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urban design
Development in Small Communities
Urban design is an issue facing almost every major city in America. The sprawling edge growth and the sub-urban cookie cutter developments have caused a decentralization that few cities have been able to avoid. Planners have been attempting to address these problems for decades, with such movements as the city beautiful, cluster communities and new urbanism. These approaches have drawn on bringing an atmosphere to urban spaces that resembles that of a smaller community; strengthening social networks, creating walkable spaces and keeping a human scale and density to the area.

However, the same phenomenon that has had such a powerful effect on large cities has also had an impact on the smaller communities that are thought of as being so successful. The automobile and sub-urbia have made their way into these communities and have caused a similar decentralization. The effects on a small town can be devastating, causing economic strain as businesses fight against each other to draw customers. The patterns of growth are changing in rural America and there are few who even notice.

“It was transformed in small, seemingly insignificant steps. This is the nature of growth in small towns and rural areas. Unlike metropolitan regions, where 200-unit subdivisions and ‘big box’ stores seem to appear overnight, the pace and scale of growth in rural America typically comes in smaller increments. Because change happens slowly, it’s easy to imagine that it won’t happen at all. Growth is usually unanticipated, and, for a long time, barely perceptible. If change seems implausible, then planning for it seems unnecessary and [is] unlikely.” (Campoli, 11)

Planning is not codes and zoning, as many misinterpret it. It is setting goals for the future and knowing what the community wants to be. This seemingly small idea is easily overlooked, as what most small communities want is what they already have; a tight-knit network of businesses and social interactions. It is important to keep these ideas strong and always at the forefront of planning new projects. This vision is what will determine the future of a community, big or small. This project is about finding vision.
[urban]_design

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Design is a term that is used often in our culture. It is often thought of as a thing; an image or duplication of something seen elsewhere. There is often a heavy influence from popular culture and advertising telling us what is "designed"; what is fashionable. I am arguing that design is not an object, rather it is an ideal; a process. It is defined as “to have a goal...intent.” I intend to show the benefits of design by showing the economic, ecological and social impacts that “good” architecture can have. The extra time and expense of design not only has aesthetic benefits, but can also improve building performance and lessen its environmental impact.

The implication of this is that design is to have a vision, something that has been gradually degraded in small communities. The slow growth rate in these towns have created a sort of pessimism about the future of the community. Failing businesses set a precedent and few think it is possible to overcome. Often blame is found with the limited number of customers or the “tight-fistedness” of locals. This is something that is likely to not change drastically, the number of patrons or their conservative spending patterns. However, the type of growth is often overlooked.

Architecture has the ability to effect people in profound ways. The build environment is engaged almost constantly throughout the day. Using architecture and planning, it is possible to have buildings interact with the community, making it more likely to see use. The strategic planning, design and execution of a project can bring people to the site and cause a social interaction that is not only financially beneficial, but strengthens the networks within the community. The creation of a core for this can begin to counteract the pessimism and act as a catalyst for growth, city wide.
Hot Springs, South Dakota is a small town that is located in the south-western part of the state. It has a population of approximately five thousand people. It is known as the southern gateway to the Black Hills, and relies heavily on the tourism of the area for revenue. The history of the town is a point of community pride and the sandstone downtown district brings another level of interest to the town.

The town’s main economic base is the V.A. Hospital, which supplies jobs, as well as retired veterans to the area. There is also the Veterans Home, which is a retirement home for veterans, which also supplies jobs. The public school system is the next largest employer. These two government funded job sources have kept the town going, though it is very difficult for other ventures. Restaurants change hand almost yearly and Ace Hardware and Pamida have managed to make any type of small merchant store difficult to operate. Overshadowing all of this is Tourism. Mount Rushmore, Sturgis and the beauty of the Hills bring thousands of tourists to the area. Many of the stores in the town are seasonal and only open during the heavy tourist traffic. Many of these are owned by investor’s from outside the community and so the benefits to the town are reduced. However, this is an important part of the economy.

The town has been struggling to find an image for itself. As national chains come into the community, the focus has shifted to financial plausibility. These venues rarely look at the community as a whole and typically compete with existing businesses. The Hot Springs of the past is barely perceptible anymore, except in the historic sandstone structures that stand as a constant reminder.

Hot Springs has lost its vision. The task at hand is to try to find it again.
Hot Springs compared to South Dakota state average:

- Median household income below state average.
- Median house value significantly below state average.
- Unemployed percentage above state average.
- Black race population percentage significantly below state average.
- Hispanic race population percentage significantly below state average.
- Median age significantly above state average.
- Foreign-born population percentage significantly below state average.
- Number of rooms per house below state average.
- House age above state average.
- Institutionalized population percentage significantly above state average.
- Number of college students significantly below state average.
- Percentage of population with a bachelor’s degree or higher below state average.

Average wind speed:
10-13 mph

Population: 4,370
Land Area: Town: 2.9 mi
Latitude: 43.43 N
Longitude: 103.48W
Elevation: 3463’
“Hot Springs is a community of over 4,000 in north central Fall River County. Scattered out along the Fall River Canyon, surrounded by red conglomerate cliffs and evergreen forests, it is one of the most picturesque towns in South Dakota. Its affinity to the landscape is easily discovered in a row of sandstone store fronts along River Street – Hot Springs principal commercial avenue.”

“At present, the town’s economic bases are a federal Veterans Administration Center and a State Veteran’s Home, both of high architectural and historic value, together with the summer tourist traffic in the Black Hills area. In days past, however, the town got a much larger portion of its income from tourist traffic. Hot Springs was a unique and picturesque resort town centered around the various attractions relating to the hot water springs in the valley. Hot Springs was a health spa.”

“The handful of men responsible for the resort’s inception and vitality created a splendid environment. Yet, as a resort/health center, it was to live only a short 25 years.”

The days of grand activities are some [90] years past now, but the grandiose architecture still lives. These buildings are the major link to a glorious past. To enable this architectural heritage to endure, it must be conserved. The value of the past is in our trust. This is the very essence of the need to conserve and revitalize historic Hot Springs, South Dakota.”

From a statement by the South Dakota Historical Preservation Center.
“He who controls the past commands the future. He who commands the future conquers the past.”

George Orwell
historical_[analysis]
“History tells us that in dateless antiquity, a hunting party of Pre-colombian Indians, tribe unknown, descended into the canyon which had red walls and rim rocks of peculiar conglomerate. At the bottom of this canyon they saw a bubbling little mountain stream full of beautifully clear water.”

“Many years later the Cheyenne Indians found the old Indian bathtub and bathed in its waters for relief from pains the medicine man couldn’t conquer. Shortly thereafter the Sioux and the Cheyenne staged many a battle for the possession of the spring which the Sioux called “Wi-wi-la-kahta” (warm water). A fierce battle, we are told, took place on what is now Battle Mountain. The Sioux finally won, and a truce was made declaring the springs and stream under a perpetual flag of truce. All territory with a certain radius was neutral ground “wherein no man should unsheathe a knife of pull an arrow from a quiver.”

View of river valley near passenger depot, circa 1890. The river meanders within sloping banks with pedestrian access across.
As settlers came to the area, the draw to the springs was just as strong. The Hot Springs Valley was gradually occupied by the early explorers of the Black Hills; Primarily ranchers and miners. The Black Hills was ceded to the U.S. in 1876 by the Sioux Tribe and people began to settle the area. In 1881 the town was officially named Minnekahta but was later changed to Hot Springs. Soon visitors would see the potential for a resort center in a site with its mild climate, warm water and picturesque scenery.

One of the original investors in starting the town, F.T. Evans had a vision for the community. He, along with other investors, built hotels and spas along the river, utilizing the multiple springs in the Minnekahta Ave. area. This cluster of development became the site where the stagecoach would drop passengers off, and visitors could easily walk to all the attractions of the resort community. In time it would become a hitching post for the town as well as the spot where the passenger train depot would be located.

The area was built to last with the primary building material being locally quarried sandstone. The masons were able to carve amazing details and the Romanesque style that was used brings cohesion to the area. Perhaps more important, there was a strong community involvement and vision to make the resort work.

The county seats in Hot Springs and the courthouse were built at the north end of River Street. The state invested in the area by locating the State Veterans Home in Hot Springs. Local business flourished providing services for the resort businesses and these institutions. The economy grew and the town seemed to be booming. In 1889 the population was 583, by 1990 it had grown to 1447. (Historic, 4)
View from atop the VA hill, down the minnekahta valley; circa 1890.

View of resort activity, many businesses attract visitors to the area; circa 1895.

View of evan’s area, circa 1900. Sandstone buildings line the street.
The town is continuing to grow, and with the transportation networks in the area improving, more people have come to find the “cures” and enjoyment of the naturally warm mineral water. The Evan’s Plunge (named after its builder) was built and is to this day the largest indoor natural warm water pool in the world. Advertising both relaxation and healing powers of the water, the town was able to persuade the rail line to make a stop in town. This brought tourists, jobs and supplies to the growing town.

Many more buildings are built along River Street. The Evan’s Hotel is a magnificent piece, though imitating the King David Hotel in Jerusalem it has been brought to a beautiful scale for the site and has articulate stonework. Other bath houses and businesses are built in the area and the environment of the town is lively and attractive.

Above River Street, the Black Hills Sanitarium (later converted to the VA Hospital) has begun construction and its architect, Thomas Roger Kimball, would be appointed by President Theodore Roosevelt as a member of the first Commission for the Fine Arts for his work on the project. The design incorporated ramps for patients and was oriented to minimize heating (and cooling) requirements. This building was a great addition to the other buildings of the area and helped keep high architectural standards the norm in the town.

The civic activities in the town are prospering as well. City Hall is built on River Street, in conjunction with the post office. Many churches are built and social clubs were organized, including library, drama and women’s clubs. The golf course is built, and “is quite the fad now in Hot Springs, the links are constantly in use.” (Early, 58) The town boasts being as refined and elegant as anything in Europe.

The gold strikes in the northern Hills continue to bring many newcomers to the area. Hoping to get rich quick, these travelers contribute to the economy of the towns in the region. They also bring some more rowdy visitors, but most of those head up to deadwood and the northern hills. However, there are documented visits from some of the wilds west’s famous outlaws.

A rift has formed between upper (resort) and lower (local) town, the latter wanting some of the tourist trade and feeling like the city and developers are pushing the resort side of the town. They open their own bath houses and gift shops away from the resort district. In 1902 the town’s largest investor, F.T. Evan’s dies. Without Evan’s vision and investments, these problems become worse.
View of activity in evan’s area, circa 1916. The valley has been planted with landscaping that helps give a sense of enclosure to the downtown. The automobile makes its way into the community, with an oldsmobile dealership in the resort area.

Overview of resort town and VA above on bluff, early 1900’s. Artists rendering.
Hot Springs continues to grow. The resort town is still active and many services are provided in the area. Lower town is expanding and the businesses of that side of town do well. The social and economic characteristics of the town maintain at a level that promotes growth for the community.

The public library was built on Chicago Street (southern continuation of River Street) and is a sandstone building of Carnegie design, with alternating bands of rock-faced and smooth-cut stone and Doric columns flanking the entrance. The building was seen as a triumph, showing the sophistication of the community. The social clubs are a big part of community events. The first boys scout troop is organized and the drama and women’s clubs still boast good involvement.

The automobile is now a common sight in Hot Springs with an Oldsmobile garage right on the main strip. Though the business type may not be compatible with the tourism trade, the building is appropriate for the area, built of sandstone and with large areas of glazing to showcase the merchandise. The automobile brings changes to the growth pattern of the community. The outbuildings of the homes, in general, have been consolidated to a single building and the homes begin to be placed further from town services.

River Street continues to develop. There is now a continuous strip of buildings between upper and lower towns. However, development in the resort area has lessened. The result becomes a long strip of development, lacking the density that was so successful in the original town. This, combined with the diminishing belief in the healing powers of mineral water, causes the tourism export to decline. The VA medical center takes over the Black Hills Sanitarium. This, along with the State Veteran Home, sustains the local economy. However, without the progressive minded investors, like Evans, the town’s population and economic stability slip. The town continues to grow, but at a much slower rate.
One of the last sandstone building was the US Post Office, 1931. Using a more sandstone to make an interesting pattern in the facade.

View of town as outward growth expands, 1931. Activities brought people into town to such as this, showing the horse racing that occurred in the town on what is now Butler Park.
The First World War has come and gone and the impacts on Hot Springs are evident. The increase in production of agricultural products has given the town a shot in the arm. The growth, however, has occurred primarily at the edges. Sandstone has declined in use for a building material (this may be partly due to the existing stock of sandstone buildings); replaced by faster and easier wood construction.

Angostura reservoir promises to bring agricultural benefits to the region by providing irrigation to the area southwest of Hot Springs. The farm and ranch economy is vital to Hot Springs, as it is the regional supplier to these ventures. Tourism continues to decline, though the new Mount Rushmore Memorial will soon begin bringing more traffic to the area. Tourism will continue to be a part of the town's economy, but will never be as strong a destination as in the past. The town relies heavily on the VA hospital and State Veterans Home, which do provide enough stability to keep the town alive.

Floods and fires have destroyed many of the buildings in the resort area. These are typically replaced by wooden buildings and do not usually have compatible uses with the tourist trade. The town has no plan for keeping the resort district intact, and so it fades. The floods are constantly washing out the rail lines. As a result of the flood and declining usage, passenger trains stop making trip to Hot Springs. The automobile steps in as the primary mode of transportation.

The town’s growth is affected by the use of the automobile. It spreads over the valley and up on the college hill area. These neighborhoods are of a good density and are planted nicely. However, the pattern suggests a moving away from the services of the town. This is a turning point in the town. Consumers begin desiring a one stop shopping experience, to reduce the number of stops. The community social groups begin to lose involvement; the theatre closes for a time. With the exception of the various activities the veterans organizations put together, the community struggles finding unity.
Hot Springs has continued to grow, albeit slowly (less than .5% a year average growth). However, in the last 20 years the population has declined. New businesses find it hard to find a niche in the community, and usually only last a couple of years. The draw for young professionals and families is low, with the majority of jobs coming from the VA Hospital, State Veterans Home and the school district. The town is now known not as a resort town, but as a “Veteran Town.” The potential for Hot Springs as a resort destination persists, but will take a concerted effort from the city and investors.

There are many sights to see in Hot Springs. Evan’s Plunge draws many visitors as the world’s largest indoor natural warm water pool. The Mammoth Site, the largest accumulation of Colombian mammoths discovered, is a huge asset, both economically and educationally. Hot Springs is considered an historic district set in a beautiful landscape, and is a sight unto itself. The Wild Horse Sanctuary, where over 500 wild horses run free over 11,000 acres, is only 10 mi south of Hot Springs and Wind Cave National Park is 10 mi north. There are plenty of attractions to draw on to convince visitors to stop.

Most businesses do focus on the seasonal tourism traffic that is present in the Black Hills. However, there is little effort to market year round traffic and these ventures are spread across town and lack density. Development assumes the consumers willingness to drive to each destination. There is no one point in town for visitors to stop, shop, eat and sleep. As a result, visitors often stop only for a specific destination, then move on in their journey through the hills, missing much of what Hot Springs has to offer.

The town’s growth has continued to occur at the edges. The neighborhoods have grown from the town center in all directions. As these get further from the CBD, new businesses have built on the outside of town, contributing to a pattern of sprawl, taking business from and, more significantly, reducing consumers in the downtown area. The town is not at a point where action needs to be taken to reverse this activity, but incentives need to be given to develop more in the downtown area, and reduce the edge growth in the city.

The buildings that are constructed in the area lack the elegance and permanence that the original sandstone buildings conveyed. Typically the buildings have cost as the top priority, not the quality of space or environments they create. The city, without fail, goes with the low bidder on all public projects. What has been created as a result are a series of sheds that have been faced with a variety of materials. The cohesion and quality, which was once a distinct aspect of the town’s architecture, is difficult to find. Many of the old sandstone buildings have fallen into disrepair and are in need revitalization. The result of all these factors is a fragmented appearance, confronting visitor’s with no place que to stop and get out of their car.
The town has only to look into its past to find the answers to its waning economy and population. Hot Springs has many assets on which to build. The natural beauty and warm water in the area will always have a draw to people. The affinity to the environment, the permanence of structure, and intensity of activity of the original town complimented the inherent beauty and gave people a place to come relax and enjoy the natural splendor of the area. This needs to be reestablished in the downtown district.

Through architecture and planning, it is possible for Hot Springs to reinvent itself as a thriving resort community. The resulting economic boost can spur economic growth throughout the town, just as it did in the first part of the 20th century. The focus needs to be on creating spaces that are elegant and inviting in a dense pattern: Creating a depot of sorts for the town; A place where visitors can “tie their horse” and relax for a day, or two.

“Decades of a slack economy have preserved the historic quality of Hot Springs’ fine sandstone buildings, and only recently has unplanned economic and physical development threatened to overrun this quality. If, however, this development is wisely planned for, it can be channeled to take advantage of Hot Springs’ heritage to create an even more attractive, profitable, and livable community.”

“what was preserved by the accident of a slack economy can, if preserved through the right sort of planning, help to accelerate a renewed economic vitality.” (Mueller, 6)
Hot Springs' growth patterns have been spreading out over the valley, lacking cohesion. An effort to find vision for the community can provide unity in the built environment of the town.
Architecture and planning in small towns is often minimal, if existent at all. Development occurs at a slow rate, so proposing a plan for growth seems unnecessary. However, the sprawling patterns that plague larger cities have made way into these smaller communities, often disguised as a logical alternative. Highway strip development and subdivisions are prominent for its vehicular access and cheap, undeveloped land. This type of growth can be devastating on the economics of a small community, as businesses struggle against each other for the limited consumer base.

Hot Springs, SD is one example of a small community struggling to revive its (once lively) economic environment. The town has had several spurts that have shown growth. Yet, these have not lasted long or been sustained. The recent addition to the Southern Hills Golf Course has brought promise of renewed development. This momentum needs to be focused towards a pattern of growth that can continue to advance the economic and aesthetic character of the town.

To achieve this objective, three criteria must be met:

1. CREATE A DENSE DEVELOPMENT WITH A MIXTURE OF USES
   - This brings people to the development, bringing an intensity of activity that identifies the site as a vibrant center. The best way to do this is to make a place where people live, work and play; a place that gives multiple reasons to visit and use the site. Density also allows for window shopping and chance sells by patrons of other businesses, improving the economic situation for all in the area.

2. CREATE DESTINATION FOR THE TOWN
   - The town is in need of a sense of place. Currently, there is no one spot of attraction that beckons potential visitors to stop. It is also beneficial for the town to have a well-defined entertainment district, promoting social interactions within the community. The dense activity and a carefully planned landscape are critical. As most people come in cars, placement of parking is also an integral part of the project.

3. ENHANCE/RESTORE THE NATURAL BEAUTY AND HISTORY OF THE TOWN
   - The community has a rich history and has many features to take advantage of. The Fall River runs through the town, with natural warm-water springs in many places along the valley; The natural beauty of the Black Hills National Forest surrounds the town, which acts as the “Southern Gateway to the Black Hills;” And the historic, locally-quarried sandstone buildings show an affinity to the landscape, bringing a unique character to the town. These elements should be utilized to rejuvenate the area.
The area is a natural oasis, showcasing a beautiful river valley, majestic rock formations and plant life specific to the southern black hills.
Creating destination is the primary program of the project. This is a multi-faceted endeavor, requiring pooling the local population as well as the tourist traffic present in the community. Using the existing historic buildings and the natural beauty of the area, the project can have a character distinct to Hot Springs.

To facilitate the creation of a destination, the use of the building will be commercial/tourism district, featuring a hotel, restaurant, and retail space. This mixture of uses can draw on the local population and tourist alike. The district should be able to get visitors to stop and see the sites, but also to plan their vacations around visiting this site, and those in the community.

The hotel has two purposes. The first is to replace the degrading motel across the river. It is past its prime and has changed its name several times in the past few years as it struggles to keep up with the new requirements of national chains. Secondly, the hotel creates a destination for the site, bringing area visitors to the heart of the city. By bringing people to the main commercial area, it can act as a starting point to the multiple attractions, not simply being one of many other sites to see.

A restaurant is an important program for the site and the community. The town has been in need of a semi-formal style restaurant for several years, since the close of the Dakota Rose. A place to eat, drink and socialize also creates destination for the site, not only for visitors but for the local population. This allows a social meeting place for tourists and town’s people alike.

The last use of the building is to create a commercial and resort district for the community. Currently the town prides itself as a tourist town, however, there is no single spot of attraction that invites people to stop. Creating a well-defined district can help pull more traffic over and help revitalize the community. With the natural springs in the area, it is possible to have recreational activities as well.

The intensity of activity that all of these functions bring to the area can insure that the businesses have a constant flow of patrons. The benefits of having them in a compact area are easy to understand, as every venue brings window shoppers to the other businesses.
state historic preservation
to safeguard the heritage of the city by preserving a district which reflects elements of cultural, social, economic, political and architectural history to promote the use of the historic district for the education, pleasure, and welfare of the people

social/historic
grant money for historic buildings

city of hot springs
to stabilize and improve property values to foster civic beauty to strengthen the local economy

social/political
utility reconfiguration policy changes to preserve resort district advertising to bring tourists

developer
facilitate restoration of storefronts encourage businesses to locate to the area create commercial "mall" on main st

social/economic
building/restoring buildings in the area advertising to businesses to occupy spaces

goals

motivation

contribution

Close interaction with the involved parties can inform decisions on what is best for the community.
The process of revitalizing a community is a group effort. There needs to be intense cooperation and a selfless willingness to do whatever it takes to finish the project. There are several pieces that need to be looked at, and there are organizations that are ideally positioned for this. The project will likely deal with some of the historic parts of the community, so the State Historic Society (and their local chapter) should be involved. The City of Hot Springs will also have a critical role in bringing everything together and setting a master plan in place. A developer is the last party, and possibly most important. The developer will need to be altruistic in the goals for the project, looking for the best outcome for the community, not the bottom line. Together these parties could create a project that brings Hot Springs back to life once again.

The State Historic Society would be able to provide information on about every area of Hot Springs and assist in design decisions involving existing historic buildings. They would also be an important part of the funding of the project and in finding tax incentives for historic revitalization.

The City of Hot Springs would need to facilitate communication between all involved parties. Part of this involves having a vision, or master plan, for the overall outcome. Having goals and communicating those goals is a critical part of the project. Also, code reviews and infrastructure modifications would be another primary role of the city. The city government is supposed to be an agent of the people, and those goals should be voiced in the project as well.

The developer is an important role, and critical, as they carry the financial risk. Understanding that producing a project that suites the needs of potential renters, but also meets the needs of the community at large, will be far more profitable than simply producing a box for a specified use. The local pride in the project, if the town’s population are involved in the process, can help produce positive momentum for the project, making the job of marketing the project that much easier.
Several communities in the region have suffered the same slow decline as Hot Springs. Two of the towns have bounced back. Hill City and Keystone were both having economic trouble. They both relied heavily on tourism, with few non-tourism businesses in the town. The two towns put forth the effort to revitalize their tourist districts. These efforts were rewarded; the storefront filled up and the towns are doing much better. Most notable is the amount of regional business they have caught. This has benefitted the rest of the community and the towns are growing (both more than 20% in the past decade), and are able to invest in community services.

Hot Springs’ tourism district is in a similar state of disrepair (perhaps non-existent as a district). The compatible businesses have spread out all over the town and there is no clear district for visitors to stop. An effort to bring the tourist activity to a unified area will benefit the town immensely. The area that is most suited is the old resort district, the Evan’s area. The uses currently in the area are very broad and range from gift shops to auto sales. The businesses that are compatible with a resort district suffer from a lack of density of like businesses. The area is in need of redefinition, just as the other communities in the region have done.
Hot Springs’ tourism district is in a state of disrepair (perhaps non-existent as a district). The businesses have spread out over the town and there is no clear district for visitors to stop. An effort to bring the tourist activity to a unified area will benefit the town immensely.

Using other towns in the region as a starting point, the program of the development has a tourist draw. Hot Springs, with its larger population, also can draw on the local on the local population. In addition to the gift/gallery ventures that are typical components of the tourist stops in the hills, the project will encourage commercial ventures that support the local economy as well. By charting activities that will occur on the site, spaces can be derived, and major component of the development will be bringing in businesses that provide for the needs of tourist and the community. Examples of such businesses are banks, a sporting goods store and restaurants/night entertainment. With an historic theatre on the top floor of one of the existing buildings, a community play house may also be a viable concept for bringing visitors and the town to the site.

The charts here show that the main floor build out to bring the town to a reasonable density is around 50,000 sq ft. The floors above can begin to accommodate the other programmatic needs of a hotel and parking. Finding a means to re-energize the existing buildings on the site is also very important; Making the historic buildings not only usable, but modernized and desirable.

The overall square footage of the hotel will be determined partly by the footprint of the tourist district. However using recently constructed hotels and that the project will be replacing a motel, around 100 rooms would be foreseeable. Some of these should be extended stay suites to allow for longer stays, do to the proximity to local institutions and the ability of Hot Springs to be a staging ground for visits to the black hills.

The restaurant should be sufficiently sized to accommodate a large dinner crowd, as well as the morning rush from hotel customers, and to hold small parties and receptions, if needed. This capacity is not unusual for the area and will help to keep many customers to the area, benefitting all businesses in the district. Of course, small cafes and coffee shops would be incorporated into the area (2 coffee shops already existing).
Three sites were considered, two in the downtown area and one on the edge of town. Though all the sites have potential for future use, site C has a higher priority for development. If the old resort district can be revived, the social and economic impacts to the town will be dramatic and can create a better environment for the community.
Centrally located in the town, the site lends itself well as a focal point for the community. The site is within walking distance to the school, the courthouse and the VA, integrating the local population into the site. The river is a prominent feature in this area as the mountains “squeeze” this portion of the valley. And the quality of sandstone buildings is represented as well in this area as anywhere in town. All these features create an ideal location to re-focus the community.

The first step is to make a gesture to incorporate the city to the site. The existing centennial trail parallels the river through most of town. This is a beautiful trail that allows users to view the natural scenery of the mountains and river life, while observing most of the downtown area. This trail can be extended to incorporate the numerous other features of the community.

Extending through the rest of the northern section of town allows a pedestrian route to the Evan’s Plunge and to Hot Brook and Cold Brook Canyon. This gives the opportunity for the reaching the buildings in the upper town through a bicycle/pedestrian path, and also opens the opportunities for sports enthusiasts to explore the canyons with unique rock formations and natural springs. Likewise, extending a trail around the VA, passing the Pioneer Museum, to Battle mountain, can provide both the logistical means to the museum and a scenic path for those wanting to hike the area and explore the springs and hills. Other paths can be made to allow for bicycle/pedestrian loops, while connecting features such as the Mammoth Site, the Southern Hills Golf Course, the State Veterans Home and extending through the Fall River canyon. Cross connections could then be made between these major paths, further connecting the community and providing variety of experience for regular users.

These paths obviously help the community and bring unity to those users. However, it can also signify the destination in the town, as these path all converge in the resort district. This place shows its importance as a starting point on a journey and allows for visitors (and locals) to park their cars and visit several attractions, while finding a pleasant walk through the valley. The idea of destination as a “trail head,” or a destination to begin a new journey makes the site feel as though there are endless possibilities, encouraging longer stays and more frequent visits. The Park system and river are very important in this aspect of the project.
“In terms of architecture and history, this is the richest part of Hot Springs. The relatively well-preserved condition and unique style of the Evans Hotel, Minnekahta Block, St. Lukes Church, and the Union Depot, and other buildings provides a prime setting for historic conservation.”

“Besides being an ideal location for local business, this area has an opportunity to further develop its function as a tourist center. A tourist information center, a motel, an historic park, an auto service center, and a church all provide valuable services for the visitor or local citizen. More specifically, if the Chamber’s information service were increased, more tourists could be encouraged to visit historic Hot Springs. Additionally, these tourists could leave their cars…and begin a brief or extended walking tour.”

(mueller 60)
The Evan’s Area is a very historic area in town. In the area where the original major investor, F.T. Evans, began building over a century ago, it shows the vision that he had for the community. His efforts show the ability of a quality project, focused on improving the community, can act as a catalyst. The resulting development in the area became the center of activities in the community, bringing the town together and giving visitors a destination when coming to the community.

Nestled in the river valley, with several springs nearby (most under the buildings) it is iconic for the clientele Hot Springs is marketed for. The dry air, moderate climate, mineral water, and natural scenery merge in this location perfectly. Additionally, the sandstone buildings represent that these features would be a part of the community for a long time. The ability to begin many hiking trails in this area also appeals to the resort district, as exercise is an important part of physical and mental health.

As in the inception of the town, this area is a good point to focus the community. The vision to invigorate this district can revitalize the economy of Hot Springs and impact all areas of the town.
The buildings of the area have great historical significance. Many of them need little alteration to accommodate a lively commercial district. However, some will need massive reconstruction. The most common alteration is that of the utilities, which has been added to these buildings after the advent of electricity. Main St looks more like an alley than a street. The sandstone used on most of the buildings has weathered well, though the glazing and trim is in need of repair. Several of these buildings have been updated, now the rest of the structures need to brought to the same level.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Building</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Fenestration</th>
<th>Condition</th>
<th>Changes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fall River County Courthouse</td>
<td>Sandstone Richardsonian Romanesque Style Symmetrical Denticulated cornice</td>
<td>good</td>
<td>good</td>
<td>reconfigure utilities to minimize visual impact consider reopening spring in basement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Braun Hotel</td>
<td>Sandstone/wood Romanesque Mineral Springs in lower level</td>
<td>good</td>
<td>good</td>
<td>consider reopening spring in basement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gibson House (Flat Iron Building)</td>
<td>Sandstone Peninsular shaped, surrounded by streets on 3 sides Northern entry to site Denticulated cornice</td>
<td>good</td>
<td>good</td>
<td>improve rear entrance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wesch-Oak Building</td>
<td>Sandstone Rubble Wall on north (probably on south as well) Romanesque Pilasters to articulate different uses Symmetrical Denticulated cornice</td>
<td>fair</td>
<td>poor</td>
<td>reconfigure utilities to minimize visual impact (front and rear) rebuild rear store front</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F.J. Oldsmobile Garage</td>
<td>Sandstone Stepped parapet Symmetrical</td>
<td>fair</td>
<td>poor</td>
<td>reconfigure utilities to minimize visual impact (rear) reconstruct window show glazing to improve appearance</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The sandstone used on most of the buildings has weathered well, though the glazing and trim is in need of repair. Several of these buildings have been updated, now the rest of the structures need to brought to the same level.
site II_[inventory]  
conceptual design
The actual building site is on the east of the old resort town, on main street. This is on the rear side of the historic buildings. The current user is Golden West Telecommunication, with a single-story, brick office building and a metal utility building. The site looks more like an alley than a road and is cluttered with utilities, trash cans and vehicles. However, many of the sandstone buildings addressed this street environment in the past, and the fenestration was designed accordingly. The site is anchored on the south end by the old Evan’s Hotel and on the north by the VA bluff. The bluff runs the entire length of the site with a road going up the slope. The base of the VA Hospital is easily 120 feet above the site. Much of the slope that is on the back of the site appears to be fill material from the creation of the road, and could easily be removed or retained. There is a moderate amount of activity on the site, most of which stems from the telephone company. The landscaping on the site is maintained very little, if at all; The trees have not been trimmed, the grass unmowed. The sidewalks are cracked and the road has been patched multiple times. Curbs have been chipped away by the service vehicles that use this road. The resulting overall appearance is that the area is in decline and it is not an attractive place to be. The site’s uses need to be reconsidered and the buildings and infrastructure needs updated.

The images show views looking down the site. The buildings appear more run down by the existing infrastructure being in disrepair. The west side of the site has good enclosure, however, the east is lacking street definition and density.

The opposite image is an aerial photograph of the site and surrounding area. The void in the center is currently a used car dealership and provides an excellent opportunity for a connection to the traffic flow and the river.
conceptual sketch showing how enclosure on the site can create a more pedestrian friendly atmosphere
Currently on the site there is a brick office building occupied by Golden West Telecommunications and a metal building housing some of their equipment. These buildings do not contribute to the historic buildings and have little aesthetic interest. They are single story and spaced apart, giving very little enclosure to the space.

This leads to an obvious need for bounding on the east (left in drawing) side of the street. The project asks for an environment with certain characteristics to draw people to use the space. The density that is required and openings on buildings of both sides of the street is an important part of the design. As it is, the openness leaves the site has a feeling of desolation. This coupled with the neglect and services on the back side of the buildings make an uninviting space. The first move is to create a mass that brings balance and creates a pedestrian scale to the area. This enclosure creates a comfortable space for people to occupy. The restoration and opening of the rear entrances of the historic buildings can provide an area of dense commercial activity.
new mass, balancing space

new mass begins to parallel hillside.

lifting ped. street, allowing service to occur below.

new mass wraps the site, unifying the new and existing.
Development of this space began with a narrowing of the street, further amplifying the enclosure for the site. However, to keep it from becoming claustrophobic, the upper floors are pushed back, allowing the space to open to above.

The push/pull of the floors begins to mimic the hillside behind, hinting to users what is beyond and mimic the form of the river valley. This affinity to the landscape is further explored by pulling the street up a story, terracing the building up the slope.

The lifting of the street allows for the separation of pedestrian and vehicular traffic, raising the pedestrian street above. Also created is the opportunity to utilize the under used second story of the existing site buildings as well as lessening the perceived height of the new mass. The two masses are then united by wrapping the skin of the new mass over the existing buildings and across the plaza, across to a new green corridor.

The building “wrapping” can pick up all these pieces and unify the area. The building has potential to become iconic for the town, allowing a memorable stay in the community. The design concept needs to relate to the town’s history and to its presence today. The building can use influence from the surrounding buildings for inspiration. The existing buildings have lasted over 100 years and understanding a building cycle that in multi generational is paramount in this project.

The buildings on the site do have a rich history and cultural significance. They need to be approached as an asset and protected as the landmarks they are. However, protecting the buildings does not imply that changes cannot be made. I would like to use one of the site buildings as an example of the possibility of a substantial building redesign that respects the history, while creating a viable, modern space. The idea of wrapping these buildings, protecting while preparing for new use, can achieve this goal.
Schematic Diagram illustrating the massing of the new building in relation to the existing and the “skin” bringing the two together, creating a pedestrian walkway in the process.
The wrap can become a power gesture for the site, connecting not only the building to each other, but to the landscape as well. The sections below diagram how the building reacts to the exiting site. One cut is made through each existing building, as well as the open spaces. The flexibility of the buildings allows for reaching the various existing floor heights and provide means of bringing people to the site. The building also uses the slope behind to bring vehicles up to the parking levels. The density of use is easily perceived, and is a powerful statement for the intense activity that can occur on the site.
The new structure builds on the existing bringing new structure and floor plates. The enclosure becomes part new and part old. In this sense the project is quite additive, using the existing as a starting point and then bringing new elements to provide for the new functions. The cohesion that is gained makes a strong statement about the direction of the community: that it is proud of its history, but is prepared to move ahead into the future, bringing the past forward.
Birds eye perspective showing the building in relation to its surroundings. The park extends past the site, creating scenic atmosphere.

Overall perspective showing massing of new building, with site buildings removed.
The final building evolved into a concrete structure, with a louvered, secondary skin wrapping the building and the site. The louver also acts as a canopy system protecting the new store entrances, both on the new and existing portions of the design. The building cascades down the hill, wrapping the existing buildings and folding onto the landscape. This fluidity creates an iconic and appropriate gesture for the community and can help to attract businesses and customers to the area. A connection to the river has been made and the west river wall has been removed, allowing people to enjoy the natural beauty of the river valley. The park system has been expanded as well.

The following pages show architectural documentation of this design.
section of louver system, providing shade of building and balconies, while providing protection for main floor entrances.

access to 2nd floor, opportunity for retail use

existing commercial space

louver system provides shading and privacy

louver system provides shading and creates wrapping of the site

pedestrian street with activity on both sides

service street below

main lvl house retail, restaurant and hotel reception

guest rooms

guest rooms

guest rooms

lower level for fitness center, for members and guests
The west-east section show how the building works. The separation of the pedestrian street provides opportunities for a dense commercial district, using the existing buildings to full capacity. This also provides a chance for activities (dining, shopping, etc.) to spill out of the buildings, further activating the space. The parking is separated, but located conveniently behind the building, using existing infrastructure to provide ramping.
The ground floor utilizes the existing storefronts in their original orientation, leaving River Street as a traffic street lined with commercial ventures. Main street becomes a true services street and parking occurs under the new building. A fitness center is located on this level, providing direct access for local members, while still being accessible for hotel guests. On the north end, commercial ventures step down to meet the ground. This location becomes prominent and would make a great location for a sporting goods store (none currently in town) that specializes in outdoor sports.

The main floor occurs 15’ above grade. A pedestrian street is created and commercial spaces occupy both sides of the street, capitalizing on the under-used second floor of the existing buildings. The central courtyard becomes a central space for the development, with a hotel and restaurant adjacent to it. The pedestrian street folds out to the community and gestures to the various trails that could be incorporated into the city.

The 3rd floor begins the hotel units and parking, with a close connectivity to the lobby. This allows for convenient access and for the rooms to have nice views across the development and to the river valley and mountains beyond. As the louvered elements wrap the existing buildings, the space that is created could be enclosed to create roof gardens or even small residential units/2-story commercial space.

The floors above house the rest of the hotel units and parking. Again, this allows for convenient access and the rooms to have nice views across the development and to the river valley and mountains beyond. These rooms are more detached and offer a greater sense of privacy, though the balconies off the rooms keep the occupants involved with the street below.
site III [ped. st.]

building design
site III [approach]
built design
Building Summary

170,000 building sq ft
140,000 parking sq ft
35,000 renov. sq ft

hotel
73 reg. rooms
15 extended stay suites
3 family suites

retail
12 new commercial spaces
6 renovated existing spaces
7 existing commercial spaces
1 restaurant/lounge/reception

parking
250+ space parking structure
expanded surface parking
This is a rather large building project for the town, with nothing like it to date. That is not to say that it is out of scale for the town. Many projects are being constructed throughout town. This scheme simply concentrates these uses into a site that has optimal draw. In part, the size and scale of the project is what can make it successful. Being the only dense district, it has an additional draw to businesses and is uniquely positioned in the community to draw tourists and locals to the site.

The overall design is as programmed, providing approximately 25 commercial ventures (some could be subdivided if needed), hotel and restaurant. The parking has been integrated into the building, and the community, and serves as another asset for the town. These numbers are completely within reason as per the analysis of other towns in the region and current trends for lodging and tourism in Hot Springs.

Placing these uses together these creates a dense entertainment district for the community, benefitting the entire population of the town.
“Modern man likes to pretend that his thinking is wide-awake. But this wide-awake thinking has led us into the mazes of a nightmare in which the torture chambers are endlessly repeated in the mirrors of reason. When we emerge, perhaps we will realize that we have been dreaming with our eyes open, and that the dreams of reason are intolerable. And then, perhaps, we will begin to dream once more with our eyes closed.”

Octavio Paz
Architecture in smaller communities is often minimal, to say the least. As growth occurs slowly, any and all economic development is encouraged, often without having a strategy of how best to grow. Generally thought of along purely utilitarian lines, buildings are little more than decorated sheds, designated in name only for a given use. The lack of vision for the community as a whole affects the attitudes of all the parties involved in the project, from developer to architect to city officials. Architects have come to believe that small town projects are concerned only with cost and function, allowing the social, health and aesthetic impacts to go forgotten. As a result, rarely are designs pitched to clients along any other lines. The developers learn to expect a purely functional solution and the cyclical situation continues to spin.

Once this is understood, change can occur.

An architects primary role (as in any professional career) is that of an educator, especially in a rural setting where architectural examples of possibilities are limited. Many professions can figure out how to put a building together, what a designer brings to the table is innovative alternatives that have deal with the complexities of the environment around them. Architects need to bring vision to their project, and in doing so, bring vision to the community.

Small communities have so much to offer; walkable communities and strong social networks to name a few. Hopefully we can forget to rationalize these projects so much and begin to dream a little for the future of these towns.
I would like to thank the faculty of the College of Architecture for all the support and knowledge given so freely over the last six years. In particular, I would like to thank my mentor, Prof. Krug, for the countless meetings throughout this project. I would also like to thank Prof. Handa and Prof. Laging for their criticisms and advice along the way.

I would like to thank my friends, family, and colleagues for the, I’m sure tiresome, conversations and for the moral support that has helped me get to this point.

And to Ivy, the love of my life, thank you for all you have done. There is no doubt that I would have never gotten as far as I have without your love and support.

Thank You.
No source has been more informative than living and working in Hot Springs and talking with the local population. There is definitely vision in the community, and there are those ready to see it materialize. Those in the community willing to work for the betterment of the town has been an inspiration and great observation for many of the ideas presented here. I hope that this can be some help to them.


