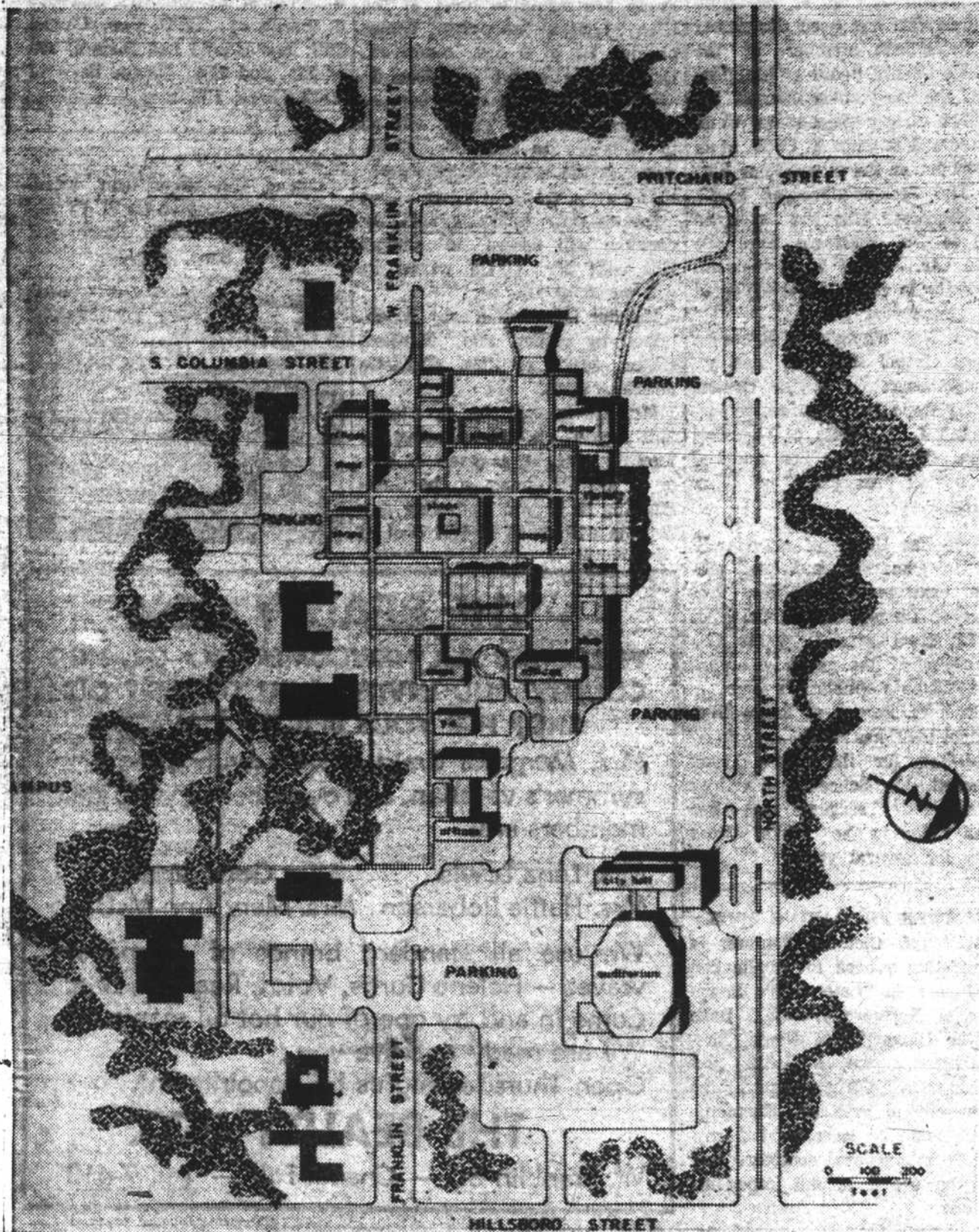


Should complement—not compete . . .

# Defeatism shouldn't control thinking on downtown mall, architect declares



**CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT, 1970** — A possible re-arrangement of downtown Chapel Hill as a mall-centered shopping area is shown in this 'conceptual' drawing by architect Don Stewart. The double building depicted on North

St. in the lower right hand corner is envisioned as a town hall and auditorium, while the center cluster of buildings would be commercial establishments.

By Ron Shumate

"I think something will have to be done about Chapel Hill's traffic problem within the next few years."

This statement was made this week by local architect Donald S. Stewart. Stewart added that there are many problems that must be dealt with in thinking about a mall for Chapel Hill.

His thesis for a Master of Regional Planning, written in 1958, dealt with the redevelopment of Chapel Hill's downtown business district.

**To 'stimulate thinking'**

"The main purpose of my thesis," Stewart explained, "was to stimulate thinking" in terms of some method of relieving traffic congestion here.

Stewart, who says he would like to see something like a mall here in Chapel Hill, says parking is one of the major problems here now.

"And, of course, you have to consider how the new Eastgate Shopping Center is going to work—how much it's going to affect downtown business.

"But you have to keep in mind that students are still going to shop downtown. They're not going to drive out there when they can just walk right down here and buy what they want."

**Need easy access**

Stewart feels that a mall-type of business district should be a place where shoppers can go and take their time if they wish; but it should also be a place where they can get in and out of in a hurry if they need to.

"The mall in Kalamazoo provides real atmosphere," he said. "There's no rushing, but shoppers can take their time going from place to place and not have to worry about parking meters.

"You have to make it easy for the shopper," he said.

In his thesis, Stewart says that "the betterment of the existing conditions is not sufficient." Therefore, he says, people here must take "a firm hand in actually eliminating the undesirable conditions and completely reorganizing physical elements as deemed essential for the best possible solution."

**Scores 'defeatism'**

Stewart further states that interested persons should not look upon such a project as "purely hypothetical with a defeatist attitude."

He also adds that people should approach the problems "without any pre-conceived ideas and a broad mind with a view toward the future and the role that such a central district (as a mall) should play in a growing community."

But he hastens to emphasize that his plan, while seemingly a workable one, is both drastic and visionary, and should serve primarily to stimulate other thoughts toward the problems.

He also points out that the plan outlined in his thesis is not the only solution.

"You could write a thesis on almost every topic in my thesis," he says. "It's that broad and that involved."

**Complement — not compete**

With regard to shopping centres, Stewart said in his thesis that they should not compete with, but complement, a town's main business district.

Therefore, he states, the main business district must have "a sound basis for its existence; otherwise, it can become secondary to the outlying shopping center."

Stewart feels that when and if expansion come here, it will be northward. "Rosemary may become the main artery through town," he feels.

"Land to the north of Franklin Street is less expensive, so expansion should go that way."

Stewart says he doesn't profess to know the answer to the traffic problem here.

"But I do think something will have to be done. It will take a lot of study on the part of merchants as well as persons connected with the University."

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