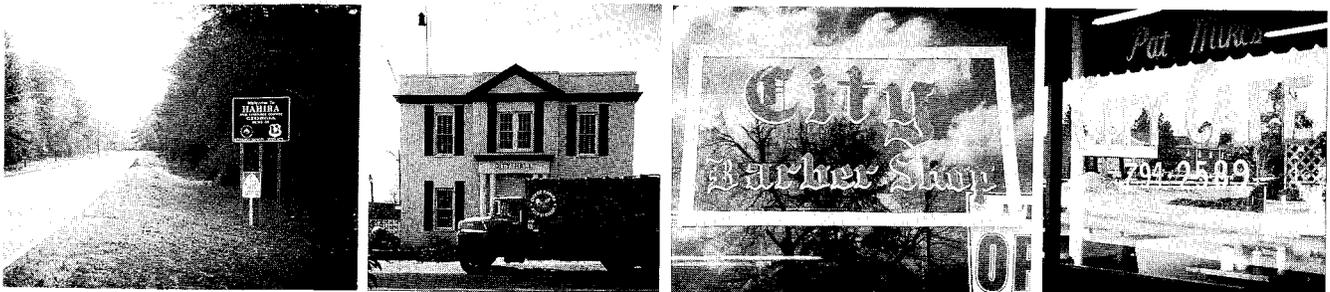


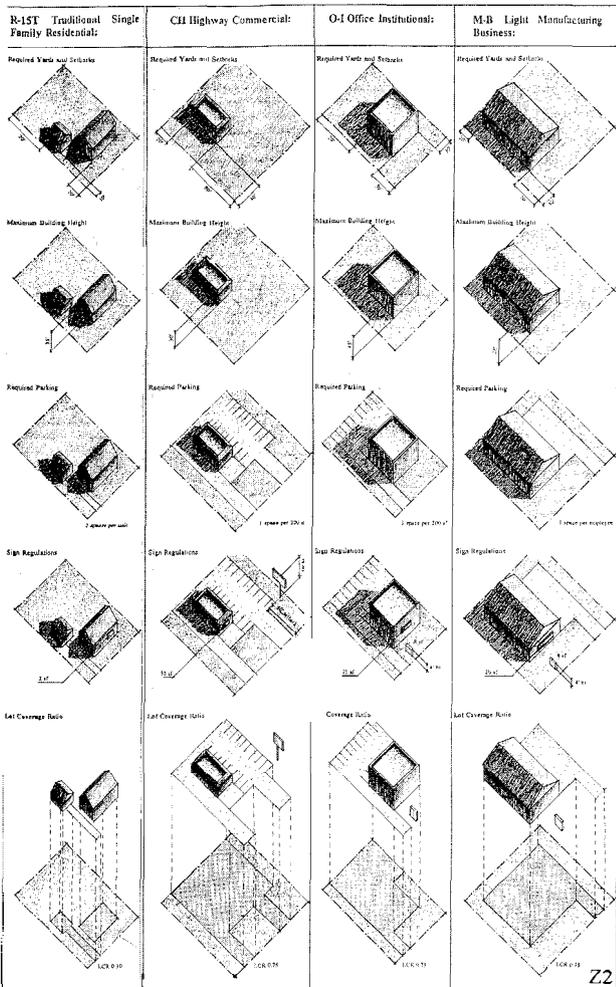
Design Research and Demonstration in the Small Town: The Hahira, Georgia, Town Plan and Code

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Above: Illustrative Plan





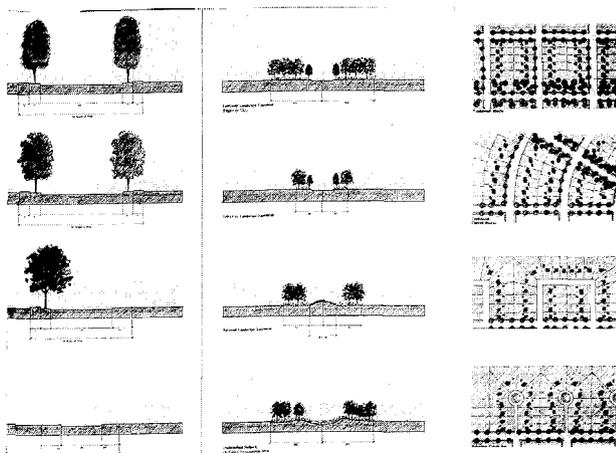
Above: Partial Page of New Zoning Ordinance

Unlike many small towns, with vacant main streets and deteriorating neighborhoods, Hahira still thrives. A building moratorium, imposed because the town had no sewer system, limited growth during the 1980's. However, strong regional growth and Hahira's attractiveness as a place to live sustained demand for existing housing and kept main street stores occupied. One can live in this traditional small town and be within walking distance of downtown, schools, the hospital, and city hall. One can easily commute to jobs in a growing region of 100,000. The recently completed sewer system, will allow the population to increase from 1300 to 3000.

Hahira citizens want their town to grow, but in a way that preserves its small town qualities. Because most of those qualities are visual, or provide important visual settings for activities, a key concern was to find a way to make the plan and the process itself visual, so that everyone could understand what was, and what was not, wanted.

Three research questions emerged to shape the process and the results of the work. First, how can urban design aid planning decisions by providing clear choices and by revealing the visual consequences of decisions? Second, how can urban design improve regulations so that desired development is encouraged and inappropriate development discouraged? Third, how can urban design reveal a process for other small towns to follow, rather than produce products — a model plan, process or ordinance — to be copied? The project began in the fall quarter with information collection and analysis. During the winter, a collaborative urban design studio produced three complete alternative plans as visual decision tools for the town. These followed principles of traditional American small towns, garden city and suburb ideas, and contemporary urban development patterns. During the spring, summer and fall, visually based zoning and subdivision ordinances and historic district guidelines were developed and submitted to the city, along with the final plan. These documents, and also all of the other plan documents, are on mylar sheets, (24 inches by 36 inches) so that reproduction and distribution are easy and inexpensive.

The Hahira Town Plan began as a community service project and became an example of applied research, conducted by faculty and students. It shows the ability to convert planning documents and ordinances into visual form, understandable by everyone, eliminating the thick zoning and subdivision texts that few people, including architects and planners, actually understand.



Above: Partial Page of New Subdivision Regulations

