

***Urban Design Analysis***

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***Vermont/Santa Monica Metro Red Line Rail Station***

*Prepared for*  
The Los Angeles County Transportation Commission

*by*

**A R C H I P L A N**

**Urban Design Collaborative**

**Summary of Findings**

*December 4, 1992*

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## **SUMMARY OF FINDINGS**

### **Urban Design Analysis Vermont/Santa Monica Metro Red Line Station**

#### **1. Purpose of the Study.**

This analysis focused on the potentials for joint development at the site of the Vermont/Santa Monica Metro Station, with the intention of identifying the extent of possible development envelopes and evaluating the compatibility of that development with the fixed transit-related facilities as proposed.

Development considerations at the Vermont/Santa Monica site have concentrated on two potential site configurations. The first site configuration is based on those properties currently owned by LACTC, incorporating approximately 1.03 acres of land. This is referred to as the "current" site in this analysis. The second site configuration adds the properties located at the southeast corner of Santa Monica Boulevard and New Hampshire Avenue, for a total site area of approximately 1.37 acres of land. This is referred to as the "extended" site in this analysis.

#### **2. Summary of Development Potentials.**

There are opportunities at the Santa Monica station location for joint development to support the transit use and at the same time contribute to and be compatible with the development of the surrounding neighborhood. The site is suitable for a mixed use development, locating retail commercial uses around the portal plaza and residential units above. With the co-location of residential and commercial space, there is also the potential that the commercial space might accommodate services in support of the residential, particularly if that residential is in the affordable housing category or if the resident population represents a special need group.

In any development scenario for the site(s), commercial development should surround the transit portal and allow adequate pedestrian circulation space around the portal entry for commercial access as well as for transit queuing and surge space. In terms of residential above, there are opportunities within either site configuration for terraced housing in order to maintain physical compatibility with existing housing on New Hampshire, as well as to make a positive contribution to the Vermont and Santa Monica streetscapes. In both site configuration assumptions, three stories of housing organized around upper-level courtyards is recommended.

Parking for the mixed use development described above is a critical factor in determining the sites' capacity, although the proximity of the new development to the transit facility presents opportunities for some reductions from current code requirements for parking. Such reductions from statutory parking ratio requirements can be justified in part by the relatively low rate of automobile ownership in the area's demographics and in part by the reduced need for automobile dependency implied in the context of transit-oriented development.

### *Development Potentials on the "Current" Site.*

Retail commercial uses on the "current" site may be oriented around the portal plaza, with entries on the plaza, on Vermont Avenue, and on Santa Monica Boulevard. Within the constraints of the transit station structure below grade, the provision of parking space toward the interior of the site, and appropriate retail space configurations, the "current" site is capable of holding approximately 10,250 sq. ft. of commercial space.

Residential development above the commercial uses can be terraced and organized around upper-level open courtyards, scaled to be compatible with existing and projected neighboring uses. Assuming a unit size of approximately 900 sq. ft., the "current" site is capable of holding approximately 65 units of housing. Access to the residential project may be from the lower level parking areas, as well as via a residential lobby with some visual presence on the portal plaza.

Parking requirements for the commercial and residential development on this site exceed the site's capacity to meet the requirements according to current code. For the commercial uses, approximately 30 parking spaces are required, and for the residential uses (assuming that 1.5 spaces per dwelling unit is required for the size and type of unit considered), approximately 98 parking spaces are required. In the development concept illustrated in the drawings, approximately 95 parking spaces are provided on the "current" site, representing an overall shortfall of 33 spaces from code. Thus, in the illustrated concept, parking may be provided at a ratio of 3 spaces per 1,000 sq. ft. for the commercial (or 100 percent of code requirement), and one space per dwelling unit for the residential (or 75 percent of code requirement).

### *Development Potentials on the "Extended" Site.*

Retail commercial uses on the "extended" site may be oriented around the portal plaza, as with the "current" site configuration described above. There was some consideration given to the phasing of development (see the discussion below), and in that context additional commercial development on the "extended" site was shown to be additive to that shown for the "current" site. The total amount of retail space that can be comfortably accommodated on the "extended" site is approximately 14,750 sq. ft.

Residential development above the commercial uses can be terraced and organized similar to the concept on the "current" site. Again, as with the commercial uses, the concept is shown to illustrate opportunities for phased development or property acquisition, so that the development on the "extended" site is additive to that shown for the "current" site. With the same unit size assumptions as noted above, the "extended" site is capable of holding approximately 90 units of housing.

Parking requirements for the commercial and residential development on this site also exceed the site's capacity to meet the requirements according to current code. For the commercial uses, approximately 45 parking spaces are required, and for the residential uses (assuming that 1.5 spaces per dwelling unit is required for the size and type of unit considered), approximately 135 parking spaces are required. In the development concept illustrated in the drawings, approximately 140 parking spaces are provided on the "current" site, representing an overall shortfall of 40 spaces from code. Thus, in the illustrated concept, parking may be provided at a ratio of 3 spaces per 1,000 sq. ft. for the commercial (or 100 percent of code requirement), and

just over one space per dwelling unit for the residential (or 75 percent of code requirement). However, if approximately ten parking spaces are used for kiss-and-ride parking and that number is deducted from the available commercial parking, then the commercial ratio is less than the code requirement at approximately 2.4 parking spaces per 1,000 sq. ft. (or approximately 80 percent of the requirement).

### 3. Site Development Recommendations.

*Site Size.* On the basis of the concepts described above, it is recommended that the "extended" site be considered for development. While the smaller "current" site is capable of supporting a project, its irregular configuration coupled with site access issues makes development more difficult than for the larger "extended" site, on which a more efficient (and cost-effective) project may be developed.

*Development Phasing.* While phasing of the site development has been considered, and some phased development and construction is possible, it is also the case that phasing implies a less efficient approach to development than concurrent construction on the entire site. Problems of subterranean shoring, temporary site access situations, and some complexities of joining the upper levels in a continuous and visually compatible manner contribute to this inefficiency.

*Specific Site Modifications.* In order for a mixed-use development to be accommodated on the Vermont/Santa Monica station site, it is desirable that several modifications be made to the station design as currently proposed. These are as follows:

- The size of the portal plaza should be reduced by 12 feet along its westerly side and by 90 feet on its southerly end in order to maintain a scale that is more conducive to pedestrian activity, to be compatible with the surrounding area development (including the historic Priester building across Santa Monica Boulevard to the north), and to be supportive of the potential commercial development fronting on it. To achieve this reduction, the dimensions of the proposed skylight should be reduced accordingly as well.
- The location of the station elevator might be changed to a position on the southerly side of the mezzanine connection to the station, immediately opposite its present location on the north side of the mezzanine passageway. This will allow for a more unobstructed arcade around the plaza/commercial space, and would also orient the elevator door toward the plaza.
- Coordination of the station structural system is recommended, with additional bearing capacity recommended in several key locations in order to allow for the integration of joint development in the future.
- Some of the residential units may be impacted by the 30 foot height of the proposed station art installation. The relationship of the art to potential development should be further studied to ensure compatibility.

#### **4. Overall Development Potentials.**

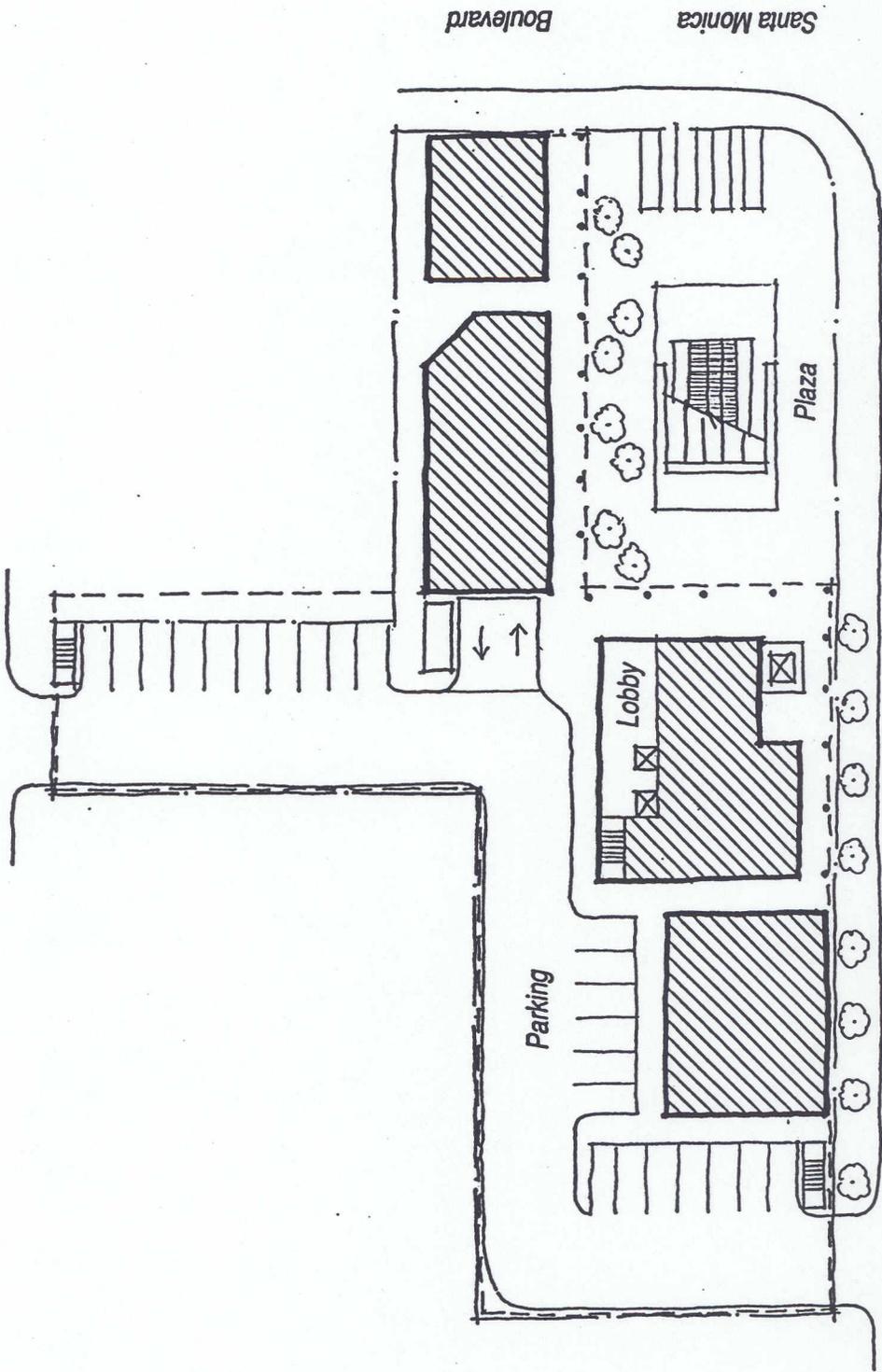
Future development trends in the vicinity of the Vermont/Santa Monica station would suggest a continuation and intensification of the current mix of retail and residential, with low probability of commercial office development. Thus, development of the station site in mixed uses might serve as a catalyst to other similar types and scales of development on the surrounding blockfronts. In this light, there may be future connections desired to the station box through the introduction of new or additional portals. As currently proposed, there are four knock-out panels proposed for possible future portal connections. While it is unlikely that any of the foreseeable future development could readily absorb the usually high costs of effecting such a connection, it is at least conceivable that this might occur, and in that case it has been determined that the knock-out panels as proposed are both adequate in number and in appropriate locations to allow this to occur.

***URBAN DESIGN ANALYSIS***

***Vermont/Santa Monica Metro Red Line Station***

***ARCHIPLAN Urban Design Collaborative***

New Hampshire Avenue



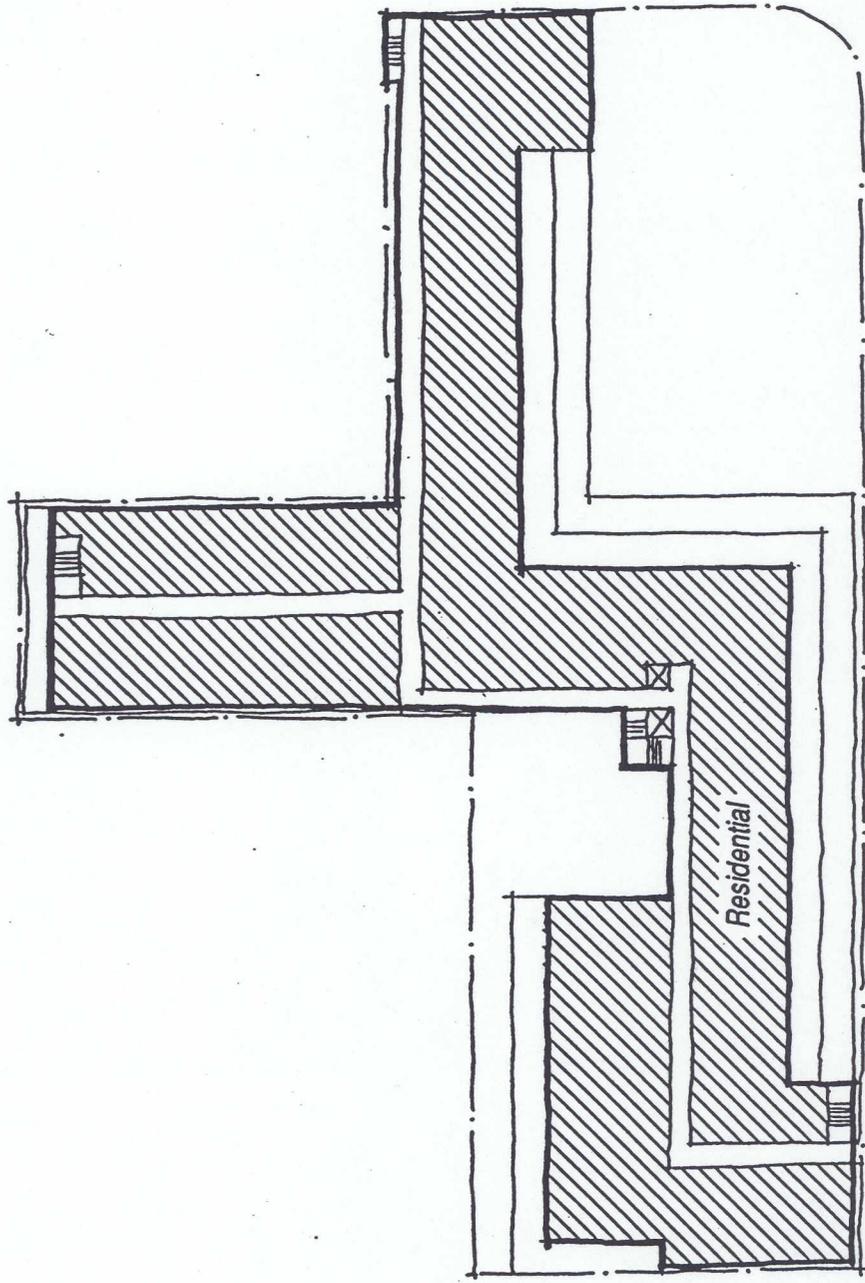
Santa Monica Boulevard

Vermont Avenue

# GROUND FLOOR CONCEPT PLAN: CURRENT SITE

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**Urban Design Analysis**

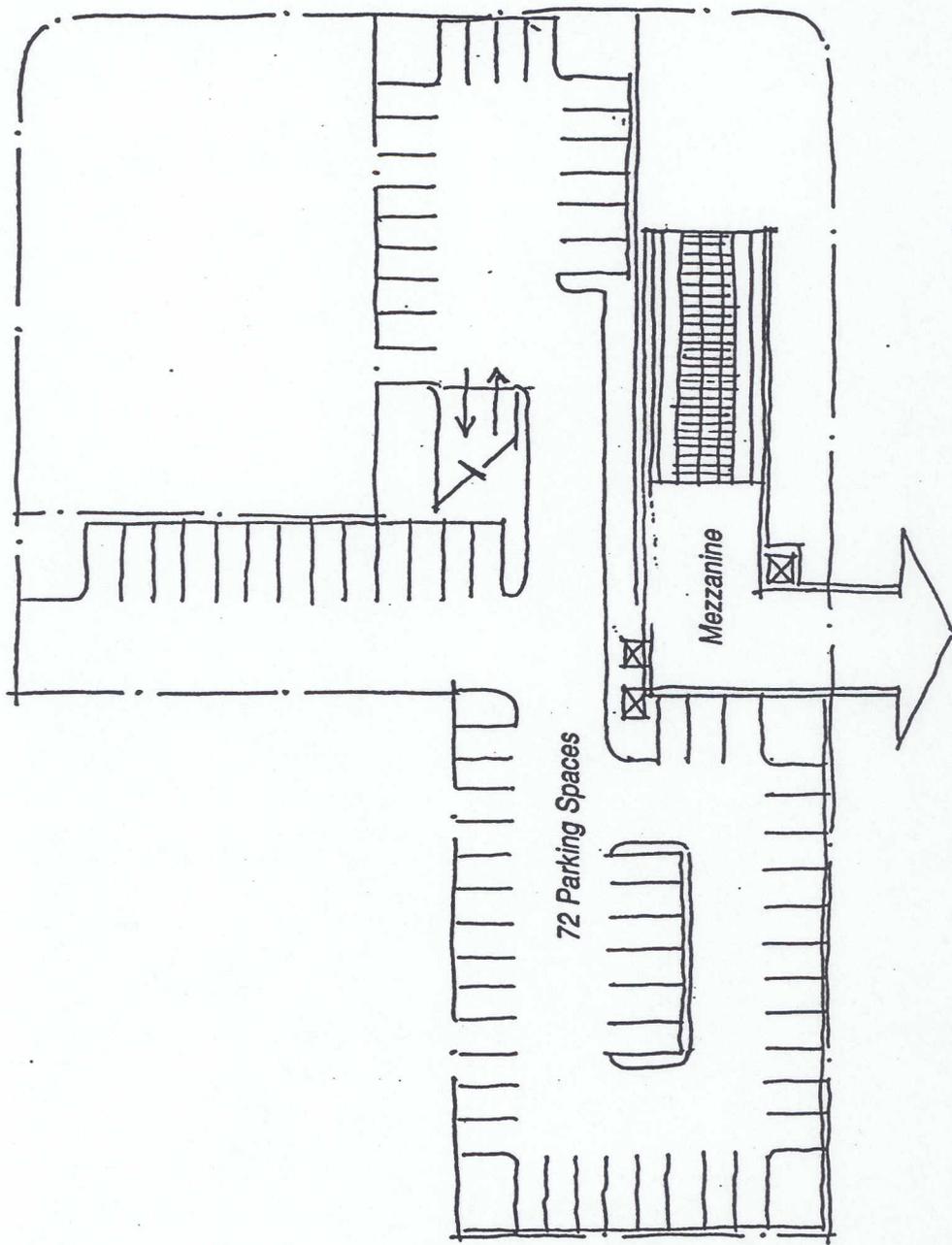
Vermont/Santa Monica Metro Station



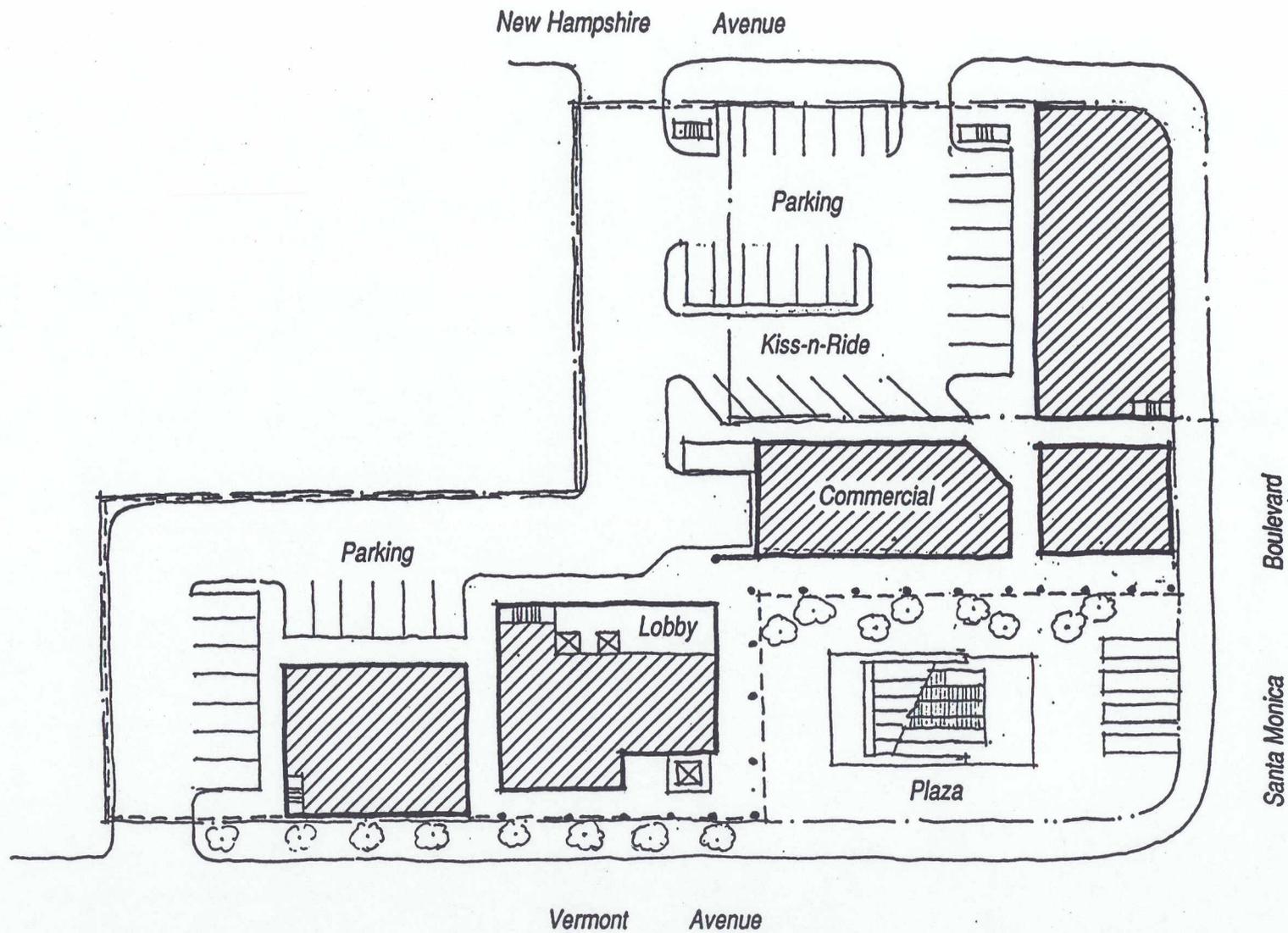
**UPPER FLOORS CONCEPT PLAN:  
CURRENT SITE**

ARCHIPLAN Urban Design Collaborative  
**Urban Design Analysis**

Vermont/Santa Monica Metro Station



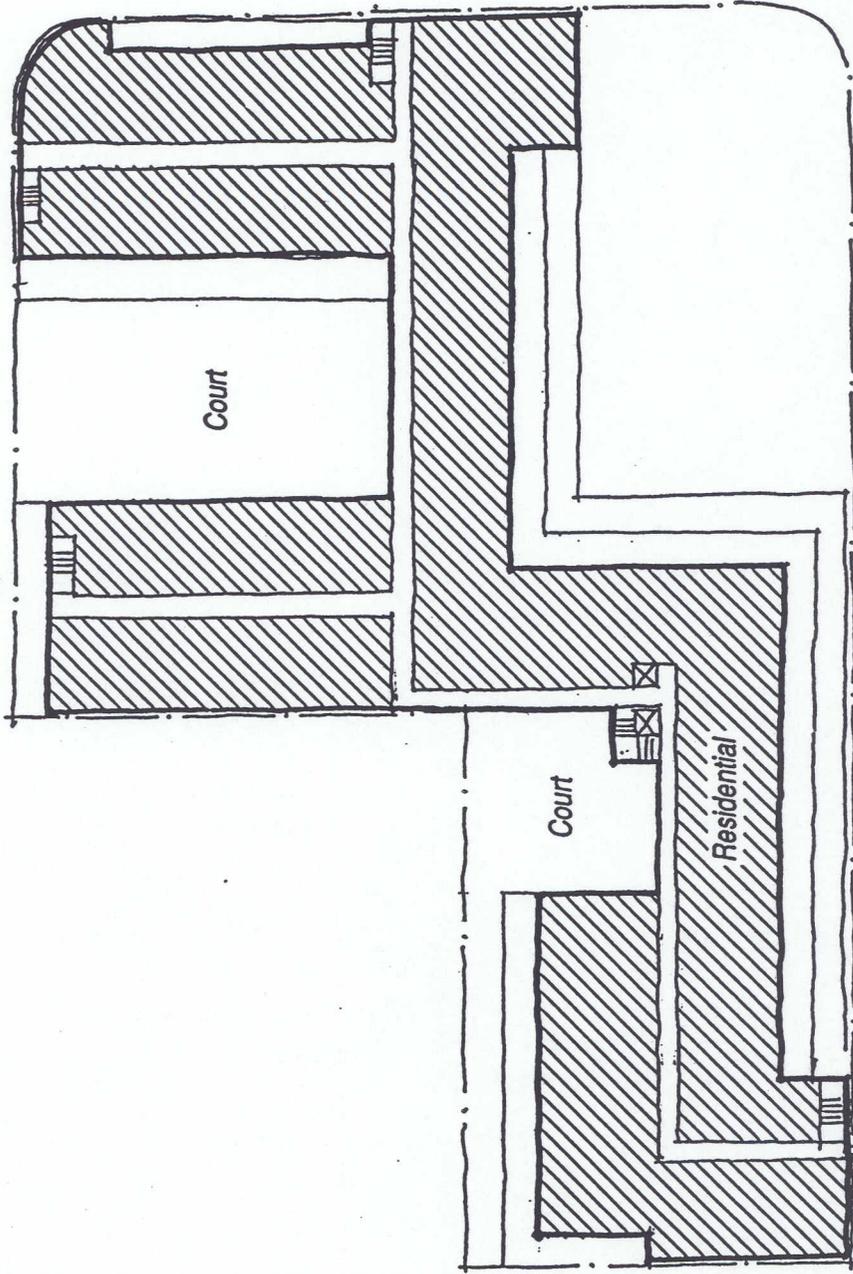
**LOWER LEVEL CONCEPT PLAN:  
CURRENT SITE**



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 Urban Design Analysis

Vermont/Santa Monica Metro Station

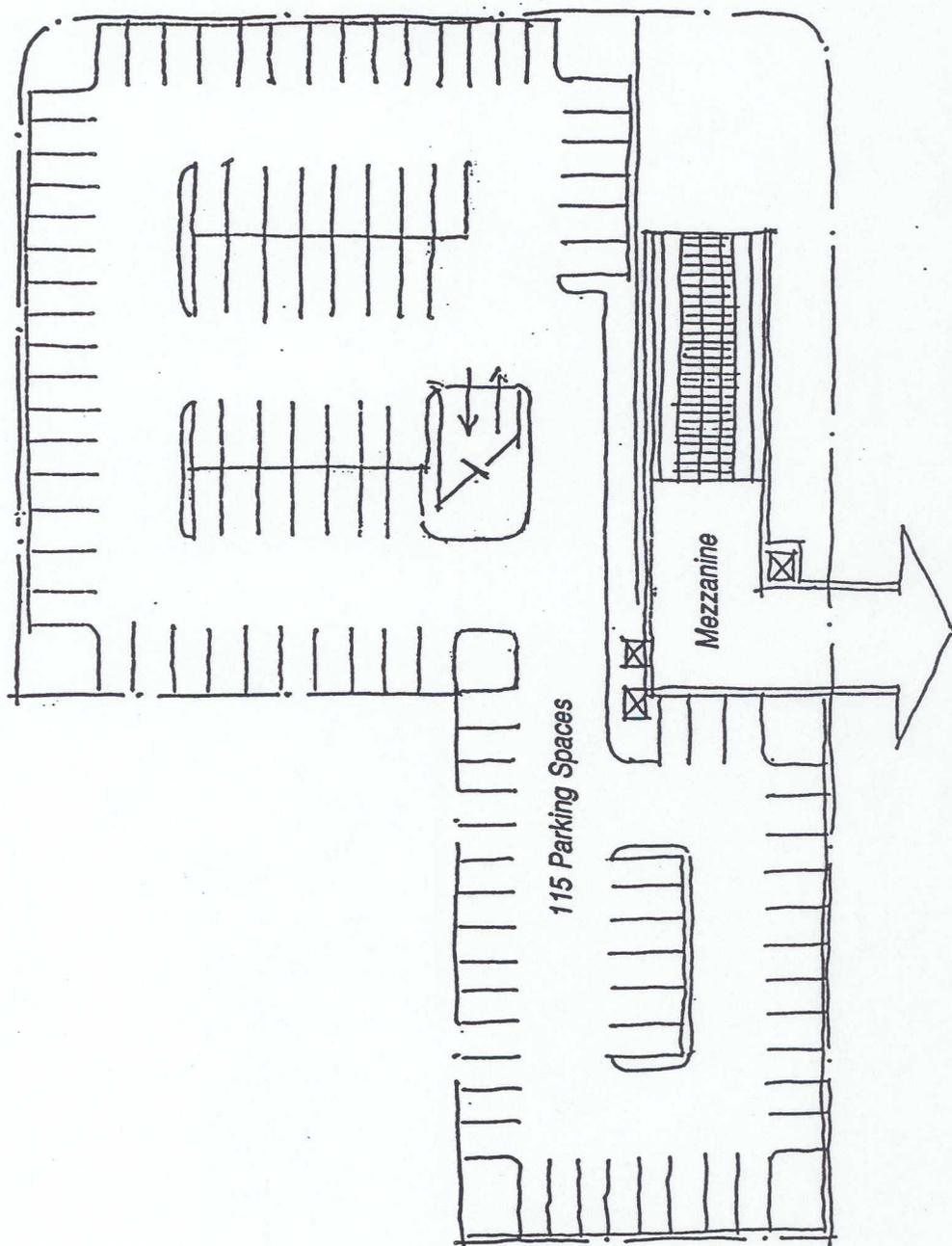
**GROUND FLOOR CONCEPT PLAN:  
 EXTENDED SITE**



**UPPER FLOORS CONCEPT PLAN:  
EXTENDED SITE**

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**Urban Design Analysis**

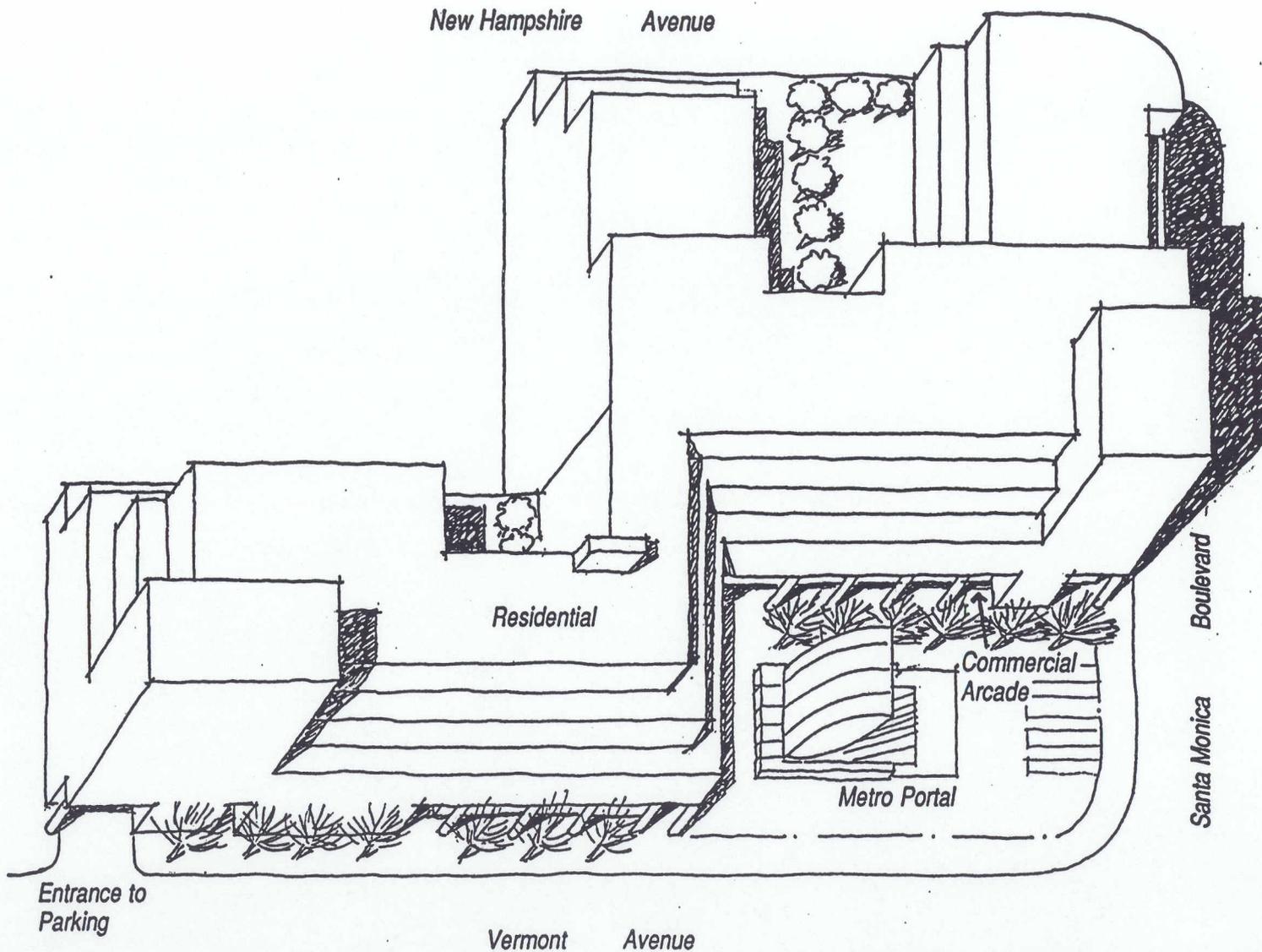
Vermont/Santa Monica Metro Station



**LOWER LEVEL CONCEPT PLAN:  
EXTENDED SITE**

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**Urban Design Analysis**

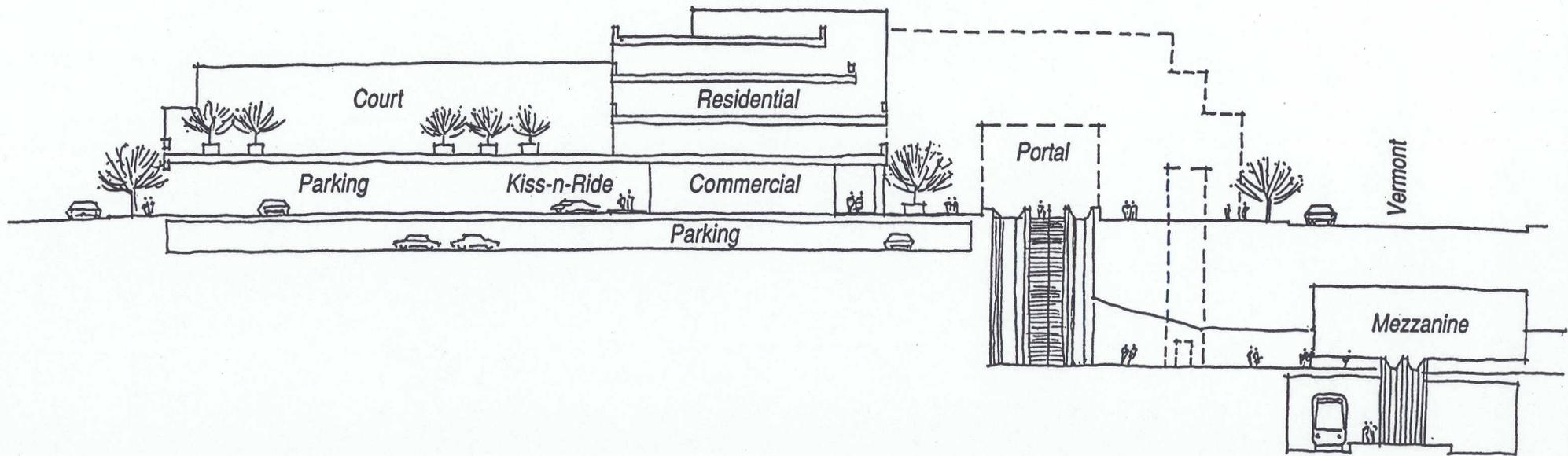
Vermont/Santa Monica Metro Station



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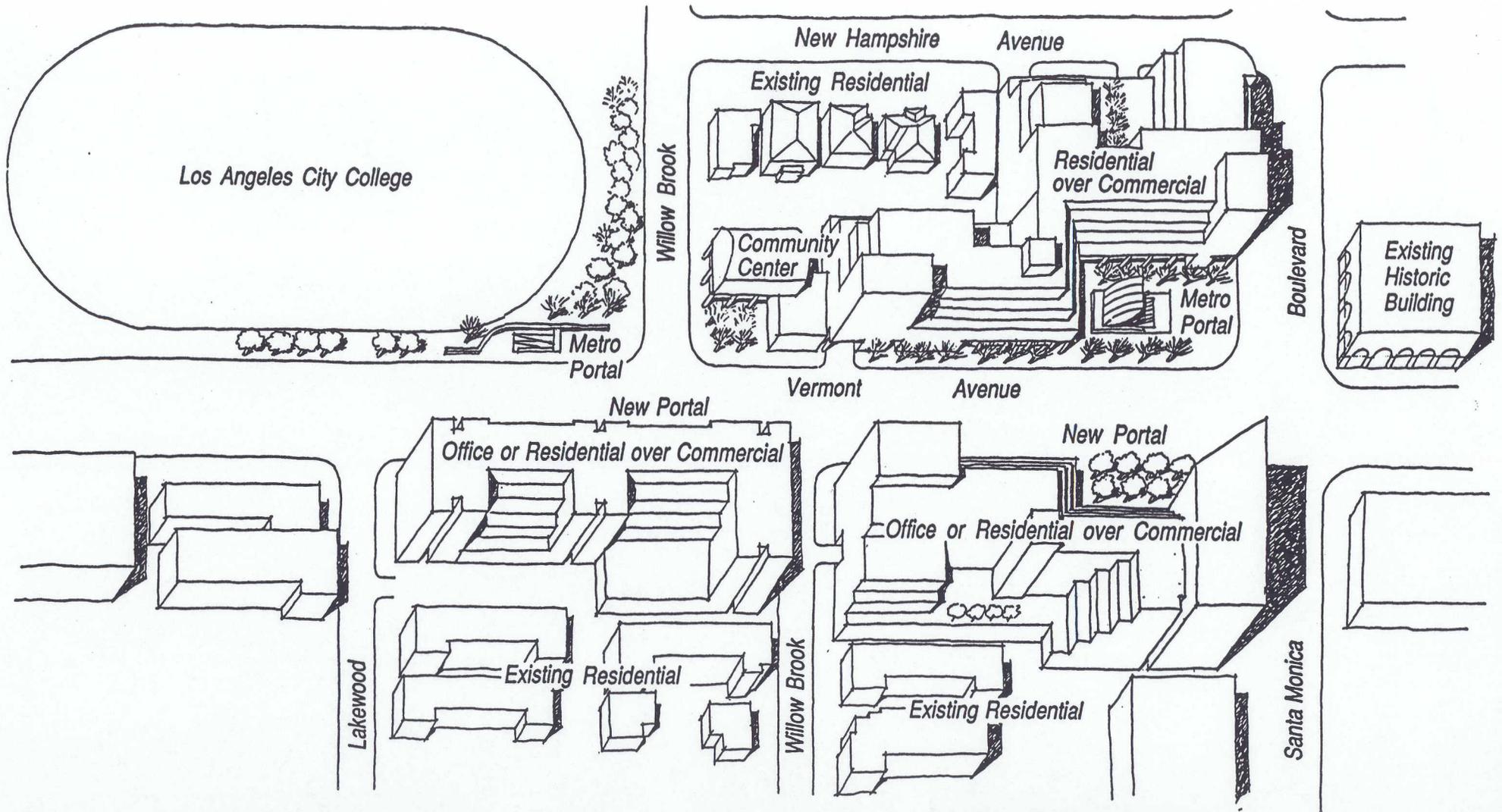
## **AXONOMETRIC EXPANDED SITE SCHEME**



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**Urban Design Analysis**

Vermont/Santa Monica Metro Station

**SECTION THROUGH  
PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT**  
(looking north)



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 Urban Design Analysis  
 Vermont/Santa Monica Metro Station

**LONG TERM AREA  
 DEVELOPMENT POTENTIALS**

# ARCHIPLAN

Urban Design Collaborative

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**To:** Carol Fredholm  
Los Angeles County Transportation Commission

**From:** David Alpaugh  
Project Manager

**Date:** December 10, 1992

**Subject:** Revised Development Analysis  
Urban Design Analysis, Vermont/Santa Monica Metro Red Line Station

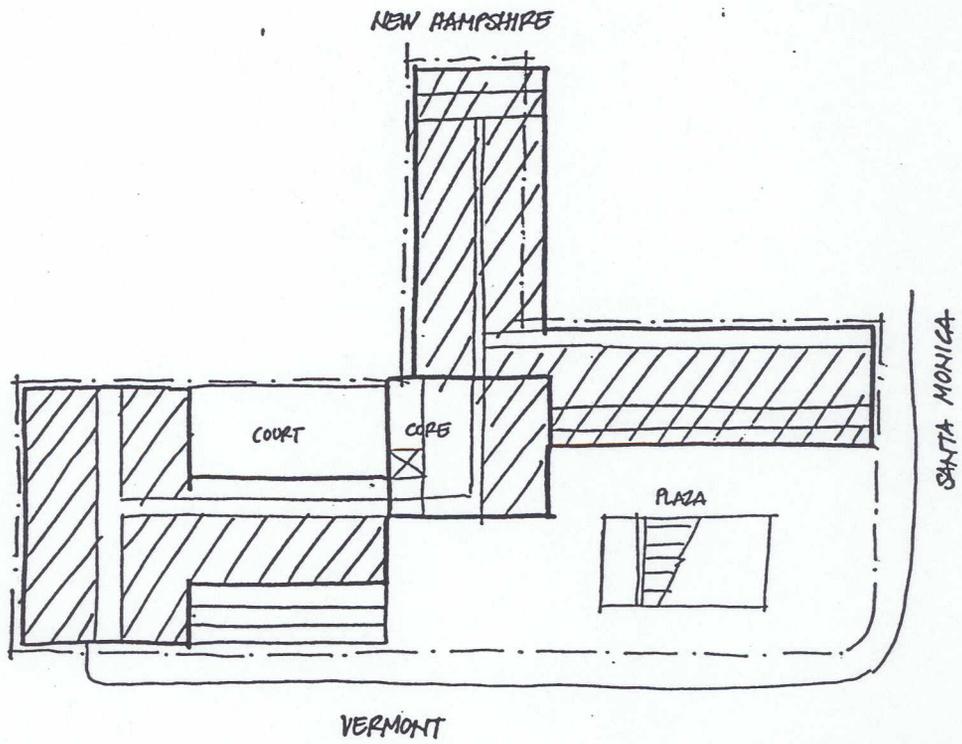
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Attached per your request are some sketch plans of the Vermont/Santa Monica Metro Station site. Our original analysis of the Vermont/Santa Monica site(s) examined development potentials with modifications to the plaza design as currently proposed. The sketches illustrate the implications on development of maintaining the size of the skylight, which is a part of the station art installation concept, as originally proposed by the artist. The sketches are rough, but they illustrate that development is still viable at the site with the full skylight. These concepts will have to be refined and the kinks worked out when you pursue a full Development Plan for this site.

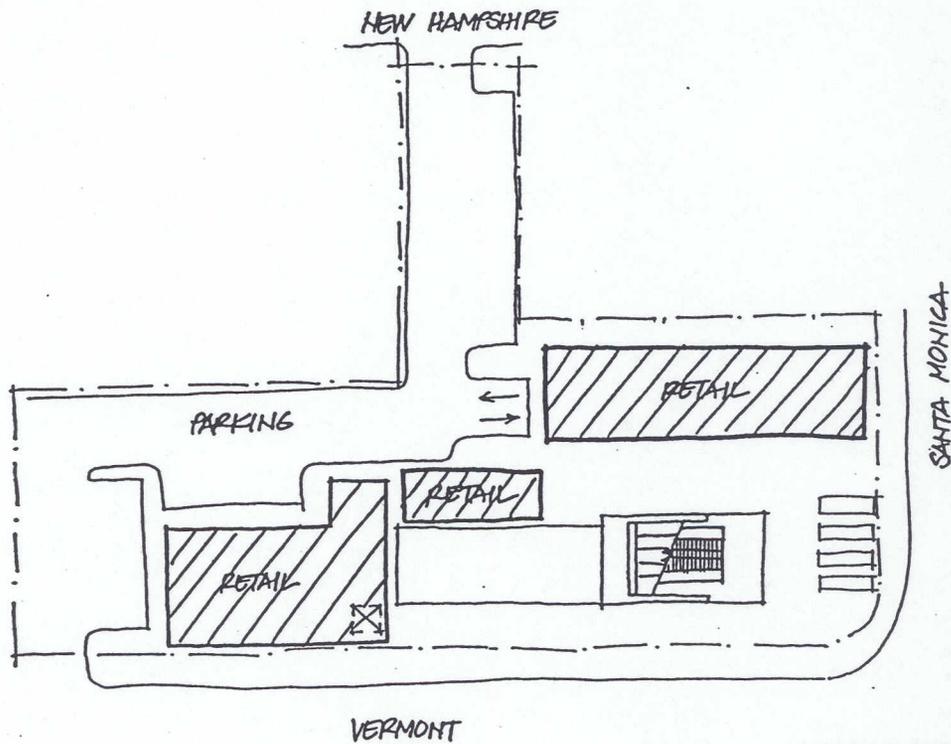
In maintaining the skylight at its full length of approximately 90 feet, the area available for retail development is reduced by approximately 30 percent to a total at the plaza level of 7,200 sq. ft. This brings the retail development to the southerly edge of the skylight surface (which is flush with the plaza and designed for pedestrian traffic). It also requires that a very narrow area of retail (approximately 20 feet deep) be placed along the westerly edge of the plaza, providing a physical and visual barrier between the open space of the plaza and the covered parking and service areas beyond. This narrow retail "pavilion" would probably best be suited to small boutique-type uses.

On the upper levels, the building plan is more bifurcated than the concepts shown earlier, but with the core located roughly in the center, the concept can still work with residential. It appears that there would be a loss of approximately 9 units overall (approximately a 14 percent reduction), for a total of about 56 units possible on the "current" site.

If you have any further questions about this, or if you would like the drawings worked out in any more detail or at a larger scale, please do not hesitate to call me.



UPPER LEVEL(S)  
"CURRENT" SITE



LOWER LEVEL  
"CURRENT" SITE

**TF 300 U78**

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**Urban design analysis**

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