pathway.

Buckland and Shelburne should work with village residents, businesspeople and property owners to develop simple, clear guidelines for fitting new development into the historic context of the village in a way that preserves and enhances its special character. Each town should consider delineating one or more Local Historic Districts and instituting a process of site plan review for new construction or renovation in these districts. The riverfront corridor is a critical area where cooperation and close coordination between the two towns will be necessary to preserve the visual character of the village and to ensure preservation of scenic viewpoints and public access.

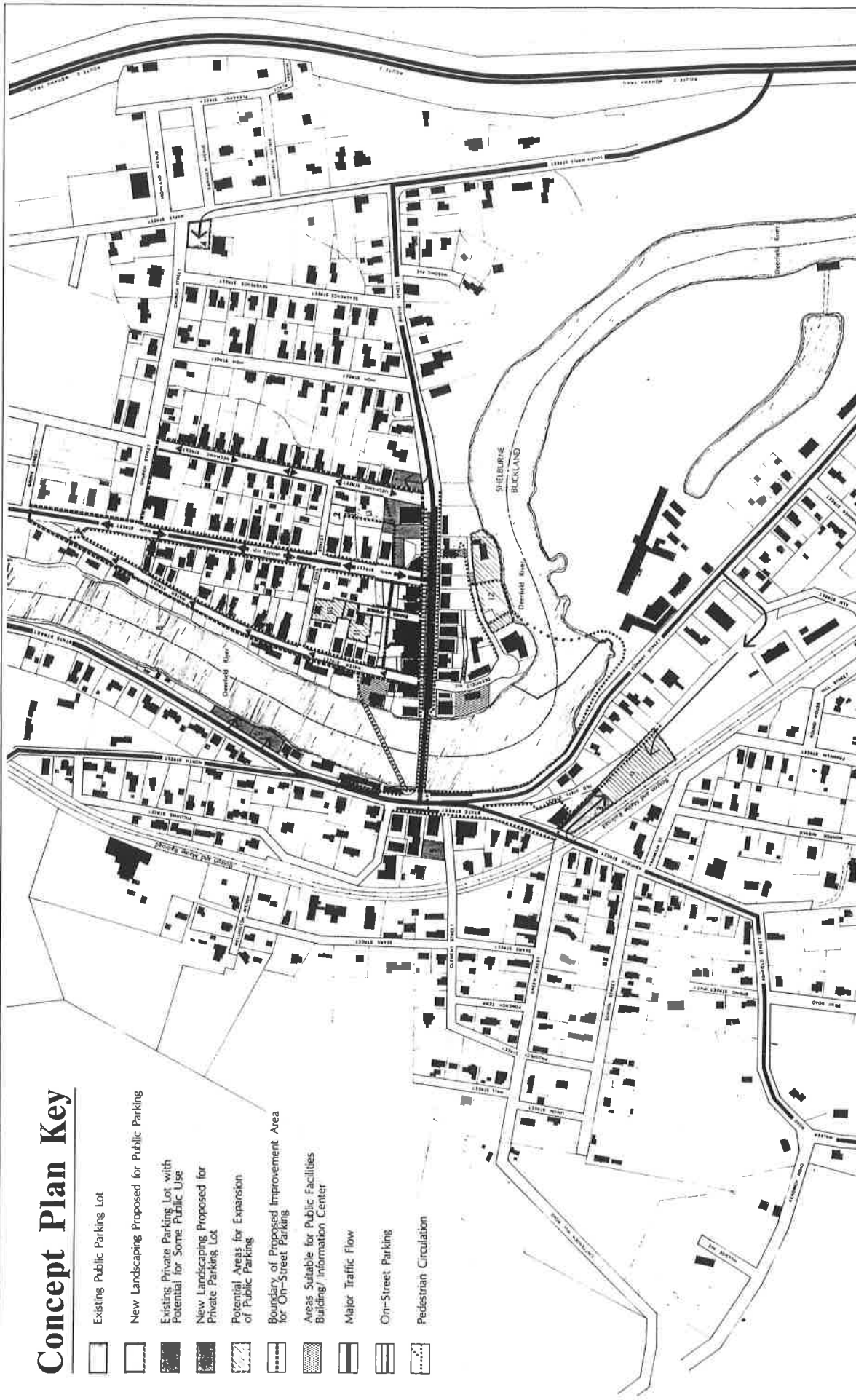
Street lighting and layout forms a crucial part of the village's friendly and intimate character and close attention should be paid by both towns to any proposals to change the type of lamps in existing fixtures since this will change both brilliance and color. The towns should insist on the use of the new, cost-effective lamps of the *color-corrected*, High Intensity Discharge type. Street trees form another crucial component of the Falls' streetscape and both towns should implement an overall plan for evaluating the health of existing street trees and replanting dying or missing trees.

The area of the Glacial Potholes and Deerfield Avenue could potentially equal the Bridge of Flowers as a natural and scenic resource and recreation area for both village residents and visitors. Shelburne and Buckland should join with their elected legislators to help Mayhew Steel to relocate its Deerfield Avenue electric privileges and operations to its facility on the Buckland side of the village. This would allow securing this key parcel for public access to the Potholes and parking for visitors that would respect the service needs of existing Deerfield Avenue businesses. A public forum should be established to explore what kind of waterfront park might be appropriate at the Glacial Potholes and to determine a general approach and cost estimate. Buckland and Shelburne should seek intensive planning and legal help and should work with the Commonwealth to explore solutions to the liability and funding problems involved. An important first step in making better use of this spectacular and historic site will be for the two towns to find a way to maintain the Potholes area and to enforce no-drinking and littering regulations on this site.

Finally, it is recommended that Buckland and Shelburne plan for the future by identifying and starting the process of securing key parcels and public/private support that will allow: 1) Development of a mixed-use development and parking structure on the site of the old "Under the Hill" Mills along upper Deerfield Avenue. 2) Implementation of a coordinated system of peripheral parking lots connected by a regular parking shuttle in order to reduce congestion at the village core. 3) If traffic levels continue to escalate, consider construction of second vehicular bridge over the Deerfield to allow for establishment of a one way traffic flow over each bridge.

Concept Plan Key

- Existing Public Parking Lot
- New Landscaping Proposed for Public Parking
- Existing Private Parking Lot with Potential for Some Public Use
- New Landscaping Proposed for Private Parking Lot
- Potential Areas for Expansion of Public Parking
- Boundary of Proposed Improvement Area for On-Street Parking
- Areas Suitable for Public Facilities Building/ Information Center
- Major Traffic Flow
- On-Street Parking
- Pedestrian Circulation



Shelburne Falls Townscape Study

Concept Plan

Prepared for
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Town of Shelburne, Massachusetts

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North:



Figure 2.

Concept Plan

Figure #1 illustrates the Concept plan for this study, addressing current issues that are critical to the continued vitality of Shelburne Falls. The key at the upper left of the sheet identifies the different sites and ownership parcels discussed in this plan and identifies them as to current or potential use. Major vehicular routes through the village are shown as dark black lines. Lines of circular dots show major pedestrian circulation routes (existing and proposed). Sites and lots are numbered to allow cross-referencing throughout the text of the study. Major areas of on-street parking, public, off-street parking lots and private off-street lots are identified through the use of different tone and hatching patterns.

Figures #2 and #2A show an aerial photograph of the study area of the village and an enlarged detail of the overall Concept Plan that corresponds to this same area. The numbers for the different sites and ownership parcels remain the same.



Figure 3. Aerial Photograph of the Village Area

I. Short Term Recommendations

The following recommendations spring from this study and represent immediate actions that the Towns of Buckland and Shelburne can take to address the problems and goals listed in the Townscape Plan request for proposals and in the introduction above.

1. Parking Management

Issue:

The center of Shelburne Falls is congested and it is increasingly difficult for short-term shoppers to find a parking space. If parking becomes too difficult or time-consuming the core service businesses of the village will lose competitiveness with nearby malls.

Recommendation:

Institute a program of better parking management including a two-hour parking limit in key areas and a clear signage system leading to long-term parking areas for employees and commuters.

A 1987 survey of businesses in Shelburne Falls identified *the lack of on-street and off-street parking* as the two most serious problems facing the continued commercial growth and health of the Village.

Parking studies conducted in June and July of 1988 (see figure 5) showed that 40% of the legal spaces on the Shelburne side of the river were occupied by cars parking for six hours or more during business hours on weekdays. On the Buckland side 13% of the legal spaces, excluding the Salmon Falls and Eagles Club off-street lots, were tied up by the same car for six hours or more. This amounts to a total of 69 spaces village-wide. These spaces are typically occupied by employees of local businesses who have no alternative off-street lots especially for their use or by day-parking commuters who are leaving their vehicles to carpool to jobs elsewhere in the county or beyond.

As a result over a quarter of the total legal spaces in the village area are unavailable to short-term parkers (see figure 5), the very people whose business must be retained in order for the core merchants of the Village to compete with the growth of shopping malls in the area.

The first step in solving the congested and increasingly inconvenient parking situation in Shelburne Falls would be for Shelburne and Buckland to take a more active role in managing the 259 total spaces of combined on-street and off-street parking that they currently share in the commercial area of the village. A two-hour parking limit should be instituted and enforced that would cover the angle-parking spaces along Bridge and State Streets and in the Bank Lot off-street area behind the

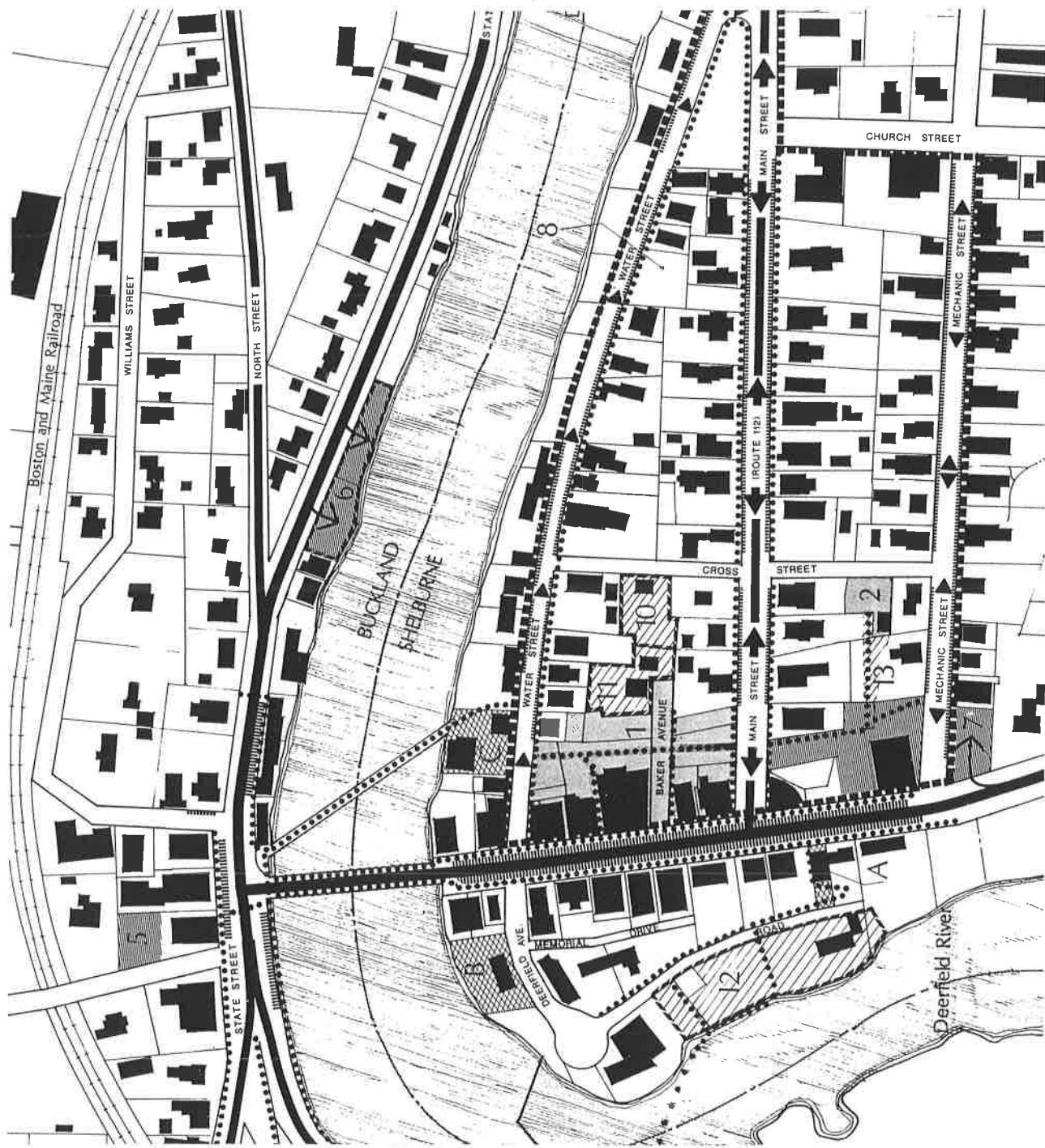


Figure 4. Detail of Concept Plan

Shelburne Falls Supermarket. Sufficient support and budgetary help should be given to the two police departments to enable them to patrol and ticket offenders.

The second step would be to provide new employee parking areas such as the 23 Cross Street lot recently acquired by Shelburne and creating other lots specifically aimed at commuters because of their strategic locations near major entrances to the Falls area. These new lots combined with an actively enforced two-hour parking limit could provide up to 25% more parking capacity in the village's commercial center.

2. On-Street Parking

Issue: *The significant on-street parking potential of existing side streets in the village is greatly underutilized.*

Recommendation: *Increase on-street parking capacity, pedestrian and traffic safety and aesthetics by organizing the existing haphazard and poorly defined parking pattern along side streets. Investigate using D.P.W. highway maintenance funds or other grants to provide an integrated package of curb, sidewalk and planting improvements.*

On-Street Parking: The dense 19th century fabric of Shelburne Falls' buildings and streets developed around the central focus of the Deerfield River and the potential hydro-power available at the Salmon Falls. The growing community had only limited amounts of flat river terraces separated by steep banks to use for industrial, commercial and residential purposes. The two looming parallel ridges of Massamett Mountain and West Mountain acted to further compress and centralize development in Shelburne Falls. As a result, today the Falls still preserves the attractive character of a largely pre-automobile, pedestrian village full of natural, historic and architectural resources.

The same dense and attractive 19th century pattern puts space in the Village at a premium and creates a variety of competing potential uses for any particular parcel. As a result, extensive new amounts of off-street parking lots will be impossible to create without seriously damaging the historic 19th century structure and charm of the village area. This would in turn seriously damage the ability of its businesses to compete and its residential areas to accommodate a demand for housing in the Village that has been steadily growing for the last decade. (The current residential vacancy rate in Shelburne Falls is less than 2%.)

Figure 3: Parking Study Summary

Shelburne:	Bank Lot On Weekday	34% of legal spaces (85) occupied for 6 hours or more by same car.
	Bank Lot On Saturday	15% of legal spaces (85) occupied by the same car for the entire 6 hour survey period.
	Bridge Street On Wkdy	6% of legal spaces (78) occupied by same car for 5 hours or more.
		9% of legal spaces (78) occupied by same car for 4 hours or more.
Buckland Excluding Salmon Falls Lot and Eagles Lot:		
	On Weekday (Thursday)	13% of legal spaces (currently 45) occupied by the same car for 4 hours or more.
	On Saturday	13% also.

The scarcity of available vacant lots in the village area has led to extensive use of on-street parking which, if unmanaged, merely adds to congestion and traffic safety problems downtown. This congestion can be relieved and additional safety gained for both pedestrians and motorists by making sure that available on-street parking space is efficiently organized and used and clearly delineated.

The streets in the vicinity of Bridge Street could absorb up to 31 spaces of additional parking without major physical modifications to the existing street. After measuring these streets and locating all driveways and intersections, we found room for an additional 21 spaces along Main Street, 5 along Water Street and 5 along Mechanic Street. These spaces would be especially useful for longer term parking by store owners, employees and others remaining more than two hours. Most of this recommended on-street parking is within a 2 block walking distance of Bridge Street.

The area on the Shelburne side of the river which is bounded by Mechanic Street, Church Street, Main Street along the Baptist Green and Water Street should be designated as a special On-Street Parking Improvement Area. This area is shown on the overall Townscape Concept Plan, figure 1, with a heavy dashed line marking its outer limits. This is a key area at the heart of the Village and Main Street forms one of the major

entrances to the Village area for those arriving from the North off the middle Route 2 exit or along Route 112. Improvements in such a district can be coordinated in a complementary way. For instance, new curbing and a clearer separation between road and sidewalk will not only encourage more efficient use of available parking space but will also provide extra protection for new street trees planted as part of a coordinated street tree inventory, health assessment and re-planting program.

The existing conditions in the Proposed Improvement Area along Mechanic, Bridge, Main and Water Streets are shown in the plan at upper left in figure 4, entitled "On-Street Parking Potential". A detailed plan should be developed that applies this approach to the unique conditions of each of the four streets. Below the "Existing Conditions" plan view is shown the proposed improved version.

While these changes may seem to some to be "too urban" or "neatened up" to be appropriate to the existing character of the Village, we strongly believe that materials can be chosen and the work done in such a way that it will be in keeping with the existing character of the village and, in fact, complement the very high-quality residential architecture of the area. The stately feel of Main Street as a major route to and from the commercial spine of the Village would be strengthened and important clues given to drivers entering at highway speeds that they are entering into the center of Shelburne Falls and should slow down.

Required improvements, which might be financed by state highway improvement funds, could include new curbs, sidewalks, protected "nose-outs" for planting new street trees, and minor widening of existing on-street parallel parking lanes. Changes to the directional flow of Water Street detailed in the next section, Traffic Circulation, are proposed as part of overall improvements to this area of the Village.

Possible state programs that might fund these improvements include: Urban Systems Program, Community Development Block Grant Program, Public Works Economic Development Program, Small Town Improvement Program, Three "R" Maintenance Program, Economic Development Administration Funds and Commercial Area Revitalization District (CARD) Funding. This "CARD District" funding applies only to the area in the Shelburne Village currently zoned commercial and as such would only cover the proposed On-Street Parking Improvement Area as far as Cross Street.

3. Traffic Circulation

Issue:

The intersection between Bridge St. and State St. is currently functioning at minimum acceptable standards of traffic flow at certain peak hours. If growth continues in the village and West County area, this intersection will form a dangerous bottleneck full of confusion and delay. On the Shelburne side of the village, Water St. is too narrow to safely accommodate two-way traffic and on-street parking. Vehicles entering Water St. off Main St. and Route 112 often travel excessively fast.

Recommendation:

Make a clearer system of traffic stop lines, turning lanes, through-traffic lanes and parking areas marked on the roadway to effect a steady flow of traffic. Make Water Street a one way street heading away from Bridge St.

Traffic Consultant, John T. Gillon, identified the State Street to Bridge Street intersection at the west end of the Iron Bridge as one of the most congested in the village. This area, which is actually an enlarged six way intersection, is also the most probable future bottleneck for traffic circulation through the Village if current growth trends continue. Detailed counts of vehicles and turning movements were done for this intersection at rush hours on both weekdays and weekends. Computer analysis by the "CINCH" program used by the Massachusetts Department of Public Works was then run resulting in these recommendations.

State Street/Bridge Street Intersection Analysis

Traffic Consultant, John Gillon states that "a capacity analysis was conducted for both morning and evening peak hours to determine the operating characteristics at the State Street/Bridge Street intersection. The analysis is based on the new 'Highway Capacity Manual' for non-signalized intersections. This manual assumes that the through and right-turn movements along any main street will operate unrestricted but conflicting movements will be subjected to various periods of delay depending primarily on the frequency of adequate safe gaps to complete these movements. These periods of delay are generally categorized in 'Levels of Service' ranging from 'A' for very short or no delays through 'F' for extensive delays."

"As can be seen on the Intersection Levels of Service table as well as in calculations, the State Street left turn to Bridge Street movement occurs without significant delay due to the State Street northbound through movement. However, the Bridge Street operation ranges from little or no delay during the morning peak periods to average and long traffic delay during the PM peak hour."

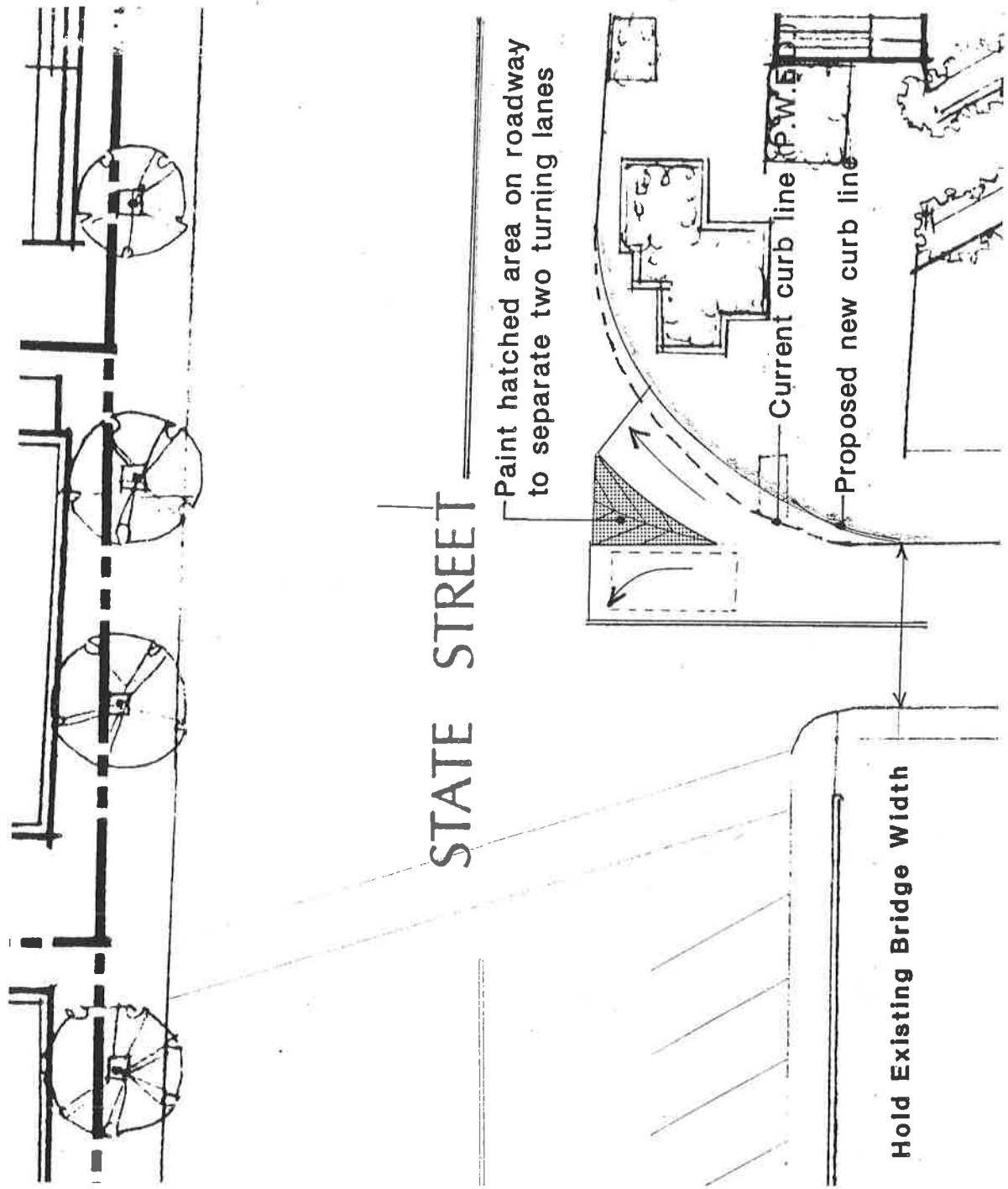


Figure 7. Detail of Curb Modification

"In essence, the Massachusetts Department of Public Works should review the approach design of the roadway prior to bridge improvements. If Bridge Street can accommodate both a left and right-turn lane at State Street, the additional capacity could serve the expected latent demand expected due to downtown improvements."

"Our preliminary findings recommended reconstruction of the Bridge Street approach at State Street to separate left and right turning traffic. This proposal was made after capacity calculations revealed a "D" level of Service during the PM peak hour. Since there is some controversy over whether the bridge can be widened without compromising aesthetics and historical charm, additional calculations were conducted to analyze the effectiveness of reconstructing the curb between the bridge and State Street (See Sketch). This minor improvement would only allow queue storage of one left-turning vehicle before the right-turning vehicle is blocked thus the benefits of such an improvement are questionable."

Intersection Levels of Service

Bridge Street at State Street Intersection:

<u>Movement</u>	<u>AM Peak Hour</u> 6/16/8/4	<u>PM Peak Hour</u> 7/277/2
State Street left onto Bridge Street	A	A
Bridge Street (All Movements)	A	C
	A	D

A" Level = Freeflow, "C" Level = Normal Delay, "D" Level = Lowest Level Allowed for Design

As seen in the calculations above, the average queue in the left turn lane is 0.48 or less than one car length. Thus creating separate turn lanes will improve the right turn from a "D" level to an "A" level and the left turning vehicles will not have to wait for right-turning maneuvers resulting in an increase from an "D" level to a "C" level. In essence, these minor improvement will have dramatic benefits for Bridge Street traffic.

The recent Sidewalks Improvement Plan completed for Buckland under a P.W.E.D. Grant was successfully implemented with minimal disruption during the busy summer season. The key improvement that should now be made in this area is to keep the long crosswalks clearly painted. Highly visible stop lines should be painted on the roadway at the State St./Bridge St. intersection to show cars how far to pull out and then stop, thereby allowing right hand turn traffic to pull by cars waiting for a left hand turn. John Gillon recommended a minor modification of the current curb line at this intersection to increase the traffic flow at rush hours as detailed in his sketch which is shown as figure 7.

The intersection at the west end of the Iron Bridge is extremely wide and confusing and has cars pulling in and out of parking stalls on both sides, making it even more difficult for pedestrians and drivers to negotiate. For these reasons it is critical to delineate crosswalks, stopping lines, and left and right hand turn queuing lanes as clearly as possible on the roadway itself. More extensive use of granite blocks set into the asphalt (such as those recently installed to delineate parking stalls and "no parking" areas in front of the Buckland Town Hall block) could be looked at to reinforce such stopping and lane cues. Crosswalks could be emphasized and problems of the wearing away of painted markings avoided by the judicious use of areas of granite pavers to denote and clearly delineate crossings.

On the Shelburne side of the village the crosswalks are currently barely visible. If the community wants to retain its attractiveness to pedestrians and shoppers who prefer the scale and feel of a 19th century village to that of a mall, then it is crucial to provide clear cues to motorists to cede the right of way to pedestrians using crosswalks. This means the crosswalks must be repainted as often as necessary to stand out at a distance or, alternatively, demarcated with a more durable material such as areas of granite pavers.

Making Water Street One Way

After reviewing traffic circulation and safety issues on the Shelburne side of the Village, our traffic consultant, John Gillon, recommended making Water Street a one way street heading north away from Bridge Street towards the Baptist Green. Water Street is currently used for two way traffic as well as parallel parking on both sides of the street -- all in a 21-24' maximum width roadway. The result is that motorists play a game of hopscotch around parked cars with vehicles travelling in opposite directions having to negotiate alternate use of a single travel lane. In addition, traffic coming directly off Rt. 112 and heading toward the Iron Bridge down Water Street is often traveling too fast for such a congested zone.

Changing the direction of flow on Water St. to one way travelling away from the Iron Bridge will still allow semi-trailers that cannot cross the bridge to turn right and get back to Rt. 2. One way flow away from the center of town also allows quick access to the Baptist Green area and the north side of town by fire equipment (once the Iron Bridge is structurally upgraded). In addition, on-street parking along Water Street will be increased and made safer.

The intersection at the north end of Water Street should be reworked by closing off the straight line extension of Water Street in front of 66 Water St. to make a single right angle intersection between Water St. and Main Street. the existing shallow 30 degree intersection where Water St. going north meets Main is extremely unsafe from a traffic engineering and safety standpoint and should be eliminated.

John Gillon recommended that Cross street between Water and Main Streets retain its existing character of a small two way traffic access lane.

4. Congestion in the Village (Traffic and Parking)

Issue:

More and more vehicles are being attracted to the center of Shelburne Falls by the region's continuing growth and vitality. Congestion and obstacles to even traffic flow as well as disruption of free pedestrian circulation will inevitably result.

Recommendation:

Formulate an overall strategy of establishing off-street parking lots near the major entrances and exits from Shelburne Falls combined with clear and abundant signage that acts to intercept tourist, commuter and employee day-parkers before they reach the village and commercial center.

Our study of vehicular traffic patterns identified four distinct sources of traffic congestion in Shelburne Falls:

1) **A 19th century pattern** of narrow streets where traffic flow is periodically interrupted by the Deerfield River and its limited crossing points, by a steep railroad embankment with similarly limited crossing points, and by the periodic steep faces of the river terraces the village is built upon. Since these features are part of the pattern and resources that make Shelburne Falls a true "village" in the first place, there is little that we would recommend changing in the pattern or the natural features themselves, especially in the short term. If ultimately necessary, a second vehicular bridge over the Deerfield might be used as detailed in the long-term recommendations at the end of this report.

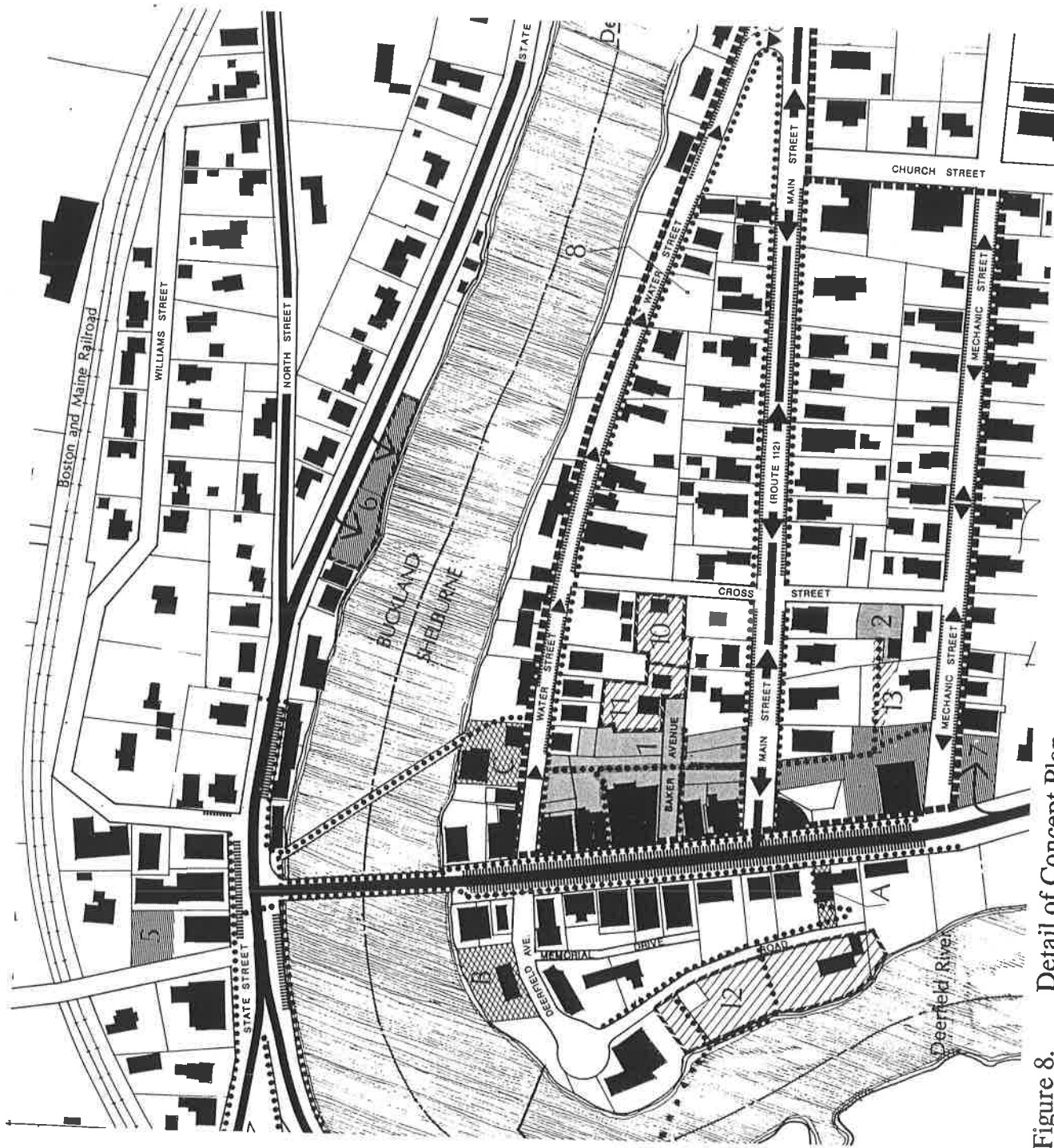


Figure 8. Detail of Concept Plan

Instead the immediate strategy should be to try to deal with congestion in the center by holding non-essential traffic out of the center as much as possible. This would take the form of adding new commuter-parking lots at appropriate sites near the key entrances and exits from the Village (see site #4, the existing Arms Academy lot, on the Concept Plan, figure 2). Existing lots located away from the Village Center should be expanded and specific signage added to direct long-term parkers to use them (see site #9, the proposed expansion of the existing Salmon Falls Marketplace lot shown on the Concept Plan detail, figure 4).

2) Insufficient designated parking for employees and day-parking commuters. There is currently a great shortage of peripheral parking spaces that are specifically designated for long term parking by employees or by commuters. The immediate response to this problem should be: 1) To resurface and *plant* the 23 Cross Street lot that Shelburne has recently acquired for use as an employee parking lot. It is crucial to acquire a pedestrian easement across neighboring property and through to the United Bank lot in order to encourage use of this lot and to make pedestrian access to the center more direct and rapid (see sites #2 & 13 on the Concept Plan detail).

In the long-term a carefully limited number of new remote lots for employees and day parkers can be created that connect with existing major parking areas. These new lots should be located primarily at the center of blocks so that a residential edge as well as planted buffers can be used to screen them (see sites #2, 10, 11 on the Concept Plan detail, page 10).

3) Tourist-related congestion, especially during key weekend hours or certain seasons. Tourists currently create congestion and tie up parking spaces at the village core that would be better reserved for shoppers running quick errands at core businesses. This situation can be improved by creating remote lots for tourists with *clear and coordinated* signage directing tourists to use them (see site #9, the proposed expansion of the existing Salmon Falls Marketplace lot on the Concept Plan Detail, p.20).

The two towns should also explore the possibility of arranging shared use by tourists of private, off-street parking lots strategically located along major entrances to the village. These could have removeable signs posted directing tourists to them during weekends of peak demand such as fall foliage season. Arrangements could also be made to allow public use of key private lots outside of business hours (see site #7, the United Bank upper lot, on the Concept Plan detail).

4) Occasional congestion in commercial district public lots caused by large functions, receptions, etc. at fraternal organizations such as the V.F.W. Post near the Bank Lot. As long-term parking lots such as the 23 Cross Street lot become available, the Towns and area merchants should work with these organizations to get their guests to park in these lots and leave the slightly closer parking free for short-term shoppers.

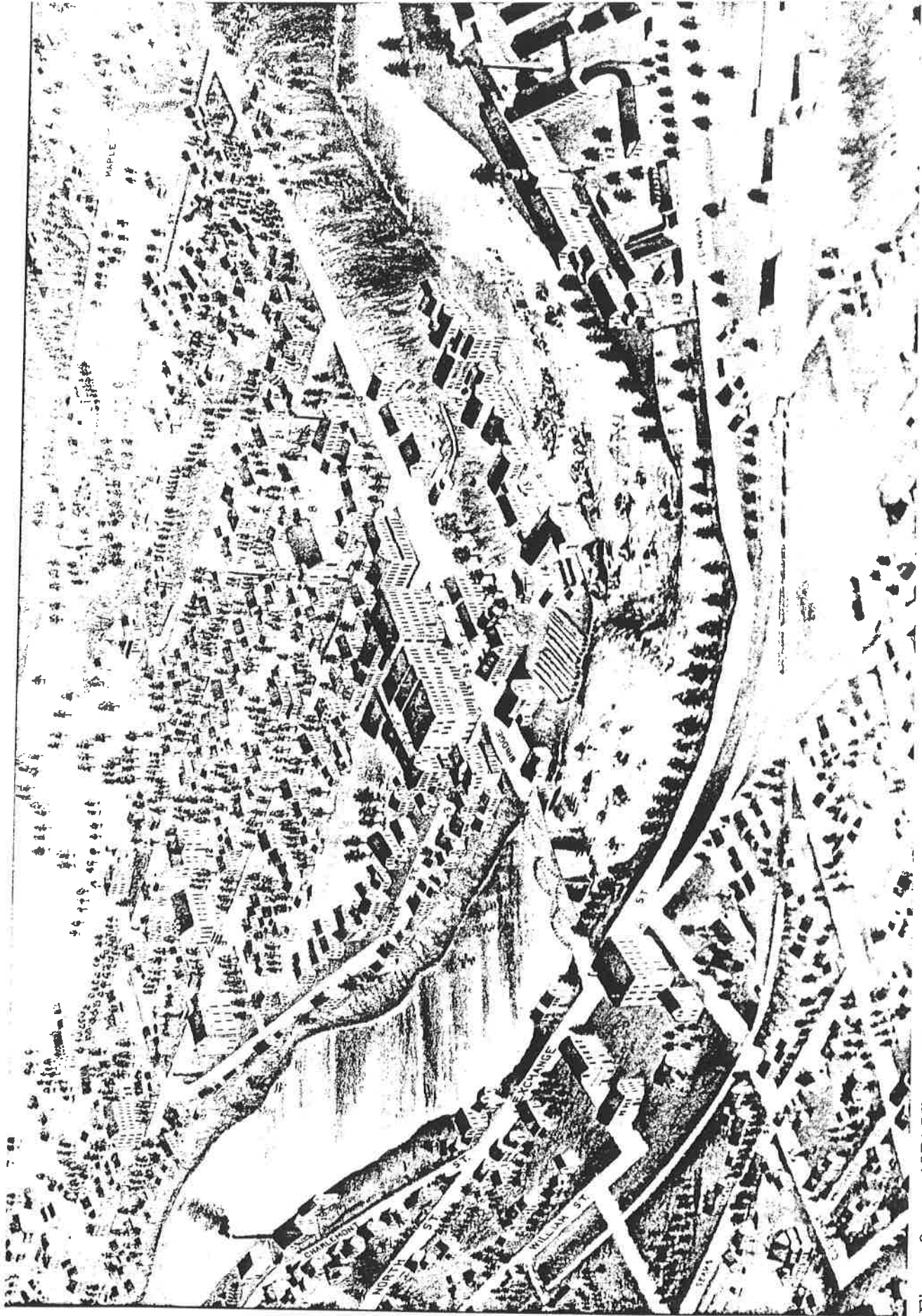


Figure 9. 1871 View of Shelburne Falls

5. Pedestrian Circulation

Issue:

Existing physical obstacles, interrupted circulation patterns and a lack of coordinated and clear signage discourage tourists and residents alike from fully exploring the village, its businesses and its unique natural resources on foot.

Recommendation:

Create a new pedestrian way to link the proposed Village Information Center with the end of Deerfield Avenue. Create direct, clearly visible and attractive routes to draw pedestrians to and from the more remote commercial "spines" such as the upper Bridge Street corridor or the Salmon Falls Marketplace area.

Pedestrian circulation in Shelburne Falls needs to be encouraged by maintaining the village character in the commercial district where buildings close to the sidewalk establish a common facade line reinforcing the street pattern. Shelburne Falls possesses a great resource in its wealth of 19th c. architectural detail on both commercial and residential buildings which is best appreciated from a pedestrian viewpoint and speed. The unique and interesting physical character of the village encourages shoppers to visits and to browse along the streets.

A clear and well- coordinated sign system, preferably the work of a single designer so that it is consistent in style and format, should be installed to guide pedestrian visitors through a series of varied loop paths linking major attractions and focal points of the Village such as the Bridge of Flowers and the Glacial Potholes with the major commercial blocks. A pedestrian connection linking the area of the proposed Village Information Center and its public restrooms with the bottom of Deerfield Avenue and the Glacial potholes area once existed and should be re-established. Traces of previous pathways and roads connecting the area of upper Bridge Street shops with the site of the old "Under the Hill Mills" of the 1800's can still be seen as railings traversing the slope behind the Town Hall and as traces of a level roadway branching off Deerfield Ave. up the slope just before the existing Mayhew Steel buildings. See figure 7, taken from an 1871 perspective view of Shelburne Falls. The original is on display at the Pratt Memorial Library in Shelburne.

A pathway or combination of pathway and steps linking the upper Bridge Street shops with the natural attractions of the riverfront and Potholes was also strongly urged in the 1980 Community Improvement Plan for Shelburne Falls. This steep and shaded slope currently acts as a barrier to isolate lower Deerfield Ave., but could be the perfect location for a combined connecting path and wildflower garden that could work with the Village Information Center and any future development of the lower Potholes area to form a second node of tourist attractions in the village that could eventually equal the Bridge of Flowers.

Adding this link not only creates an interesting pedestrian circuit, it would also increase foot traffic past the stores along upper Bridge St. which currently benefit less from pedestrian circulation than those immediately adjacent to the river and bridges. A wildflower path of this type might make an ideal project for a private fund-raising and planting effort that would add to Shelburne Falls' image as a village of flowers and greenery.

A coordinated system of pedestrian circulation in the village area should be worked out where many diverse loops (that can be taken singly or combined into a figure-eights, etc.) radiate out from the central focus of the Iron Bridge. Additional pedestrian loops need to be clearly pointed out at the Village Information Center, at the proposed central business directory and perhaps at other strategic spots in order to encourage pedestrian traffic to flow out to link the Salmon Falls Marketplace area (and other outlying commercial areas) more strongly to the center of town. Another loop could be developed reaching out to include the spine of storefronts and commercial development along State Street that ends near the Eagles Club parking lot.

Creating coordinated loops with attractive end points as goals will encourage exploration of Shelburne Falls on foot, encourage visitors to spend more time and strengthen commerce over a wider area. These loops attract greater use if they are designed so that it is never necessary to retrace one's steps.

Shelburne Falls was forced by the Deerfield, steep hills and limited flat land to develop an extremely dense and tight village fabric. This presents a problem as far as competing needs for limited amounts of building or open space. However it is also the Village's greatest strength since it offers such a richness and variety of natural, historic and commercial resources in an area small enough to truly encourage pedestrian exploration and enjoyment.

6. Public Facilities Issues/ Village Information Center

Issue:

Until recently there has been no central spot for orienting visitors to Shelburne Falls and providing information on village businesses and resources as well as those of the West County in general. There are no public facilities which non-resident visitors can easily find and use.

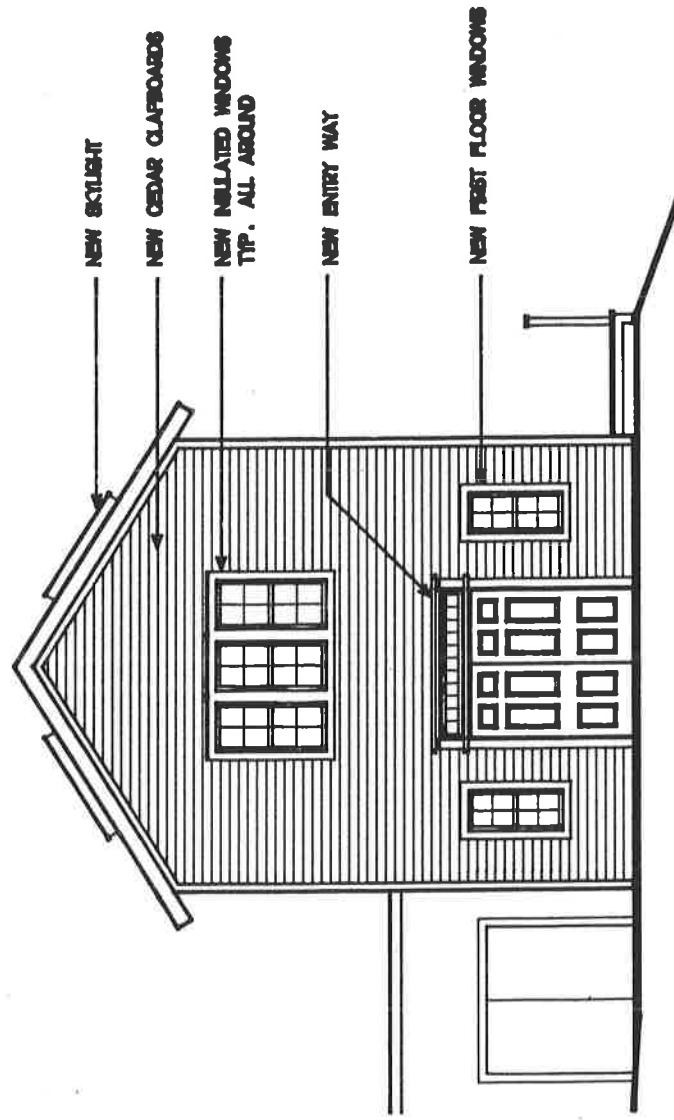
Recommendation:

Renovate the existing Shelburne Town Shed to make an attractive and functional Village Information Center containing exhibits, business and craft directories and two handicapped-accessible public toilets.

The lack of public facilities along the streets of the Village available to visitors and County residents alike was singled out by Shelburne Falls business owners as one of their most serious problems in a 1987 survey. The scope of services for the Townscape plan included assessing sites in the village suitable for use for public facilities such as restrooms, a visitor information center and perhaps a small museum or changing exhibit space relating to the village's historic and varied past.

Three sites were evaluated as potential information centers: the Town Shed, the old Berkshire Porcelain Building between Deerfield Ave. and the river and the V.F.W. Club site on Water Street. The Town Shed at 51 Bridge Street was selected for the following reasons:

1. It is strategically located to catch the attention of visitors entering the village at the major Rt. 2 entrance.
2. It allows visitors to orient themselves through its spectacular views to the potholes below and down Bridge St. to the center of town.
3. A landscaped footpath could provide a pedestrian link from the Town Shed down to the potholes area below and thereby increase foot traffic past the Bridge Street businesses.
4. Since the Town of Shelburne already owns the building this would be the most economical site to develop for an information center and public toilets. Necessary remodeling could be started quickly.
5. Use by the Town of the upper United Bank parking lot located at the corner of Bridge and Mechanic Streets could be explored for a weekend tourist lot close by the Village Information Center.



FRONT ELEVATION

Figure 10. Proposed Front Elevation of Information Center

The following is a general description of suggested renovations and improvements to the current Shelburne Town Shed as proposed by Dietz & Company Architects for renovation as the Village Information Center. These renovations will include addition of two public toilets and a viewing deck to orient visitors down toward the Glacial Potholes. Please see figures 10 - 13 depicting some of these changes.

First Floor

Existing elements to be removed include the existing stairs, the chimney and shed storage area in the rear of the building. The existing garage door and front door are to be replaced with 2 - 3'-0" 6-panel doors with transoms and wood decorative trim. Another possible option would be 2 full glass doors with divided lights. An additional window should be placed on either side of the doors for additional light, especially since this is the north elevation. The reconfiguration of the front elevation in such a fashion should provide a more inviting and a bit more formal look to the building. New stairs (with a more comfortable rise and run) will be provided in the old location with an open colonial rail. Another option would be to close the stair in with a door at the bottom of the stairs. Next to the stairs a kitchenette area can be added, with a refrigerator, stove top, sink, microwave and wall and base cabinets and enclosed by a bifold door. To the right of the kitchen can be a closet for coats and general storage. In the back of the building two fully equipped handicapped accessible restrooms for the public have been indicated. For additional light for the back of the building, a window was added along the side wall near the deck. A deck has been added to the back and sides of the building including both open and closed rails and stairs leading to the lower grade in the rear.

Second Floor

Existing elements to be removed include the existing walls in the rear which will be replaced with rebuilt stairs to the attic with storage below. The removal of the first two bays of the floor framing system and the construction of an open rail along the front edge of the newly created balcony is also recommended. This will provide a more bright and airy feeling to the front of the Information Center and will allow for the hanging of banners or the display of larger items in the new two story space.

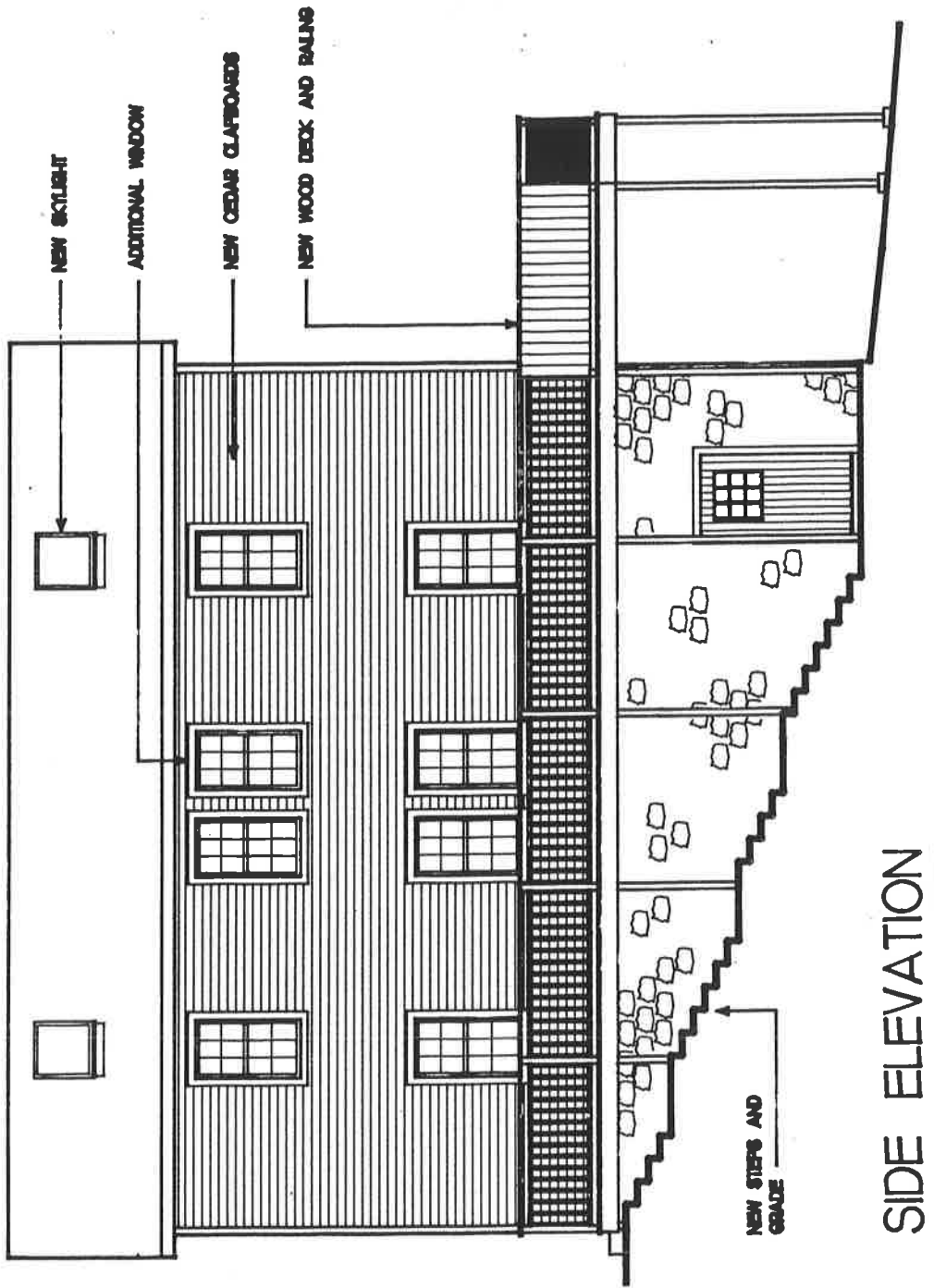


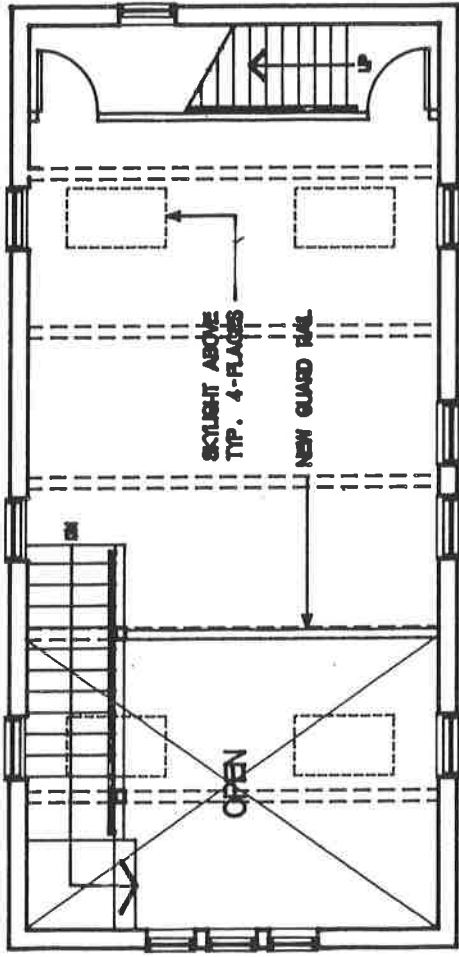
Figure 11. Proposed Side Elevation of Information Center

Figure 12: Statement of Probable Cost

November 30, 1988

<u>Sitework and Demolition</u>	
Revised grading and steps	\$3,000
Interior demolition	3,000
Landscaping	4,000
<u>Concrete & Masonry</u>	
Concrete slab in basement	1,000
Repaint & repair foundation	2,000
<u>Carpentry</u>	
New windows, doors and skylights	8,500
Miscellaneous reframing	10,000
Porch and rear stairs	10,000
New roof and siding	18,000
Insulation	2,000
<u>Finishes</u>	
Interior and exterior painting	10,000
Flooring	7,000
<u>Mechanical & Electrical</u>	
New bathrooms & kitchenette	3,000
Heating systems	10,000
Lights and power	8,000
Subtotal	99,500
Contingency 15%	15,000
Total	\$114,500

SECOND FLOOR



FIRST FLOOR

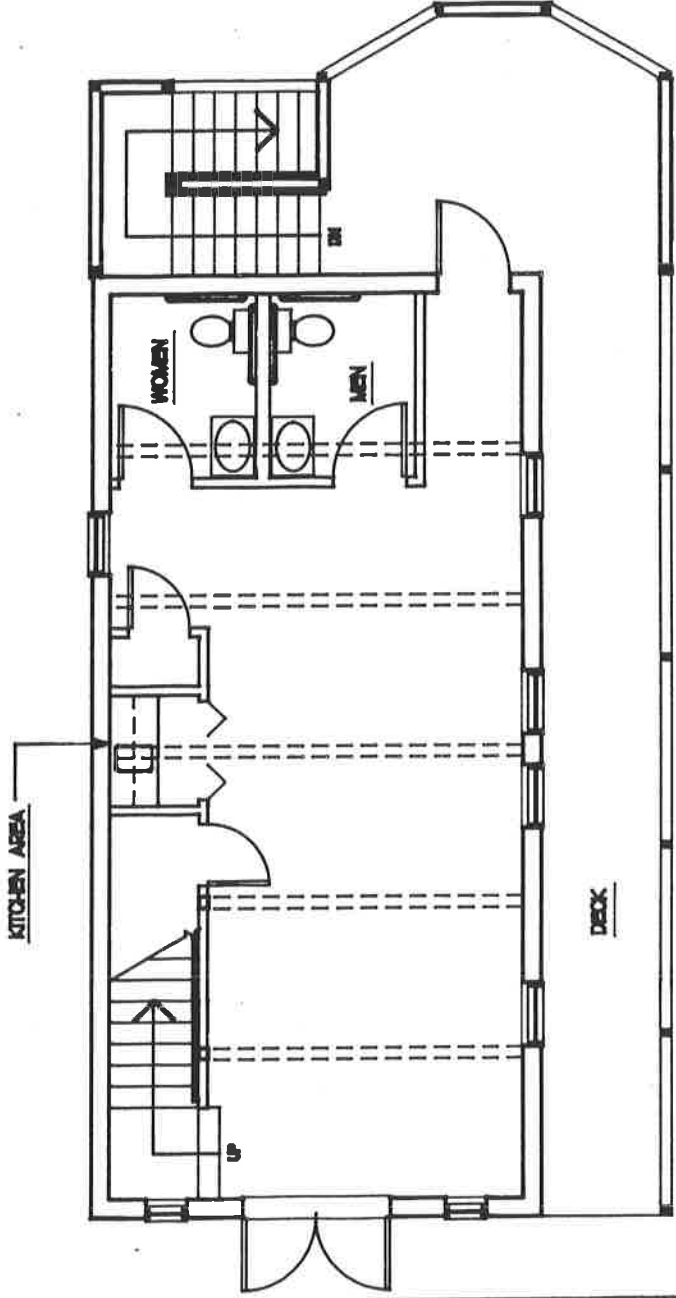


Figure 13. Proposed Floor Plans for Information Center

7. Historic Preservation

Issue:

The inappropriate demolition or modification of Shelburne Falls' older buildings can obscure and even destroy a critical component of the village's special character and continuing vitality. Merchants and building owners need guidelines and support in finding financial and design assistance to preserve Shelburne Falls' commercial facades, wealth of high quality 19th century residential buildings and several special local building types.

Recommendation:

Create guidelines and informational booklets describing how to restore existing commercial facades. Create guidelines specific to the village for residential remodeling or expansion projects. Adopt a local Historic District Ordinance and create a program of commercial site plan review for proposals affecting key corridors such as the riverfront (special building type with galleries overhanging the river). Consider adopting a Demolition Ordinance to control unnecessary destruction of historic buildings. Explore whether tax incentives can be created for building owners who participate in the above programs. Participate in the state "Main Street Program" (for more information, contact Massachusetts EOCD).

One of Shelburne Fall's greatest assets is the physical character of the village and the large number of historic buildings lining its streets. While a largely 19th century village presents challenges for accommodating 20th century traffic demands, traffic and parking requirements should not result in the destruction of the historic fabric of the village. Too many towns have undertaken radical traffic improvements only to realize that their physical and historic character was sacrificed in the process. We recommend carefully accommodating additional parking and better vehicular circulation by working within the existing constraints of the village. Set clear limits or transition zones between residential and commercial districts to avoid new strip commercial development along the major traffic entrances to and exits from the village center.

Background Over the past forty years, land use regulations and development planning have been dominated by engineers. This has resulted in developments that function well from a purely technical standpoint while generally disregarding important social, aesthetic and historic concerns. These concerns need to be brought back into the forefront of land use regulation and development practices, especially in highly scenic and historic communities such as Shelburne Falls. The sense of proportion, attention to materials and detail and the concern for creating a sense of community that clearly motivated the village's builders in the 18th and 19th Centuries must be revived to guide growth in the future. Design can play an important role in this revival if it is based on historic traditions and popular concerns rather than on the

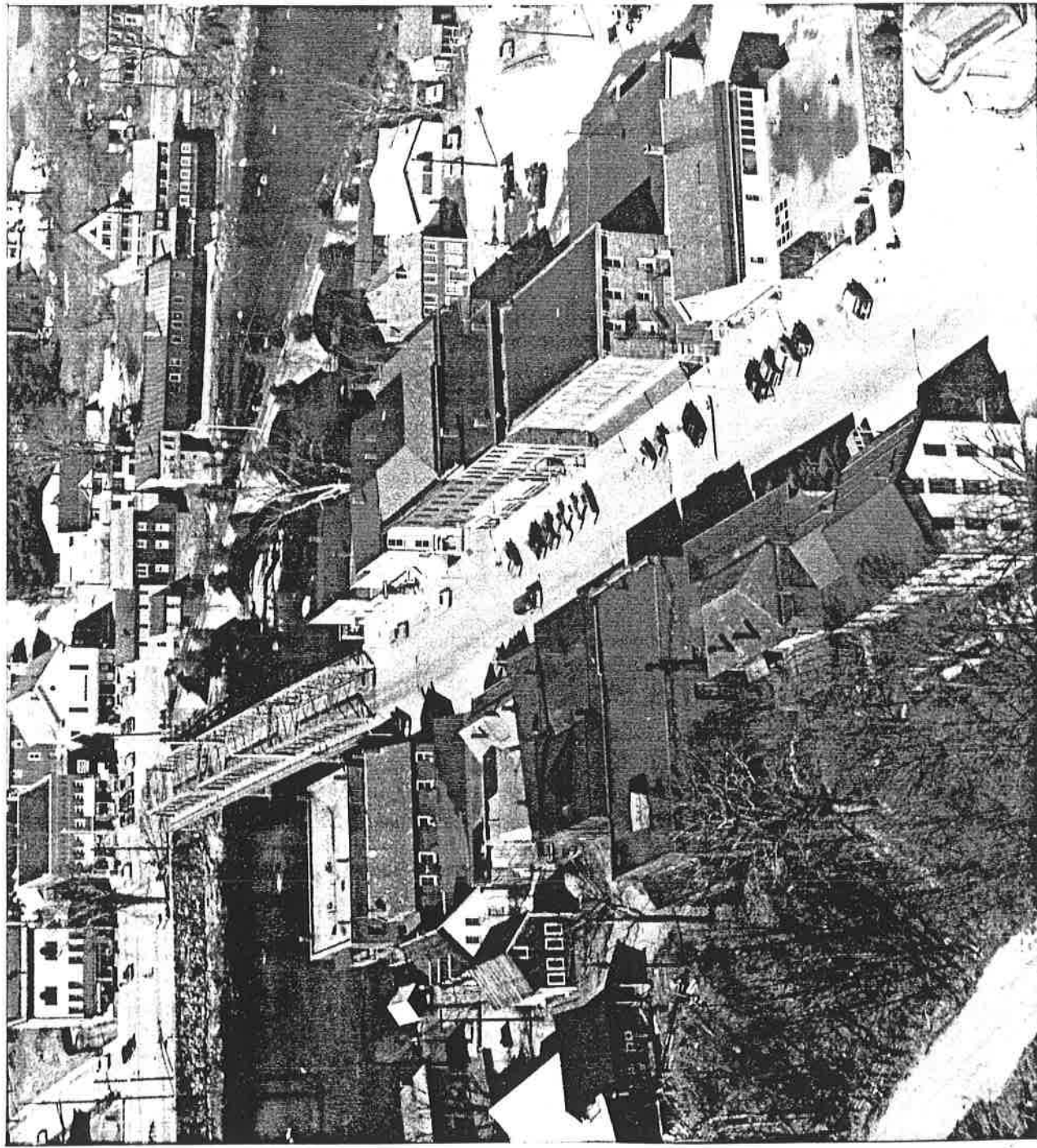


Figure 14. 1960's Air Photo of Bridge and State Streets

individual architect's will to impose alien styles on a community. Modern architecture's failure to respect historic and community traditions must share the blame with excessive reliance on technical engineering solutions for the inappropriate development that has overwhelmed so much of the American landscape.

The final - and the largest culprit is our automobile-oriented technological culture. In a certain sense, engineers, developers and business owners who create commercial strips are merely responding to the needs of consumers who typically arrive to shop by automobile. While reliance on shuttle buses, public transportation and pedestrian amenities can help reduce the impact of vehicles on the commercial district and village center, there is no way to avoid the fact that cars will continue to be a major factor in the layout and physical appearance of commercial shopping areas. However, improved site planning and design can reduce this impact by reducing the visibility of parking lots, saving space by creating more efficient street and parking layouts and by organizing buildings into cohesive masses that create pedestrian oriented community spaces and reinforce traditional street edges.

Design based on the historic traditions of the region can translate the best design elements of the past into new approaches for shaping future growth. The outstanding sense of design evidenced in Shelburne Falls' first two centuries must be continued into its third, even if this means dealing with the new challenges of parking lots and utility lines typical of an affluent, automobile-determined landscape.

Renovate or Relocate Historic Buildings instead of Demolishing Them: Wherever possible every effort should be made to renovate older or historic buildings in such a way as to respect their original appearance and to maintain them as a critical component of the character of Shelburne Falls' downtown. If the existing building cannot be renovated and left in its original position then every effort should be made to move it to a new and appropriate location. Moving houses and buildings is a traditional Yankee skill that can be put to work to avoid losing irreplaceable historic character and building details, limited commercial building stock and equally valuable housing stock near the village center.

Building Siting: Locate new buildings and additions close to major commercial streets in order to reinforce the strong architectural street edge typical of Shelburne Falls' downtown. Setbacks of new commercial or residential buildings should match existing building setbacks in the area. Building siting can also be used to allow new buildings or additions to screen existing parking lots and vacant spaces. New buildings can actually fill in gaps that now exist between structures, creating a unified edge of individual buildings along the street.

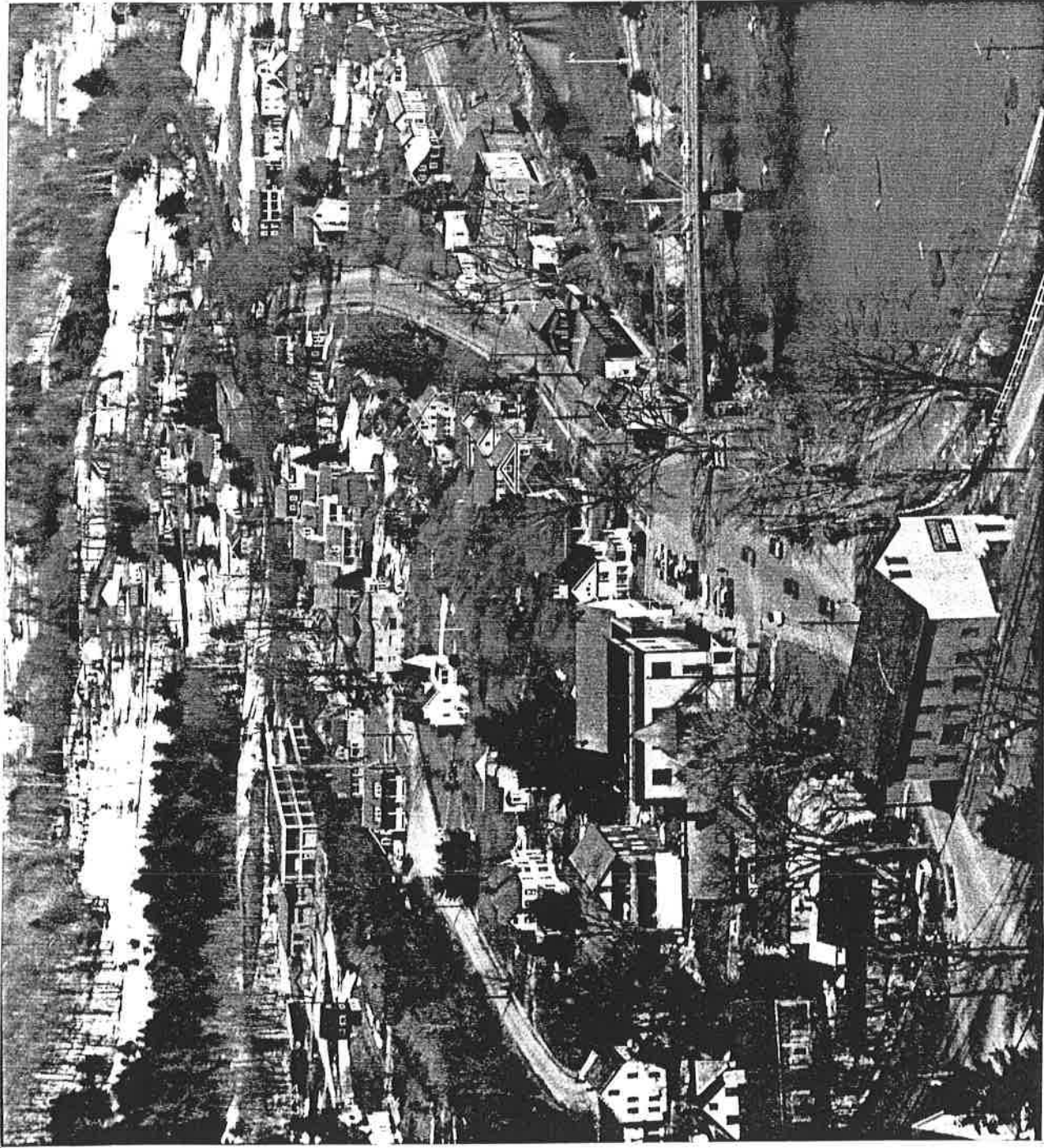


Figure 15. 1960's Air Photo of Buckland Side of Village

Building Massing: Traditionally in the commercial district of Shelburne Falls, buildings have been located close to the street, forming a strong architectural edge of prominent 2 1/2 and 3 story facades. This edge is extremely consistent and noticeable along Bridge Street (see figure 14), State Street and Water Street as far as the historic Mowry House. Outside of this commercial core, variety in building types and masses, small variations in setbacks, areas of lawn or open space and site features such as fences create diversity within the overall consistency of the groups of building lining the streets.

New commercial buildings should fill in existing gaps in the existing facade line of commercial district streets. New buildings should be designed with strong 2 1/2 to 3 story facades to reinforce this street edge. Doors and windows opening on the street should be encouraged and should be carefully designed to encourage activity along the street.

New residential construction should be broken down into smaller masses of a more residential scale to reflect neighboring buildings. Large, massive buildings should be avoided in favor of groupings of smaller buildings of varying sizes and orientations. The groupings of smaller buildings can be used to create variety along the street, to create smaller enclosed pedestrian spaces and to enclose entrances and driveways.

Additive massing, otherwise known as the old New England tradition of adding on, should be used to break down the volume of larger structures and fit them to their traditionally scaled neighbors. This technique will be particularly important in fitting new commercial construction *not situated* on the existing major commercial streets to the scale and massing of the adjacent Victorian residences.

Building Height: Buildings of two and especially three stories should be encouraged along Bridge Street up to the United Bank building and along State Street within one block of the Iron Bridge. The one story buildings typical of newer commercial developments are too low to create a strong sense of enclosure along a street the size of Bridge Street. A single story, flat-roofed, "modern style" building such as the old Bank of Boston building at the corner of Main and Bridge Streets is out of scale with its older, 2 1/2 to 3 story commercial neighbors and even with the predominant 2 1/2 story height of the nearby Victorian residential district. (The earlier and taller building that it replaced is shown in the pre-1890 photograph shown in figure 17.) The new building is visually out of character with the rest of the street and weakens one's sense of being "downtown" at the commercial core of the village that Bridge Street projects.

One story buildings exclusively devoted to retail sales also preclude the diversity of uses that create variety and interest in the commercial district. In a taller structure, the ground floors are typically devoted to retail uses, while the upper floors house office, storage or even residential uses. This also creates activity and vitality in the downtown after business hours.

Architectural Design: What is needed in the Village Center and Commercial District is the use of architectural styles in renovation and new construction that reflect but don't slavishly imitate the massing, proportions and relationship to the street of traditional buildings in this area. Within the range of traditional building sizes, locations and orientations, a fairly wide range of architectural styles can be appropriate. The key is to achieve variety and individuality without creating buildings that are monuments to their designers, are out of scale with their surroundings or are improperly sited in relation to their neighbors and to the major commercial streets. A restrained post-modernism that uses traditional elements in a relevant, balanced way and avoids historical gimmickry could work very well in this area.

Building designers should be creative and imaginative in the contemporary adaptation of traditional materials, proportions and detailing. Special attention should be focused on designing commercial buildings that are tall enough to relate well to Bridge, State and Main Streets and that maintain and reinforce the distinct line of 2 1/2 to 3 story facades along the street.

Rooflines: Avoid flat roofs and slightly sloped roofs in buildings under 2 stories in height. Flat roofs should only be used where adjacent to existing 3 storied, flat-roofed buildings such as those that form the Bridge Street commercial corridor in Shelburne and the Town Hall Block in Buckland.

Facades: Guidelines programs as well as incentive packages should be developed to aid property owners and businesses in both towns' commercial districts to *return* facades on their buildings to their original appearance whenever possible. Respecting neighboring facades and the special detailing typically lavished on these commercial blocks is important while at the same time meeting the business needs of the current owners or occupants. The care and consideration given to designing the facades of buildings in the commercial district one hundred years ago should be matched by any renovations or changes undertaken today. This attention to detailing and use of interesting materials also serves to emphasize how the facades form a common wall that gives definition to the streetscape as a special place to be or to shop.

Architectural Details: Architectural elements such as dormers should be in proportion with the overall building and should be in keeping with traditional Shelburne Falls architecture. Exaggerated or excessively large architectural elements or ones that are out of proportion should be avoided.

Materials: Traditional materials such as local stone, brick and clapboards help blend new buildings in with the old, but should not be relied on by themselves to create a sense of historic character. Historic building materials are not effective when used on buildings that in other ways violate Shelburne Falls' sense of scale, proportion and siting.

Fenestration: Careful proportioning and location of windows on the building facade is critical in blending new construction in with the existing village character. New fenestration can draw its inspiration from traditional windows and the variety and proportion they create on a building. Excessive regularity or irregularity should be avoided. Large picture windows and glass curtain walls should be avoided for aesthetic as well as energy conservation reasons. Windows can be used to create a sense of rhythm on a building. An overall balance is important, though typical Shelburne Falls facades often contain window eccentricities such as small, oddly placed windows and occasional blank, windowless areas of clapboards or shingles that punctuate the fenestration. Studying and adapting traditional Shelburne Falls windows is recommended to achieve the unique blend of proportion, rhythm and variety that is unique to the town's architecture.

Signage: Signs will be a critical element in creating a successful transition between driving and walking in the village's commercial district. New peripheral parking lots and reorganized traffic and pedestrian flows will require a well-coordinated signage system to guide drivers successfully to their destination and to encourage their use of the peripheral lots. In addition to orienting visitors, a well-designed and located system of signs could unify the central business district and provide it with a positive image. This system should probably be developed by a single designer to ensure overall consistency and careful placement of signs.

Streetscape: The streetscape of the central district of both Buckland and Shelburne -- its sidewalks, street trees, curbs, steps, railings, and ornamental details -- is also an important part of any historic preservation effort and should not be treated as a minor or inconsequential concern. There is a wealth of 19th century industrial detailing throughout the village which should be protected and extended in character by any new projects such as the P.W.E.D. sidewalk reconstruction grant for Bridge Street that has been applied for. Village-wide programs to re-plant street trees will form a crucial part of streetscape improvements in the Falls given adequate attention to good design and installation as well as continued maintenance of the new trees. Preserving the streetscape of the village as a unique and interesting place to walk and shop is essential to maintaining the viability of the local businesses to compete with nearby malls or with the shopping districts of larger towns.

Individual property owners and businessmen can make a significant contribution to the local streetscape and to the health of the commercial districts by investing in removing previous inappropriate changes to the facades of their buildings (such as the white marble facing of the old United Bank building or other examples of 1960's "modern" design intrusions into the otherwise consistent 19th century commercial design of Bridge and State streets). The interesting handwrought railings made by a West County ironsmith that were added a few years ago to the entrance of McCusker's Market are a good example of a new detail added by the individual property owner that enlivens the streetscape and strengthens the downtown as a special place while at the same time responding to 19th century precedents in the area.

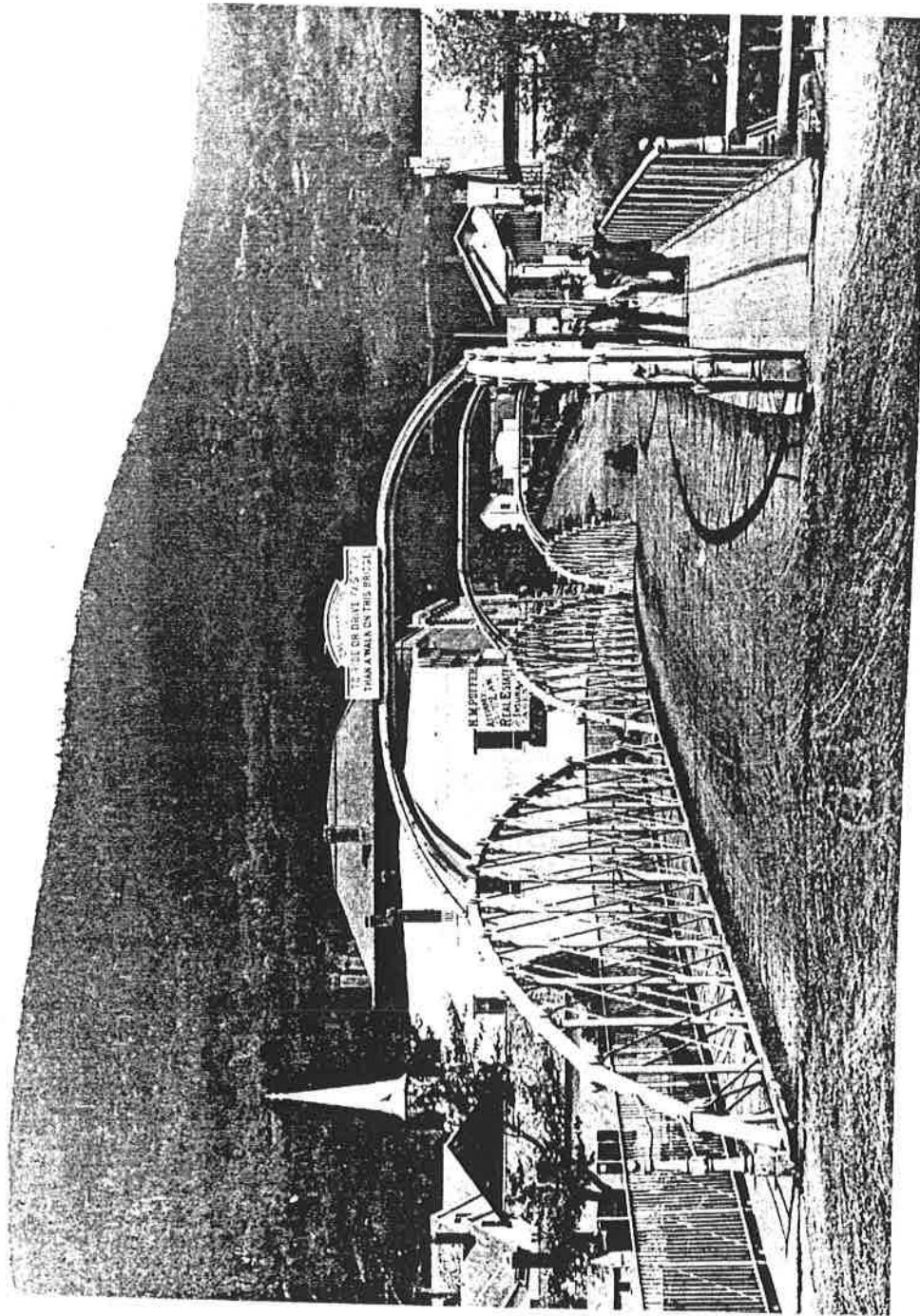


Figure 16. Photograph of Second Bridge (pre-1890)

Bridge Preservation: Preservation of the 19th century industrial character of the Iron Bridge is critical in preserving the traditional visual character of the village center. Any re-design by the Massachusetts D.P.W. should retain this special character and should avoid a new excessively wide bridge looking like it belongs on any faceless modern highway. Every effort should be made to stabilize the two existing stone piers of the Iron Bridge and re-use them in the new design. The width of the travel lanes on any new re-design of the bridge is also a critical consideration. It is recommended that the travel lanes be widened slightly, but by no more than by 2 feet in each lane. This will avoid making the bridge and Bridge and State Streets a place for high speed automobile traffic and thus will ensure that the village center continue to have a safe and inviting pedestrian character. Of course, it is also critical that any new bridge design allow safe and quick passage of fire fighting equipment and emergency vehicles.

Preliminary Guidelines for New Development in the Village Center and Commercial Districts:

These preliminary guidelines recommend design approaches for the architecture and landscape of the commercial districts and village center. They are not legally binding but are intended to advise and guide landowners and developers with plans to renovate, expand or build new construction in this area. At some point in the future, the town and area landowners and businessmen may want to expand and formalize these recommendations in a design review process for the commercial district of each town.

Parking:

- Encourage parking at the rear of instead of in front of commercial buildings. This will screen the parking from view, create a strong edge of buildings along Bridge and State Streets and reduce traffic congestion.
- Encourage efficient and attractive design of parking lots. *Require ample landscaping to screen cars.* Reduce the large, unbroken expanses of asphalt without losing parking spaces.
- *Encourage the consolidation and sharing of parking lots.*

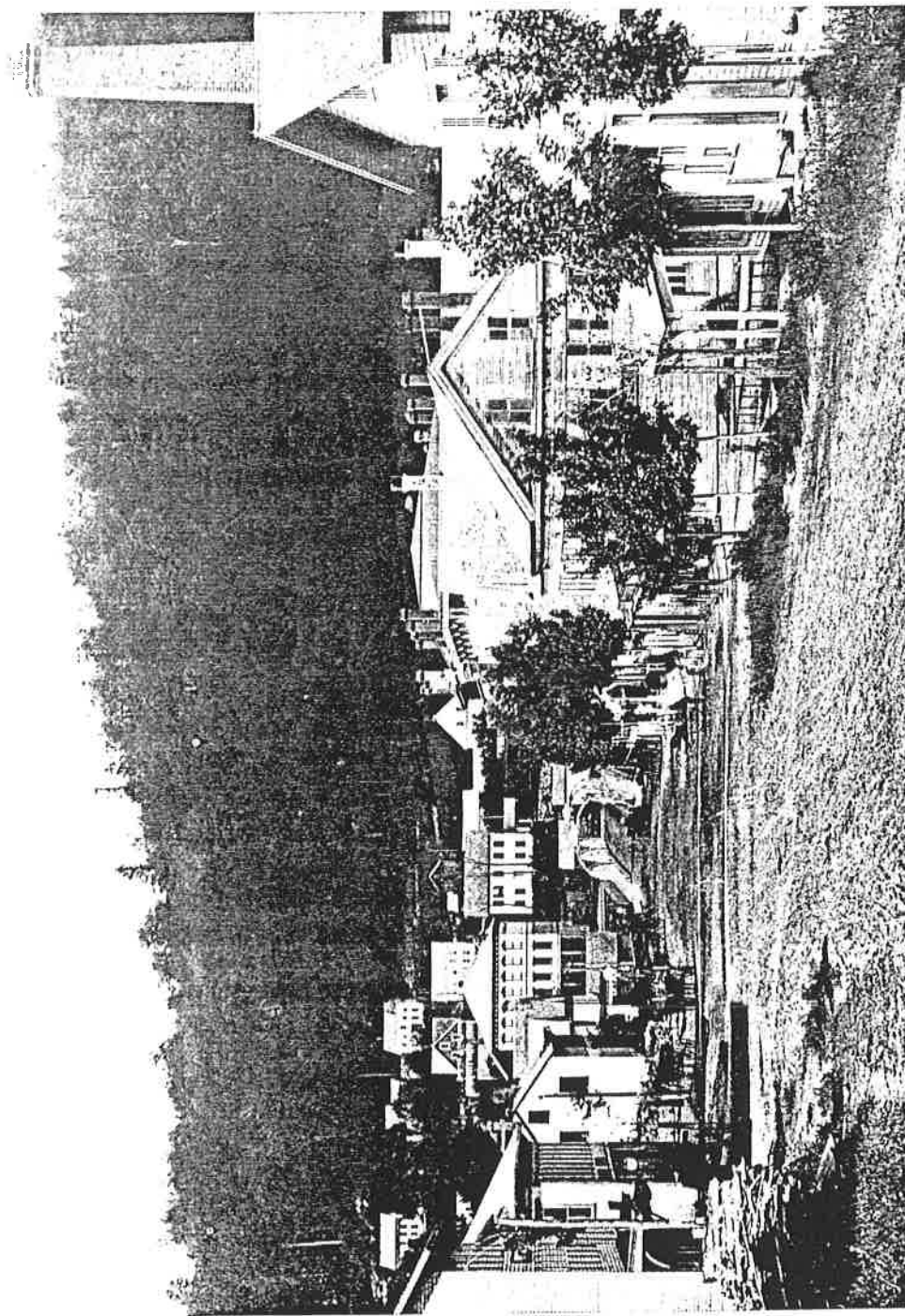


Figure 17. Photograph of Bridge Street (pre-1890)

Landscape and Site Planning:

- Locate new buildings or additions close to State, Bridge, Main and Water Streets with parking and service areas screened to the rear. This will create an attractive edge of buildings along the street instead of the large areas of parking that are typical of commercial strips.
- Encourage variety, irregularity and uniqueness in building location and design, reflecting traditional Shelburne Falls patterns.
- Encourage the planting of large street trees in informal groups to help shade and enclose the street.
- Buildings should be arranged on the land in varied, clustered masses focussing on the street.
- Encourage attractive pedestrian-oriented environments around the shopping areas. Allow the Commercial District to become a destination rather than a collection of parking lots.

Architecture:

- Architecture of the village center and commercial districts should develop a style that is sympathetic to the older areas of town and reflects the traditional settlement pattern of buildings arranged closely along the street.
- New commercial buildings and additions should have a strong relationship to the major existing commercial streets (State, Bridge, Water, Main & Mechanic), forming an architectural edge of strong 2 1/2 to 3 story facades along the street.
- Creative adaptation of traditional Shelburne Falls building forms and styles is encouraged with special attention to be paid to adjacent older buildings.
- Reuse and add on to rather than tear down existing older buildings at the Village core.
- New residential buildings should avoid large, bulky masses that do not harmonize in scale with the village's existing 19th century buildings. New buildings should be broken down into groupings of smaller, attached structures.
- Traditional building materials such as brick, stone, clapboards and slate roof shingles should be used. Roof pitches, fenestration, building proportions and masses and other details should relate to but not copy traditional Shelburne Falls architecture.

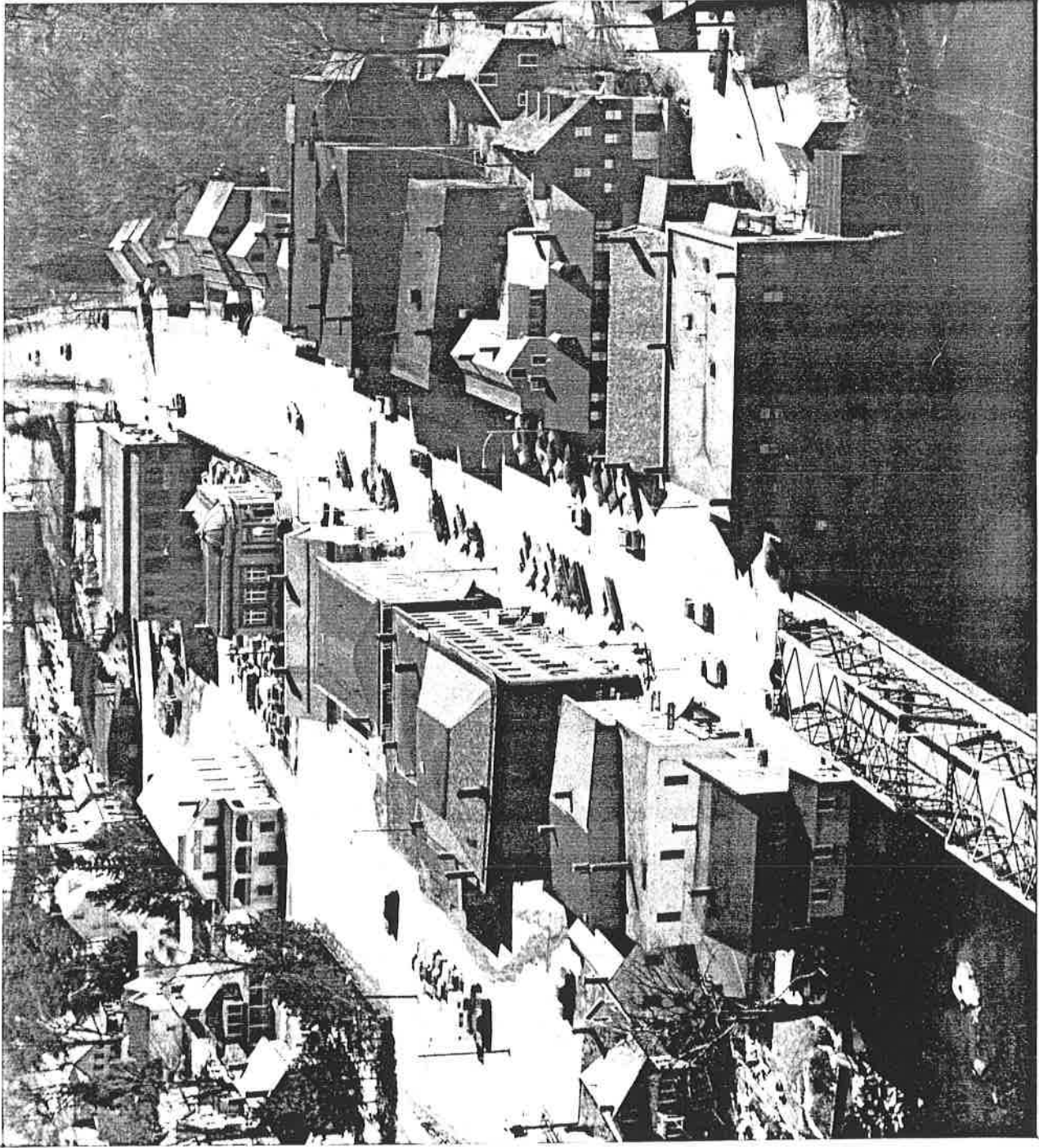


Figure 18. 1960's Air Photo of Bridge St., Looking East

Signage: See pages 144 -147 of Dealing with Change in the Connecticut River Valley: A Design Manual for Conservation and Development, Vol. II, by the Center for Rural Massachusetts, the Mass. D.E.M. and Dodson Associates for one possible set of guidelines for signage in an historic town center. The Planning Boards and Conservation Commissions of both Buckland and Shelburne should each have one copy of this manual.

Zoning: Institute a local Historic District By-law with design review to control building renovations and new construction in the Bridge Street commercial corridor. Create guidelines and informational booklets on harmonious renovation or new development for the village district. Consider requiring a special permit procedure in identified, key areas other than the Bridge Street and State Street Historic District to ensure that any proposed project be consistent in character and scale with traditional structures in Shelburne Falls, that it respects other structures in the vicinity, that it promotes pedestrian and traffic safety and that, where applicable, it consolidates the number of curb cuts in the district. This special permit procedure should also prevent the intrusion of commercial uses into residential areas and promote scenic views from publicly accessible locations.

One key area that deserves special guidelines and a special permit process involving site plan review is the riverfront corridor and any building that is sited directly adjacent to the river. Shelburne Falls already has some very interesting buildings with gallery additions cantilevered out over the river to add space. This "look" should be preserved and the existing buildings picked up on and harmoniously related to by any new construction or expansion.

As elaborated in Dealing with Change in the Connecticut River Valley: A Design Manual for Conservation and Development, Vol. II:

"Local zoning may include an Historic District bylaw (enabled under Chapter 40C, MSA) to regulate changes in building facades. This type of zoning is most appropriate where historic buildings are geographically concentrated (as is the case of the downtown area of Shelburne Falls).

In other areas of town, where historic district zoning may not be appropriate or where there is property owner resistance to this type of regulation, other means may be employed to help protect a community's character. one approach, known as "Site Plan Review," may include certain minimum requirements for the exterior appearance of any new or altered buildings. (This tool is typically applied to non-residential and multi-family uses.) For example, scale drawings of proposed building facades may be required, showing locations and types of all windows, doors, and exterior materials. The Site Plan Review process normally evaluates whether the proposal meets minimum requirements for "fitting into" the neighborhood. These provisions may include a requirement for facing a masonry block building in brick of an appropriate color (not "used" brick or other varieties doctored to appear old); a requirement for pitched roofs; and a requirement that

window size and spacing conform to the general window proportions and rhythms characteristic of traditional buildings in the area."

(from Dealing with Change in the Connecticut River Valley: A Design Manual for Conservation and Development, Vol. II, Center for Rural Massachusetts, Amherst, 1988. This manual is highly recommended and copies were distributed by Massachusetts D.E.M. to both the Planning Boards and Conservation Commissions of both Buckland and Shelburne).

Lighting: The character of the village's commercial district at night is very important because it is used frequently in the evening, especially in the wintertime. Typical commercial strips at night are marred by glaring, high intensity sodium vapor street lights that cast an eerie orange glow over the parking lots. Some towns in the Connecticut Valley area have also converted their downtown areas to these non-color-corrected sodium vapor lights -- with results that discourage use of the area at night. A preferred approach involves the following:

- Screen all exterior lighting: Require that all exterior lighting have "cut-off" type fixtures that prevent glare onto adjacent areas. Avoid intense spot lights that glare into pedestrian areas or streets.
- Require *color-corrected* sodium vapor or other *color corrected* high intensity discharge (HID) lighting to avoid the orange or purple glare given off by non-color-corrected lights. Reduce the intensity level of lighting to create a more attractive night-time environment. Use a larger number of smaller light standards in the 12 to 18' height range rather than a few very tall standards or lights on tall phone poles.
- Use incandescent exterior lights in smaller, pedestrian exterior spaces where quality of light is especially important.

Encourage Essential Goods and Service Businesses:

- Avoid the sterility of modern commercial strips. A diversity of spaces, architecture, and site features is essential to maintain a sense of community in the village center. Dynamic streets, plenty of attractive storefronts and restaurants, open spaces with character and activity make a small town unique and attractive. Keep the essential core businesses -- the grocery store, hardware store, pharmacy, clothing and shoe stores, etc.. To survive these core businesses must have adequate parking. They also enhance the marketability of the village's commercial district by giving it an attractive overall identity as an pleasing place to be, a destination in itself. Instead of stop and run shopping with multiple vehicle trips and frustrating parking experiences, encourage one-stop shopping in the district at a more leisurely pace. This is the secret of the malls and it can be adopted to Shelburne Falls without adding all the negative aspects of mall shopping.

Strong Town Center Image: In order to continue to be a true destination and town center, the commercial district needs to continue to build a strong, positive identity. The town and local businesses, residents and landowners can help create this image in a number of ways.

- Continue with a district association to sponsor improvements, fundraise, encourage quality design and construction and to advise the Planning Board on issues of local concern.
- Implement the coordinated signage system recommended above and partially funded by the same Community Block grant as this study.
- In the future, look into creating a design review process implemented by the Business Association and local property owners in coordination with the planning board. The process could either be advisory or regulatory. It would add an element of peer assistance and - when necessary - pressure to ensure that careful and appropriate development occurs in the District.
- Participate in EOCD's "Main Street Program" to help renovate facades and to market the entire downtown shopping district as an entity.

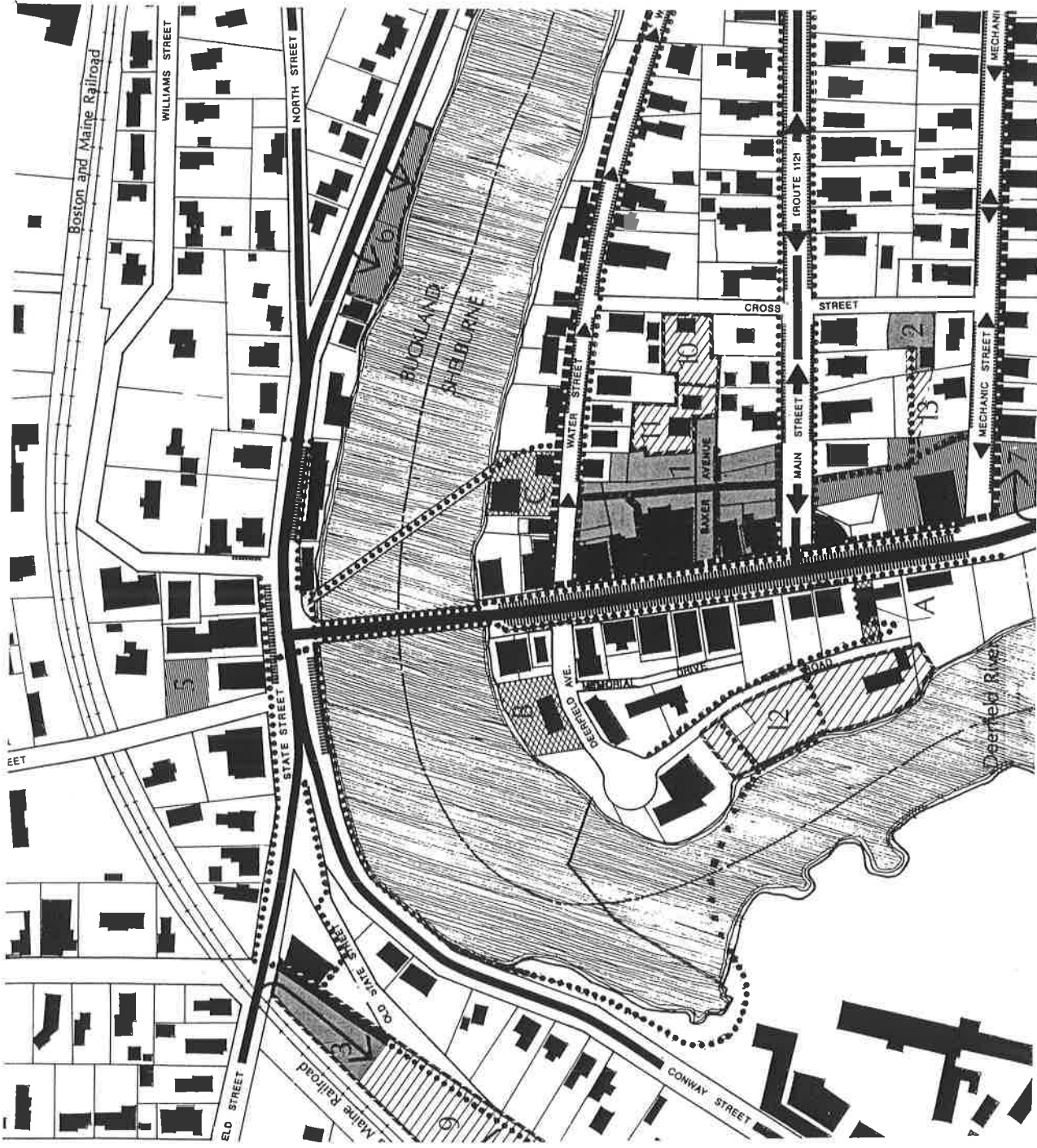


Figure 19. Detail of Concept Plan

8. Expansion of Off-Street Parking (Parking Lots)

- Issue:** *Random, unplanned creation of a multitude of small parking lots threatens Shelburne Falls' character and historic buildings.*
- Recommendation:** *Create new off-street parking lots only as a last resort after exhausting parking management and ways of using existing parking sources more efficiently and intensively. Focus on expanding major existing, off-street lots by identifying and negotiating for the acquisition of any key lots not already town-owned. Investigate purchasing right of first refusal as a means of making sure that the towns have a chance to acquire these critically-located parcels when they come on the market. Designate these expansion lots for employee and tourist day-parking. Free up parking immediately adjacent to the major commercial corridors for use by short-term parkers. Require sufficient buffer plantings or retention of an edge of residential properties to retain Shelburne Falls' identity as a village, not a mall.*

Parking Lots: Some additional remote parking lots are needed to service existing businesses, but these parking lots should be carefully planned and screened to avoid demolition of neighborhoods and of historic structures. A limit on remote lots should be agreed on to avoid negative impacts on the historic character of the village. Additional remote lots could be created at lots # 82 and # 69 of the Shelburne assessor's maps (sites 10 and 11 on the Townscape Concept Plan.). these lots are most effectively used for long-term parking and should have a strong pedestrian connection back through the center of the block to connect with the Bank Lot and to encourage their use by employees. The existing structure located in the proposed site 11 lot could be moved to face adjacent streets.

Buckland: Proposed Expansion of Off-Street Parking:

Buckland is more fortunate than Shelburne in having two off-street parking lots already located at strategic points at major entrances to the village area to act as remote lots for employee or commuter parking and to intercept tourist traffic and hold it out of the increasingly congested center of the village. This has the benefit of keeping the limited on-street parking at the center of town free for short-term shoppers and errand-runners. The Eagles Club lot has been expanded and improved in the last few years under an Off-Street Parking Program Grant. 34 parking spaces are available there for public use during specified hours through an agreement between the Town and the Eagles Club. This cooperation between private organizations and the two Towns is a great example of how to make the most efficient use of scarce and limited available space for off-street parking. Buckland

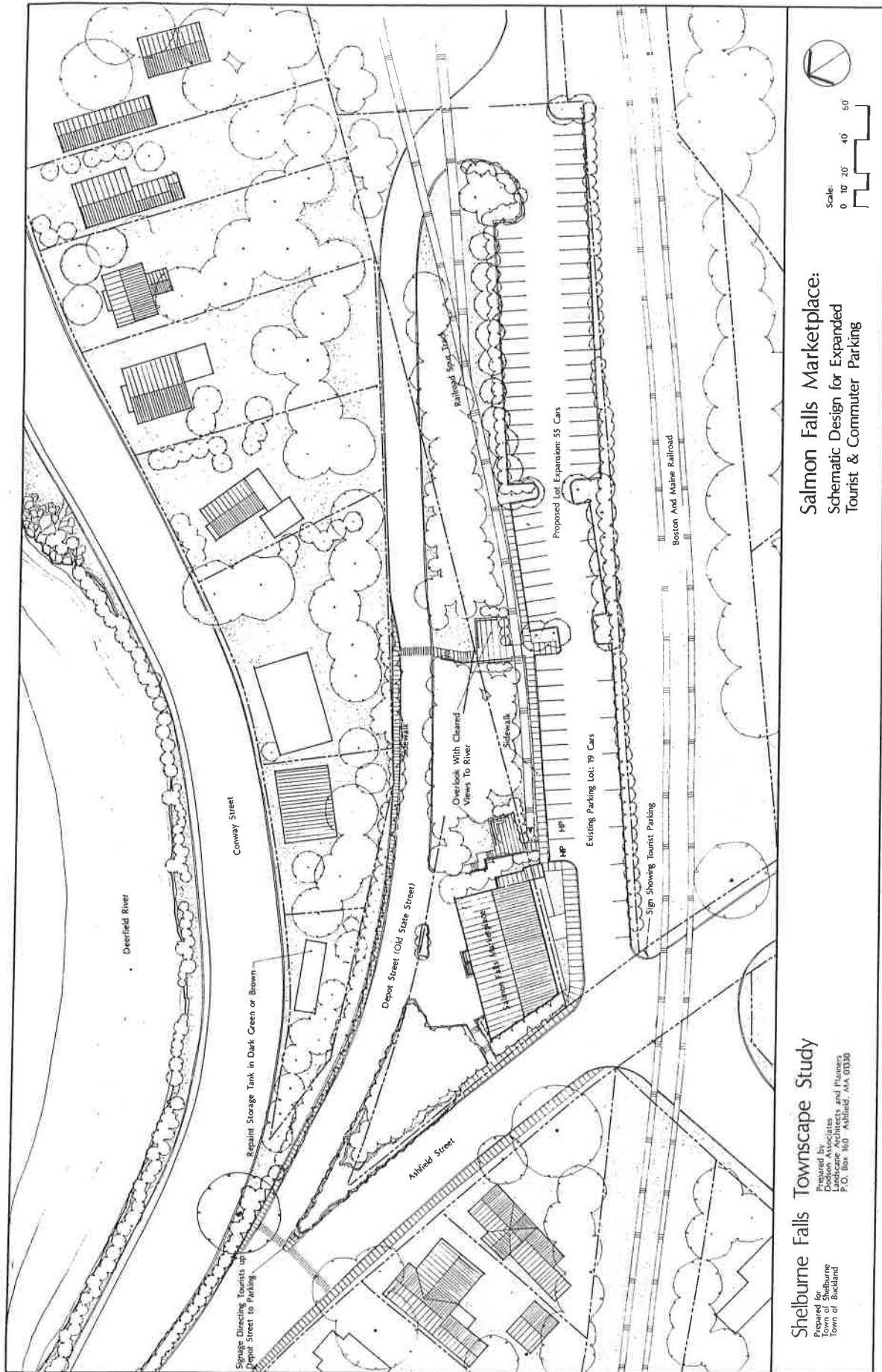
should encourage local businesses to create off-street parking behind their establishments that can serve their employees, free up limited on-street parking and possibly even be made available for public parking during hours when the business-in-question is not open. This is in everyone's best interest if the village businesses are to be able to grow and successfully compete with the unlimited parking of the malls.

The Townscape Plan Steering Committee asked for a planting plan and cost estimate to be prepared for the Eagles Club Lot since it is located in such a prominent position -- right on the river, in full view of all visitors on the Bridge of Flowers, and visible to any one coming in to the Buckland commercial center on the major State Street entrance off Route 2. The proposed planting plan is shown in figure 20. It features a single row of scholar trees (Sophora japonica) that bloom in mid-summer and will provide a canopy of shade over parked cars without obscuring views of the River. Other proposed plants are large beds of lemon daylilies and weeping forsythia and use of evergreen wintercreeper vines (Euonymus fortunei "vegetus") that will grow down through the dumped rip-rap stone facing along the riverbank and provide this with a greener and more natural look. An approximate cost estimate for this work using prices current in summer, 1988 is as follows:

Cost Estimate for Proposed Plantings for Eagles Lot, Buckland:

(Prices used are from Weston Nursery's 1988 Catalog.)

100	Hemerocallis flava.....	Lemon Daylily.....	\$280
250	Euonymus fortunei vegetus	Big-leaf Wintercreeper	2,750
67	Forsythia suspensa.....	Weeping Forsythia	1,072
19	Sophora japonica	Scholar Tree	1,216
	Mulch		250
Total materials:			5,568
Total materials & labor:			\$11,136



Shelburne Falls Townscape Study

Prepared by:
Shelburne Falls
Landscape Architects and Planners
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Salmon Falls Marketplace:
Schematic Design for Expanded
Tourist & Commuter Parking

Figure 21.

Salmon Falls Lot The existing Town-owned parking lot next to the Salmon Falls Marketplace is well situated for expansion to serve as a the major tourist and commuter parking lot on the Buckland side of the village. This area and proposed modifications to it are shown in plan view in figure 21. Currently this lot contains 19 standard spaces and two handicapped accessible spaces. There is room on the town-owned parcel to add 55 standard spaces together with some planting areas to screen the lot from neighbors. A connection suitable for semi-trailer trucks to reach the J. Blassberg depot has been retained along Depot Street (Old State Street). Semi-trailer traffic should be excluded from the actual parking lot area.

Selective clearing of the existing scrub growth on the bank between the lot and Depot Street should be carried out to encourage the native dogwood trees (*Cornus alternifolia*) that have already established themselves there. This clearing should be combined with the construction of several overlook points and perhaps wooden stairways to visually and physically connect visitors parking in the Salmon Falls Lot with the Deerfield, the two bridges and the center of the village. If parkers can easily orient themselves they won't feel that the lot is excessively remote and will tend to use it more.

Clear, coordinated signage and a connected system of sidewalks and pedestrian ways should lead towards the river and the center of the village from all remote lots used for tourist, commuter or employee parking.

Shelburne: Proposed Expansion of Off-Street Parking

Construction of additional parking lots in Shelburne should be coordinated to act as an extension of existing major off-street lots and should be limited to avoid random siting of small, expensive and isolated lots wherever parcels first happen to come on the market. The town should avoid creation of a random "checkerboard" pattern of small lots which would face openly onto residential streets, break the unified line of facades down the street and spread the noise and impact over a wide area of the village. Letting it happen will weaken the established street pattern of the village which is reinforced by the wealth of distinguished 19th century architecture - both residential and commercial.

There is a shortage of housing in the Shelburne Falls. For this reason, any housing stock that occurs on lots whose best use is determined, after careful consideration, to be for expansion of off-street parking should be moved and reused somewhere else rather than being torn down and lost to the village. The area as far as Cross Street is currently zoned commercial and may well be needed for future expansion of office and commercial use after the vacant space along Bridge Street, especially of second floors, has been used up. For this reason, careful planning of any future parking lots is required to limit, wherever possible, the destruction of existing buildings.

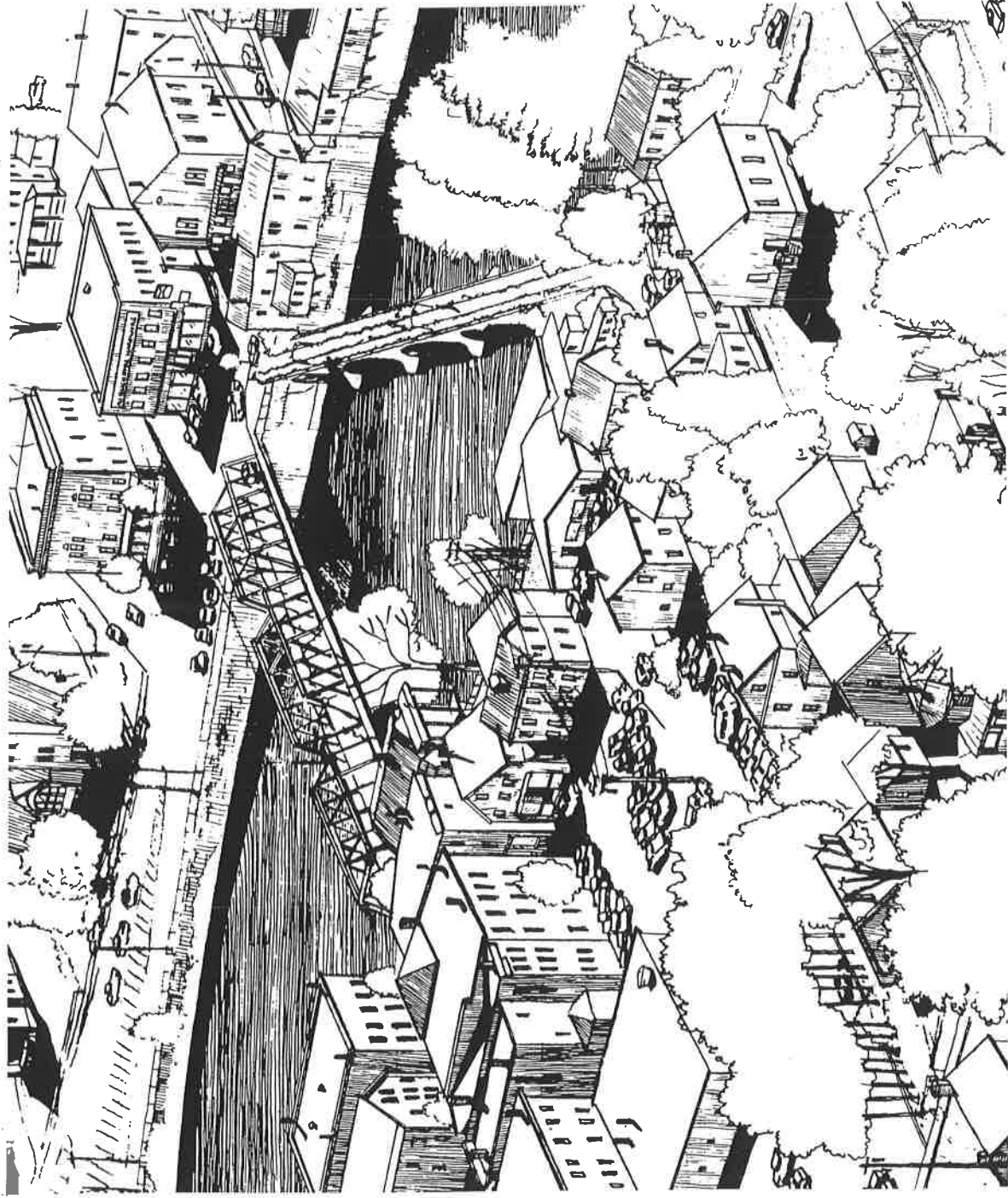


Figure 22. Detail of Existing View of Village

Figure 22 to the left shows an aerial perspective view of Shelburne Falls looking west. In the center of the view is the existing Bank Lot (Site #1 on the Concept Plan). This is the major off-street parking lot on the Shelburne side of the Deerfield River.

The following two perspective views, figure 23, entitled, "Detail of Conventional Scenario," and figure 24, entitled, "Detail of Recommended Scenario," are intended to visually contrast the effect of following a haphazard policy of creating many small, isolated parking lots versus purposefully seeking to acquire strategic parcels that adjoin existing major lots.

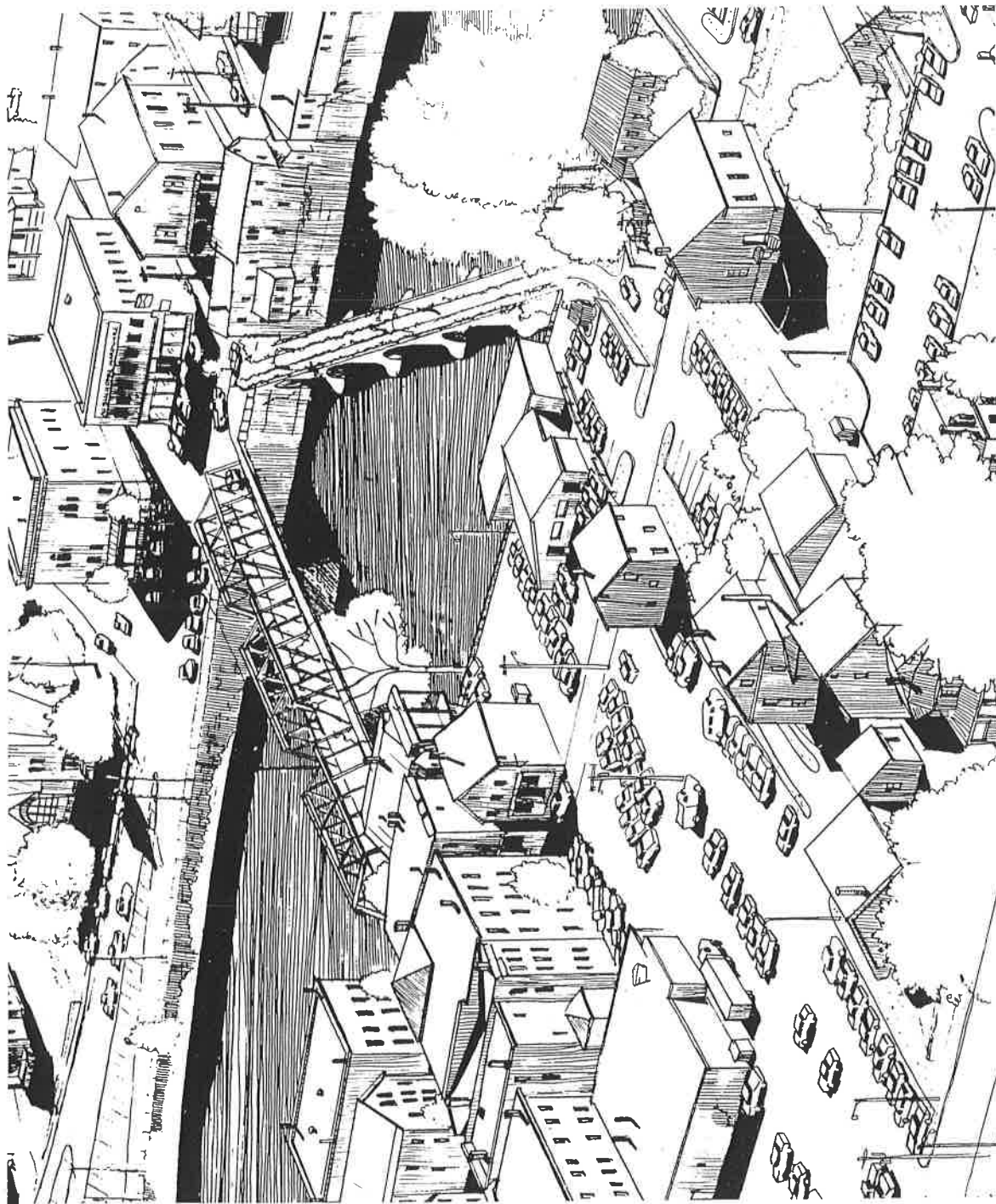


Figure 23. Conventional Scenario

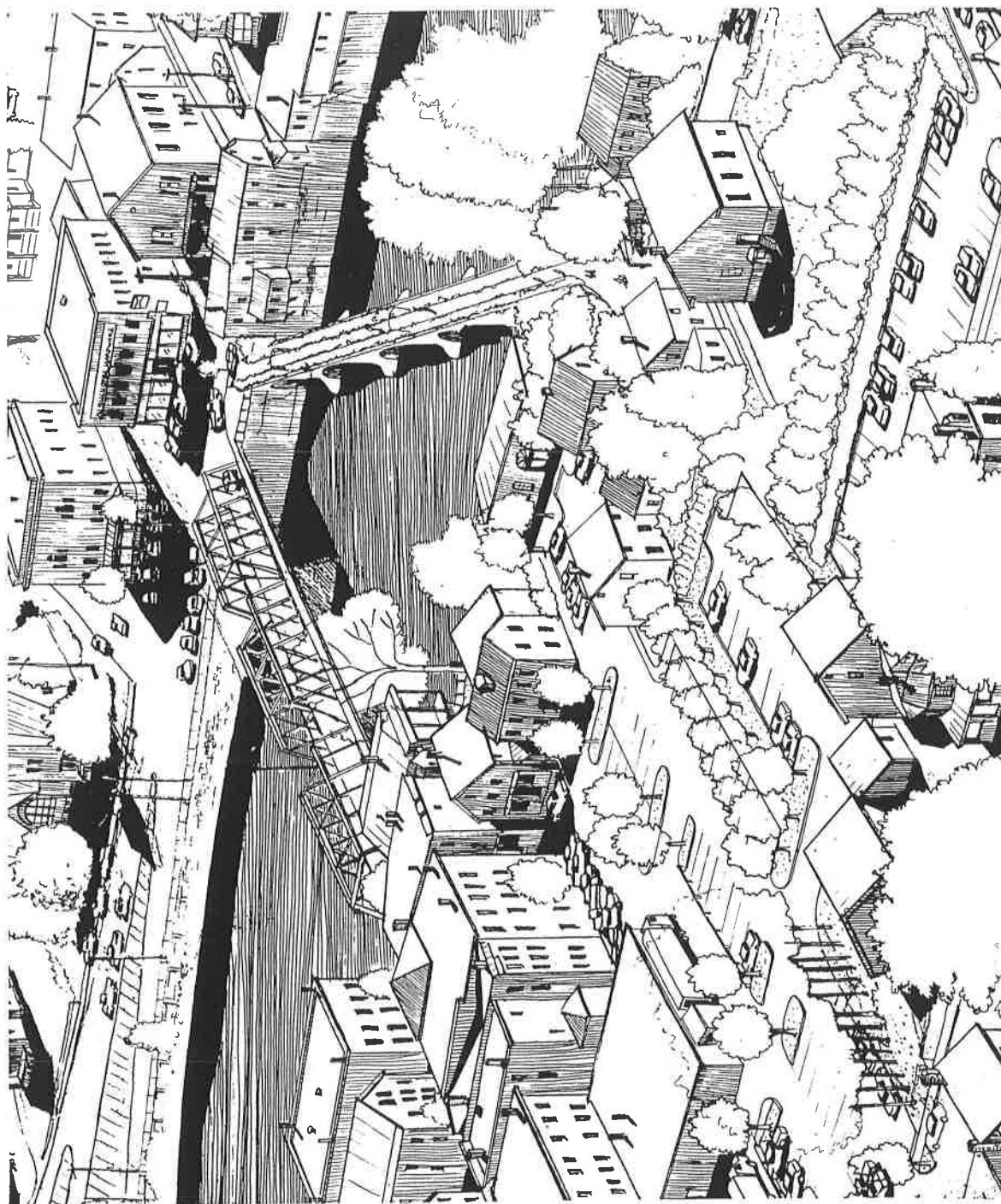


Figure 24. Recommended Scenario

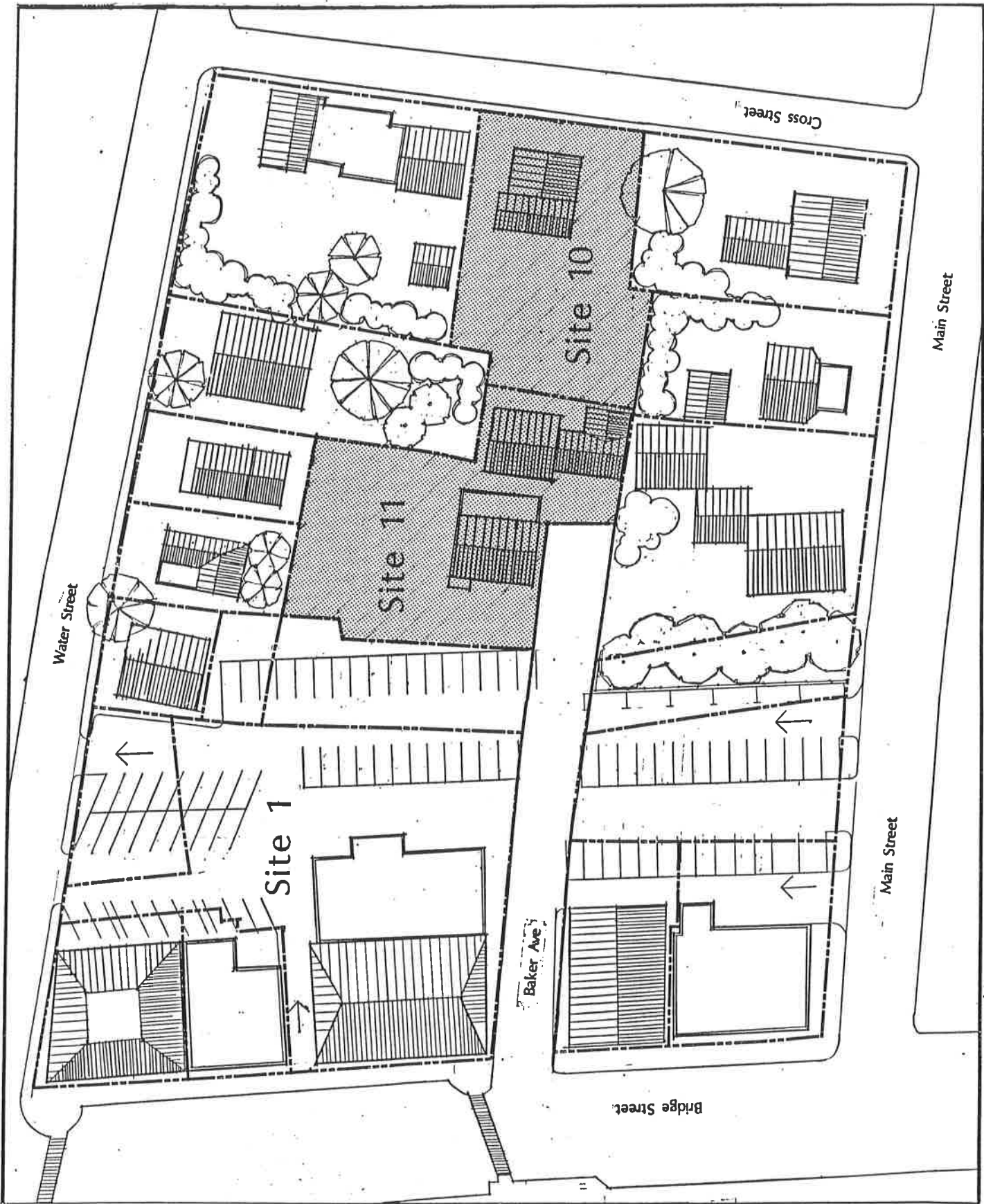


Figure 25. Expansion of Bank lot: Existing Conditions

Shelburne should create a limited expansion of the central Bank Lot (site #1 on the Concept Plan, Detail p.46), by negotiating with the owners of sites #11 and #10 (Assessor's Map #82 and #69) to acquire or purchase the right of first refusal on these two key parcels. Figure 25 shows these two sites and their relationship to the existing Bank Lot with its present parking pattern.

If the town were able to acquire one or both of these two adjacent parcels, it would have several options for expanding off-street parking in the Bank Lot toward the center of the block bound by Bridge, Water, Cross and Main Streets. This would retain a residential edge around the block that, combined with the increased use of planting along the edges of the lot, would screen the expanded parking at the interior of the block. This strategy would preserve the unified 19th century character of these perimeter streets. If both parcels were eventually acquired, Shelburne could expand the capacity of the Bank Lot by up to 60%. This would increase the total number of legal on-street and off-street parking spaces on the Shelburne side by 32% -- or almost one-third.

A key to the success of this strategy is for the town and the business association to work together with the owners of sites #11 and #10 to develop a mutually acceptable solution to a problem of critical importance to the continued vitality and growth of the town's core businesses. Lack of available parking for employees represents the major barrier to increasing office space and retail trade in the commercial district. Many of the vacant 2nd and 3rd floor spaces along Bridge Street could be rented out as either office space or residential apartments if adequate off-street parking could be made available close at hand and in conformance with Shelburne's current zoning.

Figures 25 through 29 illustrate several possible options and parking layouts, depending on the sequence in which the town might acquire these lots: Figure 25 to the left shows a plan view of existing streets, buildings, parking spaces and ownership parcels in the block bounded by Bridge, Water, Cross and Main Streets. Site 1 is the existing Bank Lot parking area. Sites 11 and 10 are private lots situated adjacent to the Bank Lot that would be appropriate for screened, parking expansion as detailed in the following options and plans.

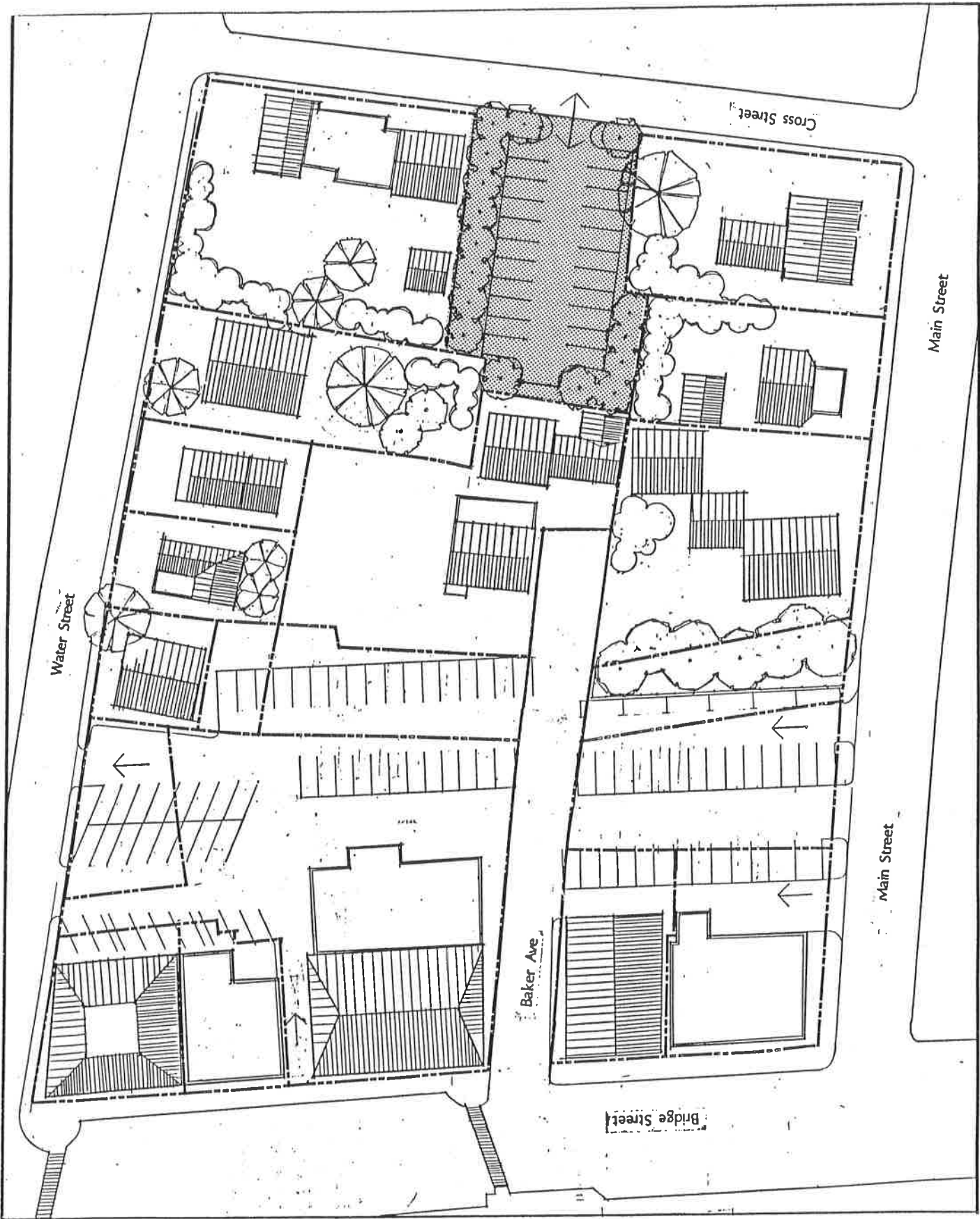


Figure 26. Option #1 for Expansion of Bank Lot

Option 1, figure 26: Site #10 is located off Cross Street and has no independent access to the Bank Lot. It is currently occupied by a single garage. If the town and business association were able to approach the owner and offer an alternative site for whatever uses the owner currently has for the garage, the town might be able to purchase the lot. If it were developed as an interim, gravel-surfaced lot as shown on figure 26, it could provide parking for 28 employees. Development of this lot as well as the recently acquired lot at 23 Cross Street (on the other side of Main Street) would emphasize Cross Street as the current edge of the commercial district and as a route for employees to follow when looking for a parking space.

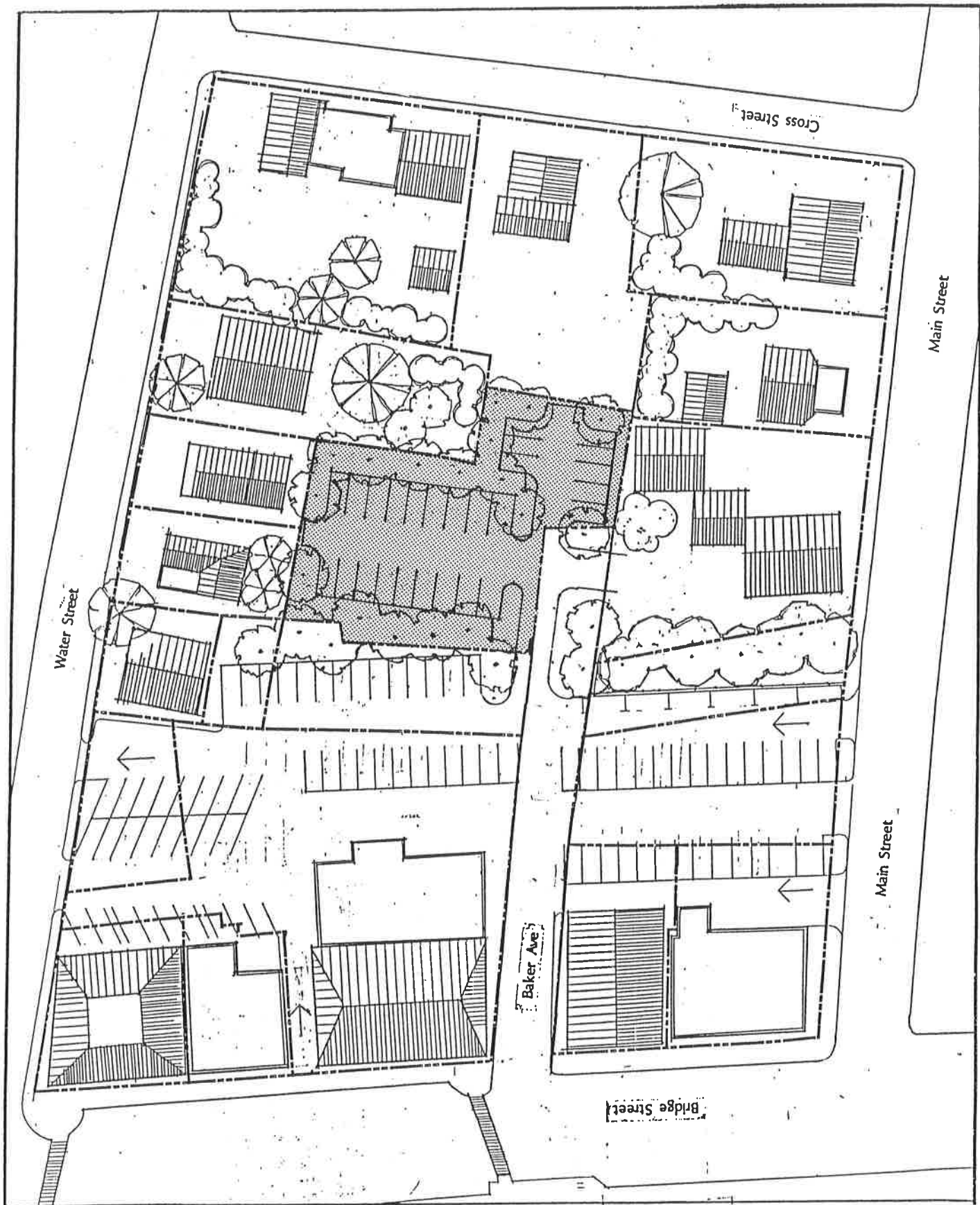


Figure 27. Option #2 for Expansion of Bank Lot

Option 2, figure 27: Site #11 is off Baker Avenue and is adjacent to the Bank Lot. If the Town could reach an agreement with the owner of site #11 to purchase this lot, the town could then *move* the existing, sturdy house to an alternate location and gain 28 parking spaces with direct access to the Bank Lot. Moving the house would prevent the loss of this impressive structure from the overall housing stock in the village. As noted previously, everything possible should be done to avoid tearing down housing stock in town.

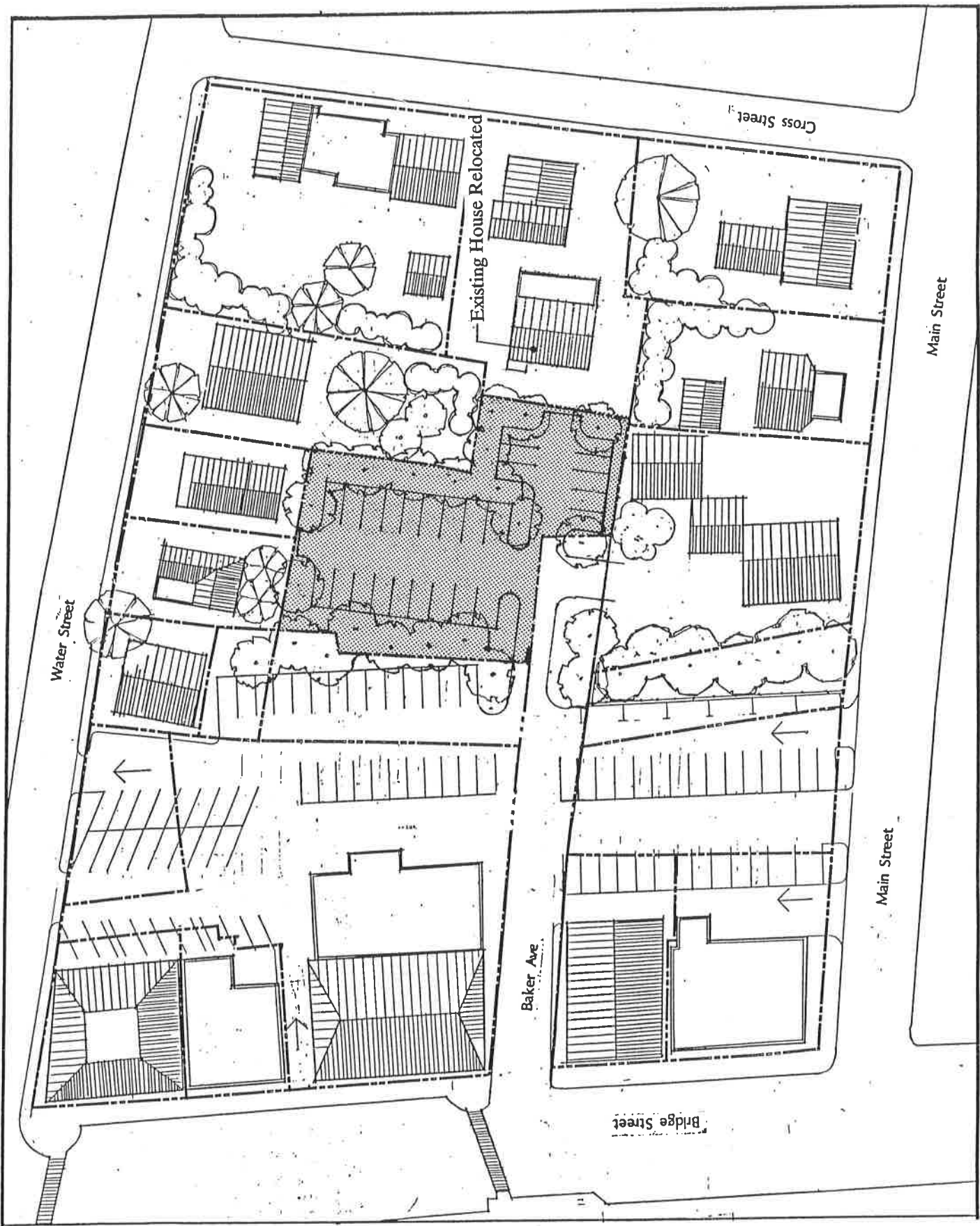


Figure 28. Option #3 for Expansion of Bank Lot

Option 3, figure 28: If Shelburne was able to acquire both lots, it would have the option of relocating the house from Site #11 onto Site #10. The house could be positioned so that it related in layout and access to the existing garage on Site #10. This option is represented in figure 28. This option is strongly recommended because it successfully retains a residential edge to the entire central parking block, thereby protecting Shelburne Falls' current character. The drawback to this option is that unless a special arrangement were worked out, it would probably be more expensive per parking space created. 28 new spaces would be added with a direct connection to the Bank Lot, which represents a 33% increase over its present capacity.

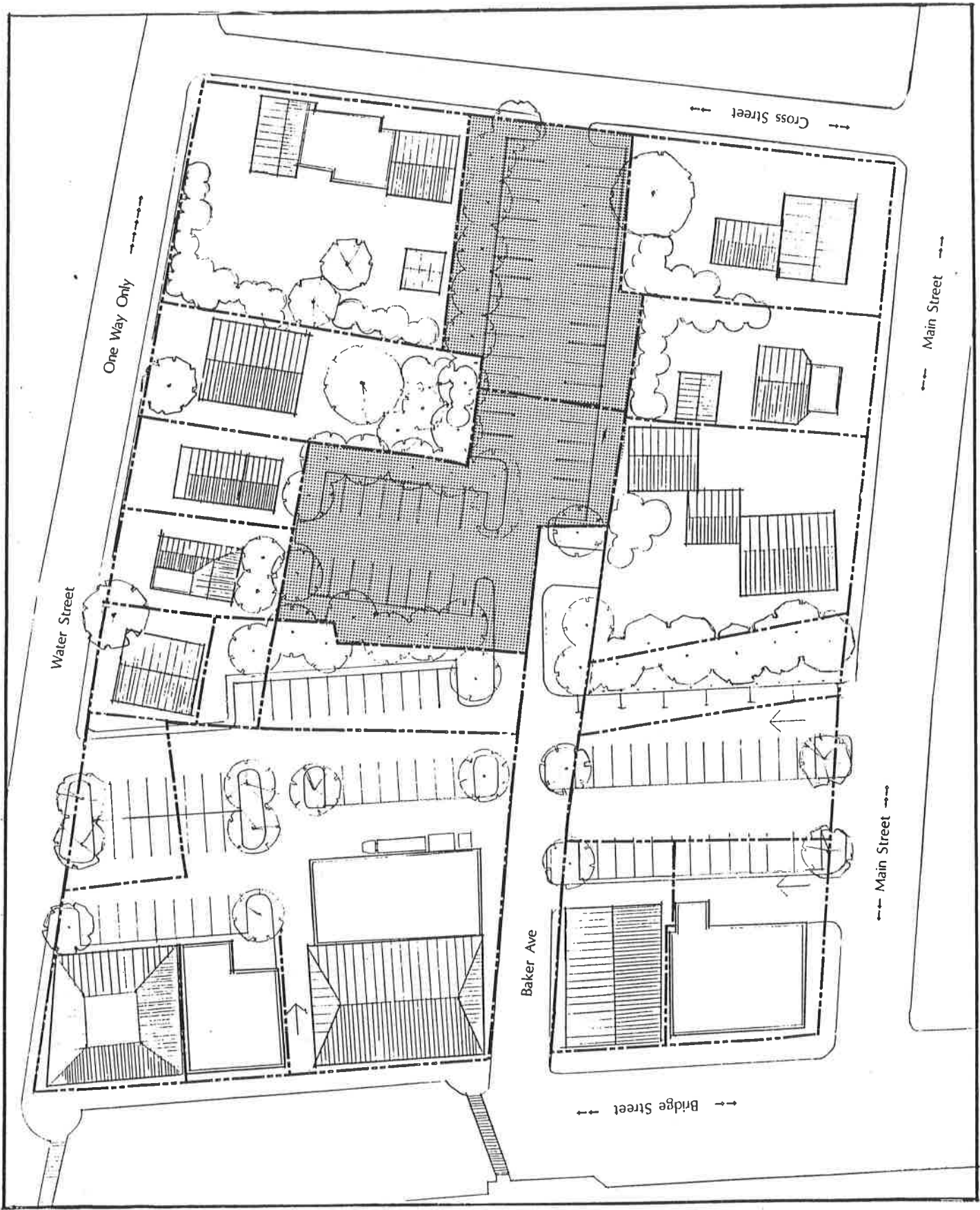


Figure 29. Option #4 for Expansion of Bank Lot

Option 4, figure 29: Finally, if the Town were able to acquire *both Sites #11 and #10* and wanted to maximize the number of new parking spaces to be gained, it could develop parking and planted buffers on both sites. This option would add 51 additional spaces on the two sites. Figure 22 presents this option along with some reorganization and additional planting in the existing Bank Lot. This option would essentially create a new Baker Avenue extension right through the center of the block, linking the existing Bank Lot with Cross Street and the employees using the long-term parking on Site #10. This option would allow the shopper looking for a parking space to enter the Bank Lot and if it were full to move through the new lots at Sites #11 and 10 until they either found a space or exited onto Cross Street. This option is shown in aerial perspective in figure 45 (p.96) and in a detail taken from this perspective drawing labelled as figure 24 (p.55).

Summary of Parking Spaces:

Buckland:	Existing:	
	Salmon Falls	19 spaces
	Eagles Lot	34 spaces
	Riverside Block	18 spaces
	McCusker's/Town Hall Block	16 spaces
	McCusker's Rear Lot (private)	14 spaces
	Total:	101 spaces

Proposed:	
Salmon Falls	55 spaces

% Expansion = 52%

Shelburne:	Existing	
	Bridge Street	61 spaces
	Water Street	12 spaces
	Bank Lot	85 spaces
	Total:	158 spaces

Proposed:	
23 Cross Street	17 spaces
Improvements to Main Street	c.21 spaces
(between Bridge and Church)	(42 maximum)
Possible acquisition of Field Lot	(28 spaces)
Field and Greenlee Lots	51 spaces
Possible Circulation Improvements	
to Bank Lot	-11 spaces
Phase 1 of Potholes Development	80 spaces
Total:	158 spaces

% Expansion = 100%

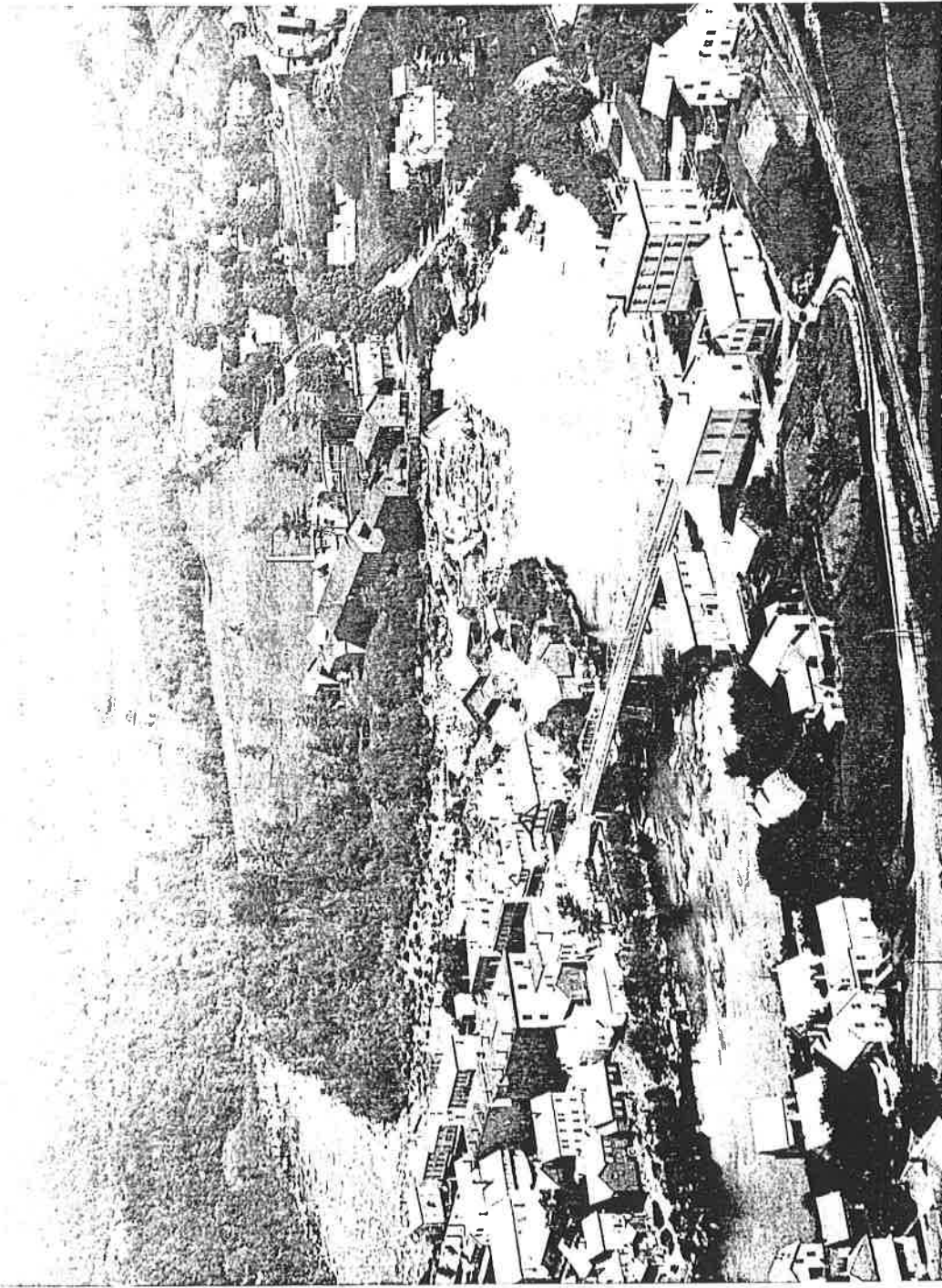


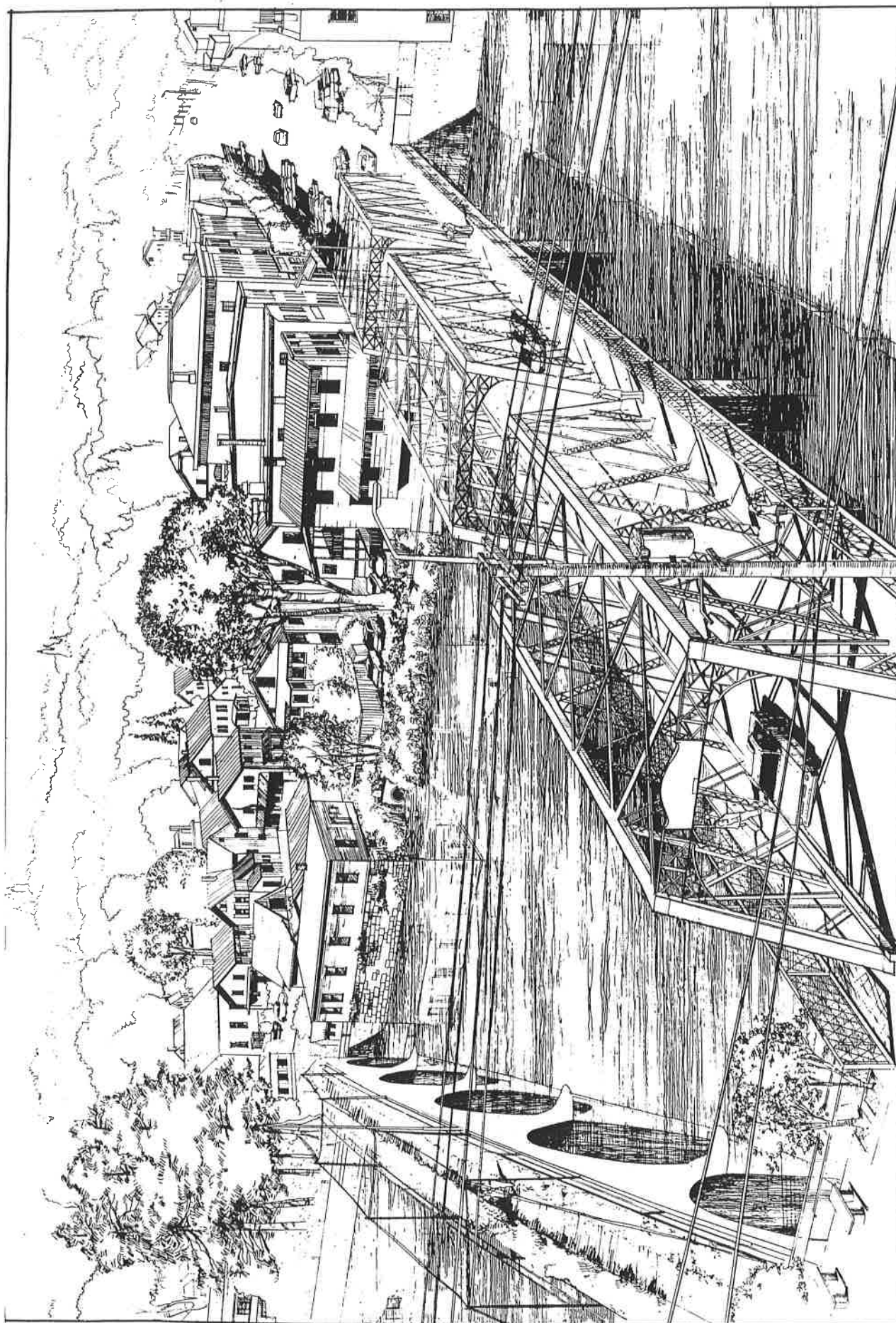
Figure 30. Pre-1890 View of the Village from West Mountain

Mowry House (No. 8 Water Street)

As part of the Townscape Study, the consultants were asked to recommend whether or not the Town should move to aid the V.F.W. Club of Shelburne Falls in tearing down the wood frame building it owns at 8 Water Street, located between its club building and the package store and annex, in order to create parking. The building is included in a National Historic Register District and therefore federal funds could not be applied to its demolition. Called the Mowry House in the National Historic Register application, this house is one of the oldest buildings in that area - dating from before 1840. While it is currently in need of repair, architect Kerry Dietz determined that it could certainly be restored and renovated, perhaps as office or commercial space on the first floor with residential apartments on the upper floors. It now contains 4 to 5 rental units.

The Mowry House is crucial to establishing the tight 19th century village feel that characterizes Shelburne Falls. It forms part of a unified facade of commercial buildings along Water Street located next to narrow sidewalks and that reinforce the street pattern in that part of the village. Comparing figures 23 and 24 shows the effect that removing this building would have. Figure 23 on the left shows the Mowry Building demolished and used for parking. A maximum of 15 spaces could be created by expanding the lot slightly by erecting a retaining wall along the Deerfield River. 6 of these 15 spaces would have to be reserved for the tenants of #4 and #10 Bridge Street. Thus, the V.F.W. would only gain a maximum of 9 spaces. This is a very expensive way to create 9 spaces of parking. Further drawbacks are that this option eliminates badly needed rental units and is an inappropriate location for a row of parked cars, as they would sit directly between and in full view of the village's two major attractions: the Bridge of Flowers and the Iron Bridge.

The detailed perspective view in figure 24 shows the building at 8 Water Street retained and renovated. In addition, this view shows how the area might look if the towns of Buckland and Shelburne and interested area residents were able to work with the V.F.W. Club of Shelburne Falls to find a more spacious new facility for them and help them to relocate. This would have the advantage of freeing up a considerable number of parking spaces in the Bank Lot while simultaneously giving the town control of a key parcel of land and three buildings. Numbers 8, 10 and 12 Water Street are strategically located along the key pedestrian link between the Shelburne entrance to the Bridge of Flowers and the Bridge Street commercial corridor and Iron Bridge. If the town could ever find outside funding for a small museum/interpretive exhibit on Shelburne Falls' rich and inventive industrial past, the c. 1905 blacksmith's shop that forms the oldest part of 10 Water Street (currently part of the V.F.W. building) would be an excellent site for it. The more recent white frame addition forming the front of the 10 Water street complex has little to do with the architectural area around it. Removing this addition could create an attractive entrance to the brick blacksmith's shop behind and create 8 spaces of visitor parking directly next to the Bridge of Flowers, but still screened from the river's edge.



Shelburne Falls Townscape Study

Prepared for
Town of Shelburne
Town of Buckland

Prepared by
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Figure 31. View to Shelburne Side from Junction of Bridges:
Existing Condition

Figure 31 shows how the utility poles and overhead wires at the Buckland end of the two bridges distract from several of the key Shelburne views. On page 71 there is a discussion of the importance of sinking these utilities as part of the current Massachusetts Department of Public Works redesign of the Iron Bridge and the Bridge Street/State Street intersection.

2. Overhead Utilities and Street Lighting

Issue:

Overhead utility lines and poles obscure and detract from the focal point of the Village near the intersection of the Bridge of Flowers and the Iron Bridge. Existing tall, "cobrahead" light standards throughout the village are inconsistent with the traditional lights of the town -- a more pedestrian-scale cast iron light such as currently still found in front of the elementary school and along the Bridge of Flowers.

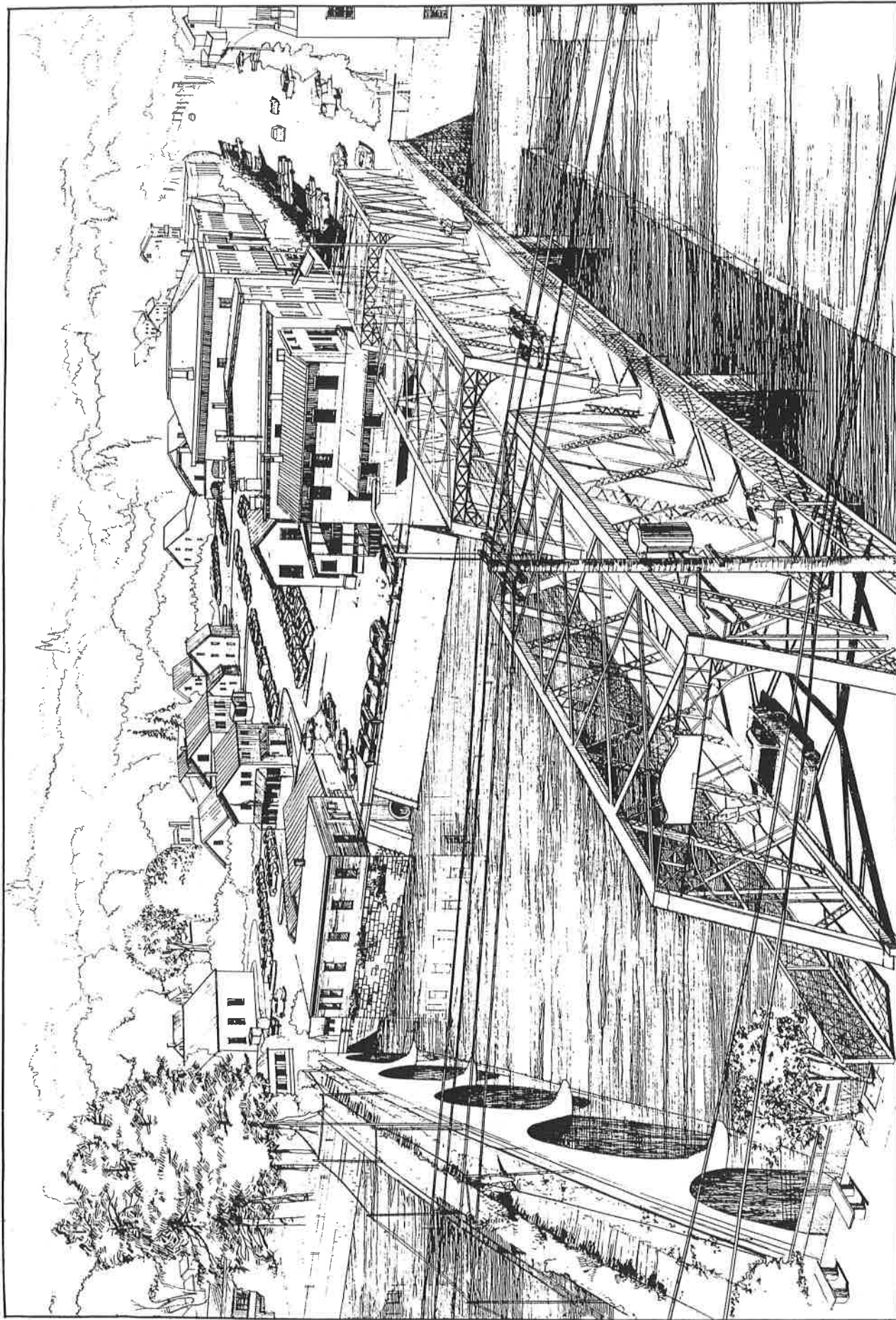
Recommendation:

Explore burying the overhead utility lines and eliminating the poles in the block directly in front of these two Bridges (the State St./Bridge St. intersection). This should be considered as integral part of the redesign of the Iron Bridge and of this intersection. Eliminate the "cobrahead" lights and replace them and the new pedestrian-scale lights proposed for the Bridge Street Reconstruction project with a single type of 18 -20'tall standards appropriate to the 19th c. commercial facades of the center.

Overhead utility lines crossing the Buckland end of the Iron Bridge and the entrance to the Bridge of Flowers should be put underground in order to leave these key views uncluttered and to emphasize the visual importance of this area that linking the two towns into a single Village. Sinking the overhead utility lines at the Buckland entrance to the Iron Bridge should be part of the redesign of the Iron Bridge and the congested seven-way intersection at its State street entrance that is currently being worked on by the Massachusetts Department of Public Works. The completion date for this redesign is by the close of 1990 so now is the time for the Towns to request DPW to re-evaluate this intersection design and the grid of overhead utilities occurring right next to the Village's central symbol and attraction.

The McCuskers/ Aubuchon/ Buckland Town hall Block should have its utility hook-ups re-routed so that they enter from the sides or rear of the block.

The 40 foot tall "cobrahead" roadway lights currently installed across the Iron Bridge and along Bridge Street should be replaced with a larger number of smaller light standards in the 18 to 20 foot height range and in a cast iron style that complements the existing pedestrian height light fixtures installed along the Bridge of Flowers. Specifications for a recommended 18 to 20 foot fixture of this type are included in the files of supplementary information produced under this grant and on file as part of the Townscape Plan materials at the Shelburne Town Hall.

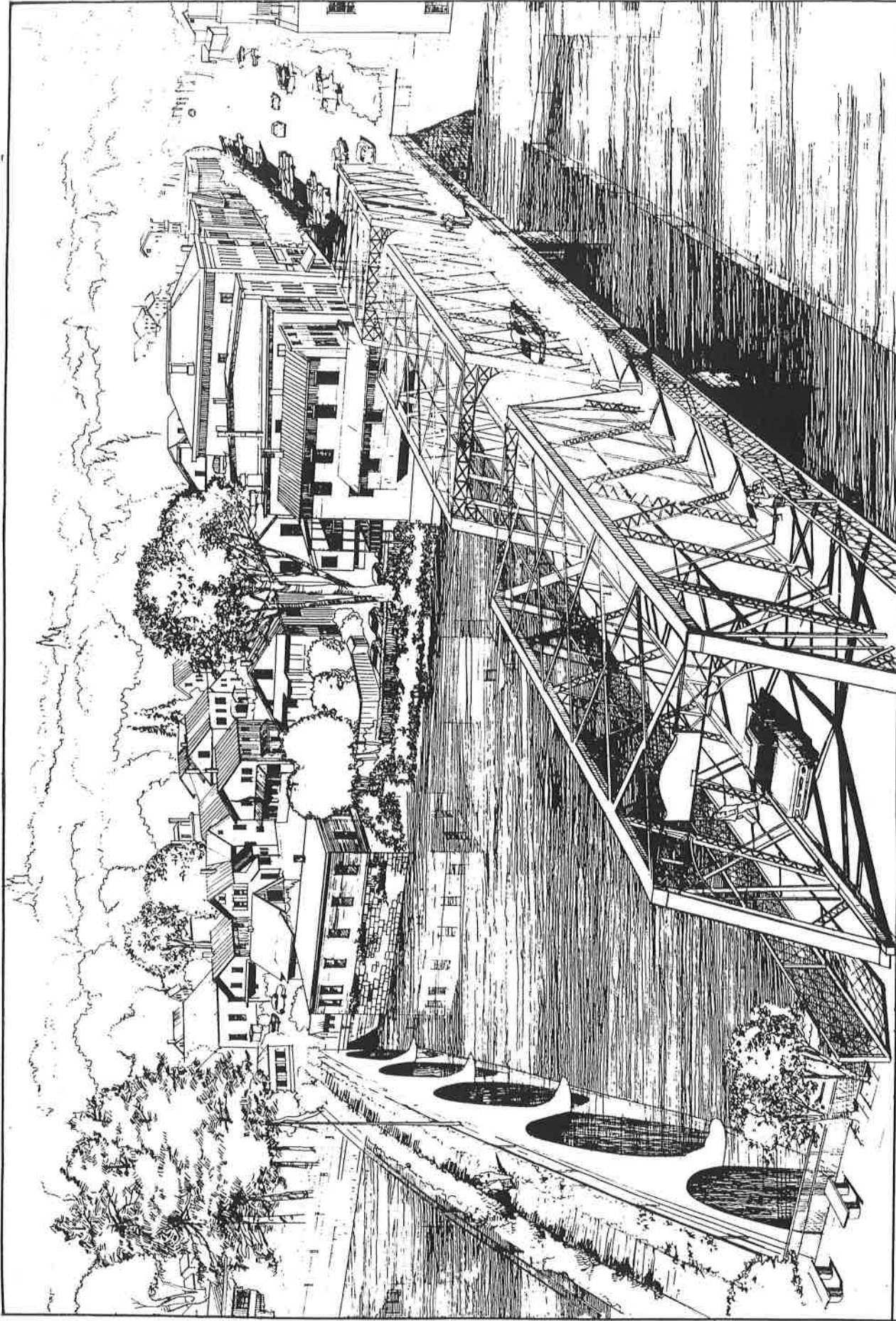


Shelburne Falls Townscape Study

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Figure 32. View to Shelburne Side from Junction of Bridges:
Conventional Scenario

Figures 32 and 33 show details from the "Conventional Scenario" and "Recommended Scenario" perspective views.



Shelburne Falls Townscape Study

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Town of Buckland
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Figure 33. View to Shelburne Side from Junction of Bridges:
Recommended Scenario

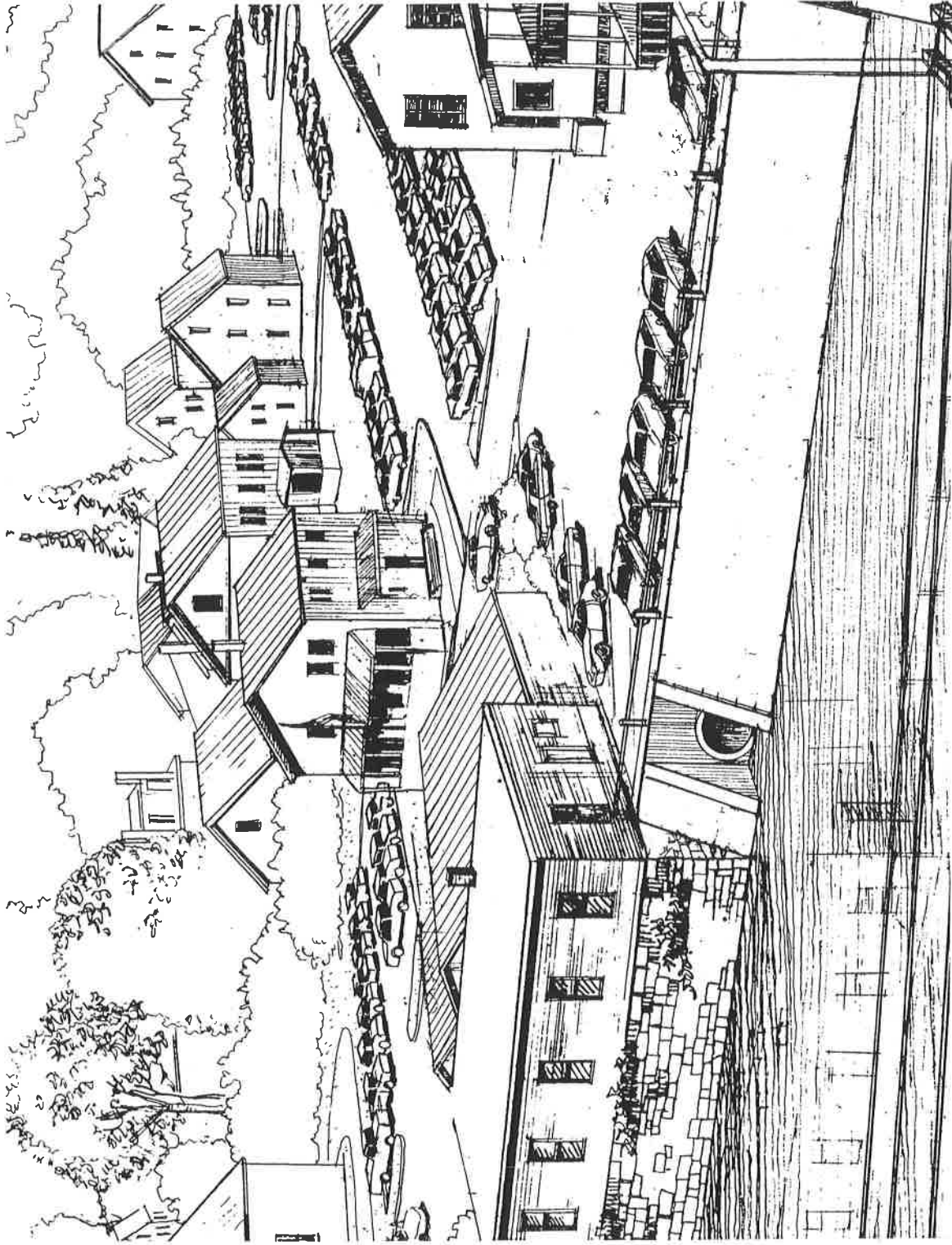


Figure 34. View to Shelburne Side: Conventional Scenario Detail

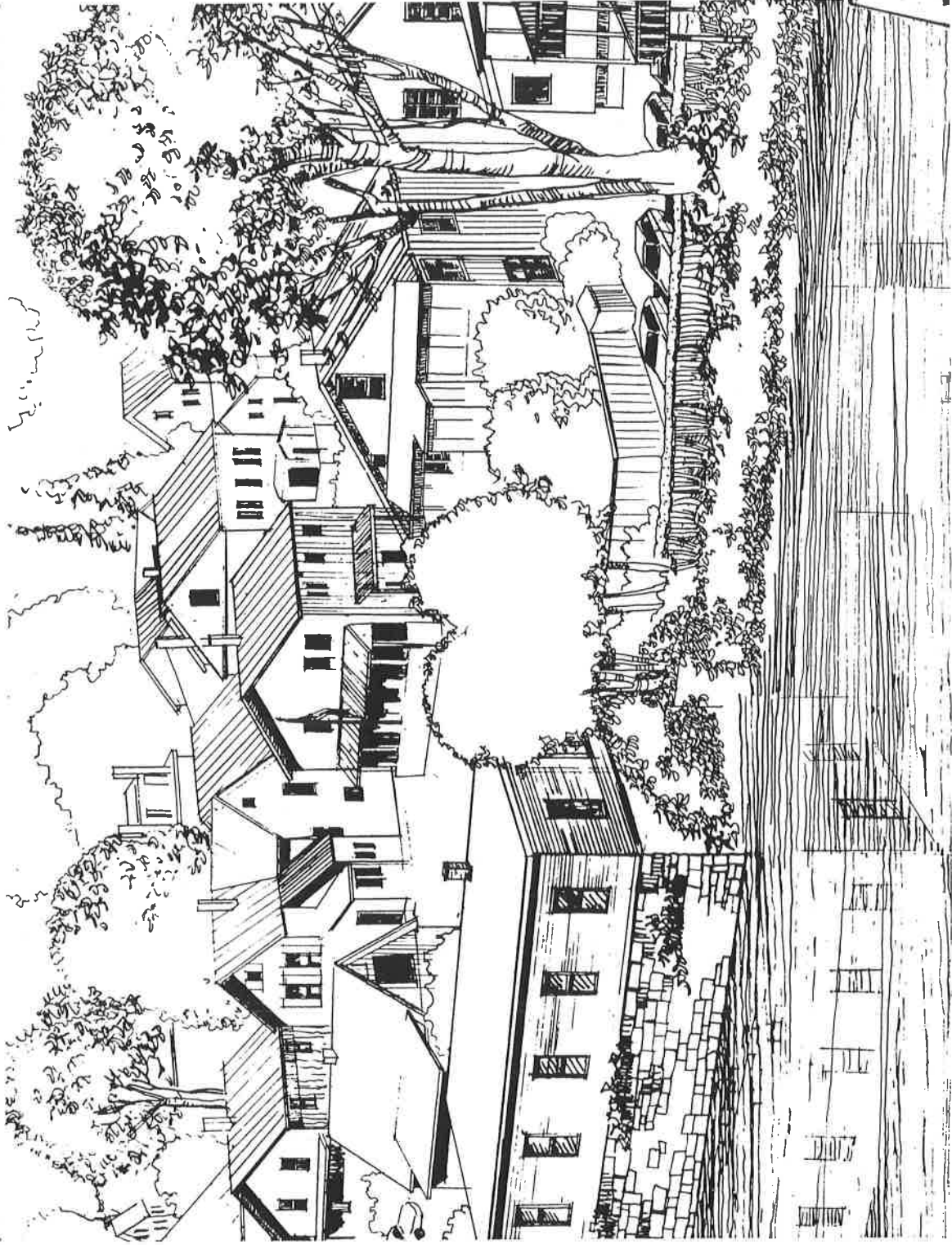


Figure 35. View to Shelburne Side: Recommended Scenario Detail

Plans prepared for the Bridge Street Reconstruction project under a Public Works Economic Development (P.W.E.D.) Grant by Dufresne-Henry, Inc. of Greenfield and dated December, 1987 show proposed locations for the bases of pedestrian-scale lights at spacings that vary from between 60 to 70 feet apart. In addition, they show the existing 40 foot tall aluminum cobrahead lights and masts retained. This mix of two radically different styles of lighting should be avoided. Shelburne should get Dufresne-Henry to change the proposed pedestrian only scale lights to slightly higher 18 to 20 foot tall fixtures capable of lighting both roadway and sidewalks but without excessive harsh light or glare. The existing 40 foot tall cobrahead fixtures could then be removed. Installing uniform, 18-20 foot, cast iron lighting standards will produce a streetscape look that is more appropriate to the Village's 19th century architectural heritage.

The 18 to 20 foot tall lamp posts should be spaced on a staggered pattern from one side of Bridge street to the other for best lighting efficiency and at a distance apart such that a 1.4 minimum average footcandle reading is produced along the roadway and sidewalks. This spacing would probably be close to the 65 foot average spacing that Dufresne-Henry is using for the proposed pedestrian scale lighting bases shown on its Bridge Street Reconstruction plan.

The two towns should require color-corrected high intensity discharge (H.I.D.) lamps --that is either High-Pressure Sodium lamps of the Deluxe Color type (best) or Type II Metal Halide lamps. Both of these lamps will avoid the orange or purple glare given off by non-color-corrected type lamps. Use of incandescent exterior lights wherever possible in the Village for smaller, pedestrian-scale, exterior spaces should be encouraged.

10. Street Tree Inventory and Re-planting Program

Issue: *The stately rows of large shade trees planted along the Village's main streets decades ago are disappearing and no concerted plantings are providing for a new generation. There seems to be no provision for evaluating the health and long-term prospects of Shelburne Falls' street trees.*

Recommendation: *Encourage implementation of a village-wide inventory and the prioritization of key streets for re-planting programs.*

A street tree planting program on Bridge Street that was started about eight years ago has added some welcome greenery and summer shade but needs to be extended throughout the commercial district at an approximately 35 foot on center spacing that will match that of the c. 1980 planting. Tree pits of at least 25 square foot area should be located halfway between each set of proposed

street lights and also be staggered from one side of the street to the other. This would produce a pattern where a street tree on one side of Bridge Street roughly faces an 18 to 20' tall street light on the other side. This pattern would maximize the efficiency of the proposed street lighting while interspersing it with a green canopy along both sides of this major commercial street.

Any street tree plantings will need commitments of regular maintenance from the two towns. Regular watering in the summer and especially during the first two to three summers are critical. All new street trees should be at least 4" caliper and be installed with tree guards and tree grates. Select species resistant to tough urban conditions. American elms can be kept disease free if properly planted, maintained and injected annually to prevent Dutch elm disease. With proper care, American elms are an unparalleled street tree.

The tree pit, pavement and curbing details as well as the use of granite sets to delineate parking stalls and no-stopping zones recently used in the Buckland P.W.E.D. sidewalk and streetscape reconstruction project are good details. Shelburne should adopt these details or very similar ones for any work on its side of the river. This would give Shelburne Falls a unified overall streetscape look.

A Village-wide project to map all street trees and note their condition and probable continued health is an important first step towards encouraging the community to undertake new street and shade tree planting programs. Such an inventory would help to ensure coordinated planting and maintenance plans while at the same time identifying individual streets or problem areas that could be undertaken as manageable starting projects. Street trees absorb pollution and traffic noise, add shade and comfort in the summer and can be used to reinforce Shelburne Falls' central image of the Bridge of Flowers. Perhaps the help of the Shelburne Falls Women's Club could be enlisted to supervise this inventory project as a successor project to their successful restoration of the Bridge of Flowers.

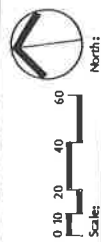
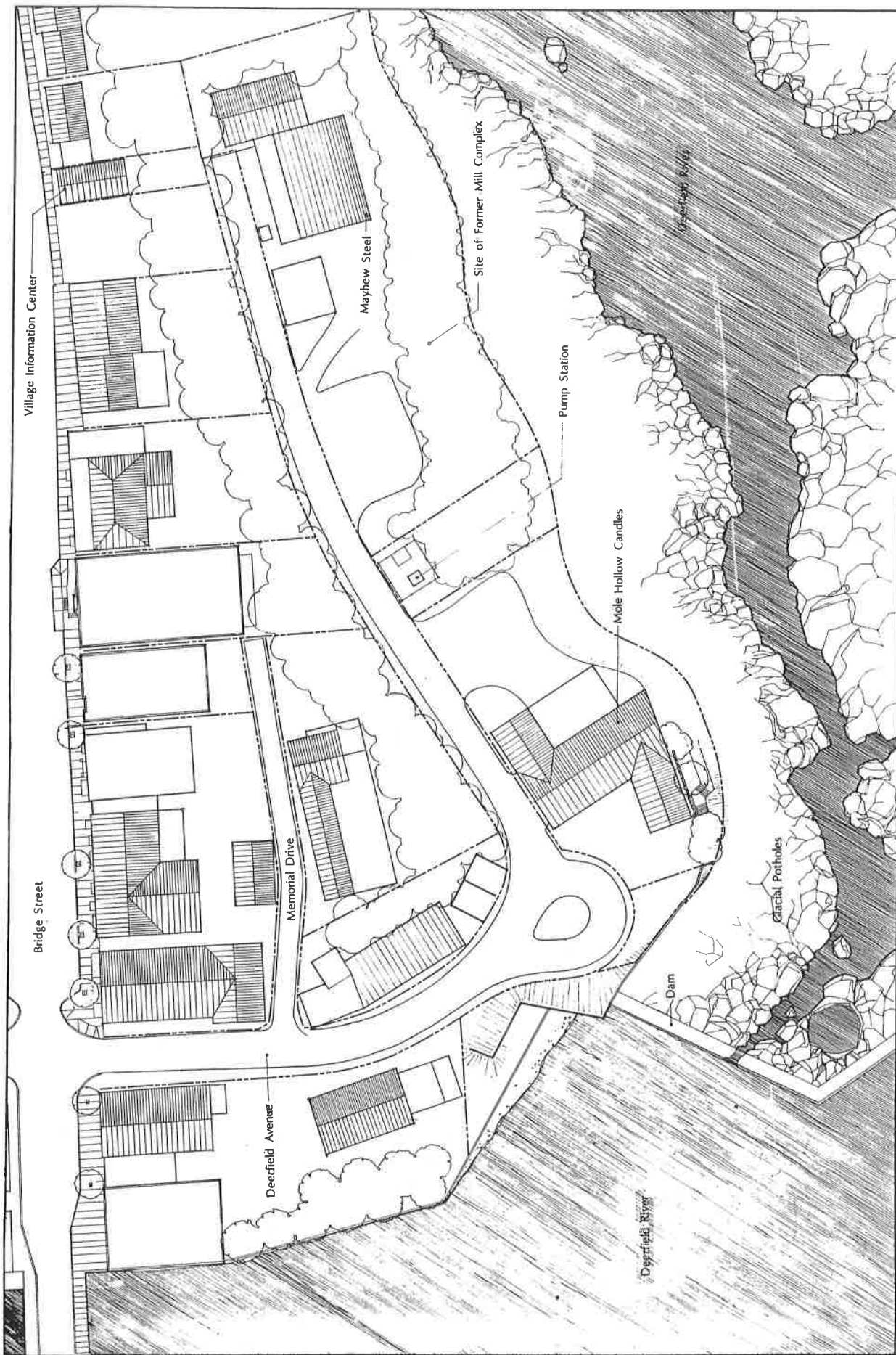


Figure 36. Deerfield Ave./Glacial Potholes Area
Existing Conditions
12/4/88

Shelburne Falls Townscape Study

Prepared for:
Town of Shelburne
Town of Buckland

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11. Glacial Potholes Area: Immediate Issues and Recommendations

Issue:

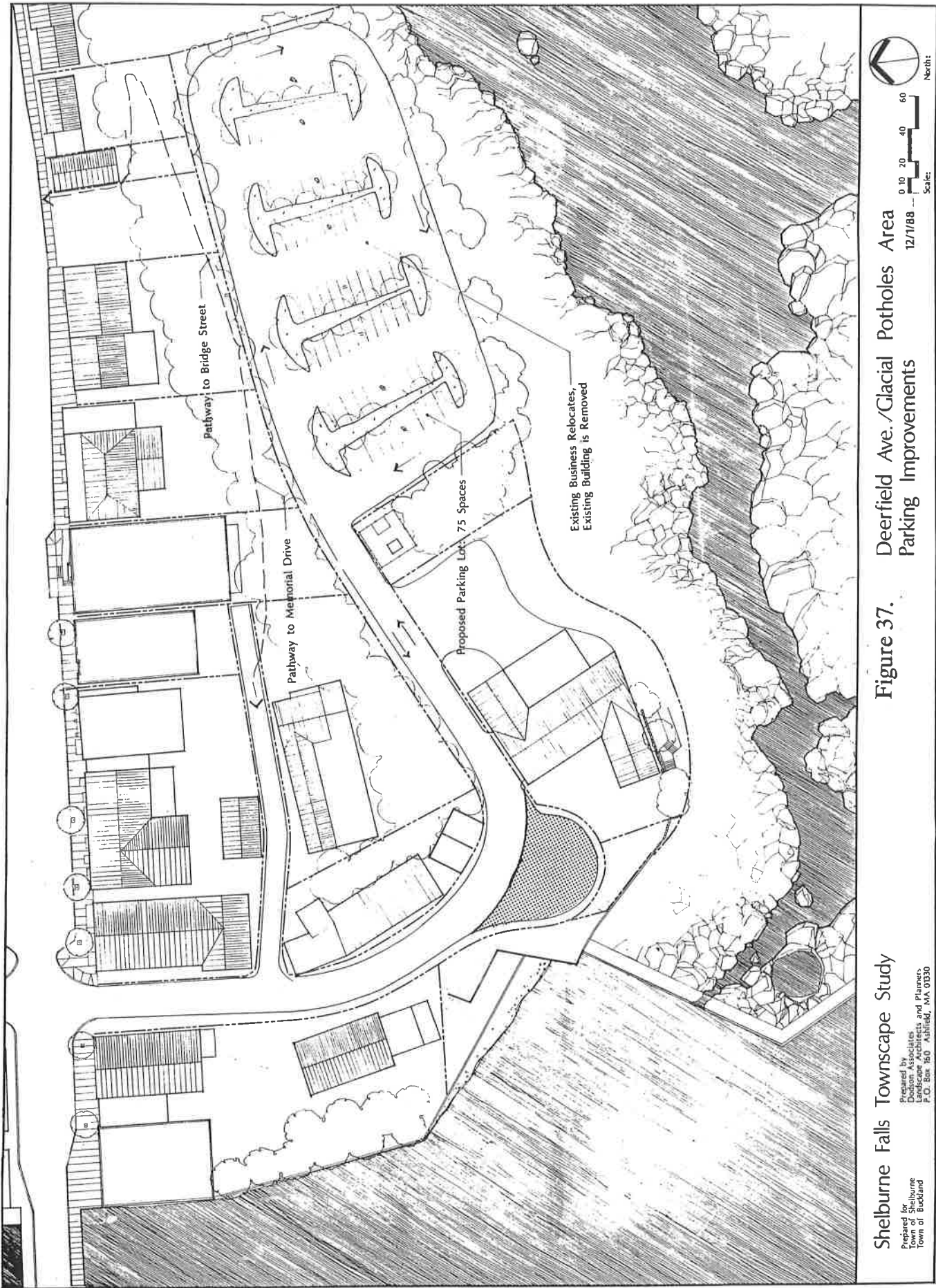
Access to the Glacial Potholes area is currently difficult and unclear. Major natural resources such as the riverfront on both sides of the river and the Potholes as well as historical resources such as the dam and mill areas on both sides of the Potholes, which together with the natural phenomenon of the Salmon Falls helped create Shelburne Falls, are being underutilized or ignored.

Recommendation:

Work with the Mayhew Steel Company to help them successfully re-locate to Sears Street in Buckland in several years time. Secure this unique and valuable piece of riverfront land for public access and use by coming to an agreement with Mayhew Steel and with Mole Hollow Candle Company and getting help in the form of a small planning grant to involve the community in actively working with consultants to explore options and attach costs for creating a combined waterfront park and tourist parking area/ truck turnaround at this location. This process will identify which of several State grant programs to pursue in this area.

Existing Use At present public use of the Glacial Potholes area is discouraged and the area has no regular maintenance commitment from either public or private sector. This may be largely due to concern over accepting liability for any accidents in the area if the public is in any way encouraged to use it. This means that several of the greatest natural resources shared by the two Towns -- the incredible 450 million-year-old exposed and folded bedrock, the 12,000 year old post-glacial Potholes and the resource of the Salmon Falls, literally the generating force behind the industrial success and development of the village area -- are underutilized and underenjoyed. Here are incredible natural, historical and potentially recreational resources that literally have been central to Shelburne Falls' history and industrial heritage but are largely benignly ignored.

Access Pedestrian access to the Potholes and riverbed itself is difficult, is limited to one or two spots only, lacks a coordinated path system and suffers from an inconclusive feeling of arrival. Vehicular access down Deerfield Avenue is often difficult and congested. There is a strong need for legal parking spaces that neither block traffic nor make deliveries from large trucks impossible for the businesses that have to use Deerfield ave. such as Singley's Furniture, Mole Hollow Candle, and Mayhew Steel, Co.



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Town of Buckland

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Figure 37. Deerfield Ave./Glacial Potholes Area
Parking Improvements

12/1/88

A conflict exists over the use of the several flat, earthen terraces that represent the old building locations of the "Under the Hill" Mills which have all been destroyed by flood or, most recently, fire, except for the old Frost Mill (Mole Hollow Candle). Mole Hollow Candle and Mayhew Steel own all but a small part of these and need them for employee parking. These businesses also need to count on shipping and receiving by large trailer trucks which then also need to turn around to exit back to Bridge Street. Tourists and sweltering bathers on hot summer days come down Deerfield Avenue, need places to park and will find or manufacture them legal or not, blocking employees, semi-trailers or fire trucks.

Presently the prime location for a small, pleasant pedestrian plaza with seating overlooking the spectacle of the dam, potholes and ever changing water conditions must be given up as a car and truck turnaround.

There is a need to create a "critical mass" of businesses along Deerfield Avenue, a *series* of retail and other businesses that would contribute to the vitality of this area. The current pattern of widely spaced businesses risks commercial isolation and does little to contribute to creation of a vital commercial area that could use its proximity to the river and the Glacial Potholes to build its own special identity. As in other places in the Falls, however, it is almost impossible to build up such a corridor without good vehicular and pedestrian circulation and without making parking available nearby.

Figure 36 (page 78) shows a plan view of existing conditions and ownership patterns in the Glacial Potholes/ Deerfield Avenue area.

Immediate Recommendations

Executives at Mayhew Steel have been approached several times in the last few years and have indicated an interest in talking with Buckland and Shelburne about the possibility of centralizing all their operations on Sears Street in Buckland. At the time of a major fire at their Deerfield Avenue site a few years ago this seemed very close to happening, but the decision to invest in new machinery at the Deerfield Ave. site was made instead. A major factor in this decision was the fact that Mayhew Steel holds *free electrical power rights* (from New England Power Co.) *in perpetuity* at this site as a result of their ceding the company's rights to hydropower generated by the dam.

By 1991, the equipment installed at the Deerfield Avenue site will be obsolete or expendable and Mayhew officials would consider moving at this time *if* the two towns can help them to get their free electricity rights transferred from the Deerfield Avenue site to the Sears Street site in Buckland.

Buckland and Shelburne should work together with Mayhew Steel and New England Power Company officials and with the elected representatives from Shelburne Falls to find a way to secure this unique and historic piece of waterfront property for public access and recreational use. Once Mayhew Steel transfers operations to the Buckland side of the river, the buildings currently on the site -- which are not historic and were excluded from the national historic register district for the village -- should be removed.

Buckland and Shelburne should apply for a small study grant to hire consultants to work with the community to investigate options for establishing a waterfront park along the Deerfield which would include the historic "Under the Hill Mills" site and the Glacial Potholes. This process would pinpoint which option the community would like to pursue and would attach a cost estimate to it. Once a rough scope and cost estimate has been attached to the project the two towns would be able to decide state or federal program to apply to for funding. State funding is currently unavailable but may be restored in the future.

For the immediate future the Mayhew Steel parcel on Deerfield Avenue could be put to use as an 80 car parking lot with planted islands to provide shade and break up the expanse of blacktop and vehicles. This parking lot would be best suited for use by visitors to the Potholes and tourists. As shown in figure 37, a loop could be integrated into the parking lot design to allow a clear, one way traffic pattern and to allow large trucks servicing the Deerfield Avenue businesses to turn around and exit back to Bridge Street.

Including this turnaround loop would, in turn, make the existing undersized loop in front of the old Frost Mill (currently Mole Hollow Candle Company) obsolete and free up this loop and the adjacent area for possible development as a pedestrian plaza and overlook with dramatic views of the dam, sluiceways and Potholes area.

Buckland and Shelburne should work together with Mole Hollow Candle, other Deerfield Avenue businesses and the Commonwealth to take better advantage of the great natural resource of the Salmon Falls and Glacial Potholes area. A solution that provides clear overlook areas, clear orientation and clear access to the Potholes will help make this area a successful business corridor and destination in its own right. In addition, adding parking and clear, safe access to the river will remedy the current conflicts in use between Deerfield Ave. businesses and visitors to the Potholes on hot, summer days. A commitment to better maintenance at the Potholes should be a part of making better use of them and their potential to equal the Bridge of Flowers as a visitor destination in town. Issues of controlling any possible liability for accidents occurring at the Potholes and for any toxic waste problems that might be encountered on this former industrial site should be investigated.

A seasonal boardwalk pathway might be laid out to allow a safe and dry-foot passage across the riverbed and Potholes area during the low water season. During the high water season the boardwalk could be removed and stored. This boardwalk would allow close inspection of the Potholes and a possible interpretive trail while at the same time providing pedestrian access to the Buckland side of the river near the historic Lamson-Goodnow mill complex. This would add an important new pedestrian loop encouraging visitors to circulate and to visit both sides of the river.

Creation of a seasonal pedestrian route crossing the Deerfield below the dam would complement widening of the sidewalk along Conway Street from the New England Power Co. land near Lamson and Goodnow back to the Iron Bridge. Currently this sidewalk is only wide enough to pass single file and no effort is made to control or improve volunteer vegetation along this section of the river. If space for a wider and more gracious sidewalk cannot be found, one option would be to follow the example of the existing "gallery" additions cantilevered out from the sides of Buildings along the river and employ a similar technique for widening the sidewalk along Conway Street. While requiring a substantial investment this approach would create a "riverwalk" area that would repay the two towns for many years to come.

Long term recommendations for a mixed-use development and parking structure on Mayhew Steel's Deerfield Avenue parcel are covered in the second section of this report.

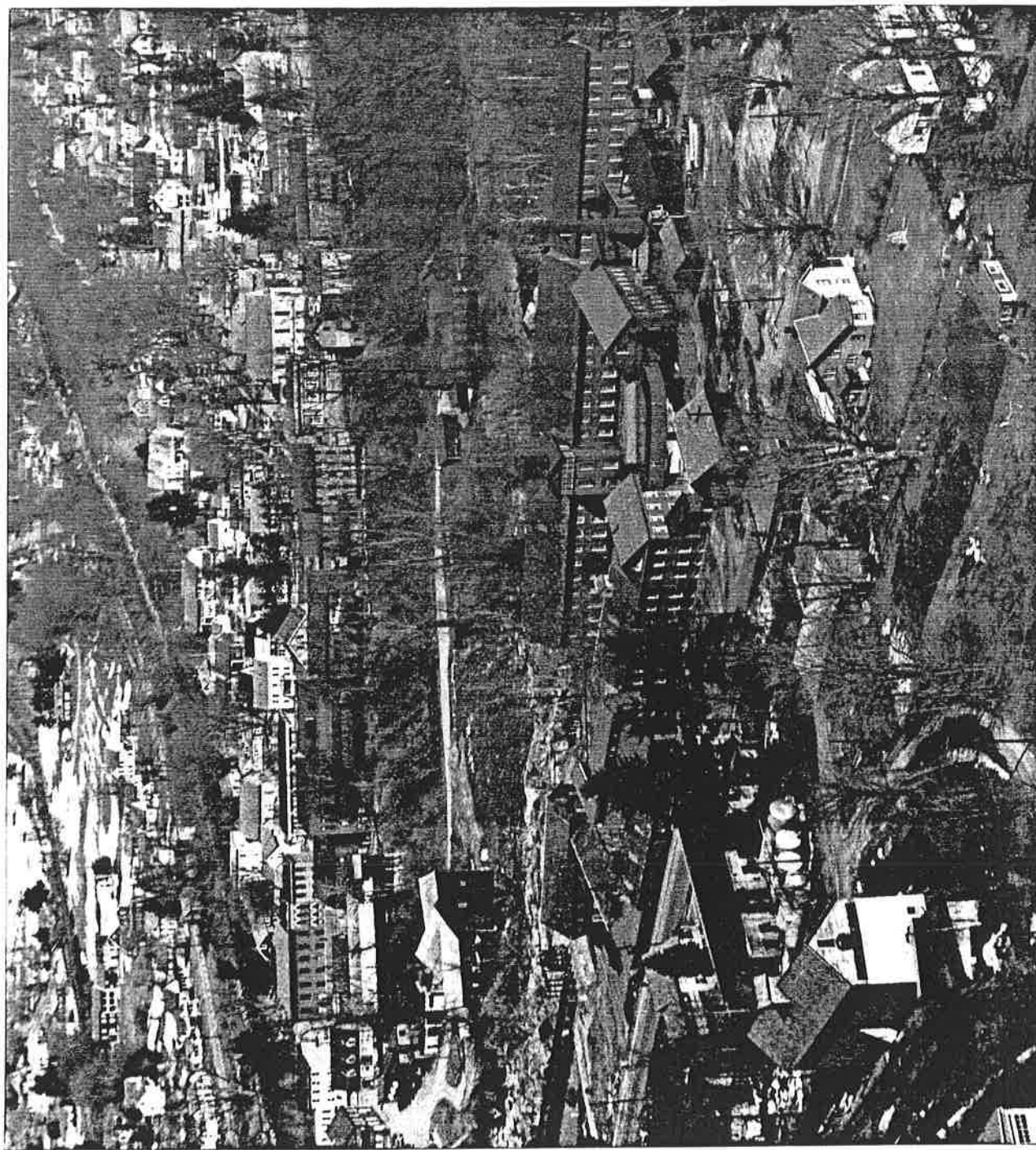


Figure 38. 1960's Air Photo of Lamson-Goodnow Complex

12. Commercial District Issues

Issue:

Proposals have been made to expand the Commercial Zoning District in Shelburne -- perhaps as far as Church street and possibly beyond this along Main Street. In Buckland a majority of the existing commercial use is non-conforming making it difficult for the existing by-laws to regulate where commercial stops and residential begins (and so to avoid creeping conversion of residential units and creation of commercial strips.

Recommendation:

Do not allow expansion of the Shelburne Commercial District -- there is too much underutilized or vacant space within the existing District. Instead, deal with home businesses on a special permit basis after establishing clear and definite standards for providing off-street parking for clients, noise and nuisance control, safe ingress and egress, etc., so that all special permit applications are reviewed in a fair and consistent manner. In Buckland, alert the Planning Board to the commercial strip development visibly building up along State Street between the center and Route 2. Encourage protective zoning measures which could, again, include some form of commercial site plan review to prevent steady encroachment by commercial on formerly residential areas.

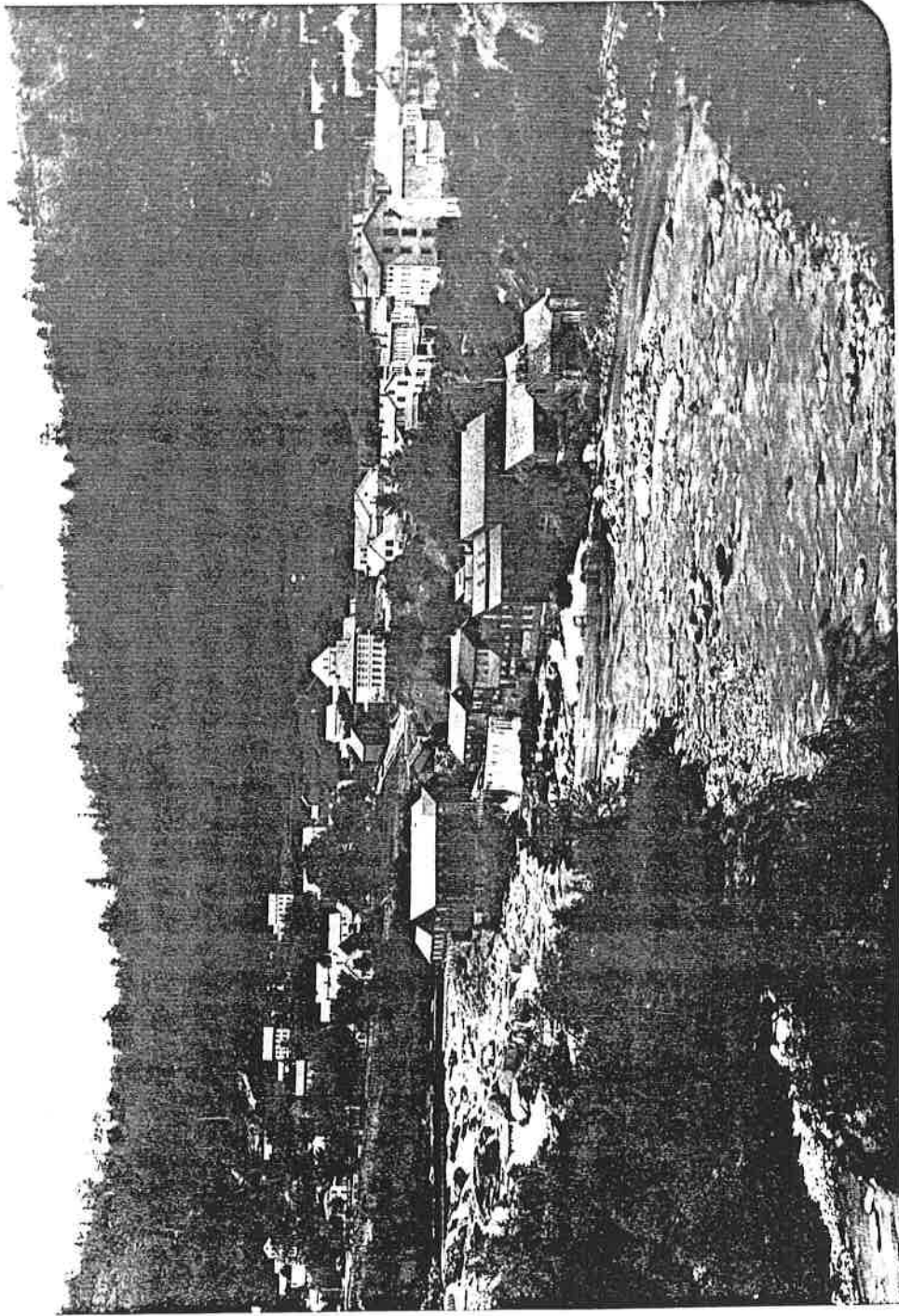


Figure 39. Pre-1890 Photo of "Under the Hill" Mills

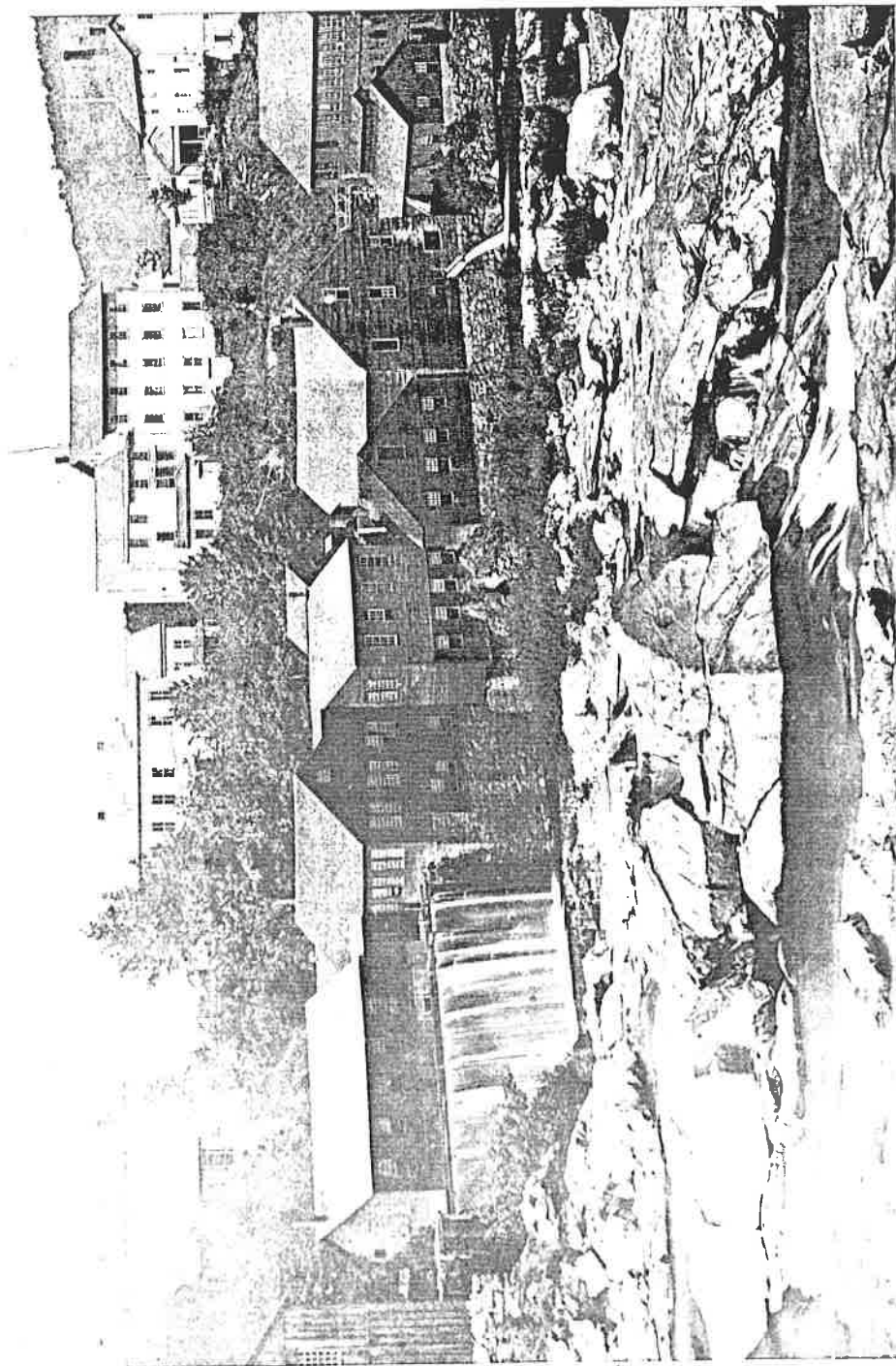


Figure 40. "Under the Hill" Mills and Upper Bridge Street

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Deerfield Ave./Glacial Potholes Area
Proposed Park + Development

Figure 41. Proposed Park and Development, Glacial Potholes

II. Long Term Recommendations

It is time to develop a long-range vision for Shelburne Falls and identify clear steps in reaching this vision so that the two towns can use their resources and funds as efficiently as possible -- identifying and dealing with potential problems in a coordinated way and *before* they become emergencies. Developing a positive and specific vision for the future of the Village area will allow the significant strides of the past to be built on and extended. The initial concepts developed below deal with issues that will face Shelburne Falls in future decades.

1. Glacial Potholes Area

Issue:

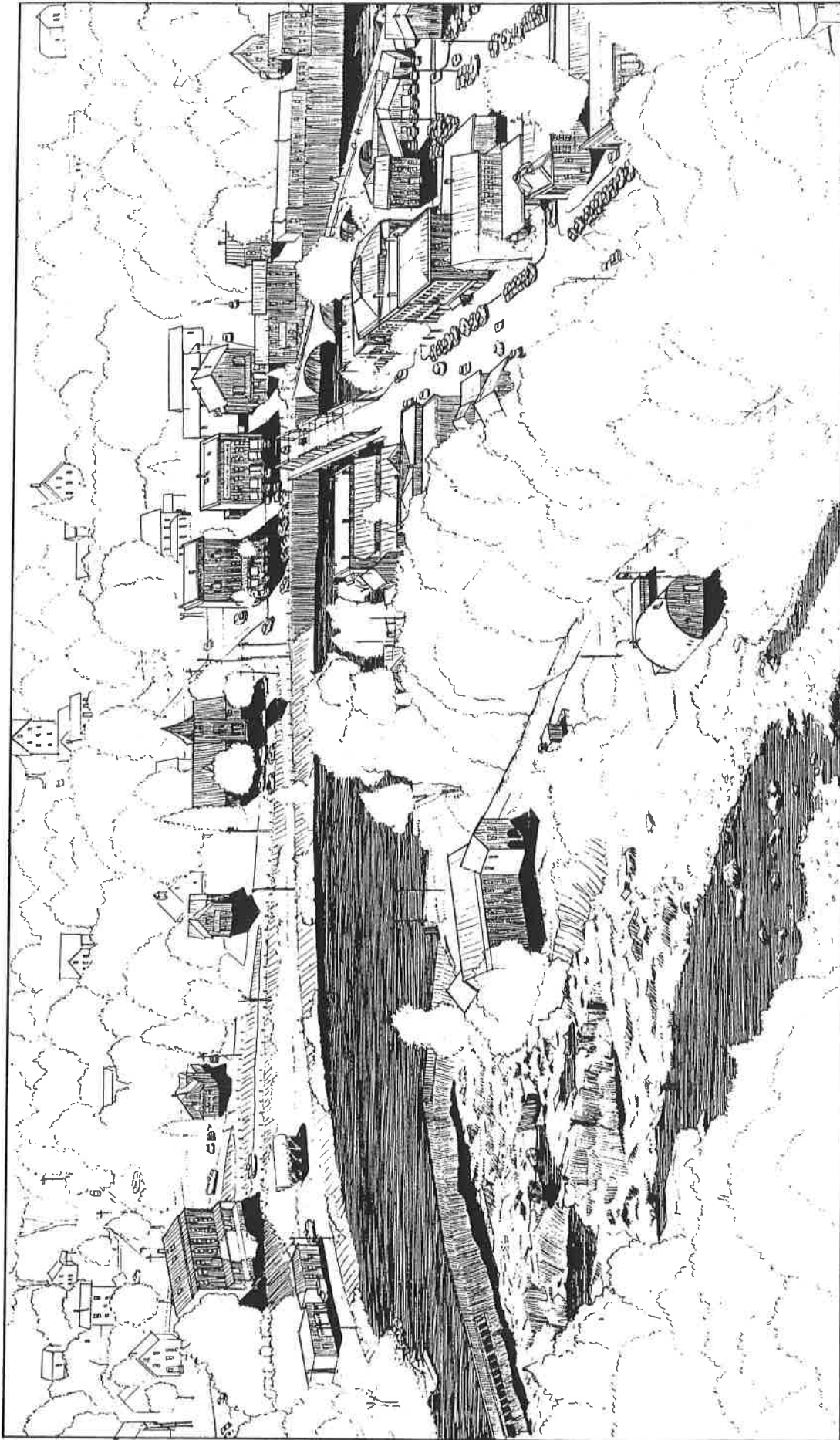
The resource of the Deerfield River, dam and Glacial Potholes are central to Shelburne Falls and its history. Currently, these areas are underutilized and public access is difficult and poorly indicated. The old "Under the Hill Mills" site and the site of the United Bank and its parking lot represent the only two sites in Shelburne Falls that are suitable for locating a parking structure -- should continued growth in West County area make this necessary in the future.

Recommendations:

Capitalize on the spectacular site and multiple natural and man-made features of the village center and Potholes area by re-creating the massing of the historic "Under the Hill Mills" complex as a modern mixed-use development screening several levels of structured parking.

A large complex of mill buildings was formerly located adjacent to the Glacial Potholes on the site of the current Mayhew Steel Company building. We recommend recreating in a general manner the complex of buildings that originally stood on this site in the Nineteenth Century. 70,000 s.f. of mixed use development located in 8 new structures with 60,000 s.f. of parking sufficient for 150 cars could be located in a two-story parking deck built against the hillside and screened from view behind the proposed buildings. The top floor of the parking would service existing Bridge Street businesses and the visitor information center. The bottom two floors would service the proposed development. The existing business on the site would be transferred to a more desirable location and the existing metal building would be removed.

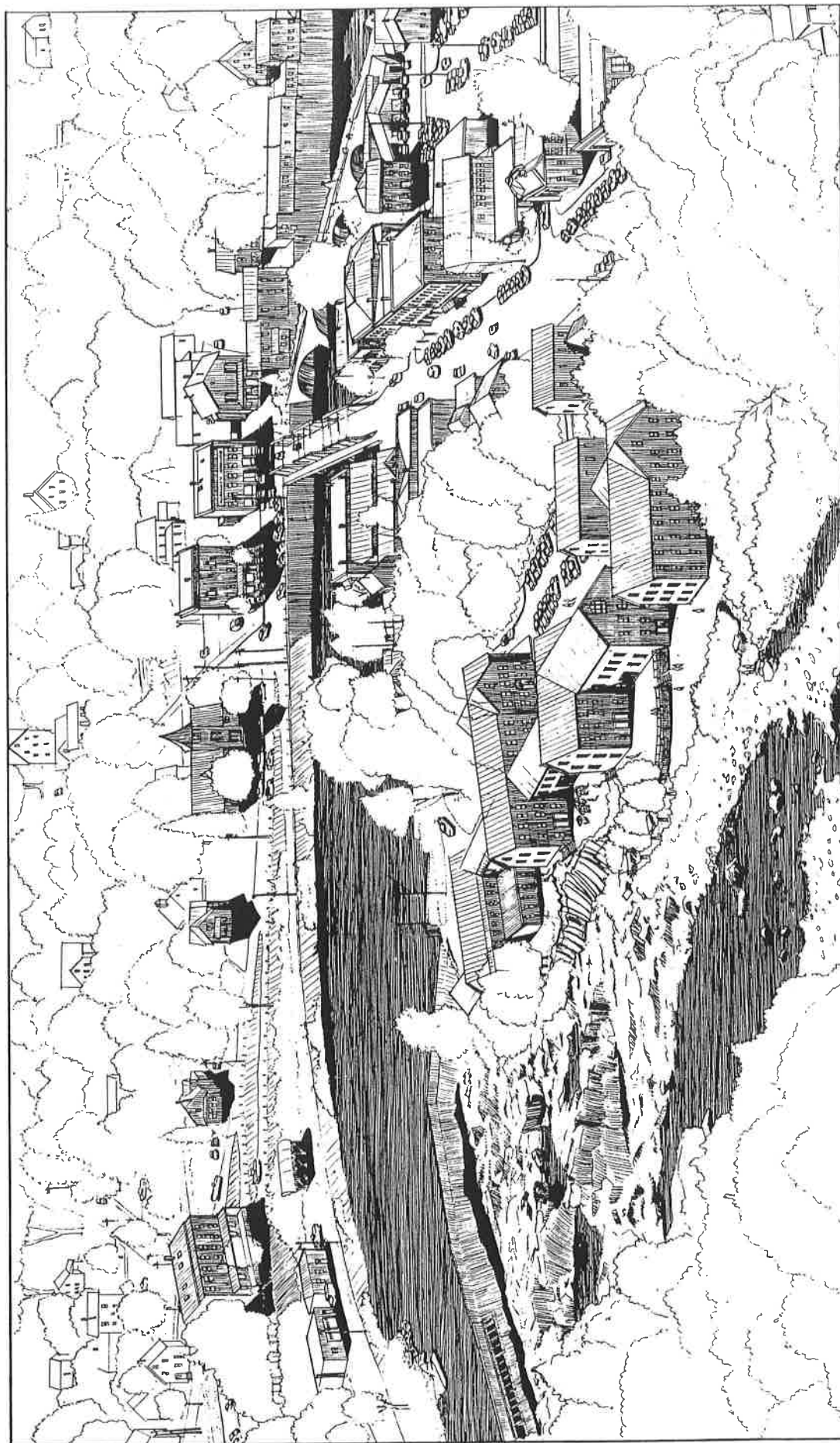
Proposed uses in the new buildings would include stores, restaurants, housing (including affordable units), offices a park administration office and a small museum/interpretive center. The project would be developed as a public/private partnership involving private developers



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Figure 42. Aerial View: Existing Conditions, Glacial Potholes



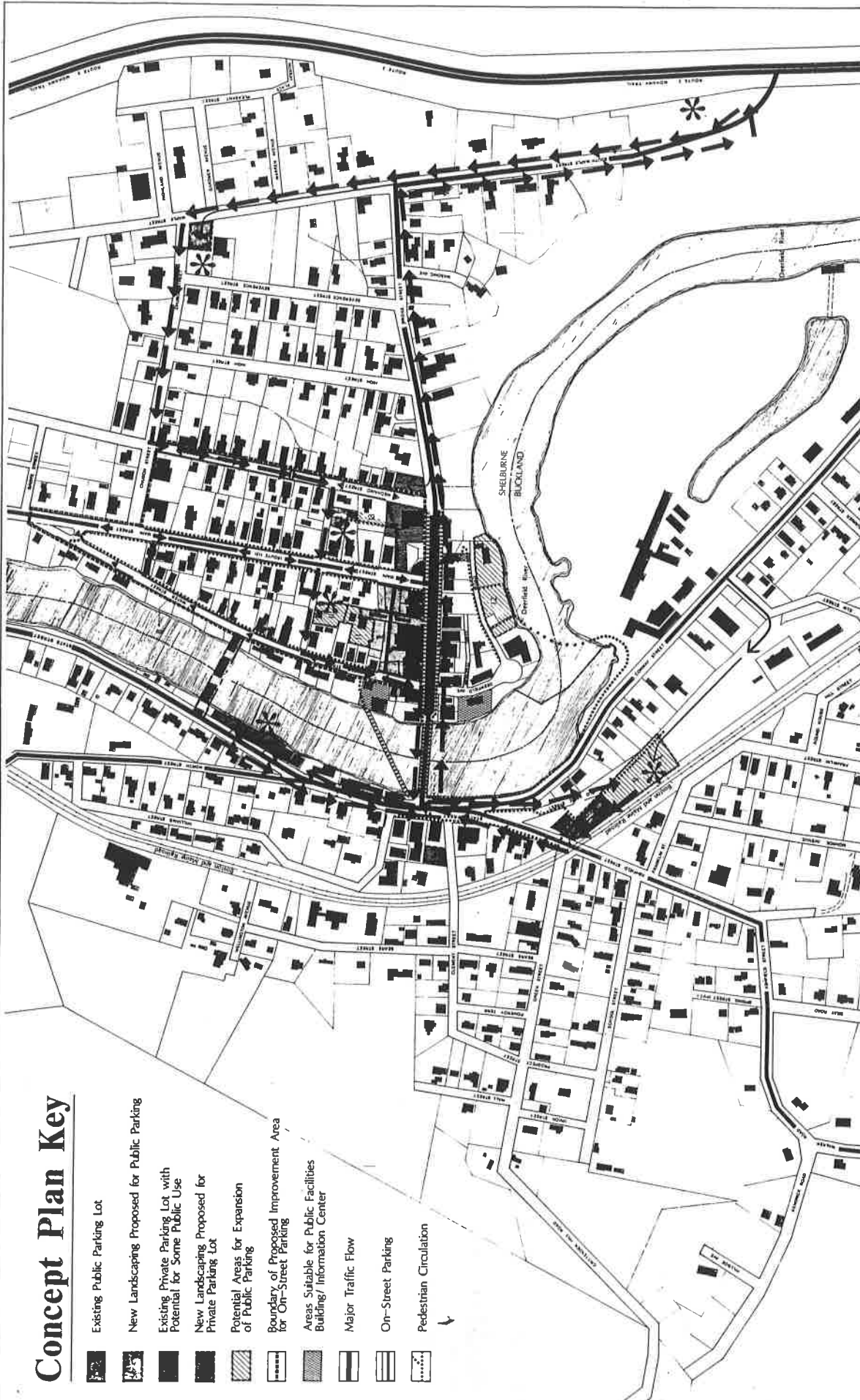
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Figure 43. Aerial View: Recommended Development

Concept Plan Key

- Existing Public Parking Lot
- New Landscaping Proposed for Public Parking
- Existing Private Parking Lot with Potential for Some Public Use
- New Landscaping Proposed for Private Parking Lot
- Potential Areas for Expansion of Public Parking
- Boundary of Proposed Improvement Area for On-Street Parking
- Areas Suitable for Public Facilities Building/Information Center
- Major Traffic Flow
- On-Street Parking
- Pedestrian Circulation



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Concept Plan

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Town of Buckland, Massachusetts
Town of Shelburne, Massachusetts

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- * Peripheral Parking Lots
- Parking Shuttle Path

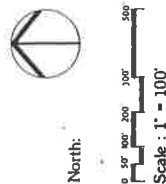


Figure 44. Concept Plan Showing Commuter Lots & Shuttle

working with local citizens, the business community and town, county and state government. A park would be established, possibly with state or federal assistance, focussing on the natural features as well as the cultural and industrial history of the site. Park staff would be located in the complex and would supervise access to and use of the potholes area. The complex would also contain a small museum and interpretive center.

2. Shuttle System

Issue:

As the West County area continues to grow, increasing vehicular traffic will inevitably lead to increasing congestion in the Shelburne Falls center and commercial district. The Iron Bridge and the commercial district act as traffic "bottlenecks" and the more successful the district is at retaining and attracting shoppers and visitors, the more severe the congestion problem will become.

Recommendations:

Minimize congestion and traffic conflict at the Iron Bridge and village center by creating a coordinated series of off-street parking lots at the edges of the village. Coordinated signage should direct visitors - particularly tourists and long-term parkers - to use these peripheral lots. A shuttle system could be used during periods of peak demand to encourage use of these lots.

Many towns with large numbers of tourist visitors such as Rockport and Edgartown are implementing shuttle systems servicing remote parking lots. While these towns have many more visitors than Shelburne Falls does now, Buckland and Shelburne may want to plan for future traffic growth. Visitors would park at one of four parking lots located at the edges of town along major access roads. A jitney shuttle would bring tourists and visitors into town. An easy first step would be to rent Greenfield's trolley replica for use on days of peak anticipated parking demand. In addition to reducing traffic congestion, this system would itself be an attraction and would provide visitors, shoppers and residents with a more enjoyable way to get around in the village. Reduced levels of traffic and pollution would improve the quality of life downtown.

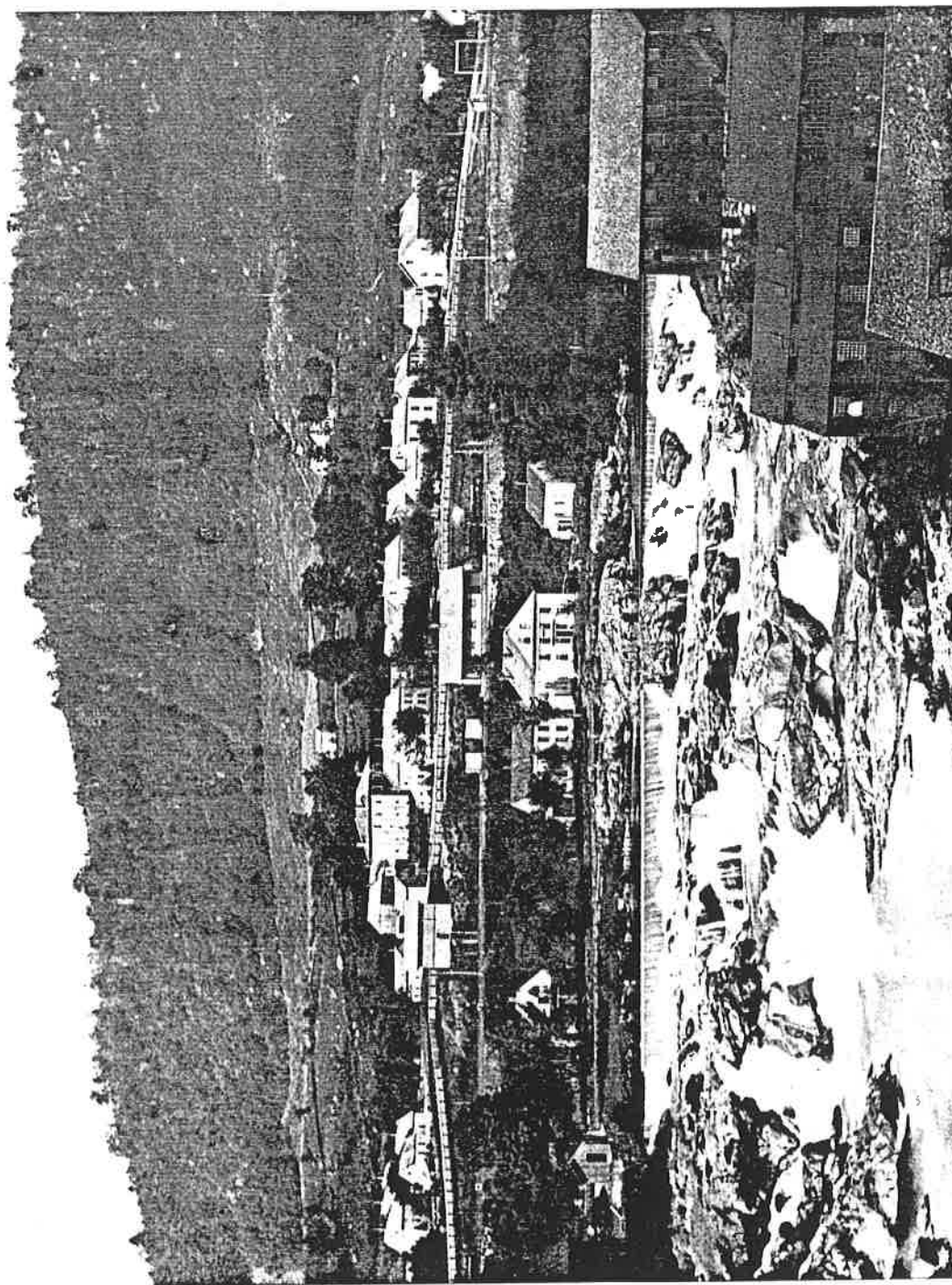


Figure 45. Pre-1890's Photograph of Salmon Falls Dam

3. Long-Term Traffic Situation

Issue:

Accommodation of ever increasing numbers of vehicles passing over the Iron Bridge or through the village center will may eventually become impossible. In addition, traffic increases over the long term may destroy the close-knit, pedestrian pattern and character produced by the village's 19th century layout.

Recommendations:

Adopt a long term traffic planning approach that accepts Shelburne Falls' street system as it exists today and seeks to relieve increasing traffic congestion by holding tourist and employee parking at the village periphery.

Because of the constraints presented by the river, the steep terrain, unusual street patterns and the fragile historic character of the village, it will not be possible to meet large-scale future traffic increases in the village in a conventional manner without creating significant, and probably unacceptable, levels of change to the existing village. Other historic towns have faced this dilemma: do we accommodate traffic and drastically alter our village or do we look into other ways to reduce vehicular congestion. We recommend long-term traffic planning that accepts Shelburne Falls' street system as it is today and reduces congestion by reducing the flow of cars through town through the following techniques: remote shuttle and parking system for tourists and employees, additional development of on-street parking on existing streets, one-way traffic patterns and the development of a parking garage at the Potholes.

4. Second Vehicular Bridge

Issue:

Increased growth in the village and in West County may eventually reach a level where a single bridge crossing the Deerfield at the village center cannot accommodate vehicular traffic. Severe bottlenecks and delays would result.

Recommendations:

When traffic levels warrant it and if traffic cannot be diverted to the edge of the village, consider construction of a second bridge near the village center and creation of a one way traffic flow across each bridge.

In the future, traffic may become highly congested at the Iron Bridge. Even a new bridge at this location would not be able to handle large-scale future increases of traffic due to the street pattern and the need to preserve historic structures, buildings and street character. Building a moderately-sized second vehicular bridge north of the Bridge of Flowers would allow a one-way traffic pattern to be created across each bridge, improving traffic flow. A less expensive and preferable approach would be to discourage high levels of traffic through the village.

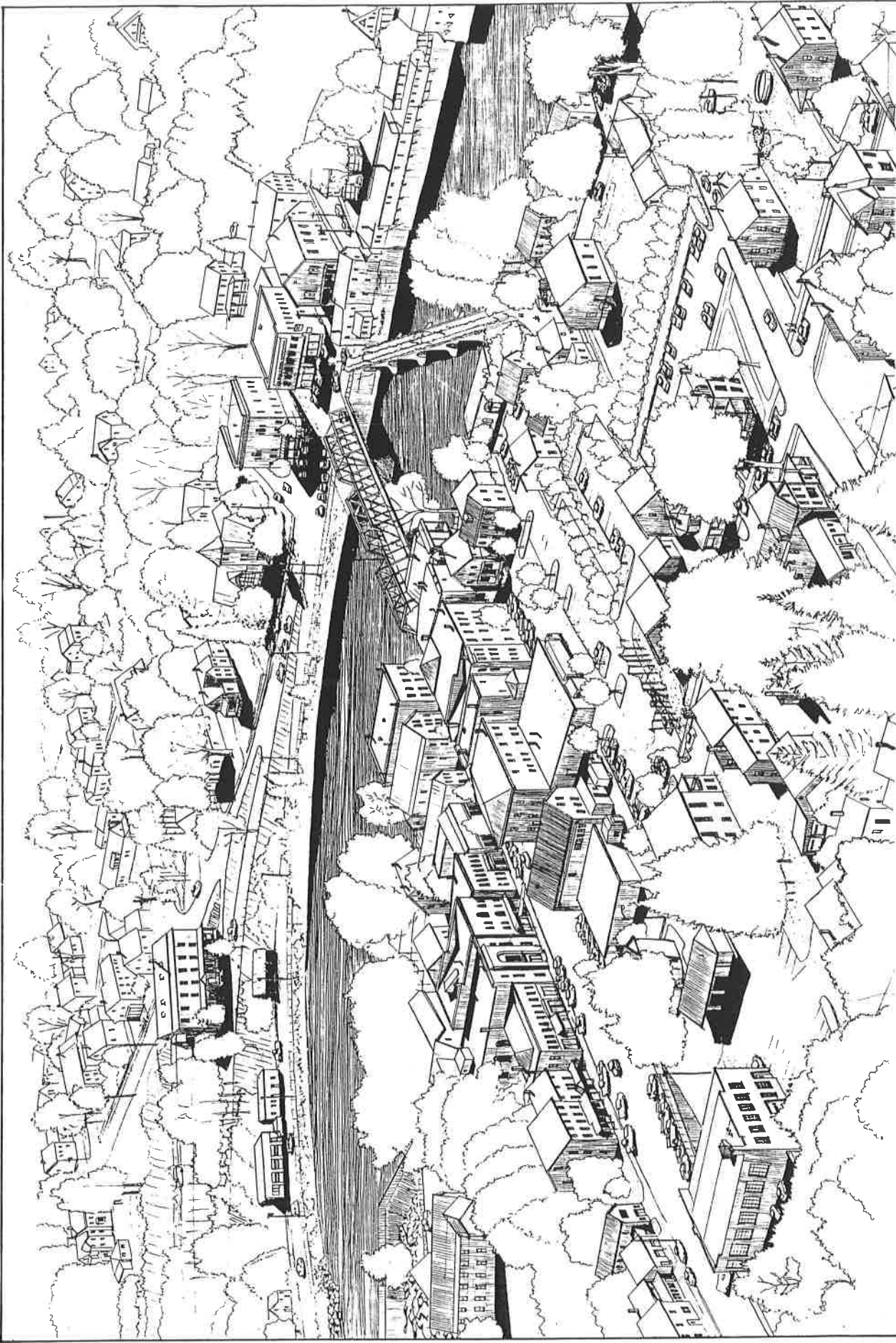


Figure 46. Aerial View of Village Looking West:
Recommended Scenario

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IV. Conclusion

Most Shelburne Falls residents want to blend prosperity with the preservation of the village's historic character, sense of community and natural beauty. This cannot be achieved by standing still. The first victims of inaction would be the core service businesses that are such an important part of the Falls. The next victims would be the extraordinary natural and scenic resources which Shelburne Falls enjoys and which careless "modernization" would quickly destroy.

The essential service and supply businesses: the clothing, grocery, pharmacy, hardware and other stores are the most vulnerable to competition from the malls. To compete, these businesses must provide ample parking and relatively easy vehicular access. We have attempted to do this with as little impact as possible on the village's physical character. To successfully compete, the existing village businesses must also understand that the village's existing historic character and quality of life is their greatest marketing asset. This character must be preserved and strengthened as Shelburne Falls grows because it is what makes the village a unique place to live in, to visit, or to shop in.

Dodson Associates, Dietz and Company and Gillon Associates hope that the short and long term recommendations that have been enumerated in the text and illustrations of this report will become the basis for a public forum and discussion of options for future growth of Shelburne Falls. Implementing these planning and design measures will allow Shelburne Falls to integrate new development and increase commercial vitality for its businesses without losing what gives it its special and memorable character today.