

A Case Study Speculating
on the Possibilities

Okolona Technical College



The Small Town Center 1997

Acknowledgements

This document is the result of many hands working together.

We would first like to thank Dr. Jessie Mosley and her son Gene Mosley for bringing the project to our attention and providing information about the Okolona site and connections to others in the community. A special thanks to Dr. Mosley for sharing her insight to the Mississippi cultural past and revealing her wisdom and strength that demonstrated her amazing character to our college students. We would like to thank the Mississippi State University Office of Research for providing funding.

We would like to thank all that we worked with including members of the NCNW Site Committee, those from the local churches who participated in the barbeque and performance play on the site, members of the local community and especially Russell Brooks who continues to reveal his support and enthusiasm for a promising future of the community.

Thanks to School of Architecture Dean John McRae for his strong support. Thanks to David Perkes for his careful attention to the details of the project and his inspiring instruction to all involved. Thanks to the students for their important research, hard work and in imagining the possibilities for this place and its people. Finally, we would like to thank Brian Wiginton and Brian Bassett for their work in assembling this document.

The Small Town Center

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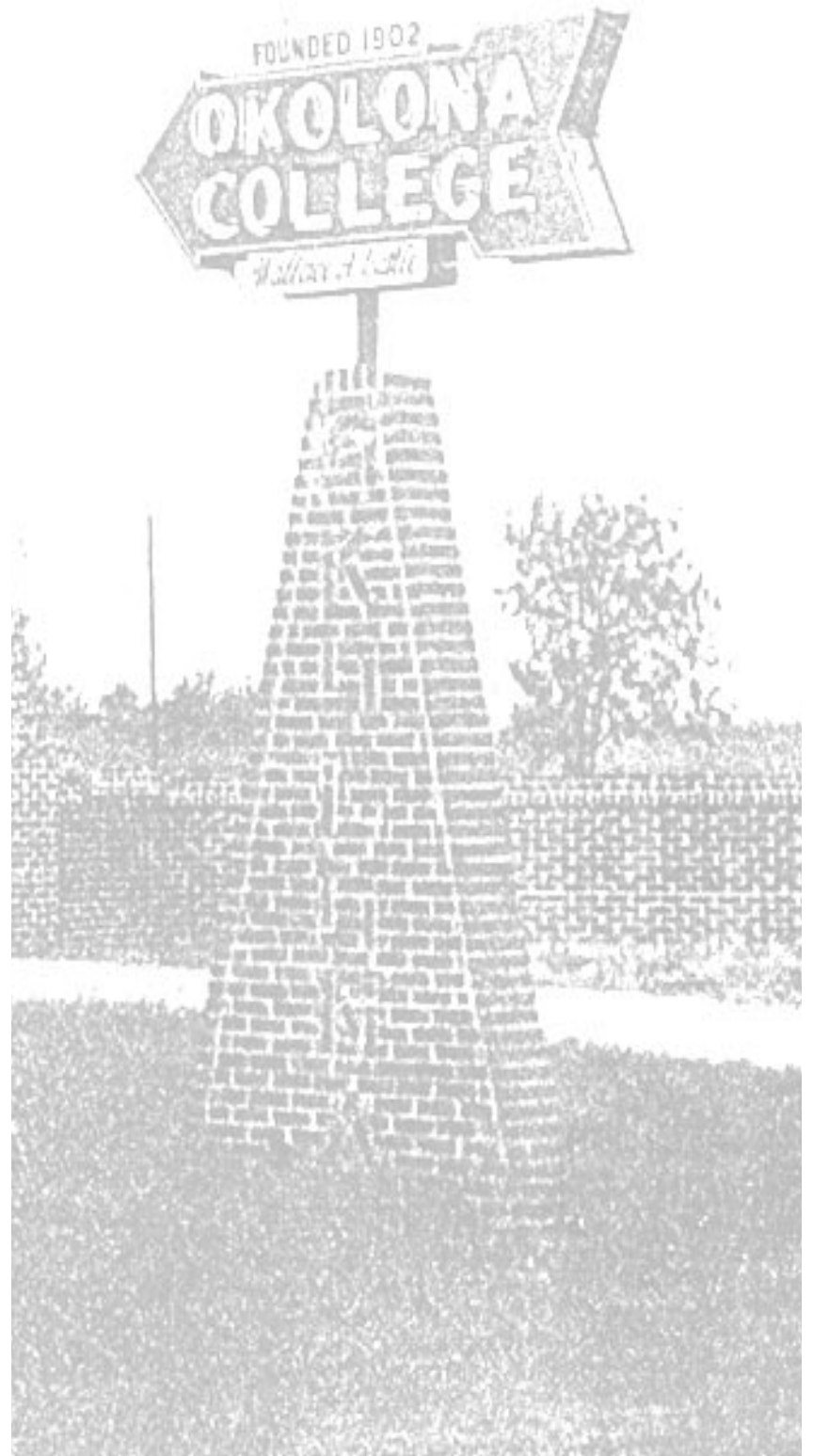
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Uncovering a Legacy

Section 1

During the fall semester of 1996, a third-year design studio taught by Professor David Perkes performed a detailed analysis of the former site of Okolona Technical College in Okolona, Mississippi. At the request of the National Council of Negro Women (NCNW), each student in the studio made design proposals for a series of "Site Renewal Stages" that are organized and consolidated in this document. It provides the NCNW with a set of general suggestions that could influence the reshaping and re-birth of Okolona Technical College site.



1. This information was collected from interviews with Dr. Jesse Mosley, president of the Mississippi Chapter of the National Council of Negro Women (NCNW), and her son Gene Mosley.

In 1902, Wallace A. Battle of Russell County, Alabama felt a need to establish a facility that would provide normal and industrial training for young, African-American men and women in the town of Okolona, Mississippi. Perhaps because more and more African-Americans were being excluded from traditional trades such as carpentry, as well as from skilled occupations linked to new technologies such as electrical work, Battle decided to found what was then called The Okolona Industrial School. He began in a tattered old blacksmith shop and nurtured the school for twenty-five years, eventually developing the site into a more typical campus setting. In 1921, the school formed a partnership with the American Church Institute for Negroes, who appointed Battle the Field Secretary of their organization in 1927. At this time, Battle's wife, Effie T. Battle, became head of the school, which was renamed Okolona College in 1932. Upon Effie Battle's departure as head of the college in 1933, the Board of Trustees elected Professor A. M. Strange to the position. An experienced and effective teacher and administrator for the Chickasaw County Training School System, Strange is given credit for the construction of most of the college's modern facilities and for the acquisition of much of the college's modern equipment. Other influential leaders of Okolona College include Richard T. Middleton, Professor C. L. Carter, and Professor W. Milan Davis. It was important to these leaders of the college to serve the young people of Mississippi who could not afford to enroll in more costly institutions. These leaders worked hard to keep expenses within the means of the average young man or woman, while providing the best training possible. In 1965, the Episcopal Diocese of Mississippi, under whose auspices the American Church Institute for Negroes acted, made a decision that would change the course of Okolona College. They felt that enough humanitarian work had been done in this area of Mississippi and that the Episcopal Diocese needed to turn their attention elsewhere. Because no other funding or support could be found for Okolona College, it was forced to close its doors in the same year.¹

The property remained inactive until 1990, when the National Council of Negro Women (NCNW) purchased the Okolona Technical College campus with high aspirations of what it could become and how it could



serve Okolona and the surrounding area. The mission statement of the NCNW reads:

The NCNW sponsors educational, economic, social, cultural, and scientific self-help projects nationally and in specific communities across the nation. Through its projects, the NCNW strives to achieve equality of opportunity and eliminate prejudice and discrimination based upon race, creed, color, sex, or national origin.²

The NCNW began by holding meetings in various buildings on the site and envisioned one day being able to hold state-wide NCNW conventions on the campus. Their most important goal, however, was for the Okolona Technical College site to once again become an education center for the town of Okolona and the surrounding communities. Through discussions with Dr. Mosley and the Site Committee several ideas emerged about the type of programs that could be developed in support to the group's needs. With the Welfare Reform Act taking effect in the next couple of years it was generally agreed that job training and programs that support family life would be essential:

- **Non-traditional Job Training Program:** classrooms, a wood shop, plumbing and electrical shops, a masonry work shop and a welding area
- **Child Care Center:** three classrooms with (20) three and four-year olds each, kitchen, offices, outdoor play area
- **On-Site Residence Education Program:** dormitory housing for single women and women with children, classrooms, dining, child care and other support spaces
- **Community Continuing Education Program:** classrooms and workrooms
- **Senior Citizen Day Center:** small library, dining facilities, classrooms, arts and crafts activity rooms and other support spaces
- **Conference Center:** house the annual NCNW state meetings and draw other businesses to meet there; hotel rooms, dining and banquet rooms, meeting rooms, an auditorium and other support spaces.³

Location

Historically, one could reach Okolona College by train on the Gulf, Mobile, Ohio Railroad and by state highways 41 and Highway 245. Also, a bus service made it easier for one to travel to the campus from within Okolona to the college site just outside of town. The college sits on the west side of Highway 245, and is typically approached on this road today. The prairie-like condition of the landscape allows the buildings to stand prominently across the 65-acre, horseshoe-shaped campus. The unmistakable Abbott Hall and McDougall Hall are well-known landmarks for passers-by along Highway 45, now Highway 245.



2. NCNW Pamphlet

3. Specific detail in regards to square footages is presented in the Appendix.

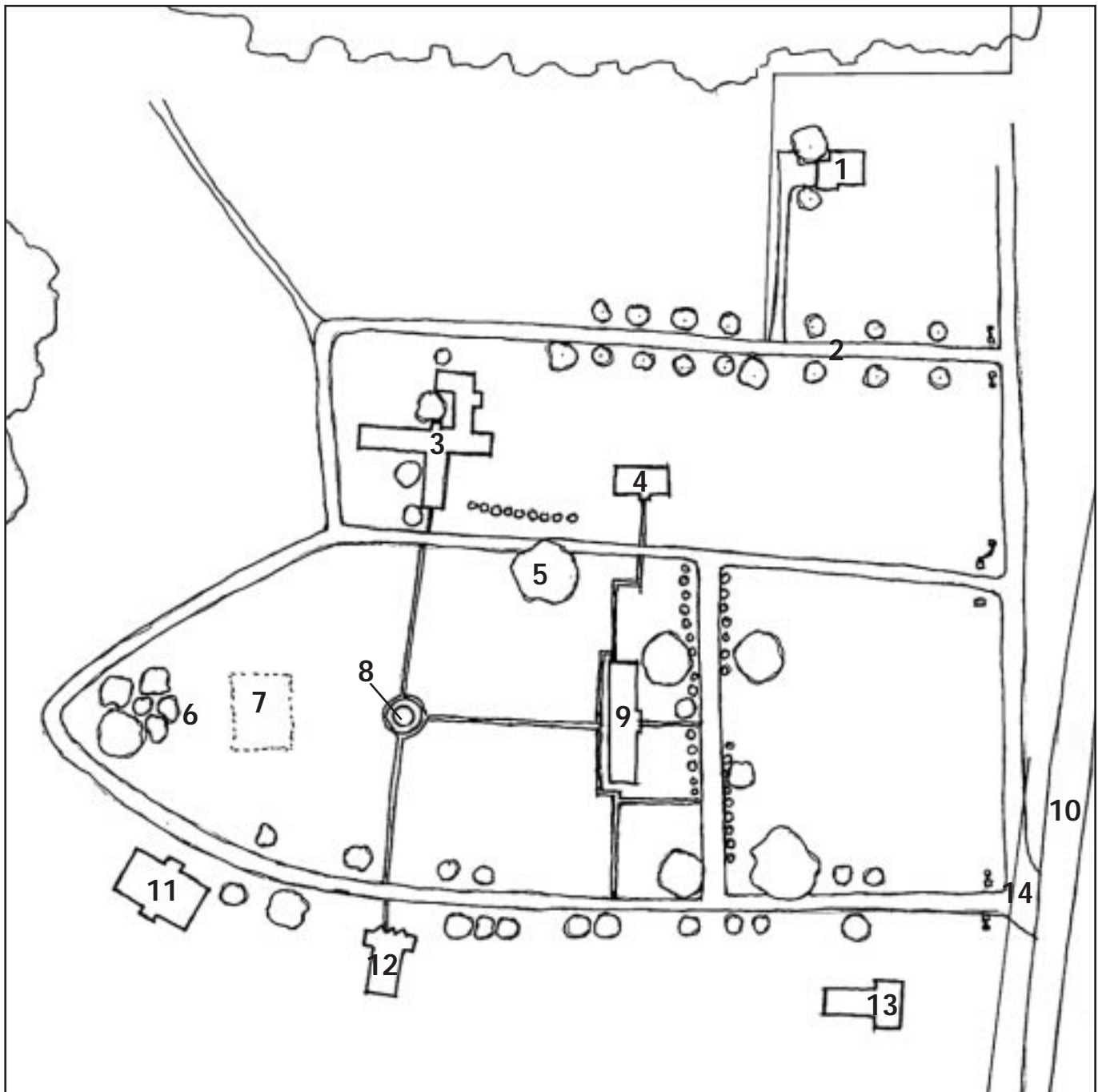


View from Highway 45

Site Plan

The campus has a memorable presence as one passes along the highway and then enters the site. The most remarkable features are the change in grade whereby the buildings sit on the crown; the boulevard of trees which run along one of the entrance roads; the central large tree which sits among the buildings and seems to have as much presence by its expansive limbs; and the expansive pastoral landscape beyond. There is a nice collection of buildings that sit within this landscape. The following site plan identifies the location of many of the important elements on the Okolona Technical College site.

1. President's House
2. Boulevard of Trees
3. Bratton Hall
4. McDougall Hall
5. Central Tree
6. Playground
7. Basketball Court
8. Pavilion
9. Abbott Hall
10. Highway 245
11. Trades Building
12. Okolona Hall
13. Day Care
14. Entrance



Use Chart

Understanding the historic uses of the buildings on the site as well as their current condition is a critical step in realizing their potential for new use. The following chart documents the historic use and current conditions of the Okolona College buildings.

McDougall Hall

| | |
|--------------------------|--|
| <i>Historic Use</i> | Chapel, Chaplain's office, Business Manager's office, Dean's office, Health Center and Registered Nurse, Department of Science, Guest Chamber, Department of Home Economics |
| <i>Current Condition</i> | Poured-in-place concrete structure with brick veneer. Generally, this building is structurally sound, but the interior is deteriorating due to the failure of the roof. While the shell is still viable, much work would have to be done to the interior; the windows would need to be replaced as well. |



McDougall Hall
(1996)

Abbott Hall

| | |
|--------------------------|---|
| <i>Historic Use</i> | President's Office, President's Reception, Registrar, classrooms |
| <i>Current Condition</i> | The west porch is currently used as an outdoor stage for local church productions. However, a structural post is missing on the south side and the floor joists are failing. On the east side, the brick veneer is providing the only structural support; we expect this portion of the building to collapse very soon. Based on these observations, we expect that the north side of the building is in poor condition as well. It is our recommendation that efforts be made to salvage Abbott Hall. Its exceptional character and presence on the site make it a worthwhile rescue effort. |



Abbott Hall
(1996)

R. W. Patton Library

| | |
|--------------------------|--|
| <i>Historic Use</i> | 80-seat reading room, lounge, conference room, 18,000 volumes of reference materials, 80 current periodicals, maps, etc. |
| <i>Current Condition</i> | The R. W. Patton Library was destroyed by fire. |



Historic photo of R.W. Patton Library
(date unavailable)

Bratton Hall

Historic Use T.D. Bratton Memorial Dormitory; residence for women, modern laundry facilities, college-wide cafeteria in north wing

Current Condition Structure is combined concrete block & poured-in-place concrete with wood-framed roof; stable to good condition. It is currently an informal meeting place for the NCNW site committee.



Bratton Hall
(1996)

Okolona Hall

Historic Use Residence Hall for men, laundry facilities, Residence of the Dean of Men

Current Condition Okolona Hall was destroyed by fire in approximately 1988.



Okolona Hall
(1996)

College Grill

Historic Use Snack Bar and social gathering place for students

Current Condition The College Grill was torn down.

Trades Building

Historic Use Location of vocational trade courses; primarily consisted of workshop space

Current Condition The floor of this wood-framed building with brick veneer has completely failed due to unstable soil conditions.



Trades Building
(1996)

Agriculture Building

Historic Use The site where the Agriculture Building once stood is outside the bounds of the tract of land currently owned by the NCNW

Agriculture Building Department of Agriculture; "farming unit," lab spaces, classrooms

Mending the Site

Section 2

As is the case with most older buildings that become renovated, rehabilitated, and reused, many measures must be taken to bring the building to a certain level of safety in relation to its human inhabitants comparable to the safety standards employed in new constructions today. Many of our older buildings are rife with materials such as lead-based paints and asbestos that more recent research has shown to be harmful to human health. It is necessary for the NCNW site committee to submit the buildings on the college site to the proper professionals to determine which, if any, of these potential threats exists within the buildings that are otherwise salvageable. With this analysis comes the taking of whatever measures necessary to remove the harmful materials or to neutralize their threat to human health.

More specific to the condition of the Okolona College buildings is the condition and performance of the building parts that keep out the elements. Careful analysis of the buildings must be done to figure out to what extent the walls, floors/foundations, ceilings/roofs still keep out air and water. Damage by weather, insects, or general disuse can greatly affect the reusability of buildings, and must be assessed early on. There are also some less-drastic effects of disuse that need to be investigated such as dangerous plant matter that may have grown up on the site (poison ivy, poison oak, etc.). Other necessary inspections, of course, include structural evaluation of the buildings; however, it is rather obvious which ones are failing.

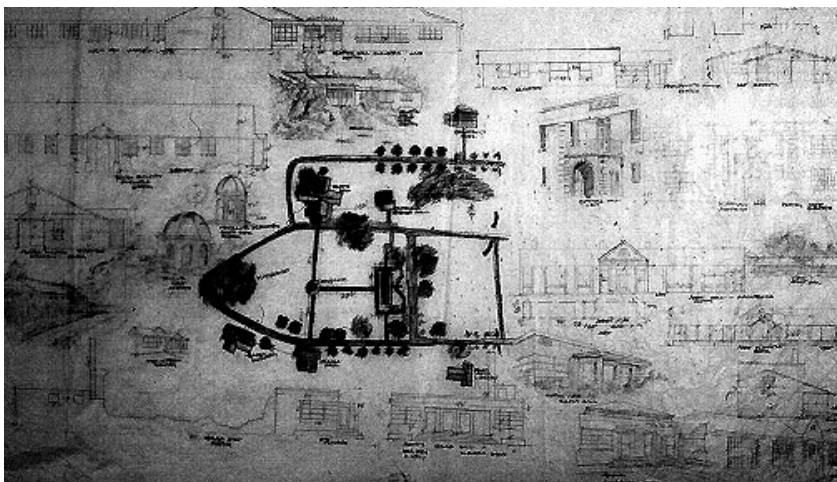
Addressing all present hazardous conditions on the site early, both those that are hazardous now and those that pose potential threats, will help further revitalization efforts be realized more smoothly and more successfully. In light of all the time, money, and effort that will eventually be put into reusing this site, it is best to try to eliminate all potential for unforeseen problems as soon as possible. Although we do not have the expertise to perform the proper evaluations, we suspect from our initial investigations that *Abbott Hall*, *Bratton Hall*, and perhaps *McDougall Hall* are worth the effort toward renovation and reuse.



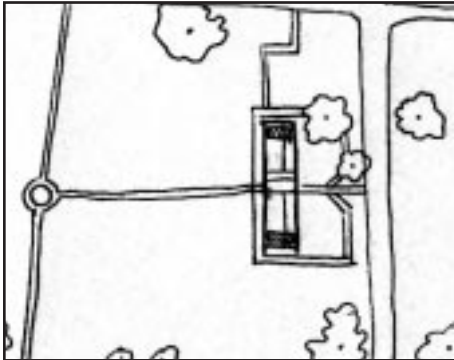
Floor structure of Trades Building



Decaying material found in one of the buildings



Tracey Johnson's study of the existing Okolona Technical College site



Restrooms could be placed at the ends of Abbott Hall to make the site a more effective place to hold outdoor events.



Kim Crossnine's proposal for an orchard

What is the smallest move one might make in order to set in motion further development on this site? Better yet, what is the smallest move one might make in order to sponsor greater usefulness on the site right now? This latter question could best be answered or addressed by looking at what the site is used for currently. As has been discussed, various local churches hold dramatic productions at the site, using the long, southeast facing porch space of Abbott Hall as the stage. Because they are community-sponsored activities and bring a sense of livelihood to the site every once in awhile, it is important to maintain the possibility for the plays to take place here. One proposal by Tami Oddo suggests a way to make the site an even more effective place for audiences and performances. Her suggestion for a first move is to convert the end spaces of Abbot Hall into outdoor-accessible public restrooms. Because this would require certain structural repairs and the necessary electrical, mechanical, and plumbing installations, this small conversion might be a somewhat accurate gauge as to the difficulty of intervening upon the other buildings on this site. Something so simple as a restroom could draw more people to the site during the types of activities now held there. Another proposal, by Kim Crossnine, suggests the possibility of planting an orchard of fruit or nut trees along the east-west axis of the campus, beginning at the south end of Abbott Hall and extending just beyond the Pavilion. Besides eventually becoming a nice, shady place to walk through, the fruits or nuts that the trees would bear could be a profitable commodity for the landowners. A small fruit stand could be made near Highway 245 that would sell the fruit from the trees at the site, as well as fruits and vegetables that others in the community could bring to sell on consignment.



Abbott Hall used as a stage set

Reclaiming the Site

Section 4

Because of the age of the buildings at the site and because of the amount of time the buildings have been unoccupied, the overall site appears somewhat neglected. In an attempt to heighten interest and instill confidence among the townspeople of Okolona, as well as to further enthusiasm among the site committee, it seems important to remove the buildings and remnants of buildings that are determined to be unsalvageable as facilities due to destruction by fire or to excessive weathering. This act of reclamation is important to the feeling that the site is truly beginning a process of rejuvenation. All of the students suggested that the ruined buildings be removed, and many of the students have proposed that salvageable bricks, metals, etc. from these buildings be stored for future use by the Job Training courses. One such proposal by Chris Eidt suggests that the materials be stored in McDougall Hall, once all non-structural partitions are removed from it. He also suggests that McDougall Hall remain open to the air as a work space for the Job Training courses. Also, new materials for new constructions could be stored here, out of view and out of the elements.

The most important part of this stage is hiring responsible, qualified professionals to make a series of visits to the site and to carefully evaluate each building in terms of its current structural capacity, as well as in terms of the potential dangers listed above. Also, these professionals should work with experienced contractors in the area to determine approximately how costly it will be and how long it would take to repair those buildings that are salvageable. Another useful estimate would be the cost of demolishing and removing those buildings that are not salvageable, and investigating whether or not their foundations are reusable. If they are not, then the inspectors should include the cost of removing or burying the foundations in the latter estimate.



The Trades Building is in poor condition and should be demolished for safety. The bricks, however, could be salvaged and used by the future Job Training courses.



The ruins of Okolona Hall should also be removed, but like the Trades Building, the bricks could be salvaged and used by training courses.



Materials may be stored in McDougall Hall, once all interior non-structural partitions are removed.

By this stage, it is vital to the survival of the project to find a way to make it really stand out in the town as a work that people are committed to and that other townspeople can and should become committed too. It seems that the NCNW should attempt to make the next step a large one to show that they have faith in the longevity and vitality of the project and in the value of the work throughout the process. Therefore, rather than renovating an existing building first, a *new building* on the site could be seen as a greater achievement and raise the expectations of both the NCNW and the citizens of Okolona as well. This first major act of renewal can definitely establish the will of the NCNW upon the site. Also, taking measures to open up the site in a real way to the public could generate a feeling that real, beneficial work is being conducted at the site. Things such as parking, paved areas, sidewalks, trees, and such will work with the other initial moves to enhance the current usability of the site for the people of Okolona and will possibly help to gain outside support for the project.

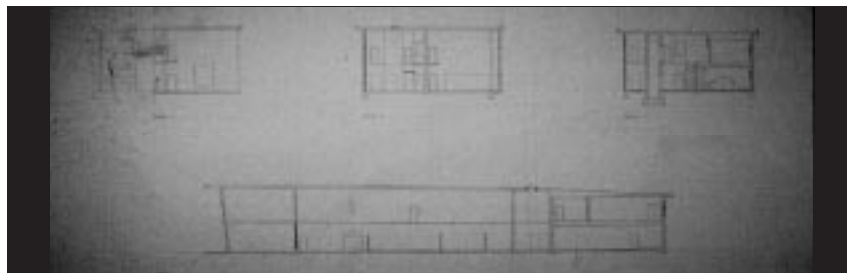
Five students, Chris Eidt, Jared Pierce, Arissra Stamps, Tracey Johnson, and Asad Bakeer proposed new facilities to house what has been named a Non-traditional Job Training Center. In such a facility, women would be trained in skills and trades in which men have traditionally been the primary participants. Potential courses include masonry, carpentry, electrical work, plumbing work, and welding.

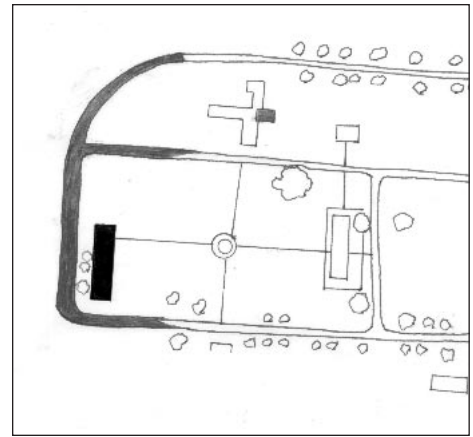
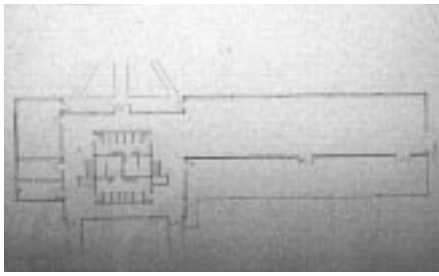


A detail of Chris Eidt's building proposal

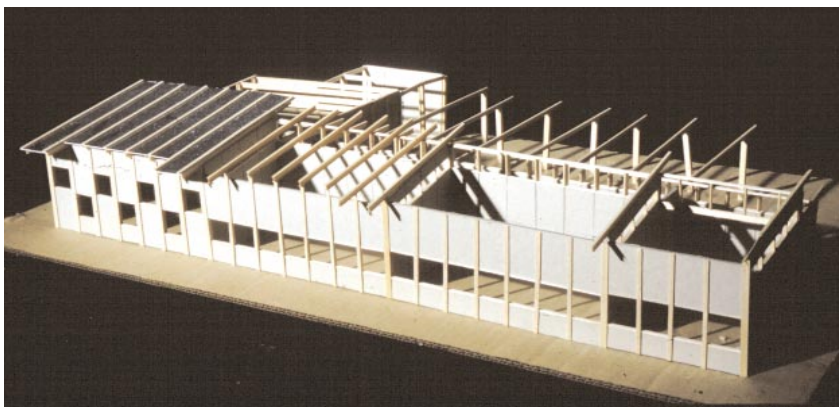
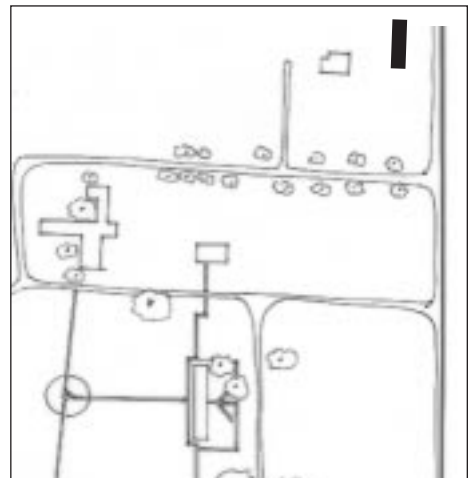
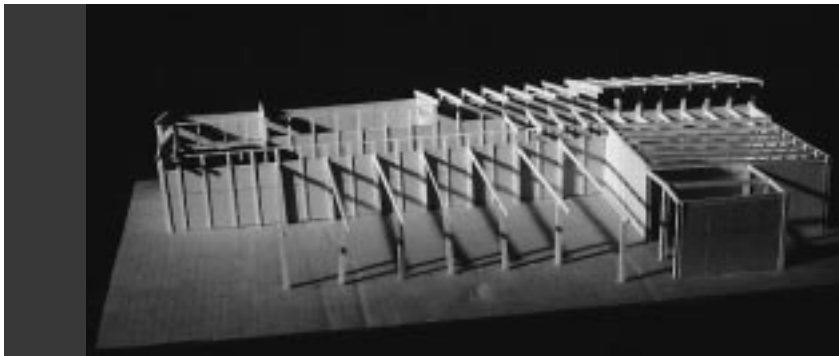


Chris Eidt's proposal is situated on the western of the campus, opposite Abbott Hall, to complete the implied ring of buildings around the central yard and the pavilion. The design includes classroom space along with a large indoor shop area. A large, covered, outdoor working space is also provided, as seen on the left side of the model pictured here.

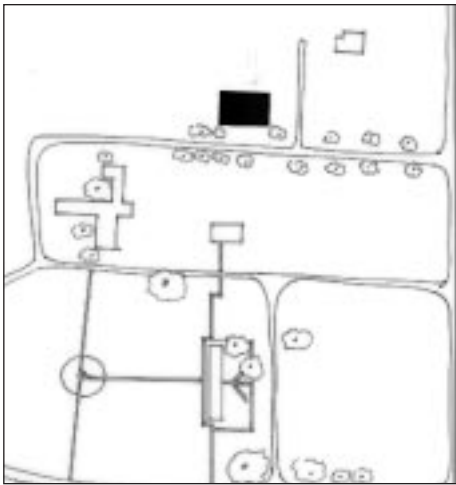




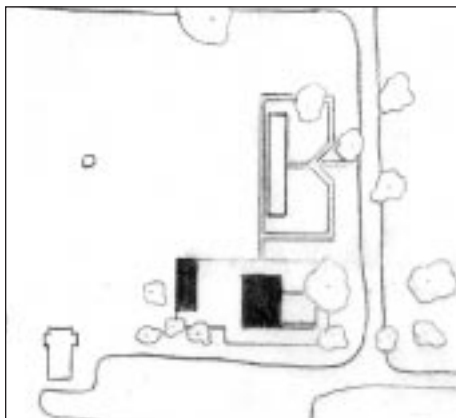
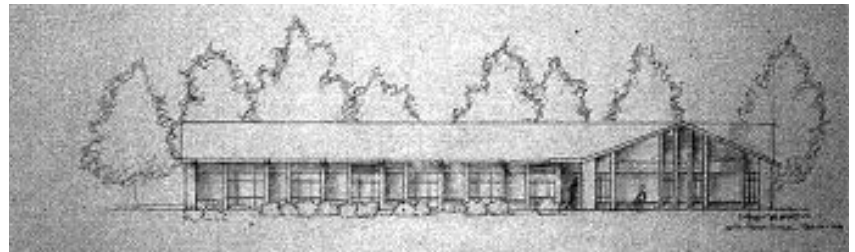
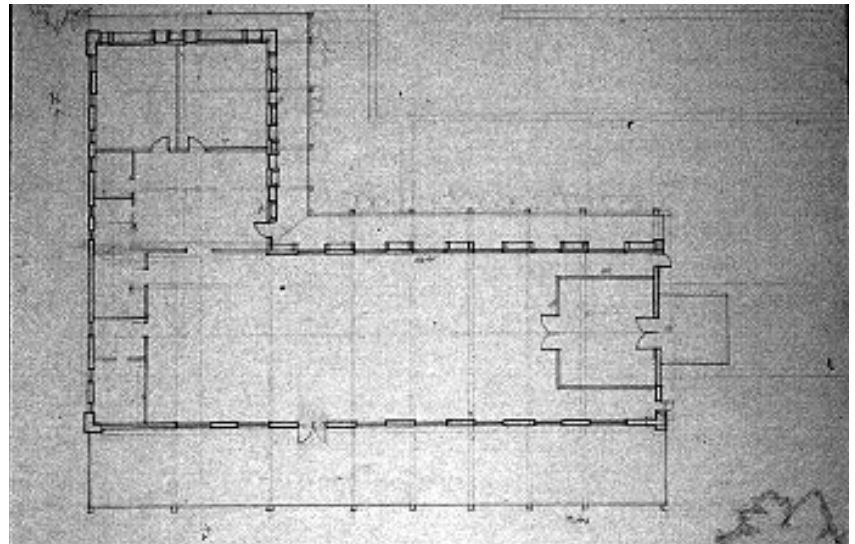
Jared Pierce placed his building proposal in the same area as Eidt's, across the central yard from Abbott Hall. Pierce's proposal also includes a large indoor work area, classrooms, and an covered outdoor work area as well. The buildings proposed by Eidt and Pierce both include provisions for events and programs not necessarily related to a Job Training Center, thus allowing use by a broader audience throughout the renewal period of the campus and also, once it is complete.



Stamps had a different strategy than Pierce and Eidt on where to place her building. She decided to stretch the campus along Highway 245 by placing her proposal for the Job Training Center to the north and just to the east of the President's House, beyond the Boulevard of Trees. Her proposal includes office and classroom space as well, and includes a large, covered, outdoor work area to be shared by the trades courses housed in the building.



Tracey Johnson placed her proposal just north of the Boulevard of Trees. Her building would also provide large covered spaces for working, and smaller classroom and office spaces. The placement of the building along the Boulevard of Trees allows that path to once again be an important element in the campus plan.



Asad Bakeer's proposal is actually two structures, situated just south of Abbott Hall. One of the structures is an open air, covered work space, while the other structure is a building housing classrooms, offices, and a large work area. The building's entry terminates a long path implied by the arcade on the west end of Abbott Hall.



Reactivating a Landmark

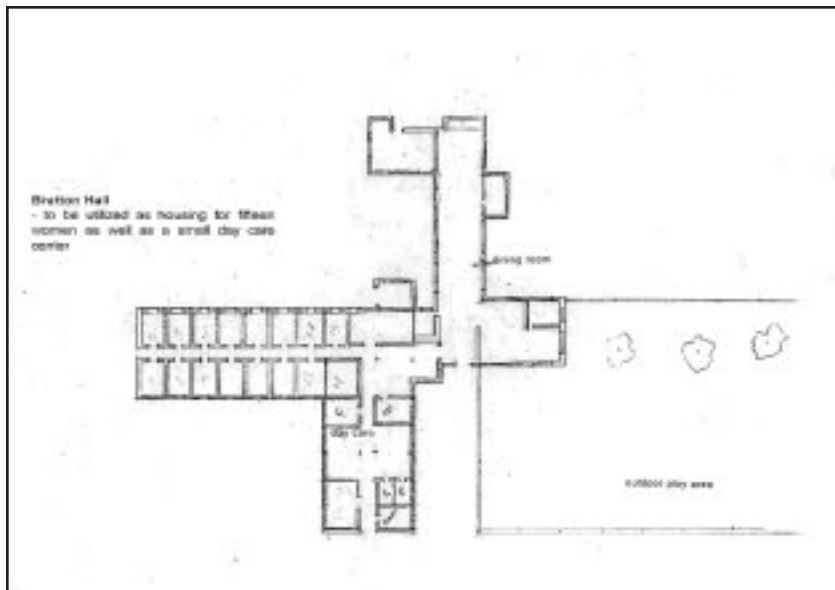
Section 6

After such a visible move as getting a new building on the site, it is possible that the NCNW site committee will have enough of a “product” to go out and get much more funding for its revitalization efforts. Once more money is raised, a prudent next move might be to begin to reinhabit some of the existing buildings. We have identified three major divisions of strategies that students employed in finding ways to reuse these buildings. They are as follows: readjusting the interior of the building while maintaining the current footprint; expanding the dimensions of the current footprint while maintaining its general configuration and adjusting the interior accordingly; annexing a piece of construction to the building and changing the interior, thus altering the footprint significantly. The primary buildings that students sought to renovate and reuse were Abbott Hall and Bratton Hall, while a few students also worked with Mc Dougall Hall, the President’s House, and Okolona Hall.

Those who concentrated on Bratton Hall were Kim Crossnine, Asad Bakeer, Brian Bassett, and Andrew Butler. Tammy McMahan and Tami Oddo both concentrated on Abbott Hall, while Chris Eidt, Ryan Dingus, and Giles Yokel worked on making McDougall Hall inhabitable again. Chris Eidt also proposed a renovation to the President’s House, as did Mike Hutto. Jared Pierce worked on Okolona Hall.



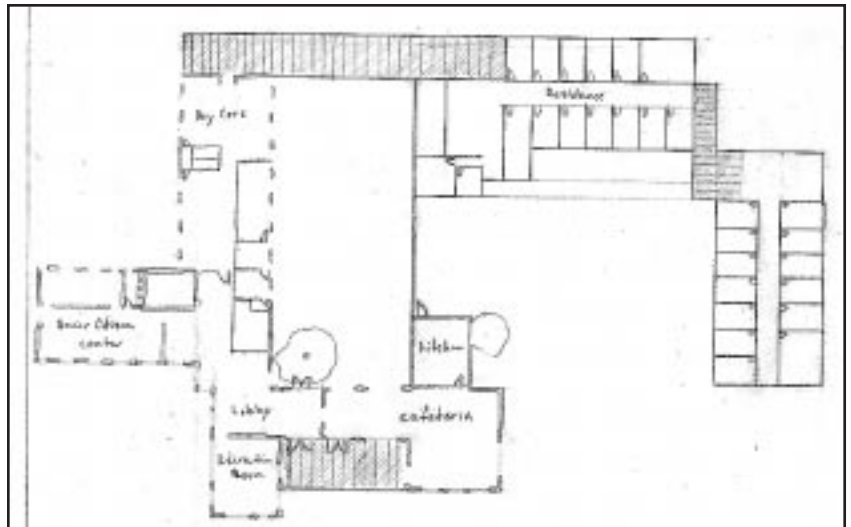
Abbott Hall is one of a few buildings on the campus that could be re-used.



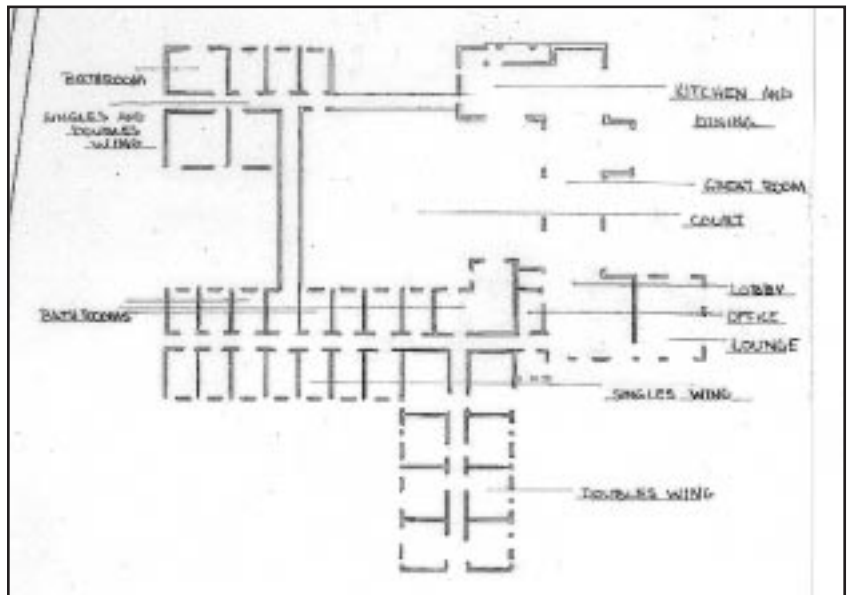
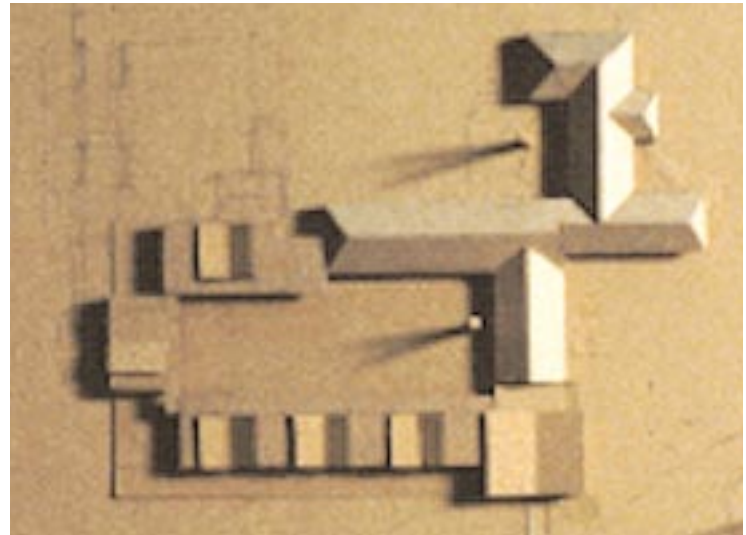
Bratton Hall

Kim Crossnine’s proposal utilizes Bratton Hall as housing for fifteen women as well as a small day care center. The existing dining room would be restored and used by the residents. Just to the east of the building would be a secured outdoor play area.

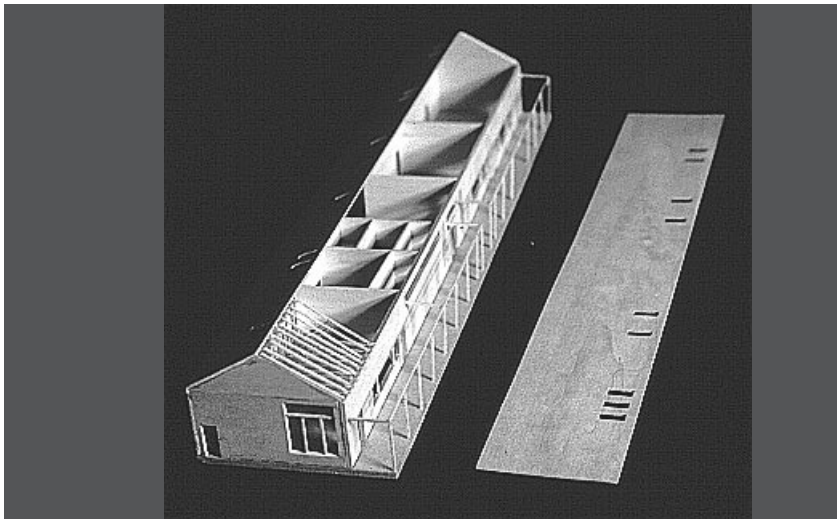
Asad Bakeer also utilizes Bratton hall as a residence but proposes a substantial addition to the north of the existing building. The existing plan of Bratton Hall would house a day care, a senior citizen's center, and a cafeteria. The addition would provide new dorm rooms.



Like Asad, Brian Bassett proposes a large addition to the existing Bratton Hall. In this proposal, the cafeteria is widened to provide food service to all users of the site. The rest of the existing building would house dorm rooms for single women. The addition would include larger rooms for single mothers and would also provide a commons room for all of the residences. The addition with the west and south wings of the existing building would form a courtyard to be shared by the residents.



Andrew Butler's proposal also has an addition which creates a courtyard space. Both single and double rooms would be provided in the existing part of Bratton. The addition would add more rooms as well as rest room facilities.

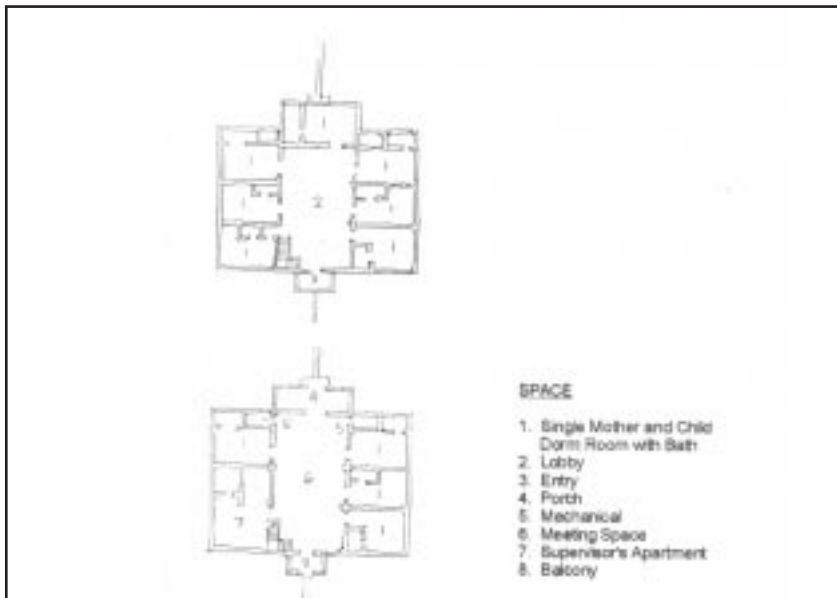


Abbott Hall

Tammy McMahan proposes significant changes to the floor plan of Abbott Hall to accommodate a job training program. Her design also provides residence education and community education facilities.



Tami Oddo altered the interior floor plan of Abbott to accommodate necessary office and classroom space, as well as an open shop area. Oddo suggests removing the wooden floor joists and replacing them with a concrete floor system to support the loads created by equipment and materials that would be located in the shop. Oddo also added a covered, exterior workspace for the trades courses.



Mc Dougall Hall

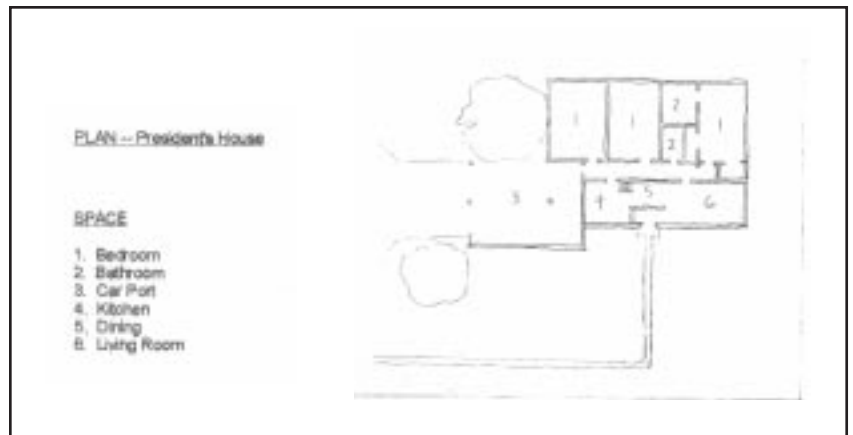
Giles Yokel proposes the re-use of McDougall Hall as a historical museum dedicated to the history of Okolona College and the history of African Americans in Mississippi. (diagram not available)

Ryan Dingus suggests re-using McDougall Hall as a church or chapel. This type of use would also provide large and smaller meeting spaces that could accommodate other functions as well. (diagram not available)

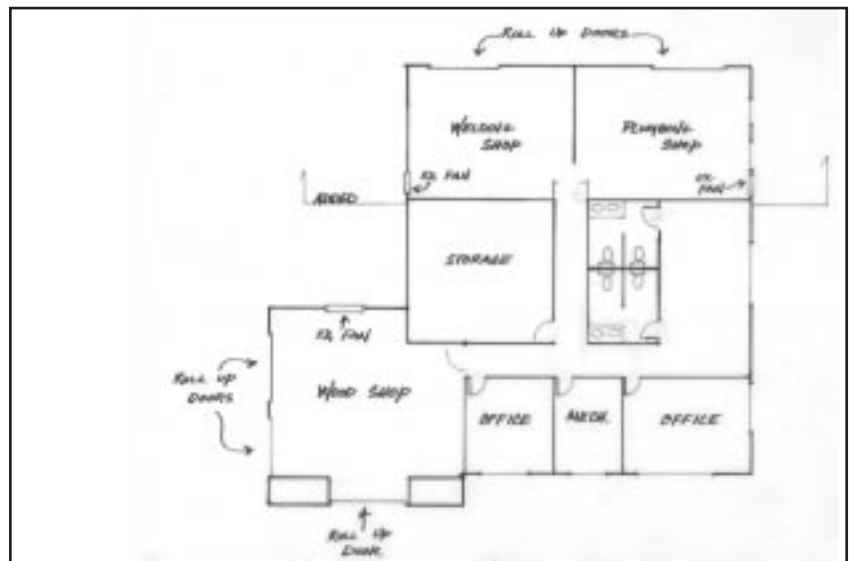
Chris Eidt suggests converting McDougall Hall into apartments for single mothers who are enrolled in the Residence Education Program. He proposes a small addition to the north side of the existing building.

President's House

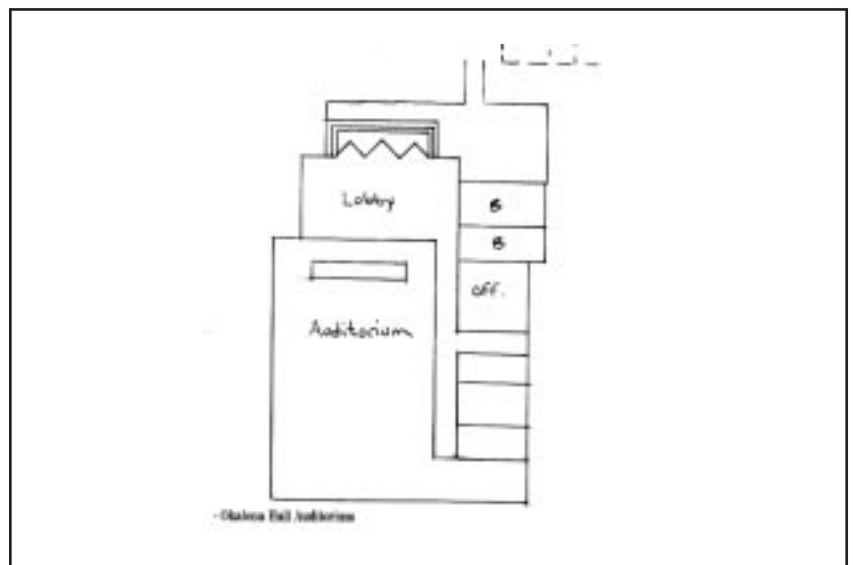
Chris Eidt suggests repairing the President's House so that it can be inhabitable again. The house could be occupied by the person who maintains and controls the events of the site. He proposes that much of the work on the President's House can be carried out by the Job Training Program students.



Mike Hutto proposes a completely different use for the President's House. He suggests converting the existing building into shops and offices for the Job Training Program.



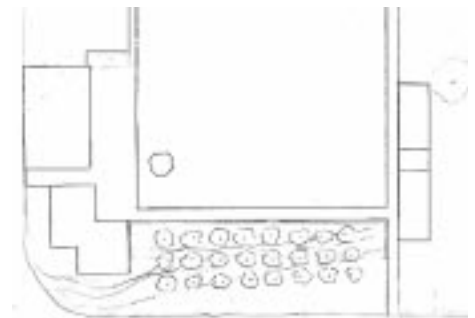
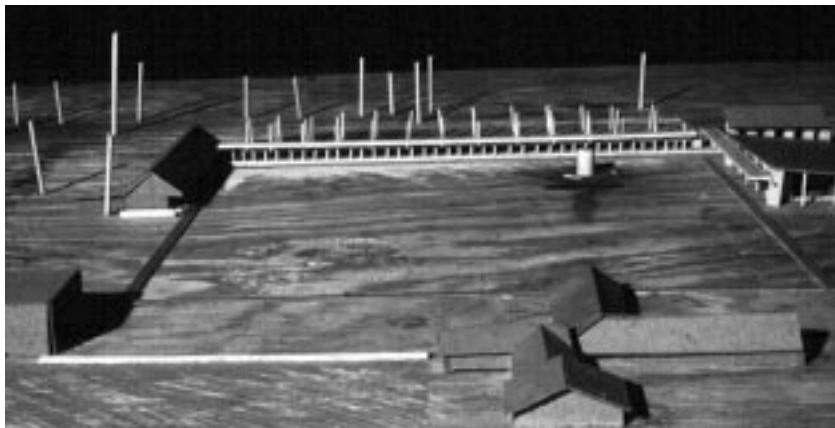
Although Okolona Hall was destroyed by fire, a portion of its front facade remains. Jared Pierce keeps the facade in his proposal to build an auditorium on the Okolona Hall site. A lobby would be just beyond the existing facade, with an auditorium, offices, and rest rooms also in the new building. The facilities would include seating for around 300 people, a stage, and projection capabilities.



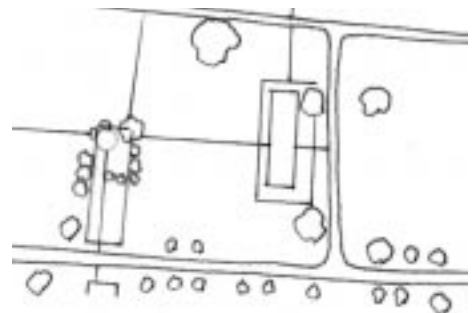
Broadening the Possibilities

Section 7

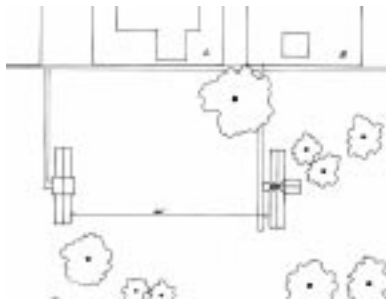
Now that the site is somewhat ready to be inhabited by the college and by the community, another type of construction needs to find its way into the project. One significant component of a campus environment is the collection of outdoor spaces for students, faculty, and local townspeople to gather. These are the spaces where chance meetings occur and where many of the most memorable experiences of college life are made. In service of these vital experiences, it seems necessary to make an outdoor space where events for both the college and the community can happen. A potential result of this move might be that the site begins to really feel like a useful and thriving place. Two types of proposals for such an outdoor space arose from the collected student work: a covered, linear space; or a demarcated, open space. Among the students who proposed a linear, covered space were Kim Crossnine, Jared Pierce, and Mike Hutto. The remaining proposals, the demarcated, open spaces, were made by Arissra Stamps, Kevin Degrauw, Paul Waddell, and Asad Bakeer.



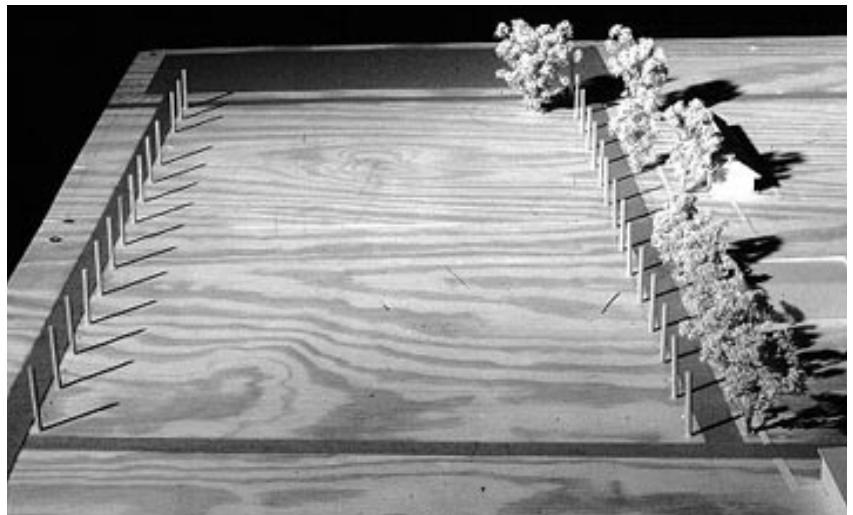
Kim Crossnine suggests a long, covered walkway just to the north side of her previously proposed orchard at the south end of the site (refer to section 3). The walkway would provide sheltered passage from Abbott Hall to a proposed new building across the campus in addition to providing some covered seating on the side.



Jared Pierce's proposal also involves the space near the pavilion. He suggests a trellis that would form an arbor over the path that connects Okolona Hall to the Pavilion. Like Kim's proposal, Jared's will provide shaded passage into the central campus yard, and it will include seating and gathering space at the end of the path nearer to the Pavilion.



Mike Hutto proposes a linear, covered pavilion across the central yard from Abbott Hall and west of the Rasberry Pavilion. Hutto's pavilion would provide a shaded space that could house picnics, musical and dramatic performances, community meetings, and perhaps even farmers' markets.

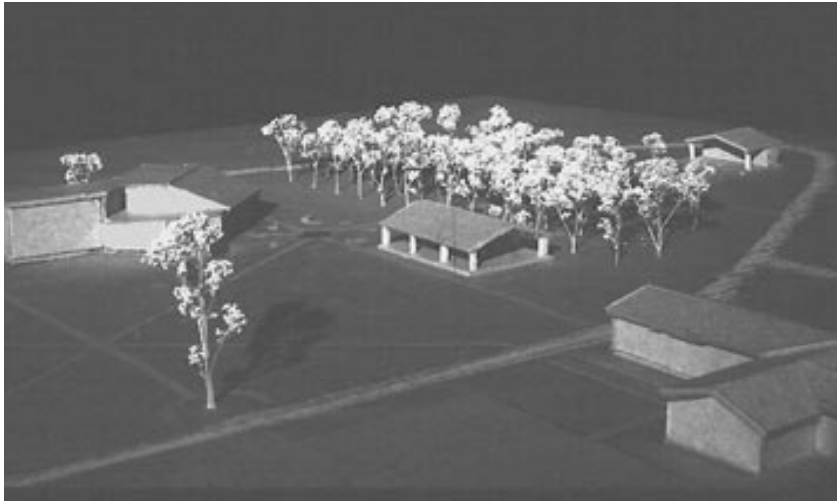


Arissra Stamps proposes a large, open field with lighting along each side for events such as flea markets, state/county fairs, or family reunions. The field is large enough and well-lit enough to accommodate sports events as well. The expansive field would be located along Highway 245, to the northeast of Abbott Hall and the President's House, and across the Boulevard of Trees from Stamps' Job Training Center proposal.



Kevin Degrauw suggests developing the space between Bratton Hall and McDougall Hall as a courtyard. A new, small chapel would enclose the east side of the court. This open space is much smaller than the one Stamps suggested, but it could certainly accommodate many types of activities as well as become a special place to the users of the site.





Paul Waddell's proposal involves a bit more construction, but still accommodates certain events that currently occur on the site. His suggestion is the planting of a grove of trees at the west-southwest end of the site, with a small, outdoor theater just beyond the grove. Outdoor gatherings could be held there, with a bit more removal from the noisy highway. This placement would better suit the local churches and schools who currently use the site to put on performances and other events.

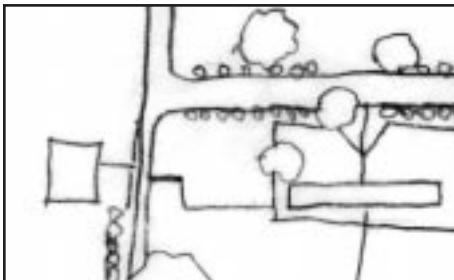


Asad Bakeer's proposal is less involved with construction than the others; it involves removal of earth. Asad's suggestion is to carve out a tract for a lake, where people could swim, and possibly fish if the site committee decided to provide for that possibility as well. Besides creating a recreation spot, the lake would also become a scenic, natural backdrop for the rest of the campus.

Finding these remarkable spaces within the larger landscape will begin to give the site a real sense of being its own place and will begin to bring a real sense of integrity to the site as a whole. Having this kind of identity within Okolona and within the state of Mississippi at large will only help increase enthusiasm for the project as it continues.

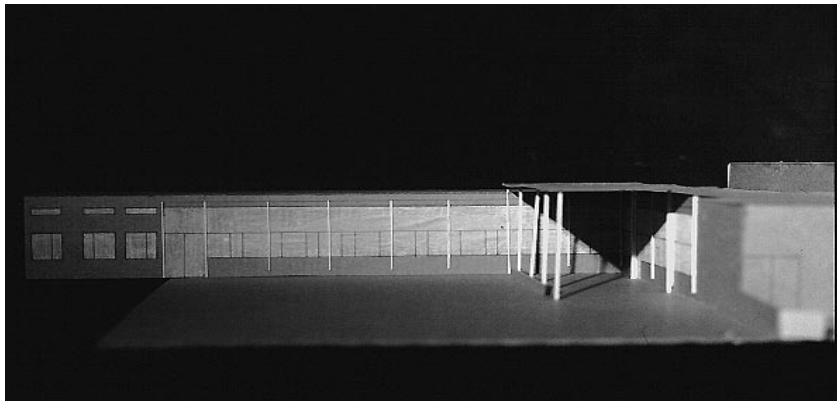
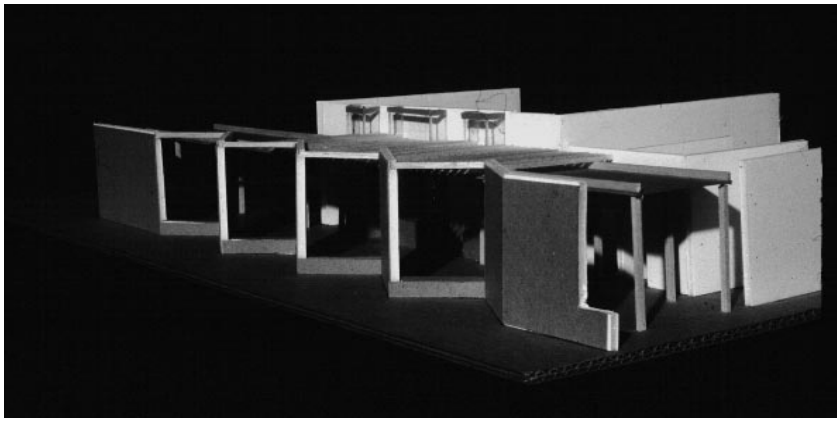
Kim Crossnine's proposal is for a multi-purpose facility just to the west of The Pavilion. The building is equipped with a large, open space that could be used as a lecture hall or as a general gathering space and with smaller, classroom-sized spaces for use by a Senior Citizen Day Center Program. Also, it is important that the building have a generous amount of shaded outdoor space, as well as provisions for food preparation to allow for cookouts, family reunions, or fund-raising meal service. A primary feature of Crossnine's building is that it is nestled into the orchard that she proposed early on (refer to section 3), and it connects to Abbott Hall via the covered walkway that runs along the orchard. The addition of this new building to the reshaped site transforms and enhances the natural setting of the site as it is now. We believe that a new richness may result from such a thorough investment in a portion of the site. It will be valuable in providing shade, in giving the site a defined edge, and by forming a sensitive and beautiful relationship with the landscape.

With the addition of the outdoor space, the new building, the renovation of the existing building, and the other, initial moves, the site will be very different than it is at this time. At this point, then, it is necessary to think about addressing the site as a new site -the site as it has been remade thus far- and make the next move in terms of how it benefits the new community of buildings and spaces rather than the former/current one. It is now possible to think of constructing a new building, or to think of a large-scale expansion or annex of one of the buildings that will be the newly existing inventory of buildings. Several students have made proposals that address the site as they envision it once it is somewhat reshaped, including Kim Crossnine, Ryan Dingus, Tami Oddo, and Andrew Butler.

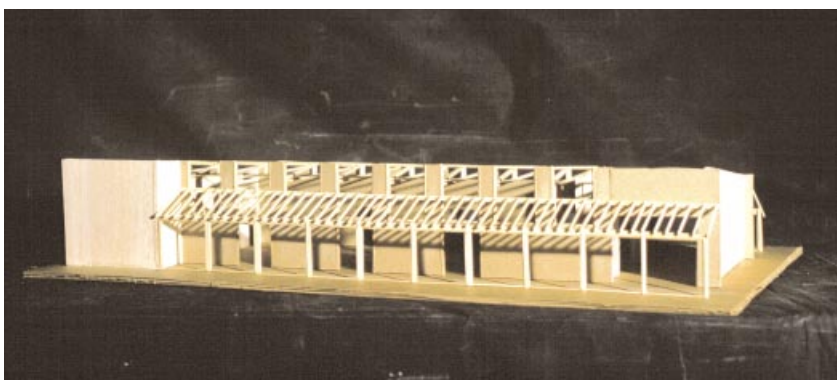
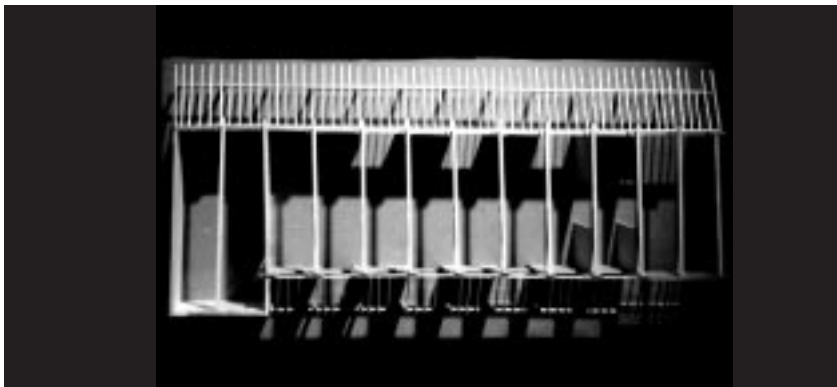


Ryan Dingus proposes to restore Abbott Hall or build a new building on the same site. The new building would provide a public cafeteria, classroom spaces, and offices. The focus of Dingus' design is not necessarily on the building itself, rather on its relationship to the space between it and McDougall Hall. The proposal transforms this space into a grove of trees that could provide an important shaded meeting place for the site.





Another proposal, by Tami Oddo, involves a similar strategy and a similar building type. Her proposal is sited just to the north of Crossnine's, and would house a Community Life Center. The center is meant to accommodate formal community and campus events, as well as to provide a place for students to spend free time. Shaded outdoor space is important for this building also, and it includes a gallery space and lobby to help mediate between the interior and the exterior. Oddo's community life center takes advantage of a parking area that she proposes in an earlier move, and gives a sense of enclosure to the western end of the campus.



Andrew Butler proposes a banquet hall to be built in an area north of the existing buildings. Although the name "banquet hall" implies that a certain function would take place in it, the generous open space Butler provides in the building could be used by many different groups for a variety of functions. This new building would be situated among other proposed buildings surrounding an open yard. This proposal rethinks the current configuration of the campus and transforms it, creating new outdoor spaces as well as adding several new buildings.



Continue to Build a Foundation

- Continue to develop the research of historical events and identify significant people that had contributed to the life of the Okolona Technical College.
- Collect stories of people and their lives who attended the Okolona Technical College. Compile this into a reproduceable document that you can give out to others to help them understand the heritage of this place.
- Develop a list of alumni with their addresses and phone numbers; establish communication with them and rally support for the project. For those that are interested in supporting your site improvements, send a copy of this report to them to educate them on things that we discussed.
- Gain community support by expanding your circle, including other community groups and citizens. Planning for the future of this site should be broader and more inclusive than including only those members from your own group.

Agree to meet and work together for a common purpose.

Create a planning group with broad representation.

Discuss everyone's goals and objectives, beliefs, and assumptions, to create a common vocabulary and to form a common basis for planning.

The most important result of effective organizing is a strong community coalition that sees this process as an important source of possibilities to find shared opportunities. With this process a broad range of people will emerge to participate and carry ideas into reality.

Constantly Evaluate and Clarify Your Priorities

- Produce a mission statement for your Site Committees' program. Make a clearer statement of your purpose so that everyone that you work with can immediately know what is driving this project.



- From this report, identify which programs you wish to bring to this site, prioritize the most needed and possible types of programs and evaluate square footages and needed room types, see Appendix.
- Create a work plan that outlines the general planning process and initial steps that you intend to follow with the Site Committee. Keep record of these meetings so that you can progress in the decision-making process.

Take Inventory of What You Have

Evaluate the conditions and ability to realistically renovate the remaining buildings. We believe that Abbott Hall, Bratton Hall and McDougall Hall may be salvageable. We recommend that you either work with a local contractor who has a lot of experience with renovating old buildings and get their opinions about structural conditions and hazardous materials including asbestos and lead paint; or, if they are not qualified as licensed engineers and licensed asbestos inspectors, then we recommend that you inquire with professionals about services and fees to make a site visit and a written report with recommendations. We recommend that you spend a little money upfront to get professional opinions so that you can realistically know what is possible and what is not. Two professional groups that we have had experience with are:

For structural inspection and recommendations call:

Bobby Jenkins
Jenkins Engineering
PO Box 2101
Tupelo, MS 38803
601 840-1233

For asbestos inspection and recommendations call:

Henry Sanford
Power Management and Control, Inc.
PO Box 1241
Jackson, MS 39236
601 981-0653



Stabilize What You Have

Once you have secured reports from these professionals, we recommend that you get a cost estimate from a local contractor to stabilize the buildings. Do stabilize the buildings until you can gain the funding required to accomplish full renovation.

Actively Build Upon This Document

- As you prepare to initiate these plans, it is important to find out what people outside the planning group think. You may decide to survey others so that you may be able to identify key issues and underlying attitudes of the community about these ideas. Be sure to find out what public and private interests are already planning-and how your ideas about this place collaborate with others' projects. For information about your community, contact:

City planning department-for current planning and zoning issues

Mayor, City Council and/or County Board-for capital improvements planned for your town.

Economic development or redevelopment authority-for their responsibilities for expanding the economic vitality of your community

Public works department-for infrastructure improvements (streets, sewers, lights, etc.) being planned in the community

Local business associations, developers, and nonprofit organizations-for improvement or expansion projects being planned for your community

Parks and recreation department and school board-for planned changes in programming

- Identify available partners who can contribute to the implementation of your plan. These partners may come from the business community, a government agency, or a nonprofit organization. Since most projects and programs will usually require some form of collaboration among these three sectors, identifying partners early on will enable you to



include some of their needs and concerns in your plan. Be flexible and listen to the ideas and concerns of other individuals and organizations. As you encourage constructive dialogue about your plan with your neighbors and the larger community, you will see a more comprehensive and refined plan emerge.

- Find a grantsperson who can assist you in finding potential grants at local, state and federal levels. It is probably going to be easier to find funding for programs than it is for capital improvements. It will be important to gain community involvement so that you might find local funding to improve the conditions of the buildings and the site.
- Seek volunteers from the local church groups and community to do some of the projects that volunteers are capable of doing as described in "Gaining a Foothold" and "Reclaiming the Site."
- Have more plays on the site and other events to raise funds so that you can purchase materials and pay for some of the services you will need to begin to stabilize the site.

