



Figure 10.5 Children on the Front Porch. Local residents described their neighborhood as a ‘front porch’ community. Here, local children collaborated on their homework until disturbed by the design team.



Figure 10.7 Traditional Bungalow. This common American house type is a staple of single-family housing in towns across the nation. Several good examples remained in the study area.



Figure 10.6 Traditional Southern ‘Shotgun’ Houses. Although some of these houses were too decayed to be rehabilitated, others could be saved. This modest housing type can usefully serve as a model for new affordable housing in the community.

disrepair and dereliction required that most of these homes in the neighborhood be replaced. However, we noted in our recommendations that future designers could usefully incorporate the advantages of this vernacular type into new affordable housing designs.

The ‘bungalow cottage’ is another housing type well represented in the study area. Although these

homes are wider and more substantially built than the shotguns, many fit into the affordable range. Most are one-storey frame homes with low-slung rooflines, front-facing gables and wide front porches. Again, the relatively narrow width allows a higher density appropriate for an urban village (see Figure 10.7).

The third type of housing in the neighborhood is much less promising. A series of single-storey brick duplexes were constructed in the 1970s along the streets in the eastern part of the area, and this housing type is markedly out of character with the rest of the neighborhood. Its building footprint is wide; setbacks from the street are deep; it is built flat on the ground rather than with a raised ground floor, and the crude, uncovered patios contrast sharply with the protected, cozy feeling offered by the covered porches of the other homes in the area. Gables face the side of the house instead of the front, and the suburban-looking brick ranch style does not blend well with the adjacent traditional housing types (see Figure 10.17).

There are two small, white frame churches in the community, indicated in purple on the master plan shown in Plate 40. These buildings are tiny in scale, traditional in shape with wood frame steeples, and they nestle neatly into the urban fabric to provide a community focus, add character, and help the neighborhood feel like a small village.

One other building stands out in the neighborhood – the football stadium for the nearby Greenville High School. Despite its large scale, this structure

blends reasonably well into its context, and plans were underway to renovate the facility at the time of the charrette. Parking and crowds can create problems for local residents during game nights, and we wanted to find solutions to these challenges so the neighbors will welcome more community events at this site.

KEY ISSUES AND GOALS

As a result of pre-charrette discussions and a series of site analyses carried out during the early stages of the charrette, we formulated five key objectives:

1. Capitalize on the market value of available property located near University Ridge for major new development. (This would provide property owners with a high return on their investments to offset the lower profitability of affordable housing developments elsewhere on the project site.)
2. Upgrade and increase the stock of affordable housing for existing residents.
3. Enhance neighborhood identity and character.
4. Facilitate the expansion of the Sarrine football stadium without disrupting the neighborhood scale.
5. Recognize and protect historic landmarks in the neighborhood.

THE CHARRETTE

We developed the master plan during a six-day charrette in August 2001. We had helped orchestrate a lot of local publicity prior to the event, and over 350 people participated (see Figure 10.8). The team set up its temporary design studio at the Ramada Inn in the heart of the neighborhood, a location that

enabled a large number of residents and other interested people to contribute throughout the week. The charrette began with a walking tour of the neighborhood: over 25 design team members, advisory committee members, interested developers, city staff, residents and community police officers walked every street in the study area, photographing key elements, measuring spaces, and talking to people on the streets and porches. That evening, our opening presentation was heard by a standing room-only crowd.

Throughout the week, we held numerous interviews with interest groups including transportation planners and engineers, developers, public safety officials, stormwater engineers, housing groups, and residents. Meetings continued throughout the day as well as in the evening to give everyone an opportunity to join in the public discussion. Each evening before dinner, we pinned up the day's drawings on the wall and invited all participants to join the designers in a discussion of the day's developments. The schedule was an extended version of the one illustrated in Figure 8.2, and as always, we followed our key charrette principles as noted in Chapter 6:

- Involve everyone from the start;
- Work concurrently and cross-functionally;
- Work in short feedback loops;
- Work in detail.

Because of the publicity campaign, most residents were aware of the charrette and frequently spoke with designers both at the hotel and around the neighborhood. On Sunday morning, a local church member even took the time to show the team the parking problems of her church, a pattern repeated time and again as interested residents articulated their needs



Figure 10.8 Local newspaper front page. Active engagement with the local media is essential in any charrette process. We spoke extensively with newspapers and television reporters, and were rewarded with good and sympathetic coverage (see also Figure 10.10).