



CENTER CITY DEVELOPMENT PLAN, MEMPHIS, TN

Architects: Venturi, Scott Brown and Associates, Inc.

Location: Memphis, TN

Client: Center City Commission

Size: 6,820 acres

Completion: 1987

VSBA was selected by the Center City Commission to head an interdisciplinary planning team to develop a concept plan for Downtown Memphis. Over the past 25 years major office and retail growth in East Memphis caused historic Memphis, on the Mississippi River, to become the Western boundary of the city; but in the 1980s new interest in the downtown generated rehabilitation and building in the area overlooking the Mississippi.

Fearing that intense development could erode the amenity of the City-river connection, the Center City Commission called for a comprehensive development strategy; an overview that would address the area's problems, develop policies, and implement programs to ensure the present and the future growth of the city, while at the same time preserving the amenity of the downtown -- the prime attraction for economic development.

Our object was to plan to revitalize the Center City as a residential, financial, commercial, and cultural center. The 21 volumes of the plan consider the role and potential of the downtown and its surroundings in a broad economic and regional context. Future markets for housing, office, and retail uses in Center City were investigated and recommendations were made for the role of Memphis's cultural institutions and historic fabric in the city's regeneration.

The urban design plan emphasizes Memphis's cultural and historical richness, yet approaches its future with imagination. It maintains a balance between long and short term planning and between large and small-scale recommendations.





3. PROPOSED LONG TERM GENERALIZED LAND USE



Signs are an important part of urban imagery. Historic markers and cultural signs, in particular, have relevance to the symbols, monuments and landmarks of center city, as such signs will be associated with the landmarks and should respond to their character. A taxonomy of the different types of signs to be found in center city is given in the Beale Street/Peabody Place sign-plan, with guidelines for the design of each type.



136. Public and private signs and markers

