Sun Bank Center

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Clemson University

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Sun Bank Center

T. Douglas Ferguson
May, 1986

A terminal project submitted to the Faculty of the College of Architecture, Clemson University, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Architecture.

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Dean, College of Architecture
For Kim whose support has made all of this possible.
Since the opening of Disney World in 1971, the Central Florida region surrounding Orlando has experienced rapid growth. Unfortunately, little of the growth has taken place in the city center. In recent years efforts have been directed to reverse this trend. Streetscape and landscaping have been added and new construction encouraged. The Sun Bank Center will be the first large scale project in downtown Orlando.

The complex is to be a symbol for Sun Bank, a small town bank that through rapid growth now finds itself the second largest bank in Florida. The Bank's current building is on the corner of Orange Avenue (the major business street) and Church Street. The Bank's first building, now occupied by a community college is on the adjacent corner. Present plans call for the renovation of the present building and the construction of an additional 325,000 sq ft for Sun Bank use. In addition the developer has asked for another 325,000 sq ft of leasable office space.
Presently existing on the site is Beardall Park which is quite poor visually but has the historical significance of being the site of Orlando's first public school and then city hall. The result of a public hearing on the future of Beardall Park was to include a new public park in the development.

Another interesting factor is the Church Street Station development adjacent to the project, which has become a major tourist attraction.

It is important that the design for the Sun Bank Center be such that will encourage further development in the downtown. This provides the project with some potentially exciting urban design issues. It will be my goal in examining these issues and developing a design to better understand the impact of a major development on a central business district.
I would like to thank and recognize all the people who helped to make this semester a success:

My Committee for their support, guidance, and criticism;

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"Build your community and you build your bank."

Linton E. Allen - Founder of Sun Bank

Despite the migration of many businesses due to the Disney Complex 30 miles south, Orlando still maintains a vital and attractive downtown business district. The older, somewhat historic, residential districts still partially encompass downtown and provide a wonderful containing element. Ready access to downtown from all of Central Florida is possible by Interstate 4 and the Orlando East-West Expressway. The Church Street Station development located in downtown, has become a major Central Florida tourist attraction. Several downtown street festivals during the past few years have demonstrated public interest in the future of downtown Orlando.

Sun Bank Center when completed will be the first major commitment to downtown Orlando. This active interaction between Orlando and Sun Bank is appropriate due to the long history of cooperation between the bank and its city. Its size, location, and functions will
make Sun Bank the most important ingredient in the urban fabric. Because of this the design of Sun Bank will become synonymous with Orlando.

Sun Bank Center offers the opportunity to explore several exciting architectural issues. The design of the high-rise has become a major topic facing today's architects. As Sun Bank will be the first high-rise in Orlando, the manner in which it solves this issue is especially important.

Sun Bank Center will contain a high-rise office building, retail activities, a 350-room businessmen's hotel, and a large parking garage. The impact an urban context of this scale will have on the existing downtown is another design aspect. The scale of downtown Orlando is predominately five to six stories. Much of downtown lies within a historic district and therefore this scale can be expected to persist.

As this thesis project develops Sun Bank Center will provide opportunities for explorations of all of these issues. The issues of particular interest are: an exploration of highway architecture, building as a
sign, impact of a large center on downtown, and revitalization of a downtown retail district. One city official has referred to the completed center as the signature of the Orlando skyline. The image this signature projects becomes the crux of the design problem. It is important that the solution combines the interest of the city with the interest of Sun Bank, successfully answering questions of image and function in such a manner as to enhance the revitalization efforts in downtown Orlando.
Background
central florida overview
Although Florida was claimed by the Spanish explorer, Ponce de Leon, in 1513, it would be three hundred years before the Central Florida region surrounding present day Orlando would be settled. Encounters with native Indians and the inhospitality of much of the land prevented prior settlement. In 1821 the Adams-Omis treaty ceded Florida from Spain to the United States and initiated the beginnings of the Central Florida region.

By the middle of the 19th century, skirmishes with the remaining Indian tribes had all but ended, and the first real influx of settlers began arriving in the Central Florida area. In 1855 the town of Orlando was established and became the county seat for the surrounding territory.

Though Central Florida continued to attract settlers, growth slowed during the turbulent years of the Civil War. A traveler to the region would have found an environment similar in many aspects to life in the American West. Growth intensified
following the war as many Southern families migrated south to escape the disruption associated with the Reconstruction Period.

The first real population boom occurred in the Central Florida region during the 1880's. Responsible for most of this growth were extensive advertising campaigns aimed to attract visitors with possibilities of available land and year round balmy temperatures. The citrus industry became almost immediately the backbone of Central Florida's economy.

Associated with the growth in the citrus industry were the beginnings of the tourist industry which would later prove so important to the Central Florida region. The warm climate attracted many visitors from the North, and grand hotels were common throughout the region. Citrus growers seeking methods to protect themselves from years of poor harvests were also interested in developing a tourist industry. Excellent hunting and fishing throughout the region provided another attraction for the visitors.

Although Central Florida continued to grow
steadily, the early 1950's found the character of the region quite similar to the early 1900's. Citrus farming and tourism remained the predominant industries. In 1956, however, the Martin Company later to become Martin Marietta bought 7,300 acres southwest of Orlando. The arrival of the Martin Company created 8,000 jobs and marked the awakening of the Central Florida communities. In less than two years after its opening, 72 new businesses had been established in the region. Central Florida had begun the rapid growth it would experience for the next thirty years.

In 1965 the most important chain of events in Central Florida's history was about to unfold. A mysterious buyer had purchased some 27,000 acres of farm land southwest of Orlando. The buyer was Walt Disney; and with an announcement, on November 15, 1965, concerning the creation of Walt Disney World, the destiny of Central Florida was permanently altered. Land values soared immediately, and developers began planning for the hotels, restaurants, and service stations needed to support a major tourist attraction.
The impact on Central Florida was phenomenal. In its first two years of operation, Walt Disney World attracted 20 million visitors to the region, pumped 3.2 billion dollars into the economy, and employed more than 13,000 people. In the wake of Disney's success, more tourist attractions, most notably Sea World and Disney's Epcot, have been located in Central Florida.

Along with the growth in the tourist industry came a substantial growth in population. The results of this were the interlocking of small communities into one metropolis. The growth that began with tourism spread into other areas as well. In 1981 and 1982 over 100 firms announced plans to relocate or expand their businesses.

Today, Central Florida is a diversified region encompassing major tourist attractions, agricultural industries, and major corporation headquarters. Throughout the growth the area has maintained the elements which first made it attractive during the 19th century. Available land and opportunities
combined with a temperate climate still make the Central Florida region an attractive place to live and to visit.
Central Florida Region

SUN BANK CENTER

Central Florida Region

SR 426
SEMNOLE CO
ORANGE CO
ORLANDO
WINTER PARK
15A
ORLANDO
NORTHWEST
SANDY LAKE ROAD
50
441
4
With Central Florida's first population boom in the 1880's, the city of Orlando began to take shape. The first five years of the 1880's saw the small village grow to become the center of the region. An advertisement for the city acknowledged the growth as:

phenomenal as there are no oil wells, factories, or mines, the population depending entirely on its orange groves, truck gardens and unrivaled climate. Orlando is built on the peel of the orange.²

The arrival of the railroad in 1880 spurred much of the development. The original depot was located near the present day intersection of Church Street and Orange Avenue. As businesses and social facilities were established surrounding the depot, the Church Street-Orange Avenue intersection became the focal point of the developing downtown.

From a town of 200 people and 6 stores in 1860, Orlando grew to include 50 stores, 5 large hotels, an opera house, two newspapers and numerous other activities by 1866.
Especially important were the hotels which played a vital part in the tourist industry. The largest and most popular of the downtown hotels was the San Juan de Ulloa. The businesses located on its main floor and the excellent restaurant became a favorite spot for Orlandoans as well as tourists.

The character of downtown Orlando reflected much of the "western" attitude of the Central Florida region. Saturday afternoon would often find crowds watching a local cowboy wrestling alligators on Orange Avenue. As the importance of the citrus industry continued to grow, Orlando became the shipping and financial center for the region. The years between 1910 and 1917 saw the amount of citrus acreage for the region more than double, thus strengthening the importance of Orlando.

As the importance of the city grew so did its population. By 1920 Orlando boasted a population of over 20,000. Closely related to the growth of the city was the development of the highway system. Significant in attracting visitors was the decision
to locate the Dixie Highway through Orlando. The Dixie Highway was the major tourist thoroughfare into Florida. As the influx of travelers to the city increased, so did construction in downtown Orlando. To accommodate the visitors, dozens of new hotels were added along Orange Avenue, and in addition several skyscrapers were built. Two such buildings were the Orlando Bank and Trust and the State Bank and Trust Company. When the 10-story State Bank building was completed in 1922, Orlando Bank followed immediately with a slightly taller structure of its own. It is interesting to note the competition for the skyline shared by banks during the early years of Orlando, a spirit which still persists today. Also notable is the precedent for luxury hotels along Orange Avenue, a phenomena that regrettably has ended.

It was not until the end of World War II that Orlando again experienced any substantial periods of growth. The space and missile industry, marked by companies such as the Martin Company and the United States Missle Test Center at Cape Canaveral, brought
many employees to the Central Florida region. The majority of these employees settled in the residential districts in and surrounding Orlando. In response to this, the downtown district expanded with numerous new businesses and hotels.

By the early sixties, however, it was evident that Orlando was suffering the plight experienced by many American cities. Although the city continued to grow, much of this growth was directed toward the suburbs. As malls were built, many downtown businesses closed their doors and relocated nearer to their customers. The move toward the suburbs weakened the base of downtown by drawing away its businesses. In addition the growth occurring in the suburbs was over land which had previously been used for citrus farming. Although the development on these lands created new jobs and amenities, the environment of a farming community no longer existed. The disassociation of Orlando with the outlying farming communities may have reached its final point in 1978 when the last remaining citrus grove on Orange Avenue was bulldozed
and replaced by a supermarket.

Although the arrival of the Disney Corporation in the 1960's had a major impact on Central Florida and the metropolis of Orlando, any positive effect on the downtown district was unnoticeable. The Disney complex created a tourist center 30 miles southwest of Orlando and dissolved any real need for visitor accommodations in the downtown. It was beneficial to the city, however, that Interstate 4, the major route to Disney, was designed to pass immediately adjacent to downtown. As with the Dixie Highway before it, the routing of Interstate 4 insured Orlando a place on the major tourist axis through Florida.

Recently there has been a resurgence of growth in the downtown district. Presently there are over 3 million square feet of office space in downtown and more under construction. As companies are encouraged to locate their offices downtown, retail activities geared toward the office workers are also established. Revitalization and renovation efforts have resulted in Church Street Station, a collection of bars and
restaurants which have become Central Florida's fourth largest tourist attraction. This and the efforts of the Downtown Development Corporation are beginning to create a downtown environment which does not close at 6 p.m. A major project to upgrade Orange Avenue with streetscaping elements and several other downtown projects, such as an addition to the library, public parking garages and an Orange County administration building, have just recently been completed. With the addition of private projects, such as the proposed Sun Bank Center, downtown Orlando and Orange Avenue especially, the intersection of Orange and Church will again become the focus of a progressive and exciting city.
Downtown Orlando today is a mixture of historic buildings dating back to the 1880's and new high-rise office structures. The interaction of these diverse elements has created both positive and negative effects. Until only recently, downtown Orlando consisted primarily of low-rise and mid-rise buildings. In the early 1970's, the first high-rise building, the 18-story CNA Tower, was completed. Since that time, approximately 10 additional towers have been added to the downtown. These towers provide the majority of the office space so important in downtown revitalization efforts.

One of the most important elements in downtown is the Church Street Station mentioned in an earlier section. This development provides the obvious benefit of an exciting nightlife and a major draw to downtown. In addition, Church Street Station has, by example, demonstrated the possibilities of renovation. Since the success of Church Street Station, numerous other renovation projects have been undertaken. Most notable of
these is along Pine Street where a two-block area of turn-of-the-century buildings has been renovated. A sizeable portion of downtown lies within Orlando's historic district which has aided in encouraging renovation projects.

Transportation to and from downtown is provided primarily by Interstate 4, which runs north and south through the region, and by the East-West Expressway. Efforts to alleviate traffic problems downtown have resulted in the construction of a public parking garage and the operation of a shuttle service from a commuter lot on the outskirts of downtown. There are also several privately owned and operated parking garages in the area.

Public space in the city consists of the Lake Eola Park, Beardall Park, and the plaza to the Barnett Building. Though Lake Eola Park is quite beautiful, the Barnett Plaza is perhaps the most popular, possibly due to its location in the heart of downtown. This would seem to indicate a need for public space in the midst of the business district.
The condition of Beardall Park will be discussed in subsequent sections.

As downtown Orlando begins a new growth surge, it is important that developers are sensitive to the fabric of small-scale historic buildings. The fabric has already been threatened with new office towers either built or underway. Careful blending of these elements, along with the injunction of an active nightlife, should create the environment for which downtown Orlando strives.
Downtown Orlando
sun bank history
Sun Bank was founded in 1934 as the First National Bank at Orlando. Over the past fifty years, it has grown to become the second largest bank in the State of Florida. In spite of its growth in size, Sun Bank, Inc. still strives to maintain its image of a "hometown bank with hometown concerns." The bank continues to follow the philosophy of Sun Bank's founder Linton E. Allen: "Build your community and you build your bank."

The execution of this philosophy has been demonstrated by the numerous community projects with which Sun Bank has been associated. In 1964 the Bank was instrumental in founding the campus for the University of Central Florida. The following year Sun Bank represented an anonymous buyer interested in purchasing 27,000 acres southwest of Orlando. This property would later become Walt Disney World. At the same time the Bank organized efforts to relocate the routes of Interstate 4 and the Florida Turnpike closer to Orlando. Sun Bank has also been instrumental in
bringing Martin Marietta Aerospace Industry to Orlando and in financing the Orlando International Airport.

The decision to locate the Sun Bank Center in downtown Orlando is further evidence of Sun Bank's commitment to the city. Orlando's mayor, Bill Fredrick, acknowledged the importance of this decision:

Sun Bank is the most substantial single development in the history of the city, and without a doubt will enhance in magnificent style the character of the entire downtown area. The project is a dramatic show of confidence by Sun Bank in the future of Orlando and symbolically underscores the rapidly advancing opportunities for all the people of Central Florida.
Design Process

Trying to make Orlando Art for you
case studies
The skyscraper and the twentieth century are synonymous; the tall building is the landmark of our age. Shaper of cities and fortunes it is the dream, past and present, of almost every architect... The skyscraper is not only the building of the century, it is also the single work of architecture that can be studied as the embodiment and expression of much that makes the century what it is. For better or worse, it is a measure of our consumer and corporate culture. The tall building probes our collective psyche as it probes the sky.6

Since the beginning of this century, architects have searched for a skyscraper style. The results of these searches have been varied, each solution embodying the forces of its time. However, no other building type can command the prominence and strength of the skyscraper. For the corporations building and occupying the building, these elements become most important. The imagery projected by the tall building will reflect greatly on how the corporation is perceived. Therefore a proper solution for a tall building should project an imagery which describes its occupants.

In a similar fashion, tall buildings have often had the opportunity to address not only themselves but the entire city as well. Where because of location...
or size the structure is especially dominant, the building may become synonymous with the perception of the city. When this happens the architect has the responsibility to create a design through which the building might speak favorably of its city. Many buildings in the past have responded to this challenge and through their designs have created imagery strong enough to become symbols of cities.

The vertical or perpendicular style of the twenties and thirties addressed the issues of skyscraper design with enormous energy. Perhaps no other building types in recent history have sought an integration of image and architecture as these solutions. Raymond Hood's American Radiator Building, New York City, 1924, is an excellent example of this integration. American Radiator was a producer of furnaces and heaters. Hood conceived the building as an advertisement for the company. This is accomplished by abstracting furnace forms as the ornamentation for the top of the building. This effect is heightened by cladding this ornamentation in gold terracotta in contrast to
the darkness of the building's body. At night the top is lit by flood lights so that the building, in effect, "glows like a torch." Hood's solution has most definitely produced a building whose imagery is symbolic of its occupant.

Two buildings which have been able to become synonymous with their cities are the Chrysler Building, New York, 1930; and the Empire State Building, New York, 1931. Both at the time of their completion were the tallest buildings in the world. Each was also able to dominate the skyline of New York. The strong imagery at the tops of these buildings allows them to sign the skyline, signatures which through time have become instantly recognizable as symbols of New York. The Art Deco styling of Chrysler's crown is particularly adept at this. Housed within the crown were Walter Chrysler's duplex apartment, gymasium, "Cloud Club," and an observatory. This placed the executive functions of the building within an area which is highly visible and articulated.

From the decoration and imagery of the Art Deco
period, architecture passed to the logic and simplicity of the Modern Movement and its "glass box." Perhaps the best example of the principles embodied in the glass box can be found in Skidmore, Owings, and Merrill's Lever House, New York City, 1951. Although the Lever House does not respond to questions of imagery and signature as its predecessors, it helped to usher in new thoughts on office building design. The advent of the curtain wall became an important element in creating leaseable open plan office space. In addition technical advances in thermal comfort and lighting were developed.

Despite the benefits of the glass box, cities soon began to become crowded with seemingly identical buildings. The lack of image these buildings projected caused them to lose any significant connections with the occupants or the city. The result of this was the creation of anonymous skylines. To the motorist approaching along the interstate, the skyline of a city in Texas might seem indistinguishable from the skyline of a city in Indiana. These anonymous skylines
have not taken advantage of the opportunities offered by the tall buildings.

In an attempt to deal with this challenge, architects took the glass box and attempted to create an image. Hugh Stubbins' Citicorp Building in New York City responds well to this issue. The top of the building is raked dramatically to provide a large scale image of the building on the New York skyline. This signature is placed on top of an indifferent shaft. When the building meets the ground, it again promotes its image by resting the tower on huge columns at the center of each side.

A similar example is Philip Johnson's Penzoil Place in Houston, Texas. In a similar manner as the Citicorp, Johnson has angled, dramatically, the tops of Penzoil's twin buildings. The imagery is continued by placing the two towers only feet apart creating a tense negative space.

As architects today continue to explore the expression of tall buildings, many exciting solutions are offered for critique. The work of Kohn, Pederson, and Fox returns to many of the expressive forms found
in the 1920's; Johnson-Burgee's Republic Bank in Houston is a design filled with strong imagery.

The skyscrapers of Johnson-Burgee have done more to revive the image conscious building than that of any other single architect. The AT&T, Republic Bank, Transco, and PPG buildings are adding new signatures to the skylines of New York, Houston, and Pittsburgh. However, despite the strong imagery of these designs, it is difficult to find strong connections between the image and the occupant. The Gothic gables and Dutch Stadhuis of Republic Bank have little relation to the bank or to Houston. However, these designs do contain the essential elements to eventually become symbols synonymous with their respective cities.

The success of the skyscraper is dependent upon its expression of its occupant and its city. The historical and recent examples presented would seem to indicate strong, bold imagery as the best vehicle for conveying this expression. The skyscraper in a sense becomes a sign post. If successful it is advertising both itself and its city. This is especially
true when the building is highly visible from the highway, developing 55 MPH billboard architecture.
The design of Sun Bank Center will attempt to create a solution which speaks on different levels, expressing the images of Sun Bank and Orlando to the motorist on Interstate 4 and the pedestrian on Orange Avenue.
setting: downtown Orlando
Recent efforts have accomplished a tremendous revitalization in downtown Orlando. A commitment by Sun Bank to the future of downtown will strengthen and continue these efforts. Downtown has the potential of being the business and financial center for the rapidly growing Central Florida region. Within this district is the Government Center for Orange County, over 7 million square feet of office space, and a major entertainment center in the Church Street Station.

The heart of Orlando has traditionally been Orange Avenue. The resurgence of downtown has begun to establish Orange Avenue as a true retail "Main Street." A major element of this has been the street-scaping along a five-block stretch of Orange Avenue. This 4.5 million dollar project widened and bricked sidewalks, resurfaced intersections with brick pavers, planted rows of drake elms and added street furniture. Results have been immediate with an 88% increase in pedestrian traffic along Orange Avenue.
Another major element in downtown with direct impact on Sun Bank is the Church Street Station development. Approximately 1.3 million people visit Church Street each year, making it one of the largest tourist attractions in Florida. This entertainment complex brings a large number of tourists and natives downtown each evening. A major benefit to downtown would be encouraging activities which would keep these visitors downtown. Because of its proximity to Church Street Station, Sun Bank Center will have the opportunity to develop such activities.

The location of Sun Bank Center, on the corner of Orange Avenue and Church Street, places it on what has always been considered the center of downtown. The Church-Orange intersection historically was adjacent to the Orlando Railroad Station, and it was around the intersection that the city of Orlando grew. Since its founding in 1934, Sun Bank has always enjoyed the importance of a Church and Orange location.

The blocks immediately north of the Church-Orange intersection contain what has recently been zoned as
the downtown historic district. This classification has encouraged extensive revitalization throughout this segment of downtown. These recent efforts in this historic district will insure that the area immediately to the north of the Sun Bank Center will remain as a low scale district.

Orange Avenue creates an axis with Orlando City Hall located on the block immediately south of Sun Bank. This, in effect, establishes a southern terminus to downtown Orlando. In contrast to the evening population at Church Street Station, City Hall will provide a large number of daytime users for the amenities of Sun Bank Center.

The site of the Sun Bank Center is adjacent to the intersection of Interstate 4 and Orlando's East-West Expressway. This location makes the site one of the most prominent in Orlando. This is particularly true for visitors to the area. Interstate 4 is the major artery into the Central Florida region. For tourists coming to visit one of the area's attractions, the Sun Bank Center will be highly visible from the
interstate. The fact that the interstate is elevated over much of its stretch through downtown increases this visibility.

Sun Bank Center will be bound on the north by Church Street, the west by Interstate 4 and the Church Street Station development. Orange Avenue creates the east edge. Across Orange Avenue are the CNA and Barnett Bank buildings. At 18 and 16 stories, respectively, these are the tallest buildings in downtown Orlando. Immediately south of the site is City Hall and further south the East-West Expressway.

Located on the site for the new Sun Bank Center is the existing Sun Bank building. The exciting building was built in 1958 as the headquarters for Sun Bank, and in the mid 1970's underwent renovations to update the structure.

Also located on the site is Beardall Park. Beardall Park was the site of Orlando's first public school and later the first City Hall. Although the park has this strong historical connection to the city, the size of Sun Bank Center necessitates building over at
least a portion of the park. An agreement with the city of Orlando requires that the design of the Sun Bank Center replace any park removed and that the new space be dedicated to the city.

The future success of downtown Orlando is closely tied to the future of Sun Bank Center. Its location along Orange Avenue will strengthen the resurgence of Main Street. The proximity to Church Street Station and City Hall will insure a day and evening population. Finally the high visibility from Interstate 4 provides the opportunity for Sun Bank Center to become a popular symbol for the city of Orlando.
Downtown Orlando
When completed Sun Bank Center will be the largest multi-use urban development in downtown Orlando. On its 7-acre site the center will contain distinct functional elements such as office space, retail, hotel, and a parking garage. The major elements of the proposed development are:

1. **Existing Sun Bank Building** - The existing building will be retained. The 176,350 GSF building currently houses the main offices of Sun Bank. This use of the building should also be retained. However, ancillary elements may be altered or removed as deemed necessary for the design of new structures.

2. **New Office Building** - The new building should contain approximately 650,000 GSF of office space. Approximately 50% of this new space will be for Sun Bank use. The remaining area will be leaseable office space. A physical interaction should be possible between the new Sun Bank offices and the existing Sun Bank building. The new office building should also provide various space to be used as a conference center.
3. **Banking Hall** - A 14,700 GSF Grand Banking Hall will also be developed within the project. This banking hall will serve day-to-day consumer banking needs as well as being a central atrium space for the center.

4. **Businessmen's Hotel** - A 350 room firstclass businessmen's hotel will serve a major need of downtown Orlando. The design of the hotel should enable it to enjoy a close relationship to the amenities offered by Church Street Station.

5. **Retail** - An agreement with the City of Orlando requires approximately 50,000 GSF of retail space to be located throughout the site. The retail space will consist of speciality shops, restaurants, and other uses common to a downtown environment designed to serve employees and visitors to a mixed use urban center. The retail space should be located in the new office building and the hotel and placed as to put an emphasis on pedestrian use. The placement of the retail space should make an attempt to encourage retail development along Church Street and Orange Avenue.
6. **Parking Garage** - Structured parking for 1900 cars should be located on the site. This parking will serve all elements of the Sun Bank Center as well as having the potential to serve users of City Hall and Church Street Station.

7. **New Public Park** - To replace any removal of the existing Beardall Park a new public park should be included in the design of the Sun Bank Center. This pedestrian space will be used for civic functions and public activities. The park will have the opportunity to become a major focal space at the heart of downtown. Therefore, adequate open space should be provided for large outdoor functions.
Through case studies, setting and program analysis, it was determined that Sun Bank Center contained the essential ingredients for a high-rise with a strong image. The building would have the opportunity to create a "signature" for the skyline of Orlando, a signature which would project the images of Sun Bank and Orlando.

At the start of design several goals and objectives were established for the Sun Bank Center design:

1. Respond to the challenge of how to top a high-rise, through an exploration in the high-rise as a corporate and civic symbol.

2. Respond to the motorist on Interstate 4 as an exploration of 55 MPH architecture.

3. Respond to the pedestrian and scale of downtown Orlando.

4. Complement revitalization efforts along Orange Avenue.

5. Reestablish the ideas of downtown hotels.

6. Provide useable open space in downtown Orlando.
7. Create a signature for the skyline of Orlando which also serves as a designation of the town center.

The response to the question of creating a skyline signature becomes the crux of the design problem. All other objectives can be embodied in a successful solution to this goal. Of particular importance is the relation of the skyline to the tourist/motorist traveling on Interstate 4. This signature becomes the key impression of Orlando conveyed to the motorist.

The footprint established by the new office building is critical in the development of a skyline proposal. A very large footprint results in the possibility of a building which in height respects an established scale in downtown. This solution fails to solve several design issues. The large footprint covers a large percentage of the site and makes functional relationships between departments and the existing building difficult. It also does not take advantage of the opportunity to create a highway symbol for Orlando. In addition, though the height of such a solution is sympathetic to existing scale
its bulkiness is overpowering to the existing context.

A mid-rise solution might attempt to solve all of these design criteria. Through a series of step ups, the design can relate to existing scale while still providing the height required for an image building. However, arriving at this type of compromise the design does not directly address itself to the issues established as important to the project.

A high-rise solution best answers the challenge to create a strong image building. The smaller footprint of the high-rise is more in line with standard gross square footage for a typical office floor. In addition the size of the high-rise provides for strong relationships between the new building and the existing building. Program analysis would indicate a high-rise of thirty stories. Since the tallest building downtown is the adjacent eighteen-story CNA Building, and because of the proximity to Interstate 4, a high-rise solution would meet the requirements for prominence established through case studies.

Having determined the footprint and approximate
height, the next step is to discover what images should be projected. If the design is to become a symbol for Sun Bank, it must read as advertising the bank. This advertising must be worked into a sensitive high-rise design. Much of Sun Bank's recent advertising has focused efforts on the image of the sun. Messages such as "Come to the Power of the Sun," displayed with sunrise scenes are used throughout Florida on billboards and television advertisements. The logo of Sun Bank is an abstraction of a sun with the words Sun Bank enclosed by a three-quarter circle. It would appear the bank wishes to use a connection with the sun to project its image.

Sun Bank's traditional commitment to Orlando requires that the image projected be not only symbolic of the bank but also of Orlando. The idea of sun has strong possibilities in this direction as well. Florida and Central Florida have historically been closely tied to the sun. Florida the "Sunshine State" has used this connection to promote its tourist industry and warm climate. It has been stated as the importance of the
tourist and citrus industries to Orlando, industries dependent upon the sun. The sun as a symbol is also representative of growth, power, and progress. These representations are important to a city in the midst of rapid development. The responsibility given Sun Bank Center is to be a good "neighbor" and "citizen" of Orlando by respecting the existing fabric and representing new ideals.

The challenge now becomes to top a high-rise in a manner which evokes images of the sun--images which can be related to Sun Bank and Orlando. Early studies in response to this dealt with abstractions of the Sun Bank logo and the sun. While some of these studies were quite literal in their form, the attempt was to create a design capable of carrying a powerful image. A successful solution must be able to speak to a variety levels. It should address Sun Bank and Orlando as a symbol, as well as an exploration for a skyscraper "style." The conclusions of this study would indicate that a skyscraper "style" is dependent upon how the design solves the questions of image.
Included on the following pages are images and thoughts used in the development of Sun Bank Center. It is hoped that these images will serve as a prologue to the final design solution.
Sun Bank Center

Goals & Objectives

1. Respond to the motorist on I-4
2. Compliment revitalization of Orange Ave.
3. Respond to energy considerations
4. Reestablish idea of Orange Ave. Hotels
5. Convey images of Orlando & SunBank
6. Explore / Discover

Build your community and you build your bank
1. A signature for Orlando
2. A designation of town center
Thoughts...
1. skyscrapers = 20th century
2. fantasies vertical rather than horizontal
3. Because architecture is a practical art, and practical men pay the bills, the search for style has been rationalized and camouflaged.

"The dumb but reasonably honest glass box at least had the virtue of a saving simplicity; there is no virtue in elaborate vacancy."

Image: This is the center of downtown
This is Orlando

NOT
1. A city that needs a signature not small but bold.

2. An image that is sleek, progressive, graceful.

Why a taller building for image?
**Site Goals**
- Encourage activity along Orange Ave.
- Provide shade
- Develop a link between Church St. Station and Orange Ave.
- Provide usable open space in downtown

**Discovery in Architecture**

**Big Building Monument / Friendly Bldg.**
- Entrance/Approach
- Four-sided building

MIES: Minimize space, freedom - but not to extremity....
Being a good neighbor means...
Being a good citizen means...
A commitment to downtown !!!!!!
Design Solution

Skyline From I-4
The final proposal for Sun Bank Center has attempted to respond to the different issues established throughout the design process.

In response to the question of image, the design has abstracted the logo of Sun Bank and combined it with a form symbolic of the sun. The result is a divided circle, shifted along its axis forming the top of the building. The lower arc of the circle is cut into the body of the building, while the upper arc is formed by a tubular steel truss. As the lower arc forms the upper floors of the building an opportunity is provided to create a sky lobby. The curve of the arc becomes the roof of the lobby while on either side executive offices and conference rooms overlook the space. The upper arc completes the circle and creates an essential part of the big scale "sign" of the building. Beneath the arc is an observation deck offering views of Central Florida.

As the upper arc is shifted on its axis, it is pulled from the body of the building. This is accented by placing the arc on an element extracted from the
building. This element, one bay in width and extracted half a bay, defines the core of the building as well as providing a strong vertical thrust to the design.

The new tower is clad in two different materials. On the east and west facades, the elevation is a reflective glass curtain wall. This is intended to respond as a large scale element relating to the motorist on Interstate 4. The north and south elevations are composed of prefabricated brick panels. This is an attempt to relate to the characteristic brick architecture of the city.

A grand banking hall has been developed as the connection between the existing Sun Bank building and the new tower. The ground floor, in an effort to encourage pedestrian activity, contains customer service functions of the bank. Running through the hall are bridges connecting the vertical circulation cores on each level. This banking hall also serves as the atrium/lobby for the new tower.

The site development attempts to encourage a connection between Orange Avenue and Church Street.
Station. This is accomplished by situating the businessmen's hotel in a manner which creates a corridor between the hotel and the office complex. The space created between the two buildings becomes a hard surfaced plaza. To promote traffic through the plaza, activities such as the banking hall and retail space open onto it. Church Street Station should become a major draw for visitors of the hotel and this itself will encourage pedestrian activity. Along Orange Avenue space is dedicated as an open green space. This provides a need for open public space downtown; shaded, cool downtown spaces; and creates the opportunity to provide a public space to respect City Hall.

The following drawings and photographs are a graphic representation of the final design proposal for Sun Bank Center.
SUN BANK CENTER
Orlando, Florida
A Masters Design Project       Spring 1986
T. Douglas Ferguson

Central Florida Region   ↑   Downtown Orlando

Existing Skyline
Banking Hall Level
Typical Office Levels 2·9

Typical Office Levels 10·26
East Elevation
Skyline From Lake Eola
West Site Section
East Site Section
West Wall Section

Spandrel Glass
Precast Double-Tee
Precast L-Beam

Suspended Ceiling
2 Conc. Topping
Plenum

HVAC System

- L-Beam
- Double Tee
- Supply Air

Cooling Towers
Mechanical Floors

South Wall Section

Prefab Brick Panel
L-Beam
Supply Air

Lighting
Double-Tee
Return Air

Structural - Mechanical Systems
Images

Skyline From I-4

Orange Ave. Corridor
footnotes
FOOTNOTES


2 Ibid., p. 38.

3 Ibid., p. 235.

4 Ibid., p. 235.

5 Ibid., p. 235.


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