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Biddleville/Five Points Community Center, Charlotte, North Carolina

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May 1, 1987

To the Graduate School

Herewith is a thesis submitted by Danita Michelle Brown entitled "Biddleville/Five Points Community Center, Charlotte, North Carolina." We recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Architecture.

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Accepted for the Graduate School
BIDDELEVIILE/FIVE POINTS COMMUNITY CENTER,
CHARLOTTE, NORTH CAROLINA

A thesis presented to the Graduate School of Clemson University in
partial fulfillment of the requirements for the professional degree Master
of Architecture.

Danita Michelle Brown
May 1987
ABSTRACT

Neighborhoods are the building blocks of any urban community, and the quality of life is determined by their livability and character. The residents of Biddleville/Five Points Community in Charlotte, N.C., feel strongly about preserving the historical and basic character of their community, yet realize that a need for change and development is essential to the heart of the community which, at present, consists of economic and architectural blighted commercial region.

The Charlotte-Mecklenburg Planning Commission recognizes the importance of neighborhoods to the larger community and thereby has labelled the Biddleville/Five Points as part of a Development Enterprise Area with the idea of using public actions to leverage or stimulate additional private investment in areas which have the potential of becoming new growth areas for residential and nonresidential uses; thus advancing the objectives of redirecting growth.

The planning and architectural proposal submitted herewith addresses the need for the development and establishment of identity in
the Biddleville/Five Points community. The scope of the proposal ranges from that of an urban scale, which involves the development of commercial and business oriented activities; to that of a community scale, which encompasses services such as day care, health care, residential, recreational and community gathering. With these activities and architectural development, both the economic base and the quality of life for the community will be strengthened, and a sense of identity and space will be achieved which compliments both the historical and basic character of Biddleville/Five Points.
DEDICATION

To my parents and family for not only their financial assistance, but more importantly for their love, constant support and encouragement in all my endeavors. And as always to God through whom all things are made possible.
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INTRODUCTION

The Charlotte-Mecklenburg Planning Commission has targeted the Biddleville/Five Points area for redevelopment for several reasons; the most important being the historical significance of the community and the adjacency of Johnson C. Smith University. On April 30, 1985, the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Historic Properties Commission formally listed the community in its historic properties register. The university's active and important role in providing education in and outside the community serves as an additional reason to develop the area into an attractive "gateway" for students. Additionally, the fact that the area is one of the oldest and best preserved black communities in Charlotte, prompted the Commission to address the needs and potential of the area. The community was noted as being a vital and necessary part of the larger Charlotte community.

The proposed center will be located in the West Trade-Beatties Ford Road area near Johnson C. Smith University with the objective of bringing activity and life back to a community of presently blighted commercial
tract. The Center will also serve to provide an entry to Biddleville/Five Points and an anchor for the commercial/retail corridor of Beatties Ford Road extending towards Interstate Highway 85.
1. Map locating Charlotte, North Carolina
2. Map of Mecklenburg County
BIDDELVILLE/FIVE POINTS

The Setting

Charlotte, North Carolina is the largest city between Washington, D.C., and Atlanta, Georgia, and is one of the fastest growing metropolitan areas in the southeast. One of the main reasons for this growth is the creation of a strong business climate and an environmentally healthy community with strong neighborhoods—the key for a highly livable land use pattern and one that best addresses the forces of change.

The Biddleville/Five Points area of study consisting of the ninety-seven acre Johnson C. Smith University and the neighborhood communities of Biddleville, Smallwood and Seversville, lies just minutes from downtown Charlotte and in close proximity to major highways 85 and 77. The area is part of Charlotte’s Central Area district which includes the city’s downtown business district and its older, established neighborhoods.

One of the major themes that guides strategy development for Charlotte-Mecklenburg’s Central Area is the conservation of neighbor-
hoods and the housing therein. Any change has to be sensitive to maintaining the integrity and character of existing communities. However, like most urban inner city areas, population loss occurred at a precipitous rate as outlying suburbs began to develop. Between 1960 and 1980, the Biddleville/Five Points area lost almost one-third of its population, dropping from 152,067 to 106,321 persons. Since 1980, however, the population has stabilized and is expected to remain at about its current level for the rest of the century.¹

It is true that the inner city has a majority of Charlotte's poor, but there are several affluent areas as well. The city's neighborhoods are simply too diverse to generalize about their residents. The quality of housing varies substantially as well. The most architecturally and historically significant homes and institutions in Charlotte exist in the inner city. The character and quality of these neighborhoods make them an important resource, and one that must be preserved. The tree-lined streets of Biddleville/Five Points, as much as anything, help give Charlotte its image.
Origins and Growth

In 1873, Biddle Memorial Institute, now known as Johnson C. Smith University, was established on a hilltop location off of Beatties Ford Road about a mile west of town. Named for major Henry Biddle, whose wealthy widow gave a considerable amount of money just after the Civil War to establish a college in Charlotte for blacks.

Biddleville, Charlotte’s oldest, well-preserved black neighborhood, was named for Biddle Memorial Institute. In the early years, the neighborhood was little more than a cluster of homes for the professors who taught at the college. The old Victorian house that the university uses as its infirmary is a remnant of that era. The most impressive structure in the area is Biddle Hall, completed in 1883, which served as a sentinel for the black residents of Charlotte and the surrounding countryside. Biddle Hall, still dominating the western skyline, is listed in the National Register of Historic Places. With the introduction of a streetcar line the neighborhood grew into a thriving residential/commercial suburb.
The linear arrangement of Biddleville's nineteen century dwellings was formed in other Charlotte "ring villages" which are black settlements that developed on the perimeter of the city in addition to the in-city neighborhoods established during the 1870s and 1880s. Black "ring villages" are a phenomenon not noted in urban histories of northern cities, and they are now beginning to be studied by scholars as a unique feature of Southern urban geography. Some of the "ring villages" in Charlotte may have developed after the Civil War from the slave quarters of old farms; others could have also grown from pre-war enclaves of free blacks and slaves who did not live on their master's property. No houses appeared on the cross streets, and there was no attempt to arrange buildings to create a central square, both of which were popular residential layouts in America in the period.

Along with the one-story wood frame cottages that make up most of the village, there are other landmarks. The spacious two-story Victorian residence of pioneer black professor Dr. George E. Davis stands at the corner of Campus Street and Dixon Street. A block and a half down
Campus Street is Mount Carmel Baptist Church. In 1918 it replaced an earlier wooden structure. Noted Charlotte architect Louis Asburg provided the Gothic style plans, and the congregation members donated labor to build the church, often laying bricks by lantern light late into the night. A third landmark is the village's original cemetery located at the west end of Cemetery Street; now part of a city park, and retaining only some of its stones dated back to 1908.2

Before the construction of Interstates 85 and 77 in the 1960s, Beatties Ford Road served as a major thoroughfare into Charlotte, thereby establishing the Biddleville/Five Points area as a prominent merchandising center for the city as well as the university community.
Current Issues

By the mid-1960s, a collection of suburbs, with the old college village of Biddleville at its heart, had become a single predominantly black neighborhood. The Charlotte Redevelopment Commission called the area "Biddleville/Five Points" and began to talk about razing this "slum." However, the residents of this grand old community were proud of their heritage and refused to let the bulldozer move through. Today, condominiums, apartments, and homes are rising on vacant lots, and young families are renovating the sturdy old homes that punctuate the neighborhood. An annual community festival highlights and celebrates the heritage of this very special community and proves that Biddleville/Five Points is alive. The neighborhood association has a definite commitment to create an atmosphere of community unity and revival through development.3
COMMUNITY ANALYSIS

Biddleville, Smallwood, and Seversville

In 1871, Stephen Mattoon, the first president of Biddle Institute, bought a fifty-acre farm adjacent to the campus, where teachers, students, and others could purchase lots, build homes and reside. Biddleville had become a thriving little community by the 1890s, its homes lining present-day Solomon, Campus, and Beatties Ford roads. On April 25, 1903, trolleys began serving the neighborhood and Biddleville became a part of Charlotte in 1907.

Biddleville continued to have a separate identity, however. The late Barazilla Thomas, long-time resident and "historian" of the neighborhood, remembered and described how Biddleville's colorful "post office" worked. The mailman would bring the mail to a house on Mill Road, put the letters and packages on a rock in the front yard and give forth with a bellow that you could hear from one end of Biddleville to the other. Biddleville even had its own burial ground, still existent at the end of Cemetery Street, next to a city park.
11. Aerial Photograph of Biddleville c. 1870
Once a village at the edge of town, Biddleville is now Charlotte's oldest surviving black neighborhood. Surrounding the college and the original 1871 village are later subdivisions built after the turn of the century as the city grew outward. Western Heights and Roslyn Heights opened during the streetcar era, while the Smallwood Homes and Crestview developments date from the automobile days after World War II. For several years, Western Heights was a white area, as was old Seversville Village across West Trade until the 1960s, when the urban renewal destruction of Second Ward downtown created a massive shift in Charlotte's black population.

Immediately after World War II, a large development of small, wooden homes was built on new streets straddling West Trade Street beyond Roslyn Heights. It was called, with perhaps unintended ironic humor, Smallwood Homes. Like Seversville, it was occupied by white working class families until the 1960s. 

Presently, all three neighborhoods possess a quality of life and stability especially in Biddleville and Smallwood. However, housing
conditions and economic instability are eating away at the historic district and residents are committed to changing this negative movement into a positive one.

The Charlotte City Council adopted official neighborhood boundaries in 1979, following an extensive study by the Planning Commission. As part of the study, public meetings were held throughout the community, in which residents identified the boundaries they perceived to mark their neighborhood.

The Biddleville/Five Points Community Center proposed service area is composed of Biddleville, Smallwood, and Seversville neighborhoods and Johnson C. Smith University. 1980 census data for the neighborhoods from the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Planning Commission was combined and broken down into eight major characteristics of the community.
1. **POPULATION:**
   - Total: 7365
   - Black: 7726
   - White: 139

2. **AGE:**
   - Median: 25.2
   - Percent 0-14 years: 22.9
   - Percent 65+ years: 17.5

3. **PERCENT HOUSEHOLD:**
   - Six or more: 34.1
   - One person: 24.7

4. **FAMILY STRUCTURE:**
   - Total number of families: 1627
   - Percent married couples: 52.5
   - Percent female head w/child: 44.5

5. **HOUSING UNITS:**
   - Total: 2372
   - Number occupied: 2099
   - Number rental: 1517
   - Percent owned: 30.1
   - Percent in unit 10+ years: 40.6

13. Table I: 1980 Census Data
6. **INCOME:**
   - Median family income: $10,131
   - Percent below poverty line: 31.4
   - Percent elderly below poverty line: 33.5

7. **EDUCATION (Percent 25+ years):**
   - Grade school or less: 35.8
   - High school: 37.2
   - College: 6.67
   - Drop-out: 17.2

8. **EMPLOYMENT:**
   - Total: 2745
   - Number in managerial/professional work: 341
   - Number in manufacturing: 658
   - Number in retail trade/sales: 474
   - Number in service occupations: 526
   - Number in production, craft or repair: 267
   - Number as operators: 462
   - Unemployment rate: 10.7
   - Percent with work disability: 11.6
   - Percent of women in labor force: 59.1

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13. **Table I: 1980 Census Data (Continued)**
Neighborhood Composition

A major characteristic of the 1,627 families that comprise the area is that nearly fifty percent have female heads with children, and slightly over fifty percent of all women in the area are in the work force. These figures alone suggest a need for a community child care facility and pre­education programs that are provided at a minimal cost to the parents. The median family income in the area is $10,131 with 31.4 percent of families below the poverty line.

Another important characteristic of the community is that for residents over the median age of 25 years, 35.8 percent have a grade school or less education and 17.2 percent are dropouts. These figures indicate that some form of education and/or training that will lead to jobs within the community is needed considering the fact that the unemployment rate is 10.7 percent--6.4 percent higher than the average of all Charlotte neighborhoods.

The census data also reflects a high percentage of elderly residents below the poverty line. This indicates a need for some type of senior
citizen programs that offer low-cost meals, transportation, and services that provide structured activities within the community. Nevertheless, the fact that over fifty percent of the families are composed of married couples and that forty percent of the residents have lived and owned their homes for ten or more years, indicates that the community is strong and established. Activities and services that reinforce these qualities are needed to maintain this strong identity of community.
JOHNSON C. SMITH UNIVERSITY

Historic Development

Johnson C. Smith University was established in response to a critical need for educational opportunities for black students in the region. On April 7, 1867, the school was created by three reverends of the Catawba Presbytery on a hilltop location about a mile outside town. Mrs. Mary D. Biddle, a Philadelphia churchwoman, donated monies to begin operations. In honor of her contribution, the school was named and chartered Biddle Memorial Institute. The eight acres of donated land was officially deeded to the school’s trustees in 1873, to become the site of the new school for young men.

In 1921 and 1922, through the generosity of Mrs. Jayne Berry Smith of Pittsburgh, the university experienced spectacular growth. In honor of her late husband, the university changed its name to Johnson C. Smith on March 1, 1923. The following year the school became the beneficiary of the James B. Duke Endowment. Tobacco and utility multi-millionaire James B. Duke set up an Endowment to help support four colleges in North and
South Carolina: Duke University, Davidson College, Furman College, and Johnson C. Smith University. By the 1980s, the Endowment had provided Johnson C. Smith with over ten million dollars. In 1929, Johnson C. Smith was officially recognized as a four-year college. The high school program had been eliminated by this time and plans were laid to begin admitting women.⁵
Campus Environment

Johnson C. Smith campus covers ninety-seven acres of tree-lined grounds with forty-six major buildings in sight of downtown Charlotte. Though located conveniently within easy access of major highways I-77 and I-85, the abundant trees and open spaces lend the campus a pastoral quality. Virtually all activities are within easy walking distance. At the center, the historic Biddle Hall is Charlotte's finest example of Victorian institutional architecture. When it was built, it served as classrooms, dining hall and chapel, all in one. The hall is listed in the National Register of Historic Places along with Carter Hall, the oldest dormitory on campus. The 1923 stone arch at the Five Point intersection with its iron gate is the twentieth century symbol of the expanded university.

The buildings donated during the 1920s by Mrs. Smith are characterized by dark red brick exteriors with simple but well detailed Neo-Classical trim. All are by New York architect A. G. Lamant, who did much work for Presbyterian institutions throughout the eastern United States. Of particular interest are the three four square style teachers' cottages along
Beatties Ford Road, the George E. Davis Science Center (1923) which memorializes that pathbreaking professor, and the white-columned university church (1929) which quickly became the spiritual center of this religiously oriented school. Since 1930 a number of new buildings have appeared, most funded by the Duke Endowment and built of brick in the international style. Greenfield Hall, created by Charlotte's Odell and Associates in 1984, broke from the international mode with a "Post-Modern" style of columns and gables.6
19. Plan of Campus
School Activities

As one of the nation's oldest black universities, Johnson C. Smith has compiled a one hundred and nineteen year legacy of achievement and excellence. The educational curriculum is that of a liberal arts school with twenty-six programs of study within four major divisions--the Humanities; the Social Science Education, Health and Psychology; and Mathematics and Sciences. Bachelor of Science, Bachelor of Arts or Bachelor of Social Work degrees are awarded within the four divisions. Studies in Economics, and Business Administration along with Computer Science, Banking and Finance, and Communication Arts, are growing in popularity.

Although the university's major emphasis is on teaching, it is also increasing its role in the field of research and testing of new concepts and ventures. As the population groups and business activities multiply in the community, it will become an increasing valuable real world resource for Johnson C. Smith students. They have developed a cooperative education program in the curriculum which integrates on-the-job
experience with classroom studies. Students currently are involved in internships and cooperative education experiences with such nationally known corporations as IBM, National Bank, and others. Beyond these efforts, the university is also interested in establishing a facility outside the academic setting which allows graduates to test their classroom experiences in the marketplace. The university sees the facility as being within the Biddleville/Five Points community to assist in the redevelopment of the area.
PROBLEM TYPE

Precedent Exploration

The historic role of community centers in American society is to build first a sense of identity, then a spirit of self-help to tackle community problems, combined with an immediate program of educational and cultural activities based on local needs and interests. Older commercial areas in inner-city neighborhoods which lack a sense of identity usually suffer from various obstacles to revitalization and development. As is the case in Biddleville/Five Points, the community has experienced a diminution in local household income and, thus, purchasing power. Buildings in the commercial district have deteriorated; the number of marginal businesses has increased; and the variety of services provided has decreased.

Neighborhood commercial redevelopment entails physical renovation and economic revitalization of the district's businesses. In the past, the mature suburb's central business district was a satisfactory alternative to the central city for shopping. The older suburb housed
numerous social and educational institutions such as churches, civic clubs, vocational schools, etc. Today many of the older suburb's economic, social, and cultural functions are no longer combined in individual communities but instead are dispersed across the suburban landscape. For instance, with the coming of the interstate, suburban transportation has decentralized to individual automobile trips; yesteryear's train, trolley, and buses which served the older neighborhoods have ceased operation and have been replaced by questionably more efficient and advanced means of movement.

Examples of older communities that have taken hold of the negative elements that break down the definition of community and turn them into positive ones, became prevalent during the early 1970s. Issues such as having social, economic, and cultural services located within the community rather than outside, and maintaining the existing quality of services, are bringing back the elements that identify communities.

The following two case studies deal with two distinct aspects of how to tackle community development; one deals with the built form on a
community scale, the other with the planning and organization of systems that work on an urban scale.
Over-the-Rhine Center

The Pilot Center for Cincinnati’s Over-the-Rhine district, designed by Wollen Associates of Indianapolis, is a complex of four separate recreational and social-service facilities that occupy what was originally two city blocks.

The concept behind this Center is to maintain the existing context by infilling vacant lots between older neighborhood buildings on the street, while effecting semi-enclosed public spaces inside the blocks.

"The new buildings, by virtue of their scale, materials, and composition, allude, as in the photograph, to their older neighbors even as they asset their own complexities with painted-on graphics and with window and door openings. But their effort is somehow quiet and modest."

The introduction of activities that are needed to bring identity to a community, the social and recreational elements that bring people together, were added with a minimum disruption to the existing neighborhood make-up.
The neighborhood population, which is composed of forty-five percent black, forty-five percent Appalachian white and ten percent of German extraction, had been suffering from many ills that older urban communities face; deterioration of housing, loss of population, and low average income. What was once a well-knit social (and architectural) community had begun to unravel. By retaining the sound older buildings and rehabilitating them, the architects were able to restore the image and character of the district. The Pilot Center consists of four separate buildings that fill gaps between older structures and enclose an interior green space. The largest of the four is the recreational building which contains a skating rink, game rooms, crafts room, gym and swimming pool. The two-story swimming pool space is designed to open to the outdoor green space on warm days. A second building is the Senior Citizen Center which provides low-cost meals, recreational and educational facilities for the elderly. The third building houses the Parent-Child Center which provides a Montessori School and day care. The fourth building and "heart" of the Center is the HUB Services facility which
contains a large community room for local meetings, parties, weddings, and movies. The building also provides employee training and placement services, a free store, a small health center and a post office.

An objective of the project was to provide local residents with a familiar context, rather than a bold and impressive new architectural statement that would have run the risk of being alienating. The study of "Over-the-Rhine" Center relates closely in environment and community needs to the Biddleville/Five Points proposed center. The following lessons in particular were important:

1. The spatial relationship of activities: the need to have a focal point from which all activities generate and the continuity of space from each activity.

2. The concept of retaining community continuity through the mixing of new and existing patterns: a process of retaining whatever old buildings that were sound and therefore retaining the image and character of the district.

3. Program criteria: established a guide for what activities can be used together and which ones require a separate identity within the complex.
Harvard Square

The urban design consultants of Monacelli Associates were asked by the Cambridge Planning and Development Department to prepare an analysis of Harvard Square at the intersection of Massachusetts and Boylton Avenues. Known for its proximity to Harvard University, this residential, commercial core provides shopping facilities and restaurants in a low-scale environment of old and new buildings organized around a central intersection and transit stop.

The main thrust behind this study was to investigate the significant physical elements of Harvard Square in order to establish planning guidelines. By examining the physical forms, the design team isolated such issues as entries and surface transparencies, surface modulation, niches, and variants, that are important to the Square's character. The study analyzed the "urban context" (how it physically divides into sectors and the crucial retail facilities, transit activities, etc.); "elements of form" (building densities, walls, reference points, open space, configurations,
This study was examined to look at the site issues and influences that may relate to Biddleville/Five Points. Being that both Harvard Square and Biddleville/Five Points are composed of several streets converging at a point in an existing commercial area, several observations have been gained from the Harvard Square study which are applicable to the Biddleville/Five Points analysis. They consisted of the following:

1. The close relationship created between people and building surface: the need to develop circulation paths that work with a building's edge.

2. Creation of reference points and open people spaces: the need for identifying elements that complement existing ones and relate to places of people gathering.

3. Massing of dense buildings which define the points of intersection: building edges are needed to define street lines with the height of these buildings decreasing as they move from the point of intersection.
27. Photograph of Intersection
THE STUDY AREA

Perceptual Characteristics

Nodes are places of meeting or crossing. They are the foci that become gathering points. They may be crossroads or breaks in transportation paths or concentration of uses and activities. The Five Points intersection of West Trade Street, West Fifth Street, State Street, Beatties Ford Road and Rozzelles Ferry Road is a major node of metropolitan scale. The areas adjacent to the Clinton Chapel A.M.E. Zion Church and the Mechanic and Farmers Bank also are nodes but of a neighborhood scale.

Edges are boundaries between two areas which may be used as paths. The Beatties Ford Road/West Fifth Street corridor serves as both a definite physical and visual boundary between the neighborhoods and the university. In addition, each of the traffic corridors that form the Five Points create a series of boundaries which separate pedestrian and vehicular movement. Each corridor is heavily travelled by automobiles which make pedestrian movement across these boundaries dangerous.
Paths are where people move. They may be streets, walkways, transit lines, alleys, etc. Biddleville/Five Points has many paths which vary in importance of use. For the most part these are restricted to the sidewalks along the Five Points streets that converge to form the intersection. However, cross paths are created between reference points and/or activity nodes such as between the transportation stop on Beatties Ford Road and the residential district lining State Street and the university housing units.

Gateways are major points of entry. In a vehicular oriented society, these will normally relate to streets, but they apply to pedestrian movement as well. In Biddleville/Five Points, a major vehicular gateway occurs at the intersection itself where a view of the university and the neighborhood character can be perceived. An important pedestrian gateway is the stone arch entry to the university.

Landmarks are important reference points—they are usually dominating buildings or large physical objects such as signs, statues, or fountains. Some of the more important landmarks in the Biddleville/Five
Points area are Biddle Hall on the Johnson C. Smith campus and Mechanic and Farmers Bank at the Five-Point intersection on Beatties Ford Road.¹⁰

In summary, Biddleville/Five Points is comprised of an imaginable area which is structured with nodes, defined by edges, penetrated by paths through gateways and identified by landmarks, some of historic significance.
Land Use

A land use plan classifies, in general terms, the way land is being used. It refers to major physical elements by identifying them with a two-dimensional representation. The following land use classifications are used by the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Planning Commission and apply to Biddleville/Five Points:

- R Residential District
- C Commercial District
- I Institutional District
- L-I Light Industrial District

Excepting the ninety-seven acre Johnson C. Smith campus, which is classified as institutional, the majority of the land in the area falls under the Residential District. A Light Industrial District is intermingled with parts of the neighborhood predominantly on its southwest edge.
Building Analysis

The residential portion of the study area consisting of the Biddleville, Smallwood, and Seversville neighborhoods, contains most older single family homes of wood and occasionally brick construction. A few groupings of multi-family units exist. The later are new and in good condition while the individual residences vary from substandard to excellent condition. Most commercial structures are single story and of masonry construction. With exceptions, their quality ranges from fair to poor. The Mechanic and Farmers Bank, the Clinton Chapel A.M.E. Zion Church, and Church's Fried Chicken buildings range from good to excellent condition.

The buildings which compose the campus of Johnson C. Smith University are for the main part listed in the National Register of Historic Places. The remaining structures built in the late 1950s to the present are in good condition and are of a brick which complements the character of the historic structures. Twenty percent of the buildings in the neighborhood of Biddleville are considered to be of architectural or historic
significance. Notable examples on the Johnson C. Smith campus are: Biddle Hall, Carnegie Library, Carter Hall and Teachers' House. The Dr. George E. Davis House, the Shotgun House and Old Mount Carmel Baptist Church are the best known of the historic buildings within the neighborhood.
Table II: Commercial Buildings Analysis.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Building Location and Use</th>
<th>Condition</th>
<th>Age (years)</th>
<th>Usage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>Fair</td>
<td>Poor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beatties Ford Road</td>
<td>●</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Mechanic and Farmers Bank</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rozzelles Ferry Road</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>• P.C. Godfrey Co.</td>
<td>●</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Beverage/Barber/Pool</td>
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<td>●</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Union Gas Station</td>
<td>●</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Clinton Chapel</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Furniture Store</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Trade Street</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Church's Chicken</td>
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<td>• Lennox Storage</td>
<td>●</td>
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<td>• Gas Station/Store</td>
<td>●</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Beauty Shop</td>
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<td>• Vacant Cleaners</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Cleaners</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• A&amp;P Foods</td>
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<td>• Michelin Tires</td>
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<td>• Outreach Center</td>
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<tr>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Good</td>
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<td>Poor</td>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>State Street</td>
<td></td>
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<td>●</td>
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<td>80</td>
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<td>Bruns Avenue</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Work Services</td>
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<td>10</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

As can be seen by the preceding table, a large number of the commercial buildings in the study area are in poor physical condition and are under utilized. A few structures are in good condition. These also serve as important magnets in the community.
Map of Climatic Data
PROBLEM DEFINITION

Planning Objectives

The establishment of a better economic and living environment in the Biddleville/Five Points community is the major goal of the proposed community center. The utilization of commercial, social, and business development serves as a means of treating blight in the community. This also reinforces the objectives of the proposed community center which are as follows:

1. Improve the social context and commercial viability of the area by bringing together various activities and services such as convenience commercial, retail, office space, recreational, and educational.

2. Preserve the historical character of the Biddleville neighborhood and the Johnson C. Smith campus.

3. Establish a means of organizing and controlling commercial growth for the community in terms of land usage and density.

In addition to the objectives which identify the social and economic concerns, an architectural objective is to connect existing activities and
landmarks with new elements and create a complex which serves as the "genus loci" of the area. This includes connecting the university with the neighborhoods by developing common areas and activities. The connection can be enhanced by visual corridors and spaces which at present are not well defined.
Community Needs

Through a careful study of the characteristics of the Biddleville/Five Points residents and their expressed concerns, a list of basic needs and desired activities was compiled which relates closely to the before mentioned community objectives. These needs and concerns set the programmatic framework for the proposed community development and are as follows:

1. A need for economic opportunities and development, especially for the young adults, to encourage economic growth and stability.

2. Redefine the presently deteriorating residential and commercial image of the area.

3. A need for structured social activities and casual interaction for residents of all ages.

4. A need for a program which enhances the important role of family life and community activities.
Means of Implementation

The establishment of a Development Enterprise Area in the Five Points area by the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Planning Commission has the main objective of creating employment opportunities for people in this moderate to low-income area, along with the rehabilitation of existing housing. The following strategies to bring together local business leaders and residents in order to reverse the trend of disinvestment in the area, are as follows:

1. Give priority to publicly funded water, sewer, and transportation capital projects that support growth redirection to the area.

2. Require that developers work with the neighborhood organization and interest groups on matters such as the community's existing land use, historical character and image statement.

3. Provide economic support to developers working for reinvestment in the area.

The phasing of the proposed Biddleville/Five Points area plan will address the issues of office, retail, commercial and industrial development;
identifying areas where additional public and private support is needed; and identifying activities that are of primary need to the community.

Phase I: Community Services

These activities, relating to the "heart" of the community are the most primary need within the area. They would consist of a parent-child center, senior citizen, and health services facilities, recreational and administrative spaces. Construction funds for these facilities would be provided partially by federal and city funds, with the remainder from investments in which residents and interested parties can buy stock in a community investment company to finance the project. Operating costs will be handled in the same matter with stock investments and dividends derived therefrom being applied back to the operation.

Phase II: Commercial Development

This is vital to the economic viability of not only the community but also the city of Charlotte. Designated parcels for commercial and retail spaces will allow developers and owners of businesses to construct
buildings consistent with their finances, but with the added incentive of public funds and service assistance.

Phase III: Housing Development

The opportunity to create alternative housing for families and students is well needed. This phase of development will support the previous phasing of services and economic development. With Phases I and II in place, it is expected that developers or builders will be able to come in and build housing on a profitable basis without relying on public financing.
DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

The Components

The Biddleville/Five Points community proposal can be broken down into two levels of development: one on an urban scale, and the other at a building scale. The urban scale deals with the overall physical planning of the area for commercial, office, residential and social activities. The building scale focuses on the recreational, social service and administrative facilities comprising the community center.

Community Planning

Commercial Business involves the development of services such as a movie theater, laundry, beauty and barber shop, furniture shop and work services company with the objective of at least maintaining the level of services currently offered. It also includes the development of permanent office space for lease.

Commercial Sales involves the development of retail sales facilities such as a community convenience store that is centrally located in the area, a number of short order food stores and some specialty shops such as
flowers, hardware, and pharmacy. At present, these facilities are of deficient quality, and not contributing to the commercial environment.

The Incubator Project developed in conjunction with small retail rental space, provides university graduates and area entrepreneurs low cost business/office space, shared common services and facilities for a year. The occupants are also provided with management assistance, as well as laboratory, library, computers and office services.

Residential development will provide housing of a higher standard of design and construction than the average multi-family unit in the area. Each individual unit would follow architectural guidelines which provide for a front porch, backyard and green space within designated restrictions. The number of bedrooms and other spaces may vary. Residential developments would be located near the center of activity, yet remain a degree of privacy and security.

The Community Center will consist of the activities that are developed to directly serve the recreational and social needs of the
Biddleville/Five Points community. Its location will be central and highly visible within the architectural character of the proposed development.

Parking in the area will be limited to surface parking, with the multiple facilities making use of the spaces. Street parking should be utilized wherever appropriate. Parking space needs would be determined in accordance with zoning requirements.

Community Center

Recreational facilities consist of a gymnasium, swimming pool and game area all of which will serve a variety of age groups and multiple purposes.

Social services facilities serve various community needs and are divided into a senior citizen facility, parent-child facility, community facility and a health facility.

Administrative facilities will consist of work and meeting spaces for those charged with operating the center.
Community Center

Recreational Facilities

Gymnasium. A multi-purpose space with basketball courts and spectator seating sharing support areas such as lockers, showers, and equipment checkout.

Swimming Pool. Indoor pool with a wading section, a viewing area and administration control space.

Game Area. A flexible area used by all ages with areas for table tennis, video games, physical exercise, and weight lifting.

Locker Rooms. Mens and womens changing facilities with toilets, showers, and lockers. A central control area would distribute towels and equipment.

Social Services Facilities

Senior Citizen Area. This provides low-cost meals, educational facilities and group activity spaces that are run by the community church. Spaces would include a kitchen, dining room, large workroom and support facilities.
Spaces would include a kitchen, dining room, large workroom and support facilities.

Parent-Child Area. This provides preschool and kindergarten classes operated by a church at a low cost to the community's working mothers. Spaces would include several small classrooms, a large work area and an indoor/outdoor play area.

Community Space. This consists of a large community room for meetings, parties, weddings, and movies to name but a few. The facility will be at the "heart" of the center development.

Health Facility. This is used in conjunction with the university. It will provide basic health care and educational guidance in areas such as physical, dental, and mental health. Spaces will include screening rooms, an administration area, and support functions.

Administrative Facilities

Work Area. This would provide space for two secretaries who would combine administrative duties with reception and control of the facility.
Office. This would be the work space for the center director who would manage both the recreational and social services facilities.

Conference Room. This space would be used by the director for small meetings of up to ten people.
## SPACE REQUIREMENTS

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<th>Persons</th>
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<td>w/portable bleachers</td>
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<td><strong>Exercise Room</strong></td>
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PROPOSAL

Community Planning

The Community Service Center occupies one section of the Five Points and relates, as the other points do, to a pedestrian square. Site activities relate to each other by means of an entry courtyard which identifies the control point of the community room and the recreational spaces. The independent services of parent-child, senior citizens and health services are located in three buildings connected by an open arcade leading to the entry courtyard.

Parking occurs off the site and most traffic to the center will be pedestrian in nature. Rozzelles Ferry Avenue and State Street, which define the site, serve as paths to the center.
Community Center

The concept for the relationships of space to circulation is taken from the historic "shotgun" house type commonplace to Biddleville as well as many black neighborhoods during the early part of the twentieth century. The house was nicknamed for its resemblance to a long, narrow, shotgun barrel. It is a one-story dwelling consisting of three or four rooms lined up one behind the other, with no hallway. This room arrangement is different from any other American house type because the shotgun is not just another European-American dwelling form, but a distinctive African-American type which has been traced back through Haiti to western Africa.
ROZZELLES FERRY LEVEL

41. Rozzelles Ferry Level
STATE STREET LEVEL

SITE...SECTION

42. State Street Level
45. Structural/Mechanical Diagram/Section
46. Photograph of Building Model
47. Photographs of Building Model
ZONING DESCRIPTION

The following sections are from the City of Charlotte Zoning Ordinance, dated January 1, 1984.

The Community Center site area is zoned 0-6: Office District, which is intended for offices, institutions and commercial activities not involving the sale of merchandise at retail. Permitted uses include the following:

3042.0 • Parks and playgrounds, operated on a non-commercial basis for purpose of public recreation.

• Buildings for social, fraternal, social services, union and civic organizations.

• Business and professional offices, provided that retail sales and deliveries of merchandise are not made from the premises and merchandise displayed is visible only from within the building.

• Clinics, medical, dental and doctor's offices.

• Commercial schools and schools providing adult training in any of the arts, sciences, trades and professions, provided that no retail sales of merchandise or services are made on the premises.
• Laboratories and other facilities for research in enclosed buildings, both basic and applied, conducted by or for any individual organization or concern whether public or private.

• Office buildings.

• Post Offices.

• Off street parking for offices, business, and industrial uses.

1608. Minimum Requirements for Mixed Uses
When two or more uses occupy the same building and those uses would normally have different setback or yard requirements, the greater of the setback or yard requirement will apply to the building.

2001. Off-Street Parking Requirements
2002.2 Community recreation center: 1 space per each 150 square feet of gross floor space.

2002.24 Office and professional building: 1 space per each 300 square feet of gross floor area.

2002.3 Day care centers and preschools: 1 space per each 2 adult attendants and 1 space per each 10 children.

2002.2 Medical and dental offices and clinics: 1 space per 200 square feet of gross floor area.
2002.3 Retail stores, all types: 1 space per 200 square feet of floor area used or designed for sales on ground floor, plus 1 space per 300 square feet of floor area used or designed for sales on all other floors.

2007. Parking spaces assigned to one use
Required spaces assigned to one use may not be assigned to another use at the same time. The required parking spaces for places of assembly may be assigned to parking spaces that are otherwise assigned to other uses if the parking spaces are used at different times.
NOTES


5 Information provided through the Office of Public Relations at Johnson C. Smith University, Charlotte, North Carolina, 3/10/86.


8 "Hub-Over-the-Rhine," Architectural Record, October 1975, pp. 81-86.

CREDITS

1. Charlotte Mecklenburg Planning Commission
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13. 1980 Census Information, Charlotte Mecklenburg Planning Commission
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