

PROJECT PROFILE

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Project Name Center in the Square Location One Market Square
Roanoke, Virginia 24011

Owner Western Virginia Foundation for the Arts and Sciences

Project Use(s) Cultural center housing the Art Museum of Western Virginia, Mill
Mountain Theatre, Rke. Valley History Museum, Science Museum of
Western VA, and The Arts Council of the Blue Ridge

Project Size 150,000 square feet. Total Development Cost \$10,575,000

Annual Operating Budget (if appropriate) \$1,093,221.00

Date Initiated 1979 Percent Completed, December 1, 1996 100%

Projected Completion Date (if appropriate) _____
 (Attach, if you wish, a list of relevant project dates)

Application submitted by:

Name Carolyn G. Nolan Title Grants Officer

Organization Center in the Square

Address One Market Square, Roanoke, Virginia 24011

Telephone () (540) 342-5708 FAX () (540) 224-1238

E-mail # cntrsquare@aol.com or CITS@CITS.org

Key Participants (Attach an additional sheet if needed)

Organization	Key Person	Telephone
Public Agencies <u>City of Roanoke</u>	<u>City Manager W. Robert Herbert</u>	<u>(540)981-2333</u>
Developer <u>Western Virginia Foundation for the Arts and Sciences</u>	<u>James C. Sears, Ed.D.</u>	<u>(540)342-5701</u>
Professional consultants:		
Architect <u>Hayes, Seay, Mattern & Mattern</u>	<u>Timm Jamieson</u>	<u>(540)857-3112</u>
Landscape architect <u>N/A</u>		
Urban designer _____		
Planner <u>Hayes, Seay, Mattern & Mattern</u>	<u>Timm Jamieson</u>	<u>(540)857-3112</u>
Lawyer <u>The Honorable William B. Hopkins, Sr.</u>		<u>(540)982-1000</u>
Other <u>Contractor - J.M. Turner & Company</u>	<u>Jay Turner, Jr.</u>	<u>(540)343-6749</u>
Community group(s) <u>Downtown Roanoke, Inc.; Design "79; Roanoke Area Market Assoc. Elfun Society, The Athenian Society for the Arts and Sciences, The Regional Partnership, Central Roanoke Development Foundation, City of Roanoke Planning Commission, Roanoke Chamber of Commerce</u>		
Sponsor <u>Western Virginia for the Arts and Sciences</u>		

Please indicate how you learned of the Rudy Bruner Award in Urban Excellence. (Check all that apply)

[] mailing [] media [X] previous RBA entrant [] other

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Signature Carolyn G. Nolan, Grants Officer

PROJECT PROFILE

ABSTRACT

Project Name Center in the Square

Location Roanoke, Virginia

1. Describe briefly the project's design and implementation.

Center in the Square (Western Virginia Foundation for the Arts and Sciences) is the exciting cultural complex in Roanoke's historic downtown farmers' market. Five independent cultural organizations thrive in a restored 1914 warehouse:

- Art Museum of Western Virginia
- The Arts Council of the Blue Ridge
- Mill Mountain Theatre
- Roanoke Valley History Museum
- Science Museum of Western Virginia and Hopkins Planetarium

Each of the organizations has its own budget and its own board. Center in the Square provides rent-free space, utilities, maintenance, security, custodial service, and other benefits. Center was conceived in order to provide the community with accessibility to major arts and cultural organizations, and in so doing, to transform a dying urban area into a vital entertainment, shopping and tourist center. The facility opened in 1983.

The idea originated as early as 1976, when a business league was formed to promote business growth in downtown Roanoke and urban revitalization. This group of prominent citizens formed a new group, the Central Roanoke Development Foundation, and the major outgrowth of this group was *Design '79* (see Appendix). Center in the Square was the resulting centerpiece -- the 'jewel in the crown of *Design '79*. ' In a storefront office in a very visible and much-publicized window on Roanoke's busiest street, *Design '79* positioned an architect drawing plans for possible downtown improvements. Citizens were encouraged to observe and offer suggestions. Four months of call-in television broadcasts created a public wish-list of 3600 ideas, and more than 1200 were used.

2. What local urban issues did this project address? What were its goals? Were there issues that, in your judgement, might have been addressed but were not?

The issues included:

- the renewal and transformation of a "lost," crime-ridden urban area
- the adaptive reuse and preservation of abandoned but historic buildings
- the input of the local population
- the cooperation of numerous public and private groups
- easy, safe accessibility to arts and cultural organizations, all in need of new homes for one reason or another

The Science Museum operated in an abandoned schoolhouse in a flood-prone area. Mill Mountain Theatre's original home had burned; the Art Museum was inaccessible to large segments of the population. The local Historical Society occupied a storefront, and The Arts Council moved from one donated office to another. By moving into the restored 1914 warehouse in the center of the market area, all five organizations have flourished in their new location, as has the surrounding historic market area and downtown Roanoke. Had we anticipated the extent of our popularity, we would have planned a larger facility complete with a larger parking garage with adequate deck clearance for the many visiting buses.

3. Describe the financing of the project. Do you think it could be replicated?

Partnerships had to be forged with individuals, regional governments, state governments, regional businesses, the Federal government and the five organizations selected to occupy the cultural and educational complex. The cost for the original Center in the Square building was \$7,500,000, including all land, construction, architects, engineers and consultant fees. At the beginning of the project, pledges were quickly obtained for \$4,000,000 from the private sector and a State of Virginia grant of \$2,600,000 to purchase and remodel the McGuire building. The Western Virginia Foundation for the Arts and Sciences entered into a Trust Indenture with First National Exchange Bank (actually a consortium of six banks and a life insurance company, all headquartered in Roanoke), whereby \$2.5 million in bonds were issued to complete construction on the project. The property, state grant money and pledge commitments were pledged as security for the bonds. The General Assembly exempted all non-profit real estate and personal property of the Foundation, the Center and its resident organizations from local taxation. All payments on the bonds were paid off in 1989, three years ahead of schedule. In 1988, the Foundation obtained donations and pledges of more than \$3,000,000 to purchase and remodel an adjoining building built in 1918. The remodeling of that building (now called Center on Church) and a large portion of the original building was completed in November 1990. The cost of this project (\$3,075,000) was paid from pledges, one of which was a state grant of \$1,500,000. This project is absolutely replicable, with individual situations and locations requiring careful study. Center in the Square's administration receives calls monthly from cities across the country inquiring about its success.

4. Why does the project merit the Ruby Bruner Award for Excellence in the Urban Environment?

Virginia Town and City Magazine (October 1996) noted that "Roanoke...was one of the first downtown areas in the nation where leaders recognized the importance of preserving heritage, forming public/private partnerships and involving citizens in charting the future." Center in the Square was one of the wonderful results; it is truly an outstanding example of urban excellence. Center in the Square merits the award because it has not only served to truly create excellence in the urban environment, but also it has virtually recreated the heart of our city, providing a happy meeting place for all cultures, classes, and races. The idea of housing multiple organizations under one roof, centralizing support services, utilizing a sound older structure and minimizing overhead makes this idea practical and sustainable for any community, anywhere. Thirteen years after its opening, Center in the Square continues to represent an outstanding public/private partnership that is a cost-effective solution for bringing educational opportunities, economic development, and added quality of life to a community. Center in the Square is a perfect example of community, government, and business working together for excellence.

Community Representative Perspective

Warner Dalhouse

Retired, Chairman of the Board, First Union National Bank of Virginia

Retired, Chairman of the Board, Shenandoah Life Insurance Company

Former Chairman of the Board, Western Virginia Foundation for the Arts and Sciences, Inc.

Current Chair, Endowment Campaign, Center in the Square

COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVE PERSPECTIVE

This sheet is to be filled out by someone who was involved, or represents an organization that was involved, in helping the project respond to neighborhood issues.

If possible, answers should be typed directly on this form or a photocopy. If the form is not used and answers are typed on a separate page, each answer must be preceded by the question to which it responds. Please limit answers to the area provided.

Name Warner Dalhouse Title Retired, Chairman of the Board
First Union National Bank of VA
Organization _____ Telephone () (540) 721-5233
Address 460 Tranquility Road, Moneta, Virginia 24121
FAX () (540) 721-6093 E-mail # _____

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Signature 

1. How did you, or the organization you represent, become involved in this project? What role did you play? For example, was there a public review process in which you took part?

I was one of the founding directors, the only one still active on the project after 15 years. An ad hoc group of businessmen were seeking new housing for a burned down local theatre, and, in the process, discovered other arts and educational organizations also needed better and more accessible space. Coincidentally, some of these same businessmen were involved in a downtown revitalization project called *Design '79* and were prescient enough to marry the two objectives with a public-private partnership involving local, state and federal involvement. Five and a half million dollars of private money catalyzed the creation of Center in the Square.

2. From the community's point of view, what were the major issues concerning this project?

- Downtown revitalization to stabilize a deteriorating urban place.
- Housing accessibility, improved visibility and financial stability for five well-established cultural organizations.

3. What trade-offs and compromises were required during the development of the project? How did your organization participate in making them? With hindsight, what, if anything, would you do differently?

The old five-story farm implement building that became most of Center in the Square required many construction compromises. It was not designed to house museums. This required the diverse organizations to negotiate and compromise for the most suitable space for their individual permanent needs. And, of course money required us to make careful construction decisions, although the community ultimately contributed nearly \$9,000,000 to assure quality space and a minimum of painful compromises.

There was, honestly, not much we would change in the concept and implementation. Free space for the organizations frees their own money for their own programming and the community now clearly believes Center is essential to the community.

4. How has this project made the community a better place to live? Why should it win this Award? Please be as specific as possible.

Prior to the creation of Center in the Square, Roanoke's old market area was blighted with drifters, prostitutes, pornographic shops, drugs and crime. It was not a place attractive to our own citizens. Thirteen years later over 200 new businesses have been created in that area and its immediate environs, 30 restaurants, book stores, art galleries, coffee shops, and two major office buildings producing approximately \$3 million in real estate taxes. We now have quality live theatre year-round in a downtown venue at a time when most communities this size are still trying to get a movie theatre downtown.

Center in the Square emphatically and even dramatically meets the standards of this award by demonstrating the complementary interaction of economic, governmental and aesthetic values and successfully reconciling competing financial, visual, and social values in the process.

By moving the Art Museum of Western Virginia, the Science Museum, Mill Mountain Theatre, the Roanoke Valley History Museum and the Arts Council of the Blue Ridge into a central city location, the project

- Stabilized the deteriorating downtown neighborhood.
- Made the Museums available to private transportation and all economic levels of the community.
- Catalyzed over \$750,000,000 in downtown development since opening in 1982.
- Became an icon of our quality of life, influencing the attraction of new industries and creation of new jobs.

5. If a community group came to you for advice in carrying out a similar project, what would you tell them?

That they are into a very complex and difficult endeavor but that the pay-off will be incredibly valuable in serendipitous ways they nor we could envision -- and that we will help them by opening our files, making our staff and directors available for them, and generally doing what we have done for literally dozens of interested groups from around the nation.

6. If, five years from now, you were to judge that this project was still successful, what characteristics would convince you of that fact?

- Continuation of broad community support in financial terms (approximately \$300,000 per year) and in attendance (approximately 400,000 per year).
- Continuation of media and governmental kudos for our social, economic, entertainment, and educational value.
- Continuation of the lines of yellow school buses that regularly deposit children from 60 school districts that include a visit to Center in standard school activities.
- Other communities still trying to clone the remarkable success of Center in the Square.

Community Representative Perspective

John P. Bradshaw, Jr.

Executive Vice President
Hayes, Seay, Mattern & Mattern, Inc.

Member, City of Roanoke Planning Commission

COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVE PERSPECTIVE

NOTE: Document by fax

This sheet is to be filled out by someone who was involved, or represents an organization that was involved, in helping the project respond to neighborhood issues.

If possible, answers should be typed directly on this form or a photocopy. If the form is not used and answers are typed on a separate page, each answer must be preceded by the question to which it responds. Please limit answers to the area provided.

Name	John P. Bradshaw, Jr.	Title	Executive Vice President
Organization	Hayes, Seay, Mattern & Mattern, Inc.	Telephone	(540) 857-3113
Address	1315 Franklin Road, SW, Roanoke, VA 24016		
FAX	(540) 857-3180	E-mail #	hsmm@roanoke.infi.net

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Signature

1. How did you, or the organization you represent, become involved in this project? What role did you play? For example, was there a public review process in which you took part?

As a member of the Planning Commission and also a senior member of the A&E design team, I had an excellent opportunity to be a part of the planning process for both the public and the private sector. The review was mostly in the drafting and implementing of the historic district regulation, which was essential to the success that the project triggered for the downtown area. Yet there was major public sector review input directed into the design.

2. From the community's point of view, what were the major issues concerning this project?

The major issues were:

- where to effectively locate the 5 agencies intended for the facility, if not at the proposed site
- could a facility such as Center in the Square trigger a stymieing of the deterioration of the old town area
- would the public accept going into a rundown area after hours

3. What trade-offs and compromises were required during the development of the project? How did your organization participate in making them? With hindsight, what, if anything, would you do differently?

There were few trade-offs with respect to the Planning Commission and the project, in that this was possibly the last chance to save the area from the wrecking ball. In hindsight, possibly the Planning Commission could have been more proactive, yet in this case it wasn't required.

4. How has this project made the community a better place to live? Why should it win this Award? Please be as specific as possible.

Center in the Square has lived up to all expectations of good planning. It was the central place for the public and private, the community and the individual to gather around and create a significant center that saved a core area of our community. It was the first building block followed by street improvements, public building improvements, private stores, restaurants, office buildings and tourist activities. As a public/private community project it has proven to be an award winner.

5. If a community group came to you for advice in carrying out a similar project, what would you tell them?

It can be done but it requires dedicated leadership in all places focused on the objective.

6. If, five years from now, you were to judge that this project was still successful, what characteristics would convince you of that fact?

Five years after its completion, a major flood hit the whole area but there was no question that all elements would be restored at some cost. I am confident that if something of a similar nature were to happen in the next few weeks that the public/private sectors would again rebuild, because it has proved itself to be a lasting feature of the Valley and of the whole general area. **Center in the Square is a lasting event center of Southwestern Virginia.**

Public
Agency
Perspective

Brian Wishneff

Formerly, Chief of the City of Roanoke, Office of Economic Development

Currently, President, Brian Wishneff & Associates

PUBLIC AGENCY PERSPECTIVE

This sheet is to be filled out by staff representative(s) of public agency(ies) who were directly involved in the financing, design review, or public approvals that affected this project.

If possible, answers should be typed directly on this form or a photocopy. If the form is not used and answers are typed on a separate page, each answer must be preceded by the question to which it responds. Please limit answers to the area provided.

Name Brian J. Wishneff Title Former Chief, Office of Econ. Development, City of Roanoke
Currently, President, Wishneff
Organization Brian Wishneff & Associates Telephone () and Associates
1010 First Union Bldg., 213 S. Jefferson St. (540) 982-1317
Address Roanoke, Virginia 24011
FAX () 540/982-1568 E-mail # _____

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Signature _____

1. What role did your organization play in the development of this project?

- Roanoke City had just completed *Design '79*, a comprehensive plan for the entire city, which called for making the historic farmer's market an entertainment area. Locating Center in the Square in the heart of the farmer's market was crucial to the success of this portion of the plan.
- For an entertainment/arts complex in the center of downtown to be successful, nearby parking would be required. Roanoke City acquired a UDAG grant to build a parking garage attached to the Center.

2. Describe what requirements were made of this project by your agency (e.g., zoning, public participation, public benefits, impact statements).

In order to receive the UDAG money, the City had to require an unconditional guarantee that the project would be built and prove that financing was available. In addition, certain architectural/functional guidelines had to be met in order for the building to fit in with the historic market area.

3. From your perspective, how was this project intended to benefit the urban environment? Describe how, if at all, these intentions changed over the course of the project. What trade-offs and compromises were required? How did you participate in making them? With hindsight, what would you now do differently?

A. The project benefited the urban environment by:

- Taking an empty, run-down building in the heart of downtown Roanoke and turning it into a state-of-the-art complex for the arts in southwest Virginia.
- Stimulating development in an area of downtown known more for its illegal night life than as a center for downtown retail, restaurants and entertainment.
- Changing the perception of the area to that of a safe haven.
- Bringing together many diverse entities under one roof as a stimulus to the tourist/travel industry.
- Bringing people downtown during the evening hours to stimulate associated businesses such as restaurants.
- Building on the age-old tradition of the City Market.

B. These intentions did not change over the course of the project.

C. None-other than unconditional guarantee mentioned in question 2.

D. N/A

E. I would have bought more surrounding property and/or buildings for future expansion.

4. Describe any data you have that document the impact that this project has had on its surroundings and the people in the project area. Attach supplementary materials as appropriate. What have you observed of the project's impact?

- Travel expenditures have grown from \$114 million in 1985 to \$150 million in 1995.
- Center in the Square opened Center on Church in 1990 at a cost of \$3,420,000.
- Since its completion in 1983, almost \$750 million has been invested in downtown construction/renovation.
- Since 1983, over 30 restaurants, six clothing stores and numerous various retail businesses have opened in the area and prospered.
- The number of festivals in the market area has increased along with attendance, with the Sidewalk Art Show (sponsored by the Art Museum of Western Virginia) becoming the largest sidewalk art event of its kind on the east coast.
- In the market area, employment is now over 3,000.

5. What about this project would be instructive to agencies like yours in other cities?

The success of Center in the Square verifies the need for entertainment as an attraction in downtown areas. Whether cultural, sports-minded, aquarium, etc., the availability of a major people-attractor has a positive economic impact on major downtowns by alleviating the notions that downtowns close up at night and that downtowns are sterile. When a city plans for its downtown, be sure to plan a cultural activity to heighten quality of life, along with the office buildings and retail stores.

6. If, five years from now, you were to judge that this project was still successful, what characteristics would convince you of that fact?

- Employment in downtown has grown.
- New establishments have opened in the area.
- Visitation to Center in the Square has increased.
- Center on Church has been fully occupied, necessitating the implementation of Phase III expansion plans.
- Other cities continue to visit the Center/market area for insights on how to accomplish similar projects.
- Downtown housing has been realized.
- Property values have increased.
- Visitors to Center in the Square come from all over the world.

Professional Consultant Perspective

William B. Hopkins, Sr.

Attorney-At-Law

Board of Directors, Western Virginia Foundation for the Arts and Sciences

PROFESSIONAL CONSULTANT PERSPECTIVE

This sheet is to be filled out by a professional who worked as a consultant on the project, providing design, planning, legal, or other services. Copies may be given to other professionals if desired.

If possible, answers should be typed directly on this form or a photocopy. If the form is not used and answers are typed on a separate page, each answer must be preceded by the question to which it responds. Please limit answers to the area provided.

Name William B. Hopkins, Sr. Title Vice-President
Organization Martin, Hopkins & Lemon, P.C. Telephone ((540) 982-1000
Address P. O. Box 13366, Roanoke, Virginia 24033
FAX ((540) 982-2015) E-mail # _____

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Signature

William B Hopkins Sr

1. What role did you or your organization play in the development of this project?

I was an early member of the Board of Directors and Attorney for the Western Virginia Foundation for the Arts and Sciences. Having been a Member and Majority Leader of the Virginia State Senate, I was instrumental in obtaining a State grant for Two Million Six Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$2,600,000.00).

2. From your perspective, how was the project intended to benefit the urban environment?

A. The project was intended:

- to focus the attention of the Roanoke community on arts, science, and history in the Roanoke Valley,
- to create an awareness and interest therein, and
- to make same readily available to the people of the Valley.

B. Secondly, the project was intended to revitalize the most blighted area of downtown Roanoke.

3. Describe the project's impact on its surroundings and on the people in the area. Do you have data that document these effects? Attach supplementary material as appropriate.

The project has had a much greater impact on its surroundings than I or anyone connected therewith envisioned. Fifty to sixty years ago downtown Roanoke was an area young people enjoyed at night. Businesses were open. There were four motion picture theaters. All this changed after World War II: gradually at first, then at an accelerated pace. Night life in downtown Roanoke was dead during the decade of the 60's and 70's.

Center in the Square brought back life to the area we Roanokers call "the market." Prior to Center in the Square, the Roanoke Museum of Fine Arts (now the Art Museum of Western Virginia) was located in Cherry Hill, the most affluent section of the city. Peter Rippe, its Director, violently opposed the move to the most rundown section of the city. A month after Center's opening, Peter's attitude changed. He said to me, "More people have come through my museum in the first month than the previous five years in Cherry Hill."

4. What trade-offs and compromises were required during the development of the project? How did your organization participate in making them?

Not Involved

5. What was the least successful aspect of the project? With hindsight, what would you now do differently?

It all did better than we thought.

6. How might this project be instructive to others in your profession?

- Don't believe that people in the community will not support you.
- Seek support from all aspects of the community.
- Seek qualified planners to help you spend the money raised wisely.

7. If, five years from now, you were to judge that this project was still successful, what characteristics would convince you of that fact?

That it continues to offer the general population a wide range of cultural and educational exhibits; that it continues to grow and spurs the growth of business in the area; and that it provides a source of civic pride for the community.

Developer Perspective

William S. Hubbard

Treasurer, Board of Directors

DEVELOPER PERSPECTIVE

This sheet is to be filled out by the person who took primary responsibility for project financing or is a representative of the group which did.

If possible, answers should be typed directly on this form or a photocopy. If the form is not used and answers are typed on a separate page, each answer must be preceded by the question to which it responds. Please limit answers to the area provided.

Name	William S. Hubard	Title	Treasurer, Board of Directors
Organization	Western Va. Foundation for the Arts and Sciences	Telephone ()	(540) 344-0910
Address	2202 Carter Road, Roanoke, Virginia 24015		
FAX ()	E-mail #		

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Signature Wm. S. Hubard, Treasurer

1. What role did you or your organization play in the development of this project? Describe the scope of involvement.

There was no outside developer involved in the development of Center in the Square. The Western Virginia Foundation for the Arts and Sciences purchased the McGuire building, remodeled it and has owned the building continually since then.

2. What, if any, modifications were made to the original proposal as the project was developed? What trade-offs or compromises were required during the development of the project?

No major modification, trade-offs or compromises were required or made.

3. What, if any, innovative means of financing the project were used?

Most of the fund-raising efforts required face-to-face selling and all members of the Board were most cooperative in this effort. The *Wall of Fame* idea helped a great deal. This *Wall* requires a gift of \$5,000 or more from individuals and \$10,000 or more from corporations. These names are placed on a wall in the atrium for public viewing. Pledges were quickly obtained for \$4,000,000 from the private sector and a State of Virginia grant of \$2,600,000 to purchase and remodel the McGuire building. As a loan against future pledge payments, and secured by a mortgage on its building, Center in the Square obtained a \$2,500,000 loan from a consortium of six banks and a life insurance company, all headquartered in Roanoke. The interest rate on this loan was at 65% of the New York prime interest rate.

-
4. How did the financial benefits and economic impacts of this project differ from other projects? How does the project's quality relate to the financial goals?

This project changed the downtown area from a deteriorating condition to a turn-around situation. It was the beginning of the revitalization of the downtown of Roanoke. Many new businesses were established as a result.

5. What was the most difficult task in the development of this project? What was the least successful aspect? With hindsight, would you do anything differently?

The most difficult task was coordinating space requirements of the five resident organizations occupying the space available. The least successful aspect was failure to provide adequate space to accommodate the unexpectedly large attendance--in excess of 400,000 annually. With hindsight we should have acquired more space in the beginning. We finally had to do this by purchasing and renovating an adjoining building.

6. What about this project would be instructive to other developers?

Center in the Square is a revolutionary concept in incorporating under one roof art, science, theatre and history. It is unique in the United States and has solidified support for further urban revitalization.

7. If, five years from now, you were to judge that this project was still successful, what characteristics would convince you of that fact?

The three goals established in the beginning:

- (1) to provide all citizens, young and old, from all walks of life, an enlightening and educational experience;
- (2) to provide the inspiration for urban revitalization;
- (3) to create a tourist attraction thereby providing new industry and improved economic climate for the area.

Other Perspective

Sandra B. Light

Community Volunteer

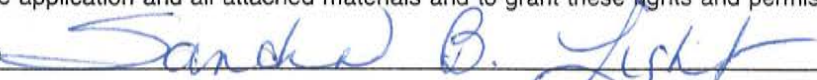
&

Center in the Square Representative
to *Habitat II, The City Summit*

OTHER PERSPECTIVE

Name Sandra B. Light Title Community Volunteer
Organization _____ Telephone () (540) 342-5259
Address 3905 Bosworth Drive, S. W., Roanoke, Virginia 24014
FAX () _____ E-mail # blight10@aol.com

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Signature 

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1. What role did you play in the development of this project?

Having just moved to Roanoke in 1980, I had little to do with the development of Center in the Square. I was, however, a member of the Speaker's Bureau and scheduled many speaking engagements at meetings of civic groups such as Rotary, the Junior League, etc. At these meetings I would explain the concept of what Center was to be, the hopes and dreams of the founders, show artists' renderings of the finished product, and do my best to create a sense of excitement and anticipation of what was to come.

2. From your perspective, how was this project intended to benefit the urban environment?

This project was intended to benefit the urban environment by counteracting the growing decay in a downtown area that is, in fact, the largest in western Virginia. It was realized that the impending loss of this area would have significant negative impact upon approximately one-third of the state of Virginia. By replacing the decay with this well thought-out project, it was believed that a festive, safe, and vital atmosphere would create sufficient excitement to bring people back downtown as well as to increase economic development. This project has succeeded beyond anyone's wildest dreams.

3. Describe the impact that this project has actually had on its surroundings and on the people in the project area. Include any data or supplementary materials that support your conclusions.

The impact Center has had on its surroundings and on the people in the area has been phenomenal! Over 200 new businesses have opened. This project has been the cornerstone of \$750 million in building improvement programs--an amazing amount for a city of Roanoke's size. It is conservatively estimated that Center's presence pumps over \$25 million annually into our local economy. Because of an increasingly healthy business environment, employment in the area has increased dramatically.

4. What trade-offs and compromises were required during the development of the project? Did you participate in making them?

N/A

-
5. What was the least successful aspect of the project? With hindsight, what would you now do differently?

In my opinion the least successful aspect of the project was not realizing how tremendously successful Center in the Square would be. Even after adding a \$3,075,000 addition in 1990, our facilities are much too small to accommodate additional exhibits, activities, and crowds (particularly school groups). In hindsight, I believe the developers (had they envisioned the phenomenal success) would have endeavored to raise even more funds so that a larger facility could have been built along with a much larger parking facility.

6. What can others learn from this project?

An important reason that Center in the Square was chosen as an award-winning "Best Practice" (showcased at the *Habitat II* conference in Istanbul in the summer of 1996) was the fact that the creation and success of this project encompasses the essential components of successful urban revitalization -- partnership, empowerment and sustainability. From the earliest brain-storming sessions to the final product, the broadest base of support existed. This same base continues and grows today. Without it, Center as we know it would not exist. The importance of this broad-based involvement is explained to those inquiring from all over the country (and indeed, the world) about how this tremendous success might be replicated. We have found that other similar projects are undertaken to address the same concerns faced Roanoke in the late 1970's -- a declining, crime-ridden, blighted downtown area, a downtown area producing less than desired tax revenue, and area school systems struggling to offer adequate science, arts and cultural programs. Center in the Square has certainly proven to be replicable, and the staff has enjoyed sharing the essential components of its success with those inquiring as to its working formula.

7. If, five years from now, you were to judge that this project was still successful, what characteristics would convince you of that fact?

Center in the Square has now been in existence for 13 years. I feel that its success has been proven. As discussed in #6, this project encompasses the three essential ingredients of the success of such an endeavor. It continues to hold its ever-growing base of support, continues to empower our citizens, schoolchildren, and neighboring merchants, and these attributes have greatly been responsible for the project's sustainability.

Center's innovative creation and unique operation creates an economic, social, and environmental impact that is unequaled in the region. It has literally recreated the heart of southwestern Virginia. It has been the catalyst not only for huge economic expansion, but also for Roanoke's being recognized nationally as a superior place in which to live and work. This project has helped sustain and expand an authentic central downtown area where many cultures, classes and races shop, meet, work and play. Historic preservation and downtown beautification were triggered after Center's opening and continues today, creating immeasurable improvement and balance of the economic, social and environmental life of the downtown area and indeed, the entire Roanoke Valley.

Other Perspective

Carole Evitts

Erie County (New York) Cultural Resources Advisory Board
ArtSpace Committee, Buffalo, New York

Former Executive Director, Roanoke Valley Arts Council
Former Executive Director of Festival in the Park, Roanoke, Virginia

OTHER PERSPECTIVE

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Signature Carole Evitts (signature by fax)

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1. What role did you play in the development of this project?

As Program Director and then as Executive Director of the Roanoke Valley Arts Council (now The Arts Council of the Blue Ridge, one of the five organizations in Center in the Square), I participated in the formation, planning and design of Center in the Square.

2. From your perspective, how was this project intended to benefit the urban environment?

Even before Center opened it was clear that we were creating something dynamic and important for the community. Its subsequent success is not in the least a surprise.

3. Describe the impact that this project has actually had on its surroundings and on the people in the project area. Include any data or supplementary materials that support your conclusions.

Beyond the physical space, Center in the Square made a significant contribution through its planning process and its organizational structure. We were able to identify and assess needs, and to bring individuals and organizations together. Center generated agreement and understanding not only within the arts culture but also within the community at large. Center became just that, a focal point for the Roanoke Valley and southwest Virginia.

4. What trade-offs and compromises were required during the development of the project? Did you participate in making them?

N/A

5. What was the least successful aspect of the project? With hindsight, what would you now do differently?

N/A

6. What can others learn from this project?

Now, in Buffalo, New York, similar circumstances have generated interest in a common shared space for the arts. I am deeply involved with these discussions, and I constantly refer to my Center in the Square experience. Center is becoming a model for what we are attempting here, a template we can follow with variations to suit our own circumstances. Center in the Square, it appears, is a seminal project that will spread its benefits far beyond the borders of Roanoke, Virginia.

7. If, five years from now, you were to judge that this project was still successful, what characteristics would convince you of that fact?

That it is still fiscally sound; that it is still serving the needs of the artists, organizations, and the public; and that it has inspired other communities to develop similar projects.

Other Perspective

Ezera Wertz

Farmer/merchant on the Roanoke City Market since 1951

Wertz's Country Store

OTHER PERSPECTIVE

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1. What role did you play in the development of this project?

I served on a planning committee with Bern Ewert, City Manager, to plan market area remodeling.

2. From your perspective, how was this project intended to benefit the urban environment?

Center in the Square was part of an overall concept which would benefit the downtown businesses as well as the customers. We sought to build the market up with more of a family atmosphere instead of the undesirables which had formerly prevailed. In the 50's, no families visited the market area, only older people. The first real market promotion took place in 1978. That started attracting families, and Center in the Square brought them in large numbers.

3. Describe the impact that this project has actually had on its surroundings and on the people in the project area. Include any data or supplementary materials that support your conclusions.

Center in the Square was the biggest shot in the arm; it was what made the market area. Impact on real estate values was tremendous; boarded up buildings were replaced with thriving businesses. Center in the Square brought life back into the market area.

4. What trade-offs and compromises were required during the development of the project? Did you participate in making them?

There were of course headaches with all of the construction, but we knew the end result would be beneficial. We never had any idea that Center would draw that many people. Tourists came from all directions. Families shopping on the market will frequently say, "Oh, I'm from (an out-of-town city). I brought my children to the Science Museum (or Art Museum, or History Museum, or Theatre.)" We found that as our audience changes, our business may have to change also. Center in the Square brought a different clientele to our shops - we found we had to stock different types of merchandise. We learned we had to change with the times. The owner of the Art Gallery next to me drew people interested in art, then Center in the Square multiplied the numbers of people interested in art. Those visitors in turn visited me. All merchants help each other.

5. What was the least successful aspect of the project? With hindsight, what would you now do differently?

We didn't provide enough parking. We had never had parking problems before, and did not take into consideration the need for another parking garage.

6. What can others learn from this project?

Everyone wanted something positive to happen in downtown Roanoke. We learned that if you can get everybody together, going in the same direction, you can accomplish most anything you want to do.

7. If, five years from now, you were to judge that this project was still successful, what characteristics would convince you of that fact?

I think it will get even better, more people, more business.

Other Perspective

Anne B. Hammersley

Former Vice Chairman, Executive Committee, Center in the Square

Director Emeritus, Western Virginia Foundation for the Arts and Sciences

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Signature Anne B. Hammersley

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1. What role did you play in the development of this project?

The Downtown Business League was funded in 1976 by a group of dedicated citizens to revitalize a crumbling downtown. This private group joined the city to form the Central Roanoke Development Foundation for a greatly expanded effort. The result was *Design '79*, a unique plan developed with assistance of hundreds of citizens to create a new business and cultural climate in the heart of the city. Center in the Square was its centerpiece. I played a minor role in the Downtown Business League, was one of nine members of the Central Roanoke Development Foundation, worked on its implementation committee, and was a founding member of the Center in the Square Board, serving from October 1979 until 1994. I was part of the planning, development, implementation and operational process of all.

2. From your perspective, how was this project intended to benefit the urban environment?

The benefits were to be three-pronged:

- first and foremost, to provide all citizens, young and old, from every walk of life an enlightening, educational and entertaining experience by bringing together in one accessible location in the central city five far-flung arts, science, history and theatre groups;
- second, to be an inspiration for growth and improvements downtown;
- third, to create a magnet for tourists and new industry thereby resulting in an improved economic climate for the area.

3. Describe the impact that this project has actually had on its surroundings and on the people in the project area. Include any data or supplementary materials that support your conclusions.

In its first year, Center in the Square pumped into the economy over \$1.5 million in tourist dollars, almost \$1 million in payroll for 113 new jobs and support jobs, and \$780,000 in supplies and equipment. \$7.5 million was spent in the original phase of construction and \$2.5 million for the 1990 expansion. 45,000 people visited in the first 52 hours and several hundred thousand including 100,000 schoolchildren tour it each year. The resident museums' attendance increased phenomenally. The once moldering Market area is a beehive of activity with many new businesses, and restoration of historic buildings. Merchants report as much as a 50% increase in sales. Several industries have cited Center in the Square and the quality of life it provides as a major reason for locating here. For the thousands who visit, lives have been enhanced and horizons broadened.

4. What trade-offs and compromises were required during the development of the project? Did you participate in making them?

The major trade-off involved the resident organizations. Two of the five had to be convinced that the advantages of new custom-designed space free of rent, utilities, security and maintenance outweighed the loss of some degree of individuality and the move to an area some regarded as unsavory. Those two, while isolated and with minimal attendance, were not unhappy where they were. One had a rather elitist membership, many of whom preferred to remain in their mansion Museum. Hundreds of hours were spent in allocating space and solving design problems. Boards had to be reassured that the location would prove to be a great advantage, not a hindrance, that indeed members would be safe there at night.

5. What was the least successful aspect of the project? With hindsight, what would you now do differently?

The least successful aspect was organizational. The resident organizations, integrally involved in the planning and developmental stages, were not as involved in the operational phase. A constant undercurrent of turf problems, while not major, was evident. The five presidents should have been working more actively on committees such as finance, fund-raising, marketing and house management. This situation is presently being remedied. Funding always is a critical element with cultural endeavors such as this but Center in the Square is dealing with this just as many are having to do. I would have a far healthier endowment from the very beginning.

6. What can others learn from this project?

In all the United States, only Roanoke, Virginia, has Center in the Square, a revolutionary concept in museum housing and in supporting the cultural life of a growing, vibrant city. It has been the trailblazer and others can learn everything from Center in the Square, from the dream stage to the day-to-day operations. They can see the need for an abundant endowment, the need to involve citizens from a wide area in the operation, the unexpected expenses involved in maintaining such a facility, staffing it and making it secure. They also can see what a success it is. The effect on people of every age, sophisticated or naive, wealthy or less fortunate, is a joy to behold. This project is a point of pride for the Roanoke Valley and all its residents. It has been the cornerstone for growth and prosperity in the downtown area.

7. If, five years from now, you were to judge that this project was still successful, what characteristics would convince you of that fact?

Three goals were established in the beginning, were achieved with great success and remain the guiding factors in Center in the Square. These, coupled with fine housing and outstanding programs along with a superb location convenient to all have elevated Center in the Square to star status.

Other Perspective

Sigmund E. Davidson

Retired President, Davidsons, Men's Clothier in Downtown Roanoke

Director Emeritus, Western Virginia Foundation for the Arts and Sciences

OTHER PERSPECTIVE

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Signature

Sigmund E. Davidson

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1. What role did you play in the development of this project?

I was serving as President of the "Downtown Roanoke" organization at the time in 1979 when the concept of Center in the Square was first conceived. In that capacity I was first involved in the project and I have served on the Board of the Western Virginia Foundation for the Arts and Sciences (Center in the Square) since then. In 1988 I served as the General Chairman of a successful \$3,200,000 fund campaign to add another building (30,000 additional sq. ft. of space) to the Center in the Square. I have also served as General Chairman of the Annual Fund-raising Campaign for several years.

2. From your perspective, how was this project intended to benefit the urban environment?

From my perspective, Center was intended to accomplish the following objectives:

- to revitalize the "Downtown" retail and financial center of the community.
- to enhance the quality of life of the citizens of our city by improving and centralizing cultural and educational activities.

3. Describe the impact that this project has actually had on its surroundings and on the people in the project area. Include any data or supplementary materials that support your conclusions.

The impact this project has had on its surroundings and on the people in the community has far exceeded my expectation. From the economic point of view not only has it brought vitality and traffic to the retail constituents of the downtown area, but it has also served as a strong catalyst and major influence on industries and commercial enterprise in deciding to locate in the valley. More importantly, it has upgraded the cultural and educational quality of life for all of the citizens of our valley.

4. What trade-offs and compromises were required during the development of the project? Did you participate in making them?

I was not involved in this stage.

5. What was the least successful aspect of the project? With hindsight, what would you now do differently?

It is my personal opinion that each of the five resident organizations that compose Center in the Square should have been brought under one administration that would conduct all functions of marketing, public relations, programming and fund development for the entire body.

6. What can others learn from this project?

The general concept of offering cultural, scientific and educational activities in one central and easily accessible location is one that other communities would find to their advantage.

7. If, five years from now, you were to judge that this project was still successful, what characteristics would convince you of that fact?

If I were to feel the project was still successful five years from now I would expect the attendance statistics to grow at the excellent rates they have shown in previous years. I would expect the programs offered by the resident organizations to have improved in quality and performance again to the same rate of improvement as demonstrated previously, and I would look for the continued growth of traffic and activity in the immediate surrounding urban area.